

# THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON CHILD HEALTH



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# DISCLOSURES

- I have no relevant financial disclosures



# OBJECTIVES

- Articulate key ways in which poverty affects child health including physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions
- Enhance skills in assessing the health needs of children from impoverished backgrounds and recognize signs of malnutrition, developmental delays and psychosocial stressors
- Identify specific vulnerabilities faced by children living in poverty including malnutrition, access to healthcare, educational disparities.
- Explore how to integrate faith-based principles into clinical practice, ensuring that care for children in poverty is compassionate and holistic
- Understand our role as advocates for child health, learning how to influence policies that improve healthcare access and outcomes for children affected by poverty.



# WHAT IS POVERTY?



# 1 NO POVERTY



## WHAT IS THE GOAL HERE?

To end poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030.

## WHY?

More than 700 million people still live in extreme poverty and are struggling to fulfil basic needs like health, education, and access to water and sanitation. 70 per cent of the global total of extremely poor people live in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Poverty has many dimensions, but its causes include unemployment, social exclusion, and high vulnerability of certain populations to disasters, diseases and other phenomena which prevent them from being productive.

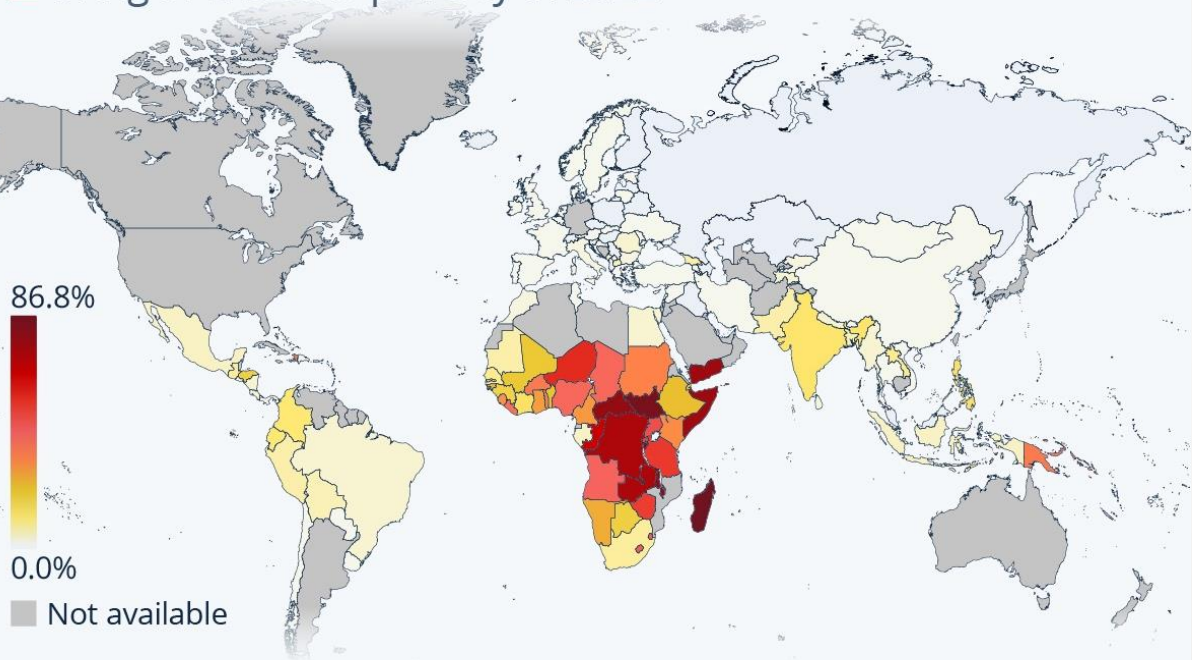
1 NO POVERTY



By 2030  
**167 million**  
children  
will live in  
**extreme**  
poverty  
if the world  
doesn't take  
**action**  
to improve  
health  
and education

# The World's Child Poverty Hotspots

Estimated share of children (0-17 y/o) living in extreme poverty in 2022\*



\* Extreme poverty is defined as living on less than \$2.15 per person per day at 2017 purchasing power parity.

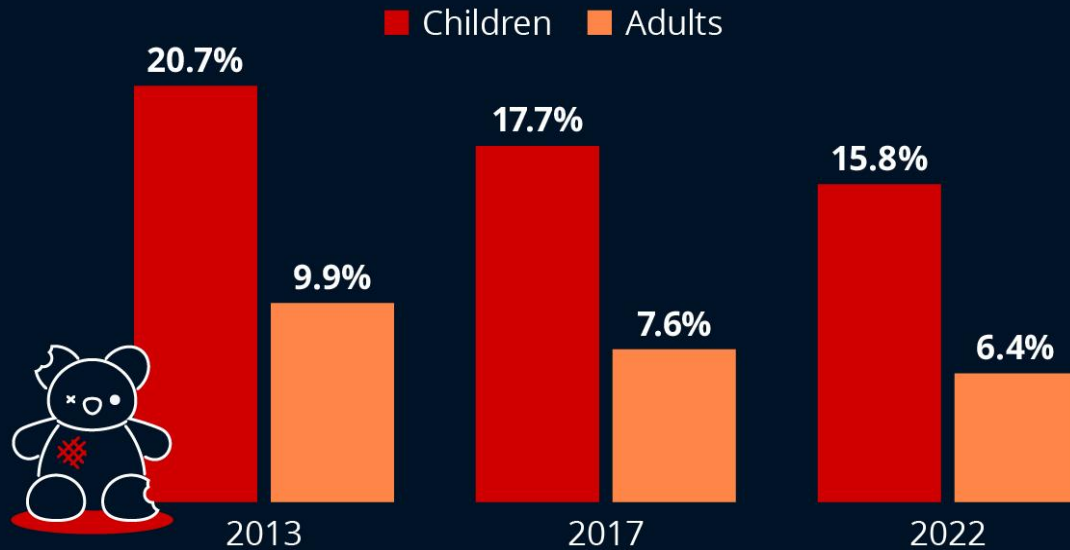
Sources: World Bank, UNICEF

# GLOBAL CHILD POVERTY



# Children Disproportionately Affected by Extreme Poverty

Estimated share of children (0-17) and adults (18+) living in extreme poverty worldwide in 2022\*



\* Extreme poverty is defined as living on less than \$2.15 per person per day at 2017 purchasing power parity.

Sources: World Bank, UNICEF

# GLOBAL CHILD POVERTY

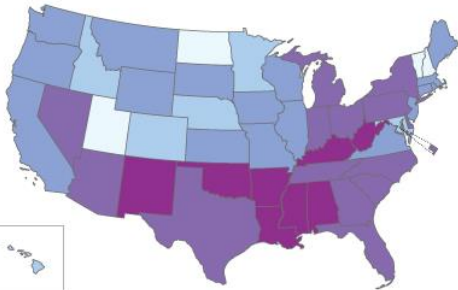




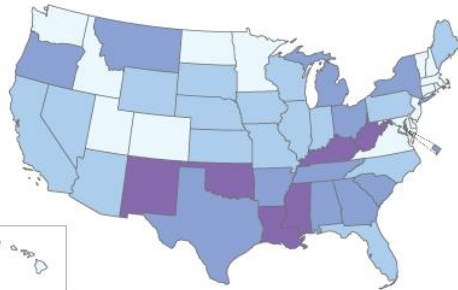
Figure 1.  
**Poverty Rate by Age Category: 2023**



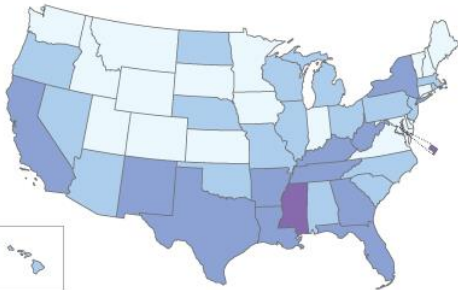
**Under Age 18**



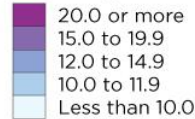
**Ages 18 to 64**



**Age 65 and Over**



**Percent by state**



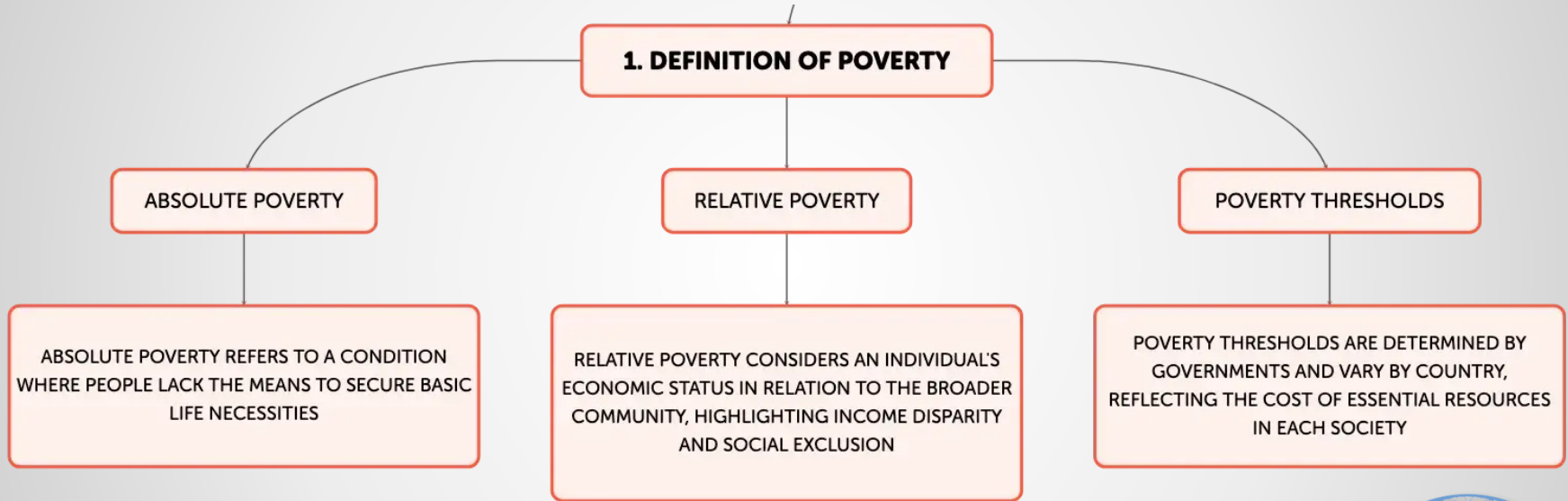
Note: Alaska is represented at approximately one-third of its actual size relative to the rest of the United States. For more information, visit [www.census.gov/acs](http://www.census.gov/acs). Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates.

# US CHILD POVERTY





# DEFINING POVERTY



# POVERTY FROM THEIR VOICES

*"While poor people mention having a lack of material things, they tend to describe their condition in far more psychological and social terms than our North American audiences. Poor people typically talk in terms of shame, inferiority, powerlessness, humiliation, fear, hopelessness, depression, social isolation, and voicelessness... The problem goes well beyond the material dimension, so the solutions must go beyond the material as well." - Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert*



# VOICES OF THE POOR

For a poor person everything is terrible—illness, humiliation, shame. We are cripples; we are afraid of everything; we depend on everyone. No one needs us. We are like garbage that everyone wants to get rid of. - Moldova

When I don't have any food, I borrow, mainly from neighbors and friends. I feel ashamed standing before my children when I have nothing to help feed the family. I'm not well when I'm unemployed. It's terrible. - Guinea-Bissau

During the past 2 years we have not celebrated any holidays with others. We cannot afford to invite anyone to our house, and we feel uncomfortable visiting others without bringing a present. The lack of contact leaves one depressed, creates a constant feeling of unhappiness, and a sense of low self-esteem. - Latvia

When one is poor, she has no say in public, she feels inferior. She has no food, so there is famine in her house; no clothing, and no progress in her family. - Uganda



# VOICES OF THE POOR

The poor have a feeling of powerlessness and an inability to make themselves heard. - Cameroon

Your hunger is never satisfied, your thirst is never quenched; you can never sleep until you are no longer tired. - Senegal

If you are hungry, you will always be hungry; if you are poor, you will always be poor. - Vietnam

What one shouldn't lack is the sheep, what one cannot live without is food. - China

What determines poverty or well-being? The indigenous people's destiny is to be poor. - Ecuador



# EFFECTS ON CHILD HEALTH

- Poverty affects:
  - Birth weight and infant mortality
  - Language development
  - Risk of chronic illness
  - Environmental exposures and risk of injury
  - Nutrition
- Poverty profoundly affects neurocognitive development by constant exposure to toxic stress and adverse childhood events



# PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF POVERTY

**75%**

Of all the children living  
in extreme poverty  
live in Sub-Saharan  
Africa and Asia

**49 million**

children under the  
age of 5 suffer from  
**malnutrition**

**3** out of **10**

people live without  
safe and sanitary

**DRINKING  
WATER**

If all students in low-income  
countries gained basic

**READING SKILLS**

**171** million  
people

**COULD ESCAPE  
POVERTY**

**45%**

of all child deaths  
worldwide are from causes  
related to  
**UNDERNUTRITION**

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# PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF POVERTY

- Malnutrition during pregnancy can lead to later health disparities in children, such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.
- No access to nutritious food, clean water, or adequate medical care can lead to stunted growth, weakened immune systems, and difficulties in developing cognitive skills.
- Poor living conditions, such as overcrowding and exposure to environmental toxins, can contribute to poor health.

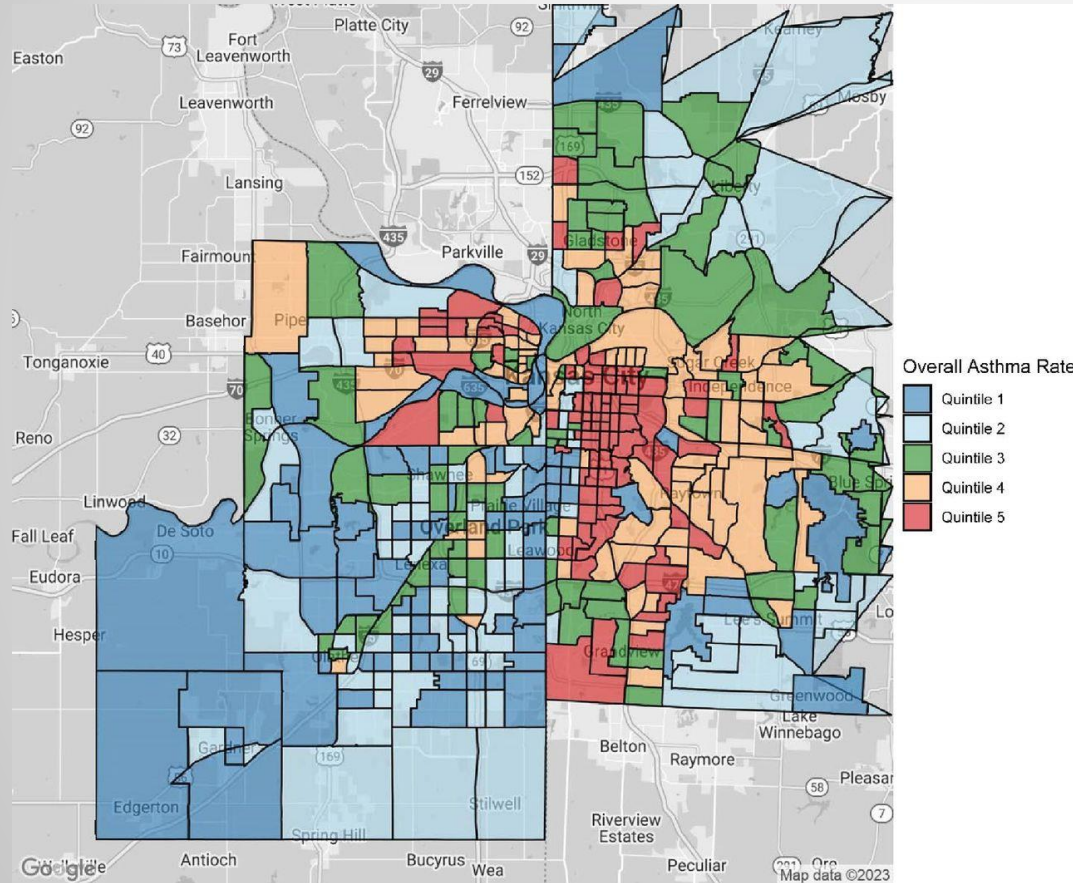


Image: UNICEF/BANA, 2007





# EX: POVERTY AND ASTHMA IN KC



- CMKC – studied asthma visits and admissions (17-19).
- Across our city found the most impoverished areas had the highest incidence of asthma admission



## Education

- Doing less well at school
- Having fewer job prospects
- Feeling fatigued and tired when learning



## Mental health

- Worrying about their parents
- Scared about their future
- Feeling left out and embarrassed

# How poverty affects children

Poverty is not just about having enough money. It is damaging to all aspects of children's lives.

## Family life

- Being unable to afford holidays and days out
- Not enough food to go around and seeing parents go hungry
- Overcrowding and lack of space at home



## School and friends

- Unable to have friends over
- Not having the correct school uniform
- Missing out on school trips



# EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL POVERTY



- The social and emotional impacts of poverty on children create long-lasting effects on the lives of children and their transition into adulthood.





# POVERTY AND CHILD LEARNING



Image: Paul Bergman

Children carry weight and burden from their home life. They face challenges in getting education, graduating from secondary school, and are more likely to drop out, repeat grades, or fail to keep up with peers.

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# MENTAL HEALTH AND POVERTY

## Impact of Poverty on Children's Mental Health

**16 million U.S. children live in poverty**

22% of all children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level.



1 in 10 youth has serious mental health problems that are severe enough to impair how they function at home, in school, or in the community.



21% of low-income children and youth age 6 to 17 have mental health problems.



57% of these children come from households living at or below the federal poverty level.



85% of children in need of mental health services in the child welfare system do not receive them.

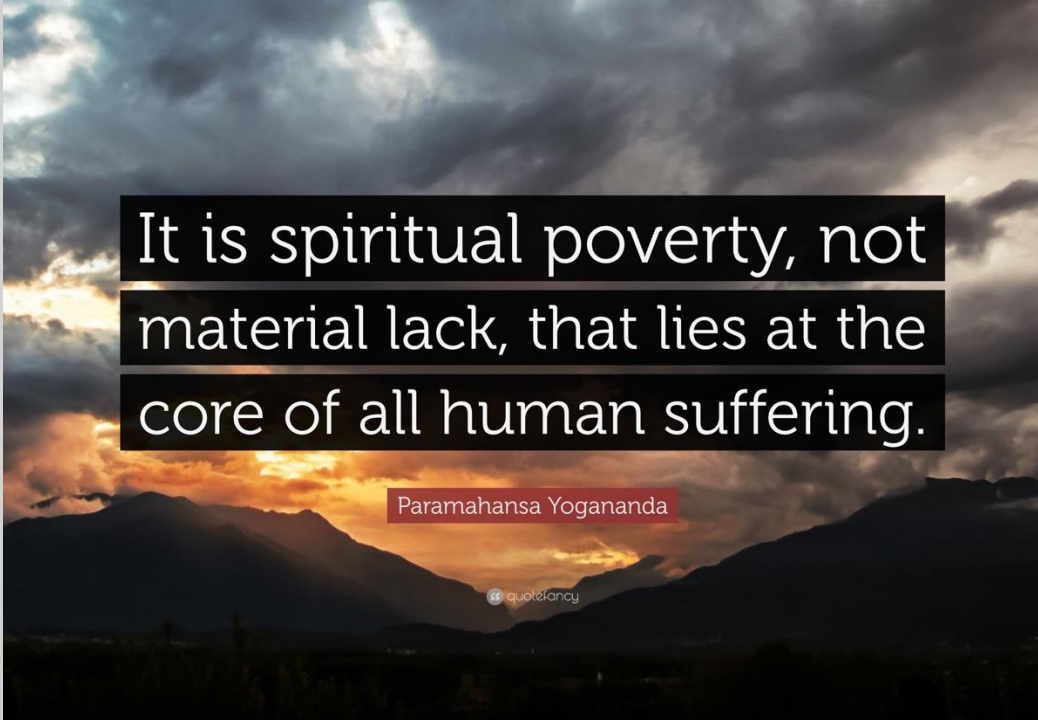


Roughly half of all lifetime mental health disorders start by the mid-teens.

- Negative stigma around mental health needs make it hard to want to access treatment.
- Lack of access to mental health services, long waits, or inability to pay for non-covered services are a barrier to mental health care.
- Family stressors when living in poverty can lead to parental mental health or substance abuse issues, or diminished capacity to engage in positive parenting behaviors.

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# SPIRITUAL POVERTY



It is spiritual poverty, not material lack, that lies at the core of all human suffering.

Paramahansa Yogananda

quote fancy

And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. - Romans 7:18-20



# SCREENING FOR POVERTY

- Poverty Screening is part of routine, urgent, and community child health care.
  - IHELP Screening
  - Accountable Health Communities Core Health-Related Social Needs
  - Food insecurity 2-question screening
  - Health Leads
  - Help Steps
  - WE CARE – AAP
  - Well Rx (Self Administered)





# SCREENING FOR POVERTY

- Best Practices to begin screening for poverty:
  - Don't target, screen all families who enter care
  - Make screenings equitable, accessible, and confidential.
  - Show empathy. Be willing to say “I don't know but I will try to help you find out.
  - Identify services and resources in your community to provide for families who screen positively.
  - Recognize that you won't be able to address every concern, and that you don't have to “fix” everything on your own.



# EX: IHELP SCREENING

Initially created by Kenyon, et al (2007). Clinician administered, addresses multiple determinants.

*"Here's a few questions I ask all my patients":*

- Income – Do you have any concerns about making ends meet/insurance or covering medical bills?
- Hunger/Housing - Do you have concerns about having enough food or about your housing (conditions or payment)?
- Education/Ensuring Safety – Concerns about education or about safety in the home (adults or teens > 15 yrs).
- Legal Status - "What hospital was your child born in?"
- Power of Attorney – Are you the legal parent/guardian of this child?



# SDOH SCREENING

- Screening for Social Determinants of health is complicated.
- Implementation has had mixed reviews and not always led to improved outcomes.
- The implementation of this should be viewed as a Quality Improvement project.
- Screenings were shown to lead to more referrals, but referrals did not equate improvement in health outcomes.
- More work needs to be done concerning what happens post-referral.



# Understanding Child Poverty

## *A Global Issue*



**POVERTY IS MORE THAN  
JUST NOT  
HAVING ENOUGH FOOD.  
ITS THE ABSENCE  
OF  
BASIC HUMAN NEEDS.**

# HOW THEN SHALL WE...

- First, we understand and educate ourselves on the complexity of the issue of poverty.
- We explore concepts of inequality, injustice and lack of opportunity affect the poor.
- We advocate for changes to those issues.





# WE BECOME THEIR ADVOCATES

- We support organizations and policies that prioritize sustainable change.
- We support 2 generation strategies that help children and parents simultaneously.
- We improve access to healthcare and infrastructure changes.

## Why Advocate?

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It's not.”  
- Dr. Seuss, The Lorax



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# ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS



END **CHILD**  
POVERTY  
GLOBAL COALITION



# HOW THEN SHALL WE...

- Second, cultivate a heart of compassion and empathy towards those experiencing poverty.
- Treat with dignity and respect.
- Listen to their stories
- Seek to understand their struggles.

“

Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life.

- NELSON MANDELA

”

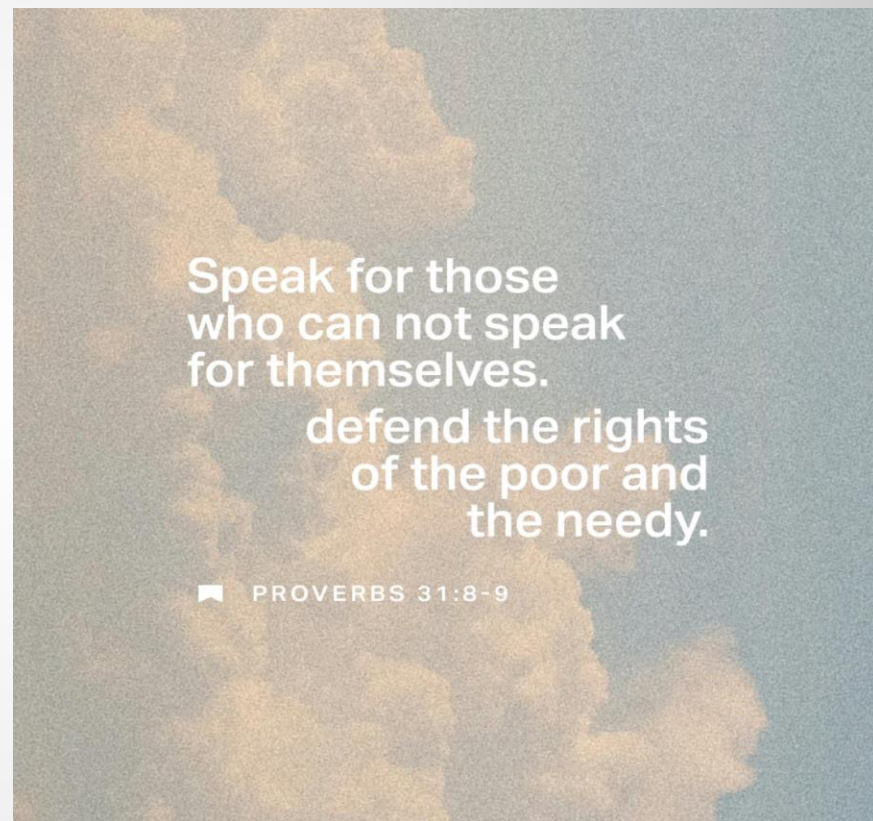
Image: The Dandelion Philosophy.

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# HOW THEN SHALL WE...

- Third, be personally engaged in helping the poor.
- Volunteer, Advocate, use your skills and resources to advocate.
- Volunteer with local agencies engaged in helping the poor.
- Enact practices in your workplace



# HOW THEN SHALL WE...

- Last, we focus on relationship building and sustainable solutions.
- Walk alongside people, be a listening ear, advocate.
- Support education and training initiatives.
- Support community-based initiatives that help those closest to them.



1 NO POVERTY



# END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

IF CURRENT TRENDS CONTINUE,



BY 2030

**575 MILLION**

PEOPLE WILL STILL BE LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY

**ONLY ONE THIRD**

OF COUNTRIES WILL HAVE HALVED THEIR NATIONAL POVERTY LEVELS

MANY OF THE

**WORLD'S VULNERABLE POPULATION**

REMAIN UNCOVERED BY SOCIAL PROTECTION

IN LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES, ONLY



OF CHILDREN



OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE



OF OLDER PERSONS

RECEIVED SOCIAL PROTECTION CASH BENEFITS

[2020]

IN RESPONSE TO THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS,



**105 COUNTRIES**

ANNOUNCED ALMOST 350 SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES IN THE PAST

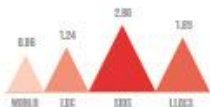
**12 MONTHS**

(FEB. 2022 - FEB. 2023)

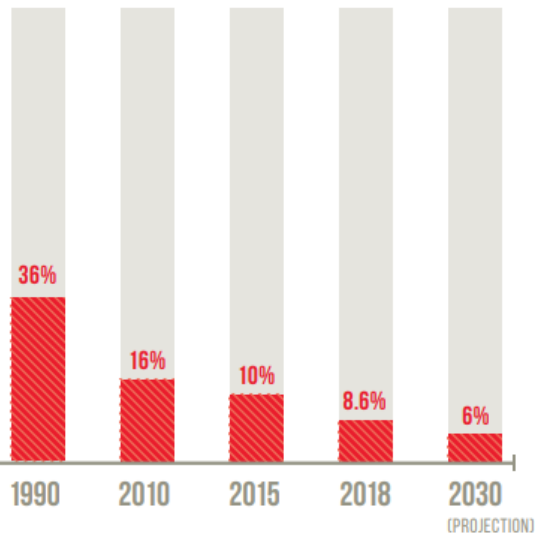
LDCs, SIDS AND LLDCs FACE HIGHER VULNERABILITY TO DISASTERS

AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER OF DEATHS OR MISSING PERSONS PER 100,000 POPULATION

[2012-2021]



## THE WORLD IS NOT ON TRACK TO END POVERTY BY 2030



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# What do children voice about living in poverty?

They consistently say they want:



To live in security,  
with love and care  
in the family.



To interact socially, to have  
friends, to play, and to be  
part of a community.



To be healthy.



To go to school,  
and get an  
education.

**Children unanimously highlight the stigma, diminished sense of confidence and self-worth, lack of opportunity, and dangers of growing up in poverty.**

**MED**





**THANK YOU**

