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IVCO 2018 FRAMING PAPER

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH: WHERE ARE WE AT?

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Foreword

This paper has been produced for IVCO 2018, the International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations' Conference. It is one of a series of papers exploring this year's conference theme 'Women and youth: bridging the gap – volunteering for inclusive development'.

This Framing Paper provides an introduction and overview:

- [Inclusive development for women and youth: where are we at?](#)

Three Theme Papers address specific topics:

1. [Inclusive development policy for women and youth](#)
2. [Inclusive development practice for women](#)
3. [Inclusive development practice for youth](#).

Note on terminology: These papers use the terms volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) and international volunteer cooperation organisations (IVCOs). IVCOs should be understood as a specific group or type of VIO.



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Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015 place inclusion and the concept of ‘leave no one behind’ at the forefront of the international development agenda.¹ Accordingly, they mark the first set of global development goals that engage all countries of the world and set ambitious objectives in terms of inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups in sustainable development processes – women and youth being the largest of these groups. This focus on inclusion has brought increasing attention to the concept of inclusive development and the issues of power dynamics and inequality at the heart of it.

While there is no agreed upon set of outcomes associated with inclusive development, many approaches adopted by international development organisations aim to empower women and youth (and other marginalised groups) to access resources, increase their social mobility, participate in civic and political life, and effect changes in social norms over time. In this paper, we review the main features and outcomes of the most important approaches, such as Gender and Development and Youth Participation, and further assert that volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) and international volunteer cooperation organisations (IVCOs) have made significant contributions to inclusive development. However, inclusive development also presents significant challenges for development organisations and governments. For example, inclusive development necessitates embracing multiple, locally-determined visions of development from the Global South. For development organisations including IVCOs, implementing inclusive development requires modelling inclusion in their organisational programming and structure. For governments, inclusive development highlights the power dynamics causing many inclusive policies and initiatives for women and youth to remain under-funded, under-enforced and under-prioritised. Looking ahead, there is still much work to do to clarify the definition of inclusive development in order to ensure that economic inclusion and inclusive growth do not take priority over social, environmental or relational inclusion. We conclude by considering some areas for future research.

This Framing Paper is complemented by three Theme Papers providing greater detail on key aspects of inclusive development for women and youth. Theme Paper One focuses on policy for inclusive development, and highlights the opportunities for IVCOs to champion more inclusive management approaches in development. Theme Paper Two asks how volunteering can promote gender equality and women’s empowerment, and assesses the current state of women’s inclusion and participation as volunteers for development. Theme Paper Three looks at inclusive development practice for youth, with a focus on volunteering for development.

¹ The focus on inclusion in the SDGs is exemplified by the vision of a ‘just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met’ (UN 2015, p.7).

Definition and Origins of Inclusive Development

Inclusive development is a term that is widespread in 21st century development discourse, but it is a broad concept that has been defined in a multitude of ways. It can refer to either the inclusion of all stakeholders in development projects and programming (Oxfam 2014), or to broader societal and national aspirations towards a society where all people have access to the same freedoms, opportunities, and services (Teichmann 2016, p.160, Van Gent 2017, p.20). Inclusive development highlights the social and ecological aspects of sustainable development, and also has a relational aspect.² **Social inclusiveness** focuses on empowering and bringing opportunities for meaningful social participation to the most marginalised groups in society: women, youth, LGBTI+³ people, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, refugees and others. **Ecological inclusiveness** focuses on ensuring that local people can own and access natural resources and that governments manage natural resources sustainably. **Relational inclusiveness** acknowledges that ‘poverty and ecological degradation are often the result of actions taken by others’ (Gupta and Vegelin 2016, p.439). To date, the focus has mainly been on social inclusiveness, while ecological and relational inclusiveness are emerging areas.

The roots of inclusive development can be traced back to the ratification of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which recognised and protected political, economic, and social rights. This agreement enshrined the rights of every individual, regardless of race, gender, class, religion, or any other characteristic. The 1970s debt crisis and the negative results of structural adjustment policies in the 1980s cast doubt on the neoliberal, economically-focused approach to development, as standards of living in many parts of the Global South plummeted. In the 1990s, some important precursors to inclusive development emerged, with increased attention paid to Human Development and participatory development (e.g. Chambers 1997).⁴ Both human and participatory development prioritised people’s wellbeing and agency as an alternative to depersonalised growth-focused development models.⁵

2 From the 2000s to date, as exemplified in both the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the SDGs, sustainable development has been a framework of great importance. It posits that there are social, ecological, and economic aspects to development that must be maintained for current and future generations (Gupta, Pouw & Ros Tonen 2015, p.104).

3 LGBTI+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, plus (queer, two-spirited, and other identities and orientations).

4 Human Development is an approach developed by Mahbub ul Haq based on the work of Amartya Sen that focuses on increasing both individual and group freedoms and choices. Participatory development was another approach that gained popularity during this period. Robert Chambers’ (1997) concept of ‘putting the last first’ aimed to give beneficiaries a voice in, and some control over, the development initiatives that affected their lives.

5 It is important to distinguish inclusive development (ID) from inclusive growth (IG), as the two terms are often used interchangeably. Growth refers to increasing economic growth, incomes and GDP, whereas development is a broader term that encompasses other dimensions of well-being, particularly education, health and safety (Rauniyar & Kanbur 2009). IG is much easier to quantify and translate into discrete policy options than ID, but the two terms are often used in combination without clear distinctions. The World Economic Forum, for example, developed an Inclusive Development Index (IDI) in 2017 which is largely focused on IG, but includes some social inclusion indicators as well. While both ID and IG are important concepts in the current development landscape, ID (a newer idea) must be distinguished from IG (a more mainstream and widely used term) so that space is preserved for a more holistic perspective in development.

For development practitioners and volunteers, inclusive development provides a lens through which to ask tough questions of our social, political and economic systems, and demands that we consistently ask ourselves ‘who benefits or not, and why, and how can the marginalised be empowered?’ (Gupta, Pouw & Ros-Tonen 2015, p.553). For development organisations, inclusive development means that diverse local actors must be in the driver’s seat on development projects, and that there can be no single dominant definition of development that might unintentionally disadvantage certain groups (Mittleman 2008). Support must be given to multiple and locally determined visions of development, such as the concept of ‘*Vivir Bien*’ or ‘*Living Well*’ advanced by indigenous peoples in the Americas (Ranta 2018).

Inclusion of Women in Development: Context and Approaches

International commitments to women’s inclusion in development date back to the 1960s. The First World Conference on Women in 1975 and the ratification of the UN’s Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 marked important milestones. The focus on women’s human rights and reducing gender inequality accelerated in the 1990s (Vogelstein 2016), with the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo marking the first time that women’s reproductive rights were included in an international policy document (UNICEF n.d.). The 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing was a watershed event where issues of human rights, poverty, economic inclusion, and gender-based violence were addressed, and the concept of women’s empowerment was popularised (Manuh & Anyidoho 2015). The Beijing conference represented an important shift in power dynamics, as it was chaired by a woman from the Global South, Gertrude Mongella of Tanzania. Women’s empowerment and gender equality were well represented in the Millennium Development Goals,⁶ and the 2030 SDGs place even greater emphasis on gender equality.⁷ In 2010, a new UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) was established. Governments have also taken action to prioritise gender equality. Between 2005 and 2018, 74 countries adopted National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security, which operationalise the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to consider a gender perspective in all peace and security operations, and to recognise women’s vital roles in humanitarian contexts. Recent moves by Sweden and Canada towards developing feminist foreign policies and international assistance programs represent another policy arena where inclusive development is being operationalised (Government of Sweden n.d., Government of Canada 2018). Theme Paper One discusses these developments in more detail.

6 In particular, Goal 3 on women’s empowerment and gender equality, and Goal 5 on improving maternal health.

7 Goal 5 aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, Goal 1 acknowledges that women are much more likely to live in poverty than men due to unequal access to paid work and education, and Goal 3 aims to reduce maternal mortality and ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Three important approaches to women's inclusion in development are Women in Development, Gender and Development, and Intersectionality.⁸ **Women in Development (WID)**, which was popular in the 1970s, focused on integrating women into existing development projects, and posited that the main problem was women's exclusion and lack of access to resources. However, WID did not question existing social norms and power structures causing this exclusion. Thus, while putting women onto the development agenda, WID saw their specific needs and interests largely sidelined (Razavi & Miller 1995). **Gender and Development (GAD)**⁹ replaced Women and Development in the 1990s, and emphasised the consistent evidence showing that gender inequality has significant negative impacts on development efforts – for example, Klasen's (1999) World Bank study showing that gender inequality in education and employment impedes economic growth. In this period there was an important transition from looking at women in isolation to addressing their subordinate status in the broader system of gender relations between women and men (Moser 1993). GAD provides a rights-based, feminist analytical framework that considered inequalities from a power relations perspective, especially regarding unfair division of labour, unequal participation in decision-making, and uneven access to and control over resources. The Gender and Development approach put women and girls' specific needs and interests on the development agenda, and its feminist perspective laid the groundwork for working with men and boys within larger social systems to eliminate gender-based discrimination (Adéquations 2009).

The core tool used in the GAD approach is **Gender Mainstreaming**, which can be used to build development projects on a base of understanding local gender relations (UN Women 2014). Gender mainstreaming does not call for more programming aimed at women, but rather suggests that gender and gender equality must be prioritised by development institutions, including within their staffing. A similar and widespread GAD tool is **Gender Impact Assessment**, which is used to predict the effects of a proposed program, law, or policy on the state of equality between men and women (European Institute for Gender Equality n.d.). The organisation Gender at Work developed a framework building on GAD concepts that is used by large INGOs such as Oxfam to understand the impacts of gender and to design gender-responsive development interventions that can create lasting changes (Gender at Work 2018). This framework highlights areas where change is needed to achieve gender equality along two axes: from formal laws and institutions to informal social norms, and from personal thoughts and realisations to broader group and systemic norms (Figure 1). Thus, it provides development practitioners and VIOs with a way to engage with broader cultural and societal systems that perpetuate gender-based discrimination.

8 Intersectionality is an approach that emerged from feminism but is now used to enhance inclusion of all individuals.

9 Gender refers to the 'socially determined ideas and practices of what it is to be female or male', and thus varies depending on cultural contexts. Gender stereotypes and norms are learned through socialisation and are thus changeable over time, not fixed (Reeves & Baden 2000, p.30).

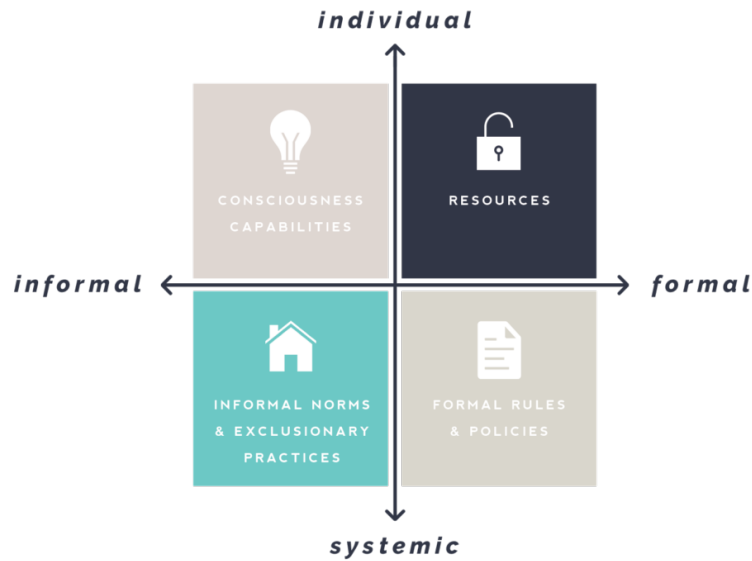


Figure 1: The Gender at Work analytic framework.

Intersectionality is an increasingly popular approach that emerged from critical race and feminist theory and is crucial for improving inclusion of both women and youth.¹⁰ In 1980s North America, black men and middle-class white women were seen as the archetypal victims of racism and sexism, and as a result the experiences of those affected by both racism and sexism were often ignored. Thus, building on the work of pioneering black feminist theorists,¹¹ intersectionality rejects the idea that there are separate categories of disadvantage, and highlights the overlapping forms of discrimination faced by certain groups of women based on the intersections between race, class, and gender (e.g. poor black women). In essence, it proposes that multiple identities exist within each individual and are linked to multiple forms of discrimination.¹² Today, the concept of intersectionality has expanded to include identities beyond race, class, and gender, to look at how being indigenous, LGBTI+, or living with a disability adds to experiences of marginalisation. Achieving inclusive development for all depends on institutions recognising that an individual may have multiple and overlapping identities that each create discrimination, which in turn impacts the level at which they can participate in, and benefit from, development processes. The Sustainable Development Goals incorporate a significant focus on gender, age, and disability, but do not specifically acknowledge how these categories can overlap and intersect, and thus affect individuals simultaneously (UNSDN 2017).

¹⁰ The term 'intersectionality' is credited to Crenshaw (1991).

¹¹ See Michele Wallace (1979) and Angela Davis (1983).

¹² Intersectionality should not be confused with representation (i.e. having individuals with a broad variety of identities participating in development processes).

Development organisations can apply an intersectional approach by a) running collaborative initiatives with organisations that serve particular marginalised groups (e.g. persons with disabilities), b) avoiding making generalisations about a disadvantaged population (i.e. women and youth must not be treated as homogenous groups with standardised needs), and c) ensuring that the most vulnerable populations are included and hired to conduct research and programming related to their own experiences (Simpson 2009, pp.20-25). In order for IVCOs to improve on inclusion of women and youth, taking an intersectional approach to inclusive development requires that efforts are made to identify specific obstacles related to intersecting sources of oppression that prevent marginalised people from fully participating in, and benefiting from, development programs. Intersectionality is still a relatively recent approach that requires further development, and some current challenges in applying intersectionality are discussed below.

Inclusion of Young People in Development: Context and Approaches

International commitments to youth inclusion also have a long history and stem from the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) — now ratified by 194 state parties (Farrow 2016, p.1). In 1992, children and youth were recognised as playing a vital role in sustainable development at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UN 1992, chapter 25). In 1995, challenges and barriers to youth participation were highlighted with the development of the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth (Youth Policy Labs et al. 2014, p.10), which outlined 15 policy areas where youth needed to be specifically considered. In 1998, the first World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth produced more concrete commitments by governments to increasing young people's ability to fully participate in society (Bacalso & Farrow 2016). However, it wasn't until the 2007 World Development Report 'Development and the Next Generation' (World Bank 2007) that topics including learning for life and work, staying healthy, working, forming families, and exercising citizenship became mainstream development priorities. Since then, there have been calls for broadening interventions aimed at youth beyond the typical areas of health, employment, and education, to focus on political engagement and civic inclusion (e.g. UNDESA 2016), and youth are an important focus in the 2030 Agenda.¹³ The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 is creating new opportunities for youth by promoting them as agents of change in the

¹³ According to UNDP (2016a, p.1), '65 out of the 169 SDG targets reference young people explicitly or implicitly, with a focus on empowerment, participation and/or well-being. There are 20 youth-specific targets spread over six key SDGs: Goal 2 (hunger), Goal 4 (education), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 8 (decent work), Goal 10 (inequality) and Goal 13 (climate change).'

maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Governments have also been taking youth issues more seriously: from the late 1990s to date, more than 140 countries have developed or are drafting a youth policy, and there was a 50% increase in the number of countries with youth policies between 2013 and 2014 (Glassco & Holguin 2016, p.14). Further, increasing attention is being paid to developing programs targeted at specific vulnerable youth sub-populations (ibid.).

A number of conceptual approaches have been developed to better understand and support the inclusion of young people in development processes, such as youth participation, empowerment, engagement, and youth-led development. While each of these conceptual approaches is different, they also have many overlapping features: they all refer to developing young people's agency and skills, and focus on providing concrete opportunities for youth to engage with their communities and institutions. Roger Hart's 'Ladder of Youth Participation' (see Figure 2) is a reference tool still used by many practitioners to analyse the level of young people's participation in decision-making processes (Hart 1992). It sets the context for the different approaches to youth participation, and shows that while youth leading and sharing decision-making with adults are goals to aspire to, consulting young people and having them participate in adult-initiated actions are also valuable steps. The focus on citizen participation for young people is also evidenced by the development of diagnostic tools to measure youth well-being, most recently through the Youth Wellbeing Index (YWI), which 'recognise[s] the centrality of citizen participation to youth development and wellbeing' (Farrow 2016, p.10).

While the outcomes of youth participation in development contexts have often been measured through case studies and small-scale examples (Farrow 2016, p.8), there is growing evidence that increasing youth participation leads to better development outcomes. This has been shown both in terms of increasing their self-confidence and empowerment, but also in terms of measurable outcomes such as sexual and reproductive health and rights (Asker et al. 2012, Oxfam 2015, ANGO 2015, Wallerstein 2006). However, as highlighted in Theme Paper One, the discourse of participation has been critiqued as a donor-driven requirement that has limited impact on youth empowerment when imposed on local actors (Cooke & Kothari 2001). Finally, as many authors have reported, youth participation is being transformed by digital technology (Fogg & Eckles 2007, Wicklin 2010, Davies 2011). However, the scope and impact of online participation needs to be better understood, especially in the Global South.



Figure 2: The Hart ladder of young people's participation.

Youth Empowerment is a conceptual approach that focuses on the links between building individual capacity and creating positive change in communities and institutions. Youth Empowerment Programs (YEP) have been linked to positive behavioural changes in young people, including long-term civic engagement and better operations within North American community organisations (Ledford et al. 2013).

Youth Engagement is another concept that promotes 'the meaningful and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity focusing outside the self' (CYCC Network 2013, p.6) and includes the principle of youth voice, i.e. that young people should be comfortable expressing themselves, and their contributions must be valued equally with those of adults. Youth engagement increases mental health, leads to long-term behavioural changes, and is an important foundation for youth empowerment. Some models of 'Critical Youth Engagement' put a greater emphasis on the dynamics of power and the importance of collective action to engage marginalised and excluded youth (Fox et al. 2010). This model defines five core commitments: 1) youth carry knowledge, 2) critical analysis toward critical consciousness, 3) youth leadership in partnership with adults, 4) intersectionality, and 5) collective action for social change.

Youth-Led Development is an approach developed by Peace Child International and promoted by UN-HABITAT (among others) that goes further towards ensuring youth are in control of initiatives affecting them (UN HABITAT 2012). It encourages youth to determine their own development priorities, goals, and objectives, and to be role models for other youth. A recent report by Restless Development concludes that in many parts of the world, youth-led initiatives are being shown to have greater impacts than other project types,

which include achieving youth leadership and addressing broader development goals. Youth-led development must be seen as a means of tackling all types of development challenges, and not as an end in itself; ‘youth leadership without clear purpose and real links to the development of countries risks standing alone without transformative impact’ (Restless Development 2014, p.34). In this sense, this approach has to be understood as a way of enabling young people to lead in certain situations – and not as a way to exclude adults from decision-making.

These different conceptual approaches (and others such as Positive Youth Development¹⁴) have been instrumental in putting youth on the development agenda at the global, regional and local levels – as legitimate actors, partners and innovators, rather than only beneficiaries. The major differences between these approaches are to be found in the specific models that have been developed to explore and operationalise them. While an in-depth comparison of these models goes beyond the scope of this paper, it might be said that the differences are related to core elements such as their mix of agency and structural conditions (enabling environments); their degree of collectivity; their sequential (e.g. ladder) or non-linear logic; and their optimal forms of participation (youth-led versus shared control between youth and adult).¹⁵ Finally, many IVCOs have developed specific models for promoting youth inclusion with their local counterparts that are based on these conceptual approaches and grounded in particular contexts.

Contributions to Inclusive Development from Volunteers and VIOs

Volunteers and VIOs have been contributing to inclusion of women and youth for many years by supporting vulnerable and marginalised communities in urban, peri-urban and rural areas across the globe. VIOs have close working relationships with civil society organisations in their countries of operation, and contribute to building the skills, agency, and social capital of marginalised women and youth. Further, volunteering promotes dialogue, trust, and long-term relationships – all of which are crucial to achieving effective bottom-up change. For example, women volunteers have established and strengthened alliances between women’s rights organisations around the world, and youth volunteers worldwide have effectively promoted inclusive youth leadership with their peers. However, as argued in Theme Paper One, project management conventions in the development sector do not necessarily favour a diversity of management strategies based on local

14 Positive Youth Development is an approach that has been used in North America and in the Global South. It focuses on four domains of young peoples’ lives: assets, agency, positive change in their communities, and enabling environments (YouthPower n.d.).

15 Based on the outputs of the Expert Meeting on Adolescent Participation organised by UNICEF in January 2017.

contexts. The unpredictable nature and heavy administrative load of project-based funding puts emphasis on short-term planning and upward accountability. Therefore, one way that IVCOs can promote more inclusive development management is by leveraging their proximity with local counterparts and advocating for more inclusive and diverse development management strategies that prioritise accountability to project beneficiaries.

On the other hand, national volunteering represents a powerful mechanism for civic engagement that should also be leveraged, as described in the Volunteer Groups' Thematic Paper to the HLPF (Forum 2018). Theme Paper Three points out that in Rwanda, the economic contribution of volunteers' time was valued at over 30% of the national economy (Government of Rwanda 2012). Other expressions of volunteerism – North-South, South-North, and South-South cooperation – also contribute significantly to inclusive development by building and strengthening solidarities, often through peer-to-peer approaches. For example, international volunteerism is an effective mechanism for diaspora members to return to their country and give back to their community.

Box 1: Volunteer and VIO contributions to inclusive development: some examples

Over the last 20 years, volunteers working with diverse local organisations have made significant contributions to women's empowerment and gender equality around the world. Theme Paper Two gives examples of their contributions in several areas, including: capacity building (e.g. in Guatemala, UN Volunteers worked with various institutions, including with police forces, to build capacity to deal with gender-based violence), advocacy and policy (e.g. UNITERRA volunteers designed and delivered training programs on eliminating gender-based violence in Mongolia, and the results have since been disseminated with success to various local actors including private textiles companies, colleges and police units), and promoting knowledge and learning (e.g. a UN volunteer has developed a data-collection app that allows poor women in Bangladesh to directly report their greatest needs to the *Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Project*).

Theme Paper Three highlights the work of the International Citizen Service (ICS) volunteers in Kenya who worked at a school for children with disabilities and conducted outreach with families to ensure that they received official access cards that would allow them to receive government benefits for persons with disabilities. Further, in Uganda, a youth-led organisation called Action For Fundamental Change and Development (AFFCAD) has helped numerous vulnerable youth gain vocational skills and employment. Another example is the young volunteers from Oxfam-Québec who worked with local partners and communities in Bolivia and Peru to empower indigenous youth through audio-visual creation. These concrete examples show how, by working directly with local organisations and communities, volunteers contribute to the inclusion of marginalised groups in development processes.

While VIOs have developed different approaches and accumulated a lot of knowledge on how to promote inclusive development globally, they are also facing limitations and challenges shared with the whole development sector.

Limitations and Challenges of Inclusive Development

Inclusive development is still a relatively broad concept that has some limitations and challenges. First, inclusive policy instruments (such as youth policies) are insufficient if they are not well funded, implemented, enforced, and prioritised. In many countries around the world, even when youth policies are implemented, they are still often a low priority for governments, as demonstrated by the lack of seniority of the individuals responsible for them, and the frequent combination of youth issues with sports and recreation. Young people have justifiably protested that they are interested in more than culture and sports; they also need jobs, leadership and participation.

Second, given that the terms inclusive development and inclusive growth are often conflated and used interchangeably, it is necessary to better define and promote inclusive development to ensure that economic inclusion and growth are not prioritised over social, ecological, or relational inclusiveness. While it is important that vulnerable and marginalised women and youth have access to decent employment and economic opportunities, we must also act on the other dimensions of exclusion and discrimination.

Third, the concept of 'leave no one behind' leads to the question of how it is possible to take all members of a society into consideration and include them without creating new exclusions – keeping in mind that the most marginalised individuals are often not part of formal structures and can be difficult to reach. A major critique of inclusive development projects, specifically large land investment projects, is that it is difficult to include everyone, and the mere process of including one group creates its own new dynamics whereby other individuals or groups may feel excluded. This process can be thought of as fragmentation: when looking at the needs of more and more specific groups of marginalised people, will the needs and desires of some necessarily conflict with the inclusion of others? This question necessitates investigation into how inclusive development is linked to democracy and governance in different contexts.

Fourth, applying intersectionality in international development contexts may be difficult for a number of reasons outlined by Bastia (2014). Categories such as gender, race, or ethnicity have different meanings depending on specific cultural contexts. Taking an intersectional approach must therefore be combined with an in-depth historical and context-specific

understanding of local categories of discrimination. Even then, it is unclear how well the concept can travel. Efforts should be made to ask what intersectionality means to individuals in different contexts. It may also be difficult to apply the concept at the macro level. Most studies that employ intersectionality use it on a small scale, but in international development, scaling-up is important. And there is a danger of intersectionality becoming depoliticised if it is widely adopted and seen as just another check box to fill when designing a development project.

Finally, development organisations are also facing internal challenges, and they should assess how inclusive their organisational structures are and consider how they are promoting diversity within their workforce, volunteers, and partnerships. In order to take an inclusive development approach, organisations must prioritise bottom-up as opposed to top-down development (Otsuki et al. 2017), and model inclusion in their programming, hiring, and areas of focus. Women, youth, and other marginalised individuals must not only participate, they must direct and determine questions, priorities, and actions from projects' inception through to feedback phases to ensure meaningful accountability. The rights of vulnerable groups to inclusion and participation must be championed, starting in our own organisations and networks.

Research Agenda on Inclusive Development

Looking ahead, it is clear that further work is needed to clarify the concept of inclusive development and to understand how VIOs are contributing to it. First, given that many vulnerable people do not have a single national identity (e.g. refugees, undocumented migrants, displaced populations), it is crucial to consider how to use an inclusive development approach beyond specific country contexts. While some recent research describes how inclusion is impacted by humanitarian crises (Obani 2017), tools must be developed to ensure that inclusive development principles can be maintained and that the most marginalised are able to participate in recovery from a crisis.

Second, further research is needed to bring inclusive development into conversation with current debates on economic growth and capitalism that come from the Global South – for example with post-extractivism, a concept developed in South America that describes the need to rethink global systems of production that rely on unending extraction of natural resources (Brand et al. 2017). Engaging with theory from the Global South will keep the environment and power relations present in debates around inclusive development (Mohan 2017).

Third, all countries must work to obtain good disaggregated data on the wellbeing of their populations. One of the objectives of SDG 17 is to enhance support to developing countries

to increase the ‘availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts’ (UN 2015, p.32). This data is needed to understand the mechanisms and drivers of exclusion specific to different cultural contexts around the world (UNDP 2016b, p.6).

Fourth, the links between inclusive development and intersectionality must be deepened and tools developed to apply an intersectional approach in different contexts. This is because intersectionality has the potential to transform the way that marginalisation and exclusion are addressed, and to take inclusion to a more profound and holistic level.

Finally, further research is needed to identify the concrete changes and opportunities that online participation is creating for women and youth in the Global South, and how IVCOs and their local counterparts are using online spaces to support inclusive development.

In the last ten years, inclusive development – specifically, ensuring the inclusion of women and youth – has emerged as a priority for governments and organisations that are tackling poverty and inequality. Inclusive development is more than a set of policy prescriptions, and proposes new priorities that counter-balance the neoliberal policies behind growing economic inequality and ecological degradation. Today, taking an inclusive development approach also means grappling with current debates around the decolonisation of power and knowledge, increasing diversity in leadership positions (beyond simply achieving gender balance), and prioritising the voice, autonomy and agency of marginalised groups.

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