



Women in Bangladesh working on a World Food Programme project to improve agriculture. Image from Friends of the WFP.

Eradicating extreme poverty & hunger in Bangladesh...

The World Food Programme, the Food and Agricultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund have improved maternal and child nutrition, towards achieving MDG1, in one of Bangladesh's poorest regions.

The program included: enhancing food security through homestead gardens and income-generating activities; improving education in schools through school feeding; improved infant and young child feeding practices; and prevention of micro nutrient deficiencies, particularly anaemia, among children.

...While promoting gender equality and empowering women towards achieving MDG3

Changing the status of women in the region was both an issue to address and an outcome of the program. Homestead gardens have given women additional income and increased control over family finances, and they are also more confident in dealing with government officials and travelling to access health services. *"Earlier I thought money should be kept with my husband. But after my involvement with the program I have realized that I must have some resources in my hands. I have become aware,"* said Rina, a participant in the program.

The MDGs have had success since 2000, but unfinished business remains

In September 2000, world leaders came together to adopt the [United Nations Millennium Declaration](#). The Declaration committed nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty, and set out a series of eight time-bound targets that we know as the **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs). The list of MDGs is set out in the Attachment.

The MDGs have led to the following differences in the lives of millions of people:

- Extreme poverty has been halved five years ahead of the 2015 deadline.
- 90 per cent of children in developing regions now participate in primary education.
- Remarkable gains have also been made in the fight against malaria and tuberculosis, along with improvements in all health indicators.
- The probability of a child dying before age five has been nearly cut in half over the last two decades, sparing about 17,000 lives of children every day.
- The proportion of people without access to improved sources of water has been reduced by half.

However, many countries have made limited progress towards other goals such as reducing maternal and infant mortality rates, reducing undernutrition and increasing availability of safe sanitation. Therefore, while the combined work of governments, civil society and multilateral organisations has achieved impressive results, a renewed commitment is required to complete the MDGs and meet new global challenges and objectives for the coming years.

What next? In 2015, Australia has an historic opportunity to adopt the next set of global goals

In the last three years, members of the United Nations have been negotiating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will be the guide to policies on poverty and development for the next 15 years. In **September**, leaders will gather to make what the UN Development Program calls “**a historic pledge to end poverty. Everywhere. Permanently.**”

The proposed SDGs (see Attachment) build on the MDGs in areas such as eliminating poverty, improving equitable access to education, ensuring access to safe water and improving health standards. In addition, the SDGs also call for increased attention to inclusive economic growth, sustainable management of the world’s resources and reinvigorating the global partnership for development. Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs are goals for ALL countries.

Advocates like you can send a message that we want these goals endorsed, adopted and resourced.

Australia can contribute to reinvigorating the partnership for development by:

- Committing to having the Foreign Minister attend the SDG Summit in September, which would show ownership of the goals which are adopted – *she is likely to attend, but we can also emphasise the importance of this commitment.*
- Joining other countries in endorsing the SDGs as the basis for national development objectives and policies in the next 15 years.
- Committing additional resources towards meeting the SDGs, which would include rebuilding the Australian aid program after recent cuts to the program.
- Having Australia’s aid policies and spending priorities reflect the priorities of the SDGs.

Take action: Write a letter to the editor calling on the Foreign Minister to attend the Sustainable Development Goals Summit and commit to endorsing, adopting and resourcing the goals.

Tips for writing your letter this month – you can see more tips [here](#)

1. **Write as soon as possible.** Complete and submit your letter immediately after this month’s Fact & Action Call. An imperfect, submitted letter is infinitely more powerful than a perfect, non-submitted letter.
2. Keep it **short** and simple. Letters to the editor should be less than 180 words. Follow the **EPIC** format – engage your reader, state the **problem**, inform about solutions, **call to action**.
3. If possible, **respond** to a published article and react passionately, incorporating your message. The SDGs are wide-ranging, so articles on health, education, nutrition, access to water or availability of jobs (in Australia or overseas) provide opportunities for responses.
4. **Submit** it, including your full name, address and phone number.

See all newspaper [contact details](http://results.org.au/get-involved/resources-tools) at: results.org.au/get-involved/resources-tools

If you need help, please ask your Group Leader, or Gina - our Grassroots Engagement Manager. The impact of your action can be multiplied if RESULTS knows about it – so please let your Group Leader or Gina know what action you’ve taken - info@results.org.au