



Introduction

This book is designed primarily to help readers broaden their knowledge of global issues, gain insight into their country's situation in a global context, and understand the problems of sustainable development—both national and global. Because development is a comprehensive process involving economic as well as social and environmental changes, this book takes an interdisciplinary approach. It attempts to describe and explain the complex relationships among various aspects of development, including population growth, economic growth, improvements in education and health, urbanization, and globalization. Teachers, students, and learners of all ages are invited to explore these relationships even further using the statistical data and theoretical concepts presented in this book.

Difficult Questions, Different Answers

The book starts with three difficult questions: What is development? How can we compare the levels of development achieved by different countries? And what does it take to make development sustainable? The authors do not

claim to have all the answers to these and other questions posed directly or indirectly in the book. Instead, students together with their teachers are encouraged to suggest their own answers by analyzing and synthesizing the information presented here. They should engage in open discussions of problems that have no simple solutions, in order to formulate their own opinions and support them with objective data and rational arguments.

Many of the answers inevitably involve value judgments, which makes absolute objectivity impossible. Even the authors have differing views on some of the issues addressed here, but they have based this book on one fundamental idea: development should be a tool for improving the lives of all people. It is up to readers to define for themselves the meaning of a better life and to prioritize the goals of development.

Data and Development

Perhaps, the main strength of this book is that it is based on abundant statistical data for most countries, presented in data tables at the end of the book as

well as in figures, maps, and references in the text. Statistics can be powerful tools for learning. They can help paint a more accurate picture of reality, identify issues and problems, and suggest possible explanations and solutions. But statistics have their limitations too. They are more reliable for some countries than for others. And because it takes a long time to collect and verify some statistics, they may be out of date before they are even published. The statistics presented here were the most recent available when this book was written.

It is also important to remember that many aspects of development cannot be accurately measured by statistics. Examples include people's attitudes, feelings, values, ideas, freedoms, and cultural achievements. Thus statistical data can tell us only part of the story of development—but it is an important part.

Comparing statistical data on your country with those on other countries can be extremely revealing for several reasons. First, seeing one's country in a global context and learning how it is different from or similar to other countries can improve understanding of the country's status and of its development prospects and priorities. Second, because the economies of the world are becoming increasingly interdependent, development processes in

all countries are becoming more interrelated. The authors hope that this book will help satisfy popular demand for information about national and global development processes and contribute to a better understanding of sustainability issues, from local to international.

A word of caution is warranted here. The authors hope that a better understanding of the complex interrelations among the economic, social, and environmental aspects of development will help readers avoid oversimplified conclusions based on just one or two statistical indicators. Readers would be wise to explore each issue in more detail by finding additional data, questioning their accuracy, and taking into account social processes that might be hard to measure and quantify.

About This Book

This book was prepared as part of an international project under the World Bank Institute's Development Education Program (DEP). The objective was to create a template text about the global issues of sustainable development—social, economic, and environmental—that could then be customized for various countries by teams of local educators and published in their respective national languages. Work on

these national adaptations has already begun.

The first national adaptation of this international template was *The World and Russia* student book, published in Russian, which was officially approved by the Russian Ministry of General and Professional Education for students in the 10th and 11th grades studying economics, social studies, geography, and environmental studies. The authors of the Russian adaptation represent several leading research and educational institutions in Moscow. Those of you who might be interested in seeing how the adaptation was performed but cannot read Russian will find its English translation on the Development Education Program's Web site at www.worldbank.org/depweb. You will see that the portions of the text adapted for Russia are highlighted. The Russian language text of *The World and Russia* can be found on the Web site of its Russian publisher, the St. Petersburg Institute, School of Economics, at www.ise.spb.ru.

The Latvian adaptation, *The World and Latvia*, is currently being prepared by a local team led by two professors at the University of Latvia. The English translation of this second adaptation will also appear on the DEP Web site with the Latvia-specific portions of the text highlighted.

We hope that the Russian and Latvian examples will inspire educators from other countries to use this international template to develop customized student materials that meet the needs of their national curricula. Alternatively, students and other readers interested in development issues could use this international template without adaptation as a source of relatively current statistical data and widely accepted concepts for purposes of research and classroom discussions.

How to Use The Book

Because all development issues are intricately interrelated, there is no single, best sequence in which to study them. Thus the structure of this book allows the readers to start with almost any chapter that they might find the most intriguing. The authors, however, would advise not skipping Chapters 1 and 2 since they serve as a general introduction to the book and present some important basic concepts on which the following chapters build. Chapters 15 and 16 can be read as a continuation of the conceptual discussion started in the first two chapters. And the final chapter, Chapter 17, should preferably be saved for last even though, rather than presenting conclusions, it invites the reader to explore some additional issues.

As you read this book, you should keep in mind the multiplicity of interconnections among all aspects of the development process. In some cases, these interconnections will be explicitly pointed out in the text (including cross-references to other chapters), while in other cases readers may need to identify them on their own. Questions in the margins are intended to help readers see the larger picture behind the specific data.

Suppose you are most interested in environmental issues. Chapters 10 and 14 are devoted to two different environmental challenges: local particulate air pollution in large cities and global air pollution from carbon dioxide emissions. But to gain a better understanding of these issues you will also need to read about population growth and economic growth (Chapters 3 and 4), industrialization and postindustrialization (Chapter 9), income inequality and poverty (Chapters 5 and 6), and health and longevity (Chapter 8). These are the most obvious links, and they are relatively easy to identify while reading the environmental chapters. You could also, however, look into links with all the other chapters in the book. For example, how does globalization (Chapters 12 and 13) affect air pollution in large cities in developed and developing countries? Or how does globalization help international efforts to minimize the risk of global climate

change? You could then explore the links between privatization and energy efficiency (Chapter 11) or between education (Chapter 7) and environmental protection. Eventually, it becomes clear that development is so comprehensive that understanding any one issue inevitably requires studying all the rest.

Although teachers of various school subjects can use this book to help their students understand specific development issues, students should always be made aware that no single issue exists in isolation from the others. Ideally, teachers would use most or all of the book's content to build one or more learning modules centered around given curricular topics. For example, an Air Pollution module might look like this:

Air Pollution

1. Introduction: Concepts of “development” and “sustainable development.” Chapters 1 and 2
2. Local and global air pollution. Chapters 10 and 14
3. What are the major courses of the increasing air pollution?
 - Population growth—Chapter 3
 - Economic growth—Chapter 4
 - Industrialization—Chapter 9
 - Urbanization—Chapter 10
 - Income inequality—Chapter 5
 - Poverty—Chapter 6

4. Aggravating factors or new opportunities?
 - International trade—Chapter 12
 - Foreign investment—Chapter 13
 - Foreign aid—Chapter 13
 - Privatization—Chapter 11
5. Air pollution as a threat to development sustainability:
 - Healthy environment as one of the goals of development—Chapters 1 and 15
 - Natural capital as a component of national wealth—Chapter 16
 - The role of government policies—Chapter 17.

You will note that most of a module's components can be formulated as questions for discussion. It is up to the reader to conclude whether, for example, the effects of economic growth are more detrimental to environment than are the effects of poverty or whether foreign investment in developing countries contributes to pollution rather than helps reduce it. The book provides helpful (although not exhaustive) data and concepts but does not provide any easy answers.

When discussing questions arising from this book, it is important to make full use of the statistics contained in

the data tables (at the end of this book). Comparing data on different countries and looking for correlation among various indicators can often provide more insights and food for thought than simply reading a text. Most of the statistics in the data tables, figures, and maps are from the *World Development Indicators* (1997, 1998), the *World Development Report* (various years), and other statistical and analytical studies published by the World Bank. Figures 4.4 and 9.2 as well as some data in chapters 12 and 13 have been included with permission from the International Monetary Fund.

The authors hope that the discussions generated by this book will help readers understand how global and national development relate to issues in their own lives, and that this understanding will lead to practical action at the local level. Teachers and other educators can use this book to inform discussion about local development challenges not only among their students but also among parents and other community members. Students can use the knowledge gained to make better informed life choices and to become more active, involved citizens of their countries.