

# Making Voices Heard and Count

The Leave No One Behind partnership urges decision makers at the national and global levels to ensure that the voices of marginalised communities are heard and count in the planning, review and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



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Marginalised communities are usually not visible in the available data to monitor the progress of the SDGs. To address data and policy gaps on marginalised communities and provide means to their empowerment, a coalition of international civil society organisations (ICSOs), national CSOs, civic platforms and community-based organisations was formed in 2017. Their joint endeavour is to develop a practical approach to make the voices of these communities “heard and count”, thereby helping to realise the universal pledge to leave no one behind in SDG implementation.

Together, partners carried out a pilot project across five countries (India, Bangladesh, Kenya, Vietnam and Nepal). This collaborative project applied a

unified approach with more than 2,000 representatives of marginalised communities engaged in research on local level implementation of the SDGs.

The country findings demonstrated that marginalised communities, when equipped with proper awareness, knowledge, skills and tools, have the capacity to monitor and hold decision makers accountable for the implementation of the SDGs at the local and national levels. The project also found that when effectively connected with public authorities and policy makers, communities were able to take steps to influence public planning and reporting processes to support greater inclusion of marginalised communities.

# Key recommendations from this project:

**Ensure sufficient investment and political commitment to meet the global ambition to “leave no-one behind” and deliver the SDGs**

Governments need to ensure that adequate resource allocation and political as well as legal commitments are fulfilled to include marginalised communities in the implementation, follow-up and review of the SDGs.

**Strengthen inclusive decision making**

National Governments and civil society stakeholders should support marginalised communities to take a more active role in decision making at all levels.

**Improve reporting and accountability**

National Governments should clearly report on how they are adhering to the pledge to ‘leave no one behind’ and report on progress for marginalised groups in their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs): and develop clear frameworks to ensure the perspective and voice of marginalised groups is included in national accountability mechanisms for the SDGs.

**Foster collaborative research to close data gaps**

National Governments and donors should encourage, facilitate and allocate funds to cross-sector collaborations in order to close research and data gaps on marginalised groups in SDG monitoring, and thereby help to address key local drivers of social exclusion.



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