

Poor Relief

Why Giving People Money Is Not the Answer to Global Poverty

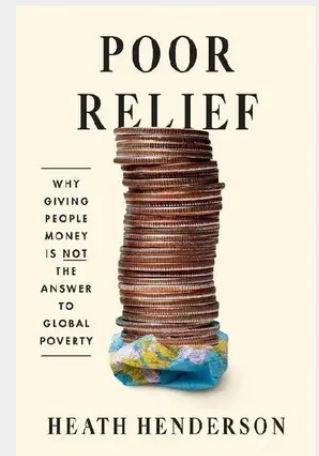
An economist challenges an emerging orthodoxy: the idea that the best way to alleviate poverty is simply to give people money. A simple notion has become increasingly widespread in recent years: to lift people out of poverty, just give them money. Leading international organizations like the World Bank and United Nations endorse the use of cash transfers. So do Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and everyday philanthropists—the charity GiveDirectly has raised more than \$800 million to distribute to households in a dozen countries. Challenging this emergent wisdom, Heath Henderson argues that cash transfers—whether one-off grants or a “basic income” provided over a stretch of time—are a flawed response to global poverty. They risk displacing interventions that recipients themselves might prefer: if a community lacks access to clean water or high-quality healthcare, for instance, giving cash to households will not address the problem, which can be solved only by putting those funds toward public infrastructure. Cash transfers have also been linked to more direct harms, including increases in domestic violence, child labor, inflation, and even mortality. The appeal of cash transfers is rooted in the idea that they avoid paternalism, letting the recipients of the money, rather than faraway donors, make choices for themselves. But as Henderson points out, such transfers substitute one form of paternalism for another, by assuming that markets know best. *Poor Relief* instead proposes looking beyond one-size-fits-all solutions toward a truly bottom-up alternative. Fixing global poverty is not just a matter of giving people money—it requires giving communities democratic power.

An economist challenges an emerging orthodoxy: the idea that the best way to alleviate poverty is simply to give people money.

A simple notion has become increasingly widespread in recent years: to lift people out of poverty, just give them money. Leading international organizations like the World Bank and United Nations endorse the use of cash transfers. So do Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and everyday philanthropists—the charity GiveDirectly has raised more than \$800 million to distribute to households in a dozen countries.

Challenging this emergent wisdom, Heath Henderson argues that cash transfers—whether one-off grants or a “basic income” provided over a stretch of time—are a flawed response to global poverty. They risk displacing interventions that recipients themselves might prefer: if a community lacks access to clean water or high-quality healthcare, for instance, giving cash to households will not address the problem, which can be solved only by putting those funds toward public infrastructure. Cash transfers have also been linked to more direct harms, including increases in domestic violence, child labor, inflation, and even mortality.

The appeal of cash transfers is rooted in the idea that they avoid paternalism, letting the recipients of the money, rather than faraway donors, make choices for themselves. But as Henderson points out, such transfers substitute one form of paternalism for another, by assuming that markets know best. *Poor Relief* instead proposes looking beyond one-size-fits-all solutions toward a truly bottom-up alternative. Fixing global poverty is not just a matter of giving people money—it requires giving communities democratic power.



33,50 €

33,50 € (zzgl. MwSt.)

Nicht mehr lieferbar

Artikelnummer: 9780674296138

Medium: Buch

ISBN: 978-0-674-29613-8

Verlag: Harvard University Press

Erscheinungstermin: 28.11.2025

Sprache(n): Englisch

Auflage: Erscheinungsjahr 2025

Produktform: Gebunden

Gewicht: 438 g

Seiten: 256

Format (B x H): 150 x 221 mm

