

Attitudes of Schoolchildren to International Development

**Research Study Conducted for the Department for
International Development**

March 2000

Contents

Introduction	1
Summary of Findings	3
Implications	13

Appendices

Sample Profile

Guide to Statistical Reliability

Marked-up Questionnaire

Computer Tables

Introduction

This document contains an interpretative report from the Year 2000 Survey of Secondary School Pupils, carried out by Market & Opinion Research International (MORI) on behalf of the Department for International Development (DFID). Also included are the marked-up questionnaire, a profile of the sample, a note on statistical reliability, and the computer tables.

As set out in the White Paper on International Development, DFID has set itself the aim of building public awareness and understanding of development issues and global interdependence, and the Government's policies towards international development, including the poverty reduction targets. A key audience is schoolchildren, and this study aims to provide a benchmark of current attitudes towards international development among this group.

Methodology

The sample of schools comprised 256 middle and secondary state schools in England and Wales. The sampling universe included county, voluntary aided/controlled and grant-maintained schools, but excluded special schools and 6th form colleges. This sampling frame was stratified by the nine Government Standard Regions (GSRs) and within each stratum, schools were selected proportional to the size of the school register, thus producing a nationally representative sample of secondary and middle schools.

The age groups included in the survey were 11-16 year olds in curriculum years 7 to 11. Each school was randomly allocated one of these curriculum years, from which MORI interviewers selected one class at random (using a random number grid) to be interviewed. Interviewing was carried out through self-completion questionnaires with the whole class in one classroom period. A MORI interviewer was present to explain the survey to pupils, to reassure them about the confidentiality of the survey, to assist them in completing the questionnaire, and to collect completed questionnaires. In classes where four or more children were absent during the self-completion session, up to two follow-up visits were arranged to interview absent pupils.

Fieldwork for the study was conducted between 17 January and 29 February 2000. Of the 256 schools approached, 24 declined to participate at the invitation stage (a letter sent to the headteacher) and a further 117 schools refused to participate during the fieldwork period. In total, 115 schools participated, giving a response rate of 45%. Overall, fully completed questionnaires were obtained from 2,767 pupils, an average of 24 pupils per class.

Data were weighted using a cell weight matrix of gender by age within government standard region. The weights for age, sex and region were derived from data supplied by the Department for Education and Employment and the Welsh office. The data on age were accurate at January 1999. The effect of weighting is shown in the sample profile in the Appendices and in the computer tables.

Before fieldwork, a number of pilot interviews for the DFID questions were conducted to ensure that the question wording was suitable for this age group, and findings were fed into the development of the final questionnaire.

Acknowledgements

It is clear that schools are currently working under great pressure from a number of different sources. They also receive numerous requests to participate in surveys such as this. Consequently, we wish to record our gratitude to the many schools that took part and we are indebted to all pupils and staff who made this survey possible.

Presentation and Interpretation of Data

When interpreting the findings it is important to remember that the results are based on a sample of the population, and not the entire population. Consequently, results are subject to sampling tolerances, and not all differences between sub-groups are therefore statistically significant. A guide to statistical significance is included in this document.

In tables where percentages do not add up to 100% this is due to multiple answers, to computer rounding, or to the exclusion of 'Don't know' or 'No response' categories. Throughout the tables, an asterisk (*) denotes a value greater than zero, but less than 0.5%.

Some results of this study are compared with an adult Omnibus survey conducted by ONS for the Department for International Development in 1999. Although the questions are not directly comparable (because of the different methodology, and where the question wording has been changed to make it more suitable for a younger audience), this does allow the results to be seen in a wider context.

Publication of Data

As with all our studies, these results are subject to our Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract. Any publication of results requires the prior approval of MORI. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misinterpretation.

Summary of Findings

Awareness

- Just one in ten school children says they know a lot about developing countries, and a further seven in ten say they know something about them. Twenty-two per cent, on the other hand, say they know nothing at all about developing countries, or answer 'don't know'.

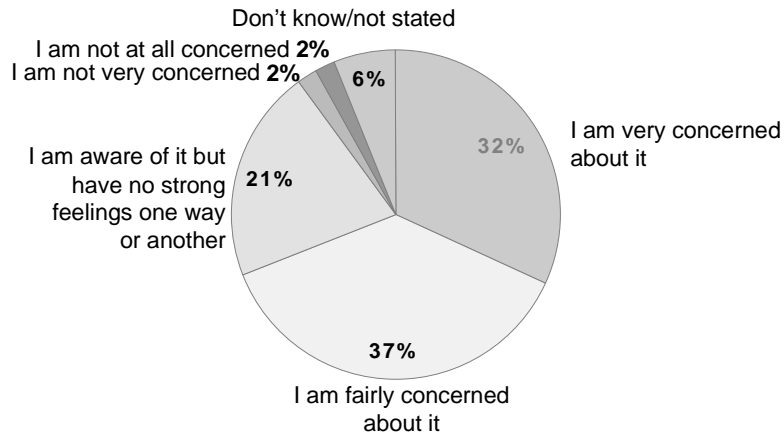
Q Which of the following, if any, best describes how much you know about developing countries?

<i>Base:</i>	(2,767)
	%
I don't know anything about them	14
I know something about them	69
I know a lot about them	10
Don't know/not stated	8

Source: MORI

- As might be expected, older children are more likely to say they know at least something about developing countries – 86% of 15-16 year olds, compared with 72% of 11 year olds. However, even among this older group, only 11% say they know a lot.
- When given a list of conditions that may exist in developing countries, such as lack of food, low levels of education and poor healthcare, a third of schoolchildren say they are very concerned about it, and just over a third say they are fairly concerned about it (as shown in the pie chart below).
- A fifth say they are aware of it but don't have strong feelings one way or another, and just 4% say they are not very or not at all concerned about it.
- Girls, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and younger pupils (78%, 78% and 77% respectively) are most likely to say they are concerned, compared with 69% overall.

Q In many of these countries there are people who do not have enough to eat, cannot go to school to learn to read and write, or cannot always get basic healthcare. Which of the following, if any, best describes how you feel about this?



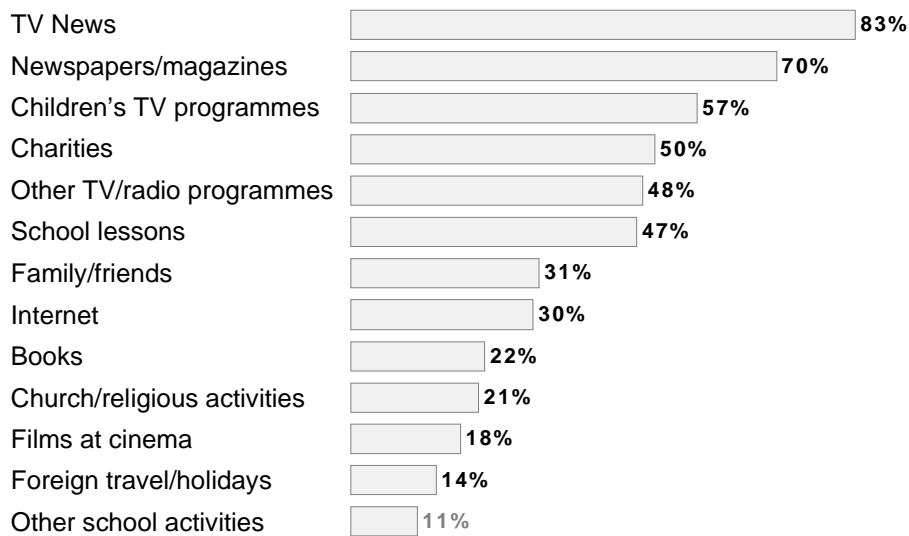
Base: 2,767 schoolchildren aged 11-16 in England and Wales

Source: MORI

- In the adult survey, 64% said they are concerned about levels of poverty in developing countries, compared with 15% who say they are not very or not at all concerned.
- As with adults¹, the vast majority of school children currently get their information about developing countries from TV news, and newspapers and magazines (83% and 70% respectively). Other popular sources include children's TV programmes (especially for younger children), charities, other TV and radio programmes, and school lessons.
- Three in ten say they use the Internet, though in another part of the survey, 51% say that the Internet will be essential for communication in the future, and 49% say that they find the Internet (not CD Roms) useful to help with their homework. (On the other hand, 38% say that learning the Internet is not as easy as they expected, and 16% have never used the Internet.)

¹ Though it should again be noted that the two surveys are not directly comparable

Q How do you find out what is happening in developing countries?



Base: 2,767 schoolchildren aged 11-16 in England and Wales

Source: MORI

- School lessons and TV news are also the most popular ways of finding out more about developing countries (perhaps because they do not require too much active effort on the part of the children). In teaching development issues in the classroom, however, this subject will need to be made interesting for children to study, and pitched at the right age level.
- Lessons and TV news come marginally ahead of the Internet, newspapers and magazines, children's TV and other TV and radio programmes. Relatively few cite their family and friends, foreign holidays, or religious activities as popular ways of receiving information, perhaps because they are not currently common sources of information at the moment. Family and friends are the exception; MORI often finds that these receive high scores as actual sources of information, and relatively lower scores as preferred means of information.
- Younger children and girls tend to be more likely to choose any of the ways of finding out more about developing countries; while this indicates that there is a potential market for more information about developing countries, especially among younger age groups, there is also some work to be done in attracting the interest of boys and older schoolchildren.

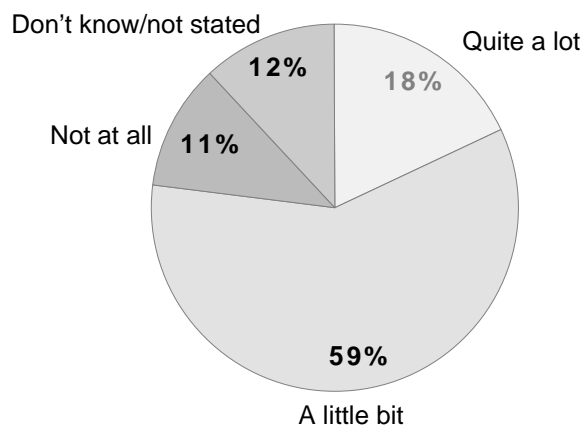
Q Would you like to know more about what is happening in developing countries? If so, how?	
<i>Base: All</i>	(2,767)
	%
School lessons	36
TV News	35
Newspapers or magazines	31
Internet	31
Children's TV programmes (e.g. Newsround, Blue Peter)	30
Other TV or radio programmes	29
Books	26
Charities	23
Other school activities	23
Films at the cinema	19
My family or friends	18
Foreign travel / holidays	16
Church or other religious activities	14
Other	2
I don't know/I don't want to find out any more	17
Not stated	13

Source: MORI

Interdependence

- The majority of school children seem to be aware that poverty in developing countries does impact on the UK – though some could have been guessing. More than three-quarters say it affects people in the United Kingdom at least ‘a little bit’. Eighteen per cent say it affects this country quite a lot, and eleven per cent answer ‘not at all’.
- As well as being less likely to say that they are concerned, older children are more likely to think that the UK is not affected by poverty in developing countries (15% of 15-16 year olds say not at all, compared with 8% of 11 year olds).

Q Thinking about poverty, which means 'being poor', how much would you say that poverty in developing countries affects people in the UK?



Base: 2,767 schoolchildren aged 11-16 in England and Wales

Source: MORI

- In the adult survey, 41% agreed that they personally were affected by poverty in developing countries (37% disagreed), and 65% thought that it could have effects which damage this country's interests (15% disagreed).
- However, when asked to give examples of how people in the UK may be affected, the vast majority of school children are unable to give an unprompted answer, suggesting that there is still some way to go before children become fully aware of the issues surrounding global interdependence.
- Among those who were able to give an answer, 7% say that people in the UK are affected by giving money to people in developing countries (there still appears to be an association between poverty and donating – 3% mention donating food and material other than money, and 2% say raising money), and 5% say that this country will be affected by refugees from poorer countries looking for work, and have worries about overcrowding. (It should be borne in mind that the fieldwork period coincided with a number of stories in the media discussing immigration and asylum seekers, which may have had an affect on this response.)
- Other responses, mentioned by fewer than one in five, include feeling sorry for people in poorer countries, seeing media stories about them, concern about homelessness, and feeling guilty that people in the UK are better off.

Q In what ways do you think that people in the United Kingdom can be affected by poverty in developing countries, that is, countries that are poorer than our own?

<i>Base: All</i>	(2,767)
	%
Donating money/giving money/sending money	7
Refugees/immigrants come here looking for work/over-populating us	5
Giving them money means less for our needs/uses up our resources	3
Feel sorry for them/can be upsetting	3
Watching TV/news/media showing poverty	3
Giving them materials/necessary items/food/ clothes	3
Homelessness/living on the streets/have no homes	3
Feel guilty/feel guilty that we have more than them	2
Raising money	2
Having relatives/friends in poor countries	1
Trade would be affected	1
People in this country are not affected	1
Can lead to conflict/war	1
Jobs can be affected	1
Government increasing our taxes	1
Pressured into donating money	1
Lack of money	1
People go out to help them/spend their time helping them	1
Unable to get food/water	1
Sending medical care/health facilities	1
Abolishing Third World debt	1
Makes you realise how lucky we are	1
We have our own homeless/poor/problems in this country	1
Diseases coming over to UK	*
Families split/abandoned	*
Nobody cares enough to help	*
Give them a good education	*
Exploitation of cheap labour	*
Foreign holidays can be affected	*
People in poorer countries waste money	*
Being aware	*
Military support	*
Others	5
Don't know	2
Not stated	62

Source: MORI

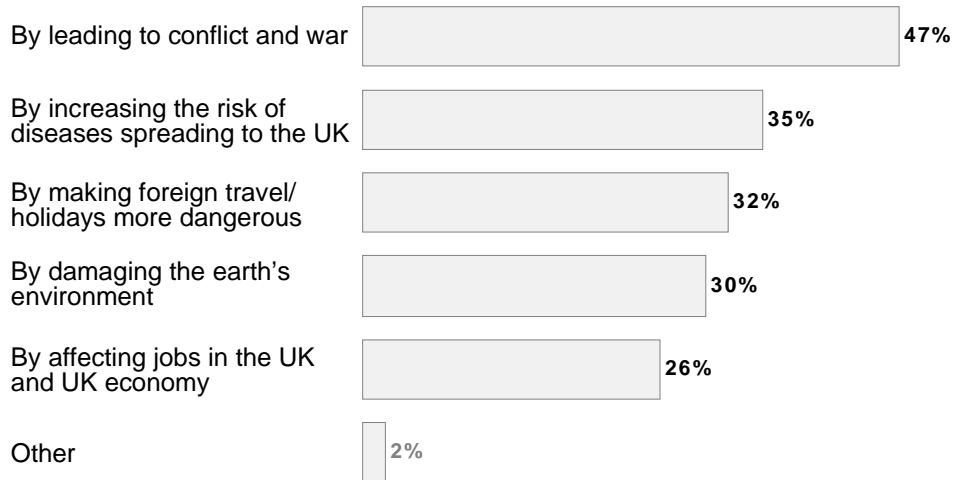
- In a later section of the survey², MORI again asked respondents how people living in the UK might be affected by high levels of poverty in developing countries, but this time prompted them with a list of suggestions.
- Here, 47% of schoolchildren think that the UK can be affected by high levels of poverty leading to conflict and war. A third

² This question is re-based on all those answering (2,311 respondents).

choose the risk of diseases spreading to the UK and the increased danger of foreign travel.

- Three in ten say high levels of poverty will damage the earth’s environment, and a quarter say that the UK economy and jobs will be affected.

Q In which of these ways, if any, do you think high levels of poverty in developing countries can affect us in the UK?



Base: 2,311 schoolchildren aged 11-16 in England and Wales

Source: MORI

- Boys are more likely to pick out increasing the danger of foreign travel, damaging the earth’s environment and affecting jobs in the UK economy. Older children are almost twice as likely as younger children to think that UK jobs and the economy will be affected (33% of those aged 15-16, compared with 19% of 11 year olds).
- In the adult survey, conflict and war was also seen as the main danger (62%), followed by just over two-fifths who mention the UK economy, damaging the environment, and increasing the risk of disease, and 36% who say it increases the risk of foreign travel. While adults are more likely to mention any of the ways in which the UK can be affected, as might be expected, they are relatively more likely to pick out the economic and employment issue.

Reducing poverty

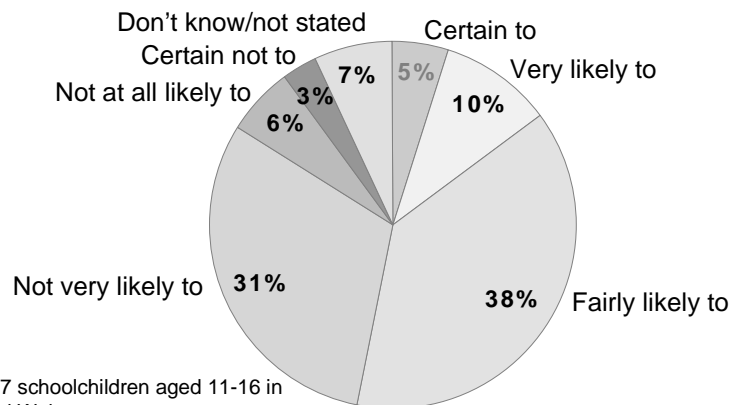
- When given a list of the Government’s key targets for reducing poverty by 2015, 38% say they think the goals are fairly likely to be achieved, and 31% say they are not very likely to be achieved. It is not uncommon in MORI’s experience for answers to congregate about the middle of the scale in this way, especially when the question covers a difficult topic. We suspect therefore that some young people may have been hazarding a guess.

- Fifteen per cent of respondents say that the world's governments are certain or very likely to achieve these targets, compared with 9% who say that they are certain not to or not at all likely to.
- Girls and younger pupils (the most concerned groups) are the most positive about the chances of achieving these goals – 57% and 64% respectively say they think it is likely that the targets will be reached, compared with 53% overall.

Q *The world's governments want to reduce poverty around the world (that is, people being poor, and living on 65p or less a day). By the year 2015 (in 15 years' time), they want to:*

- 1) *reduce the number of people who are very poor by half*
- 2) *have every child in every country going to a primary school*
- 3) *improve basic healthcare for everybody*

Thinking about all of these together, how likely, if at all, would you say they are to reach these goals?



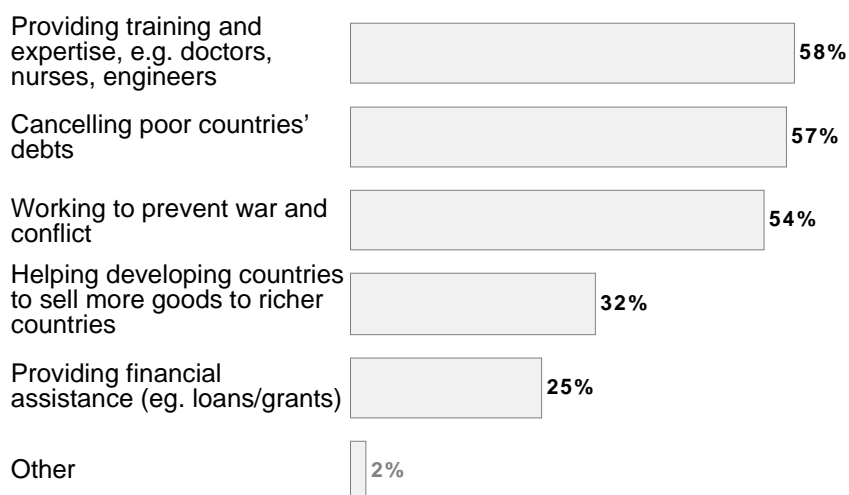
Base: 2,767 schoolchildren aged 11-16 in England and Wales

Source: MORI

- When prompted with a list of ways in which the Government can help developing countries reduce poverty, the most important are seen as providing training and expertise and cancelling debts (again, this may have been affected by the publicity surrounding the Jubilee 2000 campaign at the end of 1999). Working to prevent war and conflict is also mentioned by more than half (as noted above, this is later picked out as the main way in which the UK can be affected by high levels of poverty in developing countries).
- Improving the exports of developing countries is mentioned by a third, while a quarter mention providing greater financial assistance. Thirteen per cent answer 'don't know' or leave the question blank.
- Providing training and expertise and working to prevent conflict and war are particularly likely to be picked out by girls (63% and 57% respectively); older children are again the most likely to think helping developing countries to export more is important (39% of 15-16 year olds, compared with 24% of 11 year olds). This may partly reflect the more complex issues involved around trade, but it is also clear that no age group thinks that providing more financial assistance is the most important way of relieving

poverty – although this option is significantly more likely to be picked by pupils from a minority ethnic background (34%).

Q *Governments and other organisations try to help developing countries to reduce poverty in a number of ways. Which, if any, of the following do you think are most important?*



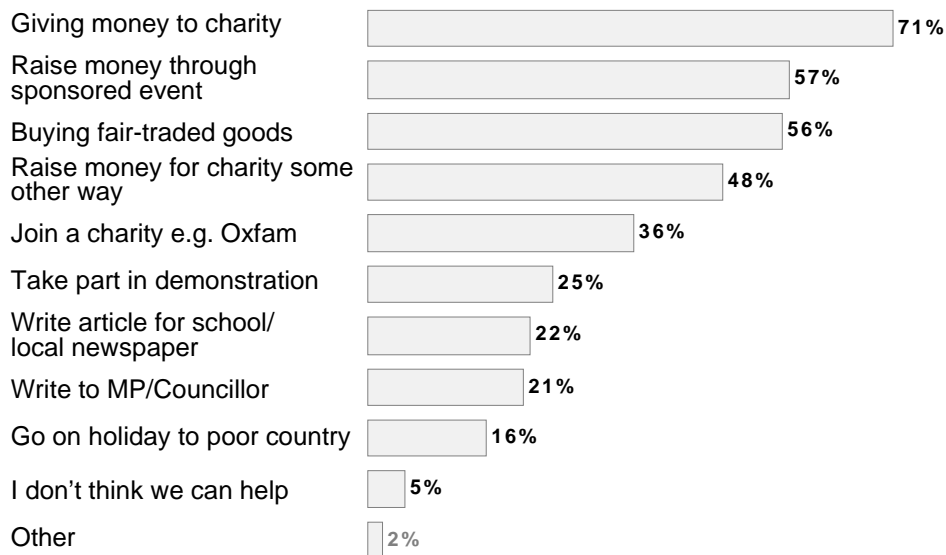
Base: 2,767 schoolchildren aged 11-16 in England and Wales

Source: MORI

- Adults are most likely to say that debt cancellation is the most important way of reducing poverty (33%). Reducing conflict and war, providing financial support and increasing trade and investment are all mentioned by around one in five.
- The majority (58%) of school children think that they and their family can help people in poorer countries, although 18% do not think there is anything they can do, and a further quarter answer 'don't know' or leave the question unanswered.
- Again, young pupils are most optimistic about what they can do to help (65% of 11 year olds), although there is no significant difference between boys and girls. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are also more likely to think that they can do something to help (65%).
- A similar proportion (54%) say they can help people in developing countries in the adult survey, although 41% say that there is nothing that they can do as an individual.
- As seen in the results to the open-ended question, most school children think that they can help people in poorer countries by giving money to charity. Over half also cite raising money for a charity through a sponsored event, or buying fair trade goods.
- More 'politically active' ways of getting involved, for example taking part in a demonstration, writing an article for a school or local newspaper, or writing to an MP or a local Councillor are mentioned by fewer, though still at least one in five. This needs to be considered in the light of the low levels of political activism

among the young. Do these figures reflect high levels of cynicism about the political process, or are there other ways of engaging the young, or is it that young people are not yet politically active? Indeed, it would be interesting to test whether these figures actually fall among older teenagers, among whom levels of apathy may be even higher.

Q How do you think you can help people in poorer countries, if at all?



Base: 2,767 school children aged 11-16 in England and Wales

Source: MORI

- Younger schoolchildren and girls tend to be more likely to pick out any of the ways of helping people in poorer countries, continuing the trend for them to be more concerned about people in poorer countries. Older children may also be feeling the demands of the GCSE schedule
- Contributing to charities is also seen as the easiest way to reduce charity by those interviewed in the adult survey (89%), followed by half who say buying fair trade goods.

Implications

In the light of DFID's objective to improve the levels of awareness of development issues in schools, there are some encouraging findings from this study. Eight in ten schoolchildren say they know at least something about developing countries, and the majority say that they are concerned about the plight of people in poorer countries. There also appears to be some understanding that this subject is more complicated than simply providing financial assistance to developing countries – the high profile Jubilee 2000 campaign will have helped here, and MORI's qualitative work indicates that many teachers are already trying to introduce global issues into the classroom.

Nonetheless, while it is relatively easy for children to say they are concerned about developing countries in a questionnaire, it is much more difficult to turn them into active global citizens. There is a demand for more information about development issues in the classroom, but this must be made interesting and relevant to children, while bearing in mind the practical demands of teachers. In the meanwhile, television is likely to remain the main source of information about these topics. There is also a clear difference between how boys and girls view development issues, as well as in the views of older and younger children.

In the longer term, this study should be seen as a benchmark against which to measure future trends in the awareness of and attitudes towards developing world issues among schoolchildren.

© MORI/12362
March 2000

Michele Corrado
Gideon Skinner

Appendices

Sample Profile – Survey of Secondary School Pupils

	Unweighted		Weighted
	Number	%	%
Total	2767	100	100
Age of Pupils			
11	448	16	19
12	642	23	19
13	471	17	18
14	563	20	18
15/16	643	23	25
Gender of Pupils			
Male	1404	51	51
Female	1363	49	49
Type of school attended			
LEA	1977	71	68
Grant-maintained	579	21	22
Other	211	8	10
Comprehensive	2267	82	80
Grammar	185	7	8
Secondary Modern	76	3	4
Middle	239	9	8
Co-educational	2472	89	87
Boys only	104	4	4
Girls only	191	7	9
Ethnic Origin			
White	2403	87	82
Black and ethnic minorities	342	12	18
Region			
North	321	12	6
Yorks and Humbs	216	8	9
North West	350	13	13
Midlands	529	19	19
East Anglia	340	12	4
South West	341	12	9
SE and London	388	14	34
Wales	282	10	6

Family Composition

Both parents in household	2207	80	78
Single parent in household	503	18	19
Sibling in household	2412	87	86

Guide to Statistical Reliability

The respondents to the questionnaire are only samples of the total “population”, so we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been interviewed (the “true” values). We can, however, predict the variation between the sample results and the “true” values from a knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the “95% confidence interval”.

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100 interviews	6	9	10
500 interviews	3	4	4
1,000 interviews	2	3	3
2,500 interviews	1	2	2
3,000 interviews	1	2	2

For example, with a sample of 2,500 where 30% give a particular answer, the chances are 19 in 20 that the “true” value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range of plus or minus two percentage points from the sample result.

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be “real”, or it may occur by chance (because not everyone in the population has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one – i.e. if it is “statistically significant”, we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentage giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume “95% confidence interval”, the differences between the two sample results must be greater than the values given in the table overleaf:

Size of samples compared	Differences required for significance at or near these percentage levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	\pm	\pm	\pm
100 and 100	8	13	14
250 and 100	7	11	12
500 and 250	5	7	8
500 and 500	4	6	6
1,000 and 100	6	10	10
1,000 and 500	3	5	5
1,000 and 1,000	3	4	4
1,500 and 1,500	2	3	4
3,000 and 100	6	9	10

List of Local Education Authorities by Government Standard Region

North: Cumbria, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesborough, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar, South Tyneside, Stockton-on-Tees, Sunderland.

Yorkshire and Humberside: Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Doncaster, East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston-upon-Hull, Kirklees, Leeds, North Yorkshire, Rotherham, Sheffield, Wakefield, York.

North West: Cheshire, Greater Manchester (Wigan, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Salford, Trafford, Manchester, Oldham, Tameside, Stockport), Lancashire, Merseyside (Sefton, Wirral, Liverpool, Knowsley, St. Helens).

West Midlands: Hereford & Worcester, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands (Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley, Sandwell, Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry).

East Midlands: Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire.

East Anglia: Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk.

South East: Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, London (Inner and Outer), Oxfordshire, Surrey, West Sussex.

South West: Bath and North-East Somerset, Bristol, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Wiltshire.

Wales: Aberconwy and Colwyn, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Anglesey, Wrexham, Caernarfonshire and Merionethshire, Powys, Cardiganshire, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot, Bridgend, Rhonda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Monmouthshire, Newport, Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan.

Marked-up Questionnaire

Computer Tables
