



**Get Smart  
about  
Global Poverty and Development Assistance**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

*NOTE: The One Shared World<sup>SM</sup> campaign aims to raise awareness and generate dialogue about global poverty and how America is tackling it. These frequently asked questions and answers have been compiled to help you be part of that dialogue and to feel comfortable talking about global poverty and U.S. development assistance. Find more resources and information at [www.onesharedworld.org](http://www.onesharedworld.org).*

**Q What is poverty?**

**A** A person is considered poor if his or her consumption or income level falls below some minimum level necessary to meet basic needs. Globally, the World Bank sets this “poverty line” at US\$2 (moderate poverty) and US\$1 (extreme poverty) per day.

**Q How many people in the world live in poverty?**

**A** More than one billion people — one in six — live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than \$1 a day. Almost three billion more live on less than \$2 a day. Each of those people lives hand-to-mouth and day-to-day. They are hard-pressed to meet their daily needs for water, food and shelter. And, they have little or no voice in what happens to them, their families and their communities.

**Q But what does the plight of poor people in developing countries have to do with me?**

**A** Whether we realize it or not, our lives are entwined with those of people in every corner of the globe. Of course, we all share similar hopes and dreams for our future and the future of our children. But we also share the impact of war and conflict, economic instability and disease—all caused or made worse by poverty.

In other words, we share one world, and what happens “there” affects us here: our health, our jobs, our environment, our security, our way of life. That’s why global development assistance is so important.

**Q Development assistance. Isn’t that when the U.S. sends aid—such as during a war or after an earthquake?**

**A** Unlike disaster relief, development assistance isn’t a response to emergency situations like war and natural disaster. Simply put, development assistance is helping people help themselves. Through global development assistance, the U.S. and other countries extend a “hand up” to poor people in developing countries, helping them improve the conditions of their lives and help them, their communities and their nations become self-sufficient.

**Q Give me an example of development assistance.**

**A** Development assistance helps provide access to education, health care and economic opportunity—valued by people everywhere. It can take many forms, for example training rural women to be community health workers, or providing a small loan to start a business and take the first steps out of poverty, or helping a village dig a well so local girls can spend the day in school instead of hauling water from a far-away river.

**Q How does this make a difference?**

**A** Small individual steps have a lasting ripple effect. For example, educating girls helps to foster more resilient families, prevent diseases like HIV/AIDS and open up better jobs that pay higher wages—making communities, societies and the world we all share healthier, safer and more prosperous.

And, looking at the big picture, over the past 50 years, we've seen more progress in reducing poverty and improving health and education than at any other time in history. During this period:

- Diseases such as smallpox and river blindness, that formerly afflicted millions of people a year, have been virtually wiped out.
- The average life expectancy worldwide has increased from 44 years to 59 years.
- Many more children attend school—for example, the average number of years of schooling has risen from three to six years in Latin America and from three to nine years in Asia.
- Incomes in poor countries have tripled.

**Q How much does the United States give?**

**A** According to the Center for Global Development, the U.S. federal budget devotes to development assistance \$92 a year—that's 25 cents a day—for each American.\*

**Q What about individuals; is there anything one person can do?**

**A** It seems like an overwhelming task, but each of us has a stake in the outcome. And, there are many things that individuals can—and must—do. Whether we donate time or money to various development organizations, learn more about the issues or help make others more aware of the effects of global poverty, each of us can play a role. Individuals can find ways to learn more, connect more or do more at [www.onesharedworld.org](http://www.onesharedworld.org).

\*[www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/2850/](http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/2850/)