

Exploring New Ways of Knowing - Preparing Youth for the 21st Century

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Sciences & Humanities ♦ Innovation & Sustainable Development



♦ Technology & Global Bioethics

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The State of the World's Children 2006
Childhood Under Threat



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Over the next 30 years almost 98 per cent of global population growth is going to take place in developing countries. What this new generation does will largely determine the future of our planet, and influence how we advance science and knowledge-building. The hazards of youth at risk of exclusion in these regions is enormous, no longer threatening a minority but whole sections of society along with our collective destiny. To secure our common future peacefully, we need a new international vision and intergenerational dialogue that encourages the growth and evolution of civil society for the future.

Although we all believe our human species to be the highest point on the evolutionary scale, there is one critical area in which we have failed to evolve, one area in which we do not represent an improvement upon our predecessors. And this is a failure so fundamental, so critical, that our long-term survival is at stake. Ultimately, it poses a greater threat than war, poverty, hunger, crime, racism and tribalism—even of the genocidal variety—combined.

That fundamental failure is this: We are not protecting and preserving our own. Our notion of the human "family" as the safeguard of our species has not evolved. Instead, it has gone in the opposite direction—it has devolved.

CHILDHOOD

- Number of children in the world: 2.2 billion.
- Number of children living in developing countries: 1.9 billion.
- Number of children living in poverty: 1 billion – every second child.
- The under-18 population in Sub-Saharan Africa: 340 million;
in Middle East and North Africa: 153 million;
in South Asia: 585 million;
in East Asia and Pacific: 594 million;
in Latin America and Caribbean: 197 million;
and in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS): 108 million.

SHELTER, WATER AND HEALTH CARE

- 640 million children in developing countries live without adequate shelter: one in three.
- 400 million children have no access to safe water: one in five.
- 270 million children have no access to health services: one in seven.

EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

- More than 121 million primary school-age children are out of school; the majority of them are girls.
- Number of telephones per 100 people in Sweden, 162;
in Norway, 158; in South Asia, 4.
- Number of Internet users per 100 people in Iceland, 65; in Liechtenstein, 58; in Sweden, 57; in the Republic of Korea and the United States, 55; in Canada, Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands, 51; and in South Asia, 2.

SURVIVAL

- Total number of children younger than five living in France, Germany, Greece and Italy: 10.6 million
- Total number of children worldwide who died in 2003 before they were five: 10.6 million. Most of these deaths could have been prevented.

- Daily toll of children in the world who die before their fifth birthday: 29,158
- The number who die each day because they lack access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation: 3,900; those who die each year: 1.4 million.
- Ranking of the 10 countries where children are most likely to die before their fifth birthday, in descending order: Sierra Leone, Niger, Angola, Afghanistan, Liberia, Somalia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau.

IMMUNIZATION

- Percentage of infants who receive DPT3 vaccine: 76.
- Number of infants vaccinated each year: 100 million.
- Number of child lives that could be saved each year through routine immunization: 2.2 million.

MALNUTRITION

- Percentage of infants with low birthweight: in Yemen, 32; Sudan, 31; Bangladesh, 30; India, 30; and Sweden, 4.
- Percentage of children under five who are moderately and severely underweight: in Sub-Saharan Africa, 29; Middle East and North Africa, 14; South Asia, 46; East Asia and Pacific, 17; Latin America and Caribbean, 7; and in CEE/CIS, 6.
- Percentage of children under five who are severely underweight: in Sub-Saharan Africa, 8; Middle East and North Africa, 2; South Asia, 16; East Asia and Pacific, 3; Latin America and Caribbean, 1; and CEE/CIS, 1.

LIFE EXPECTANCY

- Life expectancy for a child born in Japan in 2003: 82 years;
- Number of Japanese children who died before they were five years old: 5,000.
- Life expectancy for a child born in Zambia in 2003: 33 years; number of Zambian children who died before they were five years old: 82,000.
- Worldwide life expectancy has increased by seven years in the past 30 years: from 56 to 63.
- Increase in life expectancy in Middle East and North Africa since 1970: 16 years.
- Number of countries in Africa where life expectancy has declined since 1970: 18.

HIV/AIDS

- Percentage of 15- to 49-year-olds in Botswana who are HIV-positive: 37.3; in Swaziland, 38.8. Number of children who have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS worldwide: 15 million; the number of children living in Germany: 15.2 million; the number in the United Kingdom: 13.2 million.
- Estimated number of children under 14 years old in sub-Saharan Africa who are HIVpositive: 1.9 million; the number of children under five living in Spain: 1.9 million.
- Total number of new HIV infections in 2003: 5 million; number among people under the age of 25: > 2.5 million.
- Global number of people living with HIV/AIDS: 38 million; number between 15 and 24 years old: > 10 million; number of these who are female: 6.2 million.

COST OF TREATING HIV/AIDS

- Percentage of adults in Mozambique who are infected with HIV: 12.
- Approximate lowest possible cost of generic antiretroviral therapy for one year: \$300.

- Per capita annual income in Mozambique: \$210. Percentage of people in developing countries who need antiretroviral therapy but do not have access to it: 93.

CONFLICT

- Number of major armed conflicts from 1990 to 2003: 59.
- Number of these conflicts that involved war between countries: 4.
- Number of the world's 20 poorest countries that have suffered a major civil war in the past 15 years: 16.
- Estimated number of children killed in conflicts since 1990: 1.6 million.
- Estimated rise in the under-five mortality rate during a 'typical' five-year war: 13 per cent.
As many children have been forced by conflict or human rights violations to leave their homes as there are children under five living in the United States: 20 million.
- Number of children killed in Rwanda in 90 days in 1994: 300,000;
number of children born in Canada in 2003: 319,000.
- The number of times the children of Iraq have been caught up in conflict in the past 20 years: 3.
Almost half the population is under the age of 18.
- Total number of years Iraq was under comprehensive UN sanctions: 12.
- Estimated number of hazardous sites in Baghdad, mostly related to cluster bombs and caches of dumped ammunition: 800.
- Total number of primary schools in Iraq: 14,000; schools without an adequate water supply or sewage system in Iraq: 7,000; those without a supply of safe water: 3,700.
- Cost of basic education supplies for Iraqi children of primary school age: \$5.
- Gross female enrolment in Iraqi secondary schools, as a percentage of males: 62; world average: 92.

PROTECTION ABUSES

- The number of children trafficked each year is the same as the number of children under five living in Australia: 1.2 million.
- The number of children sexually exploited in the multibillion-dollar commercial sex industry is the same as the number of children living in Belgium: 2 million.

A WILLING WORLD CAN END POVERTY, CONFLICT AND HIV/AIDS

- Number of Millennium Development Goals: 8; those related to children: 8. Estimated annual cost required to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015: \$40 billion-\$70 billion.
- World military spending in 2003: \$956 billion.
- Members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee: 22.
- Percentage of gross national income that the UN recommends they devote to official development assistance: 0.7.
- Number of countries that met or exceeded the target in 2002: 5.
- Total number of countries that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child: 192;
countries that have not yet ratified the Convention: 2. [Somalia and USA]
- Countries that have ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict: 82.
- Countries that have ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography: 83.

Environmental Science and Planet Earth: Realities and Facts
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Global Bioethics
<http://www.paep.ca/en/CIYL/2006/doc/Global%20Bioethics%202006.pdf>



After Homo Sapiens, What Next?
Pamela J. Peck, Ph.D., Cultural Anthropologist
http://www.paep.ca/en/CIYL/2002/doc/peck_homo_sapiens.pdf



This Canadian International Youth Letter (CIYL) is part of a new series with an emphasis on science and human affairs. The series incorporates cultural and youth studies as well as research-based information on the science of human behaviour, including the effects of war, destructiveness and violence on youth development, global mental health and the environment. Under the theme **'Exploring New Ways of Knowing – A Meeting of Minds, Science and Human Experience'** it is part of the new project of the **International Youth Network for the Advancement of the Sciences, Humanities and Global Bioethics (IYNet)**

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