

Economics from the Ground Up

CASE STUDY 1: The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is a set of **eight international development goals** that were established by the United Nations following a special Millennium Summit at the turn of the new millennium (the year 2000). At the time, there was a sense of outrage at the continuing level of extreme poverty worldwide, and the MDG represented a shared, global commitment to reducing this poverty, and relieving the worst forms of human deprivation.



To date, all 193 countries that are members of the UN, along with a number of large international organisations, have agreed to **achieve these goals by the year 2015**. In order to try and accelerate improvements in the lives of the poorest people in the world, each of the millennium development goals is quite specific, having targets and dates by which to achieve those targets.

Table 11.9 below outlines the eight millennium goals and their main target – how their achievement will be measured. Each of the goals has a number of sub-targets, but the main target has been focused on here.

Table 11.9: Millennium Development Goals and targets

Goal	Main target
Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Between 1990 and 2012, halve the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day.
Universal primary education	By 2012 all children, both boys and girls, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.
Gender equality	Eliminate gender disparity in all levels of education by 2015, and increase the number of women in wage employment and in national parliaments.
Child health	Between 1990 and 2015, reduce the under-five mortality rate by two thirds.
Maternal health	Reduce the maternal mortality rate by three quarters, and universal access to reproductive health, including access to effective contraception.
Combat HIV/AIDS and malaria	Universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDs by 2010, and halt the spread of the disease by 2015. Halt the spread of the occurrence of malaria by 2015.
Environmental sustainability	A series of targets including - to reduce biodiversity loss by 2010, halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015, improve the lives of slum dwellers and integrate sustainable development into all country policies and programmes.
Global partnership	Working with global organisations and private companies, share responsibility for improving the global trading system to address the special needs of the poorest countries, reducing the burden of debt on heavily-indebted poor countries, increasing access to affordable medications in poor countries, and improving access to communications technology around the globe.

The Millennium Development Goals: Case Study 1. For the exclusive use of purchasers of 'Economics from the ground up (1st edition)' Refer to page 328 of the text.

Will the world achieve the Millennium Development Goals?

There has been some debate and criticism about the uneven levels of achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. For example, following slow progress on the goals, in 2005, members of the G8 (a grouping of eight of the largest, most influential developed economies) agreed to provide more money to cancel debt in the world's poorest countries. This would allow them to divert resources into improving health, education and reducing poverty and improve the chance that the Millennium Development Goals would be achieved in those countries.

As budding economists, your job is to evaluate the performance of the global community in achieving the MDG.

Visit the UN MDG website at: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>. The website lists all the goals, and provides an overview on their level of achievement to date.

The UN also provides a site called MDG Monitor, which shows how specific countries are progressing in their efforts to achieve the goals. It includes examples of the goals and their achievement in action. Visit the <http://www.mdgmonitor.org/>

Task:

Choose any **three** of the Millennium Development Goals, and investigate the **extent** to which the goal has been achieved to date. Write up a brief report on your findings.

Your report should include:

1. An explanation of **why** you chose those particular goals. This may include why you think some goals are more important than others.
2. The **goals** and the **targets** for achievement of those goals.
3. An evaluation of the **extent to which the goals have been achieved to date**, what **challenges** remain, and whether or not the 2015 target will be reached.
4. An example of a '**success story**' for that goal. (These are available on the MDG Monitor.)
5. An explanation of how the achievement of each of your chosen goals is likely to **improve economic development and living standards** in the poorest countries of the world.