

Stream 1: “No one left behind”: The challenges and good practices of evaluating vulnerable and marginalized groups

Lead Agencies: UNFPA, UN Women

Background

Leaving no one behind is a fundamental principle of the new Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) agenda. Not only are there specific goals on ‘ending poverty, in all its forms, everywhere’, and ‘reducing inequality’, but tackling marginalisation and responding to the needs of all vulnerable groups are central to the SDGs. The SDG Declaration (UN, 2015) is very specific on the importance of meeting the needs of children, women and girls, people with disabilities, older people – and other groups - by the 2030 deadline. The Declaration states that nobody’s ‘race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status’ should bar them from achieving their potential and their fair share in progress. It also stresses the importance of everyone being able to live their lives in dignity (UN, 2015).

This session will focus on evaluations of programmes and policies targeting vulnerable and marginalized groups. Generally speaking, vulnerable and marginalized groups (VMGs) are communities that experience a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion. VMGs may include, but are not limited to: women, children (adolescent girls in particular), indigenous people, ethnic minorities, internally displaced persons, migrant workers, sex workers, persons living with HIV, persons with disabilities, and elderly persons. Vulnerability will also be defined as the degree to which a population, individual or organization is unable to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impacts conflict, crisis, disasters, emergencies.¹

Key Objectives

The key objectives of this session include:

- To share experience and knowledge, among evaluation practitioners, of key approaches and methodologies used in evaluations targeting vulnerable or marginalized groups.
- To discuss the implications and challenges of involving VMGs in the design, conduct, and dissemination of evaluations.
- To explore opportunities and challenges in involving VMGs in evaluation in the context of current events related to crisis, conflict and migration (e.g. Syrian crisis).

Format (Total duration: ~3 hours)

World Café format – panel discussion followed by small group discussions.

1. Opening panel (duration: 95 minutes)

Representatives from agencies will set the context by sharing experience of relevant evaluations. Each presentation should be 20 – 25 minutes.

¹ Environmental health in emergencies and disasters: a practical guide. (WHO, 2002)

Potential presenters and presentations:

- UNFPA – Evaluations on themes relating to sexual reproductive health adolescent and youth and gender based violence that target VMGs
- UN Women - TBD
- UNICEF - TBD
- Other Agencies

2. Plenary QA (duration: 15 minutes)

3. Small group rounds (duration: 50 minutes)*

Each small discussion group will have a facilitator, a rapporteur and 4-5 participants. There will be 3 rounds of discussion that should last approximately 15 minutes. After each round, facilitators along with participants should “harvest” the key insights and ideas from the discussions. Participants may alternate discussion groups after each round. Rapporteurs will be present to capture the ideas

4. Closing discussion (duration: 20 minutes)

After the last round, the facilitators and rapporteurs will share insights to the larger group and UNFPA/UN Women will provide concluding remarks.

*** Potential discussion topics for the small group rounds**

(a) Evaluation design for VMG

- How do we approach sensitive issues relating to VMGs (e.g. family planning, use by youth, adolescent girls; FGM; child marriage; son preference, violence against women) with implications for the conduct of the evaluation?
- How do we ensure all voices are heard (“no-one left behind”) which can be challenging in specific contexts (e.g. when dealing with youth, sex workers, LGBTI communities, IDP, minorities)?

(b) Participation of vulnerable individuals or groups who may be affected by the evaluation:

- What is needed to secure the participation of vulnerable or marginalized groups?
- How do we involve VMGs in the evaluation process?

(c) Duty-bearers and their participation in the evaluation process:

- How do we manage strong sensitivities/reservations around issues relating to VMGs (e.g. LGBTI, MSM, ethnic minorities) in programme countries when conducting an evaluation?
- How can this be done while maintaining a Human Rights Based Approach that should be incorporated in the design of the evaluation?

(d) Local expertise in the conduct of the evaluation:

- What do we need to consider in the evaluation approach and methods of data collection (and analysis) to ensure that it is responsive to VMGs as well as gender or broader human rights issues?
- How do we ensure that in-country evaluation team members (national) are highly knowledgeable of the cultural context and issues relating to VMGs, but do not assume strong personal views/biases on the subject to be evaluated?
- How do we build capacities and knowledge sharing through evaluation process?

(e) Governance structures and independence:

- How do we maintain the independence and impartiality of evaluation at the reporting stage while managing political sensitivities on language or content (e.g. MSM, LGBTI, ethnic minorities)?