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Cherie Blair wants to kill the world's intestinal worms

Posted by **WPCOMIMPORTUSER1** Friday, January 25, 2008 at 12:17 pm
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I realize that this photo is a blurry mess, but it may be the only visual record of one of the most surreal Davos moments ever. Somewhere behind those backs of people's heads are Cherie Booth Blair (you know, Tony's wife), pretending to be an intestinal worm, chasing (while wearing boots with three-inch heels) after a bunch of Davos attendees pretending to be schoolchildren. Meanwhile, Gene Sperling (a top economic adviser in the Clinton administration), is pretending to be a teacher, rushing to get antiworm medicine to the kids before Cherie gets them.

This was all the doing of **Deworm the World**, an initiative that's grown out of **research by MIT's Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab** showing that kids who have taken antiworm medicine are more likely to attend school and do well than their worm-ridden peers. (It's been put together by several of my fellow Young Global Leaders of the World Economic Forum, but I didn't have anything to do with it.)

The dewormers have enlisted Ms. Booth/Mrs. Blair (she seems to use the names interchangeably), who was herself happily dewormed as a child, as a celebrity spokesperson. Tony Blair will not be joining her. "Every time I mention this subject to my husband," she said, "he looks very distressed and runs out of the room."

The worm pursuit game had been designed as an educational tool for kids, and the deworming project is already up and running in Kenya. Bill Gates got a bit more press today for his **pledge to spend \$306 million to help "transform agriculture" in developing countries**. But I'm pretty sure his presentation didn't involve any role-playing tag games.

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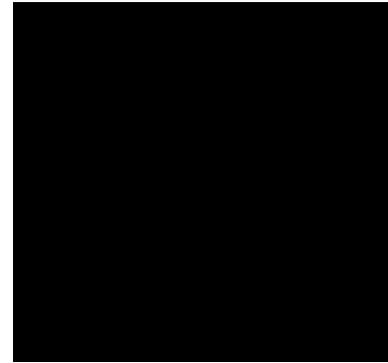
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