

VOA Special English Development Report

WORLD BANK REPORT ON POVERTY

This is Bill White with the VOA Special English Development Report.

The World Bank has published a new report about poor people. The report represents a ten-year study of the causes and effects of poverty around the world. The researchers spoke to more than 60,000 poor people from 60 countries. The report was published in a book called *Voices of the Poor*.

The report argues that poverty is not just a lack of money. It says people are emotionally damaged by poverty. It makes them feel powerless, guilty and dependent. The researchers say poor people are almost always hungry. They usually do not have clean water, waste systems or roads. And, *Voices of the Poor* says sickness is a major fear among the poor because of high medical costs and the need to work.

The researchers also found that governments are not correctly intervening in the problems of the poor. Poor people say they often are treated badly by government representatives. These include police, health officials, educators and social workers. The report says this leads poor people to distrust governments.

The researchers found that being poor also causes serious problems in family relationships. Men are considered the heads of families in many cultures. They are expected to be

the providers. The researchers found that poor men often become dependent on alcohol as a result of their inability to financially support their families. The researchers also say some men physically mistreat their wives.

The main writer of *Voices of the Poor* argues that poor people need to be involved in changing their living conditions. Deepa Narayan says there must be changes in systems of government from the local level to the international level. Ms. Narayan says the poor must be given the power to negotiate directly with governments, non-governmental organizations and international agencies.

Ms. Narayan praises new efforts by the World Bank to support small community projects. She believes people in communities know their own needs better than anyone else. And, she believes they can best decide how to meet those needs. *Voices of the Poor* argues that giving poor people more control over their lives will help fight poverty around the world.

This VOA Special English Development Report was written by Caty Weaver. This is Bill White.

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