Learn about Farmers (primary)

| Age range: 8 - 11 | Time: 1-3 hours |

Outline
Pupils will use the example of farmers in Malawi to understand the importance of small farmers for local community development and food security, and the links to sustainability and the global food system. They can either use a picture card sort or a snakes and ladders game to explore the issue.

Learning Objectives
- To identify the challenges faced by small farmers
- To suggest ways in which these challenges can be overcome
- To explore the benefits of small farmers both nationally and globally

Resources
- Learn farmers primary power point
- Sequencing picture cards
- Snakes and ladders board game
- Support in Malawi sheet
- Farming diamond ranking cards
- Snakes and ladders template

Curricular links
ENGLISH AND DRAMA: Sequencing sentences to describe cause and effect. Explanation texts to convey farming issues clearly. Instruction texts when making and describing how to play farm board games. Speaking and listening: Using role play to convey issues related to small scale farming.

Keywords
- Droughts: long periods without any rainfall;
- Fertiliser: chemicals used to help plants to grow;
- Irrigation: to supply water to dry land by pipes or ditches;
- Yields: the amount of food that is produced.
### Activity option 1: Card sort and role play

| **Aim:** | For pupils to understand the range of challenges facing small farmers. Pupils will appreciate the range of different ways in which small farmers can be supported to increase food production in sustainable ways, whilst linking together cause, effect and solutions. |
| **Time:** | 30 minutes plus preparation and performance time for role play |
| **Resources:** | Malawi Farming picture cards  
Learn farming primary power point |

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| 5mins     | Use the power point to introduce Malawi and Leyla Kayere (pronounced Ka-yer-re) Leyla is a farmer who has benefitted from investments in small scale agriculture and now is able to grow and sell tomatoes to be canned and sold.  
NB the power point is split into two parts at the middle to cater for a choice to activities, one for using with picture cards, and the other for use with Snakes and Ladders.  
Introduce the activity using the slides which accompany, and skip the ones for the activity you are not using. | Pupils should be able to sequence the picture cards to show the causes and effects of limited small-scale farming. |
| 10-20mins | Split the class into small groups and give each group one of the 4 sets of picture cards from the Malawi farming picture cards activity sheet. (These will need to be cut up and mixed up prior to the lesson). Each of the 4 sets shows a different challenge and solution. The correct order is the order you find the cards in on the sheet at the point of download/print. Each A4 sheet is a single set of cards.  
Working in small groups with 1 set of 8 cards, pupils are challenged to discuss what the pictures show and sequence the set of cards to show the progression from small-scale farming CHALLENGES, to SOLUTIONS and then community BENEFITS.  
Alternative option – more difficult  
You could give each group all four of the picture card sets (32 cards) mixed up, and ask them to sort them into the 4 different challenges first, and then the 4 solutions and the 4 benefits. This will be a greater challenge for pupils. |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
10mins | Ask each group to feedback to the class about their sequencing choices. You can use the slide in the power point to help. Draw out the 4 main challenges highlighted (but stress these are only examples of the problems):
- Lack of fertiliser
- Lack of money to invest
- Lack of sufficient land
- Climatic variation

This should give a picture of the range of challenges small scale farmers face and a lack of support offered to them.

Ask groups to them suggest the solutions to these problems in Malawi, and the range of benefits for individuals, families and the community more widely in Malawi when small farmers are supported.

*Example*

The graph in the slide show the impact on crop yields after the government in Malawi provided support for small scale farmers by subsidising fertilisers (spending nearly 10% of the government budget on this). This has helped maize yields to increase substantially over the last 5 years, thus improving food security; reducing hunger problems and helping to overcome poverty (see [http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?p=4187](http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?p=4187) for more information).

End up by asking the group these questions –

- What SKILLS and QUALITIES do small scale farmers have?
- Do you think small farmers have a role to play in the food system?

Highlight to the group the potential small scale farmers have in reducing food problems when support allows the hard work, ingenuity, and local knowledge they already have to lead to real long term improvements.
| Prep time & performance time (open) | Give pupils time to plan a role play in groups to highlight the challenges, solutions and community benefits related to small scale farmers. Encourage them to use what they have read about and discussed in the previous activities, and to try and put themselves in the shoes of someone like Leyla. If possible they should try and give some sense of the challenge, how they were supported, and what has been the result.  

*Activity options*

They could put their role play into a variety of forms, depending on their (and your) preference, including:

- Story
- Acting
- Comic/storyboard
- Photo presentation

If you have access to computers, young people could make a digital story/cartoon.

After pupils have had time to prepare, allow them the opportunity to show the rest of the group the creative response they have developed. Ask observing groups to identify the key challenges, solutions and benefits raised in each story.

This is a good opportunity to re-stress the potential small scale farmers have, if supported to overcome the range of challenges they face. | Acting out the story as a role-player will convey pupil understanding of key issues. |
### Activity option 2: Farming Snakes & Ladders and role play

**Aim:**
For pupils to understand the range of challenges facing small farmers. Pupils will appreciate the range of different ways in which small farmers can be supported to increase food production in sustainable ways, whilst linking together cause, effect and solutions.

**Time:**
45 minutes plus preparation and performance time for role play

**Resources:**
- Snakes and ladders game sheet, dice and counters
- Support in Malawi sheet
- Learn farming primary power point

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| 5mins | Use the power point to introduce Malawi and Leyla Kayere (pronounced Ka-yer-re). Leyla is a farmer who has benefitted from investments in small scale agriculture and now is able to grow and sell tomatoes to be canned and sold.  
  
  NB the power point is split into two parts at the middle to cater for a choice to activities, one for using with picture cards, and the other for use with Snakes and Ladders.  
  
  Introduce the activity using the slides which accompany, and skip the ones for the activity you are not using.  |           |
| 30mins| Put pupils in small groups, each group needs a copy of the **snakes and ladders game**, a dice and counters.  
  
  Before starting the game, remind pupils that during the game they should try to consider:  
  - Challenges facing small farmers  
  - Things that improve their chances  
  - Who is able to support them (i.e. their community/government/agencies like Oxfam)  
  
  (They may want to note down their ideas during the game, or be given time to do so after they have finished playing the game.)  
  
  When the game is finished, ask pupils to read the **Support in Malawi** sheet so they can see how farmers have been supported in real life. |           |
| 10mins | Bring the groups together and ask them to feedback what they have discovered. You can use the slides in the power point to help generate their ideas (*What is the impact*). Draw out what the SOLUTIONS were in Malawi and the range of BENEFITS for individuals, families and the wider community.  

*Example*  
The graph in the slide show the impact on crop yields after the government in Malawi provided support for small farmers by subsidising fertilisers (spending nearly 10% of the government budget on this). This has helped maize yields to increase substantially over the last 5 years, thus improving food security; reducing hunger problems and helping to overcome poverty (see [http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?p=4187](http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?p=4187) for more information).  

End up by asking the group these questions –  

- What SKILLS and QUALITIES do small scale farmers have?  
- Do you think small scale farmers have a role to play in preventing hunger?  

Highlight to the group the potential small farmers have in reducing food problems when support allows the hard work, ingenuity, and local knowledge they already have to lead to real long term improvements. |
| Prep time & performance time (open) | Give pupils time to plan a role play in groups to highlight the challenges, solutions and community benefits related to small scale farmers. Encourage them to use what they have read about and discussed in the previous activities, and to try and put themselves in the shoes of someone like Leyla. If possible they should try and give some sense of the challenge, how they were supported, and what has been the result.  

*Activity options*  
They could put their role play into a variety of forms, depending on their (and your) preference, including:  
- Story  
- Acting  
- Comic/storyboard  
- Photo presentation  

If you have access to computers, young people could make a digital story/cartoon. After pupils have had time to prepare, allow them the opportunity to show the rest of the group the creative response they have developed. Ask observing groups to identify the key challenges, solutions and benefits raised in each story. This is a good opportunity to re-stress the potential small scale farmers have, if supported to overcome the range of challenges they face. | Acting out the story as a role-player will convey pupil understanding of key issues. |
Extension: Make your own snakes and ladders!

| Aim: | For pupils to understand the range of challenges facing small scale farmers. Pupils will appreciate the range of different ways in which small scale farmers can be supported to increase food production in sustainable ways, linking together cause, effect and solutions. |
| Time: | 60 minutes |
| Resources: | Blank snakes and ladders game  
Materials such as colouring pencils and pens  
Malawi farmers picture cards  
Support in Malawi |

This activity is a slightly more flexible and challenging way for pupils to be exposed to the information. It requires them to use their comprehension skills to piece together information given to them, and their literacy and communication skills to design a game. It is a good basis for stimulating peer learning. This activity could be extended to making games for pupils in other classes/schools to play to teach them about the issue.

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| 10mins | Give pupils the blank snakes and ladders template and a copy of the Malawi farmers’ picture cards. DO NOT cut up the cards.  
Explain that the picture cards show the challenges and solutions for farmers in Malawi.  
Explain that they are going to use this information to make their own snakes and ladders game. Challenges should be used as snakes, and solutions as ladders.  
You could also give them the Support in Malawi sheet for more information. | Pupils should be able to identify the benefits of small-scale farming on local communities |
| 30mins (or more) | Pupils can then use make their own Snakes and Ladders games using the blank template | Pupils should be able to work together to play the snakes and ladders game |
| 20mins | Give time for groups to play each others games, and to decide if they successfully allow players to understand both the challenges and the solutions facing small scale farmers. | |
**Extension ideas**

**Maths**
Provide groups with a small amount of money to buy seeds and then hold a community event to sell the produce. This could be to parents or governors. The pupils could then calculate how much profit they have made and how many new seed packets they could buy. This is a clever way of showing pupils the simple principles of micro-credit.

**... and don’t forget the wider Food for Thought project**

Make sure that once you have taken your pupils through the **learn**, **think** and **act** stages they go online at **Class for Change** to share their experiences with other pupils across the world.

Class for Change launches in March 2012 as part of the Oxfam **Food for Thought** project.

See [www.oxfam.org.uk/foodforthought](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/foodforthought)
**World Food day**
This is a great opportunity to find out where different foods around the world are produced. Ask pupils to bring in a packed lunch and research where each food item was grown / produced. You could then create a class map plotting where the different foods came from. This could also be extended to a class assembly where they teach the whole school about food growth and origins.

**Geography**
A great platform for case study research. Pupils could pick another country in the world and find out what food people eat and how the food is produced. Pupils could make good use of information technology and non-fiction texts.

**Science**
Key stage 2 pupils could use this as a vehicle when teaching 'How to grow plants well'. Pupils can select which conditions to change and which to keep the same. Pupils could compare the growth of plants with and without fertiliser, water, space and good soil.

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