

# Mothers in Arizona Moving Ahead The MAMA Project

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**ENDING  
POVERTY  
NOW**



# The Problem

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1. Young single mothers and their children experience poverty at one of the highest rates in the country and a myriad of negative impacts.
2. This also hinders the well-being and economic development of the larger community.
3. We are not serving them and addressing these issues as well as we could in part because we cannot see the problem from their perspective.
4. We need them as insider experts and as empowered partners in the solutions.

# Poverty & Young Mothers

Poor people suffer the worst health outcomes



Young mothers in poverty deal with:

- poor nutrition, food insecurity
- unsafe neighborhoods, substandard housing
- inadequate support systems, isolation
- little knowledge, access and trust on the health care system

Yet women are often the primary breadwinners, most important teachers, and principal health care advocates for their families.

# The *Stress* of Poverty

## **Chronic Stress =**

Challenging/uncertain events that **exceeds resources**.

Heightened by

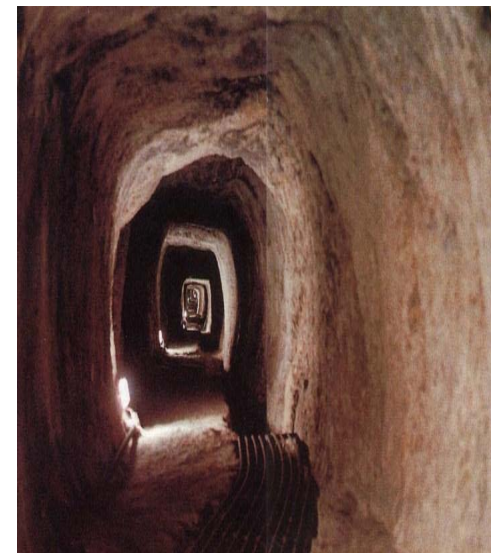
- **no predictive information**
- **lack of social support**
- **lack of coping strategies**

(RWJ Foundation)

## **The Tunnel of Scarcity:**

Your only focus is solving the emergency of the moment.

Important things on the periphery get ignored.

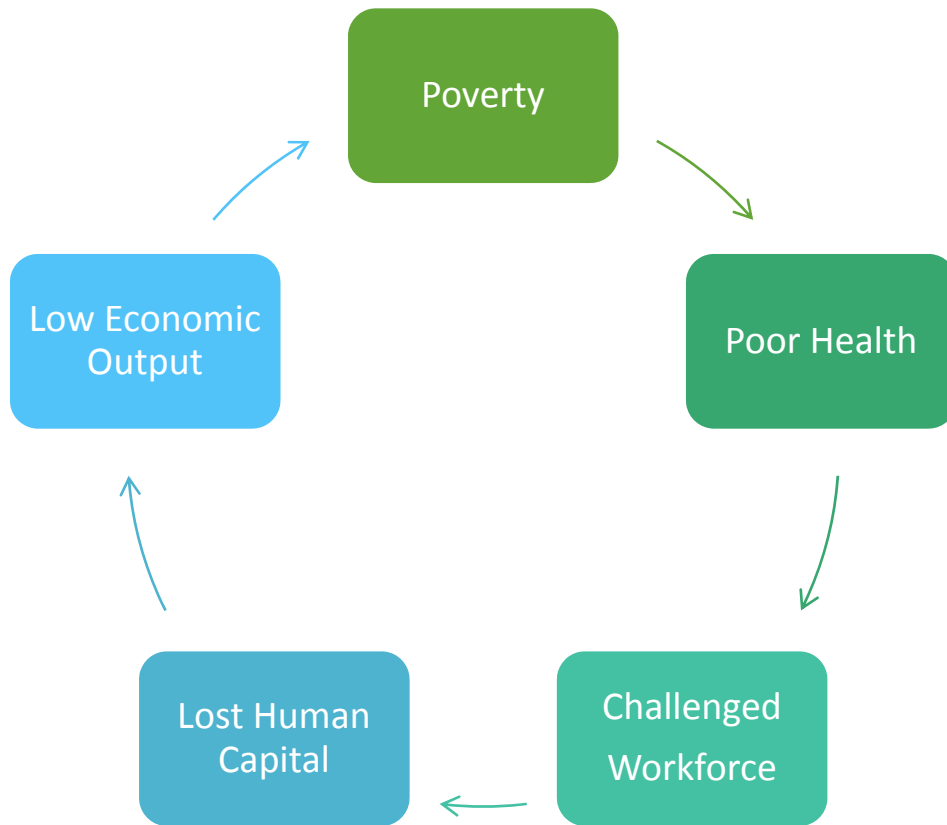


*Harvard economist Sandhil Mullainathan. Science: Poverty impedes cognitive function. Mani, A., Mullainathan, S., Shafir, E., & Zhao, J. 30 August 2013: Vol. 341 no. 6149 pp. 976-980.*

# Poverty: The Greatest Threat to Children's Health

- In 2013, the *American Academy of Pediatrics* recognized poverty as one of the greatest threats to children's health.
- Poor children have:
  - increased **mortality**
  - more frequent and severe **chronic diseases** such as asthma
  - increased **obesity** and its complications
  - poorer **nutrition and growth**
  - less access to quality **health care**
  - lower **immunization rates**
- Children are the **poorest members of our society** with nearly 25% born into poverty in 2013.
- More than 6 in 10 children born into the lowest income quintile **will never make it into the middle bracket.**





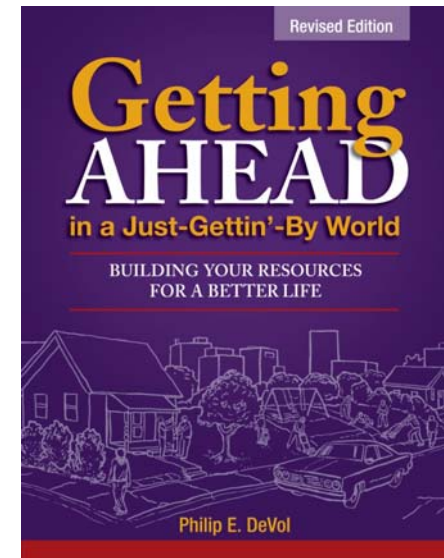
“By changing our perspective and actions, we can look at **each person in poverty as a potential asset** in the economic development of our county and move from managing poverty to ending it.”

*Pima County Economic Development Plan 2015-2017*

Poverty consequences can **extend for generations**.  
Breaking the generational cycle is difficult but urgent.

# The Getting Ahead Model of Change

- Living in poverty makes it **hard to change**
- Understanding the **big picture**
  - poverty is about more than the choices people make.
  - poverty impacts participants' own lives
- People in poverty are **problem solvers**
- Statistically **significant changes** shown across nine psychosocial indicators including
  - Self Efficacy
  - Hope
  - Future planning
  - Improved # of physical and mental health days each month
- Getting Ahead gets people to the **starting line**



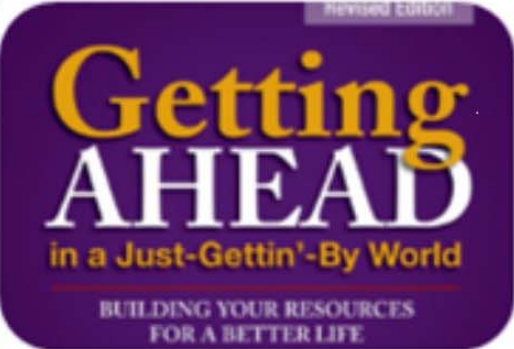
# Mothers in Arizona Moving Ahead The MAMA Project

- A pilot 18-month project
- Designed to map a new approach to create change at both an individual and a systems level
- Partnership with six organizations






# The MAMA Experience



**Getting Ahead**  
in a Just-Gettin'-By World  
BUILDING YOUR RESOURCES  
FOR A BETTER LIFE

Revised Edition

**12 Moms + 2 Facilitators**

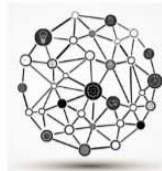


**3 Moms + 5 Allies**



Meet for 8 or 16 weeks (50 hours total)

Meet once a month for the rest of the year



# Objectives

## 1) MOTHERS

(& their families)

To improve their

- **health outcomes**
- **income and financial stability**
- **ability to find, navigate, and use resources, particularly in healthcare**
- self-efficacy and advocacy skills
- connection to community resource networks
- social capital, particularly across economic class

## 2) ALLIES

(health care professionals & volunteers)

To improve their

- **capacity to work with low-income families**
- understanding of poverty
- attitudes towards them
- **ability to find, navigate, and help others use resources**
- health advocacy skills

## 3) SYSTEMS

(health care & others serving people in poverty)

To improve our understanding of **barriers** to achieve quality health care and financial stability.

To create identifiable **system changes**.

To develop a more effective Getting Ahead program **model** that is sustainable and can be replicated in other communities.

# Participatory Evaluation: Mapping Stories



Develop a **process** to share the worldview, understandings, and experience from all three stakeholders: mothers, healthcare providers, and volunteers.

Create a comprehensive and collective **understanding** of the issues facing young mothers and their children.

Support on-going **investigation and dialogue** as the building blocks of change with common concepts and vocabulary that create a communication “Rosetta Stone.”

THE **POWER** OF  
STRATEGIC  
**STORYTELLING**



# Questions or Ideas?

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