

Interesting Facts about How Our Resources Are Distributed Globally

Young people may think that the ways they spend, save, invest, or donate their money do not affect anyone but themselves. They may think that their choices influence only their own lifestyles. This could not be more false. Each spending choice has a ripple effect in the global economy. Our purchases fuel the economy by paying the salaries of others. Local economies are all connected globally, and are influenced by how individuals make decisions. The manufacturers and retail shops we support sustain people around the world, who in turn sustain the health of our planet and our own personal welfare.

The fair trade industry has raised awareness of socially responsible purchasing. It has created visibility for the journey that our products take from grower to grocery shelf. It informs consumers that when we buy a bar of chocolate, we are sending a message to a chocolate manufacturer and grower. *Do we want to buy from a company that treats its employees well, or from one who sells the cheapest product? Do we want to buy from a company that uses sustainable farming techniques and pays a fair price to its farmers?* Responsible consumers know that they vote with their money. Our purchases influence the sustainability of resources, the environment, and the habitats of all living things.

A good consumer is a person who makes responsible choices with his or her money. A good consumer evaluates options and makes the best choice based on economics, quality, and benefits to society. Sometimes the best choice is not the least expensive choice.

The world's resources are not divided equally. If you never compare what you have with what others do, you'll never fully understand how desperately we need to start acting selflessly. Following are some figures about the distribution of the world's monetary resources:

- In 2005, 1.4 billion people in the world lived on less than \$1.25 a day. This was down from 1.8 billion in 1990. (Millennium Development Goals Report, page 8, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf> accessed October 6, 2010)

- Nearly 160 million children (one in six children in the world) are engaged in child labor. These children are often working in hazardous conditions (in mines, with chemicals, or with dangerous machinery). These children, between the ages of five and fourteen, are supporting their families and missing out on educational opportunities. Most of them are girls.

(UNICEF. http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_childlabour.html)

