



# Bringing Agenda 2030 to Life

AFRICA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Caritas Africa

In partnership with CAFOD and University College London



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The contents of this report reflect the views and opinions of the research participants, rather than those of the research team.

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**Caritas Africa (2019), Bringing Agenda 2030 to life. Regional Sustainable Development Report. Nairobi.**

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# Executive Summary

This report focuses on the four transformative principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: **leave no-one behind**; **tackle inequalities**; **integrate environment and development**; and **promote participation and dialogue**.

The report uses a bottom-up approach to identify positive examples of sustainable development policies and practices chosen as a result of dialogue between different stakeholders. The report derives from a participatory learning process in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Zambia to localise the 2030 Agenda.

## The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

2015 represented a major shift in development thinking as the focus moved on from the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets. This shift represented many years of collective thinking and inclusive conversations about international development priorities. The result was an ambitious agenda: 'Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'.



## Transformative principles

This report, and the research it is based on, seeks to bring that ambitious agenda to life. This means focusing not just on individual goals and targets but also paying more attention to the transformative principles that cut across Agenda 2030.

We have focused on four key principles that we believe have the potential to shape how we think about development so that we can do it differently:

- A commitment to **leave no-one behind**: ensuring that everyone reaches minimum standards; putting the most vulnerable groups at the centre of policy-making and tackling the discrimination that different individuals and groups face.
- An emphasis on **tackling inequalities**: challenging inequalities in the distribution of wealth, power and opportunities, and addressing the discrimination faced by certain groups.
- **Integrating the environment and development**: encouraging development processes that support and restore our common home so that it can provide for the needs of both present and future generations.
- Promoting people's **participation and dialogue**: ensuring that women and men are able to participate in ongoing dialogue and contribute to decision-making with regard to development priorities, policies and programmes.

These four transformative principles are also strongly supported by Catholic Social Teaching. Shortly before Agenda 2030 was agreed, Pope Francis published his Encyclical “Laudato Si’ – On care for our common home”. Laudato Si’ questions the current model of development and invites the global population to engage in a dialogue that redefines progress and promotes development in ways that benefit all – particularly the poorest and most vulnerable – while also respecting the environment and the earth’s natural resources. This report discusses some of the ways in which Laudato Si’ both affirms and challenges Agenda 2030, drawing on analysis already conducted by a group of Catholic development agencies<sup>1</sup>.

## Transformative principles in practice

This regional report is a synthesis of national reports produced for Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Zambia. It offers sixteen brief case studies (identified as having the greatest transformative potential) and draws together the local understandings of each principle to offer a regional synthesis. It identifies and reflects on differences in understandings of Agenda 2030, shaped by differences in national development agendas and processes.

The research process used a questionnaire to explore the local meaning of the four transformational principles. These localised understandings were then compared to Agenda 2030, Laudato Si’ and national development plans, and this formed the basis of discussion during the participatory learning workshop. Following the workshops, key examples were developed into case studies and a report was produced for each country.

For the first principle of **leave no-one behind**, participants in all four countries made links to national agendas around ‘inclusive growth’ and ‘widespread prosperity’. Participants argued that, while some groups can be defined as left behind, diversity within groups is also important. Many, particularly in Liberia and Kenya, made links to the fourth transformative principle of **participation and dialogue**, so that individuals, groups and communities who are left behind can identify and define their own priorities.

The concern with poverty that underpinned many of the understandings of **leave no-one behind** was broadened in government agendas to a focus on the second principle of **tackling inequalities**. In slightly different ways, participants in each country framed rising inequalities (particularly in

wealth and income) as a potential threat to social cohesion and security. There were clear links between inequalities – whether income, wealth, gender or across the urban–rural divide – and power. Gender inequalities were seen as a key challenge in all four countries, in line with the focus on gender in Agenda 2030. Case study 5 in the Liberian context provides an example of land rights that highlights many of the issues raised around gender in our research.

In line with the urgency of **integrating the environment and development** expressed in both Agenda 2030 and Laudato Si’, our participants emphasised that climate change and environmental degradation are a pressing concern. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, flooding and coastal erosion posed a particular risk, while in both Kenya and Zambia deforestation was raised as an urgent issue. The case studies highlight the involvement of local communities in interventions designed to halt and address environmental degradation, including through civic education. In Kenya and Liberia, in particular, the specific remit of environmental monitoring or protection agencies was seen as valuable, but more needs to be done to ensure the implementation of progressive laws. Another issue raised was the existence of vested interests, such as the mining sector in Zambia, which might bypass these laws.

Finally, **participation and dialogue** was seen as a cross-cutting principle that would enhance work to **leave no-one behind, tackle inequalities** and **integrate the environment and development**. Participation and dialogue is not just a question of government inviting selected groups or representatives but is instead a broad process of consultation, as in the development of Sierra Leone’s Medium Term Development Plan. Forms of inclusive democracy, linked to SDG 16, were the subject of each of the four case studies presented in this part of the report – using media in Kenya and Liberia, and bringing excluded groups and decision-makers together in Zambia and Sierra Leone.

## The research process: grounded in positive examples and people’s experience of sustainable development

Local consultation processes often start from a discussion of needs and go on to identify new interventions, with governments, institutions and civil society groups frequently failing to recognise valuable work that already takes place in the country.

<sup>1</sup> CAFOD (2018) [Engaging in the 2030 Agenda through the lens of Laudato Si’](#)

This research sought to avoid this problem, and instead began by focusing on what the principles of Agenda 2030 mean to people from different sectors, asking them to identify examples of good initiatives. This approach generates shared knowledge and works well in contexts where a constructive relationship with government and between different sectors of society is possible. It does not replace a government's own strategy for building national development plans but is instead designed to analyse and complement such plans. In particular, it allows non-policy experts to help shape the implementation of policy agendas.

The research began with a comprehensive analysis of the principles behind Agenda 2030, and this analysis was then used to design a questionnaire to explore the local meaning of the four transformational principles in practice in four sub-Saharan countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Zambia.

In each country the national Caritas Africa member organisation led the process of identifying twenty-five key actors for interview, which would be the first stage in understanding the localisation of Agenda 2030. Analysis then compared these localised understandings with Agenda 2030, *Laudato Si'* and national development plans in each of the four countries. Differences and similarities were identified and formed the basis for the discussion during the participatory learning workshop which gave participants space to critically engage in a participatory learning experience that built on a critical assessment of existing practices and their strengths, with the aim of recognising problematic issues and thinking of innovative ways to overcome them.

Following the workshops, further research was undertaken into key examples and these were developed into case studies. A report was then produced for each country, discussing the national meaning of the transformational principles and challenges, and containing a number of case studies that illustrate how one or more principles and the SDGs can be addressed simultaneously.

These reports have been used directly by governments in their SDG reporting processes and have also been used by civil society coalitions to push conversations on national development. While the reports do not claim to be representative of a country's voice, they provide ideas and examples that were agreed by several key people in the country. The validation of individual perspectives was achieved through the shared production of knowledge as a result of in-depth engagement with the proposals of others and a considered collective choice of significant examples. Future work might involve similar processes with local

community actors, with deeper engagement outside of the capital city in each country.

Caritas Africa Member Organisations from 11 sub-Saharan African countries have shared these lessons in a regional workshop which highlighted similarities and differences of context and appropriate interventions.

The report identifies what has worked in each country and why, and enables participants to learn from their diversity as they strive for sustainable development and to exchange practical ways to achieve the SDGs. In particular, the report and its case studies demonstrate how civil society can gather evidence through participatory learning processes to help translate broad development agendas into the local context, and to inform their engagement with government throughout the implementation of Agenda 2030.

It goes without saying that the analysis and examples here will only be useful if actors treat them as part of a wider engagement process in which this report is just one input into a broader discussion involving a far larger number of people.

## KEY FINDINGS

- 
- **Ensuring that no-one is left behind requires both economic and social strategies to reduce stigma and help marginalised groups to claim their rights**, as case studies 2, 3 and 4 highlight
- 
- **Partnerships between civil society, national governments and international donors are needed to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable in society** – but projects should enhance (rather than being a substitute for) progressive policies, as in case studies 2 and 3
- 
- **Health, education and judicial systems all need to be inclusive, leaving no-one behind and tackling inequalities at the same time.** For the poorest and most at risk, local and national governments need to provide additional support to enable them to access these systems, as case studies 1 and 4 demonstrate
- 
- **Tackling inequalities can work across sectors and inequalities of income and gender, or across the urban-rural divide** but needs to be specifically tailored to local contexts, as case studies 5 and 7 highlight
- 
- **Work on the pressing issues of climate-change and environmental degradation can offer new opportunities to employ left-behind groups**, as in case studies 9 and 10
- 
- **The sustainability of environmental protection requires careful monitoring** of large companies and development licenses, **as well as support for alternative local livelihoods** to halt and address activities that contribute to environmental degradation, as in case studies 11 and 12
- 
- **Meaningful participation and dialogue need to be inclusive, with targeted efforts to reach those at risk of being left behind.** Participatory spaces also need to have decision-making power and budget to support their deliberations. Case studies 13 and 15 highlight how media can be a key tool to extend the reach of information and participation in decision-making, as well as accountability through engaging with law-makers
- 
- **The principle of participation and dialogue can work at multiple levels to enhance outcomes for the poorest**, between communities and multinational companies as well as between left-behind groups and governments, as in case studies 14 and 16
- 
- **Participatory research can reveal examples of positive work on the ground**, building on what is already happening while also engaging with transformative agendas and creating shared meaning

## INTRODUCTION:

**‘Bringing Agenda 2030 to Life’**

2015 marked a significant shift in development thinking, as the global focus moved on from the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets. This shift represented many years of collective thinking and inclusive conversations within the international community about the priorities of international development. It resulted in an ambitious agenda with an aspirational preamble and declaration: ‘Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’<sup>2</sup>.

This report, and the research behind it, seeks to bring that ambitious agenda to life. It aims to move beyond attention solely to individual goals and targets and to look more closely at the transformative principles that cut across Agenda 2030. In ‘Bringing Agenda 2030 to life’, we have focused on four key principles that we believe have the potential to shape how we do and think about development differently:



**A commitment to leave no-one behind:** ensuring that everyone reaches minimum standards; putting the most vulnerable groups at the centre of policy making and tackling the discrimination that different individuals and groups face.



**Integrating the environment and development:** encouraging development processes that support and restore our common home so that it can provide for the needs of both present and future generations.



**Promoting people's participation and dialogue:** ensuring that women and men are able to participate in ongoing dialogue and contribute to decision-making around development priorities, policies and programmes.



**An emphasis on tackling inequalities:** challenging inequalities in societies around how wealth, power, and opportunities are distributed, and addressing discrimination faced by certain groups.

These four principles cut across Agenda 2030, but they are also strongly supported by Catholic Social teaching, giving Catholic organisations a strong mandate to engage. Soon before the agenda was agreed, Pope Francis published his Encyclical ‘Laudato Si’ – On care for our common home’. ‘Laudato Si’ questions the current model of development and invites the global population to engage in a dialogue that re-defines progress and promotes development in ways that benefit all – particularly the poorest and most vulnerable – at the same time as respecting the environment and the earth’s natural resources. This report discusses the ways in which ‘Laudato Si’ both affirms and challenges Agenda 2030, drawing on analysis already conducted by a group of Catholic development agencies<sup>3</sup>.

Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development places a strong emphasis on adaptation to the diversity of national contexts. Therefore, this report explores local voices in bringing these four transformative principles to life. This report is part of an advocacy-focused research partnership in four sub-Saharan African countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Zambia. In each of these four countries, twenty-five women and men were interviewed about their knowledge and experience of development, bringing together participants from different sectors: government, civil society, academia, national and international NGOs. In the Kenyan research the private sector, media and women’s groups were included; in Zambia members of the Church also participated<sup>4</sup>. The research aimed to gather a diversity of views to explore how these different people understand the four principles, and to discuss examples from each country that demonstrate what each principle means in practice. These twenty-five women and men indicate a cross-section of some of the views on the ground of how Agenda 2030 can be translated at national and local levels.

The analysis in this report and the examples of good practice and policies already happening in each country comes from both the interviews and from the collective engagement of participants in a two-day participatory workshop. The findings of this research were analysed and compared with recent national development plans in each of the four countries, understanding how diverse perspectives could together contribute to the localisation of Agenda 2030.

An important objective of this research process was to foster dialogue around the implementation of sustainable development in each country. This took place through a two-day participatory workshop. The dialogue is reflected in this report.

The examples presented in this report cut across both the individual SDGs and the four transformative principles. They represent forms of policies, practice or processes that are transferable, and that can provide learning across sectors, as Agenda 2030 encourages us to do. They can help to guide future directions for sustainable development, by building on the work that has already been done. These examples were identified by research participants and discussed during the workshops; the case studies presented here are those chosen by these participatory processes.

While participants felt that we could learn from these examples, they can also have problematic aspects and are not intended to be understood as ‘ideal’ or perfect examples. Moreover, we are not suggesting that these case studies are the only way in which the transformative principles could be translated into practice. What the case studies do reveal, however, are some specific forms of intentional actions that we can learn from. They offer integrated approaches that cut across different principles and different goals of Agenda 2030 simultaneously.

## Translating Agenda 2030 through participatory learning for research-based advocacy

Agenda 2030 requires the translation of global principles and goals into national contexts in order to be implemented. This translation needs to take place through dialogue and participation of the different actors in every society. Translating a policy document into a local context is not an easy process and often this national translation takes the form of another policy document that many actors struggle to understand in terms of concrete interventions and programmes. What Agenda 2030 brings is a global language that enables dialogue and mutual accountability amongst different stakeholders, offering an opportunity for reflection

<sup>2</sup> The 2030 Agenda: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

<sup>3</sup> CAFOD (2018) [Engaging in the 2030 Agenda through the lens of Laudato Si’](#)

<sup>4</sup> While most inputs from participants in this report have been analysed and presented in a synthesised manner, the report contains some quotations which have been anonymised. We simply state whether the interviewee is female or male, which sector they represent, and which country they come from.

## The Sustainable Development Goals



Source: UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform (2015).

## Case Study Table: Connections Across Transformative Principles and SDGs

Case Study	Principles	SDGs
<b>Case Study 1: WFP Home-Grown School Feeding Programme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave No-One Behind;</li> <li>• Tackling Inequalities;</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 2; SDG 3; SDG 4; SDG 5; SDG 8</b>
<b>Case Study 2: Windows for Widows - Supporting livelihoods of Ebola survivors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave No-One Behind;</li> <li>• Tackling Inequalities;</li> <li>• Participation and Dialogue</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 1; SDG 3; SDG 4; SDG 5; SDG 8; SDG 10</b>
<b>Case Study 3: Supporting vulnerable women in Marsabit County</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling Inequalities;</li> <li>• Leave No-One Behind;</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 1; SDG 5; SDG 8</b>
<b>Case Study 4: Promoting Economic and Social Rights for People with Disabilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave No-One Behind;</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 1; SDG 3; SDG 4</b>
<b>Case Study 5: Enhancing Women's Rights to Land</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling Inequalities</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 5; SDG 10</b>
<b>Case Study 6: Social Safety Nets - Tackling inequalities by leaving no-one behind</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling Inequalities;</li> <li>• Leave No-One Behind;</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 1; SDG 2; SDG 3; SDG 4; SDG 5</b>
<b>Case Study 7: School Greening Programme in Kwale county</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating the Environment and Development;</li> <li>• Tackling Inequalities;</li> <li>• Leave No-One Behind;</li> <li>• Participation and Dialogue</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 2; SDG 4; SDG 10; SDG 6; SDG 3; SDG 15</b>
<b>Case Study 8: Kulinganiza Campaign ('Make It Equal')</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling Inequalities;</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 10; SDG 16</b>
<b>Case Study 9: Monrovia Beach Sanitation Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating the Environment and Development</li> <li>• Leave No-One Behind</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 1; SDG 3; SDG 6; SDG 14</b>
<b>Case Study 10: Mitigating Flooding - Sensitising communities &amp; working with youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating the Environment and Development</li> <li>• Leave No-One Behind</li> <li>• Participation and Dialogue</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 5; SDG 11</b>

Case Study	Principles	SDGs
<b>Case Study 11: Climate Change Champions in Kirisia Forest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrating Environment and Development</li> <li>Participation and Dialogue</li> <li>Leave No-One Behind</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 13; SDG 15; SDG 1; SDG 12</b>
<b>Case Study 12: Green Charcoal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrating the Environment and Development</li> <li>Tackling Inequalities</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 1; SDG 5; SDG 12; SDG 15</b>
<b>Case Study 13: Connecting remote-populations to decision-makers through radio</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation and Dialogue</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 16</b>
<b>Case Study 14: Women's Priority Policy Issues in the Constitutional Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation and Dialogue</li> <li>Leave No-One Behind</li> <li>Tackling Inequalities</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 5; SDG 16</b>
<b>Case Study 15: Uwe Macho, Marsabit County</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leave no-one behind</li> <li>Participation and Dialogue</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 1; SDG 16</b>
<b>Case Study 16: Silica Mining</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation and Dialogue;</li> <li>Leave No-One Behind</li> </ul>	<b>SDG 1; SDG 3; SDG 5</b>

about national development priorities and a language for sharing progress across different countries.

Global agendas such as this do not meet a vacuum at national level, but an array of ongoing projects, policies, and interventions promoted by the government, communities, and civil society. Governments often struggle to recognise the existing valuable work that takes place in the country and contributes towards Agenda 2030. Usually local consultation processes start from a discussion of needs to identify new interventions. While this is also important, we have decided to work in a different way by focusing on what the principles of Agenda 2030 meant to people from different sectors and what examples of good initiatives they had seen. These different meanings and examples were then used as the basis for a dialogue through participatory learning that built on a critical assessment of existing practices and their strengths. This ensures different actors can see how Agenda 2030 can be implemented through concrete action based on existing successful practice. The participatory learning process also allows actors to identify the problematic issues with existing practice and think of ways of overcoming them.

The process started with a comprehensive analysis of Agenda 2030 and the identification of the four transformational principles which the Agenda contains. This language was then translated into a clear questionnaire that would help explore the local meaning of transformational shifts and examples of good initiatives. Led by a focal point in each Caritas partner member organisations in four sub-Saharan

African countries, the research process started by preparing a list of key actors to be interviewed. The first criterion was to ensure gender equality, and then to select a mix of government and parliaments, civil servants, local authorities, civil society (including media and faith-based organisations), representatives of indigenous people and local communities, business and private sector, and the scientific and academic community. In each country 25 women and men were chosen, interviewed and invited to attend a two-day participatory learning workshop.

Transcripts from the interview were analysed to identify meanings and key emerging issues for each of the four transformational principles. These were compared to the contents of Agenda 2030, the encyclical *Laudato Si'* and national development plans. Differences and similarities were captured and formed the basis for the discussion during the participatory learning workshops, through a brief presentation delivered at the beginning of sessions.

The four workshops allowed participants to explore in small diverse groups the meaning of each principle and examples that demonstrated how these were addressed in practice. Each group discussed different examples (these could be activities, projects, policies, practice or process) at any scale (from their personal work/community or something they had witnessed and can be very local or involve the entire country).

**The following principles underpinned the workshops:**

- **equal participation** – all participants have an equal and important role in shaping the work, all participants should feel free to speak and be heard
- **context and diversity** allowing for each individual and organisation to bring their own unique experience and interpretations
- **gender equality** we can't discuss about the development of our communities excluding half of it from the process.
- **thinking freely**
- **equality of authority and power** – the workshop is not 'led' but facilitated, with lots of group work rather than 'experts' or presentations from the front

**The workshop objectives were**

- To bring together a range of stakeholders from national and local government, civil society, national and international NGOs, and academia
- To foster dialogue on how we want sustainable development implemented in our country.
- To develop a participatory learning space to collectively reflect on key principles underpinning the SDG agenda, where we can all learn from each other. The sessions in the workshop will aim to
  - generate collective (but diverse) meanings around the 4 transformative principles, and what they mean for us in our country
  - consider case studies of good practice and policies already happening in our country
  - discuss challenges around 4 transformative principles (either in understanding or policy & practice)

In their discussions, participants were asked to consider the following questions:

- **What** was done in this case?
- **Who** were the people involved in planning/carrying out the work?
- **Who** were the marginal individuals and groups reached in this case?
- **Where** did it take place?
- **Why** was it done in this way?
- **Why** did it work?

The examples were collectively discussed to see where there were agreements and disagreements and to add further details to examples introduced in interviews.

Subsequent to the workshops key examples were further researched and developed into case studies. For each country,

we produced a report discussing the national meaning of the transformational principles and challenges as well as containing a number of case studies that illustrate how one or more principles as well as the Sustainable Development Goals themselves can be addressed simultaneously. These reports have been used directly by governments in their SDG reporting processes but also by civil society coalitions to push conversations on national development.

While the number of participants in each country is very small, the intensity of the process of qualitative discussion and exchange necessitates the creation of trust and a space for everyone to input. This means we are not claiming to be representative of the country's voice. The national reports provide ideas and examples that were agreed by a number of key people in the country, and it is only one amongst many sources that a country can use to inform their implementation of Agenda 2030. The validation of individual perspectives was achieved through a process of co-production of knowledge through an in-depth engagement with what others proposed and a careful collective choice of significant examples.

Future work might involve similar processes with local community actors, with deeper engagement outside of the capital city in each country.

Finally, representatives from the partner organisations in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Zambia joined other advocacy staff from other Caritas member organisations for a two-day regional workshop bringing together people from 11 African states. This workshop aimed:

- to provide a space to engage with the SDGs and their underlying principles, and to think through visions of how to do development differently and in line with *Laudato Si'*; to strengthen Caritas Africa Member Organisations' capacity
- to engage effectively in advocacy with governments through sharing of advocacy experiences, reflection and mutual learning

This workshop went beyond the analysis of the materials from the four countries to discuss more broadly Caritas advocacy in the context of Agenda 2030. Through the use of storytelling, participants shared their experience of successful advocacy, taking stock of the richness and diversity of their work. Then, they drew out learning for broader national and regional advocacy work. This report focuses on the findings of the four national research-based advocacy processes but we have also produced a separate summary of the regional workshop.

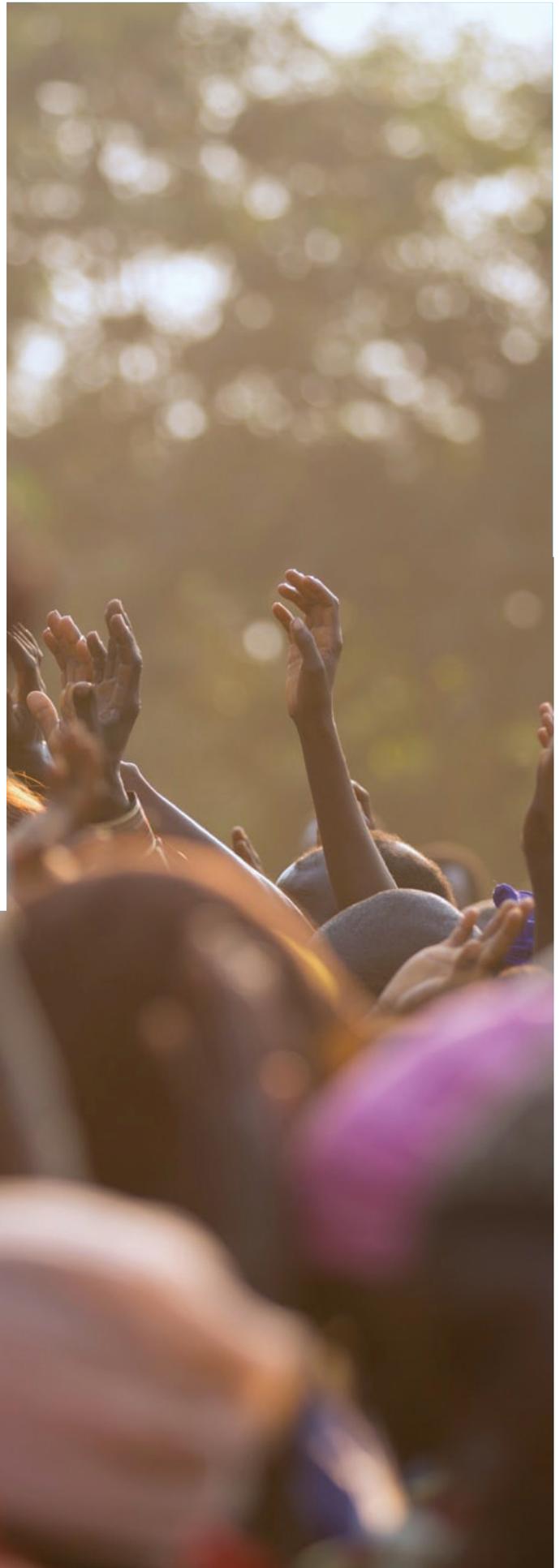


Photo By Avel Chuklanov

## PRINCIPLE 1:

# Leave No-One Behind



Agenda 2030 builds on the Millennium Development Goals by aiming to complete what they did not achieve. Reaching the most marginalised or the ‘furthest behind’ is a key dimension to this work: none of the seventeen SDG goals or targets will be met unless they are met for each and every person. This represents a shift from previous ways of measuring development that tended to use national averages to suggest success. The specific focus on ‘leaving no-one behind’ reframes the values that shape how we do and measure development.

In his Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the Pope affirms this focus in Agenda 2030 on leaving no-one behind by emphasising that preferential treatment for the poorest is an ethical imperative. Prioritising the most vulnerable members of society becomes the indicator of progress. For the Pope, this involves dialogue and a broad process that sees the poor not as victims, but as agents of change.

## Liberia

Liberia’s current national development agenda is the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018-2023). This agenda aligns with the focus on leaving no-one behind in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development through a focus on ‘improving wellbeing’, particularly for ‘vulnerable’

groups. It has an explicit target to ‘lift at least a million people out of poverty in the next six years’. Echoing this framing of ‘vulnerability’ in terms of poverty, our research participants understood vulnerable groups as those who live on less than \$1 a day, or those who experience regular food insecurity. The following case study highlights how ‘leave no-one behind’ can cut across the SDGs, reducing hunger and food insecurity (SDG 2), through improving local livelihoods and employing local producers (SDG 8), at the same time as a targeted focus on gender disparities in schooling (SDGs 4 & 5).

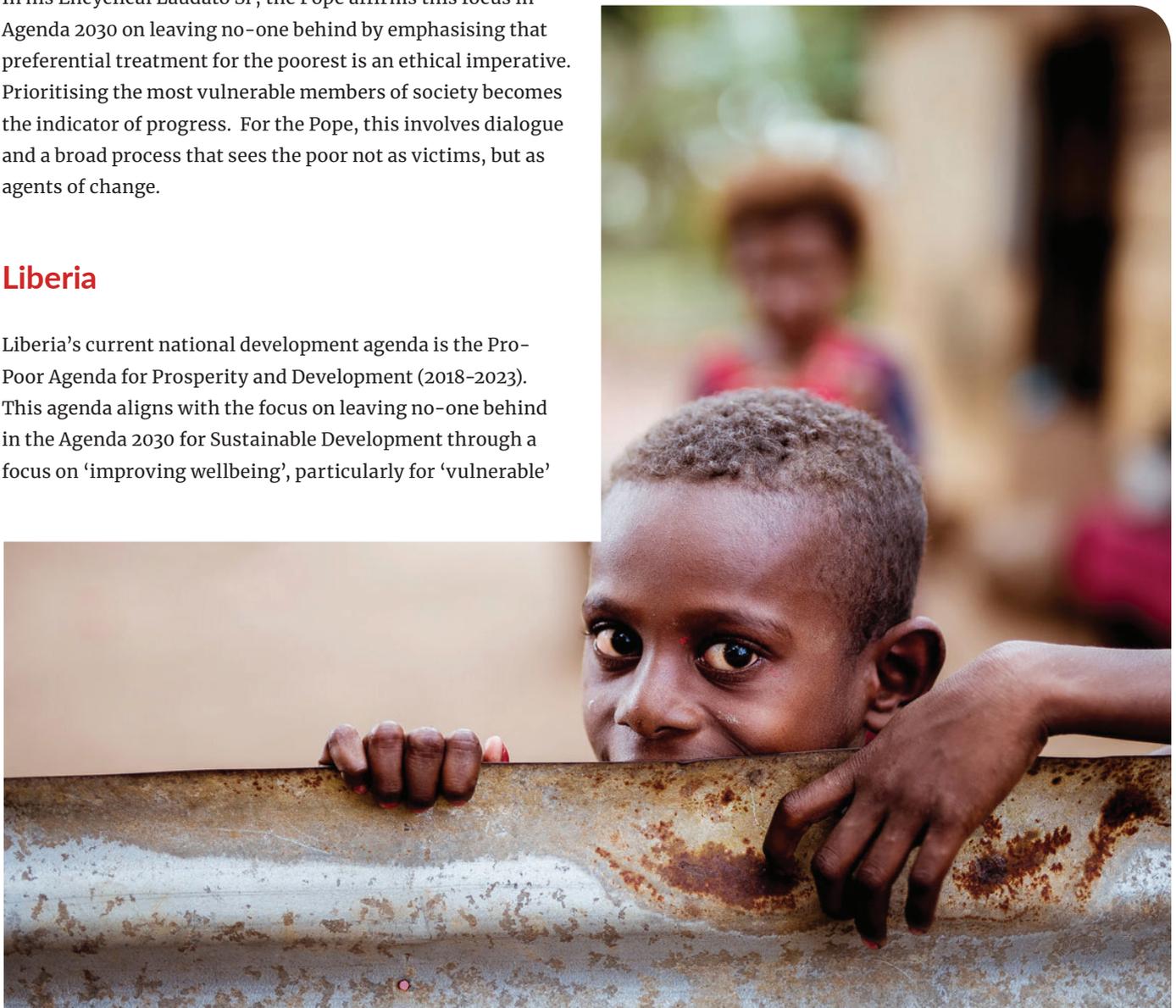


Photo By Ben White

## Case Study 1:

**WFP Home-Grown School Feeding Programme**

SDG 2; SDG 3; SDG 4; SDG 5; SDG 8 // Leave No-One Behind; Tackling Inequalities

In Liberia, food insecurity affects both children's health and educational outcomes. In addition, counties with the highest levels of food insecurity and poverty have the lowest net school enrolment rates. In response, the World Food Programme (WFP) has worked with the Liberian government to provide school meals in rural public primary schools since 2013 as a tool to encourage children attend school regularly and remain enrolled. A key part of this programme highlighted in our participatory workshop was the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme. In this programme, students received fresh and nutritious daily meals sourced by WFP from local smallholder farmers, including four women farmers groups in 2017. Farming groups are given food for work and technical support for their agricultural activities, promoting local ownership of the programme and empowering local farmers to increase their income and send their own children to school.

The Liberian school feeding programme also has a particular focus on gender inequalities in schooling. Adolescent girls attending primary school in grades 4-6, with a disproportionate gender gap of more than 15% in favour of boys, are provided with additional monthly take-home rations. These take-home rations encouraged

more girls to attend school, with corresponding results in retention, addressing the opportunity costs of attending education and gender disparities in enrolment and completion rates<sup>5</sup>.

**WFP Home-Grown School Feeding Programme: What can we learn?**

- Thinking creatively about how to deliver projects by supporting local people ensures that multiple SDGs can be met at the same time
- Partnerships between international donors and government are important, but ultimately need to be sustainable at the national level
- There is a clear relationship between leaving no-one behind and tackling inequalities: thinking how to do both at the same time can extend the impact of initiatives



Students at Ylamba Public School in Nimba County.

Photo: WFP/John Monibah

<sup>5</sup> Case Study Source: World Food Programme Operation Documents, Liberia Country Programme (2013-2018)

**“Leave no-one behind means no discrimination”**

Female, Government, Liberia

In addition to economic measures of ‘wellbeing’, research participants in Liberia emphasised that vulnerable groups experience higher levels of discrimination. To address this, they argued that the provision of resources needs to be supported by work to reduce discrimination and stigma, and ensure that policies and programmes reach their intended beneficiaries. Many participants felt that the shift in post-war Liberian development from top-down to bottom-up forms of development was an important one, that emphasised the importance of participation, linking to the fourth transformative principle of participation and dialogue. Our research participants argued that work that spoke to both the transformative principle of ‘leave no-one behind’ and of ‘participation and dialogue’ would help ensure that those who are left behind would not be also be excluded from decision-making processes, particularly in the projects which were designed to support them.

## Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone’s most recent development agenda, the Medium-term National Development Plan (2019–2023), is closely aligned with the principle leave no-one behind. It aims towards ‘achieving middle-income status for the country by 2039 through inclusive growth that is sustainable’. For the government of Sierra Leone, the principle leave no-one behind is central to national cohesion and a transformed economy, with access to free education, job opportunities, and the

protection of the rule of law. Our research participants too emphasised that exclusion from work, justice and education systems were ways that the vulnerability of individuals or groups could either be perpetuated or addressed. Illiteracy, for example, was seen as “a tool for marginalisation” (Male, Parliament), while access to education was seen as “a key tool for empowerment” (Male, Civil society). Sierra Leone’s Medium-term National Development Plan has the sub-title ‘Education for Development’. Our research participants highlighted the recent introduction of Free Quality Education (2018) and work to develop an Inclusive Education Policy as particular strengths of the government’s approach to leaving no-one behind, enhanced by partnerships with strong civil society coalitions such as the Education Network for Children with Disabilities (ECDN).

Our research participants emphasised that while some categories of people are marginalised as a result of historical and entrenched inequalities, shocks (whether health-based, climate-related or economic) can also suddenly destroy lives and livelihoods, compounding pre-existing vulnerabilities. The following case study explores an example to address shocks associated with the 2014 outbreak of Ebola in Sierra Leone. It makes clear the importance of timely and disaggregated data for addressing groups at risk of being left behind.

**“if you don’t have the data, how can you cater for them?”**

Male, Academia, Sierra Leone

### Case Study 2:

## Windows for Widows - Supporting livelihoods of Ebola survivors

SDG 1; SDG 3; SDG 4; SDG 5; SDG 8; SDG 10 // Leave No-One Behind; Tackling Inequalities; Participation and Dialogue

*Windows for Widows is a project run by Caritas Freetown, with support from their Spanish partner Manos Unidas. For the project, widows who lost their husbands to the Ebola virus were targeted for the project through a database of registered Ebola widows developed by the Sierra Leone Association for Ebola Survivors, combined with the UNDP vulnerability criteria to identify those with the highest levels of poverty or living in remote or slum*

*areas. Women who have lost their husbands in these spaces are at particular risk of being left behind because of their economic vulnerability after the loss of the family breadwinner, compounded by the social stigma of both being a widow and an Ebola survivor. A number of these women further suffered high levels of trauma and stress during the Ebola crisis.*

The goal of the Windows for Widows project was to enhance the economic capacity of Ebola affected widows, and to support them to live in good physical and mental health, with dignity and respect. They were provided with psycho-social counselling and follow-up support. They were also trained in public speaking, to support them to voice their concerns during community meetings and other public engagements. For their businesses, they were provided with mentorship, trained in basic business management skills, and organized into cooperative groups of between five and ten members. Each member was given supplies of non-perishable goods and commodities to sell in their communities, to improve their livelihoods and provide start-up capital. In addition to supporting the widows themselves, Caritas Freetown provided further support for their dependents, providing children with materials for school to enable their continued enrolment. Several of these businesses are still active, and all of the supported children have remained in school.

#### Windows for Widows Case Study: What can we learn?

- Targeting vulnerable groups can have multiplier effects beyond the original beneficiaries, tackling inter-generational inequalities while leaving no-one behind
- The most vulnerable require multi-dimensional strategies – that could include capacity-building, resources or psycho-social support – to meet their complex needs
- Treating those at risk of being left behind as partners in their own development and recognising their agency will enhance their voice, promoting participation and dialogue



A beneficiary of the livelihood support at her market stall

## Kenya

Kenya's long-term development blue-print, Vision 2030, and the successive Medium Term Plans designed to implement this vision, are closely aligned to the SDGs as well as to the aspirations of Africa's Agenda 2063. Vision 2030 aims to transform Kenya into an industrialised middle income country, offering a high quality of life to all citizens. In its Social Pillar, Vision 2030 aims to build 'widespread prosperity'. While Kenya's third Medium Term Plan (2018–2022) does not use the specific language of 'leave no-one behind', it makes a commitment to the 'full realisation of human rights' as a priority, particularly for 'vulnerable groups'. For two specific vulnerable groups – those living with disability and for the elderly – the third Medium Term Plan commits to 'enhancing and expanding social protection programmes and providing dignified support'.

Our research participants in Kenya also discussed 'vulnerable groups', and particularly highlighted how poverty was a cross-cutting issue that affected and compounded the

vulnerability of each of these groups. As well as individual groups that were seen as having specific vulnerabilities, both our research and MTP III recognised that some communities are vulnerable. Participants noted that pastoralists and those living in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) counties are most severely affected by climate change and drought, making links to the third principle of integrating the environment and development. This understanding of 'left behind' as operating at multiple different levels – within families, counties or national processes – was often associated with reflections on Kenya's decentralisation and devolved forms of governance. In both the MTP III, and in the work of civil society groups, there was a commitment to participation and dialogue that allowed communities themselves to define who was left behind and how to prioritise the allocation of funds, linking together the first and fourth principle of the Agenda 2030.

**“In different communities, different groups are left behind... I think at a national level we need to understand that the principle of leave no-one behind cannot be generalised.”**

Female, Civil Society, Kenya

In our research, vulnerabilities associated with gender were seen to be compounded by other social and environmental factors. Participants saw groups of women such as women in rural areas, domestic workers, single mothers and widows as particularly vulnerable. Patriarchal attitudes were in particular seen to result in some women being left behind, both because of cultural practices but also because of a constrained and gendered labour market.

### Case Study 3:

## Supporting vulnerable women in Marsabit County

SDG 1; SDG 5; SDG 8 // Leave No-One Behind; Tackling Inequalities

In Marsabit County, women who become single mothers are discriminated against as a result of traditional laws that require that women who become pregnant out of wedlock are chased from their communities. These women experience high levels of both social and economic vulnerability. In response to their needs, a project run by IREMO (Indigenous Resource Management Organisation), with support from The Christensen Fund, offers support to these women in Maikona location, a remote town in Marsabit County. Women were encouraged to form their own savings groups, and to voice their own problems and increase their visibility, challenging social stigma and discrimination. Community elders who are the custodians of the traditional laws were also involved, so that the women could be re-connected with their immediate families.

These women are first provided with guidance and counselling, and then business training to identify income generating activities. They are provided with a small grant by IREMO, and given guidance to officially register their activities and potentially access government funds. Over time, through these groups women have re-integrated into their communities, as community members came to buy their goods and to borrow money through their group banking systems. Their self-esteem has increased, with intimidation and traumatising reduced through both counselling and collective organising and support.

### Supporting vulnerable women Case Study:

#### What can we learn?

- Collective organising and action can offer financial as well as social and emotional benefits. It can allow women to support each other, increase their visibility and advocate for their rights, and challenge social stigma and discrimination
- Legal recognition of groups and support by NGO and civil society can provide a link to government funding, improving the targeting of leave no-one behind mechanisms



Members of Thatha women's group displaying one of their livelihood projects to an IREMO volunteer

Leave no-one behind as a principle, however, is not only focused on these forms of small-scale or micro-initiatives, which are tailored to specific local contexts, but require left behind groups to support themselves out of poverty and marginalisation. In the remotest geographic regions, our research participants made clear that leaving no-one behind required government intervention to extend services such as education (SDG 4) and health (SDG 3), forms of infrastructure (SDG 11), roads and communication networks (SDG 9). At the same time as extending service provision, governance and decision-making processes also needed to be extended to reducing regional conflict, which were associated with these vulnerabilities. Leaving no-one behind requires both strong policies and strong institutions (SDG 16), and appropriate targeting of resources and community sensitisation processes.

## Zambia

Zambia's 7th National Development Plan (2017-2021) embeds the first transformative principle throughout its agenda, entitled 'Accelerating Development Efforts towards Vision 2030 without Leaving Anyone Behind'. This Plan aims to prioritise interventions that 'ensure that no-one is left

behind as the economy grows', through the 'translation of policies into equitable, cost-effective interventions', including diversifying the economy (SDG 8), universal quality education (SDG 4), maternal and neo-natal health (SDG 3), preventing early and child marriage (SDG 5), and governance and anti-corruption systems (SDG 16). A key dimension of the Plan is a wide range of inclusive training systems, and has a specific focus on people with different learning abilities or the inability to pay.

***“We have seen lots of programmes meant to empower women ... However, we see them still being disadvantaged as a result of our culture which has already taught us that women should take a back bench in society. Be it at home, in schools, at church or in governance of the country. I would classify the aged and the disabled in the same category in terms of the way society side-lines them.”***

Female, Academia, Zambia

### Case Study 4:

## Promoting Economic and Social Rights for People with Disabilities

SDG 1; SDG 3; SDG 4 // Leave No-One Behind

*Through an EU-funded project called 'Inclusion for All: Promoting Economic and Social Rights for People with Disabilities', CAFOD in partnership with Households in Distress are advocating against the injustices people with disabilities are facing in a remote district of Zambia called Mbala. In this district, two billboards have been mounted in conspicuous places to fight against discrimination and stigma for people with disabilities by promoting positive messages of disability rights.*

*In addition to raising the visibility of rights for people with disabilities, the Inclusion for All project is also advocating for the implementation of the 2012 Disability Act in Zambia which makes it mandatory for every building to be accessible for persons with disabilities. The project has set*

*an example with by providing infrastructure modifications to five key public buildings after an accessibility audit, including schools and health facilities. These include rail guides, and in some instances widening the doors or door frames to ensure that wheel-chair users are able to enter the rooms and external doorways. More than three hundred people with disabilities in the surrounding communities will now be able to access these buildings. The project also includes specific provision for the health and education of people with disabilities, by providing an outreach clinic offering physiotherapy services, and a school for visually impaired pupils. It is now advocating with district officials for town planners to allocate further funds to support those with disabilities to access public services.*

### Inclusion for All Case Study: What can we learn?

- Ensuring that no-one left behind requires both economic and social approaches to reduce stigma and raise the profile of rights for marginalised groups
- Auditing public services to ensure that they meet the needs of marginalised groups can ensure that these groups are not excluded. Audits of both the allocation of funds and of physical infrastructure are important dimensions of these assessments.



Billboard in Mbala district near the Finance Bank to enhance visibility

Research participants in Zambia emphasised that stigma does not only affect people with disabilities, limiting their access to basic services. It also affects other groups including those with HIV/AIDS or those from the LGBTQI community, who a female participant from civil society described as “misunderstood because they do not conform to what society dictates is right”. Stigma was understood as part of a wider set of social norms that discriminated against some groups, including on the basis of gender. Research participants emphasised that these forms of discrimination affected different groups differently, according to age and location, as well as access to job market opportunities. The impact of political inequalities were closely associated with leaving no-one behind: participants stressed the importance of eradicating corruption that restricts progressive work

## Summing Up: Leaving No-One Behind in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Zambia

In all four government agendas, the first transformative principle was linked to forms of ‘inclusive growth’ or ‘widespread prosperity’, linking ‘leave no-one behind’ to work to develop the national economy. Leave no-one behind in all four countries was understood in terms of particular groups, that tended to include women and youth, the disabled and the elderly. In Kenya, there was also emphasis on regional dimensions to being left behind that included particular counties within the country, reflecting the process of devolution that is shaping development agendas there. In all four countries our research participants made links between the social and the economic forms of discrimination and marginalisation that these groups face. In all four countries participants emphasised the relationship between poverty – in terms of income, access to resources, assets and food security – as a key marker of being left behind.

In all four countries participants argued that while some groups can be defined as left behind, diversity also matters. Many, particularly in the Liberian and Kenyan research, made links to the fourth transformative principle of participation and dialogue, advocating that individuals, groups and communities who were left behind should be able to identify and define themselves, and their own priorities. Links were also made to the second principle of tackling inequalities, where social and economic exclusion of left behind individuals and groups was associated with exclusion from health, education and justice systems. In Zambia, participants argued that political inequalities that limited access to systems by party affiliation are a particular challenge.

The case studies included in this report reflect work at different scales: the national level (Case Study 1), the county and district level (Case Study 4) and the community level (Case Studies 2 and 3). These different levels of work reflect the importance of understandings of leave no-one behind beyond placing emphasis on individuals and groups to lift themselves out of poverty – as is the case in some micro-finance and other ‘empowerment’ initiatives. They make clear the importance of work with wider communities to challenge social stigma and exclusion, detailing a wide range of interventions that reflect the need for a range of strategies, including capacity building, resource provision or psycho-social support, to meet the complex needs of left behind groups.



Photo By Adrianna Van Groningen

## PRINCIPLE 2:

# Tackling Inequalities



In Agenda 2030, tackling inequalities is both a cross-cutting principle and a specific goal (SDG 10). In a world in which inequalities both within and among countries are rising, and wealth, power and opportunities are not equally shared, tackling inequalities is a particularly pressing issue. In Agenda 2030, gender inequality ‘remains a key challenge’, requiring the removal of all barriers to equality between women and men, and for equal access to economic opportunities, political participation and decision-making and justice. Efforts on this key issue should be informed by data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, meeting SDG target 17.8.

Laudato Si’ goes further to argue that these inequalities cannot be tackled without addressing the structural drivers of inequality, and the concentration of power in the hands of the most powerful. Making links to the principle of leave no-one behind, both Agenda 2030 and Laudato Si’ emphasise that inequality affects us all, but affects the poorest and most vulnerable most severely.

## Liberia

***“If you look at Liberian history, it is clear that one of the root causes of our crisis that lasted for almost fifteen years was the uneven distribution of state resources.”***

Male, Government, Liberia

Aligned with the focus on tackling inequalities in Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the Liberian Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018–2023) sees pervasive poverty, inequality and widespread deprivation as the greatest restraint to sustaining the peace and accelerating growth and sustainable development. It argues that the fractured relationship between the state and the people must

be addressed, and quotes the inequality adjusted Human Development Index, on which Liberia ranks among the lowest ten countries, reflecting pervasive political, social and economic inequalities. In our research, while equal access to education, health and judicial systems were seen as key mechanisms through which inequalities could be tackled, they still represented markers of inequality. Some participants highlighted that access to these systems required financial outlays, that entrenched pre-existing inequalities and limited justice for the poor.

In both our research and in the Liberian Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), gender emerged as a key inequality, aligned with the focus on gender in Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. This is also recognised in the PAPD – the Liberian government has made a commitment to reducing women’s inequality in political, social and economic life through Pillar 1. Our research participants argued that although gender inequalities were improving, they persisted at all levels and within all sectors of society, from within households up to government. Gender-based violence is of particular importance to Liberia in a context where rape and sexual violence was widespread during the years of civil war, and cases of sexual violence, including against children, continue to be high. In this context, research participants emphasised the importance of positive role models for gender equality, such as the former president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and her ability to get gender onto the agenda, both through the passing of the Rape Law in 2005, but more generally through the positive effect that her visibility had on beliefs about opportunities that should be available to women and new laws enshrining 30% female participation in government.

In our research, female participants in particular emphasised that property rights, voting rights and inheritance rights were all limited by patriarchal systems and attitudes. The Land Rights Act (2017), brought about by a broad coalition of civil society and pressure groups, was seen as a particularly valuable way to challenge these entrenched gender inequalities.

## Case Study 5:

**Enhancing Women's Rights to Land**

SDG 5; SDG 10 // Tackling Inequalities

*In forty communities across four Liberian counties, CAFOD and their implementing partners are working to ensure that every woman has access to the advice and support they need to secure land tenure. Development Educational Network - Liberia (DEN-L) provided training and awareness on women's land rights that increased knowledge and provided financial support under the project while the Liberian Law Society provided the necessary legal aid and representation. These organisations together worked with women such as Krubah, who are often denied access and ownership to land because of discriminatory traditional customs, particularly after they become widows. In many communities, land ownership is passed down to clans through the male family lines, and most of the time men control the decision making, distribution, management and use of land, leaving women relying on men to obtain a restricted portion for producing food to feed their family. Due to lack of money to pay for surveys and taxes to obtain legal titles, if a woman is left with a piece of land she often ends up losing it to a richer land-grabber, usually a man. With the support of CAFOD, DEN-L and the Liberian Law Society, Krubah has now surveyed her entire land and probated her land deed, and paid the first tax on it. She grows cassava and other small vegetables (potato, greens and pepper) and feeds her children with the harvest.*

**Women's Land Rights Case Study: What can we learn?**

- *Inequalities persist both as a result of unequal protections in law and discriminatory attitudes and customs – both need to be addressed for change to be sustainable*
- *Progressive laws may require coalitions of iNGOs and NGOs to lobby the legislature, but once new legislation is in place civil society needs to raise public awareness, and support vulnerable people to make use of it*



Krubah, a proud landowner with her title deed

**Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone's Medium-term National Development Plan is closely aligned to Agenda 2030 in that it recognises the significance of income inequality in Sierra Leone, and the need for future economic growth to be both inclusive and sustainable. Our research participants also were concerned that Sierra Leone has high levels of wealth and income inequalities, but further made links to the ways in which wealth and power are closely related. Inequality in our research was associated with an unstable middle class, and corruption and nepotism that meant that funds were not allocated to where they were most useful or necessarily reaching their intended beneficiaries. Tackling inequalities was seen as something that explicitly required political will, but would lead to a range of positive outcomes that included

increased social cohesion and reduction of tensions and violence.

As with Agenda 2030, gender inequalities are seen by Sierra Leone's government as a key dimension of national inequalities. The Medium-Term National Development Plan emphasises the challenges of the entrenched discrimination from the household and community to national levels, and acknowledges how discrimination and gendered stereotypes limit equitable relationships between men and women, as well as access to resources. Inequality was seen as something that affected people's confidence and sense of self-worth, in ways that inhibited them and made it difficult to realise their full potential, even for educated or 'elite' women in positions of power.

**“Even with my work, especially working in a male dominated environment, there is a tendency for me to be overlooked. That is something that is very inherent when you look at the male–female relationship especially in relation to our culture here as well.”**

Female, Government, Sierra Leone

Finally, in understanding the relationship between inequality and the environmental concerns of the Agenda 2030, research participants echoed the argument of the Pope’s encyclical that inequality leads to environmental damage, in particular

by reflecting on the ways in which the civil conflict, the Ebola outbreak of 2014 and the 2017 mudslide in Freetown all revealed problems at a system-level associated with inequality in Sierra Leone. Research participants emphasised that these types of relational inequalities need systems level approaches, such as incentives for doctors and teachers trained in urban settings to work in the rural areas. They also require attention to those who are particularly left behind, to ensure that minimum standards are reached throughout the country.

#### Case Study 6:

### Social Safety Nets - Tackling inequalities by leaving no-one behind

SDG 1; SDG 2; SDG 3; SDG 4; SDG 5 // Tackling Inequalities; Leave No-One Behind

In 2014, Sierra Leone launched a programme to provide social safety nets through unconditional cash transfers (Ep Fet Po) that aim to change the lives of extreme poor and vulnerable families in Sierra Leone. These social safety nets tackle inequalities in income, but also address questions of gender inequality through the specific targeting of women as beneficiaries. The intervention targets extremely poor households as they are the most food insecure, and likely to have the highest risks of malnutrition and poor maternal health. The programme is implemented by the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) with support from partners such as The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), The Anti-Corruption Commission and Ministry of Health & Sanitation, and funded by the World Bank with counterpart contributions from the Government of Sierra Leone. Enrolment in the social safety net programme started in 2015, with a target of 12,000 households in four districts in the country. Each beneficiary household receives the Leones equivalent of 45 USD quarterly, combined with workshops that focus on encouraging beneficiary households to put the transfers towards investments in human capital and adopting good practices around health and early childhood development. Community Health Workers have been critical for the delivery of these workshops, as well as following-up and supporting families to practise what they are taught. Since the inception of the programme, over 30,500 households have benefitted from the quarterly cash transfers and complementary workshops.

#### Social Safety Nets Case Study: What can we learn?

- Tackling inequalities can work through top-down funding from government, but will be more effective if supported by forms of community-level support and follow-up
- Financial interventions need to be carefully monitored to ensure that funds are allocated without corruption or nepotism
- Income-based inequalities cut across multiple SDGs: food security, health, education and gender – tackling inequalities can have benefits in multiple sectors simultaneously



Beneficiaries at training on Health, Nutrition & WASH at Ngombehun pay point in Moyamba district

The learning from the Ebola outbreak and the positive example of the Social Safety Nets programme highlight that tackling inequalities needs to focus both on those left behind or suffering the results of inequalities, but also those with the power – male community and family members in Case Study 6 were vital to enhancing the financial gains of the unconditional cash transfers by supporting women’s participation in decision-making.

## Kenya

The Kenya Vision 2030 is closely aligned with Agenda 2030 on the issue of tackling inequality. The social pillar expands a definition of widespread prosperity – linking back to the principle of leaving no-one behind – to argue that widespread prosperity ‘also involves the building of a just and cohesive society that enjoys equitable social development.’ This echoes the framing of the reduction of inequalities in Agenda 2030, which links inequalities to questions of justice and social cohesion. In the political pillar of Kenya Vision 2030, this is spelled out: ‘Kenya will be a state in which equality is entrenched, irrespective of one’s race, ethnicity, religion, gender or socio-economic status; a nation that not only respects but also harnesses the diversity of its people’s values, traditions and aspirations for the benefit of all.’

***“Inequalities are created, they don’t just come.”***

Male, Academic, Kenya

In both Kenya’s Third Medium Term Plan (MTP III) and in our research, a key justification for tackling inequalities is the promotion of stability and security at the national level. By all of our research participants, inequalities were seen to be closely linked to power, with gaps of both wealth and income seen to be widening at both national and global levels. Participants saw the link between power and tackling Inequalities in Kenya as closely related to the control of resources and decision-making by different kinds of elites. One of the biggest challenges to tackling inequalities was seen to be corruption, nepotism and politics based on ethnicity, clan or tribalism.

***“There is no way we are going to address inequality if we only address the economic and social pillars – we have to start from the political pillar.”***

Male, Civil Society, Kenya

As in Liberia and Sierra Leone, gender policies such as the rule that judiciary and parliamentary representation needed to be at least one third women were seen as positive. This was not only as a direct impact of the policy – by increasing representation – but more broadly, as improving gender discriminatory attitudes throughout Kenya. In Kenya, it was not only individuals and groups that are at risk of being left behind that were also targeted to reduce inequalities. Our research participants also emphasised the importance of community-level inequalities, particularly in areas which had been historically neglected by development, such as the ‘Northern frontier’ of the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs). Work towards devolution provided for by the Kenyan Constitution, enacted in various laws from 2013 onwards, and supported by legal mechanisms such as the Equalisation Fund designed to support these northern counties, were seen to be the most illustrative example of the ways in which inequalities can be responded to through government policy. The following case study builds on the links revealed in our research between a focus on devolved policies of development and the environmental concerns that ASAL counties face that risk increasing already existing inequalities within Kenya.

## Case Study 7:

**School Greening Programme in Kwale county**

SDG 2; SDG 4; SDG 10; SDG 6; SDG 3; SDG 15// Tackling Inequalities; Integrating Environment and Development;

Leave No-One Behind; Participation and Dialogue

Kenya's National Environment Management Agency (NEMA), with the support of Kenya Pipeline Company, have designed a school greening programme to create a culture of environmental responsibility among pupils both in school and their homes, and to provide some of the poorest schools with additional infrastructure and environmental resources. Two primary schools in Kwale County were chosen for the provision of water harvesting structures to support the establishment of tree nurseries, in areas where there were otherwise no water harvesting activities or near zero tree cover. 82% of the population in the county live in rural areas and rely on subsistence farming, but unreliable rain patterns, extreme drought and related crop failure have caused severe problems in recent years, exacerbating county-level inequalities. Deforestation is one of the contributing factors to these climate hazards.

Tree seedlings were provided based on the local conditions and with the aim of growing fruits such as mangoes and papaya to support in-school feeding programmes. Schools have a key role to play in developing awareness of conservation measures, creating a culture

of environmental responsibility and ownership, and developing healthy green attitudes which can be carried into wider communities, addressing SDG target 12.8. This project enhances community participation by including parents, students, teachers and government officers, encouraging dialogue and awareness around climate change and the value of reforestation.

**School Greening Case Study: What can we learn?**

- A wide range of SDGs can be tackled simultaneously, if work to tackle inequalities is carefully designed both across the principles and across these goals
- Often there are links between inequalities and climate change – projects such as reforestation help to support local communities in multiple different ways
- Schools and their wider communities can be a key entry-point for a range of work to tackle inequalities, including related to water, food, and climate-related insecurity

Within the context of robust Constitutional, legal and policy provisions and funds for tackling inequalities, our research found that raising awareness, as this case study highlights, was an important aspect for future efforts to tackle inequalities. Research participants argued that this should be enacted through partnerships across government, civil society, the NGO sector and the church, supported by sensitisation and civic education at the community level. Media were seen as a key set of actors in this process.

**Zambia**

Tackling inequalities is one of the 'strategic areas' of focus for the Zambian government, reflecting recognition in the 7th National Development Plan (2017–2021) that Zambia is one of the most unequal countries in the world, according to the GINI coefficient. The 7th National Development Plan presents this inequality as a 'potential threat to long-term social and economic development'. In the plan, emphasis is placed

particularly on reducing income inequality, gender inequality, and the rural–urban divide.

In our research, income and wealth inequalities were further linked to power inequalities between the elites and 'ordinary' citizens. Tackling inequalities was felt to require political will and strong, equitable approaches to leadership that would ensure that progressive policies were appropriately funded and implemented. The following case study considers a national campaign organised by a coalition of civil society and community-based organisations to monitor and advocate for spending to specifically tackle inequalities.

***“Most times it is dependent on who wields power. Those with less power face deeper inequalities.”***

Female, Civil Society, Zambia

## Case Study 8:

**Kulinganiza Campaign ('Make It Equal')**

SDG 10; SDG 16 // Tackling Inequalities

In around 2014, community-based and policy and advocacy civil society organisations came together on a platform to start the 'Kulinganiza Campaign'. The campaign broadly focuses on how Zambia can make use of taxation and public expenditures to reduce rising income and social inequalities in the nation. Amongst the key activities of the campaign is interrogating expenditure tools used by local authorities in service delivery, particularly through the Local Government Equalisation Fund (LGEF) which government grants to all local authorities in Zambia. The Kulinganiza Campaign argues that although this fund exists for the purposes of fighting inequality, little of the resources are actually ear-marked for the purpose of service delivery.

The current target of the campaign is in mineral resource rich districts of Zambia where inequalities have proved to be more prevalent. Host communities and those displaced by mining activities are left worse off by multi-billion dollar extractive projects, while creating opportunities for the elite and expatriates in the areas. The campaign urges local authorities to earmark funds through the Mineral Revenue Sharing Mechanism provision for local community use from the taxes from extractive projects so as to ensure that local communities and those displaced are not left worse off. The campaign ensures a strategy of making use of evidence from case studies on the performance of the fund to inform community mobilization, media outreach, engagement meetings with government at national and district level. Currently the campaign has influenced Solwezi Municipal Council,

a council hosting Africa's biggest Copper Mine, to deliberately reserve 10% of revenues from extractive projects for purposes of service delivery for the mine host communities, as a way of improving expenditure by mining companies.

### Kulinganiza Campaign Case Study: What can we learn?

- Tackling inequalities require systems-level interventions – national campaigns with coalitions of civil society and community-based organisations can support real change
- Linking advocacy to pre-existing progressive laws around taxes or funds with specific development focus can enhance their implementation



As with Liberia, participants in Zambia particularly emphasised the importance of land rights for rural populations in tackling inequalities. There was also in-depth understandings of gender, that highlighted ways in which gender inequalities are not only bad for women – some forms of masculinity such as sexual promiscuity, for example, were seen as particularly risk in the context of the HIV/AIDS crisis. Our research participants emphasised the need for gender equality at all levels and in all spaces of society, including

the Catholic church, and highlighted work to increase the participation of women in church governance.

## Summing Up: Tackling Inequalities in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Zambia

In all four countries, the concern with poverty that underpinned many of the understandings of ‘leave no-one behind’ was broadened in government agendas to a focus on inequality. Each country, in slightly different ways, framed rising inequalities, particularly in wealth and income, as a potential threat to social cohesion and security. Tackling inequalities was described in national development agendas in all four countries as central to sustainable development and inclusive growth. In Zambia, tackling inequality was a ‘strategic area’ of focus for the government; while in Kenya it was described as a question of justice. In all four countries, our research participants made clear links between inequalities – whether as a question of income, wealth, gender or across the urban-rural divide – and power. Those with less power were seen as suffering deeper inequalities.

Within these national development agendas and within our research, pervasive gender inequalities were seen as a key challenge. Understandings of gender were broad, and included differential access to assets and resources, but also the ways in which social attitudes and discrimination shape how women understood what they were able to be and do. In Kenya and Zambia particularly, our research participants emphasised that gender inequalities had negative outcomes for both men and women, placing strain on men as economic providers or encouraging risky behaviours. A raft of ‘gender laws’ (such as laws against rape, or in favour of more female representation in parliaments) in all four countries were seen as a great strength of the last twenty years of development, but our research participants all acknowledged that more needed to be done to implement these laws, and to challenge gender inequalities at all levels – from within the household right up to national parliaments. Our research participants emphasised that these gender inequalities affect different groups differently, interacting with spatial dimensions of inequality such as in rural or underdeveloped urban settings, or age-based inequalities, such as discrimination that youth might face.

The case studies presented in this report reflect some of the work to tackle multiple inequalities at the same time, and to work at large scales that reflect the complexity of achieving SDG 10. Case Study 5 aims to challenge both gendered and urban-rural inequalities, as well as inequalities between local communities and the state. Issues of inequalities between political elites, multinational companies and ‘ordinary’ citizens are also the focus of Case Study 8 in Zambia, exploring how campaigns can help tackle inequalities and support the implementation of progressive policies. From Sierra Leone, Case Study 6 aims to speak to both inequalities of income and gender, reflecting a policy for social safety nets for the poorest that was introduced by research participants in all four participatory workshops, and that challenge the transmission of poverty and inequalities across generations. Finally, Case Study 7 in the Kenyan context is notable for the ways it cuts across the principles of leave no-one behind,



Photo By Adrianna Van Groningen

## PRINCIPLE 3:

# Integrating the Environment and Development



Agenda 2030 calls for a new approach, where protecting the planet from degradation and tackling poverty and inequality must work together, balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental. Agenda 2030 reaffirms that planet Earth and its ecosystems are our common home. The Pope describes this as ‘integral ecology’ and emphasises that everything is interconnected: ‘we are faced with not two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental’. As Agenda 2030 argues, the complete range of development activities – including ending food security (SDG 2), access to water and sanitation (SDG 6), access to energy (SDG 7), building infrastructure (SDG 9), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), and responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) – must be met by sustainably managing our natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that the planet can support the needs of both present and future generations. Agenda 2030 highlights the need for a world in which consumption and production patterns and use of all natural resources are sustainable – from rivers, lakes and aquifers to oceans and seas (SDG 14), and from air to land (SDG 15). In *Laudato Si’*, this is understood as inter-generational justice: we need to recognise the impact of human activity on the planet, and protect the environment as our common good.

Within Agenda 2030, action on climate change (SDG 13) is singled out as an issue that demands decisive global action and the widest possible international cooperation. For the Pope, rich countries have an ‘ecological debt’ towards poor ones: climate change impacts the poorest communities the hardest. To act against climate change, we need greater political will, and to challenge powerful vested interests who work to conceal the impact of their activities.

## Liberia

The Liberian government, in the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018–2023), recognises the urgency of improving Liberia’s preparedness to mitigate disaster and address climate-related risks. As the PAPD

notes, Liberia’s location and weather conditions make it particularly prone to natural disasters such as floods. The government has not yet developed a national environmental action plan, however, to integrate climate change into development planning, and need to set clear targets for their aim to improve management of natural resources and the conservation of biodiversity by 2023. One of the key issues highlighted by the Liberian government in the PAPD, as well as by our research participants, is that the enforcement of policy, legal and institutional frameworks designed to sustainably manage natural resources needs to do so in ways that do not negatively affect the poorest members of society. Continuing this work by developing their National Environmental Action Plan represents a key challenge for the Liberian government in the upcoming years.

***“There is something they call public participation in our law which says the entire population should get involved in the management in the environment. How can we do so if we don’t let them know about their rights and responsibility?”***

Male, Government, Liberia

In our research, participants emphasised, echoing the Agenda 2030 and *Laudato Si’*, that protecting natural resources is a collective responsibility which requires both government intervention and the role of communities themselves. Participants made links to education systems and building awareness, which is part of the remit of Liberia’s Environmental Protection Agency, linking the third principles of integrating the environment and development with the fourth principle of participation and dialogue.

## Case Study 9:

**Monrovia Beach Sanitation Project**

SDG 1; SDG 3; SDG 6; SDG 14 // Integrating the Environment and Development; Leave No-One Behind

The Monrovia beach sanitation project began in 2011, designed to provide employment opportunities for disadvantaged youths in Monrovia and its immediate environs, and to clean up the beaches of Monrovia. Payment for the beach cleaners was transferred in 2016 from the Bureau of Maritime Affairs to that of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The project addresses issues of sanitation and waste management by cleaning dump sites that block the community main drainage to the sea, and by monitoring open defecation and garbage disposal by nearby residents. The communities along the beaches are particularly challenged by household waste, human faeces and plastic and others washed on shore by the sea and river outlets. 75% of households in Monrovia do not have toilets.



Beach workers resting after cleaning up for the day

The Monrovia Beach Sanitation currently employs 5,313 previously unemployed youths, with women constituting more than 75% of the workforce, working 3 hours per day from 8am to 11am. The minimum wage for ordinary sweepers is USD\$70.00, with higher wages for those working to monitor the beaches and manage the project. This project cuts across the transformative principles of Agenda 2030, by employing unemployed youth and women – two groups who are at risk of being left behind – to work on environmental issues.

#### **Monrovia Beach Sanitation Case Study: What can we learn?**

- Integrating the Environment and Development requires new and creative solutions to increasingly urgent problems – employing unemployed youth and women helps leave no-one behind at the same time as meeting SDGs around water and health
- Local workers at the community level can help support the sustainability of change by monitoring waste disposal and open defecation, and sensitising local communities about the risks and environmental degradation associated with poor sanitation
- These efforts need to be supported by provision of adequate water and sanitation facilities, increasing the number of households with access to toilets

## **Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone's Medium-term Development Plan views protecting the environment as a cross-cutting issue, and mainstreams environmental protections across all policy clusters. The national context makes this a particular pressing concern: Sierra Leone is ranked as the third most vulnerable country in the world to climate change. The Medium-term National Development Plan highlights that recurring environmental disasters demand a re-think of public policy in relation to management of environmental and natural resources. This includes a focus on addressing vulnerability and building resilience through forest management and conservation of wetlands. At the same

time, however, as in the Liberian research, participants made the case that for some of the most vulnerable communities who are dependent on natural resources, conservation needs to go hand in hand with a commitment to the provision of alternative livelihoods.

***“No one segment of the society is forever protected. ... The mudslide affected people who were protected and insulated. But we saw their vulnerability in their exposure to the environmental and human activity which resulted to the mudslide.”***

Male, INGO, Sierra Leone

While climate change represents an external threat that requires attention both inside and outside of national borders, this external threat was seen in our research as compounded by threats internal to Sierra Leone that included population dynamics and demographic realities. Many of our research participants commented on the damage that urbanisation without attention to the environment can do, and noted how these processes had led to the huge impact of the 2017 mudslide which killed over a thousand inhabitants and left more than three thousand homeless. Housing built in areas

of environmental risk links inequalities with environmental concerns, as deprived populations' vulnerability is increased through cycles of natural disasters. With proper planning, however, our research participants emphasised some of the ways in which protecting the environment and forms of development align. For example, preventing deforestation through timber logging and charcoal burning leads to better soil quality and the ability to grow particular crops such as peppers, supporting agricultural activities rather than being in tension with them.

#### Case Study 10:

### Mitigating Flooding - Sensitising communities & working with youth

SDG 5; SDG 11 // Integrating the Environment and Development; Leave No-One Behind; Participation and Dialogue

*The rainy season brings increased threats to economic livelihoods and health in Freetown and puts the lives of some of the poorest residents of the city at risk. In 2019, Freetown City Council (FCC) initiated a Flood Mitigation project focused on clearing 35 of the most severely affected flash-flood points of the city, and in turn reducing the spread of malaria, cholera, and other water-borne diseases. To carry out this work Freetown City Council (FCC), in partnership with Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces and Sierra Leone Roads Authority, worked with community volunteers of unemployed youth cleaning the waterways and gutters. These youth were provided with food donated by World Food Programme and AfriGas, bringing in the private sector. Many youths were eager to participate in the cleaning exercise and took pride in being recognised by their local represented councillors for their work, increasing their visibility in their communities.*

*In parallel to the clearing and de-silting work, there was also a public engagement media campaign via radio and other social media platforms. The focus of this campaign was to ensure the long-term sustainability of flood mitigation in these communities, through community monitoring of the cleared gutters, culverts and waterways. In addition, communities were discouraged from illegal dumping and fly-tipping of garbage along the roads and near waterways, compounding the risk of flooding in and around the affected areas. Education and public awareness were seen as key to ensure sustained behavioural change in communities.*



Kissy Brook bridge before the FCC clean-up



Kissy Brook bridge after the FCC clean-up

#### Mitigating Flooding Case Study: What can we learn?

- Youth unemployment can be harnessed to address environmental concerns, providing work opportunities and supporting transitions into fuller employment

- Voluntary roles, as many youth took up in monitoring their communities, can have a key role to play in raising the profile of youth and supporting the sustainability of projects
- Involving local communities and working through local governance structures can help to ensure that environmental interventions are sustainable

Focusing on ways in which the environment is a cross-cutting issue, as the National Development Plan does, helps to break cycles of socio-economic and environmental vulnerability – providing work through green jobs, or changing the role of extractive industries in national development when their activities put both the environment and local livelihoods at risk – by working across the SDGs in connected ways, that draw together principles not only of integrating the environment and development, but working to leave no-one behind and tackle inequality at the same time.

## Kenya

The social pillar of Vision 2030, building on the links between the first and second principle of leaving no-one behind and tackling inequalities, integrates the third principle of environment and development by arguing that, “Kenya’s journey towards widespread prosperity involves the building of a just and cohesive society that enjoys equitable social development in a clean and secure environment.” In Kenya’s third Medium Term Plan (MTP III), the environment is mainstreamed and linked to particular sectors, including: employment (SDG 8), through a strategy for the creation of green jobs and the ‘blue’ economy, linking to both SDG 15 & 14; infrastructure (SDG 9), through development without destroying natural reserves; land and housing (SDG 11),

ensuring that housing is adequate, decent and sustainable, without degrading natural resources through building; and water and sanitation (SDG 6), ensuring that development supports clean and safe spaces which sustainably manage resources.

**“Development can be positive or it can be negative depending on how it is handled.”**

Female, Civil Society, Kenya

While MTP III is extremely well-aligned with the focus of Agenda 2030, Kenya has also played a critical role in shaping the global environmental agenda, and MTP III reaffirms their commitment to do so at the multilateral level. There is recognition in the plan that Kenya’s economy is highly dependent on climate-sensitive sectors, making the country (and particular areas within it) vulnerable to climate variability and change. Our research participants echoed this global focus of MTP III and government engagement, arguing that the “environment is for all of us”, with a concern about resources for both today and tomorrow that echoes the language of the Pope’s Encyclical *Laudato Si’* and the concerns for inter-generational justice.

### Case Study 11:

## Climate Change Champions in Kirisia Forest

SDG 13; SDG 15; SDG 1; SDG 12 // Integrating Environment and Development; Participation and Dialogue;

Leave No-One Behind

*In the year 2017, Caritas Maralal in partnership with the department of Kenya Forest identified serious charcoal burners in Kirisia forest. They were brought together as a group, with sensitisation exercises on the importance of the forest. They were trained on how they can still use the forest to make a living without destroying it, for example through bee keeping and the use of dry fallen trees to make charcoal rather than cutting down new growth. They were supported with beehives and tree seedlings to start tree*

*nurseries as an income-generating activity at the same time as developing the forest cover. They were also trained to start and run saving groups. During their normal chores in the forest like grazing and collecting firewood, they collected dry seeds of croton plants and replant within the forest to support the regeneration of indigenous tree cover.*

*Each group then organized themselves into autonomous small groups, and the members became climate champions*

in their villages and raise local understandings, reporting climate degradation to village councils of elders. This strategy of community involvement in the process of conserving the environment is linked to target 13.b: of SDG 13, which talks of promoting mechanisms of raising capacity for effective climate change related in planning and management in developing countries and giving more focus to women, youth, and local and marginalised communities.

#### Kirisia Forest Case Study: What can we learn?

- *Linking Climate Champions to training and reporting forest conservation within local structures can help to ensure that action is taken immediately by those on the ground*
- *Ensuring that alternative livelihoods such as bee-keeping are offered will help to change practices and recognises the impact of climate on the poorest, raising the likelihood that change will be sustainable, and leaving no-one behind*



Baawa Ward Climate Champions

## Zambia

Aligned with the Agenda 2030, Zambia's 7th National Development Plan acknowledges the effects of climate change, particularly on the agriculture sector. In this plan, Government aims to 'promote the adoption of agricultural environmentally-friendly practices', as well as to mainstream climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, speaking to target SDG 13.2. For the Zambian government, these measures reduce environmental risks such as water shortages (SDG 6) and air pollution, at the same time as 'promoting social wellbeing, including better health, and growth of the economy' (SDG 3, SDG 8). In the Plan, unsustainable use of resources – which the government names as forests, land, water and minerals – is a 'binding constraint to the socio-economic transformation of the country'. The Zambian Government define unsustainable use of resources as a 'lack of patriotism'.

As in Kenya, one of the key problems that our research participants identified in relation to environmental degradation and the tensions with development was deforestation. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FOA), Zambia is the country with the second highest deforestation per capita in the world, and the

country is losing approximately 8,000 hectares of forest a year. Zambia's Government therefore launched the Plant a Million Trees Initiative in 2018, aiming to plant two billion trees by 2021. A second policy initiative led by the Forestry Department, 'cut one, plant two' allows communities to collect new saplings for planting.

***“The nation is highly dependent on mining for revenue generation to fund education, health, social protection etc, but it comes with negative environmental externalities.”***

Male, NGO, Zambia

Participants in Zambia further identified the reliance on the mining sector as one of the key tensions between economic growth and environmental protection. The mechanisms to challenge these multinational companies needed to be strengthened, with effective oversight and funding for monitoring from the Zambian Environmental Monitoring Agency, and transparent use of Environmental Impact Assessments. At the same time, some corporate social responsibility initiatives by mining companies were praised, such as in Case Study 12.

## Case Study 12:

**Green Charcoal**

SDG 1; SDG 5; SDG 12; SDG 15 // Integrating the Environment and Development; Tackling Inequalities

In Solwezi and Kasempa districts, a project by the Kansanshi Mining PLC in 2010, partnered with Caritas, aims to discourage deforestation by introducing green charcoal technology. Kansanshi mine is encouraging burners and small-scale farmers to instead make briquettes by burning the stalks of maize leftover from agricultural processes, mixed with cassava porridge and then pounded into a mould to form a brick which can be used for cooking. Community members are trained in the process of making these briquettes at the mine, which are sold for K120 rather than the K40 that is the market-rate for charcoal. In the years of its implementation, the initiative has been able to train over 2000 members of the communities within the province in green charcoal production.

The challenges of this project have been the dominant reliance on charcoal burning as a source of income and fuel for cooking. This alone makes it tough to sway a community dependent on conventional charcoal fuel for domestic use and earning to a whole new method of doing things, even if it may prove more beneficial in the long run. High levels of illiteracy and education about the environment means that the communities lack awareness of the effects of charcoal burning.

**Green Charcoal Case Study: What can we learn?**

- Providing alternative sources of livelihoods for the poorest can help reduce their reliance on practices which degrade the environment, but this work needs to be supported by extensive awareness raising
- Private multinational companies can be encouraged by government to fund corporate social responsibility activities that can meet multiple SDG targets at the same time, but need simultaneously to be monitored for the effects that their own industries can have on the environment.



A training session at Kansanshi Mine, teaching women to convert maize stalks into green charcoal

## Summing Up: Integrating the Environment and Development in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Zambia

In all four countries, integrating the environment with future sustainable development was seen in national development agendas as pressing concern. Government development agendas emphasised in each of the four research countries that they are already suffering the effects of climate change. In Kenya and Zambia this was emphasised through concerns about the unreliable rainfall and drought brought about (in part) by deforestation, while in Liberia and Sierra Leone the risks of flooding and the 2017 mudslide in Sierra Leone's capital of Freetown were of particular concern. This led to different policy environments: both Kenya and Zambia had

policies to nationally expand tree cover, while Sierra Leone and Liberia's governments both had policies to address garbage and waste disposal that was leading to the blockage of drainage systems.

All four countries had active Environmental Protection Agencies, and the possibility of Environmental Impact Assessments. As our research participants emphasised, however, the implementation of policies to halt and address environmental degradation was at times weak, and could be severely hampered by the vested interests of multinational companies, or by local communities themselves who relied on natural resources such as forests for income-generation or to support their energy needs. Our research participants emphasised in all four countries that environmental degradation affected the poorest most severely, but that

natural resources were a common good, echoing the Pope's language in *Laudato Si'*.

Of particular strength, as each of the four case studies in different contexts showcase, was the ways in which work to address environmental degradation was developed in partnership with local communities themselves. Research participants made clear links between this third principle of integrating the environment and development and the fourth principle of participation and dialogue. In Kenya and Liberia particularly the mandate of the Environmental Protection Agency for civic education and community participation was shown to be effective in promoting sustainable change. The provision of alternative livelihoods for the poorest, as shown in Case Studies 11 and 12, can enhance this community-based sensitisation, ensuring that increased knowledge leads to sustainable change. Employing disadvantaged groups in 'green jobs', as Case Studies 9 and 10 reveal, can be a further important dimension of environmental work. Climate change and environmental degradation continues to be urgent, however, and the work of governments in all four countries to mainstream the environment into all forms of development planning is clearly critical for the next decade.

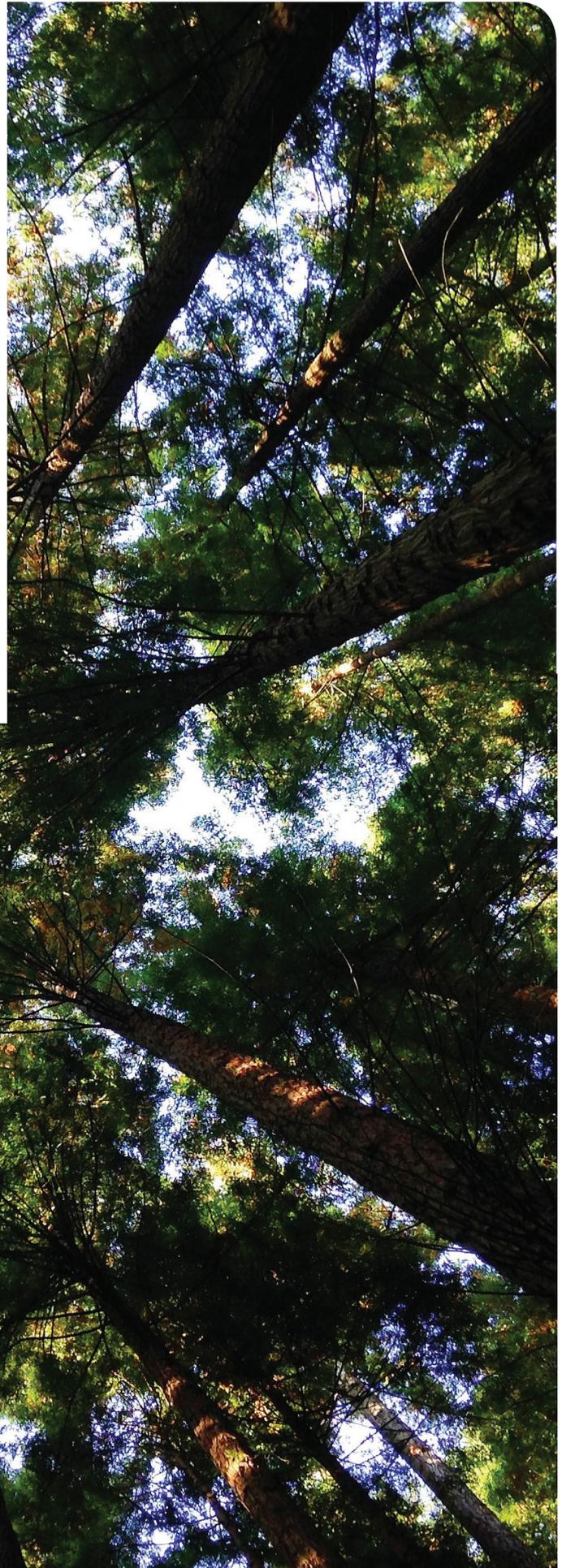


Photo By Angela Benito

## PRINCIPLE 4:

# Participation and Dialogue



Agenda 2030 is defined as a document ‘of the people, by the people and for the people’ (UN 2015, 52). It was developed in a way that promoted participation, in much more inclusive ways than the Millennium Development Goals, involving national dialogues and thematic working groups as well as engagements with civil society and other stakeholders in many countries across the world. In the Agenda, the UN encourages member states to conduct ‘regular and inclusive reviews of national progress’ (UN, 2015, p. 79) that draws on key stakeholders such as civil society or the private sector, but that also pays particular attention to the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable. The targets for SDG 16 facilitate these inclusive processes, by encouraging governments to ‘develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions’ (target 16.6) and ‘ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making’ (target 16.7). It is these participatory processes that are believed to ensure the success of this ambitious and transformative agenda, because sustainable development is both enriched by, and depends upon, diverse perspectives. In *Laudato Si’*, the Pope affirmed this importance, calling for new forms of dialogue that are based on open encounters in which there is a willingness to change and no individual or group is left behind, especially those who are most affected.

## Liberia

Pillar 4 of Liberia’s Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018–2023) aligns with this emphasis in both Agenda 2030 and *Laudato Si’* on promoting participation and dialogue. Pillar 4 of the PAPD argues that to build effective governance that is both accountable and transparent, policies and strategies are required that will ensure ‘the participation of the entire citizenry in decision making’. This Pillar particularly emphasises the empowerment of all groups, especially women, children and people with special needs, linking back to the principle of leaving no-one behind.

***“In reality I think that’s the rural people who are excluded. Underprivileged groups don’t take part in decision making. Most of the time, it is the educated people who make the decisions for these people because they are the ones who sit around the table to discuss the issues and make the decisions.”***

Female, Media, Liberia



Photo By Avel Chuklanov

## Case Study 13:

**Connecting Remote-Populations to Decision-Makers through Radio**

SDG 16 // Participation and Dialogue

In March 2016, research conducted by Mercy Corps and IREX found that community radio provided a critical source of information for the people living in Liberia, particularly in remote rural parts of the country. The findings estimate that 86% of the Liberian population listens to radio, and most preferred the local community stations to national radio stations for news and information. One clear means of participation and dialogue through Liberia's radio stations is provided by Mr. John Kollie's Liberia Media Democratic Initiative (LMDI) and Korta Dorgba's Liberia Media Initiative (LMI). Most recently, the LMDI has been on the road to very rural communities to discuss ongoing efforts aimed at reforming Liberia's electoral laws. The program brings together these locals and stakeholders, including county officials and lawmakers, to exchange ideas and receive questions. The programs are pre-recorded and later broadcast on national radio stations around the country.

**Connecting Remote Populations through Radio Case Study: What can we learn?**

- *Connecting local communities to lawmakers through face-to-face meetings broadcast on radio can help to extend the proportion of the population who are able to raise their concerns and interact directly with policy makers, potentially increasing the proportion who believe that decision-making is inclusive and responsive (SDG target 16.7).*

In the Liberian context, the transformative principle of participation and dialogue cut across all three of the other principles. Participants felt that if this principle was truly met then no particular individuals or groups were left behind, inequalities would be reduced through inclusive systems and consultation, and local stakeholders would be consulted about environmental and development projects that affected their communities. This principle of participation and dialogue was seen to be central to sustaining transparent and inclusive governance, as well as continuing to ensure that conflict was reduced and mediated. As the case study in this report highlights, meaningful participation requires that targeted efforts are made, whether through creative uses of media or through resources and awareness raising to challenge exclusion from decision-making and extend the reach of information.

- *Access to information over radio is a crucial way to tackle inequalities and reach those at risk of being left behind, such as rural and remote communities.*



Participants at a Dialogue Forum

**Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone's Medium-term National Development Plan (2019–2023) was developed through intensive and extensive consultations, with an estimate outreach to two million people in articulating and setting priorities through citizen's manifestos, and validation of the plan, closely aligned to the processes encouraged by Agenda 2030. For our research participants, this inclusive development was highly valued, and there was a sense that top-down processes had been minimised and that many multiple-stakeholder platforms existed. One woman from government described the development planning process as "a lesson", in which she learned the value of engaging with communities on their own development priorities.

At the same time, however, our research participants emphasised that there was a need for continued capacity building and civic education to ensure meaningful participation, and for both decision-making and the allocation of resources to continue to be decentralised, involving all 22 local councils and ward levels. As one woman from civil society asked, “the platforms are there, but are they influential?” Participation is not meaningful without a shift in decision-making power. There was a concern that despite gains in participation there was still a concentration of power and influence in the hands of elites.

For meaningful participation and dialogue, inclusion was understood through the categories of leave no-one behind, including across age, language, gender, disability, rurality or race, and was defined as equitable power relations at all levels, from household to the community and national levels. Particular efforts needed to be made to challenge those who experienced stigma – young people who were stereotyped as just being ‘rash’ or ‘perpetrators of violence’ were seen as an important group to reach out to, as were those with disabilities in ways that can build on the disability act and inclusive education policies.

**“We need to build the confidence of people through encouragement and capacity building for those that are less able to participate in decision making, due to their vulnerability.”**

Female, Civil Society, Sierra Leone

#### Case Study 14:

### Women’s Priority Policy Issues in the Constitutional Review

SDG 5; SDG 16 // Participation and Dialogue; Leave No-One Behind; Tackling Inequalities

*In 2016 a Constitutional Review Committee was given the mandate to review Sierra Leone’s 1991 constitution. They went around the country to conduct consultations, including with women’s groups and local women in different areas. The expectation was that the first draft of the constitution would have integrated women’s concerns, but women’s policy priority issues were missing. In response to this absence, women self-mobilised around International Women’s Day, in a gathering of over one hundred women facilitated by the Campaign for Good Governance with support from Trocaire.*

*These female participants cut across different sectors of society. A female lawyer was hired to review the first draft of the new constitution, and present to those gathered. Recommendations were developed into a 19-point resolution that addressed a decade of advocacy around inclusion in politics, decision-making and female empowerment, which was given the title ‘Many Messages, One Voice’. The women presented this to the late Chairman of the Review Committee, and popularised the 19-point*

*resolution in all forms of media. When the White Paper came out from government that did not contain the priority issues contained in this 19-point resolution, press conferences were organised by these women and the paper was withdrawn from parliament. While in some regions of Sierra Leone it’s a taboo for women to speak in public and to participate in dialogue and decision-making, this conference was able to challenge discriminatory gender norms in both legislation and processes of engagement.*

#### **‘Many Messages, One Voice’ Case Study: What can we learn?**

- *Participation is closely linked to power: marginalised groups can self-mobilise, but they also need support for spaces to be created to engage with decision-makers*
- *Leveraging pre-existing mechanisms and processes, such as International Women’s Day and the Constitutional Review process, can magnify focus and enhance dialogue*

- *Face-to-face participation can be supported by remote participation through media*
- *When organising groups to advocate for their needs, it is important to ensure that all different types of people in that group are represented, particularly those who are often left behind.*



National Women's Conference, International Women's Day 2016

## Kenya

The political pillar of Kenya's Vision 2030 "aims to realize an issue-based, people-centred, result-oriented and accountable democratic system", emphasising the 'people' as Agenda 2030 does. In Kenya's third Medium-Term Plan (MTP III) this accountability is described through links to the Constitution (2010) which has made provision for advancing devolution, promoting public participation in policy-making, and in strengthening the three arms of government (the Executive, Judiciary and Legislature). Kenya's national development agenda makes explicit the links between inclusive processes and leaving no-one behind, strongly aligned with the focus of Agenda 2030 and the transformative principles which cut across it. Pre-existing structures, such as church networks or other faith-based organisations, were seen to be particularly useful for mobilising communities around the new laws provided for by the Constitution (2010).

***"I would imagine where public participation is going to work is where people are sure they will drive the development agenda themselves at their local level. If I knew I had a voice and it would influence I would go. But if it is listening and endorsing something that has already been planned and approved at some level then I would just say there is no need."***

Female, Private Sector, Kenya

### Case Study 15:

## Uwe Macho, Marsabit County

SDG 1; SDG 16 // Leave no-one behind; Participation and Dialogue

*'Uwe Macho,' a Swahili expression for 'Be Alert,' is an advocacy strategy carried out by Caritas Marsabit in an attempt to empower the community to demand accountability from the government regarding the use of resources. The strategy came into being immediately when Kenya launched the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in 2003 through an Act of parliament. The*

*primary objective of CDF was to address poverty at grassroots level by dedicating at least 2.5 per cent of the government's ordinary revenue to grassroots development. Caritas Marsabit's Justice and Peace programme carried out a range of activities to inform the community on the existence and management of this fund, including the publication of the 'Uwe Macho' magazine. This*

magazine contained the information on the allocations and expenditures of the CDF of all the four constituencies in Marsabit County in every financial year. All the allocations and expenditure were printed into a booklet and copies distributed throughout the county for public knowledge. The Uwe Macho magazine is distributed free of charge to advocacy groups and community members in all the parishes spread throughout the County. Some of the major challenges that have emerged from devolution in Marsabit county include bias in employment opportunities, unequal development pattern and corruption. On many occasions, citizens have used the contents of the magazine to demand accountability from the elected leaders, helping to meet SDG target 16.6 to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

#### Uwe Macho Case Study: What can we learn?

- Participation and dialogue requires specific and targeted efforts to include those who have been left behind, with a range of activities that include training in advocacy, multiple different forms of communication, and links between marginalised communities and governance structures
- Civil society has a key role as a bridge between local communities and government, and need to use this position to both advocate and disseminate information.



## Zambia

Zambia's 7th National Development Plan is closely aligned with the focus in Agenda 2030 on Participation and Dialogue. The Plan argues that 'inadequate citizen's participation is a hindrance to the progress of the nation at all fronts, namely political, economic, social and environmental,' and holds that 'to successfully achieve the long-term Vision of being a prosperous middle-income country, Zambia has to be inclusive in its development trajectory by harnessing people's voices in augmenting the nation's development agenda.' This inclusive approach includes capacity development at national, provincial and local levels, as well as the explicit aim to 'promote citizens' participation in issues that are pertinent to their wellbeing'. Building on the focus of SDG 16, the Government aims to continue to implement policies that promote transparency, accountability and citizen participation, as well as strengthening governance institutions.

In our research, participants emphasised that for participation to be meaningful it needs to be relevant, strategic and regular, but that it also needs to lead to real change and not

just 'rubber-stamping'. Going beyond the understandings of participation in the Plan, research participants emphasised that in addition to governance structures and elected representatives, participation might also be through protests, challenging decisions in court or public campaigns. An example of this was the 'sanitary pads for female pupils' public campaign, which led to specific budget provision in the national budget, through participation on social media that targeted the principle budgeting and planning offices.

***“Today because of the implementation of decentralisation, there is a great opportunity for the community to participate and influence decision-making. What is happening now is that in District Development Coordinating Committees, for example, ... there must be youths, there must be women, there must be disabled people represented.”***

Male, NGO, Zambia

Our research participants emphasised that changes in governance structures (such as moves towards decentralisation) and shifts in global agendas as represented by the SDGs together offered opportunities for changes in how participation and dialogue in national agendas took place. This was felt to make clearer spaces for the interests of marginalised groups to be represented and to hold duty-bearers to account and to increase national accountability.

#### Case Study 16:

## Silica Mining

SDG 1; SDG 3; SDG 5 // Participation and Dialogue; Leave No-One Behind

*Silica mining is an activity dominated by women, with trade facilitated by middlemen (silica stone traders) who act as intermediaries between the vulnerable women and unemployed youths who do this artisanal mining and the mining companies who buy the stones for use in the processing of copper. The silica stone crushers use hand tools to extract silica without use of any protective clothing which makes them highly vulnerable to silica-related ailments. Although these silica stone crushers were organised under a registered co-operative, they were operating without legal licences and did not have the marketing skills or capital to negotiate with the silica stone traders who came to negotiate with them. Stones were being sold at K65 or K70 per tonne to these middlemen, who then sold on to the mines for K800.*

*Future-preneur/STS Zambia (FPSZ) therefore worked to increase dialogue between these women and the mining companies, cutting out the need for the middlemen. They were organised to meet with local government officials to raise their concerns, and provided with training to effectively negotiate on behalf of the 488 members of the cooperative. As a result of meetings with the Mopani mine, the women now sell directly to the mining company at K400 per tonne. With the increased price for silica stones they are now saving to buy their own machine to wash and crush the silica, and continue to increase profit.*

### Silica Mining Case Study: What can we learn?

- *Organising marginalised groups into cooperatives and providing training to help access markets and negotiate for themselves can help to ensure that they are not left behind*
- *The principle of participation and dialogue can work at multiple levels – between communities and multinational companies, as well as between local communities and governments – to enhance outcomes for the poorest*



## Summing Up: Participation and Dialogue in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Zambia

In all four countries, participation and dialogue was seen as a cross-cutting principle that would enhance work to leave no-one behind, tackle inequalities and integrate the environment and development. Participation and dialogue was not just a question of government inviting selected groups or representatives, but broad processes of consultation, as in the development of Sierra Leone's Medium Term Development Plan. Our research participants emphasised that for participation to be meaningful, it needs to lead to increased inclusion in decision-making power, and the power to allocate resources. Symbolic forms of participation in which consultation does not lead to meaningful change or allow local populations to decide their own priorities were heavily criticised in our research.

These forms of participation were understood differently in the four countries, and linked to forms of governance through the different aspects of SDG 16. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, the inclusive consultation processes associated with the development of national plans was appreciated, while research participants in Kenya praised the opportunities which county level and devolved systems of governance offered. In Zambia, participants both emphasised the value of decentralisation, but also raised concerns about the politicisation of development, and highlighted the risk of corruption, nepotism and exclusion that can be associated with vested interests.

In all four countries, our research participants made clear that extra work is required to include marginalised individuals and groups in this process; the Case Studies give some illustrative examples through innovative forms of media – magazines and advocacy groups in Kenya (Case Study 15) or through meetings in remote areas recorded for broad dissemination over radio in Liberia (Case Study 13). The role of NGOs and civil society to facilitate connections between local communities and decision-makers was also emphasised in all four countries, exemplified by the case studies connecting powerful multinational companies with economically vulnerable women (Case Study 16), or bringing together female representatives across rural-urban and socio-economic divides to advocate in parliament for the gendered dimension of a Constitutional review (Case Study 13). These cases all represent forms of claimed spaces, in which local communities, supported by NGOs and civil society, opened new pathways to power which had not previously been available. The participatory process of our research itself helped to think through new and innovative strategies for connections with decision-makers, that go beyond solely invited 'consultations' with government.

# Final Reflections

This report and the research it is based on seek to bring the ambitious Agenda 2030 to life. This means focusing not just on individual goals and targets but also paying more attention to the transformative principles that cut across the agenda

We have focused on four key principles that we believe have the potential to shape how we think about development so that we can do it differently:

- A commitment to leave no-one behind: ensuring that everyone reaches minimum standards; putting the most vulnerable groups at the centre of policy-making and tackling the discrimination that different individuals and groups face.
- An emphasis on tackling inequalities: challenging inequalities in societies in terms of how wealth, power and opportunities are distributed, and addressing the discrimination faced by certain groups.
- Integrating the environment and development: encouraging development processes that support and restore our common home so that it can provide for the needs of both present and future generations.
- Promoting people's participation and dialogue: ensuring that women and men are able to participate in ongoing dialogue and contribute to decision-making around development priorities, policies and programmes.

The process presented in this report demonstrates how citizens and civil society can use global frameworks such as Agenda 2030 to engage in meaningful dialogue with government and other actors. For this dialogue to lead to concrete positive change, we propose participatory learning processes, supported by the freedom to debate complex issues, to create trust amongst those involved. And we show



how the focus on specific examples of policies, processes and practices can ground the discussion in reality, serving as a springboard for further discussion.

When conducting this research, we built a process that captures individuals' knowledge and experience and uses this as the basis of a collective learning process. The participatory learning workshops in the four countries identified case studies to collate evidence for use in advocacy and to be taken on board by government. This approach generates shared knowledge and works well in contexts where a constructive relationship with government and between different sectors of society is possible. The process does not substitute a government's own process for building national development plans but can instead complement such plans. This approach allows non-policy experts to help shape the implementation of policy agendas.

Caritas Africa Member Organisations from 11 sub-Saharan African countries have shared these lessons in a regional workshop which highlighted similarities and differences of context and appropriate interventions. Such approaches and methodologies can also be used to explore specific issues at a much more local level.

We hope Caritas Africa members and other organisations will be inspired by this report to use a participatory research and learning approach to inform their advocacy and programmes. We also hope it represents a useful contribution to the challenge of translating and implementing Agenda 2030 in individual countries, and reporting on progress as we approach 2030.

Photo by Annie Spratt

## KEY FINDINGS

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- **Ensuring that no-one is left behind requires both economic and social strategies to reduce stigma and help marginalised groups to claim their rights**, as case studies 2, 3 and 4 highlight

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  - **Partnerships between civil society, national governments and international donors are needed to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable in society** – but projects should enhance (rather than being a substitute for) progressive policies, as in case studies 2 and 3

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  - **Health, education and judicial systems all need to be inclusive, leaving no-one behind and tackling inequalities at the same time**. For the poorest and most at risk, local and national governments need to provide additional support to enable them to access these systems, as case studies 1 and 4 demonstrate

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  - **Tackling inequalities can work across sectors and inequalities of income and gender, or across the urban–rural divide** but needs to be specifically tailored to local contexts, as case studies 5 and 7 highlight

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  - **Work on the pressing issues of climate-change and environmental degradation can offer new opportunities to employ left-behind groups**, as in case studies 9 and 10

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  - **The sustainability of environmental protection requires careful monitoring** of large companies and development licenses, **as well as support for alternative local livelihoods** to halt and address activities that contribute to environmental degradation, as in case studies 11 and 12

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  - **Meaningful participation and dialogue need to be inclusive, with targeted efforts to reach those at risk of being left behind**. Participatory spaces also need to have decision-making power and budget to support their deliberations. Case studies 13 and 15 highlight how media can be a key tool to extend the reach of information and participation in decision-making, as well as accountability through engaging with law-makers

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  - **The principle of participation and dialogue can work at multiple levels to enhance outcomes for the poorest**, between communities and multinational companies as well as between left-behind groups and governments, as in case studies 14 and 16

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  - **Participatory research can reveal examples of positive work on the ground**, building on what is already happening while also engaging with transformative agendas and creating shared meaning.

# Appendix

## Organisations Involved

**Caritas Africa** is dedicated to the service of the poor and to the promotion of charity and justice. It is regrouping 46 national Caritas organisations in the sub-Saharan Africa, including Atlantic and Indian Oceans islands. It is at the heart of the Church's mission in Africa. In serving the poor, it is a sign of God's love for humanity in Jesus Christ. The work of Caritas is inspired by Scriptures, Catholic Social Teaching and by the experiences and hopes of people who are disadvantaged and are living in poverty. Caritas works with people of all faiths and none. Altogether, we are serving more than 73 million people in poverty and affected by various crisis situations.

**CAFOD.** The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development is the official aid agency for the Catholic Church in England and Wales. CAFOD reaches out to people living in hard-to-reach places, in war zones and those who are discriminated against. CAFOD believes that if one of us is hurt, hungry or abandoned, we all are hurt, hungry and abandoned. No one should be beyond the love and support they need to live a dignified life. We are part of a global Church network with a local presence in 165 countries and territories. Together we make up one of the largest aid networks in the world. Because of our global reach and local presence, we have the potential to reach everyone.

**The Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU)** conducts world-leading research and postgraduate teaching that helps to build the capacity of national governments, local authorities, NGOs, aid agencies and businesses working towards socially just and sustainable development in the global south. We are part of The Bartlett faculty, ranked the world's top institution for built environment subjects in the renowned QS World Ranking. The DPU has over 65 years of experience in academic teaching, research, policy advice and capacity building in the field of international development.

As part of its mission to build the capacity of professionals and institutions, the DPU undertakes a range of action-oriented work with partners in different parts of the world. Regular contact with policy and planning practice through capacity building and advisory work is viewed as an important part of challenging and developing the theoretical and methodological debates pursued in our teaching and research.

**University College London.** UCL is London's leading multidisciplinary university, with more than 13,000 staff and 42,000 students from 150 different countries. Founded in 1826 in the heart of London, UCL was founded to open up education to those who had previously been excluded from it. UCL's founding principles of academic excellence and research aimed at addressing real-world problems continue to inform our ethos to this day. UCL is consistently ranked amongst the top 10 universities in the world.

