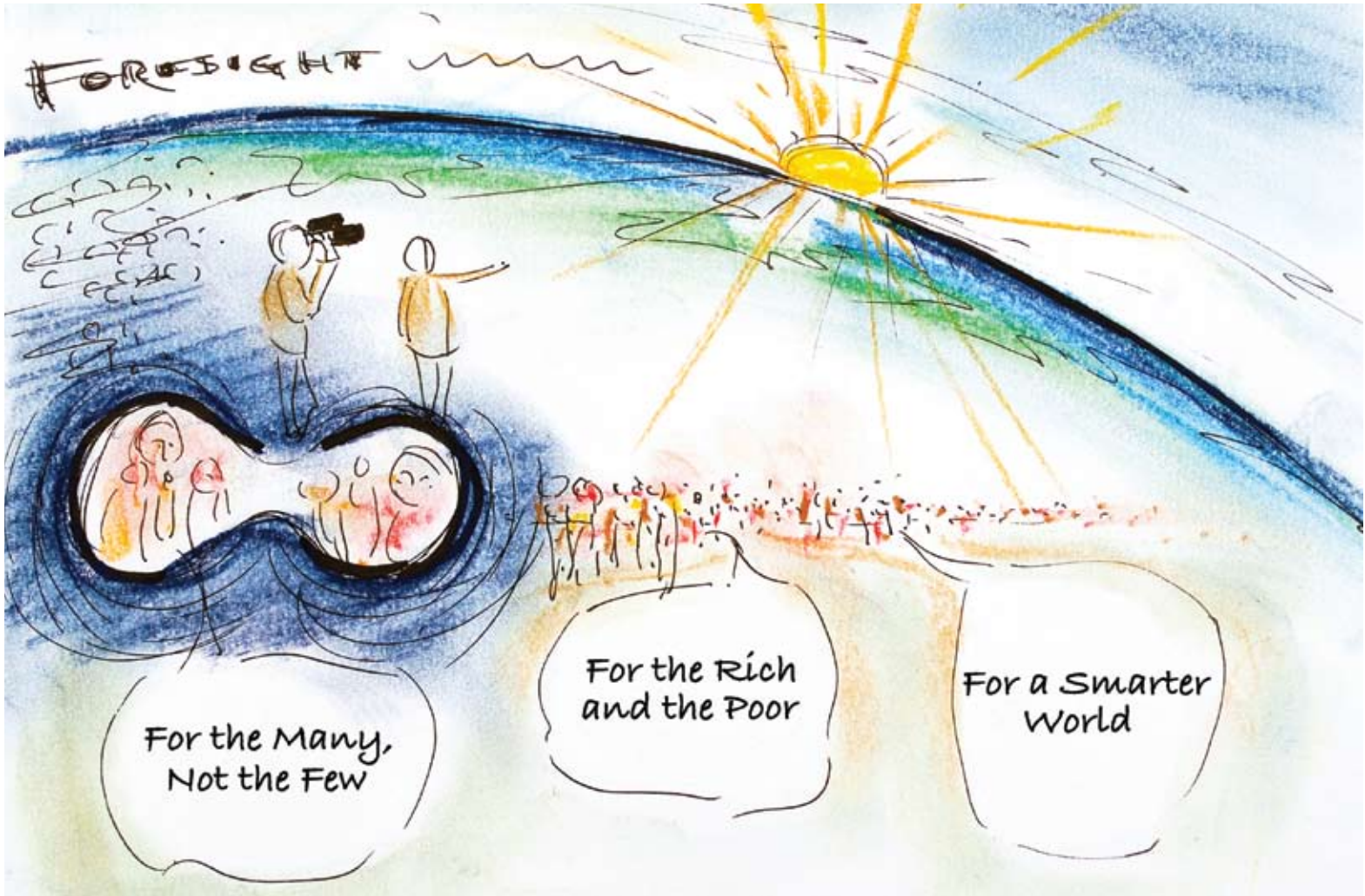


INSTITUTE FOR  
ALTERNATIVE FUTURES  
THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

PRO-POOR FORESIGHT FOR  
COMMUNITIES, COUNTRIES & REGIONS



# PRO-POOR SCENARIO TOOLKIT:

GLOBAL FORECASTS

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## PRO POOR FUTURES FORECASTS FOR 2039

Each of the factors listed below are anticipated to affect the quality of life for people in poverty over the coming decades. For each factor we offer three different forecasts: alpha, beta and delta. The alpha forecasts are statements that describe an expectable future (a likely extrapolation of current trends). The beta forecasts describe a feared future (some of the many things that could “go wrong”). The delta statements are visionary forecasts that describe a successful future for people who live in poverty.

### Climate

#### **Alpha Forecast**

The global poor are hit “first and worst” despite large-scale government efforts to reverse climate change. Death rates grow among poor populations from increases in the prevalence of infectious diseases and natural disasters such as violent storms, coastal flooding, droughts, and famines. Global responses by governments and NGOs modify some of the worst suffering, but climate change severely stresses poor populations worldwide.

#### **Beta Forecast**

Global warming foments a series of catastrophes. Climate change, due to global warming, causes stress in societies who then make war on their poor through either active repression or benign neglect. Migrations of poor people fleeing ecological disasters provoke military responses by internal or external actors leading to large-scale slaughters. Diseases and famine take even more lives. The death rate spikes after 2015, but so does the birth rate, with more poor people living shorter lives filled with greater suffering.

#### **Delta Forecast**

Climate change prompts a global response that focuses the attention of wealthy governments, corporations and NGOs, as well as governments in developing countries, to mitigate the negative impacts of global warming by helping poor populations. The need to protect ground cover, shade, and forests, for example, drives major efforts to provide better cooking and heating fuels for the poor. As more programs bring success in both moderating climate change and improving the lives of the poor,

the integration of poor populations into the sustainable 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy becomes a source of pride and celebration.

## Development Paradigm

### Alpha Forecast

Wealthy countries face their track record of development that leaves many countries worse off than when programs began. These countries recommit to promoting development by integrating poor countries more fully into the global economy. Hoping to leverage new technologies and new sources of energy, governments create incentives for companies to invest in poor countries. Greater oversight of business practices in poor countries leads to greater corporate social responsibility. The World Trade Organization eliminates most agricultural subsidies among rich countries. New strategies are tailored to the unique situations found in each developing country, produced through intensive study of microlending and other innovations using internet technology. Technology also provides new means for overseas populations to contribute to the development of their home countries despite their residency abroad. The youth in rich countries bring new energy and new faith to the fight against global poverty, leading to successful innovations in environmental, economic, and health policy.

### Beta Forecast

An accelerating flow of reports from governments and multilateral organizations conclude that development efforts in the poorest countries have failed. Rich countries suffer from “aid fatigue” and shift resources from the global poor to address domestic problems. Development organizations, such as the World Bank, struggle to remain solvent, often by helping donor countries exploit the resources of poor countries. Foundations still fund projects to help the poor, but each follow their own strategies without coordination or cooperation. Governments still provide aid to poor countries, typically clothed in the rhetoric of nobility while the naked truth is anxious desire for natural resources, military alliances, or markets for donor country products and services. The realists of 2039 argue that a survival paradigm is what the poor need and that there is no going back to the days when the illusion of development could be called a paradigm.

### Delta Forecast

Global governments recognize that a “good life” is obtainable worldwide for both the poor and the wealthy when development is viewed in social, psychological, political as well as economical terms. Leaders in the development field work with community leaders to help each society evolve in its own way to establish the optimal environments for people and cultures. The well being of people is a topic that universities, think tanks and governments study regularly. Over several decades, the public largely accepts that beyond a fairly low level of economic achievement, life gets better for people in thriving

communities that contribute meaningfully to a better world. Politically popular leaders in different societies call for distributive justice that assures the wealthy contribute to improving the lives of the poor. Poverty is redefined as more than a lack of material wealth, but also as the absence of economic, social, ecological, educational, and spiritual environments that are conducive to growth and self-actualization. Development in 2039 focuses on the improvement of these environments to allow each individual to have the choice and achieve what he or she considers a “good life.”

## Education

### **Alpha Forecast**

Education for poor people grows gradually over the next several decades, though large gaps persist. Gaps remain between the education levels of girls and boys in many countries while in failed and fragile states, the poor have little access to education. Government investments in early-childhood education combine with NGO initiatives to increase the level of literacy each decade. Despite progress, disparities in the quality of education available to the rich and poor continue to drive unrest among the poor and social movements for improved equity. While the education differential for women is reduced, many older women have missed their chance for an education.

### **Beta Forecast**

In many poor countries, compulsory education laws still exist but the government gives up supporting schools. Many wealthy elites believe that educating the poor creates expectations that will never be realized and could ferment dissatisfaction that threatens the social order in their countries. For many of the poor in fragile and failed states, violence and banditry lead many parents to keep their children at home. Many poor have given up hope that their children will be educated.

### **Delta Forecast**

Educators in poor communities around the globe leverage local resources and technologies, such as handheld devices and ubiquitous computing, to create optimal environments for cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual learning. This approach addresses pre-natal and early childhood development, as well as continued education and development throughout life. The global focus on education strengthens economies and supports efforts to maintain peace and stability. Educators identify talented young people in poor communities early and groom them for positions of community leadership. The emphasis on education also fosters greater support for nutrition programs that yield healthy babies ready to learn.

## Global Governance

### Alpha Forecast

Multilateral organizations reform their governance structures to reflect 21<sup>st</sup> century economic and geopolitical power dynamics, increasing the number of seats at the table. However, these changes simply reflect a shift in the composition of the global elite and leave poor people and countries unrepresented. Countries continue to compete politically and economically, but in their “enlightened self-interest” they take some steps to reduce poverty worldwide. Social pressure pushes multinational corporations to improve their corporate social responsibility and play a more positive role in the countries in which they do business.

### Beta Forecast

The poor’s primary role in global governance is as pawns in the competition between larger, richer countries. Citing the injustices endured by the poor as their excuse, large countries initiate military or economic conflict to achieve their own ends. With their attention focused on rising competitors like China, Russia, and Brazil, the U.S. and the E.U. fade as advocates of democracy and free trade, causing both to fall out of favor in most of the world. The rise of China under authoritarian rule leads many countries to prefer strong parties that can maintain order in the face of ecological and economic crises. National interests tend to dominate government agendas as countries compete for scarce resources and defend borders against incursion and migration. The poor in most countries support nationalist regimes, which assure them neither security nor justice.

### Delta Forecast

Governance is accomplished through knowledge networks that shape international, regional, national and local solutions to problems by organizing the political engagement of individuals and groups. As a result, policy on climate change, education, health, and wealth distribution feature open discussions, continuous polling, and occasional world referenda that engage billions of participants. Rich and poor alike participate in this networked governance through technologies that are widespread, and there is a widely held desire to ensure that all people have the means to participate. The United Nations plays an active role in coordinating governments from regions and nations. Local politics are robust in 2039 and many people prefer to participate at this level. However, most remain knowledgeable about issues at all levels of government and participate in online politics. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* sets the rules for national governments, and after several prosecutions of former leaders by the World Court, politicians recognize that international legal constraints will be enforced.

## Global Economy

### Alpha Forecast

The “emerged markets” – e.g. China, Brazil – hold the lead in global economic growth, investing strategically in Africa and other areas to gain resources while developing their internal markets. The poorest countries merge the models of China and India by developing low-cost manufacturing for export as well as technology-based service hubs in urban centers. The EU, U.S., and BRIC nations shift to green economies by 2039. Trade and intellectual property rules ensure that poorer nations have access to 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies for sustainability purposes. However, the economic gap between rich and poor grows over the decades and is higher in 2039 even though the proportion of people in abject poverty has grown smaller.

### Beta Forecast

The global economy fragments after a succession of recessions, pandemics, wars and natural disasters associated with climate change. Credit markets freeze everywhere while trade barriers and loan defaults make it harder for the poor in all countries. In poor countries, the formal economy breaks down and the poor turn to barter, crime or migration for survival. Global agricultural productivity declines over the decades due to deteriorating infrastructures, water shortages and short-sighted trade policies. Industrial production concentrates in the developed and emerged countries, which seek only natural resources from poor countries, typically on terms that offer little benefit for any but the elite in those countries. Tourism, remittances and foreign aid all decline while the global economy leaves most of the world’s poor with little hope.

### Delta Forecast

The economy strengthens to support the poor with highly coordinated, multilateral powers regulating competition and promoting programs that raise the standard of living for poor populations. The agriculture sector responds to climate change with scientifically advanced solutions that harness molecular sciences and nanotechnology. These solutions allow local production of environmentally sustainable foods that support health while providing income to the world’s poor. Industrial production increases through the use of robotics during the 2020s and 2030s, which creates greater demand for human-crafts and arts. The service economy grows over this period, particularly in education and health. The global minimum wage treaty is adopted in 2029, which guarantees that even those with little education can earn a living. Knowledge-based services such as in the entertainment/culture sectors create a growing base of employment at higher income levels.

## Mobility

### Alpha Forecast

Mobility increases largely through more fuel-efficient automobiles – including gas-electric hybrids – and the increased use of modernized mass transit. However, poor people in developing countries remain at a disadvantage in the quality of available infrastructure. This makes it difficult for many poor people to get to jobs or their products to market. The development of low-cost vehicles and increasing car exports from China and Brazil provide new transportation options for middle- and lower middle-class people in developing countries. Government programs that encourage the use of electric vehicles mitigate the impact increased car usage has on air quality, but in poor urban areas internal combustion engines still create pollution.

### Beta Forecast

War and climate change dislocate and cut large numbers of people off from information, markets, and hope. As a result of greater urbanization, many squatters live within the rights-of-way of public transit systems in poor countries, reducing the efficiency of those systems. Many poor people continue to use bicycles as their primary means of transportation, but the increase in motorized traffic makes this difficult and unsafe on major roads. Road-pricing schemes to reduce traffic and pollution place motorized transit beyond the reach of the poor. As a result, poor people are contained within urban slums and ghettos, or isolated in rural areas without the adequate mobility to get to jobs or markets.

### Delta Forecast

Mobility becomes an option for all people, and ecological designs with cultural sensitivities direct traffic flows to assure that the impacts are positive. With a shift of focus from “transportation” to “access for all,” built environments are redesigned to ensure that all residents have access to the things they need in centrally located community centers and shops. Furthermore, many poor people obviate the need to travel by spending much of their time using virtual technologies that allow them to meet, trade, and interact with people all over the world. Increased mobility – real and virtual – expands the horizons of poor people, exposes them to new opportunities and cultural experiences as well as removing the stigma of provinciality. In this way, physical mobility becomes a source of social mobility.

## Jobs

### Alpha Forecast

Global economic cycles become more severe and throw tens of millions into poverty during recessions without lifting all of them back out during expansions. Hesitant to build up large staffs during uncertain

times, employers rely on part-time, contract, or informal workers, who receive lower pay and benefits than full-time employees. Where it is economical, employers replace workers with robots and knowledge technologies. The wage gap continues to grow despite highly touted international efforts to increase wages, improve farm productivity and create decent jobs. Most countries set targets for unemployment, typically under 5%, but only a few of the Nordic countries are succeeding at meeting these targets year after year. Unemployment hovers at 10-15% in rich countries and over 20% in poor countries.

## **Beta Forecast**

The global economic turbulence rocks the first few decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. All economic sectors concentrate wealth and employment around networks of highly educated people who capitalize knowledge while leaving the majority of the world's eight billion people searching for a diminishing number of jobs. Well-intentioned international programs that call upon nations and NGOs to meet employment targets prove ineffective against the relentless global economy that concentrates power in networks of multinational corporate elites. Investments in robotics and automation reduce the labor required for industries such as textiles that once offered poor countries a first step out of poverty. The global poor can hope for jobs serving the elites, but most poor people find only intermittent service and agricultural work in the formal sector.

## **Delta Forecast**

Governments commit to ensuring that all citizens are either in jobs that add dignity and meaning to life or training to obtain one in the future. A collective effort among multinational organizations (MNOs), multinational corporations (MNCs), and NGOs to make "globalization work for all" extend this approach to poor countries. Jobs in all sectors provide minimum wage floors with individual life planning focused on a worker's life goals. The use of technology, as well as outreach by poor country governments, strengthen bonds between poor countries and their Diasporas in rich countries, replacing "brain drain" with patterns of circular migration that raise the level of skills and understanding worldwide. The agricultural sector uses genetics for advanced farming which foster labor-intensive learning jobs, drawing many people back to the countryside. Urban green jobs, services and cultural arts and crafts provide incomes that fuel local and global economies and support personal growth.

## **Security**

### **Alpha Forecast**

The global poor suffer disproportionately from multiple forms of violence, including rape, assault and homicide, and robbery. Violence strikes vulnerable populations, particularly women, children and minorities in growing urban slums or in the swelling refugee camps. Governments pour more money

into the military and police in reaction to the growing global violence, but corruption among these forces makes matters worse in many countries. The poor often find themselves the victims of collateral damage.

## **Beta Forecast**

Violence afflicts poor populations in 2039 on a scale unseen in human history. Catastrophic events, such as nuclear and bioterrorist attacks, reinforce the daily fear that stressed populations feel everywhere. Rape, murder, and state repression are daily threats in poor areas, where the wealthy expend great effort to contain the violence. Kidnapping and human trafficking drag poor people, particularly women and children, into the global underworld economy. Global arms traffickers make increasingly deadly small arms, drones and smaller, low-cost flying attack platforms. Weapons of mass destruction are widely and cheaply available in 2039. For those in poverty life is insecure everywhere.

## **Delta Forecast**

Under the mantle of Interpol, global collaboration between law enforcement agencies assures security for the vast majority of the world's poor as well as for the wealthy. Authorities share knowledge to disrupt or destroy the most threatening networks of illicit and terrorist activity. In cases of fragile or failed states, military action is subsumed into a larger law enforcement strategy that is integrated with aid, sanctions, lending, and other forms of engagement. This law enforcement body will be comprised of multinational forces responsive to the best interests of all regions in the world. The policy of the G20 nations to limit the arms trade reduces the number of fragile states that are capable of supporting terrorist organizations, drug cartels, and other crime rings.

## **Social Identities**

### **Alpha Forecast**

Social identities become more globalized and less parochial in developed countries and among the elites of poor countries, while the social identities of the poor are defined by local communities, kinship groups or tribes. Through technology, the term "global society" takes on a real meaning in many people's lives, including poorer young people growing up in the 2020s and 2030s. Multinational companies encourage the global identity in order to grow brands in international markets. More people associate themselves with larger identities, often based on religion or culture rather than ethnicity or nationality. These global identity groups provoke reaction from people who feel threatened by the loss of local ties so while social groups become more porous internationally there are many local groups that define an "other" in order to set the boundary of inclusion. Thus, the poor often face social exclusion or racial discrimination when they are overlooked by those with a global identity while they are excluded

by those enforcing local societal boundaries. Class distinctions remain especially rigid in poor countries in 2039, moderated only somewhat by the growth of larger networks that cross national and class lines.

## **Beta Forecast**

In a highly stressed world, many poor people survive by obeying authorities, while others struggle to get what they can at any cost. Whereas elites benefit from global connectivity, kinship and tribal identities still define relationships among the poor. Social institutions, such as churches and governments, which once integrated the poor into a larger identity, are weakened during the turmoil of the 2020s.

Paramilitary groups enforce social boundaries to promote strong identities that define inclusion and exclusion, frequently dehumanizing the “other” in order to justify exploitation.

## **Delta Forecast**

Respect for and tolerance of all different cultures and perspectives grow as technology and globalization promote cross-cultural interaction. Those who have passed into higher economic strata encourage the poor to expand their cultural and economic horizons. A new ethic based on wisdom and compassion emerges from a highly influential group of people whose presence influences those around them and invites many people to experience and celebrate the unity of all.

## **Technology That Makes a Difference**

### **Alpha Forecast**

New “green” technologies for renewable energy and conservation mitigate some of the effects of climate change foreseen early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Decentralized power generation provides electricity for hundreds of millions of people who had previously gone without. This electricity also reduces deforestation in poor countries and natural gas provides poor people with safer fuels for cooking and heating. With electricity, many poor people are able to access the internet, enabling them to participate more actively in political systems and economic markets. Advances in nanotechnology, water purification and desalinization transform agriculture bringing “smart” agriculture to poor people worldwide. Medical technology reduces birthrates through contraception while pre-natal medicinal foods improve the learning capacity of children born in the 2020s and 2030s.

### **Beta Forecast**

In a world made hostile by conflict and climatic events, poor populations depend on low-tech solutions for survival. Old technologies such as windmills, coal, and animal husbandry, join with the recycling of scrap materials, enabling some poor people to make do. Weaponry becomes more important for the poor to protect themselves from both people and animals migrating in search of better habitats. While

advances in communications technology continue in developed countries, poor people – who often lack a stable source of electricity – do not have access to these new tools and platforms. Poor populations suffer harmful effects of counterfeit and low-quality drugs sold to fight disease and contain pandemics.

## **Delta Forecast**

Advances in technology create elegant low-cost solutions for emerging problems. Scientists from the developed and developing worlds collaborate regularly via communications technology to invent appropriate technologies for poor populations. These scientists apply new fields like nanotechnology, knowledge technology, and biotechnology to purify water, generate energy, redesign built environments, and improve agricultural output. Western neuroscience provides a basis for understanding traditional practices such as prayer and meditation. This merger of technologies from a wide variety of contexts prompts innovation in tailoring environments that support the optimal development of individuals, families and cultures.

## **Health**

### **Alpha Forecast**

Chronic diseases afflict more of the aging population worldwide in 2039 while infectious disease is reduced for infants and young children. Overall, the health status for lower income people has improved. HIV disease is still the leading killer followed by heart disease, while depression now is the fastest growing disease worldwide. Obesity has also increased strikingly, driving high rates of diabetes particularly in lower income populations. Many cancers have also increased with the aging population, particularly in countries where tobacco use increased in the early 21st century. Along with sporadic viral epidemics, major infectious disease outbreaks continue to move from lower income regions to wealthier parts of the world. Drug-resistant tuberculosis spreads from areas where HIV disease is most prevalent. All told global health conditions for children have improved in 2039, but for adults and elders in lower-income areas health conditions are in many ways worse as people live longer but with more illness and disability.

### **Beta Forecast**

Waves of infectious disease devastate lower income populations striking down young and old alike, while those who survive into middle age are afflicted with higher rates of diabetes, mental illness, heart disease and traffic accidents. Birth rates are up in areas where the suffering is severe so many people lead shorter, more miserable lives in 2039. Yet people in higher income areas live longer than ever, benefiting from new treatments. Nevertheless, mental health problems such as depression have created terrible declines in the overall quality of life. Social ills such as vehicular death, suicide, and drug abuse are on the upswing. Outbreaks of infectious disease, such as extreme drug resistant Tuberculosis (XDR-TB), threaten the wealthy and spread uncontrollably through the poor. Neither drugs nor vaccines

are available to the poor. Lower income areas also face the growing burden of obesity that makes diabetes far more prevalent than it was earlier in the century. Most lower-income, and middle-income countries offer only minimal health care to poor people in over-crowded clinics. The economic result is that poor health reduces the capacity of populations to create wealth, and many countries are spiraling down as a result.

## **Delta Forecast**

Health has improved globally in 2039 and the greatest improvements are in lower-income populations. A higher level of spiritual health may explain the growing interest across all faith traditions in assuring that the potential of all people to develop physically, psychologically, socially and economically is realized locally and globally. Individual, family and community resilience programs have effectively addressed both infectious and chronic diseases while working on the social determinants of health. These programs work with appropriate technologies for preventing disease (e.g., mosquito control, vaccines, and drugs) along with behavioral change projects that have largely stopped the spread of HIV and TB. Even more powerfully, culture-based systems work to improve population hardiness through nutrition and education programs. These culturally-specific systems help bring healthy, thriving populations of children into the world prepared to learn and thrive. Mental health also is better in 2039. In high-income populations the decline in depression is attributed in part to the higher purpose people feel in contributing toward a world that works for all when the wealthy care for the poor.

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