



Some Big Ideas *(behind this book)*

The world is richer ... the poor are poorer



Poverty is not easy to measure internationally, the World Bank definition (those living on or below \$1 per day = 1.3 billion people) underestimates the scale of poverty and other organisations use the \$2 per day definition. The threshold in the US is \$12 per day and other developed countries, have yet different definitions.

However we measure it, poverty remains a massive international issue - there were 35.8 million officially living in poverty in the US in 2003 (12.5% of the US population, up on 2002), 70 million in the EU, 200 million in Latin America, 315 million in Africa and, at the very least, 600million in Asia.

The world has never been richer (with the world economy estimated to now be worth just over \$60 trillion) and, yet poverty continues to rise. Progress in reducing poverty has been highly uneven - extreme poverty is not declining and is even increasing in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and most of Asia. Progress has occurred, however, in Vietnam, India and China.

If inequality is taken into account, the situation is even worse. According to Professor James K. Galbraith and other researchers, world inequality was reasonably stable from 1963 until 1971; it then declined until 1979 but has risen steeply since then.

Ours is a world of extremes



The poorest 40% of world population accounts for 5% of global income, while the richest 10% accounts for 54%.

In 1960, the richest 20% of the world's people shared between them 70% of the entire wealth of the planet, by the mid - 1990's, this figure had increased to over 85%. In 2005, just 8.7 million people had a net worth of \$33 trillion (half of the total value of the world economy).

In 1990 the average American was 38 times richer than the average Tanzanian; by 2004 s/he had become 61 times richer.

In 2003/4, the world spent:

- at least \$950 billion on arms
- \$8 billion on mobile phone ring tones
- \$15 billion on plastic surgery
- \$12 billion on perfume
- \$105 billion on alcohol in Europe



There has been real progress... BUT



Life expectancy in developing countries increased by over a third from 46 to 65 years between 1960 and 2003 BUT around 1.9 billion people are not expected to survive to age 65.

Between 1970 and 2003 the adult literacy rate in developing countries rose from 48% to 77% BUT in 2000 more than 850 million adults were illiterate, over 60% of them women.

The average GDP per capita for all developing countries rose from \$330 to \$4359 between 1960 and 2003 BUT 1 billion people live on less than \$1 a day, and close to 1 billion people cannot meet their basic consumption needs.

Another half a billion, did anyone notice?



In 2006, the UN estimated world population at 6.5 billion, an increase of half a billion people since the landmark of 6 billion in 1999. World population is now increasing by 208,000 people every day - this still means that a child born in 2000 will witness a 50% increase in their planet's population to around 9 billion by the time they are 50. Only after 2200 is world population expected to peak and stabilise at a little over 10 billion.

The fastest growth rates are in 50 least developed countries and the implications of this growth for those countries, for the poor, for women and for the children born are massive.

If every second woman decides to have three rather than two children, the population of the world in 2050 will be 27 billion.... If, however, every second woman decides to have only one child instead of two, the world population will sink to 3.6 billion.

Without compromising the future



Our impact on the planet is massive – a 2004 report noted that in 2001:

- North America (population 319 million) had an 'ecological footprint' of 9.2 global hectares per person
- Western Europe (population 390 million) a footprint of 5.1 global hectares
- The Asia Pacific region (population 3407 million) 1.3 global hectares
- Africa (population 810 million) 1.2 global hectares.

If everyone on the planet wanted to live like Europeans and North Americans, we would need another 6 planets to cope – **and we do not have them.** We need to begin to live in a way that is sustainable into the future.



No country treats its women the same as its men



The Gender Equity Index is a measurement developed by NGO Socialwatch and it seeks to illustrate general gender equity in development. It measures education, economic activity and empowerment and, in 2005, found that of the 120 countries surveyed:

- 20 had critical levels of inequity
- 31 had low or very low levels
- 28 had medium levels
- 41 had high levels

The most startling conclusion of the survey is that in no country worldwide do women enjoy the same opportunities as men. But, in order to eliminate gender inequities, a country does not have to have a high level of income, so equality does not have to wait for wealth.

Almost an entire continent is being left behind



Over the past 50 years, average life expectancy at birth has increased globally by almost 20 years, from 46.5 years in 1950 -1955 to 65.2 years in 2002. Improvement has occurred everywhere - on average, the gain in life expectancy was 9 years in developed countries, 17 years in the high-mortality developing countries and 26 years in the low-mortality developing countries. BUT on far too many fronts Africa continues to fall behind and as many Africans note: *'we can't get ahead for falling behind'*.

Rights not charity



Every person, by virtue of their birth, has rights – they are not bestowed by governments or by communities, they cannot be given away, divided up and they apply to all regardless of the class, colour or creed. At least, that's the theory - the reality is different unfortunately, especially for those whose rights are denied on a daily basis.

Be the change you want to see



Perhaps more than ever before, events and situations thousands of kilometres away directly affect us and increasingly what we do, and how we live, affects millions of distant others. Environmentally, economically, politically, socially and culturally, we cannot, and do not, cut ourselves off from others – no matter how far away.

The vast majority of humankind do not want to be reminded daily of the gross inequalities that characterise the world, the majority want something done about it. The question is what and who is responsible?

Mahatma Gandhi believed that we must be the change we want to see in the world, working for change begins with the individual and that only when all of us take responsibility, will the world begin to change for the better.