

AID AND DEVELOPMENT

Poverty in Plenty

A human development report for the UK

Edited by Jane Seymour for UNED-UK

AID AND DEVELOPMENT

Volume 8

Poverty in Plenty

A human development report for the UK

Full list of titles in the set
AID AND DEVELOPMENT

- Volume 1:** Crisis and Opportunity
- Volume 2:** Child Slaves
- Volume 3:** Civil Society and the Aid Industry
- Volume 4:** Doing Development
- Volume 5:** The Greening of Aid
- Volume 6:** International Perspectives on Voluntary Action
- Volume 7:** Literacy and Power
- Volume 8:** Poverty in Plenty
- Volume 9:** The Reality of Aid 1996
- Volume 10:** The Reality of Aid 1997–1998
- Volume 11:** The Reality of Aid 1998–1999
- Volume 12:** The Reality of Aid 2000
- Volume 13:** Exploited Earth
- Volume 14:** Famine Early Warning Systems

Poverty in Plenty

A human development report for the UK

Edited by Jane Seymour for UNED-UK

First published 2000 by Earthscan

Published 2013 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY, 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Copyright © United Nations Environment and Development – UK
Committee (UNED-UK) 2000

All rights reserved

Earthscan publishes in association with the International Institute for
Environment and Development

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data has been applied for

Publisher's note

The publisher has made every effort to ensure the quality of this reprint, but points out that some imperfections in the original copies may be apparent.

At Earthscan we strive to minimize our environmental impacts and carbon footprint through reducing waste, recycling and offsetting our CO₂ emissions, including those created through publication of this book.

ISBN 13: 978-1-849-71047-3 (hbk)

ISBN 13: 978-1-853-83707-4 (pbk)

Poverty in Plenty

This page intentionally left blank

Poverty in Plenty

A Human Development Report for the UK

*Edited by
Jane Seymour
for UNED-UK*

EARTHSCAN

Earthscan Publications Ltd, London and Sterling, VA



NATIONAL
LOTTERY
CHARITIES
BOARD

Poverty in Plenty is funded by
the National Lottery Charities Board
and Oxfam GB

First published in the UK and USA in 2000
by Earthscan Publications Ltd

Copyright © United Nations Environment and Development – UK Committee (UNED-UK),
2000

All rights reserved

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 1 85383 707 5

Cover design by Declan Buckley
Cover photo by Jon Walter, Third Avenue

For a full list of publications please contact:

Earthscan Publications Ltd
120 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9JN, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 7278 0433
Fax: +44 (0)20 7278 1142
Email: earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk
<http://www.earthscan.co.uk>

22883 Quicksilver Drive, Sterling, VA 20166-2012, USA

Earthscan is an editorially independent subsidiary of Kogan Page Ltd and publishes in association
with WWF-UK and the International Institute for Environment and Development

This book is printed on elemental chlorine-free paper

Contents

<i>List of figures, boxes and tables</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>List of main contributors</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>UNED-UK</i>	<i>xii</i>
<i>Foreword by Sakiko Fukuda-Parr</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Preface by Derek Osborn</i>	<i>xiv</i>
<i>Editor's acknowledgements</i>	<i>xvi</i>
<i>List of acronyms and abbreviations</i>	<i>xvii</i>

Part I: Issues and Context

1	Why a UK human development report?	3
	Introduction	3
	What is a human development report?	3
	The definitions we have used	5
	Social capital: Making the connection to poverty	6
	The process	7
	Structure of the book	8
2	Human development in context	9
	Setting the scene	9
	Thinking globally	10
	Environmental justice	12
	A global imbalance	13
	Environmental justice in the UK	14
	A national view	19
	The UK's treaty commitments	19
	Trade agreements and human development	20
	Conclusion	27
	Main messages of this chapter	27
3	Getting the measure of human development	28
	Thinking about poverty	28
	The right tools for the job	31
	Human poverty and human development	32
	Making comparisons	33
	Who dies young in Britain?	36
	Functional illiteracy in Britain	41
	Low income in the UK	42
	Long-term unemployment in the UK	45

Human poverty in Britain	46
The Social Exclusion Unit	49
What the Social Exclusion Unit has done so far	50
Is the SEU having an impact?	51
In the regions	53
Main messages of this chapter	54

Part II: Key Elements and the UK Policy Agenda

4	Food security: A challenge for human development	59
	The food we eat	59
	Food and human development	60
	Food poverty	60
	Food security	61
	Developing food security	63
	Commodity or necessity?	64
	Lessons from the past	65
	Main messages of this chapter	69
5	Housing	70
	A key to human development	70
	Homeward bound	70
	Sustainable building	71
	Sustainable living	76
	Meeting demand	78
	Conclusion	79
	Main messages of this chapter	80
6	Employment integration for the least advantaged people in the UK:	81
	Opportunities and risks	81
	Into work	81
	Sustainable livelihoods	84
	Incentives to take up employment	84
	Low pay and the minimum wage	85
	In-work benefits	87
	Unemployment and high risk groups for unemployment	88
	Active labour market policies	88
	Flexibility	91
	Employability	91
	Conclusion	93
	Main messages of this chapter	93

Part III: The Way Forward

7	From vision to reality	97
	Meeting needs	97
	An equitable environment	97

Contents

Fair shares	99
How can we empower communities?	102
Setting up systems to build sustainability	105
Sustainable regeneration	105
Regional level	108
National level	108
Main messages of this chapter	110

Part IV: Reference Section – HDR-UK Report Statistics at Regional Level

Appendix 1 Environment and health	115
Appendix 2 Economics and employment	125
Appendix 3 Social environment	135
Appendix 4 Human Poverty Index for British parliamentary constituencies and OECD countries	143
Appendix 5 Participating organisations	159
<i>References</i>	<i>160</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>170</i>

List of Figures, Boxes and Tables

Figures

3.1	The definition of poverty	29
3.2	Premature deaths in the extreme areas of Britain (1991–95)	38
3.3	Percentage of the population with less than half the average income after housing costs (1991–96)	43

Boxes

2.1	The multilateral economic organisations	11
2.2	Unsustainable growth	13
2.3	Examples of environmental injustice in the UK	15
2.4	The interface of treaties for human development and those for trade	21
2.5	UK activity since the Copenhagen Summit commitments	22
3.1	Absolute and overall poverty in Britain	30
3.2	Gender inequalities in the UK	34
4.1	Bath Place Community Venture, Leamington Spa	62
4.2	Cable Street Community Garden, London	64
5.1	The National Sustainable Tower Blocks Initiative	72
5.2	BedZED	75
6.1	Teresa's story: One lone parent's experience of getting back to work	82
7.1	Draft principles of the UN sub-commission on human rights and the environment	98
7.2	European influence	99
7.3	Plugging the leaks	101
7.4	Human development: models for change	103
7.5	A local programme	104
7.6	Barriers to participation	106
7.7	Steps to participation	107

Tables

2.1	Objectives of selected multilateral environmental agreements and associated trade measures	26
3.1	Examples of DETR indicators	31
3.2	How the UK is doing	36
3.3	Constituencies where people are most at risk of premature death (mortality rates under 65) in Britain, 1991–95	39
3.4	Percentage obtaining only literacy level 1 in England, Scotland and Wales in 1996	42
3.5	Share of the total income received by income decile (after housing costs)	44

List of Figures, Boxes and Tables

3.6	Change in real median weekly outcomes 1979–96 by decile group at April 1998 prices (after housing costs)	44
3.7	Distribution of low weekly household incomes, 1995–98	45
3.8	Percentage of people who were long-term unemployed in April 1999 (claimant count)	47
3.9	The 20 constituencies which suffer the worst human poverty	48
3.10	The 20 constituencies with the least human poverty	48
3.11	The 18 policy action teams	51
3.12	Targets for SEU outcomes	53
7.1	A fairer share of resources	100
7.2	Participation continuum	108
A1.1	Atmospheric pollution 1977–78, 1987–88 and 1997–98	115
A1.2	River and canal pollution in 1995 (percentage rated poor or bad)	116
A1.3	Percentage of bathing waters not complying with mandatory EU coliform standards, 1999	116
A1.4	Water pollution incidents in 1997 (total number of incidents and prosecutions)	117
A1.5	Previous use of land changing to urban use in 1993	119
A1.6	Percentage of land covered by trees, 1995	120
A1.7	Greatest threats to the countryside, 1997	121
A1.8	Average daily motor vehicle flows by road class, 1998	121
A1.9	Fatal and serious road accidents in 1997	122
A1.10	Cigarette smoking among people aged 16 and over, 1996–97	122
A1.11	Standardised mortality ratio in 1997	123
A1.12	Percentage of children immunised, 1981, 1991–92 and 1996–97	124
A1.13	Percentage reporting a limiting long-term illness in 1997	124
A2.1	Percentage of households that could not afford certain items in EU countries, 1995	125
A2.2	Percentage of households in receipt of benefit: by type of benefit, 1997–98	125
A2.3	Distribution of weekly household income, 1995–98	126
A2.4	Percentage of households with different types of savings, 1997–98	127
A2.5	Percentage unemployed (claimant count) in April 1999 at county and unitary authority level	128
A2.6	Percentage unemployed (ILO definition) 1994–98	130
A2.7	Percentage of unemployed people who were long-term unemployed in April 1999 (claimant count)	131
A2.8	Percentage of employees with ‘flexible’ work contracts in spring 1998	132
A2.9	Households accepted as homeless: by reason, 1997	133
A2.10	Percentage of households with selected durable goods, 1997–98	134
A3.1	Notifiable offences against individuals recorded by the police	136
A3.2	Crimes committed against households, 1998	138
A3.3	Percentage of notifiable offences cleared up by the police: by offence group, 1997	140
A3.4	Percentage of people with feelings of insecurity: by gender, 1998	141
A3.5	Percentage of householders participating in local voluntary work, 1996–97	142
A3.6	Internet access in Britain	142
A4.1	HPI-2 for British parliamentary constituencies	143
A4.2	How the UK compares with other OECD countries	158

List of Main Contributors

Chapter 1

Jane Seymour, Editor, *Human Development Report*, UNED-UK

David Gordon, Head of the Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Social Justice, and
Director of the Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research, University of Bristol

Sanjiv Lingayah, Centre for Participation, New Economics Foundation

Chapter 2

Chris Church, Community Development Foundation

Simon Bullock, Friends of the Earth (Environmental Justice, pp12–18)

Carolyn Stephens, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Chapter 3

Sanjiv Lingayah

David Gordon*

Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Director, Human Development Report Office, UNDP (Making
Comparisons, pp33–36)

Carolyn Stephens

Rebecca Tunstall, Department of Social Policy and Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion,
London School of Economics (The Social Exclusion Unit, pp49–53)

Alison Gilchrist, Community Development Foundation (In the Regions, pp53–4)

Chapter 4

Damian Killeen, Director of the Poverty Alliance

Chapter 5

Sally Hall, on behalf of the Association for Environment-Conscious Building

Jane Seymour

* Some of this work received funding from an ESRC seminar series grant for 'Developing Poverty Measures: Research in Europe'

Chapter 6

Katherine Duffy, Principal Lecturer at the Business School, De Montfort University, and Director of Research for the Council of Europe Initiative in Human Dignity and Social Exclusion

Chapter 7

Simon Bullock (An Equitable Environment, pp97–9)

Gabriel Chanan, Director of Research and Dissemination, Community Development Foundation

Chris Church

Sanjiv Lingayah

Carolyn Stephens

Appendix 1

David Gordon and Danny Dorling,* University of Bristol

Editorial Group

Peter Beresford/Fran Branfield, Centre for Citizen Participation, Brunel University

Fran Bennett, Oxfam GB

Simon Bullock, Friends of the Earth

Tony Colman, MP

Karen Dugdale, Communities Against Poverty

Nick Robins, International Institute of Environment and Development

Peter Bargh, Preston Borough Council

Project Coordinator

Tom Bigg, UNED-UK

Funders

National Lottery Charities Board

Oxfam GB

* Danny Dorling is now at the University of Leeds.

UNED-UK

The United Nations Environment and Development – UK Committee (UNED-UK) was set up in the wake of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (known as the Earth Summit) to promote environmental protection and sustainable development at the global, national and local levels. We are a membership organisation, providing organisations and individuals in the UK and other countries with up-to-the-minute information on the broad range of activities in the UK and the UN which are designed to realise the objectives established at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.

We also encourage the active involvement of all sectors of society in making progress towards the key elements of sustainable development, emphasising the importance of integrating the environmental, social and economic elements in a coherent, comprehensive policy framework. UNED-UK now functions within the host organisation of UNED Forum which is working to build momentum among a wide range of actors in preparation for the Rio +10 Earth Summit in 2002.

For more information, visit our website at: <http://www.earthsummit2002.org>.

Foreword

The annual UNDP *Human Development Report* (HDR) is unapologetically independent and provocative. This has enabled us to present clear messages which identify the societal and economic elements necessary for all human beings to achieve productive and fulfilling lives, and the barriers to progress. In recent years the HDR has focused on issues of poverty, production and consumption, globalisation and human rights. In addition, each year we produce indices that aggregate statistics and allow comparisons between countries on broad themes, including human development, gender empowerment and human poverty. To complement these global efforts we have developed a programme of national HDRs which assess levels of human development within countries, and help create a policy environment for achieving human development goals.

UNED-UK's report *Poverty in Plenty* breaks new ground in two ways. It is the first national HDR to focus on an industrialised country and it is the first to be produced by a non-governmental organisation (NGO). At all levels of development it is essential that people are able to lead long and healthy lives, to have access to knowledge and information and to receive the resources necessary for a decent standard of living. This book explores the degree to which these basic requirements are met in the UK. It considers the barriers and incentives which currently exist, and puts forward ways in which improvements could be made.

There are two further elements of this report that I welcome. The first is the use of UNDP's Human Poverty Index (HPI), which has been calculated here at local level and clearly shows the gap between the areas of the UK with the best and the worst human development. The second is the strong emphasis on the need for greater consistency between work intended to tackle poverty and deprivation on the one hand, and initiatives focusing on sustainable development and the environment on the other.

While problems of poverty and deprivation are less extreme in countries such as the UK than in some other parts of the world, the human development message is still highly relevant. There are many people who suffer through inadequate housing, insufficient means to guarantee a nutritious diet and the absence of secure, rewarding and remunerative employment. Access to positions of influence for women remains low, and the gap between the richest and the poorest continues to rise. Yet *Poverty in Plenty* also demonstrates that there are positive messages from a wealth of initiatives taken by NGOs and by official bodies, and increasing evidence that these issues are moving to the heart of UK policy in a range of important areas.

Sakiko Fukuda-Parr
Director, Human Development Report Office
UNDP
New York

Preface

Poverty diminishes people. It condemns them to a continuous struggle to find the means for a basic existence. It constricts their ability to acquire skills and resources and to make the most of any opportunities. The vicious circle of poverty perpetuating itself over years and from one generation to the next is all too familiar within families, wider communities and even whole countries. This report looks at how poverty undermines human development in the UK.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) produces an annual *Human Development Report* (HDR) on the state of development throughout the world. This provides a regular and comprehensive picture of the trends in human development, including health and life expectancy, literacy and educational attainment, access to resources and the prevalence of inequality and poverty.

Over the years, the successive reports record the progress which the world has made in reducing the impact of some of the major diseases and in spreading literacy. They chart the gradual improvement in the availability of food and the emergence of new businesses. At the same time, however, they underline how much remains to be done to set the world on a path of more sustainable development.

The HDR highlights the differences in life expectancy in different countries and the prevalence of disease. It shows progress in education, and the large areas of ignorance that remain. It draws attention to the great variations in access to resources in the world, both between and within countries, and the very unequal shares of wealth and opportunity available to different groups and individuals.

The HDR is frequently used to focus attention on the problems – and successes – of the developing world. But it contains much that is relevant and important to the developed world. Poverty may be harsher and more widespread in the developing world but it also persists as a blight, a reproach and a challenge in parts of many developed countries, including our own.

Poverty in Plenty therefore analyses the lessons of the UN's HDR for the UK. The results are disturbing; they reveal clearly and explicitly the disparities between one area of the country and another. Problems reinforce one another, and it is no surprise that the most deprived areas experience multiple problems including below average health and life expectancy, low attainment levels and poor job prospects, poor environments and lack of access to facilities.

This volume exposes the extent of these disparities and the depth of the poverty within plenty which our society displays. There is more inequality in Britain than in most other developed countries, and this accentuates the problems of the most deprived groups and individuals.

The analysis presented here should be read and taken to heart by all those concerned with issues of deprivation and social exclusion. We need to reinforce the message that these

problems are strongly correlated with bad environments and poor access to opportunities. The challenge of sustainable development is to ensure that economic, social and environmental objectives are pursued in an integrated way. *Poverty in Plenty* shows how far we are from achieving that in some parts of the country, and how much we need integrated approaches to tackle the problems.

It is not enough to develop environmental policies that ignore or even exacerbate their impacts on vulnerable groups or communities. But it is equally not sufficient to tackle problems of poverty and social exclusion simply by promoting the creation of new jobs or social measures that do nothing to improve the poor environments and lack of access which hold people back in some of the most deprived communities.

The work of the Social Exclusion Unit and many other recent government initiatives are beginning to make an impact on the problems. This book seeks to build on those enterprises and offers suggestions for further action in the UK. Above all, it emphasises the importance of a well-rounded integrated approach which puts together social, economic and environmental measures in a way that will achieve true sustainable development and eliminate poverty.

The new integrated community strategies for sustainable development which local authorities in England and Wales are to develop following the current Local Government Bill should help local communities to develop more rounded approaches to this whole complex of issues. But such communities will need help and support from government and other agencies if they are really to break out of the cycle of deprivation which *Poverty in Plenty* reveals. Community-based, nationally supported partnerships for change could be the way forward.

It is true that no country has yet found an ideal path to achieving sustainable development. All should be able to learn from the experience of others. This book is a valuable contribution to that learning process.

Derek Osborn
Chairman, UNED Forum
London