Social Inclusion - a Development Principle

What about Social Inclusion?

Leaving no one behind is a central theme that underlines the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015.

This fact sheet will help guide your thinking on inclusive development.

Social exclusion vs inclusion

Social exclusion: these are laws, policies, decisions, institutional behaviors and structures that serve to systematically exclude entire communities or groups of people from rights, opportunities and resources that are available to most other people in society. Being poor can lead to exclusion but exclusion is more than just being poor.

Social inclusion entails ensuring that excluded groups and the processes of exclusion - geographic, social, political, and economic - are recognised, understood and addressed so that all can participate and progress equally and fairly in society.

Why Social Inclusion?

Inclusive development should be an objective for every workshop, program and organisation. Inclusion aims to create a society that upholds fundamental human rights and principles of equality and equity. Inclusion supports human rights; and is essential for sustainable economic growth and development[1].

Social Inclusion principles:

‣ Improved access to services for the most disadvantaged

‣ Improved access to resources and benefits of development for the most disadvantaged

‣ Meaningful participation in decision making for the most disadvantaged

‣ Removal of institutional and social barriers to the above

Barriers to Social Inclusion

Some of the causes of exclusion are:

‣ Institutional or organisational barriers - culture and practices

‣ Policy barriers;

‣ Attitudinal barriers to those perceived as 'different'- discrimination, stigma;

‣ Environmental and physical barriers;

‣ Communication and information barriers.

Linking social inclusion to development

‣ Reflect on your country, workplace and community context - who do you think is marginalised/left behind in development and how?

‣ Is inclusion or equal opportunities incorporated in your government national development goals?

‣ Reflect on your workplace and sector- are there individuals/ groups who are excluded from the work process or from the benefits of the work you are doing?

‣ What can you do to promote inclusion in the above scenarios?

Linking Social Inclusion to professional field

When reflecting on how you will be more inclusive in practice, think of the social inclusion principles mentioned previously.

‣ Are there groups that are excluded from accessing services and resources you provide, from decision making or other opportunities;

‣ are there inherent barriers at your workplace or community?

‣ What can you do about this that is within your scope of influence or ability?

Three levels of influence you have as a change agent:

1. Can you influence policy?

A policy is a course of action adopted or proposed by a government or an organisation on how it intends to conduct business.

2. Can you influence practice?

Not everyone develops policy - most people implement policy directives.

3. Are you able to promote a culture that supports inclusion? You can be a change agents who is able to foster positive and inclusive cultures.

Be inspired...

"An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity."

Martin Luther King Jr

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[1] Analysing and Measuring Social Inclusion in a Global Context, UN 2010