Summary

Farmers get an overview of the program, its context, and what they can expect from their participation in it. They also will have the opportunity to envision what they want their year to look like which can both help farmers to get excited about the season and help program directors better understand what their participants want from the program.

The need: It sets the tone for the program and is a place where participants can consider what the program will require of them, and their commitment to being part of the program (and their agreement to follow any rules).
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: This teaching resource was developed by Aley Kent and Ellee Igoe of IRC Food and Agriculture Technical Unit, in partnership with the Institute for Social and Economic Development (ISED Solutions). Refugee farmer training programs across the country provided feedback on this lesson, which is now integrated throughout the guide. From 2015 to 2017, ISED partnered with twelve refugee farmer training programs through a USDA BFRDP educational enhancement grant, to support the design and testing of new and shareable teaching resources for culturally and linguistically diverse farmers. To learn more about this project, or to access the whole list of newly developed teaching resources for refugee farmer training programs, see the New American Resource Library at https://nesfp.org/new-american-resources. For more in-depth explanations of the teaching approaches and activities used in these materials, please see the 'Teaching Handbook: Refugee farmer training'. While these resources were designed with refugee audiences in mind, they can be adapted and used in any farmer training or incubator setting.

VARIATION: Throughout this guide, boxes (like this one) contain variations and adaptations that serve varying programs and farmers. They are suggestions and reflections from other programs based on how they made this workshop work for them.

TEACHING TIP: Throughout this guide, boxes (like this one) contain teaching tips to help you better facilitate farmer learning. Most come from other programs who have tested and reflected on using this lesson.

DEVELOPER’S NOTE: Throughout this guide, boxes (like this one) contain notes from this guide's developer that provide insight into how a lesson is typically taught at the developer’s program.

ICONS: You will find the icons below throughout this guidebook. They are there so you are prepared for the activity and can get an idea of what it will bring at a glance.
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9 ORIENTATION TO THE FARM TRAINING PROGRAM PRESENTATION / ACTIVITY 3 / 20 MINUTES
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12 ENVISIONING MY FARMING YEAR / ACTIVITY 4 / 45 MINUTES
   • Activity to understand how this program fits into the growing season and help farmers to identify their personal goals for the year.

WHAT TESTERS SAY:
“This is great - much improved organization over my previous efforts, and more thorough.” - Linda, Global Gardens Refugee Training Farm

“I love the overall structure of the MPA! Very useful for start-up programs to have all of the “core” classes in one place and already organized in order.”
   - Hannah, All Farmers

“The MPA is relevant in introducing necessary topics and themes for our clients to know if they want to move forward as farmers and not just gardeners.”
   - International Rescue Committee, Tucson
OBJECTIVES: At the end of this session, growers will be able to:
• Understand four foundational farming vocabulary words/concepts
• Understand what it means to be a farmer in the U.S. and in the context of this program
• Picture what success looks like for them at the end of the farming season, and describe some of the help they will need to get there
• Understand what they can expect from program staff, and what is expected of them as participants
• Decide if this program is right for them

TIME: About 1.5 hours

STRUCTURE: Small group activities and PowerPoint presentations

CLASS SIZE/SESSION: Adaptable

INTENDED AUDIENCE: English Language Learning and Refugee Aspiring Farmers who are new to production agriculture in the local U.S. context.
Resources needed
Adaptable except where noted.

TIME: About 1.5 hours
Suggested times for each activity are estimates and can be modified based on your needs.

STAFF / INTERPRETERS: 1-2 Staff Members and 1 Interpreter

LOCATION: Classroom / packing shed etc.

SUPPLIES:
Materials Needed for Participants:
• Note paper
• Paper and drawing implements for visioning in Activity 4
• Any forms they will need to review or sign

Materials Needed for Trainer:
• This User’s Guide
• PowerPoint presentation
• Flipchart paper and markers
• Large enough space to form a circle with all participants
Step In, Step Out

TIME: 10-15 minutes

OVERVIEW:
This activity is a circle game that you can play indoors or outdoors with a wide range of people. You will want at least eight participants. It is a flexible, adaptable activity that you can easily modify based on your audience.

OBJECTIVES:
Understand what it means to be a farmer in the U.S. and in the context of this program.

STEP 1: INTRODUCTIONS
• Ask everyone to stand in a circle.
• Briefly introduce yourself and then go around and ask everyone to share their name with the group. Ask participants to introduce themselves to the person next to them, or to the whole group if this will not take folks too far out of their comfort zone.

STEP 2: STEP IN, STEP OUT ACTIVITY
How to Play:
• The leader/moderator reads a question or statement.
• If the statement applies to any one in the circle, they step in to the circle. If it does not (or when it does not) they step out — or back into their place in the circle.
• The leader/moderator can choose one “in” person to answer verbally for each question. Always ask folks to share their name before they answer.

Sample statements:
1. I have lived in the United States for more than 1 year/2 years/5 years/10 years.
2. I have 5 people in my family. 10 people. 15 or more.
3. I live in _____________ neighborhood.
4. I have lived in 2 countries in my life. 3 countries. More than 5 countries.
5. I have grown food for my family.
6. I have made money from food that I have grown.
7. I have used oxen to plow.
8. I have used a tractor to plow.
9. I currently have a place to grow in ____________ city.

Make up your own for your group. 12 to 15 questions or statements total is good.

TEACHING TIP:

One tester said: “Might be helpful if experienced farmers can attend this first lesson to describe their work and accomplishments.”
TIME: 10-20 minutes (depending on how much you decide to engage the audience)

OVERVIEW:
This PowerPoint presentation introduces farmers to key vocabulary words Production, Produce, Farmer, and Market.

OBJECTIVES:
Understand four foundational farming vocabulary words/concepts

MATERIALS NEEDED:
• ESL PowerPoint

STEPS: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION WITH IMAGES ATTACHED
Keywords:
• Production: An activity that creates something new.
• Produce: Fresh fruits and vegetables.
• Farmer: A person who grows food and sells it for money.
• Market: A place where food is bought and sold.
Orientation to the Farm Training Program

TIME: 20 minutes

OVERVIEW:
PowerPoint on what it means to be a producer in the U.S. and in this local context. Set up for discussion about program expectations.

OBJECTIVES:
By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:
• Understand what they can expect from program staff, and what is expected of them as participants.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
• Orientation PowerPoint presentation
• Projector or printed visuals to pass around

TEACHING TIP:
One reviewer mentioned: “I would insert photos from our farm - but would use the ones presented here as a model for what/ how to illustrate ideas.”

SLIDE 2: INTRODUCTION
When I say the word “farmer”, what does that mean to you? What is a farmer?
The government defines a farmer as someone who grows and sells their food and makes at least $1,000 in a year from farming. That’s only $20 per week. Most farmers in the United States have other jobs and farm only part time.

SLIDE 3: DO YOU THINK IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE A FARMER IN THE CITY?
We’ve seen it work! All of these individuals, and more, are earning money from their urban farm businesses.

SLIDE 4: MEET LUCHIA...
Luchia is a single mother of five in San Diego. She is originally from Uganda. She primarily grows kale and collard greens for sale at two weekly farmers markets. She has about 1,600 square feet of space to farm. She earns between $100 and $150 per week, or about $5,000 per year from her farm business.
Let’s talk a little bit more about this training and what [insert your program’s name here] can do to help you start a farm business like these others have.

You are here because you have already been gardening in this location and want to try to make money from it. This program will help you get better at growing food for sale to others and assist with marketing this food.

You choose the food you grow, but we will help by providing you with information about crops that are both productive and popular for the market. What are these ladies growing here?

We will help you along the way...we will have meetings and activities in the classroom, we will visit farm plots, and we will visit you at your plot to answer questions.

You can work alone, with your family, or involve your friends. Who might you decide to work with?

You can still take home whatever food you want to eat and you will decide how much to sell. We can help you decide how much you should grow of each crop.

We can also assist you in selling your produce at [insert name of your local market with local picture here].

Farming is a tough business and there are many challenges to get started. What are some challenges that you think you might have? Why do you think starting small could be beneficial?

We operate this program at the IRC [use name of your program] because we want to help build a stronger, healthier community. But, the IRC cannot actually do this without you. It is the people who grow the food that really do the hard, important work.
SLIDE 17: JUMP AHEAD TO ACTIVITY 4: ENVISIONING MY FARMING YEAR

SLIDE 18: What do you need to get out of this program to reach your vision?

Now that they have talked about their visions, have a discussion about what they think will be important to help them get there. “What support will you need to achieve this vision?” Capture this on a flipchart.

You might want to add some that aren’t mentioned to the list:
- Choosing crops that are good for the market
- Growing as much food as possible on the land available
- Pick and wash food so that it is safe for people to eat
- Interacting with customers in the marketplace
- Tracking the money you spend and how much you make
- Etc.

Transition to What Farmers can Expect from Staff, and the Expectations of Farmers in the MPA program:
- The IRC [use name of your program] is here to help you reach your vision, and in order to get there, you can expect this from us...
- [explain your program “offerings”: trainings, physical resources provided, one-on-one or small group technical support or coaching, etc.]

Next go over expectations/requirements of farmers, or any policies or conditions for farmer participation or contributions. These may include (but are not limited to):
- Contact information
- Training session attendance expectations (and any consequences related to missed classes)
- Frequency of attendance at farm plot/level of maintenance expected
- Expectations around Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs), use of shared resources, produce quality if you are aggregating for market
- Participation at markets
- Prohibited substances or behaviors
  (ideally you display some pictures to represent some of these Expectations, or even write them into farmer languages and have interpreters review these with farmers. These same expectations should be included on any forms or agreements signed at this or the next meeting.)
- Provide forms farmers need to sign (photo release, letter of agreement etc.)
TIME: 45 minutes

OVERVIEW:
Activity to understand how this program fits into the growing season and help farmers to identify their personal goals for the year.

OBJECTIVES:
Decide if this program is right for them.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
• Poster of annual seasons
• List of class topics
• Drawing paper and markers or colored pencils or crayons
• Blank flipchart pages, markers

Envisioning My Farming Year

STEP 1: INTRODUCING OUR FARMING YEAR (15 MIN)
• Ahead of time, draw a visual of the farm season – a circle or ring that shows the seasons: draw a snowflake or winter jacket and hat during the winter (if it gets cold where you are), or raindrops for monsoon season, or a bright sun during the hottest times of the year to help people see that this is a representation of the year in weather. Then, make a line or draw a seedling to show when planting begins, and then a market stand or harvest crates to represent harvest season(s), and another line (if there is one!) to mark when harvests end – you can draw and other important markers too – but not too many (keep the image simple).
• Explain this poster to the room – maybe ask if they can tell what you meant by your drawings! Ask for them to try to point to “where we are now on this poster.”
• Now, explain (perhaps draw on the poster itself) when these MPA classes are taking place, to help people see how this class schedule fits into your production season.
• You might want to go over brief topics of the MPA curriculum that will be coming up, and ask for farmer feedback on them here.

STEP 2: WHAT WILL THE YEAR BRING? (30 MIN)
• Now, point to the end of the harvest season on your cycle, and say, “I want you all to picture the future after a good growing and marketing season. Take a minute to form a picture in your mind of what you and your farm will look like HERE.”
• Hand out drawing paper and markers or colored pencils. Ask participants to draw anything that represents the image they made in their head.
• Have them share their pictures with their neighbor and talk about it.
• Ask volunteers to share what they or their neighbors “saw” – “What did you envision for your future as a farmer?”
• Capture these thoughts on a flipchart in words or images.

VARIATION:
One tester suggested: “If this is meant to help farmers decide whether they want to participate or not, you can add in some explicit questions about this decision if you need farmers to decide on the spot.”