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# Influence of regional, national and sub-national HDRs

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# Abstract

This review highlights some achievements by regional, national and sub-national Human development Reports (HDRs) in influencing policy debate. Examining a sample of regional, national and sub-national HDRs released over the past 18 years, one concludes that several HDRs influenced the application of the human development concept and measurement to policy analysis at the national level. For the purpose of this exercise, few typologies of HDR influence have been identified, such as the national application of the human development paradigm; the contribution to the human development debate on specific themes; the development of national capacity for policy formulation and assessment; the revision of national policies and budget allocations according to human development priorities; extensive media attention generated by some reports; and the introduction of human development materials in national education curricula in developing countries. The paper dedicates a section to each category, providing examples from HDRs to illustrate the type of influence.

Keywords: National Human Development Reports, Influence, Policy, Capacity Development

JEL classification: Y3, B59, H50

The Human Development Research Paper (HDRP) Series is a medium for sharing recent research commissioned to inform the global Human Development Report, which is published annually and further research in the field of human development. The HDRP Series is a quick-disseminating, informal publication whose titles could subsequently be revised for publication as articles in professional journals or chapters in books. The authors include leading academics and practitioners from around the world, as well as UNDP researchers. The findings, interpretations and conclusions are strictly those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of UNDP or United Nations Member States. Moreover, the data may not be consistent with that presented in Human Development Reports.

## Introduction

Human Development Reports (HDRs) are intended as dynamic advocacy tools to measure progress involving processes of broad participation and active engagement within countries and across regions. They are designed to bring together different stakeholders and groups of people to debate and articulate development priorities, consider sensitive development issues, as well as to strengthen societal capacities to use and produce data and analysis.

**Regional HDRs** are instruments for assessing human progress in a set of neighbouring countries with common human development challenges and for promoting regional partnerships for influencing change. **National HDRs** have the potential to influence the national policy debate, placing human development at the forefront of the national political agenda and reflecting people's priorities through the engagement of national partners and the identification of inequities. **Sub-national HDRs** are focused on sub-national areas, where participatory approaches are more revealing and human development analysis can be more directly linked to the policy process.

Since 1992, when the first national HDR was published in Bangladesh, more than 650 national and sub-national HDRs, and 37 Regional HDRs, have been produced. They have brought to light disparities and broadened policy discussions by bringing in traditionally excluded perspectives (e.g. those of women, the poor, ethnic minorities, people living with HIV/AIDS or with disabilities).

HDRs are uneven in quality and their contributions to national debate, policy making and action, as well as their ability to translate the complexities of the human development approach in the national context, vary considerably with topic, timeliness and quality. Many national and

international stakeholders contribute to policy making in developing countries; the research identified good practices based on reports that were recognised as adding value to the development debate in their country:

- The report is focused on critical/sensitive development issues, relevant to the country or regional context, and it is presented in a timely way to contribute to public debates;
- The report preparation engages key stakeholders, as relevant to the theme addressed in the report and reflects on their diverse concerns;
- The report presents convincing data and perspectives, based on rigorous analysis and sound methodologies, and it offers information which would not be otherwise available.

In many countries, the regular publication of national HDRs has facilitated the introduction of the human development approach in public discourse, informing governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and establishing the reputation of the reports as an authoritative and independent source. The nature of HDR influence will differ from country to country, and from report to report. The same report can be relevant at different phases of the policy process. For example, eight NHDRs were published in Guatemala between 1998 and 2008. They have become a reference instrument for national development debates, as recognized by the UNDP-EO (2006) *Evaluation of the National Human Development Report System*.<sup>1</sup> The NHDR series has had substantive impact on public awareness and they are widely used by civil society organisations, as confirmed by the number of references to NHDRs in their programmes and advocacy campaigns. The results have been uneven in terms of influencing UN programmes and government policies. For example, the director of the 2002 report (women and health)

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<sup>1</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/NHDR-main-report.pdf>

participated in the health law debate in the Congress. On the other hand, the Guatemala HDR2005 analysis of the multi-ethnic stratification of society was rejected by the Government, for having been developed without its participation and for using outdated statistics.

Acknowledging that one type of influence can trigger or be based on another, this review has summarised key examples in terms of:<sup>2</sup>

1. Adaptation and evolution of the human development approach;
2. National applications of human development measurement;
3. Contribution to capacity development;
4. Revision of national policies and fund allocations to reflect human development priorities and the needs of the poorest and excluded groups;
5. Prominent media coverage on human development issues;
6. Establishment of national human development networks and people-centred curricula.

## **1. Adaptation and evolution of the human development approach in the national and regional context**

The strength of National and Regional HDRs has been to bring life and additional credibility to the human development approach by adapting analytical and methodological tools to local circumstances. In many developing countries, mostly with the support of UNDP, prominent national scholars and thinkers have been engaged in the application of the human development paradigm to local development challenges. If the global HDR must maintain a degree of

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<sup>2</sup> All cited reports are listed with their full titles, themes, and areas of influence at the end of the paper.

generality in its analysis and policy recommendations, regional, national and even sub-national HDRs can focus on key issue that trigger or obstruct people's freedoms in a given state or region, identify local patterns of inequality and exclusion, and ultimately propose specific and concrete policy options based on this analysis.

These reports have contributed to move the frontiers of human development concepts and measures, while making its definition meaningful in developing countries' debates. The most convincing innovations have guided the formulation of national human development policies; and sometimes they crossed national borders and were replicated elsewhere. This section will present few examples of regional and national HDRs which have advanced the application of the human development approach in their respective domains.

The Dominican Republic HDR2008 recognised that social, economic and institutional inequalities in the country conditioned the enlargement of people's opportunities to one's individual or personal affiliation. Beyond resource allocation, power relations were identified as one of main causes of the perpetuation of inequalities. The first chapter of the report is entirely dedicated to the conceptual definition of the linkages between power, access to opportunities and expansion of capabilities, with a focus on the individual and collective spheres of human development. The analysis was supported by the introduction of a human empowerment index composed of two sub-indices (one for individual and one for collective empowerment) covering 52 indicators measuring social, political and economic empowerment including in terms of health and ICT. The index was disaggregated at the regional and district level to identify areas which lacked access to power and decision making. The main message of the report was "enhancing human development means changing the power structures", which was translated



into clear policy recommendations in terms of decentralisation, local communities' control over natural resources, access to information and other initiatives to strengthen the capacity of the poor to take part in national debates. At the time this paper was written, the NHDR team was cooperating with the Dominican Republic central and local governments for the preparation of sub-national human development reports as vehicles to broaden participation in policy debates.

HDRs have utilised the human development approach to demonstrate the multiple facets of national development challenges. For example, the Mongolia HDR2003 analysed how topography, climate and geography can lead to striking development inequalities. It developed an HDI by urban and rural residency, and by provinces and cities. The report's recommendations were incorporated in the Mongolia State Population Development Policy, which led to increased support to regional centres and the promotion of intensive livestock herding. The Mongolia HDR2007 introduced the "poverty likelihood ratio" to capture the link between poverty and employment by comparing the difference in welfare of households headed by formal sector employees and households headed by informal/agricultural workers. Based on this analysis, the National Statistics Office approved new terms and definitions of labour statistics in June 2009. Following the report, an amendment of the Employment Promotion Law was prepared and the Parliament of Mongolia approved a Law on Vocational Training in May 2009.

Focusing on local circumstances, the approach utilized for the Bankura District HDR2007 (India) allowed the identification of new parameters to understand starvation in the district. The Report uses Natural Resource Database Management Systems (GIS based software) for mapping social service delivery institutions in underdeveloped areas. Instead of disaggregating the HDI at the district level, which would have raised issues of data reliability, the report adopted the

concept of Human Development Radar, as in Figure 1. The HD Radar measures 8 human development indicators to compare attainments in different areas.<sup>3</sup> Special surveys were conducted for indicators for which data is not collected in a routine manner such as migration,

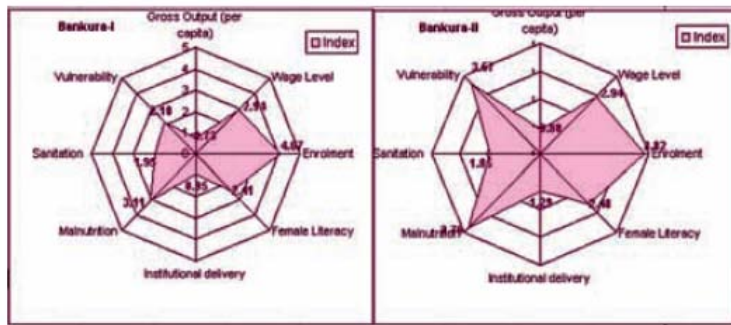


Figure 1 Human Development Radar

the status of the Sabar Community (a tribe group) and food security. The concept of an exchange rate index- “labour vis-à-vis rice”<sup>4</sup> was applied to understand the reasons for starvation and a time series was

presented. Based on the analysis, the report recommended an area-based approach for effectively reaching out to the poor instead of trying to identify individual households that are below the poverty line.

Concerned with the high inequality in the country and the region, the Mexico HDR2002 designed an HDI which is sensitive to inequalities in income, education and health. The index can consider development changes if equality in only one dimension increases and the total human development gain from improvement among a target group of individuals. In later applications, municipal data allowed to decomposition of inequality indices to identify sources and regions contributing to overall HDI inequality. Finally, using projections based on both census and income-expenditure surveys data, the HDI was disaggregated at the household and individual level. The inequality adjusted index was debated at prominent universities in Mexico

<sup>3</sup> The indicators are: per capita gross output, wage level, enrolment, institutional delivery, malnutrition, sanitation coverage, female literary rate and vulnerability; for more information see section 1.4 of the report, pages 9-14.

<sup>4</sup> Sen (1982)

and in the media. Other innovations introduced by the Mexico HDR Team to enhance human development measurement include:

- Adjusting the HDI for internal migration, local crime and violence against women;
- Redistributing oil revenues from producing regions to the rest of the country following national redistribution policy patterns, instead of computing oil revenues in the producing regions' GDP as per official statistics, to obtain a better picture of available resources in each region.<sup>5</sup>

In some cases, the adaptation of the human development approach meant a focus on excluded groups, to understand the root causes and persistent patterns of deprivation beyond national averages usually reported in international documents. The Central and Eastern Europe HDR2003 presented the first large scale household survey of the Roma, with over 5,000 interviews and data comparable across 5 countries in Central Europe. The data allowed the calculation of the HDI for Roma, the disaggregation of MDG indicators and the comparison with similar indicators for non-Roma populations. The report was used as a reference by the World Bank and Open Society Institute initiative called “A Decade of Roma Inclusion”, with the objective to meet the MDGs for Roma people. This case is not unique; in Chile, beyond the publication of HDRs, a team of human development experts measured human development trends at the communal level, and calculated the HDI for the Mapuche populations to determine interethnic and intra-ethnic inequalities. The analysis revealed important insights on sub-national circumstances, with a focus on indigenous populations, informing diagnostics and planning at the regional level.

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<sup>5</sup> de la Torre and Moreno (2009)

Regional HDRs might be slightly more distant from the specificities of the local context, but often they benefit from additional resources and the collaboration of international experts from the region, advancing the human development analysis of development challenges which are common to several countries. For example, the Central America HDR2009 looks at the incidence of violence and criminality in 6 Central American countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, providing comparative policy analysis and recommendations. The main assumption of the report is that “insecurity”, or “insecurities”, is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon, whereby causes and vulnerabilities change dramatically according to: typology of the crime, sex, age, social status, domicile, time, etc. The main contribution of the human development approach to the theme is the rejection of the idea that to guarantee security it is necessary to renounce to civil freedoms: in human development terms, security is meant to expand people’s freedoms and not to reduce them. A key principle state in the report is “equitable security”: everybody should have access to security and not only those who can pay for it. Identified priorities range from cultural prevention to the need to recuperate public spaces and downgraded areas, including also specific recommendations to improve the efficiency of the judiciary and rehabilitation initiatives for the convicted.

Another example of influential report at the regional level is the Asia Pacific HDR2008, which applied the human development approach to corruption, providing an alternative perspective to studies focused on the ‘business climate’ aspect of corruption. The Report documented the challenges that corruption poses to human development, and showed that everyone eventually loses with corruption, although it hurts the poor the most. The focus was on identifying practical solutions to fight corruption and bolster human development in the Asia-Pacific, not on establishing the most or least corrupt in an effort to ‘finger point’. The Asia Pacific HDR2008

proposed a seven-point agenda for action ranging from joining international conventions to exploiting e-governance opportunities and supporting citizen action. Senior political leaders and officials have supported and drawn on the Report's central messages and solutions. For example, President Yudhoyono of Indonesia asked his top government officials to read the Report; in Papua New Guinea, there were renewed calls for the establishment of an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC); in Lao PDR, the discussions contributed to the decision to ratify UNCAC in September 2009; the expert panel debating the APHDR at the 13<sup>th</sup> International Anti-Corruption Conference in Athens, Greece, used the Report to reach out to global partners/stakeholders engaged in the fight against corruption. Further, in the Philippines a major private sector led conference on Human Rights and Integrity showcased the APHDR to inform the private sector on how to address corruption while delivering human development dividends to people. Drawing on the APHDR, an advocacy initiative led by Filipino civil society in partnership with Transparency International scaled up its anti-corruption activities.

Several influential national and regional HDRs have demonstrated that these reports can be more than investigative tools to inform national policies and advocacy: they can push concepts forward. Next section will focus on selected examples of how human development indices and indicators have been adapted in national HDRs to better capture the development challenges in the country context.

## **2. National application of human development measurement**

Regional, national and sub-national HDRs apply human development measures as developed in global HDRs and in the related academic literature to national and regional contexts. Several reports have introduced new measurements and reformulated the human development index

(HDI) to better reflect local circumstances. Examples range from the disaggregation of indicators at the sub-national or group level to identify inequalities, fill in gaps in data availability, or develop indicators to measure human development dimensions, which are usually neglected in national official statistics, such as security, empowerment and participation, the rural-urban divide, etc. Most of these innovations are not applicable at the global level due to lack of comparable data or their relevance for specific situations only. Nevertheless, at the local level they have constituted valuable instruments to advance the understanding of the human development situation.

Examples include the Argentina HDR2002 which produced the Extended Human Development Index (EHDI). The EHDI broadened the HDI with quantitative measurements of infant mortality, unemployment and education quality to reveal overlooked social and geographical differences through new provincial statistics. The EHDI was utilised during the design and implementation of policies and strategies for local development.<sup>6</sup>

Another example from Latin America is the Colombia HDR2003 on conflict, which produced an HDI corrected for violence. The index enabled comparison across various sub-national departments. Local authorities in Medellin, Antioquia and Meta adopted the recommendations emanating from the analysis for prevention of guerrilla recruitment, mine action and the strengthening of local institutions.

Beyond adaptation of the HDI, some national HDRs developed new indices to measure additional dimensions of human development. The Nepal HDR2004 pioneered a human empowerment index (HEI) before the Dominican Republic HDR already mentioned in the first

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<sup>6</sup> As assessed by the UNDP-EO (2008), page 25

section. The Nepal HEI is composed of 8 indicators reflecting education, health, information and participation in social organizations.<sup>7</sup> The index intended to provide governments and development partners a tool to support action to address economic, social and political exclusion in areas of concentrated poverty and vulnerability. A national survey produced an assessment of how social mobilization on a large scale can catalyze poverty reduction, heighten empowerment and foster peace.

The Thailand HDR2003 focused on community empowerment by establishing collaboration between the National Economic and Social Development Board and community leaders from four regions. The report proposed a human achievement index (HAI), which combined indicators on eight components of human development (namely health, education, employment, income, housing and living conditions, family and community life, transportation and communication, and participation) to provide a more nuanced picture of disparities among Thailand's 76 provinces than traditional poverty assessments.

To harmonize policy monitoring with the country's priorities, Bosnia and Herzegovina HDR2007 aligned national MDG targets and indicators, previously developed in the NHDR2003, with the European Union social inclusion agenda. The report adapted the 18 EU "Laeken" indicators of social exclusion to the local context including issues of ethnicity, and methodologies responding to human rights-based and human development approaches. Three indices of human social exclusion were developed: the human social exclusion index, the human extreme social exclusion index, and the human long-term social exclusion index.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For additional information on the rationale and methodology to construct the HEI, see Annex 1.3 of 'Nepal National Human Development Report, 2004, pages 120-137.

<sup>8</sup> See the UNDP-EO (2009 b.)

Other HDRs have contributed to the collection and analysis of socio-economic data in areas where information was otherwise not available. For example, the Kosovo HDR2004 presented analysis based on a special survey covering 30 municipalities with a sample of over 6,000 households. Addressing the lack of census data since more than 20 years, the information and data analysis was crucial to UNDP and other development partners to identify communities most in need of development support.

Even when data is available at the national level, there might be constraints to disaggregating indicators to inform policies targeting poorest areas or populations. The Croatia HDR2006 provided the country's first comprehensive analysis of social exclusion. The analysis is based on a Quality of Life survey modelled on standard European Quality of Life methodology, with a sample of almost 9,000 Croatian citizens. The extensive coverage of the survey allowed sub-national disaggregation of data which were previously available only as national averages, highlighting regional disparities in quality of life.

### **3. Contribution to capacity development**

HDRs have the potential to develop capacities among a broad range of partners. Through the preparation process, multiple stakeholders are involved in consultations, participatory reviews and analysis, data collection, and formulation of advocacy strategies, developing skills key to formulating and implementing human development policies. This contribution is potentially more relevant where capacities for socio-economic analysis are limited, such as post-conflict countries (e.g. Tajikistan, Guatemala and Afghanistan) or at the local level (e.g. India sub-national HDRs).



The Tajikistan HDR2003 on water helped develop national capacity in a crucial sector for the Central Asian republic. The report team included water management specialists, economists, statisticians and environmental specialists from government ministries, research institutions and NGOs. This collaboration produced the first attempt in the country to address water issues in a multi-dimensional way, influencing the policy approach and the way institutions operate in the sector. In the context of the Third World Water Forum, held that year in Kyoto, and the Dushanbe International Fresh Water Forum, which brought together 400 participants from 45 countries, the HDR provided a multidimensional assessment of water resources integrating human development and MDG indicators. The HDR contributed to create momentum around water issues, as reflected in the Tajikistan PRSP, which emphasised water and sanitation, the improvement of the poor's access to water, and the need to rehabilitate the water supply system and to reform water management.

The Government of India has supported a practice of sub-national HDRs to operationalize the human development approach. Led by national and sub-national authorities, HDRs are utilised in many states to collect socio-economic indicators mandated at provincial level by the tenth (2004-07) and eleventh (2008-2012) national development plans. India has been so far the most prolific single country in terms of HDR production, with 1 National, 26 State, 19 District and 1 City HDRs. The reports are prepared under the aegis of local authorities in collaboration with local experts and with the involvement of local populations. Beyond providing an analytical instrument to inform local policies, the preparation of HDRs in India often imply multiple layers of capacity development to allow the meaningful participation of different strata in society. For example, a Human Development Research and Coordination Cell (HDRCC) has been established in the Planning Department of the Government of West Bengal to mainstream human

development in the State, undertake sensitization and capacity development on human development and to guide districts in preparing District HDRs.

The Chhattisgarh HDR2005 showed how an HDR can be used to implement bottom-up methodologies, developing the capacities of various groups of the population to participate in the policy making process. The State Government requested village level reports on key human development issues (livelihoods, knowledge, health - indigenous and formal health care systems, natural resources, institutions, etc.) for all villages in the State (more than 17,000). These village level reports were collated at the district level. Finally the State report was prepared on the basis of district reports. The Report saw the active participation of citizens, also thanks to a dedicated cadre of surveyors, who were trained to launch a state wide campaign *Gaon Dahra Chalav Abhiyaan* (a call for going back to villages). As follow up, the Chhattisgarh Planning Department established a Human Development Research and Coordination Unit. The State has also introduced a chapter on Human Development in its Annual Economic Survey and Plan document, which presents a broad status on key human development indicators. The State government has undertaken sensitization of journalists from print and electronic media through workshops, debates in colleges across State on human development issues and awareness generation of *Panchayati Raj* members (elected representatives) on gender budgeting. Also, the report triggered initiatives to strengthen the statistical system, develop websites to make the existing data accessible, train statistical office staff on use of statistical software such as SPSS, and introduce village index cards providing vital data on key socio-economic indicators for all villages in the district.

Another example is the Afghanistan HDR 2004, which provided for the first time in recent years an analysis on living conditions in the country. In the absence of a national census for 25 years, nationwide demographic and household income surveys, and with a low national capacity to gather and analyse administrative data, the HDR team compiled human development indicators under the guidance of an international statistical expert and in collaboration with civil society and national and international survey agencies.<sup>9</sup> Data and analysis from the report served as a basis for the National Development Strategy, while developing national capacities to compute and analyse statistical data. The international statistician was a public officer seconded by the Government of India, providing a successful example of south-south cooperation. The UNDP-Evaluation Office's Assessment of Development Results for Afghanistan<sup>10</sup> highlighted how the NHDR buttressed UNDP work in the area of development policy, by laying a foundation for a government commitment to a broader, human development based notion of development to address Afghanistan's fragile situation.

In several instances, the production of HDRs has contributed to strengthening the National Statistical System. For example, in Guatemala the human development team developed an integrated survey system. The project helped improve the quality of the surveys, increased the geographic and thematic coverage of statistical information, provided better inputs for the reports and fostered greater debate on human development in the country<sup>11</sup>.

The Human Development Report system has also inspired independent groups to adopt similar methodologies in order to analyze and advocate for policy change in favour of human

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<sup>9</sup> Data sources include CSO data, the Afghanistan Statistical Year Book 2003, UNICEF/CSO Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey, and the 2003 National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment survey, for data on rural poverty.

<sup>10</sup> section 3.2.5 "Coordination and development management" UNDP-EO (2009 a.);

<sup>11</sup> UNDP-EP (2009 c.), page 31 on effectiveness

development. The 2003 Arab Human Development Report, *Building Knowledge Societies*, for example, was well received in the Arab countries and prompted Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai to launch a \$10bn foundation for the betterment of knowledge in the Arab Countries. The mission statement of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation reflects to a great extent the recommendations of the 2003AHDR. Moreover, in 2007 the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States agreed to partner with the foundation to support the production and develop capacity for the production of a series of *Arab Knowledge Reports (AKR)*, following a similar methodology to that of a UNDP-sponsored Human Development Report. The first AKR, *Toward Productive Intercommunication for Knowledge*<sup>12</sup>, was launched as the flagship publication of the 2009 Arab Strategy Forum, a high-level policy dialogue among policy-makers, private sector representatives, and opinion leaders from throughout the region and around the world, held in Dubai in October 2009,<sup>13</sup> after which it was extensively covered in the regional media.

In addition to the AKR process representing a strong endorsement of the relevance of UNDP HDRs, and a sign of UNDP's role in developing analytical and advocacy capacity in external organizations, it also pointed to a possible niche for UNDP in NCC countries – that of partnering on high-quality, strategic analysis that responds to country demand and is energetically endorsed by the highest levels of government.

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<sup>12</sup> UNDP and Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation (2009)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.arabstrategyforum.org/asf2009en/>

#### **4. Revision of national policies and budget allocations to reflect human development priorities**

The human development approach reinforces the importance of multidimensional assessments and analysis, with special attention to excluded groups, for policy making. This section will highlight examples of how the approach can be translated in policy revisions and fund allocations to serve a human development agenda.

As noted above, India has adopted sub-national HDRs as an explicit instrument for policy formulation. The process has forged partnership between data collectors (sub-national statistical offices) and data users. Human development indicators have become part of the political agenda of various states. The West Bengal HDR2004 offers an example of how recommendations on rural landlessness and women and children's nutrition shortfalls can be translated into policies to address critical issues at the local level.

Some HDRs contributed to the development of national strategies, most frequently the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. For example, the Bosnia and Herzegovina HDR2003, prepared with an extensive collaboration with the team preparing the PRSP, produced a country-tailored MDG strategy. Over 70 per cent of the localised MDG indicators proposed in the HDR were successively included in the Bosnia and Herzegovina PRSP, serving as benchmark for future policies. Likewise, the El Salvador Poverty Reduction Strategy was informed by the El Salvador HDR2003's diagnosis of poverty, human development and inequalities. Based on the strategy, a fiscal reform to stem tax evasion was adopted, as recommended by the report.

The Tanzania HDR2002 is an example of synergy between the PRSP process and the preparation of human development reports. Its position as an integral part of the process to revise the PRSP

allowed an efficient absorption of the report's findings into policy-making. The report was produced by a working group, composed by government, NGO and donor representatives, which is part of the Poverty Monitoring System mandated by Tanzania's PRS. The report gave a detailed account of poverty indicators, it analysed the reach of macroeconomic performance in the 1990s, and budget allocations to priority sectors such as health. Based on the reports' recommendations, the PRS addressed governance and accountability issues, vulnerability and social protection, and the links between poverty and the environment. Finally, the Poverty Monitoring System was integrated with multidimensional indicators to measure poverty and environmental issues as proposed in the HDR.

Generally, HDRs are but one input to the national policy making process and policy shifts cannot properly be attributed exclusively to HDRs. However, their contribution has been recognised on several occasions exemplified in the examples below.

The Chile Assessment of Development Results<sup>14</sup> emphasizes the role of the eight NHDRs published in the period 1996-2009 in broadening the horizons of the national development debate among both public and private actors. The contribution of the Chile HDRs has been recognized in the increasing emphasis on mechanisms to reduce inequalities in public policies. Examples of this influence include the re-definition of "rural" in public statistics and policies as recommended in the Chile HDR2008, the citation of the report in the presidential agenda, and the inclusion of the HDI in the prioritization index used by the Ministry of Planning to allocate funds.

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<sup>14</sup> UNDP-EP (2009 d.), section 4.3 is focused on Human Development.

In Argentina, measurement innovation and a massive outreach campaign coincided with a broader national discussion on institutional reforms. The Ministries of Social Development, Health and Education used the EHDI developed in the Argentina HDR2002 (see section 1) in the design of policies and resource allocation. Also, the parliament referred to the report in drafting a bill on federal tax co-sharing. Provinces began to prepare human development indices and reports to design local human development strategies.

The four NHDRs published in Peru<sup>15</sup> have been successful in introducing the human development approach among Peruvian academics and for State agencies – including the National Statistics Institute that used NHDR data as a reference. HDI calculations have also become a base for selecting and channeling social assistance through State programmes (e.g. the projects Urban Work and JUNTOS, supported by UNDP<sup>16</sup>).

Informed by the Egypt HDR2003, which estimated the HDI for Egypt's 451 administrative units, the Prime Minister launched the “Municipal Initiative for Strategic Results” to support access to basic services in the 58 units with the lowest HDI. Seven governors also agreed with local councils to use the report's findings as benchmarks to develop local plans aimed at reducing inequalities.

The Uganda HDR2002 contributed to the success of policies on HIV/AIDS. The report produced in-depth analysis of cultural and traditional factors fuelling the epidemic. It also extended data collection to the majority of the country's district, showing how improved access to health care would not affect macroeconomic stability. The report informed a national conference on

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<sup>15</sup> A fifth NHDR is expected to be launched in 2010.

<sup>16</sup> More information about these projects can be found at <http://www.pnud.org.pe/frmtipo02.aspx>. Information about the human development approach in Peru can be found in the UNDP-EP (2009 e.)

HIV/AIDS, which led to policy on free anti-retroviral treatment provision in all districts and the introduction of specific references to HIV/AIDS in the Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan. With the same focus on the HIV/AIDS theme, the Botswana HDR2000 informed a government programme to guarantee universal access to Anti-Retroviral Therapy, and a student version of the report in both English and Setswana was disseminated in all secondary schools.

Through budget analysis, HDRs have advocated for increased allocations to the poorest areas, realigning UN/UNDP programming in the country with human development priorities. In some cases HDRs have triggered donor funding.

For example, the Thailand HDR2003 and the human achievement index mentioned in section one, steered discussion in community fora on issues ranging from managing agricultural debt to restore access to natural resources. Provincial governors used the report for setting development priorities and resource allocations, and for negotiating with central authorities the resources to address disparities among provinces.

The analysis provided in the Indonesia HDR2004 suggested that 3-4 percent of GDP would have been necessary to guarantee rights to food, health, education and physical security to all Indonesians. The Government acknowledged the findings of the report, which was used to inform regional resource allocations and to depart from the previous emphasis on infrastructure.

Policy applications of the Mexican HDI adjusted for inequalities have affected the allocation of public expenditure at the state level. In 2005, after the first set of data was calculated, the Federal Government allocated special resources to the indigenous municipalities with the lowest HDI. In 2007, this policy extended to the one hundred municipalities with the lowest HDI and in the



poorest state, Chiapas, the 2010 programme against poverty in 28 municipalities was guided using the HDI.

The El Salvador HDR2005 signalled the economic, cultural, social and political impact of international migration, where an estimated 20 per cent of the population live abroad. The report presents an in-depth investigation of how the origin communities have changed due to migration, and suggested the need to reformulate national development policies to address the new challenges. Inspired by the report, new programmes were designed to strengthen development initiatives and policies, and to improve the understanding of migration. Following the collaboration of diplomats from destination countries in the elaboration of the report, the European Commission financed the project “Human Development and Migration” with the objectives of: enhance information and analysis to mainstream migration issues into public policies; promote interventions in communities with a high prevalence of emigrants; and improve the understanding of migration among researchers, academics and opinion leaders.<sup>17</sup>

In Bulgaria, the Ministry of Regional Development cited the calculation of municipal HDI as a source for funds allocation. The 2003 NHDR on rural areas led to an integrated area-based approach programme consisting of a set of partnership projects initiated by UNDP and supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and other donors. Similarly, the Jordan HDR2004 provided the first sustainable livelihood data collection in the country and applied a human rights based approach to policy analysis. Based on the report’s advocacy, the Government started to provide targeted support to the Zarqa Governorate, the country’s poorest urban area, and the World Bank reformulated its gender strategy for Jordan.

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<sup>17</sup> For additional details see UNDP El Salvador at <http://www.pnud.org/sv/migraciones/content/view/17/106/>

In January 2010 the Maharashtra planning department announced that each county in the district will receive budget allocations based on its HDI. The Maharashtra HDR2002 computed the HDI for the district's sub-unit for the first time, and it described Maharashtra as having 'pockets of affluence amidst acute poverty. In 2006, few severely deprived areas were selected to pilot health and education programmes, and achievements were measured. Notwithstanding these policy efforts, eight years after the publication of the report trends showed that inequality persisted and the government decided to allocate budget resources according to human development parameters.<sup>18</sup>

There are other examples showing that the disaggregated calculation of the HDI can have a decisive influence on public fund allocations. In Brazil, the Human Development Atlas to monitor trends in selected human development indicators has been institutionalized as an instrument to guide resource allocation, regardless of the political orientation of the ruling party. During the eight years of the Cardoso Administration, the HDI was used for selecting states, municipalities and families in four main federal projects. Of these, the most important in terms of its territorial impact was the *Alvorada* (Dawn) programme, launched in 2000 "...to improve the living conditions of the neediest in the shortest term possible...". The programme covered most Brazilian states, micro-regions, and municipalities with an HDI lower than the Brazilian average. In total, it reached 24 states and 2,185 municipalities, covering a population of over 36 million poor people. With the Lula government, the municipal level HDI has continued to be used as a tool to target social programmes in Brazil, including programmes for youth and adult education, electricity for all, basic sanitation, food security for families living below the poverty line and the Young Agents for Social and Human Development Programme (which provides an allowance

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<sup>18</sup> Source: Hindustan Times - <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/mumbai/Budget-aims-to-reduce-disparity/Article1-502502.aspx>

for adolescents between 15 and 17 years of age to remain in school with the aim of preventing violence, drug abuse and adolescent pregnancy, and invested the equivalent of \$17 million in 2004). Table 1 summarized local policies that have been inspired by the Human Development Atlas.

State/Legislation	Programme(s)	Description
<b>Amazonas</b>	State Council on Human Development Law 2784 of 2003 Law 2798 of 2003 Citizenship Programme	Include representatives of state agencies and of civil society to coordinate social policies Creation of a Fund for Human Development Creation of a minimum wage to “contribute to increasing the state’s HDI”
<b>Bahia</b>	4-year Plan	One of the objectives of the 2004-2007 development plan is to increase the state’s HDI
<b>Ceará</b>	Economic Development Plan	To further improve the state’s position in HDI, which moved from 23 in 1991 to 19 in 2000
<b>Maranhão</b>	Government Plan, 2003-2006	To increase the state’s ranking in the HDI from 0.547 to 0.65
<b>Minas Gerais</b>		The stated goal of the current government is to increase the state’s HDI from 0.776 to 0.800
<b>Paraná</b>	Electricity and milk distribution to needy children	These two programmes target municipalities with lower HDIs
<b>Pernambuco</b>	Rebirth Project	Social projects and microcredit for the rural population
<b>Rio Grande do Sul</b>	School uniforms	Distributed to municipalities with less than 15,000 inhabitants and with lower HDIs
<b>Santa Catarina</b>	Fund for small-size companies	Loans to be granted to municipalities with an HDI equal to or lower than 90% of the state’s average
<b>São Paulo</b>	Social Network	To integrate federal, state, municipal and private projects in the 50 municipalities with lower HDIs
<b>Tocantins</b>	Federal programme <i>Fome Zero</i>	The programme targets 42 municipalities with lower HDIs

**Table 1: The Influence of the HDI on selected legislation and social programmes in Brazil. Source: UNDP-EO Evaluation of National Human Development Report System**

## **5. Media attention to human development issues**

Policy makers, civil society and international partners are usually the main target audience for the HDRs. The media coverage of its publication can reveal the report's relevance for the national policy debate.

One of the most prominent examples of extensive media coverage is the Turkey HDR2008, which brought the perceptions of youth to the centre of the human development analysis. Instead of seeing youth as the receivers of information, products and policies, the report involved youth in every stage of the preparation process. To balance the mainstream image of youth as dynamic, healthy, middle class students, the report investigated more categories of youth, amongst whom five million of “invisible youth” who are not able to participate in education or employment. More than one thousand news reports/articles and interviews based on the report placed youth issues on the national agenda. In a spontaneous development, youth NGOs who had participated in the NHDR established a “Youth NGOs Platform”, a yahoo group to continue the work on a youth policy, and they kept advocating for the recommendation of the report through television programs, seminars and conferences. Triggered by this response, the Government established a team to develop a strategy and presented to the Parliament the first youth law in Turkey, officially recognizing the significant contribution of the NHDR to this effort. The report also helped mobilize funds for a youth knowledge-fair and for youth projects in the framework of the Development Market Place competition funded by the World Bank.

Some HDRs successfully reach out to international media and institutions. The Afghanistan HDR 2004 received coverage from the most prominent regional and international media (including BBC, CNN, Radio Australia, Tokyo Shimbun, Reuters, Al Jazeera, Le Monde, The

PakTribune, the Toronto Star and the New York Times). This was also due to President Hamid Karzai, who quoted the report on several public occasions, including a presentation to the European Parliament. Another example is the recent Bosnia and Herzegovina HDR2009 on social capital, which was mentioned during a foreign policy debate in the British House of Lords<sup>19</sup>.

As for Regional Human Development Reports, an example of a series that has attracted a great deal of media attention is the *Arab Human Development Report (AHDR)*. Each edition has been reported on widely in the media within the Arab region, due mostly to its comprehensive treatment of the most significant issues facing the Arab countries, from governance to knowledge to women's empowerment to human security. Beyond the region the *AHDR* has been embraced as a rare view into development dynamics as seen from the region. Time magazine referred to the 2002 *AHDR* as "... perhaps the most important volume published in 2002."<sup>20</sup> Pulitzer-Prize columnist Thomas Friedman of the New York Times has written about the *AHDR* no fewer than five times. And *The Economist* magazine covers the *AHDR* each time it is launched. In both contexts the report's strong regional ownership has been emphasized as a key factor by the media. In the words of Rami Khouri, editor in chief of the Lebanon Daily Star, "It is much more painful -- though always useful -- for such self-awareness to be documented in a credible report by knowledgeable and honest Arab analysts."

The media coverage of the 2009 *AHDR* was the greatest yet. Three television specials were run in the Arab countries on the most widely viewed networks, Al-Arabiya, Al-Jazeera, and BBC Arabic. Over 400 articles were written about the 2009 *AHDR* around the world. And *The*

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<sup>19</sup> The citation happens at the 6<sup>th</sup> minute in the footage available at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/hi/house\\_of\\_lords/newsid\\_8465000/8465758.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/hi/house_of_lords/newsid_8465000/8465758.stm)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.time.com/time/subscriber/personoftheyear/2002/poydoctrine.html>

*Economist* magazine launched a 16-page special edition on the Arab Region that was timed to coincide with the launch of the AHDR. This sort of coverage has been vital for fostering a constructive discussion on development priorities in the Arab countries, both in the region and around the world. And it has also stimulated interest among the broader public, as evidenced by the over-500,000 downloads of the AHDR 2009 between July 2009 and January 2010.

Media strategy can also be designed to reach target audiences and to provide access to information to marginalized groups, who usually do not participate in the policy debate. The outreach strategy of the Bolivia HDR2004 included the production of 60 30-minute radio magazines based on new subjective data on culture and globalisation collected during the preparation of the report. The radio magazines were picked up by 278 radio stations, and an impact study found six out of ten rural radio listeners had discussed the HDR findings with friends and families.

## **6. National Human Development networks and people-centred curricula.**

One key HDR contribution has been to promote the human development paradigm among national academic circles. Reports have shown how an integrated multi-disciplinary approach can help understand complex development issues better than more narrow sectoral and technical analysis, especially if applied to sensitive issues such as political freedom or societal inequalities.

In several countries the periodic production of HDRs has helped create a core group of human development experts. The Philippines case stands out for the establishment of a Human Development Network gathering 150 development practitioner- members from government agencies, international organizations, civil society organizations, and research institutions. The

network is dedicated to build knowledge that will help strengthen institutional capacity in achieving human development outcomes primarily through participatory research and advocacy, including the preparation of NHDRs, the calculation of the HDI at the municipal level and the organisation of workshops and fora.<sup>21</sup> The leverage of the network contributed to the dissemination of HDRs and utilisation of their findings. For example, the launch of the Philippine HDR2005 on conflict attracted several hundred people including the highest levels of government, there is widespread reference among partners to concepts in the reports, and the ‘Human Security Index project’ credits the report for providing concrete indicators for measuring the costs and causes of armed conflict.<sup>22</sup>

HDRs have served as a vehicle to introduce human development in university curricula and other training opportunity, allowing the development of national expertise familiar with the approach, which facilitates the subsequent application of the human development to policy analysis and policy making. At the time this paper was written, UNDP was aware of 28 academic courses and 15 training focused on, or significantly integrating in their curricula, the human development approach. Of the total, 20 academic courses and 12 training courses take place in developing (non OECD) countries, with the collaboration of local academic institutions. India emerges as the single country with more human development training opportunities, but other countries in Asia, Latin America, Easter Europe and the CIS have institutionalised similar courses. Only two

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<sup>21</sup> The Network began as an informal group of development practitioners who first got together in 1992 through the initiative of Professor Solita Collas-Monsod and Kevin McGrath, Resident Representative of (UNDP). Through a series of meetings, the group discussed how best to apply the major findings and conclusions of the first Philippine Human Development Report. The HDN became a registered organization in 1997. For more information visit <http://hdn.org.ph/>.

<sup>22</sup> See the UNDP-EO (2009 f.).

African countries (Zambia and Uganda), and one Arab State (Jordan) have offered similar educational initiatives.<sup>23</sup>

For example, the Arab States HDR 2004 introduced a new indicator for measuring knowledge, incorporating data on daily newspapers, radios, television sets, scientists and engineers, patent applications, book titles, telephone lines, cellular phone subscribers and internet hosts. Following the participation of, or consultations with, 400 faculty members in Arab universities, the report is now used in the curricula of Cairo University, Jordan University, King Saud University and Al-Akawayin University.

In Uzbekistan, UNDP has made strong efforts to systematically increase awareness and advocate the policy relevance of the human development paradigm to undergraduate and postgraduate students, teachers and state officials of Uzbekistan's leading academic institutions. This is being achieved through support to research and the development of pedagogies and curricula to teach human development, train lecturers and develop in-service training schemes.<sup>24</sup>

Human development courses inspired by national HDRs have been introduced at the Yerevan University in Armenia, the Sophia University in Bulgaria, and, based on the Thailand HDR 2003, the National Defence College made a course on the human achievement index mandatory for high-ranking officials.

In other cases, the HDRs have been adopted as university course materials. For example, the Asia Pacific HDR2008 on corruption was used as knowledge and programming guide by the University of the Philippines National College for Public Administration and Governance to

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<sup>23</sup> For additional information on available human development educational opportunities see <http://hdr.undp.org/en/nhdr/training/>

<sup>24</sup> See UNDP-EO (2009 g.)



incorporate human development perspectives into a national course on anti-corruption for students and public administrators. In Chile, HDRs have been included as one of the main bibliographical references in various academic curricula.

In Latin America, the Human Development Virtual School has been operating since 2001 with a distance-learning modality. A team of 94 academics from 21 countries, supported by a technical team of 20 staff based in Colombia, has provided 17 on-line courses in cooperation with various universities from various countries (e.g. Open University of Catalonia, the Madrid Complutense University, El Rosario University in Colombia, the País Vasco University). So far, 2,500 people have been trained, comprising mostly national policy makers and Latin American researchers.

In some countries, human development concepts have been introduced in secondary school curricula. In Brazil, three out of seven exams measuring student performance in secondary school included questions on the HDI, signalling that HDIs and human development principles are considered a mandatory part of the secondary school syllabus. Also in Argentina, 40,000 copies of the NHDR2002 have been distributed to high schools nationwide, and based on the same report Military academies now offer a seminar on human development. Based on the Azerbaijan HDR2003, the Minister of Education published a human development curriculum and the subject became an option in secondary schools. The same report inspired the first community-based organisation in the country, the “Human Development and Sustainable Income Generation Public Union”, and the Azerbaijan International Operating Company (operated by British Petroleum) set up a Human Development Centre to work on private sector issues.

## Conclusions

This review intended to showcase concrete examples of how regional, national and sub-national HDRs have had the capacity to contextualize the human development paradigm, which in several cases determined a clear influence on policy debate in their context. Although capacity to apply the human development analytical framework and data quality varies across countries and regions, on many occasions participatory methodologies and national ownership have allowed HDRs to reach down to various groups and strata in society, including those who are excluded. Because of their atypical methodologies, HDRs are increasingly recognised outside the borders as interesting insights revealing multidisciplinary analysis and a plurality of perspectives (e.g. by international organisations and occasionally researchers). Beyond their value for informing national policy debated and advocating for more people-centred policies, regional, national and sub-national HDRs could open the door of “global development debates” to scholars and development practitioners from developing countries.

Besides informing the preparation of the global HDR2010 in terms of these reports’ contribution to the promotion and the application of the human development paradigm worldwide during the last 20 years, the review will be used to revisit the publication “Ideas, Innovation, Impact”, with the aim to provide additional materials to support for HDR teams and keep expanding the influence of the human development approach.

## List of reports referenced in the text

Report	Influence	Themes
Afghanistan HDR2004 “Security with a human face”	Capacity development and media	Post-conflict
Arab States HDR2004 “Towards Freedom in the Arab World”	Education	Empowerment
Arab States HDR2003 “Building a Knowledge Society”	Capacity development and media	Knowledge
Argentina HDR2002 “Contributions to Human Development in Argentina”	Measurement, policy and education	Equity and excluded groups
Asia Pacific HDR2008 “Tackling corruption, transforming life”	Understanding and using HD and education	Empowerment
Azerbaijan HDR2003 “ICT for development”	Education	Empowerment
Bhutan HDR2000 “Gross National Happiness”	Understanding and Using HD	Equity and empowerment
Bolivia HDR2004 “Interculturalism and globalisation”	Media	Participation
Bosnia and Herzegovina HDR2003 “Millennium Development Goals”	Measurement and policy	Excluded groups
Bosnia and Herzegovina HDR2007 “Social Inclusion”	Measurement	Excluded groups
Bosnia and Herzegovina HDR2009 “Social Capital”	Media	Participation
Brazil Human Development Atlas	Budget and education	Equity
Bulgaria HDR2003 “Rural regions: overcoming development disparities”	Budget and education	Equity
Central and Eastern Europe HDR2003 “Avoiding the dependency trap”	Measurement	Excluded groups
Central America 2009, 2010 “Abrir espacios para la seguridad ciudadana y el desarrollo humano”	Adaptation	Human Security
Chile HDR2008 “The way of doing things”	Policy and education	Sustainability
Colombia HDR2003 “Understand in order to transform the local roots of conflict”	Measurement	Post Conflict
Croatia HDR2006 “Unplugged: faces of social exclusion in Croatia”	Measurement	Excluded groups
Egypt HDR2002-3	Policy	Equity
El Salvador HDR2005 “The impact of migration”	Budget	Equity and excluded groups
Dominican Republic HDR 2008 – “Desarrollo humano, una cuestión de poder”	Adaptation	Empowerment
Guatemala HDR2002 “Ethnic and cultural diversity: citizenship in a plural state”	Understanding and Using HD	Participation

Guatemala HDR2002 “Women and Health”	Understanding and Using HD	Empowerment
India: Bankura District HDR2007	Measurement	Equity and excluded groups
India: Chhattisgarh HDR2005	Capacity Development	Participation
Indonesia HDR2004 “The economics of democracy”	Budget	Equity
Kosovo HDR2004 “The rise of the citizen: challenges and choices”	Measurement	Equity
Maharashtra HDR2002	Budget	Equity
Mexico HDR2002	Measurement	Equity
Mexico HDR2004 “the challenge of local development	Measurement and budget	Equity
Mexico HDR2006-7 “Migration and Human Development”	Measurement	Equity
Mongolia HDR2003 “Balancing rural and urban disparity”	Measurement	Equity
Mongolia HDR2007 “Employment and poverty”	Measurement	Equity
Nepal HDR2004 “Empowerment and poverty reduction”	Measurement	Empowerment
Tajikistan HDR2003 “Water resources and Sustainable Human Development	Capacity Development	Sustainability
Philippines 2005 “Peace and Conflict Prevention: Human Security”	Understanding and using HD	Conflict
Tanzania HDR2002	Policy	Excluded groups and environment
Thailand HDR2003 “Community empowerment and human development”	Measurement, budget and education	Equity
Turkey HDR2008 “Youth in Turkey”	Media	Empowerment and participation
Uganda HDR2002 “The Challenges of HIV/AIDS	Policy	HIV/AIDS and equity
West Bengal HDR2004	Capacity Development and policy	Excluded groups
Zimbabwe HDR2003 “Redirecting our response to HIV/AIDS	Policy	HIV/AIDS

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