

# Who wants to be billionaire?

The purpose of this module of work is to describe and explain changing **human processes** through a study of inequalities in the global distribution of wealth in the era of modern globalisation. After mapping where the very wealthiest people live, students will ask why people in some countries are gaining wealth faster than others. This module will also raise important questions about the nature of **global citizenship** and the importance of money for quality of life (and happiness).

This module starts by looking at where in the world all this new wealth is found – thereby introducing the concept of **space** and patterns of spatial distribution, asking where the wealth of billionaires lies (whether in primary / mining or quaternary / software, for example). Increasing numbers of billionaires work across all sectors of industry in Europe, the Americas (especially the US), Asia and the Middle East. However, Africa is home to just five resident billionaires still.

By contrasting the numbers of extremely wealthy people living in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, this module proceeds by asking students to question why some places are gaining more quickly than others from the benefits of globalisation. It also introduces them to the idea of increasing **interdependence** and connectivity between people around the world. This is done by profiling the work of a female Chinese billionaire whose wealth stems from recycling of British waste.

Plenty of issues arise from the analysis of where billionaires live. In particular, the idea that globalisation means “the rich get richer while the poor get poorer” is a popular topic of debate in the media and for policy-makers. This module investigates whether there is truth behind the claim, or whether the wealth of billionaires (acting as global citizens) is actually trickling-down – through investment as well as via aid and acts of charity – to poorer people. In closing, this module asks students to (i) query the conventional and consumer-orientated concept of quality of life based purely on monetary wealth and (ii) think about valuing happiness, beyond the accumulation of wealth. The possible tensions between economic prosperity and social fairness provide students with grounding in the concept of **environmental interaction and sustainable development**.

## Focus on Key Concepts:

**Space**

**Interdependence**

**Human processes**

**Environmental Interaction and Sustainable development**