

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCE in Global
Development (6GL01)
Paper 1: Understanding Global
Development

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General Comments

Candidates responded well to the paper, and provided a range of responses to the questions. Most candidates were able to attempt an answer to most questions. Most candidates were able to refer to a wide range of examples, and to describe states of affairs. There is pleasing evidence that most candidates were able to extend their awareness beyond the issues relevant in their own countries. Stronger candidates were able to link the examples they gave to development issues, and to provide explanation, analysis and reasoning to support their views.

Areas for improvement include:

- all candidates should understand basic terminology, including differences between multinational corporations and supranational institutions
- candidates should ensure that they focus on development issues, and theories, not only on description of states of affairs
- candidates should check which kind of development is being asked about in each question, and ensure that they direct their answers accordingly.

Overall, candidates responded with interest to the paper and demonstrated a range of responses. For the future, centres would be well advised to aid candidates in considering:

- What is the effect of this?
- How does this process work?
- What are the development theories that underlie this process?
- How do my examples link to development issues?

Question 1ai

This question was generally well answered by most candidates. Some candidates gave answers from the text, which was expected and acceptable. Others suggested answers from their own knowledge, which was equally acceptable. A small minority of candidates were confused by the term 'natural resources.'

Question 1aii

This question was also well answered by most candidates. Most candidates were able to identify trade and development of human resources by education as ways of developing economies without natural resources. Some candidates discussed the possibilities of manufacturing goods using imported natural resources. A reasonable proportion of candidates were able to develop explanations relating to how trade, education etc could be used to develop an economy, which was pleasing.

Question 1bi

Most candidates were able to identify one or more positive impacts of trade on economic growth. Many candidates were able in addition to explain the links between these impacts and economic growth, or to contrast the positive impacts with more negative impacts. A small proportion of the candidates were able to weigh up the positive and negative impacts of trade on economic growth, effectively explaining the links between the impacts and economic growth. In general, there was a tendency to name general impacts, with a focus on economic understanding, rather than considering impacts with development at their heart. For instance, many candidates were able to say that trade brings in income; leads to the creation of new jobs and can have a positive effect on GDP and / or standard of living. A much smaller proportion of candidates were able to talk about dependency as a negative consequence of trade for LEDC countries.

Question 1bii

Most candidates were able to discuss the development of mobile communications and describe the uses of social media in specific protests. Many responses provided a great deal of descriptive detail, without making the link to the *effect* of mobile communication technologies and social media on political protest and change. Some candidates produced very strong responses which looked at the ways in which platforms such as Facebook or Twitter could provide instant information about atrocities leading to action in various form from petitions to sanctions to UN action. Some of these candidates also looked at the effects of these actions, and contrasted the positive with the negative.

Question 2ai

Most candidates were well able to outline two reasons why some people believe that democracy may not be an ideal political system. Some candidates took ideas from the passage, as expected, but many provided ideas of their own, which was also acceptable. Some candidates merely identified two reasons in a very brief fashion, rather than outlining in a little more detail. Others were able to identify or outline only one reason, despite the help provided by the stimulus material, and a small number identified inappropriate parts of the stimulus material.

Question 2aii

Most candidates were able to express an opinion in response to this question. Many candidates responded that democracies were likely to place a higher value on social development because governments relied on voters to re-elect them, whereas a non-democratic government could prioritise social stability or economic progress over the longer term because they did not need to please the people. Other candidates by contrast, felt that communist countries prioritised equality and social development; whereas Western democracies were driven by the need to keep people happy by ensuring that the economy was healthy. The strongest responses recognised the variety of different non-democratic states, and avoided the pitfall of making sweeping generalisations about their priorities.

Question 2bi

Most candidates were able to describe one or two cultural and religious values and say something about their effect on society in general. Fewer were able to show how these cultural and religious values had an effect on social development, although candidates who did make this full link, often did so very well. Most candidates referred to cultural attitudes to women.

Question 2bii

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Question 3a

Most candidates were able to describe the processes or experiences of globalisation, but only a few were able to describe globalisation theory - that is, the ideas and theories which broadly argue that the more integrated the world economy, the faster the economy will grow and the more all will benefit.

Question 3b

Candidates preferred this question to the alternative, 4b, and the question produced a range of responses, including some very pleasing, thoughtful responses which demonstrated a high level of specific knowledge, theoretical understanding and analysis of real examples.

In the strongest responses, candidates distinguished clearly between different kinds of development, and used this distinction to structure their essays. arguing that some social development might be possible autonomously, but economic development would be more problematic without international links. Some candidates did distinguish between different kinds of development, but then did not use this distinction in any way during the essay. Others argued that it was possible to develop autonomously so long as you could trade with other countries, which demonstrated some lack of understanding of the key terms.

In general, there was a great deal of description, and it would have been pleasing to see more evidence of understanding of globalisation and dependency theories. Candidates should beware of overstating their examples, or of using them to show more than it is reasonable to claim. Bhutan was often used as an example. Candidates should beware of overstating the degree of autonomy in modern Bhutan, and also beware of overstating the degree of social development, or of taking at face value claims made by official sources in Bhutan about Bhutan being the happiest nation in the world. North Korea was

also much used as an example. Some candidates identified that even North Korea has some links with China, and is therefore not completely autonomous. Others identified North Korea as a strong example of a completely autonomous nation with strong social and political development. This seems to rather stretch the understanding of strong social and political development, at least by most internationally agreed measures.

Question 4a

Some candidates produced strong responses which demonstrated clear understanding of how supranational (global) organisations promote social well-being. These responses tended to focus on the UN, the World Bank, the WHO and charities such as Amnesty or the Red Cross / Red Crescent. They talked about peacekeeping, microfinance to promote enterprise and education, vaccines and political freedoms. Some candidates described the institutions without fully linking to social well-being or focused on economic wellbeing.

A significant proportion of the candidates who answered this question were confused about what a supranational (global) organisation was, and talked about multinational corporations.

Question 4b

Only a small proportion of the candidates opted for this question. Amongst these candidates there was a divide between those who provided strong responses which demonstrated specific knowledge, theoretical understanding and thoughtful analysis of the relative roles of global institutions and nation states, and those who wrote descriptive passages about the role of multinational corporations.

There were some thoughtful discussions of what it might mean for a global institution or a nation state to be more important, taking economic, political and social factors into consideration. The strongest responses differentiated between global institutions rather than treating them all equally, and also between nation states, showing that some nation states might well be more important than global institutions, even if others were not. Some strong responses discussed the right of veto as showing that nation states did at least have more power than global institutions. Others gave examples of instances when nation states had overridden the will of the global institutions, such as the US and UK declaring war on Iraq, or Russia taking action in the Ukraine.

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