

Discussion guide

'Sowing Seeds . . . Harvesting Hope'

The story behind "Sowing Seeds . . . Harvesting Hope" is one of people networking together—rural and urban churches, farmers and agri-businesses, school and civic groups, grassroot and international agencies—all in pursuit of a common goal. That goal is growing lasting solutions to hunger, transforming people and the land that sustains them into becoming food secure.

A baker's dozen: Points to consider for group discussion

1. In recalling individuals depicted in the video, whose story or situation stands out in your mind? Why?
2. What did you learn about our partners in Guatemala and Nicaragua that surprised you?
3. In the Tonicapán program in Guatemala, who led the charge for change? Why do you think this was so?
4. Foods Resource Bank in its current annual report states that women comprise 80 percent of the world's farmers, yet only 2 percent are landowners. FRB asks: "How can we respect cultural contexts while embracing greater justice?" What suggestions do you have?
5. Sometimes only modest material resources and training are needed by the poor to grow their own food on a sustainable basis. Identify ways this point is documented in the stories from Tonicapán and Mateare.
6. Food security in developing countries requires more than increased production. Getting the produce to market in a timely manner is often a key obstacle. Did you sense that marketing was a problem for growers in Tonicapán and Mateare?
7. Workshops, demonstration plots, and community gardens are common ways of introducing new methods and new produce. What are the pros and cons of these approaches to training?
8. What distinct hurdles or challenges come with living in Central America's highlands and farming on steep and rugged mountainsides? What are the benefits?



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9. In a number of food security ventures abroad, Foods Resource Bank is the funding agency with Church World Service as the implementing party (planning and monitoring with local partners). An FRB member organization then serves as lead sponsor: for Totonicapán, the Church of the Brethren; for Mateare, the United Methodist Committee on Relief. Several other FRB member organizations contribute grants to help fund these programs. What do you see as the strengths of this collaborative approach? limitations?

10. Seventy percent of the world's population today is fed by small-holder farmers. As more and more of the world's population shifts from agrarian settings into urban areas, what new challenges lie ahead for world food production and global food safety? What can we do to encourage smallholder farming?

11. Over the credits at the end of "Sowing Seeds ... Harvesting Hope," Orion Samuelson explains that what excites him about Foods Resource Bank is that it brings urban and rural people together, increasing awareness of the complex factors at stake in growing and marketing food today. What steps might your church take to work more assertively at building rural-urban understanding?



12. Unlike the CROP commodities raised by farmers in the post-World War II era, FRB growing projects do not ship their actual produce abroad. Rather, growing projects sell the produce and through Foods Resource Bank invest the proceeds with grassroot partners in poor countries. What are the merits of this approach?

13. Discuss this statement taken from the current Foods Resource Bank annual report: "It is tempting to want to focus on finding 'the big fix.' We have found that the big fix is really many small ones added together."

For further information

Foods Resource Bank, www.foodsresourcebank.org. 888 276-4372.

Church World Service, PO Box 968, Elkhart IN 46515. www.churchworldservice.org. 800 297-1516.

Church of the Brethren Global Food Crisis Fund, 1451 Dundee Ave, Elgin IL 60120. www.brethren.org/globalfoodcrisisfund. 800 323-8039, ext. 264.

United Methodist Committee on Relief, 475 Riverside Dr, New York NY 10115. www.umcor.org . 212 870-3951.