CAPTURING AND COMBATTING THE HIDDEN DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY THROUGH THE IDEEP (INCLUSIVE AND DELIBERATIVE ELABORATION & EVALUATION OF POLICIES) TOOL

Created in partnership between the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights and the international movement ATD Fourth World

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Executive summary

Background

Researchers from the University of Oxford and staff from ATD Fourth World coordinated a participatory research process from 2016 to 2019 to collaboratively identify the dimensions that characterise poverty. The study was led in six countries: three in the Global North (the United States, United Kingdom and France) and three in the Global South (Bolivia, Tanzania and Bangladesh). The methodology was based on the Merging of Knowledge, an approach that seeks to integrate the experiential knowledge of persons experiencing poverty with the scientific knowledge of academics and the action-based knowledge of practitioners. By following a rigorous and patient research process, the "Hidden Dimensions of Poverty" study identified dimensions of poverty that are co-constructed, validated by the three types of actors and grounded in the reality of persons in poverty themselves.

The following nine dimensions were found to be common across the six countries: (1) lack of decent work, (2) insufficient and insecure income, and (3) material and social deprivation, (4) social maltreatment, (5) institutional maltreatment, (6) unrecognized contributions, (7) suffering in the mind, body and heart, (8) disempowerment, and (9) struggle and resistance (see the figure on p. 16).

Objectives

The tool for the Inclusive and Deliberative Elaboration & Evaluation of Policies (IDEEP) aims to guide decision-makers to ensure strong participation in the design, implementation and assessment of projects or policies that have impacts on people in poverty, thus ensuring that the various dimensions of poverty, including those that are "hidden", are taken into account and addressed. The IDEEP requires processes to be deeply participatory and deliberative. It aims to ensure the direct and meaningful involvement of persons experiencing poverty, who exchange ideas and experiences with other key actors in view of arriving at a common set of strategies.

The guidelines included in the IDEEP are not intended to replace existing policy assessment tools (whether sustainability impact assessments or social impact assessments relying on econometric tools, or human rights impact assessments relying on the normative framework of human rights); instead, the aim is to complement them and to offer a different perspective by providing a reliable, qualitative, and deliberative approach to capturing and harnessing the lived experience of persons in poverty in order to improve policymaking.

Methodology

The groundwork for the elaboration of the IDEEP included both desk research and case studies conducted using a participatory approach. The document draws on a review of

existing literature, including scientific articles, legislative documents and so-called 'grey' literature. In addition, three case studies were carried out with the following objectives: (1) to empirically identify and uncover the 'hidden' dimensions of poverty that remain problematic or unacknowledged in the three cases; (2) to test and refine the deliberative method proposed in the IDEEP; and (3) to formulate possible evaluation questions that may guide policymakers in the deliberative elaboration or evaluation of policies and programmes.

The tool

Inspired by the work of Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright on Empowered Participatory Governance and drawing on thirty years of ATD Fourth World's experience with the Merging of Knowledge, the IDEEP proposes a deliberative method to involve differently positioned actors in the design and evaluation of policies and programmes. The method seeks to ensure that various forms of knowledge (experiential, action-based and scientific) are confronted, the arguments weighed and possible solutions considered by the participants in order to improve the design of policies and programmes. The tool outlines these steps: (1) Setting up the core team and the process, (2) Data collection, (3) Deliberative triangulation, (4) Policy Design or Evaluation by the core team, (5) Deliberative triangulation, (6) Final document. It offers guidance on the conditions that are necessary to improve equality among participants, build trust and ensure effective participation of all individuals and groups. Finally, the IDEEP provides an evaluation framework that translates the nine dimensions of poverty into tangible evaluation questions that may guide policymakers in deliberative exercises. In this sense, the tool is a companion to the study on the Hidden Dimensions of Poverty.

The IDEEP tool seeks to inform policymakers, funders and organisations, including those that are community-based, who wish to put into practice the ideal of participation in the elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of public policies, development projects and programmes. It offers a methodology that goes beyond participation and into a deliberative practice. It aims to support decision-makers in their efforts to actively and effectively include the experiential knowledge and views of persons experiencing poverty in the policy domains that affect them, in order to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of anti-poverty plans. Only when this knowledge is heard and incorporated into the policy-making process can the blind spots of policies be uncovered and remedied. Without the voices of people who experience poverty, the hidden dimensions of poverty will remain concealed and efforts to improve their lives suboptimal.

Ensuring the active participation of vulnerable and marginalised groups in the reflexive governance of public policies requires time, resources and careful planning. It is our hope and ambition that this tool for the deliberative elaboration and evaluation of policies can start a new conversation: one that sees people in poverty as partners rather than passive beneficiaries, as holders of knowledge and as agents of change. By going beyond participation as it has been conceived of in its weaker forms and towards a deliberative

partnership between persons in poverty, practitioners on the ground and policy makers, we stand a chance in the fight against poverty.

Introduction

Context

The UN Guiding Principles on extreme poverty and human rights, adopted by the UN Human Rights Council in 2012, include an explicit commitment towards the participation of persons in poverty in public life:

> *"States must ensure the active, free, informed and meaningful participation of persons living in poverty at all stages of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of decisions and policies affecting them."*

Yet, ten years after the adoption of the Guiding Principles, people in poverty remain too often excluded from policymaking processes and from the design of projects that affect them (Speed and Reeves 2023, p. 2). This is despite the strong involvement of persons with lived experience in other policy domains such as disability and mental health (*ibidem*) and, more generally, growing attention paid by policymakers to consulting citizens through different means (OECD 2020). Part of the problem may be that effective participation of people in poverty is perceived to impose a heavy burden on decision-makers. Participation requires substantial time and resources to account for active facilitation, to build mutual trust between participants and policymakers, and to provide an environment attentive to differentials in power. Without these prerequisites, involving persons in poverty leads to ineffective participation at best, or instrumentalisation at worst.

Where participation has been tested, its design has often been inadequate: processes have benefitted from too little time, or participation has been conceived of in its weaker forms of "informing" or "consulting" beneficiaries of projects rather than its stronger forms, like by seeking their involvement or collaboration. In other cases, community-driven projects may have been overly reliant on certain actors or may have provided too little support to communities. Thus, the record of participatory processes is mixed, and scepticism has sometimes been expressed about its benefits.

Meanwhile, poverty continues to be understood narrowly, as a purely socio-economic condition rather than as an experience that is characterized by a diversity of dimensions. With some notable exceptions, existing evaluations that seek to assess the impact of a policy on poverty tend to focus exclusively on quantifiable indicators such as income or access to employment. The experience of poverty, however, goes beyond these dimensions. The participatory research coordinated by ATD Fourth World and the University of Oxford in 2017-2019 across six countries highlighted nine dimensions of poverty, far beyond the three dimensions of material deprivation, lack of income and lack of decent work that are generally understood as constitutive of poverty (see Chapter 2).

Aims and objectives

The tool for the **Inclusive and Deliberative Elaboration & Evaluation of Policies (IDEEP)** aims to guide decision-makers to ensure strong involvement of people in poverty in the design, implementation and assessment of projects or policies that have an actual or potential impact on them, thus ensuring that the various dimensions of poverty, including those that are "hidden", are taken into account. Without uncovering those hidden dimensions, anti-poverty policies and programmes will remain largely ineffective or even counterproductive. The IDEEP requires processes to be deeply participatory and deliberative. It aims to ensure the direct and meaningful involvement of persons experiencing poverty, who exchange ideas and experiences with other key actors in view of arriving at a common set of strategies.

Beyond the legal obligations that require people in poverty to participate in the decisions that are likely to affect them, this participation is essential for at least three reasons. First, by investigating the possible impacts of an intervention with persons who have a lived experience of poverty, the assessment can uncover potential effects – blind spots – that may be overlooked by policymakers, thus improving the design of the intervention and its effectiveness and reducing costly errors. Second, participation – when conducted as co-construction rather than mere consultation – may have an empowering effect: by involving persons experiencing poverty in processes of co-construction that go beyond tokenistic participation, their agency is enhanced. Third, participation allows solutions put forward by people in poverty to be taken into account in the range of policy options, thus leading to a broader panoply of answers to policy questions and helping to escape path dependency and to overcome bureaucratic routines.

Participatory policy assessments can lead to policy decisions that are better informed, that are empowering rather than disempowering, and that are more imaginative, enriching the toolbox of decision-makers. The IDEEP is a set of guidelines designed for policymakers, administrators and organizations, including development agencies, international financial institutions and local organizations. Based on a review of existing literature and case study research, described in more detail below, the IDEEP proposes a methodology for involving persons in poverty in the elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of policies, projects and programmes; it provides guidance on the conditions that are likely to enhance this participation; and it offers questions that may be used to evaluate the given policies, projects and programmes from the perspective of the "hidden" dimensions of poverty. Although it should be adapted to a variety of contexts, it provides guidance to actors who wish to incorporate the lived experience of poverty in their design or evaluation processes, and to combat poverty in all its dimensions.

Scope

The guidelines included in the IDEEP are not intended to replace existing policy assessment tools (whether sustainability impact assessments or social impact assessments relying on econometric tools, or human rights impact assessments relying on the normative

framework of human rights); instead, the aim is to complement them and to offer a different perspective by providing a reliable, qualitative, and deliberative approach to capturing the lived experience of persons in poverty.

The scope for using IDEEP in the policy cycle is theoretically broad: the tool can be used to guide deliberative exchange and learning in the elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of various types of policies and programmes that are likely to affect people in poverty at local, regional and national levels. However, some types of policies and programmes are particularly fertile ground for deploying IDEEP: wherever decision-makers are determined to fight poverty and improve the lives of the poorest and wherever these intentions materialise as technical solutions designed by policy experts, these are ideal conditions for testing the methodology proposed in this guide. Some examples of policies and programmes that are likely to benefit from inclusive deliberative exchange are as follows:

- o **Local level:** A village council in an East African country decides to upgrade the village's old fish market by replacing it with a modern market infrastructure.
- o **Regional level:** A development bank rolls out a food assistance programme after a natural disaster hits a Caribbean island.
- o **National level:** An EU country modifies the eligibility criteria and application procedure for a housing programme.

Materials and methods

The groundwork for the elaboration of the IDEEP included both desk research and case studies conducted using a participatory approach. The present document draws on a review of existing literature, including scientific articles, legislative documents and so-called 'grey' literature. In addition, three case studies were carried out with the following objectives: (1) to empirically identify and uncover the 'hidden' dimensions of poverty that remain problematic or unacknowledged in the three cases; (2) to test and refine the deliberative method proposed in this document; and (3) to formulate possible evaluation questions that may guide policymakers in the deliberative elaboration or evaluation of policies and programmes. The results of the case studies are provided in the Annex to this document (including a brief description of the policy/programme, the hidden dimensions uncovered through the deliberative exercise as well as key resulting recommendations), with key findings and insights included throughout the report.

Outline of the IDEEP guide

The present guide is structured as follows. Chapter 1 defines what is meant by 'participation' of people in poverty and discusses the rationale and reasons why it is necessary in the fight against poverty. Chapter 2 presents the nine dimensions identified in the *Hidden Dimensions of Poverty* project, led by co-researchers from the University of Oxford and ATD Fourth World and published in 2019. Chapter 3 introduces the notion of

deliberation and proposes a process for the deliberative elaboration and evaluation of policies and programmes, based on the thirty-year long experience of ATD Fourth World with an approach known as the Merging of Knowledge. Chapter 3 also lists a number of conditions that are likely to improve the results of participatory, deliberative exercises, as well as an evaluation framework that translates the hidden dimensions of poverty into specific evaluation questions to be addressed through deliberative exercises.

CHAPTER 1: Participation is an essential tool to fight poverty

What do we mean by the "participation" of people in poverty?

This tool sees "participation" as "an empowering process which enables [people affected by a project, program or policy] to do their own analysis, to take command, to gain in confidence, and to make their own decisions" (Chambers, 1994, p. 2). Purely consultative practices are not enough. Participation should allow the real possibility of participants effecting change in the definition and/or outcome of the project or policy. Instances in which people in poverty do not see their input in participatory processes reflected in the final end-product can lead to suspicion about the purpose of their inclusion or of the related institution itself. Further, inability or unwillingness to incorporate those contributions can negatively impact the future relationship between those different stakeholders.

A policy-making process should be considered participatory if the affected community is at least involved in the process and if this involvement allows for a change in how the policy is drafted or enacted. Such involvement can take different forms. Participation can be "organic", building on collective action organised by communities or local political action or it may be "induced", i.e. organised through donor or government programmes (OECD, p. 5).

Participation as a human right

The right to participate in public affairs is a human right. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Article 5 of the International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination each affirm the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs.

The right to participate was also affirmed for specific vulnerable groups. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women of 1979 defines the notion of participation as the right to participate in "the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government" (Art. 7(b)). In 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrined the right of children to participate in matters affecting them by expressing their views on those matters and "the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child" (Article 12). In the same year, Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples affirmed the right to participation of these populations in the decision-making processes that affect them to ensure their free, prior, and informed consent. This definition of the notion of participation was then taken up in Article 18 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2007.

Other international human rights bodies have explored participation by taking a developmental approach to the notion. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 links the idea of participation to the right to self-determination.

Hence, the right to participate is not only about the political life of the State but also about its economic decisions and its vision of development. The 1986 United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development places the notion of participation at the centre of the right to development. According to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the evaluation of a State's poverty reduction and development policies more generally should be based on the level of participation afforded to the groups affected by those policies.

The lack of participation may be both a cause and a consequence of poverty, leading to a vicious cycle. Indeed, lack of participation can lead to inappropriate and ineffective policies that can compound the conditions of poverty instead of reducing them, since they are not adapted to the target populations and their needs. Moreover, poverty is an obstacle to effective participation, since participation requires resources, including time, that people in poverty may not have.

Participation improves outcomes

Under the right conditions, participation can lead to better outcomes. Participation in the elaboration and evaluation of public policies, projects and programmes by those actually or potentially affected by them can lead, first, to more effective and efficient outcomes than top-down, technocratic implementation. Second, it may produce more equitable outcomes that benefit the most marginalised groups. Third, participation – when properly designed – can empower the groups involved. We examine each of these points below.

BOX 1: When participatory approaches produce a better evidence base for policy

Participation has been increasingly used in research processes, often producing novel results. One well-known example is a case of environmental health justice documented by Jason Corburn, who compared the results of a top-down, expert-led scientific study on asthma among minority communities in New York City with the findings produced by a series of community-led surveys. On one hand, the study conducted by researchers from the Department of Community Health and Social Medicine of the City University of New York Medical School (CUNYCHASM), along with the New York City Department of Health (DOH) concluded that there did not appear to be an asthma problem in the Williamsburg neighborhood. The research was based on hospitalization data from a local hospital « which most neighborhood residents rarely if ever visited » (Corburn 2005, p. 119), and it failed to disaggregate results by age, gender and ethnicity. These methodological shortcomings not only produced poor scientific evidence but also « alienated the residents from professional decision makers and scientific experts » (Dedeurwaerdere 2014, p. 97).

Later on, a series of three community-based surveys led to radically different conclusions. By tasking community members to work not only as survey administrators, but also as community health-workers, the research team was able to overcome the distrust of residents and access knowledge of local issues and practices. The community-based surveys and follow-up focus groups revealed that asthma was a serious challenge in the neighborhood and that it affected specific sub-groups more acutely. The study also sought to go beyond a mere diagnosis that would challenge the expert-driven study described above: the intention was to improve the lives of neighborhood residents through a series of actions compiled into an asthma action plan (Dedeurwaerdere 2014, p. 98). Meanwhile, the results of the research were validated and recognised in mainstream science, e.g. with a publication in the *American Journal of Public Health*.

First, in the case of community-based programmes for example, including local stakeholders living in poverty in the design and implementation of projects allows communities to ensure that the project goals are aligned with the local desires and needs of people in poverty. This alignment improves both the efficiency and longevity of projects (Chambers 1994, p. 2),

partly because people are often more willing to adhere to rules which they have set themselves, as opposed to rules that someone else set for them. The inclusion of local stakeholders in the policy's consultation provides specific knowledge of the affected group and local circumstances that might otherwise be overlooked (Robb 2002, p. 90).

Some studies comparing community-managed infrastructure projects with top-down mechanisms also find that community involvement improves the quality of construction as well as the management of local infrastructure, with corruption effectively decreasing (Mansuri and Rao 2013, p. 8). A recent review of community-driven development (CDD)[1] in difficult environments (Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, DR Congo, Indonesia and the Philippines) found that communities "are capable of effectively managing grants to provide small-scale infrastructure, and that these investments deliver some positive effects on material welfare" (Casey 2018, p. 159).

> **BOX 2: Non access to the minimum income scheme in France**
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> As part of the groundwork to produce these guidelines, a case study was conducted on the French minimum income scheme (*revenu de solidarité active* (RSA)). A participatory evaluation involving academics, practitioners and persons in poverty was conducted over a two-day period, following the steps of the proposed deliberative method described below in Chapter 3. To explain the high rates of non-take-up of the scheme (34% of eligible beneficiaries do not receive the benefit), participants pointed to the administrative labyrinth that leads many potential beneficiaries to give up in the claiming process. Social workers are not always able to accompany or help people who need it: they experience difficulties in combining the role of controller (checking that beneficiaries meet all the required conditions) and the role of support/help, and they are faced with material and time constraints. This in turn results in mistrust between beneficiaries and workers, which is an obstacle to effective support work.

The high rates of non-take-up of some social protection benefits provide another illustration of the weak effectiveness of policies designed without participation (De Schutter 2022). High non-take-up rates, which seriously undermine the ability for some welfare policies to reduce poverty, have been related to the mismatch between the design of specific social protection schemes and the needs and expectations of beneficiaries, who often face difficulties in navigating complex application procedures, bureaucratic hurdles and incomprehensible rules and restrictions (see Box 2 below).

Second, when participation is carefully planned and supported, it can lead to outcomes that are more equitable and pro-poor than top-down, technocratic approaches. One of the best-

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[1] CDD are defined as having a few distinctive features, including the creation of a community-level governing body to oversee project implementation, the provision of technical assistance and block grants for public infrastructure and services that communities manage themselves, and the provision of social facilitation that explicitly promotes the inclusion of marginalized groups and broad-based participation in decision making and local governance (Casey 2018).

known examples of such a participatory process is the participatory budgeting experience in Porto Alegre, Brazil, that started in 1989. According to Baiocchi (2003), the results of the experiment, which utilised neighbourhood-based deliberation, had clear and positive results for the city's poorest areas. For example, today, nearly all residences have running water (from 75% in 1998) and sewage coverage (from 46%); moreover, the number of public schools has increased from 29 to 86 (pp. 50-51). Similarly, in India, Mohanty (2010) finds that "the activation of the social justice committees within the *panchayati raj* institutions [at municipal level] has contributed to the redistribution of government provided development services (…) for the poorest of the state's poor" (Gaventa and Barrett 2012, p. 2402).

Third, there is considerable evidence showing that participation may lead to the empowerment of those involved. Of course, measuring empowerment as a result of participation is no easy task, and empowerment itself is "a contested concept and a moving target" (Jupp *et al.* 2010). However, citizen engagement does improve "civic and political knowledge", leads to "a greater sense of awareness of rights and empowered self-identity" (Gaventa and Barrett 2012, p. 2402). It also enhances the satisfaction of beneficiaries with funded projects; this is corroborated by the finding that participants "tend to express greater satisfaction with decisions in which they participate" (Case 2018; Mansuri and Rao 2013, p. 10).

CHAPTER 2: Poverty cannot be reduced only to a lack of income or decent work

Adopted by the United Nations in 2015, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals place "eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty," at the forefront of the 2030 Development Agenda. While acknowledging that this objective "is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development" and at the same time, confirming the multidimensional nature of poverty, the SDGs stop short of defining the various forms and dimensions of poverty (Bray et al. 2020). A range of multidimensional indicators of poverty already exist that seek to encompass dimensions beyond monetary deprivation, including the Human Development Index (HDI), the Human Poverty Index (HPI), and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). However, even these indices tend to exclude important factors, such as the psycho-social dimensions of poverty (*ibidem*).
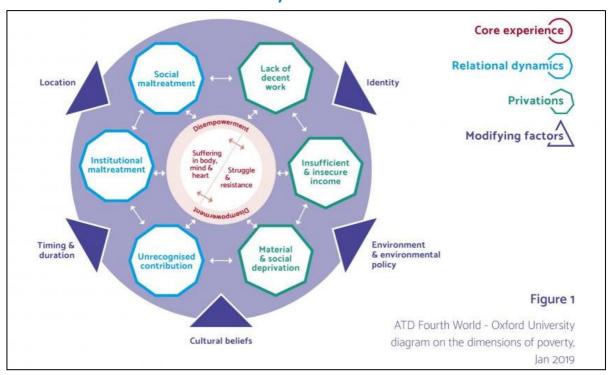
Researchers from the University of Oxford and staff from ATD Fourth World coordinated a participatory research process from 2016 to 2019 to collaboratively identify the dimensions that characterize poverty, including non-monetary aspects. The study was led in six countries: three in the Global North (the United States, United Kingdom and France) and three in the Global South (Bolivia, Tanzania and Bangladesh). The methodology was based on the Merging of Knowledge, an approach that seeks to integrate the experiential knowledge of persons experiencing poverty with the scientific knowledge of academics and the action-based knowledge of practitioners. By following a rigorous and patient research process, the "Hidden Dimensions of Poverty" study resulted in dimensions of poverty that are co-constructed, validated by the three types of actors, and grounded in the reality of persons in poverty themselves.

The following nine dimensions were found to be common across the six countries: in a first group – deprivations – the fairly familiar dimensions of (1) lack of decent work, (2) insufficient and insecure income, and (3) material and social deprivation, were identified. Next, a group of relational dimensions included (4) social maltreatment, (5) institutional maltreatment, and (6) unrecognized contributions. Finally, three dimensions were found to be at the core experience of poverty: (7) suffering in the mind, body and heart, (8) disempowerment, and (9) struggle and resistance.

The research highlighted a systemic approach: in poverty, where "everything is linked, nothing is set in stone" (*tout est lié, rien n'est figé*). On one hand, the dimensions of poverty must be considered simultaneously because they are interconnected and influence each other. They are not defined as causes or consequences, because depending on the situation, a dimension may be a cause *or* a consequence. For example, suffering in body, mind and heart may be a consequence of insufficient and insecure income. It can also be a cause of insufficient and insecure income, when physical and emotional suffering prevent people from working. Poverty is characterised by circular causalities.

On the other hand, a situation of poverty can improve or worsen over time, which means that poverty is not inevitable.

The figure below presents the nine dimensions, as well as five modifying factors: identity, location, timing and duration, the environment and environmental policy and cultural beliefs.

BOX 3: The Hidden Dimensions of Poverty

Figure 1
ATD Fourth World - Oxford University diagram on the dimensions of poverty, Jan 2019

2.1   Deprivations - The first three dimensions, related to the means of living, are those that are often recognized in society, public debate and poverty indicators.

- **Insufficient and insecure income -** To be poor is not only to suffer from low wages, but also from the irregularity and unpredictability of income. Despite the social exclusion it provokes, this precariousness leads to dependency, both financially and psychologically. Insufficient and insecure income has intergenerational consequences, when, for example, children work instead of pursuing education. As one academic in Bangladesh put it, *"If people have no work to do and cannot earn money then they cannot change their situation/condition".*

- **Material and social deprivation -** People in poverty cannot afford sufficient and nutritious food, clean water, reliable energy supplies, quality health care, quality housing and education. This may contribute to the deterioration of physical and mental health, increasing shame and the denial of dignity. According to one practitioner in Bolivia: *"Overcrowding is terrible, the whole*

extended family lives in one room of 3 x 3. If you live in the same place that you cook in, the humidity affects your health".

- **Lack of decent work** - People in poverty are vulnerable to exploitation in many forms, failure to pay wages, dismissal without warning or explanation, and sexual and physical abuse. Their precariousness can lead them to emigrate to find work. One woman living in poverty in Tanzania explained: *"As women selling food at fish market, we have a hard time keeping our male customers. Some demand sex. When you refuse, you end up losing them".*

2.2 **Relational dynamics -** Three relational dimensions describe how people who do not experience poverty affect the lives of those who do, through institutional maltreatment, social maltreatment and unrecognized contributions.

- **Institutional maltreatment** - Poor people suffer from systemic discrimination, reflected in a lack of access to law, justice, and to their rights as citizens. Their relations with institutions are painful because of their status as second-class citizens. There is no space for their personal aspirations: they are subject to questioning, conditionalities and sanctions in public services. In the US, one activist explained that: *"The welfare system is not designed to enable you to evolve out of it. It keeps us in a constant phase of being below. This system puts you in a situation and blames you for this situation. It is sometimes like you have to steal your way out of poverty".*

- **Social maltreatment** - Institutions both shape and reveal society's view of poor people and the behaviours of individuals. Society constantly judges poor people, both in the public and private sphere: in public debate, in neighbourhoods, even between relatives. If poverty is tangible in the way of speaking, the way of dressing, the educational level, judgement generates shame and exclusion. According to one woman living in poverty in Tanzania: *"An old woman in poverty testified how she is excluded from almost all social events such as marriage ceremonies in her neighborhood. Her neighbors know that she is unable to contribute financially, so they do not invite her".*

- **Unrecognized contributions -** The skills required to resist poverty are not seen nor accredited, neither in society, neither to access to a well remunerated employment. The contributions to society are denied, and they are often presumed incompetent, participating in the low self-esteem. In the words of a Bangladeshi practitioner: *"A farmer cultivates paddy and others crops for our country. If he didn't, then rich people would not get food easily. The hard work of farmers is a very important contribution for our country, yet we never give much respect to the farmer for his work".*

2.3   **The core experience of poverty**: The final three dimensions clearly reveal aspects that are too often overlooked in the experience of poverty.

- **Disempowerment** - Poverty enslaves people to others: their lives are driven by the instructions and choices of others. Lacking control, forced dependency on others erodes dignity and self-confidence. People are voiceless, subject to uncertainty and fear. According to one practitioner in Bangladesh: *''Poor people are powerless in society. They cannot raise their voice because they know nobody listens to them. Rich people control everything''.*

- **Suffering in body, mind and heart** - Poverty affects the emotions, the physical and mental health, due to the way of life (insalubrious housing, poor diet, lack of health care), the stress and anxiety (challenges on a daily basis, guilt of not being able to care for family and children), judgement of others lowering the self-esteem. In the words of one person experiencing poverty: *''Poverty means being part of a system that leaves you waiting indefinitely in a state of fear and uncertainty. Poverty kills dreams and cages the dreamers''.*

- **Struggle and resistance** - There is no other choice than to resist; struggle is necessary. Development of survival skills but also "managerial" and "executive" skills to try to make ends meet. It can become a collective resistance and overcome social isolation. As one academic put it: *"People in poverty who have people who depend on them (children) have to fight like crazy with all the odds against them... You fight, or you give up, and I think people only give up in extreme cases".*

CHAPTER 3: Participation can be enriched through deliberation

This guide began by defining participation and outlining the rationale for involving people living in poverty in the elaboration and evaluation of policies that are likely to affect them. In this section, we propose to go one step further by introducing the notion of deliberation, which implies participation of different actors – including people in poverty – who meet, present different arguments based on their knowledge (experiential, action-based and scientific), weigh the arguments and propose actionable solutions to improve policies and programmes. In this chapter, we clarify what is meant by deliberation and offer a step-by-step methodological approach that integrates different forms of knowledge. Moreover, we propose seven key conditions that improve the quality of deliberation by fostering equality among participants, building trust and allowing each person to express themselves and to be heard. Finally, this chapter presents an evaluation framework that translates the hidden dimensions of poverty into tangible evaluation questions that can guide the elaboration and assessment of policies and programmes.

Empowered Participatory Governance

Deliberation is conceptually different from participation in that it refers to "a 'process of exchanging reasons for the purpose of resolving problematic situations' that require interpersonal coordination and cooperation" (Bohman 1996, p. 27 cited in Escobar 2012, p. 34). It requires, then, that differently positioned actors listen to one another and arrive at a consensus (Mansuri and Rao 2013, pp. 87-88). Stemming etymologically from the word 'to balance', deliberation may be understood as "substantive, balanced, and open-minded discussion in which participants voice, listen to, and weigh the merits of competing arguments, sharing diverse perspectives and experiences" (Wang, Fishkin and Luskin, 2020, p. 2166).

Based on a sample of cases in different parts of the world, Fung and Wright (2003) have developed the idea of **Empowered Participatory Governance** (EPG), which is characterized by three principles: First, projects that are driven by EPG must focus on problems that are specific and tangible, that is, they must have a practical orientation. Second, participation in such projects must be "bottom up": it must involve those that are directly affected by those specific and tangible problems, including ordinary citizens but also officials in the field. Third, the interactions in EPG must be of a deliberative nature.

EPG assumes that "actors accustomed to competing with one another over power or resources might begin to cooperate and build more congenial relations" (Fung and Wright 2003, p. 16). In other words, deliberative processes are assumed to promote cooperation over competition, which can support the process of achieving a consensus. EPG can produce an intelligence that goes beyond that of its individual members (see e.g. Woolley et al. 2010, Landemore 2013 and others).

A proposed deliberative method based on the Merging of Knowledge

While Fung and Wright's Empowered Participatory Governance provides a framework for understanding processes of deliberative democracy, it does not offer a practical methodology for setting up such processes in practice. To fill this gap, we rely on a methodological approach developed, tested and refined by ATD Fourth World known as the **Merging of Knowledge**. Using a variety of tools and methods, the approach seeks to integrate the experiential knowledge of people in poverty with the scientific knowledge of academics and practical know-how of professionals and practitioners. We draw on three decades of experience with the Merging of Knowledge – conducted across many contexts and cultures across the world – to propose the following steps to the inclusive and deliberative elaboration and evaluation of policies. Annex 2 of this document describes the Merging of Knowledge in more detail and provides examples of how the methodological approach was used in the three case studies outlined Annex 1.

- **Phase 1 – Setting up the core team and the process:** Before launching the deliberative process, several preparatory steps must be taken. First, the policy design/evaluation team must be constituted. The team should involve participants who identify with the different 'peer groups' included in the ulterior phases: it should include practitioners (policy-makers), academics/experts and representatives of NGOs working with people in poverty. When people in poverty are active members of these NGOs, and not seen as passive beneficiaries, they should be associated as representatives of these NGOs, trained and supported by them. The involvement of decision-makers is key to the accountability and effectiveness of the process. These may include national or local authorities, funding bodies and local or international organisations. Without them, the results of the deliberative process are likely to remain dead letter. In this preparatory phase, the core team drafts the initial Evaluation framework (see Annex), formulating evaluation questions that are relevant within each of the nine dimensions and identifying potential judgement criteria and indicators that will be used to answer them. The core team also designs the methodological process, defining the expected timeframe for the subsequent phases and identifying candidates for the broader team involved in the deliberative exchange (Phase 3) as well as possible facilitators.

- **Phase 2 - Data collection:** Next, the core team begins collecting the evidence necessary to respond to the evaluation questions. The data sources may be the product of tools typically used for consultation purposes: (e.g. household surveys, interviews, focus group discussions) or more in-depth analyses such as sustainability impact assessments (SIA) and human rights impact assessments (HRIA). They may be pre-existing or collected specifically for the purposes of the evaluation/impact assessment, depending on the resources available. For example, for the case study conducted in France, the research team collected existing evaluations of the minimum income scheme (*Revenu de Solidarité Active*) (including official evaluations conducted by state bodies, such as the Court of Auditors, as well as academic papers assessing the impacts of the RSA). In this step, the team identifies the gaps: for

which of the dimensions of poverty, or which of the specific evaluation questions is data missing?

- **Phase 3 - Deliberative triangulation ('Merging of knowledge'):** Then, the policy designers/evaluators convene multi-stakeholder workshops, including (at least) one group of persons experiencing poverty (e.g. the potential or actual beneficiaries of the policy or project to be assessed or other persons in poverty that may be affected by it), one group of practitioners who implement the policy or project, and one group of academics. It is also recommended to include a fourth group (composed of policymakers, funders and other decision-makers).The selection of participants for the deliberative triangulation phase should be approached with care: in some cases the core team may seek to include a wide range of marginalised voices with the intention of increasing diversity, whereas other participatory processes may opt to select participants through a random draw from a pool of (potential) beneficiaries to improve representativity (ATD Quart Monde 2021, p. 24).

The purpose of the workshops is twofold:

(1) The first purpose is to harvest additional information that could not be collected prior to this phase. For evaluation questions that lack responses, the deliberative space created in the workshops serves to ask specific questions to the persons in poverty and to the practitioners about the potential or actual impacts of the given policy or project. It is crucial that workshop questions are formulated by the core team in a way that is sensitive and understandable to all participants.

(2) The second purpose is to deliberatively triangulate the different knowledge types (experiential, action-based and scientific) in order to maximise learning. For example, taking again the case study on the RSA, an academic might invoke the high rate of non-take-up of the benefit, based on the evaluation conducted by the Court of Auditors. This may stimulate a discussion around complex application procedures and lack of clear information surrounding eligibility criteria as experienced by the potential or actual users of the RSA. Practitioners implementing the delivery of the benefit on the group may invoke other possible reasons for non-take-up. Deliberative triangulation thus serves to deepen the team's understanding of the data collected, to compare and contrast different interpretations of the evidence and thus to obtain a more complete picture of the potential or actual impacts of a policy/programme.

The ultimate objective of these workshops is to combine the different sources of knowledge in a deliberative manner in order to improve the understanding of possible or actual impacts of the policy or project on the different dimensions of poverty. Annex 2 of this document provides a concrete, step-by-step example of this phase of deliberative exchange.

- **Phase 4 – Design or Evaluation by the core team:** In this phase, the core team draws conclusions based on Phase 2 and Phase 3. They seek to organise the data collected according to the different dimensions of poverty and to inform the policy-making process by formulating key recommendations for the elaboration or evaluation of the policy or programme.

- **Phase 5 – Deliberative triangulation:** The conclusions and recommendations of phase 4 should be submitted to the groups involved in Phase 3, or at least to delegates of these groups, to ensure that their proposals have not been distorted by the core team and get new insights.

- **Phase 6 – Final document:** The feedback from Phase 5 should be incorporated into the final document by the core team.

Conditions for inclusive deliberation

Deliberation presupposes that those who participate do so as equals (Landemore 2020, p. 6). A number of conditions are necessary to improve the quality of participation in the deliberative method proposed above, specifically by seeking to improve equality among participants, building trust and allowing each person to express themselves and to be heard.

1. **A safe space for deliberation:** As in any research process, an ethical framework must be set up to ensure that participants can take part in a way that is safe for them. An ethical framework implies that participants are clearly informed of the objectives, scope and extent of their participation, the possible outcomes, as well as the consequences of their participation. In this framework, participants must provide their informed consent. Confidentiality rules should be clearly defined and participants should be informed of any changes enacted as a result of the process to which they contributed. Without the follow-up and responsiveness of decisionmakers to the input of participants, frustration and discouragement is likely to hinder future participation and create distrust.

2. **Effective participation of people in poverty:** To make a difference, participation and deliberation must effectively involve people in poverty, whose voices are typically not heard in deliberative processes. While intermediary bodies may be helpful under specific conditions, relying on NGOs or other civil society organisations is not a substitute for direct involvement of people in poverty as the potential and/or actual beneficiaries of projects and programmes (see box below).

> **BOX 4: Model housing estate in Mauritius**
>
> The model estate in Mauritius was a project designed, funded and implemented by the government of Mauritius in 2009. It sought to provide families in poverty with access to housing, including 76 families that had been previously living on land that did not belong to them. To prepare the project, the government of Mauritius consulted NGOs and other representatives of civil society. However, the families that were to become the residents of the housing estate were not invited to participate in the process. This failure to involve the persons directly concerned by the project led to multiple challenges, and ultimately resulted in a programme that did not fit the needs of the local residents.
>
> According to one key policymaker who was interviewed as part of the case study:
>
> *« I'm all for consultation. The NGOs have contributed a lot and they know the business well. The NGOs have helped a lot in identifying the real problems and they have acted as a go-between. The people, and we, trust them. They bring us back in a spirit of conciliation. If you wait for everyone to agree to make a decision, we're never going to make it. »*
>
> Meanwhile, one of the estate's residents expressed frustration with the lack of opportunities to participate in decision-making:
>
> *« Also, in relation to the NGOs and social workers: when they participated in this project, it was their perspective, the way they see things. Even though they worked with a lot of families, they didn't really listen to our needs, they drew their own conclusions about what is good for us. That's one thing not to do in the future. »*

At the same time, civil society organisations (CSOs) such as community-based and grassroots organisations, local NGOs, expression groups, faith-based organisations, village organisations, farmers' associations, labour unions, cooperatives, etc. can have an important role to play in IDEEP processes, provided that they encourage and support the participation of persons experiencing poverty themselves. Such CSOs, under certain conditions, can empower, mobilise and accompany persons in poverty to participate individually and collectively, to speak out and to act for change.

3. **Institutional support:** To ensure effective and sustainable participation, policymakers, funders and other decision-makers should benefit from the support of their institutions and hierarchies. They should be encouraged and incentivised to design projects that require the participation of people in poverty through ex-ante impact assessments, ex-post evaluations and continuous monitoring. The quality of participation and deliberation must be a crucial part of evaluation, and institutions must account for the necessary resources and time to compensate for participants' time, energy, travel, etc.

4. **Time and material resources:** The participation of people in poverty in the conception, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a policy may lead to more effective, efficient and equitable outcomes, which ultimately improves the cost-

effectiveness of an intervention. However, participation and deliberation are also intensive in material resources, and in time. Policymakers must budget and prepare for this, viewing the participatory process (whether it concerns the elaboration, monitoring or evaluation of a policy or programme) as an investment rather than a cost. The resources required include the time and effort required to collect and analyse existing or new data necessary for responding to the evaluation questions (e.g. surveys and interviews), time and space for conducting multi-stakeholder workshops, compensation for the time and work of workshop participants, as well as budget for facilitators and support staff. It is important not to rush the process and to ensure the rhythm is set by those who require the most support to participate rather that dictated by the schedules of those who hold positions of power.

5. **Independence of participants:** The participants of the deliberative exchange should be able to speak openly and freely. They should be protected from reprisals or retaliation, including from the risk of losing their entitlements. The use of separate peer groups and spokespersons may help in maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of individual views. This is an ethical question (see Point 1 above) but also seeks to ensure that exchanges are authentic by avoiding potential biases to the extent possible.

6. **Addressing power differentials:** Participants in deliberative processes do not arrive at the table endowed with the same power, including resources, information and deliberative capacities. Persons experiencing poverty in particular may face barriers related to language or literacy, creating the risk of capture of deliberative processes by a narrow elite. Uneven power relations between participants, including between women and men or between members of different ethnic or religious groups, must be actively addressed by ensuring that the most marginalised groups are included and empowered throughout the process. A variety of working methods and tools may be mobilised, including the use of different means of expression (e.g., illustrations, theatre-forum, etc.) to ensure that those less comfortable with written or oral expression are not put at a disadvantage. Failing to address power differentials risks silencing some participants and thus losing key perspectives and knowledge, ignoring interpretations and producing biased results.

7. **Facilitation, support and empowerment:** As a result of differences in power, experience and capacities, facilitation and support to participants of a participatory process is a crucial component. Facilitators should be experienced and benefit from legitimacy in the eyes of all "peer groups": policymakers/evaluators, practitioners, people experiencing poverty and other groups associated in the process. The role of the facilitator(s) is multiple: to propose ground rules for the interactions to take place; to regulate speaking time so that the deliberative exercise is not dominated by one or several actors; and to equalize power differentials. In many cases, co-facilitation by two experienced facilitators who benefit from legitimacy in the eyes of all participants is recommended. In addition, the "peer group" of persons experiencing poverty should be supported by another team member (both during the deliberative process and ahead of time, in preparing their contributions).

Potential challenges, limitations and tensions

The Merging of Knowledge approach has been designed, tested and experimented for nearly three decades across various contexts in the Global North and South. It has continued to evolve and adapt, and a growing body of literature seeks to theorise, challenge and further develop it (for a list of recent works, see Bucolo et al. 2023). However, some questions remain unresolved and are often dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the teams piloting and implementing the processes. These include issues such as:
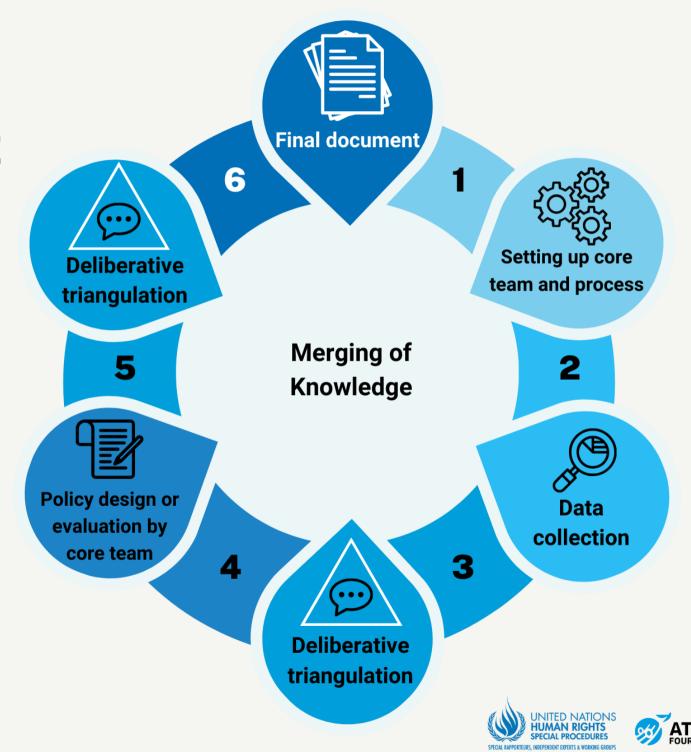
- **Challenging settings:** The time needed and other key requirements (see section on *Conditions for participation and deliberation* above) for conducting a Merging of Knowledge process may seem unrealistic in contexts where swift action must be taken (e.g. conflict or post-conflict settings, natural disasters and other humanitarian/emergency contexts). In some cases, a perceived urgency may lead decision-makers to forego a democratic, deliberative process in favour of rapid action. However, in some cases, decisions taken in haste with the intention of remaining temporary measures may become entrenched over time and subject to path-dependency. It is therefore essential that such urgent measures, adopted with little or no deliberation with potential or actual users and beneficiaries, include an explicit requirement to monitor and evaluate the policy or programme within a specified timeframe.

- **Sampling:** A major question that is likely to emerge when setting up an inclusive and deliberative process to evaluate or elaborate a policy or programme is: "Whom should we involve"? The answer will depend on the scale (local, regional or national) and scope of the policy or programme itself (aims and objectives, persons or groups targeted, etc.). Some guiding principles may help in the sampling process:

  (1) **Diversity**: It is important to include diverse voices and perspectives by seeking to involve participants from different backgrounds (including gender, age, ethnic and social origin). While a temptation may exist to select participants based on their strong analytical capacities or communication skills, this might skew the process by excluding persons who have been left out of formal education or who struggle the most in a given community or population.

  (2) **Sensitivity to cultural contexts and pre-existing dynamics**: The policy evaluation/design team should be aware of cultural norms and practices as well as pre-existing dynamics that might make some potential participants seem more legitimate than others. For example, a village chief or other community leader might seem to be an obvious or unavoidable choice in the group of participants. The team and facilitators should be aware of the consequences of involving an authority figure (particularly when it comes to balancing power relations, see p. 23) and adapt the methodology accordingly to avoid elite capture and/or submission of other participants due to pre-existing dynamics. In other cases, gender norms might prevent women and girls from speaking freely. The intricacies of cultural, social and (micro-)political factors means that the

evaluation/design team must be very familiar with and sensitive to the context into which the IDEEP becomes embedded.

(3) **Commitment to the process and its results:** As in any process or project, the participants must fully consent to taking part. But beyond this very minimal condition, participants should also be committed to honouring the outcome of the process. This translates into an openness to changing one's mind and practices as a result of collective learning and deliberative exchange. Participants of successful Merging of Knowledge processes are often persons who acknowledge a gap or shortcoming in a given policy or programme, whether they are practitioners, experts, rightsholders or professionals. If there is no openness to change and curiosity of others and the knowledge that they hold, the process is not likely to be fruitful.

- **Conflict:** The Merging of Knowledge approach brings together persons that may hold conflicting values and worldviews. They may have opposing perspectives, radically different life experiences and positions within society. They are likely to express themselves using terms that others may not be familiar with. The objective of IDEEP processes is not to bridge these differences at all costs (although it is often a side effect that emerges). Instead, the aim is to allow for the safe confrontation of perspectives and knowledge in a way that respects the dignity and experience of each participant, that values her place at the table and that seeks to arrive, collectively, at a solution that reflects the group's collective intelligence. Experienced facilitators, who should be seen as legitimate in the eyes of all participants, should seek to channel the group's energy towards constructive exchange rather than settling scores or engaging in personal conflicts.

IDEEP: A deliberative tool to combat poverty

- Ensure practitioners, decision-makers, people in poverty and academics are involved
- Agree on an ethical framework
- Pay attention to power differences
- Provide facilitation and support
- Ensure transparency and independence of participants
- Provide sufficient resources and time

Final document

6

Deliberative triangulation

1 **Setting up core team and process**

5

Merging of Knowledge

2

Policy design or evaluation by core team

4

Deliberative triangulation

3 **Data collection**

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ATD FOURTH WORLD

The method and conditions proposed in this section constitute a 'gold standard' of inclusive deliberation that convenors of such processes should aim towards and against which such exercises may be benchmarked. However, it is possible that in some contexts or under specific circumstances, each of the steps or conditions may not be met. In other contexts, additional conditions may be necessary to achieve effective participation and deliberation. The IDEEP is not intended as a one-size-fits-all model but it does aim to draw attention to a number of principles that may be overlooked by policymakers and that are likely to have an impact on the outcomes of a deliberative exercise.

While the proposed methodology and the conditions outlined above provide guidance as to the deliberative process and how it may be conducted, it does not suggest what the substantive content of the process might be. In the table below, we present an evaluation framework that translates the hidden dimensions of poverty into specific evaluation questions. In this sense, the evaluation framework is the policy-oriented companion to the Hidden Dimensions of Poverty report.

Clearly, not all evaluation questions will be relevant to all policies or programmes under construction or assessment. However, it is recommended to consider all dimensions in an initial step, given that they are interrelated and that policies intending to improve one dimension may have unintended consequences on another. It is important that the indicators used to answer the evaluation questions draw on various forms of knowledge and perspectives (including both qualitative and quantitative data), and that these are confronted and triangulated as required by Phase 3 of the process presented in this chapter. Moreover, in most cases, the evaluation questions are not intended to result in a binary (yes/no) answer but instead to move beyond it and to consider the extent to which a policy or programme leads to a specific effect, as well as the causes or causal mechanisms of the effect. In other words, the evaluation framework is not a checklist but a guide to a reflexive and nuanced deliberative assessment of public action.

Proposed evaluation framework

Group of dimensions	Evaluation area	Definition	Possible evaluation questions
Core experience of poverty	Disempowerment	The lack of **control** and **dependency on others** resulting from **severely constrained choices.**	Do policies empower people in poverty and enable them to fulfil their social responsibilities and duties? How? To what extent does the policy help to reduce dependency on others? How? Is the policy reliant on the generosity and goodwill of donors and contributors (charity-based)? To what extent is it based on rights that are guaranteed and enshrined in legislation? To what extent does the policy expand the choices available to persons in poverty? What new options are available to people in poverty as a result of the policy or programme? To what extent does the policy or programme provide persons in poverty with more control over their lives or agency?
	Suffering in the mind, body and heart	Living in poverty means experiencing intense **physical, mental and emotional** suffering accompanied by a sense of powerlessness to do anything about it.	What are the (possible) physical, mental and emotional impacts of the policy on persons experiencing poverty? Does the policy reduce the physical, mental and emotional suffering experienced by persons living in poverty? To what extent does the policy improve the well-being of its beneficiaries in terms of housing, nutrition and access to healthcare?

			To what extent does the policy reduce the isolation, stress and shame experienced by people living in poverty?
	Struggle and resistance	There is an ongoing **struggle to survive**, which includes **resisting and counteracting** the effects of the many forms of suffering brought by privations, abuse, and lack of recognition.	To what extent does the policy reduce the need for struggle? How does the policy interact with the forms of resistance that allow persons in poverty to counteract various forms of abuse?
Relational dynamics	Institutional maltreatment		Does the policy respect and uphold international and national law and legal instruments, including the Guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights? To what extent is the policy designed and developed in collaboration with people (potentially) affected by it, including people in poverty? Does the policy include the active and free participation of people in poverty in its design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?
		The **failure of national and international institutions**, through their actions or inaction to respond appropriately and respectfully to the needs and circumstances of people in poverty, and thereby to ignore, humiliate and harm them.	To what extent does the policy involve mutual and reciprocal duties and obligations between the programme provider and its beneficiaries? To what extent is the reciprocity of those duties and obligations balanced and symmetrical? How are these monitored? To what extent does the policy impose or reduce administrative burdens and bureaucratic hurdles to participate in or access the programme? How are users of the policy or programme selected and screened? What, if any, procedures are in place for users and/or candidates to challenge decisions made by the institution(s) implementing the policy?

			What indicators are used to measure the success of the policy? How is the policy evaluated and to what extent are people in poverty involved in its monitoring and assessment?
			How does the policy provide for and protect the right to privacy?
			To what extent does the policy prevent intrusive or humiliating forms of control of people in poverty? How?
			How does the policy interact with existing or planned policies at the national, regional or international level? Is it complementary or contradictory?
			To what extent does the policy monitor and reduce corruption in its implementation?
	Social maltreatment		To what extent does the policy improve or worsen the public's perception of people in poverty?
		People in poverty are **negatively perceived and treated badly** by other individuals and informal groups.	Does the policy reduce the stigma, blame and negative judgements borne by people in poverty? How?
			Does the policy reduce the process of othering? How?
	Unrecognized contributions	The **knowledge and skills** of people living in poverty are rarely seen, acknowledged or valued. Often, individually and collectively, people experiencing poverty are wrongly presumed to be **incompetent**.	Does the policy acknowledge and value the knowledge and skills of people in poverty?
			Does the policy allow people in poverty to pursue their goals in line with their knowledge, skills, competences and aspirations?

			Does the policy encourage or discourage collective action and solidarity among people in poverty and their families, friends, or society as a whole?
Deprivations	Lack of decent work	The prevalent experience of being **denied access to work that is fairly paid, safe, secure, regulated and dignified.**	To what extent does the policy enable or facilitate access to dignifying labour for people in poverty? To what extent does the policy provide training and ensure possible career progression for people in poverty? To what extent does the policy improve working conditions for people in poverty (improved pay, safety and security)? To what extent does the policy reduce the risk or incidence of informal work and enhance the right to social security?
	Insufficient and insecure income	Having **too little income** to be able to meet **basic needs and social obligations**, to **keep harmony within the family and to enjoy good living conditions**.	Does the policy contribute to persons in poverty having sufficient, stable and predictable income? If and where the programme offers benefits, are they adequate for a dignified life? Does the policy contribute to persons in poverty having sufficient, stable and predictable income to meet social and cultural obligations? Does the policy allow persons in poverty to enjoy good living conditions? To what extent does the policy reduce the risk of debt and child labor?
	Material and social deprivation	**Lack of access to the goods and services necessary** to live a decent life, participating fully in society.	Does the policy facilitate access to resources and facilities necessary for people in poverty to fulfil their social responsibilities and enjoy their social and cultural rights?

			Does the policy improve access to goods and services necessary to lead a decent life (including sufficient nutritious food, adequate clothing, affordable, quality housing with good sanitation, clean water and reliable energy, non-discriminatory education in well-equipped schools, affordable and accessible healthcare, serviceable public transport and a non-hazardous environment) for people in poverty? To what extent does the policy encourage the active and free participation of people in poverty in society?

Conclusions and next steps

The IDEEP tool seeks to inform policymakers, funders and organisations who wish to put into practice the ideal of participation in the elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of public policies, development projects and programmes. Drawing on ATD Fourth World's experience with the Merging of Knowledge methodology, IDEEP offers an approach that goes beyond participation and into a deliberative practice. It aims to support decision-makers in their efforts to actively and effectively include the experiential knowledge and views of persons experiencing poverty in the policy domains that affect them, in order to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of anti-poverty plans. Only when this knowledge is heard and incorporated into the policy-making process can the blind spots of policies be uncovered and remedied. Without the voices of people who experience poverty, the hidden dimensions of poverty will remain concealed and efforts to improve their lives suboptimal.

Ensuring the active participation of vulnerable and marginalised groups in the reflexive governance of public policies requires time and resources, careful planning, broad alliances and support from agencies, institutions and their hierarchies. It is our hope that this tool for the inclusive and deliberative elaboration and evaluation of policies can start a new conversation: one that sees people in poverty as partners rather than passive beneficiaries, as holders of knowledge and as agents of change. By going beyond participation as it has been conceived of in its weaker forms and towards a deliberative partnership between persons in poverty, practitioners on the ground and policymakers, we stand a chance in the fight against poverty.

This tool is intended to spark that conversation. We hope that IDEEP can serve as a starting point to encourage, inspire and guide decision-makers in the public and private spheres to invite persons in poverty to the table. We look forward to putting these words into action by launching a pilot programme with partners in 2024.

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Annex 1: Case studies

1.   Case study 1: the Revenu de Solidarité Active (RSA) in France

- **Description of the policy/programme**

The RSA is a measure of the French social protection system that affects a large number of people: more than two million households (approximately four million people) are currently enrolled. It is designed as a benefit to supplement a household's resources and guarantee a minimum income. It varies according to the household composition. In 2023, a single person with no children eligible for the guaranteed minimum income (i.e. with no other resources from work or otherwise) would receive EUR 607,75 per month under the RSA, while the poverty line is set at EUR 1,128 per person per month (2022). Evaluated in 2011 and then a decade later, the RSA was assessed mainly in terms of its ability to lift households out of poverty and ensure their transition to paid employment.

- **Hidden dimensions uncovered through deliberative evaluation**

The administrative labyrinth that is the path to obtaining the RSA leads a large number of potential beneficiaries to give up on this benefit: this explains, in part, the high rate of non-take-up. The practitioners who took part in participatory evaluation explained that their work is poorly organised, that they lack time and are expected to perform a double (controller & support). Both persons in poverty and practitioners pointed to the lack of trust that exists between beneficiaries and officials in charge of administering the RSA, which does not allow for effective support work.

One source of material deprivation and lack of rights results from the complexity of scheme that translates into unpredictability of the amounts paid by the RSA. These fluctuate each quarter according to the income from work or from all other sources, including other social benefits, that the person or a family member might have received during the previous quarter. In this case, the allowance received is equal to the difference between the guaranteed minimum income and the household resources. While the financial inadequacy of the RSA has already been pointed out in previous assessments, the deliberative evaluation clarified that the difficulty experienced also stems from the instability of support provided by the RSA to a given household. . Not having a long-term view of one's income, not being able to plan ahead, is a source of stress, worry, fear and suffering. It can also lead to a deterioration of physical and mental health.

Institutional maltreatment is one of the key dimensions that emerged. This abuse has several origins and multiple consequences. In addition to the administrative difficulties already referred to, institutional maltreatment stems from the fact that:

- Institutions monitor the private lives of recipients to check the composition of households, and to verify whether undeclared income has been received by these households (gifts, etc.). These measures are intrusive; they lead to shame and suffering.

- The so-called reciprocal commitment contracts concluded between the social services and the beneficiaries are not truly reciprocal: while social workers have control over the income and resources of the recipients, the latter do not have the right to object to the decisions made by the institutions. When recipients make mistakes, the sanctions are often severe; yet when institutions make mistakes, there are few or no consequences.

- **Key recommendations**

It would be important to individualize the RSA, and to enable beneficiaries to anticipate the amount paid, in order to guarantee stable income. This would reduce the material deprivation experienced by RSA beneficiaries and help alleviate fears and suffering.

The build-up of trusting relationships between practitioners and recipients should be encouraged. This could be done by separating the functions of control and support, by giving more means to the professionals (time and resources), and by identifying a single contact point who would support the beneficiary, in order to avoid the multiplication of interlocutors.

Support of RSA beneficiaries for finding employment must be improved and must take into account their experiences and aspirations. Imposing training or jobs on people is seen as another form of institutional maltreatment: support should be based on beneficiaries' desires, skills and aspirations.

There should be times and spaces that offer the possibility of constructive dialogue between people experiencing poverty, practitioners in the field and other professionals. Subsequent evaluations of the RSA must be carried out taking into account the voice of these actors, involving them from the beginning to the end of the process.

2. **Case study 2: the Model Estate in Mauritius**

- **Description of the policy/programme**

The model estate in Mauritius was a project designed, funded and implemented by the government of Mauritius in 2009. It sought to provide families in poverty with access to housing, including 76 families that had been previously living on land that did not belong to them. The project was designed based on an "integrated model", seeking to provide housing but also access to work, health services and education. To obtain a 20 m^2 house, beneficiaries were required to sign and honour a social contract and to pay a monthly rent.

- **Hidden dimensions uncovered through deliberative evaluation**

Following the implementation of the project, many deprivations persist: according to one report, nearly a third (30.5%) of the inhabitants were unemployed in 2011, and according to

the minister in charge of the project, many residents had difficulty paying their rent due to a lack of income. The village lacks a school, and more than half of the children were attending institutions far from the village in 2011. The housing units (20 m2 per family, regardless of family size) are too small for large families. These elements are reflected in the following dimensions: lack of decent work, insufficient and precarious income, and material and social deprivation.

The mandatory social contract that the tenants had to sign before accessing the newly built homes was written in English, while most of them only speak Creole. This contract puts in place a number of rules that are experienced as extremely restrictive. For example, it is forbidden to host family members, neighbours or friends who do not live in the village, it is forbidden to sell goods, and it is forbidden to enlarge or modify the dwelling (either inside or outside of it). The constraints introduced by this contract and above all, the lack of reciprocity in the commitments made by the inhabitants on the one hand and the managers on the other, are a form of institutional maltreatment.

Finally, the dimension of social isolation was uncovered through the deliberative evaluation. Indeed, one resident of the model estate explained that while it was initially intended to be built close to a village, the nearest village is more than 2 km away. The lack of public transport means access to employment and schools is difficult, and it explains why more than a third (34.4%) of the residents say they "never" see their friends. One expert described the mo"el estate as "ghettoization": a group of families living in poverty is rehoused and segregated from the rest of society.

- **Key recommendations**

The development projects and anti-poverty policies should be preceded and accompanied by a process that allows for the effective and direct participation of the potential and actual beneficiaries. NGOs and other representatives of civil society can facilitate and contribute to this participation but cannot replace the direct contributions of people living in poverty. In addition, it is necessary to ensure that participatory fora between beneficiaries and authorities are not captured by the most dynamic "elites" but seek to involve a diverse range of people in order to leave no one behind.

The logic of effective reciprocity in the rights and duties of both parties in a social contract should be reinforced. The contracts or agreements on which programs or policies are based should be co-constructed with them.

The empowerment of participants or beneficiaries through projects and policies is only possible if these programmes are based on real knowledge of the living conditions of the people they seek to support. The background assumptions on which projects or policies are founded should not reproduce stereotypes and prejudices, but instead should incorporate the knowledge of people experiencing poverty, including their constraints, challenges, resources and aspirations.

3. Case study 3: street children in a West African country

- **Description of the policy/programme**

Around 2015, the leaders of a West African country set the objective of halving by 2020 an estimated figure of nine thousand children living on the streets. Structural causes of this phenomenon are: poverty, the main driving factor; demographic growth driven by high fertility rates and lower child mortality; rural exodus, since cities are deemed to offer a better well-being; family nuclearisation and the crumbling of community solidarities. More immediate causes include the shortcomings and abuse suffered by children from poor backgrounds, including in poor quality Koranic schools, which for parents represent the last hope of education and integration.

- **Hidden dimensions uncovered through deliberative evaluation**

Children living on the streets are faced with harsh violence and "walk with death." Their income is small and unpredictable and when they find work, they are exploited. They lack safe places to sleep, take care of themselves and preserve what little they have. In order to earn money, they beg, help street vendors, keep an eye on motorbikes and cars and provide minor services. They share what they have with those who are ill or injured. This is their way to resist and survive. Yet their contribution to informal economy and solidarity goes un-recognised. Their many deprivations, com-pounded by negative prejudices and social abuse, produce deep suffering in body, mind and heart. Parents suffer from the thought that their child lives on the street.

Campaigns to "pick up children" and park them in shelters, sometimes with the help of police armed with Kalashnikovs, increase discrimination and institutional maltreatment. As a result, young people's trust in social workers is deeply undermined. They may remain in shelters for some time, then get back to the streets. And the official numerical targets are not met.

Several modifying factors were also uncovered through our dialogue. Identity: some children hide it to protect their family from being shamed or because their parents are discriminated against. Cultural beliefs also affect their life. For example, if a child leaves a Koranic school chosen by his father, s/he is banned by him and the whole family must abide with this decision. Traditionally, when parents separate, the child is entrusted to the father and his family, which may be a heartbreak for the child and a reason to flee, especially if relations with the father's new wife are difficult.

- **Key recommendations**

Fighting rural poverty and supporting small farmers who are most often left behind in public policies is a way to reduce rural exodus and prevent children and adolescents from leaving their village and family.

The setting of quantified objectives by policymakers alone, often under pressure from funders, may lead operators to "creaming" (Miller et al, 1970) i.e. to prioritise support for those who will most quickly get off the street or out of poverty, when the demand of the Sustainable Development Goals is to "Leave no one behind".

In order to avoid perverse effects, no target for action should be set without in-depth dialogue with professionals in the field and with street children.

Any programme should allow the poorest to progress from where they are and avoid excluding them before and during action, making them invisible in evaluation. Radical inclusion requires time to build trust with them and specific skills such as commitment, empathy, patience, respect for the person, their family and community, and an ability not to judge too quickly.

Since it is very difficult for a child or adolescent to succeed without a family, family reconnection is important for those living on the streets. It does not necessarily mean that they return to their nuclear family, but that they reconnect with members of the extended family.

Annex 2: Case study methodology

The Merging of Knowledge is a methodological approach designed, developed, tested and refined by the international movement ATD Fourth World. It explicitly aims to eradicate poverty through the inclusion of persons experiencing poverty in the research processes alongside practitioners and academics. Through the use of deliberative techniques such as break-out sessions in peer groups and reporting back to mixed plenary sessions using spokespersons, the Merging of Knowledge seeks to alter existing power relations between participants in order to allow knowledge from each of the three sources (experiential, action-based and theoretical) to be constructed and "merged" to obtain a more complete picture of poverty, its causes, and its consequences (Osinski 2021).

Case study 1 - Revenu de Solidarité Active (RSA) in France

The Merging of Knowledge workshop was conducted on the 15-16 April 2022. It brought together approximately twenty participants composing three so-called "peer" or reference groups: activists (persons with the experience of poverty), academics (the student research team and other university researchers) and practitioners working in several key institutions involved in the design, monitoring and distribution of the *Revenue de Solidarité Active.* The following steps were followed as part of the deliberative triangulation exercise (Phase 3 of the proposed method presented in Chapter 3 of this guide):

Step 1: Introduction and work on positionality

In a first step, the facilitators introduced the objectives of the workshop and set the ground rules for collaborations. Participants from the three "peer groups" were invited to introduce themselves and participate in an icebreaker. Then, a photo-voice exercise was proposed to reveal and elucidate the peer groups' positionality. Prompted by a single word, participants were asked to individually select an image among a sample provided by the organizing team. The image was intended to represent participants' representation of this single word. In break-out peer groups, participants shared the image they selected with the other members of their group and explained why they had selected this image. Through discussion and deliberation, the groups then each selected one image to present to the other groups. The objective was to arrive at a consensus with a single image and an accompanying key word that best represented what the group intended to express (without changing the original interpretation of the image). In a plenary session and through the voice of a single spokesperson per peer group, the activists, academics and

practitioners each presented their photo and keyword, explaining why they selected the image and how it related to the prompt.

The objective of this photo-voice exercise was to demonstrate that each group's understanding of a given word differs from that of other groups, based on its' members experience and position in society. Once again using spokespersons and in a back-and-forth between peer group break-out sessions and plenary sessions, the groups could direct clarification questions to one another and share reactions, prompted by questions from the facilitators (e.g. "What have I learnt from this exercise and from the other peer groups? What surprises me? What questions does this exercise raise for me?")

Step 2: Overview of the RSA

In a second step, members of the organizing team presented a factual overview of the RSA scheme: its history, key statistics and the conditions for receiving the benefit. The objective of this step was to ensure that all participants were aware of the functioning of the RSA, to clarify any questions and to provide a factual basis for the deliberative exercise to which participants could refer. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session.

Step 3: Evaluation practices

In a third step, one participant was invited to succinctly present the evaluation practices followed by their institution. The objective of this step was to provide an example of how policies are evaluated in practice, what sorts of questions guide evaluations and the role of beneficiaries in evaluating policies that concern them.

Step 4: Activists' input

Based on their past evaluation of the RSA (conducted for the French Court of Auditors), the group of activists presented their findings. They were guided by the following questions:

- Based on our experience with the RSA, what questions would we want to address in the Court of Auditors' evaluation of the RSA?
- If the hidden dimensions of poverty had been taken into account from the start, what questions should have guided policymakers in developing this policy?
- What questions would be important to ask people who use the RSA in monitoring this policy?

The activists' presentation was followed by a series of clarification questions posed by the academics and practitioners.

Step 4: Academics' input

Next, the group of academics was invited to present their ideas for possible evaluation questions, based on the hidden dimensions of poverty and on their respective research. The academics were asked to respond to the following questions:

- Based on our work/research and if the hidden dimensions of poverty had been taken into account from the beginning, what questions should have guided policy makers in the design of the RSA?
- What questions would be important to ask people who use the RSA in monitoring this policy?

Step 5: The Merging of Knowledge

In peer groups, participants were then asked to critically analyze the inputs of the activists' and academics' groups. The three groups were invited to reflect on the presentations from Steps 3 and 4 to identify commonalities and differences between the two. In particular, they were asked to focus on the following questions:

- Are there elements that overlap between the two contributions?
- Are there elements of each contribution that question us, that we would like to discuss together, to deepen?

The objective of this step was to compare and confront the various elements presented before and to deliberate in order to reach a consensus on the key areas of focus that should be included in the monitoring and evaluation of the policy.

Step 5: Vote

Based on the work conducted in Step 4, participants were asked to vote on the areas of focus identified. The aim was to select the key themes to be further investigated in mixed groups.

Step 6: Co-construction

In this step, members of the three peer groups were mixed into three sub-groups of participants, with each group comprising activists, academics and practitioners. This was possible only because enough trust had been built between the participants. Each sub-group was assigned one of the top three themes that had emerged from the previous step. The task was to gain a deeper understanding of the key issues by bringing in experiential, scientific and action-based knowledge and examining each issue from those three perspectives. After working in the sub-groups, a spokesperson (or two) from each group presented the findings to the others in a plenary session.

Step 7: Reactions and conclusions

Returning to their peer groups, participants were invited to debrief (both on substance and on the process of working in mixed groups) and present their reactions and conclusions to the deliberative exercise.

Step 8: Follow up

Detailed notes were taken throughout the workshop. These – along with a set of conclusions and recommendations emerging from the exercise – were circulated to the peer groups and feedback collected.