

## Sub-RésEAU Africa – Learning Journey Summary of Sub-RésEAU Africa e-discussion on Leaving No One Behind (LNOB), 6-10 May 2019

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### Introduction

The aim of this e-discussion hosted by the SDC Sub-RésEAU Africa **on Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) – promising approaches** was to stimulate a first exchange among the participants of the upcoming Regional Water Team Days (RWTD) in Niamey (27-29 May 2019) and learn from each other on how to achieve that no one is left behind, e.g. to share promising approaches and experiences, and successful examples linked to Leaving No One Behind.

The e-discussion took place for one week, from 6-10 May 2019. 5 people contributed experiences from 5 countries. You can view all original contributions [here](#) by joining the SubRésEAU Africa online community.

### Conceptualizing Leaving No One Behind (LNOB)

Leaving No One Behind is a recurring and overarching objective of the 2030 Agenda. The imperative of equality and nondiscrimination are at its heart. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, 193 countries pledged to “leave no one behind” and make every effort to target the furthest behind first. However, trends show increasing inequalities both in access to water resources and in access to WASH services. If the world’s nations simply continue with business as usual, the world will not succeed in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It is time to reflect on what are effective strategies and actions to reduce inequalities, particularly in the water sector. The conceptual framework of [UNDP \(2018\)](#) built the basis for the e-discussion:



**Examine:** Understand inequalities – who is being left behind and why; and based on this:

**Empower:** empower those who are being left behind, e.g. civic engagement and strengthen their voice; and

**Enact:** enact integrated, equity focused SDG policies, including interventions and budgets.

During the e-discussion, following questions were discussed:

- **Examining inequalities:** What approaches are you using to identify the most vulnerable? What are your experiences in designing and operating monitoring systems (e.g. government-led national or local monitoring systems, use of crowdsourced data) that enable to gain a better understanding of why people are left behind?
- **Empowering:** What are promising experiences in empowering civil society in particular women and disadvantaged groups to make use of their right to information and to meaningfully participate in planning and decision-making related for instance to fund allocation (e.g. budget tracking) in the water sector or to water resources allocation?
- **Enacting:** What are examples of policies (national, local) in your countries that include specific measures to reach the most vulnerable (e.g. pro-poor tariff setting)? What are methods and tools to enhance participation, transparency and accountability at all levels (e.g. communities, water utilities, basin organisations, governments)? What are examples of blended finance / public-private partnerships / commercial finances for cross-subsidizing initiatives in your countries that ensure that all target groups are being reached and no one is being left behind?

### Different approaches and tools to examine inequalities

The different organizations strive to leaving no one behind and reaching out to hard-to-reach and excluded people. But before we can identify the most vulnerable, we need to be clear what we mean by this: whom are the vulnerable, excluded, hard-to-reach groups. Simavi's definition of inclusion is that everybody can participate fully, regardless of differences in ethnic-racial background, financial status, educational level, physical or mental ability, religious or faith-based beliefs, gender, marital status, geographical location (rural/urban), sexual orientation, age or any other socioeconomic circumstances. In addition to those criteria, Helvetas stresses the importance to contextualise the vulnerability analysis; for instance, in this case considering which groups are most affected by inadequate access to WASH services.

In order to identify the inequalities and those that are excluded from access to and use of WASH services, the different organizations use different approaches and or tools:

- Extensive **baseline studies** are conducted by Simavi and their partners, because national and local monitoring systems often do not capture all information necessary. For this, the gender and social inclusion assessments capture detailed information on gender, poverty, age, ability and other dimensions of inequality. Randomized household surveys as well as focus group discussions and key informant interviews are used to gather the necessary information.
- Making the **people concerned as responsible as possible** is another option proposed, i.e. the municipality as contracting authority or the target population itself. For a rural WASH programme in Zimbabwe, the **district WASH committees** (composed of district representatives from the relevant ministries e.g. Agriculture, Social Welfare, Local Government, Environment, Health, etc.) used **local leadership i.e. chiefs and headmen** to identify the most vulnerable. This local group of people worked with villagers to identify who the most vulnerable were in their respective communities. In a second step, the Ministry of Social Welfare at District level then validated the identified vulnerable persons/households and presented the list to the District WASH committee. Involving traditional chiefs has also

been successful in Tchad. Handing over the **responsibility directly to the target population** bases on the fact that everyone knows each other in a village. And in addition, all inhabitants share the same notion of vulnerability – even it may differ from ours. Thus, if communities are effectively given the opportunity to identify the most vulnerable themselves, the final choice is usually well accepted. When doing so, we need to be very careful to trust and get rid of our classic prejudices such as they are illiterate, they will not understand, it is too complicated. While relying on local leadership seems to be a good entry point, it is important to reflect on how to limit political influences and how to contribute to gradually changing the perception of women's and men's roles in society.

- Last but not least, Simavi kindly reminds us to start with ourselves when we want to take down barriers and inequalities. For this, the Dutch WASH Alliance developed an internal/organizational assessment tool to assess the organization's own inclusiveness as well as the one of the local (implementing) partners. It supports us to detect blind-spots and to better understand the reality on the ground.

### **Enabling and empowering**

Enable and empower the most vulnerable by ensuring their meaningful participation in decision-making and establishing safe and inclusive mechanisms for their civic engagement. In Benin, the communal authorities lead the sectoral water planning (e.g. prioritizing villages) by involving village chiefs and drinking water consumer associations (with representatives of each village). They are later also responsible for monitoring the execution of the works. This mechanism allows to increase participation, accountability and transparency while HELVETAS's role is to ensure that participatory methods are used and make sure that minority groups are included (among others).

### **Enacting - policies, laws, reforms, interventions to confront the drivers that leave people behind**

One experience on how the most vulnerable can be successfully involved has been shared. In the rural water supply programme in Zimbabwe, the most vulnerable people received different support in order to ensure their access to WASH services, e.g. targeted subsidies, working materials or community members offered free labor to construct the latrines, hand-washing facilities, pot racks, etc.

### **Outlook**

The Regional Water Team Days (RWTD) of the Sub-RésEAU Africa which will take place from 27-29 May 2019 will provide opportunities to further exchange and deepen the discussion.

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