WORLD BANK GROUP

INCLUSION MATTERS

The Foundation for Shared Prosperity

Few terms are as abstract and as political as is "social inclusion". This report puts boundaries around an abstract concept and provides a framework for a diverse audience engaged in policy action.

This report defines social inclusion in two ways:

social inclusion

- The process of improving the **terms** for **individuals and groups** to take part in society

- The process of improving the **ability, opportunity and dignity** of **people disadvantaged on the basis of their identity** to take part in society

Artwork by Geoffrey Ernest Katantazi Mukasa

The report argues that social inclusion takes poverty analysis beyond identifying correlates to uncovering its underlying causes. While it is possible to measure social inclusion, it is important to emphasize that measures are merely symptoms or flags. The real test of moving towards social inclusion is to ask why certain outcomes obtain for certain groups and focus on the drivers and processes of social inclusion.

PART I: Framing the Issue

Part I of the report makes the case that inclusion has both intrinsic and instrumental value for development and shared prosperity. It is integral to human well-being, but it also matters because the exclusion of individuals and groups has substantial social, political and economic costs. Gender, race, ethnicity, religion, but also sexual orientation, disability status and nationality are the most common axes of exclusion. But individual identities are complex—no individual is "just a homosexual" or "just a member of an ethnic minority". Further, different identities intersect and confer cumulative advantage or disadvantage. Groups are also very heterogeneous and different members of a group may experience different levels, or different kinds, of exclusion. Exclusion takes place through practices and processes that are embedded in norms and values. Individuals and groups seek to be included in three interrelated, domains: markets, services and spaces. These form the microcosm of individuals' lives and represent both barriers to and opportunities for social inclusion. The report argues that inclusion can be wrought by

Key Messages:

1. Excluded groups exist in all countries.

2. Excluded groups are consistently denied opportunities.

3. Intense global transitions are leading to social transformations that create new opportunities for inclusion as well as exacerbating existing forms of exclusion.

4. People take part in society through markets, services, and spaces.

5. Social and economic transformations affect the attitudes and perceptions of people. As people act on the basis of how they feel, it is important to pay attention to their attitudes and perceptions.

6. Exclusion is not immutable. Abundant evidence demonstrates that social inclusion can be planned and achieved.

7. Moving ahead will require a broader and deeper knowledge of exclusion and its impacts as well as taking concerted action.

SOCIAL INCLUSION FRAMEWORK:
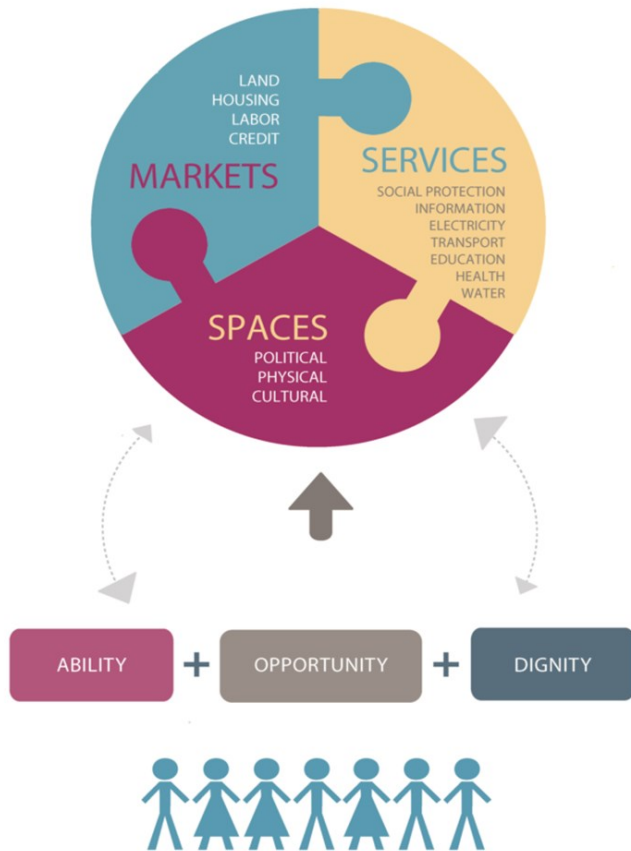
Individuals and groups tend to be included in three inter-related domains: markets, services and spaces. Change toward inclusion can be done by enhancing three related channels: ability, opportunity and dignity.

enhancing the abilities, opportunities and dignity of individuals and groups.

PART II: Transitions, Transformations and Perceptions.

Part II of the report emphasizes the urgency for social inclusion. It discusses some of the salient macro transitions of the last decades—demographic, spatial, economic, and in knowledge—which have profound ramifications for inclusion. Many of the macro level changes have been faster and deeper in the last two decades than in the preceding four decades. Understanding these changes is important for two reasons. First, they create new objective realities as societies are re-shaped by profound transformations, such as changing age structures or influx and outflow of migrants, which can lead to new forms of exclusion but also creates new opportunities for inclusion. Second, these transitions have an effect on attitudes and perceptions. Since people act on the basis of how they feel, these attitudes and perceptions matter for inclusion. Perception surveys like the Afrobarometer reveal

that not only minorities get excluded—entire majorities can feel left out where power and resources are captured by elites. Feelings of being included and respected by others, or being heard by the state, are central to the opportunities people access, the way in which they take part in society, and the way the state responds to them.

PART III: Change is Possible.

Part III of the report argues that change is inevitable and can be influenced towards social inclusion. It shifts away from a deterministic view that exclusion is immutable because it is embedded in norms and culture. Change will almost always be political and there can be push-back from dominant groups when previously subordinate groups feel included and break the norms.

Change from exclusion to inclusion is a long-term agenda and attention to timing is important when initiating reform. Lasting "one stroke of the pen" changes are few, and change is usually preceded by a series of processes or events. Processes, practices and outcomes, which take centuries to "aggregate to egregiousness", are usually not undone in a few years of "inclusive policy". This is especially the case when very exclusionary or hierarchical institutions are sought to be reformed. Further, undoing the past often entails more than just reversing negative impacts. It also requires overcoming negative beliefs and stereotypes against excluded groups, which is usually a long-term endeavor that requires multi-faceted interventions. Timing is of essence, and the impacts of some changes may be felt years into the future and may well be the unintended consequences of policy or other developments.

What Does it Mean for Policy?

The report emphasizes that policy matters, and asks "how do policies that are effective in addressing social inclusion differ from other policies?" It argues that such policies are those that don't necessarily do more, but those that do things differently. Moreover, no single set of policies or programs can be classified as "social inclusion policies" or "social inclusion programs". Depending on the "wrong" that needs to be addressed, or the "right" that needs to be deepened, a range of interventions could be employed. The report therefore discusses the ways in which different countries have practiced social inclusion. In the process, it presents a menu of options for policy makers to start addressing issues of inclusion and exclusion, rather than a set of prescriptions.

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