



a path appears

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Poverty & Early Childhood Intervention

IN WEST VIRGINIA



INDEPENDENT
LENS



COMMUNITY
CINEMA



Table of Contents

Using This Guide	1
About the Filmmakers	2
About the Film Series	3
Q&A with Producer Maro Chermayeff	4
Background Information	8
Thinking More Deeply	17
Suggestions for Action	18
Resources	19
Credits	20

Using This Guide

Community Cinema is a rare public forum: a space for people to gather who are connected by a love of stories and a belief in their power to change the world. This discussion guide is designed as a tool to facilitate dialogue and deepen understanding of the complex issues in *A Path Appears*. It is also an invitation to not only sit back and enjoy the film, but to step up and take action.

This guide is not meant to be a comprehensive primer on a given topic. Rather, it provides important context and raises thought-provoking questions to encourage viewers to think more deeply. The guide provides suggestions for topics to explore in conversations in community and classroom settings, and online. It also offers information about organizations working on the ground to make a difference and provides further resources for deeper learning and opportunities to get involved. For information about the program, visit communitycinema.org

NOTE TO READERS, FACILITATORS, AND EDUCATORS

This discussion guide gives a brief synopsis of the entire *A Path Appears* series, and then provides specific background information and resources on poverty and early childhood intervention in the United States. It also draws on stories and information from the corresponding book *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity* by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, including discussion questions and ways to take action that connect both resources.

Trigger Warning

This episode of *A Path Appears* focuses on poverty and its impact on infants and children, and also references drug abuse, sexual abuse, and domestic violence— sensitive yet pertinent topics that may not be suitable for all audiences. Facilitators and educators are strongly encouraged to review all of the readings, materials, and links and preview the film module to be sure the topic and lesson are appropriate for their curriculum and students. At the facilitator's or educator's discretion a trigger warning or other preparation/discussion may be advisable, as well as identifying viewers who might be personally or adversely affected by this material. Additional resources for the film and book *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity* are included at the end of this discussion guide, including organizations and hotlines to which to refer those who need help or support.

About the Guide Writer



ALLISON
MILEWSKI

Allison Milewski is an educator and curriculum designer with over ten years' experience in arts and media education. She has developed art integration programs, professional development workshops, and arts and media curricula for organizations such as ITVS, Tribeca Film Institute, Latino Public Broadcasting, the Brooklyn Historical Society, and Urban Arts Partnership and managed arts-based enrichment programs for over 20 New York City public schools. Allison's professional experience also includes over 15 years of program management and administration with domestic and international NGOs such as PCI-Media Impact, the Center for Reproductive Rights, and the Union Square Awards for Grassroots Activism.

About the Filmmakers



MARO CHERMAYEFF

**Executive Producer and Director,
Show of Force**

Maro Chermayeff is an award-winning filmmaker, producer, director, author and former television executive at A&E/AETN. She is Founder and Chair of the MFA program in Social Documentary at the School of Visual Arts in New York City and partner in the production company Show of Force. Some of her extensive credits include: *Kehinde Wiley: An Economy of Grace* (PBS, 2014), the landmark four-hour PBS documentary series *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (PBS, 2012), 6-hour series *Circus* (PBS, 2010), the Emmy-award winning *Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present* (HBO, 2012) *Mann v. Ford* (HBO, 2011), *Parasomnia* (France 2, 2010), the Emmy Award-winning 10-hour series *Carrier* (PBS/Nat Geo International, 2008), the 6-hour series *Frontier House* (PBS, 2002), *American Masters: Juilliard* (PBS, 2003), *The Kindness of Strangers* (HBO, 1999), *Role Reversal* (A&E 2002), *Trauma, Life in the ER* (TLC, 2001) the *Vanity Fair* web series *Eminent Domains* (2014), and over 15 specials for Charlie Rose. Represented by WME, Chermayeff is a principal of Show of Force, the production entity for the Half the Sky Movement. She is an Executive Producer of Half the Sky Movement's Facebook Game and 3 Mobile Games with Games for Change.



JAMIE GORDON

Executive Producer

Jamie Gordon co-founded Fugitive Films in 2005 after running the Development Department of GreeneStreet Films in New York City for six years as well as working on multiple award-winning Hollywood feature films. Most recently, Gordon executive produced *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity For Women Worldwide*. Her company produced *Coach* starring Hugh Dancy and the comedy *Wedding Daze* starring Jason Biggs and Isla Fisher. Among other projects, she is developing a film based on the National Book Award finalist *River Town* by Peter Hessler and a film adaptation of Brooke Berman's off-Broadway hit "Smashing." Previously, Gordon was the Head of Development for GreeneStreet Films, working on *In the Bedroom*, and co-producing *Swimfan* and *Pinero*. She worked as a story editor for producer Wendy Finerman where she worked on *Forrest Gump*. She graduated with a B.A. in history from Princeton University.



MIRA CHANG

Co-Executive Producer

Mira Chang is a producer, director and director of photography of nonfiction content for domestic and international television and several feature length documentaries. Her work can be seen regularly on ABC, National Geographic, A&E and Discovery. Her projects include *Sold* and *Jesus Camp*, nominated for a 2007 Oscar for Best Documentary. Recent projects include A&E's *Runaway Squad* and *Garó Unleashed* for the Sundance Channel. Chang was also series-producer of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*.



JEFF DUPRE

**Executive Producer,
Show of Force**

Jeff Dupre has been producing and directing documentary films for over 15 years. Together with Show of Force partner Maro Chermayeff, Dupre is director, creator and executive producer of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (PBS, 2012), *Circus*, a six-part documentary series that also premiered on PBS. He conceived and is producer and co-director of *Marina Abramovic The Artist is Present*. He is a producer of *Carrier* and Michael Kantor's *Broadway: The American Musical*. Dupre's directorial debut, *Out of the Past*, won the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival, among other awards.



JOSHUA BENNETT

Series Producer

With over 10 years experience producing film and television, Joshua Bennett has produced shoots in over 35 countries and on all seven continents, including the PBS series *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (2012). He has also produced programming for PBS, HBO, MTV, Discovery, A&E and The Sundance Channel, as well as music videos commercials, independent shorts, experimental works, corporate, new media and viral media campaigns. Bennett teaches documentary producing at New York City's School of Visual Arts' master's program for social documentary film.

About the Film Series



From the creative team that brought you the groundbreaking *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, *A Path Appears* investigates young women in America forced into a life of prostitution and the innovative programs that have evolved to achieve remarkable results in empowering their lives. Sex trafficking and prostitution. Domestic slavery. Teen pregnancy. The devastation of poverty. These troubling situations are happening not just halfway across the world, but also in our own backyards — in Chicago and Nashville and Boston.

In the second part, the series continues around the globe tracking children in Haiti, living in abject poverty after years of political corruption during times of violent protest and captures the transformation of Kenya's most notorious slum through expanded education for girls. The series uncovers the roots behind the incredible adversity faced every day by millions of women, while also presenting glimpses of hope and change.

With Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times reporters Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn and a number of celebrity activists as guides — including Malin Akerman, Jennifer Garner, Mia Farrow, Ashley Judd, Eva Longoria, and Alfre Woodard, each with painful stories from their own pasts — *A Path Appears* journeys across the country and around the globe to drive home shocking stories of gender inequality and vulnerability.

Q&A with Producer Maro Chermayeff

1. What spurred you to make *A Path Appears*? How is *A Path Appears* different from *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*?

A Path Appears is inspired by and based on Nick Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's newest book *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*. This four-hour series and book is a natural follow-up to our groundbreaking transmedia project *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. Kristof and WuDunn started formulating their concept for their new book as we were nearing our PBS broadcast premiere of *Half the Sky* in fall 2012. They recognized the enormous response from the readers and audience, people asking, "What can we do to truly make a difference?" They both wanted to address the subject matter and answer questions, using stories and storytelling to provide examples of organizations and methodology that had truly made a difference in philanthropic impact and outcomes.

Additionally, they were both interested in expanding the geographic footprint of their work — most particularly to include stories from our own backyard, the United States, as well as from Latin America and the Caribbean, parts of the world they'd worked far less in. The subject of what works and what doesn't in global giving, and the ripple effect of poverty and the vulnerability of women, in challenging and oppressive circumstances, remained very interesting to all of us as filmmakers — so we decided to continue our work together. An interesting new approach was that the book and the television series were developed in tandem — meaning many of the stories were found by the production team and folded into the book, as well as Nick and Sheryl telling more stories in the book than we were able to include in only three nights of primetime television.

2. What went into selecting the issue areas and locations for this new series? In particular, why did you decide to feature the stories taking place in the United States?

At the end of Kristof and WuDunn's [first] book, they had a final chapter called "What You Can Do: Four Steps You Can Take in the Next Ten Minutes." That call to action launched a huge response, and people began to think of Sheryl and Nick, and also of the Project Production Team (who run the *Half the Sky* Movement project and website), as a hub, a resource to help find ways to get involved. Our readers and viewers spoke, and we listened! Thousands of people talked about the many issues facing women and girls that were important to them. In selecting our issues we relied on the following criteria:

1. That the issue was impacting a large number of people around the globe and was falling doubly hard on women and girls
2. That we could connect the issue to an NGO [nongovernmental organization] and individuals we felt were effectively addressing and implementing opportunities for change
3. That the issue was relevant and emotionally accessible to our audience
4. That it was an issue and an organization or individual we could present in a fresh way, and was potentially underreported

Our team got together and over the course of many months talked about the issues we wanted to address, as well as the locations of interest and how to narrow our focus to places where the issue could be best amplified, and most importantly where we could meet and tell the stories of inspiring individuals and organizations tackling these issues in their own communities and countries. We particularly wanted to expand our geographic regions because Nick and Sheryl's initial reporting in *Half the Sky* was focused on the developing world and the Global South, and we all knew that these issues were also prevalent right here at home. We wanted to add to the dialogue and to break down the illusion that some Americans seem to have: that extreme poverty, sex trafficking, or gender-based violence are not happening here to the same extent, when in fact these are very much happening here at home. We also wanted *A Path Appears* to shine a light on solutions — what was happening around the world and here in the United States. with early childhood intervention, education, effective local police and government work — so that people understood and could explore and learn more about some of these effective interventions. The reality is that these kinds of effective solutions are vastly underfunded and undersupported — when in fact if you invest in the front end, in the safety, security, and education of young people, they have far more opportunity to thrive and avoid the ripple effects of poverty and neglect, and you save enormous amounts of money on the back end in the form of prisons, drug treatment facilities, emotional and psychiatric treatment. Not to mention that they live better and more enriched lives, without oppression, fear, and abuse.

3. How did you go about choosing your subjects, and selecting which stories to tell in the final episodes of the series?

As a production team, we vet hundreds of stories, to find the ones we feel meet the criteria we have to merit inclusion in our content. The criteria include: compelling work; location; safety of our crew in telling that story in that location; inclusion of diverse, compelling, and relatable subjects who wish to be filmed and wish to be part of the project. We are always mindful that the stories we are telling are tough, but our intention is always as storytellers to be immediate and in the moment, and to add positively to the dialogue. Our goal is

to introduce our audience to individuals and issues they may not know about, and to take them to new places they may never go, in the interest of raising awareness and fostering positive solutions and change.

4. You probably had to make some tough decisions around how to portray the stories of several minors in the film, both here in the United States as well as in Kenya, Haiti, and Colombia. Please discuss what went into your choices in telling each of their stories.

As filmmakers (Show of Force) and journalists (Kristof and WuDunn) we are all highly conscious of the serious and important ongoing dialogue of how to best tell stories about individuals facing enormous challenges and brutal circumstances. Show of Force has been part of those conversations around how best to portray these stories while recognizing the effect this has on each person who agrees to share their own truth. Nick has been a leader and influencer in keeping their stories alive in the minds of the people. We have spoken with some of the leading experts including Human Rights Watch, the International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, and numerous other leading NGOs and educators in this subject matter all around the world. There is no single "right way" to portray an adult or a minor; every story is a case-by-case decision, with the top priorities being safety, security, long-term well-being, and the fair and equitable treatment of all.

This series is about tough issues and harsh realities facing women and girls around the world and here in the United States. It is important that people understand that these harsh realities — sex trafficking, gender-based violence, slave labor, and lack of access to education, to resources, and to opportunity — even to hope — are affecting children.

For all of the stories we tell, we work hand-in-hand with highly experienced NGOs and government officials — and all of our subjects, who are participating voluntarily and with full knowledge of their role in the project — to make our decisions. We also understand that this is a complex issue with differing viewpoints: Should minors be shown or not be shown in the context of these difficult stories and situations? Many people feel the bravery and courage it takes to come forward, both as the minor and also as the guardian or parent of the minor, is courage that deserves to be honored. Sometimes, when people on camera are blurred — it is not seen as a protection of that person, but rather a continued silencing or shaming of that person. It may continue to suggest that they are a perpetrator rather than a victim with a right to speak, a right to be seen, and a right to fight for justice.

As extremely experienced and professional filmmakers, we properly and legally release all of our subjects, of course, but more important than the paperwork is our word and [our] wish for all of our subjects to be treated as they wish to be treated — and [our desire] to help them tell their stories honestly, fairly, and openly if that is what they so desire. In some cases we do blur individuals, because of specific circumstances in which we feel it may be in their best interest or [safer] not to be seen. It is always a thoughtful and intricate decision-making process, with the respect and dignity of our subjects in mind. But on the whole, we know the subjects we spoke to and we filmed and show on camera want to tell their stories, and want to be seen and heard. We are honored to give them that opportunity.

5. Portraying the stories of survivors of trauma and abuse can be challenging terrain to navigate as well. How did you and your team approach working with survivors to tell their stories?

Between *Half the Sky* and *A Path Appears*, the production team at Show of Force, in our collaboration with Kristof and WuDunn, has spent more than five years completely immersed in the complex issues facing women and girls around the globe. We take our role as storytellers very seriously and form long-lasting bonds with all of the subjects and the agents of change we feature in our films. This is also true of the actor-advocates we have brought with us on the project. Our relationship begins long before and remains long after the camera stops rolling. Through our conversations with our subjects prior to filming, and with the record that our previous body of work demonstrates, we are able to develop trust and demonstrate the quality and integrity [with] which they will be profiled. Trust is developed with subjects the same way friendships are developed between any people — through conversation, through shared experiences, through serious dialogue, and through moments of joy and laughter — and tears — where our shared goals and hopes all lie.

All the survivors — both adults and minors — we work with in our films are individuals who find the process of participating in the project empowering and rewarding, and [this] helps them to move forward and shed the shame and guilt that have weighed on them as victims. They all take their participation very seriously and all shared with us their desire to let their own story and experience help others to avoid similar fates or pitfalls. They wish to use their traumatic experiences and their survival as a beacon.

6. Was it difficult to convince the subjects to share their stories on camera? Was there a common factor that drew all of the subjects to agree to share their stories publicly through *A Path Appears*?

What is difficult is to find the right subjects, not only for this film, but for any documentary film with this nature of sensitive storytelling.

As a team, we need to look for more than one kind of story or experience, so that various facets of the story can be told, and we also need to find subjects who are emotionally prepared to share their story in this kind of way. Months of conversations and discussions take place to secure participation and work with our subjects. However, we have found that our participants on the whole are empowered by the possibility of sharing their story. Their first instinct is to want to share what happened to them, in hopes of helping others in the same situation. They appreciate being heard, and one of the most devastating experiences for them as subject is when they are not taken seriously or believed; they know in our filmmaking team that they have experienced and sympathetic "listeners" who know what they are talking about and what they have been through. We most certainly have not been through the same kind of trauma they have, but we know and care and trust our subjects, and hope and believe that they feel that.

7. What was your process for selecting the local experts on the ground in each story? And the celebrity activists?

We went into finding the stories for *A Path Appears* as we do with most films — very rigorously, with a certain focus in mind both in terms of subject matter and geography. In conjunction with Kristof and WuDunn, our team does extensive research on the people and organizations that are making an impact, and whose models are proven, scalable, and replicable. Once a good potential story was identified, we began extensive conversations with the local NGOs and activists, understanding their work and the types of stories that we would be able to capture if we were to film with them. Every potential story goes through multiple rounds of phone conversations with the subjects, vetting with other experts in the field, followed by in-person meetings, and on-the-ground scouting to determine both the strength of the work and of the stories that we will be able to capture.

The actor-advocates who travel with us are chosen based on both their own interest in and commitment to social justice and human rights issues, and their desire to raise the visibility of the work we are profiling. All of them have issues and causes to which they have already devoted a great deal of their time, although frequently we invite them on trips that are not directly related to their prior work so they can bring fresh eyes to the subject. There are always many logistical and scheduling details that have to be worked out with such busy and high-profile celebrities, but we've found that the actor-advocates who inevitably do travel with us are the ones who are immediately enthusiastic and positive about the invitation. In building our roster, we always have an eye toward diversity, not only diversity of race and age, but also diversity in terms of their prior knowledge about the subjects, and the life experiences that they bring. The nine celebrities who traveled with us for *A Path Appears* were an amazing group of dedicated individuals, and we feel each one was a unique and valuable addition to the series.

8. What message do you hope viewers will take from *A Path Appears*?

I hope that people will leave the series having been transported by incredible storytelling and filmmaking, understanding that there are real issues out in the world that deserve and require our attention and that importantly, there are solutions to the issues of sex trafficking, teen pregnancy, child labor, gender-based violence, poverty, and the overall cycle of vulnerability and exploitation that keeps so many people trapped in these situations. We wanted people to become aware, but to embrace and engage, understanding that they can have an impact and be part of sustainable change. We also want to shine a light on amazing people in our world doing incredible work to help others in peril. The film deals with incredibly difficult subject matter, and the stories are heartbreaking, but the overall message is intended to be a positive and hopeful one. We do know that early intervention, local leadership, and holistic programs that instill hope and empower the recipients work and have a lasting, generational effect. Our viewers have the opportunity every day [to] get involved and contribute toward these solutions. We hope they will seize on that message and become a part of this movement for change.

9. What have you learned from the experience of making *A Path Appears*?

Both *Half the Sky* and *A Path Appears* have been completely life-changing journeys. Before this work, before having the distinct honor of knowing Nick Kristof and having him as my good friend, I did not know very much about these issues at all. I was educated and capable, and of course [I] understood that, as Nick would say, "I had won the lottery of life," but I did not understand the web of pathologies that conspire to keep women and girls in the world from fulfilling their potential and living happy and valued lives. It was so important, as a citizen of our planet, to engage in these and other issues and get involved! As we often found, in the worst circumstances and the most daunting places, we met the most amazing people. Out of hardship comes a resilience that is frankly humbling. Everyone at my company Show of Force and specifically the dedicated producers of these two series — Jamie Gordon, Jeff Dupre, Josh Bennett, Mira Chang, Rachel Koteen, and Jessica Chermayeff — as well as the incredible postproduction team and editors Howard Sharp and Donna Shepherd, we discuss regularly how this has brought us together and brought meaning and value to our work. I have never before had so many young people contact my company asking to work on a project — or [express] how impressed they are by the stories we have been able to share with our audience. This is also true because these are not just television series, far from it. These are among the most successful social media campaigns in the world; we have a following of millions around the globe and have created extensive educational content,

and games. We all learned what a "movement" is ... what it can be, and how we can be part of it. This is the project that makes me proud to tell my daughter about what we do all day.

10. What's it like to work with Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn? What was it like to produce the film alongside the development of the book?

Nick and Sheryl are our colleagues, our teachers, and our friends. They are not always right, they don't always know everything — because they're human beings, covering a lot of territory and with a lot of responsibility. But they are always investigators and humanitarians. I admire them daily for being so tenacious, and I truly believe they have brought this kind of content forward and into the public eye (at times like [a] drumbeat) and forced people to look, listen, and "do." They also had the bright idea of letting the audience know that doing good for others will make you happier at the end of the day. We feel that way now as well.

Working in tandem on *A Path Appears*, as opposed to creating our content based on an existing book, had some tricky elements to it. One interesting element for us as filmmakers is that sometimes we found stories, and sometimes Nick and Sheryl found them — and we shared and discussed how that worked. Many more stories are in the book, and also some are more suited for text and not camera; it was interesting as a team to sort out that difference. It was extremely fun for us (gave us some bragging rights!) that we found many subjects and stories and essentially pitched them to Nick and Sheryl — and many of those are in the series and also in the book. It was fascinating to see how Nick and Sheryl would tell those stories in the context of the book, and then watch how they play[ed] out in the series. Of course for television we want and need the stories to be unfolding; the drama and stakes have to be seen and experienced — not told "after-the-fact," which in writing can be infused with drama. In the case of film ... if you don't see it ... essentially you don't know it happened.

11. Please share a few memories or experiences that stand out to you from your time in production.

Following are moments that will stay with me forever:

1. We as a team were integrally and directly involved in finding a young girl, missing for over three months: [S]uddenly, without preparation, Nick found her on a trafficking site, in the presence of her shocked and frightened mother and father. She was rescued within 12 hours by the Boston Police. We felt very lucky, but also angry. But it gave us an immediate understanding that with focus and attention to detail, young girls can be found, and pulled out of the life — and very fast.
2. Going into a Kenyan prison to talk to the man who had repeatedly been raping his granddaughter Flavian. It was dark, cold, and raining — and Nick and our producer in the field, Jessica Chermayeff, and myself had been following the story all day. In the end, we had to be fair and talk to everyone, and have everyone surrounding the story know and understand the rights release [in order] to film their stories. It was hard, it felt dangerous, but we felt we were on the right side of a horrible situation, and we were dedicated to helping this young girl. Today she is in school, and in recovery with extensive support from the NGO we worked so closely with, Shining Hope for Communities. Every day, they actually change lives for the better.
3. Driving around Nashville with Shana, and seeing the women on the street; understanding how they got there, and seeing an American city in an entirely new light. Shana is a powerful and incredibly honest person — I may never have met someone like her if I had not gone so deeply into a film trying to reveal the realities of sex trafficking in this country. I would have driven by, unaware ... I would have seen only one side of Nashville ... and there is another side. She opened my eyes, and she made me see the power of possibility.
4. The slums of Kibera in the mud rain. It is one of my favorite places on earth: the mud, the smell, the children, the world within a world — and the reality that millions and millions of people live like this in slums all over the world. Go there. You will never turn on your tap and drink a glass of water again without a reality check, and it may make you stand up and do something. Seriously!
5. The first shock of seeing an 11-year-old girl in Cartagena holding her week-old baby. She looked terrified. And I was scared for her. She didn't know she had to hold his head. He looked a little nervous too, but like all babies, he really looked right into the eyes of his mother and felt love. It was hard to understand how they could go forward together, but there they were, and there was only [moving] forward.
6. Haiti: It takes an hour and a half to get there on American Airlines ... put that in your pipe and smoke it. Insane. And we all play a part in that insanity. So chip in.
7. The girls from [the] Kibera School for Girls: Love love love them all. Kennedy and Jessica Odede — nothing but respect and love and their school is miraculous and hopeful. Little Ida, the most adorable smile on earth; "juicy sentences" being formed in the classroom; Eunice's poetry on the power of a dream. Take the time to learn more about this incredible school and how you can support their important work.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Poverty and Early Childhood Intervention in West Virginia, United States

“Poverty in America is essentially invisible. If you are successful, you insulate yourself from these kinds of problems. This is a real failure of the national media. You can’t solve problems if you’re not aware of them.”

— **Nicholas Kristof**, Journalist and Co-Author of *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*

Individuals Featured in This Episode

- **Nicholas Kristof** — Journalist; Co-author, *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*
- **Sheryl WuDunn** — Journalist; Co-author, *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*
- **Jennifer Garner** — Actor/Trustee for Save the Children
- **Tonya Bonecutter** — Early Childhood Coordinator for Save the Children

The road to adulthood is a challenging time and living in poverty can add an ocean of hardship and obstacles. The right investments in systems, programs, and individuals — including better schools, programs that build independence and resilience like home visitation, and personal connections among people living in a community — can improve life success.

Access to quality early learning programs is increasingly recognized as essential to the fight against poverty and in determining a child’s long-term physical health and social development. Despite the demonstrated benefits of these programs, the need for early childhood programs and the resources to support them continue to go unmet across the United States, with potentially disastrous consequences for children, their families, and their communities.

According to Save the Children, “All children are born ready to learn,” but 16 million children living in poverty in the United States enter school each year at a disadvantage. The first years of a child’s life are a period of rapid growth, when the need for consistent positive engagement and stimulation is critical. In fact, “A child’s brain is already 80% formed by age three, 90% by age five” (2014). Children in households that are coping with extreme economic and emotional stresses that undermine early learning activities and preschool enrollment — such as poverty, physical and sexual abuse, or substance abuse — are far more likely to fall behind their peers even before they set foot in the kindergarten classroom.

The United States currently ranks 25th in the world in early learning enrollment (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2013). For those children who do attend, program quality varies widely, especially for low-income families. In 2013, an estimated 41 percent of 4-year-olds were served in early learning programs that met less than half of the national standard benchmarks (National Institute for Early Education Research [NIEER], 2013).

In addition to the demonstrated benefits of early learning programs for the children who have access to them, there is also a strong economic case to be made for making them available. Research shows that public investment in these programs produces substantial long-term financial returns. Each “public dollar spent on high-quality preschool returns \$7 through a reduced need for spending on other services — such as remedial education, grade repetition, and special education — as well as increased productivity and earnings for these children as adults” (U.S. Department of Education [USED], 2014).

Sources:

- » BRUCE DRAKE, Pew Research Center, 2013: pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/12/05/americans-see-growing-gap-between-rich-and-poor/
- » The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 2014: teach.com/where/levels-of-schooling/early-childhood-education
- » National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), Rutgers Graduate School of Education. 2013. “The State of Preschool 2013: State Preschool Yearbook.” nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/yearbook2013.pdf
- » Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2013. “Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators.” oecd.org/edu/eag2013%20%28eng%29-FINAL%2020%20June%202013.pdf
- » Save the Children. 2014. “Early Steps to School Success.” savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.8193011/k.4505/Early_Steps_to_School_Success.htm
- » U.S. Department of Education (USED). 2014. “Early Learning: America’s Middle Class Promise Begins Early [Early Learning Enrollment].” ed.gov/documents/budget/2015/early-learning-2015.pdf
- » U.S. Department of Education (USED). 2014. “Early Learning: America’s Middle Class Promise Begins Early [Early Learning Spending].” ed.gov/sites/default/files/early-learning-overview.pdf

WEST VIRGINIA IN CONTEXT

When the Great Recession hit in 2007, West Virginia's already-struggling economy was dealt a severe blow from which it is still recovering. In 2013, the state's personal-income growth was the lowest in the nation, and communities and families across West Virginia continue to struggle with high unemployment, limited social service resources, and the ecological consequences of the region's long industrial history (Bureau of Economic Analysis [BEA], 2014).

West Virginia's extensive natural resources provided the foundation for the major industrial expansion that began in the late 19th century and continued through the middle of the 20th century. Mining—especially coal mining—was critical throughout this period and dominated both the economic and political landscape of the state.

In the 1950s, coal prices were weakening at the same time that the industry began introducing automated systems to reduce their reliance on the labor force. In a speech in Ohio in 1960, John F. Kennedy spoke about the impact of automation on the economy of West Virginia: "I ran in the primary in West Virginia. I spent some time in McDowell County in West Virginia. McDowell County mines more coal than

it ever has in its history, probably more coal than any county in the United States and yet there are more people getting surplus food packages in McDowell County than any county in the United States. The reason is that machines are doing the jobs of men, and we have not been able to find jobs for those men" (The American Presidency Project, 2014). This had a devastating effect on West Virginia's economy, resulting in a mass exodus of the state's labor force and the onset of an ongoing legacy of unemployment that reached a high of 20.1 percent in 1983 (*The New York Times*, 1983). As of May 2014, West Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was at 6.3 percent, which was equal to the national rate. However, a worrying trend indicated that unemployment rates had increased across 45 counties (WorkForce West Virginia, 2014).

West Virginia is also facing the environmental consequences of over a century of mining and manufacturing. The impact of resource extraction, deforestation, and industrial practices

touches every area of life in West Virginia, including agriculture, property value, job security, community health, air quality, and water security. According to the Sierra Club, "Coalfield communities in southern West Virginia are subject to increased flooding, destruction of local clean water sources, the danger of over-weight coal trucks, decreasing value of personal property due to coal dust and living in the shadows of huge coal-sludge impoundments. Recent research has documented severe impacts to the health of coalfield residents as well" (2014).

INDUSTRY AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN WEST VIRGINIA

In January 2014, chemical storage tanks owned by Freedom Industries leaked five thousand gallons of 4-methylcyclohexane methanol (MCHM)—a chemical treatment used in coal production—into the Elk River in West Virginia (*National Geographic*, 2014). The leak occurred one mile upriver from the region's water treatment plant and resulted in the loss of water access for over three hundred thousand people (*The New York Times*, 2014). This event is part of a larger history that includes the 2008 explosion at a chemical plant owned by Bayer CropScience that released toxic chemicals into the air and a 2009 explosion at West Virginia's Upper Big Branch mine that killed 29 coal miners (*The New York Times*, 2014). In 2012, federal prosecutors said that the top executive of Massey Energy Company and others "knowingly conspired to violate safety laws at Massey's mines" (*The New York Times*, 2014). The recent introduction of hydrofracking to mine natural gas in the Marcellus Shale region has raised new concerns about the risks related to resource extraction industries in the state.

The environmental impact of the mining and chemical industries in West Virginia is a contentious political issue that dominates public discourse. Four environmental groups petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency in 2009 “to take over much of West Virginia’s handling of the Clean Water Act, citing a ‘nearly complete breakdown’” of oversight by local authorities in the state (*The New York Times*, 2009). Although many West Virginians suffer from compromised health and quality of life as a result of the mining and chemical industries, there is also ongoing public resentment toward and fear about state and federal regulation. Stronger regulations, it is argued, will lead to layoffs and factory closings. If companies no longer find it cost-effective to work in West Virginia, they may take their businesses elsewhere, and with them, thousands of much-needed jobs.

Sources:

- » The American Presidency Project, University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). 2014. “Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy, Municipal Auditorium, Canton, Ohio.” presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=74231
- » Bureau of Business & Economic Research, 2014: be.wvu.edu/bber/outlook_pdfs/WV-Economic-Outlook-2014.pdf
- » Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), U.S. Department of Commerce. 2014. “State Personal Income 2013.”
- » Daniel E. Campbell Sherry L. Brandt-Williams, Maria E. A. Meisch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2005: epa.gov/nheerl/download_files/publications/wvevaluationposted.pdf
- » *The Economist*, 2014: economist.com/news/united-states/21602238-dirty-fuel-unites-right-and-splits-left-politics-coal?zid=311&ah=308cac674cccf-554ce65cf926868bbc2
- » E-WV: wvencyclopedia.org/articles/414
- » Ken Ward Jr. West Virginia Gazette, 2014: wvgazette.com/News/201403050071
- » Mary Beth Pudup, 1990: wvculture.org/history/journal_wvh/wvh49-2.html
- » bea.gov/newsreleases/regional/spi/2014/pdf/spi0314.pdf
- » *The New York Times*. 1983. “22 States Are Reported High on the Jobless List.” nytimes.com/1983/06/15/us/22-states-are-reported-high-on-the-jobless-list.html
- » *The New York Times*. 2009. “Clean Water Laws Are Neglected, at a Cost in Suffering.” nytimes.com/2009/09/13/us/13water.html?pagewanted=all
- » *The New York Times*. 2014. “Critics Say Spill Highlights Lax West Virginia Regulations.” nytimes.com/2014/01/13/us/critics-say-chemical-spill-highlights-lax-west-virginia-regulations.html?_r=1
- » Peter Moskowitz, Al Jazeera, 2014: america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/8/11/coal-blame-game.html
- » Sierra Club, West Virginia Chapter. 2014. “West Virginia Environmental Issues.” westvirginia2.sierraclub.org/content/our-issuesWorkForceWestVirginia. 2014.
- » “Labor Market Information by West Virginia County: May 2014.” workforcewv.org/lmi/datarel/cnty_PR.pdf
- » Statista.com, 2014: statista.com/statistics/273909/seasonally-adjusted-monthly-unemployment-rate-in-the-us
- » West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources: dhr.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx
- » Work Force West Virginia. 2014. “West Virginia’s May Unemployment Rate at 6.3 Percent.” workforcewv.org/lmi/datarel/DRNEWS.pdf

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), poverty is the greatest cause of suffering on Earth, and there is strong evidence that the stresses of living in poverty increase the risk of physical and mental illness and drug abuse. Although poverty is not exclusively the cause of mental illness and illegal drug use, the sustained emotional and physical stress of poverty, coupled with a lack of access to effective services and resources, can complicate health issues for families and communities living on the economic margins. For many West Virginian communities, decades of economic and social instability have had a measurable impact on the health and well-being of adults and children.

The majority of West Virginia's population lives in rural areas, where they face unique challenges, including greater distances between people, health resources, and health care facilities and institutions. Economically disadvantaged and isolated families also have fewer resources for both preventative and responsive health care services. According to the 2013 *West Virginia Behavioral Health Epidemiological Profile*, "Persons with lower income are more likely to engage in negative health behaviors. For example, the highest smoking prevalence in West Virginia is among those earning less than \$15,000 per year, while the lowest prevalence is among those earning \$75,000 or more per year" (WV BBH, 2013). West Virginia also has the highest smoking rate for pregnant women in the United States. The leading causes of death in West Virginia are heart disease and cancer, followed by lower respiratory disease, accidents, and stroke. Rates for all leading causes of death in the state are significantly higher than those of the United States as a whole (WV BBH, 2013).

Studies show that there is a higher rate of substance abuse among individuals and communities that are suffering from poverty-related mental illness (Mental Health America [MHA], 2014; National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2010). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drug overdose death rates in the United States "have been rising steadily since 1992 with a 118% increase from 1999 to 2011 alone" and in 2011, 80% of drug overdose deaths were unintentional.

As of 2011, West Virginia was shown to have a significantly higher percentage of depression among adults than the national average, and the "highest drug overdose mortality rate in the United States, with 28.9 per 100,000 people suffering drug overdose fatalities" (Trust for America's Health, 2013). The majority of deaths are from prescription drug abuse and accidental overdose and the percentage of drug-related fatalities has "increased by 605% since 1999" (Trust for America's Health, 2013). One reason for this worrying trend is believed to be increased access to prescription medications. According to the CDC, sales of prescription painkillers per capita have quadrupled since 1999 and "Enough prescription painkillers were prescribed in 2010 to medicate every American adult continually for a month."

Sources:

- » Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs 2014: amchp.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/WestVirginia2014.pdf
- » Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2014. "Prescription Drug Overdose in the United States: Fact Sheet." cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalsafety/overdose/facts.html
- » Children's Bureau, 2012: childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/drugexposed.pdf
- » Julie Pratt, Ted Boettner, Stuart Frazier, Stephen Smith, Renate Pore, West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy 2013: legis.state.wv.us/senate1/majority/poverty/WV%20Child%20Poverty%20Report%20February%2019%202013%20WVCBP%20-%20Ted%20Boettner.pdf
- » Mental Health America (MHA). 2014. "Alcohol, Substance Abuse and Depression." mentalhealthamerica.net/alcohol-substance-abuse-and-depression
- » National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institutes of Health (NIH), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2010. "Comorbidity: Addiction and Other Mental Illnesses." drugabuse.gov/publications/comorbidity-addiction-other-mental-illnesses/why-do-drug-use-disorders-often-co-occur-other-mental-illnesses
- » Trust for America's Health. 2013. "West Virginia Has the Highest Drug Overdose Mortality Rate in the United States." healthyamericans.org/reports/drugabuse2013/release.php?stateid=WV
- » West Virginia Bureau for Behavioral Health & Health Facilities (WV BBH). 2013. "West Virginia Behavioral Health Epidemiological Profile." dhr.wv.gov/bhhf/resources/Documents/2013_State_Profile.pdf
- » World Health Organization (WHO). 2004. "WHO World Mental Health Surveys Find Mental Disorders Are Widespread, Disabling and Often Go Untreated." who.int/media-centre/news/notes/2004/np14/en/
- » World Health Organization (WHO). 2007. "Breaking the Vicious Cycle between Mental Ill-Health and Poverty." who.int/mental_health/policy/development/1_Breakingviciouscycle_infosheet.pdf

A NATIONAL EPIDEMIC

Exposure to violence is a national crisis that affects almost two in every three of our children. According to the National Survey of Children’s Exposure to Violence (NatSCEV), an estimated 46 million of the 76 million children currently residing in the United States are exposed to violence, crime, and abuse each year. In 1979, U.S. Surgeon General Julius B. Richmond declared that violence was a public health crisis of the highest priority. Although the past 30 years have seen dramatic reductions in the prevalence of violent crime, as measured in certain sectors such as violent crimes in households with children, children’s exposure to violence and ensuing psychological trauma remains a national epidemic.

According to the 2012 *West Virginia KIDS COUNT* Data Book, 25.7 percent of children in the state live in poverty and almost 20 percent of infants are born with drugs or alcohol in their systems. According to Tonya Bonecutter, a Save the Children caseworker, “Most low-income mothers would like to breast-feed, but only one-third do so—partly because there is no free lactation counseling when they run into difficulties.” Recent research shows that if 90 percent of families breastfed exclusively for 6 months, nearly 1,000 deaths among infants could be prevented and breastfed infants typically need fewer sick care visits, prescriptions, and hospitalizations which could impact development (*The New York Times*, 2014).”

School-age children are also struggling. According to the 2012 *West Virginia KIDS COUNT* Data Book, West Virginia’s education system “ranks 47th in the nation” and 50 percent of children aged 3 to 5 are not enrolled in nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten.

Food insecurity and nutrition are shown to have a major impact on learning. Children raised in households where access to food is limited and/or inconsistent are at greater risk for impaired social skills development and reading performance, and there is further correlation for girls between food insecurity and weight gain and higher body mass index (Feeding America, 2009; Journal of Nutrition, 2005). More than 1 in 5 children in West Virginia live in households that lack access to adequate food, and 52 percent of children are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals due to socioeconomic challenges (Children’s Defense Fund, 2014).

Save the Children reports that the impact of poverty on education in West Virginia is widespread and has dire implications for the future health and success of the state’s children.

- Approximately 39 percent of 4th graders scored below the basic level of reading achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011).
- Roughly 47 percent of children aged 3 to 5 are not enrolled in nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten (KIDS COUNT, 2013).
- More than 1 in 3 rural children aged 10 to 17 are overweight or obese (33.6 percent) (The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative [CAHMI], 2012).
- About 23 percent of rural children, compared to 19 percent of urban children, are obese, or have a body mass index exceeding the 95th percentile for their age and gender (SCRHRC, 2007).

Sources:

- » Listenbee, R., J. Torre, G. Boyle, S. Cooper, S. Deer, D. Durfee, T. James et al. 2012. “Report of the Attorney General’s National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence.” justice.gov/defendingchildhood/cev-rpt-full.pdf
- » The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (CAHMI). 2012. “Data Query from the 2011/12 National Survey of Children’s Health.” childhealthdata.org/browse/survey/results?q=2415&r=50#
- » Children’s Defense Fund. 2014. “Children in the States: West Virginia.” childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/state-data-repository/cits/2014/2014-west-virginia-children-in-the-states.pdf
- » Feeding America. 2009. “Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact on Our Nation.” feedingamerica.org/SiteFiles/child-economy-study.pdf
- » Journal of Nutrition. 2005. “Food Insecurity Affects School Children’s Academic Performance, Weight Gain, and Social Skills.” ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16317128
- » National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. 2011. “The Condition of Education 2011.” nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011033.pdf
- » The New York Times. 2014. “When Even the Starting Line Is Out of Reach.” nytimes.com/2014/02/23/opinion/sunday/kristof-when-even-the-starting-line-is-out-of-reach.html?_r=0
- » South Carolina Rural Health Research Center (SCRHRC), University of South Carolina. 2007. “Overweight and Physical Inactivity among Rural Children Aged 10-17: A National and State Portrait.” rhr.sph.sc.edu/report/%287-1%29Obesity%20ChartbookUpdated10.15.07-secured.pdf
- » U.S. Department of Education: ed.gov/early-learning
- » savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGlpI4E/b.8193011/k.4505/Early_Steps_to_School_Success.htm
- » West Virginia KIDS COUNT. 2013. “2012 W.Va. KIDS COUNT Data Book Focuses on Recent Rise in Teen Birth Rates; Why It Matters; and Proven Ways to Reverse the Trend.” wvkidscountfund.org/2012-wva-kids-count-data-book-focuses-recent-rise-teen-birth-rates-why-it-matters-and-proven-ways
- » Children’s Bureau, 2012: childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/drugexposed.pdf
- » WHO, 2012: who.int/mental_health/emergencies/eecd_note.pdf

Save the Children Fund

“Poverty is more than not having money, it’s not having hope. It’s about who you are inside and what poverty does to that person.”

– Nicholas Kristof, Journalist and Co-Author of *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*

Sources:

- » NGO Monitor: ngo-monitor.org/article/save_the_children_fund
- » Save the Children. 2013. “WV State Data: Helping West Virginia’s Children Succeed.” savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/ESS_STC_STATE_FACT_SHEET_WV_FINAL.PDF
- » Save the Children. 2014a. “History.” savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.6229507/k.C571/History.htm
- » Save the Children. 2014b. “Where We Work.” savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.6146359/k.9C15/Where_We_Work.htm
- » West Virginia Home Visitation Program (WVHVP). 2014. wvdhhr.org/wvhomevisitation

Following World War I, children in Central and Eastern Europe were suffering from starvation during the Allied (mainly British) blockade of Germany, in the aftermath of one of the deadliest conflicts in human history. Eglantyne Jebb, a British social reformer, founded Save the Children in 1919 to raise money for emergency aid for children suffering from postwar famine.

Today, **Save the Children** works in 120 countries providing health care services, education, and disaster response and relief (Save the Children, 2014). Although Save the Children is primarily known for providing aid in developing countries, they have a long history of working with impoverished communities across the United States and have been providing programs and support in the Appalachian region since 1932.

As of 2014, Save the Children in West Virginia was partnering “with 11 communities in 5 counties, serving 3,952 children” (Save the Children, 2014). They also offer home visitation programs for young families in McDowell and Mason counties and other areas struggling with rural poverty through the West Virginia Home Visitation Program, which is part of the Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health (2014).

SAVE THE CHILDREN: EARLY STEPS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Save the Children’s Early Steps to School Success program lays the foundation of language and literacy skills for children from birth to age 5, so they can enter school ready to succeed. The Early Steps program is designed to assist children and to equip parents with the skills and knowledge to successfully support their child’s growth while developing strong home–school connections.

Through home visits, book exchanges, parenting groups, and an emphasis on transition to school, the Early Steps staff helps children with language and social and emotional development, and equips parents and caregivers with the skills to successfully support children’s growth.

The Early Steps program has begun to show results. As of 2011, children in the program read an average of 62 books during the school year and more than 69 percent of participants showed significant reading improvement. On average, literacy improvement among program participants was equivalent to an additional 7.8 months of schooling. Finally, 84 percent of 3-year-olds in the Early Steps program scored at or above the normal range for vocabulary acquisition.

Sources:

- » Save the Children. 2014. “Education.” savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.6153015/k.E633/Education.htm
- » Save the Children U.S. Programs. 2012. “WV State Data 2012: Helping West Virginia’s Children Succeed.” uscenter.savethechildren.org/About%20Us%20Documents/West%20Virginia.pdf

War on Poverty

In 1960, John F. Kennedy first encountered the extensive economic hardship in West Virginia when he visited the state during the presidential primary campaign. That visit is credited in part with inspiring the antipoverty policies that were key to Kennedy's "New Frontier" strategy for economic stimulus. Kennedy's policies formed the basis for the set of initiatives that later became known as President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty."

During his first State of the Union address in January 1964, President Johnson declared that, "Our aim is not only to relieve the symptoms of poverty, but to cure it and, above all, to prevent it" (Government Printing Office [GPO], 1965). In March of that same year Johnson proposed the centerpiece of the War on Poverty, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, in his Special Message to Congress. It was signed into law in August 1964 along with the Food Stamp Act (The American Presidency Project, 2014). The following year, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and amendments to the Social Security Act were also signed into law. From these policies came major initiatives such as the Community Action Program, the Job Corps, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), and Head Start.

Head Start was originally launched as a summer school program for low-income children about to start elementary school but has evolved over the past 50 years and expanded its reach. During President Jimmy Carter's administration, the program began to offer "bilingual and bicultural programs in about 21 states," and in 1995, the program was expanded "to full-day and full-year services" (Office of Head Start, 2014).

The War on Poverty has been a subject of debate since it was first initiated. In its early stages, Martin Luther King, Jr., criticized the programs and policies for being too piecemeal and not addressing the full landscape of U.S. poverty and its causes (King, 2010). In the intervening years, economists and politicians have criticized the program for going too far and being too interventionist or for not going far enough in addressing the social and economic roots of poverty.

In March 2014, the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on the Budget, chaired by Republican Representative Paul Ryan, released the report *The War on Poverty: 50 Years Later*. The report was critical of the War on Poverty and its legacy, stating, "Rather than provide a roadmap out of poverty, Washington has created a complex web of programs that are often difficult to navigate. Some programs provide critical aid to families in need. Others discourage families from getting ahead. And for many of these programs, we just don't know. There's little evidence either way."

In contrast, a team of economists at Columbia University released a report in December 2013 that concluded that the policies launched through the War on Poverty were critical to curbing poverty, improving economic opportunity, and keeping families and communities afloat during some of the most difficult economic periods of the past half century. According to the report: "Our estimates ... show that historical trends in poverty have been more favorable — and that government programs have played a larger role — than [previous] estimates suggest.... Government programs today are cutting poverty nearly in half (from 29% to 16%) while in 1967 they only cut poverty by about one percentage point" (Columbia Population Research Center, 2013).

As the divide between rich and poor continues to expand and economic insecurity spreads to the American middle class, the debate over the War on Poverty and its implications continues.

Sources:

- » The American Presidency Project, University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). 2014. "Lyndon B. Johnson: 528-Remarks Upon Signing the Economic Opportunity Act." presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26452
- » Columbia Population Research Center, Columbia University. 2013. "Trends in Poverty with an Anchored Supplemental Poverty Measure." courseworks.columbia.edu/access/content/group/c5a1ef92-c03c-4d88-0018-ea43dd3cc5db/Articles/Anchored%20SPM%20December7.pdf
- » Committee on the Budget, U.S. House of Representatives. 2014. "The War on Poverty: 50 Years Later." budget.house.gov/waron-poverty
- » Dylan Matthews, Washington Post, 2014: washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2014/01/08/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-war-on-poverty/
- » Fordham, *Public Papers of U.S. Presidents, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963-1964* (Washington: G.P.O., 1965), 1, pp. 375-380. fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1964johnson-warpoverty.html
- » Government Printing Office (GPO). 1965. "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963-64: President Lyndon B. Johnson's Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union January 8, 1964." lbrlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/640108.asp
- » King, Martin Luther, Beacon Press. 2010. "Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos Or Community?" books.google.com.kh/books?id=ka4TcURYXy4C&p rintsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=war%20on%20poverty&f=false
- » Office of Head Start. 2014. "History of Head Start." acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs/about/history-of-head-start
- » TRIP GABRIEL, *New York Times*, 2014: nytimes.com/2014/04/21/us/50-years-into-the-war-on-poverty-hardship-hits-back.html
- » USDA, 2013: fns.usda.gov/snap/short-history-snap

Fast Facts

Early learning programs are an essential factor in the fight against poverty and determining a child's long-term physical health and social development.

- “Brain development is most rapid in the early years of life. When the quality of stimulation, support and nurturance is deficient, child development is seriously affected” (UNICEF, 2013).
- “The effects of early disadvantage on children can be reduced. Early interventions for disadvantaged children lead to improvements in children's survival, health, growth, and cognitive and social development” (UNICEF, 2013).
- “Children who receive assistance in their early years achieve more success at school. As adults they have higher employment and earnings, better health, and lower levels of welfare dependence” (UNICEF and the World Health Organization [WHO], 2012).
- “Regular mother and baby Early Childhood Development groups build resilience and increase networks of social support. They provide a non-stigmatizing way of supporting vulnerable women and children exposed to violence” (UNICEF and WHO, 2013).
- Efforts to improve early child development are an investment, not a cost. Average returns on global early child development can be higher than \$5 for every \$1 invested (UNICEF, 2013).
- The United States ranks 25th in the world in early learning enrollment (U.S. Department of Education [USED], 2014).
- By age 4, children from low-income families in the United States are up to 18 months behind their peers developmentally (Save the Children, 2014).
- According to recent research, the “achievement gap found at ages 5 and 8 could be eliminated by an intensive two-year early childhood program for infants and toddlers” (Office of Early and Extended Learning, 2012).
- Children who participate in early childhood education need fewer health and human services over the course of their lifetime (Legal Momentum, 2005).

Sources:

- » Legal Momentum. 2005. “Early Childhood Education for All: A Wise Investment.” web.mit.edu/workplacecenter/docs/Full%20Report.pdf
- » Office of Early and Extended Learning, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. 2012. “Benefits of Early Childhood Education: The Facts.” nowforlater.org/files/2013/03/The-Facts.pdf
- » Save the Children. 2014. “Early Steps to School Success.” savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.8193011/k.4505/Early_Steps_to_School_Success.htm
- » UNICEF. 2013. “Early Childhood: Why Early Childhood Development?” unicef.org/earlychildhood/index_40748.html
- » UNICEF and the World Health Organization [WHO]. [2012 or 2013?]. “Integrating Early Childhood Development (ECD) Activities into Nutrition Programmes in Emergencies. Why, What and How.” unicef.org/earlychildhood/files/Integrating_ECD_into_Nurtition_in_Emergencies_-_Final_June_2012.pdf
- » U.S. Department of Education (USED). 2014. “Early Learning: America's Middle Class Promise Begins Early.” ed.gov/early-learning

A Path Appears: Home Visitation

The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (Home Visiting Program) was established as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in 2010. The Home Visiting Program provides \$1.5 billion over five years to states to establish evidence-based home visiting program models for at-risk families.

Home visiting programs are early childhood intervention strategies aimed at disadvantaged and first-time parents. They provide in-home visits with trained professionals who build relationships with families to support healthy parenting behaviors, deliver information and resources, and offer guidance throughout the child's first years. Programs vary from state to state and among service providers and may use professional nurses, social workers, or trained paraprofessionals from the region with links to the local community.

In their book *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*, Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn examine the range and impact of early childhood home visitation programs. They explain, "While there is broad agreement among experts that home visitation programs are enormously effective, there are plenty of disputes about the optimal strategy to employ."

In 2009, the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) review was launched under the guidance of the Department of Health and Human Services to evaluate home visiting research and assess the "evidence of effectiveness for home visiting program models that serve families with pregnant women and children from birth to age 5" (Mathematica Policy Research, 2011). HomVEE reviewed 35 programs in 2013 and found that although none of the models showed "reductions in juvenile delinquency, family violence, and crime," most of the programs had positive impacts on "child development and school readiness and positive parenting practices" (US DHHS, 2013). Two of the programs, Healthy Families America and Nurse-Family Partnership, performed especially well.

Sources:

- » Avellar, S., Paulsell, D., Sama-Miller, E., & Del Grosso, P., Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS), 2014: homvee.acf.hhs.gov/HomVEE_Executive_Summary_2013.pdf
- » Center on Children and Families, The Brookings Institution. 2008. "Impacts of Early Childhood Programs: Research Brief #5: Nurse Home Visiting." brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2008/9/early%20programs%20isaacs/09_early_programs_brief5.pdf
- » Jennifer Astuto and LaRue Allen, Child and Family Policy Center at New York University, 2009: files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED509749.pdf
- » Heaman M1, Chalmers K, Woodgate R, Brown J., Journal of Advanced Nursing, 2006: ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16866823
- » Heather D. Boonstra, Guttmacher, 2009: guttmacher.org/pubs/gpr/12/3/gpr120311.html
- » Mathematica Policy Research. 2011. "Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness Review: Executive Summary." acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/homvee_executivesummary_rev10_15_2011.pdf
- » Office for the Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services: acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/programs/home-visiting
- » U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014: hhs.gov/news/press/2014pres/08/20140804a.html
- » University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development (UP OCD), 2010: ocd.pitt.edu/Files/PDF/dev2010-03.pdf
- » U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014: hhs.gov/news/press/2014pres/08/20140804a.html
- » West Virginia Home Visitation Program (WVHVP). 2014. wvdhhr.org/wvhomevisitation

Research suggests that programs that employ health care professionals, such as the Nurse-Family Partnership, are especially successful and demonstrate positive results with both parents and children, including improvements in achievement scores and language skills, maternal health behaviors, and family planning. There is also evidence of long-term impact on educational attainment. Because these programs employ registered nurses, they can be expensive. However, a research brief by the Brookings Institution's Center on Children and Families on nurse-home visiting programs suggests that evidence for their value "is very strong, given the range of positive outcomes across three different randomized trials—and given the extensive follow-up data showing that effects, while modest, endure over time and outweigh program costs" (Center on Children and Families, 2008). They add that the nurse visitation programs have been "named as 'effective' or 'cost-effective' in reviews by researchers" at organizations including "the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, the Committee for Economic Development, the Brookings Institution, the RAND Corporation, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, and Blueprints for Violence" (Center on Children and Families, 2008).

Despite the fact that they are cost-effective, nurse-based programs are still prohibitively expensive for many communities who have the greatest need. Home visitation programs with paraprofessionals, such as those offered by Save the Children in West Virginia, may also have positive impacts on children and their families by offering support; education; and referrals for maternal and newborn health, emotional and mental illness, and a broad range of community resources (West Virginia Home Visitation Program [WVHVP], 2014).

Thinking More Deeply

1. What insights did the film give you into poverty in the United States? Were you aware of the economic, social, and educational challenges in communities across the country? What information surprised you the most?
2. The United States is the wealthiest country in human history, yet as of 2010 more than 15 percent of the population was living in poverty. What do you think are some of the underlying causes of poverty in the United States?
3. The poverty rate was approximately 11 percent in 1973, but has risen steadily since the 1980s. What factors do you think are contributing to the growing income inequality?
4. Nicholas Kristof refers in the film to the “invisibility” of poverty in this country. Do you agree that poverty is an invisible issue in the United States? When you encounter reporting about poverty, how are the stories told? Who are the subjects? What parts of the world are featured? Do you see poverty in your community? If so, what does it look like?
5. Jennifer Garner says in the film: “If you wait to help a kid until kindergarten, then it’s already too late.” What does she mean by that? Why do you agree or disagree with her perspective? What kind of impact could a statement like this have on children and families who had to access early childhood services?
6. In the film, Truffles did not discover that her son Johnny was nearly deaf until he was 18 months old. Why do you think his condition went unnoticed for so long? What factors do you think cause children in poor communities to be at greater risk for health problems?
7. Evidence suggests that home visitation programs help improve early childhood development. What other changes need to happen at the policy level to ensure that the most vulnerable children in our society don’t slip through the cracks?
8. Child sexual abuse occurs across genders and economic and national boundaries. Cynthia and Lynn both describe how they were sexually abused as children, but like many children, their abuse remained invisible to the adults outside their families. What resources, if any, could have helped them had they been available? What role should schools play in confronting child abuse? What resources are available in your community for children who experience abuse, and how do they communicate their services to the youth community?
9. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), evidence demonstrates that the lower an individual’s socioeconomic position is within a country, the worse their health will be. Do you think there is a relationship between poverty and physical and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety? How can these issues contribute to the increase in drug and alcohol abuse? In what ways are the circumstances in Point Pleasant, West Virginia, similar to or different from those of your own community? What mental health and rehabilitation resources are available in your community, and in what ways could they be improved?
10. Jennifer Garner has family and childhood roots in West Virginia and has demonstrated a commitment to making a difference for children and families in the state. How does her relationship with the region inform her understanding of the challenges that communities are facing? How does her familiarity with the issues shape the way the story is portrayed in the film?
11. Jennifer Garner mentions that her own mother escaped a life of poverty and education was her way out. What are the supports that you think are necessary to lift an individual and community out of poverty? Do you think that poverty in America is an individual issue or the result of social and economic factors? Discuss.

Suggestions for Action

- 1. What's your path?** Join the global movement to educate women and girls and improve the quality of life for all children. Visit our website to find out how to host a screening of *A Path Appears* with your friends, family, community, or organization and facilitate a discussion of the film and the book that inspired it: pbs.org/independentlens/path-appears
- 2. Become a volunteer, mentor, or tutor!** Get involved in an area chapter of Save the Children and connect with the Girl Scouts of the United States of America to learn more about early childhood education and volunteer and mentoring opportunities.

Save the Children: savethechildren.org

Girl Scouts of the United States of America, "Volunteering" section of the website: girlscouts.org/for_adults/volunteering

- 3. Be a Breastfeeding Volunteer!** Breastfeeding is critical to early childhood development, but many women and children experience difficulties and require support. A mother who has breastfed her baby for at least one year can become a Breastfeeding Counselor through Breastfeeding USA by successfully completing the application and education program. Find out more at: breastfeedingusa.org/content/becoming-breastfeeding-counselor.
- 4. Volunteer with CASA!** The mission of the National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association is to support and promote court-appointed volunteer advocacy so that every abused and neglected child can be safe, establish permanence, and have the opportunity to thrive. Learn how you can make a difference in a child's life. CASA volunteers are connected with a child in need and the people in their community: parents and relatives, foster parents, teachers, medical professionals, attorneys, social workers, and others. Through these relationships, volunteers can offer support to judges and others regarding the child's safety, health, and needs. Learn how you can help: casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPiE/b.5301309/k.9D58/Volunteering.htm
- 5. Mobilize your community** and harness the power of The Girl Effect. The Girl Effect is a collective movement created by the Nike Foundation, the NoVo Foundation, the United Nations Foundation, and the Coalition for Adolescent Girls, which is driven by thousands of grassroots and community-based campaigns around the world aimed at empowering girls and improving life for their families and communities. The Girl Effect Toolkit has a range of resources, tips, multimedia tools, and step-by-step guides for creating your own campaign, organizing community events, and starting local clubs to galvanize support for girls' education and empowerment.

The Girl Effect:

girleffect.org

The Girl Effect Toolkit:

girleffect.org/resources/2013/10/girl-consultation-toolkit

For additional discussion questions and ideas for facilitated activities that may be adapted for a variety of audiences and age groups, visit pbs.org/independentlens/path-appears/resources to download the *A Path Appears* salon guide and lesson plans.

Resources

To purchase a DVD of the film *A Path Appears*, visit shoppbs.org.

To purchase the book, *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*, visit apathappears.org.

Note: The following resource descriptions are adapted from language provided on the organizations' websites.

pbs.org/independentlens/path-appears — Hosted by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), this is the online source for discussion guides, lesson plans, and a salon guide for the film.

savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.6115947/k.8D6E/Official_Site.htm — Save the Children is an organization that works to save and improve children's lives in 120 countries worldwide.

nursefamilypartnership.org — Nurse-Family Partnership is a maternal health program that provides support to first-time and at-risk parents.

naeyc.org — The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) acts on behalf of the needs, rights, and well-being of young children; its primary focus is on the provision of educational and developmental services and resources.

care-international.org — CARE International is an organization fighting poverty and injustice in more than 70 countries around the world and helping 65 million people each year to find routes out of poverty.

cedpa.org — The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) works through local partnerships to give women tools to improve their lives, families, and communities. CEDPA's programs increase educational opportunities for girls, ensure access to lifesaving reproductive health and HIV/AIDS information and services, and strengthen good governance and women's leadership in their nations.

futureswithoutviolence.org — Futures Without Violence works to promote resiliency for children exposed to violence. The organization advocates for policy and conducts research to promote successful strategies in health care, education, law enforcement, and social services that help young people heal and thrive.

girlscouts.org — The Girl Scouts of the United States of America has a membership of over 3.2 million girls and adults and provides leadership opportunities for girls and raises awareness about important social issues locally and globally.

girlsinc.org — Girls Inc. provides programs that inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold through life-changing programs and experiences that help girls navigate gender-related, economic, and social barriers.

girleffect.org — The Girl Effect is a collective movement to lift 50 million women and girls out of poverty by 2030 through the education and empowerment of girls.

ncwge.org — The National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE) is a nonprofit organization of more than 50 groups dedicated to improving educational opportunities and advocating for the development of national education policies that benefit all women and girls.

unicef.org — The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is mandated by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs, and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.

Credits

WRITER

Allison Milewski

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Annelise Wunderlich

ITVS ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION TEAM

Duong-Chi Do

Director of Engagement and Education

Meredith Anderson-McDonald

Engagement and Education Assistant

Kristy Chin

Engagement and Education Coordinator

Locsi Ferra

Thematic Campaign Manager

Daniel Moretti

National Community Engagement
Manager

Jonathan Remple

Digital Engagement Producer

DESIGN

Michael Silva

COPY EDITOR

Jocelyn Truitt

FOR SHOW OF FORCE

Maro Chermayeff

Executive Producer and Director

Rachel Koteen

Co-Producer

Joshua Bennett

Series Producer

PHOTO CREDIT

Audrey Hall

Show of Force

ACADEMIC ADVISORS

Elisabeth Arruda

David Bosso

David Maduli

ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds, presents, and promotes award-winning independently produced documentaries and dramas on public television and cable, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the Emmy® Award-winning series *Independent Lens* on PBS. ITVS receives core funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

ITVS's **Women and Girls Lead** is a strategic public media initiative to support and sustain a growing international movement to empower women and girls, their communities, and future generations. Women and Girls Lead is supported by CPB and Eileen Fisher, Inc. To learn more, visit womenandgirlslead.org

NGO ADVISORS

FAIR Girls: Andrea Powell

Futures Without Violence: Laura Hogan, Celia Richa

Limye Lavi: Guerda Constant

Man UP: Jimmie Briggs

MensWork: Rus Funk

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy: Bill Albert, Amy Kramer, and Carlos Pinto

SHOW OF FORCE

Founded in 2006 by veteran television producers Maro Chermayeff and Jeff Dupre, Show of Force is known for creating some of the last decade's most ambitious and creative programs, including feature documentaries, event television series and innovative transmedia projects. Included in its projects to date is the groundbreaking *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, a multi-platform project based on the bestselling book by *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. Other recent projects include the Peabody and Emmy Award-winning *Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present* (HBO), *Kehinde Wiley: An Economy of Grace* (PBS) winner of the 2014 Jury Prize for Best Documentary Short at SXSW, the 6-hour series *Circus* (PBS) and the Emmy Award-Winning 10-hour series *Carrier* (PBS).

