

# Supporting Text: Development

*Keywords: wellbeing, inequality, subsistence, livelihoods, stakeholder.*

## **What is development?**

Development is a disputed term which generally is defined as the process of “**improvement**” of societies. While development used to be associated more with economic growth and income poverty, it is now aligned more with wellbeing and quality of life.

## **Sustainable development**

Sustainable development is a popular term which encompasses three pillars of development: social, environmental, and economic. It was first defined in 1987 as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” by the UN’s Brundtland Commission. This mission has been formally implemented through the UN Sustainable Development Goals since 2015.

## **Looking at the bigger picture**

Geographers often seek to categorise regions of development, but this can be complicated. This is because, when trying to map spatial patterns of development around the world, many categories that are created can be inaccurate and even problematic. Some of these include developed versus developing countries, first and third world countries, or the Global North and Global South.

The issues that arise from these include:

1. They are based more on economic than well-being measures.
2. Boundaries are not fixed and are often based on different measures. This means that different people may choose to divide the categories differently.
3. They simplify the complex processes which influence development. They do not take into account how a country has reached a certain level of development, for example the impact of historical events like colonisation.

For this reason, it is important to look at development through different scales. Often, using a smaller scale will provide a more accurate representation of development in a place.

## **Development context in northern Peru**

We found out in the introduction that northern Peru has low levels of socioeconomic development. This includes high rates of poverty and extreme poverty, of social exclusion - when people have limited access to resources and rights, and of outmigration - when people leave the region in search for better opportunities elsewhere. These are different measures of development.

## Measures of development

The ways in which development is measured are varied and cover all aspects of quality of life. In general, they are difficult to use because there are so many, and how they are measured can change with different approaches. Here are some examples of measures that fall under Sustainable Development's three pillars (see Table).

Economic	Social	Environmental	Political
Income GDP Inequality	Health (i.e. mortality, disease, childhood survival) Education	Biodiversity richness Conservation measures	Human rights Freedom of press

Having multiples measures of development may seem complicated, but it is useful to tackle assumptions about places based on purely economic or historical regions, such as the concept of “first and third world countries”. Let's take a look at two different development measures.

### Income

*Note: Income refers to money people receive in return for work (or investments).*

The graph on the right shows income distribution in the UK (left) and in Peru (right). Each bar is divided in five colours, each of which represents 20% of the population. Given this, we can see that in the UK, the richest 20% receive 41% of the country's income, and the poorest 20% receive only 7% of the country's income. In Peru, this gap is even larger, where the richest 20% of the population has 49% of the country's income, and the poorest 20% have 4% of the country's income.

This gap, or division, between the richest and poorest, is known as **inequality**.

### Human Development Index

One more comprehensive measure, covering all three pillars, is the Human Development Index, which adds up life expectancy, education, and per capita income (income per person). It shows a more accurate representation of development trends than simply labelling countries as “developed” or “developing”.

### Impacts of El Niño on livelihoods: why is El Niño a development issue?

The El Niño phenomenon produces a shock on societies that profoundly impacts all measures of development. Let's do a quick recap on how the El Niño phenomenon impacts the lives of the residents in northern Peru.

In the short term, the flooding causes a lot of damage, including the destruction of agricultural fields, of infrastructure, and of health and sanitation. In the long term, however,

flora and fauna increase, and therefore agriculture and fishing increase, meaning there are more job opportunities and economic growth.

From this, we know that El Niño impacts many different aspects of the population's wellbeing, including food, income, health, education, and more.

### Using the educational programme RECUST

This activity is an example of stakeholder participation to create knowledge and set priorities: the subjects of development are making decisions rather than having them imposed.

Therefore, rather than telling you more about their conditions of life, we are going to hear it directly from those living them.

### Quick recap

We talked about the educational programme “Rescuing ancestral knowledge about El Niño” (RECUST) in the introduction. Let's do a quick recap of what the programme did to see how it can teach us about development in northern Peru. In it, children interviewed their parents and community members for oral histories about the benefits of the El Niño phenomenon in the community, and then produced stories about these.

Let's take a look at one of these videos. Here, we are going to meet Alexa Sanchez Tume, a secondary student in northern Peru.

Video
<i>Attached is a video produced by a student about corn production in Mala Vida. You may choose to provide the students with the printed text as the video is in Spanish with English subtitles.</i>
Transcript
<p>Hello and good day to everyone, my name is Alexis Sanchez Tume, student at the Daniel Alcides Carrión school, and today I'm going to talk to you about agriculture in the town of Mala Vida, and of the main food product that I consider important.</p> <p>Agriculture has been the traditional economic activity in the town of Mala Vida, where products such as corn, pumpkin, cotton, sweet potato, and more are intensely cultivated. Due to the heavy rains, the soil is wet, so we know that it is thanks to the El Niño phenomenon. Throughout time, the inhabitants have gotten used to environmental conditions and, due to a lack of space, they created terraces also known as “andenes”. This benefited the farmers a lot.</p> <p>All of these food products maintained their families. Next, I will talk to you about the main and important product from Mala Vida, corn. Housewives use it to make “chicha de jora” (corn drink) and, according to the interviews I did, they made large quantities. You can also get a variety of other products from corn.</p> <p>Corn is rich in nutrients, and you can even get two harvests, increasing agricultural production</p>

at the same time. Corn is also used for the rich production of food for livestock.

To finish, I will tell you the definition of agriculture: an economic activity by which humans cultivate land to be able to obtain food and industrial products to satisfy their vital needs.

### What is Alexa telling us?

#### Exercise

*Before revealing the points that have been outlined in this slide, encourage students to reflect on the information Alexa is providing about development and wellbeing in northern Peru. Prompt the students to think about different indicators and how to associate these to this video - for example: indicators of health rely on nutrition and agriculture.*

1. Children often go unheard as actors in decision making. Alexa is standing up to talk because she has something to say.
2. The town of Mala Vida relies on agriculture for food and wellbeing.
3. Corn is one of the main products harvested, used for consumption, to sell, or to feed livestock.
4. The El Niño phenomenon brings rains that water agricultural lands and increase production.

*Ask the students if there is anything else they would like to point out, specifically if they noticed the reference to her conducting interviews. Alexa mentioned that her interviews revealed that housewives make the corn drink in large quantities.*

Let's look into the different pillars of development individually.

#### **Economic: Subsistence livelihoods**

A subsistence livelihood refers to people who gain their everyday needs independently, often from the direct production of resources.

This means that the communities rely on small-scale economic activities, such as fishing and farming, to maintain their community through the provision of everyday needs.

#### **Social: Community**

Populations in northern Peru have strong community ties, through families and residents and between generations. When an El Niño event happens, but also in other occasions, these ties can act as channels for information, immediate assistance, and other resources.

Their community identity is strongly related to their location and the pride associated with it. This is contrasted with the sense of political absence, in which community members feel left out of national and regional decisions.

#### **Environmental: The El Niño phenomenon in desert conditions**

As daily economic activities rely on the environment, nature is an integral part of the communities' daily lives. It influences their livelihoods, their nutrition, their relationship with nature – and, therefore, their wellbeing. The relationship with nature has been established over centuries, carrying knowledge about resource management from ancient civilisations throughout history.

This includes the El Niño phenomenon, as it interacts with their daily lives and with the desert environment in both positive and negative ways.

### **Standard of life and vulnerabilities**

These factors shape the quality of life of communities in northern Peru, and therefore give insight into the level of development of these populations.

These factors shape the societal conditions which mediate the impact of a natural hazard by determining the population's ability to prepare for and recover from a disaster event: the vulnerabilities and capacities [*refer to chapter on Children and Disasters for more on vulnerabilities and capacities*]. For example, few political resources will reduce access to aid. However, strong social ties and economic adaptation will allow populations to take advantage of the water.

### **Development strategies: how do we do development?**

#### **Education as a tool for development**

There are a variety of tools for development. One of the common ones is childhood education which targets quality of life in three ways. First, it provides children with knowledge that will be useful both in the present and into the future. Second, it empowers children - meaning that it gives children more power to be more confident through cognitive and behavioural skills (thinking and acting). Third, and on a larger scale, it ensures societal development as it helps children achieve better opportunities in the future.

Now, if we are looking at education as a source of information, it is important to question whose interests are represented.

#### **Development challenges**

Now we know that development is about ensuring a good quality of life. However, strategies often consider topics with competing interests, such as ownership of natural resources, so it is important to question who holds power in decisions.

A keyword here is **stakeholder**: an individual or group that has an interest in any decision or activity.

Some of these questions may include:

- Who defines what is a “good” standard of life?
- Who are the stakeholders and what are their goals or interests?

- Who is heard (or not) in decision making spaces, and why?
- Who is most affected by a decision?

Our case study is useful to look into development geographies because it gives us insight into the conditions of wellbeing of a rural population in northern Peru and shows us how decision making can significantly impact different factors of wellbeing. Let's take a closer look to address these questions.

### Questioning development strategies

Here we're diving into these questions to learn to be critical of development strategies. In the case of the El Niño phenomenon in northern Peru, we are looking at how populations prepare for and respond to floods. To look into this, let's picture one specific scenario.

Often, flood responses include infrastructure to drain and remove water from flooded land. We are going to look at the how local authorities might decide to drain the water from the farmlands by building canals that flow into the ocean, without consulting with all stakeholders.

What would be the result of this decision, and is this a beneficial or detrimental outcome?

- *Government authorities may prioritise water removal as a method to remove damage, without hearing (taking into account) how local populations benefit from it.*
- *Students should recognise that the water from floods is beneficial to farmlands for irrigation, and that removing this water would harm the production of food.*

Who are the stakeholders and what might their goals be?

- *Encourage the students to think about who might be interested in the damages or benefits of the phenomenon, and why. For example, the local residents who rely on farming for food, government authorities who want to clear the damage, farmers, large agricultural companies looking to take advantage of abundance, etc.*

Who is heard (or not) in this decision making, and why?

- *In this situation, the local authorities are deciding to clear the water without consulting other groups who benefit from the water.*
- *Students should point to government authorities and large companies having more power in decision making, over the local farmers and community-members. This may be because of authority, status, money, and connections.*

Who is most affected by this decision?

- *This is a challenging question if we are to consider the different ways in which people or groups may be impacted. However, the most profound day-to-day impacts are felt by communities that might lose the resources for subsistence economies.*

***This exercise should highlight how the inclusion of all stakeholders is important and significantly shapes the outcome of measures for development.***

### Actions for development: what can I do?

When thinking of development, focus on holistic wellbeing: while economic growth is important for access to resources, political inclusion, health, education, gender equality, and other indicators are also necessary.

Always be critical! Don't be afraid to ask questions to make sure that everybody is represented and not silenced.

<b>Activity</b>
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Now that we've learnt about development in northern Peru, what can you say about the similarities and differences between Peru and your hometown?
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Encourage students to be reflexive of the differences between their hometown and the situation in Peru: what are the similarities, differences, nuances?</i></li></ul> |
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Can you think of other ways development might be encouraged in northern Peru and/or in your hometown?
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Encourage students to consider the role of knowledge for raising awareness and creating links within and between communities.</i></li></ul> |
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<b>Activity</b>
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<i>Ask the students to summarise the main points learned throughout the lesson before taking them through to the conclusions.</i>
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## Conclusions

1. Development is about quality of life and wellbeing.
2. There are many different definitions and measures of development.
3. It is important to be critical of who benefits and who is heard in development.
4. In northern Peru, rural communities rely on fishing and farming for subsistence.
5. Lower measures of development make populations more vulnerable to the impacts of El Niño.

<b>Review Activity - Homework</b>
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Pick another video available from resource archive and, in the same way that we have done in this lesson, evaluate what the video tells you about development. To guide you, you can think of different indicators of development and what these are in the video.
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