



Urban & Rural POVERTY

"They shout, but nobody hears them. They sleep outside, yet nobody sees them. And they ask for opportunities, but nobody answers their prayers. They are called "the poor." Our national challenge is to tap into the current wave of unease and idealism, and spark a moment of purpose that compels us to think, to strategize and, most of all, to keep searching for solutions. Many, of course, have never stopped trying and their efforts are noteworthy. However, despite, these laudable works by diverse individuals and institutions, far too many Americans are poor."

* Rey Ramsey, Founding Publisher of the Horizon Poverty Series: People, Places, and Solutions.

Urban Poverty Fast Facts...

- 750,000 Americans are homeless on any given night, and over the course of a year as many as 2 million people experience homelessness for some period of time (National Alliance to End Homelessness).
- At least 230,000 homeless people use shelters and soup kitchens in our nation's cities at any given time. This data suggests that at any given time between 500,000 and 600,000 individuals are homeless (The Urban Institute).
- Throughout San Francisco, over 17,532 citations were given out for so-called "Quality of Life" crimes such as sleeping and camping in 1996 (The San Francisco Homeless Coalition).
- The fastest growing group of homeless people consists of families with children. Today, families make up about 36% of the people who become homeless (National Alliance to End Homelessness).
- 17 percent of children live in poverty in the US (18 percent of children under the age of six) - in families with income below the federal poverty line (\$13,290 in 1999).
- While the child poverty rate is highest for African Americans (33 percent) and Latino children (30 percent), by international standards it is also exceptionally high for white children (9 percent) (Child Poverty Fact Sheet).
- TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) is the program most often referred to as "welfare". As of March 1999, there were 2.7 million families on welfare, 47% fewer families than the high of 5.1 million families in 1994 (The Urban Institute).
- While poverty seems to be improving in this country, the aid is dismal. In 1997 the average monthly TANF payment amount for a family of three was \$362 (The Urban Institute).



Urban and rural poverty are interlinked. Urban work encourages migration from the countryside to the city. Urban-oriented policies alone may fail to reduce urban poverty. It is therefore important to address rural poverty in order to make sustainable progress on urban poverty.

(IFAD, the International Fund for Agricultural Development)

Rural Poverty Fast Facts...

"What do you say about employment in which workers who labor hard than anyone else get paid the least? Is this what we mean by participation in democratic life?"

-Robert Back, Immigration and Naturalization Service for the Urban Institute.

- Approximately 7.4 million persons who live in rural areas were poor in 1999. This means that the rate of rural poverty for 1999 was 14.2 percent (Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture).
- In the U.S., 51.2 percent of rural poverty is found in the South (Iowa State University, College of Agriculture).
- In the North Central Region, the rural poor are more likely to be white. In 1993 more than 90 percent of those in rural poverty from this region were white, with African Americans comprising 3.7 percent and Native Americans 2.9 percent (Iowa State University, College of Agriculture).
- Hired farm-workers made up 1/3 of the farm workforce (Economic Research Service, USDA).
- Hired farm-workers are predominately male, Hispanic, young, never married, less educated, non-citizens, and located in the South and West census regions (Economic Research Service, USDA).
- Hired farm-workers continue to earn about 58 percent as much as all wage and salary workers do (Economic Research Service, USDA).
- About 45 percent of all hired farm-workers, 25 and older, are low-wage earners and earn less than the poverty threshold for a family of four (Economic Research Service, USDA).
- Over one-third earns family incomes of less than \$15,000 (Economic Research Service, USDA).



- In the United States, rural does not always equal agriculture. In 1992, only 7.6 percent of rural employment was in farming (Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture).

- In less developed countries, Rural has a different meaning. Generally, there are two main rural characteristics. First, rural people usually live on farmsteads or in groups of houses containing perhaps 5,000 - 10,000 persons, separated by farmland, pasture, trees or scrubland. Second, the majority of rural people spend most of their time on farms (IFAD - International Fund for Agriculture Development).

- Rural Poverty has increased by 10 to 20 percent in a number of Latin American countries in the past three years, and the incidence of rural poverty is particularly high among indigenous populations; of the world's 250 million indigenous people, 70% live in Asia (IFAD).

ON-LINE RESOURCES

Urban Poverty

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (<http://www.hhs.gov/>)
- The Coalition on Homelessness, San Francisco (<http://www.sf-homeless-coalition.org/>)
- The Urban Institute (<http://www.urban.org/>)
- The National Alliance to End Homelessness (<http://www.naeh.org/about/index.htm>)
- The Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development (PICCED) <http://www.picced.org/lowres/poverty.htm>
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme <http://www.unchsh.org>
- The National Coalition for Homelessness <http://nch.ari.net/facts.html>

Rural Poverty

- The Economic Research Service (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/>)
- International Fund for Agriculture Development (<http://www.ifad.org/>)
- The Global Policy Forum (<http://www.globalpolicy.org/>)
- Joint Center for Poverty Research (<http://www.jcpr.org>)
- The International Monetary Fund (<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2000/12/khan.htm>)

General Resources

- Causes of Poverty (<http://www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Poverty.asp>)
- National Center for Children in Poverty (<http://nccp.org/index.html>)
- US Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html>)
- The World Bank: Poverty Net (<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/>)
- National Center on Poverty Law (<http://www.povertylaw.org/>)
- Child Poverty Action Group (<http://www.cpag.org.uk/>)

Information on this page was adapted from:

http://www.umich.edu/~mserve/ProjectServe/HTML/IEA_poverty.html