

Introductory Note

Community of Practice: Promotion of Orphans and vulnerable children in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased that you have accepted to take part in a four-week-long moderated e-Discussion: ‘**Promotion of the inclusion of Orphans and vulnerable children in the MDGs**’. The e-Discussion, organized by the MDGs Poverty Analysis and Monitoring Section (MPAMS) located within the African Center for Gender and Social Development (ACGSD) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), aims to identify gaps in existing MDGs targets and indicators.

Halfway through the MDGs, reviews have highlighted that the current MDG framework may not adequately incorporate and address issues of social integration, while existing targets and indicators may not accurately capture progress with regard to the inclusion of socially vulnerable groups. Amongst all regions, the African continent faces the greatest challenges in reaching the MDGs. Thus, the need to measure progress made towards the MDGs in ways that accurately portray the social inclusion of OVCs -amongst other excluded groups-, is crucial for the development of effective socio-economic policies.

It is with this in mind that through the next four weeks, our discussions will focus on identifying the multiple manifestations of vulnerability of children and orphans, on sharing national experiences with regard to policies to improve the social inclusion of OVCs into mainstream development and the MDGs and on identifying additional targets and indicators that can be used to monitor the social inclusion OVCs.

The following questions have been formulated to guide the discussions

Week 1: June 23, 2008 - June 29, 2008

Theme: Review of the prevalence and magnitude of OVCs within African countries as a socially excluded group.

1. What is the definition of orphan and vulnerable children in your country? How many orphans are there in your country? What is the number of vulnerable children in your country? Is the size of both groups known? What are the factors driving the growth in the number of OVCs in your countries?
2. What are the main areas of their exclusion?

Week 2: June 30, 2008 - July 06, 2008

Theme: Policies including the monitoring of the MDGs to integrate and advance the inclusion of OVCs.

1. What policies are in place to tackle the exclusion of OVCs in your countries?
2. How do the MDGs in your country monitor the economic and social participation of this group in the developmental efforts of your country?
1. Are there any specific institutions anchoring these policies? How are they organized?

Week 3: July 07, 2008 - July 13, 2008

Theme: Exchange of country experiences and knowledge sharing

1. How in operational terms has your country dealt with OVCs? How do you measure success (or failure)?
2. What difficulties did you encounter? What were the roles of partners, including NGOs, bilateral organizations and UN agencies?
3. With the benefit of hindsight, do you think that setting up time-bound quantitative targets have been useful?

Week 4: July 14, 2008 - July 20, 2008

Theme: Identification of additional targets and indicators for the MDGs.

1. Based on your personal and your country's /organization's experience, would you include additional targets on OVCs to the MDGs? If so, what are these additional targets/indicators that through your country experience could capture this vulnerable group?
2. What are the capacity (monitoring administrative, reporting) issues that can arise from the inclusion of additional indicators?
3. Do you think the additional targets in the MDGs give greater visibility to OVCs or risk its disappearance in a sea of indicators?

Accessing the discussion network

Please forward all of your discussion contributions and questions to the group's email address MDGSocialInclusion@uneca.org. The facilitator will first view all emails before they are redistributed to group members. Please note that we guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of all of the participants' email addresses.

Selected websites, articles and publications:

English:

[Millennium Development Goals - Basics](#)

[Millennium Development Goals - List of Targets and Indicators](#)

[Assessing Progress in Africa towards the Millennium Development Goals 2008 Report](#)

[Millennium Development Goals 2007 Report](#)

[Millennium Development Goals 2007 Update on Africa](#)

UNDP report 2007 Ghana social exclusion

The Status of Children in the World UNICEF 2008

African Union Charter on the rights of the Child

Global monitoring report World Bank 2008

Education for all UNECSO 2008

French:

[Rapport 2008 sur l'évaluation des progrès accomplis par Afrique vers la réalisation des Objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement](#)
[Évaluation des progrès accomplis par l'Afrique vers la réalisation des OMD, 2007](#)

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