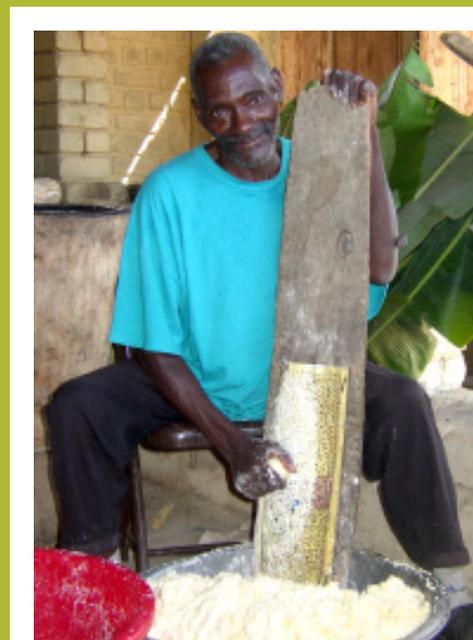


Module Two

Food Sovereignty for Faith and Anti-Hunger Groups





Faith and Anti-Hunger Reflection Exercise: Designing a Food Aid Program in Accordance with our Values, Faiths and Beliefs

▶▶ Introduction

This exercise looks at how some of our food aid programs and policies can be adjusted to help further food sovereignty rather than undermine small farmer livelihoods. The exercise may be challenging because it asks participants – for example, food pantry volunteers working hard to eradicate hunger – to explore how some of the programs that are intended to overcome hunger in the short term may actually perpetuate food insecurity and lack of food sovereignty over the long term. The point is not to say that we should not support or participate in these programs, since in many cases they are the best we have, but that we need to design alternative policies and programs that are in line with the values and principles of food sovereignty.

This exercise invites participants to examine some of the harmful consequences of food aid policies and programs. A second step invites participants to design food aid policies that help rather than hurt.

 **Time: 90 minutes**

Materials needed

- Blank newsprint, tape and markers – enough for facilitator and 5 small groups of at least 3 people each
- Newsprint with the 6 Food Sovereignty Principles listed (see Module 2, p. 9)
- 5 manila envelopes (one for each small group); each envelope includes:
 1. A few copies of that group's profile (starting on Module 2, p. 10)
 2. One copy of the chart “Policies Guiding the Food Aid Program”
 3. One copy of the generic instructions for each group (see Module 2, p. 6)
- Food items for each of the 5 groups (see Food Aid menu, Module 2, p. 8). If your budget prevents you from buying all of these items, buy only some or photocopy the labels of these items from the Internet so that the labels stand in for the food
- 5 large brown shopping bags
- “Food Sovereignty for Faith and Anti-hunger Groups” factsheets, found at the end of the module
- Copies of evaluation forms and “What I/We Can Do” sheets (See Overview, pages 15 and 16)

Preparation

- Place the food items from the Food Aid Menu in the appropriate bag (i.e. flour and cheese in the Native Americans' bag) along with the manila envelope for that group.
- Depending on your budget, you might want to prepare enough fairly traded food to share with everyone at the end of the exercise, or you could have Fair Trade coffee or cocoa to serve during the closing discussion.



Faith and Anti-Hunger Reflection Exercise, continued

Procedure

1. 10 min. Introduction to the exercise.

You can adapt or read in its entirety the following Facilitator's Script:

Welcome to the Food Aid Banquet! Today we are going to look at food aid from the point of view of the participants in these programs. What is inside the food packages that food aid program participants receive? What motivates these programs? How might we refashion food aid programs to promote sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty?

We are here today because of many sad facts that you may already know:

- Over 850 million people in the world are hungry.
- Approximately 80% of these people are food producers.
- Over 36 million Americans live in households that are considered food insecure.
- Our processed food system has produced a diabetes epidemic.
- While some people may think that hunger is caused by too many people and not enough food, world agriculture currently produces enough food to provide everyone in the world with at least 2,720 kilocalories per person per day if the food was distributed equitably.

(Source: Frederic Mousseau, "Food Aid or Food Sovereignty?: Ending World Hunger in Our Time" October 2005, The Oakland Institute).

One of the great paradoxes of our time is that hunger still exists amidst such abundance. The U.S. domestic and international food aid systems are to a certain extent dependent on a model of overproduction and cheap food. These systems have undoubtedly saved the lives of millions of people in crisis, and in many ways they work well. But they also too often present food aid advocates with the dilemma of scrambling to meet the immediate needs of people in crises, rather than focusing on addressing long-term solutions of strengthening local economies and meeting other related hunger-relieving needs such as sustainable agriculture and rural economies, affordable housing, health care and education.

The United Nations has recognized the access to safe and nutritious food sufficient in both quantity and quality as a fundamental human *right*. The Community Food Security and Food Justice movements focus on the long-term solutions of producing food in a just manner and empowering communities to feed themselves. The food sovereignty movement takes food security and food justice one step further by creating a global political framework based on the idea that communities and nations have the sovereign *right* to define their food systems, including how food is produced and distributed and ensuring that everyone can consume healthy, local foods. This includes food aid programs.

The purpose of this exercise is to explore the relationship between specific U.S. domestic and international food aid policies and anti-hunger programs, to discuss some of the challenges that these policies create for program participants and for people working for food security and justice, and to imagine alternatives solutions based on the principles and values of food sovereignty.

You are divided up into five categories of food aid recipients. Each category represents a group of people affected by U.S. agricultural policies or free trade policies. These categories are the following:

Table # 1: International Aid recipients

Table # 2: Farmers affected by Free Trade and Dumping

Table # 3: U.S. Food Pantry Customers

Table # 4: Native American Commodity Food Customers

Table # 5: School Lunch Consumers



Faith and Anti-Hunger Reflection Exercise, continued

↔ Procedure, continued

(State that workshop participants might find it curious that we have included Farmers Affected by Free Trade and Dumping in this list of food aid recipients. We did so because although free trade is not formally a food aid program, free trade boosters argue that the unfettered dynamics of supply and demand will make reasonably priced food available in all markets to all consumers in all corners of the world. Therefore, we thought it useful to categorize it as a food aid program and evaluate it against its claims to be able to feed the world.)

We'll get started with the exercise in a moment. However, before we dive into the small groups, let's engage in a quick exercise about what values guide us in our work to feed the hungry.

2. 15 min. Plenary discussion: *What does your own faith suggest to you about how to feed the hungry?*

Below you will find quotes from Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Buddhist texts about feeding the hungry. Depending on your audience, choose the appropriate quotes to read. Also, if your faith or anti-hunger group has texts or teachings that you hold sacred that relate to hunger, please include those as well.

Questions for the group:

- a. What do these texts say about feeding the hungry?
- b. What motivates you in feeding the hungry?
- c. What do your beliefs and values suggest about designing programs and policies to feed the hungry?

This is a collection of selected quotes from Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Buddhist sacred texts about feeding the hungry.

Judaism

1. Deuteronomy 24:17-22

Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this. When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.

2. Isaiah 58:3-7

'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?' Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

3. Midrash Tannaim 28:2

God says to Israel, 'My children, whenever you give sustenance to the poor, I impute it to you as though you gave sustenance to Me.' Does God then eat and drink? No, but whenever you give food to the poor, God accounts it to you as if you gave food to God.'



Faith and Anti-Hunger Reflection Exercise, continued

↔ Procedure, continued

Islam

1. Quran (Surat al-Ma'un: 1-7)

Have you seen him who denies the religion? He is the one who harshly rebuffs the orphan and does not urge the feeding of the poor. So woe to those who do prayer, and are forgetful of their prayer, those who show off and deny help to others

2. Quran (Surat ad-Duha: 1-5)

By the forenoon after sunrise. By the night when it darkens and stands still. Your Lord has neither forsaken you nor hates you. And indeed, the Hereafter is better for you than the present life of this world. And indeed, your Lord will give you all good so that you shall be well pleased. Did He not find you an orphan and give you a refuge? And He found you unaware and going astray and guided you? And He found you poor and made you rich and self-sufficient. Do not wrong the orphan and he who seeks your help turn him not down.

3. Hadith–Sahih Muslim (Bk 32, Number 6232)

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: Verily, Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, would say on the Day of Resurrection: O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me. He would say: O my Lord; how could I visit Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He would say: Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine was sick but you did not visit him and were you not aware of this that if you had visited him, you would have found Me by him? O son of Adam, I asked food from you but you did not feed Me. He would say: My Lord, how could I feed Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? He said: Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine asked food from you but you did not feed him, and were you not aware that if you had fed him you would have found him by My side? (The Lord would again say:) O son of Adam, I asked drink from you but you did not provide Me. He would say: My Lord, how could I provide Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He would say: Such and such of servant of Mine asked you for a drink but you did not provide him, and had you provided him drink you would have found him near Me.

Hinduism

1. Book X, Hymn 117, RigVeda

He who nourishes neither God nor a friend, he who eats alone, he gathers sin.

2. Book II, Verse 1, Taittiriya Upanishad

From the Infinite (Brahman) is ether born; from ether air; from air fire; from fire water; from water earth; from earth plants; from plants food; from food seed; from seed man. Man thus consists of the essence of food.

3. Book II, Verse 2, Taittiriya Upanishad

From food are produced all creatures which dwell on earth. Then they live by food, and in the end they return to food. For food is the oldest of all beings, and therefore it is called panacea.



Faith and Anti-Hunger Reflection Exercise, continued

↔ Procedure, continued

Christianity

1. Matthew 25:34-45

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

2. Luke 12:16-21

Jesus told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

3. Archbishop Oscar Romero, *Deep Justice in a Broken World*, page 17

When I feed the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor are poor, they call me a communist.

Buddhism

Bhojana Sutta

A Meal, translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

In giving a meal, the donor gives five things to the recipient. Which five? He/she gives life, beauty, happiness, strength, & quick-wittedness. Having given life, he/she has a share in long life, either human or divine. Having given beauty, he/she has a share in beauty, either human or divine. Having given happiness, he/she has a share in happiness, either human or divine. Having given strength, he/she has a share in strength, either human or divine. Having given quick-wittedness, he/she has a share in quick-wittedness, either human or divine. In giving a meal, the donor gives these five things to the recipient.



Faith and Anti-Hunger Reflection Exercise, continued

↔ Procedure, continued

3. 40 min. Small groups of Food Aid recipients

Count off one through five and in this way, form small groups. Provide each group with their brown paper bag containing food and their manilla envelope. (If there are too few people to have at least 3 people in each group, consider combining groups 3 and 4, as there are similarities between these two).

Tell your groups to open their bag and read the instructions they find inside:

Instructions:

1. Have someone in your group read aloud your profile.
2. Pass around the food from the grocery bag to everyone. Each person should handle the food and look at it carefully.
3. Take turns in your group reading aloud your group's profile and the chart "Policies Guiding the Food Aid Program." If time is limited or the group is not interested in too much detail, skip the "Background and Context" section.
4. Discuss the following questions in each group for about 20 minutes, with a recorder taking notes:
 - What causes your group to be hungry?
 - What food have you been given and how do you feel about that food?
 - What food aid policies have been developed to ease your hunger?
 - Who benefits and who suffers from these policies or programs?
 - Judging from the menu of all the groups, what do you have in common with the other groups and what is different? How might you work together for a better food aid policy or program?

Once you have answered these questions and the recorder has taken notes, proceed to these following steps for the next 20 minutes:

- Read the "Stories of Hope" and discuss the lessons or insights that this story may offer to improve your situation – if indeed your situation needs improvement.
- Design an improved food aid program for your group that is based on food sovereignty principles in accordance with your own values and beliefs.
- Identify who would be your allies in creating or winning this improved food aid program.

5. 20 min. Report backs, discussion and sharing of food

Invite everyone to eat food that you may have prepared for the whole group. This could be the same food that was served at Table #5, or Fair Trade coffee and baked goods. As people are enjoying the food, ask one table in each category to do a brief report back to the whole group, based on their reflections on the discussion questions. This large-group discussion should end with some focus on how we can work together across the groups for an improved food aid system (in the small groups there will have been plenty of time to discuss problems with existing food aid programs). The food sharing is optional based on your budget and time.

6. 5 min. Closing

Thank everyone for participating in the workshop. Hand out the "Food Sovereignty for Faith-based and Anti-Hunger Activists" factsheet, located at the end of this module. Engage in the Wrap-Up Exercise (see Overview, p. 14) and leave enough time for people to fill out the evaluation forms.



Facilitator Context

Optional Reading (to aid in preparation and understanding policy context)

Below is some additional information on the policies affecting each table. If the group is not familiar with international agricultural trade issues, especially the U.S. Farm Bill, you may want to share some of this information with them or have it in mind in the event that difficult questions arise. Another option is to give this information out to small group participants after the workshop. The reason not to give it directly to the small groups is that they may get bogged down in the details – although of course feel free to distribute this information to the groups if you think that is best. There are also resources for further information that you can pass on if you or the participants want to get a more detailed understanding of these situations.

A Word about Subsidies: The largest subsidies go to the largest farmers. Subsidies do not adequately help the majority of small family farmers. However, getting rid of subsidies will not address the problem of artificially low prices, which benefit large food processing corporations. Subsidies by themselves are not bad. Their value depends on who gets them, how much they cost to society, and what they are paying for. Subsidies are hurtful when they are paid for by the poorest taxpayers, go to the largest crop producers in the North and result in unsustainable farming practices, dumping, and destruction of rural livelihoods in the U.S. and around the world. They can be helpful when they come from a progressive tax system, go to family farmers, support local economies, and encourage environmental protection, direct marketing, and transition to sustainable farming. See National Family Farm Coalition www.nffc.net and Food First www.foodfirst.org for more information on the kind of subsidies that will help us achieve just, sustainable food systems.

Policy Changes for food sovereignty in accordance with the Principles of Food Sovereignty: The Commodity Title of the U.S. Farm Bill promotes export-based agriculture. This system rests on paying low prices to farmers in order to ensure that agribusinesses have access to abundant quantities of cheap commodities. This surplus of commodities is then dumped on foreign markets and sold at prices below the cost of production in those countries, or purchased by the U.S. government and shipped overseas as food aid, eroding the livelihoods of local farmers. Domestically, surplus grains are turned into high fructose corn syrup and other high calorie, low nutrient snack foods, the excess of which are donated by corporations to food banks. A Food Sovereignty Farm Bill would focus on producing **nutritious food for people**, not corporations, and prioritizing production for domestic markets. It would **work with nature** by offering price supports to sustainable sized family farms, not large industrial agribusinesses. It would **value food providers** by forcing agribusinesses to pay the true social and environmental costs of industrial food production and paying farmers and farmworkers a fair price for their labor and products.

The Nutrition Title of the Farm Bill is critical for helping families in crises survive. It must be strengthened to empower individuals and communities to move towards food security and out of poverty. A Food Sovereignty Nutrition Title would **put control locally** by supporting farm-to-cafeteria programs and expanding nutrition entitlements, such as food stamps, that allow people to buy direct from farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture programs (CSAs). It would also **localize food systems** and **build knowledge and skills** by increasing the funding for Community Food Security Projects, including projects in Native American Nations.

Similarly, International Food Aid in the Farm Bill's Trade Title would be revised under food sovereignty principles to **make decisions locally** and **localize the food system** by giving cash rather than U.S. commodities to communities in need overseas, so that they can strengthen their own food systems by purchasing culturally appropriate food from local producers.

Finally, under food sovereignty, dumping of food products would be eliminated, and agriculture would be taken out of all free trade agreements. We do need international agreements on agricultural production and trade, but these should not be negotiated through free trade agreements since removing trade barriers in agricultural trade has been shown to benefit large corporations and hurt local communities. (Source: NAFTA: Truth and Consequences on Corn Dumping www.citizen.org/trade/nafta/agriculture/articles.cfm?ID=11330)

For more information see National Family Farm Coalition (see link above) and Building Sustainable Futures for Farmers Globally.



Envelope Contents

Food Aid Menu

<p>Food Aid Recipient Categories</p>	<p>Try to obtain some but not necessarily all of the following foods. If that proves difficult, it is also okay just to use pieces of paper identifying the food types. Bear in mind, however, that it is likely to be a more powerful experience for participants to have the real foods in front of them for their close examination, especially nutritional information on any packaged goods.</p>
<p>Table #1: International Aid Recipients</p>	<p>In labeled bags:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice • Bulgur • Vegetable oil (soy oil if possible) • Dried beans • Cornmeal
<p>Table # 2: Farmers Affected by Free Trade and Dumping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bag of flour, rice or corn grains • Wonder Bread • Package of corn tortillas produced in the U.S.
<p>Table # 3: U.S. Food Stamp Recipients and Food Pantry Participants</p>	<p>A variety of boxed and canned processed foods that a food corporation might donate to a food bank or the lowest priced products at the supermarket with the highest calorie count that you can afford.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box of sugary cereal • Packaged dry milk • Box of pasta & spaghetti sauce • Snack food
<p>Table #4: Native American Commodity Food Recipients</p>	<p>A selection of foods that might come in a USDA food aid package. You can get a complete list of FDPIR foods at: http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/fdpir/default.htm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canned fruit in syrup • Cheese • Flour • Canned Meat • Dried beans • Vegetable oil
<p>Table # 5: School Lunches</p>	<p>A selection of foods served in a growing number of farm-to-cafeteria programs specializing in local foods, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local apples and carrots • Local cheeses • Whole grain bread (not necessarily local) • Pint of non-rGBH milk (if possible to find)



Envelope Contents, continued

Policies guiding the food aid program

Aid Recipient Categories	Policy Guiding the Program	Lobbyist
Table # 1: International Aid	U.S. Farm Bill: Trade Title: Public Law 480, Title II	Archer Daniels Midland or another large U.S. commodity processor
Table # 2: Farmers affected by Free Trade and Dumping	North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA)	Cargill
Table # 3: U.S. Food Stamp Recipients and Food Pantry Participants	U.S. Farm Bill: Nutrition and Commodity Titles Tax Reform Law	Kraft or another large corporate food manufacturer
Table # 4: Native American Commodity Food Customers	Federal Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)	Kraft or another large corporate food manufacturer
Table # 5: School Lunches	Innovative Programs in the Farm Bill encouraging local sourcing	Local community food security groups



Food Sovereignty Definition and Table I

Food Sovereignty Definition and Summarized Principles

Food sovereignty is defined as the right of peoples, communities, and countries to define their own agricultural, food and land policies which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances. It includes the right to food and to produce food, which means that all people have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources and the ability to sustain themselves and their societies.

The six fundamental Principles of Food Sovereignty are:

- Focuses on Food for People
- Values Food Providers
- Localizes Food Systems
- Makes Decisions Locally
- Builds Knowledge and Skills
- Works with Nature

Each indicated group receives the following information per the indicated table:

Table I: International Food Aid Recipients Profile

Who You Are

We are members of a farming community in Mozambique. Most of us are women, children or elderly because the young men from our village have left to find work elsewhere.

Farmers in Mozambique are food insecure in part because the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to whom the country is in debt, require that the government slash public budgets and generate foreign cash. Inevitably, this is accomplished by cutting programs like technical assistance to farmers and using the best agricultural land for growing crops to export, rather than feeding the local population. This pushes subsistence farmers onto the poorest soils without public support and makes it difficult to grow enough for a livelihood.

Why You Are Hungry

Policy Statement

U.S. Farm Bill. Trade Title (III) Public Law 480 Title II, non-emergency assistance

Public Law 480 Title II, in the Trade Title of the U.S. Farm Bill, is one of a number of U.S. International Food Aid policies. Under this policy, the U.S. government donates United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodities and *value-added foods, ships them overseas on American ships, and distributes the food through international charities. The charities can then sell the donations for cash to fund their development programs. The problem with this program is that donating U.S. commodities instead of buying food produced locally costs more, takes five months for the food to get there, rather than days, and can hurt local farmers by not purchasing food directly from them. Canada and the European Union have already switched from this system to making cash donations for local food purchases.

*In this case, value-added merely means that the product must be processed, fortified or bagged in the U.S.

(Sources: Celia Dugger, "CARE Turns Down Federal Funds for Food Aid" The New York Times, August 16, 2007; Philip Abbott, "Overview of the 2007 USDA Farm Bill: Food Aid and the Farm Bill," Perdue Extension EC-750-W; and Thomas Marchione "Foods Provided through U.S. Government Emergency Food Aid Programs: Policies and Customs Governing Their Formulation, Selection and Distribution" in "The Journal of Nutrition, 2002)



Table I, continued

Table I: International Food Aid Recipients Profile, continued

Background and Context

- **Structural adjustment:** Until the 1990s, government-run marketing boards in southern Africa protected farmers by guaranteeing them a fixed price for their crops, published ahead of harvest. Structural adjustment eliminated the marketing boards in favor of private buyers. As a result farmers now tend to sell cheaply to the first buyer, and traders prefer to deal with the few large farms established on better, more accessible roads. Most farm products are exported as raw product (e.g. coffee beans, as opposed to roasted and packaged coffee). The profit from processing or “adding value” to the raw product goes to the corporations in the developed world that package and market the foods. (Source: Alex Patel with Alexa Dewiche, “The Profits of Famine: Southern Africa’s Long Decade of Hunger” Food First Backgrounder, Fall 2002, Vol. 8 No. 4)
- **“Buy U.S.” Restrictions:** Two of the stated objectives of the U.S. Food Aid program are to: 1) Expand international trade, and; 2) Develop and expand export markets for U.S. agricultural commodities. This means the commodities donated any given year for food aid tend to reflect U.S. agricultural surpluses regardless of the receiving countries’ food needs. (Source: Thomas Marchione “Foods Provided through U.S. Government Emergency Food Aid Programs: Policies and Customs Governing Their Formulation, Selection and Distribution” in *The Journal of Nutrition*, 2002)
- **Who benefits?** U.S. based agribusinesses and shipping companies benefit substantially from the U.S. Food Aid program. A few shipping companies rely extensively on U.S. Food Aid programs for their existence, and representatives from commodity groups, such as the North American Millers Association, sit on the “food aid consultative group” that advises the PL 480 Title II program. Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) – listed as a policy lobbyist – is one of the largest grain processors in the U.S. (Sources: Frederic Mousseau, “Food Aid or Food Sovereignty?: Ending World Hunger in Our Time” October 2005, The Oakland Institute; Thomas Marchione “Foods Provided through U.S. Government Emergency Food Aid Programs: Policies and Customs Governing Their Formulation, Selection and Distribution” in *The Journal of Nutrition*, 2002)

Story of Hope

CARE USA recently decided to stop accepting some \$45 million a year in food aid from the U.S. government because they believe the system is inefficient and could hurt farmers in the communities they are trying to help.

Instead of taking donated foods from U.S. agribusinesses and selling them for cash for their programs, CARE will instead focus on getting funding from other sources and on trying to make their food aid programs profitable. For example, CARE developed a small company in Kenya, called Vegcare, which helps local farmers grow, transport and market produce that meets supermarket standards.

(Source: CARE USA, “White Paper on Food Aid Policy” June 6, 2006)



Table 2

Table 2: Free Trade and Dumping Profile

Who You Are

We are small-scale family farmers in Mexico.

Why You Are Hungry

We are food insecure because U.S. corn is being “dumped” or sold in Mexico for less than it costs to produce it without subsidies or credits, programs we don’t have. NAFTA and earlier free trade agreements eliminated price supports, subsidies and access to land for Mexican peasants. Now we cannot compete against low priced corn exported from the U.S. and are being forced to leave our lands. At the same time, the price of tortillas, which are a staple at every meal, has gone up. All of our sons have gone to the United States to work as farm workers or in slaughterhouses. Most of them do not make enough money to feed themselves adequately either.

Policy Statement

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

In 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA, eliminated all “non-tariff barriers to international trade” between the U.S., Mexico and Canada. By eliminating trade barriers NAFTA was supposed to help farmers in all three countries, instead, income for farmers in all three countries has declined. In order to comply with NAFTA, the Mexican government had to cut supports for small corn growers and price subsidies for tortillas, and change statutes regarding land rights for peasants. The price of Mexican corn has also fallen drastically.

Background and Context

- **Food Security in Mexico:** Mexican corn farmers now live on less than one third the income they earned prior to NAFTA (first implemented in 1994). (NAFTA: Truth and Consequences on Corn Dumping www.citizen.org/trade/nafta/agriculture/articles.cfm?ID=11330)
- **Increased Dumping:** Mexico has gone from being self-sufficient in corn production, to now importing 40% of its corn. According to the Mexican magazine Cambio, one out of every three corn tortillas in Mexico is now made out of imported corn (NAFTA: Truth and Consequences on Corn Dumping www.citizen.org/trade/nafta/agriculture/articles.cfm?ID=11330)
- **Who benefits?:** Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland are responsible for two-thirds of all U.S. corn exports. Income for farmers in the U.S., Mexico and Canada have all declined under NAFTA, while large agribusiness corporations have seen their profits soar. Cargill, the world’s largest grain buyer, is being investigated for price-fixing in Mexico’s tortilla market. (Sources: NAFTA: Truth and Consequences on Corn Dumping www.citizen.org/trade/nafta/agriculture/articles.cfm?ID=11330)
- **Immigration:** Between 1993 and 2002 around 2 million Mexican campesinos were displaced from their lands to look for work either elsewhere in their own country or north of the border. Once in the U.S. working as farmworkers, their average income is \$8,000 per year. Farm workers earn less than any other wage or salary workers in the United States.

Story of Hope

State Coordinator of Coffee Producers of Oaxaca (CEPCO) works with a membership of some 23,000 coffee-growing families to improve their economic security. Founded in the context of a plunge in world coffee prices and subsequent dismantling of government support for small coffee producers, CEPCO has been instrumental in strengthening coffee production, improving marketing, and linking growers to the fair trade market. It has also emphasized crop diversification and the exploration of alternative sources of income to lessen the dependence on coffee, especially through projects with women.



Table 3

Table 3: U.S. Food Stamp and Food Pantry Customers

Who You Are

We are elderly people who have worked hard all of our lives and single mothers working at minimum wage jobs.

We are food insecure because we have to choose between paying our rent, medical bills or transportation, and buying food. Food stamps and food pantries help us with this dilemma, but we wish that we did not need these services.

Why You Are Hungry

Policy Statement

U.S. Farm Bill Nutrition and

Commodity Titles and Tax Reform

Two titles in the Farm Bill affect anti-hunger programs in the U.S.: the Nutrition Title and the Commodity Title. The Nutrition Title includes programs such as Food Stamps and the School Lunch Program that distribute commodity foods to people in need. The Commodity Title currently functions to keep prices paid to farmers low, to maintain a supply of cheap raw materials for agribusinesses and food processors. It also supports an agricultural economy geared towards an export market. Commodity foods are purchased for donation to food programs under the Farm Support Program in the Commodity Title.

Tax reform law has also been important. Under the Tax Reform act of 1976, corporations can donate food to non-profit organizations and receive a generous tax deduction.

Background and Context

- **Hunger in the U.S.:** Food pantries are not only for those without jobs; 36 percent of households seeking assistance from emergency food banks have a family member who is employed. (Source: Hunger in America 2006. America's Second Harvest. March 2006)
- **What kind of food?:** The kinds of foods donated by corporations include those that would otherwise be thrown away because they have been over-produced, contain labeling errors, or are test products. While corporate donations are a very important source of much needed food for food pantries, they are often highly processed and high in calories but low in nutrition. In 2003, fruits and vegetables were the leading donated food items, but they were closely followed by snack foods and cookies (the number one donation for many years) and coffee, soda and other nonalcoholic beverages. (Source: Beyond the Food Bank: Food First Backgrounder, Fall 2004, Vol. 10 No. 4)
- **Dilemma:** Some of the largest corporate donors to food banks, such as meatpackers like ConAgra, violate food safety, environmental and labor conditions. (Eric Schlosser, Fast Food Nation, New York: Perennial, 2003) This places food pantries in the dilemma of accepting food from businesses that endanger worker and community health.

Story of Hope

The seeds for the Missouri Rural Crisis Center's Food Cooperative Program were planted in 1986 when the MRCC was engaged in a 145 day protest and occupation of the USDA offices in Chillicothe, Missouri. One of the goals of the protest was to put pressure on policy makers to pass the 1987 Credit Act. When Farm Aid (www.farmaid.org) offered to help out by distributing food to the protestors, hundreds of farmers came because they could not afford to buy food. The women in the community decided they needed to respond to this need by starting an emergency food program, which eventually evolved into the Food Cooperative. Today the Food Cooperative consists of 11 volunteer-run chapters around the state who purchase and dis-tribute thousands of pounds of high-quality locally grown family farm raised meat and produce every month to residents of rural communities who otherwise would not have access to quality food. (Source: In Motion Magazine)



Table 4

Table 4: Native American Food Aid Recipients Profile

Who You Are

We are members of Native American families who live on or near reservations in the West.

Why You Are Hungry

For centuries, our ancestors sustained themselves through traditional practices of hunting and gathering. Poverty arrived in Native communities after we were forced off our lands, put on reservations and forced to shift to a cash-based economy. We are food insecure because there are very few jobs on our reservation. We have to travel over an hour to get to the nearest store and when we get there they have a very limited selection of foods and do not accept food stamps.

Policy Statement

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations supplies commodity foods to low-income Native American households on or near reservations or in Oklahoma. Many low-income families participate in this program as an alternative to the food stamp program because they do not have easy access to food stamp offices or stores.

Background and Context

- **Hunger in Native Nations:** In 2006, each month approximately 89,920 native people participated in the Food Distribution on Indian Reservation (FDPIR) program.

- **Separation from traditional foods and harvest cycles impact on health:** Diabetes was essentially unknown among Native Americans in 1912. Today, the American Diabetes Association states that six of every 10 Native Americans are likely to develop diabetes. Many people believe that the shift to highly processed and high calorie, commodity foods has accelerated the growth of diabetes in Native communities. (Source: First Nations Development Institute, Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative "Time for the Harvest: Renewing Native Food Systems")

- **Civil Rights:** Native American, African American, Latino, and Asian American farmers have been farming and producing food in the U.S. since before it was a nation. Yet the USDA has discriminated against "minority" farmers in its programs through unfair treatment and denying access to its programs. The primary problem for minority farmers is retaining possession of their land. (Source: Rural Coalition "Civil Rights in Agriculture" www.ruralco.org/action/policycenter/civilrightsag.html)

Story of Hope

Numerous programs in Indian Nations are strengthening Native peoples' connections to traditional foods, agriculture and land management. The Fort Belknap Indian Reservation has a program to provide Native-raised grass-fed bison meat, a traditional low-fat, high protein food, to diabetics living on the reservation. The Navajo Agricultural Technology Empowerment Center combines centuries-old traditional water management and agricultural technologies with an advanced computer software network linking over 110 Navajo chapters. The White Earth Land Recovery Project is buying back their traditional lands from non-Natives and restoring their traditional harvests of wild rice, maple syrup, and other traditional foods.

(Sources: First Nations Development Institute, Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative "Time for the Harvest: Renewing Native Food Systems"; White Earth Land Recovery Project <http://www.welrp.org/>)



Table 5

Table 5: Participants in an Innovative School Lunch Program

Who You Are

We are children attending U.S. schools who are income eligible to receive lunches subsidized by the government. We are enrolled in a recently created farm-to-cafeteria program.

We are some of the 12.6 million children in the U.S. (1 in 6) at risk of hunger (www.strength.org/childhood_hunger). This is due to multiple factors, for example: our parents' wages have stagnated in an economy better at creating a small class of super-rich families than distributing income to families in need; agribusiness promotes unhealthy foods with government support to our families; and government programs and policies helping poorer families are increasingly under attack.

Why You Are Hungry

Policy Statement

Farm-to-cafeteria programs are a new approach to school lunch programs and are beneficial to all parties involved.

They simulate the local economy by offering local farmers a guaranteed market. Also, because public dollars are involved, we can have a say in how schools source their food. At the same time, they provide nutritious food to growing children. They foster holistic community development by creating economic bonds and friendships within a community as well as maintain cultural traditions and dishes.

For many low-income children, their free or reduced-price school meal may be the only nutritious meal they eat all day. High-calorie, processed foods do little to improve the health of these kids, who are often at higher risk for nutritional problems. When appealing, fresh, local food is served at school, it has the potential to improve the health and educational prospects of many of the country's poorest children—a move that would reap long-term savings. (www.worldhungeryear.org/fslc/faqs/ria_063.asp?section=6&click=1)

The idea of supplementing local food into school lunch programs has been taken on primarily at a state or municipal level. For example, the New York Department of School Food provides affordable meals during school, after school and on Saturdays (over 860,000 meals each day). This program uses local fruit such as apples grown in New York State as well as other local produce. (www.opt-osfns.org/osfns/default.aspx)



Table 5, continued

Table 5: Participants in an Innovative School Lunch Program, continued

Background and Context

Many of us do not have happy memories of our school lunches. Supplying food to institutions like schools is a plum target market for agribusiness. World Hunger Year (www.worldhungeryear.org/) describes a situation that is “particularly complicated in public schools, where the school food service funded in part by the government through the Federal School Meal Program increasingly must compete with fast food, soda, and other junk food. Soda companies can provide underfunded schools with much-needed money in exchange for the seemingly small price of giving the company exclusive ‘pouring rights’ beverage contracts. This is such a lucrative business that almost two out of three middle and high schools nationwide sell soft drinks, mostly through vending machines. Meanwhile, federal funding for the School Lunch Program, reimbursing schools for meals that meet certain nutritional and calorie requirements, has remained virtually stagnant for several years. As the quality of school-funded hot lunches declines and fast food companies pay schools to offer à la carte non-nutritious options such as Whoppers and fried chicken, schools lose federal reimbursements whenever students don’t eat the school-provided lunch. School food service providers face tough choices, but some of them now have an alternative.”

The buying power of institutions like schools and hospitals is enormous. Markets like these can be a make or break boost to local farmers. Because public dollars are often involved in these institutions, we can influence their food procurement sources. There has been enormous progress in the alternative farm to school movement since its origins in 1996. Please see timeline for milestones: www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications_164.pdf

Story of Hope

“When schools buy their products from local farms, they not only improve the quality of their meals, but they also help to establish important community relationships between consumers, farmers and the land. Marion Kalb, the director of the National Farm to School Program – which offers legal assistance and models for purchasing arrangements – notes that farm-to-school programs first took hold in areas with longer growing seasons, such as California and Florida, but also in areas where processing and storage capabilities existed for farm products. Today more than 200 colleges and 1,000 public school districts in 35 states have initiated farm-to-school programs.” www.farmland.org/resources/atmagazine/2007fall/FarmsGoBacktoSchool.asp

Another inspiring case is that of the Edible Schoolyard <http://www.edibleschoolyard.org/>. Founder Alice Waters has been a pioneer for promoting local sustainable agriculture for years. In 1994 she helped open the Edible School Yard at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School in Berkeley, California. She created an “edible classroom” where students learn about plants, gardening and cooking. Each student helps prepare and then eat a homegrown garden meal. This program has inspired a movement of similar programs around the country where children interact with the land, enjoy nutritious food and learn about gardening and sustainability.



Faith and Anti-Hunger Action Exercise: How Do We Align Our Food Aid Programs with Food Sovereignty Principles?

▶▶ Introduction

This exercise can be done with any size group, to evaluate how close a congregation's, organization's, or neighborhood's food program is to meeting the principles of food sovereignty. Likewise, with some adaptations, this exercise can be used to evaluate how lobbying/advocacy efforts (whether individual or organizational) are advancing food sovereignty principles. You will have to adapt it slightly, depending on whether you are working with a large or small group, a group where everyone is working on the same issue, or a mixed group.

🕒 Time: 30 minutes

✂️ Materials needed

- 5 small signs labeled: “Not started yet,” “Beginning/Facing challenges,” “Halfway there,” “Making Good Progress,” and “We’re doing great!”
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- For longer option only: Sticky dots or markers of two different colors for voting
- Evaluation forms and *What I/We Can Do* sheets (see Overview, pages 15 and 16)
- The 6 Food Sovereignty Principles listed on a piece of newsprint (see Module 2, p. 10)

✍️ Preparation

- Before the workshop begins, put the “Not started yet” and “We’re doing great!” signs on the floor or wall to indicate the two ends of the spectrum. If you have a large group, make the spectrum long enough for everyone to stand in a line between the two signs.
- Put the “Halfway there” sign halfway in between the other signs, the “Beginning” sign one quarter of the way down the line, and the “Making good progress” sign three quarters of the way down.
- If you have a large group of over 30 people, you will want to break them into smaller groups and have each small group go through this process on their own. If this is the case, you will need to make more signs ahead of time for each of the small groups. Each small group should also elect a facilitator to run the process.

🔄 Procedure

1. Explain that the objectives of this exercise are to evaluate where your congregation, organization or community is in terms of meeting the principles of food sovereignty in its anti-hunger work, to strategize how to get where you would like to be, and to identify allies and resources needed to get there.
2. Point to the 6 Food Sovereignty Principles and ask people to reflect on what their group has done to support each of the principles.
3. Tell people you will be pointing to each principle and then asking them to walk to the part on the spectrum that best indicates where they think their own, their congregation or their community's service program is today as well as their advocacy work. Allow a minute or two for discussion/reflection on where they belong. There may be some doubling up so that it becomes a multi-layered “line.”



Faith and Anti-Hunger Action Exercise, continued

↳ Procedure, continued

4. After people have settled into their spots, ask 2 - 3 people at different points on the line to explain why they picked that location on the spectrum.
 5. Then ask the following questions (you may need to modify these questions depending on the group):
 - Where do you **think** your congregation/ organization / community / personal service program and activism will be in 5 years?
 - Where do you **want** your congregation/ organization / community / personal service program and activism to be in 5 years?
 - You can then ask 2 - 3 people to say **what** or **who** is standing in the way of their congregation/ organization / community / personal service program and activism arriving at these improvements in 5 years?
 - How can your organization or community work together better internally or in alliance?
 6. Ask people to return to their seats and identify:
 - What actions do you need to take to get to where you want to be?
 - Which actions are the **most necessary**?
 - Which are the **easiest**?
 - What kind of **information, allies or resources** do you need to take those actions?

Someone should record the suggested actions and resources on a piece of newsprint labeled “Actions to take.”
- Optional longer version:** If appropriate, you can extend this exercise by asking people to break into small groups of 3 - 5 people to have a more in-depth discussion of strategies for moving forward on meeting food sovereignty principles. Once the “Actions to take” have been listed, people can use sticky dots or check marks to vote on the actions they think are most necessary and easiest. Each person gets 2 dots of each color, so they are limited to 2 votes in each category. The group can then pick the action with the most dots for discussion.
7. Engage in the Wrap-Up Exercise (see Overview, p. 14) and leave enough time for people to fill out the evaluation forms.



Factsheet: What Can Faith-based and Anti-hunger Activists Do to Sustainably Feed the World?

A shared value that binds humanity together is a mandate to feed the hungry. Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, atheist – it really doesn't matter – our instinct is to offer sustenance to those in need. But how? What is the best way to help the world's one billion plus hungry people? Many of us know the platitude: give a person a fish and they can eat for a day; give them a fishing rod and they can eat for a lifetime. But designing effective food aid policies and programs is a more complex matter. This factsheet presents information about what we are doing wrong in our approach to eradicating hunger... and what we can do right.

The problem: With their focus on export and the production of low-priced commodities, U.S. agriculture and trade policies have caused farmers world-wide to lose their markets and leave their land. Sadly, our food aid policies have a similar impact, tending to favor corporations over communities. For example, two stated objectives of the U.S. Food Aid program are to expand international trade and to develop and expand export markets for U.S. agricultural commodities. This means the commodities donated any given year tend to reflect U.S. agricultural surpluses regardless of the receiving countries' needs. Current official food aid programs are based on free trade principles (including dumping) and hurt farmers and farm workers everywhere.

- U.S.-based agribusinesses and shipping companies benefit substantially from the U.S. food aid program. Representatives from commodity groups, such as the North American Millers Association, sit on the committee that advises our major food aid programs. (Source: Thomas Marchione "Foods Provided through U.S. Government Emergency Food Aid Programs: Policies and Customs Governing Their Formulation, Selection and Distribution" in "The Journal of Nutrition, 2002)
- Similarly, even while cutting domestic anti-poverty programs, the U.S. government donates millions of pounds of (often unhealthy) food from big agribusinesses to domestic food banks. A little spoken rationale for this program is to protect these companies from price drops due to overproduction. (Source: Brahm Ahmadi and Chrisine Ahn, Food First Backgrounder: Beyond the Food Bank, Fall 2004 <http://www.foodfirst.org/en/node/221>)
- The World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture and other free trade agreements force countries to reduce import taxes, called tariffs, on agricultural goods that protect local markets and small farmers. As a result, floods of U.S. corn, soybean and other commodity crops, grown on industrial farms and subsidized by taxpayers, have inundated developing countries, pushing local farmers off of their land. The sale of products at prices below the recipient country's costs of production is a practice known as dumping. Its prohibition is rarely enforced by the WTO.
- Public Law 480 Title II, in the Trade Title of the U.S. Farm Bill, is a key food aid policy. Under this policy, the U.S. Government donates commodities and foods processed in the U.S., ships them overseas on American ships, and distributes the food through international charities. Donating U.S. commodities instead of buying food produced locally costs more, takes 5 months for the food to get there (rather than, for example, 5 days) and can hurt local farmers by not purchasing food directly from them. Canada and the European Union have already switched to making cash donations for local food purchases, a new practice with which U.S. will experiment through the 2008 Farm Bill.
- In 2003, wheat was exported by the U.S. at an average price of 28% below the cost of production and rice was exported from the U.S. at an average price of 26% below the cost of production, hurting farmers in importing countries (Source: Sophia Murphy, "WTO Agreement on Agriculture: A Decade of Dumping," Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy www.iatp.org) Under NAFTA, Cargill's net earnings from 2001 to 2003 jumped from \$333 million to \$1,290 million. (Source: Farm Aid Factsheet: Globalization and Consumer Choice www.farmaid.org/)
- Migration has skyrocketed since NAFTA. Today, nearly 500,000 Mexicans per year attempt to cross the border into the U.S. in search of employment, as opposed to 250,000 before NAFTA. (Source: National Family Farm Coalition www.nffc.net/issues/fnf/fnf_1.html) With an average income of \$8,000 per year, farm workers earn less than any other wage or salary workers in the United States, making them a likely food pantry client. (Source: <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/food/pubs/reports/farm-bill>)





Factsheet: Food Sovereignty Means Sustainable Food Aid Programs and Fair Trade for Everyone!

There is a better way! Food sovereignty is the right of nations and communities to take back their food system and local markets. This means countries can protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade to achieve sustainable development objectives and restrict the dumping of products in their markets. Food sovereignty is not against food aid or trade, rather, it seeks to protect the rights of people to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production. (Source: Statement on Peoples' Food Sovereignty" by the Via Campesina, et al., 1996)

We Need A U.S. Farm Bill that Empowers Local Communities, Not Corporations

- The Trade Title in the U.S. Farm Bill should give cash rather than U.S. commodities to communities in need overseas. This would allow receiving countries to strengthen their own food systems by purchasing culturally appropriate food from local producers.
- We need a Commodity Title in the Farm Bill that establishes price supports for sustainable family farms instead of producing cheap raw materials like corn for corn syrup for processors. With innovative public support, these sustainable family farms can then be alternative sources for local food aid programs rather than these programs having to rely on unhealthy agribusiness donations.
- The Nutrition Title should increase funding to Community Food Projects, Farm-to-Cafeteria Programs, and Buy Direct Entitlements that strengthen community food systems to source food locally and empower communities to feed themselves, rather than relying on emergency food aid programs.

Fair Trade for Farmers and Justice for Farmworkers

- Agriculture should be removed from the World Trade Organization's agreements that insist on making poor farmers compete with agro-industrial giants. Food is a human right and should not be treated the same as other commodities. Instead, we need international agreements for fair trade to ensure prices that cover the cost of production and allow farmers and farmworkers to make a dignified living without having to resort to migrating far from their families in search of work. Forced migration is a major contributor to hunger.
- Food aid programs should pressure decision-makers to protect farm workers rights, including the right to organize, safe working conditions and fair wages. (Source: National Family Farm Coalition <http://www.nffc.net/>; Global Exchange, Food Security, Farming and the WTO www.globalexchange.org)

Worldwide Ban on Dumping and Overproduction

- We need a worldwide ban on dumping. The U.S. should be seeking agreements with other exporting countries to end resource-depleting overproduction. (Source: <http://www.nffc.net>)



For More Information:

International Food Sovereignty Movement Building: Grassroots International www.GrassrootsOnline.org

International Food Security: World Hunger Year www.worldhungeryear.org

Immigration and Farmworker rights: Border Agricultural Workers Project www.farmworkers.org

Free Trade and Dumping: Church World Service www.churchworldservice.org

