



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

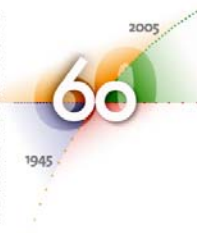
Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Eradicating Poverty



Eradicating Poverty

The world has never been as rich as it is today, yet over one billion people suffer from extreme poverty. UNESCO is committed to raising awareness to the fact that freedom from poverty is a fundamental human right

A reminder of the existence of a silent tragedy: extreme poverty, which affects 1.2 billion people. Eradicating poverty, particularly extreme poverty, has been identified as one of the two crosscutting themes by UNESCO (2002-2007). Reinforced by its ethical and intellectual mission, the Organization is able to contribute in its fields of competence to the implementation of the UN's Millennium Declaration, and, in particular, the fundamental goal of reducing extreme poverty by half by 2015. The Organization's strategy is developed in coordination with human development strategies within the framework of human safety. UNESCO is committed to including the educational, cultural and scientific aspects linked to poverty as seen through the prism of human rights.



Homeless in 2005
(© UNESCO)

A DENIAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 resulted in declaration after declaration condemning poverty as a denial of human rights and a violation of human dignity. The Vienna declaration required content and conceptual development in order to plan future action. In 2001, the Organization launched a multi-sector poverty eradication programme, with a particular focus on extreme poverty. Twenty-two projects were adopted for 2002-2003 and 20 projects for 2004-2005 (17 pilot projects and 3 conceptual research projects). These three research projects, which form the basis of the implementation of the poverty programme, include:

- to study "the aspects of poverty relative to ethics and human rights: towards a new paradigm in the fight against poverty". A series of international seminars have been organized, including experts in the fields of philosophy, law, economics, and political science (research project 1);
- to "develop national research and policy analysis capacities". Through a programme of research grants, research project 2 helps countries to develop their capabilities and to undertake the studies need to revise and amend national policies;
- to offer support to national poverty eradication strategies as well as to actions in favour of the most disadvantaged in the least developed countries (LDCs). Research project 3 helps countries to get involved in the international debate on poverty as a human right through the organization of seminars and national hearings and by setting up monitoring and reflection committees. The project is designed to assist countries to review and amend their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) within the human rights framework.

The final objective is to consider poverty as a Human Rights issue and to bring the human element to the centre of public policy priorities. This conceptual endeavour is the basis for the 17 pilot projects led by UNESCO, by intersectoral teams (at least two sectors are involved in each project).

Eradicating Poverty

A Few Facts

3 billion people receive 1.2% of the world's global revenue while one billion people living in rich countries receive 80%.

8 million children die each year of poverty-related diseases.

150 million children suffer from aggravated malnutrition.

100 million children live in the street.

These projects include:

- **Education and environment for indigenous communities in Indonesia.** To enhance the socio-economic development and the survival of indigenous cultures, it is important to maintain the links between peoples and their natural environment. As the world changes, these populations also tend to change their life-styles, thus slowing their development and even destroying the environment necessary to their survival. The project, led by the Jakarta Office, aims to provide the local communities of Siberut Island, located about 150 km west of Sumatra, with the means to use their natural resources in a sustainable manner.

- **"The Sahara of cultures and people" - Towards a strategy for the sustainable development of tourism in the Sahara, in the context of combating poverty.** This project aims to fight poverty via sustainable development, including tourism, that values and promotes both the tangible and intangible, natural and cultural heritage of the Sahara. It concerns the countries in the Sahara, including local communities and tourism professionals. Tourism is a useful tool to fight against poverty and can safeguard the particularly rich and fragile biodiversity and cultural diversity of the Sahara.

- **Reducing poverty in urban areas among women and young migrants in China and Mongolia.**

The project concerns women and youth migrating from rural areas to seek work in economic boomtowns where workers are in high demand. Although these migrants, the cornerstone of a rapidly expanding system, contribute to producing wealth, they often find themselves discriminated against and

poor. The goal of the project is to ease their integration and to provide assistance, particularly in making them aware of their rights to access basic services. It also aims to sensitize public authorities about the situation of this marginalized and abandoned segment of the population which, nonetheless, plays a major role in the country's economic development. The project has made major inroads through an excellent communications strategy which combines action in the field, research, awareness raising, multimedia support and political recommendations.

- **Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) in a global society.**

The LINKS project aims to encourage the use of local knowledge and values to shape methods of eradicating poverty and sustainable protection of the environment. It supports the right of indigenous peoples to development in a safe and viable environment. The first phase saw the launch of field projects in Asia, Europe, in the developing micro island states of the Pacific and in the Americas, all aimed at a rigorous census of local knowledge and at training of local populations to apply this knowledge.

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To Find Out More

Poverty as a denial of human rights:
www.unesco.org/shs/poverty

Read: *Poverty, a fatality? Promoting autonomy and human security in least favoured groups Benin - Burkina Faso - Mali - Niger*, Ed. UNESCO / Karthala, 2002 (in French).