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I would like to thank the following for their review and helpful comments: Gerard Barker, Soumya Chattopadhyay, Romilly Greenhill, Jo Rea, Elizabeth Stuart, and Ben Tritton (all ODI) and José Manuel Roche (Save the Children UK). I am also grateful to Hannah Caddick for editing and Ciara Remerscheid for managing production. Any mistakes are my own.

Design: Sean Willmott

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THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT 'LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND'



The rallying cry of the Sustainable Development Goals is to 'leave no one behind' by 2030 – and to reach those who are furthest behind first.

Around the world, amid widespread progress, many people remain marginalised and extremely poor. This may be due to where they live, or aspects of who they are – such as whether they have a disability, what their migratory status is, or their age, race, ethnicity or gender. These inequalities can be overlooked when progress is measured in averages across the whole population, as was the case with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Entire countries can also be left behind, particularly those facing obstacles such as land-locked status, climate stress or a history of conflict and fragility.

Understanding where there are gaps, and taking early and sustained action to address them is critical if we are to translate this ambitious 'leave no one behind' commitment into action.

Here are 10 things to know about realising the 'leave no one behind' vision by 2030.


odi.org/projects/leave-no-one-behind

01

GLOBAL PROGRESS HAS NOT BENEFITTED EVERYONE EQUALLY

Globally, people have not benefitted equally from widespread progress.

To meet the 'leave no one behind' agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals – and to reach the furthest behind first – governments must commit to prioritising outcomes for marginalised groups, and look beyond population averages to identify who and where they are and what they need.

Examples of groups that are left behind



15% of the world's population living with a disability, some 1 billion people¹



312 million workers who earn less than \$1.90 each day²

720 million women who were married before they were 18. This compares with 156 million men³



46% of people living in rural areas, who account for 80% of the world's poor⁴

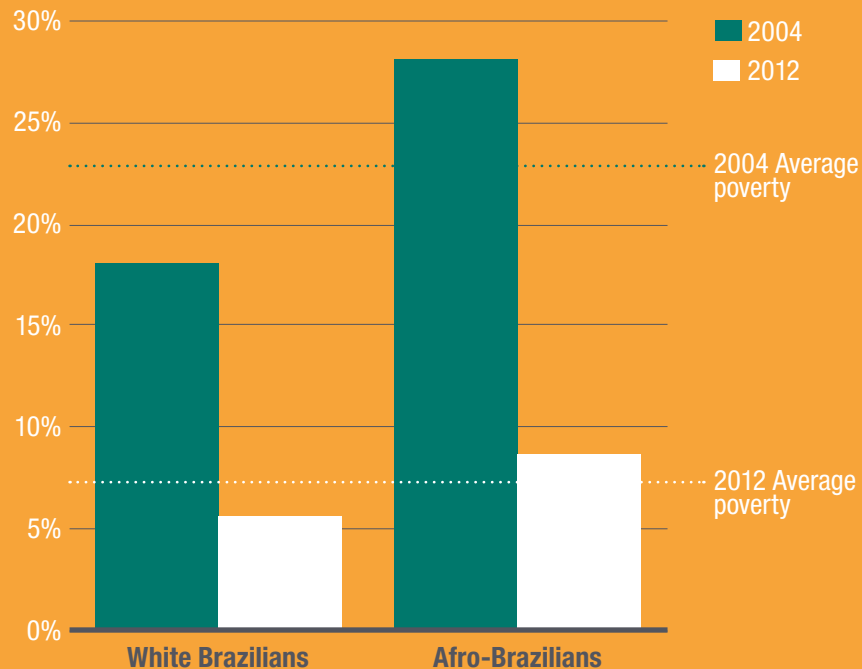
02

BEING 'LEFT BEHIND' OFTEN RESULTS FROM A MARGINALISED SOCIAL IDENTITY

Being left behind often results from aspects of social identity. For example, belonging to a marginalised racial, ethnic or indigenous group is consistently associated with greater deprivation:

- In 2004 and in 2012, Afro-Brazilians remained 1.6 times as likely to be poor as White Brazilians.⁵
- In Guatemala, in 2000 and in 2011, an indigenous household was up to 2.5 times as likely to be poor as a non-indigenous household.⁶
- In Vietnam, an ethnic minority-headed household was 3.2 times as likely to be poor as an ethnic majority-headed household in 2006, and 3.5 times as likely in 2011.⁷

Poverty fell, but Afro-Brazilians remained
1.6 times as likely to be poor as White Brazilians



03 OVERLAPPING INEQUALITIES CAN AMPLIFY THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING 'LEFT BEHIND'

The experience of multiple, overlapping inequalities – such as being female, living in a rural area and belonging to a marginalised ethnic group – can amplify the experience of being 'left behind' further still. Analysis of 16 countries showed that the poorest women from disadvantaged ethnic groups had particularly poor education and health outcomes: in 11 countries, they had the fewest years of education and in 14, the highest share of child deaths. In Ethiopia, 15% of rural Somali women were likely to have completed primary school compared with 77% of urban women from other ethnic groups.⁸

In Ethiopia, the likelihood of having completed primary school varies considerably

Rural Somali women



Urban women from other ethnic groups

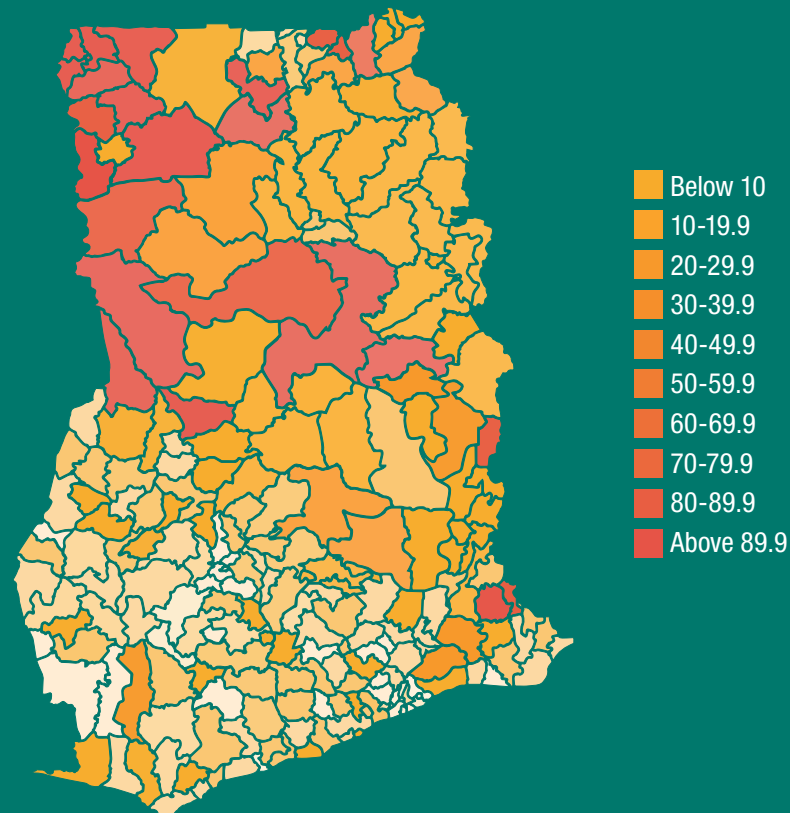


04 COUNTRY LEVEL AVERAGES MASK LARGE DISPARITIES

It is crucial to dig below national averages to uncover who is being left behind. Take Ghana, where one in four people live in income poverty. Over the country's ten regions, the poverty rate ranges from 6% (Greater Accra) to 71% (Upper West). And across its 216 districts, the range is larger still: from 1% (La Dade Kotopon Municipal) to 92% (Wa West).

Poverty maps also reveal pockets of deprivation in the south of the country, which has relatively few poor people overall. Without this high spatial resolution, it would be impossible to target and reach the poorest people effectively.⁹

Ghana's districts by poverty incidence (%)



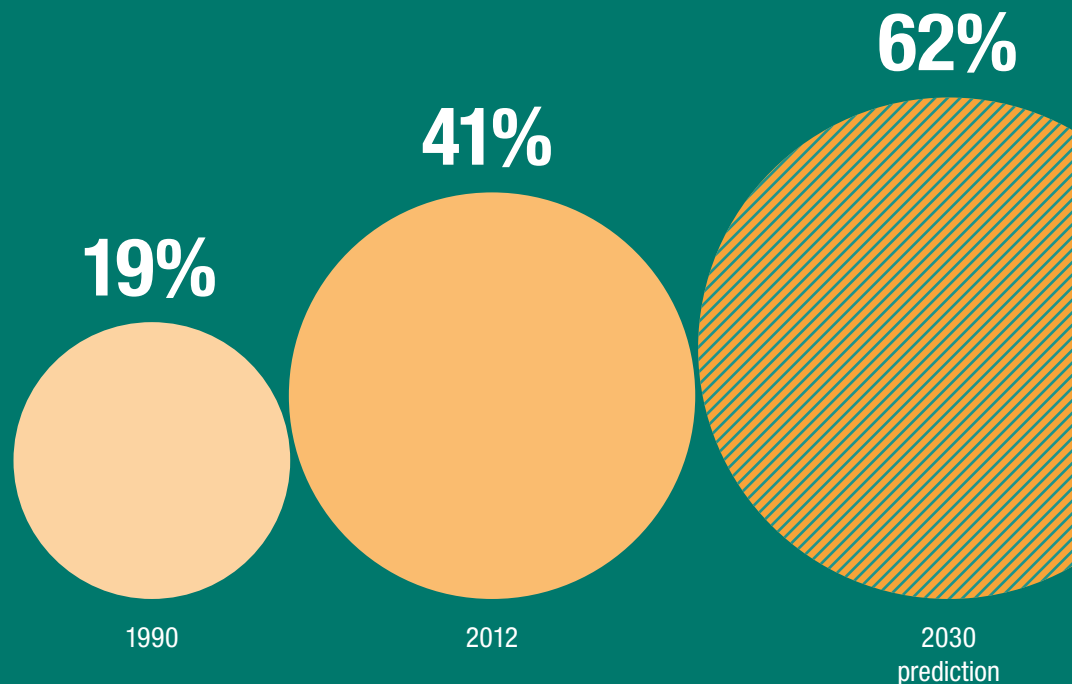
05 COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES ARE AT GREATER RISK

The Sustainable Development Goals identify specific groups of countries that merit special attention due to the challenges they face – for instance, being landlocked, subject to climate shocks or having a history of conflict.

Fragile countries – those with weak governance structures – are particularly vulnerable. The share of the world's poor people living in fragile and conflict-affected countries grew from 19% in 1990 to 41% in 2012 – and could reach 62% by 2030.¹⁰

Fragility also jeopardises other human development outcomes. Estimates suggest that more than 60% of maternal deaths, 53% of under-five deaths and 45% of new-born deaths occur in humanitarian crisis and fragile settings.¹¹

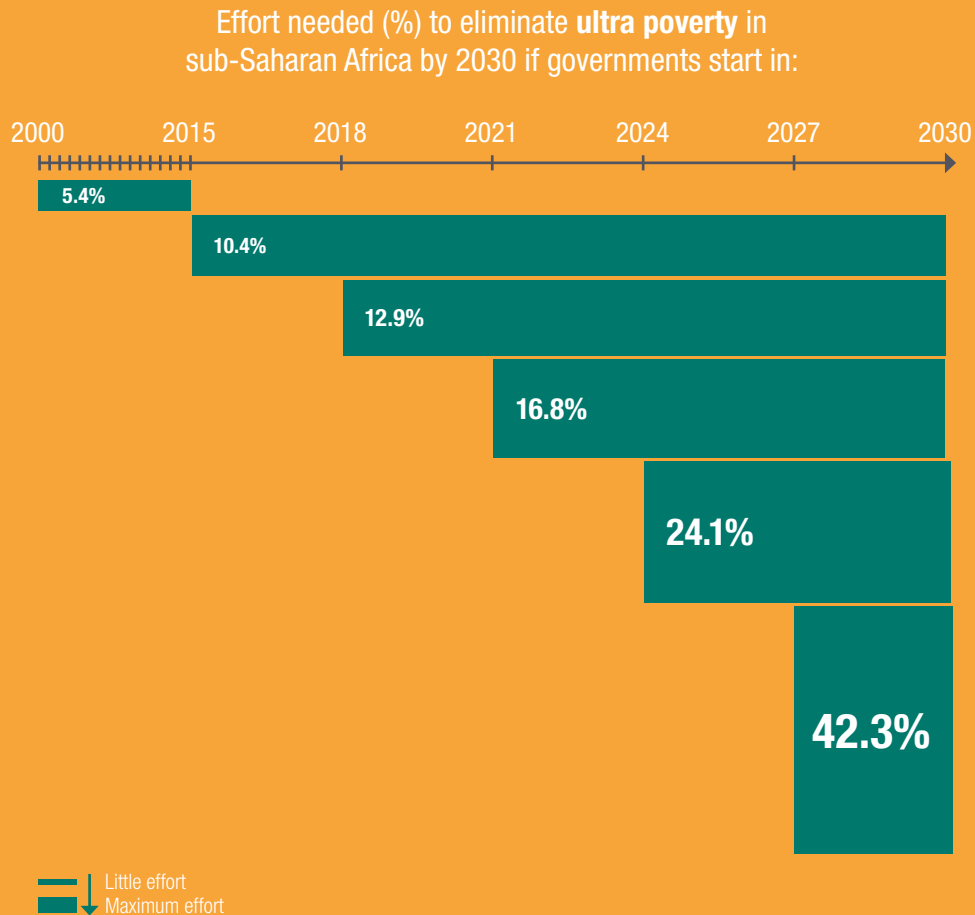
Share of the world's poor people living in fragile and conflict-affected countries



06

EARLY ACTION IS KEY

Early action is vital. The longer governments take to act, the harder it will be to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, if sub-Saharan Africa is to eliminate 'ultra poverty' (the share of people living on less than \$1 a day) by 2030, its current progress on poverty reduction needs to be nearly twice as fast as between 2000 and 2015, rising to more than three times as fast if no action is taken in the next six years. And, if nothing happens until 2024 or 2027, the region will need to speed up progress by factors of 4.5 and 7.9 respectively – a formidable task.¹²



07

PUTTING THE FURTHEST BEHIND FIRST REQUIRES DELIBERATE LAWS AND POLICIES

If countries are to put the furthest behind first, deliberate laws and policies to prioritise and accelerate outcomes for poor and marginalised groups, alongside universal policies, are needed. This requires strong national leadership.

Achieving universal birth registration in South Asia by 2030, for instance, would require three times more progress among the poorest households, compared with the wealthiest.¹³

Several examples demonstrate what is possible – as in India, where a 1 percentage point increase in reserved seats for Scheduled Tribes in 16 state assemblies led to a 1.2 percentage point decrease in the rural poverty rate.¹⁴

Annual progress needed in South Asia to reach universal birth registration by 2030

11.1%
annual progress needed

3.6%
annual progress needed



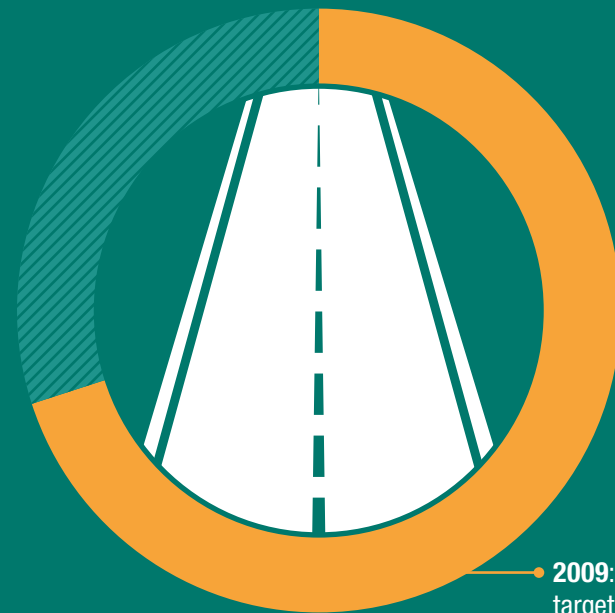
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AMBITIOUS POLICIES CAN YIELD RAPID IMPROVEMENTS

Service delivery and connectivity improvements, better anti-discrimination laws and legal reforms – including more inclusive institutions – are most likely to deliver better outcomes for the poorest and most marginalised groups.

Rapid progress is possible if governments commit to act. In India, for example, in 2005, the government initiated the Bharat Nirman flagship rural infrastructure programme, which aimed to connect every community with 1,000 or more people (500 or more in hilly, tribal and desert areas) with all-weather roads. By 2009, more than 70% of target communities were connected.¹⁵

2005: India aims to connect every community with, 1,000+ people (500+ in hilly, tribal and desert areas) with all-weather roads



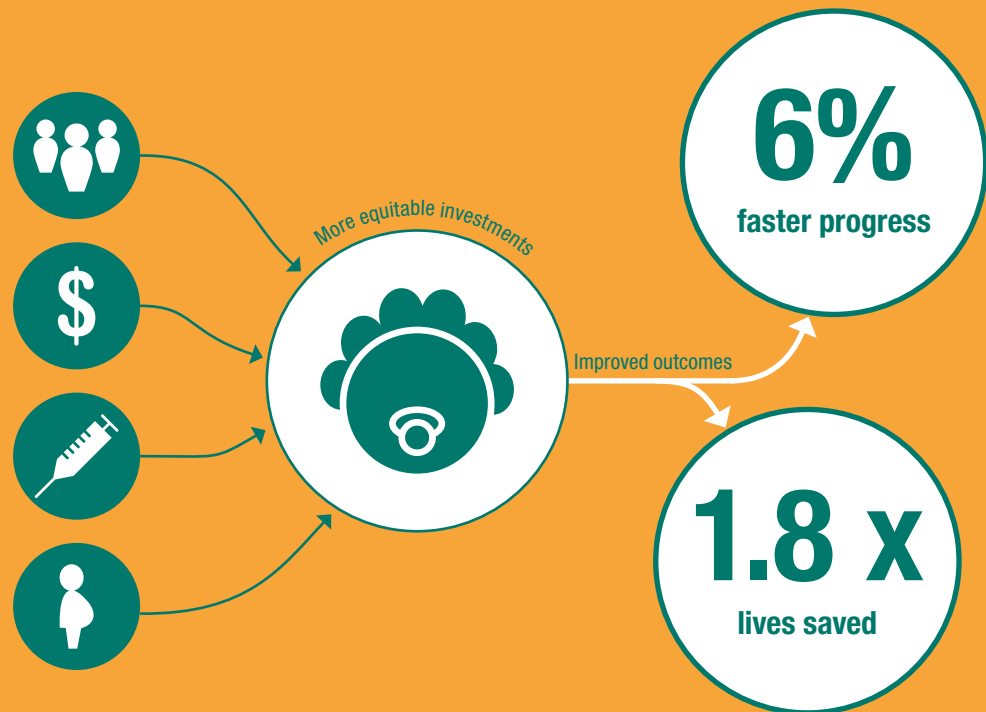
2009: Over **70%** of target communities are connected

09 FOCUSED INVESTMENTS ON LEFT-BEHIND GROUPS CAN ACCELERATE PROGRESS

Not only is investing in left-behind groups the right thing to do, but also recent studies show that it can yield faster progress than investments in better-off groups and may be better value for money.

Across 86 countries, those which pursued a more equitable pathway to progress in child survival showed 6% faster progress over ten years, on average.¹⁶ And a separate analysis of the 51 countries in which 80% of child deaths are concentrated reveals that the equivalent investment in high-impact health and nutrition interventions in poor areas saved almost twice as many lives as in non-poor areas.¹⁷

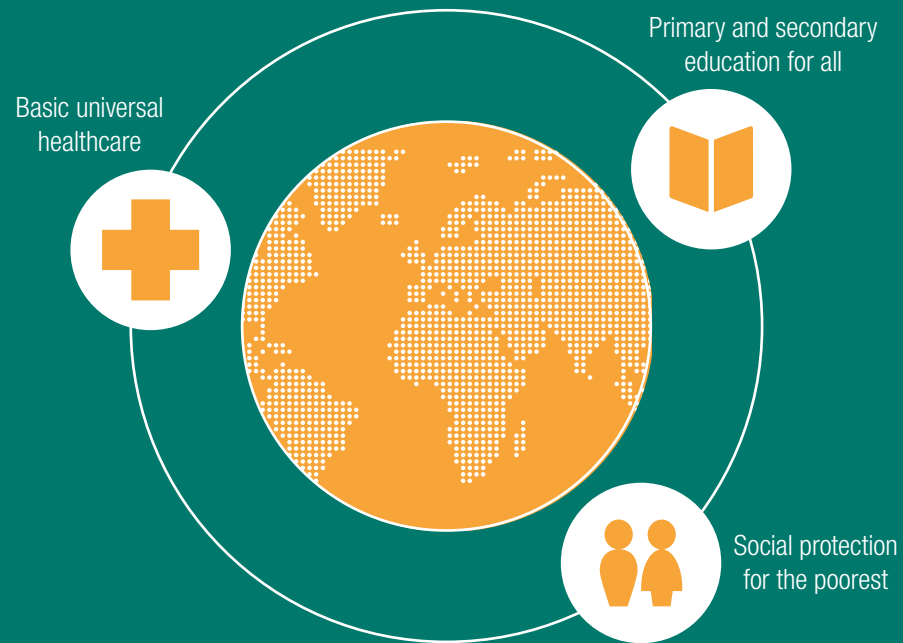
Equity-enhancing investments yield higher gains



10

MORE FINANCE IS NEEDED

Additional financing is needed to realise the promise to 'leave no one behind' – particularly in the poorest countries. The total financing gap of delivering three core elements of a basic social compact – social protection, universal health coverage and universal primary and secondary education – has been estimated at \$84 billion per year, close to 90% of which is in low-income countries. In the poorest countries, this translates into a shortfall of more than \$100 per person.¹⁸ Moreover, among 44 countries, just 18 had met internationally-agreed financing targets in at least two of the three sectors.¹⁹



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