



Participate

Knowledge from the margins for post-2015

Recommendations and key findings for the post-2015 global development framework

People living in greatest poverty and those most marginalised want a different kind of development, where interventions and public policies enact principles that are inclusive and sustainable.

According to the poorest and most marginalised groups in over 100 countries, a global framework must guarantee development that leaves no one behind; which does not demand impossible choices of the poorest and most vulnerable; which provides hope; and which recognises and strengthens the networks that hold people together. How this process is supported – by government at all levels, by business, by civil society, and by citizens themselves, is fundamentally important.

Key recommendations based on the findings of the research with people living in greatest poverty and those who are most marginalised. The post-2015 framework should:

1 Aim for the eradication of extreme poverty and reduction in inequalities

Specific measurements are necessary to assess the extent to which people living in extreme poverty and marginalisation benefit from a global development framework. This should include a focus on wellbeing that goes beyond material needs to an integrated, holistic approach which considers empowerment, dignity and capacity.

2 Strengthen the individual and collective capacities of people living in greatest poverty and marginalisation

This means strengthening the:

- Capacities of individuals to access resources and to contribute in their own development.
- Capacities of individuals and collectives to represent issues that matter to the poorest, and support collective responses to problems.
- Capacities of government institutions to respond to the needs and interests of people living in greatest poverty and marginalisation.

3 Prioritise participation throughout

Participation can strengthen the capacities of people living in greatest poverty and contribute to the reduction of inequality and eradication of extreme poverty:

- Build participation into every stage of the development process from conception; to design; to implementation; to learning, monitoring and evaluation.
- Include citizen-led regulation and monitoring of services in order to strengthen governance institutions – making them more accessible and accountable.
- Include a measurement for how accountable governments and multilateral processes are to citizen participation.

The success of the future post-2015 framework rests on its ability to respond to:

Highly dynamic contexts

The landscape of poverty is increasingly characterised by crisis, shocks, conflict, uncertainty and volatility. Policies and approaches need to be much more adaptive to continuously changing environments and circumstances.

Social norms that discriminate

Systems and institutions that support people's claims to rights can be undermined by intolerance and prejudice. Challenging unfair power structures that entrench inequalities is critical for positive change in people's lives.

Complex relationships between different problems

Answering one part of a problem does not produce sustainable outcomes for the poorest unless all interrelated issues are simultaneously addressed. Policies need to be underpinned by a deep systemic understanding of people's everyday lives. Agile learning and processes for generating feedback are required at local, national and global levels.

Evidence base

Participate synthesised findings from 84 participatory studies with people living in greatest poverty and marginalisation in over 100 countries between 1993 and 2013. In some cases research is ongoing and expanding into additional countries.

Recommendations are based on *Participate's* interpretation of the findings of this research.

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Key findings and implications of the research

Finding	Implication
<p>1 Interventions that improve the lives of the poor frequently fail to benefit the very poor.</p>	<p>1 Barriers to access for the very poorest need to be challenged directly in order to ensure equity and bring people out of extreme poverty.</p>
<p>General infrastructure development and universal access initiatives frequently fail to benefit the poorest. The poorest face major barriers to access: lack of information about what is available to them; hidden costs which are prohibitive for the poorest; urgent short term needs which do not allow the possibility of longer term investments such as education; and discriminatory institutional and social norms which divert resources away from those most in need.</p>	
<p>2 Rapid change, insecurity and uncertainty increasingly characterise the environments that the very poorest live in.</p>	<p>2 Design processes, services and infrastructure which have the capacity to adapt to rapid change and help enhance the ability of the poorest to respond to risk and protect their rights.</p>
<p>People are facing extremely fast rates of change. Factors such as food price volatility, violent conflict, climate change and rapid technological development make poverty more difficult to manage; present people with impossible choices; force people to migrate; and lead to instability.</p>	
<p>3 Poor governance is widely seen as a major contributor to poverty.</p>	<p>3 Promote better governance based on values of accountability, transparency, trust, access to information, responsiveness, and effectiveness – values that can best be achieved through citizen participation and influence in decision-making.</p>
<p>This means establishing rules of the game that work for the poorest across all levels of governance – from informal to formal; from local through to regional, national and global. It requires strengthening the institutions of governance at all levels, including the networks that connect people to formal and informal institutions.</p>	
<p>4 Inequalities are persistent and perpetuate exclusion at all levels of development</p>	<p>4 Address social inequalities: this means dismantling intolerances and prejudices that discriminate, marginalise and exclude at all levels and in all settings.</p>
<p>Policies need to recognise that social inequalities are intersecting, multidimensional and effect household, community, national and international levels. Inequalities lead to a lack of fair access to basic services but also to hopelessness and negative self-perceptions that reinforce discrimination. The most marginalised may be unaware of their existing rights, lack the knowledge needed to interact with the state, or do not feel they have the capacity to act.</p>	
<p>5 Current policies and approaches can lead to unintended and perverse effects that create dependencies which make exclusion and poverty worse.</p>	<p>5 In order for development to be sustainable, policies must address the root causes of poverty and marginalisation.</p>
<p>People living in the greatest poverty and marginalisation want a different kind of development, where interventions and public policies promote sustainability across economic, environmental and social dimensions. Without responding to all aspects of wellbeing, including hope and dignity, solutions will not be sustainable. Development that is sustainable requires investment in long-term relationships to build local ownership and local knowledge at all stages.</p>	
<p>6 Development that is sustainable requires meaningful participation that leads to strong local ownership.</p>	<p>6 Participatory development should be at the heart of interventions implemented through the new framework.</p>
<p>Rather than importing 'one-size-fits-all' development initiatives which often fail, the global framework should support the capacities of individuals and groups to design and implement their own strategies. Participatory processes enable people living in poverty to become more aware of their situation and of the potential to pool their knowledge and experience with others. Through this experience, people find dignity, recognition of their abilities, and confidence to tackle problems themselves. Through working with the state to design, implement, and monitor policies, citizens not only gain access to critical resources they also build the state's capacity.</p>	