

Informing Post-2015 Development with Ground Level Knowledge

Ground Level Panels with people living in poverty and marginalisation are calling for a new vision for development post-2015 that ensures equal opportunities and equity for everyone by guaranteeing fundamental human rights. Citizens need the power to shape the decisions that affect their lives and decision-makers must be transparent and accountable for their (in)actions and build meaningful relationships with the public. A post-2015 framework must be informed by local communities' experiences of poverty, insecurity and exclusion and means for implementation, indicators and goals should reflect the need to challenge the social norms amongst formal and informal institutions that perpetuate discrimination.

Ground Level Panels explained

By holding four Ground Level Panels (GLPs) in Egypt, Brazil, India and Uganda, the *Participate* initiative created a much-needed space for people living in poverty and marginalisation to deliberate on a new vision for development post-2015. The GLPs brought together a diverse group of participants in terms of age and identity to share their individual and common experiences of poverty and exclusion. The GLP deliberations were based on the proposals of the UN High Level Panel on Post-2015, but their recommendations speak to a 'grounded' vision of development. They provide a unique insight into how 'development' is experienced, what needs to change, and how change must happen if it is to be sustainable.

Visions for transformative development

The GLPs outlined several key areas of change for their vision of transformative development to be met, including:

1 Empowering governance for all

Empowering governance ensures people from marginalised groups are able to participate meaningfully in all domains of society with equal rights as citizens: individual and collective capacities are strengthened to mobilise and effect change. For Ugandan and Brazilian GLPs, civil society was seen as a supportive broker between people and decision-makers. All GLPs demanded a corruption-free society and state where the rule

of law is enforced fairly and governments and leaders are responsive to their (in)actions.

2 Human rights for all

The fulfilment of all human rights for those living in extreme poverty and marginalisation underpins the vision of dignity for all proposed by the GLPs. This means recognising social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights, and the interconnected nature of these rights. The panellists outlined rights to food, work, education, health, housing, access to land, political freedoms and economic security. Indian panellists called for a new framework to address the hidden barriers that prevent people from realising these rights.

3 Peace, safety and security at all levels

Peaceful methods that respect human rights should be used to resolve violent conflict within and between countries. This is a pre-condition for good governance. Panellists outlined different forms of violence that break down the social fabric of society. The panel in India stressed the significance of gendered violence in relation to discrimination within public spaces, and families.

4 Holistic approach

For panels in Uganda and Brazil, all areas of development are connected. People, the environment and government bodies all depend on each other. A holistic approach must see citizens involved in determining their future.

5 Equality and equity in opportunities

Equality of opportunity was central in all GLPs' discussions and they particularly emphasised gender equality and the empowerment of women. For India's panel the state has an important role in promoting equity, to ensure a fair starting point for all. People's identities should be respected and discrimination based on 'caste, language, disability, sexual orientation, gender, age, religion and region' must end, ensuring social integration.

6 Fair and secure livelihoods

Ugandan and Egyptian panellists called for more investment in relevant jobs and the skills to access them, and support for small

businesses to innovate and access markets. Panels in India and Brazil viewed the current economic system as exploitative and demanded systems that protect workers' rights, providing meaningful social protection mechanisms.

7 Self-sufficiency and agency

The message of self-sufficiency was important across all of the GLPs, although most clearly from Egypt. Dependencies between countries and on the private sector should be minimised. The Indian and Ugandan panels called for investors to support and protect the interests of communities in which they work, particularly where natural resources are the basis of business.

Policy recommendations

The GLPs made the following practical recommendations for turning their 'vision into action':

- **Local, national and international institutions must place meaningful participation at their core.** Views and opinion from marginalised sections of society should be sought and acknowledged, and citizens should have the power to influence decision-making processes.
- **Truly inclusive, community-led monitoring processes must be established.** The independent, participatory, ground-level monitoring of a post-2015 framework is crucial.
- **Indicators must reflect the barriers to access and underlying discriminatory practices that perpetuate poverty and marginalisation.** Egyptian panellists called for the inclusion of qualitative indicators that are set by citizens.
- **Institutions, governments and the private sector should increase transparency and access to information** of their decisions and actions to ensure that people can understand their basic rights and hold them accountable.
- **Mechanisms and spaces available to formally claim rights and seek redress must be transformed.** These are currently inaccessible to the poorest, since their legal empowerment is limited.



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Further reading

Participate initiative Ground Level Panel Synthesis Report (2013), www.participate2015.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/GLP-Synthesis-Report.pdf

A New Global Partnership: Eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development. The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (2013) http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf

Visions for development from the Ground Level Panels: <http://bit.ly/17oTMtX>

Digital story of Sabah Roman Karam, Egyptian Panellist: <http://vimeo.com/70297163>

Information on the *Participate* initiative: www.participate2015.org

Authorship

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The briefing is based on opinions expressed in the final communiqués of the four Ground Level Panels that were hosted by the *Participate* initiative. The initiative aims to provide high quality evidence on the reality of poverty at ground level, bringing the perspectives of the poorest into the post-2015 debate.

The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IDS.

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