

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

### The 2006 HDR for Croatia

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Human development has two sides:

- The formation of human capabilities—such as improved health, knowledge and skills.
- The use that people make of their acquired capabilities for leisure and productive purposes, or for being active in cultural, social and political affairs.

However in an average society, some 10-20% of citizens are in a state of exclusion as they have been simply left behind! Discrimination on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, disability or other differences, as well as prejudice, injustice or simple neglect violate the basic human right of individuals to be productive members of the community and develop a sense of self-esteem, pride and ultimately happiness, by knowing that they are appreciated.

In Croatia according to the NHDR: **Unplugged: Faces of Social Exclusion in Croatia**, 20 social groups has been found to be at the greatest risk of social exclusion including those with physical and intellectual disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, the long term unemployed, the homeless, returnees, single parents, children without parental care, victims of domestic violence, Roma, sexual minorities, the elderly, people with lower levels of education, and youth with behavioral difficulties.

These groups find themselves socially marginalized due to limited access to social services, employment, education, housing, and human rights.

Since Croatia's EU candidacy process it would be, in my opinion, important to cooperate with the European Commission (EC) in order to align Croatian social policies with EU standards, and develop action plan to combat poverty and social exclusion.

The action plan(s) and policy efforts that aim at correcting social exclusion must strike the right balance between social development and poverty reduction.

As Croatia furthers its economic development on its way into the EU, its citizens with post-secondary education, foreign language skills, and a high degree of computer literacy will have no difficulty finding employment. However, older employed individuals with less education, who are unilingual and computer illiterate, are most likely to encounter problems and risk social exclusion into the future. The “constant” education process needs to play an instrumental role in solving social exclusion SE, and not only through income increase. Although an important one, income is clearly only one option that people would like to have. Income does not defined peoples lives. Therefore, development must be more than just the expansion of income and wealth. Its focus must be people