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Leave no one behind: A Guiding Principle of the Sustainable Development Goals

Leave no one behind (LNOB) is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It focuses on the commitment of all UN Member States to combat discrimination, rising inequalities and their root causes within and amongst countries. This briefing sheet summarizes the concept of LNOB and key steps for its implementation and the challenges and opportunities for tackling LNOB in the National Strategy.

Key Messages

- Addressing the principle of LNOB lies at the heart of the 2030 Agenda and constitutes a major stepping stone to achieving SDGs and their targets.
- Implementing LNOB in Canada's National Strategy presents opportunities and challenges for groups that have been historically left behind, including Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, youth, women and girls.
- Putting LNOB into practice requires a five-step process that prioritizes specific actions, monitors and measures progress and ensures accountability.

Overview of the SDGs

The commitment to leave no one behind is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which was launched by the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in 2015 along with 17 interdependent SDGs and their 169 associated targets. The 2030 Agenda sets the vision for global action towards achieving a more sustainable future for people and planet and the SDGs are balanced across three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environment) with a focus on ensuring that the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in the population are not left behind.



Source: [UN website](#)

Key Factors Determining LNOB

People who are left behind can be the result of various factors, including living in poverty and facing exclusion, discrimination and inequalities¹. They are often economically, socially, spatially and/or politically excluded due to ethnicity, race, gender, age, disability or a combination of these factors. The United Nations (UN) approach to LNOB aims to prioritize the dignity of human beings and ensure the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable communities are met. The five key factors of assessing who is being left behind and why includes discrimination, geography, shocks and fragility, socio-economic status and governance. The people facing a combination of these factors are likely to be categorized as among the furthest left behind.



Source: Adapted from UNDP 'What does it mean to leave no one behind?' (2018)

Who is left behind in Peterborough?

Poverty is a growing concern in Peterborough City and County since nearly 16% of families live in poverty². Although unemployment levels have been lower in Greater Peterborough than provincial and national averages in 2016, a number of employment challenges are still present, especially for young people.



The number of people who identify as Aboriginal includes 800 people who live at Curve Lake First Nation and 275 people who live in Hiawatha First Nation in the Greater Peterborough area.

Putting LNOB into Practice

The interim *LNOB UNSDG Operational Guide for UN Country Teams*, provides a five-step guideline to turn the principle and vision of LNOB into action¹.

LNOB Steps	Description
Step 1: Evidence Gathering and Analysis	Gather and analyze data, gaps and trends in SDG implementation between sub-populations and/or geographic localities Analyze data using the five factor framework to understand who is left behind
Step 2: Prioritization and analysis	Policy makers should prioritize the most critical challenges based on who is the furthest behind
Step 3: Decision-making	Policy makers and practitioners should use the information gathered from Step 2 to identify actions to address the challenges, barriers, capacity gaps, and root causes
Step 4: Monitoring and Evaluation	Identify LNOB indicators and targets after considering available data and gaps
Step 5: Accountability	Integrate LNOB in SDG follow-up and review process, including national SDG Reports and Voluntary National Reviews

Source: Adapted from BCCIC '[Reading between the lines: Accelerated Implementation of Agenda 2030](#)' (2020)

Key challenges in LNOB for Canada

Certain barriers and challenges are present when tackling the key drivers that cause people to be left behind. In Canada, groups that have been historically left behind include women, persons with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ2 and non-binary persons³. Indigenous peoples, particularly those who are living in remote communities, face greater challenges in overcoming poverty, inequality and injustice.

Opportunities for LNOB Implementation in the National Strategy

Canada's success in advancing the 2030 Agenda and the pledge to leave no one behind will depend on leadership from the highest level of the government, to the community and everyday Canadians³. Collaboration and engagement with Indigenous partners and National Indigenous Organizations will be crucial to the central commitment to leave no one behind and provide a valuable integrated approach to achieving the SDGs.

Role of Indigenous Leadership and Knowledge

Integrating Indigenous perspectives, priorities and knowledge throughout the SDG framework will support capacity building and increase awareness of the 2030 Agenda.

Indigenous knowledge plays a significant role in implementing SDGs⁴. Indigenous peoples' knowledge systems, composed of distinct and diverse cultures, highlight the interconnectedness of people and nature. The customary use of and relationships with biological resources by Indigenous peoples are relevant to achieving all the goals and targets of SDGs and can provide insights to measuring the progress of sustainable development³. Indigenous knowledge, science, practices and technologies can strengthen Canadian efforts in ensuring sustainable livelihoods, greater food security and achieving a more balanced economy.

Further reading

United Nations (2015) Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>)

United Nations Chief Executives Board (2017) Shared Framework on Leaving No One Behind: Equality and Non-Discrimination at the Health of Sustainable Development (<https://www.unsceb.org/CEBPublicFiles/CEB%20equality%20framework-A4-web-rev3.pdf>)

UNDP (2018) What does it mean to leave no one behind? (<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/what-does-it-mean-to-leave-no-one-behind-.html>)

Reference List

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2. CFGP, Greater Peterborough's Vital Signs (2016), available from https://cfgp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CFGP_VitalSigns_WEB.pdf
3. Government of Canada, Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy (2019), available from https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/documents/programs/agenda-2030/7781_EmploymentSocialDevelopment_2030-ENv5.pdf
4. UN, Indigenous Peoples' Rights and the 2030 Agenda (2017), available from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2016/10/Briefing-Paper-on-Indigenous-Peoples-Rights-and-the-2030-Agenda.pdf>

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