



## Children-at-Risk Fact Sheet

The world's population has reached an all-time high of 6.8 billion, with 27% of the population under the age of 15. According to UNICEF, almost half of the world's 2.2 billion children alive on the planet today are growing up in poverty- 1 billion. Taking an honest look at the state of the average child growing up in the world is sobering. While there has been unprecedented progress and development in the past century, millions of children are still abused and exploited. We must continue to use creative and strategic solutions towards creating a world where all children are safe, nurtured, and valued.

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### Hunger and Malnutrition

In the world today, enough food is produced everyday to adequately feed everyone. Yet, over a billion people do not have enough to eat. Not only does malnutrition cause deaths every year, but when children are malnourished, they are much more likely to become sick and not properly develop.

- Every six seconds a child dies because of hunger and related causes (FAO 2004).
- One out of four children - roughly 146 million - in developing countries are underweight (UNICEF).
- Lack of Vitamin A kills a million infants a year (UNICEF).
- One in three children in developing countries have stunted growth due to inadequate nutrition (UNICEF).
- It is estimated that 684,000 child deaths worldwide could be prevented by increasing access to vitamin A and zinc (World Food Program 2007).

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### HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a global pandemic disproportionately affecting poor communities. In some countries, so many people have died of AIDS that it is literally transforming nations. Children are especially vulnerable to becoming sick or having their lives disrupted by losing a parent.

According to the UNAIDS, in 2008:

- 2.1 Million children were living with HIV.
- 280,00 children died of AIDS.
- 430,000 children under the age of 15 were infected with HIV.
- 15 million children have been orphaned by AIDS, greater than the population of children in the United Kingdom. 11.6 million orphans are in Sub-Saharan Africa alone.

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### Clean Water

Access to clean water is essential to the health of every child. While often ignored, diseases from drinking unsafe water has taken the lives of millions of children and caused countless absences from school.

- About 4,500 children die each day- or 1 child every 20 seconds- from unsafe water and lack of basic sanitation facilities (UNICEF).
- 84% of the deaths due to unclean water in the world are children under the age of 14 (World Health Organization).
- Children living in impoverished conditions often carry 1,000 parasitic worms in their bodies at any time (UN Water 2008).

- Millions of women and children spend several hours a day collecting water from distant, often polluted sources (UNHCR 2006).
- According to statistics from the UN and WHO, in the past 20 years, diarrhea has killed more children than all the people lost to armed conflict since World War II.

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## **Economic and Sexual Exploitation**

Children are especially vulnerable to being sexually and economically exploited. Across the world, poverty forces children to work, and makes them more open to being trafficked.

- There are an estimated 158 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 are engaged in child labor (UNICEF).
- Every year, 22,000 children die in work-related accidents (International Labor Organization).
- 8.4 million children are trapped in slavery, trafficking, debt bondage, prostitution, pornography and other illicit activities (International Labor Organization).
- 1 million children are exploited by the global commercial sex trade (U.S. Department of State, 2005.)
- Nearly half of the victims of human trafficking are children (UNESCO).
- 1.8 million children were involved in commercial sex work worldwide (UNICEF).

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## **Children in War**

War and armed conflict radically affects the lives of millions of women and children worldwide. The physical, mental, and emotional well-being of children in conflict is put at risk. The scope of the issue is immense.

- In 2008, 18 million children were forced to leave their homes as either a refugee or an Internally Displaced Person (UNHCR).
- There are 200,000 to 300,000 children currently being used as soldiers in conflicts worldwide (Human Rights Watch).
- More than 2 million children have died and 6 million have been permanently disabled or seriously injured as a direct result of armed conflict over the last decade (UNICEF).
- Between 8,000 and 10,000 children are killed or maimed by landmines every year (UNICEF).
- Civilian fatalities (mostly women and children) in wartime climbed from 5 per cent at the turn of the century, to 15 per cent during World War I, to 65 per cent by the end of World War II, to more than 90 per cent in the wars of the 1990s (UNICEF).

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## **Education**

Access to an education is an important part of not only the development of a child, but of entire communities and countries. Education is often crucial in breaking cycles of poverty and oppression. While there has been many improvements in the last 50 years in increasing the amount of kids in school, much progress is still needed.

- 115 Million children worldwide are not in school, 62 million are girls. (UN Human Development Report 2007-2008)
- There are 37 countries with net secondary school enrollment is less than 40%, 26 of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa. (UN Human Development Report 2008-2009)
- For every year of education, a person's wages increase by a worldwide average of 10 percent.

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## **Homelessness and Street Children**

Every child has the right to a safe and stable place to live. Children living on the streets face violence, exploitation, neglect, chemical addiction, and other abuses. The vast majority of children raised on the streets later have emotional, physical, and mental damage.

- Every year in America, 1 in 50 children experience homelessness any given year (National Center on Family Homelessness).
- 39% of the homeless population in America are children (National Coalition for the Homeless).
- While the data on street children worldwide is difficult to gather, UNICEF estimates that there are around 100 million children living on the streets.

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## **The Girl Child**

Because there have been economic, social, political, and cultural marginalization of women across the globe, female children are one of the most vulnerable populations on the earth. Ensuring the protection of women and girls is essential to creating safe and progressive communities.

- Multiple studies have calculated that there are between 60 and 107 million girls missing from the earth today because of discrimination against female children. They have been lost due to infanticide, gender-selective abortion, or other gender based discrimination.
- Only 43% of girls of appropriate age in developing countries do not attend secondary school (UNICEF).
- In 2002 alone, 150 million girls experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of physical and sexual violence (UNICEF).
- Nearly 1 in every 5 girls in developing countries that start primary school do not finish (UNICEF).
- 130 million girls and women in the world have been subjected to Female Genital Mutilation (UNICEF).