



Training Toolkit on Government Innovation for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups

Module 3

Vulnerability in the Contexts of Economic, Social and Environmental Challenges and Opportunities





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1. Social, Economic and Environmental Contexts of Vulnerability
2. Identifying the Root Causes of Vulnerability
3. Opportunities & Benefits of Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups for Inclusive Socio-Economic Development

Learning Objectives

- To understand how vulnerability is contextualized in socio-economic-environmental challenges; the related root causes of vulnerability; and the actors relevant dealing with vulnerability
- To change the perspective and mindset of participants that vulnerable groups could be the agents of change for achieving sustainable development and facilitate understanding on the opportunities and benefits of reaping the potential of vulnerable groups for inclusive socio-economic development



1. Social, Economic & Environmental Contexts of Vulnerability





1. Social, Economic and Environmental Contexts of Vulnerability

1.1 Economic context of vulnerability

How do poverty and other economic factors impact vulnerability?

- Inherent economic causes of vulnerability
 - poverty
 - low income
 - unemployment/employment in informal sector
 - lack of access to finance/credits
- Lack of / less resources to cope with external shocks e.g.
 - assets loss
 - livelihoods loss
 - economic loss



1. Social, Economic and Environmental Contexts of Vulnerability

1.1 Economic context of vulnerability

- **Consequences**

- SDG 1: (exacerbation of) poverty
- SDG 2: malnutrition
- SDG 3: spread of diseases
- SDG 4: lack of access to quality education
- SDG 5: gender inequality
- SDG 6, SDG 11: poor housing conditions / hygiene
- SDG 16, SDG 13: migration / displacement

=> Further marginalizing the vulnerable groups & deterring the progress in achieving the SDGs



1. Social, Economic and Environmental Contexts of Vulnerability

1.2 Social context of vulnerability

How do power dynamics and other social dimensions impact vulnerability?

- Vulnerability can arise from belonging to a specific group, characterized by e.g.
 - social-economic conditions
 - gender
 - ethnic
 - cultural identity
 - age
 - language



1. Social, Economic and Environmental Contexts of Vulnerability

1.2 Social context of vulnerability

- **Consequences**
 - Inability to raise the voice
 - difficulty to react to potential risks; lack of resilience to disasters and human-induced hazards
 - lack of support, help or intervention by government or other stakeholders
- If exacerbated, it can result in:
 - further discrimination/marginalization or even persecution
 - insufficient representation in society
 - poverty
 - displacement



1. Social, Economic and Environmental Contexts of Vulnerability

1.3 Environmental context of vulnerability

How do environmental pollution and climate change impact vulnerability?

- Growing world population, rising demand for food, water and energy and a dwindling natural resource base means **growing pressure on vulnerable groups**
- Climate change is a **vulnerability multiplier**, because it causes higher intensity and frequency of natural disasters. The result is more floods, storms, draughts, heat waves, and secondary effects such as salinization of groundwater
- People with the lowest income often have to live in areas with the highest **environmental risks/hazards** (air pollution, chemicals, water pollution, etc.); which increase their vulnerability.



1. Social, Economic and Environmental Contexts of Vulnerability

1.3 Environmental context of vulnerability

- Environmental risks/hazards have severe impacts on:
 - health
 - transportation, energy, water, education, health and other infrastructures
 - economic systems
 - livelihoods
- Impact on vulnerable groups will be more severe due to lack of **resilience**; especially in those countries in special situations, such as Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS)





1. Social, Economic and Environmental Contexts of Vulnerability

1.3 Environmental context of vulnerability

- Certain people or households are more at risk from environmental hazards because they:
 - Lack the capacity to avoid them (e.g. living in a settlement lacking provisions for protected water, sanitation and drainage).
 - Are more affected by them (e.g. infants are at much greater risk of death from diarrhea and acute respiratory infections than older groups).
 - Are less equipped to cope with the illness, injury or premature death they cause (e.g. persons who cannot afford treatment from a doctor or medicine).



1. Social, Economic and Environmental Contexts of Vulnerability

1.4 Other contexts of vulnerability

Other causes of vulnerability that are not explicitly included under social, economic or environmental impacts, include:

- **Pandemics (e.g. COVID-19)** impact the most vulnerable most, because of:
 - lack access to effective communication to help prepare against the pandemic.
 - not benefiting from surveillance and early-warning systems and access to health services
 - the economic burden of COVID-19 infections is high to these households, who already have low health baseline statistics
 - the most vulnerable are relatively more susceptible to psychological pressures due to life's hardships
 - the future of the most vulnerable, which lies in their children's education, is now at risk because of COVID-19



Further elaborated in **Module 9 Ensuring Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups During Public Health Emergencies**





1. Social, Economic and Environmental Contexts of Vulnerability

1.4 Other contexts of vulnerability

- **Geographical/physical constraints & challenges:** Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are an important example; many of them are even more impacted by the climate crisis than other countries or areas.
- **Historical/political factors,** e.g. Long-lasting suppression of certain groups can have a long-lasting impact on their resilience to shocks.





1. Social, Economic and Environmental Contexts of Vulnerability

Short Exercise (1)



- What are your own examples of i) social, ii) economic, iii) environmental, and iv) other vulnerabilities?
- Write down your ideas on separate sticky notes and put them on the wall to share with other participants.



2. Identifying the Root Causes of Vulnerability





2. Identifying the Root Causes of Vulnerability

- Addressing the consequences of vulnerability is **not enough**
- It is necessary to **address the causes / processes** that lead to vulnerability → with a **systemic approach**
 - Example of systemic causes:
 - **Persistent neglect** by the government
 - Lack of **education**
 - Lack of access to **public services**
 - Lack of **employment**
 - Lack of access to **justice**



2. Identifying the Root Causes of Vulnerability

- Before taking actions to address vulnerabilities:
 1. **Identify** the main root causes
 2. Be aware of the **challenges & benefits** stemming out from identification of vulnerabilities
 3. **Design** an inclusive & systemic strategy to tackle root causes



2. Identifying the Root Causes of Vulnerability

- **Challenges** related to identification / definition of vulnerable groups can lead to :
 - **Discrimination** → unchanged status quo of underprivileged status
 - **Stereotyping** → i.e. the undifferentiated labelling of entire groups as vulnerable, simply because they are classified within a specific group for reasons other than vulnerability (Levine et al., 2004; Luna, 2009).
 - **Linearity trap** → using a standardized strategy instead of understanding the real needs



2. Identifying the Root Causes of Vulnerability

- **Benefits** related to identification / definition of vulnerable groups to better address vulnerabilities
 - e.g. it is important to identify **gender inequality** as an inherent vulnerability to understand the impacts such as:
 - Lack of employment
 - Lack of education
 - Domestic violence
 - Maternal and reproductive health
 - Low representation in political power





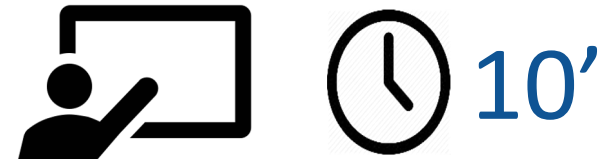
2. Identifying the Root Causes of Vulnerability

- Whole-of-government and whole-of-society efforts with all stakeholders on board to deal with the identification and addressing of vulnerability -> who are they? (see also Module 4)
 - Public sector
 - National statistic institutions
 - Human rights bodies & international instruments (treaties, conventions)
 - Community-Based Organizations / Non-Governmental Organizations
 - Foundations
 - Private sector



2. Identifying the Root Causes of Vulnerability

Short Exercise (2)



- What are the ways to identify the root causes of vulnerability?
- Write down your ideas on separate sticky notes and put them on the wall to share with other participants; *put the notes under the corresponding/related vulnerabilities identified in Short Exercise (1).*

3. Opportunities & Benefits of Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups for Inclusive Socio-Economic Development





3. Opportunities & Benefits of Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups for Inclusive Socio-Economic Development

- Addressing vulnerabilities by engaging and empowering the vulnerable groups can bring opportunities and benefits for socio-economic development
- Paradigm change in public governance on the perception of vulnerable groups as passive recipient of government social assistance to proactive agents of development
- Reaping the untapped potential of vulnerable groups for achieving more inclusive development – reducing social tension



3. Opportunities & Benefits of Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups for Inclusive Socio-Economic Development

- **Example 1:** Project “Creating Inclusive and Decent Jobs for Socially Vulnerable Groups” (Azerbaijan): enhance capacities for unemployed job-seekers from vulnerable groups to create opportunities for their productive employment within the formal labour market
- **Example 2:** training on promotion of the employment opportunities for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups of the population of Turkmenistan





3. Opportunities & Benefits of Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups for Inclusive Socio-Economic Development

Short Exercise (3)



- What are the specific opportunities and benefits of social inclusion of vulnerable groups for inclusive socio-economic development?
- What are the specific cases in your country where vulnerable groups act as proactive acts of change for achieving sustainable development?



Group Work





Group Work

Group Discussion



Please discuss the following questions in your group:

- 1) What are the **root causes** of vulnerability?
- 2) How to mobilize the **untapped potential** of vulnerable people?
- 3) What does it mean to act **systemically**?
- 4) In case of **processes** that lead to vulnerability, what are the kind of processes that are being included: e.g. political, social, economic, environmental...
- 5) What are the risks associated with each type of definition?
 - a) Discrimination
 - b) Stereotyping
- 6) Which are the main actors that cause or can address/solve the situation of vulnerability?
- 7) According to you, which of these actors are the most effective / appropriate and why?



Background Materials

<p>Key Readings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN DESA (2018): Innovation in Delivering Public Services to Vulnerable Groups for Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Brooks, N. (2003), Vulnerability, risk and adaptation: a conceptual framework, <i>Tyndall Center for Climate Change Research</i>, Working Paper n.38. Uploaded in dropbox. https://www.ipcc.ch/apps/nj-lite/srex/nj-lite_download.php?id=5463 (Suggested reading: chapter 3 and 4). UN ESCAP (2018), <i>Inequality in Asia and the Pacific in the Era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</i> https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/ThemeStudyOnInequality.pdf UN ESCAP (2020), Leaving No One Behind: By Country https://www.unescap.org/resources/leaving-no-one-behind-lnob-country#
<p>Further Readings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ziervogel, 2004), <i>A selection of methods and tools for assessing vulnerability and the potential benefits of adaptation options</i>. https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/?wpfb_dl=236 UNHCR (2016), <i>Vulnerability Screening Tool: Identifying and addressing vulnerability</i>, https://www.unhcr.org/protection/detention/57fe30b14/unhcr-idc-vulnerability-screening-tool-identifying-addressing-vulnerability.html UN DESA, <i>Vulnerability Vulnerability-Resilience Country Profile (VRCP) for SIDS</i> https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1982Vulnerability-Resilience%20Country%20Profile%20(VRCP).pdf UN Sustainable Development and Solutions Network (2019), <i>The 2019 US Cities Sustainable Development Report</i> (pp.23-31, The use of leave-no-one-behind indicators to identify vulnerable groups). https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2019/2019USCitiesReport.pdf UN OHCHR (2016), <i>Principles and Guidelines, supported by practical guidance, on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations</i>, United Nations Publications. https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/PrinciplesAndGuidelines.pdf UN ESCWA (2019), Social Development Report 3 Leaving No One Behind: Inclusion of Marginalized Groups in Some Arab Countries, E/ESCWA/SDD/2019/4 https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/leaving-no-one-behind-integrating-marginalized-groups-english.pdf



Background Materials

<p>Additional Readings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: <i>Integrated approach</i> • Mcentire, D., Peters, E. (2010), Addressing vulnerability through an integrated approach, <i>International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment</i>, vol. 1, n. 1., pp. 50-64, https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Addressing-vulnerability-through-an-integrated-McEntire-Mph/38198e35ba9f464f59a0fded9e533415d09fc682#paper-header • UN DESA (2016), Leaving no one behind — SDG Indicators https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/Leaving-no-one-behind/ • Topic: <i>Vulnerability and environmental change - perception of risks and actual vulnerability.</i> • Adger, W.N. et al. (2005), The determinants of vulnerability and adaptive capacity at the national level and the implications for adaptation, <i>Global Environmental Change</i>, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2004.12.006, vol. 15, pp. 151- 163 (Suggested readings: Chapter 1, 2, 4, 6). • Adger, W. (2006), Vulnerability, <i>Global Environmental Change</i>, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2006.02.006, vol. 16, pp. 268-281 (Suggested reading: chapter 1, 2 and 4). • Topic: <i>Vulnerability and poverty</i> • Damas, P., Israt, R. (2004), <i>Vulnerability and Poverty: What are the causes and how are they related?</i>, https://www.zef.de/fileadmin/downloads/forum/docprog/Termpapers/2004_3a_Philip_Rayan.pdf (Suggested Reading: pp. 8 – 15).
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End of Module 3

