

Annex I: Evidence table

What do we know about the effects of social development on human development outcomes? The table below organises the research and evidence included in this guide into four human development sectors – health; sexual and reproductive health (SRH); education; and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) – and five social development issues (human rights, accountability, gender inequality, age and social exclusion).

Limitations of the evidence base

Overall, the size and quality of the evidence on social development and human development is rigorous and reliable in the health and SRH sectors, but less so in education and WASH. There are several systematic reviews in health and education, which provide robust conclusions.

The human rights evidence base for these issues has a disproportionate focus on SRH, reflecting the politicisation of this issue. SRH is very closely linked to gender inequality. The evidence on social development issues is generally heavily weighted towards gender inequality.

Evidence on age-related issues, including children, adolescents and older people, focuses almost exclusively on health and SRH; there is little to no rigorous evidence on how age affects education or WASH. Disability, included here under social exclusion, is poorly evidenced and hardly visible in some sectors, such as sexual and reproductive health. Much of the literature on disability is policy-oriented, advocacy-based, or secondary, and does not provide any evidence.

The evidence base is weighted towards easily measurable impacts and the prevalence of particular issues. There is much less evidence on power relations, how to shift inequalities, or addressing cultural norms.

Almost all of the literature included here focuses on sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Strength of the evidence base: how well studied are the links between social development issues and human development outcomes?					
Human development outcome					
		Health	Sexual and reproductive health	Education	Water, sanitation and hygiene
Social development factor	Human rights	(6) (8) (16) (20)	(16) (27) (29) (34) (35)	(8) (29)	(21)
	Accountability	(4) (12) (33)	(34) (35)	(10) (12) (24)	(10) (12)
	Gender inequality	(1) (3) (5) (7) (8) (9) (11) (14) (19) (25) (30)	(1) (2) (3) (25) (27) (28) (34)	(7) (8) (9) (13) (29) (31)	(8) (9) (21)
	Age	(2) (5) (17) (20) (27) (30) (32)	(2) (22) (27) (32)	(29) (32)	
	Social exclusion	(5) (7) (16) (20) (23)		(18) (31)	(15) (26) (33)

Each number in the table refers to a study listed on the following pages. More numbers in each cell indicate more available evidence in the papers listed in this guide; fewer numbers, or blank spaces, indicate a lack of evidence in these papers.

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Key: type of research

[P&E] Primary and Empirical
[EXP] Experimental
[OBS] Observational

[S] Secondary
[SR] Systematic Review
[OR] Other Review

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