



**SOCIAL JUSTICE
AND INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS**
A Reflection

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What do we mean by ‘social justice?’

- *Equal rights and equal dignity*
- *Realization of civic, social and economic rights*
- *A vision of the future in which the basic needs of people are met*
- *A more equitable distribution of power and opportunity*



What do we mean by ‘social justice?’

- *Redress of structural injustices*
- *Empowering marginalized groups to advocate and defend their interests*
- *‘Not just giving starving people fish, or teaching them how to fish, but changing the terms of trade for fish’*



What do we mean by ‘social justice?’

- *‘The biggest enemy of social justice is charity’*
- *Social justice requires action at a societal level by many stakeholders*
- *‘Doing good is different from changing things’... ‘and justice needs change’*



What do we mean by ‘social justice?’

- *Changing power relationships between citizens, government, business and civil society*
- *Changing at source the causes of social inequities*
- *Taking risks, testing innovative solutions for systems change*



What do we mean by ‘social justice?’

- *Bringing stakeholders together to understand their role in an unjust system*
- *Transforming the people who are part of the problem to become part of the solution*
- *Access to assets and capabilities to reverse poverty and injustice*



Synergos on social justice

- *Social justice – a more just and equitable society – is a keystone Synergos value*
- *The poor should have access to basic services and economic opportunities*
- *Citizens should be able to exercise their rights, to influence public policy and have equitable access to public resources*
- *All should be treated with dignity and respect*



Synergos on social justice

- *The poor must have a significant role in determining their future*
- *Systemic change requires that the poor work in meaningful partnerships with other citizens, institutions and sectors*
- *We work for inclusive partnerships to address the root causes of poverty*



Systems change requires inclusive partnerships

- *A wider, more inclusive notion of partnerships is needed, based on:*
 - *Public accountability*
 - *Citizen participation*
 - *Equity/fairness*
 - *Transparency and good governance*
 - *Power-sharing between sectors*



Issues and questions about partnerships

- *Partnerships are not by themselves a solution to poverty and inequity*
 - *How should social justice inform our pursuit of inclusive partnerships?*
 - *How can we avoid top-down, ‘off the shelf,’ or technocratic partnerships?*
 - *What would an ‘inclusive partnership’ look like?*



Issues and questions about partnerships

- *Inclusive partnerships must give real voice and power to the poor and excluded*
 - *How do we deal with power imbalances and ‘level the playing field?’*
 - *How can we strengthen the capabilities of the poor to engage effectively in partnerships?*
 - *What are these capabilities?*



Issues and questions about partnerships

- *Partnerships must contend with deep-seated patterns of distrust, arrogance or indifference*
 - *How can we surface interdependence and nurture trust?*
 - *How can we build social capital and shared purpose?*
 - *How do we establish mutual accountability?*



Issues and questions about partnerships

- *To be effective in partnerships, the poor need to be organized, citizen organizations need to be strengthened, and civil society groups must collaborate among themselves*
 - *How can we strengthen pro-poor organizations, movements and leadership to act powerfully in partnerships?*



Issues and questions about partnerships

- *Partnerships are prone to reproduce the pathologies of the dominant development aid system*
 - *How could we democratize development partnerships?*
 - *What kind of partnerships could tackle major structural barriers like unfair trade, debt, corruption, gender injustice, social exclusion based on race, ethnicity, etc.?*



Issues and questions about partnerships

- *Many 'public-private partnerships' are premised on the promise of market-based solutions*
 - *How can we achieve maximum gain for the poor from market-based partnership approaches?*
 - *How can we avoid a market fundamentalist drive for the privatization of public goods?*



Issues and questions about partnerships

- *Dominant partnership models and methodologies are imbalanced in favour of the North*
 - *How can we build on indigenous knowledge, cultures, skills, innovations and leadership in the South?*



Issues and questions about partnerships

- *Partnerships may risk the silencing or co-optation of the poor*
 - *How can we protect the space for debate, dissent and advocacy on behalf of the poor?*
 - *How can we manage conflict in partnerships and harness the creative potential of conflicting views and interests?*



Issues and questions about partnerships

- *Systems change and development are complex, nonlinear, long-term processes – there are no easy breakthrough solutions*
 - *How can we mediate between short-term project cycles and long-term systems change?*
 - *How can we frame achievable outcomes that will reasonably assure long-term impact?*



Issues and questions about partnerships

- *Partnership-building is more art than science* –
it must contend with a cycle of advances and setbacks, a constantly changing environment, and a steep learning curve
 - *What innovative tools for quantitative and qualitative evaluation will be needed?*
 - *What new capacities for learning and knowledge sharing will be required?*

