



Food Systems & Social Impacts





Learning Outcomes

- Examine how people are affected by the different components of the food system
- Examine the negative impacts people suffer from inequitable food systems





Agenda

- Relating food systems and social impacts
- Defining and examining food justice
- Considering how each component of the food system has social impacts
- Food justice discussion





Relating Food Systems and Social Impacts

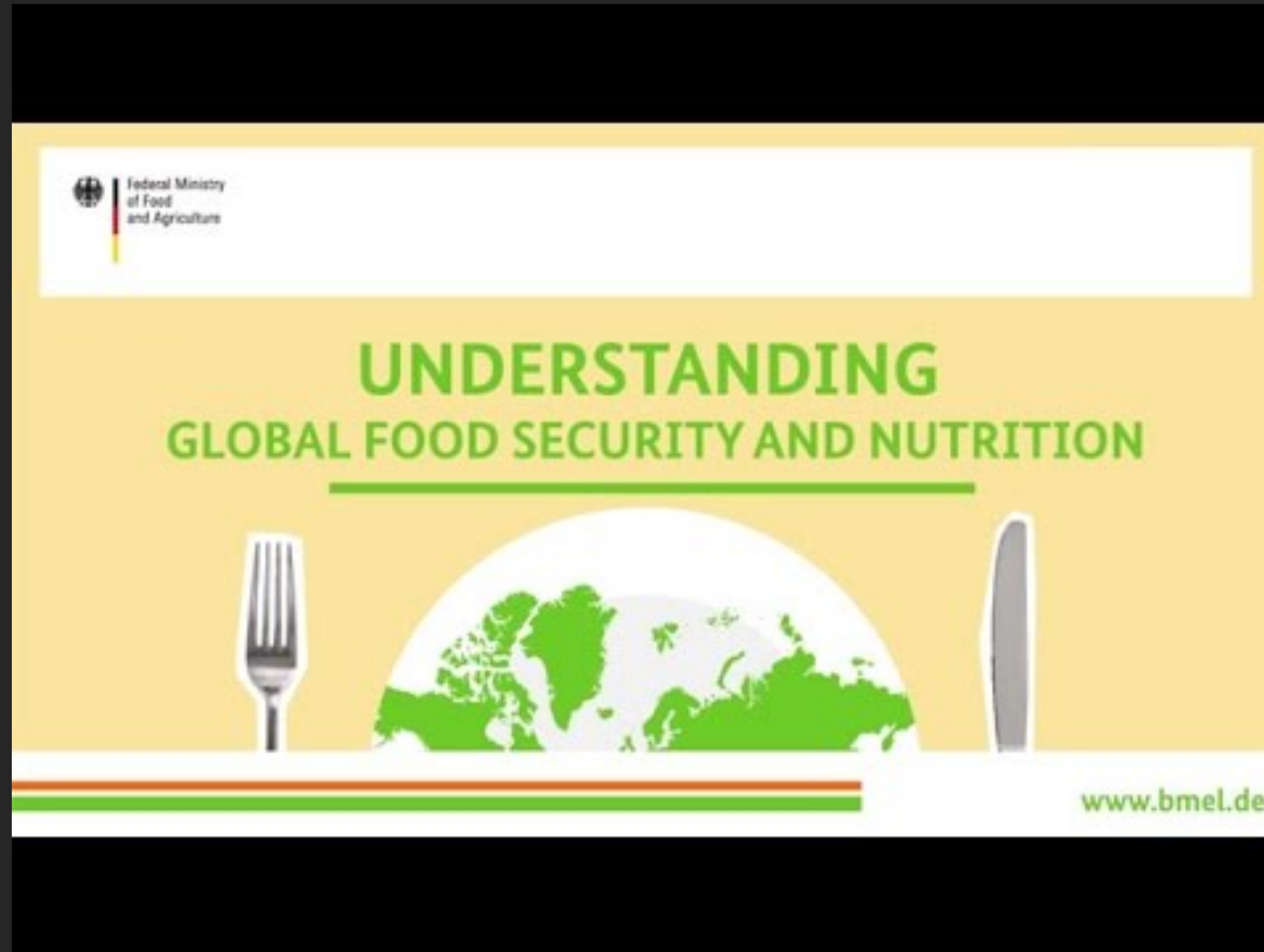
Think, Pair, Share:

Take a minute to think about this question on your own, then turn to a partner and share your response with them:

What inequalities exist in our current global food system?



Relating Food Systems and Social Impacts



"Understanding global food security and nutrition" (4 mins)

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=QJG7HmQyYcY>



Relating Food Systems and Social Impacts



Chapter 1: What is Food Justice? (2 mins)

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=p6-Mi1uY9AE>





Discussion

- Do we produce enough food globally to feed everyone in the world?
- Why are people still suffering from hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity?
- How does the video define food justice?
- **How would you define food justice?**



Relating Food Systems and Social Impacts

Has anyone ever heard of the term “food desert”, “food swamp”, or “food apartheid”?

What is a Food Desert?



What is A Food Desert? (2 mins)

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=wAu8Noo8CxA>



Food Justice Terms

Food Desert

Typically, food desert refers to access to healthy foods and how far away those foods are from the community. However, this term is not being used as much due to its failure to address the larger context around food systems and the root causes of health inequalities related to food.

Food Swamp

More specific than the term “food desert,” a “food swamp” refers to areas where there is an abundance of unhealthy food options (fast food, corner stores, gas stations, etc.) but a lack of access to healthy food options. A “food swamp” could be called a “food desert.”

Food Apartheid

Describes the inequitable structural, historical, and political perspectives and policies related to the forces that have shaped what entities of food — healthy or not — exist in a community.





Discussion

- **What kind of stores are most common in our community?**
- **What kinds of stores would you like to see in our community?**
- How can education about nutrition bring change?
- How do you see food justice play out in your community?
- In what other areas of the food system might food justice apply (think about the different elements you defined in **Lesson 3: Sustainable Food Systems?**)



Social Components of the Food System

Food System Components/Stages

Production

Harvest

Distribution

Processing

Packaging

Retailing

Distribution

Consumption

Disposal

Who is employed in the various stages?

- What is their job?
- What are any positive or negative impacts of that job?
- What is the pay like?
- What are working conditions like?
- Are there risks involved in this job?
- Where are these employees located?

Where is the food produced, and how much land does it take to produce?

- What was previously on the land that's being used to produce this food?
- Did any groups of indigenous peoples live on and steward the land currently being used to produce this food?
- Did these groups get displaced? If so, where? Are they now consumers of the food produced, or is it being distributed to other locations?

Who is a consumer, and who is not a consumer?

- What allows certain people to be consumers and not others? (i.e., location, income, etc.)
- Where do consumers exist? Is it the same location where employees worked and produced the food?





Discussion

- What inequalities exist in our current global food system?
- Can you think of ways to make any part of the food system more socially equitable?



Additional Resources

- **[Why is There Uneven Access to Food? Crash Course Geography #42](#)**: Crash Course - Discover the diffusion of food across the globe during the Columbian Exchange and examine how changes in food technology from the Agricultural Revolution to the Green Revolution to the Genetic Revolution have played a significant part in food availability across the globe.
- **[Trying to Eat Healthy in a Food Desert](#)**: VICE News - Explore the "food swamp" in East New York, Brooklyn, and look at systemic racism in America's food systems.
- **[Food Sovereignty: What It Is and Why It's Important](#)**: NowThis Earth - Climate advocate Alexa White broke down the importance of food sovereignty and how it ensures every step of the food process is fair and sustainable.
- **[Our food system hurts: living with migrant farmworkers | Seth Holmes | TEDxYakimaSalon](#)**: TEDx Talks - Unequal policies force people to leave their homes and risk their lives to harvest our food, while unequal hierarchies in our food system determine who benefits and who gets sick.
- **[How This Indigenous Farmer Is Solving Food Insecurity](#)**: PBS Terra - As climate chaos increases around the world, Michelle Week, a farmer outside of Portland, Oregon is drawing on her Sinixt indigenous knowledge to adapt her farm to the changing seasons, combating the increasing food security crisis while continuing to provide fresh food to her local community.





Contributors

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