

MM4: Feeding the World Sustainably and Responsibly



Micro-Module 4: Feeding the World Sustainably and Responsibly

Experimentation and Exploration

Lesson 6: Supermarkets, Farmers and our Broken Value Chains

Subjects: Art and Design, Agricultural Science, CPSE, Home Economics, SPHE

Lesson Title and Summary: Supermarkets, Farmers and our Broken Value Chains

Today we buy most of our food from a handful of supermarkets. These multinational companies are tremendously successful and profitable at delivering all kinds of food to us, when and where we want it. They dominate the planet's food supply systems. But behind these supermarkets, there is a global army of smallholder farmers, literally million of farmers and their families, in every corner of the globe. They work so hard often while facing the impacts of climate change head on, to put food and on our tables. Yet, many farmers earn so little that they cannot afford to feed their own families. In this lesson we'll try to understand why the global food system is so broken that farmers can starve and struggle while supermarkets profit and explore whether a better way is possible for the future.

Vocabulary: Value Chains, Farming, Production, Transport, Social Cost, Ecological Cost

In this lesson, the learner will:

- Understand how powerful and important supermarkets are in the food sector
- Explore concept of living income for food workers and farmers
- Apply learning on how to conduct online research
- Consolidate and articulate research findings
- Engage in pair and group work

Materials

- Worksheet 1: The Power of Supermarkets
- Worksheet 2: Living Income for Farmers
- Worksheet 3: How to Solve Farmer Poverty?
- Pens, paper
- Internet access



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ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

Activity 1: The Power of Supermarkets (20 minutes)

1. Write the question “ What did you eat in the last week?”. Ask the class to name foods they ate in the last week that you cannot buy in a supermarket. (note: to prompt the discussion, if need be highlight (i) speciality food stores (ii) ethnic stores, (iii) butchers, (iv) bakers and (v) fishmongers. If take-away foods are mentioned, ask if these ingredients are available in supermarkets).
2. Divide the class into groups of 4-5 learners.
3. Distribute the Worksheet 1: The Power of Supermarkets. Have the groups carry out research on supermarkets in Ireland and Europe and completing pie charts as instructed.
4. As a class, discuss the pros and cons of supermarkets having so much power in where we get our food.

Activity 2: Farmer Pay & A Living Income (15 minutes)

1. Staying in the same groups.
2. Distribute the Worksheet 2: A Living Income for Farmers. Have the teams use the internet to answer the questions.
3. As a class, discuss the group’s findings.
4. Start a class discussion with a few probing questions:
 - a. Were you surprised how much farmers get paid from the supermarket price?
 - b. Were you able to find information online showing how much farmers earn for other products?
 - c. Do you think there is enough information and consumer awareness on how much farmers earn?

Activity 3: Solutions (15 minutes)

1. Distribute Worksheet 3: “How to Solve Farmer Poverty?” to the teams. Ask the learners, as groups, to research and identify 3 actions each of the four groups can take to improve life for farmers.
2. Discuss as a class.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE: 3-2-1 (10 mins)

- Three things they feel they have learnt from the tasks.
- Two things they found most interesting and would like to explore more.
- One – their opinion they have about the tasks.

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EXTENSION / REDUCTION ACTIVITIES:

Reduction: For a shorter lesson, carry out Activity 1 just for Ireland.

Extension: For a longer lesson, extend Activity 1 by preparing pie charts of supermarkets for ALL countries in the EU.

Option B: Extend Activity 2 by instructing the teams to visit dollar street website and find pictures of small holder farmers and learning about the the items they possess that might constitute a living income (look at the food, education materials, basic household materials, shelter, bedding, sanitation facilities, etc. at their disposal). As a class, discuss the difference in what these families have and what people in Ireland might have.

MEDIA BOX: (materials, online video links, extra resources, case studies etc)

- Ripe for Change Oxfam Report: <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/ripe-for-change-ending-human-suffering-in-supermarket-supply-chains-620418/>
- Supermarkets in Ireland: <https://www.checkout.ie/tag/kantar>
- Supermarkets in Ireland: https://www.theconsumergoodsforum.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Global-Summit-2022_Irish-Retail-Scene.pdf
- Smallholder Farmers: <https://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1395127/icode/#:~:text=The%20updated%20estimates%20are%20that,world's%20food%20in%20value%20terms.>
- World Living in Poverty: <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/world-population-in-extreme-poverty-absolute>
- Our World in Data: Poverty: <https://ourworldindata.org/poverty>
- Dollar Street Gapminder: <https://www.gapminder.org/dollar-street>

LOCAL TRIP / EXPERTISE / ADDITIONAL WORK AND ASSESSMENTS

Try to identify five foods in your home that are not available at your main supermarket.

Visit a butcher, bread shop, ethnic food store, or health food store in your area and identify 3-5 items per shop that might not be available in a regular supermarket.

Interview a farmer and ask them about the prices they receive from supermarkets and how they think farmer income can be improved on our planet.

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2 ZERO HUNGER



Supermarkets in Ireland:

<https://www.checkout.ie/tag/kantar> https://www.theconsumergoodsforum.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Global-Summit-2022_Irish-Retail-Scene.pdf

Try to name the top five supermarkets in Ireland?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

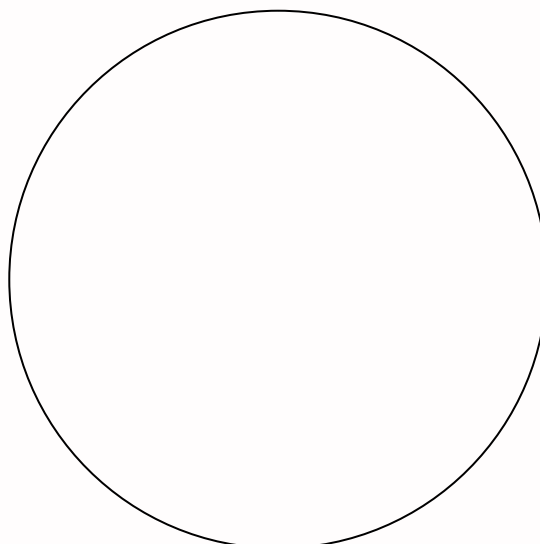
How many stores does each supermarket have across the country?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What share of the grocery market does each supermarket possess?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Using the circle below create a pie chart of the Irish retail food market:



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THE POWER OF SUPERMARKETS

Repeat the exercise for two other EU countries of your choice.

Country name: _____

Try to name the top five supermarkets in this country?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

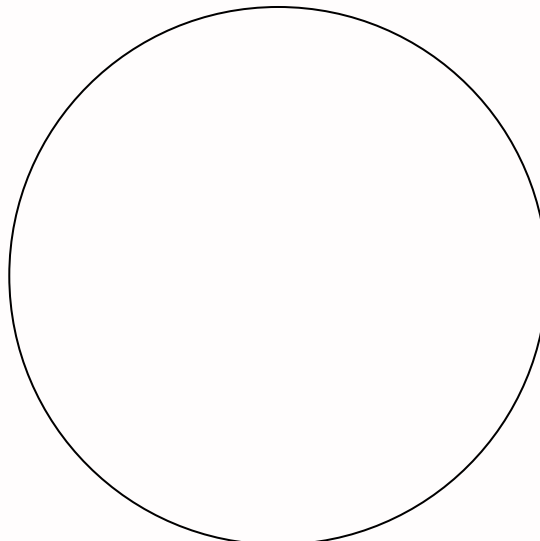
How many stores does each supermarket have across the country?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What share of the grocery market does each supermarket possess?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Using the circle below create a pie chart of the country's retail food market:



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THE POWER OF SUPERMARKETS

Repeat the exercise for two other EU countries of your choice.

Country name: _____

Try to name the top five supermarkets in this country?

1. _____
2. _____
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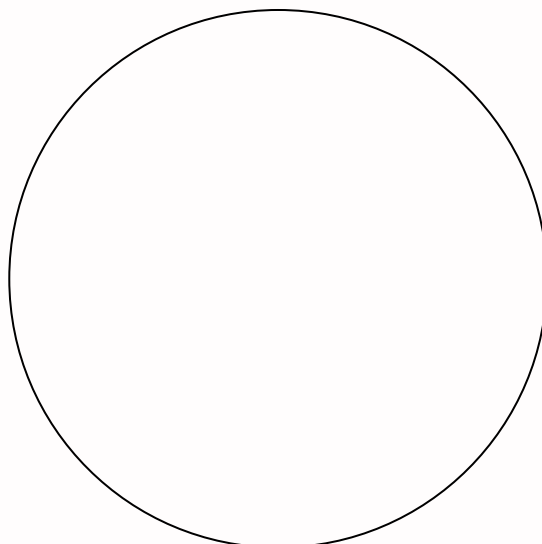
How many stores does each supermarket have across the country?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
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5. _____

What share of the grocery market does each supermarket possess?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Using the circle below create a pie chart of the country's retail food market:



MM4: L6 WS LIVING INCOME FOR FARMERS



As a group, take five minutes to explore the following four diagrams:

Charts taken from the Oxfam report Ripe for Change:

<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/ripe-for-change-ending-human-suffering-in-supermarket-supply-chains-620418/>

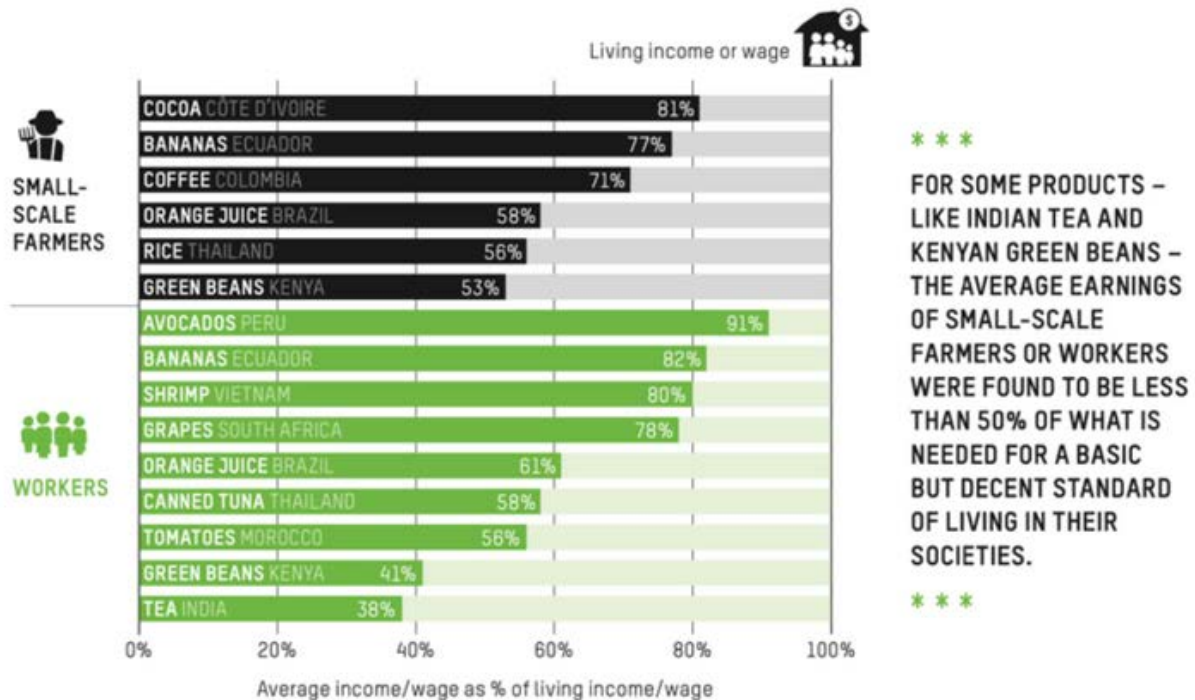


FIGURE 9: FOR CERTAIN PRODUCTS, THE INEQUALITY BETWEEN SUPERMARKETS AND THE PEOPLE PRODUCING THE FOOD THEY SELL IS PARTICULARLY STARK



Source: C. Alliot et al. (Forthcoming). Distribution of Value and Power in Food Value Chains. Oxfam-commissioned research undertaken by BASIC.

MM4: L6 WS LIVING INCOME FOR FARMERS



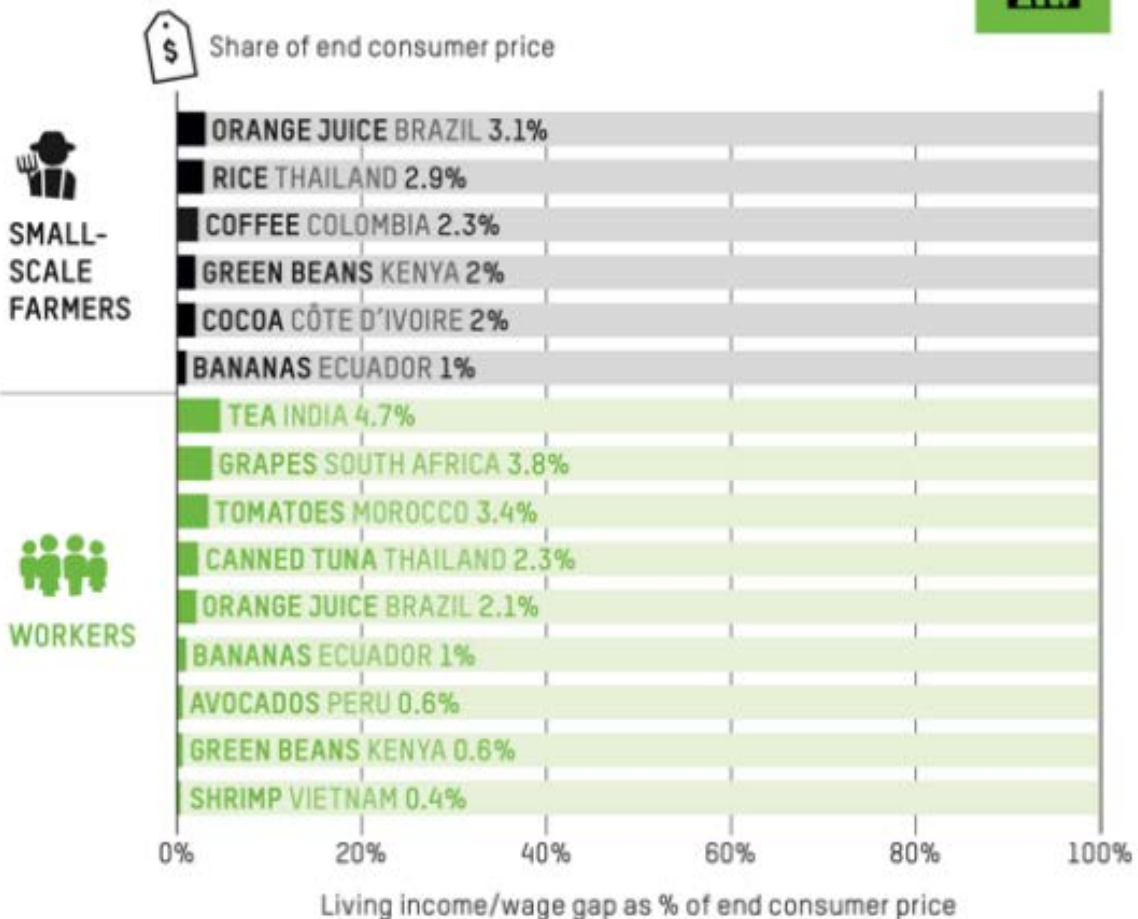
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FIGURE 10: FOR MANY PRODUCTS, THE INVESTMENT NEEDED TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN PREVAILING AND LIVING INCOMES OR WAGES IS MARGINAL COMPARED TO THE END CONSUMER PRICE

Cost of closing living wage/income gap



Note: Data as of 2015. Some commodities appear twice, as they are both produced by small-scale farmers and by waged workers on large-scale plantations, in processing facilities or on fishing vessels.

Source: C. Alliot et al. (Forthcoming). Distribution of Value and Power in Food Value Chains. Oxfam-commissioned research undertaken by BASIC.

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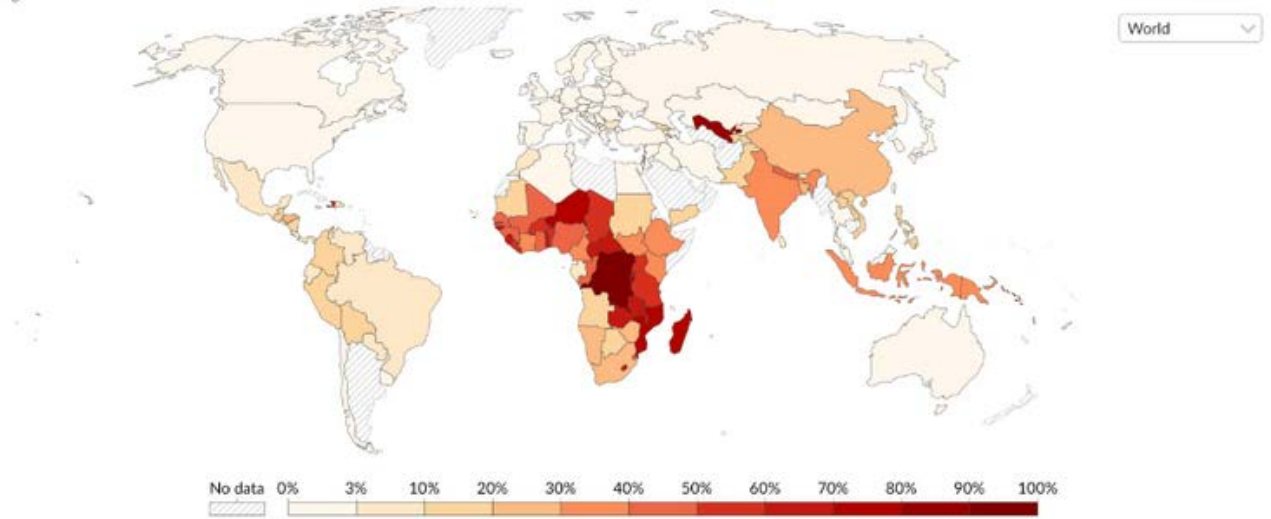


As a group, take five minutes to explore the following four diagrams:

Sourced from World in data website: <https://ourworldindata.org/poverty>

Share of population living in extreme poverty, 2006

Extreme poverty is defined as living below the International Poverty Line of \$2.15 per day. This data is adjusted for inflation and for differences in the cost of living between countries.



Source: World Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform (2022)

Note: This data is expressed in international-\$ at 2017 prices. Depending on the country and year, it relates to income measured after taxes and benefits, or consumption, per capita.

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Discuss your thoughts and impressions on the four charts above and the information they convey. Record your comments and observations below:

Search the internet to understand what a living income for farmers means. What various components might this include? In your own words, provide a definition for a living income in the box below.

MM4: L6 WS HOW TO SOLVE FARMER POVERTY?

2 ZERO HUNGER



As a team discuss, research, and identify 3 ways these 4 different groups can help improve wages and prosperity for farmers:

Consumers

Governments

Farmers

Supermarkets, Brands and Companies
