

New data website helps Nigeria's campaign to achieve Millennium Development Goals

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A new water supply offers clean water for students at Ise Akoro School in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Nigeria has launched an innovative, [interactive data system](#) to track

information about health care, water and education facilities as a tool to guide funding for local projects and help the nation achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The new Nigeria MDGs Information System was designed to support the Conditional Grants Scheme program, a \$1.2 billion effort to reduce poverty and improve access to health, education and water services for more than 65 million people throughout Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa. The grants program offers funding, training and guidance for Nigeria's Local Government Areas for related projects.

"The Conditional Grants scheme remains a veritable opportunity to maximize the use of information and expertise at every level of government and to share the burden of expenditure," said Precious Kalamba Gbeneol, the senior special assistant to the president on the Millennium Development Goals. "The Federal Government, through the Conditional Grants Scheme, seeks to build the capacities of states and local governments in order to improve governance, transparency and accountability as well as the attainment of the MDGs."

"The innovative Nigeria MDGs Information System is an important step forward in Nigeria's data-driven planning for development," Earth Institute Director Jeffrey Sachs said. The system "will be an important contribution of the Government of Nigeria not only for Nigeria's own development, but also for the benefit of many other governments."

Many Earth Institute team members are currently working to utilize the tools and experience from the Nigeria project and the Nigeria MDGs Information System to support efforts to contain Ebola in Guinea and other countries in West Africa.

The public launch of the new system was announced by the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria on the Millennium

Development Goals and The Earth Institute. The system represents the culmination of four years of partnership between the special assistant's office and the institute.

The Nigeria MDGs Information System contains data about health clinics, schools and other facilities across the country collected in multiple rounds of surveying over the past three years across all 774 Local Government Areas in Nigeria. It covers an estimated 98 percent of health and education facilities in Nigeria.

The surveys themselves, as well as the raw data and more information about the data gathering effort, can be found on the system's website, nmis.mdgs.gov.ng.



Student Eucharia Ekwealor in the newly renovated Christ the King College classroom block, Umuem, Anambra West Local Government Area, Nigeria.

The site drills deep into the data to pinpoint areas of need, and it provides benchmarks for progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. For instance, in Igabi, Kaduna, the site shows 84 improved water points, but also notes that only 32 percent of those are functional. The

site shows how many health clinics the area has, how many perform deliveries and how many have a skilled birth attendant.

Under Millennium Development Goal No. 1 – reducing extreme poverty and hunger – the site notes that 58 percent of children under 5 in Igabi are underweight, and 57 percent exhibit stunting, commonly associated with malnutrition.

At the Dominators Academy in Igabi, every classroom has a chalkboard, but 18 classrooms need major repairs; the school has improved sanitation, but not improved water service.

In its earliest phases, the team that developed the data system also utilized experience and information from the Millennium Villages Project, which is now, in turn, gaining knowledge from the Earth Institute team that is working to expand anti-poverty efforts throughout Nigeria using the Millennium Villages model.

"We have been greatly honored to work with the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs on the Conditional Grants Scheme program," Sachs said.

The special assistant's office estimates that more than 65 million Nigerians benefitted from the 2011 and 2012 rounds of funding from the Conditional Grants Scheme program (the most recent data available). In those rounds, 113 and 148 Local Government Areas received funds, respectively. A large number of projects were completed in 261 Local Government Areas.

- 4,959 water facilities and 1,536 VIP latrines were constructed in schools, health facilities and in small towns.
- In the health sector, 1,305 facilities were constructed, 68,430 health workers were trained, with 61 new health quarters

constructed, and 277 ambulances were purchased.

- 1,714 classroom blocks and 18 new teachers' quarters were constructed along with the purchase of 79,067 school desks, chairs and chalkboards.
- The program also contributed to the funding of 444 agricultural cooperatives.

The new website has improved communication between levels of government, increased available funding, improved service delivery and established an accountability mechanism for a federal-to-local funding stream in the country with the biggest economy in Africa.

The site can be used by civil society groups and other agencies to monitor the effectiveness of efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals, and to hold government agencies accountable for those efforts.

Originally designed and hosted by the Sustainable Engineering Lab at Columbia University, the Nigeria MDGs Information System website is now fully hosted and operated by the technical team at the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria on the Millennium Development Goals.

Data for the new [information system](#) was collected through multiple android phone-based surveys. The enumerators were hired and trained by the special assistant's office with support from The Earth Institute. Formhub, the tool used to create and host the survey, is another technical tool created in part to support the partnership between the institute and the special assistant's office.

Provided by Columbia University

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