20. Institutional guidance for leaving no one behind from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

By Stephanie Guha and Pradeep Itty, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Switzerland

Development co-operation that leaves no one behind requires institutional guidance

Switzerland has committed to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals laid out in the 2030 Agenda, an international agreement that pledges to leave no one behind as countries work towards these goals. In line with the 2016 Nairobi Declaration of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, the SDC believes that the leave no one behind pledge is essential for successful development co-operation. The SDC has therefore updated its institutional guidance for reducing poverty to make it more practical, more user friendly, and more in line with the 2030 Agenda.

Developing guidance to implement leave no one behind in all strategies and programmes

The guidance on leave no one behind was drafted in the first half of 2018, and benefited from consultations with SDC staff, both in the field and at the SDC head office.

The Swiss Constitution states that "the strength of a people is measured by the well-being of its weakest members". For SDC, sustainable and equitable development is not possible if certain groups of society are excluded from well-being. The SDC considers as "left behind" those individuals or groups who are excluded from sustainable development or who do not enjoy minimum standards of living. Poverty and exclusion are context specific and therefore sound analyses are required to identify who has been left behind.

At the institutional level, committing to leave no one behind means:

- Focusing on people living in poverty, giving special consideration to the poorest of the poor, and recognising the multiple dimensions of poverty.

- Tackling exclusion, discrimination and inequality in order to make transformative changes.

- Considering populations that have been left behind, or are at risk of being left behind, in all new SDC co-operation and thematic strategies.

- Helping enhance information systems and the production of disaggregated data that reveal the challenges of those left behind and strengthen the relationship between duty bearers and rights holders.

The SDC anchors leave no one behind in all of its strategies and programmes. Policy dialogue for inclusion, supported by the experience of programmes and projects, is

essential for implementing the pledge. SDC supports the empowerment and the participation in decision making of those left behind.

Consideration of inclusion and risks of exclusion at all stages of the programme cycle

At the operational level, there are two main ways to increase inclusivity, which can be combined. The first is integrating leave no one behind into programmes (mainstreaming), while the second is developing specific interventions (targeting). For mainstreaming, it is essential to examine thoroughly how the intervention affects the most excluded without exacerbating risks to further exclusion. When identifying the groups left behind, it is important to understand what caused their exclusion and to take these factors into account in programme design. If a specific group would not benefit significantly through mainstreaming alone, targeted interventions around the group's specific needs are required. Such actions are particularly recommended when addressing gender-specific exclusions.

Leave no one behind is considered at all stages of the programme cycle management, as follows.

1. **Analysis**: A specific analysis of the risks encountered by the left behind groups is required and must identify who is excluded, what they are excluded from, why and by whom.

2. **Priority setting**: The SDC must make informed choices and set priorities among all groups that are left behind or that are at risk of being left behind. It should identify one or two explicit target groups and explain why it selected them. The areas of intervention should reflect the priorities of partner governments as well as of the groups themselves, using their knowledge of the complex realities and often invisible power structures.

3. **Allocation of resources**: Decisions on the allocation or reallocation of human and financial resources must be made alongside the priority setting stage.

4. **Theory of change**: SDC partners and allies must form and develop a shared vision for the programme.

5. **Programme design**: Entry points, which are specific to the theme and context, must encourage social inclusion. Social protection is gaining importance for addressing the specific risks of exclusion and supporting the poorest of the poor.

Reliable and disaggregated data are key for identifying excluded groups and for monitoring results

Monitoring leave no one behind in programmes requires reliable raw and disaggregated data on the excluded groups, although the criteria for disaggregation will depend on the context. At the country level, the SDC recommends allocating resources to increase the availability of disaggregated data. Reports should also include qualitative findings, which can capture transformative change and empowerment within communities. Excluded peoples' realities are highly complex and information on what excludes them is often invisible. Qualitative assessments capture the knowledge and views of beneficiaries, and are excellent tools for feeding back into the planning process of future programmes.
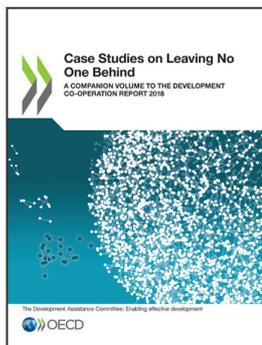
From:

Case Studies on Leaving No One Behind
A companion volume to the Development Co-operation Report 2018

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264309333-en