

Thematic Working Aid

Leave no one behind in practice

Agriculture & Food Security

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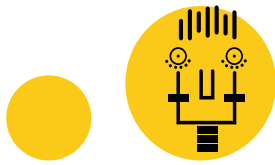


What do we know about marginalised people in AFS?

Agriculture remains a major source of livelihood for the poor around the globe. Up to 800 million people and 78% of the poor live in rural areas and rely on agriculture to make a living.¹ Agriculture is key to fighting hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition for both rural dwellers and a growing urban population. Despite the centrality of the agri-food sector for inclusive development, this is an area where poverty remains high and inequality is pervasive.

Over the last two decades extreme poverty has been globally reduced. Nonetheless, rural areas have lagged behind in reducing extreme poverty and poverty rates in such areas still exceed those in urban areas.² In Mozambique, for example, rural poverty increased during the 2000s, despite this being a period of sustained growth.³

The degree of inequality in access to land, water, productive resources and markets is a key cause of being left behind. Small family farms dominate rural landscapes across the developing world and account for up to 80% of food produced in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, while supporting livelihoods of up to 2.5 billion people.⁴ They tend to farm marginal land, however, often face insecurity of tenure and are particularly vulnerable to land and water grabbing and to the effects of climate change. They are also disadvantaged in accessing markets, as resource scarcity (including access to finance) prevents them from purchasing inputs for their farms while their small size and lack of alternatives limit their bargaining power when negotiating prices for their produce with market brokers.



Inequality is also noticeable beyond the farm gate and across the agri-food chain, as income and power are concentrated in very few hands, particularly at the stages of food processing, wholesaling and retailing.⁵ At the other end of the chain, billions of consumers struggle to access good-quality food. While one billion of the world's population is hungry, another billion and a half is overweight.⁶ This is not just because of unequal distribution of food or excessive consumption. Paradoxically, obesity is increasingly a poor people's problem. The urban poor in particular struggle to afford a healthy nutritious diet and are prone to malnutrition caused by either lack of food or an excess of inadequate food.⁷

More specifically, marginalised people in the AFS domain comprise a range of overlapping social categories facing a diversity of challenges:

- **Smallholder farmers**, who often practise subsistence agriculture and have inadequate connections to markets for inputs (such as seed, tools and adequate fertiliser), markets for services (including finance, extension and mechanisation) and markets for their produce that would allow them to improve their livelihoods. Remote location, limited assets and tenure insecurity are some of the factors undermining their ability to accumulate and invest and therefore 'step up' the agricultural development ladder.⁸ They are also particularly vulnerable to shocks. These can be climate-related shocks as well as other shocks (e.g. economic) affecting the well-being of their relatives and members of their social networks. In the absence of a welfare system they may be called upon for support in instances of disease or death.
- **Smallholder farming households headed by women**, who, in addition to the above constraints, may face further challenges in accessing resources and services and benefiting from market opportunities because of gender discrimination. Also, women's labour burden often exceeds that of men, with a range of unpaid household tasks like food preparation, childcare and fuel and water collection.⁹ This may have implications on women's health and whether girls are sent to school.¹⁰
- **Landless or land-poor people in rural areas, particularly women and young people**, who depend largely on wage labour and petty trading for food and income generation and may be subject to unfair and erratic contractual and trade relations.
- **Indigenous people and traditional communities**, who make up about 6% of the world's population and occupy about 20% of the earth's territory.¹¹ They are affected by the loss of control of their traditional lands, territories and natural resources and by a dominant development paradigm centred on income, growth, sedentary lifestyles and the financialisation of natural resources. They increasingly live in urban areas as a result of a lack of opportunities in rural areas, land dispossession and/or displacement. **Pastoral and semi-nomadic communities** are a subset of this population and are often excluded and disadvantaged by production systems and spatial organisation processes encroaching on their territories and threatening their livelihood strategies, social networks and identity.
- **Displaced people**, who have been removed from their native communities and land by large-scale investments in agriculture, natural resource extraction or infrastructure, by expanding urbanisation or by the effects of climate change. Once in their areas of resettlement, displaced people often struggle to access good-quality land and water sources. The inability to cope with the drastic changes in their livelihoods may force people to migrate into urban areas in search of livelihood options and this can expose them to new forms of vulnerability.
- **Peri-urban and urban poor, particularly women, children and people with disabilities**, who struggle to ensure access to sufficient quantities of food and cannot afford the privilege of a balanced and nutritious diet. Those living in peri-urban areas specifically are also coming under increasing pressure because of the fierce competition for land, which makes them vulnerable to unfavourable land deals that compromise their future livelihoods.

People from across these categories face multiple obstacles to a better life. What they have in common is that they are bounded by limited asset ownership, are often at a geographically-determined disadvantage, and experience a legacy of powerlessness and disconnection in relation to markets, social structures and governance institutions. An LNOB approach should seek to address these structural challenges while nurturing the agency of marginalised people. This requires interventions across a number of fronts and sectoral domains, that recognise the multiple expression of their disadvantage.

How to diagnose marginalisation in the AFS domain?

Diagnosing marginalisation in relation to AFS requires a systemic approach that captures the multiple expressions of disadvantage that result in people being left behind. Such an approach should consider the intersectionality of poverty and inequality that cuts across age, gender, class, race, ethnicity or religion¹² and the different types of structural challenges faced by those left behind. The challenges may be spatial, economic, institutional or social or a combination of all these.

A spatial perspective on marginalisation in relation to AFS highlights the structural disadvantage of being born and living in isolated and deprived rural, peri-urban or urban areas, where access to fresh food, assets, markets and skills development opportunities may be limited. Conflict, environmental degradation and exposure to extreme weather events are other important determinants of spatial marginalisation.

An economic perspective emphasises low income levels and the lack of ownership of productive assets, such as land, working tools as well as skills that can be traded for income and food. Marginalisation can also be institutional, where regulation and policies fail to reach and protect the most disadvantaged and/or fail to address inequalities in relation to AFS.

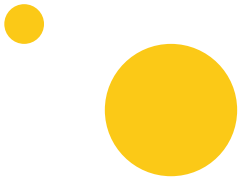
Finally, marginalisation may be determined by **social and cultural identity**. Women, young people, ethnic and religious and sexual minorities and people with disabilities are likely to be particularly disadvantaged by discriminatory cultural norms and practices, and therefore require special consideration. LNOB is about addressing these multiple forms of marginalisation in ways that protect people's dignity while offering opportunities and harnessing the diverse abilities of those who are left behind.

These multiple expressions of marginalisation map onto the three dimensions of exclusion highlighted by the SDC in the LNOB Guidance: markets, services and spaces.¹³ The LNOB Diagnosis Toolkit for AFS qualifies these three dimensions in relation to the AFS domain and indicates guiding questions for detecting concrete conditions of marginalisation. Participatory methods can help identify those who are "the left behind" and understanding their condition and perspectives by involving them directly as interpreters of their deprivation and struggles, while recognising their agency for change. The diagnosis should also take into account the specificities of local contexts and be adapted accordingly.



LNOB Diagnosis Toolkit for AFS

Dimension of exclusion	How is exclusion experienced?	Who is likely to be left behind?	What methods and sources to use to capture the different dimensions of exclusion?
<p>Markets</p> <p>(e.g. food, land, housing, labour and credit)</p>	<p>What counts as exclusion from markets in relation to AFS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which market systems are important to those left behind? • Is there limited access to affordable and nutritious food for consumption? • Is there limited access to affordable and suitable inputs and technology for agricultural production? • Are farmers able to negotiate fair prices for their produce, when dealing with market brokers? • Are farmers able to access credit and insurance? • Do wage labourers in agricultural work have access to decent pay and working conditions? • How vulnerable are people to price fluctuations (price rises for consumers, price falls for producers)? 	<p>Who is marginalised in market interactions related to food production, trade and consumption?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smallholder resource-constrained farmers, particularly those located in remote locations • Smallholder farming households headed by women • Peri-urban and urban poor, particularly women, children and people with disabilities 	<p>How to capture exclusion from markets?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse national poverty and agricultural surveys and socio-economic studies • Review thematic studies on rural poverty and livelihoods, food security and nutrition, agricultural commercialisation and value chain analysis • Collect new evidence on economic exclusion directly from target groups using participatory methods, such as resource mapping and wealth ranking
<p>Services</p> <p>(e.g. social protection, information, electricity, transport, education, health and water)</p>	<p>What counts as exclusion from services in relation to AFS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there limited access to basic services, such as education, health and water? • Is there limited access to social welfare programmes for the most vulnerable? • Is there limited access to extension services to support production? • Is there limited access to water sources for crop irrigation? 	<p>Who is marginalised in accessing agriculture and food and nutrition related services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smallholder farmers • Smallholder farming households headed by women • Peri-urban and urban poor, particularly women, children and people with disabilities 	<p>How to capture exclusion from services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review policy and institutional framework on rural poverty and food and nutrition security • Collect new evidence on service exclusion by using participatory methods that reveal experiences with public services (e.g. focus group interviews to capture group-specific challenges)
<p>Spaces</p> <p>(e.g. political, physical, cultural and social)</p>	<p>What counts as exclusion from spaces in relation to AFS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being landless or land-poor • Living in remote locations • Living in areas with accelerated environmental degradation • Living in locations exposed to natural disasters • Absence of rights or knowledge of them • Lack of recognition of social and cultural identity 	<p>Who is marginalised in relation to political, social, cultural and physical spaces?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landless or land-poor people in rural areas, particularly women and young people (including those without tenure security) • Displaced people • Indigenous people and traditional communities • Pastoral nomadic communities • People living in areas of rapid economic expansion where competition for access to natural resources is significant • Vulnerable social groups, such as: people with disabilities, children, young people, women and LGBT people 	<p>How to capture exclusion from spaces?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review thematic studies on the political economy of land, pastoralism, territorial development, climate vulnerability • Collect new evidence on experiences of remoteness, spatial exclusion and land conflict through qualitative studies and ethnographic analysis using participatory methodologies (e.g. participatory landscape and resource mapping, transect walks) • Collect new evidence on experiences of exclusion when interacting with the institutional framework (policies, formal regulation and customary practices), using participatory methodologies (e.g. focus group interviews to capture group-specific challenges)



What priority interventions are needed to LNOB in AFS?

LNOB calls for action from all stakeholders, including government, development partners, private investors, traders, civil society organisations and individuals, as citizens, consumers or economic agents. This note focuses essentially on what development partners and the SDC in particular can do as part of an LNOB strategy. It is however essential that development interventions are owned by their targeted beneficiaries and supported and enabled by each country's institutional and policy framework.

Considering the dimensions of marginalisation highlighted above, there are eight strategic entry points to LNOB in AFS programmes and, specifically, to empower the most disadvantaged in their social interactions and economic transactions with markets, either as producers, labourers, traders or consumers. These are not organised in order of priority but relate to the promotion of **opportunities** for economic and social transactions, harnessing of **abilities** that promote livelihoods and build resilience, and protecting human **dignity** through the enforcement of fundamental rights.

1. **Deliberately targeting those left behind in market access and participation** – Market-based approaches have become increasingly popular in international development as a means to promote economic growth and ultimately address poverty. Interventions linking poor rural producers to markets, for example, can play an important role in stimulating the rural economy. Evidence from programme evaluations shows that these initiatives still tend to benefit the better-off disproportionately. This happens not least as a result of donor pressure on market facilitators to quickly reach large numbers of beneficiaries. Market facilitators should therefore be supported to apply the principles of increasingly robust market diagnostic tools such as the making markets work for the poor (M4P) approach promoted by DFID and the SDC.¹⁴

Therefore, an LNOB strategy for promoting fair engagement with markets should deliberately and systematically address inequalities and power imbalances in different forms of market transactions and target those left behind. This can be done by working with government bodies and civil society organisations to promote and protect the rights of the most disadvantaged as rural producers, employers, labourers, traders and consumers. Identifying which market systems are important to the poor and all those left behind is the basis for designing interventions that tackle the constraints they face.¹⁵ There is scope for supporting bottom-up collective action by marginalised target groups that helps them claim their rights for land, decent work and nutritious food and strengthen their bargaining capacity in markets. The development of skills and building of assets of the most disadvantaged groups are complementary interventions required to support them in accessing and participating in markets, as indicated by the next entry points.

2. **Developing skills for livelihoods diversification** – Helping marginalised groups to both diversify their livelihood strategies within the farm and off-farm and their sources of income is a way of overcoming risks associated with any single activity. With regard to farming, livelihoods diversification helps to cope with the seasonality of farm income and manage the risk associated with vulnerability to weather shocks and climate change. Diversification opportunities in rural areas, particularly in the non-farm economy, are often limited, however, and require the skills and resources to initiate a new activity for example that the poor often lack. And evidence on the poverty impact of rural non-farm growth is mixed – in some contexts it has benefited primarily the already well-off.¹⁶






An LNOB strategy should therefore comprise targeted interventions to enhance the skills and capabilities of the poor, and of women and young people in particular, strengthening their ability to access employment opportunities in food processing, services, retail trade and other activities in the rural economy. It should also include interventions that promote self-employment, even if the immediate impact on people's income may be modest. Self-employment promotion initiatives may entail business development programmes tailored specifically to the abilities of those left behind with a transfer component (cf. entry point 8). Switzerland has first-hand experience in the field of vocational training and can complement this with interventions that enhance the quality of jobs and encourage entrepreneurship, including through access to small-scale finance.¹⁷

- Promoting access to ICTs that enable market access and social networking for livelihood diversification** – Modern technologies, including information and communication technologies (ICTs) like mobile phones and digital applications, not only improve the flow of information – for rural producers this may include key information about weather, farming practices and crop prices – but can also expand access to markets and services and the means to livelihood diversification. The well-off are often better positioned to take advantage of these opportunities. Nonetheless, ICTs can make a major difference for the poorest. For example, in Kenya, M-Pesa – a mobile phone-based money transfer, financing and microfinancing service – has contributed to reducing poverty and extreme poverty, and this has been driven primarily by households headed by women.¹⁸ The SDC Afri-Fin Mobile programme in Indonesia, Uganda and Zimbabwe has bundled microfinance with rural advisory services, including market information, using mobile phone technology, helping smallholder farmers to stabilise farm incomes and access formal financial services.¹⁹




An LNOB strategy should explore how ICTs and other modern technologies can equip target groups with the means to pursue new skills and start new businesses. Yet, this should be done bearing in mind that while ICTs can be a powerful means to raise the voice of those left behind²⁰ they can also reinforce exclusion.²¹

- Harnessing local knowledge and promoting technology that can be appropriated from below** – Local knowledge and long-standing indigenous practices are often dismissed as backward and unscientific. However, as frontline custodians of natural resources, indigenous people can provide crucial insights on environmental change and strategies to cope with and adapt to it.²² They should therefore be regarded as co-creators of knowledge and as agents of innovation rather than passive recipients of solutions generated elsewhere.

As such, in an LNOB strategy, local and indigenous knowledge needs to be better understood, nurtured and integrated with formal advisory services and modern scientific approaches. Furthermore, local capabilities, resources and materials can be more centrally used in technology development and innovation if these are to be inclusive, affordable and adapted to local circumstances. The SDC has gained experience of this over the years. The Postcosecha programme in Central America illustrates the effective involvement of local artisans in the production of small-scale silos that were appropriate to local needs and significantly improved local food security.²³ Among several more recent initiatives is the Grain Postharvest Loss Prevention (GPLP) project in Tanzania (2018–20) whereby tinsmiths have been trained to make metal silos – this not only addressed farmers' postharvest losses but also promotes local artisanal industry and markets.²⁴ The FAO Community of Practice for Food Loss Reduction provides examples of small-scale grain storage technologies that draw specifically on local, readily-available, inexpensive materials. And the Postharvest Loss Reduction Centre, hosted by the Natural Resources Institute in the UK, offers an online interactive catalogue for selecting appropriate grain storage solutions, with an indication of barriers to adoption and the ways of overcoming them.

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5. **Protecting and promoting land rights** – Land is a major livelihood asset for the majority of the rural poor, and ensuring security of tenure and the protection and promotion of land rights should remain an utmost priority in an LNOB strategy. This requires a multipronged approach that considers the institutional framework for land governance, local agrarian relations, the fair value of land for rural communities and indigenous peoples, and opportunities offered to local communities by land investments. Where land is a disputed asset, much remains to be done to strengthen regulatory frameworks, administrative capacity and judicial processes and protect the rights of vulnerable groups, including those of displaced communities and those of women who may be disadvantaged in patriarchal societies. Furthermore, promoting land access for landless people and supporting the recognition and formalisation of land rights is a means to empowering the rural poor and protecting them against the threats of dispossession and displacement. This should be complemented with bottom-up spatial planning locally which safeguards existing rights while opening up opportunities for expanding land use and attracting responsible investors. Community land delimitation supported by a partnership involving the SDC, other development partners and government authorities in Mozambique is a concrete example of this. Supporting the most vulnerable groups in local communities, including women and the poorest, to engage with these processes and helping them assess the real value of their land to account for its multiple functionalities (including social and cultural), is crucial to prevent unfair land deals and territorial development that leads to displacement, vulnerability and conflict.
6. **Protecting and promoting food rights** – The right to adequate food is a long-standing internationally recognised human right that is far from guaranteed for the most marginalised groups in rural and urban areas.

The protection and promotion of food rights should, alongside land rights, be placed at the centre of an LNOB strategy in AFS that tackles disadvantage at the production and consumption levels. In addition to policy advocacy at the international and national levels to raise awareness about this right and develop suitable policy frameworks, there is scope for more localised interventions. These may include supporting the identification and monitoring of food-insecure and vulnerable groups, and strengthening the voice and capabilities of civil society organisations and networks that advocate for food rights. In Brazil, for example, the establishment of a multi-stakeholder policy forum with strong civil society participation – the National Council on Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA) – has ensured that food and nutrition security has remained high on the policy agenda and has played a central part in developing interventions for tackling inequality in food production and consumption. The Food Acquisition Programme (PAA), currently being adopted in several African and Latin American countries, is a case in point. It offers technical assistance to relatively poor smallholder farmers and a secure market for their food products through institutional procurement. It also ensures a regular supply of local food to schools, hospitals and other public services, thereby stimulating local markets and promoting food security and healthier eating.²⁵

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7. **Providing social protection to mitigate risk and vulnerability** – Many will continue to struggle to make ends meet because of extreme destitution and deep-rooted inequalities. They are particularly vulnerable to shocks, related to nature, market volatility and conflict. Social protection is therefore a complementary area of action to LNOB with a range of tested instruments. The SDC's own experience includes food and cash transfers, social insurance and labour market policies. In the AFS domain, interventions comprise food assistance in response to shocks in Mali and Niger; agricultural micro-insurance to smallholders in Cuba, Bolivia and Tanzania; crop-insurance schemes in Malawi and Zambia; livestock insurance in Mongolia, programmes supporting micro- and small-scale rural enterprise in Bolivia, and support to off-farm employment in the Great Lakes region.²⁶



8. **Championing women's empowerment** – Women are a key target group in relation to all entry points mentioned above. However, their central role in AFS, either as farmers, as retailers or in household food preparation, justifies an additional emphasis. Improving women's education, for example, can be an effective way of reducing chronic child malnutrition.²⁷ Improving their skills and supporting their collective mobilisation, for example through self-help groups, can help them respond to gender discrimination around land access for example, take advantage of economic opportunities and equip them to better negotiate access to services, technology and markets. In Benin, for example, the SDC supports projects aimed at empowering women in agricultural and pastoral production through increased economic self-reliance and leadership skills development. The local community has gradually become accustomed to seeing women in positions of responsibility and seeing husbands sharing the decision-making. This successful experience has encouraged men to share power and abandon deep-rooted prejudice.²⁸

Areas of complementary action to the more localised interventions highlighted above include:

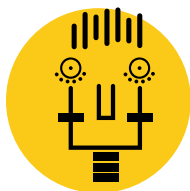
- At the level of **SDC country-level programming**: strengthen cross-thematic dialogue and synergies, as LNOB in AFS is closely related to other thematic areas of intervention, including gender, local governance, private sector development, skills development and employment.
- At the level of **national policymaking**: support country-level policy and institutional and regulatory frameworks related to critical areas, such as smallholder farming, land governance, market systems development, investment framework, rural advisory and extension services, the non-farm economy and rural employment, technological innovation and social protection.
- At the level of **international policy advocacy and influence**: advocate for the recognition of marginalised groups in global policy spaces related to AFS; continue to advocate for compliance with the relevant international guidelines and codes of conduct in AFS, including the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests or the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realisation of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security.
- At the level of **global knowledge production and exchange**: champion research on marginalisation and exclusion that offers cross-country perspectives focused on specific target groups; strengthen focus on the poorest and most disadvantaged social groups in assessing market-based approaches, including new initiatives based on mobile phones and digital technology; and support South-South learning and exchange targeting country policymakers, practitioners and SDC country offices on effective policies for addressing poverty and inequality.

Useful online resources

- Agricultural Policy Research in Africa (APRA): <http://www.future-agricultures.org/apra/>
- BEAM Exchange – Building Effective and Accessible Markets: <https://beamexchange.org>
- BRIDGE – Gender mainstreaming tools and approaches: <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/global-resources>
- Chronic Poverty Advisory Network (CPAN): <http://www.chronicpovertynetwork.org/new-page-test/>
- Committee on World Food Security: <http://www.fao.org/cfs/home/products/en/>
- FAO Community of Practice on Food Loss Reduction: <http://www.fao.org/food-loss-reduction/resources/en/>
- FAO Participatory Rural Appraisal Toolbox: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/x5996e/x5996e06.htm>
- Food for the Cities: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/ak003e/ak003e00.htm>
- IFAD on indigenous peoples: https://www.ifad.org/topic/overview/tags/indigenous_peoples
- Making Markets work for the Poor (M4P) Operational Guide: <https://beamexchange.org/resources/167/>
- Natural Resources Institute, Postharvest Loss Reduction Centre: <https://postharvest.nri.org/loss-reduction/choosing-the-right-grain-store>
- UNESCO Social Science Report 2016 – *Challenging Inequalities: Pathways to a Just World*: <https://en.unesco.org/wssr2016/contents>
- Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEI): <http://www.ifpri.org/topic/weai-resource-center>

Endnotes

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