



International
Civil Society Centre

The Leave No One Behind Partnership

Making Voices Heard and Count

Our approach, key successes and learnings

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NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND

In a nutshell: Who we are and what drives us

The 2030 Agenda's commitment to leave no one behind acknowledges that previous efforts to reduce poverty and end marginalisation have failed to reach communities that are most in need. Many marginalised communities remain invisible to official statistics as most governments are not equipped to collect highly granular data that is needed to analyse the specific situation of these groups and identify the drivers leading to their exclusion. This is not only a data problem - it also represents a challenge from the perspective of equal rights and non-discrimination. In fact, a country's capability to plan effective and non-discriminatory policy responses relies on a profound understanding of what are key drivers for exclusion and marginalisation of all parts of society and how these are interconnected with each other. Limited inclusion and lacking data on these groups hence imply that many development challenges remain poorly understood, which in return impedes public planning, with the result that many policies do not fully (or at all) reflect the situation of marginalised communities, leaving their voices unheard. At times, this can even conceal the disproportionate impact of certain laws, policies and practices on marginalised groups, further perpetuating inequality and exclusion.

The Leave No One Behind Partnership

(henceforth called the Partnership) was launched in 2017, aiming to address this dual deficit of lacking data and inclusion of marginalised groups. Hosted by the International Civil Society Centre, the Partnership now gathers around 100 international and national civil society organisations (CSOs), community based organisations (CBOs), think tanks, civic networks

and platforms. In 2018, the Partnership set up national civil society coalitions in five pilot countries: **Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Nepal, and Vietnam**. It extended to **Malawi and Denmark** in 2021, while a new coalition is planned to be launched at the end of 2022 in Palestine.

One of the two **key ambitions of the Partnership** is to bring about a scalable solution for filling data gaps on marginalised groups in development monitoring. The other goal of the Partnership is to enable local civil society and marginalised groups to participate in policy dialogues with authorities at the local and national level, amplifying community voices in the public discourse and thereby help to bring about more inclusive policies and services. The Partnership applies a **"local to global" approach**, meaning that its national and local partners are the main drivers and implementers of the joint work. Their engagement with communities and local authorities, as well as their locally applied methodologies and learnings form the basis for the Partnership's global agenda and overall approach. Learnings from local and national partners are analysed and consolidated, and published via the Partnership's global platform. Our partners and community actors jointly advocate with key international and multilateral actors to create an enabling political environment for our "Making Voices Heard and Count" approach.

Our goal is to transform the political promise to leave no one behind into a practical and scalable approach that can be implemented by any country.

Our Global Member Organisations:

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Our approach explained: “Making Voices Heard and Count”

“Making Voices Heard and Count” is both the Partnership’s motto and the name of our methodological approach. The project’s driving element is community-driven data (CDD): monitoring data that is produced by local communities and used by them to raise awareness of their situation with the public and decision makers, and to advocate for change. A key ambition of the project is to achieve a greater recognition and use of such data as a complementary source for SDG monitoring and review, and as a tool for the active inclusion of communities in the public development discourse (*Making Voices Heard*). Eventually, the project works toward the active use of this data in the planning of policies and services. We aim to make them more inclusive of the situation of marginalised communities and thereby providing critical support to improve the lives of those who are usually ‘off the radar’ (*Making Voices Count*).

Our approach fosters evidence-driven dialogues between civil society representatives and decision makers both at the national and local levels, aiming to ensure that no one is left behind in public monitoring and planning.



LNOB has maximised the added value of each single member of the partnership by making sure our own expertise is valorised. (LNOB Malawi)



The Partnership was able to create a niche for the LNOB within the SDG Agenda. We created attention to this dimension through the global network, which helped national members to engage at a higher level within the larger development sector and the UN system. (LNOB India)

We use a three-prong approach to achieve our goals:

1 Capacity building for local civil society:
Local civil society representatives receive technical trainings, enabling them to produce CDD for monitoring and advocacy purposes. This usually involves a methodology mix of both quantitative and qualitative approaches (e.g. surveys and scorecards). We aim to train and establish “local champions” this way, who can engage long-term in local development monitoring, reporting about the situation and progress of their communities.

2 Inclusive dialogues with decision makers at the local and national level:
Our national partner CSOs have well-established links with both local authorities and national level ministries. They support local civil society actors in the analysis of their data, and in the arrangement of community dialogues. These dialogues bring together marginalised groups and decision makers to discuss how to improve policies and services, based on community-driven data. Next to policy dialogues, the Partnership also helps community voices to be heard in the national SDG process, actively engaging in the preparatory processes of National Voluntary Reports (VNR) to the UN.

3 Global advocacy towards the increased use of CDD:
This involves strategic collaborations with key agencies such as the UN Statistics Division (UNSD). We work together on the creation of technical guidelines for the generation and use of CDD, thereby fostering the recognition and increased use of this data by authorities. The Partnership is also a driving force in a new UN-anchored process that brings together key global development actors, national statistics offices and civil society, aiming to harness data by citizens, for citizens, and about citizens.

What we have achieved together at a global level

The Partnership with its “Making Voices Heard and Count” approach has been able to bring together different local and national level organisations to jointly work on shared objectives. Over the years, the Partnership has contributed to different political and intergovernmental fora and events, involving for example: Asia Pacific Regional SDG Forum, European Commission’s InfoPoint for International Partnerships, Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG), High-level Political Forum (HLPF), UN ESCAP Stats Café, UN Statistical Commission, UN World Data Forum, VNR Labs at the HLPF, World Justice Forum, World Statistical Congress.

Since the beginning of its setup, the Partnership has aimed to establish strategic collaborations with other global and regional actors in its advocacy efforts towards a more inclusive monitoring of SDGs.

Main achievements of the LNOB partnership include:

A close cooperation with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), GIZ / Partners for Review and diverse Nepalese CSOs resulted in the release of a national Citizen-Generated Data (CGD) toolkit for Nepal, published in 2022.

The toolkit has been prepared for the wider use by civil society in the public policy discourse on the SDGs, providing guidance on the use of CGD in this context. It was published by the NGO Federation of Nepal. Both the Nepalese Statistics Office and the National Planning Commission contributed to it. The toolkit follows UNSD’s guidelines on CGD. It further includes inputs and experiences from youth capacity building workshops and community consultations, organised by Nepalese civil society partners.

Another important strategic collaboration for the Partnership is the *Inclusive SDG Data Partnerships Initiative with Partners for Review and the Danish Institute for Human Rights*. In 2021, the initiative brought together civil society, government ministries, national human rights institutes and national statistics offices from six countries to discuss ways forward for setting up national SDG data partnerships. The partners published a lessons learned report in July 2021 at the HLPF that gathers knowledge and recommendations from this process. The aforementioned Nepalese toolkit is one of the practical outcomes of the initiative. This report strengthens the importance of bringing together official and non-official data sources to (i) better identify locally rooted drivers of marginalisation and (ii) reflect and track these data into the national SDG strategy.

The Partnership also launched a successful collaboration with the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD) on the use of CGD facing the global Covid-19 pandemic. GPSDD and the Partnership published the report *“An Unequal Pandemic: Insights and Evidence from Communities and Civil Society Organisations”* in July 2021 at the HLPF. The report demonstrated the value of data generated by communities and CSOs for planning Covid responses, gathering stories and data from over 20 CSOs in multiple countries.

In November 2022, the Partnership was invited by UNSD to facilitate civil society inputs to a new UN-anchored collaborative aiming to foster citizens’ contributions to data. The goal is to elaborate a conceptual framework to be adopted by the UN Statistical Commission, which will guide civil society involvement in all steps of SDG implementation.



The Partnership successfully raised awareness on the importance of collecting community generated data, and tailored the advocacy goals to the countries’ needs and priorities. (IISD)



The LNOB was able to create a bridge for UNSD to interact with citizens and local organisations, helping us to engage more effectively at local level. (UNSD)

Our work at country level: Key successes

The Partnership was successful in providing a **common strategic direction** to national members, and **linking different national efforts to its overall goals**.

Main achievements of the national coalitions include:

BANGLADESH



A research on health coverage in the country with a focus on marginalised people was conducted in 2021. Information was collected by the national coalition about the measures taken on public healthcare services, as well as food and cash assistance for marginalised communities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Their inclusion and access to health services was measured using the citizen's scorecard method. This exercise was undertaken in all 64 districts with 10 selected marginalised groups, reaching about 2.000 community members. The results have been widely discussed with district and national government leaders. The Government of Bangladesh is now considering the use of the methodology in the public health sector.

DENMARK



The coalition was launched in 2021 and has been successful in participating in the Denmark's Voluntary National Review (VNR) process. The Denmark coalition was part of the Danish VNR delegation to the High Level Political Forum. It was mentioned by the Danish Government upon its foundation and was involved in the drafting of the civil society Spotlight Report 2021. The 2022 version is currently being finalised.

INDIA



The study "100 Hotspots" was published in 2019 reviewing SDG progress from the perspective of marginalised groups. This was a step forward in generating evidence on the exclusion of historically disadvantaged communities using the SDG framework, so that appropriate policy interventions can be pursued. Since then, the coalition prepared CGD-based policy briefs, and developed training modules for civil society in India to facilitate community-based evidence collection and localisation of SDGs. They also developed a background paper studying the treatment and nature of SDG 16 in India. Their work has been recognised by the government and UN in India and materialised into extensive collaboration for India's 2020 Voluntary National Review (VNR), a community-based monitoring project anchored with UNICEF and mentioned on the UNDESA website as 'SDG Good Practice'.

KENYA



Between 2018 and 2021, the Kenyan coalition implemented an LNOB dialogues project. The project organised county dialogues, undertaking research in 5 counties. Using radio, about 150,000 people were reached. The dialogues enabled voices of marginalised communities including women, youths, slums dwellers, and persons with disabilities. This fostered increased social accountability of official stakeholders and triggered responsive action for a more inclusive and equitable planning towards the realisation of SDGs for all. The consolidated voices influenced the Kenya Voluntary National reporting to the UN. In collaboration with other partners and the National Bureau of Statistics, the coalition conducted joint case studies on the increased use of citizen-generated data in Kenya.

MALAWI



The Malawi country coalition joined the Partnership in 2021, and is currently implementing a project with the objective of demanding better accountability to support gender sensitive decisions, influence policy outcomes for empowerment of youth, women and other marginalised groups. Data was collected on the national Social Cash Transfer and Affordable Input Programmes from the government. The project has prompted the National Statistics Office to invite coalition members to contribute to the Job Market study underway, which is a stepping stone towards the institutionalisation of community-driven data in the country.

NEPAL



A project focusing on youth-led SDG monitoring started at the end of 2020, aiming at strengthening the capacities of CSOs around evidence generation and inclusive data. LNOB partners in Nepal developed an SDG monitoring Community Score Card and a tracking progress website for SDG monitoring. A Citizens' Review of the SDGs was published in 2020. The report was acknowledged in the Nepalese government's 2020 VNR to the UN. In 2021, a citizen-led monitoring report was published, setting the basis for holding discussions with the National Statistics Office. In 2022, the coalition together with NGO federation Nepal and other civil society partners have co-created a toolkit for citizen-generated data, engaging key stakeholders in the country to reflect, share and learn about the data ecosystem in SDG monitoring. This also involved the National Statistics Office.

VIETNAM



In 2018, the coalition effectively contributed to Vietnam's VNR and issued a civil society statement, which was presented at the High Level Political Forum in New York. Between 2019 and 2021, the coalition contributed to the 2020 SDG reports of Vietnam and organised a series of workshops and capacity building efforts for civil society organisations (CSOs) and government officers about the role of CSOs in the SDGs. Between 2021 and 2022, the coalition conducted a citizen-generated data project to collect the voices of 3,100 vulnerable people from children, youth, women, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and LGBTIQ. In cooperation with the government in Vietnam, the coalition will contribute again to Vietnam's next VNR in 2023. The production of CGD toolkit is currently planned in collaboration with the National Statistics Office.



The Partnership has done an impressive work at the local level, ensuring a bottom-up approach to represent communities, and managed to share its work in high level platforms. Their work is unique within the SDG/LNOB sector. (Robert Bosch Stiftung)

Our National Lead Organisations:



Learnings: What makes us a successful partnership

The Partnership successfully leveraged on the strengths and thematic focuses of each of its global and country level members. Through their participation in the partnership, national platforms have shared their work in regional and global events and gained visibility within a larger pool of stakeholders. The International Civil Society Centre (the Centre) was particularly instrumental in this effort, giving visibility to the country coalitions' work, and facilitating learning and information sharing among national and global members. The Centre has been recognised by many internal and external stakeholders to have succeeded in providing structure, visibility and a framework of collaboration to the national coalitions.

By engaging in meaningful ways with actors on all levels, the Partnership managed to link local efforts fostering the inclusion of marginalised communities with global development goals. Thanks to showcasing the work of national actors in regional and global events, it created a bridge between global objectives and local realities, and vice-versa.

At the national level, the creation of a coordination structure allowed for an improved collaboration between CSOs and CBOs. This allowed for joint advocacy efforts that are more tailored to the local context. Also, the Partnership helped national members to be represented in the VNR process with a more coherent and audible voice.

While recognising that the path of making voices heard and count is a long one and it comes with challenges, it is important to acknowledge that the Partnership has been able to create a dedicated space for cross-country learning and collaboration. It successfully connected national and local civil society actors to a global platform of organisations working on the universal "leave no one behind" principle, amplifying voices of marginalised communities.

94% of respondents feel their work directly contributed to achieve the partnership's joint goals

89% of respondents think they are well involved in joint advocacy activities

88% of respondents appreciate the collaboration & communication with other national partners

94% of respondents believe the working arrangements at the national level are effective

78% of respondents think that global communications are well in line with the national context

Responses collected from 35 national LNOB partners via a web-survey conducted in 2022



Our Supporters:



Our Strategic Partners:



For more information about the partnership, please visit our website:
www.voicescount.org

If you are interested in working with us, please contact the global partnership coordinator:

Peter Koblowsky | Senior Partnership Manager
Email: pkoblowsky@icscentre.org
International Civil Society Centre gGmbH
Agricolastraße 26 | 10555 Berlin
www.icscentre.org



HOSTED BY



International
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The Leave No One Behind Partnership is hosted by the International Civil Society Centre, serving as its global secretariat.

The Centre was founded in 2007 to support international civil society organisations (ICSOs) to maximise their impact for a sustainable and more equitable world. Our mission is to strengthen the impact and resilience of these organisations to support people to change their world for the better. The Centre is owned and supported by 20 of the largest ICSOs working across environmental, human rights, social justice and humanitarian themes.