



MYANMAR REPORTER'S MANUAL

UNICEF Myanmar
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For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY

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PART I

Planning & working on a story

Planning a Story

1. Is it news?

Here is a list of what makes a story “news.” These basics also apply to a feature story. When you are looking at writing a story, go through this check list. You should be able to answer “yes” to at least one or two of the elements. A good story will have three or more.

Ask yourself:

1. Does it have **impact** on ordinary people’s lives? Who cares about this? How many people and where? How will this news touch their lives?
2. Is it **unusual**? How often does something like this happen? Is it something that people are talking about?
3. Does it involve anyone or anything of **prominence**? Are any well-known people or organizations a key part of the story?
4. Does it have **proximity**? Did the event happen in Myanmar? Or did it happen in an area of interest to readers — such as Thailand, Asia?
5. Is it **timely**? Did it happen today, yesterday, last week?
6. Is it **dynamic**? Is there movement, tension, or disagreement between groups or individuals? Is there a mystery, or suspense?
7. Is it **entertaining**? Will people find it interesting or amusing for its own sake?

Keep these questions in mind as you report the story. A good story gets better as you find pieces that make it more newsworthy.

2. What are the basic questions to be answered?

The fundamental questions of any story are the same: who, what, where, when, why, how, and how much or how many. In journalism this is known as the 5Ws and 1H.

Each of these one-word questions has many angles. Don’t think you are done reporting if you only can answer the most obvious questions. The basic questions should be running through your mind in a repeated loop – each answer might bring a new round of questions.

What? This usually involves a verb: somebody won, died, sold, claimed, or agreed to something. It's the core of the action that drives the story. You can also ask: What does this event mean? What is the central issue or problem? What step comes immediately next? What are the possible solutions and results? The 'what' element is almost always the first paragraph – or lead – in any news story.

Who? News involves not just individuals, but groups, organizations, political parties, agencies, offices, even nations. And their "who" identity is not only a name, but title, age, role, residency. Remember that "who" is not only who is directly involved in the news, but who is affected by it. Don't forget that for every official source, you should get the person's full name, exact title, and a phone number where you can reach him or her for follow-up questions.

Where? Place may involve a village or city — but it also means a specific place: which street, what neighborhood, which floor of the office building?

When? News may be centered on the immediate, what happened yesterday or today. It can also touch the past — examining an event that happened last month — or the future — predictions or announcements about what's to come. When did the problem start? When will the project be completed?

Why? The hardest, and most important, part of a journalist's job is to explain news events. People need to know what causes, motives and forces are at work. To educate citizens, you need to explore why something happened.

How? Answering "how" is connected to "what": How did the fire start? It also looks at the future: How can this issue or problem to be addressed? How will the plan be carried out? This category also includes - **how much or how many?** Almost every news story will have a number attached to it: the value of the house destroyed in a fire, the percentage increase in carpet exports, the number of acres to be logged, the cost of a program. Numbers describe the size of a problem and its impacts. They pin the story down and make general statements into factual events.

3. What is the story about?

A common problem for many reporters is that they have an idea and think it's a story. Remember that an idea is not a story! An idea is a general topic. For example, you might have an idea to do a story about housing in Myanmar. In these cases, your editor is likely to ask, "So what? What about them? What is the story?"

Look at your idea and figure out what is interesting. For example, are the prices of condominiums in Yangon reaching record prices? Are there a few houses in Yangon that have great historical interest? The point here is to find a specific **element** that makes the story interesting and news worthy.

Note: Do not be afraid if your focus seems too narrow – it is better to write a vibrant, interesting and highly focused story on the increased prices of condomini-

ums in Yangon that trying to write a far reaching article of housing in Myanmar that has no focus, no interest and no real reason to be written.

Once you're decided that there is a story, you should try to summarize what the story is about. This means writing a sentence or two that raises the essential theme of the story or the main question that it will try to answer. You do not have to show this to anyone – it's just an exercise to help you focus.

You might also want to talk to your editors or more experienced journalists and ask them they focus and shape their stories or the stories of other reporters. It can give you ideas to add to your story plan.

As you report the story, remember that the story's focus might change. If you go out with a hypothesis, be open-minded to the facts; you might find out that your hypothesis isn't true.

4. Who are the potential sources of information for the story?

In many countries with highly centralized systems of administration, authority and control, stories are often based only on what officials or official sources say. Do try to break out of this mold, and find interesting and clever ways of utilizing a wider range of sources for the stories you write.

Here are some categories of possible sources of information that you can use as a checklist when thinking about interviews.

Government sources: Don't think only of ministers in Yangon. Departments, universities, and law courts are also government sources, and the people with the most useful information are likely to be those specialists who are carrying out the work of the government, not the top officials. For example, the person in charge of public health protection will likely know more details about the sanitary conditions at mobile restaurants than the Minister of Public Health will.

Foreign sources: Embassies usually have a spokesperson who can comment on stories involving foreign governments. There are also foreign funding organizations, which pay for programs in Myanmar. Foreigners who are living and working in Myanmar can also give you perspective and comparisons with other countries.

International Organizations and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs): This category includes all organizations, both foreign and local, that carry out programs here outside the government. A few examples are UNICEF and UNDP. Most UN organizations in Yangon are extremely helpful and have excellent resources and people willing to help. We at UNICEF are willing to bend over backwards to help you with your story – don't be afraid to ask us for information or assistance! There are also many other NGOs that are very keen to help you write articles.

Business sources: Private businesses are important. Don't overlook them or their opinions!

Academic/expert sources: This includes professors at universities and other scholars, retired professionals, or specialists in various fields such as specialist doctors at hospitals.

Social groups: People form associations for both personal and professional reasons. Some examples are associations of disabled people, unions of writers, environmental groups, women's groups, and local mosques, churches, temples or monasteries.

Eyewitnesses: People who saw the event (e.g., the building falling down, the bus crash), or were involved in the event (e.g., victims of a crime) are important sources of information.

Street level/ordinary people: Always consider whether you can include ordinary citizens in your story.

Direct observation: The reporter himself is a source of information if he directly sees something happen. This can include, for example, watching a doctor treat a patient with a new medicine or technique, or attending the funeral of a prominent person.

Media sources: Normally, you will not directly use information from other newspapers, magazines or broadcast news organizations in your story. However, their stories might give you ideas about who you can contact yourself to get information, or background that you can use in your interviews. In rare cases – if you cannot get the information in any other way and if the information adds an important detail to a story for which you have most of the information – you may use a quote or statistic from other media, but you must attribute this information to the media source that you got it from.

5. How will the story meet international standards?

1. Accuracy. Use sources who are knowledgeable about the subject. As you get answers to your questions, make sure you understand the answers you're given. Verify key facts with another source. Double-check dates, names, and titles. Be sure that numbers add up.

Ask yourself: Will the reader believe the story?

2. Fairness. No story has only one side, and many stories have more than two sides. All sides of the story must be included. Your opinion is not part of the story, and you must be certain that you've treated all sides fairly, even those people you disagree with.

Ask yourself: Will the reader trust the reporter?

3. Interest. Look for the drama or the conflict that will catch people's interest. Create energy in the story by showing change or movement. With a social issue, you can create a sense of movement over time by explaining the causes of the problem, the present size and impact of the problem, and the possible solutions.

Ask yourself: Will the reader care about the story?

4. Timeliness. Old news is not news. The story should be about something that is happening now or that happened very recently.

Ask yourself: Will the story inform the reader about something new?

5. Lead. The first paragraph or two should catch the reader's attention, draw them into the story, and answer the question "So what?"

Ask yourself: Will the reader know what the story is about and want to read the rest of it?

6. Structure. In a news story, the most important elements should come first. The other parts follow in descending order of importance, in what we call the "inverted pyramid" style. The story should have a clear focus

Ask yourself: Will the reader be able to follow the story easily from beginning to end?

7. Quotes. Take extra care to quote exactly the words that the source spoke. Choose quotes that are interesting and that add something different to the story. Quote ordinary people, not just officials.

Ask yourself: Will the reader "hear" the voices of people?

8. Detail. Give the reader a picture of the news event and/or the people who are central characters in the story. Use all the senses to give a feeling of how something felt – sounds, smells, touch, taste as well as colors and shapes. Support general statements with specific numbers, facts and anecdotes.

Ask yourself: Will the reader see the events, people and places clearly?

9. Background. Give information that helps give context to a news event or feature, e.g., history, explanation of causes, cultural elements. Put local issues into a national perspective.

Ask yourself: Will the reader understand the significance of the story?

10. Clarity. Use words that ordinary people understand. Keep sentences short. Simplify complicated ideas so that anyone will be able to follow them.

Ask yourself: Will the reader understand the story?

6. Researching on the web

The web is a terrific tool for researching stories but it has to be used with caution. Not everything you find on the web will be true, accurate or balanced. Ask yourself some simple questions as you do your web searching and you may save yourself from making a mistake.

Make sure you are in the right place.

Often the way of finding information is through a search engine (e.g. Google, or Yahoo). When you go to a site make sure it addresses the questions and research you need.

Make sure the information has authority.

Do you have good reason to believe that the information on the site is accurate? Do authors provide any supportive evidence for their conclusions? Who are the authors of the web page? What gives them their authority or expertise to write? Who is responsible for the site? Is this a commercial, governmental, personal, or academic website? Is there an email address for the website which you can use to get further information or clarify data on the website?

Know why the site exists.

What is the purpose of the site? Is the main purpose to inform, to persuade, or to sell you something? Do you understand what is being said? Is there anything that is not being said? Are the people who publish the site trying to convince you of a particular viewpoint?

Look at details.

Is the site well organized? Are there misspelled words or examples of poor grammar? Do the links work and are they evaluated or annotated? Do they send you beyond the site to other reliable sources of information? Does the site offer anything unique or does it tell you little more than you could find in an encyclopedia? Are the graphics on the page clear and helpful or distracting and confusing?

Distinguish web pages from pages found on the web.

Do you think this page was designed for the web, or do you think it was originally something else? If it was originally something else, what something else was it?

Timeliness of the information.

There is little point using data from 1994 that you found on the web if this information is not up to date. Check dates, and find more recent information if the information appears old.

Working on a Story

1. Interviews

Before the interview begins, you must prepare for it. Once there you have to set up the situation and ask questions effectively. At the end, be sure to wrap up loose ends.

Preparation

Before you pick up the phone or walk out the door, you should **know what the story is**, or might be.

Collect **background information**. Learn what you can about the subject of the story and about the person you are going to interview.

Write down a **list of questions**. Make notes to yourself about the kinds of details you are looking for.

Don't just look for the first question — **anticipate answers**. Then prepare follow-up questions.

Always, always **check your equipment and supplies**. Does your notebook have enough blank pages? Do you have an extra pen? Are the batteries in your tape recorder fresh?

Setting up

Plan to arrive at the interview a few minutes early, and **look around you**. Are there copies of reports you might be interested in? Is the desk clean and empty or cluttered and messy? What do these things tell you about the source?

Choose your position carefully, so that both you and the source are comfortable. If you're going to ask tough questions, you may want to keep some distance.

Watch out for sound interference, such as open doors or music that can clutter your tape recording or interfere with your concentration.

Tell the person clearly **who you are and what the story is about**. There should be no doubt which media organization you are from - and the source should know generally what the subject of your story is.

Make them comfortable and **establish a rapport**. This doesn't mean you should try to be friends with your source. But most people will be more helpful to someone they feel is nice or has something in common with them.

Staying on Target

Start with the easy questions to let the source feel comfortable and to let them know it is important to you for them to be accurate.

Once you've started, **follow a logical train of thought** or ideas. In most cases, you should make it clear where you are going with the interview.

Ask **open-ended questions**. Pose questions that invite the person to tell you his or her thoughts: "Why are you sure this is the right approach?" "How do you respond to people who complain about this problem?"

Don't blindly follow your list of questions — **pay attention to the answers**. Listen to what the source is telling you. Follow up pieces of information to expand the story. If you go to an interview with a list of questions and just ask them, you are not doing your job. Anyone can do that!

Maintain eye contact. Don't spend the entire interview with your head buried in your note book, scribbling furiously. Would you like to talk to the top of someone's head? Make sure you keep eye contact and a neutral expression.

Avoid agreeing with the interview. **Stay neutral**. Don't say "yes I know" "It's terrible isn't it?", "I have to agree" etc. Just listen, take notes and do your job recording the views of the person you are interviewing.

Even if you are recording the interview, **take good notes**. Listen carefully and note the most important facts and quotes.

Take your time — **don't rush**. Don't be afraid of long pauses. It gives you both time to think, and sometimes sources will offer more information if you give them enough space.

As you are listening, **look for the lead** of the story. Think about what the focus of the story will be. If you already know, keep reminding yourself of it.

Be sure you **control the interview**. Keep the source focused on the information you need — not just what they want to talk about. You can say: "I'm sorry to interrupt, but..." or, "That's very interesting, but can we go back to..." or, "I'd like to hear more, but I have a deadline (or another appointment)..."

Keep the interview **on the record**. Don't volunteer to let the source be anonymous. If the person is really uncomfortable, try to negotiate a way to use some part of the information with their name attached.

Be brave; **ask the hard questions**. Remember that you are there to represent the public. Your questions are part of doing your job.

Usually you should **save the toughest questions** for the end. That way, if your source gets angry, at least you'll have the other information you needed!

Closing

Be sure to **get phone numbers** for any sources you can. This will save you the time and expense of going back to their office or shop when the editor has follow-up questions. Don't assume that they don't have a telephone – more and more people have mobile phones, ministries always have at least a digital land line, and even a bread seller may be reachable through his brother's mobile or his son's job.

Explain to the source that the reason you need this information is that you are committed to following the highest professional standards of accuracy and fairness, which means that you or your editor may need to call and ask clarifying or follow-up questions or rebuttal comments from people who give an opposing view. Tell them that the story will not be accepted without this contact information.

When including quotes from a foreign source, ask the source to PRINT in your notebook their name, title and phone number, or give you a business card.

Flip through your notes and **double-check** names, numbers, and unclear notes.

You may want to repeat back to the source the key points as you understand them.

There is one question you should always ask: **“Is there anything I should have asked you?”** This helps catch the follow-up questions you may have missed. And it makes the source partly responsible for the completeness of your story.

Sometimes it also helpful to ask: **“Is there anyone else I should talk to for this story?”** This shows you want to fully understand the issue, pursue all angles. And you may be able to use the contact for future stories.

If you know, **tell them where and when the story will be published.** You don't have to, but it's a professional courtesy.

On your way home or to the office, **think about what you'll use** from the interview. Shape the story in your mind. Go over your notes. This is part of preparing to write the actual story.

2. Writing

When you write the story, keep in mind the international standards, and review the following general tips on writing a story. You will learn the most about writing from continual practice and review with the editors. You can also learn from reading examples of good writing. Whenever you read a story that really holds your interest, study it to see what the writer did well.

Structure of a news story

The first paragraph of a news story should include the most important and most basic facts. The background and details come after that.

This structure is called the **“inverted pyramid.”** It’s like a triangle standing on its point: The most important or biggest element is at the top, and each layer below it has less weight or impact.

But how do you know which fact is most important? Usually, it’s the one that is most essential to the story — and the one that is the newest. Ask yourself: Which fact do all the others depend on?

The news is delivered right away, along with the most important background information. The rest is details that support the story, and give people something to think about or discuss.

Approaches to a feature story

A good feature story often uses some of the same techniques as fiction writing: strong characters, vivid description of settings, a dramatic flow, and dialogue. In that sense, it is more like “story-telling” than a news story is. But the same standards of accuracy, balance, clarity, detail, energy and focus still apply.

Some things to pay special attention to in writing a feature are:

1. Look closely for details. The way a person dresses, the tone of their voice, the colors in a room, all can add to the development of a “character” in a feature story.
2. Choose words with extra care. You can be more creative in a feature story when you describe the “character” and “plot” of this human drama.
3. Use quotes to give the “character” more depth. Let the reader hear the pain of a widow’s poverty, or the anger of a robbery victim.
4. Visualize a story as a movie. In movies, the camera will use a variety of distances to add to the story. Sometimes it will show a wide view to give us a feeling for the setting; other times it will zoom in to focus tightly on the expression of a face, or the trembling of a hand. You can use the same technique in writing a feature.

3. General tips for better writing

1. Write short sentences and paragraphs.

Most sentences should be 15 to 20 words or less. Some should be less than 10. You should always be able to read a sentence out loud in a single breath.

A long sentence is harder for the reader to follow, and difficult for the listener to understand. If a sentence is too long, break it into two complete sentences. Eliminate unimportant words.

2. Make sentences active, not passive.

Active sentences are more direct and more conversational. Most sentences will follow the pattern “Somebody does something.” Don’t write, “Something is done by somebody.”

3. Use active verbs.

Follow the pattern: “Somebody does something.”

Example:

“Imports grew 15 percent last year.” NOT “The growth of imports was 15 percent last year.”

4. Use familiar words that will be understood by everyone.

For example, “give” is simpler than “contribute.” And “go” is more direct than “proceed.” Keep in mind that most of your readers have had less education than you have. If you use simple words, everyone will understand you.

5. Avoid technical terms, academic ‘flowery’ phrases, and official jargon.

Ask yourself: If I walked down the street and asked 10 people, “What does ‘sustainable development’ mean?” would they be able to answer?

Or ask yourself: If I lived in a village and heard a reference to “section 14 of the 1964 Constitution” on the radio, would I know what “section 14” says?”

6. Be sure to answer the question, “So what?”

Ask yourself, why should people care about this? How will this news interest or affect them? You are asking the reader or listener to give you their time, and that’s a big favor. Don’t waste it.

7. Use a conversational tone.

Even if you are writing for print, you should read your story out loud. It should sound natural and be easy to read. If you stumble over your own sentences, imagine how hard it would be for the reader.

8. Every sentence should add something to the story.

Be willing to cut your writing. Ask yourself with each paragraph, “Is this information essential to the story? Or am I including it just because I have it? Does it repeat other information already included?”

9. Make each paragraph flow into the next.

Ask yourself, "How are these ideas connected?" Does one thought follow logically from the one before it?

Using transition words sometimes helps. Examples: after, also, although, before, but, however, later, meanwhile, next, then, while.

10. Avoid redundant phrases and excess words.

"In fact"

"By the way"

"It is known that"

11. Using quotes

People give life to a story. That's why we use quotes: to add another voice, a personal touch.

12. Accuracy is especially important.

People are very sensitive when you put their words in print. They may not like the sound of their own words in public. If you are not sure that you have the exact words that the person said, paraphrase it.

13. Place quotes in the proper context.

Part of accuracy is context. If someone talking about a fire that destroys an old building says, "This is a tragedy and a crime," you must be sure that it's clear in context that they mean "this fire."

14. Use quotes with purpose.

A quote should amplify a point or make it clearer. A quote can give an example to back up a general statement or details describing something. A quote can give a personal note, and show emotion better than you can describe it. Don't waste a quote to give basic factual information, or to repeat information. Please note – this is a big problem with all journalists. Who needs to quote someone saying "The course starts on Tuesday". Instead, use the quote to carry the story forward.

4. Questions you should ask yourself

There are basic requirements about how you put your story together and the way you behave and perform. When you have finished your story, be tough on yourself. Review your work and ask yourself the following

1. Accuracy

Is everything in your article absolutely accurate?

Are the sources you use reliable and credible?

When you ask questions, make sure you understand the answers.

Double check dates, names, titles, location spellings, etc.

Be sure numbers add up and the math is right.

Ask yourself: Will the reader believe this story? Can the reader trust me?

2. Fairness

No story has one side – have you considered all sides? This is one of the hardest things to be totally aware of and self-check on. We all have our own prejudices, but your opinion has no part on the story – leave it out! Treat all sides fairly.

Ask yourself: Will the reader trust me? Will the reader think I am biased?

3. Interest

Look for the drama – where is the conflict? Create energy in a story. Always write with an active voice.

Ask yourself: Will the reader care?

4. Timeliness

Does this matter now? Old news is no news. The story must be current, not about something that happened six months ago.

Ask yourself: Am I saying something new?

5. Lead

The first paragraph is the lead –and it has to catch the reader's attention, so they will read on. You don't want the reader to think "so what?"

Ask yourself: Will the reader be interested and engaged? Will the reader want to read to the end?

6. Structure

Does your article make sense? Can it be easily read and followed? Is it confusing? Do the important elements come first? Does it have a focus and a clear reasoning?

Ask yourself: Will the reader find this easy to follow? Will it be interesting for them until the end?

7. Quotes

Have I quoted people correctly? Have I got enough quotes? Have I chosen the right quotes? Are they interesting? Is there enough variety in the people I have quoted? Are both sides represented fairly? Have I put the quotes in the right punctuation?

Ask yourself: Will the reader hear all sides? Will the reader know that certain statements are quotes?

8. Detail

Is there enough detail? Has a picture been painted? Is there a sense of smell, touch, taste, atmosphere, color, shape? Are general statements supported by specific numbers and facts? Statistics?

Ask yourself: Will the reader be able to picture the event? Is there enough information for the reader to understand the issue?

9. Background

Give appropriate background. History, context (story development), explanation of causes, cultural context, etc. A local issue can be placed in a national perspective, or vice versa.

Ask yourself: Will the reader understand the significance of this story?

10. Clarity

Use words that ordinary readers understand. Keep sentences short. Keep the focus sharp. Simplify complicated ideas.

Ask yourself: Will any reader understand this story?

A few last reminders . . .

- Be open. Even experienced journalists can benefit from the comments of others.
- Be patient. Reporting and writing a story to international standards takes time and hard work.
- Be dedicated.
- Be persistent.
- You are a journalist who believes in international standards. Be proud of your job, your information, your knowledge, yourself.
- Don't forget your obligations to ethics. Be honest, be accurate, be balanced, be fair, and do not plagiarize.
- Be true to yourself.

Thank you to Institute of War and Peace Reporting for their generous assistance in compiling this portion of the report. Visit their website – <http://www.iwpr.net>

PART II

Children & the media

Now that you have basic reporting skills under your belt – preparing for interviews, investigating, fact-checking, writing – it’s time to take the next step: making an impact.

Reporters are the eyes and ears of the public. You can affect the way that issues are understood and dealt with, and can influence how people live their lives.

Because of the influential role the media plays, it can be a powerful force for the promotion of children’s rights.

This section explores ways that you, the media, can bring greater coverage to issues that affect children, create opportunities for children to voice their opinions in the media, provide children with important information, and ensure that children’s rights are protected in the course of doing your work.

UNICEF understands that a journalist’s primary responsibility is to fairly and accurately report a story in an interesting, compelling way. We also know that you pride yourselves on your independence – well you should.

UNICEF believes that there’s no conflict between your independent, objective role and the protection and advancement of children’s rights. In fact, by doing your job and doing it well, you will inevitably advance the cause of children by bringing facts about children and children’s issues into the public realm. We support you in this endeavor.

1. Covering Issues that Affect Children – an Overview

Covering children and issues that affect children is one of the most important things that reporters do. Unfortunately, in Myanmar and throughout the world, children and children’s issues only comprise a very small proportion of overall media coverage.

Issues affecting children – which are not always the same as those affecting adults – are worthy of coverage and public discussion. Quality stories about children will interest the public, increase debate about what the role of children in Myanmar society is, and increase possibilities for beneficial change.

Shedding Light on Important Children’s Issues

One important thing that you can do as a reporter is to bring situations affecting children to light. All across Myanmar there are children with disabilities who don’t receive the same opportunities as other children, girls who experience discrimination, and impoverished children who are vulnerable to trafficking and many other forms of exploitation. There are instances where children or young people are being harmed by acts of commission (e.g., exploitation or abuse), omission (e.g., neglect), or by other situations beyond the control of them or their families (e.g., poverty).

There are also more conventional issues that directly affect children such as health and education, though media coverage may not always reflect this fact.

The list of issues deserving of coverage goes on and on – yet so many of these issues receive scant attention in the press. By exposing situations where the situation of children could be improved, you, the media, can play an important, sometimes critical role in helping to improve the lives of children in Myanmar.

We understand that certain rules and regulations governing the media may make it challenging to bring certain issues to light. Just do your best, and be creative in your quest to bring child-related issues to public light.

Another big challenge that reporters in Myanmar often face, particularly when seeking to report on children's issues, is good information, which is not always readily available. If you're having a difficult time obtaining reliable background information for a story, contact UNICEF – we'll do our best to help you. The one thing we encourage you *not* to do is give up.

One way that you as reporters can foster awareness of an issue is not just by publishing a one-time sensational story, but by working to comprehensively explore an issue or problem through a series of more subtle, well-researched and well-written reports. Ultimately, it is regular, solid reporting on select issues that has the greatest chance of leading to a change of opinions or actions.

No doubt that the challenges you, as reporters, face is great. Nevertheless, we hope you will actively seek out stories about children and children's issues. Be creative. Think outside of the box. And remember the difference you can make!

Accurately Portraying Children

When reporting on children and children's issues, top-notch reporters take special care to ensure that the children who they are reporting on are portrayed in a fair and objective way. Unfortunately, not all reporters are top-notch, and this is not always done. Sometimes child victims of exploitation are portrayed as criminals, and sometimes children and young people are portrayed as being too immature to be able to offer valuable insights on various issues.

How children are portrayed affects how the public perceives them – and the way they are treated. When you're preparing your story about children, strive to avoid superficial characterizations. Rip apart false myths about children and the problems they face. Treat the children and young people in your stories as the bright individuals they are – people worthy of respect.

One way you can show your respect for the children you're reporting on is by listening to them. Interview them – elicit their opinions – and look at the issues you're covering from their perspective.

2. Giving Children a Voice

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history. The CRC, which Myanmar ratified in 1991, clearly establishes that children and young people have the right to express their views:

CRC Article 12:

[T]he child who is capable of forming his or her own views [has] the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

CRC Article 13:

The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to . . . impart information and ideas of all kinds . . . either orally, in writing or print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

At UNICEF, we encourage reporters to give children and young people opportunities to voice their opinions in the media, not only because this furthers their rights, but because it makes for better stories. Children know a lot – and have much to contribute to your story. They have especially valuable insights on child-related issues such as education, play, child abuse and other subjects. If you fail to interview children when writing a story that involves children, you're not only failing to do your job well, you're also missing an opportunity to make your story more interesting and informative.

Some reporters incorrectly assume that children can be hard to quote. Don't believe it! When reporters have a hard time getting a good quote from a child, it's more often than not due *not* to the inability of the child to say something of interest, but rather, to the inability of the interviewer to make the child feel comfortable and gain their trust.

Children have a lot of interesting things to say, and often give more genuine, honest responses to situations that we adults! Children can also offer fresh perspectives and insights on stories.

Nevertheless, quotes from children – whether in Myanmar or the rest of the world – rarely make it into print or video footage. Globally, most stories rely on expert opinions rather than the voices of children. In addition, the adult run-and-controlled media often ends up focusing more on the problems children allegedly create rather than the problems they face, and why. This is attributable to a number of reasons: false assumptions, impatience, laziness, or a lack of understanding about what's being missed by cutting children out of the story. We encourage you to aspire for a higher standard.

Bringing children 'into the loop' lessens the chances that they'll be portrayed in a patronizing or condescending way, or as a stereotyped, homogenous group – a frequent complaint of children and youth about the media around the globe. Involving children in stories also humanizes them. By giving a child a chance to speak, instead of just being portrayed as a "poor child" or "disabled child", that child will better come across as a complex, dynamic human being with the capability of persevering.

Yes, interviewing a child can sometimes take time and patience – so prepare for your interview knowing this! If you try to pressure children or hurry them, you'll end up with little of interest. If you let them say things in their own way, in their own time, you'll be pleasantly surprised by how much interesting information you get.

Some things to keep in mind:

- ▶ **Give children a chance.** It's difficult for children to get their voices into the media. Talk to children involved in the story you're writing. Give them a chance to speak!
- ▶ **Take children seriously!** They're smart and insightful. Show them the respect they deserve.
- ▶ **Listen!** While listening is always an important skill for a reporter, it's an absolutely essential skill for someone reporting on children.
- ▶ **Don't put words in a child's mouth.** Give them a chance to freely speak for themselves, as individuals. Don't encourage them to say what *you* want them to say – let them say what *they* want to say.
- ▶ **Be patient.** While adults can give you "quickie" interviews, this isn't always the case with children. Moreover, children provide more accurate information when given time to respond in their own way and time.
- ▶ **Be clear.** Ask clear questions, and make sure that the child you're interviewing understands the questions they're answering.
- ▶ **Don't push.** No child has to give their opinion or tell their story. Respect their right to say 'no'.
- ▶ **Conduct the interview on the child's level.** Don't tower over the children you're interviewing. Sit or stand at the same level they're at – they'll feel more comfortable, and you'll have a better interview.
- ▶ **Empathize.** We were all children once.

3. Providing Children with Information

The CRC also establishes the right of children and young people to have access to a wide range of information material.

CRC Article 17:

States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health.

CRC Article 13:

The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

This manual is not a guide on how to develop child and youth-focused media. Nevertheless, UNICEF does think it's important to briefly note what an important role that you, the Myanmar media, can play in helping children and youth realize their right to access information through the media.

Today in Myanmar, children have very little print, electronic or other media specifically developed for their consumption. UNICEF encourages you, the media, to address this deficit – and we stand ready to help you however we can.

Of course, providing children and youth with information is much more than just imparting facts. It's about giving them quality information that is interesting to people of their age, and that enhances their growth, health and enjoyment of life.

Here are a couple of quick hints for those of you who do seek to reach child and youth audiences with your work:

Show – Don't Tell: When writing for a younger audience, it's important not to be patriarchal or condescending. If you try to just *tell* youth what they should think or do you'll lose your audience. Young people respond much better when they have issues explained to them in their own language – when they're *shown* positive options that can improve their lives, and understand why this is desirable. One good way to do this is by featuring positive peer role models – other children or youth who have found constructive ways to contend with the difficulties they face, and achieve their goals despite these challenges.

Remember How Capable Children and Youth Are: Never forget just how bright and capable your child and youth audiences are. Don't underestimate their intellect

or interests when writing stories for their consumption. If you use language familiar to your audience, they're quite capable of understanding complex issues, and quite able to take action based on this information. When young people know how and where they can find the quality assistance and support, they're usually capable of changing their own lives for the better.

4. Ethical Guidelines – Protecting Children

When reporting on children, UNICEF urges you to embrace and always keep in mind the “Hippocratic Oath” of reporting on children: *first, do no harm*.

If you're not sure whether your work could cause harm to a child, it's better to err on the side of caution – our first duty as adults is to the best interests of the child.

UNICEF and other organizations have developed ethical guidelines for reporting on children because children don't have the same resources available to them as adults – and they require heightened protection to make sure that their rights are respected. Guidelines are not a tool to limit you in the work you do as a journalist – they are simply a tool to help you ensure that in the course of your work, you protect the rights of the children you're reporting on.

Among the principles to keep in mind while carrying out your work are:

Informed Consent: Children and young people may not always be able to fully appreciate the ramifications of cooperating with you for a story. Therefore, both the child *and* a parent, guardian or other adult in position to protect child's best interests should give their informed consent for any interview, picture, etc. Make sure they appreciate any potential risks involved.

No Staging: Don't tell children what to say or do, then use it for your story. Good reporters don't set up false scenarios. Be accurate and honest.

No Pressure or Coercion: Don't manipulate or pressure children who you'd like to interview or photograph – respect their wishes. They have a right *not* to cooperate!

Confidentiality: While children deserve to have their voices heard, there are also times when their identities need to be protected. UNICEF urges you to never identify child victims of sexual abuse or exploitation, child perpetrators of physical or sexual abuse, children charged or convicted of a crime, or children living with HIV/AIDS (barring fully informed consent). There are many other instances where disclosure of a child's identity could also lead to trouble or harm. In Myanmar, it's especially important to be mindful of the risks a child or young person in your story could face if their identity is exposed. Make sure they're *fully* protected against reprisals from *all* potential sources.

Protection: If you're interviewing a vulnerable child, conduct the interview in a manner and in a place where the child is safe from exposure and harm. Don't

criticize child victims (e.g., prostitutes or street children) either when you're interviewing them or when you're reporting – they are victims, and your reporting should reflect this.

Impartiality: You should never succumb to bias– never discriminate against a child because of their race, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, political viewpoints, or other reasons. And don't stereotype the children or young people you're reporting on!

Ethical guidelines – UNICEF

Principles for ethical reporting on children

Reporting on children and young people has its special challenges. In some instances the act of reporting on children places them or other children at risk of retribution or stigmatization.

UNICEF has developed these principles to assist journalists as they report on issues affecting children. They are offered as guidelines that UNICEF believes will help media to cover children in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner. The guidelines are meant to support the best intentions of ethical reporters: serving the public interest without compromising the rights of children.

We welcome your feedback. Please contact us at press@unicef.org.

I. Principles

1. The dignity and rights of every child are to be respected in every circumstance.
2. In interviewing and reporting on children, special attention is to be paid to each child's right to privacy and confidentiality, to have their opinions heard, to participate in decisions affecting them and to be protected from harm and retribution, including the potential of harm and retribution.
3. The best interests of each child are to be protected over any other consideration, including over advocacy for children's issues and the promotion of child rights.
4. When trying to determine the best interests of a child, the child's right to have their views taken into account are to be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.
5. Those closest to the child's situation and best able to assess it are to be consulted about the political, social and cultural ramifications of any reportage.

6. Do not publish a story or an image which might put the child, siblings or peers at risk even when identities are changed, obscured or not used.

II. Guidelines for interviewing children

1. Do no harm to any child; avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are judgmental, insensitive to cultural values, that place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation, or that reactivate a child's pain and grief from traumatic events.
2. Do not discriminate in choosing children to interview because of sex, race, age, religion, status, educational background or physical abilities.
3. No staging: Do not ask children to tell a story or take an action that is not part of their own history.
4. Ensure that the child or guardian knows they are talking with a reporter. Explain the purpose of the interview and its intended use.
5. Obtain permission from the child and his or her guardian for all interviews, videotaping and, when possible, for documentary photographs. When possible and appropriate, this permission should be in writing. Permission must be obtained in circumstances that ensure that the child and guardian are not coerced in any way and that they understand that they are part of a story that might be disseminated locally and globally. This is usually only ensured if the permission is obtained in the child's language and if the decision is made in consultation with an adult the child trusts.
6. Pay attention to where and how the child is interviewed. Limit the number of interviewers and photographers. Try to make certain that children are comfortable and able to tell their story without outside pressure, including from the interviewer. In film, video and radio interviews, consider what the choice of visual or audio background might imply about the child and her or his life and story. Ensure that the child would not be endangered or adversely affected by showing their home, community or general whereabouts.

III. Guidelines for reporting on children

1. Do not further stigmatize any child; avoid categorizations or descriptions that expose a child to negative reprisals - including additional physical or psychological harm, or to lifelong abuse, discrimination or rejection by their local communities.
2. Always provide an accurate context for the child's story or image.
3. Always change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child who is identified as:

- a. A victim of sexual abuse or exploitation,
 - b. A perpetrator of physical or sexual abuse,
 - c. HIV positive, or living with AIDS, unless the child, a parent or a guardian gives fully informed consent,
 - d. Charged or convicted of a crime.
4. In certain circumstances of risk or potential risk of harm or retribution, change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child who is identified as:
 - a. A current or former child combatant,
 - b. An asylum seeker, a refugee or an internal displaced person.
 5. In certain cases, using a child's identity - their name and/or recognizable image - is in the child's best interests. However, when the child's identity is used, they must still be protected against harm and supported through any stigmatization or reprisals.

Some examples of these special cases are:

- a. When a child initiates contact with the reporter, wanting to exercise their right to freedom of expression and their right to have their opinion heard.
 - b. When a child is part of a sustained program of activism or social mobilization and wants to be so identified.
 - c. When a child is engaged in a psychosocial program and claiming their name and identity is part of their healthy development.
6. Confirm the accuracy of what the child has to say, either with other children or an adult, preferably with both.
 7. When in doubt about whether a child is at risk, report on the general situation for children rather than on an individual child, no matter how newsworthy the story.

IV. Use of UNICEF materials

All of UNICEF materials are protected by copyright, including text, photographs, images and videotapes. Permission to reproduce any UNICEF material must be requested from the originating UNICEF office, and will be only be granted on the condition that the principles and guidelines in this document are adhered to.

Sources: The Convention on the Rights of the Child; Child Rights and the Media: Guidelines for Journalists, International Federation of Journalists; Media and Children in Need of Special Protection, (internal document), UNICEF's Division of Communication; Second International Consultation on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, United Nations Secretary-General.

Guidelines for Journalists and Media Professionals

(from the International Federation of Journalists)

Journalists and media organizations shall strive to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct in reporting children's affairs and, in particular, they shall:

1. Strive for standards of excellence in terms of accuracy and sensitivity when reporting on issues involving children;
2. Avoid programming and publication of images which intrude upon the media space of children with information which is damaging to them;
3. Avoid the use of stereotypes and sensational presentation to promote journalistic material involving children;
4. Consider carefully the consequences of publication of any material concerning children and shall minimize harm to children;
5. Guard against visually or otherwise identifying children unless it is demonstrably in the public interest;
6. Give children, where possible, the right of access to media to express their own opinions without inducement of any kind;
7. Ensure independent verification of information provided by children and take special care to ensure that verification takes place without putting child informants at risk;
8. Avoid the use of sexualized images of children;
9. Use fair, open and straight forward methods for obtaining pictures and, where possible, obtain them with the knowledge and consent of children or a responsible adult, guardian or carer;
10. Verify the credentials of any organization purporting to speak for or to represent the interests of children.
11. Not make payment to children for material involving the welfare of children or to parents or guardians of children unless it is demonstrably in the interest of the child.

Journalists should put to critical examination the reports submitted and the claims made by Governments on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in their respective countries.

Media should not consider and report the conditions of children only as events but should continuously report the process likely to lead or leading to the occurrence of these events.

PART III

Appendices

Appendix 1:

Myanmar Journalists' Code of Ethics

Appendix 2:

Glossary: Some Economic and Development Terms

Appendix 1:

Myanmar Journalists' Code of Ethics

This code of ethics was drafted by a group of Myanmar journalists attending a meeting in the James P. Grant Hall, UNICEF Myanmar Headquarters, on Wednesday, 24 November 2004.

1. The journalist will use honest and truthful means of gathering the news. The journalist shall report the news with honesty, accuracy and balance - without distortion, manipulation or the omission of essential information.
2. The journalist shall verify all information given by all sources, testing it for its reliability. Sources must be verified as reliable.
3. The journalist shall identify themselves as a member of the media when seeking information or interviews. They shall not disguise or lie about their identity, except in rare cases where confidential information is being gathered.
4. The journalist's first commitment is to their consumers. They shall act with independence. They should report the news without pressure from any organization, institution or commercial concern.
5. The journalist shall not accept any bribes, gifts of any sort or financial compensation that will affect their independence.
6. The journalist shall make every effort to avoid mistakes and inaccuracies but shall correct them promptly when they occur.
7. The journalist shall show respect to all people as they gather information. They shall not use threats, coercion or any attempts to exert authority over people when gathering news and information.
8. The journalist shall not incite hatred or contempt for any ethnic group, race, nationality, religious group or belief, physical or intellectual disability, gender or age group.
9. The journalist shall not plagiarize work or fictionalize or make up aspects of any news story.
10. The journalist shall recognize the right to privacy, particularly for private people. This is especially so in cases of tragedy or grief, crime (especially violent or sexually exploitative crime), or in times of distress or vulnerability.

11. The journalist shall not violate human rights and dignity.
12. The journalist shall have no ulterior motives when reporting a story. They shall not act in revenge or spite, to settle old scores, for self promotion, for profit or out of self interest.
13. The journalist shall not harm their profession. They shall support the right of every journalist to work without intimidation or threat, and they shall protect the essential rights of all journalists to report the news freely.

Appendix 2:

Glossary: Some Economic and Development Terms

Balance of Payments

The balance of payments accounts record all flows of money in and out of a country. These flows might result from exports (an inflow or credit) or from imports from abroad (an outflow or debit). They might also arise from other countries investing in the country (inward investment a credit), or from businessmen investing abroad (a debit). All flows of money are added together and the overall account is then called the balance of payments.

Birth Rate

The number of children born alive each year per 1,000 of the population.

In general, developing countries have higher birth rates than industrialized countries.

Black Market

Buying or selling prohibited or illegal goods. This could be because the product itself is illegal, like opium or heroin, or because the conditions of sale are illegal; because, for example, the seller does not have a license or is not paying sales tax. The black market is huge in many developing countries.

Budget Deficit

When a government spends more than it receives in revenues. Government income comes from taxation, customs and other revenue, and where this is less than the money the government is spending on defense, education, health, welfare and so on, this is called a budget deficit. Budget deficits are key causes of inflation, as governments often print more money to cover the deficit.

Capital

Man-made resources such as machines, factories and offices. Capital is one of the main factors of production. Traditionally, capital was thought of purely as money or assets, which could easily be bought and sold for money, such as property and so on. More recently, economists have started to consider the skills people have to make things – the knowledge of a farmer for how to grow things on his land, or an engineer's ability to build a bridge - as one of the most important engines of prosperity, especially in developing countries. They call these skills "**human capital**".

Central Bank

A government agency that manages financial institutions. Its most important job is to issue and maintain the domestic currency. Central banks often also regulate private sector and commercial banks in a country. It can be thought of as a “bank for banks”.

Comparative Advantage

The concept that people, companies and countries are most efficient when they do the things that they are best at doing. Comparative advantages can come from a combination of natural resources and human skill. Comparative advantage is particularly important in world trade, where countries benefit most by producing and exporting goods and services that they can produce more efficiently (at a lower cost, by using less physical, human and natural capital) than other goods and services.

Consumption Expenditure

Consumption expenditure on goods and services that satisfy current wants. It is a key component of demand.

Costs, fixed and variable

All producers of goods and services in the market face costs - a farmer must pay for seeds, a doctor must pay for surgical equipment. Costs are divided between fixed and variable. Fixed costs are for things you need before you even start working - a farmer for his land, for example, or a doctor for his medical education. Variable costs are payments for items you need to make individual items. See also: “diminishing returns”, “marginal cost”.

Death Rate

The yearly number of deaths per 1,000 of the population

Debt and Debt Servicing

Debt is the total amount of money owed by a country. Many developing countries now have debt which is so high that paying it back - debt servicing - takes up most of their current earnings. The question of how much debt should be forgiven, or cancelled, is very controversial around the world.

Demand

Demand is the want or need for a product, backed by an ability to pay. It is determined by a number of factors including income, tastes and the price of complementary and substitute goods. If demand increases for a particular good, then its price will rise.

Devaluation

What happens when the government deliberately lowers the value of the exchange rate of its local currency. See also: "exchange rate".

Diminishing Returns, law of

The idea that there is one correct level of production or activity to produce any one good. For example, a farmer might hire laborers to harvest his rice. Each of the first ten workers is responsible for harvesting a ton of rice each, or ten tons in total. But when the farmer hires another ten laborers, he finds they only harvest another five tons between them, or half a ton each, because they are working in fields which are further away, or are not given such good tools. The farmer gets diminishing returns from the second ten workers.

Economic Development

Economic development is a broader concept than economic growth. It combines growth with an improvement in living standards. Economic growth does not take into account how GDP is distributed or the degree of poverty that exists or how much access people have to basic needs such as schooling, health and social services. Economic development does. Sometimes the term "human development" is used to describe economic development in an even broader sense. Once the distinction has been made between growth and development then thought must be given to whether simple growth indicators like GDP are suitable to measure the general state of development in a country.

Economic Growth

Typically refers to an increase in a country's output of goods and services. Economic growth can either be nominal - because the same amount of goods are being made but inflation has pushed up their prices - or real, when more goods are actually being produced or their real value - measured by foreign currencies - has risen. See also: "economic development".

Economies of Scale

A reduction in the costs of an individual item by making more of them. For example, it might cost \$1 to buy five kilograms of rice but only \$6 to buy 50 kilograms, because the seller is happier to accept a lower rate for more sales.

Entrepreneurship

The ability and willingness to undertake new businesses. Business in a safe industry or country involves basic management, but entrepreneurship is often associated with innovating and taking risks. Entrepreneurs are vital for a country's economy, because when successful, they grow much more quickly than established, older companies.

Equity

Refers to a share or portion of ownership, usually in the form of shares. If a company issues 100 shares, each share represents 1% of the company's value.

Exchange Rate

The price of one country's currency in terms of another's. For example, one US dollar buys approximately 120 Japanese yen.

Family Planning

A health service that helps families decide how many children to have and when.

Fertility Rate

The average number of children a woman will have during her lifetime. The total fertility rate in developing countries is between three and four – in industrial countries it is less than two.

Fiscal Policy

The use by a government of its expenditures on goods and services and/or tax collections to influence the level of national income. In all countries the government is the largest single actor in the economy, so how it decides to buy or spend will have a big effect on the economy.

Foreign Aid

The international transfer of public and private funds in the form of loans or grants from donor countries to recipient countries. A grant is money that does not have to be repaid. Loans must be paid back, but their terms may vary. Aid became a big part of the international economy in the 1960s, as many countries in Africa and Asia became independent for the first time. See also: "loans".

Free Market Economy

The main economic system in the world after the collapse of communism. In a free market economy, most property is held by private individuals rather than the government, and prices are whatever a buyer and seller agree, rather than being set by the government.

Gross Domestic Product - GDP

One of the main measures used by economists to gauge how a country is performing economically. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of all goods and services produced over a given time period (usually a year) excluding net property income from abroad. It can be measured either as the total of income, expenditure or output. See also: "GNP".

Gross National Product - GNP

Gross National Product (GNP) is a measure of economic activity. It is the total value of all goods and services produced over a given time period (usually a year) including net property income from abroad. It can be measured either as the total of income, expenditure or output.

Hard Currency

A currency of an industrialized country that has general convertibility. In many developing countries governments try to fix exchange rates between national and foreign currencies.

HIV

Human Immune Deficiency Virus, the virus that causes AIDS.

Illiteracy

The proportion of the population over the age of fifteen who cannot, with understanding, read and write a simple statement about their everyday life and do simple mathematical calculations.

Industrialization

The process of expanding a country's capacity to produce secondary goods and services. Many less-developed countries (LDCs), noticing that Europe and North America became rich from industry, have tried to move from being agricultural to industrial economies as fast as possible.

Infant Mortality Rate

The number of children who die before the age of five, typically measured out of every 1,000 live births.

Informal Sector

The exchange of goods and services not accurately recorded in government figures and accounting. The informal economy, which is generally untaxed, commonly includes goods and services including day care, tutoring, or black market exchanges. The informal sector is usually made up of small companies and is often the most dynamic part of an economy.

Inflation

The rise in general prices and the reduction in value of money. Inflation is a sustained increase in the general price level. In other words, it is the rate at which prices are increasing. It can be measured monthly, quarterly or annually. In many countries, it is measured by a Consumer Price Index, where the prices of a fixed range of normal household goods are compared. Hyperinflation is when inflation

reaches over 50% a month. Inflation is bad for economic development, because it makes planning difficult and leaves most people in a constant struggle to make ends meet.

Infrastructure

The underlying assets of an economy that in normal circumstances are taken for granted as the basis for economic activity. Roads, for example, or the electricity and water networks.

Interest

The payment made for the use of funds with which to create capital goods.

Investment

Investment is money spent on acquiring capital goods, such as machinery and equipment. The term can also refer to money given by one company or individual to a company to receive a share of ownership of the company. See also: "equity".

Less Developed Countries - LDC

Countries that are generally characterized by low levels of GDP and income per capita. LDCs usually have a heavy dependence on the primary sector of the economy. Within the general category of LDCs, there are low income countries and middle income countries.

The World Bank defined low income countries as those with national income of less than \$755 per person in 1999. There are currently about 64 low income countries. Their combined population is more than 2.4 billion.

Life Expectancy

The average number of years newborn babies can be expected to live based on current health conditions. This indicator reflects environmental conditions in a country, the health of its people, the quality of care they receive when they are sick, and their living conditions.

Loans – hard and soft

Money lent by one party to another with the expectation of repayment. Loans can be divided into soft loans and hard loans. Many developing governments are offered soft loans where interest rates are below what a private company would have to pay in the marketplace. Loans are controversial in international economics because many LDC governments suffer from debt and believe they should not have to pay back past loans.

Marginal Cost

The amount spent on producing one extra unit. The marginal cost is the increase in total cost when one more unit is produced. For example, say a bakery is producing 1000 loaves of bread a day, the marginal cost is how much extra it will cost to produce one more loaf of bread. Marginal cost is important because it changes drastically at different levels of production. If the marginal cost of each unit is going down, then there is an economy of scale, whereas if it is going up, there is a diminishing rate of return.

Macroeconomics

The branch of economic theory concerned with the economy as a whole. Macroeconomics is concerned with things like inflation, exchange and interest rates and government policies. See also: "microeconomics".

Microeconomics

The branch of economic theory concerned with how things work for individual people or companies.

Monopolistic Competition

A monopoly is where one company is able to dominate the market for the good or product it is selling, setting its price as it likes. In a monopoly there is little or no competition from other firms. Monopolies are often associated with political or economic power - a government or ruler may give a monopoly in trade of a certain good to an ally.

Monopolies are the most extreme example of lack of competition and are quite rare. But markets are frequently dominated by oligarchies or cartels -very small numbers of companies who fix prices between themselves.

Non-Governmental Organizations – (NGOs)

NGOs, or Non-Governmental Organizations, is a term mainly applied to groups involved in economic development or humanitarian assistance which are not owned or controlled by any government - although a lot of NGOs get a lot of their funding from government sources. Some NGOs such as Amnesty International or Medecins Sans Frontieres are

huge and global. Others are just based in one village or community. The largest NGO, the Red Cross, has 105 million members. In conflict situations NGOs are often the biggest single economic sector, because government has collapsed and conditions are too violent and uncertain for private business to flourish.

Opportunity Cost

One measure of the cost or value of any product or activity is to compare it with the next best option. For example, the opportunity cost in a poor family of sending a child to university might not just be the actual money spent on education, but also the loss of income compared to if that child had got a job instead.

Population Growth Rate

The increase in a country's population during one year, divided by the population at the start of that year. It reflects the number of births and deaths during the period and the number of people moving to and from a country. The average annual population growth rates for a number of years provide a better picture than do rates for a single year. In 1997, total world population was more than 5.8 billion, and the average world population growth rate between 1980 and 1997 was 1.6 per cent per year. Some poorer countries have growth rates of over 4 per cent per year, meaning their population will double every 20 years. Many economists believe high population growth rates place too much pressure on economic resources in poor countries, leading to poverty, a lack of health and education services, and so on.

Poverty Line

A person is considered poor if his income level falls below some minimum level necessary to meet basic needs. This minimum level is usually called the "poverty line". What is necessary to satisfy basic needs varies across time and societies. Information is obtained through surveys conducted regularly in most countries. For the purpose of global comparison, the World Bank uses reference lines set at \$1 and \$2 per day in 1993 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms. It has been estimated that in 1998, 1.2 billion people world-wide had consumption levels below \$1 a day - 24 per cent of the population of the developing world - and 2.8 billion lived on less than \$2 a day.

Primary Industry

That part of the economy concerned with agriculture and the extraction of raw materials. Farmers and miners, for example, are engaged in primary industry. See also: "secondary industry" and "tertiary industry".

Primary Education

Education to a level of basic literacy. A student who has completed her primary education should be able to write a simple letter, read newspapers and calculate simple sums. Making primary education available to all is thought to be a major stimulant of economic development and one of the main elements in building human capital.

Primary Health Care

Health services, including family planning, clean water supply, sanitation, immunization, and nutrition education that are designed to be cost-effective in poor countries. Primary health care means clinics in villages, for example, and vaccination campaigns, rather than sophisticated hospitals and treatment facilities.

Property Rights

The clearly acknowledged rights to ownership of an asset such as land. Economic growth is impossible without ownership of property being recognized and unchallenged by all.

Purchasing Power Parity

A method of measuring the relative purchasing power of different countries' currencies over the same types of goods and services. Purchasing power parity was developed as a more accurate way to measure poverty and wealth across different countries, because things often cost less in poor countries.

Quota Limits

Limits on the amount of goods produced, imported, exported or offered for sale. Quotas are imposed by governments, either singly or as a group, and either on imports coming in from abroad or on their own industry. Arguments over quotas are often a reason for trade disputes between countries.

Rational Behavior

Modern economics is based on the idea that people in any given situation will behave more or less logically given their own perceptions of the situation. For example, no one will buy exactly the same product at a higher rather than a lower price. This rational behavior is not dependent on levels of intelligence or education. Modern economics assumes that everyone in every situation acts rationally in their own self-interest as they perceive it.

Rural-Urban Migration

The migration of people from rural areas to urban areas. One of the biggest problems in many developing countries, this leads to overcrowding of the cities, high unemployment and other social problems.

Secondary Industry

That part of the economy concerned with the processing of goods out of their raw state. For example, if a farmer grows tomatoes as primary industry, a canning factory might make tomato juice.

Staple Food

Most countries have traditionally had a main food consumed by a large proportion of the population, because it is relatively cheap and filling. In Myanmar for example, rice is the staple food – the main food that many poor people rely on for sustenance and survival. Because of the population's widespread reliance on staple foods, they can be very sensitive politically - a government will often provide a subsidy to keep prices in the staple cheap and ensure that people can afford its purchase.

Structural Adjustment Programs

A set of economic policies that governments implement when they are undergoing economic reforms. Organizations giving or lending money to an LDC often specify that a government must carry out a structural adjustment program to qualify for aid.

Subsidies

Money given to producers to reduce costs hence the market price of a good or service. Either the buyer or the seller of the good is important enough that a government feels it is necessary to shield them from the true market price of the good. In industrial Western countries farmers are often subsidized, because farmers are considered important. In poor countries the price of staple foods is subsidized to shield the consumer.

Subsistence Farming

Farming to grow crops or raise livestock mainly for local use. If, for example, a farming village mainly consumes what it grows and sends relatively little to market, it is living off subsistence farming. Unrest, the destruction of road networks, or a lack of electricity can make it difficult for farmers to get their goods to market before they rot.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is one of the most important and controversial ideas in international economics today. It is defined as achieving economic growth in a way which can go on forever. Much traditional industry, for example, which fuelled prosperity in Western countries, is based on high consumption of energy sources like oil and coal, which are not renewable - i.e., only available in limited quantities - and also pollute the atmosphere. Some industries like forestry and fishing are particularly sensitive now, because they are seen to be depleting limited natural resources.

Tertiary Industry

That part of the economy concerned with the provision of services, above and beyond the manufacture of goods. If a farmer growing tomatoes is primary industry, and a manufacturer making juice out of the tomatoes is secondary industry, then a company which sold the cans of juice to different shops, or provided information

about the prices of rival products of tomato juice to the manufacturing company would be involved in tertiary industry.

Tied Aid

Aid that is given on the condition that the recipient country uses the funds to purchase goods and services from the donor country. A lot of aid has been tied, but many economists now argue that tying aid makes it less effective.

Trade Liberalization

The removal of barriers to trade such as import quotas and tariffs. In the 1980s and 1990s, trade liberalization accelerated around the world with international agreements between over 150 countries to apply uniform standards of tariffs and trades between each other. The World Trade Organization, based in Geneva, currently leads efforts to increase trade liberalization.

Underemployment

A situation where people are working less than they would like to. Many people in poorer countries are underemployed rather than being unemployed: a farmer, for example, who only works part of the year on his land but is unable to find work at other times of the year. In cities people who work part time are often underemployed.

Unemployment

The condition in which members of the labor force are without jobs. Unemployment is sometimes used more broadly to refer to the waste of resources when the economy is operating at less than its full potential. In many industrial countries the unemployment rate is very sensitive politically.



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