

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

Embedding equity in the post-2015 framework through stepping stone targets



By 2030, we could live in a world free from extreme poverty in which all children have equal chances to survive and reach their full potential in life. For this to happen, mechanisms to ensure that disadvantaged groups are not left behind by progress must be embedded in the post-2015 global development framework.

Stepping stone equity targets are one such mechanism. These would serve as interim benchmarks across all goal areas to ensure that disadvantaged groups are on track to achieve final targets and are catching up with more advantaged groups.

By 2030, no post-2015 target should be considered met unless it is met for all.



Save the Children

KEY MESSAGES

- **Billions of people are being excluded from global progress, a significant proportion of whom are children.** The blind spot of the Millennium Development Goals to inequalities must be corrected; it will not be possible to end extreme poverty under the post-2015 framework if people continue to be left behind.
- **Inequalities are not an inevitable outcome of development progress.** Positive stories from countries including Indonesia, Benin and Peru demonstrate that governments can take steps to ensure that disadvantaged children catch up with their more advantaged peers.
- **The process to define a post-2015 sustainable development framework offers an opportunity to change the course of human history.** The new framework must include concrete mechanisms to ensure no one is left behind under any goal, including:
 - An explicit commitment that, in 2030, **no target will be considered met unless met for all groups.**
 - **Stepping stone equity targets to incentivise equitable progress across all goal areas.** These would be set for interim points between 2015 and 2030, and would help ensure that disadvantaged groups are catching up and are on track to meet 2030 targets.
 - Additional measures to promote equity, including: goals to achieve **gender equality** and ensure **open, inclusive and accountable governance**; targets to **reduce income inequality, implement policies that reduce inequalities, and halt environmental degradation**; and mechanisms to monitor equitable progress through **disaggregated data**, linked to accountability and planning processes.



Diene, age eight, crosses the dangerous border between Uganda and DRC to go to school.

PHOTO: JONATHAN HYAMS/SAVE THE CHILDREN

I INTRODUCTION

The past 25 years have seen unprecedented progress in poverty reduction. The number of people living in absolute poverty has halved, nearly 50 million more children are in school, and 14,000 more children survive every day.¹ However, while average rates of progress have been impressive in many countries, billions of people across the world are being left behind.

Many of those being left behind are children, with a staggering 66% of children in developing countries living on less than \$2 a day and one in eight children in OECD countries living in relative poverty.²

Few would argue that a child's life chances should be determined before they are born. But across the world, in high- and low-income countries alike, children's prospects in life are in large part determined by factors outside of their control – their birthplace, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic group, and whether or not they have a disability. As a result, significant gaps remain between the world's haves and have-nots, with poverty and disadvantage passed from generation to generation.

THE POST-2015 FRAMEWORK: A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

We could see an end to extreme poverty within our lifetime, including an end to preventable child deaths, the eradication of extreme income poverty, and ensuring all children are in school and learning.³

But this vision will not be achieved if people continue to be left behind. Ending extreme poverty will hinge on shifting the trajectory of global development onto a more equitable pathway, ensuring that all children have equal chances to survive and thrive in life.

The ongoing process to define a new post-2015 framework to succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) presents an extraordinary window of opportunity to drive this change. Leaving no one behind under the new framework will require progress for those furthest behind to accelerate against a backdrop of improvement for all. Systematic disparities in children's life chances across health, education and other human development spheres must close.

STEPPING STONE TARGETS TO SPUR EQUITABLE PROGRESS

To achieve these objectives, the post-2015 framework must include concrete mechanisms to incentivise shifts in policy and practice so that the needs of those who are furthest behind are met first, and gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged groups close.

This briefing focuses on one such mechanism – stepping stone equity targets. Stepping stone targets are interim benchmarks for disadvantaged groups, and should accompany 2030 targets across all goal areas in the post-2015 framework. They would specify the progress that disadvantaged groups must be making in the run-up to 2030 to ensure they are on track for achieving the final targets and are catching up with more advantaged groups. By 2030, no target should be considered met unless it is met for all.

Stepping stone targets would help to embed equity across the entire post-2015 framework, addressing group-based inequalities across all dimensions of human development. As such, they would complement additional 2030 targets to directly tackle inequalities that are particularly damaging to children, including a target to tackle income inequality and a goal to advance gender equality. Together, these mechanisms would gear the post-2015 framework firmly towards the promotion of equity, helping to realise our vision of a world in which no one is left behind.

2 LOOKING BENEATH NATIONAL AVERAGES TO ENSURE NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND

It has long been acknowledged that too many people have been left behind under the MDG framework, particularly poor and marginalised children.⁴

Monitoring progress through average rates of change has masked inequalities between different groups.

For example:

- If recent trends in education continue, boys from rich families in sub-Saharan Africa will reach universal primary school completion by 2021. The poorest girls will not reach this goal until 2086.⁵
- Inequalities in child mortality rates between the poorest and richest sections of society have remained high in developing countries over the MDG period, increasing in more than a third of countries included in recent research.⁶
- For nutrition, improvements in stunting rates since 1990 have generally been accompanied by high and persisting inequalities. While a handful of countries have achieved faster rates of progress for the

poorest sections of society, an equal number have seen considerably faster progress for more affluent groups, resulting in growing inequalities.⁷

Inequality in children's life chances is not a problem confined solely to developing countries. In the UK, for example, progress in reducing child poverty has stalled in recent years, with 3.5 million children living in relative poverty in 2012.⁸ In education, progress in learning outcomes for disadvantaged children in both early years and secondary education has increased considerably since 2005. However, gaps in learning outcomes between these groups have been persistent, reducing by only two percentage points for early years and one percentage point for secondary education between 2005 and 2012.⁹

These trends are a major cause for concern. In countries across the world, particular groups of children are being excluded from development progress (see Box 1).

BOX 1: WHO ARE THE CHILDREN THAT ARE BEING HELD BACK?

Children are being left behind in countries across the world simply because they have been born into a particular disadvantaged group, defined by socioeconomic background, gender, region, disability, or ethnic or other identity group. Such inequalities often stem from historical patterns of discrimination that have systematically deprived particular groups of economic, social and political opportunities over time.¹⁰ In many cases, these inequalities are being exacerbated by climate change

and environmental degradation, to which poor and marginalised groups are particularly vulnerable.¹¹

Those who are furthest behind tend to be members of more than one disadvantaged group and suffer from multiple, overlapping forms of disadvantage. Due to pervasive and deeply rooted social norms, women and girls are often among the most disadvantaged in any group, and face the greatest barriers to fulfilling their potential. For example, in Benin and Peru, as in many countries

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BOX I *continued*

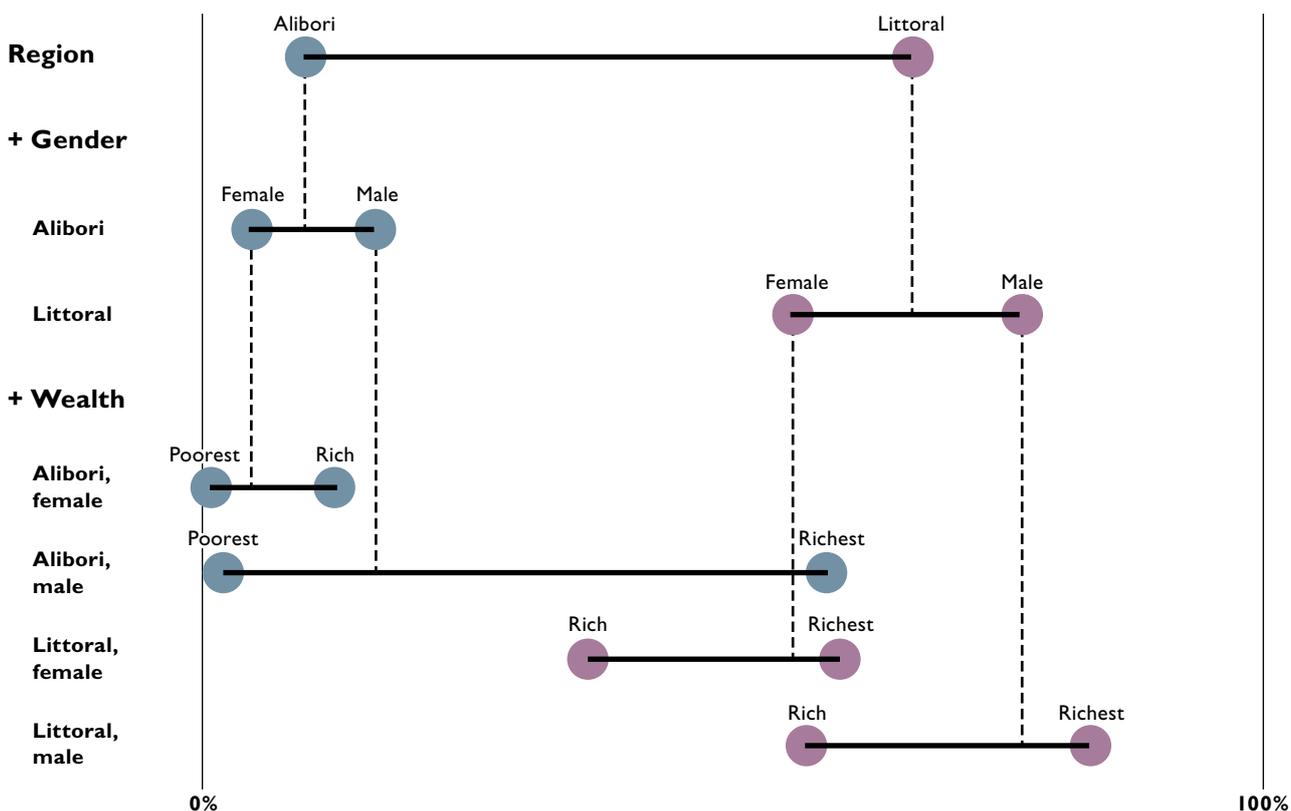
across the world, gender disadvantage overlaps with regional disparities in access to education and learning outcomes. As Figure I shows, 84% of the richest young men in the Littoral region of Benin had completed primary school in 2006, compared with only 1% of the poorest women in the Alibori region.¹² In Peru, 20% of the poorest girls completed primary school in rural areas with a basic understanding of mathematics, compared with 90% of the richest males in urban areas.¹³

Vulnerable children living on the margins of society are often the very furthest behind in terms of health, education and other dimensions of human development, and face additional barriers of stigma and discrimination. These include children living on the street or in institutions, and who are engaged in hazardous labour. Orphaned children, for example, are 12% less likely to go to school than their peers.¹⁴ Children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable, being more likely to be placed in harmful institutional care and to suffer from abuse.¹⁵

While income poverty is not an innate characteristic in the same way as birthplace or sex, the socioeconomic group that a child is born into often has significant impacts on their life chances. Societies with high levels of income inequality tend to have lower levels of social mobility because parents who lack disposable income are not able to invest as much in children's health and education, or give them access to valuable social networks and opportunities.¹⁶ In this way, economic inequalities among adults can translate into unequal life chances for children, further entrenching inequalities between groups through the intergenerational transfer of poverty.

Disadvantage in early childhood can have knock-on impacts throughout an individual's life – for example, children who miss out on education are less likely to access the same economic opportunities as their educated peers when they grow up.¹⁷ Ensuring all children have an equal start in life is therefore critical for ending poverty.

FIGURE I: DIFFERENTIALS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL COMPLETION BETWEEN REGIONAL, GENDER AND WEALTH GROUPS IN BENIN, 2006



Source: UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education

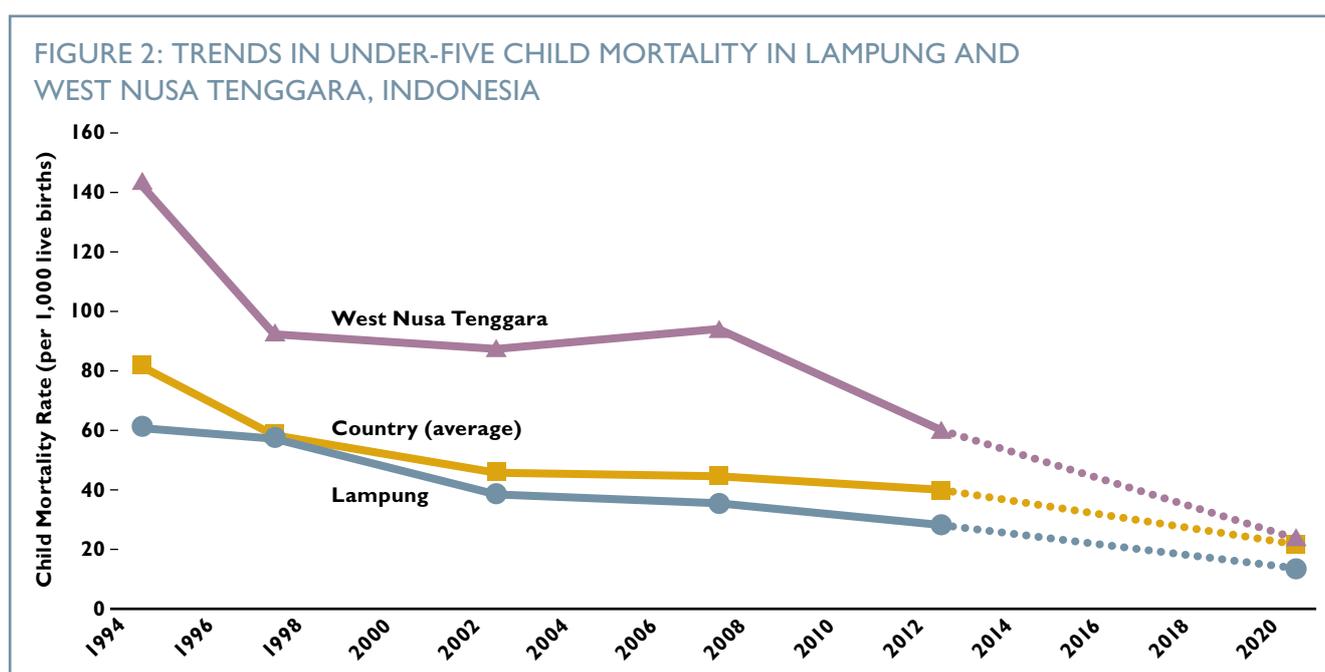
OPTING FOR EQUITABLE PROGRESS

While too many people have been left behind under the post-2015 framework, the global picture is not wholly negative. Progress has not always been accompanied by growing inequalities. For example, in the UK, inner London has risen from the second-worst performing region for secondary education in England to the second best over the past five years, and also achieved the lowest gap in learning outcomes between advantaged and disadvantaged students of all regions.¹⁸ While Bangladeshi and black African students were previously trailing behind their white peers in the English education system, Bangladeshi students are now outperforming white students, while black African students are achieving similar grades to white students.¹⁹

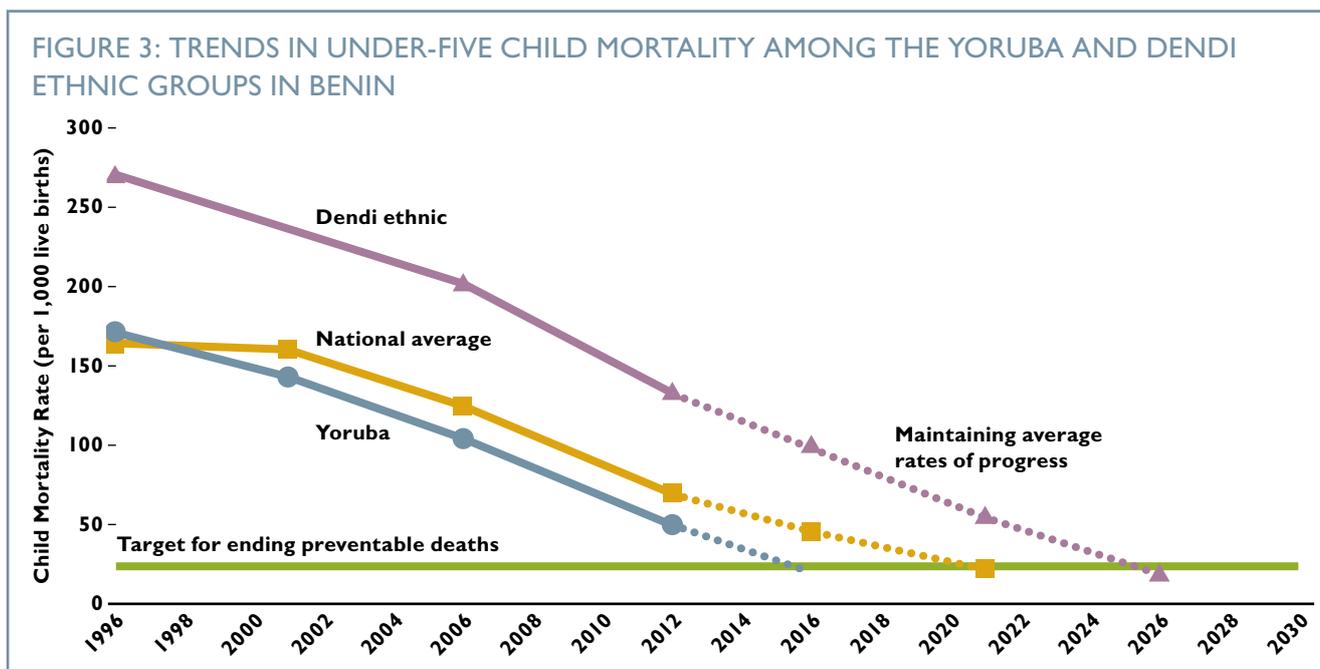
Cases of disadvantaged groups of children catching up with their peers can also be found in developing countries. For example, Figure 2 shows changes in under-five child mortality since 1994 in two regions of Indonesia – Lampung, a relatively better performing region, and West Nusa Tenggara, a region that is further behind.²⁰ Figure 2 illustrates how gaps between these regions have varied over time, increasing at some junctures and decreasing at others. Positively, the gap has been reducing in recent years and should close if recent progress is maintained. Whereas, in 1994, 81 more children were dying in West Nusa Tenggara than in Lampung out of every 1,000 born, this gap has now reduced to 32.

The reduction of disparities in child mortality across some regions of Indonesia reflects explicit commitment to integrated child health and protection within national development plans. This has been supported by efforts to achieve universal health insurance and, in some cases, the decentralisation of budgets and decision-making, and initiatives to reach disadvantaged regions and groups.²¹ There is still some way to go to eliminate preventable child mortality and inequalities in children's survival chances in Indonesia, both within and between regions, and to improve the implementation of policies to achieve these goals. However, progress in some regions in recent years has been substantial, with some disadvantaged children starting to catch up with their peers.

Benin is an example of a low-income country where average progress has masked significant variation between relatively more and less advantaged social groups, but where disadvantaged groups are making rapid progress. The country as a whole has achieved impressive reductions in child mortality in recent decades, from 166 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1996 to 70 in 2012.²² However, disparities between regions and ethnic groups remain high. For example, children in the Dendi ethnic group are still nearly three times more likely to die before reaching their fifth birthday than Yoruba children, with 133 Dendi children dying per 1,000 live births compared with 49 Yoruba children (see Figure 3²³).



Source: DHS data, Save the Children calculations²⁴



Source: DHS data, Save the Children calculations

More positively, the Dendi ethnic group is on track to eliminate preventable child deaths by 2030. Figure 3 shows the target threshold for low-income countries at which it is likely that children are no longer dying unnecessarily from preventable causes – 25 deaths per 1,000 live births.²⁵ If average rates of progress since 1996 continue, the Dendi ethnic group could reach this target by 2026. This would be a remarkable achievement for a disadvantaged group in a low-income country. However, Yoruba children could reach this target ten years earlier if they also maintain average progress. The challenge for Benin is to further accelerate progress for groups that have historically been left behind in order to ensure that all children have good and equal chances in life.

These examples are illustrative of the mixed global picture of differentials in children's life chances across the world, and the significant amount of work that remains to be done to ensure that no child is left behind by 2030. However, the fact that gaps are starting to close between some groups demonstrates that rising inequalities in children's life chances are not a necessary by-product of progress. Equitable progress is possible. It is within the power of governments to make policy choices to pursue progressive, more equitable development pathways, and of development partners to support these efforts in the world's poorest countries (Box 2).

First-time mother, Tia, holds her newborn son at a health centre in Indonesia.



PHOTO: DAVID WARDELL/SAVE THE CHILDREN

BOX 2: SHAPING POLICIES TO ENSURE EQUAL LIFE CHANCES FOR CHILDREN

The exact policies required to advance equal life chances for children are context- and sector-specific, and vary according to the profile and drivers of inequality in each country and for each disadvantaged group. However, in all countries it is critical to ensure that disadvantaged groups can access and use good-quality public services and social protection systems that meet their needs.

The focus must be on pursuing universal coverage of essential services via equitable pathways that meet the needs of disadvantaged groups first. Research shows that low-income countries that have achieved rapid changes in child health under the MDG framework have done so through improving the coverage and quality of essential, cost-effective services and social protection for the poorest people.²⁶ In many countries this will require increases in the level and quality of public investment in essential services and financial risk protection for service users. In some countries, there is significant scope to raise necessary resources through strengthened and more progressive tax systems; in others, support for government budgets from donors will have a continuing role to play.²⁷

Reaching those who are furthest behind will also require social norms, discrimination and other barriers that systematically disadvantage particular groups to be tackled. Steps must additionally be taken to bolster accountability to the poorest through improvements in transparency, access to justice and participation of marginalised groups in decision-making, including for women and children.²⁸

Post-2015 stepping stone targets should help to incentivise a national process not only to identify groups that are being left behind, but also to identify the policy approaches that will be required to ensure that targets are met.

This process must be open, participatory, and linked to global post-2015 accountability mechanisms to help guard against the continued exclusion of groups suffering from marginalisation and discrimination. The 2014 replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education provides a good example of linking national policy processes to international accountability mechanisms to spur equitable progress. This process saw 30 governments commit to addressing equity issues and ensuring that their budgets are spent in ways that better meet the educational needs of the poorest and most marginalised children.²⁹



Luzmila, 12, and Norma Lucy, 14, run to school, 20 kilometres from their home in Huancavelica, Peru.

PHOTO: ALEANDRO KIRCHUK/SAVE THE CHILDREN

3 STEPPING STONE TARGETS: A MECHANISM TO ENSURE NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND

Recognition has grown over the course of the post-2015 process that the new global development framework that replaces the MDGs will need to go beyond national averages and ensure no one is left behind.³⁰

In July 2014, the final Outcome Document of recommendations from the UN Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals identified the reduction of inequality within and between nations as a priority area, with support from a significant proportion of its members.³¹ As Brazil and Nicaragua stressed in their statement to the 11th Session of the OWG, the promotion of equality “must become an acknowledged priority and a structural dimension of the post-2015 development agenda”.³²

Previously, in its 2013 report to the UN Secretary-General, the High Level Panel on the post-2015 agenda identified ‘*leave no one behind*’ as one of five structural transformations that will be necessary for overcoming obstacles to sustained prosperity. The Panel recommended that targets should be monitored using data disaggregated by income quintile and by other groups. Importantly, targets should only be considered achieved if they are met for all relevant income and social groups.³³

The High Level Panel’s recommendation that no target should be considered met unless met for all would help to establish the promotion of equity as a post-2015 objective, and must be adopted as part of the final post-2015 agreement. However, by itself, this *no target met unless met for all* criterion would not provide sufficient policy incentives for governments

to make the urgent changes in policy and practice that will be required to ensure disadvantaged groups achieve 2030 targets.³⁴ As 2030 is a long time away and will likely see different administrations in charge, there is a danger that current governments will continue to take the easier route of serving groups that are easiest to reach, rather than the more difficult route of serving the needs of those who are hardest to reach. This poses the risk that disadvantaged groups will continue to be left behind.

Moreover, the *no target met unless met for all* criterion could also be satisfied under a scenario of growing inequality in children’s life chances. This is true for fractional targets that do not aim for the complete elimination of dimensions of poverty by 2030 (for example, a target to reduce stunting by 50%). It is also true for targets to reduce disadvantage below or above minimum global thresholds, such as the minimum global threshold for ending preventable child mortality (25 child deaths per 1,000 live births), or thresholds for minimum learning outcomes in education. Even if all groups met these thresholds, gaps below or above them would continue to grow if disadvantaged groups are not making sufficient progress to catch up with the most advantaged groups.

As the post-2015 process reaches its final stages, the challenge, then, is not only to continue to build consensus on the need for a strong focus on equity, but also to define concrete mechanisms to translate this consensus into action across all goal areas of the new framework. Save the Children presented a number of such mechanisms in *Framework for the Future*, our proposals for post-2015 goals, targets, indicators (see Box 3).³⁵

BOX 3: SAVE THE CHILDREN'S PROPOSALS FOR ADVANCING EQUITY THROUGH THE POST-2015 FRAMEWORK

This briefing focuses on stepping stone equity targets as an essential mechanism for promoting equitable progress under the post-2015 framework. This is one of several proposals for advancing equity that Save the Children presented in *Framework for the Future*. Other mechanisms include:

- **A standalone goal to achieve gender equality**, with targets to end gender-based violence, realise sexual and reproductive health and rights, advance women's and girls' economic empowerment, and ensure equal participation and influence in private and public life.
- **A standalone goal to ensure open, inclusive and accountable governance** to eliminate inequities in public participation, bolster accountability to marginalised groups and ensure effective institutions that provide equal access to good-quality public services.
- **A target to reduce income inequality and relative poverty.**
- **Goals and targets to drive forward action on policy areas that are known to reduce inequalities**, including universal health coverage, education, social protection, child protection and universal registration at birth.
- **Data disaggregation**, at the minimum by age, ethnicity, gender, geography, disability and, socioeconomic group to improve understanding of which groups are being left behind and to bolster accountability.
- **Targets to reduce international inequalities**, including through action to end illicit financial flows and reform international institutions.

For further detail, see Save the Children (2014) *Framework for the Future*.

One proposal that has potential for significant impact and that would mainstream the promotion of equity across all goal areas of the post-2015 framework is for interim equity, dubbed stepping stone targets. Initially proposed by Watkins (2014), these targets could be set for interim time periods between 2015 and 2030 and would aim to narrow disparities in basic life chances between different social and economic groups.³⁶ Watkins proposes, for example, that interim targets could be set to halve the death rate gap between the richest and the poorest, or narrow learning gaps between rural girls and urban boys.

Through focusing immediate and ongoing attention on the progress of those who are furthest behind, such targets would help to strengthen the post-2015 High Level Panel's recommendation that no target should be considered met unless met for all relevant social and economic groups.

Gap reduction is important, not least to ensure all children have equal chances in life. However, it must be pursued in ways that help to maintain overall

progress and ensure the attainment of 2030 goals for all groups. It should not be achieved through more advantaged groups going backwards. For this reason, stepping stone targets should have three interconnected objectives:³⁷

- 1) Maintain fast average progress at the national level.
- 2) Ensure that disadvantaged groups are on track to achieve 2030 targets.
- 3) Reduce gaps in human development outcomes that stem from systematic differences in life chances between groups of children. This should result from faster progress by disadvantaged groups, rather than regression by more advantaged groups.

Stepping stone targets should be defined at the national level for disadvantaged and marginalised groups that are the furthest behind, identified through an open and participatory process (see Box 4). They should be set for social, economic and environmental goal areas, taking intersecting forms of disadvantage into account.

ILLUSTRATING THE STEPPING STONE CONCEPT

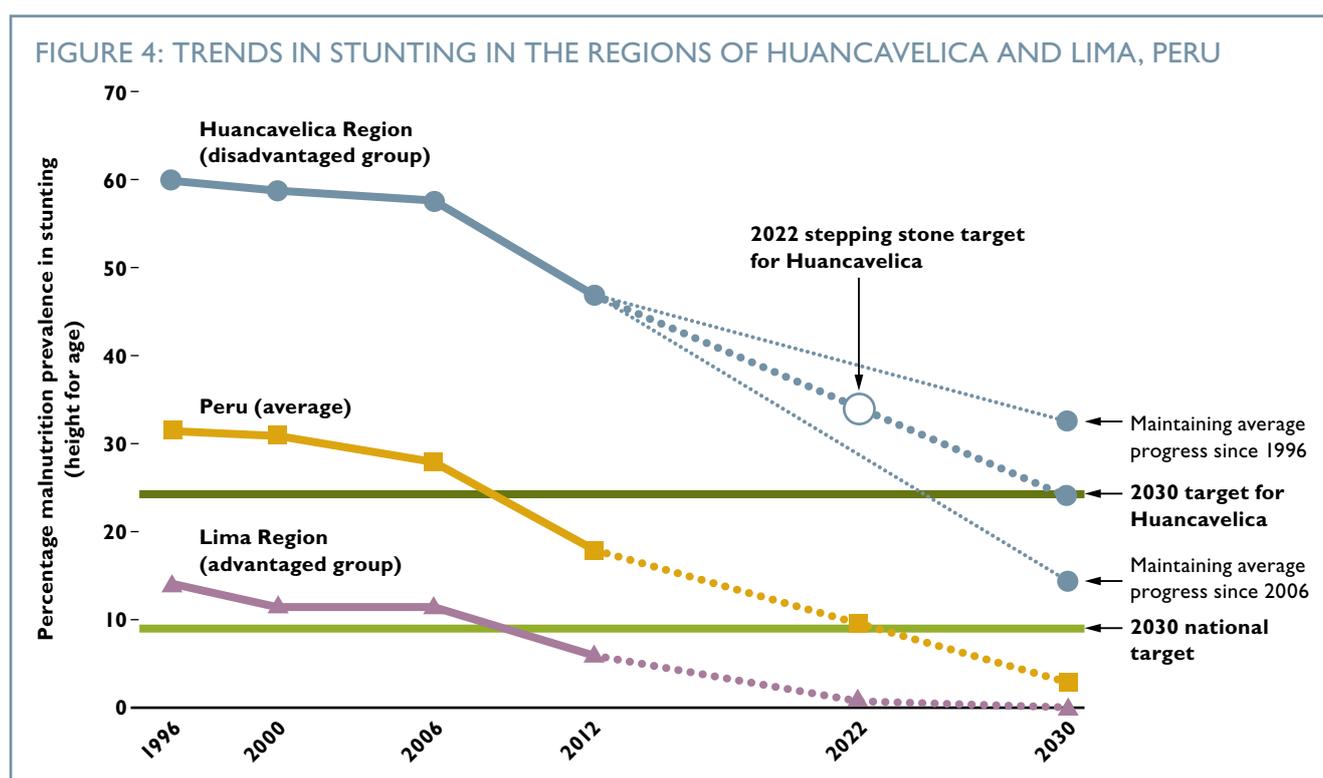
So what should a stepping stone equity target look like in practice? For purposes of illustration, Figure 4 shows regional differentials in malnutrition rates in Peru, measured through the percentage of children aged under five who are stunted. It is clear from this graph that the average rate of progress masks considerable regional inequalities. Huancavelica, the region with the highest stunting rates, is one of Peru's most remote regions in the Andean mountains, with a large indigenous population. In contrast, Lima Region houses the country's capital city, together with a significant proportion of the country's most affluent groups and good coverage of health and social services.³⁸ Peru's national average stunting rate among children under five was 18% in 2012. However, in Huancavelica stunting rates were as high as 47%, compared with 6% in Lima.

These trends are rooted in a history of high and persistent regional inequalities in Peru. However, Figure 4 shows the fruits of recent efforts by the Peruvian government and society to reverse decades of neglect and marginalisation of communities in remote Andean regions. Reductions in the stunting rate in Huancavelica accelerated dramatically between 2006 and 2012, falling 11 percentage points

compared with a reduction of only two percentage points the previous decade, and keeping pace with average rates of change. This was achieved through improvements in the coverage and quality of health, nutrition and social protection services, driven through increased investment; measures to strengthen coordination across social, financial and agricultural sectors; and results-based financing for decentralised programmes.³⁹

While recent trends in stunting rates are positive, there is still some way to go to ensure that children in Peru have equal life chances, no matter where they live. A child in Huancavelica is still nearly eight times more likely to be stunted than a child in Lima, and is over twice as likely to die before their fifth birthday than an average Peruvian child.

Save the Children has proposed that a target of at least halving stunting rates should be included in the post-2015 framework.⁴⁰ This target would be achieved by 2030 at the national level in Peru through maintaining the average rate of progress achieved since 1996, bringing the stunting rate down from 18% to 3%. In contrast, a 50% reduction target will be more of a challenge for Huancavelica. Here, meeting the target would require stunting rates to fall from the current level of 47% to 24% by 2030. As Figure 4 illustrates, if the region simply maintains the average progress it has achieved since 1996, it will miss this



Source: DHS data, Save the Children calculations

target by eight percentage points. However, if the more rapid rates of progress achieved since 2006 are maintained the target would be met ahead of schedule around 2025.

Countries must set stepping stone targets carefully according to local context, taking into account why particular groups are being left behind, historical trends, and the progress that will be needed for all groups to achieve 2030 targets. The aim of interim stepping stone targets in this example from Peru should be to help maintain the momentum of progress in Huancavelica, and ensure that the final 2030 target is met on time. In order to strike a balance between ambition and feasibility, a reasonable stepping stone target for 2022 in Huancavelica might be set, for example, at a maximum stunting rate of 34%. This would allow for some deceleration of progress due to people who are yet to be covered by nutrition and other services and programmes being the hardest to reach.⁴¹ However, it would still ensure that the region is on track for achieving the 2030 50% reduction target, and would likely see Huancavelica catching up with more advantaged regions.

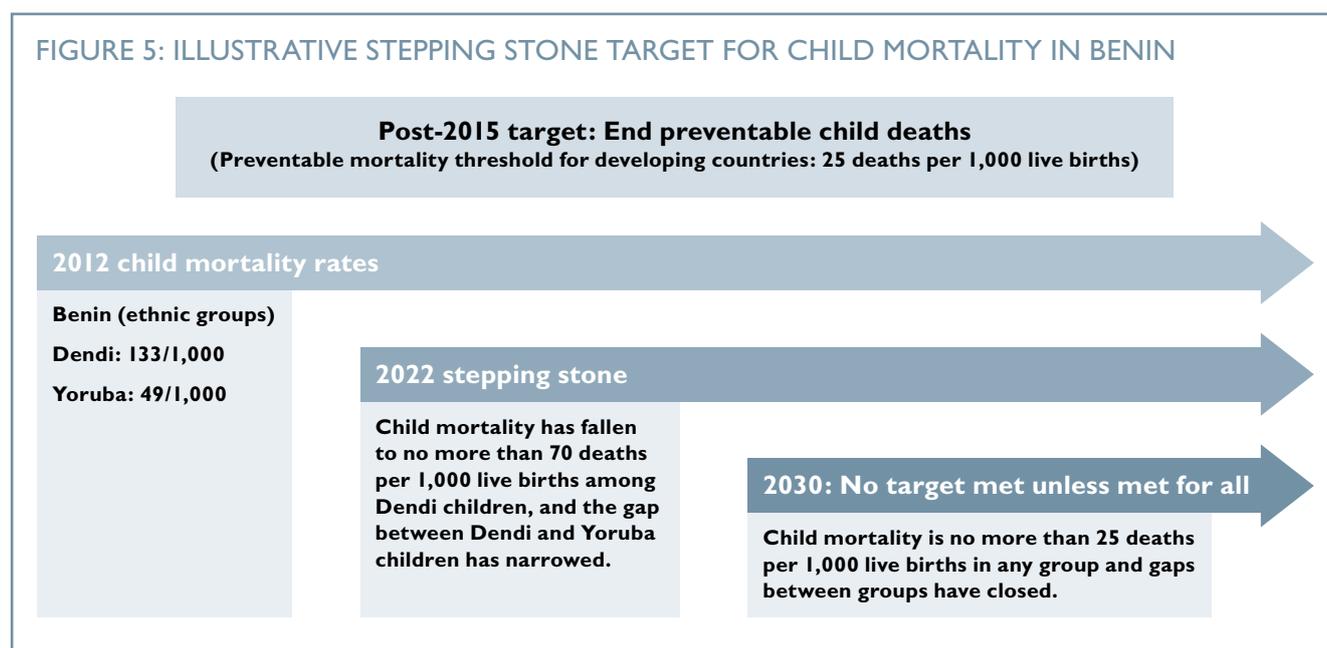
TAILORING TARGETS TO CONTEXT

A similar approach could be followed to identify stepping stone equity targets in other countries, including the examples of Benin and Indonesia discussed earlier in this paper (see Figure 5 for an illustrative stepping stone in Benin). In these

examples, the aim of stepping stone targets would be to ensure that recent rates of progress are maintained in order to achieve 2030 targets. However, in different countries and sectors, stepping stones will need to be set to accelerate progress. For example, reductions in stunting rates across the world have on the whole been slower than for child mortality due to the complex drivers of malnutrition and its relative neglect within development policy and practice.⁴² In Indonesia, stunting rates actually increased in the poorest quintile of the population between 2007 and 2010 against a backdrop of overall national improvement.⁴³ Benin saw average stunting rates increase between 1996 and 2006, accompanied by an increase in the gap between the poorest 40% and richest 10% of nine percentage points.⁴⁴

In sectors and cases like these, stepping stone targets will need to be more ambitious, ushering a step change in progress for the most disadvantaged groups. Donors and development partners have particular responsibility to support developing country governments to achieve ambitious targets. Ensuring no one is left behind under the post-2015 framework is a shared global responsibility.

To ensure that stepping stone targets are as effective and feasible as possible, a number of practical and technical details will need to be worked through (see Box 4). However, data and institutions are currently strong enough in many countries to commence the process of defining stepping stones, and incorporating them into national development plans.



BOX 4: DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING STEPPING STONES – SOME PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Poor-quality data and a lack of disaggregation** make it difficult to identify groups lagging behind, particularly those suffering from intersecting inequalities and from social exclusion. Governments, donors and international institutions must invest urgently in the post-2015 ‘data revolution’ to ensure that progress for all groups can be monitored and reported as soon as possible.
- **For purposes of illustration the examples of stepping stone targets in this briefing focus on a single mid-point date of 2022.** However, stepping stones could be set for additional dates between 2015 and 2030 to strengthen their contribution to post-2015 monitoring and accountability, potentially at three- to five-year intervals to align with political cycles.
- **Reporting on progress for disadvantaged groups is highly political** in many contexts, particularly where inequalities stem from deeply rooted social norms or entrenched patterns of exclusion that are keeping certain groups locked in poverty. In some cases, the most marginalised groups in society are not publicly recognised or counted within censuses, effectively rendering them invisible.
- **Processes to define and monitor stepping stones should therefore be open, inclusive and participatory**, including representation from a broad cross-section of civil society. They should also be linked to both national and international post-2015 monitoring and accountability systems, working in synergy with international human rights mechanisms.
- **Work will be required to identify the most appropriate baselines, metrics and benchmarks for defining stepping stones** at national levels, and to assess options for global stepping stones and monitoring.



Marco Antonio, age eight, lighting a candle in his house in Huancavelica, Peru.

PHOTO: ALEJANDRO KIRCHUK/SAVE THE CHILDREN

4 CONCLUSIONS

The post-2015 framework presents a significant opportunity to put the world on a more equitable and sustainable pathway to development and prosperity for all. World leaders must seize this opportunity, making use of every tool at their disposal to ensure that the new framework creates incentives for governments and the wider development community to reach those being left behind.

Stepping stone equity targets are a critical part of this post-2015 equity toolset. They would place immediate focus on gaps in progress between advantaged and disadvantaged children across all goal areas, and establish clear commitments to accelerate progress for groups that are furthest behind across the multiple dimensions of human development.

To maximise the capacity of the new framework to advance equity and prosperity for all, stepping stones must also be accompanied by targets to tackle

inequalities that cut across groups and societies, and to address barriers to equal life chances for children. These include extreme income inequality, which restricts poor families' ability to invest in their children; discrimination against girls and women; and environmental degradation that undermines the livelihoods, health and well-being of the world's poorest people. In addition, a goal must be included in the new framework to foster open, inclusive and accountable governance; a world in which no one is left behind will depend on governments being accountable and responsive to the needs of the poorest and most marginalised people.

Deployed together, these mechanisms would help to embed equity at the very heart of the post-2015 framework, spurring progress towards the ultimate goal: a world free from poverty in which all children have equal chances to thrive and reach their full potential in life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As governments across the world work together to build the post-2015 framework, they must maintain a strong focus on equity and ensure that concrete mechanisms to spur equitable progress are established within the new framework. These must include:

- **An explicit commitment that no target will be considered met unless met for all groups.**
- **Stepping stone equity targets to incentivise equitable progress across all goal areas.** These would be set for interim

points between 2015 and 2030, and would help ensure that disadvantaged groups are catching up and are on track to meet 2030 targets.

- Standalone goals to achieve **gender equality** and ensure **open, inclusive and accountable governance**, plus targets to **reduce income inequality, implement policies that reduce inequalities, and tackle environmental degradation.**
- Mechanisms to monitor equitable progress through **disaggregated data.**

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- ¹¹ UNDP (2011) *Human Development Report: Sustainability and Equity: a better future for all*. New York: UNDP.
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- UNESCO (2014) World Inequality Database on Education, www.education-inequalities.org/
- ¹³ UNESCO WIDE data. UNESCO (2014) World Inequality Database on Education, www.education-inequalities.org/
- ¹⁴ West, A. and Delap, E. (2012) *Protect My Future: The links between child protection and equity*. Family for Every Child and endorsing agencies.
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- ¹⁶ See, for example, Greenstone, M., Looney, A., Patashnik, J. and Yu, M. (2013) *Thirteen economic facts about social mobility and the role of education*. The Hamilton Project Policy Memo, June 2013; Corak, M. (2013), 'Inequality from generation to generation: The United States in comparison' in Rycroft, R. (ed) *The Economics of Inequality, Poverty, and Discrimination in the 21st Century*, ABC-CLIO. For in-depth analysis of the impacts of income inequality on children see Save the Children (2012) *Born Equal: How reducing inequality could give our children a better future*.
- ¹⁷ Save the Children (2013) *Food for thought: Tackling child malnutrition to unlock potential and boost prosperity*. London: Save the Children.
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- ¹⁹ OFSTED (2013) Op. Cit.
- ²⁰ Save the Children analysis using DHS data. Regions that are the furthest ahead and behind in terms of child mortality rates have changed over time in Indonesia. These regions were selected for comparison as they have consistently been among the best and worst performing regions. For further discussion of data issues and the technical construction of stepping stone targets see Kite, G., Roche, J.M. and Wise, L. (2014) 'Building a post-2015 framework that leaves no one behind: A proposal to incentivise inclusive progress'.
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- ²² All figures from Save the Children analysis of DHS data. See note 24.
- ²³ Save the Children analysis of DHS data. Note that the slope of the graph between 1996 and 2006 for the Dendi ethnic group represents a smoothed line between DHS data points owing to a discrepancy in the DHS data for 2001, likely caused by the sample size being too small for that year. The national average is below that for the Yoruba group in 1996 as the ranking of groups has changed over time. For further methodological discussion, see technical paper (details in note 24).
- ²⁴ The child mortality rate estimates were obtained from direct data processing of Demographic Health Surveys using the full birth history method. Final estimates correspond to five years preceding the survey. Projections are based on a linear extrapolation of current trends for illustrative purposes. In reality rates of change would likely slow down as child mortality rates diminish. (See, for example, Klasen, S. and Lange, S. (2012) *Getting Progress Right: Measuring progress towards the MDGs against historical trends*. Courant Research Centre Discussion Paper No. 87, February 2012.) For further discussion of data issues and the technical construction of stepping stone targets see Kite, G., Roche, J.M. and Wise, L. (2014) 'Building a post-2015 framework that leaves no one behind: A proposal to incentivise inclusive progress'.
- ²⁵ This 2030 target has been proposed by the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. If achieved, it would put countries on track to achieve the established international Child Survival Call to Action target for a national child mortality rate of no more than 25 deaths per 1,000 live births by 2035. See <http://www.who.int/pmnch/about/governance/partnersforum/communiquen/en/>
- ²⁶ Countdown to 2015 (2013) *Accountability for Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival: 2013 update*. For example, one study found that more equitable financing of health services could allow 13 additional countries to achieve MDG 4 on child mortality. See Rockefeller Foundation, Save the Children, UNICEF and WHO (2013) *Universal Health Coverage: A commitment to close the gap*. London: Save the Children.
- ²⁷ Center for Economic and Social Rights and Christian Aid (2014) *A Post-2015 Fiscal Revolution – A Human Rights Policy Brief*. New York: CESR; Save the Children (2014) *Tackling Tax*. London: Save the Children.
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- ²⁹ Global Partnership for Education (2014) *Pledge Report from GPE Replenishment Conference*, June 2014.
- ³⁰ See UN System Task Team (2013) *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development*. New York: United Nations; UNDG (2013) *A Million Voices: The world we want*. New York: UNDG; High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (2013) *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development*. New York: UN; Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (2014) Outcome Document. New York: UN.
- ³¹ Outcome Document of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, July 2014. Available at <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html> (accessed 29 July 2014).
- ³² Statement by Nicaragua and Brazil – 11th Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, 5–9 May, 2014. Available at <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/B750brazil2.pdf> (accessed 20 July 2014).
- ³³ High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (2013) Op. Cit.
- ³⁴ Watkins, K. (2014) 'Leaving no one behind: an agenda for equity'. *The Lancet*, Early Online Publication, 9 May 2014.
- ³⁵ Save the Children (2014) *Framework for the Future*. London: Save the Children. See also Melamed, C. (2012) *Putting Inequality in the Post-2015 Picture*. London: ODI.
- ³⁶ Watkins, K. (2014) 'Leaving no one behind: an agenda for equity'. *The Lancet*, Early Online Publication, 9 May 2014. Others have also suggest that specific targets could be set under the post-2015 framework for progress among the poorest, but do not build a gap-reduction component into their proposals. See Melamed op. cit. and UNICEF/UN Women (2013) *Addressing Inequalities: Synthesis report of global public consultation*.
- ³⁷ The methodology presented here follows proposals presented in Save the Children (2014) *Framework for the Future*. See also proposals from the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation: UNICEF/WHO JMP (2013) *Post-2015 WASH targets and indicators: outcomes of an expert consultation*.
- ³⁸ Franke, P. (2013) *Peru's comprehensive health insurance and new challenges for universal coverage*. UNICO Studies Series 11. Washington DC: World Bank.
- ³⁹ UNICEF (2013) *Improving Child Nutrition: The achievable imperative for global progress*. New York: UNICEF.
- ⁴⁰ This is in line with the World Health Organization target to achieve a 40% reduction by 2025 – an ambitious, stretch target. See Save the Children (2012) *Global stunting reduction target: Focus on the poorest or leave millions behind*. London: Save the Children; Save the Children (2014) Op. Cit.
- ⁴¹ Questions of feasibility should be considered as part of the process to define stepping stone targets. Research shows that rates of reduction tend to slow as countries make progress. See, for example, Klasen, S. and Lange, S. (2012) *Getting Progress Right: Measuring progress towards the MDGs against historical trends*. Courant Research Centre Discussion Paper No. 87, February 2012.
- ⁴² See *The Lancet Child and Maternal Nutrition Series*, 6 June 2013, available at: <http://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-nutrition> (accessed 20 July 2014).
- ⁴³ Indonesia National Basic Health Survey (RISKESDAS) data, cited in Save the Children (2012) Op. Cit.
- ⁴⁴ Save the Children calculations using DHS data.

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