



ENDPOVERTYNOW

End Poverty Now Situation Slips and Worksheet



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Subsistence Farmer

You have limited access to transportation and education, severely limiting your career options. You become a subsistence farmer, like 75% of people in the world's poorest countries. This means that you depend entirely on growing crops. You are at the mercy of the weather. Droughts, monsoons, or natural disasters could destroy your crops and your home, forcing you to depend on others to survive, or starve. In short, you have very little control over your income. You are severely affected by any violence in your area, which would make trade difficult and dangerous. Your life could be ruined by a single event. You have little access to banks and insurance, which would allow you to prepare for more difficult periods. You probably cannot apply for a mortgage or a loan. It is very unlikely you can buy a house or land and you probably cannot start a business. For the most part, you are stuck in your meagre, unpredictable profession and your children have little hope of living any differently.

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Impoverished Voter in a Democratic Nation

Because you are barely surviving, you feel that the government may never act in your interests. You may lose hope for any positive change in your life, making politics irrelevant. If you haven't lost hope, voting will probably be more difficult for you than for a wealthier citizen. You already work much longer hours than the average person and have far fewer products that would make daily life easier. You may depend on a shoddy car or friends for transportation. Both your long hours and unpredictable transportation make it difficult to even get to a polling station. Furthermore, the government could require you to register to vote as much as a month ahead, making for another difficult errand in an already hectic life. They may not even make this requirement known. On the day of the election, you may not be able to get time off of work to vote and you may be discriminated against based on your race, ethnicity, sex, or religion at the voting station. All of these problems make it less likely that you will be able to vote and, therefore, less likely that the government will act in your interest. These difficulties can make not caring seem to be the more rational choice.

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Average Citizen in a Poor Country or Area with Natural Resources

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%.”

If you live near forests, oil, coal, or metals in a poorer country, chances are that companies from wealthier countries will extract these resources. Your country has no choice but to invite them in order to alleviate their overwhelming debt. If the forest near you is cut down it will be much more likely that you will face devastating floods. This has already become a major problem in Nepal and Bangladesh. If you live in an area suitable for mining, it may be strip mined or drilled, releasing dust and minerals that would make it difficult for you to breathe and cause a variety of health problems. Any wildlife or wild plants in your area, a safety net when facing starvation, would probably leave or die. It is possible, although unlikely, that these companies will employ you, but even then your life would be harsh and your pay would be minimal.

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Physical Labourer in a Poorer Country

You have little access to education, making physical labour your only option. You probably do not have any kind of insurance and very little access to health care. If you get sick, you still have to work. This will make your illness worse, but you would starve otherwise. It is possible you could die from such an illness. If you are seriously injured, which is very common in your work, you will have to rely on others for your well-being, however those close to you are in a similar situation and may already have several dependants to provide for. You do not know a great deal about staying healthy or safe, and you are probably malnourished, so it is much more likely that you will become injured or sick. Even if you can get enough food and water from others, since you have little access to health care it is much more likely you will die from your disease or injury. If you can find health care, you will probably spend a great deal of your life paying off your treatment. In short, if, by pure chance, you are injured or become seriously ill, your life and the lives of those who depend on you will be changed forever, and you may not have the resources to survive.

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Impoverished Child

Around 120 million children in developing countries cannot attend primary school. More than five million children die from malnutrition each year. 8.4 million children are trapped in slavery, human trafficking, debt bondage and other illegal activities. 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.

You may not be able to attend school, one of the few ways you can escape poverty. This is either because there is none in your area, it must be paid for, or your family needs you to make money. If you have to support your family, it is very likely that you will become a child labourer or even be sexually exploited through prostitution, human trafficking, pornography, or some combination of the three. In either situation, it is very likely you will be abused or injured in a way that affects you for the rest of your life.



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Impoverished Woman in a Male-Dominated Society

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. Mistaken beliefs diminish girls' ability to work and dramatically reduce their quality of life. Furthermore, you are more likely to have misconceptions about the health needs of your family, meaning your children are more likely to be malnourished. If you have not had the chance to go to school you may also undervalue your children's need for education, thinking that they are better off working with your family to create an income.

Later in your life, you generally have less access to higher education, white collar employment, and government employment assistance programs. Largely because of this, your financial resources are typically meagre and unstable in comparison to that of men. This makes it much harder to escape an abusive relationship, survive as a single mother, or escape poverty.

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Oppressed Minority Living in Poverty

In any country, 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, and/or social discrimination. Worldwide, indigenous peoples living alongside a foreign -descended majority represent 5% of the population, yet they contain about 15% of the poor.

As an adult you have a harder time finding any high paying or skilled labour, trapping in a cycle poverty. Your government may take some steps to improve your situation, but you are largely at the mercy of individuals who treat you differently because of your race. If you were allowed in school, assuming there was one in your area and your family could afford it, your school was probably significantly worse than those in other areas. You may have had a harder time concentrating due to stress, hunger, or both. You may need to drop out of school early or work long hours in addition to going to school in order to support your family.

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Impoverished Citizen in a Wealthy Country

Saving is impossible for those living from one pay check to the next. Because of this, you are forced to go into debt if you become unemployed, injured, or ill. You may also be forced into debt by unexpected expenses. These events can be as minor as receiving a particularly expensive phone bill or needing an essential car repair. It is very unlikely that you will be able to pay off this debt, and it will only grow with interest and further unexpected difficulties.

Today's changing economies often require further skills for continued, stable employment. You probably cannot afford the time or money to receive new training, increasing the possibility that you will become unemployed. Furthermore, if your job(s) became obsolete you would have a hard time finding a new job or affording training for a more skilled job. The skills it took you a lifetime to learn could become irrelevant. In this situation it is hard to escape the cycle of debt.



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Child without Access to Education

On a worldwide average, each year of quality schooling a child receives increases their adult earning potential by 10%. 120 million children have no way of receiving a primary education. Far more cannot afford it. Many cannot attend because they must support their families. 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 can adequately support themselves and their families. Those who are born into poverty are much more likely to remain poor, unless they gain access to education.

You either do not have access to primary education or cannot afford it. If you managed to go to school you would have difficulty paying attention due to hunger, stress, or both. Education beyond fifth grade is even more scarce and expensive. Because of this, you have limited access to increasingly necessary literacy and math skills as well as vital health education.

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Britain Living in Poverty

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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American Living in Poverty

The U.S. has more impoverished people per capita than any other industrialized nation. Approximately 35 million U.S. residents live in poverty, over 12% of the total population. Children are the most affected group. The U.S. has one of the highest rates of children living in poverty and without government assistance in the world. 17.6% of American children live in poverty.

Despite these facts, poverty is almost never mentioned in the news. The working poor, who live in poverty despite being employed, are especially ignored. Far too many people who are employed work part time in several jobs. Few receive any of the benefits of full time labour, including life insurance, paid vacation, and health care. They purchase them only when they can. Moreover, companies have “stolen” around 19 billion dollars from labourers by employing illegal immigrants under the table and paying legal workers less than minimum wage. The workers in these situations are losing essential income, but the companies that take it from them are rarely prosecuted.

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Canadian Living in Poverty

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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