



# Impacts of Globalization on Groups in Society

## Chapter

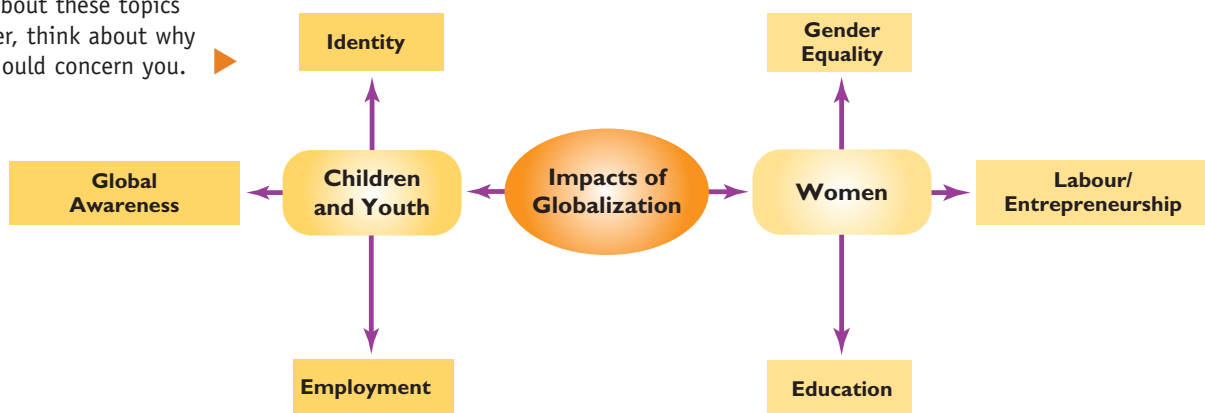
# 16

### READING STRATEGY

Before reading through a chapter, scan through the headings, illustrations, and words in bold type to get an idea of what it is about. This will help you focus on the reasons you are reading it.

Figure 16-1

Globalization affects children, youth, and women in many different ways around the world. As you read about these topics in this chapter, think about why the effects should concern you.



## Chapter Focus

Do the forces of globalization empower individuals and groups by increasing their political, social, or economic strength or are they weakened? Supporters of globalization might point to international organizations such as UNICEF that work to empower children and youth by improving their quality of life. Detractors of globalization might point out the serious issues of women who are employed in globalized industries. They might note that these women are at a disadvantage because they are often underpaid and at physical risk.

*To what extent should you, as a citizen, respond to globalization?* An important part of exploring this Main Issue for Part 4 is to understand the extent to which globalization empowers individuals and groups around the world. While the effects of globalization vary from place to place, they also affect you.

## Chapter Issue

In this chapter, you will have the chance to explore both positive and negative effects of globalization on children and youth. You will also analyze examples of some of the challenges and opportunities faced by women as a result of globalization. These examples will help you explore the Chapter Issue: *To what extent does globalization empower individuals and groups in society?*



## Apply Geographic Literacy and Media Literacy Skills

**To what extent does globalization empower individuals and groups in societies?** You can apply your geographic skills to help you analyze artwork to learn more about multiple perspectives on this and other issues. Use this Skill Path to analyze one work of art to learn more about the perspectives of people in a culture that interests you.

### Step 1 Locate a Piece of Art to Study

1

Every culture has artists who express themselves through drawing, painting, sculpture, or other forms of art. Choose a culture that is of particular interest to you and locate a piece of artwork that reveals something about the people in that culture. For example, you could attempt to find works of art created by women or children that show people in their daily life. You can find examples of art in real or virtual art galleries, museums, or in art books from the library. The painting in Figure 16-2 comes from an Internet site about Aboriginal art in Canada.

### Step 2 Examine Artwork for Information

2

The next step is to gather as much human and physical geographic information as you can by looking at the art and any information that accompanies it, such as its title, location, and date.

Answer the following questions. Not every question will apply to every work of art.

- What time period or location does the artist depict?
- What does this piece show you about the landscape or resources of the people?
- What does it reveal about the traditions of the people it depicts?
- What does it show you about the roles of the various people in the picture?
- Does it reveal the point of view of the artist? How?

Think carefully about the issue you are investigating, and the perspective that the artwork may reveal. For example, ask yourself if the artist is showing the impacts of globalization on women and children. Are children from Eastern countries shown wearing Western-style clothes? Does the artist show a valued tradition? People struggling with poverty? Sometimes a work of art reveals what is important to a person or a people, and this can help you investigate an issue.



Figure 16-2

*End of Summer*, by Ojibwa artist Nokomis. (Her name means “The Great Mother” or “Grandmother.”) What can you learn about the role of women and girl children from this piece of art? What aspects of physical and human geography are captured in this art?

### Job Link

An art curator is someone who collects art pieces for a museum or art gallery and organizes displays. Knowledge of the physical and human geography of a people can help curators understand the vision of an artist and contribute to the curator's ability to interpret artistic works.

#### Step Find Additional Information

3

Look beyond the art to broaden your understanding of it. You can find information about the physical and human geography of the area by conducting research in the library or the Internet. You can also find out more about how the people in the culture interact from these sources. Use this information to answer questions such as the following:

- Is the landscape in the piece of art typical of the region?
- Are the roles of the men, women, or children shown in the artwork true to life? If not, what is the artist trying to say?
- If the piece shows a traditional scene, does it reflect the reality of men's, women's, and children's lives? Or does it show what the artist and his or her community value? How have these values been affected by globalization?

#### Step Summarize Your Findings

4

Summarize your findings in point form on a cue card. Be sure to include the name of the artwork and the artist, the major human and physical geographical elements in the work, and any relevant geographic details from your research that helped you understand the artist's perspective. Conclude by suggesting how globalization may have affected the impressions of the artist.

#### Step Practise Your Skill!

5

- Apply It.** Select a work of art from a culture other than your own that has been created by either women or children and shows how globalization has affected the empowerment of groups or individuals in their society. Use Steps 1 through 4 to analyze the artwork.
- Share It.** Present the artwork and your analysis to the class. Compare what you have learned about the perspectives of women and children through the eyes of the artist.

## Global Challenges and Opportunities for Children and Youth

### Question for Inquiry

- In what ways does globalization affect the lives of children and youth?

Have you ever thought that Canadian concerns of children and youth are similar to global concerns of children and youth? How many Canadians never learn to read? Are there starving children in Canada?

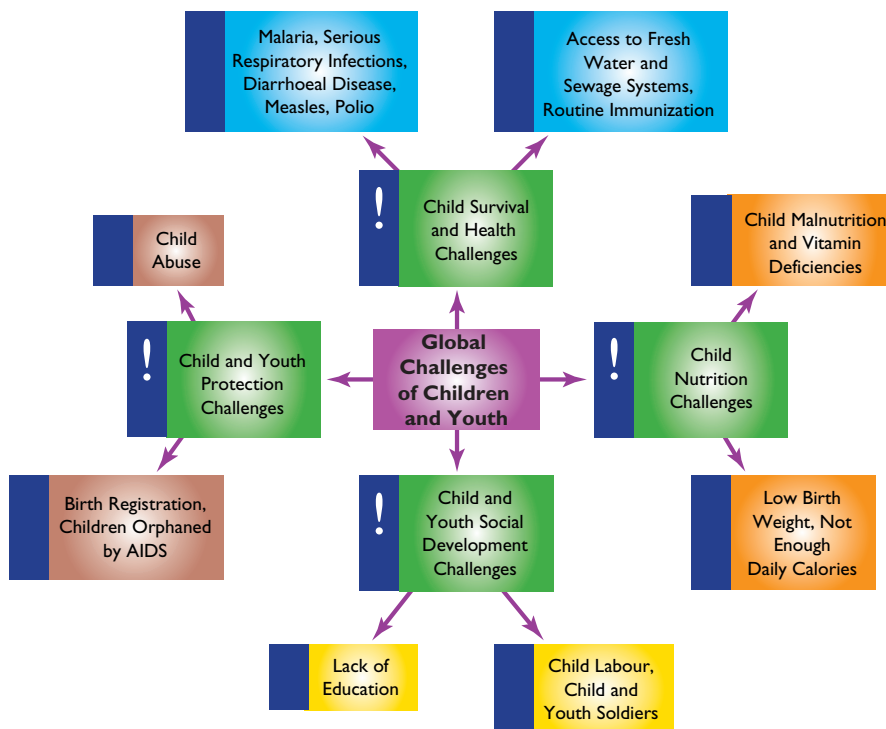
Has globalization affected child poverty?

Many experts agree that the lack of employable skills and continuing economic globalization are closely linked to the rise in working-poor families. Billions of untrained workers, who have only their labour to sell, compete on a global scale for jobs that require few skills and, as a result, pay little. Children in these families work to contribute to the family's income. This can mean that they have limited or no opportunity to attend school and get the education that could help them acquire better jobs than their parents have.

The globalization of communications and media technologies has led to an increased awareness of poverty and other issues affecting children around the world. This, in turn, has led to an increased commitment by many people in the international community to address these issues.

The main international legislation outlining children's rights is the United Nations **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, which came into force in 1990. This document recognizes that "the child [a person under 18 years of age], for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding, ... and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality, and solidarity."

There are many challenges in protecting the rights of children and youth. Figure 16-3 outlines some areas of concern. Local and international organizations have banded together to attempt to address these concerns.



## Fast Facts

By 2006, 140 countries had signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Speculate on what difficulties there might be in enforcing this convention around the world.

Speculate on why some countries did not sign this agreement.

## READING STRATEGY

**Concept webs help you explore ideas and make connections and insights in a way that linear text may not. Convert the web in Figure 16-3 into an outline format with headings for each topic and a list of subtopics. Is it as effective as the original? When is the use of each format appropriate?**

Figure 16-3

This concept web focuses on challenges that children and youth face around the world. Which of these challenges do you and other Canadian children and youth face? Even if some of these challenges don't affect you directly, should you be concerned anyway? Why or why not?

**Figure 16-4**

How is Canada doing in addressing child poverty in Canada?



| Focus Area                        | What's Happening?   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Child and Family Poverty</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than one million children in poverty; increased since 1989</li> <li>• Child poverty rate up for first time in six years to 15.6%; higher than in 1989</li> <li>• One-third of all children in Canada exposed to poverty for at least one year since 1996</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Lone-Mother Families</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child poverty rate for female lone-parent families rose above 50% for first time in three years</li> <li>• In 2004, low-income single-mother families needed, on average, \$8800 to reach poverty line (Follow the links at the <i>Perspectives on Globalization</i> website to find the current poverty line.)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Food Bank Use</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2003 was a record year for food bank use: 317 242 food bank users were children</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Social Exclusion Worsening</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child poverty rates for Aboriginal, immigrant, and visible minority groups were more than double the average for all children; the child poverty rate among children with disabilities was 27.7%</li> </ul>  |



Source: Campaign 2000, "One Million Too Many—Implementing Solutions to Child Poverty in Canada: 2004 Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada."

1. **Analyze Your Data.** Make a copy of this table in your notebook, but add a third column called "Improved or Declined." Follow the links at the *Perspectives on Globalization* website to access the report "One Million Too Many—Implementing Solutions to Child Poverty in Canada." For each row, indicate whether the situation had improved or declined for Canada's children in the 2004 Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada.
2. **Research and Report.** Contact local community or government organizations to find out what is being done to help out those who are hungry and poor in your community. Write a short paragraph describing what is being done and what young people could do to help.
3. **Determine the Global Implications of Your Data.** In what ways does understanding child poverty in Canada help you understand child poverty in other countries?



Why are the rights of children so easily violated? Is globalization one of the causes of some of these violations? How does globalization affect the response of the world's citizens to the special needs of children and youth? Does globalization lead to the empowerment of children and youth? On the next few pages, you will focus on the effects of identity and employment issues on children and youth. Exploring this topic will help you form an opinion about the Chapter Issue: *To what extent does globalization empower individuals and groups in society?*

## Children and Youth Identity

Identity is usually rooted in culture, but it can be affected by globalization. Globalization has spread the Western vision of what childhood and youth should be like through increased access to televisions, computers, and other media. This vision suggests a particular identity for children—young people, ages one through 18, who play and go to school. It supports the idea that children should have time to enjoy their childhood: they should be provided with risk-free opportunities to experience life situations.

How realistic does this vision of what childhood “should be” sound to you? Consider:

- Were you protected from the harsh realities of life? Or did you have to face difficult times?
- Were you nurtured and encouraged to experiment within the confines of home and school? Or did you have too much time on your hands?
- Were you provided with time and resources for play? Or was your childhood a series of events and encounters that demanded you “act older than your years”?
- Did you stay a child? Or did you take on roles and responsibilities that contributed to the well-being of yourself, your siblings, and your parents or guardians?
- Did you play every day after school? Or did your worklife begin early, by doing chores at home, on the farm, or in your neighbourhood? Did you seek “regular” employment when you moved into your teen years?

Experiences of childhood and youth can vary for a number of reasons. Perhaps your culture encourages young people to take on family responsibilities at an early age. Or perhaps globalization has led to more difficult economic circumstances for your family. As you will see from the examples of some Latin American children in the following section, these circumstances play a large part in forming a child's identity.



**Figure 16-5**

A 13-year-old girl in Nicaragua takes part in a theatre production run by an internationally funded foundation called the Two Generations Foundation. How do global efforts such as this one help these children find an identity that isn't tied to poverty?

## A Latin American Childhood

There are children all over the world who wouldn't recognize the life shown in North American sitcoms. One of the reasons for their hardship may be negative results that stem from a globalized economy. For example, in Latin America, some governments increased investment in industries that participated in the globalized economy, but reduced spending on social programs that supported education, welfare, housing, and medical care. These cuts had a detrimental impact on the well-being of many children and families in Latin America and led to growing numbers of street children in countries such as Brazil, Honduras, Mexico, and Argentina.

"Family" plays a significant role in both the identity and culture of many Latin Americans. Individuals consider their family to include those related to the seventh degree, so families are widely extended beyond the people in their immediate households. When reduced government spending on social programs began to affect vulnerable families, even the most desperate children felt responsible to help their entire extended family survive.



## Street Children

An increased number of children living on the street are one of the negative effects of a global economy. These children do whatever they need to do to help support themselves and their families.

*"For 10 years, I lived on the street. I didn't have anyone in the world," Rutilio, now 16, says. "To live, first I would beg. Then I learned to take things from other people. On a good day, I would steal five watches and get 100 lempiras [about \$5.60]. I had to steal—to ... eat, get some clothes. At first I felt bad about taking people's things. But then, you just do it because you have to."*

—Excerpted from **"Down and Out: Street Kids Struggle to Survive,"**  
*Current Events*, March 5, 2005.

*When children are asked why they are living on the streets, many say they are working to help out their family. ... Eufrasio, a 14-year-old Brazilian boy ... "living" in the street, [says,] "I bring home money [to my mother] whether she's out of a job or working, because she's my mother. I bring it home to her, to my whole family. Even if there's nothing left over for me, I share. I've pushed a cart around [to collect bottles, cans, cardboard, and other items to sell]. I've gone out into the street to beg. I've begged lots of times."*

—Elizabeth A. Kuznesof, **"The House, the Street, Global Society: Latin American Families and Childhood in the Twenty-First Century,"**  
*Journal of Social History*, July 1, 2005.

- 1 Compose three questions that you would want to ask Rutilio and Eufrasio in order to understand their lives better.
- 2 Helping to support their families is a major part of the identity of street children in Latin America. What expectations are placed on you in terms of helping out your family? How do they compare with the expectations placed on Eufrasio?
- 3 Can you think of ways that globalization can lead to an improvement in the quality of life of street children?

## Children and Youth Employment

Globalization has increased economic competitiveness. To give themselves an advantage in global marketplaces, producers try to provide goods and services of value at the lowest possible prices. To do this, some producers employ children and youth. There are many reasons why children are hired before adults, some of which are

- Children work for lower wages.
- They are too young to protest against hazardous working conditions.
- They are easily exploited because they are inexperienced.
- In some societies, children are encouraged and expected to work.

### Ideas and Opinions

“ Rather than banning child labour altogether, we need to find a middle ground. The reality on the street is that these children need to work. To eat, to live, to struggle. But they need to go to school as well. They need well-paid jobs that offer them safety, rather than work in dangerous situations. ... So that while they work they can do their homework. ”

—Bangladeshi boy, 16, quoted in UNICEF, “Child Labour in South Asia,” *What Young People Are Saying*, August, 2003, <http://www.unicef.org/voy/media/news.2003-08.PDF>.

The economies of many regions depend on youth being included in the labour force. In dozens of countries, children are expected to work to provide for themselves and others. In many communities, couples have children to increase the number of wage earners in the family.

There are child labourers who are well cared for, treated fairly, and given the opportunity to go to school. But there are also child labourers who are abused by their employers, just as employers abused child labourers during the Industrial Revolution (see Chapter 7, pages 146–147). They may work excessively long hours and suffer from malnutrition, underdevelopment, and lack of care. Many working children do not go to school or do not do very well at school. They often drop out at a young age to pursue jobs and agricultural activities that are poorly paid. They never develop literacy or skills that would help them get better jobs. As a result, they have much less opportunity to benefit from the economic opportunities that may result from globalization.

### Fast Facts

In 2004, about 250 million children worldwide between the ages of five and fourteen were working in jobs that ranged from farming to mining and factory work.

Do you think children should be permitted to work at all? If so, what type of work should they do?

Does this teenager feel that child labour should be abolished? Why does he feel as he does? What solution does he propose?



Figure 16-6

A young boy collects parts for recycling in a dump in China. Examine the photo. What dangers do you see for children working in this environment? How could globalization help their situation?



Consider how globalization of the garbage industry has affected some children in India, Pakistan, and China. Several countries—for instance, the United States and Japan—hope to avoid the economic and environmental costs of disposing of electronic equipment in their own countries by shipping this equipment overseas. Young children are often hired to pick through the waste and separate any material that can be recycled and resold. Instead of going to school, these children do dirty and dangerous work. They are often exposed to toxic fumes and materials such as lead.

Their families, though, depend on them to bring in money with this work. The garbage industry in their countries depends on their cheap labour to maintain maximum profit. Has globalization benefited these children or hurt them?

## Fast Facts

By 2005, there were more than 300 000 child soldiers serving in military, paramilitary, and rebel groups in the world's conflicts. One-third of these child soldiers were girls.

Why do you think armies and rebel groups use child soldiers?

## Child Soldiers

The use of children and youth in warfare is another form of child labour. In 2002, the UN placed limits on the use of children and youth in military forces. The conscription of children under the age of 15 and participation of children in armed conflict was condemned as a war crime by the International Criminal Court in 2003. Yet, boys and girls as young as eight are still used as spies, messengers, scouts for land mines, and guerrilla fighters. The globalization of trade in cheap military technology has led to the increased availability of weapons that are lightweight and easy for children to carry and use. This has led to an increased number of children being armed. In many cases, these children are forced to serve and commit violent actions. In other cases, particularly in Africa and Asia, children and youth orphaned as a result of the AIDS epidemic become soldiers because of the food, protection, and purpose they find in this violent life.

Globalization of media and communication technology has led to an increased awareness of the existence of child soldiers. International organizations such as Human Rights Watch are campaigning to stop the use of child soldiers around the world. You can follow the links at the *Perspectives on Globalization* website to the Human Rights Watch website to read more about the actions that are being taken by this organization.

## Employment and Education Opportunities

There are societies where globalization has led to opportunities for children to gain the education they need for higher-paying jobs. Read the Voices feature that follows, and think about the effects of globalization on employment and education to help answer the Question for Inquiry: *In what ways does globalization affect the lives of children and youth?*



Figure 16-7

A Congolese child soldier. For some children and youth, working for money gives them a status that non-working children do not have. What status might a child soldier be seen to have by other children?



## Learning Today for Tomorrow

Every day at 8 a.m., ... 16-year-old Neelam Aggarwal rides three miles to school in a horse-drawn buggy. She would like to be a doctor someday. But ... her

school—like most village schools in India—doesn't even offer science classes for girls. ...

"I want to make something of myself," she says. So each day after school, Neelam operates what amounts to the village's only public telephone—a cellular phone owned by Indian cellular operator Koshika. By charging her fellow villagers to make calls, Neelam can make as much as \$25 on a really good day. She's saving the money for computer classes, which she hopes will lead to a good job.

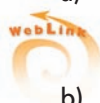
Ten years ago, few girls in India would have dared to be like Neelam. But today, she is the very embodiment of the Indian youth—ambitious, technology-oriented, and confident. Her generation is the product of ... an economy where free markets play a much bigger role. Indian society also has been transformed by the Internet and cable television—forces young people are best equipped to exploit.

—Manjeet Kripalani, "Economics: India's Youth: Capitalist Generation," *Business Week*, November 10, 1999.

- 1 In what ways has globalization made girls like Neelam aware of the opportunities that may be available to them?
- 2 What obstacles to gainful employment still seem to exist for them?
- 3 How can globalization help Neelam and her peers achieve their goals?

## Explore the Issues

- 1 **Research and Communicate.** Find out about street children in Canada or another country of your choice.
  - a) Start your research by following the links at the *Perspectives on Globalization* website to sites with information about street children.
  - b) Write a letter to that country's government expressing your opinion about the situation of street children in that country and to suggest an action that might improve the situation.
- 2 **Apply and Practise Your Skills.**
  - a) Working individually or as a team member, use the steps in this chapter's Skill Path (pages 337–338) to investigate artwork by children or youth in another country that shows their attitude toward work or school.
  - b) Create a sculpture, song, poem, or scripted performance that shows your own attitude toward work or school. **SKILLS:**



- c) Display your creative work or present it to the class.
- 3 **Focus on Media.** Follow the links on the *Perspectives on Globalization* website to the website for the non-governmental organization Youth Advocate Program International.
    - a) Use the skills you learned in the Skill Path for Chapter 2 (pages 27–28) to evaluate this source of information in terms of perspective or bias and use of evidence.
    - b) Present your evaluation in an oral report.
    - c) How does the existence of websites such as the one for Youth Advocate Program International demonstrate how globalization has affected the lives of children and youth?
  - 4 **Draw a Conclusion.** Based on what you have learned in this section, do you think that globalization has empowered children and youth? Why or why not?

## READING STRATEGY

The graph in Figure 16-8 is a scattergraph. Each dot on the graph aligns with two measurements. It aligns with one measure for one type of criteria with a scale along the top. It aligns with another measure for another type of criteria with a scale along one side. When you see a graph like this, try to see the relationship between the two types of criteria.

Figure 16-8

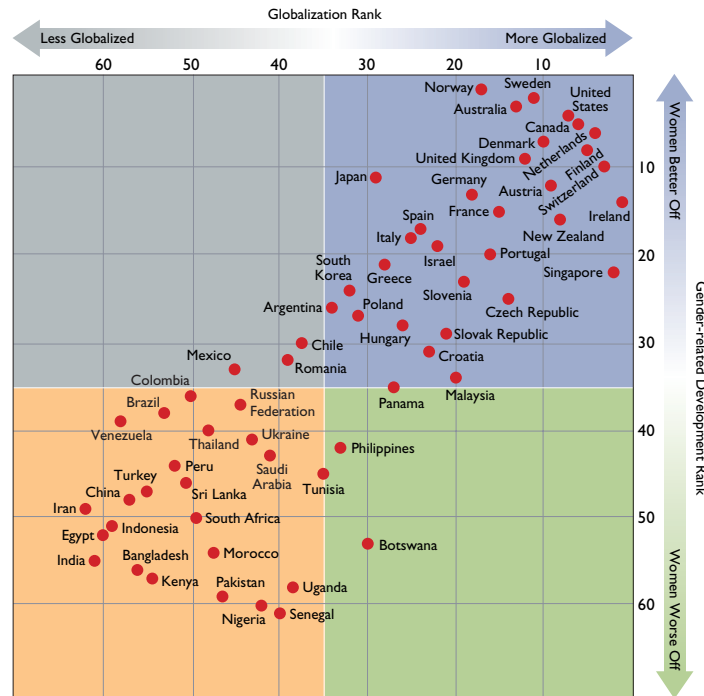
This graph compares countries' levels of globalization (using such factors as trade and participation in international treaties) and women's well-being (using such factors as health, literacy, access to education, and earned income). What does the pattern in this graph reveal about the relationship between globalization and the well-being of women?

Source: Foreign Policy and A.T. Kearney, *Measuring Globalization*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace  
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## Global Concerns of Women

### Question for Inquiry

- In what ways does globalization affect the lives of women?



If you look in your local newspaper today, you most likely will find at least one article about women's concerns. It could be about a local case of domestic violence, an international case of improving working conditions for women, or an article in the business section about a successful female businessperson. Despite this widespread media awareness of women's concerns and the globalization of organizations that work for women's rights, a good number of these articles illustrate that women continue to face obstacles in many areas of their lives. The area where experts disagree is whether globalization has contributed to increasing or decreasing these obstacles.

In the beginning of the 21st century, the United Nations **Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE)** identified several areas of concern for women globally, including violence, poverty, education and training, health, armed conflict, and women in power and decision making. In this section you will have an opportunity to explore empowerment, education, and the economy. Finding out the effects of globalization on women's quality of life will help you explore the Chapter Issue: *To what extent does globalization empower individuals and groups in society?*

## Ghana: Gender Roles and Globalization

**Something to Think About:** To what extent can traditional gender roles be influenced by globalization?

**An Example:** You learned in Chapter 15 that the lack of clean water and sanitation is more likely to affect women than men. In Samari-Nkwanta, a farming community in Ghana, women spent much of their day walking great distances for water. Some girls quit school to find the time to look for water. Yet women were rarely consulted to try to solve the problem. The Muslim culture in the area prevented women from seeking leadership positions. Men were traditionally “in charge.”

In Samari-Nkwanta, World Vision Ghana, a branch of the international organization World Vision, developed the Ghana Rural Water Project to bring clean water and improved sanitation to the Samari-Nkwanta community. The project organizers made sure that both men and women were involved in managing and maintaining the sanitation facilities.

**A United Nations Report about the Results of Ghana Rural Water Project:** *Positive outcomes of the project include:*

- *gender roles: women have on average five more hours per day to use more productively ...*
- *education: girls now make up 53 per cent of primary school students, compared to 43 per cent in 1995 ...*

*Overall, the project has allowed for increased education for more community members, healthier individuals, and a deeper respect for women. The women also now have more time to spend with their families. One man in the village noted, “My marriage has improved and become more cordial. We have time for other economic development projects.” ...*

*The community was able to achieve these results as well as more equitable access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities primarily because the project was facilitated [made possible] within an atmosphere of co-operation and coordination between men and women, as well as between the Ghanaian government and World Vision Ghana.*

—United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs,  
“Gender, Water and Sanitation: 15 Case Studies on Best Practices,” 2006,  
[http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/  
GenderWaterSanitation15CaseStudies.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/GenderWaterSanitation15CaseStudies.pdf).

- 1 What was the traditional role of women in Samari-Nkwanta before the water project? How did their role change through their work on the project?
- 2 How did globalization affect the role of women in this traditional community?

### Figure 16-10

Why do you think women have the responsibility of collecting water in many cultures?

## INVESTIGATION



Figure 16-9

Before the water project, many of the 650 people in Samari-Nkwanta became sick from unsanitized water. Why do you think World Vision Ghana chose this water project as the first step in helping develop the area?





## READING STRATEGY

When you read text and diagrams, do you mostly use visual skills, such as re-reading sections and taking notes? Or are you more comfortable using listening skills, such as reading aloud and listening to others read? As you read, think about the learning style that works best for you.

What obstacles prevent the girls in Manju's community from obtaining an education? How would your life be limited if you couldn't read and write?

## Educating Girls

The obstacles that girls in many societies face in obtaining an education are tied to both globalization and their traditional roles. In many societies, girls may share the responsibility of maintaining households with their mothers. They look after infants, fetch water and firewood, tend animals, and take care of crops. Child marriage and teenage pregnancy require girls to care for their children rather than go to school. Many families cannot afford to send all their children to school, so it is usually the boys who are given the opportunity of an education.

In an attempt to protect their community from outside influences, some men and women resist globalizing forces. They may see the education of girls as a threat to their culture from the outside world.

There are many advantages to both males and females when girls get an education.

- Educated females are likely to pass on what they have learned to other family members (both male and female).
- They are able to seek employment opportunities that will raise the standard of living and quality of life for themselves and their families. This, in turn, raises the standard of living in the country where they live.
- Educating females has been shown to improve the health of their entire family. Studies show that educating women leads to a decrease in infant mortality rates.

## Ideas and Opinions

“Manju, aged 15, sits cross-legged on a classroom floor, intensely absorbed in the day's lessons.”

“The decision to begin school at an age when many girls get married made Manju's older brother very angry. He went to the camp several times and threatened the staff. But Manju stood firm. ‘I realized school would be my way out,’ she says. ‘I want to show my brother and the village adults that they are wrong when they say that, being an older girl, I should not study.’”

— UNICEF, “Manju's Story,” *Voices of Youth*,  
[http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/education/explore\\_160.html](http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/education/explore_160.html).

Education empowers women to demand better treatment from society: it leads to the participation of women in the leadership and governments of their countries and in the world. Many experts state that by gaining a stronger voice politically, women can ensure equal opportunity in the global social fabric. They feel that once women are

able to participate in the political processes of their countries and work on changing the attitudes of people in power, they will no longer be treated as less important citizens.

## Women and Work

There are a variety of opinions about how the global economy has affected women's labour. One opinion is that globalization allows more women to find work in the branch plants and offices of foreign-owned firms in their home countries. This work offers higher salaries and better opportunities for advancement than are available in local businesses and industries. Another opinion is that most of the employment available for women is in low-skilled jobs such as clothing manufacturing. This work is often poorly paid, with long hours and difficult working conditions. A third opinion is that the effect of globalized economies on women's labour issues has been mixed. By exploring women's labour concerns, you can make your own decision about the effects of economic globalization on women.

Labour concerns reflect a culture's values and its attitude toward women. **Employment equity**—equal pay for equal work—is a Western concept. In North America and Western Europe, it is considered unfair when women with the same education, experience, and qualifications are paid less for the same type of work that men do. In some societies, women are not permitted to participate in the general workforce where they would mix with male workers.

In other communities, women are permitted to have only unpaid occupations that are considered “women's work”—housekeeping, child care, and meal preparation. For instance, in Vietnam, many women manage their household's finances, look after children, and do all the housework.

Globalization is at times at odds with the values of some cultures. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank encourage less developed countries to expand their economies through exports. These globalized economies require a labour force that often cannot be expanded unless women are included.

As you will recall from Chapter 5, globalization has led to international economic development projects that attempt to involve women in traditional occupations such as crafts, clothing, and agriculture. Foreign investors and international economic development agencies realize that traditional goods and services are marketable beyond local communities and countries. They have therefore begun supporting smaller businesses that produce these products and are often started by women.

## Ideas and Opinions

“While women now have greater access to lower offices such as councillor and parliamentarian, they remain scarce in the upper echelons [levels] of power. ... As a result, women's real influence on the important issues of their lives and communities is hitting a glass ceiling.”

—Élaine Hémond, Executive Director, *The Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie Papers*, Volume 7, No. 2, December, 2005.

What is a glass ceiling? Why is it important for women to be involved in the higher levels of government?

## Fast Facts

In May 2006, six of the 27 cabinet ministers in Canada's federal government were female.

1. How many females are currently serving as cabinet ministers in Canada? Can you name any of them?
2. Brainstorm ideas about what could be done to increase the number of women seeking powerful political positions in Canada and elsewhere.

## Crucial Concerns

### Issue: Poverty

- Women are the majority of the world's poor.

### Potential Actions:

- Develop economic reforms that increase women's access to financial services, assets, and resources, including land ownership and property rights.

### Issue: Unpaid Labour

- Domestic work is not recognized for its value to communities and societies.
- In rural areas around the world, women are not paid for their agricultural labour. Women's work, without which people in rural areas would starve, is not rewarded.

### Potential Actions:

- Governments could equip women with skills and capabilities to enhance their economic and social status.
- Educate girls and women to participate freely in the informational, educational, and technological arenas of their economies.

### Issue: Sweatshop Labour

- Globalization has led to increased employment of women workers in producing products for export, where they often earn low wages and have substandard working conditions.

### Potential Actions:

- Take legal action against clothing manufacturers and retailers who rely on sweatshop labour.
- Use the media to expose employers' abuses.
- Consumers can boycott goods made in sweatshops.
- Pass international legislation to promote and protect workers' labour rights.

### Issue: Highly Competitive Globalized Marketplace

- Entrepreneurs (independent business owners) face competition against multinational companies that can offer better-quality goods and services at cheaper prices.

### Potential Actions:

- Provide women entrepreneurs with technical and financial support.
- Increase training for women entrepreneurs, including the effective use of technology for networking, exchanging information, and Internet-based businesses.

## Potential Solutions

- To help reduce poverty, the non-profit Group for the Promotion of Education and Sustainable Development has successfully marketed purses that Mexican Indian women have created using recycled food packages.



- In areas of rural India, girls are being educated for the first time. Villagers are committed to hiring female teachers so that they can feel comfortable sending their older girls to school.



- Opposed to “capitalist globalization,” individual and group activists participate regularly at G8 summits and WTO meetings to bring media attention to abuses of global workers.



- The non-profit organization Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc. (WE) works with women who are considering starting or purchasing a business, or who are operating an existing business. WE offers lending services, business development workshops, and seminars to support women entrepreneurs.



Figure 16-11 ▲

Women and work: Crucial concerns and potential solutions

Support for women workers has also come from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Since the 1990s, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing organization (WIEGO) have attempted to protect and bring the benefits of globalization to workers not connected to a large company by connecting them with global trade unions that help promote and protect workers' interests. Another NGO that promotes female workers' rights is Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS). Among other activities, this group organizes cross-country exchanges between low-income community self-help groups that are working to benefit from globalization.

### Opportunities for Entrepreneurship

Do you have an entrepreneurial spirit? Perhaps you have a great idea for a new teen clothing line, or a plan to take advantage of what seems to be an ever-increasing demand for gourmet coffees. Entrepreneurs are people who finance and set up new businesses to make a profit. They are individuals who are willing and eager to dedicate their talents, energies, and resources to develop and market a new product or service.

### Ideas and Opinions

“Typically, women in developed countries own between one-fourth and one-third of all businesses. ... But women-owned businesses in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America are growing rapidly. ... In Swaziland, for example, women account for about 70 per cent of micro, small, and medium enterprises.

“...[Women]-to-women business exchanges are also highlighting the softer, but little-publicized, side of globalization. You have to be quietly gracious in order to make it work. ... Women, when they are going into business internationally, have a greater sensitivity to the need for understanding the culture of the country and not just barging in with their products saying ‘Here, buy from me.’”

—Excerpted from “World Force: Women Entrepreneurs Are a Growing Influence on International Business,” *Minority Business Entrepreneur*, September/October 2001.

Do you think women and men possess different qualities or skills that may give them an advantage as entrepreneurs? Why or why not?

### Ideas and Opinions

“It is hard to imagine a greater physical and psychological distance, or a greater imbalance—in terms of power, profit, and lifestyle—than that between the woman who stitches garments or soccer balls in her home in Pakistan for a retail company in Europe or North America, and the chief executive of that company.”

—Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women), “When Work Just Traps People in Poverty,” *International Herald Tribune*, September 2, 2005.

Suggest features for each of the “power, profit, and lifestyle” imbalances that exist between the female worker and the head of the company. What is the connection between this imbalance and globalization?

### Fast Facts

According to an Industry Canada 2005 report, “over the last 20 years, Canada has seen a 200 per cent increase in the number of women-owned firms. ... Firms with at least one female owner employed 2.6 million people.”

Speculate: What motivates an individual to become an entrepreneur? Do the same desires motivate most women and men? Why or why not?





## Afghan Woman Entrepreneurs

In 2003, a number of Afghan women began going into business as entrepreneurs. Many are members of Afghanistan's first female business association, which was set up with foreign funding.

*Mina Sherzoy, head of the government's department of Women's Entrepreneurship Development, says women needing start-up money typically must turn to a male relative. "There are barriers, and they will be lifted slowly," she says. "We are recovering from war and devastation and Taliban repression. ... But there's nothing in sharia (Islamic law) that says women can't do business."*

*Businesswoman Sara Rahmani re-fashions the traditional all-encompassing burqa for post-Taliban Afghanistan women. She employs 70 women, 10 doing machine-stitching on site and 60 others doing embroidery by hand at home ... [and] two Afghan men—a tailor to teach the workers and an English-speaker to help with marketing and shopping for fabric.*

*Her company, Sara Afghan, is still struggling to make ends meet, but is busy with orders from two American clients for 100 blouses and 100 sets of duvet covers and sheets, from which Rahmani hopes to make about \$2000 profit. "We have two orders, so we should be okay to pay salaries and rent for the next two months. God willing, after that, more business will come," she says. "A lot of poor women are praying for me."*

—Matthew Pennington, "Reconstructing the Burqa,"  
Associated Press, *Toronto Star*, April 28, 2005.



Figure 16-12

Sara Rahmani. What marketplace advantages do her garments have through "re-fashioning the traditional"?

- 1 How did Taliban rule in Afghanistan discourage women's entrepreneurship? What advantages does the success of a woman's international business bring to her immediate community?
- 2 How could Sara Rahmani take advantage of globalization's increased economic integration to sell her products to Muslim women outside Afghanistan? In what countries could these garments prove popular?

## Explore the Issues


- 1 **Discuss It.** Review the Skill Path in Chapter 9 (pages 187–188) to think creatively in discussing the following question: How has globalization affected the lives of women in various communities and societies?
  - a) Follow the links at the *Perspectives on Globalization* website to a site about Aboriginal Women Meeting the Challenges, and read the online pamphlet.
  - b) For each of the individuals profiled, summarize why she could be considered an inspirational model for young women today.
  - c) How can local or national role models inspire women to take on leadership roles in a globalized society?
- 2 **Read and Analyze.**
- 3 **Draw a Conclusion.** Based on what you have learned in this section, do you think that globalization has empowered women? Why or why not?

## Reflect and Analyze

In this chapter, you have analyzed the impacts of globalization on individuals and groups—specifically, children and youth, and women. You have observed that socially, economically, and politically, globalization presents these groups with both challenges and opportunities for empowerment.

You have continued to explore the Main Issue for Part 4: *To what extent should you, as a citizen, respond to globalization?*

### Respond to Ideas

- 1 a) Follow the links at the *Perspectives on Globalization* website to read the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.  

- b) Which rights would be hardest for the international community to promote and protect? Why?
- c) On a poster board, or using a computer software program such as Inspiration, display the articles you chose as most difficult to promote and protect, and your reasons for choosing them.


### Recognize Relationships between Content and Issues

- 2 a) Using literacy data from a world almanac or a recent edition of *The Statesman's Yearbook* and the levels of globalization from Figure 16-8 (page 346), create a scattergraph that compares men's literacy skills with the level of globalization for 10 countries listed in Figure 16-8.
- b) Create a second scattergraph that compares women's literacy rates to globalization in the same 10 countries.
- c) What pattern is revealed between the globalization level and literacy rate for men? What pattern is revealed for women?

- d) In what countries do you see a greater difference between the literacy rates for men and women?
- e) Does globalization seem to affect literacy rates positively or negatively? Is this effect the same for men and women?

- 3 With a partner, review the Skill Path in Chapter 1 (pages 7–8) and create a concept web that shows what you have learned about the Chapter Issue: *To what extent does globalization empower individuals and groups in society?* For example, think of ways that globalization benefits or disadvantages women.

### Focus on Research and Inquiry

- 4 In many cultures, including Aboriginal cultures in Canada, the tradition of telling stories was used to passing down information from generation to generation. **SKILLS**
  - a) Use Step 1 from this chapter's Skill Path (page 337) to locate a story from a community of Indigenous peoples in Canada that shows the role of either women or children in that community. You can begin by following the links at the *Perspectives on Globalization* website to several Internet resources or by doing research at your local library.  

  - b) Follow Steps 2 and 3 from the Skill Path to analyze the story using geographic skills to answer the following questions:
    - Whose perspective is represented by the story?
    - If the story is modern, how does it reveal the effects of globalization on the role of children or women?
    - If the story is traditional, how has the role of children or women been affected by globalization?

