

Living in poverty affects all aspects of life



*Bangladesh: Children living in poverty often have poor health, go hungry and miss out on school.
Lily Mary Rodrigues / World Vision*

What is poverty?

When people are unable to meet their everyday needs for food, water, clothing and shelter, they are living in poverty. Education, healthcare, sanitary toilets, electricity, technology and savings are beyond the reach of these families.

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is held on 17 October

Living in poverty affects much more than just money and possessions. Poverty prevents people from participating fully in their society and culture. It deprives them of choices and opportunities. Everyday enjoyment, creativity and recreation are replaced by worry, fear and stress.

Find out...

Who experiences poverty?	p2
How is poverty measured?	p2
Where do people experiencing extreme poverty live?	p2
What is it like to live in poverty?	p3
What is the poverty cycle?	p3
Do any New Zealanders experience poverty?	p3
What factors contribute to poverty?	p4
How can poverty be eradicated?	p5
What is World Vision doing?	p5
How does World Vision help people?	p6

Who experiences poverty?

Of the world's 7.2 billion people, about 1.2 billion live in extreme poverty and nearly half of the world's population is considered moderately poor. All over the world, most parents work hard to raise healthy educated children, but lack of money and resources make their future uncertain.

Statistics show some groups of people are more likely to experience poverty, including:

- **Women:** More women than men live in poverty. Women face discrimination in accessing resources, education, land, credit, health services, decent work and payment for the work they do. A mother's situation directly affects the wellbeing of her children.
- **People with disabilities:** People living in poverty experience more disabilities than those who are not poor. Poverty increases the chances of someone becoming disabled, and people with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty.
- **Minority groups:** People who are seen as different, for example due to ethnicity, religion or language, face discrimination in accessing resources, which leads to poverty.
- **Rural people:** In developing countries 60 per cent of rural people are poor, with more than half of those living in extreme poverty. Lack of resources, such as schools, doctors and roads to get crops to market, contributes to rural poverty. As rural people go to cities in search of work, urban poverty increases because poor newcomers to cities often live in slums and sub-standard houses. What work they can find may be irregular, low paid, illegal, unhealthy or even dangerous.

How is poverty measured?

Extreme poverty (or absolute poverty) is when people can't meet their basic needs of food, water, clothing and shelter – measured by an income of less than US\$1.25 per person per day. 1.2 billion people experience extreme poverty.

Moderate poverty is meeting basic family needs but lacking resources to improve lives, such as healthcare, education or hygiene – measured by an income of less than US\$2.50 per person per day.

Income poverty is when a family's income is less than the official poverty line for their country.

Relative poverty is lacking the resources that others in a country would normally have.

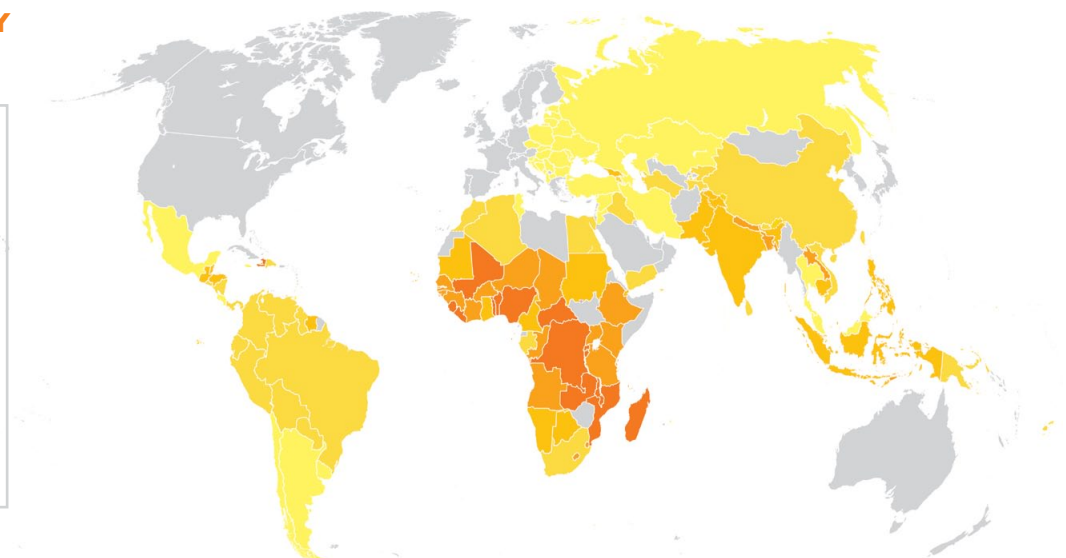
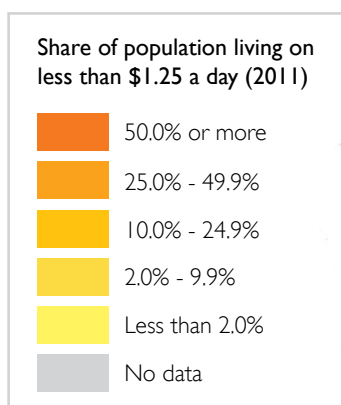


Timor Leste: Agriculture programmes for rural families, featuring vegetables, cassava and potatoes, improve health and increase incomes. Rohan Zerna & Jacqui Hocking / World Vision

Where do people experiencing extreme poverty live?

Almost all of the world's extremely poor people live in developing countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. High rates of extreme poverty are found in small, fragile and conflict-affected countries.

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY



Source: www.data.worldbank.org

What is it like to live in poverty?

Families who live in poverty experience hunger and sickness. They lack access to clean water, healthcare and education.

Hunger

Families cannot afford enough food. This means family members do not get enough protein, minerals and vitamins in their diet for good health, which leads to hunger and malnutrition. Hungry people get sick more often and lack energy for work and school. 795 million adults and children are hungry, and 3.1 million children under 5 die each year from malnutrition and related illnesses.

Unsafe water

Around the world 663 million people do not have access to a reliable source of clean water. Many of these people walk long distances to rivers or ponds to collect water which is unsafe for drinking. Dirty water carries illnesses like dysentery, cholera and typhoid. 2.4 billion people live in places where toilet facilities are inadequate and can contaminate water supplies. 760,000 children under 5 years old die from diarrhoea each year as a result of poor sanitation and unclean water.



Vanuatu: Using a tippy-tap to wash hands helps to prevent diarrhoea and other illnesses. Jo Currie / World Vision

Lack of education

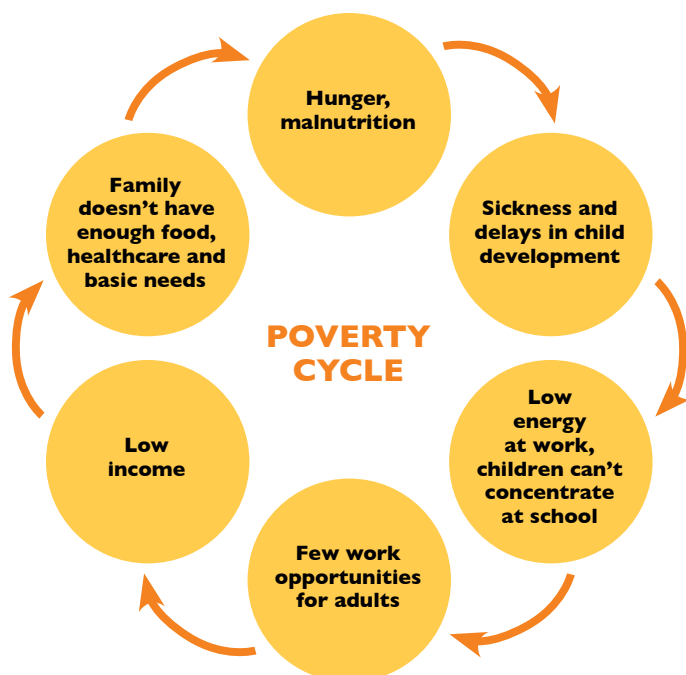
Families struggle to send their children to school. Even when education is free, uniforms and stationery cost more than parents can afford. Some children may have to work to help support the family instead of going to school. Lack of education affects future job opportunities and makes it harder to break out of the poverty cycle.

Sickness and inadequate healthcare

Hunger, unsafe water and little shelter or warm clothing contribute to high rates of sickness. Poor communities lack access to healthcare due to: shortages of doctors and nurses; long travel distances to get medical help; and families not being able to afford to pay. HIV and AIDS have increased poverty. Most deaths from AIDS are working-age people, leaving millions of orphaned children to be looked after by their grandparents, or to fend for themselves.

What is the poverty cycle?

The effects of poverty on all aspects of life mean families, communities and countries become trapped in a "poverty cycle". It is very difficult for them to improve their living standard and get out of poverty.



Do any New Zealanders experience poverty?

Poverty means lacking the resources to meet basic, everyday needs. In every country, including New Zealand, some people lack access to these resources. Thousands of families in New Zealand struggle to meet their needs for food, water, clothing, shelter, education and healthcare. Most parents work hard to raise healthy, educated children, but lack of money and resources make their future uncertain.

Poverty in New Zealand can be measured by:

+ Income poverty: when families live off less than 60 per cent of New Zealand's median income. In 2015, 29 per cent of New Zealand children (305,000 children) lived in income poverty. Of these children, 37 per cent had parents/caregivers who were in paid employment.

+ Material hardship: when families go without the things that most New Zealanders consider essential for a normal life. In 2015, 14 per cent of New Zealand children (148,000 children) lived with material hardship.

For more information about poverty in New Zealand visit www.childpoverty.co.nz

What factors contribute to poverty?

Environment

People experiencing poverty tend to rely more on their environment for survival, so environmental problems affect them more. Natural disasters destroy homes, farms and businesses and push more people into poverty. Droughts and floods can lead to food shortages, food crises and famines.

Climate change

People living in poverty are most at risk of the effects of climate change. As temperatures warm, even slightly, crop harvests decrease, which increases food prices and causes hunger. It is expected that climate change will cause more extreme weather events and natural disasters. Climate change also contributes to situations which cause conflict and war, which cause poverty.

Conflict

Conflict destroys schools, hospitals, roads and bridges. Farm work becomes dangerous and crops are destroyed due to landmines or fighting. Conflict drives people away from their homes and stops them from earning income.



*Niger: Sustainable management of trees ensures communities can access firewood for cooking.
Mariana Chokaa / World Vision*

Lack of justice

Inequalities in power and lack of justice in a society may force the poor to remain poor. In many developing countries rich landowners own most of the land while poor people struggle on small plots of often rented land. Moneylenders who charge high interest are the only places poor people can borrow money. It is difficult to repay the debt so some people remain in debt to moneylenders all their lives. This can directly contribute to bonded labour and child labour.

In the 1970s and 1980s, many developing country governments borrowed large sums of money to fund infrastructure projects and economic development. Countries could not repay these loans so borrowed more money just to pay the loan interest. The more money governments spent on repayments, the less there was to spend on services like education, water supplies and healthcare.

International trade agreements often disadvantage developing countries. Large international companies have a large market share so they control prices. Sometimes poor farmers are not paid enough for their crops to cover the cost of producing them.



*Ethiopia: Cooperatives help give coffee farmers more power to negotiate prices.
Kebede Gizachew / World Vision*

Population

A rapidly growing population can put pressure on food supplies, health clinics, schools and the environment. Historically, many children born to poor families died in infancy, however as medical services improve infant survival, populations grow. Children gather firewood, fetch water and work in the fields. By the time a child becomes a teenager, they may contribute more to the family than they consume. Poor families often can't afford education and healthcare for all of their children. The remaining children will find it more difficult to break out of the poverty cycle. In countries where there are no pensions, aged parents need their children to look after them.



*Tanzania: Local health clinics make it easier for mothers and babies to attend health check ups.
Adda Amos Ngoya / World Vision*

How can poverty be eradicated?

Eradicating poverty requires action at global, national and local scales. It requires action by individuals, families, communities, and countries, as well as community and international organisations.

Development Goals agreed through the United Nations (UN) have helped millions of people around the world to break out of poverty.

THEN: What were the UN Millennium Development Goals?

The United Nations Millennium Assembly in 2000 agreed on eight goals to reduce poverty in developing countries by 2015. These goals successfully created history's greatest anti-poverty movement and achieved a global partnership for development that made real change in the lives of millions of people. Through the Millennium Development Goals the number of people living in extreme poverty decreased by more than half, from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015.

“Following profound and consistent gains, we now know that extreme poverty can be eradicated within one more generation”

Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations

NOW: What are the UN Sustainable Development Goals?

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly agreed on Sustainable Development Goals that focus on people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership for everyone in every country across the globe. The 17 universal goals build on the Millennium Development Goals and set new targets aiming to end all forms of poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and protect the environment by 2030.

“This agreement marks an important milestone in putting our world on an inclusive and sustainable course. If we all work together, we have a chance of meeting citizens' aspirations for peace, prosperity, and wellbeing, and to preserve our planet.”

Helen Clark
United Nations Development Programme Administrator

What is World Vision doing?

WorldVision is dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. WorldVision is doing this in three ways – through transformational development, disaster management and advocacy.

Transformational development

WorldVision works with communities in need to identify and action long term changes that will improve their lives, such as access to food, water, clothing, shelter, education, healthcare, sanitation, and disaster mitigation measures, and help them break the poverty cycle.

Emergency relief

Natural disasters and conflict situations make it even more difficult for poor families to meet their needs. WorldVision has resources ready to assist communities within 24 hours of an emergency occurring. WorldVision helps communities with recovery so they can take care of their basic needs over the first few months. In the long term WorldVision helps communities to restore their lives back to normal. WorldVision also helps communities prepare for and mitigate against future disasters, so families faced with natural disasters may not be forced into a cycle of poverty.

Promotion of justice

WorldVision advocates for people affected by injustice and poverty. WorldVision does this by challenging and changing policies, systems, structures, practices and attitudes that make it difficult for people to escape life in poverty. WorldVision promotes justice at local, national, regional and global levels, for example working with children, parents and local community leaders, or lobbying the United Nations.



Myanmar: Trained young people teach others how to prepare for and respond during an emergency such as an earthquake.

Khaing Min Htoo / World Vision

How does World Vision help people?

Improving health

Poor health and lack of access to safe drinking water caused health problems for the children from Nueva Vision in Honduras and prevented them from attending school.

“Our children suffered from colds, diarrhoea and stomach aches. We'd see their sad faces. Because they had no energy, they could not play or eat and they missed kindergarten and school,” says Cintia.

“It was not until I joined my community's sanitation committee that I understood why this was happening: lack of hygiene, unclean bodies, houses, streets and community environments as well as poor food hygiene and cooking. All of this was harming the health of our families and children... In the [World Vision] sanitation committee training we were taught the main principles of personal, family and community hygiene, for example how to take care of our environment and how to treat water so it is safe to drink and cook with. This has helped us to teach and care for our families, and most of all to prevent sickness.”

Improved understanding of hygiene and sanitation, together with increased access to safe drinking water have helped the children of Nueva Vision to attend school more frequently – a good education is one step to helping them break the cycle of poverty.

Lending to small businesses

Small business owner Koe Nim from Samrong Tong, Cambodia, struggled to sell enough noodles and fried beef to support her husband and three children. When Koe applied for a NZ\$450 microloan from World Vision she was able to purchase supplies and equipment to expand her business to be more profitable.

Microloans break the cycle of poverty by supporting entrepreneurs to establish small, sustainable businesses. As these businesses grow, they create new jobs. People can save for the future, send their children to school, pay for essential medical care and protect their children from forms of exploitation such as child labour. Combining small loans with World Vision's other development work, such as clean water, nutritious food, healthcare and education, creates sustainable long term change.

Koe is grateful for the transformation the microloan has brought to her family's life – her children have enough food to eat and she can afford to pay for their education.

Providing microloans so families can earn more from their business is one step in helping families break the cycle of poverty.



Honduras: Cintia teaches others about hygiene and sanitation to improve their families' health.
Guillermo Aguilar / World Vision

Learning about nutrition

Parents in Chigodi, Malawi, didn't understand how to provide enough nutritious foods for their families, which was one factor trapping families in a cycle of poverty.

“The belief we had was that only foods bought in town are... nutritious, not knowing that... the foods we have within reach are sufficient to supply every food group.” says Rodah Silirani. She and other local mothers attended World Vision nutrition workshops where they learned to prepare nutritious meals using local foods including peanuts, eggs, pawpaw, maize flour, bananas, cassava, sweet potatoes, pumpkin leaves and fish. *“It was difficult for me to accept that locally-available foods can address micro-nutrient deficiencies. I have realised that local foods are nutritious, palatable and easily support the nutritional gaps.”*

After many years of struggling to grow enough food crops for his wife and eight children, Mr Chokochani attended a World Vision food budgeting workshop. *“The sessions taught me how to plan crops by calculating the amount of food stocks a person can eat throughout the year,”* explained Mr Chokochani. After applying his new knowledge, he harvested 95 bags of maize compared to 25 bags the previous year. His children no longer go to school hungry or suffer from malnutrition-related sicknesses.

Improving nutrition in the Chigodi community is one step in helping families to break the poverty cycle.

This resource may be reproduced for education purposes, provided the source is given. Contact us at education.nz@worldvision.org.nz