

## **Assessing Awareness of Organizations about Millennium Development Goals and the Role of Statistics in Them: The Case of Eastern Hararghe, Oromiya, Ethiopia**

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### **Abstract**

The millennium development goals are the goals designed at global level to bring to assist the livelihoods of the human being on the globe. These goals are categorized into eight: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empower women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDs, malaria, and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development. Assessing the progress to achievement of such goals given being given due attention by regional and international organizations. Assessing the awareness of different organizations about the millennium development goals and how they apply statistical methods to support such development goals as well as making them achievable. This study was designed to contribute to such a goal. The study was undertaken in eighteen governmental organizations of Eastern Hararghe Zone of the regional state of Oromiya, Ethiopia. The data were collected through self-administered questionnaire and analyzed by descriptive statistics like proportion/percentages. The results show that all organizations incorporate millennium development goals in their strategic and annual plans. They use statistics only for reporting performances but none of them know or have the data about the indicators of the achievements of millennium development goals. None of them exactly know the number of people in Zone /Region with income less than one dollar a day, proportion of people who suffer from hunger, proportion of women in the labor force and parliament, maternal and infant mortality rates and others. Thus, awareness about millennium development goals without the data about its indicators cannot help achieve the goals. There is also lack of coordination and/or awareness by organizations on which millennium development goals are related to the responsibilities and mandates of the organization. It is thus recommended that the country should work towards achieving millennium development goals by integrating appropriate statistical measures to monitor the levels of achievements and make necessary timely corrections.

**Key Words:** Ethiopia, Millennium development goals, Oromiya, Statistics

## INTRODUCTION

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were designed to improve the livelihoods of human beings. These goals are categorized into eight: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development.

Different literature show that since the periodic assessment of progress towards the MDGs started, the international organizations has been concerned about the lack of adequate data to monitor trends in many developing countries could not and not expected to meet the goals. For some they are expected to meet only one or two of the goals, while some are not expected to meet even one of the goals. Meeting a goal needs both awareness and capacity to work towards meeting the goal. As a country, Ethiopia has also been making attempts to work towards meeting such a goal and even it has designed what is called "Ethiopian Millennium Development Goals". The Regional state of Oromiya, which covers more than one-third of the country in terms of area and population, is also making attempts to implement such a goal. What we observe on the ground is, however, the people are in absolute poverty, environment is being degraded, mothers and children are dying of diseases, even if there are some evidences of economic growths at macro level. Education coverage is increasing, but little is known about its equity. For this and other reasons, it is necessary to assess the awareness of the organizations in the region about the MDGs. As statistics is the basic tool for evidence based decision making to what levels the organizations apply statistical methods in their planning towards MDGs is also very important and essential. UNICEF's contribution towards MDGs has been increasingly involved in a number of activities assessing progress towards the MDGs. It has played a key role in preparing the United Nations Secretary General's mid-decade report, particularly on assessing progress on poverty, child mortality, maternal health, water and sanitation, malaria, and HIV/AIDs-related targets (MDGs report, 2009) or led in various interagency monitoring and evaluation working groups formed around MDG monitoring. Their primary purpose is to harmonize monitoring and evaluation work within the UN system, to address specific technical and measurement issues and to build capacity at country level (UNAID, 2009). Ethiopia was one of the 189 member states that adopted the millennium declaration in 2000 and in doing so committed itself to the achievement of the MDGs. Hence, the country's development policies and strategies are geared towards this end (Diana Wagner, 2009). Reliable Statistics describe the reality of people's everyday lives and become a preoccupation for both policy making people and service delivery organizations. The primary concern for those wishing to improve the utilization of statistics in how to tackle the problem of under-use, where findings about effectiveness are either not applied, or are applied successfully. However, many developing countries still lack the capacity to produce, analyze and use the range and quality of statistics required to support effective development progress. As a result, policy making suffers, governments cannot be held accountable for their decisions and their peoples remain poor because of it. Statistics are necessary to help ensure that the available resources put into development are used as effectively as possible.

The purposes of this study were to assess how different organizations incorporate the Millennium Development Goals in their action plans and how they apply statistical methods to support such development goals by taking Eastern Hararghe Zone, Oromiya, Ethiopia as a case.

## **METHODOLOGY**

East Hararghe is one of the 19 Zones of the National Regional State of Oromiya, Ethiopia. It is bordered on the Southwest by the Shebelle River which separates it from Bale, on the West by West Hararghe, on the North by Dire Dawa, and on the Northeast and East by the Somali Region. The Harari Region is an enclave inside this Zone. Harar, the historic city is therefore the capital for both Eastern Hararghe Zone of Oromiya and the Harari Region. This Zone had an estimated total population of 2,723,850 of whom 1,383,198 are male and 1,340,652 are female with an estimated area of 17,935.40 square kilometers and population density of 151.87 people per square kilometer (CSA, 2007). The zone has 19 districts and 3 towns administrative.

A questionnaire that was prepared taking into account all the MDGs and their indicators and the role of statistics in planning and policy making was distributed to the leaders or delegates of 18 government organizations at the zonal level and Haramaya district of the zone in the year 2010. The study used mail questionnaire approach because of the nature of the respondents and the financial capacity of the researcher. The responses of the organization leaders/their delegates were then aggregated using frequency distribution and presented in tables.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

As it was explained in the previous sections there were eighteen government organizations included in this study. The leaders of the organizations or their representatives were asked different questions related to MDGs (Table 1).

One of the questions was whether their employees are aware of the MDGs. Twelve organizations responded that their employees are aware of the MDGs while six organizations said that their employees are not aware of the MDGs. Such a situation happens in organizations which do not involve the employees in preparing annual plans of the organizations. Organizations were also asked if they think MDGs can give a required development in their areas. Only one organization said no for this question. This implies that most of the organizations, at least the top management level, are aware of the MDGs. Fourteen of the organizations use statistical methods in preparing their annual plans while four do not. Whether they actually do not use or they use but are not aware of it is also unclear. Organizations were also asked whether each of the eight MDGs is related to their organizational objectives. Accordingly, all of them said eradicating poverty and hunger is relevant to their mandate areas; 9 said achieving universal primary education is relevant to their objectives; 13 said promoting gender equality and empowering women is relevant to their objectives; 11 said reducing child mortality is related to their works; 11 said improving maternal health is related to their works; 11 said combating spread of HIV/AIDs is related to their works; 11 said ensuring environmental sustainability is related to our works; and fourteen said developing global partnership for development is related to our works. Even if each organization has its specific mandate area, areas like gender, poverty and education are relevant for all. If Bureau of Health says maternal death is not related to my work, it is the indication of lack of awareness about the MDGs.

Table 1: Results obtained from various organizations of Eastern Harargehe Zone on awareness about Millennium Development Goals and the role of Statistics.

No	Question of interest		Responses of Organizations	
			Yes	No
1	Organization aware millennium development goals		Yes	12
			No	6
2	Millennium development goal give required development in local		Yes	17
			No	1
3	Apply statistical methods		Yes	14
			No	4
4	Millennium Development Goals relevant to your organization	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Yes	18
		Achieve universal primary education	Yes	9
			No	9
		Promote gender equality and empower women	Yes	13
			No	5
		Reduce child mortality	Yes	11
			No	7
		Improve maternal health	Yes	11
			No	7
		Spread of HIV/AIDs can be halted by 2015	Yes	11
			No	7
		Ensure environmental sustainability	Yes	11
			No	7
		Develop a global partnership for development	Yes	14
No	4			

The interpretations for further awareness of organizations about MDGs and what levels the organizations apply statistical methods towards MDGs show that all organizations incorporate MDGs in their strategic and annual plans, and they use statistical methods in preparing their annual plans but not aware of its proper use, may be due to the fact that there is lack of knowledge transfer and technical training in many developing countries. Such a situation occurs in countries' needs in building capacity for the achieving MDGs, work with national statistical offices to facilitate the coordination of technical assistance activities. Most of the organizations do not have professional statisticians and hence assign other professionals and even non-professionals for statistics works.

Awareness about MDGs and application of Statistics in MDGs can help to solve the workers' problems in relation to awareness about of MDGs and MDGs' relation to the responsibilities and mandates of their organization.

In conclusion the organizations were aware of the MDGs but they do not properly incorporate the MDGs in their annual and strategic plans. Most of them also use statistics for reporting purpose only and pay little attentions to the implications the data in planning and monitoring MDGs indicators. Awareness creation about the MDGs and the role of statistics in evidence based decision making is mandatory. Recruiting statisticians for the planning works will also help the organizations in this regard.

#### REFERENCE

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