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# Reducing Poverty

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## **Videos:**

“Did Brazil Find the Solution to Poverty?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEqD7pRthOI>

(7:15 minutes)

“Better Than Charity”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTFLCYzQZSY>

(5:30 minutes)

## **Guide:**

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

## **Analysis Questions:**

1. What are the opposing ideas in these two videos?
2. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
3. Andre Pagliarini said that Brazil was once an oligarchy. What is an oligarchy?
4. John Stossel said that the U.S. government’s War on Poverty “created a new underclass, generations who stay poor, people who don’t try to become independent.” What did he mean by this?
5. Andre Pagliarini mentioned “the indignities of the working class.” What do you think he meant by this phrase?
6. The Stossel video argued that welfare programs in the U.S. discourage people from getting jobs, because they might lose their welfare benefits. Is this a good argument? Why/Why not? How does this relate to arguments made in the Gravel Institute video?
7. Andre Pagliarini said Lula believed that workers needed their own party. Why would they need this? Is it important for workers to form political groups? Why/Why not?
8. In the Stossel video, the man who was helped by the Doe Fund said, “They don’t allow you to get food stamps or anything like that. That’s not allowed in the Doe Fund. They want you to be independent. You go out there and you make your own money. You know, you get your self-esteem back.” What did he mean by this?
9. The Gravel Institute video focuses on Bolsa Família. What is Bolsa Família?

10. John Stossel said that billionaires often donate money in ways that don't have a positive impact. Why is this? Why isn't the money alone making a difference?
11. Andre Pagliarini argued that Bolsa Família found success not by raising the amount of money given to people, but by raising the amount of people to whom money was given. Which strategy do you think would be better? Why would one strategy be more successful than the other?
12. Yaron Brook said, "[A]ll of our lives are dramatically better because of somebody like Jeff Bezos." What did he mean by this?
13. Andre Pagliarini explained that U.S. President Bill Clinton tried to limit access to welfare programs by adding work requirements and drug tests. Should people have to take drug tests to get access to welfare? Why/Why not?
14. John Stossel said that "oddly, what helps the most people most efficiently is greedy, self-interested capitalism." What did he mean by this?
15. Andre Pagliarini said studies have shown that Bolsa Família may have improved educational outcomes for poor children and lowered rates of domestic violence and suicide. How could a welfare program have that kind of impact?
16. Yaron Brook said, "Businesses are the most efficient because they have the right incentives, because they won't survive if they're not efficient. Governments have no such incentives, and charities are mixed." What did he mean by this?
17. Andre Pagliarini said, "For many Brazilians, Bolsa Família is the most tangible example of the state acting on their behalf. It represents the very promise of citizenship." What did he mean by this? What is the "promise of citizenship"?
18. Yaron Brook and John Stossel argued that impoverished people can benefit from wealthy business owners acting in their own self-interest. Is this possible? Can you benefit from other people acting in their own self-interest? Why/Why not?
19. Andrea Pagliarini said, "The first step is recognizing that poor people don't become less poor if the government calls them lazy." What did he mean by this?
20. Both videos identify negative consequences from instituting barriers to welfare. The Gravel Institute said that it can be humiliating to impoverished people. The Stossel video said it can discourage people from getting jobs, because they could lose their benefits. Is there common ground here?
21. Did you have an opinion of how to reduce poverty before watching these videos? If so, what was it? Has your opinion changed? If so, how? What did you learn from either video that affects your views of the debate over addressing poverty?

22. What could you learn about strategies to reduce poverty that might affect your view of this debate?
23. What else would you like to learn about reducing poverty?