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# TACTICS TO RESTRICT URBAN DEPRIVATION

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Urban deprivation, also known as urban poverty, concerns issues such as unemployment, low educational attainment among city residents due to perceived costliness, high living expenses, and ineffective social services. All these issues, which contribute to and perpetuate poverty in our urban areas, require a holistic approach. Urban poverty is so significant that all stakeholders, including the government, non-governmental organizations, and corporations, must collaborate on emerging interventions to ensure their effectiveness. The figures from the Federal Territories Ministry for the year 2022 show an almost threefold increase in the number of hardcore poor compared to the same period two years ago. According to a report from 2020, the percentage of poverty increased to 8.4% from near zero levels the previous year, due to the prevalence of marginal or extreme poverty among slightly over five percent of the population.

Dealing with urban poverty requires a comprehensive and multi-dimensional strategy that will address the root causes as well as symptoms. A key feature of this approach is to consider the poor as part owners in poverty reduction and not simply problems. This perspective change helps the poor become more than just passive victims of poverty.





Picture 1: Illegal houses built in the city center.

Addressing urban poverty thus requires comprehensive, multi-faceted approaches to both the root causes and symptoms of poverty. The approach involves viewing the poor as indispensable, albeit a challenging term to use, rather than as outliers. This represents a shift in perspective, as it transforms the impoverished from passive recipients of handouts into active participants in the eradication of poverty.

In order to eradicate urban deprivation, improving economic opportunities should be a primary focus. We can achieve this goal by generating employment opportunities, fostering entrepreneurship and small business growth, and attracting investments in urbanization. Workforce development programs should prioritize vocational training and skill development that aligns with market requirements. Additionally, they should offer job placement services and career counselling to assist urban residents in securing permanent employment.

Another important strategy is to expand access to quality education. Expanding educational infrastructure in economically backward urban areas, reforming the curriculum, and addressing the needs of industry-related knowledge dissemination through large-scale scholarships and financial assistance can disrupt this cycle. Education must incorporate life skills and financial literacy to equip individuals for their future careers. Programs that are prone to TVET will be the next best option for those who seek hands-on and skill-relevant jobs.

The shortage of affordable housing is a severe problem in cities, and the response undoubtedly requires mechanisms such as social, public housing, rental control policies, or plans for transforming slums. These initiatives aim to provide lower-income residents with safe and affordable living environments, thereby preventing homelessness and enhancing their quality of life. However, we must manage urban redevelopment to avoid displacing existing residents, as this could geographically concentrate them and exacerbate the poverty issue.

Promotion of social inclusion is also very important. By implementing anti-discrimination policies, community development, and inclusive urban planning, we can help overlooked populations become part of the fabric of society, which will eliminate some of the most stubborn social determinants today. Such initiatives could include giving civil society organizations the power to act, promoting community-led development, and ensuring that urban planning is participatory and inclusive.



Picture 2: Urban Poverty in Kuala Lumpur

These strategies require cooperative effort. We need government policies and interventions at local, state, and national levels to support this framework. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can instead support the work of government through targeted interventions and community-based programs. Similarly, the private sector, whether through CSR programs or public-private partnerships, can also serve as a catalyst for sustainable development. Most importantly, the involvement of the community is required, as local ownership and social participation strengthen its outcomes with solutions that are unique to your own poor living conditions. If that's the case, it's important to acknowledge that these strategies are not instant fixes and will not yield results overnight.

Lastly, the enforcement must conduct periodic monitoring and evaluation, which are essential to ensuring these strategies work. Having measurable goals and regular assessments, along with transparency and accountability in the process will assist in curbing, if not reducing, poverty in urban areas.

In closing, urban poverty is a multi-dimensional issue that cannot be solved with divided interventions where economic strategies are singularly enacted to address income generation or education solutions aimed at workforce development or social policy specifically directed toward reintegration into community life via otherwise stalled rehabilitation programs. Collaboration between governments, NGOs, the private sector, and communities is crucial in developing sustainable solutions that significantly reduce poverty among urban populations.