

The persistence of poverty: How real equality can break the vicious cycles ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpted from introduction

A just society must afford equal opportunities to all of its members: no child should be punished for being born in poverty. Yet, this ideal is far from being realized today. Children born in poverty have significantly more chances of remaining poor in their adult lives as a result of a number of mechanisms that perpetuate poverty from one generation to the next. For example, in the rich countries that make up the OECD, a child born to a poor family will need four to five generations to reach a level of earnings that is average for the country. At a global scale, it is far more likely that children will remain in the same richest and poorest income groups as their parents, more so than moving down or up the income ladder. Moreover, compared with the 1940s, the ability for children to improve their life prospects compared to their parents' is declining in the developing world. And persistence of poverty at the bottom is rising.

This report is based on a review of available evidence concerning the perpetuation of poverty and on the contributions of people living in or with an experience of poverty, including two two-day expert meetings, and in-person and virtual participatory dialogues with people in poverty living in Europe (Belgium and Luxembourg), Latin America (Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Bolivia), and Africa (DR Congo). The Special Rapporteur wishes to thank all those who prepared for and participated in these dialogues. Their experience and expertise are an essential source of knowledge for combatting poverty around the world.

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