

For Immediate Release: January 22, 2009

Media Contacts: Doug Gavel, Harvard Kennedy School (617) 495-1115

Adam Gorlick, Stanford University (650) 725-0224

Harvard Kennedy School and Stanford University to Collaborate on Poverty Research Project

Project to focus on poverty and inequality in America

CAMBRIDGE, MA. – A new collaborative effort, bringing together faculty and scholars from Harvard and Stanford Universities, is being launched to develop and evaluate national policy on poverty and inequality in America. **The Collaboration for Poverty Research (CPR)** will tap the vast intellectual resources of both institutions, leveraging their combined convening power to focus attention and garner public support for new measures to attack and solve one of the most significant public problems of our time.

CPR will link Harvard Kennedy School's [Multidisciplinary Program in Inequality and Social Policy](#), based at the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy, with the [Stanford Center for the Study of Poverty and Inequality](#). The partnership will offer a national stage for renewed awareness and action in hopes of improving the lives of the 37 million people living below the poverty line in the United States. Funding for the collaboration is provided in part by [The Elfenworks Foundation](#).

“The tentacles of poverty and inequality reach far and deep throughout our society – from our most crowded cities to our farthest rural corners. The challenge for policymakers is to recognize the complexity of the challenge, and to confront it in effective new ways,” said Bruce Western, director of Harvard’s Program in Inequality and Social Policy and CPR co-director. “The collaboration is intended to help bridge the gap between theory and practice, between ideas and impact. We hope to make a significant difference in this effort.”

“This initiative will help us fight a new smart war on poverty backed by the very best science,” remarked David Grusky, director of Stanford’s Center for the Study of Poverty and Inequality. “Good intentions alone are not enough, but when good intentions are combined with the best science then great things can happen.”

“America is in the midst of some of the most difficult financial, economic and market conditions we have seen since the 1930s,” says Elfenworks CEO Lauren Speeth. “In light of the times, I feel a profound sense of gratitude that Harvard Kennedy School and Stanford University would join together to address our country's most urgent needs with this initiative.”

CPR will support four interrelated programs: national task forces to investigate pressing problems pertaining to American poverty and social inequality; a social policy laboratory that promotes science-based evaluations and policy innovations that expand economic opportunity and social mobility; a program of graduate and undergraduate internships

that support the national task forces and the social policy laboratory while also training new policymakers; and a series of executive roundtables to foster exchanges between researchers, policymakers, and opinion leaders.

Those topics expected to be addressed by the work of CPR include: urban violence, housing and the poor, immigration and the labor market, economic insecurity, education and the poor, democratizing political participation, unplanned pregnancies, and health care reform. Additional topics may also be developed over time.

###

The [Multidisciplinary Program in Inequality and Social Policy](#), based at the [Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy](#) at Harvard Kennedy School, emerged from the conviction that certain research puzzles may be particularly suited to an interdisciplinary approach. In its graduate training activities, the program aims to produce scholars who will be grounded in the recognized disciplines of their home departments, but who also understand the models, methods, and findings of scholars in adjacent fields. For more information, visit <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/inequality/>.

*The [Stanford Center for the Study of Poverty and Inequality](#), online at www.inequality.com, publishes and distributes *Pathways*, a new magazine on poverty, inequality, and social policy. The Center serves as a clearing house for inequality scholarship and data, supports graduate and undergraduate training programs in poverty and inequality analysis, and fosters innovative interdisciplinary research on poverty and inequality.*

The multi-faceted, creative and hardworking team at [The Elfenworks Foundation](#) uses its wide-ranging expertise to heal, empower, and transform, fostering a world 'In Harmony With Hope.' In bringing about this historic partnership, TEF is working to uplift the lives of the poor and marginalized for the greater good of all. Partners and initiatives are on the TEF website, along with resources for nonprofits and ways to make a ripple of positive change. For more, visit www.elfenworks.org.