

Participate proposal for post-2015 targets

The Participate initiative provides high quality evidence on the reality of poverty at ground level, bringing the perspectives of the poorest into the post-2015 debate.¹

In 2013, the initiative carried out a synthesis of studies conducted by the **Participate Participatory Research Group (PRG)**² in 29 countries. This synthesis, presented in the **'Work with us'** report,³ draws out the patterns of change that emerged from people's accounts of their own experiences of moving in or out of poverty and marginalisation. The aim of this research has been to get an in-depth understanding of how people living in extreme poverty and marginalisation experience change in their lives, and the different factors that contribute to either negative or positive change.

The research demonstrates that there are certain focus areas that need to be addressed to achieve sustainable positive change in the lives of the poorest and most marginalised. The **overarching focus** and following **three focus areas** outlined in this document are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. For example, barriers to participation (in Focus Area 2) include precarious livelihoods (in Focus Area 1) and discriminatory social norms (in Focus Area 3); livelihoods are a strong counter to discriminatory social norms; infrastructure development that is pro-poor supports people to maintain livelihoods, and so on.

Under the three focus areas, we propose strategic targets, which are a distillation of the main messages from the research. We also provide an outline of example indicators that support a deeper understanding of the strategic targets and suggest potential directions for contextually relevant implementation. For the targets to meaningfully transform the lives of the poorest and most marginalised they will have to be set in the context of other transformative actions that impact on the structural causes of poverty, including the global trade and tax systems, financial regulation, climate change and environmental degradation, violence and conflict, amongst others. Furthermore, the research recommends that any success indicators are linked directly to positive impacts for the poorest and most marginalised.

OVERARCHING FOCUS

Leave no-one behind

Evidence from the *Participate* initiative research shows that those living in extreme poverty and marginalisation have not significantly benefited from the Millennium Development Goals. In order to 'leave no-one behind', tackling extreme poverty and marginalisation, alongside rising and intersecting inequalities, must be a priority for both governments and the international community. This will require a rights-based, people-centred approach which prioritises social justice and recognises the need for long-term policies and programmes.

A strong call for a 'data revolution' reverberates through the post 2015 debate. The *Participate* research shows that disaggregated data is not enough – in order to truly understand the complexities of people's lives and the ways in which they are impacted by different sorts of policies and interventions, qualitative data generated in participatory ways is essential.

¹ *Participate* is co-convened by the Institute of Development Studies and the Beyond 2015 campaign, but the initiative is only possible because of the energy, expertise and vision of the numerous organisations who are funding and facilitating the participatory research; as well as each and every one of the research participants. Between September 2012 and March 2014, the *Participate* initiative was funded by the UK Government.

² The *Participate* PRG is a global network of organisations committed to bringing knowledge from the margins into decision-making at every level of society. For more information see www.participate2015.org/about/research-network/.

³ Burns, D.; Howard, J.; Lopez-Franco, E.; Shahrokh, T. and Wheeler, J. (2013) *Work with us: How people and organisations can catalyse sustainable change*, Brighton: IDS. The full report, and an accompanying policy briefing, are available at www.participate2015.org/publications/.

FOCUS AREA 1

Livelihoods and pro-poor infrastructure development

Participate research highlights the pressing need for dignified livelihoods. Because of the lack of formal employment, the informal economy often becomes the only opportunity available for generating income, developing skills and exchanging resources for those living in extreme poverty. Furthermore, efforts to create jobs through infrastructure-driven growth rarely benefit the poorest. Some projects destroy people’s homes while others drive informal workers off the streets, tearing them apart from their livelihoods. Moreover, marginalised groups (women in particular) are excluded from access to productive assets and formal land rights – a situation that makes livelihood security impossible.

Strategic targets	<p>Target 1.1 Informal livelihoods and settlements that enable people to live a life of dignity are recognised and supported</p>	<p>Target 1.2 Increased access and control over productive assets and market opportunities by the poorest and most marginalised</p>	<p>Target 1.3 Infrastructure development benefits the poorest, while doing no harm to their livelihoods and the environment</p>
Rationale	<p><i>Informal livelihoods and enterprise activities need to be supported, not criminalised, and recognised for building the social and material resources of development as well as providing a pathway into the economy.</i></p>	<p><i>One of the major causes of poverty, in particular for women, is a lack of access to productive assets such as land and property, equipment, finance and markets, etc. However, access is not enough; people must be able to use those resources productively and effectively and individual and collective land rights must always be respected.</i></p>	<p><i>People are frequently displaced and their environments damaged in order to build infrastructure that does not benefit them. This includes for example, dams, roads, sanitation facilities and urban residential and commercial developments.</i></p>
Example indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies that marginalise informal street economies are identified and reformed to support transitions from informal environments to more stable and formal ones • Formal recognition of informal settlements increases by X% and clearance of informal settlements decreases by X% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of women and men in the bottom quintile with access to productive assets (such as land and property, equipment, finance and markets) and proof of their rights over these assets increases by X% • % of land disputes resolved in favour of marginalised people and communities instead of large corporations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living in poverty and marginalisation are engaged in the design, implementation and evaluation of local, regional, and national infrastructure projects

FOCUS AREA 2

Participation and citizen action

Development fails the poorest when decision-making processes that affect their lives exclude them. People living in poverty have a right to participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes and to hold public institutions, civil society and the private sector accountable. Frequently, even if processes exist, they are inaccessible, restricting opportunities for participation for the most marginalised. Citizen action is a strategy for people to claim spaces for participation on their own terms, and to engage policy-makers on the issues that are important to them.

Strategic targets	Target 2.1 Decisions are decentralised to the most local unit of governance	Target 2.2 Decision-making is participatory and barriers to participation are removed, particularly for those who are systematically excluded	Target 2.3 Public and private institutions are responsive and accountable to citizens	Target 2.4 A properly resourced and enabling environment for citizen action
Rationale	<p>Many decisions such as the provision of water and sanitation are made at a national level on a one-size-fits-all basis. Decisions need to be made locally and tailored to local circumstances.</p>	<p>Much of 'development' fails those who are not involved in decision-making. Everyone has a right to participate in decisions that affect them. However, many barriers to participation exist for the poorest and most marginalised; hence, these must be removed. Governments must be held to account to ensure that these processes are genuinely participatory and not co-opted.</p>	<p>Institutions must place the rights of all people at the centre of policy and programming. Where there is abuse of power, people have the right to hold decision-makers to account through the existence of appropriate and accessible mechanisms.</p>	<p>To ensure their rights, citizens have to be able to organise. They need to mobilise information that supports their cause, and create networks and spaces which enable them to express solidarity through collective action. Governments need to ensure that groups are given the freedom to organise without fear, and the resources to do so effectively.</p>
Example indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the proportion of decisions taken by the most local unit of governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that people living in poverty are engaged in the design, implementation and evaluation of policy and programmes • Resources are allocated to removing barriers to participation such as language and discriminatory attitudes (see Focus Area 3) • Mechanisms are in place to ensure that governments are held to account on the legitimacy, openness and responsiveness of participatory processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate laws, policies, institutions, procedures and mechanisms are in place in order to enable accountability. These include, for example, the ability to remove officials and politicians for wrongdoing, complaints procedures, and legislation on the right to information for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National legislation ensuring freedom of association, expression and media • % increase in resources allocated to support community based campaigning organisations of the poorest and most marginalised

FOCUS AREA 3

Tackle discriminatory norms

Participants in the research consistently expose discriminatory social norms and abuses of power at the local level as the main factors that impact on their capacity to overcome poverty and marginalisation. The rights and dignity of people with marginalised identities are systematically abused, excluding them from access to services and resources, and subjecting them to abuse because of intolerant attitudes. *Participate* research shows that a great deal of the worst prejudice and harm lies within families and local communities. Attention needs to be paid in these domains, as well as formally guaranteeing the respect of the individual and collective rights of these groups.

Strategic targets	Target 3.1 Access and quality of justice institutions, legal services, and the right to identity for people living in poverty and marginalisation	Target 3.2 Institutions are free from discrimination and prejudice	Target 3.3 Strengthened grassroots organisations of people living in poverty and marginalisation	Target 3.4 Resources, programmes and policies focus on shifting discriminatory attitudes and achieving behaviour change
Rationale	<i>Discriminatory social norms influence the development of unfair and inequitable justice systems that perpetuate these social norms, making access to justice and legal services unattainable for those most marginalised.</i>	<i>Because of their poverty, informal livelihoods, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity, gender and/or disability, people endure stigma and humiliation at the hand of those institutions which are supposed to provide them with services and care.</i>	<i>Strong grassroots movements are crucial to building collective power in the fight against discrimination. An enabling environment for the development of such collectives is crucial (see Focus Area 2).</i>	<i>Discrimination experienced within the family and community needs to be challenged; legislation alone is not sufficient. Work on attitudes towards people affected by TB and HIV/AIDS has shown that awareness raising and transformative education initiatives can be extremely effective.</i>
Example indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % increase of people reporting confidence in accessing justice institutions and complaint mechanisms • % increase of people supported to gain proof of their legal identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % increase of people in poverty who express confidence in being able to access services free from discrimination and prejudice • Mechanisms are in place for filing complaints related to mistreatment, harassment and discrimination, that take into account language and cultural diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National legislation ensuring freedom of association, expression and media • % increase in resources allocated to support community based campaigning organisations by those who are marginalised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of 'awareness raising' and 'sensitisation' initiatives increases by X% • % increase in policies and programmes that integrate components to overcome discrimination and achieve behavioural change

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