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To Halve the Have-Nots

What a Concept

WHO KNEW THAT A FIVE-foot square of nylon mesh could mean the difference between life and death for a family? Jeffrey Sachs, the economist spearheading the Millennium Promise campaign, did. Determined to fulfill the United Nation's goal to halve extreme global poverty by 2015, Sachs and experts



Children in Sauri, Kenya (top), and Bonsaaso, Ghana, both Millennium Villages.

from the Earth Institute at Columbia University and the UN Millennium Project developed the Millennium Villages model. The core principle: Match local communities with donors who provide technology and training, not handouts, and you can end world poverty, one village at a time. In Sauri, Kenya, the first Millennium Village, Sachs and his team helped villagers build a medical clinic, extend free school lunches to all children, fight malaria, improve farming, and operate new cooking stoves and computers. Bed nets significantly reduced the number of new malaria cases, and a pickup truck served as both ambulance and conveyance for goods to be sold at the market. "Sauri shows that the Millennium development goals are within reach even in places that seem utterly destitute and hopeless today," says Sachs. Between individual and corporate donations and government funding, the campaign hopes to meet the Millennium Promise goals not just on time but four years ahead of schedule. (To contribute, visit millenniumpromise.org.)

—R.B.