



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY

A number of social and life science studies show that living in poverty significantly increases the likelihood of incarceration, homelessness, being a single parent, dropping out of high school, and even dying at an earlier age. What's more, some evidence also tells us that poverty and the stress associated with it affects brain development, including how we analyze and deal with problems, how we set goals, and how well we move forward. In other words, science has proven that poverty and stress jeopardize the very skills and behaviors people need most to get out of trouble.

Over the past decade, a number of studies have shown differences in brain and brain activity in both children and adults living in poverty. Research results have shown that differences in income and education within families are directly related to the brain size of developing children and adolescents, that children of poorer and less educated parents have a smaller cerebral cortex than children from wealthier families and from families whose parents are more educated. Researchers also know that children from families with higher socioeconomic status perform better on a range of cognitive measures, including IQ scores, reading and language skills, and tests of ability to focus on a task. Studies of large numbers of children have shown that key areas of the brain in children in higher socioeconomic families related to memory and/or language tend to be either larger or more developed, or both. In other research projects, scientists from a growing field called the neuroscience of poverty found that poor children had less gray matter, the brain tissue that supports information processing and executive behavior. Certain areas of the brain are critical for following instructions, focusing attention, and general learning, all of the abilities that lead to academic success.

A few years ago, the Gates Foundation became interested in tracking brain development in young children living in adverse environments, especially stunting and poor nutrition. As early as 2000, Charles Nelson, a Boston-based pediatric neuroscientist, began research into the development of the brains of children raised in the harsh environment of orphanages. Despite being fed and sheltered, the children had little to no stimulation, social

contact, or emotional support. Many of them experienced long-term cognitive problems. Nelson's work showed that the brains of orphans bear traces of neglect. Magnetic resonance imaging showed that by age eight they had smaller areas of gray and white matter associated with attention and language than children raised by their biological families. The obvious conclusion is that having caring parents and increased attention to things like books, travel, walks together and even musical instruments at home seem to reduce the impact of poverty on a child's brain structure.

Growing up in poverty affects brain development, resulting in lower high school and college attendance. This is also due to the fact that the conditions that accompany poverty, such as violence, chaos in the home, pollution, malnutrition, abuse, and parents without work, affect the interaction, formation, and reduction of connections in the young brain, neural connections gradually weaken. Therefore communication in those parts of the brain associated with judgment and ethical processing is reduced.

At the age of 15 to 30, the brain experiences a surge of increased plasticity, which means that adolescents and young people are ready to adapt through training and practice, conditions for qualitative progress arise, but in order for this to happen, the state needs to rethink social programs and policies in poor communities by investing in programs to reduce crime, pollution, overcrowding, and abuse. New programs should target not only children but also mothers who themselves may have grown up in poverty and as a result, have not developed coping skills and are unlikely to pass them on to their children. It is especially important to focus on helping parents, at least during the first five years of a child's life. Other systems that reinforce the vicious cycle of poverty are poor schools and public infrastructure; poorly protected areas, unchecked child abuse; the lack of health care, public transportation, and green spaces are also largely dependent on the success of public policy and management.

Kimberley Noble, a neuroscientist at Columbia University, and a team of researchers from the Baby's First Years Program are studying the effects of giving

low-income families special child benefits. The effect of poverty reduction interventions on infant brain activity is the first randomized controlled trial to reduce poverty in early childhood. Along with some other projects, scientists are coming to the conclusion that cash support for low-income families can protect infants from the detrimental effects of poverty on brain development. Preliminary results from an ongoing clinical trial showed that increasing family income by an additional \$4,000 in annual income demonstrated patterns in children's brain activity associated with the development of thinking and learning.

All of these projects provide scientifically proven arguments and lead to a meaningful conclusion that a targeted public policy is needed to combat poverty. Simply lifting a family's income out of poverty may be enough to bring children much closer to the norms of cognitive development. The scientists' proposal for targeted funding for low-income families in the first years of life, including a predictable monthly unconditional cash allowance, a child tax credit, and various temporary assistance for families in need, may promote the health of a growing child's brain. At the same time, there is a well-founded opinion that in every society there are children who live in poverty, but who are mentally quite healthy. This is due to the fact that their parents tried to protect them as much as possible and emotionally prepared them to overcome adversity. The brain is like a plastic, especially the brain of children. This means that the impact of poverty on it may be reversible, and the brain may well compensate for the damage in the long run.

In conclusion, taking into account where one in five children on the planet lives in extreme poverty and even in the richest countries in the world, more than 30 million children live below the poverty line. Therefore ensuring social protection for all children is critical to reducing poverty. In any case, children should be given higher priority in countries' budgets and policies. Society must fulfill its obligations to each of its born little citizens, to provide him with a better and more prosperous future. If we want prosperity and progress, we must start with children and families.

Politics, Foreign Affairs, and Security

- The Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye Mustafa Sentop met with the President of Kosovo Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu in Ankara. During the meeting, the sides mostly focused on political cooperation between Türkiye and Kosovo as well as issues of security in the Balkans. Mustafa Sentop called for support in Türkiye's fight against the Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO), the group behind the 2016 defeated coup in Türkiye (Anadolu Agency, 01.03.2022).
- The President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev met with the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Arif Alvi within the framework of his state visit to this country. The heads of states expressed satisfaction with the development of bilateral economic cooperation and agreed to develop further bilateral ties in science and education, youth policy, and IT technologies. The leaders also discussed some issues of regional and international politics, in particular, the problem of security in Afghanistan (Centralasia.news, 05.03.2022).
- The European Union accepted and registered Ukraine's fast-track application for EU membership. The Head of the European Council Charles Michel noted that the issue of Ukraine's possible admission to the EU would be the subject of discussion in the organization. He also stressed that Ukraine's membership in the EU will strengthen bilateral economic and political ties (Avesta.tj, 02.03.2022).
- Early voting began in the presidential elections in Turkmenistan. It is held at polling stations and begins ten days before Election Day. A total of 2,618 polling stations have been formed. In the diplomatic institutions of Turkmenistan abroad, 41 polling stations have been established for voting. Members of the CIS Observer Mission have already visited various polling stations in Ashgabat. Nine candidates are running for the presidential post in Turkmenistan, including Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers Serdar Berdimuhamedov (Orient, 03.03.2022).
- On February 25, Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili reportedly said that the country had no plans to join Western economic and financial sanctions against Russia. The Russian Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Control has announced its intention to ease pressure on Georgia. Ukraine considers the intensification of trade relations between Georgia and Russia categorically unacceptable. Kyiv calls on Tbilisi to distance itself from Russia's decision to lift some of the existing trade sanctions (Ukrinform, 06.03.2022).
- Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan Ruslan Kazakbaev visited Moscow, where he had a meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov. The visit was taking place to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Ministers highly appreciated the level of allied relations and strategic partnership. Kazakbaev expressed satisfaction with the growth of mutual trade turnover between the two countries, which reached \$2.2 billion in 2021 and grew by 46.5% (Kabar, 06.03.2022).

Economy, Finance, and Energy

- Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Alikhan Smaïlov recently announced that the government and the National Bank of Kazakhstan started to implement an anti-crisis action plan, the main task of which was to maintain control over inflation in the country and stability in the foreign exchange market. The authorities launched a program to support tenge deposits. The government will increase subsidies and guaranteed loans, eliminate the excessive administrative burden on businesses, and support import substitution measures (Qazaq TV, 01.03.2022).
- The public debt of Uzbekistan demonstrates a declining trend. In particular, the ratio of public debt to gross domestic product decreased from 39% at the beginning of 2021 to 38% as of January 1, 2022, amounting to \$26.3 billion. Of this amount, external public debt equaled \$23.6 billion, while domestic public debt reached \$2.7 billion. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) report on the countries' economy, Uzbekistan's public debt can be classified as moderate (Kun.uz, 28.02.2022).
- The Kyrgyz Embassy in Türkiye together with the Turkish confederation of industrialists, businesswomen and entrepreneurs Sankon organized a business forum entitled "Kyrgyzstan-Türkiye" in an offline format. More than 60 entrepreneurs of Türkiye, 10 businessmen from Kyrgyzstan joined the forum online. Kyrgyz Ambassador to Türkiye Kubanychbek Omuraliev informed the participants about the investment potential of Kyrgyzstan and the conditions of doing business in the republic with a focus on low taxes, energy potential, membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (Kabar, 28.02.2022).
- According to the CEO of ProZerno Company Vladimir Petrichenko, Russia may decrease grain export from 42 million tonnes to 35 million tonnes due to suspended shipments amid the situation in Ukraine. Russia has already exported 23 million tonnes of wheat. Petrichenko mentioned the possibility of the base case and the crisis case scenarios. He explained that the resumption of supplies was questionable. Therefore, Russia would export 27 million tonnes of wheat instead of 33 million (TASS, 04.03.2022).
- The European Union will provide financial assistance to Ukraine. Recently, the parties signed a memorandum on the provision of €1.2 billion in macro-financial assistance. According to the Prime Minister of Ukraine Denys Shmyhal, the signing of the memorandum is another gesture of strong support from the EU, which will help strengthen Ukrainian economic potential. The IMF together with the World Bank Group announced their support and readiness to provide urgent financial and other assistance to Ukraine (Ukrinform, 03.03.2022).
- Production indicators of the energy sector of Turkmenistan demonstrate stable performance. In January-February 2022, the country fulfilled the plan for the export of natural gas by 114.7%, and for its production - 105.9%. Nevertheless, President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov stated the insufficient growth dynamics in a number of positions and ordered to stimulate the capabilities of the complex. Turkmenistan involves investors from China for the development of the 2nd stage of the Galkynysh gas field (Orient, 05.03.2022).

Society and Culture

- Türkiye received the first group of 209 Crimean Tatars, including 98 children, who had been evacuated from Ukraine due to the ongoing war. The refugees were welcomed by workers of the local administration of the northwestern province of Kırklareli as well as the National Medical Rescue Team (UMKE) at the Derekoy border gate. The refugees who did not have a place to live were then accommodated in designated guesthouses by the Kırklareli administration (Anadolu Agency, 03.03.2022).
- The UNDP and Turkmenistan signed a new project worth \$4.6 million to preserve the Aral Sea. The project is funded by the Global Environment Facility and will be implemented by the Development Program and the Ministry of Agriculture of the country. The aim of the project is to ensure the conservation and efficient use of the main ecosystems, land and water reserves in the Turkmen part of the Aral Sea basin (Centralasia.news, 04.03.2022).
- Kyrgyzstan participated in the international tourism exhibition "Travel Show Budapest 2022" held in Budapest. The delegation from Kyrgyzstan consisted of representatives of the Ministry of Tourism of Kyrgyzstan and tour operators certified by Travelife Partner. During the event, the delegation demonstrated the tourism potential of Kyrgyzstan to partners from Europe and other continents. The stand of Kyrgyzstan was visited by officials of Kazakhstan and Greece, the Deputy Minister of Tourism of Egypt, and others (Kabar, 04.03.2022).
- The European Union-Central Asia: Cooperation on Water, Environment and Climate Change (WECOOP) organized a workshop on green investment in urban mobility. During the two-day workshop, more than 50 participants from Central Asia, the EU and international financial institutions discussed opportunities to improve the environmental friendliness of urban transport in the region. The participants reviewed and proposed successful examples of implementation of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Kabar, 02.03.2022).
- The First Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Tajikistan Jamshed Jourzoda met with Hoda Jaberli, representative of the UNESCO Section of Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education. The sides discussed the implementation of education development programs and the enrollment of Afghan refugees' children in education in Tajikistan. According to data from UNHCR Tajikistan, Tajikistan currently hosts the largest number of Afghan refugees (14,000) in Central Asia (ASIA-Plus, 01.03.2022).
- The International Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation has implemented a new project called "3 Ozan together" ("3 Ozan bir arada"). The project was implemented in connection with the 700th anniversary of Yunus Emre, the 200th anniversary of Ashug Alesker and the 175th anniversary of Jambul Jabayev. Postage stamps dedicated to the anniversaries of three prominent poets of the Turkic world - Yunus Emre, Ashug Alesker and Jambul Jabayev- were issued within the framework of the project (Azertag.az, 03.04.2022).