

To Eat or Not to Eat: Students Use Interactive Case Study to Learn about Global Food Security

With assistance from DoIT staff, Plant Pathology Associate Professor Jeri Barak has developed a web-based training tool for her PP 311 course on Global Food Security.

To Eat or Not to Eat lets students role-play as a columnist for an international newspaper. Their goal is to understand the multiple perspectives behind the humanitarian hunger crisis, the role GMO (genetically-modified food) may play in the conflict, and to consider options to avoid it.

The columnist in the study flies to Malawi in Africa and conducts in-person and phone interviews.

The study walks students through interviews with:

- a doctor at the feeding camp
- foreign and local Commerce Ministers
- a local Agricultural and Food Security Minister
- a scientist
- a Greenpeace volunteer
- a plant breeder

After each segment, the student reflects on the information he or she has heard.

At the end of the study, the student prepares a research notes outline summarizing the conflict, positions, underlying interests, and proposed solutions.

To learn more about Professor Barak, visit her [faculty profile](#) and her [faculty lab website](#).

The screenshot shows the 'To Eat or Not To Eat' interactive case study interface. The title 'To Eat or Not To Eat' is displayed in a green header. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains text describing the situation in Malawi, the role of the student as a columnist, and instructions on how to use the research notes outline. The right column features a collage of images: a map of Africa with Malawi highlighted, a group of people sitting on the ground, a man in a suit, and a person holding a corn cob. A 'Get Started' button is located at the bottom of the right column. A 'Home' button is visible in the bottom left corner of the interface.

To Eat or Not To Eat

Here is the situation

You're a reporter about to leave for Malawi to cover a story on the biggest drought of the century. Starvation is widespread (rampant). Politics surrounding food and GMOs is at the heart of this sad story.

As an op-ed columnist for an international news organization you may be able to influence the outcome of this situation.

Your goal is to investigate the multiple perspectives behind this humanitarian crisis and explore options to avoid it.

Before you leave on your trip, click on the document image here to open your research notes outline. Keep this document open; you'll use it throughout your trip to track your research in Malawi.

Get Started

Home