



GOAL 15: LIVE ON LAND

'He who rides on a donkey's back doesn't know that the ground is burning hot.'
[proverb from Burkina Faso]

One day with Flora from Burkina Faso

Salut, je suis Flora. It is nice of you to visit me here in Burkina Faso! I have just finished my school homework and now I am going to take some time to relax. I love taking a nap in the millet fields that belong to my grandfather Yacouba. Come with me and I will show you where they are and maybe we will meet him there, he is probably working in the fields right now.

Can you see the amazing forest over there? 40 years ago when my grandfather Yacouba was young there was nothing here, just desert. At that time there was a great famine because it hadn't rained for a very long while. That was when Yacouba started to plant trees in the desert. Everyone else thought he was crazy because the desert ground was way too dry to have plants growing there but he went out with a pick axe made holes in the hard ground in the shadeless heat. He then planted millet seeds.

Yacouba had the great idea of adding a fertilizer mixture of slurry, animal excrements, leaves and ash into the holes. Then during the rainy season water accumulated in the holes and like magic the millet began to grow through the fertilizer mixture but not only millet also trees and bushes. The roots of the bushes and trees then prevented the water from drying out and provided shade for humans and animals. The falling leaves served as

new fertilizer for the millet plants, so that when the people here were hungry they could also even eat the leaves from the trees and bushes.

Over there under the mango tree, next to the two cows, you can see my grandfather lying there – he is wearing a brown cotton robe and a white cap. Oh, he is sleeping. I don't want to wake him up he has probably been working the whole day on the field. I will go back to the village to get him something to eat. My Aunty can make him some fresh 'To'. That is a millet bread that we eat with different kinds of sauces almost every day.

I am very proud of my grandfather and what he has achieved. His cultivation technique is now used by hundreds of farmers in the desert area as well as in the neighbouring countries from Burkina Faso, such as Mali and Niger. So now that they have applied his technique they have turned desert regions into fertile land. My grandfather has taught me that land is precious because it is the basic foundation for our food supply. Ninety percent of the people living here live off the food they produced themselves. So if I could I have a wish for the world, I would want every country to become sufficiently fertile and I would want local resources to be used in a sustainable way in order for all people to be able to grow fruit and vegetables so nobody has to go hungry.





Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss

Land is the foundation of the production of our food and therefore the basis for our lives. Millions of small farmers in Asia and Africa produce the largest proportion of food that we have on this earth. Austria also makes agriculture a high priority, in fact about 44 percent of the land in the country is used for agriculture. Most farms belong to families that not only produce food but also support the preservation of the countryside. However, sadly the number of family owned farms is decreasing quite rapidly and there is now less land available for crops. Every day Austria loses around 20 hectares of land because streets and houses are built. Twenty hectares is around the same size as 30 football fields. This results in significant negative consequences, for not only can Austria grow much less food but the way the land is used has an important effect on our climate because land stores greenhouse gases including CO₂ and water. As these stores decrease, the weather becomes more extreme and this in turn can cause natural disasters such as flooding. Goal 15 says that we need to ensure the conservation of our agricultural land and that we should use it in a sustainable manner.

The deserts and semi-deserts, which cover around one third of land area on this earth are spreading rapidly and increasing in size at a rate which almost matches the landmass of Switzerland each year. Climate change is one of the causes for this growth in desert land and therefore why we have to develop new technologies to help develop desert areas into fertile land. As part of this we should seek to support affected countries which are implementing such technological solutions.

Worldwide there are 356 million square meters of forests cleared and burned every day, and the biggest part of the forests lost comes from the tropical rain forests. Each year an area as big as Greece disappears. Can you imagine that? That is 35 football fields per minute! The rainforest has the biggest biodiversity of plants and animals but if their habitat is destroyed many of these plants and animals will die. In fact up to 150 species of plants and animals die every day.

As part of protecting endangered species and preventing their extinction, Goal 15 stipulates that we need to take action right away to prevent a

deterioration of natural habitats and the loss of biodiversity and that we need to do this in a way that promotes the sustainable management of forests and ends deforestation.

What can we do to help achieve this goal?

- You can support the Austrian agriculture by buying products that have been grown in Austria. It is particularly important to buy regional and seasonal products. If you want to take a step further then buy only Austrian organic products. Organic farming means that no artificial chemicals have been used and therefore better care has been taken of the agricultural land.
- More and more people live in the city and have forgotten what it's like to live in a more natural environment. Get to know your surroundings! Go for a hike, get to know more about the forests, agriculture and farming. Maybe your school wants to invite a guest speaker who can do a work shop with you. You could, of course, join the **Alpine Club**, the **Naturfreunde** or other associations. You can find more information here: www.alpenverein.at/jugend
- An Austrian guy named Michael Schnitzler founded an association for the conservation and protection of the endangered Esquinas Rainforest in Costa Rica. You can symbolically buy yourself a tree there for 18 Euros and this helps the organisation. Maybe your school could organise a buffet and you could help fundraise some money to support the reforestation. You can find more details on this website: www.regenwald.at

Rosa (11) from Salzburg City: 'We try to only buy organic vegetables and fruits because no pesticides are used. I also throw paper in the waste paper so that it is properly recycled, which means less worldwide deforestation.'

Samuel (9) from Schärding, Upper Austria: 'When we go for a hike through the woods we always take the marked rambling routes, so that we don't disturb any animals living there.'