Providing Jobs for Youth and the Millennium Development Goals Rankings[1]

Presented to the Danish Development Conference, August 2009, Copenhagen, Denmark

Robert D. Tortora

Chief Methodologist and Regional Research Director for sub-Saharan Africa with Gallup

bob_tortora@gallup.com

Introduction and Background

In 2000, the United Nations envisioned improving life and well-being in the developing world by creating the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) project to end poverty. The United Nations issues regular reports on the progress of meeting these goals. In its latest report, Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, notes that meeting these goals has become more difficult "because of the largely the benign development environment that has prevailed since the early years of the decade" (United Nations, 2008).

In 2006, Gallup asked sub-Saharan Africans in 26 countries to rank the MDGs in order of importance to them as individuals (Tortora, 2008). The vehicle for this ranking was the Gallup World Poll. Nationally representative samples surveyed sub-Saharan Africans aged 15 or older in each country, except where security issues or infrastructure limitations prohibit interviewing (Gallup)[2]. This was the first quantitative study that we know of used to obtain the sub-Saharan Africans' opinions on the relative importance of the MDGs.

Gallup identified 12 goals and sub-goals associated with the MDGs that respondents were asked to rank. (Hereafter the goals and sub-goals are referred to as goals.) Because it is difficult for anyone to rank a

[1] A version of this paper will appear in a forthcoming issue of Danish Insight.

[2] For example, the 2006 survey excluded areas with landmines in Angola, as well as Northern provinces in Uganda, where the Lord's Resistance Army is active.

series of 12 items, Gallup randomly assigned the 12 goals into groups of 6. Gallup then randomly asked respondents to rank the goals in the randomly selected group. Specifically, respondents were shown a card[3] that listed the six goals and were asked, "Could you please rank the following elements on this card in order of importance for you as an individual with 1 being the most important and 6 the least important?" Table 1 shows the overall rankings of the 12 goals for all 26 countries surveyed in 2006.

Table 1

Overall Rankings in Order of Most Important to Least Important in 2006 (26 Countries)		
Rank	MDG or sub-goal	Weighted average score
1.	Reducing poverty	2.41
2.	Reducing hunger	2.48
3.	Reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS	3.05
4.	Providing more jobs for youth	3.17
5.	Reducing the death rate among children under five	3.34
6.	Reducing the number of women dying during childbirth	3.38
7.	Achieving primary education for all	3.62
8.	Reducing the spread of malaria and TB	3.64
9.	Improving access to safe drinking water	3.75
10.	Improving access to sanitation facilities	4.09

[3]Interviewers read the goals to illiterate respondents.

11.	Achieving gender equality and empowering women	4.38
12.	Providing access to new technology	4.65

Not surprisingly, sub-Saharan Africans ranked reducing poverty and reducing hunger as the top two most important goals; although, statistically, they are tied for the top rank across all countries. Perhaps more surprising is that "providing more jobs for youth" is ranked fourth among the 12 goals. In addition, respondents ranked "achieving gender equality and empowering women" and "providing access to new technology" as the least important goals (number 11 and 12, respectively). When the rankings were examined by various demographic groups, they tended to stay in the same order.

While reducing poverty and reducing hunger were ranked first and second and are clearly the most important of the MDGs to sub-Saharan Africans, as well as the United Nations, Gallup decided to revise the question methodology for 2008. One concern about including the reducing poverty and reducing hunger goals was that listing these goals could somehow cause respondents to think about the need for jobs as a means of reducing poverty and hunger, and hence, respondents may have ranked the "providing more jobs for youth" goal hirer than it should have been.

In addition, Gallup wanted to test the permanence of the 2006 survey results to investigate if, even under a different question methodology, the providing jobs for youth goal would rank as high. To do this, Gallup eliminated the reducing poverty and reducing hunger goals from the list. To improve clarity about health issues, the goal "reduce malaria and TB" was divided into two separate goals. Additionally, a factor often considered important to Western donors, reducing the level of corruption in government, was included in the mix of goals to be ranked. Finally, to speed up the interview process and reduce the burden on respondents, sub-Saharan Africans were asked to rank the three most important goals. This resulted in 12 goals to be ranked. Gallup randomly assigned goals, six at time, to groups. The groups, in turn, were randomly assigned to respondents. Respondents were asked to rank the top three goals "in order of importance to you as an individual." Given all of these changes, if jobs for youth (and the other remaining goals) stayed in about the same order as the 2006 results, then a conclusion could be reached about the

robustness of these rankings. Finally, instead of examining weighted averages, median scores[4] were used in the main analysis to reduce the affect of countries with larger populations such as Ethiopia and Nigeria.

The remainder of the paper examines the results of these rankings from the 2008 Gallup survey in 28 countries overall and by region.

2008 MDG Rankings

Table 2 shows the items Gallup asked sub-Saharan Africans to rank in 2008 (Appendix A shows the countries and sample sizes included in this analysis), the median score, and their highest and lowest rank across the 28 countries surveyed. There are similar results when comparing the 2006 rankings with the 2008 rankings. In the 2008 survey, providing more jobs for youth ranks slightly higher than reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS, but these two goals were also toward the top of the list in the 2006 survey. Respondents in Kenya ranked the providing jobs for youth goal the highest, at the 1.59, and respondents in Chad ranked this goal the lowest, at 2.27.

Table 2

Ranks, Medians, and Range From Most Important Goal to Least Important Goal in 2008 (28 Countries)

Rank	MDG goal	Median	Highest rank	Lowest rank
1	Providing more jobs for youth	1.88	1.59	2.27
2	Reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS	1.92	1.34	2.28
3	Reducing the spread of malaria	1.93	1.53	2.30
4	Improving access to safe drinking water	1.95	1.69	2.37
5	Achieving primary education for all	2.02	1.78	2.25

[4] The reader should note that the lower the score, the more important the item being ranked.

6	Reducing the level of corruption in the government	2.04	1.60	2.34
7	Improving access to sanitation facilities	2.10	1.88	2.43
7	Reducing the number of women dying during childbirth	2.10	1.75	2.31
9	Reducing the spread of TB	2.17	1.80	2.48
10	Reducing the death rate among children under five	2.18	1.91	2.41
11	Providing access to new technology	2.21	1.97	2.76
12	Achieving gender equality and empowering women	2.28	1.96	2.61

Overall, given the changes that were made to the 2008 question methodology, these rankings are consistent with the 2006 rankings, and they reinforce the importance of the two goals of providing jobs for youth and reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS. In addition, by dividing the reducing the spread of malaria goal and the reducing the spread of tuberculosis (TB) goal, respondents ranked reducing the spread of malaria as third in 2008. This falls in line with many sub-Saharan Africans' perceptions that malaria is the most prevalent disease across the sub-continent (Tortora, 2006). As in 2006, providing access to new technology and achieving gender equality and empowering women were the least important goals to sub-Saharan Africans.

On a regional basis, the rankings are similar except in Eastern Africa where providing jobs for youth falls to fifth on the list: The top two goals are reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and reducing the spread of malaria, respectively. In Western Africa and Central Africa, the top two goals are providing jobs for youth and improving access to safe drinking water, respectively. In Southern Africa the top two goals reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing more jobs for youth.

Summary and Conclusions

According to the 2008 Gallup World Poll survey, sub-Saharan Africans rank providing more jobs for youth as the most important goal of the MDGs, closely followed by reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS. These results replicate the 2006 results. Because the reducing the poverty and reducing hunger goals were

excluded from the 2008 survey, respondents ranked providing jobs for youth and reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS slightly higher than they would if the poverty and reducing hunger goals were included in the list. Except for Eastern Africa, these are consistent results. In Eastern Africa, jobs for youth falls to fifth and reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and reducing the spread of malaria are ranked first and second, respectively.

The late Dr. George Gallup often remarked, in effect, if government is of the people, by the people, and for the people, then shouldn't government know what the people are thinking? Certainly this applies to donors, as well. Shouldn't donors know what the recipients of their aid are thinking about? The results of the Gallup World Poll clearly show that providing more jobs for youth is high on sub-Saharan African respondents' list of priorities. While other important goals are ranked lower, this suggests that rather than not working on these other goals, donors should relate their work on other goals to creating jobs. Specifically, connecting the providing access to new technology or achieving gender equality and empowering women goals to creating jobs for youth seems like a win-win situation for donors and recipients alike.

Appendix A: 2008 Countries and Sample Size

Country	Sample Size
Angola	1000
Benin	1000
Botswana	1000
Burkina Faso	1000
Burundi	1000
Cameroon	1000
Chad	1000
Congo Brazzaville	1000
Djibouti	1000
Ethiopia	1200
Ghana	1000
Kenya	2200
Liberia	1000
Madagascar	1000
Mali	1000
Mauritania	1000

Mozambique	1000
Niger	1000
Nigeria	1000
Rwanda	1000
Senegal	1000
Sierra Leone	1000
South Africa	1000
Tanzania	1000
Togo	1000
Uganda	1000
Zambia	1000
Zimbabwe	1000
Total	29400

References

Gallup. (n.d.). *Gallup World Poll: Methodology*. Retrieved August 4, 2009, from http://www.gallup.com/consulting/worldpoll/108079/methodological-design.aspx

Tortora, Bob. (2006, December 8). Majority of Africans say malaria most prevalent disease in their country. *Gallup News Service*. Retrieved August 4, 2009, from http://www.gallup.com/poll/25810/Majority-Africans-Say-Malaria-Most-Prevalent-Disease-Their-Country.aspx

Tortora, Robert D. (n.d.). *Sub-Saharan Africans rank the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*. Washington, D.C.: Gallup.

United Nations. (2008). *The Millennium Development Goals report 2008*. New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social affairs.