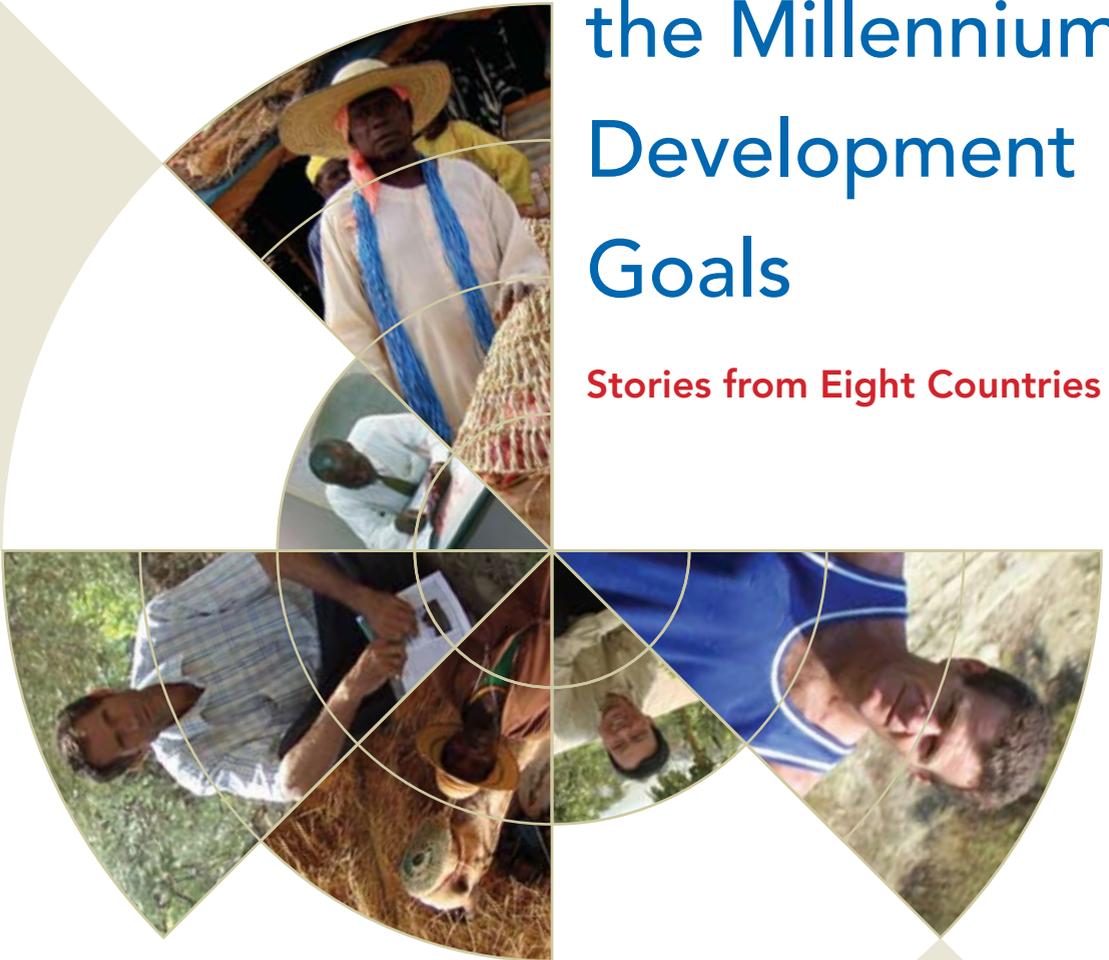


Going Local to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals

Stories from Eight Countries



SNV
Connecting People's Capacities



DVD
Included

SNV and UNDP: Going Local to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals

UNDP is the United Nations' global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP is on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges.

SNV Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) is dedicated to a society where all people enjoy the freedom to pursue their own sustainable development. SNV contributes to this by strengthening the capacity of local organizations. In over 30 countries worldwide, SNV advisers are on the ground to listen, connect, advise, facilitate and exchange expertise. SNV helps to alleviate poverty by focusing on increasing people's income and employment opportunities in specific productive sectors, as well as improving their access to water and sanitation, education and renewable energy.

In 2004 SNV and UNDP decided to join forces to increase the effectiveness of their efforts in contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable development. Both organizations support countries in the development and implementation of development strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The collaboration between SNV and UNDP builds on the complementarities between the convening powers of UNDP with national governments, and SNV's networks and advisory capacities at decentralized levels of government and civil society. By working together, both organizations use their leverage to support the capacity development of countries at local and national levels.

This partnership is geared towards addressing some of the many serious challenges that many developing countries face in achieving the MDGs. Even countries that are making relatively satisfactory progress may still have areas where they are lagging behind. The least developed countries and fragile states in particular experience widespread poverty, and need our concerted support to help them achieve the MDGs.

SNV and UNDP are working together in different ways. This publication describes the first of four joint programmes aimed at strengthening local actors' participation in MDG-based development strategies. The programme was implemented between 2005 and 2007 in 15 countries across Africa, Asia, the Balkans and Latin America with a budget of US\$ 2 million. Two other joint programmes have focused on capacity innovation at community level through small grants and mutual learning between UNDP and SNV.

A fourth programme, which commenced in 2006 and runs through to 2010, aims to support 17 countries to accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs through the design and implementation of MDG-based national and local development strategies. It is building on the lessons of the first joint programme described in this publication.

Going Local to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals

Stories from Eight Countries

SNV Netherlands Development Organisation and
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

2009





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DVD with a Film from Two Countries back cover

Preface

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) embody the key dimensions of human development: poverty, hunger, education and health. These goals were first expressed in the Millennium Declaration adopted by 189 countries in September 2000, and are to be achieved by 2015.

The focus of efforts to advance the MDGs has been predominantly at the national level. While national level efforts are integral to achieving the MDGs, in many developing countries growing attention is now being paid to the role of local knowledge, monitoring and implementation. MDG localization is the process of designing and implementing local development strategies to achieve the MDGs. This involves promoting local ownership, understanding local needs and trends, and allocating resources to achieve targeted outcomes at the local level. In 2004, SNV Netherlands Development Organisation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) entered into a partnership to support the participation of local government, civil society organizations (CSOs) and private sector groups in local and national MDG-related development planning processes in 15 countries.

Through this programme of “localizing the MDGs” (2005-2007), SNV and UNDP sought to improve local and national awareness and ownership of the MDGs; strengthen capacities of local governments and non-state actors in conducting participatory MDG-oriented planning processes; and improve the integration of MDGs in policy development at the local level. The eight case studies presented in this publication describe the approaches SNV and UNDP adopted and the results achieved. They exemplify and reaffirm the critical importance of providing opportunities for the participation of poor and vulnerable groups in planning, implementation and monitoring of MDGs.

The programme has helped to increase local and national ownership of the MDGs and supported the capacity development of local governments and non-state actors in developing local MDG-development plans based on local realities and priorities. The SNV–UNDP Partnership has also played an important catalytic role in bridging the gap between local and national development priorities, capacities and resources. In addition, the partnership enabled the adoption of a number of MDG-oriented quick-win initiatives. In a number of countries local authorities were able to mobilize new local, national and international development partnerships, and attract additional funding, as a result of their collaboration with SNV and UNDP.

Sharing successful strategies and lessons learned among different actors involved in MDG localization in different countries is an important factor in their successful achievement. As organizations with a large international presence, SNV and UNDP are well positioned to share knowledge on best practices on MDG localization by documenting experiences and organizing opportunities for practitioners to exchange views and learn from one another.

Much of the progress that the world community has so far made in achieving the MDGs risks being undermined or even negated by the recent food, financial and economic crises. It is estimated that an additional 55 to 90 million people may well be forced into poverty in developing countries as a result of it. Coordinated and collaborative actions and appropriate measures by governments and partners from developed and developing countries are required in order to mitigate the impacts of these crises. It is therefore necessary to re-affirm the world's commitment to the promise of the MDGs.

In a follow-up programme, operational from 2007 to 2010 in 17 countries, SNV and UNDP continue to strengthen local and national government and civil society capacities, as well as local-national linkages in development planning and implementation.

SNV and UNDP remain strongly committed to the attainment of the MDGs. Both organizations are intensifying their efforts to facilitate and exchange expertise with a wide range of local, national and global actors.

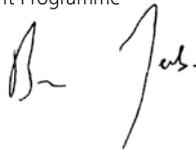
Dirk Elsen

Executive Director
SNV Netherlands Development
Organisation



Bruce Jenks

Assistant Secretary General
Partnerships Bureau
United Nations
Development Programme



1 Introduction

1.1 The Millennium Development Goals

At the turn of the millennium, 189 heads of state from around the world gathered at the United Nations in New York City to sign the Millennium Declaration, a document that stipulated a set of universally accepted goals to be achieved in the fight against abject poverty and inequality.

To meet the aims of the Declaration, governments also established international goals aiming to eradicate key aspects of poverty by the year 2015. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have become widely accepted since 2000 as the global point of reference for national development efforts.

Millennium Development Goals





▲ *Children everywhere, boys and girls alike, should be able to complete a full course of primary schooling*

The MDGs embody the key dimensions of human development – poverty, hunger, education and health – expressed as a set of time-bound targets. They include halving income-poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education and gender equality; reducing under-five mortality by two-thirds and maternal mortality by three-quarters; reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS; and halving the proportion of people without access to safe water. These targets are to be achieved by 2015, the benchmark being 1990.

The MDGs:

- Synthesize many of the most important commitments made separately at the international conferences and summits of the 1990s;
- Recognize explicitly the interdependence between growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development;
- Are underpinned by the Millennium Declaration and its principles of good governance. To achieve the goals and to sustain progress, a well functioning, inclusive and accountable governing system is essential;
- Are based on time-bound and measurable targets accompanied by indicators for monitoring progress; and
- Bring together, in the eighth Goal, the responsibilities of developing countries with those of developed countries.¹

1 www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml

Initially, efforts to advance the MDGs were focused at the national level. Specifically, they were aimed at raising awareness, undertaking needs assessments for countries as a whole, and incorporating the goals into national planning frameworks such as Poverty Reduction Strategies.

Sub-national governments and other local stakeholders who have fundamental roles in ensuring that the goals are achieved were largely left out of the dialogue and MDG discourse. While national level efforts are assuredly crucial, in many developing countries growing attention is now being paid to the role of local knowledge, monitoring and implementation in the achievement of the MDGs.²

This chapter briefly describes what MDG localization is and why it is relevant, looking at four factors that are considered important for successful MDG localization, namely: capacity at local level, involvement of non-state actors, coordination and coherence, and availability of financial resources. Chapter Two presents key findings from the eight country case studies on the basis of these four factors. Chapter Three presents an illustrative overview of MDG localization experiences in eight countries that participated in the SNV-UNDP programme on MDG localization. Chapter Four concludes with recommendations for further action.

▼ *Local stakeholders are often left out of the dialogue and MDG discourse*



1.2 The Importance of Localization of the MDGs

“It is important to realize that even though the MDGs are global, they can most effectively be achieved through action at the local level. It is at the local level that safe drinking water, electricity and other services including health and education are provided, that garbage is collected and that food is sold at market. In each city and town, there will be a local reality to be taken into consideration, and indeed the MDGs should be adapted to meet this reality.”

Dr. Oyevinka Oyebanji, UN-Habitat, 2007

The MDGs are internationally agreed and nationally adopted development goals. National statistical data often obscures variations between regions, ethnic groups or gender. Thus, while giving a good sense of overall progress, averages that measure MDG progress can be misleading, because they represent an abstraction from reality and can lead to conclusions that are not based on real observations.³ Localization of the MDGs can help to identify these differences and provide a greater focus on vulnerable groups - often specific to a particular area - who are most likely to be at risk of poverty and social exclusion.⁴

Achievement of the MDGs requires 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.

‘Localizing the MDGs’ is now seen as an important condition for success. Localizing the MDGs can be described as the process of designing (or adjusting) local development strategies to achieve locally adapted MDG targets.⁵ Localizing the MDGs means promoting local ownership, understanding local needs and trends and allocating resources to achieve outcomes at the local level. Through MDG localization, nationally defined targets are adapted to the local context to meet the development needs and priorities of specific communities. At the same time the resulting localized development targets must help achieve the country’s overall development strategy. The process of localizing the MDGs is supported by the subsidiarity principle: policies are best formulated and decisions best taken as close to the citizens as possible, so that government may be more responsive to their needs.⁶

Experiences in several countries show that the active involvement of actors at the local level is critical.⁷ Local governments are well positioned to involve communities, local businesses, non-government organizations (NGOs) and vulnerable or marginalized groups in responses

2 In this publication ‘local’ refers to the sub-national level, i.e. municipal, provincial or regional level, in rural and urban areas.

3 See, for example: *Millennium Development Goals: Looking beyond the Averages*. Vandemoortele, J. UNDP (2002)

4 See, for example: *Supporting Capacities for Integrated Local Development*. UNDP Practice Note (2007)

5 See, for example: *Supporting Capacities for Integrated Local Development*. UNDP Practice Note (2007)

6 The subsidiarity principle is a key element of the European Charter of Local Self-government, promulgated in 1985: see Article 4, Paragraph 3 of the Charter

7 See, for example: *Looking at the macro-micro gap from the other end*. Ubels, J., van Klinken, R. and van Visser, H. (2008)

and actions to advance the MDGs. The commitment of local governments and other local actors can help translate national plans and sectoral priorities into local realities that improve public services and reduce socio-economic differences.

Localization of the MDGs is a two-way process. Adaptation of national policies to local priorities can promote ownership by local communities and governments, and contribute to improved implementation at the local level. Additionally, local data can contribute to more clearly focused national policies. Learning from local experiences can also improve policymaking at the national level by highlighting barriers to more effective and equitable service delivery.

However, tailoring the MDGs to local levels is also associated with some risks. For instance, the agenda may be captured by local elites; the often weak financial and human resource base of local governments may hamper their ability to advance local development; and the expectations for immediate change and impact will often not be met.⁸

1.3 Creating Value through Partnership

In 2004 SNV and UNDP decided to collaborate to support the participation of local government, CSOs, and the private sector in local and national MDG-oriented development planning processes.

The SNV-UNDP programme on MDG localization (2005-2007)

SNV and UNDP worked to increase local and national ownership of the MDGs in 15 countries: Albania, Benin, Ethiopia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Serbia, Tanzania, Uganda, Viet Nam, and Zimbabwe.

Thirty-four countries in which both SNV and UNDP work were invited to submit proposals to participate in the programme. Countries were selected on the basis of criteria such as:

- The use of a participatory approach involving local governments, civil society and private sector organizations in planning processes
- The inclusion of capacity development components for local actors
- A focus on facilitating relationships between the local and national level
- The inclusion of strategies to 'scale up' specific activities and goals

With a total budget of \$2m (an average of \$118,000 per country), programme implementation was focused on creating an environment that fostered participation and dialogue with regard to local and national development planning processes. For example, in some countries the resources were used to facilitate civil society and private sector participation in local development planning processes, develop training materials, and provide support to the monitoring of MDG progress by local state and non-state actors. The project budget was created and designed to facilitate participatory processes and capacity development, but not to directly implement activities to achieve the MDGs.

SNV and UNDP sought to attain the following results in the programme:⁹

1. Improved local and national awareness and ownership of the MDGs
2. Strengthened capacities of local governments and non-state actors in conducting participatory MDG-oriented planning processes
3. Strengthened capacity of civil society actors to monitor progress on the MDGs
4. Improved integration of MDGs in policy development at the local level
5. Improved harmonization of policy development and planning between the local and national levels

In terms of the partnership, UNDP brought its networks, development initiatives and activities at the national level. SNV provided networks and advisory capacities at decentralized levels of government and civil society. The SNV and UNDP partnership proved to be complementary, resulting in valuable development outcomes that contributed to improved MDG localization.

1.4 Localization of MDGs: Factors for Success

Looking at the growing body of literature and case studies, four broad factors appear to be critical to the success of MDG localization efforts.¹⁰ These include:

- Involvement of non-state actors
- Capacity at the local level
- Coordination across development policies and strategies, and coherence between different levels of government
- Availability of financial resources

The following sections will look at each of these factors in more detail.

Involvement of Non-State Actors

Non-state actors are those actors outside the realm of state institutions and the government. They include the private sector and a broad range of CSOs, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), cooperatives, trade unions, service organizations, community-based organizations, youth and women's organizations and social movements.¹¹

Non-state actors, and in particular CSOs, have a critical role to play in efforts to achieve the MDGs. They can emphasize specific issues and encourage government accountability.¹² By virtue of their local knowledge and experience on the ground, they can provide solutions and analyses that respond to local situations.¹³ Mobilizing citizens' involvement in achieving the MDGs may start with an awareness-raising campaign about the MDGs and the role citizens can play in achieving them. Experience has shown that involving civil society actors in local decision-making

8 See, for example: *Supporting Capacities for Integrated Local Development*, UNDP Practice Note (2007)

9 *Building capacities of local governments, CSOs and the domestic business sector to participate in PRSP and MDG processes*, SNV-UNDP Activity Agreement I (2004)

10 See, for example: *A Rich menu for the poor: Food for Thought on Effective Aid Policies*. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2007-2009)

11 *Voice and Accountability for Human Development: A UNDP Global Strategy to Strengthen Civil Society and Civic Engagement*. UNDP (2009)

12 *Achieving the MDGs – The Call for Civic Engagement*. Speech by UNDP Associate Administrator Ad Melkert (2008)

13 *MDGs: Taking Root at the National Level?* UN-NGLS Roundup (2003)



▲ *Involvement of citizens is crucial in achieving the MDGs*

and implementation can produce lasting results. Community facilities like health centres, schools and water supply systems tend to be used more often, and are better maintained, when members of the community participate in making investment decisions.¹⁴

For example, the Albania case study (described in chapter 3.1) shows how consultations between local government and civil society representatives led to adjustments of the original plan and budget to include the priorities important to citizens.

Those who generally find it harder to engage in formal decision-making processes – including women, young people, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities and the elderly – are also more likely to be at risk of being poor.¹⁵ Therefore, to break the vicious circle of poverty, it is of vital importance to involve these vulnerable groups in MDG planning processes, implementation and monitoring.

The experience in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (described in chapter 3.4) illustrates the successful efforts of SNV and UNDP in involving vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, in development processes. It resulted, among others things, in the establishment of a daily centre for elderly citizens.

Capacity at Local Level

Studies show that in principle local governments are well placed to provide services efficiently and responsively, especially in basic social services such as primary and secondary education, health care and water and sanitation.¹⁶

However SNV and UNDP recognize that often a key constraint to successfully localizing the MDGs is the inadequate or inappropriate mix of individual, organizational and institutional capacities at the local level.¹⁷ While financial resources are vital to success, they are not sufficient to promote sustainable human development. The right enabling environment, well-functioning organizations, and a high-performing human resource base are the foundations needed to plan and implement national and local development strategies.¹⁸

Capacity development helps to strengthen and sustain this foundation. Defined as the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time, it is the “how” of making development work better and is at the heart of the mandate of SNV and UNDP.

Some crucial capacities necessary for localizing the MDGs include:

- Capacity to engage stakeholders
- Capacity to collect and analyse data, to plan and budget
- Capacity to mobilize resources and forge partnerships
- Capacity to implement development plans and to monitor and evaluate progress
- Capacity to adapt and self-renew
- Leadership capacities

The prominent place of capacity development in achieving the MDGs is becoming increasingly recognized.¹⁹

As illustrated by the cases in chapter three, local governments have been able to design and implement more coherent strategies, which include the priorities of the communities. This has been achieved through improved capacities in collecting and analyzing data, in planning, and in building relationships.

14 See, for example: *The Seed Initiative Partnership Report*. Global Public Policy Institute (2006)

15 See, for example: *Reducing Poverty by Tackling Social Exclusion, a DFID policy paper*. DFID (2005)

16 *Decentralized Governance for Development: A Combined Practice Note on Decentralization, Local Governance and Urban/Rural Development*. UNDP Practice Note (2004)

17 *Supporting Capacities for Integrated Local Development*. UNDP Practice Note (2007)

18 *Capacity Development Practice Note*. UNDP (2008)

19 See, for example: Capacity.org, *Capacity Development for Water and Sanitation*, issue 36, April 2009

Coordination and Coherence

Coordination and coherence is vital across development policies and strategies; and between various levels of government (vertical coordination), as well as between government, civil society and private actors (horizontal coordination).

Coherence between national development policies is critical to the achievement of the MDGs. Translating the global MDG targets into action requires an operational framework to set out a nationally-owned agenda directed towards achieving the MDGs. For many developing countries the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper²⁰ (PRSP) constitutes the primary vehicle to achieve the MDGs.²¹

MDG-based PRSPs are examples of efforts to create coherence in national development strategies. While PRSPs describe the country's economic and social policies in support of growth and poverty reduction, as well as the related financing needs and sources, the nationally adapted MDGs pinpoint country-specific development benchmarks. However the MDGs do not address *how* countries can meet the targets and achieve the goals. The "*how to*" is often found in national poverty reduction strategies. Linking the PRSPs to the MDGs means linking where countries want to be with how they want to get there, and this creates a composite solution that can achieve tangible results.

In addition to defining national PRSPs that accord with the MDGs, national governments must harmonize the roles and responsibilities of various domestic levels of leadership in seeking to attain national ends. To promote coherence, it is crucial that the mandates of the different national, regional and local authorities are clearly defined and understood by all.

Harmonizing development efforts of national and local government, CSOs, and the private sector is an essential aspect in achieving sustainable results. Harmonization of the contributions and efforts of different development partners is also at the heart of the Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness.²²

The case study from Guinea Bissau (chapter 3.3) illustrates how SNV and UNDP supported the re-establishment of Regional Cabinets as a leading institution in regional development coordination. The Regional Cabinets link district level and national level planning processes, ensuring that national planning takes into accounts needs identified at the district level.

20 *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers* (PRSPs) began as a tool for debt relief, but are increasingly being considered as a common vehicle through which (i) countries develop and express their nationally owned poverty-reduction strategies and policies, (ii) the Bretton Woods Institutions identify lending requirements and appropriate policy environments and (iii) the donor community and the UN system align and coordinate assistance strategies and budgets for poverty reduction at the national level. *UN Country Teams Engagement in PRSPs*. UNDG Guidance Note (2004).

21 *Relationship between MDGs and PRSP*. Joint letter by World Bank and UNDP (2003).

22 *Paris Declaration On Aid Effectiveness* (2005)

23 *Supporting Capacities for Integrated Local Development*. UNDP Practice Note (2007)

24 For a more comprehensive overview of the current discourse on decentralization and local governance, see for example *Decentralized Governance for Development: A combined Practice Note on Decentralization, Local Governance and Urban/Rural Development*. UNDP Practice Note (2004)

Availability of Financial Resources

Decentralization is not the same as localizing the MDGs, but effective decentralization can create an enabling environment by, for example, allowing local governments to formulate and implement policies that support local priorities and needs. Experience demonstrates that in countries with effective decentralization reforms, local authorities are stimulated to assume their leadership role in spearheading the elaboration of a local development strategy and mobilizing partners and resources for implementation.²³

In an ideal scenario, national governments will support the transfer of authority and responsibility by appropriate fiscal decentralization measures and positive incentives such as budget allocations for the implementation of the MDG agenda. However in many countries decentralization processes are only partially implemented. The transfer of financial resources from national to local level (fiscal decentralization) is often insufficient and in some cases even absent. Inadequate transfer of financial resources from the national to local governments can undermine local governments' capacity and legitimacy and, as a consequence, make citizens reluctant to pay local taxes. If local government directly provides services, citizens have a tangible incentive to pay taxes, and the leaders become accountable for providing public goods. In the absence of appropriate fiscal transfers, and with limited opportunities for mobilizing funds locally, effectively implementing the MDGs at the local level remains a challenge.²⁴

The case study from Benin (as described in chapter 3.2) portrays how a gap exists between the needs and ambitions at the local level and the funds available to address these needs. As municipalities have limited ability to finance their own development plans they largely rely on donor support. As a consequence, in formulating their development plans, local governments tend to focus more on donor priorities than on local priorities. Given this situation it is difficult for local governments to design and implement a coherent strategy to achieve the MDGs.

Decentralization refers to the restructuring of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity. Based on this principle, functions (or tasks) are transferred to the lowest institutional or social level that is capable (or potentially capable) of completing them. Decentralization relates to the roles of and the relationship between central and sub-national institutions, whether they are public, private or civic.

Source: Decentralized Governance for Development: A combined Practice Note on Decentralization, Local Governance and Urban/Rural Development. UNDP, 2004.

2 Key Findings

2.1 Introduction

The case studies presented in chapter three describe the approaches taken by SNV and UNDP to localize the MDGs in eight countries. The following key findings look at the extent to which the factors that appear to be critical to the success of MDG localization efforts, as introduced in chapter 1.4, played a role in programme implementation in the cases presented.

2.2 Capacity at Local Level

In most cases, SNV and UNDP supported the capacity development of local governments and non-state actors in the following areas:

- Understanding the MDGs
- Organizing participatory planning processes
- Integration of MDGs into local development plans
- Monitoring progress towards the MDGs

A thorough understanding of what the MDGs entail, and how the MDGs can contribute to local development, can help local planners to plan better and support citizens in voicing their concerns. The case studies from **Niger** and **Uganda** demonstrate how local authorities strengthened their understanding of the MDGs and of their responsibilities in planning for MDG targeted interventions.



▲ *Understanding of what the MDGs entail is an important first step*

"The MDGs were demystified."

Local councillor, Niger

"Before, the MDGs were considered just another donor jargon, but now we realize that MDGs are actually our issue."

Local councillor, Uganda

In this sense, the "capacity to understand the MDGs" can be added to the capacities necessary to localize the MDGs as presented in chapter 1.4. This is also supported by UNDP's engagement on the MDGs in Brazil. In Brazil, the MDGs were used as a framework to form a pro-MDG movement by unifying diverse CSOs, private companies, Government officials and citizens around a common goal. For this to succeed, awareness was raised on how the MDGs apply to Brazil and the fact that their outcome depends on local, not international, action.²⁵

25 *Campaigning with Partners for the MDGs – a Case study of Brazil*. UNDP (2005). The experience in Brazil reveals a few important lessons on awareness raising for the MDGs, such as:

- a. early engagement of partners can increase commitment and meaningful collaboration;
- b. an MDG campaign may require distinct phases of education and advocacy to build the necessary foundations for action and
- c. monitoring development progress can fuel MDG advocacy by providing evidence of needs, inequalities and successful policies.

Raising awareness about the MDGs among citizens and local authorities, combined with strengthening the capacity of local government authorities in participatory planning processes, proved valuable in creating development plans based on local realities. The importance of a strategic approach – namely for whom is awareness being raised, for what, and how it will lead to realizing MDGs - has been an important lesson. Most case studies demonstrate that raising awareness is a critical *initial* step for MDG localization.

Furthermore, local authorities learned to plan for *specific results* that make a significant change in peoples' lives, for example by focusing more on the *quality and accessibility* of services, instead of focusing only on the quantity of services. Also, because citizens were informed about the MDGs, local authorities became more accountable to their constituents. Upon realizing that the MDGs concern important basic services such as education and health care, citizens began to ask for improvements in these services.

In developing local plans, strategic planning for follow-up is crucial as well. An MDG-based local development plan alone is no guarantee of progress toward the goals. Mobilizing resources and developing partnerships are also essential. In some countries local stakeholders did indeed use the MDG-based local development plans to negotiate follow-up with the national government and other development partners. By presenting high quality plans that included locally-acquired evidence and citizen inputs, local government authorities were better able to negotiate their needs with national governments and other development partners including national and international CSOs.

For example, in **Niger**, the Government supported the establishment of a piped water system in a local commune after access to clean drinking water was identified as a priority in the local development plan. In **Uganda**, the outcomes of the district level MDG status analysis influenced the re-allocation of local resources toward identified priority basic services.

To help develop the capacity of local government in **Viet Nam**, SNV and UNDP worked with officials at the district and provincial level. An important element of the support provided was the promotion of local ownership, by ensuring that local stakeholders were in the lead of the project. SNV and UNDP played a lead role in the beginning of the project, after which they provided advice when required. The approach was successful, as the district plan integrated the community plans for localized MDG targets, reflecting locally identified priorities.

In supporting the capacity development of local governments and non-state actors, SNV and UNDP provided a range of advisory services to local governments and CSOs, among others in understanding the MDGs, organizing participatory planning processes and developing MDG-oriented local development plans. In many countries SNV and UNDP also worked with CSOs, not only as 'beneficiaries' of the programme, but as a *resource* given their expertise in one or more areas of the programme. For example, in **Niger** the implementing partner *Programme Cadre de Lutte Contre la Pauvreté* (PCLCP) played a key role in facilitating participatory planning processes in the four Communes in which the programme was implemented. In **Albania**, Civil Society Development Centers (CSDCs) trained CSOs on topics like statistical literacy and

participatory budgeting. In other countries CSOs played important roles in programme implementation as well, drawing on their in-depth knowledge of communities, facilitating participatory processes and specific issue expertise. Cooperation with civil society actors is thus a critical element in capitalizing on local skills to advance the MDGs for tangible and sustainable local development.

2.3 Involvement of Non-State Actors

The SNV-UNDP programme sought to increase national and local ownership of the MDGs and PRSPs. The goal was to create space for greater participation of local government, civil society and the domestic business sector in addressing the needs of local constituencies.

Several case studies demonstrated successful strategies for engaging with non-state actors.

For example, in the Cacheu region of **Guinea Bissau**, SNV and UNDP invested much effort in explicitly including the “*regulos*”, traditional leaders in regional governance processes. This decision recognized the crucial role of traditional leaders in matters affecting people at the local level, which helped enhance security and access to justice, one of the main priorities of the region.

▼ *Quality local development plans attracted national government resources for the establishment of a piped water system in Niger*





▲ The role of traditional leaders in local development is increasingly recognized

In **the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, the project facilitated the establishment of local leadership groups with representatives of the local public, business and civil society sectors as well as vulnerable and marginalized populations. This ensured that the needs of the marginalized groups were well taken into account in local and national development strategies, resulting in a few quick and tangible benefits for these groups. For example, a daily centre for elderly citizens, including a mobile health care team, was established.

In **Tanzania**, SNV and UNDP focused on strengthening civil society capacity to gather evidence on the quality and quantity of services related to MDG targets, using this evidence as an input to the local planning process. Local government authorities saw the usefulness of engaging CSOs in planning processes to facilitate citizen input and to improve basic services delivery, such as health care.

MDG awareness-raising activities were aimed at local authorities *as well as* citizens and CSOs. This strategy resulted in increased citizen and CSO ownership of the goals at the local level. Aware that their country had committed itself to achieving the MDGs, citizens and CSOs assumed a proactive role in planning for and monitoring progress towards the MDGs, in voicing their concerns as well as in requesting appropriate action from responsible authorities.

The partnership encouraged the involvement of civil society actors in development planning processes. It allowed exchange of information about public affairs and development priorities between government actors and citizens. This created synergy among various local actors to genuinely collaborate - a significant success in contexts where local government authorities were not in the habit of consulting with CSOs or citizens on development priorities. Genuine participatory planning processes have the potential to make a significant difference in the quality of development planning and implementation. With the input of citizens, the plans better reflect local needs. This has created a commitment on the part of authorities and citizens alike to follow through on the plans, and to focus on implementation. In a number of cases local revenue mobilization increased and authorities also decided to re-allocate their budget according to needs identified in the local development plans. For example in **Niger**, citizens were more committed to pay local taxes when resources were indeed spent on needs jointly identified and incorporated in the development plans. In **Albania**, revenues increased as a result of better public understanding of the services the local government provides.

CSOs played an important monitoring role by producing alternative MDG progress reports. For example in **Niger** more than 200 CSOs were involved in monitoring progress towards the achievement of the MDGs.²⁶ The results were laid down in a report, together with recommendations to increase public action to achieve the MDGs. The results of the report were discussed in a national television broadcast. The alternative MDG report for 2007 prepared by Social Watch in **Benin** presents an overview of MDG achievements so far, complemented by an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the private sector, the Government and civil society.²⁷

²⁶ *Premier rapport d'évaluation des organisations de la société civile sur les progrès accomplis par le Niger vers l'atteinte des Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement Rapport de l'évaluation des Organisations de la Société Civile sur les progrès accomplis par le Niger.* ONG-SOS Civisme Niger, Centre Africa Obota Niger, Réseau National de Jeunes Leaders pour l'atteinte des OMD, ONG Démocratie 2000 (2008)

The alternative MDG reports are frequently used by different sector ministries for their sector analysis and as a source of information while formulating specific programmes. They demonstrate that CSOs can play a constructive role in monitoring and in encouraging follow-up activities.

The SNV-UNDP partnership aimed to include domestic business sector organizations in the MDG and PRS processes. However, in most countries, it was difficult to engage the private sector in MDG-related activities. The absence of established platforms or entry points and time constraints were some of the factors that prevented the business community from participating in local project meetings.

2.4 Coordination and Coherence

“Coordination and Coherence” refers to coordination among a variety of state and non-state actors across thematic sectors (horizontal coordination), and to cooperation between actors at the local and national levels (vertical coordination). Horizontal coordination in the context of the SNV-UNDP partnership was described briefly in the previous section on the involvement of non-state actors. This section focuses on the coherence between actions at the local and national levels.

Local development processes require careful coordination to ensure that initiatives take place at the appropriate level and that there is no duplication of efforts. This means that planning at the local level should take into account relevant policies from the national level, and vice versa. Planning processes at the national level should provide a framework for consultation with local authorities and non state actors.

Some countries placed more emphasis than others on getting national government involved. A good example is **Guinea Bissau**. In Guinea Bissau, the regional government lacked the power to lead in planning for development. A legal framework for decentralized government existed, but was never implemented. With advice from SNV and UNDP, the two ministries most involved in the decentralization process deployed officials to support regional officials in assuming a leading role in bringing about regional development – a critical step in increasing both the effectiveness and sustainability of local development processes. District plans are now linked to the regional plans, which in turn are used by government at the national level to inform the Annual Public Investment Plan.

In a number of countries SNV-UNDP partnership activities aligned with ongoing development processes at the national level. These cases demonstrate the importance of national processes as enabling factors for the success of initiatives at the local level. SNV and UNDP capitalized on these enabling factors by coordinating local activities carefully with national processes.

27 *Roars and Whispers – Gender and poverty: promises vs. action*. Social Watch Benin (2005)

Processus d'implication des organisations de la société civile dans l'élaboration de la stratégie de croissance. Social Watch Benin (2006)

Communes, Secteur privé et Société civile pour un engagement en faveur des OMD au Bénin. Social Watch Benin (2007)



▲ *Local development processes require careful coordination*

For example, in **Benin**, the start of the project coincided with the drafting of the country's second PRSP, and the Government invited all stakeholders to participate in the process of drafting a second PRSP that incorporated the MDGs. SNV and UNDP strategically involved Social Watch, an international civil society network, to influence national decision-making with inputs from the local level.

In **Tanzania**, the SNV and UNDP partnership programme was implemented following the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (MKUKUTA) which made it easy for local governments to understand the relevance of acting locally to achieve the MDGs. The fact that the MDGs were already part of the National Strategy made them not look "alien". SNV and UNDP made use of this integration to kick-start the MDG localization process in two rural areas.

In **Uganda**, SNV and UNDP helped local government and civil society understand that the MDGs did not represent yet another new planning framework, but rather they were embedded in the national Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), with specific and measurable targets.

Despite the fact that in many countries MDG localization activities dovetailed with national development planning processes, a considerable challenge persists in reconciling development planning processes at local and national levels. This presents itself most acutely in the form of absence of financial resources at the local level.

2.5 Availability of Financial Resources

For effective governance at the local level, local governments require not only policy coherence, authority, technical capacity, and the participation of non-state actors, but also financial resources for development. Without adequate financial resources local governments and other stakeholders are unable to deliver the services needed to realize the MDGs.

In **Uganda**, once the MDG reports had been developed for Kasese and Soroti districts, it became clear that there was no policy framework to implement activities to achieve the priorities identified in the reports. Since the transfer of resources from the national to the district level was based on a standard blueprint for allocation, and not on actual needs identified by districts, local leaders had trouble accessing capital. Having sound reports on MDG status at the sub-national level helped the district councils to advocate for their case with the central government.

In **Niger**, local authorities were able to increase revenues to pay for a number of priority needs identified in the local development plan, but not enough to address all priority areas. In other countries, many MDG-related elements of local development plans could not be implemented due to lack of funding. Big gaps are reported between the budgets necessary to meet the needs in local development plans and the resources mobilised. This gap partly reflects local planning in practice. As a consequence of the aid architecture local planners are forced to write plans that in actual fact are more like fundraising proposals. The underlying rationale for the plans being written this way is that the implementation of local development plans depends heavily on external (international) donors. Local planners often don't know in advance what resources will be available to implement the plans they develop. Therefore, in order not to miss out on funding opportunities, the plans don't just reflect local priorities but also perceived donors priorities. While from a planning perspective the plans may seem unrealistic, from a resource mobilisation perspective they make sense. Improving local financial autonomy or improving access to capital could contribute to more realistic planning, reflecting local priorities.²⁸

These experiences emphasize the importance of appropriate policy and financial frameworks that facilitate the adaptation of the MDGs to local priorities. MDG localization cannot be implemented and scaled up unless both national and local authorities work together to sequence plans *and* budgets for implementation.

²⁸ See, for example: *Local Governance in developing countries*. Anwar Shah, World Bank (2006)

3 Country Case Studies

SNV and UNDP collaborated on MDG localization across 15 countries. The following eight case studies have been chosen as illustrative examples of the achievements of this partnership because they represent a palette of varied experiences. As countries in Africa were the majority of those covered in the programme, five of the eight cases presented in this report are from Africa, two are from the Balkans and one from Asia. The country projects were implemented between 2005 and 2007.

Strengthening Civil Society and Local Government Cooperation

3.1

Albania





Context

In 1991, Albania held its first parliamentary elections following 46 years of isolation under a strict communist regime. Since then the country has undertaken extensive economic, political and social reforms in its drive to expand its market economy, strengthen governance institutions, fight corruption and prepare for European Union membership. Despite these efforts, Albania not only remains one of the poorest countries in Europe, but is also grappling with growing socio-economic disparities, particularly between urban centers and the mountainous rural areas.²⁹

After decades of living with a one-party political system, it is not surprising that Albanian citizens were initially sceptical about the concept of multi-party democracy. During the communist era, expressing one's opinion or making proposals that might be viewed as in opposition to government plans was not commonly done. The idea that a government could be accountable to its citizens was also completely new. So while the environment was for the first time ever conducive to civic engagement in government processes, organizational and individual skills to do so effectively lacked. Against this background, SNV and UNDP aimed to facilitate the participation of civil society in local planning processes. They aimed to address challenges concerning the enabling environment of government-citizen interaction, and capacity constraints in civil society at both organizational and individual level.

In terms of the enabling environment, the rapid shift from a central party system to a multi-party democracy introduced new concepts to the national and local governments and citizens. There was no tradition of citizen engagement in planning processes, and the idea of government being accountable for the services it provides was new. Furthermore, although a new law on local government had been adopted that specified that citizen participation *must* take place in municipal development planning, most local governments nor citizens were aware of the changes in the law and the opportunities it offered for citizen engagement. For local governments, the law provided little guidance on *how* participation was to be undertaken, for example how to facilitate the proceedings, how to ensure representation of all groups, and how to budget the priorities stemming from participatory planning sessions. As a result, in most regions and municipalities, the local government did not invite civil society to participate, nor did civil society demand to be heard.

With regards to CSOs, following Albania's transition to a multi-party democracy, many international agencies had undertaken initiatives aimed at strengthening interactions between Albanian civil society and local governments. However, many of the initial projects failed due to a lack of coordination and competition for funds among CSOs. In many cases, local governments have perceived CSOs as competitors for resources rather than potential partners, further limiting the chance for collaboration. CSOs faced capacity constraints in terms of networking, interpreting statistical data and budgets, and advocacy. These capacity constraints were also

²⁹ Per capita GDP \$5,316; Human Development Index score 0,801 (68 out of 177 countries). UNDP, Human Development Report (2008)

present at the level of individual citizens, as many people had little experience in mobilizing fellow citizens, forming coalitions, analyzing data and developing proposals. Lastly, when civil society participation in development planning did occur, this often had little impact upon the decisions or priorities.

Building Trust: A Critical First Step in Providing Accountable Governance

SNV and UNDP decided to support local governments and civil society in supporting participatory planning processes. The project's approach was to help CSOs develop the skills needed to understand the development processes and form partnerships or coalitions aimed at lobbying government to address identified development issues. SNV and UNDP formulated a project with three distinct phases: first, a needs assessment was done; second, a package of capacity development interventions was designed and third, the capacity development interventions were implemented.

To determine the priority capacity needs to be addressed, SNV and UNDP undertook a capacity assessment, which included a mapping exercise of over 500 CSOs in six regions of Albania.³⁰ The objective of the capacity assessment was to get a clear picture of the capacity strengths and weaknesses of CSOs to act as effective partners in the development process of Albania.

The findings of the capacity assessment were shared with the CSOs through a series of regional workshops. During the workshops, participants were encouraged to reflect on what was needed to improve civil participation, both by individual CSOs and collaboratively. This provided the CSOs with the opportunity to reflect about themselves, which came to be viewed by all stakeholders as a critical milestone in developing their capacities because it enabled them to envision a new future of collaboration. The CSO Forum was viewed as an important capacity development opportunity and was also used to validate training packages which would be used for about 500 CSOs throughout the country.

To maximize the scope of the needs assessment and subsequent training programmes, SNV and UNDP entered into partnership with a national network of six Civil Society Development Centres (CSDCs) and five NGOs whose programmes covered all twelve regions of the country.³¹ The six CSDCs were selected as partners due to their mandate to strengthen local CSOs through advisory services and practical support. Among the criteria used in selecting these 11 partners were: involvement in past UNDP or SNV projects, recognition of their work by the local governments, and ability to quickly establish extensive civil society networks within the regions. Both SNV and UNDP considered it crucial to work with local actors, who could then retain the capacity to undertake similar processes in the future.

30 *Civic Partnership for the MDGs and NSSED - Report on Civil Society Needs Assessment in Albania*. SNV and UNDP (2006)

31 Partnerships were established with Civil Society Development Centres (CSDCs) in the regions of Durres, Korca, Kukes, Elbasan, Shkoder and Vlora, and NGOs in other regions of the country including *Agritra-Vizion* (Diber), *Eko Integrim Retina Lezhë Albania* (Lezhe), *Zyra per Monitorimin e Infrastruktures, Mjedisit dhe Shoqerise Civile* (Gjrokaster) and Albanian Civil Society Foundation (Tirane and Berat), and *Dyert e se Ardhmes* (Fier).



▲ Local communities are consulted on priority areas

Training of Trainers

Having played a key role in conducting the capacity needs assessments and developing training packages, the staff of the partner organizations underwent a training course to enable them to train CSOs across the country. The training programme included the following elements:

- *Statistical literacy* to enhance the capacity of CSOs to analyse quantitative and qualitative information related to “everyday life” issues such as education, health, economics, gender, the labour market and the environment;
- *Building networks, partnerships and coalitions* which covered issues of team building and the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of cooperation;
- *Introduction to participatory budgeting*, aimed at empowering citizens to prioritize social policies, have a say in resource allocation, monitor public spending, and hold the central and local governments accountable to the public;
- *Policy Tools for Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation*, for example “Citizen Report Cards,” aimed at empowering CSOs to monitor and evaluate socio-economic policies and strategies, and assess the impact of their activities on the poor, as well as other socially marginalized or excluded groups;
- *ICT tools for development* introducing participants to the key concepts of information and communication technologies and the opportunities ICT offers for CSOs in Albania.



▲ *Community members feel empowered to speak up*

Beyond Training: CSO Networks as Entry Point for Local Governance Participation

In addition to their role as trainers of CSOs, the staff of the 11 partner organizations played a central role in the establishment and institutionalization of CSO networks in the regions. This process started with the organization of focus group discussions in each region. The groups discussed the need for a regional network, its mission and vision, and its potential scope of work. As a result of these discussions, networks were launched in five selected regions. The next step was to brief local government officials and other local stakeholders about the networks, and to invite them to collaborate in implementing the planned activities.

Since their establishment, the regional CSO networks have steadily improved their capacity to partner with local governments and other development partners. The experiences of Fier and Peshkopi (see below) demonstrate how such networks can help bridge the gap between municipal governments and the public by contributing to local planning and priority setting. Despite competing for funds, they have demonstrated a willingness to share information and collaborate to achieve shared goals. In doing so, the CSOs have gained skills that have enhanced their ability to develop common platforms on important issues and to present a unified agenda to the government.

Fier: Government-CSO Collaboration Yields Results

In 2006, for the first time ever, the Fier local government and local CSOs sat around the table to discuss participatory budgeting. This would have been unimaginable in the period before the regime change. Subsequently, the municipal government worked through the CSO network to reach out to local communities, making them aware of the mandate and scope of work of the municipality, and consulting them on priority areas for investment. The consultations identified ten priority areas for action, with projects each amounting to EUR 30,000. Because of their involvement in the identification of projects, community members have become keen watchdogs of the implementation process and feel empowered to speak up when things do not go according to plan. The local government has started to benefit from higher revenues as a result of better public understanding of the services it provides. In Fier, the local government and CSOs have become true partners in development.

“Now when talking to government, we go with one voice and not one by one. Before we were like a broken chain not able to voice issues to government”

“Lobbying on minority issues at council level is now possible with the network, we have realized that lobbying for minority issues is not a moment but a process, hence the relationship between CSOs as facilitated by the network is very important”

CSO network members in focus group discussion in Fier.

“Partnering with civil society made it possible for government to have outreach to communities during the participatory budgeting process ... citizens are now also more aware of what government does.”

“CSO networks bring new things to the table and we find them important partners for engaging with communities.”

Government officials in Fier.

Peshkopi: Public Consultation Helps Refocus Development Priorities

In Peshkopi the local government and CSOs decided to join forces and engage in a participatory budgeting process. Earlier, the local government identified infrastructure as the main need of the district and had already allocated a large part of its budget to build new roads. Following the public consultations, however, it became clear that there were other priorities that required the government's urgent attention, including access to drinking water, reorientation of the planned infrastructure project to target hard to reach areas and protecting a local dam and green areas.

The CSO consultations led to adjustments in the original budget to include the new priority areas. The dialogue was subsequently extended beyond the budgeting process to areas such as sewage management. Collaboration between the local government and the CSOs was possible because the CSOs had become organized in a network that allowed the government to identify clear spokespersons on the side of the CSOs, whereas before they found it hard to know how to involve them.



▲ *A constructive engagement between civil society and local government*

- Inspired by their training and the positive experiences of networking at the local level, a number of CSO networks have expanded their collaborative activities beyond their initial sub-sector or community to work with other CSOs both regionally and nationally. Collaboration is also moving beyond national borders to involve CSOs with similar mandates in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo. The emergence of stronger CSO networks and individual CSOs, as well as their enhanced interface with local government, is one of the most important results of the SNV-UNDP collaboration, particularly in Peshkopi. It is expected that a strong civil society and enlarged democratic space for constructive engagement between civil society and local governments will continue to positively affect Albania. However, since capacity development is a long-term process, many of the CSO networks would still benefit from continued support to further strengthen their organizations and their advocacy skills.

“Citizens obliged us to get out of the offices and meet them in the field – partnership with the network made it easier to connect with the people.”

“As a result of participatory budgeting the road the spur has been build – this was a priority identified by the people. Without the people government was going to invest the funds elsewhere.”

Mayor of Peshkopi

“For the first time government and CSOs sat together on the same table; it is only through such a meeting that we realized as CSOs we have a voice”

Peshkopi CSO network member

Lessons Learned

- Partnerships for capacity development can only be successful if they put the client’s interest first – in this case, the local governments and CSOs in Albania. Furthermore, a thorough capacity assessment is crucial to develop a full understanding of the needs, and to ensure that any support that is provided is demand driven.
- A key factor in the success of this project was the willingness of regional and municipal governments to enter into a constructive dialogue with CSOs to engage in more participatory planning processes. The government, however, did not know *how* to find the right entry points to consult with the people. The CSO networks could provide such entry points.
- The project approach of working with and relying on local partners (CSOs and CSDCs) to bring in local knowledge and expertise proved very successful in understanding the capacity constraints *and* strengths of local non-state actors. The choice of civil society partners was crucial. Credibility in the eyes of local government was essential to gain their confidence in the process, which is a prerequisite for institutionalization of consultative mechanisms between civil society and local government. Furthermore, the approach of working with local organizations to support the capacity development of civil society builds confidence among local actors, and invests in the long-term sustainability of capacity development interventions.
- In Albania, the long-term presence of SNV in Fier and Peshkopi contributed to the success of the programme. Local authorities and civil society had trust in SNV, which facilitated a good start and constructive collaboration with SNV and UNDP.

Authors: Entela Lako (UNDP), Ernest Rwamucyo (UNDP), Jetona Myteveli (SNV), Terry Kiragu (SNV/UNDP)

A Multi-Stakeholder Approach to Localizing the MDGs

3.2

Benin





Context

In Benin, the start of the SNV-UNDP partnership coincided with the drafting of the country's second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in 2006. Presidential elections had just been held and the new government invited all stakeholders to participate in the process of drafting a second PRSP which this time would also incorporate the MDGs. SNV and UNDP worked with two nationwide network organizations to support the development of local capacity to achieve the MDGs.

A Two-pronged Approach to Localizing the MDGs

With the goal of making the MDGs work at the local level, SNV and UNDP in Benin pursued a two-pronged course of action:

- Firstly, within each locality the priority MDGs – namely, those most reflecting the local needs of people – had to be identified. The SNV-UNDP partnership then helped translate these goals into specific targets, indicators and activities as part of the regular process of local development planning.
- Secondly, to gain national level commitment and active engagement in the implementation of these local development plans, those responsible for national decision-making and budgeting needed to be more informed of the progress in achieving the MDGs at the local level.

The mechanisms required for localizing the MDGs and feeding these into national decision-making processes were not yet in place when the second PRSP drafting process started in 2005. SNV and UNDP supported a number of complementary activities to fill this gap.

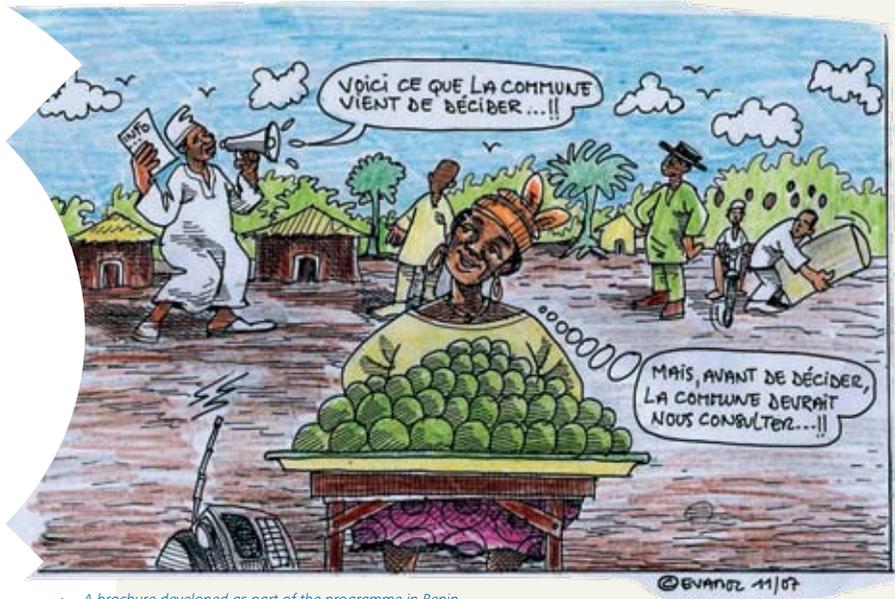
Localizing the MDGs in all Municipalities

SNV and UNDP worked with the National Organization of Municipalities in Benin (*Association Nationale des Communes du Bénin* or ANCB). The ANCB, a membership organization of all Beninese municipalities, was established in November 2003 in the context of the decentralization process. SNV and UNDP focused on developing the capacity of ANCB members to integrate the MDGs into their municipal development plans. To achieve this goal, the three parties developed a manual to train officials in the municipalities on how to define local MDG indicators, in consultation with representatives of civil society and the Ministry of Development. These indicators enabled municipalities to monitor MDG implementation progress and adjust their strategy whenever necessary. ANCB compiled a report on the localized MDGs of all municipalities, and indicated the specific resources required to achieve these goals. The report was presented as an input into the national PRSP drafting process.

Getting the Localized MDGs on the National Agenda

To influence national decision-making in support of the MDGs, SNV and UNDP worked with Social Watch, an international civil society network, which has an association of approximately 150 NGOs in Benin. SNV and UNDP funded workshops that helped Social Watch in preparing and publishing alternative “shadow” reports in 2005, 2006 and 2007, and also provided the authors with feedback on the reports.³²

32 *Roars and Whispers – Gender and poverty: promises vs. action.* Social Watch Benin (2005).
Processus d'implication des organisations de la société civile dans l'élaboration de la stratégie de croissance. Social Watch Benin (2006)
Communes, Secteur privé et Société civile pour un engagement en faveur des OMD au Bénin. Social Watch Benin (2007)



▲ A brochure developed as part of the programme in Benin

The alternative reports supplemented the official governmental PRSP reports – in which the MDGs did not feature very prominently – by presenting an overview of the progress made on all the goals. These reports were widely distributed to the ministries, municipalities, international partners and NGOs, as well as members and local units of Social Watch.

Results

- SNV and UNDP have been successful in ensuring that the second PRSP has taken into account the opinions and needs of municipalities and civil society. The second PRSP was finalized in 2007; the report came out in 2008. Taking into account the lessons learned from the first PRSP, where municipalities were not included in the formulation of the document, the ANCB this time mobilized the municipalities to bring attention to the main interests of municipalities, which was to address the importance of decentralization and democratic governance as well as the need to include municipalities in the development process. This was not done in the first PRSP. The ANCB intensively lobbied all relevant ministries. Combined with the fact that a summary was made of all municipal development plans, this resulted in the second PRSP taking into account the main interests of municipalities. As a result of this lobbying, municipalities and CSOs are now recognized as serious partners in government and development and in monitoring the PRSP.
- The preparation of the alternative MDG reports by Social Watch has contributed to the strengthening of the voice of civil society. Social Watch Benin has now become a civil society actor in Benin that cannot be ignored.
- The Social Watch reports are used by different sector ministries for analysis and as a source of information while formulating specific programmes.

Lessons Learned

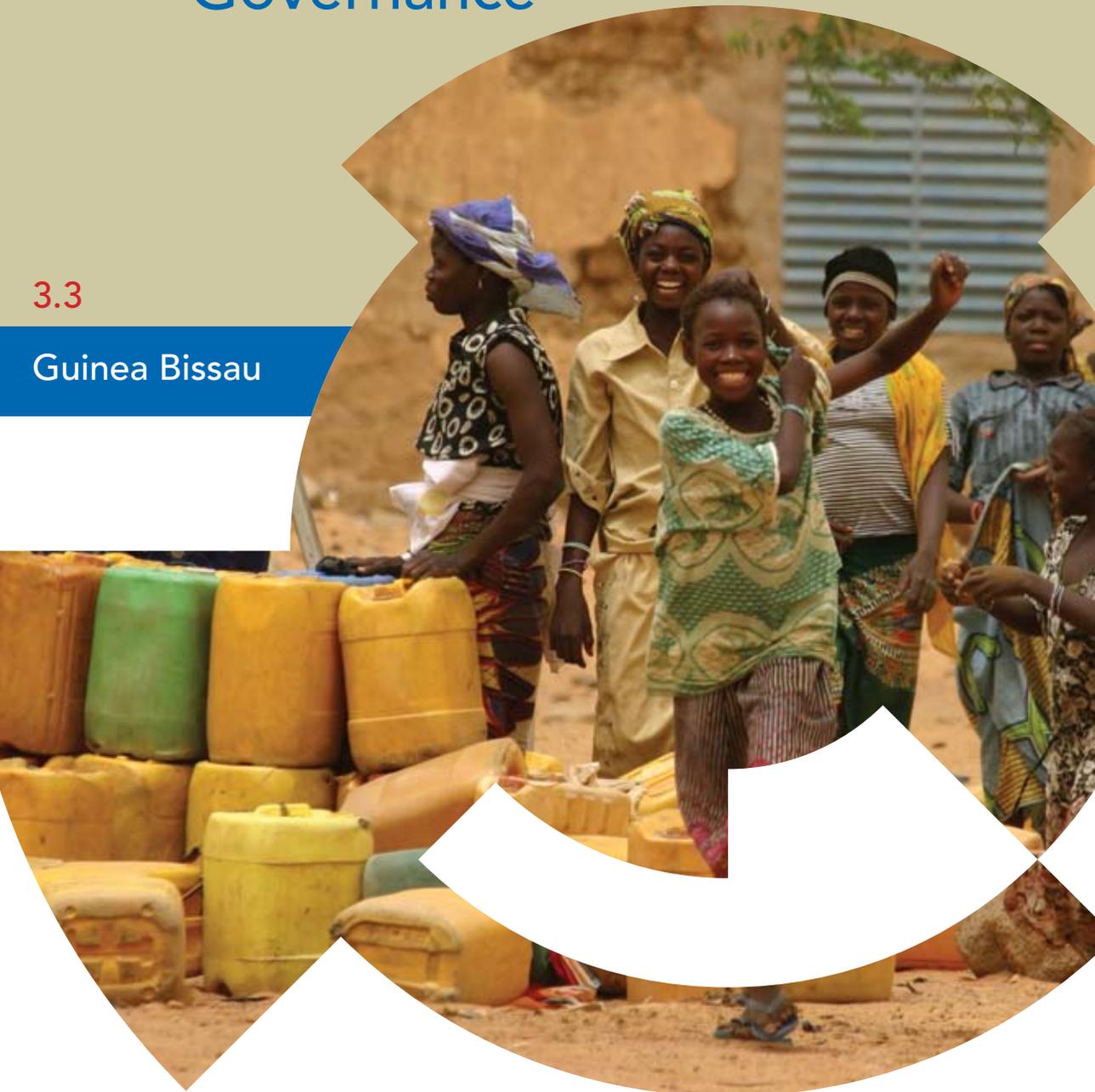
- The evaluation of the SNV-UNDP project identified the limited ability of municipalities to integrate the MDGs into their local development plans as a major challenge. Since MDGs were introduced separately, several municipalities delinked them from other activities taking place at municipal level rather than integrating them into existing plans.
- Funding remains a constraining factor, and since municipalities have a very limited ability to finance their own development plans they have to rely on donor support. To attract donors, activities to achieve the MDGs frequently come pre-packed and formulated as project proposals rather than as comprehensive plans implemented in accordance with priorities set at the local level. This is understandable, since municipality officials believe that the preferences of donors and other development agencies, rather than priorities set locally, ultimately determine which of the planned activities will actually be implemented. Given this complexity it is difficult for local governments to design and implement a coherent strategy.
- Advancing the MDGs is a process that takes time. Their simplicity is only skin deep. Underneath lies a complex reality, involving a great variety of actors who have to work together, and an even greater variety of actors who need to be convinced that change is possible and that the MDGs are attainable. The challenge lies in translating those objectives into tangible actions at local level. If successfully done, the MDGs become more realistic and people become more committed to working towards achieving them.
- Since the completion of the programme, elected local officials became less engaged in the development issues of communes including MDG processes as they were focused on campaigns for the local elections in 2007 and 2008. This underlines the strategic importance of involving a wide range of development partners in order to ensure continued efforts to advance the MDGs.

Authors: Agbodji Houensou (UNDP), Arnos Sossou (ANCB), Cécilia Feingnart (UNDP), Dieudonné Houisou (Social Watch Benin), José Tegels (SNV).

Strengthening Decentralized Local Governance

3.3

Guinea Bissau





Context

During the Cold War, Guinea Bissau had a one-party system and a wholly centralized administration. To a large extent this centralized system is still in place. A legal framework for decentralized government was established in 1997, but never applied. The cornerstone of the local governance was the Regional Cabinet for Planning, a consultative forum bringing together Regional Directors as representatives of the Ministries. The Governor chairing the meetings can also opt to enlarge this forum by inviting CSOs, the private sector and traditional leaders.

However as a result of the civil war in 1998-99 the regional de-concentrated administration was derailed and since then only a few initiatives have been implemented to restore the previous administrative regional management. The Regional Cabinets were little more than a few lines in the law and in actual fact did not function anymore. Regional Directors didn't know that according to the law they were responsible for participating in the Regional Cabinets. Resources generated by the region and transferred to the Ministries by the Regional Directions were not reallocated to the regions.

Against this background, SNV and UNDP aimed to achieve two goals:

- Support decentralization and democratic governance through participatory approaches at the local level; and
- Localize the MDGs by strengthening local capacity to plan for development

The SNV-UNDP project was implemented by the Regional Governments of the regions Quinara, Biombo, and Bafata and upscaled by SNV to a fourth region, Cacheu.

Decentralization and Democratic Governance

The strategic focus was aimed at developing the capacity of key stakeholders to re-establish the Regional Cabinets as a first step to strengthen regional power.

Key stakeholders involved included the Governors, the National Platform of NGOs (PLACON), and on the government side, the Regional Directors and representatives of the Ministry of Administration of the Territory and the Ministry of Economy & Planning.

The Governors took the lead in reactivating these cabinets. SNV and UNDP supported the Governors through the following means:

- Coaching the Executive Secretaries of the Regional cabinets
- Training members of Regional Cabinets in participatory planning, and conducting and documenting meetings;
- Assisting Regional Cabinets in reaching out to and informing citizens of their work through local radio
- Mobilizing funds from other sources

The Ministry of Administration of the Territory and the Ministry of Economy and Planning followed up on the SNV-UNDP recommendation to deploy officials to support the Governors and advise the Regional Directors about their roles in the Regional Cabinets. For this purpose the

Ministry of the Territorial Administration established a Decentralization and Regional Planning Direction, which played an important coordination role during the project.

Meanwhile SNV and UNDP raised awareness among civil society - including CSOs, NGOs and traditional leaders or *regulos* - of the existence of the Regional Cabinet and the opportunities this offered citizens to influence decision-making. The involvement of the *regulos* was important because they are essential community opinion leaders with vital roles in maintaining traditional “law and order” as well as resolving conflicts, and because one of the main priorities defined in the Regional Plans was enhanced security and access to justice. Regular dialogue between *regulos*, the justice actors and police departments allowed them to discuss day-to-day problems and improve their collaboration. For instance, *regulos* are called to be present in district courts as advisors in Canchungo, and the police cooperate with them and respect their decisions on local affairs such as land conflicts, family conflicts and cattle theft.

PLACON was advised on how to organise regional NGO Platforms on a bi-monthly basis and link their discussions to the Regional Cabinet agendas.

Exchange visits of public servants and NGO representatives between the regions have been an important means of achieving cross-fertilisation of good ideas, particularly in helping re-establishing the Regional Cabinets.

“This shows that we can work together. We have created trust between us and a fruitful relationship.”

Jamel Handem, an NGO platform leader in a Regional Cabinet meeting in Buba, Quinara Region

In terms of mobilizing funds, SNV and UNDP supported the Governors in lobbying the Ministry of Economy and Planning to supply furniture and solar energy equipment to the reactivated Regional Cabinets. The Ministry supplied these with the support of funding by the African Development Bank. Furthermore, SNV and UNDP supported the Regional Cabinet of Cacheu in mobilizing resources from the Spanish Cooperation Agency. The Regional Development plans developed with the support of SNV and UNDP have oriented NGO investments in the regions. Examples of investing NGOs include *Asamblea de Cooperacion para la Paz* (ACPP, Spain), *Associazione Internazionale di Volontariato Laico* (LVIA, Italy), *Associacao para o Desenvolvimento Sustentavel* (ADS, Guinea Bissau), the World Bank and the Ministry of Economy. Copies of the Regional Development Plans continue to be requested by NGOs and other development actors.

Localizing the MDGs

In each region the Regional Cabinet mandated a small committee called “*Equipa de pilotagem*” (path-finder team) to be trained by SNV and UNDP in facilitating MDG-PRSP planning processes in the regions. Two members of the Quinara committee were then engaged as local consultants to train committees in other regions in participatory planning.

After having been trained, these small committees successfully:

- Supported Regional Directors in conducting a MDG focused diagnosis of the regions
- Facilitated meetings in each of the administrative districts in which a more detailed participatory diagnosis was made, priorities were set and projects identified.
- Facilitated Regional Cabinet meetings to elaborate and validate Regional Plans, mobilize regional resources, enhance cabinet coordination and collaborate with other stakeholders in regional development

“No trabalha tchiu, no papea pouco”: “We are working a lot, we are speaking just a bit” is the radio slogan of Mafuge Djalo, the Governor of Cacheu. Participatory methods and the advantages of having a dialogue between stakeholders are bringing a new kind of management and leadership in regional governance in Guinea Bissau.

▼ *Trust and good relationships are a prerequisite for success*





▲ CSOs and NGOs are invited to Regional Government meetings

Results

- As a result of SNV-UNDP support, each district produced its own district development plan linked to the regional plan. The regional plans have been validated at the national level and are today used by the Ministry of Economy as a principal source of information on regional development priorities, particularly in orienting international partners and the elaboration of the Annual Public Investment Plan.
- The targets set in the regional plans have spurred support from several donors and NGOs. For example, ACPP is implementing a health project in the framework of a regional plan. LVIA is supporting the education infrastructure aspects of a regional plan. Environmental targets articulated within a regional plan are supported by ADS (a local NGO), and the World Bank is starting a regional based project on communities funding .
- CSOs and NGOs are invited to Regional Cabinet meetings. To strengthen civil society participation in the Regional Cabinet meetings SNV and UNDP supported the establishment of regional NGO Platforms and thereby linked the discussions in these regional platforms to the Regional Cabinet Agendas. As a result, NGOs managed to successfully influence decision making in the Cabinet meetings. In Quinara, NGO advocacy for gender issues and the status of youth led to the Cabinet giving priority to projects benefiting young people and addressing gender issues. The NGOs in Cacheu managed to put security and development issues firmly on the political agenda. As a result of their efforts funds were mobilised for investments in small economic projects as well as in health and education projects in the region.

- The Regional Cabinet is now widely recognized as the leading institution in regional development coordination. Regional Cabinet meetings now take place regularly. The meetings contribute to improved coordination and complementarity of services provided by various Regional Directors. For example, the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Economy and Planning asks executive secretaries of the Regional Cabinets to regularly contribute to the annual Public Investment Plan. The Secretaries of State of the Ministries of Territorial Administration and Economy and Planning regularly send representatives to Regional Cabinet meetings. They also requested SNV and UNDP to help replicate this experience in the four other regions (Tombali, Gabu, Oio and Bolama-Bijogos) in an effort to scale up to national impact.

Lessons Learned

- Not all Regional Cabinets perform equally well. The one in Cacheu has performed the best, particularly because of good leadership and the involvement of traditional leaders. Cacheu also performed better in the area of security and access to justice, one of the region's main development priorities, by recognizing the traditional conflict-solving role that the *regulos* play. Traditional authorities and institutions are often neglected, while in many other countries they play an important role in engaging citizens in development issues, especially at the local level. Therefore an important lesson is to involve traditional authorities and link them to formal institutions of governance.
- The regional NGO platforms do not function as well now that the UNDP SNV support has concluded. Neither the regional NGOs nor the National NGO Platform have been capable of mobilizing sufficient resources to continue the platforms. Thus, an important lesson is that for the sustainability of dialogue mechanisms and platforms, a future resource mobilization strategy has to be thought through during the course of the programme.
- This SNV-UNDP collaboration demonstrates that additional efforts can be made in Guinea Bissau to encourage coordinated interventions by development partners in order to maintain positive results and further sustainability in regional governance.

Author: Tomas Serna (SNV)

Vulnerable Groups Contribute to Local MDG-oriented Planning

3.4

The Former Yugoslav
Republic of Macedonia





Context

Over the past decade, a radical social transformation has taken place in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The country has moved away from a socialist centrally-planned economic system toward a market-oriented economy, with enhanced democratic institutions and a vibrant civil society. However, this rapid transition has also been characterised by a profound restructuring of socio-economic life that has resulted in widespread impoverishment and the social exclusion of a large portion of the population.

Since the last elections in July 2006, the government policy has focused on accession to the European Union and accelerating economic growth and employment. However, many marginalised and vulnerable groups – including, but not limited to people with mental and physical disabilities and their families, the elderly, women, and Roma communities – have not benefited much from the new job opportunities. Left without effective government support these groups are now relatively worse-off than they were during the socialist era.

An MDG baseline study conducted in 2005 concluded that to address these disparities, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia should focus efforts on poverty reduction (MDG 1), gender equality (MDG 3) and combating HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (MDG 6).

Against this backdrop SNV and UNDP decided to focus on poverty reduction and the integration of marginalised and vulnerable groups in three pilot municipalities: Gostivar, Negotino and Strumica. They linked with the Ludwig Boltzman Institute for Human Rights (BIM), based in Austria, which had already planned to start activities in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The three organizations agreed to ensure complementarities in their efforts.

Local Leadership Groups

In all three municipalities the project partners – in close consultation with the municipal governments – began by establishing Local Leadership Groups. These were informal groupings of prominent citizens, representatives of the public, business and civil society sectors, as well as vulnerable and marginalised groups. The purpose of these groups was to participate in the process of identifying local priorities and integrating them into local and national development strategies, with the goal of linking local planning for poverty reduction to national planning processes.

Capacity Strengthening for Development Processes of the Local Actors

Subsequently, SNV and UNDP developed a capacity-strengthening programme to support the three local leadership groups in undertaking MDG-based planning.

To guide the capacity strengthening process SNV and UNDP trained 30 local trainers and developed five training manuals for MDG-based planning in the languages of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania.³³ The manuals covered the following topics:

- Participatory Planning
- Methods and techniques for vulnerable group needs determination

³³ The English version of the manuals can be found on the UNDP Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia web site: <http://www.undp.org.mk/default.asp?where=publications>

- Monitoring and analysis
- Methods and techniques for monitoring MDG based programmes
- Advocacy and campaigning

A pool of 30 local trainers was established to train the Local Leadership Groups. A total of five training sessions were conducted in each of the five municipalities.

Strategic Planning Processes in Pilot Municipalities

In pilot municipalities, local leadership groups, together with local authorities played a key role in the strategic planning processes. First, a base line study on vulnerabilities in each of the pilot municipalities was prepared, using modified BIM methodology.³⁴

Results

- Based on the analysis and studies, this participatory process of establishing local strategies yielded three reports with development recommendations for the municipalities of Strumica, Gostivar and Negotino. Prepared collaboratively, the documents accurately reflect the needs and rights of all citizens – including the vulnerable and marginalized groups – in the municipalities. Furthermore, the strategic plans contain goals and indicators to track progress in the municipality, including progress towards human rights.

In Strumica, for example, one of the strategic goals was “Improvement of the quality of living for vulnerable groups.” According to the plan, this goal had to be achieved through:

- Improving care services and protection of vulnerable groups
- Strengthening facilities for vulnerable groups
- Involving vulnerable groups in social life
- Damage reduction from risky behaviour

Several activities were planned for each of the goals. Achievement indicators, such as monitoring the number of care centres for vulnerable groups opened, programmes to reduce discrimination, and stigmatization of marginalized groups, were set for each activity.

“The most important thing for me is that the needs of people with disabilities are included in local strategy for development. Our participation in the process encourages us to continue with our efforts to improve the position of people with disabilities. Identified needs of our members from Negotino are incorporated in the national strategy for people with disabilities.”

Gordana Trajkovska, President of Poraka (Message), centre for handicapped people in Negotino.

- There are indications that the success of this collaborative project will lead to tangible measures to improve the lives and opportunities of vulnerable and marginalised groups. A concrete example is the preparation of Action Plans for Social Protection.

34 Ludwig Boltzmann Institut für Menschenrechte (BIM) (Institute for Human Rights), Vienna

“Thanks to the activities in this project, there is visibly more intensive cooperation between local government and civil society sector in Strumica. There are many ongoing joint initiatives and approved projects.”

Toni Milusev, local coordinator in municipality of Strumica.

- With financial support from the World Bank, Strumica has established a Daily Centre and Club for Elderly Citizens. Elderly people had become marginalized, neglected and very poor due to transition processes in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Daily Centre, which also consists of a mobile team to care for elderly people in their own homes, is owned by the Local Municipality and managed by a CSO, *Prodolzen Zivot* ('Extended life'). This is the result of a joint initiative between local government and the civil society sector in Strumica to support the most vulnerable groups of citizens and improve their quality of life.

Lessons Learned

- Including representatives of vulnerable and marginalised groups in the Local Leadership Groups was critical in getting their concerns and priorities addressed in the planning document and ensure successful implementation of strategic plans.
- The pool of 30 local trainers and MDG facilitators proved to be a valuable and locally owned resource capable of replicating this initiative in other municipalities.
- SNV, UNDP, and BIM had originally – independent of each other– planned their activities in the three municipalities. Their decision to integrate the separate initiatives generated tremendous synergies, streamlining operations and averting duplication and fragmentation of efforts.
- This example of good cooperation and coordination between three international organizations demonstrated that, in situations where resources are limited, collaboration through joint ventures can achieve greater results.

Author: Liljana Alceva (UNDP)

Strengthening Capacity to Realize MDGs at the Local Level

3.5

Niger





Context

In 2002, Niger launched its first national Poverty Reduction Strategy. However, in 2005, three years after the launch of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy, and five years since the adoption of the MDGs, residents of the communes of Mayahi, Damagaram-Takaya, Tahoua 1 and Niamey 5 had not yet noticed tangible improvements in their communes. Those responsible for development planning in the communes were not aware of the MDGs, so they did not realise that many of their urgent priorities – such as access to health care and primary education – were directly related to the MDGs. Planning officers lacked the knowledge, skills and tools to facilitate a Commune Development Planning cycle oriented towards achieving the MDGs, and lacked the ability to facilitate a process in which CSOs and private sector organizations could be integrated.

SNV and UNDP decided to focus their efforts on strengthening the capacities of local elected officials, particularly mayors and councillors, to facilitate a participatory Commune Development Planning cycle within the framework of the MDGs and the national Poverty Reduction Strategy.

SNV and UNDP, in close collaboration with *Programme Cadre de Lutte Contre la Pauvreté* (PCLCP), a local CSO, worked on three distinct but related priorities:

1. Strengthening capacity to better integrate MDGs into the Commune Development Plans;
2. Supporting a consortium of NGOs to develop an alternative MDG progress report, and;
3. Strengthening capacity to improve monitoring and evaluation of MDG progress in pilot Niamey Commune 5.

Integrating the MDGs into Commune Development Plans

The SNV-UNDP programme provided both financial support and advisory services, to the elected and executive bodies of four pilot Communes as well as to various CSOs.

SNV and UNDP also trained mayors, councillors and civil servants on MDG-based local development planning, negotiation techniques, performance management and local tax law. The training on MDG-based local development planning attempted to raise awareness of the MDGs with the local population, and strengthen local commune official and staff planning capacity. The training resulted in a genuine participatory planning process. The population identified MDG-related needs in their Commune, and the Commune leaders included these needs in their respective Local Development Plans.

The local development plans that were developed as a result of the training were of a higher quality than they had been previously. The focus was no longer limited to the number of items or services that should be provided, but included an analysis of *why* the services are needed, for *whom*, and *where* they should be provided to be accessible to the people most in need.

For example, once citizens heard about the goal to achieve universal primary education (MDG 2), they started to raise questions about low school enrolment rates in their Commune. Low enrolment rates were due to prohibitive costs of birth certificates - which were required to enrol

a child in school - and the remote location of schools. Consequently, the Commune of Mayahi decided to issue free birth certificates. In Niamey Commune 5, a new, more accessible primary school was built closer to the largest concentration of people. As a result, enrolment in primary education has increased in these Communes.

Another action taken up in the Mayahi Commune was the enclosure of the local cattle market, an issue identified as a need in the Local Development Plan. While the enclosure was paid for by local resources, it now operates by charging a small fee from anyone entering the market to sell an animal. Such sustainable mobilization of resources, leveraging increased tax revenue, solved a local problem in a self-sustaining way.

In Commune Tahoua, the local plan identified clean drinking water as a priority. Financial contributions by the national Government helped create a piped water system in Tahoua, and local access to clean water increased dramatically. Similarly, in other Communes the SNV-UNDP programme facilitated the emergence of new partnerships and resource mobilization.

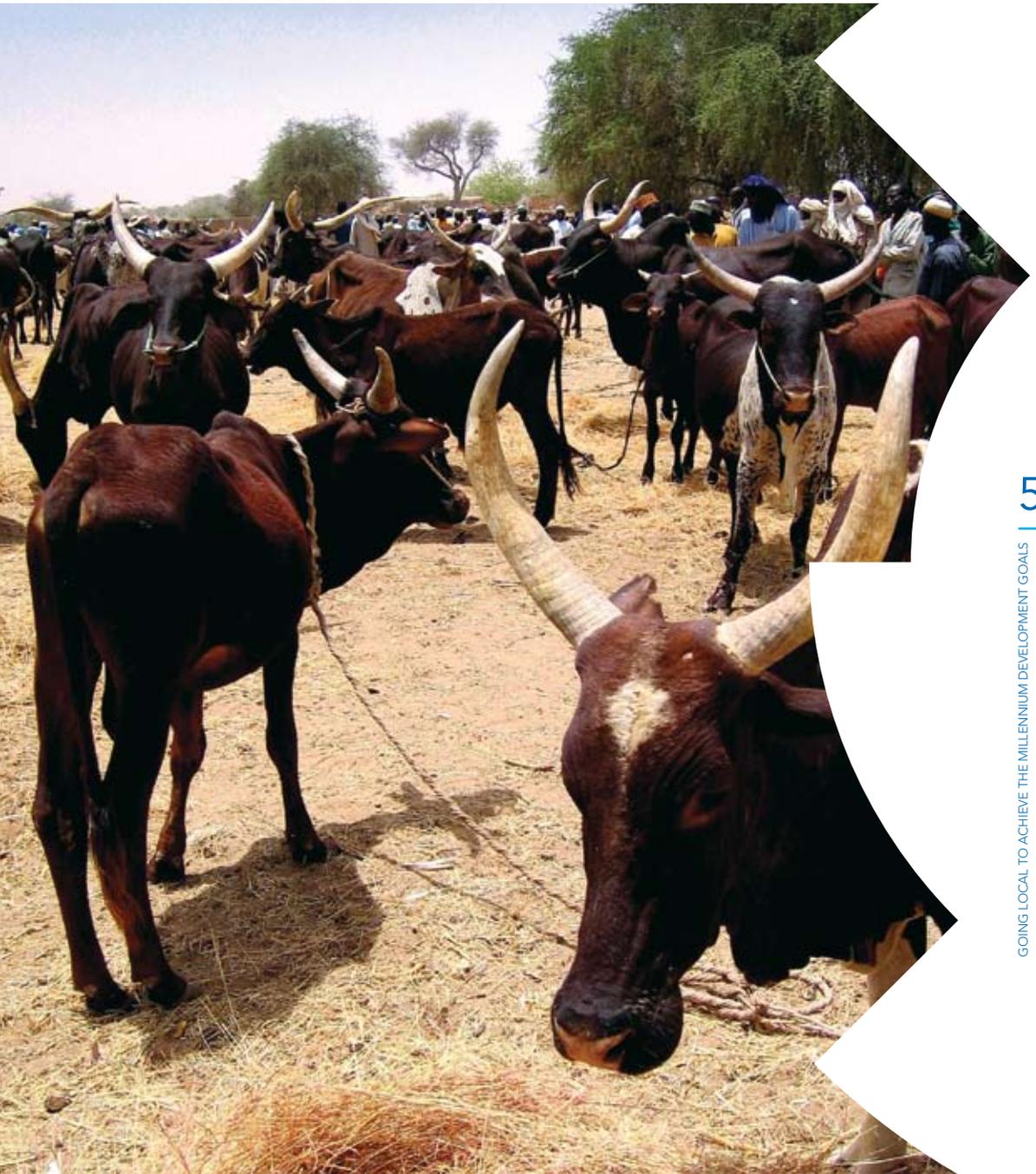
Alternative Civil Society MDG Progress Report

In addition to enhancing local understanding of MDGs, the partnership also sought to support a Civil Society Consortium in developing and publishing an alternative MDG progress report. The consortium consists of four NGOs, namely SOS Civisme Niger, Centre Africa Obota Niger, Démocratie 2000, and Network of Young Leaders for the Achievement of the MDGs. The consortium has cooperated with about 200 other NGOs in the production of a civil society report on progress towards the achievement of the MDGs.³⁵ The report identifies progress towards each MDG, presents civil society recommendations to increase public action to achieve the MDGs, and assesses the state of governance in Niger. The results of the report have been discussed in a 1.5-hour nation-wide television broadcast organized in the form of a public debate. The broadcast provided an opportunity to open a dialogue between the authorities and civil society in jointly answering questions from the public. The development of such an alternative MDG progress report enabled CSO partnerships on specific MDGs.

Monitoring & Evaluation of MDG Progress

In Niamey Commune 5, SNV and UNDP partnered to strengthen local monitoring and evaluation capacity to track progress in implementing the Local Development Plan. SNV and UNDP trained Commune staff members to understand targets and corresponding indicators. Methods and tools were developed to monitor progress and verify results at the end of a development planning cycle. Special monitoring and evaluation committees were established to gather data in the villages and neighbourhoods. The Secretary-Generals of the communes began to regularly report to the Commune Councils on key indicators, making it possible to track progress on localizing the MDGs, and to identify areas in which more development efforts and external support would be needed. This enabled the mayors and councillors to use an informed and targeted approach towards development in their communes.

³⁵ Premier rapport d'évaluation des organisations de la société civile sur les progrès accomplis par le Niger vers l'atteinte des Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement Rapport de l'évaluation des Organisations de la Société Civile sur les progrès accomplis par le Niger. ONG-SOS Civisme Niger, Centre Africa Obota Niger, RNJU/OMD au Niger, ONG Démocratie 2000 (2008)



▲ Sustainable mobilization of resources solved the local problem of enclosure of the cattle market



▲ *MDGs are not a government or a donor issue, but our issue*

Results

- The initiatives launched by SNV and UNDP in the four pilot Communes resulted in local planners and CSOs expressing the view that “*MDGs are not a government or donor issue, but our issue.*” This generated energy and commitment on both sides to collaborate, plan for and implement the MDGs based on local priorities.
- Strengthening the planning capacities of local authorities, with a focus on planning for achievement of the MDGs, enabled planners to shift their focus from quantity to *quality and accessibility.*

- Improved local planning improved relationships between citizens, local governments and CSOs. Today, the Communes are better able to articulate their local development needs because of the availability of reliable local data, and are better able to implement locally generated solutions.
- Local revenue mobilisation has increased considerably since the start of the programme. The commitment to pay local taxes has grown as local authorities in the four Communes kept their promises to invest in jointly identified development priorities. However, despite increased local revenue mobilisation, communes are still not able to raise sufficient funds to cover a full Commune Development Plan, a key issue that remains to be addressed (see lessons learned).
- The success of this pilot initiative of SNV and UNDP has inspired neighbouring communes such as Ourafane, Kanembakaché and Issawane to adopt similar approaches.

Lessons Learned

- Although the regional and national governments were aware of the SNV-UNDP programme, they were poorly involved. To successfully harmonize policies, government at all levels must be more deeply engaged.
- Although the project has been successful, lack of funds remains a persistent problem. There is a big gap between the ambitions of the communes as reflected in the budget and the resources available. It is difficult for the communes to make a reasonable estimate in advance of the funds they will be able to raise. Therefore, instead of making a plan within the limitations of a given budget, they tend to develop projects with an unrealistic budget of which only a small part will be funded. The availability of financial resources is part of a broader issue of effective decentralization of authority and resources. In Niger, the decentralization process is mainly a decentralization of responsibilities, but in practice the mandates of those governing at the local level are often insufficiently funded. Adequate policy and financial frameworks for MDG localization – including the availability of resources at the local level - are essential for successful MDG localization strategies.

Authors: Idrissa Sama (SNV), Magagi Laouan (PCLCP), Salissou Moussa (UNDP), and Zeinabou Saidou Ouédraogo (SNV)

Evidence-based Planning for Localized MDGs

3.6

Tanzania





Context

The Government of Tanzania has integrated the MDGs in its National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (2005-2010) (MKUKUTA), and allocated resources for implementing and monitoring the goals at all levels. However, progress has been hampered by numerous challenges, especially at the district level in rural areas.

District authorities do not always know how to integrate MDGs into their development plans in a way that addresses priority issues identified by the local people. They are not used to working with poverty indicators or other measures that monitor changes in poverty levels, which makes it difficult for them to plan and budget on the basis of evidence. Furthermore, monitoring and reporting is largely done to meet the accountability requirements of the central Government, and not necessarily to improve services at district level or provide local communities and other district stakeholders with feedback. As a result, there is no “constituency” for MDGs that monitors progress and demands action from the people’s perspective.

CSOs could play an important role in demanding accountability and ensuring that MDG implementation is driven by people’s priorities. However CSOs, especially at the sub-national level, have difficulty identifying entry points to and roles in the local policymaking process and engaging in dialogue with Government agencies. This is partly because they lack the capacity to analyse public policies and engage in advocacy. The dialogue between Government institutions and CSOs is also constrained because of Tanzania’s long history of state-controlled political associations and trade unions. As a result, the relationship between Government institutions and CSOs with no political affiliation is often characterised by mistrust and suspicion. SNV and UNDP worked with local governments and CSOs to improve local planning processes.

Public Service Delivery Assessments in the Kilosa and Same Districts

The goal of SNV-UNDP support in the Kilosa and Same districts was to strengthen civil society influence on local governance by developing their capacity to conduct Public Service Delivery Assessments (PSDAs), paying specific attention to the assessment of MDG-related services. The PSDA is a tool that Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and other policy-makers can use to collect systematic feedback from users about their services. The assessment provides information about consumer perceptions – for example, whether they have access to services and whether the services are of sufficiently good quality.

Civil society partners in the project included the Tanzania Association of NGOs at the national level, the Union of NGOs in the Kilosa District, and the Same Association of NGOs in the Same district. Government partners included the Local Government Authorities of the two districts and the Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania (ALAT) at the national level.

The first step in project implementation was to train CSO staff members and government officers on the concepts and methodology of conducting the PSDA. The training phase was facilitated by a consultant who administered a structured questionnaire at household level.



▲ *Accessibility of health services is considered as a priority need by local actors*

The PSDA questionnaire included questions regarding MDG-related services, and revealed a number of important issues experienced by people in the districts, such as the lack of access to safe drinking water and the long distance to health centres. Furthermore, the survey gave voice to the respondents who were dissatisfied with the health services in urban areas, which the majority considered to be expensive, far away, overcrowded, poorly equipped and with poor access to medicine.³⁶

The findings were discussed with the District Planning and Finance Committees in two stages. Immediately following the data analysis, a draft report, prepared by the involved CSOs, was presented to LGAs in the two districts, which validated the study findings. The second stage included discussions between the LGAs and CSOs on following up on these findings, which resulted in the local governments agreeing to more structurally including CSOs in planning and implementation of basic service delivery.

Results

- The SNV-UNDP initiative has created a platform for closer collaboration between CSOs and the Government on MDG-related participatory planning processes, particularly in the areas of health, agriculture, gender and HIV/AIDS. This process has helped to reverse the past mistrust and lack of engagement on both sides and could provide a foundation on which to build a long and institutionalized collaboration to address these issues. Additionally, there are positive signs that local authorities have begun to involve CSOs in development planning processes that were previously implemented exclusively by LGAs. In the Same district, for instance, planning decisions can no longer be approved unless there is a CSO representative involved. Furthermore, LGAs have already started to address some of the findings gathered from their surveys. In Kilosa, LGAs have provided local CSOs with funding to undertake health education efforts in rural areas. In both districts, LGAs have agreed to address the shortcomings in service delivery highlighted in the report.

“This service delivery assessment report for our district of Kilosa is a mirror in which the Council should reflect itself in a new way and deliver better public services.”

Gardrod Mkunduge, Chairman of the Kilosa District Council

- The PSDA has proven to be a useful tool to identify what citizens consider their priority needs and to gather user feedback on services, especially those targeted towards the poor – a feature lacking in other tools. If the findings are further integrated into local government planning processes, they could significantly improve the relevance of these plans in addressing those MDGs prioritised by the local people. LGAs in the two districts are currently discussing how to adopt such community-based research tools to collect feedback on

³⁶ *Pilot Participatory Service Delivery assessment on agriculture, health, gender AND HIV/AIDS in Kilosa and Same Districts.* ALAT, SNV, TANGO, UNDP (2007).



▲ Consultation with local government resulted in ownership of the government for the final results

people's views and perceptions, with the objective of improving the delivery of local public services. The LGA of the Kilosa District has already decided, pending a full council vote, to adopt PSDA as one of its planning and monitoring tools.

Lessons Learned

- One factor in the success of the SNV-UNDP project was the conscious effort made to implement the project under the auspices of the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty, which enabled local governments in the two districts to invest in this initiative. Furthermore, local governments were familiar with the concept of MDGs because the goals had already been integrated in the National Strategy.
- Another critical success factor was the close consultation with the Government at all stages of the PSDA exercise, the involvement of relevant LGAs in the actual survey and the validation of the findings before preparing the final report. This was crucial in gaining Government support during the exercise and endorsement and ownership of the final results, which is necessary for wider adoption of the participatory approach piloted by the project.

- Considering that the PSDA is quite a sophisticated tool, it was essential to include a budget component to develop the capacity of the key actors involved. Without this, the project would have been an exercise conducted *for* instead of *by* local actors. They would neither have owned the results nor been able to replicate a PSDA.
- An important issue emerging from the PSDA process was the fragmentation of MDG-related development efforts at the local level. In both districts, there are many similarly uncoordinated interventions by donors, which lead to costly and inefficient duplication of efforts and a lack of local government oversight. These in turn result in setbacks in implementation and lost opportunities to learn from these initiatives. In working on MDG localization, emerging coordination issues must be brought to the attention of the responsible institutions.
- Scaling up this initiative to other districts would require putting in place a national support platform, which would include technical experts on community-based research tools as well as advocacy CSOs. The inclusion of these experts would ensure research quality, facilitate information-sharing and upstream policy advocacy based on the findings.

Authors: George Sempeho (UNDP), Joseph Kaiza (UNDP), and Maureen Roell (SNV)

District MDG Reports Lead to Quick-win Initiatives

3.7

Uganda





Context

Uganda developed its first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in 1997, three years before the MDGs were launched. Hence the PRSP, called Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), did not include the MDGs. Once the MDGs were adopted internationally and nationally, a big challenge remained at the local level in understanding what MDGs are and how they relate to existing planning frameworks such as the PEAP.

District authorities were initially hesitant about engaging with the MDGs, seeing them as a parallel process to the PEAP.

Working with Districts on MDG-based Planning

From 2005 to 2007, SNV and UNDP collaborated with Kasese and Soroti districts, with the aim of strengthening the capacity of local actors in adapting the MDGs to local realities.

SNV and UNDP joined hands with Uganda National NGO Forum, which became the lead implementing organization for the project. Over the years NGO Forum had been involved in monitoring, updating and analysing the PEAP from an MDG perspective.

UNDP, SNV and NGO Forum started by explaining the nature and purpose of the MDGs and illustrated how they could enrich local-level planning processes and make them more result-oriented.

Once the key stakeholders understood the MDGs, and realized the added value of instituting MDG targets, District MDG Teams - composed of representatives of local government, CSOs and the private sector- were set up to implement the project at the local level. The teams were trained to collect and analyse data on the district's performance on the MDGs through a broad participatory process that involved civil society, local government, local leaders, development partners and the private sector.

The findings of the MDG Teams were documented in District MDG Progress Reports.³⁷ The district reports analyse their performance in relation to the eight MDGs, identify where the problems are and provide a set of recommended actions to address the gaps in relation to particular MDG targets. This is seen as by far the most successfully implemented objective of the programme. Kasese and Soroti districts are the only districts in the country that have district MDG progress reports. Furthermore, the data collected by the MDG district teams was fed into a database, called the MDG tracker, which made it easier to monitor district progress towards achieving the goals, and which can also be used as a tool to project what it takes to achieve MDGs between 2007 and 2015 in terms of resources.

The priorities set in the district MDG progress reports haven't yet led to a full integration of localized MDGs in the District Development Plans. Nevertheless, the plans include a number of quick win initiatives that will accelerate the achievement of some MDG objectives. For example,

³⁷ *Kasese district Millennium Development Goals – Kasese Status Report*. Kasese District Local Government and Kasese District Development Network (2007) and *Millennium Development Goals – Soroti Status Report*. Soroti District Local Government and Soroti District NGO Forum (2007).



▲ *Creating awareness on MDGs at the local level*

the Kasese District Council decided to step up efforts to increase the incomes of poor households to address MDG 1. It allocated resources to a horticulture project in 12 sub-counties that would support local farmers and farmers' associations in the production and sale of pineapples and mangoes. In Soroti district, the district council has used un-allocated funds for priority needs identified in the MDG district report. The budget was re-allocated to sub-counties to work on MDG1 through the "Out of Poverty Programme".

The recommendations of the district MDG progress reports are expected to be integrated in the District Development Plans next planning cycle.

Coordination Between the Local and National Level

The two district MDG progress reports identify where the problems are and provide a set of recommended actions to address the gaps in relation to particular MDG targets. The reports were launched at a national level ceremony, and are now used to focus district priorities and to advocate with the Government.

As the programme evolved SNV and UNDP learned that it was necessary to link efforts at the local level with policy and operational frameworks at the national level. SNV and UNDP engaged in dialogue with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and with the Ministry of Local Government. The Ministry of Local Government gave its full support to MDG localization and asked districts to ensure that MDGs become part of their planning processes.

The MDG tracker has been received with great enthusiasm by the Ministry of Local Government. Plans are under way to join forces with the statistics department of the Ministry, to work with UNDP, SNV and other development partners to promote the use of the tool in all districts in Uganda. Furthermore, SNV and UNDP will continue to work with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the Ministry of Local Government, and the Uganda Local Government Association, to discuss how best the MDGs can be *structurally* integrated into local government work.

Results

- The project increased awareness on MDGs in both Kasese and Soroti districts.
- A sense of ownership of the MDG report findings by the various stakeholders at the district level due to the participatory approach in which this project was implemented. This therefore ensured some of the recommendations were implemented.
- The formation of district MDG teams (composed of local government, civil society and private sector representatives) who participated in the production of the MDG district progress reports, contributed to strengthening of local analysis-, reporting- and planning capacity. By collaborating with the district MDG teams, the local governments in Kasese and Soroti recognized the importance of working with CSOs. The local governments began to see the MDGs as a natural framework for CSO involvement.
- The MDG district progress reports and the MDG tracker have made it easier for all stakeholders in the districts, including CSOs, to plan their activities in a more result-oriented and coordinated way, and to advocate for their needs and concerns with the Government and donor organizations. Kasese and Soroti districts both launched quick-win initiatives based on priorities identified in the MDG district progress reports.
- The pilot project has convinced the Ministry of Local Government of the benefits of integrating the MDGs in local planning. The Ministry has committed full support to localization of MDGs in all districts. At the national level, a special taskforce has been established to lead the efforts to increase the Localization of MDGs. On the basis of the experiences in Kasese and Soroti, Uganda Bureau of Statistics is now collaborating with UNDP to support five districts (Kumi, Rakai, Moroto, Arua and Kabarole) to localize the MDGs. This initiative is a more refined version of the previous project and incorporates some of the lessons learned.

Lessons Learned

- In working with local governments, it is important to emphasize that the MDGs are not yet another planning exercise but that they complement existing policies, such as the PEAP in Uganda. The MDGs provide an opportunity to make existing planning processes more focused and result-oriented within the area of basic service delivery.
- The MDG district reports are meant to inform the local participatory policy, planning and budget processes. The Uganda Local Government Association issued an analysis of the MDG district progress reports *after* the local development plans had been made. Therefore the MDGs were not incorporated in the District Development Plans in the planning cycle of 2007. SNV and UNDP learned that the timely and substantial involvement of the Ministry of Local Government is crucial to address the systematic integration of recommendations of the MDG reports in District Development Plans. Furthermore, it is important to develop standard methods and guidelines to support local governments on integrating the MDGs in local planning.

Authors: Diana Sekagya (UNDP) and Harriet Busingye Muwanga (SNV)

Towards Improved Local Planning

3.8

Viet Nam





Context

Over the past two decades, Viet Nam has achieved remarkable advances in its economic development, progressing from least-developed country status to a lower middle-income country. Viet Nam will most likely achieve the MDGs by 2015. However, these results at the national level conceal significant geographical disparities and inequalities. Data show that poor people's access to quality services in the areas of health, water, sanitation and education is still a concern.

Viet Nam has increased its ambitions beyond achieving the MDGs, by establishing the Viet Nam Development Goals (VDGs), a set of twelve development goals to be met at the earlier target date of 2010. Seven of these are closely related to the MDGs, while the rest address pro-poor infrastructure development, job creation, cultural and information development and reduction of vulnerability. They also focus on building a safety net for poor and disadvantaged people and promoting further administration reform. SNV and UNDP collaborated to strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders for locally-driven planning processes to accelerate the achievement of the goals in A Luoi District.

Examples of localized targets included in the 5 Year SED plan of A Luoi District

Goal: Universal education

- By 2010, the rate of the net enrolment in primary school is higher than 90%
- By 2010, the rate of net enrolment in junior secondary school is higher than 90%
- By 2010, the rate of net enrolment in high school is higher than 40%

Goal: Gender equality and female empowerment

- By 2010, the rate of female representatives in elective bodies is at least 35%
- By 2010, the rate of female pupils is 50%
- 100% of land licenses are co-signed by husband and wife

Goal: Child Welfare

- Under 5 mortality rate reduced to 15% by 2010
- Under 1 infant mortality rate reduced to 5% by 2010
- Malnutrition to 20% by 2010

Towards More Participatory and Goal-oriented Planning

To meet these ambitious new targets, the Vietnamese Government believes that they must improve their approach to Socio-Economic Development Planning, particularly at the local level. Until now, development planning has been highly centralized and top-down in nature, with little input from civil society and the private sector.

To demonstrate how a more participatory and goal-oriented planning approach might work in practice, SNV and UNDP initiated a pilot project in A Luoi District, Thua Thien Hue province in 2005: "Piloting Improved Local Planning Processes". The project was targeted at the bulk of the district's 41,000 inhabitants, most of whom belong to an ethnic minority.



▲ Stakeholder workshop in Thua Thien-Hue Province, Viet Nam

The project team established to lead the process was composed of senior officials who represented the Department of Planning and Investment (DPI) at the provincial level and the Finance and Planning Unit at the District level. The two offices are in charge of assisting the People's Committees and People's Councils (local executive and elected governments) at the provincial, district and commune level in preparing, implementing and monitoring the local Socio-Economic Development (SED) plans. SNV and UNDP supported the project team with financial resources and advisory services and played a lead role in the project formulation and work planning during the first year.

The project adopted a two-pronged approach: promoting a more participatory planning approach at the district and commune levels, and providing training for planning officials to make local plans more impact-oriented in line with MDG/VDG targets.

The community-based and participatory planning process introduced by the project started with village consultations to formulate community demands, which were subsequently laid down in communal plans. These communal plans provided the starting point from which to develop plans at the district and provincial levels.

SNV and UNDP worked with two mass organizations, the Provincial Fatherland Front and the Women's Union, to promote community participation in SED planning processes. The provincial Women's Union facilitated community consultations by monitoring and evaluating the SED plans in seven communes in A Luoi District. The provincial Fatherland Front played a coordinating role in bringing local CSOs and community-based organizations on board in the SED-planning process in three other communes (A Roang, Son Thuy and Hong Kim).

The “old” top-down approach to planning

Step 1

A higher level planning body (often DPI) instructs district and local authorities (district and commune planners) on how to prepare a SEDP.

Step 2

Communes prepare their SED plans and submit them to the District Finance and Planning Sections (DFPSs) for compilation into district-wide plans that are subsequently submitted to DPI.

Step 3

DPI consolidates district SED plans into a provincial SED plan and submits it to the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) for approval.

The “new” participatory approach to planning

Step 1

Central authorities communicate planning information to commune governments and invite them to facilitate local level consultations.

Step 2

Establishing a demand plan

- Community consultations at village level draw up a priority list that is submitted to the commune government
- Village demands are reviewed and consolidated into a communal plan that is submitted to district planning authorities
- The district finance and planning unit develops a draft district plan, and submits it to the provincial planning body (DPI)
- The Planning Division of Departments and Branches of the province set up a branch plan, submitted to PPC (DPI)

Step 3

- DPI generates a provincial plan, reported to PPC and Standing People's Council, then submits it to MPI
- Authorities at all levels carry out community consultations to discuss the plans and provide feedback for final improvements
- Budget received and submitted to People's Council for approval

Step 4

Monthly and quarterly M&E

The second key element of the project was to sensitize all stakeholders in the planning process to the importance of elaborating more impact-oriented goals. In the past development plan targets were usually formulated from a planners' perspective and framed in terms of quantitative outputs including the number of schools to be built, the number of safe water points to be established, and the number of dispensaries to be equipped. The objectives of the new planning processes focused on identifying indicators to improve people's lives such as enhanced access to education, safe water and health services. The central government's new instructions on SED planning for the 2006-2010 period to achieve the MDGs/VDGs were instrumental in realizing this mind-shift.

▼ *The SNV UNDP programme helped citizens to understand what the MDG's are and what they mean in terms of people's everyday lives*



To implement this new planning approach, SNV and UNDP worked with the provincial political school to develop a training course with a special curriculum on how to plan for MDGs/VDGs in accordance with local priorities. They provided on-the-job training to nearly one thousand local government staff members. Because the newly introduced planning process involved not only government planners but also a wide range of stakeholders, SNV and UNDP raised awareness about the new approach amongst a wider audience, including villagers and members of grassroots organizations. They used mass communication tools, including radio and TV broadcasts and information leaflets, to raise awareness on the VDGs/MDGs.

Results

- As a result of these efforts, the five-year socio-economic development plan (2006-2010) for A Luoi District succeeded in integrating localized MDGs and VDGs. There is a common consensus that this is the most significant change.
- More bottom-up planning processes ensured that plans were closer to reality in spite of the limited capacity of local authorities at the grassroots level.

"This kind of project can help us change our mind."

Provincial official, Thua Thien Hue province

"Previously the district made the plan and gave it to the commune; now we can make our own plans and productivity is increasing."

Commune representative

Lessons Learned

- The achievements in A Luoi would not have been possible without the commitment and capacity of local leaders and communities, as well as partners such as the Provincial People's Committee, DPI, Fatherland Front and the Women's Union.
- The national and provincial governments' commitment to administrative reforms and the decentralization of planning processes for poverty reduction created the political environment required for the success of this initiative. Hence, for work at the local level it is also essential to involve or ensure having the support of higher levels of government.
- A key success factor of the project was that those in charge of coordinating the planning processes, the Department of Planning and Investment (DPI) at the provincial level and the Luoi District Finance and Planning Unit, were in the lead. SNV and UNDP, which played a prominent role in the early stages of the project, were considered good partners because they recognised the importance of local ownership of the process and were able to shift to a supporting role, providing advice when required.

Authors: Nguyen Duc Thien (SNV), Tran Lan Anh (DPI) and Vu Ngoc Anh (UNDP)

4 Conclusions and Way Forward

4.1 Conclusions

The three-year SNV and UNDP programme has realized most of the results which it sought to achieve:³⁸

- Improved local and national awareness and ownership of the MDGs
- Strengthened capacities of local governments and non-state actors in conducting participatory MDG-oriented planning processes
- Strengthened capacity of civil society actors to monitor progress on the MDGs
- Improved integration of MDGs in policy development at the local level
- Improved harmonization of policy development and planning between local level and national level

The following sections reflect on the results achieved and other important issues that emerged during programme implementation.

Increased awareness and ownership of the MDGs

The programme has helped citizens and policy makers understand what the MDGs are and what they mean in terms of people's everyday lives. This is significant, because in quite a few countries MDGs were seen as something introduced by donors and therefore not relevant to their lives and work. With increased local and national ownership of the MDGs, governing authorities and non-state actors alike are more likely to take responsibility for achieving the MDGs, and for holding other actors accountable to their respective responsibilities.

³⁸ *Building capacities of local governments, CSOs and the domestic business sector to participate in PRSP and MDG processes.* SNV-UNDP Agreement I (2004)



▲ *Recognizing and building upon the strengths of local actors is key in successful capacity development*

Strengthened capacities of local actors in MDG-oriented planning and monitoring

The programme has supported the capacity development of local governments and non-state actors in developing local MDG-development plans, based on local realities, and in monitoring progress towards the MDGs. Non-state actors, in particular CSOs, played a critical role by actively participating in local development planning processes, setting up and participating in platforms for dialogue on the MDGs at the local and/or national level, and monitoring progress towards the MDGs.

Capacity development is an essential component of successful, sustainable MDG localization. The MDGs are to be achieved through existing organizations and institutions, which often face capacity challenges. Capacity development is a long-term process, and it is too early to judge the long-term impact of the SNV-UNDP partnership with respect to capacity development for MDG localization. In many countries, SNV and UNDP played a significant *catalytic* role by encouraging local authorities and civil society to collaborate, and by strengthening the capacities of those stakeholders to plan for, implement and monitor progress. Furthermore, capacity development includes recognizing and building on existing strengths and skills. In collaborating with local state and non-state actors, SNV and UNDP have drawn on their strengths, such as their thorough knowledge of the local context and their ability to identify opportunities to achieve the MDGs at the local level. Recognizing and building on the strengths of local actors is an important element of successful capacity development.

Improved integration of MDGs in policy development at the local level

The programme has contributed to the development of MDG-based local development plans. These plans indicate the status of the MDGs in specific areas (which are often different from national averages) and are important analytical and advocacy tools to address local development priorities.

▼ *SNV and UNDP helped in raising awareness on the MDGs*



Improved harmonization of policy development and planning between local level and national level

The programme played a catalytic role in bridging the gap between local and national development priorities, capacities and resources. The partnership raised awareness, helped formulate local development plans, and impelled the adoption of quick-win initiatives. In a number of countries local authorities were able to mobilize new development partnerships, and attract additional funding, as a result of their collaboration with SNV and UNDP. However, the programme could have performed better in reconciling different development processes at the local and national level. This is a challenge that deserves to be addressed in future interventions on MDG localization. MDG localization cannot be effectively implemented and scaled up unless appropriate policy and financial frameworks are available.

Comprehensive strategy for MDG localization

The programme was not always able to significantly facilitate implementation arrangements. Although some quick-win initiatives have been launched and some local government authorities were able to mobilize new development partnerships, SNV and UNDP could have facilitated more systematically the follow-up to the development of MDG-based local development plans, for example, by pro-actively liaising with potential donors to broker funds for financing activities as laid down in the local development plans. Clearly, the importance of a long-term overall strategy - including a focus on implementation and thus also on funding for implementation - has to be emphasized when working on MDG localization.

Complex reality

Furthermore, working on the MDGs at the local level is a complex and time-consuming process. Although the MDGs focus on basic service delivery, to achieve them requires working with a great variety of actors and addressing underlying processes such as democratic governance. To successfully advance the MDGs locally, the MDGs have to be translated into tangible actions and results at the local level. If successfully done, the MDGs become more realistic and people become more committed to work towards achieving them.

4.2 Recommendations

The SNV-UNDP collaboration has achieved valuable results, while also highlighting challenges, which are conveyed in the following recommendations.

Utilize a strategic approach towards awareness raising

A key recommendation is the need for a strategic approach towards raising awareness and developing capacity at the local level. A parallel approach in awareness raising, targeting both citizens at local level, civil society, and local governments has resulted in effective participatory local development planning, based on local realities and needs. For successful awareness raising, one must identify the target audiences, define expected outcomes, and establish steps subsequent to raising awareness. Without these critical planning measures, raising awareness is not likely to lead to the desired outcomes.

Strike a balance between combining broad comprehensive capacity development approaches and small scale niche interventions

The emphasis of the programme was on small scale interventions mostly at the local level.³⁹ Research suggests that smaller, more manageable interventions have a better chance of success in the short term.⁴⁰ The implementation of small scale interventions allowed the local actors to develop skills and made it easier for them to build confidence and awareness. It is crucial however that these small scale interventions are built into a more comprehensive, holistic and long term approach towards achieving the MDGs. The challenge is to find the right balance and complementarities between the two approaches and to ensure that local experiences feed national processes and vice versa.

Develop a coherent approach to face the financial challenges in implementing local development plans

The programming framework of the SNV-UNDP initiative aimed at increasing national and local ownership of the MDGs through capacity development and the facilitation of non-state actor participation in planning processes. The programme did not encompass financing direct implementation, an issue that proved to be a setback in some countries. In some countries it was difficult to maintain momentum gained during collaboration because the enthusiasm of local stakeholders to follow through was tempered by lack of financial resources. Hence, in similar programmes addressing the MDGs, it is critical to consider the funding of the implementation of the developed MDG plans and policies right from the start.

Invest in quick wins

It is crucial to strike balance between seeking opportunities for quick wins and keeping an eye on the long-term. Quick wins can be an effective way of convincing stakeholders that what they are doing is worthwhile and that the MDGs are attainable.

Involve both national and local level in MDG localization

The importance of ownership at the national level also proved to be a crucial condition for success at the local level, and proved equally essential when bringing MDG localization initiatives to scale. Adequate national policy and financial frameworks for MDG localization – including the transfer of financial resources to the local level - are therefore crucial.

Invest in adequate strategies to involve the private sector

The domestic private sector was one of the envisaged actors in the programme; however in most countries it proved difficult to engage the private sector. The reasons for this deserve a more in-depth investigation. If the private sector is to be involved in subsequent projects a proper strategy for collaboration must be designed.

³⁹ Modest in terms of funding volume and geographical scope. The average amount of project funds in each country was USD 118,000, implemented over 3 years, in several regions in a country.

⁴⁰ *Capacity Change and Performance, insights and implications for Development Cooperation, Policy Management Brief 21*. ECDPM (2008)



▲ *Quick wins are an effective way of convincing stakeholders that the MDGs are attainable*

Scope for up scaling

Given the enormous challenges faced by many countries in achieving the MDGs, there is scope for further scaling efforts, building on the successes and lessons of the SNV-UNDP partnership and other initiatives.

4.3 SNV and UNDP: Working in Partnership

“Partnership provides for a new opportunity for doing development better – by recognizing the qualities and competencies of each and finding new ways of harnessing these for the common good”

R. Tennyson, 2004.

In 2004 SNV and UNDP decided to join forces to increase the effectiveness of their efforts in contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable development. Both organizations support countries in the development and implementation of MDG-based national development strategies.

SNV and UNDP each brought distinct strengths to the partnership. The two organizations are both strongly driven by, and united around, capacity development approaches towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The collaboration between SNV and UNDP builds on the complementarities between the convening powers of UNDP with governments, and SNV's networks and advisory capacities at decentralized levels of government and civil society.⁴¹ The "strategic fit" between partners is an important condition for success. Strategies, structures and cultures need to be able to blend for success.

The partnership was forged by SNV and UNDP headquarters, where it was guided by a global SNV-UNDP Steering Committee, but implementation took place at the country level. At country level, SNV and UNDP initially were not very familiar with the details of each other's work. It took time and effort to successfully engage. The staff of both organizations had to get acquainted with differences in administrative styles, internal communication procedures and decision-making processes.

As the two organizations familiarized themselves with each other, cooperation improved. Shared professionalism, goodwill and mutual interests provided the basis for successful collaboration. The enthusiasm of individual staff was critical to the success of the partnership at the country level. For a true partnership between *organizations*, ownership by senior management at the national level is essential as well. Their involvement is crucial to ensure that the partnership goes beyond good cooperation between individual staff members. Furthermore, in cases where partnership activities were part of existing initiatives or linked to broader programmes, the added value was higher than in cases where the activities stood alone.

An important lesson going forward is that from the outset there must be joint identification and formulation of activities at the level where the programme will be implemented, to ensure that ownership of the programme is created at the level where it matters most. It is also important to create room for flexibility, to enable stakeholders to capitalize on specific circumstances and opportunities.

4.4 Way Forward

"The MDGs are universal: they are intended to embrace not only all countries but also all people within each country. [...] All citizens of the world, especially the poor and the most vulnerable, have a right to expect that their leaders will fulfil the commitments made in 2000"

Sha Zukang, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, The MDG report 2008.

⁴¹ Memorandum of Understanding SNV-UNDP (2004)

⁴² Albania, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Laos, Mozambique, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zambia

To progress towards the MDGs, country efforts must reflect and engage with local realities. The collaboration between SNV and UNDP on MDG localization has reconfirmed the critical importance of the participation of poor, marginalized and vulnerable groups in planning, implementation and monitoring of MDGs. Therefore, in the coming years such opportunities should be pursued, and expanded upon. SNV and UNDP are now continuing their collaboration on MDG localization in a programme that builds on the successes and lessons of the pilot initiatives described in this publication.

In this follow-up programme, operational from 2007 to 2010 in 17 countries, SNV and UNDP will continue to reinforce national and local ownership and strengthen capacities of relevant actors necessary to attain the MDGs.⁴² The follow-up programme places more emphasis on strengthening linkages between local and national level by involving more national actors in the localization process.

▼ *To achieve the MDGs, national efforts must reflect and engage with local realities*





▲ Continuous efforts are needed to achieve the MDGs

Furthermore, sharing successful strategies and lessons learned among different actors involved in MDG localization is an important element of success to achieve the MDGs. As organizations with a large international presence, SNV and UNDP are well positioned to do so, and explicitly aim to share knowledge on best practices on MDG localization by documenting experiences and organizing opportunities for practitioners to exchange views and learn from one another.

The Accra Agenda for Action, endorsed in September 2008, outlines the broader development agenda needed to meet the MDGs.⁴³ It highlights democracy, economic growth, gender equality, respect for human rights and protection of the environment as the prime engines of development in all countries. It also calls for more inclusive partnerships, acknowledging the crucial role of CSOs in helping achieve the MDGs. Donor countries are urged to meet their financial commitments, while developing countries are encouraged to take broader ownership of policies.⁴⁴

The multiple global crises today strengthen the case for governments and development partners to capitalize on the capacities of local stakeholders for innovations and to seize ownership of processes needed to achieve the MDGs. In periods of crisis, international community coordination on issues of resource allocation and project commitment becomes increasingly vital. In the absence of global partnerships and additional resources, developing countries that will most benefit from realizing the MDGs may not be able to succeed.

“Globally, the resources, the technology, and the knowledge exist now to improve the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable. Our challenge is to muster up the political will and the resources, and to support the strategies and actions required, to make the much needed improvements a reality. [...] Since the Millennium Declaration was signed, many significant aid commitments have been made. [...] It is vital for the credibility of pledges made that action follows the availability of serious and credible scenarios for scaling up ODA as Gleneagles envisaged.”

Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, Statement at the Annual Session of the Executive Board, 26 May 2009.

SNV and UNDP continue to respond to the call by the international community to work towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by providing advice, facilitating, and exchanging expertise with a wide range of actors at local, national and global levels. It is crucial that donor countries, developing country governments, civil society actors, the private sector, UN agencies and other development partners all step up their efforts to fight poverty.

⁴³ Ministers of developing and donor countries, Heads of multilateral and bilateral development institutions, donor organizations, and CSOs from around the world gathered from September 2-4 2008 in Accra for the Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Their common objective is to help developing countries and marginalized people in their fight against poverty by making aid more transparent, accountable and results-oriented. They endorsed a statement, called the Accra Agenda for Action, in Accra, Ghana on September 4, 2008

⁴⁴ Accra Agenda for Action, September 4, 2008, Accra-Ghana: http://endpoverty2015.org/files/ACCRA_4_SEPTEMBER.pdf

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACPP	Asamblea de Cooperacion para la Paz (Spain)
ALAT	Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania
ANCB	Association Nationale des Communes du Benin
BIM	Ludwig Boltzmann Institut für Menschenrechte (Austria)
CSDC	Civil Society Development Centers (Albania)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment (Viet Nam)
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
LGA	Local Government Authorities (Tanzania)
LVIA	Associazione Internazionale di Volontariato Laico (Italy)
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MKUKUTA	National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (Tanzania)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMD	Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement
ONG	Organisation Non Gouvernementale
PCLCP	Programme Cadre de Lutte Contre la Pauvreté (Niger)
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan (Uganda)
PLACON	Plataforma de Concertação das ONGs na Guineia-Bissau
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSDA	Public Service Delivery Assessments
SED	Socio-Economic Development (Viet Nam)
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
TANGO	Tanzania Association of NGOs
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
VDGs	Viet Nam Development Goals



SNV Netherlands Development Organisation

Dr. Kuiperstraat 5
2514 BA The Hague
The Netherlands
T +31 70 344 02 44
F +31 70 385 55 31
info@snnworld.org
www.snnworld.org

United Nations Development Programme

One United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017 USA
T +1 (212) 906-5000
F +1 (212) 906-5001
pb.cso@undp.org
www.undp.org

Colophon

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SNV and UNDP have worked together on MDG localization in 15 countries across the globe. This film highlights their experiences in Niger and Uganda. It explains their approaches and the results achieved in these programmes.

SNV Netherlands Development Organisation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) support countries in their efforts to formulate and implement development strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2004, SNV and UNDP entered into a partnership to support the participation of local government, civil society organizations and private sector groups in MDG-related development planning processes in 15 countries in Africa, Asia, the Balkans and Latin America. The partnership between SNV and UNDP has especially focused on supporting *local* efforts to achieve the MDGs, by promoting local ownership, understanding local needs and trends, and fostering collaboration between different actors at the local level. The eight case studies presented in this publication describe the approaches adopted by SNV and UNDP and the results achieved. They exemplify and reaffirm the critical importance of providing opportunities for the participation of poor and vulnerable groups in planning, implementing and monitoring the MDGs.

