

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality has proposed four key interventions to maximise the potential of the MDGs as vehicles for gender equality. These interventions have direct implications for MDG reporting at the national level.

This review has identified three areas of concern that will need to be addressed to align MDG reporting with strategic priorities for gender equality.

Range and scope of reporting

- Sex disaggregated data is the exception rather than the rule.
- Reporting tends to be ‘by the book’ and remains limited to the minimum set of indicators.
- Qualitative data is not used to the extent it could be.
- Data is rarely disaggregated along other axes of inequality such as class and ethnicity.
- Data is not appropriately backed up with gendered analysis.

Linkages across Goals

- The way in which Goals are defined tends to force reporting into a mode where cross-linkages become invisible.
- Targets and indicators overlap across Goals but cross-referencing between Goals is infrequent.
- Localisation of Goals, targets and indicators is limited.

Task Force recommendations

- Address the gaps and weaknesses in the current Goal 3 target and indicators by identification of new targets and indicators to augment the existing ones.
- Improving the availability and quality of sex-disaggregated data.
- Campaigns for policy intervention to strengthen women’s ‘capabilities’ through existing initiatives in health, education, and other sectors; expand ‘opportunities’ through fundamental changes in the economic order; and enhance ‘agency’ through measures such as electoral quotas and legislation on violence against women.
- Building on existing frameworks such as CEDAW and the ILO Decent Work Agenda for achieving gender equality. These should be complemented by a new international campaign for zero tolerance for violence against women.
- Increasing financial and technical resources for agencies dedicated to promoting the status of women, and enhancing political commitment to gender equality.

Ownership and buy-in

- There is a wide variation between countries in the extent to which actors outside government and the UN System are involved in producing national MDG reports.
- Reports produced exclusively or largely by government bodies do not always reflect the realities on the ground, or address the priorities and concerns of significant non-State actors in development.

Action is needed on several fronts to address these issues if national MDGRs are to become effective instruments for gender equality.

1. Range and scope of reporting

Considerations of data availability, reliability, national capacity and the need to keep MDG reports as simple as possible have so far been cited as reasons for not expanding the list of MDG indicators.

However, the findings of this review indicate that several countries have in fact expanded the scope and potential of MDG reporting by including data on a variety of local and contextual indicators against each goal.

There is thus a strong case for **mandatory reporting on the additional indicators for Goal 3** proposed by the Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality.

Proposed menu of indicators for Goal 3

Education

- *The ratio of female to male gross enrolment rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.*
- *The ratio of female to male completion rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.*

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

- *Proportion of contraceptive demand satisfied.*
- *Adolescent fertility rate.*

Infrastructure

- *Hours per day (or year) women and men spend fetching water and collecting fuel.*

Property rights

- *Land ownership by male, female, or jointly held.*
- *Housing title, disaggregated by male, female, or jointly held.*

Employment

- *Share of women in employment, both wage and self-employment, by type.*
- *Gender gaps in earnings in wage and self-employment.*

Participation in national parliaments and local government bodies

- *Percentage of seats held by women in national parliament.*
- *Percentage of seats held by women in local government bodies.*

Violence against women

- *Prevalence of domestic violence.*

*From Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women
Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. UN Millennium Project 2005*

Improving the **availability and quality of sex-disaggregated data** should be given a high priority. In most countries, UN organisations are involved in building the capacities of National Statistical Systems, which provide the data for inclusion in MDGRs. UN support could be

specifically focused towards **gender sensitization for statisticians** involved in collating and processing data for the MDGRs to enable them to identify and use additional data that can supplement and bring a gender dimension to the mandatory indicators under each goal.

Promoting and supporting the **collection of sex-disaggregated data** on key indicators is an urgent necessity. UN Country Teams in UNDAF countries are already committed to the development of a common country database with disaggregated data on key national indicators. This process requires coordination between ongoing data-related interventions by various organisations to ensure that data needed for MDG reporting is included in the common database. Technical support could be accessed from a range of organisations including UN agencies who themselves collect statistical data.

National MDG reports can draw on the growing pool of **qualitative data on gender issues** available with civil society groups and women's rights advocates. Qualitative data could be used to supplement quantitative data, highlight data gaps, or focus on the situation of specially disadvantaged groups. The CEDAW reporting process in particular is a rich source of data.

The last section of reporting under each goal in the MDGRs is an assessment of monitoring and evaluation capacities. A query on **national capacity to collect and use sex disaggregated data** could be included in this section and would have a significant impact in terms of attention to and accountability for providing disaggregated data in the MDGR.

2. Linkages across Goals

Women's rights advocates in several countries have expressed apprehensions that the MDGs are 'lowering the bar' on gender equality commitments made earlier. Existing instruments such as the **Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and the ILO Convention on Decent Work** provide overarching frameworks for gender equality with as much, if not more, relevance for women's rights and gender equality than the MDGs.

The **strategic priorities** suggested by the Millennium Project Task Force on Gender Equality are aligned with commitments under the Beijing Platform of Action and CEDAW, to which most countries are signatories.

Flagging data gaps for future research

'Some preliminary evidence appears to indicate a relationship between domestic violence and the changing role of women in the transition to a market economy. A national scale survey is required to gain deeper understanding of domestic violence in Vietnam so as to improve the national policy framework.'

From Vietnam MDGR

'The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women must be our touchstones for realizing the potential held out by the MDGs. The wealth of understanding and experience of the nature of gender-based discrimination and the steps needed to achieve gender equality that has been generated through the CEDAW and Beijing processes stands waiting to be tapped.'

By using CEDAW and Beijing as the lens through which the gender equality dimensions of the MDGs are understood and addressed, principled conviction and development effectiveness can be brought together in powerful way.'

*From Pathway to Gender Equality: CEDAW, Beijing and the MDGs
UNIFEM 2005*

As this review demonstrates, a key element of success in achieving Goal 3 is the extent to which actions across different domains of gender equality can feed into each other to fuel the change process. **‘Going outside the MDG box’** and incorporating elements of other right-based frameworks is a way to make these connections and synergies visible. Aligning MDG reporting with other gender equality instruments adds value to MDGRs by enhancing their usefulness as policy instruments.

The **overlap between gender equality targets and indicators** – for instance between Goals 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 – need not be a barrier to making connections between Goals. Instead, it can be turned into an opportunity to **reiterate and highlight key messages** and commitments under one or more of the international instruments endorsed by the country.

Flagging relevant gender issues at appropriate points throughout the text would enrich reporting under each Goal. Moreover, it would also create space under Goal 3 for reporting on

strategic gender issues that cut across issues, such as traditional gender roles and values, constructions of masculinity, the role of the media and the importance of women’s organisations.

Localisation and redefinition of Goals and targets can create opportunities for highlighting linkages between Goals and the need for action on multiple fronts to make progress on gender equality.

Cross-linkages between Goals can be captured through bringing **women’s voices** into reporting. The lives and experiences of people are not neatly organised around conceptual frameworks. Women’s narratives of their own experiences reflect the complexity of issues and introduce a new perspective for understanding key dimensions of gender equality.

3. Ownership and buy-in

The MDGs cannot be achieved through atomised actions by any one group of society, no matter how committed. The fact remains that these development challenges – articulated in different ways over the last several decades – cannot be addressed through technical or managerial interventions alone. More than all the other Goals, gender equality demands the political will for social transformation.

Women experience the connections

‘For us in Lwitamakooli we are supposed to get sick only during the day but not at night. This is because there will be no one to attend to you. Because of this many of our women have given birth by the roadside at night when we are trying to take them to Buwenge 10km away. In fact one woman gave birth in that swamp 3km from here and they used a sugar cane peeling to cut the umbilical cord.’

From Uganda MDGR

Highlighting cross-cutting linkages

Vietnam

- A section on ‘Cross-cutting gender issues’ including violence, traditional attitudes, access to resources and lack of data, and how they affect achievement of all MDGs.
- A section on ‘Provincial and social disparities’ included under each Goal.

Bosnia Herzegovina

- Section on ‘Civil society, democracy and human rights’ foregrounds gender inequality as a violation of women’s human rights.

Ethiopia

- Section on ‘Costing the MDGs’ addresses the challenge of costing cross-cutting issues like gender equality and environmental sustainability.

Collective and concerted actions by a range of actors outside the government and development agencies – people’s organisations, formal and informal community organisations, women’s groups, citizens’ groups, local authorities, the media, the intellectual community and all others concerned with building a fair and just society – can catalyse change on the ground. Equally, collective action can create pressure for accountability and put social change onto the political agenda.

The MDGs are intended to catalyse a collective commitment to social transformation. The national MDG report and the process of its preparation should ideally be congruent with this larger objective of mobilising and energising action by diverse constituencies towards these common objectives. Since gender equality is the thread that connects all the Goals, it can be an effective entry-point for such a collective process.

UNDP-UNIFEM project engendering MDGRs

This ‘Gender and the Millennium Development Goals’ focuses on piloting innovative approaches that highlight gender equality and women’s empowerment in MDG processes in Peru, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya and Morocco.

Cambodia

- Focus on feminisation of poverty and HIV/AIDS in the context of globalisation
- Capacity-building of a range of stakeholders
- Involving women’s groups in policy dialogues
- Establishment of a national women’s network

Kenya

- Bringing women into the policy process
- Building a coalition for action on gender equality
- Capacity-building for stakeholder groups
- District-level poverty dialogues with women
- Women’s voices reflected in MDG Media pack

Kyrgyzstan

- Focus on issues of violence and access to land
- Capacity-building for stakeholders
- Expanding and harmonising the indicators for CEDAW, PRSPs and MDGs
- Studies underway and advocacy materials being developed

Morocco

- Focus on education
- Mobilising multiple constituencies into a mass campaign for equality in education

Peru

- Focus on poverty, discrimination and sexual/reproductive rights
- Capacity-building for key stakeholders
- Media campaigns and communication materials developed

The **involvement of women’s groups, gender equality advocates and gender experts** in consultations should go beyond Goal 3 – ideally, they should be represented in working groups and drafting committees across Goals.

An **open process** has multiple benefits. The involvement of groups who are already working on gender equality would sharpen the focus of reporting on Goal 3 and make the MDGR a more **accurate reflection of ground realities**.

Gender advocates and women’s groups would not only bring a gendered perspective to discussions on other Goals, but would be able to contribute **qualitative data and first-hand information** on women’s situation, particularly key indicators of women’s status such as their vulnerability to violence.

Participation in the process of MDG reporting and ownership of the MDG report will increase the chances of women’s groups and gender equality advocates using the report and its key messages in their own **grassroots campaigns and mobilisation** for gender equality at the community level.

Albania MDGR - building national ownership

- Intensive grassroots consultations before preparation of first draft.
- Discussions and feedback on draft through regional consultations.
- Validation by stakeholders – more than 650 people directly involved through website, TV hotline, local meetings and advocacy campaign.

Costing exercises offer women's and gender equality advocates another opportunity for policy influencing. It has been the experience in most countries that gender-responsive policies and programmes fail to have an impact because they are not backed up by adequate resources. Gendered

interventions are possible and necessary at each stage of the costing process in order to ensure accuracy in resource estimation and funding for strategic priorities.

Over the last decade, feminist economists, women's movements and gender equality advocates have built up a comprehensive set of methodologies and tools for **gendered analysis of public spending**. These tools can be creatively used to supplement official costing exercises at the national and sub-national levels, in order to highlight the gaps between resource commitments and actual impacts on gender equality and bring public attention to bear on gender biases in the development machinery.

Costing the MDGs - some gender implications

The UN Millennium Project recommends a five-step procedure to costing the MDGs. Gender concerns must be incorporated at each stage.

- A **list of basic interventions** is developed for each country, based on best available data and/or national consultations.
 - Accurate data on key indicators of gender equality must be incorporated into the process.
- **Concrete targets** are identified for each intervention, based on the MDGs and other national/international commitments and targets.
 - Targets derived from commitments under CEDAW and the Beijing PFA must be adequately reflected.
- An **investment model** is developed and **resource requirements** estimated to meet targets by 2015.
 - Additional resources required to secure women's economic, social and political rights must be factored in.
- Potential **cost savings** resulting from **synergies** across interventions are calculated.
 - Women's contributions in terms of care work and unpaid work must be recognised and made visible in economic terms.
- A national **financing strategy** is developed and **sources of funds** identified, taking into account household out-of-pocket expenditures, domestic resources and external financing.
 - The implications for women of transferring costs from the public budget to the household economy must be taken into account.