

Editorial: How far do we need to go to fulfil the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to “Leave No One Behind”?

by

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While we have witnessed a significant reduction in extreme poverty since the early 2000s – to less than 10% of the global population – we cannot be complacent. That aggregate figure masks a stark reality: today’s world hunger levels – climbing to 821 million undernourished people in 2017 – mark a return to those of a decade ago. At the same time as OECD members and emerging economies in Latin America and Asia experience growing economic prosperity, there has been an increase in economic inequality within countries, threatening sustainable development. In a world of global and national progress, as measured by gross national product, the poorest inhabitants are being excluded from development gains. Worse, they are often literally invisible, because national averages do not capture or tell their story due to the lack of good data systems.

We cannot claim to be on track to leave no one behind, when women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected by the risk of poverty: 330 million women and girls live on less than USD 1.90 a day, which is 4.4 million more than men. We cannot claim to be building a better future for all when by 2030, more than 2.3 billion people, or about 27% of the world’s population, will live in fragile contexts, including under the threat of conflict situations, forced displacement, pandemics, violent extremism, famine and natural disasters. This includes more than 80% of the world’s poorest.

We have to reverse these trends. A decisive step change is needed by all actors, from the OECD to civil society, the private sector and national governments, to join forces and focus policies on promoting growth that is inclusive and sustainable, to ensure no one is left behind. In today’s world of unparalleled interconnectedness, our linked fates make our shared responsibility to the most vulnerable non-negotiable. We cannot ignore those at the furthest reaches of the economy, society, politics and, increasingly, on the front line of environmental threats, since climate change has a disproportionate impact on the poorest people.

With more than a decade left before 2030, we still have time to do something about it. The good news is that the development co-operation community is already showing signs of grasping the new context in which we are working. Policies and investments are placing greater emphasis on people-centred growth and well-being. Nonetheless, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) ask much more of development actors if they are to make good on the promise to close first the gaps for those left furthest behind. Development co-operation has to demonstrate its readiness to serve this transformative global development agenda, while prioritising those most in need.

This *Development Co-operation Report 2018* helps clarify what committing to the “Leave No One Behind” pledge means in practice. It takes a fresh and critical look at the readiness and capacity of development

co-operation and official development assistance to support developing countries and communities to achieve the SDGs. It also makes the case for more deliberate, systematic and co-ordinated efforts by development actors and stakeholders to maximise their impact on leaving no one behind.

In all these areas and many more, count on the OECD to continue designing, developing and delivering better policies for more inclusive and sustainable development co-operation.



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