

icies. To reverse that trend and cut poverty by half in fifteen years would surely require a major revision of current policies.

Even though Target 1.2 mentions “poverty in all its dimensions”, the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is not yet among the proposed indicators. The

MPI is computed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative¹² for non-OECD countries and has been included in UNDP’s Human Development Report since 2010. The World Bank poverty study ac-

¹² Cf. OPHI (2016).

Leaving no one behind calls for far-reaching changes in the way development agencies operate

BY XAVIER GODINOT, INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT ATD FOURTH WORLD

For some development agency staff, involving people living in poverty in development programmes appears to be too difficult, time-consuming and costly. Some have developed forms of ‘willful blindness’ over the exclusion of the poorest people in the projects they finance, classified as such and analyzed by Jean-Michel Séverino, former Vice-President of the World Bank and former Chief Executive Officer of Agence Française de Développement. Refusing to see this exclusion as problematic makes it possible to avoid difficulties, while exacerbating inequalities and the marginalization of the poorest people.

Encouraging and even facilitating the voluntary participation of people living in poverty should not be regarded as an optional choice in development projects, as it is an obligation under human rights principles. The Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty

and Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2012, states in article 38: “States must ensure the active, free, informed and meaningful participation of persons living in poverty at all stages of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of decisions and policies affecting them.”

New mechanisms of participation, empowerment and transparency need to be created at local, national and international levels. For example, in designing all development projects, directors should be encouraged to identify and involve people who are experienced in relations with marginalized populations (representatives of residents, representatives from associations, professionals, etc.) in order to convey the expectations of the latter to leaders and donors and implement participation in the field. This participation is impossible if the efforts made

by project managers to get the poorest populations involved are not encouraged and supported by the managers of development agencies, and if they in turn are not encouraged and supported by the line ministries in partner countries. It requires calling into question the standard performance criteria, which are often those of a bank: substantial and rapid disbursements, short-term results and visibility.

“Leaving no one behind” in development, as called for by the 2030 Agenda, involves designing long-term programmes that can reach those hardest to reach segments of the population. This requires profound changes in the rationale for the way in which development agencies operate. A first step in this regard should be creating staff incentives towards increasing people’s participation, especially the most vulnerable, in achieving all of the goals.