

Poverty

What is poverty?

Poverty means not having the basic necessities of life like food, shelter and clean water. But it also means not having opportunities for the future – like education and human rights.

TRY THIS

Use the Office of National Statistics website to look up life expectancy at birth by local areas in England and Wales. What is the difference between top and bottom? What do you think the causes might be?

Life's not fair

The world is an unequal place. Nearly 6 billion people – 84 per cent of the world's population – live in developing countries. In these countries people can face huge challenges:

- > **57** million children aren't in primary school
[NB down from 100m in 2000]
- > **663** million people don't have safe drinking water
- > **1** in **3** people lack access to a toilet

Just look at the differences between rich and poor countries:

Children who die before the age of five:

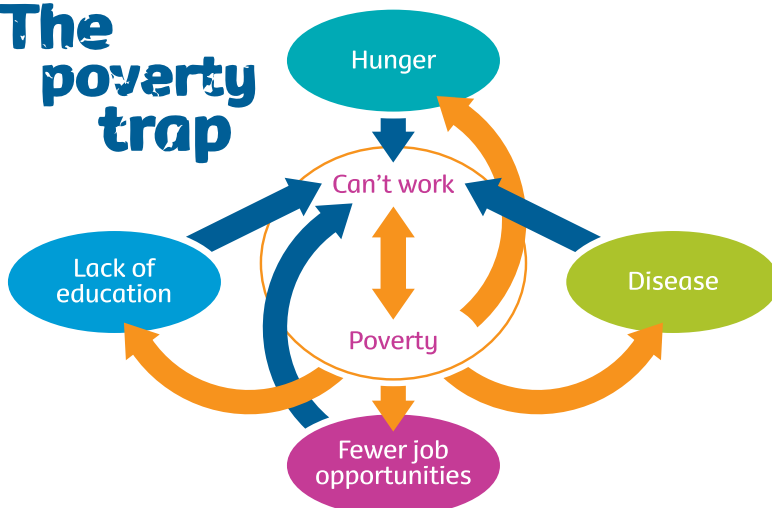
Sub-Saharan Africa: **1** in **12**

Wealthy nations: **1** in **147**

Life expectancy at birth:

Swaziland: **49** Switzerland: **83**

The poverty trap



FACT

THE RICHEST 1% NOW HAVE MORE WEALTH THAN THE REST OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION COMBINED.



Rose struggled to feed her daughter Tabita when drought in northern Kenya killed off nearly all her livestock.

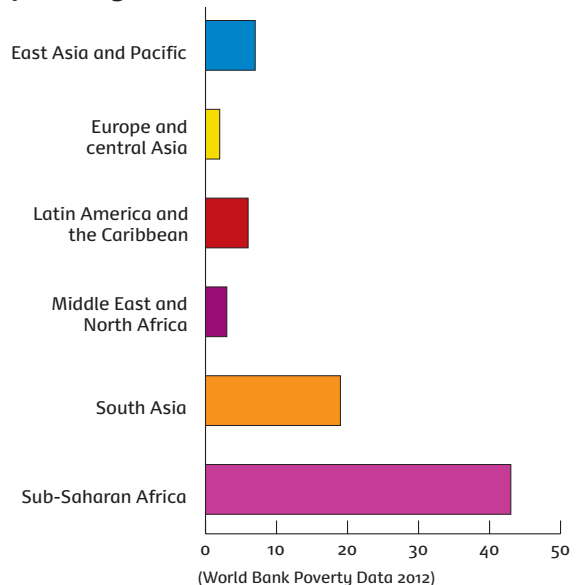
“The earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone.”

DISCUSS Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, #93 (2015).

Measuring poverty

Relative poverty is what a particular society sees as poor. Extreme poverty is defined by the World Bank as earning under US\$1.90 (£1.30) a day. One in ten people live below this line (2015). But millions of vulnerable people are only just above it and can easily slip back.

Percentage who live below the poverty line



Look at the amazing gain in East Asia – that's mostly because of the economic rise of China, which has lifted millions out of poverty.

Rich or poor? GNI per person, 2015

Qatar:	£84,300
Norway:	£44,500
Cambodia:	£2,000
Central African Republic	£400

(UN Human Development Report 2015)

TRY THIS

Look up the Gross National Income (GNI) for the UK, in the latest Human Development Report. Look at how we are ranked. Are you surprised?

Huge progress has been made towards ending poverty. Since 1990, 2 billion people have been lifted out of low human development, and extreme income poverty has been reduced for more than a billion.

The biggest changes have happened since 2000, when the Millennium Development Goals for reducing poverty

were set. These have now been replaced by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. See *SDG factsheet*. However, there are big gaps in this progress. The hardest-to-reach people in extreme poverty haven't really benefited over the period of the MDGs, so the call to 'leave no one behind' expressed in the new SDGs is very important for the future.

Causes of poverty



Debt

Poor countries borrow money for things like roads and agriculture, or to get through hard times. These debts easily mount up, leaving no money for education or healthcare.

Food

Going hungry means poor health, making it harder to earn money and send your children to school. Children who don't eat the right food for a long time may not grow properly and can have learning difficulties.

Education

Children who can't go to school and gain an education will be less able to do well in the future.

Climate change

Climate change is hitting the poorest countries hardest. Severe weather events are undoing decades of development.

Gender inequality

Women and girls are more vulnerable to poverty than men and boys. They often have less time in school, lower wages and, in some countries, can't even own their own land.

Poor health

In most poor countries people either can't afford healthcare or the right healthcare is unavailable. Parents use all their savings to treat a sick child, and if adults get sick, families lose a wage earner.

Unfair trade

Rich countries use trade rules to force poor countries to open up to cheap, subsidised goods from rich countries. But poor countries aren't ready to compete.

Progress on poverty

Debt

The ratio of what poor countries spend paying off their debts compared to what they earn from exports fell from 12 per cent in 2000 to 3 per cent in 2013. A country's finances are healthier when this ratio is low.

Food

The proportion of undernourished people in developing regions has fallen by almost half since 1990.



Education

The number of out-of-school children of primary school age worldwide has fallen by almost half, to an estimated 57 million in 2015, down from 100 million in 2000.

Climate change

World leaders signed a promise in 2015 to work towards a low carbon future, to make sure global temperature rises stay below 2 degrees. Rich countries also promised to help poorer nations cope financially with the impacts of climate change.

Gender

The developing regions as a whole have reached the target of making sure as many girls as boys go to school and college. But there are still big differences in some areas.

Health

Global health has seen major advances. For example, since 1990, the number of women dying in childbirth has been cut nearly in half.

Trade

In 2014, 79 per cent of imports from poor to rich countries were admitted duty free, up from 65 per cent in 2000. It's still not enough and better trade rules are needed.

Conflict

Armed conflict forces people to leave homes, land and jobs for years, sometimes forever. Many are killed or wounded. Families and communities are broken apart. Globally, each year since 2001 has seen more conflict.

TRY THIS

"Injustice is not invincible." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*) Do you agree or disagree? What do you think we can do ourselves about injustice?

FACT

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY HAS MORE THAN HALVED SINCE 1990 (FROM 1.9BN IN 1990 TO 836M IN 2015).

TRY THIS

If you could solve one of these problems, which would you choose, why and how?

Useful websites

dfid.gov.uk UK Department for International Development

ons.gov.uk Office for National Statistics

undp.org United Nations Development Programme

un.org/sustainabledevelopment For the SDGs

CAFOD is not responsible for the content of external websites.

(Sources: UNDP, WHO, Human Development Report 2015, Levels and Trends in Child Mortality Report 2015, water.org, Millennium Development Goals 2015, Oxfam 2015)

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All facts current as of June 2016.