

THE POVERTY LINE

A Visual Examination on what it means to be poor in Singapore.

A pictorial essay by Stefen Chow and Lin Hui-Yi, Social Space Magazine, Lien Foundation, Issue 1, 2013

Stefen Chow is grateful to be a witness through his camera. Chow has been awarded at various international photography competitions including the World Press Photo and Photographie de la Paris. His works have been exhibited in cities including New York, Paris, Milan, Beijing and Singapore.

Lin Hui-Yi is an economist by training and currently heads the China research operations of a global market research firm. Formerly with the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Singapore, she has a background in economic policy and seeks solutions that make social, environmental and commercial sense. She holds an MBA from Tsinghua University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

One frame. One person. One day.

The Poverty Line project explores a simple question: What does it mean to be poor?

Through photos of daily amounts of food that could be bought if one's income lies at the poverty line, the project creates a visual impact on the choices faced by a poor person in a country.

Starting off with China in 2010, the project has now covered 20 countries/regions across six continents; these include developed countries like Japan, USA, Germany and France, and developing countries like India, Thailand, Brazil and Madagascar.

To mitigate data availability issues, methodologies were set up for developed and developing countries respectively. For developed countries, where there is relatively up-to-date household consumption data, the average daily amount that a person living at the poverty line would spend on food is used. For developing countries, the average daily amount that a person at the poverty line earns or spends is used. Food items are bought at the local markets and supermarkets.

The Singapore series was completed in May 2013, using a figure of S\$2.22 (US\$1.79) for food per day per person. As Singapore does not have an official poverty line, calculations here were based on the main public assistance (ComCare) monthly income threshold of S\$550, and the proportion of household expenditure spent on food for the lowest one-fifth of households (12.12 per cent in 2007/08).

For further information on ComCare, see "Measuring Poverty in Singapore", page 58 to 66.

Read more about The Poverty Line at www.thepovertyline.net/.

Link to the original article: http://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1123&context=lien_research



Ang Ku Kueh (Red Tortoise Cake)



Local White Bread



Cinnamon and Star Anise



Chicken Rice



Brinjal



Pork