

WOMEN AND POVERTY

Make Poverty History

Let's stop Maternal and Child Deaths

<http://www.makepovertyhistory.com.au/healthpetition.aspx>

FACE OF POVERTY

More than one billion people in the world today, the great majority of whom are women, live in unacceptable conditions of poverty... women's poverty is directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to economic resources... lack of access to education and support services and their minimal participation in the decision-making process.

Source: United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW)
<http://www.un-instraw.org/>

**Let us be challenged by the humanity of Catherine McAuley. She remarked:
How can we teach the love of God when our own hearts are cold?**

Sister Mariska Kua RSM tells the story of unemployment and violence in Mt Hagan Papua New Guinea and its impact the women of the region.

View this video clip Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia: Women and Poverty
<http://www.mercy.org.au/ourfocus/wap.cfm>

Did you know?

Every day over 30,000 children die because of poverty. In 2000 the United Nations developed a plan, to which the 191 member nations agreed. The plan is known as the UN Millennium Development Goals. Do you know the eight goals?

By 2015 the goals for our world are to:

- **Halve poverty and eradicate hunger**
- Achieve universal primary education
- **Promote gender equity and empower women**
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve **maternal health**
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other **diseases**
- Ensure **environmental sustainability**
- Develop a global partnership for **development.**

May 15: International Day of Families

May 16: World Debt Day

This year 2008 marks ten years since 70,000 people formed a human chain to protest against debt at the G8 in Birmingham.

The interconnection of poverty, debt, families and women is undeniable.

TAKE SOME ACTION TODAY

- Take some time with the four sections: story, context, reflection action about **"Women and Poverty"**: Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia: Women and Poverty, <http://www.mercy.org.au/ourfocus/wap.cfm>
- After the 13th May explore the first budget of the new Federal Government to see its impact on women.
- Become informed about the actions of the Australian Federal Government in regard to support of women and children in remote indigenous communities.
<http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf>
- Read the progress report of the UN Millennium Development Goals
<http://www.endpoverty2015.org/end-hunger/news/quick-progress-millennium-development-goals-'obviously-possible'---migirot/15/apr/08>

FACTS AND FIGURES

The devastating effect of poverty on women

- Above **80 percent** of farmers in Africa are women
- More than 40 percent of **women in Africa** do not have access to basic education
- If a girl is educated for six years or more, as an adult her prenatal care, postnatal care and **childbirth survival rates** will dramatically and consistently **improve**
- Educated mothers immunize their children **50 percent more** often than mothers who are not educated
- AIDS spreads **twice** as quickly among uneducated girls than among girls who have even some schooling
- The children of a woman with five years of primary school education have a survival rate **40 percent higher** than children of women with no education
- A woman living in sub-Saharan Africa has a **1 in 16 chance of dying** in pregnancy or childbirth. This compares with **1 in 3,700 risk** for a woman from North America
- **Every minute** a woman somewhere dies in pregnancy or childbirth. This adds up to **1,400 women dying each day** – an estimated 529,000 each year – from pregnancy related causes.
- **Almost half** of births in developing countries take place without the help of a skilled birth attendant.

Source: Millennium Project <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/3-MP-PovertyFacts-E.pdf>

Keep up to date with Reading, Websites and Films ...

Are you familiar with the book *Jesus Before Christianity* by Albert Nolan? His more recent book *Jesus Today: A Spirituality of Radical Freedom* is excellent. It is an intense exposition of spirituality wonderfully woven with a passion for justice. It brings alive the essential call for Christians and evokes a compelling reconnect to mercy and compassion.

Listen to the lyrics or watch the movie '*Les Miserables*'

Educating to end poverty: Women and the UN Millennium Goals

http://endpoverty2015.org/women?gclid=COS3_tSvkZMCFR7LiQodP3VfWA

This website is most engaging and easily accessible.

This journal *article* from the Sydney Morning Herald, August 2007, critiques the Australian Government's efforts to contribute to the reduction of poverty. <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/australia-scores-poorly-in-efforts-to-reduce-poverty/2007/08/29/1188067192177.html>

The *Australian Policy Online* site at www.apo.org.au is well worth a regular look. It is edited by the Institute for social Research, Swinburne Institute of Technology and includes government policies and reports generated by various research Institutes. Currently it has a series of reports following the 2020 summit.

From: Specific Issues Committee, Women and Poverty (Sisters Leonie Crotty, Miriam Grech, Angela Reed, Anne Ryan)

The Committee warmly invites your response to the article or the issue.

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