



Rochester Diocese Lent Course 2015

Challenging Poverty



1: Defining poverty *Background Information*

Absolute poverty

Fact

About 2.7 billion people, over a third of the world's population, live on less than US\$2 a day.

Poverty and related causes such as preventable disease cause the death of around 21,000 children every day. That's equivalent to:

- 1 child dying every 4 seconds
- 15 children dying every minute
- The death toll from the 2010 Haiti earthquake occurring every 10 days
- A 2004 Asian tsunami occurring every 11 days
- Just under 7.6 million children dying every year.

Relative poverty

Example

John and May

John and May live in South London with three children, Jack (13), Billy (9) and Rosie (6). John was made redundant 18 months ago and both parents are now looking for work. Their privately rented flat is in a poor condition and the children's rooms are damp, which makes Billy's asthma worse. The only way to heat the flat is with expensive electric fires, so sometimes John and May have to choose between eating and keeping warm.

The summer holidays are a real struggle as the children miss out on their free school dinners. It's hard for Jack, Billy and Rosie to understand why they sometimes can't have birthday presents and can't afford the right school uniform. John and May often have to make up excuses as to why the children can't go on school trips.

Billy is now getting bullied at school and starting to behave violently in response, so the school has asked to see John and May about his behaviour. John is showing signs of depression and has started to drink more. He describes his experience as like being sucked into a black hole with no foot or hand holds.

Facts

A household is considered to be in poverty if its net income is less than 60 per cent of the national median. By this measure, in 2011/12, 13 million people in the UK (nearly one in five of the population) were estimated to be living in poverty. More than half of these lived in a working family and 3.5 million are children (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2013).

Quotes from people living in Bromley

Pensioner: *'I have to decide whether to heat my home or to eat.'*

Father with a young family: *'My wife and I haven't eaten for three days in order to make sure our children had enough.'*

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To find out more

Esubi's vision is to see a Uganda where every child knows the love of a mother, the support of a family and the hope of a future. It works with local communities to develop strong, sustainable projects which meet local needs and help the communities to support their most vulnerable children.

For more information, see **www.esubi.org.uk**.

Further sources of information:

Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion, 2013: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/>

<http://www.globalissues.org/issue/2/causes-of-poverty>

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk>

http://povertyalliance.org/what_we_do/networking/eapn

<http://www.avaaz.org>