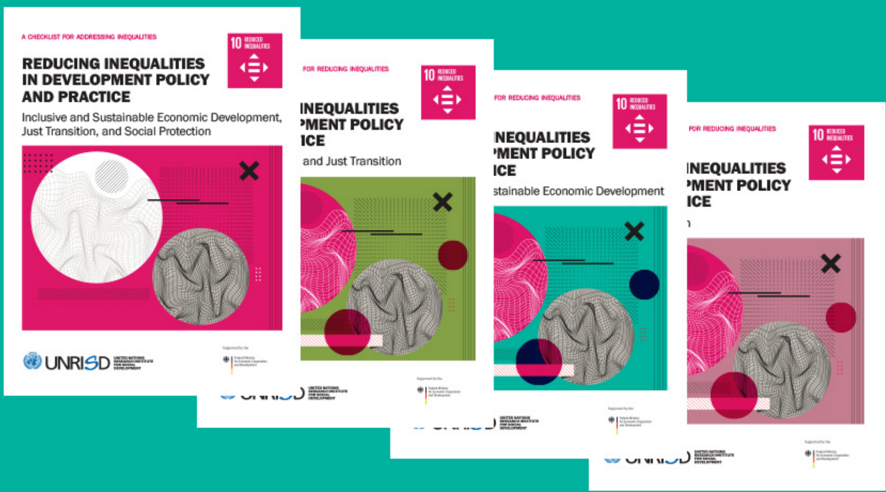
SPOTLIGHT TRANSLATING RESEARCH TO POLICY AND PRACTICE

Sectoral Guidance Notes for Reducing Inequalities: Reducing Inequalities in Development Policy and Practice



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

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With support from GIZ, the UNRISD Bonn office published three policy guidance notes on how to address inequalities in policies and programmatic interventions targeting climate change and just transitions, social protection, and sustainable and inclusive economic development.

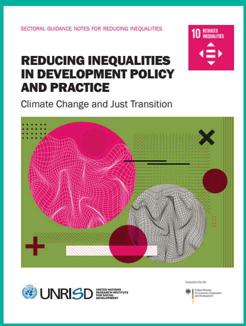
The guidance notes offer comprehensive advice on integrating inequalities into the project cycle, covering planning, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Their goal is to assist development cooperation staff from government, the UN or NGOs in headquarters and country offices in adopting an approach that systematically addresses inequalities and is intersectional in decision-making, planning and project implementation.

Addressing Inequalities Across Three Dimensions

Inclusive economic development
Economic growth alone is insufficient to reduce inequality or alleviate poverty. Inclusive economic development emphasizes equitable access to opportunities, particularly for marginalized groups. The guidelines advocate for policies that dismantle

structural barriers and promote employment in high-productivity sectors, green industries and the Social and Solidarity Economy. Redistributive measures, such as progressive taxation and investment in the care economy, play a pivotal role in creating inclusive economies that leave no one behind.

Social protection
Social protection policies, encompassing social insurance, assistance and labour market initiatives, are vital tools for reducing inequalities. By safeguarding individuals against economic shocks and life cycle vulnerabilities, these policies ensure access to essential services like health care and education. The guidance notes highlight the transformative potential of social protection, especially when combined with broader interventions such as fiscal policies, market regulation and support for rural livelihoods.



Climate change and just transition
Climate change exacerbates existing inequalities, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations and low-income countries. The concept of a just transition—centred on justice and equity—seeks to ensure that the shift to sustainable, low-carbon economies benefits all. Integrating climate considerations into social protection systems and inclusive development strategies is essential to mitigate these impacts while fostering green growth. Investments in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and public transport not only decarbonize economies but also create opportunities for underserved communities.

Core principles for addressing inequalities

The guidance notes propose a cross-sectoral approach based on:

- **General principles:** Policies must explicitly address prevailing inequalities and prioritize the needs of the most disadvantaged, aiming to reduce gaps in income and opportunity.
- **Political economy considerations:** Strategies should analyse power dynamics, counter vested interests and promote transparency, inclusivity and accountability.
- **Policy framing:** Rights-based frameworks should underpin initiatives, empowering citizens and ensuring meaningful participation in decision-making. Intersectionality must guide policy design to tackle interconnected challenges holistically.

Breaking Down Silos: Interlinkages Across Dimensions
The guidance notes emphasize the interconnections between climate change, social protection and economic development. For example, climate adaptation policies that incorporate social protection measures can enhance resilience in vulnerable communities. Similarly, inclusive economic development strategies that prioritize low-carbon sectors can simultaneously address inequality and environmental sustainability.

Building Capacity
The UNRISD guidelines serve as a tool kit for policy makers, development organizations and governments, facilitating the application of systematic, intersectional approaches to inequality reduction. By embedding these principles into the planning, implementation and monitoring of development interventions, stakeholders can advance social justice and sustainable development, fostering a future where no one is left behind. The imperative is clear: addressing inequalities across social, economic and environmental domains is not only a moral obligation but also a strategic necessity for a resilient and inclusive world.