

Adverse Inclusion

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Target 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Key messages:

1. Recognize the risk of adverse inclusion/incorporation.

Inclusive interventions (instruments and processes) do not always improve the conditions for the marginalized. Being aware of how such interventions can make their situation worse is critical for successful inclusion.

2. Adverse Social Inclusion occurs when ...

The way in which knowledge is reduced in interventions that must be measurable, affordable, and recover costs does not differentiate between different groups of vulnerable people or assess the contexts within which they participate.

3. Adverse Ecological Inclusion occurs when ...

Inclusive processes lead to local environmental degradation and when ecological measures expose local people to socio-economic disadvantage.

4. Adverse relational inclusion occurs when...

Empowerment processes fall short of empowering people adequately to question the status quo, often through symbolic gestures such as inviting participation or providing access to courts but without facilitating such participation or providing legal aid.

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mention that all goals should be achieved in an inclusive manner. The word 'inclusive' is repeated 41 times (Gupta and Vegelin 2016). This applies to all Goals including those on water, food and climate change. Inclusion sounds easy, but it is very challenging. An inclusive society for sustainable development requires social, ecological and relational inclusiveness.

Recognize the risk of adverse inclusion

The literature is replete with cases of inclusion that have exacerbated the situation for those who have been included, i.e. when advantages (A) are less than the disadvantages (D) ($A < D$). For example:

- *Adverse social inclusion*: when a small farmer is included in a global value chain but has to buy expensive seeds and herbicides, is vulnerable to global market prices, and has no exit because of contractual obligations.
- *Adverse ecological inclusion*: when local communities are employed e.g. in mining projects which leads to enhanced income but also increased living costs because of the related damage to other ecosystem services (e.g. water).
- *Adverse relational inclusion*: when access to participatory processes lead to increased participation costs.

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Adverse social inclusion (ASI) occurs when e.g. ...

- Interventions are narrowly defined to meet quantitative targets that facilitate accountability.
- Interventions do not differentiate between (a) people with different forms of permanent address, formality of housing, registration, or income; (b) different groups' capacity for market access; or (c) people with differing capacity to navigate institutional contexts.
- There is no title to land, the provision of formal services (water, sanitation, energy) is (a) of low quality if related to ability to pay; or (b) substituted by more expensive external paid services (e.g. paid toilets).
- Interventions do not account for socially embedded exchange and material constraints of production practiced by small producers.
- Interventions using intermediaries or subsidies to facilitate participation, provide services, but there are no (a) accountability processes on intermediaries; or (b) formal and enforceable criteria for funding or provision of resources; this can lead to corruption (charging a bribe), clientelism (providing access to some), elite capture (including when husbands take over work of wives), and blocking activities (preventing access by some).
- Local property rights are not recognized and enforced; this may lead to the transfer of such rights to others making these groups homeless and forced to work as migrant labourers.
- Interventions require relocation to isolated areas; further isolating the marginalized.
- Interventions recognize/give title to (prime) land but accompanying taxes forces these people to sell.
- The location of work in an intervention project is in an area excluded from 'optic' mechanisms within policy, then work may be unregulated, creating conditions for exploitation.
- The temporal vulnerability of marginalized communities is not taken into account and softened through social security measures.
- Entry requirements do not differentiate between vulnerabilities leading to inclusion at higher interest rates, or worse employment terms in more spatially and socially isolated situations.
- Commercial market participation (CMP) requires switching to specific seeds, fertilizers, etc.; costs go up.
- Outsourced referral-based hiring reduces accountability for labour or discrimination laws.
- Exit from the labour market is limited because of long-term contracts or poor on-the-job training.

Adverse ecological inclusion (ARI) occurs when e.g. ...

- Inclusive job opportunities are accompanied by damage of the local ecosystem services or contributions of nature on which the local people depend for their consumption – e.g. clean water, pollinators, etc..
- Inclusive service provision is of low quality because of the requirement of cost recovery, exposing local people to the related ecological damage.
- Inclusive re-location of people based on affordability exposes them to the air pollution and wastes of others.
- Ecological interventions – e.g. the establishment of nature parks, environmental impact assessments, environmental standards create adverse socio-economic conditions for local people.

Adverse relational inclusion (ARI) occurs when e.g. ...

- Inclusive processes through registering participants in the informal economy (including illegal migrants and unregistered refugees) makes the latter subject to unaffordable environmental & labour laws.
- The temporal vulnerability of marginalized communities is not taken into account and softened through social security measures
- Procedural justice approaches such as access to participation is provided but not supported financially or through expertise and education, this can lead to (a) additional costs of participation without a clear perspective on a reward; (b) a manipulative participative process where consent to the final outcome is presumed; and/or (c) a negative outcome for those who participate.
- Access to courts is allowed but not (or poorly) facilitated; existing violations of human rights may proceed with impunity or the marginalized lose their case because of poor ability to use the courts.
- Small producers are not effectively represented in the decision making of purchasing practices, quality/quantity, /logistics, and certification requirements of commercial markets/GPN's, then small producers may (a) become contractually exploited including forms of slavery; (b) lose control over their production process and (c) receive less returns on their investment.

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