



## Fight against poverty a campaign of 'small steps'

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GLOBAL poverty is the world's biggest problem. But the key to solving it, according to the economist at the centre of the action, is to think small, and tackle it by millions of practical steps to help the poor.

Jeffrey Sachs, director of the United Nations Millennium Project and special adviser to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, denied aid had not worked. More, better-targeted aid was crucial to ending poverty, he said.

A former Harvard whiz-kid now crusading to end global poverty, Professor Sachs played a key role in drafting the UN's eight Millennium Development Goals, such as eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2015, achieving universal primary education, and cutting child mortality.

Named last year by *Time* magazine as one of the world's 100 most influential people, he recently published his blueprint for change, *The End of Poverty*.

In Sydney this week for a Lowy Institute forum, Professor Sachs dismissed calls for "trade, not aid" — echoed by the Howard Government — as "a silly slogan which is no solution to poverty".

He was equally scathing about the "incredible naivety" of critics who claim aid has failed to solve poverty in the past.

He cited as success stories aid-funded immunisation campaigns, family planning advice in developing countries, and the Green Revolution that has trebled farm output, and Japanese and US aid to build infrastructure in Asia.

Professor Sachs told *The Age* that ending global poverty depends not on one solution, but on targeting resources to provide millions of them in villages and cities all over the world.

"It requires a combination of aid, and trade, and good governance (in developing countries) to get the job done," he said.

"It needs practical help, to get practical results ... and plan specific, concrete measures to make a difference."

Professor Sachs commended the Howard Government for its pledge to double foreign aid by 2010, although he said more was needed.

Where aid had failed in the past, he said, was because too much of it has been given as "blank cheques" or spent on Western consultants.

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