

Development in Africa's Informal Settlements

Below the Proletariat

A. R. Pashayan, Ph.D.

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Series in Economic Development



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To George "Mongololoh" Mungai Njuguna, a Kenyan whose struggles in life represent the struggles of all who live in the slum of Mukuru, and to the development professionals who serve the extreme poor.



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About the Author



A. R. Pashayan, PhD

Dr. Pashayan is a full-time lecturing professor at American University, School of International Service in Washington, DC. She teaches Global Inequality, Power & Practice in Development, Gender and Development, and Introduction to International Research at the university. Pashayan serves as Faculty Advisor to graduate students and works at the American University campus in Nairobi, Kenya, during summer leading experiential learning for the AU Abroad students. She has also held adjunct teaching positions at LSE, CSUN, and Howard University. Dr. Pashayan founded a Community-led Nonprofit Organization specifically to help residents of Informal Settlements. She regularly attends the World Bank Spring Meetings, interned two years at USAID, and worked for the former US Ambassador to the African Union on Impact Investing. The combination of experience in academia, as a practitioner, and as a development professional gives Pashayan a unique advantage in identifying gaps in service to the people experiencing poverty. With the current youth bulge across Africa, Pashayan seeks to address development gaps that could lead to what Pashayan calls “a potential youth bomb,” leaving the continent into deeper poverty. This book represents her dedication to problem-solving for the best approaches to reducing extreme poverty in slums.

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Abstract

This book discusses the effectiveness of international development programs to reduce extreme poverty in African informal settlements (slums). It is equally about the people affected by development programs. The intention is to foster dialogue among professionals about the effectiveness of development programs to better serve their clients (the poor). This book expressly examines the communication and critical thinking disconnect between development professionals and slum dwellers regarding the types of programs offered versus the types of programs needed to reduce extreme poverty in slum communities. With a sample of 500 residents from Mukuru Slum in Nairobi, Kenya, and 100 development professionals with expertise in poverty reduction in slum communities, this book sheds light on the similarities and differences of programs identified as key to effectively reducing extreme poverty. Most importantly, this book provides a theoretical way forward (The Theory of Extreme Poverty Reduction) based on Freirean pedagogy to stimulate authentic dialogue among slum dwellers that leads to the critical consciousness necessary for successful poverty reduction.

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The journey of authoring this book began during the first course of my Ph.D. program at Howard University. Learning from Dr. Cotman, now retired, set the pace for more profound academic scholarship and writing. A method of analysis was instilled in me that resulted in deeper arguments and critiques of the literature on international development. I revel in his expertise and acknowledge his emphasis on being a voice for people without a voice. I cannot thank you enough, Dr. John Cotman.

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During the day, I split my time between Howard University, the Library of Congress, the Wilson Center for African Research, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). I listened to research presentations and industry professionals who shed light on various issues of poverty reduction in Africa and international development. At CSIS, I met John Simon, former Ambassador to the African Union. John provided me with insight into international development from the perspective of a seasoned diplomat who has held top positions at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), the National Security Council (NSC), and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). He also served as an advisor to the President on AIDS and Malaria relief, as Deputy Assistant Administrator at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and is the current CEO of Total Impact Capital, Impact Investments. That someone of this stature meets with me to discuss international development means that my work is relevant. Thank you kindly, John Simon.

At CSIS, I also met Susan Fine, former Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator at USAID, who helped me frame my dissertation abstract. Subsequently, she

recommended that her retired husband help me edit the body of the work. I assumed her husband worked in a different sector and had much time on his hands. Her husband, Patrick Fine, had recently stepped down as CEO of Washington, DC' preeminent development company, FHI360. Patrick graciously provided the "industry" edit of the writing. His support and opinions are heavily weighted in the development sector.

Patrick served as a former Senior Fellow of Global Economy and Development at Brookings, Vice President of Operations at the MCC, Sr. Deputy Assistant Administrator at USAID's Africa Bureau, Mission Director in Afghanistan for USAID, and remains a frequent writer on international and human development issues. Moreover, Patrick Fine studied under Paulo Freire, the expert whose theory led me to my Theory of Extreme Poverty Reduction in this book. Thank you, Susan and Patrick.

None of this work would have been possible without my family. My parents were community leaders and problem-solvers in marginalized Compton, California. On the opposite spectrum, my brother-in-law sailed around the world with Chapman University Afloat. It was he who introduced me to a world beyond Compton. Moreover, my deepest thanks go to my husband, Don, and three sons, Johnathan, Kevin, and Maxwell. They put up with my constant travel around the world, including ten years of hanging out in what seemed to be the most dangerous place ever, the slums of Nairobi. Specific thanks go to my Johnathan, who once said, "Mom, you have already done the work of International Relations; why not get the degree?"

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*May God Bless everyone who has nudged my life
toward the culmination of this work.*

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