

Special Happenings

Poverty and Human Development

The special Happenings section in this issue of the Journal is a response to a call by the Council of Science Editors. The Council has asked all science editors worldwide to publish a special issue on Poverty and Human Development in order to raise global awareness about the devastating human toll of poverty.

In the year 2000 the United Nations received the greatest-ever commitment from countries rich and poor to do everything in their power to eradicate poverty, promote human dignity and equality, and achieve peace, democracy, and environmental sustainability. World leaders committed their support for the Millennium Declaration, which established a concrete objective: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for advancing human development and reducing extreme poverty by the year 2015. These goals provide a global framework for raising inadequate incomes, reducing widespread hunger, achieving gender equality, managing environmental sustainability, and ensuring access to education, health care, and clean water.

There is growing concern that the MDGs will not be reached by the target date. For example, it is currently projected that child mortality — which is considered a very sensitive and accurate marker of poverty — will not be reduced by 2015, with 41 million children expected to die before their fifth birthday from the effects of poverty, a preventable cause of child death (Watkins, 2005).

This present initiative of the Council of Science Editors is a call to action for scientists to address the problem. The Council has offered science and health-care editors a unique opportunity to use their knowledge and expertise to promote the Millennium Development Goals.

When the invitation for a global initiative on Poverty and Human Development was extended to science editors, we at *CJNR* signed on immediately, along with more than 230 other journals. There are many different ways to raise awareness about the issue, such as through editorials or the publication of reports and research studies. We decided that *CJNR*'s contribution would be to feature work being carried out on Poverty and Human Development by publishing synopses of various projects in the Journal's Happenings section.

We announced the publication of this special Happenings section by writing to deans and directors of schools and asking them to inform their faculty members about it. We also publicized it through our regular

listservs and in the pages of *CJNR* and by posting it on our Web site. Although the time frame was short, we were delighted at the number of submissions we received. Unfortunately, space did not allow us to publish all of these. We gave priority to large-scale projects and studies that, when taken together, reflected the range and quality of the work being carried out both in Canada and abroad.

The projects described in the pages that follow illustrate the ways in which Canadian nurses are contributing towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. These projects, whether completed or in progress, offer important new knowledge and innovation in terms of access to primary health care and social service programs for homeless youths and low-income families in Canada (MDG 4, 5), homeless members of minority groups and psychiatric survivors, in terms of decreasing child mortality in Indonesia (MDG 4), and in terms of combating HIV/AIDS (MDG 6) through collaborative partnerships to build capacity in HIV policy in Africa, the Caribbean, and Vietnam.

Human development is about freedom and about building human capacity. Canadian nurse researchers have made significant achievements in building human capacity both in Canada and in developing countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, and Caribbean and African nations, and they are making important contributions to the promotion of human development by addressing the devastating effects of poverty.

The journals around the world that have signed on to this initiative by the Council of Science Editors will be releasing their contributions simultaneously on October 22, 2007. Although this special Happenings section appears in print in our September issue, we will be posting it on the *CJNR* Web site on October 22. This is our way of showing our unequivocal support for the Millennium Development initiative, applauding the Council for its leadership, and joining with other science editors to remind world leaders that 2015 is close at hand and they must take heed.

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Reference

- Watkins, K. (2005). *Human development report 2005. International cooperation at a crossroads: Aid, trade and security in an unequal world*. New York: United Nations Development Programme. Retrieved August 28, 2007, from http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/pdf/HDR05_frontmatter.pdf.

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