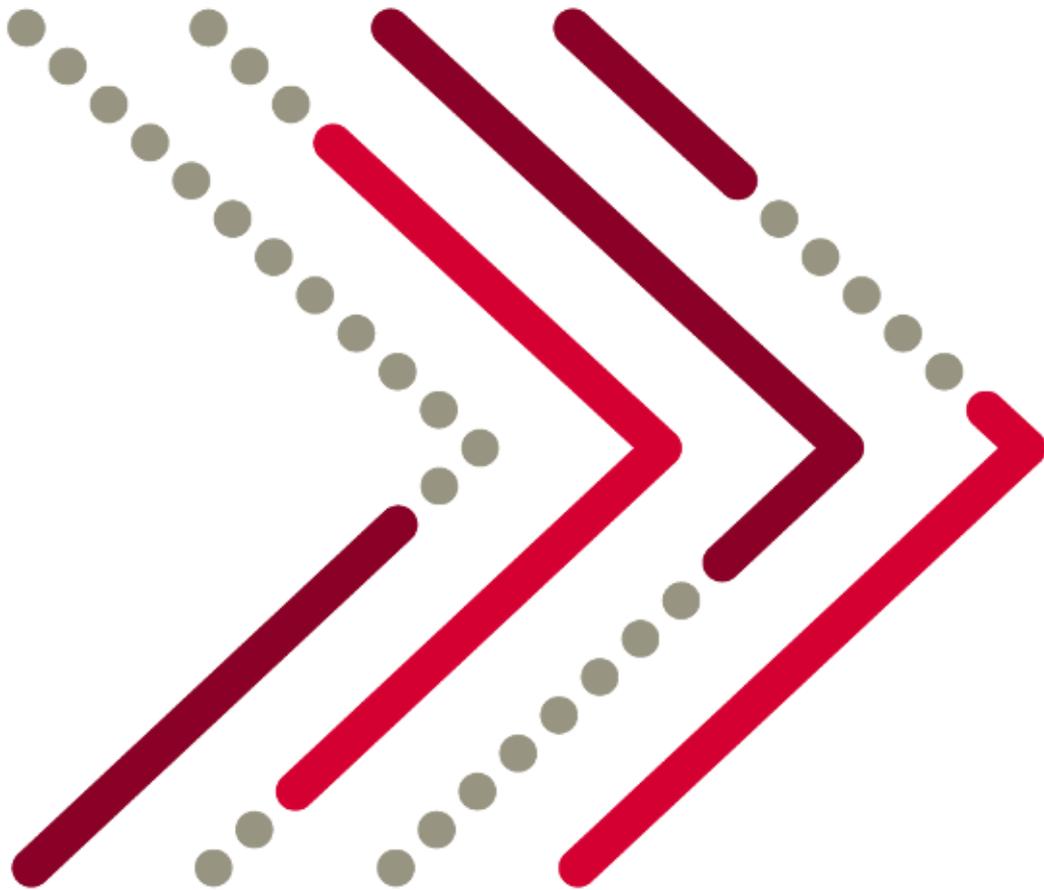


# Leave no one behind: How the development community is realising the pledge



## Contents

<b>Contents and Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>What do we mean by “leave no one behind”?</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>How development actors are responding to ‘leave no one behind’</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Government approaches</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Finland .....	11
Germany .....	12
Ireland.....	13
The Netherlands .....	14
Sweden .....	15
United Kingdom.....	16
<b>Multilateral approaches</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Analysis of approaches to ‘leave no one behind’</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>37</b>

## About Bond

Bond is the civil society network for global change. We bring people together to make the international development sector more effective. [bond.org.uk](http://bond.org.uk)

## Acknowledgements

This report was written by Kate Munro, independent consultant, with input from members of the Bond ‘Leave No One Behind’ Group, and was edited by Ken Bluestone. Many thanks to Diego Martinez-Schutt and Beck Smith, and to everyone else who commented and contributed.

# Introduction

“Leave no one behind” is a core principle of the 2030 Agenda. By endorsing the declaration, all countries pledged that *‘no one will be left behind. Recognising that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first’*<sup>1</sup>.

Alongside the formal adoption of Agenda 2030, governments and other development actors also signed up to the UK Government’s Leave No One Behind Promise, committing to ensure that *‘Every person counts and will be counted; Every person has a fair opportunity in life no matter who or where they are, and People who are furthest behind, who have least opportunity and who are the most excluded, will be prioritised’*<sup>2</sup>.

Since the adoption of the SDGs, ‘leave no one behind’ has been the main theme of the 2016 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and featured strongly in the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) commitments to reshape the humanitarian system. We are now two years into implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the task for all development and humanitarian actors is to clearly articulate how ‘leave no one behind’ is going to be taken forward and how progress will be monitored and measured.

Based on a review of published literature and interviews with key government officials and civil society representatives, this report provides an overview of some of the main actions being undertaken by European donor governments, multilateral development institutions and international civil society organisations (ICSOs) that are intended to contribute to realizing the commitment to ‘leave no one behind’.

This report builds on a Bond ‘leave no one behind’ paper published in 2016 that sets out ten principles that development stakeholders should bear in mind whilst realizing the pledge<sup>3</sup>. These principles provide the framework for analysis of the plans and actions described in this paper.

---

<sup>1</sup> Agenda 2030, Transforming our World, 2015 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

<sup>2</sup> ‘Leaving No One behind: Our Promise - GOV.UK’ <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/leaving-no-one-behind-our-promise/leaving-no-one-behind-our-promise>> [accessed 19 June 2017].

<sup>3</sup> Bond SDGs working group, *Leaving No One behind: Putting Marginalised People at the Forefront of the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2016 <<https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/resource-documents/leaving-no-one-behind-0516.pdf>>.

## Executive summary

The 'Leave No One Behind' principle, enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, has the potential to spur unprecedented change for the world's poorest and most excluded people. It implies that progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be judged according to how well groups that are furthest behind are advancing. If applied meaningfully, 'leave no one behind' will ensure that human rights are at the heart of development practice and that those furthest behind are at the forefront of development planning, processes and interventions.

'Leave no one behind' is not a prescriptive principle and responses from multilaterals, European donor governments and international civil society organisations (ICSOs) are diverse. These include the integration of the principle into strategic plans, increasing the disaggregation of development programme data, an increased focus on 'left behind' groups in monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and new initiatives to promote social protection and inclusive development.

There is a danger, however, that development actors are not paying sufficient attention to what is needed to 'leave no one behind'. Using Bond's 10 principles of 'leave no one behind'<sup>4</sup>, the report surveys the experience of Finland, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, and multilateral agencies. It highlights that while considerable attention is being given to 'leave no one behind' in response to the SDGs, no development actor has a comprehensive answer for putting the principle into practice.

Leaving no one behind means ending extreme poverty, reducing inequalities, and addressing discriminatory behaviours. The report identifies three concrete steps development actors are taking to realise 'leave no one behind':

1. Identifying who is left behind
2. Understanding the reasons why people are left behind
3. Taking action against the exclusion of 'left behind' groups and individuals.

Donor supported initiatives, such as national dialogues, have begun to map some of the furthest behind groups at national and sub-national level. But these initiatives need to be followed up by concrete action plans from governments with real political commitment to reach all excluded groups, and establish transparent inclusive and participatory monitoring and accountability processes to assess progress<sup>5</sup>.

There is a risk that the responsibility for realising the pledge to leave no one behind will be the sole responsibility of specific teams, as opposed to what is needed – a full integration into business case design and the monitoring and evaluation frameworks of all programmes and funding decisions. By failing to consider the impact of development programmes on the poorest and most marginalised, there is a risk that their vulnerability will be unintentionally exacerbated. There is also a risk that donors are focussing their efforts on specific groups and potentially undermining the core principle that 'leave no one behind' should be for all marginalised groups.

---

<sup>4</sup> Bond SDGs working group, *Leaving No One behind: Putting Marginalised People at the Forefront of the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2016 <<https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/resource-documents/leaving-no-one-behind-0516.pdf>>

<sup>5</sup> Save the Children, *Realising the Pledge to Leave No One Behind*, 2017 <<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/realising-pledge-leave-no-one-behind>> [accessed 31 May 2017].

A key step is for donors to increase the disaggregation of their programme data and ensure that it goes beyond gender, disability, geography and age to make visible those groups most marginalised in specific contexts.

'Leave no one behind' has been prominent in the UN's response to Agenda 2030, with a commitment to eliminate discrimination and reduce inequalities. Multilateral agencies are increasingly recognising the relationship between inequality, social exclusion, poverty and slow growth, and their own role in tackling these connected global challenges. Income inequality has also been a focus of research at the Banks, and a distinct but related focus on social inclusion is rising up the UN's agenda.

Underpinning this response is a clear recognition that social protection is a key tool for achieving 'leave no one behind'. In a joint statement in June 2015, the ILO and World Bank called on world leaders to promote universal social protection, which they define as '*adequate cash transfers for all who need them, especially children; benefits and support for people of working age in case of maternity, disability, work injury or for those without jobs; and pensions for older persons*'<sup>6</sup>

In policy terms, 'leave no one behind' is a challenge that cuts across all areas of government. It requires a better understanding of the factors that cause as well as contribute to reducing inequality and marginalisation. It also requires policy coherence to ensure that government action on climate change, illicit drugs, arms, tax and trade, among others, do not undermine efforts to achieve 'leave no one behind'. Yet the 'leave no one behind' principle is not significantly informing European donor government policy agendas that impact on developing countries beyond aid.

Climate change impacts are increasing, affecting poorest people with the least ability to adapt and recover the most. The link between responses to climate and environmental change and 'leave no one behind' needs to be made more explicit, however, and actions proposed are not sufficient to meet the scale of the challenge.

Putting 'leave no one behind' into practice requires governance and accountability mechanisms at local, national and international levels. It is essential that we track progress on the achievement of the SDGs, not just the final outcomes, and that we allow marginalised groups to take part in a meaningful way. It also means having measures that allow progress on 'leave no one behind' to be visible, through stepping stone equity targets, for example, or donors including 'leave no one behind' markers in their business plans.

A key challenge faced by donors seeking to scale up support to marginalised groups are the remote, often rural locations, in which they live. Partnership with CSOs is integral to the delivery of 'leave no one behind' and new ways of working must be developed that fully value and support this relationship.

By 2030 there will be significant changes in how poverty and inequality manifest themselves in the world. For instance, it is estimated that at least 46% of the world's poorest people will live in conflict affected and fragile states<sup>7</sup>. Achieving the SDGs requires that action towards the goals benefit all groups. We will only be successful with sufficient investment, with the involvement of all stakeholders including those most marginalised, and being adaptable to the challenges of the future.

Key recommendations in this report for action that could contribute to understanding why people are left behind and tackling the causes are:

---

<sup>6</sup> 'The World Bank Group and ILO Universal Social Protection Initiative', 2015 <[http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/social-security/WCMS\\_378991/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/social-security/WCMS_378991/lang--en/index.htm)> [accessed 29 July 2017]

<sup>7</sup> World Bank, *Fragility, Conflict and Violence* <<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview>>.

### Recommendations for all stakeholders

- ‘Leave no one behind’ is a transformational principle that should be applied across all goals and targets. International and national accountability mechanisms are needed to measure, reach, and fast-track progress for those furthest behind.
- Qualitative and contextual research should be undertaken by governments, UN agencies and development stakeholders to fully understand how inequalities intersect and impact on people.
- Disaggregation of data must be strengthened and go beyond gender, disability, geography and age to make visible those groups most marginalised in specific contexts.

### Recommendations for donors

- Donors should build inclusive programming criteria and ‘leave no one behind’ markers into all business cases across all sectors and include ‘leave no one behind’ criteria in their structural support to governments.
- International donors should increase support for projects that include marginalised groups in decision making at all levels and that raise awareness of their rights.
- The twin-track approach of tackling social exclusion through empowerment and data disaggregation that is captured in DFID’s Disability, Poverty and Development policy paper<sup>8</sup> should inform DFID’s, other donor governments’ and multilaterals agencies’ approach to ‘leave no one behind’ more widely.
- Donors should recognise and finance the increasingly important role that national, sub-national, and international CSO coalitions play in supporting excluded groups and community organisations to engage directly with government.
- Donor governments need to link more explicitly their commitment to climate change action, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and financing adaptation in the poorest affected countries with the ‘leave no one behind’ principle. Detailed assessments of the social impacts of climate change and environment funds and programmes are needed to ensure they do not exacerbate the impoverishment and marginalisation of vulnerable groups.

### Recommendations for governments

- All countries should report on ‘leave no one behind’ in their voluntary national reviews (VNRs) to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), taking a participatory approach and involving marginalised groups.
- All governments should undertake a ‘leave no one behind’ assessment to identify the groups that are furthest behind or at risk, why they are lagging behind and what can be done to accelerate progress. National action plans need to reach all excluded groups and establish transparent inclusive and participatory monitoring and accountability processes to assess progress.
- Governance mechanisms at all levels (local, national, regional and global) need to be more open, inclusive and accountable to marginalised groups. Local communities must be closely involved in

---

<sup>8</sup> DFID, *Disability, Poverty and Development*.

developing local targets and indicators, and take an active role in monitoring and holding local authorities accountable for SDG implementation.

- Improved publication of data on ODA and other financial flows is needed for independent monitoring of how much ODA is being targeted at those furthest behind, and to help ensure the optimal mobilization of domestic resources towards universal provision of essential services.
- Government policies and practices in areas such as trade, tax, climate, migration, arms transfers and illicit drugs should be assessed for how they impact on inequality and achieving 'leave no one behind' objectives.

Given the ambition of 'leave no one behind' and the many competing political priorities, there is a risk that 'leave no one behind' could become an empty promise. It is important that governments and other actors do not lose sight of the positive impact that tackling marginalisation, discrimination and inequality can have on development outcomes for all people. As the politics of development cooperation changes, we need to ensure that our focus on countries and people most in need remains constant and that we invest fully in achieving 'leave no one behind.'

# What do we mean by “leave no one behind”?

The ‘leave no one behind’ pledge implies that non-income-based inequalities should be tackled – particularly for those people facing multiple discriminations; and, that governments should prioritise the progress of marginalised groups. Agenda 2030 particularly highlights ‘*children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants*’.

This list identifies groups who have been marginalised and have a greater likelihood of experiencing poverty. The list, however, is not comprehensive. For example, marital status, which can be a profound determining factor of income in the case of single, divorced, and widowed women<sup>9</sup>, is not mentioned; nor is lesbian, gay, bi and transsexual (LGBT) status, or caste-based discrimination, which is one of the most persistent barriers to education and labour market mobility.

According to ODI, ‘leave no one behind’ captures three concepts: ‘ending extreme poverty (in all its forms), reducing inequalities, and addressing discriminatory behaviours.’<sup>10</sup> As ODI points out, this can apply to specific groups such as a particular caste or ethnic group within a country, or to the majority of a country, as is the case where poverty levels may be high across an entire population.

The ‘leave no one behind’ principle recognises that many factors – including social, political and economic norms – can contribute to a person’s experience of and vulnerability to poverty and that these ‘group-based’ inequalities<sup>11</sup> intersect. A key challenge for achieving ‘leave no one behind’ is learning how to recognize and respond to the relationships between these different factors and how they combine to drive poverty.

Leaving no one behind requires action across all SDG goal areas. From environmental degradation to inclusive and accountable governance, gender equality to education, all of the goals address issues that can contribute to inequality, discrimination and marginalisation. Measuring progress against the goals therefore requires improved disaggregation of data, and making links to accountability and planning processes at all levels.

It also requires substantial investment – from a study of 75 low and middle-income countries<sup>12</sup>, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) estimates that an additional \$739 billion is needed each year to ensure no one is left behind. This should not be viewed as extra budgetary costs though; the World Bank now recognizes that high rates of inequality are contributing to slowed economic growth<sup>13</sup>. Investing in ‘leave no one behind’ can yield real economic and social benefits.

Achieving ‘leave no one behind’ also goes to the core of why the Sustainable Development Goals are necessary. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were critiqued for not addressing sufficiently the underlying causes of poverty, including political and economic inequality and normative factors. While

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Stuart and Jessica Woodroffe, ‘Leaving No-One behind: Can the Sustainable Development Goals Succeed Where the Millennium Development Goals Lacked?’, *Gender & Development*, 24.1 (2016), 69–81 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2016.1142206>>.

<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth Stuart and Emma Samman, ‘Defining ‘leave no one behind’, ODI Briefing Note, October 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Kabeer, N (2010) *Can the MDGs provide a pathway to social justice? The challenge of intersecting inequalities* [https://www.unngls.org/IMG/pdf\\_MDGs\\_and\\_Inequalities\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://www.unngls.org/IMG/pdf_MDGs_and_Inequalities_Final_Report.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Stuart, et al. ‘Leaving no one behind: A critical path for the first 1,000 days of the Sustainable Development Goals.’, ODI 2016, <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10692.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Pedro Olinto, *Accelerating Poverty Reduction in a Less Poor World: The Roles of Growth and Inequality. World Bank Poverty Research Working Paper*, 2014 <<https://52.21.52.208/bitstream/handle/10986/18347/WPS6855.txt?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>>.

significant progress was made in reducing overall poverty, the implementation of the MDGs did not do enough to help many of the poorest and most marginalised people around the world realise their rights<sup>14</sup>.

Applying the principle of 'leave no one behind' to efforts to achieve the SDGs requires paying much greater attention to who is gaining from programmes and who is being missed out. By 2030, the greatest advances towards achieving the SDGs should have been realized for the groups who are the poorest and marginalised today.

## How development actors are responding to 'leave no one behind'

Several governments, multilaterals and civil society organisations (CSOs) have developed approaches to 'leave no one behind'. While there is great diversity, there is an emerging understanding that the broad steps involved in realizing the pledge are:

1. Identifying who is left behind
2. Understanding the reasons why people are left behind
3. Taking action to tackle the marginalisation or exclusion of 'left behind' groups and individuals.

### Identifying who is left behind

While interpretations vary of what putting 'leave no one behind' into practice means, there is a general understanding that the first step towards achieving inclusive development is identifying who are the excluded or marginalised groups in each context. This is reflected in reports from the World Bank<sup>15</sup>, the UN<sup>16</sup>, and civil society actors<sup>17</sup> <sup>18</sup>. This conviction has contributed to increased investment from development actors including DFID in improving data quality and quantity through their country programmes<sup>19</sup> and a growth in innovative new data gathering initiatives to help identify marginalised groups such as the P20 Initiative<sup>20</sup>.

However, CSOs in many developing countries continue to be concerned that the most influential data source - national household survey data - is still insufficiently disaggregated to truly help identify the most marginalised groups. There is also concern that new data gathering initiatives are not being formally recognised by national policy makers and are not feeding into international reporting against

---

<sup>14</sup> Bhatkal, Tanvi; Samman, Emma; Stuart, Elizabeth, *Leave No One behind: The Real Bottom Billion*, 2016 <<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9846.pdf>>.

<sup>15</sup> Maitreyi Bordia Das, *Inclusion Matters : The Foundation for Shared Prosperity - Overview* (The World Bank, 1 January 2013), pp. 1–40 <<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/384801468326712492/Inclusion-matters-the-foundation-for-shared-prosperity-overview>> [accessed 14 June 2017].

<sup>16</sup> UN DESA, *Leaving No One behind: The Imperative of Inclusive Development*, 2016 <<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/report-on-the-world-social-situation-rwss-social-policy-and-development-division/rwss2016.html>>.

<sup>17</sup> Partos, *The Spindle*, 2016 <<http://thespindle.org/about-the-spindle/>>.

<sup>18</sup> Save the Children, *Realising the Pledge to Leave No One Behind*.

<sup>19</sup> DFID, *Data Disaggregation Action Plan*, 2016 <[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/582315/Data-disaggregation-action-plan-Jan-2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/582315/Data-disaggregation-action-plan-Jan-2017.pdf)>.

<sup>20</sup> Development Initiatives, 'Making the Case for Disaggregated Data: A Look at Ethiopia', *Development Initiatives* <<http://devinit.org/post/making-the-case-for-disaggregated-data-a-look-at-ethiopia/>> [accessed 19 June 2017].

SDG indicators at the HLPF<sup>21</sup>. The UN has highlighted that *'strengthened statistical offices as well as more openness to innovative social research directions could help improve the ability to meet data needs'*<sup>22</sup>.

## Understanding the reasons why people are left behind

The second step towards fulfilling the pledge is working with marginalised, excluded groups to understand the factors, including laws, policies, institutional arrangements, and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours that contribute to marginalisation.

The causes are diverse, encompassing social, cultural, political and economic norms that embed inequality and exclude or marginalise certain groups. The UN High Level Political Forum's 2017 Review of SDG1 highlighted that many people in extreme poverty live in middle income countries but are 'left behind due to market and/or governance failure; exclusion or discrimination'<sup>23</sup>. In all parts of the world large numbers of people face multiple, compounding sources of social, political and economic discrimination.

The challenge therefore for national governments, civil society and for the international development community is to understand the intersections between these factors. A growing number of development actors are recognizing this and beginning to work on how to build intersectionality into programme design.

## Taking action to tackle exclusion and marginalisation

The third step is that national governments and other development actors need to make changes to their own structures, laws, policies and practices in response to this understanding of 'leave no one behind'. This is only possible with 'concerted effort and long-term political commitment at the highest level'<sup>24</sup>.

The HLPF's 2017 Thematic Review of SDG1 stresses that national governments should *'make deliberate policy decisions to combat high inequality and to equalize opportunities for all, making smart use of both fiscal and social systems to improve the lives of their citizens'*. In relation to eliminating poverty, the report also stresses that *'it is crucial for countries to find pathways out of conflict, work to mitigate climatic risks, eliminate discriminatory laws and policies and empower women and girls'*<sup>25</sup>.

The UN has proposed that the first imperative of governments for taking action on exclusion is to establish a *'universal approach to social policy, complemented by special or targeted measures to address the distinct obstacles faced by disadvantaged, marginalised or otherwise excluded social groups'*<sup>26</sup>.

This requires donor governments and multilaterals to integrate achieving universal coverage, social protection and tackling marginalisation into the design and business cases of their development assistance programmes to support actions taken by their national government partners. CSOs can also

---

<sup>21</sup> The Leave No One Behind Partnership, *Leave No One Behind: Delivering on the Agenda 2030 Promise*, 2017 <<http://www.civicus.org/images/LNBReportFinal.pdf>>.

<sup>22</sup> UN DESA.

<sup>23</sup> UN HLPF, *2017 HLPF Thematic Review of SDG 1: End Poverty in All Its Forms Everywhere*, 2017 <[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14379SDG1format-final\\_OD.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14379SDG1format-final_OD.pdf)>.

<sup>24</sup> UN DESA.

<sup>25</sup> UN HLPF.

<sup>26</sup> UN DESA.

play a critical role by brokering relations with grassroots actors and reaching groups in remote and rural areas that government agencies and donor country offices often can't reach<sup>27</sup>.

SDG monitoring processes will be key to promoting effective and ambitious action by development actors. Agenda 2030 calls for follow up and review processes that are '*people-centred, gender-sensitive, respect human rights and have a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind.*'<sup>28</sup>

## Government approaches

Putting 'leave no one behind' into practice requires sustained and strong political leadership over the full course of Agenda 2030. For donor governments, this could mean re-evaluating everything from development assistance programme design to country office operations and engagement with multilaterals. This section outlines the approaches of six European donor governments to 'leave no one behind' in their development cooperation. It is based on published literature and interviews with officials from some of the countries.

### Finland

Agenda 2030 is the overarching framework for Finland's 2016 Development Policy, the main goals of which are poverty eradication and reducing inequality. The Finnish development policy places particular emphasis on the rights of women and girls and on strengthening developing countries' own economies to promote employment, livelihoods and well-being. Priorities also include: strengthening democracy and the functioning of societies; as well as access to food, water and energy; and the sustainable use of natural resources<sup>29</sup>.

The cross cutting objectives of Finland's development cooperation in all areas from livelihoods and food security to tax and governance, are: gender equality, reducing inequality, and environmental sustainability. The rights of women and girls is both a focus area and a cross cutting objective.

In 2015, Finland also introduced a guidance note on how to operationalize a human rights-based approach in all development programmes. This sets minimum standards for all interventions funded by Finland, including requiring human rights assessments in order to make sure the interventions are not in conflict with human rights obligations and principles and do not contribute (unintentionally) to human rights violations and/or discrimination. Operationalising this human-rights based approach is an ongoing process, which has been strengthened significantly in recent years. Accountability is also being strengthened by the screening of all new initiatives against this minimum requirement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs's (MFA) internal Quality Assurance Board. MFA Finland also recently introduced a human rights-based approach marker to allow better tracking of implementation.

---

<sup>27</sup> The Leave No One Behind Partnership.

<sup>28</sup> UN, *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2015

<<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>>.

<sup>29</sup><http://formin.finland.fi/Public/default.aspx?contentid=341918&nodeid=49540&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>

Advancing disability rights is the strongest thematic focus under Finland's cross cutting objective of non-discrimination & reduction of inequality. Finland's 2016 Development Policy states a commitment to take into account the rights of people with disabilities. To this end a disability marker was created last year to track financial contributions to disability rights enhancement, though this is not yet fully implemented. Most (70%) of Finland's development assistance is targeted at meeting the rights of persons with disabilities and is channelled through Finnish development partner organisations (DPOs) and through their partners in developing countries. This approach includes a sub-granting arrangement with Abilis Foundation to reach small grassroots DPOs in developing countries.

Finland's second largest stream of funding on disability rights goes to the UN Partnership for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) Multi Donor Trust Fund which mainstreams disability rights across the UN system and supports country-level implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD).

Global social protection systems are a further core dimension to Finland's approach to 'leave no one behind'. Finland is funding the EU Social Protection Systems Programme<sup>30</sup>, a 4-year programme supporting low and middle-income partner country governments 'to develop inclusive and sustainable social protection systems'.

Finland is also working on integrating improved data disaggregation into the monitoring of its development cooperation impact. At this stage, however, the focus is only on introducing mandatory disaggregation by gender and disaggregation by disability where possible.

## Germany

Reducing poverty and reducing inequality are core objectives of Germany's development cooperation. Their approach recognizes that a multidimensional understanding of poverty and inequality is important, and that raising average income does not automatically lead to improvements in other poverty dimensions such as education or health, or to reducing inequality.

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is developing a cross-sectoral approach to meeting Agenda 2030 commitments on poverty, inequality and 'leave no one behind'. Their 'Reducing Poverty - Reducing Inequality' (SARUN) initiative uses studies and pilot programmes to examine the interactions between inequality and poverty. It has included country studies of how German development cooperation is reducing inequality in Morocco and Indonesia. The project advises BMZ on how tackling inequality and poverty can be better integrated into project design and how international frameworks on trade, tax and migration can place a stronger focus on marginalised groups. A further focus is on developing multidimensional measurements of poverty and the project is co-operating with the international Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN).

Reducing inequality through employment promotion is another dimension of Germany's approach, targeting those who are low on the income scale (the bottom 40%). To this end, the G7-initiated Vision Zero Fund initiative (VZF) has had strong backing from Germany. The objective of the Fund is to provide financial support for projects that '*work towards safe workplaces and compliance with minimum labour, environmental and safety standards*'<sup>31</sup>.

---

<sup>30</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/human-development/social-protection/eu-sps-programme\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/human-development/social-protection/eu-sps-programme_en)

<sup>31</sup> 'Vision Zero Fund', 2016 <[http://www.ilo.org/safework/projects/WCMS\\_517539/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/safework/projects/WCMS_517539/lang--en/index.htm)> [accessed 21 July 2017].

Germany's 2016 report to the HLPF stresses the importance of gender equality, for example, by supporting women's access to technical and vocational education in the agricultural sector and through cooperation with civil society organizations<sup>32</sup>. The report also stresses the central importance of the realization of human rights to 'leave no one behind'. This has meant a growing incorporation of human rights and equal opportunities strategies into Germany's framework for development cooperation, alongside action plans on gender equality and the rights of children and youth.

Beyond this Germany has programmes targeted at reaching minorities, people with disabilities, people in isolated areas and indigenous peoples, and they have highlighted programmes to promote employment for displaced people in the Middle East as a contribution to meeting the 'leave no one behind' pledge<sup>33</sup>.

Germany also has a development policy action plan on the inclusion of persons with disabilities. This is a particular focus of their approach to social protection and a German research initiative has produced a toolbox for increasing the inclusion of people with disabilities when implementing social protection systems<sup>34</sup>. On social protection, Germany is also targeting fiscal policy in partner countries to establish social security systems.

The impact of climate change on marginalised and vulnerable groups is recognized in Germany's response to 'leave no one behind', underpinning a commitment to double international climate finance by 2020 (from 2014 levels). Germany also co-founded the G7 'InsuResilience' initiative aimed at providing up to 400 million people in developing countries with direct and indirect insurance against climate change impacts by 2020.

On data disaggregation Germany is seeking to increase disaggregation of data by gender and age across programmes.

## Ireland

Irish Aid is focused on reducing poverty and hunger in least-developed countries<sup>35</sup>. Most (65%) of Ireland's \$800m aid budget is directed at sub-Saharan Africa<sup>36</sup> and nearly half of Ireland's bilateral aid is allocated to social infrastructure and services<sup>37</sup>.

The element of their approach that most speaks to the 'leave no one behind' agenda is their focus on increasing social inclusion and addressing poverty and inequality through improved access to social protection in partner countries<sup>38</sup>. 'One World, One Future', Ireland's Policy for International

<sup>32</sup> [https://www.bmz.de/en/press/speeches/Parliamentary-State-Secretary-Silberhorn/2016/july/160720\\_rede\\_trusteeship\\_chamber.html](https://www.bmz.de/en/press/speeches/Parliamentary-State-Secretary-Silberhorn/2016/july/160720_rede_trusteeship_chamber.html)

<sup>33</sup> [https://www.bmz.de/en/press/speeches/Parliamentary-State-Secretary-Silberhorn/2016/july/160720\\_rede\\_trusteeship\\_chamber.html](https://www.bmz.de/en/press/speeches/Parliamentary-State-Secretary-Silberhorn/2016/july/160720_rede_trusteeship_chamber.html)

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.giz.de/expertise/html/20619.html>

<sup>35</sup> 'OECD Development Co-Operation Peer Reviews: Ireland 2014 | OECD READ Edition', *OECD iLibrary* <[http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/development/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-ireland-2014\\_9789264225114-en](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/development/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-ireland-2014_9789264225114-en)> [accessed 24 July 2017].

<sup>36</sup> OECD, *Development Co-Operation Report 2017 Data for Development, 2017* <<http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/4317041ec026.pdf?expires=1500896360&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=A014C2098F6BAB1FA6DD31EEE1CBAFBD>>.

<sup>37</sup> In 2015, 46.4% (US\$198.3 million) of Ireland's bilateral ODA, was allocated to social infrastructure and services, with a strong focus on government and civil society (US\$64 million) and support to health (US\$56 million) and education (US\$39.8 million). Humanitarian aid amounted to US\$89.7 million (OECD)

<sup>38</sup> Irish Aid, *SDG1 Key Sheet*, July 2017.

Development<sup>39</sup>, underlines the importance of social protection and gives priority to programmes ‘that address inequality by focusing on the very poorest households’.

Irish Aid has since published a Social Protection Strategy which is a key contribution to meeting the ‘leave no one behind’ commitment. It explains that delivering on ‘leave no one behind means that *‘the process of developing national social protection systems must start with, and build from, the establishment and implementation of social protections mechanisms that specifically target and deliver for the poorest and most vulnerable individuals and households’.*<sup>40</sup>

The strategy sets out an approach that seeks to build the evidence base on the delivery and impact of social protection and supports a constructive and informed political and public debate on it. Irish Aid identifies the guarantee and provision of social protection as a responsibility of government, which can only be delivered through comprehensive, nationally-owned policies and sustainable and effective delivery systems. They have adopted a long-term system-building approach in Key Partner Countries with a goal of comprehensive national social protection policies and systems and a short-term focus on delivering quickly for the poorest and most vulnerable.

The strategy seeks to establish institutional capacity for social protection transfers, to support governments to create a comprehensive national social protection policy and a prioritised implementation plan, and a sustainable and progressively domestically funded social protection financing framework. This should be backed by a supportive framework of policies and programmes across economic and social sectors that address the needs of social protection recipients.

In practice, Irish Aid’s approach when working in-country, is typically that of a smaller funding partner and a catalytic policy actor, contributing to decision-making processes and programmes that involve national governments and larger funding partners.

Beyond this focus, Ireland’s ODA allocation and policy engagement is guided by the three goals of: reduced hunger and stronger resilience; inclusive and sustainable economic growth; and better governance, human rights and accountability. Irish Aid’s approach focuses on institution strengthening, good governance, gender equality and respect for human rights.

Ireland was also a strong advocate for gender equality in the Agenda 2030 negotiations. By the time the SDGs were agreed, Ireland had already established gender equality as a central objective of Irish aid spending. 79% of its bilateral aid had gender equality and women’s empowerment as a principal or significant objective in 2015, primarily in areas of social spending<sup>41</sup>.

## The Netherlands

The Netherlands has long exceeded the UN target of allocating 0.7% of GDP to ODA. The country is particularly recognized for its development cooperation focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality and responsible business practices<sup>42</sup>.

---

<sup>39</sup><https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/allwebsitemedia/20newsandpublications/publicationpdfsenglish/one-world-one-future-irelands-new-policy.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> In 2016, Irish Aid through its bilateral missions provided just over €20 million to strengthening social protection systems. Irish Aid is working with and provides ILO with €2million per annum to work on employment generation and social protection policy and systems (Irish Aid Social Protection Strategy)

<sup>41</sup> ‘OECD Development Co-Operation Peer Reviews’.

<sup>42</sup> OECD DAC, *OECD DAC Peer Review: Netherlands*, 2017 <<https://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/Main-findings-recommendations-Netherlands-2017-EN.pdf>>.

Their 2017 HLPF report committed to 'leave no one behind', reflecting plans spelled out in more detail in their 2015 Ministry of Foreign Affairs letter on The Netherlands' approach to inclusive development. It presents an approach centred on these principles: 'create jobs, equal opportunities for developing human and physical capital; combat discrimination and exclusion; redistribution through taxes and transfers; development of inclusive governance and institutions'<sup>43</sup>.

The Netherlands is seeking to incorporate both identifying marginalised groups and tackling some of the development challenges that contribute to the unequal realization of rights and poverty rates between different social groups. The two main elements of their approach are: increasing dialogue on social inclusion and implementing programmes that predominantly focus on job creation; and economic participation for young people, women and girls<sup>44</sup>.

The main undertaking to increase national level dialogue on poverty and inclusion is the €50 million Voice Accountability Fund which supports 25 national level strategic partnerships in the Dialogue and Dissent programme. This is intended to support marginalised groups to 'draw their governments' attention to the need for inclusive development'. The plan also calls on Dutch embassies to raise in national discussions how 'the poorest and most disadvantaged groups, such as people in remote areas and disabled people can derive maximum benefit from economic progress'.

The government is also supporting The Spindle<sup>45</sup> which is intended to connect innovators among Dutch and global actors through an online and offline movement for inclusive, sustainable development. The platform is intended to support shared learning and to create an 'ecosystem' that promotes innovative, inclusive sustainable development initiatives amongst its members. It focuses on four themes: civic power, inclusion, new forms of cooperation, and the innovative use of data.

On the programmatic side, The Netherlands' plan also sets out several activities to promote job creation, improvements to smallholder livelihoods, and increased access to health services for vulnerable and marginalised groups. These programmes target primarily young people, women and girls. The plan is intended to shift the focus of existing programmes and use resources in a different way.

## Sweden

Human rights and the perspective of the poor are key elements of Sweden's approach to global development. Sweden has put Agenda 2030 at the heart of its 2016 Policy Framework for Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance<sup>46</sup>. This places a particular focus on human rights, democracy, rule of law and the rights of women and children. In these areas Sweden's development plans go beyond the demands of Agenda 2030.

The framework makes reference to the 'leave no one behind' and acknowledges that: '*Poverty is increasingly about an inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities, oppression, a lack of security and respect for human rights, and social exclusion, rather than an absolute lack of resources*'<sup>47</sup>.

---

<sup>43</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Letter of 28 September 2015 from the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation to the House of Representatives on Inclusive Development in Dutch Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Programmes', 2015.

<sup>44</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>45</sup> <http://thespindle.org/>

<sup>46</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, *Policy Framework for Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance*, May 2017 <<http://www.government.se/legal-documents/2017/05/policy-framework-for-swedish-development-cooperation-and-humanitarian-assistance/>>.

<sup>47</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden.

'Leave no one behind' also features in Sweden's 2017 Voluntary National Review to the HLPF. This affirms that tackling multi-dimensional poverty is an overarching goal of Swedish development cooperation, meaning an intention to address not only people's lack of material assets but also '*lack of power and influence over their own situation, choices, security and respect for human rights*'<sup>48</sup>.

The review highlights their Productive Social Safety Net programme in Tanzania that focuses on reaching Tanzania's poorest 10% of households through conditional cash payments to female household heads and through targeted public jobs initiatives. The need for interventions is identified by village assemblies in accordance with certain criteria, which also include consideration of the environment and climate change.

Sweden is also pursuing a 'feminist foreign policy' that seeks to 'strengthen the rights, representation and resources of all women and girls. This both has the potential to contribute to tackling gender inequality and also provides a useful template for government approaches to 'leave no one behind'. It includes an overarching action plan for Sweden's foreign services and '*a concrete review of the foreign service's procedures, templates, guidelines and authority governance to ensure that these support the policy.*'

## United Kingdom

Since initiating the 'leave no one behind' pledge at the Summit for the Adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the UK has taken concrete steps to position 'leave no one behind' in its aid programmes. The UK Aid Strategy states that the government '*will prioritise work that targets the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, the most excluded, those caught in crises, and those most at risk of violence and discrimination*'<sup>49</sup>.

The Department for International Development's (DFID) 'Understand, Empower and Include' Framework sets out an overview of the UK's approach to 'leave no one behind' in its aid programmes. 'Leave no one behind' is the overarching vision for the Inclusive Societies Department within DFID, which is responsible for the implementation of the framework and for promoting it within DFID.

In keeping with the framework title, the Department has identified distinct steps in fulfilling the 'leave no one behind' commitment, but is currently focused on the first: 'Understand'. They are seeking to tackle the deficit of understanding about who the main groups are 'who are excluded or discriminated against through support of the generation and use of disaggregated data and evidence'<sup>50</sup>.

They have supported the Leave No One Behind Partnership to undertake national dialogues in 30 countries, bringing together actors from government and civil society to discuss the identification of left-behind groups in those countries<sup>51</sup>. The Partnership has also developed the P20 Initiative with Development Initiatives<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> Sweden, *Sweden and the Agenda 2030: Voluntary National Report to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*, 2017 <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/16033Sweden.pdf>>.

<sup>49</sup> HM Treasury, Department for International Development, *UK Aid: Tackling Global Challenges in the National Interest*, 2016 <[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/478834/ODA\\_strategy\\_final\\_web\\_0905.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478834/ODA_strategy_final_web_0905.pdf)>.

<sup>50</sup> DFID, *Agenda 2030: The UK Government's Approach to Delivering the Global Goals*, 2017 <[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/603500/Agenda-2030-Report4.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603500/Agenda-2030-Report4.pdf)>.

<sup>51</sup> The Leave No One Behind Partnership.

<sup>52</sup> <http://devinit.org/topics/p20-initiative/>

DFID has also recently produced a ‘Data Disaggregation Action Plan’<sup>53</sup>, which sets out an agenda to improve data disaggregation in DFID and across the international development system. The plan proposes improving the use of the UK’s ‘own development and humanitarian programme data which can be disaggregated on the basis of sex, age, disability status and geography’.

Alongside the Data Disaggregation Plan, DFID has identified four ‘trailblazer’ countries – Bangladesh, Nepal, Zimbabwe and Rwanda – where DFID is working to learn from the experience of putting leave no one behind into practice. This includes building the capacity of partners and governments to generate, disaggregate and use data, the lessons from which are intended to inform the Department’s work and strengthen its implementation of ‘leave no one behind’ in other countries over time. The plan also describes looking ‘toward the active engagement of communities as equal partners in data collection and use.’

DFID is also using a ‘personas’ approach to better understand who is left behind and the overlapping social identities that is sometimes described as ‘intersectionality’. The department has undertaken work in Nigeria and Mozambique that seeks to profile target beneficiaries based on attributes such as gender and disability and then evaluate whether development and humanitarian programmes are reaching such people and what the barriers are if not. DFID is beginning work on ‘social norms’ which could further inform the Department’s approach to intersectionality.

The UK’s SDG implementation plan outlines subsequent actions to ‘understanding’ who is left behind: *‘empowering and giving voice to people through inclusive development of policies and programmes’, ‘monitoring and shared learning on good practice’ and ‘including people in our targeted programming, trailing innovative approaches, and interventions that work at scale, such as social protection.’*

Beyond SDG-inspired initiatives, many aspects of DFID’s broader policies and programmes are expected to contribute to fulfilling the ‘leave no one behind’ pledge, although they were not necessarily designed in direct response to it. For example, DFID has a strong focus on youth, women and girls and disability across social and economic development programmes and is also applying this focus in engagement with multilaterals, for example by pushing for a policy marker on disability in OECD Development Effectiveness Committee discussions on international aid standards.

## Multilateral approaches

The World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and United Nations (UN) agencies are increasingly recognizing the relationship between inequality, social exclusion, poverty and slow growth, and their own role in tackling these connected global challenges.

Income inequality has been a particular focus of research at the banks, with the IMF recently reporting that growth in the income share of the richest 20% leads to declining GDP growth, and growth in the income share of the poorest 20% leads to higher GDP growth<sup>54</sup>. World Bank research has further concluded that ‘as countries become less poor, inequality-reducing policies are likely to be more effective at poverty reduction than growth promoting policies’<sup>55</sup>.

---

<sup>53</sup> DFID, *Data Disaggregation Action Plan*.

<sup>54</sup> Dabla-Norris, M.E., Kochhar, M.K., Suphaphiphat, and M.N., Ricka, M.F., Tsounta, E., *Causes and Consequences of Income Inequality: A Global Perspective*. (International Monetary Fund, 2015) <<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2015/sdn1513.pdf>>.

<sup>55</sup> Pedro Olinto.

A distinct but related growing focus of the UN and World Bank is social inclusion<sup>56 57</sup>. This had been rising on the agendas of multilateral development institutions over several years prior to the adoption of the SDGs, and in the wake of the Arab Spring and worldwide campaigns on inequality.

The World Bank Group's 2013 report, *Inclusion Matters*<sup>58</sup> identifies that excluded groups are significantly less likely to receive the benefits of development investments, in particular marginalised ethnic and religious minorities. Some of the key conclusions of the report include: that social exclusion is not the same as poverty; that social segregation leads to significant economic costs and productivity losses; and, perhaps most importantly, that improved inclusion can be planned and achieved in an incremental way, albeit with a risk of backlash from historically dominant groups. The report also makes proposals on how to go about designing programs to address social exclusion, including consideration of questions on who is being included in the service or intervention and who is at risk of being left out, why, and what can be done differently to ensure inclusion.

The UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has since reinforced the 'leave no one behind' commitment with the promotion of inclusive development. In particular their 2016 Report on the World Social Situation promotes the need for basic, universal social protection and universal access to primary and secondary education, which is complemented by special or targeted measures to address the distinct obstacles faced by individuals and groups at high risk of exclusion<sup>59</sup>. It also stresses that leaving no one behind requires addressing decent work deficits, achieving institutional change and changing social, cultural and political norms that underpin or perpetuate unequal power relations and the disadvantage experienced by some social groups.

'Leave no one behind' has been prominent in the UN's response to Agenda 2030. A commitment to eliminate discrimination and reduce inequalities is now at the heart of the UN's efforts to implement the Goals. A Shared Framework for Action for the UN System<sup>60</sup> aims to establish a common understanding of the challenge of rising inequalities and pervasive discrimination and put forward policies and programmes in response.

The framework promotes a system-wide approach to analysis, and to monitoring and accountability. It does not impose a new approach on UN agencies, but it does promote new and innovative UN programmes which seek to tackle inequality and discrimination, increase accountability to citizens, or improve ways of monitoring equity and inequality, through which it provides guidance to UN staff.

For example, it highlights efforts by UNICEF and the World Health Organisation to develop citizen led, social accountability platforms such as U-Report<sup>61</sup>, a social messaging tool that allows anyone in the world to respond to polls and report issues. It also advocates for wider adoption of UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES) and highlights the work of multiple UN agencies, UNDP, FAO, ILO and others, to support improved social protection systems.

Improved social protection is at the heart of the response to Agenda 2030 from across the multilateral system. Over the last 10 to 15 years, social protection programmes have been seen as increasingly relevant across many regions of the world and organisations including UNICEF, The World Bank, the European Union, G20, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the African Union have adopted

---

<sup>56</sup> Bordia Das.

<sup>57</sup> UN DESA.

<sup>58</sup> Bordia Das.

<sup>59</sup> UN DESA, 'Report on the World Social Situation 2016', <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2015/12/30/report-on-world-social-situation-2016-2/>

<sup>60</sup> UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination, *UN Systems Shared Framework for Action: Leaving No One Behind: Equality and Non-Discrimination at the Heart of Sustainable Development*, 2017  
<<https://www.unsceb.org/CEBPublicFiles/CEB%20equality%20framework-A4-web-rev3.pdf>>.

<sup>61</sup> 'UReport' <<https://ureport.in>>.

policies and strategies highlighting the role of social protection in economic growth and promoting human rights.

In a joint statement on universal social protection in June 2015, the ILO and World Bank called on world leaders to promote universal social protection, which they define as *'adequate cash transfers for all who need them, especially children; benefits and support for people of working age in case of maternity, disability, work injury or for those without jobs; and pensions for all older persons'*<sup>62</sup>.

The focus on 'universality' in the statement represents a significant shift in the rhetoric of the World Bank around safety nets and universal access to social protection. The World Bank and ILO now have a Universal Social Protection Initiative explicitly described as intended to ensure that no one is left behind. This will increase the number of countries that can provide universal social protection and support delivery of the World Bank's corporate goals of reducing poverty and increasing shared prosperity and the ILO's mandate of promoting decent work and social protection for all<sup>63</sup>. With a focus on cash transfers, the plan commits to reaching all sectors of society, including migrants, indigenous peoples and minorities. Social protection is described as a 'human right' that *'prevents and reduces poverty, promotes social inclusion and dignity'*.

The impact of discrimination on development outcomes is also increasingly recognised by the multilateral system. For instance, equity and inclusiveness are recurrent themes of UNICEF's current Strategic Plan, which highlights that *'challenging discrimination against girls and ethnic minorities can be a useful strategy to simultaneously contribute to health, education, protection and other outcomes, as well as being important for its own sake'*<sup>64</sup>.

Gender and age are prominent in the response from UN agencies to Agenda 2030. UNICEF's Strategic Plan and Gender Action Plan commit to mainstream gender equality, provide technical support on gender-equitable policies and budgets, and commit to interventions that *'will concentrate on increasing access to services and opportunities by women and girls and their inclusion and participation in all facets of life'*<sup>65</sup>. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) has called on its country offices to promote the participation of older people in age-responsive policy planning and implementation and to ensure that development responses to ageing are gender sensitive because gender inequalities accumulate across a lifetime<sup>66</sup>.

Multilateral institutions are also playing a key role in producing and disaggregating the data needed to effectively monitor progress on 'leave no one behind'. So, for instance the World Bank (with financing from the UK, Korea and Ireland) is supporting the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Innovation Fund which seeks to improve data in poor countries on people with disabilities and those living outside traditional households (e.g. institutionalized populations, slum dwellers, the homeless and refugees)<sup>67</sup>.

UNICEF is also contributing to the analysis of the drivers of and barriers to change. Its Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) uses a determinants framework to identify the key conditions or

---

<sup>62</sup> 'The World Bank Group and ILO Universal Social Protection Initiative', 2015 <[http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/social-security/WCMS\\_378991/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/social-security/WCMS_378991/lang--en/index.htm)> [accessed 29 July 2017].

<sup>63</sup> 'The World Bank Group and ILO Universal Social Protection Initiative'.

<sup>64</sup> Unicef, *Strategic Plan 2013-2021*.

<sup>65</sup> Unicef, *Strategic Plan 2013-2021*.

<sup>66</sup> UNDP, 'Leave No-One Behind: Ageing, Gender and the SDGs', *UNDP*, 2016 <<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/leave-no-one-behind--ageing--gender-and-the-sdgs.html>> [accessed 26 July 2017].

<sup>67</sup> 'Innovation Fund for Targetting Excluded Groups to "Leave No One Behind"', *Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data* <<http://www.data4sdgs.org/master-blog/2017/7/31/25m-innovation-fund-targets-excluded-groups-to-leave-no-one-behind>> [accessed 2 September 2017].

enablers that are needed to allow groups to benefit from services or achieve improvements in human development outcomes<sup>68</sup>.

Finally, 'leave no one behind' has gained traction in humanitarianism. It emerged as one of the five core responsibilities committed to by parties to the World Humanitarian Summit Framework in 2016, with specific commitments on the rights, mobility, power and access to education of refugees and internally displaced people.<sup>69</sup> The Humanitarian Charter also promotes strengthening the capacity for existing humanitarian organisations to mainstream disability into their actions and strengthen partnerships with people and organisations for people with disabilities.

## Analysis of approaches to 'leave no one behind'

While significant steps are clearly being taken by development actors towards realizing the 'leave no one behind' pledge, more action and greater coherence is needed. This section explores how steps taken so far by governments and multilaterals adhere to the 10 principles for 'leave no one behind' set out by Bond members. It also provides examples of CSO action, and suggests where further action may be needed to make progress towards meeting the pledge.

### 1. 'Leave no one behind' should apply to all goals and targets, in all countries

'Leave no one behind' is informing the development of policies and programmes across the development and humanitarian sectors, with a particular focus on social protection, access to services, and increasing the voice of marginalised groups in decision-making processes. While we recognise that all development actors cannot act on all of the sustainable development goals and targets, 'leave no one behind' should be applied consistently across all their work.

Nevertheless, some government interviewees indicated that 'leave no one behind' is not a prominent topic at a corporate level within their ministries and departments. Whilst donor governments and multilaterals are taking action on 'leave no one behind', there is a risk that responsibility for action on the pledge is being siloed into primarily one team or department, meaning that 'leave no one behind' may not be sufficiently mainstreamed throughout the organisations creating the risk that other teams may fail to contribute to the pledge, and can even undermine it.

Development programmes can exacerbate the marginalisation and impoverishment of vulnerable groups if they are not designed and implemented in a way which fully accounts for potential social impacts and is sensible to local power dynamics. For example, a World Bank Natural Resource Management Project (NRMP) in Northern Kenya was found by the Bank's own inspection panel to have

---

<sup>68</sup> '2014 Global: Formative Evaluation of Unicef's Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) | Evaluation Database', *Unicef* <[https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index\\_77905.html](https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_77905.html)> [accessed 2 September 2017].

<sup>69</sup> 'Agenda for Humanity' <<http://www.agendaforhumanity.org/aboutthecommitments>> [accessed 29 July 2017].

failed to secure the customary land rights of the Sengwer indigenous people, and instead strengthened the commitment and capacity of the Kenya Forest Service to evict them from their ancestral land<sup>70</sup>.

A further challenge for donors is that other priorities, such as economic growth and 'value for money', can be in conflict with the 'leave no one behind' principle. For example, the Bond Disability and Development Group has found that value for money assessments are often not well designed for dealing with complexity and subjectivity<sup>71</sup>. They can be used to support the selection of programmes which appear to reach the largest quantifiable number of beneficiaries, rather than reaching the most marginalised people thereby undermining commitments to 'leave no one behind'.

Given that European governments accept the need to spend more to ensure that people with disabilities can access health and education services domestically, this principle should be extended to international programmes too. Leaving no one behind requires always applying the equity principle when evaluating the value for money of programmes<sup>72</sup>. Development actors have found that principles of equity and inclusion are often considered to be an 'add-on' in practice rather than being core to effective programme design.

A consistent focus on inclusion in development programmes is a challenge for all development actors. One response is to increase resource allocation to training donor and CSO staff across sectors in effective inclusion methods. Christian Aid has identified a need to address how they design budgets, manage community engagement processes and think about staff and partner development. Their Programme Practice Paper<sup>73</sup> in response to the 'leave no one behind' pledge commits the organization to build strong gender and power analysis into all programme design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning, and to train staff and partners to ensure this becomes part of regular practice. They will apply an inclusion scoring tool in new programmes and look at all areas of work with an inclusive programming lens<sup>74</sup>.

Health Poverty Action (HPA) also has identified 'leave no one behind' as especially relevant to their work. In the context of maternal health, this marginalisation can be seen in the marked disparities in access to services, and health outcomes, for women in comparison with the wider populations of the countries concerned. Discrimination, cultural barriers, lack of access to healthcare, and lack of voice all contribute to disparities in health outcomes. Based on their experience of working with marginalised communities, Health Poverty Action has formulated a set of key principles for addressing these factors through the development of culturally appropriate health systems<sup>75</sup>.

Conflict and humanitarian crises also affect people differently depending on their gender, age, disability and other personal characteristics. It is estimated that 62% of the world's poor, under a best-case scenario, will live in fragile and conflict affected states by 2030<sup>76</sup>. Supporting those who are left behind

---

<sup>70</sup> Forest Peoples Programme, *How Can the EU WaTER Project Help Secure, Not Undermine, Human Rights in Kenya?*, December 2016 <<http://www.forestpeoples.org/en/rights-land-natural-resources/news-article/2016/how-can-eu-water-project-help-secure-not-undermine>>.

<sup>71</sup> Bond Disability and Development Group, *Leaving No One behind: The Value for Money of Disability-Inclusive Development*, 2016 <[https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/resource-documents/leaving\\_no\\_one\\_behind\\_the\\_value\\_for\\_money\\_of\\_disability-inclusive\\_development.pdf](https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/resource-documents/leaving_no_one_behind_the_value_for_money_of_disability-inclusive_development.pdf)>.

<sup>72</sup> The Bond Disability and Development Group has recommended that the unit cost of disability inclusive programmes should not be compared with non-disability inclusive programmes because exclusionary programmes do not, by their nature, represent good value for money. They propose assessment questions that ensure disability inclusive programming is at the heart of value for money assessments.

<sup>73</sup> Christian Aid, *Christian Aid and the 'Leave No One Behind' Agenda (Programme Policy Paper)*, 2017 <<http://programme.christianaid.org.uk/programme-policy-practice/sites/default/files/2017-02/Leave%20no%20one%20behind%20report.pdf>>.

<sup>74</sup> Christian Aid, *Christian Aid and the 'Leave No One Behind' Agenda (Programme Policy Paper)*.

<sup>75</sup> Health Poverty Action, *Developing Culturally Appropriate Health Systems - Key Principles*, 2016 <<https://www.healthpovertyaction.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Developing-culturally-appropriate-health-systems-April-2016.pdf>>.

<sup>76</sup> OECD, *States of Fragility 2015*, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-2015-9789264227699-en.html>

therefore requires that all development and humanitarian programmes are conflict sensitive and promote peace.

In response to the problem that older people and people with disabilities are often overlooked in humanitarian relief, a collective of CSOs, including HelpAge International and Handicap International, recently produced a set of Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action<sup>77</sup>. The standards, which will feature in the next Sphere Handbook<sup>78</sup>, recognize that the humanitarian principle of impartiality – providing assistance on the basis of need and without discrimination – requires agencies working in emergencies to reduce barriers so that people with disabilities and older people are not purposefully or inadvertently excluded from humanitarian response.

## Recommendations

- ‘Leave no one behind’ is a transformational principle that should be applied across all goals and targets.
- The ‘leave no one behind’ principle must not be subordinated to narrow definitions of value for money
- Donors should build inclusive programming criteria and ‘leave no one behind’ markers into all business cases across all sectors

## 2. Recognise the importance of normative change

It is well understood that social, political and economic norms are a key contributor to driving social exclusion and inequality. The UN system’s response assigns responsibility for long term social change to national governments. However, the development and humanitarian community have a key role in designing programs that ‘promote institutions, laws, policies, and actions to combat discrimination (...) and advance equal access to justice’<sup>79</sup>.

National governments will not always take the lead on breaking down social barriers when the norms that lead to the exclusion or marginalisation of certain groups are legally, politically or culturally sanctioned. Development actors increasingly recognize that they have a role to play in addressing discrimination, such as discriminatory attitudes, policies and laws towards migrants, ethnic minorities, caste-affected communities and LGBT people; ethnic and religious tension; cultural barriers to accessing public services; and discrimination on the basis of age.

The international development community can promote normative change through programmes that build social accountability into their design. Civil society awareness raising initiatives to promote the rights of women and people with disabilities have also been found to change perceptions and help shift social norms.

---

<sup>77</sup> ‘Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action’, *ReliefWeb*, 2015 <<http://reliefweb.int/report/world/minimum-standards-age-and-disability-inclusion-humanitarian-action>> [accessed 3 September 2017].

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.sphereproject.org/news/sphere-handbook-revision-ready-for-input/>

<sup>79</sup> UN DESA.

Increased support from the international donor community for projects that include the participation of marginalised groups in decision making at all levels, improve social accountability and which raise awareness of the rights of marginalised groups, would contribute to leaving no one behind.

An important contribution to the development discourse on normative change was DFID's Disability, Poverty and Development policy paper<sup>80</sup> which presented two essential elements for tackling the social exclusion of those with disabilities: empowerment and data disaggregation. The paper is embedded in DFID's Disability Framework. Some of the recommendations on empowerment in the paper could inform DFID's and other donor governments' and multilaterals' approach to 'leave no one behind' more widely.

However, the main demographic groups that the donor governments described in this paper focus their response to 'leave no one behind' on are women, girls and persons with disabilities. There is a risk therefore that less progress on changing social norms will be achieved in relation to other characteristics that can lead to discrimination or marginalisation.

Taking a social accountability approach to improving services can also help to change political norms at local and national level. For example, World Vision International supported residents of Nnalinya, a village in Uganda, to gather evidence on local health service provision and use it as a basis for national government-facing advocacy. This ultimately had a significant impact on reducing child mortality rates<sup>81</sup>.

Raising awareness of the rights of marginalised groups can also change social norms. For example, Handicap International's disability awareness raising activities in Ivory Coast have had a significant positive effect on the level of knowledge and the attitudes of individuals towards disabled people in general and towards people with epilepsy in particular. In every case, more participants said they were in favour of the rights of people with disabilities to take part in public events, to start a family, to manage community assets, to receive the same remuneration, and that their opinion should be considered of equal worth. People with disabilities also participated significantly more in important events, such as village meetings, associations and weddings.

Achieving 'leave no one behind' may also mean tackling normative change at many levels. Age International and HelpAge International are working as part of a global effort<sup>82</sup> to change attitudes to and legal standards for older people so that human rights will apply equally for people of all ages. The absence of a human rights convention for older persons has reinforced the lack of visibility of older people in development programmes and entrenched discriminatory attitudes and behaviours that undermine the 'leave no one behind' principles. Raising older people's awareness of their rights through the 'Age Demands Action' campaign is helping to achieve normative change at local and national levels<sup>83</sup>. The World Health Organisation is also taking positive steps to address negative norms towards older people and has been tasked by its Member States to launch a global campaign against ageism<sup>84</sup>.

Normative change to achieve 'leave no one behind' needs to be embedded into business case design, annual planning and monitoring & evaluation frameworks.

---

<sup>80</sup> DFID, *Disability, Poverty and Development*, 2000 <<http://www.make-development-inclusive.org/docsen/DFIDdisabilityPovertyDev.pdf>>.

<sup>81</sup> 'Grassroots to Global: Seven Steps to Citizen-Driven Accountability for the Sustainable Development Goals', *World Vision International*, 2015 <<http://www.wvi.org/united-nations-and-global-engagement/publication/grassroots-global-seven-steps-citizen-driven>> [accessed 3 September 2017].

<sup>82</sup> Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People: [www.rightsofolderpeople.org](http://www.rightsofolderpeople.org)

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.helpage.org/get-involved/campaign-with-us/ada-global/>

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.who.int/ageing/ageism/en/>

## Recommendations

- The international development actors should promote normative change by building social accountability into their programmes and being aware of the potential marginalisation of all groups in the contexts where they work.
- International donors should increase support for projects that include marginalised groups in decision making at all levels and that raise awareness of their rights.
- The twin-track approach of tackling social exclusion through empowerment and data disaggregation that is captured in DFID's Disability, Poverty and Development policy paper<sup>85</sup> should inform DFID's, other donor governments' and multilaterals agencies' approach to 'leave no one behind' more widely.

## 3. Drive policy change

'Leave no one behind' should drive policy change to achieve more effective outcomes and to prevent the further marginalisation of certain groups. The scale of policy and political change needed to fully realise the ambition of 'leave no one behind' is widely recognised. The World Bank's report on social inclusion finds that it 'can require re-evaluating existing national and sub-national policies across all sectors from public transport, health, education, land rights and evaluating their differential impact on socially excluded groups within the country context'<sup>86</sup>.

Elsewhere, the ODI has found that when marginalised people are asked what they want from their governments, three priority areas emerged: access to key services; living in dignity without discrimination and shame; and institutional and legal reform<sup>87</sup>.

The 'leave no one behind' commitment requires international development cooperation to be geared towards tackling exclusion and requires national governments to prioritise within public policy and budgeting groups that are the furthest away from achieving SDG targets.

According to ODI calculations, the cost of ensuring no one is left behind in health, education and social protection across 75 countries for which they have data is an annual average of \$739 billion. 'Of these, 30 low-income countries (LICs) will require another \$70 billion annually to meet these costs. In the 45 middle-income countries (MICs), governments are generating enough public revenues to meet these costs, but are not allocating enough to these basic services'<sup>88</sup>.

Tax and fiscal policies therefore play a critical role in implementing the policies needed to leave no one behind. Analysis from both Christian Aid and Save the Children has concluded that tax revenues are the most accountable and flexible way to finance delivery of the SDGs. For many countries, this will require strengthening domestic tax systems and ensuring they are progressive, in order to raise revenue for investment in essential services<sup>89 90</sup>. It will also require that objectives and targets agreed to in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development are upheld, including on Official Development Assistance (ODA) and actions to stop illicit financial flows.

---

<sup>85</sup> DFID, *Disability, Poverty and Development*.

<sup>86</sup> Bordia Das.

<sup>87</sup> Stuart, Elizabeth et al. ODI, *Leaving No One behind A Critical Path for the First 1,000 Days of the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2016 <<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10692.pdf>>.

<sup>88</sup> Stuart, Elizabeth et al. ODI.

<sup>89</sup> Save the Children, *Realising the Pledge to Leave No One Behind*.

<sup>90</sup> Christian Aid, *Delivering for Women and Girls: The SDGs and the Role of Gender Responsive Budgeting*, 2016 <<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/gender-responsive-summary-march-2016.pdf>>.

Christian Aid has further outlined how economic policies can undermine social objectives such as gender equality if sensitivity to social impacts is not addressed at the policy design stage<sup>91</sup>. In response to this, fiscal policies that address inequality, particularly gender inequality, and target spending at the most vulnerable groups among women can help achieve ‘leave no one behind’.

Evidence shows that economic growth does not lead to reduced gender inequality unless growth is accompanied by a broader set of redistributive policies, such as Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB). This ‘provides a set of tools and methodologies to maintain a gendered approach throughout the fiscal policy cycle, ensuring women’s needs are resourced’<sup>92</sup>. While this is primarily the responsibility of national governments, donors can play a key role through ‘support to build influential gender expertise within public finance reforms programmes and increase their support to women’s rights organisations and civil society for dialogue on economic policy’.

Lack of resources can also limit action even when government structures are in place to redress inequalities. In Cambodia for example, there are Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups across ministries responsible for producing gender mainstreaming action plans. However, both these groups and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs have limited involvement in budgeting and there is no mechanism to ensure that departmental budgets are allocated to gender responsive work<sup>93</sup>.

All of this suggests that the development community, governments and civil society need to develop a better understanding of the factors that contribute to making progress on addressing inequality and marginalisation. An ODI review of countries that have made real progress in this area identifies five key contributing factors:

- social movements that demand changes in the ‘rules of the game’
- political trajectories that allow such changes
- processes of constitutional reform that allow such changes
- greater political participation
- policies and programmes that are committed to reducing intersecting inequalities overtime, such as social guarantees and affirmative action<sup>94</sup>

This indicates that besides promoting policy reform through formal channels, the international development community also has an important role to play in protecting civil society space and supporting an active, coordinated and influential civil society, in which marginalised groups are represented, that is able to advocate for change. This is of particular importance in developing countries where political freedom is restricted.

National dialogues, such as the VOICE and LNOB Platform initiatives supported by the Netherlands and UK governments, make a useful contribution to analysing who is left behind by convening CSO and government actors at national level. However, it isn’t clear how actively governments are responding to the outcomes of these dialogues and, in part, this relies on the advocacy capacity of domestic civil society.

Policy change must also be driven at local level. For example, Find your Feet is a charity that supports poor rural families in Asia and Africa to grow food and improve their livelihoods. Their approach

---

<sup>91</sup> *ibid*

<sup>92</sup> *ibid*

<sup>93</sup> *ibid*

<sup>94</sup> ODI, *An Integrated Approach to Leaving No One behind*, 2016 <<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11223.pdf>>.

recognizes the importance of increasing peoples' political participation. In India, their Johar Project contributed to the formation of an inter-state Tribal Rights Forum (TRF), which brings together representatives from two state level TRFs, – which are Tribal-led, being composed of Adivasis - and provide a platform for advocacy on tribal rights at the national level. This has led to higher demand for, and uptake of, public services and social welfare schemes relating to healthcare, education, water and sanitation, livelihoods, employment and social security.

A final point here is that social protection is one of the main policy focuses of the international donor community's contribution to 'leave no one behind'. Irish Aid has drawn a number of lessons from their engagement with social protection, which informed the development of their Social Protection Strategy<sup>95</sup>. They identified several challenges, including that there is a disparate and uncoordinated system of state and non-state actors delivering social protection in many countries and that social protection cannot do everything: it delivers greatest impacts when it is accompanied by supportive policies and actions in social and economic sectors.

### Recommendations

- All governments should undertake a 'leave no one behind' assessment to identify the groups that are furthest behind or at risk, why they are lagging behind and what can be done to accelerate progress. National action plans need to reach all excluded groups and establish transparent inclusive and participatory monitoring and accountability processes to assess progress.
- Progressive domestic tax systems should be strengthened to raise revenue for achieving 'leave no one behind'. This requires that objectives and targets in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development are upheld, including that richer nations should realise the 0.7% to Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment and take action to stop illicit financial flows.
- The international development community needs to support an active, coordinated and influential civil society, in which marginalised groups are represented, that is able to advocate for change to help create an environment in which policies that address discrimination and inequality can gain traction.

## 4. Address multiple discriminations

For development to be inclusive, we need to be better at recognising the intersecting features of a person's identity that may contribute to their marginalisation, including the characteristics of a person's identity outlined in Agenda 2030:

*'children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants'.*

The interactions between these aspects of identity can contribute to exacerbate poverty, inequality and marginalisation. An example of this is Vietnam, where the child mortality rate for ethnic minority

---

<sup>95</sup> Irish Aid, *Irish Aid Social Protection Strategy*, May 2017.

children is more than four times higher than for children from the largest ethnic group<sup>96</sup>. Tackling intersecting inequalities in practice is a challenge for most development actors.

Some development actors, such as DFID, have begun work on identifying target ‘personas’. However, many others are still in the process of learning how to integrate the idea of intersectionality into programme design and implementation. Impacts on LGBT people, for instance, are not considered often enough by agencies when designing funds and projects<sup>97</sup>.

People from minority ethnic, faith or cultural groups, such as indigenous peoples and pastoralists, also often face discrimination and marginalisation. Yet tackling this form of discrimination is rarely a focus of donors and development programmes can even exacerbate the poverty of vulnerable groups when the programmes are not sensitive to local power dynamics between groups.

Understanding in practice how to respond to the intersection between people’s overlapping identities and experiences is complex and most development actors still target their programmes at supporting at most a handful of key demographics, in particular women, children and people with disabilities.

Qualitative and contextual research is therefore needed to fully understand how inequalities intersect and impact on people. Many CSOs have been working for several years on increasing the capacity of their programmes to respond to intersecting inequalities and the way that different identities – such as gender, age, ethnicity, LGBT status – and their inherent power relations, can combine in individuals to create very different experiences of inequality, discrimination and power.

Some CSOs are already thinking about how they can put tackling marginalisation and discrimination at the heart of programme design. Christian Aid, for example, has an Inclusive Programming Approach guide to ensuring that programmes treat all people equitably<sup>98</sup>. Handicap International has also been striving to include certain groups across all its mandate. Their minimum commitment is for field teams to conduct disability, gender and age analysis and explore how these three intersect to create exclusion or marginalisation. Beyond these dimensions other context specific factors are also considered to evaluate the exposure to risk of a group or community, taking an intersectional, rather than a cumulative approach.

CSOs are in a strong position to undertake some of the research needed to develop programme design models and toolkits that identify and target support to those who are furthest behind in a way that responds to local power dynamics. More support from donors is needed to fund research and the development of such new resources.

## Recommendations

- All development actors responding to “leave no one behind” need to ensure that intersecting inequalities are clearly identified in their programmes in order to reach the most marginalised groups.
- Qualitative and contextual research should be undertaken by governments, UN agencies and development stakeholders to fully understand how inequalities intersect and impact on people.

---

<sup>96</sup> General Office of Statistics Vietnam, *Viet Nam Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014. General Statistics Office Viet Nam, P. 54.*, 2014 <[https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS5/East%20Asia%20and%20the%20Pacific/Viet%20Nam/2013-2014/Final/Viet%20Nam%202013-14%20MICS\\_English.pdf](https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS5/East%20Asia%20and%20the%20Pacific/Viet%20Nam/2013-2014/Final/Viet%20Nam%202013-14%20MICS_English.pdf)>.

<sup>97</sup> Stonewall, *The Sustainable Development Goals and LGBT Inclusion*, 2016 <[http://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/sdg-guide\\_2.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/sdg-guide_2.pdf)>.

<sup>98</sup> Christian Aid, *Christian Aid and the ‘Leave No One Behind’ Agenda (Programme Policy Paper)*.

- Donors should support civil society organisations that are already effective at working with marginalised groups to strengthen their capacity on identifying and addressing intersecting inequalities, and share that learning.

## 5. Climate change and environmental sustainability

The pledge to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees that is articulated in the Paris Climate Accord is vital to fulfilling the ambition of 'leave no one behind'. It is widely recognized by donors that climate change disproportionately impacts on some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world.

In response to this, all governments described in this paper recognise the important relationship between the Paris Accord on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the SDGs in their international development plans, and some are explicitly linking their international action on climate change with improving outcomes for the poorest groups. For instance, the Netherlands Plan of Action proposes using money saved through the abolition of fossil fuel subsidies to compensate the poorest through targeted subsidies and social safety nets. The European governments described here also make significant contributions to the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environmental Facility as well as, in some cases, funding climate change programmes bilaterally.

However, donor governments are not linking their commitment to climate change action with the pledge to 'leave no one behind' explicitly enough, and action both on cutting greenhouse gas emissions and financing adaptation in the poorest affected countries are not sufficient to meet the scale of the challenge.

Climate and environmental change are already undermining and threaten to reverse development progress in many parts of the world, particularly in regions, such as the Sahel, which have high rates of poverty and instability. Being prepared for changes in climate and severe weather events can reduce the impacts of climate change on people's lives, their livelihoods and food security. Measures are needed to reduce the vulnerability and exposure of the most marginalised groups if 'leave no one behind' is going to be achieved.

There is an urgent imperative for an equitable transition to phase out the use of fossil fuels, increase renewable energy supply and ensure energy access for the poorest. For the large parts of the world already impacted by climate change, increased financial and other support is needed to catalyse adaptation action at a scale needed to reduce further loss and damage<sup>99</sup>.

Moreover, more detailed assessments of the social impacts of climate change and environment funds and programmes are needed. They should, at a minimum, not exacerbate poverty and inequality and ideally address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and vulnerable groups. The example of the World Bank programme in Kenya described earlier on page 24 demonstrates how a programme intended to tackle an environmental challenge unintentionally contributed to undermining the land rights of an indigenous community.

The UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (SES), which came into effect on 1 January 2015, may represent a significant opportunity for the United Nations system to put 'leave no one behind' into practice as they embed a series of social and environmental indicators within UNDP's accountability structure, quality standards and assurance process.

---

<sup>99</sup> Alastair Whitson, 'Loss and Damage: Climate Reality in the 21st Century' <<http://insights.careinternational.org.uk/publications/loss-and-damage-climate-reality-in-the-21st-century>> [accessed 29 August 2017].

Designing programmes that draw on indigenous knowledge and actively involve local indigenous communities is another way to ensure climate change programmes contribute to ensuring that no one is left behind. In Brazil, for example, indigenous people living in the Amazon are one of the most marginalised groups vulnerable to climate and environmental changes. CAFOD has been working in partnership with the Indigenous Council of Roraima (CIR), an indigenous grassroots organisation in the Amazonian state of Roraima, supporting them to develop a participatory methodology based on traditional indigenous knowledge to enable all community members to map natural resources, local perceptions of climate change, and its impact on communities. This information has been used for advocacy purposes and for community land management plans. They have also trained Indigenous Land and Environmental Agents in monitoring their land, and in protecting their communities from environmental threats.

### Recommendations

- Donor governments need to link more explicitly their commitment to climate change action, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and financing adaptation in the poorest affected countries with the ‘leave no one behind’ principle.
- Detailed assessments of the social impacts of climate change and environment funds and programmes are needed to ensure they do not exacerbate the impoverishment and marginalisation of vulnerable groups.
- Programmes that draw on indigenous knowledge and actively involve local indigenous communities should be supported as an important strategy for ensuring climate change action is coherent with the ‘leave no one behind’ principle.

## 6. Accountability and governance

As highlighted in Bond’s paper ‘Leaving no one behind: Putting marginalised people at the forefront of the Sustainable Development Goals’, governance mechanisms at all levels (local, national, regional and global) need: to be more open, inclusive and accountable to marginalised groups; to eliminate inequities in public participation; and to ensure effective institutions that provide equitable access to good-quality public services.

ODI proposed that by the end of the first 1,000 days of the SDGs (September 2018), governments should identify their marginalised populations, develop a ‘leave no one behind’ strategy, and begin its implementation<sup>100</sup>. There is an urgent need for all governments to publish their ‘leave no one behind’ strategies and include ‘leave no one behind’ markers in their business plans.

Donor support for national dialogues on ‘leave no one behind’ are a valuable contribution to the first stage in this process. But there is a need for transparent and accountable government-level processes for developing and resourcing action plans that respond to the particular needs and interests of marginalised groups in both developed and developing countries.

International and regional SDG monitoring and review must be fit for purpose to track progress on the ‘leave no one behind’ pledge. The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is playing a central role by overseeing follow-up and review processes at the global level. ODI further

---

<sup>100</sup> Stuart, Elizabeth et al. ODI.

suggests that the 2018 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) should have a High-Level Summit on 'leave no one behind' to review progress on the pledge. This would help drive the development of national level plans.

Despite 'leave no one behind' being the theme of the 2016 HLPF fewer than half of the voluntary national reviews (VNRs) submitted that year included sections on the 'leave no one behind' pledge<sup>101</sup>. As an indicator of political interest in the pledge, this is a concern. ODI and Save the Children have both proposed that all VNRs should contain a section dedicated to 'leave no one behind' and that UN guidelines for VNRs should include specific guidance for how countries report progress on the pledge; this would encompass the steps that countries have taken to identify and reach excluded groups, as well as reporting on national stepping stone equity targets<sup>102, 103</sup>.

Save the Children's Analyse, Act, Account model<sup>104</sup> calls on national governments to conduct a 'leave no one behind' assessment, which involves analysing which groups are furthest behind and why, and what can be done to accelerate progress. Governments should then produce an action plan to reach all excluded groups and ensure appropriate finance is in place, and to establish transparent, inclusive and participatory monitoring and accountability processes to assess progress.

At sub-national level, there is a need for targets and indicators that are locally contextualised and for local communities to be empowered and supported to help identify the concerns relevant to their particular local context. Local communities must also play an active role in monitoring and holding local authorities accountable for SDGs implementation and enforcement, including through budget monitoring and appropriate feedback mechanisms.

A further important enabling factor for achieving 'leave no one behind' is the protection and promotion of human rights. The UN's 2017 report on VNRs highlights the strong alignment between the pledge and 'the human rights imperative to tackle inequality and discrimination'<sup>105</sup>. The identification therefore by Sweden and Finland of the 'leave no one behind' pledge with a human-rights based approach to development is valuable. However, Save the Children have proposed that this relationship be made more explicit in SDG accountability mechanisms. Regional and international 2030 Agenda accountability processes must be linked to, and draw on, international human rights obligations and reporting. They should work in synergy with international and regional human rights mechanisms, ensuring a two-way systematic flow of data, analysis and recommendations, including on reaching the furthest behind<sup>106</sup>.

Fiscal policy also has an important relationship with human rights and the 'leave no one behind' pledge. For instance, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, ratified by 189 countries, obliges states to put in place all necessary measures for the realisation of women's rights and to eliminate any discrimination arising from policies, including economic policy. However, Christian Aid has reported on how cuts to public budgets in many countries have exacerbated poverty, especially for women, whose burden of unpaid care increases in the absence of adequate services and infrastructure. While human rights frameworks do not dictate what set of macroeconomic policies governments should pursue, they clearly espouse the goals to which economic policy should aspire<sup>107</sup>:

<sup>101</sup> Bond, *Progressing National SDGs Implementation: Experiences and Recommendations from 2016*, 2016 <[https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/analysis\\_of\\_hlpf\\_2016\\_final\\_paper.pdf](https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/analysis_of_hlpf_2016_final_paper.pdf)>.

<sup>102</sup> Stuart, Elizabeth et al. ODI.

<sup>103</sup> Save the Children, *Realising the Pledge to Leave No One Behind*.

<sup>104</sup> Save the Children, *Realising the Pledge to Leave No One Behind*.

<sup>105</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Synthesis of Voluntary Submissions by Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council and Other Intergovernmental Bodies and Forums (advance Unedited Text)* (UN ECOSOC, 2017), p. 2

<[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14738E\\_HLPF\\_2017\\_3\\_Note\\_Secretariat.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14738E_HLPF_2017_3_Note_Secretariat.pdf)>.

<sup>106</sup> Save the Children, *From Agreement to Action: Delivering the SDGs*, 2016

<[https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/From\\_Agreement\\_to\\_Action.pdf](https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/From_Agreement_to_Action.pdf)>.

<sup>107</sup> Christian Aid, *Delivering for Women and Girls: The SDGs and the Role of Gender Responsive Budgeting*.

One way that CSOs are contributing to improving accountability and governance is by helping to build the capacity of people to advocate for their own needs at community level. Social accountability approaches, such as community score cards and social audits, are increasingly well recognized as key ingredient for enabling all people to gain sustained access to the support and services to which they are entitled. It is proven to improve the quality and access to services for the poorest and most excluded. There is also mounting evidence that social accountability can make governance more inclusive and efficient.

A new initiative in this field is Everyone Counts (E1C), a partnership between two CSOs, CARE and World Vision, and Kwantu a technology developer in the global South. It seeks to address the problem that most social accountability processes occur within specific programmes, individual clinics, schools or other facilities. These improvements are not coordinated within sectors, across levels of government, or between different organisations supporting social accountability.

E1C is intended to take social accountability to scale at a national level within and across sectors to enable more effective and strategic advocacy for better services, more rapid adaptation of policies in response to what works and what doesn't, and more sustainable partnerships with governments and service providers to improve services for those who need them most. It will create data standards that allow data from existing projects to be aggregated, create a hub of real time data, and then make this information available freely to be used by local groups, CSOs, and government departments. The E1C partnership will pilot the model to demonstrate how it can have impact at a national level in three countries: Kenya, Malawi and Rwanda.

## Recommendations

- All countries should report on 'leave no one behind' in their voluntary national reviews (VNRs) to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), taking a participatory approach and involving marginalised groups.
- Governance mechanisms at all levels (local, national, regional and global) need to be more open, inclusive and accountable to marginalised groups. Local communities must be closely involved in developing local targets and indicators, and take an active role in monitoring and holding local authorities accountable for SDG implementation.

## 7. Civil society partnerships

A key challenge faced by donors seeking to scale up support targeted at marginalised groups is that many vulnerable communities are by their nature in remote, often rural locations, beyond the reach of capitals. This was highlighted by some government representatives interviewed for this report.

The need therefore to support and work with local CSOs is increasingly well recognized by the international development community. Local CSOs are often active in remote areas and bring extensive local knowledge both in rural and urban settings. They will also remain in an area after international agencies cease to have a presence. Nevertheless, the DAC average for the proportion of ODA channelled through CSOs was 16.9% in 2015. Ireland channelled 43% of ODA through and to CSOs in 2015 but even in Ireland, aid to CSOs has decreased substantially both in volume and as a share of bilateral aid (falling

from 75.2% in 2014)<sup>108</sup>. This is despite the fact that the Grand Bargain, agreed at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, included a commitment to fund small, local civil society organisations.

Operationally, relations between local civil society, donors and multilaterals also vary substantially between countries, often depending on the interests of key officials in country offices. There needs to be a more concerted and formalised process for country offices and Foreign Office missions to engage with civil society. International CSOs are often in a strong position to play a bridging role in this regard as they bring strong working relationships with donor governments, multilaterals and local partner CSOs.

There is a related need to build the capacity of CSOs in the global south to engage in research, policy and advocacy in order to strengthen civil society's role as a watchdog that can hold governments to account, in particular in countries where operating space is constrained or where efforts to ensure no one is left behind may be culturally or politically challenging.

The Leave No One Behind Partnership recommends building a national model that can extend to the community level, supporting excluded groups and community organizations to engage directly with municipal governments, where excluded groups often have the most engagement and influence<sup>109</sup>. It also proposes giving more support to national CSO coalitions.

## Recommendations

- Donors should recognise and finance the increasingly important role that national, sub-national, and international CSO coalitions play in supporting excluded groups and community organisations to engage directly with government.
- Donors should fund social accountability projects that can contribute to widening access to better quality services for marginalised groups, and improve governance.

## 8. We need measures of progress

Given that Agenda 2030 entails prioritizing the poorest and most marginalised, there is a need for measures of progress that reflect this and promote fast tracking progress towards the goals for those furthest behind.

Within the UN system several new approaches have been developed to monitor equity, inequality and discrimination. For instance, the World Health Organization (WHO) is working to ensure that its Health Inequalities Monitoring and initiatives from the Health Data Collaborative use an indicator framework that adequately reflects gender, equity, rights and social determinants by deconstructing a core list of 100 indicators by equity gap and gradient<sup>110</sup>.

Such initiatives are a valuable contribution to measuring progress on leaving no one behind, but a more comprehensive approach is also needed. Stepping stone equity targets are a mechanism to support governments to monitor progress for excluded groups towards SDG targets. The idea is to monitor progress for these groups at interim dates up to 2030, with the aim of reducing systematic inequalities and ensuring that progress is on track.

---

<sup>108</sup> OECD.

<sup>109</sup> The Leave No One Behind Partnership.

<sup>110</sup> UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

Save the Children and Christian Aid have proposed that stepping stone equity targets should be set for the furthest behind groups that have been identified through an open and participatory ‘leave no one behind’ assessment process. These may be needed for different thematic areas: for example, those groups of children left behind on certain nutrition indicators may be different from those left behind in education<sup>111</sup>. The key steps Save the Children proposes are:

**Step 1.** Use household survey or other disaggregated data to identify the furthest behind groups, including by age, gender, urban/ rural, economic groups, ethnicity, caste and regions. Data should be nationally representative and include at least two different points in time.

**Step 2.** Calculate the rate of progress achieved so far by these groups, and the rate of progress that they will need to achieve to meet SDG targets.

**Step 3.** Set stepping stone targets at interim dates to monitor whether the furthest behind groups are on track to meet the target. Ideally, progress should be monitored on an annual basis but, where this is not possible, two stepping stone targets could be set – for example, 2020 and 2025

### Recommendations

- International and national mechanisms are needed to measure and fast-track progress for the most marginalised, ensuring the needs of those furthest behind are met first.
- Governments should adopt national interim equity ‘stepping stone’ targets to measure progress on closing the gaps between outcomes for different groups across the SDGs.

## 9. Data gathering and disaggregation

Reliable disaggregated data that is comparable over time is necessary to measure progress against the SDGs and is particularly key to measuring progress on ‘leave no one behind’. The characteristics that contribute to certain groups being ‘left behind’ vary between countries and regions but the ODI identifies certain markers of ‘*excluded groups that are nearly universal across countries*’: ‘*those in chronic poverty (...) those living in rural locations, those engaged in agriculture, women, the children and elderly, ethnic and religious minorities and indigenous populations, and those with minimal formal education. The propensity of marginalisation is even more acute for sub-groups meeting multiple conditions of exclusion – poor rural women, for example, and uneducated indigenous communities*’<sup>112</sup>.

Most of these markers are not typically measured in the main tool for assessing development progress – household surveys – or by donors and other development actors through their programmes. Household surveys contain many gaps, including that many key marginalised groups are often overlooked and that as many as 350 million people globally may be missed out entirely by them.<sup>113</sup>

This is already hindering the development of SDG indicators. UN Stats has found that the disaggregated data needed to address all vulnerable groups are sparse. ‘*Few of the current indicators, for example, are able to shed light on the particular situations of migrants, refugees, older persons, persons with*

<sup>111</sup> Save the Children, *Realising the Pledge to Leave No One Behind*.

<sup>112</sup> ODI.

<sup>113</sup> Carr-Hill, R. (2013) ‘Missing Millions and Measuring Development Progress’, *World Development* 46: 30-44. Cited in ODI, *The Real Bottom Billion* (2016)

*disabilities, minorities and indigenous peoples*<sup>114</sup>. This is of particular importance for the UN as, beyond the SDGs, improved data disaggregation is also critical for meeting the UN's obligations of non-discrimination and equality<sup>115</sup>.

Many donor governments are increasing investment in the disaggregation of programme data in the areas of gender, disability, geography and age. However, this needs to be supplemented by analysis and data-disaggregation that makes visible those groups who may be most marginalised in specific contexts and are not included on this list; these groups will vary from one context to the next, and may also be deliberately 'uncounted' for political reasons.

Donor governments should consider developing a roadmap for how and when they will increase the scope of data disaggregation in their own reporting mechanisms so that they can plan for the inclusion of groups not currently included in data, such as by ethnicity or caste.

These data issues also need to be considered before setting stepping stone targets. Governments, with the support of the wider development community, need to be enabled to improve household surveys and consider how to use additional data sources to compliment household survey data.

Many new data gathering and disaggregation initiatives are also being developed in response to the call in Agenda 2030 for improved data to monitor the progress of all social groups towards the SDGs. Recognising the need for strengthening data disaggregation by age, the UK Government, in partnership with HelpAge International, has been leading the creation of a new UN Statistical Commission 'City Group' called the Titchfield Group<sup>116</sup> to deepen understanding on how data on people in later life can be better collected and used. The international initiative is seen to be an important component of trying to fulfil the 'leave no one behind' pledge, but will only be formally approved in March 2018 and will need time to produce useful outputs.

Save the Children's Groups-based Inequality Database (GRID)<sup>117</sup> is another example. GRID is based on a dataset of disaggregated data on child outcomes for nearly 80 developing countries. The GRID data tools provide a visual representation of the inequalities that persist between different groups of children across key SDG indicators and allows for comparison of inequalities between different countries, and between groups of children within countries. It also supports analysis of intersecting inequalities, where children suffer from multiple disadvantages.

Handicap International, with the support of DFID, has also been working to make humanitarian actors better equipped to identify and address the needs of persons with disabilities and to design and implement inclusive projects<sup>118</sup>. They are developing guidance on how to improve data collection on persons with disabilities in humanitarian crises. At the core of the project is increasing the use of the Washington Group Questions by humanitarian organisations. For example, in Jordan Handicap International placed a staff member in the national Disability Task Force to support UNHCR, which led directly to the integration of the Washington Group questions into the Vulnerability Analysis Framework (VAF).

It should be noted also that while improved data disaggregation will be key to monitoring progress on 'leave no one behind' but is not likely to be sufficient to drive change. UNICEF found that the fundamental assumption on which their Monitoring Results for Equity (MoRES) initiative is based is that generating better data will result in better targeted programmes and ultimately enhanced equity.

---

<sup>114</sup> UN Stats, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016: Leaving No One Behind* (UN Stats) <<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/leaving-no-one-behind>>.

<sup>115</sup> UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

<sup>116</sup> <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/titchfield-city-group-ageing/>

<sup>117</sup> <https://campaigns.savethechildren.net/grid>

<sup>118</sup> Handicap International, 'Disability Statistics in Humanitarian Action' <<https://www.handicap-international.org.uk/page/disability-statistics-in-humanitarian-action>> [accessed 3 September 2017].

However, they have found early indications that resource availability and political will are also decisive factors. A finding of their MoRES evaluation is that better data do not always lead to better decision making<sup>119</sup>.

Data disaggregation also enables independent monitoring of SDG progress. For example, the Equal Measures Initiative<sup>120</sup> brings together global partners from the non-profit, research and private sectors to develop an independent annual assessment of SDG implementation for girls and women until 2030. This will use existing and new quantitative and qualitative data to monitor strategically chosen gender-related SDG indicators to track the progress being made for girls and women across key lifecycle stages.

To complement data on development outcomes, there is also a need for improved published data on aid and other financial flows to understand how well ODA is being targeted at reaching those furthest behind and the progress that governments on taxing financial flows to mobilise domestic resources to fund universal services. For example, in 2015 the OECD has found that 82% of Dutch ODA could not be allocated by country income group, limiting the capacity for oversight<sup>121</sup>.

## Recommendations

- Disaggregation of data must be strengthened and go beyond gender, disability, geography and age to make visible those groups most marginalised in specific contexts.
- Non-official data sources that can complement official statistical agency data should be included in SDG monitoring, in particular when they are the only means of monitoring progress for some of the marginalised groups described in Agenda 2030.
- Improved publication of data on ODA and other financial flows is needed for independent monitoring of how much ODA is being targeted at those furthest behind, and to help ensure the optimal mobilization of domestic resources towards universal provision of essential services.

## 10. Policy coherence

Many donor government policy agendas, beyond development programmes, impact on poverty and inequality in developing countries, including security, arms transfer, illicit drugs, trade and climate change. Current 'leave no one behind' plans from the donor governments described here mostly do not go into detail on the relationship between this development cooperation objective and other foreign policy agendas.

This is an ongoing challenge for the development community to promote improved policy coherence for sustainable development. Governments have made some progress on this. For example, the last OECD DAC Peer Review of the UK in 2014 found that the UK *'takes a useful case-by-case approach to policy coherence for development, bringing together different parts of government to work effectively—at home and abroad—on issues of common interest'*<sup>122</sup>. However, the review also found that *'a more*

---

<sup>119</sup> Unicef, *Formative Evaluation of Unicef's Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES)*, 2014 <[https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/2120-Unicef-MoRES\\_pubs-Main.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/2120-Unicef-MoRES_pubs-Main.pdf)>.

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.equalmeasures2030.org>

<sup>121</sup> OECD DAC, *OECD DAC Peer Review: Netherlands*.

<sup>122</sup> OECD DAC, *Peer Review UK*, 2014 <<http://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/UK%20peer%20review%202014.pdf>>.

*systematic approach would help the UK to tap positive synergies across policy agendas, as it has started to do with trade and development’.*

A subsequent report on UK SDG implementation by the International Development Committee found that cross government coordination tended to be at official level rather than involving ministers. *‘This seems unlikely to encourage the political leadership and buy-in from across government that would be necessary to ensure continued efforts towards a coherent approach to the SDGs’*<sup>123</sup>.

Elsewhere, the OECD DAC also identified challenges to policy coherence in the Netherlands, concluding that a lack of transparency about public financial flows through the Dutch development bank, the FMO, meant it is hard to assess how the FMO portfolio is complementing Dutch development programmes<sup>124</sup>. They found that the Netherlands needs to weave a more coherent narrative with emphasis on poverty eradication and leaving no one behind throughout its development cooperation programmes.

To ensure more effective coherence between the SDGs, including ‘leave no one behind’ and policy agendas across government all countries should seek to establish political level cross government coordination groups with oversight from the department/s with lead responsibility for SDG implementation domestically and internationally. This should also be reflected in the review and reporting of progress towards the SDGs.

Social protection has been a strong focus of multilaterals in response to ‘leave no one behind’. This too though is most effective and transformational when policies and programmes in other key areas are supportive and consider the needs of social protection recipients. Irish Aid identified that these areas *‘include agriculture, education, health, public investment, employment and markets. Cash transfers can provide resources and the security that poor households need to invest in more productive technologies and livelihoods systems. Nonetheless, social protection is not a substitute for essential services and should not be financed at the expense of allocations to the provision of services in areas such as health, education, water supply and sanitation’*<sup>125</sup>.

While programmatic responses from multilaterals to ‘leave no one behind’ are welcome, institutions like the World Bank as well as donor governments, should consider how they can include ‘leave no one behind’ criteria in their structural support to governments, for example by attaching conditions to ensure more resources reach the most excluded.

With regards to fiscal policy, Christian Aid’s approach to promoting Gender Responsive Budgeting<sup>126</sup> contributes to redressing the problem that economic policies can undermine social objectives, in particular the SDG goal of Gender Equality. They have called for civil society and women’s rights organisations to be actively involved in developing national macroeconomic policy; for national SDG implementation plans to prioritise gender-sensitive investment in social and physical infrastructure; and for all tax and budget laws and policies to be subject to gender equality analysis.

## Recommendations

- All countries should establish cross-government SDG coordination groups to drive SDG implementation domestically and internationally.

---

<sup>123</sup> International Development Committee, *UK Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2016 <<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmintdev/103/103.pdf>>.

<sup>124</sup> OECD DAC, *OECD DAC Peer Review: Netherlands*.

<sup>125</sup> Irish Aid, *Irish Aid Social Protection Strategy*.

<sup>126</sup> Christian Aid, *Delivering for Women and Girls: The SDGs and the Role of Gender Responsive Budgeting*.

- Government policies and practices in areas such as trade, tax, climate, migration, arms transfers and illicit drugs should be assessed for how they impact on inequality and achieving 'leave no one behind' objectives.
- Donors and IFIs should include 'leave no one behind' criteria in their structural support to governments.

## Conclusion

Given the ambition of the 'leave no one behind' principle and the many competing political priorities, there is a risk that it could become an empty promise. It is important that over the next decade governments and other actors do not lose sight of the positive impact that fulfilling the pledge can yield for whole societies.

'Leave no one behind' is not a prescriptive agenda and the responses to it from multilaterals, donor governments and ICSSOs are diverse, including a growing interest in improved data and data disaggregation and social protection. Whilst a small number of development actors have considered what 'leave no one behind' means for their whole organisational approach, it is more typically an agenda that has been assigned to specific teams and divisions. This risks programmes and policy areas outside their remit undermining the effectiveness of initiatives designed to tackle marginalisation, discrimination and inequality.

As the politics of development cooperation changes, a further challenge is to ensure that a focus on countries and people most in need is not undermined by resources increasingly being diverted to other competing agendas and that financing for development maintains a clear focus on poverty and inequality.

'Leave no one behind' has the potential to be a transformational agenda but only if ambitious action is taken early in the SDGs implementation period.

Bond  
Society Building  
8 All Saints Street  
London  
N1 9RL, UK

+44 (0)20 7837 8344  
[bond.org.uk](http://bond.org.uk)

Registered Charity No. 1068839  
Company registration No. 3395681 (England and Wales)

