



MIND THE GAP!

A joint project of NETWORK Education Program and NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

Did you know...

- * The wealthiest 1% of our population owns more than 90% of us combined.
- * The median African American household has less than ten cents of wealth for every dollar of wealth owned by the median white family. The median Latino family owns about 12 cents.
- * 20% of Americans have -1.4% of our nation's wealth, meaning they collectively have more debt than income or assets.
- * More than 25% of American Indian and Alaska Native individuals live below the poverty level.
- * The wealthiest 1% of U.S. households owns 225 times as much wealth as the median household. This is the highest ratio on record.
- * For every dollar of wealth owned by the median single man of color or median single white women, the median single woman of color only owns one penny of wealth.

What is the *Mind the Gap!* campaign?

Using video, social media, fact sheets, workshops, webinars and a blog, the *Mind the Gap!* campaign is alerting both social justice activists and the general public about the causes and consequences of the wealth gap.

Why this campaign matters...

Catholic Social Teachings state that each of us has a right to live in dignity and that our government must serve the common good. That means that society has a moral obligation to ensure that all people, especially those living at the economic margins, have access to the necessities of life, including food and a safe place in which to raise a family. The extreme wealth inequality plaguing our nation today is inconsistent with these values.

“ The dignity of the individual and the demands of justice require, particularly today, that economic choices do not cause disparities in wealth to increase in an excessive and morally unacceptable manner (32) . . . Economic activity . . . needs to be directed towards the pursuit of the common good, for which the political community in particular must also take responsibility. (36) ”

— *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), Pope Benedict XVI

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More Facts on the Wealth Gap

There is a crack in America's foundation. The gap between the super-rich and most Americans has grown dramatically, particularly in the past 30 years. Working-class families have been burdened with stagnant wages, a rising cost of living and increasing debt. The last time the U.S. was this unequal, the Great Depression started.

The wealth gap is an opportunity gap. The amount of wealth a person owns greatly affects his or her financial stability and access to opportunities—education, healthcare, housing, legal representation, ability to start a small business, savings, retirement, etc. A large gap in wealth means a large gap in opportunities for families and individuals.

The wealth gap is a power gap. Wealth doesn't only make the wealthy powerful, it can make the non-wealthy non-powerful. The wealthy are able to fund political campaigns, think tanks, research, lobbyists and propaganda that serve their own interests. The more money behind something, the more noise it makes. And that can block out the people and ideas that best serve the common good.

The wealth gap fosters cruel stereotypes. People of color and low-income households are disproportionately oppressed by the wealth gap and have been unjustly stereotyped by those who defend the gap. However, these communities have historically been mislabeled and abused by racism and classism. Thus it is imperative that racial and class-based statistics be presented in a way that avoids perpetuating negative stereotypes. Check out this resource for tips on how to deal with this:

www.networklobby.org/mindful-gap-resources.

What can you do?

- ★ Sign on to the *Mind the Gap!* campaign (www.networklobby.org/join-mind-the-gap)
- ★ Sign the petition for a White House Summit on the wealth gap (www.networklobby.org/petition-white-house-summit)
- ★ Learn more and leave your comments at our Blog (www.networklobby.org/nep/blog)
- ★ “Like” us on Facebook and invite your friends (MIND THE GAP)
- ★ Follow us on Twitter @MndtheGap
- ★ Copy and distribute this flyer
- ★ Contact us at mindthegap@networklobby.org

Do you want to learn more?

Please visit our website at www.networklobby.org/campaign/mind-the-gap

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