“Do not leave us behind”
A Grounded Perspective on the Sustainable Development Goals

“We are experts of our lived experience. We are here to ensure that we do not get left behind as the world marches towards 2030”

- Ground-Level Panel on Sustainable Development Goals
Members of Ground Level Panel on Sustainable Development Goals, September 2015
The Global Goals – A Background

The United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted in the year 2000 until 2015 as the world’s time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions. It was a pledge to the world’s poorest and most vulnerable to build decent and healthier lives for billions of people and guided development thinking, planning prioritisation and operations since inception. Recognising the absence of civil society and marginalised people’s participation in the framing of the MDGs, the formulation of the new set of goals that would influence global policies between 2016 and 2030 began with a commitment to the principle of “Leave no one behind”.

Since 2012, the United Nations initiated negotiations around what framework would replace the MDGs. Recommendations by a High Level Panel of experts and heads of state were shared, whetted and reviewed by civil society and people on the ground. This was supplemented by the creation of thematic groups, open working groups - all of which provided civil society organisations and vulnerable persons the opportunity to present their voices, views and perspectives on how to shape the post-2015 goals. The result is the creation of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which comprise 169 targets. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, containing these targets will be formally adopted in September 2015 at the United Nations General Assembly.

Such a framework that is momentous because of its reach, duration and power of influence cannot be complete or holistic without involving the participation of excluded groups. Praxis (a development support not-for-profit organisation committed to equity and governance) collaborated with other organisations and campaigns such as Participate and Beyond 2015, with the aim of influencing and contributing to the post-2015 agenda. The Voice for Change initiative of Praxis engaged with marginalised groups across India through action research, participatory videos, digital stories and the Ground-Level Panel process to integrate their aspirations for an equitable world.

The Ground-Level Panel – A Snapshot

In July 2013, soon after the High-Level Panel of 27 eminent people shared its recommendations through 12 universal goals, the first Ground Level Panel was hosted. Fourteen people who face poverty and exclusion came together over five days in 2013 to deliberate on the post-2015 framework, review the High-Level Panel’s recommendations from standpoint of their lived experience of marginalisation and arrive at an alternative people’s agenda.

The Ground-Level Panel felt that the basic needs of food, shelter, health, education and livelihoods were basic rights guaranteed by the Constitution and did not need to find place as global goals. What they felt was more significant were the barriers to accessing these basic needs. These found space in the 15 goals (pic below) that formed the Voice for Change: A Post2015 Development Agenda by People Living in Poverty along with gaps they

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1 The Panel was established by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and co-chaired by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron. The panel shared 12 recommendations, which can be read here: [http://www.post2015hlp.org/the-report/](http://www.post2015hlp.org/the-report/)

2 To read more: [http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/united-we-stand/article4943360.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/united-we-stand/article4943360.ece)
identified in the High-Level Panel’s recommendations. The progressive goals were lauded and acknowledged at several forums.

After several rounds of negotiations with multiple stakeholders, the United Nations finally announced the Sustainable Development Goals as “the people’s agenda, a plan of action for ending poverty in all its dimensions, irreversibly, everywhere, and leaving no one behind”.

Taking the Voice for Change initiative to the next logical step, Praxis revived the Ground Level Panel on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015, a few weeks before the United Nations was scheduled to announce the SDGs. The panel, comprising men, women, sex workers, transgendered persons, people with disability, minorities, dalits, homeless, landless as well as urban poor spent two days on 7th and 8th September 2015, reviewing the gaps in the SDGs and deliberating recommendations for feasible ways of ensuring inclusion and meaningful participation of all in achieving the SDGs. The Ground-Level Panel proactively unpacked ways in which people are likely to be left behind.

The Panelists

The Ground Level panel on SDGs comprised people from different identities. These are listed in the word cloud below. The size of the word is proportional to the number of panellists ascribing to that particular category. The panellists were brought together by their common experience of poverty and marginalisation and their commitment to contribute to the global development agenda.

Gajodhar (42) is a farmer from Haretha, Uttar Pradesh, who owns two acres of land. He is a farmer who seasonally migrates for daily wage labour. He is a member of the village panchayat. He has helped the community by working with villages in dealing with issues faced by them in accessing government schemes like the Indira Awas Yojna (IAY) and granting of pattas. He has been

3 Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary general, while releasing the goals: http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/aug/03/ban-ki-moon-hails-sdgs-agreed-by-193-nations-as-leaving-no-one-behind
vocal about the lack of space for agriculturists in making policies.

Kalaivani hails from Madhapur village of Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu, where her mother, a vegetable vendor, raised her. Her first marriage ended in a divorce because of the harassment from her in-laws over dowry. Her second husband died within seven years of marriage, leaving behind two sons. She moved to Chennai in search of livelihood to raise her sons. While working as a domestic help, an agent trafficked her and pushed her into sex work. She started working for HIV prevention among female sex workers in Chennai and launched a community-based organisation called Indira Female Peer Educator Community (IFPEC) for sex workers. Her organisation works on trafficking and has petitioned the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister seeking a separate place for sex work.

Kusum Kol (35) lives with a large family - her spouse and four children as well as her parents-in-law, brother-in-law and his family. Her family is engaged in agricultural work while she working in a company that grinds spices and packages them. She leads a cooperative of ten self-help groups, each with ten members, and manages the small-scale enterprises and other livelihoods-related work that these hundred women are involved with. This ranges from agarbatti making to dairy farming, poultry work and work in flour mills. She enjoys helping other women take a step towards financial independence.

Mohammed Samsul Haque, 47, is a migrant labourer from Guwahati, Assam, who has studied up to Class 5. His sons are doing their graduation. Haque, who was a farmer from Nimua Latima village in Nalbari district of Assam, migrated to Guwahati to work as a daily wage labourer to make ends meet after regular floods destroyed his fields. He works at a garage as a screen painter during the day and spends his nights as a caretaker in the shop of a local businessman. He goes home during the harvest season to work on the fields. He still finds it difficult to get a job in the city, especially in the rainy season. He looks forward to the day that all citizens will be able to enjoy all the rights.

Nandlal, 44, has overcome the discrimination he faced because of his disability to work for the rights of the disabled. Hailing from Tehsil Salempur, Devaria district of Uttar Pradesh, Nandlal used to drive a truck at a young age. He lost both legs in a road accident at the age of 18. Taunted by family members and neighbours because of his disability, he moved to Delhi. He started living on the footpath near India Gate and has worked with several NGOs. Nandlal feels bad when he sees people look at physically challenged beggars sympathetically and wonders why they never come forward to give them work and make them independent. He dreams of a world where people look at the physically challenged as equals.

Sixty-seven year old Raghunath Sada led a land rights movement against local landlords in the Ujjwa Paschim village of Kusheswarthan, Bihar. Thanks to his relentless fight for the Musahars, the community to which he belongs, he acquired 62 acres of land. He also got two bighas of land, which help him sustain his family. His village remains waterlogged for four to five months every year. The Musahar community is the most disadvantaged community of Bihar and Sada has been voicing their issues through his writings and discussions in various fora.
Ravikant Redkar, 34, is affected by cerebral palsy and lives in a slum in North Mumbai. The happiest day of his life was when the telephone booth he runs was inaugurated in the presence of his mother. Ravikant points out how the paradigm shift in communication arena of India has put his sole livelihood option in crisis as few people use telephone booths in an age where almost everybody has a mobile. But Ravikant still nurtures the hope to overcome the present challenge as he thinks some good people still exist in society who work towards people with disabilities being a part of the development process. Ravikant is also associated with an NGO, through which he advocates causes of the disabled.

Shabnam Parveen is a farmer from Bashaul, Sitamarhi, Bihar. She is pursuing her bachelor’s degree and is a volunteer for the local NGO. Her father owns 1.6 acres of land. She has been part of the Nehru Yuva Manch for about a year through which she has set up women’s SHGs in 23 villages. She has also worked with local women for government entitlements including the public distribution system.

Sohail is a 14-year-old living in a slum in Seemapur area of Delhi. He studies in Class 10 and is keen to become an actor. Taking the first step towards his dream, he attended a month-long acting workshop at the National School of Drama. Sohail also likes to paint, sing and cook whenever he finds time from the tuitions he has to attend to prepare for his Board examinations. Along with Pardarshita, an NGO he is associated with, Sohail has done several street plays on building awareness on issues related to the Right to Education and health. He speaks out against the discrimination meted out to people because of their economic status, especially in the healthcare services. He insists that people should demand their rights and not take discrimination lying down.

Thenmozhi, 28, heads a Chennai-based organisation, Vanavil Foundation, which works towards improving the quality of life of transgendered people. When she was in Class 6, she first experienced a change in the way she saw herself. This realisation led to her isolation by her family and neighbours. After completing Class 10, she fled to Mumbai, where she was pushed into sex work and begging. She underwent a sex reassignment surgery with the support from her jamaat – community group and returned to Chennai as a woman. Through her network of outreach workers of different HIV/AIDS projects, she received training in dance and drama and joined a cultural group that sensitised people about transgender issues. She started a community-based organisation named Vanavil Foundation with the aim of developing self-help groups, reuniting transgendered people with family members and supporting those who migrate. She has a vision of a society where all transgendered people live a dignified life with adequate skills and jobs.

Ujala Kol, aged 15, hails from a tribal family in Gailokhadi, in the Satna hill range in Madhya Pradesh. Her mother braved a lot of societal criticism and walked out of an abusive marriage with Ujala and her younger brother. She moved to a residential school in Satna and has been there for a few years - thriving in an environment free from society’s taunts. She wants to become a policewoman because she is very keen to help women in distress. She finds eve teasing appalling and very hurtful to the dignity of women and wants to do everything in her power to end it.
Uzma is a 16-year-old girl from Delhi who takes care of her mentally ill mother with pride. She feeds and bathes her regularly. She also takes care of her three younger siblings. She used to live and beg near the streets of Jama Masjid along with her mother and siblings. Since 2010, she and her siblings have been staying at a shelter home run by an NGO. She now learns how to operate a computer and attends spoken English classes. With the help of a bridge course, she has completed her studies till class 6. She wants to be self-reliant so that she can take care of her mother and siblings. She dreams of a world where young children do not have to live on the street.

Vineetha, a 37-year-old member of the transgender community, migrated from Kolkata to Chennai 26 years ago and has been working for the welfare of her community members. She lived with a partner for 13 years and brought up a destitute girl with him. Five years ago, she was forced to leave her partner and her adopted girl in a crisis. She decided to leave her house and other belongings to them. She started life from scratch and since then has been making ends meet by dancing. She advises other transgendered people not to become addicted to alcohol and tobacco. She is concerned about government apathy towards the welfare of her community while actively engaging with like-minded individuals to advocate on their behalf with various government departments. She emphasises that the government should focus on the education and employment of her community members as they are crucial to ensure lives of dignity for them.

Twenty-seven-year-old Vinoth lives in K.K. Nagar slum in Chennai. His family has been living there for three generations. After failing to clear his Class 12 examinations, Vinoth became an auto driver to support his family. As he lives in the slum, he has been picked up by the police for frivolous reasons. He says that they register false case against him. Their houses were burnt several times in attempts to clear the slum. Every time there is a fire, there is the additional financial burden of investing on its repair. He got married in 2012 and has two young daughters. His family has been living in the same place for more than 40 years and have only recently received ration card and voter identity card. He emphasises that people living in slums need basic needs such as constructed house, electricity, water and toilet.

Yesamma is 25 years old. She lives in KK Nagar slum in Chennai with her husband and two daughters. She left schooling after Class 9 and started attending political meetings with her mother. She started working with a self-help group. She eventually took on a leadership role and formed three self-help groups in her own slum area. Through the trainings and linkages, she became aware of government schemes and helped people living in her slum to get access to these. She also feels confident about speaking to government officials about the problems of open defecation, water contamination, health issues and lack of resources that is experienced in her slum. She emphasises that people living in slums need to get all the basic amenities, especially toilets for women.

‘Expanding the scope of the SDGs to include our needs’

The Ground-Level Panel reviewed 16 Sustainable Development Goals to offer their insights and experiences related to each of the goals. They also added comments to the goals from the standpoint of their lived experience. About the 17th goal on Partnerships, the Panel...
conceded that these were important, but expressed their disappointment at the lack of any mention of community participation.

**Table 1: Ground-Level Panel’s analysis of Sustainable Development Goals**

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<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Sub-goals</th>
<th>Ground-Level Panel’s comments</th>
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</table>
| Goal 1 – No Poverty | 1.1 Eradicate extreme poverty  
1.2 Reduce by half the proportion of men, women and children in poverty  
1.3 Social protection systems for all  
1.4 Equal rights to economic resources and access to basic services  
1.5 Build resilience of those in vulnerable situations and reduce exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events | • Poverty line is set too low, leading to many vulnerable people losing out on social protection  
• Schemes for orphans  
• Increased access to all schemes  
• Ensure disability certificate and pensions for all individuals who are differently abled  
• Stop circulation of high value notes to raise the value of money within the economy |
| Goal 2 – No Hunger | 2.1 End hunger and ensure access to nutritious food  
2.2 End malnutrition among girls and women  
2.3 Double agricultural productivity  
2.4 Ensure sustainable food production  
2.5 Maintain diversity of crops and livestock | • Value farmers for the work they do  
• Involve farmers in deciding prices of crops  
• Prevent inflation of seed and fertiliser prices  
• Food security for farmers  
• Abolish zamindari system |
| Goal 3 – Good Health | 3.1 Curb global maternal mortality ratio  
3.2 End deaths of newborns and children under 5  
3.3 End AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases  
3.4 Reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases  
3.5 Strengthen prevention and treatment of substance abuse  
3.6 Reduce number of deaths/ injuries from road accidents  
3.7 Universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services  
3.8 Universal health coverage  
3.9 Reduce pollution-related deaths | • Timely fumigation to prevent diseases like malaria, dengue  
• Availability of medicines in disaster-affected areas  
• Proper use of ambulance services  
• Hospitals in every village  
• Abolish sex-selective eliminations  
• Punish doctors who discriminate on basis of caste/sexuality  
• Prevent and punish sale of fake medicines  
• Health services for the homeless  
• Smart cards for health services  
• Proper care for pregnant women  
• Doctor within every 20 km  
• Maintain Anganwadi centres  
• Access of health services to all |
## Grounded Perspective on the Sustainable Development Goals

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<td>Goal 4 – Good education</td>
<td>4.1 Free and equal primary and secondary education</td>
<td>▪ Guidance for formal education</td>
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<td>4.2 Access to childhood care and development</td>
<td>▪ Remove differential quality of education for poor and rich</td>
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<td>4.3 Increased access to vocational training</td>
<td>▪ Prevent sale of mid-day meal food</td>
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<td>4.4 Increase number of youth with technical, vocational skills for employment</td>
<td>▪ Wealth should not be a criteria to attain good education</td>
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<td>4.5 Eliminate gender disparity in education</td>
<td>▪ Referring candidates should be based on qualifications alone</td>
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<td>4.6 Universal youth literacy</td>
<td>▪ Remove discrimination in education</td>
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<td>4.7 Promote sustainable development through education</td>
<td>▪ Ensure allotted reserved seats are given to deserving candidates</td>
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<td>▪ Recruit eligible teachers</td>
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<td>▪ Scrap educational certificates as criteria for vocational trainings</td>
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<td>Goal 5 – Gender equality</td>
<td>5.1 End discrimination against women and girls</td>
<td>▪ Recognise all genders, including transgenders, equally</td>
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<td>5.2 Eliminate violence against women and girls</td>
<td>▪ End child marriage</td>
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<td>5.3 Eliminate child, early and forced marriage</td>
<td>▪ Equal division of work between man and woman</td>
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<td>5.4 Recognise and value unpaid care</td>
<td>▪ Prevent discrimination within offices</td>
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<td>5.5 Women’s full participation and equal opportunities for leadership in decision-making</td>
<td>▪ Equal rights to widows</td>
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<td>5.6 Universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights</td>
<td>▪ Equal rights within work spaces to women who are married and/or have children</td>
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<td>Goal 6 – Clean water and sanitation</td>
<td>6.1 Universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water</td>
<td>▪ Clean water bodies</td>
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<td>6.2 Access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene, especially for women, girls and those in vulnerable situations</td>
<td>▪ Control water borne diseases</td>
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<td>6.3 Improve water quality by acting on pollution, dumping and release of hazardous chemicals and materials</td>
<td>▪ Safe, free, pure drinking water to ensure safe consumption</td>
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<td>6.4 Increase water-use efficiency</td>
<td>▪ Conserve water</td>
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<td>6.5 Integrated water resources management</td>
<td>▪ Law on drinking water for all</td>
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<td>6.6 Protect and restore water-related ecosystems</td>
<td>▪ Clean water resources in the city</td>
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<td>▪ Remove user fee for public toilets</td>
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<td>▪ Reduce construction of dams</td>
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<td>▪ Preserve natural water resources</td>
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<td>▪ Recognise and protect rights of sewerage workers</td>
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<td>▪ Clean rivers, and prevent pollution of rivers</td>
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<td>▪ Stop claims of ‘ownership’ of rivers</td>
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<td>▪ Rain water harvesting in all</td>
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<td>Goals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7.1 Ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services</td>
<td>▪ Develop solar energy for household use, use in agriculture</td>
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<td>Goal 7 – Renewable energy</td>
<td>7.2 Increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix</td>
<td>▪ Explore and develop sources of natural energy</td>
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<td>7.3 Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency</td>
<td>▪ Save electricity</td>
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<td>▪ Give subsidies for using sustainable sources of energy</td>
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<td>▪ Electricity from biogas and manure</td>
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<td>Goal 8 – Good jobs and economic growth</td>
<td>8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth</td>
<td>▪ Check exploitation within NGOs</td>
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<td>8.2 Higher levels of economic productivity</td>
<td>▪ Take strict action against chit fund</td>
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<td>8.3 Development-oriented policies</td>
<td>▪ Equal division of labour between men and women</td>
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<td>8.4 Resource efficiency in consumption and production</td>
<td>▪ Opportunities for women to work and earn equal pay</td>
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<td>8.5 Full, productive employment, decent work and equal pay for all</td>
<td>▪ Creating policies for safe migration</td>
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<td>8.6 Reduce proportion of youth not in employment, education or training</td>
<td>▪ Increase in minimum daily wage</td>
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<td>8.7 Eradicte forced labour, modern slavery, trafficking and child labour</td>
<td>▪ Increase salaries within income schemes</td>
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<td>8.8 Labour rights and safe work environments</td>
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<td>8.9 Policies for sustainable tourism</td>
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<td>8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to expand access to banking, insurance and financial services</td>
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<td>Goal 9 – Innovation and infrastructure</td>
<td>9.1 Quality infrastructure</td>
<td>▪ Scientists should have a futuristic approach in planning development</td>
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<td>9.2 Inclusive and sustainable industrialisation</td>
<td>▪ Fund for rehabilitation of displaced</td>
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<td>9.3 Increased access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises</td>
<td>▪ Correct practice of poor always facing impact of innovation and infrastructure development</td>
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<td>9.4 Infrastructure upgrade</td>
<td>▪ Rehabilitation should involve participation of affected communities and should be to location with all services</td>
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<td>9.5 Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors</td>
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<td>Goal 10 – Reducing inequalities</td>
<td>10.1 Achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average</td>
<td>▪ Enabling decision making for all countries</td>
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<td>10.2 Social, economic and political inclusion of all</td>
<td>▪ Ensure respect for members of all races and religions</td>
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<td>10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce</td>
<td>▪ Ensure space for decision-making for children</td>
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<td>inequalities</td>
<td>▪ Ensure equality for all</td>
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<td>10.4 Adopt fiscal, wage and social protection policies for greater equality</td>
<td>▪ Equal rights to individuals to practise their own religion</td>
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<td>10.5 Regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions</td>
<td>▪ Ensure benefits of development does not accrue to just a few individuals</td>
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<td>10.6 Enhanced representation for developing countries in decision-making</td>
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<td>Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</td>
<td>11.1 Adequate, safe and affordable housing and slum upgrade</td>
<td>▪ Develop villages before building smart cities</td>
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<td>11.2 Safe, affordable, and sustainable transport systems for all,</td>
<td>▪ Ownership of land on which house is built</td>
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<td>11.3 Inclusive and sustainable urbanisation</td>
<td>▪ Pensions for differently abled</td>
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<td>11.4 Protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage</td>
<td>▪ Construction of metal roads and increase in public transportation</td>
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<td>11.5 Reduce impact of disasters</td>
<td>▪ Proper rehabilitation for individuals displaced by natural calamities</td>
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<td>11.6 Reduce the adverse environmental impact of cities</td>
<td>▪ Locate factories outside the cities</td>
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<td>11.7 Universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces</td>
<td>▪ Regulate garbage disposal</td>
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<td>▪ Encourage composting waste</td>
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<td>▪ Ensure spaces for children to play</td>
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<td>▪ Plant trees</td>
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<td>▪ Include differently abled in planning smart cities</td>
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<td>Goal 12 – Responsible consumption</td>
<td>12.1 Implement the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production</td>
<td>▪ Protect environment</td>
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<td>12.2 Sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources</td>
<td>▪ Protect food and consume responsibly</td>
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<td>12.3 Halve per capita global food waste</td>
<td>▪ All countries should evolve and implement one common policy</td>
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<td>12.4 Management of chemical wastes</td>
<td>▪ Proper exchange of information</td>
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<td>12.5 Reduce waste generation</td>
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<td>12.6 Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and report on it</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12.7 Promote sustainable public procurement practices</td>
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<td>12.8 Information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles</td>
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<td>Goal 13 – Climate action</td>
<td>13.1 Resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters</td>
<td>▪ Limit the number of space expeditions as this is bound to have a negative impact on the climate</td>
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<td>13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning</td>
<td>▪ Mitigate risk posed by increasing number of mobile towers</td>
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<td>13.3 Education, awareness-raising and</td>
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<td>Goals</td>
<td>Sub-goals</td>
<td>Ground-Level Panel’s comments</td>
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|       | capacity building on climate change | ▪ Mitigate impact of global warming  
▪ Restrain excessive use of technology |
| Goal 14 – Life below water | 14.1 Prevent and reduce marine pollution  
14.2 Manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems  
14.3 Minimise and address the impacts of ocean acidification  
14.4 Regulate harvesting and end overfishing  
14.5 Conserve coastal and marine areas  
14.6 Prohibit subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing  
14.7 Increase economic benefits sustainable use of marine resources | ▪ Important to protect marine ecosystem  
▪ Preserve marine creatures to ensure sustainable consumption  
▪ Access to livelihoods  
▪ Regulate use of fishing devices like trawlers |
| Goal 15 – Life on Land | 15.1 Conserve, restore and sustainably use terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems  
15.2 Sustainable management of forests, increased afforestation and reforestation  
15.3 Combat desertification  
15.4 Conserve mountain ecosystems  
15.5 Reduce degradation of natural habitats  
15.6 Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from genetic resources  
15.7 End poaching and trafficking of protected species  
15.8 Prevent and reduce impact of invasive alien species of crops and livestock  
15.9 Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into planning | ▪ Prevent destruction of environment  
▪ Restrain drilling in mountains for mining as it poses disaster threats  
▪ Restrict sand/coal mining  
▪ Monitor impact of volcanic activities |
| Goal 16 – Peace and justice | 16.1 Reduce violence and related death rates  
16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence against children  
16.3 Equal access to justice for all  
16.4 Reduce illicit financial and arms flows, combat organized crime  
16.5 Reduce corruption and bribery  
16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels  
16.7 Responsive, inclusive, participatory, representative decision-making  
16.8 Participation of developing countries in global governance  
16.9 Legal identity for all  
16.10 Public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms | ▪ Politicians should be kept in check as they are the often the biggest threats to peace and security  
▪ Ensure justice for homeless and differently abled, among other vulnerable groups  
▪ Ensure speedy justice  
▪ Measures should be put in place to ensure that the Government torture of its won people is eradicated |
Prioritising the goals using different lenses -

As part of the deliberations, the panellists looked at the SDGs using different lenses – children, caste/tribe, gender, disability, rural and urban. The issues that made it to the top five priorities of each of the groups draw from the pool of nine goals listed below.

Graph 1: Frequency of top five goals in the prioritisation by the six categories of children, caste/tribe, gender, disability, rural and urban

The goals of gender equality and reducing inequalities were listed among the top five priorities by all the groups. Clean water and sanitation and removing poverty were listed by five of the six groups and three spoke about the importance of removing hunger. While only two groups mentioned peace and justice, only one group mentioned the following – life on water, good health, and education.

‘How our priorities have fared in the SDGs – Transgender issues, participation missing’

The Ground-Level Panel’s 15 goals focused very clearly on the means to eradicate barriers to access of basic needs. The panel reviewed the SDGs and compared it to their goals, coming to the conclusion that “the 17 goals that have been produced to facilitate the development process have taken cognisance of some of our issues”.

At the Ground Level Panel process in 2013, two of their goals centred prominently on removing inequalities of gender and ensuring equity. Both these goals have now found a place in the SDGs in the form of Goals 5 and 10, but the issue of transgendered persons was completely ignored.

Some of the SDGs that relate to basic needs were left out of the goals by the Ground Level Panel as they felt these were guaranteed by the Constitution. These have been included by the SDGs as major goals – reduction of poverty (Goal 1) and ending hunger (Goal 2), focus on provision of good health services (Goal 3), ensure free primary education and other facilitative mechanisms to provide quality education (Goal 4), provide water and sanitation to all (Goal 6) and provide jobs to all (Goal 8). As such, the panel welcomed these goals, even as they wondered why these goals are denied to some.
The Ground-Level panel noted that the next set of goals, which focus on environmental goals (Related to life on water, life on land, renewable energy, responsible consumption and climate action) should acknowledge that the impact of climate change and environmental disasters tends to be greater on the marginalised. So this, they said, must be prominently dealt with.

The Panel found that the goals on infrastructure development (Goal 9) and sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11) reflected the growing trend of urbanisation across the world and felt the urban poor’s needs should be addressed during its implementation.

They said that while the focus on inter-state relations, nuclear disarmament and others find space in the goal on Peace and Justice (Goal 16), local and personal violence and discrimination had been completely ignored. This was specifically significant because of their experience of marginalisation and often, violence.

While Goal 17 on Partnerships for the Goals forms the overarching set of mechanisms to achieve the other 16 goals, the panel felt a crucial aspect had been left out. This was the need for community participation and the provision of institutional spaces for community participation.

‘Address these gaps to ensure we do not get left behind’

Based on the above analysis, the Ground-Level Panel identified the possible scenario where they might fall outside the scope of development despite having such detailed goals. “How do we ensure that in 2030, we are not having this discussion yet again about how we missed the bus,” a panel member said. They came up with five broad guiding principles for the implementation of the goals.

Table 2: Ground-Level Panel’s solutions to ensure inclusion

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<tr>
<th>Concerns of the Ground-Level Panel</th>
<th>Panel’s solution to concerns</th>
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<td>“Government schools were meant to provide equal opportunities to all, but with more private schools coming up, we are excluded from quality education”</td>
<td>Eliminate exclusion</td>
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<td>The Ground-Level Panel felt there was a conscious attempt to exclude them from development. Based on their experiences, they said mechanisms were set up and enforced to keep them marginalised. Another example was the corruption involved in granting reservations.</td>
<td>Such mechanisms must be brought down. For example, just like the Uttar Pradesh government has started a new rule ensuring Government employees enrol their children in Government schools in the hope that it will automatically raise the quality of education, other states should follow suit.</td>
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<td>Concerns of the Ground-Level Panel</td>
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| “We have access to Government hospitals, but when we are mistreated, or when there are no medicines or doctors, whom do we ask why the quality is not good.” There is a lack of accountability in all institutions, especially government and no mechanisms to raise questions about poor quality of infrastructure or services | Ensure accountability
Accountability within local governance is a must to ensure that the excluded are not left behind. “If we won’t ask, then who will?” |
| “If a rich person commits a crime, he can get away – be it procuring fake medicines or violating environmental laws” The government lends support to criminal elements for various reasons. The guilty go unpunished because of corruption, and a nexus with the government. | End state nexus with law breakers
Following from accountability, there is also the need to ensure action on violators of law. For this, it is imperative that the nexus with the state is broken. |
| “It is not as if the government is not aware of the problems of its citizens. It is just apathetic.” “We can vote out government after government, but cannot change a thing unless the administration also becomes more sympathetic to our plight” | Address government apathy
The administration looks down on our needs and mistreats us. Not only does this need to change, there should also be institutional spaces for community participation for any change to occur. |
| “I do not have land, but that does not mean climate change does not affect me. What subsidies am I eligible to get as a landless agricultural worker?” “People in my village face devastating floods every year. But who looks after them?” Climate change affects everyone, but some people more than others. Because of poverty and exclusion, some people do not get access to insurance or subsidies against climate-change related disasters or unseasonal rains. This only marginalises them further. | Mitigate impact of climate change on poorest
It is important to address the needs of the most excluded groups while acting on climate change and related issues. They need to be consulted and involved in every step of policymaking, implementation or monitoring. |
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ActionAid
Adithi
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Centre for Holistic Development
Indira Female Peer Educator Community
Jamghat
Leonard Cheshire Disability
Oxfam India
Pardarshita
Participate
Partners In Change
Samarth Foundation
Sarada Charitable Trust
Tamil Nadu AIDS Initiative
Vanavil Foundation
Wada Na Todo Abhiyan
The Voice for Change initiative of Praxis, started in the context of the Post-2015 development discussions, is an attempt to create spaces for direct talk by marginalised and excluded communities in global policy-making. The initiative uses conventional participatory action research, innovative tools such as participatory video and digital story telling and mediums such as the Ground Level Panel to power knowledge from the margins to reach the centre of international agenda setting.