

The Main Game: Millennium Development Goals

In September 2000, 191 member countries of the United Nations, including Australia, came together at the Millennium Summit and committed to achieving eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals set an agenda, including an achievable framework, to address significant issues of global poverty and inequality by 2015:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

For You To Do

- **Read** the following information about each goal. It outlines one of the targets for change for that goal, explains why achieving the goal is so important, and sets the scene about some of the issues of global poverty at the turn of the millennium (year 2000).
- **Play** the Main Game. The Main Game is a simple online game to help you remember and understand the goals. In Part 1, match the images of each goal together. In Part 2, use what you have learnt, and your best judgement, to answer a multiple choice question about each goal. Don't worry - if you get one wrong, you'll have a chance to try again. Remember, this game uses information about poverty and development from the turn of the millennium.

The Main Game is located at:

www.worldvision.com.au/Learn/SchoolResources/Content.aspx?id=00715a43-fad8-4f12-8a85-e2a175432985

- **Read** the handout about the progress that has been made against each goal since the year 2000.
- **Discuss** the following questions in a small group:
 - From what you've learnt about the MDGs, what surprised you the most?
 - Why do you think achieving the targets set out in the MDGs is important? Are some targets more important than others? If so, which ones and why?
 - Do you think the failure to meet the Official Development Assistance (ODA) target in Goal 8 might make it difficult to achieve the other goals? Why or why not?

The 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target: Reduce by half the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day by 2015.

In 2002, an estimated 1.6 billion people globally were living on less than \$1.25 a day. In sub-Saharan Africa, 55% of people lived below the international poverty line¹.

Hunger and poverty go hand in hand. If you're poor, you may struggle to have enough nutritious food to eat. This can leave you feeling weak and vulnerable to disease. If you become sick or undernourished, you're less likely to go to school and will find it hard to concentrate, learn and work. In countries where hunger is most widespread, one in seven children died before the age of five².

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Target: To enable all children, girls and boys alike, to complete primary schooling.

In 2001-02, around the world, 115 million children of primary school age did not get the opportunity to go to school³ - that's more than five times the population of Australia. These are mostly children living in poverty, whose parents may never have had any formal education.

A decent basic education can help people to escape poverty. The ability to read, reason and communicate empowers people to make informed choices about life, and increases their ability to generate income. Boys and girls who attend school are more likely to be healthier and avoid diseases like HIV and AIDS. Educated parents are more likely to send their children to school. Universal primary education can help prepare a skilled workforce to help countries progress economically.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Target: To enable girls to attend all levels of schooling in equal numbers to boys.

In the mid-1990s, it was estimated that 70% of people living in poverty world-wide were women, and 60% of children not in primary school were girls⁴. While women, globally, worked longer hours than men, they received less income and less recognition for this work⁵. Long-standing inequalities between women and men continue to limit the life choices for women.

Educated girls have more choices in life about marriage, childbirth and work. A few years of basic education can empower women to make changes: to send their own children to school; to have smaller, healthier families; and enjoy a higher standard of living. They are also less likely to be affected by HIV and AIDS.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Target: Reduce by two-thirds the number of children who die before their fifth birthday.

In 2002, one in 12 children in the world did not make it to their fifth birthday⁶. Often, these deaths were the result of preventable illnesses and diseases like diarrhoea, malaria, measles, or respiratory illnesses. These diseases and other poverty-related reasons caused an estimated 30,000 children to die every day⁷.

Significant improvements in the health of young children can be made, with the development of small, cost-effective community health services. These services can provide effective immunisation programs and information on the value of insecticide-treated bed nets in preventing malaria. They can also assist parents to increase their awareness of the importance of good hygiene, nutrition, and breastfeeding for the wellbeing of their children.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Target: Reduce by three quarters the number of women dying in childbirth.

In 1996 it was estimated that 585,000 women died every year as a result of difficulties during pregnancy or childbirth⁸. By 2002, only 58% of deliveries had a skilled birth attendant (for example, a midwife, nurse or doctor) present⁹. What should be a time of joy and celebration is too often a time of grief and loss in poor communities around the world. In addition to the women who die, many more are left injured or infertile after childbirth.

A mother's death can be devastating to the children left behind. In addition to the emotional trauma and grief of losing a mother, these children are much more likely to live in poverty, drop out of school, and be malnourished. Girls especially are expected to take on the responsibilities of the mother in caring for younger children, preparing food and carrying out household tasks.

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

Target: To halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV and malaria by 2015.

AIDS was the leading cause of premature death in sub-Saharan Africa and one of the main causes of death worldwide. In 2001, more than 40 million people lived with HIV and AIDS, and 14 million children had been orphaned as a result of the disease¹⁰. However, effective programs in countries like Thailand and Uganda have shown that it is possible to reverse infection rates.

Diseases like malaria and tuberculosis are also killers. But they are preventable diseases and can be largely controlled through education, preventative measures like mosquito nets (for malaria), and when illness strikes, appropriate treatment and care. These diseases devastate communities and

weaken the economy of many nations by reducing the number of people who are able to work effectively.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Target: To reduce by half the number of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

In 2002, access to safe drinking water was a critical challenge for an estimated 1.1 billion people, who had to spend significant amounts of time collecting 'unsafe' water each day¹¹. Time spent collecting water limits the amount of time available for going to school or working. Humans need a certain amount of water every day. If clean water is not available, people have to use water from unsafe sources. Water-borne diseases continue to affect the health of these people - especially young children. An estimated 2.6 billion people, or half the developing world, lacked decent toilets and basic sanitation¹². Health problems and the spread of diseases, from lack of clean water and basic sanitation, are greatest in rural areas and large urban slums.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Target: To increase development aid, relieve debt and develop fair international trade.

In 2001, it was assessed that the poorest 49 countries made up 10% of the world's population, but accounted for only 0.4% of world trade¹³. Goal 8 wants developed countries, like Australia, to adopt a fairer international trading system that would allow developing countries better participation in world trade, in order to meet their development needs. This is the area where the least progress has been made in the global partnership to eradicate global poverty. Goal 8 also calls on developed countries to commit 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI) as aid or official development assistance (ODA) to poor countries. Goal 8 also recognises the importance of debt relief to enable poor nations to increase spending on areas like health and education.

¹ World Bank, World Development Indicators: Poverty data supplement, 2008.

² FAO, The State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2002.

³ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), Children out of school: Measuring exclusion from primary education, 2005.

⁴ UNDP, Human Development Report: Gender and Human Development, 1995.

⁵ UNDP, Human Development Report: Gender and Human Development, 1995.

⁶ UNICEF, Progress for Children Report, 2004.

⁷ UNICEF, Progress for Children Report, 2004.

⁸ UNICEF, The Progress of Nations Report, 1996.

⁹ UNFPA, Maternal Mortality Update 2002, 2003.

¹⁰ UNAIDS, Report on the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, 2002.

¹¹ WHO, Health through safe drinking water and basic sanitation, 2012.

¹² WHO, Health through safe drinking water and basic sanitation, 2012.

¹³ UNCTAD, Conference on Least Developed Countries 2001, in WTO, Trade liberalisation statistics, www.gatt.org/trastat_e.html, [accessed May 2012].