

Global Poverty Quiz

We are one human family. Love your neighbor has global dimensions in an interdependent world.

Pope John Paul II

Directions: Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. See how much knowledge you have regarding poverty around the world, its impact, and some of the current causes of such poverty.

True or False

1. Almost one billion people throughout the world survive on less than \$1.25 a day.
2. Women and children make up more than 70% of the poorest people in the world.
3. More people in the world are hungry today than in 1990.
4. 10 million human beings die every year of hunger and hunger-related diseases.
5. In all developing regions, children in rural areas are nearly twice as likely to be underweight as those in urban areas.
6. About 69 million school-age children are not in school. Almost half of them are in sub-Saharan Africa.
7. The majority of children who are not in school around the world are males.
8. Every year, more than 1 million children are left motherless because of preventable deaths of women in childbirth.
9. Almost five million children still die each year before they reach their fifth birthday.
10. The highest rates of child mortality continue to be found in sub-Saharan Africa, where one in seven children die before their fifth birthday.
11. The poorest countries in the world are in Africa.
12. International trade is benefitting poor countries.
13. Development debt was hurting poor countries through structural adjustment policies that cut these countries' ability to provide basic health, education and subsidies to help people grow food; these challenges have now been solved by debt reduction and debt forgiveness.
14. 39 countries are poorer today than they were twenty years ago.
15. The gap between the rich and poor has been slowly rising over the past 20 years.
16. The richest countries in the world have pledged to give 0.7% of their Gross National Income for aid to developing countries, and the U.S. is leading this effort.

Answers

1. True. Overall poverty rates fell from 46% in 1990 to 27% in 2005 in developing regions, and progress in some developing countries continues. This is despite the recent economic downturn and the effects of the food and energy crises. Even if these positive trends continue, in 2015, roughly 920 million people will still be living under the international poverty line of \$1.25 a day.
2. True. Continuing gender inequity means poverty hits women and their children the hardest.
3. False. The estimate of the number who suffer chronic hunger is around 925 million, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN — down from 1.023 billion in 2009, but still more than the number of undernourished people in 1990 (about 815 million).
4. True. Rising world food prices, lack of land for small farmers, lack of aid necessary for seeds, etc. all contribute to hunger.
5. True. Under World Bank, IMF and World Trade Organization agreements, many developing countries have had to use land to grow exports to pay development debts, so fertile land is less available. Less available water for irrigation is also a problem. Developing countries cannot help rural farmers with subsidies for seeds, basic farm equipment, etc. Where these subsidies are available, there is a difference: Through a recent nationwide fertilizer subsidy program, Ghana has increased food production by 40%.
6. True. Lack of schools, school fees in existing schools, and the need for children to work all contribute to this fact.
7. False. The majority of children not in school are girls, due to cultural mores that favor boy children. Gender gaps in access to education have narrowed in the last ten years because of a push by the United Nations, but disparities remain high in university-level education and in many developing regions, such as Africa.
8. True. More than 350,000 women die annually from complications during pregnancy or childbirth, almost all of them (99%) in developing countries. The maternal mortality rate is declining only slowly, even though the vast majority of deaths are avoidable. In sub-Saharan Africa, a woman's maternal mortality risk is 1 in 30, compared to 1 in 5,600 in developed regions.
9. False. Nine billion children die each year before they turn five, most from preventable diseases. Child deaths are falling, but not quickly enough. Between 1990 and 2008, the death rate for children under five has decreased by 28 per cent. Recent widespread efforts on immunization have made an impact, but funding for immunizations must be kept up.
10. True. Sub-Saharan Africa has 1/5 of the world's children under five, with 4.4 million childhood deaths in 2009.
11. True. 28 of the world's 30 poorest countries are in Africa (Afghanistan, #15, and Haiti, #25, are also in the top 30).
12. False. The rich countries that dominate the World Trade Organization have pushed through trade regulations that favor their own economies. Jamaica, for example, was flooded with inexpensive powdered milk from the U.S. when trade barriers came down, and many in the Jamaican dairy farming sector were forced out of business.
13. False. Although the Jubilee Debt Campaign, supported by Pope John Paul II in 2000, helped bring about a process for poor countries to have their development debts forgiven or at least reduced, and some poor countries' populations have benefitted from this process, more countries need to be helped to ease their debt burden through a streamlined, faster and fairer process.
14. False. 59 countries are poorer because of development debt and its consequences, unfair trade practices, lack of adequate aid, and growing climate-related problems.
15. True. Rich countries have gotten richer (in terms of total GNP [Gross National Product] and the wealth at the top) while poor countries still struggle to provide the most basic services to their people.
16. False. The U.S. provides .56% for development aid, less than donations of 14 of the other developed countries in the world.

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Sources: USCCB; United Nations websites; Oxfam; CRS; Global Issues.