

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

In all societies, from Northern Europe to South Saharan Africa, there are people that are so isolated, excluded and impoverished that they live in a state of extreme poverty that is passed from one generation to the next. They do not only live in material deprivation but also lack political voice and social capital and for these reasons they are often neglected or overlooked by politicians, service providers and policy-makers. The obstacles that maintain them in poverty are therefore never properly understood nor addressed, with the result that the human rights violations that are the cause and the consequence of their extreme poverty continue unabated, and that the human capital they represent continues to be wasted.

All countries have committed themselves to a universal agenda that, in order to be sustainable, includes three dimensions – economic, social and environmental. They have also committed themselves to recognize the right of all people to live in dignity. The goals of this agenda will not be reached unless the multi-dimensional nature of extreme poverty is recognized, and the experience and knowledge of those who live it on a daily basis are drawn upon in the development of policies and programmes that can effectively ensure that no one is left behind.

With the commitment to reach the furthest behind first, Agenda 2030 has created the hope that these people will be at the heart of the efforts to implement the SDGs. Development and progress have never been thought or implemented in an effort to prioritize those who are the most difficult to reach. From the local to the international level we lack the knowledge and understanding to orient all programs and policies through this lens.

Building knowledge with those furthest behind

People who live in poverty and social exclusion are not only neglected as partners in development, but their experience and knowledge are also ignored. The international community, national governments, local authorities and grassroots actors need to recognize that people living in extreme poverty have **valuable knowledge** that can contribute to the construction of policy and development programs.

With Agenda 2030 we have the opportunity, from the local to the international level, to introduce people living in poverty as new partners in promoting development, creating cooperation, and initiating new forms of shared knowledge between people living in poverty and people in mainstream society, including academics, professionals, and policy-makers.

This new model to produce knowledge will help to understand the dynamics of poverty and exclusion and propose policies and programs that are more adapted to the reality of those who are the most difficult to reach.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY MEASURES

ATD Fourth World is carrying out a pilot project in partnership with the University of Oxford to develop indicators of multi-dimensional poverty. The project hinges on participatory research that combines the perspectives of key stakeholders and prioritizes the views of people with direct experience of material and social deprivation.

The partnership stems from a shared understanding of the inadequacies of existing ways of thinking about and measuring poverty, and the conviction that these can be addressed by conducting rigorous scientific research alongside people who have direct experience of poverty and who will be co-creators of new knowledge.

The research seeks to refine the understanding and measurement of poverty by engaging with people with direct experience, practitioners and academics to contribute to more sensitive policy design at national and international level and thereby to greater reductions in poverty.

Building commitment and action with those furthest behind

Impoverished and marginalized people are often perceived as receivers of aid and beneficiaries of programs, but not as right holders and agents of change; they are considered for what they lack and not for what they can bring to contribute together with many others to the development of their communities and progress of society at large.

In many parts of the world informal settlements are being demolished to promote development programs. When relocation projects don't include consultation, people being relocated often come back to where they used to live as this is the only way to earn a living or to have access to basic services.

The **participation of people living in poverty** in the maintenance of legislation, policies and programs that affect them is a key condition for the effectiveness and good governance of public institutions and sustainable development programs. People living in poverty should be recognized as partners who can contribute to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these programs. **The right to participate** is not only the right to speak without shame and without fear of reprisals but to be empowered and supported to effectively express one's views through capacity-building and human rights learning. Civil society organizations can take a facilitating role but ultimately governments must be called upon to embark on the process of ensuring participation, supporting local organizations, building up trust with those most concerned and allowing people living in poverty and exclusion to make their needs, expectations and efforts to contribute to development known.

Fighting against stigmatization and discrimination is crucial in the commitment to further social progress and eradicate extreme poverty. Though there are many **barriers** to it, the participation of people living in poverty provides learning and regenerating processes for people and institutions that commit to them.

Challenge 2015: Towards Sustainable Development that Leaves No One Behind

From 2011 to 2013 ATD Fourth World carried out a participatory research project to provide people living in extreme poverty with the means to contribute their experience and knowledge to efforts to achieve human rights and evaluate the MDGs and to make proposals towards the Post 2015 negotiations.

The first recommendation from the research was to leave no one behind and actively reach out to the most impoverished populations.

This idea made its way to the High Level Panel on Post 2015 and has become a principle to guide the implementation of Agenda 2030.

This research project shows that the participation of people with direct experience of poverty and exclusion can bring new and valuable insights to policy making and agenda setting.

The challenge now is to continue to include people that are traditionally left behind as partners in the planning, implementation and evaluation of sustainable development programs through participatory methods and to build the foundation of lessons learned that inform future work.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

ATD Fourth World young volunteers formed flood-prevention brigades to dig ditches in the Guinaw Rails district of Dakar to improve the living conditions of the residents. The Senegalese Ministry for Restructuring took over the construction of permanent canals. The youth brigades are still active to ensure that the poorest households are supported during the rainy season.

KEY ELEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Every country should ensure that eradicating extreme poverty is an explicit priority on their agenda, and included as appropriate in national and local government budgets, policies and laws. Anti-poverty strategies and programs need to include special measures to reach those furthest behind. ATD Fourth World proposes the following areas that are crosscutting and particularly important for people living in poverty:

Tackling climate change with those furthest behind

People who are socially, economically, culturally, politically, institutionally, or otherwise marginalized are especially vulnerable to climate change and to some adaptation and mitigation measures. For this reason the international community, governments and other stakeholders, including the private sector need to:

- Ensure that responses to climate change are coordinated with social and economic development in an integrated manner, with a view to avoiding adverse impacts on the latter.
- Ensure that local communities participate in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of adaptation and mitigation strategies that affect their lives.
- Utilize a reporting and monitoring structure that permits the disaggregation of data and then analysis to ensure the most vulnerable communities are adequately protected by climate-change policy.
- Ensure that adaptation and mitigation strategies are funded with the aim of impacting positively the most vulnerable communities, particularly those living in extreme poverty.
- Promote the creation of decent work and quality jobs, particularly for people living in poverty and workers in precarious employment, in the transition to a green economy.
- Implement job training programmes for people living in poverty and exclusion to participate in the transition to a green economy.

People at the center of humanitarian assistance

These are key recommendations to ensure that people affected by crises, including the most vulnerable and those furthest behind, are not only informed and consulted, but put at the centre of the decision-making processes to meaningfully influence humanitarian action:

- Ensure that persons living in extreme poverty are identified and reached by emergency responses.
- Direct more aid and funding to strengthening local capacities and empowering local actors.
- Distribute aid in ways that reinforce community solidarity and increase security.
- Create the conditions for the participation of people affected by the crisis, including the most vulnerable, in the planning and implementation of emergency response.
- Integrate accountability to local communities.

Social protection to reach those furthest behind

The lack of basic social protection is one of the main reasons why people living in extreme poverty are being left behind. Social protection measures are key to prevent or alleviate poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. Recommendations to ensure that those furthest behind benefit from social protection include:

- Design and implement nationally defined social protection guarantees aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. ILO recommendation 202 provides guidance for the establishment of national floors of social protection accessible to all in need.
- Establish a rights-based approach to social protection: [the guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights](#) provide policy guidance to ensure that social protection measures reach people living in extreme poverty.

- Ensure the participation of people living in poverty and exclusion in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection programs.
- Ensure that equality and non-discrimination, transparency and accountability are the key principles that guide the design and implementation of social protection policies.

Ensuring access to quality education

Whether they live in low, middle, or high income countries, children from marginalized households are less likely to benefit from quality education. They are also more likely to enter late, to perform badly, and to drop out of school early. ATD Fourth World's experience points to a number of recommendations that will enhance the quality of education for all and will ensure the fulfilment of the right to education for children in extreme poverty:

- Remove all financial barriers to equitable access to learning.
- Build a conducive environment for parents and communities to become partners in the education of their children, including families with experience of poverty and social exclusion.
- Design curricula that are appropriate to cultural contexts, reflecting ethnic, gender, rural/urban differences.
- Introduce measures to end the pervasive discrimination of disadvantaged students and parents by school teachers and staff, as well as by fellow students.

Ensuring access to decent work for all

Unemployment and underemployment plague the lives of people in poverty around the world. Workers in these conditions are more likely to lack adequate social protection and often suffer from low pay and poor working conditions.

Access to decent jobs is crucial for people to get out of poverty with dignity. Lessons learned about the working conditions of people living in poverty have led ATD Fourth World to make the following recommendations:

- Ensure human rights and dignity at work.
- Expand awareness and collective organization around workers' rights and create reliable accountability mechanisms.
- Expand job-training and life-long learning opportunities for people living in poverty.
- Protect informal workers and stimulate small and micro enterprises as well as workers' cooperatives.
- Eliminate discrimination that prevents people living in extreme poverty from accessing decent job opportunities.

Defining and measuring poverty with those furthest behind

Whether income measures or multidimensional indexes are used, people with direct experience of poverty very rarely participate in building the definition and measurement of poverty.

In order to better capture the different dimensions of poverty, particularly social dimensions, and to allow for a more nuanced, comprehensive analysis of social and economic progress, it is necessary to:

- Develop new measures, metrics, and indicators through participatory mechanisms that include people experiencing poverty.
- Combine quantitative and qualitative measures to reflect the multidimensional nature of extreme poverty and the overlapping effect of multiple deprivations.
- Gather and report disaggregated data that makes it possible to monitor progress across different economic quintiles and population groups.