



ENDPOVERTYNOW

End Poverty Now Expert Slips

“The Complexity of Poverty” Worksheet



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Economic Affairs Officer

Because those in poverty often have a lower level of education and less access to transportation than those above the poverty line, they generally have fewer ways of earning an adequate income. Because of this, the impoverished are more likely to lose crucial income because of violence or natural disasters in their area, which more severely effect certain industries and incomes while leaving others untouched. For example, in the world's poorest countries, more than 75% of the population depends on agriculture for their income. Since the success of farms depends on climate, they are more likely to be dramatically affected by circumstances they cannot control. Those living in poverty also have less access to credit markets and insurance, which could help them through less prosperous times. Their limited access to financial resources prevents them from making larger investments that may be economically beneficial in the long run. These include making income-generating investments, purchasing a house, and starting a business.

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Political Affairs Officer

Those who look at poverty from a political standpoint focus on how poverty affects political participation. Those who live in poverty are much less likely to vote. This can be because they cannot take time off work, have unreliable or no access to transportation, feel that their government will never act in their interests, or they may feel intimidated by the government or the military. Government regulations can have a dramatic effect on this. For example, if citizens must register to vote before Election Day, those in poverty would be further discouraged from voting, as they would need to take additional time out of their overburdened lives and plan significantly ahead. A government can encourage all of its citizens to vote by declaring Election Day a federal holiday, requiring paid time off to allow employees to vote, or a number of other measures. If those in poverty do not vote, a large percentage of a country's population would not be represented in their government. When this group is the most in need of assistance fails to vote, their needs are less likely to be met by the government.

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Environmentalist

According to the United Nations 1998 Human Development Report, “Globally, the 20% of the world’s people in the highest-income countries account for 86% of total private consumption expenditures—the poorest 20% a minuscule 1.3%.” Essentially, the wealthiest nations of the world are consuming the most of its resources.

In light of the growing concern about global warming and other human-induced climate change, developing nations are being pushed towards sustainable development. Simultaneously, poverty and developing world debt have been shown to force developing nations to extract and export the majority of resources they possess, without taking the environment or sustainability into account. Forests around the world are facing increased pressure from timber and farming businesses. As they have no other choice, impoverished nations are the most likely to give in. Because of these pressures, Nepal and Bangladesh have suffered increasingly devastating floods resulting from large scale deforestation.



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Human Rights Specialist

People who see poverty as the denial of human rights tend to focus on whether or not people have access to services such as education and health, in addition to their ability to participate politically. While the consequences of these denied rights tend to be less visible than those of income-based poverty, they have drastic effects over time. For example, without access to health, treatable illnesses may become debilitating, and cause the afflicted person to lose essential income. Without political representation, the voices that would ask for such services go unheard, making it much less likely that such services will be provided.

Minority groups and women are often denied suffrage and access to education and health care. For example, In India, girls are 4 times more likely to suffer from acute malnutrition than boys, who are 40 times more likely to be taken to a hospital when they become ill.



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Children's Rights Officer

Around 120 million children in developing countries cannot attend primary school. More than five million children die from malnutrition each year. The UN estimates about 250,000 children worldwide are child soldiers. 8.4 million children are trapped in slavery, human trafficking, or debt bondage. Globally, 218 million children are child labourers, of whom 126 million are engaged in hazardous work. 73 million child labourers are less than ten years old. 22,000 of these children die in work related accidents every year. Many of these cases are the result of ethnic and gender bias in the schooling system in conjunction with poverty.

Poverty severely limits children's' options, as they often need to earn money to support their families. In both developed and developing countries, their desperation in this struggle makes them easy targets for sexual exploitation, forcing many into prostitution, human trafficking, and pornography. Education is a means of breaking the poverty cycle, as it almost always leads to a higher income. However, in many areas education is unavailable or must be paid for.



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Gender Equality Specialist

Whether noticeable or subtle, the belief that a woman is worth less than a man is still prevalent in many parts of the world. In families living in poverty, this belief ensures girls are the last to be educated, fed, or assisted medically. Because they miss vital education on health, these girls are much more likely to contract HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Furthermore, mothers who have missed out on health services and education are less likely to understand the needs of their children, and this results in the next generation having lower levels of education and health themselves. This lack of access to education and health greatly diminishes girls' ability to be in control of their own futures, and dramatically reduce their quality of life, and the lives of their children.

Later in their lives, women generally have less access to higher education, white collar employment, and government employment assistance. Largely because of this, their financial resources are typically meagre and unstable in comparison to men. Furthermore, women are often influenced to support the political policies supported by their husband's or father's, keeping women's issues as a minority, rather than a mainstream issue.

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Minority Rights Advocate

In developed and developing nations, discrimination against indigenous people and ethnic minorities causes or deepens poverty. Approximately 40% of the world's countries have at least one minority group that faces severe economic, political, or social discrimination, or a combination of the three. Worldwide, indigenous peoples living alongside a foreign majority represent 5% of the population, but account for 15% of all those living in poverty. Throughout North America, being indigenous increases the possibility that an individual will be malnourished, illiterate, ill, and/or unemployed. In Mexico, for example, 80% of the indigenous population is considered poor, compared with 18% of the non-indigenous population. From discrimination on an individual level in job interviews to widespread, organized discrimination by the government, many minorities are more likely to become impoverished, remain in poverty, or both. Many people live in poverty largely because of their race.



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Developed World Specialist

For those living from paycheck to paycheck, saving becomes almost impossible. Because of this, those living in poverty are forced to go into debt if they become unemployed, injured, or seriously ill. Even events as minor as receiving a particularly expensive phone bill or suddenly needing an essential car repair can force those in poverty into debt. Debt puts a strain on marital relations, contributing to the existence of single-parent households, which have far less likelihood of getting out of debt. Today's unstable economies often require further skills for continued, stable employment. Those in poverty can rarely afford the time or money to receive new training, further increasing the possibility that they will become unemployed. If their skills become outdated, it is much more difficult to find new employment or to train for a new profession. In short, those in poverty are more likely to stay in poverty. Too often, they have no choice but to keep barely surviving and constantly dreading a financial problem.

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Education Officer

On a worldwide average, each year of quality schooling a child receives increases their adult earning potential by 10%. Jobs requiring manual labour are being replaced by service and technological jobs that usually require a college education. Those who cannot afford college are finding it increasingly difficult to find work that will adequately support themselves and their families.

Education is a key to breaking the poverty cycle; it promotes literacy, health, and the basics of math, all of which are essential in modern life. For these reasons, education has been radically expanding in poorer nations. However, approximately 120 million children still do not have access to primary education. Many countries do not provide free education, especially beyond primary school. When education is provided, a child of an impoverished family is less likely to go to school, as they need to provide an income for their families. If they do go to school, they often have more difficulty paying attention due to hunger or stress. Girls are especially excluded, as many cultures still dictate that their place is at home. When a family cannot afford to send all of its children to school, boys are often given preference.

The logo for 'ENDPOVERTYNOW' features a stylized globe with a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The globe is set against a background of overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in shades of blue, red, and yellow. The text 'ENDPOVERTYNOW' is written in a bold, sans-serif font across the bottom of the globe.

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Consultant on poverty in the United Kingdom

Despite the government's progress towards tackling social exclusion, there are still at least 3 million children living in poverty in the UK. Rising standards, particularly in education and housing have helped tackle inequalities, but poverty remains a major problem. Over five million people live in "absolute poverty," defined by a 1995 United Nations statement as "a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs."

Furthermore, according to an article published by the BBC in 2003, British children who are ethnic minorities are more likely to be living in poverty than white children. While figures differ, most state that between a third and a fifth of all children in Britain are living in poverty; however, about 73% of children of South Asian decent are impoverished. Employment rates among minority groups are as low as 35%, compared to 75% in the population as a whole.



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Consultant on poverty in the United States

The U.S. has more impoverished people per capita than any other developed nation. Approximately 35 million people live in poverty, 12% of the total population. Children are the most affected group. The U.S. has one of the top four highest rates of child poverty without government assistance in the world. 17.6% of American children live in poverty. In many states, education is largely supported by property taxes, ensuring that those living in the wealthiest areas receive the best education and those in the poorest receive the worst. This perpetuates the poverty cycle.

The agriculture industry in the U.S. takes a large toll on food production and land use. The majority of grain grown in the US is fed to livestock. Millions of acres of fertile land are used to raise cattle. The average cow uses 190 gallons of water per day, ten times the amount an average family in India uses. In the process of producing a pound of red meat, white meat, or dairy, farm fields lose approximately five pounds of irreplaceable top soil. In short, the U.S. as a whole uses a substantial amount of its agricultural resources on producing livestock, which provide only a fraction of the nutrients it takes to make them.

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Consultant on poverty in Canada

Poverty in Canada is alarmingly concentrated in cities. By 2000, over 70% of Canada's poor population lived in metropolitan areas. On average, the greater a city's population is, the higher its rate of poverty. Of Canada's metropolitan areas, Montreal has the largest poverty rate, at 22%. Officially, over 15% of Canadians live below the poverty line while only 6.4% are unemployed. The number of people considered poor living in metropolitan areas, as well as in surrounding suburbs, is growing at faster rate than the total population of these areas. Poverty is far from absent in Canada, and it is becoming more prevalent.

Aborigines are much more likely than non-aboriginal Canadians to not have their basic needs met. Studies have shown that 20-25% of First Nations communities' water systems are dangerous to health and safety. Aborigines are four times more likely to report being hungry than non-aborigines. Almost half of the houses of aborigines have been shown to contain unsanitary levels of mould. One in four aboriginal children lives in poverty. 40% of Aboriginal children not living on reservations live in poverty.



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