Fulfilling the promise of the Millennium Declaration:
The MDG Achievement Fund experience
The Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F), with a budget of US$ 900 million, is one of the largest and most comprehensive development cooperation mechanisms created to support MDG attainment.

Established through an agreement between the government of Spain and UNDP on behalf of the United Nations (UN) system, the MDG-F incorporates the goals and principles of three key international development agreements.
Signed in 2000 by 189 countries, to achieve by 2015 a set of eight measurable goals that range from halving extreme poverty and hunger to promoting gender equality and reducing child mortality.

Starting in 1997 and including a UN General Assembly resolution on System-wide coherence (2008), promotes the coordination of UN Agencies for more integrated and effective development initiatives.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Window</th>
<th>Net funded budget (US$ million)</th>
<th>Number of programmes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children, Food Security and Nutrition</td>
<td>131.9</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Culture and Development</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Democratic Economic Governance</td>
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<td>Development and the Private Sector</td>
<td>60.3</td>
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<td>Environment and Climate Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth, Employment and Migration</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Photo: Carlos Ignacio García Busta
Photo: Liang Quankang
Photo: Carla Gachet/Iván Kashinsky
Our approach

*Turning principles into joint programmes that deliver results*

Across its 130 joint programmes in eight different thematic areas, the MDG-F has used intersectoral approaches to increase development effectiveness. For each programme, the MDG-F has established governance mechanisms that ensure the full participation of national governments in their steering, supervising and management bodies. UN Agencies, working as one with the critical support of the UN Resident Coordinators, have coordinated their efforts and aligned their expertise to deliver concrete results.

**8 thematic areas that contribute to one or more MDGs**

**Millennium Declaration (2000)**

**27 UN Agencies**

Bringing their specific expertise in designing and implementing multidimensional programmes

**Reform of the UN System, since 1997, including the UN General Assembly Resolution on System-wide Coherence (2008)**

**Ensuring the participation of national government in the steering, supervising and implementing mechanisms**

**Paris Declaration of 2005, and subsequent agreements (Accra, 2008 and Busan, 2011), to improve aid effectiveness through national ownership and mutual accountability.**

**Participating UN Agencies:**

- UNDP
- UNICEF
- FAO
- PAHO/WHO
- PMA
- UNESCO
- ILO
- UNFPA
- UNIDO
- UNWOMEN
- IOM
- WHO
- UNEP
- UNHABITAT
- UNWTO
- UNODC
- UNHCR
- ITC
- UNRWA
- UNCDF
- UNAIDS
- UNCTAD
- UNOPS
- IFAD
- OHCHR
- ECLAC
- ESCAP
Our work

Targeted programmes addressing specific populations reached 1.04 million indigenous people, 553,000 youth and 2.15 million children.

Estimated direct coverage: 9 million people

74.2% of programme participants were women and girls.
Our contribution to the post-2015 debate

From the MDG-F programmes’ vast experience and its 130 joint programmes world wide, we have created a body of knowledge and best practices that will be essential for the post-2015 debate. An independent global and thematic evaluation is providing findings that may inform future cooperation mechanisms that opt to implement development initiatives through joint programmes. A series of partnerships with leading research institutions and specialized UN Agencies is allowing the MDG-F partners to distill lessons learned and promising practices.
The MDG-F’s programmes have demonstrated that joint programmes with multidimensional and inter-sectoral approaches can bring integrated solutions that are more effective in tackling complex problems. The case of nutrition and food security can serve as an example. By bringing together the expertise of various UN Agencies, the MDG-F programmes have put in place multi-sectorial approaches that include important issues such as nutritional education, gender equality and empowerment of women, agricultural production and health, among others. Joint programmes are helping to overcome the limitations of the traditional sectorial approach (the "silo" approach) to development initiatives.

MDG-F programmes have also directed the attention of development practitioners to other strategies. For example:

• Using a **dual strategy** to achieve **gender equality**, by combining gender-specific programmes with a gender perspective that crosscuts all other areas of work.
• Understanding the critical importance of **culture** and cultural specificities to improve the impact of public policies worldwide.
• Responding to the call of **indigenous peoples** for recognition of their own perspective on development goals, which could serve as a platform to end discrimination and poverty.
• Making **youth employment and migration** the cornerstones of societies’ development.
• Creating democratic and transparent mechanisms for **water and sanitation** governance which are truly participatory and culture-sensitive.

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**Photo: Great Ethiopian Run**

**Photo: Edwina Stevens/ Small World Stories/ Ethiopia Delivering as One**
Twenty-four programmes have worked to halt preventable deaths caused by child hunger and poor nutrition. Interventions ranged from providing low cost nutritional packages that can save lives and promote healthy development to engaging with pregnant and lactating mothers to ensure they are healthy and aware of key nutrition issues. Advocacy for mainstreaming children’s right to food into national plans and policies is also a key element of the fight against under nutrition.

When Sheuly Begum’s son started getting fortified biscuits at school, he became much more attentive in class, and his enthusiasm towards his studies motivated his younger sister to start going to school, too. His family participated in an MDG-F programme to boost children’s nutrition and empower women in Bangladesh.

**Story of change, Bangladesh**

*Photo: WFP/GMB Akash*

- **1.67 million children and 800,000 mothers have improved nutrition**
- **1.2 million mothers and children benefitted from breastfeeding programmes and policies**
- **82,900 health workers, 6,495 health centers, 2,533 schools and over 8,000 local and national institutions partnered to fight malnutrition**

*Participating UN Agencies: UNICEF, FAO, PAHO/WHO, UNFPA, WFP, UNDP, UNIDO, UNODC, IOM, ILO, UNESCO.*
Democratic economic governance

11 programmes, US$ 59.6 million and 13 UN Agencies

Good governance is an influential factor in achieving the MDGs. Our 11 programmes in this area have strengthened the capacity of national institutions to design and implement water policies and regulations and to provide communities with efficient water and sanitation services. We have also tackled the barriers that indigenous populations and women face in accessing water and sanitation services. Encouraging investment in services to poor communities, we have contributed to the development of new and innovative mechanisms to finance water supply and sanitation infrastructures and services to the most marginalized populations.

- 440,000 citizens gained access to safe affordable drinking water and sanitation services
- 669 community organizations andnoted
- 665 local providers have been strengthened or created to promote community empowerment and participation in water management
- 31.7 million people improved their lives through
  - 41 new laws, policies and plans to boost water and sanitation services


Story of change, Nicaragua

In Nicaragua’s North Atlantic Autonomous Region, less than 20% of the population has access to water and sanitation. Despite being surrounded by rivers that spring from the Bosawas Biosphere, Central America’s most important rainforest, the small community of Venus had no drinkable water. None, until some community women decided to put an end to the situation and approached the mayor of their municipality with a proposal to create the Potable Water Committee (CAP) of Venus, a network that would supply drinking water to the entire community. Inhabitants of Venus contributed 296,000 córdobas (US$11,800) to the project, with the MDG-F contributing an additional 1.6 million córdobas (US$64,000). Today, more than 400 villagers enjoy access to safe drinking water.
Conflict prevention and peacebuilding

17 programmes, US$ 90.1 million and 14 UN Agencies

Violent conflict is often a symptom of social exclusion. These 17 programmes have worked on solutions to overcome conflicts by promoting access to justice, providing peaceful dispute resolution and legal mechanisms, forging intercultural dialogue and building a culture of peace. Innovative and integral approaches to citizen security have reduced crime rates. Sports, arts and culture have been used to channel youth energy towards the construction of positive relations.

► 400,000 youth engaged in actions to build peace and prevent conflicts
► 40 laws, policies and plans were put in place to build dialogue spaces for conflict resolution
► 63,000 citizens accessed conflict resolution and reconciliation services and
► 78,000 gained increased access to justice


Communication barriers have become a significant problem in South Serbia, with young people from different ethnic communities unable to understand each other. At an MDG-F-supported Day of Peace celebration, Serbian, Albanian and Roma youth gathered to write messages of peace and express their hopes for the future as part of a broader MDG-F’s peace-building programme in southern Serbia, one of the poorest parts of the country. The programme aimed at strengthening dialogue, improving access to and quality of public services, and stimulating equitable economic development.
Progress on the status and role of women over the past decades has been slow and uneven. The MDG-F has supported programmes that bolster women’s representation in formal decision-making structures, using disaggregated data to push for gender responsive planning and policy development. Ending the epidemic of gender-based violence was a common thread in most programmes, which focused on strengthening women’s capabilities (as measured by health and education), improving their access to resources and opportunities, and reducing their vulnerability to violence and conflict. In addition, a dual strategy approach resulted in the inclusion of a gender perspective across our other thematic windows.

**Story of change, occupied Palestinian territory**

The MDG-F has empowered women in the occupied Palestinian territory by supporting women’s football. After these girls won their match, three women were elected to the Palestinian Football Federation Council - a first.

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**Gender equality and women’s empowerment**

- **630,000** women and girls gained access to violence prevention and protection services
- **24,000** women increased their income and
- **3,000** accessed public decision-making positions
- **1,523** public institutions and
- **449** private organizations strengthened their capacities to work more responsively towards gender equality

Respect for cultural diversity promotes vibrant and inclusive societies. We have supported efforts to promote the inclusion of minorities in social, political and cultural life and harness the potential of the creative sector for job creation, economic growth and poverty reduction. Strengthening creative industries and protecting natural and cultural heritage have proved to be effective instruments of economic development. We have worked with indigenous communities to safeguard their cultural heritage and to build health and education services that respond to their worldviews.

The MDG-F worked with members of the San community in northeastern Namibia - the last hunters and gatherers in southern Africa - to take a central role in preserving their cultural heritage through the promotion of tourism. Staff at the visitors’ reception in Tsumkwe Cultural Village were trained in financial management and tourism strategies.
Programmes supported the development of pro-poor growth policies that increase the participation and benefits of the poor in private sector development. Interventions sought to bolster economic sectors where the poor are strongly represented, opening markets to improve opportunities and stimulate small and medium enterprises.

- Technical assistance services reached 21,500 farmers, entrepreneurs and small businesses
- 85 cooperatives and 182 farmer associations were strengthened or created
- 159 new instruments (17 national and 31 local policies and five national strategies)


The MDG-F has worked to alleviate poverty in four of Peru's most disadvantaged regions by developing creative industries in tourism, handicrafts, organic agriculture and gastronomy. Some 2,500 families in the High Andes used their traditions to increase their household incomes, and improved their livelihoods while conserving their customs and, at the same time, caring for the environment.
With 1.8 billion young people living in the world today, the opportunity for injecting new energy and ideas into the way we do things is limitless. But young people face incredible challenges as they transition into adulthood, particularly in finding decent work opportunities. To address this, the MDG-F has created community employment services, encouraged new job opportunities, promoted legal frameworks and tackled migration with new policies and awareness-raising campaigns.

In the Philippines, where the MDG-F worked to provide young people with decent jobs as an alternative to migration, close to 1.5 million young people were unemployed in 2010. Among other initiatives, the programme provided training and materials on entrepreneurship, life skills and safe migration to teachers, out of school youth, local partner organizations and thousands of secondary schools. Hundreds of at-risk high school students have received educational subsidies designed to reduce drop-out rates in public schools.

15 programmes, US$ 71.8 million and 14 UN Agencies

- 642,000 people have directly improved their lives through these programmes. Among them:
  - 127,170 youth;
  - 24,072 migrants,
  - 98,399 citizens, and
  - 365,000 boys and girls

- 190,000 youth acquired new skills through training programmes


Story of change, Philippines
Progress on the MDGs can only be sustained by a healthy planet. Poor people’s livelihoods rely heavily on natural resources, and environmental changes and fluctuations often have a devastating effect on their ability to survive, preventing them from fully accessing basic services like water, sanitation and energy. Our programmes improved local management of environmental resources, strengthened communities ability to deal with the effects of climate change and integrated sustainable development principles into national policy frameworks.

The MDG-F worked with the government in four regions of Ethiopia to mobilize pastoralist communities to restore rangelands, build community water facilities, diversify their livelihoods and set up better animal health services.
The MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) was established through a landmark agreement between the Government of Spain and the UN system, with the aim of accelerating progress on the MDGs. With a total contribution of about US$ 900M, the MDG-F has financed 130 joint programmes in eight thematic areas in 50 countries around the world, in addition to global partnerships and thematic knowledge management initiatives. Our programmes cover nutrition, youth and employment, gender equality, environment, culture, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, water resources management and private sector development.

For more information: [www.mdgfund.org](http://www.mdgfund.org)

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Photo: Great Ethiopian Run. The MDG Achievement Fund partnered with the Great Ethiopian Run, the biggest road race in Africa, to galvanize support towards MDG attainment.