

## Unit 9 - Contrasting Levels of Development

### 9.1 How can development be measured?

Development is about how rich people are and how good their quality of life is. Usually money means that people can afford a better quality of life, although not always. There are big differences in different parts of the world.

- **MEDC** = More Economically Developed Country - e.g. UK, USA, Japan etc...
- **LEDC** = Less Economically Developed Country - e.g. Bangladesh, Egypt, Jamaica etc...

Some places will be partially developed - they are moving from being LEDCs to MEDCs. These will be slightly richer countries with better standards of living for their people - places like Brazil or South Korea.

We often try to measure how developed a country is by using "Development Indicators"

	GNP per capita (US \$)	Life Expectancy	Infant Mortality	Literacy %age	People per Doctor	Access to Safe Water
UK	\$18,700	77	6 per 1000	99%	611	96%
Japan	\$39,640	80	4 per 1000	99%	608	85%
Brazil	\$3,640	67	48 per 1000	83%	844	73%
Egypt	\$790	64	62 per 1000	51%	1316	68%
Bangladesh	\$340	59	75 per 1000	50%	2459	29%

- **GNP per capita** = Gross National Product, which means how much money is earned. Per capita means per person - so this is the amount of money earned on average by each person in a year. This is a tricky indicator to use: the figures are difficult to work out, they are an average and there could be a few very rich people and lots of very poor people, and GNP doesn't tell you that much about how people's lives actually are.

Some of the other indicators of development might be more useful in working out how developed people's lives are. We can also use the **HDI - Human Development Index**. This uses life expectancy, school enrolment and real GNP (adjusted to take into account what can be bought in a country) to create a combined indicator. The final figure goes from 1 to 0 - with 1 as excellent and 0 as lousy. Canada has the highest HDI today at 0.960; Sierra Leone (in West Africa) has the lowest at just 0.176. It's not hard to see which is the MEDC is it? (the UK figure is 0.92)

### 9.2 What are the consequences of changing levels of development?

People in LEDCs may live in poverty, have a low life expectancy and have few opportunities - they may not go to school (especially girls), have the chance to develop skills or work in a good job. Of course, this is a huge stereotype - Bangladesh has people who drive good cars, live in good houses and have a modern life. It also has people who live in absolute poverty. Worldwide it is estimated that 1.3 billion people (one in four) live in total poverty - without access to adequate food, clean water, sanitation, basic healthcare or education.

### 9.3 How can the gap between MEDCs and LEDCs be reduced?

This isn't easy. LEDCs need to earn money to build up things like healthcare, education and services like clean water supplies. To earn money they need to develop industries, but to do that they need money to set them up! They might borrow money, but the debt has to be paid back with interest - and that often leads to LEDCs becoming poorer, not richer.

- **TNCs** (Transnational Companies) - big, global companies set up in LEDCs. They bring jobs, investment and money and help develop skills. But they also exploit the workforce and pay low wages. The profits end up in MEDCs.
- **Foreign Aid** - MEDC governments give money or equipment to LEDCs. These can help and provide real benefits, if the aid is appropriate. Sometimes, however, the money has to be spent on things the LEDC doesn't really need but which are supplied by a company from the MEDC - so who really benefits?
- **Tourism** - can bring jobs and money and help develop transport systems etc... But the profits usually go back to MEDCs and tourism can cause environmental and social problems (e.g. crime, pollution and loss of water supplies)
- **Appropriate Development** - small scale schemes funded either by NGOs or MEDCs. They deal with people's real needs, are sustainable (they don't harm the environment or local communities), cheap and use local skills.
- **Fair Trade** - LEDCs suffer because MEDCs dominate world trade. LEDCs find it hard to get fair prices for their goods - especially raw materials. The only way they can develop is to get money for these. Fair Trade aims to pay a fair price, although the end product also ends up being more expensive. It relied on consumers being willing to pay a bit more to help people in other parts of the world out.