

Disaggregated data within countries: national human development reports

Since 1992 some 135 countries have used country-owned processes to produce more than 450 national and regional human development reports. Many of these reports present data disaggregated along gender, ethnic, age, race, geographic or other lines, enabling deeper analysis of country-specific causes of inequality and poverty—and sometimes revealing systemic discrimination and serious deprivations. The reports have become crucial sources of the most recent disaggregated country data, contributing to policy strategies for advancing and tools for measuring progress on human development. The following examples show what the reports can help achieve:

- Since 1997 Brazil has calculated the human development index (HDI) annually for each of its more than 5,000 municipalities. In response the state of Minas Gerais introduced the Robin Hood Law, which allocates a proportion of tax

revenues to municipalities that rank low on the HDI and other indicators.

- Nepal's 2001 human development report used extensive disaggregated data that revealed significant inequities in the distribution of resources and opportunities, leading the report to conclude that weak governance is at the root of disappointing outcomes in poverty reduction. The report found that life expectancy averaged 51 years in the most disadvantaged castes—and 63 years for the Newar ethnic group.
- Egypt's annual human development reports disaggregate socio-economic, environmental, demographic and other indicators for each of the nation's 26 governorates. These data and the reports' findings form the basis for yearly meetings of the country's governors to jointly examine disparities and identify policy responses.
- Lithuania's 2000 report analysed urban-rural disparities in human development. Disaggregated

data for key indicators such as mortality, suicide, employment and education showed that rural Lithuanians are losing their ability to sustain themselves with traditional occupations—and no alternative, productive, sustainable livelihoods have emerged. The report warned that this trend could undermine social cohesion.

- Namibia's human development reports have examined human poverty by disaggregating the HDI across language groups. This disaggregation reveals high human development levels among predominantly European groups—people who speak Afrikaans, English or German—and very low levels among the San (bushmen). These findings have led to targeted investments in health, education and job creation.

Disaggregated data from the reports are available online at <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/hdr/>. (To view national human development reports online, see <http://hdr.undp.org>.)

Source: Human Development Report Office, National Human Development Report Unit.