

A crash course in poverty for the privileged

Poverty Explained to People with Money

TIM 'S JONGERS

Western societies are largely governed by highly educated, healthy and satisfied citizens. These individuals dominate the media, shape societal norms, and influence democratic processes. In short, they are the decision-makers, the 'button-pushers' – even when it comes to poverty.

Yet, this influential group of citizens often remains confined to their own bubble. Living in the best neighbourhoods, executing the best jobs and being surrounded by like-minded peers, they are disconnected from the realities of those at the bottom of the social ladder. As a result, a chasm has formed between those who craft poverty policies and those who are subjected to it. This harms both individuals and society as a whole.

The author, who grew up in abject poverty and only earned a master's degree when he was around 30, has spent years researching inequality, livelihood insecurity and poverty, and has advised governments and civil society organizations on these themes. His conclusion? Most people with money barely scratch the surface of understanding poverty's complexities. They moralize, oversimplify, and question why the poor make 'bad' decisions, all while assuming they would fare better in the same circumstances.

This book bridges the gap between academic analysis of poverty and the lived experience of those who have to face it. Avoiding sensationalism and self-pity, the author uses parts of his own story sparingly, only as a tool to illustrate his analysis.

Aimed at the privileged, this is a crash course in understanding poverty's depths – a vital step towards meaningful change. Because fighting poverty begins with seeing it differently.



AUTHOR



Tim 'S Jongers (b. 1981) grew up in extreme poverty. It wasn't until the age of thirty that he started studying political science, at the University of Antwerp. He worked at a Dutch research institute and eventually ended up in local and national social-democratic politics. If anyone knows poverty from all sides – through experience, academia and policy – it is Tim 'S Jongers. He therefore has a unique perspective on how to really tackle poverty.

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