

Meena

Animation offers a wonderful opportunity for popularising the girl child's cause.

The elements of fun and fantasy give animation an irresistible appeal to young and old alike. It can capture people's attention by combining great entertainment with an educational or social message. The following stories illustrate some of the themes for the new episodes of the Meena film series.



Meena playfully suggests that she and her brother, Raju, should change places for a day. Exhausted by all Meena's household tasks, Raju complains bitterly when he is given Meena's usual small serving at supper. The family realises that food and work should be shared equally between boys and girls.

In the first episode, Meena, who is determined to learn, sends her pet parrot off to school when she cannot go. Then, using the knowledge her parrot brings home, Meena catches a chicken thief. Meena's resourcefulness convinces her parents that, like her brother, she too should go to school.



Meena and her friends stand up to some bullies who enjoy teasing girls. A soft watermelon provides a juicy and effective deterrent!

There is crisis in the family when the money lender demands the repayment of his loan. Meena may be forced to drop out of school. But Meena gets on her bike and saves the day.



Cast of characters.



The comic book combines an exciting story and delightful pictures with a graded text designed for teaching reading.

The challenge for the project is to see how Meena can reach girl children and their families from the urban slums to the remotest villages of Bangladesh. Through the Ministry of Information Meena has been broadcast on BTV and will be distributed through cinemas and the mobile film units. 1,000,000 copies of the first Meena comic book have also been printed to go to all the primary schools in the country. NGO education and social development programmes offer many opportunities for spreading Meena's message.



This lively design appears on the Meena T-shirt.

Cups, plates and stickers are some examples of the range of Meena products.



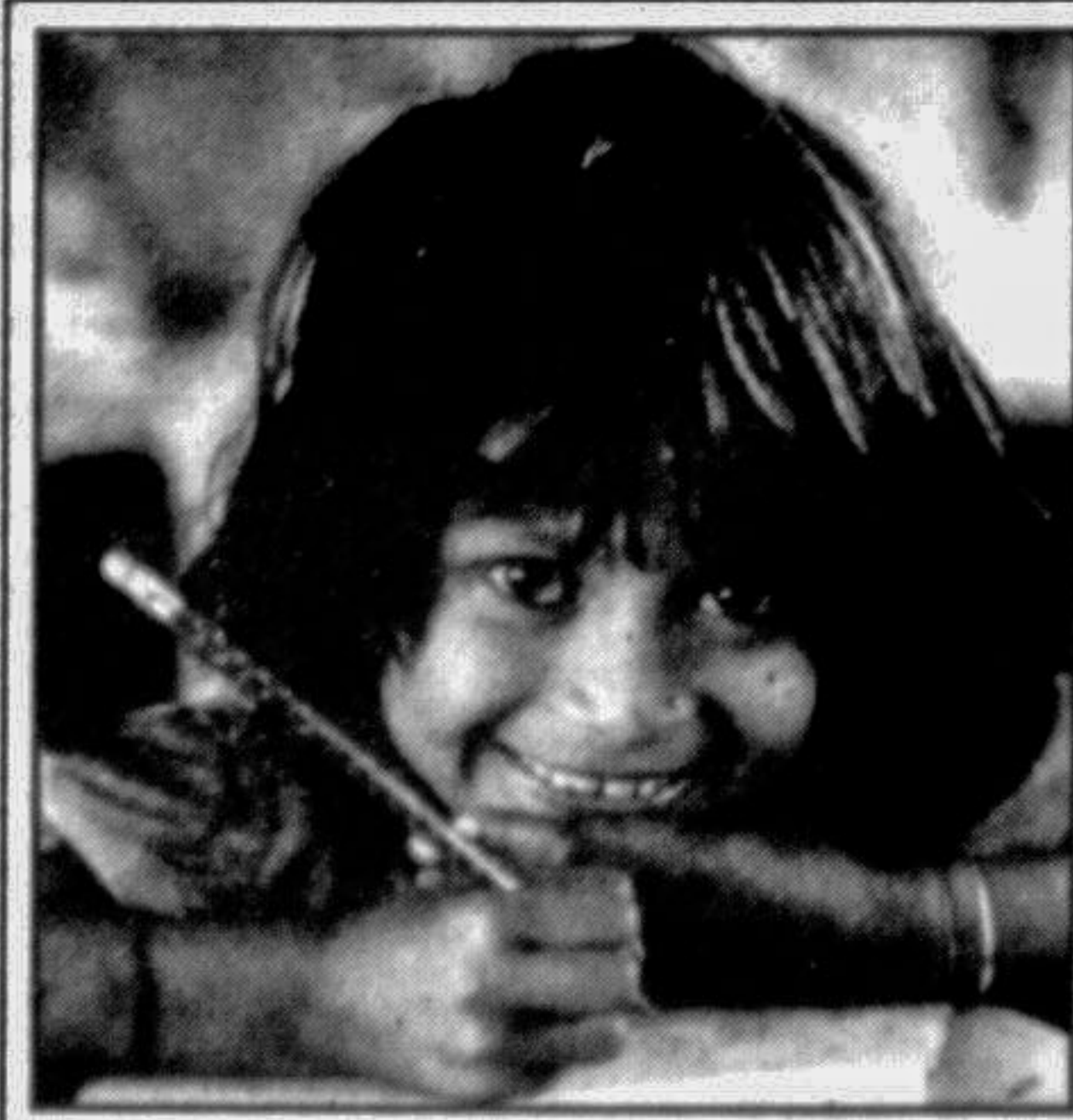
Each country will have its own language versions of the films and support materials, including comic books, posters and guidelines for using the films. Initially these materials are being produced in Bangla, Hindi, Nepali, Urdu and English. The cartoon series will be available in different formats for screening in cinemas and mobile film units as well as on video.

The enthusiastic response to Meena after Bangladesh Television's broadcasts has shown that she is fast becoming a popular star. To further promote her image, many commercial products are being developed for the urban and rural markets. Stationary sets, cups and plates, stickers, T-shirts, cards and dolls and many other items are under production. Meena now decorates the wall at the Mohakhali crossing. Will it be long before we see her on the back of rickshaws?



An enchanting little girl, Meena appeals directly to the hearts of people across South Asia.

In Meena, a lively and lovable new character has entered the South Asian stage. With her spirited approach to life she has the potential to become a symbol for the Girl Child and to be an inspiration for girls and their families across the region. The coming years will show how Meena grows into this role.



Information Officers of UNICEF Meet in Dhaka on Girl Child Theme

This week at the Sheraton Hotel, Dhaka Information Officers from UNICEF's National Committees in industrialized countries are meeting with their UNICEF counterparts from the Asia region, Headquarters and Regional Offices. There are 33 National Committees of UNICEF who are responsible for mobilizing public support, fund raising and development education in donor countries. The Information Officers play a vital role in increasing public knowledge on UNICEF's programmes for children and women. UNICEF is so well-known around the world because of the work of these committees in the sale of greeting cards and products, and educational activities.

The Information Officers based in developing countries have a similar role in supporting the implementation of country programme goals for children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The meeting this year is on the theme of the Girl Child. Field trips have been organized throughout Asia prior to the Dhaka meeting. The officers have come to exchange experiences, coordinate and jointly plan information strategies.

