

Breaking the vicious poverty cycle



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Breaking the Vicious Poverty Cycle Today, most experts agree that poverty in the United States is still rising, as layoffs rise and the economy stumbles. Meanwhile, the number of millionaires keeps growing. We are constantly told that capitalism represents the high point of human achievement.

However, in a society that condemns large parts of the population to doubt about their ability to meet basic needs (food, education and health care), while millionaires spend thousands on luxuries; capitalism does not seem as the high development point of civilization. Poverty should be considered beyond a monetary term because of its multiple implications in children's development. Poverty is a vicious cycle. The poor cannot afford education, and the uneducated/unskilled cannot hope to earn enough to overcome poverty. Poverty goes beyond an economic condition; it often includes child abuse, school failure, juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy, early death due to homicide or suicide, among other antisocial behaviours.

Poverty diminishes the possibility that children will develop into competent adults who get well employed. Children development it is not only influenced by its learning capabilities but, it is shaped by the environment he/she is exposed to. Families in poverty are concentrated in the inner-city which provides lower quality schools, fewer good role models, less social control, which leads them to join teenage gangs with high crime rates. The United States surpassed other industrialized nations in violent crimes, including homicides. Constant poverty rates do not necessarily mean that the same number of people is in poverty compared to the past.

The rate is only a percentage of the total population, which has grown through time. For example, in 1980, 12.6% of the population who lived in poverty was 28.5 million, but today the same percentage is 34.4 million people because the U.

S. population has grown by 46.2 million since 1980 (<http://www.census.gov/population/censusdata>). While the percentage of the population who lives in poverty keeps constant, at present there are 5 million more people who live in poverty than in 1980. Poverty is affected by multiple factors, such as family resources and structure, community, and economic structure. Because poor families are permanently struggling in economic crisis, they have little time, money, or energy to supervise children's development.

In addition, poor families are more likely to be single parent. Children raised in woman-headed families have higher rates of high school dropout, teen pregnancy, and joblessness. Consequences may be due to psychological alterations from losing a parent, reduced parental supervision, or because of the absence of good role models. At present, a major determinant of a country's standard of living is how well it succeeds in utilizing the skills, knowledge and health of its people. These skills, knowledge and health are necessarily developed through investment in the people, and then used in an economic environment and market structure.

Poverty is worsening due to the low investment in human capital and the bad governmental policies that have been followed. The US Government, as the only entity that has the ability and responsibility to pick these less-favoured children from the vicious cycle, need to prioritize investment focusing on <https://assignbuster.com/breaking-the-vicious-poverty-cycle/>

human capital, and not physical capital. Although infrastructure and machinery are required, competent workers and managers are needed to utilize these machines effectively. Schools are of great importance, but the education provided to children from poor families has been inadequate. The United States public school education system is not bad. However, it is bad among the 25% or so of the poor inner city families (<http://www.ensus.gov/population/censusdata>).

Efforts to reduce poverty should start through governmental policy. One approach is to generate competition on the education system, including high school and university levels, giving an equal opportunity to poor student to get a quality education.

In order to make competition fairer among public and private schools, the US Government should issue vouchers to families, in particular to poor families. The children can use these vouchers to attend any school, public or private, they are accepted in. Competition would not only help the children in the private schools but, it would make the public schools better. Competition will put pressure on public schools to keep up to competition levels. Reforms could come with either new administrators or with pressure from the Government who is providing the money.

Another possible approach is to provide incentives to the poor parents to keep their children in school. The incentive would consist of a monthly supplement conditional to children attending school regularly and performing well, and that children attend regular health check-ups. Because mental and physical health is also a problem for the poor, the program should include attendance and performance at school with health checks. Poor families

usually take children out of school and put them in the work force so that they can contribute to the family's income. This incentive will provide this additional money and ensure that children do not drop off school.

The US Government must begin to assume responsibility about the country inner cities, and wherever extreme poverty exists. It makes economic sense to provide America under-skilled, undereducated, underemployed, and underutilized people a real chance for success and productivity. Helping unprivileged people to overcome the constraints that come along within the poverty vicious cycle will cost less than current policies, and would have a more positive long term effect in the country's economy. It will save a lot of tragically lost American lives and unrealized human potential.

And it will ensure a more stable and secure America for all.