

issue brief

RESOURCES

Recent Publications

Fighting Poverty: What Works? Education: Meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Fall 2005. An assessment of the best ways to achieve universal primary education. To download this report, visit www.povertyactionlab.com.

Rural Poverty Report 2001 — The Challenge of Ending Rural Poverty. International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2001. A report stressing the need to focus on the rural poor and for a “better partnership among government, civil society and the private sector.” To download the report, visit www.ifad.org.

Sachs, Jeffrey. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time.* Penguin Press, December 2005. In this book, prominent economist Jeffrey Sachs laid out a plan to eradicate global poverty by the year 2025.

Websites

Action Aid International, www.actionaid.org

A Glimmer of Hope, www.aglimmerofhope.org

CARE, www.care.org

Trickle Up, www.trickleup.org

Naand, www.naandi.org

Planet Finance, www.planetfinance.org

Poverty.com, www.poverty.com

World Bank Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest, www.cgap.org

World Neighbors, www.wn.org

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Working to End Poverty

This CAF America Issue Brief presents a synopsis of facts, research and funding opportunities for causes you care about. It isn't meant to be a comprehensive report, and for that reason, provides a list of resources and website where you can learn more. We hope you will use this as a starting point to investigate your funding interests, and find out how you can make a global difference.

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WHAT IS POVERTY?

One third of deaths worldwide, approximately 18 million people a year or 50,000 per day, are due to poverty-related causes.¹ In addition, every year nearly 11 million children die before their fifth birthday.

Every country in the world is potentially capable of producing enough food to feed its people. However, currently 54 nations can neither produce enough food, nor afford to import the foodstuffs necessary to complement what they do produce. The majority of these countries are in sub-Saharan Africa.²

Most of the widespread hunger in a world of plenty results from deeply rooted poverty. Numerous factors may play a role in creating this level of poverty, including droughts or floods, armed conflict, political, social or economic disruptions.³

Many governments, organizations, and philanthropists are working to alleviate the global crisis of poverty by promoting education, economic development, and income redistribution. Poverty reduction efforts are also aimed at removing social and legal barriers to income growth among the poor.

WHAT ARE PEOPLE DOING TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY

Around the world, more people are mobilizing to fight poverty. For example, on October 17, 2007, World Poverty Day, more than 43.7 million people in 127

countries set a new record for the largest number of people to “Stand Up Against Poverty” in 24 hours.

The good news is that there are 135 million fewer people living in extreme poverty today than in 1999. By 2015, an additional 500 million people will have climbed out of extreme poverty.⁴ Several factors are credited for bettering the lives of millions:

Government Aid — In September 2000, the 189 countries of the United Nations unanimously agreed to cut world poverty in half by the year 2015. This agreement resulted in a commitment by 22 of the world's wealthiest countries to give 7 percent of their national income to the world's poorest countries. As of 2007, five countries have already met the goal to give 7 percent of their income in international aid, and others have set up a schedule to do so. Six countries have yet to set a schedule.

UN Millennium Development Goals — Development experts looked at different problems that make and keep people poor. They came up with eight targets that would help most people meet basic needs. These targets are today known as the Millennium Development Goals, and include: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality; reducing child mortality; and more. For a full list of the MDGs, visit www.un.org/millenniumgoals.

¹ United Nations, www.un.org

² CARE, www.care.org

³ CARE, www.care.org

⁴ United Nations, www.un.org



Microfinance Opportunities — Microfinance, the practice of providing financial services, such as microcredit, microsavings, or microinsurance to poor people, can be a powerful tool to fight poverty. In most developing countries, poor people are the majority of the population, yet they are the least likely to be served by banks. When the poor have access to financial services, they can earn more, build their assets, and cushion themselves against external shocks. By offering them small loans and financial services, the poor are able to acquire larger sums of money, which expands their choices and reduces the risks they face.

WHAT IS CAFAmerica DOING TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY?

Despite this progress, more action is needed. Here are some groups who are working with CAFAmerica to increase awareness and to end poverty.

BRAC, Bangladesh

BRAC, formerly known as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, was founded in 1972 by Mr. Fazle Hasan Abed to aid returning refugees from the war of independence in Pakistan. Over the years, BRAC has evolved into a large and multifaceted development organization that strives to bring about positive changes in the quality of life of the poor of Bangladesh. Their programs have benefited an estimated 100 million people in Bangladesh alone.

CAFAmerica grants, totalling over \$700,000, to BRAC funds were used to improve the quality of life for rural adolescent girls by creating Kendras — one-room houses where adolescent girls from marginalized societies can socialize safely while gaining useful skills. As a result, girls participating in Kendras are socially and financially empowered.

In 2005, CAFAmerica grants paid for rent, staff trainings, and orientation sessions for Kendra leaders, and tailoring trainings for 125 adolescent girls to generate income, salaries, and research. The following year, trainings in poultry, horticulture, and vegetable cultivation were added.

In 2006, an \$80,000 CAFAmerica grant was used to continue this project, making possible new activities to engage parents and communities and conduct refresher courses for over 500 Kendra leaders. The funds were also used to purchase 40,000 books and magazines to promote literacy for the girls in Kendras. As of April 30, 2006, 1,212 Kendras, with 30,440 girls, were in operation. For more information, visit www.brac.net.

ProDesarollo, Finanzas y Microempresas, A.C., Mexico

Established in 1997, ProDesarollo, Finanzas y Microempresas is a network of grassroots organizations who promote positive conditions for developing popular finance in Mexico, and increasing fair access to financial opportunities. Through seminars and trainings, such as “Presenting Microfinance for Mexican Leaders,” they strive to strengthen microfinance institutions in Mexico, promote products relevant to member institutions, and conduct studies to evaluate the impact of microfinance institutions. More than 30,000 people, mostly women, currently benefit from ProDesarollo’s network of finance organizations.

CAFAmerica has granted \$94,000 to fund ProDesarollo programs: the Third National Meeting of Microfinance (2004, 2005); the Latin American Program of Leadership in Microfinance (2004, 2005); and the Global Entrepreneurship Awards (2006).

A \$45,000 grant in 2006 helped Prodesarollo coordinate the awards ceremony of the Global Entrepreneurship Awards and deliver prizes, thus elevating the Entrepreneurship Awards’ reputation in Mexico. In a more global sense, the award ceremony enabled the organization to promote and recognize microfinance as a way to reduce poverty, and set positive examples for other micro entrepreneurs. For more information, visit www.prodesarollo.org.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Give Money.

Development aid and private charitable donations from wealthier countries are the main source of external financing for the world’s poorest countries. Official development assistance (ODA) reached \$103.9 billion in 2006, but much more is needed. CAFAmerica makes it easy for you to give to the charity of your choice, anywhere in the world, and make a real difference for people affected by poverty.

Beyond individual donations, CAFAmerica can also help you develop global grant making programs or strengthen existing ones to confront the issues of poverty head on. To find out more, visit www.cafamerica.org or email us at info@cafamerica.org.

Give Time.

Volunteering with an organization working to end poverty can be a way to make a direct, hands-on impact. Search through the websites www.volunteermatch.org, www.unv.org or www.idealists.org to find volunteer opportunities in your neighborhood and worldwide.

Give Charitable Gifts.

Making a gift to charity in someone else’s name is a way to honor someone you care about while donating dollars to do good. Many organizations provide donors the opportunity to give “alternative” gifts

to friends and family for the holidays, birthdays, weddings and more. Check out www.globalgiving.org, www.heiferinternational.org, www.altgifts.org and www.kiva.org.

Make Your Voice Heard.

Find out what your country is doing to make the Millennium Development Goals happen. Learn how much money your government gives through bilateral and multilateral assistance, and lobby to give more! To learn more ways to take action through lobbying, visit the One Campaign website at www.one.org.

