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The Third Channel

In brief

The Goal: Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills, and values required for better living made available through all educational channels, including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication, and social action, with effectiveness measured in terms of behavioural change.

In addition to formal (official, school-based) and non-formal (less official but structured) education, the "Third Channel" is a supporting, informal, educational medium, whose potential has scarcely been tapped. Wider use of this channel is essential to meeting the goals of education for all, and political leaders can do much to facilitate its wider use.

What is it?

Learning takes place in many contexts. In addition to educational activities organized around a specific curriculum, usually ending with certification of students – often categorized as "formal" (e.g. in Ministry of Education primary schools), or "non-formal" (e.g. community-based literacy classes for youth and adults, skills training in agricultural cooperatives, non-governmental community schools) – there exists in most countries a proliferation of broader "informal" learning opportunities taking place in many settings and communicated through a variety of channels. This informal grouping is collectively referred to as the "Third Channel".

Communicating basic learning needs for living

The range of skills and knowledge communicated through the Third Channel goes well beyond the essential learning tools of literacy, numeracy, or problem-solving to a wide range of behavioural skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes required if the individual is to be able to act in and react

with his or her environment – basic learning needs for survival, development, and living.

The communication channels and opportunities that make up the Third Channel are particularly suited to communication of this range of knowledge, where behavioural change is the principal focus.

Components of the Third Channel

The constituent components of the Third Channel are many and varied, and may include:

- religious, social action, cultural and community communication channels, and leaders;
- political institutions, parties and leaders, mass organizations, lobbying groups;
- any location where life skills and knowledge are communicated: the village health unit, community center, agricultural cooperative;
- traditional and modern means of mass communication: traditional folk drama, mass meetings and rallies, print media, radio, television, computer;
- advertising;
- face-to-face communication between individuals.

In summary, the Third Channel encompasses a wide range of intersecting national and local channels, limited only by the imagination, will, and capacity to make them work. Through the Third Channel, all sectors of society and all channels of communication can be mobilized in pursuit of meeting the basic learning needs of all.

Growing potential of the Third Channel

The significance and potential impact of the Third Channel on the process of meeting basic learning needs has increased dramatically in recent decades with the convergence of two major forces: the exponential growth in information and knowledge essential to survival, living, and well-being and the acceleration of the world's technical capacity and outreach in communications, through the use of new communication technologies.

In every society and particularly in today's industrial societies, learning takes place in many contexts other than the school alone – in the home, in the community, at the workplace, with peers – and modern means of communication, in particular television and radio, provide a constant stream of messages that greatly influence, for better or for worse, knowledge and behaviour.

The Third Channel reaches into every corner of the life of the individual, community, and nation. National leaders have a crucial role to play in mobilizing the Third Channel to meet basic learning needs.

Basic education: a national responsibility

Political commitment at the highest level is required to assert that the responsibility for meeting basic learning needs is national and multisectoral, and goes well beyond ministries of education to include a broad range of partners within and outside government and from central to local levels. National leaders can play a key unifying role in bringing together a broad spectrum of leaders from religious, cultural, social, political, and other spheres to participate in the national mission of achieving education for all.

The Third Channel can generate new partnerships and resources for basic education that might otherwise be closed to it, both nationally and internationally. There are major investments going into social communication from which basic education can benefit, as did Child Survival and Development in the 1980s.

As endorsed at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990, national leaders are urged to establish a multisectoral national task force to examine (or re-examine) the question of what are the basic learning needs of the society and what are the new and existing partnerships that might be employed to meet the basic learning needs of all.

On the basis of the above assessment, the specific role of formal, non-formal and informal channels of learning can be defined. The Third Channel can generate new partnerships and resources for basic education that might otherwise be closed to it, both nationally and internationally. There are major investments going into social communication from which basic education can benefit, as did Child Survival and Development in the 1980s. The commitment and direction of national leaders is essential to minimize potential problems of co-operation and co-ordination among many partners in utilizing the Third Channel for basic education purposes.

Prototype Communication Messages

While basic learning needs are country- and culture-specific, UNICEF does believe, based on its experience with *Facts for Life* that there is a place and a necessity for the development of a set of prototype communication messages that can be adapted for local use, getting more and better information to those who can use it, while helping to reduce the costs involved in developing new concepts and new techniques.

Facts for Life is a joint initiative of UNICEF, WHO, and UNESCO with the support of more than 100 international and regional organizations and non-

governmental organizations (NGOs). It contains information, in very simple language, on subjects such as the timing of births, safe motherhood, breastfeeding, child growth, immunization, diarrhoea, coughs and colds, home hygiene malaria, and AIDS. By demystifying health knowledge and putting it into the hands of families, it seeks to empower them with the knowledge and confidence needed to protect and promote family health. National leaders can help to develop an intersectoral commitment to nationally relevant "Facts for Life". *Facts for Life* has had an impact with communicators because it is clearly presented, informative, useful and adaptable in many different conditions. In the year since its launching, it is already being used in some 55 country programmes, has been or is being translated into 80 languages, and has stimulated in-country preparation of new chapters on issues specific to individual countries. This experience is directly applicable to the Education for All initiative and the broader definition of basic learning needs.

Developing national communication policy

National leaders can play an important role in the development of a coherent national communication policy and strategies to ensure coordination between bodies responsible for various channels of communication in a nation. The existence of a guiding philosophy for communication programme development is essential if the many channels grouped under the Third Channel are to assume their social responsibilities in meeting the basic learning needs of all. Such a guiding philosophy also helps to avoid inter-agency duplication and waste.

Modern mass media

While the Third Channel comprises many channels of communication and partners, both traditional and modern, there are some specific elements of national leadership required to optimize the use of modern technological means of mass communication in particular.

National leaders can encourage the media to utilize their educational potential to the full. The assumption of such responsibilities implies both the allocation of communication sector resources to social programming and to increasing the percentage of broadcasting hours devoted to direct or informal educational purposes. The FAO has recently estimated that at present only 5 per cent of broadcasting hours in developing countries is devoted to educational purposes; 95 per cent is devoted to entertainment and propaganda.

In countries where the government is not solely responsible for media management, where commercial broadcasting exists, can one expect socially responsible programming in such a free-market environment? The Children's TV Workshop (Sesame Street, with its spin-offs in many countries); the Rede Globo TV network in Brasil; the interest of Disney and

Hanna-Barbera in animation for development – all illustrate that, with evidence of a clear benefit, either in terms of profitability, good commercial politics, or goodwill gained from shouldering a social responsibility, social programming can attract private producers.

National leaders can promote intersectoral assessment of the impact of mass media and problems that may exist in population coverage. For example, in one country the national broadcasting corporation has the technical capacity to reach 85 per cent of the rural population. But a national survey revealed only a 15 per cent listenership. What is the problem? Is it in terms of content or relevance to people's lives? Is it a technical problem of quality of reception? Is it a problem of logistics or economics – for example, the availability of batteries and the ability of people to pay for them? National leaders can call for a review of programme content, quality, and technological alternatives to resolve technical problems.

New partnerships between national and international leaders and organizations are required to ensure that resource-poor countries have access to modern technologies. For example, a recent international report challenges the view that information technology is a luxury that Africa cannot afford. On the contrary, the report argues that African countries cannot afford to pass up the opportunities that this technology presents. Their development depends heavily on the efficient communication of information.

Thus, problems of foreign exchange shortage, system incompatibilities, lack of infrastructure or trained personnel, may not be automatic reasons for moving down a few rungs on the technology ladder. They present a challenge for both countries and international institutions to resolve together.

Conclusion

The Third Channel can be a valuable complement to formal and non-formal basic education opportunities. But it can only be so if national leaders challenge communicators in many walks of life to assume their role in meeting the basic learning needs of all; if they make this national challenge intersectoral in scope, requiring many partners and resources from many different areas; and if communication for basic education is underpinned by a guiding philosophy and national policy to ensure maximum benefit for all.

Further reading

There is still very little written work covering the broad scope of Third Channel activities. Useful examples from the health sector include:

Communicating for Health: Agent for Change. A joint publication of UNICEF and WHO (See also the film "Agent for Change", available from UNICEF).

Facts for Life, UNICEF, 1988.

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PART SIX:

Children in especially difficult circumstances

Introduction

Perhaps 15 per cent of children world-wide live under what are termed "especially difficult circumstances." These include over 100 million children working in hazardous or exploitative conditions, 50 million living on the streets, over 100 million who are abused or neglected in homes and institutions, plus over 20 million refugee or displaced children including those who have been physically or psychologically traumatized by armed conflict or natural disasters.

The following pages focus on only two of these issues: children in hazardous work and children in armed conflict situations. Consideration is given to physically disabled children in these situations.

Such problems as child abuse and neglect, violence in society, drug abuse, family disintegration, poverty, and armed conflict are all interrelated, but the web of causation is very dependent on local circumstances and is as yet too imprecisely defined to allow a co-ordinated universal approach to their solution. International conditions affecting national economic structures have also contributed to urban poverty and the increase of child labour, street children, and child neglect in developing countries.

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Children in armed conflict

In brief

During the past decade, more than 1.5 million children in poor countries have died as a direct result of war. Yet death is only the most dramatic and widely reported effect of armed conflict. For every child killed, three more have been wounded or physically disabled, and many more have been psychologically scarred.

War's all-embracing impact on a child's development envelops attitudes, relationships to people and society, moral values, and the mental framework for understanding society and life itself. Of necessity, many children of war adopt defiance and violence as a way of life, thus perpetuating the probability of future armed conflict.

The time is ripe for a global consensus on the concept of *Children as a Zone of Peace*. Such a commitment by the world's governments would protect children from armed attack and terrorism, and would ensure their exclusion from the forces of armed combat. It would also provide them with secure access to health, education, and social services in times of war, while exposing them to peaceful strategies for conflict resolution.

An estimated 22 million people have died in some 127 armed conflicts since the Second World War ended in 1945. The greatest impact has been felt by children, with the 39 wars of the past decade alone exacting a toll of 1.5 million children killed. In that same period, 4 million children have been physically disabled and 10 million psychologically traumatized.

Although almost all wars and war casualties occur within developing countries , over 80 per cent of military expenditures and 90 per cent of all arms exports come from industrialized countries.

The proportion of civilian deaths and casualties, having risen from under 10 per cent during the First World War to over 50 per cent in the

Second World War, jumped to over 75 per cent in the last decade. Until 1980, war deaths and casualties overwhelmingly occurred in Asia, but the carnage has since shifted to Africa, scene of two million of the last decade's three million war-related civilian deaths and casualties. All 15 current armed conflicts in developing countries are internal.

The mounting tide of terrorism and military repression, the widespread use of high-tech weapons of mass destruction, induced famine and other forms of war directed against entire populations, have particularly devastating effects on societies' most vulnerable and defenceless, women and children.

The effects on children

Psycho-social trauma is the most widespread effect of armed conflict. Denied the security that promotes natural childhood development and subject to sustained stress over a prolonged period of time, many children express feelings of sadness and anxiety and demonstrate behavioural disorders of various levels of intensity.

Studies in Lebanon and other Middle Eastern countries indicate that children become obsessed with war in conversations, play, and drawings. Indeed, defiance and violence appear to be part of the psychological coping mechanism that enables children to compensate for the sense of powerlessness and diminished self-esteem that affects them in conflict situations.

Initiatives such as "Operation Lifeline" in the Sudan, "Days of Tranquillity" in El Salvador and Lebanon, and the work of organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross show that concern for children can overcome the most intractable conflicts and generate support for services and relief efforts intended to protect and sustain children.

Evidence from Afghanistan shows that the incidence of disabilities nearly doubles among children living in zones of armed conflict, not just because of physical injuries, but because conditions of war foster a higher incidence of polio, nutritional deficiencies, and psychological trauma. Most of these disabilities are permanent and their effects are cumulative. War-induced trauma can even be transmitted across generations, as evidenced by the continuing need for therapy among families of Holocaust victims and survivors.

Attitudes, cultural restrictions, and ignorance, as well as a lack of resources, services, and trained personnel, all compound the problem of helping war-disabled children in developing nations. In situations of armed conflict, existing rehabilitation services are usually geared to adults, particularly fighting men and the military.

For example, in Angola and Mozambique, less than 20 per cent of the children (in some cases, less than 10 per cent) receive low-cost prosthetic devices. In Nicaragua and El Salvador, services are available for only 20 per cent of the children in need. Among Afghan refugees, somewhat less than 10 per cent of those being served rehabilitatively are children. There is a waiting list of up to one year for prosthetic devices for the Afghan victims of mine accidents.

In some instances, the very expense of replacing prosthetic devices as children grow and change is often used as a rationalization for ignoring their needs altogether. That lack of intervention means that deformity accelerates with continuing skeletal growth. Proper and specially designed services have to be provided on a long-term basis.

Child combatants aged under 15 are systematically conscripted, and sometimes forcibly abducted or "press-ganged" to serve in armed forces. The numbers are unknown, but anecdotal evidence from Mozambique, Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq indicates that there are hundreds of thousands of child soldiers.

The "Children as a Zone of Peace" concept should focus on safeguarding children from direct combat and terrorism in areas of armed conflict, ensuring that they are not separated from their families and that children's services and facilities are protected from disruption.

Once recruited, the children are trained in ways designed to destroy their links with family and community and to alter their moral values, all in the name of teaching them to kill. Accounts exist of incidents where combatants have forced children to participate in the murder of their own families.

Displaced and refugee children, who number approximately 15 million, suffer the additional traumas of being uprooted from home and resettled. Shifted from one temporary camp to another, the displaced are often subject to military control and not allowed to re-establish a normal life. Unlike refugees, who having crossed borders are eligible for support and protection from such international organizations as UNHCR, the displaced have no such guarantees since they remain within their own country. This becomes a substantial problem where access to relief and rehabilitation has been restricted by one or both parties to the internal conflict.

The numbers of unaccompanied children, already a problem in many poor countries, swell during periods of armed conflict. In the absence of family support, coping with and recovering from the trauma of war is even more difficult.

Children are separated from their parents for many reasons: the death, capture or "disappearance" of parents; abandonment; abuse that

drives them from the home; their abduction by the armed forces; or simply getting lost in the confusion of an evacuation. Clearly, special efforts are needed to protect and preserve the identity, nationality, and rights of unaccompanied children.

Protection and services for children in armed conflict

International conventions are not always relevant or enforcible in terms of providing care and protection for children caught up in internal armed conflicts. Essential relief services are often severely restricted where a government is unwilling to co-operate or where it cannot ensure the security of such efforts.

Some breakthrough agreements have been achieved by with conflicting parties to enable delivery of relief supplies and immunization services for children. Most recently, UNICEF and other agencies negotiated "Days of Tranquillity" in El Salvador and Lebanon to allow the vaccination of children and "Corridors of Peace" in the Sudan to allow relief supplies to women and children in zones of conflict.

In the case of El Salvador, combatants in the country's long civil war have stopped fighting each year to enable health teams to immunize the nation's children. This massive effort was achieved through a co-ordinated campaign by the El Salvador Ministry of Public Health with the active support of UNICEF, the Pan American Health Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Catholic Church, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other bilateral agencies. Each year immunization cease-fires have taken place for one Sunday in February, March, and April.

In Lebanon, "Days of Tranquillity" in 1987 saw various factions refrain from fighting and turn their military transport and communication networks over to the service of the vaccination campaign. Newspaper headlines proclaimed the event with the headline, "For Three Days All The Shots Belonged To UNICEF."

In mid-1989, "Operation Lifeline," the United Nations co-ordinated famine relief initiative for civilians in southern Sudan, succeeded in negotiating "Corridors of Peace," allowing access for relief supplies and vaccines.

These initiatives and the work of organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross show that concern for children can overcome the most intractable conflicts and generate support for services and relief efforts intended to protect and sustain children.

Even where assistance to people in rebel-controlled areas might be formally impossible because of the political implications, tacit, informal agreements have permitted relief and medical services to reach affected children. Such informal agreements could be greatly expanded and legitimized by a strong international consensus on "Children as a Zone of Peace." The problem is to gain access to the children and to win political

and financial support for their protection and rehabilitation on the scale required.

Children as a zone of peace

The Geneva Conventions of 1949 specifically deal with issues of children in armed conflict. They preclude all participation in hostilities of children below the age of 15, and require that "all feasible measures be taken to ensure the protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflict."

These conditions are reiterated in Article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. And Article 39 posits, "States' Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of...armed conflicts."

These conventions, however, have not elaborated how children affected by armed conflict are to be cared for, protected, and rehabilitated, nor have they proposed specific actions or a code of conduct to achieve these goals. An international consensus on "Children as a Zone of Peace" would help ensure that all conflicting parties would protect children and allow access for relief and rehabilitation efforts.

The Zone of Peace concept should focus on safeguarding children from direct combat and terrorism in areas of armed conflict, ensuring that they are not separated from their families, and that children's services and facilities are protected from disruption or occupation by parties to a conflict. It should also guarantee that children would neither be recruited into armed forces nor used in any capacity that might endanger their lives, health, or psycho-social development. Furthermore, all children adversely affected by armed conflict should be provided appropriate physical and psycho-social rehabilitation. Also, education and psycho-social rehabilitation of children should include peace education and training for the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

If these points were to be universally adopted, the world could find the means to provide protection, relief, and rehabilitation for all children affected by armed conflict.

The 1990 UNICEF Executive Board adopted a resolution for "creating a more peaceful world for children". The resolution "calls upon all States of the international community, as they reduce military expenditures ... to consider how they could channel part of the resources released to support country actions to reach the goals and objectives for the 1990s as set out by UNICEF."

A global network of concerned governments, NGOs, and UN agencies such as UNICEF, already actively works on behalf of children in armed conflict. The co-operation of all governments, however, is a prerequisite for success. A consensus of Heads of State or Government on "Children as a Zone of Peace" can be the embodiment of that co-operation.

Further reading

Children on the Front Line: The Impact of Apartheid, Destabilization and Warfare on the Children in Southern and South Africa. UNICEF . New York. 1987 (updated 1989).

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Betrayal: A Report on Violence Towards Children in Today's World, Caroline Moorehead ed. Doubleday. New York. 1990.

Working and street children

In brief

Child labour, street children, and the serious exploitation of working children remain widespread in developing countries, where families struggle for survival under the pressures of grinding poverty and growing consumerism. Many working children leave school or never complete even a rudimentary education due to their families' pressing need for income. In today's increasingly technological world, moreover, the perils of undereducation and deteriorating educational systems threaten the very economic survival of these children.

A multifaceted approach to the problem is needed encompassing legislation and enforcement, income generating opportunities and relevant educational and other services for working children.

While there is no accurate accounting of how many of the world's children contribute to their families' or their own economic support, the number of working children is surely in the hundreds of millions. Studies in some countries suggest that the number of street children is growing, just as the use of child labour continues to expand, often in hazardous and damaging conditions.

Working children are frequently exposed to jobs that are morally or psychologically damaging, hours that are excessive, conditions that are unsafe, or employment contracts that equate with slavery or, at least, with economic exploitation.

Also, the activities in which child workers are concentrated—agriculture, domestic service, and the urban informal sector—place them at high risk of maltreatment, denial of basic human rights, and lack of access to those who could help them.

Although such children are compelled to work by a combination of desperate poverty and community tradition, other factors including armed conflict, disasters, and rural-to-urban migration contribute to the number of working and street children.

A further inducement for children to work for money is the expanding array of consumer goods—radios, T-shirts, audio tapes, toys—available to them.

One consequence of the economic crisis in Third World countries is the ongoing deterioration of often deficient educational systems. Neither children nor parents see any benefit in giving up even a child's low wages for outmoded or irrelevant schooling that, when accessible, is frequently based on low-quality instruction.

By current estimates, about 20 per cent of primary school-age children in developing countries (about 100 million) do not attend school. Of those who do attend, one third drop out before completing four grades.

Yet, ironically, one of the main reasons why children work is to be able to afford school. Many Third World educational systems expect students' families to pay some fees, money the poorest families raise by putting their children to work before and after class. Many other children do not attend school because they cannot raise the necessary funds.

For many Third World families, the grinding burden of poverty has made reliance on their children's economic contribution an essential part of survival. In itself, that work may not be physically harmful, but today's definition of workplace hazards to children must be broadened to recognize the long-term harm stemming from inattention to a child's mental and social development, which can pose just as great a threat to his or her future as do permanent physical injuries.

On a national scale, the damage to children in the workplace undermines a country's social and economic progress far into the future. With economic survival becoming more dependent on brains than brawn, reducing child labour abuse is an important element of national economic development planning, as well as a social welfare concern.

Where the world stands now

Child labour was one of the first and most important items targeted for international co-operation. Since 1919, when the newly formed ILO adopted a convention fixing a minimum age for children's employment in industry, severe child labour problems in many countries have yielded to public pressure, regulation, and enforcement, particularly in the more visible factory and business sector.

However, the war on child labour abuse is far from over. In the formal sector, child workers continue to face serious maltreatment due to ineffective enforcement and public apathy.

According to one study, less than 6.2 per cent of the child brickworkers surveyed in Colombia had completed primary school. Yet as evidenced by another study in Egypt, many children must work to afford primary school. There, only about half of the child leather workers (70 per cent of whom

were working more than eight hours per day) were attending or planned to attend school. Depending on the number of children, the cost of education could amount to as much as one third of total household income.

The foremost remaining task in protecting working children is to find ways to combat the abuse of the large number of children not reached by existing measures...substantial legislative and administrative modifications may be required.

Major industries in some countries continue to depend heavily on cheap child labour. The Indian Government reports that children made up 37.5 per cent of the workforce in the carpet industry in 1985. Government efforts to raise the minimum age for such work to 14 have been resisted by employers who threaten to shut down their factories if they cannot hire younger children.

The "informal sector" made up of small, unregistered, or illegal shops and factories hides large numbers of working children who are at risk. Their workplaces are often unknown to labour inspectors. Their employers frequently deny or understate their existence as a workforce. Finding ways to combat abuse of the large number of children currently beyond the reach of existing measures has to be the foremost remaining task in protecting working children.

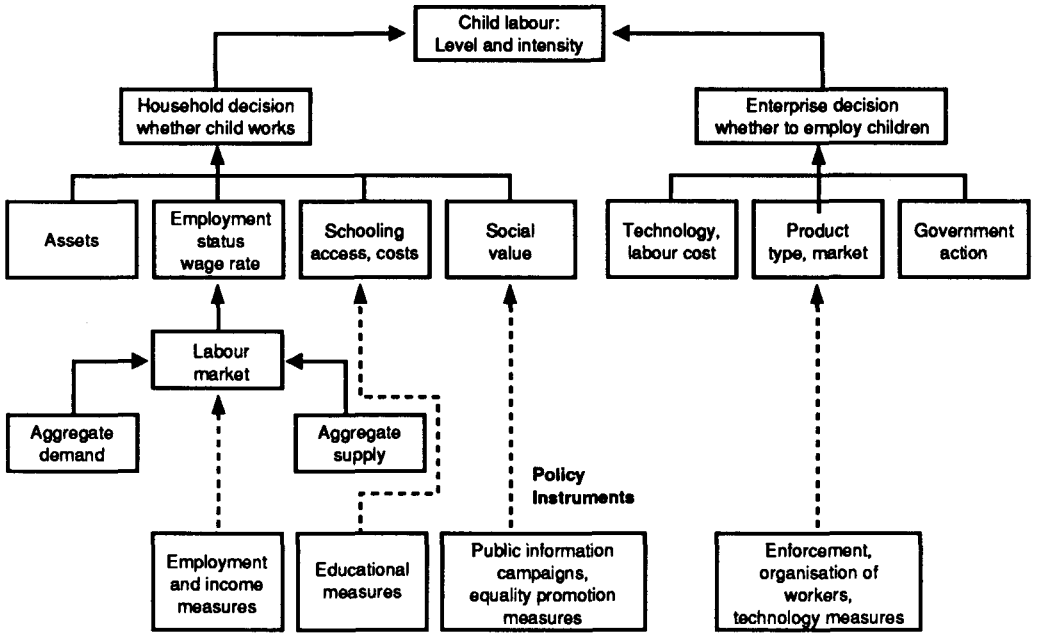
Some policies and programmes which have proved effective in urban factory and office settings could be extended to protect children in other circumstances. However, substantial legislative and administrative modifications may be required. National child labour legislation frequently exempts agriculture, small business, or household service—precisely the sectors in which most children work. It is also likely that special programmes or projects will be necessary to reach street children, agricultural labourers, domestics, and children in unregistered factories and brothels.

Planning programmes

The complex nature of the child labour problem calls for a multifaceted approach worldwide (see chart on next page), encompassing not only legislation and enforcement, but also action to help children generate the income they need and to provide working children with relevant education and other services. Governments, with NGO backing, must take a leading role regarding policies, regulations, and information campaigns for this attack on child labour abuse to be effective.

To start with, governments could launch low-cost national child labour reviews as part of their preparations for the 1992 ILO symposium on child labour, which aims at a renewed global commitment to fighting child labour abuse.

Child labour: a policy framework



Source: Combatting Child Labour, p. 15

These reviews should incorporate a thorough investigation of the child labour situation, in both formal and informal enterprises, with top priority given to identifying those children whose work constitutes a serious threat to their lives or to their physical, mental or social development.

Current public laws, regulations, and programmes designed to protect children from child labour abuse should be evaluated and strengthened to ensure more effective protection from workplace abuse.

Government efforts to assure free universal basic education to poor children could accomodate working children by instituting more flexible hours in existing schools or by arranging with employers for lesson time in the workplace.

Governments could also promote the establishment of national and local committees to monitor and publicize the situation of working children, while augmenting the efforts of labour inspectors, child welfare officers, and others responsible for protecting children against maltreatment in the workplace. (Trained volunteers can assist where budgets do not permit the hire of enough labour inspectors or child welfare workers to cover hard-to-reach workplaces).

Governments, the media and NGOs could take steps to inform children, parents, employers, and others about the dangers of child labour abuse,

the rights of working children, and the laws and regulations in force in the country. Children can be taught what working conditions to expect and whom to get in touch with when their employers break the rules.

These measures entail minimal financial outlay. All that a national situation review requires is government leadership. Developing a basic education curriculum that is relevant to the community, available free to poor children, and takes into account the special needs of working children, falls within the purview of efforts to improve any public education system, and therefore requires no additional expenditure.

Innovative measures

Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean abound in small projects that can be replicated or adapted to serve the needs of working and street children in other circumstances and locations.

In Brazil, CESAM, a church-run group trains children in various job skills as well as informing them of their rights as workers, sets specific working conditions in written contracts with employers, and successfully recovers training costs from employers.

In Asia, comic-style booklets help children cope with work-related problems. Readily understood even by semi-literate child workers and lower grade school children, the booklets can easily be adapted into other languages for use in other regions and situations.

Nairobi's Undugu Society offers education to working and street children in four low-income settlements, using regular school facilities with a modified curriculum and flexible hours to suit working children's needs. Bangladesh's Underprivileged Children's Education Programme offers similar services to more than 10,000 children, providing them with hot meals and health services as well.

Salão do Encontro in Brazil teaches working children new vocational skills alongside the standard curriculum. The children are introduced to a wide range of production skills, including furniture, toys, handicrafts, vegetable growing, and animal husbandry. A Khartoum project trains Sudanese children to work as delivery messengers, equipping them with bicycles.

Since it is not feasible or practical to end child labour, particularly among the poorest groups, governments can act during the 1990s to protect such children from abuse, provide them with meaningful training, and institute flexible educational programmes that can bring schooling to children unable to attend conventional classes.

Further Reading

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Protecting Working Children, edited by William Myers. UNICEF (forthcoming from Zed Books, New York). 1990.

Conditions of Work Digest, Vol.7, "The Emerging Response to Child Labour." ILO. Geneva. 1988.

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PART SEVEN:

Cross-cutting concerns

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The girl child: an investment in the future

In brief

Gender equality needs to be a clear objective and measure of childhood development. The 1990s could be the decade in which, finally, every opportunity is given to the girl child to acquire equal status to ensure that she grows and develops to her full potential in every nation. Assuring equitable access for the girl child to health, nutrition, work parity, and education demands the committed support and backing of the family, private voluntary and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and governments.

In many countries today, the girl child has a lower status and enjoys fewer childhood rights, opportunities, and benefits than the boy child who has the first call on family and community resources. With the girl child begins the process of inequality that the adult woman finds so difficult to overcome.

Even where poverty is not an overriding factor in childhood development, gender inhibits equal opportunities for girls. Customs and laws frequently make the girl child "the lesser child". Expressions such as the Arab "Why the silence? Has a girl been born," or the Korean "A girl lets you down twice, once at birth and the second time when she marries," testify to this lesser status. Family preferences tend to favour boys over girls; family decisions in the distribution of food, labour, health care, and access to schooling and other life-changing opportunities usually benefit boys more than girls.

Addressing the needs of the girl child could be the key to achieving a more equitable status and role for women in the long run. Of even greater urgency, however, is the need to ensure her right as a person to the full benefits of childhood.

Issues and trends

Defining the girl child requires gender-specific data which, school statistics aside, barely exist. The age of the girl child might broadly be defined as ranging from 0 to 19 years, the age ceiling differing according to country and culture.

The real gender differential in children is rooted in cultural perception. Anecdotal evidence indicates the pride with which a newborn male child is welcomed in several cultures, and, as cited above, the gloom and cynicism that greet the baby girl.

Parents often have higher aspirations for the boy child than for the girl child. Their expectation that the girl will and must marry somehow reduces her value, especially where a dowry is a condition of marriage since this reinforces the view of the girl as an economic liability. As a consequence, the girl child ends up with fewer investments, rights, and childhood entitlements. Early marriage in many traditional contexts becomes the only "development" option offered to the girl child.

Although age at marriage has increased and adolescent fertility rates have declined worldwide, early marriage of girls is quite prevalent. It is estimated that of girls aged 15 years, 18 per cent in Asia, 16 per cent in Africa, and 8 per cent in Latin America are married. By contrast, boys marry when they are considerably older as is evident from the marital status data of several developed and developing countries (see table next page). Early marriage leads to children bearing children. The demands of maternity on younger girls further constrain their capabilities to enjoy a satisfactory life as children with the full benefits of children's rights to health, nutrition, education, and employment.

Unequal health development

The fact that gender-specific data on children's health are often not available or not sufficiently reliable is a telling comment on the neglect of the gender dimension in child health and demography. However, trend analysis of data from 1945 to 1983 reveals that higher female mortality in early childhood appears to be concentrated in countries with a high preference for sons over daughters and a correspondingly lower status and lesser care accorded to girls and women.

In 30 developing countries, death rates for girls between the ages of one and four years have been found to be higher than or equal to the death rates for boys. This contrasts with the industrial countries where deaths of boys in the one-to-four age group are consistently higher than the rate for girls.

Recent studies in several countries in Asia and the Middle East also show gender disparity in child health care. More male children are immunized and treated by hospitals than female children. Mortality due to measles, diarrhoea, and respiratory infections is higher among female

children. Girls are weaned earlier; boys are breastfed longer; and girls are brought to hospitals usually in worse condition than boys.

The girl child's health vulnerability also stems from other social and cultural practices. In at least 25 countries in Africa, the Arab regions, and

Marital status of 15-19 year olds for selected countries by sex

Region\Country	Year	Female	Male
AFRICA		(percentage married)	
Botswana	1971	8.4	0.8
Burkina Faso	1975	53.4	3.9
Ethiopia	1982	53.2	5.2
Egypt	1976	21.1	3.7
Kenya	1969	33.4	3.4
Malawi	1977	47.3	5.8
Morocco	1971	30.9	3.8
Senegal	1976	33.2	1.1
Sudan	1973	41.0	4.2
Uganda	1966	46.2	6.5
United Rep. of Tanzania	1967	49.5	6.6
Zambia	1969	36.0	2.3
AMERICAS			
Argentina	1970	10.3	1.7
Bolivia	1976	15.7	3.8
Brazil	1980	16.0	2.3
Canada	1971	7.2	1.5
Colombia	1973	12.8	2.8
Costa Rica	1973	14.8	1.8
Cuba	1970	27.9	4.4
Ecuador	1974	18.1	3.7
Guyana	1970	14.5	1.5
Mexico	1978	20.1	4.8
Nicaragua	1971	20.0	3.9
Panama	1970	23.0	5.0
Peru	1972	16.1	5.3
United States	1980	8.2	2.7
Venezuela	1971	15.8	2.5

(continued next page)

Marital status of 15-19 year olds for selected countries by sex

(continued)

Region\Country	Year	Female	Male
ASIA			
Bangladesh	1974	71.8	7.4
Burma	1973	21.1	5.5
India	1971	56.3	17.4
Indonesia	1980	27.3	3.4
Iran	1976	33.9	6.4
Japan	1980	1.0	0.3
Korea	1980	1.7	0.2
Malaysia	1970	15.3	2.6
Nepal	1971	60.2	26.6
Pakistan	1981	30.7	7.3
Philippines	1980	13.0	3.2
Sri Lanka	1981	10.2	0.9
Thailand	1970	17.6	3.6
Turkey	1980	21.4	8.0
United Arab Emirates	1975	55.0	8.4

Source: Derived from United Nations Compendium of Statistics and Indicators on the Situation of Women. 1986, pp. 88-110

elsewhere, the practice of female circumcision places severe health risks, as well as emotional and pyschological strains, on an estimated 75 million girls as they enter adolescence and adulthood. This is clearly an area that calls for special advocacy and action in favour of the girl child.

Adolescent reproduction and early child bearing exact a heavy toll on young mothers and their children. National statistics from countries as diverse as Bangladesh, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Jamaica, Japan, Malaysia, Nigeria, the United Republic of Tanzania, and the United States of America indicate that girls aged 15-19 years are twice as likely to die in childbirth as mothers 20-24 years old. The risks can be five times as high for girls under 15 years of age. Such deaths are frequently caused by septic and rudimentary abortions.

The evidence points to the need to expand the coverage of health education, contraceptive knowledge and services, and the safe motherhood initiative to reduce the health and survival risks for girls and women.

Exploitative sexual practices, particularly trafficking, are also endangering the health of female adolescents on an alarming scale, a situation aggravated by rapid urbanization and socio-economic decline. The incidence and serious threat of sexually-transmitted diseases and AIDS among such girls should be a cause for serious concern to policy-makers, social planners, and development agents engaged in the protection of children's health and development.

Towards improved health for the girl child

The first step towards enhancing the health capability of the girl child is for concerned national, regional, and global bodies to recognize the problem of her greater vulnerability and to make commitments to meet her needs.

Governments, NGOs, and international development agencies must address the gender dimensions of (1) infant, child, and maternal mortality; (2) life expectancy; and (3) adolescent growth and reproductive care.

Health sector planning, programming, and budgetary allocations must reflect positive actions to bridge such gaps as may exist in coverage and benefits between boys and girls.

Traditional practices harmful to the girl's physical, mental, and emotional health must be abolished through appropriate policy and advocacy actions.

To ensure that the bearing of children by children stops, intensive awareness campaigns should be organized drawing on religious and social organizations as well as the traditional and modern media, leading to, among other things, legislative changes.

The burden on the girl child has to be reduced by increasing access to community-based child care, fuel, and water and sanitation services, thereby enabling her to benefit from health, education, and other socio-economic interventions.

Disparity in nutrition

There is evidence that gender differences affect child-feeding practices in several countries. A 1982 study of three-to-eight-month-old infants in Jordan showed that two-to-four times as many male as female infants received a wide variety of weaning foods, including eggs, fruit, meat, and vegetables. Fatty and milky foods are preferentially given to boys in India, while a more diluted weaning diet is fed to infant girls in Bangladesh. In several Latin American and African countries, protein foods are given to boys first.

Such gender discrimination results in the lower nutritional status of girls. A 1989 study in Pakistan showed 61 per cent of girls compared to 52 per cent of boys aged under five to be malnourished.

In many cultures, mothers consider their own nutritional needs secondary to those of male family members, an attitude they transfer to their

daughters. Such cultural factors, combined with poverty, can result in small mothers giving birth to low birth weight babies.

Towards nutritional equity for the girl child

Public policy on food and nutrition must take into account the family's responsibility, not just that of the women but the men as well, in ensuring nutritional equity for the girl child. Public policy must also ensure that food is available and accessible.

Mothers, as food allocators in the household, and the men, including fathers, indeed, all care givers, should be sensitized, mobilized, and trained to promote the girl child's right to a fair share of food and the other resources necessary for her growth.

Gender-sensitive data collection, monitoring, and surveillance in nutrition has to be encouraged, and the knowledge so acquired used to design appropriate strategies and responsive programmes, as well as to increase public awareness of this issue.

Addressing the needs of the girl child could be the key to achieving a more equitable status and role for women in the long run. Of even greater urgency, however, is the need to ensure her right as a person to the full benefits of childhood.

The nutritional status of girls and young women should be bolstered through energy- and labour-saving measures such as improved food conservation and storage facilities aimed at *conserving* nutritional resources and *expanding* those very resources by encouraging cash or food subsidy schemes, supplementary feeding, home gardens, cash crops, and other skills.

The girl child as a source of "invisible" labour

Girls work in large numbers and for long hours in and outside the household, but their labour is unacknowledged or under-represented in formal labour statistics.

Recent studies show significant inequalities in the gender distribution of household tasks and other chores among children. In Java, most young girls spend at least one-third more hours per day working at home and in the market than boys of the same age. In some age groups, the difference is as much as 85 per cent more hours. Malaysian girls five to six years old devote 75 per cent more hours each week to home or market chores than do boys of the same age. In the Cote d'Ivoire, girls aged 10 to 14 work 3.5 hours and boys 2 hours at household tasks. Although Nepalese children of both sexes spend the same amount of time tending animals, girls spend more time in agricultural tasks, replenishing the household water supply,

collecting fuel, and processing food than boys of the same age group.

Parental perception can also contribute to the underrating of the labour of the girl child. A study of the attitudes among 600 rural wives and husbands in Nigeria revealed that the majority of them believed that boys were more productive than girls of the same age. Men and women alike thought that parents should invest more in their male children, particularly on their feeding and schooling. Such parental attitudes explain why boys are often given greater opportunities to learn economically valuable skills than girls.

Making child labour less exploitative of gender and age

Since poverty often obliges children to work, solutions to child labour have to be linked to real efforts to alleviate poverty. The immediate need, however, is to make child labour less exploitative of both gender and age and more useful and gainful.

This call for appropriate legislation and training programmes to transform the compulsory aspect that underlies the very concept of child labour into an opportunity for the children to combine learning with earning.

Gross national productivity statistics and employment planning strategies should give greater visibility and added value to the work of the girl child, just like women's work.

Legal and welfare provisions should be introduced as necessary to eliminate exploitation while providing a safe and protected working environment for the girl child.

Gender disparity in education

It is in the field of education that social statistics of children have been most systematically collected and disaggregated. Out of more than 100 million children with no access to primary schooling in 1990, at least 60 million are girls. Of the world's almost one billion adult illiterates, two thirds are women. As long as the girl child is denied access to education or is forced to drop out of school early, such disparities in human development will continue.

While parity between boys and girls or even higher female enrolment has been achieved, for example, in the Caribbean and Latin America, as well as in Botswana, Lesotho, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, substantial inequality remains in most developing countries. Currently, the percentage of 6-to-11-year-old boys and girls in primary schools was approximately 88 per cent and 72 per cent, respectively, in the Middle East and North Africa, 48 and 37per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, and 78 and 59 per cent in South Asia.

In 68 out of 83 developing countries, primary school enrolment ratios for girls are lower than for boys (in five countries, the ratio is between 28 and 45 per cent). At secondary level, 58 out of 78 countries have lower enrolment ratios for girls than boys.

Gender disparity in education is influenced by the lack of educational facilities and cultural norms, which hold that girls are only "born to marry" and, therefore, hardly worth educating. Gender stereotyping in school textbooks and curricula reinforce such negative perceptions.

Towards educational parity for the girl child

A primary education is a minimum requirement for improved female status, empowerment, and productivity. Education for women and girls is clearly a factor with singular beneficial effects on the quality of human life, infant and child survival and development, as well as economic productivity.

The renewed commitment of world leaders in the 1990 "World Declaration on Education for All" to "universalizing access and promoting equity" in education must and can be met. As the Declaration states:

> "The most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. All gender *stereotyping in education must be eliminated*".

In keeping with this goal, countries need to set specific targets and time frames within the current decade to reduce the primary-level gender gap progressively and to achieve gender parity in education by the year 2000. Concurrently, specific targets and time frames must also be established to reduce female illiteracy. A more comprehensive approach to educating girls through formal and non-formal channels with emphasis on social and educational parity for the non-formal system.

The training and recruitment of women teachers should be intensified so that they can serve as motivators and role models for girls and a campaign launched to ensure parental support and participation in educating girls.

To help boost enrolment and retention of young married girls and adolescent mothers in education, convenient child-care arrangements and supplementary feeding schemes should also be undertaken.

Enhancing the environment

A primary objective for family, government agency, intergovernmental agency, NGO, and voluntary development organizations should be to improve and enrich the environment for the girl child.

In the long term, all countries should commit themselves to the elimination of gender disparity and discrimination in childhood through appropriate political, legislative and development measures.

In the short run, specific time-frame measures should be launched to reduce disparities and reach the girl child within existing social development programmes.

Multidisciplinary research on the status of the girl child should be carried out and the findings disseminated widely to policy makers and development planners to ensure that her needs feature in all development planning.

Effective information and communication campaigns should be prepared and launched to create and reinforce awareness of these special needs and of the girl child's unique and tremendous human potential.

Further reading

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Children and the Environment

In brief

The need to protect the environment, emerging as a high priority on government agendas and in the consciousness of the world, is closely linked with the survival and development of children. Key to improving the welfare of children and the environment is the pursuit of sustainable and equitable development. Great disparities in wealth and consumption between and within countries contribute to both social and environmental disequilibrium. In empowering women and meeting the basic needs of children and their families for health care, adequate nutrition, access to clean water and sanitation, and education the world will ensure a fairer, more productive environment for all its people, now and in the future.

The June 29, 1990, London agreement by 93 nations to halt the production of chemicals that destroy the atmosphere's protective ozone layer has been hailed as the most significant international agreement ever reached on the protection of the environment. It further manifested a new international attitude, a willingness on the part of leaders and people on every continent to take action to protect the environment. This bodes well for the children of the world whose future depends so heavily on how adults deal now with environmental issues.

In recent years a relatively new way of looking at management of the environment, one that emphasizes "environmentally sound and sustainable development," has also captured the world's attention. Mindful that the children alive today are the first representatives of all future generations, the concept of sustainable development brings children and their needs to the forefront of considerations on development and environment.

Intergenerational equity

Sustainable development raises the issue of a new type of fairness and equity rarely considered before—that of intergenerational equity. The

concept of intergenerational equity proposed in "Children and the Environment," a joint report by UNEP and UNICEF on June 5, 1990, encompasses the following three basic principles:

- Each generation is required to conserve the natural and cultural resource base, so that it does not unduly restrict the options of future generations.
- Each generation is required to maintain the quality of the planet so that it is passed on in no worse condition than it was received.
- Each generation should provide its members with equitable access to the benign legacy of past generations.

This concept of intergenerational equity must now take its place among concerns for equity between races and sexes. Achieving the latter two is proving difficult enough; attaining equity between generations is a more difficult goal. Unborn generations are not present to speak for themselves, so sustainable development requires that this generation accept responsibility for future generations.

In the past, it was assumed that succeeding generations would inherit a planet very similar to that inhabited by the current generation, with, perhaps, the added bonus of a safer, healthier, and easier life, thanks to new technology. This is no longer a justifiable assumption. The present generation is the first to be aware of the possibly Pyrrhic powers it possesses to radically change the planet's ecosystems, thereby bequeathing to its offspring a diminished inheritance of altered atmosphere, depleted soils, polluted water, and spoiled vegetation.

Thus justice between generations involves not only duties, but also rights, and not only between generations, but between members of the same generation.

Population, wasteful affluence, and poverty

Rapid population growth has a bearing on the issue of intergenerational equity. In addition to its planetary caretaker duties, today's generation also has a responsibility not to create a huge future generation, which present levels of natural resources, even if maintained, could not support.

While the population explosion is often regarded as the root cause of many of the world's environmental problems, analysis shows that the technologies and high levels of production of the industrial countries account for more of the world's pollution and environmental degradation than does the growth of population in developing countries. It is the gross disparity between unsustainable affluence and desperate poverty that pollutes our environment in more ways than one.

Unsustainable life-styles. Affluence is a major factor in environ-

mental degradation. The industrialized countries, and, to a lesser extent, the affluent people in developing countries, are the major producers of household garbage, toxic industrial waste, automotive exhaust fumes, chlorofluorocarbons, and commercial deforestation. Besides harming the environment, the excessively wasteful consumption patterns of the affluent pose a serious danger to their own health and well-being as manifested in the increased incidence of obesity, cancers, hypertension, stress, and accidents in the industrialized world.

A life-style that depends on the wanton exploitation of non-renewable resources or resources that are used up much faster than nature can regenerate is unsustainable. For children, affluence of this type is as much a threat to their future as poverty.

Perhaps the greatest potential for environmentally sound development lies in empowering women in development in areas ranging from pre-natal care and female literacy, to income-generating activities and leadership training for roles in community action programmes. Women are also important environmental educators.

Poverty and necessity. Interaction between poverty and environment leads to a downward spiral of degradation. Whereas the affluent pollute knowingly or thoughtlessly, the poor endanger the environment out of necessity. The environment of poverty perpetuates itself starting with poverty-stricken mothers overwhelmed by caring for large families, weakened by frequent pregnancy, rearing children whose basic needs of health, nutrition, and physical and mental well-being remain unfulfilled. The productivity of these children, when they reach adulthood, will remain well below their human potential, thus further exacerbating the vicious cycle of ill health and poverty.

Poverty at the national level has similar negative consequences for the environment. A major underlying reason for the ongoing destruction of the environment is the poverty and debt trap in which many developing countries find themselves. Countries cannot pursue sustainable economic policies when they are forced to deplete their forests, soil, water, and other natural resources to pay their external debt, provide for essential imports, and meet their basic budgetary obligations. Efforts to break this vicious cycle of poverty of nations, as well as of families and communities, is, therefore, an essential prerequisite to preventing further environmental degradation.

The degradation of the world's physical environment due to poverty, pollution, natural disasters, and unsustainable life-styles is both a cause and consequence of the degradation of the human environment characterized by high rates of mortality, morbidity, and fertility.

A family that is not able to protect its own children cannot be expected to protect the environment. A development programme that fails to address the basic human needs of the poor and vulnerable will not only be unsustainable, but it cannot be expected to elicit popular support and participation. Protection of the environment should, therefore, start with the protection of the most vulnerable element of the human environment—children.

Environment and basic needs

UNICEF believes that the pursuit of child survival, development, and protection through primary health care, nutrition interventions, education, and other measures is a pre-condition for establishing an environment conducive to sustainable development. Once the basic needs of survival, development, and protection are met, children as well as parents are enabled to be more sensitive to protecting the environment which nurtures and sustains the ability to meet such needs.

Once these basic needs are met, parents are also more open to family planning. When child death rates are high, parents often insure against an anticipated loss by having more children. Families which experience the death of a child are much less likely to use any method of birth planning.

Historically, sustained declines in birth rates have been preceded by sustained declines in child deaths. Programmes to reduce infant and child mortality, coupled with family planning programmes, will contribute to population stabilization sooner and at a lower level than either type of activity alone. (See the chapters in this sourcebook on Child Survival and Population Growth, and on Child Spacing.)

Both child survival and family planning need to be part of a broader approach to sustainable development, one that satisfies basic family needs for energy, food, and water, and overcomes disparities—whether these be ethnic, economic, or sexual—in access to these basics.

Women and environment

Perhaps the greatest potential for environmentally sound development lies in empowering women in development in areas ranging from pre-natal care and female literacy, to income-generating activities and leadership training for roles in community action programmes. Women are also important environmental educators.

A deteriorating environment means harder work for women, less food and care for children, and increased health hazards for both. In environmentally damaged areas of the Himalayas and the Sahel, for example, women and children are reported to spend from 100 to 300 days a year gathering fuel wood. Less time is thus available for more productive work and for child care, and less time and fewer resources are available for

acquiring food. As less water is available for personal hygiene, children become more susceptible to infection by disease or parasites.

One of the most effective ways of improving the situation of children is, therefore, to improve the environment surrounding women. Women's status in society; the availability of maternal and child health care, including knowledge of child spacing; increased family income; and the availability of education for women are all strong determinants of family size. Improvement in the status of women is, therefore, an important way to reduce population growth and thus contribute to a better human environment and sustainable development.

Water supply and environmental sanitation

Water is essential for life, not only for human beings but also for all species of flora and fauna that share our environment. Just as clean water can give life and protect health, polluted water can ruin it. Proper management of water resources is, therefore, vital for the protection of the environment.

Safe drinking water supplies and the disposal of sewage and solid waste have become key public health factors in the Third World, where a large proportion of all diseases are considered to be water-related.

Countries cannot pursue sustainable economic policies when they are forced to deplete their forests, soil, water, and other natural resources to pay their external debt, provide for essential imports, and meet their basic budgetary obligations.

Water is probably the most important indicator of the quality of our environment. Furthermore, its availability in adequate quantities is a basic prerequisite for any development of agriculture, infrastructure, trade and/or industry. Clearly, it is the most important natural resource in need of protection.

Programmes and projects for the protection and conservation of water sources and the provision of clean water supplies for human consumption and for small-scale food production are important environmental contributions, as are programmes that support community action for better sanitation and water disposal, in both rural and urban situations.

Environmental awareness and education

The quest to meet rapidly growing food needs, combined with insufficient attention to the environmental impact of agricultural policies and practices, has been a major source of environmental degradation. It is known today that the world's food needs can be met without concentrating land resources in the hands of a few and that small farms can be as productive as large ones, even without heavy reliance on polluting fertilizers and pesti-

cides. Policies favouring more equitable land distribution and promoting environment-friendly ways of assuring household food security can do much to reduce poverty and malnutrition while preserving the environment.

Food and environment

To assure basic education for all by the year 2000, as participants at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990 resolved to do, will be a major contribution to improving the environment. While it is essential to assure that children and illiterate adults achieve their rights to basic education, efforts must also be made to create appropriate perceptions of environmental problems, as well as solutions based on environmental awareness.

This can be done through all three centres of learning, the home, the community and the school, using formal and non-formal education and both traditional and modern forms of communication. Educated parents can instill patterns of behaviour that lead to marked savings in food, water, and energy consumption. Trained teachers can contribute much to increasing children's awareness of environmental issues. Effective environmental management will depend ultimately upon the widespread adoption of an environmental ethic—a code of conduct reflecting environmental awareness and the need for sustainable development.

The need for a global alliance

A recent opinion poll, conducted in 16 countries by Louis Harris and Associates for UNEP, shows that, world-wide, people are ready to accept more rather than less government regulation in environmental areas. The major environmental tasks require international solutions. Global warming, ozone depletion, acid rain, species depletion, tropical deforestation, and desertification are all now viewed as threats to all nations. The disposal of wastes has also become an international concern because toxic and hazardous wastes are crossing borders in increasing amounts.

All of these international issues are also intergenerational. Their effects are either difficult or impossible to reverse over the period of one generation. All increase concern for the welfare of children alive today and of children yet to be born. The achievement of environmentally sound and sustainable development will require actions by citizens as well as UN agencies and governments. Justice for children and for all future generations can only be gained through such a global alliance.

Further reading

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Urban children

In brief

The hazards of urban poverty take a high toll on children: tuberculosis, dysentery, meningitis, and measles are common in overcrowded slums. Poor sanitation, inadequate drainage, and pollution pose other risks: children live and play amidst mounds of rotting garbage and untreated human excrement.

The result is infant and child morbidity and mortality rates for the urban poor three or four times higher than the city's average. Unfortunately, accurate figures on the health, education, and nutritional status of poor urban children don't exist in many developing countries.

In fact, the urban poor remain largely invisible: slums don't appear on maps; schools may not serve the children of squatter settlements; and health and nutrition status is obscured by urban averages skewed by the high status of wealthier inhabitants.

Yet cost-effective primary health, sanitation, education, and nutrition strategies can help make the lives of the urban poor visibly better. And the poor themselves, if actively involved and organized, can be the most valuable partners governments have in reshaping existing situations.

The Third World's urban population is now larger than that of Europe (including the USSR), North America, and Japan combined: current estimates suggest a total of 1.4 billion people, with the total growing by over 50 million each year. Most Third World nations are still urbanizing and in many countries the process is rapid.

During the last three decades, top priority was generally placed on programmes addressing rural poverty. However, the equally urgent—and often sharply different—problems of urban poverty must not be ignored in the 1990s. The rate of urban growth alone calls for particular attention to the problems of cities' marginalized poor. Women, who more often than not

head poor urban households, and children are the most vulnerable among the urban poor.

Health and environmental problems of urban children

In the slums and shanty districts of Third World cities, infant and child mortality rates—where they are recorded accurately—may be three or four times the city average, with comparable disparities in children's health and social well-being.

Diarrhoea, dysentery, typhoid, intestinal parasites, and food poisoning can be traced to the many hazards of urban children's environment, including untreated human excrement, open mounds of rotting garbage, and water pollution in the waterways and ditches used by children as "playgrounds."

Crowding in makeshift housing helps spread such diseases as tuberculosis, influenza, meningitis, and measles. Other health hazards include frequent flooding and the lack of paved roads. Statistics that indicate higher access to water and sanitation in urban than in rural areas obscure the fact that the drinking water available to the urban poor often contains pollutants from industrial activities, untreated sewage, and garbage dumping.

The most serious health hazards in many Third World cities would be reduced or eliminated if people's homes contained a safe water supply and provisions for washing, cooking, laundry, food storage, and waste removal. In sharp distinction to environmental problems in industrialized nations, the most pressing "toxic waste" problem in the Third World, as pointed out by Hardoy and Satterthwaite, is the need to manage and dispose of human excrement and other solid waste, something that can be accomplished relatively cheaply.

A shift in health strategies for the urban poor is also crucial, from fragmented, unco-ordinated public and private services to a concerted effort, on the part of health ministries, hospitals, medical schools, and leaders at all levels, to put primary health care (PHC) principles into practice.

Since the WHO/UNICEFconference on PHC in 1978 in Alma-Ata, such efforts have started in many Third World cities. The Aga Khan health service and hospital in Karachi, Pakistan, exemplifies such an integrated PHC approach. The health service has three categories of health workers: community health workers at the household and neighbourhood level; women health visitors, working from health posts to supervise the community health workers; and doctor/nurse teams, working from health centers to support the community health workers and health visitors. The referral system links the community with the base hospital, which is also committed to supporting PHC.

Training for new health professionals at the hospital involves supporting community health needs, establishing role models for new medical

staff, and enlisting the collaboration of other sectors in improving health care.

Child nutrition and family consumption

Malnutrition is on the rise in Third World cities, according to the World Bank and other sources, where it is frequently more severe than among rural populations. Poor families in cities generally spend the major part of their income on food, and therefore suffer the most from the effects of recession and of structural adjustment programmes that have such side effects as rising unemployment, shrinking wages, and unstable food prices. As a result, even previously middle-income people are forced into poverty.

Extending basic services on a scale that would cover most settlements of the urban poor in developing countries is possible. It is feasible to provide access to land, cheap services, technical assistance, and credit facilities. To do this, the public sector needs to decentralize management schemes, assure occupancy rights to slum dwellers, facilitate informal sector businesses, and develop outreach extension services to community-based organizations, either directly or in collaboration with NGOs.

According to Caroline Moser's longitudinal study in the urban slums of Guayaquil, with the debt crisis, recession, and structural adjustment policies in Ecuador, the situation has deteriorated for the low-income population. Real wages have declined often to half their 1979 value, and work conditions have changed, with an increase in temporary and daily casual labour. Besides their heavy burden of domestic work due to the lack of water, services, and transport facilities, women also work increasingly out of the home. Female labour participation rates increased from 40 per cent in 1978 to 52 per cent in 1988.

Efforts to improve the nutrition of the urban poor need to include a variety of strategies. Nutrition education, societal support for breastfeeding, and similar measures can help solve child nutrition problems when there exists minimum food availability at household level. Interventions focusing on income and price policies, however, are of crucial importance when there is no food security at household level. When income and price policies are formulated, the survival patterns of the poor—some examples of which follow—need to be considered.

- The need to purchase water and fuel at exorbitant prices shrinks the meager incomes the poor earn from hawking, petty trading, and casual labour. The situation is exacerbated when more and more displaced people crowd into urban areas. They compete for or share limited income and resources with already-settled urban

poor who are compelled to meet kinship welfare obligations towards newcomers.

- If land is available for the urban poor to raise crops or livestock near their settlements, food intake can be improved. According to a recent study, 64 per cent of the urban poor in Africa grow some of their own food, mostly in the rural or peri-urban areas. Recognizing this fact, the Governments of Malawi, Burkina Faso, and Niger encourage urban agriculture to increase urban food supplies.
- Non-formal economic transactions between rural and urban networks are mutually beneficial. Without intermediaries, the urban poor receive food from rural kinship sources, and cash availability in rural areas improves as a result.

Such initiatives, based on traditional networks, as well as on new forms of social organization such as communal meal preparation and co-operative stores, should be encouraged. Macro- and meso-level government policies linked to such local initiatives could develop management and decision-making schemes free of bureaucratic and political biases that characterized past experiences. Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, various credit schemes for petty traders in Colombia, and community kitchens in Peru are just some examples of local-level initiatives institutionalized along these lines. On the other hand, government-sponsored consumers' outlets targeted towards the urban poor, such as CONASUPO stores in Mexico and special food markets in Sao Paulo in Brazil, proved to be successful when consumers participated in their management.

Children's socialization and education

A great majority of urban children want to learn marketable skills and often work long hours to earn money for school fees. They frequently fail to fulfill their intentions, however, because of the more urgent pressure to help their families survive.

Often, education policy and laws in developing countries aimed at protecting children fail to address the real-life situations children face in struggling for survival. Such policies, based on the ideals appropriate to industrialized, affluent societies, set standards that are unrealistic and unattainable for poor children and their families in developing countries. Because of their poverty and the lack of social policy directed to their needs, many children do not receive the attention they need and do not complete primary school.

Still, it is important to remember, as Annew and Milne noted, that "many poor families in the cities do not send their children out to work, many destitute girls do not become prostitutes, and there are people who would rather die than steal, even when they are starving".

Meaningful education and skills training programmes, therefore, as well as protective regulations, should be based on an understanding of the social life within families, neighbourhoods, and cultures of Third World cities, rather than on ideals from other societies.

Rather than continuing to work with inappropriate models, or waiting for further research, policy makers can learn the needs of children and families from them directly, through close contact and dialogue, as the Undugu Society did in Kenya.

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On the basis of the problems it identified, the Undugu Society established special schools for street children, initially called "schools for life" or non-formal schools. These schools, after an initial period of experimentation, have now been approved by the Kenyan Government. Their curriculum is shorter than the normal one and the subjects are relevant to the daily lives of the pupils. The methodology in teaching, usually reserved for adults, helps the learners discover knowledge for themselves. So far, Undugu schools have never experienced a shortage of learners.

A new approach to urban problems

In planning and carrying out a global strategy for children in the 1990s, governments must not fail to tailor their policies and institutions to meet the different needs of both urban and rural children. As a first step, commonly held anachronistic views about urban poverty must be shed.

For many years, officials and experts viewed Third World urban growth as cancerous, catastrophic, explosive, and critical— something to be resisted and reversed. This led to attempts to control city growth by bulldozing squatter settlements, expelling unemployed newcomers, and prohibiting changes in residence, among other measures. Governments withheld services from slum dwellers—including health care, drinking water, sanitation, and primary schools—lest the extension of basic facilities legitimize the squatters' land tenure.

According to Yue-man Yeung, "...many governments in Asia have adopted the twin policy measure of squatter eradication and low-cost public housing schemes in their vain attempt to come to terms with the housing problem. The most eloquent expression of the failure of the former is the

fiasco of relocating squatters from the Intramuros and Tondo in Manila to Sapang Palay, some 40 km away, in 1963. The project was a complete failure, for lack of employment opportunities and basic services in the relocated area, and squatters quickly drifted back to the city. The irony of the episode is that...the vacated land in the Intramuros is still not built upon as new construction would have to meet certain Spanish architectural style. It was a case of the planner's zeal to maintain standards being pushed to extremes. In spite of reduced building standards adopted and special financial arrangement, public housing schemes are still beyond the reach of most low-income households."

Even when official policy shifted from preventing to accommodating urban growth, the prevailing attitude to poor families was benign neglect.

One problem in assessing the needs of urban children is that virtually all available information is in the form of urban versus rural averages. Often there is no indication of the proportion of a city's population living below standards, and, since urban populations include nearly all the country's wealthy, averages tend to be higher for urban areas. Squatter settlements are not shown on many city maps, and records refer to unplanned areas and unwanted citizens in such negative terms as "illegal," "unemployed," "unregistered," "illiterate," "unskilled", and "un-organized."

Stigmatized by the rest of urban society, uprooted, and under permanent threat of eviction, often persecuted for engaging in begging, peddling, and other informal work, and with no skills to compete for better jobs, a large majority of the urban poor do not join the existing organizations through which they could advocate for change. Yet despite their scarce resources, poor people in Third World cities have survived in a hostile environment, through self-help, political alignments, and their own persistence. A major challenge for policy makers in the 1990s, therefore, is to follow the lead of the urban poor themselves and support the actions initiated within slum communities.

Spotlight on Cities, a recent WHO publication, has called for global efforts to:

- Raise awareness of the scale, nature, urgency, and "near desperation" of the predicament of the poor in many cities of the world;
- Shift urban health care strategies from simply trying to provide more hospitals and curative services to putting PHC principles into practice.

The basis for change

The Global Strategy for Shelter in the Year 2000 adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in December 1989 has drawn the attention of governments towards a hitherto underutilized resource: the knowledge, skills, and

man- and woman-power of those directly concerned, the inhabitants of the communities themselves.

Extending basic services, on a scale that would cover most settlements of the urban poor in developing countries, is possible. As Lee-Smith and Syagga's analysis of problems in African cities shows, a new mix of infrastructure services must be looked at when the habitat of the urban poor is planned. In many instances, these should include woodfuel supply and land for food production.

The same authors emphasize that the public sector can't provide shelter when per capita expenditures for urban services are declining and low-income populations in urban areas are growing rapidly. It is feasible, however, to provide access to land, cheap services, technical assistance, and credit facilities. To do this, the public sector needs to decentralize management schemes, assure occupancy rights to slum dwellers, facilitate informal sector businesses, and develop outreach extension services to community-based organizations, either directly or in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Low-cost technologies to upgrade living conditions and basic services in poor areas exist:

- A study by the World Bank has identified ways of collecting and treating urban sewage at one tenth to one twentieth the price of conventional systems. UNICEF-assisted water and sanitation projects have had extensive experience with such low-cost technologies that are installed and maintained by the communities served.
- In many cities, the cost of solid waste collection is reduced through community-based collection and offset to a large extent through the sale of recycled materials.
- The capital expenditure required to extend piped water to shanty towns and other unplanned communities is recovered through fees paid by the inhabitants. Residents of neighbourhoods unserved by city water supplies generally buy water from vendors, often paying 20 times or more the fees paid by their richer neighbours for piped water.
- PHC and non-formal basic education, through organized community participation and trained community members, substantially reduce costs of government-provided health and education services.

Child-centred urban programmes based on a convergence of services, cost-effectiveness, and community involvement can make it pos-

sible to reach the goals for children in the 1990s. Such programmes need vigorous endorsement by governments, supported by aid agencies and loans from financial institutions.

Further reading

Spotlight on the Cities, by I. Tabibzadeh, A. Rossi-Espagnet, and R. Maxwell. WHO. Geneva. 1989.

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Squatter Citizen: Life in the Urban Third World, by Jorge E. Hardoy and David Satterthwaite. Earthscan Publications. London. 1989.

"Access by the Urban Poor to Basic Infrastructure Services—Africa Region," by Diana Lee-Smith and Paul Syagga. "Access by the Urban Poor to Basic Infrastructure Services—Asia Region," by Yue-man Yeung. These background papers were prepared for the Infrastructure and Urban Development Division of the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank. 1989.

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URBAN POPULATION

	% living in urban areas*	Average annual growth rate (%)	
	1988	1965-80	1980-87
LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN	**59**	**3.6**	**3.6**
Argentina	86	2.2	1.8
Bolivia	50	2.9	4.3
Brazil	75	4.5	3.6
Chile	85	2.8	2.3
Colombia	69	3.5	3.1
Costa Rica	52	3.7	4.4
Cuba	74	2.7	1.5
Dominican Rep.	59	5.3	4.2
Ecuador	55	5.1	4.8
El Salvador	44	3.5	2.0
Guatemala	41	3.6	3.7
Guyana	34		3.1
Haiti	29	4.0	4.0
Honduras	42	5.5	5.5
Jamaica	51	3.4	2.6
Mexico	72	4.5	3.3
Nicaragua	59	4.6	4.5
Panama	54	3.4	3.0
Paraguay	46	3.2	4.5
Peru	69	4.1	3.5
Trinidad & Tobago	67	5.0	3.6
Uruguay	85	0.7	0.9
Venezuela	89	4.5	3.7
MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA	**54**	**5.3**	**4.5**
Algeria	44	3.8	3.9
Egypt	48	2.9	3.6
Iran, Islamic Rep.	54	5.5	5.0
Iraq	73	5.3	4.8
Jordan	67	5.3	5.1
Kuwait	95	8.2	4.9
Lebanon	83	4.6	1.9
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	68	9.7	6.5
Morocco	47	4.2	4.3
Oman	10	8.1	8.0
Saudi Arabia	76	8.5	5.8
Syria	51	4.5	4.4
Tunisia	54	4.2	2.9
Turkey	47	4.3	3.3
United Arab Emirates	77	18.9	4.3
Yemen	23	10.7	8.1
Yemen, Dem.	42	3.2	4.5
AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA	**31**	**6.4**	**6.0**
Angola	27	6.4	5.7
Benin	40	10.2	7.3
Botswana	22	15.4	8.2
Burkina Faso	9	3.4	5.1
Burundi	7	1.8	8.9
Cameroon	47	8.1	6.5
Central African Rep.	45	4.8	4.4
Chad	31	9.2	7.4
Congo	41	3.5	3.9
Côte d'Ivoire	45	8.7	6.6
Ethiopia	12	6.6	4.0
Gabon	44	4.2	6.4
Ghana	33	3.4	4.2
Guinea	24	6.6	5.5
Kenya	22	9.0	8.2
Lesotho	19	14.6	7.0
Liberia	43	6.2	5.7
Madagascar	24	5.7	6.1
Malawi	14	7.8	7.7
Mali	19	4.9	3.9
Mauritania	39	12.4	7.4
Mauritius	42	4.0	1.3
Mozambique	24	11.8	10.2
Namibia	55		5.6
Niger	18	6.9	7.0
Nigeria	34	4.8	6.1

URBAN POPULATION

	% living in urban areas*	Average annual growth rate (%)	
	1988	1965-80	1980-87
AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA (continued)			
Rwanda	7	6.3	7.9
Senegal	38	4.1	3.6
Sierra Leone	31	4.3	5.2
Somalia	35	6.1	5.9
South Africa	58	2.6	3.3
Sudan	22	5.1	4.1
Tanzania	30	8.7	11.2
Togo	24	7.2	6.3
Uganda	10	4.1	5.2
Zaire	39	7.2	4.6
Zambia	54	7.1	6.7
Zimbabwe	27	7.5	5.5
ASIA	**23**	**4.4**	**3.9**
Afghanistan	21	6.0	3.2
Bangladesh	13	8.0	5.5
Bhutan	5	3.7	5.1
China	21	2.6	1.7
Hong Kong	93	2.3	1.7
India	27	3.6	4.0
Indonesia	27	4.7	4.5
Kampuchea	11	1.9	3.8
Korea, Dem.	66	4.6	3.7
Korea, Rep.	69	5.7	3.9
Laos	18	4.8	5.7
Malaysia	41	4.5	4.5
Mongolia	51	4.5	2.9
Myanmar	24	2.8	2.3
Nepal	9	5.1	7.2
Pakistan	31	4.3	5.0
Papua New Guinea	15	8.4	4.6
Philippines	41	4.0	3.9
Singapore	100	1.6	1.1
Sri Lanka	21	2.3	1.4
Thailand	22	4.6	4.6
Viet Nam	21	4.1	3.5
INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES	**74**	**1.8**	**1.0**
Albania	35	3.4	2.5
Australia	85	0.2	1.3
Austria	57	0.1	0.5
Belgium	97	0.5	0.3
Bulgaria	69	2.8	1.4
Canada	76	1.5	1.2
Czechoslovakia	67	1.9	1.2
Denmark	86	1.1	0.3
Finland	66	2.5	1.8
France	74	2.7	0.5
Germany, Dem.	78	0.1	0.2
Germany, Fed.	86	0.8	0.1
Greece	62	2.5	1.3
Hungary	59	1.8	1.1
Ireland	58	2.2	1.5
Israel	91	3.5	2.0
Italy	68	1.0	0.5
Japan	77	2.1	0.7
Netherlands	88	1.5	0.4
New Zealand	84	1.5	0.9
Norway	74	5.0	0.9
Poland	62	1.8	1.7
Portugal	32	2.0	1.8
Romania	50	3.4	0.9
Spain	77	2.4	1.3
Sweden	84	1.0	0.2
Switzerland	59	1.2	0.8
United Kingdom	92	0.5	0.3
USSR	67	2.2	1.5
USA	74	1.2	1.0
Yugoslavia	49	3.0	2.4

Source: The State of the World's Children 1990, Table 5.
(For explanations and qualifications to specific figures, see notes there.)
* Percentage of population living in urban areas as defined according to the national definition used in the most recent population census.
Figures for country groupings are median values.

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