



# The Millennium Development Goals

Why they matter to local government

## The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

1. **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**  
Target: Halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and those who suffer from hunger.
2. **Achieve universal primary education**  
Target: Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school.
3. **Promote gender equality and empower women**  
Target: Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.
4. **Reduce child mortality**  
Target: Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five.
5. **Improve maternal health**  
Target: Reduce by three-quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth.
6. **Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**  
Target: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
7. **Ensure environmental sustainability**  
Target: Reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation.
8. **Develop a global partnership for development.**

## What are the Millennium Development Goals?

In September 2000, the United Nations Millennium Summit agreed eight time-bound and measurable goals aimed at combating rural and urban poverty, hunger, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. Many of the targets within the goals are set for 2015.

## Why do they matter?

- At all levels the MDGs have the potential to help concerned people, governments and donors to agree priorities, set targets, allocate resources and monitor progress.
- Globally they provide a framework for the UN member states to declare statements of intent and work coherently towards a common end.
- Nationally and at local government level they provide a basis for different sectors to set priorities, advocate for greater knowledge and external financing, and make links to the country's poverty reduction strategy.
- A poverty reduction strategy is a national plan that directs resource allocation and service provision to alleviate poverty. Governments through a participatory process involve civil society and development partners to prepare these strategies, that for many countries but not all, reflect the MDG targets. The strategy describes not only the big picture (macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programs) but also points to what must be done at sub-national level to promote growth and tackle poverty.
- Local government is also concerned with poverty reduction and economic regeneration and has its own plans. Using the MDGs is a good way to link local development plans to national and international strategies. This helps to secure funds, attract external interest and promote integrated management of urban and rural services. With limited local resources the MDGs provide the justification for targeting the poor and marginalized.

## Local Actions for Global Goals

Different ministries and departments of local government will have to work together if the MDGs and national targets are to be met. Health must work with education, education with local government and so on. Local government is also well placed to monitor progress which will assist local planning and inform national government. The MDGs provide a framework for this to happen. For example the district water and sanitation office can contribute in the following ways to different goals.

**Working with Health** on water related diseases (goal 6) the district water engineer can provide technical expertise on water storage and drainage to mitigate against malaria. This is important because the burden of disease slows down the economic growth that is presumed to solve local health problems.

**Working with Education** on the provision of basic sanitation facilities and water supply in schools will help to boost school attendance, particularly for girls (goal 2 and 3). This is important because education is a human right and one of the most effective routes out of poverty.

**Working with Local Government & Housing** on extending water supply to slum areas will cut the costs (time and money) that these households pay for water, so leaving more time for income generation (goal 1). This is important because 800 million people are expected to migrate to urban areas of the developing world over the next 15 years.

**Working with community development** to get more women involved in local decision making, for example through village water and sanitation committees. This can help all the goals because women disproportionately suffer the burden of poverty, childcare, poor education and diseases.

■ In Pakistan the government is committed to the MDGs and is reflecting these in its national poverty reduction strategy. The 2001 Local Government Ordinance underpins the government's devolution policy that gives responsibility for drinking water and sanitation to sub-district and local (union) councils. Each province will prepare its own poverty reduction strategy to reflect the MDG targets and influence the resources which local government receives.

## Find out more

WELL has produced a series of briefing notes to help you. These include:

1. The Poverty Millennium Development Goal: What water, sanitation and hygiene can do
2. The Education Millennium Development Goal: What water, sanitation and hygiene can do
3. The Child Health Millennium Development Goal: What water, sanitation and hygiene can do
4. The Gender Millennium Development Goal: What water, sanitation and hygiene can do
5. The HIV/AIDS Millennium Development Goal: What water, sanitation and hygiene can do
6. The Environmental Sustainability Millennium Development Goal: What water, sanitation and hygiene can do
7. Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Monitoring: A new decade to measure

## Enquiry service

Do you have a question about water, sanitation or hygiene? If so the WELL Enquiry Service can provide you with an answer free of charge, if you work for:

- local government
- national, state or provincial government
- a water authority or a utility
- an NGO
- a multilateral agency on International Finance Institution (IFI)
- DFID

If you have access to the internet see [www.Lboro.ac.uk/well](http://www.Lboro.ac.uk/well)

Your nearest WELL resource centre is:

Affix your sticker here

or contact:

**WELL at WEDC**  
**Loughborough University**  
**Leicestershire LE11 3TU UK**

Email: [well@Lboro.ac.uk](mailto:well@Lboro.ac.uk)  
Phone: 0 (44) 1509 222885  
Fax: 0 (44) 1509 211079  
Website: <http://www.Lboro.ac.uk/well/>



**WELL** WELL is a network of resource centres:

WEDC at Loughborough University UK; TREND, Kumasi, Ghana;  
IRC at Delft, The Netherlands; SEUF, Kerala, India;  
AMREF, Nairobi, Kenya; ICDDR, B, Dhaka, Bangladesh; and  
IWSD, Harare, Zimbabwe; NETWAS, Nairobi, Kenya;  
LSHTM at University of London, UK;

This note was funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).  
The views expressed, however, are not necessarily those of DFID.

Compiled by Sue Coates and Andrew Cotton  
Published by WEDC on behalf of WELL