

Beyond Slogans - Good Practice to Count Us All In

Summary

July 10, 2017

Side Event at the High Level Political Forum 2017

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Getting behind the slogan “leave no one behind” means making visible the contributions and highlighting the discriminations people experience as they age which may be related to disability and/or gender. At the very first side event of the HLPF, the Stakeholder Group on Ageing, the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities, and representatives of United Nations agencies, United Nations member states, NGOs and civil society groups had a unique collaboration to address the intersecting invisibilities of the 2030 agenda. This session shared information, existing best practices, data initiatives, and concrete proposals to influence the upcoming HLPF, the UN, and SDG national implementation processes.

Member states present emphasized the importance of acting on this issues at the very highest level of government. For example, Mexico has placed its SDG monitoring office in the office of the president which allows for coordination cross-cutting all ministries and administration offices. This also allows collective inter-divisional capacity building to produce, use, and disaggregate data on issues of age, gender, and disability for evidence-based policies for the SDGs and other internationally agreed goals such as MIPAA.

Numbers matter and action is needed now.

By 2050, about 2 billion people are expected to be over 60, representing 22% of the world’s population. Chronic poverty and income insecurity in old age is widespread and over 80 per cent of persons with disabilities live in poverty¹. One out of every five women out of 5 has a disability.² Women comprise up to three-quarters of persons with disabilities in low and middle-income countries, with the number of older women with disabilities rising.³ However, older persons and women and girls with disabilities are still routinely left out of evidence-based policy development because of limitations of data sets and pervasive social constructs, stereotypes, and discrimination.

Many examples of promising practices and initiatives were presented by panelists.

- UNDESA discussed a joint initiative by the UNPD, DSPD, with support from the Statistics Division and ECA, to develop a standard methodology to produce, analyze and deliver a database on harmonized indicators of older persons in Africa for evidence-based policies for sustainable development. The pilot survey will be conducted in Malawi in this summer. The

¹ Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 23.

² WHO and World Bank. 2011. World Report on Disability. Geneva: WHO.

³ UN Women, 2017. Issue brief: Making the SDGs count for women and girls with disabilities. New York: UN.

questionnaire, which covers the three priority areas of MIPAA⁴, has been developed through a strong participatory approach to ensure its reflection of the sub-Saharan context with the organization of three national workshops in Kenya, Malawi and Uganda and one regional workshop for the validations of the instruments. With respect to disability, it will contain both the questions developed by Washington Group as well as questions on functional ability used in other major surveys on ageing (Activities of Daily Living).

- Visually representing gaps in data on the life cycle encourages greater efforts by all stakeholders to be accountable to their citizens and provides incentive to others to improve.
- A “City Group” on ageing is under discussion by the statistical division and is being championed by a number of countries, including the UK.
- A representative from the UN Development Report office described a new approach to bring attention to the lifecycle deprivations of women, which is currently constrained because of gaps in data on pensions.
- UN women is exploring ways to highlight issues on age and women and girls with disabilities.
- A UN interagency collaboration is underway on issues of age and Leave No One Behind.
- In Asia Pacific, the regional SDG consultations have had more positive outcomes due to civil society collaboration with member states and UN ESCAP, particularly between persons with disabilities, older persons, and indigenous groups.
- A seven-country project in Africa was described where persons with disabilities collaborated with all sectors to increase positive input and evidence across the life cycle for SDG implementation.

Conclusions and recommendations

Participants agreed that for all people to be empowered agents of development, the following should be implemented:

- Utilize existing tools immediately to disaggregate data so that older persons, women, and persons with disabilities are included, such as the Washington Group set of questions and module on Child Functioning.
- Expand data sets to include the full life cycle.
- Ensure social policies and data collection are conducted intersectionally to ensure full participation of all underrepresented groups.
- Communicate, coordinate, and collaborate with civil society, member states, and UN bodies to improve practice and share knowledge
- Monitor all SDG goals and targets with fully disaggregated data by age, sex, and disability

The event was moderated by Mr. Paul Ladd, UNRISD. Many inputs were made from a range of civil society and UN agencies present. Statements and presentations were made by: Mr. Bruno Rios, Mission of Mexico; Ms. Mayra Soto, Mission of El Salvador; Ms. Yumiko Kamiwa, UNDESA Population Division; Ms. Megan Smith, IDA; Dr. Emem Omokaro, Dave Omokaro Foundation; Ms. Ana Pelaez, European Disability Forum; Mr. Berhanu Tefera, Africa Disability Forum; and Sylvia Beales, Gray Panthers.

⁴ Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

For further information, contact: Jack Kupferman 917-535-0457, jkupferman@aol.com

