The Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality is committed to providing research, policy analysis, and training on issues of poverty and inequality.

Why was the Center founded?

In 2006, Stanford University committed to a new program of research, training, and policy analysis on poverty and inequality, a commitment that reflects Stanford University's recognition that universities have a special obligation to provide leadership on the most pressing problems of our time. The backdrop to this new initiative is a recognition that poverty and inequality have become an unprecedented threat and that the great universities of the world must address this threat with all the resources and initiative that we have applied in the past to other major social problems.

Poverty and inequality as threats

If poverty and inequality were treated in the past as simple moral problems, now they are appreciated as problems with more profound consequences and threats for the world than those of moral discomfort. It is increasingly problematic in this context to regard poverty and inequality as soft social issues that can safely be subordinated to more important interests in maximizing total economic output. Rather, social policy must simultaneously be oriented to increasing economic output and restraining the rise of debilitating and counterproductive forms of inequality, a rather more complicated maximization problem.

Our funding

The seed funding for this initiative comes from Stanford University through the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The Elfenworks Foundation, which worked with us to design and implement this website, is also a strong supporter. We also have past or ongoing support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Corporation for National and Community Service, the Elfenworks Foundation, Grace, Inc., the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the John E. Sawyer faculty seminar series, Laura and John Arnold Foundation, the National Science Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Russell Sage Foundation, the State of California, Sunlight Giving, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Ballmer Group, The James Irvine Foundation, Tides Foundation, the UPS Endowment at Stanford University, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation).

Site credits

The Center acknowledges the Elfenworks Foundation for its long-standing and steadfast partnership in building and developing this site and of course in supporting CPI more broadly. From its inception in 2007, Dr. Lauren Speeth and John Watkins have been the visionaries behind this site, indeed it is due to their commitment and heavy lifting that inequality.stanford.edu [2] is what it is today. We also thank Mike Dalling for designing our wonderful new logo, Tim Schaller for his help with video production, and Chris
Speeth and the Charlie Chaplin Estate for sharing their historic video footage. It is testimony to the Elfenworks team that, some 10 years later, much of their code and design lives on in the current website. We are also very fortunate that Dan Bryant, Austin Owens, and the PerfectCube team were able to work seamlessly with the original design.