**Introduction**

Poverty, especially in the form of extreme poverty, is a very harmful, socially and economically destructive global issue. The problem has arisen greatly in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa with most nations with high rates of extreme poverty being from that area. Poverty spans far and wide within the earth that we live on, and it takes a huge effort to eradicate it. The solutions are neither cheap, nor easy, which will and are taking a large international effort to solve. The issue has presented itself gravely within Sub-Saharan Africa, manifesting itself through malnourished and impoverished women, men and children without proper education, homes, access to clean water, food, jobs and more.

The many issues that we consider so dire within our shared world often stem from the inequalities of wealth, and from the root issue of poverty. Currently, many nations, NGOs and large and small, international or national organizations have been hard at work to combat extreme poverty. The problem, however, is still at large, and it is the solemn duty of the UN, especially the Sustainable Development Commission's duty to tackle the problem at heart, and eradicate it completely.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Extreme Poverty**

Also known as “Abject poverty, Absolute poverty, Destitution, or Penury”, the World Bank defines the term as living on $1.25 or less a day. It was defined by the United Nations (UN) in its 1995 report of the World Summit for Social Development as "a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services."

**Sub-Saharan Africa**

Literally defined as the area in Africa which is located south of the Saharan Desert.
Background Information

Global poverty has been declining within the past few years. The World Bank estimates that people living in extreme poverty has declined by 1.9 billion in 1990 to about 736 million in 2015. In Sub-Saharan Africa, however, the number of people in extreme poverty have been rising; more than half of all people living in extreme poverty in 2015 were from Sub-Saharan Africa. Estimates also suggest that by 2030, around 9/10 extremely poor people will be living in Sub-Saharan Africa. “The average poverty rate for sub-Saharan Africa stands at about 41 percent, and of the world’s 28 poorest countries, 27 are in sub-Saharan Africa, all with a poverty rate above 30 percent.”

Causes of Poverty

There are a large amount of causes for poverty and extreme poverty. These causes are often in themselves quite hard to combat in such a large area as the Sub-Saharan Africa. The causes include:

- A lack of, or no access to clean water and food
- A lack of, or no access to jobs or other forms of income (Unemployment, which can also stem from automation)
- National or more local internal or external conflict
- Social inequality
- A lack of, or no education
- Climate change
- A lack of infrastructure
- Governmental problems (limited capacity)
- National economic issues (high inflation, corruption, debt)
- Epidemic disease
- Lack of reserves (in terms of droughts or natural disasters and such)
- Slavery
- Overpopulation

Effects of extreme poverty

The effects of extreme, or even more tame poverty can be adverse on the wellbeing of an entire society. The issues that present themselves to those less fortunate can cause desperation which may make them act in ways which can damage themselves, as well as society for survival. Though whether or not they do not act in these ways does not affect that fact that it will also damage them massively.

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effects of poverty are multiple, and the issues that arise from it are often huge problems in themselves, so if it can be fixed, then it will fix many other issues too. Effects on societies which have cases of extreme poverty may include:

**Crime**

Crime is often correlated with poverty, and though it may not always be the case, there have been many studies which show that crime rates do often increase in tandem with poverty rates. Crime can rise because of poverty for many reasons, but often it may come due to desperation for money, food and other necessities which, due to their economic status, may not be available to them. Often when people are exposed to poverty from a young age, it can be more likely for them to be exposed to crime and violence in their futures.

**Famine**

Famine is caused by poverty due to the lack of access to food or drinking water and such. Though a poor economic status of a single person can lead to that person and their family suffering, often times the conditions of extreme poverty exist within smaller communities which may all be suffering of famine as economic conditions may be very poor in such communities.

**Substance Abuse**

Substance abuse can occur with those in extreme poverty due to poor living conditions which can induce large amounts of stress and despair, which can also lead to further issues such as crime. At times, substance abuse can also cause extreme poverty, as well as control the lives of those living in poverty due to addiction or dependency on these substances, which may cause them to spend all money on it.

**Dangerous Work Conditions**

Because of their economic status, those living in extreme poverty are oftentimes exploited for cheap and dangerous labour. As they have very few opportunities for income and may be desperate for any such source of money, they are likely to take up these offers which can cost them dearly, and may have detrimental effects on their health and wellbeing. The work conditions are usually inhumane and those working there are overworked, mistreated and underpaid.

**Poor living conditions and housing**

With little money and opportunities, those living in extreme poverty may be lucky to even have a home. Extreme poverty will affect all aspects of one’s life, and will also detract from basic human needs such as housing. In the Sub-Saharan Africa, housing for those in poverty is unlikely to be urbanized, and though
it has been ameliorating throughout the years, there are still a huge amount of people living in the countryside with houses made of construction materials which are subpar. These housing conditions regularly do not come with electricity or running water, neither heating or cooling. These living conditions can be dangerous and are far from ideal for any human being.

**Disease**

In extreme poverty, it is unlikely that any medical care would be available. In Sub-Saharan Africa, if there is a medical center available, it is usually extremely far for most residents living in poverty to reach, and in many cases one may die on the trek to a hospital due to diseases. Because of a lack of medication, seemingly insignificant diseases to us can be a death sentence, as well as the lack of vaccination can spread diseases and viruses throughout large areas, which can harm and/or kill huge populations. Diseases are one of the most common causes of death within places suffering from extreme poverty.

**Increase in overpopulation**

In extreme poverty, it can be beneficial for families to have lots of children so that their children can help provide for them and their families. In 2016, according to the World Bank, the fertility rates in Sub-Saharan Africa were at 4.85% whereas in countries with low poverty rates, such as Sweden, the poverty rate was at 1.85%. Overpopulation is another large issue, which can also be addressed through the decrease in poverty.

**Environmental effects**

In a rich country, the technology is often very modern and efficient, this allows for a decrease in pollution. These countries also often have recycling and other social benefits which can aid environmental damage. This is not the case in poorer countries. This is true in many nations in Sub-Saharan Africa, where they often use very polluting vehicles, factories and they may also damage the environment with a large production of garbage, and an unsatisfying way to handle it.

**Terrorism**

Nations and people which are subject to large amounts of poverty have been documented to be mistreated and exploited by richer countries – often western countries – can be induced with anger and may wish to retaliate towards those nations. This is often a premise for terrorism.

**Effects on education**

A lack of education is frequently documented with nations and people living in poverty. A lack of education can slow down an economy, or the growth of a nation as a whole. Having an educated
populus is very beneficial and may even lead to Sub-Saharan Africa improving faster if there is a higher rate of education.

**Major Countries and Organizations Involved**

**European Union**

The European Union is the biggest aid donor in the world and with all its member nations it is able to donate and help those in poverty unlike no other organization or single nation. According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) set by the UN, donor nations should aim to allocate 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI) to Official Development Aid or Assistance (ODA), which is a measure of donor effort. Though this is the goal that nations in the EU should strive for, in 2017 only 4 EU member states were able to achieve it: Sweden Luxembourg, Denmark and the UK.  

**United Nations**

The United Nations, being a massive organization for bringing nations together to resolve common issues, has a lot of power to help end extreme poverty globally. As according to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the number 1 goal is to “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”. To do this, the UN states its targets to “eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere” by 2030. Though a large and difficult task, the UN has done, and is still doing an incredible job fighting poverty. There are many UN funds and UN led organizations which help fight poverty such as the:

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FOA)
- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

**The Red Cross**

The Red Cross have been fighting to end poverty ever since its inception, and uses donor funds and volunteers to aid them. The Red Cross raises nearly 3 billion dollars every year as a whole, which is split into different needs and much of it going to humanitarian crises, but a lot of it goes to help end poverty.

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Timeline of Events

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>September 2000</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - At the turn of the century, all 191 UN members came together to agree to try to achieve a set of 8 goals which urges all leaders of nations to strive to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women by the year 2015. The first goal of which was “to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - As the UN came to the year where they strove to reach their Millennium Development Goals, where the MDGs were still incomplete, they decided to elaborate further upon them. The UN created this agenda with similar, but more detailed and deliberate goals. They created the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where the first goal was, similarly to the MDGs, “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”. These goals were set for the next 15 years, up until 2030.</td>
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<td>January 2016</td>
<td>In January, the SDGs came into full force, where the UN and its member nations started working on all goals given. Countries which agreed to the goals were tasked to “mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.”</td>
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Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa, 3 December 1984 (A/RES/39/29)
- Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 25 September 2015, (A/RES/70/1)
- Observance of an international day for the eradication of poverty, 31 March 1993, (A/RES/47/196)
- Human rights and extreme poverty, 18 December 2014, (A/RES/69/183)

4 https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda-retired/
Sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth for poverty eradication and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, 23 November 2010, (A/RES/65/10)

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The attempts to eradicate poverty, especially that of extreme poverty, including but not limited to Sub-Saharan Africa, have been a long lasting global effort. This effort, as has been shown through the actions of the UN as well as other countries has been a strong one. Through the use of a huge amount of funding and resources, as well as international cooperation such as that found with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Millennium Development Goals, global poverty, and extreme poverty rates have been largely decreasing. Though the solution is an amazing effort, it has flaws, and it still has a long way to go.

Possible Solutions

Solutions to this problem are as plentiful as the causes to it. Extreme poverty can be tackled in many ways, some more effective than others, though any step, however small, is always a good one. Because poverty is an issue which envelops much of the world, and causes it through means which are often deep rooted into the geography of an area, economic situations of a nation, discrimination and other social issues or diseases and more, it may be that the solution to poverty will take solving many other global issues that are also very challenging in themselves to solve. Though this is an issue, it may also help in the solutions, since tackling the pillars which themselves cause extreme poverty may bring it down with it.

One solution, which will aid essentially all sectors of a nation, is to increase education. In Sub-Saharan Africa, public education is quite a rarity, and though it has been improved throughout the years, it is still far too sparse. By further improving, and increasing the amount of public education that is given in Africa, it can highly decrease the frequency of the many issues that arise with poverty, and will tackle poverty itself. Education provides further opportunities, and the knowledge of how to approach and reach these opportunities for jobs, investment, better techniques in jobs like farming and more. Through education, it is possible that all those currently suffering in terrible jobs, or those who are jobless may be able to either create opportunities for themselves, or find someplace with them.

In Africa there is a lot of corruption. This corruption is a very distinct reason as to why the poverty rates are so high within Sub-Saharan Africa. By fighting corruption, the poverty rate will itself decrease due to an increase in national funds. A huge amount of money is lost every year to corruption within
Africa, and it is imperative that the money is recovered for use in helping to aid the eradication of extreme poverty. To eradicate corruption is to eradicate extreme poverty.

In Sub-Saharan Africa there is a rather distinct lack of strong infrastructure, good economic policies and regional integration. Because of the fact that they are so lacking, those who attempt to find jobs or make a good living will likely have a very hard time doing so, as they are not even truly given that ability in the first place. It can be very hard to simply change or improve infrastructure, economic policies and regional integration, however, with enough funding, aid and advice from more developed nations, it is certainly possible.

One of the more important solutions to extreme poverty, one which we have been trying to achieve for a long time is to increase the access to clean water, nutritious food and good housing. The lack of such basic human needs is a major factor of extreme poverty, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. As those who are in poverty suffer from all of these needs, they are more unlikely to be able to leave extreme poverty. If one is lacking in basic human needs, then just to survive one must focus all their attention on obtaining them. As humans, we have mostly conquered the need for survival by building infrastructure to handle food processing, water treatment and transport, thus allowing us to focus on other aims like work, making money, having a family and achieving happiness and satisfaction. If one is deprived of those needs, they will be unable to go further and must fulfill those needs before being able to leave poverty. If they are aided in being given access to clean water, nutritious food and good housing, then they will have a much higher probability of getting out of extreme poverty.

Greater conflict management is extremely important. Being one of the leading causes of poverty, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa with conflicts such as: the civil wars in Angola, the DRC and Mozambique, the Eritrea–Ethiopia war, the Rwandan genocide, the Nigeria and Sierra Leone resource conflicts, South African apartheid violence, and the Zimbabwean war of independence.\(^5\) It is crucial that the conflicts are handled well, and justly, so as to minimize damages and costs of war. The costs and damages are often those which can take money from a nation, and send it into economic downturns and crises.

The solution which is at the heart of solving all problems above is increased funding. Because poverty is the lack of money, it is mostly a given that the solution will require money in itself. Though there is already a lot of funding from major organizations, due to this problem being such a deep rooted and fundamental one, it is worth funding more of it. By funding further, all aforementioned solutions will be able to be implemented, and eventually eradication of extreme poverty can be instituted. Though it

\(^5\) https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/2706
may seem rather shallow as a solution to simply increase funding, it is at the heart of all solutions and thus must continue to be one of the highest priorities.

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