



MEDIA BRIEF

Development Progress Stories: Showcasing outstanding examples of national progress

Overseas Development Institute publishes new country case studies that analyse what has worked in development and why

Development Progress Stories is a new set of case studies that analyses outstanding examples of national progress in development.

Based on research undertaken by the *Overseas Development Institute (ODI)*, Britain's leading think tank on international development, each case study details a specific country's achievements in one of eight major areas of development: economic conditions, health, water and sanitation, education, governance, environmental conditions, agriculture and rural development, and social protection.

The first six stories appear today on a new website, www.developmentprogress.org. They coincide with the release of a second ODI study, a country-by-country global report card on the MDGs.

In the coming months, ODI will publish online another 18 national case studies, each highlighting progress from a different country.

Key Findings:

The six case studies released today analyse a range of achievements. Highlights include:

- **Bangladesh** - Remarkable improvements in health across the board: notably, dramatic reductions in infant and child mortality rates, increased immunisation coverage and a rise in life expectancy.
- **Costa Rica** - Pioneer in environmental conservation and most notably in the preservation of its forest ecosystems. Ranked third - the highest ranked developing country - on the 2010 Environmental Performance Index.
- **El Salvador** - Remarkable progress in achieving relative peace and security, as well as improving the effectiveness of government, since the end of the end of a 12-year civil war.
- **Ethiopia** - Tackling demand and supply constraints to schooling: access to education has improved significantly. Primary enrolment has risen to 15.5 million, an increase of over 500%.



- **Ghana** - Sustained progress in agricultural productivity and poverty reduction. Ghana is ranked among the top five performers in the world in agricultural growth and is largely self-sufficient in staple foods. It will achieve MDG 1 before 2015.
- **Vietnam** - Impressive growth with poverty reduction: 20 years ago Vietnam was amongst the poorest countries in the world and is now set to join the ranks of middle-income countries by 2011.

Methodology:

The *Development Progress Stories* target national-level progress that is equitable and sustainable, and where beneficiaries are a significant share of the population. To develop the stories, ODI research team spent several months on qualitative and quantitative research, assessing more than 250 examples of countries across the eight sectors. Stories were selected based on an extensive analysis of development indicators, and more than 100 experts, drawn from academia, donor agencies and civil society organisations in both the North and the South, were consulted. Stories identified were passed between quantitative and qualitative research teams for cross-checking, and vetted by the project's external review panel.

The time frame used in analysis is from 1990 to 2010, or the most recent data available. The majority of data sources used are publicly available. They include the MDG Database: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx> and the World Bank's World Development Indicators: <http://www.worldbank.org/data/onlinedatabases/onlinedatabases.html>

ODI will produce a *Development Progress Stories* synthesis report early in 2011.

This research is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Resources:

Development Progress Stories: Country case studies are available from Gareth Thomas at g.thomas@odi.org.uk.

MDG Report Card: Measuring progress across countries: In a related project, ODI released a country-by-country assessment on progress toward MDGs. This report is free to download from www.odi.org.uk/mdgreportcard

Media contact

Gareth Thomas

Overseas Development Institute

+44 (0)20 7922 0394 / g.thomas@odi.org.uk

Interviews with ODI authors can be arranged on request.



Notes to editors

1. ODI is Britain's leading independent think-tank on international development and humanitarian issues. Its mission is to inspire and inform policy and practice which lead to the reduction of poverty, the alleviation of suffering and the achievement of sustainable livelihoods in developing countries. Locking together high-quality applied research, practical policy advice and policy-focused dissemination and debate, ODI works with partners in the public and private sectors, in both developing and developed countries. Further details can be found on the ODI website (www.odi.org.uk).

Overseas Development Institute

111 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JD, UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 7922 0300 | Fax: +44 (0)20 7922 0399

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