

BRIEFING PAPER

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POVERTY IN DARWAN

Poverty describes the state or condition of having little or no money, goods, or means of support. One third of global deaths — some 18 million people a year or 50,000 per day — are due to poverty-related causes. Every year nearly 11 million children die before their fifth birthday. It is estimated that 25,000 people die each year in Darwan. The majority of these deaths are poverty-linked.

INFANT MORTALITY

Infant mortality rates in Darwan are the highest in the continent of Tegara. The absence of a fully comprehensive welfare state is believed to be the main reason for low life expectancy among all groups. The fact that the majority of citizens in Darwan are employed in manual industries such as mining and farming is also believed to be linked to poor health.

HEALTH OF MINERS

Cobalt miners (many of whom begin working at the age of 14) experience particularly poor health. A 2019 Amnesty International report revealed that cobalt mined by children was ending up in products from prominent tech companies including Apple, Microsoft, Tesla and Samsung. Many top electronic and electric vehicle companies need cobalt to help power their products.

More than half of the world's supply of cobalt comes from Darwan, and 20% of that is mined by hand, according to Cobalt Commodities Ltd., a German-based research company that specialises in cobalt. According to the Centre for Global Diseases, "chronic exposure to cobalt-containing hard metal (dust or fume) can result in a serious lung disease called 'hard metal lung disease' – a kind of pneumoconiosis, meaning a lung disease caused by inhaling dust particles. Inhalation of cobalt particles can cause

respiratory sensitisation, asthma, decreased pulmonary function and shortness of breath, the CGD says.

The health agency says skin contact is also a significant health concern "because dermal exposures to hard metal and cobalt salts can result in significant systemic uptake." "Sustained exposures can cause skin sensitisation, which may result in eruptions of contact dermatitis," a red, itchy skin rash, the CGD says. Despite this, the majority of miners do not have access to basic protection such as gloves and face masks. Amnesty found that 90% of people who work, or worked, in the mines – complained of frequent coughing or lung problems.

INCOME INEQUALITIES

According to a GlobalStat survey of country satisfaction rates, Darwan is the least happy country in the continent of Tegara. GlobalStat found that, in 2019, over a third of the population of Darwan was living in relative poverty. Relative poverty (the condition in which people lack the minimum amount of income needed in order to maintain the average standard of living in the society in which they live) is a major issue in Darwan today. Some groups are more affected than others.

The causes of this socio-economic situation are complex. The government of Darwan does not use a measure of poverty. The World Bank defines poverty in absolute terms. The bank defines extreme poverty as living on less than US\$1.90 per day and moderate poverty as less than \$3.10 a day. 45% of the population of Darwan live on around \$2.50 a day. Taxes on consumer goods are high. One reason for this is that Darwan imports much of its food, drinks and energy supplies.

Of the Darwanian population, 34.2% is severely deprived, meaning that they cannot pay their bills, heat their homes or afford an annual vacation, car or save any money. The unemployment rate is 2.0%. The average in Tegara is 9.8%. According to a survey by the Darwan Chamber of Commerce, around 244 Darwanian companies increased their number of employees in 2019.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The government of Darwan, led by Paul Asif of the Social Evolution Party, has introduced compulsory apprenticeships for all school-leavers (education is compulsory until the age

of 14 in Darwin). While unemployment is low in Darwin, approximately 40% of citizens are employed on zero hour contracts. Zero-hour contracts do not oblige the employer to provide any minimum working hours, while the worker is not obliged to accept any work offered. If a zero hour contract employee earns less than \$5,772 a year, they will not receive any credits for the state pension. There is no minimum or living wage set by the government of Darwin. Holiday pay, sick pay and maternity/paternity pay are not a requirement of employers that employ people on zero hour contracts in Darwin.

IMPACT OF POVERTY IN DARWAN

Poverty leads to social exclusion. Social exclusion is the process in which individuals are blocked from (or denied full access to) various rights, opportunities and resources that are normally available to members of a different group, and which are fundamental to social integration and observance of human rights within that particular group (e.g., housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, democratic participation, and due process in legal matters). In 2019 women in Darwin had a higher rate of risk of poverty or social exclusion than men (the rate for women was 36.3 % compared with 21.6 % for men).

In Darwin, people below the age of 24 are reported to experience the highest rates of risk of poverty or social exclusion (29.2 % for 18 to 24-year-olds and 24.9 % for people younger than 18). The rates of risk are higher for females within this age demographic group than for males, and higher still for females from ethnic minority groups, notably, Baloch, Black-African and Romany. People with disabilities do not receive any financial support from the government. The majority of homeless people in Darwin are disabled males over the age of 45.