HUNGER
THE REAL REASONS

Seven Deadly Signs on the Road to Hunger

An educational resource on Hunger and Famine for Leaving Cert Applied
(Contemporary Issues and Religious Education)
Introduction

Counting only grains and cereals there is already enough food in the world to give everyone over 3,000 calories per day, more than enough food for all.

This resource has been designed especially for use in LCA Contemporary Issues and R.E. by students wishing to complete key assignments on ‘Famine/Hunger’. The resource was prepared to be taught alongside ‘Rising to the Challenge’.

It outlines seven of the major reasons why hunger and famine continue to haunt people in developing countries – ‘seven deadly signs on the road to hunger’. It is important to note that the causes of famine are complex and vary greatly from country to country.

These signs are presented in a factual and informative way on the teachers page (4) and in an interactive way on the student page (5). A detailed case study from Ethiopia is also provided on pages 6-7 to allow students to focus on a particular country and understand one particular situation. The suggested actions on page 7 draw on the information provided in this resource and are linked with the key assignments for contemporary issues 1 and 2.

Finally the suggested prayer service on the back cover allows students to take time out and to reflect on the main causes of famine in our world today and to think about ways to become more pro-active in the fight against global hunger.

It is not food that is in short supply, it’s justice.

Back in 1963 US President John F. Kennedy set 2 goals – that a human being would walk on the moon and that world hunger would be a thing of the past by the end of the decade. While the first might have seemed ambitious it was nonetheless achieved over 30 years ago; the second goal remains as distant as ever.

In 1974, at the first World Food Summit, world leaders vowed to eradicate world hunger by the end of the 1970’s. Over a quarter of a century later, 1 billion people live on less than two dollars a day and over 840 million people live in hunger. Put differently, every 3.6 seconds someone dies of hunger. Since you began reading, ten people have died of hunger – seven of them are children under five.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 25(1) of this declaration refers specifically to each person’s right to adequate food when it states ‘Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food’.

For an explanation of the origins and background to the UDHR see ‘Rising to the Challenge’ Unit 4. A complete version of the declaration is available on the website of the United Nations www.un.org.

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FOCUSING ROLE-PLAY: FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

(Adapted from ‘Food Glorious Food’, The Rights Stuff)

Aim: to illustrate how unevenly and unequally the world’s food is distributed.

Materials Needed: Pens, paper and 35 sweets/bars.

Mark out 7 areas around the room to represent one of each of the following geographical areas: China, Asia, Russia, Europe, Africa, North America, South America. Show each place on the map to students.

1. Explain to the group that they represent the world’s population. Ask a number of volunteers to guess how many people should stand in each of the seven ‘countries/continents’ and divide the group accordingly.
2. Now divide the group according to the actual breakdown provided on the student handout.
3. Show the group the 30 sweets and explain that these represent all the food in the world (ie. enough to feed everybody sufficiently). Ask each group to guess how many of the sweets their country gets in reality.
4. After each group has given their feedback, divide the food as indicated on page 3.

Follow-Up Discussion:
- Do you think the distribution of the food is fair?
- How does this affect people’s rights?
- Why do you think we have this situation in our world today?

What, in your opinion, are the barriers which prevent this more even distribution of food?

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LINKS TO KEY ASSIGNMENTS FOR CONTEMPORARY ISSUES 1 AND 2.

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Student Handout 1

Back in 1963 US President John F. Kennedy set 2 goals – that a human being would walk on the moon and that world hunger would be a thing of the past by the end of the decade. While the first might have seemed ambitious it was nonetheless achieved over 30 years ago; the second goal remains as distant as ever. Why do you think this is? Fill in the blank footballs below.

Moon 1

Why Moon scored:
- Wealth of the west
- U.S. Power
- Other

Hunger 0

Why Hunger didn’t score:
- Poverty of the south
- Lack of real interest from western governments
- Other

Food Glorious Food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>BREAKDOWN with 20 Students</th>
<th>BREAKDOWN OF FOOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>South America</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Peters’ Projection Map shown here portrays countries according to their true size and location. (Source: Exploring our World, 2001)
Seven Deadly Signs on the Road to Hunger...

1. TRADE

Case Study: Trade

Zambia, Southern Africa: Zambia is one country that is very vulnerable to drought. The Zambian government is one of many that are asked to repay debts as their people starve. In Zambia in 1987 President Kaunda simply stopped debt repayments arguing that it was not in the interests of the people of the country. The result was they were ignored completely and given no financial help at all. So they were forced to go back to repaying their debts.

2. DEBT

Case Study: Debt

Every day debt repayments take much needed resources from developing countries so that when a country is shocked by drought they are unable to cope with the result of famine. Debt cancellation does work. In 10 countries that have had debt cancellation, spending on health has increased by 70%, spending on education increased by 30%, and there has been no increase in military expenditure.

3. WAR

Case Study: War

The total amount of money collected by Live Aid for Africa in 1984 was £43.5m. Global spending on the arms trade is £43.5m every 20 minutes.

4. POLITICS/POLICIES (Land)

Case Study: Politics/Policy (land)

A government policy that increased hunger during the Ethiopian famine of 1984 concerned exports. Some of the best farming land in that country was being used to grow animal feed for export to Britain and the rest of the world. (Note – during the Great Famine in Ireland, one million people died and two million emigrated while Ireland remained a net exporter of food.)

5. HEALTH-HIV/AIDS

Case Study: Health - HIV/AIDS

Derek Mubanga from Lwangwe in northern Zambia lost his job when the copper mines closed. But he found another with a relief agency and his wife, Agnes, sold vegetables in the market. Providing for the six children was not a problem. When Derek died the last of the food was used up at his wake. Nursing him for 16 months prevented Agnes from growing vegetables and two million emigrated while Ireland remained a net exporter of food.

6. DROUGHT

Case Study: Drought

It is the re-occurrence of drought that causes the severe famines we see on our television screens today. If drought was the only problem these countries had to suffer there is a possibility that they would be able to cope. However it is drought coupled together with severe poverty or war or HIV/AIDS etc. that brings about so much suffering.

7. POVERTY

Case Study: Poverty

In Zambia, 86% of the population are living on less than €2 a day, the international poverty line, compared with 69% only five years ago. Increasing poverty levels is a shared experience for other famine-stricken countries including Mozambique and Malawi.

Follow on Activity

After looking at the seven deadly signs on the road to hunger invite students to suggest other reasons why we have so much hunger and famine in the world, eg. Environment, Gender issues...
The World Bank estimates that hunger robs 46 million years of productive, disability-free life each year, valued at €16 billion.

In 2002 Malawi and Zimbabwe faced an eight-month hunger gap because of prolonged shortage of rainfall.

AIDS has killed over 7 million agricultural workers since 1985 in the 25 hardest-hit countries in Africa. It is estimated that it will kill 16 million more by the year 2020.

In 2000 the Zambian government spent €170 million in debt repayments and less than half of this on health (€76m).

The total amount of money collected by Live Aid for Africa in 1984 was €43.5m. Global spending on the arms trade is over €43.5m every 20 minutes.

Match the signposts with the food. Answers can be found on the bottom of page 7.
Ethiopia
The National Story
by Mary Healy, Programme Manager, Trócaire

“Nowhere to come, nowhere to go” — that’s how an Ethiopian pastoralist describes the impact of the current drought on himself and his animals.

In Ethiopia it means not even contemplating breakfast, having a piece of bread for lunch and hopefully having some bread and beans for dinner. It means asking your child to stop attending school because you need her to go in search of food instead. It means selling your ox to buy food which, as any farmer will tell you, is short-term gain for long-term pain.

Ethiopia is yet again on the brink of disaster. Two failed rains have left more than six million people in need of food. This number is expected to rise to 14 million by March 2003. We need to ask ourselves why this has happened. The drought is not the root cause of the problem but rather the very high dependence on rain-fed agriculture in a drought-prone country. Almost 80% of Ethiopians depend on agriculture and that makes for a lot of vulnerable people when rains fail.

While the country is in a better position to respond to famine than in previous years such as 1984 when 1.2 million people died, the poor roads and absence of ports make logistics extremely difficult. Also in 2000 many parts of Ethiopia experienced severe drought and people are still recovering from the impact.

Unfortunately the Ethiopian government rejected an offer from Eritrea to use their ports to transport food aid into Ethiopia — the wounds of the 1999/2000 war, in which about 70,000 people died, still run deep.

The impact of the drought in Ethiopia is greatly exacerbated by a number of issues including a large debt burden, HIV/AIDS and a global collapse in the price of coffee, a significant export crop.

More than 10% of the adult population in Ethiopia is HIV positive. These people are more affected by and less able to cope with malnutrition. Also many families have lost one or both parents through HIV/AIDS, malaria, war and hunger leaving children to cope and preventing them from going to school.

The immediate impact of Ethiopia’s debt burden of S5.4 billion is that it leaves the government without funds to purchase surplus production in some areas for redistribution in others. But, more importantly, it severely limits investment in crucial development activities such as education and health for a population of over 60 million where life expectancy is 43 years and almost two thirds of the population are illiterate. Families are also caught in a cycle of debt because they need to borrow for food before the harvest and then must pay tax to the government for their land after it.

So what can we do about it? A number of things can be done to improve the situation both now and in the future.

- In the first instance, food needs to be given to those who need it now.
- Secondly we need to give food in a sustainable way. The Ethiopian government rightly insists that food should not be given for free but that people should earn their food by working on projects that will contribute to the development of communities.
- Thirdly, we need to support local Ethiopian organisations. Solving the current hunger with a large-scale international response is no solution unless it is done in the context of working alongside Ethiopian civil society (non-governmental organisations such as womens groups, human rights groups and community development organisations) and relevant government bodies.
- Finally, we need to demand of the international community that the Ethiopian government and civil society are supported in investing in the future of their people — investing in a way that will bring them out of this vicious cycle of drought, poverty and hunger.
The Local Story
Eimer O’Hare, Press Officer, Trócaire

I travelled to the drought-ridden town of Mainebri in Northern Ethiopia which is home to single mother of four Nigasty Kindeya (30). She was the recipient of two goats from Trócaire’s Global Gift Plan 2001. Her two goats were among the 2,300 goats bought by people in Northern Ireland last year for families in Ethiopia and Angola – another country experiencing food shortages.

Amidst the landscape of scorched fields, dry earth and failed crops Nigasty said: “The goats I got from Trócaire last year have made the difference between my children going hungry and my children having milk to drink.”

She is able to sell the milk from the goats in the local market, which has given her the means to buy food she would otherwise not be able to afford. Her children still eat about a quarter of what they were used to before the drought but unlike many others they have a meal every day.

Student Handout 3
Ethiopia is Africa’s oldest independent country and one of its poorest states. It has a population of 65.8 million, and is about sixteen times bigger than Ireland. Ethiopia has never been colonised except for a five year occupation by Italy (from May 1936), during the reign of Mussolini. It is better known for its droughts and famines and for its long civil war. Drought, famine, war and corruption have brought millions to the brink of starvation in the 1970’s and 1980’s. And it is happening again today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethiopia</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>65.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Addis Ababa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual income</td>
<td>US$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Languages</td>
<td>Amharic, Tigrinya, Orominga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Religions</td>
<td>Christianity, Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality</td>
<td>98 per 1000 live births</td>
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We have seen the seven deadly signs that cause hunger and famine. Now, here are some ways you can make a difference while at the same time completing key assignments for the Contemporary Issues Modules.

**Key Assignments**

- **Assignment A**
  - Prepare a survey for your local area to find out peoples knowledge/attitudes about the real causes of hunger in our world. (Key Assignment 6)

- **Assignment B**
  - From the information you have learned, prepare a fact sheet on Hunger and Famine to be distributed to other class groups. (Key Assignment 9a)

- **Assignment C**
  - Plan an awareness raising campaign for World Food Day – October 16th. This could involve a two minute talk/collage/newspaper article on the issue. The campaign could take place in your school but also in your local community. (Key Assignment 8)

- **Assignment D**
  - Debate the following topic ‘People are hungry because they live in hot countries and have corrupt governments. It has nothing to do with the rest of the world’. (Key Assignment 7)

- **Assignment E**
  - Write a letter the Minister for Finance, Charlie McCreevy TD, Government Buildings, Upper Merrion St., Dublin 2. Point out that human development needs (e.g. food) should be a priority when it comes to debt cancellation, and that Ireland should promote increased debt cancellation at an international level. (Key Assignment 9b)

- **Assignment F**
  - Track the issue of hunger and famine in the newspapers and on television for three days (locally, nationally and internationally). Give a brief report to your class about it. (Key Assignment 10a)

- **Assignment G**
  - Suitable for students choosing “Hunger/Famine” as the issue for their Contemporary Issues Task
    - Research the ‘Great Hunger/Famine’ in Ireland from 1845 -1849, particularly focusing on how it affected your own locality. Compare your findings with what you have learned about famine in Africa today. (Resource ‘Famine in Ireland and Overseas’ available from Trócaire, Maynooth, Co. Kildare).
Prayer/Reflection Time
- The Christian Challenge -

Use reflection below alongside Matthew 25:37

Lord, when did we see you hungry?

I was hungry………
And your multinationals planted your winter
tomatoes on our best land
I was hungry………
And you asked us to repay a debt our corrupt leaders
spent and we didn’t even spend ourselves
I was hungry………
And you spent €43.5m on arms every 20 minutes
I was hungry………
While my land grew exotic fruits for your table
I was hungry………
When the oil spills from your ships and waste from
your factories poisoned the fishing grounds of the earth
I was hungry ………
And you circled the moon.

“Then Jesus told them this parable. ‘There was once a rich man who had
land which bore good crops. He began
to think to himself, ‘I haven’t anywhere
to keep all my crops. What can I do?
This is what I will do;’ he told himself; ‘I
will tear down my barns and build
bigger ones where I will store my corn
and all my other goods. Then I will say
to myself, lucky man! You have all the
good things you need for many years.
Take life easy, eat, drink and enjoy
yourself.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool,
this very night you will have to give up
your life, then who will get all these
things that you have kept for yourself?’
And Jesus concluded, ‘This is how it is
with those who pile up riches for
themselves but are not rich in God’s

Suggested activity for reflection  (with suitable background music)

Place a large paper circle on the floor in the middle of the group – this represents our world. Inside the circle place the
‘problems’ in our world that lead to hunger and famine (the 7 deadly sins + students suggestions). Place a number of
paper arrows going into the circle. Now invite students to place words on these arrows that might offer some solutions
to these problems ( these words should be prepared beforehand). This is followed by a quiet time when students reflect
on what they have learned about hunger and famine in our world.