

OVERVIEW PATHWAY

STUDENT ACTIVITY FOOD SOVEREIGNTY CASE STUDY PART 1



**Four Stories About
Food Sovereignty**

BACKGROUND

In September 2019, Four Stories About Food Sovereignty held a week-long workshop in Victoria, BC with participants from each of the four settings. Below is an edited transcript of answers to a question that was posed to project participants the second day they met as a group. For this exercise, students role play in small groups, reading through the transcript aloud. Alternatively, one group of volunteers could read for the whole class. At the end, students reflect in small groups or as a class on what they heard. Reading through the script should take approximately ten minutes.

INSTRUCTIONS

Each group consists of nine students who choose a role to play: Bruno (facilitator); Basani and Josephine (South Africa); Christine (T'Sou-ke, Canada); Claudia, Jakeline, and Miguel (Colombia); Imad and Fatima (Jordan). Larger groups can be used by adding non-speaking, country-specific roles of Aysheh (Jordan); Mphephu (South Africa) and Chief Planes (T'Sou-ke). Students should sit and work within the country-specific groups. (Alternatively, one group of nine students could read the parts for the whole class.)

Students choose a role and then either on their own or in small groups research who the person is by using the Settings Pathway and the project website: fourstoriesaboutfood.org. Students may find additional information about some participants through online research.

Students then introduce their chosen person to the group, name and name meaning, country of origin, role in the project, or other interesting information. Following the introductions, the group begins by sitting in a circle and reading the transcript aloud (note: small pieces of paper are required as props - different colours for each country, if possible). Reflection questions are found at the end.

If this exercise appeals to students, you might want to also try Part 2.

CASE STUDY

Question posed to the project participants: What are the top three food challenges in your community?

Bruno: I'm going to give each country group a piece of paper, and each group is going to write down their three biggest problems with respect to food systems. [After some time] Okay, let's come back to the group. Was it difficult to come up with problems?

Claudia: It was difficult to keep it to only three.

Bruno: Now crumble your piece of paper, stand up, and when I count to three everyone is going to throw their paper in the air. 1. 2. 3. Now one person from each group is going to come into the circle and get one ball of paper. So, make sure you have the list of problems from another country. The challenge now for you is to look at those challenges from another country and think if you have similar challenges in your country. South Africans, which country did you get?

Basani: Indigenous Canada. Their list is food sovereignty, living on an island, economic pressure, loss of culture, outside pressure. They elaborated; would you like me to elaborate?

Bruno: Yes.

Christine: [Christine speaks for the T'Sou-ke people of Southern Vancouver Island] I'll explain for our list. Foods that are indigenous or foods that are local and should be cheap, they are now expensive. And we also think that that point contributes to loss of culture and health. We are supposed to be eating our own food, but because those foods are expensive or hard to access, a lot of people cannot afford to have them.

Bruno: South Africans, did you find anything in common with South Africa?

Basani: Yes, loss of culture. We think that they are Indigenous and might like to hunt and gather local foods, and same with us. It is the case that we would like to gather local foods, but we cannot and we have to buy other food. The land where local foods would flourish is taken over by houses or private owners, and we just aren't allowed to access it.

Josephine: And outside pressure. The T'Sou-ke mentioned that there is pollution from the industries that goes into the ocean. This pollution is not good for marine foods or environment. And the last point of bringing back the harvest, they may have food in their garden or in their territory. But because people aren't learning the cultural practices, many don't know when to harvest or how to store it.

Bruno: Is that the same in South Africa?

Josephine: That's the same, yes. Younger people don't know the native plants that we used to like to eat. Those foods are very healthy, and many can grow in drought.

Bruno: Anything else? What about the Colombians - you were reading the Jordanians' list?

Claudia: We interpreted phrases from our point of view, but isn't it better to hear the meaning of the phrases from the original people, the people from Jordan who wrote it down? There are phrases, but they didn't elaborate.

Bruno: Right now we are just making a list of similarities. Later everyone will weigh in.

Claudia: The Jordanians listed lack of water/ water shortage and pollution. And this is something that our group also came up with as well.

Bruno: What is causing the lack of water?

Imad: In Jordan, rapid increase of industrialization and forced immigration [e.g., refugees from both the Palestinian territories and Syria, as well as from Iraq and North Africa] put a large increase on the demand for water. Lack of water also comes from a lack of water sources. Jordan is a very dry country.

Bruno: So, for the Colombians, do you see this as being a problem as well?

Miguel: Politicians are not giving Indigenous people access to the water, they're not investing in public infrastructure to give the public access to the water. Mining companies are getting almost all the water in our territory.

Bruno: So there's an issue with politics as well, like in Jordan.

Miguel: Yes, there is a similarity. In La Guajira province of northern Colombia where we live, there is a lot of immigration from Venezuela, so that is putting pressure on scarce water as well. Also, there aren't many sources of water in the semi-desert of northern Colombia.

Bruno: Thank you.

Claudia: The second item on the Jordanian paper is refugees. That might have been addressed with the water issue. The third one is poverty and unemployment.

Bruno: So what does unemployment and poverty have to do with food security in Jordan?

Fatima: Having a high percentage of unemployment prevents those people from having access to culturally relevant foods and forces them to buy cheaper, un-nutritious foods. This is especially a problem for children. Their health is affected for a long time.

Bruno: So for the Colombians, do you face similar problems?

Jakeline: Yes, when there is unemployment and poverty, people have to buy un-nutritious food - they have to buy the cheapest food. And of course, all of that cheap food is commercial, processed food, full of salt, full of fat. In a lot of cases, the food comes across the border from Venezuela where prices have been subsidized. Once prices rise in Venezuela, access to that food also decreases.

END

Questions for Reflection

1. In this short segment of conversation from the workshop, what were the common challenges amongst all country representatives? Did any one country mention a challenge that was unique to them?
2. Are the challenges political, social or environmental?
3. How are political challenges connected to environmental and social ones, and vice versa?
4. What solutions might work for individual countries? Can you think of any action they might take to gain greater control over their food systems?
5. How do these challenges relate to challenges you see in your daily life and your community? What solutions do you think are needed?