

Annie Lowrey - Is It Crazy To Think We Can Eradicate Poverty?

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.. Since 1980, the proportion of the developing world living in urban areas has grown to about 50 percent, from 30 percent, and according to the World Bank, that migration of hundreds of millions has been instrumental in pulling down poverty rates — and will be for a broader set of countries going forward. Cities bolster access to health services and public resources; infant-mortality rates, for instance, are 40 percent lower in urban Cambodia than in rural Cambodia. And workers themselves become more productive, often by making the switch from labor-intensive work like farming to capital-intensive work like manufacturing. Urban poverty is hardly attractive — slums are cramped, unplanned, unhygienic places — but it is, in many cases, less deadly. (Except when it's not. A recent factory collapse in Bangladesh killed dozens of workers — a reminder of the sometimes-catastrophic human costs associated with rapid, unchecked urbanization and industrialization.)

Annie Lowrey is an economics reporter for The Times.

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