**The Health MDGs in Ghana: Lessons and Implications for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals**

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**Abstract**

The MDGs consisted of eight broad goals and twenty-nine targets, which when successfully implemented, were envisaged to improve the living conditions of the world’s poorest populations. For a period of fifteen years, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been at the centre of global development initiatives and efforts. In spite of the momentum and investments made at achieving the targets set under the MDGs, there still exist significant challenges at the global and national levels especially within the health sector in Africa.

In Ghana, the success of some of the MDGs are uneven across the goals and within the country. This paper critically reviews the implementation of the health MDGs in Ghana: specifically MDG 4 (to reduce child mortality), MDG 5 (to improve maternal health0 and MDG 6 (to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases). The study focuses on drawing key lessons from the national implementation strategies and institutional reforms adopted by Ghana towards achieving the health MDG targets. The study identifies the unique constraints and challenges that face both men and women in Ghana with regards to the health MDGs.

In brief, the results indicate that 73% of the 37 indicators in the MDGs monitored by Ghana were either achieved or significant progress were made. Ghana performed well in halving the proportion below the national poverty line by 2015. The country also performed better in achieving universal primary education and promoting gender equality as far as ratio of girls-to-boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education is concerned. Ghana also scored high marks in reducing HIV/AIDS prevalence rate. Ghana, however, missed out on some critical indicators such as child and maternal mortality, sanitation and housing, environmental sustainability and combating malaria. Why were these critical health MDGs missed? What were the key constraints? Ghana did not achieve goals four and five of the MDGs due to the slow progress it made in improving child and maternal health. The study indicates that key investments need to be made in the health sector, in the areas of access to good quality care enabling a narrowing of gaps in access and financing. It is expected that the lessons will enhance evidence-based policy making towards achieving the SDGs in Ghana.

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