Racing to Reach the Millennium Development Goals
Tracking Asia’s progress on the world’s poverty reduction targets
The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies’ Asia Pacific zone supports the humanitarian work of 37 Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, responding each year to more than forty per cent of the world’s natural disasters and public health emergencies. It provides financial and technical support for disaster operations and development programmes.

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28 A SURPRISE MDG SUCCESS STORY
More girls are in school in Bangladesh but challenges remain.
By Karen Emmons

30 AFGHANISTAN'S FORGOTTEN HEROIN ADDICTS
The illicit drug industry that is feeding the world’s addiction is taking a toll at home.
By Jerome Starkey

34 CORRUPTION CHALLENGES INFRASTRUCTURE GROWTH
Development organizations battle endemic bribe-paying in $3 trillion global construction industry.
By William Branigin

28 A SURPRISE MDG SUCCESS STORY
More girls are in school in Bangladesh but challenges remain.
By Karen Emmons

26 A SKEWED PICTURE
Do the MDGs present an accurate picture of progress?
By Bronwyn Curran
The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly was a major breakthrough in the fight against poverty. Not only did it draw out firm commitments from nations but it also promoted greater transparency and urgency by putting the spotlight on national and international efforts to improve the living conditions of the poorest by 2015.

With nearly two-thirds of deadline time elapsed, this edition of Development Asia takes a hard look at progress made toward the MDGs in Asia and the Pacific. Much success has been achieved in key areas, such as in lowering the child mortality rate and improving the quality of life of those on the fringes of society. Yet, despite the advances made, most of Asia and the developing world will fall short of the targets as they struggle to cope with the global economic crisis, rising food prices, and climate change.

In an exclusive interview with Development Asia, Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan of the World Health Organization stresses the importance of building on successes in achieving the goals and urges donor nations to continue aid programs.

These ambitious global goals have presented challenges to development professionals—and leaders—on how best to measure development progress. Critics tell Development Asia that MDG indicators tend to draw a skewed picture since these show progress at the national level that may be vastly different from conditions at the provincial level. Still, development workers agree that these indicators, though not perfect, provide the most comprehensive framework for reducing poverty worldwide.

In other stories, we tell the little known tale of Afghanistan’s heroin addicts. Much has been written about the country feeding the world’s addiction, but few have examined heroin’s painful toll on Afghanistan’s people.

This edition also looks at the problem of endemic corruption in infrastructure projects, while it weighs both the positive and negative effects of road building, one of the largest types of infrastructure projects, and most common. Patralekha Chatterjee argues that road projects need HIV/AIDS officers as much as they need engineers.

In our From the Field section, we talk to Tony Meloto, the energetic founder of the highly successful Philippine housing organization, Gawad Kalinga. The program is promoted as getting the wealthy and middle class into low-cost housing... as volunteers. A former marketing executive, Mr. Meloto is as comfortable in the slums as he is in the polo club.

We hope that this edition of Development Asia makes you think twice about your assumptions and beliefs about development issues, and makes you a more attuned consumer of development data.
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A

nent the cover story “A Long, Hard Journey Back to Job Growth in Asia” in August 2009, I found the article quite informative and timely, albeit it does tread the relatively well-trodden path of analysis that the major dilemma confronting the People’s Republic of China (PRC), as well as the rest of developing Asia, continues to be job creation and, in particular, the absorption of surplus labor from the agriculture sector. This remains a daunting problem by any means and becomes even more so when seen from the PRC leadership’s point of view. The view of ADB economists Hasan and Felipe, cited by the article, that the PRC’s success in terms of double-digit GDP growth and poverty reduction “does not seem to have led to more and better employment” may be a valid observation but, at the same time, appears to be indulging in a bit of nitpickiness on their part. When faced with 150 million surplus workers, plus a few million new entrants to the job market each year, and another 10 million laid-off workers, it would be extremely difficult to filter through what counts as “better employment.”

However, this is what the free marketplace of ideas is all about: readers are free to agree or disagree with the viewpoints depicted in the articles. I look forward to further thought-provoking articles from your magazine.

NOEL G. REYES
Research Director
Makati Business Club
Makati City, Philippines

I salute the Asian Development Bank for making the August issue of Development Asia a very timely Special Report on Labor and Employment. The relevant articles dedicated to the theme lend a holistic analysis of the challenges confronting the region and its individual economies on job creation and assurance of safety nets for the most vulnerable. Notable too is the effort to infuse strategic discussion about remittances and migrant employment as well as the gender and national security dimensions of the impact of the global crisis. It’s a jewel of a publication!

RICARDO R. CASCO
National Officer-Labour Migration Specialist
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Mission with Regional Functions, Manila
Makati City, Philippines

Thank you for the copy of Development Asia, which I found not only instructive but so close to home in terms of the labor department’s priorities—enhanced services for workers in the informal sector and an urgent look at ways to promote “jobsfit,” a policy term Labor Secretary Marianito Roque coined to address the issue of jobs and skills mismatch.

On behalf of Secretary Roque, I thank you for seriously illuminating the plight of women and young people in the context of work and the ongoing global economic crisis. The difficulty in looking for jobs across countries is profoundly dissected as well in a nationwide policy study and consultation which the department will complete this November, and what is apparent is the vulnerability of young people who are unskilled or low skilled. The link between poor skills and unemployment and joblessness also underscores the importance of appropriate education.

MA. JOJI ARAGON
Assistant Secretary for Labor Relations and Legislative Liaison, Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE)
Philippines

Comments are encouraged. Please write: editor@development.asia

CONTRIBUTORS

William Branigin served as Southeast Asia bureau chief of The Washington Post for 10 years, reporting from more than a dozen countries in the region. He was based in Bangkok from 1981 to 1986 and in Manila from 1990 to 1995.

Mark Blackwell has more than 20 years of experience in covering issues ranging from science and economics to politics and cross-border issues in Latin America for news organizations that include Hearst Corporation and Capital Cities/ABC. He specializes in information graphics.

Patralekha Chatterjee is a Delhi-based writer whose work has appeared in The Guardian, Chicago Tribune, The Christian Science Monitor, and The Economic Times of India.

Bronwyn Curran is an Islamabad-based journalist who formerly worked as a Pakistan and Afghanistan correspondent for the news agency Agence France Presse. She is also the author of Into the Mirror, a biography of Mukhtar Mai, a Pakistani woman who was allegedly gang-raped in 2002 and became an international symbol of female oppression.

Karen Emmons is a Bangkok-based journalist who has contributed to the International Herald Tribune and other publications.

Kevin Hamdorf is a Philippines-based photographer whose work has appeared in Reader’s Digest, The New York Times, Stars & Stripes and many other publications.

Bruce Heilbuth has worked as a journalist and foreign correspondent on four continents. For the best part of 10 years, he was editor-in-chief of Reader’s Digest magazine’s Australasian and Asian-English editions.

Jason P. Howe, who is based in Kabul for part of every year, has photographed conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Latin America, and other parts of the world for top publications, including TIME International, The Sunday Times, The International Herald Tribune, Financial Times, and many others.

James Hutchison has worked as a writer and photographer in Asia for more than 25 years. His work has appeared in more than 30 international publications.

Margo Pfeiff is a Canada-based journalist and photographer with 30 years of experience writing for the Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle and other publications. She is currently researching a book on the Arctic.


Floyd Whaley, senior editor of Development Asia, operates Asia Editorial Services. His work has appeared in USA Today, The Los Angeles Times, Discovery Channel Magazine, and many other media outlets. He is currently updating the Insight Guide to Southeast Asia.
Dams Threaten Mekong Livelihoods

For thousands of years, the Mekong River has nourished civilizations and housed one of the world’s most diverse populations of fish and plants.

Yet 17 dams recently built on the Mekong and its tributaries in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Thailand, and Viet Nam, as well as 11 more in the planning process, are threatening Mekong fisheries—and thereby the food security they have provided for millions, critics warn.

“People affected could number in the millions, due to the extensive changes expected to the river’s ecosystem downstream,” Aviva Imhof, campaigns director of International Rivers, an NGO based in California, told IRIN.

Most alarming, NGOs say, is a cascade of eight dams being built in the Upper Mekong in the PRC, the origin of Southeast Asia’s largest river, which could alter the ecosystem downstream for Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Thailand.

Of the eight dams in the PRC, four have been completed. NGOs claim they are already undermining fish populations and causing erosion in downstream Myanmar, northern Thailand and northern Lao PDR.

The dams are allegedly blocking Mekong fish from traveling upstream to spawn, threatening fisheries.—IRIN news service ☀

New Flood-Proof, Drought-Tolerant Rice

Researchers have achieved some success in developing rice varieties that can withstand extreme conditions.

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) reports that “scuba rice,” which can survive more than 2 weeks under water, is now being grown in flood-prone areas in India and Bangladesh.

In Japan, researchers led by Motoyuki Ashikari, a professor at the Bioscience and Biotechnology Center at Nagoya University, are hoping to develop rice varieties that can hold out under water even longer, says SciDev.Net, a nonprofit organization providing information on science and technology for the developing world. They discovered two “snorkel genes” in rice that enable the plant to elongate its stem and keep its leaves above water as the flood rises.

A drought-tolerant variety is also under development at IRRI. The institute is experimenting on high-yielding rice in drought-prone regions of Africa, India, and the Philippines, IRRI’s Rice Today reports. ☀

Reward Peaceful Afghan Provinces

Development aid should be targeted at stable provinces in central Afghanistan where projects can be more successful and effective than in conflict zones, says the United Nations.

“We focus too much on conflict provinces, and we spend enormous amounts of money there, and it does not have much impact because of the conflict,” said the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Kai Eide, during a visit to Bamyan Province in August.

“The balance [of aid spending by donors] is wrong,” he said, adding that development aid had little impact in the insecure provinces but significant effect in stable provinces like Bamyan.

“I am afraid that if we don’t spend more money in stable provinces we will also see instabilities here. It should be a warning signal to us all [and] teach us a lesson [to] direct money to the stable provinces,” Mr. Eide said.

More than 60 multilateral donors have spent about $36 billion on development, reconstruction, and humanitarian projects in Afghanistan since 2002, according to Afghanistan’s Ministry of Finance.—IRIN news service ☀

Security First Aid should target stable provinces, says United Nations representative to Afghanistan Kai Eide in Kabul.

Roundup

Twenty-eight dams have been, or are being, built on the Mekong River, despite protests that dams threaten fish populations by blocking off spawning grounds.
Bangkok Tops Carbon Dioxide List

Bangkok generates as much carbon dioxide (CO₂) as New York, and even more than London, according to a report.

The Bangkok Assessment Report on Climate Change 2009 shows that both Bangkok and New York emitted 7.1 tons per capita in 2007, compared with London's 5.9 tons.

The report was produced by the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority and the Bangkok-based Green Leaf Foundation with support from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Released in April, the Bangkok report is the first in the UNEP-supported series of climate change city reports.

The Bangkok report says transportation, electricity generation, and solid and waste water constitute 90% of emissions in the city. The rapid increase in the number of passenger vehicles has made the transport sector the largest contributor at almost 38% of CO₂ annually.

The report warned that warmer temperatures caused by increased greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), such as CO₂, may result in flooding and a rise in sea level, causing damage to infrastructure and affecting the water supply, public health, and food production.

“We hope that this report will raise awareness of the issues and stimulate actions that need to be taken by residents, and the private and public sectors to reduce those impacts, and for the city to adapt. This will help safeguard the city’s economy and its inhabitants to the extent possible,” said Park Young-Woo, regional director of the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

Disaster Looming

Floods, cyclones, and other low-intensity but recurring disasters are destroying livelihoods, houses, and infrastructure in developing countries, affecting the lives of millions of people. A United Nations (UN) report notes that damage to housing alone has quintupled since 1980. Frequent low-intensity events are a sign that a major disaster may be looming, the report says.

“Disaster risk is rising in an alarming way, threatening development gains, economic stability, and global security while creating disproportionate impact on developing countries, and poor rural and urban areas,” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

According to the UN’s Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction in May, global disaster risk in the case of floods increased by 13% (mortality) and 35% (economic loss) between 1990 and 2007. Three heavily populated countries—Bangladesh, People’s Republic of China, and India—account for 75% of the mortality risk from floods.

The report notes that a country’s economic and social development are factors that determine the impact of a disaster. Japan and the Philippines, for example, have roughly equivalent population exposure to tropical cyclones. Yet, 17 times more people are likely to die in the Philippines than in Japan.

Small and vulnerable economies have low resilience to disaster. The report says Vanuatu has the greatest projected number of annual fatalities to tropical cyclones per million inhabitants in the world.

The UN report also points out that lack of urban planning has made cities unsafe and has increased the risk of disasters. Other risk factors are the destruction of the environment and global warming.

“While we cannot prevent natural phenomena such as earthquakes and cyclones, we can limit their consequences. Pre-emptive risk reduction is the key. Sound response mechanisms after the event, however effective, are never enough,” said the UN Secretary-General.

Casual Fridays Everyday

Government employees in Bangladesh, including top executives, are dressing down—no suits and ties—to cut down on air-conditioning use even in the summer.

An AFP report said the idea came from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina herself.

Bangladesh suffers from chronic power outages, which have constrained economic growth and affected progress toward achieving a key Millennium Development Goal: halving poverty by 2015. The shortage becomes more severe in the summer—from April to October.

The government has revised the 1982 official dress code for civil servants to allow them to wear short-sleeved shirts, the report said. Other energy measures include adopting daylight saving time.
Asian nations struggle to measure up to the world’s most ambitious development goals

By Bruce Heilbuth

In the teeming slum of Comilla, Bangladesh, 17-year-old Shamima Shetu goes door-to-door armed with a painting: one side shows the world where water is dirty and sanitation practices poor; the other, where water is clean and community sanitation good.

She is a “hygiene monitor” who checks whether her neighbors are drinking safe water, using clean toilets, washing their hands before eating, and disposing of rubbish properly.

An estimated 2,500 people live in atrocious conditions in this 1-square-kilometer community outside Dhaka, the capital, yet Shamima’s work has made a difference. By reinforcing simple behaviors, she is making the neighborhood cleaner and residents healthier. “Before this program I saw many unhygienic latrines,” she says. “Now [people are] much more hygienic.”

This is one of hundreds of simple stories of progress in Asia that can be directly linked to government and United Nations (UN)-sponsored programs that sprang from a seminal decision taken by 189 countries in 2000. At the Millennium Summit, the UN General Assembly formally chartered eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to tackle disadvantage and disease in the developing world. Heads of state agreed to reach the goals by 2015. The MDGs have been widely trumpeted as the most ambitious developmental undertaking ever embraced by the international community—and the subject of much debate and controversy.

More than halfway to the 2015 deadline, have they been successful? In parts of Asia, yes. For example, in eastern, southeastern, and western Asia, the target to cut the under-5 mortality rate by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015 will likely be met, according to Millennium Development Goals Report 2009, the UN’s annual update.

Not surprisingly, much progress has been made by the booming People’s Republic of China (PRC), which has reduced the number of people living in “absolute poverty”
Since the inception of overseas development assistance nearly 50 years ago, donor countries have given a total of about $2 trillion in aid, says Salil Shetty, director of the UN Millennium Campaign. Yet over the past year, $18 trillion has been found globally to bail out financial institutions.

from 250 million to 15 million since 1978, according to a report of the PRC government in July 2009. “We believe China will achieve the Millennium Development Goals fully and on schedule,” it says.

Winning the War Against Disease

The battle against disease, the sixth goal, has been especially encouraging. The 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic by UNAIDS notes that the global percentage of people living with HIV has stabilized since 2000, though the report cautions that the overall number of people living with HIV has increased.

Significantly, the quality of life for people with HIV is improving in Asian nations. Rajendra Shirke is a recent graduate of a leadership and managerial proficiency course at the Xavier Institute of Management in Orissa in eastern India. He is one of 93 people living with HIV who graduated from the course run by the UN Development Programme, which helps monitor the goals.

“The course helped me to learn how to manage work and life better,” says Mr. Shirke, who is now studying for a master’s degree in social work. “I know I’m capable of achieving more if I just try.”

For others, quality of life means simply being able to maintain dignified employment. Another Bangladeshi, Shamima Begum, is one of more than 24,000 who have benefited from a UN and government social safety net project providing employment for destitute or socially marginalized rural women.

Ms. Begum’s life has improved markedly. She has had primary health and hygiene training and was able to buy a cow with money earned working as “crew” on project sites. She recently opened a small grocery shop, which she runs from the front of her house. Her son helps out after school.

A Better Life for Minorities

The MDGs have also been credited with bringing newfound confidence to people in disadvantaged or disempowered groups. When countries signed onto the MDGs, they agreed to work to lift the living standards of all their people, particularly the least advantaged. Minority groups have used this commitment by their governments to fight for their rights, experts note.

One such community is the lower-caste Dalit, who number some 300 million throughout southern Asia. A recent meeting in New Delhi by the National Conference of Dalit Organisations, for example, agreed that progress toward the goals can offer them a better life.

The summit heard grim stories of oppression against the Dalit. In a recent case in Bihar state, an upper-caste landowner chopped off all five fingers of a 10-year-old Dalit girl’s hand with a sickle for stealing spinach leaves from his property.

The recent struggle of a handful of Dalit women for land rights in a small hamlet in Andhra Pradesh shows there is hope. When upper-caste landowners claimed that waste grazing land belonged to them, the women filed a right-to-information claim with local authorities. With the help of the media, they won the right to work on the land.

Mixed Results for Asia

Yet despite the best of intentions and advances made, the picture remains disappointing in many places. Recent studies by a partnership of the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations Development Program and ESCAP, as well as those by World Bank and IMF, indicate that most Asian nations, along with most developing countries, will not meet all the targets.

Moreover, advances in the fight against poverty and hunger have begun to slow as a result of the global economic and food crises. The UN acknowledges that progress against extreme poverty in South Asia is in danger of disappearing because of the global economic contraction and job loss.

In reducing the maternal mortality rate, India is faring particularly badly: of the 536,000 women worldwide who die during pregnancy or childbirth, 117,000 are Indian, according to the 2009 MDG report released in July. This incidence is “a human rights catastrophe,” says Paul Hunt, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health.

Meanwhile, poverty in West Asia has been increasing steadily with the absolute number...
We Need Global Goals

Censure may be warranted, but even if most Asian nations fall short of targets, most sensible people will agree that some progress is better than none.

An expert subscribing to this view is John Ruxin, assistant clinical professor of public health at New York’s Columbia University, who has spent years as an aid worker in developing countries.

Looking at the MDGs as a failure is to fail to see what they intend to do, according to Mr. Ruxin. “Don’t we need global goals?” he asks. “What’s the alternative? It might not be a blueprint for action, but it’s a tool that helps ensure these issues stay on governments’ radar when they might not otherwise have done so. How are we doing? How can we do better?”

Besides, many initiatives in Asia are of the grassroots variety: they encourage people’s aspirations, set an example, and may lead to the formation of small business enterprises.

We Need Global Goals

None of this may surprise critics of the MDGs, who observe the initiatives should, or would, have been set in motion anyway and that the excessive focus on aid could deter sound domestic policy.

One of the most trenchant critics is Samir Amin, an economist and authority on the developing world. He says that while commendable, the goals are vague, “ideological cover” for Western neoliberals, and redolent of “pious hope.”

Mr. Amin attacks, in particular, the way the goals are monitored. Equality is measured by access to education and empowerment by the proportion of wage-earning women, he observes in an online critique. Many cultures ignore the rights of women and the family, he says. “Without discussion, declarations on this question are only empty talk.”

Millennium Development Goals

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV-AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

Yuán Power: The People’s Republic of China (PRC) has reduced the number of people living in “absolute poverty” from 250 million to 15 million since 1978, according to a report of the PRC government in July 2009.
Women Light the Night

Consider the “barefoot solar engineers” in the Barmer district of India. Night has fallen on the edge of Rajasthan, where shifting dunes mark the border with Pakistan. In four adjacent villages in the Barmer district, naked bulbs in the courtyards of houses act as tiny beacons in the desert.

These communities, scattered across an undulating landscape, have had their nights lit by incandescent bulbs for the first time ever, thanks to the work of four young women colloquially known as “barefoot engineers.”

The women—one from each village—assembled the lights and are paid to maintain and repair them as part of a renewable energy project for rural livelihoods by the Government of India and the UN. They spent 2 months training and now undertake regular checks, respond to complaints, repair faulty lights, and maintain batteries that power these.

Each family with a light contributes to a fund from which their “barefoot engineer” is paid a monthly salary ranging from the equivalent of about $20 to $25. Little girls now trail their local expert and watch in awe as she fiddles with wires and fuses, hoping they will be engineers some day.

Worrying Signs

Are more advances likely? The 2009 MDG report flags major developments causing concern. Funding gaps are evident for programs needed to improve maternal health, the goal toward which least progress has been made. And developing countries have had a major reduction in donor funding for family planning since the mid-1990s on a per-woman basis, despite the big contribution such programs can make toward improving maternal and child health.

The ability of most Asian countries to finance development programs adequately may be in jeopardy. Industrialized countries made a commitment to raise their aid contributions to 0.7% of national income by 2015, yet the figure in 2007 was only 0.28%—termed a “shameful failure” by the UN.

Meanwhile, export revenues have fallen in the past year as the financial meltdown in high-income economies has trickled down, and the debt service-to-export ratio is likely to deteriorate further. “The world is confronted with a global economic crisis whose full repercussions have yet to be felt,” asserts Francesca Perucci, chief of the Statistical Planning and Development Section of the UN Statistics Division.

Most Group of Eight nations have committed publicly to increasing aid. But as the global economy contracts, these commitments have dropped because most are expressed as a percentage of national income. For many developing nations, this could reverse gains made, says the 2009 MDG report.

Other experts note that aid is not the main route to achieving the goals. A bigger problem, for example in India, which is a large country with adequate domestic resources, is the prioritization of funds toward meeting the goals. This includes better use of existing public resources and harnessing private, NGO, and community efforts.

Revitalizing Efforts

The MDG report calls on governments and agencies involved to revitalize their efforts. Among areas critically in need of attention, (Continued on page 14)
## Rating Asia’s Progress

Conditions improve across Asia, but too slowly to meet most goals

### Goal 1: Poverty, Hunger

**Hunger decline slows**

Spike in consumers’ food costs halts a steady drop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2007</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Asia</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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**Percentage of population that is undernourished**

### Goal 2: Education

**Progress is slow**

Universal primary education is unlikely by 2015.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2007</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Asia</td>
<td>85%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
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<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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### Goal 3: Gender Equality

**Political power**

Women hold a larger share of legislative positions.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
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<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<td>9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>20%</td>
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### Goal 4: Child Mortality

**Measles vaccines**

Inexpensive measles vaccines are highly effective.

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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2000</th>
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<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Asia</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>62%</td>
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### Goal 5: Maternal Health

**Maternal death rates improving**

One-third of the deaths worldwide are in South Asia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1990-92</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>West Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
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<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Maternal deaths per 100,000 births**

### Goal 6: Disease

**TB rate plummets**

Tuberculosis is far less common across Asia, but goals might not be met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2007</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>459</td>
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<td>1990</td>
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<td>93</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
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<td>51</td>
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**Tuberculosis cases per 100,000 population**

### Goal 7: Environment

**Slums less common**

Urban poor are less likely to live in slums in most regions.

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<th>Region</th>
<th>1990</th>
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**Percentage of urban population with shelter deprivations**

### Goal 8: Development

**Online access rising**

The rate of internet use more than doubled in all regions.

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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1990</th>
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**Internet users per 100 population**

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On Track or Falling Behind?

Many of Asia’s nations are expected to meet most MDG targets by 2015 or have already, according to a trend analysis in a 2007 report. However, about a third of measurable trends show slow or no progress, and the global economic crisis could stall or reverse trends toward financially sensitive targets.

### Key
- **Early achiever**
- **On track**
- **Slow**
- **No progress/regressing**

Not rated: Items with insufficient or noncomparable data, including all of goals 5 and 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL 1: Poverty, Hunger</th>
<th>GOAL 2: Education</th>
<th>GOAL 3: Gender Equality</th>
<th>GOAL 4: Child Mortality</th>
<th>GOAL 6: Disease</th>
<th>GOAL 7: Environment Sustainability</th>
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### Source

* In 2000 dollars
Crisis-Driven MDG Challenges

- **Progress on extreme poverty slowing.** The global economic crisis coupled with high food prices has derailed progress made on eradicating poverty and will keep between 60 million and 100 million people in poverty who would have otherwise been lifted out if not for the downturn, according to research by the Asian Development Bank.

- **More hunger.** The prevalence of hunger in developing regions is on the rise, from 16% in 2006 to 17% in 2008, according to the 2009 MDG report. That is another 10 million people. One in four newborns in South Asia weighs less than 2,500 grams.

- **Low birth weight.** Of the estimated 19 million infants in the developing world with low birth weight (less than 2,500 grams), 8.3 million or 43% are born in India, according to The State of the World’s Children 2008 report by the United Nation’s Children’s Fund (UNICEF). The report goes on to note that even that figure may be low, as 6 out of 10 infants in the developing world are not even weighed.

- **More unemployment.** The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates global unemployment in 2009 could reach 7% for men and 7.4% for women, many of whom remain trapped in insecure, sometimes unpaid, jobs.

- **Less funding likely for family planning.** Fallout from the financial crisis may result in less funding for programs such as those for improving maternal health. Most developing countries have experienced a major reduction in donor funding for family planning on a per woman basis. In India, it has declined by about 50%, says Ms. Ghosh.

- **Jobs are threatened.** Contractions in economic growth in many Asian nations outside of the People's Republic of China and India are expected to slash jobs and incomes. The percentage of productively engaged people classified as being employed in “vulnerable sectors” may be as high as 84% for women and 74% for men, according to ILO.

(Continued from page 11)

...it says, are the provision of productive and decent employment for all, including women and young people.

The report urges governments to intensify efforts to get all children into school and eliminate inequalities in education based on gender and ethnicity. Prospects are hopeful on this front. ADB research notes that the majority of countries in the region will reach gender parity in primary and secondary education, though not in tertiary.

“Greater political will” must be mustered to reduce maternal mortality, especially in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, it adds. Rapid acceleration of progress is needed to bring improved sanitation—toilets or latrines—to the 1.4 billion people still lacking, or the 2015 sanitation target will also be missed.

Specifically, the Millennium Campaign calls on donor countries to urgently agree to a timetable to accelerate delivery of aid commitments, make “rapid progress” toward simplifying and streamlining aid, reduce or eliminate agricultural subsidies, and ensure poor countries are fully represented in decision-making bodies and in restructuring the global financial infrastructure.

STRUGGLING FOR EQUALITY Burqa-clad women walk on the outskirts of Kabul. Though the country has made progress in the area of girl’s education, Afghanistan’s women are among the worst-off in the world as measured by life expectancy, maternal mortality, and malnutrition.

**Trumping Domestic Violence**

In Pakistan, where 185 women were killed in domestic violence last year according to the country’s Human Rights’ Commission, 24-year-old Jamila Bibil was regularly beaten by her husband, a cobbler in the town of Chakwal. A month after the birth of her second daughter, Asma, he threw her out of the house without her baby. When family pressure forced her back, he promised in writing never to abuse her again and to give her maintenance money.

However, the beatings got worse. Eventually Ms. Bibil tried to self-immolate with petrol, but a neighbor saved her in time. ‘I wish I’d died that day because I was so fed up with my life, but I had to live because of my daughters,’ she says.

Then Ms. Bibil heard about the Bedari Crisis Intervention Centre, part of a UN Millennium Campaign gender support program. A counselor there listened to her story and referred her to a pro-bono lawyer. She filed a case for her daughters’ custody, which was resolved in her favor within a day. She now plans to file a case for spousal maintenance with Bedari’s help. “I had lost hope,” she says, “but I’m happy to get my daughter back.”
The campaign calls on developing countries to ensure their national development policies and plans are pro-poor and focused on women and excluded groups, prioritize expenditures on the MDGs, ensure accountability and transparency in managing public money, and prioritize “domestic resource mobilization.”

In some cases, a nation’s ability to meet these goals may depend largely on forces beyond its control. Take Nepal. Its government has identified a need for public investment of $12.6 billion over the next decade to reach its MDG commitment. To do so, donors must double their funding for development in the country over the next 10 years. That seems unlikely, even though Nepal, like Sri Lanka, has made great progress on health-related and other goals.

An Exercise in Futility?

Attempts to motivate governments to do more with sweeping calls for “more action” at a time when they cannot afford it may seem like an exercise in futility. “It’s a hell of a question with no easy answer,” concedes Mr. Ruxin. “The international community can’t use carrots and sticks successfully, or you wouldn’t have the Zimbabweans of the world.”

Yet Mr. Ruxin takes a philosophical view, confessing that he never had the greatest expectations for the goals. At the same time, countries that have made good progress almost always have shown leadership and have competent, transparent governments. Encouraging such transparency is one of the best ways forward, Mr. Ruxin suggests.

As testimony, he points to Rwanda, which has improved conditions for its people, particularly around children’s health, since its genocidal civil war in the 1990s. Now it is on the road to meet and exceed many of the MDGs by 2015. Child mortality between 2005 and 2007 declined between 20% and 30%. Over 60,000 people are receiving retroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS, one of the best figures in sub-Saharan Africa. “If Rwanda can do it, why can’t others that are far richer?” questions Mr. Ruxin.

The African nation’s success, he believes, stems from a government which, while autocratic, is relatively transparent, uncorrupt, and committed, and has strong institutions. That combination has helped the public health sector build good programs with international support.

“I believe there are steps the international community can take through having more democratic elections and good institutions,” he says. “When you start to do this, progress is made. It happened in Uganda.”

“Matter of Political Will”

Salil Shetty, director of the UN Millennium Campaign, believes it is a straightforward question of political will. Rich country governments that have made pledges but not delivered to those who need it most should simply get on and do so.

Since the inception of overseas development assistance nearly 50 years ago, donor countries have given a total of about $2 trillion in aid. Mr. Shetty says. Yet over the past year, $18 trillion has been found globally to bail out financial institutions.
**MARKET DAY** Buyers pick vegetables in a market in Kolkata, India. The global economic crisis, coupled with high food prices, has derailed progress made on eradicating poverty and has pushed between 55 million and 90 million more into extreme poverty, according to the United Nations.

“The stark contrast between the money dispersed to the world’s desperately poor after 49 years of painstaking summits and negotiations, and the staggering sums found virtually overnight to bail out the creators of the global economic crisis makes [sic] it impossible for governments to claim any longer that the world can’t find the money to help the 50,000 people who are dying of extreme poverty every day,” says Mr. Shetty.

There seems to be no easy solution to this conundrum. Nevertheless, as the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Dr. Margaret Chan, has told Development Asia, the very fact that the goals’ reporting process is so visible helps focus attention and can stimulate political will. Plus, the strong emphasis on monitoring progress is a major incentive for governments and development agencies to deliver on their promises, she says.

Ultimately the best hope may lie in the efforts of the people, agencies, and governments that work hard to make a difference and to meet their MDG commitments wherever and whenever they can with all the resources they can muster.

**Back to School, Aged 75**

The classroom at the Manohar Basti Samudayik Learning Center in Nepal is lively with the chatter of over 50 housewives who have come to school after taking care of daily chores. Giggleing and whispering, Man Kumari Subedi is exchanging notes with 45-year-old Kamala Shrestha as they discuss their schoolwork. At age 75, Ms. Subedi is attending school for the first time in her life.

“This is the best part of my day,” says Ms. Subedi, who like other illiterate women in her neighborhood, has enrolled in this “housewives’ program.” It’s part of a government scheme backed by the Millennium Campaign involving 85,000 volunteers to enable everyone to read and write by 2010.

For these women and thousands like them, cynicism about the MDGs is irrelevant. “I read the newspaper now and discuss the news with my husband,” says Krishna Karki, a 30-year-old school goer with two kids. Like more and more of her classmates, she no longer feels left behind.

**Encouraging Safer Births**

In a remote village of the Jumla district in Nepal, lack of awareness and a shortage of medical care resulted in an above-average number of rural women dying in childbirth. While expecting her second child, 20-year-old Jarsikala Kami was encouraged by a village development committee volunteer to visit a local birthing center.

“We took Jarsikala there on a homemade stretcher,” says her mother-in-law. “My granddaughter was born the next day with the help of a skilled birth attendant.”

When she was discharged, Ms. Kami was given the equivalent of about $30 to buy food—part of the Government of Nepal’s policy to encourage women to deliver babies at hospitals and health centers. It is working. The latest available data show 281 cases of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births annually, compared with 539 deaths in 1995.
a CLIMATE-SMART world is within reach

World Development Report 2010: Development and Climate Change

Countries need to act **NOW**.
Today’s decisions determine both the climate of tomorrow and the choices that shape our future.

Countries need to act **TOGETHER**.
Global cooperation is needed to improve energy efficiency and develop new technologies.

Countries need to act **DIFFERENTLY**.
We cannot plan for the future based on the climate of the past.

WHO Head Dr. Margaret Chan: “Asia is Critical to Global Success of the MDGs”

World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Born in Hong Kong, China, in 1947, she initially studied to be a teacher but then enrolled for a medical degree at the University of Western Ontario alongside her husband, David Chan.

Since graduating, Dr. Chan has had an illustrious history of service in public health. In June 1994 she became the first female in Hong Kong, China, to head the Department of Health, where she gained public attention with her effective management of outbreaks of avian influenza in 1997 and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003. In 1997, she ordered the slaughter of 1.5 million chickens after a strain of avian flu killed six people. This decisive response is widely credited with preventing the spread of a potentially fatal virus.

Dr. Chan was recruited by the 193-member-state WHO in 2003. When she was appointed Director-General in 2006, she became the first person from the People’s Republic of China to head a United Nations agency. Her areas of special focus include improvements in the health of women and “people in greatest need.”

Peers report that she has an inclusive management style and is engaging and easy-going. She once reportedly sang a song from Rodgers and Hammerstein’s musical The King and I in front of civil servants from the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development.

In an interview with Development Asia’s Bruce Heilbuth, Dr. Chan discusses the progress of MDGs in Asia, achievements, and what disappoints her most.

Development Asia: What is your reaction to the recent report on the MDGs and the progress made toward reaching the health-related goals in Asia?

Margaret Chan: The continuing high levels of maternal mortality in many
country in Asia is a huge disappointment. Asia, and HIV has declined in many Asian countries. However, these declines have been offset by increases in parts of central Asia, so it’s something of a mixed picture.

It’s encouraging that governments are prioritizing health. Per capita government expenditure on health increased in Asia between 2000 and 2006. In the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the figure doubled from $42 in 2000 to $88 in 2006. For the WHO South-East Asia Region as a whole, the figure increased from $16 per capita to $29.

But this has to be compared with a per capita government expenditure globally of $455. When governments are spending so little, the shortfall has to be made up by individuals and families, often incurring catastrophic expenses that push the whole family into poverty. Again a mixed picture.

Development Asia: What disappoints you most?
Margaret Chan: Maternal mortality. It’s a result of many factors including poor access to care, failure to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and women’s low status in many societies.

We’ve known for over 20 years that most maternal deaths and the deaths of infants they’re carrying can be prevented if women receive good care during pregnancy and childbirth. Yet in southern Asia, more than half of births take place without skilled care. Only one pregnant woman in every three receives the WHO-recommended minimum of four antenatal care visits.

These figures reflect the weak state of health systems in many countries. In the WHO South-East Asia Region, there are only 5 doctors per 10,000 population compared with a global average of 13 per 10,000. The availability of essential medicines is also poor.

Development Asia: What are the biggest remaining challenges in Asia?
Margaret Chan: To maintain progress in national averages for the health-related indicators while doing a better job of addressing in-country disparities.

There are stark differences in health status according to socioeconomic conditions such as household wealth, education, and place of residence. In Viet Nam, for example, despite relatively low levels of child mortality, children living in rural areas are twice as likely to die before they’re 5 than those in urban areas.

Development Asia: In 2007, you were quoted as saying that “health has never before received such attention or enjoyed such wealth.” Has that changed, or do you see it changing?
Margaret Chan: Spending on health by governments and their development partners has increased significantly over the last decade. Official development assistance for health
Donor nations need to “stick to their commitments regarding public health programs. It would be a terrible mistake to cut aid at the time it’s most urgently needed.”

—Dr. Margaret Chan
Director-General, World Health Organisation

Development Asia: The MDGs aren’t without their critics. One dismisses them as “ideological cover” for Western neoliberals. What’s your response?
Margaret Chan: The goals have been a powerful tool for keeping the world’s attention on development issues through a time of competing priorities. Measuring quantifiable targets provides a powerful reminder of where progress toward the goals has been made, and where it’s still lacking.

In part, the power of the goals derives from their specificity—identifying clear and common priorities, all of which contribute to reducing poverty. They’ve helped focus development around core themes and given an accountability framework for countries and their development partners. And they’ve drawn attention to the importance of better coordination among stakeholders and highlighted the critical need for functioning health systems.

The reporting process has spotlighted the weakness of countries’ statistical and information systems needed for accurate and timely monitoring of progress.

But the MDGs tend to focus on national results, which we know can mask inequities in countries and regions, as well as gender inequities.

One issue WHO continues to stress is the broader context of health beyond the MDGs. We know that by 2030, 8 of the 10 leading causes of death will be linked to noncommunicable diseases and conditions like mental disorders, injuries, and violence.

These aren’t problems confined to the developed world. They’re of growing importance in many Asian countries. Addressing risk factors—such as tobacco use, unhealthy diets, being physically inactive, and the harmful use of alcohol—and the consequent socioeconomic impact of cancer, cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes depend not just on health care services but also on action in a variety of policy domains.

Many health outcomes depend on policies beyond the health sector, whether it’s import duties on essential drugs and technologies, employment and housing policy affecting early childhood development, laws that discriminate against people with AIDS, or restrictions on movements of people or livestock to prevent the spread of epidemics.

IN CONFIDENCE World Health Organisation Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan and United Nations Secretary General Ban K-moon hold a news conference in Geneva in May 2009. Dr. Chan has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Millennium Development Goals.

Development Asia: Much of the MDGs’ progress in health obviously depends on political will, a nebulous driver even in certain times. What can be done to ensure that Asian governments and their agencies do what they’ve said they’re going to do?
Margaret Chan: The high visibility of the reporting process helps maintain attention and stimulates political will. We know government ministers pay attention to their country MDG reports and that civil society and the media have become vocal contributors to the debate on how to accelerate progress.

Building political will is one thing, maintaining it is another. It’s important that momentum be sustained over the time it’ll take to achieve the MDGs and other health-related goals.

We’re at the stage where international and national political leaders are paying attention to them. But we must make sure [countries] can access the financial, technical, and human resources commensurate with the nature and size of the challenges they face.
Decent Work is more than just a job. Decent Work is the individual’s opportunity to contribute to the future of one’s self, one’s community and one’s nation.

Decent Work for men and women is the opportunity for productive work in which rights are protected, adequate income is generated, and social protection is provided. Decent Work represents the integration of social and economic goals. It is at the heart of global, regional, national and local strategies for sustainable economic and social progress. By working in partnership with principal actors of the multi-lateral system and the global economy, the ILO seeks to promote four Decent Work objectives: opportunity, rights, security, and dialogue.

Since 1999, interaction between ADB and the ILO has intensified in four main areas: strategic consultations in preparing ADB’s Social Protection Strategy; regional technical assistance to improve the role of labour standards in selected developing member countries; social safety nets; and dialogue with trade unions in project technical assistance and lending activities.

The ADB and the ILO formalized their cooperation in 2002 through an MOU to maximize their development impact, including through research on linkages between economic growth and labour market dynamics and trends, labour migration and climate change as well as collaboration through technical assistance on labour law reform, social security, skills and training, and employment-based infrastructure development.

If work is decent, the individual has dignity.

When the individual has dignity, the community is stronger.

When the community is stronger, a nation becomes transformed.

Core Labor Standards Handbook
Information on core labor standards (CLS), illustrative examples and CLS application in ADB operations

Labor Markets in Asia: Issues and Perspectives
In-depth discussions of labor markets, links between globalization, technical change, and competition, and policy action frameworks

Interacting with Workers’ Organizations: A Primer for ADB Staff
Practical guide on incorporating stakeholder consultation into the ADB program and project cycle
What exactly is poverty, and how can it be measured? Since the early 1970s, Indian economists have used minimum nutritional standards to define those in poverty. In 1979, the Indian Planning Commission officially described it in calorific terms: those with a per capita daily energy intake of fewer than 2,400 kilocalories in rural areas and 2,100 kilocalories in urban areas—estimates of the basic nutritional requirement to stay alive—were considered living below the poverty line. This nutrition-based approach formed the basis for defining several national poverty lines throughout the 1970s and '80s.

In 1990, the World Bank converted national poverty lines expressed in local currencies to develop an international benchmark of $1 a day (in purchasing power parity terms). This became the new poverty yardstick. In 2008, that figure was revised to $1.25; and today, many economists argue that $2 a day is a more realistic and humane standard.

Whatever the global figure, economists have long debated the question: if your income is above the poverty line but you have limited access to clean water, basic health care, and education, are you still poor? No single factor is the cause of poverty, which is a condition far more diverse and complex than simply measuring income, spending power, or caloric intake, they noted.

Gradually, poverty became radically redefined as a state of “capability deprivations,” a broad range of limitations and barriers that prevent individuals from rising out of a destitute existence. These include social, political, environmental, and economic factors running the gamut from living in fear of your life, or with discrimination, to gender inequality and being denied a say in government. A person might be poor, but if she is able to educate her children she has hope for the future.

Ethical Dimension

The ability to look after your family’s basic health needs, earning an appropriate wage for work, and living a normal life span in an unpolluted environment are just as important as how much money is earned. In effect, if an environment is created for people to live a decent life and they can be free to make their own decisions, they will be able to lift themselves out of poverty. This view turned traditional views of poverty on their head by arguing that to achieve economic growth, social reforms must take place before economic reforms.

Sen was a groundbreaking figure in this holistic new avenue of thought among economists accustomed to measuring development simply in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) growth and poverty only in terms of income earned. For his controversial views, Mr. Sen won the 1998 Nobel Prize for Economics and was praised by the Nobel Committee for bringing an “ethical dimension” to a field dominated by technical specialists.

The list of capability deprivations went on to inspire the creation of the United Nation’s Human Development Index (HDI). In 1990, the first annual Human Development Report, which introduced the HDI, was published. It broadened the measurement of a country’s developmental progress beyond simply using GDP by also including life expectancy, literacy, and educational attainment. The HDI is now a common measurement of the well-being of a country, classifying nations as developed, developing, or underdeveloped.

With 80% of the world’s population living in developing countries, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), organizations worldwide worked simultaneously throughout the early 1990s toward addressing the need to cooperate with one another to face the emerging challenges of poverty in the 21st century. They also struggled to set up methods of measuring progress in battling poverty.

Economists have long debated the question: if your income is above the poverty line but you have limited access to clean water, basic health care, and education, are you still poor?

A series of United Nations conferences addressed key aspects of development, including education, the environment, human rights, population, and women’s issues. The World Health Organization (WHO) led a major international campaign to improve infant and child mortality rates. Developmental cooperation expanded access to family planning and improved drinking water.

**Global Blueprint for Action**

In March 1995, world leaders convened for the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development. For the first time, at such a high level, the international community committed to addressing poverty by putting people and their quality of life at the center of development efforts. There was neither a global monitoring system nor a timetable for this international commitment, but each of the 117 nations was to prepare its own national, time-bound strategy. During the summit, 2,400 international nongovernment organizations (NGOs)—from small, local activist organizations to large, well-funded foundations and “think-tanks”—participated in an unprecedented forum, bringing together widely divergent notions about poverty alleviation. What emerged was a rough global blueprint for action, a list of targets with which to tackle the daunting but doable task of eliminating poverty in our lifetime.

Although progress had been made throughout the 1990s in tackling poverty in Asia, there was now a sense of urgency for governments to push forward their obligations in the region. In November 1997, Asia and the Pacific ministers agreed to accelerate their efforts by focusing on the single goal of freeing the region of poverty through economic growth, human development, sound environmental management, and improving the status of women.

From the Marshall Plan to the 1990s, aid was contributed mostly by donor governments for individual programs on a project-by-project basis, an often inefficient method. By the mid-1990s, private funds vastly outweighed government aid, and the hallmark had become cooperation among networks and partnerships of private donors, NGOs, and local and foreign governments. Rather than the traditional focus on a project’s cost, “development effectiveness” and results were put to the forefront.
“People were no longer talking about how much money was being spent on building a new road or how many kilometers were completed,” says Shiladitya Chatterjee, an advisor in the Asian Development Bank’s Strategy and Policy Department. Instead, what was being asked was whether that road helped reduce poverty in the region. Did it help raise people’s income and lead to better access to education and medical help? Were women benefiting from this road and had the environment improved? Says Mr. Chatterjee: “We started talking about multidimensional outcomes rather than outputs and inputs.”

Adds Mr. Chatterjee: “The MDGs represent a time-bound monitorable and global program of action focusing on a set of clear universally accepted development priorities.”

In September 2000, the landmark UN Millennium Summit, the largest-ever gathering of heads of state and government, was held in New York City. Actions and targets that had been refined and debated throughout the 1990s to reduce world poverty were included in the Millennium Declaration, which was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and government. Eight specific goals that break down into 21 quantifiable targets and are measured by 60 indicators were drawn from the Millennium Declarations to become the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of core human development indicators that includes everything from increasing primary school attendance worldwide and the number of women in parliament to beating malaria and HIV/AIDS.

It takes time to make the changes needed to reduce by half the number of people living on less than $1.25 a day and to cut the mortality rate among children under 5 by two-thirds, so a 25-year window was designated with 1990 as the starting point of the MDGs. The target year is 2015.

“The MDGs are a work in progress,” says Mr. Chatterjee. “There are ongoing discussions…with the result being that we now have a better sense of what poverty is, what the outcomes of development are, and a better sense of how we should support development.”

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**MDG Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>The Indian Planning Commission establishes the Indian poverty line.</td>
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<td>1979</td>
<td>Start of the discussion on “capability deprivation”</td>
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<td>1980s</td>
<td>The World Bank, in its World Development Report, establishes the $1/day definition of poverty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>First <em>Human Development Report</em> is published, presenting the Human Development Index, which broadens the concept of the overall development of a country from merely measuring GDP to including education and life expectancy as well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>The World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen establishes a common set of targets for poverty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee endorses seven of these targets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>The Manila Declaration on Accelerated Implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP region of 1997 establishes a set of targets for Asia and the Pacific.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>The biggest-ever gathering of world leaders meets in New York City for the Millennium Summit to commit to reducing poverty by adopting the specific targets and milestones of the UN Millennium Declaration—the Millennium Development Goals—a document signed by 147 heads of state and government.</td>
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Some solutions for climate change are blowing in the wind

Climate change makes us all vulnerable. But one sure way to fight it is to harness renewable energy. ADB provides funding and assistance for wind energy facilities across Asia. These facilities turn wind into electricity. Provide power for tens of thousands of poor households. And switch Asia on to a low carbon growth path.

ADB. Investing in climate change solutions for Asia.
A Skewed Picture

Are the Millennium Development Goals presenting an accurate picture of progress?

By Bronwyn Curran

Nepal’s progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of reducing mortality rates in children under 5 looks pretty impressive. The country reduced its rate by half between 1990 and 2005 to 74 per 1,000 live births. But that is little comfort if you live in the country’s midwestern region, where the under-5 mortality rate is dramatically higher than the national average—122 per 1,000 live births.

With an impressive national average in this indicator but lagging numbers in one region, should Nepal still be considered on track to achieve this goal?

Two-thirds of the way to the global MDG deadline of 2015, that is the question many government officials and experts around the world are asking about their countries. The national indicators of MDG progress provide a snapshot of the situation in a country. They do not reveal vast disparities within countries, particularly in Asia and the Pacific, home to three out of four of the world’s most populous countries.

Too Aggregative?

Critics specializing in monitoring and evaluation argue that the MDG progress indicators inherently present a skewed picture. They are aggregate indicators, portraying progress at the national and international levels. But in countries the size of India or the People’s Republic of China, wide variations may exist between provinces and subnational groups. Critics say this puts into question claims by governments of progress in certain areas, and indicates the need for MDG progress to be assessed at the regional or provincial level.

When asked if the MDG indicators are too aggregative, South Asia Regional Policy Adviser of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Gabriele Koehler, responds: “Absolutely…They give a false impression that countries are on track when for some groups or geographical areas they are not, so the picture can be very misleading. They need to present a subnational picture along ethnic, linguistic, geographic, and religious lines, and those groups that tend to be excluded.

“For example, India is on track for the education MDGs, but when you disaggregate the indicators by ethnicity or religion or parts of India, there are many segments of the population where they are not on track at all,” Ms. Koehler explains.

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Kiyo Akasaka acknowledges that aggregates can “mask differences which may exist within a group,” citing an example in Brazil, where the 2006 national average for access to improved drinking water was 91%, while the average in rural areas is 58%.

“Some countries show more than 30 percentage points difference between rural and urban populations” in relation to the MDG indicator on access to improved drinking water, Mr. Akasaka says. But it works both ways, he points out. “Groups or populations faring well may also have too little weight on the national average. Looking again at the MDG indicator on access to improved drinking water, in Niger, for example, the 2006 national value is about 40%, but in urban areas it is more than 90%.”

To counter the potential distortion arising from aggregated data, UNICEF has created “Devinfo” maps that illustrate the disparities within countries in their MDG progress.

“Through our Devinfo maps we can see, for example in India or Nepal, how MDGs are doing in different parts of those countries,” he says.

UNICEF’s education section has also developed a parity index that shows differences by gender for education, and rural–urban differences.
The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) monitors MDG progress in Asia and the Pacific, in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). UNESCAP’s Regional Adviser on Statistics Jan Smit rejects suggestions that the MDG indicators distort the real picture.

“National-level MDG indicators measure what they intend to measure: a country’s overall progress towards specific MDG goals and targets. In that sense, they do not present a skewed picture,” Mr. Smit says in an interview. “They do, however, mask within-country disparities and do not present a skewed picture,” Mr. Smit reckons.

Says in an interview. “They do, however, mask within-country disparities and do not present a skewed picture,” Mr. Smit reckons. In that sense, they do not present a skewed picture,” Mr. Smit says in an interview.

However, a country’s ability to disaggregate indicators may be limited by technical factors. “For example, it might not be possible to estimate under-5 mortality at an acceptable level of statistical precision in provinces with small populations,” Mr. Smit reckons.

The ESCAP–ADB–UNDP Asia-Pacific MDG partnership regularly addresses intra-country disparities in its regional progress tracking reports. The Millennium Development Goals: Progress in Asia and the Pacific 2007 devoted its second half to subgroup disparities. It gave as an example the strong international performance in the goal of reducing under-5 mortality by two-thirds.

The 2007 report found that under-5 mortality rates are at least 50% higher in rural than in urban areas in Asia and the Pacific. While the Philippines is on track to meet the goal of reducing child mortality, the rural–urban divide is widening: in 2003 in the largely urban National Capital Region, the under-5 mortality rate was 31 per 1,000 live births, while in one largely rural region in the center of the country, the rate was 68.

Within urban areas the difference is stark between rich and poor households in the Philippines. Under-5 mortality rates are 52 per 1,000 in the poorest urban households, compared to 18 per 1,000 in the richest urban households.

Subnational Monitoring

Mr. Akasaka says the UN’s Statistics Division and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators (IAEG), responsible for preparing data and analysis on MDG progress, have encouraged data disaggregation wherever relevant.

“The MDG framework indicates that ‘all indicators should be disaggregated by sex and urban–rural as far as possible,’” the Under-Secretary-General says.

Faiza Effendi, who heads the poverty reduction and gender unit at the UNDP in Pakistan, says the country does not adhere to MDG reporting guidelines because they encourage the provision of disaggregated data by region and gender.

“The issue is that many developing countries do not have data broken down by region. Even in Pakistan, it is only in the last 3 years that the government has offered some district-level information, but then it is only in a handful of sectors, and that information is not broken down by gender,” Ms. Effendi says.

“It’s important to bear in mind that despite reporting through aggregate data, the MDG indicators manage to highlight the development trends or results in a country, be it on female primary school enrollment, female mortality, or child mortality, etc.”

The official UN website for the Subnational Monitoring

In countries the size of India or the People’s Republic of China, wide variations in socioeconomic indicators may exist between provinces and subnational groups

MDG indicators (http://mdgs.un.org) presents some indicators for urban and rural populations, others by sex, to show subnational disparities.

The UN’s Handbook on MDG Indicators is currently being updated by the IAEG and will include guidelines on relevant disaggregations for each indicator,” Mr. Akasaka says.

In addition, the UN’s Statistics Division has held two workshops in Asia and Africa on MDG monitoring. Representatives of national statistical offices were trained in the production of data for MDG subnational monitoring.

Ms. Effendi says UNDP is supporting the Government of Pakistan in undertaking poverty head-count calculations by province, in developing a poverty social impact analysis—which shows development results and gaps—and in supporting poverty monitoring at national and subnational levels.

Oxfam, one of the major NGOs working on poverty eradication and gender equity, believes MDG indicators provide important barometers.

“They are the most comprehensive global framework we have to tackle extreme poverty, and as such they are an important first step towards eradicating such poverty,” says Oxfam Australia policy director James Ensor.

“The question shouldn’t be about whether MDG indicators are perfect, but whether the world is prepared to put in the political will needed to achieve the goals.”

SEE-SAW STATISTICS Nepal has reduced the under-5 mortality rate by half to 74 per 1,000 live births over a period of 15 years. In the country’s Midwestern region, however, the rate is much higher than the national average at 122 per 1,000 live births.
STRUGGLING TO IMPROVE A study by the Campaign for Popular Education in Bangladesh shows girls are performing 11% worse than boys. Poor girls cannot afford private tutoring, which is usually necessary to score well on exams.
A Surprise MDG Success Story

More girls are in school in Bangladesh but challenges remain

By Karen Emmons

When the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were formulated nearly a decade ago, Bangladesh had few advantages in the struggle to reach the targets that would lift its people out of poverty. In the area of secondary education, to the surprise of many, the country exceeded expectations.

Bangladesh has been described as in the “vanguard” globally in how it has achieved a tremendous jump in girls’ presence in the classroom. The number of girls being educated has nearly quadrupled, from 1.1 million in 1991 to more than 4 million in 2008.

The achievement included a threefold increase in secondary enrollments and a sevenfold increase in female enrollments since 1980. This was attributed in part to awareness campaigns of nongovernment organizations (NGOs), conducted with women’s groups during weekly village meetings, which were designed to change parents’ attitudes. Also credited is private-sector assistance for salaries, training, and incentives, such as a female-targeted stipend program launched in the early 1990s.

“Bangladesh has made impressive achievements in girls’ education and is now making good progress in recruiting 60% female teachers in government primary schools, notes Brajesh Panth, Principal Social Sector Specialist with the Asian Development Bank’s South Asia Department.

Although there are regional variations, much of the overall gain has enabled Bangladesh to achieve one of its MDGs ahead of time—that of gender parity in education.

Breaking Down Barriers

The share of females in total enrollment is now close to 55%, compared with less than 40% in the early 1990s. According to World Bank reports, the female secondary school assistance stipend program is “ground-breaking” and is globally recognized as “pioneering” for how it has broken down a huge barrier to girls’ access to education and kept many more in school until graduation.

Receiving the stipend was dependent on each girl attaining a 45% pass mark, keeping an attendance rate of 75% and staying unmarried until she graduated. To ensure that only eligible girls received the stipend, three additional criteria were added in 2003: new entry to the program was limited to students in grades 6 to 9, girls studying in grade 10 (previous program members) had to be registered with the government, and the 45% pass mark applied to half-term exams also.

High Dropout Rate

While recognizing the “significant impact” of the stipend program, Enamul Hoque, a research manager with the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), a coalition of 1,000 NGOs working in literacy and education, also says girls are still dropping out at a high rate and are still behind boys in terms of graduating from secondary school. On the secondary school exams, according to a study by CAMPE’s Education Watch, which produces an annual report on education-related issues in Bangladesh, girls are performing some 11% behind the boys. Poor girls cannot afford the private tutoring that is generally needed to do well on exams because “the quality of education is not up to the mark,” explains Mr. Hoque. Thus they don’t score well.

Mr. Hoque says 50% of girls are dropping out before the grade 10 final exam primarily because of their performance, though to a lesser degree parents’ concerns for their daughter’s security is a factor.

Mr. Hoque believes the successful stipend program should remain untied to academic performance for the longer-term impact. “If we can retain a girl in school through the second level, definitely her children will go to school” and, he adds, she will be able to give them the tutoring help they will need, at least in the primary years.

Because the demand for education is greater than the space, schools in Bangladesh largely operate in two shifts, allowing each primary-aged child only up to 3 hours in a classroom.

The female secondary school assistance stipend program in Bangladesh is “ground-breaking.”

—World Bank
Afghanistan’s Forgotten Heroin Addicts

The illicit drug industry that is feeding the world’s addiction is taking a toll at home

Text by Jerome Starkey
Photos by Jason P. Howe

Bismillah is one of the lucky ones. Forced to flee his home because of fighting, his family abandoned him, and three of his four children died in infancy. But in a half-built concrete warehouse on the outskirts of Kabul, the 10-year heroin addict is finally getting help.

“I started smoking marijuana, then opium,” he says softly, gazing listlessly out of the window of the converted warehouse that serves as a drug treatment center.

“Under the Taliban there were heroin factories in my hometown, and we were turning opium into powdered heroin. We had no idea it was so dangerous.”

The 28-year-old refugee used to live in Helmand, a Taliban heartland in the war-ravaged south, where he split his time between running a small shop and tending his private opium crop.

“Our land was only very small, so unless we grew opium poppies we couldn’t eat,” he says. “I was growing opium and taking it to the factories, where we turned it into heroin.”

Today, his wife and their one surviving daughter live in a tented refugee camp on the northern edge of Kabul, where winter temperatures plunge well below minus 20 degrees Celsius.

Bismillah is one of more than 2 million Afghan drug addicts, fed by cheap heroin in a country that produces more than 90% of the world’s supply. While billions of dollars have been spent trying to curb Afghanistan’s narcotics trade, far less has been provided to help the people inside the country whose lives it ruins.

There are only 50 beds at the Wadan Drug Rehabilitation Centre where Bismillah is being treated. In Kabul alone, drug-treatment advisors estimate that there are between 60,000 and 80,000 addicts and fewer than 300
beds at a handful of nongovernment clinics, which struggle to get funding.

Saeed Agul Stanikzai, the Wadan Centre’s director, says they are about to run out of money. “We got $100,000 for our first 4 months, but that’s about to run out. No one has agreed to pay more,” he says.

Meanwhile, the conditions that create addicts show no signs of letting up. Since 2001, Bismillah’s homeland has become one of the most bitterly contested battlefields in Afghanistan. A small foreign military force that was sent to his hometown of Musa Qala in 2006 was forced to retreat under a controversial ceasefire that eventually ceded control to the Taliban.

Foreign troops retook the town in late 2007, but the farmland outside is still well beyond government control. Opium is the crop of choice.

In the chaos of counterinsurgency, heroin production has exploded across Afghanistan, and while a few new provinces are declared poppy-free each year, production in the Taliban strongholds has been largely undented. The Taliban taxes farmers 10% of the farm-gate prices and provide protection to the opium convoys.

Whole Families Hooked on Opium

Increasingly, Afghanistan’s opium is manufactured into heroin inside the
country before it is smuggled to Europe. Farm laborers, who harvest opium by scoring the poppy bulbs and scraping up the sap, often get addicted by licking their work knives. In rural parts of the country, opium is routinely used as a painkiller. In Badakhshan, in the northeast, some mothers feed babies opium to sedate them. Entire families are addicted.

But many addicts injecting heroin learned their habits abroad. “A lot of the addicts are Afghan refugees who have returned from Iran and Pakistan,” says Mr. Stanikzai. “But nearly all of them are young people. They are the future of Afghanistan, and we have to help them. When we treat an addict, we’re not just helping one person; we’re helping a whole family, sometimes a whole community.”

Mohammed Akbar, 36, was deported from Iran 3 years ago after living there for more than 20 years as a refugee. He was already addicted when he came back to a country he barely remembered, to a city he hardly knew.

“I had no family here; I had no friends,” he said. “I couldn’t find any work.” Eventually, he found his way to the bombed-out shell of the old Russian Cultural Centre, a favorite haunt for Kabul’s addicts.

Once a showpiece of Soviet occupation, the building was destroyed and abandoned in the bloody civil war that laid to waste more than 30% of the city.

Amid the squalor of the ruins lived 450 addicts in permanent gloom, surrounded by squalid trappings of addiction—needles, foil, and human filth—until they were evicted in a citywide cleanup.

Most of them moved to the ground floor of the Wadan Centre, where they are waiting for space in the rehabilitation program. Many of them have been waiting for months.

“I used to sell boiling water on the street,” Mr. Akbar says. “Whatever I earned I’d spend on heroin.”

The street price of heroin in Afghanistan is the lowest in the world, according to estimates. Addicts in Afghanistan pay less than $4 a gram, at least 25 times less than the equivalent price in Europe or the United States, by which stage the drug is cut and diluted an untold number of times.

Reintegration A Challenge

At the Wadan Centre, addicts awaiting treatment are free to come and go, but they are frisked by police each time they return. Heroin is banned on site.

Just a few hundred meters away, under a bridge on the Kabul river, lone men shuffle along the muddy, rubbish-strewn banks, looking for a private place for their next deadly fix.

Despite the drug’s abundance, many addicts are still forced to steal. “Even my own family didn’t trust me,” Bismillah admits. “I was so addicted that I was taking things from my own home.”

And even when they complete the rehabilitation course, reintegration into society is a massive challenge. “Drug addiction in Afghanistan is very shameful for an addict’s family,” Mr. Stanikzai says.

At the Wadan Centre, the recovering addicts enjoy a range of treatments, including medication, basic literacy classes, and vocational training in drawing and painting. But even after completing the course, many cannot find work.

Naeem Mohammed Aleem, 23, has been clean for 5 months, but he’s still living on a mattress underneath the rehab center, with about 40 addicts for company.

“The real problem here is that everyone is unemployed,” he says. “Even once they get treated they can’t find work and so they get addicted all over again. I was treated 5 months ago, but I’m still sleeping here because I can’t find a job.”

Kabul has grown from a few hundred thousand people to more than 3 million since 2001, but opportunities for returnees are limited.

Many refugees in Iran and Pakistan are economic migrants, who flee Afghanistan not because of fighting but in search of work. For those who get sent back, it seems their last opportunity is gone—unless they find redemption at a treatment center.

“If you are a drug addict, people assume you are a thief,” said Khalid, a father of four recently deported from Iran. “I lost everything—money, respect, friends—and I made the decision to give up. I decided to get proper help. It’s my only chance of a better future.”
Corruption Challenges
Infrastructure Growth

Development organizations battle endemic bribe-paying in $3 trillion global construction industry

By William Branigin

In the People’s Republic of China (PRC), a court upholds a former Beijing vice mayor’s suspended death sentence for corruption in connection with construction projects for the 2008 Olympic Games.

In Japan, three executives are convicted and their consulting company fined after they admit bribing a senior Vietnamese official to secure contracts for road construction contracts funded by Japanese aid money.

In the Philippines, the World Bank debars eight firms and one individual after a lengthy investigation finds they colluded with each other and government officials to rig bids for major bank-financed road projects.

Across Asia, governments, multilateral institutions, private companies, and advocacy groups have been grappling with corruption, an age-old problem that has taken on epidemic proportions in recent years amid the region’s world-beating economic growth and rapid development.

All told, the World Bank Institute reports, more than $1 trillion is paid in bribes each year—equivalent to about 5% of global gross domestic product (GDP)—with the burden falling most heavily on people living in extreme poverty.

The problem is especially acute in the construction sector, a $3 trillion industry worldwide that, because of the size and complexity of projects, extensive approval processes, and multiple layers of contractors, affords the greatest opportunities for corruption. The London-based Construction Sector Transparency Initiative estimates that direct and indirect losses from corruption in the industry amount to 15%–30% per year.

Transparency International (TI), a nongovernment anticorruption organization based in Berlin, also ranks public works/construction as the
most corrupt sector internationally, saying its projects are the most likely to involve the bribing of public officials or political contributions aimed at influencing policies, laws, and regulations.

“For corrupt politicians and officials, construction projects are the perfect vehicle to dispense patronage and amass illegal private wealth,” says Chandrashekhar Krishnan, executive director of TI’s national chapter in the United Kingdom.

“The costs are not only financial,” he adds. “Lives are lost when corruptly constructed houses and schools collapse in earthquakes; unnecessary infrastructure projects are built, diverting scarce resources from other pressing needs such as health, water, and education; and shoddy infrastructure is produced and the environment is destroyed because regulations and standards are circumvented.”

Bribe Payers Index

In TI’s latest edition of the Bribe Payers Index, a rating of the tendency of firms from 22 international and regional exporting countries to pay bribes to win contracts abroad, Belgian and Canadian firms were judged the least likely to make illegal payoffs. Ranked as most likely to pay bribes were firms from Russia, the PRC, Mexico, and India, in that order.

But while graft remains rampant, threatening to undermine civil society in some countries, anticorruption activists see signs of hope. They point to increased public awareness and resentment of corruption, crackdowns by governments and international organizations, recognition by the private sector of its damaging effects, and a growing array of tools and methods designed to detect and prevent it.

In combating corruption, the risk of public exposure—as in the aforementioned cases in the PRC, Japan, and the Philippines—offers a potentially strong deterrent, especially when accompanied by sanctions.

For multilateral institutions, the most powerful weapon is often “debarment,” or blacklisting, of a company found to be involved in corruption. In January, the World Bank made public the names of four PRC companies, three Philippine firms, and the Filipino owner of one of the firms after investigators found evidence of bid-rigging. Joining a firm from the Republic of Korea that was blacklisted earlier, they received debarments of varying terms, two of them permanent, and the bank announced that it had stopped about $33 million from being awarded.

A month later, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) confirmed that it had blacklisted 41 companies and 38 individuals in 2008 for corruption, bringing to 552 the total number of banned firms and individuals since 1998. The offenses ranged from fairly minor fraud to bidding collusion on a $10 million road project. Although ADB does not publicly release names in such cases, it said it shares the information with suppliers, joint venture partners, or agents, and can take many forms, including bribery, extortion, fraud, collusion, embezzlement, influence peddling, and money laundering. It is usually concealed, with those aware of the corruption either complicit in it or reluctant to report it.

Bribes can be paid directly to win a contract, for example, but the more common method is to use an intermediary such as an agent, TI says in a report on preventing corruption in construction projects. The contractor hires an agent with high-level contacts and pays a fee or a percentage of the contract price, a large chunk of which the agent then passes on to the representative of the project owner or government official responsible for awarding the contract. The bribes—often deposited in offshore bank accounts—may be hidden in formal agreements that exaggerate the scope of the agent’s work.

Because agents are so commonly used—and often do legitimate work—the arrangement can be difficult to detect.

Joint-venture partners, subsidiaries, and subcontractors also offer vehicles for bribes, especially when they are based in countries with weak investigative or regulatory capabilities. In such cases, the agency agreement can be executed in, and the bribe paid from, the country least likely to discover it.
However, the misuse of the agency agreement “is not an insurmountable problem,” says TI’s Mr. Krishnan. “It can be addressed. And it is entirely possible to work through honest agents.”

Construction Integrity Pacts

In promoting “clean construction” practices, “there are a number of tools available to people in the industry,” Mr. Krishnan says. Among them are “construction integrity pacts,” which he says “can reduce corruption risks and therefore save public resources.”

Developed by TI in the 1990s, the pacts have been used in various forms in at least 14 countries. Three model pacts tailored for construction projects, both public and private, include an agreement among companies in the same sector to refrain from bribery and other corrupt practices when they compete against each other for contracts anywhere in the world; an accord between the project owner, designer, and all bidders to act with integrity in the pre-qualification and tendering process; and a pact in which the owner, certifier, and selected contractor pledge to resist corruption in the execution of a specific project.

In addition to the pledges, the pacts include measures “to ensure that the agreements are policed and enforced,” TI says.

According to Mr. Krishnan, the pacts work because contractors, project owners, and funding entities all have an interest in preventing bribery.

“Many companies are beginning to see that there’s a strong business case against corruption,” he says. “I think companies are seeing now that you can really suffer a lot if you get caught out in a major corruption scandal.”

PricewaterhouseCoopers, one of the world’s largest professional services firms, agrees that companies need “an anticorruption strategy that goes beyond avoiding potential enforcement penalties,” not least because it is “part of good governance and adds to the value of the corporate brand.”

PricewaterhouseCoopers reported last year that 63% of senior executives in a global online survey said they had experienced some sort of actual or attempted corruption, and 42% said their competitors pay bribes. Nearly 45% said corruption had dissuaded them from entering a certain market or pursuing an opportunity and 39% said their company had lost a bid because of corrupt officials.

However, while nearly 80% of the executives said their company had a program to detect and prevent corruption, only 22% were confident of its effectiveness, the survey showed.

Nikola Sandoval, TI’s senior program coordinator for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, sees similar mixed results for anticorruption efforts in Asia. “In some areas there’s quite a lot of progress that’s being made,” she says. “But there’s still a long way to go.”

She cites Pakistan and Indonesia as countries where integrity pacts have been “quite successful.”

In Indonesia, “it’s been written into legislation that on any contract above a certain threshold, an integrity pact needs to be implemented as part of the process,” she says. “This helps to get some monitoring. It gets a commitment from everyone in the contracting process that they will not engage in any corrupt activities, and it sets out what the sanctions would be.”

The pacts have “worked very well” since they were adopted in Indonesia about five years ago, Ms. Sandoval says, with one notable shortcoming: a lack of civil society monitoring.

Anticorruption Toolkits

A more recent addition to the anticorruption toolkit is the Project Anti-Corruption System (PACS), which TI issued in 2007 to fight bribery and fraud in the construction sector. It sets out anticorruption standards and templates on independent monitoring, due diligence, contractual commitments, procurement requirements, government obligations, corporate programs, and rules for individuals, training, transparency, reporting, and enforcement. The system is now being developed and promoted by the Global Infrastructure Anti-Corruption Center in alliance with TI, Mr. Krishnan says.

Among other things, PACS standards call for an independent assessor to monitor the project for corruption; public disclosure of project information; tender-stage exchanges of details among the project owner and each bidder on shareholders, agents, joint venture partners and other “corruption risks”; financial audits; and civil and criminal enforcement mechanisms.

PACS measures can be required for projects by government regulatory authorities, public or private owners, or project funding parties, the system’s promoters say. Funding organizations, for example, can make the measures a condition for providing financing.

Multilateral institutions and private companies have “reacted positively” to PACS, Mr. Krishnan says, but adoption of the system is still in its early stages.

Also in the works is a pilot program conducted by the Construction Sector Transparency Initiative (CoST) in seven countries, including the Philippines and Viet Nam. The program is intended to promote accountability in publicly financed construction projects, and the Philippines has appointed a full-time “multistakeholder group coordinator” for the pilot.

But a recent progress report cited a number of obstacles. Key projects to be monitored “are put on hold or canceled late in the pilot phase,” volunteers hesitate to confirm findings “for fear of reprisal,” and transparency groups “show little or superficial interest to collaborate” with CoST, the TI report says.

“We should not underestimate the challenges,” Mr. Krishnan says. “But I think if you look at the trends… there are reasons to be optimistic that you can do something about corruption in what is a very difficult sector. I don’t think that would have been the case about 10 or 15 years ago.”
Languages on the Brink

Thousands of languages are spoken across Asia. Some are vast, spoken by hundreds of millions. Dotting the region are isolated pockets of dwindling languages spoken by perhaps a few hundred or a few dozen. Many are dying, known by only an aging handful.

LITERACY Highest and Lowest
Nations with literacy rates of more than 95% or less than 50%, out of 38 nations in a 2008 report by the World Health Organization

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Source: World Health Organization

At the Other End of the Scale

The size of a language may be determined by the number of people who speak it as their mother tongue, or by the number who speak it at all.

Mandarin Chinese – About 1 billion people are estimated to speak versions of Mandarin Chinese as their first language.

Hindi – In India’s 2001 census, more than 400 million people listed Hindi as one of their languages in that nation alone.

Both have spread around the globe.

Source: Census of India; UNESCO

COLLEGE STUDENTS
Studying Abroad, but Within Region
Percentage of mobile students from each region that remained within their region

Source: UNESCO
What a Difference a Road Makes

Blacktop lifelines bring progress to millions in Asia, but roads also have a dark side. . . . Text and Photos by James Hutchison

ROAD WORK A road crew in north-east Pakistan tackles a landslide. Building and maintaining roads are key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
Nose to nose with an ancient overloaded bus grinding uphill with passengers draped over its sides and roof, a four-wheel drive SUV slithers backward in retreat up a rain-soaked trail with barely a meter of loose dirt between its wheels and a 200 meter vertical plunge into the river below. The driver finally reaches a bend wide enough for the bus to inch past, the third time he has performed this hair-raising maneuver on a rollercoaster bypass around a landslide blocking the road in northeast Pakistan.

“This is how it was driving in these mountains before proper roads were built,” explains the SUV driver, grinning almost nostalgically. Here in the foothills of the Himalayas, it is easy to see what happens when the blacktop lifelines that take people to work on time, to the hospital when they are sick, and deliver food, suddenly vanish. This is exactly what happened here at 8:52 in the morning on Saturday, 8 October 2005, when a massive earthquake struck, taking an estimated 80,000 lives.

Landslides damaged or destroyed 6,400 kilometers (km) of roads in nine districts. With more than 3 million homeless, hungry and injured facing winter snows, building and restoring roads became a race for life. In an extraordinary effort of multi-agency cooperation, and an engineering feat costing billions, an army of road crews and machinery operating around the clock averted an even worse disaster as relief supplies and building materials flowed in.

At Rara Village, an hour from Muzaffarabad, community leader Aboul Latif proudly shows there is little sign of devastation in Rara village, which was badly hit with 17 killed. Today, there are only homeowners finishing up 135 new dwellings, thanks to a 2 km road bulldozed last year to bring in reconstruction material and link the village to the main road for the first time.

Before the road, Mr. Latif’s daughter Ruqaya fell and injured her head while working in their field. It took so long to get her to the main road by donkey that she ended up disabled. “That would never happen now,” says Mr. Latif. “We are just 10 minutes away by car.”

The community of 700 maintains the road. Incomes have risen as farmers get better prices by bringing produce to market themselves, supplies are cheaper as transportation is a fraction of what it cost before, and children now attend high school.

“Nothing has improved our lives as much as the new road,” says Mr. Latif.

Virtually no large infrastructure project can begin without a road, and none can better the lives of people within its reach in so many sectors, especially in developing countries, where new roads help achieve Millennium Development Goals by relieving poverty and malnutrition, and providing greater access to health care and education.

Even in secluded Bhutan the government understands that modern roads underpin progress. People who imagine Bhutan a near mythical Shangri-La tucked away in the far reaches of the Himalayas are surprised to hear that more than 4,000 km of roads have been built since the first car arrived in 1961, a remarkable achievement in one of the most mountainous countries in the world.

Modern roads fit well with the Buddhist country's famed Happiness Index: people are naturally happier when they have better job opportunities, goods at cheaper prices, and electricity in their homes from hydro power plants, all made possible by roads. Sangey Tenzing, director general of Bhutan’s Department of Roads, says there is ever greater pressure from people in isolated regions to build more roads. Before the spectacular East–West highway spanned the country, travelers from the capital of Thimpu were forced to cross into India to reach Trongsa, now just a day’s drive down the highway. Severe poverty has also diminished in settlements along the 328 km route.

Road Out of Conflict

New roads in Southeast Asia are also drawing old enemies closer together. “Narrow dirt trails that were once used to transport refugees and military hardware have given way to modern highways carrying electronic goods, exotic fruits, and tourists,” says Arjun Thapan, director...
general of the Asian Development Bank's Southeast Asia Department, of the new East–West Economic Corridor between the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Thailand, and Viet Nam.

As of June this year, commercial trucks from Thailand and Viet Nam are able to enter each others' territory for the first time to deliver and pick up goods following an exchange of traffic rights and the introduction of a regional customs transit system. Containers sealed for the duration of the trip prevent theft and damage to the 1,200 commercial vehicles—400 from each country—that have initially been provided with permits to enter neighboring countries.

"Because of the progress these countries have made, trade and tourism will prosper further. You can now set out from Thailand, do business in the Lao PDR, and arrive in time for dinner at Danang in Viet Nam—all in the space of a single day," says Mr. Thapan.

The East–West Economic Corridor encompasses a road link about 1,450 km long and when completed, will be the only direct continuous land route between the Indian Ocean in Myanmar and the South China Sea in Viet Nam. Linked with the North–South and Southern corridors, the ambitious trio of routes will integrate the economies of the six Greater Mekong Subregion nations and bring them together as never before.

Before the southern route was completed linking Cambodia, Thailand, and Viet Nam, travel between Phnom Penh and Ho Chi Minh was a long and grueling affair on old buses that frequently broke down on potholed roads flooded by monsoon rains. Today, the smooth half-day trip by air-conditioned coach on the new highway is a bargain at $12. New businesses flourish along the route from tourist hotels and small vendors to manufacturing plants, promoting trade and cooperation in a formerly conflict–torn area.

When Roads Do Harm

"Hopefully, by 2015, much progress will have been made in reaching the Millennium Development Goals but this achievement will be cruelly overshadowed if the largely avoidable slaughter of the young on the world's roads continues unchecked. This epidemic on wheels—which already kills on the scale of malaria—will continue to rob even more families of their loved ones and their livelihoods, as the number of those killed doubles to well over two million per year by 2030," wrote Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, chairman of the Commission for Global Road Safety in the introduction to Make Roads Safe—A Decade of Action for Road Safety.

World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Margaret Chan notes in the 2009 Global Status Report on Road Safety that more than 1.2 million people die on the world's roads each year, and as many as 50 million others are injured. Over 90% of these deaths occur in low-income and middle-income countries, which have only 48% of the world's registered vehicles. Pedestrians, cyclists, and riders of motorized two-wheelers and their passengers are the most vulnerable road users, accounting for around 46% of global road traffic deaths, which actress Michelle Yeoh, global ambassador of Make Roads Safe, calls the world's most neglected epidemic.

The estimated cost of road accidents in the developing world is now $100 billion a year, and rising, as more new roads are built and traffic increases with scant attention to safety. In India, an estimated 2 million people have a disability as a result of a road traffic crash. Make Roads Safe points out that road safety could prove a significant economic boost for poor nations. Every dollar spent on road safety in the developing world would save up to $20 in improved productivity, health, and earnings, the report concludes.

Traffic accidents cost low-income and middle-income countries between 1% and 2% of their gross national product (GNP), more than the total development aid they receive, according to the World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention by the World Bank and WHO. While a decrease of about 30% in road crashes is forecast in high-income countries, a huge escalation is anticipated in low-income and middle-income countries, no surprise to anyone who has travelled the roads of Asia's developing countries. Even on new highways, decrepit speeding vehicles with bald tires jockey for space with truck traffic and swarms of motorcycles ridden by entire families without helmets, the largest source of casualties.

The Asian Injury Prevention Foundation distributed more than 400,000 child helmets to primary schools throughout Cambodia, the Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam as part of its Helmets for Kids program and the organization's nonprofit Protec Helmet Company developed the world's first tropical helmet and child motorcycle helmet standards. Viet Nam has cut motorcycle road deaths by enforcing crash helmet laws.

In Cambodia, road traffic accidents are now the largest noncommunicable health burden. Roads in the People's Republic of China (PRC) are among the most dangerous in the world. Research by the Medical School of Jinan University in Guangzhou showed the figure for all traffic accidents in the PRC in 1951 was around 6,000. By 2004, it had risen to more than 770,000, with 560,000 injured and 110,000 people losing their lives per year—an astounding eight times the death rate of the United States.

Reflecting new concern by development organizations, the first ever United Nations Ministerial Conference on Global Road Safety will be held from 19 to 20 November 2009 in Moscow. This is the first time road safety is being considered and discussed at such a high level.
The first broad assessment of the road safety situation in 178 countries, the Global Status Report on Road Safety, reveals that many countries' road safety laws are woefully inadequate, and enforcement should be strengthened to include increasing the number of traffic police combating speeding and drunk driving, and making the use of motorcycle helmets, seat belts, and vehicle safety checks all mandatory. When new roads are designed, provision needs to be made to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists, and innovations such as dedicated motorcycle lanes, a safety feature of the Butterworth-Kulim Expressway in Malaysia that has had a dramatic impact on preventing road fatalities and injuries involving motorcycles.

Roadside Pollution

In June 2009 in Mumbai, the first owner of the Tata Nano was handed the keys to the world's cheapest car. The company says it has

Road Projects Need an HIV Officer as Much as an Engineer

By Patralekha Chatterjee

Asia needs roads. Roads open up markets, bring economic growth, and offer access to health care and opportunities. But new roads can also displace communities, destroy homes, and disrupt livelihoods. Countries in the region have responded to these concerns with national policies on resettlement and rehabilitation of communities displaced by infrastructure projects.

The spread of HIV/AIDS by road projects—a problem with implications even more serious than resettlement and rehabilitation—has received much less attention and action by governments in the region. As Asia transitions from recession to recovery, many countries in the region are firming up ambitious plans to expand their road networks. Construction brings truck drivers and road workers—often male migrants, living away from home for long stretches. While many studies about HIV/AIDS and transport have flagged long-haul truck drivers as a group at risk of HIV, there has been much less work investigating HIV/AIDS prevalence and risk among road construction workers, who constitute an important risk group for the transmission of HIV.

In 2006, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and German government-owned development bank KfW agreed to recommend that infrastructure construction contractors conduct HIV/AIDS awareness programs to reduce risks of HIV transmission among their workers and the local community.

Today, major donor agencies that provide loans for many of Asia’s road projects require agencies to carry out HIV prevention work as part of the agreement. The challenge is to scale up such interventions. This requires national policies that make it mandatory for all road construction projects—whether they are donor-funded, locally resourced or use the build-operate-transfer model—to incorporate HIV information in their project design. The more daunting next step is to translate such policies into practice and to get the technical people in charge of the project talking seriously with the NGOs involved in outreach.

India, a country with 2.5 million people living with HIV/AIDS, and an emerging economic power hobbled by poor infrastructure, offers good examples of what is happening and what needs to happen. Over the next two years, the country will build more highways than any other country in the world, according to Kamal Nath, India’s Minister for Road Transport and Highways. The ministry is working on incentives to attract developers to hit the country’s target of adding 20 kilometers a day to the national highway system. Humanitarian as well as economic reasons underpin donor interest in HIV prevention campaigns. Such programs are intended partly to be firewalls against loss of skilled workers who could be at risk of HIV. The World Bank is working on a pilot project that would target local communities and spouses of the migrant workers.

Donor involvement in India’s highway expansion has led to the National Highway Authority of India engaging NGO partners to conduct HIV/AIDS and human trafficking awareness programs. The donor-supported Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, which is responsible for building, operating, and maintaining the metro rail system, has initiated an HIV/AIDS program targeting laborers on one of the metro lines.

These examples are a good start. But merely including HIV/AIDS prevention clauses in civil works contracts does not ensure the implementation of activities. A May 2009 report by the World Bank’s Transport Unit points out that many NGOs selected to partner with the implementing agencies have experience with rehabilitation and resettlement but not HIV prevention campaigns. For better results, the capacity of such partner NGOs needs to be strengthened. Simultaneously, technical personnel overseeing road projects must be sensitized to better understand the NGOs. The third critical issue is improved monitoring mechanisms to increase the effectiveness of the interventions. The observations provide lessons for other road projects as well. Governments in Asia need to tie effective HIV/AIDS prevention programs to all new road projects. Donors play a critical role in leading this effort. Roads should provide a path out of poverty, not a door that opens communities to disease.

•
received more than 200,000 orders for the car, which costs about $2,000, and expects millions of Indians will give up their motorcycles for a Nano. Environmentalists warn that pollution will soar as the low-cost cars will further clog India's crowded roads.

In Asia's traffic choked cities, vehicle exhaust is now a major contributor to urban air pollution, climate change, and diseases such as lung cancer and heart disease. Traffic jams in Shanghai and Bangkok have reduced average weekday motor vehicle speeds to as low as 10 km per hour, slower than the millions of bicycles they have driven from urban roads. With Thailand's vehicle fleet of about 25 million growing at an astounding rate of 10% a year, no number of new highways can cope.

Even on the streets of Bhutan's capital, traffic jams and parking problems are beginning to appear as the number of vehicles increases by 12% a year. Roadside vehicle pollution from gridlocked traffic, broken up sidewalks, and open manhole covers in Manila present a hostile environment for pedestrians. Where sidewalks do exist, they are often crammed with vendors, forcing those on foot out into dangerous traffic. When roads are forced to bear far more traffic than they were designed to handle through poor planning and lack of efficient public mass transit, they turn toxic and dangerous, harming instead of helping.

Singapore imposed expensive restrictions on drivers to curb the number of cars and reduce pollution and fuel-wasting gridlock. In addition to a driver's license, a Certificate of Entitlement is required, costing several thousand Singapore dollars. This permits the vehicle to be driven for 10 years, then it must be scrapped. Certain roads in Singapore require users to pay per use via Singapore's Electronic Road Pricing system. These measures also provide incentive to use an efficient public transport system.

New Roads, Old Problems

When a new rural road opens, benefits are immediate: faster travel times, cheaper transported goods, and lower vehicle maintenance, to name a few. But without careful planning those benefits can be insidiously overshadowed by unintended problems. With easier access to cities, an exodus of labor may follow, sometimes leaving families without a breadwinner. Road construction and increased commercial traffic brings an influx of lonely men with cash in their pockets, fueling drug use, the sex trade, and rising rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Studies in Bangladesh, India, and the PRC show a high HIV prevalence among long-distance truckers.

Monitoring the AIDS Pandemic (MAP) Report 2005 shows that education is effective in reducing high-risk behavior. Before HIV prevention campaigns began in 1996 in Tamil Nadu in southern India, 30% of truck drivers and their helpers reported having sex with a female sex worker in the preceding 12 months, and just over half had used a condom the last time they bought sex. By 2002, that had fallen to just 2% as fewer men bought sex and condom use rose to over 90% during 6 years of prevention programming and education.

From drawing board to ribbon cutting, roads cost vast sums to build and maintain. They should not become a major source of death and disease for lack of proper planning, management and regulation, say experts. Roadways should fulfill the role for which they were intended—to improve lives and reduce poverty.

In the end, the difference a road makes depends on how people use it.
Standing in a mud puddle in the pouring rain, in one of Manila’s slum areas, a scruffy white-haired man in tattered loafers chats comfortably with some of the poorest people in the Philippines.

“What were you planting?” he asks a 92-year-old landless farmer from the central Philippines. The old farmer describes how he grew sweet potatoes on his farm until repeated storms, and political violence in his village, drove him to a Manila slum in search of a better life. The elderly farmer and his deeply impoverished neighbors talk with the white-haired man—Tony Meloto—like old friends.

A few hours later, Mr. Meloto can be found again chatting comfortably with what appears to be another group of old friends, only now he is sitting in the posh Manila Polo Club. Everything has changed, except for Meloto’s muddy loafers and rain-soaked short-sleeve shirt. Across from him is the retired president of a multinational company. On one side is a member of one of the wealthiest families in the Philippines. An established international theatrical performer sits at the table as well.

“We bring the resources of the richest people in the country to bear on the needs of the poorest people in the country,” explains Mr. Meloto, founder of the nongovernment organization Gawad Kalinga. “We honor not only the poor, but we honor those people who help the poor.”

Mr. Meloto, a 59-year-old former marketing executive, had a religious experience in the mid-1980s that drove him into the Manila slums to help the city’s poor. In 1995, he launched an organization that he called Gawad Kalinga, meaning “to give care.”

Though born out of Catholicism, deep in the heart of a Manila slum, the organization has spread globally. It supports, and is supported by, people of all faiths, and its associates can be found on the leafy campus of Harvard University, as well as the poorest areas of the Philippines.

When Mr. Meloto, and Gawad Kalinga, received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership in 2006, the judges concluded: “Gawad Kalinga has thousands of faces.”

“These are faces of every Filipino ethnicity, faith, and social class—of donors at home and abroad who are providing the money and land for new villages; of volunteers across the Philippines who are joining their families, and friends, and schoolmates, and officemates, and fellow church members to build houses and to provide Gawad Kalinga villages with training and services; of executives, lawyers, doctors, architects, and other professionals. These are also the faces of over two hundred thousand grateful beneficiaries.”

Gawad Kalinga (GK) has built more than 35,000 houses in the Philippines. Their brightly colored GK villages offer clean, safe living environments for impoverished families. Supporting this effort is a virtual Who’s Who of the country’s wealthiest families and political elite as well as leaders of some of the largest, high-profile corporations in the Philippines.

“We focus on partnerships instead of fundraising,” says Mr. Meloto. “Fundraising is not sustainable.” As a result, the organization has found some unlikely partners in its efforts to house and help the poor.

“We focus on partnerships instead of fundraising,” says Mr. Meloto. “Fundraising is not sustainable.” As a result, the organization has found some unlikely partners in its efforts to house and help the poor.

“Projects are for a limited duration. They aren’t sustainable,’ he says. “And programs focus on a narrow aspect of society. They aren’t holistic. These things don’t help form the values that keep people out of poverty for life.”

We now have landowners vying to donate property to us for GK villages. We have an overabundance of land.

Gawad Kalinga’s philosophy of building partnerships to help the poor appears to have no bounds.

“We even involve corrupt politicians,” says Mr. Meloto. “If he is 10% good, we engage that 10%. If he loses the election, or gets caught in a scandal, we just take his signs off our villages. We are involved in engagement, not judgment.”

Gawad Kalinga’s sterling reputation—its corporate partners include top law firms and accountancies—and its ability to nimbly adjust its operations to incorporate improvements in its work allow it to function like a small NGO while wielding the resources of a large development organization.

Mr. Meloto contrasts this to traditional development organizations, which he says are hobbled by the operational deficiencies of “projects and programs.”

“Projects are for a limited duration. They aren’t sustainable,” he says. “And programs focus on a narrow aspect of society. They aren’t holistic. These things don’t help form the values that keep people out of poverty for life.”
Large development organizations are susceptible to institutional blind spots, especially regarding the role of men in development, he says. “Development organizations have a gender bias against men.”

“Assistance is funneled to the women in the house. Men are left without the skills training and values formation they need to support their family, so they fall back into the habits that perpetuate poverty,” he explains. “We include men in our assistance programs. They are the builders of their homes and their neighbors’ homes. We don’t give up on the man of the house.”

Mr. Meloto’s outspoken advocacy of partnerships between the poorest and the wealthiest caught the attention of Tony Gonzales, the affable former Secretary of Tourism for the Philippines. Just as Mr. Meloto has done with hundreds of other high-profile supporters, he did not ask Mr. Gonzales for a donation. He made him a partner.

“I wanted to learn more about them before I made a commitment,” says Mr. Gonzales. “I visited a GK village, and it was a moving experience. After that, I didn’t hesitate to offer assistance.”

Mr. Gonzales is now busy working to make some GK villages into tourist destinations, thereby bringing revenue into the communities while at the same time promoting the work of Gawad Kalinga to international travelers.

While munching on pork rinds at the Manila Polo Club, Mr. Meloto listens patiently to an overly complex question about whether his organization incorporates urban renewal best practices into its housing projects.

“You don’t have to have a PhD to help people,” he responds. “People talk about best practices. Not only are we using best practices, we created many of these best practices.”

In an instant, his eyes dart across the room and he sees a woman in an elegant black dress entering. Her family owns one of the largest conglomerates in the Philippines. “Excuse me,” he says and bounds toward her.

Gawad Kalinga is about to get another partner.
“When workers are not able to pay for a few loaves of bread with their monthly earnings, their leaders are not meeting the most basic needs of their people.”

Ela Bhatt, founder of the three-million strong Self Employed Women’s Association in India

“Do you want to be living, when we come out of the other side of this financial crisis, with the wreckage of yet more years of neglect or do we want to keep on going on this when you know as well as I do, that working in the poorest countries in the world is the least expensive thing we can do to fulfill our responsibilities as global citizens?”

Keynote address of former US President Bill Clinton at a special United Nations event in February

“This could be bingo for Africa, or a lotto.”

Alain Joyandet, French Secretary of State for Cooperation, on the French Government’s decision to potentially introduce a special lottery to supplement development aid

“The United States will never become China, and China will never become the United States. But the living fact is... our interest has never been interwoven so closely, and the mutually beneficial cooperation between our two countries has never been so broad, and the driving force boosting the China-U.S. relationship has never been so strong.”

State Councilor Dai Bingguo, who oversaw foreign policy at the first meeting of the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue in Washington, D.C., in July

“So in summary, Your Majesty, the failure to foresee the timing, extent and severity of the crisis and to head it off, while it had many causes, was principally a failure of the collective imagination of many bright people, both in this country and internationally, to understand the risks to the system as a whole.”

Reply of the British Academy to the Queen’s question: why had nobody noticed that the credit crunch was on its way?

“We will pay for this one way or another. We will pay to reduce greenhouse gas emissions today, and we’ll have to take an economic hit of some kind. Or we will pay the price later in military terms. And that will involve human lives.”

Anthony C. Zinni, a retired US Marine general and the former head of the Central Command, wrote recently in a report as a member of a military advisory board on energy and climate at Center for Naval Analyses (CAN), a private group that does research for the US Navy

“We must recognize the fact that adequate food is only the first requisite for life. For a decent and humane life we must also provide an opportunity for good education, remunerative employment, comfortable housing, good clothing, and effective and compassionate medical care. Unless we can do this, man may degenerate sooner from environmental diseases than from hunger.”

The late scientist Norman Borlaug, father of the Green Revolution, in his Nobel lecture in 1970
MUST-READ BOOKS

WASTE
Uncovering the Global Food Scandal
By Tristram Stuart
Penguin
$29.95

In Waste, author Tristram Stuart asks why North America and Europe throw away 30% to 50% of their food. He claims that the fresh produce discarded by farmers, manufacturers, supermarkets, and consumers could feed the millions of starving people in the world at least three times over. He argues that avoiding waste is the easiest remedy to a global food crisis.

Mr. Stuart has been a freelance writer for Indian newspapers, a project manager in Kosovo, and a critic of the food industry. He has made regular contributions to television documentaries, and radio and newspaper debates on the social and environmental aspects of food. His first book, The Bloodless Revolution: Radical Vegetarians and the Discovery of India, was published in 2006.

“Stuart, a freegan and environmental campaigner, has based his book on painstaking research carried out over several years of first-hand experience of foraging in supermarket bins, as well as interviews with company executives and trawls through the meagre data provided by governments and businesses...Waste is certainly one of the most important environmental books to come out in years. But it is more than that. It is an indictment of our consumer culture that should make us all feel deeply ashamed. The scale of our food waste problem—and its effect on the developing world—revealed in this book will leave you shocked. And, the author hopes, demanding change.” —Fiona Harvey, Financial Times

“Stuart is surely right that ‘reducing food waste should become one of the highest priorities on the environmental agenda.’ It’s a no-brainer: good for the hungry (North America and Europe combined chuck out enough to feed the world’s hungry three times over), good for the environment (excess food production is directly linked to the destruction of the rainforest) and even good for business (‘where waste has been cut, profit margins soar’).”—Bee Wilson, The Sunday Times

“In Waste, Tristram Stuart shows how we could have much more food overnight simply by not tossing away so much of it. This simple concept ingeniously unites many food scandals that often do not get the attention they deserve: the mould that destroys a third or more of Third World harvests; the fish caught by accident that must be thrown back, dead, under rules intended to conserve stocks; the millions of tons of edible food wasted by modern food processing and ‘sell-by’ dates; even western squeamishness about eating ‘every part of the pig but the squeal.’”—Debora MacKenzie, New Scientist

ENOUGH
Why the World’s Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty
By Roger Thurow and Scott Kilman
PublicAffairs/The Wall Street Journal
$27.95

Investigative reporters from The Wall Street Journal look into the economic, political, and social dynamics that perpetuate famine.

Roger Thurow and Scott Kilman seek to answer why more than 9 million people die of hunger, malnutrition, and related diseases every year when the technology and know-how to grow enough food to end chronic hunger have been available for years. They focus on Africa, where more die of hunger than from AIDS and malaria combined.

Mr. Thurow has been a foreign correspondent for The Wall Street Journal for 20 years. Mr. Kilman has been the Journal’s leading agriculture reporter. They have teamed up to produce ground-breaking stories on famine and food aid. Their stories on three 2003 famines were a finalist for the 2004 Pulitzer Prize in international reporting.

“Thurow and Kilman are journalists who have covered famines in Africa, agricultural policy in the corridors of Washington and Brussels, and food commodities markets in Chicago. Yet their book is more than just a rough first draft of history. While grounded in colorful, entertaining reportage, Enough also displays a depth of thought and research more commonly found in academic studies. Well-chosen anecdotes bring the issues to life.”—Javier Blas, Financial Times

“This very readable book argues that the agricultural science and technology of the green revolution, which ended famine in much of the world last century, was on the whole a good thing, and that we need more of it.”—Debora MacKenzie, New Scientist

THE IDEA OF JUSTICE
By Amartya Sen
Belknap Press
$29.95

Nobel laureate Amartya Sen writes a critique on the theory of social justice that takes into consideration practical realities and differences in the understanding of a just society. He argues that society inevitably faces a choice between what is “more” or “less” just.

Mr. Sen is winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize in Economics. He is Lamont University Professor at Harvard University.

“Two themes predominate: economic rationality and social injustice. Mr. Sen approaches them alike. He can, when he wants, theorize without oxygen at any height. But he believes that theory, to be of use, must keep its feet on the ground. Modern theorists in his view have drifted too far from the actual world.” —The Economist

“The most important new intellectual notion here is a working through of the fundamental distinction between two competing approaches to justice. Most modern political philosophers are concerned with finding the right rules, institutions and social contracts for a just society. This school of thought—dubbed ‘transcendental institutionalism’ by Sen—found its greatest 20th-century exponent in John Rawls, who built on foundations laid by Kant and Rousseau... The competing vision of justice Sen prefers is a ‘comparative’ one, which examines ‘what kind of lives people can actually lead.’ The heroes of the comparative pantheon are Condorcet, Wallstonecraft and Mill. For them, as for Sen, abolishing slavery or giving women the vote would free people to lead lives of their own choosing, even without creating a perfectly just society.” —The Sunday Times

“In showing why those who pursue justice do not need an ideal of a perfectly just society, only a view about what would make the world a more just place, The Idea of Justice deserves to be acclaimed as a major advance in contemporary thinking.” —John Gray, Literary Review

46 Development Asia • OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2009
PORTFOLIOS OF THE POOR
How the World’s Poor Live on $2 a Day
By Daryl Collins, Jonathan Morduch, Stuart Rutherford and Orlanda Ruthven
Princeton University Press
$29.95

The book explains how more than two billion people around the world survive on just two dollars a day or less. The authors of Portfolios of the Poor asked villagers and slum dwellers in Bangladesh, India, and South Africa to keep track of how they manage their money over a period of one year. Their “financial diaries” show that they cope by using financial tools that tap informal networks and family ties. Some have run saving clubs and used microfinancing. The authors believe that the experiences of these poor households reveal new methods to fight poverty and ideas to develop financial products for the poor.

THE BEAUTIFUL TREE
A Personal Journey Into How the World’s Poorest People Are Educating Themselves
By James Tooley
Cato Institute
$19.95

Award-winning scholar James Tooley shares lessons learned on a journey that took him from the largest slum to the mountains of Gansu in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). He tells the story of how parents, teachers, and education entrepreneurs in poor communities in Africa, India and the PRC have built and funded their own small private schools.

THE MYTH OF THE RATIONAL MARKET
A History of Risk, Reward, and Delusion on Wall Street
By Justin Fox
HarperCollins
$27.00

The first book of Time columnist Justin Fox chronicles how the efficient market theory affected the course of modern financial history—from the formative days of Wall Street to today’s global economic crisis. The theory assumed that the market was always right, and that investors made rational decisions. In The Myth of the Rational Market, Mr. Fox tells the story of how advocates of the theory made and lost their fortune, and the part they played in the events leading to the current crisis. He also introduces a new wave of economists and scholars who no longer believe in the theory, and how they glyphs the future of financial markets.

The author is economics and business columnist for Time magazine. He also writes the Curious Capitalist blog on Time.com. Before joining Time in 2007, he spent more than a decade at Fortune magazine, where he covered a wide variety of topics related to economics, finance, and international business.

“Do we really need yet another book about the financial crisis? Yes, we do—because this one is different. Instead of focusing on the errors and abuses of the bankers, Fox… tells the story of the professors who enabled those abuses under the banner of the financial theory known as the efficient-market hypothesis.” — Paul Krugman, The New York Times

“Justin Fox’s description of how the idea [that the market is rational and efficient] evolved and conquered is fascinating and entertainingly told. Mr. Fox has written a worthy successor to Capital Ideas, the late Peter Bernstein’s 1990s classic on the emergence of the rational-market myth: bang up-to-date; alas, without the happy ending.” — The Economist

The Beautiful Tree is named after Mahatma Gandhi’s phrase for the schools of pre-colonial India. Mr. Tooley was a professor in leading universities in Canada, England, and South Africa for many years. He has conducted research and consultancy work for the International Finance Corporation (IFC), World Bank, United Nations, UNESCO, and Asian Development Bank Institute on private education in developing countries. He received recognition for his research paper on private education for the poor from the Financial Times-IFC in Hong Kong in 2006, the 2006 Templeton Freedom Prize for Excellence in Promoting Liberty in Free Market Solutions to Poverty in the United States, the 2007 Alexis de Toqueville Award for the Advancement of Educational Freedom in Warsaw, and the 2007 National Free Enterprise Award in London.

“Schools for the poor are the obsession of James Tooley’s book, The Beautiful Tree… Tooley spent years surveying private schools across the developing world. He found that, on average, they had smaller class sizes, higher test scores and more motivated teachers, all while spending less than public schools… Tooley blasts development experts for recognizing the problems with public education and still insisting that more investment in public schools is the way to go.” — Carlos Lozada, The Washington Post

“Orthodox opinion on developing-country education for the poor holds that parents are too ignorant to know a good school when they see one, and that a decent education is impossible to provide on the minimal budgets available to private schools… Tooley’s book is different. He tells the story of the advocates of the theory who enabled those abuses under the banner of the financial theory known as the efficient-market hypothesis.” — Paul Krugman, The New York Times

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The Beautiful Tree
“There’s a change in the business climate.”

This December, the world’s governments will gather in Copenhagen to usher in the New Clean Economy. Climate Savers will be there. These companies are shaping the new reality by combining CO₂ reductions and business growth. By 2010 they will have collectively decreased their CO₂ emissions by 50 million tons while creating competitive advantage and increasing shareholder value. They’re proving that climate leadership makes sense for business and for the planet. Now is the time for the world’s governments to lead us further along this path, into a new era. The future is calling, and the world is waiting. Follow the leaders at: panda.org/cleaneconomy