

The Land Challenge



This group activity illustrates just one of the many different types of programs that Oxfam organizes in towns and villages all over the world. Each group will represent a small village. Your village has just bought an area of land to farm. Now you need to decide what to do with it. Your village has a meeting with everyone to discuss how the land should be used, and you must make several decisions.

As a group think of a name for your village and decide what you want to do with the land. Talk about and answer the following questions:

- How will the land be split up? Will everyone get an equal share? Will people with more money get more land? Will people with bigger families get more land? Will women-headed households get land?
- What kind of crops will you grow? Will you grow more than one kind? With many kinds, your village can have a full range of food for nutrition; with one kind, you can sell more.
- Will you eat what you grow, sell it locally, or export it to other countries? If you grow food, you don't have to pay for it; if you export, you may make more money. With exports, you must use a large portion of your land to make shipments worthwhile.
- Will you use pesticides? Pesticides protect from insects so you don't have to do as much work, but they are also bad for your health.
- Will you buy genetically engineered crops or traditional ones? Genetically engineered crops have special characteristics: they might grow faster, or resist disease. But you have to pay the company for seeds each year, which can be very expensive. In traditional farming, you can use your own seeds year after year.
- What will you do if your crops fail?
- If each family has their own piece of land, what happens when one family's crops have a bad year? Do other families help them out?
- Does your village have a plan if there is a famine?

There is no truly right answer. If your group cannot decide on a certain issue, have a vote to decide. Make brief notes on your answers. After the groups have made their decisions, a person from each group should tell the class about the decisions they made. How were your group's decisions different from the other groups?

