

# Winners and losers in globalization of world's economy, health and education

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Globalization has made the world a better and more equal place for many more people than was the case a few decades ago. However, it has also created two well-defined worlds of poor countries and wealthy nations, according to Vanesa Jordá and José María Sarabia of the University of Cantabria in Spain. In an article published in Springer's journal *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, they studied the distribution of well-being over the last wave of globalization between 1980 and 2011.

Well-being is generally described as the state of being happy, healthy or prosperous. The researchers used the UN Human Development Index as

an indicator of quality of life. It offers a realistic perspective of the national levels of well-being of 130 countries, covering almost 90 percent of the world's population. The Index also takes into account non-income dimensions such as education and health.

It shows that globalization has brought higher levels of development to more countries than was the case 30 years ago. However, the intensity by which well-being has increased differs across countries. This has created two well-defined clusters: one of least [developed countries](#) in especially Sub-Saharan Africa, and another of highly developed countries. At the same time, medium developed nations, such as China and India, have caught up with the advanced economies.

Overall, income inequality across countries has only been reduced by less than ten percent. Because of the so-called "poverty trap," poorer countries struggle to rise to the top within the competitive common global market. Such efforts are hampered by difficulties in acquiring supplies and public services in least developed countries, which makes accessing global markets difficult. Foreign money is also invested heavily in oil exporting countries rather than in countries that do not export oil. Leader countries in each region of the world are able to overcome such obstacles, and experience [higher levels](#) of development compared with the nations around them.

The greatest decrease in disparities was found in education, which presents reductions of up to 64 percent. This is thanks to enhanced efforts towards education in developing countries over the last 40 years, especially in Asia. It is consistent with the belief that globalization promotes investment in education and helps countries to develop.

On the health side, no real catch-up or convergence was seen during the nineties. However, this is changing over the past ten years thanks to the expansion of health technology and medicines. Greater access to

HIV/AIDS medications, tuberculosis treatment, and insecticide-treated mosquito nets to reduce cases of malaria are of benefit.

"The benefits of [globalization](#) have increased a number of aspects of well-being in most countries. However, these advantages have not reached a group of [countries](#) which are not able to overcome the human development barriers in health and income. They are being trapped in a low pole which shows little sign of their catching up or converging to the general trend," conclude Jordá and Sarabia.

**More information:** Jorda, V. & Sarabia, J.M. (2014). Well-being distribution in the globalization era: 30 years of convergence, *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, [DOI: 10.1007/s11482-014-9304-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-014-9304-8)

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