

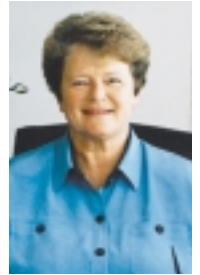
A Global Movement is Needed

Over the past decade, there has been a growing realization that poverty and health are very closely linked. We now know that a few diseases – such as HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, childhood diseases, and reproductive health conditions– are directly biting into the economic growth of poor countries. And there is increasing recognition of the sheer difficulty faced by developing nations as they seek to counter these health threats.

As the success stories that follow show, it is possible to reverse the impact of infectious diseases and reproductive health conditions – even in the poorest countries. We know what works. A number of health interventions and tools can dramatically reduce deaths from the main killer diseases. They include insecticide-treated bednets to prevent malaria and malaria treatment for pregnant women and children, prevention and care programmes for HIV/AIDS, DOTS strategy to control TB, immunization to prevent measles, and antibiotics to prevent pneumonia deaths among children.

If we can take these interventions to scale, making them available worldwide, we will have in our hands a concrete, result-oriented, and measurable way of starting to reduce poverty. Meanwhile, intensified efforts are also needed to help accelerate the research and development of new tools and to push for reductions in the price of urgently needed medicines and vaccines.

To achieve this, we need a global movement that can make the control of infectious diseases one of the highest social and political priorities of this decade. We need a movement that stimulates people in all countries to find their own best way of carrying the initiative forward. And we need a movement that is inclusive, pluralistic, and positive, but at the same time doesn't lose its focus and determination. In short, we are asking for a massive effort.



Dr GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND
Director-General
WHO

An Historic Opportunity to Protect Children



For too long, poor communities have been engulfed in the cycle of poverty and disease. Poverty increases vulnerability to disease through limiting access to health care, information, education, safe water, sanitation, adequate diet, and through other violations of children's rights. And sickness perpetuates poverty. When illness strikes, people who are poor are driven deeper into poverty – unable to work and care for or educate their children. This situation is often aggravated by the lack of knowledge, skills, and resources necessary for the prevention and care of childhood diseases.

A recent World Bank Report revealed that malaria, pneumonia, diarrhoeal diseases, measles, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis in children are the largest contributors to the health gap between the poor and the rich. Nearly 70% of all deaths from communicable diseases occur in children under the age of fourteen. Rising infant mortality rates and the millions of children infected or orphaned by the AIDS epidemic, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, are grim testimonies to the devastating impact of communicable diseases on families and society.

The success stories that follow are evidence that this vicious cycle of poverty and ill-health can be broken, even in some of the world's poorest countries, when children and families are at the centre of concerted action. This can be done by making affordable vaccines, drugs, and other interventions available to all children. But, most importantly, this must include empowering families and communities and ensuring their access to basic social services, including health care, basic education, nutrition, water, and sanitation. The success stories in this book, including those on preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS in Thailand and reducing child mortality in Benin through community child health programmes, are heartening illustrations of the potential of these strategies.

The world has the resources and the knowledge to significantly improve the lives of children and their families. What is now needed is the political commitment and action, at all levels of society, to build a global movement for children to ensure that every child's right to survival, dignity, security and self-fulfilment is achieved. Together we can build a better world for future generations.

CAROL BELLAMY
Executive Director
UNICEF

Delivering Global Commitments

The global fight against AIDS is almost 20 years old, but it has taken nearly all of those 20 years to learn one basic fact: an effective response against AIDS requires a sustained society-wide response in every quarter of the globe. It requires the energy of grass-roots mobilization to be matched with effective leadership from every level.

Twenty years' experience of the epidemic have demonstrated some key components of an effective response: strong leadership, partnerships, overcoming stigma, addressing social vulnerability, linking prevention to care, focusing on young people, and encouraging community involvement in the response. These components underpin the effective responses to the HIV epidemic that are highlighted in this report, from Senegal, Thailand, and Uganda.

HIV infection has a complex relation to poverty. HIV hits both rich and poor. Yet there is also a profound link between HIV/AIDS and poverty, a “negative synergy”, whereby HIV/AIDS creates and deepens poverty, making it harder to escape from. Poverty reduction is therefore an integral part of reducing vulnerability to HIV and of reducing the impact of AIDS. Poverty is now one of the main drivers of the global epidemic. The majority of people with HIV are in the developing world. Not only are economic inequalities reflected in the epidemic, they are made worse as energy is sapped from sectors that would otherwise be able to help economic progress.

The global movement in response to the epidemic is gathering momentum – creating new forces of solidarity and a heightened level of advocacy. However, one of the things we have learnt in the AIDS movement is that advocacy must be backed up with substance: real shifts in resource allocation, effective interventions for behaviour change, improved access to care, and greater distribution of the necessary goods and technologies – from pharmaceuticals to condoms.

UNAIDS stands as a committed partner in scaling up efforts against the communicable diseases that deepen poverty. The opportunity for action has never been greater, nor its need more urgent.



Dr PETER PIOT
Executive Director
UNAIDS

Partnerships for Health and Development



The links between health, nutrition, and poverty are well known. Poor and malnourished people are more likely to contract and develop communicable diseases, and are at higher risk of dying from resulting illness than are wealthier, healthier individuals. Communicable diseases also contribute to poverty. People who become ill are more likely to fall into poverty and to remain there than are healthier individuals.

Today the epidemics of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis are worsening, particularly in many developing countries that are witnessing a rapid erosion of the social and economic gains of the past three decades. Childhood infectious diseases remain the top killers worldwide and there has been little progress in reducing maternal mortality in poor communities. To stem these epidemics, we need to act collectively, and with greater urgency than ever before, to reach and involve the poor in building effective responses within and outside the health sector.

The success stories described in these pages demonstrate how far many nations have come in defining viable strategies to attack these public health threats and in scaling up to achieve a national impact. The stories illustrate many lessons. They demonstrate that success is possible even in resource-poor settings. They show that inputs such as drugs or vaccines, as important as they are to improving health, are not enough. Political commitment, capacity-building, human resources, education and communication, local adaptation, and community involvement are critical.

They also signal that strengthening and increased financing of health systems and social services in general can make possible a large-scale and more sustainable response.

The World Bank, working with governments, donors, NGOs, and the private sector is supporting countries to expand and scale up such successes. We engage in policy dialogue, and we employ traditional and new financial instruments and implementation models to assist governments to rapidly implement their disease control programmes and to further develop their health systems. We value a strong partnership to pursue public health and development objectives together and look forward to the progress that lies ahead.

JAMES D. WOLFENSOHN
President
WORLD BANK

Mobilizing International Action

Extracts from an address to the Development Assistance Committee, OECD, Paris, 2 October 2000

UNESCO has a key role to play in poverty alleviation and in translating into reality the goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015. UNESCO's fields of competence – education, science, culture, and communication – are critical for empowerment, for creating an enabling environment for people to participate actively in individual and social development through education, respect for human rights, cultural and historical sensitivity in policy design, environmental sustainability, and access to information for all.

It is vital to foster the development of an integrated concept of education, one that enables individuals to adapt to a rapidly changing social, economic, and cultural environment and to continue to learn throughout life. It is no longer enough to learn how to read, write, and count. Education must also result in improved social conditions for the poor.

The financial contribution by the world community to poverty reduction, education for all and health is a "make or break" factor. The responsibility for resource provision rests mainly with national governments in the South. A mutually reinforcing relationship must be developed between macro-economic stability and structural reform on the one hand, and growth and reduction of poverty and inequality on the other.

The international community must now mobilize itself, rethink the provision and modalities of aid, identify new financial resources and mechanisms and show that it is capable of practising what it preaches. A development process oriented towards poverty alleviation, education, and health should involve increasing both domestic resource mobilization in the South and private international capital flows. The international community should assist in the design of strategies that will help to increase savings, attract private investments, improve the efficiency of local financial systems, manage and reduce debt, improve public financial management and make the best use of official development assistance.



KOICHIRO MATSUURA
Director-General
UNESCO

Together, we can make a Difference



Guided by the principles of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and the ICPD review process (ICPD+5), UNFPA supports prevention of HIV infection as an integral component of reproductive health. The reproductive health approach to HIV prevention provides an appropriate entry-point for the implementation of HIV interventions. HIV/AIDS has never been higher on the international agenda, not only as a public health and development issue, but also as a security issue. In the worst-affected countries, the demographic impact of AIDS threatens to wipe out the hard-won gains of the last 30 years in terms of health status and life expectancy.

Girls and women are most vulnerable to HIV infection given the social and economic disadvantages they face in their day-to-day lives. Recent data show that there are an estimated 12 women living with HIV for every 10 men in many countries around the world. Experience shows that the burden of caring for entire families falls increasingly on the shoulders of women as AIDS continues to devastate families and communities. Adolescents are at high risk of HIV infection, as they tend to engage in risk-taking behaviour and their access to preventive information is generally limited. Further efforts must be made to empower women and girls and create a space for female decision-making in private as well as public life.

National goals and global imperatives are best met by satisfying the rights, needs and aspirations of individual children, adolescents, women, and men. The success stories included in this report serve as an important reminder of the power of committed and focused multilateral partnerships. There is still much work ahead of us. It is only through large-scale cooperation that we can meet the substantial health and development challenges, including that posted by the HIV pandemic.

DR NAFIS SADIK
Executive Director
UNFPA