

Cultivating Opportunity

Teaching Guide

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Video produced by Michael Sheridan.
Teaching Guide written by Brenda C. Barrett,
edited by Laura Inouye.

About Oxfam America

Oxfam America creates lasting solutions to hunger and poverty by working in partnership with grassroots organizations promoting sustainable development in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Americas, including the United States. To foster an environment supportive of long-term development, Oxfam also advocates for policy change and produces educational materials for the U.S. public on poverty and hunger issues.

Oxfam America

26 West Street, Boston, MA 02111

Phone 800/77-OXFAM

E-mail info@oxfamamerica.org

Website: www.oxfamamerica.org

Cultivating Opportunity Teaching Guide

This teaching guide to Oxfam America's *Cultivating Opportunity* video contains follow-up activities on three topics:

- Cooperatives
- African-American Farmers
- Mozambique's Land and Resources

These activities are appropriate for students in grades 6-12. They include discussion topics, group exercises, field trips and research projects which can be used in history, social science or business classes. Also included are lists of terms and additional references (books, videos and web sites) for each topic.

Cultivating Opportunity

The Video at a Glance

Cultivating Opportunity looks at two small-scale farmers from vastly different parts of the world — Mozambique and the United States — who have devised similar solutions to the hardships of hunger and poverty in their communities. You will meet Willie Head, Jr., an African-American farmer in Georgia, and Teresa Massango, an African family farmer in Mozambique. Both are struggling to hold on to their family farms and to gain access to markets. With the help of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives (FSC) in the U.S. South and the Union of General Cooperatives (UGC) in Mozambique, both of which are supported by Oxfam America, Willie and Teresa organize farmers' cooperatives to market their produce collectively and increase their incomes.

In the U.S. context, the video focuses on the difficulties of small-scale farmers competing with large agribusinesses for a share of the market. As African-American farmers, they also must deal with the racism and discrimination that come with being from a minority group. With help and encouragement from the FSC, Willie organizes a group of farmers to form a cooperative. Together, these

small-scale farmers find ways to overcome obstacles they could not surmount as individuals. They now produce high-quality products and sell them directly to customers ranging from organic and specialty food stores to low-income housing residents operating their own farmers' markets. By cutting out the middleman, the farmers earn more and their customers get high-quality produce at fair prices. In the process, Willie gains experience as an organizer and leader.

In Mozambique, small-scale farmers face the challenges of land access and inequities. Land issues are complex in a country in transition from 400 years of Portuguese colonial rule followed by a 16-year civil war. Current laws and government policies restrict land ownership, making it very difficult for poor people to reclaim land. UGC helped Teresa work her way through the system to reclaim her land and form a community cooperative. Members helped each other secure deeds to their land and established a community market to sell their products.

Cultivating Opportunity demonstrates that by working together in cooperatives, small-scale farmers are learning to: 1) pool their resources, 2) educate other farmers about better ways to farm, 3) gain entry into markets, and 4) increase their incomes from their products.

Cooperatives

Reading

Cooperative Principles

Cooperatives are run by a set of principles that underlie the basic philosophy and guide day-to-day operations. Following are seven cooperative principles adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance.

Voluntary and Open Membership: Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

Democratic Member Control: Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote). Cooperatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.

Member Economic Control: Members contribute

equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least a part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative.

Autonomy and Independence: Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations (including government agencies) or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

Education, Training and Information: Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public — particularly young people and opinion leaders — about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

Co-Operation Among Cooperatives: Cooperatives serve their members and strengthen the cooperative movement most effectively by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

Concern for Community: Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

Farm Cooperatives

Following are goals and objectives particular to farm cooperatives such as those highlighted in *Cultivating Opportunity*:

Marketing: Train small-scale farmers to compete in markets, gain access to alternative markets, and implement creative, direct marketing practices, such as establishing independent farmers' markets.

Diversification: Teach small-scale farmers how to supplement their incomes by introducing other products.

Financing: Help small-scale farmers apply for joint loans from local banks to finance their operations.

Transportation: Help small-scale farmers find ways to share transportation to take their products to market.

Activities

- **Discussion** Have students read the cooperative principles prior to viewing the video. Afterward, lead a discussion about how these goals and objectives played out in the video.
- **Group Exercise** Divide the class into groups

and have each group explore a different type of business, such as sole proprietorships, partnerships or cooperatives. They should examine which types are appropriate for different circumstances and how each type operates. Have each group assign a leader or spokesperson to report back to the class, and then lead a discussion about how cooperatives can enable small-scale farmers to address their problems.

- **Research** In 1934 the American Missionary Association established the Brick Rural Life School in North Carolina to help African-American farmers learn improved farming skills and management. From it emerged the Brick Community Cooperative, which by 1946 included 500 people. Have students conduct their own research to identify a cooperative community project.
- **Field Trips** Take your class on a field trip to a local farm, a farmers' market or a cooperative food store for real-life experience in how products are brought to market.
 - Have students interview local farmers and distributors about their experiences in getting their products to market.
 - Set up a one-day farmers' market at school. Have each student contribute a couple of

dollars to purchase products to sell. Have students create signs for the stand, ads for the school newsletter and flyers to post around the school.

- Bring the class together for a final discussion on business practices, customer service, investment and profit.

Resources

- **Web Sites**

Farm Life: <http://topaz.kenyon.edu/projects/farmschool/addins/homepage.html>

Federation of Southern Cooperatives:
<http://www.federationsoutherncoop.com/>

- **Video**

Direct Marketing for Small Farmers: This 10-minute video developed by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Program is a wonderful piece explaining how farmers get their products to market. To order contact:

Visual Communications Specialist
North Carolina Cooperative Extension
Program
NC A&T State University
P.O. Box 21928

Greensboro, NC 27420
910/334-7636

Terms

Business
Community
Cooperative
Democratic
Income
Market share
Marketing
Partnership
Principles
Profit
Responsibility
Sole proprietorship

African-American Farmers

Reading

Farming was the primary means by which African Americans could make a living following the end of slavery in 1865. Although the Civil War freed the slaves, it left many African Americans in a

state of servitude. Many stayed on plantations as sharecroppers or tenant farmers well into the 1940s.

Sharecropping is a system that allowed a farmer to work a certain number of acres on a large plantation. In exchange for his labor, the sharecropper received a stipend or “seed money” which he had to repay after the harvest. Through price manipulation and outright cheating of usually illiterate farmers, crops often sold at a loss, leaving sharecroppers with very little after settling debts with the plantation owner. This system kept the sharecropper in perpetual debt and fostered a new form of slavery throughout the South.

Some African-American farmers were fortunate enough to acquire land of their own and become independent farmers. In 1934, through the Tenant Purchase Program established by President Franklin Roosevelt under the Farm Security Administration, some African Americans were able to buy land with low-interest federal loans.

Even as landowners, African Americans were at a disadvantage because local power structures, including banks, businesses and markets, remained under the control of whites. African Americans were forced to pay high interest rates on credit, if they could get it, and high prices for supplies to farm their land. This systematic discrimination kept African-American farmers from rising above their low economic status, ultimately forcing many to give up their farms due to financial insolvency.

Adverse weather conditions, such as floods in the Mississippi Delta, contributed to poor harvests, forcing many African Americans to leave their farms and seek work in the cities. But jobs in Southern cities were limited, and many African-American farmers migrated north in search of better jobs and opportunities.

In all, some six million African Americans headed north between 1910 and 1960, with the largest migration during the 1940s. During this period, the number of African-American farms peaked at more than 925,000 in 1920. By 1992, the number of farms owned or leased by African Americans declined by 98 percent, with only 18,000 remaining. Their acreage dropped from a high of 15 million acres to less than 2.3 million.

In the early 1980s, a number of African Americans started to return to the South. Some believed that the civil rights movement of the 1970s had changed things and that they would receive fairer treatment as farmers, but the “Promised Land” did not turn out to be the answer to their dreams.

Since the early 20th century, and gaining momentum during the civil rights period, African-American farmers had begun to organize and form cooperatives to gain better access to markets. But as the number of African-American farmers continued to decline, they took their concerns to Washington and presented their case to the President and Departments of Agriculture and Justice [see web sites

listed below for more]. Their future hangs in the balance.

Activities

- **Discussion Topics** 1) Lead a discussion about cooperatives vs. individual family businesses. Encourage students to think about how the size of a farm affects its ability to turn a profit, to access markets and to compete with large agribusinesses. Also talk about the benefits to small-scale farmers of pooling their resources to increase their marketability and incomes.
2) Introduce the topic of racism and how it affects power relations among farmers and markets. Ask students to identify acts of racism in the reading and in the video. Invite students to talk about racism they see in their everyday lives. Encourage discussion about solutions.
- **Research** Introduce reference materials, such as *Abstracts of the U.S.* produced by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, to substantiate facts, including demographic statistics on race, labor and income, presented in the video.

Resources

- **Web Sites**

U.S. Department of Agriculture 1998-2003 Civil Rights Action Team Report

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/programs/crstplan.htm>

African-American Farmers Organize Against Republican “Freedom to Farm” Bill:

<http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/paige.html>

U.S. Census Bureau

<http://www.census.gov>

- **Books**

Nicholas Lemann, *The Promise Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* (Vintage Books: Random House, NY, 1992) chapter 1.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Communications, *Agriculture Fact Book 1996*

Terms

Civil Rights
Discrimination
Emancipation
Interest
Migration
Plantation
Racism
Sharecropper
Slavery
Systematic

Mozambique: Land and Resources

Reading

What is it like to live in a country that was under colonial rule for four centuries? To have your homeland taken away from you? To be forced to work as a slave on your own land and to be denied the rights to citizenship, including the rights to vote and to self-governance? These are the struggles of the people of Mozambique who endured exploitation by the Portuguese for 400 years followed by a 16-year civil war. *Cultivating Opportunity* briefly identifies some of the economic and social problems as well as the many challenges the

Mozambican people face in becoming self-sufficient.

This reading examines the political changes the people of Mozambique have experienced in their struggle for freedom. Their story is similar to that of African Americans' struggle for freedom. Both were displaced from their land and are struggling to regain it. Both were left with little power to determine their own destiny. It is a long road home for the people of Mozambique because although they have expelled those who ruled their homeland for centuries, many of the negative effects linger on.

Mozambique's Land System

Under Portuguese occupation, Mozambique had a two-tier land system which was controlled by customary authorities and *regulos* (land chiefs) who were given land in exchange for providing labor for private plantations. The *regulos* also provided state services, such as collecting land taxes from local landholders.

The constitution assessed taxes on land, allowing the *regulos* power over land occupied by Mozambican nationals and giving *regulos* the power to allocate land to private companies, Portuguese settlers and colonial plantation owners.

After independence the Mozambique Liberation Movement (FRELIMO) nationalized all the land and the *regulos* were divested of their power. The

State expanded agricultural estates, pushing nationals into communal villages and creating state farms under nationalist rule. Civil unrest followed by drought left many farmers without food or displaced. Some land was later returned to the regulos, but not to the original owners.

The State implemented the national land law allowing the State to concede land for commercial use for up to 50 years. In 1987 this law was amended to allow small-scale farmers to use land they had traditionally farmed and to obtain land-use title deeds. Even so, land use title deeds were very costly and difficult to obtain.

In 1995 the Permanent Land Commission was established. It wrote the first National Land Policy for Mozambique. The purpose was to simplify land administration. Land continues to be controlled by the State, but now Mozambique nationals are allowed to buy land and trade titles.

Many Oxfam America partner organizations are actively involved in the land rights issue. Through their efforts, Mozambicans are better able to interpret the new land laws and gain access and control to their most valued asset.

Mozambique's Political Struggles

Mozambique was rich in gold and ivory and became a center of trade from the 15th through the 19th centuries due to its easy coastal access.

During the Portuguese occupation, which began

at the turn of the 15th century, the country was also stripped of many natural resources. Nearly a million Mozambicans were sold into slavery between the 1760s and the early 1900s.

Afterward, many native Mozambicans found themselves in *chibalos* (a system of forced labor) controlled by the state. Mozambican men were sent to work in South African gold mines and cotton fields in other Southern African countries.

In 1964, FRELIMO launched a 10-year struggle to gain independence from colonial rule. Independence was won in 1975, and the Portuguese fled the country, taking everything they could and destroying what they had to leave behind. All commercial production and trade collapsed.

In 1976 civil conflict erupted, quickly dashing hopes that the newly independent country would build a modern, progressive economy. The terrorist Mozambican militia known as RENAMO, supported initially by neighboring Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and later by South Africa's apartheid regime, terrorized the country, killing countless civilians and destroying more than 2,500 schools and 800 rural health posts along with entire villages, roads, bridges and other economic and social infrastructure.

Nationalism followed with the adoption of Marxism-Leninism in 1977 and socialism became the official doctrine. All land was nationalized and put under government control. This pushed native Mozambicans off their land, restricting ownership

to the government.

Famine struck in the mid 1980s, leaving thousands starving and forcing many people to abandon their homes in search of food.

In 1992, when the democratization of South Africa deprived the RENAMO rebels of outside support the warring factions signed a peace accord, paving the way for Mozambique's first multi-party elections in October 1994.

The end of the revolution left one million dead, two million refugees and four million internally displaced people out of a total population of 17 million.

In 1994 two million people were dependent on international food aid. The country was identified as the poorest nation in the world with an annual per capita income of \$88, and over two-thirds of the population living in poverty.

Activities

- **Discussion** Lead a discussion about what it means for a people to be powerless, to have their property taken away and to be under the control of others against their will. Talk about the similarities between the struggles of Mozambicans and African Americans to win back their freedom and to gain power after years of slavery, apartheid and sharecropping.
- **Small Group Research and Discussion** Di-

vide students into small groups. Assign each group to research an aspect of Mozambican history – life under Portuguese colonial rule, the role of agriculture, the civil war, post-war development — to present to the rest of the class. Use the references and web sites listed below.

Resources

- Web Sites

Oxfam America’s field trip to Mozambique:
<http://www.oxfamamerica.org/advocacy/art796.html?backresults=TRUE>

Africa Online: News & Information

<http://www.fe.doe.gov/international/mozambique.html>

This web site contains four reports specific to Mozambique. An excellent map is found on the “CIA 1997 World Factbook” site, which is included in this section.

- **Books**

Rachel Waterhouse, *Mozambique: Rising from the Ashes*, Oxfam Country Profile, Oxfam Great Britain, 1996.

Terms

Apartheid
Citizenship
Colonialism
Communism
Democracy
Economy
Exploitation
Imperialism
Independence
Nationalism

Sources

“The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited:
Mozambique,” EIU Country Report 4th Quarter
1996

“Minority Family Farmers Face Extinction,” *Farm
Aid News & Views*, (February 1997) 5:3

Boivin, Gigi and Thom, Michelle, editors. *The
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy for Farm
Aid*, Mark Ritchie, March 29, 1993 & June 28, 1995

Griswold, Deirdre, “What Imperialism Has Done To Mozambique,” *Workers World*, February 15, 1996

Roesch, Otto, *Politics of Agriculture in Tropical Africa*, Chapter 12

Skrodzki, Bernhard, *Guide to Mozambique*, Bradt Publications, UK and The Globe Pequot Press, USA, 1994

Waterhouse, Rachel, *Mozambique: Rising From the Ashes*, Oxfam (UK and Ireland), 1996

Zippert, John, “Christian Social Action: Not One More Acre!” Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund, October 1994