

Global inequality

One way of measuring global inequality is to measure the wealth of different countries – the amount of goods or products and services produced (the Gross Domestic Product or GDP).

2010 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) - in US\$ (per capita)

TOP 15		US\$	BOTTOM 15		US\$
1.	Qatar	88,230	168.	Guinea	1,056
2.	Luxembourg	80,305	169.	Ethiopia	1,018
3.	Singapore	57,240	170.	Afghanistan	998
4.	Norway	52,240	171.	Mozambique	982
5.	Brunei	47,200	172.	Madagascar	910
6.	United States of America	47,125	173.	Malawi	908
7.	Switzerland	41,765	174.	Togo	847
8.	Netherlands	40,775	175.	Sierra Leone	803
9.	Australia	39,690	176.	Central African Republic	764
10.	Austria	39,455	177.	Niger	720
11.	Canada	39,035	178.	Eritrea	676
12.	Ireland	38,685	179.	Burundi	410
13.	Kuwait	38,295	180.	Liberia	396
14.	Sweden	37,775	181.	Zimbabwe	395
15.	United Arab Emirates	36,975	182.	Democratic Republic of Congo	340

Source: World Economic Outlook, International Monetary Fund, 2010. www.imf.org



What evidence of global inequality is shown in these photographs?



However, this doesn't mean that everyone in Qatar or Australia is rich and everyone in Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo is poor. There is inequality of wealth between countries and there is inequality of wealth in every country. There is poverty in Australia and people with great wealth in Zimbabwe. Also, money or GDP is only one measure of global inequality. Robert Kennedy, a US Presidential candidate, said this a few weeks before he was assassinated:

"Our gross domestic product counts air pollution and advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for those who break them. It counts napalm, the cost of a nuclear warhead, and armoured cars for police who fight riots in our streets. It counts rifles and knives, and the television programs which glorify violence in order to sell toys to our children.

Yet the gross domestic product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages; the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials.

It measures neither our wit nor our courage; neither our wisdom nor our learning; neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country; it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile."

For You To Do!

1. Find the countries listed on p. 4 on a world map (see worldvision.com.au/schoolresources) and identify the region of the world where each is located. What do you notice about these countries?

Europe	Asia	Oceania/ Pacific	Africa	Latin America	North America	Middle East

2. Read the quote from Robert Kennedy (above) and identify the important things he says that GDP **does not** measure. Can you suggest any ways that these could be measured?

Important issues	Measure