

We the Peoples 2005 Survey Results

ACHIEVING THE GOALS: STARTING POINTS

In 2001 the United Nations launched the Millennium Development Goals to mobilize global support to end extreme poverty. Derived from the Millennium Declaration, and based on global partnership, the primary goal is to reduce extreme poverty in the world by half by 2015.

Unlike many international conference declarations and programs for action, the goals have specific targets and dates for accomplishment. Because of this, and reflecting the high level endorsement, they have fed a revival of interest and debate about development and the eradication of poverty. They have stimulated hope and expectations. As a result, if the MDGs remain unfulfilled, there will be rising cynicism and millions will be left in unnecessary destitution, disease, and hopelessness.

Therefore, governments, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations face a crucial challenge this year to take prompt action to ensure commitments will be met and to remove roadblocks that frustrate the eradication of poverty and the achievement of greater global justice.

CIVIL SOCIETY: CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Civil society response to the goals has been “mixed.” Why?

Many civil society organizations (CSOs) emphasize the need to change structural and causal elements in the world economy and in power relations. These factors both recreate and sustain continued poverty. Many groups emphasize the need for common, agreed international goals for North and South.

Many CSOs conclude that these concerns were not honoured in actions that followed their participation in UN conferences in Beijing and Copenhagen in the 1990s. The rich countries, through the Organisation for Co-operation and Development (OECD), came up with an approach to development without the participation of Southern countries.

Among the failings, this OECD approach dropped 12 vital elements of the Beijing Platform for Action for women/gender equality. Social development objectives lacked specificity. Donor countries were not bound by time targets to provide aid and social development funding.

At a 2000 meeting in Geneva, NGOs bitterly responded to a joint presentation by the OECD, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the UN, “*A Better World for All*” (<http://www.paris21.org/betterworld/>). Once again, the approach had not been negotiated with Southern representatives. The existing poverty-sustaining, macroeconomic framework remained unexamined and unquestioned. Rich countries omitted references to their own poverty eradication and social development needs. There were no fixed commitments for donor countries. Some organizations also saw the approach as a sell out by the United Nations to the interests and organizations dominated by the North.

Because the Millennium Development Goals reflect in many details the approach taken in “*A Better World For All*,” they suffer some of the same NGO criticisms.

WHERE ARE WE NOW? THE GOALS AT RISK

"So far, the record in achieving these goals is mixed. Broad regions are far off track. Changing that will take a strong and joint effort from the whole international community, developed and developing countries alike...We are willing to take on that challenge...Active participation from a wide range of actors – civil society, the academia and the private sector – will be key factors in ensuring that the Millennium Development Goals are reached."

– H.E. Göran Persson, Prime Minister of Sweden, February 8, 2005.



The Millennium Project's 2005 report *"Investing in Development"* (<http://unmp.forumone.com/>) states the goals are still achievable if all countries fulfill their promises and redouble their efforts. Donor countries must increase development aid. Recipient countries must put poverty reduction strategies in place by 2006.

The European Commission's *Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2000-2004* (<http://www.undp.org/mdg/donorcountryreports.html>), proposes that the goals can be achieved if there is a "quantum leap in scale and ambition, both in terms of resources and policies."

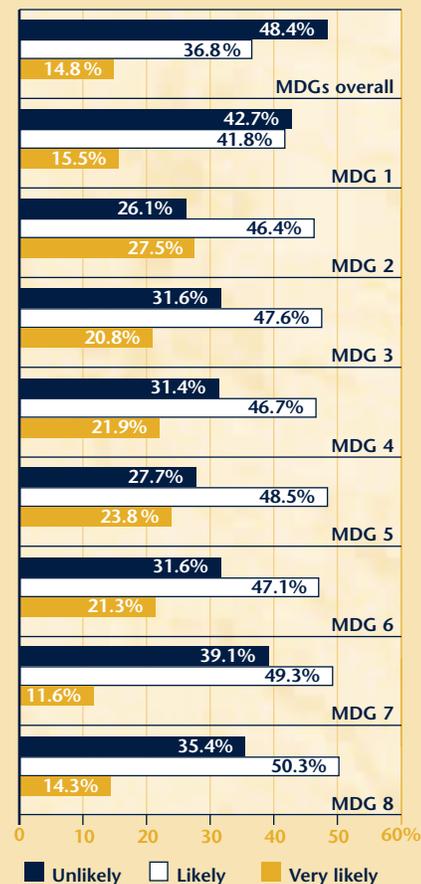
However, there is a risk of early failure.

Developing countries are making progress in reducing extreme poverty and providing basic necessities for their citizens. However, progress has been slow in the Least Developed Countries, in sub-Saharan Africa, in Central Asia, and in the poorest regions and provinces of some countries. There are even significant reversals. Governments and international agencies report that if current trends continue, we will not reach the goals by 2015.

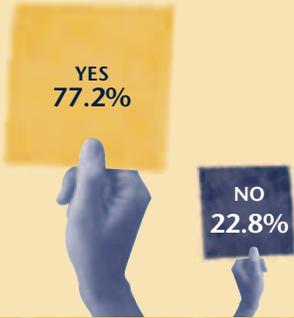
On-target progress is evident for only two goals: halving the proportion of people living in absolute poverty, and ensuring access to safe water. By current trends, child and maternal mortality goals will not be met in most regions, and sub-Sahara Africa will not meet the universal primary education goal (with shortfalls likely in South Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa as well). About one-third of developing countries are unlikely to achieve gender parity in education. Targets on infectious diseases remain daunting and even more difficult where there is no safe drinking water or basic sanitation. A global partnership for development is hampered by insufficient aid from rich countries.

Yet, the eight development goals are achievable. The greatest advances are taking place in East and South Asia, especially in China and India, the world's most populous countries. Major advances there positively influence global results.

In the country where you are working, how likely is it that the MDGs will be achieved by the target dates?



Have the Millennium Development Goals and the Declaration been an impetus for civil society engagement with the United Nations' development agenda?



Do you know about the United Nations' Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?



At which stage is your organization's work on the MDGs?

WHAT WE KNOW: THE 2005 SURVEY RESULTS

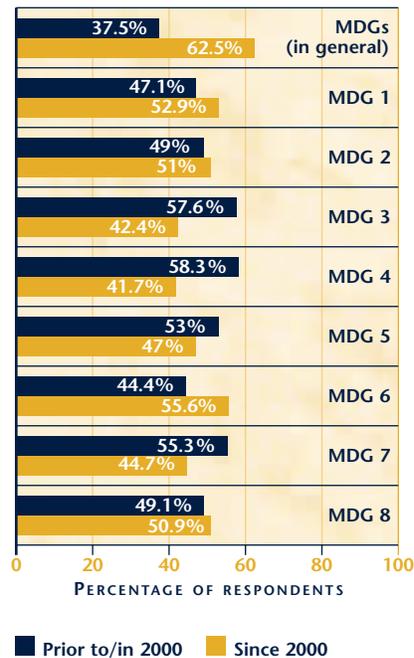
The 439 survey participants provided information, views, and recommendations on all the Millennium Development Goals.

Our survey shows a trend of increasing CSO activity in support of the Millennium Development Goals. The 2005 *We the Peoples* survey was broader than in previous years. For the first time it included questions about each of the specific goals and about the development goals and civil society work in general. Here are the summary highlights from responses to questions about the nature and scope of work and activities.

Of survey respondents familiar with the development goals and Declaration, 85% are involved in related activities. The majority of respondents are in the implementation stage of their activities, with almost one-third at the planning stage. Very few have completed their activities.

Half the respondents started their work *prior to* the 2000 Millennium Summit, the remaining half *since* the adoption of the development goals.

When did your organization begin MDG-related work?



The eight development goals provide a framework for civil society activities even when organizations have been working on some of these same development goals for many years.

Three-quarters of organizations find the goals have had no favourable effect on their funding. One-quarter find funding has improved as a result of the Millennium Declaration and/or the goals. Primary sources of improved funding are UN programs, other NGOs, aid agencies, and governments. The principal source of funding for almost half the respondents is membership. One-third depend on grants from private individuals and foundations as the source of most of their funds.

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

Civil society efforts to achieve the development goals are wide-ranging, with a variety of expected outcomes. Most activities fall into the following categories:

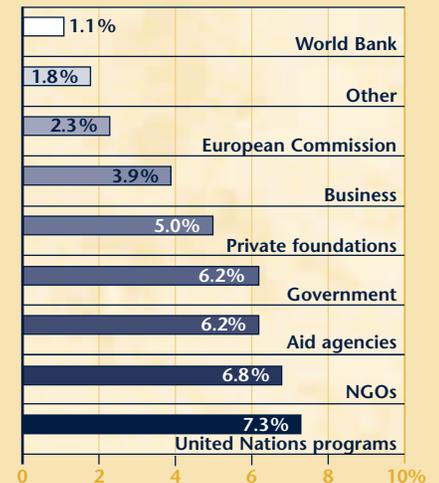
- awareness-raising (in the general public and in specific communities, including decision-makers)
- education and training
- poverty reduction efforts
- direct provision of services (e.g., health-related)
- advocacy work to introduce or change policy
- issues of governance
- general campaigning for all, some, or one of the goals

In the survey, respondents were given an opportunity to describe their projects and activities. There is great diversity.

- A **Sudanese** youth organization is rebuilding a sanitation system. This is a participatory community project in a post-conflict zone. The project deals with waste, water, and sanitation management while raising public awareness about HIV/AIDS.
- An organization in the **United Kingdom** promotes the Tobin Tax as an alternate means of financing the eight development goals. (Proposed by economist James Tobin in 1978, the small tax would be applied to foreign currency exchange transactions.)
- A **Kenyan** organization has created a small bank for local fishing people. The bank creates opportunities to save money for future investment in the industry. Organizers of this micro-finance initiative hope to eventually involve 30,000 people.
- A **Pakistani** organization lobbied for and drafted new national legislation on infant and child nutrition. Now it publicizes the implications of the new laws.
- A **Canadian** woman weaves tapestries that include messages about female infertility, bioethics, and biotechnology. She speaks publicly to raise awareness of reproductive health and technology, and the need for gender equality.
- One organization capacity-builds in the *favelas* (slums) of **Rio de Janeiro** to assist disadvantaged youth and adults acquire job skills. This is part of an entrepreneurship and small business development program.
- An **Australian** organization works for sexual and reproductive health and rights in Asia-Pacific. It advocates implementation of the program from the International Conference on Population and Development.

Does working on the Millennium Development Goals help civil society organizations get funding?

If the Millennium Declaration or the MDGs had a positive effect on your organization's ability to obtain funding, from what sources did you obtain funding?



“Poverty is the ‘ultimate threat’ to stability in a globalizing world. But the fact is that the international community is giving with one hand, but is taking with the other.”

- Michel Camdessus, former Executive Director, IMF. UNCTAD, February 13, 2000.

“Although we are likely to reach the first Millennium Development Goal of reducing poverty by half worldwide by 2015, much more aid, much more openness to trade, and more widespread policy reforms are needed to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals in all countries.”

Comment by François Bourguignon, chief economist of the World Bank for OneWorld.net

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS PLUS

Survey respondents also report great diversity in setting targets for themselves, and in pressing governments at several levels to adapt the goals to local circumstances. Many have set more ambitious targets than the eight development goals or have moved deadlines for achieving earlier results.

The following consolidated summary matches these survey results to each of the eight goals.

The survey also provides a snapshot of how CSOs are working with governments, the media, and the private sector; how they are including people with special needs; and how they are adapting their work to the development goals set in 2000.

THE MOST IMPORTANT GOAL: GOAL 8 – “DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT”

We believe this is the most important of the eight development goals. Survey respondents agree. We believe it is essential to achieve Goal 8 in order to achieve the other seven.

In preparation for the September 2005 summit of world leaders, there is a superior task to assess the state of the partnership between developed and developing countries. The United Nations, national governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, and motivated citizens everywhere should take part in this assessment. The need for a real North-South global partnership has never been greater.

World leaders pledged support for this partnership in the 2000 Millennium Declaration, in the development goals, and again when they met in 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico. Each time they agreed and emphasized the significance for economic and social development of governance, trade, development assistance, debt, and private sector involvement. The aim of the partnership, says UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, “is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world’s people.” The promised partnership of Goal 8 reminds us of the vital role wealthy countries must play to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

There are seven targets on the way to this global partnership:

Target: Develop an open, rules-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system that includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – nationally and internationally.

Target: Address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), including tariff and quota-free access for their exports. Create an enhanced program of debt relief for the highest indebted poor countries, cancel official bilateral debt, and offer more generous Official Development Assistance (ODA) for countries committed to poverty reduction.

Target: Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing countries (based on the UN-agreed Program of Action).

Target: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries.

Target: Develop decent and productive work for youth.

Target: Provide affordable, essential drugs to those who need them in developing countries.

Target: Make the benefits of new technologies — especially information communications technologies — more available to people in developing and poor countries.

Survey Results: Goal 8 Civil Society Activity and Views

According to our survey, most civil society organizations are working on one or more of these targets. Their work includes governance, trade, development assistance, development financing, and debt.

Governance. Groups working on governance aim for “more democratic systems of global governance, especially economic governance,” according to a Belgian organization. Such groups promote a stronger voice for developing countries in the international financial institutions (World Bank, IMF). They support equal partnership between the North and South in poverty reduction strategies and actions. Some would like to see a stronger role for the UN to better link economics and human rights.

Trade. Civil society organizations working on trade issues promote fair trade so that trade better benefits poor countries. Much of this work is aimed at developed country governments and their existing trade agreements and practices. Some groups promote policy changes by Northern governments to facilitate market access for goods from those developing countries that respect human and labour rights.

Some groups promote change in trade agreements such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the General Agreement on Trade in Services. One Norwegian respondent works against the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement. Others target the World Trade Organization (WTO) to promote safeguards for agricultural products from poor countries.

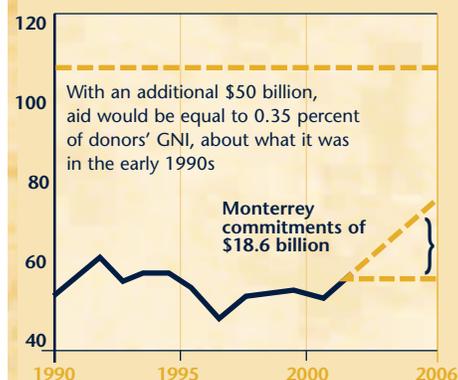
Development assistance and financing. Many responding organizations demand wealthy countries meet the long-agreed Official Development Assistance (ODA) minimum target of 0.7% of GDP. Many advocate untied aid to support the Millennium Development Goals. Some respondents call for a “new architecture for global finance,” including global taxation initiatives (see <http://www.wider.unu.edu> for background) to help finance the eight development goals. In India, one group promotes financing changes to support small, decentralized projects that invest in community “start-ups,” technology, and marketing for mini-enterprises.

Debt. A few groups lobby developed country governments and international financial institutions (IFIs) to cancel the debts of developing countries (especially the poorest nations). One international NGO advocates debt cancellation for all those countries identified as the poorest and for those countries with unsustainable debts.



Is your organization contributing to/promoting/ or advocating about MDG 8?

Net official development assistance (\$ billions)



Source: <http://www.developmentgoals.org/partnership.htm>

An Indian organization notes: "As developing countries become further integrated in the world economy, their chances for development become increasingly dependent on global economic structures and policies. This applies particularly to countries that depend on multilateral institutions and developed countries for loans and debt relief and therefore have to abide by certain 'conditionalities'... Hence, what is of relevance here is the 'external economic environment' which comprises the WTO, the International Monetary Fund, UNDP, UNCTAD, the World Bank and developed country groups."



The goal: Achieving a global partnership

Obstacles: In wealthy countries, low public awareness about development and about the development goals is a handicap to meeting targets and building a global partnership. Survey respondents fear this lack of awareness will enable governments and leaders to ignore the commitments made in 2000. It is important, they say, for Northern societies to realize that development in the South is in their own self-interest. An organization in China notes, "The developed countries should realize that development is inter-related and that helping developing countries is helping themselves...The developing countries should be better prepared for cooperation."

There is a need for political commitment. However, commitment to development is lacking in wealthy countries. Yet, developed countries hold much of the power to determine amounts of aid, trade regulations, and debt relief. Despite commitments made in international agreements, these countries have not yet built "transparent and accountable partnerships for development," according to one international NGO.

Respondents are also concerned that Northern countries are turning to armed security and military spending at the expense of development.

Recommendation: There should be more development education in the North and more citizen participation in the development goals and the efforts to achieve them. Governments and leaders should be more accountable to parliaments and citizens to increase funding and make progress on the MDGs.

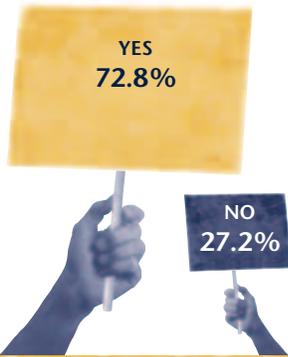
Survey participants propose significant increases to ODA, additional funding beyond ODA specifically for the eight development goals, a binding donors treaty to legally guarantee funding commitments, a currency transfer tax to help finance development, and changes to trade rules and subsidies to support developing economies.

Obstacle: The survey identifies the powerful "exclusive clubs" of the wealthy countries as a roadblock to achieving global partnership progress. One respondent says institutions like the G-8, IMF, OECD, and the WTO, "make decisions that affect the lives of the poorest with little room for input from those affected by these decisions."

Recommendation: Respondents emphasize the need for increased cooperation among states, a stronger UN for making decisions on trade, finance and debt, more voting power for the South in multilateral institutions, and increased transparency and improved governance of international economic, financial, and trade institutions.

GOAL 1.

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger



Is your organization contributing to/promoting/ or advocating about MDG 1?

organization in the United States is concerned about declining coffee prices and the subsequent impoverishing impact on farmers in countries where coffee is a primary source of income. "We have already helped thousands of farm workers and their families," this NGO writes, "by certifying farms and bringing farms up to standards that provide education, housing, and decent wages." This NGO's international work also includes environment sustainability.

A Peruvian NGO states that they address, "development of regional markets, integrating urban systems, and improving relations between regional markets and international markets" as a means to addressing poverty.

However, most responding groups work at national or local levels. Groups working to reduce poverty by country and by community try to improve household income and increase access to resources. Their focus is employment opportunities and rural development. Micro-credit income-generation activities are popular among respondents. These activities often create employment, encourage savings, and help strengthen communities. Groups active at the local level recognize that increased income improves nutrition. For example, one Afghani organization is helping farmers "collect the fruits of distributed seedlings for income generation and for better nutrition." An improved water-supply system also boosts nutrition.

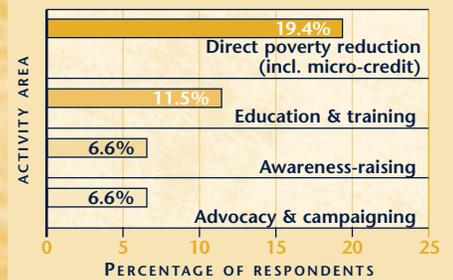
Other local activities to help reduce poverty include education, training and capacity-building. Special efforts are made to involve women, Indigenous Peoples, and youth in an effort to strengthen employability for these disadvantaged sectors of societies. A Nicaraguan organization says it provides "education for the young population on their rights and potential

Target: By 2015, halve the proportion of people living on less than one dollar a day.

Target: By 2015, halve the population suffering from hunger.

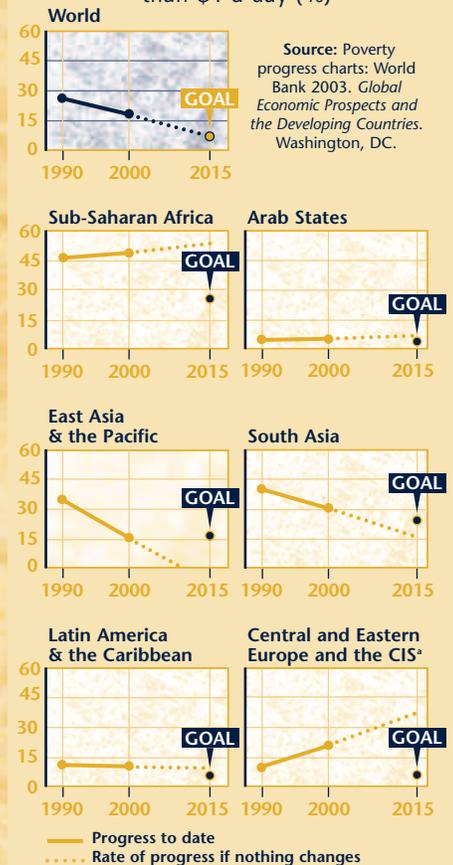
A handful of groups are active internationally. To help achieve poverty reduction, these groups advocate changes to the international financial institutions (the World Bank and IMF) and they promote changes at other international organizations. They also work to address the underlying causes of worldwide poverty. For example, one

CSO MDG 1 Activities

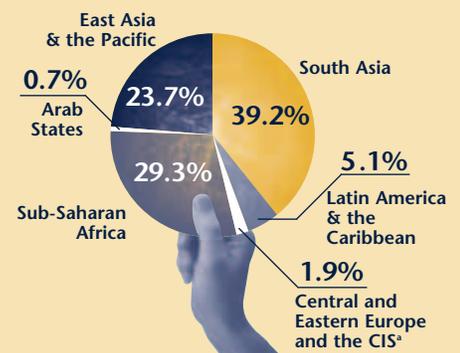


Poverty:

Proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day (%)



Regional distribution of population living on less than \$1 a day, 2000 (% of total)



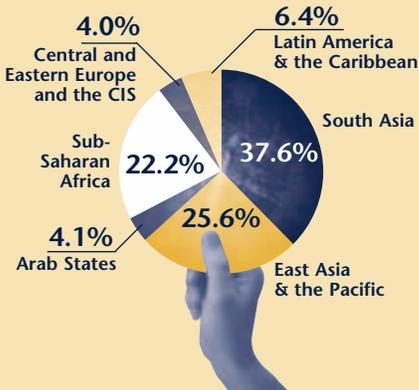
GLOBAL TOTAL: 1,100 MILLION IN 2000

^a Refers to population living on less than \$2 a day.

Hunger:
Undernourished people
(as % of total population)



Regional distribution of population undernourished, 1998–2000
(% of total)



GLOBAL TOTAL: 831 MILLION IN 2000

Source: Hunger progress charts: World Bank 2004. World Development Indicators 2004. CD-ROM. Washington, DC. FAO 2003. The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2003. Rome.

to improve their living conditions” as well as “education and information to the population on nutrition and food security.” Small-scale agriculture training also aims to increase family and community nutrition.

Some CSOs work to raise public awareness to increase support for poverty reduction. Some also inform people of their rights, including the right to food and water. A very small number of groups advocate national/local policy changes favourable to poverty reduction and increased civil society involvement in poverty reduction strategies.

The goal: Eradicating poverty and hunger

One NGO from Cameroon states, “Resources don’t get to the real target, people at the grassroots level.”

Obstacle: The most commonly cited obstacle to the achievement of Goal 1 is “insufficient resources.” Respondents recognize that this includes lack of money, insufficient political will, lack of commitment, and inadequate policy.

Recommendation: Better national policy. Policy and resources are needed to support social development. Survey respondents believe present economic development policy is not benefiting the poorest populations, and that investments in social support systems would increase people’s quality of life. One Indian respondent calls for “changing priorities and investments to enable the poor to set up their own livelihoods. Education, vocational training, infrastructure, and health care systems are essential.”

Obstacle: Various forms of inequality, including inequality based on gender, greatly hinder poverty reduction.

Recommendation: Policies and programs to eradicate poverty and hunger should calculate and address the needs of the disadvantaged and marginalized. Inequalities based on caste, gender, class, ethnicity, and other social factors must be addressed in achieving this goal. In particular, women’s empowerment is a priority; women make up the poorest group within populations around the world.

Obstacle: Survey respondents note that poor national economic performance undermines poverty reduction locally. Of particular concern are insufficient employment opportunities, unequal distribution of national income, and lack of initiative in the private sector.

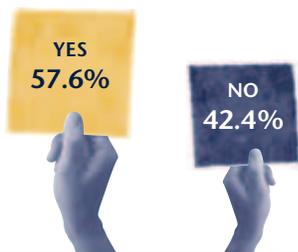
Recommendation: Young people in particular need employment opportunities with adequate wages and fair working conditions. This may require government-private sector cooperation to enforce labour standards. The population of those aged 15 to 24 is rising rapidly in most parts of the world.

Security issues, including situations of war, occupation, terrorism, and political instability are cited as obstacles to poverty reduction from respondents in several countries facing these scenarios.

Obstacle: Many respondents criticize government planning and decision-making that does not include civil society organizations and citizens.

Recommendation: Respondents call for increased opportunities for public participation in planning and implementing poverty reduction programs. There is a special need to include those who are most affected, often women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and the elderly. Surveyed groups argue in favour of hearing the needs of affected people for the most effective solutions to poverty. Such participation requires investment in training and education so citizens are able to participate. A Chilean organization notes the need to “implement productive programs that give tools to the most needy so that they can become aware of their own reality and create and take actions toward their social improvement.”

GOAL 2. Achieve universal primary education



Is your organization contributing to/promoting/ or advocating about MDG 2?

Target: By 2015, ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school.

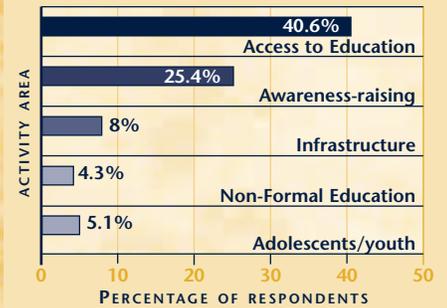
Survey respondents are convinced universal primary education is necessary to achieve other development goals, including poverty reduction and gender equality. Many groups work to improve access to education and to encourage enrolment and infrastructure development.

Activists for access to education run local school programs, discourage dropouts, and encourage enrolment by poor, disabled, and rural children. They help sensitize parents about the value of education for girls. They help address parents’ financial needs and tackle cultural norms that hamper school attendance by girls.

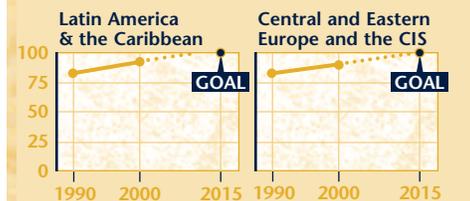
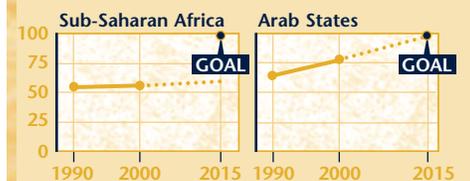
“Achieving primary education is already a reality in Tunisia. Our action consists of fighting early school leaving, especially for girls.”
– Tunisian organization

Some organizations work to increase public and decision-maker knowledge and awareness of enrolment issues and the value of education. Others promote building schools, rehabilitating abandoned or conflict-destroyed schools, improving teaching resources and teacher training. Some groups provide non-formal education to adults and youth (including literacy skills, life and job skills, and information communications technology training).

CSO MDG 2 Activities

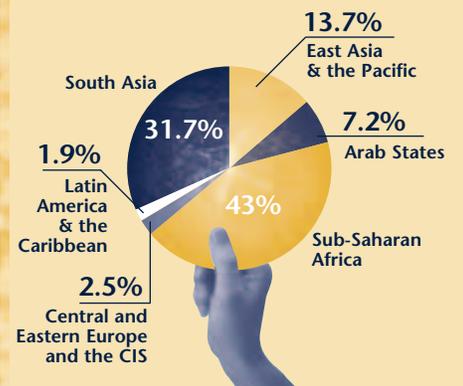


Primary education: Net primary enrolment ratio (%)



— Progress to date
..... Rate of progress if nothing changes

Regional distribution of primary age children not in school, 2000 (% of total)



GLOBAL TOTAL: 104 MILLION IN 2000

“Basic education should be made compulsory and free, and made a fundamental right. Sufficient resources should also be allotted [to allow it to function].”

– NGO respondent from India

The goal: Universal primary education

Obstacles: Groups active in education say the greatest obstacles are a shortage of schools, lack of material and equipment (including computers and Internet access), lack of quality curricula, a shortage of trained teachers, and the disincentive of low wages.

Recommendation: More resources are needed for the education system in poor and developing countries.

Obstacles: Some social/cultural practices and norms work against school attendance and education, especially for girls. Lack of awareness among adults of the value of education also prevents progress toward this goal.

Recommendation: Greater public awareness of the value and importance of education. Survey respondents highlight the need to build awareness among parents, political and religious leaders, and the larger community. Increased support from parents and the community can lead to higher school enrolment and political support for bigger education budgets.

“The government needs to make [education] a top priority and start a huge media campaign to get parents on board...The government needs to stop gender-segregation at primary level education. It is devastating for children to be segregated at such an early stage. It is an absurd thing to make separate primary schools for boys and girls in a country where the government cannot even provide enough schools. Unless the government tackles this head-on this goal will never be achieved in Pakistan...Unless there is a rights-based approach to education at all levels, especially at primary level, this goal will not be achieved.”

– Pakistani civil society group

Obstacle: Commercialization of education has a negative impact on the poor. User fees can be a prohibitive barrier to education of children from poor families.

Recommendation: Some respondents emphasize the need for free primary education, without user fees (at least until secondary school). Where necessary, national education policy changes should address this need.

GOAL 3.

Promote gender equality and empower women



Is your organization contributing to/promoting/or advocating about MDG 3?

Target: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and at all levels by 2015.

- **Indicator** Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and tertiary education
- **Indicator** Ratio of literate females to males, 15-24 years old
- **Indicator** Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- **Indicator** Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

Many survey respondents recognize the need for gender equality and women's empowerment in order to achieve any and all eight development goals. They argue for gender analysis as part of the assessment of each goal.

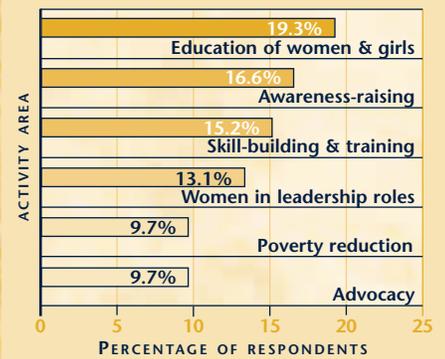
Civil society organizations are working toward this goal in a variety of ways. Some groups promote women's education, working with educational institutions to improve literacy. Improved education empowers women by increasing earning capacity and contributing to better health. Some organizations work specifically with girls.

Other groups work to increase awareness and sensitize the public, decision-makers, the media, institutions, and their partner organizations about gender issues, women's rights, and the positive impact of women's participation in society. They also address discriminatory and harmful practices and behaviour.

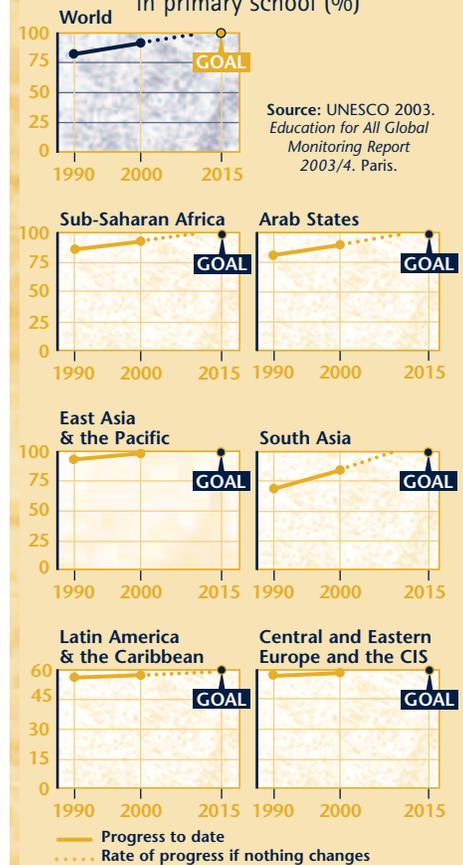
Respondents include those involved in capacity-building and skills training in leadership, decision-making, gender-sensitivity, organizational management, and sexual and reproductive health. Some organizations lobby decision-makers for resources and for changes in legislation and policy. They promote gender mainstreaming in policy-making and gender-sensitive budgeting.

Many CSOs stress the importance of sexual/reproductive health rights as a means to achieve empowerment, education, and better health, and as fundamental rights. Some respondents also uphold the UN framework as a reference for national policy and programs and as a standard to assess progress. This framework includes the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>), the Beijing Platform for Action (<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instreet/e5dplw.htm>), and the Cairo Program of Action (<http://www.iisd.ca/Cairo/program/p00000.html>)

CSO MDG 3 Activities

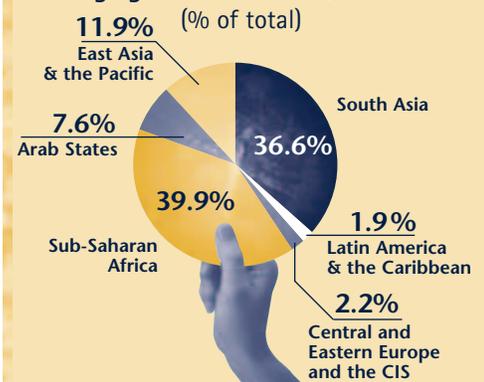


Gender equality: Ratio of girls to boys in primary school (%)



Source: UNESCO 2003. Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2003/4. Paris.

Regional distribution of primary age girls not in school, 2000



GLOBAL TOTAL: 59 MILLION IN 2000

“The chief obstacles [to achieving MDG 3] have to do with culture – traditional norms for women’s roles and power relationships take time to change. Gender equality is a transformative process which will take time...”

– An American NGO

“Some Cambodians do not allow their children, especially girls, to continue their studies due to poverty. Girls have the task of helping their parents earn money to uplift the living standard of their families while boys pursue their studies far from home.”

– NGO respondent from Cambodia

The goal: Gender equality and women's empowerment

Obstacles: Many respondents point to cultural and religious beliefs and practices as well as women’s and girls’ traditional roles as obstacles to progress. Others mention “attitudes” and “mindsets” about women and girls, the lack of public awareness about the value of women, and patriarchal systems.

Recommendation: Awareness-building and public education about gender rights require more resources. Observance of religion(s) should be separate from state policy and decision-making, especially decisions affecting the rights and empowerment of women.

Obstacle: Bad government including instability, corruption, lack of political will, and unsound policy negatively impact efforts to achieve this goal. Some organizations draw attention to the low participation of women in governance as a major obstacle.

Recommendation: Decision-making structures need to be more representative and inclusive of women and women leaders. Decision-making decentralization will enable women in local communities to participate in the discussions and changes that affect them most.

Obstacle: Lack of opportunities in education and training for women severely limits their earning power and their access to information, health care, and further education.

Recommendation: Policy and increased resources should support education and training for women and girls. There is need for more investment in formal and informal capacity-building, training, and support for income-generating activities such as micro-credit programs. Many groups suggest incentives for parents to send both male and female children to school. Traditional attitudes and beliefs about women need to be addressed.

Obstacle: A small group of respondents draws attention to the different impact of poverty on men and women. They see continuing gender inequality as a result of inadequate attention to this difference.

Recommendation: More resources for the empowerment of women and for social development. Budgets should be gender-sensitive. Gender should be mainstreamed in policy development.

“The state must have the courage to change the laws and policies that discriminate against women due to gender. The state must not use religion to justify discrimination against women and must not allow any individual or group to do the same. NGOs can work to help and are working to help but if the government machinery is not with them, they will not succeed.”

– Pakistani organization

GOAL 4. Reduce child mortality



Is your organization contributing to/promoting/or advocating about MDG 4?

Target: Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five.

For this goal, most groups are active in the health sector. Half of these groups work in postnatal health care, the other half work with adults to reduce child mortality.

Those working in postnatal care monitor infant health and promote infant and child nutrition, regular post-natal vaccinations, and disease

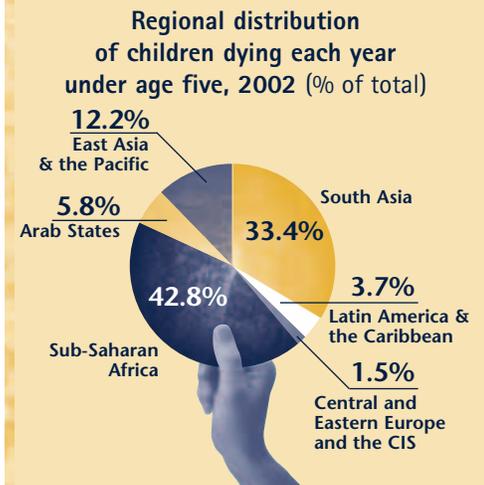
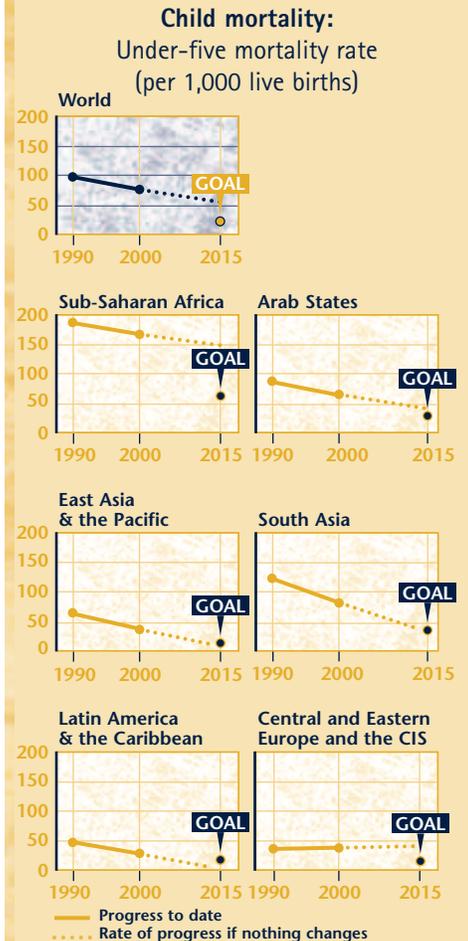
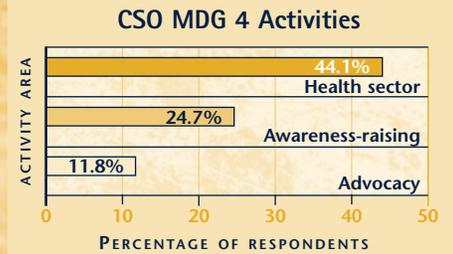
prevention. For example, a Nigerian group is working to “reduce the number of children that die in rural areas through common ailments like malaria and diarrhea.”

Working with adults includes the sexual and reproductive health and rights of potential mothers, counseling, childbearing/childcare information about breast-feeding, pre- and postnatal vaccinations, and disease prevention. Some groups provide general, primary, and preventative health care through medical clinics, health centres, and free health camps. One Ghanaian organization is “working with traditional birth attendants... to update [their] knowledge and skills...to reduce infant mortality.”

A Colombian organization is working toward “Improvements in the health of children extricated from child labour.”

Many groups raise awareness, publish, and take up media campaigns, education, counseling, and capacity-building. They target the general public and parents. For parents, they address both pre- and postnatal stages to increase the chances of child survival. Child mortality awareness in the larger community can influence decision-makers to make policy changes in key areas.

Some organizations advocate policy change. They strive for equitable health systems, better maternal and child health policy, more resources, and implementation of international law. One international organization desires to “shift World Bank economic analysis of health, which has failed children, the poor, the disabled, and the elderly, and promote a rights-based, pro-poor social model of health.” Many groups support ratification of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.



GLOBAL TOTAL: 11 MILLION IN 2002

Sources: UN 2003. *World Population Prospects 1950-2050: The 2002 Revision*. Database. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. New York. World Bank 2004. *World Development Indicators 2004*. CD-ROM. Washington, DC.

An Indian NGO requests that “local hospitals and nursing homes be given grants by the national governments to engage non-profit [organizations] to carry out intensive care for the newborn, including activities with the patient’s families.”

The goal: Reducing child mortality

Obstacles: The vast majority of respondents point to the underlying problems of resources and funds, lack of political will, and poverty as obstacles to health care and adequate nutrition. Insufficient resources and political will mean health facilities, services, and trained professionals are not adequate to meet the needs of parents and young children.

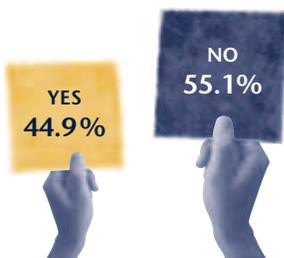
Recommendation: More investment in the health sector. More resources for maternal care and for child survival. Respondents also stress the need for health care facilities with adequate supplies, lower costs (some suggest “free” health care as a priority), and greater access to necessary drugs. There is a recognized need for more medical staff, and more training for existing staff.

Obstacle: Children die from preventable causes because of poor education, low awareness of child mortality risks, and some cultural/religious beliefs/practices which inhibit education and awareness.

Recommendation: Resources are needed for parent and public education and awareness. Survey respondents want parents to know the options that are available to them to better care for their children. The media and modern communication tools and techniques can reach larger numbers of people.

GOAL 5.

Improve maternal health



Is your organization contributing to/promoting/or advocating about MDG 5?

Target: Reduce by three-quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth.

Most CSOs active in maternal health are involved in raising general awareness and educating women and mothers (including adolescents and young mothers) about their health and the health of their child.

Some groups offer reproductive health services to women, including attending at childbirth, providing contraception, family planning counseling, and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights.

A group from Nigeria notes, “Maternal mortality indicators are higher for adolescents than older women, [however] the national adolescent health policy is weak in addressing the factors that contribute to it. Funding of the adolescent health policy is central.”

Some groups work to improve health care infrastructure and train health care staff. A small number advocate policy and system change to adequately address maternal health (including ratification of the ILO Convention on Maternity Benefits). (<http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C183>). A few groups work with pregnant women living with HIV/AIDS to help reduce transmission and prevent maternal mortality.

The goal: Improving maternal health

Obstacle: Many respondents find fault with the health care system and attribute the continuing existence of maternal mortality to inadequate health policy.

Recommendation: Survey respondents would like to see systematic or structural reform in national health care systems and better national policy to increase access for users, especially women and adolescents. Several mention making health care free, particularly maternal health care. Others desire policy changes. These changes would include: integration of the Program of Action from the International Conference on Population and Development into national policy; removing links between women's health policy and religious views/institutions; changing intellectual property rights to better meet the needs of the poor; and integrating HIV/AIDS awareness into sexual and reproductive health programs.

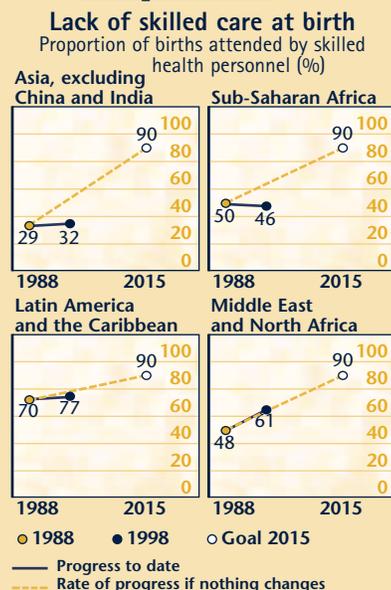
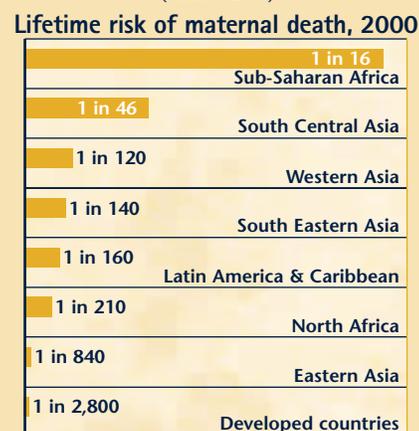
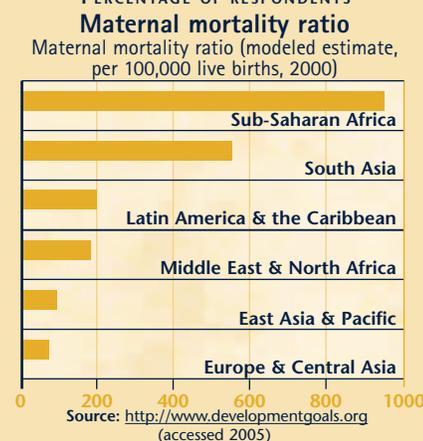
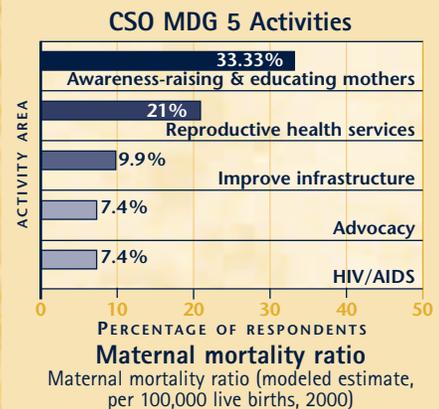
Obstacle: A shortage of facilities, skilled personnel, adequately trained personnel, and equipment. It is felt that insufficient resources are allocated to health infrastructure in general, and sexual and reproductive health/maternal health in particular.

Recommendation: Strengthen health infrastructure to better address the needs of women, including more and better health care facilities with updated equipment, more and better trained health care personnel with higher pay, and more support for stronger planning and management.

Obstacles: Respondents believe that general lack of knowledge about maternal health, lack of education, and limited access to information about health are the key problems. Certain beliefs and practices, sometimes emerging from cultural and religious traditions, perpetuate this lack of awareness and create barriers to the empowerment of women.

Recommendation: More resources for public education and awareness-raising campaigns about maternal health, and sexual and reproductive health in order to make information available and to challenge pervasive ignorance about these issues.

A civil society organization from the Philippines identifies the chief obstacle to achieving Goal 5 as "the government's failure to adopt a comprehensive family planning and reproductive health program, based on an appalling subservience to the dictates of the local Catholic Church."



GOAL 6.

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases



Is your organization contributing to/promoting/or advocating about MDG 6?

Target: By 2015, halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

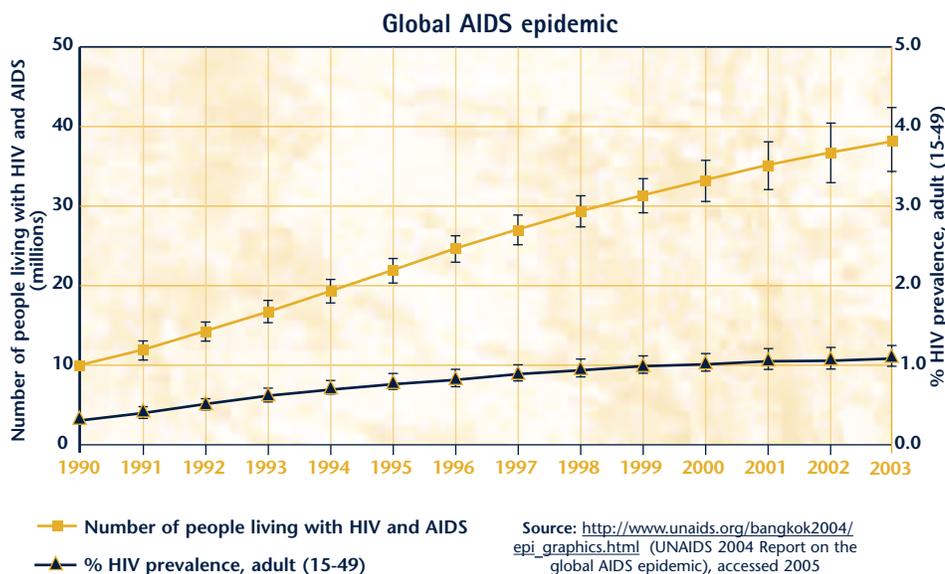
To achieve Goal 6 will require a wide range of initiatives. The activities of civil society organizations reflect this.

Many groups describe their work as promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. They address the general public, youth, women and mothers, and the international community.

- *Public awareness* focuses on generating media coverage, and making information available through publications, seminars, and workshops. Many survey respondents report that their governments still do not admit HIV/AIDS is a major issue and many citizens, although aware, are not really thinking about it because they do not know just how many people are affected.
- Those who target *youth* use similar means, but with the understanding that those at risk should be educated about HIV/AIDS and other diseases from an early age in order to maximize the efficacy of prevention efforts.
- *Attention to women, and mothers* in particular, emphasizes the gendered nature of the issue. The aim is to increase realization that women, especially young women, are particularly vulnerable to becoming infected and at risk of mother-child transmission.
- *International awareness* efforts try to capture the attention of donor nations about the problem in heavily affected and potentially high-risk regions in order to encourage more resources for research, prevention, and treatment, and the recognition of HIV/AIDS as a global problem.

Some organizations work for prevention by providing information about transmission and prevention methods. They promote healthy lifestyles. Groups stress that although many may be aware of HIV/AIDS, prevention education is necessary to increase people's understanding of their own risk and methods of prevention. For example, a respondent from a Canadian university notes that "more education about prevention of HIV/AIDS from kindergarten to end of life [is needed]. Drugs help but they are not magic bullets and prevention/education is more important than drugs and condoms."

Civil society groups are also involved in the treatment of those infected or affected, aiming to improve their capacity to continue with their lives. They work to improve overall health services, create more facilities and



improve staffing, as well as ensure drug availability. Some groups provide affected people with social support. This includes counseling and other services. A handful of civil society groups specifically mention their support for youth and AIDS orphans.

Other civil society organizations undertake political advocacy and network to create a “united front” against HIV/AIDS and other diseases. They propose policy initiatives and lobby governments.

The goal: Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

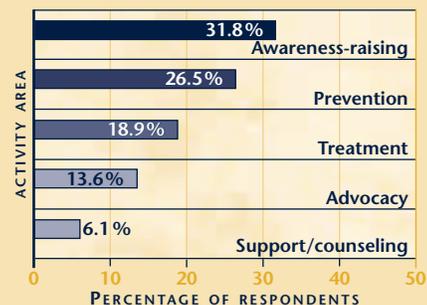
Obstacle: The general public is not aware of the gravity of the HIV/AIDS situation. The public is also not adequately aware of prevention methods. This ignorance is perpetuated by beliefs and practices based in culture and religion and by traditional attitudes toward women. Stigmatization accompanying the disease results from lack of knowledge and discourages engagement to battle the disease while cultivating a non-supportive environment for the affected.

Recommendation: Resources for public awareness campaigns about HIV/AIDS in order to discard stigma, nurture frank and open discussion about the practices that increase risk and vulnerability, and empower people to make informed decisions.

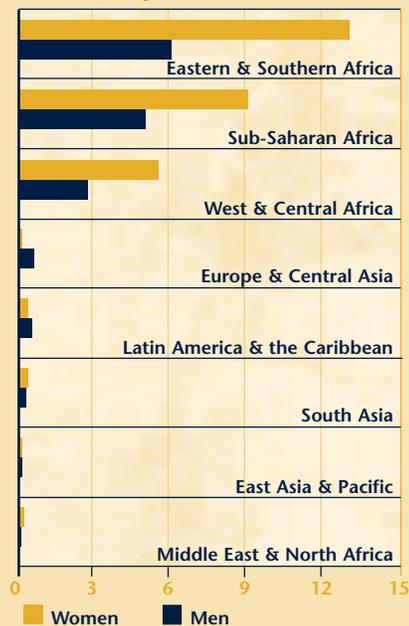
An Irish organization states: “[There is a] failure on the part of political and social groups to face the reality of HIV status. Taboos around the issues remain strong, as does complacency.”

Obstacles: According to our survey, poor health policy and poor health infrastructure (facilities, health professionals, available drugs) are major obstacles in halting and reversing the spread of these diseases. Underfunding and undercommitment are the root causes of this situation.

CSO MDG 6 Activities



Youth living with HIV/AIDS (%, ages 15-24, end 2001)



Source: http://www.developmentgoals.org/Hiv_Aids.htm

Incidence of tuberculosis (per 100,000 people), 2002



Source: http://www.developmentgoals.org/Hiv_Aids.htm

Recommendation: Make drugs available to those who presently cannot access them due to high costs in order to better fight HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. In highly affected areas, government policy should enable generic drugs to be produced, with negotiated cooperation from pharmaceutical companies.

Recommendation: More investment in community-based health care. This requires increased national resource allocation for community health and increased resource commitments from donors and international funders. Local community groups should receive more support to strike a balance between them and larger national and international NGOs that traditionally receive the most funds.

Recommendation: Governments must invest in local rural and urban infrastructure to reduce the risks of malaria and tuberculosis. Sewage systems, waste management, and water pollution need attention.

Recommendation: Include sexual/reproductive health rights and more attention to HIV/AIDS in policy and programs to maximize efficacy of prevention and care.

Obstacle: Those who are most vulnerable and affected by HIV/AIDS, especially youth, are not consulted when creating policy and programs.

Recommendation: Educate young people at an early age about risk. Employ peer education where formal counseling is not available. Involve young people, including young women, in policy development and in solutions.

Recommendation: Develop policy to meet the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS. Policy should include a range of measures to improve treatment, care, education and training, employment opportunities, and quality of life dimensions of people living with HIV/AIDS.

GOAL 7.

Ensure environmental sustainability



Target: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources.

Target: By 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people now living without sustainable access to safe drinking water (and sanitation).

Target: By 2020, achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Civil society organizations focus their sustainable environment work on raising awareness, natural resource conservation/ management, and advocacy.

About one-third of survey respondents are involved in awareness-raising and education. They promote sustainable practices. There is a noteworthy focus on youth, including university students in hands-on environment work. For example, one Venezuelan organization engages university students who “teach principles of sustainable development and environmental protection to the poorest communities, as part of their social service.” Other groups work with slum dwellers, children, and rural populations. There is a clear emphasis on village and grassroots action.

Some organizations carry out water and sanitation projects. One environment group says its “major focus [is] on equitable access to fresh water as a vital key and precondition to the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals.” A policy research institute, working through the Commission on Sustainable Development, has a program “to ensure the sustainable availability, distribution, and use of water resources.”

Others provide water and improved sanitation by collecting rain and eliminating contamination to benefit target populations in specific regions. Safe water projects include pollution control of Africa’s Lake Victoria basin. One group in Peru devotes its energies to “restoring environmental sustainability by eliminating chemical contamination in four lakes serving 36 Indigenous communities in the Peruvian Andes.”

Other groups work to reverse forest loss. In India, one NGO has set up 29 village forest protection committees as well as a federation for “conservation and livelihoods” all over the state of Andhra Pradesh. In western Kenya, groups work to save the environment of the Gwasi Hills.

“We are helping conserve millions of acres of farm and forest land and to protect water, soil and wildlife. We expect to continue these efforts, magnify them, and also improve their effectiveness.”

– International environmental group

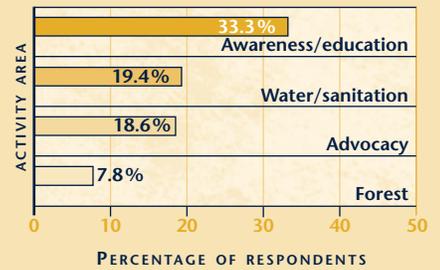
Promoting and protecting the right to water, and advocacy against privatization of water and water systems, are priorities for a number of organizations.

Advocacy for other kinds of policy change is the focus for other organizations. Policy-related work includes ensuring compliance with international law, observance of voluntary codes of conduct, and implementing environmental law. Other groups help create new environmental laws, or help modify existing ones. Some groups fight against privatization of natural resources.

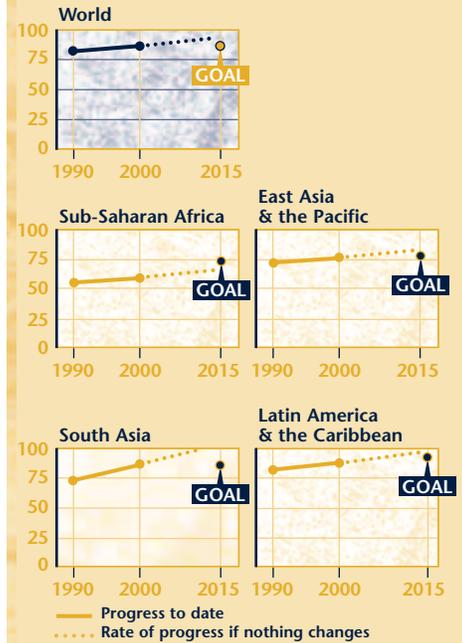
The goal: Ensuring environmental sustainability

Obstacle: Poverty prevents sound environmental stewardship. Many survey respondents draw attention to the fundamental relationship between the environment and poverty. One Indian organization notes that “poverty impels people to destroy the balance” because of their reliance on natural resources.

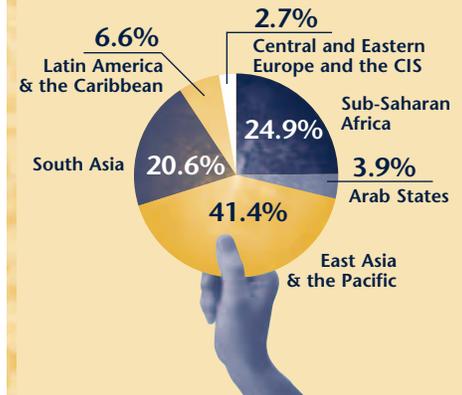
CSO MDG 7 Activities



Access to water: People with access to an improved water source (%)



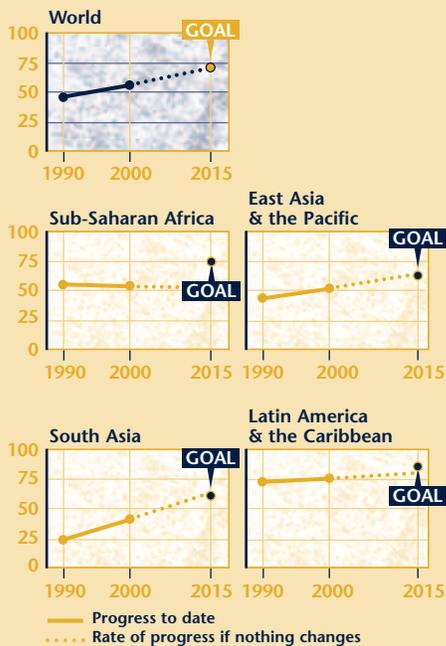
Regional distribution of people without access to improved water source, 2000 (% of total)



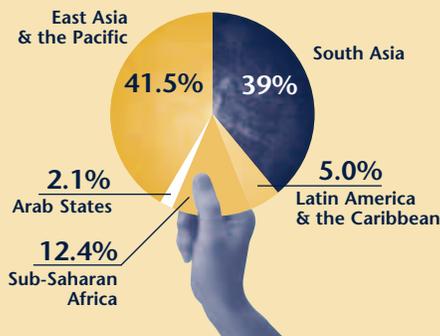
GLOBAL TOTAL: 1,197 MILLION IN 2000

Source: World Bank 2004. *World Development Indicators 2004*. “Access to water/sanitation.” CD-ROM. Washington, DC.

Access to sanitation:
People with access to improved sanitation (%)



Regional distribution of people without access to adequate sanitation, 2000 (% of total)



GLOBAL TOTAL: 2,742 MILLION IN 2000

Source: World Bank 2004. *World Development Indicators 2004*. "Access to water/sanitation." CD-ROM. Washington, DC.

Recommendation: Ending poverty will strengthen environmental sustainability in many places.

Obstacle: The privatization of some resources like water can negatively affect access to and use of resources, especially by the poor.

Recommendations: Some CSOs call for a rights-based approach to the environment and demand policies that define access to resources and improvement of sanitation and living conditions as basic human rights. Some are especially concerned about slum dwellers. Many respondents are concerned that privatization of resources will undermine this human rights approach.

An Indian NGO urges that governments change their attitudes which consider "slum dwellers as a burden on the society. These people provide basic services to the society and contribute immensely to overall development."

Obstacle: A lack of adequate and updated environment policy.

Governments lack the will, incentives, and financial resources to enforce existing policy. Lack of leadership and commitment to the Kyoto Protocol on climate change is one example. The US refusal to support Kyoto is seen as an obstacle by some American and other groups.

Recommendation: Stronger government commitment to better environmental legislation and more capacity to enforce regulations. Ensure local decision-making about resources and the environment. One NGO suggests "recreating mechanisms of local governance and creating a sense of local ownership of natural resources, providing a basic knowledge base and facilitating access to finance for communities to build up their assets." There is a need for government partnerships with civil society and local organizations such as farmers' associations and village committees.

Obstacles: Diverse approaches. Survey respondents find that there is a "lack of support for integrated approaches that incorporate the principles of sustainability (economic, environmental, and social)." One US-based group criticizes "the lack of a civil entity to establish and maintain a network among all countries of the world to work toward the realization of this goal in a concerted manner," while reporting the group is trying to create such a network.

Recommendation: More public education about the environment and ecology. More outreach to parliamentarians and decision-makers to promote a holistic approach to environmental problems. Civil society organizations have an important role. According to one respondent, public information could be improved by "equal time on mass media for facts, news, and commentary" sensitive to these issues.

Obstacle: Current international trade and economic practices are major obstacles, according to some respondents. They claim these practices foster environmental destruction by unlimited exploitation of resources. Some respondents believe that the policies of the international financial institutions, especially policy-driven privatization of resources, detach citizens from local resources and lead to environment degradation.

Recommendation: Some organizations would like to see “reform of company law and trade regulations” and “a legally binding regulatory system at the international level.” This regulatory system would include constraints in trade agreements and in trade activities to ensure compliance with environmental standards. Regulations would apply to corporations. Survey respondents encourage corporate social responsibility be included in policy discussions and policy development. These changes would require supervision by international bodies, enhanced monitoring with a role for stronger local civil society groups, and transparent accountability and enforcement.

One survey respondent calls for “an *earth first law*, not just a policy, for all business transactions, as well as a *local peoples decide law*. A *destroyers must pay law* would certainly make a difference.”

Terms of Engagement

Innovation

Some examples of the innovative ways groups around the world are working toward the goals include:

- In **Tanzania**, the Tanzanian Gender Networking Program (TGNP) and the Feminist Activist Coalition (FemAct) (<http://tgnp.org/Ofemactmembers.htm>) have launched a “Return Resources to the People” campaign challenging the government to allocate more resources to health, education, and related sectors. Tanzanian CSOs also prepared their own shadow report of the official 2001 MDG progress report.
- Villagers in the Kashkadarya region of southern **Uzbekistan** had no gas supply and were cooking over open fires. The villagers organized themselves to build a 1,600-metre medium-pressure and a 1,280-metre low-pressure gas pipe to service 260 families for heating and cooking. Local women successfully pressured the government to help pay for gas heating of the village school.
- In **Bulgaria**, a local workshop was held in the city of Plovdiv. The workshop included minority groups and designed specific strategies to localize the MDGs.
- In **Vietnam** an initiative was launched to localize the MDGs and a list of VDGs (Vietnam Development Goals) was developed by the Poverty Task Force (government agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, national and international NGOs), which served as an input to set indicators for the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Similar projects were carried out in the **Philippines** and **Cambodia**.
- The **Mediterranean** wetland and coastal ecosystems conservation project is a regional initiative involving Albania, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, and Tunisia. The project aims to conserve wetlands while improving NGO capacity to address biodiversity, raise awareness, and network among Mediterranean populations. It promotes local and national coordination on issues of ecology.

“I am now convinced that the MDGs can only be attained through a global compact, anchored in national policies that take into account local circumstances.”

- Benjamin William Mkapa,
President of the United Republic
of Tanzania, *International Herald
Tribune*, July 13, 2004.

Inclusion

Our survey reminds us of the valuable role of youth. Youth as specifically mentioned in the MDGs are vital to local and national communities. Organizations such as TakingITGlobal (TIG) (<http://www.takingitglobal.org/home.html>) and the Global Youth Action Network (GYAN) (<http://www.youthlink.org>) help to create networks among youth to work on development issues. Similarly, the elderly are working to demonstrate the importance of their growing numbers and their value to the development of healthy, intergenerational societies. However, the MDGs do not mention the elderly.

In our survey, 39% of respondents point out the needs of the elderly are inadequately addressed by the MDGs. Organizations such as HelpAge International (<http://www.helpage.org>) are networking worldwide to highlight and mainstream in international dialogues the issues of aging.

The quantity and diversity of women's organizations and networks working globally on the Millennium Declaration is noteworthy. The Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (<http://www.wgnrr.org>), the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) (<http://www.wedo.org>), and the Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and Peace (WLP) (<http://www.learningpartnership.org/about>), are some of the global networks actively seeking to empower women.

Survey respondents also note that the participation of Indigenous Peoples and minority groups is often overlooked. Development programs sometimes do not account for the particular barriers that these groups face, including discrimination, different languages, and some government refusal to acknowledge their existence. Indigenous groups have formed organizations to promote their interests and welfare. These groups include Minority Rights Group International (MRG) (<http://www.minorityrights.org>) with 130 partners in 60 countries. Similarly, disabled people are often excluded from their societies by social and physical barriers. Organizations that represent people with disabilities, such as Handicap International (<http://www.handicap-international.org/english>) recognize the need to work with governments to be included in development programs.

From the survey we know many civil society organizations, such as the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GNP+) (<http://www.gnpplus.net>) are working to ensure that the needs of people living with AIDS are taken into consideration, while others advocate for an intensive international effort to search for a vaccine against HIV.

Trade unions report education and advocacy campaigns including work for better labour standards. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) (<http://www.icftu.org>) has embraced the MDGs. Along with other labour organizations in the Global Unions coalition (<http://www.globalunions.org>), it encourages its members to become involved in advocacy campaigns such as The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (<http://www.whiteband.org>).

From our survey, here are some examples of civil society activities with youth, the elderly, and others:

- A **Kyrgyz** group is organizing a festival and lectures for youth groups. The United Nations Association of **China** is organizing university student Model UN conferences on the MDGs. Similarly, GYAN is collaborating on a Youth and the MDGs report, and the production of an MDG Youth Campaign Kit intended to involve young people in MDG-related projects, campaigns, and advocacy efforts.
- The **Arab** NGO Network for Development (<http://www.annd.org/>) has set up an online discussion group for young people from Arab countries to exchange ideas and experiences on development and human rights. The **Pacific** Youth Bureau (<http://www.spc.org.nc/youth/>) will assist in developing regional youth strategies and policies.
- The International **Nepal** Fellowship (<http://www.inf.org.np/>) provides technical and financial support to self-help groups of disabled people of all ages, while the **Haiti** Society for the Blind has been working for over 50 years to provide practical support for visually impaired people. The Beguborlik centre in **Uzbekistan** is providing vocational training for orphan children and children with disabilities.
- The Muthande Society for the Aged (MUSA) in **South Africa** is working with older people providing meals, home-based care, and transport to health centres while also running a literacy training program.
- **The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues** (<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/>) has decided to devote its 2005 session to Indigenous Peoples and the MDGs.
- The Mekong Regional Indigenous Child Rights Home (MRICRH) (http://www.depdc.org/halfwayhome/english/about_us_for_whom_work.html) is an NGO based in northern **Thailand** that provides a half-way house and protective services for Indigenous children vulnerable to human trafficking. It works with 14 hill tribes, as well as Indigenous groups from China, Myanmar, Nepal, Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Malaysia.
- CHIRAPAQ (The Center for Indigenous People's Culture of Peru) (<http://www.madre.org/sister/Peru.html>) was formed in **Peru** by a group of Andean and Amazonian women with the goal of defending Indigenous rights and strengthening Indigenous identities in their communities. Social integration of Indigenous Peoples is the focus of the Australian Tangentyere Council, a voluntary organization formed to address the needs of Aboriginal People living in town camps in Central **Australia**. The Council works to improve the living environment, providing social support services such as education and training.
- MDG campaigns in **Chile** and **Argentina** have a strong gender focus with a particular emphasis on sexual and reproductive rights. The Chilean Citizens Campaign is managed by ACTIVA Consultores, a non-profit association of professionals specializing in issues of gender, poverty, and development. In Argentina, 15 women's groups make up the Argentine Network for Monitoring Gender Policy. They are working to hold their government accountable to its MDG commitments.



Does your organization participate in a public review of national budget priorities and advocacy about them?

In the country where you are working, how could government better support civil society's role in implementing the MDGs?



Similarly, the **Pacific Women's Bureau** (<http://www.spc.org.nc/Women>) is redefining the Pacific Platform for Action in light of the MDGs, reviewing areas of critical concern by conducting comprehensive gender audits across 13 areas and reviewing policies and legislation for integration of gender issues.

- In 2003, the CPDC/**Trinidad and Tobago Network** (http://www.caribbeanngos.net/member_profile_pages/cs1/default.htm) produced a Women's Campaign Workbook as a training resource to be used to prepare women to participate in local government.

Engaging Government

Nearly 55% of survey respondents want to see greater inclusion of civil society in government policy deliberations. A similar 50% would welcome the creation of strategic partnerships with governments for specific goals and for funding civil society initiatives. Many organizations point to the need to involve local community leaders, raise public awareness, and better engage the media. They support greater public transparency and more public participation by officials.

Some respondents want to see greater involvement of NGOs in assessing government activities. More than a third of respondents find formal recognition by their governments to be an important factor in their work.

Many are aware of government initiatives but only a few are asked to participate. For example, only a quarter of responding civil society organizations participated in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers consultations. One organization described the process as "mere consultation for consultation sake; policies and decisions are not affected by these so-called consultations." Many say there are no results or any real impact, as government has already made its decisions and often ignores civil society proposals.

However, from our survey there are encouraging examples and ideas:

- The mayor of Naga City, in the **Philippines**, has improved transparency and accountability by making the city's budget publicly available in the city hall and including a feedback system where complaints about government services can be aired by residents using the mayor's cellular phone. The Naga City People's Council, women, the urban poor and senior citizens are consulted on legislation.
- The **Commonwealth Foundation** (government-funded) (<http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com>), in partnership with other civil society groups, supported 21 diverse learning projects and case studies for citizens of small and island countries to participate in government. The projects were turned into an interactive Citizens and Governance Toolkit.
- A group from **Cambodia** comments on the best way to engage governments, "Civil society should strengthen networks and lobby governments to fulfill their MDG commitments. Also, civil society should make parallel reports on the progress of MDG achievement to compare with governments' reports."
- In July 2004, the **Moroccan parliament** brought together government, UN, and civil society representatives from French-speaking Arab countries to share information and create a network for planning and action around the MDGs.

- In **Italy**, parliamentarians were invited to sign a draft resolution that focuses on the 0.7% GNP aid target. Parliamentarians in **Spain** have expressed interest in a similar resolution on the MDGs.
- In October 2004 in **Fiji**, parliamentarians from Pacific islands convened the First Conference for Pacific Parliamentarians on “The Role of Pacific Parliamentarians in the Fight against HIV/AIDS.” They committed themselves to be proactive advocates for HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention and promised to strengthen institutional support for the fight against HIV/AIDS (see the Suva Declaration at http://www.spc.org.nc/AC/artHIVAIDS_ParliamentariansDeclaration.htm).
- The 2002 Youth Summit in **Ukraine** created Ukraine MDGnet. It presented a one-page report on each of the MDGs, outlining specific recommendations to Parliament. An initiative in **Botswana** has linked all legislators online, allowing citizens to follow parliamentary proceedings on the Internet.

Engaging the Private Sector

Almost 52% of survey respondents believe progress on the development goals would be significantly improved through strategic partnerships with the private sector.

As well, 49% want to see mandatory standards of corporate social responsibility. A similar number of respondents call for increased transparency of private sector activities. Others point to the importance of independent monitoring of the private sector, ensuring respect for the domestic legislation in host countries, better access for NGOs to corporate resources and funding, as well as greater corporate adherence to fair and environmentally friendly business practices. Specific suggestions to engage the private sector include:

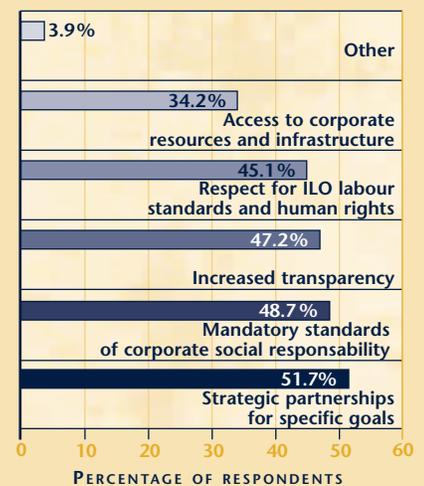
- Support legal frameworks for corporate accountability
- Institute global sanctions and laws for corporations
- Tax benefits for civil society and support for a “good citizen” label program that identifies corporations that comply with the UN global compact

“We believe that the central challenge in meeting the Millennium Development Goals is to foster good governance and economic institutions that are conducive to economic growth, accompanied by a bold program of investments in infrastructure, health, education, public management, and environmental management. These investments directly address the needs of the poor, and build a stronger foundation for economic growth.”

“While some tension remains between the NGO community at large and the corporate, for-profit sector, we are witnessing a steady shift in the attitudes of both the business sector and NGOs. Each, at long last, is recognizing the critical and, indeed, legitimate role played by the other in achieving consistent, sustainable, long-term development.”

– Mary E. Mc Clymont, President and CEO of Inter Action. Report to USAID, July 2004

How could the private sector support civil society's role in implementing the MDGs?

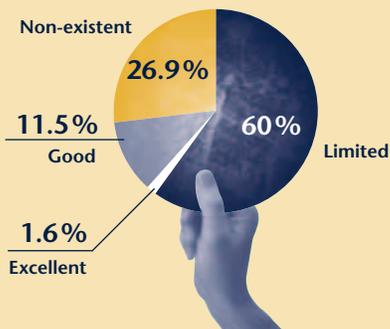


“Publish what you pay, Transparency International and Tax Justice Network have the best CSR strategies for the MDGs as companies are a big obstacle to any MDG goals unless robust CSR happens in the coming years.”

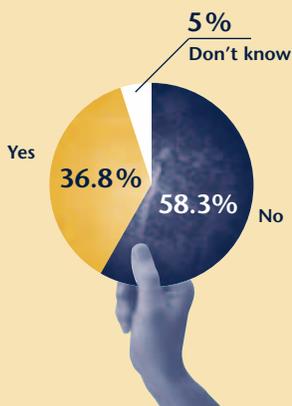
– Comment by a UK-based civil society organization

HELPING BUSINESS MEASURE ITS IMPACT: THE GLOBAL REPORTING INITIATIVE

The Netherlands-based Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) develops globally applicable sustainability standards by which companies can report their economic, social, and environmental impacts and contributions. The standards are developed by a multi-stakeholder coalition drawing not only on business but on accounting, environmental, and social expertise. The GRI works closely with several UN bodies including the Global Compact (www.globalreporting.org).



How would you assess the media coverage of the MDGs in the country you are working in?



Has your organization engaged the media about the MDGs?

Engaging the Media

The media is a valuable partner in the effort to promote greater awareness of the eight development goals and to unite different people and constituencies around these agreed goals. Newspapers, radio programs, and the Internet can all be useful methods to inform, build public support for specific initiatives, and pressure governments and leaders to follow through on their commitments.

However, two-thirds of our survey respondents find media coverage of the Millennium Development Goals in the country where they work limited, while 27% say it is non-existent. Only 37% of the respondents had worked with the media at the local and national level through publications and interviews about local projects and initiatives. Media work can include storytelling, letter writing campaigns, workshops, talk shows, and radio and TV programs. Many groups are involved in media capacity-building, producing programs, providing international documents to the media and other media-related activities.

At the global level, sharing information has led to better civil society networking and the creation of coalitions focused on issues ranging from monitoring the activities of international institutions to pressing for greater efforts to find a vaccine for HIV. Planetwire.org (<http://www.planetwire.org>) is a virtual newsroom for journalists who want the latest information about reproductive health rights and services, maternal and child health, equality in education, women's empowerment, youth participation, and a healthy environment. The site provides journalists with story ideas, facts and figures, contact with experts, and background information.

Some specific examples of media activity include:

- An organization in **New Zealand** is planning a documentary that would focus on the MDGs in the Pacific region. A **Kenyan** group runs a radio station actively informing people about the MDGs.
- A civil society group in the **Philippines** is distributing flyers illustrating local plans and activities targeting the MDGs. A **Venezuelan** organization is developing community information posters.

- A **Canadian** organization is building an Internet-based educational resource on the MDGs, the UN Global Compact, and other initiatives.
- The national “Sin Excusas 2015” campaign in **El Salvador**, launched in July 2003, brings together more than 20 networks and organizations. It uses the media, including TV/radio spots, and posters to spread its “Broken Dreams” motto, and to call for better government adherence to MDG commitments.
- In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the BBC World Service Trust (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust>) in partnership with the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (<http://www.cdsee.org>) is undertaking a project called *Our Town, Our Future*. It uses radio drama to help promote democratization, good governance, and the rule of law, and to empower citizens to stand up for their rights and voice their concerns.
- The Global Campaign for Education (<http://www.campaignforeducation.org>) is making life-size cut-outs of “friends” to send by mail to policy-makers. The cut-outs symbolize the 105 million out-of-school children and 860 million illiterate adults worldwide.

Engaging the World

When leaders gather in New York in September they will know that people around the world are working to achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015. These people work at United Nations agencies, in governments, and as we can see from the survey results, are active in civil society organizations on every continent. Civil society activism and commitment to the goals can be found in labour organizations, women’s and youth groups, development, environment and peace NGOs, human rights and community organizations, United Nations Associations, and elsewhere. The more our leaders know about this civil society commitment and activity, the better.

The Irish organization Trócaire (<http://www.trocaire.org>) sums up the message from our survey:

“ What is needed most is radical change in attitude on the part of the world’s rich countries — politicians, business people, and the public alike — to face up to the suffering and inhumanity of the current global system which means that 2 billion people go to sleep hungry each night. This is a denial of their basic human rights. We know what needs to be done to change this: cancel the debt, make trade fair, increase aid, and give poor countries a voice. We don’t need more elaborate studies and analysis. We need strong leadership, vision, combined with profound listening to those who are suffering. Above all, we need action.”