

Empowering People in Achieving Poverty Eradication, Social Integration, Decent Work and Full Employment for All

**NGO Committee for Social Development
represented by**

International Movement ATD Fourth World

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**We are having a
conversation on
empowerment of people,
without inviting any of the
people we are talking about.**



Towards Sustainable Development that Leaves No One Behind

The Challenge of the Post-2015 Agenda

Working Paper - June 2013



Empowerment

- Definition?
- Empowerment vs. Disempowerment
- Dehumanization is disempowering

Framework

- i. Ensure that social, economic, political and legal **institutions are open and inclusive**;
- ii. Build **human and social capital to strengthen capacity for effective participation** and give individuals and the groups to which they belong a voice; and
- iii. Actively **promote participation** by, inter alia, addressing discrimination.

“Participation is not merely a means to an end (e.g. poverty reduction) ... **It is a fundamental right to which individual are inherently entitled by virtue of their humanity...** Participation provides an opportunity for people living in poverty to be **active agents of their own destiny**; thus, it is fundamentally important to reclaiming **dignity.**”

-Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights (2013),
Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona

A little more on participation

“Incomplete participation is better than no participation”

-Anonymous



Participation can be Disempowering

- When we practice participation simply to say we did, people:
 - Lose time
 - Lose trust
 - Lose confidence in their capacity to exercise agency
 - Fear being used in the future

“People living in poverty and vulnerable groups must be **empowered** through organization and participation in all aspects of political, economic and social life...”

-Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, 1995

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Participation Done Correctly

- Not forced
 - Clear intentions
 - Adequate time
 - Designed with people
 - Unite people without judgment
 - Build trust through presence
 - Representatives must
- report back
 - Recognize existing inequalities (reach the most excluded)
 - Regular evaluations
 - Avoid marginalizing language
 - *Legal framework*
 - *Awareness*



Back to the Supply-Demand Nexus

i) How can we make sure institutions are open and inclusive (ready to accept participation)

- First, end extractive consultations

States Can: Ensure Equal Protection Under Law

“If you are insulted or abused in the street because you are black, Jewish or disabled, you can make a complaint because there is a law that exists, and the police will listen to you. But if you are insulted and abused in the streets because you are begging, you cannot make a complaint because there is no law for that”

-French Participant

States Can: Use a Legal Framework for Participation

“States must ensure the active, free, informed and meaningful participation of persons living in poverty at all stages of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of decisions and policies affecting them”

-Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, 2012

- There are others: WSSD, national-level, etc.
- Public service delivery is a good place to start

States Can: Implement ILO Recommendation 202

- Social Protection Floors
- We should add, participation of people living in poverty in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SP schemes

States Can: Implement Transparency & Accountability Measures

- Establish Safe and Transparent complaints procedures
 - Particularly when it comes to public service delivery and human rights

“Being able to say ‘let me speak to your supervisor’, that’s a powerful thing to say.”

-Person Living in Poverty, USA

States Can: Focus on the *Delivery* of Public Services

- Awareness-raising training to challenge taboos and stereotypes
- Building empathy

Supply Side:

ii) What can we as stakeholders do to strengthen the capacity for people to participate?

Stakeholders Can: Expand Rights Education and Awareness Campaigns

“We do not have sufficient knowledge of our rights that are violated. We need:

- Raising education and awareness on citizens’ rights and responsibilities...”

- Participants in Madagascar

Stakeholders Can: Improve Education

- Eliminate discrimination in schools

“It is not easy for a child to express herself or to study hard due to the mockery of a classmate or even of the teacher because of where you live. Even though we are living in the cemetery, we have the same dreams of becoming a teacher, doctor, lawyer, etc. as everyone else.”

-Mother from Bolivia

Stakeholders Can: Improve Education

- Create a conducive environment for parents—including those who live in poverty—to be partners in their children's education.

Stakeholders Can: Improve Education

- Take the community's context into account:

“In May, I take my children out of school to help on the farm. I do it because we must be able to eat in order to send the children to school the following year.”

-Father from Burkina Faso

Stakeholders Can: Improve Education

- Eliminate hidden costs to education:
 - Transportation
 - Uniforms
 - Supplies
 - Etc.



Stakeholders Can: Practice True Participation

- Take time to know the community and build trust
- Sisters of the Good News in the Philippines

Stakeholders Can: Expand Civil Registration

- Citizenship is a basic form of ‘empowerment’
- UNICEF’s *Good Practices in Integrating Birth Registration into Health Systems (2010)*
 - “Enhance the focus on socially excluded children”

Beyond the Supply-Demand, how can we promote participation?

Address Discrimination and Stigmatization Against People Living in Poverty

“That people disrespect us by calling us names like ‘social case’, ‘bad mother’, ‘incapable’, ‘good for nothing’ demonstrates how they are judging us and do not know the reality we face. We experience the **violence** of being discriminated against, **of not existing**, not being part of the same world, **not being treated like other human beings.**”

-Person Living in Poverty, France



“Why didn’t you shower you pig?”

-Person Living in Poverty, Bolivia

“Extreme poverty engenders a fear, a shame in people, doubts that stop them from expressing themselves when they should.”

-Person Living in Poverty, Madagascar

Discrimination

1. Prevents access to available resources and services
2. Silences people and preventing their participation

“Stigma supplies the world view for marginalization by **‘legitimizing’** the process of setting up and perpetuating an — ‘us and them’ divide, and through the devaluation and **dehumanization** of those seen as being outside the —us...

Stigma gives rise not only to discrimination, but also to a range of other human rights violations, both of economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights, underscoring the indivisibility of all human rights.”

-Catarina de Albuquerque, UN Special
Rapporteur on the right to safe drinking water
and sanitation

Effective Partnerships

- Civil society, government, and people living in poverty can create robust partnerships that improve participation and counteract the process of disempowerment
 - ATD Fourth World programs in Belgium facilitate the creation of spaces for people living in poverty to speak to legislative bodies.
 - caveat

Human Rights

- Align development targets and their implementation processes with human rights norms and standards using the **UN Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights**

“The Guiding Principles are global in scope. They should be used by all countries and regions at all stages of economic development, with due regard to national specificities. They are based on a **relational and multidimensional view of poverty** that recognizes that the empowerment of persons living in poverty should be both a means of realizing the rights of the poor and an end in itself.”

Human Rights

- Use human rights indicators (OHCHR, Human Rights Indicators: A guide to measurement and implementation)
 - Proportion of public service providers and administrative offices handling beneficiaries in a non-discriminatory manner

Research and Measurement

- Re examine the indicators linked to extreme poverty. **\$1.25 a day should do longer be considered as a reliable global measure of extreme poverty**
 - Multidimensional Poverty
 - (With participation)
- Make the choice to value **Qualitative** and **Subjective** measures (Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi)

Research and Measurement

- Recognize that data used to scope projects (often based on **censuses**) **leave out the most excluded**
 - ATD/UNICEF collaboration in Madagascar
- Attribute success only when development **target is reached at the lowest quintile**

**On behalf of the NGO Committee on
Social Development and the
International Movement ATD Fourth
World:**

Thanks!