



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

WOMEN TRANSFORMING DEVELOPMENT



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Kay Chemush for the U.S. State Department



Misako Imada / Oxfam

WOMEN TRANSFORMING DEVELOPMENT

T rue transformational development depends on peace, security, good governance, competent leaders and smart economic growth. Research and experience have shown that progress toward this kind of development is not possible without the full and equal participation of women.

Women are half the world's population and they bear and rear the next generation. Women produce more than half the food in many developing countries, they are often mainstays of families and communities and they serve as an important force in conflict mitigation and reconciliation.

We frequently see women as victims of violence, as not having equal rights, as less educated than men and as victims of human traffickers and warring parties during conflict. But, we also need to recognize their strengths and contributions to societies.

Today women are leading countries, working to combat violence, seeking education for themselves and their children, training for economic opportunities, providing economic support to children and caring for others in distress. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is committed to women's equality and empowerment not only because it is just, but also because it is the shortest road to transformational development. And, that goal must be embraced by men and women together.

WOMEN TRANSFORMING DEVELOPMENT

“Forget China, India and the internet: economic growth is driven by women.”

—*The Economist*

“**Women in the workforce: The importance of sex**”
April 12, 2006

Over 800 million women are economically active worldwide, undertaking critical roles in industry, agriculture, manufacturing and services, and as producers, traders, owners and operators of small- and micro-enterprises. Throughout the developing world, women are vital economic players, representing a larger percentage of the work force than ever before. Support for expanding women’s economic opportunities will yield economic gains for women, households and the economy.

The United States was among the first donors to acknowledge that increasing economic opportunities for women in developing countries is essential to spurring growth and reducing poverty. Both women and men have talents and drive that can help their countries succeed. But in many places around the world, women still face legal and practical barriers that limit their access to property, markets, technology and services.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, women produce 60 to 80 percent of the food in developing countries. Increasing their property and other legal rights can boost agricultural productivity and reduce hunger. Micro and small entrepreneurs—many of whom are poor women—need greater opportunities to access global markets and more reliable sources for financing. Better roads, more accessible water and more affordable communications can help overcome the isolation and lack of time that hold women back from increasing their incomes.

U.S. foreign assistance is committed to increasing economic opportunity for the poor, especially for poor women.

ECONOMIC
GROWTH



USAID helped Ecuador's María Isabel Coral secure a market-rate loan for her store.



A woman from Mozambique shares agricultural practices she learned through a USAID program.



UNICEF / HQ052192 / Giacomo Prozzi

This woman's vegetables provide income and healthy food for her family in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



These Afghan women sorting raisins have joined the workforce in their country at a USAID-funded factory.



Women are finding opportunities in nontraditional employment.



USAID helped make small-scale aquaculture a viable means of income for women in Bangladesh.

USAID

WOMEN TRANSFORMING DEVELOPMENT

“...if we truly seek a peaceful and just world, we must systemically enhance women’s access to—and participation in—decision-making processes.”

—Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
October 18, 2006

In armed conflicts and wars, women’s power is often overlooked. They almost never command troops or appear at formal peace negotiations as key players. Their status as victims—women and girls are forced to serve enemy combatants as sex slaves, domestic workers and even fighters—renders them near invisible and silent. Rape is a deliberate weapon of war in many conflicts as well.

Yet, real peace and security depends as much on women as it does on men. Women are peacemakers, heads of households, community leaders and providers of economic and psychological support for children—their own and those who have been left orphaned. In the wake of conflict, women more often than not act as organizers to restart and repair everything from schools to orphanages to agricultural enterprises to health care.

In Rwanda, for example, women continue to play a significant role in rebuilding communities and in reconciliation between ethnic enemies in the aftermath of that country’s 1994 civil war when an estimated one million people were killed.

U.S. foreign assistance provides women with the tools they need to step into their peacemaking and rebuilding roles. USAID has published “Women and Conflict: An Introductory Guide to Programming,” which explains how conflict and fragility may increase gender inequities and suggests ways to address the issues and build on women’s strengths.



Medical and psychological support is helping this girl recover from her time as a former child soldier in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Now 14, she joined the Mai Mai militia and worked as a commander's bodyguard. She was later raped by a soldier and eventually became his "wife." The conflict continues today and more than 33,000 child soldiers remain active.

A woman carries a baby on her back in a sling pouch at a displacement camp in West Darfur.





This Nepalese mother is desperately searching for her daughter who was trafficked into an Indian brothel.



Ana Paula Paiva / Imago

USAID helps trafficking victims in Brazil with health, education and psycho-social services.



Key Chemush for the U.S. State Department

Baan Kredtrakarn shelter in Bangkok helps reintegrate victims of trafficking into society.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

WOMEN TRANSFORMING DEVELOPMENT

“...failure to address gender-based inequalities immediately after disaster and throughout the response can condemn women and girls to less aid, fewer life opportunities, ill-health, violence and even death.”

—**International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**
2006 World Disasters Report

USAID is committed to saving lives, alleviating suffering and minimizing the economic costs of conflict, disaster and displacement. Women are often more vulnerable than men in these situations due to less education, limited mobility and fewer economic resources.

Conflicts and natural disasters exacerbate women’s vulnerability through displacement, economic disruption, family separation, breakdown of rule of law, lack of security, corruption and profiteering.

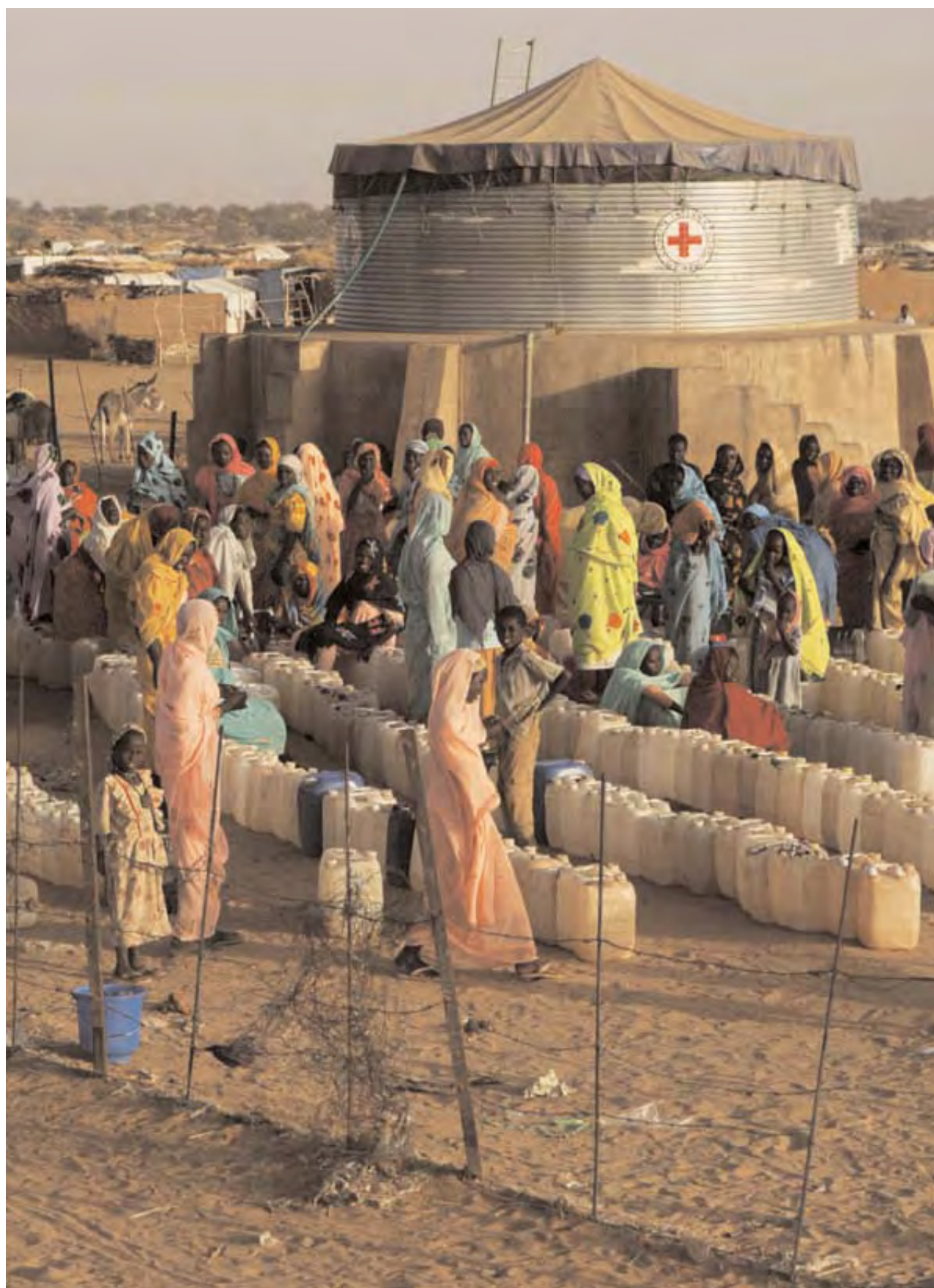
With an increased level of awareness of the issues concerning women and humanitarian assistance over the past few years, USAID has undertaken several initiatives to better support women in times of crisis. In some countries, collecting firewood outside of camps for internally displaced people puts women in serious danger of sexual violence. This risk has been reduced by using armed patrols to accompany women or employing fuel-efficient stoves that reduce the amount of firewood needed.

Women inarguably have security needs during a humanitarian crisis. However, women are not simply helpless victims. Women play an important role in delivering assistance, establishing peace and rebuilding societies.

U.S. foreign assistance works not only to meet women’s basic needs—for security, shelter, food and medical assistance—but also to listen to women and give them a voice in their country’s recovery.



Women gather materials to build homes in a displaced persons camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Women and children at a displaced persons camp in Sudan line up near a water tank to fill jugs.



Misako Imada / OnAsia

A girl in a relief camp for survivors of Pakistan's 2005 earthquake carries bread to her family tent.



Mike Baydar / U.S. Air Force

A Pakistani earthquake survivor takes a drink before being airlifted from Muzaffarabad to Islamabad.



Misako Imada / OnAsia

Pakistani earthquake survivors—like this girl cooking—sought shelter at USAID-funded relief camps.



UNICEF / HQ05-1868 / Donna Decaire

A survivor of October 2005's Hurricane Stan gets her hair braided at a temporary shelter in Guatemala.

An ethnic Albanian family from Kosovo waits with other refugees to be taken to new housing.



UNICEF / HQ98-0270 / Roger Lemoine

WOMEN TRANSFORMING DEVELOPMENT

“There are those who say that democracy is for men alone. In fact, the opposite is true: Half a democracy is not a democracy.”

—Remarks at the American University in Cairo
U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
June 20, 2005

Despite some recent progress, women around the world are still largely absent from national and local decision-making bodies. Unequal access to government forums restrains women and their potential contributions to economic and social development. Yet women have a right to participate in decisions that affect them, their families and their communities.

In no region in the developing world do women and men have equal access to credit and other financial services, education and land and other economic assets. In far too many instances this disparity silences women’s political voices.

Gender discrimination and inequalities also undermine development. A study in several African countries projects that total agricultural output could increase by about 6–20 percent if women’s skills and access to productive assets such as land and livestock were on par with men’s.

Where women have access to land, income and power, they use these resources in ways that contribute to long-lasting changes in their families, societies and political institutions.

Foreign assistance helps countries address barriers to women’s participation in formal employment, ensures women’s access to financial services such as credit and savings, improves the nature and conditions of work, and provides adequate support when women leave the labor market.

Women own only a tiny fraction of all titled land worldwide and are frequently denied the right to inherit property. Land and housing ownership can convey to women the community status, legal remedies, and self-confidence, which are critical to reducing their vulnerability to domestic violence and HIV/AIDS infection. This newfound status can also equip women with the skill, compassion and drive to join the ranks of political leaders who are making a positive difference in their countries.



Women line up to vote in national elections in Afghanistan, September 2005.



At a student protest in Georgia, a woman displays her support for the pro-democracy Kmara movement.



Edith C. Bawn / DAI

This woman proclaims an end to gender discrimination in her Liberian village.



Ben Barber / USAID

Ukraine reporter Lesya Alexeyenko received USAID-funded journalism training.

Maya Devi holds daughter Anjani at a meeting of "sahayoginis," who champion women's issues in India.



UNICEF / HQ03:0357 / Am Vitale



Land ownership has helped to improve this Ethiopian woman's economic standing.



Young women wait their turn for service at Colombia's Casa de Justicia, a judicial service provider.

Stephen Swain / USAID

WOMEN TRANSFORMING DEVELOPMENT

“No society can prosper when half of its population is not allowed to contribute to its progress. Educated and empowered women are vital to democracy—and important for the development of all countries.”

— **U.S. First Lady Laura Bush**

Women’s health and education are keys to increasing the health of their children, decreasing health care costs and improving productivity. Educating girls and women is a powerful investment in poverty reduction. The payoff: elimination of inequalities and improved well-being for families, communities and nations.

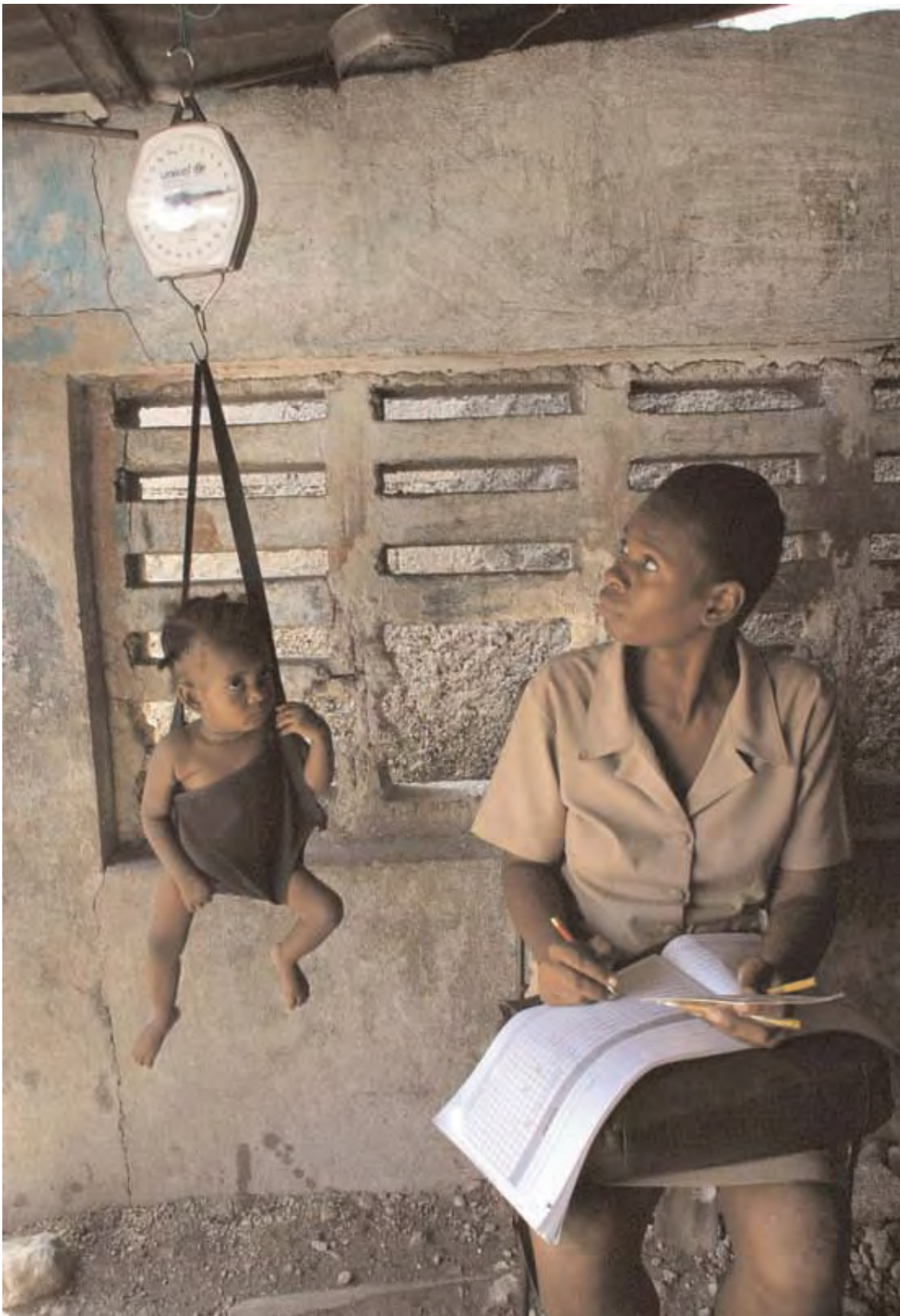
Educating girls also results in reduced birth rates, higher education levels for their children, increased agricultural productivity and higher family incomes. USAID partners with governments and stakeholders—including teachers, policymakers, the private sector and NGOs—to encourage parents to send their girls to school and to empower schools to retain girls through graduation.

HIV/AIDS is a major threat to the investments made in developing countries. Every day 6,000 young people aged 15 to 24 become infected with HIV, of which two-thirds are young women. USAID supports activities that address the economic, social and cultural factors that make women and girls more vulnerable than men to this global pandemic.

As a society is only as strong as its weakest member, USAID assists special populations that may be at risk temporarily or on a chronic basis: people with disabilities; orphans and young people; victims of gender-based violence; refugees; female heads of households; and those affected by HIV/AIDS.

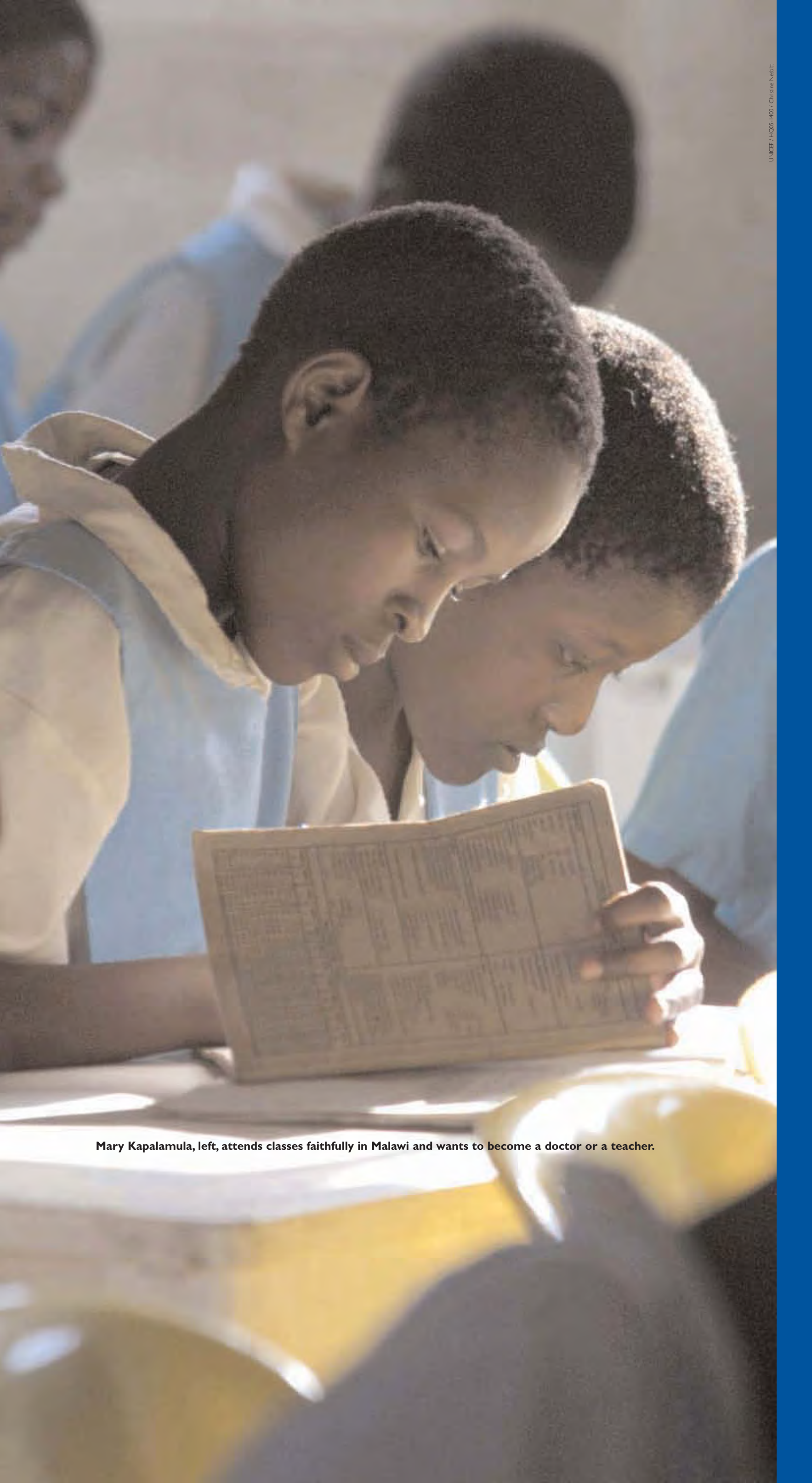


USAID supported vaccination of Iraqi children against polio, measles, mumps and rubella.



UNICEF / HQ04-0176 / Roger Lemoine

A health worker in Haiti records a toddler's weight as shown on a sling scale.



Mary Kapalamula, left, attends classes faithfully in Malawi and wants to become a doctor or a teacher.



Richard Nyberg / USAID

Landmine victim Elisabeth Nassalan opened a business in Senegal with USAID help.

USAID provides ethnic Roma school children with lunches, school supplies and tutoring.



Jay Sorensen / USAID