

Poverty Eradication Cluster¹ – Position paper for HLPF 2017

Poverty is a state that should not only be defined by a lack of income but also as a set of multiple and cumulative deprivations in the access of fundamental human rights and dignity such as the right to food and nutrition, access to education, health, housing, decent work, lack of political voice and power. Multidimensionality of poverty and interconnectedness of dimensions need to be recognized to design policies and programs that tackle poverty in a comprehensive and holistic way.

Poverty has strong structural causes and governments, in this regard, have a crucial role to play in addressing these root causes and creating an enabling environment for each segment of the population to be able to enjoy their rights and have their dignity respected. Member States ought to start with the political reforms to make the 'Right to live in dignity' a fundamental right in their constitution – without which ending poverty will remain as a slogan. Addressing poverty has to be essentially linked to reducing inequalities.

Clear identification of the vulnerable and marginalized groups is needed such as women, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, victims of sexual orientation discriminations, Indigenous communities, members of castes and outcasts (Dalits), (un)documented migrants, refugees etc. For many of these groups or individuals, constant stigmatization and discriminations push them into a vicious circle of poverty, powerlessness and exclusion. For children, poverty has devastating effects due to their particular life stage that lead to lifelong consequences.

To be able to break this negative circle, approaches to end poverty should be based on the values of human and environmental rights, democracy and justice (goal 16). People living in poverty should be seen as rights-holders and recognized as active agents in the fight against poverty. Institutionalizing participatory decision-making and implementation processes in a decentralized and inclusive manner are fundamental in order to leave no one behind.

Fostering a new model of development that is inclusive and sustainable for all is vital for poverty reduction. In accordance with ILO Recommendation n°202, the multi-pronged approach to address poverty should start with creating or strengthening national mechanisms of Social Protection which includes – in unambiguous terms - ending hunger by adequate provisions of food and nutrition for all (goal 2), provisions of free basic health facilities for the poor and affordable other health facilities (goal 3), safe and affordable housing (goal 11), free and compulsory universal elementary education (Goal 4) and water and sanitation (goal 6), access to full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value (goal 8).

In connection with goal 2 on sustainable production and consumption, agriculture plays a major role for the poorest communities in LDCs and middle-income countries and as such, needs promotion, product storage facilities, processing and marketing, insurance against loss etc. The informal sector gives employment to the poorest. Here, legal protection needs to be developed to promote decent work and cover not only informal workers but also give protection to migrant labors. In addition, sustainable models of agriculture that promote alternative systems that respect local indigenous practices should be encouraged as well as the establishment of cooperative means of ownership and production.

Gradual switching over to green development model, extensive measures for resilience against climate change and disaster are key. Innovative solutions towards technology transfer and increase of the quantum of development cooperation associated with adequate financing need urgent attention, if we want to fully achieve the Goals by 2030.

1 The Poverty Eradication Cluster is a sub-group of the NGO Major Group with a focus on poverty eradication and reduction of inequalities. The Cluster was created in May 2017 in connection with the theme of HLPF 2017 « Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world » .

Case studies - concrete examples of SDG implementation by NGOs through participatory and multidimensional approaches

Adoption of a law on the elimination of poverty in Quebec, Canada

In Quebec, a coalition of 32 national organizations and 15 regional networks — including trade unions and religious, women's, and anti-poverty organizations — submitted a proposal to the Province's General Assembly and the relevant Parliamentary Commission on the planned law on the elimination of poverty. Extensive consultations were organized with those with direct experiences of poverty, to ensure that the proposal fully reflected their views. The resulting document proposed that the legislation be based on three concepts derived from human rights principles:

- the eradication of poverty should be a government priority until Quebec becomes a society without poverty;
- priority should be given to improving the lives of the poorest fifth of the population;
- people experiencing poverty and the associations that represent them should be involved in the conception, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of anti-poverty measures.

The proposal also suggested the creation of two new institutions, one of which was an Advisory Committee to the government, in which three to five of the 15 members should be people in situations of poverty. To facilitate their participation, measures were proposed to address practical constraints, such as reimbursement for the time they had to take off from work. The new law, adopted in 2002, obligates the government to implement anti-poverty measures that are based on the recognition of human rights, to measure the effects of the law and its implementation, and to involve people living in poverty in the process.

Source: Direct communication from ATD Fourth World

Case study of Ghana's LEAP program to fight poverty

The Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) Programme was established as the flagship social Protection programme of Ghana's Social Protection Strategy. It aimed at providing social cash grants to the extremely poor and vulnerable households, with the objective of reducing poverty by increasing consumption and promoting access to services and opportunities. The pilot project started with 1,654 households in 21 districts in 2008 and increases to 213,048 households in all the 216 districts in Ghana as at September 2016. The criteria to be registered as a beneficiary of the LEAP was for the household to have at least one member who was either an orphan or a vulnerable child, an elderly person above 65 years without productive capacity, a disabled person with severe disabilities or an extremely poor and vulnerable pregnant woman.

To reach the main objective of eradicating poverty, specific objectives were:

- To improve basic household consumption and nutrition among children below 5 years of age, the aged (65 years and above without productive capacity) and people with severe disability;
- To increase access to health care services among children below 5 years of age, the aged (65 years and above without productive capacity) and people with severe disability;
- To increase basic school enrolment, attendance and retention of beneficiary children between 5 and 15 years of age;
- To facilitate access to complementary services (such as welfare, livelihoods and improvement of productive capacity) among beneficiary households.

The research led by Sanitization Center in Ghana found out that the program was achieving positive result on the lives of the beneficiary households and the education of their children in terms of enrolment. LEAP beneficiaries were also registered onto the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) free of charge. This is to ensure access to health care services for the LEAP beneficiaries.

Source: Direct communication from Sanitization Center in Ghana

Case study on #sustainable production in Argentina

The work of Hecho por Nosotros (Argentina) includes promoting sustainability in the fashion and textile industry through promoting the use of natural fibres, connecting cooperatives, and craftsmen from marginalized areas, like the Andean region and Patagonia, to social enterprises and international markets. This involves artisans who are preserving artistic traditions, creating positive social impact, and improving the quality of life for themselves and their families, tackling poverty, hunger, and eventually linking to decent work and economic development. Sustainable growth and development require minimizing the toxic materials used, and the waste and pollutants generated, throughout the entire production and consumption process. As natural fibres are 100% organic, they are beneficial for the environment, especially when cultivated in sustainable way.

Source: Direct communication from Hecho por Nosotros

Case study on mobilization to #end hunger and famine in East Africa

World Vision joined the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Conference of Churches in May 2017 for a Global Day of Prayer to End Famine. This called was aiming at raising awareness about the dire situation in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and Nigeria where more than 20 million people are facing starvation. Some 1.4 million children are severely malnourished and at immediate risk of death. The UN has declared this the largest humanitarian crisis since its inception in 1945.

The call to action to pray and engage with churches, governments and society and ensure delivery of life-saving food, water and health interventions. 120 organisations representing 1 billion people of faith joined the Global Day of Prayer to End Famine. Millions of people of faith from around the world joined hearts and minds for an end to famine. 70 million social impressions on twitter alone contributed to bringing a spotlight to this dire situation.

Source: Direct communication from World Vision

Dignity and agency through work and education in Madagascar

The humanitarian organization founded in 1989 by Pedro Opeka (Congregation of the Mission) with the name of Akamasoa (“good friends” in Malagasy) has converted a garbage dump on the outskirts of the capital of Madagascar into a village where men and women live with dignity from their own work. To achieve this, people living in the garbage dump were seen as active agents of change of their own lives, as the organization believed that sustainable development could not be brought only from outside of the country: there was a will to help but not to assist. It is for these reasons Akamasoa always worked with poor people helping them to build structures – schools, work places, dispensaries – which with they could rebuilt their lives and prepared the future of their children. After 27 years of operation, Akamasoa helped 500 000 Malagasies. 4,000 houses have been built and 25000 persons are living in. Each village has schools, dispensary, and work places: quarry, brick laying, carpentry, agriculture, art and craft. It has also benefited 8,409 students distributed as follows: 7,324 in kindergartens and primary schools, 765 secondary schools and 120 in the university, which shows the process of school reintegration that has taken place thanks to the 37 schools founded by Akamasoa.

Source: Direct communication from Congregation of the Mission

WORKING WITH ROMA POPULATIONS IN STRASBOURG, FRANCE

Since 2003, Doctors of the World have been working with Roma families from Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and ex-Yugoslavia that were originally living on lands with no access to water, electricity, schools, or health care. The staff contacted the relevant city services — socio-medical centres, social workers, and mother and child health services — regarding the families’ specific needs. Slowly the city services integrated the children into the local primary school, and began to regularly vaccinate all of them, in addition to providing maternal health services and childcare centres. At the same time, the

families were informed of their rights and entitlements to services. The city also allocated land for the families with water, electricity, laundries, toilets, and garbage management services, and ensured they had access to interpreters, French instructors, and social workers. Nevertheless, approximately 200 people still live in inadequate housing, and social and health workers lack training on the social and cultural causes and consequences of extreme poverty. There are also difficulties in coordinating the various services required and an increasing number of documents are required to access them. Doctors of the World is thus continuing to institutionalize and strengthen the partnerships that have been developed.

Source: Direct communication from Doctors of the World

Leaving no one behind: no more invisible children in Ivory Coast

The right to live with dignity begins with a proof of identity. In the Ivory Coast, following the civil war conflict from 2004 to 2007, many children were not declared, yielding an alarming situation. Without a nationality, poor children have no access to health care, education and later to decent and legal work; they are easy targets for abuse and trafficking. In the event of natural disasters or conflicts they risk being separated from their families for lack of official papers.

In this context, the Government had given undocumented children access to primary school, but middle school remained unattainable without a birth certificate. Many mothers in Songon raise their children alone. Because most mothers live without a legal marriage, they and their children are left with nothing when the father leaves or dies. They can be repudiated overnight and become isolated without any resources to raise their many children. To enroll their children on the civil status lists, they must pay the judge, the doctor and their travel expenses in order to determine the child's bone age and elaborate the identity documentation. Needless to say, most mothers in Songon cannot afford this and financial help was crucial for their children's future.

UNICEF was planning to finance these birth certificates for 300 children, thus enabling them to enroll in middle school in the sub-prefecture of Songon (suburb of Abidjan) to continue their studies. Because children of single mothers were not enrolled, these children could not be counted in UNICEF's program to continue studying. Aide à la Jeunesse Africaine (AJAD), a Make Mothers Matter (MMM) member organization, identified 100 such "Ghost children" in Songon. In October 2016, MMM raised fund to help AJAD finance and negotiate the process for these children to receive a birth certificate. This partnership between Make Mothers Matter and AJAD provided these 100 children with a legal status and have the opportunity to access school education, health care and their nationality. These "invisible children" have been brought out of oblivion and given an identity essential to their development, protection and integration into society. To exist with a name is already to be recognized and to be able to be rescued, the first step to escaping poverty.

Source: Direct communication from AJAD Aide à la Jeunesse Africaine

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