

## GLOBAL POLICY OF ERADICATING POVERTY. THE ASPECT OF EDUCATION

### ABSTRACT

The problem of poverty in today's world has unquestionably taken on a global dimension. Consequently, it constitutes a challenge in the area of socio-political activities which should aim at eradicating this phenomenon or its maximum reduction. In order to meet the so oriented perspective of activities, it seems justified to take this problem into account in the process of social education, which is inscribed in the process of developing the society's citizenship. The purpose of education is to raise public awareness of the problems arising, among others, from the development of the modern world. The present article will refer to the current questions related to the phenomenon of poverty and the ways in which it can be limited. Educational tools may provide the means of shaping the attitudes of policy makers who implement global policies aimed at eradicating poverty. In addition to that, the article also pays attention to the so-called poverty measures, in view of the fact that the statistics are often confusing and fail to provide an adequate illustration of the scale of poverty. Presentation of poverty cannot be based merely on income (according to the World Bank at the level of 1.90 \$/person/day or according to the United Nations 1.25 \$/person/day). Viewing the problem of poverty through the prism of social development dimensions such as education, standard of living and health, gives a more credible picture of the situation in the world. The article lists countries and regions which currently deal with the problem of the highest statistics of people affected by the so-called "acute" poverty. It is precisely these countries, that should become a high priority for policy-makers.

## STRESZCZENIE

Problem ubóstwa przyjmuje w dzisiejszym świecie bezdyskusyjnie wymiar globalny. W związku z tym stanowi on wyzwanie dla działań społeczno-politycznych, których skutkiem powinno być wyeliminowanie tego zjawiska bądź możliwie maksymalne jego ograniczenie. Wychodząc naprzeciw tak zorientowanej perspektywie działań, zasadne staje się uwzględnienie tego problemu w procesie edukacji społeczeństwa, która wpisuje się w formowanie postaw obywatelskich. Jej celem jest uwrażliwienie społeczeństwa na problemy wynikające m.in. z rozwoju współczesnego świata. W artykule ukazane zostaną aktualne problemy związane z fenomenem ubóstwa oraz możliwości jego ograniczenia. Za sprawą narzędzi, jakie wykorzystane są w edukacji, możliwe jest kształtowanie postaw decydentów realizujących działania polityki globalnej zorientowanej na eliminację ubóstwa. Celem artykułu jest również zwrócenie uwagi na tzw. mierniki ubóstwa, gdyż dane statystyczne często bywają mylące i nie unaoczniają skali problemu ubóstwa. Istotne jest ukazanie ubóstwa nie tylko na podstawie wysokości dochodów (wg Banku Światowego na poziomie 1,90 USD/os/dzień lub wg Organizacji Narodów Zjednoczonych 1,25 USD/os/dzień). Spojrzenie na problem biedy przez pryzmat wymiarów rozwoju społecznego, takich jak edukacja, standard życia i zdrowie, daje bardziej wiarygodny obraz sytuacji panującej na świecie. W artykule zostały wymienione państwa oraz rejony, które obecnie borykają się z największą liczbą osób doświadczających tzw. ostrej biedy. To właśnie pomoc tym krajom powinna zajmować obecnie priorytetowe miejsce wśród działań decydentów politycznych.

**KEYWORDS:** *education, poverty, sustainable development, Sustainable Development Goals.*

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** *edukacja, ubóstwo, zrównoważony rozwój, Zrównoważone Cele Rozwoju.*

## INTRODUCTION

There are various problems in the contemporary world which often take on a global dimension. The phenomenon of poverty, which calls for attention, among others, due to the fact that it affects a wide spectrum of areas, comes to the fore here. In the historical perspective, the issue of poverty has mostly been analysed through the prism of its subject, namely, a single person. However, currently, the problem affects whole communities of a particular country or region (Sulmicka, 2001, p. 5). In order to address the issue of poverty, it seems justified to take this problem into account in actions aimed at its reduction and, in the long term, eradication. Global policy oriented towards

the fight against the phenomenon of poverty should give consideration to the process of education as one of the ways to tackle this problem. "In the scientific and social reflection on the drama of poverty, one has to take into account the overall existential situation of man, who has progress inscribed in his nature (this progress is also a fundamental challenge for education)" (Szymczak, 2003, p. 12). In this context, education plays a major role, since, by shaping an individual, it has an impact on the attitudes of the whole society. The essential role of education is to prepare a person, i.e. its subject, to the life in his or her social and natural environment. Both the properly worked out content and the teaching methods can have a significant influence on shaping the attitudes of people responsible for implementing administrative and legal regulations to eliminate poverty. Policymakers who possess proper understanding of the problem will address it in global policy. The word policy should, in this context, be understood as adequate action aimed at addressing and diagnosing all possible causes of poverty. This article makes an attempt at demonstrating the relevance of educating both those who are directly affected by poverty, and those who have a real impact on decision-making in the political and social sphere.

## **POVERTY AS A GLOBAL PROBLEM OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD**

The problem of poverty is analysed by a variety of scientific disciplines, such as economics, sociology or psychology. Of course, each of the quoted sciences treats the question of poverty from a different perspective, which often results in the lack of one definition that would fully grasp this phenomenon. Several causes might be identified behind difficulties associated with providing an unequivocal definition of the phenomenon of poverty. Firstly, it is changing over time. Things which satisfy our basic needs nowadays, undoubtedly differ from the things desired in the past. Another cause here, is the subjective character of poverty. This is due to the fact, that each person has a different set of needs which may be the result of, for example, cultural differences. Another issue is the poverty line, which is largely dependent on such factors as economic indicators or a policy pursued in a particular country or region. It is also worth noting that the phenomenon of poverty has recently become

a subject that calls for debate in the political arena. Poverty means, among others, inability to satisfy basic needs, and those need differ depending on age, condition and the region in which he or she lives (Szymczak, 2003, p. 19–21). Those needs are almost always dependent on economic issues. Many scholars, addressing the phenomenon of poverty, its causes, attempts to diagnose and eliminate it, refer to the sphere of morality and politics. According to Ruth L. Lister, “poverty as a material reality distorts and restricts the lives of millions of women, men and children, and its persistence discredits those of the *non-poor* who concede to its existence and contribute to its existence” (Lister, 2007, p. 14).

An analysis of factors that allow to determine the pace of development or the scale of poverty is related, among others, to the topic of geographic research. Reflecting on the determinants of the modern phenomenon of poverty, scientific reflection focuses on the economic issue. The problem of causes, however, is a compilation of a variety of political, economic, environmental, religious, cultural and even historical circumstances which, in turn, results in a different position of states or regions of the global world. The impact of climate, diverse access to natural resources, topography or population density may have an influence on the poverty of a given region. Research on the relationship between geographic location and the scale of poverty, allow to formulate a thesis that moderate climate has a positive influence on the efficiency of economic activities undertaken in specific areas. Such regions are in a privileged position in relation to, e.g., hot tropical zones, where the climate can generate a specific passivity in the society towards making an effort.

The amount of natural resources undoubtedly influences a particular country's prosperity, however, this is not a universal principle. Many countries, despite having huge oil fields, do not derive profits that could effect in self-sufficiency or economic stability. This is due to, among others, control on raw materials imposed by international companies, which obtain those resources and then sell them to highly developed countries. Moreover, in many cases, the governmental economic policy of some countries leaves much to be desired. The income obtained from the sale of exploited resources is rarely reinvested in the state. Local authorities, in the framework of the adopted economic

strategy, decide to invest the potential profit from resources in developed countries. Extreme cases of irrational management of mineral deposits in such countries as Congo or Angola, generate poverty in their populations. Resources become a bargaining chip for the purchase of modern weapons, which are later used in internal conflicts. As a result of lobbying such a policy of affluent leaders by international concerns, the resources are controlled by force. Of course, there are countries like Japan, Switzerland and Singapore that do not have natural resources in their area, yet, their development has not been limited, but on the contrary, they are at the forefront of world economies (Sulmicka, 2001, p. 11–14).

Global poverty may also emerge as a result of natural disasters which mostly refers to the areas belonging to developing countries. Damage issuing from natural disasters mainly affects the poorest people, due to the fact that they choose to live on the cheapest lands suffering from earthquakes or floods. Poor people cannot afford making any preventive investments, which to some extent raise the cost of building a traditional house but, in the face of a natural disaster, when the overall profit and loss calculation is considered, are still more profitable. At the same time, the situation in rich countries is, analogically, less severe as they invest huge financial resources in places which are by definition exposed to losses. It is precisely due to the possibility of reacting immediately to natural disasters that poverty in those areas can be limited. The above-mentioned, selected examples of factors influencing the phenomenon of poverty constitute only a certain quintessence, which illustrates the dependence of a country's development on its location on the map of the globe. Geographic location, which may translate into an abundance of natural resources, is undoubtedly linked to the phenomenon of poverty but is not its sole factor.

A much more decisive factor influencing the progress and development of a given society and, in the longer term, leading to successive reduction of poverty, is the ability to implement the acquired knowledge. This, can next be reflected in technical progress (Sulmicka, 2001, p. 14–16). These are the so-called non-material factors that people generate through education and self-improvement. Providing education for a low-income community, may constitute a kind of investment that can help to eliminate social and

economic disparities. Rational management of natural resources is only possible, provided that the whole society can participate in those non-material factors. Analyses conducted by Thomas Sowell demonstrate that “the economic consequences of geographical differences can be divided into direct, i.e. ones affecting the current standard of living or indirect, i.e. ones affecting the development of societies, depending on whether geographic determinants facilitate or impede their communication and interaction with the rest of the population” (Sowell, 2016, p. 22). As a consequence, “no society has a monopoly on discoveries and inventions that contribute to the development of mankind, and thus, for a given group of people (...) contact with others and knowledge of innovations appearing in other parts of the world was a significant advantage” (Sowell, 2016, p. 22). Consequently, social interaction with the inhabitants of different geographical areas has several positive effects. Firstly, it allows for comparing the experience data derived from the use of technologies, the received products, or the knowledge on a specific topic. Secondly, communities of other regions begin to realize that there are various ways of doing certain things. As Mirosław Czerny observes, “geographic research on development (or geography of development) is looking for a new paradigm by reconciling the theoretical foundations of geography and the related sciences with their practical application, among others, in the area of regional development and planning, development assistance, social development programs or risk reduction projects” (Cherny, 2012, p. 18) including poverty.

## **PERSON AS A SUBJECT OF EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PHENOMENON OF POVERTY**

The reflection of philosophical anthropology provides us with knowledge about man as regards, among others, his relationships with other people or other living beings on the earth. Man is the object of interest on the part of various scientific disciplines which seek to acquire thorough knowledge of the various aspects of his specific nature. Man is also the object of study of such sciences as biology, physiology, anatomy, sociology or various disciplines of cultural sciences (Krapiec, 1999, p. 269). In general, it can be stated that every humanistic science examines man, his activity and all

works created by him. In the latter case, we deal with ethnographic sciences, archaeology, linguistics, etc.

The above-mentioned scientific disciplines, which concentrate on man as the object of analyses, do not deal in detail with the issue of man's ontological structure. Neither, are they capable of providing a clear definition of a human person. In order to answer those questions, it is necessary to refer to the research conducted on the ground of philosophy which presents an autonomously existing subject, the "I", the originator of acts, performed as "my" acts including intellectual, sensual, covetous or physiological ones. In other words, philosophy analyses the fact of being human and it is, therefore, able to provide a wealth of relevant information about him. It reflects on the ontological structure of man and the legitimacy of the actions that he undertakes. Knowledge of those consequences becomes crucial as human beings should be treated not as a means of all activities but, above all, as their goal (Krapiec, 1999, p. 269). Implementation of the process of education in the context of the above reflection, places the human being at the centre of this action, due to which he becomes a subject. Consequently, neither the human person nor its welfare should ever be affected by any form of poverty. The phenomenon of poverty, irrespective of its scale, violates human rights as it marginalizes him socially. Therefore, the process of education built on the basis of adequate anthropology, may provide means of eradicating the phenomenon of poverty (Szymczak, 2003, p. 125–126).

Education as a process of shaping a personal entity is originally associated with the upbringing. This is due to the subsequent courses of action taken by parents or educators. Out of concern for their charges, they try to show them some proper forms of behaviour in the surrounding environment. Education is a peculiar method of shaping human development to make concrete changes in his personality (Bołoz, 2010, p. 150–151). By expanding the scope of the educational process with the aim of commencing a practical fight against poverty, education should become upbringing. As Wojciech Bołoz observes, "education should consist in going out and leading others into another, wider world, which is achieved by showing others the new horizons, providing them with incentives to seek those horizons and encouraging the

right conduct...” (Bołoz, 2010, p. 151). This does not only relate to the strictly human dimension of the problem of poverty, since access to the environment or the quality of the environment is one of the indicators of poverty. The environment should, therefore, be understood not only as a collection of natural components, but also as a sphere in which a human person or a particular community can realize themselves. Basic educational assumptions that help to achieve the adopted aim, should include values that constitute an incentive for the individual, but also for the community which is subjected to the educational process, to respected those assumptions.

## MEASURES OF POVERTY

Determining the degree of the phenomenon of poverty, deprivation or people suffering from hunger, may pose a problem. The so called, measures of poverty, seem helpful in this respect. Those include:

- The Headcount Index (HCI),
- Human Development Index (HDI),
- The Human Poverty Index (HPI-1 and HPI-2),
- Global Hunger Index (GHI),
- Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).

The Economic Poverty Index is an indicator used by the World Bank and it is defined on the basis of the proportion of a given country's population living below a defined level. Poverty is measured on the basis of income. People who earn too little to meet their basic needs are classified as poor. According to the World Bank, the line for extreme poverty per person is \$ 1.9/day, and according to the United Nations, \$ 1.25/day.

Based on this assumption, when we compare the last 25 years as regards the number of people experiencing extreme (absolute) poverty (living on less than \$ 1.25/day), it is important to note that the percentage of people experiencing extreme poverty has significantly declined. In 1990, the number of people living under less than \$ 1.25 per day was 1926 million, in 1999 – 1751 million, and in 2015 – 836 million (*The Millenium Development Goals Report 2015*, p. 6). The poverty rate has fallen in all regions, but this progress is not uniform. The decline in the population

living in extreme poverty is primarily due to the improvement of the situation in East Asia and the Pacific (71 million less poor in 2012–2013). In sub-Saharan Africa, this figure has decreased by only 4 million (Web-01, accessed on 3.08.2017). Although, the statistics show a decrease in absolute poverty, it seems wrong to set a threshold of extreme poverty at \$ 1.25/day or \$ 1.9/day. This issue is strongly emphasized by Thomas Pogge, who notes in a publication from 2002, entitled *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms* that the above-adopted standard is incorrect and cannot reflect the full extent of poverty. It is, however, a generally accepted norm. According to the authors of *The Millennium Development Goals Report*, in 2015, 836 million people lived in extreme poverty. However, according to the United Nations Development Program, there are 2.2 billion people living in poverty or on the verge of poverty whereas 1.2 billion live under \$ 1.25 a day.

Despite great success in the last 25 years, which includes the fact that:

- 1 billion people have escaped extreme poverty,
- 2.1 billion people have improved their sanitary conditions,
- 2.6 billion people have obtained access to sources of drinking water,

it should also be stressed that 1 out of 9 persons still suffer from hunger and 1 out of 3 is undernourished (*Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone*, p. 5).

The second indicator, which helps to identify the poorest regions of the world, is the Human Development Index (HDI). It was worked out by the United Nations Development Program. It takes into account three factors: life expectancy at birth (long and healthy life), expected years of schooling (knowledge) and national income per person in \$ (standard of living).

The third indicator is the Human Poverty Index, also worked out by the United Nations Development Program and complementary to the HDI index. We can distinguish here HPI-1 and HPI-2. The HPI-1 focuses on three basic aspects: probability of death at the age of up to 40 (for developing countries HPI-1) or up to 60 (for developed countries HPI-2), illiteracy rate and percentage of population without access to safe drinking water, medical care and mortality of children under 5 years of age.

Table 1.

**Countries with the lowest Human Development Index (2015)**

No.	Country	HDI	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	Gross national income per capita (2011 PPP \$)
1.	Central African Republic	0.352	51.5	7.1	4.2	587
2.	Niger	0.353	61.9	5.4	1.7	889
3.	Chad	0.396	51.9	7.3	2.3	1991
4.	Burkina Faso	0.402	59.0	7.7	1.4	1537
5.	Burundi	0.404	57.1	10.6	3.0	691
6.	Guinea	0.414	59.2	8.8	2.6	1058
7.	Southern Sudan	0.418	56.1	4.9	4.8	1882
8.	Mozambique	0.418	55.5	9.1	3.5	1098
9.	Sierra Leone	0.420	51.3	9.5	3.3	1529
10.	Eritrea	0.420	64.2	5.0	3.9	1490

Source: United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Reports 2016, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>, accessed on: 7.08.2017.

Countries with the highest number of people suffering from poverty are the ones where the Global Hunger Index (GHI) is the highest. This indicator is calculated on the basis of four components: the percentage of undernourished population, the percentage of children suffering from dwarfism, the proportion of underweight children under 5 and the mortality rate of children under 5.

Table 2.

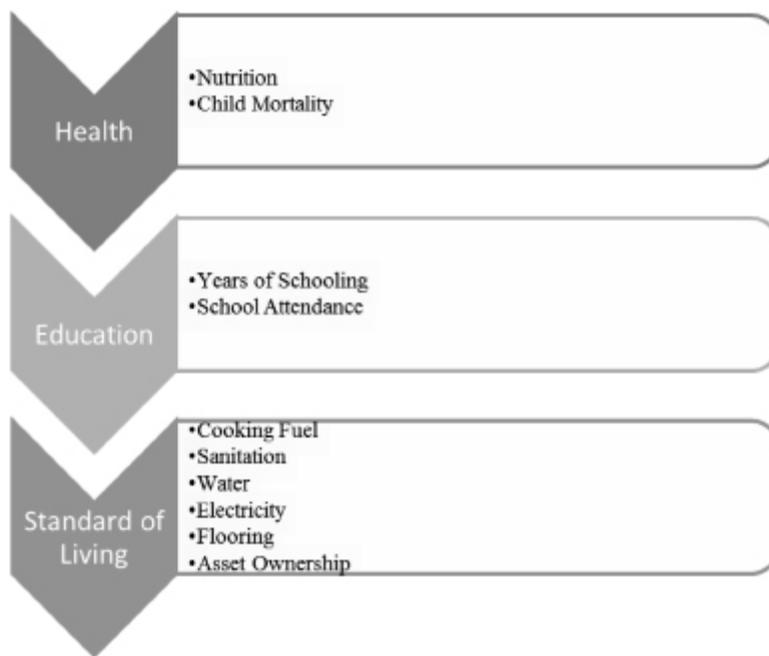
**Countries with the highest Global Hunger Index**

No.	Country	Global Hunger Index
1.	Central African Republic	46.1
2.	Chad	44.3
3.	Zambia	39
4.	Haiti	36.9
5.	Madagascar	35.4
6.	Yemen	35
7.	Sierra Leone	35
8.	Afghanistan	34.8
9.	Timor Leste	34.3
10.	Niger	33.7
11.	Pakistan	33.4

Source: *Global Hunger Index 2016*, <http://ghi.ifpri.org/> accessed on: 6.08.2017.

However, the most frequently used measure is the Multidimensional Poverty Index – MPI. It has been used since 2010 and it is an indicator of the so called “acute” poverty affecting 102 states. In the case of the MPI, the dimensions of social development such as education, standard of living and health were divided into 10 factors. The MPI is calculated on the basis of the number of children commencing education, the expected number of schooling years, child mortality, child nutrition, access to electricity, clean water, sanitation, flooring, fuel and asset ownership.

Chart 1.  
Multidimensional Poverty Indicator



Source: Own study based on Alkire, S. and Robles, G. (2017), *Multidimensional Poverty Index Summer 2017: Brief methodological note and results*, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, University of Oxford, OPHI Methodological Notes 45.

This indicator was introduced to distinguish “acute poverty” from extreme poverty (according to the World Bank living under less than \$ 1.90/day). It is considered to be the most precise way to show the extent of poverty in the world, as it is not focused solely on income. The MPI can vary, for example, depending on the province, in Kabul it is 25%, and in Urozgan (Afghanistan), it is 95%. Almost the poorest population (48%) are children aged 0– 17 years old (Alkire, Robles, 2017, p. 1).

Table 3.

**Countries with the lowest Multidimensional Poverty Index**

No.	Country	Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI = H*A)  Range 0 to 1	Headcount ratio: Population in multidimensional poverty (H)  % Population	Intensity of deprivation among the poor (A)  Average % of weighted deprivations
1.	Niger	0.605	89.3	67.7
2.	Ethiopia	0.564	87.3	64.6
3.	Southern Sudan	0.557	91.1	61.2
4.	Chad	0.552	87.1	63.4
5.	Burkina Faso	0.535	84.0	63.7
6.	Somalia	0.514	81.2	63.3
7.	Sierra Leone	0.464	81.0	57.3
8.	Guinea	0.459	75.1	61.1
9.	Mali	0.457	77.7	58.9
10.	Burundi	0.454	80.8	56.2

Source: Alkire, S. and Robles, G. (2017), *Multidimensional Poverty Index Summer 2017: Brief methodological note and results*, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, University of Oxford, OPHI Methodological Notes 45.

The above data clearly show that the poorest regions are found in sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of those countries include ones recently or currently affected by conflicts. Inability to meet basic needs is largely due to insufficient food production, demographic growth or extreme weather phenomena (e.g. drought).

## **POLITICAL ACTION UNDERTAKEN TO ERADICATE POVERTY**

Elimination of worldwide poverty in all its forms is undoubtedly a priority for the United Nations and UNICEF. This objective was recognized as the supreme one in the Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on

25 September 2015, entitled *Transforming Our World. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The document contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 related tasks. It constitutes a continuation of activities undertaken on 6–8 September, 2000 during the establishment of the UN Millennium Development Goals. Eight areas requiring immediate political response were identified at that time. Those include: eliminating extreme poverty and hunger, providing universal primary education, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, using sustainable management methods, and developing a global partnership for development (Kaniewska, Klimska, 2016, p. 223). The 2015 document details and expands the Millennium Development Goals, but it must be stressed that both documents bring to the forefront the need to eliminate poverty in all its forms. “The objectives of Sustainable Development and the related tasks are interdependent and indivisible and provide a balance between the three aspects of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental”. (General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1: Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030, 2015). Sustainable development assumes that elimination of all forms and dimensions of poverty, combating inequality within and between countries, protecting the environment, or striving for stable and sustainable economic growth, are closely interrelated and interdependent.

The tasks of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have a global and universal character, taking into account the opportunities and levels of development in individual countries and respect for national policies. Integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the Action Plan adopted in Addis Ababa on 13–16 July, 2015 (Addis Ababa Action Agenda of Third International Conference on Financing for Development). The authors point out that it is unacceptable that 800 million people suffering from chronic malnutrition should not have access to sufficient amount of safe food (Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, 2015, p. 7). It is possible to counteract the phenomenon of large-scale poverty, provided that global partnership for sustainable development with the support of concrete policies and actions is established.

An extremely important aspect of the two above-mentioned documents is, that they draw attention to the need of providing high quality education to all people and of promoting lifelong learning. It is education that opens up a chance to improve the living situation of a large part of the population. By building and raising individual awareness it is possible to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence, especially against women and girls. The signatories of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agendas have committed themselves to “providing quality education, equitable and inclusive education for all levels – pre-school education, primary and secondary education, as well as technical and vocational education. All people, regardless of gender, age, race or ethnicity, as well as people with disabilities, immigrants, indigenous peoples, children and adolescents, especially when they are in a particularly difficult situation, should have the opportunity to learn for the rest of their lives to gain knowledge and the skills needed to take advantage of opportunities and full participation in society” (General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1: Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030, 2015). It should be noted that with respect to many development challenges, some progress has already been achieved. There has also been significant improvement in access to education. In developing countries it has grown from 83% (2000) to 91% (2015). The number of children not attending primary school has dropped from 100 million (2000) to 57 million (2015). Literacy and reading skills in the 15–24 age group have increased over the past fifteen years from 83% to 91% (The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015, p. 4). Notwithstanding the high progress within access and quality of education, this area still requires undertaking continued and enhanced action. These include Early Childhood Development (ECD). This program initiated by UNICEF consists of more detailed initiatives to provide and support the widely understood development of children. This is possible by:

- improving the quality of basic health services, access to food, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, education,
- good orphan care practices,
- early implementation of development policies,
- building world-wide partnership and peace in the world (Web-02, accessed on: 9.08.2017).

In the area of improving the wellbeing of children and their access to education, Early Childhood Care and Education Programs play a key role. UNICEF representatives note that the care that the child receives in the first eight years of life (especially in the first three years) affect the child's entire life. Learning is not limited to the so-called formal education (school attendance) but also to the experiences that the child earns in the early stages of development. Access to food, adequate medical care are key elements that affect proper development of children. UNICEF's activities in this program focus on investing in child development through early learning campaigns and improving readiness for school along with actions promoting health and proper nutrition (Web-03, accessed on: 9.08.2017). "Globally, millions of children under the age of five are at risk of never reaching their full potential. One out of four children under five (159 million) are stunted due to poor nutrition, with numbers significantly higher in parts of Africa and South Asia. Nearly half of all 3 to 6 year olds do not have access to pre-primary education. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 80 percent are not enrolled in pre-primary programs" (Web-04, accessed on: 10.08.2017).

The benefits of UNICEF programs are particularly important for the poor and disadvantaged children. "For example, a 20-year study in Jamaica showed that disadvantaged young children who were exposed to high-quality early stimulation interventions as infants and toddlers earned up to 25 percent higher wages as adults – equivalent to adults who grew up in wealthier households" (Web-04, accessed on: 10.08.2017).

The World Bank representatives emphasize that the ECD programs constitute also an investment in the economic growth in a given country. "Evidence suggests that an additional dollar invested in the quality of ECD programs yields a return of between \$ 6 dollars and \$ 17 dollars" (Web-04, accessed on: 10.08.2017). Education brings measurable benefits that translate into improved economic conditions for developing countries.

## CONCLUSION

The last two decades have been a period when hundreds of millions of people have come out of extreme poverty. It is important to note that this primarily refers to children, young women and young men who play a key

role in the process of change that is taking place to eliminate the phenomenon of poverty in the world. Educated people, aware of their capabilities and potential, can take action to build a better, sustainable and peaceful world. Social inclusion is also important for the improvement of welfare. Women and girls must have equal access to high quality education, economic resources and political participation. They must have equal opportunities with men and boys in terms of employment opportunities, leadership and decision-making at all levels.

Access to education and its quality undoubtedly play a key role in eradicating poverty in developing countries. The benefits of education are long-term and are passed on generations to come. It is important to remember, however, that the phenomenon of poverty is a complex issue, and that the sole education of society may prove insufficient. It is also important to ensure universal health protection, access to high quality health care, addressing income inequality and access to natural resources.

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