

Teacher's Notes: Examining Food Insecurity in Rwanda

Purpose

Students develop their understanding of some of the causes of food insecurity in Rwanda. They use skills in creating and interpreting graphs.

Students explore the impact of malnutrition on wellbeing, and the factors that increase the risk of experiencing chronic malnutrition in Rwanda. They brainstorm the short and long-term effects of malnutrition on a child's life.

Students develop their understanding of the work of an aid and development NGO by reviewing projects that address issues of food insecurity and malnutrition in Rwanda. They make connections between strategies and outcomes.

Resources

- 1 x Student Handout: Food Insecurity in Rwanda, per student
- 1 x Student Handout: Malnutrition – a consequence of food insecurity, per student or pair
- 1 x Student Handout: Addressing Food Insecurity in Rwanda, per student

Activity

Ask students to read the information in the handout Food Insecurity in Rwanda. Students then complete the questions on the handout.

Ask students, either individually or in pairs, to read the information in the handout Malnutrition – a consequence of food insecurity. Students should then complete the brainstorming activity.

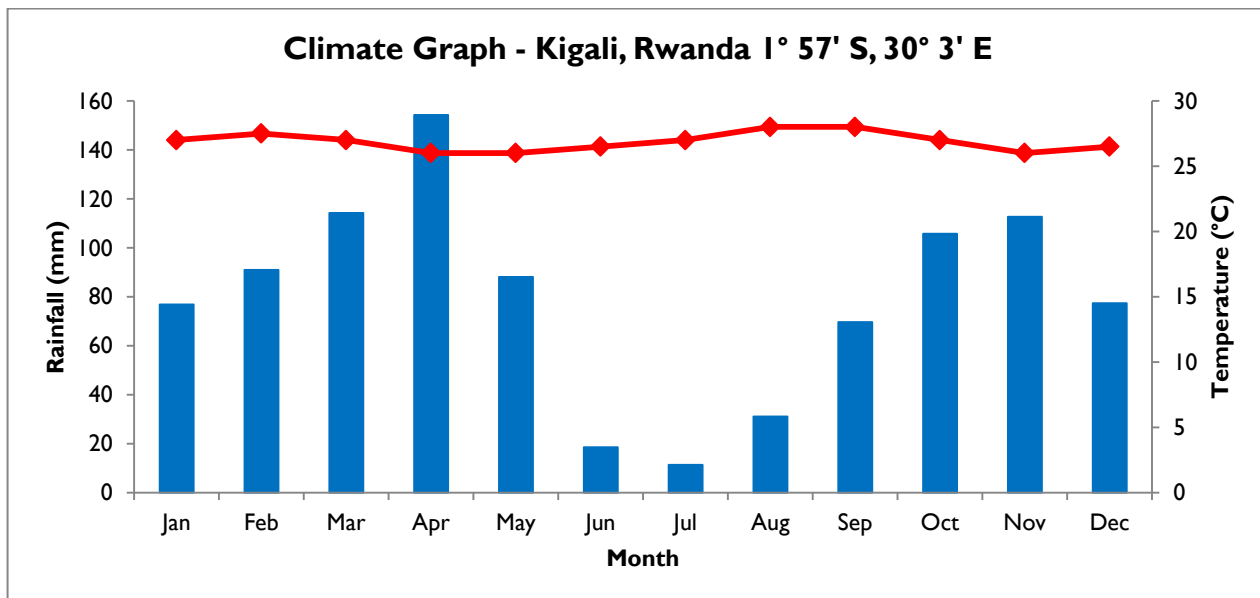
Ask students to read the information in the handout Addressing Food Insecurity in Rwanda. Students then complete the questions on the handout. Note: students may benefit from completing Q1 with a partner.

Option: Between them, the three student handouts examine some of the causes, consequences, and solutions for addressing food insecurity in Rwanda. They do not, however, all have to be used together – they can be used individually or in combination.

Notes

Suggested answers for Student Handout: Food Insecurity in Rwanda

Q1. (a) Climate graph for Kigali, Rwanda:



(b) Five wettest months marked on seasonal agricultural calendar:

Rainfall peaks												
Planting												
Harvest												
Lean seasons												
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

(c) Sample answer:

In Rwanda, planting is associated with peaks in rainfall, typically occurring at the same time. A month after the end of planting, harvesting of crops begins, lasting for two to three months. Approximately one month after the end of harvesting the “lean season” starts, during which vulnerable households face food insecurity. Lean seasons typically occur in April and May, and again in September to November. The lean season coincides with the end of the planting season, and while crops are growing, before they are ready to harvest. The lean season finishes with the start of the harvest.

Q2. Based on the information provided in the text, the likely answers for situations where poverty can make households vulnerable to acute food insecurity include: drought; flooding; illness.

Suggested answers for Student Handout: Malnutrition – a consequence of food insecurity

Q1. There are many effects of malnutrition on a child's life in the short and long-term. Some possible answers could include:

If a child is malnourished => they are more likely to have a weakened immune system => they are at greater risk of illness/dying before age five.

If a child is malnourished => they are more likely to have problems with the development of their brain/ health => they are more likely to have problems at school.

If a child is malnourished => they are more likely to have problems at school => they are likely to have fewer employment opportunities / a lower income as an adult.

If a child is malnourished => they are likely to have problems with their physical development => they are more likely to have on-going health problems throughout their lives.

If a child is malnourished => they are likely to have stunted growth => in girls this means their children are more likely to also have stunted growth.

Suggested answers for Student Handout: Addressing Food Insecurity in Rwanda

Q1. Strategies for improving food security and reducing malnutrition mentioned in the handout include:

- agricultural skills training, including modern farming techniques, seed harvesting, and how to farm different types of crops eg: mushrooms;
- financial management, entrepreneurship, and income generation skills training;
- providing seeds and seedlings eg: onion seeds, and providing livestock eg: goats and cows; and
- nutrition education eg: how to have a balanced diet; supplementing food consumption eg: intensive feeding programs, sharing food, providing meals to children.

Q2. Sample answer:

Improving incomes helps to reduce food insecurity and address malnutrition by enabling people to purchase additional food, particularly during times of food shortages. Having extra income also allows people to invest in their farms, and to generate further income. For example, using the income from the sale of an onion crop, Mugabo was able to purchase a cow. Cows provide milk for consumption, and any excess can be sold. The manure from cows can be used as fertilizer, which can help grow crops that can either be eaten or sold. By increasing his income, Mugabo's family were able to increase their meals from one per day to three per day and improve their health.