

global Eye

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Summer
1998

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Thank you to Nick Fairclough at
WaterAid and Marcella Leos and
Juan Manuel Santin at the Embassy
of Mexico, London for their assis-
tance with articles in this issue.

Fight Against Polio

The World Health Organisation is continuing its push to eradicate polio worldwide by the year 2000 with the help of the British Government and the United Nations. Following its successful £47.5 million campaign against polio in India in 1996, the Department for International Development has given financial backing to a move to immunise over twenty five million children in Pakistan against polio in one day. The event was co-ordinated by UNICEF who hope to have reached about 80% of the countries' children under 5.

In the last few months of 1997, UNICEF also assisted with campaigns in Nigeria, Yemen and Indonesia. A total of 23.8 million children under 5 were immunised against polio, with many also receiving vitamin supplements and measles vaccinations.

Ethical Trading

The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) is a revolutionary new initiative involving major companies, aid agencies and the government, which aims to set high ethical trade standards for British companies. The ETI is developing and promoting practical means by which companies can ensure that the basic rights of the people who produce goods for the British market are met worldwide. By promoting the use of codes of conduct and monitoring systems, the ETI is taking a major step towards making substantial improvements to the lives of many of the world's poorest workers.

Companies already involved in the initiative include Asda, Boots, B&Q, The Body Shop, BT, C&A, Co-op, Grattan, Monsoon, Safeways, Sainsburys, Somerfield, Tesco and Waitrose.

Health in Pakistan

A National Forum on Women's Health has been held in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, to discuss ways to improve the country's maternal mortality rate. Pakistan's maternal mortality rate currently stands at 340 per 100,000 live births, one of the highest rates in Asia. The forum recommended an increase in medical care and health services and an education programme addressing the social and cultural importance of improving women's health. It is estimated that almost 600,000 women around the world die due to birth-related causes each year.

Montserrat Still in Need of Support

The Department For International Development (DFID) has committed a further one million pounds to help the island of Montserrat deal with its ongoing volcanic crisis.

DFID is funding a project to encourage small and medium scale businesses to establish themselves on both Montserrat and Antigua, providing a source of employment to the islanders and helping them to re-establish financial independence.

Recently DFID have also contributed towards building projects, which it is hoped will reduce some of the pressures on housing in the north of the island. Improvements to the island's medical service and the provision of a magistrate to help maintain the justice system have also been supported.

Lomé Negotiations

The Secretary of State for International Development has emphasised the importance of eliminating poverty in the EU's forthcoming negotiations on the Lomé Convention. Speaking at a UK Presidency Project conference in London, Clare Short said, "We must make sure the successor to Lomé makes a real and effective contribution to eliminating global poverty." She has urged a closer working relationship with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries when looking at the key elements of the Lomé partnership in September 1998, and has stressed that it is vital to include international development targets in the successor to the present agreement.

The United Mexican States, as Mexico is officially known, gained its **independence from Spain in 1821**. The country consists of 31 states and one federal district. The official language is **Spanish**, and most of the country's 92 million people are **Roman Catholic**.

Mexico covers a land area of almost **two million square kilometres**. The climate varies from **dry desert** conditions in the north to **rainy tropical** conditions in the south east. The central plateau enjoys a mild climate and it is here that the majority of the population lives. The border with the USA stretches for over **3000 km**, yet at Mexico's narrowest point, the Pacific Ocean and Gulf of Mexico are only 225 km apart.

Oil exports and **tourism** are Mexico's two biggest earners of foreignexchange. Ninety per cent of visitors to Mexico come from the USA and Canada.

The country has a large number of modern highways known as **autopistas**, and a well developed railway system.

People	Mexico	UK
Population (million)	91.1	58.1
Life Expectancy (years)	72.1	76.8
Infant Mortality (per 1,000 births)	27	6
Literacy (%)	90	99
Economic and Social		
GNP (US \$ per capita)	3,320	18,700
TVs (per 1000 people)	192	612
Radios (per 1000 people)	263	1,433
Employment (%)		
Agriculture	28	2
Industry	24	29
Services	48	69

Source: UN Human Development Report, 1998.

Mexico is:

- one of the world's leading producers of oil
- the world's leading producer of silver
- the world's largest Spanish speaking country



Historic Mexico

Some of the earliest and most advanced civilisations in the Americas once inhabited the land we today know as Mexico. These include the Olmec, Mayan, Toltec and Aztec peoples. The Aztecs founded a settlement named Tenochtitlán in an area surrounded by marshes in Lake Texcoco. As the settlement grew, its military strength was increased by the construction of causeways that dammed the waters of the surrounding marshes and made the town into a virtual fortress. Today the site of this city is occupied by Mexico City. The Aztec Empire however was eventually destroyed by a Spanish invasion led by Hernán Cortés. The Spanish ruled Mexico for almost three centuries until independence in 1821.

Mexican culture today reflects this history, and is a rich, complex blend of Indian, Spanish, and American traditions. Rural areas are largely populated by Indians, descendants of the highly developed societies of the Maya, Aztec, and Toltecs, and by Spanish and mestizo (people of mixed Spanish and Indian ancestry) farmers and labourers. In the cities both European, particularly Spanish and French, and North American influences are evident.

Natural Hazards

The Aztecs, one of Mexico's early peoples, called their country the 'land of the shaking earth'. Apart from earthquakes Mexicans have a number of other hazards to contend with, including volcanic eruptions and hurricanes.

On September 19th 1985, an earthquake registering eight on the Richter scale hit Mexico City. The cost of damage was put at over £2.5 billion. Hundreds of buildings were destroyed, nearly 30,000 people were made homeless and at least 8,000 (possibly 20,000) were killed.

In 1988, hurricane Gilbert devastated the Yucatán peninsula, damage was estimated at £550 million. More recently Acapulco was hit by hurricane Pauline in October 1997, causing a decline in the tourist trade there.

Mexico's highest peaks, such as Pico de Orizaba (5746 m), Popocatepetl (5452 m), and Iztaccíhuatl (5286 m), are all volcanoes. Possibly the most famous volcano though is Parícutín which first appeared in 1943.

Mexico City

Situated at about 2240 metres above sea level, the city is bounded by mountains on three sides and dominates the nation's political, economic, and cultural life. Mexico City occupies the site of the Aztec settlement of Tenochtitlán, which at its peak had a population of more than 250,000, and by the 16th century was the centre of the Aztec Empire.

Today Mexico City covers an area of 2000 sq km and is home to some nineteen million people, approximately one quarter of the country's entire population. The city is at the centre of an emerging manufacturing belt that stretches from Guadalajara in the west to Veracruz on the Gulf Coast in the east.

The rapid growth of Mexico City this century has caused a number of problems:

- air pollution
- traffic congestion
- an inadequate water supply
- subsidence.

Air pollution is mainly caused by industrial and traffic fumes. The situation is at its worse when a thermal inversion traps polluted air at ground level and the mountains around the city prevent pollution from dispersing.

Despite the opening, in 1970, of a subway system the city is severely congested. The traffic congestion is largely the result of the sheer volume of traffic, but it is partly caused by the old narrow streets.

One attempt to cut down traffic pollution bans people from driving for one day a week. The days are allocated by using the last digit of the license plate. For example, cars with plates which end in a 5 or 6 are banned on Mondays. These restrictions apply between 5 am and 10 pm on weekdays only. Anyone caught breaking these restrictions faces a severe penalty.

NAFTA

(North American Free Trade Agreement)

On January 1st 1994 NAFTA came into being. This economic alliance consists of Canada, Mexico and the USA, and aims to eliminate restrictions on trade and investment between the three countries over a 15 year period. It is hoped that NAFTA will bring more employment to Mexico as well as more exports and cheaper imports. Some Mexicans however fear that cheap labour in their country will be exploited and that Mexico will become an economic colony of the USA.

Even before the creation of NAFTA many US firms had set up factories, known as maquiladoras, in Mexican cities near to the Mexico–USA border. These maquiladoras take advantage of cheap Mexican labour to assemble imported parts into finished goods for export. More recently, however, US firms have invested heavily in well-equipped modern factories producing motor vehicles and other consumer items for the US market.

As the *world's population increases*,
so the number of people living in urban areas increases.

However, urban population is actually growing at a *much faster rate* than that of the world as a whole.

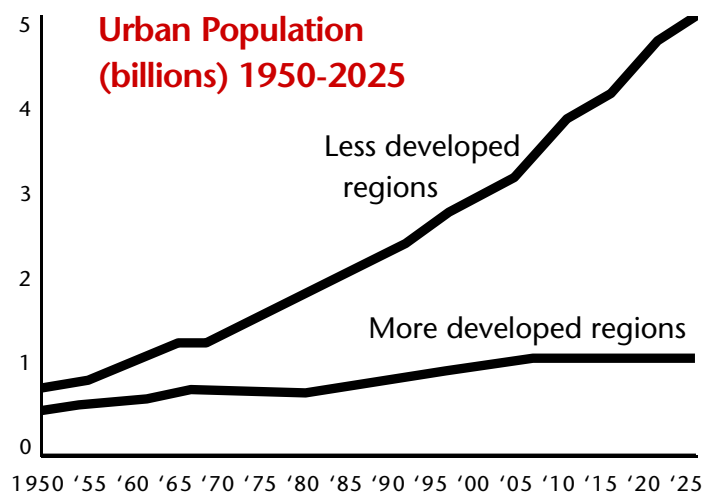
Between 1950 and 1990, the world's population doubled, but the size of the world's urban population trebled. In the past thirty years the fastest urban expansion has been taking place in the Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) of the world.

Reasons for growth

Urban population is growing for several reasons:

- natural population growth is higher in urban areas
- internal and foreign investment in developing countries tends to be concentrated in urban areas
- increasing development means that more people are needed to work in manufacturing and service industries, these tend to be located in urban areas, whilst fewer are employed in primary occupations, such as farming
- migration of people from rural to urban areas in search of new opportunities
- improved media communications have exposed people in rural areas to images of urban living which raise peoples hopes for a better life.

Cities can be places of improved wealth and prospects for many people living in LEDCs, but the speed with which these urban areas have expanded have also caused problems. Successful cities need to be planned, but in many places the scale of growth has made such planning impossible. In São Paulo, Brazil, for example, the population grew by half a million people every year in the 1970s and 1980s.



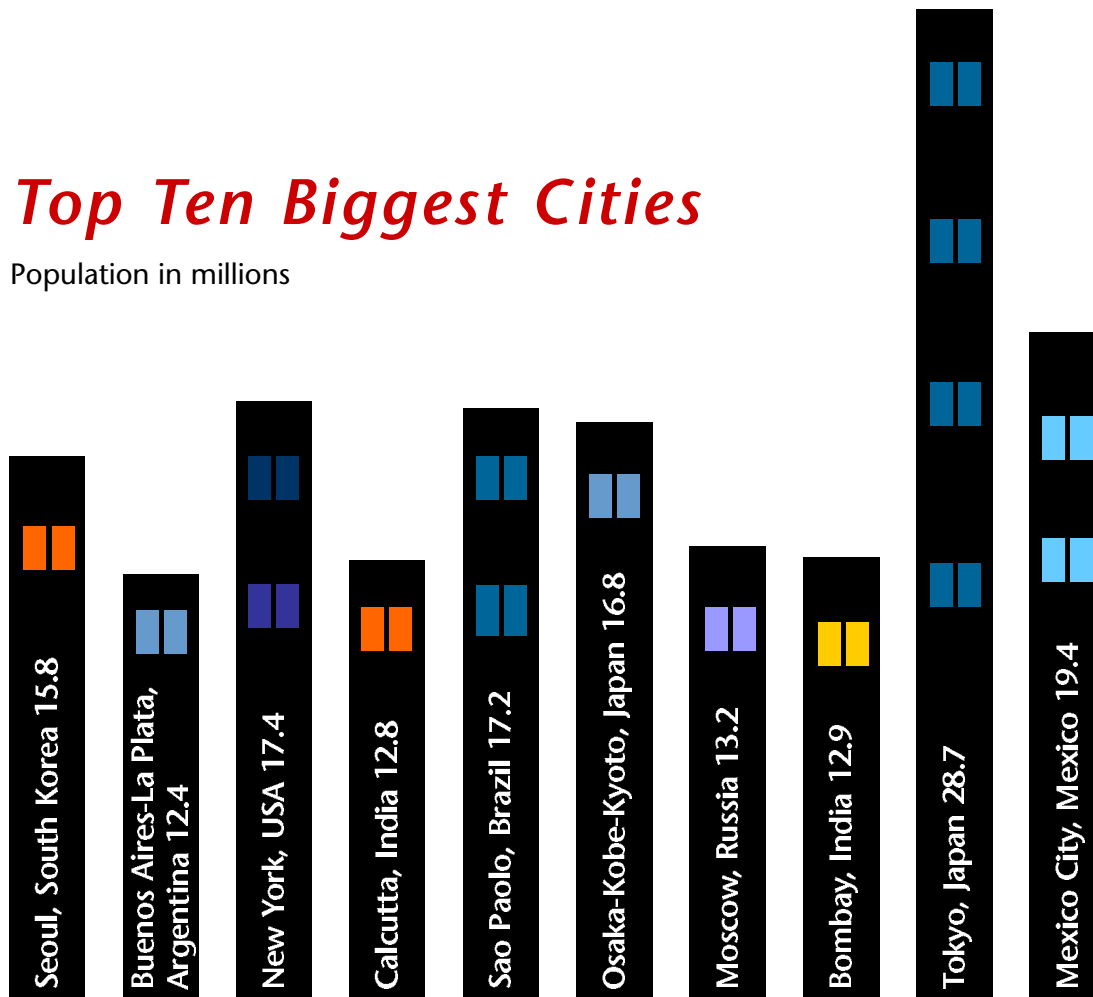
Migrants who move to cities looking for work often have little money, so cannot afford housing. They are forced to build shelters for themselves on waste ground. The resulting settlements are called shanty towns. City authorities find it difficult to provide water and electricity supplies to such areas.

Due to the large numbers of people looking for employment in the cities, employers may pay low wages for work which is often undertaken in poor or dangerous conditions. The workers need the income, no matter how small, and do not want to speak out against their employers. Many people are unable to get formal contracted employment, and so undertake casual work.

In many cities the rapid growth of industry has led to water pollution, poor air quality and unhygienic waste disposal. Investment in industry without due investment in transport and infrastructure has also led to inadequate public transport, traffic congestion and severe air pollution from vehicle exhausts.

Top Ten Biggest Cities

Population in millions



From Teaching Geography Jan '98. Info. from Cities: 'Life in the World's 100 Largest Metropolitan Areas' produced by Population Action International

People do not want to live in *shanty towns* with *poor services*, but they often have no choice. Local people are more than *willing to give their time and energy* to improving their *surroundings*.

In Bombay, India, an area of waste land has been transformed into the Mahim Nature Park, so increasing the amount of green space in this highly populated city. Local people have been encouraged to plant trees, shrubs and flowers in any available space, in an effort to improve the city's appearance and air quality. Groups such as the Homeless People's Federation in South Africa and the Urban Community Development Organisation in Thailand, work with local people to improve their lives, providing loans and saving schemes which allow people to build or buy better homes and much needed equipment for work. This local enthusiasm, and groups such as these, linked to better government funding and improved planning for the future, can transform the present slums, and avoid the development of future problem areas.

Case Study 1: Zambia

Like most developing countries, Zambia faces severe urban housing problems, but in Lusaka a self-help scheme is allowing shanty families to build spacious new homes for themselves. The Low-Cost Housing Project is run as a partnership between the Zambian authorities, the French government and two United Nations agencies. Families that take part are taught how to produce bricks, roofing sheets and floor tiles using local raw materials, and are then given on-the-job training from experts in building methods. The families use half of the bricks that they produce to build their houses, the others are returned to the project organisers and sold to buy raw materials to make more bricks.

Self-built houses cost about a quarter of the price of ready built, and are considerably larger than the shacks that the families used to live in. Every new house has three bedrooms, a kitchen, sitting room and bathroom. In Lusaka's Baulent shanty town, where the project began in 1996, nearly thirty houses have already been built, and over fifty families are waiting to join the project.

Case Study 2: Brazil

Curitiba is located 300km south of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. In the last twenty years the city's population has risen from 500,000 to 1.5 million, but many of the problems associated with such dramatic growth have been eased by good planning and financial investment.

Curitiba has the fastest and cheapest bus system in Brazil, yet it is used by 1.3 million passengers every day. Minibuses connect passengers' homes to city bus stations, from where regular express services cross the city using special bus lanes, stopping only at the futuristic tubular glass and metal bus stops which have been designed for passengers.

Alongside the bus system an extensive network of foot and cycle paths have been designed and private traffic in the city is severely restricted. Green space in the city has also been greatly increased in the last few years, with woods, parks and lakes all being developed to improve the city's environment and make Curitiba a better place to live.

WaterAid was set up by the **British water industry** in July 1981 at the start of the United Nation's Water Decade. So far, more than **four and a half million people** have benefited from improved water supplies and/or sanitation as a result of projects supported by WaterAid. A further two million people will be helped by projects already started or planned. WaterAid is currently working in **12 countries** in Africa and the Indian subcontinent.

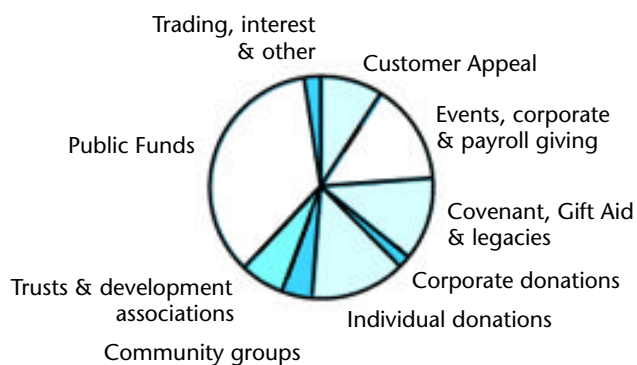
WaterAid does not control projects directly, instead it works with local organisations which take care of the day to day management of projects. One such project took place in the village of Chololo in Tanzania. Women and children had to walk three kilometres every day to collect water from the nearest borehole. The water they collected was not clean and water-related diseases such as diarrhoea were common. The 3,300 residents of the village were determined to improve this situation and so approached WaterAid and the Tanzanian Government's Ministry of Water for help.

A project was set up and villagers mapped the area, dug trenches and built a water tank. The villagers also established a water fund to pay for the maintenance and any repairs to their new water supply.

Projects such as this bring benefits in the form of health improvements and financial savings. Before a water supply scheme was introduced in the neighbouring village of Ng'omai, people there paid for a bucket of water with a bucket of maize, the equivalent of 500 Tanzanian shillings (50p). A bucket of water now costs 10 Tanzanian shillings (1p).

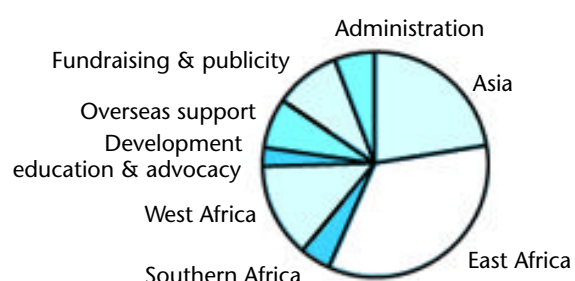
Total income

1997	1996
£7,327,006	£6,639,187



Total expenditure

1997	1996
£7,240,192	£7,199,968



WaterAid projects

There are a number of features common to every project supported by WaterAid:

- it meets the basic water and sanitation needs of poor people
- it effectively integrates water, sanitation and hygiene education activities
- local people are involved in the planning and management of the project
- cost effect technologies are used which are appropriate to local conditions, so that the cost per person benefiting is low
- WaterAid does not duplicate the work of any other organisation
- benefits resulting from the project are sustainable in the long term without outside help
- the national authorities support or approve of WaterAid's work in their country.

WaterAid' s vision is of a world in which all people have access to safe water and effective sanitation.

Wonderful trip! Marvellous memories!

Thirty one eager and enthusiastic students and staff from Hamond's High School, Swaffham recently enjoyed an amazing geographical and cultural experience in Northern Tanzania.

Based at the International School, Moshi in the Kilimanjaro region of the country, we shared two weeks of exploration and discovery. The comments of students show the impact that the trip had, creating a visit that will remain in our hearts and minds for many years to come.

"It was an amazing experience to look at a different culture."

"The trip has fuelled my enthusiasm for travel and learning about many different ways of life."

"The people were open and welcoming."

"An interesting and enlightening experience."

"Although it is a very poor country the people are wonderful and extremely generous."

"A very civilised and stable community that seems to have its priorities in good order."

"The last two weeks have been an 'epic' journey of a lifetime, and I have associated with people who have now become friends."

It certainly gave us all an opportunity to broaden our emotional and cultural horizons, and experience Tanzania, a vibrant and stimulating economically developing country.

Rob Lodge, Head of Humanities, Hamond's High School