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INTRAC launches **New Website** – see  
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online resource for development  
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**In this issue:** Brian Pratt reviews the  
implementation and usefulness of the  
Millennium Development Goals in light  
of the many failed and forgotten global  
initiatives which have gone before;  
Charles Buxton reflects on the  
engagement of communities in Central  
Asia in Poverty Reduction Strategies  
and the Millennium Development  
Goals; and Hannah Warren reviews the  
progress made towards the MDGs and  
the mechanisms used for monitoring  
the goals.

*viewpoint*

**Millennium Development Goals: More Global  
Targets – Have We Been Here Before?**

**W**e are seeing, and sometimes  
feeling, an increased  
pressure to help achieve the  
Millennium Development Goals; with a  
wide range of development actors,  
including governments, NGOs, bi-lateral  
institutions, and academics subscribing  
to the goals and utilising them as guiding  
principles for the focus of their work.

Am I the only person suffering a *déjà vu*?  
Have we not been here before? I recall  
meetings back in the early 1980s with  
James Grant, then Director of UNICEF,  
who pushed various versions of GOBI  
(growth monitoring, oral re-hydration,  
breast-feeding and immunisation), which  
was intended to solve the health  
problems of children in poverty. It took a  
long time but at least Grant and his  
colleagues in UNICEF eventually  
realised that universal solutions would  
not work. GOBI was bound for failure.  
Why? – because the children in most dire  
straits were never going to be covered by  
universal solutions based on assumptions  
of an average childhood. As the evolution  
of the CEDC (Children in Especially  
Difficult Circumstances) recognised,  
unless children in the hard to reach  
groups were provided with and had  
access to basic health and other services,  
GOBI was indeed going to fail. Thus, by  
the late 1980s, those who would now be  
termed the ‘socially excluded’ were

integrated into the UNICEF programme.  
However, one has the impression that  
GOBI was silently shunted to the side.

Whether GOBI died a slow death or was  
conveniently forgotten as the target date  
came and went, is a matter for history.  
However, what remains clear is that our  
experience with global goals has not been  
good. Readers can probably remember  
catch-phrases from the past including:  
the ‘1st and 2nd Development Decades’,  
‘Roll Back Malaria’ and ‘Health for all’.  
One of the reasons they fail or fizzle out  
is that they are often devoid of any  
reference to local political, economic, or  
social realities. For example, we can all  
point to countries which are now classed  
as middle-income but are harbouring  
massive internal social inequality which  
would place large segments of the  
population well below the poverty line by  
any understanding of the term.<sup>1</sup> Similarly,  
UNICEF struggled in the 1980s to realise  
that universal coverage could mean only  
reaching a good proportion of children,  
unless certain difficult political decisions  
were made about working with child  
workers, soldiers, street children and so on.

So in what ways are the MDGs different?  
The MDGs on the face of it at least  
appear to be a nice, simple way for civil  
servants and politicians to work: they set  
out quite narrow goals, which seem on



see article on page 5

the surface to be tangible and realisable. The danger, however, is that people start to believe that the goals represent some form of achievable reality – removing poverty by 2015 for example – without difficult decisions having to be made and without acknowledging that for some of the world's poor, an achievement of the goals will mean very little, if anything. One of the downsides of these goals is the temptation to 'depoliticise development'. We are already seeing a weakening of the good governance agenda which is being sacrificed to the need for reduced transaction costs in donor agencies, which in theory can be achieved through sector-wide and budgetary support programmes. Meanwhile, governance and grass-roots democracy take a back seat.

Perhaps even more worrying than official aid trends is the degree to which governmental donors are pushing NGOs to fit into the agendas set by the MDGs, encouraging them to narrow their focus to these goals and to the areas of the world where they hope success might be achieved. For example, it will be easier in theory to achieve results in fast growing Asian economies than the sadly stagnant (and often deteriorating) African economies. Similarly, it will be easier to achieve progress towards the goals by improving the situations of the least poor within countries; small proportional changes, amongst certain segments of the population, will make the figures look good.

Meanwhile many groups of people, for whom political and economic power ensures their economic, political and social subordination and exclusion, remain outside the reach of narrowly focused aid programmes and those who are included are subject to potential vagaries of donor priorities and policies due to the aid-based nature of the remedy. As increasing numbers of donors try to centre their assistance on a small number of countries, and attempt to influence the policies of NGOs to do likewise, one wonders what future remains for the poor in countries not included in the ever shrinking list. If the gini coefficient<sup>2</sup> were used to decide on the allocation of aid, rather than national averages, this would mean admitting the reality of the political and social control of

wealthy élites at the expense of large groups living in poverty. This makes a simple economic interpretation of poverty as a shortage of resources less credible.

Commitment to the MDGs is no doubt worthy. However, we need to be wary of allowing them to be used as an excuse for avoiding difficult political issues, and ignoring the very real complexity of human development in its widest understanding. Development cannot, and should not, be reduced to simple physical and technical indicators and we should question the real motives of those organisations and donors who adopt such methods. Is it because they are more concerned with being seen to achieve something (however abstract) rather than really believing that they can achieve developmental aims which tangibly improve the lives of the world's poor? Or is it more to do with institutional survival and functioning of governmental and inter-governmental aid institutions? Or has the aid industry merely fallen into the trap of setting targets, politically acceptable to their domestic constituency, which can be endlessly redrawn (or quietly forgotten) as happens with the target culture in domestic services? In addition, the MDGs place excessive responsibility on Southern governments to meet tangible, time-bound targets (MDGs 1–7), whilst Northern governments are responsible for the vague goal (containing vague targets) of 'developing a global partnership for development' (MDG 8), leading one to question who will be ultimately blamed for a failure to meet the goals.

NGOs and civil society groups do not exist as instruments of official aid, and thus should be making their own decisions as to whether they want to dedicate themselves entirely to the MDGs. There are many other issues and social groups that can legitimately claim our attention. It may be that one of the goals fits ideally to the aims of your agency, but many other organisations find themselves trying to shoe horn their real objectives artificially into an MDG format. Civil society, as the name infers, is an integral part of society that is neither of the state nor the commercial sector. It is not there merely as a delivery mechanism for a specific set of international goals.

We need to ensure that we maintain a vision of social justice, gender equity, and human development that relates to more than just the MDGs. We also need to recognise the political obstacles that, frankly, will not be overcome by simply ignoring them and agreeing 'blank cheque' forms of development financing. We need targeted advocacy where it matters, for real improvements in livelihoods, rather than allowing the world to set targets so general that everyone can happily agree with them in principle, and then ignore them in practice!

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#### Notes

1. A recent DFID report on Peru notes that whilst the per capita GNP is in the region of 2,300 dollars, almost half the population survive on less than a dollar a day. Such inequalities are growing internationally, not falling.
2. The gini coefficient is a measure of inequality, used to measure income inequality.

#### Millennium Development Goals

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

# Engaging the Community in Poverty Reduction Strategies and the Millennium Development Goals in Central Asia

A visit to villages in Northern Kyrgyzstan with DFID in summer 2004 (looking at how community groups can input into the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy [PRS]), and a series of round tables with other civil society players, showed how difficult co-ordination still is in one of the focus countries for British aid in the region. Despite the presence of an active NGO sector and good relations between it and government agencies on the ground, high-level civil society involvement in the Poverty Reduction Strategy process has faltered. Thus, many NGO leaders are frankly disappointed by the failure of government and international agencies to move past the initial consultation stages to partnership in the implementation and evaluation of the strategies. Meanwhile, a small improvement in Kyrgyzstan's economic fortunes (as is seen elsewhere in the region) is overshadowed by concerns regarding inefficiency and corruption in state structures and the dynastic tendencies of presidential power.

Connecting the efforts of community groups at the local level (repairing Soviet era infrastructure, building new facilities, setting up self-help groups and micro-credit schemes) with national debates or 'goals' (such as PRS and MDGs) requires a major step forward for civil society organisations. Their resources and capacity to analyse community problems and their own work must be increased, and the 'social partnership' relations with government need to be enhanced. INTRAC's own work in the region has focused on joint NGO efforts to evaluate poverty programmes, and to use the informal data on needs and priorities that the sector can uniquely provide. The next stage of this work will concentrate on the provincial level, where the potential for cross-sectoral collaboration is good but PRS and MDG data are less available. Partners suggested that gender and micro-finance are two areas where NGOs can make a contribution to the analysis.

The MDGs are a welcome addition to the development debate, if for no other reason than they are clearer than most attempts to

describe poverty reduction targets, and can focus efforts accordingly (albeit, with their own limitations, as outlined elsewhere in this issue of *Ontrac*). At a UNDP regional workshop on the role of CBOs in fighting poverty, two main questions were highlighted: what does poverty mean at the local level, and how far are public services meeting needs?<sup>1</sup> Community groups could give voice to local views by helping to answer these. This certainly gives a practical focus. But committed champions will be required to get these voices heard at higher policy levels.

The UNDP's 2003 report on progress towards MDGs in Tajikistan, the poorest country in the region, shows that it is unlikely to reach targets on gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, malaria and TB reduction, or clean water provision. Detailed figures on the eight main goals and 18 sub-targets are accompanied by a presidential plea for debt relief and more external investment. A report by a local research agency, Sharq, confirmed this position, citing GDP at 241 US dollars per capita in 2003 and a variety of studies showing that over 60 per cent of people are living below the poverty line.<sup>2</sup>

During 2004, INTRAC ran a series of pilot workshops in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to train NGOs in monitoring and evaluation methods and at the same time collect data on civil society involvement in anti-poverty programmes. In Tajikistan, a monitoring unit within the presidential administration, together with an expert group of international agencies, co-ordinates work around the PRS. Head of the unit Nozigul Hushvakhtova comments: 'We welcome NGOs and need to define their role in PRS implementation more clearly, with an emphasis on the qualitative indicators and getting the benefits of NGO wide networks and closeness to the population'. In the past, 'NGOs did projects for international donors in parallel with government, now we need to bring them together'. She sees PRS and MDGs as a 'single process'.<sup>3</sup> The monitoring unit plans to commission a small number of NGOs to carry out evaluation studies. INTRAC's partner NGO Manizha is

discussing implementing a series of workshops on poverty issues for parliamentary deputies elected in March 2005 and NGO Avrora hopes to contribute a study on at-risk youth. The director of Avrora argues that NGOs are important in the process as they often have valuable new ideas and methodologies, but acknowledges that they often lack resources to apply these ideas or share them with local government. Therefore the link between government and NGOs is a welcome and useful one.

Key findings from Oxfam Tajikistan's work on livelihoods, gender equity and access to water in the southern province of Khatlon show that rural incomes remain stagnant, women and girls face cultural and institutional impediments to employment, and poor communities still lack the services they expect from government.<sup>4</sup> The leader of the civil society support centre in the town of Kulyab comments that too many village community structures are still dependent on one external donor. Better agency coordination, more information and education programmes are needed to support civil society participation in this area. NGO input is urgently needed in the monitoring of MDGs and PRS, but their capacity must be developed so that they can contribute from an objective and independent position.<sup>5</sup>

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## Notes

1. Christine Musisi, UNDP regional office Bratislava, at the FSU sub-regional workshop 'Strengthening the Role of CBOs in Poverty Reduction Strategies', Bishkek, November 2003.

2. Mini-Review on Poverty Issues and Civil Society Role in Poverty Reduction in Tajikistan, Dushanbe 2004 (for INTRAC).

3. Interview for *Ontrac*, March 2005.

4. Oxfam Tajikistan, Community Situation Indicators, report for PRSP Monitoring Group, November 2004.

5. Interview for *Ontrac*, March 2005.

## capacity building news

Welcome to Capacity Building News No. 18. In this edition Mia Sorgenfrei provides an outline and explains the purpose of the *learning processes* encompassing INTRAC's Praxis Programme activities. She focuses on two specific aspects of organisational capacity building: *Evaluation and Impact Assessment*, and *Values and Power* – topics of particular relevance to this issue of *Ontrac* as they are likely to have implications on the extent to which civil society organisations will be able to contribute to the pursuit and monitoring of the MDGs.

INTRAC's *raison d'être* is to enable civil society organisations (CSOs) to fulfil their mission more effectively by helping these organisations enhance the quality of their efforts to alleviate poverty and promote social transformation. The Praxis Programme indirectly contributes to this mission via its support to innovative and contextually appropriate practice and research in the field of organisational capacity building. To this end, we wish to develop further our understanding of why some capacity building work has had positive impacts, while other efforts to build capacity have had minor, or even negative effects. We are also increasingly aware that the prevailing power relations in the systems in which CSOs operate significantly influence the types of activities which CSOs are able to carry out – and how they carry them out. One way to counterbalance this dynamic is to ensure that CSOs have a strong sense of identity and explicit values that are reflected in their organisational mission and ways of working, and there is scope for emphasising this in organisational capacity building practice.

### Engaging with Practitioners through the Praxis Learning Processes

The Praxis Programme aims to stimulate mutual learning based on the exchange and analysis of organisational capacity building experiences by a wide range of civil society support providers. It is our view that local capacity building practitioners in developing and transitional countries have a key part to play in generating new ideas and approaches.

We are gradually initiating learning processes around selected key topics that appear to be of particular interest. Current key topics include: *Values and Power*, *Organisational Learning*, *Leadership*, *Analytical and Adaptive Capacity*, *Organisational Capacity Building at a Community Level*, *Cross-Cultural Management*, *Capacity Building from different Contextual Perspectives* (e.g. *Francophone*, *Hispanic*, *Central Asian*, *Chinese*), *Capacity Building in the Context of HIV/AIDS*, *Exchange and Dissemination of Capacity Building Approaches*, *M&E*, and *Impact Assessment*.

For each key topic the learning processes will encompass elements such as:

- The production of a Praxis Paper providing an overview of current thinking around the key topic at the beginning of the process, as well as a Praxis Guide as the final outcome of the process.
- The establishment of learning groups, and the organisation of workshops and seminars to promote reflection, analysis, and learning.
- Support to local practitioners to document and disseminate experiences (for example through Praxis Notes), as well as the commissioning of case studies and further research.
- The dissemination and exchange of information via Praxis publications, the interactive Praxis Interchange pages on the new INTRAC website, and the network of capacity building organisations which the Praxis Programme is building up.

Some of these learning processes have already started for key topics such as *Organisational Learning* and *Francophone Approaches to Capacity Building*. Based on our experience so far, it is clear that each process is unique, because it is organically shaped by initiatives and ideas emerging among practitioners and researchers, both external and internal to INTRAC. It is hoped that the learning processes will lead to a new understanding of the key topics which will then inform policy debates, either directly or indirectly. *If you have ideas or experiences you would like to share, or would like to be involved in taking any of the key topics forward, please contact us at [praxis@intrac.org](mailto:praxis@intrac.org)*

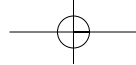
### Impact Assessment of Organisational Capacity Building

In order to decide which organisations to support, and what programmes and projects to fund, decision-makers are increasingly demanding detailed explanations of possible outcomes and impacts, preferably linked to the MDGs. Capacity building initiatives are not exempt from such demands, despite the fact that they are often characterised by complex, longer-term processes with

indirect effects. To date, the knowledge generated about the actual impacts of organisational capacity building has been limited. Therefore, it is important to gather experiences from the field and analyse them to derive lessons learnt.

Praxis Paper No. 2, '**Rising to the Challenges: Assessing the Impacts of Organisational Capacity Building**' (John Hailey, Rick James and Rebecca Wrigley, INTRAC February 2005) suggests that assessing the impacts of organisational capacity building, which is characterised by intrinsically complex, intangible and often ill-defined processes, is particularly complicated. While much progress has been made, it is clear that impact assessment is a rapidly changing field in which there is often a lack of clarity regarding its primary purpose. It is therefore important to understand the particular characteristics of organisational capacity building more clearly, and identify or develop appropriate approaches tailored to these characteristics. This entails exploring whether it is possible or even desirable, to make a direct link between cause and effect (i.e. between effective organisations and developmental change). In addition, innovative impact assessment approaches would need to rise to the challenges of:

- Measuring what is important, not merely what is easy
- Capturing and assessing the systemic, multi-dimensional and dynamic nature of organisational change with simplicity and clarity
- Using a variety of quantitative and qualitative processes
- Involving a greater degree of participation by local communities and incorporating their stories and experiences
- Balancing 'core' principles such as trust, equality, ownership, reliability, credibility and legitimacy, with flexibility to adapt to differing contexts
- Recognising and responding to the needs and agendas of different stakeholders
- Using methods to analyse and consolidate information from different sources with some degree of consistency and comparability



Impact assessments seem to be more effective when they are linked to improved practice within an organisational environment where learning and experimentation is prioritised. Only then can information collected and knowledge shared be used constructively for critical reflection and improved practice. However, there are currently few incentives for learning and openness. Without an explicit recognition of power imbalances by all parties involved, many participating organisations feel insecure about disclosing weaknesses or failure particularly where this may be linked to funding considerations. The recent shift in emphasis from control and accountability towards learning offers room for optimism, but more could be done to address this constraint.

Finally, it is vital to provide the necessary investment of time and resources, both human and financial. This needs to be recognised by both participating organisations and their donors, otherwise such processes will be poorly implemented, generate little information of operational value, and suffer from limited credibility. Impact assessment should

therefore be seen as an investment that can add value to the organisation's ability to learn, rather than just an additional cost.

### Values and Power in Organisational Capacity Building

Organisational capacity building practice is fundamentally influenced both by the values we hold and the power dynamics of the system in which capacity building practitioners and the organisations they support, play a part. The Praxis Programme aims to provide a space for practitioners to develop a shared language and jointly reflect upon important issues about the impact of values and power, such as:

- How do power dynamics influence our choices regarding the design and implementation of capacity building processes?
- How explicit are we prepared to be about the values we 'carry' into the process?
- Are we prepared to embrace an approach to capacity building which brings values and power to the forefront, or are we actually more comfortable with 'technocratic' or 'instrumentalist' approaches?

- Even if we wanted to, do we have the means and opportunities to analyse and internalise the resulting understanding of how values and power relations are influencing our work at each and every stage of the process?
- Is there scope to be talking about a global 'family' of capacity building practitioners who are prepared to sign up to and be held accountable for an 'ethical' capacity building practice? What would that scenario look like?

In the light of the increasingly dominant 'accountability' and 'results' agendas that influence organisational capacity building processes and the development process in general (as evidenced by the focus on MDGs), the Praxis Programme wishes to open a debate around these questions. A Praxis Paper on this key topic is under preparation by INTRAC's Deputy Executive Director, Brenda Lipson.

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end of *capacity building news*

## INTRAC Publications

**Praxis Papers** can be downloaded for free from [www.intrac.org](http://www.intrac.org) (Praxis Programme section) – or you can order printed copies for £5.95 from the publications area of the site. New and forthcoming titles include:

- **Rising to the Challenges: Assessing the Impacts of Organisational Capacity Building** (Praxis Paper 2) by John Hailey, Rick James and Rebecca Wrigley

- **Organisational Learning for NGOs: Creating the Means, Motive and Opportunity** (Praxis Paper 3) by Bruce Britton
- **Building Organisational Resilience to HIV/AIDS: Implications for Capacity Building** (Praxis Paper 4) by Rick James
- **Building Analytical and Adaptive Capacity for Organisational Effectiveness** by Mia Sorgenfrei

New **PraxisNotes** are published on a regular basis and are only available online.

**For further information about INTRAC's publications please visit our website [www.intrac.org](http://www.intrac.org) or e-mail [swindsor-richards@intrac.org](mailto:swindsor-richards@intrac.org) to request a copy of our 2005 Publications Catalogue.**

## New Website visit [www.intrac.org](http://www.intrac.org) to see our brand new website

**O**ur new website went live in March 2005, and we celebrated with a fantastic launch party at the Frontline Club in London. Many thanks to Shelley Couper, Marketing Consultant, for her work in overseeing the whole project. Jacqueline Smith, INTRAC's Publishing Manager, is now responsible for the site and you can contact her at [jsmith@intrac.org](mailto:jsmith@intrac.org).

Exciting new features include:

- Themed arenas for INTRAC's three main areas: find information and resources on organisational capacity

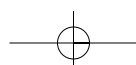
building, strengthening civil society and participatory development

- Praxis Interchange is an interactive part of the site: upload content about organisational capacity building and have your say
- Online purchasing of INTRAC Publications: simply fill your basket and click to order
- Resource Database: enter search terms to find materials you are interested in
- The Praxis Directory of Civil Society Support Providers: find your nearest

support provider or even add your own organisation

- Loband Filter: access other sites in text-only format to decrease download times from remote areas
- Events Calendar: on which you can publicise your own organisation's events

You will also find key information about our forthcoming conferences and training courses, current research initiatives, consultancies and programme activities.



# Monitoring the Millennium Development Goals: A Critical Review of Progress and the Mechanisms for Measurement

In September this year world leaders will meet at the UN Millennium +5 Summit to review progress made towards the MDGs. So, five years on from the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and with 10 years to go before the deadline for the majority of the goals, what progress has been achieved, is the world on track, and how have achievements affected the world's poorest?

## Mechanisms for Monitoring and Reporting on the MDGs

From 2001 to 2002 clear mechanisms and guidelines for monitoring the MDGs were established and developed by a number of official agencies<sup>1</sup> and experts who divided each of the goals by targets (18 in total) which are measured by 48 specific indicators (Hammond 2003). In 2003 a detailed document containing guidance on definitions, rational, concepts, and sources of data for these 48 indicators was prepared.<sup>2</sup> Since 2002 the UN Secretary General has produced annual reports outlining global and regional progress, and countries are now producing national monitoring reports<sup>3</sup> (Hammond 2003; UN Statistical Division 2005). Overall a combination of figures from national statistical services and international agencies are used to monitor the indicators (UN Statistical Division 2005).

## Worldwide and Regional Progress

So what has the progress been to date and is the world on track to meet the goals set by the 2015 deadline? To a great extent the answer to this question depends on the geographical level at which the MDGs are monitored, and the particular segment of the population being analysed. In relation to global achievements, progress has been modest at best, and figures provided for each of the goals<sup>4</sup> present a dismal picture. According to Vandemoortele (2003), only one of the goals, MDG7 (target 10 – halving the proportion of people without access to safe water by 2015) is on track globally. Regarding regional progress, achievements vary considerably,<sup>5</sup> with some regions making significant headway towards the attainment of certain goals and others making little, none or even negative progress (UN Millennium Project 2005). 2004 figures, for example, show that

Northern Africa is on track to achieve, or has met, 12 of the targets, and South-East Asia is on course to meet nine targets, whilst Sub-Saharan Africa is not on track to achieve any, with progress actually declining in relation to some. As the UN Millennium Project (2005:14) report highlighted, in Sub-Saharan Africa 'between 1990 and 2001 the number of people living on less than \$1 a day [MDG 1] rose from 227 million to 313 million, and the poverty rate rose from 45 percent of the population to 46 percent'.

## National and Sub-national Progress and Disparities

Progress varies further by countries within regions<sup>6</sup> and also within individual countries. These are variations which global, regional and national averages disguise. Sub-national variations may occur both geographically and between different socio-economic groups, for example according to age, gender, ethnicity, religion, and rural or urban location. These variations are important as they often highlight issues for which special measures and efforts need to be taken, and reveal disparities otherwise hidden in national averages (Vandemoortele 2003; UN Millennium Project 2005). In Zimbabwe for example, between 1988 and 1999, the under 5 mortality rate (U5MR) declined nationally by four percentage points. However, for the bottom quintile of the population it actually increased by 20 percentage points, and in 1999 'children in the poorest quintile had a U5MR that was four times higher than that for their counterparts in the richest quintile' (Vandemoortele 2003:12). Figures illustrate that similar situations have occurred in countries over a number of regions, including Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Indonesia, Kazakhstan and the Philippines (Vandemoortele 2003).

## So Who Benefits From Progress?

These examples illustrate not only the significant variations in progress made, but also the misleading nature of averages in relation to the daily lives of many of the world's poor. The mechanisms by which progress is achieved has been called into question, with evidence suggesting that

national average progress has often been realised by improving the situations of the least poor, which is easier to attain, with the poor remaining in the same situation and 'bypassed by "average" progress' (Vandemoortele 2003:10). In such circumstances average progress means very little to those living with the stark reality of poverty and experiencing a deterioration of their situation.

## Data Availability and Reliability

In addition, concerns abound regarding the methodology used to measure progress towards the MDGs, and the availability and reliability of data. In relation to MDG1, for example, it has been argued that 'current data on global poverty are simply not robust enough to make an informed judgement as to whether the world is on track towards the 2015 target' (Vandemoortele 2003:16). Indeed, many countries do not have the capacities to produce the data needed and where data is produced it is often of poor quality, resulting in the use of estimates (UN Statistical Division 2005). Furthermore, concerns have been voiced regarding the actual indicators used and their appropriateness for measuring poverty and the other goals, targets and indicators (Satterthwaite 2003).

## Conclusion

According to the current figures the world is not on track to meet the MDGs by 2015, and any progress that has been made has occurred in particular locations and amongst specific groups of the world's population, with many of the poor experiencing little or no change or a worsening of their situation. If the limited progress made is bypassing the poor, any achievements will be restricted and the adoption of the Millennium Declaration will have failed in its commitment to 'making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want' (UN Statistics Division 2005). The UN Millennium +5 summit needs to assess why progress has been so limited, and outline what can be done to reverse current trends and address the situation of the world's poorest. In addition any measurements of progress need to highlight the situation of the most

disadvantaged so that the reality of their situation is not concealed.

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### Notes and References

1. The 'Road Map' was prepared by the Secretaries of the UN, IMF, OECD and World Bank (Hammond 2003).
2. UN (2003) Indicators for Monitoring the MDGs: Definitions, Rational, Concepts, and Sources, New York: UN.
3. National reports are often produced with assistance from UN agencies and PARIS21 – launched in 1999 to assist countries in

developing their statistical capabilities (Hammond 2003).

4. For a summary of progress towards each goal see UN Millennium Project 2005: 23–7.

5. For an overall regional update on progress in relation to each goal see: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/mdg2004chart.pdf> Accessed:1/3/05.

6. For country tables go to: <http://www.developmentgoals.org/Data.htm>.

Hammond, B. (2003) 'Building the Statistical Capacity to Monitor the MDGs', *Development Policy Journal* 3: 47–52.

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## INTRAC Sixth Evaluation Conference 2006

April 2006

Europe

**Final Registration Deadline: 1 March 2006**

INTRAC's successful series of conferences on Monitoring and Evaluation continues with the **Sixth International Evaluation Conference** to be held in **April 2006**.

The conference agenda will be based on key issues emerging from a series of regional workshops that are being held throughout 2005 in Africa, Asia and Latin America. INTRAC's conferences aim to generate dialogue between practitioners, academics and policy makers, and the programme will provide space for plenary sessions as well as workshop presentations and discussions. Going beyond the monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes, the conference will examine the monitoring and evaluation of issues such as:

- advocacy
- capacity building
- networking
- civil society development
- PRSP processes
- gender mainstreaming
- conflict prevention

**For further information, please contact Zoë Wilkinson, Conference Organiser**  
[zwilkinson@intrac.org](mailto:zwilkinson@intrac.org)

## DEVELOPMENT POLICY REVIEW

EDITED BY DAVID BOOTH

Published on behalf of The Overseas Development Institute

**DEVELOPMENT POLICY REVIEW** is the refereed journal that makes the crucial links between research and policy in international development. Coverage includes the latest thinking and research on poverty-reduction strategies, inequality and social exclusion, property rights and sustainable livelihoods, globalisation in trade and finance, and the reform of global governance. Informed, rigorous, multi-disciplinary and up-to-the-minute, **DPR** is an indispensable tool for development researchers and practitioners alike.



### SAMPLE CONTENTS

Second-Generation Poverty Reduction Strategies: New Opportunities and Emerging Issues

Ruth Driscoll and Alison Evans

Livelihoods and Rural Poverty Reduction in Kenya

H. Freeman, F. Ellis and E. Allison

Design Contradictions in the 'New Architecture of Aid'? Reflections from Uganda on the Roles of Civil Society Organisations

Sarah Lister & Warren Nyamugasira

Politics, Evidence and the New Aid Agenda\*

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# INTRAC Training

We are pleased to announce our programme of short courses for May to September 2005:

## **Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation, 9th – 13th May 2005, Oxford UK**

Participatory methods are growing in importance as the development community recognises the need to involve all stakeholders in the process of development. This course introduces various approaches to managing a participatory monitoring and evaluation process within NGOs, and covers the limitations of more traditional linear, cause and effect interpretations.

## **Financial Management for Non-Specialists, 18th – 20th May 2005, London UK**

This course provides participants with the knowledge, practical skills and confidence to interpret and use financial information in order to have a constructive input to their own and their partners' organisations.

## **Advocacy and Policy Influencing, 6th – 10th June 2005, Oxford UK**

Participants are exposed to skills required to formulate effective advocacy strategies, implement appropriate work plans, and incorporate monitoring and evaluation systems.

## **Rights-Based Approaches to Development, 15th – 17th June 2005, London UK**

This course gives an in-depth overview of the concepts and methodologies of the rights-based approach to development. The shift to rights-based approaches implies that people's full rights as set out in international law are upheld and respected.

## **Capacity Building: An Organisational Approach, 4th – 8th July 2005, Oxford UK**

This is an introductory course on capacity building, focusing on understanding the process of capacity building and strengthening from the perspective of organisations. Capacity building takes place at different levels, such as at the individual level, or at a broader societal level. This course concentrates on building the capacity of organisations, and looks at this organisational approach for NGOs.

## **Thinking Strategically, 13th – 15th July 2005, London UK**

NGOs constantly have to make difficult choices when faced with the massive scale of poverty and distress, compounded by the limited resources of the non-profit sector. This and the nature of NGO work require strategic thinking and action. Strategic thinking is a dynamic process, which should be responsive to changing circumstances.

## **Civil Society Strengthening, 5th – 9th Sept 2005, Oxford UK**

The aim of this course is to explore the practice and theory behind programmes designed to strengthen civil society. Specifically we will look at issues around understanding what civil society is in different contexts and how to analyse it.

Discounted fees can be obtained if you apply eight weeks before the course start date.

Contact Agnes Daizi, Training and Logistics Administrator, [training@intrac.org](mailto:training@intrac.org) or call +44 (0) 1865 263040, or visit our website [www.intrac.org](http://www.intrac.org)

## INTRAC People

A big welcome to the five new members of staff who have joined INTRAC in the last few months. Dr. Kasturi Sen, who joins us as Research Director, has a wealth of international experience having worked for CIIR and OXFAM in Yemen, at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and recently as a Research Associate at the University of Cambridge. She has a degree in Philosophy, a Diploma in Social Policy and Planning in Developing Countries and a PhD from Exeter University on the Sociology and Economics of migrant labour in the Gulf. In addition, Hannah Warren has joined as a Researcher; Susie Prince has been appointed as a Programme Coordinator; Dr. Katie Wright-Revolledo comes to us from Bath University as a Senior Researcher; Gabriela Guzman joins us as Office Assistant; and, finally, Anna Winterbottom, as Library and Information Assistant.

Our goodbyes and best wishes for this period go to Abi Laing, Eliza Hilton and Frances Rubin as they embrace new challenges. John Beauclerk has changed the way he works with us from member of staff to Associate. We all miss John's company but are happy that we see him regularly and wish him great success too. Last, but not least, we are delighted to announce the safe delivery of Sophia Joanne Brehm, born to our Researcher Vicky Brehm.

**Written by Shelagh Windsor-Richards**

Resources Manager, INTRAC E-mail: [swindsor-richards@intrac.org](mailto:swindsor-richards@intrac.org)

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