

Trapped in an unending cycle of poverty, a woman does all she can as a desperate attempt for survival. Without clean water, food, or sanitary supplies, she spends long hours working for less than one dollar a day ([Un.org](#)). Almost sixty percent of this dollar goes to buying food for herself and her family. The children that she has almost all perish in these conditions and very few survive past the age of five. This woman and her story are typical of over one billion people, where poverty rates have not declined despite raging efforts ([Unicef.org](#)). Because of this poverty, twenty nine thousand children die of easily preventable causes daily (American). These children, all less than five years old, go unnoticed by a majority of people in developed countries. The United Nation's Millennium Development Goal of lowering child mortality rates is the most significant because an increase is easily preventable and they are essential to the development of the country.

Surprisingly, the main causes for the deaths of children under five years of age can be prevented by proper health care and vaccinations. As one of the leading causes of death of children in developing countries, measles has almost been eradicated in the more developed areas. Measles is easily prevented by vaccinations, which cost less than one dollar per person (American). The Measles Initiative is one of the largest fundraisers that are carried out by the local Red Cross Chapter. As a member of this council, efforts to increase awareness of the Measles Initiative are a priority. This fundraiser shows the extent of a dollar—since the Measles Initiative began, the rate of measles in Africa fell by 89% (American). The Measles Initiative combines the efforts of many organizations, and has been highly successful. But, because measles has not been eradicated, effects of it have been seen in the United States (Harris). In an article from the *New York Times*,

measles has been seen in the United States—foreign visitors had brought in the virus from abroad.

To reach other Millennium Development Goals, reducing child mortality is a key stepping stone. As the base of the population, children are essential in reducing poverty and hunger, as well as achieving universal primary education. Also, “helping children reach their full potential is also investing in the very progress of humanity” (Unicef.org). Bringing a child into a world of poverty and hunger shouldn’t be done— children have a right to a healthy childhood, as well as a bright future. Only when the child mortality rate is reduced can matters such as education can come into play. A universal primary education can in turn spur the economy, allow the population to be educated in matters of disease transmission, and increase chances of winning the fight against HIV/AIDS. Reducing child mortality by improving conditions as well as increasing the number of vaccinations for children has a great impact on the future of the country and the success of the development goals.

In the next six years, lowering child mortality rates by two-thirds is a highly plausible goal. Although some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have shown little improvement, combined efforts between organizations such as the American Red Cross, UNICEF, and the United Nations will ensure the success in lowering mortality rates. Once these rates have been lowered, economic and social aspects of developing countries can be improved, and other goals contracted by the United Nations can be achieved.

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