

AS STEWARDS OF THE EARTH WE MUST SHARE WITH ALL LIVING THINGS

My name is Alex. I am seven years old. My older brother's name is Erick and my younger sister's name is Joy Faith. The first thing I do in the morning is bathe and then I go to school. I walk to school with my brother and sister every day. I am in standard three in primary school (first class/P3). In class, we do Maths, English, Swahili and Social Studies.

In school, apart from lessons, I love to play football with my friends. My favourite football player is Messi, maybe also Aguero. My favourite team is Manchester City. I also really like to wrestle with some of my friends.

When I get home, I usually go and graze the goats and take them to the water points to drink. In the evening I wash my uniform, do my homework and spend some time reading.



Alex and his family share their land with goats and chickens. These animals help to earn money to pay school fees. Sometimes, if there is not enough rain to grow their own food the family sells some goats or chickens for money to buy food. Joy Faith, Alex's sister, says that the most important things in her life are to have food, to have a good house that is clean and to have some livestock; maybe goats, sheep and chickens.

Many people in Alex's community keep bees. Bees are very important for biodiversity, the variety of life on Planet Earth. All species are interconnected, which means they depend on each other. Forests are homes for animals. Animals eat plants. Plants need nutrient-rich soil to grow. Fungi gives these nutrients to the soil. Bees carry pollen from one flower to another. This is especially important for food for people because pollination produces seeds and fruits for current and future crops.

Biodiversity also provides food, shelter, clothing and medicine for people. Trees and vegetation help people to manage water on the land.

If biodiversity is weakened, all living things can feel the impact. Bees help people in Alex's community to earn money by selling honey; however, far more importantly, the bees help to enrich the biodiversity of the region.

Discuss

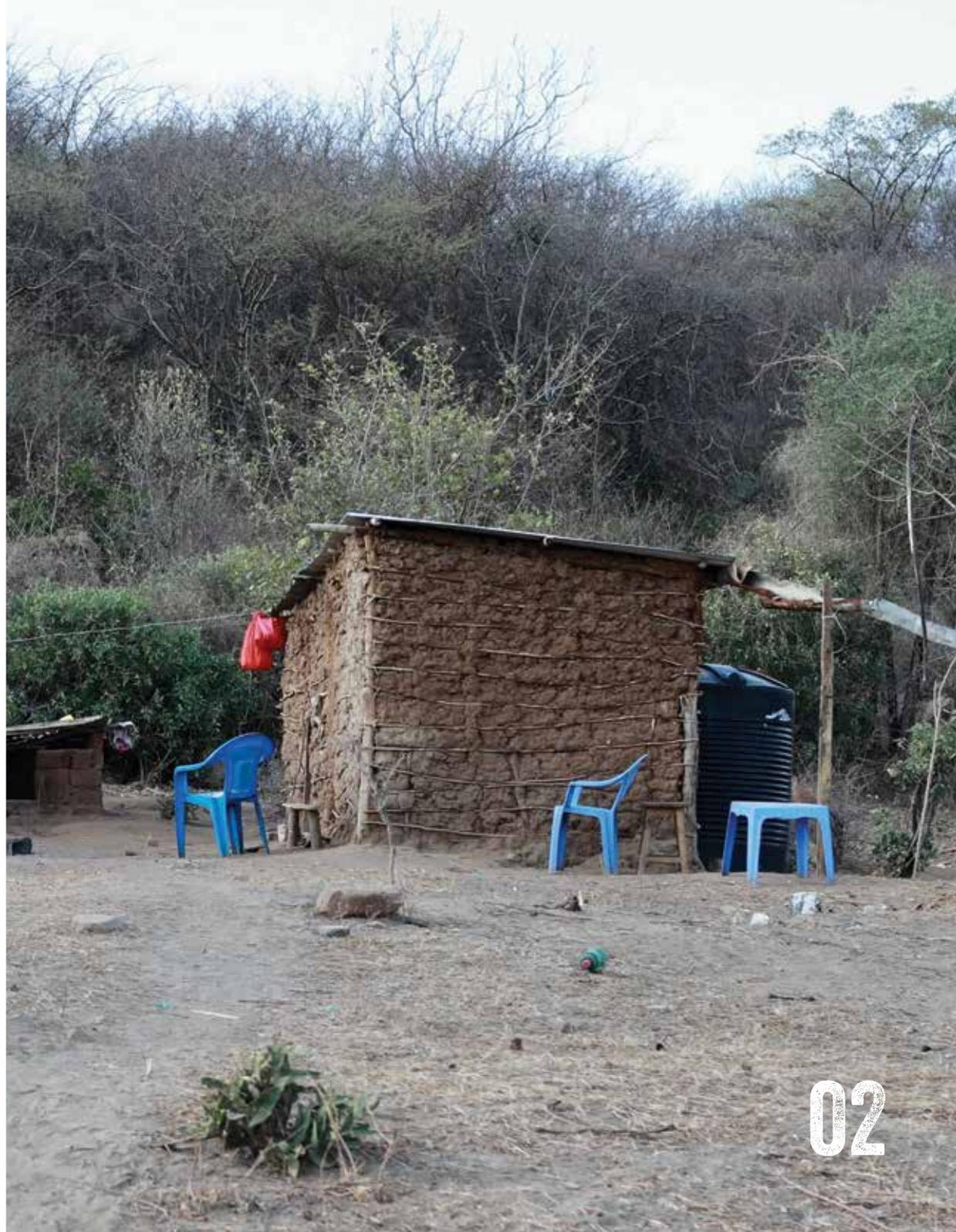
- Do we share the land with animals in Ireland?
- How can animals help to end poverty for people?
- Do animals impact the earth's climate?



Background: Erick (8), Joy Faith (6) and Alex (7) walk home from school, Embu County, Kenya. Reverse (right): Alex (7) with chick. Reverse (left): Erick (8) with goats; woman beekeeping on demonstration farm. Photo credit: Gary Moore

Trócaire

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AS STEWARDS OF THE EARTH WE MUST *CONSERVE WATER*

Madris lives in Embu County in the eastern region of Kenya. She gets clean water from a local river, but it is a three-hour round trip to walk there and back. In the past, she was able to sell her crops and get money to hire a donkey to fetch five containers of water. However, when it does not rain she cannot afford this and can only carry one container of water on her back per trip.

Madris built a rain-harvesting system at the back of her house. A pipe collects the rain that falls on the roof and sends it into a water-storage tank. She lets the trees, grass and bushes around her house grow, providing good cover for the soil. This prevents evaporation of water from the soil, however, these rainwater conservation methods only work when it rains.

Madris is a member of a savings and loans group with nine other women from the local area. They meet every Friday and each put 100 Kenyan shillings (90 cent/80 pence) into a savings box. This year, when the crops failed, the women could use the money they saved to buy food.



'When I was small my grandparents would look at the shape of the moon or the direction of the wind to know when rains were coming. There used to be plenty of rain and we used to have a good harvest. When I look at my land now, it looks to me like a desert. It's a big difference. When it does not rain, there is no harvest from my maize and mung beans; they dry out. I feel it is not fair, in other countries people are living well and here we are struggling without rain.'

Discuss



- How does the changing climate impact Madris and her family?
- How are we in Ireland contributing to the changing climate?
- Do you think we value water as much as Madris does?

Background: Madris carries water from the river, Embu County, Kenya. Inset: Madris with members of the savings and loans group. Reverse (left): Madris collects water at the river. Reverse (right): Rain-harvesting system on Madris's house. Photo credit: Gary Moore

Trócaire

REF: E5





AS STEWARDS OF THE EARTH WE MUST GROW FOOD SUSTAINABLY FOR NUTRITION



My name is Alex. I am seven years old. I like to be called Alex, but at home, sometimes my family will shorten my name to Ale.

In the morning my mother, Madris, wakes up first. My sister Joy Faith always wakes up last. We eat ugali (maize porridge) for breakfast. At school for lunch I have githeri (a mixture of maize and beans), the same as everyone else. We eat lunch in the field sitting under the acacia tree for shade from the sun. Every day I finish school after lunch and then come straight home. When I get home, I usually go and graze the goats and take them to the water points to drink. The favourite part of my day at home is in the evening when I eat my supper. Sometimes this is rice and beans. I would like people in Ireland to know that we live in a good place.

Discuss

- Where does the food you eat come from?
- Does the way food is grown have an impact on Planet Earth?
- There is more than enough food for every person on the planet so why do you think some people are still hungry or malnourished?



Background: Students under the acacia tree outside Alex's school, Embu County, Kenya. Reverse (left): Madris prepares maize meal, Embu County, Kenya. Reverse (right): Alex (7) eats ugali. Photo credit: Gary Moore

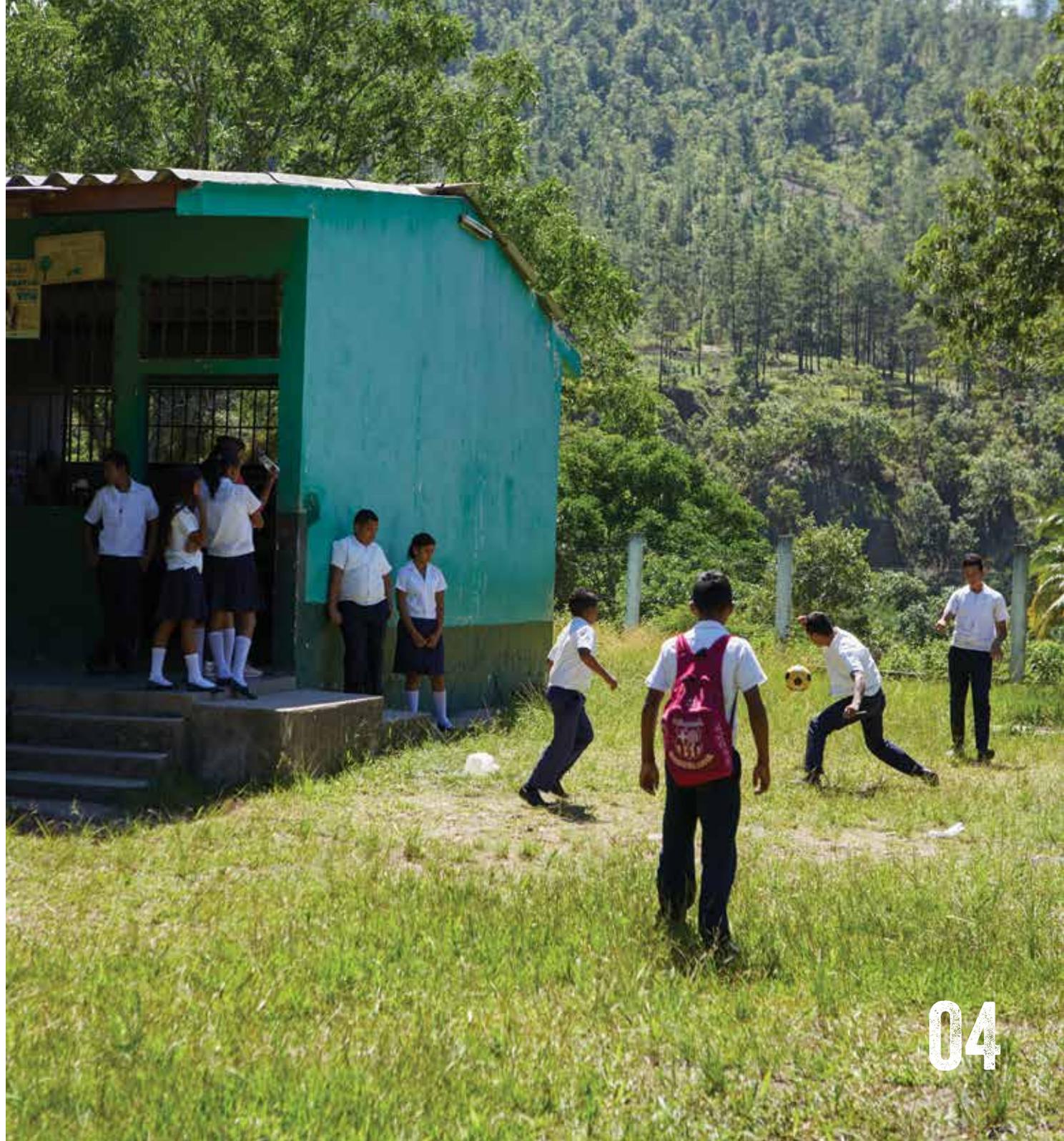
Madris, Alex's mother, works hard so that her children have food to eat everyday. It is very important to her that the family eats together so that they can talk about any challenges they are facing and how to help each other.

Last year, she harvested 70kg of mung beans. This year, the rains did not come so she only harvested 5kg of beans. This small amount was only enough for her family for one month. Her maize crop failed also. She sold the dry remains of maize crop to cattle farmers to feed their cows.

Madris goes to a demonstration farm close to her home to understand about zero-waste organic farming. She learns how to catch and store rainwater, prepare sunken beds, use animal waste to fertilise crops and keep the soil nourished.

Many trees in the forest also provide nutrition for their family. Fruit from the baobab tree, balanites tree and tamarind tree are rich in vitamins and can be used as medicine.

Trócaire



AS STEWARDS OF THE EARTH WE MUST ENJOY THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



My name is Jocsan. I am five years old. I wake up at 5:30 a.m. I help my mother to collect eggs from the hens and give some food to the pigs. At playschool I sing, play, draw and look at books. My favourite foods are eggs, beans, chicken and mangoes. For breakfast I have coffee, fried plantain and tortilla. For lunch I usually have rice, beans and tortilla. For dinner I usually eat eggs, fruit and sometimes chicken.

The natural environment is very important for Jocsan and his family because that is where they grow all of their own corn and beans. They use the corn to make tortillas. They also have some pineapples, and fruit trees growing on their land.

Discuss

- How do you use your natural environment?
- How does the natural environment help Jocsan to live a prosperous (healthy and happy) life?
- What would happen if his natural environment was destroyed or taken away?



Background: Jocsan (5) plays with branch of tree, San Francisco Campo, Honduras. Reverse (right): Children play football outside primary school, San Francisco Campo. Photo credit: Simon Burch
Reverse (left): Jocsan and Martín play football. Photo credit: Giulia Vuillermoz

There is lots of grass and trees in his natural environment. The grass is great for playing on. The trees provide important shade from the sun. Jocsan loves to play games with his friend Martín outside.

To the left, Jocsan is getting set up to play a game. He takes a branch with leaves, shows it to everyone and hides it among other similar branches. He calls out 'warm', 'cold', 'freezing' or 'boiling' to guide the other players to it. Whoever finds the stick chooses another natural item to hide. After each item is found the players share what else they saw, felt, smelled, touched and heard while they were looking for the branch.

'Mar y Tierra' (Sea and Land) is another really simple and fun game. The children scratch a line in the dry earth. They all stand on one side of the line. One side is 'land' and the other is 'sea'. The leader calls out either 'land' or 'sea' and the children have to jump to the correct side. If you make a mistake you are out. The faster the leader calls the harder it is to jump the correct way. The winner gets to be the caller the next time.

Trōcaire



AS STEWARDS OF THE EARTH WE MUST CELEBRATE AND APPRECIATE WHAT IS AROUND US



My name is Nicolle. I am fourteen years old. My school is next to my house. There are two teachers and sixty students. The seniors attend in the morning and the juniors in the afternoon. I am a senior in the seventh grade (first year/Year 10). I study Spanish, Natural Science, Social Science, Maths, Technology, English, Arts and PE. My brother Jocsan goes to playschool. He will start first grade (junior infants/P1) next year. He can already count, spell and write his name.

The land, vegetation, water and sun around Nicolle's home is very important for her family. They help them to grow their own corn and beans to eat. They also grow pineapples and have fruit trees. When they have extra food, they can sell it to earn money. Sometimes, particularly around June, when food is scarce, Nicolle and her mother also work on other people's land to earn money.

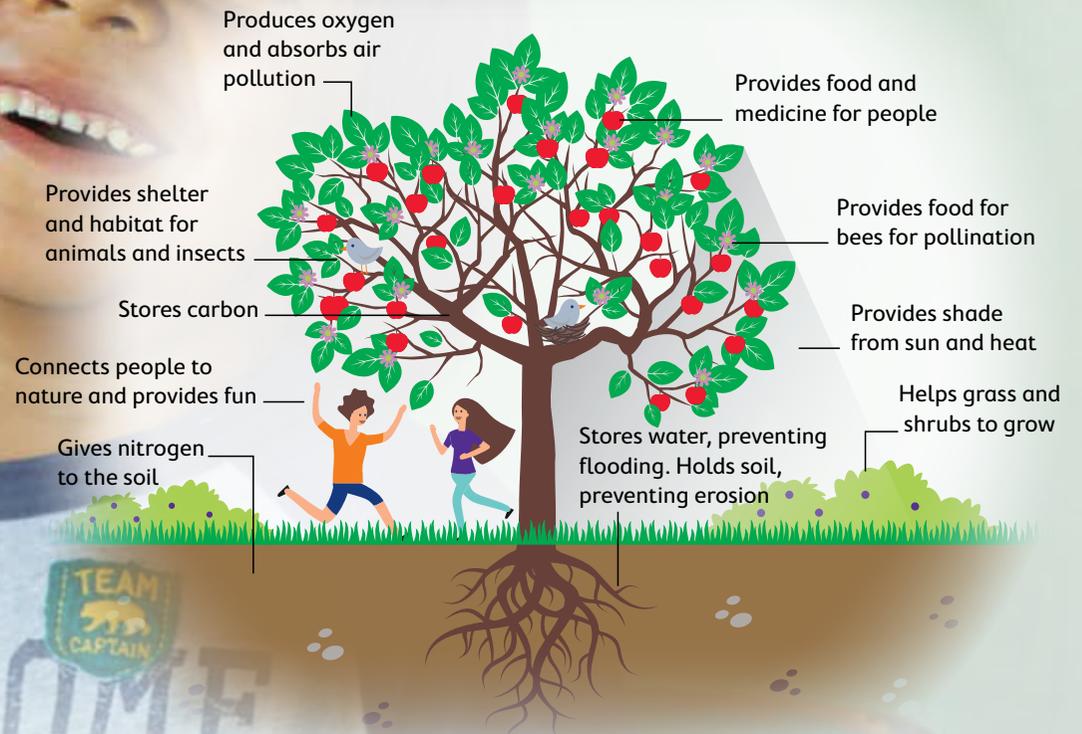
Discuss

- What similarities and differences are there between your life and Nicolle's life?
- How do you celebrate and appreciate your natural environment in school?
- How does this protect the planet?



Background: Jocsan (5), San Francisco Campo, Honduras.
Reverse (right): Nicolle's (14) classroom, San Francisco Campo, Honduras. Reverse (left): Poster created in Nicolle's class.
Photo credit: Simon Burch

National tree day in Honduras is 30 May. To celebrate this day Nicolle's class created a poster from natural fibres to hang in their classroom. They have kept the poster hanging on the classroom wall as a reminder to appreciate all that the forest and natural environment gives them. It is also a reminder to protect what is so important to them.



Trōcaire



AS STEWARDS OF THE EARTH WE MUST DEFEND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



My name is Angela. I live here in this community of San Francisco Campo. Nature is a part of us. Mother Earth is the only thing we have; we must take care of it. Nature takes care of us with plants like the noni tree. We want to protect the water, the air, the oxygen. Our children need to be able to breathe fresh air in the future. The rivers and water are a big part of our life; however, our water sources (rivers) are drying up because logging companies are stealing our trees. For many years I, along with my neighbours, have fought strongly to defend our forest. The logging companies are ignoring the law. They are cutting down more than double the amount of trees that they are reporting. The noni tree gives fruit and can be used in traditional medicine.

I took part in training run by a local organisation. I learned about my human rights. This helped me to understand that what the logging company is doing is not fair. I organise women in my community to fight for the country we want in a peaceful way where our rights are respected. We try to block the logging company trucks by putting rocks on the road. The police try to stop us.

Discuss

- Does any food that you eat come from Honduras?
- How can the destruction of the environment impact peace?
- Is there a group in your local area defending the environment?



Background: Pineapple picked from Angela's land. Reverse: Angela shows the noni tree on her land, San Francisco Campo, Honduras. Photo credit: Simon Burch

The landscape and climate across the country of Honduras is very varied. As a result, there are many different animals on the land and in the water. The forests are home to tree frogs, parrots, sloths, tapirs, howler monkeys and many cat species; including ocelot, puma and jaguar. Deforestation threatens the rich biodiversity of Honduras. This has a knock-on effect for the animals living in freshwater rivers and lakes, as well as in the sea off the coast of Honduras.

Trócaire also works with a local organisation in Honduras called MILPAH (Movimiento Independiente Indígena Lenca de la Paz-Honduras). This group of indigenous (native) people is devoted to defending and protecting what belongs to them in their environment – their mountains, forests and rivers. Martín Gómez, who works for MILPAH, says:

'We aren't criminals,
We are human rights defenders.
We defend the water because it is life,
We defend the air because it is life,
We defend the land because it is life,
We defend the forest because it is life.'

Trócaire