



Capacity Development for MDG Localisation

PRACTICE NOTE

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

C2015	Capacity 2015
C3	City Community Challenge Programme
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CDG	Capacity Development Group
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PN	Practice Note
SNV	SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Purpose of this Practice Note

This Practice Note (PN) provides UNDP staff and other development practitioners with an understanding of what it means to 'localise the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)' from a capacity development perspective. More specifically the Note:

- 1 Provides a definition of what it means to 'localise the MDGs';
- 2 Outlines the potential benefits of the MDG localisation process
- 3 Highlights key capacity development issues to be conscious of while engaging in localisation processes;
- 4 Details a systematic approach to consider when formulating and implementing (MDG-based) local development strategies.

The audience for this Practice Note includes UNDP and UN practitioners – especially at the country level – as well as domestic and external partners engaged in local development issues. This Note draws from and is complementary to a growing body of literature related to local development and localising the MDGs. The Note takes from the case evidence presented in the study 'Localising the MDGs for Effective Integrated Local Development: An Overview of Practices and Lessons Learnt'.

The Premise

UNDP defines 'localising the MDGs' as the process of designing (or adjusting) and implementing local development strategies to achieve the MDGs (or more specifically, to achieve locally adapted MDG targets).

This implies either adapting and sequencing the targets and indicators of existing local development strategies as needed, or elaborating a MDG-based development strategy that reflects local priorities and realities. For this approach to be successful, it must be locally-owned and participatory, should start from disaggregated data, and should be supported by the appropriate mix of individual, organisational and enabling environment capacities at the local level. While recognising that localisation requires a collaborative effort from all actors at the local level, this Practice Note focuses on the role of local government in this regard, and the capacity development challenges that confront them.

This Practice Note is divided in five sections. Section I introduces concepts and definitions related to MDG localisation. Section II discusses the risk and opportunities involved. The next section (III) introduces the international, national, and local frameworks in which localising occurs, while Section IV presents an overview of the capacity development challenges to localising the MDGs. The final section (IV) describes a five-step capacity development approach to MDG localisation that can be easily adapted to different development contexts.

I. THE ISSUE AND ITS DIMENSIONS

UNDP defines 'localising the MDGs' as the process of designing (or adjusting) and implementing local development strategies to achieve the MDGs (or more specifically, to achieve locally adapted MDG targets).

This 'localising' process is multifaceted. It entails the adaptation of MDG targets and indicators to the local level; the collection and analysis of disaggregated data; the implementation of revised local development plans, including the mobilisation of the resources required; and the monitoring and review of progress made. To be effective, this localising agenda is highly dependent on local governance reforms that make for more effective, inclusive and transparent decision-making and implementation.

While localisation requires the collaborative participation of all actors at the local level, this Practice Note focuses on the role of local government/local authorities in this regard, while recognising that the MDGs can only be achieved if they work closely together with national and other levels of decentralised government as well as non-state actors, including communities and the business sector.

1. Adapting to local needs and realities

There is a compelling logic to believe that, unless MDG targets and indicators are brought to the local level (or 'localised'), national and global achievement will be skewed. National MDG targets and indicators represent national averages. Achieving them would require targeted interventions in pockets of deprivation, which are often very context specific. In order to impact the lives of people, MDG targets and indicators need to be adapted and translated into local realities, and embedded in local planning processes.

What do we adapt? This does not require the invention or reinvention of another new goal framework. Rather, 'localising the MDGs' is a flexible process that either adapts and sequences the targets and indicators of existing local development strategies as needed or elaborates a MDG-based development strategy, to reflect local priorities and realities through a participatory and locally-owned process. Efforts to meet the adapted targets and indicators are often negotiated depending on the pool of resources available in a given year, the prioritisation of needs, and the availability of capacity in a given sector.

- 1 **Goals** - Different countries face diverse development challenges and respond very differently to them, displaying large socio-economic heterogeneity and following varying reform and development paths. To reflect these differences, countries can adapt the global MDGs to their national circumstances, by adapting global indicators and targets to local needs or by adding specific targets that reflect national priorities. National adjustments can also be made to baseline years, to deal with the unavailability of data at the national level, or varied base years for the collection of data (i.e. multi-year Household Income Expenditure surveys, etc.). Not *all* MDGs may be equally relevant to the sub-national level. The participatory process described in Section V suggests a prioritisation exercise to determine which goals are most relevant to the local context. In some cases, additional goals can be added (such as good governance), which the sub-national/local level also adopts. This provides coherence and links local development efforts with the national level.
- 2 **Targets** - It is through the adaptation of targets that the needs and priorities at the local level are truly captured. In most countries, this adaptation starts from the nationally-adjusted global targets, which are adjusted to the local development context, using a participatory process. In other countries, entirely new targets were developed for the local

level. There is no fixed or optimal number of targets that can be developed, but limiting their numbers enables focus and prioritisation.

- 3 **Indicators** - A balance needs to be achieved between developing new local-level indicators and adopting national-level indicators to measure progress towards the targets. Local level indicators can be developed and monitored to better reflect the nuances of the local context. This may also be necessitated due to available data at the national level not being available at the sub-national level or not being at the required level of disaggregation.

2. Disaggregated data: do we really need it?

National statistical data often obscures sub-national variations between ethnic groups or genders and masks pockets of marginalisation and deprivation. Localisation of the MDGs can help identify these differences and provide a greater focus on vulnerable groups that are most likely to be at risk of poverty and social exclusion such as: single-parent families, families with many children, ethnic communities, refugees and internally displaced people, the long-term unemployed, female-headed households in rural/urban settings, and the elderly. Using locally-adapted MDG targets with disaggregated indicators, allows for greater specificity in tracking vulnerability trends, monitoring the true face of poverty, and identifying and addressing other development challenges for specific regions/localities. The stumbling block is the lack of sufficient disaggregated data, locally. Hence a localising process could often begin with capacity development efforts to collect and analyse such data. Alternately, the available national data is used as a proxy until such local data is made available.

3. Localising the MDGs and Capacity Development: where is the link?

UNDP recognises that the key constraint to localising the MDGs (and their achievement) is often a lack of, or the inappropriate mix of individual, organisational, and enabling environment capacities at the local level. This Practice Note does not prescribe set solutions to address these capacity deficiencies. Rather the Note draws a link between the different steps of a MDG localisation processes and the key capacities needed (see Section IV below), providing practitioners with a reference point for discerning where their capacity development investments and efforts should be focused. Ultimately, these efforts – including the identification of capacity needs and the capacity development strategies required – should be shaped by the local context and the actors concerned.

II. THE VALUE ADDED AND RISKS OF LOCALISING THE MDGS

Questions worth asking prior to embarking on efforts to localise the MDGs include: what is the added benefit of localising the MDGs and what is lost if the goals are not localised? A review of the evidence highlights that experiences with full-fledged local MDG processes are few, and relatively recent, and that their impact has not yet been assessed. However, based on experiences with local development strategies, the value-added of localising the MDGs can be expressed as follows:

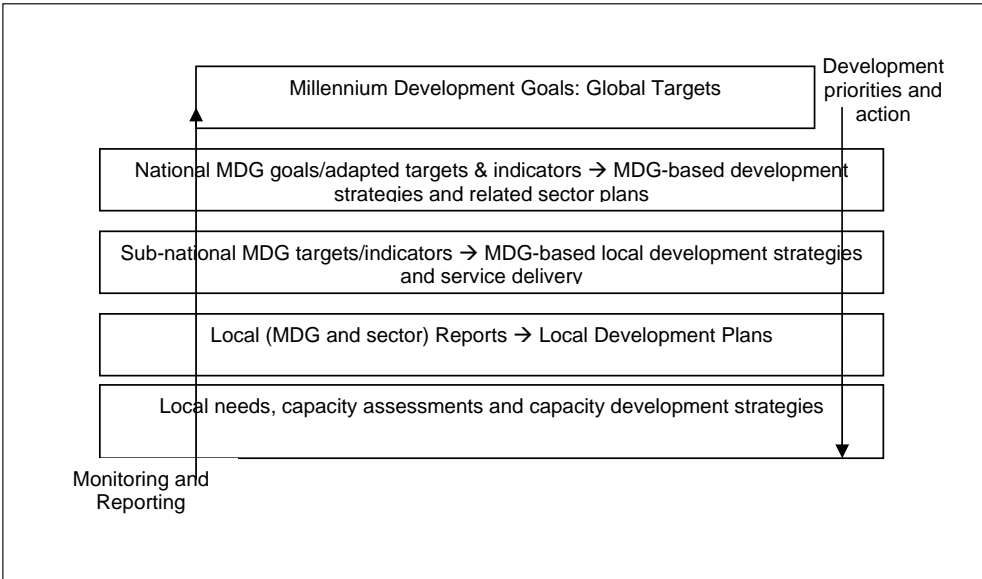
- (1) **Localisation provides a clear framework for integrated local development planning that adopts a more holistic, multi-sector approach to poverty reduction and human development.** Though some of the MDGs are sector-driven (such as MDGs 2, 4, 5), in essence they are strongly inter-linked. For example, the adaptation of Goal 1 on poverty to the local level requires looking at the different ways poverty manifests itself at the local level and correlates with issues of employment, health, education, environment and infrastructure development. Similarly, adapting Goal 2 on

education requires considering issues of poverty, gender, health, and even environment. Establishing these inter-linkages at the local level, provides a more integrated framework for development.

- (2) **Localisation links global, national and local levels through the same set of goals which allows for comparisons and benchmarking, and provides a target-based, measurable framework for monitoring and reviewing local development results.**

National MDG-based strategies are easily linked to local level strategies and vice-versa through the same framework of the MDGs, providing a common frame of reference not only for planning and budgeting but also for measuring achievement and progress on the basis of globally, nationally, and locally agreed upon targets (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: National actions and frameworks that support the local level agenda



- (3) **The MDGs are an effective tool for advocacy and mobilisation of resources, including efficient and sustained investments for local action.** With their clear deadline and clear set of measurable targets and indicators, the goals – and the linkages between the global, national and local levels, provide greater exposure and visibility to local development issues, otherwise forgotten.

- (4) **Localisation facilitates mutual accountability.** The MDGs, whether global, national or local, are underpinned by the Millennium Declaration and the principles of good governance therein. To achieve the goals and to sustain progress requires a well functioning, inclusive and accountable governing system. It is an agenda that strengthens local efforts to monitor one's own development investments, hold leaders accountable and track results each year. The process supports and sustains democratic governance, based on participatory decision-making and the empowerment of marginalised groups in the development process.

Risks Associated with the Localisation Process

Localising the MDGs is not without risks. A primary risk is the politicisation of the process and the capturing of the agenda by a leader or group to serve one's own political end. Some may, therefore, argue that local authorities should not have lead responsibility for some or all of the elements of the localisation process (e.g. baseline assessment, target setting, prioritisation), because of the danger of the process becoming – or being perceived to be – 'political' and because association of the MDG strategy with those in power could weaken its effectiveness once that party loses power, because it would be seen as belonging to the previous 'administration'. The Note acknowledges this danger, but believes that local authorities should be regarded as the natural lead agent, albeit with a clear responsibility to work in close cooperation with all other relevant local actors across the political spectrum.

A second risk is that the expectations for immediate change and impact will often not be met. Experience has shown that implementation of development strategies requires sustained commitment and staying power, with results often slowed by constraints in capacity and funding. Developing and supporting some quick pay-off outputs in a participatory manner and including them in the MDG-based development strategy could mitigate such frustrations and provide some measure of immediate reward and demonstrate real change.

III. A FRAMEWORK FOR LOCALISING THE MDGS

Achieving the MDGs at the local level requires the implementation of MDG-based local development strategies that are aligned with national policies and budget processes, and supported by effective decentralisation reforms and local-level mechanisms for the delivery of basic services.

This section starts with an analysis of the enabling environment for localisation, followed by a closer examination of the role of local government and other local stakeholders, and a brief description of how UN Country Teams (UNCT) can support localisation processes.

1. The Enabling Environment for Localisation

As stated by UNCDF, local development is not just development that 'happens locally' - it is development that leverages the comparative and competitive advantages of localities and mobilises their specific physical, economic, social and political resources and institutions. It is development that does not happen in isolation but is embedded in national development processes and frameworks, including existing national development strategies and decentralisation reforms or the lack thereof.

1.1 National to Local linkages

National development frameworks, be they MDG-based national strategies, PRSPs, or other sector and cross-cutting strategies, establish common or compatible objectives which can then be pursued more concretely at local or regional levels. Clearly defined national development frameworks are important mechanisms to support greater coherence. Practice also shows that the existence of such clarifies how national obligations can work for local development, and helps establish strategic objectives that are common across different sectors and levels.

Box 1: The Viet Nam Development Goals - A National Framework to Support the Local Agenda

Viet Nam's formulation of 'Viet Nam Development Goals (VDGs)' is one example of a national framework that supports the local level agenda. The VDGs are an adapted version of the MDGs representing the country's core vision of development and its international commitment to achieve the MDGs. The VDGs set

targets for monitoring progress on the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (a home-grown version of a PRSP) as well as establishing sub-national targets to reflect lagging development progress among ethnic minorities and women. Similarly, in Jordan, civil society organisations that were consulted on the MDG gender empowerment goal, created a Jordan-specific target to Goal 3, namely to 'Increase the percentage of political and economic equality of women by 2015' based on statistical data and patterns of existing gender-based discrimination. This goal was endorsed by the government for the national MDG Report for 2004. Consultations for the adaptation of the MDG targets and indicators at the local level in the Aqaba governorate concluded with suggesting the introduction of indicators that document gender-based discrimination in economic and political participation.

Box 2: Local and National Efforts Working Together

Capacity 2015 is a UNDP-managed programme that supports local capacities for development. It links the local and national development agendas of countries by:

- 1 Supporting local-level data collection and analysis through local MDG Reports moving disaggregated data into local plans and national MDG strategies.
- 2 Facilitating local-national development committees through training, information access and improved procedures to renegotiate inputs into Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS).
- 3 Long-term engagement in multi-stakeholder dialogue, providing the knowledge, motivation and incentives to stay engaged on the MDGs.
- 4 Addressing the implementation constraints of decentralisation policy by helping local administrators, service agents and civil society organisations (CSOs) to better understand policy, legislation and procedures.
- 5 Bringing a rights-based approach to local development through information sharing and engagement on the rights and responsibilities of local and national stakeholders to each.
- 6 Strengthening institutional capacities of monitoring and accountability bodies that involve local and national-level representation, with specific attention to monitoring development disparities.
- 7 Codifying good practices and lessons learnt in local development, and feeding these into national development strategies, PRSs and sector approaches.
- 8 Engaging local leaders in knowledge and skills development for greater voice and visibility in national-level debates and decision-making bodies.
- 9 Introducing project management capacities and strengthening local management systems and skills.
- 10 Engaging with national decision-makers in advocating for local issues and interests.

1.2 A supportive Aid Environment

National development frameworks, and through them local agendas, are supported in turn by a supportive international framework. In today's globalised world, there are many global push-pull factors that influence development frameworks at the national level, and in turn impact on local development processes and results. These include the pressure from global conventions and standards, the pull from regional agreements and for membership in sub-regional institutions, the demand to align and harmonise with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The UN, the World Bank, and Regional Development Banks, as well as bilateral agencies and international NGOs can play a strong role in encouraging countries to meet their local level poverty reduction targets and focus them on the needs of the poorest. To that effect, the increased attention of donors towards harmonising interventions and aligning strategies in support of decentralisation and local development can be noted. A more coordinated international assistance framework whether in terms of resources or programming aligned with national priorities can enhance the targeting of development programmes on local level actions to address disparities and marginalisation. The question of direct financing to the local level, and a national aid coordination mechanism and regulatory framework that allows for, and oversees, such direct transfers is also pertinent here. More evidence of the actual development effectiveness impact of this practice, and lessons learnt would need to be analysed before pronouncing on its merits as a development finance strategy for better development results.

1.3 Decentralisation and Local Governance

Decentralisation is not the same as localising the MDGs, but effective decentralisation does facilitate successful localisation. A recent review of National Human Development Reports that

focused on decentralisation pointed to the following evidence where decentralisation works for positive local development outcomes:

- 1 It allows local governments to better formulate and implement policies that support priority local needs, including inducing greater productive efficiencies to promote local economic development.
- 2 It empowers communities, by providing a framework for multi stakeholder participation in local decision making and in shaping the local development policies and programmes.
- 3 As a policy instrument, decentralisation can help improve the quality and accessibility of basic services, such as education, health and infrastructure.
- 4 The time taken for decision making can be reduced, as well as certain administrative costs.
- 5 It can help ease inter-district and intra-district inequities, and ensure prioritisation of expenditures to marginalised groups.
- 6 It can facilitate local and national governments response time to local or national crises and external shocks.

Experience also demonstrates that in countries with effective decentralisation reforms, local authorities take on a leadership role in pushing the MDG agenda and take responsibility for spearheading the process to elaborate and implement a local development strategy. They also have a unique comparative advantage in that they can promote strategic alliances with local community and private sector organisations to realise productive efficiency gains in the use of public resources.

National governments can support this process by offering positive incentives such as performance-based or targeted budget allocations for the MDG/pro-poor agenda. National governments can also use earmarked grants to ensure that the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups are addressed, or more systematically, use an integrated planning system where national resources finance part of local development plans.

However, in many developing countries, this is currently not the case. Local government is often highly dependent on the national government, particularly with regards to public finance (such that local government is sometimes little more than deconcentrated *local administration*) and fiscal decentralisation is the exception rather than the rule.

Box 3: Fiscal Decentralisation

UNDP and UNCDF have supported fiscal decentralisation as a core governance component of their poverty programmes, such as in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Yemen, Bolivia, Georgia, Ghana, Nepal and Uganda. Their work highlights the need to improve mechanisms for mobilising local fiscal resources and local spending, including through training around local financial administration, revenue generation and accountability (UNDP 1998). Another example is the City-Community Challenge fund or 'C3' initiative in Uganda and Zambia, set up by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and now managed by UN-HABITAT. C3 aims to specifically target and involve the poorest in local communities. It is unusual in that it seeks to ensure direct access to funds to small community groups, supplied with clear partnership and accountability mechanisms to central government, national local government associations, local government, local businesses and communities (DFID 2003).

Good local governance comprises a set of institutions, mechanisms and processes through which citizens and their groups can articulate their interests and needs, mediate their differences and exercise their rights and obligations at a local level. This is fundamental to the approaches used, and who actually benefits from localising the MDGs. The building blocks of good local governance are many: citizens' participation, partnerships among key actors at the local level, capacity of the local actors across all sectors, multiple flows of information, institutions of accountability and a pro-poor orientation. This definition sits within the broader definition of good governance for human development articulated by UNDP as addressing the objective of reducing inequalities of opportunity through empowerment. This human development oriented definition of

good governance does more than just try to help the poor and relates very much to the core orientation of capacity development.

Be it sound fiscal and financial management, the transparency and effective application of administrative procedures, skilled staff to plan, manage and oversee services, accountability of political representatives to the wider community, these are all essential parts of an enabling environment allowing the MDGs to take hold, and make a real difference in the lives of the poor at the local level. Indonesia focused on assessing progress made towards building this enabling environment in 2001 when a number of local government associations endorsed a set of principles to improve operations—ranging from participation and rule of law, to equality, efficiency and effectiveness of services. These '10 Prinsip Tata-Pemerintahan Yang Baik' (10 Principles of Good Governance) were used as an advocacy tool and eventually became parameters for assessing the level of good local governance.

Box 4: Introducing Good Local Governance – Experiences in Indonesia

In 2001, the Indonesian government introduced laws on decentralisation and regional autonomy that led to a shift in service delivery. Previously, authorities paid little regard to transparency, accountability, and professionalism. Consequently, the government was not fully responsive to the needs of the people and the people's faith in the public sector was eroded. Changes in municipal management such as modifying planning, programming, budgeting, and financial management procedures have helped local government become more responsive, transparent, and accountable to citizens' needs. This process has been supported by UNDP's Breakthrough Urban Initiatives for Local Development (BUILD) programme. At a meeting of central and local government and civil society organisations, ten core guiding principles for good local governance were established and these principles were later adopted by the Association of Municipalities at its annual meeting:

1. **Participation** – encourage all citizens to exercise their right to be involved in decision-making of direct or indirect public interest
2. **Rule of law** – realise fair and impartial law enforcement – honouring basic human rights and social values
3. **Transparency** – building mutual trust between government and communities
4. **Equality** – provide equal opportunities for all people to improve their welfare
5. **Responsiveness** – increase the sensitivity of government administrators to public aspirations
6. **Vision** – develop a clear vision and strategy, in participation with communities, to ensure shared ownership and responsibility for the development process
7. **Accountability** – increase accountability of decision-makers in order to promote decisions in the public interest
8. **Supervision** – increase supervision of operations by involving general public and private sectors
9. **Efficiency and effectiveness** – guarantee effective service delivery through optimal and responsible use of resources
10. **Professionalism** – enhance the capacity and moral stance of administrators to ensure easy, fast and affordable service delivery

Source: UNDP Indonesia (2002)

Good local governance is also about creating and protecting the space for leadership, vision and creativity of citizens to engage wholeheartedly in their own development. In Mongolia, a Parliamentary resolution passed in 2005 created a ninth MDG called 'Fostering Democratic Governance and Strengthening Human Rights.' This linked good governance to tailored targets and devised a framework to support them. Three indicators were selected to monitor progress: to respect and abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to ensure freedom of the media and access to information and to create an environment of zero tolerance for corruption. Albania also created a ninth MDG at both the national and local levels focusing on 'Improved Governance.' While capturing the essence of the Millennium Declaration, the sub-national regions' focus on this unique additional goal allowed for debate and articulation of what 'good governance' was for the citizens of the regions, as well as for the establishment of targets to achieve it, and indicators to measure the progress made. In both countries, such was used to promote an energising regulatory environment that promoted greater civic engagement.

1.4 Local Service Delivery

The process of decentralization in developing countries has given local governments new responsibilities including that meeting the basic service delivery needs of their citizens. However, the prevailing majority of local governments have limited capacity to fulfill this new responsibility. Although service delivery is at the centre of efforts to achieve the MDGs, however, the reality on the ground in many developing countries is such that, the state (at all levels) is failing to fulfil their core role of delivering services on a sustainable basis to all its citizens, particularly the poor. Therefore, the need to explore alternative service delivery approaches becomes vital for fighting poverty and, thus contributing to achieve the MDGs.

In this regard, there is an urgent need to develop an adequate framework for re-orienting service delivery sector to achieve the MDGs in particular and long term development goals in general. As a consequence of state's failure to fulfil its service delivery responsibilities, various non state actors are desperately engaging in ad hoc activities to close the gap in service delivery, though without any clear policy, directions and legal framework. This creates a situation where accountability, quality and standards of service and affordability are left in the hands of providers to the detriment of the poor users.

The re-organization of service delivery will require the thorough examination of both the supply of services by partners across society with the demand and involvement of users. A relationship of accountability between service providers, policy makers and civil society partners including communities (users) offers a framework that combines both the demand and supply angles of service provision. From the demand side, the involvement and engagement of communities in a manner that enables them to be part of the process of planning, managing and overseeing the services provided, will be central to the reorganization of service delivery to enable broader service coverage. From the supply side, multi-stakeholders partnerships involving non state actors (private sector, NGOs, CBOS) are crucial to the efforts to expand service delivery for the achievement of the MDGs targets.

Evidence from the field on local service delivery clearly suggests that there are opportunities for non state actors to make meaningful contributions for local service delivery interventions to reach the poor and to meet the MDGs targets. In a number of developing countries, the state has not met its service delivery responsibility in a number of sectors, at least in the medium-term and in most developing countries non-state providers of services are filling the service delivery gap and this need be recognized and be given more attention. Non state provision of services offers not only options to reach the poor but also competitive challenges to public service providers as they tend to present alternative and complementary access, quality and costs advantages to the poor and low income consumers. Although there are serious constraints for positive engagements by governments, non-state providers of services are equipped to provide better pro-poor services and governments have the responsibility to put in place conducive enabling environment to encourage and empower non state actors' full participation on a more sustainable basis. There are numerous cases of relatively successful non state provision of local services for the poor and low income groups that are contributing to the MDGs efforts, and these also support strongly the case that state provision of services needs to be complemented by non state provision to ensure accelerated access and broader coverage in service provision. Non state provision of services occurs in a wide array of forums as a result of society's response to the failure of state utilities and the need for services. In some service sectors, the size and scope of non state providers of services is generally unknown and its boundaries unclear because of their informal nature. Even where there is successful experience on non state provision of various services in a number of countries, scaling up still remains an issue because service providers do not meet service standards designed for formal utilities.

The improvement of local service delivery depends on the capacity and commitment of government to engage and empower non state providers of services to enhance better service provision in many sectors in developing countries. Local governments to fulfil their service delivery responsibilities to address unmet demands and gaps, there is the need to consider a

'smart' combination of state and non-state provision of services in a more holistic strategy and better understand how they do relate and complement each other. It is also important to define the roles of various actors involved and provide knowledge on the comparative advantages of various service delivery models. Tested experiences from countries like South Africa and Mozambique suggest that if government is supported to establish different modes of interactions, modalities for service delivery and set the conditions of application under the existing policy and regulatory frameworks, service delivery could be boosted and enhanced. In order to make government play this facilitating role, it is imperative to develop its policy, regulatory and engagement capacities through support in learning, dissemination of good service delivery models and practices, setting standards in service delivery and monitoring service providers' performance.

Non state providers of services are vital for the improvement of local service provision, especially where public utilities are not able to deliver. However, the government is expected to regulate the service sector and provide an enabling environment for effective and sustainable operations by both state and non state actors. Governments can beneficially engage with non state providers of services for MDG realization and maximize their potential as a vital resource to complement their functions and fill existing service delivery gaps. There is need to address some critical issues relating to the roles played by non state providers of services and for government to provide leadership roles, specifically in the facilitation, regulation, direct provision and modes of interaction.

2. Relationships that Impact the Localising Processes

2.1 *Inter-relationships between actors at the sub-national and local Levels*

As stated previously in this Note, although local authorities play a key role in localising the MDGs, their effectiveness in doing so depends heavily on the inter-relationships between different levels of local government and other sub-national actors and entities. UNCDF states that 'where higher-level sub-national tiers have a clear mandate to mentor and monitor lower-level tiers of local government, it makes sense for Local Development Plans (LDPs) to operate at both levels, although the focus of interventions may well vary according to the level' whilst '... in countries where the different tiers of local government have no significant functional relationship ... the obvious starting point for LDPs is to operate at the lowest feasible level.' While the focus of localisation efforts and involvement of different sub-national levels of government and other actors will of course be determined by country context, there are some key aspects of sub-national relationships to consider when undertaking the localisation of the MDGs. As noted by UNCDF, these include the following:

- 1 Links between local governments and traditional authorities.** In many countries, especially in rural areas, customary authorities continue to play an important role in local governance even though their democratic legitimacy may be contested.
- 2 Links to other local non-state actors.** Where there is significant local NGO activity, attention should be focused on encouraging cooperative arrangements with local governments.
- 3 Institutional links for co-provision.** Where two or more tiers are jointly involved in service provision, a major underlying theme will be the development of mechanisms facilitating communication and cooperation between the institutions at these different levels.
- 4 Organisational constraints.** Where local governments are large, a major focus may often be on improving internal relations and efficiency.

2.2 *Inter-municipal cooperation, regional and international 'local networks'*

Partnerships between local authorities can be instrumental for improving the scope and efficiency of local government activities, allowing sub-national units to combine resources in order to

provide higher quality services, and to take advantage of economies of scale in delivering on the MDGs. For example, the Chouf Qaza in Lebanon where the Swayjani Municipal Federation is located consists of 9 villages with approximately 26,000 inhabitants and 5,165 hectares and makes up part of the larger Qaza of 97 villages in an area that was especially affected by the civil war. The Federation has initiated the localising process to strengthen the capacities of the municipalities it consists of and of civil society organisations to improve service delivery and lessen the impact of the civil war, including of displacement.

There are also a number of regional and international vehicles for inter-municipal cooperation, such as local government associations and networks that bring together local governments across a range of countries. These bodies have a significant role to play in promoting the interests of local government to central governments, as well as enabling the exchange of good practice and sharing knowledge between local government and their national associations within each region (box 2).

Box 5: Local Government Organisations and Networks

Globally there is the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) organisation that is working in partnership with the UN to promote local development. Regionally there is a number of associations, for example, the United Cities and Local Government Africa (UCLGA) in Africa; CityNet for the Asia-Pacific; Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in the Council of Europe a Pan-European network that includes local government beyond EU member states; the Council of European Municipalities and Regions for local government in the EU; and the Federation of Latin American municipalities, Cities and Associations of local government (for Latin America as well as the Caribbean. There are also thematic networks such as the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives - local governments for sustainability' that supports capacity development in local governments globally, focusing on sustainable management approaches, tackling climate change, sustainable tourism development, amongst other areas, through training programmes, exchanges and events. The Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) as a regional focal point for the 'Global call to action against poverty' which aims at raising the awareness of civil societies in the Arab countries and developing their capacities to enable them to monitor and to advocate the social and economic policies of their own governments. Moreover, ANND, as a regional focal point of [Social Watch](#), is part of its global campaign on the MDG and encourages and support its members to elaborate relevant national targets and improve appropriate indicators.

2.3 Alliance-building with civil society and community organisations

The mapping of potential civil society and community organisations is a valuable tool to identify other actors in the community, and assess their capacities, strengths and weaknesses – which in turn can be the starting for a capacity development intervention. Bringing civil society on board can help set priority issues and mechanisms through which to address them. For example, in the Strong Places programme in Sri Lanka district level CSO committees were established to provide guidance in efforts to strengthen the capacity of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) in the post-Tsunami context. Within the framework of the SNV-UNDP Partnership for Strengthening local actors in MDG and PRS processes several mapping exercises have been undertaken. In Albania, a 'Civil Society Needs Assessment' was undertaken in 12 regions. Its results were used to prepare and plan the training session and were shared with other development partners. In Kenya, an assessment of local level institutional capacities for MDG implementation was produced which helped to formulate activities at the district level, while in Honduras; a capacity assessment of local planners was produced and shared with local actors.

In addition to involving non-state actors, service delivery to poor people can also be improved 'by putting poor people at the centre of service provision: by enabling them to monitor and discipline service providers, by amplifying their voice in policymaking, and by strengthening the incentives for providers to serve the poor' (World Development Report 2003). Their direct involvement will help identify key areas where 'safety nets' are required to avoid key problems of poverty, e.g., homelessness; unemployment; ill-health; eviction and generally improve their security and quality of life (DFID 2001). The level of improvement will depend on the influence that poor people can bring to bear on service providers. By placing the influence of the poor at the centre, a pro-poor approach provides a corrective means of giving them a stronger voice in the face of other

'stronger' stakeholders that can more easily claim their interests. Community-driven improvements to service provision have demonstrated to local government and service providers the possibilities of improving or extending provision to the un-served by working in partnership with community groups (UN-HABITAT 2005) and increase its sustainability. For example, a study of 1,875 households in rural communities in six countries (Benin, Bolivia, Honduras, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Uganda) suggests that water system durability is significantly higher when communities control investment decisions and contribute part of the investment costs, ensuring that they both get what they want and are willing to pay for it (World Bank 2001). Community involvement is also a means to build social capital. Through collective action, 'learning-by-doing', capacity development, and interaction with other actors, communities have an opportunity to expand their range of skills and social networks. In addition it can promote transparency and accountability, reducing the risk of 'elite capture' by dominant local elites, and set up a system of checks and balances through the exchange of information between CBOs and other formal institutions (World Bank 2001)

It is important to note that poor communities have especially benefited when they have organized themselves to present their needs. Better organized communities, often the more urban ones, are in a stronger position to negotiate with local government and service providers, and potentially better able to make local investments in infrastructure development (UN-HABITAT 2005). However, it is only in partnership with local government that the poor can ensure that the plans they formulate are taken forward at a sufficient scale in order to benefit a city or local community as a whole (UN-HABITAT, 2005).

2.4 UN Country Teams and localisation

Resident and non-resident UN agencies at the country level have a vital role to play in developing capacities to localise and achieve the MDGs given their sectoral expertise and the support they can offer to respective ministries, departments, local government bodies, and civil society organisations. It is clear that no one UN Agency, Fund or Programme has the ability to support all aspects of the localisation process. Furthermore, in light of the Secretary General's Panel on UN Wide System Coherence and its call for a 'One UN' approach at the Country level, UNCTs are becoming more closely aligned in programming and better coordinated. While this Note deals specifically with the functional capacities necessary to support localisation (such as the ability to engage in a multi-stakeholder dialogue, prioritise and plan) it is important to note that these functional capacities are cross-cutting and relevant to all actors, and that the technical capacities for service provision and local development should also be considered when undertaking localisation. UN Agencies, Funds, and Programmes with specific sectoral expertise can not only build the technical capacities for providing services and boosting local economic development, but also act as facilitators for more extensive development of functional capacities by other partners. Localising the MDGs is not the responsibility of one UN agency alone, but rather should draw upon the comparative advantages of each member of the UNCT and other partners as appropriate. To deliver on this, the UNCT in both Tunisia and Syria is working together on localising the MDGs. For example, in both cases, the utilisation of DevInfo and expertise of the varied agencies is expected to enrich the localising initiatives underway.

Box 6: Tanzania's DevInfo Monitoring System

[DevInfo](#) is a ready-made platform to promote database integration. Its adaptability to local context and incorporation of globally accepted indicators has led many countries to utilise the software. In Tanzania, DevInfo is used to support the poverty monitoring system: the Tanzania Socio-Economic Database ([TSED](#)). The system provides a user-friendly platform to access data on over 300 indicators disaggregated by sex and geographical location (i.e. urban, rural and administrative unit). TSED is used for producing analytical studies such as the National Poverty and Human Development Report and as a resource for stakeholders to engage in evidence-based policy-making. TSED users include National Bureau of Statistics, government ministries and institutions, UN system, members of Parliament, other development partners, non-governmental organisations, universities and research institutions, civil society organisations, private sector, and the press.

IV. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS TO LOCALISING THE MDGS

1. Localising the MDGs – Where Does It Meet Capacity Development?

The MDGs will not be achieved at the local level, and consequently the national and global level, if local governments, civil society organisations and private businesses do not have the capacities to push the localisation agenda and mobilise the resources necessary to implement it. From the cases studied, eight priority capacity investments have been identified:

- a. **Capacities to facilitate participatory planning through dialogue and priority-setting**
Because of their key role in pushing the localisation agenda, local governments need to become more pro-active in taking up their roles as local change-agents. For this they need the ability to facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement in the different steps of the planning process – including visioning and prioritising of actions – which will help create shared responsibility over the strategy's implementation and will promote cooperation between local governments and other stakeholders. An example of support to develop these capacities can be found in Albania where UNDP assisted local government officials and civil society representatives in all 12 regions of the country. Skills were developed to ensure that they could facilitate participatory sessions and participate meaningfully during the different aspects of the MDG localisation process.
- b. **Capacities to gather, disaggregate, and analyse data for planning purposes.**
Localising the MDGs requires that (local-level) data is available; that local actors (local government officials, civil society organisations, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders) are able to gather, disaggregate and analyse it, and that they have the ability to identify challenges and opportunities based on the evidence it presents. For this they need skills to conduct a baseline assessment, understand quantitative and qualitative data, and using data to monitor and review progress. Developing even the most basic capacities in these areas enables all stakeholders to participate more effectively in the localisation process. Such capacities have been nurtured, for example, through the SNV-UNDP partnership on strengthening local actors in MDG and PRS processes. In Benin, three pilot municipalities have identified local indicators to monitor the progress towards the MDGs in their municipality, and have started to collect data to measure progress made. A municipal guide on monitoring the MDGs has been formulated after piloting the methodology in the 3 pilot municipalities. In Malawi, a training manual for monitoring and evaluation of the MDGs was drafted while in Macedonia 'Local Leadership Groups' were trained in methods and techniques for monitoring MDG-based programmes. In countries where data at the local level is lacking, innovative means have been found to collect data for local planning. The background study on MDG localisation provides several other examples of local-level data collection and monitoring systems, such as the Community-Based Monitoring System.
- c. **Capacities to undertake integrated planning and budgeting.** No strategy will be successful without the plan and budget to implement it, calling for the ability to prepare an integrated budget and manage it effectively and accountably. In Armenia, UNDP has supported the introduction of performance-based budgeting in 5 municipalities. The initiative has helped develop the capacities and skills of municipal staff and community council members through training and adaptation of budgeting software, and has led to a commitment of the municipalities involved to cost-share investment projects that ensued from the prioritisation exercise that was part of the project. Participatory budgeting has also been implemented with great success in Brazil where it has spread to over 100

cities. Integrated planning includes the facilitation of inter-sectoral working groups through training, information access and improved procedures, to negotiate and provide input to MDG-based local development strategies.

- d. **Capacities for networking, with voice and knowledge, to link local development processes to national strategies and finance.** A key to sustaining both the efforts and results of localising is to ensure that local needs and assets are recognised and embedded in national plans and budgets. Local authorities need to be able to ensure a two-way engagement between the local and the national level, which requires the right mix of skills, including the ability to share information, lobby, advocate, and build relations. This means being able to steer nationally-driven policies, such as fiscal and administrative decentralisation to best benefit the local MDG agenda and vice versa.
- e. **Legal and administrative knowledge and systems to implement and monitor fiscal and administrative decentralisation policies handed to sub-national levels.** This requires that local authorities and other local actors are understand the policy, legislative and procedural provisions that are most applicable to local conditions, and are cognizant of their rights and obligations, all of which to ensure a decentralisation that works for them. In Montenegro, UNDP is involved in a multi-partner Capacity Development Programme (CDP) that supports the government's public administration reforms. It has in-built mechanisms and procedures designed to ensure full participation by all partners in key operational and overall policy decisions. The CDP delivers a wide range of technical assistance and support to the beneficiary ministries, a considerable amount of which is in the form of 'soft services' such as coaching, mentoring, and team building. This has facilitated the overall transfer of know-how, learning, and the mainstreaming of advice and other forms of assistance/outputs into ministries' operations. The CDP offers an example of what can be achieved by a relatively modest, but speedy and flexible pilot programme response to urgent needs in a complex and rapidly changing policy environment.
- f. **Capacities to mobilise resources, including the networking and risk management skills.** This includes capacities to negotiate with national governments/ministries of finance, donors and international businesses on having foreign direct investment flow into one's locality to finance MDG-based strategies. Community-led Infrastructure Funds (CLIFFS) have also been successful tools to develop the capacities of local communities to manage funds whilst simultaneously using such funds to leverage further donor and private sector resources. In India, the CLIFF has been very successful in helping leverage and blend financial and other resources from a whole range of actors including municipalities and the private sector (e.g., banks and land owners) to catalyse scaling-up and replication of community-led slum upgrading schemes.
- g. **Capacities for effective and efficient project management.** Understanding and applying transparent rules and procedures, including for accounting and procurement, and ensuring checks and balances is at the heart of meeting mutual accountability obligations and sustaining both client and investor confidence. Ensuring proper oversight mechanisms for service delivery, including for financial services at the local level, are key in this regard.
- h. **The capacities to monitor and review progress.** Participatory monitoring of local development plans, budgets and results has shown to deepen local ownership and commitment among a broad base of stakeholders. The ability to also codify good practices and lessons learnt in local development, and feedback into local and national development strategies, PRSs and sector plans, is an important component of such CD efforts. This documentation and monitoring of plans facilitates the revisions/amendments to respective implementation strategies, based on whether targets were met or not for the given period, and is a driver of state-citizen and national-local accountability

mechanisms. The collection of information can be supported by the provision of monetary and non-monetary incentives. UNCDF has extensive experience with incentive systems within local government to ensure participation and effectiveness of local development planning and implementation. In Nepal and Tanzania, there are systems in place to award local governments with greater funding allocations based upon the type and quality of information they share with their communities. Such information includes the posting of annually approved projects at the local level, making available project timeframes and budgets, and providing copies of all relevant documentation (budgets, work plans, supervision and payment arrangements) to project management committees.

2. What makes a Capacity Development Strategy Different at the Local Level?

Deepening the above capacities at the local level, to support the localisation of the MDGs, asks that we take into account the following nuances that emanate from working at the local as opposed to the national level. Some are posed as challenges and others as opportunities.

Challenges:

- 1 The challenge in developing capacities for localising the MDGs is strongly related to the actual level of human development in a locality. Especially in Least Developed Countries, high levels of illiteracy, the poor status of socio-economic infrastructure, including financial services and the very limited local tax base makes the achievement of progress on MDG targets difficult.
- 2 Disaggregated data is often scarce and hence MDG costing has to rely almost solely on surveys and other forms of direct client feedback, which could be subjective and hence skew or misdirect capacity development efforts.
- 3 The existence of an enabling environment for decentralisation and local development using local authorities is a key ingredient to a successful process of localising the MDGs. However, the existence of decentralised legislative frameworks and strategies do not necessarily translate into enhanced authority and competencies for fiscal and administrative management. These capacity needs must be addressed. Moreover, it must be assessed if the decentralisation legislation is combined with a supportive fiscal decentralisation policy.
- 4 Ethnic, linguistic, economic and racial identities can manifest themselves more visibly and immediately at local levels, and these differences have to be addressed in multi-stakeholder engagement forums and in access to information, training and basic services in addition to the utilisation of culturally appropriate approaches.
- 5 Geography, with rugged terrain, long distances between communities, and uninhabitable areas, limits possible capacity interventions, or increases time and cost in application.
- 6 There is often less formal institutional presence at sub-national levels, particularly at community and village levels. This mitigates the need for enhanced coordination and networking. Capacity development strategies need to focus more on informal networks and groupings.
- 7 Technical depth in terms of knowledge and skills, and exposure to problem-solving and participatory planning or engagement in decision-making are often weak, including the risk of brain-drain due to weak incentives/motivation factors to remain in one's locality. In some cases, the non-monetary incentives to stay in one's own village, and the commitment to the development of one's local community could compensate.

Opportunities:

- 1 The knowledge of local contexts, customs, relations and needs encompassed in the localising process, allows for better adaptation and realism in application of capacity development strategies.

- 2 Community volunteerism is an essential local resource. Capacity development should allow for easier access to volunteer services that are more readily available at local levels.
- 3 Local leadership may have more space to experiment, dialogue, explore alternatives and engage directly with stakeholders at the local level which facilitates feedback and support to capacity development initiatives.

The capacities noted earlier refer to a set of cross-cutting functional capacities that are key to ensuring successful localisation of the MDGs and their eventual achievement. In the following section a systematic approach for localising the MDGs is described in conjunction with the relevant capacity development activities to support it.

V. A FIVE-STEP CD APPROACH FOR LOCALISATION OF THE MDGS

This section provides a synopsis of the different capacity development steps involved in the localisation process (see also Figure 2 below), which can roughly be divided into two categories: those related to developing the strategy and those related to implementing it. As highlighted in sections one and two above, the success of this process depends to a large extent on the enabling environment for localisation – especially (fiscal) decentralisation and strong national to local linkages on planning and budgeting – and the vision, knowledge and skills base of those managing, and involved in, the process.

The aim is to not be prescriptive, but to emphasise the value of adopting a flexible approach to such a process – to allow opportunities for refining and adjusting the process and its outcome to take account of changing local circumstances. This only provides for a systematic manner in which to approach and advocate a process, which at the end of the day would be driven by and adapted to local realities.

1. Designing a Local Development Strategy to Achieve the MDGs

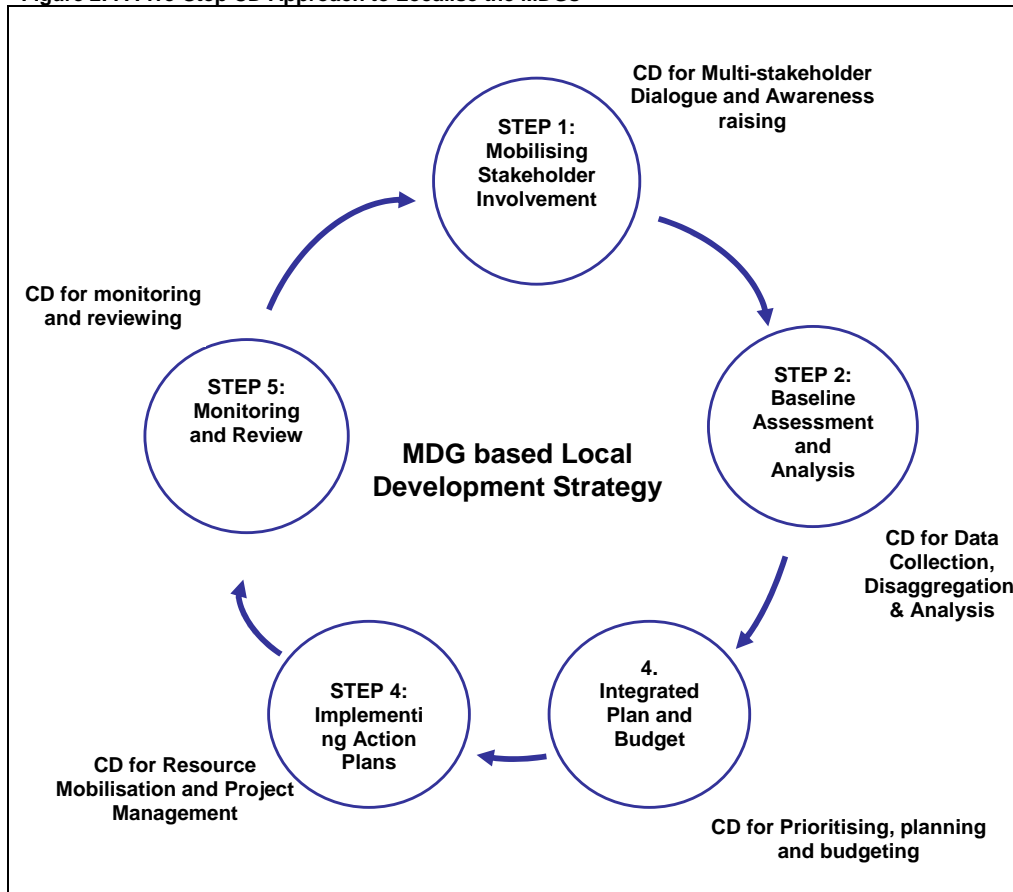
Given the integrated nature of a development strategy to achieve locally adapted MDG targets, its design requires a consultation process that will bring together all stakeholders concerned, ranging from local government authorities, to representatives of civil society and community organisations, to private sector companies. This will help promote “ownership” over the strategy and ensure sustainable outcomes and investments.

STEP 1: Mobilising stakeholder involvement

Mobilising stakeholder involvement will in many cases start with an awareness raising campaign about the importance of the MDGs and their contribution to good local governance, using different strategies methods including public service announcements, art activities targeting the youth, and town-hall meetings, to name just a few. Successful examples of such campaigns can be found in the Kukes region in Northern Albania, and in Nigeria, where activities targeted at the youth were very successful in raising awareness about the MDGs. It may also be necessary to support the self-organisation of poor communities and strengthen their dialogue and negotiation skills so that they can contribute to the debate and ensure that their voices are heard. Related to this is the more general need to educate and empower local citizens about their right to be represented locally, and their responsibility to participate in local decision-making processes.

UN Country Teams can support these various efforts through on-the-job capacity development support and training on the facilitation of multi-stakeholder dialogues, communications, negotiating and dialoguing, and can promote (national) MDG awareness campaigns.

Figure 2: A Five-Step CD Approach to Localise the MDGs



STEP 2: Baseline Assessment and Analysis

Before being able to start prioritising actions and investments to achieve the MDGs at the local level, a good understanding is needed of the current situation in a locality. This requires conducting a baseline or needs assessment. This initial assessment should not be too burdensome for a local government to carry out - in terms of the time and resources required (human, financial and technical), and should produce information that can be easily communicated to local government officials and politicians, as well as the wider public. This will facilitate subsequent consultation and decision-making processes. It will also be important to ensure that the local government involved has a good understanding of any national priorities that may already exist in relation to the MDGs, most important the national MDG-based strategy, to ensure that these areas are addressed – even if only to discount them – as part of the baseline assessment.

Very broadly, a baseline assessment should seek to identify the main poverty challenges and needs and the direct and indirect causal factors behind them.

Box 7: South Africa's Provincial Analysis of Social and Economic Factors

South Africa's Eastern Cape profiled the dimensions of local poverty as part of its own development strategy, the Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP). A history of underdevelopment and institutionalised racism left the province with difficulties not faced in other parts of the country. The Eastern Cape had provided the labour supply for South Africa's mining industry while remaining a fairly agriculturally dependent area. When the mineral trade declined, unemployment followed and welfare dependency increased.

The PGDP was developed as a mechanism for combating these problems. First, an overview of the socio-economic situation was needed before determining the policy options to address them. Geo-spatial and demographic assessments traced the natural environmental and economic diversity between provincial districts. Development indicators helped to account for differences in basic service delivery, poverty and inequality. This process allowed for an understanding of how the economic sectors selected for growth in the PGDP would be impacted by the province's socio-economic profile, including local health services, energy sources, education and infrastructure. This stock-taking process revealed that in contrast to other provinces, poverty rates in the Eastern Cape were significantly related to gender, race, geography and natural resources. It provided the qualitative and quantitative backdrop to explain how the province's social and economic status quo would affect the plan's 14 tailored targets and 10-year development vision.

Source: 'Provincial Growth and Development Plan: Eastern Cape 2004-2014'. Eastern Cape Province. 2003.

There are four broad phases in a baseline assessment – definition of information, data collection, data analysis and communication – which should ideally be carried out by local stakeholders, be they the local government or civil society organisations. UN Country Teams can offer support to this process by strengthening the capacities and skills of local stakeholders in qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, and by promoting mechanisms for data collection and storage (both at the local and the national level), through statistical literacy programmes and the provision of software, such as DevInfo.

Definition of information

A baseline assessment of local progress towards the MDGs should seek to identify suitable indicators that are 'SMART' – Simple, Measurable, Accurate, Reliable, and Time-bound. This requires:

- 1 Defining indicators that provide information on progress towards the MDGs.
- 2 Identifying indicators that reveal local environmental, social, economic and institutional factors that may have a bearing on each MDG target.
- 3 Outlining the *types* of information required (qualitative, semi quantitative, quantitative) and consider *how feasible* it will be to collect and analyse those.
- 4 Identifying those policies and actions that may impact on a particular MDG, e.g. planning regulations or environmental standards.

Box 8 below presents a case study from the Philippines where the government recently promoted a list of 14 'Core Local Poverty Indicators' (CLPIs) that it states should be used as a minimum for monitoring local poverty trends:

Box 8: Local MDG Indicators in the Philippines

The Government of the Philippines has promoted a list of 14 'Core Local Poverty Indicators' (CLPIs) that it states should be used as a minimum for monitoring local poverty trends:

MDG	Core Local Poverty Indicators (CLPIs)
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of households with income less than the poverty* threshold Proportion of households with income less than the food threshold Proportion of persons aged 15 years and above who are not working but are actively seeking work Proportion of children (0-5 years) who are moderately and severely underweight Proportion of households who eat less than three full meals a day Proportion of household members victimized by crime
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of 6-12 year-old children who are not in elementary school
Goal 3: Promote gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of 13-16 year-olds who are not in secondary school (This can be generated from indicators Goal 2 since data are gender disaggregated)
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of children under five years old who have died
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of women who have died due to pregnancy related causes
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other infectious diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of households without access to safe water Proportion of households without sanitary toilets
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of households who are squatters Proportion of households with makeshift housing
Goal 8: Global Partnership for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployment Rate of 15-24 year olds, by gender

Source: Government of the Philippines 2005

Data collection

Collection of data relating to MDG indicators is required in order to assess the main poverty challenges and causal factors. This can be conducted through a range of different approaches. If there is sufficient time and resources, a local authority may conduct its own assessments, such as through household surveys, internal auditing (e.g., of budget expenditure, staff skills), etc. However, it may be recommended to use/verify such data with independent secondary sources such as, from NGOs and academic organisations, bringing in a more neutral assessment of the situation. Use of secondary data may also be useful and more affordable than primary research, and speed up the assessment process, but use of such data will require a robust assessment of whether the data is sufficiently up-to-date, accurate, and reliable to use and most importantly whether the methodology utilised in collection and analysis is statistically sound.

Whatever the source of data, it is important to stress the need to disaggregate the data as far as possible (e.g., by gender, and to district or village/community level). However, the difficulty of obtaining good quality disaggregated data at the local level should not be underestimated. It constitutes one of the major obstacles to the successful localisation of MDGs. In the absence of accurate disaggregated data, it may be necessary to develop proxy estimates. The utilisation of DevInfo and the involvement of the UN Country Team are proving to be a very essential basis for developing disaggregated data as the case of localising the MDGs in Tunisia and Syria is illustrating. However, concerted effort needs to be made to strengthen the capacities of the departments of statistics to collect data at the governorate and sub-governorate level (village,

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district, etc.) in order to enhance the usefulness of DevInfo. Similarly, periodically updating DevInfo is essential for effective monitoring of the MDGs.

Analysis

Once the data has been collected, it is necessary to understand how different factors are impacting the poor, categorising the *types* (outline which MDG is affected) and level of *impact* (the scale) and whether they are positive or negative. Analysis of institutional and policy frameworks and their impact on each of the MDG targets is an important part of examining the causal factors behind existing trends.

Communication

The outcomes of the analysis need to be clearly presented to key decision-makers and stakeholders in order to identify possible policy options and activities, as well as to begin the prioritisation process. This calls for strong communication and dialoguing skills, which UN Country Teams can help to develop through appropriate (on-the-job) training.

STEP 3: Developing an Integrated Plan and Budget

Analysing the data collected through the baseline assessment will help identify and prioritise those areas that require immediate attention, in terms of policy responses and action, and those that can be addressed in the medium and longer term. This priority setting will make a strategy more action-focused.

Action plans for short-term interventions need to be developed for each of the priority areas identified, without losing focus on the policy coherence between the different actions plans, and between each plan and the long-term MDG agenda, for example by ensuring that changes to sanitation and water policy take account of the potential impact/contribution to health and environment targets. Also important is ensuring that the local development process links to national strategies and finance, and that local needs and assets are recognised and embedded in national plans and budgets. This calls for the ability to dialogue, negotiate, build consensus and mobilise support for the priority actions identified and to elaborate a consistent and integrated budget. UN Country Teams can support local governments and other local stakeholders to develop these capacities by accompanying them in this process, and by providing training in these areas. A capacity assessment can help identify the areas in which support would be most needed.

Each action plan can be broken down into the following 8 components:

1. **Aims and objectives** - The identification of required indicators, the potential sources for data collection, and methodologies for collection (surveys, focus groups, etc.). In addition, it will be important to identify relevant stakeholders related to the data being collected (i.e. Ministry of Health for Goals 4, 5, and 6) as well as other (non-state) stakeholders operating in each sector (health unions, NGOs, etc.).
2. **Desired outcomes** - Each action plan will have to specify its desired or expected outcomes, possibly including broad targets for each outcome, as this can assist the process of monitoring progress. For example, the desired outcome of a poverty/income-focused action plan might be defined as 'reducing the proportion of unemployed people by 50% within the next five years'. These outcomes might be intermediate targets or steps towards contributing to the longer-term achievement of MDG goals and targets. However, it has to be underscored that expected outcomes need to be realistic and consistent with available and projected resources and the presence of an enabling environment.

3. **Key actions and policy requirements** - The plan should outline each key activity required to meet the specified priorities and those activities required to achieve the desired outcomes. This part of the action plan should also include any *preparatory* activities that may have been identified as necessary to enable the implementation of a plan – such as capacity development, advocacy, as well as fundraising activities. Establishing priorities will have identified those major areas that require specific policy responses, including whether standards and regulations need to be revised or new ones introduced in order to provide a more supportive institutional context for action to take place (i.e. microfinance best practices related to interest rates and repayment modalities).
4. **Assigning roles and responsibilities** - The baseline assessment will have identified many of the key institutions and stakeholders already involved in achieving each of the MDGs, and ideally it will have clarified those additional groups which need to be brought in to respond to identified challenges and gaps. The process of assigning roles and responsibilities to particular activities will need to be inclusive of all key stakeholders, taking into account their relative resources, capacities and relevance to a particular target and activity. Each action plan should identify and involve those parties that are required to make a decision in each policy area, as well as those who will be impacted by the change, e.g., changing land tenure rights to take account of informal communities will require careful dialogue between local planners, slum dwellers, local residents and other stakeholders to ensure that the system is accessible and understandable for the communities as well as realistic for the local authority to implement.

The process also needs to identify mechanisms that can be used to support horizontal cooperation (intra and inter-municipal cooperation) and vertical cooperation (regional, national and global links) such as establishing local committees or working groups, joining regional networks and municipal exchanges, etc. National local government associations can also assist in this exchange, as well as international networks such as UCLG and the International Council for Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI) (UN-HABITAT 2003) (see also section three above).

5. **Timeframe** – Detailed action plans need to be defined for short-term priorities that will specify monthly and even weekly activities and resources required to achieve the desired outcomes. Sufficient time needs to be allocated to allow for capacity and resource development, especially since the lack of skills or finance may have been identified as major barriers to progress.
6. **Budgeting and financial forecast** - Each action plan should seek to calculate the financial resources required to achieve the desired outcomes. In traditional systems this would be calculated by technical officers within a local authority. However direct community involvement can greatly assist the process of planning ahead financially, ensuring that the needs and interests of the poorest are reflected in the process. Such involvement can also improve the effectiveness and accountability of financial management within a local government.
7. **Accessing resources** - Each action plan will remain simply that – a plan – without the necessary resources to implement the proposed activities. Therefore an *essential* part of any plan will be to identify real and potential sources of funding in order to carry out the work.

Local funds include local sources of funding – such as revenue generation, local taxation and charges, establishing municipal bonds, providing micro-credit and supporting the establishment of local credit groups. As with other elements of the action plan, the implications of different sources need to be assessed for their potential poverty and wider impacts. Improved financial administration and transparency can make a significant

contribution to revenue generation. Simplified procedures and a progressive tariff structure, based on ability-to-pay, have allowed Kenyan municipalities to increase the revenues they have obtained from business licenses. In Uganda, market fees are the main source of revenue for many local governments. (Blore, Devas and Slater 2004). However, despite the ability of local governments to raise funds, as UNCDF notes: 'There is a fairly widespread, but mistaken, belief, especially in countries creating local governments for the first time, that local governments both can and should be fiscally self-sufficient. The paradox of decentralisation is that the degree to which service expenditure responsibilities are ideally decentralised is much greater than the degree to which fiscal revenues can be decentralised. Virtually all local governments worldwide require central transfers to bridge this fiscal gap.' Besides central level transfers, public-private, public-NGO, public-public partnerships and inter-municipal cooperation can all help to bring additional resources to implement a local action plan, not only in terms of finance. Local government needs to take the lead in assessing the pros and cons of involving different partners and ensure that they will make an important contribution to actualizing the development plan, especially that the focus on the poor remains at the forefront of MDG-based planning. It may be that a range of partners are required in order to make programmes/project and sectoral action plans viable.

External funds should also be identified in the plan. These sources include potential regional, national and even international funding that can support implementing the actions plans. Examples of these, such as the Global Environment Facility, the World Bank Social Investment Fund, and Community Led Infrastructure Finance Facility, are discussed in more detail in the background study accompanying this Note.

8. **Monitoring and review** - Tools for monitoring and reviewing the strategy as a whole are discussed in more depth in Step 6 that follows. However, a crucial part of implementing an action plan is the periodic assessment of each plan, which should be applied as standard practice to ensure that the plan is moving towards its desired objectives as well as to assess whether it is having any unforeseen outcomes or impacts.

2. Implementing a Local Development Strategy to Achieve the MDGs

STEP 4: Implementing Action Plans

Once a plan has been designed, the next phase is to implement it. The key word here is 'coordination', both between stakeholders at the local level and between the local and the national level. Many case studies have indicated that this process can take longer than expected, especially where fundraising, training and capacity development is required in advance of undertaking practical action.

Tapping into and building-up social capital is a crucial part of the implementation of an action plan. The approach calls for working with the resources that are immediately available to local government, using the experiences and expertise of different groups e.g. planners, community workers, private sector, as well as communities themselves, to contribute to local development activities. Sometimes it is only through such collaborative 'learning-by-doing', including learning from our mistakes, that we can move towards a lasting and effective process of development (Hamdi 2004).

Another important element is the actual mobilisation of internal and external resources, as outlined in Section IV above. UN Country Teams can support this process by developing the capacities of local authorities to plan and manage their budgets, to lobby the central government for financial authority and to develop proposals for grants from external funding sources. Also important during this phase are the project management capacities, including the ability to understand and apply rules and procedures, including for accounting and procurement.

A number of countries have already begun to make progress in implementing an MDG-based approach to local development strategies. As already mentioned in Step 2, the governments in Indonesia and Albania have been supporting strong campaigns to localise the MDGs in local government and regional departments. Box 9 highlights work carried out in Turkey, building directly on their Local Agenda 21 process. The Turkish experience highlights the value of working with existing community mechanisms and networks to bring partners together for ongoing implementation.

Box 9: Local Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals

Local Agenda 21 (LA21) in Turkey has been praised as one of the most successful in the world. Launched in 1997 with support from UNDP and International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) the project continued into a second implementation phase in January 2000. The third phase links LA21 to the MDGs, called 'localising the UN MDGs and WSSD Plan of Implementation through Turkey Local Agenda 21 Governance Network'. The Turkish LA21 governance network includes metropolitan municipalities, provincial municipalities, district municipalities, sponsoring organisations, a youth component, plus steering committees involving central government bodies, e.g., the Prime Ministry, State Planning Organisation, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Forestry and Environment, as well as the General Secretariat of the European Union.

'LA21 City Councils' are a unique governance mechanism in Turkey that brings together central and local government with civil society in a collaborative framework of partnerships. The City Councils have established a participatory platform from which local visions can be created coupled with action plans. Broad participation has helped the sustainability of the project from development through to evaluation. Membership in the councils can include hundreds and sometimes thousands of organisations – providing platforms to discuss and develop priorities and identify problems in a city.

At the neighbourhood level there are 'Neighbourhood houses' as well as neighbourhood committees that provide a means of facilitating participatory neighbourhood processes. Also women's LA21 councils exist in over 30 cities with a national network to facilitate raising awareness and the involvement of women. Similarly youth LA21 Councils have been established in all partner cities to promote youth participation in LA21 policies and strategies. A Council for the Elderly and Council for the Disabled also exist. A number of cities have established 'LA21 Houses' which serve as a venue for meetings and activities by local stakeholders.

The programme has enabled a new local governance model to be established in Turkey where LA21 has demonstrated itself as a trigger for social transformation – accelerating decentralisation and democratisation in the country. The most important lesson to be drawn from the project continues to be the immeasurable value gained from the involvement of local stakeholders and wider community as 'partners' with a view to integrating social, economic, and environment policies and leading to a more open, participatory governance at the local level. Strong 'ownership' of the project amongst local authorities and stakeholders has been accompanied with real commitment from all parties to champion the process at national and local levels.

Source: Turkey Local Agenda 21 Governance Network 2005

STEP 5: Monitoring and Review

The importance of establishing effective indicators for monitoring the development and implementation of an MDG-based local development strategy must not be underestimated. Much of the monitoring process can be seen as a repeat of the baseline assessment process outlined in Step 3, only this time there will be a pre-existing set of data from the initial assessment from which to compare and analyse progress that has been made, highlight areas that need more targeted support, identify previously missed barriers as well as new obstacles to progress. Monitoring also provides vital information that can be communicated to regional and national government assisting their strategic assessment of progress at a national scale. As mentioned in Step 3, indicators need to be developed that are 'SMART' and best capture the situation with the resources and data that are available. Most importantly, in formulating indicators within the MDG-based planning is to integrate the MDG indicators as essentials to be collected and analysed. They provide the benchmarks by which to measure achievement towards the MDGs. The MDGs

also provide a time-frame for their achievement (2015) and the action plans can be set for medium to long-term objectives based on resource availability.

Box 10: Local Urban Observatories

Since 1999 UN-HABITAT's Global Urban Observatory (GUO) has been helping local authorities set up their own local urban observatory to gain an accurate picture of their development needs and to track progress. Local urban observatories (LUO) bring together city officials, citizens and businesses to ask the simple question 'how well is my authority achieving results that matter?' In Santiago, Chile for example, the LUO helped the municipality develop indicators for monitoring progress against the authority's strategic plan for 2010. Baseline data and development targets were produced for 73 indicators. As a result of the monitoring system, the allocation of municipal resources has become more transparent and public awareness of the impact of decisions on the economy and the environment has grown. In cases where a broader range of stakeholders has been involved, LUOs have strengthened networks between citizen groups and the local authority, such as in the city of Ahmedabad, India.

DevInfo has also proved to be a valuable tool in helping to monitor progress. Localising the MDGs and adapting indicators to the local realities will facilitate the collection and monitoring of indicators at the sub-national levels that were hitherto not accounted for. Participatory Impact Assessment and Community Score cards are other tools to assess the impact of strategy implementation.

CONCLUSION

A sense of urgency exists in relation to achieving the MDGs as 2015 is merely years away. Increasingly, there is awareness that achievement of the MDGs can only happen through action at the local level: potable water supplied to a household, a health clinic and staff that reduces maternal and infant mortality in a village, vocational training that leads to employment for an individual, and others. Key to the achievement of the MDGs is the capacities of local actors – both government and non-government – to adapt national MDGs to their reality and plan, implement and monitor activities.

This Practice Note has aimed to provide practitioners with a clear definition of what it means to localise the MDGs, the processes to do so, and most importantly the key capacities to be developed to ensure that the localisation process is a success. This note is intended as a reference point when assessing where to begin with a localisation process. Not only are six broad steps to MDG localisation outlined, but also the five essential functional capacities are linked to them. Such linkages ensure that capacity development is an integral part of all the localisation processes thereby providing a greater chance for success.

It is recommended that readers of this Practice Note adapt it to the local reality; the five-step process need not be undertaken in the given sequence, nor is it necessary to complete all five of them. However, the lessons from across the world speak loud to the fact that when the basic knowledge base, skills and space for engagement increases (as is done through these process steps), the adjustments to local development processes to meet community needs is felt. As to the impact on development results, future evaluation evidence will tell.

ANNEX: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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