



Learning Activity 2.4

Locating Resources, Issues, and Changes



1. A number of resources have been identified in Lesson 2 and reference was made to issues related to resource use and changes over time. An example is provided to help you get started.
 - a) Label each of the following places on the map of Manitoba found on the following page.
 - Brandon
 - St. Leon
 - Winnipeg
 - Duck Mountain Provincial Park
 - South Indian Lake
 - Selkirk
 - Minnedosa
 - Nelson House
 - Swan River
 - b) Next to the place name, list the resource, issue, or change with which it is connected.
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Manitoba Resources: Issues and Changes

Chemawawin Relocated because of flooding from hydro development



Sustainable Development



In the previous two lessons, you learned about different natural resources and perspectives toward the use of resources. You also learned that some resources are **renewable**, while others are not. We all rely on natural resources, directly or indirectly, to survive. As the population of the world continues to grow, there is increased demand on natural resources. If managed properly, renewable resources such as forests, water, fish, and agriculture can continue to meet the needs of an increased population. However, the world has a limited supply of **non-renewable** resources and will eventually run out of these resources. This is a major challenge facing the world in the twenty-first century.

We Are Okay



There are two different perspectives regarding sustainable development. One view is that new discoveries and technologies will find ways to provide new resources and to deal with the environmental problems that we face. People with this view feel that Earth has not yet reached its **carrying capacity** (its ability to support its population at current living standards). They point to past events, such as the **Industrial Revolution**, to show that major changes and improvements can occur in the future as they did in the past. They believe that new discoveries and technologies will allow us to continue with our current lifestyles and **standard of living**.

We Are Not Okay

The other perspective sees Earth as already having reached its carrying capacity. People who support this view believe that we will have to change the way we live and the way we use our resources if we are to survive. We will have to work harder to manage our renewable resources and we will have to reduce our consumption of these resources as well as protect our environment. We may have to settle for a moderate and **sustainable** standard of living instead of increasing our wealth by using more and more resources. Sustainability means using resources in such a way that they meet present needs without long-term, negative consequences on the environment.

Defining Sustainable Development



Today, many governments, including the Government of Canada, encourage **sustainable development**. This means that new developments should not rely on the increased use of non-renewable resources. In addition, they should not use renewable resources more rapidly than they can be replaced. This would apply to all new industries, agricultural activities, city expansions, transportation networks, and recreational activities. The United Nations has defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (World Commission on Environment and Development. *Our Common Future*. 1987.) Another United Nations body has a similar definition, "improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems." (World Conservation Union, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Wide Fund For Nature. *Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living*. 1991.)

Sustainability and You

What resources do you use in your daily life? Can you reduce your dependence on non-renewable resources? How does your lifestyle affect the environment? What things can you do to save the environment? The following activity will help you answer these questions.



Learning Activity 2.5

Resource-Use Log: Reassessment



1. What resources do you use and how can you make your resource use more sustainable and environmentally friendly?
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Learning Activity 2.5: Resource-Use Log: Reassessment (continued)

- b) Analyze the list of resources you use and make suggestions about how you can change your needs and behaviours to reduce the amount and number of resources you use. List your ideas in the column on the right.

Examples:

- recycle
- reduce use
- walk instead of drive

Resource-Use Log: Reassessment		
Date	Natural Resources You Use (provide specific examples)	Strategies to Reduce Resource-Use

Resource Exploitation and Its Impact



Many of the wealthy, more-developed countries of the world do not have enough resources to meet their needs and satisfy their high standard of living. Sometimes, they rely on resources such as tea and coffee that are only available in poorer, tropical countries of the world. Less-developed countries are often looking for **foreign investment**. They want to make money or profit and are willing to allow foreign companies to come in and build mines, develop plantations, or engage in other resource-dependent activities. **Multinational** companies operate around the world. In many cases, such companies **exploit** the resources of less-developed countries and export them for use in wealthier countries. This benefits people in wealthy countries, but often results in negative political, economic, and social change in less-developed countries. Many Canadians think it is important to be aware of the activities of multinational companies and to strive for fair treatment of foreign workers and **fair trade** with poorer countries.

Political Implications



The exploitation of natural resources by multinational companies can have major negative political implications for less-developed countries. In some cases, the leaders of these countries keep the money paid by multinational companies. When this happens, the common people do not benefit from the sale of resources. This type of political corruption results in very wealthy leaders in countries while the majority of the population remains very poor. In some cases, the income from resources is used for military purposes by governments or by rebel groups. For example, in several African countries, rebel groups control the diamond trade. They use the money to pay for weapons and fight civil wars. Diamonds sold for this purpose are sometimes called **blood diamonds**. People in wealthier countries who buy diamonds should ask for a **Certificate of Origin** to make sure the money paid is not used for war.

Economic Implications



The extraction of resources from less-developed countries can also have economic implications. It can provide jobs and income for the local people. The workers may learn new skills; however, it can also lead to problems. Foreign workers are often poorly paid, while the resource companies make huge profits. These workers do not receive benefits such as unemployment insurance, paid sick leave, and better housing. In some countries, multinational companies develop **plantations** to grow export crops such as coffee, tea, bananas, and citrus fruits. This means that land is taken away



from local farmers who are no longer able to produce food for themselves and their families. Local **subsistence** farming is replaced by large-scale, commercial plantations controlled by outsiders.

Social Implications

The extraction of resources from less-developed countries can lead to social problems. Traditional family life may be disrupted when family members, often fathers, are away at work for long periods. Although income is usually considered a good thing, the workers may misuse the money, leaving their families without support. The profit motive may result in an increase in crime and a breakdown of traditional village life.

Environmental Implications

The extraction of resources in less-developed countries can also have a negative impact on the environment. Poorer countries often do not have laws to protect the environment. This allows multinational companies to operate without spending money to reduce environmental damage. In some cases, companies move their factories to less-developed countries where they do not have regulations about levels of pay, age of workers, environmental protection, or fair trading. Factories that employ children, have long shifts, and pay low wages are sometimes called **sweatshops**. There is some evidence that sweatshops also exist right here in Canada.



Implications for More-Developed Countries

Importing goods from less-developed countries has advantages and disadvantages for more-developed countries such as Canada. Importing goods gives us access to more resources and boosts our economy. Specifically, importing food products gives us access to items that we cannot produce here (e.g., tea, coffee, bananas, etc.). It also provides a year-round supply of produce that is produced seasonally (e.g., fruits and vegetables). Disadvantages may be that importing products increases our dependence on foreign items, and having easy access to additional resources may discourage us from reducing our use of non-renewable resources and finding alternative raw materials and fuels.

Making Personal Choices

Many Canadians are concerned about the practices of some multinational companies. Perhaps your community has a group or organization that encourages Canadians to ask questions about the products they buy. Sometimes, the media will carry stories about working conditions in factories



in less-developed countries. Wise consumers try to learn where the products they purchase come from, who made them, and the conditions under which they are manufactured. Numerous organizations support fair trade. If you have access to the Internet, you may be able to find websites of organizations that give information about sweatshops and suggestions for fair trade. Most cities and larger towns in Manitoba have shops run by **non-governmental** and church organizations that sell fair trade products. One example is that of Ten Thousand Villages with shops throughout Canada and the United States. In Manitoba, they have stores in Altona, Brandon, Steinbach, and Winkler, as well as two in Winnipeg. The Worldly Goods store run by the Marquis Project in Brandon carries a wide variety of fair trade products. Many specialty shops in Winnipeg carry them as well. Due to customer demand, many regular grocery stores have added a number of fair trade food products to their stock. Next time you shop, look for Fair Trade Certified products.

What do you know about the impact of more-developed countries exploiting resources in less-developed countries? What do you know about sweatshops? What do you know about fair trade? What actions can you take to support fair trade? How can the money from your purchases support local workers in less-developed countries of the world? Your personal choices have a considerable impact on the use and trade of natural resources, and on the people who are involved in the process. The following activity will help you organize your knowledge about these topics.

Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

Aside from questions about fair trade, many Canadians are very concerned about our use of natural resources and how our lifestyles affect the environment. We are becoming aware of the long-term, negative impact of our lifestyles on the environment; that our dependence on non-renewable resources cannot last; and that we must take individual and collective actions to use resources in a sustainable manner. We know that we must become better stewards of the environment. What actions can you take?

Taking Action

You and your family may already be doing many things that are environmentally friendly and sustainable. You may be walking or cycling instead of driving to school or to work. You may be careful with your use of paper. Your family may be participating in a local recycling program. Perhaps your community hosts a farmers' market where you can buy fresh, locally produced food. Can you think of other actions that promote environmental stewardship and sustainability?