Module 2
Vulnerability and Leaving No One Behind for Achieving the 2030 Agenda
Contents

1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
2. Definition of Vulnerability
3. What is Government Innovation for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups?

Learning Objectives

• To learn how addressing vulnerability and promoting inclusion of vulnerable groups are related to achieving the 2030 Agenda
• To understand what innovation in government is needed
• To understand that vulnerability is a systemic challenge
• To facilitate the understanding of & the discussion about vulnerability-related definitions necessary for addressing the following Modules.
1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda
1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda

- In the last decade, development has been progressing fast.

- Development is **unevenly distributed, unequal** and **too slow** to achieve the SDGs before 2030.

- This inequality impacts some groups more than others.

- Most affected: poorest & **most vulnerable**

- **Marginalization** of vulnerable groups exists both in developing and developed countries.
1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda

• “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 27 September 2015.

• The Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity, with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 Targets.
1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda

- The SDGs are **universal** (all countries) and **indivisible** (no cherry-picking, all SDGs are linked and relevant)

- “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (Sept. 2015) aims to promote human rights and address vulnerability by **2030**

- The core principle: **leave no one behind** + endeavor to reach the furthest behind first

- Urgent need to empower the most vulnerable!
1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda

Which Agenda 2030 Goals illustrate inclusion of vulnerable groups as a cross-cutting principle?

In fact, **ALL SDGs contain references to vulnerability. Examples:**

- SDG 1 on poverty
- SDG 2 on food security, nutrition and agriculture
- SDG 4 on education and learning opportunities
- SDG 5 on gender equality
- SDG 6 on water and sanitation
- SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy
- SDG 8 on decent work
- SDG 10 on reducing inequality
- SDG 11 on cities, with a specific reference to the poor and vulnerable or those in vulnerable situations
- SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions
1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda

Vulnerable groups are explicitly mentioned in the 2030 Agenda

• “The new Agenda builds on the Millennium Development Goals and seeks to complete what they did not achieve, particularly in reaching the most vulnerable.” (p.6)

• “We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.” (p.2)

• “People who are vulnerable must be empowered. Those whose needs are reflected in the Agenda include all children, youth, persons with disabilities (of whom more than 80 percent live in poverty), people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants” (p.7).
1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda

It is impossible to achieve Agenda 2030 and its 17 SDGs if vulnerable groups are left behind
1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda

Definition of vulnerable groups according to the 2030 Agenda

“all children, youth, persons with disabilities (of whom more than 80% live in poverty), people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous people, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants [and] people living in areas affected by complex humanitarian emergencies and in areas affected by terrorism” (para. 23).
1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda

Key areas identified as crucial to achieving Leaving No One Behind based on VNRs of 45 countries in 2019

Source: CDP (2020) background paper No. 50
1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda

Who is left behind?
based on VNRs of 45 countries in 2019

Source: CDP (2020) background paper No. 50
1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda

Strategies to address most marginalized often missing - based on VNRs of 45 countries in 2019

Source: CDP (2020) background paper No. 50
1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda

“Large gaps in well-being and opportunities within and among countries are national as well as global problems, demanding integrated, multilateral solution”

- UN DESA World Social Report 2020 -
1. Addressing Vulnerability & Achieving the 2030 Agenda

LESS THAN HALF OF THE GLOBAL POPULATION IS COVERED BY ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES (2017)

EXISTING PATTERNS OF DISCRIMINATION MAY BE ENRENGCHED BY THE CRISIS

COVID-19 IMPLICATIONS

THE MOST VULNERABLE GROUPS ARE BEING HIT HARDEST BY THE PANDEMIC

3 BILLION PEOPLE WORLDWIDE LACK BASIC HANDWASHING FACILITIES AT HOME

THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD FOR COVID-19 PREVENTION

80-YEAR-OLDS ARE DYING FROM CORONAVIRUS AT 5X THE AVERAGE RATE

3 IN 10 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HAVE EXPERIENCED DISCRIMINATION (2014-2018)

OLDER PERSONS PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES CHILDREN WOMEN MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

FEWER THAN 1 IN 5 PEOPLE USE THE INTERNET IN LDCs (2019)

2. Defining Vulnerability
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- **Vulnerability** is a weakness or some area where you are exposed or at risk (https://www.yourdictionary.com/vulnerability).

- **Vulnerability =** the quality of being **vulnerable** (= able to be easily hurt, influenced, or attacked), or something that is vulnerable (Cambridge dictionary)

- Vulnerability is a **theoretical concept** that is **not measurable** or observable.

- Vulnerability is a very broad term -> context-dependent -> many different definitions.

- The only consensus in academia: vulnerability is bound to a **specific location and context**.
2. Defining Vulnerability

• Vulnerability is not a natural phenomenon
  ➢ It has historical, social, cultural, environmental, political, economic roots

For understanding & addressing vulnerability, we must have a clear view on all contributing causes & circumstances

• Vulnerability is systemic
  ➢ It is the addition of a number of causes and not a single phenomenon
  ➢ Solutions to overcome vulnerability must be systemic too
2. Defining Vulnerability

- Vulnerability is **complex** and **multi-dimensional**
  - This is why the process of identification may be challenging

- A thorough identification process needs to combine different types of **methodologies** and **data sources**

- Identification processes are challenging because of the lack of e.g. universally accepted methodology, disaggregated data, inconsistent data, insufficient technical skills to evaluate
2. Defining Vulnerability

• Vulnerability is **dynamic** - not a **static** phenomenon.

• It can be related to:
  
  - **present** conditions → e.g. state of poverty, war, famine
  - **future** conditions → e.g. **risk** of socio-political, economic or environmental threats that eventually lead to e.g. poverty, war, famine
  
  - **Risk** means “the potential for consequences where something of value is at stake [and there is] a probability of occurrence of hazardous events” (IPCC, 2018).
2. Defining Vulnerability

• Vulnerability is a **multi-faceted** concept.

• It denotes **susceptibility to harm** / reduced ability to respond to threats.

• It might depend on:
  - social, economic and/or environmental **context**
  - **living conditions**
  - **power** structures
  - **social** organization
2. Defining Vulnerability

- Vulnerability varies from situation to situation
  - within the same group there might be **different types of vulnerability**
- Vulnerability is dynamic
  - it might change overtime in **unexpected ways**
2. Defining Vulnerability

• **Neglect of policy attention** or **lack of strategy** to address vulnerability
  ➢ e.g. lack of effective strategies to reach the furthest behind
• Exclusion from channels of communication with central State **increases vulnerability**
  ➢ e.g. no welfare, no economic development, no public service
• Minorities are considered vulnerable because of their **difficulty to access to public services**
  ➢ e.g. literacy barriers, language, disabilities, lack of resources
• Vulnerability can occur because of **unforeseen and rapid changes**
  ➢ e.g. environmental disaster or mismanagement, demographic changes, economic processes, urbanization, hazardous livelihood options
2. Defining Vulnerability

- **World Bank**: vulnerability is an “exposure to risk that leads to unacceptable levels of deprivation”.

- **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**: vulnerability is “the ability or inability of individuals and social groupings to respond to, in the sense of cope with, recover from or adapt to, any external stress placed on their livelihoods and wellbeing”.

  - Example: **less means** (i.e. ability) to adapt (i.e. to respond) to climate change (i.e. external stress) = **more vulnerability**
2. Defining Vulnerability

- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
  - Vulnerability = inability to enjoy human rights + high exposure to risk of violation and abuse.
  - States have the duty to heighten care and respect and fulfil human rights.
  - Uphold human dignity & recognize and address vulnerability.
2. Defining Vulnerability

- United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR):
  
  ➢ “The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards.”

- World Health Organization (WHO):
  
  ➢ “Vulnerability is the degree to which a population, individual or organization is unable to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impacts of disasters.”
2. Defining Vulnerability

Increased vulnerabilities due to urbanization process

Bangalore: growth of urban sprawl 1973 – 2006

Source: https://vividmaps.com/bangalores-growing-urban-sprawl-1973/

Photo credit: UN Photo/Kibae Park
3. What is Government Innovation for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups?
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What is government innovation?

- Innovation in government is about finding new ways to impact the lives of citizens, and new approaches to activating them as partners to shape the future together. It involves overcoming old structures and modes of thinking and embracing new technologies and ideas.

- The potential of innovation in government is immense; however, the challenges governments face are significant. Despite this, governments are transforming the way they work to ensure this potential is met.

Source: OECD Embracing Innovation in Government - Global Trends, February 2017
What is government innovation?

- Government innovation is not continuous incremental improvements of services (e.g. adding a Facebook page to a service) but it is about discontinuous, systematic and relevant change (e.g. offering a service only via a Facebook page).
- Given the public sector context, which is often constraining, and the need for more systematic and strategic innovation, the role the public manager/staff is to strike a balance between stability and predictability on the one hand, and leadership, change and innovation on the other hand.

Why is government innovation needed?

- Social, political, environmental and technological factors are all combining to mean that staying the same is not an option.
- Multi-faced/changing needs and vulnerabilities of vulnerable groups
- Government capacity gaps
3. What is Government Innovation for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups?

Source: UK Policy Lab Blog https://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/category/policy-lab/
3. What is Government Innovation for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups?

### Government as a system

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Source: UK Policy Lab Blog [https://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/category/policy-lab/](https://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/category/policy-lab/)
Social inclusion is:
“The process of improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of people disadvantaged on the basis of their identity to take part in society” (World Bank 2013, 50).

The World Bank considers three interrelated channels through which inclusion can be enhanced: ability, opportunity, and dignity. All three channels act in tandem to produce the conditions for individuals and groups to take part in society. (Figure: Framework for Social Inclusion)

3. What is Government Innovation for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups?

Social inclusion, integration and cohesion

The process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status, through enhanced opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights.

“A society for all” in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play.

The absence of fractures or divisions within society and the ability to manage such divisions. A cohesive society creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, fights exclusion and marginalization and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility.


3. What is Government Innovation for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups?

Social inclusion of vulnerable groups starts with government innovation including innovating governance and public service delivery for vulnerable groups

• How can government empower vulnerable groups?
  ➢ By listening and understanding their concerns and needs

• How can government listen & understand concerns?
  ➢ By partnering up, communicating effectively & acting alongside vulnerable groups

• What next?
  ➢ Create public services that reflect concerns and needs of such groups
3. What is Government Innovation for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups?

- **Inclusive public service delivery for vulnerable groups**
  - Vulnerable groups should be engaged in **co-designing** and **co-creating** public services to address their special needs
  - Especially the essential public services such as health, education, water and sanitation

- **Participation in consultation for policy designing and in policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation**
  - **Institutionalize the engagement** of vulnerable groups and evaluate the impact of such mechanism
  - Multi-channel engagement is important for vulnerable groups
  - Supreme Audit Institutions, parliament and civil society organizations for the interests of vulnerable groups should all foster such participation
Group Work
Group Work (1)

Work in pairs and discuss the following questions:

- How is vulnerability defined in your country/organization?
- How is this definition country-specific and how does it link to SDG implementation?
- What are approaches, strategies and tools for identifying vulnerable people and their multifaceted and heterogenous vulnerabilities?
Discuss and see whether you agree on the following set of conclusions.

- Vulnerability is about individual people – some people are more vulnerable than others.
- Vulnerability is about groups of people with common characteristics and who tend to be as a group in a similar situation of vulnerability.
- Vulnerability is about processes that lead people and groups of people with common characteristics being ‘vulnerable’.
- Vulnerability is about actors that influence the way these processes – identified above – are playing out.
Group Work (3)

Write down your answers to the below question in post-its

- Why do we need innovation in government?
- Why is innovation in government critical for social inclusion?
- Who should be included in designing new services and why?

Then share three key insights with other participants & the whole group in the plenary
Background Materials

**Key Readings**


**Further Readings**

- UNDP (2019) Development approaches to migration and displacement
## Additional Readings

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End of Module 2