From the Margins to the Center: Pathways out of Poverty

"Do we have the will to make poverty history?"

-- Bono

Poverty is a major barrier to the advancement of inclusion, equality and diversity. This vicious cycle of exclusion and inequality can breed poverty, preventative illnesses and disability. For persons with disabilities, some of the major reasons that they experience the debilitating effects of poverty are social exclusion, economic marginalization and educational barriers.

With the rates of poverty increasing on both a national and international level, statistics for persons with disabilities are growing at an even more alarming rate. More than 25 percent of the people living with disabilities in the US are in poverty, and an increasing number of them are persons of color. Indigenous people have a higher risk of developing a disability than other marginalized groups, and women are also at a high risk due to the extra burden of gender and/or racial discrimination.

Some of the most frightening statistics of all have to do with the growing gap in wealth between the rich and poor. For example, the richest 20 percent of all people earns approximately three-fourths of the world’s wealth, while the poorest 40 percent accounts for only 5 percent. Every day it is estimated that 22,000 children worldwide die each day due to poverty. With such eye-opening facts about the inequality and injustice thriving in the world today, why has there been little to no change in the fate of those living in poverty?

We have to end poverty. The need is greater than ever to build inclusive communities that meet the needs of all community members and foster cooperation and community, rather than consumption and competition. We need to build communities that provide proper education to all of the people so we will all be aware of the crisis that we are facing. Yet budget cuts in social protections and social innovations are threatening to hurl more people into poverty. It will be no overnight process to meet the daunting local, national and global economic challenges the world faces today, but we need to focus on reshaping the world we all want, based on these sobering facts.

We are interested in presentations that present ideas on how to end poverty, particularly in marginalized groups. They can be on a small or large scale, or both. The Pac Rim team continues to host this dialogue as it is one of the most important issues of the 21st Century. Join the Conversation.

- Presentations that illustrate the causes of poverty, and how to create a reform of current systems with a reverse effect;
- Ways that research can help us eliminate poverty and give academics a role in the fight against poverty;
- Alternatives to income support policies that create a poverty trap;
- Effective economic self-sufficiency projects and proposed policies that are progressive in thinking and whose approach is holistic (not piecemeal), fiscally sustainable, energizing and simple;
- Models of support services in rural areas;
- Best practices for inclusive development and a post 2015 Global Agenda;
- Initiatives that challenge and address barriers to information access and services and promote inclusionary practices, equitable distribution of resources, and equal participation for persons with disabilities into development projects;
- Microfinance projects that offer sustainable income-generating opportunities;
- ‘Change not charity’ action plans, and economic initiatives that utilize multi-stakeholder and collaborative approaches to alleviate poverty, food insecurity or homelessness for persons with disabilities;
- Strategies for raising the salary for persons with disabilities and women to be equal to that of persons (mainly men) without disabilities;
- Strategies for increasing employment opportunities for women and girls with disabilities, including through gender-specific microfinance, corporate responsibility, quotas, targets and incentives;
- Employment opportunities for people with disabilities in indigenous communities, and indigenous people with disabilities in the larger community;
- Community initiatives that utilize natural support pathways and benefit all persons with disabilities;
- Alternative economic models or a critique of existing models that perpetuate inequality and exclusion for persons with disabilities;
- Innovative and trendsetting technologies that have proven beneficial to advance inclusion, equality and diversity;
- Best practices in preventable health related to poverty, the environment and substance abuse which incorporate indigenous people’s values;
- Initiatives to include gender, indigenous people and disability into United Nations and domestic policies and international and domestic development activities;
- Issues in women’s physical and psychosocial well being, specifically those areas that call attention to ending violence and abuse, poverty, isolation, and improving educational opportunities for girls and women with disabilities.

We welcome all proposals. Please see presentation formats on our webpage at: http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu/presenters/formats/.

Please read criteria for each format and ensure that you have the appropriate number of presenters for your chosen format.

You may submit proposals online at: http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu/submissions or send your proposals via email to prcall@hawaii.edu.

For questions regarding this topic area contact the Pac Rim team at prcall@hawaii.edu.
For general information on the conference, please contact Charmaine Crockett at cccrocke@hawaii.edu, (808) 956-7539.