

TURKEY: INTEGRATED LOCAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Capital Development Fund

POVERTY REDUCTION AND MDG ACHIEVEMENT



Photo by UNDP

Background

Turkey has an area of 780,000 square kilometres and a population of 72.6 million (2009). The Turkish economy grew rapidly until 2008, peaking in 2004 with 9.4% GDP growth. Although 2009 was a year of contraction due to the global economic crisis, the GDP growth rate forecasts for 2010 promise a strong recovery. Overall, Turkey is the world's 17th largest economy and is classified as a middle-income country, with a per capita GDP of US\$ 12,955 (PPP). According to the 2009 Human Development Index (HDI), Turkey ranked 79th of 182 countries.

Five years before the 2015 deadline, Turkey has eradicated extreme poverty and hunger. Nevertheless, significant regional disparities still exist, with pervasive pockets of poverty especially in rural areas. Poverty in rural areas is 34.6% (2008). One of the main problems in the national socio-economic context has been the high unemployment rate, which increased considerably since 2008. The unemployment rate among the youth and women is estimated to be nearly 26% (2009).

MDG Localization and Local Development Programmes

The Government of Turkey's commitment to combat rural poverty is reflected in the National Strategy for Rural Development, which comprises three programmes: (a) the Support to Rural Development Investments Programme; (b) the Social Support Programme; and (c) the Support to Agricultural Cooperatives Programme.

The Social Support Programme is executed through a call for proposals

to which NGOs and local government agencies can apply. Governors of target provinces maintain overall coordination and monitoring at the local level. Although the State Planning Organization determines the budgetary allocation and the guiding principles of the programme, the implementation and operational authority depend on local governments. Regarding the Support to Rural Development Investments and Support to Agricultural Cooperatives Programmes, the role of the local government is most visible during the identification of local needs, the evaluation of applications, the monitoring of project implementation, and payments. Thus, although the funding is determined centrally, many operational decisions are made locally.

Launched in 2006, the Rural Development Investments Programme has initiated more than 3,000 small projects, with a total financial volume of approximately US\$ 160 million. The projects promote investments in production facilities (e.g., food processing, seed production, silages), drip irrigation systems, procurement of agricultural machinery and equipment. The initiative targets rural areas across the country and aims to eradicate rural poverty especially among smallholders and farming enterprises. As a result, 1,298 new micro-, small- and medium-sized facilities have been established; technological infrastructures of some 200 facilities have been improved; and 350 rural investments have been made through resources obtained from the programme.

The Social Support Programme financed 1,122 projects in 2008-2009, with a total investment of approximately US\$ 90 million. The initiative has three components (employment generation, social inclusion, and culture, arts and sports) and targets vulnerable groups (children, youth, women, the unemployed, rural poor, the elderly, the disabled, and immigrants) in nine provinces of the Southeastern Anatolia Region. The

projects' portfolio covered the traditional weaving and clothing sector, renovation of poor housing to generate employment, garbage and waste management, and micro-enterprises for rural women.

The programmes have benefited the environment. For instance, the pressurized irrigation systems contribute to the better, more efficient use of water. Greenhouses use clean energy resources instead of conventional energy resources. In terms of promoting gender equality, the programmes have triggered 'women cooperatives', which the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs now also promotes and supports.

Finally, the Government of Turkey, with the assistance of UNDP and financial support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), is implementing three large-scale rural development projects in the less developed regions of Turkey. These projects aim at reducing rural poverty through fostering smallholder investments and improvements in social and economical infrastructure at the village level that directly contribute to the achievement of MDG targets in income and food poverty, gender empowerment, environmental sustainability and access to water and sanitation.



Opportunities for Scaling Up

Experience in Turkey suggests that the local economic development and MDG localization programmes are extending the coverage of basic services among certain groups and geographical areas. The initiatives capture the needs and demand of the population, especially of marginalized groups. Significant partnerships with the European Commission, World Bank and IFAD allow the development of an 'integrated investment and rural development model' that could serve as a comprehensive and sustainable mechanism for eradicating rural poverty (MDG 1), while contributing to the attainment of MDG 3 and MDG 7 through gender mainstreaming and the integration of environmental consideration, respectively.

The Integrated Investment and Rural Development Model benefits from successful interventions under the ongoing programmes, promoting regional development. The model would increase agriculture

THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN ACHIEVING THE MDGS:

Local administration is an integral part of a unitary public administration system, which also comprises the central government. Local government consists of a number of public corporate entities established to meet the common needs of the inhabitants of provinces, municipal districts and villages. Decision-making organs are elected, and law determines respective responsibilities, powers, basic structure and resources. The central administration has the power of administrative trusteeship (tutelage) over the local administrations within the framework of principles and procedures set forth by law to ensure that the functioning of local services: (a) is in conformity with the principle of the integral unity of the administration; (b) ensures uniform public service; (c) safeguards and serves the public interest; and (d) meets the local needs appropriately. There are vulnerabilities in the service delivery system. Local agents that do not have the institutional skills and capabilities, decrease the potential impact of local economic development programmes

The recently established Regional Development Agencies in 26 regions constitute a unique element of the decentralization process and are ideally positioned to play a critical role for localizing MDGs. They are active in combating poverty and boosting regional competitiveness. The development agencies are responsible for coordinating preparation and implementation of regional development plans. The general assembly of the development agencies includes members of the local governments, universities and non-governmental organizations.

productivity through the establishment of: (a) 'agro-malls' that combine all critical services (extension, finance, input supplies, produce marketing, storage, agricultural machinery and equipment) in a single physical rural location and make them easily accessible to rural communities; (b) promotion of agro-business, agro-industry and micro-enterprises; (c) organization of rural communities; and (d) capacity development of regional and local agencies for business facilitation, knowledge management and advocacy.

The project will be implemented in the least developed regions in Turkey: Central Southeastern Anatolia (CSA - Diyarbakir, Urfa) and North-eastern Anatolia (NEA - Kars, Ardahan, Igdir, Agri). The integrated nature of the model will ensure that women and youth benefit from the interventions mainly in income diversification and non-farm activities. The implementation of the model in the two target regions will directly benefit an estimated 50,000 (at least 50% women and youth) rural poor; the total number of indirect beneficiaries is expected to reach 300,000. The 'agro-mall' concept will have secondary benefits on the environment by bringing low-carbon technologies, such as shared solar irrigation systems and the expansion of pressurized irrigation schemes. Agglomeration of agricultural inputs and outputs in a single location will decrease the distance required for transportation, thereby reducing carbon emissions. The market-oriented rural community organizations (e.g., co-ops) will have a visible impact, especially on women and youth. Better-organized rural communities, especially 'women cooperatives', will improve rural communities' access to financial resources. The Development Agencies have the basic capacities which need to be improved for the model to function properly and sustainably. There is also a strong UNCT/UNDP commitment, with two specialized UN agencies (UNIDO and FAO) fully engaged in scaling up opportunities.

Total resources of US\$ 8.5 million for the period 2011-2015 are required for the construction of two agro-malls, procurement of machinery and lab equipment, seed capital for co-financing ten projects involving cooperative associations and public private partnerships, and training sessions on value chain and business development.

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