



Environment and Climate Change

MDG-F Thematic Study: Key Findings and Achievements.

Executive Summary

Background

Environment and Climate Change

Environmental issues have been increasingly visible in the development agenda in the last few decades. The notion of the environment as a development factor has moved efforts from strictly natural resource preservation to more contemporary notions that sustainable development should be people-centered, yet at the same time in harmony with the environment. This is also underlined by the concept that sustainable development incorporates economic, social and environmental variables in an integrated manner.

Yet this concept of furthering development without degrading the environment has proven highly elusive, at a global level as well as at national and local levels in developing countries. Forest and other natural habitat losses, overexploitation of natural resources, chemical contamination and lack of safe water and sanitation in a large proportion of the developing world are some environmental issues that continue to affect societies and hinder development. Furthermore, a close link exists between poverty and environmental degradation. This is a root problem of many development issues, particularly for the poor who directly rely on natural resources for their livelihood. Poor nations and poor societies face severe environmental problems, among them scarcity of, and unequal access to, resources.

The MDG-Fund Environment and Climate Change Thematic Window

The Environment and Climate Change Window supported 17 Joint Programmes (JPs) worldwide, with a total allocation of US\$89.5 million. These JPs aimed at contributing to the achievement of MDG 7 on environmental sustainability, particularly the target of integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs, and reversing the loss of environmental resources. In addition, these JPs are linked to other goals, such as contributing to the achievement of MDG 1 to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. The work in this window has also been widened to comprise climate change, in particular, adaptations to the adverse impacts of climate change.

JPs in this window have sought to take integrated approaches, not only in the sense of dealing with environment *and* development in a cohesive manner, but also in addressing the issues at multiple policy and action levels with the involvement of multiple stakeholders. They also sought to reduce poverty and environmental vulnerability through the support of interventions that improved environmental management at both the national and local levels and enhanced people's capacity to adapt to climate change.

Achievements and Results

The JP interventions have produced a series of accomplishments. The key results have been to enhance the capacity of developing nations (in a variety of settings) to establish and implement policies that intersect natural resource management with development. They have increased consciousness on environmental issues and rights as they relate to the development process. This including areas such



as climate change adaptation for communities and countries being forced to respond rapidly to this phenomenon. Pilot projects have demonstrated that very concrete activities can result in important achievements in natural resource management, in sustainable development and in adapting to climate change. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that building the knowledge base of environmental matters as they relate to development is a cornerstone for improving conditions and is mutually supportive of capacity building.

Enhanced governability and institutional capacities, including policy frameworks

JPs have contributed to improved governability and institutional capacities to deal with the environment and climate change. The activities have resulted in both new policy frameworks and support of existing institutional capacities, as well as enabling activities and action plans for managing natural resources while sustaining development. Activities were implemented created dialogue and practice at national and local levels. In Peru, local governments have mainstreamed environment and climate change issues into community development plans and budget operational plans in a participatory manner.

In China, the JP notably supported the development of the Basic Energy Law, and in Colombia, the National Policy on Integrated Hydrological Resources Management included strategies proposed by the JP dealing with vulnerability and climate change adaptation issues. Programmes also supported the development of local actions plans (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Afghanistan), resulting in more efficient tools for advancing the local administration of environmental resources.

Environmental consciousness, including climate change impact

Through outreach and training, stakeholders undertook activities that raised consciousness among community members on environmental issues and how these affect their well-being and livelihoods (Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama). Awareness raising was also aimed at decision-makers. In Egypt, the programme, through advocacy efforts, supported the Energy Efficiency Unit of the Egyptian Cabinet of Ministers, making energy efficiency the responsibility of all major energy consuming productive sectors. In China, the awareness of more than 200 companies was raised on climate change and corporate social responsibility. Education (formal and informal) and training have been important areas of work within the window. These efforts included training of community development councils as well as government personnel in the management of natural resources, community mobilization and community-based

interventions addressing strategic capacity gaps of policymakers (Afghanistan), training on green business options for students and businesses (China), and water management (Jordan), among others.

Within the Peruvian and the Turkish programs, formal training, education and capacity building platforms in climate change and in other environmental issues were shaped. In Peru, a formal Diploma program in climate change science and management was developed. In Turkey, the JP supported certification courses for staff from government and institutions on climate change and other environmental issues, as well as the convening of university groups of experts.

Improved knowledge base of environmental issues, including climate change



Activities have also been carried out with the aim of strengthening and improving the knowledge base of environmental issues, how they relate to human development, and how new phenomena such as climate change are having an impact on livelihoods. Some programmes have supported the development of diagnostic instruments and indicators such as integrated use of hydrological resources (Guatemala) and food security and vulnerability mapping and surveys (Senegal). Other JPs have focused on the

establishment of baseline information to improve policy frameworks (China, Egypt) and vulnerability assessments for policy development (Colombia, Jordan). Several JPs developed and delivered training instruments. For instance, in Mozambique, farmers received training on drought-resistant crop seeds as a measure to adapt to climate change and in the Philippines, the JP developed Climate Change Vulnerability and Assessment Tools for four key sectors (health; water resources; coastal resources; and agriculture/forestry/biodiversity sector).

Pilot projects

Many achievements have been attained through innovations and pilot projects, as well as different types of direct interventions. These dealt with increasing access to finance (Philippines, Egypt), improving access to water and sanitation for the poor (Mozambique, Mauritania, Guatemala, Nicaragua), promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services (Mauritania, Guatemala), and increasing clean energy service delivery (China), among others. A synergy between direct interventions and capacity building can be observed. Many projects were demonstrative (with a 'learning by doing' approach) while many also included more specific training and capacity building components as part of the interventions.

Conclusions

The Environment and Climate Change Window of the MDG-F is a highly complex work arena. The subject matter is intricate and layered. When working with environmental issues within a development context, the conceptual areas (and, necessarily, the intervention areas) deal not only with natural resources and environmental factors, but also with social and economic factors, vulnerabilities and

inequalities. Therefore, the window dealt with an all-inclusive and cohesive approach to meet the challenges and face the issues.

Sustainability

The sustainability of projects, programmes, and outcomes is contingent upon many variables, and the long-term impact and sustainability of JP achievements rely, basically, on the uptake of these achievements by the local and national actors involved in the program's interventions.



Evidence suggests that their sustainability and replicability, albeit depending on many factors, has a greater likelihood of occurring if activities create and leave increased capacity with local populations, NGOs and civil society organizations for these small-scale projects. Furthermore, greater sustainability probabilities exist when the interventions respond to local needs, fulfilling capacity and knowledge gaps. As in all international projects of this sort, sustainability and durable change is more likely when the projects are designed and implemented to insert themselves in, as well as strengthen, the institutionality of the different nations in order for them to face environment and development issues (including climate change adaptation). When programmes fulfill local needs, such as the financial mechanisms created by the JPs in the Philippines and Egypt, for instance, the likelihood of sustainability and continuance is strengthened.

Recommendations

A series of recommendations are made in the report for generating enabling environments, programmatic recommendations and future steps, and specifically in knowledge sharing as well as in advocacy efforts in the Post 2015 arena.

Access to full report: <http://on.mdgfund.org/Wghz05>