

Marriage: Out of Reach for the Poor?

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When law and culture send an undifferentiated “sexual expressionist” message, poor women and children suffer more in the dating and marriage markets because of their sets of constraints, preferences and opportunity costs. Decades of government “solutions”—particularly contraception—have exacerbated the situation. These programs fail to meet poor women’s needs and desires for community, for gift-giving, and for relational intimacy. We will share our experience for the past 3 years of inviting poor women (and men), alongside religious women (and men), to reflect on their desires and experiences of dating, marriage, and family. Our project, *I Believe in Love*, includes both individual and community participation, as it seeks to be a solution to the relational poverty that leads women to choose single motherhood, as well as a resource to help poorer women and men find and keep lasting love, marriage, and family.