

The Global Food Crisis

Assembly for World Food Day – October 16.

Age Range 11-16

There is an assembly for KS2 learners included in the online study pack.

Introduction

This assembly is intended to raise learners' awareness of the extent of the Global Food Crisis and engage them to take action to alleviate hunger.

World Food Day is observed on October 16 in more than 150 countries. It celebrates the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations on this date in 1945.

The right to food was recognized as a basic human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. However many of the world's poor still go hungry. Steep rises in the price of food are seriously exacerbating this situation. This assembly examines the reasons for this and what can be done.

Timing

The assembly should take 10 to 15 minutes (longer with learner participation)

Preparation

There are 8 PowerPoint slides. These can be copied onto OHP transparencies if preferred. The assembly may involve pupil participation or be presented solely by a teacher. A script for learners to read or dramatise is provided below for the teacher to cut and paste, print and distribute.

Follow up

This assembly provides an introduction to Oxfam's online teaching resources about the global food crisis.

What to do

Slide 1 – Introduction: World Food Day



This slide could be projected before the assembly begins and during the introduction.

World Food Day is observed on 16 October every year. It reminds us of our responsibility, as citizens of the world, to work towards making the right to food a basic human right for all people. However rising food prices around the world mean that many people are still going hungry.

Slide 2 - Food prices in the UK



Make the assembly relevant to the learners' own experiences by asking them to think about how rising food prices are affecting their own families.

Ask if learners know of any particular rises in food prices themselves (eg: the price of a carton of milk rising from 65p to 75p) *or* two learners could role-play shoppers discussing the rising price of food.

Despite these price rises only around 12% of UK incomes are spent on food. When food prices rise most people just complain, tighten their belts and maybe make a few sacrifices. There isn't a major crisis. However the situation is very different in other countries.

Slide 3 – The Pay for A Day's Work in Cambodia



In Cambodia a worker in the rice fields earns 40p per day

Ask the learners how this worker would be affected as the price of rice rises. Is the Cambodian worker affected by rising prices in the same way as British workers?

In fact in 2006 a day's pay in Cambodia was enough to feed a family of 6 with a little cash left over. In 2008 it is barely enough to feed half the family. The result is that adults are going hungry so children can eat.

Slide 4 – Phnom Penh market



This is the effect of rising food prices in a poor country like Cambodia. The pile of rice on the left is the amount a worker can buy with their wages in 2008. The pile on the right is the amount of rice the same wages could buy one year ago.

Slide 5 – Poor People spend up to 80% of their incomes on food



Ask the learners to read the slide and think about the question for a moment.

The world's poor spend up to 80% of their incomes on food. When prices rise the poor just don't have enough money to pay for the more expensive food.

This situation isn't just happening in one country like Cambodia. It's being repeated in many countries across the world.

People in developing countries are spending an extra £324 billion this year alone just to buy enough food to feed themselves. Rising food prices are dragging 105 million people into poverty. 30 million of these people are in sub-Saharan Africa.

It's a very sudden and large shock to peoples' livelihoods. It threatens to set back much of the progress the world community has been making to reduce poverty.

Slide 6 – A Perfect Storm



The Global Food Crisis has been described as a 'Perfect Storm'. This means that many different causes have come together at the same time to create the Crisis in just the same way as the causes of a severe storm like a hurricane suddenly and unpredictably come together.

The five main causes of the Global Food Crisis are illustrated on Slide 5. Individual learners could be asked to read the script for each slide. The scripts can be printed for learners from the scripts page.

Food used for biofuel

Biofuel is fuel made from plants instead of oil. With oil prices rising farmers are encouraged to grow crops for biofuel rather than food. In 2007 23% of the USA's maize crop was used to produce fuel rather than food. This may be good news for North America's motorists but it's bad news for the world's poor. They rely on cheap food imports. With less food for sale, prices go up.

Rising oil prices

The price of oil and natural gas has more than doubled since 2007. This is one reason why biofuels appear an attractive alternative to oil. Fertilisers are made from oil and farmers require oil for machinery and transport. Therefore the price of food is rising because growing it and sending it to market depends on oil. The food on sale is more expensive.

Climate change

Climate change and bad weather disrupt food production and push up prices. Recently very severe weather affected places as far apart as Australia, the USA, India, Burma and East Africa. In all these places crops and livestock were destroyed. With less food for sale, prices go up.

Changing diet

Many people in China and India are becoming better off as their countries become richer. For example it is estimated there will be 350 million middle class people in China by 2030. Better off people tend to change their diets. They eat more expensive foods such as poultry and meat. To produce 1kg of beef requires 7kg of grain. This grain could be used to feed the poor. With less grain for sale, prices go up.

Rising population

The world's population increases by around 210,000 people every day. Until recently food production rose faster than population, meaning there should have been enough food for all. However since 2006 food production has begun to lag behind rising population. There is now slightly less food to be shared out among the world's people than before. Prices rise.

Slide 7 – What can you do?

What can you do?

- Learn more, tell others and keep talking



- Change the way you live

Slide 8 – What can you do? continued

- Make your voice heard



- Get more involved

The Global Food Crisis poses a severe threat to the livelihoods of millions of people around the world. It is serious. However overcoming the Crisis is possible and really boils down to the choices that we all make. This final section of the assembly aims to empower learners to feel that they can play a positive role in making the world a fairer place.

The actions are explained further on the *Getting Involved* sheet available with this study pack.

Learn more, tell others and keep talking – the first action learners can take is to keep informed of what's happening in the world and to keep sharing their ideas with others. People who know what they're talking about are taking the first step towards making a difference.

Even small changes in the way we live in the UK have a positive impact. Buying Fairtrade, buying food products from developing countries, cutting down on waste and eating less meat all contribute towards making life fairer for the world's poor

Making your voice heard helps make our leaders accountable to us for the decisions they make in our names. When international leaders meet to set up the rules for world trade we can call them to account and remind them that we expect them to use their power to make the world fairer for all.

Oxfam and other charities provide plenty of opportunities for young people to get involved as responsible and active citizens. Their websites have all the details.

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A Perfect Storm – Learners’ scripts

Five learners are required to read the scripts.

Script 1 - Food used for biofuel

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Script 2 - Rising oil prices

The price of oil and natural gas has more than doubled since 2007. This is one reason why biofuels appear an attractive alternative to oil. Fertilisers are made from oil and farmers require oil for machinery and transport. Therefore the price of food is rising because growing it and sending it to market depends on oil. The food on sale is more expensive.

Script 3 - Climate change

Climate change and bad weather disrupt food production and push up prices. Recently very severe weather affected places as far apart as Australia, the USA, India, Burma and East Africa. In all these places crops and livestock were destroyed. With less food for sale, prices go up.

Script 4 - Changing diet

Many people in China and India are becoming better off as their countries become richer. For example it is estimated there will be 350 million middle class people in China by 2030. Better off people tend to change their diets. They eat more expensive foods such as poultry and meat. To produce 1kg of beef requires 7kg of grain. This grain could be used to feed the poor. With less grain for sale, prices go up.

Script 5 - Rising population

The world's population increases by around 210,000 people every day. Until recently food production rose faster than population, meaning there should have been enough food for all. However since 2006 food production has begun to lag behind rising population. There is now slightly less food to be shared out among the world's people than before. Prices rise.
