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The Millennium Development Goal to Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger: What progress to date?

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To mark the event we...

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Update

CAF America has no exposure to U.S. and international banks that are currently in difficulty or to the stock market. Donating to Donor Advised Funds, Matched Donor Advised Funds and 'Friends of' Charity Funds remains unaffected and CAF America is continuing its grant making as normal.

The giving season is almost upon us and, although the financial climate is uncertain, we urge you to make the most of your tax allowances and start planning your giving as soon as possible. Informed planning now will enable you to help those causes and organizations that matter to you most. To learn more about our giving solutions please click here. All donations received or post-marked on or before December 31, 2008 will be eligible for a 2008 tax

Recognizing that education is vital in combating poverty, Camfed International works to facilitate education for young girls and empower young women in some of the poorest rural areas of Africa. Since 1993, the organization has...

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provide, especially large scale infrastructure projects like water pipelines and power plants or grids. However, these types of project have failed in the past, especially in Africa where governments are often too poor, too disorganized or too corrupt to keep things going.

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receipt.

If you have a Donor Advised Fund please consider giving now; having prudently set aside funds you are in a strong position to help charities and nonprofits around the world at a time when others may be less able to give.

Please note that CAFAmerica will close at 5pm Wednesday, December 23, 2008 and re-open on Friday, January 2, 2009 so that our staff may spend the holidays with friends and family.

Introduction from Susan K.E. Saxon-Harrold



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to the October issue of *CAF America News*. October 17 is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. In recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the theme for this year's day is 'Human Rights and Dignity of People Living in Poverty'.

To mark the event we take a look at what progress has been made in implementing the UN's Millennium Development Goal to Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger by 2015. Although nearly 190 countries have signed up to the Goal since the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, progress has been depressingly slow. And this lack of progress recently prompted the UN Secretary-General and the President of the UN General Assembly to convene a high-level event in New York on September 25, 2008. The aims of the summit were to renew commitments to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and to set out an action plan for the future. To read more about this summit and its outcomes please click [here](#).

In this issue we also take a look at some of the organizations around the world working to combat the worst effects of poverty and hunger. If you're interested in learning more about the issues involved and how international nonprofit organizations are working to eradicate poverty our new Issue Brief – *Ending Poverty* – will be of immense interest. And if you would like to help in raising awareness, please [forward](#) this issue of *CAF America News* onto friends and colleagues that you think might be interested in learning more about eradicating poverty.

Despite turbulent financial times I am very proud to announce that CAF America and the CAF American Donor Fund had an extraordinarily successful year in 2007/08. Donations at CAF America and CADF for the year topped \$55 million, allowing us to make 1520 grants throughout the year to nonprofits and charities around the world. Recognizing that CAF America is now a significant grant-maker we have also seen a 26 percent increase in nonprofits applying for eligibility.

I extend my thanks to all of the generous donors who made this possible. I would also like to extend my thanks to the staff at CAF America and CADF, who have worked diligently

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to drive this success.

Best wishes,

SKE Saxon-Harold

Dr. Susan K.E. Saxon-Harold
Chief Executive Officer

The Millennium Development Goal to Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger: What progress to date?

The World Bank warned recently that the reach and depth of world poverty is much greater than previously thought. It estimated that 1.4 billion people live in extreme poverty.

The statement is shocking and may not have been well received by the United Nations (UN) which, in 2000, implemented a Millennium Development Goal (MDG) entitled the *Eradication of Extreme Poverty and Hunger*.

This far-reaching goal, one of eight designed to address various global deficiencies by 2015, would attempt to reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day; achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; and reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Other MDGs set in motion at the same time included initiatives to make significant impacts on gender inequality, child mortality, a lack of universal primary education, maternal health, HIV/AIDS and other diseases as well as environmental sustainability. For more information about these MDGs click [here](#).

The World Bank's grim warning is echoed by Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General who said recently, *"While there has been progress on several counts, delivery on commitments made by Member States has been deficient, and has fallen behind schedule. We are already in the second half of our contest against poverty. We are running out of time."*

In reality, overall poverty rates are falling.⁽¹⁾ In 1990, 1.8 billion people were living in extreme poverty. Moreover, in the period 1990 - 2005, the proportion of people living below the poverty line (estimated at \$1.25 per day in 2005 prices) fell from 41.7 percent to 25.7 percent. And if this pace were to continue it suggests that the target of halving extreme poverty worldwide by 2015 is achievable.

However, these broad statistics mask a wildly unequal picture. Eastern and SE Asia have experienced a sharp drop in levels of extreme poverty. The region saw its extreme poverty rate drop to less than a third of the 1990 level, thanks in large part to the rapid economic growth in China where a staggering 475 million people have been lifted out of poverty in the last 15 years. Elsewhere, progress has been patchy or non-existent with most developing nations experiencing an increase in the number of people living in extreme poverty. Sub-Saharan Africa, for example,

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experienced an increase of 100 million people over the same period and, according to the UN Development Programme, the "poor are simply getting poorer" in the region.

Acknowledging these worrying trends, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon urged for more action from world leaders at a high-level UN event in New York on September 25. He was rewarded with an estimated \$16 billion in new commitments from governments, foundations, businesses and civil society groups to meet the MDGs. This funding includes \$1.6 billion to improve food security, over \$4.5 billion for education and \$3 billion to fight malaria. To find out more about this event please click [here](#).

This is very encouraging and to ensure that momentum is not lost Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has called for another review meeting in 2010. Hopefully, this will animate international leaders, private business and the nonprofit sector to increase efforts during the remaining years before the MDG deadline.

Finally, there is a danger that those involved in finding and delivering solutions may focus too much on the deadline of the MDG rather than the target of halving the number of people affected. After all, does it really matter if it takes a few years longer to get there? And even once the target is met, the issue of extreme poverty will not have been solved; there will still be an estimated 700 million people living on less than \$1.25 a day. However, the MDG process would have served a hugely valuable purpose in focusing global attention on one of the most intractable issues of our time. By quantifying poverty, the MDG has ensured that the issue will remain on national and individual agendas for years to come. And that's as it should be.

¹www.endpoverty2015.org



Secretary-General Ban
Ki-moon

Can Technology Aid in the battle against poverty?

Is technology helping the fight against poverty? Or is it simply lining the pockets of rich nations at the expense of the poor? It's an argument that has been high on the agendas of development agencies in recent times and one that, all too often, gets bogged down by political dogma or simple disagreements about a particular type of technology.

There's no doubt that developing countries are clamoring for the technology that developed countries can provide, especially large scale infrastructure projects like water pipelines and power plants or grids. However, these types of project have failed in the past, especially in Africa where governments are often too poor, too disorganized or too corrupt to keep things going. Moreover, such projects also divert funds and resources away from local communities and economies where they are needed most. On the other hand small-scale, simple technologies like a hand-operated press for converting mud into bricks, have helped millions of poor people in developing countries by providing employment as well as affordable housing using local, sustainable materials.

So if some technology is good for the poor and some is bad, how do aid agencies and national governments around the world choose which technologies to adopt for their particular situation and which to discard?

The answers are not immediately obvious but some technologies imported into poor or developing countries, with good intentions and at considerable cost, are just plain bad for poor people. For example, chemical pesticides that depend on strict health and safety rules in their application are ineffective. The rules are almost certainly never followed with the unfortunate effect that local populations often become sick. Evidence suggests that many millions of people in developing countries are affected in this way each year.

Some technologies are simply too complicated. In Africa, western style flushed toilets have often been implemented into development projects. But poor villages often lack the capacity to dispose of the watery waste and, in some instances, lacked the water to provision the toilets in the first place. And some imported technologies, like the manufacturing techniques used by developed nations, have a negative economic effect by reducing or even eliminating the need for local labor and thus increasing unemployment rates.

The situation is complicated further by the fact that some technologies, which at first glance might seem inappropriate

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in a 'poor' setting, seem to be proliferating. This is particularly true of digital communications equipment. For example, there are currently over 3 billion cellphone subscriptions worldwide and areas showing the greatest growth in subscriber numbers include Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa where a mobile phone can cost as little as \$10. In the context of a family living on \$1.25 a day this is a hugely significant sum but a cellphone can bring significant economic and social benefits to a poor family. A mother with a sick baby can call a hospital several towns away to see if a doctor is available before making the long trek. Furthermore, that same doctor can send text message reminders to patients taking HIV/AIDS medications. In both instances time is saved; time that is better spent on tasks that provide food, shelter and income.

In a microcredit project endorsed by Grameen Bank, a group of 'phone ladies' in Bangladesh purchased cellphones through microcredit and established themselves as local phone operators, charging small commissions per call. The 'phone ladies' expanded and eventually became Grameen Phone Ltd, providing a livelihood for 250,000 women.

PCs might also appear to be inappropriate but anywhere that electricity reaches will almost certainly have them, even in the poorest regions. They may not be that numerous in schools but small, local and cheap internet cafes have sprung up anywhere that provides access to electricity, even in the poorest slums. These give local communities and their small enterprises access to new markets and information. They also provide access to education material that can give poor people the skills to work their way out of poverty.

Solar panels can now be seen on the roofs of mud huts in Kenya, slums in India and shanty dwellings in Latin America allowing some of the poorest people in the world to enjoy information and education programs from, for example, the Discovery Channel.

There is no doubt that these digital and other technologies have had an impact but look a little deeper and you begin to see that it is older and simpler technologies that appear to be having a more significant and lasting effect on poverty. Such 'barefoot' solutions, as they have become known, are gaining credibility. International aid and development agencies are increasingly endorsing these solutions as the best way to introduce new technologies to impoverished or developing regions.

For example, engineers and development professionals in developed countries are keen to tackle the issues of safe water and sanitation using western-style systems based on pipes and pumps. They believe that this, more than anything else, will enable the UN's Millennium Development Goal on poverty to be realized by 2015. However, it is estimated that, with a billion people not having access to safe drinking water and twice that number not having safe sanitation, the cost to implement this worldwide is almost a trillion dollars. Critics of this approach suggest that systems originally developed for 19th century cities in the West are simply unsuitable for poor areas in the developing world. They argue that funds would be better spent on simpler systems that could be put in place more speedily and more cheaply. The elephant pump used in some African villages is a good example of this. The



An elephant pump. Picture courtesy of PumpAid

device is an ancient Chinese pump powered by pedals (like a bicycle) and is a pipe through which a loop of rope is fed attached to which are plastic washers. It's estimated that this costs around a tenth of a conventional pump and will last 50 years. Additionally, all of the parts can typically be replaced locally.

Other barefoot solutions include turning weeds into biofuels; a machine for turning industrial waste into cheap roof tiles; and dual purpose systems to collect waste and reuse it as fertilizer. By using locally available resources and manpower, barefoot technologies provide jobs while introducing a quality of life easier to maintain and at a lower cost than that created by more advanced technologies.

Camfed International, United Kingdom: Enabling vital education for poor girls in rural Africa

Recognizing that education is vital in combating poverty, Camfed International works to facilitate education for young girls and empower young women in some of the poorest rural areas of Africa. Since 1993, the organization has been tackling chronic poverty with the view that short term strategies are ineffective.

It has, therefore, developed a comprehensive four-stage model of support, the aim of which is to provide long-term educational benefits for young girls in rural areas, supporting them through primary and secondary education with grant funding and educational materials. It also provides post-school training and microfinance support. This enables young women to become financially independent by developing small businesses or training for professional careers. The final stage of the program is CAMA, a peer network of young women made up in part of previous beneficiaries, who become powerful advocates for the program. In addition to providing vital role models for young girls, CAMA members also act as mentors and trainers for other girls in the program. Camfed's approach sets in motion what it describes as a virtuous cycle of change, giving girls in rural Africa an opportunity to work their way out of chronic poverty.

Camfed's first program was implemented in the small village of Mola, Zimbabwe in 1993. Since then programs have been put in place throughout Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ghana, and Tanzania. To date, over 400,000 children have benefited. In October 2007 the organization received a grant of \$130,620 from CAF America which, alongside matched funding from Merrill Lynch, enabled a further 600 vulnerable girls to complete high school. The funding also enabled 60 schools to benefit from much-needed resources, a further 600 women to be trained in business management and 400 young rural women to receive microfinance grants to start up their own business. For more information about Camfed's activities please click [here](#).

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Secondary school girls at a supported school in Zambia

The Iskcon Food Relief Foundation: Feeding undernourished school children in India

In India education is compulsory for children aged 6 to 14 years but poverty prevents many from getting the full value of their educational experience. According to UNICEF, 47% of young children in India are malnourished, and up to a third of the world's undernourished children are Indian. To combat this, the Iskcon Food Relief Foundation operates food relief programs throughout southern India for malnourished children. Through its Midday Meal daily food distribution program, Iskcon aims to give these children a better chance at an education, allowing them to eventually escape the cycle of poverty and hunger.



When Midday Meal was created in 2004, it reached approximately 900 students. Since then, and with the help of government subsidies, the program has grown significantly. Midday Meal now provides over 1 million meals per day to children in primary schools in Mumbai and surrounding cities. For many students, this free meal (a nutritious mix of rice and dal - a traditional Indian bean and vegetable dish) is the only complete meal they will eat each day.

Nutrition clearly affects children's ability to learn and the success of Midday Meal is reflected in increased school attendance as well as improved performance among children in participating schools. The Iskcon Foundation hopes to continue expansion and serve over 5 million children per day by 2009.

To learn more about the work of the Iskcon Food Relief Foundation, please click [here](#).

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Pictures courtesy of Iskcon Food Relief Foundation

iSisters: Mentoring women in need in Ottawa, Canada

iSisters is a Canadian charity that designs and delivers free technology mentoring and training programs for women in poverty in Ottawa who are unemployed, have limited education and depend on government services for basic needs.

It was set up in 2001 by a group of enthusiastic and like-minded teachers who wanted to give something back to their community. All of its programs are designed and delivered collaboratively through partnerships with local community organizations that typically work with specific groups of people in need. Programs are tailored for the needs of these different groups and, over the past five years, new projects have been started to assist pregnant teens, young mothers, Inuit women, immigrants, homeless women, and survivors of violence. Each new program is designed so that, after three years, the partner agency is capable of independently running the learning program. In this way, iSisters is able to begin a new project with a different community center each year.

Most participants have little or no experience of using technology but soon learn PC basics and are then able to explore employment possibilities, write resumes with Microsoft Word and safely judge online content. The programs aim to increase self-esteem, improve earning potential and provide greater economic independence for women in need. Many of the participants are single mothers, and are typically uncomfortable in a conventional academic setting. Despite this, iSisters and its partners have achieved a participation completion rate of over 95 percent. For more information about iSisters please click [here](#).

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iSisters' employment support program with Tungasuvvingat Inuit.