

## NHDR Write-Up: VDA Practitioner Course on Human Development

### Bolivia's 2007 NHDR

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The 2007 NHDR of Bolivia highlights a number of HD challenges that this country's multicultural population faces. Bolivia has a strongly compartmentalized, divided, and heterogeneous society (rich, poor, indigenous people, aged, peasants, urban population, etc.) which suffers from the colonial heritage that founded the basis for its social and economic asymmetry and unequal exploitation and distribution of resources. Lack of participation of the vulnerable groups in decision making, reduced number of women in Parliament, corruption, limited access to health, education and justice, low incomes, breaches of social, economic and cultural rights, etc. are just some of the factors that challenge the HD enjoyment by all Bolivians. When trying to group, one realises that challenges in Bolivia tackle elements of all three HD paradigm essential components: efficiency, equity, and freedom. The unequal access to use existing resources such as the education system (the HD efficiency component) combined with the unequal distribution of resources and benefits derived from the country's resources such as gas (lack of equity) results in an uneven possibility to make informed and free choices depending on the group affiliation/gender (such as indigenous, rural, urban poor, etc.) due, among others, to limited access to education, poverty, power distance from the decision making levels, etc. (lack of freedom). This illustrative example shows the interconnectedness of the various dimensions and complexity of HD and how solutions can be effective only if they tackle more aspects at the same time of the HD paradigm.

In line with this, the policy implications of the NHDR are that the government has to promote at the same time policies centred on equality, generation and redistribution of richness, elimination of poverty, provision of social services, cultural identity, sustainability, and promotion/creation of inclusive, participatory and intercultural institutions. I discovered that the Government attempt to improve the quality of life of it's citizen's is currently done through the multiyear National Development Plan which sets the strategy for all national public policies (see page 2 for the strategic framework: <http://www.planificacion.gov.bo/BANNER/PARA%20PAG%20WEB/pdf/2-3.pdf>). The strategy constitutes a mix of HD economic, social, and political strategies, including a plan for relations at the international level.

Apart from the topics tackled by the public policies (for a full list please refer to: <http://www.planificacion.gov.bo/BANNER/PARA%20PAG%20WEB/pnd1.html>), the modality how these policies will be formulated is crucial to attain the goal of improving HD standards: more inclusive and participatory management of the formulation and implementation of public policies, for example, will result in lessening inequalities, poverty, gender disparities and incrementing political participation and good governance. To do this, one crucial recommendation could be to strengthen the overall democratic governance model. Creating new mechanisms for including social participation and a real exercise of human rights will bring to the construction of an intercultural society where every individual enjoys development. However, this does not come without challenges in the case of Bolivia as the government will probably have to integrate the current used representational model with the participatory communitarian model (closer to the indigenous communities) of exercising democracy. Another recommendation for improving the HD situation is not to apply universal and homogeneous solutions and policies as they don't apply well to the heterogeneous Bolivian society: the research for policies that are adapted to the local needs has to be strengthened. To achieve this with success, participation and representation of diversity could probably be best achieved in the framework of a decentralized decision making and implementation framework.