

Activity: Reading Discussion



TIME ESTIMATE
45 minutes



OPTIONAL MATERIALS
Whiteboard, whiteboard markers, markers, paper

PURPOSE

To encourage participants to comprehend the reading material, engage in peer discussions and build oral communication and critical thinking skills.

DESCRIPTION

In groups of 3-6 depending on class size, participants will debrief the reading and background material.

FACILITATOR NOTE

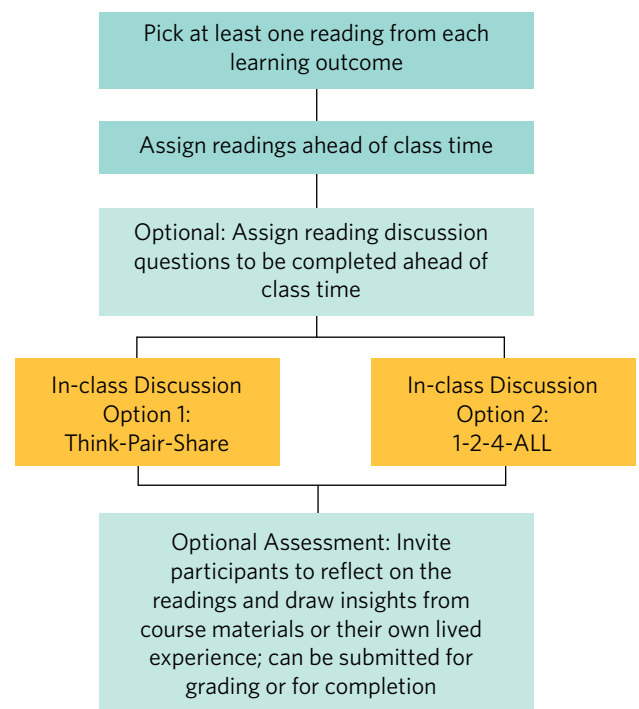
Readings are linked to the module's Learning Outcomes (LOs) with a minimum three readings listed per learning outcome. Pick and choose readings based on what LOs work best in your classroom and which readings are most relevant to your discipline. Feel free to modify the questions to suit your own contexts. These questions can be distributed beforehand or during the activity.

HOW-TO GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS/ EDUCATORS

Each learning module has three learning outcomes. Each learning outcome is accompanied with a set of readings and discussion questions for each reading. The readings are meant to complement the Background material. This guide provides instructions on how these discussion questions can be incorporated into the classroom. These serve as sample guidelines, so feel free to adapt this activity to your classroom and teaching style! Facilitators are encouraged to review the Facilitator Guide before class time.

STEPS

- 1 From the reading list, pick at least one reading from each learning outcome that would fit best with your learning goals. Some areas of consideration include discussion questions you hope to engage in, length of reading and author(s).
- 2 Assign readings ahead of class time so learners come prepared to engage in discussion.
- 3 Break the class up into groups, group size depends on which option is selected below. Groups can be broken up by the reading (ie have one group discuss the reading connected to Learning Outcome #1) and then each group would share their discussion so that the entire group would hear about each reading even if they only discuss one reading.
- 4 Present discussion questions during class either on a whiteboard, presentation or printed on a piece of paper.



- 4 Provide participants with the following options to conduct the discussions:

Option 1: Think-Pair-Share

1. Break the participants into smaller groups of ideally 5-6 people depending on how many learners are in your class. Assign each group to discuss a reading by reviewing the discussion questions together.
2. Participants will individually reflect on the discussion questions and share their responses within the small groups.
3. Once participants have finished their discussion in the small group (~20-25 mins), have them report back the key points of their discussion to the larger group.

Option 2 for smaller class sizes of ~12-15 participants or less: : 1-2-4-ALL¹

1. (1, individually) Learners will reflect on the discussion questions individually in silence for 1 minute.
2. (2, pairs) Learners will pair up with another student and generate ideas for the 2 minutes.
3. (4, small group) Learners will form groups of 4 to share and develop ideas for 4 minutes.
4. (ALL) Learners will return to the larger group to report insights and takeaways for 5 minutes before proceeding onto the next question.
5. During 'ALL', limit the number of shared ideas to 2 to 4, especially in large groups, and maintain the rule of one conversation at a time.
6. You are encouraged to use a visual or auditory cue (e.g. a bell) to announce transitions since this format is time-sensitive.
7. Ensure that every group and individual has an opportunity to share and be heard so that no one individual or a few groups are dominating the group sharing. We suggest reviewing community agreements with the class before the start of the activity.

¹ This method is adapted from [Liberating Structures](#).

- 5 Alternatively, discussion questions can be assigned to be completed ahead of class time.
- Have learners complete a one-page reading reflection to briefly answer the discussion questions ahead of class.
 - During class time, learners can go through their answers in small groups and reference their written reflection.
 - Depending on instructor capacity, learners can submit their written reflection as an assignment (graded or for completion). This allows instructors to provide constructive feedback and effectively address any misconceptions at the beginning of the next class.

ASSESSMENT: READING REFLECTIONS

Educators can choose to incorporate reading reflections as graded or non-graded (for completion) assignments. Educators are encouraged to share guiding questions, suggested word count and an evaluation rubric (if graded) for clarity on what is expected from the student. Educators may also choose to invite learners to draw insights from course materials (lectures, readings, other activities if applicable) or from the learners' own lived experience and academic background based on their comfort levels.

NOTES:

READINGS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Learning Outcome #1: Describe the role of philanthropic foundations in international agricultural development and food systems governance.

1. [Who benefits from global food developments?](#)

Murrell, F. 2016. Mashed bananas -- who benefits from global food developments? *Journal of the Home Economics Institute of Australia*, 23(3), 19-23.

- What is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's role in their work of helping undernourished people in Uganda and India? Who are they forming partnerships with to achieve their goals? Whose voices are being left out/unheard?
- What are the kinds of solutions and interventions to poverty and malnourishment favoured by the Gates Foundation? Which solutions are generally overlooked or left out? Critique these decisions in terms of the unknowability/uncertainty of the future? What assumptions does the Gates Foundation make about how the future world will be?
- How is the Gates Foundation accountable to the communities their interventions are designed to impact?
- How does or doesn't the GM banana project address malnourishment? Are there trade-offs for Ugandan farmers associated with adopting these cultivars?

2. Food Regimes

Holt-Giménez, E. & Shattuck, A. (2011). Food crises, food regimes and food movements: rumblings of reform or tides of transformation? *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 38, 109-144. doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2010.538578.

- Describe the corporate food regime and characterize the role philanthropy plays.
- What is the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and how is it connected to philanthropy and the corporate food regime?
- Why do philanthropic foundations overwhelmingly support neoliberal projects in food systems development, and how is that connected to the growth of food movements?

3. [Philanthropy and the 'long' Green Revolution](#)

Nally, D., Taylor, S. (2015). The politics of self-help: The Rockefeller Foundation, philanthropy and the 'long' Green Revolution. *Political Geography*, 49, 51-63.

- How does philanthropy differ from charity? In what ways are they similar?
- What is meant by the term 'human capital' and how is it important, ideologically, to the aims of philanthropic models of development?
- Characterize the relationship between early philanthropists and the peasant farmers they sought to 'emancipate' from tradition.

Learning Outcome #2: Identify how unequal power relations enacted in international agricultural development maintains hegemonies and cycles of dependency in food systems at local, national, and international scales.

1. [Capitalist Philanthropy](#)

Morvaridi, B. (2012). Capitalist Philanthropy and the New Green Revolution for Food Security. *Int. J. Of Soc. Of Agr. & Food*, 19, 243-256.

- How do philanthropists legitimize their role in global governance and development? What organizations do they partner with to achieve a position of influence and power in the realm of food systems governance?
- What is cultural hegemony, as it is described in the article? What other examples of cultural hegemony can you think of?
- What is the capitalist philanthropist view of agrarian restructuring and how is it connected to the ongoing dominance of multinational corporations in global agriculture?

MODULE 6: FOOD SYSTEMS GOVERNANCE

2. [Philanthropy and Sovereignty](#)

Fent, A.M. (2012). Philanthropy and sovereignty: a critical feminist exploration of the Gates Foundation's approach to gender and agricultural development. *Association of Concerned Africa Scholars Bulletin* 88.

- a. Describe how the Gates Foundation positions itself paternalistically towards recipients of its aid.
- b. What does the Gates Foundation's mean by gender analysis? What assumptions does the Foundation make about gender relations and poverty?
- c. Why is gender 'targeted' by the Gates Foundation and how does article argue the positionality of the Foundation strips agency from women?
- d. What voices are left out of this gender analysis? Do either the Gates Foundation or Fent offer an analysis that includes 2SLGBTQIA+ perspectives?

2. [The New Donor Culture and International Agricultural Development](#)

Schurman, R. (2018). Micro(soft) managing a 'green revolution' for Africa: The new donor culture and international agricultural development. *World Development* 112, 180-192. doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.08.003.

- a. How does the Gates Foundation 'do development'? What characteristics do they favour in their staff and partner organizations and why?
- b. How might the way the Gates Foundation self-organizes internally impact the way it approaches achieving its development goals?
- c. What is meant by 'managing up' and 'managing down' and how does that look in practice? Using an equity lens, consider potential impacts on aid recipients from managing up/down. How does this impact the power relations between the donor and the aid recipient, as well as within the Foundation?
- d. Problematize the idea that the Gates Foundation can or should be intervening in order to "fix" rural Africa and rural Africans. Is the 'culture of smartness' prevalent in the foundation contributing to hegemonic relationships between the foundation and its grantees?

Learning Outcome #3: Explore the impacts of different governance and development approaches employed in international agricultural development.

1. The African Green Revolution

Shilomboleni, H. (2017). African Green Revolution, food sovereignty and constrained livelihood choice in Mozambique. *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 52, 115-137. doi.org/10.1080/00083968.2018.1483833.

- a. Compare and contrast the African Green Revolution and food sovereignty approaches to achieving food security for African smallholder farmers.
- b. What is missed by focusing on the macroscopic ideological differences between African Green Revolution and food sovereignty approaches?
- c. What are the implications of the large differences in power and financial resources that exist between the Green Revolution proponents and food sovereignty organizations?

2. Philanthropy's Role in Africa's Agricultural Development

Holt-Gimenez, E. (2008). Out of AGRA: The Green Revolution returns to Africa. *Development*, 51, 464-471. doi.org/10.1057/dev.2008.49.

- a. What would be necessary to 'create the socio-economic conditions that allow for rapid and sustainable growth of Africa's agro-ecological alternatives'?
- b. What might be philanthropy's role in an equitable and sustainable agricultural development in Africa?
- c. How can philanthropic foundations be held accountable to the communities in which they are philanthropically involved?
- d. Are 'Green Revolution' and agroecological solutions mutually exclusive? Is there the potential for farmers to exercise agency and choose elements from each to incorporate?

3. [Governing Natural Resources for Food Sovereignty](#) [Movie]

CAWR Coventry University. (2019). "Governing natural resources for food sovereignty: full movie".

- a. What is meant by "community rights" over land and natural resources and how does it differ from individual rights?
- b. Why are community rights considered important for achieving food sovereignty and alleviating rural poverty in Africa?
- c. What are some commonalities between the various organizations represented in the video? What can we learn about building a coalition of grassroots food movements from this video?
- d. Briefly describe the research methodology employed by the two academics from CAWR Coventry University. Employ an equity lens and critique the methodology in terms of socially just and community-based research.

Other resources:

- Ferguson, B. G., Maya, M. A., Giraldo, O., Terán Giménez Cacho, M. M. y, Morales, H., & Rosset, P. (2019). Special issue editorial: What do we mean by agroecological scaling? *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 43(7-8), 722-723. doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2019.1630908.
- Shiva, V. (2019). ["Bill Gates is continuing the work of Monsanto", Vandana Shiva tells FRANCE 24."](#)
- The Africa Report. (2017). [Green revolutions, gold in that soil.](#)
- AGRA. (2020). [AGRA Annual Report 2019-Integration and Scale: Transforming the livelihoods and lives of smallholder farmers in Africa.](#)

ASSESSMENT: READING QUIZ

Administer an online or in class quiz on one or several of the readings before the activities.

- Option 1: Refer to the guiding questions listed with the readings
- Option 2: As a pre-reading assignment, have participants submit a question from the readings. Select and compile the most relevant questions to create a reading quiz.

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