



No child too far

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**10 UNDERREPORTED STORIES:  
SAVING CHILDREN'S LIVES**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# No child too far

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## **10 UNDERREPORTED STORIES: SAVING CHILDREN'S LIVES**

**2012**  
EVERY CHILD.  
EVERY OPPORTUNITY.  
NO EXCEPTIONS.

**unicef**   
canada



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David Morley  
President and CEO  
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In a forgotten urban shanty-town or in a village miles from the media spotlight families are struggling for survival. In remote corners of the world, a mother sees the hope in a medicine kit brought by a health worker and a bag of medicine. Every day, lives are being saved.

Over the past year I have spoken to children, their families, health workers, and my UNICEF colleagues who are on the forefront of the child survival revolution. But for most Canadians this is not possible. Most Canadians learn about the lives of others through stories we read in newspapers, magazines and blogs, or see on television.

But there are many stories that do not get told, including the story of the 19,000 children who die every day from causes that are easily preventable and the global efforts to end these senseless deaths. This report tells their stories – the most under-reported child survival stories of 2012.

Every day around the world, UNICEF workers equip themselves to go as far as necessary to save children's lives. **For UNICEF the goal is simple: child survival. The reason is simple too: because no child is too far.** We go wherever the need is great, no matter how complex the problem, no matter how rough the terrain, no matter how remote the location

As you read this report remember you are reading about the daily realities of millions of families around the world. You are also contributing to UNICEF's efforts to reach these vulnerable children because knowing their stories is the first step in helping ensure they survive.

Thank you,

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canada

# Saving children's lives

Every day Canadians pick up a magazine or turn on their computers to read more about the latest celebrity pregnancy or political slip of the tongue. They read world news focused on the power plays of politicians whether they be in China, Syria, the USA or Venezuela.

But where do Canadians read about the issues that most severely impact the daily lives of the billions of people living in poverty around the world?

Every day 19,000 children die from easily preventable causes, simply because they don't have access to water, medicines, food or basic protection. Often these children live in remote areas, or there are social barriers that make it challenging to get basic supplies and support to them to prevent these deaths.

These 19,000 children do not include the thousands of children who die in conflict, natural disasters or other humanitarian emergencies every year. Quite simply these are children who don't survive due to sickness, poor nutrition or injury.

A child will die every four seconds from one of these preventable causes. But more often than not these deaths go unreported. This report aims to change that.

With the generous help of The Meltwater Group's media monitoring services *Meltwater News*, UNICEF Canada surveyed Canada's major media outlets to determine which child survival issues received the least profile this year. With this report we hope to shine the spotlight on some of the main killers of children that go underreported in Canada.

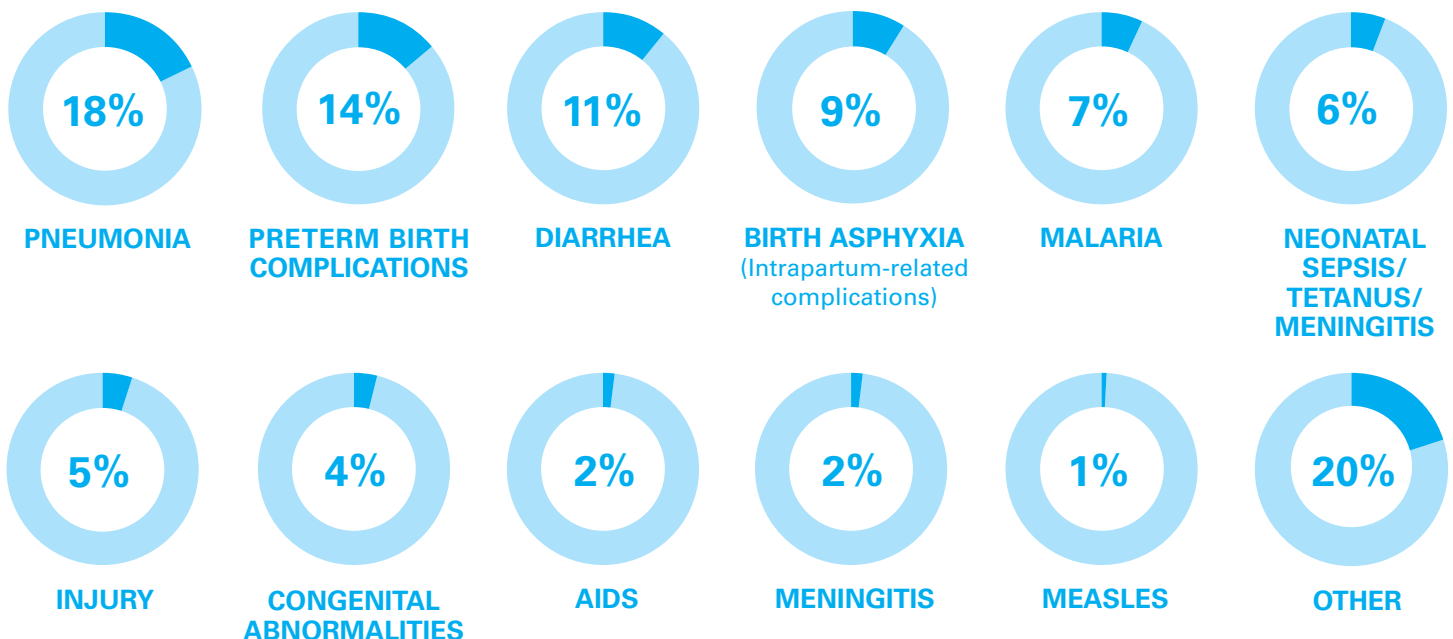
These deaths are preventable and we believe Canadians should know about them. Not just about the children who are dying, but also what is being done to keep them alive.

Every day UNICEF is seeing success. In the past two decades UNICEF's work in almost every country and territory in the world has helped reduce the number of children dying from 33,000 to 19,000 a day. This is success to be celebrated. But we can't stop now.

**Because we must, and most importantly, we can, get 19,000 child deaths – down to zero.**

## TOP KILLERS OF CHILDREN UNDER 5

Source: Committing to Child Survival: A promise renewed 2012



# Meningitis vaccination campaign reaches 100 million in just two years

On a recent December day, a health worker in Nigeria vaccinated the 100th million person against meningitis.

Every year, Africa's meningitis belt is hit with a new wave of the deadly disease endangering the lives of 450 million people in 26 countries stretching across the continent from Senegal to Ethiopia.

It was only two years ago that the first meningitis vaccine campaigns using the MenAfriVac® was launched. Children in Burkina Faso were the first to receive the vaccine and since then nine other countries have held nation-wide meningitis vaccination campaigns to protect children from this deadly, but preventable, disease.

Meningitis impacts children and youth most severely. A child with meningitis suffers through painful swelling of their brain and spine and the disease can be fatal within 48 hours.

Children who do survive can face severe learning difficulties, deafness and even have their limbs amputated. From 1996 to 1997, the worst recent epidemic hit 250,000 people in the region, killing 25,000 people and leaving 50,000 permanently disabled.

MenAfriVac® – the first vaccine developed specifically for Africa – is cheap. At less than 50 cents per dose it is accessible to the world's poorest countries. Recent research released this year, supported by Health Canada, shows that this vaccine can be safely used for a few days

without refrigeration – something that normally poses huge logistical challenges for getting vaccines to children in very remote areas.

By the end of this year, the vaccine will have reached more than 112 million people, providing widespread and long-awaited protection. The MenAfriVac® vaccine's success may mean a breakthrough in eliminating the disease across the meningitis belt and saving millions of lives.

**TWO YEARS**  
**100**  
**million**  
**VACCINATED**

## UNPARALLELED SCALE:

UNICEF has immunized more than 58 per cent of the world's children and is the largest procurer of vaccines worldwide.

In 2011 alone UNICEF secured approximately 2.5 billion doses of polio, measles tetanus, BCG and yellow fever immunizations with the market value of more than \$1 billion. These vaccines are used in routine vaccination campaigns reaching the most vulnerable children around the world.





# Reluctance to report drowning deaths in Asia hides “silent” emergency

The fertile waterways flowing from Bangladesh’s Ganges Delta are a life source for millions – but they also claim the lives of thousands of children every year.

In the Bangladeshi town of Matlab, drowning is responsible for 50 per cent of all child deaths between the ages of one and four. Every day 46 children drown in Bangladesh.

Childhood drowning is an epidemic in Asia – home to 95 per cent of all children who drown worldwide.

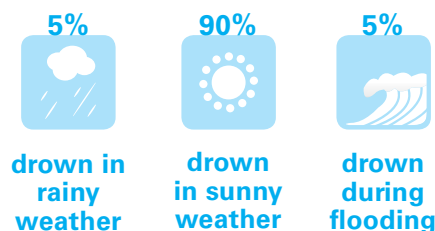
This past May UNICEF and The Alliance for Safe Children released a study examining child drowning in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam and two regions in China. Almost nine out of 10 children living in rural areas in these countries live within 20 meters of water, where 80 per cent of child drownings occur.

when discovered. Often families don’t have the money to bring their dead child to a hospital or fear legal consequences.

But drowning deaths are easily prevented. In Bangladesh UNICEF has taught children water safety and how to swim since 2009. Drowning rates among children who have gone through the program are 90 per cent lower than those who have not.

In Canada swimming lessons are often a regular part of childhood – in Asia there is an urgent need to reach more children with these basic skills – an easy and proven solution that will save young lives.

## CHILD DROWNINGS



Source: Child Drowning, UNICEF 2012



© UNICEF/BANA/2010-00696/Liddin

## LONDON GAMES LEAVE LEGACY FOR CHILDREN

This year’s 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games not only entertained the world with thrilling sports competitions but the events inspired and improved the lives of millions of children as well.

In the years leading up to the games, International Inspiration – a partnership between UNICEF, the British Council and UK Sport – used sport to help 12 million children and youth in 20 countries around the world get educated, gain confidence and stay safe.

In Bangladesh International Inspiration supported UNICEF’s “Swim for Life” program which has taught 160,000 children between the ages of four and 10 swimming skills. The results are reduced drowning deaths and increasing numbers of boys and girls swimming for physical activity and for fun.

# Babies of child brides 60 per cent more likely to die before first birthday

When children become pregnant, their bodies are not fully developed and the consequences for their babies can be deadly.

Babies born to children are at a much higher risk of illness and death because of their mother's young age.

Many are born preterm and severely underweight. They are sicker, weaker and many do not survive childhood. These babies are 60 per cent more likely to die before their first birthday compared with babies born to adults.

In many cases the child mother of these babies is married.

On October 11 this year, the world marked the first ever International Day of the Girl, focusing on ending child marriage. Child marriage denies girls their childhoods, disrupts their education, limits their opportunities, increases the risk of violence and abuse, and jeopardizes their health. It also leads to child pregnancy.

Newborns who do survive are more likely to suffer undernutrition and late physical and cognitive development.

Globally, one in three women who are currently 20-24 were married as children. If this trend continues, 150 million more girls will be married by their 18th birthday within the next decade. And they will likely become mothers soon after they are wed.

And so while we face a health challenge in caring for preterm newborns, the long term solution to this problem must include a global effort to end child marriage.

## BABALU: ALMOST A CHILD BRIDE

Fifteen-year-old Babalu is from India's Rajasthan State. At 14 her parents arranged her marriage to an unemployed 45-year-old man.

Babalu saw her sister's health deteriorate from multiple pregnancies after being married at 13. She didn't want the same life.

Fortunately Babalu received support from the 'precheta', or educator and women's advocate, who works for the local government. A health worker also spoke to Babalu's parents about the harmful effects of child marriage. Eventually Babalu's parents cancelled the wedding and Babalu stayed in school.

UNICEF works in diverse contexts around the world to end child marriage. By advocating with governments to establish new laws and provides alternatives for girls – especially schooling – communities themselves often decide to end the harmful practice.



© UNICEF/NHC2008-2236/Khemka

# Climate change raises malaria threat

A small mosquito bite can be deadly to a child.

Globally malaria kills 600,000 people every year, mostly children under five. The global fight against malaria has seen success recently with the number of deaths falling by 26 per cent since 2000.

But there is increasing concern that long-fought progress against malaria may be at risk – due to the damaging effects of climate change on the planet.

Environmental groups for years have warned climate change will have devastating consequences on human health. But the discussion is broadening and the financial world has taken note.

This year the World Bank warned that climate change could mean the spread of malaria to areas of the world that haven't seen it in years – reversing progress made in eliminating the deadly disease.

One study suggests that in some areas in South America, Sub-Saharan Africa and China the chance of being infected with malaria could increase by 50 per cent.

Efforts to distribute bednets, spray against mosquitoes, and provide medication to prevent and treat malaria has required substantial global investment. If progress made begins to reverse, more funding to protect children will be needed. Malaria is a costly disease with people living in poverty paying the highest price.

In Africa a child dies from malaria every minute and the disease costs the continent 1.3 per cent in economic growth each year.

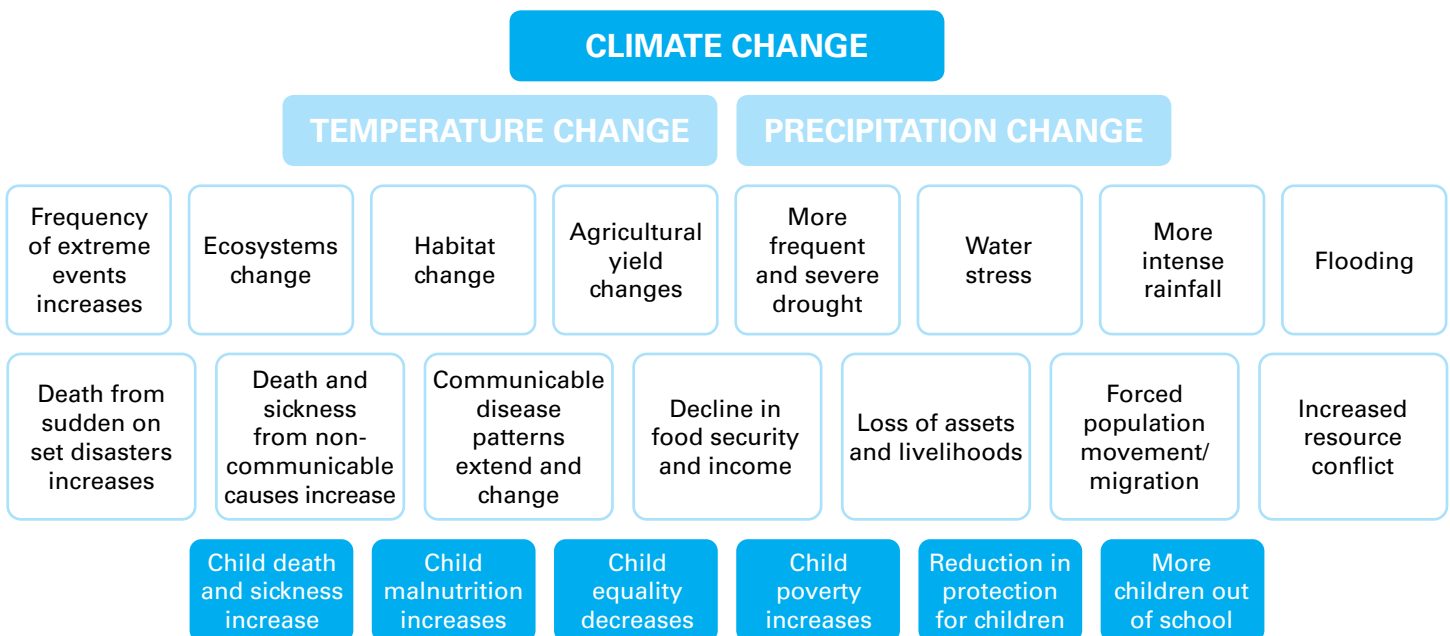
If climate change continues, the burden malaria will have on the world's poorest children will grow – as many face a bigger risk than ever before.



© UNICEF/ANY/HO2012-1314/Zaidi

## HOW CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTS CHILDREN

Source: UNICEF UK, Climate Change Report 2008, p. 3



# Child undernutrition hits crisis levels in Yemen

More than a year of civil unrest and near economic collapse has had a heavy toll on children in Yemen.

The poorest country in the Middle East, Yemen has one of the highest rates of chronic malnutrition in the world with almost one million children acutely malnourished and an additional 267,000 struggling to survive severe acute malnutrition. This is almost as many malnourished children as there were in Somalia during the 2012 Horn of Africa crisis.

Globally undernutrition contributes to more than one-third of child deaths every year – that's more than two million children annually.

Undernourished children are weak and far more likely to succumb to common illnesses. Those fortunate enough to survive are often stunted or living with irreversible physical and mental damage.

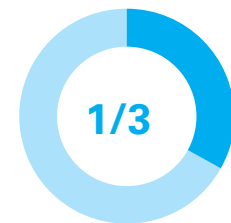
In Yemen nearly 60 per cent of children are stunted.

Children are undernourished because they don't have access to quality foods and don't consume the vitamins and minerals they need.

But solutions are simple: exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life and micronutrient supplementation save lives.

This year UNICEF operated hundreds of child feeding centres and trained thousands of health workers on treating malnourished children across Yemen – but with the continued instability in the country, this silent emergency is far from over.

## GLOBAL UNDERNUTRITION



**ONE-THIRD OF CHILD DEATHS EVERY YEAR**



© UNICEF/NYHQ/2012-05664/AlGhabri

## NINE-MONTH OLD SHAMSAN'S STORY

Shamsan is recovering from severe malnutrition. At nine months old, he is far below the weight of what a healthy nine month old should weigh – about 20 pounds.

After suffering from diarrhea for three weeks, a common side effect of malnutrition, he was thin, weak and listless.

Shamsan's mother, rushed her son to a UNICEF supported therapeutic feeding clinic at Al-Sabeen Hospital in Yemen's capital city Sana'a. Thankfully, he received the life-saving treatment he required.

The little boy's story is not unique among children in Yemen. One in eight Yemeni children under five risk dying of common childhood illnesses because of malnutrition. One in ten does not even reach the age of five.

This summer, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provided \$2 million in assistance to support UNICEF's emergency response to the nutrition crisis in Yemen.

# Kiwanis project aims to eliminate tetanus worldwide

A mother's worst nightmare – a child in pain who cannot be held and comforted.

This is what thousands of mothers face every year when their newborn becomes infected with tetanus during child birth. Each day, 160 newborns die from tetanus; a painful disease that causes excruciating convulsions and is contracted when women don't have a clean place to give birth.

Tetanus is highly preventable and has virtually disappeared in industrialized countries like Canada.

Now, a global effort is underway to eliminate this disease everywhere. Major achievements were made this year when five countries eliminated tetanus – Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Tanzania, Timor Leste, and most recently China.

But more work needs to be done. Around the world – including here in Canada – Kiwanis, a global service group with members in 80 countries, has launched the Eliminate Project and are working tirelessly to raise \$110 million – the funds needed to eliminate the disease by 2015.

The project has brought together leaders from NGOs, governments and multilateral agencies. Companies such as BD and Pampers have also been strong supporters of the campaign.

While there are 28 countries that have successfully eliminated maternal and neonatal tetanus – there are 31 countries yet to reach this goal.

The next few years will be critical to eliminating tetanus around the world ensuring that no mother has to stand helplessly by and watch her child die from such an easily preventable disease.

## CHINA ELIMINATES TETANUS

Earlier this year the world's most populated country eliminated maternal and neonatal tetanus.

In addition to increasing vaccinations, it was determined in China that an effective way of eliminating the disease was increasing the number of women giving birth in hospitals. Historically, hospital delivery has been low in China, especially in poor rural regions. Before 1995 China's rural hospital delivery rate was below 25 per cent.

In 1999 UNICEF, the Ministry of Health and the National Working Committee for Children and Women launched China's Safe Motherhood Initiative in 40 poor regions. The aim was to encourage women to deliver in hospitals to ensure clean conditions and life-saving care.

Over the last decade the strategy expanded and was a proven success. Including China, 161 countries have now eliminated the disease.



© UNICEF/NYHQ2008-0622/Dean

# When Parliament voted down Bill C-398, it was children who lost

Earlier this year the Canadian Government had the opportunity to help all children – regardless of how poor or far away – access life-saving medicines like ARVs through Bill C-398. The Bill proposed amendments to Canada’s Access to Medicines Regime that would help export low cost medicines to the world’s poorest people.

UNICEF Canada was disappointed when the Bill failed to pass second reading in Parliament. Clearly there was a misunderstanding of the potential of, and need for this Bill.

While there was much reporting on the political debate surrounding the proposed legislation there was little coverage on the children who lost out in the end.

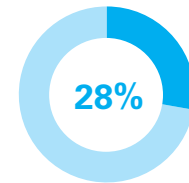
When a woman living with HIV gets pregnant, preventing transmission of the deadly virus to her baby is possible – but only if she has antiretroviral medications (ARVs).

Every year approximately half of the 1.5 million babies born to mothers living with the virus receive the medicine needed to prevent them from contracting the disease. The drugs exist, and they work, but millions of mothers in poor countries simply can’t afford or access them.

More than 530,000 children contract HIV every year, most from their mothers. With better access to ARVs, this number can be reduced to nearly zero.

Children who are living with HIV are also in need of ARVs. Of the more than 2 million children estimated who need these drugs only 28 per cent have access, as opposed to 57 per cent of adults.

Improving access to life-saving medicine for the world’s most vulnerable women and their children is critical in fighting the HIV and AIDS epidemic, and saving young lives.



**GLOBALLY, 2 MILLION CHILDREN NEED ARV'S, BUT ONLY 28 PER CENT HAVE ACCESS.**



## TSELANE: HIV POSITIVE MOTHER OF HEALTHY BABY GIRL

While getting blood tests at eight months pregnant, Tselane learned she was HIV positive. Although devastating news, in a way, she was fortunate: having learned her status meant she could protect her unborn child. Tselane immediately began taking antiretroviral treatments (ARVs). Two weeks later, her daughter Dintle was born without HIV.

Every day, 900 children are newly infected with HIV.

To protect unborn babies from HIV, UNICEF and partners have set an ambitious goal: eliminate new infections among young children by 2015. Achieving the world’s first AIDS-free generation may seem like a tall order, but Tselane and Dintle show that by improving access to ARVs it can be done.

# UN Commission works to help newborns take their first breaths, but barriers remain

Every year, more than 600,000 newborns die trying to take their first breaths.

Birth asphyxia – when a newborn is unable to breathe – accounts for nearly half of all newborn deaths in the first 24 hours of life.

The tragedy is that these deaths are avoidable with low-cost, simple equipment and basic medical training.

Earlier this year, the UN Commission on Life-Saving Commodities for Women and Children brought world leaders, business executives and health experts together from around

the world. This Commission is the first of its kind and aims to address the inequities in global health care.

The Commission agreed on an action plan that could save 6 million lives by making 13 essential items – mainly medications and equipment – more accessible in the world’s poorest countries.

The Commission found that simple low-cost suction and self-inflating bags and masks – to help babies take their first few breaths – could potentially save more than 330,000 lives in just five years.

The world is capable of mass-producing these basic items but

a number of barriers prevent their wider use.

Health systems in poor countries are under resourced and quality controls on equipment are often weak. Many health workers simply don’t know these basic life-saving tools are available – so there isn’t much demand which leads to low production levels. It’s a cycle of challenges that must be addressed.

The UN Commission’s action plan is an important step in ending a common cause of newborn deaths and could save thousands of lives with items that only cost a few dollars to produce.

## 13 LIFE SAVING ITEMS

The UN Commission on Life-saving Commodities for Women and Children aims to improve access to essential, items that will save children’s and mother’s lives.

### THESE ITEMS ARE:

#### Newborn health items

- Resuscitation equipment like suctions, bags and masks to help newborns breathe
- Injectable antibiotics to treat newborn infections
- Chlorhexidine to care for newborns’ umbilical cords
- Antenatal Corticosteroids to reduce complications with preterm birth

#### Child health items

- Amoxicillin to treat pneumonia
- Oral rehydration salts and zinc to treat diarrhea

#### Maternal Health items

- Oxytocin and Misoprostol to stop post-partum haemorrhaging
- Magnesium Sulfate to stop eclampsia (seizures in pregnant women)

#### Reproductive health items

- Female condoms
- Emergency contraception and contraceptive implants to support family planning.



© UNICEF/NYHQ2004/1392/Noorani

# Diarrhea, no laughing matter for 2.5 billion people without proper sanitation

Anyone who has seen *Slumdog Millionaire* remembers the scene where a boy falls in the latrine. While audiences may have giggled at the image, the sad reality is that those latrines are not just the stuff of movies. Around the world an estimated 2.5 billion people are still without proper sanitation. Poor sanitation is the main cause of approximately 700,000 diarrhoeal deaths amongst children under five each year.

The challenges of providing sanitary living conditions include both behaviour change issues and

technical challenges. Communities are the most critical actors in efforts to improve the use of toilets, as adults and children must be educated about the benefits of latrines in order to put an end to defecating in the open.

Meanwhile, new ideas are improving toilets and latrines to make them more viable in challenging living conditions.

In August this year, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced the winner of its Reinvent the Toilet Challenge. The challenge

was to develop an affordable toilet that did not require water, a sewage system or electricity and would transform human waste into something useful. A group from the University of Toronto won 3rd prize.

It is poor rural children who are most likely to be living in unsanitary conditions, and extremely vulnerable to diarrhea. The global efforts to improve sanitation, whether in communities or universities, will be critical to protecting these children from one of the most common causes of death.



© UNICEF/BANA/2009-00054/Noorani

## COMMUNITY LED TOTAL SANITATION

Improving sanitation involves more than building toilets. 'Community Led Total Sanitation' is a revolutionary low-cost approach to rural sanitation where communities take action to stop open defecation.

UNICEF and its partners bring neighbourhoods together to discuss sanitation issues. These discussions often begin with humour or games. Once people are comfortable they discuss their sanitation facilities — or lack there of — and learn about the impact practices like open defecation have on their health.

Local sanitation committees are formed and are responsible for designing ways to improve sanitation within their communities, like building latrines from local materials or educating children on handwashing.

With communities leading the way sustainable changes to sanitation practices are achieved which save children's lives.



# Vaccine to prevent pneumonia reaching even the most remote regions of Ghana

In a small ward of the Princess Marie Louise Children's Hospital in Ghana a third of the children are struggling to breathe as they receive treatment for pneumonia.

Across the globe pneumonia kills more children than any other disease. It is responsible for 1.3 million child deaths every year.

But in Ghana the fight against this deadly disease may be over soon.

This past April, Ghana was the first African country to introduce the pneumococcal vaccines

together with a rotavirus vaccine to simultaneously combat diarrhea and pneumonia; the leading causes of child death worldwide.

Introducing the two vaccines was a massive logistical undertaking for the Ghanaian government, the GAVI Alliance and UNICEF.

Every health clinic in every part of the country – no matter how remote – received the vaccines needed to reach every child. The cold chain refrigeration system needed to protect the vaccines, was strengthened across the country.

The successful role out of these two vaccines has shown that such a large logistical undertaking is possible and other African countries are now planning on introducing both vaccines at the same time. This December, Tanzania announced it will follow Ghana's lead.

**PNEUMONIA RESPONSIBLE FOR**

**1.3 million CHILD DEATHS EVERY YEAR**

## SOLARCHILL: ICE FROM THE SUN

Uninterrupted refrigeration of vaccines is vital because the effectiveness of vaccines are affected if not kept within a very tight temperature range.

Ensuring this 'cold chain' from manufacturer to child is a major challenge in parts of the world with limited or unreliable electricity.

SolarChill uses the energy of the sun to create ice for refrigeration systems that are used to keep vaccines at a stable temperature. The open-source SolarChill technology was developed by UNICEF and its partners, and has had successful pilot programs in Kenya, Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Vanuatu and Rwanda.







NO CHILD  
TOO FAR

**UNICEF** – The United Nations Children’s Fund has saved more children’s lives than any other humanitarian organization.

We work tirelessly to help children and their families, doing whatever it takes to ensure children survive. We provide children with healthcare and immunization, clean water, nutrition and food security, education, emergency relief, and more.

UNICEF is supported entirely by voluntary donations and helps children, regardless of race, religion or politics. As part of the UN, we are active in over 190 countries – more than any other organization. Our determination and our reach are unparalleled.

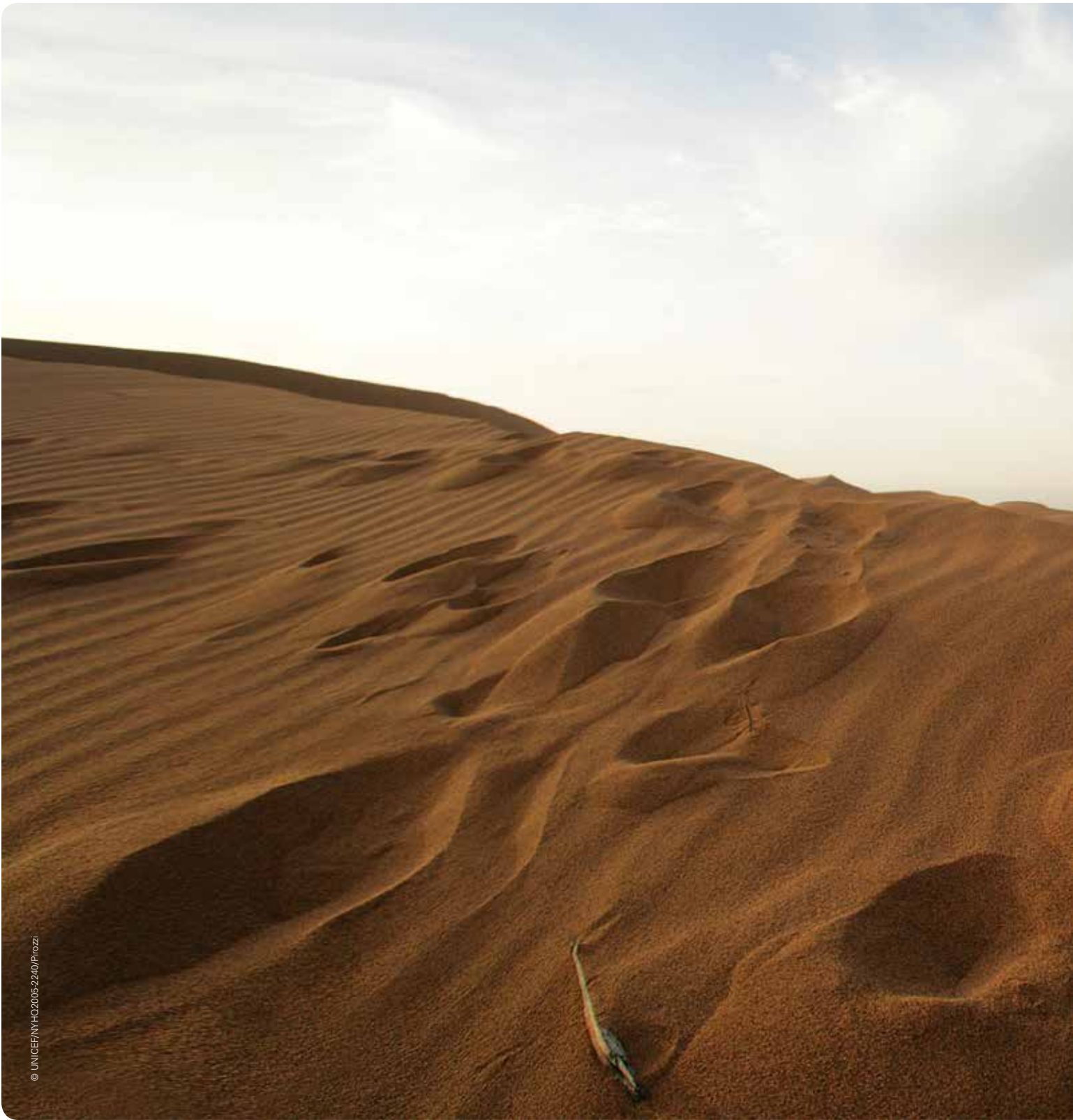
**Because nowhere is too far to go to help a child survive.**

**UNICEF Canada**

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