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THE 'FACELESS' UP IN ARMS

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Voices



(TOP) **GOING DOWN THE HOLE:** **ABBAS, 15, NIGER.**
"He has worked in the 22-metre deep goldmine for three years, 6am to 7pm, seven days a week, 363 days a year. What he earns is not enough to get him out of the poverty trap."

Although his village is 12 kilometres away, he hasn't been home since he arrived and has only once seen his father, who came to get money from him. In the pitch black, his only light is a lamp tied to his head with a rubber band. He uses no safety devices. His boss died falling down the mine, after losing his footing climbing down just like this. Someone so young — and that's his life."



(ABOVE & RIGHT) **BROKEN SCALES OF LIFE:** **CHANNA, 12, AND HER BROTHER PAU, 9, CAMBODIA.**

"With US\$20 donated by a passerby, Channa bought a weighing scale — charging people 4 cents a weighing — and her brother bought shoe-shining equipment. Together they supported their sick mother. But the day before the picture was taken, policemen chased them. They beat up her brother, took his equipment and offered to sell it back to him. He couldn't afford it. Now she is the only one supporting the family. People talk about the poverty trap. It is like a boat which leaks: You go to stop one leak, and the other one opens up, and you only have one Elastoplast. That's what these people are facing."

SO, WHO STOLE THEIR SMILES?

CHEOW XIN YI
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HIS assignment was to travel to eight of the world's poorest countries to document the progress towards improving their people's lives by 2015 — a goal set by world leaders at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000.

The collection of photographs that Britain-born photojournalist Nick Danziger turned in after 10 weeks on the road, however, showed just how slow progress has been.



NICK DANZIGER, 47

The award-winning documentary producer, whose travels were commissioned by World Vision International, said: "What is impressive about this project is that normally, when you are commissioned by a humanitarian organisation, they want you to showcase the good work they are doing. World Vision wanted to show the needs that are not being addressed. The vast majority of pictures that you see here are people who are not being helped by anyone."

Debuting in London, the exhibit of 40 photographs coincides with the 2005 United Nations World Summit in New York in September. Singapore is the first stop of the exhibition's Asian tour.

TODAY asked Nick to pick the photos that meant most to him and share the stories behind them. Catch the rest of his collection from April 7 to 30 at The Photographic Society of Singapore's premises at Selegie Arts Center. Admission is free.



(ABOVE) **THEIR SECRET SHAME:** **AYAZ, 10, INDIA.**

"Ayzaz's mother is HIV positive, infected by her husband who died last year from Aids. Ayzaz and his little sister tested negative, but his six-year-old brother is positive. Ayzaz has stopped school and is the only one supporting the family, sorting second-hand clothes for his uncle's business — a 10-hour shift pays 10 rupees (36 cents) a day. If people found out that mother and son are HIV positive, they would be chased from their home and all the children would be removed from school. That's why in this picture, the mother is out of focus. I also had to take pictures of her neighbour, so no one would guess why I was taking pictures there."

(RIGHT) **A KILLING COLD:** **AIDA, 13, AND TATEVIK, 2-1/2, ARMENIA.**

"They live in a house condemned as too dangerous to live in, with no electricity or running water. While their mother and 14-year-old brother seek work in the countryside, Aida looks after Tatevik. Their meal is the cheapest bread, a bowl of soup and tea. But Aida's bigger worry is Tatevik's health — she coughs constantly and has bronchitis. Two other sisters have already died of pneumonia. The doctor has told her unless Tatevik gets proper treatment and food, she too would die. It is absurd — this is Armenia, two hours by plane from Paris. Don't just look elsewhere for people living in difficulties; they are in your backyard."



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