



Poverty has always been present in rich or poor countries. In modern times, the economic inequality gap is increasingly widening. There are many causes for this high rate of economic inequality, including a lack of individual responsibility, bad government policy, and exploitation by people and businesses with power and influence. Many believe that the gap in economic inequality will cause problems for social cohesion. That it will cause crime and violence. The poverty line is defined as \$1.25 per day with 1.4 billion living on or below the poverty line. "Furthermore, almost half the world—over three billion people—live on less than \$2.50 a day and at least 80% of humanity lives on less than \$10 a day."ⁱ

Women, in particular, face the harshest realities of poverty. Impoverished women's rights are often not protected. They are likely to be the last to eat, the ones least likely to access healthcare, and are not being paid for domestic tasks. They face gender discrimination that leads to fewer options for work, resources, and education. Women are often forced into sexual exploitation as part of their basic struggle to survive.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo 72 per cent of rural households and 59 per cent of urban households are poor. The DRC ranks 186th out of 187 on the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index. In Kenya nearly half of the country's 43 million people live below the poverty line or unable to meet their daily nutritional requirements. Kenya is ranked 145th.ⁱⁱ In these two countries in particular, women face starvation, disease, and sexual assault due to economic inequality. Research has shown that the larger the gap the more likely that women are discriminated against because of their gender. They are forced to do domestic tasks such as cooking and cleaning rather than being educated. "Fewer than 20 percent of African women have access to education. Uneducated African women are twice as likely to contract AIDS and 50 percent less likely to immunize their children. Meanwhile, the children of African women with at least five years of schooling have a 40 percent higher chance of survival."ⁱⁱⁱ If more women were allowed to be educated or obtain jobs, research shows that it would close the gap in gender and economic inequality.

Wezesha believes in economic empowerment of grassroots women, the organisation work with women and children in order to combat the cycle of poverty and indigence through manageable income generating activities and by acknowledging women talents and resources available at their level. Enhancing the capacity of women to attain sustainable income requires long term strategy to change the long-standing situation of non investment in their health.

ⁱ Shah, Anup. "Causes of Poverty." - *Global Issues*. N.p., 28 Sept. 2014. Web. 27 June 2016.

ⁱⁱ "Rural Poverty Portal." *Rural Poverty Portal*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 June 2016.

ⁱⁱⁱ Packtor, Jordanna. "10 Poverty in Africa Facts - The Borgen Project." *The Borgen Project RSS2*. N.p., 07 Nov. 2014. Web. 27 June 2016.