

**Introduction to ROSA Regional Version SOWC 2007**  
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There are few subjects more important for all the people in South Asia than the development of women and children.

A key reason why there is still substantial poverty and under achievement is the way that women are too often denied access to education and a voice in decision making.

It is a simple fact that gender equality goes hand in hand with the well being of children. A child whose mother is educated stands a much better chance of survival, and is more likely to live a healthier life and be better educated.

The Global 'State of the World's Children' Report for 2007 takes up these themes and calls for women to be empowered so that children will benefit.

Such is the importance of this for South Asia that my office has produced a regional version of the report. It not only calls for gender equality and greater efforts to get more girls educated, but it advocates for women to be given greater influence in the household, the workplace and in political arenas.

In South Asia the consequence of not doing this are plain to see. Gender inequality means societies are fighting poverty with one arm tied behind the back. Allowing women access to knowledge means healthier families and better decisions.

Gender Equality is not only morally right, it is pivotal to human progress and development.

I hope you will find time to read the regional version, look around at the villages and towns where you live, and then join us as we attempt to help children and make a better future for all of them.