

Poverty in the dominican republic essay



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Development throughout the life of a person depends on nourishment, shelter, education, and many other factors. A person cannot lead a full life without catering to their needs and interests, and living in poverty does not help.

Poverty levels affect many people all over the world, specifically, the Dominican Republic. I recently took a trip there with my mother, and, during this trip, I noticed many dilapidated homes that housed under-nourished families. I feel that these situations do not help people develop successfully or practice all of their beliefs. To further research my assumptions, I interviewed Yadiris Aleman who was born and raised in a small town outside of Santiago.

She moved to America when she was 20 with her family, and now - at 34 - she lives in New York with her three children. Research has shown that many areas of the Dominican Republic have been affected by the poverty throughout the country, was your lifestyle affected by this tremendous obstacle? Yadiris had a very strict life as a child. No girls were allowed out past 8 o'clock, they were not allowed to have boyfriends until they were 18 years old, and there was a 6 a. m. wake up call to clean before school. The women had to constantly keep up with the housework and cooking.

When the entire family was together the men would relax and watch television while the women had to constantly be cooking and cleaning. The poverty greatly affected Yadiris's life in the Dominican Republic just judging by the adjustments she alone had to make: moving to America and needing to learn English while keeping up with her other chores and raising a family. I

have experienced the beautiful developing tourism in the Dominican Republic and have also seen the horrible living conditions of the local families. During my stay in the country, I saw numerous stray animals that were malnourished and wondering around.

In addition, I saw many children who looked as if they have not been taken care of very well. For example, one day I saw a small child - maybe three years old - running in the street with no clothes of any kind and the parents nowhere to be found. Many of the housing conditions also did not meet the par for even normal poverty stricken families in the United States. Countless homes did not have windows: just curtains. I feel that situations such as this only happen as a result of the corrupt government in the Dominican Republic.

The police force is corrupt and does no justice for the public safety of the local people. Instead of giving attention to the country's extreme societal issues, most of the government officials only look to be elected in order to obtain bribes while in office. The government has been devoting much time and money to the developing tourist resorts because they are a main source of the growing economy. On the other hand, "[m]any local inhabitants sense a loss of local hegemony and fear that tourism is disrupting the social fabric of community life" (Freitag).

As a result of her extreme poverty before she came to America, Yadiris feels that one of her hardest parts of adjusting in America was the city life because she was born and raised in a small town, where her floors were cement and her roof was a piece of scrap metal. She went on to tell me how they were only permitted an hour of electricity a day causing food to spoil

faster and allowed for no hot water. While the government is putting money into the many extravagant tourist resorts, the Dominican Republic's inhabitants are living in shams with few schools or health clinics left after tropical storms destroying a majority of them. Education is not taken seriously throughout the Dominican Republic. School is only mandatory until the sixth grade, by which, many children have already dropped out. Of the hundreds of schools destroyed in tropical storms, only about half have been rebuilt.

Hence, Yadiris was very surprised at the importance of education upon her arrival in America. She followed very strict rules growing up, but education was never stressed. Yadiris mentioned one thing that stuck out to me; she thought the low concern for education has a connection to the low income offered. I feel this low income will eventually affect the attitude of the workers, which in the end will result in a low interest and seriousness about one's job. There are public clinics with free health care, but they are understaffed and poorly equipped.

As a result, those who can afford it go to private doctors. Often times the older generations still use voodoo and other natural remedies rather than traveling to a clinic. The health clinics are understaffed because education is not stressed to the children. Subsequently, there is a battle for low education jobs between all of the Dominicans and illegal Haitian immigrants.

Another factor in the Dominican poverty is the long border it shares with very undeveloped Haiti. “[A]gricultural labor shortages occur that are in part satisfied through large-scale Haitian immigration” (Raynolds). I feel that this,

in a way, is like the situation the United States is in right now. There are many jobs being taken by illegal immigrants, this takes away from those immigrants who come here to live honestly, get a better education, and make a life. Dominican jobs are being taken by Haitians everyday, thus the lives of Dominicans are being affected greatly. “ It is estimated that up to 12,000 people suspected of being Haitian are forcibly deported every year from Dominican territory” (Howard).

These large numbers of poor, illegal Haitian immigrants add to the unemployment and poverty levels daily. Problems within the Dominican agriculture arise very often. The low agricultural productivity is mainly caused by the lack of new age technology when it comes to their crops. This lack of crops has also shown in the nutrition of the people: many children suffer from severe malnutrition, and calorie deficiencies affected many mothers. A decline in agriculture resulted in an “ agricultural employment [decline] and rural unemployment, under employment, and poverty [becoming] more widespread” (Raynolds).

The additional decline in employment makes finding a job even harder for the Dominicans. The farmers were even greatly affected because the small amount of land they are left with after tourism own only puts forth a low level of production. This low level of production and profit, normally, cannot support a family enough to remain above the poverty level. Many farmers and heads of the house have tried to work two jobs to make ends meet, and still cannot reach a comfortable level.

Many of the Dominican Republic's inhabitants either own a farm or are employed by a farm owner, but the lack of crops means lack of jobs. The lack of land for agriculture, the illegal Haitian immigrants, and the disregard for education and health are all results of the government's actions. The many different situations in a person's life affect actions in the present and future, so why should one stand back and let life pass them by. I feel that poverty stricken countries like the Dominican Republic can evolve from these problems and begin better lives.

Education, health, food, shelter, beliefs, etc. are important parts of everyday life. People should not have to restrict their goals and customs due to the severity of poverty in their country. There are many things that affect a person and poverty is just one of the big ones.