

МИНОБРНАУКИ РОССИИ

**ФЕДЕРАЛЬНОЕ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ БЮДЖЕТНОЕ
ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОЕ УЧРЕЖДЕНИЕ
ВЫСШЕГО ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ
«ВОРОНЕЖСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ»
(ФГБОУ ВПО «ВГУ»)**

Учебно-методическое пособие для вузов

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

PART I

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POVERTY'S MANY FACES: CHALLENGES, PROJECTS AND FUTURE

Wanting to be faithful to a calling to attention and care towards current and urgent themes, we found the necessity of proposing as a topic the relation between poverty, in its economic, but also social and human meaning, and youth. Young people, in fact, are the holders of the essential human rights (instruction, work, health, culture), which the State has the obligation to guarantee and uphold; only this way, youth will be able to freely fulfill their obligation of solidarity and of participation to the harmonious development of the national and international community.

UNIT 1

WARM UP

Make a list of words that may be connected with the topic “Poverty”. What is poverty in your opinion?

READING

Skim through the text fairly quickly and tell the audience its main idea.

POVERTY AND SOCIAL DISQUALIFICATION: DEFINITION AND STRUCTURAL CAUSES

Poverty is almost always associated with the idea of deprivation, of lacking of material means to satisfy the person's needs. The World Bank defines as "extreme poverty" the disponibility of less than 1,25 dollars per day for a living, while the poverty thresholds, that is the available income under which you are officially considered a "poor one", are established by every single country, which calculates it starting from its own economical condition and standard of living. Most of the poor ones live in the so-called developing countries, with a particular bearing on the Asiatic continent (Pacific zone), the African one (Sub-Saharan zone), and the South American one (Caribbean zone); the thickest concentration of poor people is in rural zones, where the only sustenance source is agriculture. Furthermore, there are some particularly vulnerable categories: children, elders, disabled ones and generally whoever is unable to work, some ethnic groups like Roms, immigrants, convicts. In every single group, women live a disadvantage situation more arduous than men's. In many cases, poverty is the direct origin of social disqualification, that means an individual's impossibility, inability or discrimination in participating to certain personal and collective activities: the economic dimension thus is not sufficient for describing this phenomenon, and it must be integrated with other perspectives, such as the social and relationship-wise ones. Now we also speak of

remarkable place is occupied by private associations, both laical and religious ones, committed in material interventions in zones which the national assistance haven't interest or possibility to arrive in. That's the case of the African Sub-Saharan zone (Sahel, Mali, Burkina Faso...), the Balkan zone (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia...), some Latin American countries (Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela...). Besides interventions of direct aid, the association which took upon themselves the responsibility of working on the territory are committed in actions of empowerment of local structures, so that they do not only solve immediate crisis, but they also try, in the limit of their possibilities, to grant the instruments of an autonomous development, able to respect also the cultural, geographical and social specification of the interest area. Even having available lesser financial resources, this kind of initiatives present the undeniable advantage of being able to directly involve the population in a development policy aiming at something wider than the solution of a momentary emergency.

We don't have the aim of solving the problem, this being a task requiring expertises and instruments we do not have, but we believe that dialogue and comparison between our different experiences can be a first and indispensable step forward to become people aware of reality and of problems surrounding us. Facing the inequalities present in the world we're asked to give our contribution and to act in first person: that's the only way we could give reason of our hope in a better world.

COMPREHENSION CHECK

Read the article again and explain the following words:

1. inner frontline
2. instruction
3. interventions
4. thus
5. eliminate
6. core
7. commit
8. guideline
9. commitment
10. allocated assistance
11. continuous drop
12. gradually
13. laical and religious
14. empowerment
15. undeniable advantage

Answer the questions:

1. Give the example of regional and universal organizations.
2. What does MDG stand for?
3. On what UN and other international organizations focus on?
4. What is the United Nations Organization for?
5. Does the economic crisis influence on the level of poverty?
6. What countries form the Balkan zone?
7. What private associations you can name?
8. Who has more power? Private or State's sector?
9. What do you think you are going to learn in next units?

FOLLOW-UP

Make a short summary of the article using 4-5 sentences.

UNIT 3

WARM UP

In your opinion, what factors influence on poverty?

READING

Skim through the text fairly quickly and tell the audience its main idea.

FACTORS OF POVERTY

THE BIG FIVE

What are the major factors of poverty?

Poverty as a Social Problem:

We have all experienced a shortage of cash at times. That is an individual experience. It is not the same as the social problem of poverty. While money is a measure of wealth, lack of cash can be a measure of lack of wealth, but it is not the social problem of poverty.

Poverty as a social problem is a deep wound that permeates every dimension of culture and society. It includes sustained low levels of income for members of a community. It includes a lack of access to services like education, markets, health care, lack of the ability of making decision, and lack of communal facilities like

water, sanitation, roads, transportation, and communications. Furthermore, it is a "poverty of spirit", that allows members of that community to believe in and share despair, hopelessness, apathy, and timidity. Poverty, and especially the factors that contribute to it, are a social problem, and their solution is social.

We learn that we cannot fight poverty by alleviating its symptoms, but only by attacking the factors of poverty. Mentioned below the "Big Five" factors contribute to the social problem of poverty.

The simple transfer of funds, even if to the victims of poverty, will not eradicate or reduce poverty. It will merely alleviate the symptoms of poverty in the short run. It is not a durable solution. Poverty as a social problem calls for a social solution. That solution is the clear, conscious and deliberate removal of the big five factors of poverty.

Factors. Causes and History:

A "factor" and a "cause" are not quite the same thing. A "cause" can be seen as something that contributes to the origin of a problem like poverty, while a "factor" can be seen as something that contributes to its continuation after it already exists.

Poverty on world scale has many historical causes: colonialism, slavery, war and conquest. There is an important difference between those causes and what we call factors that maintain the conditions of poverty. The difference is in terms of what we, today, can do about them. We cannot go back into history and change the past. Poverty exists. Poverty was caused. What we potentially can do something about are the factors that perpetuate poverty.

It is well known that many European nations, faced by devastating wars, such as World Wars I and II, were reduced to bare poverty, where people were reduced to living on handouts and charity, barely surviving. Within decades they had brought themselves up in terms of real domestic income, to become thriving and influential modern nations of prosperous people. We know also that many other nations have remained among the least developed of the planet, even though billions of dollars of so-called "aid" money was spent on them. Why? Because the factors of poverty were not attacked, only the symptoms. At the macro or national level, a low GDP (gross domestic product) is not the poverty itself; it is the symptom of poverty, as a social problem.

The factors of poverty (as a social problem) that are listed here, **ignorance, disease, apathy, dishonesty and dependency**, are to be seen simply as conditions. No moral judgment is intended. They are not good or bad, they just are. If it is the decision of a group of people, as in a society or in a community, to reduce and to remove poverty, they will have to, without value judgment, observe and identify these factors, and take action to remove them as way to eradicate poverty.

The big five, in turn, contribute to secondary factors such as lack of markets, poor infrastructures, poor leadership, bad governance, under-employment, lack of skills, absenteeism, lack of capital, and others. Each of these is a social problem, each of them is caused by one or more of the big five, and each of them contributes to poverty perpetuation, and their eradication is necessary for the removal of poverty.