



Contents

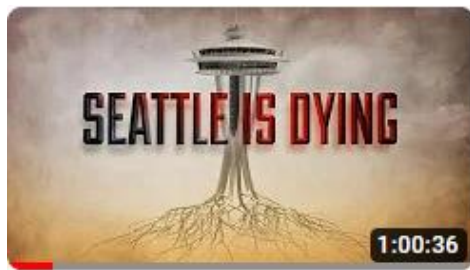
- Intro..... 6
- Vancouver has a new tent city. This time it’s in the street, not a park 10
- If Seattle is dying, here’s the cause of death 16
- ?..... 28
- Seaside sets course to tackle homelessness at the Oregon Coast 41
- Ashland Couch surfing 44
 - So ... what to do? 46
- Medford council tallies its efforts to aid homeless people..... 50
- Why San Francisco Is Nearly The Most Crime-Ridden City In The US..... 53
- Venice residents businesses fed up with homeless problem 'It's disgusting' 56
- Santa Ana provides new data that Orange County is ‘dumping’ homeless 59
- Life Of a Homeless 63
 - What is the life of a homeless person like?’ 63
 - What do the homeless do all day?..... 63
 - What is the hardest thing about being homeless? 64
 - What does being homeless do to the brain? 64
 - What are the 4 types of homelessness? 64
 - Should you make eye contact with homeless?..... 65
 - What Happens When You Avert Your Eyes From the Homeless 65
 - What ethnicity is the most homeless?..... 67
 - 'Through Our Eyes' camera project showcases homeless 67
 - What is the average life expectancy of a homeless person?..... 67
- Causes 68
 - THE CHALLENGE 68
 - Education 72
 - The Impact of Homelessness on Education 72
 - Homeless as a high school senior 75
 - Why Finland and Norway still shun university tuition fees – even for international students..... 80
 - New source of revenue..... 81
 - Equality key in Nordic model 82
 - Education Comments..... 86

Homework in Finland School	89
Do We Need Homework?	90
How to Teach Like The Finns?	90
Why do Finnish pupils succeed with less homework?	92
Long summer holidays	93
Why Sean wrote this article:	95
Respect for teachers	95
'Long-term planning'	97
Homework works	99
Families	103
List of countries by homeless population	103
What is the root of homelessness?	111
The Facts About Family Homelessness	111
Homelessness: The Facts	112
Children and Homelessness	114
HOMELESSNESS IN NORWAY: THE SUCCESS OF LONG-TERM HOUSING-LED STRATEGIES	116
Children and Families	116
How Many Children and Families Experience Homelessness?	117
Why Do Families Experience Homelessness?	117
The Impact of Homelessness on Children	118
Ending Homelessness for Children and Families	118
Drugs and Meth	120
Your body Is Your Drug Store	120
You are your own master chemist	123
Financing Cocaine Use in a Homeless Population	124
Abstract	124
1. Introduction	125
‘I DON’T KNOW THAT I WOULD EVEN CALL IT METH ANYMORE’	129
How The Atlantic's Big Piece on Meth and Homelessness Gets It Wrong	164
What’s Really Driving Homelessness	165
SUD, Homelessness, and Recovery	166
What percentage of homelessness is caused by drugs?	168
How does substance abuse play a role in homelessness?	168

Is there a correlation between poverty and drugs?	168
What is the number one cause of homelessness in America?	168
Non-violence in your mind and body.....	170
Emotions	172
New Thought.....	174
New Concepts	177
New Wiring	180
New Personality	183
New Human	186
Researchers gave homeless people money and what they did with it might surprise you	189
Here’s how opening up to others helped 1 homeless veteran get back on his feet.....	191
How a stranger’s act of kindness changed 1 homeless man’s life	192
Housing	194
Debunking the Myths of Homelessness.....	194
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HOMELESSNESS IN NORWAY.....	194
More affordable housing with less homelessness is possible, if only Australia would learn from Nordic nations	197
Crime.....	201
The first step to stop corporations from profiting from incarceration in the United States.....	201
60 Minutes Presents: Behind Bars.....	208
Inside Halden, the most humane prison in the world	217
Peace Education Program	228
Study on Prem Rawat Foundation’s Peace Education Program Shows Exceptional Benefits for Incarcerated People	228
Man Is At His Best When In Peace – Prem Rawat.....	231
More Americans Killed by Guns Since 1968 Than in All U.S. Wars — Combined	238
Losing jobs.....	241
These Are the World’s Top 10 Happiest and Unhappiest Countries in 2022	242
Happiness is the key.....	246
Forget GDP — New Zealand is prioritizing gross national well-being	251
The Ray Of Happiness	257
Happiness Lies Inside	260
Happiness.....	261
Where is preventive Medicine in this picture.....	262

Why don't we fund more prevention?	262
Preventative Care is the Healthcare of the Future	269
5 Reasons Functional Medicine is the Only Kind of Health Care You Want	271
People often wonder what the difference is between Functional Medicine and “conventional” medicine. What is Functional Medicine? These are great questions – and basically it comes down to a different approach.....	271
Here are the five reasons functional medicine is the only kind of health care you want, period.	273
What is a Functional Medicine Doctor?.....	275
What Does a Functional Medicine Doctor Do?.....	276
Education & Training	277
What Conditions Does a Functional Medicine Doctor Treat?	277
Reasons to See a Functional Medicine Doctor	278
<i>California Approves Bill to Punish Doctors Who Spread False Information</i>	279
The Spread of Misinformation and Falsehoods	281
Closing.....	284

Intro



Seattle is Dying | A KOMO News

Documentary

KOMO News ✓ 13M views

KOMO Anchor Eric Johnson takes an in-depth look at the impact the drug and homelessness problem is having on our city and possible...

A few months ago my wife Barbara said let's watch this YouTube video called Seattle is dying.

This YouTube video had an incredible effect on us. I started thinking this is not only Seattle's problem but the entire West Coast.

My daughter Aleia lives in a small town in southern Oregon. They also have the same homeless problem there. Mind you millions of dollars are being spent to try to solve this problem.

I decided to start from Vancouver Canada and work my way down to Southern California.

This problem exists all over. This problem exists in our entire country.

I started to research to see what other countries are doing with this problem.

I found out that the Scandinavian countries' mission for the last 10 years is to severely reduce homelessness in their countries.

For example, Norway has reduced it by 60% in only 10 years. Norway makes it a provision in its constitution that having a place to live is a birthright.

I work on many different fronts. In the past 10 years, I've always been interested in the happiness index for rating countries around the world.

Each country is rated on the state of happiness of the citizens.

I find it quite fascinating that the Scandinavian countries are the number one in the world. They take up the top 8 out of 10 spots. Israel and New Zealand are among them.

The United States was 19th on the list. It seems to me the higher a country is in the ratings, the more progressive the social programs are.

The Scandinavian countries are extremely innovative when it comes to education, housing, and prison reform.

How would you like to go to school and never get homework? Kids would love it!

Many Scandinavian countries do this and yet they are the most educated kids on the planet.

In our country, we burn out kids so that consequently there is no joy in learning.

Competition is the greatest force that they use. You are fighting against your fellow students to obtain success.

The Scandinavian countries believe that cooperation with one another is the answer

Big difference.

When it comes to prison reform. The United States prison system is built by for-profit corporations. The longer you are in, the more money they will make.

They have no incentive for you to rehabilitate. Punishment is their means.

The Scandinavian countries take another approach and it is not through punishment.

It is teaching a man how to fish. It is teaching a man to learn the tools to succeed in society.

They take a humane approach. They take an approach of dignity. They believe if you treat someone with respect they will treat you with respect.

Inside our prison systems in America, there is a war between the prisoners and the prisoner guards. Not only that, but prisoners fighting one another.

In that kind of environment. No wonder when they get out they return to prison.

They don't have the skills to be good human beings in society.

There is a saying that the more you pay to something the more attention it pays to you.

In the United States prison system, it is designed against you to heal oneself.

I hope you enjoy this book and will ponder it over. There are many lessons for us to learn.

Without kindness, you may have the greatest plan, but it will fail if it is done without kindness. Kindness is the foundation of life.

If you want to see what a lack of kindness does in our society, take a look at the homeless epidemic in America today.

We are the richest nation on earth and yet one out of every 30 children is living in the streets. What does that say about our priorities?

We spend around 60% of our budget on the defense industry.

We seem to put more emphasis on war than on helping our fellow man.

The United States has lost touch with its citizens. The Scandinavian countries still have their problems. They are striving to overcome them practically and consciously.

In the United States, the top political officials pay only lip service to this. It seems to me they make laws that benefit the rich.

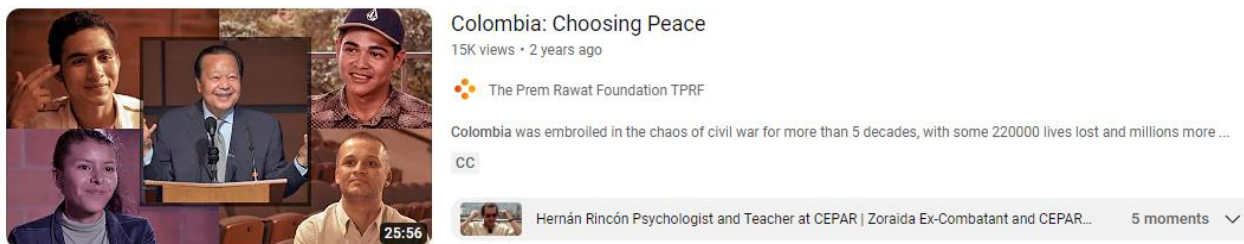
The following YouTube video comes from the peace education program, a worldwide program dedicated to bringing peace. This is a highly successful program in our prison systems around the world today.

It is quite innovative and highly successful in the outcome.

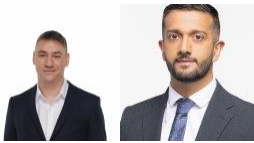
Many prison systems today are using this program to help solve their problems.

Columbia for decades has had two rival gangs fighting. This has led to too much bloodshed in the country.

This program helps them to reconcile their differences and put their weapons down.



Vancouver has a new tent city. This time it's in the street, not a park



By **Simon Little** & **Kamil Karamali** Global News

Posted July 7, 2022 7:45 pm

Updated July 8, 2022 1:50 pm

¹A new tent city has popped up along Hastings Street in Vancouver. Kamil Karamali reports on why it's not likely to be cleared away any time soon – Jul 7, 2022

The City of Vancouver appears to be home to a new **tent city**, but it's not in a park this time.

Instead, the dozens of tents have sprung up along East **Hastings Street** between Main and Carrall streets.

While tents and makeshift vendors have long been a fixture of the street in the area, the presence of tents appears to have bloomed since the city scaled back its controversial “street sweeps”.

As of July 1, Vancouver police have ceased to accompany city workers who patrol the street daily, collecting refuse — and according to some residents, personal items — and throwing them in dump trucks.

¹<https://globalnews.ca/news/8973620/vancouver-hastings-street-tent-city/#:~:text=The%20City%20of%20Vancouver%20appears,between%20Main%20and%20Carrall%20streets.>

“Right now (the tents are) on both sides of the sidewalks, but I don’t think it’s because the police have stopped their street sweeps,” Cheryle Gnargie O’Sullivan, who lives and works on the Downtown Eastside told Global News.

She said the area has seen a drastic increase in homelessness, and pointed to the choice low-income residents face between living on the street or in “disgusting,” poorly-ventilated single-room occupancy hotels — several of which have been the site of recent fires.

“We just need adequate housing. We don’t need to live in tents or SROs, we need our buildings to be maintained and kept up to standard whether it’s in the DTES or anywhere else.

“Just because we’re here doesn’t mean we’re any less important.”

In a statement, Vancouver police said it gave notice last fall that it would cease accompanying city sanitation workers, which it said was “inappropriate use of policing resources and is not a core policing service.”

Police directed questions about the tents to BC Housing.

In a statement, BC Housing said it was not responsible for enforcing city bylaws on camping. The agency said it was, however, “actively reaching out to those camping on the street or in parks to offer indoor spaces.”

“Over the long term, BC Housing staff, the City of Vancouver, and our non-profit housing operators are working on building supportive homes for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness,” the statement said.

“Since 2018, BC Housing has opened more than 1,400 supportive housing units in the City of Vancouver – that’s 1,400 people who are no longer sleeping outside and have homes with 24/7 supports and access to healthcare.”

A further 700 spaces are currently in development, it said.

Area boutique owner Troy Cruikshank said the growing number of tents in the area raises concerns about safety and fires.

“I worry about what else cannot be monitored inside those tents, because it’s an enclosed space,” he said.

“We already have an issue with fires going on in the city. It is definitely an added concern.”



Cruikshank said the number of people sleeping on the streets has grown, as has crime in the area. He said he arrived at his store one evening recently to find multiple vehicles with smashed windows on the block.

“All of those people who came to this area that night, no longer feel the same about coming here, and that’s a problem,” he said.

“I have clients who have been coming to me forever who are suddenly ordering online for delivery to their house ... they don’t feel safe.”

But community advocates say the problem won't be solved with more street sweeps or policing — and that for many, sheltering on Hastings Street is itself a matter of safety.

Vancouver's 2020 homeless count, the last conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic, documented 2,095 homeless people in the city, about a quarter of them unsheltered.

“People talk about how when they're displaced on a regular basis and have their things taken how violent that feels and how debilitating, destabilizing, the mental trauma and psychological trauma they feel from being shuffled along every day,” DTES support worker and advocate Fiona York said.

“When people stay in one place, that's a way of trying to find safety.”

York said concerns about safety in the area could be addressed by adding resources, ranging from fire extinguishers to sanitation.

Sarah Blyth, executive director of the Overdose Prevention Society and long-time advocate, said the situation on Hastings Street hasn't actually changed. It's only become more visible.

“The tents exist. They go up every night, they come down — It doesn't mean they're not there. I think in some ways its good to have tents up so people are aware we need to have more housing,” she said.

Blyth called the elimination of police-supported street sweeps a good thing, saying it reduces conflict and tension in the area.

But she said it needs to be replaced with something else, anchored in the community.

“The solution isn’t just to go away, it’s ... to find a model of helping people which isn’t just taking people’s stuff and throwing it in a garbage can which is creating more hostility,” she said.

“We need to involve the community so they are helping each other and helping themselves. More dumpsters, getting people opportunities to collect their own garbage, getting people from the community to help each other get rid of the garbage, we need a bathroom immediately.”

The City of Vancouver declined to provide someone for an on-camera interview, but in a statement, deputy general manager of engineering Taryn Scollard suggested work of that nature was underway.

The city has deployed extra trash bins in the area, she said, and plans were in the works for engineering staff to work with community groups and the homeless to conduct sidewalk cleaning.

“This work will begin at some point next week, noting that we need to provide time to community groups to organize a block stewardship program to assist with this work, and to provide them with tools that they need to be successful,” the statement reads.

Scollard said the city was also meeting with a coalition of community groups to identify “short- and long-term solutions that support people experiencing homelessness and to keep them and their belongings safe, while maintaining street cleanliness and accessibility. ”

In the meantime, it appears the tents will remain a regular fixture of the area.

“People have nowhere to go and nowhere to turn,” O’Sullivan said.

“We don’t have a lot of options going on around here in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.”



Vancouver homeless encampment draws a lot of ang...

CBC News: The National  36K views

After a few violent scenes at a homeless encampment in Vancouver, anger from the neighbourhood is pushing the issue in front of...



No Vacancy: Vancouver's Housing Crisis, documentary

AMI: Accessible Media Inc. • 84K views

In No Vacancy: Vancouver's Housing Crisis, AMI's Grant Hardy investigates the impact of Metro Vancouver's housing crisis on...

²If Seattle is dying, here's the cause of death



The narrative that Seattle is a city of mayhem and lawlessness wasn't created solely by Republicans.

by

- [Dominic Holden](#)

/ September 8, 2020

*Seattle Police officers in tactical gear speak with demonstrators, May 30, 2020.
(Shaminder Dulai/Crosscut)*

This year, Seattle became a key piece of evidence in the right-wing case against progressive cities. Fox News ran a story in June that quoted Assistant Police Chief Deanna Nollette saying [businesses were reportedly being extorted for cash](#) around a Black Lives Matter protest in Capitol Hill. Headlined “Crazy Town,” the story went viral along with photos of a city engulfed in flames and a man holding a rifle.

A few days later, Fox News [had to delete the photos](#) after they were exposed as a collage of unrelated images — the flames were from a different city, whoops. Seattle cops issued an about-face, too, [retracting the extortion claims](#). But the blaze had already been set.

The day after Fox News ran its original story, President Donald Trump raged on Twitter against “the anarchists takeover” of Seattle, saying “[terrorists burn and pillage our cities](#).” Blaming the city’s “Liberal Dems,” he promised to “end this Seattle takeover now!” Not long after that, Seattle’s police union president went

² <https://crosscut.com/opinion/2020/09/if-seattle-dying-heres-cause-death>

on Fox News to claim that proposed budget cuts would ensure “[Seattle will be a lawless wasteland.](#)”



Seattle helpless as armed guards patrol anarchists' 'autonomous zone,' shake down



Black community activists clash with Seattle anarchists over BLM message

Fox News opinion host, Tucker Carlson, used an image from the Capitol Hill Occupied Protest (CHOP) in a June episode of his commentary show, painting the scene as dystopian and lawless. On its website, Fox News continued the narrative by unethically cutting out parts of photos to combine them into a manufactured version of reality.

Fox News opinion host, Tucker Carlson, used an image from the Capitol Hill Occupied Protest (CHOP) in a June episode of his commentary show, painting the scene as dystopian and lawless. On its website, Fox News continued the narrative by unethically cutting out parts of photos to combine them into a manufactured version of reality.

This narrative wasn't just crafted by Republicans, though. The portrayal of Seattle as a place of mayhem, poverty and fear has been cultivated for decades by resident moderate Democrats and local media — and now it's being laundered into a larger racist, classist attack on progressive cities nationwide.

[“What is happening to Seattle?”](#) asked a headline in The Seattle Times last year, followed by a letter from a former resident who lamented a city he “did not recognize” due to “human waste” and homeless people. [“Has Downtown Seattle Become a War Zone?”](#) *Post Alley*, a local commentary website stocked with retired journalists, asked in January. A Medium post by a man who saw the local news coverage also asked, [“What happened to Seattle?”](#) and conservative website TheBlaze chimed in last winter in a post about Seattle's “Antifa mob” with the old question, [“What's happened to Seattle?”](#)



CRAZY TOWN

Seattle helpless as armed

Fox News used a picture from protests in Minnesota and falsely claimed they were taken in Seattle for a story they labeled "Crazy Town," and ran on their website.

Fox News used a picture from protests in Minnesota and falsely claimed they were taken in Seattle for a story they labeled "Crazy Town," and ran on their website.

In the original photo, which Fox News used in a pattern of misinformation, the photo's metadata and caption clearly state that it was taken by Associated Press photojournalist John Minchillo in Minneapolis, Minnesota on Chicago Avenue on OK, sure, let's answer these loaded questions.

What happened to Seattle is that [police used excessive force](#), [killed innocent people of color](#) and [gassed nonviolent protesters](#) with impunity for decades, so people protested, and then some rioted and, as a result, they successfully pushed for the Seattle City Council to [reduce the budget by a fraction and cut pay for a few department executives](#).

What happened is that an immigrant woman of color, Kshama Sawant, [beat back the entire political establishment](#) and [Amazon's \\$1.5 million campaign](#) to become the most senior member of the city council, so now local critics — stop me if you've heard this one before — keep crying about a foreign-named [socialist who's destroying our government](#) and ["crippling" business](#).

What happened is that Seattle has been dying since Jell-O salads were *au courant*. It was about to die in 1971 when a billboard begged the last person leaving the city to ["turn out the lights,"](#) and it was gonna keel over in the '80s because of crack. What happened in the '90s was that City Attorney Mark Sidran warned that Seattle had not died — another close call — but was at death's door again. Unless the police could quash crime with new anti-vagrancy laws, he said in [a 1993 speech](#), Seattle would face "a dying retail core, where there is more criminal than commercial activity, where random senseless acts of violence become pervasive."

What happened in the 2000s, despite the rise of skyscrapers and a booming downtown, was The Seattle Times backed Councilmember Tim Burgess and the Downtown Seattle Association's agenda of ticketing ["strange"](#) panhandlers to ["reclaim a sense of order."](#) What happened soon after, when Ed Murray ran for mayor in 2013, is that he [cherry-picked data to claim crime was rising](#), and former King County Executive Ron Sims said Seattle had "lost its flash" and would ["retire like Gary, Indiana"](#) — unless Murray was elected. Despite Murray's election, KOMO TV ran an hourlong special last year called "Seattle Is Dying." KOMO's piece actually suggested jailing Seattle's sickest homeless people on an island so that they ["couldn't simply get up and leave when they wanted."](#)

What happened is that Seattle used to be perfect but has now been dying constantly for 50 years, according to the same people who keep floating a theory that Seattle can be fixed if illness and poverty become crimes.

What also happened is that a younger generation attended Seattle Public Schools with more [Vietnamese, Cambodian](#) and [East African](#) immigrants. [White kids went to schools in the Rainier Valley and Beacon Hill](#) with [Black kids who were shaken down by cops on bogus pretenses](#). And as Seattle has grown, many of us know that some of our communities are poorly represented, see that others are unfairly targeted and think the city shouldn't be run at [Rainier Club luncheons about "improv\[ing\] quality of life."](#) What happened is that, in retrospect, popular local chestnuts about "Lesser Seattle" and [the motto "Keep the Bastards Out"](#) seem frankly xenophobic. What happened is that, after Seattle's miserable history of [redlining](#), many Black residents were displaced because they [could no longer afford mushrooming annual property taxes](#).

What happened is that my former tiny Seattle apartment that cost me \$625 a month in 2003 now rents, according to a recent real estate listing, for more than \$1,500 — thereby outpacing inflation costs by more than \$7,000 a year. What happened is that the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce [tried to weaken a \\$15 an hour minimum wage bill](#), and even though the ordinance passed, a full-time worker who now makes \$15 an hour still couldn't afford rent and bills on my former apartment.

What happened was national right-wing media gulped up local market share: Sinclair bought KOMO TV and KVI Radio, Mormon church-owned Bonneville International has KIRO-FM and KTTH, and Q13 Fox has been a home for [cop-friendly](#), conservative-leaning coverage. What happened is they have spent years disseminating classist, racist talking points like “Seattle Is Dying” — even though the city is incontrovertibly rich and popular — while old, wealthy white "liberals" help prop up these ideas as fact.

What happened this summer is that Seattle residents joined a national civil rights uprising against police officers across the country who keep killing innocent Black people. Most protesters didn't break anything, and 99.99% of the city went unscathed. But as a sidebar to the ongoing demonstrations, some people broke windows, spray-painted walls and looted shops. Some hurled rocks, water bottles and fireworks at law enforcement officers clad in armor; in one instance, someone allegedly attempted to set [the East Precinct on fire](#), potentially with people inside. At the same time, Seattle police have engaged in a violent pattern of deploying pepper spray, tear gas, blast balls and aggressive arrests on largely peaceful protesters — [including by targeting medics](#). What happened was that conservatives used the pandemic for political leverage, claiming that shuttered storefronts caused by a global recession should actually be pinned on "violence" by Black Lives Matter and progressive politics in general.



People walk through Cal Anderson Park, which was part of the CHOP, June 14, 2020. The CHOP became the spark for Fox News hosts, President Trump and other right-wing strategists to paint Seattle as a warzone and the basis for a statistically-proven false argument that Democratic-run cities are seeing more crime than Republican-run cities. (Sarah Hoffman/Crosscut)

People walk through Cal Anderson Park, which was part of the CHOP, June 14, 2020. The CHOP became the spark for Fox News hosts, President Trump and other right-wing strategists to paint Seattle as a warzone and the basis for a statistically-proven false argument that Democratic-run cities are seeing more crime than Republican-run cities. (Sarah Hoffman/Crosscut)

What happened is that the hard number of crimes in Seattle has increased over the past decade, and we cannot ignore the suffering caused by violence and theft. But we also can't ignore that [Seattle's population grew by 23% in that decade](#) and the crime rate itself has dropped. When we factor in population growth, Seattle's crime rate was down last year (5,669 crimes per 100,000 people) from the rate it was in 2015 (6,104 per 100,000 people), which was lower than it had been at the start of the decade in 2010 (6,083 per 100,000 people), according to the Seattle Police Department's [crime records](#) and [population counts](#). And while crime has increased downtown, we can't ignore that the 35,000 new housing units are largely [clustered around downtown](#) and the [number of downtown residents increased by 42% in the past decade](#).

But what didn't happen in the past decades was City Hall making developers include enough [affordable units for tenants making half \(or less\) of the median income](#), while most of Seattle's [single-family neighborhoods remained largely static](#). Instead, rapacious corporations like Amazon [recruited more workers](#) and drove up housing demand, while the total number of available new homes lagged behind; prices tripled and quadrupled, and now more people must live in tents. A few years ago, the city council passed a bill to raise more money from companies to deal with homelessness, only to repeal it when [Amazon threatened to retaliate](#). Then Mayor Jenny Durkan [deployed cops to erase the visual problem](#) of homelessness, in some cases [destroying encampments during the pandemic](#).

And what happened to the Seattle Police Department is almost nothing. In the revised 2020 city budget, a handful of department executives were going to stop making more money annually than the city's few remaining journalists earn in eight years — and [Mayor Jenny Durkan vetoed it](#). When the Police Chief Carmen Best chose to quit, the mayor's cronies used the stunt to blame the council. Conservatives like [KTTH's Jason Rantz](#) tried to grandstand as social justice advocates, telling Fox News, "Welcome to Seattle, where Black Lives Matter means firing all of these Black officers and then running out the Black female police chief." What actually happened, as Nikkita Oliver pointed out last month in Crosscut, is that a Black police chief and an increasingly multiracial police force failed to prevent bad police behavior against working class communities of color. "Unfortunately, but rather predictably, the violence of SPD did not relent under Best," [wrote Oliver](#). "[Police budget cuts were] a reasonable response to a growing youth- and Black-led movement to defund armed police and invest in both Black communities and community-based public health and safety." What had also happened previously is that Durkan initially tried to block Best from becoming chief, but relented after a [backlash](#), and then helped give the police union a generous contract that [undermined previous police reforms](#).

What happened is that the type of people driving this question — residents with lovely views, nice homes, jobs as pundits, lamenting the bygone days of a Seattle past — are asking the question in a certain way: They want to know why homeless people can't just *disappear* and why politicians can't be more *polite*?

But another type of Seattleite is asking "What happened?" in a different way. People who don't work in tech, people under 40 years old, people who don't have an inheritance, and many descendants of the Great Migration and recent immigration don't wonder why we see homeless people. They don't wonder why protests keep raging. They know. They're asking why police can still beat protesters without punishment despite "police reform," why their career can't buy them a home no matter how they balance their checkbook, why their band can't break out no matter how good they are, why they have to live a three-hour round trip commute from work, why an artist can produce only until the age of 34 before accepting a soul-crushing job in marketing or real estate? They've been

wondering why the promise of Seattle panned out for old white people with money, but this new Seattle doesn't pan out for them. And it's honestly hard to fathom that the former group has become so callous to the latter.

Broadly speaking, what happened in Seattle was an uncultured, sleepy, nearly failing airplane factory town in the 1970s grew up. As it grew, City Hall empowered a rogue cop union, never demanded fair exchange from developers and big corporations and, as money flooded in, left out many of the very populations of workers who had made Seattle successful.

What's happening is this: the kids are finally shaping Seattle's conversation, and the old guard wants to Make Seattle Great Again.
Please support independent local news for all.

- [law & justice](#)

About the Authors & Contributors



Dominic Holden

Dominic Holden is a national politics reporter from Seattle, where he was News Editor of The Stranger from 2009 to 2014.



Seattle is Dying | A KOMO News Documentary

KOMO News  13M views

KOMO Anchor Eric Johnson takes an in-depth look at the impact the drug and homelessness problem is having on our city and possible...

Death Of A Cit The Portland Story ?



Bill Conerly

Senior Contributor

I connect the dots between the economy ... and business!

Follow

Jan 28, 2021, 07:30am EST

Listen to article 11 minutes



Portland, Oregon protest. (Photo by Nathan Howard/Getty Images)

GETTY IMAGES

How long does it take for a city to die? Downtowns across the country have emptied due to the pandemic, causing many stores and restaurants to close. Suburbs are doing much better, in many cases hardly touched by the recession. But in Portland, Oregon, continued violence and vandalism have

combined with high housing costs, homelessness and poor community leadership to raise the question: how long before this city dies?

Portland has been doing well for years, and current problems are not certain to end the city's life.

But without significant change, decline is certain. In many other cities, leaders stepped up to the challenge and saved their cities. That will probably happen in Portland, but there are few signs of change at this point.



Pompeii, near Naples, Italy. (Photo by ANDREAS SOLARO/AFP via Getty Images)

AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

PROMOTED

Cities can die. Death can be sudden, as with Pompeii, or gradual, as with the Mayan city of Tikal and the Jordanian city of Petra. The United States abounds with ghost towns in the mining country as well as communities left

behind by economic change. Down the road from Portland are a number of mill towns that have emptied out.

Economists tell stories about the growth of cities, usually starting with trade. Most of our old cities are on the ocean or other waterways: New York, Boston, Philadelphia. Most of the not-so-old cities are also on trading locations: New Orleans, St. Louis, San Francisco. Railroads pushed some cities forward, such as Atlanta. Although moving cargo is still important, these cities are no longer dependent on being cargo terminals.

Other cities are built on natural resources, such as access to a rich fishery or forests or minerals. Denver and Spokane come to mind.

Once cities are established, though, they often become regional trading centers. The small towns scattered around the countryside need a larger city for access to specialized goods and services. As the nation grew, so did the cities. Cities are places where people can better connect with others offering more specialized products.

[READ MORE](#) [Why A Gradual Approach To Tackling Corruption Might Make More Sense](#)

[Adam Smith pointed out](#) that the division of labor created great benefits but was limited by the size of the market: “A country carpenter deals in every sort of work that is made of wood [He] is not only a carpenter, but a joiner, a cabinet maker, and even a carver in wood, as well as a wheel-wright, a plough-wright, a cart and waggon maker.” In a small city, however, the woodworker can specialize on one type of products, such as tables and chairs, becoming far more efficient through experience and specialization. In a larger city, another woodworker can make a living providing jigs and fixtures to the many table

makers. These benefits of a large city accrue to the workers as well as the customers. Everyone is better off.

Thus cities start with a specific advantage but often grow in ways that are quite different from their original advantage.

Portland began as a place from which beaver pelts could be shipped to China, and then lumber to the California boom towns, eventually adding Oregon wheat to be shipped to Asia. Then cheap hydropower brought the aluminum industry to the region. As the city grew, however, it expanded in surprising ways. A local college student married a voltage meter to an early television screen, creating an oscilloscope and a company to make them. That company's success in attracting engineers to the city led Intel to locate its largest facility in a Portland suburb. And a local boy ran track at the University of Oregon and founded Nike to make running shoes.

Today many cities have reasons for existence quite different from their origin stories. Shoes and computer chips can be designed anywhere—at least anywhere that good designers and engineers are willing to live. If Portland had to rely on its natural advantages of shipping, lumber, agriculture and fishing, it would be a few hundred thousand people, not two and a half million.

Given its starting point and past development, what could cause such a city to die? Walking the streets of Pompei one sees the effect of sudden catastrophe on a thriving city. Portland sits atop an [active volcano field](#) and in an [earthquake zone](#). Neither are likely to kill the city, though the possibility exists.

Portland has already weathered losses to its traditional industries. Container ships seldom stop here anymore. Logging is less than half the volume as in the

1950s through 1970s, and lumber mill efficiency has reduced the labor needed by the industry even more.



View of Mount Hood in Portland, Oregon USA

GETTY

The economic base that remains depends on people wanting to be here, to engineer and design goods and services that could be created most anywhere.

People have come to the metropolitan area for the quality of life—close to mountains, beaches and deserts—but also because the city has been a vibrant, lively place, with theaters, restaurants, sports and even a few churches. Size begets size, in effect. Having been a major city, it grew more readily than if it had been a small town.

The question about the death of Portland becomes whether people will continue to want to move here. Inbound migration has been the dominant demographic feature.

Portlanders enjoy housing costs less than San Francisco or Seattle, but in a national comparison that doesn't mean much. The [metropolitan area ranks](#) 11th out of 60 major metropolitan areas. The state decided to limit urban sprawl many years ago, causing land values to be high. Much of the new construction, both single family and multifamily, is in-fill near the urban core. That has made construction costs much higher here than if new homes were built in the outer suburbs.

The quality of life has also suffered due to increased homelessness. A decade ago, one might see someone wrapped in blankets sleeping in a downtown doorway. Now the homeless have discovered inexpensive tents, some as cheap as \$25 new. Tents provide a modicum of privacy and, in a group setting, a little bit of security. The police seldom try to move homeless campers. When the Portland Timbers entered Major League Soccer back in 2011, fans could walk the quarter-mile from downtown to the stadium without seeing any homeless people. Now the fans—if games had spectators—would pass several encampments on that short stretch.

The city's dedication to high density urban housing at the expense of affordability shows no sign of changing. Well-paid engineers can afford the cost, but blue collar workers not so much.



Homeless tent near downtown Portland

GETTY

Efforts to cope with homelessness primarily consist of spending millions on “affordable housing,” which paradoxically costs more to build than regular housing. That’s because union wages must be paid at affordable housing projects, but otherwise developers use much cheaper non-union workers. Some of the money earmarked for affordable housing buys existing apartment houses, making no net addition to the supply of residences. Few people here imagine that a spate of new construction in outlying farmland would make existing housing affordable through plain old supply and demand.

Riots emerged on top of expensive housing and homelessness. As in most large cities, peaceful protests grew out of the George Floyd killing. As in a number of cities, some of the protestors turned violent. What’s unique in Portland, though, is the continued violence. The antifa mobs regularly commit vandalism and occasionally commit [arson on occupied buildings](#) or [assault reporters](#). Local journalist [Andy Ngo](#), himself an antifa assault victim, regularly documents the Portland riots.

Was this the straw that will break the camel’s back? So far that’s unlikely but possible. For most area residents, the riots are merely a straw. Rioters occasionally move outside the central city into the suburbs, but not too often. Portland’s county, Multnomah, has a [district attorney who declines to prosecute](#) most riot-related arrests. The other counties in the metropolitan area, however, take a much harder line. Suburban police departments are less hamstrung than the Portland Police Bureau, which is understaffed due to retirements and quits. Portland police are closing out 911 calls without ever contacting those in distress, [according to the Oregonian](#) newspaper, but surrounding police departments are doing much better.

With the police struggling to handle the riots, shootings accelerated in 2020, running more than double 2019's level. More neighborhood shootings and ignored 911 calls make all residents feel vulnerable. Despite this undercurrent, though, the overwhelming majority of residents go about their lives normally, or what passes for normally in a pandemic.

Reputation may be Portland's greatest damage. Coverage by newspapers, television and current affairs podcasts has been extensive, both across the country and worldwide. This is critical given that the area's growth comes from in-migrants, mostly from other states in the U.S. Real estate developers and investors have significantly [downgraded their attitudes](#) about Portland real estate.

Most cities that die felt economic change. Portland has done well in this regard. New industries rose, replacing the old industries, thanks to the migration of bright and well-educated young adults. Now, however, past policy to restrict housing has combined with lack of civic leadership to provoke further problems. Can one die from shooting oneself in the foot? Yes, if the wound goes untreated. Portland has shot itself in the foot. Most likely, the people of the city will come around and seek treatment. But if they don't, the wound will prove fatal.

Follow me on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#). Check out my [website](#).



Bill Conerly

Follow

I decided to become an economist at age 16, but I also started reading my grandmother's used copies of Forbes.

... Read More

- [Editorial Standards](#)
- [Reprints & Permissions](#)

• Print



Portland neighbors beg for help as homeless camp takes root

KOIN 6  2.1M views

Portland neighbors beg for help as homeless camp takes root
Subscribe to KOIN 6's YouTube channel:...



Go inside 24 hours of Portland's homeless crisis | 'One Day'...



KGW News  1.2M views

On April 21, 2022 teams of journalists from KGW News set out to chronicle Portland's response to the homeless crisis over a single...

³[Seaside sets course to tackle homelessness at the Oregon Coast](#)
When it comes to the homelessness, the spotlight is often on Portland, but smaller towns across the state are grappling with similar issues.



Author: Tim Gordon

Published: 7:19 PM PST February 23, 2022

Updated: 7:37 PM PST February 23, 2022

SEASIDE, Ore. — Looking out over the Oregon Coast at Seaside, it's clear why people like to visit. But because of a severe lack of affordable housing, few can actually live there.

“Even for the people who want to get jobs here, we don't have enough homes,” said Seaside City Councilor Tita Montero.

[Seaside](#) depends on tourism to keep its economy afloat. At the same time, like many other Oregon cities, it is also grappling with [increasing homelessness](#) in the community — sometimes right out on the beach.

City leaders say it requires a balance to deal with a population that needs help, but also to meet homeowners needs and not hurt the economy.

“It's really looking after people who are houseless but also taking care of residents who have homes here and are often impacted,” said Seaside Mayor Jay Barber.

With the mayor's support, Montero is leading Seaside's effort to make things better, after city leaders made homelessness a priority in 2021.

“We started off with, what are the needs of all these different groups of people?” Montero said. “What are the needs of city workers, what are the needs of the people who own houses here? What are the needs of the people who are homeless?”

³<https://www.kgw.com/article/news/local/homeless/seaside-homeless-crisis-oregon-coast/283-c5f6bbc2-e38e-4b72-9eae-f527cf787845>

Since last May, city leaders have held a half-dozen community forums. After that, Montero formed a “think tank” made up of a variety of community members, officials and professionals. It helped the city form seven key strategies, ranging from creating a homeless warming shelter to adding liaisons to building transitional and permanent affordable housing.

Some strategies are already working.

“I think what happens in a larger city is the bureaucracy is so big. It's difficult to have those kind of ground-level [efforts], kind of ‘How can we solve this together?’” said Barber. “That's really what we're working toward.”

In some ways, homelessness looks different at the coast than in Portland. There are more small camps on the outskirts of Seaside, with many hidden in the woods or at the ends of otherwise quiet streets. But numbers paint a different picture.

RELATED: [Vancouver is facing a homeless crisis](#)

“Clatsop County has the highest number of homeless individuals per capita in rural Oregon. So, we do have an issue,” said Viviana Matthews, Executive Director of [Clatsop Community Action](#). The non-profit organization spends most of its time helping keep people from becoming homeless.

The most recent point-in-time homeless count in 2019 found Clatsop County had 894 homeless people living there, a rate of 22.7 per 1,000 people.

[The Helping Hands warming shelter](#), which opened in January, is part of the strategy to help the unsheltered. Next, the plan is to have the same space become a navigation and resource center in the non-winter months.

Cheryl Paul is one of CCA’s two new homeless liaisons who make connections on the homeless community.

“Sometimes it's just a little as a pair of socks, but ultimately getting to know them taking care of small needs, with the goal in mind to work towards finding housing, and then the steps it takes to get to housing,” said Paul.

Not all homelessness is hidden in the woods. Just north of downtown Seaside there is a lot full of car and RV camping. And to the frustration of nearby residents, it's been going on for a while.

It was about a year-and-a-half ago, Montero said, that homeless people in old RV's started parking and camping long-term along the river on Necanicum Drive. That was not allowed, and signs went up — then some of the campers ended up moving into a city-owned lot across the street.

RELATED: [Mayor Wheeler extends camping ban along Portland's high-crash corridors](#)

City leaders know it cannot last forever, but one of the challenges for this small city is finding a place for a sanctioned and managed car park camp somewhere else.

“We have so little land that we need to be working with private landowners. We're in some discussions with some private landowners hoping to get some land to be used for managed carparks,” said Montero.

In the meantime, Seaside's police chief has added "homeless liaison" to the duties of the community service officer, and the city is reworking its camping ordinance. The goal is to give police more defined rules for moving people on, while offering alternatives for where to go.

Police Chief David Ham said that's an important start, given changes imposed at the state and federal level.

“The problem for Seaside — and some of our residents in the community who are complaining about this — is the fact that that we haven't really had any concrete policy and ordinances that are in effect that we feel that we can act on,” said Ham.

There are certainly differences from small cities to large. Seaside's volunteer city hall leadership is finding that out, as it finds its way through its homeless crisis.

“The wheels of government move slowly and we're never going to be fast enough for a lot of people,” said Montero.

“We're trying to solve this with the kinds of resources and time that we have, but it is a challenge. We are not going to solve it, but we will be able to help make things better,” said Barber. "That's our plan."



Seaside grapples with high rates of homelessness on the Oregon...

KGW News  248K views

Clatsop County has the highest rate of homeless individuals per capita in rural Oregon. City leaders in Seaside are making tackling...

Ashland ⁴Couch surfing



In Ashland, people wait in their cars or “couch surf.”

Thiemens defined couch surfing as spending a few days in a friend’s apartment and then moving in to a family’s house or garage for another few days or weeks. Some of them also end up in area hotels or motels for a week or two before moving on to something more permanent.

The problem with that definition is that it doesn’t gel with the HUD’s definition of a “literally homeless” person, said Amber Lester, the Housing Program Manager at Appleseed Community Mental Health Center.

This is how the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines "literally homeless."

On paper, therefore, Ashland County doesn’t have a homeless problem.

“Homelessness in Ashland County definitely looks different than what it does in other counties. Ours are not sleeping in the streets. But they’re there,” Lester said.

Lester said Appleseed has a waiting list of its own.

“From July 2021 to present time, I have eight people in their cars supposedly,” Lester said. “A lot of times these people are falling off the radar by the time I get to them on the waiting list.”

⁴https://www.ashlandsource.com/solutions/ashland-countys-hidden-homeless-problem/article_b4e5b552-8535-11ec-a31a-833a724d85bb.html

She said four years ago people waited for around 30 days. Now, people are waiting an average of six months.

Appleseed helps people with their first month of rent or a deposit if they are considered literally homeless. Its clients find permanent housing in apartments such as Union Lofts, Montgomery Crossing, Ashland Village Apartments or the Essex House.

“These places have huge waiting lists,” Thiemens, with ACCESS, said. “So where do you go in the meantime? Well, you couch surf, you hang out at Goasis, Walmart. You live in your car, the parks.”

The lack of affordable housing, along with a dwindling number of churches able to offer shelter, prompted ACCESS in 2016 to use some donated apartments to serve as emergency shelter and transitional housing.

In total, ACCESS has four, one-bedroom shelter apartments and another two transitional apartments. One of the transitional spaces has two bedrooms and the other has only one bedroom.

The average stay for ACCESS clients in a shelter apartment is 45 days, Thiemens said. In a transitional apartment, the average stay is 68 days, she said. It has helped the homeless issue, but there are limitations.

“We are just a tiny Band-Aid. Think of the tiniest Band-Aid — that’s what our help for homeless looks like in Ashland County,” Thiemens said.

Kyser, Thiemens and Lester acknowledged Ashland County has a homeless problem — and the problem is growing. They each have ideas on how to best solve it.

Kyser, for example, thinks part of the solution is establishing more programs like ACCESS, Safe Haven and Appleseed.

Lester and Thiemens both think Ashland County needs more affordable housing — maybe even a small shelter.

The man police helped at Goasis on that cold January night ended up getting a ride halfway to Wooster, where he lived, by an Ashland police officer. The officer was met by a Wooster police officer in New Pittsburg, who then transported him to his apartment.

Had that happened prior to November 2017, the man might have been able to secure a hotel room for the night under a program that allowed police to give homeless people a voucher that covered the cost for a night.

The program, according to Ashland Police Chief Dave Lay, was funded through the Kroc Center. The last voucher issued, however, was November 2017, Lay said.

“We’ve thought about wanting to bring that back, but the question remains — where does the funding come from?” he said.

So ... what to do?

The issue of homelessness is complex. The solution is not clear cut.

A homeless shelter, for example, might provide someone with a place to stay for emergencies — but shelters, by design, are not permanent.

“We don’t need a giant homeless shelter,” Thiemens, with ACCESS, said. “But we do need something for that emergency.”

Thiemens referenced “Housing First,” an approach that relies on getting people into a stable shelter before addressing mental health concerns, substance abuse issue or other needs.

"You get people in housing, then you address their issues. Well, that’s well and good if you have subsidized housing available. We don’t have very much of that at all. Everything here is owned by private landlords,” Thiemens said.

"We need more transitional apartments, for people to be sheltered and gain stability in order to transition to affordable housing.”

Although Housing First has been touted to essentially eradicate homelessness, the problem with it is cost.

The state of Utah, which served as one of the country's first state-funded Housing First models in 2005, is experiencing rising costs firsthand.

An audit performed in November by the state’s legislators showed a desire from lawmakers to “emphasize efforts to promote self-sufficiency” instead of allocating millions into the model.

Affordable housing seems to be a viable option, but only if developers find it financially feasible or as a wise investment, Thiemens said. The average rent costs \$640 a month in Ashland, according to Apartment Guide.

Thiemens said the fair market rate in the county, for a two-bedroom apartment, is \$743.

“Think about how much money you need to bring home to afford that,” she said, noting it becomes more of a strain when considering the cost of child care and transportation.

If people who are experiencing homelessness don't also acquire the skills needed to secure stability — personal finance, job-related skills, community — social workers such as Thiemens fear the person could fall right back into sleeping on the streets, their cars or friends' couches.

That's why ACCESS, a faith-based organization, offers transitional or temporary housing under conditions: get a job, pay for rent, establish a community.

The goal, Thiemens said, is to develop skills and relationships that allow people to transition to self-sufficiency and a more stable future.

More programming and resources could help alleviate the existing organizations who feel overwhelmed, Kyser said.

"Ashland County could use more resources like ACCESS and others," she said, noting the [closure of the Pump House](#) at the end of 2017 as a blow to the effort to shelter homeless men.

Kyser says the first step toward a solution to homelessness, at least in Ashland County, is simply to sit down at a roundtable to fully understand the situation before committing to long-term fixes.

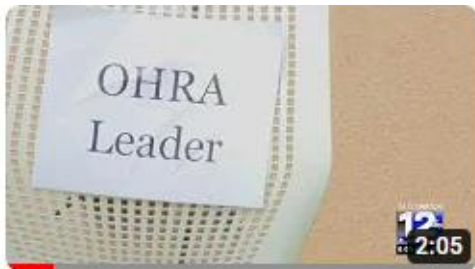
A group of stakeholders, called the Homeless Coalition, has worked since at least 2008 to address challenges in the area.

The next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 9 and will gather social workers like Kyser and others to discuss the ongoing effort to curb homelessness. Kyser believes the Ashland area is in a unique position in history to make lasting changes.

"So let's sit down at the table, understand the need," she said. "From there, we can talk about what can we do."

"Are there other agencies that can provide assistance? It takes a team of us to dig down deep and talk about this urgent need."

For those interested, the meeting is open to the public. For information on how to join the virtual meeting, contact Appleseed's Jerry Strausbaugh at jstrasbaugh@appleseedcmhc.org



Ashland group receives \$4.2 million grant to convert motel in...

NewsWatch 12 • 68 views

Options for Helping Residents of Ashland is the first Oregon group to receive a 'Project Turnkey' grant from the state in order to found a...



'Scared to death': What it's like being homeless in rural Oregon

KOIN 6 • 1.7K views

Many people experiencing homelessness cite cost of rent and unemployment as the main reasons they are on the street. Rural...



HOPE VILLAGE in Medford, OR: a Transitional Tiny House Village...

Respectful Revolution • 38K views

Tiny houses as an affordable housing solution to homelessness is an idea that's most definitely catching on all around the U.S.. HOPE...

Medford council tallies its efforts to aid homeless people

By Damian Mann

Oct 16, 2022 12:30 AM

AA



Homeless people hang out at the urban campground in Medford, which costs an estimated \$2.4 million annually to operate. [Mail Tribune / file photo]

⁵Medford has spent almost \$18 million over the past three years to curb homelessness, but the city has seen a spike in substance abuse and mental health disorders.

⁵ <https://www.mailtribune.com/top-stories/2022/10/16/medford-council-tallies-its-efforts-to-aid-homeless-people/>

Each year since 2020, the city has increased the money it has devoted to deal with homelessness, which continues to place a strain on residents, businesses and emergency services.

“We have surpassed our goals and frankly, in my opinion, what our expectations were on having an impact on the homeless population through that plan,” said Councilor Eric Stark.

The City Council Thursday night reviewed its Homeless System Action Plan, which has led to investment in various types of housing, diversion and prevention programs, as well as development of funding sources.

In 2018, a city survey found 609 adults who lived on the streets, with 116 veterans and 108 people in families.

From 2020 to 2022, the city has seen a 15% decline in chronic homelessness, according to Angela Durant, the city’s principal planner for housing and urban development.

But during the same period, the city has seen a 63% increase in homelessness among those with severe mental illness.

A 93% spike has been seen in people with substance abuse problems.

The city has worked with local nonprofits, including Rogue Retreat, to offer a variety of housing, such as the urban campground, a tiny house village and a Navigation Center.

Many of the properties where these facilities are located are owned by the city.

The Navigation Center, which will house 100 people a night, cost almost \$7 million. Rogue Retreat manages the shelter portion.

To address the spike in mental health and substance abuse, other partners are preparing a plan to deal with those issues at the Navigation Center.

The city is looking at medical crisis housing and has recently partnered with Jackson County for a mobile crisis unit.

Durant said the city is partnering with 22 behavioral health providers to set up a framework to deal with some of the more difficult mental health and substance abuse issues.

An almost \$4 million effort through Project Turnkey to transform the Redwood Inn into 47 small apartments has stalled, awaiting additional dollars to complete all the units. An additional state grant of \$450,000 is in the pipeline for this project.

One of the goals for the motel is to create decompression units to help those with mental health or substance abuse. Other units would be available for permanent supportive housing.

Another project being developed over the next two years would provide 304 housing units for families, seniors, medically fragile individuals and agricultural workers.

Durant said the city will continue to look at securing funding to help operate the urban campground, which costs an estimated \$2.4 million annually. The city has found a permanent location for the facility off West McAndrews Road, and the urban campground will move from its temporary location off Biddle Road to the new location in June 2023.

Surprised at the expense to operate the urban campground, Councilor Alex Poythress said, “It seemed like it was a lower expected cost.”

Rogue Retreat, which operates the urban campground, is working on developing the actual cost to operate the campground, which has grown from about 25 beds a night to 125 now.

When it started operating the campground, Rogue Retreat had grants that helped fund the operational costs, but many of those have since dried up.

Local health care providers have shown a willingness to partner with the city to provide medical housing units, which will help alleviate emergency room visits.

The city has an ongoing effort to identify city-owned properties that could be used to shelter the homeless. So far, 16 properties have been identified.

To help identify and secure properties, the city had been looking at a community housing foundation.

Durant said the city has since reevaluated this idea and is now working with other partners that have greater expertise, including the Northwest Community Housing Foundation and Proud Ground.

Reach freelance writer Damian Mann at dmannnews@gmail.com

Why San Francisco Is Nearly The Most Crime-Ridden City In The US⁶



San Franciscans face about a 1-in-16 chance each year of being a victim of property or violent crime, which makes the city more dangerous than 98 percent of US cities, both small and large. To put this in perspective, Compton, California, the infamous home of drug gang turf wars, and which today remains more dangerous than 90 percent of all US cities, is almost twice as safe as San Francisco.

Tuesday, November 9, 2021 3 min readBy: Lee Ohanian

By: Lee Ohanian

Who would have thought that San Francisco would have twice the crime rate of Compton, the latter still a major clearing house for cocaine distribution? This seeming impossibility is what happens when city governance fails spectacularly on just about every important dimension. Welcome to the world of crime in San Francisco, why it is so bad, and why it won't get better.

Now, it is important to note that interpreting crime statistics is difficult, as some crime may be very concentrated in a few neighborhoods, with many other neighborhoods being safe; and some incidents are small, such as minor property crimes, while others are horrific, including violent crime. But taking note of these interpretation challenges doesn't change the point that San Francisco is a dangerous city. Consider Presidio Heights, perhaps the most expensive zip code in the United States. Presidio Heights is the chichi neighborhood that is home to Nancy Pelosi, best-selling novelist Danielle Steele, and several members of the Getty family, who funded some of Governor Gavin Newsom's private businesses.

How expensive? Well, first check out what \$2.5 buys you. That is \$2.5 million, of course. As the brokers say, if you don't know that, then don't bother them. But we can still be online lookie-loos. Take a gander.

This home has about 1,600 square feet, with three bedrooms and two bathrooms. There is no listing for lot square footage, but since this two-level home shares common exterior walls with its neighbors (including what appears to be a commercial building on one side), I am guessing that you would own only about 1,000 square feet or so of terra firma. Views? Don't expect to see the Golden Gate at the \$2.5 million price point. But

⁶ <https://www.hoover.org/research/why-san-francisco-nearly-most-crime-ridden-city-us>

you will see plenty of your neighbors when you gaze out the windows. Backyard? Don't expect one. Just be happy that you get to live in Presidio Heights at the bargain price of \$2.5.

And it turns out, while over-the-top wealth can buy you many things, it doesn't buy a safe neighborhood. The incidence of violent crime is still more [than twice as high in Presidio Heights as the US average](#). It is also high compared to other tony California neighborhoods, such as Montecito, California, part-time home of Oprah Winfrey and Ellen DeGeneres, where the likelihood of assault and robbery is about one-third as low as in Presidio Heights.

Similarly, while [Presidio Heights receives an overall score of "C" for crime](#) from another neighborhood evaluation study, [Montecito receives an "A+"](#), and [Bel Air](#) and [Pacific Palisades](#), two of the most expensive neighborhoods in Los Angeles, receive grades of A+ and A-, respectively.

San Francisco's unacceptable crime track record is implicitly a choice that the city has made, which is all the more surprising when the city spends about \$14,000 per San Franciscan per year on government services, about 40 percent higher than New York city's profligate budget.

One important deficiency is too small of a police force. New York's police force per resident is nearly twice that of San Francisco, and New York is a much safer city. Another important deficiency is a less-than-productive relationship between the police and the city's district attorney, Chesa Boudin, an extremely progressive prosecutor, who some consider to still have the mindset of his days as an SF public defender. Boudin is notable in that he is the child of a mom and dad convicted for first-degree murder in the killing of two police officers during the robbery of a Brinks truck about 40 years ago.

This didn't get Boudin and the police off to the best start, and their relationship has gone further south, with Boudin criticizing police for not clearing more crimes. Boudin himself has been widely criticized for failing to prosecute obvious cases, including a person who had been arrested multiple times over the previous year, who had a history of felony convictions, and [who ultimately killed two women while driving a stolen car after drinking and using methamphetamine](#).

Boudin chose not to prosecute, and forwarded the case to the parole department. The charges? Two counts of voluntary manslaughter, possession of a stolen vehicle, leaving the scene of an accident, burglary, driving while under the influence of alcohol and drugs, driving while addicted to drugs, possessing a gun and a large-capacity ammunition magazine, and violating the terms of parole. He had also been arrested just prior to the crash on charges including possession of methamphetamine and car theft.

Boudin defended his decision by indicating that the parole department would have a much better chance at stopping the cycle of crime for these types of individuals: "We

evaluated the facts, the strength of the case and the charges, and decided it was more likely that he would be held accountable through parole.”

But even after the killing of the two women, Boudin did not indicate that he made a mistake in not prosecuting the driver. Rather he focused on changing the parole system to ensure that criminals received the “supervision and structure that are needed.” Really? I wonder how this made the families of the two victims killed feel.

Note also that drug addiction was involved, and this is the 800-pound gorilla in the room. San Francisco politicians have chosen to accept drug use in the city, along with the crime, mental illness, and homelessness that accompany drug abuse. And it is just not acceptance of drug abuse. Drug abuse is facilitated by providing clean needles for addicts, which results in used hypodermic needles being disposed of everywhere, and by tacitly allowing several neighborhoods to become de facto open-air drug markets. And drug users and drug sellers have flocked to San Francisco, largely because they know that their trade is acceptable.

There are now many more drug users in the city than high school students. Roughly 1,000 addicts will die this year from an overdose, and almost certainly more than 1,000 new users will replace them. Sadly, none of this will change, not until San Franciscans demand this change. And if it hasn’t happened yet, I don’t know when it will.



A city in crisis: How fentanyl devastated San Francisco - BBC...

BBC News 4M views

More people died of drug overdoses than of Covid in San Francisco over a one year period. Why has one of the richest cities in the world...



The end of SAN FRANCISCO?

Uptin 83K views

Crime has surged and the city has emptied out, so will the city full of big dreams ever be the same? Up Your Knowledge! Facebook:...

Venice residents businesses fed up with homeless problem 'It's disgusting'



By [Chelsea Edwards](#)

Published October 4, 2022

[Venice](#)

[FOX 11](#)

Venice homeless problem frustrating residents, businesses

The homeless problem in the Venice community has left people calling the area "lawless."

LOS ANGELES - Residents and business owners in Los Angeles' Venice neighborhood say they are fed up and tired of the homeless crisis plaguing the city.

Several homeless people have been blamed for robberies, violent encounters and even a fire that destroyed multiple homes.

No More Tingling|

[Sponsored](#)

[Learn More](#)

Security cameras caught a violent encounter between two homeless people Tuesday morning. Police were called to the Venice Pier around 6:30 a.m. for reports of an assault. Witnesses said a naked homeless man was beating and dragging a homeless woman. When officers arrived on scene, they had to use a Taser to subdue the man and take him into custody.

On Sunday night, multiple homes along the Venice canals were destroyed in a massive fire. Community members and witnesses are blaming the homeless population.

One man told FOX 11 he saw several homeless people coming and going out of the building next door, which was under construction. He didn't see the fire being lit, but saw it burning in the garage around 10:30 p.m. Sunday.

RELATED: Neighbors blame homeless for Venice Canals fire that destroyed multiple homes

"It's disgusting. And it's not at all surprising. We've seen it time and time again. It's very frustrating. Because you're watching it, feeling that it's happening as you're watching that on the screen, and you can't do anything about it, because obviously it's already taken place and you can't protect the person that's been hit or stabbed or shot. And again, it's in a long line of these things right in our area. Venice Beach has been largely the epicenter for this stuff over the last year and half to two years," said Darrell Preston, who owns several businesses in Venice.

His security cameras caught that violent encounter Tuesday morning.

PREVIOUS COVERAGE:

- **Homeless in Venice: Unhoused ordered to vacate beach, LAPD to enforce camping ban**
- **Homeless man recorded in alleged Venice attack: 'I would like to go to jail. I live outside'**
- **Visible changes on Venice Beach Boardwalk after deadline to remove homeless encampments**

He also said one of his businesses was robbed Monday morning by a homeless man who stole an expensive bottle of Mezcal. Preston told FOX 11 that he saw that same man Tuesday morning drinking from that bottle and stumbling around.

The homeless population along costal cities has exploded over the past few years. **Councilman Mike Bonin**, who represents District 11, which includes Venice, has been trying to work and fix the homeless crisis there. He is now stepping down and two attorneys are running in the race.. **Traci Park and Erin Darling.**

LA City Council candidate Traci Park discusses how to combat homeless issue

Traci Park is one of two candidates looking to take District 11 seat in the November election.


Park, who joined FOX 11 Special report, says if she was elected she would implement shorter-term emergency solutions to get people into safe settings and get them help. She would set up safe camping and parking locations and then move to shelter options.

"This is a public health and safety crisis that we have on our hands and the patchworks of encampments we have all over Venice and the entire Westside are not working for anyone, our communities, our schools, our local businesses," Park said.



Is Venice Beach Still Paradise? (Homeless Takeover?) us

476K views · 1 year ago

 Peter Santenello

Venice Beach is one of the most iconic and well-known places in the USA. Does it have the same vibe as pre-pandemic times

4K CC

Santa Ana provides new data that Orange County is ‘dumping’ homeless



“Do you have stats for me?” Judge David Carter asked in February. Santa Ana is back with those stats.



A woman sleeps on the sidewalk on Fourth Street in Santa Ana, on Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2020, a half-block away from the federal courthouse where homelessness in the city was the topic of a hearing in a lawsuit Santa Ana filed against the county. (Photo by Theresa Walker, Orange County Register/SCNG)

By **ROXANA KOPETMAN** | rkopetman@scng.com | Orange County Register

PUBLISHED: September 1, 2020 at 6:49 p.m. | UPDATED: September 3, 2020 at 5:11 p.m.

Much of Orange County is transporting homeless people into Santa Ana, placing an unfair burden on that city to address the county’s homelessness crisis, city officials allege in court documents filed Monday.

The filing marks the city's latest effort seeking legal relief over this issue. And this time, officials have some numbers and additional data that they hope will prove their point that many other cities in the county are "dumping" their homeless in Santa Ana.

"We now have better evidence that the county did not stop this practice. It's just being done in other ways," Santa Ana City Manager Kristine Ridge said.

Santa Ana officials and residents have long complained that they've become a dumping ground for the homeless.

In January, the city filed a lawsuit [against the county and three cities in south county](#). They soon [dropped Dana Point, San Clemente and San Juan Capistrano from the lawsuit](#), but pushed forward against Orange County.

In February, U.S. District Court Judge David O. Carter indicated he needed more data to make a ruling. He asked Santa Ana officials: "[Do you have some stats for me?](#)" At the time, lawyers for Santa Ana did not. Carter denied the city's request for an injunction, saying he would reconsider if the city came back with specific data.

The city is back with those numbers via an amended complaint filed Monday in U.S. District Court.

Local police agencies throughout parts of the county are arresting homeless people in their cities "as a means of reducing their homeless populations," the complaint alleges. The arrested homeless are brought to the county's Intake Release Center in Santa Ana, where they are processed and released instead of being transported back to their own cities.

Some cities, such as Irvine and Los Alamitos, do not track those arrests, according to the lawsuit. But the cities that do track those arrests offer a window into how many people are being brought from other cities to Santa Ana.

Since July 23, 2019, that's ranged from 11 people arrested in La Habra to 286 arrested in Laguna Beach. People also have been transferred into Santa Ana from Brea, Buena Park, Cypress, La Palma and Placentia, according to the lawsuit.

UPDATE: [Santa Ana removes Laguna Beach from homeless lawsuit; changes claims against Brea, La Palma](#)

Santa Ana officials accuse Orange County of being in violation of an agreement stemming from a lawsuit known as the Orange County Catholic Worker case, which has led to new homeless shelters, opened or planned, in about a dozen Orange County cities and at least two neighboring communities in Los Angeles County.

Under the agreement, homeless people would not be transported to shelters outside their immediate region, known as service planning areas. But Ridge said that's still happening.

The lawsuit seeks a court order prohibiting the county from transporting homeless people across their own service planning area, among other things.

Orange County Board of Supervisor Andrew Do, in an e-mailed statement Tuesday, called the allegations "completely groundless" and a "political stunt."

Do did not reply to specific questions about allegations in the lawsuit.

RELATED LINKS

- **Federal judge says 'no,' for now, to Santa Ana's homeless lawsuit against the county**
 - **Santa Ana sues Orange County, Dana Point, San Clemente and San Juan Capistrano over homeless**
 - **Santa Ana drops Dana Point, San Clemente, San Juan Capistrano from its homeless-related lawsuit**
 - **Faced with a planned homeless shelter near schools, Santa Ana residents demand 'no more shelters'**
-
- **Santa Ana will replace temporary Link homeless shelter with something permanent**
Santa Ana officials said transfers from other communities have led to a disproportionate number of homeless people in their city. From 2017 to 2019, homelessness in Orange County increased by 43 %; but in Santa Ana, homelessness increased by 77 %, according to the lawsuit. As of April 2019, more than 25 % of the county's homeless lived in Santa Ana.

"This is by far the largest number of individuals experiencing homelessness of any city in Orange County, even though Santa Ana is one of the County's poorest, most diverse cities, least able to address the impact of homelessness," the lawsuit states.

The strain of hosting so many homeless touches many people in Santa Ana.

"It's having a significant negative impact on their quality of life," Ridge said. "It's not only the residents but the small business owners."

Santa Ana officials said the pandemic worsened the problem after the county implemented "onerous" testing requirements for people seeking to use the county-run shelter known as The Courtyard in Santa Ana. That testing, according to the lawsuit, has boosted homelessness in the city because people who can't get into the shelter typically "remain in the area."

And while capacity at The Courtyard has decreased because of the pandemic, county officials have failed to provide more beds elsewhere, according to the lawsuit.

In the lawsuit, Santa Ana officials are asking the county to ease-up on the entry requirements at The Courtyard and provide other emergency shelters outside of Santa Ana. The lawsuit also asks for the county to transport recently-released jail inmates back to their original cities.

RELATED ARTICLES

- **Garden Grove, Fountain Valley, Westminster plan to open a new homeless shelter**

- **Gov. Gavin Newsom visits to help open new hub for north Orange County homeless services**



Santa Ana Cracks Down On Homeless Encampment

CBS Los Angeles 2.9K views

The encampment was on the plaza next to the Orange County Superior Courthouse. Jeff Michael reports.

Life Of a Homeless

There is no “average” life of a person experiencing homelessness. Life on the street is as varied and complex as life anywhere, and an individual's experience of homelessness can be a product of their age, health, relationship and employment status, and many other factors.

What is the life of a homeless person like?



⁷Now homeless, you spend all day looking for hot meals, a place to sit without being told to “move on,” somewhere to take care of bathroom needs and a dry quiet warm space to sleep. There are no safe places to store belongings. **Opportunities become elusive.** Oct 1, 2018

What do the homeless do all day?



⁸Everything that housed people could do just by walking into another room of their house usually requires homeless people to travel several miles. Between **showering, eating, working, sleeping, using the bathroom, and being told to move along**, you could easily be on your feet all day. Jul 2, 2019

⁷ <https://www.streetsensemedia.org/article/how-does-it-feel-to-be-homeless/#.Y4HzIHbMLrc>

⁸ <https://invisiblepeople.tv/what-do-homeless-people-do-all-day-anyway/>

What is the hardest thing about being homeless?



⁹"It is **hard sleeping through the night without being murdered or sexually assaulted**, but once you get into a refuge you have other problems. "When you have a bed it doesn't necessarily mean you have a life. And when you have a refuge spot, it doesn't mean everything is solved. Apr 17, 2018

What does being homeless do to the brain?



¹⁰Researchers surveyed 298 adults living on Denver streets, finding that **68 percent reported experiencing some form of severe mental illness**—the most common diagnoses were post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and schizophrenia. The number rose to 89 percent among those who had been homeless for over three years. Jan 12, 2022

What are the 4 types of homelessness?



¹¹**What are the four types of homelessness?**

- Transitional Homelessness. There is a popular misconception that homelessness is a chronic condition. ...
- Episodic Homelessness. ...
- Chronic Homelessness. ...
- Hidden Homelessness.

⁹ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/you-can-see-it-in-their-eyes-the-hardest-thing-about-being-homeless-20180417-p4za5d.html>

¹⁰ <https://rednoseday.org/news/what-are-four-types-homelessness>

¹¹

Should you make eye contact with homeless?



¹²Before friendship, before conversation, before anything else, **the very first step on the road to understanding is eye contact.** Allowing the other person to be seen and allowing yourself to truly see them is where it all starts. So, the next time you see a homeless person, resist the urge to ignore them.

What Happens When You Avert Your Eyes From the Homeless

¹³

There's a German phrase some psychologists use to describe the dehumanizing feeling that results from avoiding eye contact: "Wie Luft behandeln." It means: "to be looked at as though air."

Michael Gonzalez is familiar with that feeling. He experienced street homelessness for about three years starting in 2010, and he remembers that sensation of going unacknowledged, being looked through, like he wasn't even there.

"It hurts. In the beginning it hurts," Gonzalez said. "And then I think after a while it just started to annoy me. And then it angered me, and then it disgusted me. And then at some point it's like, you just get used to it."

[We The Commuters](#) is dedicating the next few weeks to reporting on homelessness and our transit system. When we put out a commuter survey several months ago, lots of people mentioned homelessness in their responses and asked for more coverage of the increased presence of people taking shelter in the subways.

¹² <https://www.muindifoundation.org/making-eye-contact-with-homeless-people-is-important/>

¹³ <https://gothamist.com/news/what-happens-when-yo...>

A lot of your comments showed a struggle with selfishness and humanity:

"I don't go more than a few hours in New York without seeing someone living in desperation in the subways. It makes me feel guilty about all the resources I have in my life, but it also feels like a social issue we should be addressing as a community."

What ethnicity is the most homeless?

black

¹⁴Racial minorities experience homelessness at a disproportionate rate. For example, **black or African Americans** make up 13% of the general population but 40% of the homeless population. Indigenous people across the country continue to experience homelessness at even higher rates. Jan 21, 2022

'Through Our Eyes' camera project showcases homeless ...

<https://www.wltx.com> > article > news > local > through...

¹⁵Nov 3, 2021 — The "Through Our Eyes" camera project gives 100 cameras people experiencing **homelessness** and allows them to show what they see in their ...

What is the average life expectancy of a homeless person?



¹⁶People who are homeless have roughly the same life expectancy as a resident of the United States in 1910. Today, overall life expectancy in the U.S. is **78.7 years**, according to the World Bank. “There are too many, too young, and they're preventable,” said Paul Lewis with the Multnomah County Health Department. Jan 8, 2020

¹⁴ <https://my.neighbor.org/demographics-statistics-homelessness/>

¹⁵ [Through Our Eyes' camera project showcases homeless humanity | wltx.com](https://www.wltx.com)

¹⁶ <https://www.streetsensemedia.org/article/there-are-literally-thousands-of-people-dying-homeless-on-the-streets-of-america/#.Y4H-THbMLrc>

Causes

THE CHALLENGE



¹⁷The facts about homelessness

Once a year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that each Continuum of Care conducts a Point-in-Time (PIT) count of people experiencing homelessness. The January 2021 PIT Count was severely disrupted due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. In 2021, only 226 out of 383 (59%) Continuums of Care conducted a complete or partial count of unsheltered homelessness. In fact, almost the entire state of California (11.9% of the US population) did not conduct a count of their unsheltered homeless population.

These are a few of the reasons that the 2021 PIT Count provides a severely inaccurate and more limited snapshot of the state of homelessness throughout the United States. While we think it is important to share the 2021 PIT data, we believe it is also important to keep the 2020 PIT data on our website as it may be a more accurate reflection of the picture of homelessness within the United States.

What we do know is that COVID-19 has substantially impacted our most vulnerable neighbors - its economic impacts continue to amplify housing affordability and the economic drivers of homelessness.

According to HUD over 326,000 people were experiencing sheltered homelessness, either staying in emergency shelters, hotel rooms or safe havens in 2021. This number is likely artificially low, due to people avoiding group shelters because of COVID-19. This figure does not capture the number of people who are sleeping in places not intended for human habitation.

For comparison according to HUD, in 2020 580,466 people in the United States experienced homelessness on any given night. That is a nearly 2.2% increase from 2019 and the fourth year in a row the number of people experiencing homelessness has risen—an increase almost entirely driven by people who are unsheltered. Due to the under count of homelessness in 2021, the following data is from the 2020 PIT Count. To get an accurate representation of homelessness within your community, you should look at local government data for 2021 if it is available. Whether you look at the HUD count or other estimates, the facts and figures surrounding the issue of homelessness are staggering.

2020 HUD Annual Homeless Assessment Report Data

https://www.lotuscampaign.org/the-challenge?gclid=Cj0KCQiAj4ecBhD3ARIsAM4Q_jGuSRjLk-4HUzmc_ufj-rrxcFSx7cfs5AdiBhk85gdB0HLK0gLTCjAaAqIUeALw_wcB¹⁷

Total number of people experiencing homelessness in the United States

580,446

Sheltered

354,386

Unsheltered

226,080

Men

352,211

Women

223,578

Families with children

171,670

Unaccompanied youth

34,210

Veterans

37,252

Chronically homeless

120,323

Men

Homelessness was once almost exclusively a male issue. While men still represent the majority of those who experience homelessness, with 60% of the population identifying as male, a far more diverse cross section of the general population is affected.

Women

As of 2020, women account for 39% of those experiencing homelessness. The increasing rate of homelessness among women is exacerbated by high rates of domestic, physical and sexual abuse.

Families

Not since the Great Depression (1929-1939) have so many families been homeless in the United States. In the 1980's, families accounted for less than 1% of those experiencing homelessness. Today, families account for almost 30%.

Unaccompanied youth

Do you feel like you are seeing more young people on the streets? You probably are, as 34,210 or 6% of people experiencing homelessness are unaccompanied youth under the age of 25. Half of this demographic is living in unsheltered environments.

Veterans

Despite major strides over the past decade, there are 37,252 veterans experiencing homelessness, or 8% of all homeless adults. Women are the fastest-growing segment of the homeless veteran population and now comprise 9% of the total.

Chronically homeless

120,323 people or about 20% of those experiencing homelessness have chronic patterns of homelessness, meaning they have been homeless for more than a year or have had multiple periods of homelessness over the preceding three years. The great majority of those who are chronically homeless, almost 64%, are unsheltered.

The causes of homelessness

There is a common misconception that alcohol and drug abuse are the root causes of homelessness, however, this is rarely the case. In most situations, multiple factors are at play.

Simple economic issues are among the most critical factors contributing to homelessness. These include the lack of affordable housing, poverty, lack of employment opportunities, and low wages. Far too many people are living so close to the edge of economic disaster that one financial setback, such as job loss, car troubles, illness, divorce, abandonment, or any unexpected expense can lead to the loss of their home.

Non-economic factors can also play a role in homelessness. These include psychological or physical disabilities, learning disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, medical conditions, drug and alcohol dependence, a history of childhood abuse, sexual abuse, or some combination of these. Domestic abuse, for example, is the leading cause of homelessness among women, and a shocking 84% of homeless women have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives.

The reality

While the cause of each instance of homelessness may be unique, there is one thing every case has in common. Once a person is homeless, it is extremely difficult for them to escape without help.

There is a myth that all a person who is experiencing homelessness has to do is clean up, get a job, find a place to live and the problem is solved. If only it were that simple.

For how can a person who is homeless be expected to clean themselves up and find a job when they are without a safe place to sleep, without access to bathing or toilet facilities, and without a place to wash their clothes? They are compelled to keep what few possessions they own with them at all times lest they be stolen, are dependent on soup kitchens in scattered locations with limited hours and amounts of food, and, if late for the line at the shelter, are on the street for the night exposed to the elements.

If they are lucky enough to find work, what are the chances that they can then find an affordable place to live, especially when there is a severe shortage of affordable units in virtually every market in the country? And, if they do find an affordable unit, there is very little chance they will be accepted as a resident because they lack a credit history. And, if they are accepted, emotional, psychological, and medical issues may make it difficult for them to adjust to their new environment.

The reality is that without help, it is virtually impossible for an individual to escape from homelessness.

Education

The Impact of Homelessness on Education



¹⁸Homelessness in New York City has continued to rise over the past decade. As of July 15, 2019, there were **58,117 homeless people**, including **11,852 homeless families with 20,860 homeless children**, sleeping in the New York City shelter system. This represents an 47% increase over the past decade.

How Education is Impacted

During the same period of time, the New York City public school system has seen an increase in homeless students. The Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness (ICPH) released their report last August, **On the Map: The Atlas of Student Homelessness in New York City 2018**. The report states that homelessness among public school students has risen more than 50% over the past six years, and the number of housed students has decreased. Since 2012, more than 150,000 children attending New York City public schools have experienced homelessness. More disturbing still, 33 percent of all homeless students are 2nd graders or younger. Children experiencing homelessness lack the stability and support necessary to succeed academically. In addition to academic impacts, disruptions to a child's education threaten their social and emotional development. Chronic absenteeism can play a significant role in homeless children quickly falling behind one grade or more.

¹⁸<https://www.voa-gny.org/impact-of-homelessness-on-education>

ICPH has further found that homeless students achieve proficiency on New York State standardized tests at roughly half the rate of housed students. In addition, the impact of homelessness on students lasts long after those children are housed.

Furthermore, the resources that schools and teachers can allocate to homeless students are limited. In a 2019 brief published by The Research Alliance for New York City Schools entitled **Homelessness in NYC Elementary Schools: Student Experience and Educator Perspectives**, it was reported that "Schools with high concentrations of needy students can easily become over-extended...The schools we visited set aside these limited funds (only \$100 per student) to purchase additional school supplies and clothing for students, and to make sure that students did not have to pay for school trips."

Where VOA-GNY Steps In

At VOA-GNY, we are committed to enhancing the educational experience of the children in our Tier II shelters through a variety of supportive services. Each of our Tier II shelters provides high quality recreation and after school programs and other value-added services, which address the full range of issues faced by children and families. Most of these are funded through private donations.

In addition to after school programs, we solicit volunteer homework tutors and reading mentors who provide one-on-one educational assistance. Last fiscal year, community members volunteered over 500 hours at our family shelter programs.

Our recreation programs focus on literacy, basic math and enhanced reading comprehension. We offer homework assistance, tutoring, reading mentors, storytelling, arts and crafts, field trips and educational games. This ongoing individualized attention promotes improved learning and academic achievement, as well as providing stable, supportive relationships with caring accomplished adult role models.

VOA-GNY began its **Operation Backpack®** program 16 years ago with an original goal to outfit the 600 students living in our family and domestic violence shelters with gently used backpacks and school supplies. The drive grew each year, and has since evolved into its current model — providing brand new backpacks full of grade-specific supplies to every child living in the New York City shelter system who needs one before the first day of school. It not only relieves families and children of a stressor, but takes the burden of providing supplies off of teachers as well. To date, Operation Backpack® has outfitted 180,000 students, and continues this summer, with the goal of providing 20,000 backpacks to children in need this year.

VOA-GNY is committed to providing the educational resources and support families need to help break the inter-generational cycle of poverty and create a better future for their children.



By Noelle Withers, Associate Vice President, New York City Housing and Homeless Services. Learn more about [how we meet the housing needs of vulnerable New Yorkers and Operation Backpack®](#).

Homeless as a high school senior



¹⁹Levi Bohanan was homeless as a high school senior. Without a parent or guardian looking after him, he wasn't sure he would graduate, let alone go on to college. But then school staff connected him to resources that would support him, they told him about Pell Grants, and that assistance changed his life.

“None of that can happen absent trust,” said Bohanan, who is now a special assistant at the U.S. Department of Education. “None of that can happen without teachers and educators and staff knowing what to engage with and what to look for.”

¹⁹ https://www.edweek.org/leadership/our-student-homeless-numbers-are-staggering-schools-can-be-a-bridge-to-a-solution/2021/09?s_kwid=AL!6416!3!602270476281!!!g!!&utm_source=goog&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=ew+dynamic+recent&ccid=dynamic+ads+recent+articles&ccag=recent+articles+dynamic&cckw=&cccw=dynamic+ad&gclid=Cj0KCQiAj4ecBhD3ARIsAM4Q_jE1Niy1aqIVYbvcsIbt__mIKeVqDa3KmcAwwGR6Rm9nmmjpKi6RfFoaAobZEALw_wcB



ASSESSMENT How Can Teachers Better Understand Students? A New Breed of Assessment Will Try to Help

Resources can help build that trust—a key component in students’ sense of well-being, belonging, and academic performance where schools can have a big influence. With a big wave of unprecedented federal funding coming to schools to help homeless students, educators might feel a lot of pressure to figure out how to use that money well. But here’s one general strategy that might be effective and take a lot of the pressure off: Think about how others can use the money, use it better, and forge lasting relationships.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, student homelessness was on the rise. In fact, it hit an all-time high of 1.5 million students during the 2017-18 school year, according to a federal estimate that many believe is far below the true figure. But COVID-19 has only made the situation more volatile, even as gathering up-to-date statistics about homeless students has proven difficult if not impossible.

So it's no surprise that many rejoiced when Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, slipped \$800 million for homeless youth into the American Rescue Plan at nearly the last possible moment. That aid could be a real boon to schools that have focused on helping those students with the basics during the pandemic, from providing Wi-Fi hotspots to ensuring they're actually identified as homeless.

Yet, there are acute concerns about where things are headed. A federal eviction moratorium expired at the end of July, and the Biden administration replaced it with a 60-day moratorium, only for the Supreme Court to strike it down in late August. The wisdom and impact of such moratoriums can be debated. But that development, along with rapidly increasing rents, home prices, and COVID numbers from the hyper-contagious Delta variant, could set off another troubling surge of student homelessness.

Educators are aware of what the convergence of those factors might mean in the future. In a nationally representative EdWeek Research Center survey of K-12 educators, 44 percent said they were "somewhat concerned" that the number of homeless students will rise during the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years. Another 12 percent said they were "very concerned" about that possibility.

"We can't wait for kids to show up at the door of mental-health providers, or worse, emergency providers," said Sharon Hoover, a professor at the University of Maryland's school of medicine and a co-director of the National Center for School Mental Health.

What can schools do?

While they are allowed to use the American Rescue Plan funds to provide emergency housing, that housing is not open-ended, said Kerry Wrenick, the state coordinator for the education of homeless children and youth at the Colorado education department.

Still, that sort of short-term assistance could serve as a bridge to connect students and their families with various services. Homeless families that get that temporary help and see schools working on their behalf could develop more trusting relationships with school staff—something that, in turn, would benefit students.

And this is where outside partners and advocates could do a lot of the heavy lifting.

Schools can form partnerships with and direct funds to community-based organizations with dedicated experts who know the opportunities and challenges of finding affordable and stable housing. These partnerships can be durable, Wrenick stressed, and contribute to keeping homeless students and their families, who are often invisible, in the spotlight.

Educators might also consider how their go-to approaches and resources for helping students during the pandemic might be insufficient for homeless students.

“You don’t see a family at the end of an off-ramp from a highway with a cup out. They have a shelter, perhaps, but they’re still homeless,” Wrenick said.

Educators might also consider how their go-to approaches and resources for helping students during the pandemic might be insufficient for homeless students.

For example, while it’s already a challenge for young people who are sharing a room or a computer with a sibling (and sometimes even a parent), trying to pay attention to a teacher’s Zoom lesson is even more difficult from a shelter. Providing a tablet or computer can help but often isn’t enough, says Dr. Diane Tanaka, the medical director of the Homeless Adolescent and Young Adult Center at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. Solutions can include finding quiet, supervised, and safe spaces for these students to work, like their own libraries, she said.

But once homeless students have been identified, Bohanan agreed, using American Rescue Plan money to provide wraparound services is crucial. And Hoover urged school staff to think about the “layered adversity” these young people may be experiencing, from family trauma to medical conditions like asthma.

“We don’t want to think about our youth in one box. It’s easy to do because our programming is siloed, and our funding is siloed. It doesn’t attend to the intersectionality of our children,” she said. “But they’re often pushed into one program.”

In the same way, schools shouldn’t think of themselves as an island. Building connections between programs, and between schools and the broader homeless community, can relieve stress on systems as well as students, families, and the educators who are trying to help. Without those things remaining intact, the trust homeless students and their families need to feel is fragile if not impossible to build. But in this situation, when it comes to who puts in time and sweat, schools might do better in some cases by passing the baton (and some money) to others.



[Andrew Ujifusa](#)

[Assistant Editor, Education Week](#)

Andrew Ujifusa was an assistant editor who covers national education policy and politics.

- [twitter](#)
Related Tags:

Why Finland and Norway still shun university tuition fees – even for international students

Published: February 17, 2015 1.13am EST

Author



1.

Jussi Välimaa

Professor, Finnish Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä

We believe in the free flow of information

All the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – provide higher education free of charge for their own citizens and, until recently, international students have been able to study free too. But in 2006, Denmark introduced tuition fees for international students coming from outside the European Union and European Economic Area. In 2011, Sweden followed suit. Now only Finland, Norway, Iceland and Germany do not collect tuition fees from international students.

Despite some moves to introduce fees, all these countries remain real exceptions in a world where international students are often a lucrative source of income for universities.

In Finland, the issue reared its head again last year when the government proposed that universities would be able to introduce fees for international students coming from outside the EU after 2016. After a lively public debate, in January the Finnish government decided not to go ahead with the proposals.

Researcher Leasa Weimer's recent study concluded that the main actors opposing tuition fees were the powerful Finnish student organisations. They

feared that collecting tuition fees from international students would open the gate to tuition fee reform for national students as well.

Don't let yourself be misled. Understand issues with help from experts

Those students, politicians and academics resisting tuition fees also said that a tuition-free system supports international social justice by giving students from developing countries an opportunity to participate in higher education.

They also argued that the introduction of tuition fees would undermine Finnish internationalisation efforts as it would be likely to lead to a significant decrease in the number of international students – as happened in Denmark and Sweden after the introduction of tuition fees there. In Sweden the drop was 80% during the two years following the introduction of fees.

New source of revenue

On the other side of the debate, the promoters of tuition fees – which include university managers, the ministry of education and business representatives – advocated a neo-liberal stance on education as a private good. They argued that competition for international students would enhance the quality of teaching and make Finnish universities more competitive in the international marketplace.

They also pointed out that it was unfair for Finnish taxpayers to pay for the education of international migrants' coming to Finland where they also enjoy good social benefits. This argument has gained traction as a populist political view in Finland. Promoters also claimed that international students would be a new source of revenue for universities.

In November, Norway's government backed down from a proposal to introduce fees. The main arguments against the reform were quite similar to those aired in Finland: student organisations, in particular, feared a “domino effect” by which tuition fees for international students would be the first step in introducing them for domestic students.

The rectors of Northern universities and university colleges – some of which are geographically remote – argued that they would lose many international students, especially Chinese and Russian students, if they started charging tuition fees.

According to Agnete Vabo at the Norwegian Institute for Studies in Higher Education and Research, the leaders of the most prestigious universities in

Norway also argued that tuition fees would mean a great loss in terms of maintaining the diversity and quality of the international student population. In a globalised world this would be very problematic.

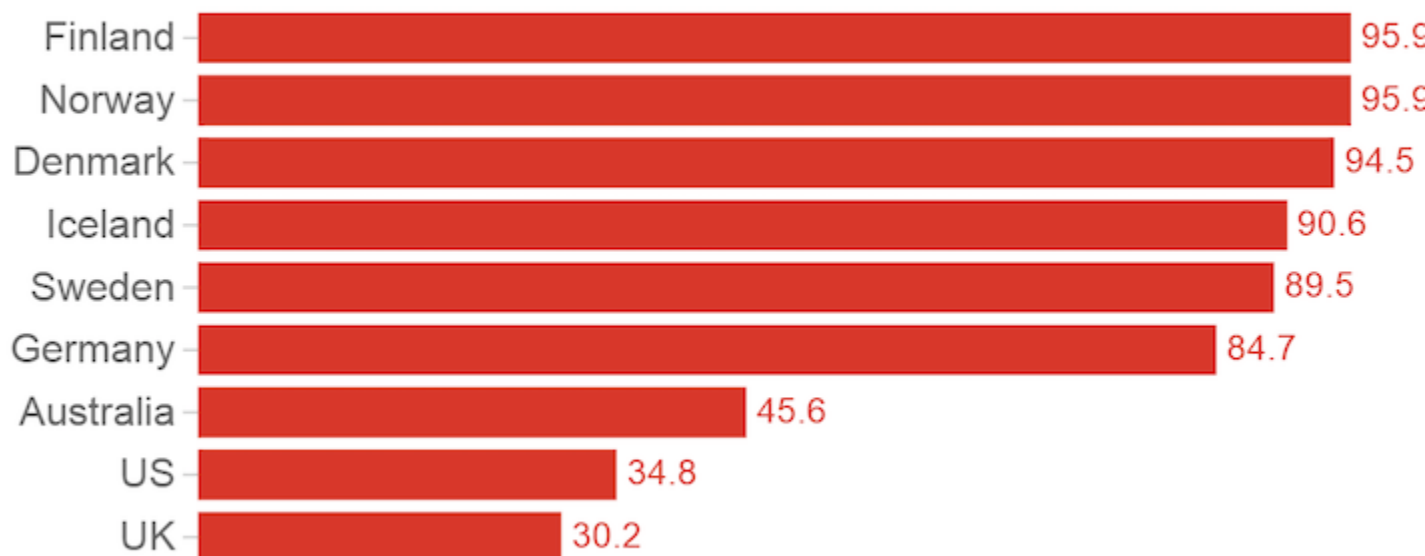
Equality key in Nordic model

We know that education is expensive everywhere – including in Nordic countries – and that someone has to pay for it. The crucial question is who. But to answer this, it is important to pay attention to the differences between the societal goals and social dynamics of higher education in Nordic countries and countries which charge university tuition fees, such as the UK, US or Australia.

The Nordic higher education systems are almost entirely publicly funded. According to [OECD Education at a Glance 2014](#) the proportion of public funding varies between just under 90% in Sweden and 96% in Norway and Finland, whereas in England only 30% of the costs of higher education are paid by the public purse.

Proportion of university funding from public expenditure

% public investment in tertiary institutions, 2011



All Nordic countries also have a strong tradition of equality, which in education translates into offering equal educational opportunities for all citizens. The Nordic countries have policies to encourage gender equality and to support students from lower socio-economic groups to enter universities.

As a result, there is greater equality of educational opportunity in Nordic countries. Finnish students whose parents went to university are only 1.4 times as likely to participate in tertiary education as their peers whose parents did not go to university, according to the OECD. In Sweden, a young person with university-educated parents is 2.3 times more likely to go to university themselves, while in the UK they are six times more likely.

Yet perhaps the most important difference between the Nordic countries and countries such as the UK is the ethos of education as a civil right and a public service rather than a commodity. Degrees are not seen as commodities to be exchanged in the marketplace.

As the cases of Sweden and Denmark show, the neo-liberal argument for education is not unknown in Nordic countries. But a strong counterargument is rooted in the values of Nordic welfare societies which see higher education primarily as an equality issue.

A high level of education is beneficial for the development of society including business and industry, making it a collective economic issue. With this argument, education is defined neither as a private investment nor a commodity, but a civil right. So, individual human beings should not have to pay for it.

Next read: [How Germany managed to abolish university tuition fees](#)

- [Norway](#)
- [Finland](#)
- [Students](#)
- [Student visas](#)
- [Higher education Europe](#)
- [Best Practice in Education](#)

Before you go...

I'm often utterly delighted by articles that help inquisitive readers learn about the world we live in, guided by experts sharing knowledge that educates and inspires. These are articles that make you sit up and say "wow." They make me want to share tidbits with my family and friends. Your support makes it all possible.

Donate now
Beth Daley

Editor and General Manager, The Conversation U.S.



You might also like



[Math teachers in virtual classes tend to view girls and Black students as less capable](#)



[How accessibility for disabled university students can benefit all students](#)



Why attending publicly funded schools may help students become more culturally sensitive



School attendance problems are complex, and our solutions need to be as well

Education Comments



If I had my way I would have free education from kindergarten to getting a Ph.D. if one wanted. Education is the foundation of society.

Several Scandinavian countries already have this concept put in place.



10 Universities in Sweden for International Students | Study in...

Ask Scholars dotcom • 19K views

10 Universities in Sweden for International Students | Study in Sweden | Scholarships in Sweden: Ask scholars presents 10...

Without an educated society, we are doomed in the end. I would also bump up the salaries for all teachers. They are hardly making a substantial living for themselves and their families. Many teachers use their hard earn money to buy supplies for their students.

A teacher should have the same kind of significance as a software engineer. A teacher is programming directly to the students, the foundation for their future.

The present-day system is based on rote memory. It is based on Johnny go to page 12 and read paragraph two. Going to school should be the most outrageous adventure that a student can do.

We need to replace the current boring system with a new Outlook.

Schools should be creative. Schools should be full of laughter and joy. You can teach difficult subjects in that same classroom.

A student will learn more in a state of laughter than listening to a boring lecture.

No wonder students hate school because it is so boring. I only had a few teachers in my life that made a huge difference in my life. They all made the subject matter exciting and at the same time gave me the yearning to learn and master the given subject.

By paying teachers more money they can make a great living and also will be highly motivated. We need to change the guidance counselor. When I was in high school many years ago mine was a joke. He had no interest in me at all.

We need to hire the best psychologist in the world to be guided counselors. They need to help bring out the best in the student. They need to give hope to the student. They need to show that they care.

Without changing this mindset it will be very difficult to change.

I would also want to change the education curriculum to include present-day knowledge of you are your own chemistry set. You are responsible for the chemicals that get released into your body.

Without this understanding, our society will continue going on in our chaotic ways.

Until each one of us realizes that the jewel lies within then it will be very difficult to change society at large by trying to change only the external.

Note this is not a philosophy but more of the latest scientific research on the effects of the mind and body connection.

I would hire teachers who have the innate wisdom of daily discovering the jewel within themselves. This would bring it out of the world of theory and into the world of practical experience.

If the entire education system did this, we could change the students and their attitude in life. Every student has something incredible to offer to this world. We must guide them to discover what it is.

Proper education should be a right for every individual in society. Just think in today's school many students have to go through a metal detector to enter school. How can you learn in such a crazy environment? Changing the education system will take probably around a century or more. The main mindset that has to change is to only look externally for the answers.

When a society starts looking both externally and internally this will change everything around.

There is so much politics involved in the current educational system

The way the money is allocated. The schools that certain students can go to. District problems. The list goes on and on.

Without kindness coming from within wisdom can never take place.

One needs to combine wisdom and kindness to produce a better system and systems in this world.

Homework in Finland School

62368



© fightbegin | Depositphotos.com — Finnish schoolchildren visiting Hameen castle

How many parents are bracing themselves for nightly battles to get their kids to finish their homework every year with the beginning of a school year? Thousands and thousands of them. Though not in Finland. The truth is that there is nearly no homework in the country with one of the top education systems in the world. Finnish people believe that besides homework, there are many more things that can improve child's performance in school, such as having dinner with their families, exercising or getting a good night's sleep.

Do We Need Homework?

There are different homework policies around the world. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) keeps track of such policies and compares the amount of homework of students from different countries. For example, an average high school student in the US has to spend about 6 hours a day doing homework, while in Finland, the amount of time spent on after school learning is about 3 hours a day. Nevertheless, these are exactly Finnish students who lead the world in global scores for math and science. It means that despite the belief that homework increases student performance, OECD graph shows the opposite. Though there are some exceptions such as education system in Japan, South Korea, and some other Asian countries. In fact, according to OECD, the more time students spend on homework, the worse they perform in school.

Finnish education approach shows the world that when it comes to homework, less is more. It is worth to mention that the world has caught onto this idea and, according to the latest OECD report, the average number of hours spent by students doing their homework decreased in nearly all countries around the world.

So what Finland knows about homework that the rest of the world does not? There is no simple answer, as the success of education system in Finland is provided by many factors, starting from poverty rates in the country to parental leave policies to the availability of preschools. Nevertheless, one of the greatest secrets of the success of education system in Finland is the way Finns teach their children.

How to Teach Like The Finns?

There are three main points that have to be mentioned when it comes to the success of education system in Finland.

First of all, Finns teach their children in a “playful” manner and allow them to enjoy their childhood. For example, did you know that in average, students in Finland only have three to four classes a day? Furthermore, there are several breaks and recesses (15-20 minutes) during a school day when children can play outside whatever the weather. According to statistics, children need physical activity in order to learn better. Also, less time in the classroom allows Finnish teachers to think, plan and create more effective lessons.

Secondly, Finns pay high respect to teachers. That is why one of the most sought after positions in Finland is the position of a primary school teacher. Only 10% of applicants to the teaching programs are accepted. In addition to a high competition, each primary school teacher in Finland must earn a Master’s degree that provides Finnish teachers with the same status as doctors or lawyers.

High standards applied to applicants for the university teaching programs assure parents of a high quality of teaching and allow teachers to innovate without bureaucracy or excessive regulation.

Thirdly, there is a lot of individual attention for each student. Classes in Finland are smaller than in the most of other countries and for the first six years of study, teachers get to know their students, their individual needs, and learning styles. If there are some weaker students, they are provided by extra assistance. Overall, Finnish education system promotes warmth, collaboration, encouragement, and assessment which means that teachers in this country are ready to do their best to help students but not to gain more control over them.

The combination of these three fundamentals is the key to success of any education system in the world and Finns are exactly those people who proved by way of example that less is more, especially when it comes to the amount of homework.

Why do Finnish pupils succeed with less homework?

- Published

27 October 2016

Share



IMAGE SOURCE, THINKSTOCK

Image caption,

Homework can be the cause of friction in families - but not in Finland

By Sean Coughlan

BBC News education and family correspondent

[@seanjcoughlan](#)

How do Finnish youngsters spend less time in school, get less homework and still come out with some of the best results in the world?

The question gets to the heart of a lot of parental angst about hard work and too much pressure on children in school.

Parents facing all those **kitchen table arguments over homework** might wonder about its value if the Finns are getting on just fine without burning the midnight oil.

As the OECD think tank says: "One of the most striking facts about Finnish schools is that their students have fewer hours of instruction than students in any other OECD country."

ADVERTISEMENT

Long summer holidays

It also touches on another tension between schools and families - the increased cost of summer holidays.



IMAGE SOURCE, THINKSTOCK

Image caption,

Finland's school system is high performing, but pupils spend relatively few hours in school

While children in England and Wales are still toiling away in school into the middle of July, the Finns have already been on holiday for six weeks, in a summer break that lasts 10 to 11 weeks.

And completing this picture of less is more, Finnish children do not in theory have to start school until they are seven - although most will have been in classes from an earlier age.

But when it comes to the international Pisa tests, Finland is in sixth place and the UK is 23rd in reading; and Finland is 12th and the UK is 26th in maths.

Another set of OECD global rankings last year put Finland in sixth place for maths and science.

So what's going on? How do the Finns seem to start later, have fewer lessons and then finish ahead?

Finland, as part of its centenary commemorations next year, has a project to share what works in its schools with other countries.

Saku Tuominen, director of this **HundrEd** project, says parents in Finland don't really want longer hours in school.

He says there is a "holistic" approach to education, with parents wanting a family-friendly approach.

Why Sean wrote this article:

We asked readers to send BBC Education correspondent Sean Coughlan their questions on schools.

Sean chose four questions, and we asked you to select your favourite, which came from Lukas Milancius, a 16-year-old student.

Lukas asked: "How come Finland has shorter days and no homework for students and yet is achieving more?"

Lukas explained to us the thinking behind his question:

"I want to know why other countries are not adopting this education system. I find myself to be in a difficult situation where I am obliged to do a lot of homework and attend long school days which leaves me with hardly any time for me to do other activities."

Respect for teachers

There is little homework, compared with UK schools, and there is no culture of extra private tuition.

A key concept in the Finnish school system, says Mr Tuominen, is "trust".

Parents trust schools to make the right decisions and to deliver a good education within the school day - and schools put trust in the quality of their teachers.



IMAGE SOURCE, THINKSTOCK

Image caption,

Finland has systematically put an emphasis on improving education since the 1970s

Teaching is a high-status job in Finland and teachers are accorded a great deal of professional independence.

It's a different philosophy from the system in England, says Mr Tuominen, which he sees as being built around a check-list of tests, league tables, targets and public accountability.

He describes the amount of testing as the "tail wagging the dog".

But before making any assumptions that the laid-back Finnish approach must be the way forward, you could just as easily look to the educational hot houses of Singapore or South Korea.

Their children also do better than those in UK schools, but with an entirely different cultural approach, based on long hours and relentless pressure.

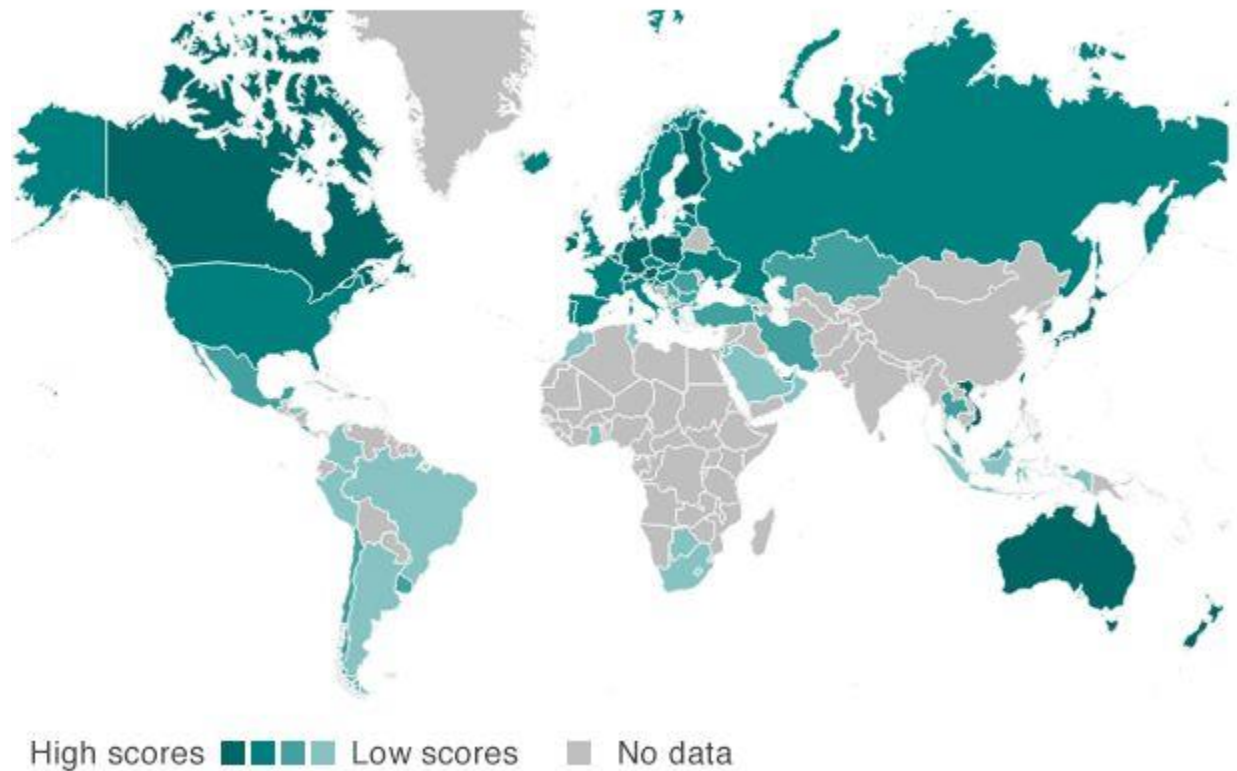
'Long-term planning'

This raises the question as to whether school systems, rather than shaping the next generation, simply mirror the society that's already there.

And in the case of Finland, Mr Tuominen says the Finnish school system is inseparable from the culture which it serves.

He says it's a "socially cohesive", equitable and efficient society, and it gets a consistently reliable school system to match.

Rankings based on maths and science at age 15



This might sound as if countries are stuck forever with the school system that they've inherited.

But it's worth mentioning that there is nothing inevitable about Finland's success. It's built on the foundations of reforms introduced in the 1970s and 1980s, which turned an ordinary school system into a world leader.

Russell Hobby, leader of the National Association of Head Teachers, picks out this "stability" beyond the electoral cycle as the key difference.

"In Finland there's a long-term approach to education policy that means plans remain in place for a significant amount of time, giving them a chance to work," he says.

"In England the opposite is true. The government is constantly tinkering with policy and there's an obsession with structure - such as grammar schools and academies - rather than a focus on evidence."



IMAGE SOURCE,ISTOCK

Image caption,

By the beginning of June, schools in Finland are on summer holiday

But there are no signs of cutting back on days or hours in the UK.

England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are already above the OECD average for the number of days taught.

And in England, this year's Budget in fact promised extra funding for extended days in secondary schools.

Pupils in England already get an average of 150 hours extra teaching per year than their Finnish counterparts.

Homework works

The OECD's education director, Andreas Schleicher, says extra hours are linked to better results.

"You teach one hour of science more per week and you will see that reflected in higher average scores," he says.

But that doesn't mean it's going to be enough to catch up - because countries such as Finland, he says, can "deliver greater value in learning in fewer hours".

There is another big question raised by this balancing act between quantity and quality.

If there were shorter hours and longer holidays for schools, what would it mean for working parents and the cost of childcare?

There's also bad news on the homework front.

Even if the Finns don't need it, research suggests it makes a positive difference.

Prof Susan Hallam from the Institute of Education says there is "hard evidence" that homework really does improve how well pupils achieve.

"There is no question about that," she says.

A study for the Department for Education found students who did two to three hours of homework per night were almost 10 times more likely to achieve five good GCSEs than those who did no homework

So back to the late night arguments over unfinished homework.

-
- *Do you think your children get too much homework?* **Join the conversation - find us on Facebook**
-



- You mean you're not on holiday yet?

- 11 June 2014



Finish School System - Michael Moore

Tkeo89 • 10K views

Where to invade next - Michael Moore



Why Finland's schools outperform most others across...

ABC News (Australia) ✓

5.1M views • 2 years ago



Where to Invade Next

2:00:23

Where to Invade Next

YouTube Movies

Comedy • 2016

Buy or rent R



6 Problems with our School System

Next School

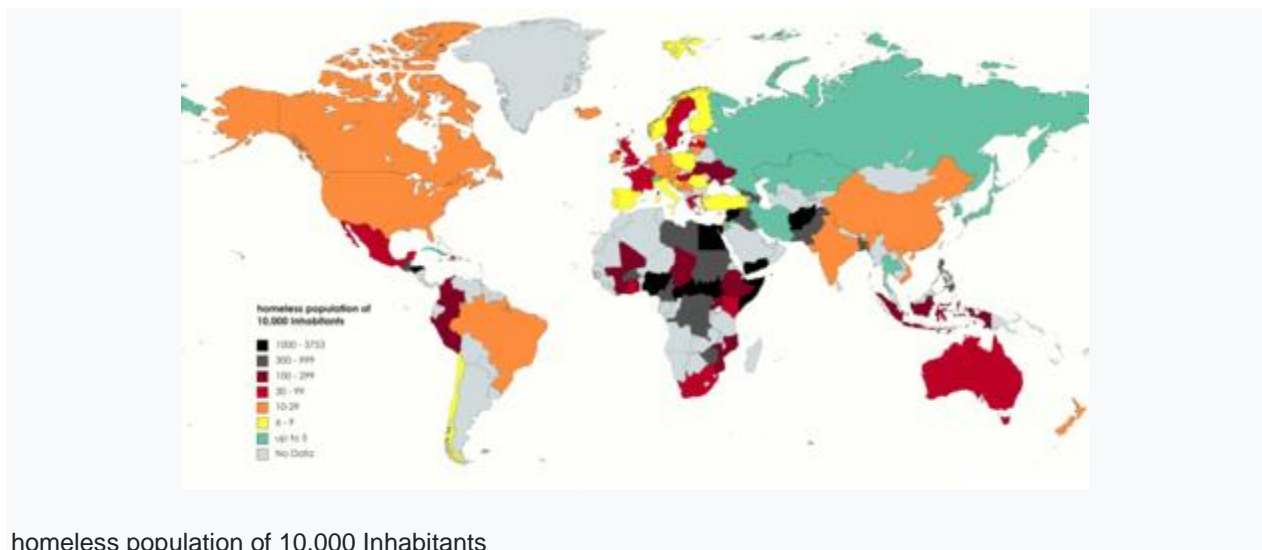
14M views • 5 years ago

Families

List of countries by homeless population

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[Jump to navigation](#)[Jump to search](#)









homeless population of 10,000 Inhabitants

²⁰It is estimated that 150 million people are [homeless](#) worldwide.^[1] [Habitat for Humanity](#) estimated in 2016 that 1.6 billion people around the world live in "inadequate shelter".^[2]

Different countries often use different definitions of [homelessness](#). It can be defined by living in a shelter, being in a transitional phase of housing and living in a place not fit for human habitation. The numbers may take into account [internal displacement](#) from conflict, violence and natural disasters, but may or may not take into account chronic and transitional homelessness, making direct comparisons of numbers complicated.^[3]

²⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_homeless_population






Country	Homeless (avg. day)	Data year	Homeless per 10k	Unsheltered per 10k	Main article, other notes
 Afghanistan	4,660,000	2020 ^[4]	1180		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Australia	100,568	2016 ^[5]	49.1		Homelessness in Australia
 Austria	22,580	2019 ^[6]	25.4		
 Azerbaijan	735,000	2020 ^[4]	725		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Bangladesh	5,000,000	2019 ^[7]	307		
 Bhutan	0	2015 ^[8]	0	20	
 Brazil	222,000	2020 ^[9]	10		
 Burkina Faso	700,000	2020 ^[10]	335		
 Cameroon	1,033,000	2020 ^[4]	389		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Canada	25,000-30,000	2021 ^[11]	10		Homelessness in Canada




Country	Homeless (avg. day)	Data year	Homeless per 10k	Unsheltered per 10k	Main article, other notes
 Central African Republic	686,200	2020 ^[4]	1421		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Chad	342,680	2020 ^[4]	209		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Chile	14,013	2019 ^[6]	7.4		
 China	2,579,000	2011 ^[12]	18		Homelessness in China
 Colombia	4,943,000	2020 ^[4]	971		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Congo DR	5,332,000	2020 ^[4]	595		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Costa Rica	3,387	2020 ^[13]	6.6		
 Côte d'Ivoire	308,070	2020 ^[4]	117		
 Croatia	3,000	2018 ^[14]	7		
 Czech Republic	23,830	2019 ^[15]	22		
 Denmark	6,431	2019 ^[13]	11		Homelessness in Denmark

Country	Homeless (avg. day)	Data year	Homeless per 10k	Unsheltered per 10k	Main article, other notes
 Egypt	12,000,000	2020 ^[16]	1200		Homelessness in Egypt
 Estonia	2,000	2018	15.2		Citation/website link is blocked.
 Ethiopia	2,693,000	2020 ^[4]	234		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Finland	4,886	2020 ^[17]	8.8	0.1 ^[18]	Homelessness in Finland
 France	300,000	2020 ^[19] ^[20]	45	4.5 ^[21]	Homelessness in France
 Georgia	304,010	2020 ^[4]	760		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Germany	37,400	2022 ^[22]	4.4		Homelessness in Germany
 Ghana	100,000	2020	32.9		Citation/website link is blocked.
 Greece	40,000	2016 ^[23]	37.1		Homelessness in Greece In citation, the population figure is found under Table 12.

Country	Homeless (avg. day)	Data year	Homeless per 10k	Unsheltered per 10k	Main article, other notes
 Grenada	68	2011	6.4	6.4 ^[24]	Homeless in national census seems to mean unsheltered. High variance after hurricanes.
 Guatemala	475,000	2012 ^[25]	315		
 Haiti	37,867	2018 ^[26]	34		
 Honduras	1,000,000	2013 ^[27]	1235		
 Hong Kong	1,800	2018 ^[28]	2.4		
 Hungary	30,000	2018 ^[29]	30.7		Homelessness in Hungary
 Iceland	349	2017 ^[13]	10.3		
 India	1,800,000	2020 ^[30]	12.6		Homelessness in India
 Indonesia	3,000,000	2004 ^[31]	136		Homelessness in Indonesia
 Iran	15,000	2015 ^[32]	1.9		
 Iraq	1,224,000	2020 ^[4]	304		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Ireland	8,014	2021 ^[33]	16		Homelessness in Ireland
 Israel	25,000	2019 ^[34]	29		Homelessness in Israel
 Italy	50,724	2016 ^[35]	8.4		
 Japan	3,992	2020 ^[36]	0.3		Homelessness in Japan

Country	Homeless (avg. day)	Data year	Homeless per 10k	Unsheltered per 10k	Main article, other notes
 Jordan	0	2010 ^[37] 2017 ^[38]	0		
 Kazakhstan	5,500	2020 ^[39]	0.6		
 Kenya	394,000	2020 ^[4]	73.3		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Latvia	6,877	2017 ^[13]	35.3		
 Libya	278,000	2020 ^[4]	405		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Liechtenstein	0	2004 ^[40]	0		
 Lithuania	4,024	2017 ^[41]	14.1		
 Luxembourg	2,059	2014 ^[13]	37.5		
 Mali	332,700	2020 ^[4]	164		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Mexico	456,000	2020 ^[4]	35.4		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Mozambique	769,000	2020 ^[4]	246		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Netherlands	32,000	2021 ^[42]	18		Homelessness in the Netherlands
 New Zealand	5,031	2006 ^[43]	12	3.1	Homelessness in New Zealand
 Nigeria	24,400,000	2007 ^[44]	1658		
 Norway	3,909	2016 ^[45]	7		
 Pakistan	4,500,000	2018 ^[46]	943		
 Peru	700,000	2017 ^[47]	223		

Country	Homeless (avg. day)	Data year	Homeless per 10k	Unsheltered per 10k	Main article, other notes
 Philippines	4,500,000	2018 ^[48]	424		
 Poland	30,330	2019 ^[49]	8		
 Portugal	8,209	2020 ^[50]	8	3.3	Homelessness in Portugal
 Romania	15,000	2004 ^[51]	7		
 Russia	64,000	2010 ^[52]	4		Homelessness in Russia
 Serbia	20,000	2017 ^[53]	28.5		
 Slovenia	3,799	2019 ^[13]	18.3		
 Somalia	2,968,000	2020 ^[4]	1867		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 South Africa	200,000	2015 ^[54]	36		Homelessness in South Africa
 South Korea	11,340	2016 ^[55]	2		
 South Sudan	1,542,000	2020 ^[4]	1378		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Spain	30,000	2021 ^[56]	6.4		Homelessness in Spain
 Sudan	2,730,000	2020 ^[4]	623		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Sweden	34,000	2011 ^[57]	36		Homelessness in Sweden
 Switzerland	2,200	2022 ^[58]	2.55		Homelessness in Switzerland
 Syria	6,568,000	2020 ^[4]	3753		Internally displaced, per IDMC

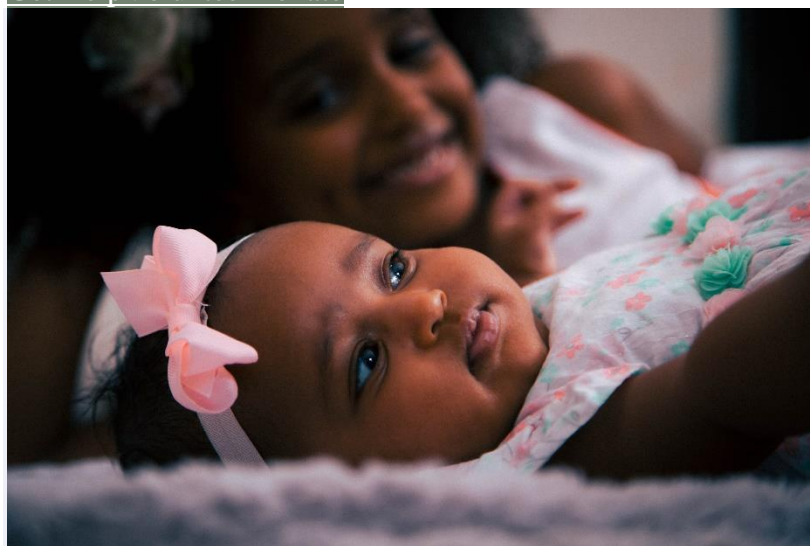
Country	Homeless (avg. day)	Data year	Homeless per 10k	Unsheltered per 10k	Main article, other notes
 Thailand	2,700	2020 ^[59]	0.4		
 Togo	100,000	1999 ^[60]	211		
 Turkey	70,000	2021 ^{[61][62][63]}	8.5		
 Uganda	500,000	2014 ^[64]	143		
 Ukraine	734,240	2020 ^[4]	168		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 United Kingdom	365,535	2019 ^{[65][66][67][68]}	54.4	0.9	Homelessness in the United Kingdom
 United States	580,466	2020 ^[69]	17.6	5.9	Homelessness in the United States
 Yemen	3,858,000	2020 ^[4]	1294		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Vietnam	162,000	2020 ^[4]	16.6		Internally displaced, per IDMC
 Zimbabwe	1,200,000	2013 ^[70]	848		

What is the root of homelessness?

²¹For women in particular, **domestic violence** is a leading cause of homelessness. The country report that top causes of homelessness among families were: (1) lack of affordable housing, (2) unemployment, (3) poverty, and (4) low wages, in that order.

The Facts About Family Homelessness

Get Help Volunteer Donate



²²Homelessness is one of our nation's most misunderstood and vexing social problems. Homelessness does not discriminate. Families with children, single adults, teenagers and older individuals of all races struggle with the devastating effects of homelessness.

The primary cause of homelessness is a lack of affordable housing. Over five million low-income households have serious housing problems due to high housing costs, substandard housing conditions or both. While the problem of homelessness seems daunting, we can end homelessness in our nation.

In Arlington, there are hundreds of families living in dangerously overcrowded housing. They're moving from place to place, night after night, in a constant state of fear and mere survival. We don't see homeless families or those threatened by violence on street corners or intersections – they are well

²¹https://homelesslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Homeless_Stats_Fact_Sheet.pdf

²² <https://www.doorwaysva.org/our-work/education-advocacy/the-facts-about-family-homelessness/>

hidden. We need your help to end domestic violence and family homelessness. Together, we can offer a safe home for those in crisis, the tools they need to rebuild their lives and a pathway to long-term, affordable housing.

Homelessness: The Facts

- More families experience homelessness in the United States than in any other industrialized nation. ([*The Bassuk Center on Homeless and Vulnerable Children & Youth*](#))
- A typical homeless family is comprised of a single mother with her two young children. ([*The Bassuk Center on Homeless and Vulnerable Children & Youth*](#))
- One in 30 American children experience homelessness annually; 51% are under age five. More than 2.5 million children are homeless each year in America. ([*The Bassuk Center on Homeless and Vulnerable Children & Youth*](#))
- Family homelessness is a growing social problem affecting families in every state. Nationwide, 85% of providers have seen family homelessness increasing in recent years. ([*The Bassuk Center on Homeless and Vulnerable Children & Youth*](#))
- In the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, for the five-year period of 2013-2017, although the region reduced the number of individuals experiencing homelessness by four percent, families experiencing homelessness has remained a challenge for the region, increasing by 1.6 percent over the same five-year period. ([*Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments*](#))
- Family homelessness, once viewed as episodic and situational, has become chronic, with families accounting for 37% of the overall homeless population and 50% of the sheltered population. ([*The Bassuk Center on Homeless and Vulnerable Children & Youth*](#))
- The interrelated nature of domestic violence and homelessness is undeniable: 92% of homeless women have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives, and 63% have been victims of intimate partner violence as adults. ([*National Network to End Domestic Violence*](#))
- A domestic violence experience is common among youth, single adults and families who become homeless and for many it is the immediate cause of their homelessness. ([*National Alliance to End Homelessness*](#))
- 39% of cities cited domestic violence as the primary cause of family homelessness. ([*U.S. Conference of Mayors*](#))
- Domestic violence is the immediate cause of homelessness for many women and children. Among families that reported domestic violence in the prior five

years, 88 percent reported that it contributed to their homelessness a lot. ([National Alliance to End Homelessness](#))

- More than 90% of homeless mothers report they had been physically and/or sexually abused over their lifetimes. ([The Bassuk Center on Homeless and Vulnerable Children & Youth](#))
- In America, up to 1.6 million youth experience homelessness each year. The statistics for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) homeless youth are even more shocking, as this group represents up to 40% all young people experiencing homelessness. Considering that LGBT youth represent an estimated 7% of the total youth population, these numbers are disproportionately high. ([The True Colors Fund](#))

OUT OF REACH

2018 Data from the National Low Income Housing Coalition

Arlington, VA
Housing Wage*



*Hourly wage required to afford a modest 2-bedroom rental



Working at minimum wage

\$7.25/hour



Each week you have to work

192 HOURS



To afford a modest **2-BEDROOM** rental home at Fair Market Rent

Think Arlington is more affordable than DC?

In reality, Arlington's housing wage is the same as DC's (\$34.48), but with VA's lower minimum wage (\$7.25), Arlington residents must work the equivalent of **4.8 FULL-TIME JOBS** earning minimum wage to afford a 2-bedroom rental.



Infographic created by

DOORWAYS
for women and families

- One in four renters spends more than half their income on housing. Almost half pay over 30% of their incomes on rent. ([Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies](#))
- In Arlington County, a community member would need to work 4.8 full-time jobs (192 hours per week) at minimum wage to afford a 2-bedroom at Fair Market Rent. ([National Low Income Housing Coalition](#))

- Housing is essential to ending homelessness, but it is not sufficient. Families need basic supports beyond decent affordable housing to thrive: food, education, employment, child care, transportation, health and mental health care, trauma-informed care, and children’s services. ([*The Bassuk Center on Homeless and Vulnerable Children & Youth*](#))
- More than 90% of providers agree that services are necessary for families to remain stably housed, and that services need to be provided as soon as families become homeless and continue after they are permanently housed. ([*The Bassuk Center on Homeless and Vulnerable Children & Youth*](#))
- Beyond addressing their immediate safety and housing needs, survivors of domestic violence require supportive services that can help them heal from the trauma of abuse and improve their economic security and well-being. ([*National Alliance to End Homelessness*](#))

Children and Homelessness

1 in 30 American children experience homelessness. They live with or without their families, in shelters, cars and abandoned buildings. Lack of affordable housing is a primary cause of homelessness in families; often one or both parents are working, but not making a livable wage. Additionally, events such as illness, unemployment, accidents and violence limit the ability to secure stable housing and affordable housing. [Learn more about the impact of homelessness on children.](#)

Family Homelessness Resources

We create pathways out of homelessness leading to safe, stable and empowered lives. [Learn more about family homelessness resources in our community.](#)



HOMELESSNESS IN NORWAY: THE SUCCESS OF LONG-TERM HOUSING-LED STRATEGIES

Children and Families



Adults and children in families make up about **30 percent of the homeless population.**

How Many Children and Families Experience Homelessness?

²³2020 marked the first time since 2010 that homelessness among people in families did not decrease. On a single night in [January 2020](#):

- An estimated 171,575 people in families — or 55,739 family households — were identified as homeless.
- Approximately 16,667 people in families were living on the street, in a car, or in another place not meant for human habitation.

[Between October 1, 2016, and September 30, 2017](#), an estimated 478,718 people in 150,630 family households used an emergency shelter or a transitional housing program.

Why Do Families Experience Homelessness?

Families experiencing homelessness are similar to other families that are also poor, but who have a home to live in. Both may struggle with incomes that are far less than they need to pay for housing. In fact, it is often some jolt to this precarious situation – a lost job or work hours, conflict with family members they are staying with, an unanticipated bill or violence within the home – that leads families to seek help from homeless service programs. Homeless families are usually headed by a single woman with limited education, are typically young, and have young children.

²³ <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/who-experiences-homelessness/children-and-families/>

The Impact of Homelessness on Children



[VIDEO](#): *Children have a unique perspective on the experience of homelessness. Listen them talk to their parents about how it has affected their lives.*

Homelessness can have a tremendous impact on children – their education, health, sense of safety, and overall development. Fortunately, researchers find that children are also highly resilient and differences between children who have experienced homelessness and low-income children who have not typically diminish in the years following a homeless episode.

When compared to low-income and homeless families, children experiencing homelessness have been shown to:

- Have higher levels of emotional and behavioral problems;
- Have increased risk of serious health problems;
- Are more likely to experience separations from their families; and
- Experience more school mobility, repeat a grade, be expelled or drop out of school, and have lower academic performance.

Ending Homelessness for Children and Families

Housing is the solution to homelessness for low-income families. Most families would benefit from assistance to help them rapidly reconnect to permanent housing. Rapid re-housing provides help with housing search, financial assistance, and case management services to help families quickly transition out of shelter and back into housing of their own. A small subset of families may require more intensive or long-

term support, through the provision of transitional housing, permanent rental assistance, or permanent supportive housing to escape homelessness. Families can also benefit from connection to other supports designed to strengthen and improve their lives, such as child care, employment assistance, early childhood services, income support, or mental health counseling.

Drugs and Meth

Your body Is Your Drug Store

The art of Taoism has been around for thousands of years.
I find it quite fascinating that they talk about the elixir of life.

This elixir is not an herb or any external substance.

This elixir exists inside of us.

In India, they talk about the nectar from God that flows within.

Yet here we are taking drugs for our ailments.

Each drug has huge side effects.

Now I'm not saying don't take drugs.

I'm saying maybe there is a better way.

For example, in China, you pay your doctor when you are healthy.

You don't pay when you are sick.

Mind you in modern-day China this isn't always the case.

But the point is that you focus on balance and harmony.

In our culture everything is fragmented.

We don't focus on the harmony of the mind, body, and soul connection.

When I was young I heard about the concept of being in harmony with the
universe.

To be quite frank I had no idea what they were talking about.

Here's an example of being out of balance.

In my junior year, my parents took our family to Yosemite.

It's probably one of the most incredible places on the planet.

Yet I couldn't see the forest from the trees.

I was miserable.

Why because I missed the ocean.

Now that is out of balance.

Before we can begin to be in harmony with the universe let's try being in harmony with the planet earth.

Currently, man has divorced himself from our precious earth.

We pride ourselves on the technology that we have.

Yet we are emotionally immature with the earth.

Where am I going with this?

Imagine if man was in absolute harmony with the earth.

Can you imagine the wisdom that it has?

It might tell you that your body is your drug store.

Every thought whether positive or negative secretes over 1400 positive or negative chemicals.

Currently, most of America is totally out of balance.

Look at all the problems today.

I used to work for the USDA.

I saw my friends taking up vaping.

I couldn't believe how much smoke came out when they exhaled.

It was at least 5 times the smoke from regular smoking.

No wonder there is such an epidemic.

Imagine drugs existing inside of you that are dormant.

To receive them, you must be in balance and harmony.

In every moment we have the opportunity to be conscious and aware.

Currently, we are playing the same tapes over and over again.

I can guarantee that these elixirs of life will work better than any physical drugs.

Your body has the intelligence to produce these for you.

How many people listen to their bodies?

How many people monitor their thoughts?

How many people dive into silence?

How many people monitor their actions?

You see this is a moment-by-moment conscious event.

When we are unconscious chaos exists.

Look at the world around you.

Does it seem to be in balance and harmony?

The question is do you want to change?

Are you content with the current conditions?

This isn't just Richard on a soapbox.

I'm asking real questions.

What do you think?

You are your savior.

Nobody is going to save you except yourself.

All the scripture point the way but you must walk on this path.

This human body is hardwired to find God within.

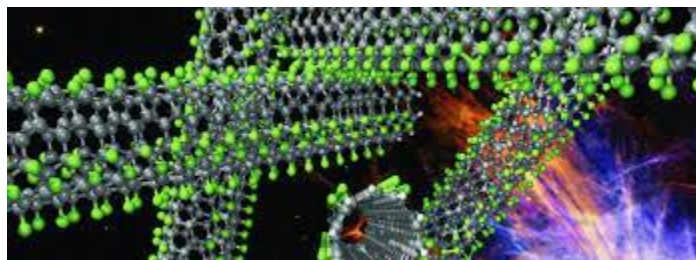
We are on this incredible journey to discover our true nature.

We are out of balance and yet we can learn how to be in balance.

These are exciting times.

Millions of people are waking up.

You are your own master chemist



Did you know that Buddhists have been studying the art and science of happiness for thousands of years? They were probably one of the first to talk about that you are your own master chemist.

Buddha once said that when you get angry you are drinking your own poison. In the last 30 years, western scientists are on board with this. They know that over 1500 stress hormones get released into the body.

Recently I finished the book *You are your own master chemist*. From the YouTube video, I learned that my book was in alignment with the Buddhist. Buddha was probably the best psychologist ever known. Granted he did not call himself that.

Yet they mapped out the states of mind that the western world is trying to catch up on. Just think it was only in the 1980s did western science study the science of happiness.

The east is thousands of years ahead of us when it comes to studying the mind. Lama Glen mentioned there are probably thousands of chemicals that exist that western science does not know about.

Only in a heightened state of awareness do these chemicals get produced by the brain. Remember your state of awareness determines your state of mind and body. If you are constantly stressed out one has no clue about the mind-body connection.

[Go to:](#)

Abstract

²⁴**Background:** Cocaine use is highly prevalent among homeless populations, yet little is known about how it is financed. This study examined associations of income sources with cocaine use and financing of drugs in a longitudinal evaluation of a homeless sample. **Methods:** A homeless sample was recruited systematically in St. Louis in 1999–2001 and longitudinally assessed annually over two years using the Diagnostic Interview Schedule and the Homeless Supplement, with urine drug testing. **Results:** More than half (55%) of participants with complete follow-up data ($N = 255/400$) had current year cocaine use. Current users spent nearly \$400 (half their income) in the last month on drugs at baseline. Benefits, welfare, and disability were negatively associated and employment and income from family/friends, panhandling, and other illegal activities were positively associated with cocaine use and monetary expenditures for cocaine. **Conclusions:** Findings suggest that illegal and informal income-generating activities are primary sources for immediate gratification with cocaine use and public entitlements do not appear to be primary funding sources used by homeless populations. Policy linking drug testing to benefits is likely to have little utility, and public expenditures on measures to unlink drug use and income might be more effectively used to fund employment and treatment programs.

Keywords: homelessness, substance use, cocaine, financing, income, public entitlements, longitudinal, diagnostic assessment, urine drug testing, panhandling

[Go to:](#)

²⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5746683/>

1. Introduction

Members of homeless populations by definition lack sufficient income to maintain secure housing. However, substance use and abuse are highly prevalent in homeless populations [1,2,3,4], implying that sources of funding must be available for obtaining substances of abuse. In particular, homeless populations have been demonstrated to have a very high prevalence of cocaine use [5,6,7,8]. Several studies have examined various sources of income in homeless populations and reported income to be associated with substance use. A homeless study conducted in Alameda County, California found that informal sources of income such as income from panhandling and other illegal activities to be the most frequent sources of current income, especially among those with current year substance use disorders [9]. Multivariate analysis of data from homeless studies conducted in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia found that alcohol and drug use disorders were associated with income from odd jobs and illegal activities [10]. Studies of street-involved youth have found that risky (illegal or quasi-legal) income-generating activities (e.g., sex work, salvaging/recycling, solicitation of donations for small services, panhandling, drug dealing, theft, and other criminal activities to generate income) are highly prevalent and are further associated with drug use [11,12,13].

These findings are consistent with research on the relationship of income and drug use in more general populations. Individuals addicted to narcotics are well known to derive the bulk of their income from criminal activities [14]. A multisite study of female crack cocaine users found that 70% of the women exchanged sex for drugs [15]. A multisite study of social security income recipients revealed that urine samples were 28% more often positive for cocaine in the first ten days of the month compared to the rest of the month, suggesting a temporal relationship between cocaine use and availability of income [16].

The findings from this limited body of research suggest the need for further exploration of the relationship between drug use and its financing specifically in homeless populations whose financial resources

are ostensibly limited. Additionally, there is need to examine how cocaine in particular is financed in homeless populations, because of the remarkably high prevalence of cocaine use demonstrated in this population [7,8], in the context of the expense of this drug. Therefore, this study examined associations of income sources with cocaine use and monetary expenditures for drugs in a longitudinal evaluation of a systematically recruited sample of homeless people assessed annually over two years.

[Read more article](#)

EXPLORE

[Brighten their holiday. Enrich their everyday. Give The Atlantic](#)



A resident of Skid Row, in Los Angeles, holding crystal methamphetamine, in August 2021 (Rachel Bujalski for The Atlantic)

‘I DON’T KNOW THAT I WOULD EVEN CALL IT METH ANYMORE’

Different chemically than it was a decade ago, the drug is creating a wave of severe mental illness and worsening America’s homelessness problem.

By Sam Quinones

OCTOBER 18, 2021

SHARE

²⁵IN THE FALL OF 2006, law enforcement on the southwest border of the United States seized some crystal methamphetamine. In due course, a five-gram sample of that seizure landed on the desk of a 31-year-old chemist named Joe Bozenko, at the Drug Enforcement Administration lab outside Washington, D.C.



Organic chemistry can be endlessly manipulated, with compounds that, like Lego bricks, can be used to build almost anything. The field seems to breed folks whose every waking minute is spent puzzling over chemical reactions. Bozenko, a garrulous man with a wide smile, worked in the

²⁵ [A New, Cheaper Form of Meth Is Wreaking Havoc on America - The Atlantic](#)

DEA lab during the day and taught chemistry at a local university in the evenings. “Chemist by day, chemist by night,” his Twitter bio once read.

Bozenko had joined the DEA seven years earlier, just as the global underworld was veering toward synthetic drugs and away from their plant-based cousins. Bozenko’s job was to understand the thinking of black-market chemists, samples of whose work were regularly plopped on his desk. He analyzed what they produced and worked out how they did it. In time, Bozenko began traveling abroad to clandestine labs after they’d been seized. His first foreign assignment was at a lab that had made the stimulant MDMA in Jakarta, Indonesia. He saw the world through the protective goggles of a hazmat suit, sifting through the remains of illegal labs in three dozen countries.



The Least Of Us: True Tales Of America And Hope In The Age Of Fentanyl And Meth SAM QUINONES, BLOOMSBURY PUBLISHING

BUY BOOK

When you buy a book using a link on this page, we receive a commission. Thank you for supporting *The Atlantic*.

Meth was the drug that Bozenko analyzed most in the early years of his job. Large quantities of it were coming up out of Mexico, where traffickers had industrialized production, and into the American Southwest. All of the stuff Bozenko analyzed was made from ephedrine, a natural substance commonly found in decongestants and derived from the ephedra plant, which was used for millennia as a stimulant and an anti-asthmatic. A Japanese researcher had first altered the ephedrine molecule to synthesize crystal methamphetamine in 1919. During World War II, it was marketed in Japan as *hiropon*, a word that combines the

Japanese terms for “fatigue” and “fly away.” *Hiropon* was given to Japanese soldiers to increase alertness.

In the early 1980s, the ephedrine method for making meth was rediscovered by the American criminal world. Ephedrine was the active ingredient in the over-the-counter decongestant Sudafed, and a long boom in meth supply followed. But the sample that arrived on Bozenko’s desk that day in 2006 was not made from ephedrine, which was growing harder to come by as both the U.S. and Mexico clamped down on it.

There was another way to make methamphetamine. Before the ephedrine method had been rediscovered, this other method had been used by the Hell’s Angels and other biker gangs, which had dominated a much smaller meth trade into the ’80s. Its essential chemical was a clear liquid called phenyl-2-propanone—P2P. Many combinations of chemicals could be used to make P2P. Most of these chemicals were legal, cheap, and toxic: cyanide, lye, mercury, sulfuric acid, hydrochloric acid, nitrostyrene. The P2P process of making meth was complicated and volatile. The bikers’ cooking method gave off a smell so rank that it could only be done in rural or desert outposts, and the market for their product was limited.

Bozenko tinkered with his sample for two or three days. He realized it had been made with the P2P method, which he had not seen employed. Still, that was not the most startling aspect of the sample. There was something else about those few grams that, to Bozenko, heralded a changed world.

Among the drawbacks of the P2P method is that it produces two kinds of methamphetamine. One is known as d-methamphetamine, which is the stuff that makes you high. The other is l-methamphetamine, which makes the heart race but does little to the brain; it is waste product. Most cooks would likely want to get rid of the l-meth if they knew what it was.

But separating the two is tricky, beyond the skills of most clandestine chemists. And without doing so, the resulting drug is inferior to ephedrine-based meth. It makes your heart hammer without offering as potent a high.

RECOMMENDED READING



How DEA Agents Took Down Mexico's Most Vicious Drug Cartel

DAVID EPSTEIN AND PROPUBLICA



The Irrationality of Alcoholics Anonymous

GABRIELLE GLASER



The Experiment Podcast: Doing Drugs as a Human Right

Bozenko's sample contained mostly d-methamphetamine. Someone had removed most of the l-meth. "I've taken down labs in several continents," Bozenko told me years later. No one in the criminal world, as far as he and his colleagues knew, had ever figured out how to separate d-meth from l-meth before.

Back in the late '80s and '90s, when the ephedrine method had taken over, the market for meth had grown because of ephedrine's

availability—and because the substance could be transformed into meth with ease and efficiency. All you had to do was tweak the ephedrine molecule, and doing that required little more than following a recipe. But you had to have ephedrine.

The P2P method offered traffickers one huge advantage: The chemicals that could be used to make it were also used in a wide array of industries—among them racing fuel, tanning, gold mining, perfume, and photography. Law enforcement couldn't restrict all these chemicals the way it had with ephedrine, not without damaging legitimate sectors of the economy. And a trained organic chemist could make P2P, the essential ingredient, in many ways. It was impossible to say how many methods of making P2P a creative chemist might come up with. Bozenko counted a dozen or so at first. He put them up in a large diagram on his office wall, and kept adding Post-it Notes with new ones as they appeared.

As Bozenko dissected that sample in 2006, its implications hit him. Drugs made in a lab were not subject to weather or soil or season, only to chemical availability: With this new method and full access to the world's chemical markets through Mexican shipping ports, traffickers could ramp up production of P2P meth in quantities that were, effectively, limitless.

Even so, Bozenko couldn't have anticipated just how widely the meth epidemic would reach some 15 years later, or how it would come to interact with the opioid epidemic, which was then gaining force. And he couldn't know how strongly it would contribute to related scourges now very much evident in America—epidemics of mental illness and homelessness that year by year are growing worse.



Joe Bozenko at the DEA Special Testing and Research Laboratory in Virginia
(Gabriella Demczuk for *The Atlantic*)

A FEW MONTHS after Bozenko's discovery, on December 15, 2006, in a town named Tlajomulco de Zúñiga in the central-Mexican state of Jalisco, a methamphetamine lab exploded. Firefighters responded to the blaze, at a warehouse where plastic dinnerware had once been made. No one was hurt in the fire, nor was anyone arrested. But a fire chief called the local DEA office.

Abe Perez supervised the DEA's Guadalajara office back then. The warehouse stood on a cul-de-sac at the end of a house-lined street, Perez, who is now retired, remembered years later. Residents "knew something was going on; the smells were giving them headaches," Perez told me. But they were afraid to say anything. So they lived with it as best they could until the warehouse exploded, most likely because of a worker's carelessness.

Perez and his agents urged Mexican police and prosecutors to obtain a search warrant for the building. The process was slow, and the day ended with no warrant. That night another fire erupted, at a warehouse across the street that, the agents learned, contained chemicals in blue plastic barrels and in bags neatly stacked on pallets. "The traffickers came in the middle of the night with gasoline and burned it, burned all the evidence," Perez said. "But we were able to get photos of the place."

Eduardo Chávez, another DEA agent, flew in from Mexico City the next afternoon. He and Perez stood outside the second smoldering warehouse. Each man had spent the early part of his career busting meth labs in rural California—Chávez in the area around Bakersfield, Perez in northeastern San Diego County.

That had been a different era, and each had gotten a rare view into it. Bakersfield was Chávez's first assignment, in 2000, and to his surprise, it was a hotbed of meth production. Southern California was where the

ephedrine-based method had been rediscovered, largely due to the efforts of an ingenious criminal named Donald Stenger. Stenger died in 1988, in custody in San Diego County, after a packet of meth he'd inserted in his rectum broke open. But the ephedrine method had by then become more widely known and adopted by Mexican traffickers moving up and down the coast between Mexico and California.

From the January/February 2016 issue: How DEA agents took down Mexico's most vicious drug cartel

The Mexican meth industry had been pioneered in that earlier time by two brothers, Luis and Jesús Amezcua. They came to California illegally as kids, and eventually ran an auto shop near San Diego. The story goes that a local meth cook dropped by their shop in about 1988, asking Jesús if he could bring in ephedrine from Mexico. Jesús at the time was smuggling Colombian cocaine. But he brought ephedrine north and, with that, became attuned to the market that had been opened by Stenger's innovation.

Ephedrine was then an unregulated chemical in Mexico. Within a few years, the Amezcuas were importing tons of it. Jesús traveled to India and Thailand, where he set up an office to handle his ephedrine exports. Later, his focus shifted to China and the Czech Republic.

The Amezcuas' meth career lasted about a decade, until cases brought against them landed them in a Mexican prison, where they remain. But the brothers marked a new way of thinking among Mexican traffickers. They were more interested in business deals and alliances than in the vengeance and endless shoot-outs so common to the previous generation of smugglers, who had trafficked mostly in marijuana and cocaine. The Amezcuas were the first Mexican traffickers to understand the profit potential of a synthetic drug, and the first to tap the global economy for chemical connections.

At first, the brothers ran labs on both sides of the border. They set up many in California's rural Central Valley—Eduardo Chávez's territory—making use of an existing network of traffickers among the truckers and migrant farmworkers that stretched up from San Diego. At one bust, agents found a man in protective garments with an air tank on his back. He turned out to be a veterinarian from Michoacán who said he came up for four-month stints to teach the workers to cook.

Hell's Angels cooks took three days to make five pounds of meth. Mexican crews soon learned to arrive at cook sites like NASCAR pit crews, with premeasured chemicals, large vats, and seasoned workers. They produced 10 to 15 pounds per cook in 24 hours in what came to be known as "super labs." Soon the biker gangs were buying their meth from the Mexicans.

But toward the end of Chávez's Bakersfield assignment, in 2004, the cooks and workers who'd been coming up from Mexico began to vanish. His informants told him that they were heading home. In California, law enforcement had made things hard; the job was getting too risky, the chemicals too hard to come by. The meth-cook migration would accelerate after Chávez left the state in 2004. Meth-lab seizures in the United States withered—from more than 10,000 that year to some 2,500 in 2008. Today in the United States, they are rare, and "super labs" are practically nonexistent. In Mexico, however, it was a different story.

The burned-down lab being surveyed by Chávez and Perez at the end of 2006 had been designed to produce industrial quantities of meth. Like many other labs that had been popping up in Mexico, it reflected the union of substantial capital and little concern for law enforcement. It used expensive equipment and stored large inventories of chemicals awaiting processing. Notes found on the scene suggested that the cooks typically got about 240 pounds per batch.

Like Joe Bozenko, the agents standing at the edge of the smoke and the stench that afternoon felt that they were glimpsing a new drug world. What struck them both was what they were not seeing. No ephedrine. The lab was set up exclusively to make P2P meth.

Working through all the chemicals on hand, by Bozenko's estimation, the lab could have produced 900 metric tons of methamphetamine.

What's more, this lab was not hidden up in the mountains or on a rural ranch. Tlajomulco de Zúñiga lies just 15 miles south of Guadalajara, one of Mexico's largest cities, and serves as home to the city's international airport. The area has everything needed to be a center of meth manufacturing: warehouses, transportation hubs, proximity to chemists. Trucks rumble through the area daily from the shipping ports in Lázaro Cárdenas, in the state of Michoacán, and Manzanillo, in the state of Colima.

The ephedrine method was still very much in use in 2006; Mexico, which had been reducing legal imports of ephedrine, wouldn't ban them outright until 2008; even after that, some traffickers relied on illegal shipments for a time. And despite all the advances when it came to making P2P, in at least some respects the traffickers "didn't know what they were doing yet," Chávez told me. The explosion showed that. Nonetheless, years later he thought back on that moment and realized that it was almost as if they were witnessing a shift right then, that week.

About five years after the Tlajomulco lab exploded, in June 2011, Mexican authorities discovered a massive P2P meth lab in the city of Querétaro, just a few hours north of Mexico City. It was in a warehouse that could have fit a 737, in an industrial park with roads wide enough for 18-wheelers; it made the Tlajomulco lab look tiny. Joe Bozenko and his colleague Steve Toske were called down from Washington to inspect it, and they wandered through it in awe. Bags of chemicals were stacked 30 feet high.

Hundreds of those bags contained a substance neither Bozenko nor Toske had ever thought could be used to make P2P. Bozenko often consulted a book that outlined chemicals that might serve as precursors to making methamphetamine, but this particular substance wasn't in it. Well-trained organic chemists were clearly improvising new ways to make the ingredients, expanding potential supply even further.

Working through all the chemicals in the plant, by Bozenko's estimation, the lab could have produced 900 metric tons of methamphetamine. Against a wall stood three 1,000-liter reactors, two stories tall.

Nothing like this had been achieved with ephedrine, nor could it have been; no one could have imagined the accumulation of 900 metric tons of the chemical. Later, Mexican investigators would report that of the 16 workers arrested at the Querétaro lab, 14 died over the next six months from liver failure—presumably caused by exposure to chemicals at the lab.



Meth and paraphernalia (*above*) inside a tent on Skid Row, in Los Angeles. The area encompasses about 50 square blocks of the city; tents (*below*) line many of its streets. (Rachel Bujalski for *The Atlantic*)

Methamphetamine was having a cultural moment in the U.S.—“meth mouth” had become an object of can’t-look-away fascination on the internet, and *Breaking Bad* was big. The switch from ephedrine-based labs to ones using the P2P method was even a plot point in the series. But few people outside the DEA really understood the consequences of this shift. Soon, tons of P2P meth were moving north, without any letup, and the price of meth collapsed. But there was more to the story than higher volume. Ephedrine meth tended to damage people gradually, over years. With the switchover to P2P meth, that damage seemed to accelerate, especially damage to the brain.

ONE NIGHT IN 2009, in Temecula, California, partway between San Diego and L.A., a longtime user of crystal meth named Eric Barrera felt the dope change.

Barrera is a stocky ex-Marine who’d grown up in the L.A. area. The meth he had been using for several years by then made him talkative and euphoric, made his scalp tingle. But that night, he was gripped with paranoia. His girlfriend, he was sure, had a man in her apartment. No one was in the apartment, she insisted. Barrera took a kitchen knife and began stabbing a sofa, certain the man was hiding there. Then he stabbed a mattress to tatters, and finally he began stabbing the walls, looking for this man he imagined was hiding inside. “That had never happened before,” he told me when I met him years later. Barrera was hardly alone in noting a change. Gang-member friends from his old neighborhood took to calling the meth that had begun to circulate in the area around that time “weirdo dope.”

[Read: A former meth addict talks about his experience with drug court](#)

Barrera had graduated from high school in 1998 and joined the Marine Corps. He was sent to Camp Lejeune, in North Carolina, where he was among the few nonwhite Marines in the platoon. The racism, he felt, was threatening and brazen. He asked for a transfer to Camp Pendleton, in San Diego County, and was denied. Over the next year and a half, he said, it got worse. Two years into his service, he was honorably discharged.

After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Barrera was filled with remorse that he hadn't stuck it out in the Corps. He was home now, without the heroic story he'd imagined for himself when he joined the Marines. The way he tells it, he drank and used meth to relieve his depression.

He'd sometimes stay up on meth for four or five days, and he had to make excuses for missing work. But until that point, he'd held his life together. He worked as a loan processor, then for an insurance company. He had an apartment, a souped-up Acura Integra, a lot of friends.

But as the meth changed around 2009, so did Barrera's life. His cravings for meth continued, but paranoia and delusions began to fill his days. "Those feelings of being chatty and wanting to talk go away," he told me. "All of a sudden you're stuck and you're in your head and you're there for hours." He said strange things to people. He couldn't hold a job. No one tolerated him for long. His girlfriend, then his mother, then his father kicked him out, followed by a string of friends who had welcomed him because he always had drugs. When he described his hallucinations, "my friends were like, 'I don't care how much dope you got, you can't stay here.'"

By 2012, massive quantities of meth were flowing into Southern California. That same year, 96 percent of the meth samples tested by DEA chemists were made using the P2P method. And, for the first time

in more than a decade of meth use, Barrera was homeless. He slept in his car and, for a while, in abandoned houses in Bakersfield. He was hearing voices. A Veterans Affairs psychologist diagnosed him with depression and symptoms of schizophrenia.

Even many years later, when I spoke with him, Barrera didn't know how the drug he was using had changed and spread, or why. But as a resident of Southern California, he was among the first to be affected by it. Over the next half-dozen years or so, the flood of P2P meth would spread east, immersing much of the rest of the country, too.

MENTION DRUG-RUNNING, and many people will think of cartels. Yet over the past decade, meth's rising availability did not result from the dictates of some underworld board of directors. Something far more powerful was at work, particularly in the Sinaloa area: a massive, unregulated free market.

By the time Eric Barrera's life began to collapse, something like a Silicon Valley of meth innovation, knowledge, skill, and production had formed in the states along Mexico's northern Pacific Coast. The deaths of kingpins who had controlled the trade, in the early 2010s, had only accelerated the process. "When the control vanishes, all these regional fiefdoms spring up," said a DEA supervisor who pursued Mexican trafficking organizations during these years. (He, like some other DEA agents I spoke with, asked that his name not be used, because of the dangerous nature of his work.) "We just started seeing more and more labs springing up everywhere." The new labs weren't all as enormous as the Querétaro lab that Bozenko had seen in 2011. But they multiplied quickly.

Beginning in about 2013 and continuing for the next several years, meth production expanded geometrically; the labs "just escape all limits," a member of the Sinaloan drug world told me. "In a five-square-kilometer area outside Culiacán [Sinaloa's capital city], there were, like, 20 labs. No

exaggeration. You go out to 15 kilometers, there's more than a hundred.”

Listening to traffickers on wiretaps, one DEA agent told me, made it clear just how loose the confederations of meth suppliers were by then. The cartels had not vanished, and many of these suppliers were likely paying one or another of them off. But the wires nonetheless revealed a pulsing ecosystem of independent brokers, truckers, packagers, pilots, shrimp-boat captains, mechanics, and tire-shop owners. In the United States, the system included meat-plant workers, money-wiring services, restaurants, farm foremen, drivers, safe houses, and used-car lots. The ecosystem harnessed the self-interest of each of these actors, who got paid only when deals got done.

“We'd waste hours listening on the wire,” the agent told me, “to people wasting their time calling around doing the networking as brokers, trying to set up drug deals, because they wanted to make money. There's a huge layer of brokers who are the driving force [in Mexican drug trafficking]. Maybe they own a business or restaurant in Mexico or in the U.S.—this is something they do to supplement income. A large percentage of drug deals at this level don't happen. But it's like salesmen—the more calls you make, the more people you know, the more sales you get. So four or five people will be involved in getting 50 kilos to some city in the United States. This guy knows a guy who knows a guy who has a cousin in Atlanta ... And with the independent transporters operating at the border, there's no cartel allegiance. They're all just making money.”

From 2015 to 2019, the Mexican military raided some 330 meth labs in Sinaloa alone. But arrests were rare, according to a person involved in targeting the labs. Far from being a deterrent, the raids showed that no one would pay a personal price, and more people entered the trade as a result. At one point in 2019, DEA intelligence held that, despite all the raids, at least 70 meth labs were operating in Sinaloa, each with the capacity to make tons of meth with every cook.

With labs popping up everywhere, the price of a pound of meth fell to nearly \$1,000 for the first time on U.S. streets by the late 2010s—a 90 percent drop from a decade earlier in many areas. Yet traffickers’ response to tumbling prices was to increase production, hoping to make up for lower prices with higher volume. Competition among producers also drove meth purity to record highs.

Methamphetamine damages the brain no matter how it is derived. But P2P meth seems to create a higher order of cerebral catastrophe.

Pot was part of this story too. As some American states legalized marijuana, Mexican pot revenue faltered. Many producers switched to making meth and found it liberating. Marijuana took months to grow, was bulky, and could rot. “But with crystal meth,” the member of the Sinaloan drug world told me, “in 10 days you’ve made it. It’s not as bulky as pot, so in two weeks you’re crossing the border with it. Within two or three months, you’re big.”

In the Southwest, the drug quickly became more prevalent than ever. And supply kept flowing east, covering the country in meth all the way to New England, which had almost none before the mid-2010s. Since late 2016, the Midwest and South have seen an especially dramatic shift. Mexican traffickers had never been able to get their hands on enough ephedrine to cover those regions, but now that was no longer an issue. In place after place, they made alliances with local dealers to introduce their product.



Left: A man inside his encampment on a Skid Row sidewalk, after taking a puff of meth. *Right:* Another resident of the same encampment, who attributes his homelessness to a cycle of meth use he cannot break. (Rachel Bujalski for *The Atlantic*)

The Louisville, Kentucky, area is one example. For years, Louisville had a paltry meth market. A pound of it sold for \$14,000. Then Wiley Greenhill went to prison. Greenhill was a minor drug dealer in Detroit who had come to Louisville in 1999, attracted by Kentucky's vibrant street market for pain pills, which were fetching five times what they sold for in Detroit.

He eventually landed at the Roederer Correctional Complex, north of Louisville, where he struck up a friendship with an inmate from California. The inmate's father, a businessman from Southern California named Jose Prieto, had gotten into debt with the wrong people from Sinaloa. The Sinaloans told Prieto that to settle his debt, he had to sell their meth. Greenhill was given the opportunity to buy it.

By 2016 Greenhill was out of prison, and the meth began to flow. At first Prieto sent small quantities through the mail. Soon the loads reached 50 to 100 pounds a month, driven east by women Greenhill hired.

Prieto proved eager to get his product out. He fronted Greenhill hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of meth on the promise that he would be repaid. Tim Fritz, a DEA agent who investigated the Prieto-Greenhill ring, told me, "Jose Prieto would say, 'Whatever you need, we got it. Whatever you buy, I'll double it. You want 10 pounds, I'll give you 20—pay me later.'"

As months passed, the Louisville meth market expanded beyond anything the region had seen before. The trade spread to southern Indiana and nearby counties in Kentucky as the number of customers grew. Other local traffickers began to import meth as well. The price of a pound of meth fell to about \$1,200, less than a tenth of what it had been just a few years earlier.

At the MORE Center, a Louisville clinic set up to treat pain-pill and heroin addicts, patients started coming in on meth. Before the Prieto-Greenhill connection, only two of counselor Jennifer Grzesik's patients were using meth. Within three years, almost 90 percent of new patients coming to the clinic had meth in their drug screen. "I don't remember having any homeless people in my caseload before 2016," she told me. But 20 percent of her clients now are homeless.

Greenhill and Prieto were arrested in 2018 and 2019, respectively, and are now serving lengthy federal-prison terms. They left behind a transformed market. Primed by the new supply, meth demand has exploded, in turn drawing more dealers who have found their own supply connections. The price of a pound of meth remains low. To compete, some Louisville meth dealers now offer free delivery; others offer syringes already loaded with liquid meth so users can immediately shoot up. Similar partnerships, arrangements, and retail innovations have transformed regional drug markets across the U.S.

HABITS, ONCE ENTRENCHED, are difficult to change. If they weren't, more Americans would have quit smoking soon after 1964, when the U.S. surgeon general issued his first report on its risks. American nicotine addicts kept smoking because nicotine had changed their brain chemistry, and cigarettes were everywhere. We stopped people from smoking, argues Wendy Wood, a psychologist at the University of Southern California and the author of a book on habituation, by adding “friction” to the activity—making it harder to do or limiting access to supply. We removed cigarette vending machines, banned smoking in public spaces. By adding friction to smoking, we also removed cues that prompted people to smoke: bars where booze, friends, and cigarettes went together, for example.

Something like the opposite of that has happened with P2P methamphetamine. “Meth reminds me of what alcoholics go through,” Matt Scharf, the director of recovery programs at Midnight Mission, a Los Angeles treatment center, told me. “There’s alcohol everywhere. Meth is now so readily available. There’s an availability to it that is not the case with heroin or crack. It’s everywhere.”

All of that meth has been pushed into a market already softened up by the opioid epidemic. That should not have mattered: Historically, meth and opioid users had been separate groups with different cultures, and the drugs affect the brain’s reward pathways differently. But as large supplies of P2P meth began to arrive, many opioid addicts already feared for their life. Fentanyl, a dangerous synthetic opioid, was also spreading quickly. For many, Suboxone—which blocks opiate receptors and hence eliminates opioid cravings—was a lifesaver. They use it daily, the way a heart patient uses daily blood thinners to stay alive. Yet the counseling and continuum of care required to support the broader life changes necessary for addiction recovery are often absent.

From the May 2019 issue: Sam Quinones on how physicians get addicted too

Thus, as P2P meth spread nationwide, an unprecedented event took place in American drug use: Opioid addicts began to shift, en masse, to meth. Meth overdoses have risen rapidly in recent years, but they are much less common than opioid ODs—you don't typically overdose and die on meth; you decay. By 2019, in the course of my reporting, I was routinely coming into contact with people in Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, and West Virginia who were using Suboxone to control their opiate cravings from long-standing addiction to pain pills and heroin, while using methamphetamine to get high. Massive supplies of cheap P2P meth had created demand for a stimulant out of a market for a depressant. In the process, traffickers forged a new population of mentally ill Americans.

OVER THE PAST YEAR and a half, I've talked with meth addicts, counselors, and cops around the country. The people I spoke with told me stories nearly identical to Eric Barrera's: P2P-meth use was quickly causing steep deterioration in mental health. The symptoms were always similar: violent paranoia, hallucinations, conspiracy theories, isolation, massive memory loss, jumbled speech. Methamphetamine is a neurotoxin—it damages the brain no matter how it is derived. But P2P meth seems to create a higher order of cerebral catastrophe. "I don't know that I would even call it meth anymore," Ken Vick, the director of a drug-treatment center in Kansas City, Missouri, told me. Schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are afflictions that begin in the young. Now people in their 30s and 40s with no prior history of mental illness seemed to be going mad.



Eric Barrera, now an outreach worker to homeless military veterans on Skid Row, had used meth for years before the flood of P2P meth hit. His mental health took a sharp downward turn. (Rachel Bujalski for *The Atlantic*)

Portland, Oregon, began seeing the flood of meth around 2013. By January 2020, the city had to close its downtown sobering station. The station had opened in 1985 as a place for alcoholics to sober up for six to eight hours, but it was unequipped to handle people addicted to P2P meth. “The degree of mental-health disturbance; the wave of psychosis; the profound, profound disorganization [is something] I’ve never seen before,” Rachel Solotaroff, the CEO of Central City Concern, the social-service nonprofit that ran the station, told me. Solotaroff was among the first people I spoke with. She sounded overwhelmed. “If they’re not raging and agitated, they can be completely noncommunicative. Treating addiction [relies] on your ability to have a connection with someone. But I’ve never experienced something like this—where there’s no way in to that person.”

On Skid Row in Los Angeles, crack had been the drug of choice for decades. Dislodging it took some time. But by 2014 the new meth was everywhere. When that happened, “it seemed that people were losing their minds faster,” a Los Angeles Police Department beat officer named Deon Joseph told me. Joseph had worked Skid Row for 22 years. “They’d be okay when they were just using crack,” Joseph said. “Then in 2014, with meth, all of a sudden they became mentally ill. They deteriorated into mental illness faster than I ever saw with crack cocaine.”

Susan Partovi has been a physician for homeless people in Los Angeles since 2003. She noticed increasing mental illness—schizophrenia, bipolar disorder—at her clinics around the city starting in about 2012. She was soon astonished by “how many severely mentally ill people were out there,” Partovi told me. “Now almost everyone we see when we do

homeless outreach on the streets is on meth. Meth may now be causing long-term psychosis, similar to schizophrenia, that lasts even after they're not using anymore."

I called James Mahoney, a neuropsychologist at West Virginia University who had studied the effects of ephedrine meth on the brain in the early 2000s at UCLA. The psychosis he saw then was bad, he said, but it frequently appeared to be the result of extended sleep deprivation. In 2016, Mahoney took a job as a drug researcher and specialist in WVU's addiction clinic. Less than a year later, the P2P crystal meth from Mexico started showing up. Mahoney was inundated with meth patients who came in ranting, conversing with phantoms. "I can't even compare it to what I was seeing at UCLA," he told me. "Now we're seeing it instantaneously, within hours, in people who just used: psychotic symptoms, hallucinations, delusions."

In community after community, I heard stories like this. Southwest Virginia hadn't seen much meth for almost a decade when suddenly, in about 2017, "we started to see people go into the state mental-hospital system who were just grossly psychotic," Eric Greene, then a drug counselor in the area, told me. "Since then, it's caused a crisis in our state mental-health hospitals. It's difficult for the truly mentally ill to get care because the facilities are full of people who are on meth."

Mitchell told me that the most visible homelessness—people sleeping on sidewalks, or in the tents that now crowd many of the neighborhoods in L.A.—was clearly due to the new meth.

Symptoms could fade once users purged the drug, if they did not relapse. But while they were on this new meth, they grew antisocial, all but mute. I spoke with two recovering meth addicts who said they had to relearn how to speak. "It took me a year and a half to recover from the brain damage it had done to me," one of them said. "I couldn't hardly form sentences. I couldn't laugh, smile. I couldn't think."

I spoke with Jennie Jobe, from rural Morgan County, in eastern Tennessee. Jobe had spent 20 years working in state prisons when she started a drug court and associated residential treatment center in 2013.

For its first few years, Jobe's court handled meth addicts who got their drugs from local "shake and bake" manufacturers— small-batch cooks using Sudafed, and usually producing just a few grams of the drug at a time. These meth users were gaunt, she remembers, and picked at their skin. But they were animated, lucid, with memories and personalities intact when they arrived at her facility, detoxed after months in jail.

By 2017, however, people were coming to her treatment center stripped of human energy, even after several months spent detoxing from the drug in jail. "Normal recreational activities where guys talk trash and have fun—there's none of that. It's like their brain cannot fire."

Treating them was daunting. Despite years of research, science has found no equivalent of methadone or Suboxone to help subdue meth cravings and allow people addicted to the drug a chance to break from it and begin repairing their life. And, like many others I spoke with, Jobe found that the human connection essential to successful drug treatment was almost impossible to establish. "It takes longer for them to actually be here mentally," Jobe said. "Before, we didn't keep anybody more than nine months. Now we're running up to 14 months, because it's not until six or nine months that we finally find out who we got." Some can't remember their life before jail. "It's not unusual for them to ask what they were found guilty of and sentenced to," she said.

Why is P2P meth producing such pronounced symptoms of mental illness in so many people? No one I spoke with knew for sure. One theory is that much of the meth contains residue of toxic chemicals used in its production, or other contaminants. Even traces of certain chemicals, in a relatively pure drug, might be devastating. The sheer number of users is up, too, and the abundance and low price of P2P

meth may enable more continual use among them. That, combined with the drug's potency today, might accelerate the mental deterioration that ephedrine-based meth can also produce, though usually over a period of months or years, not weeks. Meth and opioids (or other drugs) might also interact in particularly toxic ways. I don't know of any study comparing the behavior of users—or rats for that matter—on meth made with ephedrine versus meth made with P2P. This now seems a crucial national question.

ONCE YOUR EYES are open to the scale and human consequences of the P2P-meth epidemic, it's hard to miss its ramifications in many areas of American public life.

Perhaps the most significant is homelessness.

In 2012, a Los Angeles Superior Court judge, Craig Mitchell, founded L.A.'s Skid Row Running Club. Every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday, 20 to 50 people—recovering addicts, cops, public defenders, social workers—meet around dawn in front of a local shelter to run for an hour through the greatest concentration of homeless people in the United States. The club's broader mission is to support the area's homeless community through mentorship and a focus on wellness.



Top: Barrera, distributing socks on Skid Row. Bottom: The Skid Row Running Club—recovering addicts, cops, social workers—seeks to support the area’s homeless through mentorship and a focus on wellness. (Rachel Bujalski for The Atlantic)

Los Angeles has long been the nation’s homelessness capital, but as in many cities—large and small—the problem has worsened greatly in recent years. In the L.A. area, homelessness more than doubled from 2012 to 2020. Mitchell told me that the most visible homelessness—people sleeping on sidewalks, or in the tents that now crowd many of the city’s neighborhoods—was clearly due to the new meth. “There was a sea change with respect to meth being the main drug of choice beginning in about 2008,” he said. Now “it’s the No. 1 drug.”

Remarkably, meth rarely comes up in city discussions on homelessness, or in newspaper articles about it. Mitchell called it “the elephant in the room”—nobody wants to talk about it, he said. “There’s a desire not to stigmatize the homeless as drug users.” Policy makers and advocates instead prefer to focus on L.A.’s cost of housing, which is very high but hardly relevant to people rendered psychotic and unemployable by methamphetamine.

Addiction and mental illness have always been contributors to homelessness. P2P meth seems to produce those conditions quickly. “It took me 12 years of using before I was homeless,” Talie Wenick, a counselor in Bend, Oregon, who began using ephedrine-based meth in 1993 and has been clean for 15 years, told me. “Now within a year they’re homeless. So many homeless camps have popped up around Central Oregon—huge camps on Bureau of Land Management land, with tents and campers and roads they’ve cleared themselves. And almost everyone’s using. You’re trying to help someone get clean, and they live in a camp where almost everyone is using.”

Eric Barrera is now a member of Judge Mitchell’s running club. Through the VA, he got treatment for his meth addiction and found housing; without meth, he was able to keep it. The voices in his head went away.

He volunteered at a treatment center, which eventually hired him as an outreach worker, looking for vets in the encampments.

Barrera told me that every story he hears in the course of his work is complex; homelessness, of course, has many roots. Some people he has met were disabled and couldn't work, or were just out of prison. Others had lost jobs or health insurance and couldn't pay for both rent and the surgeries or medications they needed. They'd scraped by until a landlord had raised their rent. Some kept their cars to sleep in, or had welcoming families who offered a couch or a bed in a garage. Barrera thought of them as invisible, the hidden homeless, the shredded-safety-net homeless.

But Barrera also told me that for a lot of the residents of Skid Row's tent encampments, meth was a major reason they were there and couldn't leave. Such was the pull. Some were addicted to other things: crack or heroin, alcohol or gambling. Many of them used any drug available. But what Barrera encountered the most was meth.

Tents themselves seem to play a role in this phenomenon. Tents protect many homeless people from the elements. But tents and the new meth seem made for each other. With a tent, the user can retreat not just mentally from the world but physically. Encampments provide a community for users, creating the kinds of environmental cues that the USC psychologist Wendy Wood finds crucial in forming and maintaining habits. They are often places where addicts flee from treatment, where they can find approval for their meth use.

In Los Angeles, the city's unwillingness, or inability under judicial rulings, to remove the tents has allowed encampments to persist for weeks or months, though a recent law allows for more proactive action. In this environment, given the realities of addiction, the worst sorts of exploitation have sometimes followed. In 2020, I spoke with Ariel, a transgender woman then in rehab, who had come to Los Angeles from a

small suburb of a midsize American city four years before. She had arrived hoping for gender-confirmation surgery and saddled with a meth habit. She eventually ended up alone on Hollywood's streets. "There's these camps in Hollywood, on Vine and other streets—distinct tent camps," she said, where women on meth are commonly pimped. "A lot of people who aren't homeless have these tents. They come from out of the area to sell drugs, move guns, prostitute girls out of the tents. The last guy I was getting worked out by, he was charging people \$25 a night to use his tents. He would give you girls, me and three other people. He'd take the money and we'd get paid in drugs."

Megan Schabbing, a psychiatrist and the medical director of emergency psychiatric services at OhioHealth, in Columbus, Ohio, later described to me how meth use and this sort of suffering can reinforce each other. Schabbing spends much of her time on the job digging into the underlying causes of drug use among those who end up in the ER. Often there was trauma: beatings, molestation, rape, war deployment, childhood chaos, neglect. For many of these patients, she discovered, the delusions fueled by meth became the point—the drug's attraction. "Many would tell me, 'I can stay out of reality on the street'" by using meth, she said. "When they come to us, it takes them days to figure out who and where they are. But some patients have told me that's not a bad thing if you're on the street."

If P2P meth pushed her patients toward homelessness, it also helped them bear it.

HOW COULD THIS crisis emerge so quietly and remain, in many ways, invisible to most Americans? One reason, perhaps, is the national focus on the opioid epidemic, which was itself ignored for a long time. In recent years, the headlines have been about pain-pill or heroin overdoses, then fentanyl overdoses, and the funding has followed. Besides, deaths, however tragic, allow for memorials, a chance to remember the deceased's better days. Meth doesn't kill people at nearly the same rate as

opioids. It presents, instead, the rawest face of living addiction. That part of addiction, one counselor told me, “people don’t want to touch it.”

There is no central villain in the P2P-meth story—no Purdue Pharma, no dominant cartel. There’s no single entity to target, either. So the issue is often enveloped in a willful myopia. Advocates for homeless people seem reluctant to speak out about the drug, for fear that the downtrodden will be blamed for their troubles.



Left: A couple sits on a Skid Row sidewalk while a man sleeps next to them. *Right:* A woman near her tent in L.A., holding a wooden heart she found while searching for recyclables. She wants to kick her meth habit, she says, but cannot stop using. (Rachel Bujalski for *The Atlantic*)

The spread of P2P meth is part of a larger narrative—a shift in drug supply from plant-based drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, and heroin to synthetic drugs, which can be made anywhere, quickly, cheaply, and year-round. Underground chemists are continually seeking to develop more potent and addictive varieties of them. The use of mind-altering substances by humans is age-old, but we have entered a new era.

Drug demand is important in this new era. People need to understand what these drugs will ultimately do to them, and those who are using will need substantial help getting off them.

But it must be said: The story of the meth epidemic (like the opioid epidemic before it) begins with supply. In a previous era, most Vietnam vets kicked heroin when they got home and were far from war and the potent supplies they were used to in Southeast Asia. Today, supplies of meth are vast and cheap throughout much of the country.

Crystal meth is in some ways a metaphor for our times—times of anomie and isolation, of paranoia and delusion, of communities coming apart. Meth is not responsible for these much wider social problems, of course. But the meth epidemic is symptomatic of them, and also contributes to them.

If you spend time among meth users, you'll notice certain habits and tics: fixations on flashlights, for instance, and on bicycles, which are endlessly disassembled and assembled again. Hoodies are everywhere. The hoodie is versatile—cheap, warm, functional. But as opioids, then meth, spread across America, the hoodie also became, for many, a hiding place from a harsh world. “When we put up that hood,” one recovering addict told me, “we’re making the choice to separate ourselves from everyone else—instead of someone pushing us out. I think it’s our way to hide from the world that doesn’t accept us. The hood is the refuge. It’s our safe place.”

Perhaps the best defense against epidemics like this one lies in choosing to look more closely and more sympathetically at the people in those hoods—to put a higher priority on community than we’ve done in recent years. America has made itself more vulnerable to scourges, even as those scourges grow more potent. But scourges are also an opportunity: They call on us to reexamine how we live. Until we begin to look out for the most vulnerable among us, there’s no reason to expect them to abate.

This article is adapted from Sam Quinones's new book, The Least of Us: True Tales of America and Hope in the Time of Fentanyl and Meth. It appears in the November 2021 print edition with the headline "The New Meth." When you buy a book using a link on this page, we receive a commission. Thank you for supporting The Atlantic.

The Least Of Us: True Tales Of America And Hope In The Age Of Fentanyl And MethSAM QUINONES, BLOOMSBURY PUBLISHING

BUY BOOK

[Sam Quinones](#) is a Los Angeles–based journalist and the author of four books of narrative nonfiction, including his latest, [The Least of Us: True Tales of America and Hope in the Time of Fentanyl and Meth](#).

MOST POPULAR

The Future of American Warfare Is Unfolding in Ukraine

Aid to Ukrainian forces is achieving more than the long U.S. intervention in Afghanistan did.

PHILLIPS PAYSON O'BRIEN



Whoops, I Deleted My Life

A sense of panic set in when I realized I'd erased the entirety of my inbox.

THOMAS CHATTERTON WILLIAMS



Dolphins Might Have Elite Spice Tolerance

Chili-pepper-laced fishing nets can't keep the marine predators away.

SARAH KEARTES



Harassment in Economics Doesn't Stay in Economics

When women in the profession face mistreatment, everyone suffers.

ANNIE LOWREY



When Kids Have to Act Like Parents, It Affects Them for Life

Some people who have to be responsible for their siblings or parents as children grow up to be compulsive caretakers.

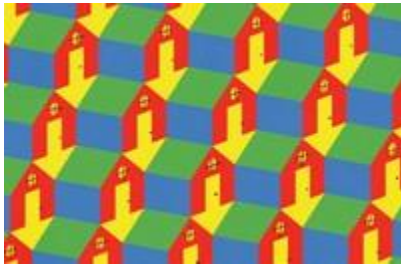
CINDY LAMOTHE



Housing Breaks People's Brains

Supply skepticism and shortage denialism are pushing against the actual solution to the housing crisis: building enough homes.

JERUSALEM DEMSAS



It's Gotten Awkward to Wear a Mask

“It’s like showing up in a weird hat.”

KATHERINE J. WU



How The Atlantic's Big Piece on Meth and Homelessness Gets It Wrong

By Ned Resnikoff on November 15, 2021

FacebookTwitterEmailShare

²⁶Via [Michael Hobbes's Twitter account](#), I see *The Atlantic* has published a lengthy article on a new strain of crystal meth that is said to be "[worsening America's homelessness problem](#)." The *Atlantic* piece is about a month old at this point, but I thought it would nonetheless be worth examining here. Primarily that's because it serves as a good showcase for several common misconceptions about homelessness.

The author of the *Atlantic* piece, Sam Quinones, is a veteran journalist and the author of two recent books about the opioid epidemic. (His *Atlantic* article was adapted from the more recent of the two.) I've been reliably informed that his reporting on this subject is terrific, and I have no reason to doubt that assessment. Indeed, Quinones is persuasive and compelling where his *Atlantic* piece details the rise of the P2P-based meth over its ephedrine-based competitor, and the havoc the more potent P2P-based form can wreak in people's lives. It is when he turns his attention to the homelessness crisis that his story begins to fall apart.

Quinones argues that P2P meth is fueling an increase in homelessness. He cites the following evidence to support this claim:

- Two personal narratives concerning Southern California residents whose meth addiction contributed to their descents into homelessness.
- Anecdotal reports from a beat cop and a physician who both note a rise in severe mental illness among homeless Skid Row residents and attribute this to increased meth use.
- The assessment of Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Craig Mitchell that, in Quinone's words, "the most visible homelessness—people sleeping on sidewalks, or in the tents that now crowd many of the city's neighborhoods—was clearly due to the new meth."

The piece includes a few gestures toward other possible causes of homelessness: "homelessness, of course, has many roots," Quinones concedes. But, citing Mitchell, he dismisses housing costs as "very high but hardly relevant to people rendered psychotic and unemployable by methamphetamine." Policymakers focus on housing costs and ignore substance use disorder (SUD) among the unhoused, he suggests, out of a soft-hearted desire to avoid stigmatizing unhoused people.

The story Quinones is telling about meth and homelessness can be broken into two parts. The first is a causal narrative that says widespread meth use is causing homelessness to increase in the aggregate. The second part is an argument that unhoused people with SUD face more barriers to getting out of homelessness. There is some truth to part two of Quinones's account, but part one is plainly false.

<https://homelessness.ucsf.edu/blog/how-atlantics-big-piece-meth-and-homelessness-gets-it-wrong>²⁶

What's Really Driving Homelessness

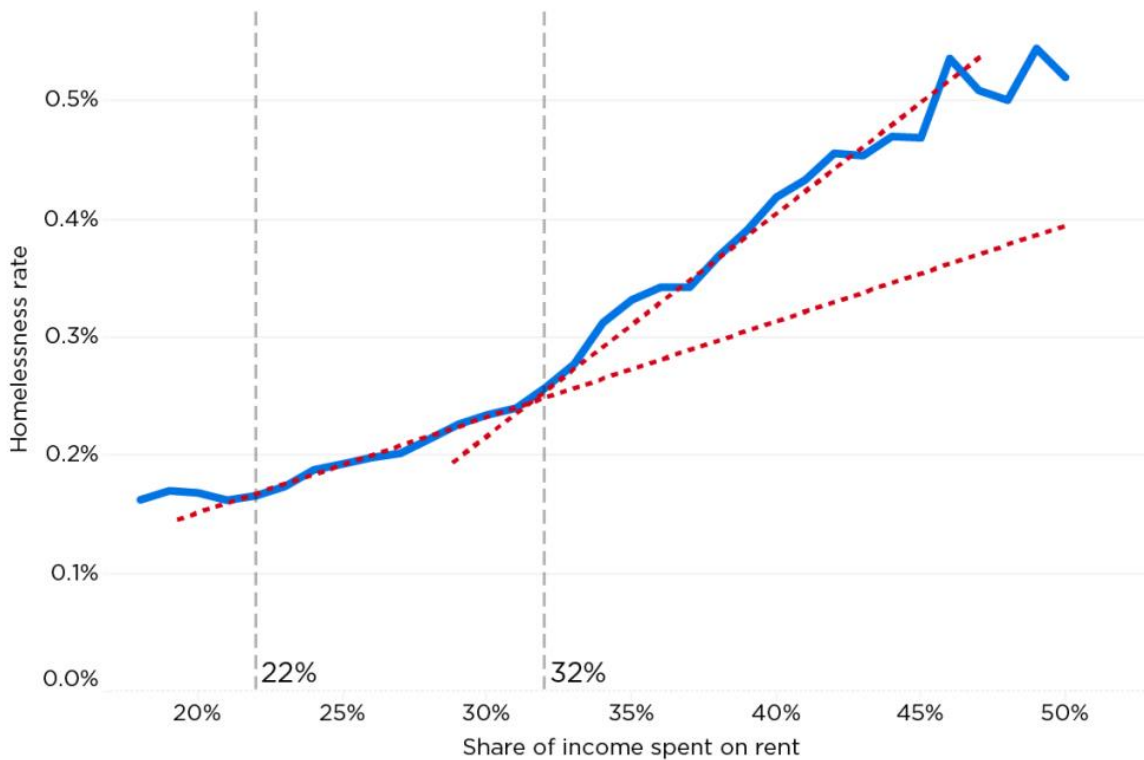
Here it is worth distinguishing between the *precipitants* of homelessness and the main *drivers* of homelessness. Precipitants of homelessness are particular and non-generalizable; they are the set of individual circumstances that cause a particular person to become homeless. SUD is a common precipitant. So is fleeing domestic violence, becoming unemployed, or getting hit with unexpected medical bills. The precipitants of homelessness can be some combination of structural factors, personal mistakes, and plain bad luck. They help explain why a particular person became homeless, but they aren't necessarily *drivers*; they can't tell us why the overall rate of homelessness is so much higher in California than it is in other states.

While SUD can be a precipitant of homelessness, it does not drive overall rates of homelessness. If it did, we would expect West Virginia—which [leads the nation in drug overdose deaths](#)—to have more homelessness on a per capita basis than California. But West Virginia actually has [one of the lowest rates of homelessness in the country](#). Why? Because housing in West Virginia is cheap. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the standard fair market monthly rent for a two bedroom unit was [\\$771 per month in West Virginia](#) and [\\$2,030 per month in California](#). At those prices, someone who is struggling—whether due to SUD or for some other reason—may be able to find housing in the former state when they would have become homeless in the latter.

Which brings us to the actual main driver of homelessness: housing unaffordability. The below graphic [from a report by Zillow's economics research arm](#) may not be as gripping as Quinones's prose, but it tells a more accurate story about why we've seen such dramatic increases in homelessness over the past several years.

Homelessness climbs faster when rent affordability reaches 22% and 32% thresholds

An uptick in rent affordability beyond 22 percent translates into more people experiencing homelessness. Beyond 32 percent means a faster-rising rate of homelessness — which could mean a homelessness crisis, unless there are mitigating factors within a community.



Zillow Economic Research | Source: An analysis by Zillow Research Fellow Chris Glynn of the University of New Hampshire, Thomas Byrne of Boston University and Dennis Culhane of the University of Pennsylvania.

Indeed, between 2012 and 2020—the time over which Los Angeles’s homeless population more than doubled in large part, Quinones argues, because of widespread meth usage—the city’s housing prices also [nearly doubled](#).

SUD, Homelessness, and Recovery

So much for Quinones’s causal story about the link between meth use and homelessness. The second part of his argument—that SUD can pose a significant barrier to ending homelessness for many unhoused people—fares better, though it is incomplete. While we don’t know exactly how many unhoused people struggle with SUD, it seems to afflict a particularly high share of the unsheltered population: a [2019 California Policy Lab report](#) estimated that roughly half of

unsheltered people in Los Angeles have an SUD, although the report's authors acknowledged significant limitations inherent in the dataset they were using. On top of those methodological challenges, is unclear how many of those people developed SUD before becoming unsheltered, and how many did after. In either case, it is undeniable that SUD can make it a lot harder to emerge out of homelessness, even with help. It may even be true that those with severe P2P meth dependencies are among the hardest people to help.

But it is simply wrong to suggest—as Quinones does, again paraphrasing Mitchell—that “nobody wants to talk about it.” In fact, there has been a ton of research on how to end homelessness for people with severe SUD. I highlighted some of that research in [an earlier blog post](#) describing the permanent supportive housing (PSH) model. As I summarized it then, PSH “prioritizes moving unhoused people with particularly high needs into permanent housing while also offering them a variety of optional services.”

I wrote:

My own favorite study of the PSH model—the study I find myself returning to again and again—comes from here at BHHI. [BHHI Director Margot Kushel], fellow BHHI faculty member Maria Raven, MD, and Matthew Niedzwiecki, PhD, conducted a randomized control trial of a PSH intervention offered in Santa Clara County on a Housing First basis. (For those who don't consume much social science research: Randomized control trials are just about the closest you can get to replicating ideal laboratory conditions when studying a policy intervention out in the field.) The target population for this intervention was people with extremely high needs; as the researchers noted [in their writeup of the study for *Health Services Review*](#), “Participants averaged five hospitalizations, 20 visits to the emergency department, five to psychiatric emergency services, and three to jail in the two years prior to being enrolled.”

In other words, this Housing First-aligned treatment was specifically for the hardest-to-treat members of Santa Clara's unhoused community. The results of the intervention were extraordinary: 86% of those who received the treatment were successfully housed and remained housed for the vast majority of the follow-up period (which averaged around three years). Similarly, there was a sharp drop in utilization of emergency psychiatric services among the treatment group, corresponding to a rise in scheduled mental health visits.

Not only does Housing First work, but the evidence shows that it can work for even the highest need population of people experiencing homelessness. The 86% success rate cited in the *Health Services Review* article, while impressive, actually understates the intervention's effectiveness. When BHHI researchers revisited Santa Clara for additional data, they found that *more than 90%* of participants had been housed and remained housed over the long term.

Rather than refusing to talk about the prevalence of SUD in California's unhoused population, researchers have been developing effective interventions; and policymakers and practitioners have been working to implement them.

None of this policy development has been happening in secret. In fact, a lot of interesting work has been happening in Los Angeles, where Quinones did much of his reporting. I already mentioned the Los Angeles branch of California Policy Lab; that is just one organization amid a

broader ecosystem of Los Angeles-based research institutes and service providers that includes the [Price Center for Social Innovation](#), the [St. Joseph Center](#), and, of course, the [Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority](#). It is a shame the *Atlantic* piece does not include any of their voices. Perhaps their voices could have clarified that the homelessness crisis is being driven first and foremost by housing unaffordability—and that there is no solution to homelessness without housing.

What percentage of homelessness is caused by drugs?

²⁷Most research shows that around **1/3** of people who are homeless have problems with alcohol and/or drugs, and around 2/3 of these people have lifetime histories of drug or alcohol use disorders. According to SAMHSA, 38% of homeless people abused alcohol while 26% abused other drugs. Sep 14, 2022

How does substance abuse play a role in homelessness?

²⁸Substance abuse often leads to homelessness. **Addictive disorders disrupt relationships with family and friends and can cause job loss.** For people struggling to pay their bills, the onset or exacerbation of an addiction may cause them to lose their housing.

Is there a correlation between poverty and drugs?

²⁹Although **there is no evidence that demonstrates cause and effect between poverty and addiction**, studies have shown that substance abuse is more common among individuals of lower economic status. Feb 7, 2020

What is the number one cause of homelessness in America?

³⁰**Lack of Affordable Housing** – There's a clear connection between the lack of affordable places to live, and the number of people living on the streets. More specifically, in cities and metropolitan areas.

²⁷ <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/homeless>

²⁸ <https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/nchav/resources/docs/mental-health/substance-abuse/Substance-Abuse-and-Homelessness-508.pdf>

²⁹ <https://www.addictioncenter.com/addiction/low-income-americans/>

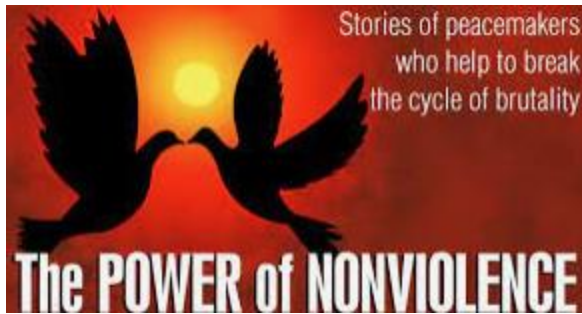
³⁰ <https://atlantamission.org/7-major-causes-homelessness/>

Las Vegas is 'uniquely American scene' - Fmr. FBI agent

But despite the elimination of the ban, the agency [has remained hesitant](#) to comprehensively research one of the most divisive issues in America. Many activists blame the influence that the NRA and other powerful pro-gun lobbies seem to have on some members of Congress, and the agency's fear that funding could be reduced or revoked.



Non-violence in your mind and body



What came first the chicken or the egg? The body and the mind are so tangled with each other. It's like a huge bundle of string. Imagine for each thought you have a series of chemical reactions get released into your bloodstream.

The Buddhist has the following saying. Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. You see each time we get angry a series of harmful chemicals gets released into the body. Some people are so out of sync that the facet never gets turned off.

Even if they want to it takes time, patience, and effort. Our subconscious is driving the show. If someone says something to you that you don't like you will automatically get angry.

The anger is wired directly into your body. By the time we reach the age of 35 our body is hardwired directly from the subconscious. It is driving the show. We are on auto-pilot. Habits good and bad are hardwired directly into our bodies. We are like leaves blowing in the wind.

Each morning we get up. We do the same thing over and over. It's like in the old days listening to a record and the album is scratched. It will play the same thing over and over and over.

This is our life. Even if we want to change we have to start to rewire our circuits consciously.

For that to happen, one must be able to break away from a beta state to change. You see a beta state of mind can't reach the subconscious. So if you say an affirmation to change it can't reach the subconscious to rewire the circuits.

This is where meditation comes in. A person who meditates learns over time how to connect to the quantum field.

The stronger the connection you have to this field the more capability you will have to rewire the human body. The scenarios are endless. It's up to your imagination. You have free will.

The quantum field doesn't judge us. Yet changing and rewiring your circuits require you to be in sync with love, kindness, patience, tolerance, and compassion. This is why it's so important to meditate. This is why it's so important to be conscious and aware of each moment.

The wise ones in the past would monitor their thoughts and actions. If they were in a situation where the person would say something to make them angry they would simply smile.

Why put gasoline on the fire? They understood that by getting angry they are drinking their poison. Yet this is difficult to do. That's why it takes constant training.

We have people in the office who will Twitter whatever comes to their minds. They don't know how to stop, look, and listen.

To be honest this was never taught in schools. Look at our nation today. Both sides are pissed off and can't work with one another. This is an emotionally immature society.

For the world to change for the better one must take responsibility and learn new ideas to discover their true nature.

We must all ponder over the state of mind we are in. As a society, we must discover ways to become mature adults. We must help those in need. We can do this. Millions of people are waking up from their slumber.

Emotions



Emotions can be scattered all over the place. Most of us are reactive beings. As you probably know by the time you are thirty-five your personality is usually set in stone.

Your subconscious is running the show. The body and mind are so ingrained. Our habits are driven by our subconscious. It's like we react

without being aware. Our subconscious has taken over.

Yes, that is a good thing and yet at the same time, it causes many problems in our life.

When we go through a traumatic experience in life it creates an emotional scare in our subconscious. All of us have traumas that have occurred in our lives. Many people may ask why this guy is so angry all the time.

Most of the time it was some event that happened years ago and never got resolved. The circuits are still hardwired to that event.

Humanity has been trying for years to learn how to go beyond our emotional issues.

Quantum field theory (QFT) extends quantum mechanics from single localized particles to fields that exist everywhere. These fields represent forces that permeate all of space and time.

In the quantum field, there is no trauma. In the quantum field, there is no anger, hatred, and negative emotions.

We are trying to solve our emotional issues using matter over matter. By using the quantum field to heal we are using kindness, love, and compassion to heal and transform ourselves.

We are using our free will to tap into the quantum field and rewire our nervous systems and our body.

Mystics have done this for thousands of years. Modern-day scientists are using the tools of mystics and combining them with scientific instruments and protocols.

These are exciting times for humanity. We are on the verge where it will be a common everyday practice to rewire our brain towards quantum awareness. We are only moments away. Yes, it will take time but the sun is rising.

Man will soon realize the harmful effects of negative thinking and negative emotions. They will see the practical evidence of how it has put a man in a downward spiral in life. We have been fighting for thousands of years. Need I say more?

Humanity is stuck on the merry-go-round of life. The mystics have declared there is a way around this mess that we created.

This is a divine video game. Once a person understands the rules and why the game was even created in the first place this person will simply smile.

We have free will. The message in this book is you are the universe. You just don't know it. Think outside of your box. The quantum field exists everywhere and that includes inside of you.

New Thought



Did you know that in every thought you have there is a chemical reaction to your thoughts? Your thoughts create who you are. They create your habits your personality and state of mind.

Your subconscious is driving your car in life. Most of us have put the car in the remote control. We aren't aware of the power that is keeping us alive.

We don't realize that we have a genie within. Every thought we have enforces our views on life. We are a collection of all our thoughts since we were born.

We contain the blueprints of all our thoughts. Our thoughts are where we stand today. It's kind of amazing that most of mankind has forgotten the power of thoughts.

We never ponder over what we think we become. We haven't put two and two together. I think without meditation mankind can't truly see the forest from the trees.

We are so much focused externally that we don't even know about the internal world within.

I don't have to say what happens when the world at large does this. We have been fighting for thousands of years. Many people think that man's nature. Well, it is if we as a world only focus externally. Need I say more?

Did you know that meditation over time will help slow down the mind? Many people have a hard time falling asleep. It is a major problem all around the world.

When the facet of adrenaline can't be turned off and you're in a high beta state of mind it's difficult to fall asleep.

The chemical melatonin can't be released. This chemical is responsible for telling the body to fall asleep. Many people take drugs to put them to sleep.

Unfortunately, the drugs will put them to sleep yet they are extremely harmful and over time causes tremendous damage to the body. Yet the drug industry is interested in making a profit.

Meditation brings one to the awareness of the quantum field. When one meditates one begins to tune in to a field of kindness, love, and compassion.

When one becomes kind this person will have over time kind thoughts. Life is like a tuning fork.

Whatever you think you vibrate at that frequency. If your thoughts are anger I can guarantee you will be in a state of anger.

You will enforce your anger into your subconscious. Over time this becomes your habit and this becomes your personality.

Many years ago I heard the Dalai Lama would go over his entire day when he was going to sleep. He would pay attention and think about how he could improve his thoughts and actions.

He would ponder over and consciously progress to be a better human being.

At that time I truly didn't understand it and see why it was so important. Years later I see it as a foundation for humans to transform. If we as a society become kind in all areas of life the world at large would change for the better.

So yes mediation is the key to helping transform our thoughts. When one begins to be aware and conscious of the quantum field the mind slowly begins to transform.

This is the ultimate brainwashing. You are learning how to clean the clothes of your mind. This is how true healing takes place. Because we are unconscious we live our life that is not in harmony. Consequently, our world at large is in chaos.

I remember I worked for a short time for a company that has a software program for heart surgeons. This program would guide them in certain heart procedures.

I remember asking the owner of the company why the health care industry didn't promote preventive medicine. His answer was the American public does not want this.

They expect doctors to heal them and not to take responsibility for their health issues.

This is how far off we are. A society that doesn't understand and know the quantum field is an immature society. Look at our political system. We want to

build a huge wall. The quantum field builds bridges. The quantum field does not judge. The quantum field is never angry. The quantum field does not know about war.

Because we are totally out of touch with our true nature this is where we stand today.

New thoughts will arise when humanity becomes to embrace the quantum field. All the wisdom to solve any problem lies in that field of intelligence.

You can only think based on your emotional maturity. The universe will only show and help based upon your awareness in life.

The more humanity taps into its true essence the more our world will transform. In the future, we will see that presently humanity is in a kindergarten state of awareness. We think we are at a high level.

We have these cell phones and think we are so advanced. But we use them for texting while we are driving our cars. We think we are so advanced. Our society thinks the indigenous people aren't civilized.

Yet they have been in harmony with Mother Earth for thousands of years. We are sawing the branch we are sitting on and are so smug in thinking we are superior.

Our egos have to lead us astray. Ponder this over. You are a piece of the puzzle.



I'm sorry to say but many people are locked into their boxes. Many people can only think inside their box. Take a look at American politics today. They are in shambles.

One side can't talk to the other side. Both sides say the other side is to blame. We are locked by our subconscious minds and we do the same thing over and over again. Our concepts of who we truly are are limited. They are archaic.

We are so focused externally that we have forgotten our true nature.

It's like we can't see the forest from the trees. We must be open to new concepts and ideas for society to progress to the next level in the video game of life.

Many people get stuck at a certain level in the video game and call that life. They have no idea that you can be aware and conscious of the quantum field.

The sun is about ready to come up for humanity. It has been a roller coaster of a ride for thousands of years. War has been going on, it seems like an eternity.

Yet millions of people are waking up from their slumber. A new dawn is occurring for mankind. Man is slowly evolving into a kind man.

When humanity understands that we are the universe incredible transformations will occur on this planet.

You see with greater transformations comes new concepts and ideas that will be developed and implemented on this planet. Take for example kindness. Many people think that kindness is weak yet the entire foundation of the universe is kind.

Slowly over time kindness will manifest in all areas of life. Take a look at politics today. The way politicians campaign today is to slander their opponents. We have politicians today who mock anyone who has a different point of view. Both sides of the party only vote on issues that support their party.

When true kindness comes into the picture people no longer will support anyone who is not kind to their opponent. They may have different points of view yet kindness allows a person to see through the other person's eyes.

Kindness leads to love and compassion. Kindness allows a person to think outside of the box. Kindness can solve any problem on earth. Every problem has a solution. If you are stuck in your belief system you will not be open to a practical solution even if it's staring you in the face.

For example, the quantum field is all around. You are the universe you just don't know it. Humanity must learn how to think outside of the box. We must learn how to be tolerant of all.

Light is winning the battle against darkness. Darkness is the absence of light. Currently, we are seeing chaos all around the world. Darkness has nowhere to hide.

New concepts and ideas are being presented all around the world. Millions of people are looking at life's problems and thinking about how to solve the problems on earth.

Each one of us holds an individual piece of the puzzle. What good would a puzzle be if the entire puzzle was put together yet your piece was missing?

Ponder this over. Learn to think outside of the box. Go beyond your comfort zone in life.

PDF



YouTube



New Wiring



Mankind is on an incredible journey. We are going from darkness to light. We are on a journey to discover our true nature. As I said we are hardwired to find God.

We have everything set in place. The car is there sitting in our garage. God is sitting patiently in the passenger seat. All it takes for you to use your remote control and open the garage door within.

You see it's only by your will alone can you open the garage door. Nobody will open the door for you including the one in your passenger seat. You see the law for human beings is free will. You must make the practical decision to use your will to open the door within.

Well, what does this have to do with new wiring? Our subconscious is running the show. Almost every action we take is automatic. We go to bed. Our alarm clock goes off.

We use the same hand to shut it off and go back to bed for five minutes. The alarm goes off again. We shut off the alarm. We stumble out of bed and go to the bathroom. We brush our teeth.

We are trying to wake up. Off to the kitchen, we go to brew some coffee. It's time to head off to work just in time for rush hour traffic. We make a few phone calls along the way. Some of us text when the cars are stopped. We make it to the office and do the same dull routines. I could go on and on.

Our daily routines in life are hardwired. We party on the weekends to release stress and wake up in the morning with a hangover.

Day by day, year by year we continue this routine. Our subconscious picks this up and reinforces it in our everyday life.

Our wiring is complete. This is our being and personality. You are a combination of all the thoughts you have ever had. Mankind is locked inside of his box.

So what is this new wiring you are talking about? Imagine you are the universe. You just don't know it. What if I told you that slowly you could rewire your circuits to understand and experience your true nature?

What if your true nature is part of the quantum field? It is part of the universe and God. What if I told you, you are magnificent?

Meditation is a way to directly rewire your circuits within. It is a way to slowly reprogram your subconscious. You are a computer programmer for your subconscious. You can transform and change into a butterfly.

I have said before the mind is like a tuning fork. Whatever it focuses on it will vibrate at that level.

Meditation allows one to tap into the quantum field which is infinite love, kindness, compassion, and tolerance. These are just a few traits.

The more one meditates these traits are rewired into our circuits and create new wiring within. One learns to stop, look, and listen to live. Every moment a person makes a conscious decision to act and be aware.

These lead to proactive human beings instead of reactive beings whose leaves are blowing in the wind.

One learns over time to be in the center of the hurricane instead of the 150 miles per hour of the winds of the mind.

Our world at large is stressed out. Yet the person who meditates slowly learns to be in the center of the hurricane. Yes, this takes time and effort.

But with the same time and effort it takes to be angry and pissed off in the world is the same time and effort it takes to be a kinder person.

Everything takes time and effort. Mystics have talked about this for thousands of years, ways to go outside of your box. They have talked about the human body is designed to experience God within you.

Many people try to use affirmations to program directly to our subconscious. Only when a person learns how to dive deeper into meditation will this work. Imagine from 0 to 7 years old everything that came before you the good, bad, and ugly was directly stored in your subconscious. Your brain waves were in a theta state.

From seven on the waking state is in beta. Your subconscious is online. Over 90% of your actions are dictated by your subconscious. For so many people on this planet, they are living lives that are stressed out.

Their brain waves are in high beta. No matter what affirmations they say they can't rewire and reprogram their subconscious.

Only by learning how to meditate and learn how to go into more coherent brain waves states can one learn to reprogram the subconscious.

These are exciting times. There is a marriage between science and spirituality. Science is giving direct evidence to help mankind discover his true nature and to discover the quantum field within.

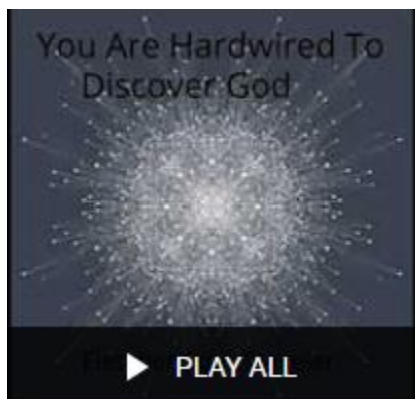
I don't know about you but I'm blown away by the possibility for humanity to change. We are on the journey of going from darkness to light. New tools are coming our way. Just wait and see.

The more a human being embraces his true nature one's imagination becomes larger. The universe starts to give you a different point of view on this journey of life. Ponder this over. Are we living in the matrix and don't realize that we have been asleep?

PDF



YouTube



New Personality



Your personality is driven by your subconscious. Over time one cements into his subconscious all the thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Our daily habits contribute to mostly our subconscious. To change and reprogram ourselves we must be conscious and aware.

We are like the snake shedding a new skin. To change we must develop a new personality. This requires great courage. We are learning how to drop the old and embrace the new. Why do humans resist change? Even if they know it will be beneficial to them

we resist it. We love our comfort zone even if it is making us miserable. Strange isn't it? Many people would rather wallow in their misery than overcome their problems and have a better life.

What kind of personality can I become? At the simplest level how about one who is kind in all circumstances? Amid adversity, one would simply smile. If another person would get angry at you, you would simply smile. It takes two to tango. Kindness will not participate in putting gasoline on the fire.

How about learning to see through the other person's eyes? You could see his point of view. You would listen to what the other person is saying. Most people don't. Most people are thinking about what to say next without actually listening to the other person.

How about loving life? You wake up in the morning and are so excited to be alive. What a glorious day it is. You get up and meditate. You get in tune with the quantum field.

Your mind, body, and soul get filled up with love, kindness, and compassion. You are in sync with the universe. Your will is focused on love. Your mind is your friend. You have sweet thoughts throughout your day. You become a kind human.

Incredible synchronicity occurs daily. Your love humanity. Every moment you are living in harmony.

One loves to be in nature. Gaia (Mother Earth) is by your side. She knows your name and you know that. You are living once again in perfect harmony with her.

Each person discovers his/her gifts to help solve the world's problems. With each problem a solution lies.

One begins to acquire incredible wisdom. This is a part of your true nature. You are in harmony with the universe. Exciting times are ahead of us.

We are becoming a new humans. Humans learn over time to directly reprogram ourselves. We discover we are our genie. In the past, our genie would work behind the scenes and we would be oblivious to it.

Mankind slowly learns that through his will he can learn how to reprogram his life. Someday in the future, this will be taught in schools throughout the world.

Science and religions are merging. Many new fields will open up. The higher our society advances the more harmony will be discovered.

Mankind will discover that war is obsolete. The bickering and fighting will stop when we can directly experience the thread that ties us all together.

We are going from me to we. This is how the world changes when we see the unity of all.

These are incredible times. The news mostly shows chaos. Yet millions of good deeds are happening all around the world.

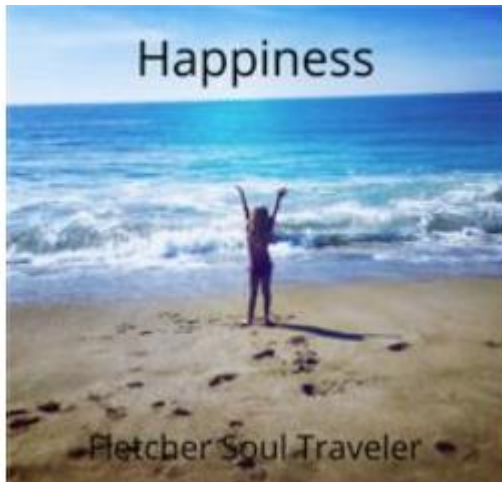
Yet it takes effort and conviction. But every time you get out of bed it takes effort. Why not just reprogram yourself and discover your true nature? Imagine a hidden gold mine exists inside and we search throughout the four corners of the earth to find it.

One can spend lifetimes trying to discover it. It's a joke when one realizes that it has been there all the time inside of you.

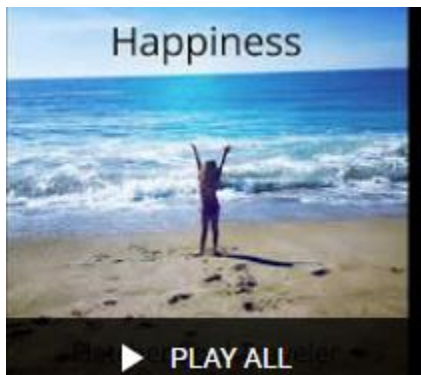
Mystics have been saying that for thousands of years. You are learning to become a mystic. You don't have to give up your life. You must embrace life.

Ponder this over. Exciting times are ahead of us.

PDF



YouTube



New Human



When one starts to implement new higher emotion, new thoughts, new concepts, new wiring, and new personality then one becomes a new human.

Christ was a perfect example of that. For thousands of years, man has been fighting and involved in wars. It seems quite

barbaric.

The world still fights wars all around the world. Many people say this is man's nature. In reality, it's not. We are going on a journey from darkness to light.

For thousands of years, we have been governed by different shades of darkness and light. Anger and hatred have ruled the land. Man doesn't know how to be civil so we go to war. War is obsolete.

Yet for war to become truly obsolete one must transcend our emotional state of mind. Anger and hatred towards one another must stop. Mankind is presently becoming a butterfly.

We were a worm and now millions of people all around the world are turning into a cocoon. In a matter of time, we will become butterflies. Yes, this will take time but a new human is emerging from the ashes. The greatest transformation is slowly occurring on this planet.

Science and spiritualism are merging. You see each individual is a piece of the grand puzzle.

A new human is born when we embrace God moment by moment in our daily life. It's not just the words but a state of being. The new human will learn how to be conscious of the quantum field 24 hours a day.

This new mindset will radically change the world. It will affect every single aspect of life. We will see through different eyes.

Mankind will become a kind man. We will begin to see the thread of love that ties us all together. We will become one unified mind. Yes, you will still be an individual yet your awareness will be in a state of oneness in life.

You will see that humanity is an extension of yourself. Presently we only see me. We are going on a journey from me to we.

I hope this excites you. This is not a fairy tale. It may take millions of years. You see the sun is rising. There is no doubt about that. Mankind is waking up from his slumber.

I believe that mankind can change for the better. Every day people are waking up. In the past, the mystic path was out of reach for the common person.

Presently people are seeing easy and practical ways to morph and change into a brand new way of seeing life. All the mumbo jumbo is taken out.

This does not change the experience of the quantum field. Nothing is taken away yet people now can practice simple techniques to directly connect to God.

I feel all the help in the universe is there. By our will alone we can ask for help in our daily life. We are not alone. Yet to experience this we must open the door within.

Humanity must learn how to rewire ourselves. Humanity must change and be open to greater adventures in life.

We have seen where man's present state of mind is and the consequences that occur. Just look at politics today. We are divided. Yet the new human will transform and leave all darkness behind.

You see when one embraces the quantum field darkness can't exist. Darkness is the absence of light.

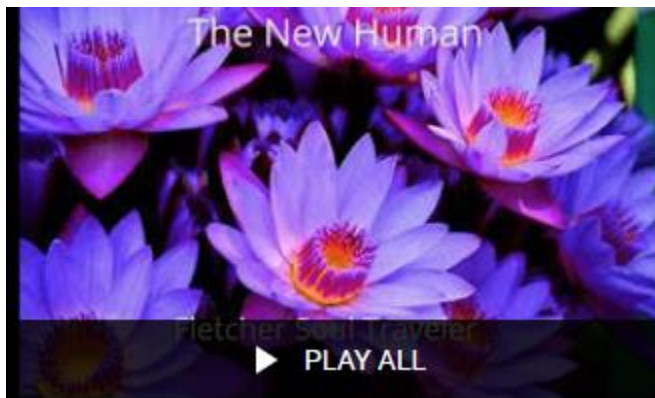
Someday in the future, we will look back at the present and we will say what an incredible roller coaster ride that was. What an incredible journey. This is the greatest story ever told.

We were on the verge of blowing ourselves up through nuclear. The consciousness of man knew deep down inside that we could overcome our petty difference and become united.

Not every civilization ends this way. Some have destroyed themselves. A new dawning is occurring for mankind. Just wait and see.



YouTube



Researchers gave homeless people money and what they did with it might surprise you

³¹This was the first study to provide a direct cash transfer to people who were homeless.

Ray (left) and Katherine (right) are two of the 50 people who received financial support from researchers. Foundations for Social Change / YouTube
Oct. 10, 2020, 11:53 AM CDT / Updated Oct. 14, 2020, 10:30 AM CDT / Source: TODAY
By [Ronnie Koenig](#)

A nonprofit organization led a study that explores what might happen if people who are homeless are given financial support and the results may surprise you.

Foundations for Social Change, a Canadian charitable organization based in Vancouver, British Columbia, teamed up with the University of British Columbia for a social program, called the New Leaf Project. Researchers gave 7,500 Canadian dollars (approximately \$5,717.27) via direct transfer to 50 people who had recently become homeless. The people were free to use the money as they saw fit with no restrictions.

To the surprise of the researchers, most of the recipients used the cash to turn their lives around. "Preliminary results show that on average, those receiving the direct cash payment moved into stable housing faster, maintained a level of financial security and stability over 12 months of follow-up, and increased their spending on food, clothing and rent," said Foundations for Social Change in a [press release](#) Tuesday.

³¹<https://www.today.com/news/researchers-gave-homeless-people-money-study-t193940>

Here's how opening up to others helped 1 homeless veteran get back on his feet

SEPT. 25, 2020 / 05:37



Watch [TODAY All Day!](#) Get the best news, information and inspiration from TODAY, all day long.

[Here's how opening up to others helped 1 homeless veteran get back on his feet](#)

"By empowering individuals to meet their own needs and move into housing faster, the 50 cash transfer recipients freed up space in shelters and saved the shelter system \$8,100 (Canadian dollars) per person over the course of the year (for a total savings of \$405,000)."

The results fly in the face of what many of us believe about people who are homeless — that if given money, they will spend it on alcohol and drugs.

[Dr. Jiaying Zhao](#), the principal investigator of the study and a professor at UBC, told TODAY that she hopes the study will change perspectives and influence government policies. Zhao said she was approached by Claire Williams, the CEO of Foundations for Social Change, in 2016 about the unique project that would focus on direct giving.

"I had been looking at poverty reduction for a while," said Zhao. "We came up with this approach: if the money were unconditional, would it reduce homelessness in Vancouver?"

The study marked the first time a cash lump sum was used in such a manner. Zhao explained that the amount was chosen because it's the total of an annual welfare check in Vancouver.

"That's how we decided on the number," she said. "We want to change policy going forward and get better support for people who enter homelessness."

The study told the recipients it was up to them how to spend the cash.



"We followed the people for a year," she said. "The results are surprising. I did not expect people could move out of the shelter that quickly. I didn't expect the improvements in food security. These are encouraging results."

Zhao said that when it comes to people who are homeless, the focus is often on stereotypes. "The common assumption is they'll use it on alcohol and drugs," she said. "And we actually saw a 39 percent reduction in spending in those areas. That was super encouraging to see."

[How a stranger's act of kindness changed 1 homeless man's life](#)



Even more exciting was that some of people who were homeless who received the cash used it to [start their own businesses](#).

"They were extremely entrepreneurial," said Zhao. "There was also positive spillover to their children and families."

The study followed 115 homeless people, 50 of whom were given the lump sum, while the remaining 65 people were the control group. Participants all had to meet certain criteria — they had to be homeless for less than two years, be between the ages of 19 and 64 and have no substance abuse or [mental health issues](#).

One participant, Ray, who was randomly selected to receive the money, said his life was completely changed by the windfall.

"When I found out I had been accepted to receive the cash transfer, I was living in an emergency shelter, trying to find a way forward," said Ray in a statement. "The money gave me the resources I needed to get out of the shelter and push for the social programs and the computer class I needed. It was an important stepping-stone and it gave me a choice. It gave me a chance."

Dr. Zhao hopes to see two major changes come out of the study.

"One is policy change. I hope governments in North America will increase support, specifically cash support for the homeless," she said, noting that she doesn't believe everyone should be given the money but that they would need to meet certain criteria in order to receive it.

"The second is public perception," she said. "It's time to change how the public views people who experience homelessness and the many assumptions we have about who they are and what they are like."

CORRECTION (Oct. 14, 11:28 a.m.): An earlier version of this article misstated a quote from Dr. Zhao. It is a 39 percent reduction on spending on alcohol and drugs, not a 49 percent reduction.

This is TODAY

Housing

Debunking the Myths of Homelessness

t

³²Drug and alcohol abuse are often the result of homelessness, not the cause. ... **Homeless** people **spend** every moment struggling to find their next meal, ...

[PDF](#)

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HOMELESSNESS IN NORWAY



Nordic countries have been historically renowned for their social security and high living standards. They are seen as a safe haven and an aspirational goal among the international community. Norway is no exception, and a prime example of the exceptional Norwegian welfare

32

https://www.currytbcenter.ucsf.edu/sites/default/files/product_tools/homelessnessandtbtoolkit/docs/background/Factsheet/Debunking%20the%20Myths%20of%20Homelessness.pdf

state is the condition of homelessness. Here is everything you need to know about homelessness in Norway.

How Norway Defines “Homelessness”

The Norwegian government has defined homelessness as an individual or family that is unable to independently maintain a safe, consistent and appropriate housing arrangement. Norway has one of the [smallest homeless populations](#) in the world, with only 0.07% of the total population being homeless as of 2016. This proportion is less than half of that found in the United States where 0.17% of the population is homeless.

Causes

While only 0.07% of the Norwegian population is homeless, certain groups are at greater risk than others. Four [key causes of homelessness in Norway](#) include insecure housing markets, economic hardship, addiction and mental illness. According to the [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), 54% of homeless people are reportedly drug dependent, 38% suffer from mental illness and 23% are under the age of 25. Additionally, migration poses a challenge to homelessness in Norway, with 20% of the homeless population being immigrants.

Government Initiatives to Fight Homelessness

Norway’s success in regards to having a low homeless population is not random or coincidental. Instead, it is thanks to targeted, effective and long-term policy initiatives. One of the first major policies announced to combat homelessness in Norway was Project Homeless. [Project Homeless](#) was launched from 2001 to 2004 and led a collaborative effort among multiple government departments to develop effective methods for combatting homelessness. After Project Homelessness ended, the [Strategy Against Homelessness](#) was announced in 2005 and ran until 2007. This strategy built upon the success of Project Homelessness and aimed to:

- Reduce eviction petitions by 50% and eviction itself by 30%
- Prevent individuals recently released from prison or a treatment institution from requiring temporary housing
- Improve the quality of overnight shelters
- Limit temporary housing stays to less than three months

Most recently, the Norwegian government launched a strategy in 2014 that in many ways furthers the work of the Strategy Against Homelessness. This [new strategy](#) specifically targets families with children and young people up to the age of 25. This is a long-term strategy that will last through 2020 and aims to:

- Ensure safe rental housing for families with children
- Limit temporary housing to exceptional circumstances, with these arrangements not exceeding three months
- Reduce and prevent homelessness among families with children and young people

The 2014 strategy plans to achieve these goals by providing assistance to individuals shifting from temporary to permanent housing, assistance in obtaining a suitable home within an insecure housing market, preventing evictions and social innovation.

Repeated reassessment of needs and continued support has been key to Norway’s success in reducing poverty through effective policy. These methods are not unique to Norway, they can be seen across the globe in countries with similarly low homeless populations. Thus, it is reasonable

to conclude that the insights gained from Norway can be used to inform policies and initiatives against homelessness in countries that are currently struggling.

– *Lily Jones*

Photo: [Pixabay](#)

JULY 30, 2020



How Finland Ended Homelessness

Second Thought 1.7M views

Get free access to Nebula with your CuriosityStream subscription!
Visit <https://curiositystream.com/secondthought> How Finland End...



Why The U.S. Can't Solve Homelessness

CNBC
1M views • 10 months ago

More affordable housing with less homelessness is possible, if only Australia would learn from Nordic nations

by Andrew Scott, Heather Holst and Sidsel Grimstad, The Conversation



Credit: Shutterstock

³³Housing is expensive in Australia. But it doesn't have to be this way. Higher quality, more affordable housing is a matter of policy choice.

A key problem is Australia's housing market is too skewed towards treating housing as a financial asset, rather than a basic human need.

There is almost a universal consensus among economists, for example, that negative gearing favors the interests of investors to the detriment of others, but both major parties are scared to change the policy.

One way to break the policy stalemate is to consider policies shown to have worked in other countries. To facilitate this, the Nordic Policy Centre—a collaboration between The Australia Institute and Deakin University—has [published an overview](#) of housing and homelessness policies in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland.

³³<https://phys.org/news/2022-04-housing-homelessness-australia-nordic-nations.html>

Of particular note among the wide range of housing policies in these nations is the prominence of housing cooperatives, which assist both renters and those wanting to own a secure, high-quality home.

Why Nordic countries?

Why look at the Nordic countries?

One reason is their relative success in tackling homelessness.

Finland is the world leader in this. There, the number of people experiencing homelessness has fallen from more than 16,000 people in the late 1980s to about 4,500 people in 2020. This represents a homelessness rate of less than one per 1,000 (Finland's population is about 5.5 million) compared with nearly five per 1,000 in Australia.

Homelessness, granted, is more complicated than just the cost of housing. It involves family and relationship trauma, physical and mental health issues, and substance use.

The Finns' achievement is due to a range of policy responses including strong outreach services.

But underpinning these responses is the Finnish government's "[Housing First](#)" principle, adopted in 2007, which says people have a right to decent housing and to useful social services. It's a seemingly simple concept, but radically inclusive compared with how other countries deal with the homeless.

Vibrant cooperative sectors

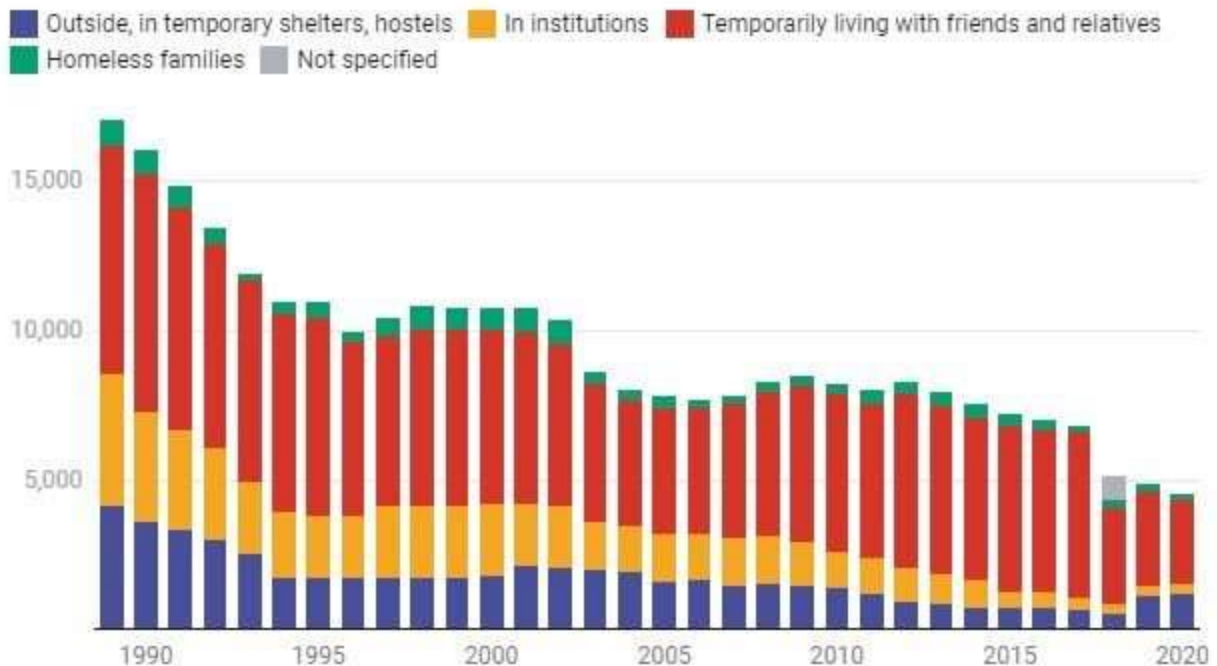
In Australia, housing cooperatives might conjure up images of small hippie communes. This is an unfair characterization, borne of the fact the sector is so tiny and unknown.

All up, cooperative housing comprises less than 1% of the Australian housing sector, with about [200 housing cooperatives](#) mostly focused on providing affordable rental housing.

In Nordic countries, however, housing cooperatives are a mainstream option for both renters and owners.

Sweden's cooperative sector amounts to 22% of total housing stock. Norway's represent 15% nationwide, and 40% in the capital, Oslo. In Denmark, more than 20% of the population lives in cooperative housing.

Homelessness in Finland, 1989-2020



Credit: The Conversation

How cooperative housing works

Cooperatives take a variety of forms. But the key features are that they are democratically organized and exist to serve a real economic or social need of their members.

Rental housing cooperatives exist to provide housing, not accrue wealth. They pool common resources to own and manage affordable rental accommodation. Tenants are generally required to become members and encouraged to be actively involved in decision-making, management and maintenance. Any revenue from rents is reinvested in new housing projects or upgrading older buildings.

In Denmark, rental cooperative housing—known as *Almenboliger*—plays a critical role in providing affordable housing for a range of people, including the elderly and those with disabilities. Its non-profit orientation as well as supportive government policies—such as lower-interest loans—enable cooperatives to reduce construction costs and offer lower rents.

In Norway, national law allows 10% of units in a housing cooperative complex to be bought or used by local government authorities to house people who can't afford alternatives. Housing cooperatives in Oslo have been vital for securing decent housing for immigrants and for older people.

A path to home ownership

Just as important in terms of lessons for Australia is that Nordic housing cooperatives also play a big role in helping people buy a home.

So-called "equity-based" housing cooperatives in Sweden, Norway and Denmark help reduce the cost of home ownership. This generally involves the cooperative building or buying an apartment or unit block, then allowing members to buy individual homes, while the cooperative retains ownership of common areas.

Members own their individual dwellings and co-own and manage shared spaces with other co-op members. The structure is similar to strata title in Australia, with individual ownership of some parts of a property and shared ownership of others. The big difference is strata title is often "investor-owned," while a housing cooperative is "user-owned."

The result is that members can buy a home for about 20% less than what it would cost them otherwise.

More collaboration needed

Not everything the Nordic countries do can be replicated in Australian conditions. But one thing we can certainly learn is the importance of collaboration between different tiers of government and civil society organizations.

Australia's superannuation funds, for example, have the means to invest in low-returning, but very safe, affordable housing assets. Government policies should support them doing this through cooperative structures that help to fill the gap between market and state.

There's no quick fix. Emulating any Nordic housing policy achievements will take decades. Finland's [critical organization](#) for tackling homelessness, for example, was established in 1985.

But better housing options are there in plain sight, waiting for policy makers and other stakeholders to take them. If they want to.

Provided by [The Conversation](#)

This article is republished from [The Conversation](#) under a Creative Commons license. Read the [original article](#).

Explore further

Crime

The first step to stop corporations from profiting from incarceration in the United States
[Why the criminal justice system needs to be returned to public hands](#)

30 March 2021

Article

Over the past decades, private corporations have increased their control over prison services in the United States and around the world. Despite enormous lobbying efforts by the private players, citizens have started to reject this agenda of profiting from the criminal justice system, and instead demand to return prison management to public authorities. Biden has announced an end to renewing federal private prison contracts, which should be the starting point for wider changes.

Authors

[Louisa Valentin](#)

Programmes

[Public Alternatives](#)



Photo credit "Profiting from Criminalized Immigration 1806241324" by Patrick Feller is licensed under CC BY 2.0

On 26 January 2021, the newly inaugurated President of the United States, Joe Biden, signed an [executive order](#) directing the Department of Justice (DOJ) to phase out contracts with private federal prisons in what he called ‘the first step to stop corporations from profiting off of incarceration that is less humane and less safe’. The Federal Government of the United States is the single-largest customer of the private prison industry [1], yet the executive order (EO) is said to only have a limited impact on prison privatization and mass incarceration in the country, as it only affects a fraction of the privatized prison system. For example, the Department of Homeland Security, which is in charge of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE), is not included. To put it into context, only nine percent of people incarcerated in the federal prison system are housed in private prisons, while, as of January 2020, [81 percent of ICE detainees](#) are held in privately operated facilities. Nevertheless, the EO throws a major curveball at a multimillion-dollar industry that influences the lives of tens of thousands of incarcerated people, possibly costing the companies almost 20 percent of their annual revenues in the United States [2].

Currently, the Bureau of Prisons has contracts with three private prison operators: CoreCivic (formerly known as Corrections Corporation of America), GEO Group, and MTC (Management and Training Corporation), which together operate twelve private federal prisons across the

country. The executive order had its first effects at the end of March 2021, when the contracts with two privately owned federal prisons expired, the [Moshannon Valley Correctional Facility](#) in Pennsylvania and the [Rivers Correctional Institution](#) in North Carolina. The people imprisoned at the two facilities were transferred to public federal facilities.

TNI has investigated these cases of de-privatization in the context of its work to develop an [international database of de-privatization](#) of basic public services. The criminal justice system is a critical service for society and is of a highly sensitive nature regarding human rights. As such, you would think it should be a core business of public authorities. Prison services have increasingly been run by private companies for the last few decades in many parts of the world. For example, in the United Kingdom, private prisons were introduced in the 1990s and despite security concerns, contracts for [two new private prison sites were awarded in 2019](#). The private management of prisons, detention centers, and integrated services in the United States, as well as elsewhere in the world, has led to declining quality of service provisions, increased security issues, and higher safety incidents at privately managed facilities [3]. According to several studies, the security risk at privately operated prisons is higher than at publicly operated facilities; for example, the rate at which assaults occur within private prisons is double that at public prisons.

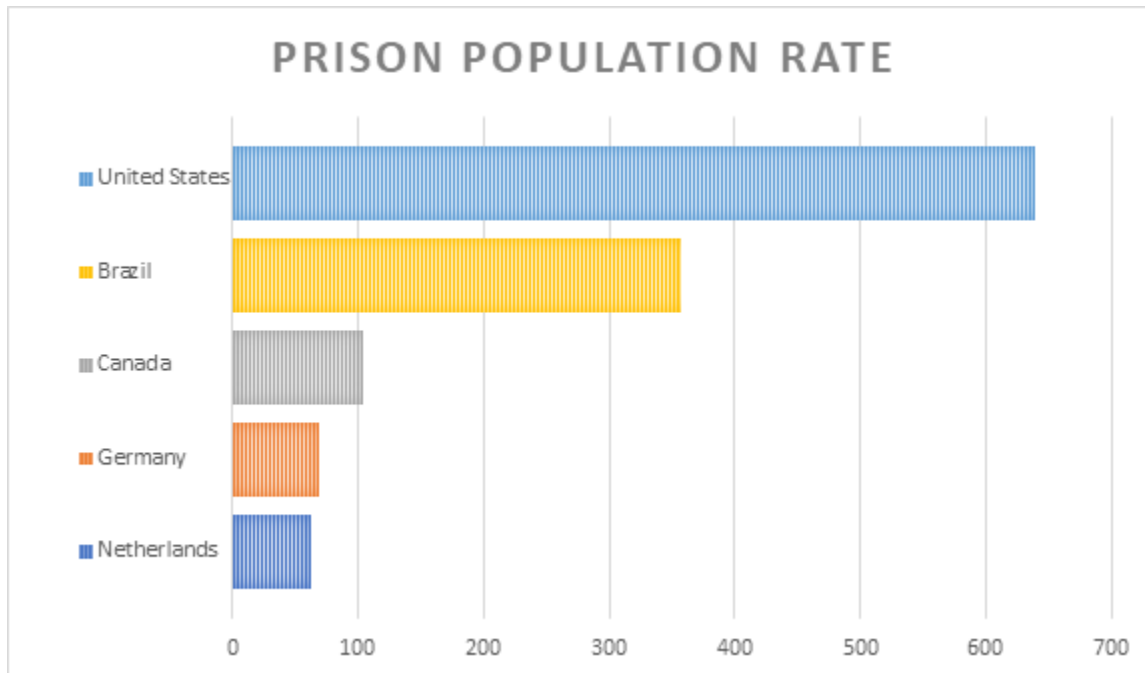
Given the first step President Biden took through signing the EO on 26 January 2021, this article explores the underlying characteristics of the privatized criminal justice system in the United States and the necessity to transfer ownership and control into public hands.

Prison Population, Mass Incarceration and the ‘Need’ for Private Actors

The United States hosts the largest prison population worldwide in absolute numbers, with a prison population more than four times higher than that of India, whose general population is four times greater than that of the United States. Out of over two million people currently in the US prison system, roughly eight percent are placed in privately run facilities, both at the federal and the state level for 31 states [4]. Private federal prisons, which are now directly affected by President Biden’s EO, incarcerate almost 14,000 people, or nine percent of the federal prison population [5]. During the time period between 2000 and 2019, the number of people held in private federal prisons increased by 77 percent. Even though this number has dropped again in the past five years, the federal government remains the single largest user of private prisons in the United States.

One reason for this steep increase in the private federal prison population, as well as of the private prison population in general in the United States is the country’s extraordinarily high incarceration rate. In March 2020, the [Prison Policy Initiative](#), an organization supporting decarceration, reported the incarceration rate of the US to be 698 per 100,000, higher than any other country worldwide. However, the high incarceration rate alone does not explain the extensive use of private detention facilities in the US, but it is one part that contributes to overcrowding of the entire system, increasing the need for more facilities. The main characteristic of the US criminal justice system that re-enforces high incarceration numbers and plays in favor of large private prison operators is the fact that the prison system in the US is not

built to rehabilitate. It is built to keep people in the system for a long time and is centered around incapacitation and retribution.



Figure

1: Prison Population Rate. Created using data from [World Prison Brief](#)

A System of Incapacitation and Retribution

The flaws in the system of the United States become obvious when comparing it to that of high-income countries in Europe, such as the Netherlands and Germany. Both countries have significantly lower incarceration rates than the United States, with Germany at a rate of 76/100,000 and the Netherlands at 69/100,000 at the time a report by [Vera Institute of Justice](#) was written.

A key explanation for these significantly lower rates lies in the philosophical and practical approaches of certain European nations, which are very different from the approach taken in the United States. One of the biggest differences within the approaches is the focus on normalization from the two European countries, which is making life in prison as similar to life in the community as possible by granting various freedoms to people in prison. The European model is organized around the central elements of resocialization and rehabilitation, which is reflected in much shorter prison sentences, as well as the extensive use of alternative mechanisms such as fines, community-based sentences, and probation.

A major consequence of the approach followed by the United States is the fact that people are not being prepared to re-enter the community once they are released from prison. This causes the US to have much higher re-incarceration rates compared to [Germany, the Netherlands or Norway](#). This vicious cycle, paired with high incarceration rates, creates a constantly saturated, even overcrowded criminal justice system with vast profit opportunities for private operators.

Profits. Above all Else?

Originally entering the market after the Civil War, the private prison industry experienced a boom due to the mass incarceration which followed the government's war on drugs in the 1980s. Since then, the for-profit prison sector has evolved and turned into a billion-dollar industry – at the cost of those living in private prisons. Why? Because private corporations, just like any other business, follow one major objective: making the largest profit possible. In doing so, they keep prison budgets as low as possible by employing mostly non-union and low-skilled workers at lower salaries, offering limited benefits compared to publicly run institutions, and keeping all kinds of additional expenses for utilities, healthcare and food at the bare minimum [6].

These cost savings come at a price. Employing fewer and lower-skilled guards leads to significantly higher employee turnover rates in privately operated prisons, which ultimately results in safety and security risks for the imprisoned people, due to the inexperience of the guards. The Department of Justice (DOJ) found in its [2016 report](#) that in private federal prisons, there are significantly higher safety issues than in public federal prisons.

Even though stories reporting the conditions in privately operated prisons regularly surface, state-level governments and the federal government continued to award private corporations with contracts over the past decades. From the government's perspective, this is done for two major reasons: to deflect responsibility for the conditions away from the government and, allegedly, because letting a private operator provide the service saves money. However, [several reports](#) indicate that there were no findings that suggested that the use of private prisons is more cost-effective than public prisons. These falsified claims often originate from the private prison industry and are misleading because most private prisons are low-security facilities, which are less expensive to operate. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, when accounting for security levels and other variations, supposed cost savings have not materialized [7].

Prison Profiteering

To understand the mechanisms at play, it is important to examine the concept of prison profiteering, the influences the private prison industry has on politicians and policymakers, and how a whole industry behind it emerged. The primary objective of for-profit prisons is to be profitable and generate stakeholder value. Like any other business, private prison companies constantly seek to obtain new contracts to develop and manage new facilities [8].

Private prisons rely on being full to be economically viable, due to the way their contracts with the government are constructed. The government pays the private company an agreed-upon yearly cost per prisoner. In return, the private facility provides a mandatory ration of food, clothing, healthcare and other needs, often at low quality and restrained to the bare minimum to keep profit margins as high as possible.

To maintain a high occupancy rate, many private prison operators mandate the state government to ensure that the privately run facilities are always filled at a certain occupancy rate, which usually lies around 90 percent. In Arizona, three private prisons even operate under a [100 percent](#)

[occupancy guarantee](#). Private prison operators claim their practices have no impact on the criminal justice system. However, a study by the Washington State University uncovered that privately owned prisons, on average, lead to an increase in the prison population, as well as an increase in the sentence length for non-violent crimes [9]. Coincidentally, private facilities predominantly host non-violent offenders [10].

From Single Service to Billion Dollar Industry

What started as a relatively small industry focused on detention facilities in the 1980s has evolved into a multibillion-dollar giant. Together, the GEO Group and CoreCivic have spent over \$2.2 billion to acquire smaller companies to branch out to new industries beyond incarceration. For example, the GEO Group has acquired BI Incorporated, an ankle bracelet monitoring company, which also provides prison healthcare services and operates residential reentry centers. This is only one example of how private prison operators have extended their reach and diversified the services they provide to include reentry programs, rehabilitation centers, food and health services, ankle bracelets, transportation services and more [11]. These services are diverse, yet they have one thing in common: they all depend on people being imprisoned to survive.

Corruption, Lobbying and Political Influence

Despite the obvious objective of for-profit prison companies to expand their contracts, they claim that opportunities to do so depend on factors completely out of their control. In a [2014 annual report](#), Corrections Corporation of America, now CoreCivic, appealed to its stakeholders that the relaxation of sentencing practices, falling conviction rates, and changes in criminal law would, among other factors, negatively affect the company's profit perspectives. Several cases of corruption, as well as the industry's active involvement in lobbying and political campaigns reveals that private prison operators indeed try to influence these factors. In 2009, the profit-maximizing incentives led to a major case of corruption, when two judges in Pennsylvania were found to have received a total of \$2.6 million from two juvenile detention facilities [12]. The payments were part of an agreement, which led to the conviction of twice as many children as the state's average, over a period of several years. While such illegal actions are not the norm, they clearly show that the profit objective of private prison companies can impair the functioning of the whole criminal justice system – at the cost of those being unfairly judged and imprisoned.

Private prison operators, such as CoreCivic and the GEO Group, despite claiming their objectivity, are involved in several activities to influence the political and legal landscape and bend conditions in their favour. Both private companies were actively involved with the American Legislative Exchange Council when it worked to draft model legislation that impacted mandatory minimum sentences, the three-strikes law, and other laws, all of which contribute to higher prison populations. Moreover, the companies have close ties to politicians. For example, US Senator Marco Rubio, a former speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, has [close ties to the GEO Group](#). During his time in Florida, he awarded the GEO Group a \$110 million contract for a new private prison. Throughout his career, he has received over \$40,000 in campaign donations from the GEO Group.

Furthermore, CoreCivic and GEO Group contributed millions to the election campaign of former President Trump, an investment that did not remain unrewarded, as private prison operators largely benefitted from Trump's strict immigration policies. The close ties to politicians and strong lobbying activities of the companies show that private prison corporations are not only hosting convicted and imprisoned people; they also play an active role in deciding who is a criminal in the United States by influencing policymakers, politicians and directly lobbying on laws that impact sentencing patterns.

A Wave of Change

Over the past decades, an increasing number of activist and advocacy groups have strengthened their fight against the privatization of the prison system. Initiatives, such as the [Sentencing Project](#) and the [Prison Policy Initiative](#) direct their efforts toward educating others about the harmful consequences of public services being in the hands of profit-oriented private corporations. A series of scandals and reports about the conditions in private facilities triggered former President Obama to phase out contracts between the Department of Justice (DOJ) and private operators, a decision that was overturned under the administration of former President Trump but has now been reinstated through President Biden's EO of 26 January 2021.

And although contracts between the DOJ and private operators will be phased out, possibly costing the two largest operators, CoreCivic and GEO Group, roughly 20 percent of their annual revenues, the remaining parts of the privatized criminal justice system are enormous. Privately run immigration detention centers host over 80 percent of Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) detainees and have grown by [739 percent](#) between 2002 and 2019. They also account for [almost 30 percent of CoreCivic's revenues](#).

A crucial step to fight against these privately run detention centers was undertaken in 2019 by the state of California. The state passed [Assembly Bill 32](#), which phases out contracts with private prison operators and privately run immigration detention facilities until 2028. In doing so, California is well ahead of the federal government and shows how state laws can work on a complimentary basis to federal government decisions, potentially paving the way towards a future version of the criminal justice system fully under public management.

MARCH 4, 2018 / 7:06 PM / CBS NEWS

-
-
-

Not many issues can unite Democrats and Republicans. But criminal justice reform is one of them. After thirty years of being Tough on Crime in the U.S., no other nation incarcerates more of its citizens than we do. We have 5 percent of the world's population, but 25 percent of its prisoners. The cost of housing all those inmates: \$80 billion a year.

Crime and Punishment

As we first reported in 2016, American politicians and prison supervisors are looking for new ideas - in Germany. The main objective of German prisons is rehabilitation, not retribution. Germany spends less money on prisons, but gets better results. Their recidivism rate is about half the U.S. rate. We wondered if Germany had found a key to prison reform. So we visited three German prisons, but our trip started in a small resort town about 100 miles north of Berlin.

When the weather's warm, the lakeside town of Waren, Germany, attracts families and tourists. We found Bernd Junge there with his sister and niece -- out for a stroll, eating ice cream sundaes -- an innocent scene if ever there was one. But Junge is a convicted murderer, sentenced to life in prison for a contract killing. He shot a woman to death in cold blood. We spoke with him by the lake.



Bernd Junge with family CBS NEWS

Bill Whitaker: This is part of your sentence. This is part of your punishment?

Bernd Junge: Well this is about being reintegrated into a normal life and that means rehabilitation and all that, so for me, yes, this is part of it.

Bill Whitaker: This doesn't look much like punishment.

Bernd Junge: Yes, well that's the German fairy tale.

After 15 years in prison he's earned weekend leave for good behavior. He's on track for early release. In Germany, 75 percent of lifers are paroled after 20 years or less.

Joerg Jesse: If someone says to himself it's a German fairy tale, if he doesn't commit any crimes anymore after release, it's OK. He can think about his imprisonment, what he wants.



Waldeck Prison, Germany. CBS NEWS

Joerg Jesse is a psychologist by training. He's now director of prisons in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, a state in north Germany along the Baltic, about the size of New Hampshire. There are rich fields here, brilliant sunsets, and Waldeck -- the maximum-security prison where Bernd Junge has served his time.

Bill Whitaker: Should he have a future for himself? He took a life.

Joerg Jesse: Yes, he should.

Bill Whitaker: He should?

Joerg Jesse: He should.

Jesse invited us to Waldeck to show us how the German system works.

Joerg Jesse: The real goal is reintegration into society, train them to find a different way to handle their situation outside, life without further crimes, life without creating new victims, things like that.

Bill Whitaker: Where does punishment come in?

Joerg Jesse: The incarceration, the imprisonment itself is punishment. The loss of freedom, that's it.

Bill Whitaker: I think Americans think crime and punishment. You say punishment is not even part of the goal of the German prison.

Joerg Jesse: No.

Bill Whitaker: At all?

Joerg Jesse: Not at all.

So life inside prison mirrors life outside as much as possible. Germans call it "normalization." It starts with small prison populations. Low-level offenders get fines or probation. Prison is reserved for the worst of the worst -- murderers, rapists, career criminals. We were surprised how quiet and peaceful it was inside Waldeck. We wondered where all the inmates were. It turns out they were relaxing outside on this sunny day.

Bill Whitaker: This is unbelievable. You're in for murder and you have a key to your cell.

Cells have doors, not bars. It's for privacy. Inmates can decorate as they please. We saw Joerg Muehlbach playing video games in his cell. He told us he was convicted of large-scale cocaine trafficking and gun possession. He was sentenced to seven years.

Bill Whitaker: Compared to cells in the United States this is quite luxurious.

Joerg Muehlbach: Yes, it is comfortable here. As a prisoner here it's alright.

He says being separated from his family makes prison hard, not the conditions. He has a private bathroom and things that would give American prison guards the jitters.

Bill Whitaker: You have darts. You've got a letter opener. You have legs on the table that you could break off and use as a club. You've got quite a bit of freedom in here?

Joerg Muehlbach: Gosh, I haven't even thought about that. Here this is normal.

Muehlbach's day is normal too. He gets up and goes to work in the prison kitchen. After his shift, there's R&R -- darts in the common room, beach volleyball in the yard. There's a lot to do, he told us.

Joerg Muehlbach: Painting course, pottery, soccer, gym, crocheting.

Bill Whitaker: Painting and crochet?

Joerg Muehlbach: Yes, painting and crochet. And in crochet we make hats, oven mitts, whatever you need.



A meal at Waldeck Prison, Germany. CBS NEWS

We visited several German prisons and were amazed how laid back everybody seemed at each of them -- prisoners and guards. Heidering Prison outside Berlin is as clean and bright as a Google campus. The prison is surrounded by fences, not walls, so inmates can see the outside world. The prison uniform? Street clothes. For the inmate who finds this too stressful, there's yoga.

At old facilities like Tegel in Berlin, or new ones like Heidering, the focus is on humane treatment and rehabilitation. Prison guards are key. They're well paid and highly trained -- they spend two years learning psychology, communication skills, conflict management. Jesse calls them "calm down" experts.

Joerg Jesse: Calming down, calming down, calming down. Not showing power too much. Not showing guns. Not showing weapons.

They use solitary confinement, sparingly. Jesse says there's little violence in German prisons.

Bill Whitaker: How do you explain that?

Joerg Jesse: If you treat them as if they are your enemy, they will react as enemies. They will react as dangerous.

Bill Whitaker: In fact, many of them are dangerous. We we're up there on a row where everyone you ask was in for murder, murder, murder.

"If you treat them as if they are your enemy, they will react as enemies. They will react as dangerous."

Joerg Jesse: They're all human beings, and they know a violent manner. And we do exactly the other way around. "Don't be aggressive." Show them that there is a different kind of conversation possible.

The conversation starts right away. It's based on therapy. Psychologists make an initial assessment of all new inmates and devise personalized prison plans for them: recommendations for counseling, classes, vocational training and work. Inmates who follow the plan earn greater freedoms and early release.

Joerg Jesse: We cannot see the sense in just locking people up for their whole lives. Your prisons will fill up and you'll have to build new prisons and so on and I think that was the situation in the U.S.

With more than 2 million inmates in U.S. prisons, more Americans are coming to Germany seeking solutions.

[American tour: It's like a dorm. This would be a nice dorm room for the Ivy League.]

We joined U.S. prison and law enforcement officials on this tour in Berlin. Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy was part of the group. He was impressed by what he saw.

We joined U.S. prison and law enforcement officials on this tour in Berlin organized by the Vera Institute of Justice and John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy was part of the group. He was impressed by what he saw.

Dan Malloy: I can tell you, they have a lower crime rate than we do. They have a lower recidivism rate than we do, and they're spending a lot less money on jails.

Bill Whitaker: In the U.S., we've got much greater access to guns. We've got-- race as a factor and ethnicity as a factor. Are the things being done here directly transferrable to the United States?

Dan Malloy: I think there are many things that are transferrable. That doesn't mean that it's a perfect fit. But I think we have to challenge ourselves to do better.

Bill Whitaker: This doesn't have the same vibe, doesn't feel like the prisons in Germany at all.

John Wetzel: Little bit more intense, maybe.

Bill Whitaker: Little bit more intense.

John Wetzel is Pennsylvania's Secretary of Corrections. Five years ago, he went to Germany looking for ideas to improve his prisons. He showed us around Graterford, outside Philadelphia. It's the largest maximum-security prison in Pennsylvania -- almost 3,000 prisoners are packed in here. We were walking through an 80-year-old cell block when this inmate approached. He said he was a low level drug offender.

Prisoner: Sometimes, it be leaking on the block, people dying in their cells, the water stinks. Did you smell the water? Water smells like it's coming out of the sewer hole.

John Wetzel: You're preaching to the choir. I've done as much as I could for...

Prisoner: I mean, for real, there ain't nothin' but poor black and Latino people in the jail. It's bad in here man, its bad.

John Wetzel: Yeah? I mean look around.

Prisoner: It's bad.

Wetzel started as a prison guard three decades ago. Back in 1980, there were 8,000 inmates in the state. Today, there are almost 50,000. Physical and sexual assaults are a fact of life. At Graterford, there are more than 600 lifers.

John Wetzel: Pennsylvania's a state where life means life. So, if you're doing life here you're not gonna be walking around a park-- eating sundaes with your family.

When Wetzel was in Germany, Joerg Jesse gave him a tour of Waldeck.

Bill Whitaker: You were skeptical.

John Wetzel: It almost sounded like Disneyland. "Oh, there's very few inmates. Inmates have their own keys and everybody gets along and everything's hunky-dory." I mean, who's buying that story? Not me.

By the end of his visit, Wetzel was buying it. He started implementing some of the things he saw in Germany, like more intensive staff training, greater freedom for inmates with good behavior and programs to help them reenter society.

Bill Whitkaer: We, the American public, called for tougher sentencing, throwing away the key. Are we there for this more lenient approach?

John Wetzel: I think our culture, we don't want to think lenient. We don't want to think soft. We got here by being tough on crime. I think we're getting away from it by being smart on crime, and smart on crime happens to be more lenient.

Sometimes Germans think their prisons are too lenient. But the system is mandated and protected by the country's highest court. There are problems. They have gangs. They have drugs. They've seen signs of Islamic radicalization. They try to counter it all with counseling.

But there are inmates deemed too dangerous to release. They wind up in something called preventive detention. At Berlin's Tegel prison we met Chris Templiner. He has spent the last 20 years not knowing when or if he'll ever get out.

Chris Templiner: They think I'm dangerous so what can I say? What can I show them? I don't know.

Bill Whitaker: You did bad things?

Chris Templiner: Really bad things, yes.

He wouldn't tell us his crimes and German privacy laws kept us from finding out. His life is confined to this well-appointed, apartment-like building. Look around, this is life in prison for Germany's worst offenders.

Bill Whitaker: You expect to be here until you die?

Chris Templiner: Maybe. Yes.

But convicted murderer Bernd Junge stuck to his plan and earned the freedom to leave prison every day for work - a maintenance job at the nearby port.

Bill Whitaker: You could escape if you wanted to.

Bernd Junge: Yes.

Bill Whitaker: But you don't?

Bernd Junge: No.

Bill Whitaker: Why not?

Bernd Junge: Very simple. My time is almost over. And I want to be done with this chapter of my life, once and for all.

At Pennsylvania's Graterford prison, this is where murderers are housed - locked up 23 hours a day.

[Death row: I'm still hungry. Still hungry.]

John Wetzel: I think more now than any time in the history of our country we have the right and left agree that we've-- frankly screwed up the corrections system for 30 years and it's time to do something different. It really starts with understanding that, you know, a human being's value isn't diminished by being incarcerated.

Bill Whitaker: What you're talking about requires a huge mind shift on the part of all of us.

John Wetzel: It's crossing the Grand Canyon is what we're talking about.

Since our story first aired, Bernd Junge earned his release from prison and so did his fellow inmate Joerg Muehlbach. A prison supervisor tells us they have stayed out of trouble and are doing well.

Produced by Marc Lieberman. Associate producer, Michael Kaplan.



The German prison program that inspired Connecticut

60 Minutes  731K views

A prison in Connecticut is taking cues from Germany, where inmates do yoga and have keys to their cells. "60 Minutes" reported on it in...

Inside Halden, the most humane prison in the world

Amelia Gentleman visits Halden, the high-security jail in Norway where every cell has a flatscreen TV, an en-suite shower and fluffy, white towels



Halden is one of Norway's highest-security jails, holding rapists, murderers and paedophiles. Photographs: Gughi Fassino



Amelia Gentleman

[@ameliagentleman](#)

Fri 18 May 2012 16.48 EDT

Halden prison smells of freshly brewed coffee. It hits you in the

workshop areas, lingers in the games rooms and in the communal apartment-style areas where prisoners live together in groups of eight. This much coffee makes you hungry, so a couple of hours after lunch the guards on Unit A (a quiet, separated wing where sex offenders are held for their own protection) bring inmates a tall stack of steaming, heart-shaped waffles and pots of jam, which they set down on a checked tablecloth and eat together, whiling away the afternoon.

The other remarkable thing is how quiet the prison is. There isn't any of the enraged, persistent banging of doors you hear in British prisons, not least because the prisoners are not locked up much during the day. The governor, Are Høidal, is surprised when I ask about figures for prisoner attacks on guards, staff hospitalisations, guard restraints on prisoners, or prisoner-on-prisoner assaults. I explain that British prisons are required to log this data, and that the last prison I visited had a problem with prisoners melting screws into plastic pens, to use as stabbing weapons; he looks startled, says there isn't much violence here and he can't remember the last time there was a fight.

Halden is one of Norway's highest-security jails, holding rapists, murderers and paedophiles. Since it opened two years ago, at a cost of 1.3bn Norwegian kroner (£138m), it has acquired a reputation as the world's most humane prison. It is the flagship of the Norwegian justice system, where the focus is on rehabilitation rather than punishment.

There was early speculation that [Anders Breivik](#), currently on trial in Oslo for the murder of 77 people, might end up here, given that there are few high-security options across Norway, but that now looks unlikely, at least for the first chunk of his sentence. If he is judged to be sane, he will probably remain in isolation in the Ila prison where he is currently being held, a former Nazi concentration camp with a less utopian vision. However, the underlying ethos of Halden prison gives an insight into Norwegian attitudes towards justice, one that is under scrutiny as the country assesses how to deal with Breivik.

When Halden opened, it attracted attention globally for its design and its relative splendour. Set in a forest, the prison blocks are a model of minimalist chic. Høidal lifts down from his office wall a framed award for best interior

design, a prize given in recognition of the stylishness of the white laminated tables, tangerine leather sofas and elegant, skinny chairs dotted all over the place. At times, the environment feels more Scandinavian boutique hotel than class A prison.

The hotel comparison comes up frequently. Høidal is just back from visiting a British prison and had to stay a night in a hotel off Oxford Street. Happily for the hotel, he can't remember the name, but he noticed his room was certainly smaller and probably less nice than the cells in Halden. Every Halden cell has a flatscreen television, its own toilet (which, unlike standard UK prison cells, also has a door) and a shower, which comes with large, soft, white towels. Prisoners have their own fridges, cupboards and desks in bright new pine, white magnetic pinboards and huge, unbarred windows overlooking mossy forest scenery.

"There was much focus on the design," Høidal says. "We wanted it to be light and positive."

Obviously the hotel comparison is a stupid one, since the problem with being in prison, unlike staying in a hotel, is that you cannot leave. Even if the prison compound has more in common with a modern, rural university campus, with young and enthusiastic staff (who push themselves around the compound on fashionable, silver two-wheel scooters), the key point about it is that hidden behind the silver birch trees is a thick, tall concrete wall, impossible to scale.

Given the constraints of needing to keep 245 high-risk people incarcerated, creating an environment that was as unprisonlike as possible was a priority for Høidal and the prison's architects. "The architecture is not like other prisons," Høidal says. "We felt it shouldn't look like a prison. We wanted to create normality. If you can't see the wall, this could be anything, anywhere. The life behind the walls should be as much like life outside the walls as possible."

Advertisement

This principle is governed in part by a key feature of the Norwegian sentencing system, which has no life sentences and stipulates a maximum term of 21 years.

"Everyone who is imprisoned inside Norwegian prisons will be released – maybe not Breivik, but everyone else will go back to society. We look at what kind of neighbour you want to have when they come out. If you stay in a box for a few years, then you are not a good person when you come out. If you

treat them hard... well, we don't think that treating them hard will make them a better man. We don't think about revenge in the Norwegian prison system. We have much more focus on rehabilitation. It is a long time since we had fights between inmates. It is this building that makes softer people."

Prisoners are unlocked at 7.30am and locked up for the night at 8.30pm. During the day they are encouraged to attend work and educational activities, with a daily payment of 53 kroner (£5.60) for those who leave their cell. "If you have very few activities, your prisoners become more aggressive," Høidal says. "If they are sitting all day, I don't think that is so good for a person. If they are busy, then they are happier. We try not to let them get institutionalised."



'We don't think about revenge in the Norwegian prison system,' says governore Are Høidal, 'we have much more focus on rehabilitation.'

The role of the prison guard is very different from that in the UK. While officers in Britain get a few weeks' training, Norwegians will have completed a two-year university course, with an emphasis on human rights, ethics and the law. At Halden there are 340 staff members (including teachers and healthcare workers) to the 245 male inmates. Staff are encouraged to mingle with inmates, talking to them, counselling them, working with them to combat their criminality. A great deal of attention is given to making sure people have homes and jobs to go to when they leave, and that family ties are maintained. (There is a well-stocked chalet-style house for prisoners to receive overnight visits from their families.) "We have many more prison officers than prisoners. They are talking about why they are here, what problems got them into this criminality. Our role is to help them and to guard them. The prison governor

role in Norway is unique. They are meant to be coach, motivator, a role model for the inmates."

The regime is expensive – approximately 3,000 kroner (£320) a night, compared with around 2,000 (£213) at the more basic, older Norwegian institutions, such as the Oslo prison where inmates are often locked up for 23 out of 24 hours, but it is cheaper than Ila, where the guard count is higher and the cost 4,000 kroner (£426) a night. A year in Halden costs the state around £116,000, while the average cost of a place in the UK is £45,000.

Cost is only one of the reasons prison reformers in the UK don't think there's any prospect of the Halden model being adopted here. We have double the number of prisoners that Norway has (around 140 per 100,000 in England and Wales, to Norway's 74.8), and having a smaller prison population makes things simpler for the Norwegian state. Halden is so new, there are no figures yet for how swiftly and frequently prisoners drift back into prison after their release, but nationwide Norway has one of the lowest recidivism rates in [Europe](#), just 20% after two years, compared with around 50% in England. Partly that's down to the prison system, but it's also the result of a much better welfare system. There is little popular appetite for softening the prison regime in this country. The justice secretary, Kenneth Clarke, may have stated, "It is just very, very bad value for taxpayers' money to keep warehousing them in overcrowded prisons where most of them get toughened up", but his early commitment to tackling rising prison numbers was not well-received.

The large amount of money and thought lavished on inmates at Halden doesn't stop them (politely) expressing their dislike of the place and their desire to leave as soon as possible. An elderly prisoner, with terminal cancer, serving a long sentence for drug smuggling, is in the craft room, crocheting a toy teddy bear with no enthusiasm for his task. He concedes that Halden smells better than other prisons he has been in, because it doesn't have the mildewed odour of the old buildings, or the deep stench of bodies squeezed together in close confinement. "The only thing that is nice is the building," he says. "People think that you are staying in a five-star hotel, but prison is prison. They lock you up."

Kent, a 43-year-old office manager serving a three-year sentence for a violent attack, is sitting in the prison's mixing studio, where prisoners record music and make a programme that is broadcast monthly by the local radio station. He has formed a band with three other inmates and two guards, and performs regularly for fellow inmates. Leaning back in his swivel chair, sipping at his coffee and fiddling with his red baseball cap, he admits he's enjoying being

able to focus on his music, but says, "The Halden prison has been compared to the finest hotel. That's the impression my friends and parents have from reading the papers. It is not true. The real issue is freedom, which is taken away from you. That is the worst thing that can happen to you. When the door slams at night, you're sat there in a small room. That's always a tough time."

He has children aged 10 and 12. "I think about them 24/7. I speak to them three times a week for 30 minutes, but there is so much to say, so much I need to be doing for them. I think I'm never going to commit another crime. Freedom means so much to me."

There is some annoyance from staff at the focus on the buildings, rather than on the principle of rehabilitation that drives the prison. "One politician when it opened said, 'I could live here for a year, no problem.' But he was in the cell for two minutes," says Janne Offerdal, who teaches English to the inmates (mainly to foreign nationals caught smuggling drugs into the country; the Norwegian prisoners all speak impeccable English). "They compare the facilities with the elderly prisons. But if you are building a new building now, you wouldn't build an old one."

Høidal is bemused by the popular fascination with the prisoners' flatscreen TVs, pointing out that it's now impossible to buy the older models. "I don't call the cells luxurious. It's 10 square metres, a toilet, a shower, that's all."

No one is thrilled to arrive here. The reception officer explains that the most positive reaction is one of relief. When they are brought in, "some of them are crying," he says. "They don't know what they're going to do with their dog. There are aggressive people who are high on drugs, or withdrawing from drugs, which is not always easy to deal with. It's only the older guys who've been in other prisons who are happy to be in Halden."

As we walk around the compound, an inmate comes up to ask Høidal, "Can we have a swimming pool?" He laughs, and remembers the shock of a Russian prison governor who visited recently and was horrified to see that the inmates didn't stand to attention when Høidal came past but instead clustered around him, seizing the chance to list their complaints.



Halden has an award for its interior design. At times, the environment feels more Scandinavian boutique hotel than class A prison.

There are no plans for a swimming pool, but Høidal does want to make a jogging track through the woods, and a young sports teacher (who is working on specialised programmes for recovering drug addicts) says he hopes to start rock climbing lessons in the summer.

I wonder if it's a good idea to teach inmates how to scale rock faces, but he responds with hurt amazement. "There would be no security risk. I wouldn't be teaching them how to escape." So far there have been no escapes, or attempts.

The sports centre is focused on team sports, especially football. There are a few bits of training equipment, but no weights, because Høidal doesn't approve of them: "I see the negative of focusing too much on muscles. It is a violent thing."

The inmates tell Høidal they're annoyed by recent changes to the routine, but they are respectful when they address him. He listens politely, agrees that in prison minor irritations can become major frustrations, but remarks that people outside the building would laugh at the trivial nature of their complaints.

In the winter, when the compound was covered in snow, one of the inmates went outside and stamped around for a while. Looking out from the staff canteen later, guards noticed he'd written Help Me with his footprints. A UK

prisoner might set fire to his cell; even these appeals for attention are done in the most non-aggressive manner.

I see only one piece of prisoner graffiti, a rather half-hearted scribble on an A4 printed notice (to avoid causing permanent damage): "Fuck the rules" (only the pen has stopped working, so all that's really legible is Fuck the r).

Otherwise, there is the prison-sanctioned graffiti, the recurring logo of a convict in striped uniform, apparently about to hurl his ball and chain to the wind, which decorates the yard walls and toilet doors, and was commissioned at considerable expense from the Norwegian graffiti artist [Dolk](#), out of the prison's 6m kroner (£640,000) art budget.

Huge, blown-up photographs of daffodils, Parisian street scenes or Moroccan tiles cover the corridors. Høidal doesn't have a clear answer to whether the pictures have a positive effect on inmate behaviour, but says that whenever a state building is opened in Norway, 1% of the construction budget goes on art.

One wild-eyed ex-amphetamine addict slaps Høidal on the back, tells him he is a good man, but says he misses his old prison, Oslo, where he served an earlier sentence. Drugs were more of a problem in that jail, he adds wistfully. Høidal agrees that the style of Halden prison, with the relentless presence of guards wanting to talk and help inmates, does not suit everyone. "Some people don't like them being around all the time. If you want drugs, then you prefer Oslo prison."

Another prisoner, living in the relative seclusion of Unit A, where he is a year into a sentence for sexual abuse of a minor, pays tribute to the humanity of the prison staff (as opposed to that of the fellow prisoners, who, when they found out what he was in prison for, announced they were going to dismember him). "The people who work here don't look down on you," he says. Compared with the 1850s Eidsberg prison, where he was before, Halden is a relief: "Being there and being here, it's like heaven and hell."

Two prison officers are sitting with the eight prisoners on A-block, encouraging them to knit woollen hats. One also has expensive oil canvases for them to experiment with, but there isn't much appetite for either activity, so once the waffles are finished, they return to playing a card game.

The civility between staff and inmates is noticeable everywhere. Information for new inmates is translated into English for those who do not speak Norwegian. The text is apologetic about the possibility that they may have to wait before they are transferred to a cell, and concludes: "We hope you have

understanding for any waiting and hope to help you as soon as possible. With best regards, the reception officers."

Maybe I'm not there long enough to sense latent anger or profound despair, but Halden doesn't feel like a place where you have to look over your shoulder. An official in the healthcare division says up to 40% of inmates will be taking sleeping pills, and between 10% and 20% are on anti-depressants, but overall the atmosphere is calm.

Though food is provided by the prison, inmates can buy ingredients to make their own meals. The prison shop has wasabi paste for those who want to make sushi. You can buy garam masala, vanilla pods or halva, and there is prime fillet of beef at 350 kroner (£37) a kilo, which prisoners club together to buy when they want to make a special meal. The most frequently borrowed books in the library are cookbooks. Most prisoners' fridges are full of yoghurt drinks and cheeses; a couple say they've put on weight since they arrived.

At 3pm, a table is set for 10, with white china plates, glasses and white paper napkins, in the drug rehabilitation unit, where Robert, 45 and an ex-addict and dealer, is living. Some prisoners are sitting on the brown woollen sofas watching the communal television. It looks like an advertisement for a family ski-chalet, complete with beautiful forest views. This is the main meal of the day; afterwards, between four and five prisoners will be locked in their cells for an hour to give the prison guards time for a break, then there will be free time until lock-up at 8.30pm.

Occasionally the prisoners talk of the Breivik trial, which is closely followed on television. On the whole they don't believe the liberal regime from which they benefit should be extended to him. "He couldn't stay in a place like this," Robert says. "If I saw him, I would knock him down. I'm a nice prisoner but I would do it and I would brag about it. Everybody wants to take him out."

A fellow inmate, Patrick, serving a 12-year sentence for drug smuggling, was one of two prisoners who organised a prison-wide collection to buy flowers for the victims of Breivik's attack. Everyone gave up their daily wage of 53 kroner (£5.60); even the prime minister was moved by the gesture. "It was horrible, the thing that happened, and we felt helpless," Patrick says. "We wanted to do something. I was surprised that it got so much media attention; I was surprised that people thought, 'You're prisoners, but you are so nice.' We are also human beings. We also have daughters, sisters, children."

Høidal says, with some relief, that if Breivik is ever transferred to Halden, it won't be for at least a decade, by which point he will have retired. Although special arrangements may have to be made for the first stage of Breivik's incarceration, he believes the Norwegian principles of fair and liberal punishment will not be threatened by the atrocity. In the days after the attack, the Norwegian prime minister, [Jens Stoltenberg](#), said, "We are shaken but we will not give up our values. Our response is more freedom, more democracy."

Høidal echoes his words: "If it happens again, then maybe we will have another discussion about the system. For the moment, I don't think that this case will change Norwegian thinking

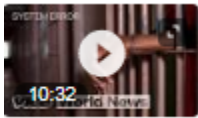


The World's Most Luxurious Prison | 2020 Documentary

57K views · 1 year ago

 OLIROUX TV

Ann Widdecombe visits Norway's Halden Prison, where inmates share plush flats, dine on sushi and even record their own rap ...



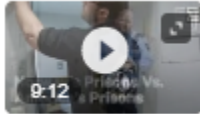
[New Ways Private Prisons Are Making Billions | System Error](#)

YouTube · VICE News
Apr 22, 2022



[Private prisons in the U.S. make big profits](#)

YouTube · CGTN America
Apr 1, 2016



[How Norway's Prisons Are Different From America's | NowThis](#)

YouTube · NowThis News
Aug 6, 2020



[Inside the "world's most humane" prison](#)

YouTube · Channel 4 News
Oct 27, 2016

Peace Education Program

Study on Prem Rawat Foundation's Peace Education Program Shows Exceptional Benefits for Incarcerated People

October 28, 2022·3 min read

A robust new study found that The Prem Rawat Foundation's (TPRF) Peace Education Program has exceptional benefits for incarcerated individuals.

ORLANDO, Fla., Oct. 28, 2022 /PRNewswire-PRWeb/ -- The [Peace Education Program](#) has a wide range of remarkable benefits for incarcerated people, including reducing anxiety, increasing self-understanding and self-improvement, and enhancing hope and appreciation for life, according to an [extensive new study](#).

Conducted by Ace Insights, an independent market research company, the [study](#) analyzed the impact of the program on 5,276 incarcerated individuals in Brazilian correctional facilities. Noting that "the quantitative findings are extremely robust," 99.7% of participants reported benefits, and the study concludes "that the Peace Education Program is making a very positive impact on almost all incarcerated peoples' lives."

On October 25, the [study results](#) were presented at the International Corrections and Prison Association Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida. The conference is one of the premiere gatherings of corrections professionals and experts in the world. More and more of them are embracing the [Peace Education Program](#) as an empowering resource for positive change, both for themselves as well as the incarcerated people they serve.

- ADVERTISEMENT -

Demonstrating its cross-cultural relevance, 300,000 people in 80 countries and in 40 languages have participated in the [Peace Education Program](#) to date, including 100,000 people in 775 correctional facilities.

The innovative workshop series gives people an opportunity to reflect on their own humanity, increasing self-awareness in support of resilience, empathy and wellbeing. TPRF Founder [Prem Rawat's](#) video presentations are at the heart of the workshops, encouraging participants to explore the [ten themes](#) of Peace, Appreciation, Inner Strength, Self-Awareness, Dignity, Choice, Hope, Clarity, Understanding and Contentment.

The most recent [study](#) on participants in prisons in the State of São Paulo, Brazil adds to a growing body of evidence of the program's successful results. Other [studies](#) have shown similar positive impacts for people in correctional facilities across 4 continents, as well as for participating high school and university students in the U.S., U.K., New Zealand, and Colombia.

"It's wonderful to see that the new study on the impact in Brazil confirms what we've found elsewhere across the globe: this program can help transform lives no matter how challenging the circumstances," says Peace Education Program Director Willow Baker. "It was an honor to present the study and more information about the Peace Education Program this week at the ICPA conference and to meet so many dedicated people who want to make a positive difference in the field of corrections."

The [Peace Education Program](#) workshops can be offered in person, virtually, or on inmate tablets by ViaPath and Edovo (tablet versions currently available in the U.S. only). [The Prem Rawat Foundation](#) makes the workshop materials available free of charge.

To implement the program at correctional facilities in Brazil, The Prem Rawat Foundation partners with the Prison Education Foundation (FUNAP), a state foundation under the Secretariat of Penitentiary Administration in charge of helping inmates to rehabilitate and reintegrate into society through educational, labor, cultural and legal assistance initiatives.

The [Peace Education Program](#) is just one of the ways that TPRF advances dignity, peace and prosperity by addressing fundamental human needs.

TPRF's [Food for People](#) program has served over 4.7 million nutritious meals to disadvantaged children and elderly people in India, Nepal and Ghana.

Since [Prem Rawat](#) founded TPRF in 2001, it has given over [160 grants](#) totaling over \$5.7 million to a variety of partner NGOs in 40 countries to help victims of natural disasters, COVID-19 and other traumas.

Media Contact

Jake Frankel, The Prem Rawat Foundation,
1.310.392.5700, jakefrankel@tprf.org

Mary Wishard, The Prem Rawat Foundation,
1.310.392.5700, marywishard@tprf.org

[Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

SOURCE The Prem Rawat Foundation

- **1.**

³⁴Man Is At His Best When In Peace – Prem Rawat

June 30, 2021 7:46 pm



In April 2021, The Prem Rawat Foundation (TPRF) signed a partnership MoU with the South Africa Department of Correctional Services to expand the [Peace Education Program](#) at correctional facilities throughout the country. Prem Rawat is seen signing the MoU, while looking on is Rev. Dr. Menzi Mkhathini from the Department of Correctional Services. Photo courtesy of TPRF.

By Chandra Segaran

KUALA LUMPUR, June 30 – Exactly 50 years ago in June 1971, global Peace Ambassador, Prem Rawat landed at Heathrow Airport in London, armed with a simple desire. To bring the message of Peace and the gift of Self-Knowledge to the people of the West. It has never been done before. His lineage of teachers of self-Knowledge before him never went beyond the shores of India to spread the Knowledge that Prem Rawat speaks about today.

He was 13-years old and his arrival in England was apparently news worthy, if not a sensational event, as not only those who had invited him to bring his teachings to the west had turned up at the airport to welcome him, but there were newsmen as well in the crowd, wishing to interview the young man, who was promising world peace. Their curiosity was piqued.

³⁴ <https://www.weekly-echo.com/man-is-at-his-best-when-in-peace-prem-rawat/>

Unfazed and cool, but basking both in the warm greetings from the long-haired men and woman who came to welcome him at the airport, and the newsmen with a steady stream of questions, Prem Rawat went on to answer with candour and simplicity the questions posed to him from the media.

Many titles were given to him in his early days of stay in the UK. Whether they were sceptical or adorative, it depended on who were giving them. The media described him as “a guru from India”, with a reasonable amount of scepticism while those who had invited him – whether they were looking for the truth, or simply peace in their lives or were just some anti-war youngsters of the 70s – to spread the message of peace in the west- called him a genuine teacher who had an important message to impart.

Fast forward 50 years, Prem Rawat who spoke at an event at the International Conference Centre in Birmingham on June 17th this year, was the same cool and collected orator that he was in his first public talk at the Conway Hall, in London in the summer of 1971.

His message that Peace is possible has withstood the test of time and today his Peace Education Programme, an innovative series of video-based workshops that help people discover their own inner strength and personal peace, is a huge success and runs in 70 countries. Available in 30 languages including Spanish, Mandarin, Hindi, Arab, Tamil, Bahasa Indonesia, the programme has been adopted as part of education in learning institutions, colleges, and social service in community centres.

It has been made available in over 650 prison programmes worldwide where it has had tremendous success with many prisons reporting improved wellbeing and reduced violence. In the state of Telangana, India, an academic study showed a huge reduction in re-offending and five prisons reportedly closed down due to the success of the programme there.

His LOCKDOWN live stream series that began as the world slowed down with the onslaught of the COVID-19 virus were caught by many people from different parts of the world.



From regular advice on wearing the masks, following other standard operating procedures (SOPs) and keeping safe during the pandemic to looking within for strength and hope, and recognising the nature of the self and its wisdom, Prem Rawat kept many of the live stream tuners engaged, motivated and inspired to get on with their lives despite the fears and uncertainties that the virus had created.





Over United in Hope: Prem Rawat Foundation

\$300,000

in humanitarian aid



[MORE VIDEOS](#)



The Prem Rawat Foundation (TPRF) during the pandemic has been also working with partners to provide over \$400,000 in crucial medical care, supplies, food, and other humanitarian aid to those suffering during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the event in Birmingham to mark his 50th anniversary was limited to the local crowd, with all COVID-19 SOP in tow, audience from all over the world also tuned in to the live stream of the event.

He was in his element as he recalled his early days in the UK and the young “hippies”, many of them who were also guests at the latest event, minus their hippie hairstyles and live style, who had turned up to hear his talks and wanting to know about life, God and how a group of them had earlier travelled to India to invite him to UK.

“It has been an incredible journey.”

Of course there was a lot of sensationalism, as a 13-year old boy was promising peace “but this 13-year old was not shooting blank words”, he said.

“People had to feel peace. People had to feel the magic of being alive.”

“What was being said? That what you are looking for is inside of you. You will find it there. (Yet), so much of the focus was on so many other things (about him), are you a Prophet, are you a this or that and...I have said many times, ‘No, I am not a prophet’.”

The names were always there, from the time he was a child and they never really mattered, but what was important was the deed itself, Prem Rawat said, adding that he took satisfaction in knowing that his words had brought comfort to many people.

Prem Rawat spoke of the distinction of being a human being. “No human being is ordinary. Every human being is extraordinary.”

A question had been posed to him, implying that human beings were nothing.

“When do people see human being as nothing then?”

“If a human being is not doing what the human being is made for, the human being then appears useless to you.”

Many of the things human beings do today in the world are not any good at all, he said, pointing out the poor records not only in the space race that has left garbage in the space from abandoned satellites to other debris, but the wipe out of many animal species from the planet and the poor sharing of resources that have left a huge divide between the rich and the poor.

“Human beings are only good when they experience peace, when they experience joy, when they work towards peace, when they work towards joy. When they work towards personal fulfilment. That is when human beings shine.”

Prem Rawat also spoke about the possibility that laid for a human being in his or her lifetime – to know with certainty who they really are and their potential for true fulfilment, despite the difficulties or what is happening externally.

Further information on the Peace Education Program and PEAK (Peace Education and Knowledge) is available at the Prem Rawat Foundation website: <https://tprf.org/>

–WE



Freedom Within: Prem Rawat Speaks to Inmates at Twin Towers

49K views • 3 years ago

The Prem Rawat Foundation TPRF

Join Prem Rawat as he speaks to inmates participating in the Peace Education Program at the Twin Towers Correctional Facility ...

CC



Peace Education Program Changes Lives at Zonderwater Prison

19K views • 7 years ago

The Prem Rawat Foundation TPRF

A remarkable short profile of The Prem Rawat Foundation's Peace Education Program at the mammoth Zonderwater Prison

CC



Inside Peace - The Potential for Prison Peace Education

20K views • Streamed 6 years ago

The Prem Rawat Foundation TPRF

On Wednesday, June 15, TPRF and Tutu Foundation UK co-sponsored, an invitation-only event focused on TPRF's Peace Education Program



Jerry Marshall | Peter Clark | John Biggin | The Peace Education Program | Why I Got...

13 moments



Inside peace

The Prem Rawat Foundation TPRF • 3.7K views

This documentary film highlights the impact of the Peace Education Program on incarcerated individuals at Dominguez State Jail in San...

More Americans Killed by Guns Since 1968 Than in All U.S. Wars — Combined

By comparison, roughly 1.2 million service members have been killed in every war in U.S. history.



Members of the U.S. Army Old Guard place flags at gravesites at Arlington National Cemetery on May 27, 2010 in Arlington, Virginia. Mark Wilson / Getty Images file

By Chelsea Bailey

³⁵More Americans have died from gunshots in the last 50 years than in all of the wars in American history.

Since 1968, more than 1.5 million Americans have died in gun-related incidents, according to [data](#) from the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). By comparison, approximately 1.2 million service members have been killed in every war in U.S. history, according to estimates from the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) and [iCasualties.org](#), a website that maintains an ongoing database of casualties from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

³⁵ <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/las-vegas-shooting/more-americans-killed-guns-1968-all-u-s-wars-combined-n807156&source=gmail&ust=1669591716977000&usg=AOvVaw3iiOcTtduvgiHdb5Vsuzce>

Americans Killed

Firearm related deaths 1968 to 2015: 1.53 million

America's Wars 1775 - 2017: 1.20 million

Revolutionary War	1775-1783	4,435
War of 1812	1812-1815	2,260
Indian Wars	Approx. 1817-1898	1,000
Mexican War	1846-1848	13,283
Civil War	1861-1865	498,332
Spanish-American War	1898-1902	2,446
World War I	1917-1918	116,516
World War II	1941-1945	405,399
Korean War	1950-1953	54,246
Vietnam War	1964-1975	90,220

Firearm related deaths vs U.S. war casualties. NBC News

Sunday's massacre in Las Vegas — which left 59 dead and 530 others injured — is the deadliest mass shooting in modern American history. And such attacks are becoming more common.

Related: [Trump: Las Vegas Shooter 'Sick' and 'Demented Man'](#)

"What we've seen in Las Vegas is an uniquely American scene," former FBI agent Ali Soufan said on MSNBC. "The aftermath of such traumatic events have become an all too familiar scene in our society and in our politics, unfortunately."

[Tom Brokaw: Gun debate must 'go to the top of the agenda' in US](#)

Tom Brokaw: Gun debate must 'go to the top of the agenda' in US

OCT. 3, 2017 / 03:36



The June 2016 shooting at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida, which killed 49 people, is now the second deadliest attack, followed by the 2012 massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, which killed 26 people, most of them children.

After the Sandy Hook shooting, a tearful President Barack Obama announced a series of executive actions aimed at curbing violence in America. The orders included a measure to [overturn a 20-year-old amendment](#) that prevented the CDC from conducting federally funded research into how gun violence affects Americans.

[Losing jobs](#)

These Are the World's Top 10 Happiest and Unhappiest Countries in 2022

“Politics should be directed as the great sages long ago insisted: to the well-being of the people.”

SHARESHARESHARETWEETSHARE



View of a lake within Finland's Nuuksio National Park. | SaiKrishna Saketh Yellapragada via Unsplash



By Joe McCarthy

March 21, 2022

³⁶*Think about how you felt yesterday. Did you smile or laugh a lot? Did you learn or do something interesting? Were you angry? Sad?*

Every year, the global polling giant Gallup asks hundreds of thousands of people in more than 140 countries these and other questions as part of its annual survey on emotional well-being.

It also asks people to rate where they stand on an imaginary a ladder — "with the lowest rung representing the worst possible life and the highest rung representing the best possible life" — and where they expect to stand in five years. Based on their responses, Gallup classifies them as "thriving, struggling, or suffering."

The United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) then takes this survey data and combines it with analysis of Twitter content and other surveys, along with social and economic data, to create the annual World Happiness Report.

Email Now:

G20 Nations: Act Now for Countries on the Frontline of the Climate Emergency

22,457 / 50,000 actions taken

TAKE ACTION

[More Info](#)

Now in its 10th year, the latest report published on March 18 is a "bright spot" in a "troubled time of war and pandemic," the authors write. As rates of poverty and hunger surged throughout the pandemic, mutual aid networks emerged to fill gaps in government support. In fact, rates of helping strangers, volunteering, and donating to causes and individuals increased by about 25% over the past two years, according to the report.

"This surge of benevolence, which was especially great for the helping of strangers, provides powerful evidence that people respond to help others in need, creating in the process more happiness for the beneficiaries, good examples for others to follow, and better lives for themselves," said John Helliwell, one of the main authors of the report, in a press release.

The report notes that more countries are beginning to factor human well-being and happiness into their approach to governance. New Zealand, for example, now considers human well-being a more important factor than growth domestic product when considering new policies.

³⁶<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/happiest-and-unhappiest-countries-2022/>

Related Stories

-

Jacinda Ardern Says Economic Growth Is Pointless If People Aren't Thriving

Some countries do a much better job than others at centering the public good. This is often reflected in the World Happiness Report, the authors of which note that people in countries that rank higher in the analysis tend to have higher levels of trust in their governments.

“World leaders should take heed,” renowned economist Jeffrey Sachs, a lead author of the report, said in a statement. “Politics should be directed as the great sages long ago insisted: to the well-being of the people, not the power of the rulers.”

The highest ranked countries all have robust welfare programs and minimal levels of inequality relative to the global population. The lowest ranked countries, meanwhile, have high levels of extreme poverty.

Finland, the highest ranked country for the fifth year in a row, has one of the strongest social safety nets in the world, an exceptional education system, and low childhood poverty, according to the Sustainable Governance Indicators report by the Bertelsmann Foundation. The country also prioritizes work-life balance, allowing people to shape more of their time according to their own passions and curiosities.

Afghanistan, the lowest ranked country, has been ravaged by war for more than two decades and suffers from extraordinary levels of violence. In August 2021, when the Taliban solidified rule over Afghanistan for the first time since 2001, women and other vulnerable communities faced increased risk.

It’s important to note that countries with high levels of reported happiness have benefited from historical and ongoing colonialism (countries from the so-called Global North), while those with the lowest scores suffered from it (countries from the so-called Global South). In other words, a historical understanding of happiness levels is essential.

Related Stories

-

Why Are Reparations Essential for Climate Justice?

With that in mind, here are the 10 happiest and unhappiest countries in the world, according to the World Happiness Report.

The 10 Happiest Countries in the World

1. Finland
2. Denmark
3. Iceland
4. Switzerland
5. Netherlands
6. Luxembourg
7. Sweden
8. Norway
9. Israel
10. New Zealand

Related Stories

•

[Why This Activist Wants Our Lives to Be Organized Around Our Own Well-Being](#)

19 US

The 10 Unhappiest Countries in the World

137. Zambia
138. Malawi
139. Tanzania
140. Sierra Leone
141. Lesotho
142. Botswana
143. Rwanda
144. Zimbabwe
145. Lebanon
146. Afghanistan



Why Finland is the happiest country in the world | Full...

SBS Dateline ✓

219K views · 1 year ago

Happiness is the key.



I find it quite fascinating to see the correlation between a country's state of happiness and the policies they pursue.

Each year there's a rating of all the countries in the world by the citizen's happiness.

The Northern European countries dominate the list. New Zealand and Israel are also included.

During my research, I found that the countries that are on top of the list in happiness are also the same countries that are sincerely actively pursuing social change in all areas.

The United States is number 19 on the list. We have a long ways to go. I don't have to tell you that just turn on your TV and watch the madness.

It seems to me the more an individual is emotionally mature consequently, the environment around him will reflect that.

The Scandinavian countries have taken this topic seriously for many years. They know that if an individual is truly happy and has all his comfort needs, the nation will be happy.

By living a happy life, they contribute so much to society.

If you are homeless or on drugs, your lifestyle is a burden to society. In the US they would say you made your bed and now sleep in it. It's more of a punishment treatment.

In Scandinavian countries, punishment is not an option. Rehabilitation is the answer.

If you treat a criminal with respect and dignity and train them, they can and will change

The modern-day prison system in America does not allow for this. It is profit driven. They don't want you to succeed in life. They make money from you being in prison. They will cut corners wherever they can so they can make more money.

The Scandinavians take an entirely different view. Everyone makes mistakes. Human beings can change for the better if given the proper environment.

Many people have had real-life curve balls thrown at them and the next thing they know they are on the street with no home.

Entire families currently are living on the streets with no home.



This problem is so complicated. It can't be solved by just the book. Yet the foundation of solving this problem is kindness.

Most people think that kindness is weak while going to war is strong. Kindness is the building block of the entire universe.

Anybody can go to war. We've been doing that for thousands of years. We are mentally disabled in our society. Yet we think we are hardly advanced.

War is obsolete and has always been so. We spend over half our budget on the defense industry. Yet we can hardly take care of our own people

A homeless society indicates there is a severe problem in society today.

With homelessness, all sorts of problems manifest. A chain is only strong as its weakest link.

Don't think that you are separate from homelessness. It could happen to you someday.

A nation that works on solving this problem practically is the most sophisticated nation on earth. These top 10 happy countries go way beyond what we do in the States.

Granted in the States there are so many good people locally and at the state level working to solve this issue.

But it takes the awareness of the US government to totally embrace this and implement laws that will help society to overcome this.

Housing prices are astronomical. People just can't keep up with them. Many laws or most of the laws are made with the rich in mind.

We need new thinking in politics today. We people to be involved in the political process.

Leaders like check Jacinda Ardern who embraces being kind in our politics. She is a new wave, of politicians who are adamantly against the old ways of being. The old style away of tearing down your opponent is over.

Just think we had a president who'd love to put down anybody. Anybody was free game. He told more than 30,000 lives during his presidency.

What amazes me is the people voted him into office. This is a reflection of how far we have gone off course.

Happiness is not a Republican or a Democrat. We must all respect other people's views and not put them down.

Each of us thinks differently and acts differently. Yet, if the politicians could be tolerant of one another, it would go a long way in politics.

In my eyes, the Scandinavian countries are doing 100% better than our current situation in America.

Many people give the excuse that the Scandinavian countries are small. It's much easier for them to do. Yes, that is true. Yet, many years ago they took our concepts of education and brought them over to their countries.

They adopted them. They morphed and changed the system and now they have the finest educational system in the world.

The US can take the same principles that they did and make laws that could help change society for the better.

In my eyes, if you have a kind man in the office you will have kind laws.

Many people still believe in a trickle-down economy. We were suckered into it. It hasn't solved our problems at all.

We are on the verge of having several businessmen have a net worth of over 1 trillion dollars. If you spend \$100,000 a year for around \$34 million years, that would be a trillion dollars.

For this planet to survive, we must change and recalibrate all our systems.

We can no longer be just consumers on this planet. It is about time to be custodians of this planet. I find it sad that at the very bottom of the list are many African nations.

They have been in civil war for many years. I spent time in Africa and loved the country and the people.

In my eyes, this continent will change for the better. The transformation will occur. Any problem on earth can be solved.

We just have to put our minds to it and come up with a solution.

Happiness is the key.

Forget GDP — New Zealand is prioritizing gross national well-being

³⁷The country’s new “well-being budget” emphasizes citizen happiness over capitalist gain.

By Sigal Samuel Jun 8, 2019, 8:00am EDT

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern wants to prioritize national well-being. *Hagen Hopkins/Getty Images*



This story is part of a group of stories called

Finding the best ways to do good.

We usually think of a country’s wealth or capital in terms of its financial bottom line: its gross domestic product. But New Zealand challenged the world to assess it in terms of a very different commodity, as the country released the first-ever **“well-being budget”** on May 30.

To Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, the purpose of government spending is to ensure citizens’ health and life satisfaction, and that — not wealth or economic growth — is the metric by which a country’s progress should be measured. GDP alone, **she said**, “does not guarantee improvement to our living standards” and nor does it “take into account who benefits and who is left out.”

³⁷<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2019/6/8/18656710/new-zealand-wellbeing-budget-bhutan-happiness>

The budget requires all new spending to go toward five specific well-being goals: bolstering mental health, reducing child poverty, supporting indigenous peoples, moving to a low-carbon-emission economy, and flourishing in a digital age.

To measure progress toward these goals, New Zealand will use 61 indicators tracking everything from loneliness to trust in government institutions, alongside more traditional issues like water quality.

Ardern, who has spoken of empathy as the trait most needed in political leaders nowadays, said that her government has “laid the foundation for not just one well-being budget, but a different approach for government decision-making altogether.”

This approach appeals to many progressives, but it’s also attracted criticism from some who think it’s airy-fairy marketing spin at best and fiscally irresponsible policy at worst.

“New Zealanders won’t benefit from a government that is ignoring the slowing economy and focusing instead on branding,” said Amy Adams, a lawmaker in the opposition center-right National Party, in a statement. “We’re facing significant economic risks over coming years, but this government is focusing on a marketing campaign.”

Critics worry that Ardern’s approach will set the country back financially, and argue that it’s a government’s responsibility to look out for overall economic success rather than the happiness of individuals. Some think prioritizing the latter is ineffective. “If addiction and suicide rates fail to improve, will the government be prepared to dial back this spending?” said Louis Houlbrooke of the New Zealand Taxpayers’ Union. “Or will it just throw more money into the black hole?”

Though its effectiveness has yet to be tested, the government’s plan does seem to be a good-faith effort to try something new. For instance, it’s investing more than \$200 million in services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, which Ardern said is “the biggest single investment ever” in the issue in New Zealand’s history.

Ardern’s supporters also emphasize that money isn’t the only type of capital that matters. Mental health and a sense of community, for example, are equally important forms of capital even though they may be more intangible.

It’s an approach that merits serious consideration. At a time when some argue the traditional capitalist model has made us more anxious and isolated than previous generations, defining success less strictly in terms of wealth and more in terms of

overall well-being is likely to appeal to many people. Other countries may come to embrace New Zealand's approach. In fact, some have already anticipated it.

The history of using well-being to measure a country's success

New Zealand isn't the first country to consider the well-being approach, though it is the first to release a budget explicitly centered around that concept.

The fourth king of Bhutan coined the term "**gross national happiness**" in the 1970s, when he began asserting that "Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross Domestic Product." It was more than just a quippy one-liner. By 2008, Bhutan had officially enshrined GNH in its constitution.

Amid the global financial crisis, national happiness became the subject of **policy conferences** and **college courses**. France commissioned a study on it, which leading economists — Amartya Sen, Joseph Stiglitz, and Jean-Paul Fitouss — completed in 2009. In 2011, the OECD released its first **well-being report** on its member countries, and in 2012, the UN began releasing its annual **world happiness report**.

This year, **Finland, Denmark, and Norway** earned the top three spots in the international ranking of happiest countries. Bhutan came in 95th place.

Nevertheless, Bhutan continues to closely monitor its 800,000 citizens' happiness as its most precious commodity. **NPR has reported on the process:**

Every five years under the direction of the **Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH Research**, survey-takers fan out across the country to conduct questionnaires of some 8,000 randomly selected households.

Bhutan asks about 300 questions. ... Happily, the participants are compensated a day's wage.

As one of the center's lead happy index researchers, [Dorji] Penjore says, "We try to measure ... all forms of capital. So that is the difference between GDP and GNH." He says, for example, the government asks people about their spirituality: "Do you meditate?" says Penjore. "How frequently do you pray?"

They ask how much time and money you devote to your community, how many hours you sleep and how many hours you work. Some questions might startle an American: How often do you quarrel with your family? How long do you stay away from them? Do you trust your neighbors?

Bhutan's guiding philosophy has inspired others, like the United Arab Emirates. In 2016, the country created a new cabinet position with a lofty title: minister of state for happiness and well-being. A woman named Ohood bint Khalfan Roumi got the job.

"This is serious business for the government," she **told** the Los Angeles Times. "What is the purpose of government if it does not work toward the happiness of the people? It's the duty and role of the government to create the right conditions for people to choose to be happy." She said those conditions include everything from good infrastructure to making sure people feel safe.

"Some people may laugh at [the idea of nurturing] happiness, thinking it is silly and fluffy," Roumi added. "I assure you, it's a science. It touches on medicine, health, social sciences."



The UAE's first minister of state for happiness and well-being, Ohoud bint Khalfan Roumi, certainly looks happy. *Kamran Jebreili/AP*

One of her initiatives was a “happiness patrol” in Abu Dhabi, which involved police officers rewarding citizens for good behavior instead of just punishing them for infractions. Motorists who obeyed the rules of the road, for example, were given gift vouchers.



The well-being approach is also gaining momentum in Latin America. In 2013, Ecuador appointed a state secretary of **buen vivir**, an understanding of the good life — rooted in indigenous spirituality — that entails living in harmony with the natural environment. And Venezuela created a **vice ministry of “Supreme Social Happiness”** (though given the political and economic crisis currently unfolding under President Nicolas Maduro, it’s hard to imagine much social happiness flourishing there in the short term).

New Zealand has gone one step further than all these countries by deciding to make well-being the organizing principle of its national budget. The results of this grand social experiment will be watched closely over the coming years not only by New Zealanders, but also by governments worldwide. How the experiment turns out will likely influence their willingness to try it, too.

The Ray Of Happiness



com Unabridged (v 1.1) – Cite This Source – Share This

hap·pi·ness   'hæpɪnɪs - Show Spelled Pronunciation[**hap**-ee-nis] [Pronunciation Key](#) - Show IPA Pronunciation

-noun

1. the quality or state of being happy.
2. good fortune; pleasure; contentment; joy.

[Origin: 1520–30; [HAPPY](#) + [-NESS](#)]

—*Synonyms* 1, 2. pleasure, joy, exhilaration, bliss, contentedness, delight, enjoyment, satisfaction. HAPPINESS, BLISS, CONTENTMENT, FELICITY imply an active or passive state of pleasure or pleasurable satisfaction. HAPPINESS results from the possession or attainment of what one considers good: *the happiness of visiting one's family*. BLISS is unalloyed happiness or supreme delight: *the bliss of perfect companionship*. CONTENTMENT is a peaceful kind of happiness in which one rests without desires, even though every wish may not have been gratified: *contentment in one's surroundings*. FELICITY is a formal word for happiness of an especially fortunate or intense kind: *to wish a young couple felicity in life*.

Our Constitution, says that we have the right to pursue happiness. Every one of us desires to be happy. We spend our entire life pursuing it. Happiness is like the rainbow in the sky. You can see the rainbow touching the ground but as you get near the rainbow it moves. Happiness is quite like that. It is always within our

grasp. At times we can even hold it but then it will disappear. We search for happiness everywhere.

For some, I'll be happy when I'm out of middle school. I'll be happy when I graduate from high school. I'll be happy when I graduate from college. I'll be happy when I am married. I'll be happy when I have kids. I'll be happy when I have a new boss. I'll be happy when I go on vacation. I'll be happy when I retire.

We are always looking for happiness. We want that some external event will make us happy for the rest of our lives. We search for it and never quite find Cinderella-type happiness. The Prince who we married ended up being someone imperfect just like us.

So where do we find happiness? Can we truly be happy and be involved with this world? Does true happiness exist? Is happiness a state of mind? If I become rich will I truly be happy? Everyone equates happiness with money.

Did you know a lot of people who win the lottery spend all their money and lose it in five years? If you don't have money and a big sum is given to you without proper financial planning you could lose it.

For thousands of years, great teachers have said that true happiness lies within. It does not exist in this world. Imagine at the time of your death everything that you own will be taken away. You can't bring any material possessions with you.

Happiness is truly a state of mind. I have been to third-world countries where the average poor person is selling something on the street. He has his entire family with him. Happiness is written all over his face.

I have seen people who are super-rich and whose lives are miserable. Happiness truly comes from within. There is an internal well where one can drink and be filled with happiness and joy. It is our true essence.

Meditation brings us into that realm. Meditation is the key that unlocks the door within. Imagine your true nature is infinite happiness yet we spend our entire lives looking in the wrong places. It has been inside us all the time.

At times I see that the majority of us are looking in the wrong place. We just need to redirect our attention within. From that well within we can tap into the source and bring that happiness to the surface.

Over time it will start to fill up your life both externally and internally. You will see for yourself that happiness exists everywhere but do we have the eyes to see? It's only by refining ourselves over time do we see the beauty of life.

In this state, we don't strive if only I had this or if only I had this. Every moment you are drinking the nectar within.

I'm not saying as soon as you start to meditate that all your problems will go away. This life is a journey. Every day we take one step after another. Over time by being aware and being self-empowered we truly become happy.

We realize that happiness is truly a state of mind. Nobody can take it away. As long we strive to reach happiness externally it will come and go. It's like the mirage that you see in the desert when you are thirsty. You see the mirage and you're happy because there is water. Yet when you walk up to it, it disappears.

Many people may say I'm happy and I don't need to go within and find it. That's great. We are saying something a little different. We are saying that the entire universe is comprised of happiness.

By being aware of the force behind all life you will become happy. You don't have to depend on some external event to trigger happiness. Your essence is happiness. By discovering your true essence you will be happy.

Happiness Lies Inside

All the great masters have said that happiness lies inside.

It's not a joke.

It really does.

The proof is in the pudding.

Try it and you will like it.

People try it and they like it.

It needs no convincing.

It needs no converting.

Ponder over these words.

Happiness lies inside.

Happiness

When I was young I thought that toys could bring me happiness.

When you first receive the gift you are so happy.

Days go by and your happiness slowly goes away.

One day your toy is broken.

Your happiness has died.

Over and over I saw this in my life.

I saw it in others.

All external happiness will someday fade away.

This led to my search.

There had to be another way.

True happiness lies inside your heart.

It was will and always be.

Go within.

Discover the meaning of this puzzle.

Where is preventive Medicine in this picture

Why don't we fund more prevention?

Jake Segal October 24, 2019

In 1733, Benjamin Franklin traveled from his home in Philadelphia back to his birthplace in Boston. Franklin was 27 years old. It was almost two decades before he attached a key to a kite, and more than three before he became America's first postmaster general. Even in these early days, Franklin had an eye for innovation and that is what he encountered in Boston: The Boston Fire Society, one of the first colonial mutual aid organizations, which was set up to prevent the small house fires that typically led to destructive urban blazes.

On his return to Philadelphia, Franklin wrote a letter to The Pennsylvania Gazette using a pseudonym. In the letter, which he began by stating, "***An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,***" Franklin suggested that locals follow in the footsteps of Bostonians. The next year, Franklin helped found the city's Union Fire Company.

The adage has endured. Talk to government officials, and you'll find that it's a belief widely shared. In the fall of 2018, Social Finance, along with partners from the Public Health Institute and the Center for Health Care Strategies, did exactly that. With funding from Blue Shield of California Foundation, we set out to ask and answer a question that is at once simple and breathtakingly huge:

What will it take to generate sustainable investments in strategies that promote health and well-being and end violence?

To wrap our arms around that question, we decided we needed a better understanding of the problem itself. If an ounce of prevention really is "worth a pound of cure," why don't we invest more in prevention? We decided to ask current policymakers what they thought.

What we heard was honestly disheartening. People were frustrated; baffled by complexity, hamstrung by inertia. Challenges bled into and reinforced one another. In spite of all of it, we also saw kernels of hope. In every interview we conducted, public leaders suggested policy ideas that could help them navigate the challenges they described.

We hadn't intended to write about either our pursuit of a clearer problem definition, or about policy solutions. But in the wake of these interviews, we've

done both, broken into two pieces. The first, below, delves into the challenges to prevention that public officials described. The second, linked at the end of this piece, describes what governments and their philanthropic partners can do about it.

THE FORCES THAT THWART PREVENTION

At times it can seem as though the cards are stacked against prevention. If we haven't been able to overcome the challenges that stymie prevention funding in the few hundred years since 1735, there must be good reasons.

We see four overarching issues most responsible for under-investment in prevention: **uncertainty; a lack of accountability; reactivity;** and, underneath these factors, **wrong-pockets problems** that, in the absence of greater collaboration, frustrate efforts to solve systemic, often dispersed problems.

UNCERTAINTY: THERE IS GENUINE AMBIGUITY ABOUT WHICH PROGRAMS WILL ACHIEVE POLICY GOALS

A central reason we don't invest in prevention hides in plain sight: Many of the leaders we spoke with aren't convinced that investments in prevention pay off.

The social sector is flooded with claims of dramatic cost effectiveness, of "proven" programs, of unambiguous success. It's common practice for nonprofits to claim a social return of \$10 or \$20 for every \$1 spent; anything less seems, by comparison, prosaic. But there is a large and growing body of research that suggests an unwelcome truth: Social interventions typically don't achieve the results they set out to.

"Social problems can be like a Rubik's cube," said one state public health leader. "They're complex, interdependent, and hard to solve."

Sociologist Peter Rossi famously summarized this challenge in his Iron Law: The expected value of any net impact assessment of any large-scale social program is zero. Skepticism, then, is usually warranted. Policymakers are right to second guess preventive interventions, even those described as "proven." The reality is that programs face significant and pervasive performance variability.

“We’re missing a more nuanced dialogue about complexity — about more than just what works or what doesn’t, but instead around how something works, for whom, and for how much.” — Senior California agency leader

Humility in discussing program expectations is too rare, and exaggeration only accelerates the cycle of inflated impact expectations that result in degraded credibility. Of course, there *are* great interventions out there, making real and measurable impact, and there is enormous value in scaling those interventions. But in the absence of more measured assessments of program impact, those “best bets” can be overlooked or undervalued.

The fact that it’s hard to make a measurable impact on the complex lives of vulnerable people shouldn’t surprise anyone. If most interventions aren’t successful, we should be all the more zealous about finding those with truly credible evidence of impact. But it’s also incumbent on all of us in the social sector to be realistic about the uncertainties that run through our work, and acknowledge that they can be valid barriers to action.

WHY DON'T PUBLIC AGENCIES INVEST MORE DEEPLY IN PREVENTION?



ACCOUNTABILITY: MOST PROGRAMS ARE NOT MEASURED CAREFULLY AGAINST PRESET STANDARDS

The public sector is trending toward greater outcomes orientation. But progress is slow going.

“In the healthcare arena we are moving toward paying more for outcomes,” a senior public health official explained. “But for now, we are mostly focused on paying for services.”

Though every public agency has planning and budgeting processes, few have a clear goal-setting, evaluation, and reconciliation built into their annual cycles.

In the absence of specific, measurable, multiyear outcomes goals, accountability — really getting a sense of what works and what doesn't — is impossible.

At the same time, evaluations — determining which programs work best — are rare. Evaluation is a mechanism without a constituency, seen as wasteful by conservatives and as reductionist by liberals. For elected officials, it's often preferable to point to positive anecdotes and claim success rather than risk finding negative results.

Structural under-investment in evaluation creates fertile ground for uncertainty. When policymakers can't rely on trustworthy information about program effectiveness, strong and weak interventions get confused, and the credibility of programmatic impact gets watered down. This makes it hard for policymakers to devote political capital or taxpayer funds to long-term prevention.

The shortage of strong evaluations is, in part, a data access problem. Government caches are carefully protected and rightly so. But the firewalls guarding access to the insights needed for program assessment and improvement have become nearly impenetrable. The promise and value of big data can't be realized in the face of entrenched conservatism and legal pessimism.

In the past five years, we've seen examples of states and counties that have build integrated data systems, and used those frameworks to fund tailored programs — interventions with defined impact measurement criteria, careful evaluations, and outcomes-based funding mechanisms. Examples like these are rare, but they suggest pathways for others to follow.

THERE'S GREATER PRESSURE TO RESOLVE URGENT CRISES THAN TO PREVENT THEM

Prevention involves mobilizing resources today to avoid negative outcomes tomorrow. This is a problem, because elections require officials to demonstrate near-term results and dis-incentivize longer investments.

“It's important to be able to show the results [of a program],” a California local elected official explained. “We need to know if things are working, and to demonstrate to the public that their money isn't going to waste.”

“So many things are the right thing to do but the payoff is long term,” said another. “No one wants to do work now and get paid far in the future.”

Near-term incentives can diverge from long-term interests. Emergencies can eat up resources and political capital.

“When things are huge, short-term cost savers, it’s a no brainer [to invest in prevention],” an interviewee told us. “But when it comes to the rest — the important stuff, even things like saving lives — it takes moral leadership.”

UNDERLYING IT ALL: WRONG-POCKETS PROBLEMS

Social issues don’t fit neatly into agency or jurisdictional silos. Multi-factorial challenges touch on the work of dozens of agencies spread across cities, counties, states, and the federal government.

Consider chronic homelessness. Funding for shelters and rental support flows from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to local Continuums of Care, which then often receive supplemental funds from state and local authorities. The chronically homeless tend to require frequent emergency department visits and hospitalizations; those health services are partially reimbursed through insurance plans, which are in turn funded via an intricate mix of federal and state dollars. They many need substantial behavioral health support and substance use treatment. They are more likely to be incarcerated (in county jails, or less frequently, state or federal prisons), more likely to require emergency transit (via ambulances often accompanied by city or county fire engines) and to generate (largely city) police calls.

This is all to say, complex social challenges span jurisdictions and agencies. The advantages of solving these issues are therefore diffuse. Yet, there are few mechanisms available that support benefit-sharing between agencies or levels of government. So, the activation energy needed to fund prevention remains prohibitive.

For some issues, greater cross-agency communication and priority alignment may be enough to spur change. For others, deeper partnerships — those with meaningful financial implications, with shared risks, with carefully defined (and sometimes even contractual) terms — will be necessary to make hard choices around program direction, divvy up value and cost, overcome legal and regulatory barriers, and to ultimately build sustainable structures worthy of the challenges they’re up against.

LOOKING AHEAD: A MORE SOPHISTICATED PUBLIC SECTOR

In the face of these challenges, innovators across the country are stepping up.

Forward-thinking public servants are using vast stores of administrative data to improve grant selection and actively monitor performance. Evidence-based policy experts are helping to establish more nuanced criteria for assessing intervention evidence and balancing that evidence against capacity and expected cost. Governments are developing more sophisticated approaches to spending, such as building value-based purchasing models and even using outcomes-based payment terms.

We're also beginning to see more substantial conversations about social value. In choosing programs to fund, cost is easier to account for than benefit; and while there is a longstanding infrastructure set up to ensure accountability for public spending, there's nothing like it to ensure accountability for impact. However, new, more effective tools, matched with risk-taking, boundary-pushing leadership, allow more officials to address both sides of the cost-benefit equation.

In the next post, we'll review various policy proposals meant to counteract the roadblocks to prevention funding. These include strategies for strengthening inter-agency collaboration; enabling multiyear goal-setting; accelerating leadership development and training; simplifying data sharing and use; building communications tools for describing the value of prevention; and cultivating forums for analyzing and agreeing on which programs are the best bets for taxpayers.

Read about these and some of the other policy proposals the Social Finance team collected while speaking with California policymakers on the topic of prevention funding [here](#).

...

Written by Jake Segal, a vice president at Social Finance, with support from associate director Annie Dear. This piece was developed through a grant from the Blue Shield of California Foundation, in partnership with the Public Health Institute and the Center for Health Care Strategies.

Preventative Care is the Healthcare of the Future

DECEMBER 30, 2019 / BY JANET EARLY

Although health as a topic has surged in popularity in the past decade, so have rates of chronic illness. According to the [CDC](#), 6 in 10 of US adults struggle with a chronic disease, while 4 in 10 have at least two.

Chronic diseases are the leading causes of death and disability in the US and the primary drivers of the country's \$3.5 trillion in annual health care costs.

Though the causes of these diseases are unclear, preventative care promises to be an actionable, effective long-term solution.

What is Preventative Care?

³⁸Preventative care is a proactive approach to healthcare. It focuses on preventing or detecting health issues before they evolve into major medical problems. Another term for preventative care is "routine care." Traditional examples include regular check-ups with your physician, immunizations, and flu shots.

There's also a growing emphasis on health optimization: optimizing your energy levels, body composition, and overall sense of wellness. The rise in attention is the direct result of the increasingly bleak state of public health today.

According to the [New England Journal of Medicine](#), "Cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes now cause 70% of U.S. deaths and account for nearly 75% of health care expenditures."

Obesity and chronic disease are multiplying at epidemic proportions.

"Although the United States pays more for medical care than any other country, problems abound in our health care system. Unsustainable costs, poor outcomes, frequent medical errors, poor patient satisfaction, and worsening health disparities all point to a need for transformative change..."

A prevention model, focused on forestalling the development of disease before symptoms or life-threatening events occur, is the best solution to the current crisis."

— New England Journal of Medicine

Why doesn't the traditional healthcare model prioritize preventative care?

The traditional healthcare system was built out of a 20th century need to address urgent, acute medical issues. In other words, it was designed to be "sick care." Over time, the profitability of this system became cemented around people needing to visit their doctor. To put it simply, if you weren't sick, you weren't a source of profit.

In a perfect world, the traditional system would prioritize keeping you healthy over treating your illness, but the economic structure doesn't currently allow for it. What drives profits is the overuse of health services. Healthy people don't need "sick care," so they lose their economic appeal. The need for change has been widely recognized, but delayed since any major change to this system could be incredibly disruptive.

[However, positive and encouraging changes are happening.](#)

³⁸<https://www.steadymd.com/blog/preventative-care-is-the-healthcare-of-the-future/>

Independent healthcare services such as [SteadyMD](#) have designed new businesses around preventative care. Wanting to avoid the economic crutch that the traditional healthcare system has stumbled into, this new approach is built to prosper when people are healthy, not sick. The preventative healthcare approach helps prevent chronic illness through ongoing health maintenance, lessens symptom burden, and extends your “healthy years.”

To be blunt, there is no financial incentive to keep you sick. In fact, it’s better for business to keep you healthy long-term. And helping you lead your healthiest life is SteadyMD’s mission.

Your SteadyMD doctor dedicates time to help you catch small problems before they turn into bigger problems. Rather than just treat your immediate symptoms, your doctor will address the root cause of complex issues and chronic illnesses. Because you get the personal attention of the same doctor every time, they really get to know you and your family, and each conversation continues right where it last left off. A SteadyMD doctor is your partner in health, long-term.

What can you do?

Practice manageable approaches to nutrition, exercise, and wellness. For example, prioritize whole foods over packaged ones, adopt an exercise routine you will stick to over one that burns you out, and employ a relaxing nighttime routine instead of working on your laptop late into the evening. The most effective next step you can take is to find a teammate, someone knowledgeable who will guide and support you as you strive to reach your healthiest self.

5 Reasons Functional Medicine is the Only Kind of Health Care You Want

ROBIN BERZIN, MD

Doctor

November 23, 2015

³⁹People often wonder what the difference is between Functional Medicine and “conventional” medicine. What is Functional Medicine? These are great questions – and basically it comes down to a different approach.

The two use many of the same tools, but functional medicine is about optimizing your health and quality of life in ways you never knew were possible. Conventional medicine is about treating disease once it has already appeared. When I went to medical school I knew there had to be a better way than the “pill for every ill” style medicine I was being taught. I also knew “integrative medicine” meant a more holistic, whole person approach. But when I learned about functional medicine – which is an evidence-based high tech science driven approach to holistic medicine – I fell in love, and knew that there was no going back. Now my mission at **Parsley Health** is to make functional medicine available to everyone because I believe we all deserve the best care possible and because I have seen how it changes lives.

³⁹ <https://www.parsleyhealth.com/blog/5-reasons-functional-medicine/>

PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY &
RESTORATIVE
MOVEMENT



TARGETED
SUPPLEMENTS
& MEDICATIONS
AS NEEDED



STRESS
REDUCTION
TECHNIQUES



TOPICAL
STEROID
CREAM



NSAIDS
*(ie. Aspirin,
Ibuprophen, etc.)*



Here are the five reasons functional medicine is the only kind of health care you want, period.

1. It keeps you healthy instead of just keeping you alive

Conventional medicine is great at making sure you don't die, but its triage approach – waiting for an emergency or severe symptoms to diagnose and treat advanced illness – has nothing to do with improving your health and quality of life today.

2. It's personalized

One size fits all, cookie cutter medicine no longer cuts it. Functional medicine uses advanced testing and genetics in combination with the art of listening to your story to piece together a plan that is 100% tailored to you, your body and your life.

3. It's always at the cutting edge of science

In conventional medicine, it takes on average 18 years for new information to work its way into medical education. Functional medicine, however, is able to take advantage of new research in real time such as discoveries around how the microbiome – aka the bacteria in our bodies – impact our health, because it's based on a paradigm of the body as an interconnected matrix, not a disconnected set of organ systems.

4. It makes you feel good

It gets to the root cause of pesky symptoms like insomnia, fatigue, gas & bloating, and skin rashes and eliminates them. It supports your body's optimal function with natural vitamins minerals and herbs so that you need fewer drugs and procedures. It improves your quality of life, from energy and clarity to weight and immunity. It's about helping you feel your best now and teasing you up for a long healthy life in the future.

5. It changes your life.

Functional medicine teaches you how to listen to your body and tap in to your health in ways you never forget. Ultimately how you live each day determines your health and quality of life. Functional medicine is designed to teach you how to live well and to support you in maintaining that lifestyle despite the many toxic inputs and influences – chemicals in products and food, sedentary lifestyles, chronic stress – we are all exposed to in today's world. The reality is, we all get sick at some point. Functional medicine is designed to prevent chronic debilitating illness like diabetes, heart disease and cancer that are the number one killers in modern society and to deal with temporary things, like viruses and bacterial infections, in a more natural way that does less long term harm to the body. It also supports you with the guidance and tools to handle the inevitable challenges in the best possible way so that you live well and generate as much happiness in your life as you can. That's why I started Parsley Health – a new hybrid model of health care that combines the functional medicine approach that makes more sense for patients of all walks of life, with new care delivery models that both increase access to better medicine for more people, and that let doctors practice the kind of medicine that makes them feel good too. To learn more or schedule a free membership consultation call click here.

by

ROBIN BERZIN, MD

Doctor

Dr. Robin Berzin is the Founder and CEO of Parsley Health, America's leading holistic medical practice designed to help women overcome chronic conditions. She found

What is a Functional Medicine Doctor?

Written by [WebMD Editorial Contributors](#)

Medically Reviewed by [Sarah Goodell](#) on November 09, 2022

IN THIS ARTICLE

- [What Does a Functional Medicine Doctor Do?](#)
- [Education & Training](#)
- [What Conditions Does a Functional Medicine Doctor Treat?](#)
- [Reasons to See a Functional Medicine Doctor](#)

⁴⁰Functional medicine doctors use specialized training and techniques to find the root causes of complex illnesses. They may investigate multiple factors causing a condition, or they may look into multiple conditions causing one symptom.

A doctor in functional medicine works holistically, considering the full picture of your physical, mental, emotional, and sometimes even spiritual health.

They consider factors like [diet](#), genetics, hormonal changes, prescription and over the counter medications, and other lifestyle components. This type of doctor may be ideal for people with [chronic illnesses](#) that aren't easily managed by conventional medical techniques.

Functional medicine doctors decide to specialize in functional medicine after completing conventional medical training. Other types of health practitioners—including chiropractors and naturopaths—may focus on functional medicine.

ADVERTISEMENT

⁴⁰ <https://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/what-is-a-functional-medicine-doctor#091e9c5e8202d525-1-2>

What Does a Functional Medicine Doctor Do?

Functional medicine doctors look at your full history to identify the root causes of an illness. They usually spend more time with you than conventional doctors. They collect detailed information about the disease and your overall lifestyle.

A functional medicine doctor may ask about:

- A timeline of symptoms
- Sleep patterns
- Exercise habits
- Nutrition
- Stressors
- Personal relationships
- Emotional wellbeing

Then, they come up with a treatment plan to manage multiple factors that may be contributing to chronic conditions. It may include prescription medications, supplements, or other therapies.

Finally, they track the progress of treatment and make changes as needed. The functional medicine approach is different for each person since each treatment is tailored to that person's specific illness.

Your relationship with a functional medicine doctor may also be different than with your primary care doctor. According to The Institute For Functional Medicine, it's a more collaborative partnership: the doctor considers your input while still keeping you responsible for your choices as they relate to your condition and treatment.

With functional medicine, the care given is based on the system affected, not the condition diagnosed. For example, a diagnosis of [depression](#) may have multiple causes. A functional medicine doctor will research and treat each cause, leading to a personalized treatment approach.

Education & Training

Functional medicine doctors have gone through traditional medical school training. They may then choose to get additional certification from an organization such as The Institute for Functional Medicine. Doctors then apply functional medicine teachings to their original field of practice.

Additional certification does not give these doctors any further legal status, but proves they have trained and are committed to working within this modality. A functional medicine certification is also open to other types of practitioners like acupuncturists, dentists, nurse practitioners, and more.

RELATED

-

What Conditions Does a Functional Medicine Doctor Treat?

Most functional medicine doctors solve complex and multifaceted health issues. Examples include depression, chronic pain conditions like [arthritis](#), and inflammatory diseases like [Celiac disease](#) or [inflammatory bowel disease](#) (IBD). The unique processes used by these doctors may help people manage the daily symptoms of chronic disease.

If you do not have a chronic illness, you can still visit a functional medicine doctor. Many also focus on preventative care.

Reasons to See a Functional Medicine Doctor

1. **You Want Longer Appointments**

Functional medicine doctors typically spend more time with you because their process involves recording a detailed history.

2. **You Are Open to Alternative Treatments**

In addition to prescription drugs, functional medicine doctors may also prescribe alternative treatments like acupuncture, meditation, or herbal remedies.

3. **You Have a Chronic Illness**

Functional medicine is well suited to treating chronic illnesses. Doctors in this field seek to find the causes of chronic disease, as opposed to treating the symptoms.

4. **You Want a Personalized Experience**

Functional medicine addresses each person individually. Using different methods than a conventional medical doctor, a functional medicine doctor will help you figure out which specific treatments are right for you.

California Approves Bill to Punish Doctors Who Spread False Information

⁴¹Weighing into the fierce national debate over Covid-19 prevention and treatments, the state would be the first to try a legal remedy for vaccine disinformation.

- Give this article
-
-
-



California's Legislature approved a bill that would allow regulators to punish doctors for spreading false information about Covid-19 vaccinations and treatments. Credit...Jim Wilson/The New York Times

⁴¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/29/technology/california-doctors-covid-misinformation.html>



By [Steven Lee Myers](#)

Steven Lee Myers, who covers disinformation from San Francisco, has written about the intensifying political divide over how to address the problem.

Aug. 29, 2022

Trying to strike a balance between free speech and public health, California's Legislature on Monday approved a bill that would allow regulators to punish doctors for spreading false information about Covid-19 vaccinations and treatments.

The legislation, if signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom, would make the state the first to try to legislate a remedy to a problem that the American Medical Association, among other medical groups and experts, says has worsened the impact of the pandemic, resulting in thousands of unnecessary hospitalizations and deaths.

The law would designate spreading false or misleading medical information to patients as “unprofessional conduct,” subject to punishment by the agency that licenses doctors, the Medical Board of California. That could include suspending or revoking a doctor’s license to practice medicine in the state.

While the legislation has raised concerns over freedom of speech, the bill’s sponsors said the extensive harm caused by false information required holding incompetent or ill-intentioned doctors accountable.

ADVERTISEMENT

[Continue reading the main story](#)

“In order for a patient to give informed consent, they have to be well informed,” said State Senator Richard Pan, a Democrat from Sacramento and a co-author of the bill. A pediatrician himself and a prominent proponent of stronger vaccination requirements, he said the law was intended to address “the most egregious cases” of deliberately misleading patients.

The Spread of Misinformation and Falsehoods

- **Covid Myths:** Experts say the spread of coronavirus misinformation — particularly on far-right platforms like Gab — is likely to be a lasting legacy of the pandemic. [And there are no easy solutions.](#)
- **Midterms Misinformation:** Social media platforms [struggled to combat false narratives](#) during the 2022 U.S. midterm elections, but it appeared most [efforts to stoke doubt](#) about the results [did not spread widely.](#)
- **The Pelosi Misinformation Loop:** We tracked how prominent Republican figures [amplified groundless and often homophobic claims](#) about the attack on Paul Pelosi.
- **A New Misinformation Hub?:** Misleading edits, fake news stories and deepfake images of politicians [are starting to warp reality on TikTok.](#)

California’s legislation reflects the [growing political and regional divisions](#) that have dogged the pandemic from the beginning. Other states have gone in the other direction, [seeking to protect doctors](#) from punishment by regulatory boards, including for advocating treatments involving hydroxychloroquine, ivermectin and other medications that the American Medical Association says remain unproven.

- **Dig deeper into the moment.**
[Special offer: Subscribe for \\$1 a week.](#)

If enacted, the law could face a legal challenge. Governor Newsom, who has three weeks to sign the legislation, has not yet taken a public position on it.

While other nations have criminalized the spread of vaccine misinformation — and have higher vaccination rates — the response by states and the U.S. government has largely been limited to combating misconceptions with accurate information, said Michelle M. Mello, a professor of law and health policy at Stanford University.

She noted that even laws that cited a “compelling interest,” like public health and safety, to police disinformation ran the risk of having a chilling effect, a First Amendment standard for many courts.

“Initiatives like this will be challenged in court and will be hard to sustain,” she said in an interview. “That doesn’t mean it’s not a good idea.”

California’s response follows [a warning](#) last year by the national Federation of State Medical Boards that licensing boards should do more to discipline doctors who share false claims. The American Medical Association has also warned that spreading disinformation violates the code of ethics that licensed doctors agree to follow.

The measure was among [a flurry of Covid-related bills](#) proposed by a legislative working group that drew fierce opposition from lawmakers and voters. Some of the most contentious bills have stalled or died, including one that would have required all California schoolchildren to be vaccinated.

As the legislation moved through the Legislature, its sponsors narrowed its scope to deal directly with doctors’ direct interaction with patients. It does not address comments online or on television, though those have been [the cause of some of the most impactful instances](#) of Covid misinformation and disinformation.

“Inaccurate information spread by physicians can have pernicious influences on individuals with widespread negative impact, especially through the ubiquity of smartphones and other internet-connected devices on wrists, desktops and laptops reaching across thousands of miles to other individuals in an instant,” the Federation of State Medical Boards wrote in a [report](#) in April. “Physicians’ status and titles lend credence to their claims.”

The legislation would not require the suspension or revocation of a doctor’s license, leaving such determinations to the Medical Board of California. It is intended to make the dissemination of false information about Covid-19 subject to the same rules as other kinds of “unprofessional conduct” taken up by the board.

The legislation defines disinformation as falsehoods “deliberately disseminated with malicious intent or an intent to mislead.” Treading into the at times contentious debates over alternative, often unproven Covid treatments, the bill defines misinformation as spreading information “that is contradicted by contemporary scientific consensus contrary to the standard of care.”

ADVERTISEMENT

[Continue reading the main story](#)

It says doctors have “a duty to provide their patients with accurate, science-based information.” That would include the use of approved vaccines, which have been subject to [fierce debates and political activism](#) across the country, though there is broad agreement among medical professionals about their effectiveness.

A group called Physicians for Informed Consent opposed the legislation, saying it would silence doctors. The group filed [a lawsuit](#) this month to seek an injunction preventing the Medical Board of California from disciplining doctors based on accusations of disinformation. In its lawsuit, it called the legislation’s definition of misinformation “hopelessly vague.”

In a recent letter to Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy, James L. Madara, chief executive of the American Medical Association, said disinformation swirling around vaccines had contributed to ignorance among the public that had worsened the pandemic’s impact.

“The most unfortunate result of this has been significant vaccine hesitancy and refusal among certain communities and within certain demographics, ultimately resulting in continued higher rates of severe illness, hospitalization and death due to Covid-19 in these populations — outcomes largely preventable with vaccination,” he wrote.

Steven Lee Myers covers misinformation for The Times. He has worked in Washington, Moscow, Baghdad and Beijing, where he contributed to the articles that won the Pulitzer Prize for public service in 2021. He is also the author of “The New Tsar: The Rise and Reign of Vladimir Putin.” [@stevenleemyers](#) · [Facebook](#)

A version of this article appears in print on Aug. 31, 2022, Section B, Page 4 of the New York edition with t



Closing

THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Trump's dinner with a
Holocaust denier draws rare
criticism from some Jewish...

9 hours ago



Trump Dinner Guest Draws Major Backlash - YouTube



Former President Trump dined with Kanye West and white supremacist Nick Fuentes at Mar-a-Lago, triggering a political...

YouTube · MSNBC · 7 hours ago

When the country's leaders have no morals and ethics, that is the end of that civilization. Unfortunately, we never learned from the past.

Take this example of ex-president Trump inviting. Kanye West and white supremacist. Nick Fuentes to his South Florida mansion.

This caused such an outrage and it should. Yet many top Republic officials refused to comment on this. This has been the norm ever since President Trump was in office.

They put their head in the sand just like an ostrich would. They're more interested in their own power and control than basic human ethics and morals.

Going back to this book. There was a lot of material presented. Unfortunately, this is only the tip of the iceberg.

We can no longer kick the can in Congress down the road and not act upon the problems that are needed to be solved.

I have been saying for many years that if a politician is not kind then don't vote for him.

Only by having kind politicians can we have kind laws. Without a kind mind, one will make laws that are unkind.

Kindness and wisdom are derived from the same place inside of you.

Does Congress today represent the kindness of men? Of course not. Bickering, fighting, and downplaying your other political parties is the name of the game.

The art of politics in our country is leading us down the drain.

We have no human respect.

Many countries around the world are actively pursuing the art of kindness into solving the world's critical problems.

The United States needs to wake up from its slumber and see that we have much to improve upon. We call ourselves the greatest nation in the world yet our citizens would not say that today.

Today it seems the government is for the super-rich and not the poor.