Urban v. Rural Populations

Urban populations are rapidly on the rise...
- Half of the world’s population lives in urban areas.
- New York City’s economy is larger than all 46 of sub-Saharan Africa’s economies combined.
- Mumbai and Shanghai each have over 100 million people clustered in and around them.

These populations are projected to keep growing...
- In India, more than 275 million people will move into its cities over the next twenty years.
- By 2025, 70% of China’s population, about 900 million people, will live in cities.
- By 2050, the United Nations projects that there will be over 27 cities with a population greater than 25 million people.
- By 2050, over 70% of the world’s population could be living in urban areas.

What does this mean?

COMPETITION – Growing cities can increase GDP growth rates which can impact economic competition, as in India.

POLARIZATION – Growing cities have polarized income distributions, especially in shrinking opportunities for the middle class. This happened in Manhattan from 1980-2007 and in Toronto from 1970-2001. Rates of poverty are high in urban areas. In 2002, more than 1 million people out of 8 million were in poverty in London.

DESTRUCTION – The decrease in rural populations can adversely affect rural culture, religion, and customs.

EXPANSION – The needs of cities will expand with their growth, including needs for more buildings and space, transportation, energy, jobs, homes, water, waste removal, service delivery, and more.

For more information, visit these resources:
UN-Habitat at http://www.unhabitat.org/
(See “State of the World’s Cities” documents)
For more on social justice and what you can do, visit: www.luc.edu/socialjustice

Is there anything I can do?

LEARN – Take a class. Attend a guest lecture. Talk with a professor. Read. Research.

ACT – Get involved with extracurricular organizations. Form a discussion group. Serve in the community. Change your personal habits.

PRAY – No matter your faith background and identity, put your intentions for the world, its people, and its resources in your prayer and reflections.

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Document sources: