

The Raffles Review

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No-one left behind



SOURCE

[Leave no one behind: The real bottom billion](#) by Tanni Bhatkal, Emma Samman and Elizabeth Stuart and published by the [Overseas Development Institute](#) in September 2015.

BIG IDEAS

- Though poverty was reduced under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the gains for the poorest across the world were limited. 1 billion people aged 15 years and over still have no schooling or primary education, and the most severely affected group within this are poor rural females. 800 million people worldwide are malnourished, of whom 75% live in rural areas.
- Marginalized and minority groups are likely to have made the least progress on health, education and income under the MDGs. Over 66% of health-poverty and education-poverty is found in households where the head is a member of an ethnic minority. Women from ethnic minority groups are also most likely to have missed out on gains accruing from MDGs.
- The problem of inequality is not limited to Low-Income Countries alone. Some minorities, like Roma populations in Eastern and Western Europe are 70-75% more likely to be at the risk of poverty compared to the national averages. Though only 10% of the US population identify themselves as LGBT, among American youth who are homeless this figure rises to 40%.
- Governments will not meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets unless specific obstacles that marginalized populations face, especially those deliberately excluded, are tackled.
- Identity-based marginalisation is not inescapable: countries like Honduras, Pakistan, China and Vietnam are using a range of targeted and intersecting educational, income support and healthcare programmes to help tackle the causes of inequality.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

- Targeting disadvantaged and marginalized groups like the elderly, the disabled, ethnic and religious minorities, women and girls and sexual minorities must be a priority for public administrators worldwide if progress on SDGs is to be made.
 - Extreme inequality of income, and of other aspects of wellbeing including health and education is not only restricted to poorer countries. Some High-income countries have pockets of marginalisation in which people systematically perform worse than the average, which poses a challenge for public administrators too.
 - Public service should be self-critical and actively look for ways to counteract the influence of the social composition of its members, which are often drawn from majority groups and elites, and be mindful of the 'cognitive' and 'action' biases this creates.
 - Governments everywhere should adopt the principle of "leaving no person, and no group, behind" as a critical factor in defining measures of progress towards the SDGs. Targeting the betterment of worst-off first could be key to successful achievement of the SDGs.

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*This weekly offering
summarises insights on public
service matters to challenge
assumptions and question
the status quo.*