HANDOUT 1

United Nations Definition of Poverty

"Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and cloth[e] a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation."

—United Nations, 1998

Using this definition of poverty, come up with a list of the kinds of information you could look at to find out whether a country's people suffer from poverty. For example, it would be helpful to know the average income of people in a country because money is one way to measure poverty and wealth.

What are some other things it would be helpful to know? List them.