

Sustainable Food – Food Security



Introduction –

Food security has become one of the biggest concerns for food producers around the world. With a growing world population the challenge to ensure affordable and nutritious food for all is becoming bigger.

Key Questions –

What is the difference between hunger and food insecurity?

What could cause food insecurity?

What can we do to increase food security?

What is the difference between Hunger and Food Insecurity?

This should be carried out as a discussion session

What is hunger?

How do you feel when you are hungry?

Hunger is defined as “A feeling of discomfort or weakness caused by lack of food, coupled with the desire to eat”.

What do you think food insecurity is?

Food Insecurity is defined as “A lack of adequate access to, and availability of, affordable and nutritious food”

What do you think the main differences between hunger and food insecurity are?

Hunger is expressed as a feeling, whilst Food Insecurity is related to adequate access.

Feelings are personal and the feeling of hunger for 1 person could be different to the feelings or perception of others.

Adequate access, although personal, are easily measured and are not subjective.

What could cause food insecurity?

Understanding why some people face food insecurity and the effects this can have on them and their families is the first step in helping to measure the damage that food insecurity can cause.

What do you think are the main causes of global food insecurity?

Climate Change – As flooding and drought become more prevalent around the world this directly affects people's ability to grow and harvest food. Food security is a big concern, particularly for people living in economically developing countries, such as Gambia, Yemen, Haiti etc, where more people rely on growing and rearing their own food to feed themselves and their families. With growing populations in a climate diverse world this causal factor is one that must be addressed quickly.

Economic Change – There are many reasons how economic change can affect food security. It is not just about the income of the individual but also many other financial factors. Increases to demand with a reduced supply will cause price rises, thus, making products less affordable.

Conflict - Conflict stands out as the single biggest factor driving global hunger today. Countries at war or suffering civil unrest and disturbance show higher rates of food insecurity. Over 60% of those who are food insecure are living in conflict zones. Conflict forces people to flee from their homes, often leaving behind their only means to a livelihood. Conflict also divides communities and can cause farmers to abandon any long-term agricultural strategies for fear that they will never reap the benefits if they are forced to flee.

Population Growth - According to the United Nations, the global population will be nearly 10 billion people by 2050. As the population continues to grow, it is necessary that food production and food accessibility grow to match it. Unfortunately, we have already seen in countries that have experienced population booms that resources needed for food production (water supply, croplands) can become scarce when divided, causing food insecurity.

Accessibility – Direct accessibility to nutritious and affordable food are growing as a cause of food insecurity within the UK. Some accessibility issues could be lack of food shops offering healthy options or lack of transport to visit supermarkets. Can you think of any other accessibility blocks to nutritious and affordable food for all?

It is estimated that 840 million people in the world are food insecure. The United Nations have set Sustainable Development Goals for the world to help reduce the problems. From the 17 goals set, goal 1 is **NO POVERTY** and goal 2 is **ZERO HUNGER**. How can these goals be met is a question, with many different answers?

What can be done to increase food security and reduce global hunger?

Different people hold different views on the best ways to increase food security for our growing world population. Food security is not just an issue in the economically developing world but is an issue for the whole world. Whilst specific ways to make each country more food secure through its own production are key it is also important to recognise 3 key focusses for world change.

Organic Farming – Organic farming is seen as a healthier and more sustainable way to feed our growing population with a smaller impact on our wider environment. Organic agriculture generally creates less soil and water pollution and lower greenhouse gas emissions, and is more energy efficient. Organic agriculture is also associated with greater biodiversity of plants, animals, insects and microbes as well as genetic diversity. Through reducing the use of chemicals, fertilisers and growth additives in organic farming methods, the impact of pollution and spoilage is lowered making this a vital way to increase our long term production, therefore, raising food security worldwide.

Fairtrade – Fairtrade is all about paying a fair price for the things that we buy. This will help people become food secure by ensuring that growers receive better prices for their crops, allowing them to support the workforce with better conditions and rates of pay. Money through fairtrade is also used to improve local communities with transport or access to clean water. Fairtrade products support over 1 million farmers and workers in 74 countries worldwide. By supporting Fairtrade producers we can directly support people have the money to afford nutritious foods.

Science – Scientific developments will allow for the world to move into a more food secure space. From crop modification to allow growers to produce food in times of drought, to GPS driven machines to enhance crop yield, science is playing a large role in the movement towards global food security. Organisations like Practical Action are helping people directly to improve food security, 1 project is in Bangladesh where they have helped families to grow crops and keep ducks on “raft like” floating gardens on flooded rivers. This has enabled people to have food security even during the flooding season.

The benefits gained by having a food secure nation are wide and varied. These benefits can be easily split into 3 main headings –

Social Impacts – Those positive impacts on people and the population.

Economic Impacts – Positive impacts on personal, business and national finances.

Environmental Impacts – Positive impacts on the environment.

Activity

A country is looking at ways that it can increase food security for its entire population. You have been asked, as a student ambassador, to identify the positive impacts a food secure population would have on society, economics and the environment.

For each heading describe 5 different positive impacts that food security would have.

Social Impacts

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Economic Impacts

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Environmental Impacts

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.