

Leaving No One Behind: Perspectives and Directions from DFID Multi-Cadre Conferences



About this report

This report was written by Siân Herbert (K4D) based on the discussions, presentations, preparatory materials, and inputs from conference participants related to two DFID conferences that took place in November 2017 and February 2018 in Bristol. Jim Woodhill (K4D) provided peer review and some text. Mark Harvey (DFID), Andrew Long (DFID), and Jo Howard (K4D) shaped the content and style of the report through peer review. The conferences were designed and organised by DFID staff: Paula Chalinder, John Carstensen, Mark Harvey, Andrew Long, Ann Robertson, Catherine Ferry, Elaine Allan, and Lindsay Law; with inputs from K4D. Thanks also to the DFID conference participants who contributed written inputs including: Duncan Barker, Jo Howard, Fiona Clark, Harriet Macdonald-Walker, Phillip Mann, Fiach O’Broin-Molloy, Beaulah Muchira, Abdalla Shah, Nicolienne Oudwater, and Lisa Rudge. And to those that facilitated the scenario break-out groups and acted as thematic experts. The live graphics were drawn by Juli Dosad of www.inclusioncreativa.com. The photographs were shot and edited by Siân Herbert. The videos were shot by Siân Herbert and Sandra Baxter (IDS), and edited by Alice Shaw (IDS) and Alice Webb (IDS).

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Acronyms

CPRD	Country Poverty Reduction Diagnostic
CSOs	Civil society organisations
DFID	Department for International Development
FCAS	Fragile and conflict-affected states
GDP	Gross domestic product
GOM	Government of Mozambique
HD	Human development
HMG	Her Majesty’s Government
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
ICED	Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
K4D	Knowledge for Development programme
LNB	Leave no one behind
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
ODA	Overseas development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
VfM	Value for money
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

Foreword

We hear plenty of news about the remarkable reductions in poverty achieved in recent years and that is good news. But it is still the case that many are not being reached and even in those geographies that have seen such reductions, we know that extra effort and understanding is needed if the poverty gaps are not to stay forever not closed. For example, for infrastructure development it is essential that we understand the reasons why marginalised individuals, families, groups, communities, towns and regions are left behind and that we can do something about this. The need to understand and take appropriate measures was apparent before embarking on this agenda but has recently been compounded by an Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) performance review of transport and urban infrastructure that found DFID was not doing enough in its economic development programmes to reach the poorest and most vulnerable. This learning journey/multi-cadre conference agenda is a start to address that failing.



Mark Harvey
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John Carstensen
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(former) Head of Profession for Social Development

Executive summary

Leaving No One Behind: Perspectives and Directions from DFID Multi-Cadre Conferences



This report is on two DFID multi-cadre conferences that explored how strengthening a development focus on leaving no one behind (LNB) improves the lives of people living in extreme poverty and marginalisation. The conferences brought together over 220 advisers from across the livelihoods, social development, infrastructure, and climate and environment cadres.

The purpose of this report is to share the outcomes and process of the conferences with colleagues in DFID and partner organisations. The conferences provided an innovative and interdisciplinary space for peer learning and led to a shared understanding of how the LNB agenda could be progressed within DFID, with partners and within cadre groups.

LNB is a core commitment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a key priority for DFID, with the UK Government having been a very strong advocate for embedding this concept in the SDGs. The LNB commitment puts people at the centre of international development efforts, with a development focus on extreme poverty, exclusion, stigma, violence and discrimination. However, finding sustainable pathways out of poverty for the extreme poor presents development organisations with profound challenges.

The conferences explored the implications of LNB for economic development, building stability and increasing resilience, with attention to the cross-cutting issues of gender, disability, digital access, and migration. They were innovative in the way they integrated collaborative facilitation processes and visual recording within an overall framework

of scenario analysis. The design aimed to optimise peer-to-peer sharing and learning while working towards a collective understanding of how to accelerate progress on the LNB agenda.

Central to the discussions was the concept of intersectionality, i.e. recognition that extreme poverty and marginalisation must be viewed from the intersection of multiple interacting social, political, and economic factors. In seeking solutions, it makes little sense to focus on one group or one form of exclusion without considering the wider context of interacting forms of exclusion.

In taking the LNB agenda forward, there was a focus on six themes:

1. Disability inclusion;
2. Gender inequality;
3. Infrastructure;
4. Markets, trade, and supply chains;
5. Nutrition; and
6. Digital development.



This report captures the key conclusions on these themes.

The conferences also led to ideas for how the LNB agenda could be strengthened within DFID work processes. These included the importance of working collaboratively across cadres, championing LNB through clearer narratives, creating better guidance on how to translate the concept into practice, managing in uncertain, fragile and complex environments, strengthening the evidence base, and translating the LNB agenda into implications for climate change.

It is worth noting that the two conferences took place at a time when DFID was beginning to develop new strands of work across the government department framed as 'strategic directions'. It is only slowly emerging how these will be taken forward alongside the strategic objectives of the UK aid strategy of 2015.

1. Introduction

Leave no one behind (LNB) is a core commitment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

LNB is a key priority for DFID as it is 'integral to achieving the Global Goals [SDGs], the four strategic objectives of the UK aid strategy, and is in the UK's national interest by creating the conditions for a more secure, sustainable, fairer and prosperous world' (DFID, n.d.a, p.1). A strong advocate for the development and adoption of the LNB concept in the SDGs, DFID understands LNB to mean:

- > Every person counts and needs to be counted;
- > Every person should have a fair opportunity in life no matter who or where they are; and
- > The people who are furthest behind, have least opportunity and are the most excluded must be prioritised (ibid.).

The LNB commitment puts people at the centre of international development efforts, 'shines a light on who benefits from development and who is excluded, and commits us all to address extreme poverty, exclusion, stigma, violence and discrimination' (ibid.). While the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of halving global poverty may have been reached, the remaining +/- 700 million extreme poor, or 10% of the world's population, will remain in extreme poverty and be left behind unless we sharpen a focus on how to design policies and programmes that explicitly and directly target the underlying causes of exclusion and marginalisation. It is clear that those left behind are the hardest and most costly to reach. They are vulnerable to poverty traps and suffer most from shocks related to health issues, climate change, natural disasters, conflict, or economic downturns. Finding sustainable pathways out of poverty for the extreme poor presents development organisations with profound challenges.

To explore how to meet these challenges and to deliver on its commitments, in 2017 and 2018 DFID held two professional development conferences for its advisers that focused on the LNB agenda. These cross-cadre events engaged over 220 advisers and sought to create a shared understanding of LNB challenges and generate practical ideas for how DFID could strengthen its response.

The two conferences were designed and facilitated to optimise dialogue and learning across the thematic cadres and employed a range of innovative approaches to learning and facilitation.



Three core questions underpinned the conferences:

1. How do we currently understand extreme poverty and the concept of leave no one behind? (focusing on experience, data and diagnostics)
2. What is our response? (understanding current ways of working and interventions)
3. What should we be doing differently?

Within the context of LNB and extreme poverty, the conferences focused on implications for:

- > economic development;
- > building stability; and
- > shocks and resilience.

Important cross-cutting issues include:

- > gender;
- > disability;
- > digital development; and
- > migration.

This report summarises the discussions and conclusions from the two conferences.

It aims to profile the LNB and learning agendas by providing a written record to be shared with DFID staff more broadly, Her Majesty's Government (HMG), and other DFID partners. By reflecting on the current understanding and implementation of the LNB agenda, in a participatory and learning-oriented way, it also aims to inspire change to help policymakers better implement this important agenda.

2. The conference approach

The core learning objective of the LNB conferences was to deepen understanding and build consensus and coherence around extreme poverty and the LNB agenda. The conferences provided the time and the space for DFID advisers to explore the evidence around LNB, ask questions, share experiences and formulate ways of improving DFID's approach to LNB.

A range of learning and networking spaces were combined to create a dynamic and highly interactive conference process. The week-long conferences sought to draw on evidence and know-how, with presentations by internal and external experts, breakout sessions, 'cadre clinics', individual reflection time, round-table discussions, plenary forums, training sessions, networking spaces, and 'market stalls'.

A mix of innovative, participative and collaborative facilitation methods were used to structure the conversation and optimise learning (e.g. the 'ritual dissent' exercise).¹ To help capture the content of the conferences, a graphic artist worked with participants to represent key messages and conclusions. Videos were also produced to share conference outcomes. The diversity of spaces, exercises, methods, and ways of capturing the discussions were designed to meet the different learning styles of participants.

Central to the design of the conferences was professional development training on scenario analysis. Delivered by the DFID-funded Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development (ICED) facility,²



Box 1: Organisational learning

The two LNB conferences were part of DFID's wider focus on and investment in organisational learning. As recognised by the 2014 ICAI review on how DFID meets its objectives, there is a need for DFID to constantly improve its organisational learning. In this context the two conferences were considered 'learning journeys', Table A1 on page 38 summarises the success factors for good organisational learning from DFID's Organisational Learning Benchmarking Framework.



¹ <http://cognitive-edge.com/methods/ritual-dissent/>
² <http://icedfacility.org/about/>



Box 2: Scenario training

The objective of the scenario training was to support DFID advisers to think more strategically and in the longer term, and in contexts of uncertainty. The actor-based methodology drew on concepts from game theory, with the underlying assumptions that scenario planning tries to determine how defined actors with clear and identifiable priorities, can be expected to interact with one another in a defined context. The participants applied this to real-life DFID case studies that led to an analysis of the range of possible 'future landscapes', including baseline, best and worst-case scenarios, and to an understanding of what drives change (positive and negative).

the scenario training introduced participants to methods for analysis and planning in complex situations and helped to drive a more critical analysis of the underlying causes of extreme poverty. Scenario training enabled participants to explore how different stakeholders might behave in new and uncertain situations. This led to discussions on the implications for DFID's processes of planning and programming.

The conferences focused on learning across internal networks and included 220³ advisers from the social development, livelihoods, environment and climate, and infrastructure cadres. This presented a valuable opportunity for staff to discuss issues

with colleagues from different cadres, and for colleagues based in different country offices to talk face to face with the UK-based policy teams and researchers. DFID chose this multi-cadre approach in recognition that current development efforts are often hampered by siloed thinking and working practices, and that development challenges require collaborative working across thematic areas. Bringing together the four cadres fostered deeper understanding and relations, and strengthened networks and working across cadres.

The second conference built on the first conference: much was learned from the first event that led to some design changes. The second conference also sought to build on and not just repeat the first conference. This report covers the combined outcomes and conclusions.

The conferences were supported by DFID's Knowledge for Development (K4D) programme.⁴ K4D helped to organise technical input and sessions, provided guidance on learning processes, supported facilitation, and coordinated the graphic recording and documentation of the conferences.



³ 80 advisers attended the November 2017 conference, and 140 attended the February 2018 conference.

⁴ <https://www.ids.ac.uk/k4d>

3. Understanding the LNB agenda

What does LNB mean?

The SDGs have sought to overcome some limitations of the approach to the MDGs. Because the MDGs focused attention on development at the aggregate country level, not enough attention was given to those left in poverty traps due to marginalisation and exclusion. The LNB concept is broad enough to have been adopted by 193 countries in 2015 as part of the SDG agenda, yet this breadth also means the concept can be interpreted in many different ways. To tackle the challenges of those left behind, it is necessary to be clear about who is left behind and why they are left behind – the geographically remote, the hard to reach, the deliberately hidden, the excluded, the

vulnerable, the invisible. Unpacking the dimensions and complexities of LNB became a core theme of the conferences. This led to discussion about the implications for advisers. How do advisers make decisions of who to focus on? How do advisers understand and evaluate the trade-offs? For example, trade-offs in relation to LNB and other policy and strategic priorities – such as value for money, when it may be very expensive to reach the poorest. Or in terms of interventions that are targeted on specific groups vs those that aim for systematic change (see Figure 4 for a summary of DFID advisers' questions about LNB).

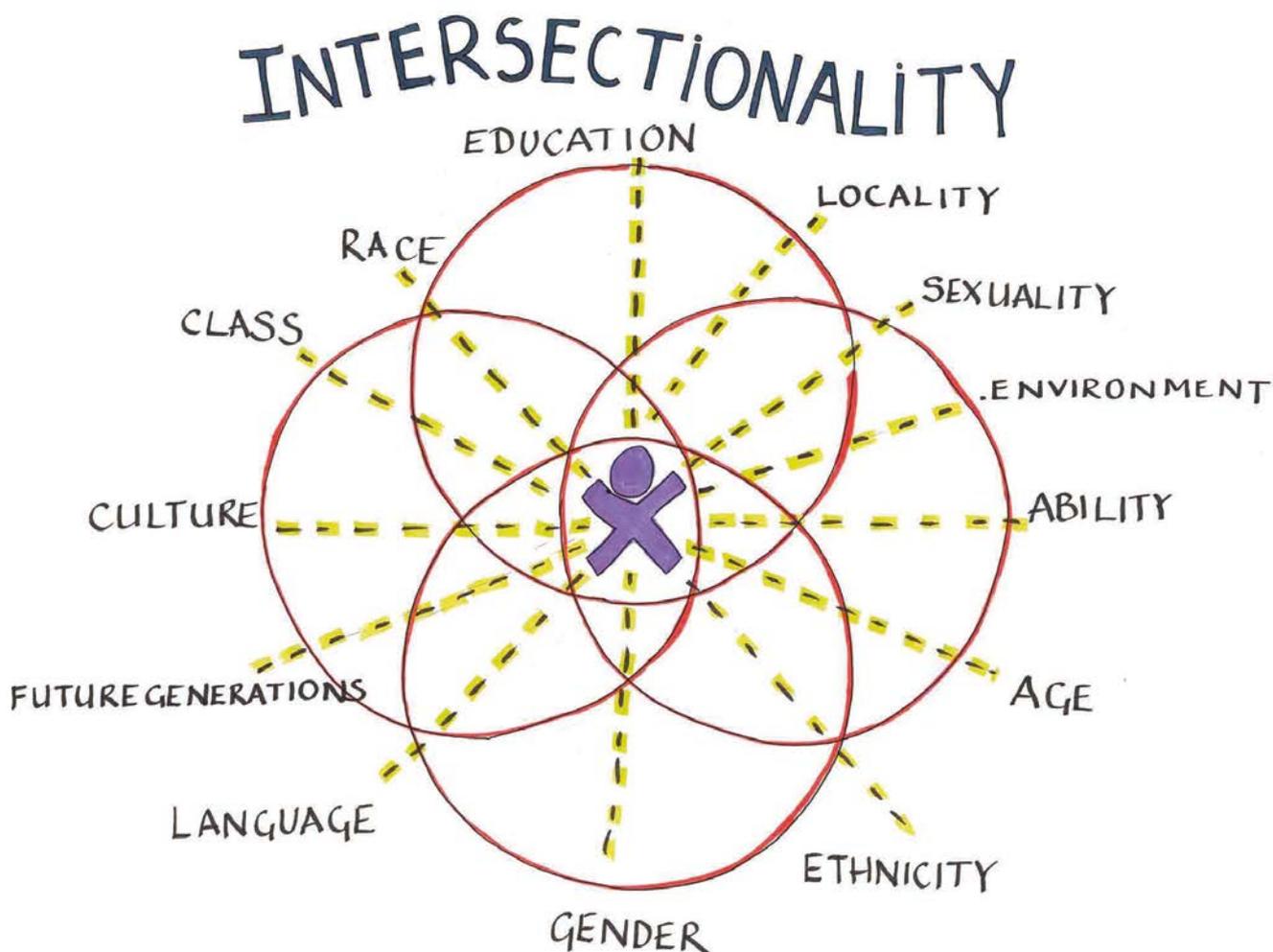
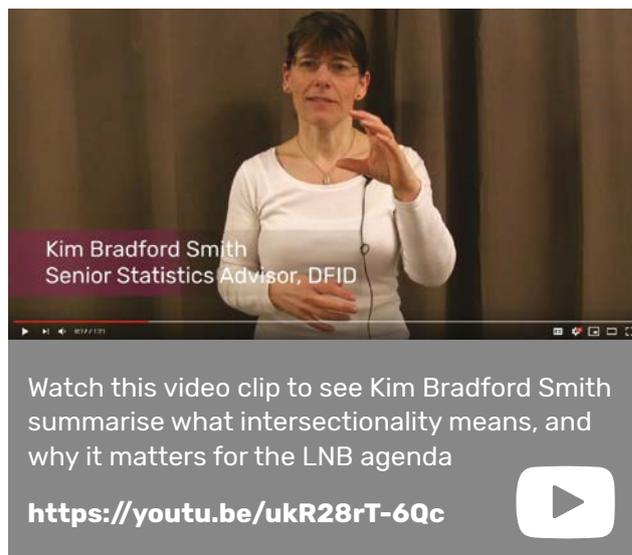


Box 3: Live drawing (graphic recording)

The live drawing (graphic recording) helped participants to visualise the issues and the connections, and to remember what had been discussed. Conference participants engaged directly with the graphic artist, suggesting things to include and how to visualise them, creating a fun and participatory environment. It also promoted teamwork, as some individuals took the lead in designing graphic summaries for their groups. The photos and videos provided visual and audio outputs for the participants to internalise and remember the conference by, and they facilitated the wider dissemination of the messages to people beyond the conference.

Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality was presented as central to LNB, as it explains how the interconnected nature of social categorisations (e.g. gender, ethnic identity, class) intersect to 'create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.'⁵ While the concept of intersectionality can be complicated to communicate, it has been useful in project design and evaluation as an analytical tool to understand the different situations and needs of project beneficiaries. It is important not to oversimplify, but instead to unpack the concept and think about what works for different categories of people who are extremely poor (e.g. those without land, the unemployed).



⁵ Oxford English Dictionary definition of intersectionality: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/intersectionality>

Big picture trends

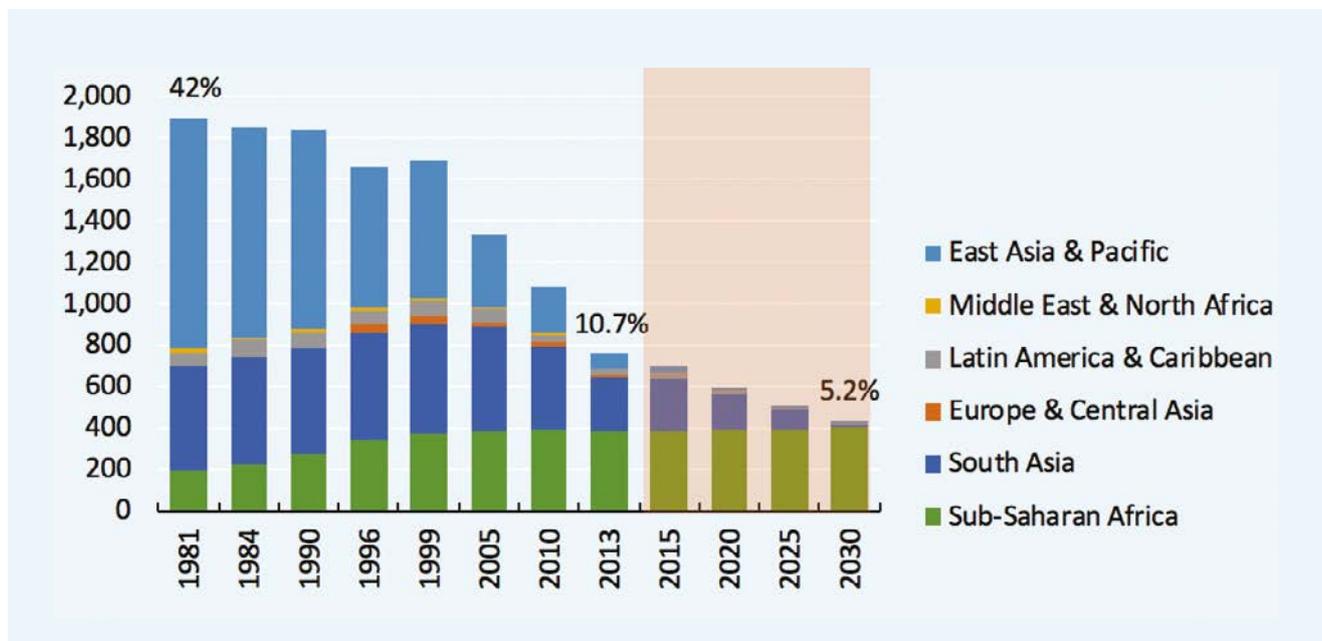
DFID's Deputy Chief Economist, Nick Lea, presented a global context on poverty. Due to the Asian Miracle there has been a striking reduction in extreme poverty. By 2030, the total global poverty headcount is projected to drop to 5% of the population.

However, as Figure 1 shows, there are significant regional differences. In terms of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, relative to the OECD, East Asia is converging, South Asia is on an upward trend but from a low base, and Latin America is falling after being on an upward trend. Strikingly, by 2030 Africa will still have 29% of its population living in

extreme poverty, accounting for virtually all of the global 5%, and critically, 80% of the extreme poor will be living in fragile states. However, extreme poverty only tells part of the story, as within countries inequality is growing.

The huge question is how to tackle extreme poverty and the trade-offs between increases to overall economic growth vs strategies that focus more exclusively on targeting extremely poor or marginalised groups. The challenge is to find win-win strategies in this regard.

Figure 1: The future of extreme poverty – people living under \$1.90 (millions)



Source: Lea (2017)⁶

A challenging perspective on the equity of development was contributed by the 'P20 Initiative', which draws attention to the poorest 20% of the world's population – the estimated 1.4 billion people who live below the international poverty line and face multiple and intersecting deprivations (Development Initiatives, 2017).



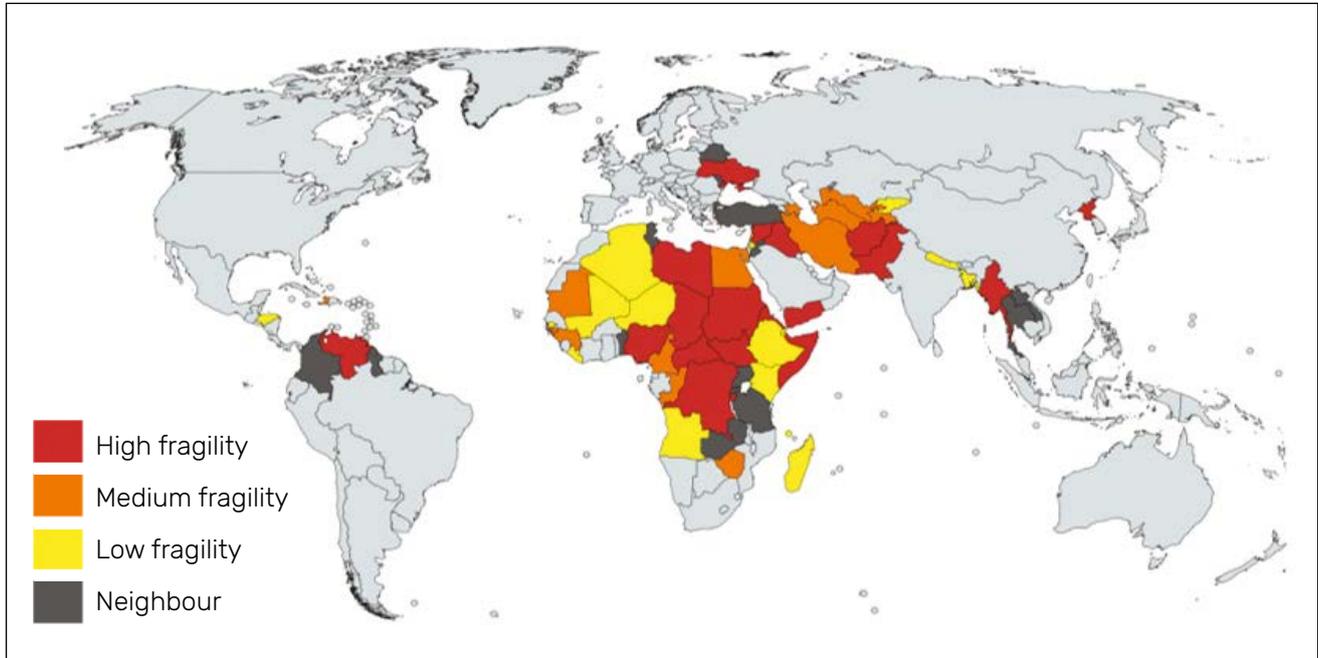
⁶ From *Tackling extreme poverty and leaving no one behind*, PowerPoint Presentation, by N. Lea, 2017, unpublished, based on data from PovCalNet and projections from CEOPP poverty model. © 2017 DFID. Reproduced with permission.

While the proportion of people in extreme poverty is falling (nearly) everywhere, it is increasing in fragile states, especially in Africa (see Figure 2).

Countries in transition still face considerable poverty levels and risks of reversal; however in the future,

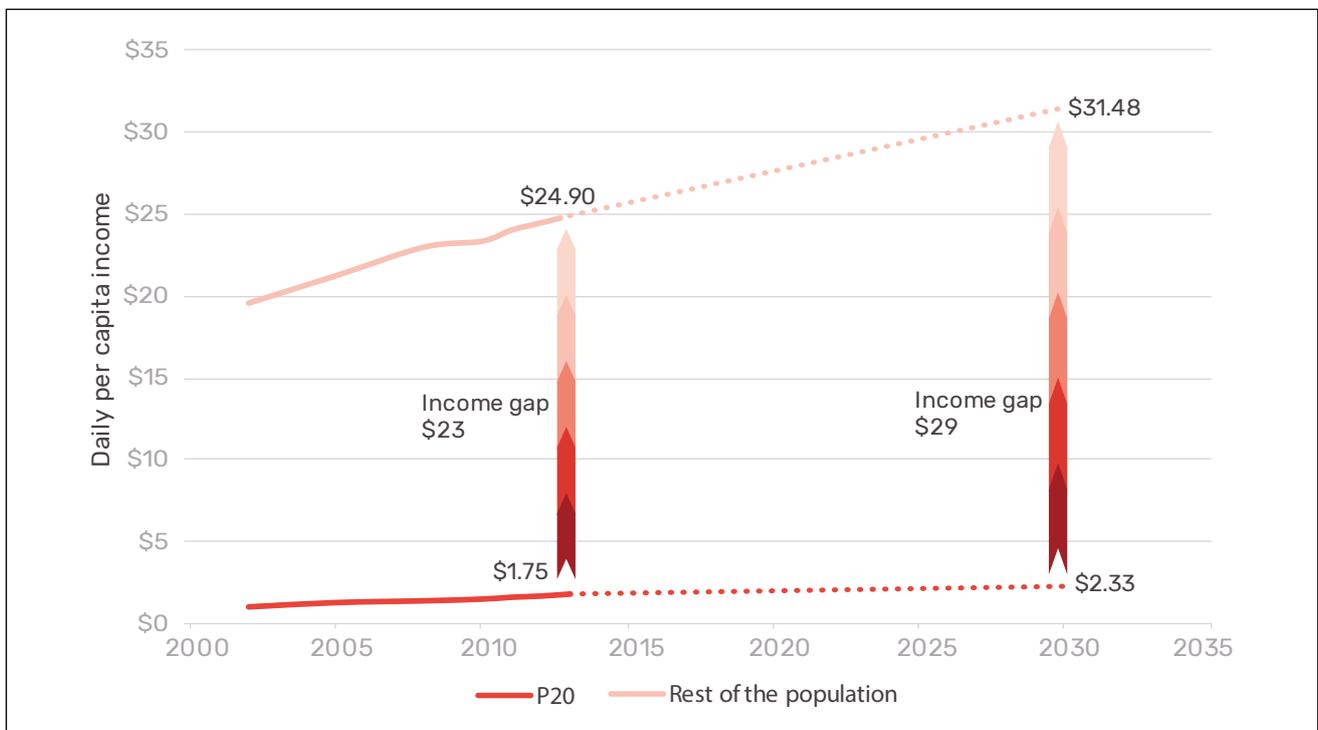
conflict and fragility will become the main reasons for the persistence of extreme poverty (ibid.). Significantly, the gap between the poorest 20% of people and everyone else is getting bigger (see Figure 3) (ibid.).

Figure 2: DFID Fragile States List 2017



Source: Lea (2017)⁷

Figure 3: Past and projected income gap between the P20 and everyone else



Source: Development Initiatives (2017, p.9)⁸

7 From *Tackling extreme poverty and leaving no one behind*, PowerPoint Presentation, by N. Lea, 2017, unpublished. © 2017 DFID. Reproduced with permission.

8 From *The P20 initiative: Data to leave no one behind*, Baseline Report, by Development Initiatives, 2017: <http://devinit.org/post/p20-initiative-data-to-leave-no-one-behind> © 2017 Development Initiatives. Reproduced with permission.

Data

Access to, use of, and the quality of data in uncertain and unpredictable contexts is central to understanding development trends, and who is being left behind. Previously, the emphasis has been on collecting data for donors' own accountability systems, but not on sharing data with other development partners. This has meant that a lot of investment in data collection is wasted, and the data landscape is fragmented. The SDGs provide an impetus for the international system to join up to support data collection at the national level, and data sharing. This data can then be used to inform a government's national priorities, and donors can align around these national priorities. Other sources of data should also be utilised, for example data from the private sector, from civil society organisations (CSOs), and new technologies such as satellite imagery.

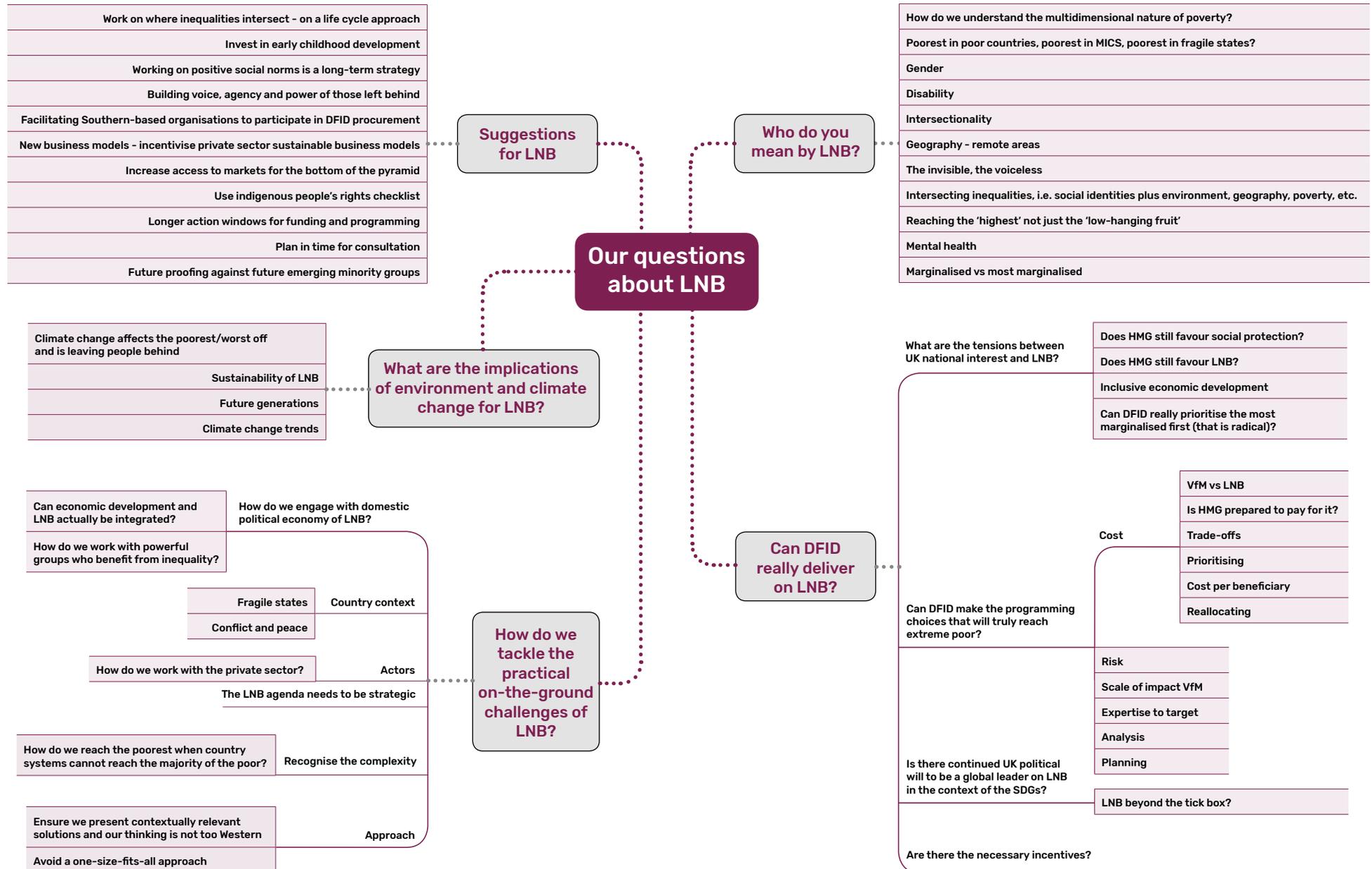
Biased data is much more damaging than poor data, and DFID and other donors should be brave enough to decline the use of biased data. It is important that advisers examine the transparency of how data is produced and the institution producing it. National organisations that oversee data production – looking at the methodologies and



sources of data – are important. There is also the risk of unconscious and conscious bias in DFID's management and collection of data related to projects. The international community needs to be clear when it provides data on where the information came from and how it was gathered. Does DFID need an organisation-wide model or methodology to assess progress on LNB, including analysis at the portfolio level?



Figure 4: Mind map of the conference participants' questions about LNB from conference 2, day 1 (summarised from Post-It notes)



Source: Author's own

The UK's LNB narrative

DFID's LNB framework has three pillars:

 <p>Understand for action Strengthen understanding and analysis of who, where, and why people are being left behind. Improve data capacity and use of disaggregated data to inform decisions, and continue to build evidence of what works in different contexts (as a minimum expectation for all overseas development assistance (ODA) spend).</p>	 <p>Empower for change Empower those people who are furthest behind to be agents of change. Enable their voices to be heard and acted upon and work with others to challenge discrimination and harmful social norms, and promote opportunities to hold governments and implementers to account.</p>	 <p>Include for opportunity Support inclusive growth, institutions, and services. Include people who are furthest behind in development and growth processes, as well as delivering targeted programmes and services to reach populations that are particularly hard to reach.</p>
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Source: Author's own, with text from DFID (n.d.a, p.3)

David Hallam,
Director of Middle East
and North Africa, DFID

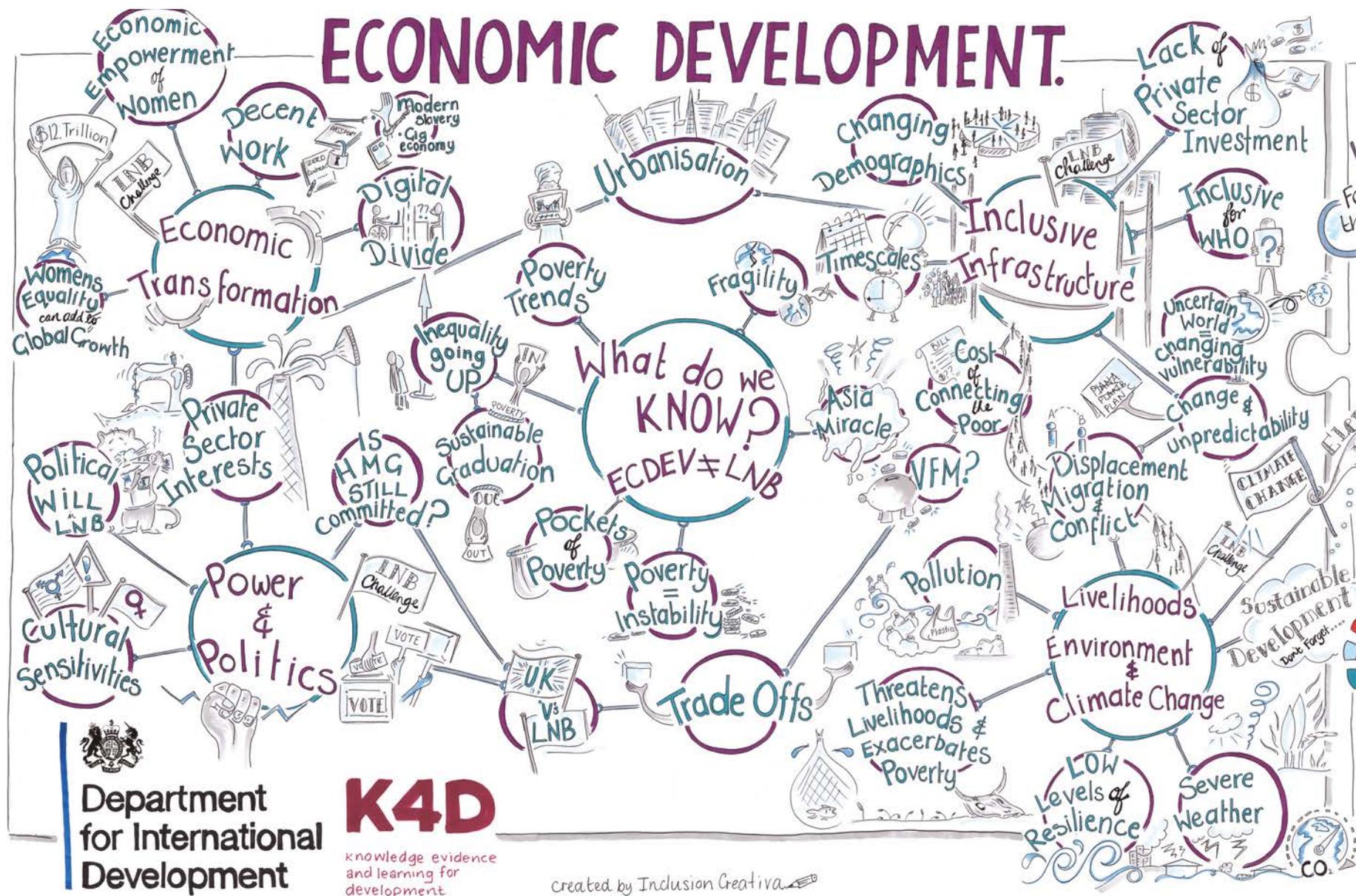


Watch this video clip to see David Hallam explain the opportunities and enablers that DFID has to address extreme poverty

<https://youtu.be/XBXULFPLePU>



4. Critical LNB themes



Economic development

When working on economic development, complex trade-offs include: What is the balance between transformational approaches and poverty alleviation in portfolios? At what point does inequality become excessive for building an inclusive society and for building a middle class that drives a dynamic domestic economy? Which should we target? Should cost-effectiveness be a consideration in poverty alleviation that leaves no one behind?

A key gap was identified: while environmental degradation (e.g. clean air, clean water, clean land) and climate change are key drivers of poverty and marginalisation, and thus central to eradicating extreme poverty and to LNB, development actors tend not to address them. They are too often the 'elephant in the room'.

DFID's economic development strategy (DFID, 2017b) in relation to LNB, includes work on:

- > Tackling gender discrimination and barriers for women;
- > Creating more opportunities for women, the poorest, and excluded groups to access improved jobs, labour rights, and working conditions in high-growth sectors;
- > Continuing work on improving the conditions in the sectors where most of the poor currently work – such as informal micro-enterprises or smallholder and subsistence agriculture; and
- > Working across HMG to end modern slavery and child exploitation.

In responding to the ICAI learning review on inclusive growth in Africa, DFID is (a) enhancing its diagnostic tools (the Country Poverty Reduction Diagnostic (CPRD) and the Inclusive Growth Diagnostic); (b) developing inclusion diagnostics and distributional analysis tools; and (c) interrogating its monitoring, evaluation and results story in more detail, particularly the ability to establish baselines and track progress, and understanding distributional impacts (ICAI, 2017).



Tony Burdon,
Head of Private Sector
Department, DFID

Watch this video clip to see Tony Burdon discuss DFID's opportunities and challenges in tackling extreme poverty in the private sector by 2030 and beyond

<https://youtu.be/ZMr69DvbU2k>



Building stability

Most of the world's extreme poor live in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS), and poverty projections predict that FCAS will have an even greater share of the world's extreme poor in the future. Human development lags behind in FCAS, which tend to be less stable and have particularly negative gendered outcomes. Thus, conflict and fragility is central to the LNB agenda, and this is reflected in the UK Government's commitment to spend 50% of its aid in FCAS. While DFID's interventions in FCAS have been typically humanitarian focused, economic development and development responses are increasingly part of the response (DFID, 2016).

The complexities of LNB in FCAS include: how to manage trade-offs and unintended consequences in balancing LNB and stability; tools/analysis to draw on (e.g. to understand vulnerability in crises); and the different gendered effects and needs in different fragile and conflict-affected contexts.



Patrick Pollard
Economic Adviser, Conflict Humanitarian and Security Department, DFID

Watch this video clip to see Patrick Pollard explain why building stability matters for the LNB agenda

<https://youtu.be/Abbyo0dE69w>



Gender equality

DFID has updated its high-level gender equality strategy (DFID, 2018a), and calls for the international community to step up and deliver its promises on gender equality. It adds women's political empowerment to the DFID focus areas for action; the other focus areas are women's economic empowerment, girls' education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and ending violence against women and girls. The LNB lens means disaggregating women and girls to focus more on marginalised women and girls, and on gender mainstreaming in country offices (e.g. through gender audits and gender reviews).

Shocks and resilience

Building resilience to regional health shocks includes paying attention to infectious diseases and the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance. Inclusion is the key to preventing and mitigating the effects of health shocks, as outbreaks and health emergencies often occur in the most vulnerable, marginalised populations. Better data and understanding of excluded populations, and the barriers to their inclusion, are needed for DFID to target its interventions.

The digital revolution

The digital revolution – especially the rapid expansion of mobile phone use and internet access – presents an unprecedented opportunity to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. However, progress is uneven and is not spreading rapidly enough, so digital exclusion risks leaving many behind. DFID's digital strategy (DFID, 2018b) sets out a series of issues for further investigation:

- > How is digital technology being used in the sectors and contexts in which DFID works?
- > Who is likely to be left behind in a digital world and why?
- > What types of interventions might help tackle barriers to access and use of digital technology?
- > What risks might people face when online?
- > How does this differ for different protected characteristics?



HD & RESILIENCE





Disability

The presentation of DFID's disability framework highlighted that the framework needs updating to be more ambitious (DFID, 2015). This reflects DFID's prioritisation of this issue, and the huge scale of need across the world, and particularly in FCAS (e.g. for every child killed in conflict, a further three are disabled).

At the Global Disability Summit held in 2018, there were four focus areas:

- > Inclusive education;
- > Routes to economic empowerment, including social protection;
- > Assistive devices and technology; and
- > Addressing stigma and discrimination, including violence.

To make progress on these areas, DFID has identified three key enablers: political will; data and evidence; and leadership and representation.

An interesting discussion ensued, with inclusive infrastructure a key theme. In designing services, DFID advisers can start with questions such as: What prevents disabled women from accessing a service? Data disaggregation and evidence are key to informing this.

Migration and modern slavery

An estimated 244 million people worldwide are on the move (3% of the world's population), and in 2017 alone, 170,000 people arrived in Europe across the Mediterranean. Migration is an important area for future UK and EU cooperation, and requires a transnational approach, yet the international response is fragmented. Tackling modern slavery⁹ is part of the UK Government's approach to irregular migration, and is a foreign policy priority. Vulnerability to modern slavery is not an inherent characteristic but is socially constructed, relational, and interacts with drivers such as poverty and environmental degradation. Interventions thus need to be multidisciplinary (e.g. across education, health, social protection and livelihoods) and planned across HMG. LNB considerations need to be built into migration and modern slavery approaches from the beginning.



⁹ See photography of modern day slavery at <https://www.lisakristine.com/shop-image-collection/modern-day-slavery/>

5. LNB in practice

Trailblazers

DFID has set up **four ‘trailblazer’ case study country offices** to pilot and mainstream its LNB approach – DFID Zimbabwe, DFID Rwanda, DFID Nepal, and DFID Bangladesh. Their learning has so far highlighted the following lessons:



Understand for action

- > Collect and share disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data
- > Use LNB data to better target LNB groups in programmes and policies; and
- > Develop tools and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to monitor progress on LNB priorities.



Empower for change

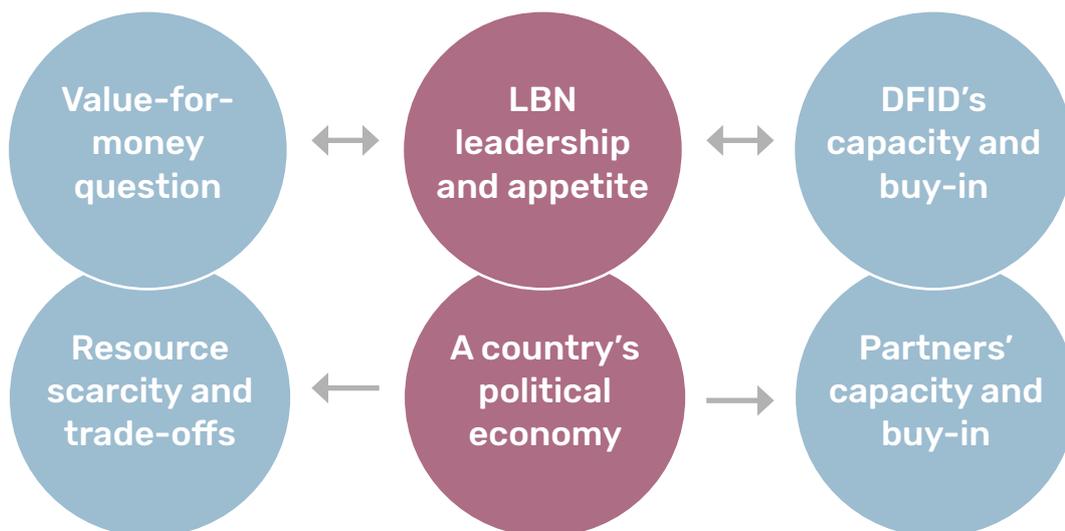
- > Collect and consider feedback from LNB groups to inform programmes and policies;
- > Build local capacity to hold government accountable on LNB issues; and
- > Consider LNB issues and voices in DFID’s reporting.



Include for opportunity

- > Consider LNB-sensitive procurement strategies;
- > Mainstream LNB thinking in DFID teams to create a better office culture;
- > Ensure that LNB groups are targeted in programmes; and
- > Encourage leadership of LNB groups in programmes.

Figure 5: Key strategic challenges



Source: Adapted from Kirsch (2018)¹⁰

¹⁰ From *Leave no one behind (LNB) mainstreaming in practice: DFID’s LNB trailblazer countries*, Powerpoint Presentation by M. Kirsch, 2018, unpublished. © 2018 DFID. Adapted with permission.

Transforming responses to VfM

The LNB agenda now means that equity is a key factor to consider when assessing value for money (VfM) – in terms of the equity of outcomes, outputs, and inputs. This has shifted the conversation from ‘what is the VfM for DFID?’ to ‘what is the VfM for the beneficiaries?’. This means targeting spending on disadvantaged people has a bigger value than spending on more privileged people, as it is about the value the intervention brings to the recipient, not just the brute cost. All DFID business cases now need to set out how they will measure equity, increasing the incentives to include equity experts and to include marginalised groups in the business case.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding people and the environment is an increasingly important issue as the global development community focuses on industry standards and integrity. It is particularly important from a LNB perspective as it is often the extremely poor and marginalised who are most vulnerable to exploitation. DFID is giving significant attention to safeguarding across its programmes and policy influencing work. A recent ICAI report on transport and urban infrastructure gives an example:

In the infrastructure sector, ‘safeguarding’ refers to the protection of communities and the environment from inadvertent harm, for example through acquisition of land, road accidents,

unsafe work practices or the disruption of ecologically sensitive habitats. This also includes protecting vulnerable people from sexual abuse and exploitation, which is a risk in infrastructure projects given the concentration of unaccompanied men at work sites (ICAI, 2018, p.iii).

The same report highlights that:

DFID relies on its multilateral partners to implement appropriate social and environmental safeguards, including protecting beneficiaries from harm. While the department has worked actively at the global level to strengthen multilaterals’ safeguarding policies, it is not active enough in ensuring there is adequate implementation capacity in-country (ibid. p.3).

Challenges identified at the conference include: safeguarding in difficult-to-reach places; resource limitations; what is meant by safeguarding and how it differs (e.g. by organisation or according to national culture); problems with the conflation of political risk and operational risk; the need for support and training to carry it out; safeguarding policies turning into tick-box exercises; and the tendency to thinking of safeguarding as siloed issues (e.g. the current focus on sexual exploitation), rather than holistically.





Graduation approaches¹¹

Insights from five large graduation programmes in Bangladesh have led to a revision of the DFID-Bangladesh graduation model. While the former graduation approach utilised in the DFID programmes has been ‘transformational’, it has been limited by (a) the narrow focus on extremely poor households, which has not been enough to tackle social barriers; (b) ‘graduation’ taking place without education and good nutrition, suggesting a greater role for basic services; and (c) the challenge of how to adapt delivery to tackle poverty churn.

Questions remain such as (a) how to facilitate sustained pathways out of poverty for all – for example, for labour-poor households; (b) how to go beyond the focus on livelihoods in situ to facilitating migration and mobility; and (c) how to connect to national social protection systems as part of an exit strategy.

The new graduation model can provide a bridge between social protection and inclusive growth (bottom-up transformational growth), and is an important intervention in the LNB toolbox.

Keeping the poorest safe in protracted crises

Development and humanitarian actors need to deliver differently in protracted crises to ensure the poorest and most vulnerable are not left behind. DFID must shift how it operates by:

- > Investing through development channels whenever possible, and humanitarian ones only when humanitarian principles cannot otherwise be met;
- > Investing early to preserve and build essential services, shock-responsive social protection systems, and the private sector; and
- > Addressing the economic, social, and political exclusion of marginalised groups (including women and girls, refugees and internally displaced people).

DFID must also shift how it collaborates and designs programmes by:

- > Establishing multidisciplinary teams from the outset – humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding;
- > Engaging with international partners and harnessing funding;
- > Planning early and preparing for future risks;
- > Building in contingencies and using flexible and shock-responsive programming; and
- > Using adaptive programming.

¹¹ The session also screened this short video: CGAP-Ford Foundation (2014) *Graduation approach: creating pathways out of extreme poverty*. Video. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/XWQn2W9ZDvE>

6. Taking LNB forward – key themes

The first conference explored six key LNB themes through cross-cadre groups using the scenario analysis process. Their conclusions are summarised in this section in text, video and graphics.

Disability inclusion

An estimated 800 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live with disability, although the data is very limited. Disability is at the heart of DFID's LNB agenda.

To step up and deliver on disability, three key ideas for DFID were outlined:

- > 'Nothing about us without us' – any programme or policy DFID develops must include disabled people in the design process.
- > Use carrots and sticks to incentivise DFID's programme partners to do more on this agenda – to get better data on disability, to have more inclusive teams, and to ensure the agenda is mainstreamed throughout its work.
- > In anticipation of the 2018 Disability Summit, to get everyone at DFID to make a personal and public pledge to systematically and consistently include disabled people in DFID's work (using the hashtag #IDPWD – International Day of People with Disability).



Watch this video clip to see why disability inclusion matters for the LNB agenda

https://youtu.be/fD6FAa_izNg



Gender inequality

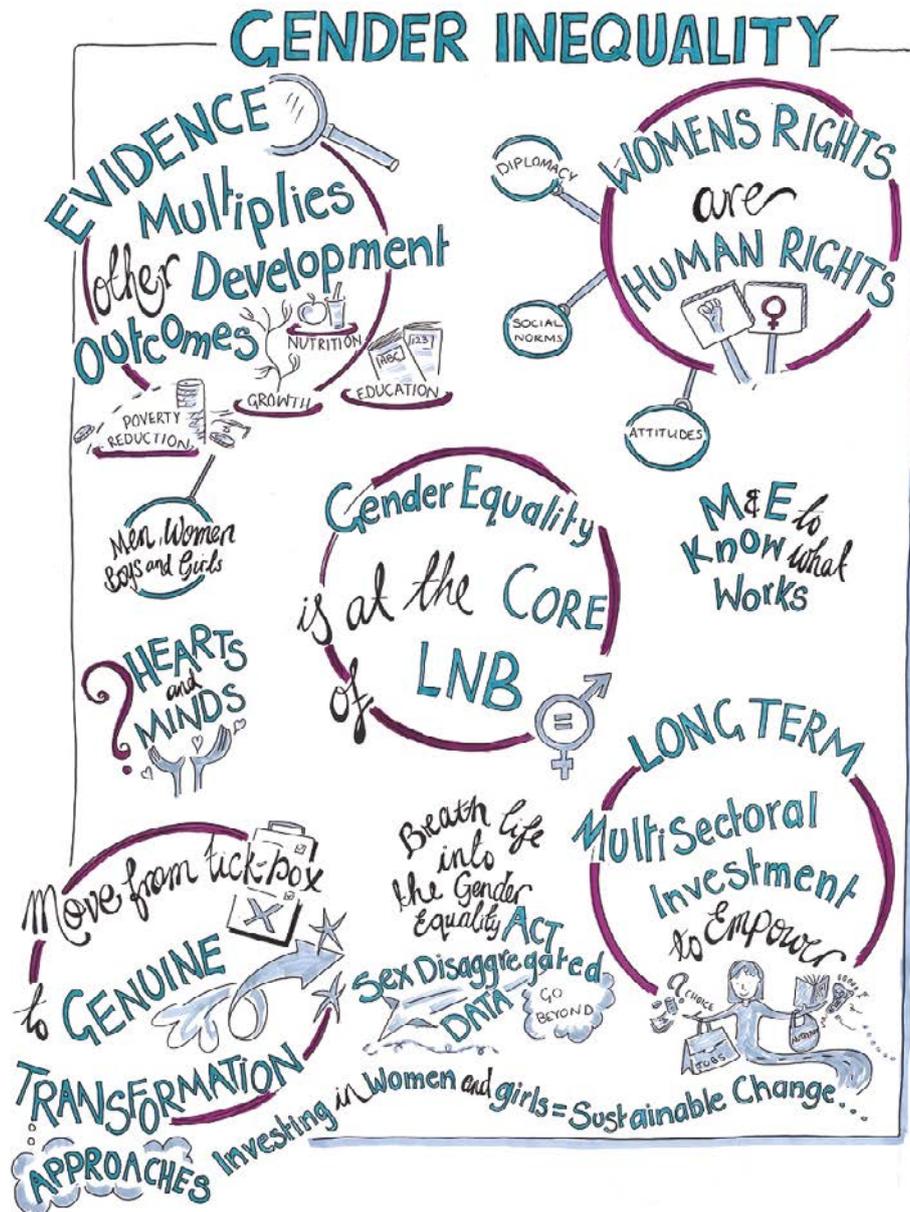
There is a huge body of evidence on the importance of gender equality for other development outcomes – for example, if women and men played an equal role in the economy we could see a 26% increase in GDP; and we know that when women are at the table at peace negotiations, the agreements are more likely to be sustainable and effective. We will not be able to make progress on the LNB agenda without putting women and girls at the centre of those efforts.

For DFID to move beyond its current patchy – sometimes tick box – approach to take a transformational approach to gender equality, it needs to make long-term investments across multiple sectors. For example, interventions in education and health also need to address infrastructural needs and the needs of women in the economy.



Watch this video clip to see why gender inequality matters for the LNB agenda

<https://youtu.be/IBrgVIIbMxw>



Infrastructure

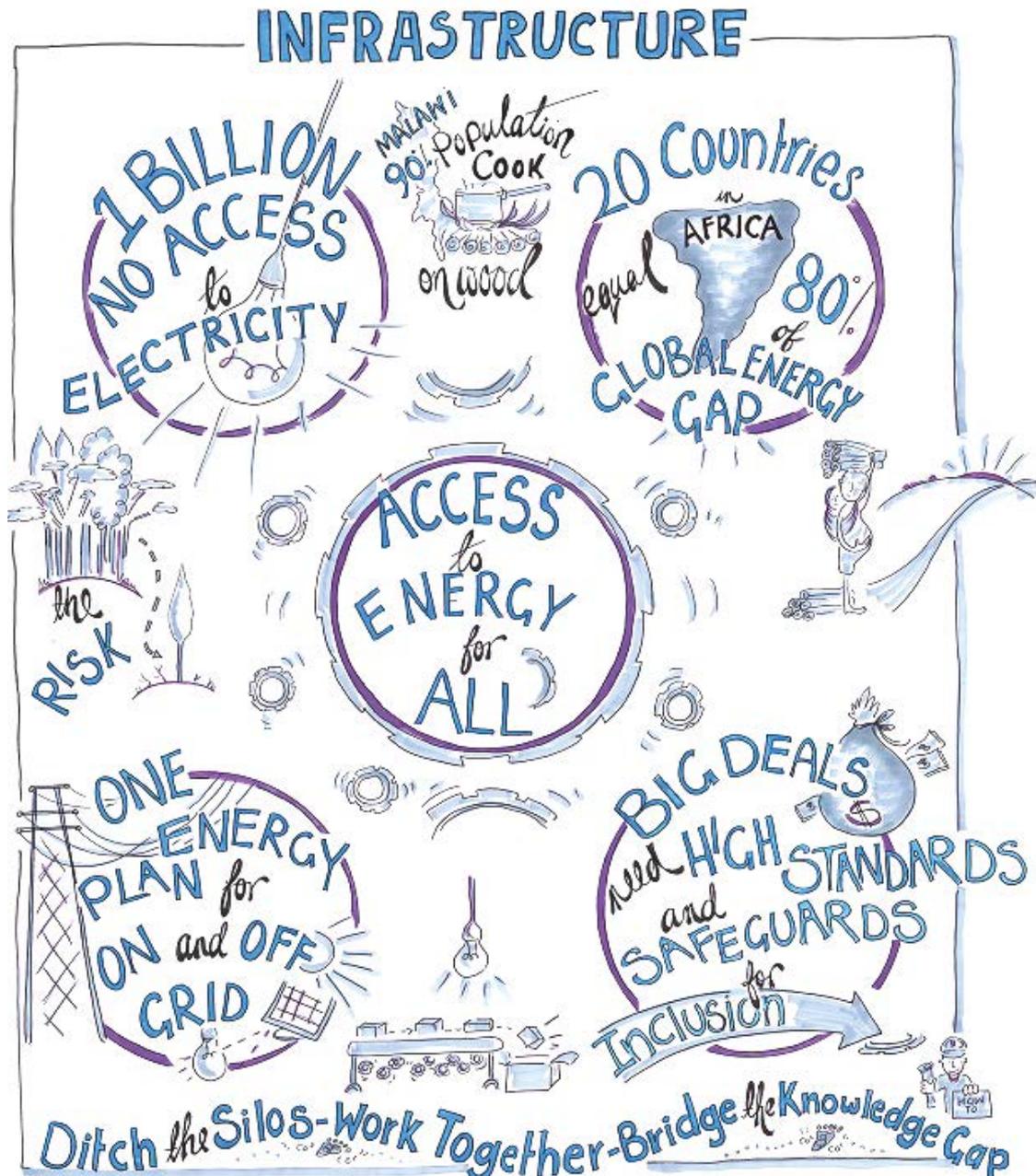
Eighty per cent of the global challenge to ensure access to energy for all is located in just 20 countries in sub-Saharan Africa – for example in Malawi, 90% of the population cook with wood, which increases the risk of deforestation. Energy is a crucial element and vehicle for achieving many of the SDGs, particularly those linking to economic growth, climate, health, and other sectors.

In aiming to reach the most vulnerable, DFID needs a holistic and integrated approach that combines a mix of on-grid and off-grid projects across its portfolios. Important areas to address are: including the most vulnerable in discussions about where the grid is extended to; ensuring high standards and safeguarding in energy projects; and addressing the huge data gap. Their conclusion was: 'Ditch the silos, work together, bridge the knowledge gap'.



Watch this video clip to see why infrastructure matters for the LNB agenda

<https://youtu.be/SBdsTFYN988>



Markets, trade, and supply chains

In protracted humanitarian crises, development and humanitarian responses often focus on essential short-term needs (through in-kind transfers), yet they do not link up to longer-term needs – for example, those that might focus on markets, trade, and supply chains.

To meet this challenge, DFID should focus on planning and coherence at the portfolio level, and at the country business-plan level, to develop an approach that combines in-kind transfers with work to develop markets, addressing both short- and long-term needs. This means that not every programme and business case would have a direct impact on the extreme poor within the programme time frame, but the impact would be understood as part of a bigger picture with the ultimate aim of transformational change.



Watch this video clip to see why markets, trade, and supply chains matter for the LNB agenda

<https://youtu.be/tlTAqKrgBul>



Nutrition

One in three of the world's population suffers from some form of malnutrition. The impact is lifelong and intergenerational – children who are stunted are less able to learn and are less productive as adults. Better nutrition underpins many of the SDGs but equally, to achieve nutritional outcomes we need progress on almost all of the SDGs. Three focus areas for DFID were identified:

- > Malnutrition in fragile and conflict-affected areas – especially those countries where malnutrition is projected to get worse;
- > Externally – maintaining DFID's global leadership role on nutrition; and
- > Internally – with sustained leadership and nutrition champions making sure that nutrition is at the heart of DFID's efforts to reach the SDGs.



Watch this video clip to see why nutrition matters for the LNB agenda

<https://youtu.be/OxAa5dMAxbl>



Digital development

Seven out of 10 people worldwide own a mobile phone, and many already have internet access. Digital technology presents one of the greatest opportunities of our time to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. Yet pre-existing marginalisation intersects with digital inclusion, and thus the digital divide is increasing in many areas of the world – for example, women in sub-Saharan Africa are 25% less likely than their male counterparts to access the internet.

To make progress on this agenda, it was suggested that DFID engages through multi-stakeholder relationships (with the private sector, civil society, national governments and donors) to articulate the LNB agenda. It can also play a role in the data revolution to understand who is digitally excluded and why.



Watch this video clip to see why digital development matters for the LNB agenda

<https://youtu.be/b0HQfJGH48E>



7. Taking LNB forward – embedding in DFID work processes

Building on the first conference, the second conference concluded by looking at how the LNB agenda could be strengthened in DFID's operations and work processes. The conclusions were shared with a representative of DFID's Executive Committee Office (ExCO) on the last day of the conference.

The two conferences took place at a time when DFID was developing a set of new 'strategic directions' that will complement the strategic objectives of the UK aid strategy of 2015. There is an opportunity to explore the implications of the LNB agenda for each of the new strategic directions.

Championing the LNB agenda through a LNB narrative that works for all

Issue

LNB has multiple drivers and impacts, so an interdisciplinary approach based on collaborative working and understanding across cadres and across the UK Government is essential. Better collaboration can help overcome siloed working and thinking: to do no harm, to manage risk, to maximise impact, and to leverage value and influence.

The importance of working collaboratively is well recognised in DFID, and has been stressed by the ICAI. However, day-to-day pressures and existing organisation structures remain a barrier. Management leadership, along with allocating the necessary time, space, and resources, is necessary to strengthen the depth of collaborative work needed for LNB.

Ideas for action

- > Develop an incentives framework for staff to have the time and space for greater collaborative working. Unpack further the role of incentives to understand better how to operationalise, and how to prioritise collaborative learning and working.
- > Focus on issues that present easy ways to collaborate, and where people can get traction. Analyse cases where cadres already collaborate well on a LNB agenda to understand what is happening and what can be built on – for example joint analyses, joint learning, joint events, and joint diagnostics,¹² perhaps at the country level, or through joint units.
- > Communicate these new ways of working – the tools, resources, and language – to build legitimacy for this agenda and to influence senior management.
- > Mainstream cross-cadre and cross-HMG working in everyday programme management.



¹² These conferences pre-dated the DFID Commission on Country Development Diagnostics, and there has now been progress on this recommendation to strengthen interdisciplinary working on analysis and diagnostics.



Championing the LNB agenda through a LNB narrative that works for all

Issue

While the LNB agenda has strong DFID backing, the concept is not always well understood and there is a need to better embed LNB thinking and practice in the work of programming, policy, and research teams. This requires strong champions at country and headquarters level. In turn, a clearer narrative about LNB is necessary to enable the practical benefits and implications to be more easily communicated. There is a need to encourage context-specific understanding of exclusion and the deeper causes of why people are left behind.

Ideas for action

- > Unpack the LNB strapline – create specific LNB narratives for each cadre so they can engage and contextualise LNB in their work, and have clarity in their communication.
- > Move the debate on LNB into the core of the work of all cadres, rather than it being seen as largely a social development issue.
- > Use evidence thoughtfully to show the complexities of the challenges and a fuller picture, not just a particular agenda/view. Use good quality data to elucidate those benefiting, the gaps, and the counterfactuals.
- > Design in an equity approach to programming right at the start – for example, inclusive education and infrastructure.

- > Be wary of trade-offs becoming an excuse not to engage with LNB.
- > Review who should 'own' the LNB agenda and embed it across DFID through leadership, capability building, and systems.
- > Ensure LNB is explicitly linked to 'equity' in the VfM analysis.

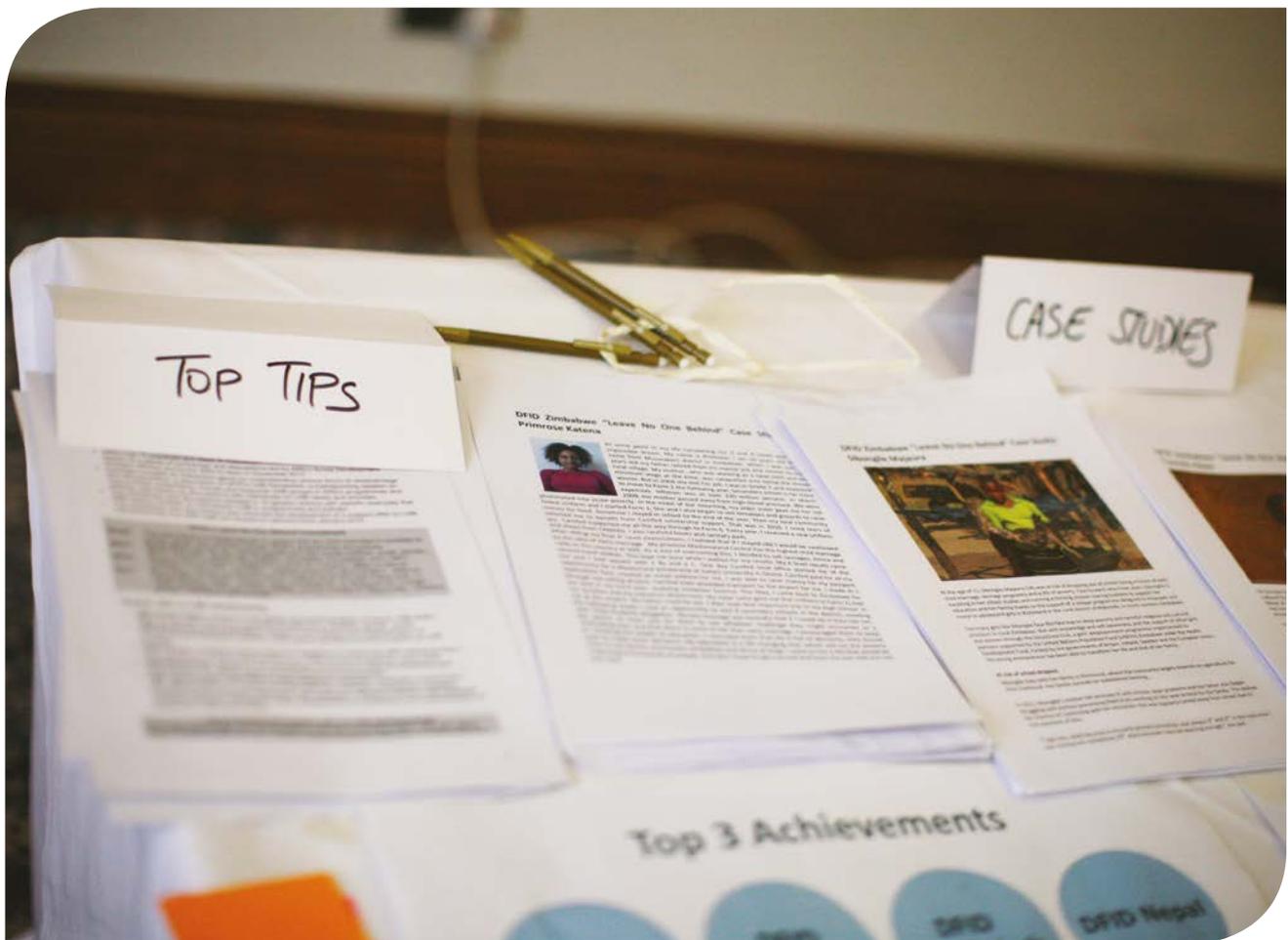
From rhetoric to reality, translating LNB into practical reality through clear guidance

Issue

To make the LNB concept operational, and to make real progress on this agenda, clear guidance is needed as to what to prioritise, with an elaboration of the costs, choices, and trade-offs involved. This needs to avoid reductionist approaches to LNB which focus on particular excluded groups without a context-specific understanding – for example, disability inclusive programming is not just about including people with disabilities.

Ideas for action

- > Have a clear discussion about, and position on, the choices that LNB presents in a given situation, and the expected results (e.g. the number of beneficiaries, the extent of marginalisation targeted, or the ease of access required). Work out how to incentivise reaching those left furthest behind.
- > Better integrate and consolidate LNB in critical organisation-wide strategies (e.g. on economic



development, conflict/stability, the Africa strategy, etc.), and potentially in portfolio-wide approaches to support better consideration and cohesion of LNB choices.

- > Better integrate and consolidate LNB in critical organisation-wide strategies (e.g. on economic development, conflict/stability, the Africa strategy, etc.), and potentially in portfolio-wide approaches to support better consideration and cohesion of LNB choices.
- > Focus and coordinate research efforts on defining opportunity costs. Improve internal and external analysis, communication and guidance around trade-offs.
- > At the programme level, consider capturing the tensions in reaching the most marginalised, and the choices that may need to be made.

Dynamism, uncertainty, and future proofing

Issue

How can we plan and programme effectively for LNB given uncertainty, change, and fragility? How can

we understand and evaluate short- and long-term trade-offs, so we can respond flexibly to shocks?

Ideas for action

- > Develop digital tools for modelling, analysis, and scenario planning.
- > Increase the flexibility in spending targets, for example spreading resource allocation over a longer time frame to better manage shocks.
- > Carry out LNB scenario planning at multiple levels – for example programme, country office, regional and global – and integrate explicit LNB scenarios, issues, and trade-offs into planning.
- > Develop systems to continually monitor, review, and adjust country/spending departments that are specific to LNB action plans/strategies through a VfM lens.
- > Develop cross-sector strategies and programming with a focus on making LNB more effective than individual approaches – for example with better VfM, there is more scope for managing uncertainty and dynamism.

Strengthen the evidence, data, and evaluation on LNB

Issue

DFID's commitment to LNB needs to be backed up with better quantified analysis of who is being left behind, who is benefiting from interventions, and the impact of these efforts. Data is needed to demonstrate progress on the LNB agenda, disaggregated according to their impacts on the quantity and/or status of people supported, and to understand the trade-offs and impacts (*vis-à-vis* sustainability and VfM).



Ideas for action

- > Develop an organisation-wide methodology and tools (data driven) for: understanding and assessing LNB factors in the local context; baseline assessment; an organisational systems approach to measuring progress on LNB; diagnostics that reflect intersectionality; and agreed metrics for measuring LNB progress.
- > Organise multi-country discussions to evaluate LNB.
- > Develop guidance on how to understand and manage trade-offs between LNB and VfM.
- > Develop a mechanism to track and share evidence of what works between country offices, programmes, and cadres.
- > Develop a methodology that identifies whether a situation is one of disadvantaged individuals within a functioning community, or whether the community itself is unable to thrive.



8. Participants' comments on the conferences

Conference participants were invited to offer their reflections in a session at the end of each conference, and in a post-conference survey. Generally, people were very positive about the interactive nature of the event, the use of graphic recording, and the opportunities for in-depth cross-cadre engagement. There was also appreciation for how scenario analysis can open up new perspectives and questions. Some of the individual reactions are given below.

What was your favourite moment?

'The shocks and resilience session was well designed and facilitated'

'Getting into live problems that DFID offices are dealing with'

'In-depth discussions with cadre advisers over dinner covering world events, dealing with conflict, service delivery, log-frames and project implementation'

'Meeting and working with colleagues from other cadres, sharing knowledge and ideas had great value.'

What learning needs have you identified that now need to be addressed?

'The session on LNB in the context of economic development was very revealing. My area of need is to understand how to influence economists to prioritise the extreme poor and small-scale production in their work'

'I need to be more open to other cadres – I feel that I lack knowledge on climate, which is crucial for the future of our progress'

'How to act more politically, both in ring-fencing LNB and the poverty-eradicating work at the home front, and to be a lot more evidence based and less predictive in our work in-country, including anything more politically smart.'



9. Annexes

Annex 1.1 – Organisational learning

Table A1: The success factors for good organisational learning

Culture and leadership	Skills and capabilities	Tools and systems
<p>Learning as a strategic investment:</p> <p><i>Be clear this is a corporate priority and will help the organisation maximise its impact</i></p> <p><i>Invest time and resources to support organisational learning and track improvements</i></p>	<p>Engagement and commitment:</p> <p><i>This is everyone's responsibility</i></p> <p><i>Positive recognition for those doing well</i></p> <p><i>Build staff capability: to use evidence and know-how, to apply collaborative learning practices and help others to do this</i></p> <p><i>Surge support</i></p>	<p>Evidence-based decision-making:</p> <p><i>Be clear on evidence used to inform decisions (knowledge and know-how)</i></p> <p><i>Watch out for optimism bias, and be clear when we do not have enough evidence</i></p> <p><i>Identify and target priority gaps</i></p>
<p>Stakeholder involvement:</p> <p><i>Involve a wide range of partners in our learning efforts – learn from them, share what we learn, joint approaches</i></p> <p><i>Avoid groupthink: diversity, external challenge</i></p>	<p>Making it safe to learn:</p> <p><i>Protect time and space for learning</i></p> <p><i>Encourage people to talk about what is not working as well as what is. Learn from mistakes, do not just move on</i></p>	<p>Learning is embedded in the delivery process:</p> <p><i>Systematic not sporadic</i></p> <p><i>Requires collective effort</i></p> <p><i>New ways of working</i></p>
<p>Leadership role modelling:</p> <p><i>Open debates</i></p> <p><i>Ask the questions: What have you learnt?</i></p> <p><i>Have you shared this? What do you not know? How can we help?</i></p>	<p>Leadership in connected networks:</p> <p><i>Connections not collections: communities of practice (internal and external)</i></p> <p><i>Build demand not just supply iterative approaches</i></p>	<p>Systems for capturing and sharing lessons:</p> <p><i>Primary focus on people/networks</i></p> <p><i>Fit for purpose technology (support collaborative working, smart searching, portfolio data, institutional memory)</i></p>

Source: Adapted from DFID (n.d.b, p.3).

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