

Building Inclusive Institutions that Leave No One Behind: An SDG Mid-term Review

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01

Introduction

Given that the topic of leaving no one behind is closely linked with the 2024 theme of ECOSOC and that the mid-term point to achieving the SDGs has been reached, the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) has decided to have a closer look at the different steps required to build inclusive institutions that leave no one behind.

02 Leaving no one behind:

Meaning and significance

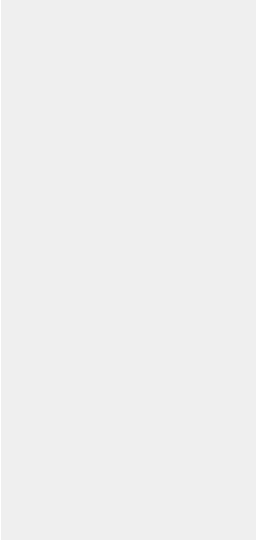
LNOB cannot be attained without addressing the most vulnerable population groups, who are also disproportionately affected by global crises, such as climate change and COVID-19.

Related to multiple SDGs:

- o Goal 1 – no poverty
- o Goal 2 – zero hunger
- o Goal 3 – good health and well-being
- o Goal 5 – gender equality
- o Goal 10 – reduced inequalities among countries
- o Goal 16 – peace, justice, and strong institutions
- o Goal 17 – partnerships for the goals



LNOB



“Full realization of human rights, without discrimination on the basis of social status, sex, age, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability, or other status.”

People who are left behind can experience..

Absolute Deprivation

People live in multidimensional poverty or below other minimally acceptable standards of security, income, public services, infrastructure, and well-being.



Relative Disadvantage

People experience exclusion, discrimination, and/or deep-rooted inequalities; and are less able than others in society to gain influence, get an education, access to healthcare, job markets and have a decent work, housing, acquire wealth, access to technologies. They also have a lower life expectancy.



Why Now?

1

The age of polycrisis has worsened the situation of vulnerable groups and/or increased the risk of more people being left behind e.g. the geopolitical tensions, pandemics, and political instability.

2

As a result, and despite more than two decades of improvements, the gaps between different groups of people have widened, affecting the implementation of Agenda 2030, and of course the pledge to leave no one behind.

3

It will take 286 years to close gender gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory laws.

Why Now? (in numbers)

110–150 million

people may have been pushed into extreme poverty, adding to the 689 million people worldwide surviving on less than \$1.90 a day in 2018.

575 million

If nothing changes, by 2030, 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty, some 660 million people will still be without electricity

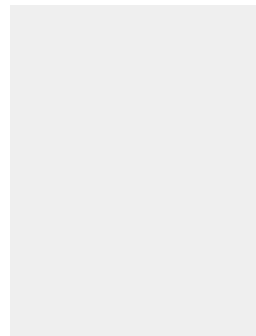
84 million

children will be out of school and 300 million children or young people attending school will leave unable to read and write.

03

Building inclusive institutions to leave no one behind

Different intersecting and cross-cutting factors can prevent or slow down the pledge of leaving no one behind, such as demographic imbalances caused by rapid population growth, lack of access to basic services as well as unprecedented shocks and crises affecting the world. Therefore, a better understanding of the current situation, identification of vulnerable groups and root causes, and establishment of inclusive public institutions and policies that leave no one behind are urgently required.



Building Inclusive Institutions that Leave No One Behind





Step 1: Identify who is left behind

- Identifying individuals or groups being left behind and understanding their specific needs and challenges
- UNDP, for example, uses the following five key factors: discrimination, geography, governance, socio-economic status and shocks and fragility
- While a person might be left behind due to disadvantages related to only one of the five factors described above most of the people left behind face intersecting disadvantages stemming from more than one factor

Step 2: Identify why they are being left behind

Possible root causes keeping people marginalized and excluded

Discrimination	Discriminatory laws, policies and social practices that leave particular groups of people behind, for example, due to their gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, and sexual orientation.
Cultural and social factors	Cultural norms and societal attitudes or stereotypes can create barriers to the inclusion of certain groups.
Socio-economic and demographic factors	Such as low income, reduced life expectancy, and low educational attainment or lack of access to social safety nets, financial services, and basic services, such as healthcare, water and sanitation, education, energy, and decent work, can perpetuate cycles of poverty and marginalization.
Geographic location	Remote and isolated local communities, oftentimes in rural areas, exacerbated by territorial inequality in terms of infrastructures and basic services.
Weak public institutions and policies	Lack of policy coherence at all governance levels, vertically and horizontally, can lead to weak results and impact.

Step 2: Identify why they are being left behind

Lack of political will and commitment	Lack of policy coherence at all governance levels, vertically and horizontally, can lead to weak results and impact.
Insufficient means of implementation	Governments may struggle to allocate sufficient funds to address the needs of marginalized populations, leading to gaps in public service delivery.
Global economic system	Developing countries in particular face challenges in accessing markets, technologies, and resources, hindering their ability and capacity to LNOB.
Shocks and crises	Climate change, natural and man-made disasters, global pandemics, violence, conflicts and wars, mass displacement, economic downturns, price fluctuations, and other shocks and crises disproportionately affect vulnerable population groups, often exacerbating existing challenges.
Digital divide	Lack of digital skills and/or access to internet resources results in marginalization and uneven distribution of public services.
Data challenges and gaps	Understanding which population groups are being left behind requires the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

Step 3: Ensure that no one is left behind

- Building inclusive institutions will require implementing the 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development developed by CEPA and endorsed by ECOSOC in 2018:
 - **Effectiveness**: competence, sound policymaking and collaboration;
 - **Accountability**: integrity, transparency, and independent oversight;
 - **Inclusiveness**: Leaving no one behind, non-discrimination, participation, subsidiarity, and intergenerational equity.



Step 3: Ensure that no one is left behind

Strategic Planning

Once the vulnerable groups and root causes have been identified, governments are encouraged to develop integrated people-centered strategies for leaving no one behind with mutually reinforcing processes and targeted equity-based policies and interventions. They should hereby apply a human rights-based approach and a gender perspective.

Empowerment of all Actors

Governments should involve all actors, particularly the most marginalized, in the decision-making, review and follow-up processes to empower them and ensure accountability and transparency. Multi-sector and inter-ministerial (horizontal and vertical) collaboration and cooperation is required in the context of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.

Investment

From a societal point of view, it is also necessary to promote and anchor, in parallel, democracy as well as economic growth, and to invest in civic education to gain a healthy, active, educated population, where opportunities to live a good life are offered to all social strata and are leaving no one, no place behind. We must change the mentalities of welfare and “begging”, through investment in the values of hard work, the competitive spirit and the sense of merit.

Step 3: Ensure that no one is left behind

Data Collection & Analysis

UN agencies and country offices can support this endeavor by systematically compiling all available disaggregated data and other relevant quantitative and qualitative data from a wide range of data sources, including trend analysis where feasible.

Data collection and analysis processes should ensure meaningful participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups. Citizen-generated data, for example, which are produced by people to directly demand, drive, or monitor changes on issues that affect them, can be very useful to complement traditional data sources.

Monitoring & Evaluation

A critical aspect involves ensuring effective measurement and monitoring of progress, as it enables a comprehensive understanding of the outcome and impact of interventions aimed at addressing inequalities.

04

Good practice examples & lessons learned



Country	Effort undertaken	Practical example
Comoros	working on strengthening its contributory and non-contributory social protection system , adopting new laws to promote youth employment , strengthening existing laws on violence against children and women , launching a national institution for human rights and civil liberties , and establishing universal health coverage .	Social Safety Net Project: supported about 36,000 households, with 10,290 households receiving socio-economic recovery grants, and women making up 76 % of cash transfer recipients . The program focuses on human capital, women's empowerment, and productive inclusion .
Dominica	working with the UN World Food Programme on creating a more shock-responsive social protection system to strengthen its ability to deliver assistance to the most vulnerable people following a climate shock by linking social protection systems to the payouts made by the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF SPC) .	The pilot project has increased the government's access to disaster risk financing , enabling it to build the financial resilience of the most vulnerable against natural disasters .
France	in line with the European Commission's Digital Decade , which aims for 80% of European citizens to develop basic digital skills in the next decade, France is working to tackle the digital divides hindering the aim of ensuring an inclusive digital transformation .	National Plan for Digital Inclusion: aims to achieve digital inclusion of at least one third of the French population over the next 10 years , which means equipping a total of 4,5 million citizens with basic digital skills .

Country	Effort undertaken	Practical example
Greece	<p>paying particular importance to the protection of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged population groups and aims to ensure the effective integration of the principle of leaving no one behind at all levels and across all public policies and reform measures.</p>	<p><u>Strategy for Social Inclusion and the Fight against Poverty</u> and the first <u>National Action Plan for the protection of Children’s Rights:</u> aim to reduce child poverty and guarantee every child access to free health services, education, childcare, housing, and adequate food.</p>
Kazakhstan	<p>making significant progress in addressing and eliminating unequal access to the internet across the country.</p>	<p>250+ Project: aims to provide villages with high-speed mobile internet. As a result, 5000 of the 6400 settlements –99% of the country’s population - were provided with access to the internet using various technologies. The remaining 1.4 thousand settlements are small villages where access is expensive or technically challenging. These can be covered through various support mechanisms (e.g. tax breaks) or non-geostationary satellite constellations (e.g. Starlink).</p>
Mali	<p>aiming to reduce poverty and address inequalities, exclusion, and discrimination for the most disadvantaged, the Government, in collaboration with UN agencies, is implementing programs to strengthen the resilience of individuals, households and entire communities and ensure their inclusion.</p>	<p>The country has set up targeted money transfers as well as canteens in public schools to ensure that children attend school and improve their health.</p>

Country	Effort undertaken	Practical example
<p>Morocco</p>	<p>One of the country's goals is to leave no woman and no girl behind. The 2022 national report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) highlights the various achievements accomplished over the past fourteen years in promoting women's rights, including legislative and institutional reform projects, strategies, plans and programs. Several other policies and strategies are designed and localized for target groups, such as rural communities, elders, youth, persons with disabilities, minorities, based on the mobilization of all actors and stakeholders involved in the sustainable development dynamic.</p>	<p>In line with resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council, Morocco adopted a national action plan on women, peace and security in 2022, showing its commitment to gender equality and its conviction that the Women, Peace and Security Agenda is an essential component of maintaining international peace and security.</p>
<p>Slovakia</p>	<p>In an effort to reduce social isolation for senior citizens and digital skill discrepancies, Slovakia has launched multiple intergenerational programs and projects.</p>	<p>The Hlavičky (“Clever Heads”) project is an intergenerational volunteer program bringing children and seniors living in Banská Bystrica together to learn from one another. Senior citizens tutor children and elementary school students and help them with their homeworks. In exchange, the children help the senior citizens master modern technologies. The program primarily focuses on children from vulnerable or large families who cannot afford to finance a tutor.</p>

Countries using the Multidimensional Poverty Index

Country	MPI Use	Practical example
Egypt	Poverty in Egypt has generally increased during the first two decades of the new millennium, with almost one in three Egyptians living below the poverty line . With the help of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) , Egypt introduced one of the largest initiatives to improve the living conditions of the country's poorest .	“Decent life initiative” (Hayat Karima) is a climate sensitive initiative launched in 2019 with the aim to create sustainable rural communities, close developmental gaps, alleviate poverty in villages and slums in urban areas . It is targeting 4500 villages across the country and aims to improve the lives of 60 million Egyptians .
India	The MPI provides crucial insights into multiple cross-sectoral indicators and evidence for decision-makers at all levels . It complements existing metrics to track progress and informs high-impact interventions. Thus, India educated government officials, citizens and others, on the value and necessity of MPI as a potent policy tool and is using it in the planning of development strategies, budgetary allocations, and goal setting .	The use of MPI in national planning strategies resulted in numerous targeted development interventions leading to progress in key areas, such as health, and education, and about 135.5 million persons escaping poverty .
Malawi	The second MPI report launched in 2022 complements monetary poverty measures, by providing an understanding of the multidimensional nature of poverty and the dominant deprivations experienced by different population groups. It uses data from the fifth Integrated Household Surveys (IHS) , which was conducted in 2019/2020, with findings showing that people in rural regions are in general poorer , indicating the urgent need to address rural-urban disparities.	In 2022, more than half of the population - 58.8 percent - remained multidimensional poor , albeit indicating a slight decline from 61.7 per cent in 2021 . The country has enacted various pieces of legislation and put in place various strategies to ensure that no one is being left behind. Marginalized groups are also involved in key decision-making processes .
Nepal	In 2021, Nepal published its second MPI report. Nepal recognizes the prevalent issues of intersectional discrimination, exclusion, violence, inequality, and exploitation in its society and is taking measures to ensure equity, through legal provisions, policy measures, institutional arrangements, investments, and establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships .	While 3.1 million people were left in multidimensional poverty between 2014 and 2019, Nepal made considerable progress in reducing the overall poverty rate from 30.1 percent in 2014 to 17.4 percent in 2019 in line with its commitment to achieve a ‘Prosperous Nepal’ .

05 Recommendations

The principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) focuses on finding and helping vulnerable groups. This means not just creating policies for them, but also tackling the deeper problems that cause inequality, discrimination, and exclusion in the first place.

1	Countries are encouraged to develop integrated people-centered strategies by establishing inclusive public institutions, mutually reinforcing processes and targeted equity-based policies and interventions. They should hereby apply a human rights-based approach and a gender perspective and implement the CEPA principles of effective governance.
2	Accountable, responsive, and inclusive institutions will also have to be built at the subnational level to reduce inequalities and exclusion. Equity-based policies should be enforced and a dedicated and adequate budget attributed to targeted interventions to address the deprivations of those being left behind.
3	Macroeconomic policies should focus on fairness, creating jobs, reducing poverty, and inequality. They should use gender-based budgeting and explore ways to fund programs that help the most vulnerable.
4	Interventions should aim at addressing the needs of those furthest behind first and be paired with preventive policies to ensure that new people or groups do not fall behind at the same time

05 Recommendations

5	Civic engagement through a participatory approach, supporting local communities and civil society organizations, can help shape public decisions and hold governments accountable regarding the realization of the rights of vulnerable population groups.
6	Changing the mindset of the public sector: Governments should invest in intellectual capital and human resources, including in the skills, competencies, resources, working conditions and values of public servants.
7	Accessible, reliable, and robust data is required to guide policy making and drive change.
8	Ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management of efforts aimed at leaving no one behind are essential to ensure that strategies remain effective and responsive to changing circumstances.

Thank you