A friend of mine, Megan Evershed, is an Environmental Sciences student. She inspires me in so many ways because she is strong-willed and resilient in her fight for the greener side of life. She's not just a hippie child who wants to chain herself to every tree being threatened with death-by-chainsaw. She is intelligent, logical and realistic in her arguments and for that, I stand by and support her cause.

Over the weekend, I turned to Megan for help regarding this week's blogpost. I couldn't find a way to narrow down my thoughts and ideas into a focused, conclusive argument. Megan kindly offered me some guidance in the form of research papers, glossaries and practical experiments. Amongst all of this I found a small paragraph on The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals... and inspiration struck.

The UN MDG's

There are eight goals on the list. For each goal there is a correlated target. I am going to look at each of these goals over the next few weeks and write about some ways in which I think future generations could rely on new media technologies to help achieve these goals.

I am going to be honest from the start – I *am* the typical BA student – I hate Maths, I hate numbers, I hate stats. None of it makes sense to me and me trying to make sense of it gives me headache I'd really rather not face.

But I don't think that's a bad thing – ever stopped to think that maybe the reason the world faces such adverse poverty, poor standards of education, severe diseases like HIV/AIDS or Cholera, or global warming, is because for so many years we've turned to the stats to tell us what's going on? When last did a person, an actual breathing specimen, talk to you about environmental problems and tell you – *realistically* – how you can make small changes to your lifestyle to help heal the world?

Again, I'm talking about an *actual* human being – not the MTV "Switch" campaign, or Eskom's "49 million" TV advert, or free pamphlets, bumper stickers and biodegradable shopping bags. While we do need all of those things too, I think that what we need the most is a way to understand our world in layman's terms, to know how it works and what's breaking it, so that we have a realistic, approachable way to begin healing it.

So there will not be a lot of statistics, numbers, graphs or pie charts to encode all the words I'm sharing. Instead there will be words. Opinions. Ideas.

Declaration

"At the Millennium Summit in September 2000 the largest gathering of world leaders in history adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets, with a deadline of 2015, that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions-income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion-while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. They are also basic human rights-the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security."

Goals

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

-

Target 1A: Halve the proportion of people living on less than $1 a day

- Proportion of population below $1 per day (PPP values)
- Poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty]

- Share of poorest quintile in national consumption

- Target 1B: Achieve Decent Employment for Women, Men, and Young People

- GDP Growth per Employed Person
- Employment Rate
- Proportion of employed population below $1 per day (PPP values)
- Proportion of family-based workers in employed population

- Target 1C: Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

- Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age
- Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

- Target 2A: By 2015, all children can complete a full course of primary schooling, girls and boys

- Enrolment in primary education
- Completion of primary education
- Literacy of 15-24 year olds, female and male

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

- Target 3A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015

- Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector

- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality rates

- Target 4A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

- Under-five mortality rate
- Infant (under 1) mortality rate
- Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

- Target 5A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

- Maternal mortality ratio
- Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

- Target 5B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health

- Contraceptive prevalence rate
- Adolescent birth rate
- Antenatal care coverage
- Unmet need for family planning

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

- Target 6A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

- HIV prevalence among population aged 15–24 years
- Condom use at last high-risk sex
- Proportion of population aged 15–24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS

- Target 6B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it

- Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to anti-retroviral drugs

- Target 6C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

- Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria
- Proportion of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets
- Proportion of children under 5 with fever who are treated with appropriate anti-malarial drugs
- Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
- Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short Course

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

- Target 7A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs; reverse loss of environmental resources

- Target 7B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

- Proportion of land area covered by forest

- o CO2 emissions, total, per capita and per $1 GDP (PPP)
- o Consumption of ozone-depleting substances
- o Proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits
- o Proportion of total water resources used
- o Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected
- o Proportion of species threatened with extinction

- Target 7C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation (for more information see the entry on water supply)

- o Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural
- o Proportion of urban population with access to improved sanitation

- Target 7D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers

- o Proportion of urban population living in slumsensure that the habitat of a species to be more protected

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

- Target 8A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system

- o Includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally

- Target 8B: Address the Special Needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDC)

- o Includes: tariff and quota free access for LDC exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA (Overseas

Development Assistance) for countries committed to poverty reduction

- Target 8C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

o Through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly

- Target 8D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

- Target 8E: In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries

o Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis

- Target 8F: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

o Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population
o Personal computers in use per 100 population
o Internet users per 100 Population

As you can see, there is a lot that makes up each and every goal and its targets. It will take some time to fully grasp what the goals are really tying to achieve, how the targets are looking to achieve that, and finally, how new media technologies may assist with these developments.

I will begin the first post, within the next three days, by looking at the first two goals (poverty and education).

I look forward to saving the world, hope you do too!