



annd

Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية

ANND Input for the Stakeholder Consultation
Addressing inequality through EU development cooperation

Questions

1. What are your general views on how the EU approaches the issue of inequality in the context of its development cooperation and external action? Is inequality sufficiently prioritised? (max 0.5 page)

Deriving from its legal obligations articulated by the Lisbon Treaty Article 208 and its commitment to implementing the Agenda 2030 and achieving sustainable development, the EU has a firm stance for addressing inequalities. The new European Consensus on Development reaffirms this, noting that *“eradicating poverty, tackling discrimination and inequalities and leaving no-one behind are at the heart of EU development cooperation policy”*.

Yet, the overall **decreasing amount of Official Development Assistance** and **how the ODA has been spent**, i.e. including for migration-control, in-donor refugee costs, but not principally for development needs, reflect an opposite approach in implementation and show that “addressing inequalities” is not sufficiently prioritized. In this context, **security-driven concerns** of the European member states prevail in overall EU external policy and as well in use of ODA. This is in contrast to EU’s commitment to development effectiveness principles. Thus the more “leaving no one behind” is integrated within the EU officials discourse, the less it is put in practice. Another concern is with regard **to promotion of the role of the private sector and leveraging private investments** within the context of the development cooperation. Tackling inequalities particularly at economic level requires creating opportunities and in this regard private sector can play an active role. However investment projects led by European companies without development impacts for the communities where those projects are implemented and in sectors that are not prioritized by their national development plans turn into opportunities and profits for European companies at first and create further inequalities.

2. What is your assessment of how inequality hampers the achievement of the EU’s development cooperation objectives? (max 0.5 page)

Inequalities do not outburst suddenly, they are deeply rooted, and **are outcomes of actions at various levels; political, economic, social, environmental...etc.** Therefore they are not abstract phenomena, but **highly interlinked to social and economic policies implemented and**



annd

Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية

promoted. They are not limited to national level either, but **impacted by regional and international policy directions.** In this regard, chronic inequalities within and between countries is a key challenge for achieving sustainable development and combating this inequality within and between countries must be a priority within the EU development cooperation policy objectives. However it is important to consider that widening and deepening inequality is not a challenge linked to poverty eradication only. Thus a growth-led approach would be limited, especially when there is no assurance that the growth outcomes will be distributed to those who are in need most. In addition, inequality hampers achieving development, because its persistence means **persistence of social injustices and destruction of social cohesion. Discriminatory practices, in legal frameworks or policy implementation exacerbate existing inequalities and lead to exclusion, extremism and radicalization among different segments of the societies.** Development cooperation thus should enhance inclusion, and enable various development actors to come together for design and implementation of policies. It should contribute to an enabling environment for civil society that can reflect on the local development needs and necessities as well.

3. **Based on your experience, please briefly describe up to three examples of development projects or programmes funded by the EU, which you see as positive examples of how inequality in all of its forms can be tackled in EU partner countries, and explain why they are successful? (max 1 page)**

Inequality is a multidimensional challenge, widened and deepened among and within countries. It stands at the core of the Agenda 2030, through which a universal commitment is made towards leaving none behind. Nevertheless, **adopting a quantitative approach and supporting specific projects addressing certain groups' needs only, like vocational training opportunities provided to young, access to finance for women's empowerment and other similar projects tackling certain segments of the people who face discrimination and inequalities will only have limited impacts.** While they may achieve success, for instance with regard to unemployment, this success may remain short-term and with limited impacts only **unless they are implemented within a comprehensive and coherent policy approach.** This approach requires addressing 'root causes', ensuring inclusive growth, decent and sustainable job opportunities with investments in productive and value-added sectors and with effective redistribution policies; thus a new development paradigm. In this context, the EU support, as a key partner for the Arab region, **should focus on projects that aim principally ensuring the full enjoyment of the economic and social rights including social protection, health and education**



annd

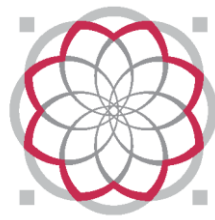
Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية

as well as clean water, energy, public transportation and housing...etc. for all without any discrimination. On the other hand, to achieve long-term and sustainable impacts from such projects requires **that they are not primarily donor-driven but rather designed and implemented within a comprehensive and inclusive national development policy.** This requires, the EU, as a key partner to enhance the regulatory role of the state and respect its policy space and enable multi-stakeholder platforms, ensure an inclusive partnership upholding the principles of development effectiveness.

4. How do you consider EU development cooperation can be improved to more systematically and effectively address inequality in partner countries? Can you highlight some areas for improvement for development projects and programmes financed by the EU, in terms of how they support the fight against inequality in partner countries? Can you suggest other opportunities or areas particularly relevant for reducing inequality that are currently not sufficiently well-reflected in EU development cooperation? (max 1 page)

The EU is a global actor, with its development cooperation policy, and firm commitment from EU member states on allocation of official development assistance, it can achieve a lot and thus contribute to sustainable development. Nevertheless, **experience from MDGs has shown that achieving the goals is not just a matter of funding and commitments; rather it is an issue of patterns and policies at the macro-economic, financial and social development levels.** Therefore the development model the EU supports would play a key role given its impacts worldwide. A reformed trading system and a shift from “Liberalization for the sake of Liberalization” are much needed. The revised approach should aim inclusive, sustainable and redistributive growth as well as the enhancement of productive capacities for generating sustainable employment opportunities. Likewise given the role it gives to private sector, the role EU should play a key role holding businesses and private sector accountable.

On the other hand, **the EU should adapt its own policymaking process as well, taking into consideration the impacts of diverse policy implementations (i.e. of trade, security, migration, aid...etc.) at all levels (social, economic, political...etc.).** These impact assessments should serve as indicators and benchmarks for future policies and development policy in particular. In this regard, ensuring policy coherence for development is vital. Policy coherence requires EU to strengthen a human rights framework, in which the universality, indivisibility and inter-relatedness of all human rights are recognized. In addition, it requires the EU to ensure its commitment towards development effectiveness principles, including national ownership, transparency, partnerships for development and mutual accountability to minimize any



annd

Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية

negative aspect that development policy can result into. Nevertheless, on the level of implementation PCD faces various challenges that should be addressed for development cooperation to have effective results.

- 5. Do you have any other suggestions or experiences that you would like to share, arising from your work related to the challenge of addressing inequality in developing countries? (max 0.5 page)**

About ANND: The Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) is a regional network, working in 12 Arab countries with nine national networks (with an extended membership of 250 CSOs from different backgrounds) and 23 NGO members. ANND was established in 1997 and its headquarters is located in Beirut, Lebanon since 2000. ANND aims at strengthening the role of civil society, enhancing the values of democracy, respect of human rights and sustainable development in the region. ANND advocates for more sound and effective socio-economic reforms in the region, which integrate the concepts of sustainable development, gender justice, and the rights-based approach.

Website: www.annd.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/www.annd.org/>

Twitter: @ArabNGONetwork