

Learning and Living a Global Perspective

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This information will help you increase your understanding of what it means to have a global perspective and develop your knowledge, skills, and participation as global citizens.

What Is a Global Perspective?

Global perspective emphasizes the interconnectness among humans and societies throughout our planet. To develop a global perspective, we need to have the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to live effectively in a world possessing limited natural resources and characterized by ethnic diversity, cultural pluralism, and increasing interdependence.

Neither schools nor individuals have the time and resources needed to become knowledgeable about all of these issues. But we can strive in our formal and informal learning to develop the skills and techniques needed to explore them. Our educational institutions need to be especially responsive. Extension Services can play an important role.

Some Things We Can Learn and Do

It is unrealistic to think that we can become global citizens overnight, or that suddenly we can become transformed into outspoken global education advocates. But we can be receptive to opportunities to expand our global perspectives, to speak out when social justice principles are violated in our immediate surroundings, and above all, to help children and youth understand their relationship to the larger picture. For example, most of us may find the following illustration surprising.

A Summary of the World:

If we could shrink the Earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look like this:

- There would be 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14

from the Western Hemisphere (North and South), and 8 Africans.

- 51 would be female; 49 would be male.
- 70 would be nonwhite; 30 white.
- 70 would be non-Christian; 30 Christian.
- 50 percent of the entire world's wealth would be in the hands of only 6 people and all 6 would be citizens of the United States.
- 80 would live in substandard housing.
- 70 would be unable to read.
- 50 would suffer from malnutrition.
- 1 would be near death; 1 would be near birth.
- Only 1 would have a college education.
- No one would own a computer.

When one considers our world from such a compressed perspective, the need for both tolerance and understanding becomes glaringly apparent (*Dealing with Differences*, Marion O'Malley and Tiffany Davis).

Our Own Roots

Who were our ancestors? Where did they come from? What were they like? Knowing the answers can increase our understanding of who we are. Helping our loved ones, especially children and youths, address these questions can build a foundation for their global perspective. Your leader will describe some activities that will increase your knowledge of history.

Life in Other Countries

Not all of us have the opportunity to travel abroad or go to that "country of our dreams." Nevertheless, virtual trips to other countries are available through books, video, and the Internet. Select one country you want to visit and begin exploring. Countless books, periodicals, and encyclopedias are available to help you. Here are some Internet sources that are particularly useful.

Library of Congress Country Studies
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html>

This site offers interesting studies of 85 countries.

The United Nations Cyber School Bus
<http://www.un.org/pubs/cyberschoolbus/>

This site features profiles of cities worldwide, information on 185 countries, global trends, and flags of the UN member nations. There is even a country quiz (and answers). Here are some sample questions and answers, just for fun.

Quick Questions

1. This country has a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and its inhabitants carry rubles; which country is it?
2. The capital city of this country is named after the country's first president. It also has a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. What is the name of this country?
3. In Australia, people have space: there are only 2 people per square kilometre on the average. What is the largest city?
4. More than 5.6 million people live in the capital of Colombia. What is the name of that city?
5. The people on this Caribbean island are not far from Florida, United States, and they speak Spanish. Havana is the capital. What is the country's name?

Answers: 1. Russian Federation; 2. United States of America; 3. Sydney; 4. Bogota; 5. Cuba.

Guatemala

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/links/index.html>

The Peace Corps' Web site has many resources for teachers, students, and others. Their World Wise Schools provide links to every country served by Peace Corps volunteers.

West Virginia Community Educational Outreach Service (CEOS) clubs and members have expressed special interest in rural Guatemala recently. They have conducted two donation drives to help low-income Guatemalan communities where WVU Extension is conducting projects. The Peace Corps' site provides many links for those wishing to learn more about Guatemala.

Mexico

<http://city.net/countries/mexico/>

West Virginia CEOS has provided scholarships for two WVU international students from Mexico in recent years, Leticia Bravo and Celina Melgoza. Members have demonstrated a special interest the arts and crafts, food, social issues, culture, geography, and tourism of our neighboring country to the south. This Web site is filled with information of all kinds about Mexico. In addition, Internet enthusiasts can click onto the site (<http://city.net/countries/>) and select any other country or territory.

Cooking

International recipes galore are easily accessible in books and magazines. The United Nations Bookshop's Web site (<http://www.un.org/Pubs/bookshop/cookbook/cookbook.htm>) includes a unique section devoted to international cookbooks.

Raising Our Consciousness

The injustice of world hunger is an issue requiring our understanding. The February 1999 issue of *World Press Review* includes a commentary written by Ignacio Ramonet in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, a French periodical. Raiment illustrates that the total wealth of the world's three richest individuals is more than the combined gross domestic product of the 48 poorest countries. Nearly half of the world's population earns less than \$2 per day. Twenty percent of all children do not receive enough calories daily. Thirty million people each year die of hunger, and 800 million people suffer from chronic malnutrition.

How have we permitted such a disproportionate sharing of the world's wealth, particularly at the expense of millions of people trapped in the cycle of poverty?

1999: 10M

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