

Part IV: The challenges of today

8. Poverty

Poverty is a major handicap to any proper development of the young. This ugly phenomenon is nothing new; it has accompanied humanity in its history; but every age has its own peculiar experiences and stories to tell about the brutality of poverty to its children. The surprising thing about the structural development of human society is the persistence of this phenomenon and the challenges it poses to every age. In the 21st century, in spite of the political, industrial and technological advancements, poverty has remained a seemingly insurmountable problem to humanity till the present day. Considering the enormity of woes transmitted by this phenomenon, it could count as one of the greatest enemies of the human being and dignity. In meaning, poverty is a condition of being in lack, need, deprived of the essential necessities of life. Poverty humiliates and draws its victims to misery and sometimes to death. It destroys physically and psychically and practically hampers many aspects of human development.

8.1 *The Actuality of this Phenomenon*

There are many poverty-stricken human beings in our world today – people who are suffering from abject poverty and lacking the elements conducive for human existence. In most cases, some are confined in and restricted under the poverty trap – a situation which implies their lack of hope or inability to escape poverty. Poverty does not just mean the lack of financial or material means of livelihood. Political or societal exclusion is also part of poverty.¹ Most people cannot or do not have a free access to taking part in the life lived in their society. People who are regarded as nobody in the society have no possibility to lead a life worthy of human dignity.

In effect, there are many ways of accessing poverty. Poverty can be economical, socio-political, cultural, intellectual, religious and moral/ethical. Norbert Mette² tried to describe theologically the many faces of poverty and identified them with suffering. He presented these many different suffering faces of the poor as the greatest challenge to the Christian faith. We are daily confronted with: the poor faces suffering as a result of inflation caused by foreign debts; the hungry faces caused by social injustice; the disillusioned faces caused by unful-

¹ GUTIÉRREZ, G., „Theorie und Erfahrung im Konzept der Theologie der Befreiung“, in: *Lateinamerika und Europa, Dialog der Theologen*, (METZ J.B./ ROTTLÄNDER P. Hrsg.), München, 1988, 48-60.

² METTE, N., „Option für die Armen – Lernschritte zur Umkehr: Theologische Orientierungen und sozialpastorale Perspektiven im Kontext einer Wohlstandsgesellschaft“, in: *Arbeiterfragen* 2/93, Herzogenrath, 1993, 8.

filled promises of politicians; humiliated faces arising from the denial of their rights and cultural integrity; suffering faces as a result of aggression and intimidation; the suffering faces of children who are living in fear, roaming the streets, feeding from slums and sleeping under the bridges; the suffering faces of women who are regularly humiliated, marginalized and socially disadvantaged; tired and depressed faces of migrants because they cannot find an abode worthy for the human being; the unsatisfied and worn-out faces of workers who labour immensely but can hardly sustain their existence with their very little earnings. Indeed, poverty has many faces and in each case and form, it poses a great challenge to the modern man.

Talking of poverty is different from experiencing poverty. Those who live in poverty and experience the reality of poverty have different stories to tell than those who merely hear of this phenomenon. Poverty has different levels and categories. To be able to ascertain the conditions, under which we may categorize somebody as poor (at least from the economical and sociological points of view), Richard Hauser³ suggested that we must first of all call up and explain the concept of *existence-minimum*. An existence-minimum characterizes the boundary of needs satisfaction; and whoever lives below this boundary is seen as poor. Here we must recall our position in the previous chapter: that greed must be distinguished from and may not be tolerated as need. Having taken note of that point, it then becomes relevant to differentiate between *absolute* and *relative* existence minimum.

The *absolute existence-minimum* marks a boarder-line of needs satisfaction. And when every attempt for survival lies underneath this boarder-line and lingers to a level that may endanger human life and existence, then we talk of absolute existence-minimum. Taking economic poverty, for example, whoever lacks the means to satisfy the fundamental and basic physiological needs and necessities like food, clothing, housing or health-care, falls below the absolute existence minimum. When such lacks or needs remain unrectified, survival becomes threatened, life will be in jeopardy or will no longer be worthy of human. This suggests the existence of absolute poverty.

The *relative existence-minimum*, on the other hand, is seen mainly as socio-cultural problem. This involves a boarder-line, under which the victims are relegated and they are subjected to the periphery of the given society. Even when the basic necessities are available enough in the society, those living under the relative existence minimum have no access to them. They are just living far under the average living-conditions in their own society. In this sense, we are talking of relative poverty. In general terms therefore, absolute poverty refers to all people who, at a given time, must live below the absolute and over-all existence minimum; but relative poverty refers to those people who cannot meet the exis-

³ HAUSER, R., "Armut – national", in: *Handbuch der Wirtschaftsethik*, Bd.4, (KORFF, W. et.al. Hrsg.), Gütersloh 1999, 69-85.

tence minimum of their socio-cultural standard. While the former deals with the minimum for general human existence, the latter takes the level of the standard of living within a socio-cultural set-up into consideration. In relative poverty, the societal standard is the determining factor.

Meanwhile, whether absolute or relative, it is not an easy task to determine the existence-minimum. In this regard, Glatzer and Hübinger⁴ suggested a differentiation between the definition of *life conditions* and the *resources*. Some steps are relevant in order to address the definition of life conditions: first step is a concrete analysis of the specified dimensions of living conditions at a given time. The second step is to stipulate the boarder-line for the minimum standard. Third step is to set regulative rules for evaluating comparatively the stand of the different dimensions of life conditions. In this relationship, determining the absolute existence minimum requires strictly the analysis of those basic dimensions of life condition like feeding, housing, clothing, healthcare, etc., while determining the relative existence minimum enjoys a more liberal inclusion of other dimensions. Here, one also considers other conditions of life (like education, communication, transportation, standard work, recreation, access to justice and political participation, security and insurance, etc.) according to the socio-cultural standards in the given society.

When addressing the definition of the resources to existence minimum, the major consideration is the analyses of the amount of resources available to the person – comparing his income with the standard rate of expenditure. However, false application of resources by the individual person (for example, wrong calculation in life-style or false priority of needs and expenses) can also have consequences that may lead to poverty, in which case the person must have to bear the responsibility. Considering the exorbitance and high maintenance-cost of certain kinds of cars and houses, it would be unreasonable for somebody with a minimal income to purchase them; otherwise he runs the risk of financial ruin.

In the case of families with many members, the distributions of resources must be done in a manner which would ensure that every individual transcends the existence minimum. In this distribution, no member of the family should be seen as a burden to the rest; and none should be placed on greater advantage over the rest.

8.2 *The Impact of Relative Poverty*

As we have already pointed out, a society can be rich while some of her members remain poor. Relative poverty involves a boarder-line, under which the victims are relegated and they are subjected to the periphery of their own society. The basic necessities for life are available enough in the society, but some citi-

⁴ GLATZER, W. & HÜBINGER, W., „Lebenslagen und Armut“, in: *Armut im Wohlstand* (DÖRING, D., et.al. Hrsg.) Frankfurt/Main, 1990, 31-55.

zens are denied access to them. They are just living far under the average living-conditions in this given society. In some situations, some of these people may enjoy some basic amenities to keep life going, but when compared with the standard of living in their society, they are said to be living in relative poverty. And children who are brought up under such conditions of marginalization and deprivation suffer the impact of relative poverty very deeply.

On a general basis, the knowledge regarding the level of poverty (in socio-cultural terms) could be sought through identifying the different living conditions in the particular society in question, and from there, setting a minimum standard. In the same way, the level of poverty of the individual is accessed by synchronizing the sum of consumption with the income. A reasonable balance must be sought in order to determine a minimum standard. Through an analysis of these general and individual indications, we may arrive at the poverty index, which provides the poverty gap (between rich and poor), and the severity of poverty. With this clarity of the poverty boundaries, the government is obliged to pursue programs geared towards striking a societal balance and alleviating the poverty.

A typical society where such programmes are functional is the German society whose salary-tax deduction is structured to benefit earners with families and children more than those living alone. Even those who are unemployed have a source of little income (*Hartz-IV*) for basic living. Generally, with such programmes, poverty is not completely alleviated; but the institution of such social help “*Sozialhilfe*” programmes, geared relatively to fight the poverty, gives poverty a new face in the form of waging a war against it – “*bekämpfte Armut*” (confronted poverty). In this regard, some specifications are required: an overview of the differences in the social conditions between men and women; between children and adult; between single and married people; between families without children and those with children, as well as those with numerous children; families where both parents are earning and those where only one partner is earning, as well as families without job; between children raised in intact families and those raised by single parents. These are different situations which influence the poverty level, and the knowledge of these details is necessary for a proper organization and regular update of any official social help. Social help must take into consideration the changes which occur in these living conditions.

Meanwhile we must emphasize that social help must not be seen as a permanent solution for the poor, otherwise the poor will be condemned to be poor forever. The danger is that they give up fighting for the future; and when many of such people live in the same environment, they may form unintended ghettos of lower-class citizens. On the other hand, there is an absolute need to control the process of eligibility for social help to avoid the abuse of people shying away from work just because they can receive social help. The social help must rather be seen as “help to self-help”. It must be geared towards helping the poor out of poverty – by opening ways of seeking for self-subsistence.

Sometimes, however, in line with van Oorschot⁵, it is a known phenomenon that some people, even when they fall under the existence-minimum boarder-line, do not want to take the social help. This could be as a result of shame, fear of a disrespectful family reputation or some other reasons. In such cases, the concerned person(s) will be living in covered or hidden poverty “*verdeckte Armut*”. The old people are very much at risk to suffer a hidden poverty. A rejection of social help causes a lot of problems both for the individuals concerned and the political set-up of the society. In the words of Richard Hauser, “Verdeckte Armut liegt bei einer Person vor, die zwar einen Anspruch auf Sozialhilfe besitzt, ihn aber nicht geltend macht. Wenngleich der Staat hierbei Sozialausgaben „einspart“, so geschieht dies doch um den „Preis“ einer erhöhten und besonders schweren Armut“.⁶ He means that hidden poverty exists when a person does not lay claim to his right to social-help. Although the state saves money thereby, but it pays, on the other hand, a higher price of having a very high rate of severe poverty.

We may not look for the reasons for such rejection of social help solely on the individuals alone. There are internal and external causes. There may be lack of proper information or even false information to the matter. There may also be fear of unforeseen obligations and consequences of taking such money from the state. Pride can also play a role here; or the fear of being stigmatized. On the part of the state, the conditions and criteria placed against getting such help; an unnecessary publicity of the recipients; attitude of the official personnel towards the recipients; and public discussions where single abuses are generalized, can scare recipients away from the social help. We may not underestimate the fact that some of the “very-poor” live along the streets and under the bridges and as such do not have any permanent address that can qualify them to register for such social help. A majority of such people lives under the absolute existence minimum.

We can also notice an expansion of this hidden poverty not only at the level of those seen to be actually poor without official identification; but also by those who are at the poverty risks. This means that there are people who are prone to falling into the poverty line as a result of some changes in their life-situations. Here, there is every possibility and tendency for the person(s) to sink under the boarder-line of existence minimum, when one willingly or unwillingly enters into positions of social risk like old-age, divorce, joblessness, the inability to work, sickness, greater number of dependants which is not commensurate to one’s income, etc. People like R. Berntsen and U. Rendtel⁷ argued that even when we claim that the tendency of remaining rich is there, one must carefully

⁵ VAN OORSCHOT, W., *Take it or leave it. A Study of none-take-up of social security benefits*, Tilburg, 1994.

⁶ HAUSER, R., *op cit.*, 1999, 83.

⁷ BERNTSEN, R., & RENDTEL, U., “Zur Stabilität von Einkommensarmut im Längsschnitt”, in: *Lebenslagen im Wandel: Zur Einkommensdynamik in Deutschland seit 1984* (RENDTEL, U. /WAGNER, G. Hrsg.) Frankfurt am Main, 1991, 457-487.

differentiate where the situation is lasting and where it would be short-lived. However, to what extent those who are not regarded as poor could be exposed to the dangers of poverty is determined by the economic situation, political arrangements and the security order and social system of the nation.

Nonetheless, as far as relative poverty is concerned, some of the following reasons may generally be held responsible:

- 1) Unemployment and joblessness – especially when this situation lasts for a very long time;
- 2) Very low income that cannot carry the family's/person's responsibilities satisfactorily;
- 3) Unsuccessful business adventure (for people who are self employed) which may lead to bankruptcy;
- 4) Early retirement, especially when one has not saved enough in the pension scheme;
- 5) Family problems like divorce, separation of partners (occasioning a situation that one must bring up the children alone), and/or numerous numbers of children – above the family income capacity;
- 6) Sickiness – which may cause the inability to work;
- 7) Unforeseen circumstances like drug-addiction, alcohol-addiction, uncontrollable spending of money;
- 8) Lack of, or poorly organized social-help programmes on the part of the political society.
- 9) An unforeseen death of the family bread-winner (in cases where the children have neither insurance nor any material/financial inheritance).

As mentioned above, even in those rich societies that have organized social programmes for the alleviation of poverty, some outstanding percentage of the children living in them are suffering under relative poverty. According to the UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) Publication of its Reports in 2008 on the situation of children in Germany and some of the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) nations, relative poverty is increasing and the material welfare and even the feeling of personal subjective well-being in children is drastically depreciating.⁸ In line with the directives of UNICEF, Hans Bertram analyzed the situation of children in the different states of Germany compared with other member-countries of OECD under six dimensions: Material well-being, Health and Security, Education, Family and Peer-relations, Behavioral-risks, subjective feeling of well-being.

⁸ BERTRAM, H. (Hrsg.), *Mittelmaß für Kinder: Der UNICEF-Bericht zur Lage der Kinder in Deutschland*, München, 2008.

Übersicht zum materiellen Wohlbefinden von Kindern in OECD-Ländern und deutschen Bundesländern

Materielles Wohlbefinden					
	Einkommens- armut bei Kindern	Deprivation			Arbeit
	Anteil (in %) der Kinder (0-17) in Haushalten mit einem Äquivalenzeinkommen unter 50% des Medians: aktuellste Daten (2002) ¹	Anteil (in %) der Kinder, die über geringen Wohlstand ihrer Familie berichten: 11, 13 und 15 Jahre alt: 2001	Anteil (in %) der Kinder im Alter von 15 Jahren, die berichten, weniger als sechs Bildungs- güter zu besitzen: 2003	Anteil (in %) der Kinder im Alter von 15 Jahren, die berichten, dass in ihrem Zuhause weniger als zehn Bücher vorhanden sind: 2003	Anteil (in %) der erwerbsfähigen Haushalte mit Kindern ohne ein erwerbstätiges Elternteil, OECD: aktuellste Daten (2002) ²
Baden-Württemberg	8,7				4,7
Bayern	7,6				4,2
Belgien	6,7	16,9	21	11,7	4
Berlin	15,8				15,8
Brandenburg	19,6				9,5
Bremen	19,6				16,5
Dänemark	2,4	13,5	27,2	7,4	4,1
Deutschland	10,9	16,4	17,6	6,9	8,8
Finnland	3,4	17,8	20,5	5,1	3,1
Frankreich	7,3	16,1	25,4	9,1	6,2
Griechenland	12,4	28,7	61,8	7,2	2,4
Großbritannien	16,2	15,3	20,1	9,4	7,9
Hamburg	14,8				12,6
Hessen	9,4				6,8
Irland	15,7	20,7	31	10,4	6,9
Italien	15,7		25,8	9	3,8
Kanada	13,6	10,7	21,9	6,4	3
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	20,9				11,9
Niederlande	9	9	18,3	12,6	5,7
Niedersachsen	9,7				8,0
Nordrhein-Westfalen	10				8,3
Norwegen	3,6	5,8	11,9	4,6	4,6
Österreich	13,3	16,8	16,7	9,3	2,1
Polen	14,5	43,1	42,5	8,4	9,3
Portugal	15,6	28,9	33,9	12,9	1,7
Rheinland-Pfalz	9,3				6,3
Saarland	11,6				7,9
Sachsen	19,6				10,5
Sachsen-Anhalt	21				12,5
Schleswig-Holstein	10,3				7,4
Schweden	3,6	9,2	18,2	4,5	2,7
Schweiz	6,8	13,1	22,7	10,9	1,8
Spanien	15,6	22,4	24,7	4,4	4,2
Thüringen	19,2				8,1
Tschechien	7,2	40,2	27,8	1,9	7,2
Ungarn	13,1	38,7	44,1	4,1	11,3
USA	21,7	13,1	24,2	12,2	2,3

Anmerkung: Die Jahreszahlen in Klammern gelten für die deutschen Bundesländer

- 1 Die relative Armut wurde anhand des Median der Einkommen von allen mittleren Einkommen von Familien mit Kindern unter 18 Jahre in der Bundesrepublik berechnet. Relativ arm ist, wer 50% unterhalb des **Medianeinkommens der Bundesrepublik** liegt. Das monatliche Familiennettoeinkommen beinhaltet staatliche und private Transferleistungen.
- 2 Haushalt mit Kindern: Jeder Haushalt mit Kindern ohne Altersbegrenzung für die Kinder. Der Wert für Haushalte mit arbeitslosen Eltern basiert auf der EU-Definition von Arbeit.

Looking at the statistics for the material well-being of children⁹, the major source of poverty affecting children is either based on parents having no jobs or those earning very little – having very low income, which eventually leads to the child's deprivation of adequate education or general standard of well-being in one's own affluent society. Our intention is not to show which state or country is better or worse than the other, but to create the awareness that a lot more needs to be done for the well-being of our children. One realizes with regret that many children, especially children growing up under single parents, are proportionately much disadvantaged. The poverty pressure for single parents is very high. Even when they are working and earning, their single income is hardly enough to conquer the poverty risks. Also, in the area of education, over 25% of the young people have the worry and fear of getting minimal loans in the future with the qualifications they can afford with the trainings they are presently pursuing.

Looking at the dimension of subjective feeling of wellbeing, where the statistic¹⁰ centered on children's health, schooling and personal feeling of well-being, there is too little satisfaction.

The data shows that even in Germany, over 6% of the children/ young people up to the age of 15 years, are growing up with the feeling of being outsiders in their own society. They feel excluded from the standard of life in their society; or in worse cases, feel subjected to loneliness even among the stream of people and peers. In the real sense of the word, they are relatively poor, and cannot meet up with the pace and standard of their society. The Reports of the "*Bremer Institut für Arbeitsmarktforschung und Jugendberufshilfe*" (BLAf) highlighted a 10% increase within a year in the number of children dependent on money from social-help.¹¹ This means that in December 2006, a yearly average of 1.9 million children under the age of 15 years were recorded as being dependent on the social-help-money (HARTZ-IV), which means 173.000 poorer children more than the year before. And the number keeps increasing as the years go by.

Moreover, according to this BLAf's report, the poverty increase was overwhelmingly noticeable in the more economically advantaged southern states like Bayern (with 12% increase) and Baden-Württemberg (with 13% increase). This situation proves that the poorer families do not benefit much from the economic growth of their society. From this background, the "*Deutsche Kinderschutzbund*" warns that such societal inequality –especially among children – can dramatically lower the chances of getting good education and qualifications, it can endanger good health, or minimize the chances of taking part in social and cultural, as well as developmental activities, and can also hamper a balanced life in the family. So I think that in this regard, politics, and educational researches can help by according

⁹ BERTRAM, H. (Hrsg.), *Ibid*, 233.

¹⁰ BERTRAM, H. (Hrsg.), *Mittelmaß für Kinder: Der UNICEF-Bericht zur Lage der Kinder in Deutschland*, München, 2008, 269.

¹¹ www.zeit/online/2007/17/kinderarmut-studie.

Übersicht zum subjektiven Wohlbefinden von Kindern in OECD-Ländern und deutschen Bundesländern

Subjektives Wohlbefinden						
	Gesundheit	persönliches Wohlbefinden				Schulisches Wohlbefinden
	Anteil (in %) junger Menschen, die ihre Gesundheit als «ausreichend» oder «mangelhaft» bezeichnen, 11, 13 und 15 Jahre: 2001	Anteil (in %) junger Menschen mit Werten über der Mitte der Lebenszufriedenheitsskala: 11, 13 und 15 Jahre: 2001	Anteil (in %) der Schülerinnen, die der Aussage zustimmen «Ich fühle mich wie ein Außenseiter oder von bestimmten Dingen ausgeschlossen», 15 Jahre: 2003	Anteil (in %) der Schülerinnen, die der Aussage zustimmen «Ich fühle mich unbehaglich und fehl am Platz», 15 Jahre: 2003	Anteil (in %) der Schülerinnen, die der Aussage zustimmen «Ich fühle mich alleine», 15 Jahre: 2003	Anteil (in %) junger Menschen, die die «Schule sehr gerne mögen», 11, 13 und 15 Jahre: 2001
Baden-Württemberg						
Bayern						
Belgien	13,1	87,8	7,9	15,6	6,4	17,9
Berlin						
Brandenburg						
Bremen						
Dänemark	14,8	87,7	5,3	11,8	6,2	21,4
Deutschland	14,9	85,4	6,1	11,4	6,2	29,5
Finnland	11	91,6	5,5	8,4	6,2	8
Frankreich		85,1	7,7	12,3	6,4	21,7
Griechenland	10,1	92,2	6,3	8,3	6,5	29,5
Großbritannien	22,6	83,5	6,8	8,7	5,4	19
Hamburg						
Hessen						
Irland	12,9	86,8	5,6	7,8	4,6	22,3
Italien	12,5	85,2	4,9	6,2	6	13
Kanada	13,7	86,3	8,9	10,5	7,6	21,9
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern						
Niederlande	17,2	94,2	3,9	6,9	2,9	34,4
Niedersachsen						
Nordrhein-Westfalen						
Norwegen	18,5	82,9	5,6	9,1	7	38,9
Österreich	15,6	88,1	5,8	8,2	7,2	36,1
Polen	14,4	80	8,2	9,9	8,4	17,3
Portugal	19,1	80,5	6,4	11,7	5	31,1
Rheinland-Pfalz						
Saarland						
Sachsen						
Sachsen-Anhalt						
Schleswig-Holstein						
Schweden	13,2	86	5,2	4,9	6,7	21,6
Schweiz	9,1	89	7,1	11,7	6,6	22,3
Spanien	9	87,8	3,3	8,9	4,4	22,8
Thüringen						
Tschechien	11,8	83,4	9,7	6,4	7	11,6
Ungarn	14,9	84,4	9,3	7,6	7,3	26,3
USA	19,8	83,1				23,4

the life and welfare of children a central place in their activities. Children must be helped to trust in themselves and in their future. The poverty of children

must be fought with all good possible means; and those affected must be supported and given a sense of worth and belonging, since, as we said in an earlier chapter, every child has needs (education, feeding, clothing, housing, recreation, protection and security, etc.) and also has the right to have these needs fulfilled by whoever is responsible for his wellbeing.

This is the reason why the German “Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (BGB)” outlined juridical measures to ensure that the welfare of children is not endangered. “Wird das körperliche, geistige oder seelische Wohl des Kindes oder sein Vermögen gefährdet und sind die Eltern nicht gewillt oder nicht in der Lage, die Gefahr abzuwenden, so hat das Familiengericht die Massnahmen zu treffen, die zur Abwendung der Gefahr erforderlich sind. In der Regel ist anzunehmen, dass das Vermögen des Kindes gefährdet ist, wenn der Inhaber der Vermögenssorge seine Unterhaltspflicht gegenüber dem Kind oder seine mit der Vermögenssorge verbundenen Pflichten verletzt oder Anordnungen des Gerichts, die sich auf die Vermögenssorge beziehen, nicht befolgt.”¹² When the bodily, mental or spiritual welfare of the child, or his properties for existence are endangered, and the parents are not willing or not in the position to prevent the danger, the family court must take measures to avoid the impending dangers. We assume that the properties of the child are in danger when the caretaker of these properties runs short of his obligations towards taking care of the child, or ignores the direction of the court concerning the child and his properties. The so-called measures to be taken include:

1. Ordering public help, for example, activities of the child/youth-help and healthcare systems;
2. Insisting on the observance of compulsory school-system;
3. Prohibition of the source of danger (for a particular time range) the use of family house or particular environment, or visiting some other place where the child resides;
4. Prohibiting the source of danger, every contact or meeting with the child;
5. Replacing or changing in the document, the parental care-taking of the child;
6. Partial or total revoke of parental care.

Trying to address the problem of children’s poverty, each of the individual states in the German federation is seeking ways for political solutions to the quagmire. In Nord-Rhein-Westfalen (NRW), different organisations (like Arbeiterwohlfahrt Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft NRW, DGB Bezirk NRW, Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft NRW, Deutscher Kinderschutzbund Landesverband NRW, Der Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband NRW) came together and made a collective publication – a memorandum¹³ over children’s poverty, fighting to prevent it by

¹² BGB – *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*, 71.Auflage 2013, §1666

¹³ *MEMORANDUM KINDERARMUT: Bekämpfung der Kinderarmut, Politische Forderungen, Präventive Ausrichtung der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe und des Bildungssystems*. August 2009.

way of making political demands. Confronted with the fact that almost every fourth child in NRW is living under relative poverty, they formulated a 10-points programme of political demands; and made preventive suggestions in the area of children's education: 1) Overcoming the borders of federalism; 2) Formulating and implementing an agreed and acceptable educational concept, social-state concept and financing concepts; 3) Making the welfare of the child a priority; 4) Survival-basic-insurance for children; 5) Prevention and participation instead of crises intervention; 6) Supporting the Parents in their task of upbringing; 7) Building and expanding children's daily nursery homes; 8) Reformation of school education; 9) Supporting and encouraging children with migration backgrounds; 10) Ensuring an early and a constant medical care.

This political will ought to be seen in every society and even internationally. The preventive strategies may differ, based on cultural and structural differences, but the will to improve the plight of the young must remain the task of all political bodies. If a family is rich, every member of the household should benefit from this wealth. In the same way, if a society is wealthy, it should not condone sectional poverty among its citizens. A wise saying has it: Prevention is better than cure. Poverty prevention as well as alleviation – relative or absolute – must form part of the targets of any human organisation and political structure. One cannot pretend its non existence – either in the relative form or in the absolute form. Wherever they remain unaddressed, children bear the brunt very bitterly. This can and must be prevented. The basic maxim for children's poverty prevention should be: *Every child must be supported, encouraged and fortified for the present and the future.* There must also be a network in place among parents, institutions and communities in the society, as well as in politics, to oversee and coordinate all endeavours in the act of prevention and alleviation of children's poverty; and to ensure that the struggle goes on till the fight is completely won.

8.3 *Why Absolute Poverty?*

All societies are not the same. And not all societies do have relative poverty; some are weighed down with a more biting form of poverty – the absolute poverty. This means that the greater percentage of its citizens is living under the absolute existence minimum. Whoever has not been exposed to, or not yet opportuned to experience such living-conditions may underrate the intensity of the suffering of children growing up in such circumstances. One obvious fact is that whenever absolute poverty is mentioned, all eyes and minds go to the undeveloped, or rather 'not-yet-developed' regions of the globe like Asia, Latin America and Africa. One may ask: what is wrong with these regions of the earth, and why have they, despite modernity, remained poor with very little future for their children? Africa, for example, "is a continent, which possesses extraordinary human resources. Currently, its population is rated at a total of a trillion citizens, and its

birth-rate is the highest in the world today. Africa is in a land with enormous riches for human living, but this life is unfortunately characterized with serious poverty, and is suffering under heavy injustices.”¹⁴

Addressing poverty in developing nations, we must take the economical, socio-political and anthropological dimensions into consideration. Economically, many are poor because their material resources are not enough to afford them a living. This means that they are not able to provide the basic human needs like food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and basic education. As long as one is not able to provide these basic necessities, one is forced to live under the minimum standard. Socio-politically, many are poor because of the social inequalities in the societies. Sometimes, the asymmetrical power tussle zeros the chances for many to take part actively in the life of their society. Anthropologically, it is unfortunate to witness that some cultures have embraced poverty as their stable form of life. In such situations, one may talk of “culture of poverty”. Here one is imaginatively limited to poverty in his worldview, behaviour and aspirations.

Walbert Buehlmann concentrated his research on Africa, and adequately tried to summarize what, in his opinion, could be accountable for the poverty in the African continent. “Armut in Afrika heißt, ungünstige klimatische Verhältnisse, mit bald zu viel, bald zu wenig Regen; infolgedessen der chronische Hunger in der Sahel-Zone.... Armut in Afrika heißt ungerechte Welthandelsbedingungen.... Armut in Afrika heißt Spielball der internationalen Politik sein.... Armut in Afrika heißt Knappheit an Lebensmitteln, Medikamenten und Ersatzteilen aller Art, heißt Staatsbürokratie, Schwarzmarkt, Korruption und Ausbeutung der Armen durch die Reichen; eine Situation, die J. Nyerere schon ‘geistige Slums’ genannt hat.”¹⁵ He says that poverty in Africa ranges from the unfavorable weather conditions – sometimes very heavy and sometimes very little rain – which often result to lack of food in the affected zones; to the unjust world-business conditions as well as the unfair and manipulative international politics – where the poorer countries producing most of the world’s raw materials get just little or nothing for them; also poverty in Africa includes the internal problems comprising of bad rulership, corruption, black-market, incompetent state-bureaucracy, lack of the means of livelihood, the rich getting richer while the poor get poorer, a situation which Julius Nyerere called ‘mental slum’.

As we said earlier, there are many and different aspects of poverty, but because the economic aspect of poverty leaves behind a conspicuous and more devastating trace, as well as terrible effects, especially, among peoples living under the absolute existence minimum, we want to explore more into this dimension. There are numerous causes of economic poverty in the developing countries.

¹⁴ BENEDIKT XVI, “Speech before the Angelus on 4th October 2009”, in: *L’osservatore Romano*, 39, Nr.41-9, October 2009.

¹⁵ BUEHLMANN, W., *Weltkirche: Neue Dimensionen, Model für das Jahr 2001*, Graz 1987, 39.

Hermann Sautter¹⁶ identified the following: 1) Minimal chances of getting employed – “*Geringe Beschäftigungschancen*”; 2) Low level of work productivities – “*Niedrige Arbeitsproduktivitäten*”; 3) Insufficient system of transfer for social help – “*Unzureichende Versorgungsleistung durch Transfersysteme*”; 4) The unfair protectionist economic politics of the industrialized nations – “*Protektionistische Handelspolitik der Industrieländer*”.

When the people are so poor and have no means for educating their children, the young people will have very minimal chances for employment into the work-market which consistently demands higher qualifications from job seekers. Secondly, in the so-called poorer nations, populations are exploding immensely, so that the little affordable job opportunities can only be seen as drops of water in the ocean of job seekers. Overpopulation is one of the reasons for massive unemployment in these parts of the world. Here the competition for employment is very high. And this gives the job-market the undue advantage over the masses. Also the sophisticated standard of the world-market demands qualifications, which the people’s economic standard of living and education cannot easily meet. It is a chain of connected problems – an unending circle.

Obviously, overpopulation can lead to poverty; and we know that poverty is a great handicap to the development of the child and society; but this phenomenon is not enough to justify the deprivation of any child of his rights – especially education and other basic needs. That is why, in the section of our work which dealt with the rights and needs of the child, we called for solidarity of action between families, communities, states, nations – in a responsible hierarchy of obligations – in the task of bringing up the younger generation – so that the population would have enough qualified work-force to meet the demands of the job-market. Deciding to be childless is not and cannot be a solution, otherwise we face depopulation like most European countries are witnessing today. The problem of childlessness and depopulation of some parts of the world, especially in the West, and the fear of family extinction, is neither new nor peculiar to the 21st century alone. Even in the 18th century, the signs were evident as we can confirm from the writings of Rousseau: “Aber es genügt den Frauen nicht, ihre Kinder nicht mehr zu stillen, sie wollen überhaupt keine mehr, was eine natürliche Konsequenz ist. Sobald das Muttersein als Last empfunden wird, findet man die Mittel, sich seiner zu entledigen. Man will eine fruchtlose Ehe, in der man ungestört genießen kann. Der Reiz wendet sich gegen die Gattung, statt zu ihrer Vermehrung zu dienen. Diese und andere Gründe der Entvölkerung zeigen uns das zukünftige Schicksal Europas an.”¹⁷ Rousseau means that women no longer see it as problematic to stop breastfeeding their children; they don’t even want children

¹⁶ SAUTTER, H., „Armut – Entwicklungsländer“, in: *Handbuch der Wirtschaftsethik*, Bd.4, (KORFF, W. et.al. Hrsg.), Gütersloh 1999, 86-106.

¹⁷ ROUSSEAU, J.J., *Emil oder Über die Erziehung*, (Herstellung: Ferdinand Schöningh), Paderborn 1971, 18.

any longer; a situation that has its natural consequences. As long as being a mother is seen as a burden, one tries to rid oneself of this problem by wanting to live alone. One wishes a childless marriage, where one will enjoy life undisturbed. The frustration gears up irritation against the family instead of promoting its growth. These and other reasons for depopulation show us how Europe is destined to look like in the future. This is not meant to discourage us, but just to warn against the dangers of depopulation.

Rousseau went on to say that most women no longer have the zeal to remain women or become mothers. But even when they want to be, the circumstances around them impose otherwise. Here we must acknowledge and offer respect for those women who, the burden of the societal disadvantages on women notwithstanding, are still able to be good mothers. We must acknowledge with respect that today, many women are confronted with the fact of family and job responsibilities, and a good number manages the situation very responsibly. In order not to be forced into deciding *either* for job *or* family, “sei darauf hingewiesen, dass ethisch gesehen eine Politik den Vorzug verdient, die die wirtschaftliche und soziale Lage der Menschen – insbesondere der Frauen – verbessert”¹⁸. It is here advised, from the point of view of ethics, to play such politics which can positively improve the economic and social situations of the population – especially the women. In fact, women are indispensable in the family and society. Without women, there would be no birth, and the child without a mother is artificial. The child needs a mother who would show him love and takes responsibility for his upbringing. And if these responsibilities are badly handled, or not addressed at all because of social or economic pressure, that has great repercussions on the child.

It is however evident that so many other reasons are accountable for depopulation: ranging from politics, economy and medicine, to the changes in mentality, standard of living and the current form of civilization. Outside these societal, but external factors, the family remains the root. If children do not emanate from the family, they cannot be responsibly germinated from elsewhere. And their upbringing and education must also begin at this root – family. Here, not only the mothers have the responsibility of bringing up their children. No one can therefore blame only the women for the woeful plight of the family in modern times. We must have to acknowledge how men on their part disadvantage the family in the pursuit of their career. Against such a trend, Rousseau emphasized the importance of the role of the father in the upbringing of his child. “Wie die Mutter die wahre Amme ist, so ist der Vater der wahre Lehrer. Sie müssen sich also über ihre Funktionen wie über ihre Methoden verständigen. Aus der Hand der einen muss das Kind in die Hand des anderen übergehen.”¹⁹ Just as the mother is a true nurse for the child, so also should the father be a true teacher for the child. Both par-

¹⁸ SAUTTER, H., *Op.cit.*, 1999, 94.

¹⁹ ROUSSEAU, J.J., *Op.cit.*, 1971, 22.

ents must agree on their functions and their methods. The child must move freely and smoothly from the hands of one to the hands of the other.

Rousseau points out also that the father cannot be dispensed from his role. Responsible parents, even when they are not professional educators, can bring up their child better than the most professional teacher in the world. This is because zeal and enthusiasm, (which one can readily find in the personal relationship between parent and child), can replace talent (of the teacher); but not the other way round. Rousseau, in addition, found very hard words for irresponsible fathers: When a father just biologically procreates and feeds his child, he has only done a fraction of his duty. The child must be brought up in the family and community to be a social being, human, and a citizen of the state. "Wer nicht seine Vaterpflichten erfüllen kann, hat nicht das Recht, Vater zu werden. Weder Armut, noch Arbeit, noch Rücksichten entbinden ihn der Pflicht, seine Kinder zu ernähren und zu erziehen"²⁰. Whoever cannot fulfil his duty as father hasn't the right to be one. Not even poverty or job can exonerate one from the duties of caring for, feeding and educating one's children as father. And the greatest mistake one can make is to delegate this responsibility. If a child is brought up outside his family care and love, he loses the familial bond, and knows very little about his personal history, his parents and his siblings, and is likely to face identity crises. The young people must be brought up and trained to face the challenges of the ever-growing structures of economic growth everywhere they live.

Low level of work-productivity is another cause of poverty in developing countries. Taking agriculture (which should be a major source of employment in developing countries) for example, the productivity of workers depends very much on the applicability of other capitals like land, materials and money to the human capital. In most cases, even when the human capital is available, they lack working infrastructure: the land is often overused to the extent that they become non-arable; some people must toil in infertile and dry lands and there are no machines to irrigate them; some people must use antiquated implements and tools which are no longer ad rem for the mass production of goods required in the agricultural sector today.

The major problem with this sector is that, even if they want to improve or grow, they do not have any access to the official credit-market. The big companies monopolize the banks and the credit market such that the small business establishments have little or no chance to get credit. J.P. Krahnén and R.H. Schmidt²¹ evaluated these situations as dangerous and not conducive for the growth of these small entrepreneurs because they are by this means exposed to borrow money from private money-lenders who normally demand exorbitant interests. There must be a programme to finance the small business bodies.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 23.

²¹ KRAHNEN, J.P., &SCHMIDT, R.H., *Informal and Formal Financial Systems in Developing Countries*, Frankfurt am Main, 1991.

Another problem contributing to the low level of work-productivity is the insufficient access to health-care, further education, training and general well being of the human capital. The achievement capability of the working force depends much on their physical and mental fitness. When one is sick and lacks medical attention, we cannot expect much productivity from him. In most of the developing countries, there is no health insurance, and in most cases the sick do not receive proper treatment because they cannot afford the costs. In serious sicknesses, hospital bills may send the family borrowing, or may liquidate their investment in any small entrepreneurship; and this will adversely affect the economic standard of the family. So, as long as the health of the work-force is not guaranteed, their productivity is also not guaranteed.

Moreover, the normal training and higher training of the work-force is not sufficient. In chapter two we discussed exemplarily the Nigerian school system and saw how problematic it was to adapt and equate the educational system with the particular needs of the society and culture. Now the complexity in the work-market of today demands adequate (normal and higher) training. Educational costs are nowadays alarming, such that most parents can no longer afford education for their children. Some parents themselves could not and had not received adequate education, and this has affected or is affecting today their levels economically in the society. L. DeRidder points out that lower level of parents' education can retard their children's career development. "Being born to parents with limited education and income reduces the likelihood of going to college or achieving a professional occupational goal and essentially predetermines the child's likely vocational choice".²²

In this regard, but on the other hand, J. Mortimer and his research colleagues²³ also reported that parents with postsecondary education tend to pass along its importance to their children. This is a finding supported by many other studies. Meanwhile, not only the level of education counts; the level of family income (since there are also some illiterate families who come across money) is a major aspect of family background that influences the career development of the youth.

Here, one must mention the risks insufficient income may pose to the family, especially for girls. It is often the case that families with limited economic resources tend to direct them first to the males of the family, giving less hope and encouragement for further education to the daughters in the family. Also, some parents – especially working class or lower-income parents – may hold values (arising from some form of cultural bias) that place girls in the homekeeper role and lay less emphasis on their occupational preparation. This is great injustice. Instead, through a process of educating (with equal opportunities) all their chil-

²² DeRIDDER, L., *The Impact of Parents and Parenting on Career Development*, Knoxville, 1990, 4.

²³ MORTIMER, J., et al., *Influences on Adolescents' Vocational Development*: Eric Digest Series 352555, Berkeley, 1992.

dren about life roles, parents can improve their family standards and influence the employability skills and values that children subsequently adopt. Grinstad and Way report one mother's message to her daughter on the theme of taking education seriously and becoming self-sufficient as a way of averting poverty: "You have to have a way to take care of your family. And she (her mother) says you cannot depend on a man. ... you have to think about number one and that's you. ... how are you going to make a living, how are you going to support your children, if you don't have some kind of training."²⁴ This is such a challenge that we expect every parent to give his child – male or female.

Insufficient system for the transfer of human care is another major cause of poverty. There are human beings who are no longer functional and must rely on external help, otherwise they will be experiencing the brunt of poverty. Here we can mention people who are sick (temporarily or permanently), people who are handicapped, people who are aged, women who get children and must bring them up alone, etc. When such people do not get any social help – privately or officially – they are prone to fall under the existence minimum standard. In most cases, one remembers with nostalgia the African extended family system, which had always supplied to fill this gap. I mean 'with nostalgia' because today, the western type of civilization has infiltrated the African cultures and is destroying the typical African style of life and social system. African cultures cherish collective existence – where the survival of the individual is only guaranteed by a social network of coexistence and cooperative assistance with one another. When an African culture imports the foreign "Western" culture of individualism (forgetting that almost everyone in this other culture is privileged to have all insurances as an individual), and is not in the position to afford such insurances for the members of its society, the standard of living for the helpless ones would be miserable.

One of the strongest reasons why poverty is persisting in developing countries could also be looked for in the relationship with the developed and industrialized nations. There are enough problems from within, no doubt, but the external factor has much weight. The politics of protectionism, as well as the economic and financial politics of the developed nations do not give any chance for the poorer countries to develop. The poorer nations are not left with any chance to gain any comparative advantage from the work productivity of the industrial goods. They possess the raw-materials, but the productions of the required market-goods are not carried out in their land. Even when they produce, their products are denied access into the markets of the industrial nations – whose primary interest in any business relationship is to protect their own market. The underdeveloped nations are forced to export their

²⁴ GRINSTAD, J.A., & WAY, W.L., "The Role of Family in the Vocational Development of Family and Consumer Education Teachers: Implications for Vocational Education", in: *Journal of Vocational Education Research* 18/4, 1993, 50.

raw-materials at give-away prices, and must remain consumers of imported goods made out of the raw-materials stemming from their own soil. In such situations – where industrialization is not encouraged or even sabotaged, and instead, dependence on the “external exploitation” becomes the order of the day – unemployment problems can only worsen, and economic growth dampened. “Die Armut in Entwicklungsländern sei, so gesehen, das Ergebnis einer systembedingten internationalen Ausbeutung.”²⁵ One can say, in this sense, that the poverty in the developing nations is the result of the international system of exploitation. The whole systems of global economic relationships only result to greater amassing of wealth for the industrialized nations, and the promotion of abject poverty for the not-yet-industrialized nations and regions.

Corruption is another monster nursing poverty and hampering every attempt or effort being made at alleviating poverty; and this affects negatively the proper orientation which the young people deserve for their development. As a sample, we take Nigeria where, in my opinion, corruption has become endemic. Despite its tremendous natural and human resources, Nigeria has not been able to wriggle itself out of the shackles of poverty. Nigeria is Africa’s nation with the largest population, oil reserves and numerous numbers of ethnic groups, whose relationships with one another unfortunately end up in rivalry and conflict instead of cooperation and enrichment. The fear of ethnic instability in Nigeria led to the adoption of a federal system of government – resulting to a fiscal decentralization, which provides Nigeria’s state and local governments considerable autonomy, including the control of about 50% of government revenues, as well as being responsible for providing public services. But unfortunately, the absence of a control-machinery and the lack of a stringent regulatory and monitoring system from the government has allowed for rampant corruption. One can rightly argue that Nigerians have no reason to be poor because of the abundance of human and natural resources including oil and gas available in the country. For instance, Nigeria realized the sum of 300 billion Dollars from crude oil between 1970 and 1990. In addition, in 2003, the government earned the total sum of 998.4 billion Naira from crude oil alone,²⁶ yet there is nothing meaningful to show for it in terms of development. The ruling bodies at the different level of government most of the time appropriate these revenues for their private interests and purposes. Nowadays in Nigeria, people join politics, not to work for their people, rather to have access to the public fund and to take their own share of the national cake – which is monthly disbursed to the various sectors of government.

The populace, denied of their resources, is for the most part not satisfied with the status quo, and often resorts to violent unrests, although sometimes, some of

²⁵ SAUTTER, H., „Armut – Entwicklungsländer“, in: *Handbuch der Wirtschaftsethik*, Bd.4, (KORFF, W. et.al. Hrsg.), Gütersloh 1999, 97.

²⁶ IKELEGBE, A. O., “Crisis of Resistance: Youth Militias, Crime and Violence in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria”, in: *African Studies Centre Seminar*, 2004.

the ethnic unrests are politically or religiously motivated. While this unrest has its roots in poverty and economic competition, its economic and human damages further escalate the problems of poverty. Human lives are lost, infrastructure is destroyed and people in the private sector lose their means of livelihood through vandalism of property. Sometimes, some of these civil unrests contribute to the adoption of populist policy measures which work in the short-run, but impede long-term poverty alleviation efforts. For instance, ethnic unrest and the displeasure of local communities where oil companies are located have contributed to the conflict over oil trade in the Niger Delta, which threatens the productivity of oil trade – causing reduction of revenue and greater unemployment. Very often the government insists on policies of compensation, which may temporarily pacify the uproar, enrich one or two pressure-groups, but brings no long-term plan for the economic development of the concerned areas. Moreover, the process of oil extraction has resulted in significant pollution, which further harms the agricultural sector, which is the major source of income for most people of these areas.

It is not as if nothing has been done so far in the history of Nigeria to combat poverty; but corruption has hindered past poverty alleviation efforts, and will continue to do so, unless corruption is checked, since resources which could pay for public goods or which are directed towards investment (and so create employment opportunities and other amenities for citizens) are being misappropriated. In the bid to alleviate poverty, several governments in Nigeria have initiated different policies and programmes aimed at achieving the goal. But corruption and political instability gave no way through. Some of these programmes include: Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank as well as the National Accelerated Food Production Programme of 1972; Operation feed the Nation (1976) – aimed at teaching the rural farmers how to use modern farming tools; Green Revolution programme (1979) – to reduce food importation and improve local food production. Many more poverty alleviation programmes came between 1986 and 2004. They include: Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI), Better Life Programme (BLP), Directorate of Employment (NDE); People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN); Community Bank (CB); Family Support Programme (FSP); Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP); Poverty Eradication Programme (PEP); National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP); and National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) whose aim were to ameliorate the suffering of the people by providing them employment opportunities and access to credit facilities to enable them establish their own business. Money meant for these programmes at all levels of governments are often stolen and kept in private bank accounts at home and abroad by public officials. We must accept that no meaningful investment, which can generate development and employment for the people can take place in so an environment plagued with corrupt practices.

The concern for the alleviation of poverty is not only internal. Even when these policies are initiated internally, sometimes they receive support from the World Bank. For instance, since 1961 when Nigeria joined the World Bank, the country has received assistance on 120 projects worth \$1.87 billion.²⁷ Some of these projects include: *The Micro/Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)* – This was a US\$ 32 million project which was aimed at increasing the performance and employment levels of *MSMEs* in selected non-oil industry sub-sectors in three targeted states of the country. The purpose of this scheme was to diversify the Nigerian economy from relying solely on crude oil as her source of foreign exchange earner. Another was the *National Fadama Development Project* – This was a US\$ 100 million project with the objective of achieving sustainable increase in incomes of Fadama users – like local farmers, fishers, hunters, and all those who depend directly or indirectly on Fadama resources. The purpose of this project was to provide meaningful means of livelihood to nomadic cattle rearers in the northern part, hunters and fishermen in the southern part of Nigeria with a view to enhancing their living standard. Worthy of mention is also the *Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Project (LEEMP)* – This was a US\$ 70 million project, which aimed at strengthening the institutional framework at all three levels of government (federal, state and local governments) to support an environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive development. It is however a million dollar question to ask how the government officials and their agents have managed the whole sums of money meant for each of these different projects.

In the midst of all these problems – of corruption, economical disadvantages arising from international politics, insufficient system for the transfer of human care, low level of work productivity and the minimal chances for employment – confronting the developing nations of the world, children growing up in these nations are often exposed to all sorts of abuses, exploitations and untold suffering. Many children have no good stories to tell about their childhood. A 15 year old boy from Liberia lamented in an interview that he so much dreams to be re-born again, in order to have the chance of experiencing the joys of being a child which he never had. He had no stories to tell about life in the classroom because his childhood was dominated with gun-shots and brutality, since he was conscripted early enough to fight as a soldier. His experience is similar to those of millions of children all over the world who have no taste of happy childhood, and must with hard suffering and all sorts of deprivations struggle for survival. They are subjected to severe poverty, hunger, sickness, brutality and exploitation.

In the face of such situations, Jean Ziegler – a UN special reporter (2000-2008) on the rights to food – laments how the world lets children die of hunger.²⁸ He

²⁷ World Bank: “Report on Nigeria”, in: <http://www.worldbank.org/nigeria>, 2006.

²⁸ ZIEGLER, J., „Wir lassen sie verhungern“ – Interview <http://www.bpb.de/dialog/145727>, 2012.

expressed his experiences in his book “*Wir lassen sie verhungern – Die Massenvernichtung in der Dritten Welt*”. Every five seconds, a child under ten years dies. 57000 people die of hunger every day. One billion people are permanently underfed. And these happen on a planet with enormous riches. The world food report of the UN pointed out that world agriculture can feed 12 billion people (almost double the present world population) without problems; so it is the height of irresponsibility and inhumanity to let people starve. There is structural hunger, sometimes invisible, but which is massacring people daily. Such hunger is implicit in the underdevelopment of the nations of the south. There is also cyclical economic hunger (*konjunkturrell*). This is visible and often happens when the economy of a society suddenly falls through war or some climate excesses as in some Sahel regions of Africa. These occasion situations of hunger to which the global body should rally round and offer help; instead the hungry mothers with dried-up children in their arms appear shortly on televisions and disappear quickly. And the starvation continues. We can objectively say: there is no lack in our world to occasion starvation; whoever dies of hunger is murdered.

Ziegler sees as the global cause of these problems the manipulation in the world economy and global capital market. The speculations of the stock exchange on food, the European and American dumping politics in Africa, the robbery of land, the excessive debts of the developing nations which hinder meaningful investiture in necessary aspects like agriculture. It is a crime against humanity for the USA, under the guise of controlling climate change, to burn 138 million tons of maize and hundreds of millions of tons of grains (last year) in order to produce bioethanol and biodiesel – even though the production method is in no way friendly to the environment. The production of one liter bioethanol requires 4000 liters of water and releases immense carbon dioxide to the environment. Generally, world politicians are doing very little to alleviate hunger. They allow the economic multinational groups – whose primary interest is the maximization of the profits – to dictate the pace. Today, we have a cannibalistic world order. Ten world economic multi-national groups are today controlling 85% of the basic foodstuff worldwide.²⁹ These groups decide who eats to live or starves to death. The question of hunger, starvation and death is not the issue of the production of food, rather the issue of the access to food. We cannot keep waiting and seeing children die every day. We must begin to act, each in his area of operation. The change cannot come from heaven; each one of us is the change which we require for a better world. A French writer – Georges Bernanos once said: God has no other hands than our own. So, either we change this world or nobody will do it.

According to the reports of the UNICEF in 2002³⁰ as regards the situation of children in the world, more than 10 million children die every year before they

²⁹ ZIEGLER, *ibid*, 2012.

³⁰ UNICEF, *Kinder bewegen die Welt: Zur Situation der Kinder in der Welt*, Frankfurt a.M., 2002.

reach their fifth birthday. 600 million children are living in extreme poverty. 150 million are deficiently underfed. One-third of the population of some nations in Africa and Asia cannot afford sufficient food for their households. Around one billion people in our world have no clean water to drink. Even in regions where the people have access to some water, there are often reports of contamination. About 2.4 billion people have no good and hygienic sanitary conditions (Asia is most affected in this regard). And these put the life and health of the people, especially children, in jeopardy. 250 million children world-wide are subjected to work. 300 thousand are forced into combatant forces as soldiers. Two million children were recorded within a decade as soldiers killed in war.

It looks like an incredible story but real, to hear that UNICEF estimates every fifth child in the world to have not visited any school. Concretely, over 100 million children within the primary school age are not going to school. Most affected are children who are working or roaming the streets, those who are sick or infected with HIV/AIDS, or handicapped children, or those fighting in armed conflicts, children from very poor families or ethnic minorities as well as those living in remote villages. Most of those who eventually attend school, do not receive good and qualitative education. In most developing countries, one-third of the 190 million children (within the ages of 10-14 years) who are working has not had or do not have any access to primary school education. And in most of these countries, financing educational programmes is no priority. One realizes also that more than half of the 880 million adult illiterates recorded world-wide come from these undeveloped countries. This problem affects the children, because as long as the parents are illiterates, we may not expect them to know the importance of the absolute value of education for their children.

UNICEF in its report of 2009³¹ presents a detailed and world-wide statistic of the literacy rate of young people (between the ages of 15-24 years) as well as their school attendance rates at different levels of their education as follows:

³¹ UNICEF, *Gemeinsam für Kinder: Stoppt sexuelle Ausbeutung! Mit allen Daten zur Situation der Kinder in der Welt*, Frankfurt a.M., 2009, 154-163.

	Alphabetisie- rungsrate (15-24 J.) 2000-2007*		Anzahl pro 100 Einwohner 2006		Telefon Internet		Grundschule		2000-2007*		Anteil der Schüler in % die die letzte Klasse erreichen werden		weiterführende Schule 2000-2007*			
													Schulbesuchsrate		Einschulungsrate	
													bereinigt		bereinigt	
	männl.	weibl.	männl.	weibl.	männl.	weibl.	gesamt	männl.	weibl.	männl.	weibl.	gesamt	männl.	weibl.	männl.	weibl.
Alghanistan	49	18	8	2	126	75	74	46	66	40	90	28	9	—	18	6
Ägypten	90	82	24	8	108	102	98	94	96	94	98	91	85	82	78	72
Albanien	99	100	60	15	106	105	104	93	92	92	90	100	78	75	74	77
Algerien	94	91	63	7	114	106	96	94	97	96	91	—	80	86	65	68
Andorra	—	—	97	56	90	90	83	83	—	—	—	—	83	87	73	75
Angola	84	63	14	1	69x	59x	—	—	58	59	83	19	16	—	22	20
Antigua und Barbuda	—	—	134	64	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Äquatorialguinea	95	95	27	2	125	119	91	83	61	60	33	—	41	23	—	22
Argentinien	99	99	81	21	113	112	99	98	—	—	87	—	80	89	75	82
Armenien	100	100	—	6	96	100	80	84	99	98	99	100	88	91	84	88
Aserbaidschan	100	100	39	10	98	95	86	83	74	72	97	99	85	81	79	76
Äthiopien	62	39	1	0	97	85	74	69	45	45	58	84	37	24	29	19
Australien	—	—	97	52	105	105	96	97	—	—	—	—	154	146	87	88
Bahamas	—	—	77	34	98	98	87	89	—	—	81	91	91	83	85	—
Bahrain	100	100	123	28	120	119	98	98	86	87	99	100	104	91	96	77
Bangladesch	71	73	13	0	101	105	87	91	79	84	65	94	43	45	40	42
Barbados	—	—	88	93	104	102	97	96	—	—	97	—	100	104	88	89
Belgien	—	—	93	47	102	102	97	98	—	—	94	—	112	108	89	85
Belize	—	—	89	44	11	125	121	97	97	95	92	—	77	81	64	70
Benin	63	41	12	1	105	87	87	73	72	62	65	89	41	23	23	11
Bhutan	83	73	10	4	103	101	79	79	74	67	84	—	51	46	38	39
Bolivien	99	98	31	6	109	109	95	95	78	77	82	41	84	81	72	70
Bosnien und Herzegowina	100	100	48	24	—	—	—	—	92	89	—	100	—	—	—	—
Botswana	93	95	47	5	108	106	83	85	83	86	75	—	75	78	52	60
Brasilien	97	99	53	23	141	133	94	95	95x	95x	81	88	101	111	75	83
Brunei Darussalam	100	100	79	42	107	106	94	94	—	—	98	—	96	100	88	92
Bulgarien	98	97	108	47	101	100	93	92	—	—	95	—	108	104	90	88
Burkina Faso	47	33	7	1	66	54	52	42	49	44	64	90	17	12	14	10
Burundi	77	70	3	1	108	98	76	73	72	70	78	74	16	12	—	—
Chile	99	99	76	25	107	102	—	—	—	—	98	—	90	92	—	—
China	99	99	35	10	112	111	99	99	—	—	—	—	75	76	—	—
Cookinseln (Neuseeland)	—	—	27	79	80	73	75	—	—	—	—	—	71	74	62	68
Costa Rica	98	99	33	28	112	111	91	93	87	89	91	—	83	89	58	64
Dänemark	—	—	107	58	99	99	95	96	—	—	92	—	118	121	88	90
Deutschland	—	—	—	—	104	103	103	98	—	—	99	—	102	100	—	—
Dominica	—	—	37	85	87	75	80	—	—	—	88	—	107	105	77	85
Dominikanische Republik	95	97	51	16	101	96	77	79	84	88	61	81	63	75	47	57
Dschibuti	—	48	5	1	49	40	42	34	80	78	—	—	27	18	26	17
Ecuador	96	97	63	12	117	117	96	97	—	—	76	—	67	68	57	58
Elfenbeinküste	—	40	22	2	79	62	61	49	66	57	86	90	32	18	25	14
El Salvador	95	96	55	10	116	112	94	94	—	—	67	—	63	66	53	56

	Alphabetisierungsrate (15-24 J.) 2000-2007*			Anzahl pro 100 Einwohner 2006			Grundschule			2000-2007*			weiterführende Schule 2000-2007*				
	männl.	weibl.	gesamt	Telefon	Internet	2006	Einschulungsrate			Schulbesuchsrte bereinigt	weibl.	männl.	Einschulungsrate			Schulbesuchsrte bereinigt	weibl.
							gesamt	männl.	weibl.				gesamt	männl.	weibl.		
Korea, Republik	-	-	84	71	107	103	100	93	-	-	-	100	95	99	93	-	-
Kroatien	100	100	96	37	99	99	91	90	-	-	-	90	93	86	88	-	-
Kuba	100	100	1	2	102	100	96	97	-	-	-	93	94	86	88	-	-
Kuwait	100	100	91	29	97	96	84	83	-	-	-	87	91	75	79	-	-
Laos	85	80	17	1	123	109	86	81	-	-	-	81	77	62	62	33	40
Lesotho	75	91	20	3	115	114	71	74	-	-	-	82	88	49	38	32	40
Lettland	100	100	95	47	96	93	89	92	-	-	-	-	-	33	42	19	29
Libanon	-	-	31	26	96	93	82	82	-	-	-	98	99	78	85	70	77
Liberia	68	76	8	0	96	87	40	39	-	-	-	97	97	37	27	22	13
Libyen	100	98	66	4	113	108	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	86	101	-	-
Liechtenstein	-	-	82	64	106	107	87	89	-	-	-	-	-	120	104	62	69
Litauen	100	100	138	32	95	94	90	89	-	-	-	-	-	99	99	92	93
Luxemburg	-	-	117	72	102	103	96	98	-	-	-	-	-	94	98	82	86
Madagaskar	73	68	5	1	142	137	86	96	-	-	-	-	-	36	93	24	23
Malawi	84	82	5	0	117	121	88	94	-	-	-	74	77	24	23	17	18
Malaysia	98	98	75	54	101	100	100	100	-	-	-	86	88	36	71	32	27
Malediven	98	98	88	9	118	114	97	97	-	-	-	-	-	66	72	66	72
Malï	36	23	11	1	90	71	68	54	-	-	-	-	-	80	86	65	70
Malï	96	99	86	34	101	99	92	91	-	-	-	45	33	35	21	-	15
Marokko	84	67	52	20	112	100	91	85	-	-	-	91	87	99	99	84	90
Marshallinseln	-	-	-	-	94	92	67	66	-	-	-	-	-	74	-	-	-
Mauritanien	70	63	34	1	99	104	78	82	-	-	-	56	59	45	37	32	39
Mauritius	95	97	62	25	102	102	94	96	-	-	-	-	-	66	67	43	47
Mazedonien	99	99	70	13	98	98	92	92	-	-	-	97	97	89	88	81	82
Mexiko	98	98	53	19	114	111	98	97	-	-	-	93	93	89	88	81	82
Mikronesien	-	-	19	14	109	111	-	-	-	-	-	97	92	86	88	71	70
Moldau	100	100	32	17	97	96	88	88	-	-	-	-	-	80	86	-	-
Monaco	-	-	52	56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	84	85	87	91	80	83
Mongolei	94	97	29	12	99	102	90	93	-	-	-	-	-	84	95	77	87
Montenegro	-	-	107	44	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	96	98	91	97	87	85
Mosambik	38	48	12	1	113	97	79	73	-	-	-	98	97	-	-	-	-
Myanmar	97	96	0	0	114	115	99	100	-	-	-	63	57	40	68	46	46
Namibia	91	94	30	4	107	107	74	79	-	-	-	83	84	72	100	49	49
Nauru	-	-	-	-	78	80	-	-	-	-	-	91	91	77	90	53	61
Nepal	85	73	4	1	129	123	91	87	-	-	-	-	-	25	42	50	-
Neuseeland	-	-	94	79	102	102	99	99	-	-	-	86	82	81	95	46	41
Nicaragua	85	92	33	3	117	115	90	90	-	-	-	-	-	81	117	123	91
Niederlande	-	-	106	86	108	105	99	97	-	-	-	50	56	62	70	40	47
Niger	53	26	3	0	58	43	56	40	-	-	-	84	81	119	117	88	89
Nigeria	89	85	24	6	105	87	68	59	-	-	-	44	46	14	9	12	7
Niue (Neuseeland)	-	-	-	-	107	102	-	-	-	-	-	68	58	36	29	28	23
Norwegen	-	-	108	82	98	98	98	98	-	-	-	96	102	96	102	91x	96x
Oman	99	98	70	11	82	83	73	75	-	-	-	-	-	113	113	96	97
Osterreich	-	-	113	51	102	101	97	98	-	-	-	99	99	90	87	78	77

	Alphabetisie- rungsrate (15-24 J.) 2000-2007*			Anzahl pro 100 Einwohner 2008			Grundschule			2000-2007*			weiterführende Schule 2000-2007*		
	männl. weibl.		Internet	Telefon		Internet	Einschulungsrate		bereinigt	Schulbesuchsrate		Anteil der Schüler in %, die die letzte Klasse erreichen werden	Einschulungsrate		Schulbesuchsrate
							gesamt			gesamt		offizielle Angaben	gesamt		
	männl.	weibl.		männl.	weibl.		männl.	weibl.	männl. weibl.	männl.	weibl.	Angaben	männl.	weibl.	männl. weibl.
Pakistan	80	60	22	8	74	57	94	74	74	60	51	70	34	26	23
Palastinen Autonomiegebiete	99	99	22	7	82	83	76	76	76	91	92	98	91	97	18
Polen	-	-	0	0	108	101	98	95	98	-	-	-	96	105	-
Panama	97	96	66	15	113	110	99	98	98	-	-	85	67	73	-
Papua-Neuguinea	63	65	-	2	60	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Paraguay	96	97	51	4	113	110	94	95	95	95	96	84	66	67	80
Peru	94	97	31	23	116	117	96	97	94	88	89	85	93	96	70
Philippinen	94	95	51	6	110	109	91	93	93	88	89	94	79	88	70
Polen	100	99	95	37	98	97	96	96	96	-	-	98	100	99	-
Portugal	100	100	116	30	118	112	98	98	98	-	-	-	94	102	-
Ruanda	79	77	3	1	138	142	76	81	84	87	87	31	14	13	5
Rumänien	97	98	80	52	105	104	93	93	93	-	-	94	86	86	5
Russische Föderation	100	100	106	18	96	96	91	91	91	-	-	99	85	83	-
Salomonen	-	-	2	2	102	98	62	62	62	-	-	-	33	27	-
Sambia	73*	66*	14	4	118	116	90	94	94	55	58	76	33	27	19
Samoa	99	100	25	4	100	100	90	91	91	-	-	96*	76	86	-
San Marino	95	96	64	57	128	127	97	98	98	94	95	61	44	47	41
São Tomé und Príncipe	-	-	106	77	96	95	95	95	95	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saudi-Arabien	-	-	99	58	98	97	89	89	89	-	-	-	104	103	-
Schweden	-	-	99	58	98	97	89	89	89	-	-	-	95	90	-
Schweiz	59	44	25	5	81	79	71	70	70	58	59	54	27	21	16
Senegal	-	-	63	13	97	97	95	95	95	98	98	99	87	89	93
Serbien	-	-	87	36	126	125	99	100	100	-	-	99	105	119	-
Seychellen	99	99	87	36	126	125	99	100	100	-	-	99	105	119	-
Sierra Leone	64	44	-	0	155	139	-	-	-	69	69	91	38	26	17
Simbabwe	98	99	6	5	102	101	87	88	88	91	93	62	42	39	43
Singapur	100	100	109	56	109	109	99	99	99	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slowakei	-	-	91	42	101	99	92	92	92	-	-	97	94	95	-
Slowenien	100	100	93	64	101	100	96	95	95	-	-	99	96	95	-
Somalia	-	-	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	24	20	85	115	122	4
Spanien	100	100	106	43	106	104	100	99	99	-	-	100	115	122	-
Sri Lanka	97	98	26	2	108	108	98	97	97	-	-	100	86	88	-
St. Kitts und Nevis	-	-	32	2	86	103	64	78	78	-	-	78	110	100	-
St. Lucia	-	-	62	122	114	99	97	97	97	-	-	96	80	95	-
St. Vincent u. d. Grenadinen	-	-	74	29	94	100	93	88	88	-	-	64	67	83	-
Südafrika	95	96	83	8	108	103	88	88	88	80*	83*	77	92	98	48*
Sudan	85	71	12	9	71	61	45	37	37	52	52	74	35	33	17
Suriname	96	95	21	8	121	121	95	98	98	84	86	71	66	90	66
Swasiland	87	90	24	4	110	102	78	79	79	93	93	80	47	47	41
Syrien	95	92	24	8	129	123	97	97	97	97	96	92	72	68	65
Tadschikistan	100	100	76	15	113	111	98	97	95	89	88	99	90	75	89
Tansania	79	76	15	1	113	111	98	97	97	71	75	83	75	82	8
Thailand	98	98	63	13	108	108	95	94	94	98	98	-	75	82	77
Timor-Leste	-	-	5	0	103	95	70	67	67	76	74	-	53	54	-

	Alphabetisierungsrate (15-24 J.) 2000-2007*			Anzahl pro 100 Einwohner 2006			Grundschule			2000-2007*			weiterführende Schule 2000-2007*											
	männl. weibl.		Teil der Internet	Einrichtungsrate		bereinigt	gesamt		weibl.	Schulbesuchrate		bereinigt	Einrichtungsrate		Schulbesuchrate		bereinigt	Schulbesuchrate		bereinigt				
	männl.	weibl.		männl.	weibl.		männl.	weibl.		männl.	weibl.		männl.	weibl.	männl.	weibl.		männl.	weibl.		männl.	weibl.		
Togo	84	64	11	5	110	95	86	75	61	82	76	68	84	54	27	30	14	45	32					
Tonga	100	100	29	3	116	110	98	94	—	—	—	91	97	92	96	54	68	—	—					
Trinidad und Tobago	100	100	69	22	96	94	85	85	—	98	98	84	97	75	78	64	67	84	90					
Tschad	56	23	5	1	90	61	71	50	41	31	38	26	94	23	8	16	5	13	7					
Tschechische Republik	—	—	122	35	100	100	91	94	—	—	—	100	—	96	97	—	—	—	—					
Tunesien	97	94	72	13	110	107	96	97	95	93	93	94	—	81	89	61	68	—	—					
Türkei	98	94	71	18	96	92	93	89	91	87	87	94	95	86	71	74	64	52	43					
Turkmenistan	100	100	4	1	—	—	—	—	99	99	99	—	100	—	—	—	—	84	84					
Tuvalu	—	—	15	19	106	105	—	—	—	—	—	63	—	87	81	—	—	—	—					
Uganda	88	84	7	5	116	117	—	—	83	82	25	25	72	20	16	16	14	16	15					
Ungarn	100	100	107	20	102	102	90	90	96	96	98	98	100	94	93	83	84	90	93					
Uruguay	98	99	99	35	98	96	89	88	—	—	—	98	—	96	95	90	90	—	—					
Usbekistan	98	99	67	24	117	113	100	100	—	—	—	92	—	94	109	—	—	—	—					
Vanuatu	99	99	9	4	97	94	—	—	100	100	100	99	100	103	102	—	—	91	90					
Vatikanstadt	92	92	—	—	110	106	98	86	—	—	—	69x	—	43	37	41	35	—	—					
Venezuela	96	98	69	15	106	103	91	91	91	93	93	90	82	73	82	62	71	30	43					
Vereinigte Arabische Emirate	99	97	119	37	104	103	88	88	—	—	—	99	—	89	91	78	80	—	—					
Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika	—	—	80	70	98	99	91	93	—	—	—	96	—	94	94	88	88	—	—					
Vietnam	95	94	18	17	109	103	—	—	94	94	94	92	98	68	62	—	—	77	78					
Weißrussland	100	100	61	56	97	95	90	89	93	94	94	99	100	95	97	87	89	95	97					
Zentralafrikanische Republik	70	47	3	0	72	49	53	38	64	64	54	39	65	—	—	13	9	16	10					
Zypern	100	100	103	42	103	102	99	99	—	—	—	99	—	96	97	93	95	—	—					
Weltregionen	77	68	18	3	101	90	75	70	64	61	61	61	84	36	29	28	24	26	22					
Afrika südlich der Sahara	28	69	19	3	110	104	83	81	66	66	66	60	82	39	34	30	27	20	18					
Ost- und Südafrika	77	66	18	3	93	77	67	58	63	56	62	62	86	33	24	26	20	31	26					
West- und Zentralafrika	93	85	37	13	102	97	86	81	88	85	85	83	—	73	67	67	62	54	52					
Naher Osten und Nordafrika	84	74	15	9	111	104	88	83	81	77	77	72	94	54	45	—	—	51	43					
Südostasien	98	98	36	12	111	110	98	97	92**	92**	92**	80**	—	73	73	60**	62**	60**	63**					
Ostasien und Pazifik	97	97	54	19	120	116	94	95	90	91	91	84	—	87	94	69	74	—	—					
Lateinamerika und Karibik	99	99	81	20	98	96	92	90	93	91	91	96	97	89	85	79	75	79	76					
GUS, Mittel- und Osteuropa	—	—	93	59	101	101	95	96	80**	77**	77**	74**	90	102	101	91	92	—	—					
Industriestaaten	90	84	30	11	109	103	89	86	80**	77**	77**	74**	90	62	58	51**	49**	48**	43**					
Entwicklungsländer	75	63	9	1	101	91	79	74	65	63	63	60	82	35	29	30	26	26	24					
Am wenigsten entwickelte Länder	90	85	42	13	108	103	90	87	80**	77**	77**	76**	90	67	63	58**	57**	48**	44**					
Welt	77	68	18	3	101	90	75	70	64	61	61	61	84	36	29	28	24	26	22					

Definitionen s. Seite 212 ff.

x Daten beziehen sich auf die neuesten verfügbaren Daten aus dem genannten Zeitraum.

** Werte beziehen sich auf die neuesten verfügbaren Daten aus dem genannten Zeitraum.

— Angaben ohne China

— keine Daten verfügbar

Definitionen s. Seite 215 ff., Hauptquellen s. Seite 210 ff.

x Daten beziehen sich auf andere Jahre oder Zeiträume, weichen von der Standarddefinition ab oder beziehen sich nur auf einen Teil des Landes

Diese Werte werden nicht bei der Berechnung der regionalen und globalen Werte berücksichtigt.

Definitionen s. Seite 215ff., Hauptquellen s. Seite 220ff.
 x Daten beziehen sich auf andere Jahre oder Zeiträume, weichen von der Standarddefinition ab oder beziehen sich nur auf einen Teil des Landes.
 Diese Werte werden nicht bei der Berechnung der regionalen und globalen Werte berücksichtigt.

Definition der Weltregionen s. Seite 212ff.
 * Werte beziehen sich auf die neuesten verfügbaren Daten aus dem genannten Zeitraum.
 ** Angaben ohne China
 — keine Daten verfügbar

When we look at the different regions of the world, in these statistics, one would notice, from the poorer regions, a very low rate in the number of children enrolled in schools – when compared with the birthrates in those areas. Those actually visiting and those who eventually complete schooling are also minimal. This does not mean a lack of interest in education among the children of these re-

gions; rather it is the consequence of the absolute poverty situation they are subjected to. In some areas we notice that female enrollment into school is less than that of the male – especially in those countries still nurturing the traditional mentality that girls are to be trained for taking care of the household. But as regards the completion of schooling, the tendency and actuality of girls completing their schooling is naturally more than those of the boys. The reason for this in some cases is the frequent involvement of the boys in armed conflicts; or situations where they must begin very early in life to work for livelihood. Girls also drop out of schools where there are no imminent solutions to their poverty. The danger is that a societal structure of exploitation of children could be built up.

The apex of the exploitation of children with tremendous devastating effect is the fact that every year, more than one million children are forced into prostitution. Poverty robs children of their rights and exposes them to danger. UNICEF investigated many regions of the world.³² We take examples from Asia, Europe and Africa. In Bangladesh, the average age of children who often become victims of sexual exploitation is 13 years. Because the topic is tabooed, children who are sexually abused are often afraid to talk about it. A 13 year old girl told her story: “My father died when I was six years and my mother must suffer so much with a mini job in order to feed us. When she goes to work, I stay at home taking care of my eleven months sister. I always observed how the house owner abuses my mother for not being able to pay her rents promptly at the end of the month. Then I began to think about how I can be making money to help my mother. I got a job as house girl which lasted only two months because my madam was always beating me and without pay, she offered me only one meal a day. An older man in the neighborhood called me and said he wanted to introduce me to his friend who can help me. The man left me alone with his friend in his house. It all began. That was my first time – very painful. His friend gave me money. I convinced my mother that I got the money from cutting stones (which was normal but hard way for children to earn money). Without the knowledge of my mother, the man calls me always for himself and for other men in his house and sometimes in hotels. That was how I became a prostitute”.

It is terrible how scrupulous people make lucrative business out of desperate situations of children. In the Philippines, a girl of 12 years told how she was lured to the city of Manila to be engaged as a family house girl but landed instead in a “Red-light” bar. There were serious movement restrictions. She must attend any man who comes. She must change her identity to avoid being located if any of her relations should look for her. The pimp handles her with the other girls like prisoners and slaves. She was held hostage for seven years till she could escape. This is only one story out of the 100 thousand children, according to a

³² UNICEF, *Gemeinsam für Kinder: Stoppt sexuelle Ausbeutung! Mit allen Daten zur Situation der Kinder in der Welt*, Frankfurt a.M., 2009.

UNICEF-Report, who are involved in prostitution in the Philippines. There, the business has gained ground in the internet, and child-pornography has become hot cake. Some dealers promise children so much money to be photographed as “model”, which in reality ends up only in the sex-websites of the internet.

There are a lot of children who are forced into work even by their own parents. In the growing economies of India and China, and in the drug-fields of Afghanistan and Pakistan, children are sometimes forced to risk their lives for dangerous labour. It seems to be normal in these regions of the world for parents to borrow money which their children must offset with their labour. A boy from Afghanistan narrated how he had to go to the opium-farm even from the age of nine because his father owed the opium-lord a huge sum of money. His father could not pay back his debt, and it was agreed that his son must supplement the payment by working in the farm for five years. He laments the ruins of this contact with drugs (so early in life) to his health. An Indian boy showed his cut fingers incurred from machines (having no security checks) in a construction company where he worked from the age of thirteen. His father procured the job for him so that he could help in offsetting the “family-debts”.

This wind of exploitation blows also in Europe; a lot more in the poorer regions of Eastern Europe. A girl from Moldau explained how she ran away from home at the age of eleven, just to escape the brutal mishandling from her father. A group from the neighbouring village promised to find her a job outside the country. In the enthusiasm to earn money, she did not even ask what kind of job she was to do. She was carried away and brought to Poland together with other girls from Moldau, Ukraine and Rumania. (Since the European borders became open, the business has spread everywhere.) The men engaged the bigger girls in prostitution. Her job for the time being was street-begging. If she failed to bring enough money back, she was beaten. The mishandling was worse than what she experienced from her father. After three years, she knew it was time to shift her into prostitution; and with the help of a “Good Samaritan”, she fled while they were on a begging-tour.

The absolute poverty and the search for greener pastures have driven many women into the hands of human traffickers. Children who must grow up without the protection of their parents are regular victims. Based on the UNICEF account³³, over 330 thousand Moldauers have left their homes in search of survival. Over 170 thousand children and young people in such a small country are growing up without father or mother; at least 20 thousand without both parents, and over 70% of those affected receive little or no care. This situation makes them vulnerable for exploitation.

Telling the story of exploitation will not be complete if the plight of children in Africa is left aside. In their poverty and suffering, they are exploited in need. A

³³ UNICEF, *Gemeinsam für Kinder: Stoppt sexuelle Ausbeutung! Mit allen Daten zur Situation der Kinder in der Welt*, Frankfurt a.M., 2009, 93.

young girl from Nigeria told her story: Her mother was left to care for five children after the death of her father. It was a life of abject poverty. Having heard that baby-sitters earn enough money in America, she felt fit for the job. She arranged with her girl-friend who has a similar fate to fly to America, earn money and help their families. They came across people who claimed to be travel agents organizing for visas to America and Europe, who promised to bring them into America. The trip to America ended in Burkina Faso. They were sold to a very rich brothel-woman with a horde of girls in her hotel. Each of these children must satisfy at least twenty customers every day. It was horrible. Since they had no travel papers, the chances of escape were very minimal. She said she had luck to have survived to tell her story. Also, history will not forget the children who are languishing in the cocoa farms in Ivory Coast. A good number of children – predominantly boys – are bought (from far and near) by the cocoa farmers to be used in harvesting cocoa for export. The painful part is that some of these children narrate that they have never eaten chocolates which is the product of their exported sweat. From UNICEF-Report³⁴, over 200 thousand children and young people from West Africa are sold yearly in slavery conditions over the borders of their country.

Taking a look at the east and the south of Africa, one sees how the sex tourism in the so called holiday paradise has become an avenue for sexual exploitation of children. In Kenya alone, the UNICEF estimates over 15 thousand children and under-aged who are exploited as prostitutes in the beaches of Mombasa, Kifili, Malindi, and Kwale. They satisfy indigenes as well as tourists from the industrialized nations. The concept of cheap-sex lures many tourists to these areas. You find many single adults – ladies and men from developed countries coming to enjoy the “cheap bodies” of young teenagers – under-aged boys and girls roaming the holiday areas in search of money. From these sex tourists, UNICEF estimates 18% as coming from Italy, 14% comes from Germany, 12% comes from the Switzerland.

We cannot underestimate the psychological effects, the emotional trauma, health disaster, and the risks of identity tragedy and the feeling of personality- or self-worthlessness these children are subjected to. The exploitation of the young is a menace and an aberration of human demeanour. These exploitations of their absolute-poverty-situations are not only an abuse of childhood, but an abuse of humanity on the whole. Humanity should be ashamed of itself for not being able to overcome poverty despite the immensity of God-given natural and human resources.

8.4 Child Poverty has a Circle of Sustainable Shadow of Effects

When we talk of child-poverty, we are not only talking about the present stage of deprivation; we are at the same time talking of the chain of consequences of the present poor life-condition and their effects on the future of the child. That is to

³⁴ *Ibid*, 2009, 95.

say, the concept of child poverty is not restricted to the present material deprivation in the household, rather extends to the entire life conditions of the child – how is the child today, and how will he be tomorrow if these conditions persist? The question is: how much and how far are children who are living in poor conditions affected? The point here is: the poor living condition of the child today has a very long shadow of effects that are often sustained till his old age.

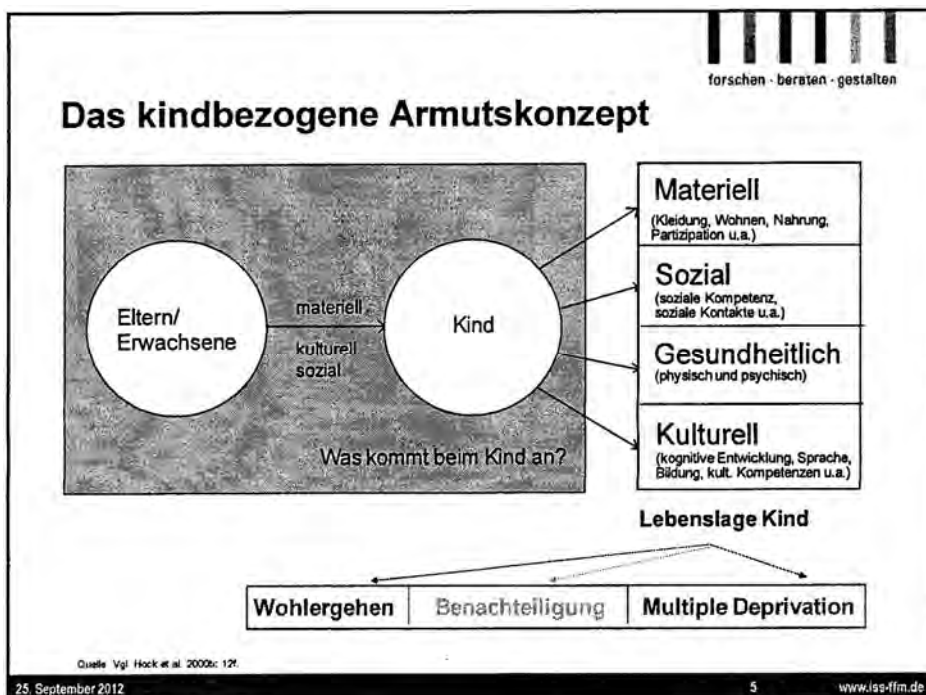
In order to explore the real face of child-poverty, the following conditions must be taken into consideration: First, the definition of the poverty must concentrate on the living condition of the child – how the child feels about his situation, as well as the internal and external observable manifestations in his life. Secondly, the household and family situation and life condition where the child is living should be analyzed, especially how it affects the child. Meanwhile, the concept of child-poverty should not be understood as a collection of disadvantages in the living conditions of the young people; poverty can only be spoken of when a substantial quantity of lack really exists, and this falls under the defined existence-minimum boarder-line.³⁵ Furthermore, the definition of child-poverty must take into consideration the various dimensions of the living conditions of the young. Basing the definition of child-poverty on the family income alone is to lose sight of the greater aspects of life condition of the young – since income alone (irrespective of the size) does not and cannot determine the wellbeing of the child.

In this regard, any discussion on the poverty of children must, in addition to the material wellbeing, consider the dimensions of their healthcare, development and education, participation in the cultural and social life of the society. These are the various dimensions which parents or adults must look into in discussing child-poverty and the process of educating children. A hungry or an unhealthy child cannot respond positively to education, and as such has little or no chances of participating meaningfully in the social and cultural life of his society. The environment and the living condition have a lot of influence on the child and his future. So, child-poverty has many faces: material, social, healthcare and cultural.

The material wellbeing of the child involves the provision of things like housing, feeding, clothing, etc. The social dimension has to do with the social integration of the child in the society – this involves the child's social competence and the ability to make social contacts. The dimension of healthcare deals with the physical and psychical conditions of the child – his mental and bodily developments. The cultural dimension has to do with education and cognitive development; it involves issues like language, symbols, work, plays and other forms of cultural competence.

We pointed out earlier that the concept of being poor must be differentiated from the concept of being disadvantaged. A child is poor when he lives in a

³⁵ HOLZ, G./ RICHTER, A./ WÜSTENDÖRFER, W./ GIERING, D., *Zukunftschancen von Kindern: Wirkung von Armut bis zum Ende der Grundschulzeit*, Frankfurt/M, 2006.

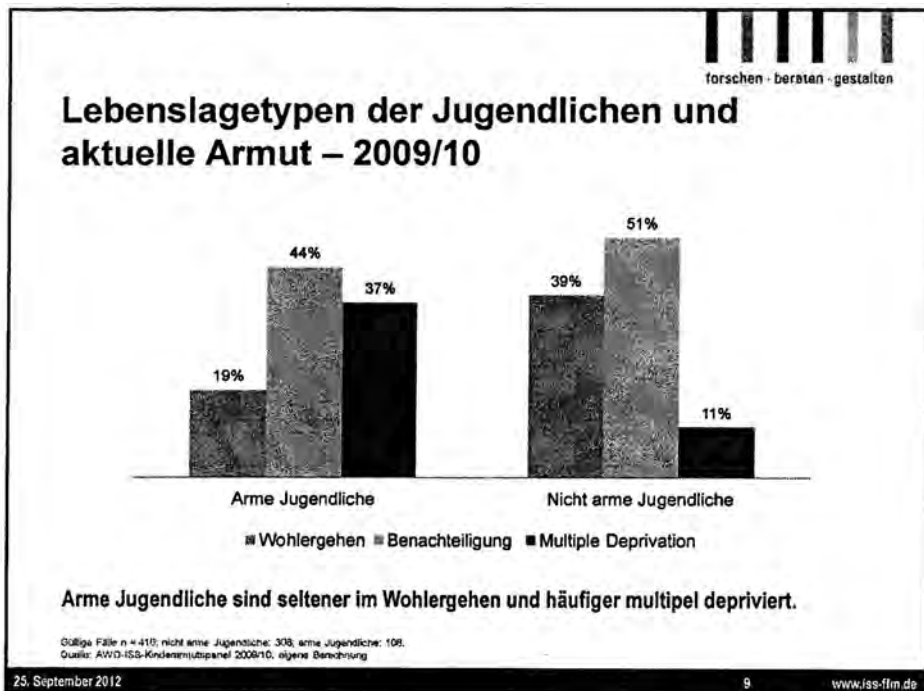


Courtesy of Beate Hock & co³⁶

condition that falls under the defined poverty-boarder-line of the given society. It is possible that a child does not live under this category, but still suffers some lack in the material and physical/psychical dimensions. Such children may be termed disadvantaged. So, we can further categorize the different dimensions of children's welfare/poverty into three different aspects of child's living condition: Children who are well off; Children who are disadvantaged; and Children who live under multiple deprivations.

According to Gerda Holz, we may talk of *Wohlergehen* "Well-off" of children when the well-being of the child is guaranteed; when there is no visible lack as regards the main dimensions of the child's life-condition. We may talk of *Benachteiligung* – disadvantaged position of children when we observe some little lack in some areas of the life-situation. Such disadvantages can restrict the child in some form of his futher development. Talking of multiple deprivations, we mean the existence of substantial lack in most of the aspects of the child's life-situation. Here the child has no access to most necessary resources needed for

³⁶ HOCK, B., et al, *Gute Kindheit – Schlechte Kindheit? Armut und Zukunftschancen von Kindern und Jugendlichen in Deutschland*, Frankfurt/M, 2000.



(Taken from AWO-ISS-Study)³⁷

his positive development.³⁸ The life-condition of the affected young people gets worse the longer the poverty situation lasts.

In Germany for example, where we can only talk of relative poverty, following the report of 25 September 2012 from the AWO-ISS-Study, poor young people are rarely in the position of the Well-off; rather they are found often in the disadvantaged group and more predominantly in the position of multiple deprivations. From this statistical data, one can imagine the gravity of poverty risks and the intensity of deprivation facing the poor children in the less developed countries where absolute poverty is in place.

The great wave of differences between the well-off and the multiple deprived children is the result of the conditions in the process of socialization which began from birth, through the family, to the society. And these influence to a

³⁷ HOLZ, G./ LAUBSTEIN, C./ STHAMER, E., *Von alleine wächst sich nichts aus – Lebenslage von (armen) Kindern und Jugendlichen und gesellschaftliches Handeln bis zum Ende der Sekundarstufe 1*, Berlin, 2012.

³⁸ HOLZ, G., *Armuts(s)folgen und Armutsprävention bei Kindern – Expertise zur Lebenslage armer Kinder und zu Maßnahmen der Armutsprävention durch das Land Rheinland-Pfalz*, Frankfurt/M., 2008, 21.

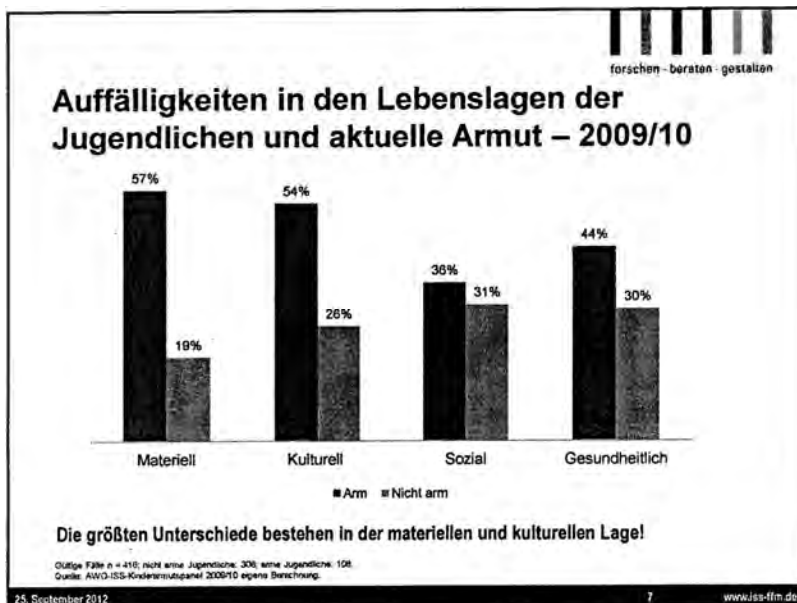
great extent the development processes of the children. And depending on how they are tackled, they can either lead to the consolidation of the deficits or can lead to improvement or worsening in the life-condition of the young people. In any case, they form the basis for the future developmental process of the young. The sky is the limit for children in the well-off positions; while the deprived children are condemned to the destiny of restrictions and limitations.

When such a multiple deprived situation sets in so early in life, the child then has less chances of actualizing his potentials, and as such, his development can only take the way of downward depreciation – unless one is lucky enough to experience a miraculous strategic change in life. If such children are left to fate, “Die Folgen sind gravierend: Die Kinder haben keinen gleichberechtigten Zugang zu Bildung und zu Freizeitaktivitäten. Sie weisen nicht selten gesundheitliche Defizite auf und leben oft in sehr beengten Wohnverhältnissen. Diese Lebensumstände bestimmen nicht nur die aktuelle Situation vieler Kinder, sondern auch ihre Chancen, ihr persönliches Potenzial zu entfalten und sich zu eigenständigen und gemeinschaftsfähigen Persönlichkeiten zu entwickeln.”³⁹ The grave consequence is that the children have no equal access to education and recreation. Their health situations are deficient and they often live in uncondusive environments. Such living conditions determine not only the *actual poverty situation* of many children, but also the chances they have to develop their personal potentials, to build themselves up as independent and sociable personalities.

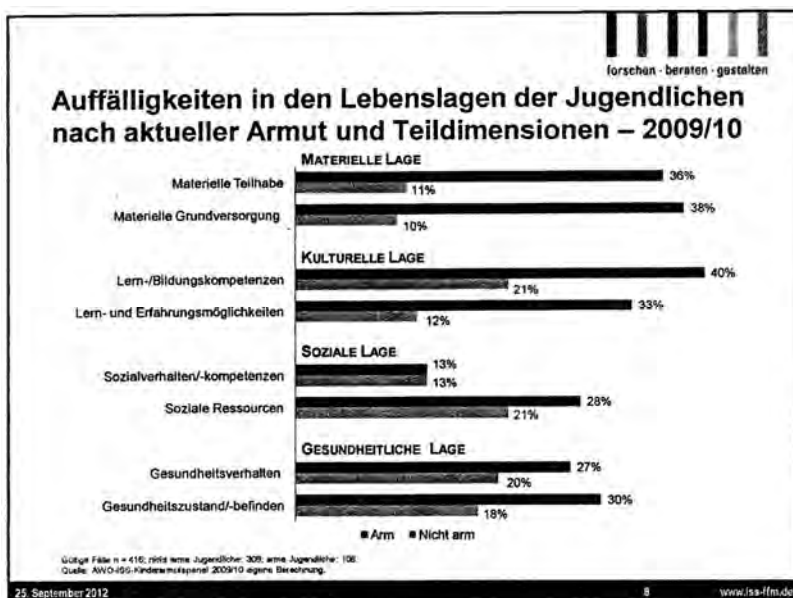
Talking about the actual poverty situation of the young people, we mentioned the four dimensions – material, cultural, social and healthcare – as indispensable components. The above statistic from *AWO-ISS* shows that the greatest difference between the “poor” and “not poor” young people lies most in the material and cultural dimensions. Though each of the dimensions has its own different gravity of influence, none can be undermined. This mentioned influence is observed not only in the time of the actual poverty situation, but also after it; and in fact spans all through the life biography of the young person. The following *AWO-ISS* statistic shows the extent of the impact in the various dimensions of life-condition after the actual poverty situation of the young. Outside the social arena, where there is still difference in the availability of social resources but no difference in the social competence of the children, the margin of differences between the “poor” and “not-poor” children is enormous in all other aspects: materially, culturally and healthwise. And this disadvantaged position follows them all through life.

It is necessary now to have a little more detailed look at the different dimensions of the actual poverty situation of the really affected young people.

³⁹ www.Kinderarmut-bat-folgen.de, Berlin, 2012.



(Taken from AWO-ISS-Study)⁴⁰



(Taken from AWO-ISS-Study)⁴¹

⁴⁰ HOLZ, G., et all, *Ibid*, Berlin, 2012.

⁴¹ HOLZ, G., et all, *Von alleine wächst sich nichts aus – Lebenslage von (armen) Kindern und Jugendlichen und gesellschaftliches Handeln bis zum Ende der Sekundarstufe 1*, Berlin, 2012.

The *Material dimension* exposes the greatest disparity between the life-conditions of the “poor” and “not poor” young people. The income of the parents of children of the two groups differ conspicuously; and in the provision of basic care and amenities, one observes that the poor children are actually living in grave deficient conditions. The poor children always look hungry and often appear unkempt, dirty and sick. Talking about the possession of their own personal rooms at home, with personal cup-boards and toys is a mirage. They come in contact with playing objects and tools only in schools and public places. To this effect, they have very limited recreational facilities; and this restricts the possibility of their participation in the social, recreational and cultural life of their immediate societies and hampers their development enormously.

In most societies, where absolute poverty is in place, the life-condition of the poor young ones is ignominious. The plight of most children in Africa, Asia and latin America is miserable. “Poverty is the leading problem for the African children causing not only physical health issues; but emotional, educational, and social problems as well. Many of these children are very sick from the water they drink, not having enough food, or from extremely contagious diseases passed throughout their villages.... It [poverty] leaves people hungry, and sick, and with no real place to sleep. Just like for any child, these African children who are not given the basic needs for life such as food and clean water, suffer in every aspect of life. Most of the poor children have to worry about things at such a young age that most people never have to worry about, which messes up their emotional and mental state of mind. They have to worry about things like their and their family’s health issues; if they are going to get to eat, and walking very long distances to get water. Above all, many kids are orphaned at a very young age, which leaves them to take care of themselves and their younger siblings. If the child’s mental and emotional state get messed up when they are so young, they will live with that the rest of their life.”⁴²

Child-Poverty is not merely the lack of food, shelter and clothing; it is also the absence of opportunities, infrastructure and safety. This includes the absence of safe drinking water, reliable electricity, effective mass transit, roads, quality educational institutions and accessible health care. Millions of children suffer this situation and are left to wallow away in obscurity and deficiency. “I cannot fathom what could have been, if only the millions of very talented young men and women in Africa had half the opportunities that are available to young people in the developed world. Imagine how many more doctors, lawyers, scientists and teachers the world could have produced? Imagine how many more inventions the world could potentially have? The most important resource that any nation has is its human resources. The tremendous waste of human capital in Africa cannot go unabated. What poverty has done to a large extent is destroy the

⁴² ADADEYOH, K., “Poverty in Africa has far reaching effects”, in: www.Helium.com

spirits of so many young boys and girls. Poverty has created a lack of hope, a lack of dreams and a void in their lives.... Poverty has far reaching consequences on the young people who should otherwise grow up to be the future leaders in these countries. Many young people have no educational opportunities, are malnourished, are constantly exposed to deadly pathogens and are exposed to increasing levels of violence. Many parts of Africa are now becoming safe havens for prosecutors of religious and cultural wars, and many countries are training grounds for terrorists. The deplorable state of the healthcare systems in many African countries has the potential of leading to the spread of highly contagious viral or bacterial agents worldwide, leading to epidemics or pandemics.... The most significant consequence of poverty in Africa is the huge waste of human resources and the damage to the spirit of the young folks in many African countries".⁴³ Most of the major cities in Africa like Lagos, Johannesburg and Kinshasa have large slums of the unemployed and underemployed, and the greater populations of the young people grow up in such environments of abject poverty. The future of such young girls and boys has a very big question mark.

Even in developed countries, children who grow up in very poor neighborhood have very minimal chances for their future. The material income of their parents determines the neighborhood where they live (sometimes in ghetto or rowdy city-conners). They are often victims of automobile gas-emissions (in big cities), environmental pollution, and they are prone to suffering nicotine poisoning.⁴⁴ Also children of poor parents, because they do not possess personal cars, are more exposed to the dangers of the road. They seek public transportation or often walk the streets; and this exposes them more to risks of accident. According to the research of Gerhard Trabert⁴⁵, doubled figures of poor children are often involved or die in road accidents than the "not poor" children. In addition, the poor children are poorly fed and they get fat, they are very shabbily clothed. In a society where fashion and trade-mark has a meaning and is a symbol of status, the poor children, in their manageable attires, always feel inferior to their "not poor" counterparts who often go about in very costly fashionable wears. This inferiority/superiority feeling creates even from childhood the second/first class mentality. The poor grow up with such inferior mentality, and sometimes even as adults, lack the courage (even with qualification) to seek higher opportunities within the so-called first class citizens. This may be due to the lack of social competence.

The *Social dimension* is another important aspect in the discussion of life-condition and child-poverty. Every child needs a social background of human beings – an environment, where he/she can develop him/herself. The family is here of central importance, since it is the major avenue for giving the child access to

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ SÜMBÜL, M., *Kinderarmut in Deutschland*, www.evrensel.de, 1. September 2007.

⁴⁵ TRABERT, G., *Kinderarmut: Zwei-Klassen-Gesundheit*, in: Deutsches Ärzteblatt, Ausgabe 3, Januar 2002.

both material and immaterial resources. “Das Familienklima, die Eltern-Kind-Beziehung und der Erziehungsstil haben direkte Auswirkung auf die kindlichen Aneignungs- und Lernprozesse. Armut hat wesentliche psychosoziale Folgen für die ganze Familie, die Eltern und die Kinder. Materielle Verarmung kann zu Änderungen im familiären Rollensystem, im sozialen Status der Familie und zur Beeinträchtigung der elterlichen Beziehungen, der Eltern-Kind-Beziehung sowie des elterlichen Erziehungsverhaltens führen. Gemeinsame Familienaktivitäten wie zusammen mit den Eltern essen, einkaufen, spielen, fernsehen, Ausflüge machen usw. haben einen großen Einfluss auf die Lebenslage des Kindes.”⁴⁶ The climate in the family, the parent-child relationship, and the style of upbringing, all have direct effects on the child’s learning and acquisition processes. Poverty has its psycho-social effects on the whole family – on the parents and on the children. Material poverty can lead to changes in the system of family-roles, in the social status of the family, can also mar the relationship between the parents themselves and affect negatively the parent-child relationship, and can as well change the parent’s attitude towards upbringing of their child. Collective family activities like: parents and children eating together, shopping, playing, watching television, and going on excursions together, all have great influence on the life-condition of the child.

If the social network in the family and in the immediate environment is not in order, the child suffers massively. In a situation of abject poverty, the child cannot bring other children to his home; and is rarely invited by other children. There are no parties organized for the children – on birthdays or special feasts, and at the same time, they are not motivated to go to the celebrations of other children, since they lack the money to buy the accompanying gifts. It is a known fact that poor children are segregated against because they lack the social capital.⁴⁷ This means that they lack the social integration in the family, in the circle of friends, in the environment and neighborhood, and in the school. About the social capital, one should distinguish between the structural and the individual cognitive competence. When the segregation is as a result of the deficit in the individual cognitive competence, then we may look for solutions in the child, work on him to help him out. But when the segregation arises as a result of social structures and bias in the environment, we look for solutions in the society or environment in which the child is growing up. Real social integration is the product of a positive structural as well as individual cognitive competence.

It is unfortunate that poor children often grow up with a stigma – put on them either by fellow children, or by adults in the neighborhood, or by those

⁴⁶ AL-BARGHOUTI, G., „Auswirkungen von Armut auf Kinder und Familien“: Gekürzte Fassung aus der AWO-ISS-Studie, *Alle Kinder braucht das Land – Handreichung zur Prävention von Armut in Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder*, Bonn, 2007. (www.mobile-familienbildung.de.)

⁴⁷ HAVERKAMP, F., „Gesundheit und soziale Lebenslage“, in: *Handbuch Armut und Soziale Ausgrenzung* (Hrsg. von Ernst-Ulrich Huster, Jürgen Boekh, Hildegard Mogge-Grothjahn), Wiesbaden, 2008, 331.

who are supposed to educate them in schools and public places. Such children experience, right from their childhood, the feeling of exclusion. As opposed to the rich ones, poor children are rarely praised; they are often intimidated. This restricts immensely their social-emotional competence. Their attitudes to problems show that they tend towards avoiding them instead of solving and surmounting them. They tend to be easily overburdened and give up very quickly. There are also some who may react to acts of intimidation with aggressiveness. The poor young often like to avoid the social arena because of their inferiority complex. They also often lack the private social network outside their family; having little or no external persons of respect whom they can turn to for advice, direction or help. If they at all extend the bounds of their families, they still hang onto their types – the poor ones. They have very minimal trust in their ability to compete successfully with the rich ones. In their daily lives and dealings, they really manifest no good feelings of self-worth. As such, they manifest deficient social competence, and enjoy very little and restricted social contacts.

In the *Healthcare sector* of the life-conditions, the young poor are confronted with physical and psychical problems. With the help of UN reports and statistics, we analyzed earlier the impact and effects of poverty on children of different parts of the world. Generally, as a result of poverty, children are underfed; and they live under unhygienic conditions. These have consequences on their health. Some contract chronic diseases and there are no means for curing them. Unlike the rich ones, the poor children are not regularly brought to necessary medical check-ups which are meant to prevent, discover and cure contracted diseases. Uncured bodily ailments can sooner or later turn into psychical problems. Some get frustrated with life, suffer from depression or take to drugs. Some are forced into prostitution or other criminal activities, where they suffer physical and psychical torture and abuses.

Inadequate feeding can hinder proper growth and can lead to motoric disorder. When the parents cannot afford the money for good food, the poor children eat very unhealthy. Instead of fruits and vegetables, they take solace in fast-food, chips and pork meat⁴⁸, if at all they find any. This poor feeding and the subsequent danger of getting sick go with many other consequences that will reflect in the other dimensions of life-conditions. They manifest a great deal of social incompetence and are often deficient in cognition and language. The poorly fed ones lack necessary vitamins and concentration, and often manifest tiredness and overweight. Or in the case of absolute poverty, where the children have just nothing to eat, the children get too thin and sick as a result of malnutrition.

Poor children, as a result of their lack, often look for alternative means of boosting their ego. They come very early in life in contact with things like ciga-

⁴⁸ RICHTER, A., „Armutsprävention – ein Auftrag für Gesundheitsförderung“, in: *Kinderarmut* (Hrsg. von ZANDER, M.), Wiesbaden, 2005, 205.

rettes, alcohol, drugs, and sometimes, they get addicted. Sometimes the poor parents, as a result of their poor life-style, transmit these addictions over to their children. According to the report of the *Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum* Heidelberg⁴⁹, 40% of the women in the socially disadvantaged class of the society smoke during pregnancy. And also in three of four homes with children under six years, either of the parents smokes. When children even in the womb or so early in life steadily come in contact with such stuffs of addiction, only a miracle can save them from this temptation. And when young people get addicted, they experience disorder in their learning process, intelligence and behaviour; they also have a high risk of psychical disorder, which can become chronic and affect them negatively all through their lives.

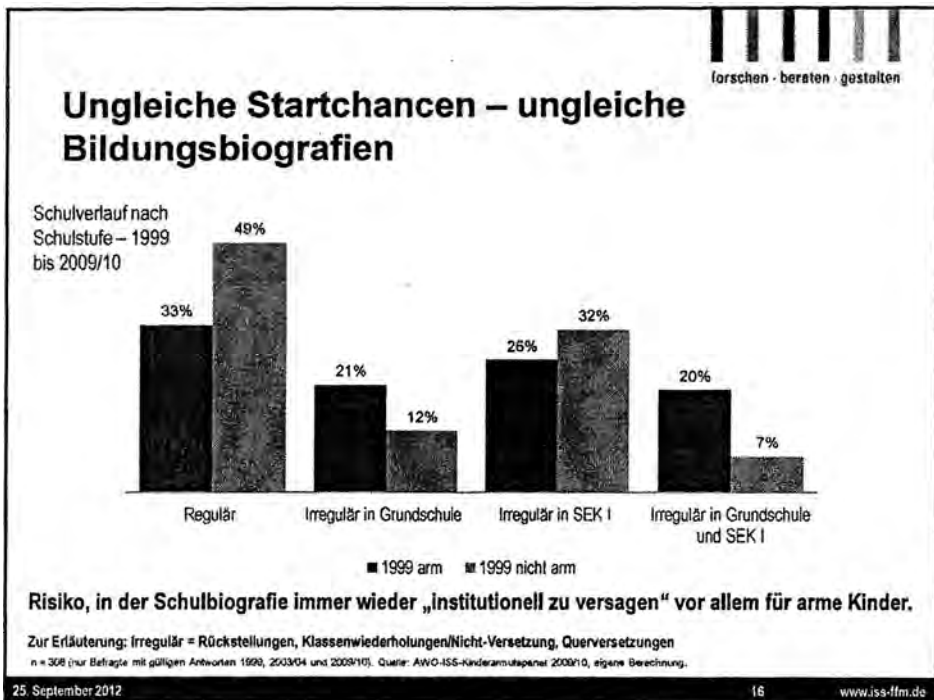
To grow up in poverty is to permanently suffer the psychological effect of want. And according to Walter Mischel, poor children have very little self control when confronted with things they desire – food, clothes, money, etc. The urge for the satisfaction of their desires is extremely strong.⁵⁰ They are living under emotional pressure of lack, such that, in the face of desirables, they can hardly exercise enough self-discipline. In simple words, they are often greedy. Their deficiency can cause them later to be materialistic in their lifestyle.

The *Cultural dimension* of the life-situation of the young concerns their cognitive development, language, cultural and educational competence. One notices, even from the age of kindergarten, that the cognitive development of the poor children (in comparism with the “not poor” children) is very slow. The disadvantaged children show at a very tender age some deficiency in “*Feinmotorik, Grobmotorik und Sprachfähigkeit*”⁵¹ They show a very restricted use of language and expression; and are also limited in their attitudes towards play and work. The situation of lack in the family affects them very much. They lack toys and books which should have kept them busy in their free times at home; and as a result, they take to excessive media-consume or walk into bad gangs outside the home. They lack motivation from their family and this follows them through. The chances of a reasonable start in life is very much unequal between the poor and the not-poor. This is very much reflected in the educational biographies of the young as well as the chances of accomplishing a training.

⁴⁹ SCHULZE, A., *Rauchen und soziale Ungleichheit – Konsequenzen für die Tabakkontrollpolitik* – Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, Heidelberg, 2004.

⁵⁰ MISCHEL, W., “Self-control is the key to success”, in: *San Francisco Chronicle*: 16. December 2007.

⁵¹ UNICEF Deutschland: „*Ausgeschlossen*“ – *Kinderarmut in Deutschland*, 2008.



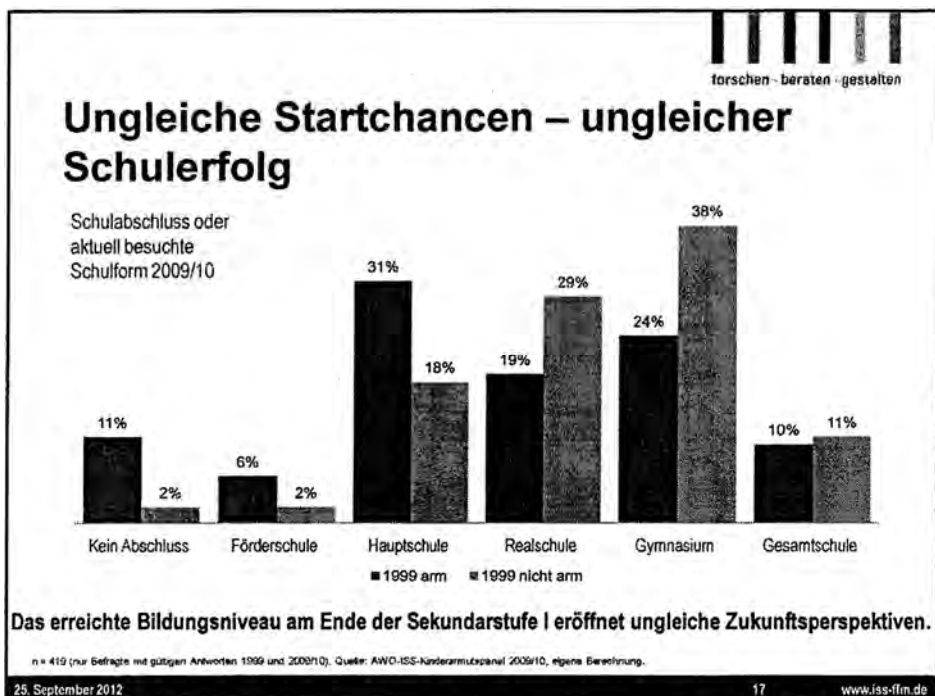
(Taken from AWO-ISS-Study)⁵²

In the above data, we can see that the risk of dropping out of school is higher in the educational biographies of the poor children than those of the “not poor”. At the same time, the data below shows that the chances of attaining a high standard niveau in education with the perspective of a prosperous future is very much higher with the “not poor” children than the poor.

We can see from the following data that the gap between the poor and the not-poor children is very wide in matters of opportunities in life. The family’s financial conditions often determine what type of schools children attend; how they are handled in schools by teachers and fellow pupils/students. Their psychological (im)balance determine their academic success. In this regard, the socio-economic status of the parents determines, to a great extent, the development (also of the intelligence) of the child – sometimes more than the prenatal and perinatal factors.⁵³ In Germany for example, research shows that children who lived for a very long time under poverty level manifest in their IQ

⁵² HOLZ, G., et all, *Von alleine wächst sich nichts aus – Lebenslage von (armen) Kindern und Jugendlichen und gesellschaftliches Handeln bis zum Ende der Sekundarstufe 1*, Berlin, 2012.

⁵³ MERTEN, R., „Psychosoziale Folgen von Armut im Kindes- und Jugendalter“, in: *Kinderarmut und Generationengerechtigkeit*, (Hrsg. von Christoph Butterwegge & Michael Klundt), Opladen, 2002, 149.



(Taken from AWO-ISS-Study)⁵⁴

an average of nine points less than children who have never tasted poverty; and children who lived in poverty for a short time, have an average of four points less.⁵⁵ There are however exceptions to this discovery as noted by the American researcher Glen H. Elder.⁵⁶ He proved that poverty does not always lead to poor intelligence. It is, however, evident that poor children have learning problems; sometimes they repeat classes, and the potentiality of dropping out of school is high.

Research also suggests that the effects of poverty can vary between boys and girls. Till the age of six, the child does not yet possess the real understanding of poverty; but from eight years, the poverty perception is present. From this age, children who are multiple deprived already feel the hard burden of fighting for their future. From this point, according to Gerda Holz, the gender-variation of effects show themselves strongly in three aspects⁵⁷:

⁵⁴ HOLZ, G., et all, *Ibid*, Berlin, 2012.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*.

⁵⁶ ELDER, G.H., *Children of the Great Depression*, Chicago, 1974, 311.

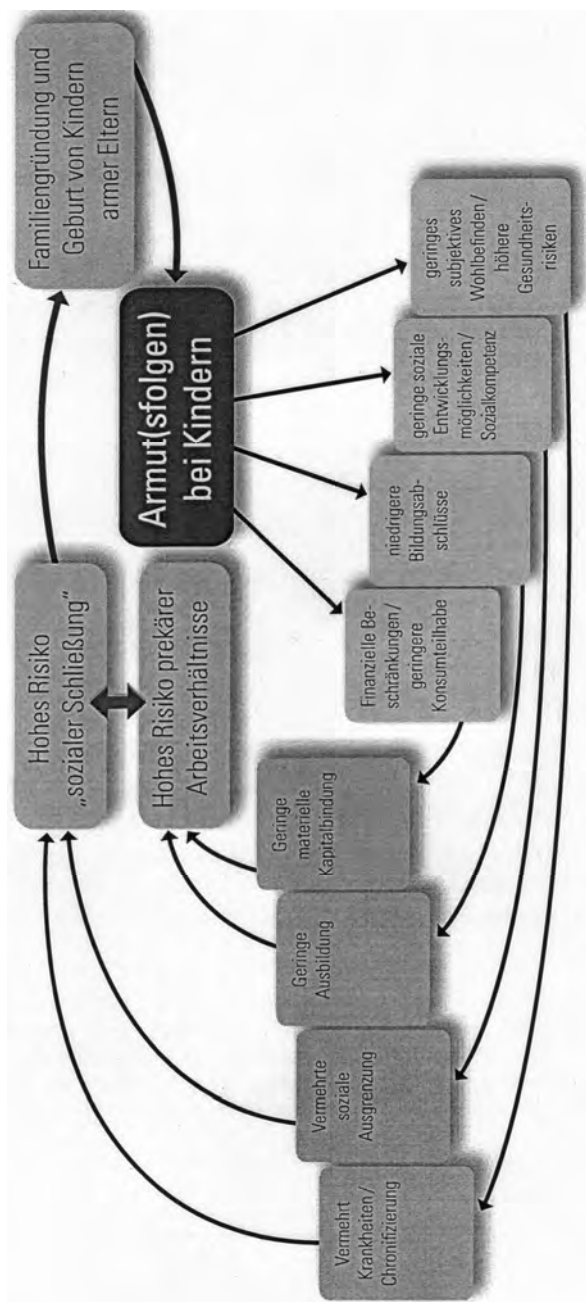
⁵⁷ HOLZ, G., *Armuts(folgen) und Armutsprävention bei Kindern – Expertise zur Lebenslage armer Kinder und zu Maßnahmen der Armutsprävention durch das Land Rheinland-Pfalz*, Frankfurt/M, 2008, 25.

- 1) The feeling of self-worth "*Selbsteinschätzung*" is a little more positive in the boys than in the girls. This means that the girls have more shame in the face over the situation than boys.
- 2) In multiple deprived families, boys enjoy more attention in collective family activities "*Gemeinsame familiäre Aktivitäten*" between parents and children than the girls; Girls, on their part, mainly suffer more when they cannot invite their peers to play with them at home.
- 3) In poor families, girls are from a very early age pulled into taking some responsibilities "*unterschiedliche Pflichten*" in the household – far earlier than the boys.

This situation changes automatically when we observe the conditions of the not-poor children from not-poor families. In this group, the boys seem to be the losers, while girls turn out to be the winners in the above points (especially 1&2). Meanwhile we must point out that not all poor children are equally disadvantaged. There are some children from poor families who are a little well-off; and there are children from not-poor families who are disadvantaged. And the risk and possibility for children to shift from one living condition to the other abounds. That is why the concern of all should be to discover the factors which can lead to protecting children in general from living in poor life-conditions. If this is not done, we run the risk of producing generations of poor people after another – since poverty leaves its shadows all through life. The effect of poverty on children goes on producing other effects, which on the long run forms a circle of effects from one generation to the next – as the sketch below shows.

In the first place, when children live in poor conditions, the financial constraints of their family restrict them from taking part in the acquisition and use of goods in their society. This will in effect deprive them of the necessary material capital base, which can in the future minimize their range of work-situations. Secondly, poor children are left with little academic qualifications and trainings; this, in turn, endangers their chances in the job-market. Thirdly, poor children acquire very minimal social development, and as such, a very low social competence. This can cause them an unprecedented but wide-spread social exclusion. Fourthly, when children live in poverty, they have a very minimal feeling of well-being and are exposed to the risk of health hazards. This can lead to multiple contacts with diseases and chronic sicknesses. Massive deficit in all these four aspects of life-condition normally breeds occasions of social segregation and exclusion, and is accompanied with a high risk of precarious work-situations. This portends the danger of leaving the individual poor – even as an adult. And when they marry in such conditions of poverty and get children, the whole circle of poverty with its effects begins afresh with the young generation.

The worst thing that can happen to a child is to restrict or deprive him/her of a qualitative educational opportunity. Children born into poor families, unfortunately, suffer this fate. *PISA* has established a strong connection between so-



(Courtesy of AWO-ISS-Study)⁵⁸

⁵⁸ HOLZ, G., et all, *Von alleine wächst sich nichts aus – Lebenslage von (armen) Kindern und Jugendlichen und gesellschaftliches Handeln bis zum Ende der Sekundarstufe I*, Berlin, 2012.

cial origin and educational success; and according to the study of *AWO-ISS*, the process begins already from the time of kindergarten, and holds on into the school age and beyond, so that even from the age of ten, it becomes somehow clear which direction the child is going.⁵⁹ Children from wealthy families have chances which children from poor families cannot dream of. The former acquire enough material, cognitive, healthcare and social competences which place them over and above the latter. In addition to qualities like intelligence and temperament, they are equipped with the capability to express themselves boldly (mastery of language), creativity, and the motivation to achieve something. They have a better feeling of self-worth and are more active in showing what they can do. Above all, the children in well-off families (as against the poor children) have the chances of operating in a better and higher social network. They have every support and motivation they need to excel.

Hans Schlack⁶⁰ opined that the insecure financial and professional situations of the parents of the poor children, as well as the bad housing conditions, and sometimes an incomplete family and social isolation are things, among others, responsible for the impoverishment of children; and these lead to the non-actualization of their intellectual potentials. Some poor children are often enrolled in school later than their age-mates. When they eventually begin, they find it difficult to follow the lessons since others have gone far. The consequence is to get bad results and face a further depressive delay of repeating classes.

Meanwhile, the school carrier of children does not only depend on the financial situation of the parents; educational statuses of the parents also play a big role. A child who has uneducated parents is poor and disadvantaged in that sense. Educated parents aspire seriously for the education of their children. "Festgemacht an den Bildungsabschlüssen der Eltern, hier der Mütter, weisen die Mütter armer Kinder einen erheblich schlechteren Bildungshintergrund (d.h. maximal Hauptschulabschluss) auf. ... Ein hochsignifikanter Zusammenhang besteht zwischen dem Bildungsstand und der wirtschaftlichen Lage der Eltern. Auch streben Eltern mit einem guten Bildungsabschluss (mindestens Realschulabschluss) eine bessere Bildung für ihre Kinder an."⁶¹ Taking example from the educational stand of the parents, here the mother, it is observed that most mothers of poor children have a very poor educational background (not more than a simple vocational school, if at all). In fact, a connection has been established between the educational standard and the economic situation of the family. Parents

⁵⁹ Konsortium Bildungsberichterstattung: *Bildung in Deutschland; Ein indikatorengestützter Bericht mit einer Analyse zu Bildung und Migration*, Bielefeld, 2006.

⁶⁰ SCHLACK, H., „Lebenswelten von Kindern“, in: *Sozialpädiatrie – Gesundheit – Krankheit – Lebenswelten* (Hrsg. von H. Schlack), Stuttgart, 1995.

⁶¹ HOLZ, G., *Armuts(folgen) und Armutsprävention bei Kindern – Expertise zur Lebenslage armer Kinder und zu Maßnahmen der Armutsprävention durch das Land Rheinland-Pfalz*, Frankfurt/M., 2008, 26.

with good educational qualifications ensure better education for their children. Such parents see the need to change schools for their wards when they are not satisfied with the standard of teaching and learning in the former school. Educated parents also emphasize to their children the need to acquire a higher education. These create for their children chances and open many doors, which remain closed for the poor children. The higher the education of the child is, the more are his chances of employment and a better economic security.

In addition to the educational qualification of the parents, some authors argue that the professional engagements and activities of the parents have their influence on the intelligence and work-capacity of their children. Even among the poor families, children of parents with jobs are better off than children of the unemployed. According to Vandell and Ramanan⁶², poor children, whose mothers are working as they were still very young, do better in reading, writing and calculations than other poor children whose mothers sat at home. Others⁶³ trying to justify this position meant that poor children can, at least, benefit from the activities of their mothers, and from there, develop better. Meanwhile, we are not trying to relegate the unemployed to the background. Some really make efforts to find jobs or engage in many activities to better their poverty situation. Some just decide to stay at home in order to take good care of their children. And some deny themselves many good things for the welfare of their children. Whatever the good reasons may be, however, they do not rule out the advantaged position of children of the educated and the employed.

Meanwhile, the unemployment or poverty of the parents does not always mean that the child is condemned for ever. He can still consciously be helped out of his situation. Glen Elder⁶⁴ discovered that poverty can have something positive in it which can be rechanneled for the good future of the child. He followed the development of children who presently live in poverty but were associated with socially strong personalities with accredited family values; and with the help of values, these young people convincingly proved more successful than their counterparts who never experienced poverty. Their humbled-life-situations made them more receptive for the values that could lead to success. This eventually shows that we cannot circumvent values in this fight against poverty. Consequently, fighting global poverty requires global values.

⁶² VANDELL, D.L. /RAMANAN, J., "Effects of early and recent maternal employment on children from low income families", in: *Child development*, 63, 1992, 938-949.

⁶³ WOODS, M.B., "The unsupervised child and the working mother", in: *Developmental psychology*, 6, 1972, 14-25. See also: MILNE, A.M., et al, "Single parents, working mothers and the educational achievement of school children", in: *Sociology of Education*, 59, 1986, 125-139.

⁶⁴ ELDER, G., *Children of the Great Depression*, Chicago, 1974, 160.

8.5 The Way Out of the Quagmire

The solution to the poverty of children is not to be sought in children, but rather in the larger society which occasions the poverty under which children suffer. One obvious fact is that "...poverty has earned recognition in the extent of its ravaging society and the affairs of humanity at the international, national and local levels; ...the need exists now for urgent actions towards its eradication and control. It is dehumanizing; ...it must be eradicated..."⁶⁵ Economic solutions at the political levels can make a good start. Since poverty has become a global menace, a reverse of the mechanisms geared towards fighting those problems we mentioned above which are responsible for relative poverty in the industrialized nations, and the absolute poverty in the developing nations will go a long way to alleviate poverty worldwide. In this regard, Hermann Sautter⁶⁶ suggests three possibilities: 1) Improving the chances for productive activities through the stimulation of economic growth; 2) Improving the chances for the poor to take active part in the economic growth; 3) ensuring an active care-system for those who cannot help themselves.

The government must improve the chances for all productive activities – both in the private and in the public sectors. Some governments have no programmes that can help build up the private sectors; or they make policies which stifle the small-scale enterprises. Crippling the initiatives of the private economic activities has been marked as one of the problems hindering the work-potentials and weakening the economic growth of the developing nations. Economic growth would be stimulated – and thereby minimize poverty – when the private economic initiatives are supported and encouraged. Pinger⁶⁷ and his colleagues however added that this support is, on the long run, only meaningful if it widens the self-help-capacity on the part of the poor and makes them active subjects in economic growth instead of merely degrading them to everlasting recipients.

This ushers in the second step which centers on improving the chances of the poor in taking active part in the economic growth in their society. Before one can promote the chances of productive activities (talked about in the above paragraph), one may not forget that there are poor people in the society who may not even have access to the means for beginning any productive activity. Any program for stimulating economic growth must therefore include harnessing the potentials also among the poor. For example, in the agricultural sector, the poor must also have *access to land* and be empowered with ag-

⁶⁵ OBADAN, M. I., "Poverty in Nigeria: Characteristics, Alleviation Strategies and Programmes", in: *NCEMA Policy Analysis Series*, 1996, Vol.2, No.2.

⁶⁶ SAUTTER, H., „Armut – Entwicklungsländer“, in: *Handbuch der Wirtschaftsethik*, Bd.4, (KORFF, W. et.al. Hrsg.), Gütersloh 1999, 98-104.

⁶⁷ PINGER, W., et.al, *Armut bekämpfen – Selbsthilfe fördern*, Sankt Augustin, 1995.

ricultural facilities, capital, basic human education, and the use of modern techniques. The availability of land alone does not solve the problem. The state must provide a functional infrastructure: roads for the transportation of goods they produce; water, electricity, canalization, etc. for proper productivity.

The potentiality of the poor to help themselves and take an active part in the productive activity of the society is increased by letting them gain *access to the credit market*. There must be banks and credit institutions responsible for lending money with lower interest rates to poorer people. Furthermore, the poor must also have *access to the human capital set-up* in the society. A healthy person can be more productive. Adequate insurances – healthcare and otherwise – are necessary in this regard. It must be ensured that all citizens, rich and poor alike, take part in the insurance structures.

Also it must be ensured that all persons have *access to a basic human education*. No matter the profession one chooses or which talents one sees in him/herself, one must have access to the relevant training one needs in order to participate actively in the economic growth of his society. Education must, as far as possible, remain free for all. If any section of the society's young generation is excluded (as a result of poverty) from the academic or professional qualifications, this group of persons would automatically be sorted out in the competitions of the capital market – where qualifications play tremendous roles. T.P. Schultz⁶⁸ pointed out that empirical experiments show that proper education raises the productive potentiality among children of the poorer class – since it enables them to handle new techniques efficiently and makes them more receptive to directives and more open to innovations. The probability is high that the more the children of poorer families have access to qualitative education and training, the more chances they have to take part in any economic growth of their society.

There is no human society devoid of people in different need-situations; people who require the help of others in order to survive. So in the fight to overcome poverty, there is the necessity to ensure an active care-system for those who cannot help themselves. If the economy is bad, everybody feels it. In the same way, when it gets economically well with the society, every member of this society (without exceptions) should enjoy this well-being. There must be an improved welfare-system for taking care of those members of the society who are not, not yet, or no longer functional, active and productive. This is a great challenge, especially, for countries in the developing nations where the forms of taking care of “the incapables” are a little different.

In most African countries, for example, the concepts of insurances or pension schemes are not functional. The “not yet able”, “not able”, and the “no longer able” persons solely depend on the able-bodies in their respective families. Be-

⁶⁸ SCHULTZ, T.P., “Education Investments and returns”, in: *Handbook of Development Economics*, (ed. CHENERY, H., et.al.), Bd. 1, Amsterdam, 1988.

cause children are obliged to take care of their parents till death, many African parents believe that they are better insured when they have many children. For parents, the more the number of children, the more the pension is assured. This is problematic, because in most cases, the poor parents are not able to feed or provide for the number of children they bring into the world. And among siblings, or even in the entire extended family, whoever is financially well-off must take care of the rest. This is meant to be part of the African sense of solidarity and being one's brother's keeper. If I am allowed to air my critic however, this in itself, one must say, does not and cannot promote economic growth because the so-called "able ones" are most often overburdened by the demands of their dependants; and therefore financially so overstressed that they cannot progress. The governments of the nations must therefore establish social systems for taking care of all – but especially the non-able – members of the society. We do not mean to suggest here that Africans should imbibe the "rationalistic individualism" of the West – where everybody is just concerned with, for and about himself alone; and the state should take care of the rest.⁶⁹ The state should establish systems for the official transfer of help without relegating the social obligation of the individual towards caring for one another to the background. My submission is: The contributions of the family members in taking care of their less-privileged ones should be supplemented with an official and public transfer system of social help.

In some of these undeveloped countries, because of the unavailability of official credible records and statistics, it might be very difficult to organize this social help in the form of monetary aid (examples from some developed nations, like Germany's *HARTZ IV*). In the absence of that, the state can, in addition to insurances and pension schemes, alleviate the suffering of the masses by supporting, through subventions, the basic means of livelihood. This demands economic efficiency and political adjustments in the society.⁷⁰ Things like food and drink, clothing, house-rents, health-care and education can be made cheap so that everyone can afford them. Every community knows her economically disadvantaged members who may eventually need help. To this effect, some "fair-price-shops"⁷¹, for example, could specifically be established by the state to assist and serve the needs of the poorer households.

Generally, we must acknowledge that one of the best cures to poverty is to seek political solutions to structural problems like health-care, education and to organize a functional system for transferring help. This can only be possible through a convinced participation of all – rich and poor alike. To make this participation possible, there must be a decentralization of political offices and demarcation of competence; and the individual rights of all must be protected and

⁶⁹ Confer GSÄNGER, H., *Soziale Sicherungssysteme für arme Bevölkerungsgruppen*, Berlin, 1993.

⁷⁰ DREZE, J. & SEN, A. (eds.), *The political economy of Hunger*, Oxford, 1990.

⁷¹ SCHUBERT, B. & BALZER, G., *Überlebenssicherung durch Kaufkraft-Transfers*, Berlin, 1990.

strengthened. The activities of the non-governmental organizations should be promoted. And there must be a healthy cooperation between the governmental and non-governmental organizations. The excessive gap between the poor and the rich must be bridged.⁷² To secure a stable society, the rich must have the opportunity of getting their properties insured and protected against vandalism. The poor, on the other hand, must be helped towards gaining access to the ownership of property. In effect, both the rich and the poor should be protected from and against one another; and motivated towards working with and for one another and for the common good.

There must be an outstanding act of economic solidarity before the society can be rid of poverty. That is why we are emphasizing a functional system of transferring help. And the help must be geared towards "*helping the poor to help themselves*". The poor must play their part, and use the help they receive to build themselves up and work for the economic growth of the society. The solidarity we are subscribing for must be accompanied by subsidiarity. The higher or larger body must enable the lower body as well as the individual play their parts, and the other way round. That means: a politics of poverty alleviation is very much connected with the politics of democratization and the division of powers. This can only be achieved when a political protection of human rights and dignity is in place.

If we hold political solutions as inevitable in the fight against poverty, corruption, which is always a cankerworm in the fabric of any affected nation, must therefore, be addressed. In the case of Nigeria for instance, to overcome the problem of poverty as a country, the war against corruption must be intensified. I consider this the first step because Nigeria is wealthy and should not be seen as poor. Her poverty is strictly connected with her corruption. Corruption has eaten deep into the fabrics of the nation. Freed from her corruption, Nigeria has every human and material resource to be a great nation. Even some efforts meant to fight corruption, end up in corruption. Some anti-corruption agencies, like the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), still remain under the control of a corrupt executive interference. At the end of the day, the fighters of corruption end up being cut up in the web of corruption. This suggests that extra attention must be paid to one's personal moral integrity before being called into such a commission. The selected members of such commissions must be people with moral status and noble standard, and as the name suggests, they must be truly independent in their work, and be accorded every legal authority to prosecute corrupt practices without the interference of the government. The workers in public offices and in the law enforcement agencies must be well-paid to prevent them from the enticement of bribery. Then, it must be taken seriously to let whoever goes against the ethics of his profession face the wrath of the law.

⁷² See BARRACLOUGH, S.L., *An End to Hunger*, London, 1991.

Corruption has many faces. But no matter the form it takes, it ends up in the abuse of power and the misappropriation of public funds. One gets the impression that government policies in some undeveloped countries are just to address particular issues at particular times. Projects are often initiated as avenues for siphoning the public bursary accounts. One notices that government approved and awarded projects are abandoned halfway and nothing is done about it. No question, no probe, no prosecution. Even when another government comes into power, the circle continues. Each new government begins new projects and abandons the old (just to show its presence, as well as collecting its share of the national cake). Such unsystematic projects and programmes elevate instead of alleviating poverty. Government policies should not be interim, just to quell a single unrest or the other; rather they must be policies with long term plans aimed at alleviating poverty. They must reflect the needs and aspirations of the people at all times; and made to be legally binding so that even the change of government authority and personnel should not affect the existing projects.

In addition, it is necessary for governments and people in authority to incorporate the well-being of the poor in their policy-making – what O. Igbuzor,⁷³ referred to as “pro-poor policies”. According to him “Pro-poor policies” are policies that focus on the welfare of the poor. That is to say that government should also consider the plights of the poor when policies are formulated. These are policies that would facilitate the creation of jobs, such as the establishment of small and medium scale enterprises. We mean such policies that would encourage creativity among the poor, and help them be productive. D. W. Ogogo⁷⁴ sees these “Pro-poor policies” not just as job creators but also as creators of wealth in the society. Since the poor count as the greater majority in the society, empowering and enriching them means automatically enriching the society. Where corruption reigns, nobody cares about the poor. Everybody cares about his own purse. And the society in itself will remain poor, since no collection of uncoordinated but corrupt rich individuals can make a society rich.

Corruption can be fought from within with changes in the political structure, life-style and mentality of the people. What about the influences from outside? The developed countries must help the undeveloped nations to fight corruption. Whoever hides a thief or helps the thief save his booty, makes himself a thief. A situation where the government leaders of undeveloped countries loot the treasuries of their nations and save them in personal accounts in banks of the West is unacceptable. Based on the extent of transparency within the financial institutions in Europe and America, no one can imagine that these millions and billions of dollars and Euros could be transferred overseas unnoticed. But this hap-

⁷³ IGBUZOR, O., “Alternative Poverty Eradication Strategy for Nigeria”, in: *Another Nigeria is Possible* (ed. MORU, J.), Abuja, 2005.

⁷⁴ OGOGO, D. W., “The Role of Capital Market in SME Financing”, in: *The Nigerian Stock Market Annual*, Lagos, 2005.

pens on regular basis. Therefore, there must be a task-force in place (nationally and internationally) controlling the financial transactions of people in government and public services.

We have already appealed earlier that the industrialized nations must be fair in pursuing their political and economic interests, especially, when dealing with nations with less political and economic might. It is unfair for the nations of the G-8 (or in the recent times G-20) to make economic and trade policies and agreements that would only enrich them and perpetuate the poverty of the smaller and nonviable countries. We do not intend to heap the whole blame on international politics, but much can be done at this level to alleviate poverty in our world. On their part, the leaders of the underdeveloped nations must take the challenge and do their home-works well. Leaders of these nations must work to tackle their problems and stop waiting for “*manna from Heaven*”. They must understand and accept the moral responsibilities attached to their positions; and see themselves as people called to serve and fight for the common welfare and improve the living conditions in their societies.

Hermann Sautter wrote: “Armutsbekämpfung in Entwicklungsländern wird also nicht vorrangig von einer Änderung der Weltwirtschaftsordnung zu erwarten sein, sondern von einer klugen und ethisch verantwortbaren Politik der Entwicklungsländer selbst, die unter den Bedingungen einer wettbewerblich organisierten Weltwirtschaft betrieben wird.”⁷⁵ One may not expect that overcoming poverty in the developing nations will be achieved by changing the world economic order, rather by an intelligent and clever politics with ethical responsibility on the part of the developing nations – a politics which can survive the organized competitions of the world economy. Sautter’s opinion might be right, but we must add that this so called “world economic order” should be fairly organized to give the weaker nations the chance to enter the race first and foremost, before they can take part in the competition.

Where two elephants fight, the grass suffers most. Every form of disorder at the international, national and local arenas affects children more than others. If for no other reason, at least for the sake and good of our children and future generations, we must pursue less our egoistic interests and rally round to fight poverty collectively. What concerns the children of today in any part of the world affects the entire world of tomorrow. Since the world is becoming a global village growing into one another, if we do not alleviate but permit the culture of poverty in any part of the world of today, we are elevating the culture of poverty in the world of future generations.

We must work with the principle of ‘thinking of the future generations’ (*Prinzip der Nachhaltigkeit*). We shall delve more into this principle in

⁷⁵ SAUTTER, H., „Armut – Entwicklungsländer“, in: *Handbuch der Wirtschaftsethik*, Bd.4, (KORFF, W. et.al. Hrsg.), Gütersloh 1999, 98.

chapter ten while dealing with the quest for global values. Meanwhile, following this principle, we must be ready to change our life-styles. The affluent (nations, societies and individuals) should not lose control of their human senses. Norbert Mette commented: “Und zum anderen darf nicht übersehen werden, dass dieser Wohlstand einer Minderheit nicht zuletzt dadurch zustande gekommen ist, dass die Mehrheit der Menschheit dafür geopfert hat, und darüber hinaus die natürlichen Lebensgrundlagen hemmungslos vernichtet worden sind. Eine Änderung des Lebensstils der Wohlhabenden und Reichen ist also um der Schaffung humanerer Lebensbedingungen für alle, ja um der Erhaltung der Welt für künftige Generationen willen unausweichlich.”⁷⁶ Mette is asking us not to forget that this affluent minority did emerge because the majority of humanity sacrificed for it; and moreover our natural resources were unscrupulously destroyed for it. A change of the affluent life-style would therefore mean to create better human living conditions for all. This makes the preservation of our world for the sake of future generations unavoidable.

Fighting for the welfare of future generations should begin with securing the interests and wellbeing of the children of today. UNICEF made regional consultations and challenged governments of the different regions of the world into making obligatory declarations in the interests of children.⁷⁷ Among others, these declarations decried the chronic of unfulfilled promises in respect of the welfare of children; and resolved to move the world with and in the direction of children. They emphasized their awareness of the fact that the chances for socio-economical change and growth in their regions depend on how much they invest on the young ones. All must therefore work towards creating a better world for children. What this entails in reality is that children must be protected and encouraged from their early years of life; their rights must be guaranteed and their needs fulfilled; education should be used to fight poverty at all levels. Healthcare for all should be seen as a priority since a healthy child is a great asset to every nation. The nations must learn to invest in children. And our world must be made conducive for children to live in. We would wish that these do not end at mere declarations; we expect rather that they be enforced with official obligatory conventions.

⁷⁶ METTE, N., „Option für die Armen – Lernschritte zur Umkehr: Theologische Orientierungen und sozialpastorale Perspektiven im Kontext einer Wohlstandsgesellschaft“, in: *Arbeiterfragen* 2/93, Herzogenrath, 1993, 23.

⁷⁷ Examples of such declarations include: *Pan-African Forum* of 28-31 May 2001 in Egypt where they signed a collective position of the African governments; *Peking declaration* of 14-16 May 2001 signed by 21 government representatives from East-Asia and the Pacific region; *Berlin Declaration* of 16-18 May signed by 52 European and middle-Asian nations; *The Agreement of Kathmandu* of May 2001 signed by seven south-Asian countries among others; *The consensus of Kingston* 9-13 October 2000 and the *Declaration of Panama* 17-18 November 2000 by the government representatives in the American region; *The Declaration of Rabat* 15-19 February 2001 by the Arabic Civil Society Forum.

It is easier to make declarations than to uphold their contents. The plight of children, even a decade after these declarations, has not yet improved. In the most recent publication of the UNICEF⁷⁸, it is evident but a sorrowful phenomenon that many cities in the developing nations are rapidly growing alongside with their emerging slums. Many families, in the search for greener pastures, locate to the cities, but end up in the slums. And the children of these slum-dwellers live under dramatic conditions. Over one billion children and youth live in slums worldwide. UNICEF estimates that every third child in the world grows up in slums under massive unhygienic conditions. They are suffering from hunger, subjected to all health hazards and survival risks. They have no access to any school. Although there are more schools in the cities than in the villages, but the very poor ones in these slums cannot afford sending their children into these schools. Such children roam the streets, look for food in garbage-dumps, and contract deadly diseases. Many slums-children just get sick, die quietly and unnoticed. Medicare is something for the *Bourgeoisie*. In most of these city-slums, according to UNICEF, 30-50 % of the new-born babies are never registered – that means such children do not officially exist or they have no identity. After birth, their parents just let them grow into the streets to fend for themselves like other slum children. A good number of these children, just to have a feeling of belonging, join bad gangs – which expose them to all sorts of abuses, criminality and exploitations. Many have no future in a world of plenty.

The poverty of our children must be prevented with every legitimate means. Gerda Holz and colleagues give a clue to the points we need to note in the process⁷⁹:

- The fight against poverty must start at the earliest possible time in the life of the child.
- The child's existence and development possibilities must be guaranteed.
- The child's participation, integration, education and healthcare must be promoted.
- The main goal must be to assist the child grow up with a suitable well-being in the present and the future.
- The first addressees on issues regarding children must be their parents and family.
- The known world of the child – his immediate environment: family neighborhood and community – must be secure.
- The child's potentials and resources must be promoted and strengthened.

⁷⁸ UNICEF, *Zur Situation der Kinder in der Welt*, Frankfurt a.M., 2012.

⁷⁹ HOLZ, G. /SCHLEVOGT, V. /KUNZ, T. /KLEIN, E., *Armutsprävention vor Ort (MO.KI – Monheim für Kinder), Evaluationsergebnisse zum Modellproject von Arbeiterwohlfahrt Niederrhein und Stadt Monheim*, Frankfurt/M, 2005, 25.

- Possible developmental deficiencies of the child must be prevented or overcome.
- Children must be encouraged to learn ways of solving/overcoming problems.
- The central means for getting access to social resources are comprehensive education and upbringing, care and direction. These must be made available to the child both financially and emotionally.
- Proprietors and workers in institutions of healthcare, social services and education, are responsible for offering our young the adequate attention, care and services they need.
- Finally, politics and officials at the community, state and federal levels of government have the utmost responsibility for providing the necessary social ground and effective conditions that can primarily make the prevention of poverty possible.

Poverty has remained a dreadful challenge in our time. Its consequences for children and the effects on the young are very catastrophic. We invest so much on preserving the world's cultural heritages (landscapes, artworks, historic-buildings, etc.) all over the world. Let us accept the fact that a child of today is the world's most valuable heritage for tomorrow. One of the ways of investing in our children is to give them proper education on the positive and responsible use of the media.

