

## BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HUNGER GAME

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**OBJECTIVE //** Students will gain insight into what causes hunger, hinders development and what can break the cycle of hunger.

**RECOMMENDED TIME //** 40-60 minutes

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS //** Any

**MATERIALS //** The game board, one die, one set of Development Cards per player, one place marker per person (version B), tape or sticky tack (version A) (optional).

**NOTE //** There are two types of game board. Version A is comprised of several individual sheets of paper which can be spread out on the floor or posted to walls around the room. It is most suitable for larger groups. Version B is a small board to be played in small groups at a table.

**PREPARATION //** Copy and cut out one set of Development Cards for every player.

**Version A** Set the sheets of paper out on the floor or post them around a room in the order in which they appear. The last sheet, entitled Famine, should be separated from the sequence (i.e. in the centre).

**Version B** Tape the two sheets together to make a game board.

### PLAYING THE GAME //

- Explain that each player represents a small-scale (subsistence) farmer in a developing country. The farmers have enough food to get by day to day but don't have any stored for the future. They don't have money to spend on improving farming methods. Their goal is to break the cycle of food shortage and insecurity. Collecting each of the 5 Development Cards will increase their chances of breaking the cycle.
- The game reaches its natural end when each player collects all 5 Development Cards. This may take a number of cycles around the board, though the game could end earlier— once the players have had enough time to learn about the issues. There is no "winner" or "loser".
- As the players move around the board have them read aloud the descriptions on the squares on which they land. This is where much of the learning happens.
- You may wish to discuss the vocabulary with the players before they begin playing.

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#### ACTIVITY //

- Place all of the development cards face up.
- Begin at the square marked "start here". Players should take turns rolling the die and moving around the game board.
- As they move, players should pick up or return the Development Cards as instructed. If a player doesn't have a card to return when instructed to do so, that player misses a turn.
- Each player is allowed to hold only one of each card at a time.
- When a player has collected all 5 cards s/he has broken the cycle. The other players who have less than 5 cards should continue to play until they have collected all 5 cards.

*This game was developed in collaboration with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.*

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS //** Information for educators follows each question.

#### WHAT HELPED BREAK THE CYCLE OF HUNGER? WHAT PERPETUATED (CONTRIBUTED TO) IT?

- Break: *Favourable Rains, Terraces Built, Temporary Recovery, Community Tree Planting, Primary Health Care, Women Included, Community Meeting, Fair Prices, Land Reform, Peace, Workshop, Food Assistance.*
- Perpetuate: *Deforestation, Drought, Food Prices Rise, Disease, Climate Change, World Economic Crisis, Farmers Are Forced From Their Lands, Civil Conflict, Inappropriate Development, Soil Erosion.*

#### HOW REALISTIC IS THIS GAME?

- This game highlights some of the causes of and ways of addressing hunger. It would be difficult for an activity to address each situation faced by all farmers around the world, but the causes of and ways of addressing hunger in this game are common to many small-scale farmers and communities around the world.

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**WHAT DO YOU THINK THE 5 CARDS REPRESENT?**

- These cards represent 5 themes that each Canadian Foodgrains Bank international project must address. Many other international aid groups also address these themes.

**WHY IS THERE NO "WINNER" OF THE GAME?**

- Having a winner would assume that the game is competitive. It is not. People should not compete to be able to eat and feed their families. Rather communities must collaborate in order for all to have enough to eat.

**HOW DOES ONE CAUSE OF HUNGER RELATE TO ANOTHER?**

- Often the causes of hunger impact one another.

**WHY WOULD YOU MOVE FROM *DROUGHT TO FOOD PRICES RISE?***

- When there is little or no rain many crops do not grow, resulting in less food. With less food on the market, the price for the food that is being sold rises because of the rules of supply and demand.

**WHY WOULD YOU MOVE FROM *FOOD PRICES RISE TO DISEASE?***

- When food prices rise people may not be able to access enough food or nutritious food to meet their needs. As a result, their bodies may not be able to fight off diseases.

**WHY WOULD YOU MOVE FROM *CIVIL CONFLICT TO FAMINE?***

- In some cases, conflict can cause famine because people are not able to grow crops or move to another region to get food. Also, in some cases food assistance (from national or international agencies) is not able to get to the people who need it because it is too dangerous to enter the conflict zone. In these extreme cases, people may begin to die from lack of food.

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**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT WOMEN BE INCLUDED IN DECISION MAKING?  
WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ENDING THE CYCLE OF HUNGER?**

- For a variety of reasons, women have not always been included in decision making on a community level. For instance cultural norms may have prevented them from participating. Some development projects have also overlooked the perspective of women when planning how best to work with a community. It is important that women be included in decision making because women have different experiences than men and offer a different perspective. In the case of hunger, women are usually the caregivers of their families which means that they are responsible for feeding their families. In addition to this, many women are also farmers. In fact, women account for more than half of all farmers in the world. Therefore, if women were not able to participate in decision making an important voice would be missing.

**WHY DO YOU THINK THAT *FAMINE* IS SEPARATED FROM THE SEQUENCE?**

- Though the word is used frequently, a famine is a rare occurrence. In this game, the Famine space is separated from the sequence to highlight its rarity and severity. Usually, a famine can only be declared by the UN and the nation in which the famine is occurring. It is based on high levels of food scarcity, malnutrition in children and the death rate.

**THIS GAME HIGHLIGHTS THE CYCLE OF HUNGER FOR A SMALL-SCALE FARMER IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HUNGER IN CANADA?**

- Some Canadians think that hunger is not an issue that affects Canadians. This is not true. There is a lot of information available about hunger in Canada. A good place to start is [foodbankscanada.ca](http://foodbankscanada.ca).

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**WHAT CAN WE DO IN CANADA TO HELP BREAK THE CYCLE FOR SMALL-SCALE FARMERS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD?**

- There are many ways for Canadians of all ages to help break the cycle. Generally they can be divided into 3 or 4 categories:

**1. ADVOCATE**

Speak to your friends and family about what you have learned about hunger.

Write a letter to the Prime Minister or your MP advocating for strong Canadian policies and support which will benefit vulnerable people. Tell the government that you care about world hunger.

**2. FUND FOOD ASSISTANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

Donate money to DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE. Money donated to DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE will go towards both food assistance programs and longer term food security programs in developing countries. These programs support various projects, such as building terraces and community workshops. You can learn about some of our projects by watching 'A New Leaf: Confronting a Food Crisis' (2013), a collaboration between DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and Salt + Light Television.

**3. THINK ABOUT YOUR LIFESTYLE**

Learn about the items that you purchase. Buying Fair Trade products is a good way to insure that your money is spent ethically. Use the activity Banana Split (in the THINKfast activity database at [www.devp.org/thinkfast](http://www.devp.org/thinkfast)) to learn about profit divisions and fair trade.

For additional information about Fair trade:

Ten Thousand Villages: [www.tenthousandvillages.ca](http://www.tenthousandvillages.ca)

Fairtrade Canada: [www.fairtrade.ca](http://www.fairtrade.ca)

Canadian Fair Trade Network: [www.cftn.ca](http://www.cftn.ca)

Consider your environmental impact.

Climate change has a devastating impact on those who are most vulnerable.

Plant a tree. Or two. Or more! A single tree will absorb one ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime.

Compost your organic waste. If you can, ride a bike or take the bus instead of driving.

**4. PRAY**

As a Catholic organization we believe in the power of prayer. We invite you to pray to end hunger. Please consult our resources listed below for prayers.

Food for All: One Human Family : [www.devp.org/sharelent](http://www.devp.org/sharelent)

THINKfast prayers: [www.devp.org/thinkfast](http://www.devp.org/thinkfast)

## Vocabulary

**CAPACITY BUILDING** // Creating an environment for people to improve their ability to achieve their goals. In this case that means being able to grow food and/or feed one's family. Capacity building may include professional development, community participation, and the creation of policies and frameworks which help people grow more food and/or feed their family.

**CROP** // A field of plants that is grown to be harvested as food, feed for livestock, fuel or for any other economic purpose. For instance, a farmer may plant a crop of corn, potatoes or wheat to sell at the market.

**DEFORESTATION** // Cutting of trees and reducing of forests.

**FAMINE** // A drastic, wide-reaching food shortage which results in severe hunger, even death (see point above).

**FOOD AID** // The distribution of food to those who are in need. Most of Canada's food aid is purchased in the region where it is to be distributed. Buying food locally, as opposed to shipping it from Canada, benefits or reduces harm to the local economy. Also, food purchased locally is usually more culturally appropriate.

**FOOD ASSISTANCE** // Similar to food aid but can also include distributing cash or vouchers to the beneficiaries themselves for the purpose of buying food locally, tools or agricultural inputs like fertilizer.

**FOOD SECURITY** // When all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.

**SMALL-SCALE FARMER** // A farmer who has a small plot of land for growing food for personal consumption and for producing a small crop to sell for income. Also known as a subsistence farmer.

**SOIL EROSION** // A process that removes topsoil (the top soil layers) and carries it away from farmer's fields.

**TERRACE** // A leveled surface on raised ground or on a sloping site; commonly used to farm on hilly or mountainous terrain. Terraced fields decrease erosion and surface runoff.

**TOPSOIL** // The upper, outermost layer of soil which has the highest concentration of organic matter.



## Background Information for Educators

*Additional information is given below for some of the spaces on the game board.*

**DEFORESTATION** // Trees and vegetation provide nutrients to the soil. In addition to this, their roots hold soil in place. However, many people around the world burn wood for the purpose of cooking, which leads to deforestation. Ultimately, this can cause the loss of topsoil through heavy rains or wind.

**TERRACES BUILT** // A terrace is a piece of sloped land that has been landscaped into a series of successively receding flat surfaces or platforms, which resemble steps. Terraced steps are commonly used to farm on hilly or mountainous terrain. Terraced fields decrease erosion and surface runoff.

**FOOD PRICES RISE** // Some people spend up to 80% of their income on food. When food prices spike many people may not have enough money to buy food. They may sell off various items, like goats, to pay to feed their family in the immediate future. However, by selling their goats they are losing a source of food for the family (milk from the goat) and income (from selling the milk or the goat itself on the market). Therefore, while they may gain money from the sale of their goat for their immediate needs, they could find themselves in a worse situation in the future. Also, if many families are selling their goats at the same time, the price of goats decreases. Therefore, the families will be getting less money by selling their goats when food prices rise than they would have when food prices were stable and less people were selling them.

**CLIMATE CHANGE** // Farmers around the world are affected by changing climatic patterns. Natural disasters such as hurricanes, monsoon rains, droughts and flooding can devastate a crop. Changing patterns of precipitation can disrupt normal planting and harvesting schedules, leaving farmers guessing as to when they should plant, harvest, etc.

**COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING PROGRAM BEGINS** // *See Deforestation and Soil Erosion.*

**WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS** // In the case of a recession or depression in the global economy, countries are asked to repay loans that they owe to banks and/or other countries. When this happens, governments – both in the developed and developing worlds—often cut their development budgets resulting in cuts to development programs.



## Background Information for Educators

**PRIMARY HEALTH CARE** // If people are not healthy they are not able to work to provide food for themselves or their families. Without primary health care, even common illnesses can lead to serious illness or death. Also, when a family member is ill or dies, that person's family must rely on other family members or people in the community to provide for them, putting a strain on community supports. Primary health care also insures that women remain healthy throughout their pregnancies, and that their babies have a lower risk of major health problems as infants and later in life as adults.

**FARMERS ARE FORCED FROM THEIR LANDS** // There are many cases around the world where farmers are forced to abandon the land that they are farming. This happens for a variety of reasons and in various ways. For example, in some cases farmers don't hold land title to the property they have been farming for years or decades. This may be because the landlord is unwilling to sell the land or will only sell for a very high price. In other cases, the government has given land rights away to companies or other stakeholders (i.e. for mineral exploration). Sometimes, farmers feel pressure to sell their land because of intimidation/threats or the lure of financial compensation, which often is not enough to provide for their families in the long term. These cases are more common in countries where the legal system is weak and where people don't know their rights.

**CONFLICT** // In many cases, conflicts around the world occur because people or groups are fighting over land. This may happen because the land is very fertile, because it contains other precious resources (like minerals or water) or for other reasons (expanding urban areas, etc).

**LAND REFORM** // For example, people are given title to the land that they farm (often after farming it for year or decades), or the government has changed the law concerning who can own land (for instance, if women can inherit land). See Farmers are forced from their lands.

**INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT** // Not all development projects are well thought out or successful. Some are even detrimental to the communities and people that they have set out to help. Ill-planned projects may lead to environmental problems, conflicts within a community, disempowerment of local people, etc. Other projects work well for their duration, but are not sustainable and do not leave lasting change once finished.

**SOIL EROSION** // The topsoil is the top layer of soil and the soil in which vegetation grows. It has the most organic matter and nutrients. The loss of topsoil through water runoff or wind results in a poor growing environment for vegetation. This results in reduced farm income due to decreased production.





## Background Information for Educators

**WORKSHOP** // Workshops can be held so that people are able to exchange ideas and learn new methods and concepts about farming, nutrition, etc. Such learning opportunities are particularly important for people who have not had an opportunity to study formally or who have few resources available to them.

**FOOD ASSISTANCE** // See vocabulary list.

**FAMINE** // Though the word is used frequently, a famine is a rare occurrence. Not all food crises result in famine. According to the World Food Programme: "in order for a famine to be declared, there must be evidence of the following three conditions:

1. At least 20 percent of the population has fewer than 2,100 calories of food a day;
2. Prevalence acute malnutrition must exceed 30 percent of children; and
3. The death rate must exceed two deaths per 10,000 people, or four child deaths per 10,000 people per day."

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#### START HERE

You have enough food to get by but none to store for the future.

You don't have money to spend on improving farming methods.

#### FAVOURABLE RAINS

More crop growth results in more food which can be sold or shared.

**Move forward 3.**

#### DEFORESTATION

Trees are cut for firewood, but overcutting leads to an environmental crisis.

**Miss a turn.**

#### DROUGHT

Your crop doesn't produce any food so you use up all of your extra food.

**Roll again. Roll a 6 or go to FOOD PRICES RISE.**

#### TERRACES BUILT

Your fields are protected from soil erosion. Your crops improve!

**Pick up card 5.**

#### FOOD ASSISTANCE

Local and international agencies provide food assistance by bringing in food, tools, and animals.

#### WORKSHOP

is held for farmers to exchange ideas and methods.

**Pick up card 2.**

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#### SOIL EROSION

Heavy rains wash away your topsoil.

**Return a card.**

#### INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT

Project does not help farmers who are poor.

**Return a card.**

#### PEACE

A fair solution to the conflict has been agreed upon.

**All players pick up a card. Players on FAMINE can move to PEACE.**

#### LAND REFORM

Laws are changed. Small-scale farmers get access to more land.

**Pick up any card.**



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#### FOOD PRICES RISE

You sell off some of your goats to buy food.

**Roll again.**

If you roll a 4 move to DISEASE.

#### DISEASE

Lack of food reduces your body's ability to fight off diseases. You get very sick.

**Roll 6 or return a card.**

#### UNCERTAIN WEATHER PATTERNS DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

You are uncertain of when to plant crops.

**Miss a turn.**

#### TEMPORARY RECOVERY

Rain begins. You are able to start farming again.

#### COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING PROGRAM BEGINS

A development agency provides tools and seeds.

**All players pick up card 1.**

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#### FAMINE

Families leave their homes in search of food.

**Roll again.**

**Roll 1:** Return a card & move to FAVOURABLE RAINS

**Roll 2:** Return a card & lose a turn

**Roll 3, 4, 5:** Return a card & move to FOOD ASSISTANCE

**Roll 6:** Leave game

#### WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS

No money left for development programs because your government must pay off its debts.

**Miss a turn.**

#### PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Your family can see a nurse and a doctor regularly.

**Pick up any card.**

#### FAIR PRICES

You are paid a fair price for your products.

**Have another turn.**

#### CIVIL CONFLICT

Your crops are destroyed. Money is spent on weapons, not development.

**All players return a card. Roll again. If you roll a 6 move to FAMINE.**

#### COMMUNITY MEETING

to plan development.

**All players pick up card 3.**

#### WOMEN INCLUDED

in decision making.

**Pick up card 4 and any other card.**

#### FARMERS ARE FORCED FROM THEIR LANDS

**Roll a 6 or move to CONFLICT.**



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CARD 1

ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY

CARD 1

ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY

CARD 1

ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY

CARD 1

ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY

CARD 2

CAPACITY  
BUILDING

CARD 2

CAPACITY  
BUILDING

CARD 2

CAPACITY  
BUILDING

CARD 2

CAPACITY  
BUILDING

CARD 3

COMMUNITY  
PARTICIPATION

CARD 3

COMMUNITY  
PARTICIPATION

CARD 3

COMMUNITY  
PARTICIPATION

CARD 3

COMMUNITY  
PARTICIPATION



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<p><b>CARD 4</b> WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT</p>	<p><b>CARD 4</b> WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT</p>	<p><b>CARD 4</b> WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT</p>
<p><b>CARD 4</b> WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT</p>	<p><b>CARD 5</b> SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</p>	<p><b>CARD 5</b> SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</p>
<p><b>CARD 5</b> SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</p>	<p><b>CARD 5</b> SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</p>	