

Side Events

Early Action at Country Level for Leaving No-One Behind

Thursday, 1 December 2016, 1pm

Objective:

'Leave no-one behind' was a key theme of the Second High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (The Global Partnership) in Nairobi, including at a dedicated plenary session. The objective of this side event, complementing the discussions held in the plenary, was to use new country-level insights and civil society initiatives to shape action on three priority challenges in meeting the ambitions of the Leave No-One Behind agenda:

- Gaining better information on who is left behind and why
- Giving a voice to people who are left behind
- Understanding which policies and types of development cooperation are effective for better outcomes for the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalised people

Participants:

Lead organisations: Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands

Partner organisations: Department for International Development, UK; Ministry of Finance, Nepal; Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID); Civicus; Voice

- Moderator: Edward Hedger, Acting Executive Director, ODI
- Panellists (in order of speaking):
 - Christiaan Rebergen, Director General for International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands
 - Romilly Greenhill, Team Leader for Development Finance, ODI
 - Baikuntha Aryal, Joint Secretary, International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, Nepal
 - Gwen Hines, Director for International Relations, Department for International Development (DFID), UK
 - Ruth Kimani, Voice Programme Officer, Hivos, Kenya

There was a high degree of audience engagement, with multiple questions and comments from the floor, which focused on issues such as:

- The possibilities for reaching the unreached and delivering basic services created by new technologies, which can help poorer countries 'leapfrog' expensive infrastructure;
- The development of innovative mechanisms to give voice to the unheard, such as citizens' juries and assemblies of the people; and
- The political and contested nature of the Leave No-One Behind agenda, which emerges, for instance, in struggles around land grabbing and human rights.

Key issues discussed:

Edward Hedger opened the event by reiterating the criticality of the commitment to Leave No One Behind in order to achieve the SDGs for everyone, everywhere. He drew the clear links between the Global Partnership – which is unique in its inclusive and multi-stakeholder character – and the Leave No One Behind agenda, whose success will rely on the active participation of all actors in partnerships for effective development cooperation.

Christiaan Rebergen, Director General of International Cooperation at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasised that achieving Leave No-One Behind requires early and sustained action, referring to the ‘Coalition on Early Action to Leave No-One Behind’ established by The Netherlands, Kenya and ODI earlier this year, in which 18 countries and organisations made commitments. He set out four key elements for success: identifying marginalised people; defining effective policy and monitoring measures to reach them; giving marginalised groups a voice and a seat at the table; and exchanging experiences, knowledge and lessons. On the latter point, Christiaan Rebergen raised the idea of a repository of data, evidence and best practices, which could potentially be housed at UNDP. He then presented policy initiatives by The Netherlands, including the “Voice” programme, a new innovative grant facility created with an investment of EUR 50 million by the Dutch Government that supports the most marginalised and discriminated-against people in 10 countries: Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Laos, Cambodia, Philippines and Indonesia.

Ruth Kimani, Programme Officer for Voice at the international NGO Hivos in Kenya, explained how the initiative is active in 10 African and Asian countries through a five-year programme consisting of both financial support and the integration of lessons and best practices to strengthen the capacity of excluded groups such as persons with disabilities, abused women, LGBT, vulnerable groups, youth and elderly people, and ethnic minorities to advocate and participate in decision-making. The premise of the initiative is that – regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or status – no-one should be denied basic human rights or economic opportunities.

Romilly Greenhill, Team Leader for Development Finance at ODI, presented early insights from new Leave No One Behind ‘stock-take’ research conducted by ODI in two countries, Kenya and Nepal, in the health and roads sectors. The research found that marginalised groups – those on low incomes, in rural areas, with lower levels of education and ethnic minorities – face worse access, especially those experiencing multiple dimensions of marginalisation at the same time. The project identified progressive policy provisions in both countries in the health sector, but found that for the roads sector in Kenya, priority was given to national-level growth considerations (in turn, this could raise overall levels of economic development and government revenues that could be channelled towards addressing poverty and vulnerability). This finding illuminates one important possible tension regarding the most effective routes to leaving no one behind: whether efforts should be direct or indirect, according to different rationales in different contexts. In both Kenya and Nepal, the biggest challenges were found to be translating progressive policies into effective service delivery, although donors were found to have played a positive role in Nepal, for instance, in terms of encouraging and heavily financing the delivery of progressive health policies. The analysis points to a need for more and better (disaggregated) data, resources that are clearly targeted towards achieving the Leave No-One Behind commitment, and the centrality of local governance and accountability, including to give under-represented groups a voice in dialogue and decision-making.

Baikuntha Aryal, Joint Secretary of the International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division at Nepal’s Ministry of Finance gave the perspective of a least developed country that aims to graduate from this status by 2022. He discussed the Nepal Government’s focus on improving database management, in recognition of the fact that it will be impossible to understand who requires support and better access to basic services without enhanced information. Nepal is also concentrating on listening to the voices of poor and marginalised people when formulating its development plans and policies, including by going out into remote areas to undertake

consultations. However, he acknowledged that this does not go far enough, emphasising the importance of empowering and enhancing the capabilities of people being left behind, particularly through education, capacity building, training, and access to financial services, as well as improved social protection and social health insurance.

Gwen Hines, Director for International Relations at DFID, explained that the UK's Aid Strategy remains highly focused on the poorest of the poor, and that a requirement for UK ODA to tackle poverty reduction is built into legislation. DFID approaches the Leave No-One Behind agenda as "understand, empower, include". DFID is supporting work to build evidence in 'trailblazer' countries such as Nepal and Rwanda, and will also launch a new data initiative at the World Data Forum next year. Gwen Hines emphasised that data needs vary context by context. For example, in Malawi, the national statistical system is not strong, but village clinics have posters on the walls – the question is how to capture this bottom-up information in innovative ways. On empowerment and inclusion, women and girls remains a priority area for DFID: the UK is represented on the UN High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment and DFID's Girls' Education Challenge fund has a window to reach the most marginalised. DFID has also recently announced that will increase its focus in the areas of disabilities, child exploitation and slavery. It is also a partner in the P20 Initiative to improve data on the poorest 20% of the world's population. Lastly, Gwen Hines noted that the Leave No One Behind commitment in Agenda 2030 encapsulates not only marginalised groups of *people* but very poor and fragile *countries*, especially in the Middle East and parts of Africa, for which the international community must provide increased support to ensure that these countries do not get left behind. While we cannot deny tough challenges in middle-income and even high-income countries, official development assistance (ODA) should primarily be targeted to countries that cannot access other kinds of resources.

The issues of empowerment and listening to the voices of marginalised groups were an important thread throughout the discussions, for example when discussing land rights; the need for governments to actively seek the participation of remote and vulnerable groups when formulating policies to serve them; the development of innovative forums to capture citizens' demands; and the empowerment work of the Voice programme. There was acknowledgement that while improved data to inform policymaking *about* marginalised people is critical, this alone is not enough, if it does not also facilitate increased participation in decision-making, monitoring and accountability *by* marginalised people. This raises the acutely political nature of the Leave No One Behind agenda, which in many cases will require development partners to confront or think through shifts in power dynamics and the need for genuine participation and accountability.

Main conclusions and next steps:

Leaving No-One Behind is an extremely ambitious agenda that will require new commitments, partnerships and transparency between all actors in development cooperation. The Global Partnership should play a key role in accelerating this progress, especially because it has a uniquely inclusive and multi-stakeholder nature.

Partners in The Global Partnership can support action on two fronts:

(1) Voice and empowerment – Leave No-One Behind is an inescapably political and potentially highly contested agenda, and we must be prepared to confront this. Success will depend not only on achieving progressive policies, data and financing, but also on securing the right local political dynamics. Ultimately these stem from strengthening national and local governance frameworks in countries, so that governments are truly accountable to their people.

(2) Better data, evidence and understanding – how can we reach the unreached if we do not know who and where they are? On the one hand, this means a step-change in national statistical capacity as well as other innovative ways to generate, analyse and disseminate data, particularly about – and to – marginalised and vulnerable groups. On the other hand, we know that there are

already numerous projects and interventions that could offer important lessons on how to reach and empower marginalised groups, but these lessons are not being sufficiently well shared.

As a next step on the latter point, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to develop with UNDP the idea of a global repository of data and best practices. This repository would help to capture and share existing evidence so that we can join up partnerships and projects, and scale up what works.

Finally, it should be noted that it will be critical to continue engagement on this theme amongst a wider pool of stakeholders (especially given the limited size of this event) to ensure follow-up by all actors.