

POVERTY AND SOCIAL MARGINALIZATION IN SAN LUIS POTOSI: A PUZZLE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Poverty, and social marginalization in San Luis Potosi are associated with populations living in small villages, scattered and often isolated. These populations are closely related to the primary economic activity, with little possibility of entering to the national and much less international market, despite having large endogenous capacities. Also, the main purpose of this paper is to present the efforts of the Mexican government to decipher the puzzle of poverty and social are structural issues that can be solved only with innovative frameworks. Then, local development strategies in San Luis Potosi must go through the promotion of habits of coexistence and socialization, as well as identifying fundamental values that are sorted coexistence and forms of social organization. Unfortunately the Mexican government at all levels (Federal, State and municipal), with inappropriate strategies of combating poverty, tends to get lost in the complex system of the national economy that mitigates the efforts of combatting poverty and social exclusion. That is why local governments in San Luis Potosi are exposed to serious risks of improvisation and failure in their policy to combat poverty and social exclusion.

Keywords: Poverty, Social Exclusion, Local Government

Introduction

In recent decades, even optimists have been forced to recognize that poverty and social exclusion, not only have endured throughout the world, but also have been reproduced in alarming terms. There goodwill theoretical consensus on the need to reduce, but concrete actions in this regard have severe difficulties.

Mexico also has different social problems, young people today are at social risk, and that the main factors affecting young people are the economic, cultural, family breakdown, abnormal behaviors and other personal, family or environment affecting the care and attention given to children and adolescents. This is due to the growing shortage of education, unemployment and especially income.

The lack of expectations, disappointment about the future, inequality and the few opportunities that society provides to younger makes crime, vandalism and social exclusion becoming increasingly go boom in almost all parts of Mexico and above earthquake in the colony belonging to the State of San Luis Potosi.

Then the main purpose of this paper is to present the efforts made by the Mexican government to decipher the puzzle of poverty and social exclusion issue in San Luis Potosi. San Luis Potosi has about 2, 600,000 inhabitants; the population in poverty increased from 36% to 37.6% between 2008 and 2010, which represents about 1,350,000 persons and 380 000 of them

are living in extreme poverty. As for the educational backwardness in San Luis Potosi, they're approximately 574 000 inhabitants with the problem of educational backwardness, 542 000 with lack in access to health services, 423 000 with lack of access to quality housing, 800 000 with the problem of access to food and 1, 481,000 with the lack of access to social security (Coneval: 2012).

It is therefore that improving the living conditions of the inhabitant of the Terremoto Colony becomes a puzzle to the Municipal government. Therefore actors in public administration with the Autonomous University of San Luis Potosi through the project "Protecting the increasing Life in Terremoto" seek to decipher the puzzle. It is a local development strategy that goes through the promotion of habits of coexistence and socialization, as well as identifying the fundamental values that stimulates coexistence and forms of social organization. Creating enthusiasm for a positive and creative lifestyle, walk towards human social relations, based on peace respect and solidarity, ability to solve problems, evaluating the consensus and teamwork; that help to foster a change in attitudes in favor of justice, tolerance, cooperation, solidarity through analysis and assessment of conflict situations.

Literature review

Analysis approaches of Poverty

Poverty, in its broadest sense, is associated with living conditions that violate human dignity. The condition of poverty limits the rights and freedoms of the people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs for their full social integration. The production of poverty is a complex phenomenon in which different processes interact (economic, social, political, cultural and ethical).

In the international system and policies, there have been several debates, theories, models and systems analysis of social reality in response to the unknown production and reproduction of poverty. Also, illiberal attribute much of the causes of poverty to the market, by its neglect of social realities. Therefore, Cimadamore (2008) views poverty as actions that perpetuate and reproduce injustice and inequality in attempts to fit poor people to the capitalist pattern. Meanwhile, Leguizmon Alvarez (2008) considers that the causes and persistence of poverty in Latin America are associated with political attacks between actors in decision-making on the continent. The critical social approach considers that the production and persistence of poverty is related to structural factors such as dependency, imperialism, corruption and demagoguery of the dominant local, national and international actors.

Identified with Institutional theory, Mota Laura Diaz (2008) focuses on the figure of the State the analysis the production and reproduction of poverty. Since the beginning of colonization, the State has focused on the defense of the interests of a minority that are under the leading the decision-making. Throughout the centuries, the State remains at the center, ensuring the specific conditions of appropriation and distribution of assets.

Although there are a variety of theoretical approaches to identify what makes an individual poor, there is a widening consensus about the multidimensional nature of the phenomena of poverty and social marginalization. Then, to analyze scientifically the phenomenon of poverty they're several interesting approaches.

- The indirect or livelihoods approach
- The direct or basic needs approach
- The capabilities approach.

The indirect or livelihoods approach studies the causes of poverty from lack of resources, essentially income, physical and human capital. This interpretation focuses on the distributional issue: the lack of resources suffered by the individual or household is its main concern. The direct approach focuses on the manifestations, thus focusing attention on the forms and lifestyle, customs and attitudes of the poor. Capabilities approach incorporates structural explanation of the causes of poverty (Flores 2010).

Extreme poverty is defined as a level of income in an amount not to consume even a minimum amount of food that allows appropriate personal performance. Moderate poverty is defined from a normative pattern of consumption amount of income of families successfully covering many of their basic needs. In extreme poverty, there are opportunities to overcome economic and social progress. The marginal condition is so severe that in extreme poverty, they are not likely to access any opportunity for growth and development.

In Mexico the official measure of poverty began between 2001 and 2002. Gradually measuring poverty would be a vital issue for the Mexican government to focus on building specific indicators reflecting the situation in which millions of people live in Mexico. Also, poverty is conceived as a socio-economic and political condition in which people live with very low levels of welfare and income was used as a proxy for economic welfare of the population.

In 2004, the Law of Social Development which created the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL), as official institution in measuring poverty and social marginalization in Mexico. The main variables for the measurement process are:

- Per capita income
- Educational Backwardness
- Access to health services.
- Access to social security
- Quality and housing spaces
- Access to basic housing services
- Access to food
- Degree of social cohesion

The presence of these dimensions in homes varies according to the shortcomings faced by people.

Social Marginalization as a Structural Phenomenon

Marginalization is a structural phenomenon that originates in the manner, style or historical patterns of development. The processes that shape the marginalization make a precarious social structure of opportunities for citizens, their families and communities, and expose them to hardship, social risks and vulnerabilities. These conditions scape to the control of families and communities and be solved, need the active collaboration of public, private and social.

For Moreno (2001), the social marginalization is the cause that the individual gets to express dissenting behavior. However, in some cases these discrepant behaviors are not only considered misfits but can become fashion, or be socially valued based on the author's group membership behavior. In the case of young people in the colony of Terremoto in San Luis Potosi, drugs and

vandalism have been valued within their group and assigned a meaning that the essential requirements are met.

Despite its multidimensional nature, some of the forms, intensities and social implications of marginalization can be approximated by synthetic indicators. As will be understood, these analytic-descriptive measures are extremely useful for development planning, since differentiate territorial units according to the intensity of the deprivations suffered by its population, and to establish the order of priority in public policies to improve the lifestyle of the population and strengthen the distributive justice at the regional and local levels.

The social marginalization index is a measure to differentiate the locations as the overall impact of the deficiencies that affect the population. The Mexican government has defined dimensions of marginalization from three main variables such as education, housing and income. Article 3 of the Constitution establishes the access to basic education as a right of all Mexicans. Without doubt, the greatest level of social marginalization arising from the lack of participation in the educational system is recorded in the uneducated population or with lack of knowledge that can be acquired in the first level of basic education. The population living in dwellings without electricity, piped water and sanitary floor is exposed to higher impairments to enjoy a long and healthy life and hinders the learning of children, among other crucial deprivations in the lives of families and their members.

The available opportunities to people to have a decent standard of living are determined by a variety of factors. Of these, include asset ownership, access to essential satisfactions related to the state of social spending (such as education and health) as well as the possibilities for competitive participation in labor markets.

In economies where the market plays an increasingly decisive role in allocating resources, money income determines the capacity to purchase goods and services. In short, we can say that social exclusion comes from a situation permanent conflict between the individual and the social context, determined by the interaction of the person with the economic, social, cultural and political factors. The unmet demands generated maladjustment, which can be found when the subject demands are high and cannot be solved. In qualitative and quantitative terms, obvious the need and usefulness of understanding poverty and social exclusion for the design and implementation of policies aimed at its reduction.

Poverty in Mexico: Some statistics

According to statistics from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), between 2006 and 2011 all Latin American countries, except Mexico, managed to reduce poverty by 6.9 percentage points on average. During the same period at the regional level, the indicator fell from 36.3% to 29.4%. However, the agency estimated that in Mexico the percentage of the population in poverty conditions jumped from 31.7% in 2006 (the year Felipe Calderón assumed office) to 35.3% in 2011. And last but not least, homelessness in Mexico increased from 8.7 to 13.3% in that period, which means an increase of 4.6 percentage points.

According to the "2012 Social Landscape of Latin America" presented by ECLAC on *November* in the Chilean capital, in 2006 poverty in Mexico was 4.6 points *lower* than the regional average and the same with homelessness. In 2011, both indicators *exceeded* the Latin American average: poverty by 5.9 points and homelessness by 1.9 points, which had never happened in the past. On the list of eighteen countries included in the 2012 Social Landscape ECLAC, Argentina has the lowest incidence of poverty, with 5.7% of the population, followed by Uruguay (6.7%), Chile (11.0%), Costa Rica (18.8%), Brazil (20.9%) and Panama (25.3%).

Mexico is among the six poorest countries in the region, second only to the Dominican Republic (42.2%), Bolivia (42.4%), Paraguay (49.6%), Nicaragua (58.3%) and Honduras (67.4%).

ECLAC said that their poverty figures for Mexico are different from those of the National Council for Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL) because the Mexican institution takes a multidimensional measurement, and the UN agency only measures household income. However, ECLAC and CONEVAL agree that poverty in Mexico has increased in recent years (Corda: 2012). Similarly, in Mexico, the Social Development Secretariat considers that 54% of Mexican live in poverty, indicating that they survive with less than 4 USD a day, while 32% do so with less than 2.5 USD and 24% less than 2 USD. From this perspective, the poorest states in the country are Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Tabasco and Durango, and they concentrate high percentages of indigenous population (Aboumrad: 2013).

Overview of San Luis Potosi

San Luis Potosi is one of the 32 federating units that comprise Mexico. It is located in Mexico's central plateau, in the north central region of the country and occupies a wide area of central Mexico. Its official name is Free and Sovereign State of San Luis Potosi. With a land area of 63,068 km, it is the fifteenth state of Mexico by land extension.

The state of San Luis Potosi is rich in culture, heritage and history. It is bordered with 9 states; Nuevo Leon and Coahuila in the north, Tamaulipas in the northeast, Veracruz to the east, Hidalgo in the southeast, Queretaro in the south, Guanajuato, Jalisco and Zacatecas to the west.



Map 1: Location of San Luis Potosi

Source: Google Map

San Luis Potosi has a profitable location in the Mexican territory because it is a compromise between the three major cities of the country: Mexico City, Monterrey and Guadalajara, and between four important ports: Tampico, Altamira, Manzanillo and Mazatlan. In addition, its varied climate, road and rail network facilitate easy trade and makes it one of the few states in which you can develop a significant business infrastructure.

The economic impact of the state is due to several factors such as tourism, industry and geographic location that allow the rapid transport of products to almost anywhere in Mexico. However, this economic development is seen only in the state capital, which has led to a great migration from the suburbs to rural areas as well as other neighboring states such as Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas, and mainly to the United States. (Mballa: 2013).

The economic development of San Luis Potosi has been weakened by political and social problems that have adversely changed the perception of public safety in the state and in the area. However, it has experienced in recent months economic growth (especially in the capital city San Luis Potosi), due to local policies that have taken advantage of its geographical location. Today we have developed a large number of industrial parks that have driven the manufacturing and industrial sector. Despite this there is a fiscal burden on state taxpayers.

The lack of information networks, corporate support, training on entrepreneurship and other factors, prevent opportunities from reaching the poor people. This situation is certainly one of the causes of the rise of poverty and social exclusion in San Luis Potosi as indicated by the following table.

Table 1. Municipal measurement of poverty in San Luis Potosí 2010.

Percentage of population, number of persons, social exclusion average number of poverty indicators, Mexico, 2010			
Indicators	percentage	Number of persons	Average number of needs
<i>Poverty</i>			
Population in poverty	28.9	232,967	2.0
Population in moderate poverty	26.0	209,248	1.8
Population in extreme poverty	2.9	23,719	3.5
Population vulnerable by social deprivation	23.7	191,110	1.6
Income Vulnerable Population	10.5	84,625	0.0
Non-poor and vulnerable	36.8	296,423	0.0
<i>social deprivation</i>			
Population with at least one social deprivation	52.7	424,076	1.8
Population with at least three social deprivation	10.5	84,594	3.4
<i>Indicators of social deprivation</i>			
educational backwardness	13.5	108,888	2.2
Access to health services	17.0	137,237	2.4
Access to social security	36.3	291,913	2.1
Quality and living spaces	3.8	30,536	3.3
Access to basic housing services	6.6	52,811	3.0
Access to food	20.2	162,629	2.4
<i>economic well</i>			
Population with income below the minimum welfare line	9.8	78,526	1.9
Population with income below the welfare line	39.4	317,592	1.5

Source: Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social, 2010.

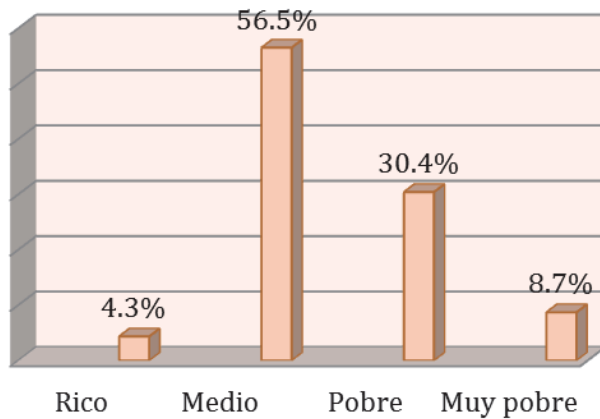
Local Government in Search of Solutions in “Terremoto”.

a. Social reality and social explosion risks in Terremoto.

Terremoto Colony belongs to the municipality of San Luis Potosi, and is located between the boundaries of the municipality of Soledad de Graciano Sánchez, on one side of Tercera Grande, Tercera Chica, y Flores Magon y Santo Tomas colonies, and has the following characteristics:

- Population: 2,500 people about
- Paving
- Drinking water
- Drainage System
- Public Lighting
- Garbage collection service
- Public Transport
- A Children Garden
- Recreational areas

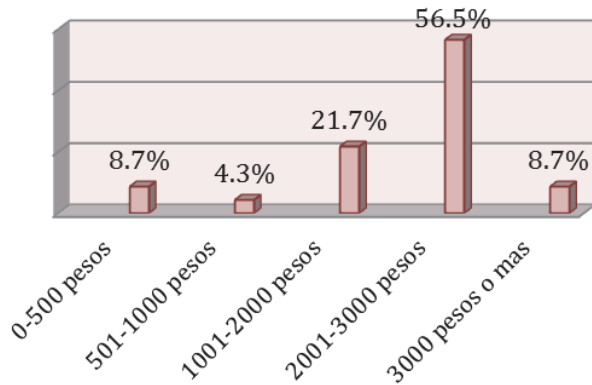
The actual situation of the Terremoto can be seen in the following graphics, as results from a survey conducted in February 2013.



The 56.5% of the inhabitants of Terremoto consider themselves as part of the middle class, 30.4% are considered poor but believe that there are people poorer than themselves, 8.7% is considered very poor in Terremoto and only 4.3% are considered rich.

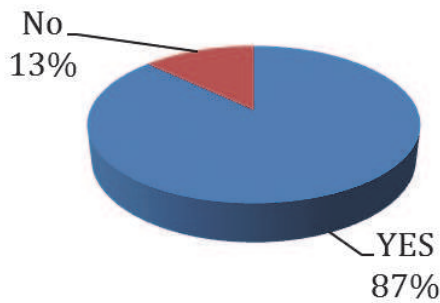
Graphic 1. Life style in Terremoto

Source: Own elaboration



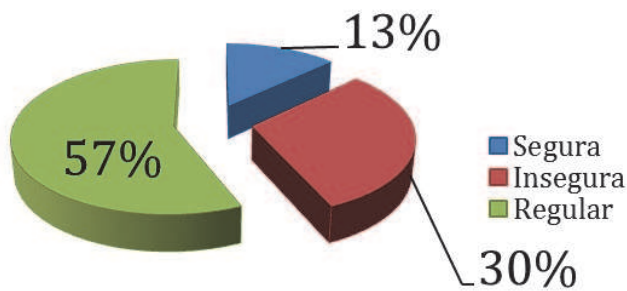
This graph shows that over 56% of the populations of Terremoto earn less than 280 dollars a month, which is a sign of a low standard of living

Graphic 2. Income Average
Source: Own elaboration



87% of people have medical service

Graphic 3: People Currently enrolled at any institution that provides health services?
Source: Own elaboration



Only 13% of people believe that the neighborhood is safe, others believe there is a great climate of insecurity in Terremoto

Graphic 4. Level of security in Terremoto.
Source: Own elaboration

These graphs show that there is a high degree of instability in Terremoto. That implies the need of building new mechanisms by local government to develop that neighborhood. a few years ago, Terremoto was in the list of most marginalized colonies the Municipality of San Luis Potosi.

The social needs of the inhabitants of the colony were of all types: health, education, social security, housing and social backwardness. Gradually the Municipality implemented projects and social programs to bring public services to this part of the population. The aim was to reduce the percentage of poverty that was detected in the Colony and combat social ills by paving all the streets, constructing drainage and sewerage, offering drinking water and creating recreation etc.

It is true that the current reality of Terremoto tends to a climate of continuous improvement, and it is still observed social resentment towards the authorities and the rest of society, reflected in antisocial behavior by teenagers. What can be said is that Terremoto is walking slowly towards its combat against poverty and social exclusion despite the advanced stage of drug addiction and vandalism.

Indeed, neighborhood youth have unmet needs (school, job opportunities, personal growth and development, recognizing their talents) resulting in maladjustment characterized by:

- Unsuitable relations between young people and their environment,
- Situation of conflict and maladjustment in the interaction process.
- Inadequate experience and use of the subjective elements of the surrounding world.
- Imbalance's concept of himself and his life experience.
- Lack of active and constructive participation in the social group.
- Difficulties to live in society.

This scenario makes it clear that the behavior of the "young band" of Terremoto is a response to a change in family structure and individual factors. Changes in the value systems of families have led to the increase in the number of young people living alone or homeless, without social support, rejected by the society because of their addiction to drugs. This situation causes a progressive youth isolation from Social System giving a logical explanation for the binomials: youth-violence and social exclusion-violence.

b. The program: "Protecting the increasing Life in Terremoto"

To combat poverty and social exclusion in Terremoto, the government of Municipality of San Luis Potosi has launched a social inclusion program named "Protecting the increasing Life in Terremoto". This program has some strategies for the incorporation of the inhabitants of Terremoto in economic dynamics, social and cultural rights.

The following table presents a summary of the program

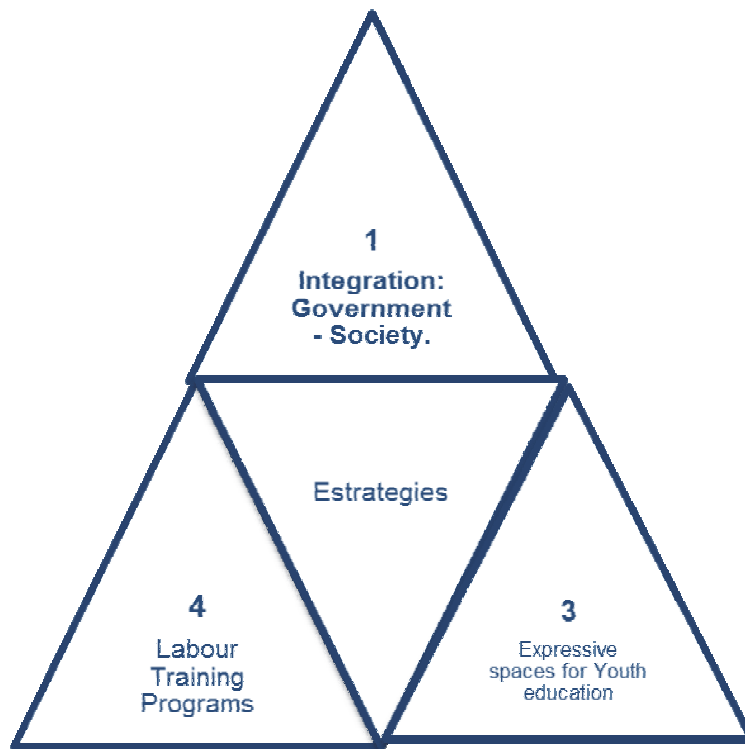
Table 2. Main characteristics of the "Protecting the increasing Life in Terremoto" Program.

Main Activity	Objectives	Implementation Strategies
Celebrating children	Promote coexistence, cooperation, solidarity, respect, social skills and interpersonal relationships	Performing activity of living with the children in their school. Delivery the school supplies and toys to the children.
Macro Gymnastics	Bringing parents and children to achieve family comprehensive development. Discover, identify and analyze the fundamental values that help to building social cohesion	Working with parents and children in activities in Kindergarten, enabling them to reaffirm their bonds of trust and security.
Cleaning my neighborhood	Fermenting social consciousness through the union as a hub for the resolution of social problems in the colony.	Delivery of cleaning area residents. Preparation of a weekly schedule of cleaning the colony

Terremoto	Involve the inhabitants of the colony in the work of cleaning the fronts of their houses to allow engagement and coexistence among all settlers	
Youth and social responsibility	To promote among young people and adults the sense of respect, empathy and tolerance toward others, and the responsibility of each person to transform Terremoto	Provide courses, workshops and conferences on a selected schedule to neighborhood youth about the importance of social responsibility
Graffiti contest in Terremoto	Offering new spaces for artistic expression through the graffiti art under the theme "United for a better Terremoto"	Harnessing the potential of young artistic people of Terremoto through the regular organization of a graffiti contest.

Source: Own elaboration

To carry out this development model its needed a thorough restructuring of the value systems of society. This program must be supported by new social, economic and technological policies. The puzzle that is the fight against poverty and social exclusion in Terremoto can be summarized in the following triangle.



Graphic 5. Conceptual map of the "Protecting the increasing Life in Terremoto" Program.

Source: Own elaboration.

Final Thoughts

The poor material conditions and their impact on a daily life of citizens, explain the need of conceiving new multidimensional public policies on social development. These policies should

address the issues of housing, basic income, training and socio-labor, to offer real opportunities to break the cycle of poverty through real improvement of the material conditions of the people. The health and social welfare actions alone are insufficient to address the situations of marginalization and poverty. The role that women can play in these processes should be reconsidered for the allocation of responsibilities. The fight against the precariousness of the poor and marginalized requires effort.

It is important to consider that political manipulation of social programs, rather than the exception, it seems to be the rule in Mexico's recent history. As shown throughout this paper, an approach to explore ways of political use of social programs is to understand the construction and functions of intermediaries between the government and its beneficiaries. Social programs, without transparency or control mechanisms by the society, have historically been used for electoral purposes in Mexico.

Also, in order to redefine the methods in the fight against poverty, it is essential today that the poles of decision making at the municipal level should establish a cohesion between the theoretical and practical dimensions, to dilute the tension between belief and illusion, between rhetoric and reality, between what is and what should be the living conditions of the people with low income. It is the balance between these aspects that can give a human face to the municipal programs of social and human development with two fundamental aspects:

1. The conception of humanity as a whole (horizon of current debates about inequality, polarization, asymmetry, discrimination, xenophobia etc.)
2. The conception of the human person as unique versus the dehumanization of inter-social relations, as product of hyper-globalization and economic liberalism.

This scenario suggests the importance of thorough research on new models of the fight against poverty and social marginalization. More than anything, the rationalization of the combat against poverty is a very important intellectual operation that exceeds the simple desire to support local development, as it is a decision-making process with multidimensional impacts. It is a matter of general administration, and public administration in particular that should be based on logic and inter-institutional planning to reduce the gap between political speeches (which are often empty and demagogic during elections) and implementation of a true integral human development policy

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