

From the World Development Indicators



2002

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Cartographic design by the Map Design Unit of the World Bank

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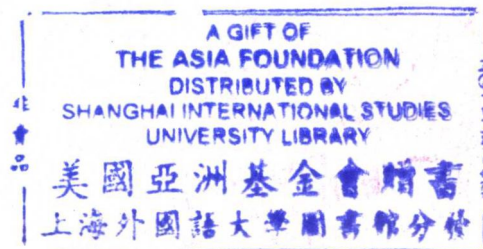
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Low- and middle-income economies

- East Asia and Pacific
- Europe and Central Asia
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Middle East and North Africa
- South Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa

High-income economies

- OECD
- Other
- No data





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WORLD VIEW

At the Millennium Summit in September 2000 the states of the United Nations reaffirmed their commitment to working toward a world in which sustaining development and eliminating poverty would have the highest priority. The Millennium Development Goals, which grew out of the agreements and resolutions of world conferences organized by the United Nations in the past decade, have been commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress. The goals focus the efforts of the world community on achieving significant, measurable improvements in people's lives. They establish yardsticks for measuring results, not just for developing countries but for the rich countries that help to fund development programs and for the multilateral institutions that help countries implement them.

1**Eradicate extreme poverty
and hunger****5****Improve maternal health****2****Achieve universal primary
education****6****Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria,
and other diseases****3****Promote gender equality and
empower women****7****Ensure environmental
sustainability****4****Reduce child mortality****8****Develop a global partnership
for development**

Millennium Development Goals

The first seven goals are mutually reinforcing and are directed at reducing poverty in all its forms. The last goal—global partnership for development—is about the means to achieve the first seven. Many of the poorest countries will need additional assistance and must look to the rich countries to provide it. Countries that are poor and heavily indebted will need further help in reducing their debt burdens. And all countries will benefit if trade barriers are lowered, allowing a freer exchange of goods and services.

For the poorest countries many of the goals seem far out of reach. Even in better-off countries there may be regions or groups that lag behind. So countries need to set their own goals and work to ensure that poor people are included in the benefits of development.

Eradicate extreme poverty . . .

During the 1990s GDP per capita in developing countries grew by 1.6 percent a year, and the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day fell from 29 percent to 23 percent. By 1999 there were 125 million fewer people living in extreme poverty, continuing a downward trend that began in the early 1980s. But much of the progress has been in Asia, where sustained growth in China lifted nearly 150 million people out of poverty after 1990. Faster growth in parts of South Asia has also led to modest declines in the number of people living in extreme poverty. In other regions the number of poor people has increased, even as the proportion in extreme poverty has fallen.

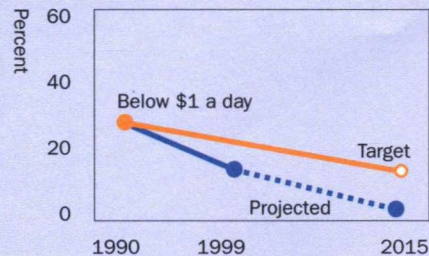
The Millennium Development Goals call for reducing the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day to half the 1990 level by 2015—from 29 percent of all people in low- and middle-income economies to 14.5 percent. Recent projections by the World Bank show that it is possible to achieve that goal in most regions if growth in per capita income accelerates to an average of 3.6 percent a year. This would be nearly twice the rate achieved over the past decade, but such growth is possible.

With sustained growth, many regions will achieve the goal

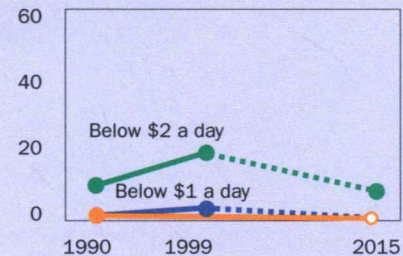
Population living below \$1 and \$2 a day

● \$1 a day poverty rate ● \$2 a day poverty rate
○ Average path to \$1 a day target

East Asia and Pacific



Europe and Central Asia



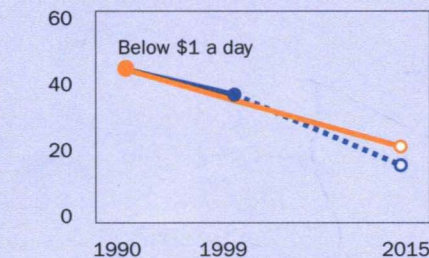
Latin America and Caribbean



Middle East and North Africa



South Asia



Sub-Saharan Africa



Source: World Bank staff estimates.

... and hunger

As average incomes grow, extreme poverty declines and children become better nourished. Very few upper-middle-income countries report significant levels of underweight children. But the data are incomplete, and more systematic monitoring is needed.

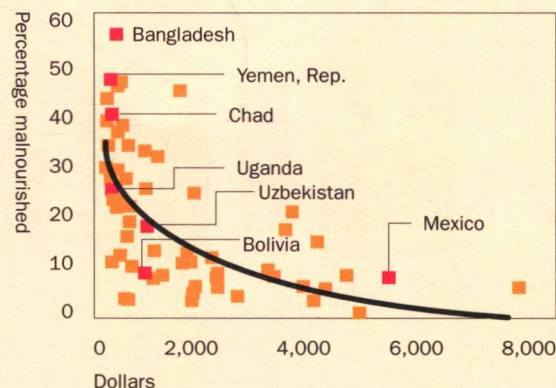
Most regions of the world have made dramatic progress in reducing the proportion of underweight children. But progress has been slowing, leaving the prospect of reaching the targets of the Millennium Development Goals in doubt.

Malnutrition rates among children under five in the developing world fell from 46.5 percent in 1970 to 27 percent in 2000. Even so, 150 million children in low- and middle-income economies are still malnourished, and at current rates of improvement 140 million children will be underweight in 2020.

The number of undernourished people in the developing world fell from 840 million in 1990 to about 777 million in 1997–99 and is expected to decrease by 200 million more by 2015. But greater reductions will be needed to reach the World Food Summit goal of cutting the number of undernourished people in half by 2015.

Malnutrition falls as average income rises

Under-five malnutrition rate, most recent year, and GNI per capita, 2000



Source: UNICEF and World Bank staff estimates.

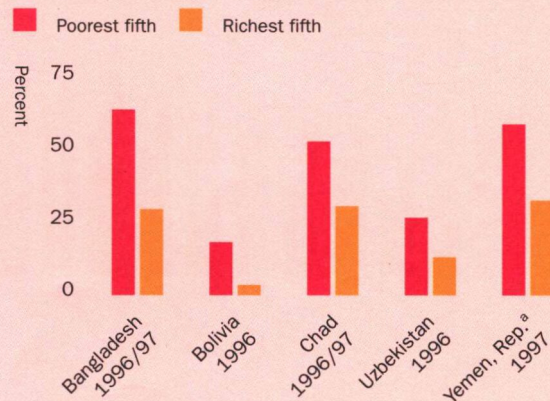
Malnutrition in children is caused by consuming too little food energy to meet the body's needs. Adding to the problem are diets that lack essential nutrients, illnesses that deplete those nutrients, and undernourished mothers who give birth to underweight children.

Just as poor countries tend to have high rates of malnutrition, the poorest segment of the population within a country is the most malnourished. Even in countries with relatively low average rates of malnutrition, poor people suffer disproportionately.

Raising incomes and reducing poverty is part of the answer. But even poor countries need not suffer high rates of child malnutrition. They can make big improvements through such low-cost measures as nutrition education and micronutrient supplements. Other things that help include improving the status and education of women, increasing government commitment to health and nutrition, and developing an effective health infrastructure.

Within countries, malnutrition also follows income

Under-five malnutrition rate by quintile in selected countries



a. Children under four years old.
Source: Demographic and Health Survey data.

Achieve universal primary education

Education is a powerful instrument for reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and social well-being, and laying the basis for sustained economic growth. It is essential for building democratic societies and dynamic, globally competitive economies.

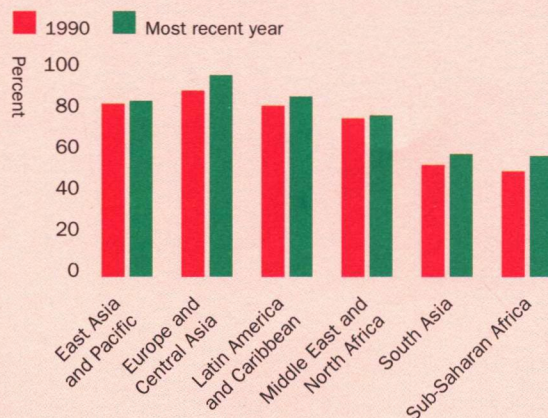
The 1990 Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, pledged to achieve universal primary education by 2000. But in 1999 there were still 120 million primary-school-age children not in school, 53 percent of them girls and 74 percent living in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The Millennium Development Goals set a more realistic but still difficult deadline of 2015 when all children everywhere should be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Recent work at the World Bank has produced new estimates of primary completion rates. These show small improvements everywhere, but progress overall has been too slow to reach the goal by 2015.

What can be done? Lower costs to students and their families. Improve the quality of schools. And increase the efficiency of the school system.

Slow progress toward education for all

Average primary school completion rate



Source: World Bank staff estimates.

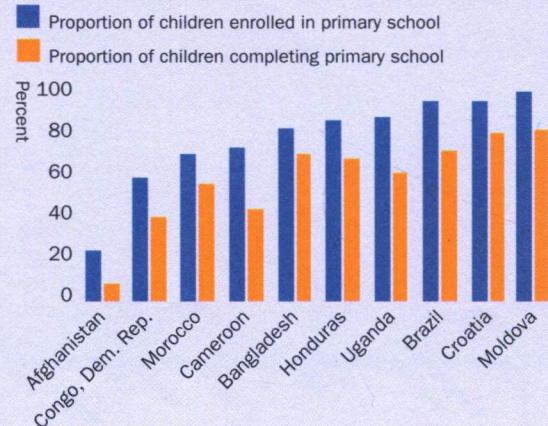
To reach the goal, schools must first enroll all school-age children and then keep them in school for the full course of the primary stage. In many places schools fail to do both. As a result, there can be large gaps between reported enrollment, attendance, and completion rates. Disparities arise for many reasons. Children may start school late or they may repeat grades, putting them off track. Frequently children drop out of school because of their own or a family member's illness or because their families need their labor. If they return, they re-enroll in the same grade the following year. But many never finish.

Some 79 developing countries have already built sufficient schools and places to educate 100 percent of their primary-school-age children. Only 27 of those countries retain 100 percent of children in school through primary graduation.

Since 1990, 17 middle-income and 21 low-income countries have seen completion rates stagnate or decline. Afghanistan fell from an already low 22 percent in 1990 to an estimated 8 percent. A number of middle-income Gulf states, Latin American countries such as Trinidad and Tobago and República Bolivariana de Venezuela, and low-income countries such as Cameroon, Kenya, Madagascar, and Zambia have also lost ground.

Finish what's started

Primary school enrollment and completion rates, most recent year



Source: World Bank staff estimates.

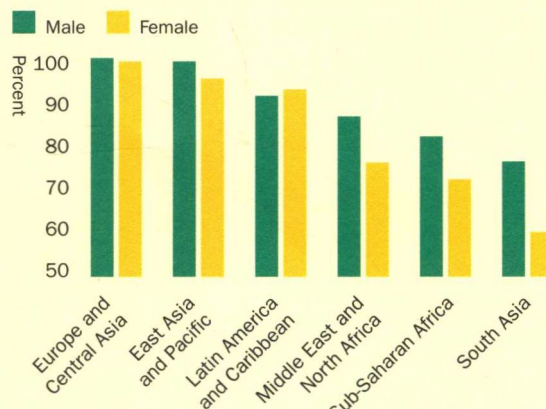
Promote gender equality and empower women

In most low-income countries girls are less likely to attend school than boys. And even when girls start school at the same rate as boys, they are more likely to drop out—often because parents think boys' schooling is more important or because girls' work at home seems more valuable than schooling. Concerns about the safety of girls or traditional biases against educating them can mean that they never start school or do not continue beyond the primary stage.

Girls reach adulthood with lower literacy rates than boys (except in Latin America and the Caribbean). Informal training, such as adult literacy classes, can make up some of the difference. But many girls, who begin with fewer opportunities than boys, are at a permanent disadvantage.

Starting out in second place

Youth literacy rate (ages 15–24), 2000



Source: UNESCO and World Bank staff estimates.

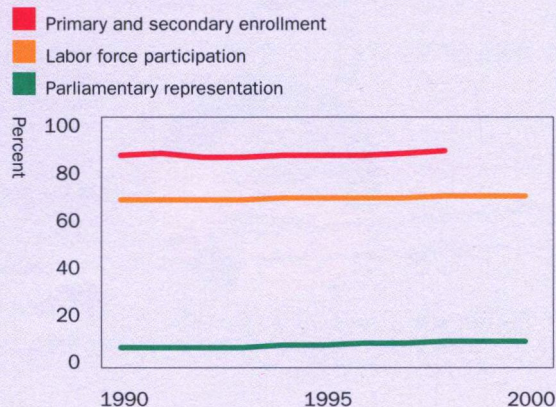
Educating women and giving them equal rights is important for many reasons:

- It increases their productivity, raising output and reducing poverty.
- It promotes gender equality within households and removes constraints on women's decisionmaking—thus reducing fertility rates and improving maternal health.
- It increases children's chances of surviving to become healthier and better educated because educated women do a better job caring for children.

Equal access to education is an important step toward greater gender equality, but it is not the only one. Even as gender disparities in education diminish, other differences persist everywhere—in legal rights, labor market opportunities, and the ability to participate in public life and decisionmaking.

Large gaps remain in roles and opportunities for women

Ratio of female to male, global average



Source: World Bank staff estimates.

Recognizing that empowering women extends beyond the classroom and the household, the Millennium Development Goals include three additional indicators of gender equality: illiteracy rates, the proportion of women working outside agriculture, and the proportion of seats women hold in national parliaments. These indicators suggest that even after reaching the goal of full participation in primary and secondary education, the world will still fall short of gender equality.

Reduce child mortality

Deaths of infants and children dropped rapidly over the past 25 years. The number of deaths of children under five fell from 15 million in 1980 to about 11 million in 1990, a period when the number of children being born was still rising. This was success borne on many wings—vaccination programs, the spread of oral rehydration therapy, wider availability of antibiotics to treat pneumonia, and better economic and social conditions all contributed.

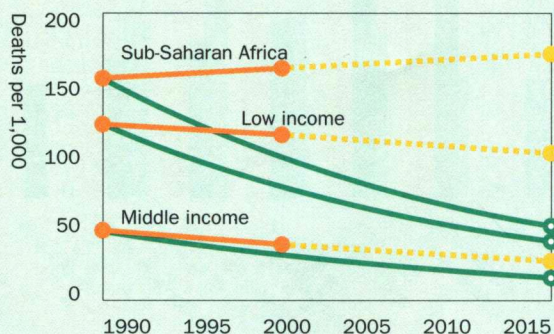
Rapid improvements before 1990 gave hope that mortality rates of children under five could be cut by two-thirds in the following 25 years. But progress slowed almost everywhere in the 1990s, and in parts of Africa infant and child mortality rates increased.

At the end of the 20th century only 36 developing countries were making fast enough progress to reduce under-five child mortality to a third of its 1990 level by 2015. Most of those are middle-income countries, although a few poor countries—notably Bangladesh and Indonesia—and some of the poorest countries of the former Soviet Union are on track to achieve the goal.

Still far to go

Under-five mortality rate

Progress to date Path to goal
Projected progress at current rate



Source: World Bank staff estimates.

For 70 percent of children who die before their fifth birthday the cause is a disease or combination of diseases and malnutrition that would be readily preventable in a high-income country: acute respiratory infections, diarrhea, measles, and malaria.

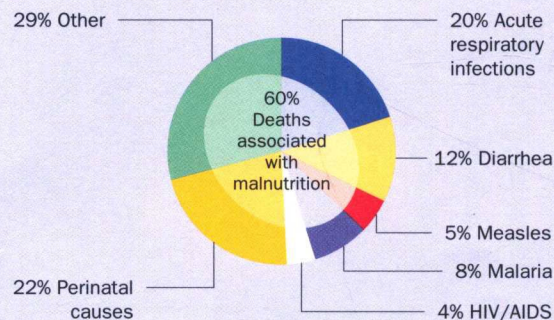
In some parts of the world vaccination coverage has begun to decline. In 1999, 55 countries had not attained 80 percent coverage of measles vaccinations among children under one year; another 48 reported no data.

One-third of child deaths occur in the neonatal period. They are caused by poor maternal health and lack of care during pregnancy and delivery.

To ensure continuing improvements, disease-specific vaccination and treatment programs must be sustained while new strategies address unmet needs and unserved populations. In all countries the poorest people are least likely to receive health services and so have the highest mortality rates. Addressing the underlying causes of poverty will improve health, and better health will reduce poverty.

Causes of child mortality

Deaths among children under five, global, 1999



Source: WHO.