



*“Leaving No One Behind”
in the context of the 2030
Agenda for Sustainable
Development*

Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, Beirut, Lebanon

24-26 April 2018

Susan Nicolai

Senior Research Fellow

Growth, Poverty and Inequality Programme, ODI

@susan_nicolai



Defining 'leave no one behind'

1. Ending extreme poverty in all forms and ensuring those who have been left behind (in relative & absolute terms) can catch up.
2. Stopping group based discrimination – with a particular focus on intersectionality.
3. Prioritising and fast-tracking action for the furthest behind. 'Progressive universalism'.

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

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



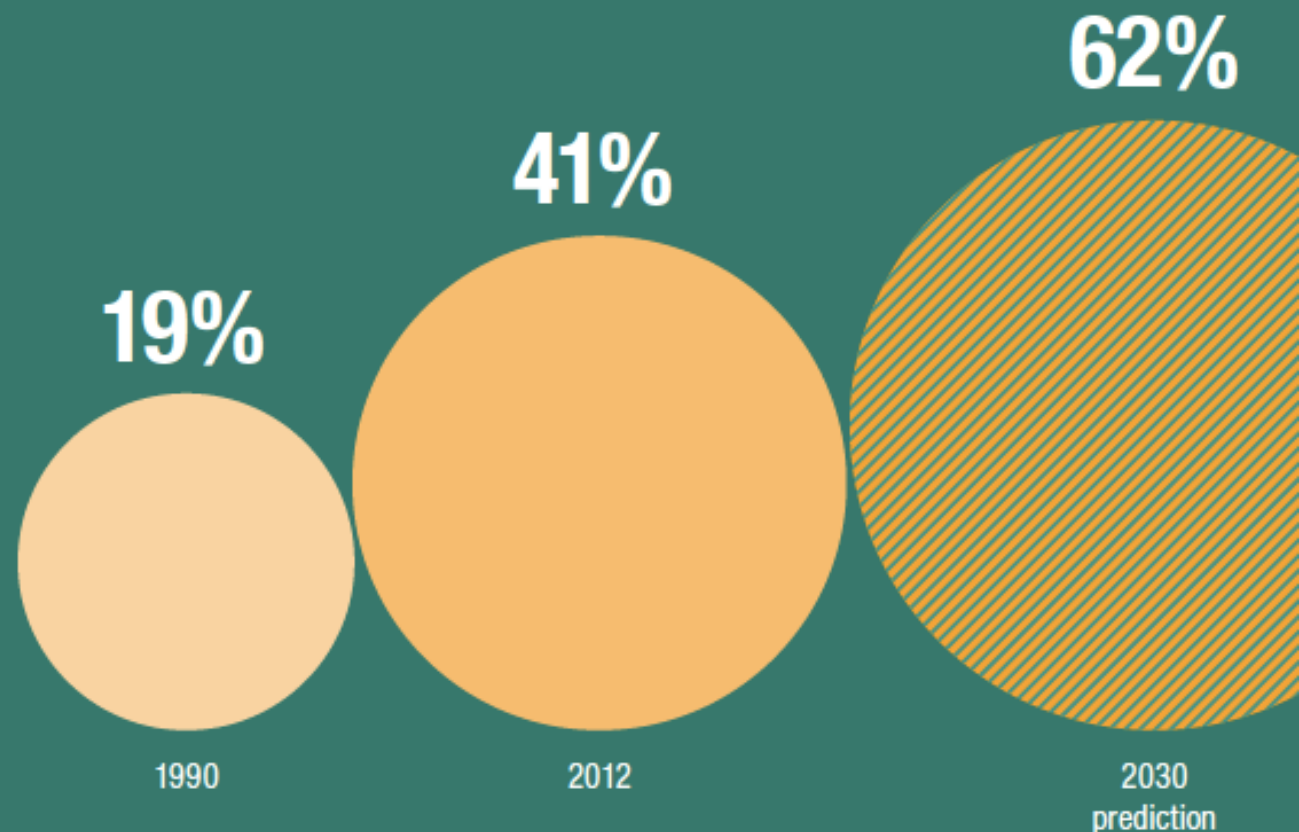
05 COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES ARE AT GREATER RISK

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

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





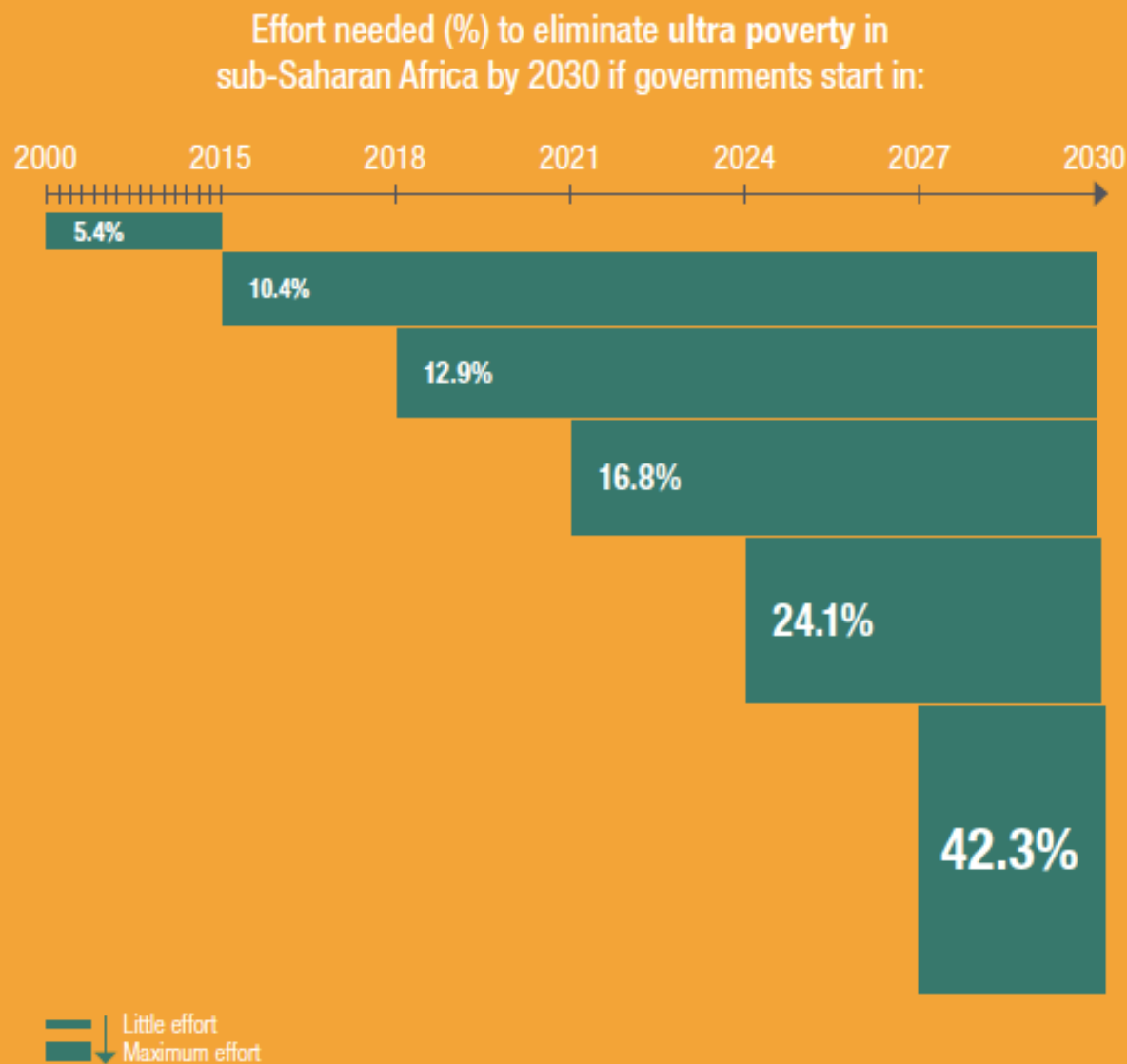
Striving to 'leave no one behind'

1. Early action is key
2. Importance of deliberate laws and policies
3. Ambitious policies can work
4. Focusing on the most marginalized can bring greater overall efficiency
5. Additional financing is key

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



Poorest
wealth quintile

3.6%
annual progress needed



Richest
wealth quintile

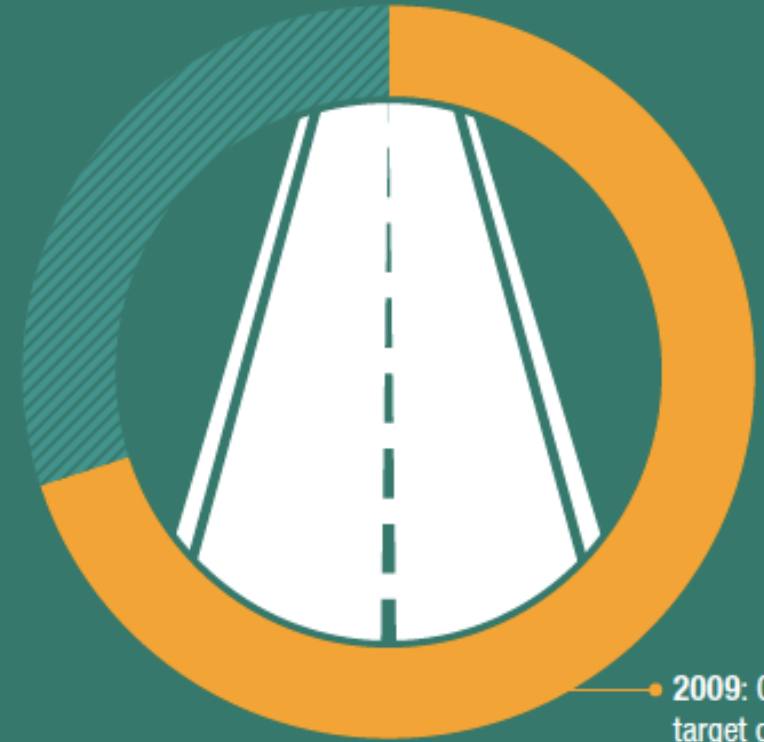
08

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



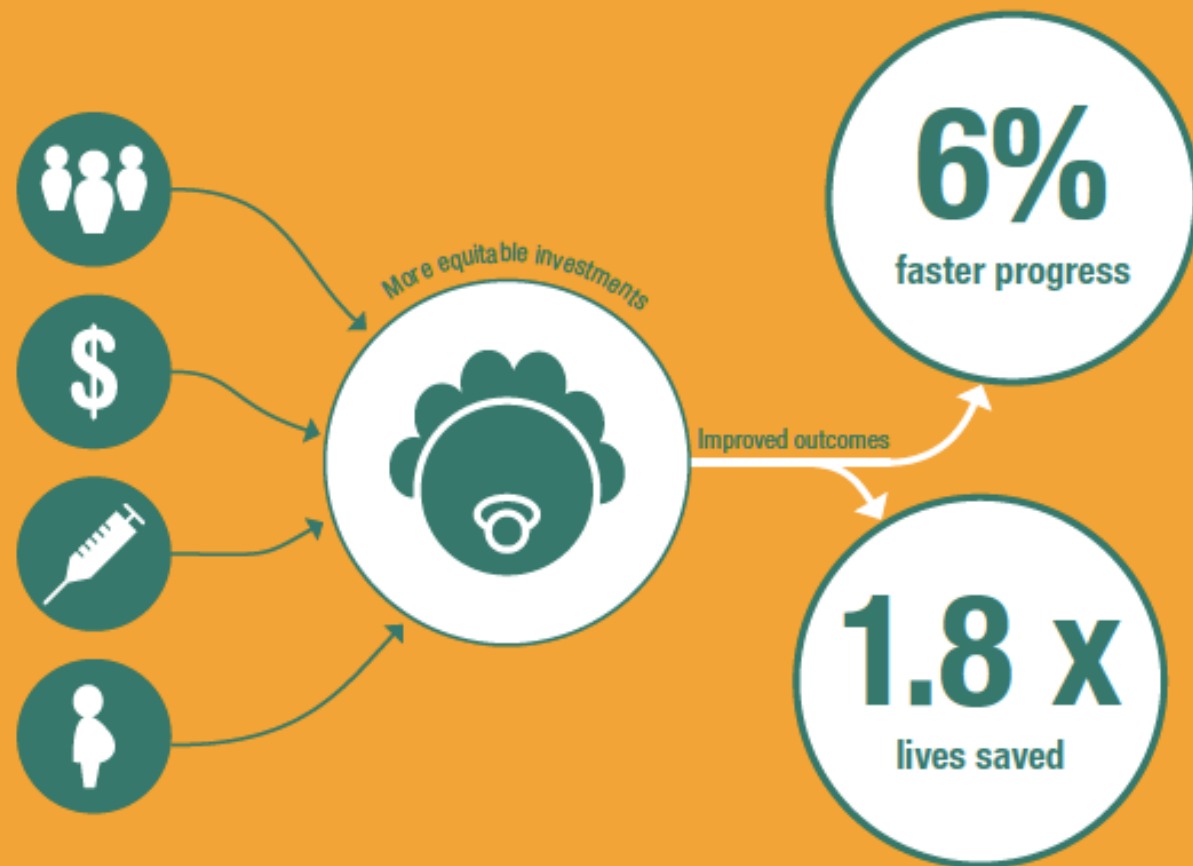
2009: Over 70% of target communities are connected

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

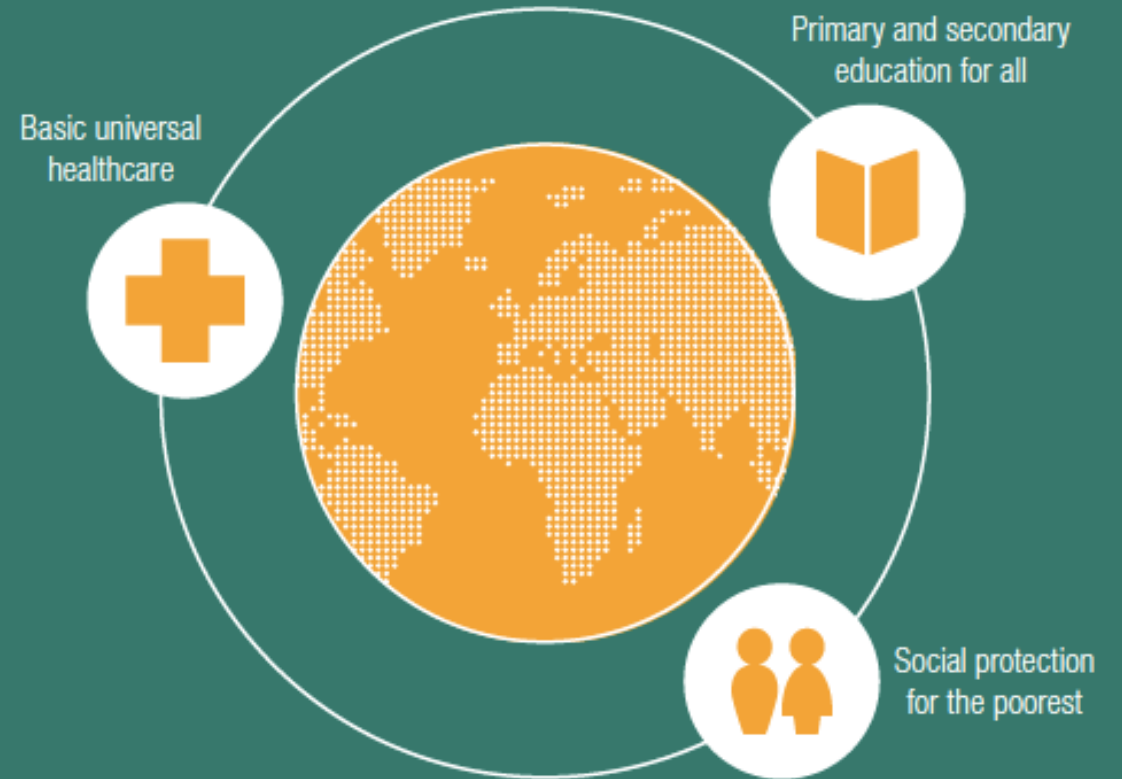
Equity-enhancing investments yield higher gains



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





What do people who have been left behind want?

- *Priority 1: Government spending on key services*
- *Priority 2: Living in dignity without discrimination and shame*
- *Priority 3: Institutional and legal reform*



‘Leave no one behind’ in the Arab region

- Lowest health expenditure per GDP at less than half the world average
- Lowest labour force participation rates for women, at less than half the world average
- Ten times the per person world average number of refugees
- Highest number of international migrant workers in the Gulf countries, at more than ten times the world average
- In the past 25 years, almost half of all Arab countries, home to more than half of total Arab populations) have experienced conventional wars, civil wars, or both



For further questions:

s.nicolai@odi.org.uk

Susan Nicolai
Senior Research Fellow
Growth, Poverty and Inequality
ODI

@susan_nicolai