

How can CyprusAid contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals?

"THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION IS BASED ON THE IDEA THAT PEACE AND SECURITY, DEVELOPMENT AND RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARE INTERLINKED AND MUTUALLY REINFORCING. THIS TRINITY IS TRUE"¹

A decision of the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were devised at the turn of year 2000, when world leaders came together to set specific and focused targets for international development. They constitute eight commitment areas which aspire to secure peace, eradicate poverty and establish a healthy global economy² by 2015. While the MDGs were viewed as achievable when they were devised in 2000, and while remarkable progress has been made since their inception, their implementation has been highly uneven and has faced significant challenges. One of these challenges is the recent economic crisis which plunged millions more people into dire poverty and caused instability in food prices, greater unemployment and reduced foreign investment. Moreover, climate change has had a considerable impact on environmental sustainability.

Nonetheless, efforts need to be maintained and existing resources and expertise should continue to be dedicated to the acceleration of progress over the next few years, until the target year of 2015. Additionally, proven strategies, policies and interventions need to be used to make radical steps of progress, while those that have not proven to work³ need to be eliminated, in order to enhance efficiency and move forward towards the achievement of the MDGs.

The Millennium Development Goals, as the most widely recognised targets for worldwide development, are divided into eight thematic objectives, each with specific sub-targets, as follows:

MDG1: End Poverty and Hunger

- Halve the proportion of people living on less than \$1 per day.
- Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

MDG2: Universal Education

- Children everywhere to complete a full course of primary school education.

MDG3: Gender Equality

- Eliminate gender disparity in education.

MDG4: Child Health

- Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate of children under 5.

MDG5: Maternal Health

- Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ration.
- Achieve universal access to reproductive health.

MDG6: Combat HIV/AIDS

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.

- Achieve universal access to treatment.
- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases .

MDG7: Environmental Sustainability

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.
- Reduce biodiversity loss.
- Halve the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.
- Achieve by 2020 significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

MDG8: Global Partnership

- Develop further an open rule-based, predictable, non discriminatory trading and financial system.
- Address the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked countries and small-island developing states.
- Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt.
- Provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries.
- Make available the benefits of new technologies⁴.

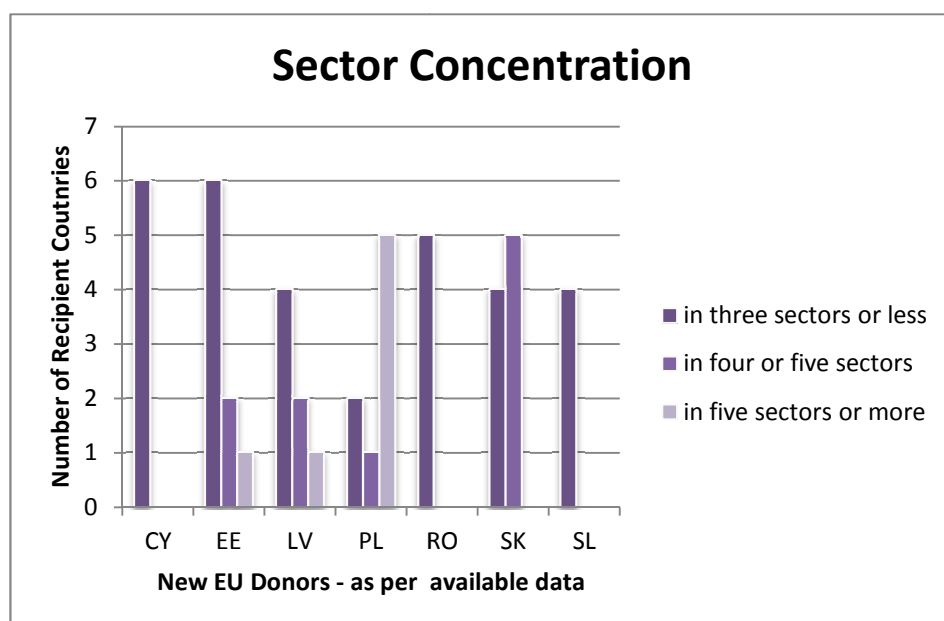
CyprusAid and the MDGs

CyprusAid was instigated in 2004, when Cyprus became part of the EU, and is the Development Cooperation Service of the Republic of Cyprus, established in its current form by the Council of Ministers in 2005. Since then, it has been committed to **providing humanitarian, technical and official assistance** to a number of countries, both as an emergency response and to promote long-term sustainable development. CyprusAid has a unique and advantageous position, with experience as both an aid recipient and an aid donor, thus it has first-hand and expert knowledge that it can provide to the international development community. However, some limitations may result from its lack of a dedicated implementing agency and the fact that it is based in a small country.

CyprusAid's main contributions to the MDGs lie specifically in its **Official Development Assistance (ODA)**. In 2009, CyprusAid collaborated with various partner organisations on projects in six countries, which are also OECD recipient countries, three of which are also listed as "Least Developed Countries". A mere 4% of CyprusAid's ODA goes towards these Least Developed Countries, while 5.3% is contributed towards projects in middle-income countries⁵.

Having achieved the commitment of 0.17% of Gross National Income (GNI) to ODA in 2008⁶ Cyprus, through CyprusAid's ODA, has increased its contributions in line with the EU development guidelines for new Member States. CyprusAid contributes to two recipient countries in Africa, Lesotho and Mali, both of which are "Least Developed Countries". Africa comprises a large part of the developing world and consists of many of the OECD's "Least Developed Countries".

Sector Concentration



It should be noted that, as compared to other countries that acceded to the EU in 2004, Cyprus is performing well in all areas of ODA⁷, considering its size and its recent transition from recipient to donor country. It has also performed well in channelling aid to the beneficiaries, owing to its decision to dedicate aid

funds towards the implementation of projects rather than towards administrative costs. Cyprus should also be commended for its focus and concentration on the sectors of its expertise and experience and for the mitigation of fragmenting its assistance across many sectors.

CyprusAid's Contributions (Completed and Ongoing) to the Millennium Development Goals⁸

Project	Country & Partner	Details	Specific contribution towards MDGs
Early Childhood Education Enhancement	Egypt <i>UNWFP</i>	Increasing attendance of girls in schools by providing food to families with a girl in primary education	MDG 1 Alleviating Hunger MDG 3 Gender Equality MDG 2 Universal Education
Protracted Relief Operation for non-Refugee Palestinians	Autonomous Palestinian Territories <i>UNWFP</i>	Provision of food to vulnerable groups including children and pregnant women	MDG 1 Alleviating Hunger MDG 4 Childhood Health MDG 5 Maternal Health
Support to Municipal Development in the Gaza Middle Area	Autonomous Palestinian Territories <i>DANIDA</i>	Infrastructure and maintenance projects inc. building and repairs to roads, sewers, walkways etc.	MDG 7 Environmental Sustainability Indirect contribution to other MDGs through increase of infrastructure
Good Governance for Enhanced Post-War Reconstruction	Lebanon <i>UN Human Settlements Programme</i>	Capacity building for local government	MDG 8 Global Partnerships Indirect contribution to other MDGs through strengthening of service-providing government departments
Contribution for the Recovery & Reconstruction of the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian Refugee Camp	Lebanon <i>UN Relief & Works Agency</i>	Contributions to the reconstruction of the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp	MDG 1 Ending Poverty – direct contribution through the provision of basic needs, which indirectly contributes to other MDGs inc. MDG 8 targets – Access to water and sanitation

Construction of Girls Boarding House in Sekonyela High School	Lesotho <i>Ministry of Education & Training of Lesotho</i>	Construction of a boarding house for girls, allowing them to attend the school	MDG 2 Universal Education MDG 3 Gender Equality
Refurbishment of Schools	Lesotho <i>Irish Aid & METL</i>	Funding for refurbishment of 4 Schools	MDG 2 Universal Education
Sustainable Waste Management in Sikasso	Mali <i>Mali & Belgium governments, Belgian Technical Cooperation</i>	Public Waste Management	MDG 7 Environmental Sustainability Access to clean water and sanitation
Bridge Construction	Mali <i>See above</i>	Construction of bridges in Konlikovo Area to facilitate access to villages, especially in winter	Indirect contributions to all MDGs, especially 1 & 7 through increasing access to rural areas
Emergency Obstetric Care Project in Al Mahweet	Yemen <i>DED</i>	Repairs and equipment for three centres, and training of healthcare practitioners	MDG 4 Child Health MDG 5 Maternal Health
UNWFP Country Programme	Yemen <i>UNWFP</i>	Rations of wheat and vegetable oil to families with girls in elementary schools	MDG 2 Universal Education MDG 3 Gender Equality Indirect contribution towards MDG 1
Support to Reproductive Health in Yemen	Yemen <i>Netherlands Marie Stopes International</i>	Building of 10 new clinics and the refurbishment of six others, as well as increasing access to all	MDG 5 Maternal Health MDG 6 Halt HIV/AIDS and other reproductive diseases by providing further access to information and services

As can be seen from the table above, CyprusAid's Official Development Assistance projects fulfil specific and targeted MDG goals. Although Cyprus, as a new member state, is effective in implementing EU guidelines, as compared to some other member states which joined in the same year, it could potentially increase its aid donations by improving its efficiency and coordination of aid delivery. In this regard, the next sections outline general and specific actions that CyprusAid could take to improve its aid programmes and further contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Beforehand, a review of the two main political summits for the establishment of international and European aid implementation measures will be presented.

Establishment of the Development Aid Implementation Measures

Since the commitment to achieving the MDGs was made, there have been several summits, reports and amendments to international and European standards. The two most fundamental documents in this direction have been the Paris Declaration, devised in 2005, and the Accra Agenda for Action, devised in 2008. New member states are encouraged to employ these principles as part of their aid programs.

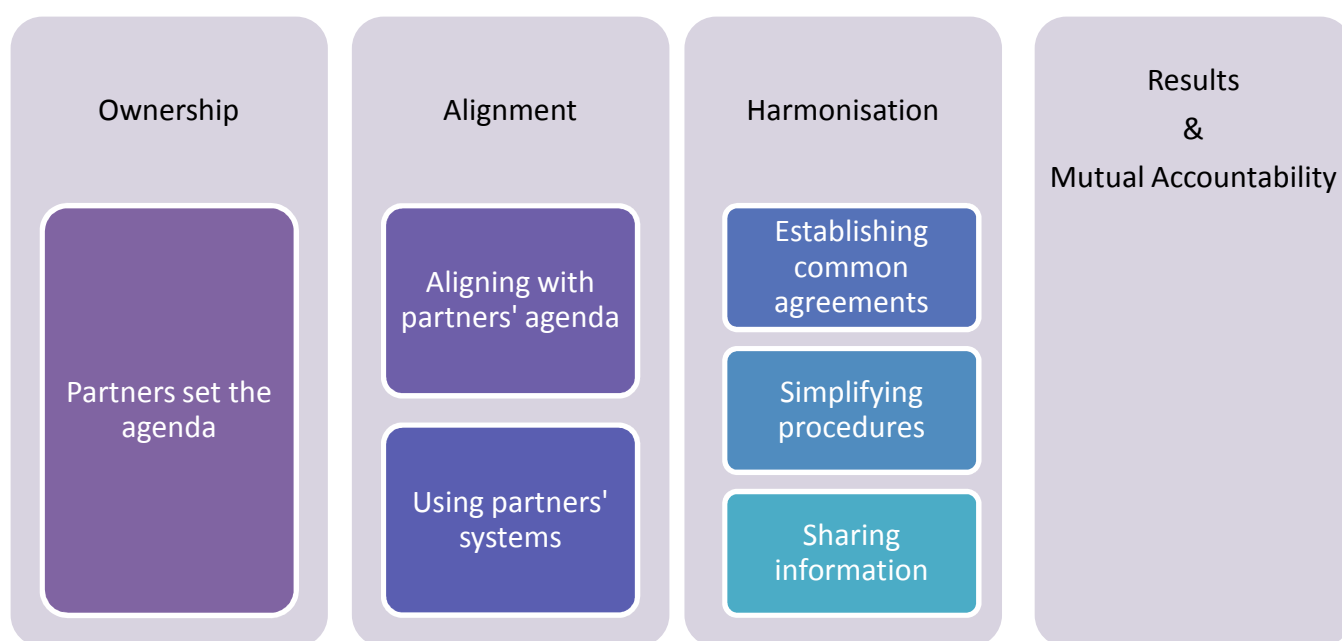
The Paris Declaration

The Paris Declaration was groundbreaking in calling for reform not just to the volume of aid, but more importantly to its effectiveness. "Beyond its principles on effective aid, the Paris Declaration lays out a practical, action-oriented roadmap to improve the quality of aid and its impact on development. It puts in place a series of specific implementation measures and establishes a monitoring system to assess progress

and ensure that donors and recipients hold each other accountable for their commitments.” Its framework can be summarised using its “5 Pillars”⁹ which are briefly presented below:

Ownership: As was clearly stated by the Millennium Declaration, development is the responsibility of developing countries, as much as it is of the developed countries. However, without placing the onus entirely on one or the other, it should be noted that totally donor-driven aid diminishes the accountability that governments of developing countries owe to their citizens¹⁰. There must, therefore, be consultation and coordination between donors and recipients at all stages of policy-making and implementation of projects.

Alignment: Donor countries should align their practices with the agendas of the recipient countries, otherwise unsustainable intervention may prevail, and that does not promote progress. Additionally, another aspect of alignment is using recipient countries’ existing systems. The end goal of alignment is the enhancement and facilitation of citizens’ ability to rely on and utilise in-country services, such as healthcare and infrastructure, and the hindering of the creation of parallel institutions, which not only does not improve the status quo but can increase reliance on external interventions¹¹.



The Paris Declaration Five Pillars¹²

Harmonisation: Administering development projects is costly, thus each mission needs to be designed in detail and thoroughly planned, so as to avoid a lack of coordination between donors and recipients and/or among donors, which could increase tangible and non-tangible costs. Fragmentation of aid increases the cost and also jeopardises the effective delivery of projects. It is therefore advisable that donor countries concentrate on fewer recipient countries and on fewer sectors at any given time, for their development assistance. Harmonisation also implies coordinated action, consequently, communication is vital at all stages of the development assistance delivery cycle, especially when more than one donor country is involved. This not only increases the effectiveness of joint intervention, but also eliminates duplication of efforts and resource drainage.

Managing for better results: Reporting, managing and publishing the results of the development assistance is very important for several reasons. Firstly donors and investors, both private and public, need to know how their money is being spent. Secondly, the work being done needs to be monitored so as to reflect on what is and what is not working in development assistance, in order to ensure that policy and practice can be adequately and duly updated. Thirdly, development assistance management should be results driven and with a long term outlook rather than with a focus on short-term results which may compromise the entirety of the project. Finally, management and reporting must take into account the needs of the recipient country and its citizens, and the evaluation and assessment process should critically assess the progress and benefits brought to the country and the life of its citizens.

Mutual Accountability: At the onset, development accountability is viewed as a responsibility of donors and investors. However, accountability must be shown by all parties, including the recipients of development aid. Therefore, on the one hand, donors and investors are accountable for the stable flow of development funds, while implementers, recipients and beneficiaries of development aid are accountable for its shrewd and productive use. This involves transparency at all stages of development assistance, policy-making and implementation. Information must be easily accessible by all parties involved, financial flows must be accurate and translucent, corruption must be alleviated and frameworks must be based on human rights and the responsibilities of each actor¹³.

The Accra Agenda for Action

Three years after the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action evaluated the level to which the recommendations and actions put forward by the Paris Declaration.

Country Ownership: In line with the Paris Declaration's call for ownership, the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) emphasises the need to use existing country systems to the maximum possible extent and more so strengthen them. More significantly, it called for donor countries to change the set of conditions that need to be satisfied for development assistance, to include and promote country ownership. Additionally, conditions on which development assistance programmes hinge should be drawn from recipient country's policies, and not be externally imposed, be mutually agreed by both donor and recipient countries and be entirely transparent and made public .

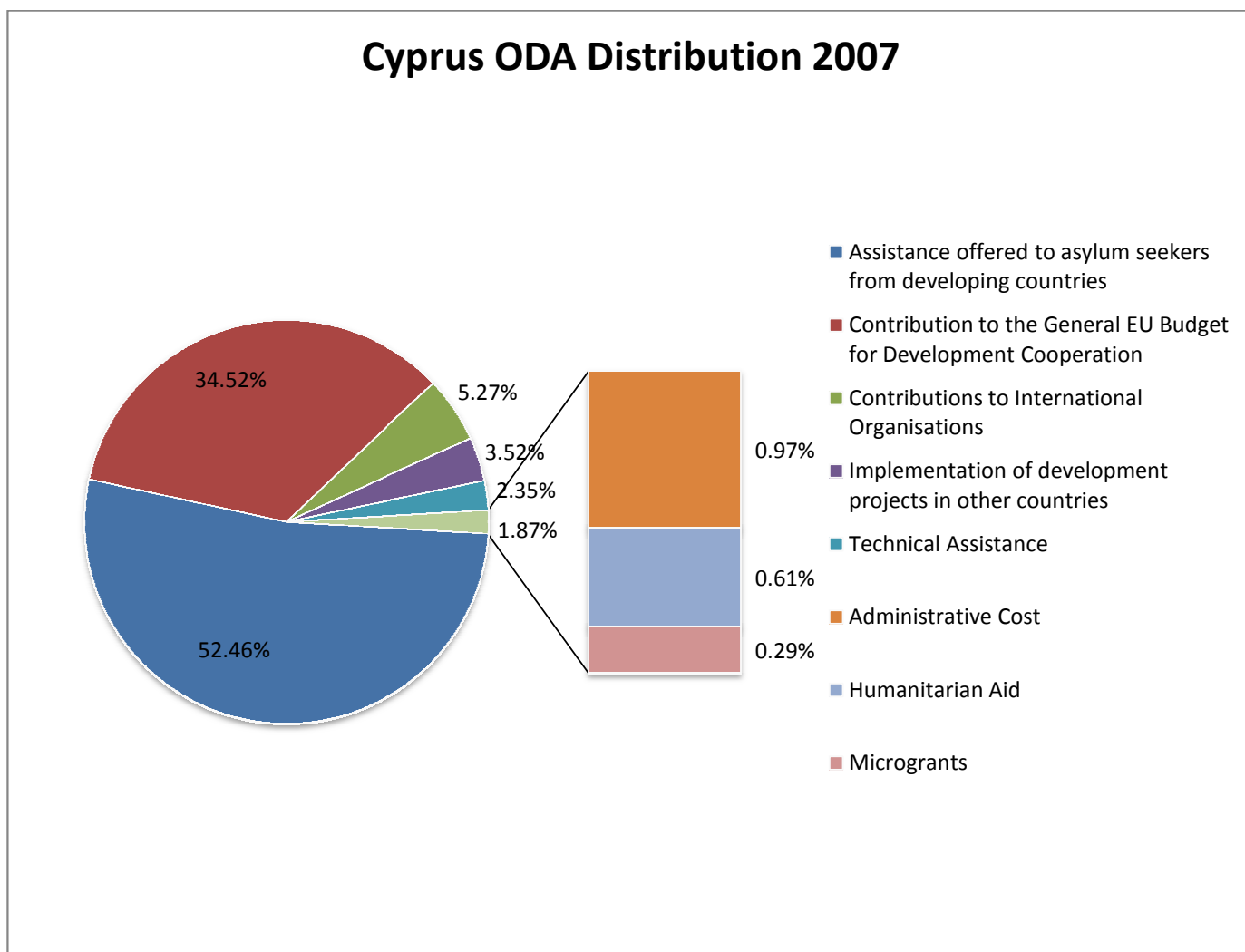
Effective and Inclusive Partnerships: Moving a step further than the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda called for inclusive partnerships that involve all development actors, at all levels. This includes creating open and inclusive dialogue in policy-making and involving more actors in implementation, in particular NGOs and other stakeholders.

Managing for Results: Managing for results means managing and implementing aid in a way that focuses on the desired results and uses information to improve decision-making. Moreover, the principle endeavours to establish results-oriented reporting and assessment frameworks that monitor progress against key dimensions of the national and sector development strategies. These frameworks should also track a manageable number of indicators for which data are cost-effectively available. In respect of this the civil society would benefit from more freely available data and CyprusAid could facilitate the collection, dissemination and publication of data and information.

CyprusAid's role

As has been seen, CyprusAid effectively contributes to several of the MDGs in its various official development assistance programmes. As a comparatively recent donor country, many of the efforts CyprusAid has made to date are to be commended; as for instance, its pledge to and achievement of committing 0.17 per cent of its GNI to ODA, successfully attained two years ahead of schedule¹⁴. However, to enhance its participation and contribution towards the MDGs to a significant level, CyprusAid has still to take certain actions. More specifically, further improvements to its development assistance programs could be made over the course of time, both in policy making and in implementation. Some recommendations for CyprusAid will follow, which will form the basis of this policy paper.

CyprusAid Overseas Development Aid.



Contribution to the EU Budget

A significant part of CyprusAid's development budget (34.52%) is paid into the European Commission Budget for the funding of EU's External Assistance¹⁵. Currently, a number of international organizations deliver on behalf of CyprusAid its development objectives, as it is a relatively small donor country without an implementing agency. As compared to other new EU Member States, Cyprus contributes less of its aid budget to multilateral aid than the average. More specifically, of the Non-DAC Donors that reported their aid flows to the OECD, Cyprus contributes a low 42%, whereas Latvia, for example, contributes the largest proportion of its aid budget at 87%¹⁶. The common budget allows large-scale collaboration among donor

countries in certain projects, and allows for better utilization of monetary resources, where it is needed. It is inherent that as CyprusAid's policies and practice become more effective and efficient, and whilst an implementing agency is set up and more partnerships established, CyprusAid's contribution will be even more significant, as it can be based on more factors, such as utilizing the expertise of local NGOs, rather than purely financial contributions.

Assistance to Asylum Seekers

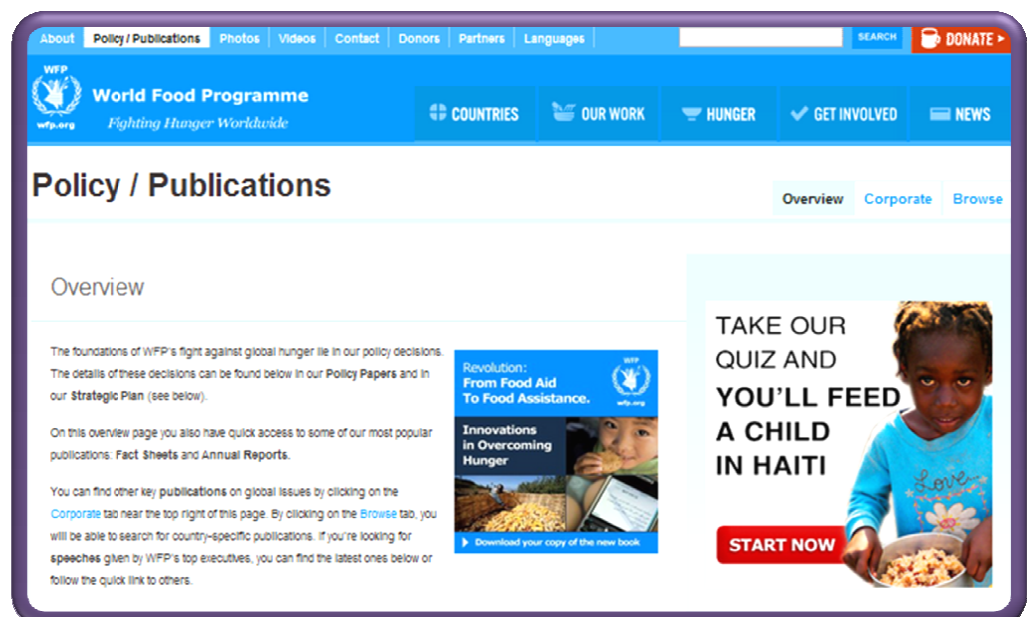
In 2007, CyprusAid's largest percent of assistance went to asylum seekers¹⁷ and in 2009 over 50% of its budget was spent on assistance to refugees for their first 12 months of stay¹⁸. As previously mentioned, CyprusAid's work could be enhanced in this area by instigating transparency into its processes and establishing partnerships with international organizations and local institutions who specialize in this field. A greater amount of information needs to be available, detailing what the assistance to asylum seekers is comprised of and the objectives achieved. For a small country, the burden of providing assistance to refugees and asylum seekers is disproportional to Cyprus' population and resources. It is therefore important that Cyprus takes initiatives to constructively contribute to European migration strategies and policies, so that a more balanced division of resources is made, in support of the Mediterranean countries which are at the forefront of the large migration flows and serve as transit countries. Furthermore, stronger international cooperation on migration should be pursued, as a means of bringing mutual benefit to origin countries, host communities and migrants themselves¹⁹. Finally, CyprusAid should devise programs encouraging the integration of migrants to the Cypriot society, so as to prevent and combat poverty and social exclusion²⁰.

Official Development Assistance

CyprusAid's development budget contributes a relatively small percent to the Official Development Assistance, i.e. schemes and projects in recipient countries. These projects are, for the most part, in collaboration with other partners and/or, an international implementing agency. Working in partnerships is a central part of increasing the quality of development assistance and constitutes one of the Pillars of the Paris Declaration. Based on the five pillars of the Paris Declaration, it is advisable that CyprusAid takes necessary actions to enhance and improve its presence in the field of Development Assistance and the results produced from the implementation of such projects.

Foster Participation:

To ensure the successful outcome of CyprusAid's work and particularly the progress and results produced from its projects, it is necessary to gather up all parties involved and coordinate their actions. Therefore, it is recommended that CyprusAid, as a donor organisation, works



towards achieving greater communication and coordination between donor organizations and recipient countries, and that the recipient society, at all its levels, is adequately involved and engaged in a more effective way, in policy and in practice. As is the case so far, CyprusAid does not consult with national or southern NGOs when making decisions about their official development assistance²¹. This may be understood by the fact that CyprusAid does not have an implementing agency, thus, it relies on other EU Member States and international organisations to disseminate and implement Official Development Assistance programmes. Additionally, CyprusAid's decision-making is highly centralised, which does not allow for the incorporation of a much more participatory and inclusive approach, which in turn, could vastly increase the level of participation among all kinds of stakeholders²². What could be done to immediately address this, is for CyprusAid to incorporate Cypriot NGOs into the development policy-making process and utilize the vital experience of development workers²³, as well as to contribute to capacity building among NGOs in Cyprus to allow them to better deliver aid and play a significant role in the development process. Furthermore, becoming an independent agency within an interdependent relationship with the Cypriot government could lead to a more productive and participatory approach, achieving more concrete results.

Instil Transparency: CyprusAid should promote the dissemination of updated and accurate information regarding its development aid programs and projects, in spite of the fact that as a Non-DAC Donor it is not obliged to do so. Further to a brochure published in 2009, detailing the different stages of its development assistance and reporting its aid flows, there has been very little information released. This approach should also keep CyprusAid in line with other new EU Member states that have recently evolved into donor countries²⁴. Instilling transparency in its processes and actions will create a successful image of CyprusAid within the general public of Cyprus and the recipient countries, of an institution with reliability, responsibility and the achievement of positive results. CyprusAid should be more accessible on the Internet with an updated and more elaborate website, detailing CyprusAid's targets, programmes and reports. Downloadable information should include its strategies, policies, action plans, its contributions to the MDGs, as well as annual reports²⁵ and other publications. Dedicated space should host information on recipient countries and progress reports on the projects carried out in each of them. Statistics reports and

details on partner organisations are also suggested inclusions.



Monitoring Results: While information is available about CyprusAid's official development assistance and Technical Assistance, it is encouraged that further information regarding targets or aims, and whether or not these are being met is published. To successfully evaluate CyprusAid's outcome, progress needs to be monitored on a permanent basis, against targets, timelines and benchmarks established at the onset, using experience, expertise and good practices

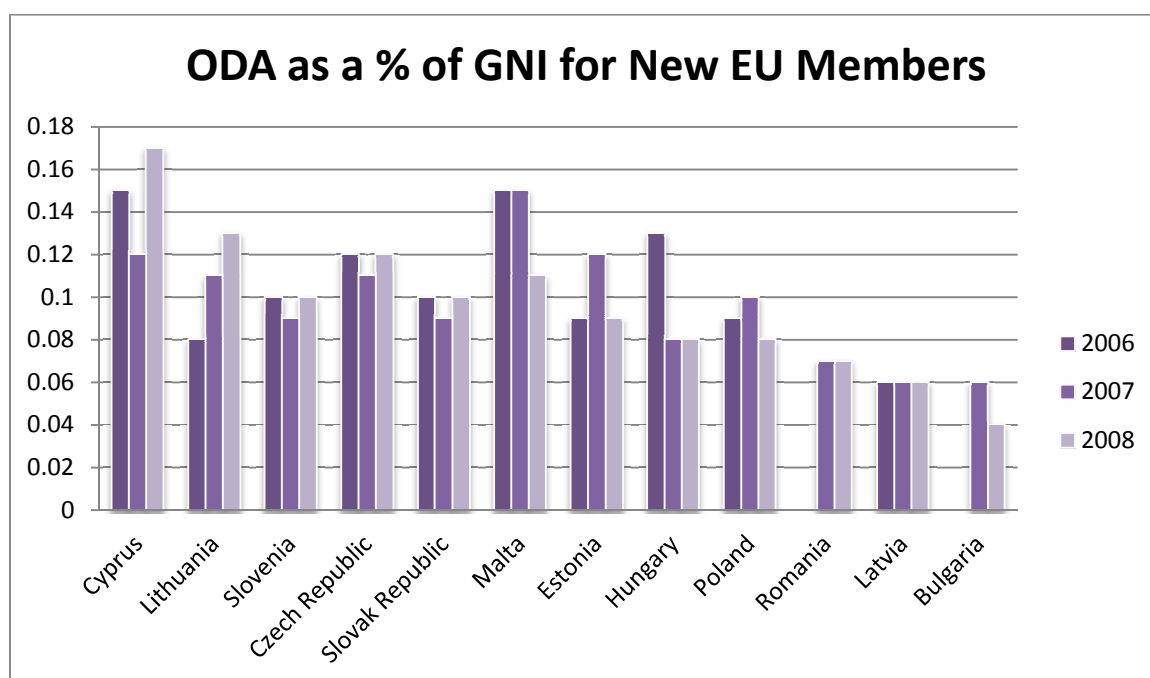
from partner organizations or previous work accomplished.

Building and Harmonizing Partnerships: As CyprusAid does not yet have an implementing agency, and due to the fact that resources are scarce for smaller countries and capacity building is an essential aspect of development assistance²⁶ for national governments, forming partnerships is essential for the successful delivery of development assistance. Consequently, it is in CyprusAid's best interest to promote and enhance the formation of collaborations and partnerships with local and European NGOs, both based in Cyprus and in partner donor and recipient countries. Consulting with NGOs at all stages of development policy-making and implementation can create a balanced view of what needs to be done. Delegation of operations to NGOs, particularly in the recipient countries, can foster genuine and equal partnerships between all stakeholders. Finally, coordinating joint projects with a greater contribution from Cypriot actors can help create a win-win situation in terms of building the capacities of CyprusAid personnel and local NGO's, whilst promoting the positive benefits of ODA assistance to the general public.

CyprusAid's Official Development Assistance portfolio has adopted the Barcelona Commitments, in pursuing aid effectiveness through closer coordination and harmonisation²⁷. As stated in the Paris Declaration, and further elaborated in the Accra Agenda for Action, harmonisation between partner countries, i.e. between donors and recipients and multiple donors, is vital to improving the effectiveness of aid streams and the implementation of sustainable projects. Closer coordination coupled with higher levels of transparency also contributes to mitigating the existence of "aid darlings" and "aid orphans", whereby a large flow of aid goes into particular countries leaving other countries in need unattended²⁸.

Mainstreaming Gender: Cyprus addresses gender as a horizontal issue in its official development assistance. However, no funds are earmarked specifically for gender-based interventions²⁹. As all eight of the Millennium Development Goals are highly intertwined, progress in one can accelerate progress in others. Gender is specifically addressed in MDGs 3 and 5 (Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment; Maternal Health). However addressing gender in all interventions and all issues has significant advantages for the progress of other MDGs, such as for example, increasing education and empowerment of women, can also help reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is therefore advisable for CyprusAid to mainstream gender, allowing that it is addressed in its Official Development Assistance, not just as a horizontal concern but as a specific nexus of intervention. It is also important to note that the empowerment sought by women at local and community levels may be different from what is envisaged at a global level by aid donors; thus, an honest and sincere dialogue is needed for addressing specific needs and for sustainable progress to be achieved³⁰.

Overseas Development Aid and Gross National Income



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Technical Assistance Scheme

CyprusAid's Technical Assistance scheme gives the opportunity to students from developing countries to study in Cyprus, on a short-term or long term basis, by taking courses that may lead to acquiring professional qualifications. Through this scheme, Cyprus imparts some of its expertise in fields such as Tourism, Forest Management and Land Planning, to students from recipient countries so that they can bring home and utilise that knowledge. While this may be seen as having positive benefits for the recipient, its effectiveness and efficiency should be examined, for improvements that could be made in the overall strategy of CyprusAid's ODA assistance.

Coordinated Partnerships: The main improvement that could be made to CyprusAid's Technical Assistance Scheme is an increase in the quality of partnerships between donor and recipient countries. There are several concerns which are expressed. First and foremost, the potential for creating brain-drain, whereby students who have taken part in such schemes do not return to their home country. It must therefore be emphasised that comprehensive and regular liaising with the recipient countries' governments is required to ensure that the scholarships are beneficial to the country.

Addressing Needs: While it is commendable for Cyprus to share its expertise in the various sectors, a needs-based approach should be adopted whereby the courses to be provided are jointly chosen by donor and recipient, based on the expected benefit they would bring to the recipient country's society. Currently, CyprusAid has not made a commitment to manage and select Technical Assistance schemes and courses with its partner countries, in adherence with the Accra Agenda for Action (article 14)³². A deeper collaboration with recipient countries would not only allow local needs to be fulfilled, but it would also allow for a more accurate assessment of the effectiveness of the Technical Assistance scheme. It should therefore be a priority for CyprusAid, as it is a task that can be taken up by Cypriot NGOs.

Increase Transparency: The Technical Assistance Scheme must become more transparent so as to avoid any similitude to tied aid, due to the fact that Technical Assistance funds go into Cypriot institutions.

Transparency will help mitigate this, and can be achieved by better reporting of institutions to which money is paid, making information available regarding the criteria on which the scholarships are based, providing details on the number of students from each recipient country and what they do during and after their education, and publicizing the impact that is made in the recipient country. This is also an area of CyprusAid's assistance where gender could be addressed and progress made on MDG5.

Humanitarian Assistance

Cyprus has already contributed significant amounts of humanitarian and other assistance to countries and people in dire situations (from either natural or man-made disasters). It has thus the potential to serve as a coordination centre for the dispatch of emergency humanitarian assistance in cases of natural disasters or conflict situations in the region, a role that is facilitated by its geographic position and the good relations it enjoys with countries in the area. Furthermore, and as has been mentioned, Cyprus' assistance is provided in an efficient and effective way through the partnerships it forms with other agencies, particularly from EU Member States, or International Organisations, for the implementation of projects in countries of common interest and with end result a maximized positive effect for the recipient country.

As an emerging donor, Cyprus is currently working towards the direction of creating its own implementation mechanisms (as stated in its 2009 brochure "CyprusAid The Development Cooperation Service of the Republic of Cyprus"), so as to be able to undertake direct assistance to countries in need. It is therefore not an appropriate time to make observations on Cyprus' humanitarian assistance. However, constructively contributing to this effort a few examples of challenges that were faced in the past when providing humanitarian assistance are presented below, as lessons learned and threats that can be avoided.

Coordination: Using the aftermath of the Haitian earthquake as an example, what was noted was a proliferation in international aid presence, which however, had limited reach and was not directly accessible to the people who needed it the most. This observation is attributed to a lack of coordination between NGOs, aid agencies and international and local organisations³³. Efficient coordination and harmonisation between countries is instrumental in attaining a quality outcome and irrespective of how big the aid amount, may be. What is important is the quality of assistance and how it is delivered. Additionally, and particularly during times of conflict, non-state actors are often better placed to provide social and medical services³⁴, especially where states are weakened, such as in recent events in Northern African countries.

Avoiding Aid Darlings/Orphans: In 2005, the tsunami disaster appeal raised well over the required amount, all of which was earmarked to the relief of tsunami-affected areas. Cyprus contributed 15.34% of its humanitarian assistance for this purpose. However, the tsunami example demonstrates an existing danger whereby aid can overflow in one area and deplete in another, creating thus, phenomena of the so called aid darlings and aid orphans. More specifically, and continuing on building on the tsunami example, the tsunami disaster drew large amounts of funds, thanks to the intense media coverage and international mobilization. At the same time though, other areas in the world in dire situations were neglected, thus putting a halt to their long term development projects. In further proof of the abovementioned phenomena, six months after the tsunami, 48% of UK charities unrelated to the tsunami appeal, reported a decrease in donations. Consequently, caution needs to be exercised and the right balance in development aid needs to be exercised, so as to avoid such imbalances.

Long-term Vision: Unpredictability is a factor which influences the course of a development aid project. Circumstances may call for a lengthier time to completion, changes in the needs of the recipient country or

in the goals set at the onset may cause delays and or re-adaptation of the aid program. Accordingly, donor fatigue may become an issue, not only when an aid project goes over the expected time and resource forecasts, but also when the recipient country's government demonstrates serious weaknesses in dealing with a difficult situation and/or when a disaster causes the collapse of infrastructure. Consequently it is necessary to plan with a long-term vision on the one hand, and on the other to assess progress and goals/needs met at regular intervals, so as to be able to take necessary measures for a stable and uninterrupted flow of funds albeit conditions that may alter the initial situation.

Disaster Risk Reduction: Responding to natural and man-made disasters, and their associated risks, including economic loss, can be dealt with through a recent and effective trend in development, which is the "Disaster Risk Reduction" (DRR) strategies. These strategies have shown to yield long-term benefits, including progress towards the achievement of the MDGs³⁵. There is an observable correlation between capacity and vulnerability, whereby countries with the capacity to mitigate the effects of natural disasters can recover much more quickly and efficiently, countering the economic loss and increased international dependence that comes as a result. These operations often require an investment which may not pay off for several years, however there are substantial benefits and thus taking a long-term view to disaster risk reduction is worthwhile. For instance, China spent \$3.15 billion on reducing the impacts on floods between 1960 and 2000, which is estimated to have averted losses of up to \$12 billion³⁶. Activity in Disaster Risk Reduction also calls for invested participation and communication with local communities to ensure appropriate implementation of DRR schemes and apparatus³⁷. It is advisable for CyprusAid to incorporate into its humanitarian aid budget resources for the implementation of DRR, which will contribute to establishing sustainable progress in the MDGs and will ensure economizing in resources needed in the future.

Concluding Remarks

CyprusAid has done a lot over the last few years in adhering to the EU guidelines for new member states for development assistance and has succeeded in growing its ODA in a very short period of time. This should be recognised as a great achievement, but should not lead to complacency; there are still many aspects of CyprusAid's assistance efficiency which could be improved.

A first step with immediate results is the creation of an implementing agency. Although, the responsibility could be shared with Cypriot NGOs, resulting in an elevated degree of inclusion and participation of all development stakeholders, a central agency is needed to overlook and coordinate actions and aid distribution, as well as to exercise scrutiny on cost administration³⁸. Furthermore, to enhance CyprusAid's contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and its effectiveness as an institution dealing with development assistance, the legal framework should be reformed accordingly³⁹.

CyprusAid needs to establish more diversity of collaborations and partnerships with development assistance bodies both within the island and at a European or international level, not only in harmonization of actions but also in achieving an effective division of labour as promoted by the Accra Agenda for Action. Furthermore, instilled transparency can seamlessly lead to better understanding between organisations and governments and can foster more efficient participation. Finally, as CyprusAid's experience develops, its responsibility will also be enhanced in adhering to international guidelines and best practices. CyprusAid has all the potential to be an equal partner who contributes to the successful achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as is targeted by 2015.

¹ FINNISH PRESIDENT TARJA HALONEN

- ² www.unfoundation.org/assets/pdf/making-the-millennium-development-goals-happen.pdf | *Making the Millennium Development Goals Happen: Perspectives from Global Aid Workers and Development Professionals on Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*. A Special Report by Devex & The United Nations Foundation
- ³ http://cotent.undp.org/go/cons&-service/stream/asset/?jsessionid=aMgXw91bMbH4?asset_id=2620072 | *What Will it Take to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals?* UNDP Report
- ⁴ www.un.org/millenniumgoals | UN Millennium Development Goal Fact Sheets
- ⁵ *Country Questionnaire: European Aidwatch Report 2010*. Concord Europe and Cyprus Planning Bureau
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About the NGO Support Centre

The NGO Support Centre is a non-governmental organisation, formed in 1999, to support the development of an emerging civil society, providing assistance and resources to NGOs so that they may take their role as full partners in the socio-economic development of Cyprus. The Centre contributes to increasing the capacity of NGOs by providing technical assistance and training and by promoting dialogue between civil society organisations and with international institutions. The NGO Support Centre also implements projects dedicated to the strengthening of civil society in fields of conflict resolution, gender equality, human rights and development cooperation both locally and internationally. This policy paper is published by the NGO Support Centre within the framework of the EuropeAid funded project «Knowledge Makes Change! Strong cooperation between NGOs and academics in promoting development among politicians and public», which the Centre currently manages in cooperation with Polish Humanitarian Action and Pontis Foundation in Slovakia.

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Written by: Sophie Agrotis

Edited by: Fotini Paleologou

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About the Author

Sophie graduated from Cambridge with a degree in Social Anthropology, during which time she undertook several internships relating to the charity sector, and based around research. After completing her degree she spent over six months working for UNCRC Policy Centre – ‘Hope for Children’, where she gained the opportunity to write two papers as part of the ‘Knowledge Makes Change’ project. She is currently studying for a MSc in Development Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, and has worked for UK charity War Child as a Communications Officer, and as Office Administrator for the Religious Education Council alongside her studies. Sophie is also the Communications Officer for the Observatory on Returned Children.