

FOREST FOODS FOREVER

A PRIMARY SIMULATION GAME (AGES 7–11)

Aim

To encourage pupils to think about issues of food and hunger, to understand some of the food challenges facing communities living in Bolivia, and to engage with how communities are finding ways to have a more secure supply of food.

Objectives

This lesson plan should help pupils to:

- think about where food comes from
- engage with the story of people in another country who have a different way of life
- understand some of the challenges facing a community at risk of hunger
- recognise the resilience and adaptability of people in overcoming environmental and other challenges
- describe the work that Christian Aid does and engage with charities' work to tackle global hunger.

Materials needed

- Photocopied worksheets (available at the end of these notes):
 1. *Food group pyramid*
 2. *Food from the forest template sheet*
 3. *Food forever template sheet*
 4. *Ivana's story*
- Tracing paper, scissors, colouring pencils
- Pasta pieces and sugar cubes/small parcels of sugar

These classroom activities support the *Forest Foods Forever* assembly, available to download from caweek.org or christianaid.org.uk/learn

These materials have been developed for Christian Aid Week (12-18 May), but can be used at any time of year. If you are using this game during Christian Aid Week, you might also like to consider how your school might draw out links between people in your area who work tirelessly to raise money during the week to support communities around the world, and the communities who are able to use this money in the best possible way to help lift themselves out of poverty.



BITE BACK AT HUNGER

Introduction

Tell pupils that they will be thinking through some challenges facing a community of people living in the Amazon rainforest and learning about issues relating to food and hunger. You could ask pupils to find Bolivia in an atlas or on a globe and explain that around one-third of Bolivia is covered by the Amazon rainforest.

First, ask them to suggest things that they think would be good about living in the rainforest.

Explain that many Amazon communities are very remote (far away from other communities and amenities such as local shops) and ask pupils to suggest some challenges that they think people living in a very remote place might face.

Explain that many people living there rely on what they can grow or gather from the forest.

This means that they sometimes go hungry. You could also explain that climate change is making weather patterns less predictable, the dry seasons more intense and the rainy seasons wetter, which means that it can be harder to find or grow food.

Say to pupils that they are going to play a game that aims to help them understand some of the challenges faced by a group of people at risk of hunger.

Tell pupils:

You live in a village called Alta Gracia, which is in the Amazon rainforest, in a country called Bolivia in South America. It is very beautiful here; the forest is your home and it is also your source of food. Because the nearest town is many miles away, people in your village rely on what they can grow, catch or harvest in the forest. The people in your village hunt wild boar and you also grow rice and gather fruit from the forest.

Before the game starts, share the **food group pyramid (sheet 1)** with pupils and ask them to think about how the foods – meat, rice and fruit – will be important to keep the community well fed, and which should form the greater part of their diet. You could ask them to research why the different food groups are important for nutrition and suggest that they note on the sheet which food groups are represented by wild boar, rice and forest fruit.

Split pupils into smaller groups of between 5-10 people, and hand out tracing paper, scissors, colouring pencils and the **food from the forest template (sheet 2)** to each group. Explain that in this game, pupils will have to work hard to ensure their families have enough food and they can do this by carefully copying, colouring and cutting out the food from the forest templates. Remind them that in order to be healthy, humans need a range of foods, so they need to think carefully about how they will work together and use their time to make sure their group is well nourished.

The game

Please note that timings and quantities can be adjusted to suit the needs and size of the groups. Explain to groups that they need to produce 20 each of the wild boar, rice and forest fruit templates in order to keep their group well fed. [Teachers: adjust this target according to the size and abilities of the groups – you will be taking most of their templates during the first three rounds of the game. The point is that they should struggle to meet the target, so if pupils are going to meet

the target easily, you can increase the number of templates you seize during each round.]

Give pupils five minutes to produce some food (by copying, cutting out and colouring in the templates) – and explain that the templates must be neatly cut, coloured and copied in order to be counted. After five minutes, ask them to stop because their communities face their first big challenge.

Challenge 1

Tell pupils:

The dry season has arrived and the wild boar have headed deep into the forest to find water. People in your village are having to walk further and further to find food, and often come back empty-handed.

Take most of the groups' wild boar.

Ask pupils:

- How do you feel?
- What will you do now to survive?

Give groups five minutes to 'grow' and 'gather' more food (copy, cut and colour the templates) and then ask them to stop because their communities face their second big challenge.

Challenge 2

Tell pupils:

The dry season is dragging on and you've heard that there are cattle ranchers in the area. Cattle ranchers often burn large areas of the forest to clear it for cattle farming, increasing the risk of forest fires in the dry season. Before you know it, a forest fire approaches your land; you and your family manage to escape, but the fire destroys most of your rice crop.

Take most of the groups' rice.

Ask pupils:

- How do you feel?
- What will you do now to survive?

Give groups five minutes to 'grow' and 'gather' more food (copy, cut, and colour the templates) and then ask them to stop because their communities face their third big challenge.

Challenge 3

Tell pupils:

The rainy season finally arrives, and with it... floods! Much of the land in your local area is underwater and this makes gathering fruit very difficult.

Take most of groups' forest fruit.

Ask pupils:

- How do you feel?
- What challenges do your community face?
- What would happen to your family?

Good news!

Tell pupils:

A local organisation called CIPCA would like to support you. CIPCA is run by people who understand the needs of your community and the environment in which you are living.

Show groups the food forever template (sheet 3) and explain that CIPCA has agreed to loan each group:

- 2 sheep that survive well in the forest and can cope with very wet weather
- 20 chicks that will grow into chickens to provide eggs and meat
- seeds for maize and yucca plants, which will be ready for you to eat soon and do better in dry weather than rice and forest fruits
- cocoa plants, which take longer to grow, but which you will be able to sell or exchange for other foods that you don't have, like pasta and sugar.

Discuss:

- What have groups learnt from the previous challenges?
- Would they like to try growing different things?

Guide the discussion to draw out the fact that the more variety of things they have to eat, the less affected they are by anything going wrong.

- What will groups concentrate on growing now?

Ask pupils to add to their food group pyramid sheet with the new options that they now have and work out a plan to grow more food.

Food forever round

Hand each pupil a food forever template sheet (sheet 3), which has chicken and egg, sheep, maize, yucca and cocoa templates. Tell pupils that they can continue to collect and grow their forest foods (wild boar, rice and forest fruits), but now they can grow other crops to help protect them from any natural events that might threaten their food supplies.

Give pupils 10 minutes to grow their range of crops.

After three minutes announce: *the dry season arrives, but your yucca and most of your maize survive the drought.* (Take just a few wild boar, rice and maize.)

After six minutes announce: *the rainy season arrives, but your sheep and chickens cope well.* (Take just a few forest fruits.)

After nine minutes announce: *you can now harvest your cocoa and sell it or exchange it for things like pasta and sugar.* (Swap your pasta and sugar cubes for any cocoa that pupils have produced – five pieces of pasta/sugar cubes per cocoa copy.)

Conclusion

You could award a prize to the group that has produced the most food, or the greatest variety of foods. Or you could just focus on the main learning outcome, which is that growing a variety of foods means that communities are able to cope much better with environmental challenges such as floods and droughts.

Lead a discussion around the following questions:

- What foods do pupils have at the end of the final round – and have they covered all the major food groups? (They can check this against their food group pyramid.)
- What might this mean for their community?
- What have pupils learnt about food?

Guide the discussion to ensure that pupils have considered the following aspects.

- Communities need to have a secure supply of food in order to survive.

- Communities want to do more than survive – they want to thrive. To thrive, people need a range of foods in their diet. Lack of food – and anxiety about food – saps people’s energy and strength and makes them less able to concentrate on other things.
- People are facing increasing challenges in finding and producing food because of climate change, which is disturbing weather patterns and increasing the likelihood of both floods and droughts.
- There is enough food for everyone in the world if certain things are done to ensure people can grow the food they need.

Share Ivana’s story (sheet 4) with the class and ask pupils to consider the questions and discuss the following:

- What are the main similarities and differences between the food experiences of this remote forest community and the ways in which we get our food in Britain and Ireland?
- What is important about the way that CIPCA works?

Finally, you could watch a film about Ivana, available at learn.christianaid.org.uk/globalexplorerswhiteboard

Ideas for further activities

- Make a classroom display with some of the food templates. You can order a poster featuring Ivana by emailing **schools@christian-aid.org**
- Pupils could write a descriptive piece about food and hunger from the point of view of someone living in a forest community.
- Pupils could research more about Bolivia and the Amazon rainforest, and find out what is being done to protect this important environment.
- Encourage pupils to be active global citizens by writing to their local politician to ask them what they are doing about the issues of hunger and climate change.
- Find out more about the campaign on food and hunger that is running throughout 2013 and get your school involved. For more information, visit **christianaid.org.uk** (from late January 2013).
- You can download more materials on food and hunger from **christianaid.org.uk/learn**
- You could ask pupils to put on an assembly based on what they have learnt. Ready-made assemblies on Ivana and the work of CIPCA are available at **caweek.org** or **christianaid.org.uk/learn**
- CIPCA is one of the partner organisations featured for this year's Christian Aid Week. To find out more about how your school could help raise money to fund Christian Aid's work, visit **caweek.org**



Notes for teachers

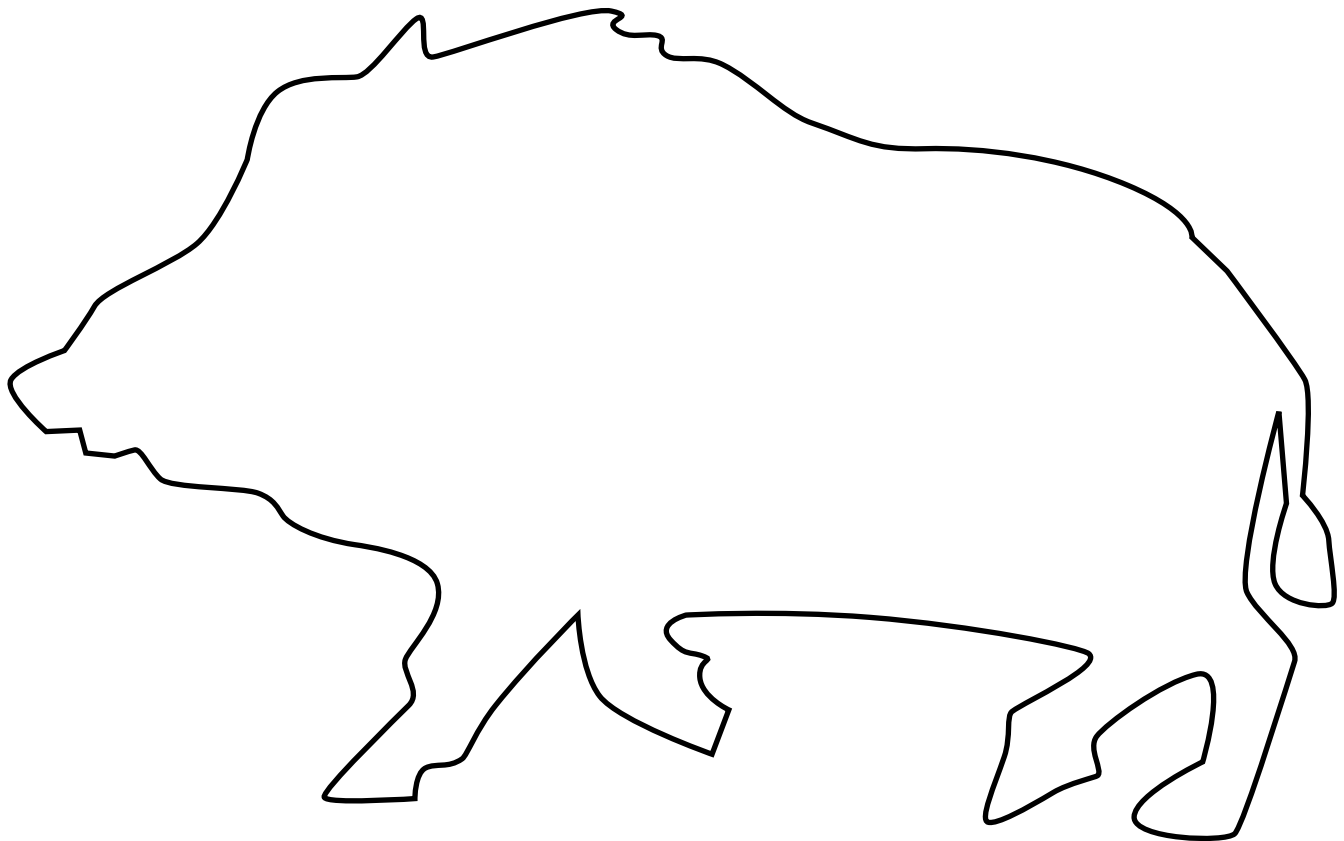
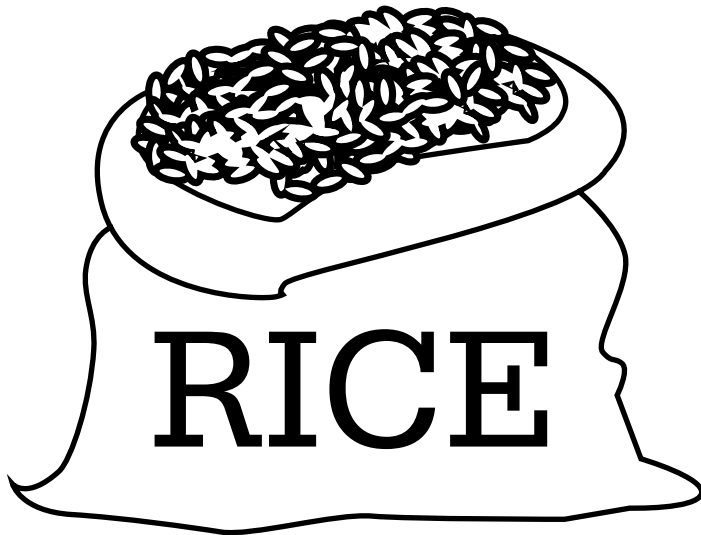
- Bolivia is a country rich in natural resources. It boasts huge reserves of oil and gas, and the biodiversity of the Amazon rainforest. However it is also one of the poorest and most unequal countries in South America and millions of people here live in difficult conditions, struggling to survive.
- The Bolivian Amazon is one of the most biodiverse regions in the world. However, this biodiversity is under threat as only 17 per cent of the national territory is protected. The indigenous communities have always traditionally hunted what they need to sustain their families. However, major road building, mining, urbanisation, logging and the increase of agro-industry (the large-scale production, processing, and packaging of food using modern equipment and methods) means that the natural balance is being upset and the fauna of the Amazon is in danger.
- Deforestation is common – loggers, cattle ranchers and large businesses prove a threat to the indigenous people who are often displaced from their lands.
- Deforestation also has a serious environmental impact. Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis. By absorbing carbon, they help to reduce the overall amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and so slow climate change. However, when trees are cut down and burned, the carbon they were storing is released into the atmosphere. CIPCA's work in protecting the forest is an important part of the effort to limit climate change.
- The community in Alta Gracia is an indigenous community. Although indigenous groups make up the majority of the population of Bolivia, they are the ones who are most affected by inequality, poverty and the abuse of human rights.
- CIPCA, which is supported by Christian Aid, is helping indigenous communities in the Bolivian rainforest to adapt to changing weather patterns by supporting them to grow a wider range of crops and to raise animals that are resilient to changes in the weather. It is important to note that CIPCA is a local organisation, and is therefore well placed to understand and support the needs of the local community.
- Each family that CIPCA works with are given seeds or saplings for 52 different kinds of crops. Some are planted to harvest the same year, whereas others will not mature for decades. What is key is that they are also given support in growing them all. Crop diversification gives families a wider variety of food to feed and nourish themselves and means they are not dependent on one crop that may fail, or have a low value when sold or exchanged.
- Christian Aid works with partner organisations in 48 countries across the world, finding sustainable ways to end poverty.
- Today, 1 in 8 people on Earth are suffering from extreme hunger. But this problem is solvable. Because the planet is capable of producing enough food to feed everyone, if important changes are made. Lots of organisations are campaigning for governments to change policies on investment, land, tax and aid to ensure that people in poorer countries can fight hunger and access the food they need. To find out more about the details of this campaign, visit **christianaid.org.uk** (from late January 2013).
- More educational resources on food, climate change and other global issues are available to download at **christianaid.org.uk/learn**



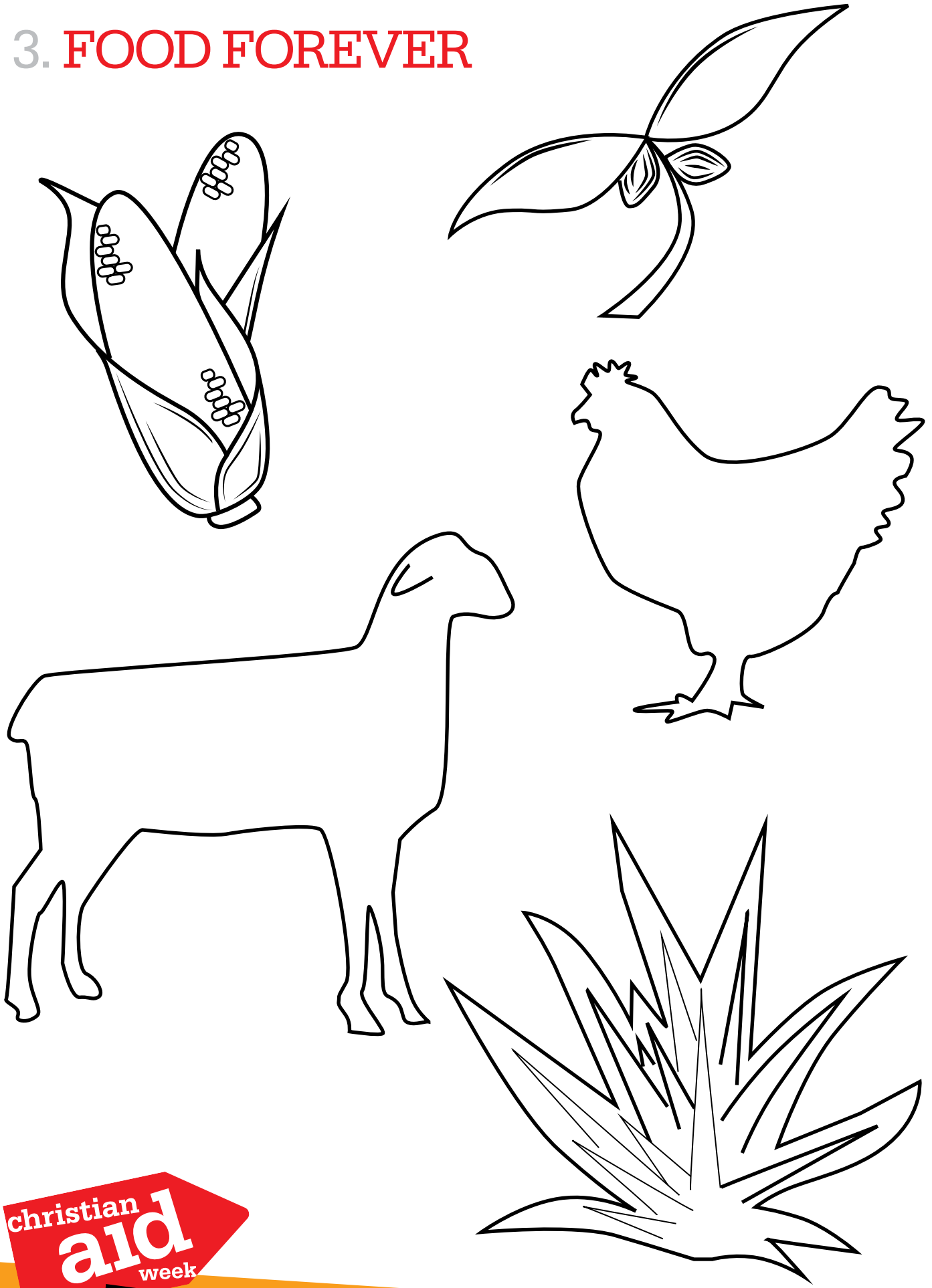
1. FOOD GROUP PYRAMID



2. FOOD FROM THE FOREST



3. FOOD FOREVER



4. IVANA'S STORY



Ivana is 10 and she lives in a community called Alta Gracia, in the Amazon rainforest in Bolivia. She has two brothers and two sisters, and her favourite subjects at school are maths and languages.

Ivana loves her home and she explains how important the forest is to her family:

'The forest is important because it has animals we can hunt, it gives us fruit we can eat and when we need it we can use the wood. My dad goes to hunt animals and my older brother goes to help with looking after the cocoa trees. Looking after the forest means making sure that it's not hurt and that it's clear of pests and things that stop the cocoa trees from producing lots of fruit. We all go to collect the fruit when it's time to harvest it.'

CIPCA, a local organisation that works with the charity Christian Aid, gave Ivana's family some chicks, sheep and some saplings (baby trees) to help them make sure that they have a range of food to eat. CIPCA also helped the community stand up for their rights to stay on their land, and not be forced off by businesses.

Ivana explains the range of food they now have:

'We have five hens and about 20 little chicks. Sometimes we get 10 eggs a day! The eggs take about 18-20 days to hatch, and then when we go in the morning the egg has cracked open and there is a chick there! Chickens are nice to eat, and we eat lots of eggs too – fried or boiled. We sell them too, or sometimes we exchange them – we swap eggs for sugar, bananas, yucca, those sorts of things. It's better now we have the chickens because we can exchange more and buy more to eat.'

'We've got sheep now too. We take them out to eat grass. We make sure they don't go too far away and we give them water. I like them. Every 10 days, it's our family's turn to look after the sheep all day. There are 10 families from the community who look after the sheep. We'll be able to sell them and buy things for the community – and the meat is tasty too!

'Cocoa is important because we can sell it and buy the rest of the food that we need. We buy rice and sugar and oil. I like hot chocolate, it's nice. You take the block of chocolate, and cut bits off into a pan and you heat it with water, then you add sugar and stir it. Then you take it off to let it cool and put it on the table for the family to share.'



Questions:

- In what ways is the role of food in Ivana's life the same as in your own?

- In what ways is it different?

- What is CIPCA and how has it helped Ivana's family?

