

Food for Thought

A dynamic enrichment programme for KS 2/3 that enables young people to make real connections with the wider world.

Be part of an interactive experience that uses Leicester's twinning link with Nicaragua in Central America and the world renowned plant collection at the University of Leicester Botanic Garden to explore the journey of crops from plant to product.



"I really enjoyed learning about Masayan agriculture and harvesting maize."



"The main thing I liked as a market stall trader was the practical session where we had to buy things that other people made and then sell them on."



"I didn't know anything about plants until I came to the Garden. Now I know a lot... and plants can do incredible things."

Food for Thought

Food for Thought is a collaborative programme between the Leicester Masaya Link Group and the University of Leicester Botanic Garden

This unique adventure provides hands-on experience of life in Masaya, Leicester's twin city in Nicaragua, using the facilities at the University of Leicester Botanic Garden to find out about a range of plants that grow in a tropical country. Students discover how these plants are used in food, medicine and crafts and they learn about the implications of local and international trade and the impact of climatic events on lives and livelihoods.

Actively connecting with the wider world

Set around a Nicaraguan market place, participants take on the role of local producers, making and selling plant-based goods and interacting with each other as they go about their jobs. Everyone is busy in all sorts of ways...

- ❖ **Carrying out** their tasks from planting, harvesting and grinding maize, to making 'tortillas', preparing tropical fruit juices, finding out about plants in medicine or designing textile and hand-made crafts.
- ❖ **Searching** for Nicaraguan plants in the Botanic Garden's tropical and desert houses.
- ❖ **Experiencing** the economic ups and downs of trading in a local Nicaraguan market.
- ❖ **Thinking** about how people and places are interrelated at local and global levels.



Pupil-focused learning

Practical and participatory activities that

- **encourage** team work and negotiation skills.
- **create** space for critical thinking and discussion.
- **build** self-confidence and a positive attitude towards sustainability and diversity.

What we offer

- **Briefing session** and teacher's pack.
- **A full day's visit** to the University of Leicester Botanic Garden with specialist teaching and resources.
- **An interactive CD** of photos, videos and follow-up activities.
- **Guidance** on using the project as a scheme of work to embed the global dimension.



Benefits to schools

- ▶ **Clear curriculum links** to Citizenship, Geography, Science, Maths, MFL, Art, DT and Food Technology.
- ▶ **Enhances** Literacy and Numeracy.
- ▶ **Accessible** to all learning styles.
- ▶ **Engaged and active learners** promoting better behaviour and improved standards.
- ▶ **Contributes to** Learning Outside the Classroom, International School Award, Eco and Healthy Schools.
- ▶ **Supports** staff CPD.

"An amazing amount of knowledge was acquired by everyone. The kinaesthetic approach to learning appealed to all and we have been awakened to a breadth of information."

Deputy Head Teacher at Whitehall Primary School

How the programme works

1. Briefing Session

This is essential in order to participate fully and involves

- An in-school twilight session (or during PPA) for the lead teacher and any support staff to discuss the logistics of the visit to the Botanic Garden and plan related curriculum work.
- Includes a teacher's pack containing a full description of the activity day, risk assessments, photo permission forms and maps for the Garden.

2. The visit to the University of Leicester Botanic Garden

This is a full-day of participatory activities, staffed by specialists.

- The day begins with an introduction to Masaya, Leicester's link with Nicaragua, through an interactive session with photographs to help the students find out more about the country.
- The day revolves around 8 interconnected activities in which students are divided into role groups based on Nicaraguan trades that involve the use of plants (maize in particular). Inspired by real life scenarios and using Nicaraguan currency (the Cordoba), they buy their raw materials from a 'Nicaraguan market' and make a range of goods to sell back.



Farmers plant and harvest maize and use microscopes to look at the fertility of their crop.

Millers process the maize, grinding it into flour using different methods and tools.

Cooks use the flour to prepare maize 'tortillas' and find out about the science behind popping corn.

Juice Makers use a variety of fruits to make tropical juices and traditional Nicaraguan maize drinks.

Herbalists make healing balms and collect medicinal plants from around the Garden to create a display board showing how these are used.

Textile Workers design, sew and decorate cotton bags used to store 'tortillas'.

Handicraft Workers create greetings cards with maize husks and bracelets from wooden beads.

Market Traders set out their stalls with fruit, vegetables, genuine Nicaraguan artefacts and the products the other groups make, pricing all the goods to buy and sell.



- **A highlight of the day is a tour of the tropical and desert houses in the Botanic Garden to identify and sketch some of the Nicaraguan plants used in the activities e.g. pineapples, aloe vera and cotton.**
- Through the various trading transactions participants learn about the workings of profit and loss in a local economy.
- The activities are drawn to a close with a plenary to share experiences and think about the wider global issues of sustainable development, social justice and interdependence.
- The day ends with a Fiesta when everyone has a chance to taste some of the foods related to the day as they listen to Nicaraguan music.

3. Follow-up Activities:

Food for Thought is designed as a springboard for other work in school. The follow-up activities maximise the benefits of participating in the programme.

- We encourage participants to share their experiences with the wider school through displays, assemblies and peer-learning activities.
- We can provide a range of curriculum ideas and topic webs for development back in school.
- Additional sessions can be booked to explore particular issues in greater depth e.g. fairtrade.

Cost and Booking Information

Who is it for?

Food for Thought is designed for years 5, 6 and 7 (it is possible to involve year 4)

- ▶ Up to **65 pupils** can take part in the activity day at the Botanic Garden and there are multiple ways in which schools can participate, e.g.
 - By bringing 2 classes - age groups can be mixed to enable smaller schools to bring 2 classes from different year groups.
 - By bringing Gifted and Talented students from different subject areas.
 - By using it as a cross-phase project for years 6/7.
 - As part of an enrichment or activities week, or as a collapsed curriculum day.
- ▶ The kinaesthetic, visual and auditory methodologies meet the needs of all learning styles.

What does it cost?

The programme costs £750 and includes:

- ▶ The briefing session and the teacher's pack.
- ▶ The activity day for **up to 65 pupils** at the Botanic Garden, a *Quality Badged Learning Outside the Classroom Centre* (normally costing £4.25 per head).
- ▶ 4 experts in the field delivering the activities.
- ▶ All the materials and use of resources on the activity day (equivalent to £3 per head).
- ▶ A CD of photos, videos and worksheets for complementary work in school.
- ▶ Advice and guidance on follow-up activities.
- ▶ Access to Nicaraguan handling boxes for displays, assemblies and follow-up work.

When does the day at the Botanic Garden take place?

Food for Thought runs in the Spring and Autumn terms. Early booking is recommended.

- ▶ Spring dates: **Mon 30, Tue 31 January and Wed 1 - Fri 3 February 2012**
- ▶ Autumn dates: **Mon 17 - Fri 21 September 2012**

Schools should arrive between **9.30-10am** (depending on distance traveled)

How is it staffed?

The activity day at the garden is led by teachers and specialists, however

- ▶ **each school must bring at least 6 adults to supervise the groups.**

How do I book?

To make a booking please contact:

University of Leicester Botanic Garden
Stoughton Drive South, Oadby
Leics, LE2 2NE

Phone/fax: 0116 271 2933

Email: ubg@le.ac.uk

For further information please contact:

Leicester Masaya Link Group
Southfields Library, Southfields Drive
Leicester, LE2 6QS

Phone: 0116 223 2272

Email: lmkg@leicestermasayalink.org.uk

Watch **Food for Thought** in action on **www.leicestermasayalink.org.uk**

The Leicester Masaya Link Group is a registered charity (No: 1088684) and is a member of the **Consortium of Development Education Centres**. The University of Leicester Botanic Garden is a badged **Learning Outside the Classroom Centre**. Both organisations are members of the **East Midlands UN Regional Centre for Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development**.