



## The MDG Poster Book

# Contributions by local communities to attaining the UN Millennium Development Goals

A new tool for analysing and showcasing development projects

gtz

commissioned by  
 Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development

## MDG spotlights in Africa

The HIV/AIDS rate in Cameroon is at approx. 12%, while the estimated number of unreported cases is several times higher. Young women in particular are hardly aware of how to protect themselves against this infectious disease.

Securing water supply is one of Algeria's most pressing problems. So sustainable management of this scarce resource at local level is imperative.



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The Millennium Development Goals –  
unattainable or realistic?

## Preface

### The MDG Poster Book – Grassroots contribution to the Millennium Development Goals

Since September 2000, the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals are presenting a global framework for action and recognised principles of international development cooperation. They are the first instance in which the United Nations – and therefore also Germany – has committed to specific targets for the global eradication of poverty, promotion of development and protection of the environment. To achieve these ambitious goals, approaches that encompass all sectors of policy must be found. Aware of this, the German Federal Government adopted its inter-ministerial “Programme of Action 2015”. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is coordinating the programme since 2001. On behalf of the Ministry, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH (German Technical Cooperation) is contributing actively to this shared international mission through three projects: “People and Biodiversity – Implementing the Biodiversity Con-

vention”, “Environmental Policy and Promotion of Strategy Processes for Sustainable Development” and “Poverty Reduction Mainstreaming Project”.

These development policy programmes stress over and again the importance of involving local communities as actors in the development process and giving them a political voice. In most cases, local communities directly depend upon natural resources as the base of their food supply and source of their income. Environmental degradation presents communities with major challenges, which they must meet through creative approaches and locally appropriate solutions. By realising measures that combine the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources – such as the projects presented in this brochure – communities contribute far beyond their boundaries to attaining all of the MDGs.

Unfortunately, there is still inadequate appreciation among politicians and the public of the linkages between environment and poverty. All too often, environmental protection is considered a luxury, with the result that decision-makers give priority to eradicating the worst poverty as an initial, isolated step.

The 60th United Nations General Assembly – the New York Millennium Review Summit in September 2005 – presented a welcome opportunity to underscore that the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources make a key contribution to combating poverty, especially in rural areas. This opportunity was seized by convening several side events in collaboration with the Equator Initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Poverty Environment Partnership (PEP) donor initiative – BMZ is an active member of both. The events enabled representatives of indigenous and local communities involved in GTZ-supported projects in Algeria, Benin, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, the Philippines and South Africa to contribute their experiences. They used these forums to explain the results of their projects

in terms of the MDGs, both among themselves at community level and vis-à-vis the numerous global leaders attending the Summit.

To showcase the contributions made to MDG attainment by grassroots projects in a way that is readily understandable and can be taken in at a glance, GTZ has designed a novel poster format together with the communities. This was presented for the first time at the New York events, where the response was very positive: other development cooperation organisations have now taken up this format to showcase and analyse their activities.

This brochure presents posters that emerged from twelve projects conducted by German development cooperation institutions. We invite you to explore them!

Dr. Klemens van de Sand  
Commissioner for the  
Millennium Development Goals (BMZ)

Marita Steinke  
Head of Division Environment and  
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New York, June 2006: Esther Mwaura-Muirua from Kenya presents the concept for the MDG posters at the Community Commons of the Equator Initiative.

Young people from all over the world gathering at the World Youth Day 2005. As a contribution made by German Development Cooperation, the MDG posters on Bonn's Münsterplatz are also part of it.



## Introduction: Giving the grassroots a voice

How can grassroots development projects showcase their activities and successes in a way that is readily understandable and can be taken in at a glance? How can indigenous and local communities compile and present their contributions to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)? Is there too little awareness and appreciation of their role compared to the macro level – with its global structural policy, intergovernmental dialogue and national-level policy advice – although there is no doubt that the Millennium Goals can in large part only be realised at the “grassroots”?

Communities develop creative and effective ways in which to preserve biodiversity and reduce poverty. They may be the villagers around the Pendjari National Park in the north of Benin who participate in managing the protected area, or people in villages located in the Nepalese Churia forests who manage these endangered forest areas sustainably. How can the importance of such resource conservation projects for poverty reduction be made visible? How can these communities be given a voice in the international development debate? How can their practical experience feed into policy dialogue? Which approaches succeed, and which do not? How can the successful ones be disseminated and presented to the public?

## Analysis, presentation and exchange of experience

As a response to all these questions, GTZ has designed a special poster format together with various communities, by which project results can be surveyed and presented. It has already been used with much success at the following events:

- Representatives of indigenous and local communities used it to present their projects at the Community Commons – a forum for local communities, representatives of international development policy organisations and decision-makers – which took place in New York in June 2005.
- At the UN Millennium Review Summit held in September 2005, again in New York, these communities used the format to present “their” development projects.
- At the Bonn United Nations Day, the posters were exhibited in the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany and were presented to a broad public at the 2005 World Youth Day.



These posters not only enable project results to be presented in an accessible way, but also provide a basis for an exchange of experience and networking among various communities.

To produce a poster, the project must be analysed in detail against a set of specific questions: What are the project's core elements? What are its results – including those extending beyond the direct project objectives? What has been achieved, and what has not? How do these results relate to the individual Millennium Development Goals? How do they tie in with other development-related themes?

The effects of a development project are rarely linear, but generally stem from complex webs of inputs and results. By clarifying the above questions, the process of putting together a MDG poster is a simple way of engaging in joint analysis. It builds a foundation for monitoring results, and offers a method by which to survey key project outcomes at the same time.

The Millennium Development Goals in a role play. What can contribute to attaining the MDGs?

## Starting point: The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, with poverty reduction as their overarching focus, provide worldwide guidance for international development policy.

By adopting the Millennium Declaration in September 2000, the United Nations' members committed to combating poverty worldwide, fostering development and protecting the environment. The Declaration was complemented by eight goals underpinned with specific targets. These Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their indicators, set out in abridged form below, are to be attained by the year 2015:

### Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day.
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

### Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

- Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.

### Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

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

### Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

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

### Goal 5: Improve maternal health

- Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio.

### Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

**Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability**

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources.
- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.

**Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development**

- Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory.
- Address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff- and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction.

The German government has formulated its strategy for attaining the MDGs in its "Programme of Action 2015". GTZ aligns all its activities with the Millennium Declaration.

Whether it be in Central Algeria or in South Africa among the Makuleke, the participation of communities in planning and implementing projects is a key factor for the success of development cooperation.

**Good Governance is key**

The MDGs are intended to be understandable, targeted and verifiable. However, they only address parts of the Millennium Declaration, specifically the themes of development, poverty reduction and environmental protection. The MDGs do not explicitly take up other aspects of the Millennium Declaration such as good governance, peacebuilding and human rights. But without good governance, for example, it will not be possible to comprehensively tackle the root causes of poverty, nor to achieve sustained development success.

From the vantage point of the communities, in particular, good governance is an essential precondition to development and thus also to environmental or resource conservation projects. Only where political transparency prevails and participation is possible, where people can voice their interests, and land rights and uses can be negotiated, for example, will communities be in a position to assume active responsibility for the resources surrounding them. Community-based environmental projects can strengthen negotiating capacities and safeguard legal positions, thus fostering good governance and mainstreaming it in society.

**Good Governance**

"Good governance" is about how decisions are taken and implemented in a state. Originally, the connotations of this notion included an efficient public sector, accountability and controls, but also decentralization and transparency. Today, good governance means more: It is not just confined to government action alone but also encompasses the interaction between government and civil society – thus encompassing the totality of rules and enforcement mechanisms that coordinate people's behaviour.



## Protect the environment or reduce poverty?

There has been disagreement in the past on how environmental protection stands in relation to poverty reduction. Environment is covered as an issue in MDG 7, but beyond this it is scarcely integrated in a strategic manner. This reflects the state of public debate, in which the close links between environment and poverty continue to be inadequately appreciated. Even in expert circles, an intact environment is still frequently viewed as a "luxury" – something to be tackled once the worst poverty has been eradicated. The result is that environmental protection is frequently viewed as a competitor for scarce (financial) resources.

But without protecting the environment and making sustainable use of natural resources, it will be impossible to realise the Millennium Development Goals in any sustained, long-term manner.

A comparison is revealing. By using improved stoves, the Mirt Stoves, thousands of households in Ethiopia now require only a fraction of the fuel-wood needed for conventional stoves. This saves money and is environmentally friendly.

The mangrove forests of Palawan (The Philippines) form an ecosystem with a high level of biodiversity. As a fish-breeding area, they secure the population's food. In addition, the forests offer protection from tidal waves.

Environmental protection makes key contributions to poverty reduction. To name just a few examples: If air and water pollution are reduced, respiratory and intestinal diseases, and thus child mortality, also decline (MDG 4). Combating soil erosion, notably in the Sahel region, preserves productive agricultural land, which is essential to reduce poverty and hunger (MDG 1). Finally, intact ecosystems are the most important producers of clean water, fertile soil and vital oxygen and are thus the very basis of human survival.

## Starting at the grassroots

People living in indigenous and local communities have played a minor role so far in the debate on how to realise the Millennium Goals. There is much talk about these communities – but very little with the people themselves. And yet it is these communities and their development efforts that are at the centre of the development process. These people are the benchmark for the success or failure of all efforts. They are achieving the Millennium Goals on the ground, and are thus the counterpart to MDG implementation at macro level.

The very existence of many indigenous and local communities depends directly upon biological resources. A broad diversity of species and cultivated varieties not only secures food supply. It also represents, with its gene pool, the basis for the productivity of crop varieties and their adaptability, e.g. to climatic changes or pest infestation. In many parts of the world the diversity of wild animal and plant species also contributes to food security, as most indigenous communities supplement their diet with plants that they have gathered and animals that they have hunted, particularly in times of poor harvests. Furthermore, their natural environment provides fuel, building

### Sustainability – GTZ's guiding vision

Sustainability means, quite simply, meeting the needs of the present in a way that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability should be the basis of all political decisions on the management of natural, societal and technological resources. Sustainable development has become accepted as a principle guiding the global community since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The Agenda 21 document adopted in Rio provides a programme for its implementation. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH (German Technical Cooperation) aligns all its activities with this guiding principle.

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materials and medicinal plants. The latter are often the sole basis of healthcare and preventive medicine in poor countries.

If biological diversity is lost, people's living conditions deteriorate. In many places poverty forces people to abandon their sustainable ways of life and overexploit natural resources. This heightens the loss of biodiversity and further deepens poverty – a vicious circle.

On the other hand, many indigenous and local communities are developing creative and effective strategies for the sustainable management of their natural resources. They deploy them not only to conserve biodiversity, but also to use it as a supplementary source of income, thus reducing poverty. This shows how important sustainability is for development although it is not explicitly mentioned in the Millennium Goals.

## Towards the Millennium Review Summit: How the posters came about

How can the profile of community projects be raised? How can their complex interrelationships with the project setting and their linkages with the Millennium Goals be illustrated clearly? Who should present these project approaches in order to enhance external credibility and generate a sense of pride in what has been achieved? These are some of the questions posed by the Equator Initiative when, in the run-up to the 2005 United Nations Millennium Review Summit, it started looking for ways to mainstream environment in all MDGs as a precondition to poverty reduction and to underscore, at the same time, the role of the local level in line with the motto "MDGs happen at the grassroots".



"Whale-watching" has become an important source of income in KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa). As a member of the Wildlands Conservation Trust, the local population can benefit from this form of ecotourism – through admission charges and jobs.

### Conserving and utilising biological and agricultural diversity

GTZ takes an integrated approach towards biodiversity conservation. This goes far beyond "classic" nature conservation and thus contributes to implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). GTZ's programme "People and Biodiversity", for instance, has promoted and continues to support almost 30 projects in developing countries that mostly concentrate on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing, traditional knowledge and implementing the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Further GTZ activity areas that contribute directly to reducing the poverty of local populations include development-oriented nature conservation and agrobiodiversity conservation.

GTZ mainstreams the CBD in other spheres of development cooperation, and also strives to further develop the Convention itself and its instruments. Acting on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), GTZ contributes to structural policy debate at international workshops and the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD.

[www.gtz.de/biodiv](http://www.gtz.de/biodiv)





Representatives of local and indigenous communities discussing the significance of the MDGs at local level during the Community Commons.

New York's Fordham University, which is also a member of the Equator Initiative, has provided its campus in the Bronx to the more than 150 participants for a week.

## The first showing: Community Commons

In preparation for the 2005 UN Millennium Review Summit, the Equator Initiative convened a forum for communities, international development organisations and decision-makers in New York in June 2005 – the Community Commons. It was here that GTZ presented the MDG poster concept for the first time to the event's more than 150 participants. GTZ did so together with representatives of the relevant local communities, drawing on a diverse array of case studies. A key aspect was that community representatives presented the MDG posters themselves. This underscored that the presentations were not about theoretical notions, but about people and their practical activities and successes.

The purpose of the posters is to compile, process and present in a clear fashion the relevant

- data,
- information,
- results and effects,

of the development project in question and their relations to the MDGs.

## Grassroots information ...

The key benefit of this approach is that it involves local actors in the analysis and presentation of their development projects. With GTZ support, communities themselves compile the project information and analyse results. They ask themselves: What are our tangible results? What effects do these generate? What do they contribute to the MDGs and good governance? The process of producing such a poster therefore also has an important participatory effect, as – in contrast to conventional appraisals and progress reports, or video films about projects – the people on the ground are actively involved.

Moreover, this approach makes it easier for communities to analyse their projects according to clear, understandable criteria – and to do so in such a way that the results of different projects can be compared. The process of preparing a project poster is therefore an analytical tool, and the finished poster is a medium for the exchange of experience: At the Community Commons event alone, representatives of projects in more than 40 countries were thus able to share experience and engage in joint learning.

## The Equator Initiative

The Equator Initiative was initiated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The initiative brings together the United Nations, governments, civil society, industry, media, academia and foundations as a network. Their goal is to support local communities in the tropics in their efforts to conserve biodiversity and combat poverty. Germany, which joined the Equator Initiative in 2003, is represented by GTZ's programme "People and Biodiversity".

[www.undp.org/equatorinitiative/](http://www.undp.org/equatorinitiative/)

## ... for international debate

The clear presentation of project results and their links to poverty reduction and Millennium Goals made the posters a useful tool at the Community Commons for dialogue among the communities, on the one hand, and among global leaders and decision-makers, on the other. The analysis of project results provided by a poster also benefits donor organisations, as it shows clearly how close a project has come to achieving the set goals from the local perspective.

The posters thus serve

- as a horizontal exchange of best practice among projects,
- as a dialogue with global leaders and political decision-makers,
- as a communication with donors, who are informed about the results of their assistance,
- and – thanks to their clear structure – as broad public awareness-raising.

The communities harness a special quality of GTZ: GTZ can support implementation within a programme at all levels – from local over national (e.g. by means of government advice) through to international – as it operates in parallel at all of these levels. This allows a unique transfer of know-how in line with the “escalator principle” across all levels and in both directions. In this way, not only are the interests and successes of the communities communicated to political decision-makers in developing and donor countries, but – not least through the MDG posters – a dialogue is initiated in which the partners have equal standing. In addition, GTZ works to transfer the know-how and experience of local projects to international activities, e.g. at UN level.

Giving grassroots people a voice.  
The Local-Global Leader's Dialogue  
of the Community Commons.

Opening the Heads of State Dinner on the 14.09.2005. In a relaxed atmosphere, the hosts, Kemal Derwiş (UNDP Administrator), left, and Klaus Töpfer (UNEP Executive Director), right, welcome the evening's honorary guest, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.



At the Community Commons, the poster design concept was supplemented to include guidance by which others can prepare their own project posters. An MDG Poster Toolkit (page 38) was made available to local and indigenous communities, enabling them to present their project activities to the Millennium Review Summit in September 2005.

For further information on the Community Commons:  
[www.gtz.de/community-commons](http://www.gtz.de/community-commons)

## The second showing: Millennium Review Summit in New York

“Environment for the MDGs” – this was the title of a dialogue event with global leaders convened on 14 September 2005 by the international Poverty Environment Partnership (PEP) during the Millennium Review Summit. The primary objective was to raise the profile of the environmental theme (as enshrined in MDG 7) in the discussions held at the UN Summit, and to highlight the key contribution made by sustainable environmental management to the attainment of all the Millen-

nium Goals. A further aim was to use the Summit to present the work of communities to a broad (not only an expert) public.

The Environment for the MDGs event debated the economic linkages between environmental issues and poverty reduction and considered which of the two areas should be the primary target of investment. The panel comprised more than 20 prominent politicians, industrialists and scientists, as well as two representatives of local communities – a success achieved not least by their good lobbying and the presentations made at the Community Commons. In parallel, GTZ exhibited the MDG poster series, which had been reworked and expanded to include four more case studies (one further environmental project, one on water and two on AIDS control).

The Summit culminated in the Heads of State Dinner – an evening gala bringing together illustrious guests representing the realms of development cooperation, politics and culture. Exemplary environmental initiatives from around the world that contribute to MDG attainment and combine environmental protection with poverty reduction were



The discussion panels of the Environment for the MDGs event boasted high-ranking members.

Here is Forum 2, with, from left to right, Jane Weru (Slum and Shack Dwellers, Kenya), Connie Hedegaard (Minister of Environment and Nordic Cooperation, Denmark), Jeffrey Sachs (Director, Earth Institute), Mary Robinson (Former President of Ireland), Ian Johnson (Vice-President for Sustainable Development, World Bank) and Achim Steiner (Director-General, IUCN).

presented to this international audience. A celebrity jury awarded prizes to ten of these projects. One of the award-winning projects is the GTZ-supported Makuleke Project, which presented itself to the jury with its project poster. The South African Project won the award for its approach of generating income from the sustainable use of protected areas in the Krüger National Park and for the announcement that it will cease, on a voluntary basis, the lucrative trophy hunting in favour of biodiversity conservation in the future. Makuleke was the only small-scale project among the ten – standing beside major projects such as the announcement of the EU that it will pledge an additional 20 billion Euros for develop-

ment assistance each year, or the commitment made by the Swedish government to raise Official Development Assistance (ODA) to one percent of gross national income as early as 2006.

## Moving on

In the meantime, further MDG project posters have been produced in English. There are German versions of many of them, as well as translations into the country languages – Spanish or French.

GTZ developed the poster design together with the community projects, but makes no copyright claim.

Most of the projects presented in the posters work together in the framework of cooperative programmes with several German implementing organisations such as KfW Entwicklungsbank (KfW development bank), GTZ (German Technical Cooperation), InWEnt (Capacity Building International) and DED (German Development Service) in addition to the partner institutions. The process of poster production is thus an important step towards realising the principle of unified development cooperation. There is also growing interest in the posters in the international realm beyond German institutions. The concept has already been taken up by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) as an idea for analysis and external presentation.

The posters are thus well on the way towards becoming an established tool of both German and international development cooperation.

## Poverty Environment Partnership (PEP)

The Poverty Environment Partnership is an informal network comprising more than 30 international environment and development organisations. It aims to improve the coordination of poverty reduction and environmental protection. GTZ's Pilotproject Rioplus represents German development cooperation within PEP.

[www.undp.org/pei](http://www.undp.org/pei)

Benson Venegas, Costa Rica, presenting the poster concept during the "Environment for the MDGs" event – as an innovative instrument to analyse and present community projects.

Junior meeting senior and local meeting global at the MDG Evening Gala: David Camejo, Youth Group Representative in the GTZ AIDS Combating Project (Dominican Republic), Al Gore (Former US Vice-President) and Dr. Gro Harlem Brundland (Director-General, World Health Organisation WHO).



## An electronic tool

The next step is already under way: The Equator Initiative will continue the international dialogue among communities with its Community Taba. This forum is scheduled to take place on 18–31 March in Curitiba, Brazil, in parallel to the eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP8).

The poster design will have been transformed into an electronic tool by then, thus allowing the communities present at the event to develop their own MDG project posters. They will receive advice from community representatives who have already prepared posters and are now sharing their experience. This is an innovative example of South-South learning. It utilises and engenders appreciation of the consulting capacities of trained community representatives.



Livingstone Maluleke presents the award-winning project of the Makuleke community during the afternoon discussion panel in the Forum and with a short film at the Heads of State Dinner.