

# SESSION 3: WHO PRODUCES OUR FOOD?

Age range: 11–14 years

<b>Outline</b> Learners will understand that our food is produced by a variety of farmers across the world. They will use images to develop and challenge their own assumptions about farming. Next, learners will then use a case study from Malawi to consider some of the challenges faced by small-scale farmers and solutions to these, as well as identify potential benefits that small-scale farming can bring to communities. Learners will then use real examples from other countries to find out more about the challenges of small-scale farming and how some farmers are responding to these difficulties. Finally, learners will create and present a piece of persuasive writing about one of these “food heroes”.		
<b>Learning objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand that farming is a broad term encompassing a range of practices.</li> <li>To be aware of some of the challenges faced by small-scale farmers as well as potential solutions to these.</li> <li>To recognise some of the benefits that small-scale farming can bring to communities.</li> <li>To develop reading and persuasive writing skills.</li> </ul>	<b>Learning outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners will challenge their own assumptions about farmers and farming by examining photographs of different farming practices.</li> <li>Learners will identify some challenges facing small-scale producers.</li> <li>Learners will explore some ways in which small-scale farmers have found solutions to these challenges.</li> <li>Learners will summarise and organise some text about a “food hero” and use this to create a piece of persuasive writing.</li> </ul>	
<b>Key questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the world's farmers?</li> <li>What is a small-scale farmer or producer?</li> <li>What challenges do small-scale farmers face?</li> <li>How might these challenges be overcome?</li> <li>What makes these small-scale producers “food heroes”?</li> </ul>	<b>Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slideshow B (Sessions 3–6): Slides 2–20</li> <li>Resource sheets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>How can tomatoes change lives?</i></li> <li>2.–9. <i>Farming heroes</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Activity sheets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Tomatoes in Malawi - Card sort</i></li> <li>2. <i>Recognising my farming hero</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Curriculum links</b>		
<b>England</b> Pupils should be taught to: <b>KS3 English</b> <b>Spoken English</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speak confidently and effectively, including through giving short speeches and presentations, expressing their own ideas and keeping to the pint.</li> </ul>	<b>Wales</b> <b>KS3 English</b> Learners should be given opportunities to: <b>Oracy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speak and listen individually, in pairs, in groups and as members of a class.</li> <li>Use a variety of methods to present ideas, including ICT, dramatic approaches, discussion and debate.</li> </ul>	<b>Scotland</b> <b>Literacy</b> <b>Listening and talking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When I engage with others, I can make a relevant contribution, encourage others to contribute and acknowledge that they have the right to hold a different opinion.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand increasingly challenging texts through making inferences and referring to evidence in the text.</li> </ul> <p><b>Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write for a wide range of purposes and audiences, including summarising and organising material and supporting ideas and arguments with any necessary factual detail.</li> </ul> <p><b>KS3 Geography</b></p> <p><b>Human and physical geography</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand, through the use of detailed place-based exemplars at a variety of scales, the key processes in human geography relating to: population and urbanisation; international development; economic activity in the primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary sectors; and the use of natural resources.</li> <li>Understand how human and physical processes interact to influence and change landscapes, the environment and the climate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present, talk and perform in formal and informal contexts and for a variety of audiences including teachers, peers, younger/older learners and familiar and unfamiliar adults.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read for different purposes, e.g. to retrieve, summarise and synthesise key information; to interpret and integrate information.</li> </ul> <p><b>Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write in a range of continuous and non-continuous texts in a variety of forms.</li> <li>Write for a range of authentic audiences, real or imagined.</li> </ul> <p><b>KS3 Geography</b></p> <p><b>Range</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils develop their geographical skills, knowledge and understanding through learning about places, environments and issues at a range of scales in selected locations within Wales, the European Union and the wider world.</li> <li>Pupils should be given opportunities to study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People as consumers: the impacts on and changes in economic activity.</li> <li>The rich and poor world: economic development in different locations/countries.</li> <li>Tomorrow's citizens: issues in Wales and the wider world of living sustainably and the responsibilities of being a global citizen.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <p><b>Understanding places, environments and processes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils should be given opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe and explain physical and human features.</li> <li>Explain the causes and effects of physical and human processes and how the processes interrelate.</li> <li>Explain how and why places and environments change, and identify trends and future implications.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can respond in ways appropriate to my role and use contributions to reflect on, clarify or adapt thinking. <b>LIT 3-02a/LIT 4-02a</b></li> <li>I can independently select ideas and relevant information for different purposes, organise essential information or ideas and any supporting detail in a logical order, and use suitable vocabulary to communicate effectively with my audience. <b>LIT 3-06a/LIT 4-06a</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can persuade, argue, evaluate, explore issues or express an opinion using a clear line of thought, relevant supporting detail and/or evidence. <b>LIT 3-29a/LIT 4-29a</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Social Studies</b></p> <p><b>People, place and environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can compare the social and economic differences between more and less economically-developed countries and can discuss the possibilities for reducing these differences. <b>SOC 3-11a/SOC 4-11a</b></li> </ul> <p><b>People in society, economy and business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can describe how the interdependence of countries affects levels of development, considering the effects on people's lives. <b>SOC 3-19a/SOC 4-19a</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Religious and Moral Education</b></p> <p><b>Christianity - Values and issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can apply my developing understanding of morality to consider a range of moral dilemmas in order to find ways which could promote a more just and compassionate society. <b>RME 4-02b</b></li> </ul>
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### Activity 3.1 (30 min)

#### *Farmers around the world*

- This activity aims to enable learners to develop and challenge their own ideas and assumptions about farming. By exploring a selection of images related to farming around the world, learners will understand that food is produced by many different types of farmers in many different places around the world.
- Select an image to use from slides 4 to 13 of *Slideshow B*. Using an interactive whiteboard if possible, display a selected area of the image, such as a lush green paddy field or a field of corn. Alternatively, print off the image and attach a sheet of paper with a frame cut out to “hide” the rest of the image.
- In pairs, ask learners to think about and discuss the following questions (also provided on slide 3): *Where is this place? Who might be the farmer? What is happening in the photograph? Why do you think that? What is happening beyond the frame?* Share learners’ ideas as a whole-class discussion.
- Reveal the complete image and discuss learners’ responses. *Were their original ideas about the image correct? If not, why not? Were they surprised to see the complete image? If so, why?*
- Repeat the activity using other images from the slideshow. Another way of managing this activity is to organise learners into groups and give each group a different “partially hidden” image to discuss. Learners could then share their images and ideas as a whole class.
- In discussion time, draw out that there are many different types of farming and farmers. For example, many small-scale farmers in the global South are women.

#### **Differentiation**

- *Make it easier: Use the complete photographs to stimulate class discussion about farming.*
- *Make it harder: Ask learners to find their own farming images to share with the rest of the class.*

### Activity 3.2 (30 min)

#### *Tomatoes in Malawi<sup>1</sup>*

- The aim of this activity is for learners to start to understand the range of challenges facing small-scale farmers, as well as potential solutions to these. Learners will explore some different ways in which small farmers can be supported to increase food production sustainably, whilst linking together cause, effect and solutions
- Show learners where Malawi is located on a map. Use slide 14 to introduce Malawi and Leyla Kayere (pronounced Ka-yer-re). Explain that Leyla is a farmer who has benefitted from investments in small-scale agriculture and is now able to grow and sell tomatoes to be canned and sold. Ask learners to think about the challenges that Leyla and her family might face when they are trying to grow tomatoes. For additional information see *How can tomatoes change lives?* (Resource sheet 1).

<sup>1</sup> This content (including the accompanying activity and resource sheets) was first published by Oxfam in 2012.

- Split the class into small groups of three or four and give each group **one** of the four sets of eight picture cards from *Tomatoes in Malawi - Card sort* (Activity sheet 1). These will need to be cut out and mixed up prior to the activity. Explain that each set of pictures shows a different challenge that small-scale farmers in Malawi might face, as well as a potential solution and the benefits of this. The correct order is that provided in the original activity sheet at the point of download and print. These sequences are also provided in slides 15 to 18.
- Ask learners to discuss what the pictures show and sequence the images to highlight the progression from CHALLENGES, to SOLUTIONS and then BENEFITS for the local community.
- Ask each group to feedback to the rest of the class about their sequencing choices. Draw out the four main challenges provided below but make the point that these are only examples of potential problems which a small-scale farmer in Malawi might face and there may be others.
  - *Lack of fertiliser*
  - *Lack of money to invest*
  - *Lack of sufficient land*
  - *Climate change*
- Refer back to Leyla Kayere and discuss the following questions:
  - *What skills and qualities do small-scale farmers like Leyla have?*
  - *What is the biggest challenge that Leyla faces?*
  - *How have these solutions improved life for Leyla and her family?*
  - *How can tomatoes change lives?*

## Differentiation

- *Make it easier: Reduce the number of cards by selecting a challenge, solution and benefit from each set.*
- *Make it harder: Give learners the challenge and solution cards from one of the sets and ask them to think of ways that the solution might bring benefits to the local community as well as individual farmers.*

## Activity 3.3 (60 minutes)

### *Farming heroes<sup>2</sup>*

- This activity aims to illustrate the benefits of small-scale farmers, and suggest reasons why such farmers need support and investment within the current global food system.
- Introduce learners to the idea of being a “hero” by asking them what they think being a hero means. Compare their ideas to the Oxford English Dictionary definition on slide 19. *Did they pick out similar things to the definition? Should there be a distinction for the word hero between men and women (in other words, heroine)?*

<sup>2</sup> This content (including the accompanying activity and resource sheets) was first published by Oxfam in 2012.



- Explain that for the purposes of this exercise the word hero will be applied to men and women equally. Go through each of the parts of the definition on slide 19 and check that learners are comfortable with the meaning of courage, outstanding achievements and noble qualities.
- Organise learners into pairs or groups of three. Give each pair or group one of the examples from *Farming heroes* (Resource sheets 2 to 9). There are eight examples which could be used. Whichever way the examples are shared, you need to try to ensure that each example has been given to at least one pair or group of learners.
- Tell learners that they need to imagine that they are recommending that person for an award as a farming hero. Explain that to do this, they need to read the information about the person and pick out how he or she has demonstrated the qualities which make them a hero.
- Give learners some time to read the information provided and use their comprehension skills to identify how their hero has displayed courage, outstanding achievements and noble qualities. Learners could use the template provided in *Recognising my farming hero* (Activity sheet 2) to help them. Encourage learners to feel some connection with their nominee.
- Once learners have had time to read their example and identify the relevant points, give them time to prepare how they will present this information to the rest of the class. Explain that this will be an opportunity for learners to practise their comprehension skills as well as their creative/persuasive writing. The aim is to persuade the awarding body to recognise their hero.
- There are various ways in which learners could submit their ideas. For example, it could be as a written submission of a certain length (such as 500 words), or learners could be asked to present their submissions to the class. If possible, encourage some sort of submission to the class, for example through oral presentations or visual displays, to allow everyone to learn about each of the nine heroes. The idea is not to encourage competition between the examples, but enable learners to recognise and appreciate the range of different qualities that the heroes have shown.
- Allow time for learners to present their findings (either visually or orally) to the rest of the class.
- Once the whole class has heard about each of the heroes, ask them if they think it would be fair to pick one of these heroes as the “best”. *Can they all be recognised as heroes for different reasons?*
- Finally, show slide 20 and discuss what the common challenges faced by these heroes were as well as the common responses. After the class has either read or heard about all the heroes, mix up the groups and ask learners to consider what the common challenges and the common responses were?
- Use this as an opportunity to highlight that these examples are not unusual. Millions of small-scale farmers across the world face similar issues related to a lack of resources, having little political power or voice and facing discrimination. Emphasise that small-scale farmers themselves are working successfully to overcome these challenges using innovation, hard work, co-operation and tenacity. Encourage learners to celebrate this and recognise the agency of these people as central to overcoming these issues.

## Further ideas

- Ask learners to think about and discuss how one or more of the images might change during the year. Alternatively, learners could draw an image of what they think the home or community of any people connected with the images (such as a farmer or farm worker) are like. Discuss learners' drawings and encourage them to give reasons for their ideas.
- Older or more able learners could read How can tomatoes change lives? (Resource sheet 1) to find out more about Leyla Kayere. Support learners to infer the meaning of key vocabulary in the text. Ask learners to think about the challenges that Leyla faces as well as potential solutions and the benefits of these. What questions would learners like to ask Leyla?

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# Tomatoes in Malawi - Card sort

## Activity sheet 1a

 <p><b>Small farmers have little money to buy fertiliser for crops.</b></p> <p><small>Source: <a href="http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Blue_plastic_bags">http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Blue_plastic_bags</a></small></p>	 <p><b>Little fertiliser and soil erosion results in poor plant growth.</b></p> <p><small>© Jane Oxfam</small></p>	 <p><b>With poor plant growth food supply for the community is not enough for everyone.</b></p> <p><small>© Jane Oxfam</small></p>	 <p><b>Small farmers are given fertiliser and small loans by local government groups.</b></p> <p><small>© Jane Oxfam</small></p>
 <p><b>Fertiliser means more types of crops are grown, e.g. tomatoes, groundnuts, sweet potato and wheat.</b></p> <p><small>Source: <a href="http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Groundnuts">http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Groundnuts</a></small></p>	 <p><b>This means more food and better nutrition for the local community.</b></p> <p><small>© Annie Oxfam</small></p>	 <p><b>There is now enough food so extra food can be sold for profit at the market.</b></p> <p><small>© Annie Oxfam</small></p>	 <p><b>Families can buy health care for somebody in the family who is sick.</b></p> <p><small>Copyright © Oxfam GB. You may reproduce</small></p>



# Tomatoes in Malawi - Card sort

## Activity sheet 1b



**Malawi is a small country with little land for farming.**

Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/>



**Large estates growing tobacco tea, sugar and other crops for export own the best land.**

Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/>



**So small farmers are left with little space for their farms.**

© Annie Bungere/Oxfam



**Small farms don't let you grow a lot of food.**

© Debbie Vazhek/Oxfam



**The farmers put their land together to make a larger piece of land, and farm together**

© Debbie Vazhek/Oxfam



**Working together saves time so they can grow lots of crops like rice, wheat and tomatoes.**

Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/>



**This means they can sell food in bigger amounts to the local factory and super-market.**

© Abbie Traylor-Smith/Oxfam



**The community can use the money to make a grocery shop and a tea room.**

© Annie Bungere/Oxfam



# Tomatoes in Malawi - Card sort

## Activity sheet 1c



**Farmers have little money to buy seeds, little training and only have seeds that grow slowly.**

Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/>



**Having few resources means farmers can only plant few seeds every year.**

© Jane Beedey/Oxfam



**This means there is not enough food grown to feed the community.**

© Abbie Trayler-Smith/Oxfam



**Farmers are given starter packs of seeds and fertiliser, with training.**

© Abbie Trayler-Smith/Oxfam



**The community can then harvest tomatoes twice a year as well as diversifying crops.**

© Abbie Trayler-Smith/Oxfam



**These tomatoes are sold to the local factory.**

© Abbie Trayler-Smith/Oxfam



**The local factory make canned tomato juice and puree to supermarkets across Malawi.**

© Abbie Trayler-Smith/Oxfam  
Ketchup source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/>











**Selling the tomatoes from two harvests per year give extra money to send children to school.**

© Abbie Trayler-Smith/Oxfam



# Tomatoes in Malawi - Card sort

## Activity sheet 1d

 <p><b>Climate change results in unpredictable rain-fall.</b></p> <p>Source: <a href="http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/">http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/</a></p>	 <p><b>This causes more and more frequent droughts, causing soil erosion.</b></p> <p>Source: <a href="http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/">http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/</a></p>	 <p><b>Drought and soil erosion mean crops are ruined, so there is less food grown.</b></p> <p>Source: <a href="http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/">http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/</a></p>	 <p><b>The local community work together to build a channel from the local river to the fields.</b></p> <p>Source: <a href="http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/">http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/</a></p>
 <p><b>This means water is available all year round and reduces soil erosion.</b></p> <p>Source: <a href="http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/">http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/</a></p>	 <p><b>Better water supply means a larger yield of maize is grown.</b></p> <p>Source: <a href="http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/">http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/</a></p>	 <p><b>Maize can be sold to make foods like corn-flakes, pop corn and tortilla chips in other countries.</b></p> <p>Source: <a href="http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/">http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/</a></p>	 <p><b>The money made from selling maize is used to buy roofing material and build new homes.</b></p> <p>© Abbie Traylor-Smith/Oxfam</p>



## How can tomatoes change lives?

## Resource sheet 1a

Leyla Kayere lives in Mnembo in southern Malawi, a small country in southern Africa. She makes a living from growing tomatoes.

Leyla says: *“I was born here and I have lived here all of my life. When I was growing up, agriculture was not as advanced as it is now. We didn’t know anything about irrigation. We only used to grow cassava and millet – to eat, not to sell. There were occasionally wild tomatoes but we had no method for growing them. I couldn’t live without tomatoes now. When you cook without them the food tastes awful”.*



Things have changed for the better in Mnembo. New brick houses with iron roofs are springing up everywhere, replacing the old-style, thatched mud houses. Paths are busy with bicycles, often loaded with coils of iron for new roofs or baskets full of vegetables on the way to market. This activity is the result of an Oxfam-funded irrigation scheme. The scheme was set up with ongoing support from Oxfam for two years.

The land is over-farmed and becoming increasingly infertile. Harvests are becoming smaller. And, as a result of changes in the climate, the rainfall in Malawi is increasingly erratic. This leads to more frequent and severe droughts or destruction of crops when the rains are intense and unpredicted. Both result in food shortages. In a country with long dry spells but lots of rivers, irrigation is an obvious solution.



The Mnembo Irrigation scheme has helped to improve the lives of 400 families by transforming their traditional small low-yield crops into year-round, high volume harvests that provide continuous food and a source of income. The community are now totally self-sustainable.

## How can tomatoes change lives?

## Resource sheet 1b

With initial support from Oxfam, the farming village of Mnembo have managed to come together to harvest and sell their produce in bulk. In addition to bigger and better maize harvests, the newly irrigated land enables the community to diversify and grow cash crops. They now grow wheat, rice and tomatoes.



Tomatoes are the most profitable crop. The community harvest twice a year and sell as a co-operative to the Mulanje Peak Foods Canning Factory (who sell canned tomato juice and tomato puree in supermarkets throughout Malawi). After the project, with no support from Oxfam, the community harvested 53,000 tonnes of tomatoes (twice) and made enough profit to really start changing their lives.

Read Leyla's story to see if you can work out these key terms mean.

Irrigation

Harvest

Infertile

Profitable

Community

Cash crops

Co-operative

### Think...

What questions would you like to ask Leyla?

What are the challenges for Leyla?

What are the possible solutions?

What are the benefits of these solutions?

What do you think will happen to Leyla and her community in the future?

**Photo credits:** Abbie Taylor/Oxfam



## Farming heroes: Dulce Marlen Conteras (Honduras) Resource sheet 2

Dulce helped set up COMUCAP, a women's organisation in Honduras.

"I work in the general coordination of COMUCAP. We began working in 1993 with a radio programme which talked about women's rights. Then we created a committee to defend women's rights.



Photo credit: Annie Bungeroth/Oxfam

We realised that we had to start getting women involved in all the different processes; we had to find a way for them to stop depending solely on their husbands. At that time, we women had to fight just to get enough food for our children. We decided that we had to do something to become independent, and not to have to rely on others. Women were very submissive, there was great discrimination, and we were very fearful.

We began training people through a radio programme called 'Siempre Vivas'. Of course, this was not easy; we had many conflicts with men. This has really been a very difficult process for us, but we have been able to overcome the different obstacles. We have been able to change the attitudes of men because they have been able to see that our work has not been useless, that it has been productive.

When the training programme was finished, the different groups came and asked what we were going to do now. So we decided to start small chicken-rearing projects. We had been organised for five years at this point, and we decided that we wanted a name for ourselves. We became COMUCAP in 1998.

We trained women in chicken rearing, but we realised that this wasn't very profitable, so in 1999 we decided to start training women in organic coffee production. We obtained a collective plot of land that we use to demonstrate and teach the women new techniques.

Oxfam came to us in 2000. They gave us the money to buy another plot of land. When Oxfam saw what we had done with the plot they had funded, they gave us the money to buy another 40.

Last year we sold our coffee for the first time. This year will be our first real harvest. We will give the coffee to the Raos co-operative, which works with a German Fairtrade organisation. The coffee is roasted in Germany. When we make a profit, we will divide it equally among the women."

**Farming heroes: Givania Maria da Silva (Brazil)****Resource sheet 3**

Givania Maria da Silva is part of the traditional Quilombolas community, which is struggling to reclaim land taken by wealthier farmers. She is a local Member of Parliament, the first ever from her community to be elected.



**Photo credit:** Gilvan Barreto/Oxfam

“The main problem we have faced is being pushed off our land. It is the most important issue we have had to tackle because it affects how we live: what we can plant, how much food we can grow, how we earn a living – everything.

In 1995, our community association (AQCC) joined forces with the National Association of Quilombolas so that we would be a stronger and bigger voice when we took our demands to the government. After the election in October 2002, we were able to capitalise on all the work we had done to build a case. We lobbied the new government to recognise our legal entitlement to our land, and we were successful. But it’s not over yet. We need support to evict the farmers that have been trespassing on our land, and that will be another struggle.

The previous government did agree that the farmers should leave, but they didn’t do much about it, and weren’t prepared to pay the farmers compensation – which is their legal right. The new decree acknowledges that the farmers are owed compensation. The government is now making an inventory of buildings and equipment so that they can calculate the amount of compensation due. This should help us get our land back faster.

We have come so far, and that’s down to persistence and all the communities pulling together to speak as one voice. Sometimes, people ask us if all the effort and heartache is worth the effort. But for us, this land is priceless. It can be productive, once we reclaim the more fertile areas. It is also a symbol of our culture and part of our history – who we are. Other people just want land to plant crops on. We want our land. This is where our ancestors settled and worked.”

## Farming heroes: Angelina Mungia (Honduras)

## Resource sheet 4

Angelina has been trained in vegetable gardening by a community organisation called OCDIH.

“Before OCDIH, life was pretty tight. We lived in extreme poverty, and sometimes all we could eat was corn. With the vegetable gardens, we have much better nutrition.

There are seven of us living here: my husband and five of my nine children. Four have left to find work. It took us 30 days to build this house. Once the roof is on, it's the women and children who build the walls using mud and leaves. It took us eight days.

I sell cheese and butter to stores and markets in Santa Barbara and Ocotepeque. I can't sell them locally because other women sell here. It's a two-day journey by bus. I start work at 7 in the morning preparing half-pound bags of cream. Then I weigh the cheese and cut it into pieces. I'm ready to go by 9.30am. I have to leave my family alone for a night. My husband looks after things while I'm away. He cooks well.



Photo credit: Gilvan Barreto/Oxfam

My worst moment was six years ago when my mother was very sick. The same year I was mugged twice. I had just finished selling in Santa Barbara, and a man put a machete to my throat and took all of my money. That was the worst moment of my life. I still travel to Santa Barbara to sell. I have to.

My motivation is my children. I work so that they don't have to be like me. My greatest hope is to have all my children in school. Then I will be able to rest because what really drives me is their future and their happiness.

OCDIH taught me everything. An agricultural technician came here four days a month for four months. Now I teach our community. I teach here in my garden, and when the kids go back to school in February I will teach them too.”



## Farming heroes: Miguel Pineda (Honduras)

## Resource sheet 5

Miguel has been trained in vegetable gardening by a community organisation called OCDIH.

“I work in the fields with my five sons. We wake up at 5am to wash and have breakfast, then we sharpen our machetes, grab our food bag and plough, and head off to the fields. We work together in the fields every day. We have a schedule, starting at 6am and working until 4pm with a one-hour rest for lunch.

The corn harvest is in March. We will keep one part of the harvest and sell the rest. You need to have an income. There are always people who need corn. We can sell a load (100 pounds) for 200 lempira (£6.40). It takes three months to harvest a load.



Photo credit: Gilvan Barreto/Oxfam

I have two cows and a calf. The cows provide milk and cheese for my family. Both cows are pregnant; they will give birth next month. We hope the calves will be female so that we can get more milk. My sons and I milk the cows in the morning. We change fields every two weeks to give the cows fresh grass.

Our lives are difficult. Poverty is the biggest problem in Honduras. To feed our families we need to have more food. I have 10 children. Before we just hoped things would improve. Now we are beginning to see a change.

OCDIH have helped us to improve our standard of life. We have our vegetable gardens. The production is beginning. Before OCDIH came, we used to let some vegetables go to waste because we didn't know what to do with them and or how to look after them. It has been great learning. Now we have carrots, beetroot, cabbage, onions, lettuce, cucumber and garlic. Our gardens give us vitamins. They're good for me because I'm old, and they're good for the young kids.”



## Farming heroes: Dogna Hernandez (Honduras)

## Resource sheet 6

Dogna is an agricultural technician who trains other women as part of COMUCAP, a group supporting women's rights.

"My first husband had lots of problems with alcohol and left me to raise two sons by myself. During this time, I worked in the coffee fields cutting coffee. Any work that I could find I would take just to survive. Then I didn't make any money, now I earn on average 1,500 to 2,000 lempira (£48–£64) a month.

I attended the field school for six months where I learnt how to farm. Now I'm a teacher. I teach at the field school once a week. I teach 23 other female members with their children and husbands. We teach them how to grow potatoes. This basic knowledge can then be applied to other crops such as corn and beans. Each Friday we teach a different topic, and then we go to the field for practice.



Photo credit: Gilvan Barreto/Oxfam

We don't have much land, but people are learning how to make the most of what they have. I teach them about how to care for the soil. An engineer from El Salvador came to show us how to control pests in the soil to avoid fungal diseases that destroy crops. What the women learn here helps them to grow good food in their family gardens at home. It improves the nutrition of their families. Some even sell what they are producing.

I also work in the collective fields of Carocol. This is the coffee season, so I get up at 3am to prepare breakfast and lunch for my husband and my six children. Then I clean the house. At 6am I go to the coffee farm. We all work in the coffee fields during harvest season. The schools are on holiday so that the children can work too. They go to cut coffee to earn money to buy their own books, backpacks and uniforms ready for school.

Most of us had no idea how to read and write, but through my efforts all my children have been educated. They have all gone through sixth grade. Without the COMUCAP they would all work the fields. I hope to have a small farm and work on it in my old age. I would be very happy if my children are able to earn enough money to look after themselves.

COMUCAP started working with Oxfam in 2000. Seven years later, these entrepreneurial farmer women are exporting Fairtrade, organic coffee to international markets.

**Farming heroes: Francisca (Honduras)****Resource sheet 7**

Francisca, 18, is screwing on bottle tops at a factory processing Aloe vera (a plant). The factory is run by COMUCAP, a group supporting women's rights in Honduras. After only a year they are selling the Aloe products internationally, including to an online company in Switzerland.

"One year and one month ago my mother died. She was a member of COMUCAP. My mother didn't know how to read or write, so she would take me with her to all the meetings and training sessions to make notes. I learnt a lot from these meetings; they helped me grow as a person. We talked about our worth as women, that we should not be embarrassed or ashamed of what we are. And we would dance.

When my mother died, I took her place. All the women knew me, and they accepted me. Lots of women I know are very shy; they are afraid of men. I'm not shy. I can look a man in the face without being afraid. I'm not embarrassed of being myself, and I know my mother would be proud of that.

I am the oldest child still at home, so I have to feed five siblings and look after my father. My father wakes me up at 4am so that I can prepare meals for everyone before I go to work. I earn enough here to look after everyone and buy myself clothes and shoes.

I have also learnt a lot from other women here. What I learn about hygiene here I can apply at home. My ambition is to remain with the group, to remain united. I want to learn more about my work because you don't know what the future holds."



Gilvan Barreto/Oxfam

## Farming heroes: Lekea Borena (Ethiopia)

## Resource sheet 8

Lekea Borena is a farmer in Ethiopia struggling to cope with changes in the weather. She is going to a local community hearing with thousands of others to discuss the problems.

“Today things are very different. Harvesting now is incomparable to how it was before. The rains are short and unpredictable – it means less quantity and less quality of crops.

My husband and I both grew up as farmers. But with all the problems we have had to look at other ways of making extra money. My husband went off to look for work. I started brewing homemade alcohol to sell in other villages. But the cost of the ingredients – such as corn and hops – has gone up, as has the price of transport.

We’ve started growing grass peas instead of normal peas – they need much less water and are more resistant to drought. We are also experimenting with new varieties of seeds, which are short maturing so take less time to grow.

I’ve heard on the local radio about these big global meetings on climate, but I don’t know the details. If I could speak to the foreign countries and governments at those meetings I would tell them that the big issues to focus on are ensuring forestation and access to water. We need to save our natural resources for the next generation.

At the hearing, I am going to tell the politicians about the challenges we face: the lack of water, the poor harvests, the loss of trees. I am lucky to have this opportunity to talk to them, and I want to tell them that farmers here can thrive if we have support. I want to know what they will do to help us. I have lots of friends from all over coming to the hearing – they all have the same problems and will all say similar things to me.

Despite the problems, I feel good about the future for farmers. We have support from the government, and we have new technology to make farming better. But we need water. Even so, I don’t want my children to be farmers – I want them to be the leaders of the country. Maybe even the next Prime Minister! Why not?”



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## Farming heroes: Wubalem Shiferaw (Ethiopia)

## Resource sheet 9

Wubalem Shiferaw is a member of the Mecha village cooperative for women beekeepers. This has allowed them to invest in modern beehives.

“I live in Mecha with my husband and my daughter, Rekebki. We have no land to farm, so it has always been very hard for us to make money. For years, we have been eating just one small meal a day. But the beehives have changed that. Now we are able to afford clothing.

As the beehives are within my compound I tend to them almost every day and night. I am getting used to this modern beekeeping technique; it has really helped us to provide the market with good-quality honey. We’ve learnt how to harvest the honey dressing up properly in our protective clothes.



The old-style beehives, up in the trees, did not help the bees to make more honey, and as a result we didn’t get much honey from each hive. But with the modern techniques, the bee is helped to make more honey, and at the same time it is also producing wax. We used to get only five to eight kilos a year per beehive, but using the modern techniques we get 10 to 15 kilos.

With the extra money I now have, I’m planning to buy some more beehives to multiply the amount of honey and wax that I can sell. Hopefully that will improve my income in return.

The establishment of the honey co-operative has made it easier to sell our honey in the market, and it has also helped us to save money. With our saving gradually fattening, we are contemplating how we should best spend it. We are thinking about other businesses that we could set up close to our hives.”



## Recognising my farming hero

## Activity sheet 2

I think \_\_\_\_\_ should be admired for their courage,  
outstanding achievements and noble qualities.

\_\_\_\_\_ has shown courage by...

\_\_\_\_\_ has made outstanding achievements such as...

\_\_\_\_\_ has shown noble qualities such as...

Overall, I think that \_\_\_\_\_ is a hero because...