



Effects of Globalization on Individuals and Communities

Chapter

17

READING STRATEGY

Before you begin reading this chapter, give yourself a head-start by previewing the activities at the end of the chapter.

Figure 17-1

Think about the effects of globalization on you personally and on your community. How has globalization affected your quality of life? How has it affected life in your community?

Chapter Focus

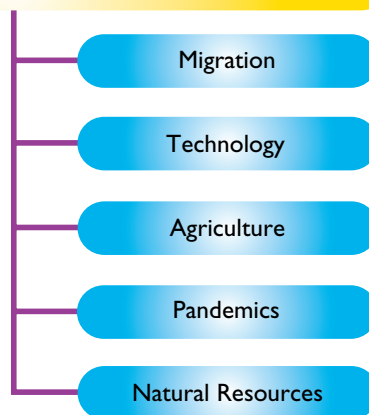
To what extent should you, as a citizen, embrace globalization? As you continue to explore this Main Issue for Part 4, think about how globalization affects individuals and communities. As you do, consider how globalization affects you personally, as well as how it affects the community in which you live.

Today, change is the one thing that is constant in our lives. During your lifetime, you have already seen many changes in your community and in Canada. You have seen how similar changes have spread around the world. The forces of globalization have had a powerful impact on individuals and communities. They have affected patterns of migration and technology. They have raised new issues and controversies about agricultural practices and the sharing of natural resources. The trends and changes that have led to globalization have raised concerns about the growing threat of diseases that may spread quickly around the world. These are just some of the effects of globalization today.

Chapter Issue

In this chapter, you will consider some examples of the effects of globalization on individuals and communities. These examples will help you understand the Chapter Issue: *To what extent does globalization affect individuals and communities?*

Effects of Globalization on Individuals and Communities



Globalization, Migration, and Technology

Question for Inquiry

- In what ways has globalization's influence on migration and technology affected people?

The modern mobility of the world's population has produced widespread social and cultural changes. These changes have resulted in the creation of many multicultural communities across Canada and around the world. Within them, individuals assume multiple identities that reflect the attitudes, values, and behaviours of their home cultures as well as those of their adopted communities. In this section, you will examine the ways in which globalization has influenced migration and technology. As you do, you will begin to form an opinion about the Chapter Issue: *To what extent does globalization affect individuals and communities?*

Globalization and Transnationalism

How has globalization affected migration patterns and trends for individuals and communities? Think about the speed and accessibility of transportation and communications technologies today. How have these advances made it easier to travel around the world and to exchange information, goods, and services? How do they bring people around the world closer together?

Today, the forces of globalization allow many immigrants and their communities to maintain close ties with their homelands. Cellphones, the Internet, and lower-cost air travel make it easier to maintain contact and to visit friends and family “back home.” Money can be transferred to almost any place in the world easily and quickly. As immigrants take advantage of the opportunities created by globalization, they form transnational networks (networks that extend across one or more borders). These networks create political, social, cultural, and economic links between geographic locations around the world.

How has the ability to stay connected to people changed how immigrants identify their place in the world? Many members of transnational communities see themselves not just as multicultural citizens, but as global citizens. They embrace multiple identities that are not anchored in either their place of origin or their place of destination.

Ideas and Opinions

“ [As a result of globalization,] people can migrate to wherever they desire. ... As people travel, they bring their culture with them and combine it with that of their new destination. When a culturally diverse group of people live together they learn [about] each other's race and culture, which helps minimize the racism and discrimination among them. As a result, this helps to strengthen relationships of people from different cultures, bringing us closer together. ”

—Anita Yu, Canadian student,
Historica YouthLinks, 2005,
<http://www.youthlinks.org>

When parents or guardians move their families to countries like Canada, what are the potential positive impacts on them? What are the potential negative impacts? What impacts have globalization and migration had on your community?

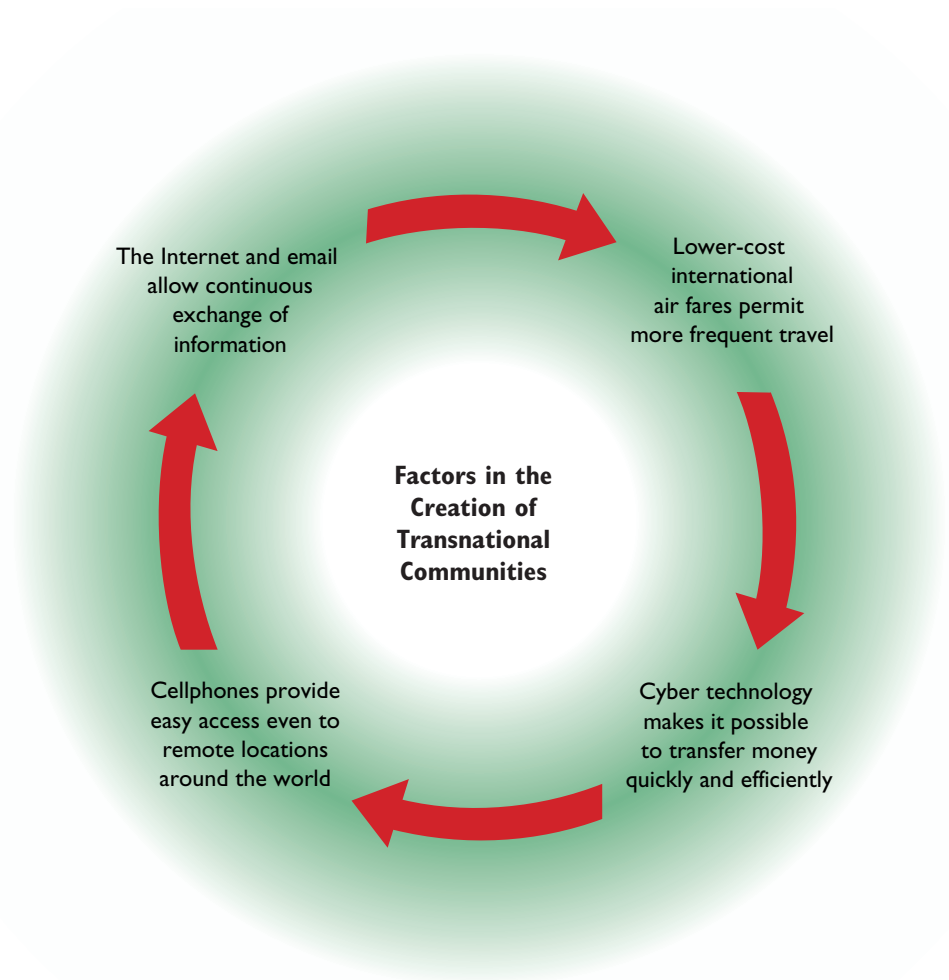


Figure 17-2 ▶

These key factors of globalization work together to create a transnational network around the world. What other global technologies do you think contribute to **transnationalism**?

The Effects of Migration on Canadian Communities

When you look around your community, what signs of cultural diversity do you see? Immigrants settle in all parts of the country and in all types of communities. Most, however, choose to settle in the cities and regions in which other immigrants from their homeland have settled. As a result, today's cities—such as Montréal, Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary—are home to large numbers of people from China, India, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, and many other countries.

One of the most culturally diverse provinces in Canada is British Columbia. In recent years, Canada's Pacific province has experienced a major demographic transformation. It is estimated that by 2017, one in every three residents of British Columbia will be a member of a visible minority. This will give the province the largest population of visible minorities in the country. You will have a chance to read about one of these minorities on the next few pages. What geographic factors influence so many immigrants to choose British Columbia as their new home? How has globalization influenced these immigrants and their communities?



Figure 17-3

Vancouver celebrates St. Patrick's Day with a multicultural parade that blends Chinese dragon boats and South Asian bhangra dancers with Celtic pipe bands. In what ways does this type of celebration reflect the effects of globalization in Vancouver? What similar events and celebrations are held in your community or region?

Chinese Transnationals

The city of Vancouver and its suburb of Richmond are home to the largest number of Chinese immigrants in Canada. Before Hong Kong was returned to Chinese control in 1997, some Hong Kong residents felt uncertain about their future. Many migrated to Canada. The lower mainland of British Columbia has benefited from the transnational network established by the Chinese community. Many immigrants set up businesses there while continuing to operate businesses in Hong Kong. They invested in real estate around Richmond and Vancouver. What impact does this type of financial investment have on the community? What impact does it have on the people who live there?

Today, many Hong Kong immigrants are **transnationals**. They live either in Canada or Hong Kong, depending on their stage of life. Many young people come to Canada to attend school. When they

graduate, they return to Hong Kong to pursue business opportunities. In some families, mothers stay in Canada so that their children can attend school. Fathers become “astronauts,” working and living in Hong Kong and commuting for visits with their families. When they retire, many transnationals who have spent their working lives in Hong Kong return to Canada to enjoy the quality of life and the social security benefits available to retired Canadians. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a transnational lifestyle for the individuals involved? What impact do you think transnationalism has on communities and the social services they provide?

Ideas and Opinions

“Transnationalism invokes a travel plan that is continuous, not finite. Immigrants never quite arrive at their destination because they never quite leave home. Indeed, the whole problematic of ‘home’ can become extraordinarily complex in an age with increasing levels of dual citizenship, labour contracts with short-term visas, family members located on opposite sides of national borders, and fast and ever cheaper lines of contact between nations. The life-world of the transnational migrant is stretched across space. ... The Hong Kong migrant would like to work in Hong Kong and sleep in Canada.”

— David Ley and Audrey Kobayashi, “Back in Hong Kong: Return Migration or Transnational Sojourn?” Vancouver Centre of Excellence, Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis, April 2005.

What technologies of globalization make it possible for immigrants from Hong Kong and other countries to live as transnationals? What are the benefits and drawbacks of a transnational lifestyle?

Explore the Issues

- 1 Focus on Current Events.** Look for images in newspapers, books, and magazines and on the Internet that reflect globalization’s influence on migration and technology in Alberta. Photocopy or download these images to create a photo collage. Include appropriate labels or descriptions of the images.
- 2 Think About It.** “Globalization will impact Canada’s First Nations and Francophone communities differently than it will impact the majority.

In the case of the Francophone communities, it may well become a question of survival.” (France Levasseur-Ouimet, professor emeritus, University of Alberta, February 2006).

- a) Why might globalization affect First Nations and Francophones differently than the majority of Canadians?
- b) What can these communities do to maintain their distinct identities while still welcoming newcomers?



Identify, Analyze, and Evaluate Different Points of View

To what extent does globalization affect individuals and communities?

As you continue to build your understanding of this Chapter Issue, you will encounter many different points of view. Therefore, it is important to be able to identify and analyze different viewpoints. Recognizing different points of view helps you to keep an open mind and build a better understanding of an issue. Then, you can use the information to form your own opinions.

When you are researching an issue, follow these steps to identify and analyze different points of view.

Step Research the Issue

1

Do some research to find and identify different points of view about the issue you are investigating. These viewpoints may be found in a variety of sources, such as books, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet.

Step Evaluate the Validity of a Point of View

2

When you are reading different points of view, you need to analyze whether or not they are valid. A point of view is valid if it stems from an author's personal experience or knowledge, if it is unbiased, and if it can be supported by facts. A point of view may be invalid if it is not based on personal experience or knowledge, if it is biased, and if it is not supported by facts. For example, you would want to consider the validity of these two different points of view about the health risks of smoking cigarettes: one expressed by a tobacco company executive who claims there is no link between smoking and lung cancer, and another expressed by a research scientist who claims there is a direct link between smoking and lung cancer. To decide whether these points of view are valid or invalid, ask yourself:

- Is each point of view based on the person's experience or knowledge?
- What personal bias about cigarette smoking does each person have?
- What are the facts about cigarette smoking and lung cancer?

Figure 17-4 ▶

Use a resource person to help you find a variety of points of view.



Step **Evaluate the Language**

3

Look for the connotation, or implied meaning, in the language an author uses to express his or her point of view. The connotation of words can create different feelings and impressions. For example, what impression is conveyed when an author describes someone as a political leader rather than a dictator? When you analyze language, think about why the author may have chosen to use certain words and descriptions, and how these words reflect his or her point of view.

Step **Practise Your Skill!**

4

- 1 Apply It.** Apply the steps of the Skill Path to identify and analyze the following two points of view about genetic modification. (Before you do this analysis, you may wish to learn about genetically modified foods on pages 362–364.) While many experts understand the potential benefits of GM, they believe more research is needed to determine potential risks before proceeding with its widespread application. Others believe the known health risks associated with malnutrition and hunger outweigh the potential risks of genetically modified products.

Today, the leading edge of genetics is in the field of biotechnology. The basis of this new area is the ability to take DNA from one organism and insert it into a different species. This is truly revolutionary. ... However, history informs us that though we love technology, there are always costs, and since our knowledge of how nature works is so limited, we can't anticipate how these costs will manifest themselves. ...

GM plants are living organisms. Once these new life forms have become established in our surroundings, they can replicate, change, and spread; there may be no turning back. Many ecologists are concerned about what this means to the balance of life on earth that has evolved over millions of years through the natural reproduction of species. ... We only discover the costs of new technologies after they are extensively used. We should apply the Precautionary Principle with any new technology, asking whether it is needed and then demanding proof that it is not harmful. Nowhere is this more important than in biotechnology because it enables us to tamper with the very blueprint of life.

—David Suzuki, geneticist and environmental activist, "Biotechnology Is Experimenting with Your Life," *Briarpatch*, September 1, 2000.

Over-cautious rules result in hyper-inflated research and development costs and make it harder for poorer countries to share in the benefit of biotechnology. No one argues that we should not proceed with caution, but needless restrictions on agricultural biotechnology could dramatically slow the pace of progress and keep important advances out of the hands of people who need them. This is the tragic side effect of unwarranted concern.

In 2002, Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa rejected some 23 000 metric tonnes of food aid in the midst of a two-year-long drought that threatened the lives of over two million Zambians. President Mwanawasa's public explanation was that the bioengineered corn from the United States was "poisonous." ... Uganda has stopped research on bioengineered bananas and postponed their introduction indefinitely. ...

During the next 50 years, the global population is expected to rise by 50 per cent—to nine billion people, almost entirely in the poorest regions of the world. And producing enough to feed these people will require the use of the invaluable gift of biotechnology.

—C.S. Prakash and Gregory Conko, "Technology for Life: How Biotech Will Save Billions from Starvation," *American Enterprise*, March 2004.

2 Discuss It. Review the criteria for analyzing sources outlined in this Skill Path. Then discuss the following questions:

- What arguments for and against biotechnology and genetic modification does each of the excerpts in Activity 1 identify? Why do you think there is not a simple answer to this type of ethical question?
- What is your position on the application of the "precautionary principle"? Give reasons for your answer.

Globalization and the Politics of Food

Question for Inquiry

- In what ways do changes in global agriculture affect people?

In the last section, you considered how globalization affects how and where we live. It affects many other aspects of our lives, including one of our most basic needs: food.

Do you ever think about the foods you eat? Do you wonder if chemicals have been added to preserve them or to make them look more appetizing? Do you worry that pesticides used in agriculture may be harmful to your health? These are some of the issues associated with modern agriculture. In this section, you have the opportunity to explore one important issue in agriculture today: the impact of biotechnology on global agriculture.

Genetically Modified Foods

In the 1960s and 1970s, the **Green Revolution** ushered in a new era in global agriculture. Many traditional farming practices were replaced by technologies that created increased agricultural production in countries around the world.

Today, some experts believe that biotechnology may offer the world a second Green Revolution through genetic modification. **Genetic modification (GM)** allows genes from one species to be introduced into another to produce a hardier and higher-yielding strain. Genetically modified products include vaccines, medicines, and foods, especially food staples such as rice, corn, sweet potatoes, and soybeans. GM technology can increase the quality, quantity, and availability of food products for people. Yet the rapid introduction of products produced through biotechnology has raised questions. What is the

Ideas and Opinions

“Biotechnology is a suit[e] of tools that allows plant breeders to introduce a greater array of novelty into their plant varieties, and select which work, much faster than they could using conventional plant breeding techniques. There is nothing inherently evil or Frankenstein-like about genetically modified plants.”

—Boru Douthwaite, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Ibadan, Nigeria, in “The Role of Science in Sustainable Agriculture,” *Ag BioTech InfoNet*, http://www.biotech-info.net/role_of_science.html, June 20, 2001.

READING STRATEGY

There are some important new terms in this section. As you read, use a dictionary to define these terms in your personal glossary.

While many researchers support genetic modification of plants, other people, including some scientists, politicians, and religious leaders, oppose genetic modification involving animals. What concerns might this type of genetic modification raise? What is your point of view?



Figure 17-5

In Britain, farmers were unknowingly growing a strain of oilseed rape that had been genetically modified after planting cross-pollinated seeds imported from Canada. As the plants flower, it becomes impossible to avoid further cross-pollination with conventional crops. What effect do you think situations like this might have on traditional farming?

potential impact on human health, the environment, and traditional farming practices? How will these impacts affect individuals and communities?

The Promises and Risks of GM Products

What are the promises and risks associated with genetically modified products? Biotech companies believe that GM products will eliminate food shortages in the 21st century by providing better-quality and cheaper foods in greater quantities. They claim these products are safe for both humans and the environment. Other experts disagree. They argue that GM products pose a number of risks. Some of these risks are already known; others are yet to be discovered. How do we know if the benefits promised by genetically modified products outweigh the potential risks? (See Figure 17-5.)

Ideas and Opinions

“ Genetically modified foods can lead to serious environmental disasters. The major concern is that genetic engineering technology could permanently change the ecosystems. Once these plants and animals are genetically modified, they may endanger other species and animals that live in the same environment. ”

—Alex Wu, Canadian student,
Historica YouthLinks, 2003,
<http://www.youthlinks.org>.

Do you agree with this student’s point of view? What impact might the potential environmental risks of genetically modified foods have on individuals and communities?

We should produce genetically modified products because they

- provide higher concentrations of calcium, iron, vitamins, and proteins
- produce higher-quality foods
- may be used to inoculate against diseases
- reduce the use of chemical pesticides because of greater resistance to pests and diseases
- reduce wastes that pollute the environment because raw materials are **biodegradable**
- produce higher yields because crops require less time to mature and have greater resistance to diseases, pests, and droughts
- increase the world's food supply
- provide better-tasting foods

Health

Environmental

Economic

Ethical and Moral

We should not produce genetically modified products because they

- may lead to unpredictable allergic reactions
- may alter the genetic makeup of individuals
- may cross-pollinate with other crops
- may lead to a loss of flora and fauna
- may produce unknown effects on other organisms
- violate the natural order of the world
- threaten the earth's biodiversity
- concentrate agribusiness in the hands of powerful corporations in the industrialized nations
- create increased dependence of developing countries on the industrialized world
- may produce unknown effects and stresses on animals
- do not require labelling under current legislation in Canada



Figure 17-6

Different people have different experiences of GM foods. They will have different points of view about GM foods based on those experiences. Look at each point and think about who might find that point to be highly persuasive. **SKILLS**

Some experts are concerned about unknown risks associated with GM products. Should these concerns override the need to eliminate the malnutrition and hunger experienced by people in the world's poorest communities? Explain your point of view.

Ideas and Opinions

“To deny desperate, hungry people the means to control their futures by presuming to know what is best for them is not only paternalist but morally wrong. We want to have the opportunity to save the lives of millions of people and change the course of history in many nations. The harsh reality is that, without the help of agricultural biotechnology, many will not live.”

—Hassan Adamu, former Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for Nigeria, in “We’ll Feed Our People As We See Fit,” *Washington Post*, September 11, 2000.

Genetic Modification and Human Health

INVESTIGATION

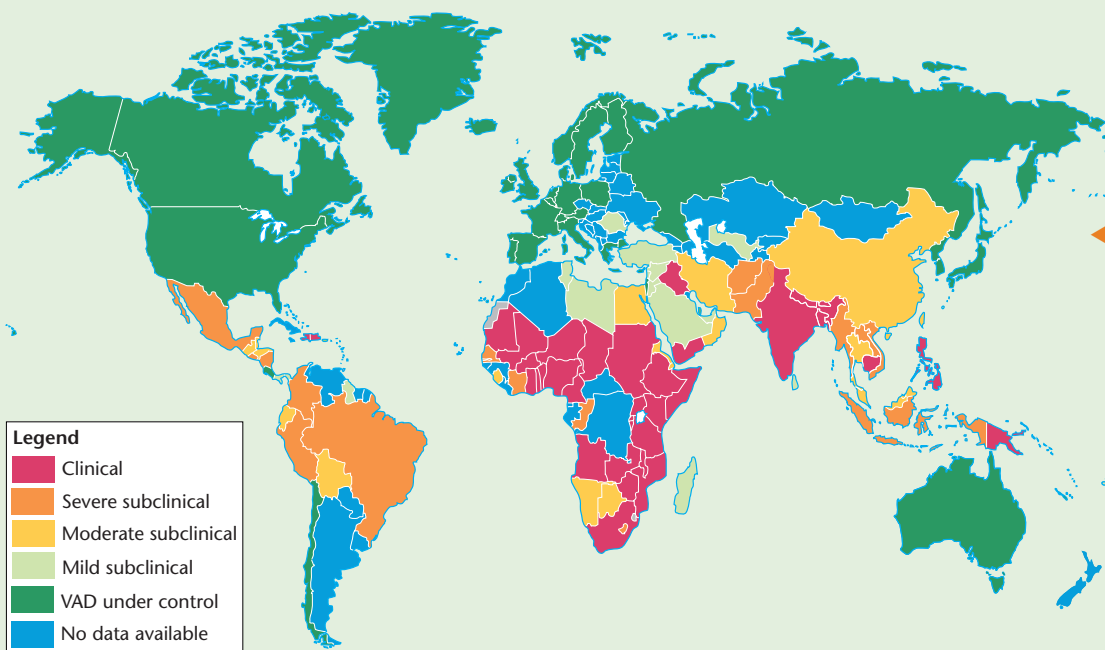
Something to Think About: Should genetically modified foods be available to individuals and communities if they reduce or eliminate certain health risks?

An Example: Vitamin A deficiency (VAD) is a major health issue in many parts of Africa and Southeast Asia. At the beginning of the 21st century, an estimated 124 million people were affected by VAD. It poses the greatest risks to women and children. Among children, VAD is the leading cause of blindness. Among women of childbearing age, VAD can lead to iron deficiency. This increases health risks to newborn babies and can cause premature births and even death.

Since rice is the staple diet for more than three billion people, scientists have developed a fortified form of the grain known as Golden

Figure 17-7 ▶

Genetically modified Golden Rice (far right) is enriched with beta-carotene, which the body uses to create Vitamin A. A single Golden Rice seed grows a plant that produces at least 1000 seeds. This process repeats itself, thereby creating millions of rice seeds from a single seed. In two years, a single seed has the potential to produce 20 000 t of rice. In what ways can this technology help reduce the health risks associated with Vitamin A deficiency?



◀ **Figure 17-8**

This map shows countries experiencing various levels of Vitamin A deficiency. What pattern can you identify? What impact might Golden Rice have on individuals and communities in countries with high levels of VAD?

Source: World Health Organization, World Food Summit, Rome, Italy, November 13–17, 1996; <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/w2612e/w2612eMap05-e.pdf#search=%22%22Vitamin%20A%20deficiency%22%20%2B%20map%22>.

- 1 To what extent do you think Golden Rice 2 can contribute to the elimination of Vitamin A deficiency in Africa and Southeast Asia? Give reasons for your ideas.
- 2 What do you think are the benefits of genetically modified foods such as Golden Rice? What do you think are the drawbacks?
- 3 Opponents of GM foods argue that there are larger issues associated with hunger and poverty, including poor hygiene and sanitation. Do some research to learn more about these issues and what impact they have on individuals and communities.

Rice. Golden Rice is genetically modified to contain higher levels of beta-carotene, a substance needed to form Vitamin A. In 2005, an improved variety called Golden Rice 2 was produced that provides up to 23 times more beta-carotene than the original strain.

However, Golden Rice has created widespread controversy. Proponents, including some scientists and agribusinesses, claim that Golden Rice can make a major contribution toward creating a sustainable system for providing Vitamin A to those who need it. Opponents, including environmental and anti-globalization activists, argue that focusing on rice ignores the larger issues associated with widespread hunger and poverty. They also believe that genetically modified foods such as Golden Rice benefit the corporate agribusinesses of the industrialized world at the expense of the people in developing countries.

Comments from an Authority: “Biotechnology can be a force for solving the developing world’s food security problems only if its limitations are clearly understood. Nothing illustrates this truth better than the Golden Rice phenomenon. Golden Rice has evoked extreme reactions, from being hailed as the solution to the problem of dietary malnutrition to being labelled ‘Fool’s Gold.’ The truth, as always, lies ... between the extremes.

“Golden Rice is a breakthrough in biotechnology, but it is not ... the solution to either malnutrition or problems of food security. The NGO Genewatch observes that ‘[Vitamin A deficiency] ... and other nutritional deficiencies in developing countries are the result of poverty and its associated problems of inadequate diet, poor hygiene, and sanitation. Addressing this root cause must therefore be the main priority for any sustainable solutions.’ ”

— M.P. Singh, Commissioner of Finance, India,
“Separating Hope from Hype in the Biotech Promise,” *Science, Technology, and Innovation Program, Harvard University, 2004*,
<http://www.cid.harvard.edu/cidbiotech/comments/comments204.htm>.

Explore the Issues

- 1 **Discuss It.** As a class, discuss what you know about genetic engineering. Think about such things as cloning and modifying crops with animal genes. Then brainstorm a list of the ethical considerations and concerns involved in genetic modification. In what ways do these changes in global agriculture affect people?
- 2 **Practise Your Skills.** Review the arguments for and against genetic modification. Then do further research to find different points of view on this subject. Apply the steps in the Skill Path for this chapter (pages 362–364) to analyze these points of view. Then express your own point of view in an editorial, political cartoon, or another format of your choice. **SKILLS**

Pandemics in a Globalized World

Question for Inquiry

- In what ways does globalization facilitate the spread of pandemics?

Each year, health officials warn us about the seasonal influenza that comes around every winter. Many of us get a “flu” shot to prevent us from contracting the disease. If we don’t, we may get sick for a week or two. Although some people die from the flu each year, for most healthy individuals it is simply an unpleasant inconvenience.

Now imagine a more deadly type of flu—one that will likely kill even healthy people. Imagine a flu for which there is no vaccine. Imagine a flu that can spread rapidly around the world. Today, international travel, agricultural trade, and other forces of globalization can facilitate the spread of infectious diseases to create a worldwide epidemic called a **pandemic**. Pandemics are therefore another aspect of globalization affecting individuals and communities.

In this section, you have the opportunity to learn about one potential pandemic that many health officials and governments believe is a threat today: avian flu. As you do, think about the impact a global pandemic would have on individuals and communities around the world.

Avian Flu: A Pandemic Waiting to Happen?

Today, a deadly strain of avian flu—also known as bird flu—is threatening to spread around the world. The flu was first discovered in domestic poultry in Southeast Asia in 2003. It quickly spread to other bird species. Within two years it had crossed the species barrier from birds to humans. By 2006, avian flu had spread beyond Southeast Asia to China, the Middle East, Russia, Europe, and Africa. Experts believe this deadly strain will continue to follow the migration routes of wild birds, eventually reaching North America. There is no immunity to the virus, and there are no vaccines to protect against it. In 2007, there was no evidence that bird flu could spread from human to human. But that could change.

Fast Facts

The first epidemics known in North America occurred following the arrival of Europeans in the 16th century. The newcomers introduced infectious diseases such as influenza, smallpox, and measles that were previously unknown on the continent and for which First Nations people had no immunity. Over time, millions of people died.

How does this information reflect the effects of globalization in the past?

Figure 17-9

This cartoon expresses one point of view about the avian flu. What message does cartoonist Brian Duffy convey? Do you agree with his point of view? Using the Internet, find three editorial cartoons about avian flu and compare and contrast them with this cartoon. (Check the *Perspectives on Globalization* website for links.) Then create your own editorial cartoon to express your point of view.



Fast Facts

The “Spanish flu” of 1918–1919 started as a bird virus. It killed around 50 million people—about 2.5 per cent of the world’s population at that time (1.8 billion). Today, the global population is over six billion.

If avian flu were to have the same death rate, approximately how many people would die? What do you think governments could do to prevent such a tragic loss of life? Give reasons for your answer.

Ideas and Opinions

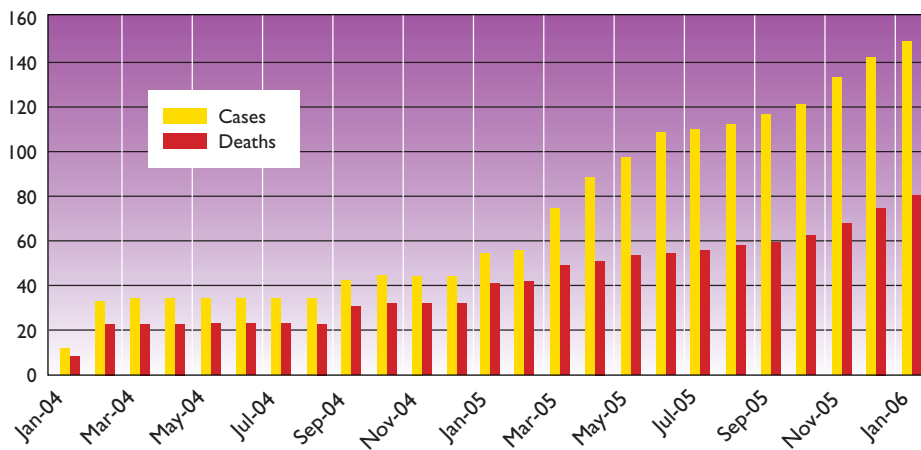
“A pandemic is by definition a global event [and] it requires a global response. No matter how much an individual country stockpiles and believes it’s protected, it will not be protected if the rest of the world is unprotected.”

—Dr. Julio Frenk, quoted in “China Reports Third Bird Flu Outbreak in Week,” *Canadian Press*, October 26, 2005.

Many industrialized countries are working to find a vaccine for avian flu. Many developing nations, however, cannot afford this type of research and development. Nor can they afford to buy the vaccine from foreign companies. What impact do you think this disparity will have on individuals and communities in less developed countries? What obligation do you think more developed countries have to ensure that all people have access to a flu vaccine?

Historically, flu pandemics have occurred about every 30 years. The last bird flu pandemic was in 1968. In 2005, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned that another deadly flu pandemic is imminent unless preventive action is taken. WHO cited the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) epidemic, which began in February 2003 and quickly spread to 30 countries, including Canada, to demonstrate the need to contain any contagious disease as early as possible.

Bird Flu Graph and Timeline since January 2004



Source: Bird Flu Beacon, http://www.birdflu.beacon.com/Timeline_for_Spread_of_Bird_Flu.htm, based on data from the World Health Organization.

Figure 17-10

These statistics show the number of human cases and deaths from avian flu since January 2004. What trend do these figures show? How quickly are the number of cases and deaths multiplying? What are the implications?

Some experts believe there is insufficient evidence to support the idea that bird flu is a “pandemic waiting to happen.” They argue that the risk is limited to those in contact with live bird markets, poultry farms, and other places directly involved with live poultry. They believe health officials and governments are sounding a false alarm among the public.

Although there is some debate over whether avian flu will be the world’s next pandemic, most experts agree that a pandemic of some kind is inevitable.

Ideas and Opinions

“Our science just isn’t strong enough for us to know that, and it’s not strong enough for us to be making these kinds of alarmist predictions that we’re hearing from WHO and others. This is the third time WHO has told us we’re on the brink of an avian influenza pandemic. They said it in 1997 and they were wrong. They said it a year ago and they were wrong.”

—Dr. Richard Sabas, former Ontario Medical Officer of Health, “Deadly Flu: The Only Question Is When,” *Toronto Star*, August 27, 2005.

At what point do you think it is appropriate for health officials to warn governments and the public about the potential threat of a pandemic? Give reasons for your point of view.

Explore the Issues

- 1 Take Community Action.** Contact local health officials to find out what actions are planned in your community in the event of an epidemic. Report your findings to the class.
- 2 Think About It.** Do you think that governments and corporations have a global responsibility to share drugs and vaccines with countries that are unable to produce their own or that cannot afford to buy them? What impact would their failure to do so have on individuals and communities?
- 3 Practise Your Skills.** Research HIV/AIDS in the world today and find out how globalization has facilitated the spread of this pandemic. Locate different points of view about the roles and responsibilities of governments to help those people living with the AIDS pandemic in Africa and Asia. Complete the steps of this chapter’s Skill Path (pages 362–364) to analyze the points of view and develop your own opinion. **SKILLS**

Globalization and Natural Resources

Question for Inquiry

- In what ways does globalization increase pressure on natural resources development?

Today, rapid population growth and increased global trade networks have led to increased pressure to develop the world's limited natural resources. Many people believe resource development is a positive thing: it can improve quality of life and raise the standard of living for many individuals and communities. But is resource development always a positive influence? Under what circumstances might this development have negative impacts on individuals and communities?

In this section, you have the opportunity to consider these questions as you explore a resource that many experts believe will be the source of conflicts and perhaps even wars in the century ahead: fresh water.

Water: A Commodity or a Right?

If you are like most Canadians, you probably take water for granted. You drink it, prepare food with it, wash with it, and swim in it. But how much water do you really need? The recommended basic water requirement is 50 litres per person per day. Yet the average Canadian uses up to seven times this amount. That's 350 litres of water a day! Compare this to someone living in Gambia in Africa. He or she has only 4.5 litres of water to use each day. What impact does a lack of fresh water have on individuals and communities in water-stressed regions of the world?

Providing fresh water promises to be one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. Most experts agree that a global water crisis is looming. Over the next 25 years, the number of people in the world who will face water shortages is expected to increase dramatically. Before the agricultural and industrial revolutions, fewer than one billion people competed for the available fresh water. Today, more than six billion people compete for the same amount of water. This figure will be at least eight billion—and perhaps as high as 10 billion—by the year 2050. How can governments ensure that this growing population has access to fresh water?

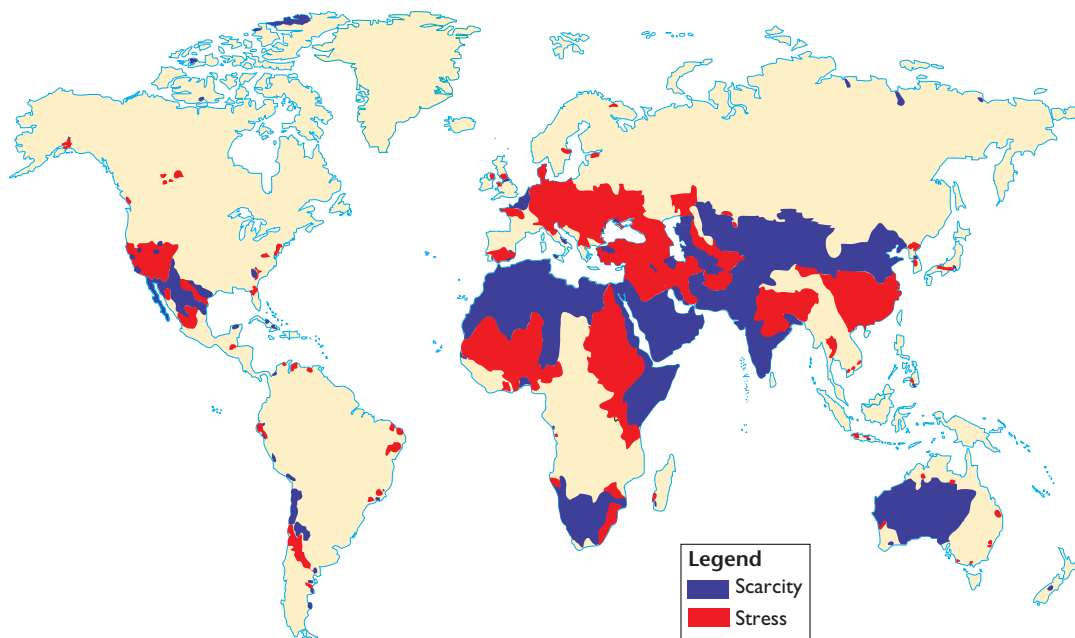
Figure 17-11 ▼

In Canada, water parks like this one at the West Edmonton Mall consume vast amounts of water for recreational purposes. In contrast, many people in Africa travel long distances to obtain a small amount of water for their daily needs. Do you think Canadians should make a greater effort to conserve our water supply? Why or why not?



Figure 17-12 ▼

This map shows the predicted freshwater scarcity and stress in the world by 2025. What patterns can you identify? Compare the map to a projected world population map for 2025. What conclusions can you reach?



Source: BBC News, http://news.bbc.co.uk/nol/shared/spl/hi/world/03/water_popup/img/crisis_areas/map.gif.

Fast Facts

There are six billion people in the world today. According to the United Nations, at least 1.3 billion do not have access to clean drinking water; another 2.5 billion lack proper sewage and water sanitation services.

What impact do you think a lack of fresh water has on individuals and communities?

Many people think of water as a **public trust**—an essential, life-supporting resource for the benefit of everyone that should not be exploited for profit. That is why, in most countries of the world, water services have traditionally been provided by public utilities.

In recent years, however, a new global water industry is seeking to **privatize** water resources and services in many countries. Local governments often lack the money needed to upgrade aging water **infrastructure**. So instead they issue long-term contracts to transnational corporations to manage water services. Should a vital resource such as water be developed for profit? Or is water an essential right that all people have? What impact does the private development of water resources have on individuals and communities?



Should Water Utilities be Privatized?

Experts who support the privatization of water resources believe that private industry has the financial resources to upgrade infrastructures and deliver safe drinking water. Those who oppose privatization argue that it leads to higher prices and violates human rights. As you read the following perspectives, think about the possible impacts of commercial development of water resources.

Privatization ... allows for the de-politicization of environmental and health regulations. Governments that own, operate, and finance water and wastewater utilities cannot properly regulate them. All too often, conflicts of interest prevent them from enforcing compliance with laws and regulations. Privatization reduces these conflicts, freeing regulators to regulate and increasing the accountability of all parties. ...

Across the country, thousands of facilities fail to comply with laws and standards. Many are inefficiently run: Some are grossly overstaffed; others are staffed by insufficiently trained operators. Many are in need of costly upgrades. Water charges are insufficient to cover these costs. Clearly, many systems could benefit from the capital investment, expertise, efficiency, and accountability that privatization can bring.

—Elizabeth Brubaker, “A Thirst for Privatization,” *Financial Post*, January 9, 2003; excerpted from “Liquid Assets: Privatizing and Regulating Canada’s Water Utilities,” *The Centre for Public Management, University of Toronto, 2002.*

The private sector was the first to notice: the planet is running out of fresh water at such a rate that soon it will be the most valuable commodity on earth. ...

Water for profit takes several forms. Backed by the World Bank and the IMF, a handful of transnational corporations are seeking to **cartelize** [combine forces to control] the world's water delivery and wastewater systems. Already, Vivendi and Suez of France deliver private water services to more than 200 million customers in 150 countries. Now they are moving into new markets in the [less developed] world, where debt-struck governments are forced to abandon public water services and hand over control of water supplies to for-profit interests.

These companies have huge profits, charge higher prices for water, and cut off customers who cannot pay. ... Based on the policy known as full-cost recovery (charging for the full cost of water, including profits for shareholders), the water companies are able to impose rate hikes that are devastating to millions of poor people who are forced to use cholera-laced water systems instead. ...

— **Maude Barlow, Council of Canadians, “The Tide Is High,”**
The Guardian, February 26, 2003,
[http://www.canadians.org/display_document.htm?](http://www.canadians.org/display_document.htm?COC_token=&id=561&isdoc=1&catid=313)
[COC_token=&id=561&isdoc=1&catid=313.](http://www.canadians.org/display_document.htm?COC_token=&id=561&isdoc=1&catid=313)

These GATS [General Agreement on Trade in Services] agreements and the ideology that everything should be for sale to the highest bidder not only threaten our rights but deny the sacred nature of water—that it is given to us by the creator and the earth. This is the basis of our traditions and beliefs. ... Together we must oppose the unsustainable belief in unlimited growth and irresponsible development that will eventually destroy the rights of all human beings. Without a new way, one in which our traditions can play a leading role, the earth will not survive.

— **The Interior Alliance, BC First Nations and the Council of Canadians,**
“Nothing Sacred: The Growing Threat to Water and Indigenous Peoples,” July 2001, [http://www.canadians.org/display_](http://www.canadians.org/display_document.htm?COC_token=&id=237&isdoc=1&catid=78)
[document.htm?COC_token=&id=237&isdoc=1&catid=78.](http://www.canadians.org/display_document.htm?COC_token=&id=237&isdoc=1&catid=78)

- 1 What are the main arguments for and against water privatization? Which perspective do you agree with? Support your position with direct quotations from the excerpts in this feature.
- 2 Do you think the commercial development of water resources would have a positive or negative impact on individuals and communities in Canada? What impact do you think it might have on individuals and communities in countries with shortages of fresh water?



▲
Figure 17-13

Most Canadians simply have to turn on the tap to obtain the water they need. Who do you think should control the water supply—a public utility or a private corporation? Why do you think so?

Explore the Issues

1 Think About It.

- List all the ways in which you and your family use water every day. Is any of your water usage wasteful? Explain your answer.
- List the ways in which Canadian society as a whole uses water. Prioritize the list. Do you think Canadians should try to reduce their water consumption? Why or why not?

2 Apply Your Skills. In Canada, there is a great deal of debate over exporting water to the United



States. Do some research to find different points of view on this subject. (Check the *Perspectives on Globalization* website for some links.) Analyze these viewpoints using the steps in this chapter's Skill Path (pages 362–364). Then form your own opinion. Express your point of view about the exploitation of Canada's water resources for profit in a newspaper article or editorial. **SKILLS**

Reflect and Analyze

In this chapter, you explored some of the effects of globalization on individuals and communities. As you did so, you had the opportunity to formulate ideas to respond to the Chapter Issue: *To what extent does globalization affect individuals and communities?* Now discuss this issue in your class. Think about the examples in this chapter of the ways in which globalization affects individuals and communities. Then think about how globalization affects you personally and the community in which you live. As you do so, you are completing the next step in the exploration of the Main Issue for Part 4: *To what extent should you, as a citizen, respond to globalization?*

Respond to Ideas

- In November 2005, France experienced riots for several weeks. According to a CBC report at the time, "Many people view the

violence as the expression of pent-up anger by the country's unemployed and underemployed youth, particularly in Muslim immigrant communities, and as a sign of the difficulty North Africans have experienced in trying to integrate into French society." Do some research to find other points of view about the events in France. Then outline the freedoms and responsibilities that globalization has created for both immigrant and host communities in a concept web or graphic organizer. **SKILLS**

- Choose one region in the world that is experiencing water shortages today. Do some research to find out what problems exist in the region and why, and the steps that are being taken to resolve them. Present your findings in a written report or poster-board display.

- 3 Find out what you can do to support your school's eco-campaign. If your school does not have an eco-campaign, work with your classmates to start one. The goal is to implement plans to reduce your school's use of resources, to expand recycling programs, and to improve the environmental quality of your school. Develop a group action plan to achieve your goals through curricular and extracurricular activities. Set target dates for achieving your goals, and celebrate your successes.

Recognize Relationships between Content and Issues

- 4 Many people believe that Canada is underpopulated. Some population projections indicate that the Canadian population may actually decline in this century. This has sparked a debate between those who believe that Canada should accept more immigrants and those who feel that increased immigration threatens our natural resources. Do some research into projected population growth in Canada following the steps in this chapter's Skill Path (pages 362–364). Then develop a

position paper expressing your point of view, with evidence to support your position. **SKILLS**

- 5 Over a three-week period, read newspapers and magazines to collect articles about different aspects of Canada's water resources, such as water pollution, water treatment, and water exports. Prepare a collage that highlights the key water issues in Canada today.

Focus on Research and Inquiry

- 6 The United Nations defines the term *sustainable consumption* as “enjoying a good quality of life while consuming fewer natural resources and polluting less.”
- Do some research into sustainable consumption. Identify different points of view. Then apply the steps in this chapter's Skill Path (pages 362–364) to analyze these viewpoints. Present your findings in a class seminar. **SKILLS**
 - Discuss ways in which you, as a citizen of Canada and as a global citizen, can practise sustainable consumption. Prepare a pamphlet promoting your ideas.