

ENID's approach to the Millennium Development Goals promotes the need for better targeting methods and integration among development targets. This will have a greater impact on youth and women in rural Upper Egypt, the most vulnerable segments of Egyptian society.

Egypt Beyond the Millennium Development Goals

ENID's Approach to the Post-
2015 Development Agenda

Egypt Network for Integrated Development

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General Overview:

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established and agreed upon by 189 nations and 23 international organizations in the year 2000 will come to an end in 2015. These MDGs have provided a new global framework to achieve a wide array of essential developmental targets using the fundamental concept of improving people's wellbeing as noted in Amartya Sen's 'Development as Freedom' and the foundation of the concept of Human Development.¹ The 8 goals contain 21 targets and 60 indicators designed for governments to accurately map their development progress, benchmarked to the base year 1990.² The new Human Development Index (HDI) consists of increasing life expectancy, improving standards of living (income), and strengthening education.³ It accurately proposes different conditions required for achieving human development, incorporating indicators for economic growth through increased income as well as improved social welfare.

Progress has been made by many developing nations in achieving targets for the numerous goals ahead of schedule. These include the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, the reduction in the number of people living in slums, and halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water. Extreme poverty (the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day) has been reduced from a staggering 47% in 1990 to 22% in 2010.⁴ Access to improved sources of drinking water has improved significantly, with more than 2.1 billion people gaining access to better water sources over the past 20 years. However, some targets have yet to be achieved to date and across countries despite policy implementations to accomplish them by 2015. The goal of reducing child mortality, for example, is within reach, and the proportion of undernourished people in developing countries decreased from 23.2% in the 1990 period to 14.9% in 2010.

The outlook is less optimistic for numerous other targets, where the likelihood of developing countries achieving positive outcomes by the year 2015 is very unlikely. In fact, due to numerous persisting challenges, many developing countries are regressing in achieving certain targets. Challenges include weak governance and institutions, poor starting conditions for meeting the goals, environmental degradation, and conflict, among others.⁵ Thus, certain regions including Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, and Western Asia, will not likely achieve most MDG targets by 2015. The MDG 2013 Progress Chart portrays a bleak situation for Sub-Saharan Africa, where 13 out of the 16 targets will not be reached if prevailing trends persist. The situation is less alarming in Northern Africa, where seven out of 16 targets will not be achieved.⁶ The problem is that the MDGs provide targets to achieve the 8 goals, yet lack a clear

¹ Amartya Sen. *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, 1999.

² UNStats. *Official List of MDG Indicators*.

³ United Nations Human Development Report, <http://hdr.undp.org/en>.

⁴ UNMDG Report 2013.

⁵ Bread for the World Institute, briefing paper, May 2008.

⁶ MDG Goals: 2013 Progress Chart.

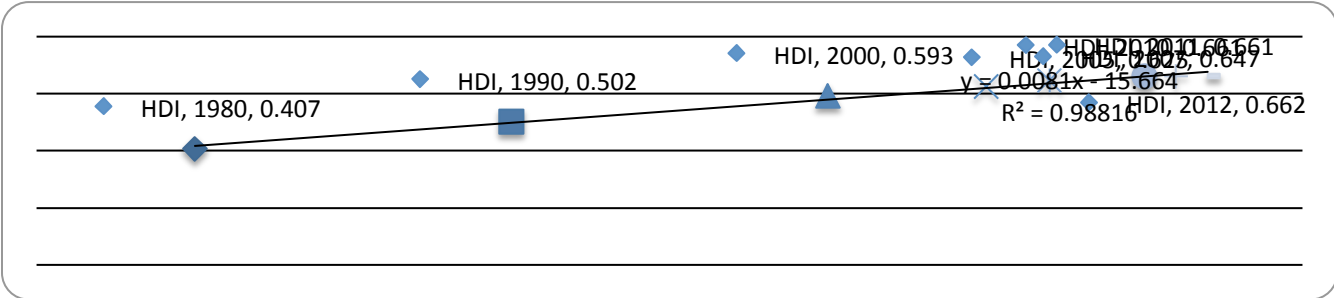
implementation mechanism that has impeded the ability of developing countries to tackle these challenges in the pursuit of the goals. The case of Egypt is no different where 11 targets across five goals remain below target levels, despite major achievements in ten targets across the 8 MDGs.

Egypt’s Progress on Achieving the MDGs:

Egypt has witnessed favorable progress in achieving many MDGs, improving its developmental prospects significantly in the past two decades. Of the 16 targets, three have already been achieved five years before the deadline, including halving income poverty between 1990 and 2015, reducing the under-five mortality rate, and halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Egypt has successfully achieved universal primary education (MDG 2), as the net enrolment ratio increased from 86% in 1990 to 96% in 2009.⁷ Yet one country assessment highlights major challenges that are yet to be effectively addressed, including high population growth, gender inequality, and youth unemployment.⁸ These challenges have persisted following the January 2011 revolution, and the unstable political and economic environment has in fact exacerbated key development constraints. Egypt is off track in achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people (Goal 1 Target 2). It also struggles to achieve universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it (Goal 6 Target 10), as well as steps to contain the growing hepatitis epidemic.

Egypt has progressed well in various other areas. Six targets are within reach if certain changes are made, and eight targets are very likely to be achieved. One shift that must take place in the new framework should be to ensure the optimum quality of education as a crucial stepping stone to long term growth. Egypt has also improved tremendously with regard reduction in child mortality (MDG 4), with under five mortality rates declining by two thirds by 2008. Indeed, these are major achievements in the pursuit of better livelihoods, and this is reflected in Egypt’s Human Development trends highlighted in Figure 1 below. Egypt must focus on areas that it still falls short in order to create considerable improvements in citizen’s wellbeing.

Figure 1: Egypt Human Development Index Trend 1980 to 2012



Source: UNDP Human Development Index Trends

⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Egypt MDG Report 2010.

One area that requires more attention, particularly with regard to the post-2015 development agenda is the need for better indicators for securing decent work for all Egyptians. This is especially important given that the unemployment rate for youth in Egypt is 21.5%. It must also be noted that youth account for a staggering 90% of total Egyptian unemployment across age groups.⁹ Another major issue that requires new approaches is gender inequality and disparity in Egypt. Issues that prevent the empowerment of women and girls in Egypt include low political participation rates (among the lowest in the world) where Egypt will not likely meet target 3.3 to reach 50% representation.¹⁰ Other prevalent issues with regard gender include female participation in the labour market, which was a mere 22% in the country as a whole, and as low as 6% in rural Upper Egypt in 2011.¹¹ The unprecedented levels of sexual harassment and violence against women are another key concern that must be addressed on the legal front.¹² Egypt also currently faces major challenges in achieving universal access to water and sanitation. Despite the increase in the number of people with improved water sources and improved sanitation facilities, much needs to be done to ensure sustainable approaches to environmental conservation and green economy given the inefficient usage of water in irrigation and consumption.

It is thus crucial to deliberate changes in indicators, targets and goals to address new development constraints and to adopt more effective means to tackle persisting challenges. In this regard, the new development agenda, through a more clearly defined MDG framework, will provide developing countries with better tools and implementing mechanisms to achieve their critical development goals within the new timeframe. One such change from the previous framework is the provision of 12 goals from eight in the previous framework. The achievement of Universal Primary Education (Goal 2) would be changed to “Provide Quality Education and Lifelong Learning”, addressing the new challenge of providing quality universal education. The increase in international demands for improved youth wellbeing as evinced by the Arab Spring has led to the deliberation of a new goal to “Create Jobs, Sustainable Livelihoods, and Equitable Growth”. This goal would contain indicators that ensure the increase in decent jobs by a certain percentage, a decrease in the number of youth not in employment or education, and an increase in new startups to create an enabling business environment.¹³ The Egyptian government must ensure that the most critical developmental constraints, as voiced by civil society, would be most effectively targeted by the new development framework, and the progress in this regard seems promising.

⁹ Survey of Young People in Egypt (SYPE) Final Report 2011.

¹⁰ Situation Analysis 2010, UNDP & Ministry of International Cooperation.

¹¹ HIECS 2010/2011, and Labor Force Sample Survey 2011.

¹² Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIECS) 2010/2011.

¹³ Information is based on current UNGA international deliberations in the realization of the new development framework, and is subject to change in the coming period.

A New Mechanism for the Implementation of MDGs:

New indicators are currently being deliberated for the post-2015 development agenda to better incorporate these concerns, yet an effective mechanism must be realized for national governments to avoid previous mistakes in implementation. The United Nations acknowledges these concerns in an Outcome Document drafted in September 2012 following a gathering at the United Nations General Assembly, where major discrepancies and gaps in the achievement of MDGs among developing countries are acknowledged.¹⁴ The report highlights specific challenges faced by developing countries in Africa, as well as middle-income countries, of which Egypt is represented. To meet these challenges, the UN promotes the scaling up of proven interventions across countries to assist the most disadvantaged and vulnerable citizens, and to implement the New Partnership for Africa's Development to promote international support to escalate the achievement of the most off-track MDGs.¹⁵

The most effective way to address these challenges is the creation of a new mechanism that will address the key country specific development impediments through a process of targeting geographically and by segment, establishing an integrated approach to development, and making use of better statistics to produce more robust, consistent and coherent indicators.¹⁶ The Egypt Network for Integrated Development (ENID), a UNDP project working to improve income-generating activities in Qena, (an Egyptian governorate located in Upper Egypt), can be regarded as an effective intervention that meets the aforementioned criteria to be scaled up for the post-2015 development agenda.

The Need for Strategic Targeting:

Geographic Targeting:

Geographic targeting is an essential tool to assess the specific regions with conditions that are most demanding of a developmental intervention. In the case of Egypt, geographic targeting is crucial to concentrate developmental interventions in the most critical and vulnerable areas—namely Upper Egypt governorates in the case of Egypt. Geographic targeting differs among countries and requires the use of information at different administrative levels and various poverty indicators.¹⁷ The need for geographic targeting must be better implemented within the post-2015 development agenda. Nations need to adopt a strategic targeting approach to identify their most crucial needs in order to adopt an effective national strategy to meet the numerous development indicators. Without this, nations will repeat previous mistakes and inefficiencies in their pursuit of meeting the goals within a timely process.

In the case of Egypt, ENID has concluded that villages in rural Upper Egypt are the areas at greatest risk of a vicious cycle of underdevelopment in which poverty is rampant, unemployment is high, and access to services is minimal. Among the 1000 poorest villages, 941

¹⁴UNGA, Special Event 25 September: Outcome Document, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/L.4, 2012.

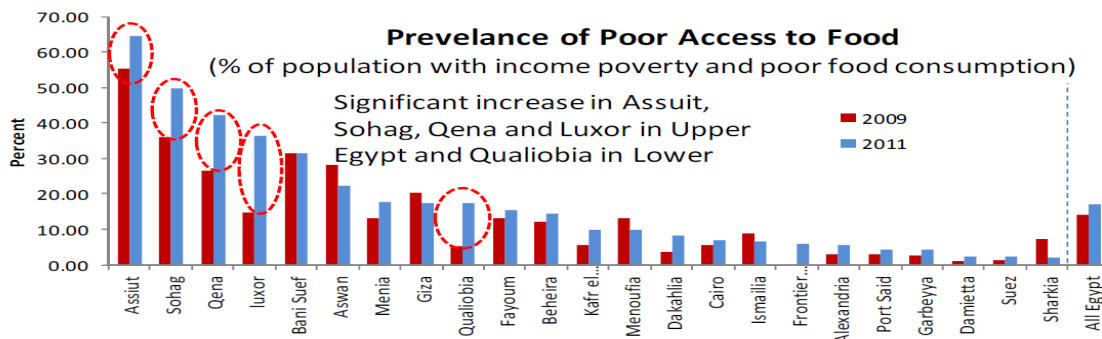
¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Health in the Post- 2015 Development Agenda, June 2012.

¹⁷ Millennium Development Goals and Geographic Targeting in Mongolia, 2009.

are located in 7 Upper Egypt governorates including 112 in Qena (the fourth highest), with a total population of around ten million people of which 1.5 million live in Qena.¹⁸ Extensive food insecurity is also concentrated in Upper Egypt governorates, with the prevalence of poor access to food ranging from medium to very high.¹⁹ The situation is in fact regressing rapidly in many Upper Egyptian governorates, where the percentage of total population with income poverty and poor food consumption increasing significantly in Assuit, Sohag, Qena and Luxor as portrayed in Figure 2 below. If policy changes are made, Egypt may achieve MDG 1.C, halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, by the 2015 deadline.²⁰ Current trends reinforce the need for strategic targeting in order to successfully progress on the MDGs, and it is crucial for better targeting mechanisms to be implemented in the framework of the post-2015 development agenda to ensure developing countries have the necessary resources to meet the agreed upon targets through relevant indicators.

Figure 2 Prevalence of Poor Access to Food



Source: Figure 10 in CAPMAS and World Food Program (May 2013), Heba Ellaithy and Dina Armanios

In Egypt, regional disparities are vast and rural Upper Egypt accounts for the largest concentration of income poverty (43.7%). Also, youth living in rural areas account for 59% of Egypt’s total youth population but a striking 85% of Egypt’s poor youth.²¹ ENID recognizes the need to concentrate development interventions in the areas that are most vulnerable, where pockets of poverty exist with a great disparity in wellbeing. Breaking the cycle of poverty first and foremost requires pinpointing the areas where a development intervention will have the greatest impact. It is clear that the cycle of poverty is most profound in rural Upper Egypt, where citizens have less access to public goods and services. It is for this reason that ENID has created a web of interventions in around 30 villages in 10 districts across Qena governorate in Upper Egypt, where 941 of Egypt’s 1000 poorest villages are located. These interventions are promoted initially by identified opportunities in the region, such as tourism and environment; desert and organic agriculture; readymade garments; and handicraft clusters - to create 45 innovative products that would spur economic activity and increase income-generation among the most vulnerable. The South is a region with much incentive to expand off-farm employment

¹⁸ Egypt’s Poverty Map Report.
¹⁹ World Food Program, 2013.
²⁰ Egypt MDG Progress Report 2010.
²¹ EHDR 2010 Message Two.

and readymade garments in the manufacturing sector, to take advantage of lower costs and higher value added in agro-processing and garment industries. If strategic bets are taken, and policies reformed to further incentivize this shift, major progress in achieving the MDGs will be made through poverty alleviation, employment expansion and improved access to basic services.

Segment Targeting:

Youth and women are the most vulnerable segments of Egyptian society. 24.4 million Egyptians are between the ages of 15-30 years, representing a bulge that has driven the uprising in January 2011 for dignity and social justice. Indeed, this youth bulge requires unprecedented strategies to promote market expansions to absorb the youth who enter the labor force annually. One major problem is the mismatch between the education acquired and skills needed to meet market needs or excel in the private sector. The situation is bleak for women in Egyptian society. Egypt is ranked 120 among 128 countries in a recent Gender Gap Report.²² Low labor participation, declining job opportunities and weak political participation has marginalized half the Egyptian population from thriving and actively contributing in societal progress. This situation is exacerbated outside the Greater Cairo Metropolitan Region (GCMR). Breaking the cycle of poverty is particularly challenging given the prevalence of illiteracy, at 17% of the total youth sample, which mostly exists in rural Upper Egypt. Also, around four million youth suffer from one of seven severe deprivations, and 5.9 million youth (one out of three) experienced one or more severe deprivation.²³ The current MDG framework, despite goal 3 of promoting gender equality and empowering women, contains minimal substance on improving the wellbeing of youth and women in society. The post-2015 development framework must factor in the plight of youth and women globally who are at an increasing disadvantage in the development process.

ENID's interventions are wholly focused on bettering the lives of youth and women in the numerous interventions across Qena. These interventions are not restricted solely to the improvement of economic performance, but the enhancement of socio-cultural wellbeing as well. Among the main achievements include the establishment of one preschool class in Abbassa village, the opening of a mobile health unit impacting four villages in Qous district, and the training of 30 teachers on literacy education for girls. ENID has developed 2 youth centers through the Youth Center Initiative (YCI) with the goal of shifting the focus from sports activities to a full community center where services for employability are also found. This is done through enhanced capacity building trainings for staff in the youth centers in managerial and soft skills among other areas to promote holistic development for youth in villages across Qena. Under the One Village One Product (OVOP) and Cluster Development models, ENID has so far introduced 13 new products in 13 villages, including glass casting, paintings and mosaic art, camel bone sculpting, and khayameya (traditional patchwork). Jewelry is another product

²² Gender Gap Report 2013.

²³ EHDR 2010. Youth living in absolute poverty are those who suffer from two or more severe deprivations. The severe deprivations of basic human needs include food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information.

established in Dandara district that has quickly become a successful and sustainable enterprise for 22 young female beneficiaries involved in the project. ENID's handicrafts projects are designed to provide productive training for youth, especially girls, who are among the most vulnerable. As of now, 168 youth beneficiaries, of which 136 are women and 32 are men, have taken part in the production of these handicrafts to provide new gateways for income-generating activities. The goal is that these interventions will be scaled up to spur Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) at the local village level in the South, where the demand for these interventions is high and where initial capital requirements are low. The very essence of success for these programs is accurate targeting to address the most at risk in Egyptian society.

ENID- The Case for an Integrated Approach to Target Implementation:

One recognized constraint faced by developing countries in achieving the MDGs is the lack of integration between key targets, given the weak administrative and networking mechanisms involved in fulfilling the goals. For instance, decreasing poverty (goal 1) is recognized as separate from reducing child mortality (goal 4) and ensuring environmental sustainability (goal 7). This approach becomes problematic with the realization that most developmental processes are interlinked, and separating these processes makes it more challenging for nations to achieve synergies and shared experiences on some of the key indicators. The literature points to the impact of better quality in education on the improvement of maternal health in the reduction of poverty, for example. For target 5.A, ENID will contribute to maternal health through the mobile health care unit for mothers and their children enrolled in primary schools in four villages in Qous district, and contribute strongly to the achievement of target 1.b, achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, through the various crafts interventions, of which one has become a successful enterprise. The key is that many different interventions are taking place simultaneously in the same villages. An integrated approach will ensure that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Crucial Role of Networking in the Integrated Approach:

Networking is a crucial part of ENID's integrated approach to development. ENID works with policy makers at the central level, government agencies at the governorate level, and local authorities at the district level. ENID adopts a core prospect noted in the 2008 Egypt Human Development Report for the need to engage with civil society organizations (CSOs) to ensure the sustainability of the various development interventions to achieve the MDGs. Without such a sustainable approach to development, where CSOs play a crucial role on the ground in implementation, development would not be feasible.²⁴ It is for this reason that ENID works with more than 20 CSOs and NGOs in a diverse range of interventions. Some affiliated NGOs include the Dandara Cultural Center for ENID's jewelry and glass casting projects, the Community Development Organization for wood turning and arabesque, sculpting with camel bone, and a sewing workshop for 40 girls in four different villages. The Women's Development Organization NGO is affiliated in the tableware pottery work and a second glass-casting project. Engagement of CSOs is a win-win situation, as they provide the best opportunity for women and youth to

²⁴ EHDR 2008.

learn at the grassroots level not only a skill but are guided on business, finance and marketing. They become more socially active as they engage in communal tasks and goals. CSOs, with their awareness and deep engagement with local communities, guide and enhance the impact of interventions by creating a local management hub. It is thus crucial for the post 2015 development agenda to create policy reforms further empowering CSOs in the financial and legal context.

Another important step regarding networking for the MDGs is identifying which government ministry, or group of ministries, is responsible for overseeing the achievement of country targets. As part of an integrated approach to development, more cooperation needs to take place across relevant ministries to build harmoniously on previous gains, avoid duplication and centrally document progress for better monitoring & evaluation. ENID has worked to facilitate a more effective networking environment, engaging with and across 7 relevant ministries including the Ministry of International Cooperation, the Ministry of Planning, and the Ministry of Local Development, to promote development projects in Upper Egypt. The next step, one regarded as crucial in the post-2015 developmental framework, is creating an Egyptian National Action Plan for tackling these key constraints, as noted previously in the 2008 Egypt Human Development Report.

The Need for Better Statistics:

To further facilitate the achievement of MDGs on a national level, it is necessary for Egypt to strengthen statistics and information gathering frameworks. The correct development targets can only be agreed upon if a genuine shift in people's livelihoods and wellbeing is defined, properly documented and accounted for. This also emphasizes the need for strong monitoring frameworks to assess progress across time and shift vital resources where they are needed most. Given the trend in current deliberations regarding the post-2015 development framework following the Rio+20 Conference held in 2012 and the Outcome Document released soon after, more focus by developing countries is being placed on effective targeting on a case-by-case basis.

Recommendations:

Egypt needs to work hard in the coming year to progress as fast as possible on MDGs yet to be achieved. This must be done while simultaneously drafting a plan for a national framework for the post-2015 development agenda. A number of working groups representing government ministries, CSOs, and international organizations have convened at the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to create a national framework in the lead up to the high level UNGA sessions on the post 2015 MDGs starting September 2014. ENID is a strong example, portraying the need for a new mechanism to more effectively progress on the numerous MDG targets and goals. In this regard, essential steps to create an effective development framework will include the following:

- The need for proper targeting to identify the various areas that are most vulnerable and where regressing employment prospects compound a cycle of poverty. Women and youth in rural Upper Egypt were identified by ENID, through geographic and segment

targeting, as facing many disproportional challenges in achieving national MDG targets and improving livelihoods in the near future.

- The need for an integrated approach at the ministry, governorate and district levels as well as across these bodies to achieving the diverse web of MDG goals and targets in one coherent national context.
- Networking channels must be strengthened to ensure the sustainability of project interventions and provide greater impact to project beneficiaries within national goals.
- Women & youth specifically face compounding challenges that can only be tackled by providing them with capacity building programs and income-generating activities to thrive in the work environment where there is a recognized market demand.
- The need for better gathering and usage of statistics to provide a more accurate picture of the nation's progress on the numerous targets and goals. This will allow for a more rapid response to targets that are, on a yearly basis, either stagnant or are regressing. This also requires a stronger monitoring and evaluation framework in development projects nationwide to ensure the sustainability of developmental interventions in the long term.

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