



Global Citizenship in

ACTION

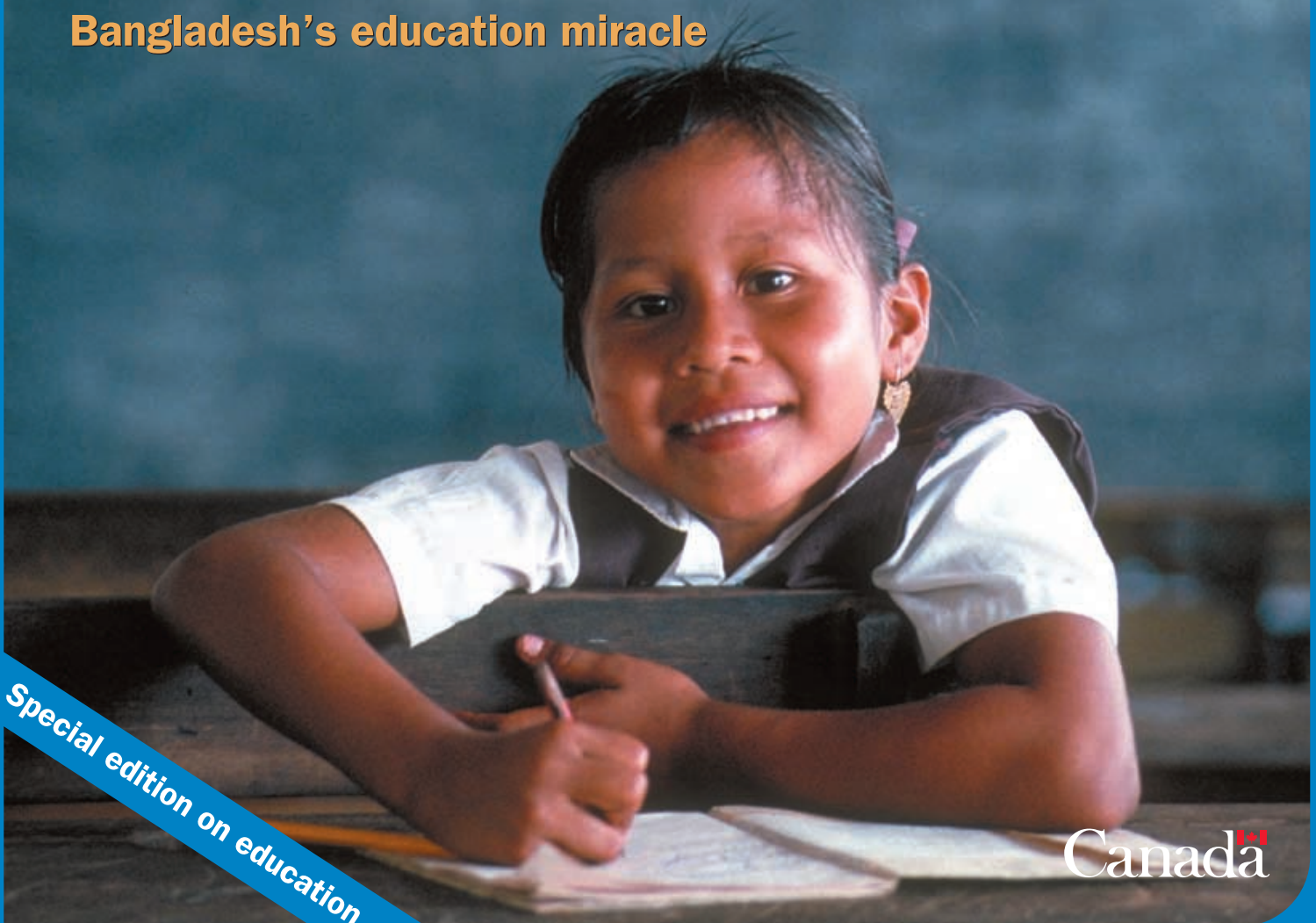
Canadians reaching out to the world

Basic education in Uganda

The Slovak Republic's "Untouchables"

Distance education in Guyana

Bangladesh's education miracle



Special edition on education



CIDA

From the Minister

Education empowers. It liberates. It's the best escape route out of poverty, marginalization, and poor health, and it's the foundation for democracy and human rights. Canadians instinctively know what the World Bank has proven with statistics and studies for the last 15 years—that education, especially for girls, is the best development investment any country can make.

Today, for the first time in human history, most people in the world can read and write. So why are nearly one billion human beings—mostly women—illiterate? How is it that 130 million children—two-thirds of them girls—are not in school? Why are so many other children failing, dropping out, or just not reaching their potential?

Education is a human right. That's not negotiable. The international community agrees, and it has committed itself to providing education for all. If we are to reach that goal, some hard decisions have to be made—about political will and local ownership, about resources, about sharing our knowledge and coordinating our efforts.

Over the next five years, CIDA is quadrupling its investment in basic education. We're focusing on helping governments develop education systems that are participatory, accountable, and properly resourced. We're focusing on involving the community, especially parents and local leaders. We're also focusing on including the excluded, and on giving teachers the tools, the training, and the status to do the work they love.

This edition of *Global Citizenship in Action* is about providing basic education to all. It tells stories of new lives and new horizons for people of all ages. It's a message about the future that Canadians and their partners are building today, right now, in the hearts and minds of the world's students. I hope you enjoy their stories.

Maria Minna
Minister for International Cooperation



CIDA photo: Greg Kinch

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Canadians reaching out to the world

The Canadian International Development Agency supports sustainable development in developing countries in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable, and prosperous world.

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On their own terms: Basic education in Uganda

They're not burying the pen any more in Karamoja, Uganda. It was a symbolic gesture, made by the elders in the 1940s, when the colonial authorities tried to recruit local youths to join the King's East African Rifles. Their names were inscribed on a list, and pen and paper came to be seen as instruments of death. The elders sacrificed a black ox, and they placed a curse on writing and learning materials—a curse that lasted for more than a generation.

The Karamojong resisted all efforts by the English to educate their young people. A semi-nomadic pastoral community whose men and boys migrate with their cattle every year during the dry season, they didn't have much use for Latin or Greek. But they could no longer deny that the future of their community depended on the education of their youth.

In 1995, Save the Children Norway consulted with the elders of the community and showed them that education could be tailored to meet their needs. The sons of the men who invoked the curse held a ceremony to "unearth the pen." They were ready to consider formal education again—but on their own terms.

With support from the Canadian International Development Agency, the government of Uganda, and UNICEF, Save the



Photo: Courtesy Dan Thakur

Children developed a pilot curriculum that included literacy, numeracy, and basic skills like crop production, livestock and natural-resource management, health (including HIV/AIDS), and home management.

Canadian educator Dan Thakur played an important role in developing some of the modules. “We wanted to design a curriculum that would prepare the Karamojong to participate in the world outside their community,” says Thakur. “But it had to meet their needs and fit into their way of life.”

The program was a tremendous success. In the morning, the children would carry out their chores, then go to the learning centres for lessons between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. After that, they would return home to help out, and go back to the centres in the evening, often accompanied by their parents and grandparents. The facilitators—usually one man and one woman—were local people who not only taught the curriculum but also helped preserve the values and cultural identity of the community.

This pilot is currently being replicated in 16 other communities across Africa. It is now a small but integral part of the Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) of Uganda, the national educational reform program. The government

of Uganda is strongly committed to ESIP’s success; primary-school enrolment has already gone up by 250 percent, and the government’s goal is to provide quality basic education to all school-aged children, including disadvantaged children like the Karamojong, by 2003.

ESIP is a new way of doing business. It integrates all educational activities in Uganda under one umbrella. All foreign assistance, whether it is from Canada or any of the other donors, including the United Kingdom, Denmark, the United States, Ireland, the World Bank, and the Netherlands, is channelled through it. It’s also a way of doing business that puts the government of Uganda in charge. The government implements all programs and activities, working closely with donors and local partners through committees and working groups that set policy, resolve management issues, and monitor and evaluate progress. Like the Karamojong, Uganda as a country now has education on its own terms.

The good news about Uganda’s progress is getting out. The elders must have enjoyed the joke when the first lady of Uganda, Janet Museveni, travelled to Washington, D.C., in 1999 to receive a prize for Uganda’s primary-education program. It was in the shape of a pencil. ■



A group of children are standing in a makeshift settlement made of wooden and metal shacks. The ground is covered in gravel and some trash. One child in the foreground is holding a clear plastic bottle. The children are dressed in simple, everyday clothing.

The Slovak Republic's “Untouchables”

There are between 350,000 and 500,000 Roma in the Slovak Republic, which represents 7 to 10 percent of the population. Most live in poverty in some 500 rural settlements.



This article was written by CIDA staff member Ian Darragh, who visited the Roma with colleague Carol Hart in 1999.

One-room school offers hope to the Roma

When David Scheffel, a Canadian anthropologist, first visited the Roma (or Gypsy) community of Svinia in the eastern part of the Slovak Republic in 1993, he was shocked. “They are refugees in their own land,” said Dr. Scheffel. “They have absolutely no rights.” He found a group of 650 people living in utter poverty—a degree of destitution he didn’t know existed in Europe.

The Roma owned no land, and so were squatters. The village had an unemployment rate of 100 percent, and the majority of Roma were illiterate.

On top of all this, Dr. Scheffel found that Roma children were being denied their right to a basic education. And so there was little hope for the new generation to break out of the cycle of poverty.

The Roma—the largest minority group in the eastern part of the Slovak Republic—grow up speaking a dialect called Saris that is not understood by speakers of Slovak, the language of the majority. On this pretext, Roma children were being streamed into a separate school for “slow learners.” The result was a segregated school system: “white” ethnic Slovak children attended a modern school, while a couple of hundred metres away, Roma children languished in a run-down building where instruction was minimal, and there was no accommodation for the Roma language or culture. Most kids dropped out after a few years.

Dr. Scheffel was so emotionally affected by what he had seen that he decided he had to do more than just study Roma culture as an academic anthropologist. He made a personal commitment to help the Roma improve their lives, and approached the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for assistance.

In 1998, CIDA was the first aid agency to make a commitment to provide basic education, better housing, clean water, and sanitation in Svinia. With seed money from CIDA, Scheffel assembled a coalition of non-profit organizations, under the leadership of the University College of the Cariboo in Kamloops, B.C., where Dr. Scheffel teaches anthropology.

One of the first priorities in Svinia was to solve the problem of the high drop-out rate. After talking to Roma families, Dr. Scheffel decided the solution was to locate a new school in the Roma village itself. That way, the children didn’t have to go outside the community, where they felt uncomfortable. As well, their parents could see what was happening in the school as they passed by the windows. To be successful, the new school would have to create an atmosphere where the Roma felt at home. It would have to be a place that nurtured and celebrated Roma culture.

To accomplish this, CIDA provided funds for a workshop with power tools, and a carpenter to provide training. Using these tools, Roma fathers renovated a temporary structure, turning it into a one-room schoolhouse, the first ever in the community. The school became *their* school, rather than one run by somebody else.

Although the outside of the schoolhouse was drab and unpainted, there was an abundance of colour and activity inside. The children’s paintings were mounted from floor to ceiling along one wall.

The teacher, Christine Veschi, a Peace Corps volunteer from New York City, led the children as they eagerly recited colours, numbers, and poems in Slovak. They had made tremendous progress at learning the new language in only a few months.

“The authorities kept telling us that the Roma children were imbeciles... they simply did not have the intellectual capacity to learn,” Dr. Scheffel said. But the new school has proven that if a nurturing environment is created, Roma children are as eager and quick to learn as children anywhere.

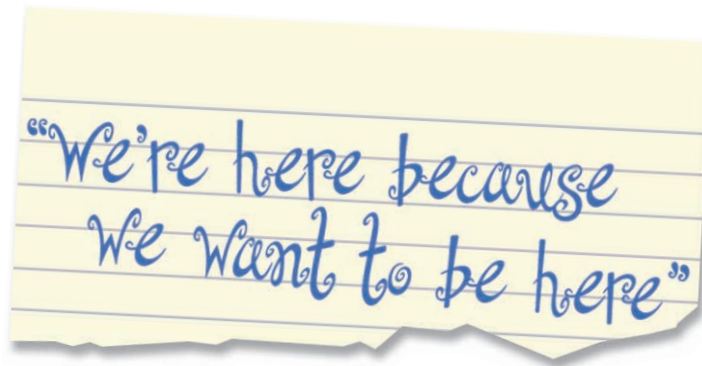
The goal of the CIDA project is to act as a catalyst to help the Roma find their own path to a better life. By establishing a school for the first time in the community, Dr. Scheffel has given the children of Svinia new hope, proving that one person can make a tremendous difference. ■

“When I heard I’d been selected as the NLTA’s representative for Project Overseas... I felt as though I’d won the lottery,” says Robert Goulding of Newfoundland. “I never imagined I’d get such an opportunity.”

Goulding, a teacher and member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers’ Association (NLTA), was on his way to Malawi in southern Africa with a group of eight Canadian teachers. It was July 2000, and his was one of many trips that year supported by the Canadian Teachers’ Federation through its Project Overseas, a program funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Project Overseas, founded in 1962, provides academic and professional assistance to teachers and organizational support to their associations in developing countries. Canadian educators work as volunteers, taking short-term assignments, usually during the summer break. On this particular trip, the Canadians were helping some of their Malawian colleagues upgrade their academic qualifications. They were also helping administrators and union officials hone their leadership skills.

The Canadians conducted an in-service program to prepare their Malawian colleagues for School Certificate of Education exams in a wide range of disciplines, including history, English, biology, and home economics. They held classes daily from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the National Resource College. They expected 500 participants, but more than 700 showed up at various points during the three-week session.



“Other teachers get copies of the summary notes,” says Masautso Cox Yonamu, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Teachers’ Union of Malawi. “In that way, the number we were actually able to reach was closer to a thousand.”

This kind of training is critical if Malawi is to meet the massive demand for more teachers that followed a government decision to make education free for all children. Many of the new teachers who rushed in to fill the gap did not have high-school equivalency. The conditions in which they work are also difficult, as Goulding and his team discovered.

“Meeting teachers and students...was one of my greatest experiences,” Goulding reminisces. “I was totally amazed at the integrity, professionalism, and grace these Malawians brought to their students and classrooms.”

On average, classroom size exceeded 90 students per teacher, and supplies and equipment were scarce in many areas. Headmasters often had to double as carpenters, plumbers, and general handymen in addition to teaching and receiving visitors. But somehow, teachers managed to teach, and students managed to learn.

“We are here because we want to be here,” say the Malawian teachers. “We like our jobs in spite of the difficulties.”

“In four short weeks, the teachers of Malawi taught me more about education, commitment, and caring than I have experienced in my lifetime,” says Goulding. “I learned about life and learning, to be truly happy with what I have, and to live life to its fullest.” ■

Robert Goulding in Malawi



Moving off the mountain

At Acualinca, Nicaragua, the wind blows all day long. The sound of trucks coming in, dumping their loads, and leaving again is a steady drone. Buzzards circle overhead, and cows, dogs, and children forage for food. Whole families scavenge for recyclable material they can sell, stepping over rotting waste, avoiding broken glass and tin, picking their way through the shifting mounds of refuse in the bright morning sun. Diesel fumes, methane, and other by-products of organic decomposition pierce the pungent air.

Welcome to the Managua city dump—where hundreds of families live, work, and play in all seasons and all weather. Every day of the year, they're out there on the mountain of garbage, raking through other people's castoffs in the hope of finding some items worth selling. Once a week, someone comes around and buys what they've salvaged. For a week's work, they might make 150 or 200 cordobas—around \$15 in Canadian money.

Fourteen-year-old Elena has been working on this mountain since she was seven years old. She's a survivor: some of her friends have died on the dump, buried under tons of garbage, hit by speeding trucks, succumbing to disease. Others have been victimized—physical violence and rape are common, as are bullying and theft.

"The younger kids suffer when adults take away the things they have collected," says Elena. "They are defenceless."

There's not much future in this kind of work. Most of the children never see the inside of a school. When they're older, many of the boys drift off into a life of crime and violence. The girls begin the cycle of pregnancy, childbirth, and grinding poverty early, and there seems to be no way out.



CIDA photo: Peter Bennett

But there is a way out. A local organization, known as *Dos Generaciones*, or Two Generations, is helping young people get an education and work towards a better life. Supported by CIDA and Save the Children Canada, *Dos Generaciones* runs regular school programs for the smaller children, and provides scholarships for teenagers. Classes are held during hours that allow the children to continue working at least part-time, so that families are not deprived of essential income.

"Our philosophy is based on the Charter for Children's Rights," says Eddie Ramon Perez, the director. "We translate this into practice by giving kids the right to go to school, by making them fundamentally aware of their rights, and telling them that they can demand their rights and defend them."

This approach, along with its track record, has won *Dos Generaciones* the Body Shop's 2000 Human Rights Award.

Its work is changing lives. Elena is now only working half-days. With her scholarship, she can afford to take time off to go to class.

"*Dos Generaciones* tells us to study, to go to school and make an effort, because this is our future," says Elena.

And she will have a future. She may not have settled on a career yet, but she knows what she wants. The municipal government is planning to move Elena and her neighbours away from the mountain at Acualinca. Her mother is afraid of the change, but Elena is ready for it.

"I like the government's idea of getting people out of this situation," she says. "I want to move forward." ■

ONE STEP AT A TIME

Shikha Ahmed* is always the first student to arrive at Little Angels high school.

Shikha has poliomyelitis in her lower left leg. She was recently integrated into a mainstream high school in Sion, India, from her special-education class in Colaba. Because there is no ramp to accommodate her, she has a hard time climbing the stairs all the way to her third-floor classroom.

Shikha is often by herself during the school day. Her school lacks the kinds of facilities that would help her socialize with her classmates. When the other students participate in physical education or go to camps, she is left behind.

But despite her physical disability, Shikha refuses to give up on herself. She works hard in her new math class, and is determined to become a software engineer.

A few years ago, Shikha's disability would have denied her her dream of becoming an engineer, as well as any access to higher education. Children with disabilities in India received an education through special schools run by the country's non-governmental organizations. The service, however, only reached two percent of children living with disabilities.

Through the work of organizations like the Spastic Society of India, the 60 million people who are estimated to be living with disabilities in India are beginning to receive their education—not out of charity, but as a right.

Inclusion is increasingly recognized as an effective way to provide schooling to most youths with disabilities in India, and to improve the country's entire education system. Since 1986, various government initiatives have been established to integrate children with disabilities into mainstream schools. It is now estimated that 28,000 children in 6,000 schools are benefiting from this change.

Inclusive education is psychologically better for children with mental or physical challenges, and is socially desirable for all children. It is also more economically viable compared to the high cost of building separate special-education institutions, since only a few modifications to regular schools are required.

The National Resource Centre for Inclusion (NRCI) was created in 1998, with the help of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Roeher Institute of Toronto, to ensure that India takes the integration of children with disabilities a step further.

Housed on the premises of the Spastic Society in Mumbai, the NRCI is committed to the development of an Indian national policy on education inclusion. Its mandate is to monitor and develop practices on inclusion, and to make information on policy and practice concerning effective, inclusive education broadly available to stakeholders.



CIDA photo: David Barbour

Despite the headway made in recent years to recognize the rights of people with disabilities, Shikha's situation shows that there is even more to do to make them feel equal in their school and community.

Accessibility for people with disabilities is a problem. In addition, a Spastic Society of India research survey indicates that 98 percent of children with disabilities live in the poorest sectors of India's cities. On many fronts, people with disabilities are still being left outside of Indian society.

Accurate figures on the size of the disabled population are a vital tool when lobbying for rights and negotiating policy and budget allocations. The Centre took on the battle for those people living with disabilities and fought for their right to be counted. Thanks to the intensive lobbying of disability groups like the Spastic Society of India under the NRCI project, the government of India recently agreed to include "disability" in the 2001 census.

India has many more steps to take towards a fully inclusive society. With the guidance of the NRCI, the climb will result in lasting policies that will serve as models to any nation with an excluded population. ■

**Not her real name*

Canada's goals in basic education

With its partners in developing countries, countries in transition, the Canadian education community, and other bilateral and multilateral donors, Canada is working to ensure that:

- **all children have access to and complete a primary education of good quality by 2015—our efforts will include a special emphasis on girls, the poorest people, those from minority groups, working children, and children with special needs;**
- **progress is made toward gender equality and the empowerment of women by eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by the year 2005; and**
- **the quality of basic education is improved, as reflected in recognized and measurable learning outcomes, especially in literacy, numeracy, and life skills.**

— From CIDA's Draft Action Plan on Basic Education, CIDA, 2001. This Plan is the result of a wide-ranging international consultation that involves current and former teachers, principals and educators from Canada, partner countries, and organizations and associations, as well as concerned citizens and grass-roots organizations working in the field.



Photo: Courtesy Melanie Boyd, CIDA



LEARNING THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

DISTANCE EDUCATION IN GUYANA



Photo: Courtesy John Berry



CIDA photo: Virginia Boyd

The dense equatorial forests of Guyana's hinterland are a paradise for the ecotourist. Jaguars still roam the jungle, howler monkeys pierce the air with their distinctive call, and macaws and toucans add a touch of brilliant colour. The Demarara, Essequibo, and Berbice Rivers are the highways into the interior, and human settlements, mainly Amerindian, are few and isolated.

Most of these communities are far removed from the world of rich ecotourists and adventurers. They are poor. They have no electricity, no telephone service, no road to the outside world. Health care is often days away, and education, although free, is still in its earliest stages of development.

The majority of the primary-school teachers are local women. Nearly three out of every four struggle valiantly without even having completed secondary school, let alone teachers' college.

"Most teachers from the coastal areas don't want to take on the job" of teaching in the hinterland, says Savitri Balbahadur, principal of the Cyril Potter College of Education in Georgetown.

"There are just no amenities. Life is pretty basic. The Department of Education had to turn to the villages for teachers, and they simply chose the most qualified people."

For those young teachers, it's a challenging job. They lack tools and training. There are no convenient facilities for skills upgrading. There are few mentors close by to guide them.

But that's all changing, thanks to the efforts of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and some donor-funded projects including the Guyana Basic Education Teacher Training project, which is supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The project supports the Cyril Potter College of Education, the National Center for Education Research and

Development, and other agencies of the MOE with assistance from Tecslut International Limited of Montréal. Guyanese, Caribbean, and Canadian consultants are helping the Guyanese to train trainers, and to design distance-education courses and systems that strengthen the teacher training and improve the quality of basic education in Guyana.

These courses are helping the teachers from the interior get their secondary-school equivalency before entering a distance-education program that will lead to their teaching certificates. The Guyanese Ministry of Education hopes that, by 2003, the program will provide 1,200 teachers and about 400 school principals—both men and women—with upgraded education and training.

But it will be a long road ahead for those young teachers. Equivalency takes on average about two-and-a-half years to complete. Although some finish earlier, teacher training will still take another two years after that. They study at home at night by kerosene lamp, and every month they travel to the nearest regional centre for face-to-face sessions with tutors.

For some, those centres are as much as two days' away from their home villages. But motivation is high—as one participant noted, the program has "brought to our community something that was once rare": the opportunity for a better life without having to leave home.

"I consider this a real breakthrough," says Balbahadur. "It will have a great impact on the education system. Once they are trained, the tutors in the hinterland can design their own training programs and deliver them there. And in the villages, more education means that the people can generate their own income. It will have a multiplier effect—and who benefits? The children." ■

Basic education spurs rural development in Ethiopia

A few years ago, many poor women in the town of Filtu in the Somali region of southeastern Ethiopia survived by begging local shopkeepers to lend them sugar or tea, which they then sold to townsfolk or nomadic herders (pastoralists). If they were lucky, after paying back the shopkeeper with interest, each might end up with 30 cents at the end of the day to feed her family.

Thanks to a literacy and loan program supported by Oxfam Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), these extraordinary women have gone from the edge of starvation to a life that has some basic security.

A revolving-loan fund run by the Pastoralist Concern Association of Ethiopia (PCAE) offers the women \$20 to \$200 to set up small businesses like tea shops, butcher shops, and restaurants. Along with the loans, the women attend PCAE's literacy and numeracy classes to learn to better manage their new businesses.

The women were unable to read their first loan agreements, and had to turn to their children for help. Now they proudly read and sign them by themselves.

"We had heard of women's rights and human rights, but we didn't know what it meant until now," one said. "We see that this is what it means to have human rights."

Instead of begging, the women earn their own money, and thanks to basic education, "we know how to use our money—we are learning what we should have learned as children." Now able to calculate and track their income and expenses, they can make liberating decisions—for example, how much of their profits to reinvest in the business, and how much to keep as family savings.

At the other end of the country, in Degua Tembien in Tigray province, Oxfam Canada and CIDA support an adult-literacy program and 15 community-managed rural day-care facilities, the first of their kind in Tigray. In a region where few girls attend school, it's significant that over half of the 1,500 children in day care are girls. Their fathers have also become involved in their children's education, as they help out doing maintenance and repairs at the centre.

Part of an integrated rural-development program implemented by the Relief Society of Tigray (REST), the day-care centre has been key to enhancing local food and health security. Not only do boys and girls learn to read and write, but their mothers are freed up to take a fuller part in their community's productive and social life.

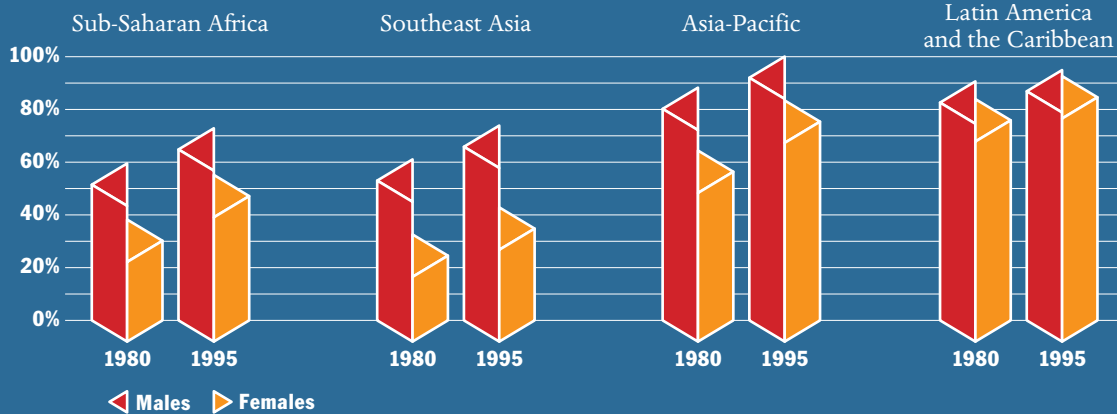
What's more, as the children learn, the mothers become proud and interested, and end up enrolling in the adult-literacy program, where two-thirds of the 26,000 participants are women. Because literacy is required for holding local office, the literacy program has led directly to more women in positions of community power. ■



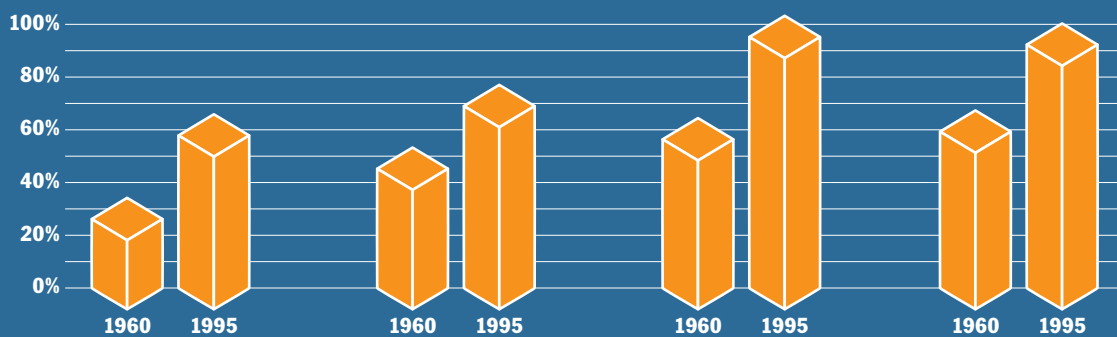
Photo: Andrea Lindores

Things are looking up

Adult literacy rates



Net primary enrolment



In 2000, representatives of 180 countries met in Dakar, Senegal, to build on this historic progress. They agreed to focus on several key areas, including:

- supporting early-childhood care and education;
- promoting education of girls, minorities, and children in difficult circumstances;
- encouraging education of young people and adults; and
- improving all aspects of the quality of education.

This focus is known as the Dakar Framework for Action, which not only commits all countries to working together towards specific goals, but also states that no country seriously committed to basic education will be thwarted in achieving this goal by a lack of resources.

Sources: UNICEF, *State of the World's Children 1999*; *Women: A World Survey*, 1995; UNESCO Web site, February 2000.

REPORT CARD on Education for All

- ✓ Today, more than 80 percent of the developing world's children start school.
- ✓ Today, an estimated five out of every six people on earth are functionally literate.
- ✓ Today, there is little or no gender difference in literacy rates for the 15–24 age group in Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Eastern Asia and Oceania.
- ✓ Since 1960, the number of girls aged 6 to 17 has doubled, but their enrolment in school has tripled.
- ✓ Since 1970, women's literacy rates have gone from half of men's to two-thirds of men's, with the greatest improvement in Africa and the Arab states.

Bangladesh's education miracle

One-room schoolhouses, once a staple of Canada's Western provinces, have long since disappeared from Canada. But with Canadian support, they are bursting into business in Bangladesh. Since 1985, more than 34,000 thatch-roofed schoolhouses with earthen floors and simple teaching materials have sprung up in villages across rural Bangladesh—one of the poorest countries in the world.

Established by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Bangladesh's largest non-governmental organization, the schools have provided a bridge to a better life for more than 1 million children.

It all began when a poor woman, a member of one of BRAC's very successful village cooperatives, asked: "But what about our children? Must they grow up illiterate, or can we do something to help them now?"

Although great strides have been made in recent years to improve national literacy rates for both men and women, in some rural areas of Bangladesh, more than 85 percent of the people are illiterate.

Studies show that having a basic education directly improves a person's income and productivity. Women who have just four years of schooling are more likely to have fewer and healthier children.

But even though primary school is free and compulsory in Bangladesh, only one out of every four children completes it. More than 13 million children have either never gone to school or have dropped out. Some can't afford the fees for pencils, paper, and school uniforms; others find the schools too far away or the hours inappropriate, since these children are needed to work and help their families in the daily tasks of survival.

The BRAC schools are different—the parents decide where the school will be located, and they often help to build it. They hire and supervise the teacher, and they set the school hours so that children can still help out in the fields or around the home. The small class size helps teachers forge a special bond with their students, especially since the students are taught by the same teacher for their entire three years of schooling.

Although classes run year-round, they are only held for three hours a day. Classes focus on basic literacy, numeracy, and life skills, using examples from rural life. About 70 percent of the students enrolled are girls. Teachers are local women with at least nine years of education who take a short training course from BRAC when they begin, supplemented by regular refresher courses. Parent-teacher meetings are held once a month.

There are two types of BRAC schools: the first provides children aged 8 to 10 with a Grade 3 education, in the hopes that they will then transfer into government schools for Grade 4. More than 85 percent do. The second provides children aged 11 to 14, who are too old to enter the formal school system, with basic literacy and numeracy skills. The cost of the schools? Approximately \$25 per student per year.

Shaida Begum is a former farm labourer who couldn't even sign her own name a few years ago. But since joining one of BRAC's village organizations, she has started her own very successful rice-processing business. She now sends her daughter to a BRAC school, and says: "My daughter wants to be a doctor, so I plan to make her a doctor."

To make sure graduates retain their literacy skills, BRAC has set up 6,300 local lending libraries. It has also established 1,522 schools in four main urban centres, some of which are aimed primarily at teaching children aged 8 to 14 who have to work. And the BRAC school model is being replicated by over 268 local non-governmental organizations, who run

2,550 similar schools. In addition, the Bangladeshi government has asked BRAC to manage 67 of its community-based primary schools.

In partnership with the Aga Khan Foundation Canada, CIDA has supported BRAC's education programs for 10 years. In 1999, the project entered its third phase, providing \$9 million over five years to expand the school program to cover five

grades in four years (enabling graduates to enter secondary school directly), train more teachers, develop quality learning materials, and expand the libraries. The goal is to reach 2.4 million children by 2004. The BRAC model is also being replicated in Egypt, Mali, and Zambia. ■

Success factors: A typical BRAC school

- Active parent and community involvement
- Accessible one-room schools
- Flexible school timing
- Strong student-teacher relationships
- Small class sizes
- No homework, no exams
- Participatory life-based curriculum
- Female teachers from the community



CIDA photo: Dilip Mehta