

# Hunger in our World.

5<sup>TH</sup> / 6<sup>TH</sup> class

## Well done for taking part in the Our World Irish Aid Awards!

This year's theme "Hunger in our World" relates to the first Millennium Development Goal 1. We hope that, by participating in this project, you and your pupils will deepen your understanding of this critical issue, and find creative ways of communicating what you have learnt to a wider audience.

The accompanying Teacher's Information Leaflet teachers' background information leaflet provides an introduction to the current situation of hunger in the world.

In these lesson plans for 5th and 6th classes, we have set out a suggested overall plan, followed by teaching ideas, worksheets, and resources lists. We hope you find these useful, but do feel free to draw on any other relevant sources of information on this topic or to use your own ideas. We wish you all the very best of luck with your project

## Curricular Links

Food and hunger are topics which are relevant right across the Primary Curriculum. As topics they can be covered under many subject areas such as English, Art, Gaeilge, SESE, SPHE - and even Maths. For religion, world religion and ethical curriculum these topics are also highly relevant.

- **SPHE**

*STRAND:* Myself

*STRAND UNIT:* Taking care of my body - Food and nutrition

*OBJECTIVE:* Appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy. Recognise some of the important nutrients that are necessary in a balanced diet and the food products in which they are found; explore the factors that influence food choices; explore and examine some of the illnesses particularly associated with food intake or special health conditions

- **SPHE**

*STRAND:* Myself and the wider world

*STRAND UNIT:* Developing citizenship - National, European and wider communities

*OBJECTIVE:* Realise and begin to understand the unequal distribution of the world's resources; basic needs not being met, understanding some of the issues, the ways in which we can help, the role Irish people have to play

- **Science**

*STRAND:* Human environments

*STRAND UNIT:* Trade and Development Issues

*FAMINE:* Become aware of the causes and effects of famine; examine the work of relief agencies and become aware of Irish involvement in them; discuss possible short and long-term solutions to famine; compare the experience of famine in Ireland with that of other countries

*DEVELOPMENT & AID:* come to appreciate the inequalities between the developed and the developing world

- **History**

*STRAND:* Eras of change and conflict

- **Northern Ireland Curriculum:**

Key Stage 2 curriculum for: The World Around Us – *Interdependence and Place* strands (Geography) Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PD&MU) – Strand 2: Mutual Understanding in the *Local and Wider Community*. Language and Literacy: *Talking and Listening; Reading; and Writing*.

## Overall Plan

It is important to familiarize yourself with the information in the Teacher's Information Leaflet before introducing the topic to your class. You can draw on that information in working through the activities with your class. Some additional information for pupils, which you can photocopy or read out, is provided below. It is also important to have a world map displayed in the classroom for reference throughout.

Ensure that pupils understand the difference between **acute hunger** which happens in famine situations and which they will have seen depicted on TV, and **chronic hunger** which is much more widespread and goes on all the time, but is rarely the focus of media attention. (see Teacher's Information Leaflet page 2) It is the recent rise in the numbers of chronically hungry people in the world that has led world leaders to declare that we now have a global food security crisis.

- 1. Introduce and explore the issue** of food and hunger with your class, using the lesson plan below. If you wish to explore the issues further, additional sources of information or class activities can be found using the list of websites on the last page of this leaflet.
- 2. Choose a topic to focus on.** You might choose to focus on a particular country/ies, region/s or theme/s. You could, for example, look the links between the environment and food, or the links between food and the other Development Millennium Goals. You could focus on trade and fairtrade looking at the food commodities we buy from developing countries.. You could look at hunger in developing countries today in comparison with the Irish famine. Or you could explore nutrition and health as issues for both rich and poor countries. The websites and resources provided on the last page provide further relevant information on the issues.
- 3. Do the project.** The teacher's booklet provided contains suggestions on the type of project you could do and the criteria by which it will be judged. You and your pupils can decide on any medium you wish to use. Your project will express what you wish to communicate about the issues to an audience, whether through writing, illustration, artwork or audio-visual media. Please take account of the guideline for teaching about development on the back page of the teacher's booklet, as these will help to inform the judges' decisions.
- 4. Share what you've learnt.** It's a good idea to share your project with a wider audience, whether in the school or community

## Lesson Plan.

### 1. Warm up:

- Go around the class asking them to count and ask each sixth person to stand up. Tell the class that one in six of the world's population is hungry.
- Form pupils into groups of 4 or 5. Give one group, one tangerine each.
- Give the other groups only one or two tangerines to share between the group.
- Ask the class if this feels fair. Does it reflect the real situation for people in the world?

### 2. Worksheets:

- Copy the worksheets below
- Read through & discuss the information & do the activities.

### 3. Discussion:

- Encourage the class to discuss:
- What are some of the causes of hunger? What are some of the solutions?
- What can the world do to help? What can we do? Why is food security so important?
- Suggested reading is provided for further discussion.

**Good luck and enjoy!**

## Hunger in our world today

We all know what it feels like to be hungry but most of us have only felt hungry for a short period of time. This kind of hunger does us no harm and gives us a healthy appetite for our next meal. But many people in the world go to bed hungry every night. They are in danger because they cannot get the food they need to survive and be healthy.

There is enough food to feed everyone on the planet. Yet in our world of 6.6 billion people, one billion people suffer from hunger every day. These people don't get enough food over a long period of time which means they become weak and sick. This is especially dangerous for pregnant mothers and small children.

### The problems for small farmers?

A lot of the food we eat comes from other countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia, where many of the poorest people in the world live, most of the food is grown locally. Many people are small farmers who grow nearly all of the food they eat. They usually have small plots of land and use basic hand implements, such as hoes. Planting and harvesting is often done by hand with the help of all the family.

Due to recent rises in the prices of food, seeds, fertiliser and tools, they can no longer afford to buy what they need to farm. This is one of the main reasons why many small farmers in developing countries cannot now grow enough food to feed their families.

Richer countries use a lot more energy than poorer countries. This causes a lot of carbon dioxide and other gases to be released which harms the environment and contributes to climate change. As a result much farming land in developing countries has become drier in recent years. In poor countries most farmers do not have irrigation systems and have to rely on the rain. In some countries global warming causes flooding which damages soil. So whether there is too much rain or too little, the effects of global warming prevent farmers from getting the crops they need and this leads to many more people becoming hungry and malnourished.

### Fairtrade

A lot of what we eat and drink comes from developing countries. Millions of small farmers in developing countries grow crops such as coffee, bananas, tea and cocoa, which are then sold on to the rest of the world. But the farmers who do most of the hard work don't always get a fair price for their produce.

Fairtrade organisations try to get a better deal for these small farmers. Getting a fair price helps farming families to provide more nutritious food and look after the health and education needs of their children.

## What is Ireland doing to fight hunger?

Irish Aid is the governments overseas aid programme, it is working in partnership with governments around the world to provide extra nutrition for people most at risk. We are helping countries to end hunger by improving agriculture and giving smallholder farmers the help they need to provide food for their families and communities.

We are also working internationally with other countries to give aid more efficiently and to help farmers from poor countries to get a better deal on the world market. We are helping poor countries to cope with the problems created by climate change and supporting new environmentally friendly ways of farming so that there can be food security for everyone in the future. Irish Aid also supports overseas development agencies and missionaries in their work to fight hunger.

### *Did you know?*

- One in six people in the world are hungry
- Worldwide, women produce more food than men
- 70-80% of food in Africa is produced on small farms
- Women produce most of the food in Africa
- There is enough food in the world for everyone
- One third of all edible food is thrown out every year in rich countries
- Wasted food in landfills produces methane, a gas that causes climate change
- 35 billion dollars is spent ever year in the US on weight reduction projects.

Below is a TV news interview with Rosemary from Malawi. Pupils should read it and act it out. Whoever plays the reporter has to add in their name. Use it as a basis for class discussion.

**Reporter:**

Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. I am here in Malawi in East Africa. It's a beautiful country. It is known as the warm heart of Africa because people are so friendly. I am here with Rosemary Situla who lives on this farm behind me. Hi Rosemary, can you tell me about your life here.

**Rosemary:**

Hi. Well I have lived here all my life, with my mum, dad and brothers. We grow everything we eat on our farm. We used to grow just maize that we mashed up and made into Nshima, which is like porridge. This was fine most of time but each year there were a few months when the food would run out and there would be very little to eat. Those were hard months, we felt so hungry.

**Reporter:**

Why didn't you buy food?

**Rosemary:**

We didn't have any money. We didn't even have money to buy seeds or fertiliser or tools to help us grow more. Prices kept going up. And then a few years ago, the rain just didn't come, the land was dry and the harvest failed. We don't have irrigation you see, we have to rely on the rain. We all got sick from lack of food, especially my youngest brother. None of us could go to school.

**Reporter:**

Why didn't the rains come?

**Rosemary:**

Well, sometimes that happens and I think it happens more now because people around the world have not looked after the environment.

**Reporter:**

So have things got any better?

**Rosemary:**

Yes they have. For us anyway. A farmers' group was set up in our village and managed to get funding from the government and from some other countries. This group gave us seeds and showed us how to get more food from our land. Now we grow cassava, which is a bit like potato, and sweet potato as well as maize. These survive the dry months. It means we have enough food to get through the year.

**Reporter:**

And can you sell any of your produce?

**Rosemary:**

Yes, because now we have a new road and so we can take our produce to sell in the market in the nearest town. We have also started to grow sugar cane. Some fairtrade international companies have agreed to buy it for a fair price. This would be wonderful because it would give us a little extra money to spend on education and medicine.

**Reporter:**

That's great. So what would you say to viewers back in Ireland?

**Rosemary:**

Well, I would say that, if possible, please buy fairtrade products as this helps millions of farmers like us in developing countries. And please try to look after the environment, because, when people in other parts of the world damage the environment, that affects us badly. It would make a big difference if rich countries cut down on energy and waste, for example.

Finally I would say, please keep supporting our efforts to grow more food. If rich and poor countries work together to improve agriculture, hopefully fewer people in countries like Malawi will suffer and die from hunger and malnutrition.


**Discuss:**

The reasons why Rosemary and her family suffered from hunger. What brought about improvements in their situation?

# Match Problems to Solutions

## Activity 2:

Match problems to solutions by drawing a line to connect each problem to the most suitable solution. Then tick the correct box or boxes to show who should carry it out. This could be drawn on the board for a whole class activity or pupils could do it in pairs.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM ?		WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?	WHO CAN HELP?		
			Governments in developing countries	Richer countries	Me
<i>Women who produce most of the food in developing countries need more support</i>		<i>Build more roads and set up more markets in rural areas</i>			
<i>Food prices are rising beyond the reach of poor families in urban (city) areas</i>		<i>Increase the amount of aid for agriculture</i>			
<i>Some farmers don't get enough crops from their land</i>		<i>Send successful farmers around the regions to advise other farmers</i>			
<i>Many poor farmers now can't afford seeds and fertilisers</i>		<i>Cut down the amount of fast food in the world</i>			
<i>Global warming means many poor farmers cannot rely on rains as they used to</i>		<i>Immunise small babies against diseases</i>			
<i>Many farmers from developing countries get a very low price for their produce on the world market</i>		<i>Small farmers need to be given extra help to get what they need because of rising prices</i>			
<i>Small babies cannot absorb nutrients if they get diseases</i>		<i>Give cash or food to very poor families who are going hungry</i>			
<i>Many farmers can't get to markets to sell their goods</i>		<i>Reduce carbon emissions to stop global warming</i>			
<i>Developing countries are getting less money in aid for agriculture now than they did before</i>		<i>Provide support for women in developing countries to improve their farms</i>			
<i>Producing fast food wastes too much of the world's energy and causes health problems in richer countries</i>		<i>Support fairtrade to make sure farmers in developing countries get a fair price</i>			

Making sure that everyone has enough to eat is important for many reasons. If people don't get enough to eat they are likely to suffer from diseases. Babies, children and pregnant women are especially at risk. If children are unwell they can't go to school. In order to make sure everyone gets enough to eat, we need to sort out various other problems.

Using huge amounts of energy leads to increasing level of carbon dioxide and methane emissions. This damages the environment and contributes to climate change, which makes it more difficult for poor farmers to grow enough food for their families to eat. Women are responsible for growing most of the food, so making sure that they have an education and are treated well is vital. Poor farmers often grow crops like coffee, tea, bananas and flowers to sell to people in rich countries. They need to be paid a fair price for their products so they can provide for their families.

Below is a spider diagram which includes all the Millennium Development Goals. Have a look at all the bubbles. In pairs/groups pupils think about and discuss how each of the topics in the outer bubbles is linked to food and nutrition in the centre. They write down one link in each bubble. (make a bigger diagram and copy it if you want more space) Discuss the connections with the whole class. Variation: Assign specific topics to each group and they identify several links for their topic.



Below are suggestions for reading materials which could be used to stimulate further discussion on the issue of food and hunger. Curriculum links are provided.

**1. Extract from Under the Hawthorn Tree by Marita Conlon-McKenna:**

*CURRICULUM LINK:* Strand: Eras of change and conflict;  
*STRAND UNIT:* The Great Famine

*“ He kept walking on. Two or three times he felt dizzy and lightheaded and had to sit down to get his breath back. He could hear the river water running, but still could not see it. Then up ahead he was able to make out the crossroads and the humpy bridge. Two women lay on the ground near the bridge. They were both so weak they didn’t notice the young boy pass them.*

*Michael could not believe it when he came to the old mill. Crowds of people were waiting, sleeping on the cobblestones. They could go no further. A few of them were grouped together in families. They lay in their rags or blankets, relieved not to be on their own. From within the building came a constant moaning and crying, and a smell of disease and sickness seemed to fill the air around the place. Some people were praying out loud.*

*A nun, dressed in full habit, came through a small wooden door. She spoke in a loud voice: ‘ This place is full. We have no space for man, woman or child, nor is there spare food. Perhaps by tomorrow when we have removed those who have died of sickness and the fever, we may be able to take a few.’*

Extract from Under the Hawthorn Tree by Marita Conlon-McKenna, The O’Brien Press, €7.95 (PBK), ISBN: 978-0-86278-206-1 Note: the first two chapters of this book are available free to read on [www.obrien.ie](http://www.obrien.ie)

**2. Chapter 15, Under the Hawthorn Tree by Marita Conlon- McKenna,**

*CURRICULUM LINK:* Science; Strand: Living things;  
*STRAND UNIT:* Human life - Human life processes

**In this chapter one of the characters Peggy become dangerously ill from hunger.** This chapter could stimulate discussion on the need for nutritious foods and the consequences for health of a diet lacking in iron, proteins and other nutrients. The children in the book have an extremely monotonous diet which does not provide them with all the nutrition they require. Their diet would be similar, in many respects, to that eaten by people currently suffering from chronic hunger.

**Useful Resources:**

- 1. Our World Our Future** – a teacher’s pack on development for 5th and 6th class Geography, Irish Aid, 2006, Unit 5 on Famine and Aid pp75-92, and Unit 3, Lesson 6: Fairtrade. Available free from Irish Aid, Dublin or Limerick and to download from [www.irishaid.ie/ourworld](http://www.irishaid.ie/ourworld)
- 2. One World Our World**, Irish Aid, 2009 - A children’s storybook on four countries in Africa and Vietnam. Includes information on food in the chapter on Louisa from Mozambique Available free from Irish Aid, Dublin or Limerick and to download from [www.irishaid.ie/ourworld](http://www.irishaid.ie/ourworld)
- 3. Chew on This - Everything You Don’t Want to Know About Fast Food** by Eric Schlosser, Puffin Books, for 8 – 12 year olds. This book gives the unvarnished truth about the fast food industry and also takes a look at the effects on the environment and the highly topical issue of obesity.
- 4. Will Jellyfish Rule the World?** - A Book About Climate Change by Leo Hickman Puffin Books, for 8 – 12 year olds.
- 5. Food – ethical debates about what we eat** - by Jim Kerr, Evans, recommended as teacher resource or for some children in senior classes

**Useful Websites:**

Information and activity sheets are available free to download from:

<http://www.obrien.ie/resources/UHTWorkbookEpisode1.pdf>  
<http://www.obrien.ie/resources/UHTWorkbookEpisode2.pdf>

for material very appropriate for a discussion on world hunger.

- [www.irishaid.gov.ie/ourworld](http://www.irishaid.gov.ie/ourworld) This is the Our World (Irish Aid awards website which includes a number of interesting short case studies on food and farming in Irish Aid’s programme countries.)
- [www.christian-aid.org.uk/learn](http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/learn)
- [www.concern.net](http://www.concern.net)
- [www.developmenteducation.ie](http://www.developmenteducation.ie)
- [www.gorta.ie](http://www.gorta.ie)
- [www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet)
- [www.selfhelpafrica.ie](http://www.selfhelpafrica.ie)
- [www.trocaire.org](http://www.trocaire.org)