

State of the World's Children & Youth: An Overview



EDUCATION

- More than 100 million school-aged children around the world, 60 percent of them girls, never see the inside of a classroom. Another 100 million children will drop out before completing their education.
- One third of all children in the developing world must drop out of school by age 10 to help support their families.
- Only 55% of children in the developing world complete 4 years of primary education. Boys have twice as much chance of becoming literate as girls.

HEALTH

- Every day, 40,000 children under the age of 5 die in developing countries. (15 million deaths per year) The majority could be saved at very little cost. Two thirds of those deaths are caused by diarrhea, measles, tetanus, and respiratory infections – all curable conditions.
- Just 10 years ago, fewer than 20% of the developing world's children were immunized; by 1990 that figure had risen to close to 80% The total cost is approximately \$1 billion a year, but the investment soon pays for itself. Smallpox eradication, for example, is today saving the world \$1 billion a year in vaccine and surveillance costs - three times as much as the cost of eradicating the disease itself.
- More than one third of all families in the rural areas of the developing world do not have access to clean water and one half do not have safe sanitation.
- It is estimated that in the next decade, as many as 2.5 million African children may die of AIDS. An additional 3 million to 5 million children may be AIDS orphans – children whose parents have died of the disease.

POVERTY AND HUNGER

- Half the world's people, nearly two and a half billion, live in countries where the annual per capita income is \$400 or less. Every day, one out of every three children under 5 in developing countries goes to bed hungry. That is 150 million children, a sum six times greater than the entire population of Canada or twice the population of Mexico.
- One child in every three in the developing world is prevented from growing to his or her mental and physical potential by persistent malnutrition. Today's knowledge about birth spacing, breast-feeding, weaning, growth promotion, and the prevention and treatment of common illnesses, plus well-targeted food supplements, has shown that the problem of mass child malnutrition can be overcome at an average annual cost of \$10 per child.
- Almost 23 million children around the world are classified as severely malnourished. Although the majority will survive, many will suffer permanent damage to their health.
- The problem of absolute poverty in the world has its center of gravity in South Asia. Approximately 40% of all the young children who die in the world each year, 45% of the children who are malnourished, 35% of those who are not in school, and over 50% of those who live in absolute poverty, are to be found in just three countries - India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.
- The 1980's have been a "lost decade" for millions of children in some of the world's most affluent societies. Over the last 10 years the proportion of children living below their nations' official poverty lines has increased in most of the nations of the West - including Canada, Germany, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

ABUSE AND PROTECTION

- 100 million children live and work on the streets, 12 million in the Philippines. In Brazil, 7 million live and 17 million work on the streets.
- To reach the basic health, nutrition, education and water and sanitation goals will cost about \$20 billion a year for the next decade. To put this figure into perspective, it is one eighth of one percent of the world's annual income, or about as much as the world spends every 10 days on the military.
- 10 million of the world's refugees - almost 70% - are children. An estimated 7 million children, mostly in Africa, are growing up in refugee camps, often deprived of identity and nationality as well as adequate food, health care and education.

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and the most important of the commandments. But after this there is another one very similar to it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' The whole Law and the prophets are founded on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:36-40)

Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you shall make himself slave of all. For the Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve and to give his life to redeem many. (Mark 10:43-45)

Mary said, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit exults in God my savior! He has looked upon his servant in her lowliness and people forever will call me blessed. The Almighty One has done great things for me, Holy is his Name! From age to age his mercy extends to those who live in his presence. He has acted with power and done wonders, and scattered the proud with their plans. He has put down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up those who are downtrodden. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He held out his hand to Israel, his servant, for he remembered his mercy, even as he promised our fathers, Abraham and his descendants forever. (Luke 1:46-55)

When Jesus had finished washing their feet, he put on his garment again, went back to the table and said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and you are right for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also must wash one another's feet. I have just given you an example that as I have done, you also may do. Truly, I say to you, the servant is not greater than his master, nor is the messenger greater than he who sent him. Understand this, and blessed are you if you put it into practice. (John 13:12-20)

Now all the believers lived together and shared all their belongings. They would sell their property and all they had and distribute proceeds to others according to their need. (Acts 2:43-45)

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord. Do not neglect hospitality...Remember prisoners as if you were with them in chains, and the same for those who are suffering. (Hebrews 13:1-3)

The Lord shall reign forever; God has set up a judgment throne and rules the world with righteousness, judging the nations with justice. The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a place of safety in times of trouble. Those who cherish your name, O Lord, can rely on you, for you have never forsaken those who look to you. Sing praise to the Lord who rules in Zion! Tell every nation what God has done! God remembers those who suffer; God does not forget their cry, but punishes those who wrong them. (Psalm 9:8-12)

May our sons in their youth be like plants well-nurtured and full grown, and our daughters be like pillars that adorn the corners of the temple. (Psalm 144:12)

You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." But I tell you this: do not oppose evil with evil; if someone slaps you on your right cheek, turn and offer him the other. If someone sues you in court for your shirt, let him have your coat as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go two miles with him. Give when asked and do not turn your back on anyone who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become children of your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:38-45)

Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks will receive, and anyone who seeks will find, and the door will be opened to him who knocks. Would any of you who are parents give your child a stone when you are asked for bread? Or a snake when you are asked for a fish? As bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him. (Matthew 7:7-11)

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, asking, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?" So Jesus called a child, set him in front of the disciples and said, "I assure you that unless you change and become like children, you cannot enter the Kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven, and whoever receives such a child in my name receives me. If anyone should cause one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble and fall, it would be better for that person to be thrown into the depths of the sea with a great millstone around his neck. How terrible for the world that there are things that make people lose their faith! Such things will always happen -- but how terrible for the one who causes them!" (Matthew 18:1-7)

IN A TYPICAL DAY IN THE U.S.A.

- 135,000 children bring their guns to school
- 100,000 children remain homeless
- 49,322 children are in public juvenile-correctional facilities
- 3,288 children run away from home
- 2,989 children see their parents divorced
- 2,753 teenagers get pregnant
- 2,400 children are born into poverty
- 1,849 children are abused or neglected
- 1,629 children are placed in adult jails
- 1,287 teens give birth, 1,099 have abortions, 367 miscarry
- 988 children are abused
- 719 babies are born at very low birthweight
- 666 babies are born to women who have had inadequate prenatal care
- 600 teenagers get gonorrhea or syphilis
- 211 children are arrested for drug offenses
- 110 babies die before their first birthday
- 72 babies die before one month of life
- 9 children die from gunshot wounds
- 5 teenagers commit suicide.

- The United States lags far behind most industrial nations in preventing childhood disease and injury. A quarter of preschoolers and a third of poor children under 5 are not immunized.
- The infant mortality rate for 1988 was 10.0 death per 1,000; the black infant mortality rate was 17.6.
- A black child born in inner-city Boston has less chance of surviving the first year than a child born in Panama, North or South Korea, or Uruguay.
- An estimated 7.5 million to 9 million children and teens have emotional problems; 70% to 80% of them are not getting help.

POVERTY

- One out of five U.S. children lives in poverty; the U.S. childhood poverty rate is two to three times higher than that of most other First World countries.
- Nearly a quarter of all U.S. children under 6 live in households that are struggling below the official poverty line – \$12,675 a year for a family of four and \$9,890 for a family of three in 1989.
- In a study of eight industrialized nations (The United States, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, West Germany, Canada, England, and Australia), America had the highest child poverty rate. Children are the poorest Americans.
- In 1987 32.5 million people were poor in the U.S.; of that number 13 million were children under the age of 18 and 5 million were children under 6; another 2.7 million children under 6 live in "near-poor" families, with incomes between 100 and 150 percent of the poverty line.
- While the number of all children under 6 in the U.S. population remained relatively stable between 1968 and 1987, the number of poor children under six increased by 35 percent; Children under 6 are more likely to be poor than any other age group.
- Of the 5 million poor children under six, 42% are white, 32% black, 21% Hispanic and 5% other minorities; minority children under six are more likely to be poor than are white children, whether they live with one or two parents.
- In the United States, three fifths of the households that receive food stamps contain children. The average amount received, in constant dollars, has not changed since 1980.