

xfam on the new home front: European poverty imposed b.

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The [Guardian's reported this morning that](#):

Europe faces a "lost decade", with the number of people trapped in poverty across the continent set to rise by up to 25 million by 2025 unless austerity policies are reversed, according to a [damning new report from aid agency Oxfam](#).

The charity, which is better known for delivering relief programmes in developing countries, says the damage being inflicted on many European societies is reminiscent of the devastation wrought by the strict "structural adjustment" programmes imposed on poor countries by the International Monetary Fund over the past 25 years.

I admire that honesty. What it is saying is that this poverty is the result of political choice.

As the Guardian continues:

Using research carried out by thinktank the Institute of Fiscal Studies into the likely impact of austerity on poverty levels in the UK, and extrapolating it across all 27 European Union member-states, Oxfam predicts that relative poverty, defined as the number of people living below 80% of median income, could be set to rise by anything from 15 to 25 million people by 2025.

"The European model is under attack from ill-conceived austerity policies sold to the public as the cost of a stable, growing economy, for which all are being asked to pay. Left unchecked, these measures will undermine Europe's social gains, creating divided countries and a divided continent, and entrenching poverty for a generation," says the report.

And as [Duncan Green at Oxfam notes](#) the [report's recommendations say](#):

An additional 15 to 25 million people across Europe could face the prospect of living in poverty by 2025 if austerity measures continue. It could take between 10 to 25 years for poverty to return to pre-2008 levels in Europe.

It does not have to be this way. Oxfam calls on European governments to do more than merely adjust existing austerity measures.

European governments must:

- * Invest in people and economic growth:*
- * Invest in public services*
- * Strengthen institutional democracy*
- * Build fair tax systems*

Oxfam is proud to stand with civil society in envisaging a new model of prosperity built on social justice and environmental sustainability.

I should add, I will be working with Oxfam on tax related issues over the next year.