

Chapter 4

Identity and inequality: Focus on social groups

The previous chapters have shown that factors beyond an individual's skill or effort, such as place of residence or parents' education, affect income, access to other productive assets, and health and educational status, thus creating inequality between individuals. Yet other characteristics that identify the social group to which an individual belongs, including gender, age, and migrant, indigenous or disability status, also have considerable influence on well-being and economic outcomes. Indeed, an individual's chances in life depend significantly on group ascription and the ways in which both the individual and group interacts with public institutions and the labour market.

It is important to address group inequalities, because they constitute a large component of overall inequalities within countries (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2010). Disadvantaged groups often have lower levels of human capital due to factors such as place of residence, lack of social capital or discrimination, and may receive lesser returns on such investments than other groups. Furthermore, unequal access to resources can affect the well-being of the individuals belonging to disadvantaged groups adversely in comparison to how such group members would fare based on their individual positions or characteristics (Stewart, 2002). As a result, the potential of individuals within these groups to be productive and to participate in all aspects of society is diminished, as is their ability to contribute to, and benefit from, development.

Inequalities across social or population groups – those that are socially embedded and defined in terms of social characteristics such as ethnic background, culture, language, and so on – also tend to be more persistent over time than economic inequalities between individuals (Stewart, 2009). Group inequalities span many dimensions, particularly economic, social, political and cultural, the interactions among which are likely to explain the persistent disadvantages experienced by the members of certain groups. Similar to the case with individuals, the lower levels of human capital usually found among members of disadvantaged groups (social inequality) may lead to lower incomes (economic inequality). Both types of inequality may result in, but at the same time may be caused by, the lack of political power. However, faced with persistent

group inequalities, individuals and families are unlikely to escape poverty because it is difficult to move across groups, such that a higher proportion of families in disadvantaged groups remain deprived over time (Stewart and Langer, 2007). Thus, addressing inequalities faced by disadvantaged and marginalized social groups is not only an imperative, but also a practical entry point to combating inequality in society.

In addition, many individuals belong to more than one disadvantaged group, and inequalities across dimensions often reinforce each another. For example, older, young or indigenous women experience setbacks and marginalization on the basis of their gender, ethnicity and culture, as well as their age. In Bolivia, the probability of a Spanish-speaking woman completing secondary education is 5 percentage points lower compared to a Spanish-speaking man. The probability declines by 14 percentage points for a man belonging to the Quechua people, and by 28 percentage points for a Quechua woman (World Bank, 2013). In India, men from Scheduled Tribes are about four times less likely to have completed secondary education than men who do not belong to Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes, while women from Scheduled Tribes are six times less likely than other women to have done so.¹

This chapter brings into focus some of the disparities that exist across five social and population groups—youth, indigenous peoples, older persons, persons with disabilities and migrants—and also illustrates how such disparities intersect with—and reinforce—one another. Indigenous and ethnic groups generally share a cultural identity—a common history, language and traditions—while young people, older persons and persons with disabilities share a set of common distinctions and concerns related to their age or abilities. Similarly, migrants have a shared, defining experience. Yet, each of these groups faces particular disadvantages and barriers, which preclude the full participation of the individuals within them in social, economic and political life. Lack of participation, at its turn, reinforces the disadvantages they face and limits the opportunities they have to influence their circumstances. The discussion to follow will highlight shared inequalities in poverty, education, employment and health outcomes between these social and population groups with respect to the rest of the population.

I. Inequalities faced by youth²

Youth, having lost the protection afforded to children, but generally not yet viewed as adults, confront structural and cultural barriers to their full

1 Calculations based on data from India's Demographic and Health Survey 2005-06. Available [online] at: <http://www.measuredhs.com/>.

2 The United Nations Secretariat uses the terms youth and young people interchangeably to refer to people between the ages of 15 and 24.

participation in economic, social and political life that, in turn, risk leading to long-term inequalities. In many societies, youth are increasingly—and, in some cases, alarmingly—disadvantaged in terms of relative income, unemployment, working poverty, and other decent work deficits that point to uncertain futures. Many of these problems have been exacerbated by the financial and economic crisis and subsequent austerity measures, so much so that today's youth are seen as an entire generation at risk (ILO, 2013a).

The situation of youth employment poses a host of cumulative long-term challenges ranging from income insecurity to disruptions in family life. Additionally, young people are susceptible to particular health risks and harmful behaviour. Yet, frequently, they lack access to knowledge about issues related to reproductive health, sexuality and mental health.

A. Youth and inequalities in the labour market

One major concern facing many countries is the question of how to integrate youth into the formal labour market and promote equal employment opportunities and outcomes among young people. Even in prosperous times, young people have experienced challenges in accessing and retaining employment, as labour markets have struggled to absorb large populations of youth. In developed countries, secure and regular employment with its associated benefits—such as pensions and social security, which were taken for granted by most of the previous generation—are simply no longer available to new entrants into the labour force, who are forced increasingly to take on temporary or part-time jobs, often at skill levels below their own qualifications. In developing countries, where nearly 90 per cent of the global youth population resides, informal work with low remuneration is increasingly the order of the day, with the exception of a few countries where formal employment has increased through proactive public policy.

Unemployment is a particularly severe problem for youth. Although there is wide variation, rates of unemployment are significantly higher – generally more than double, and often nearly triple – for youth than for adults, in all geographical regions. Youth tend to be ‘last in’ and ‘first out’ – the last to be hired, and the first to be let go. Due to their age, they have less experience, smaller networks, and less information and expertise regarding job searching than prime-aged (aged 25-54) and older workers, such that many youth are disadvantaged in finding new employment once they have been dismissed. The most recent rate of global youth unemployment stood at 12.3 per cent in 2011. That rate is expected to rise to 12.6 per cent in 2013, amounting to more than 73 million young people unemployed (see table IV.1).

Unemployment, particularly prolonged unemployment, during youth can have severe, long-term repercussions on equality. In addition to the immediate effects of lost earnings, skill development and experience, young people who experience unemployment will not recover those losses fully over time; many

will have lower lifetime earnings and fewer skills than had they not encountered unemployment, and will confront unemployment again later in life (Morsy, 2012). Young people's difficulty, in transitioning from school or training into the labour force, and in earning decent wages also hinders their ability to contribute to family income, become independent, establish their own household and plan for child-rearing. Delayed household formation also has broader implications for aggregate demand, in particular for housing and consumer durables associated with home-ownership. It is estimated that the growth in youth unemployment during the economic crisis raised the Gini coefficient considerably in some developed countries, particularly where young workers were most affected by decent work deficits (Morsy, 2012).

Although rates of youth unemployment in developed countries are expected to fall in the coming years, much of the decline is likely to be due to discouraged youth dropping out of the labour market (ILO, 2012c). Already, approximately 6.4 million youth worldwide have grown discouraged and given up on job searching, or extended their education in the hope of riding out the jobs crisis (ILO, 2012b). In OECD countries, one out of every six young persons is neither employed, looking for employment, nor in education or training (ILO, 2013a). Though some youth are not in employment, education or training by choice—or rather, lack of opportunity—many unemployed or idle youth are not developing human capital and are at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion. It is, therefore, not surprising that youth poverty has increased significantly in 19

Table IV.1. Global unemployment and unemployment rates, youth (15-24), adults (25+) and total (15+), 2007-2013

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Youth unemployment (millions)	69.9	70.4	75.6	74.0	72.6	72.9	73.4
Adult unemployment (millions)	99.8	104.4	120.7	120.0	119.7	122.5	128.1
Total unemployment (millions)	169.7	174.8	196.4	194.0	192.3	195.4	201.5
Youth unemployment rate (%)	11.5	11.7	12.7	12.5	12.3	12.4	12.6
Adult unemployment rate (%)	4.0	4.1	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.6
Total unemployment rate (%)	5.4	5.5	6.1	6.0	5.9	5.9	6.0
Ratio of youth-to-adult unemployment rates	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.7

Source: International Labour Organization (2013b), Annex A, Table A1.

OECD countries since the crisis. In Estonia, Spain and Turkey, in particular, an additional 5 per cent of young people fell into poverty between 2007 and 2010. Youth poverty decreased only in Germany, where household income grew in this period and youth unemployment did not rise (OECD, 2013).

A recent report by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) found that the economic impact of the exclusion of youth, not in employment, education or training (NEET) was at least 153 billion euros—or 1.2 per cent of European gross domestic product – in 2011. Such costs relate mainly to public finance as well as to loss of earnings over the long term. Youth with low education levels were three times more likely to become NEET than those with a tertiary education. Youth with an immigrant background as well as those living with disabilities were also significantly more likely than the rest of the population to be unemployed or idle (Eurofound, 2012).

Good academic performance and the ease of students' transition into decent work are dependent in large part on the quality and affordability of educational systems and programmes and their relevance to the changing needs of the labour market. Many young people believe that youth are not being prepared adequately for future employment (Mourshed, Farrell and Barton, 2012; United Nations, 2011a). The skills mismatch in youth labour markets is a persistent problem, as is, increasingly, skills obsolescence brought about by long-term unemployment (ILO, 2013a). Young women, in particular, are often over-educated for the kinds of jobs that are available to them. In many countries, growing levels of educational attainment among young people coexist with high levels of youth unemployment. The social exclusion, the frustration, the unfulfilled expectations and even, the hopelessness, of unemployed and underemployed, educated youth have been linked to recent social unrest in many countries and regions and most prominently, to the protests in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe (ILO, 2012b; World Bank, 2012b; Stiglitz, 2012).

The general lack of effective education-to-employment systems has often led young people to turn to vulnerable jobs and insecure working arrangements, such as contractual, temporary or part-time work, hazardous work, low-productivity jobs, jobs unrelated to their skills, or informal-sector work. Such jobs are, typically, associated with poor pay, poor working conditions, and limited opportunities for skills-development and -advancement. In the Arab Republic of Egypt, youth are twice as likely to work in the informal sector, as are adults between the ages of 35 and 54 (World Bank, 2012b). Similarly, in the European Union, 17 per cent of young workers are in the informal sector compared to 7 per cent of prime-aged workers (aged 25-54) (ILO, 2012c). Part-time employment in the European Union rose faster among youth than adults before, as well as during, the economic crisis. Between the second half of 2008 and 2011, Ireland saw an increase of 20.7 percentage points in part-time employment of youth and Spain an increase of 11.8 percentage points (ILO, 2012b). Such jobs can help youth to integrate into the labour market initially and provide short-term benefits, but can also lead to persistent job insecurity.

In developing countries, where many, including youth, cannot afford to be out of work, the majority of workers are in vulnerable employment, comprising own-account and unpaid family work. Youth, in particular, are often engaged in unpaid work for family businesses or farms. Those who do have paying jobs are more likely than prime-aged workers to be in low-wage jobs. Young people also confront greater challenges in entrepreneurial activities, as they are less likely to qualify for credit and possess fewer skills and less experience (ILO, 2012b). These challenges result in disproportionate levels of poverty in working youth in developing economies across regions. In countries where data are available, youth represent 23.5 per cent of the total working poor, against 18.6 per cent of non-poor workers³ (ILO, 2012b). Agricultural-sector work and low levels of education are highly correlated with youth working poverty. In Africa, data from 24 countries suggest that 49 per cent of young workers live on less than \$1.25 per day, and 73 per cent live on less than \$2 per day. Similarly, another study of 22 African countries showed that 41 per cent of working youth were food insecure, or had not had sufficient food on several occasions over the past year (AfDB and others, 2012).

B. Health risks borne by youth

During the period of adolescence and youth, individuals become susceptible to particular health risks and harmful behaviour, such as early pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, and inter-personal violence. Other potentially risky practices, such as smoking, are also likely to be developed during these years. Yet, youth-friendly services, such as access to relevant information on health and well-being, and adequate health care and social support, are insufficient. For example, just 36 per cent of young men and 24 per cent of young women have sufficient knowledge to protect themselves from contracting HIV (WHO, 2012a).

Worldwide, 40 per cent of all new adult HIV infections are among youth. Among the five million youth living with HIV and AIDS, girls and young women are more affected than males (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2012). Sexual violence also affects a significant proportion of youth, which is particularly worrisome in the context of HIV and AIDS. A multi-country study showed that the younger the woman when she had sexual intercourse for the first time, the greater the likelihood that her sexual initiation was forced (WHO, 2005). In two thirds of the settings surveyed, the proportion of women who described their first sexual encounter as coerced was over 30 per cent if that encounter was reported to have occurred before the age of 15 years, and less than 20 per cent among women who had had their first sexual encounter at ages 15 to 18 years.

Teenage pregnancy is detrimental to the health of both mother and child. It

3 Based on an income poverty line of \$1.25 a day.

also correlates with lower educational attainment and poverty. Complications from pregnancy and childbirth are a leading cause of death among women aged 15 to 19 years in developing countries. Yet, at the global level, more than 10 per cent of all births occur among women aged 15 to 19 years, mainly in developing countries (WHO, 2012a). Inter-personal violence is also a significant cause of youth mortality and disability, particularly among males. An estimated 250,000 homicides occur annually among youth aged 10 to 29 years, representing 41 per cent of the global annual number of homicides (WHO, 2011).

II. Inequalities faced by older persons⁴

Although many older persons around the world are able to participate in all aspects of society and to maintain adequate living standards through retirement pensions, ongoing work or familial support, many others, in both developed and developing countries, confront increasing levels of poverty, poor health and social exclusion. Older persons are disproportionately at risk of inadequate and insecure income, insufficient access to quality health care and other services—such as finance and accessible transportation and housing—and pervasive discrimination on the basis of their age.

A. Older persons and poverty

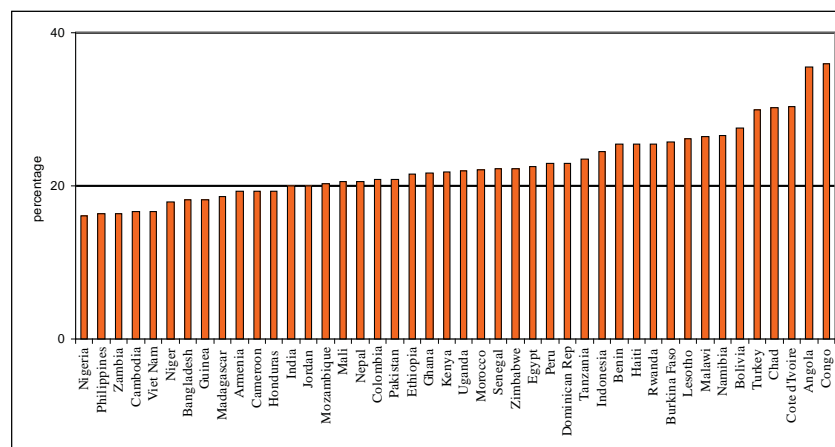
The incidence of poverty among older persons varies significantly among countries and data are not always available. However, in general, in developing countries without well-developed social security systems, older persons are generally less well-off than the rest of the population. Their living standards are also lower, in part because they are more likely to live in rural areas, where poverty is more prevalent.⁵ Figure IV.1 illustrates the percentage of older persons in several developing and emerging economies that are in the bottom wealth quintile, as estimated using DHS surveys. In some countries, households headed by older persons will have more of certain assets than those headed by younger persons, due to accumulation over the life cycle. However, even such older households may lack a regular or secure income, or liquid assets. In 30 out of the 44 countries shown, older persons are poorer than average, based on this indicator.

In many countries of the OECD, however, in the last two decades, older persons have seen greater income gains than other social groups. Still, in 2010, the percentage of older persons living in poverty (defined as having an income below half of the national median income), was above that of the total population

4 The United Nations defines older persons as men and women aged 60 years or over. In many developed countries, the cutoff point of 65 years is used to refer to older persons.

5 The DHS wealth index is calculated with data on household ownership of assets such as televisions and types of access to drinking water.

Figure IV.1. Percentage of older persons in the bottom wealth quintile, late 2000s



Source: Author's calculations based on data from Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS).

Note: The chart shows the percentage of older persons who own an equal or lower amount of wealth per capita as the poorest 20 per cent of the total population.

in only 11 out of 26 countries with data (see Table IV.2). Older women tend to experience higher rates of poverty than older men, in some countries even reaching more than triple men's levels. In addition to gender, household structure is a key determinant of old-age poverty. Among households headed by an older person, single individuals experienced income poverty at a rate of 25 per cent, compared to 9.5 per cent for couples, on average (OECD, 2011).

The extent and degree of poverty and inequality experienced by older persons are generally linked to the presence (or absence) of social protection schemes and the level of benefits they provide (United Nations, 2007; OECD, 2011; Barrientos, 2006). Older persons experience distinct vulnerabilities in income security, yet longer life expectancies and changing family structures—whereby older persons are being cared for by family members less frequently—underscore the fact that the issue is of critical importance. Although, on average, legislated contributory pension programmes cover 40 per cent of the global working-age population, there is significant variation across regions. Effective coverage is lower than legal coverage in all regions, pointing mainly to gaps in programme implementation, or funding (ILO, 2010). Accordingly, less than one out of every five older persons worldwide has public pension coverage (United Nations, 2011a).

In high-income countries, approximately 75 per cent of persons aged 65 years and over benefit from some form of pension, compared to an average of less than

Table IV.2. Income poverty rates for adults aged 65 and over in OECD countries

	65 and older			Total
	Total	Male	Female	
Rep. of Korea	47.2	43.7	49.5	14.9
Australia	35.5	32.5	38.1	14.4
Mexico	27.6	27.2	28.1	20.4
Israel	20.8	19.0	22.3	20.9
Slovenia	16.7	14.7	15.9	9.2
Greece	15.8	14.2	17.1	14.3
United States of America	14.6	12.1	17.5	17.4
Spain	12.5	11.0	13.5	15.4
Austria	11.3	6.9	14.5	8.1
Belgium	11.0	10.9	11.1	9.7
Italy	11.0	7.0	13.8	13.0
Germany	10.5	7.9	12.4	8.8
Portugal	9.9	9.5	10.1	11.4
Finland	9.7	5.0	12.9	7.3
Poland	9.7	11.3	8.3	11.0
Sweden	9.3	4.5	12.5	9.1
United Kingdom	8.6	6.2	10.5	10.0
Denmark	8.0	6.4	9.2	6.0
Estonia	6.7	7.8	5.8	11.7
Norway	5.5	2.1	7.9	7.5
France	5.4	4.1	6.4	7.9
Slovakia	4.3	1.5	6.1	7.8
Czech Republic	3.7	2.3	4.7	5.8
Iceland	3.0	3.5	2.6	6.4
Luxembourg	1.9	2.5	1.5	7.2
Netherlands	1.4	1.1	1.6	7.5

Source: OECD, Income Distribution OECD.Stat database. Available online at: <http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/income-distribution-database.htm>. Accessed in December 2013.

20 per cent of older persons in low-income countries. Standard pension systems cover mainly workers in the formal sector, whereas most of the working-age population in low-income countries are employed in the informal sector. Where contributory social security systems exist, older women are disadvantaged vis-à-vis older men in terms of pension levels and other benefits (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2012). In most countries, women are less likely than men to work in the formal sector, where pension coverage is higher. Additionally, women earn, on average, lower wages and frequently spend less time in the labour force, due mainly to child-rearing and care-giving activities. In some cases, women are disadvantaged further by limited pension entitlements, such as where they may be covered by a husband's or former spouse's pension, or following the death of a husband – despite women's greater life expectancy and lower levels of remarriage (ILO, 2010). When older women receive pension income, it is often used for family expenses, such as school fees and meals (UNFPA and HelpAge International, 2012).

Across all regions, voluntary coverage for self-employed persons extends to just 4 per cent of the working-age population (ILO, 2010). Some developing countries have been establishing, and expanding, social protection programmes, including non-contributory or social pensions, which ensure a minimum level of income to all persons or to those not covered by a contributory system. Such systems can be highly effective in reducing poverty and inequality, especially among older persons belonging to marginalized and disadvantaged social groups.

B. Employment and health inequalities faced by older persons

Universal pensions are important, not only as a matter of social justice, but because older persons face a range of challenges in employment. In many countries, older persons have lower social status and confront widespread, age-based discrimination in hiring, training and retention, as well as high rates of long-term unemployment (defined as unemployment for 12 months or more), which can be found even where their overall levels of unemployment are relatively low (UNFPA and HelpAge International, 2012). In Europe, seven out of ten respondents to a survey believed that the greatest barriers to participation in the labour force by persons aged 55 years or older were: inadequate opportunities to limit working hours gradually, exclusion from workplace training, and employers' negative perceptions of older employees. Moreover, the most pervasive form of age discrimination was reported to be workplace-related, with 21 per cent of respondents having either experienced, or witnessed, age discrimination in the past two years while in the workplace or seeking work (European Commission, Eurobarometer, 2012). Older persons' disproportionately high rates of long-term unemployment may be linked to age-based discrimination. Once unemployed, older persons are less likely to be rehired and, if rehired, are likely to experience greater wage losses (OECD, 2006). Approximately 44 per cent of older workers in the United States had been unemployed for at least one year, in comparison to 21 per cent of the 20- to 24-year-old workers and 12 per cent of workers below age 20 (Kurtzleben, 2012).

Older persons also face multiple barriers to accessing health care, precisely during the stage in life when health care is often most needed. They often confront discriminatory attitudes and receive poor or inadequate treatment, if any. In Europe, evidence exists of age limitations and price inflation in health-insurance policies for older persons (Murphy, 2012). In surveys from developing countries, older persons have reported multiple forms of discrimination in seeking health care, from disrespectful treatment to outright refusal of treatment (Sleap, 2011). In a multi-country survey of older persons, the majority of respondents—63 per cent—found it difficult to access health care when needed (HelpAge International, 2011).

User fees and medication costs, lack of data and investment related to the situation of older persons, location of services, and lack of age-friendly services and structures are some of the other common—and even ubiquitous—factors that perpetuate inequalities faced by older persons. A prominent example is the experience of older persons with HIV. In addition to serving frequently as caregivers to infected younger family members, many older persons themselves have the virus. Yet, statistics on HIV and AIDS are often gathered on persons only up to age 49 or 59. Similarly, older persons are rarely screened for the virus, and programmes on HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment seldom target older populations (United Nations, 2011b). Such failure to consider older persons in relevant research and initiatives is generally based on the mistaken assumption that older persons are unlikely to engage in activities that could transmit the virus. Consequently, older persons may be put at greater risk due to lack of awareness of safe practices and testing or treatment resources.

Access to health care plays a key role in the health outcomes of older persons, particularly those who might be living with disabilities. More than 46 per cent of older people aged 60 and over have disabilities. The prevalence of disabilities among older persons increases with age and geographic location, despite the fact that many of these disabilities are preventable. Older persons in developing countries are more likely to have disabilities than those in developed countries, and older women in both developing and developed countries are more likely than men to have disabilities. For example, visual impairments are three times more prevalent among older persons in developing countries than in developed countries (UNFPA and HelpAge International, 2012).

III. Inequalities faced by persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities are at a disadvantage compared to the general population across several dimensions of social and economic well-being (WHO and World Bank, 2011). This disadvantage is very often the result of a disabling environment: physical and institutional barriers, discrimination and exclusion. Often, persons with disabilities are rendered invisible, or considered to be incapable of participating in society, or even in processes of decision-making

regarding policies that affect them. Yet, such exclusion has costs. For instance, excluding persons with disabilities from the world of work costs societies not only the value of their lost potential productivity but also the expense of providing disability benefits and pensions. One study of ten countries in Asia and Africa estimated that this exclusion might cost countries between 1 and 7 per cent of GDP (Buckup, 2009).

A. Persons with disabilities and poverty

Disability is more common among women, older people and households that are poor, and lower-income countries have a higher prevalence of disability than higher-income countries (WHO and World Bank, 2011). Although few studies have looked at the prevalence of disability among poor households, one such study of 15 developing countries showed that the economic situation of households that had at least one member with a disability was worse than the situation of households without any person with a disability. In 10 out of those 15 countries, households that had at least one member with a disability had significantly lower assets (Mitra, Posarac and Vick, 2011). At the individual level, disability has a two-way relationship with poverty, which creates a vicious circle: disability may increase the risk of poverty, for example, by excluding individuals from education and work, but poverty may also increase the risk of disability, inter alia, through malnutrition or poor living and working conditions (The Lancet, 2009; WHO and World Bank, 2011). It is estimated that 20 per cent of the world's poorest persons have disabilities (Elwan, 1999). At the same time, persons with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty than persons without disabilities. Data from 59 countries surveyed in the WHO World Health Survey (2002-2004), showed that, in lower-income countries, 22.4 per cent of all persons with disabilities were in the poorest wealth quintile compared to 13.3 per cent in the richest quintile (WHO and World Bank, 2011). In a separate study of 18 out of 21 OECD countries with data, working-age people with disabilities showed higher poverty rates (defined as less than 60 per cent of the median-adjusted disposable income) than those without disabilities. On average, across OECD countries, the income of persons with disabilities was 12 per cent lower than the national average and as much as 20 to 30 per cent lower in some countries (OECD, 2009).

B. Persons with disabilities face educational, employment and health inequalities

Most of the evidence suggests that children with disabilities tend to have lower school attendance rates compared to children without disabilities. Data from surveys conducted in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe show that children with disabilities aged from 6 years to 17 years are less likely to start school, or to be enrolled (Mitra, Posarac and Vick, 2011). Similarly, in South Africa, being physically disabled or having some other type of disability has

been positively associated with the likelihood of dropping out of primary and secondary school (Sibanda, 2004). Similarly, a recent study by WHO based on data for 51 developed and developing countries found that primary school completion rates for boys with disabilities were only 51 per cent, compared to 61 per cent for boys without disabilities. The intersecting deprivation determined by gender is evident here as well: the corresponding rates for girls were only 42 per cent for girls with disabilities and 53 per cent for girls without disabilities (UNICEF, 2013).

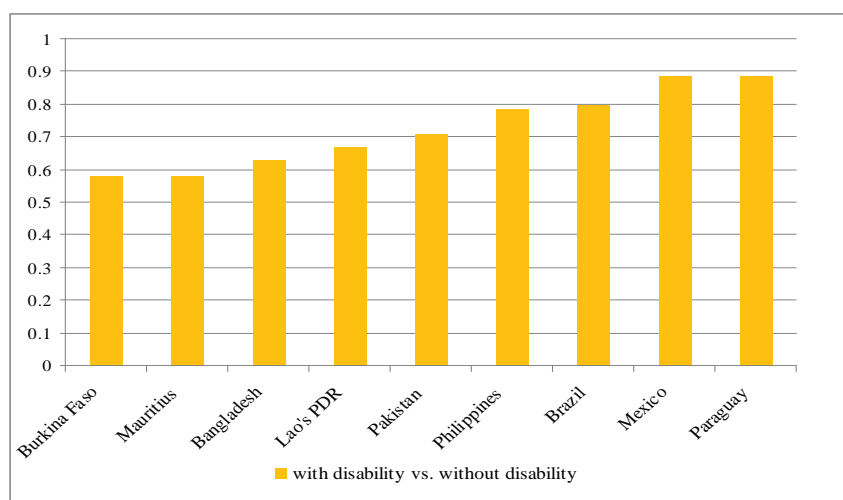
There is also consistent evidence that adults with disabilities have lower educational attainment than their peers without disabilities. In a study of 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe, in 12 of the 15 countries the mean number of years of education completed was significantly lower among persons with disabilities. In 14 of these countries, the percentage of individuals who completed primary education was significantly lower among persons with disabilities (Mitra, Posarac and Vick, 2011).

Regular school systems rarely provide learning opportunities to all students, especially those with disabilities. In many countries, public resources for children with disabilities are directed to segregated schools instead of to mainstream education in one, inclusive system. Yet segregated schools may not be suitable, or even cost-efficient, for students with disabilities. In one country, special schooling cost up to three times more than schooling for children without disabilities (UNICEF, 2013). Resources would be more efficiently used if they were directed towards enabling children—both with and without disabilities—to attend the same age-appropriate classes, with appropriate infrastructure and individually-tailored support, as required.

Persons with disabilities also tend to have lower employment rates than persons without disabilities. *The World Report on Disability 2011* found that, among 51 countries, women with disabilities were 10.3 per cent less likely than women without disabilities to be employed, and that men with disabilities were 12.1 per cent less likely than men without disabilities to be employed (WHO and World Bank, 2011). As shown in figure IV.2, the disability gaps in employment rates were largest in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, smallest in the countries of Latin America, and ranged in between in the countries of Asia. Persons with multiple disabilities suffered the most from the disability gap in employment rates (Mizunoya and Mitra, 2013).

Employment inequalities experienced by people with disabilities are found in both developing and developed countries. In most developed countries, persons with disabilities of working age have an unemployment rate that is at least twice that of persons without disabilities (United Nations 2012a). A study of 27 OECD countries found that 44 per cent of working-age persons with disabilities were in employment and 49 per cent were inactive, while 75 per cent of working-age persons without disabilities were in employment and just 20 per cent were inactive (OECD, 2010b).

Figure IV.2. Ratio of the employment rate of persons with disabilities to the employment rate of persons without disabilities, selected countries



Source: Mizunoya and Mitra (2013).

Note: A ratio below 1 means that persons with disabilities are not integrated in the labour market to the same degree as persons without disabilities.

Not only are people with disabilities less likely to find work than people without disabilities but, worse yet, they have little chance of finding decent work. When persons with disabilities are employed, they are more likely to be underemployed, receive lower earnings and experience higher job insecurity, even in high-income countries (OECD, 2009). In developing countries, many persons with disabilities work in the informal sector, where there is very little job protection and stability (Murray, 2012). Women with disabilities are even less likely to be employed than men with disabilities, and also earn less when they are employed.

Disability gaps in health exist as well. At the household level, there are inequalities in health expenses. On average, households with persons with disabilities report spending a significantly higher proportion of their expenditure on health care (Mitra, Posarac and Vick, 2011). At the individual level, there are significant inequalities between persons with disabilities and the general population in health outcomes and access to health care. Some of these health inequalities result from the fact that certain health conditions that cause disability are associated with the increased risk of specific co-morbidity (Mayeux, 2007; Prince and others, 2007; WHO and World Bank, 2011). Very often, though, these health inequalities are the results of barriers faced by persons with disabilities in accessing effective health-care services, barriers that are not just

physical, environmental, economic and societal in nature, but also the result of neglect, abuse and acts of discrimination committed by caregivers or health-care professionals themselves (Hughes and others, 2012; Jones and others, 2012; WHO, 2012b; WHO and World Bank, 2011).

IV. Inequalities faced by indigenous peoples

In countries and regions (Latin America, Northern America and Oceania) where data disaggregated by indigenous status exist, it is well documented that indigenous peoples face many socioeconomic disadvantages relative to non-indigenous peoples (Hall and Patrinos, 2012). Studies indicate that half of the gap in earnings between indigenous and non-indigenous groups is due to human capital deficits. Lower educational levels, lack of skills or abilities, lower employment rates and poorer health all contribute to higher poverty rates for indigenous groups. The other half of the gap is due to unknown factors, which may represent the impact of discrimination and other social forces, in the labour market (World Bank and IMF, 2011).

A. Indigenous peoples and poverty, educational, employment and health inequalities

Around the world, indigenous peoples are among the poorest groups, accounting for 10 per cent of the world's poor. Moreover, one third of indigenous people worldwide are poor (United Nations, 2009; World Bank and IMF, 2011). In the United States, for example, an indigenous person living on a reservation is four times more likely to live in poverty than an average citizen, and more than one quarter of the indigenous population live below the official poverty line (Hall and Patrinos, 2012). In countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America, poverty rates were between 1.5 and 5.1 times higher among indigenous peoples than in the rest of the population in the mid-2000s (table IV.3). With a few notable exceptions (Chile and Mexico), poverty rates have not improved much among indigenous peoples in Latin American countries, especially in countries with large indigenous populations such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Peru. By contrast, poverty rates have declined rapidly in Asian countries that have experienced rapid economic growth recently (such as China and Viet Nam), and the decline has very often occurred more rapidly among the indigenous than the non-indigenous population (World Bank and IMF, 2011).

Although indigenous traditional knowledge and livelihoods are rarely taken into account, in many countries, indigenous peoples have lower educational outcomes and experience lower employment rates than non-indigenous peoples. Among indigenous peoples, illiteracy levels are higher, school enrolment ratios are lower, school performances are poorer and average years of schooling are far fewer (López, 2009; Macdonald, 2012; World Bank and IMF, 2011; United Nations, 2009; UNESCO, 2010; Hall and Patrinos, 2012). In sub-Saharan Africa,

the literacy rate of some indigenous groups can be as much as four to five times lower than the national rate, as was the case among the Pygmies in the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the Peuhls in Benin in the mid-2000s. In the Central African Republic, gross primary enrolment ratios are only 7 per cent for the Mbororos and 21 per cent for the Pygmies, but reach 73 per cent for non-indigenous groups. The differences persist at the secondary level. In Gabon, the gross primary enrolment ratio is only 4 per cent for Pygmies compared to 80 per cent for non-Pygmies.

As regards employment inequalities, there is ample evidence that indigenous peoples are excluded from the labour force, which reinforces the persistence of their poverty levels (United Nations, 2009; Statistics Canada, 2011). In Australia, the 2006 indigenous unemployment rate of 15.6 per cent was more than three times higher than the rate among the non-indigenous population. Similarly, in New Zealand, the Maori unemployment rate of 7.7 per cent was more than twice the national average of 3.8 per cent (United Nations, 2009).

There are also significant disparities in health status between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Indigenous groups experience disadvantages in terms of both morbidity (prevalence of communicable and non-communicable diseases, malnutrition, suicide and violence) and mortality (United Nations, 2009). For instance, child malnutrition prevalence tends to be worse among indigenous groups than in the rest of the population in countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America. By the mid-2000s, the prevalence of stunting among indigenous children was three to four times higher in Cameroon (53.6 per cent among the Pygmies versus 13 per cent nationally), Gabon (51 per cent among the Pygmies versus 6.7 per cent nationally), Namibia (25.6 per cent among the Sans versus 7.3 per cent nationally), and Mexico (44.3 per cent among the indigenous population versus 14.5 per cent among the non-indigenous population) (Macdonald, 2012).

Indigenous groups tend to experience higher mortality levels than the rest of the population in both developing and developed countries. By the mid-2000s, mortality rates in children under age five were higher than national rates among almost all the indigenous groups analysed by Macdonald (2012). Gaps in life expectancy are also apparent in both developing and developed countries, and differences in life expectancy between indigenous and non-indigenous groups are as great as 20 years in Australia and Nepal (United Nations, 2009). In Latin America, maternal mortality levels are also higher for indigenous peoples, particularly in remote areas. In Ecuador, for instance, the maternal mortality rate of 250 maternal deaths per 100,000 women measured among indigenous peoples living in remote areas was over three times higher than the national rate of 74.3 per 100,000 measured in 2003 (Montenegro and Stephens, 2006).

While indigenous peoples worldwide continue to be among the poorest groups, and tend to suffer from lower educational and poorer health status and greater incidence of discrimination than other groups, no clear differences

Table IV.3. Poverty rates in selected countries, 2002-2008

Country, year	Proportion poor (percentage)		
	Indigenous people (1)	Non-indigenous people (2)	Ratio (3)= (1) / (2)
Sub-Saharan Africa			
Dem. Rep. of the Congo, 2005	84.8	71.7	1.2
Gabon, 2003	70.1	32.7	2.1
Asia			
China, 2002	5.4	3.5	1.5
India, 2004	42.8	22.7	1.9
Lao People's Dem. Rep., 2002	50.6	25.0	2.0
Viet Nam, 2006	52.3	10.3	5.1
Latin America			
Bolivia, 2006	69.3	46.0	1.5
Chile, 2006	15.2	9.1	1.7
Ecuador, 2006	78.0	46.6	1.7
Mexico, 2008	80.6	45.3	1.8
Peru, 2005	62.3	35.0	1.8
Guatemala, 2006	74.8	36.2	2.1
Brazil, 2002	48.0	23.0	2.1

Source: World Bank and International Monetary Fund (2011).

exist in some countries (especially the poorest) between indigenous and non-indigenous groups in terms of such development indicators. Moreover, within some countries, the experiences of different indigenous groups vary, with some indigenous groups showing better development indicators than others. Such variation is evident among the various Mayan peoples in Guatemala and Native American groups in the United States. Sometimes, the performance of some indigenous peoples even exceeds that of the population as a whole. For instance, several Scheduled Tribes in the Northeastern States of India fare better than the population as a whole, in terms of under-five mortality and child stunting prevalence. Similarly, the Aymara of Peru and the Guarani of Bolivia exhibit better levels of under-five mortality, water deprivation, child stunting and literacy than the national population (Macdonald, 2012).

B. Indigenous peoples, inequalities in land rights and environmental challenges

A great number of indigenous peoples live in precarious conditions and are marginalized, often as a result of forced displacement and the impacts of globalization and climate change, leading to serious inequalities and poverty (United Nations, 2009). Indigenous peoples retain deep ties to their ancestral lands and territories and the resources these contain. Land, and resources such as water, timber and wildlife, have provided for the subsistence and development of indigenous groups, which have used their traditional knowledge and expertise to manage their territories' resources efficiently and sustainably. Yet indigenous peoples face environmental challenges on multiple fronts that increase their social marginalization and disadvantage.

Dispossession of indigenous people's traditional lands and territories—which are often sources of valuable natural resources, such as oil and minerals—by both public and private entities has generated tensions over land tenure and access to productive land in many countries, adversely affecting the economic and socio-cultural stability of indigenous peoples. Many members of Scheduled Tribes in India have, for example, been forced to migrate to cities or nearby areas (8.5 million people between 1951 and 1990) and work as construction workers or agricultural labourers, as they have lost access to their traditional lands (Das and others, 2012).

Indigenous peoples have found that many development policies and projects fail to consult them, encroach on their land rights and—either directly or indirectly—harm their traditional production methods. Large-scale and resource-intensive development projects can not only result in eviction and loss of traditional territories and land, but also generate challenges related to migration and resettlement, depletion of resources necessary for physical and cultural survival, pollution and destruction of the traditional environment, social and community disorganization and, in some cases, harassment and violence. Critical to the prosperity—and even survival—of indigenous culture is the ability

of indigenous peoples to own and manage their lands, territories and resources according to their collective rights. Responding to appeals from indigenous peoples, and in line with recent international instruments, several countries, particularly in Latin America, have enacted legal reforms to recognize the rights of indigenous peoples over the protection and control of their territories, lands and resources. However, implementation of reforms such as land titling is widely lagging and uneven.

Indigenous peoples are also particularly at risk from the impacts of climate change, due to their dependence on the environment and its resources. Thus, the thawing permafrost in the Arctic region, the rising sea levels in the Pacific Islands region, and the frequent droughts in the semi-arid lands of sub-Saharan Africa are destroying traditional food sources and habitats (vegetation, livestock and fish stocks), and forcing indigenous people in these regions to relocate to other territories, making them environmental refugees.

V. Inequalities faced by migrants

Migration is a forceful symbol of inequality, whether in terms of income, labour market opportunities, access to social services, security or lifestyle. Millions of people move each year, within their countries or across borders, seeking to improve their situation and reduce the gap they perceive between their position and that of people in other, often wealthier, places. Many of these migrants may end up better off than they would have been if they had not moved. Nevertheless, migration also carries significant risks and costs and its outcomes are dependent on a number of contextual factors. Poor access by immigrants to good education and health care, lack of political voice, work in the informal sector, immigration policies as well as deep-rooted social, racial, ethnic and gender barriers often limit both the opportunities available to them and the outcomes of their move. While many immigrants do gain from moving, they are often disadvantaged in comparison to individuals born in the regions or countries of destination.

A. Inequalities and trade-offs: migrants and those who stay behind

Migration constitutes an important income-diversification strategy and can play an important role in reducing poverty and improving the livelihoods of those who move. On average, migrants are economically better off than those who do not migrate. For instance, the income of foreign-born persons in OECD countries is higher than income per capita in their countries of origin, with the differences being particularly large among those coming from the least developed countries⁶ (Clemens and Prichett, 2008). A comparison of workers with similar characteristics (e.g. same country of birth, country of education, years of education, work experience) in and outside of the United States indicates that foreign-born workers

6 GDP per capita at PPP (constant 2000 \$).

in the United States earn four times as much as they would have in their countries of origin (Clemens, Montenegro and Prichett, 2008). Individuals and families who move from one developing country to another, and even internal migrants, also tend to access better opportunities, earn higher salaries and are able to diversify their sources of livelihood (UNDP, 2009). An analysis of Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data shows that internal migrants work more often in skilled, non-manual positions than non-migrants in a majority of developing countries with data.⁷ The migrant/non-migrant gap is highly significant in most of these countries, even after adjusting for differences in age, childhood residence (urban-rural) and current residence (United Nations, 2008).

A better-paid job is not the only reason for migrating. Individuals and families also move in order to give their children a better education, get access to better health care and other services, or become more independent and empowered. Migration can also be triggered by displacement or loss of livelihood in the place of origin. Oftentimes, it enhances educational attainment and has a positive impact on children's health; enrolment rates are higher and child mortality is lower among children of immigrants in OECD countries than in countries of origin, on average, and also among internal migrants in the majority of developing countries (Ortega, 2009; Harttgen and Klasen, 2009). Nevertheless, improvements in education or health are not as large as those in income. Even when immigrants gain economically, poor access to services may hinder their human development and inhibit well-being.

Migration has costs and carries risk. Financially, travel expenses, official fees and documents and settlement costs typify a journey that can, at times, last for years (UNDP, 2009; De Haas, 2006; Papadopoulou, 2008). In addition, migration often involves separation from family members. While individual migrants and their families often benefit economically from the move, children and other family members can be affected adversely in various ways (Cortes, 2008; Rossi, 2008).

Overall, the risks that migration entails, as well as its outcomes, are distributed unevenly and affected greatly by the conditions under which people move. Those who are forced to move by conflict, insecurity or desperation, or who move using irregular channels, have less choice than those who move freely or through regular channels in search of better opportunities. In general, moving involves trade-offs: people who migrate gain in some dimensions of well-being and lose in others. Moving may affect material well-being positively, yet migrants often face hostility and discrimination and lose civic and electoral rights. Moving can empower women and youth by allowing them to participate in the labour market and gain autonomy, even though it involves separation

⁷ Internal migrant women, defined as those who moved during the six years preceding the interview, were more likely to work in skilled, non-manual occupations in 29 out of 42 developing countries with data available in the early to mid-2000s, while internal migrant men were likelier to work in more skilled jobs in 24 out of 27 countries with data.

from family and friends. Yet, in many cases, social and policy barriers curtail the gains from migration, including economic gains.

B. Disparities between migrants and natives of the regions or countries of destination

Disadvantages experienced by immigrants, in the area or country of destination, are often reflected in enduring disparities between them and those born in receiving areas (natives). Information from developed countries shows that international migrants experience higher unemployment rates and, when they are employed, work more often in precarious and informal jobs and have lower income than natives, even at comparable levels of education. Education does not grant equal treatment to immigrants in the economy and the labour market. In the European Union, the share of foreign-born workers with higher education working in low- and middle-skilled jobs (36 per cent), is almost double that of natives (19 per cent) (European Commission, 2011). Over-qualification relative to actual employment is observed even among immigrants who have been in the European Union for 10 years or longer. Similarly, in the United States, the proportion of international immigrants with higher education is larger than that of natives, yet immigrants earn lower salaries and work less often in managerial and other highly skilled positions.⁸ In Canada, over-qualification or *brain waste* has been estimated to drain \$1.7 billion a year from the economy (Reitz, 2005). One problem is that the skills and credentials earned abroad often go unrecognized. Poor host-country language skills, a provisional or irregular legal status, and discrimination are other factors that influence the inequalities observed. Discrimination and other social barriers are deeply entrenched through social and cultural norms and affect internal migrants as well. In many developing countries, for instance, uneducated migrants from rural to urban areas often fare worse in the labour market than other urban residents, and are treated as outsiders (UNDP, 2009).

As a result of these disadvantages, immigrants are at a higher risk of poverty and exclusion than natives. In addition, many immigrants have limited or no access to social protection, partly because they work more often in informal jobs and under non-standard contracts. Many countries restrict access by temporary immigrants to unemployment benefits, health care and various social transfers, even when they work in the formal economy (UNDP, 2009). While 20 per cent of European Union natives are at risk of poverty or exclusion, the proportion is 35 per cent among those born outside the European Union (European Commission, 2011). In the United States, the percentage of persons below the national poverty

⁸ The proportion of families earning \$75,000 per year or over was 41.5 per cent for those headed by a native-born person and 31.5 per cent for those headed by a foreign-born (United States Census Bureau, 2012 Statistical Abstract, Population: Native and Foreign-Born Population. Available [online] at: http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/population/native_and_foreign-born_populations.html. Accessed on 14 March 2013).

line was 13.5 among native-born persons and 19.0 among foreign-born persons in 2009 (United States Census Bureau, 2012).

Inequalities often affect immigrants who arrived as children and are even inherited by those born in the area or country of destination (the second generation). Most evidence indicates that children of immigrants do better than their parents in terms of education, labour-market situation and income, but they do not catch up fully to children with no immigrant background. While their educational attainment differs greatly by country, children in the second generation are generally at greater risk than other children of dropping out of school before completing secondary education, and often perform less well than other students (European Commission, 2011; OECD, 2012). Their disadvantage is due, in part, to their socioeconomic background. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those with an immigrant background, tend to concentrate in poor neighbourhoods and under-resourced schools that, for example, suffer from low teacher-to-student ratios. However, significant differences remain after controlling for parental education, occupation, household living standards and other characteristics. For instance, reading outcomes at age 15 are lower among the second generation in 21 out of 27 OECD countries with data, even after accounting for socioeconomic characteristics (OECD, 2012). Countries with educational systems that separate students according to performance at an early age, such as Germany, or those in which there is strong residential segregation and a high concentration of disadvantaged students, have the biggest gaps in school performance.

In the labour market, second-generation youth suffer from higher levels of unemployment than workers with no immigrant background, even at similar levels of education (European Commission, 2011). For the employed, differences in wage and occupation are small and, for some groups, these tend to disappear as workers age, suggesting that the greatest hurdle for children of migrants is to get a foothold in the labour market. Limited access to employment-related networks, and discrimination, particularly against ethnic minorities, are some of the structural obstacles found by the second generation in accessing employment. Even though many countries have enacted anti-discrimination legislation, limited compliance and lack of awareness curtail its effectiveness (Lessard-Phillips and others, 2012). Countries where the educational system provides extended vocational training options, and those in which labour unions and employers are actively engaged in integrating minorities, have done better in reducing the risk of unemployment among second-generation youth (Liebig and Schröder, 2010; Heath, Rethon and Kilpi, 2008).

VI. Conclusion

The above sections have described how diverse social groups—which share an identity and certain distinct characteristics—experience similar disadvantages,

in particular in the realms of income, education, employment and health. They confront barriers that prevent them from fulfilling their potential and participating fully in society; they face exclusion and are considerably less likely to enjoy the fruits of development. They are denied opportunities, often branded by stereotype and stigma, and discriminated against. Lack of participation perpetuates the disadvantages they experience and their ability to influence their circumstances. The persistence of such barriers and disadvantages across generations leads to broad inequality traps.

The chapter also highlighted how inequalities experienced by social groups do not occur in isolation, but rather, tend to overlap across key domains of opportunity. For example, good-quality education accessible to all young people – especially those who are indigenous or have disabilities – promotes their health literacy and the likelihood that they will engage in healthy behaviour, develops the skills needed to attain decent work and wages eventually, and builds their long-term awareness of citizenship and the importance of participating in society. At the same time, good health enables individuals to perform well in school and in jobs or traditional livelihoods, to continue to work into old age, and to participate in family and community life. Both successes and gaps in such domains are, therefore, interconnected. Yet, it is in this way that manifestations of inequalities in each of these areas intersect and, thereby, persist.

In charting the course for the future United Nations development agenda, the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 agenda called for reaching excluded groups: “Leave no one behind”, it advised; “We should ensure that no person—regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status—is denied universal human rights and basic economic opportunities.” Addressing inequalities between social groups is crucial in and of itself, but it is also necessary for social cohesion, sustainable economic growth, political stability, and development processes in general.

Enhancing social inclusion is a long-term process, particularly when inequalities are rooted in historical and cultural norms but, as Chapter 5 will discuss, it can be done, namely, by expanding opportunities, improving abilities and according dignity. Although each social group may face particular challenges, and the needs of these groups may be prioritized differently, overcoming group-based inequalities requires a policy approach that goes beyond piecemeal, group-specific measures. As Chapter 5 will highlight, policies to address the negative impacts of inequalities on particular social groups need to emphasize the empowerment of all members of society in building human and social capital. They must focus on developing inclusive institutions and expanding access to basic services, and on ensuring that the services provided address the needs of all social and cultural groups in society effectively. Policies must also be based on the clear and thorough understanding of the social, political and cultural norms at work in creating positions of disadvantage in the first place, to ensure that the root causes of discrimination and social, political, cultural and economic exclusion are addressed.

