Charting paths to transformation

Navigating uncertainty to expand human development

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The hero and the villain in today's uncertainty story is one and the same: human choices.

So, what practical choices can be made for the better?

This chapter emphasizes policies that focus on the Three I's: investment, insurance and innovation. Together, these will promote, protect and stimulate human development for people and planet to flourish in the face of new uncertainties.

Culture plays a big role, too. The chapter identifies three enablers of cultural change: education to cultivate evolving values, social recognition to legitimize them and representation to protect their inclusiveness and translate them into policies.

Enhancing human development—by expanding freedoms and achievements in wellbeing and agency—is an open-ended process filled with new possibilities. Uncertainty is part of that journey, and as human ingenuity pushes forward the frontier of the possible, new unintended consequences are bound to arise, good and bad. And new challenges can mean room for new opportunities. To thrive under uncertainty, as important as averting the negative consequences of well-intended actions, is to grab the opportunities that emerge.

Today we seem to be living through several unintended consequences of progress, as reflected in part in the three layers of uncertainty—the dangerous planetary changes in the Anthropocene, the unpredictability in uncharted transitions, and the social division and polarization of societies. Our choices and the values that underpin them have at times promoted socially, economically and environmentally unsustainable policies and development paths. Inequalities have allowed a few to benefit while many get left behind.

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The image of the "empty box" in chapter 1, with no country so far achieving a very high Human Development Index (HDI) value with low pressures on the planet, suggests that our societies need to devise new ways of pursuing development. Chasing higher GDP per capita or even higher HDI values alone is not enough.

The call is thus for transformational change, which requires enhancing social arrangements to address people's insecurity and unsettledness. But this provides only a partial response. We are not confronting a small adjustment or transitory imbalance. We are navigating uncharted territory, where social and planetary systems are adjusting simultaneously. The assumption in much economic analysis that all other conditions remain unchanged does not hold.

Transformational change may be needed beyond policies and institutional arrangements. Societies also might need to shift social norms, beliefs and values (introduced in chapter 3 as culture). The

Dasgupta Review on the economics of biodiversity argues for ensuring that societies' demands on nature do not exceed nature's sustainable supply, for adopting different metrics of economic success and for transforming our institutions and systems—particularly those in finance and education—to enable these changes and sustain them for future generations.[1] But the review goes further, coming to a startling conclusion: "No social mechanism can meet this problem in its entirety, meaning that no institution can be devised to enforce socially responsible conduct."[2]

The problem is that humans are embedded in nature, so current and future wellbeing depends on maintaining the integrity of the biosphere, yet people's conduct is undermining that very integrity. As if this were not challenging enough, the Dasgupta Review argues that "unlike the economics of climate change, [...] the economics of biodiversity [...] requires not only national and intergovernmental engagement, but engagement by communities and civil societies throughout the world."[3] How, then, can such a problem be solved? If these conclusions are startling, the recommendation on what to do may seem even more so: "It would seem then that, ultimately, we each have to serve as judge and jury for our own actions. And that cannot happen unless we develop an affection for Nature and its processes."[4]

Social mechanisms to address collective problems usually rely on appealing to people's interests (such as price incentives to tax pollution) or creating institutions (property rights over land or a specific resource, such as a forest). Interests and institutions clearly matter, but the headline recommendation of the Dasgupta Review can be interpreted to take us to the world of ideas—or of culture (chapter 3).

And why invoke the relevance of ideas, of culture, now? Many communities in history have had a deep affection for nature. Chief Elesi of Odogbolu living in Nigeria stated in 1917: "I conceive that land belongs to a vast family of which many are dead, few are living and countless others unborn."[5] The 2020 Human Development Report documented how indigenous peoples over time have held—and today in many communities around the world continue to hold—beliefs and values that reflect "an affection for Nature and its processes."[6] Many are persecuted and killed when their actions based on such beliefs come into conflict with interests shaped by existing institutions,

from mining to expanding agriculture.[7] But now the challenges that we confront go beyond climate change and preserving the integrity of biodiversity functions: these are but two of the manifestations of our Anthropocene context.

In addition to dangerous planetary change, the other layers of uncertainty documented in this Report are unsettling people's lives. The conflicts that play out at the local level between indigenous peoples and firms or authorities are a microcosm of a broader set of tensions that may not be resolved by arbitrating between competing interests. It seems reasonable to suggest, in addition to re-examining policies and institutions (which is typically the remit of work such as the Human Development Report), that the cultural context—the ideas, broadly defined to include practices, beliefs, norms, values and technologies—also bears re-examining to explore a way forward as we navigate today's uncertain world.

Examining culture opens new vistas for the range of possible actions by those in positions of power and the potential for new social mechanisms to address the unprecedented challenges we are confronting today. But that requires two things. First is broadening our perspective on the determinants of people's choices. And second is reflecting on more recent perspectives about what culture is, how it changes across contexts and over time and how it is used by people in strategic ways, rather than as a fixed latent variable working silently in the background. Key for both is recognizing the importance of agency and freedom, the tenets of the human development approach (chapter 3).

A framework to embrace uncertainty

Navigating the uncertainty complex demands doubling down on human development to ensure that people have the capabilities to harness the potential embedded in uncertain times. "The cunning of uncertainty opens new spaces and facilitates the emergence of alternative options. Ambiguities permit boundary crossings where closure between knowledge domains or areas of strictly defined expertise have reigned. Ambiguities do not mean that everything becomes fuzzy and porous or that anything goes. They mean acknowledging that social life is full of contradictions and that social beings have the ability to navigate between them. Once they have the necessary resources, they also negotiate with each other viable options for living together."[8]

> "Navigating the uncertainty complex demands doubling down on human development to ensure that people have the capabilities to harness the potential embedded in uncertain times

We propose a two-tier framework to respond to a dual gap in our uncertain times. On the one hand, a mismatch between current social arrangements struggling to promote human security and to tackle people's unsettledness. On the other hand, a mismatch between prevalent beliefs and values and what might be needed to navigate through the uncertainty complex (figure 6.1).

The first tier is about what to do, with a focus on concrete transformations on three fronts: investment, insurance and innovation.

- Investment, in the capabilities people will need to enable socioeconomic and planetary conditions for human flourishing.
- Insurance, to protect people from the unavoidable contingencies of uncertain times, safeguarding their capabilities, including their fundamental freedoms (enhancing human security).
- Innovation, to foster capabilities that might not exist today.

The second tier is about how to generate the broader social and contextual conditions for change to take hold, acknowledging the role of culture as described in chapter 3.

- Education, to strengthen agency and encourage people to shape their own future.
- Recognition, to acknowledge human rights and respect for people's identities and values to change scripts and narratives that build hope in society.
- Representation, to amplify the power and voice that strengthen representation and agency.

Insights from cultural change suggest cultivating motivating principles that can both enhance social arrangements and shape cultural evolution in uncertain times.[9] The motivating principles highlighted in this Report are flexibility, creativity, solidarity and inclusion (spotlight 6.1).

No single set of policy recommendations can suit every context and every country, but using these principles as a compass can help navigate through the layers

Figure 6.1 A two-tier framework for transformation
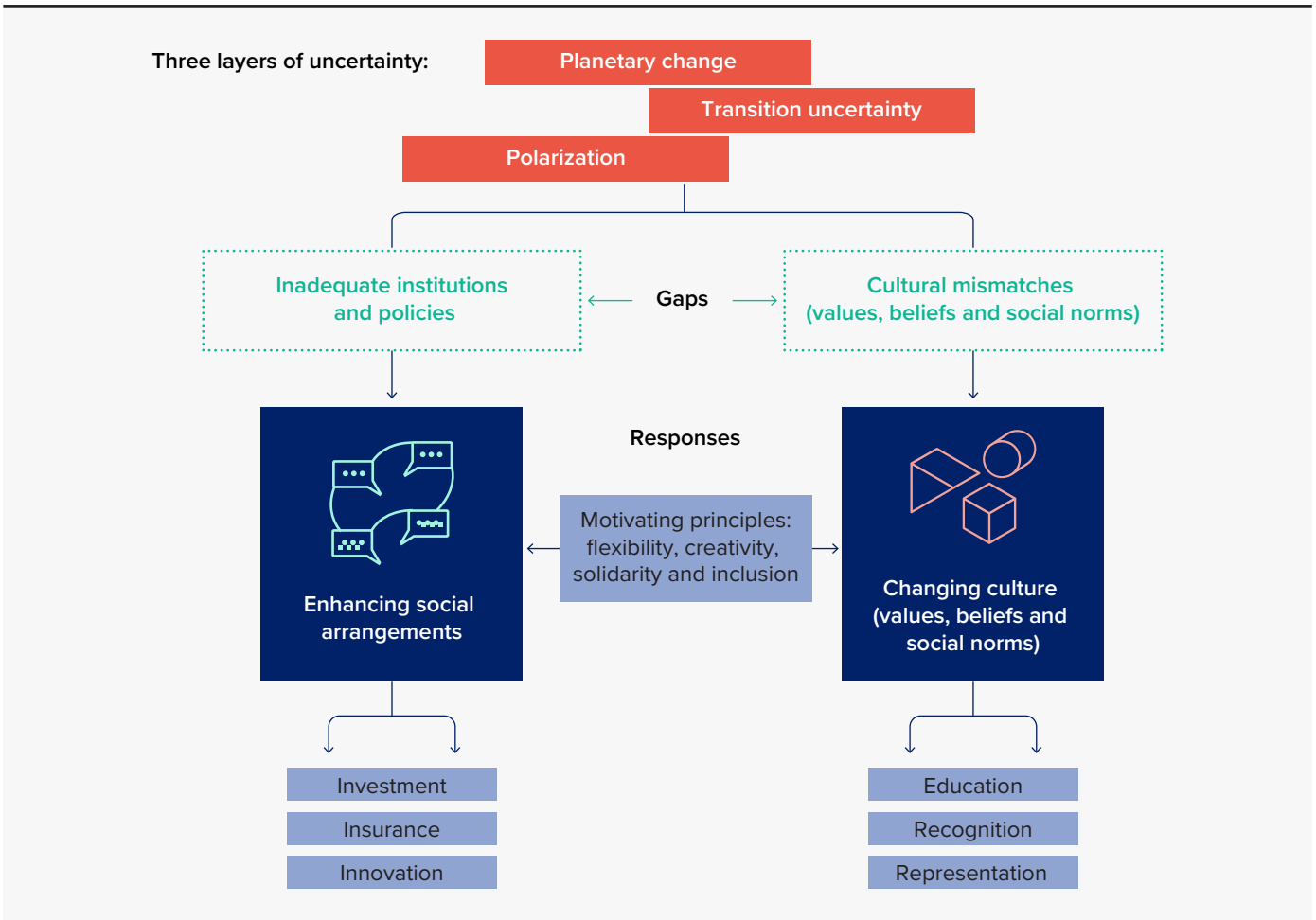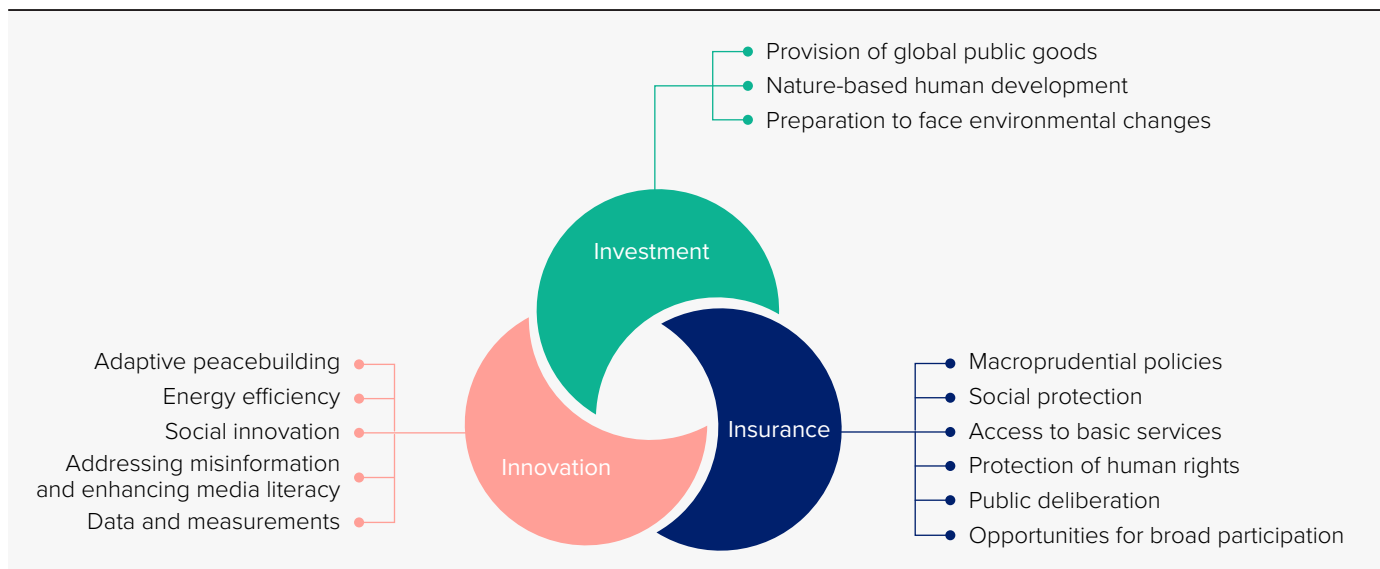

Source: Human Development Report Office.

of uncertainty and inspire people to embrace uncertainty. Flexibility, creativity, solidarity and inclusion build pathways to transformation by strengthening resilience[10] and agency,[11] as they increase communities' capacity to thrive in environments characterized by change. For instance, in the context of societal responses to Covid-19 in the G7 countries, differences in solidarity and agency were much more marked than in the economic and environmental policies pursued, pointing to the importance of supplementing economic policies with solidarity- and agency-enhancing actions.[12]

Investment, insurance and innovation towards continually expanding human development

Thriving under uncertainty is possible. Three policy building blocks that would shape transformations to expand human development could provide support in facing the layers of uncertainty from dangerous planetary change, uncharted transitions and polarization. The first is investment, encompassing people and financial and natural resources. The second is insurance mechanisms that guarantee protection or compensation in the case of shocks or threats emanating from planetary imbalances or insecurities and that can bring a greater sense of control. The third is innovation, to embrace change, looking for new solutions through creativity, iterative learning and diverse perspectives. Investment, insurance and innovation all safeguard and promote agency, thus advancing human development. Implementing these mechanisms aims to grow opportunities for the future while advancing human potential in the present.[13] Figure 6.2 identifies some of the policy examples explored below.

Figure 6.2 Making people more secure though investment, insurance and innovation

- Provision of global public goods
- Nature-based human development
- Preparation to face environmental changes

Investment

Adaptive peacebuilding
Energy efficiency
Social innovation
Addressing misinformation and enhancing media literacy
Data and measurements

Innovation

Insurance

- Macroprudential policies
- Social protection
- Access to basic services
- Protection of human rights
- Public deliberation
- Opportunities for broad participation

Source: Human Development Report Office.

Investment—in capabilities to thrive under uncertainty

The first building block encompasses investment in the capabilities required to successfully navigate an uncertain future. It includes policies focused on enhancing capabilities as well as on forming the assets to do so—meaning different forms of capital, including natural capital.

The context of multilayered uncertainties sets up new challenges but also new possibilities for the long-standing aspiration to provide global public goods.[14] On the challenges the three layers of uncertainty render investments in global public goods more difficult: the planetary scale of the Anthropocene's challenges generates a mismatch with the geographic scope of national governments,[15] while political polarization and transition uncertainty complicate how domestic priorities are weighed against international challenges. This was made starkly clear during the Covid-19 pandemic, as the world struggled and failed to ensure universal access to personal protective equipment and then vaccines, despite having the scientific, technological and financial capacities to make the investments needed to do so.[16]

But the uncertainty complex also makes the case for investing in providing global public goods more compelling. The additional investment to avoid future pandemics is estimated to be $15 billion a year.[17]

This is a tiny fraction of the economic cost of the Covid-19 pandemic (without considering any human cost in lives lost or learning lost): more than $7 trillion in lost production and more than $16.9 trillion in emergency fiscal responses.[18] The investment is also very small compared with the $650 billion dollar issuance of special drawing rights.[19] The rational case for investing in global public goods has been made many times, as has the need to craft appropriate arrangements that sustain international coordination or cooperation.[20]

But with the recognition of the uncertainty complex lies the opportunity to look across the interactions of the layers of uncertainty and not only work through formal existing structures and rules but also encourage experimentation and innovation.[21] This can be advanced by recognizing that providing global public goods in a context of novel uncertainty can be enhanced with institutions of multilevel governance offering compelling narratives that foster cooperation and coordination through the legitimacy of envisioning better futures.[22] These institutions would embrace uncertainty, which means adopting policies and strategies robust to many alternative futures. Normative goals—if formulated with participation, flexibility to iterate and informed rigorous research—could help produce assessments that offer more robust policy options beyond just alerting the world of the extreme possibilities to come.[23] They could be

even more robust if these assessments took a holistic view, focusing on the behaviour of the individual components and agents in socioecological systems as well as their interactions and relationships.[24]

Investment is also essential in complex governance systems (governmental and beyond) that can experiment, respond quickly, draw on all relevant knowledge and account for heterogeneity of societies, while overcoming the power imbalances that entrench vested interests. This would promote inclusion and build trust for sustained collective action and solidarity (box 6.1). Investing in governance also means crafting systems that can redress inequality and provide individual and group recognition to enable dignity by, among other things, strengthening social policies and fostering civic (re)engagement and participation.[25]

Investment is also needed in nature-based human development, including bottom-up efforts that rely

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Box 6.1 **Governance for systemic and transformational change**

The Anthropocene represents a complex set of crises of a kind humanity has not previously confronted. Human impact on the planet and unsustainable economic and social systems virtually guarantee environmental and societal upheaval for the foreseeable future. Every polity will experience the effects for generations to come.

Complexity theory helps us understand what it takes to manage such systemic problems: holistic analysis, constant experimentation and the inclusion of many disciplines and perspectives. But our existing governance processes are designed largely to sort people and issues into siloed boxes onto which "optimal" procedures can be applied, sandpapering away the diversity and volatility that characterize reality.

It is entirely possible to govern for the complex systemic problems we confront.[1] Such governance must focus not just on the behaviour of individual components and actors in interrelated systems but also on their interactions and relationships.[2] It must adopt policies and strategies that are robust to alternative futures and adaptable in the face of rapid change. Specifically, it must aim to (re)build social capital at scale, build meaningful networks across decision silos and create effective, inclusive layers of governance that keep decisionmaking as close to local knowledge as possible. To those ends governance should be based on four principles: systemic thinking, transparency, social inclusion and subsidiarity.

The most important change that Anthropocene governance requires is the shift to systemic thinking and decisionmaking. Some of the actions decisionmakers can take are mapping the system using social or organizational network analysis;[3] employing tools such as scenario-based planning for a variety of alternative outcomes and conditions;[4] and continuously monitoring, evaluating and assessing the impact of policies.

Transparency in governance refers to the degree to which information is available to all stakeholders and enables them to have an informed voice in decisions and assess the choices made by insiders.[5] It is essential both for accountability and for making governance effective and responsive, as meaningful transparency permits feedback on how well policies and experiments are working and what adaptations may be needed.

Inclusion in governance refers to expanding meaningful participation to a wide array of stakeholders and ensuring they have both deliberative and decisionmaking powers. Governance must prioritize inclusivity for three reasons: it is necessary for reducing power imbalances, networks with a diverse and distributed structure are more resilient to shocks and disruptions, and greater inclusion fosters legitimacy.

Subsidiarity made possible by adequate transparency and inclusion then becomes a key principle for creating resilience in a multilayered governance structure. It refers to how "social and political issues should be dealt with at the most immediate level consistent with their adequate resolution."[6] If practised well, governance based on subsidiarity can bolster the efficacy and legitimacy of policy responses because local authorities tend to be physically closer, more connected and more visible to the people they serve.

Governance based on these principles gives humanity its best shot at effectively and justly transforming the existing systems for creating, using and disposing of the material substrate of human society. Such governance has the potential to shift us towards greater adaptability, to strengthen the societal trust that is key to effective governance in challenging times and to improve prospects for sustainable development in the Anthropocene.

Notes
1. Florini, LaForge and Sharma 2022. **2.** Colander and Roland 2014; Florini, LaForge and Sharma 2022. **3.** Yang, Keller and Zheng 2016. **4.** Kupers and Wilkinson 2014. **5.** Florini 2013. **6.** Arato, Cohen and von Busekist 2018, p. 43.
Source: Florini, LaForge and Sharma 2022.

on the inclusion, participation and knowledge of local communities and indigenous peoples,[26] leveraging their potential to both learn and scale up transformative change.[27] Examples include investing in green areas to manage the risk of extreme temperatures, reducing ecosystem-based disaster risk, improving water quality, ensuring water availability and improving agricultural practices to ensure food security. The value of these efforts often goes beyond the contributions to communities. So, instead of treating them as isolated initiatives, countries should integrate them into national development priorities across domains, including water security, food security, disaster risk reduction and economic performance. Nature-based human development both relies on and can enhance the agency of local communities and indigenous peoples; it also provides for diverse visions of what is a good life, incorporates justice and inclusion in conservation and promotes education and knowledge sharing.

"Investing in mechanisms that prepare local communities to face rapid environmental changes such as food insecurity can increase agency and freedoms by fostering inclusion and solidarity

Investing in mechanisms that prepare local communities to face rapid environmental changes[28] such as food insecurity can increase agency and freedoms by fostering inclusion and solidarity (spotlight 6.2).

Insurance—against the interacting layers of uncertainty

Insurance guarantees protection or compensation against shocks emanating from the interacting layers of uncertainty. A key goal is to enhance human security. As chapter 4 describes, human insecurity not only constrains agency and fundamental freedoms but also hinders collective action. People have always confronted adverse outcomes—illness, death or injuries that preclude someone from providing for the household—and extended families, friends and local communities have often been a source of support.

Charities or religious institutions have sometimes helped. Groups engaged in dangerous occupations such as mining established mutual societies

for an injured or incapacitated member of the group to receive support from the others, and some market insurance eventually developed out of these arrangements.

It is critical to expand market insurance, under properly regulated frameworks that protect users and address several of the well-known market failures in insurance markets (including moral hazard and adverse selection). Equally important, market insurance providers will face the challenge of innovating to offer services that address the novel context of uncertainty, for which existing actuarial practices may not be fully adequate.

It is also crucial to expand, and innovate in, social insurance. Over the 20th century government-funded social insurance programmes expanded around the world. Public social welfare spending in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries grew from a median of 0.4 percent of GDP in 1900 to 18.6 percent in 2017. Private (mandatory and voluntary) social welfare spending has also increased in recent decades, from a median of 1.1 percent of GDP in OECD countries in 1980 to 2.1 percent in 2017—reaching more than 10 percent in the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States.[29]

There is great diversity across countries in the level and categories of spending, in the mix of taxation to fund government programmes and in the reliance on private provision. But the bulk of the increase in OECD countries is related to contributory social insurance programmes to support older people and to pay for healthcare expenses, with both workers and employees contributing to fund government programmes. Denmark and New Zealand rely, instead, on general tax revenues only. Most striking, however, is how much less spending there is in non-OECD countries: total social protection spending increased from a median of 4.5 percent of GDP in 2000 to only 6.3 percent in 2015 in 46 countries that account for most of the world's population. In several African countries less than 3 percent of the population living in the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution is expected to rely on support from governments or nongovernmental organizations—and the rest were most likely to rely on family and friends (box 6.2).[30]

Macroprudential measures can be implemented to promote financial stability, in part learning from the lessons of the 2007/2008 global financial crisis. Most

Box 6.2 The heightened importance of expanding and innovating in social protection

Expanding and improving social insurance, recognized as important for a while, acquire heightened relevance in today's uncertain times. Social insurance enhances human security and can stimulate risk taking and investment, supporting other elements of institutional change and policies. The reverse also holds: some investments can provide insurance. For instance, investments in nature-based human development can be an effective tool for achieving resilience to shocks.[1]

Key policies in this area relate to social protection[2] that can shield people against shocks, achieving a dual purpose: protection and promotion.[3] The need to balance both raises questions about the appropriate mix of targeted and universal policies. The interaction of inequalities, hierarchical power imbalances, polarization and conflicts can complicate reaching consensus for social policies.[4] Social protection income and providing public goods can reduce inequality while preventing political polarization, potentially reversing entrenched polarized attitudes.[5] So it is important to deliver mechanisms that reach everyone, independent of economic status. For instance, a social protection model that was born to tackle social protection simultaneously with climate adaptation and disaster risks is adaptative social protection.[6] Adaptative social protection builds safety nets (savings, insurance, information) to prepare households to act on unforeseen situations, so they can smooth consumption, retain assets and reduce exposure to shocks.[7]

Notes
1. Dasgupta 2021; DeFries 2020; UNDP 2020a. **2.** Social protection is concerned with protecting and helping those who are poor, marginalized or dealing with increased risks. Social protection includes a set of measures provided by the state, such as social assistance (noncontributory transfers in cash, vouchers, in-kind, free waivers and subsidies), social insurance, social care services and labour market programmes (Carter and others 2019). **3.** Drèze and Sen 1989. **4.** Ravallion 2017. **5.** Stewart, Plotkin and McCarty 2021. **6.** Arnall and others 2010; Bahadur and others 2015; Davies and others 2013. **7.** Bowen and others 2020.

central banks have stability objectives, and they apply different tools that work as insurance instruments to build resilience.[31] The most common mechanisms are countercyclical capital buffers and capital requirements, which serve as a shock absorber, sector-specific capital requirements for the banking sector, and loan-to-income or loan-to-value ratios that increase bank capital above the minimum.[32] Although in most countries these instruments are under the Central Bank's control, in some (such as Brazil and South Africa) decisionmaking responsibility is shared. Not all countries have the same mechanisms available—for example, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Peru and Türkiye use other prudential instruments such as reserve or cash requirements on domestic deposits. Reducing the costs of future systemic shocks and containing vulnerabilities require building macroeconomic prudency and coordinating with monetary policy.[33]

Approaches such as state-contingent debt instruments can help economies respond to shocks quickly and predictably. These instruments enable countries to manage their sovereign debt payments depending on changes in their capacity to pay as a direct result of shocks.[34] Mexico, Nigeria and Venezuela have linked these instruments to commodity prices (such as oil prices); Argentina, Greece and Ukraine have linked them to GDP variations; and Barbados and Grenada have linked them to the effects of natural hazards. State-contingent debt instruments act as insurance that gives countries the space to apply countercyclical and stabilization policies that are immediately triggered after well-specified adverse events take place. After the event, and by contract, either the maturity or the volume of payments to creditors (or both) is adjusted to give more fiscal space to the sovereign debtor. Creditors can count on a predictable response as specified in the contract, as opposed to being subject to ad hoc and unpredictable processes of potential debt restructuring.[35]

Access to financial services can greatly contribute to people's abilities to navigate changing and uncertain economic conditions. Financial inclusion can reduce poverty and inequality through access to credit and insurance.[36] Moreover, digital banking and payment, loan and credit services enable wider financial inclusion, especially among underserved groups and in low- and middle-income countries.[37] Financial literacy is an important accompaniment to greater financial inclusion because it develops tools, knowledge, confidence and awareness related to personal and business finances. Important state-led and

private initiatives exist to strengthen these capabilities—for example, by incorporating financial literacy content in education curricula.[38]

One of the main challenges policymakers face is inadequate coverage of the people most likely to be left behind. Targeted social policies that are based on income can easily exclude informal workers. Such policies might have requirements that leave individuals at higher risk of slipping through the cracks.[39] With these challenges combining with other recent threats, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the focus of the debate has shifted more to universalism. An example to take advantage of the structures that have already been built is the implementation of systems that benefit all, such as universal access to health, education, care or income.[40]

A minimum guaranteed income has been tested through pilot projects in India, Kenya and Namibia.[41] One of the main operational challenges for these programmes is that they are financed by taxation, and countries with lower incomes have limited formal tax systems and income data.[42] Another concern is that a minimum guaranteed income does not provide an integrated solution across other human development dimensions, so it could divert resources from other government-subsidized or universal services, such as education, and distort economic incentives. However, a universal basic income needs to be seen not only in the context of the world today—in which limited government resources and acute needs may tilt the argument towards targeted transfers—but also as preparing for the world of tomorrow, when the nature of future work may change.[43]

Many have advocated shifting the debate towards universal basic services, to guarantee that everyone meets their basic needs and has expanded opportunities and participation independent from contingencies.[44] Universal access to services can still lead to inequalities in human development. And as the recent Special Report on Human Security points out, universalism must consider equity and quality and not just cover essential needs.[45] In some countries health and education are already built on universal basic service principles, but this can be expanded to housing, care, transportation, information, security and nutrition.[46] Universal access to mental health services[47] enables people to deal with mental distress and thrive, and these services could be offered within existing social structures, such as schools and community centres.

> **" Good practices in promoting human rights point towards identifying what binds us together and engaging people in dialogue about human rights in their daily lives**

Universal basic services are also based on solidarity, as it recognizes that needs and the responsibility to fulfil them are shared in the collective. A study of 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean determined that policies across the region explicitly mention that no child or adolescent should be left out of the education system and designed methodologies based on the Universal Design for Learning.[48] In El Salvador's Modelo Escuela Inclusiva de Tiempo Pleno, flexible pedagogic programmes were adapted for different students based on inclusion principles.[49] The study also highlights that the challenge for inclusive education is achieving not just a technical change but also a social change. When approaching universal policies in practice, it is important to consider all actors (teachers, administrators, parents), create local support networks and transform the institutional culture with a shift in attitudes and norms.[50]

Protecting human rights can work as insurance by shielding people in times of uncertainty (box 6.3). Mechanisms that rebuild trust and promote understanding,[51] respect, inclusion and equality can help in navigating conflicts and impacts of displacement. In some cases policy design and programme selection that consider human and environmental rights can be helpful in a context of contested and uncertain futures.[52] Examples include strategic impact assessments, regulatory impact assessments and cost-benefit analyses that consider both international and local regulations, such as access to water and full citizenship and recognition of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or another sexual minority (LGBTQI+).[53]

Good practices in promoting human rights point towards identifying what binds us together and engaging people in dialogue about human rights in their daily lives.[54] Practices such as volunteerism and policy mechanisms that favor inclusion and that enhance deliberative processes can also be interpreted

Box 6.3 Navigating uncertainty—the human rights anchor

In a context of uncertainty, it is extremely difficult (maybe impossible) to think of ideal scenarios or optimal policies. Even more so in a context of a plurality of views, where decisions are heavily affected by cultural context and emotions (chapter 3).[1] Amartya Sen advocated that it is possible to make progress in assessing policy objectives without necessarily searching for the conditions of an ideal world. The key is to identify "clearly remediable injustices."[2] Not an easy task, either. But humanity has made remarkable progress in defining some normative principles that should remain valid in the new context. Probably the most important consensus is encoded in the internationally agreed 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Human rights and human development are linked.[3] Their concepts have a common motivation, and several human rights can be seen as rights to capabilities. However, capabilities tend to refer to the opportunity to choose among different alternatives for what one would like to do (opportunity freedoms), while human rights also encompass the chance to choose freely (process freedoms).[4]

In times of change and deep uncertainty, human rights become even more salient to guide our collective actions for three main reasons.

First, in a context of deep social and planetary transformations, is that they retain the focus on people.

Second is their emphasis on fundamental freedoms, which depend not only on achievements but also on the agency of people (a dimension that has often been missing in public discussions; see chapter 3). In this space human security is a subset of these fundamental freedoms (freedom from fear, from want and from indignity), explicitly mentioned in the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Third is their universality. This defines a space of equality across all people on the planet. The 2019 Human Development Report highlights that this condition (inherited by the description of several Sustainable Development Goals) allows the analysis of inequalities to be refocused beyond income, including on the gaps in agency and freedoms.[5] The 2020 Human Development Report underscores that the lack of recognition of human rights amid dangerous planetary change can perpetuate discrimination and injustice and makes navigation harder in the Anthropocene context.[6]

The universality of human rights also ensures their validity in the expanding digital world. This is critical for protecting the right to participate in the cultural life of communities, the right to freedom of expression while addressing online hate speech and disinformation, and the right to privacy.[7]

Notes
1. As indicated in the introduction of this chapter, in these times humans will have to serve as judge and jury for their own actions (Dasgupta 2021). **2.** See discussion in Sen (2009b). **3.** Sen 2005. **4.** Sen 2005. **5.** UNDP 2019. **6.** Leach and others 2018; UNDP 2020a. **7.** Bachelet 2022.

as advancing insurance (spotlight 6.3) in addition to promoting human rights.

Innovation—expanding societies' chances to thrive in uncertainty

Innovation refers to mechanisms that look for new approaches through creativity and iterative learning drawing from diverse perspectives. As chapter 5 mentions, technological innovation can expand societies' chances for thriving in uncertainty. It is important to prioritize investments in research and science to push the frontiers of knowledge and mobilize technological change to complement, and not replace, people. As chapter 1 highlights, it is also fundamental to innovate responsibly, addressing

justice and sustainability seeking to avoid power concentration.

Peacebuilding is one space where innovative approaches are being applied to manage complexity. Born out of new understanding of complexity and resilience, adaptive peacebuilding prioritizes iterative learning to sustain peace, where peace is seen as a continuous process rather than an end.[55] Drawing on insights from complexity theory, the approach recognizes that peacebuilding must respond to continuously changing circumstances. The objectives for peacebuilders then become working with communities and people affected by conflict, facilitating the creation of self-organized and resilient social institutions that can embrace uncertainties and channelling nonviolent responses to stressors and shocks.[56] This is achieved through participatory decisionmaking,

constant iteration and variety of solutions.[57] Lessons from church-based groups, local nongovernmental organizations and government initiatives for adaptive peacebuilding in Rwanda point to focusing on local needs for transitional justice. Religious institutions facilitated spaces for Hutu, Tutsi and Twa to come together and process their grief and honour their loved ones after the genocide. Civil society leaders encouraged Rwandans to take advantage of their cultural repertoires for healing. Through *kwihangana*,[58] communities achieved conflict resolution through patience and gift giving. Local nongovernmental organizations focused on tackling socioeconomic conditions and the mental health of women who had faced sexual violence. The government implemented efforts to resonate with local adaptive peacebuilding strategies,[59] teaching reconciliation in schools and providing a space for commemoration and public memory.

Because shocks, crises and conflicts can have serious effects on mental wellbeing, they should ideally be prevented. This is not always possible, but measures can be implemented to mitigate crises, and innovations can help improve mental wellbeing—for example, mechanisms that connect mental wellbeing to peacebuilding or psychological resilience building techniques.[60] (See spotlight 6.4 for an elaboration of the framework "Preventing distress, mitigating crises and building resilience" introduced in figure 2.9 in chapter 2).

" Even well-intended policies can overlook conditions that affect the groups most likely to be left behind. In these cases social movements and community initiatives innovate and experiment with alternative views, codes, values and practices using symbols, teach-ins, educational workshops and awareness raising

Urban communities are likely to have stronger networks due to the high density and proximity of services, actors and resources,[61] which set the conditions for innovative initiatives. In India it is very common that in the name of solidarity, communities mobilize to establish small-scale decentralized composting plants. The Residents' Initiative for a Safe Environment started in Bengaluru with 1,200 households coordinating waste separation and collection at composting sites. The initiative depended on engaging many households without external support and on their willingness to contribute financially.[62]

Innovation requires creative energy to address complex problems through community interactions.[63] Dangerous planetary change and new threats are pushing some countries to transition to clean energy systems. In India one of the challenges of distributing energy is rural areas, so the country has introduced the National Solar Mission, with mechanisms to encourage community-based off-grid projects.[64] Two initiatives based in the provinces of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have attempted different solutions to bring electricity to their communities.

Innovative organized actions can strengthen the individual and community repertoires and power, influence decisionmakers and transform traditional social norms and cultural behaviours.

Community involvement can also ensure that policies reflect people's priorities. Even well-intended policies can overlook conditions that affect the groups most likely to be left behind. In these cases social movements and community initiatives innovate and experiment with alternative views, codes, values and practices[65] using symbols, teach-ins, educational workshops and awareness raising.[66] In Israel a welfare-to-work programme was implemented to benefit the long-term unemployed, requiring all adults from beneficiary households to participate full time. But the programme did not account for the needs of those dependent on unpaid care work. A local group of men and women in one of the areas that lack day-care facilities started advocating for their right to participate in the labour market and to have access to care. The group organized a participatory needs assessment to express the needs of the community.[67] This example aligns with inclusive localism, focused on empowering and investing in the capabilities and agency of local communities.[68]

Innovation can also result from recombination or iteration.[69] Initiatives such as Thinking and Working Politically and Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation have an advantage when the problem is complex, the context is novel or the solutions are contentious.[70] For instance, the organization Funda Wande was created based on the fact that 58 percent of children in South Africa were unable to read for meaning in any language at the end of grade 4.[71] The organization aimed

to improve children's reading skills. Using the iterative adaptation approach[72] to deconstruct the problem, it identified four main causes: weak institutional functionality, undue union influence, weak teacher content and pedagogical skills, and wasted learning time.

> " Another area that requires innovation is tackling misinformation. Major social media platforms have enacted policies such as notices, warnings and links to resources on misinformation

Local actors, native language speakers, teachers and other relevant stakeholders were brought in for another diagnosis, which identified teacher training and reading materials as action entry points. In Eastern Cape and Limpopo, two of the worst performing provinces, iterating and revising practices led to teaching materials being produced in local languages, thereby adapting them to each setting. Only a cheaper set of materials in native languages would accomplish widespread readership. The organization currently runs its programme in 30 schools in Eastern Cape, 80 schools in Limpopo and 50 schools in Western Cape.[73]

Another area that requires innovation is tackling misinformation. Social media have transformed the methods, speed and scale of spreading misinformation, especially where it is organized and intentional (spotlight 6.5). Major social media platforms have enacted policies such as notices, warnings and links to resources on misinformation. For example, links to official information by the World Health Organization are suggested under posts mentioning Covid-19 on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. And Twitter alerts users who share an article without opening the link first. At the same time fact-checking initiatives have been created by users of these platforms, and media plurality has been strengthened through new and independent outlets that could not exist or have the means to inform in the traditional media landscape, often at the local and grassroot levels.

Innovation is also important when it comes to new ways of measuring human development (box 6.4). Motivated scientists can fulfil a social role[74]—for example, in contributing to green transitions through advocating for taxes on pollution.[75] Committed researchers and scientists who let their values guide their work are a powerful force, as they can draw society's attention to the perils of climate change[76] or other development challenges. In this sense there is also a need to expand the research and measurement of social norms (perceptions and values),[77] as understanding them is also key to socially coordinating people.[78] Beyond data collection, research is developing models to predict social norm change and methodological tools to test the causal effect of social norms.[79]

Drawing from cultural change

For investment, insurance and innovation strategies to promote agency and advance human development, opportunities for common deliberation to accompany cultural change are important (figure 6.3). Building a solid institutional capacity open to diversity and deliberation can be seen as insurance in uncertain times. Under uncertainty, mismatches between current and needed institutions can emerge.[80] Strengthening intergroup contact[81] can reduce hostilities against other parties and provide opportunities for common deliberation that fosters cultural change.[82]

Education, social recognition and representation[83] are some of the ways stakeholders can encourage cultural change supportive of investment, insurance and innovation.[84]

Education to cultivate evolving values

Education—a powerful tool to instil reasoning and critical thinking, opening possibilities for new values and attitudes in younger generations—is key for agency. It can encourage people to act regarding climate change and other Anthropocene pressures, providing them with ownership and agency to shape their own future and hold decisionmakers to account.[85] Governments and other organizations have explored myriad education curricula to shape the next generations' wellbeing. One is comprehensive sexuality education,[86] an approach that schools around the world are implementing to improve sexual reproductive health, prevent dating violence and increase understanding

Box 6.4 Augmenting the resolution of the Human Development Index values using satellite imagery and artificial intelligence

Data collection to measure human development is challenging. It is difficult to get accurate and high-quality information for some regions across the globe. In this context remote technology and satellite imagery can help researchers and decisionmakers observe, explore and evaluate the status of human development[1] in a timely, consistent and affordable way[2] and can fill gaps in official statistics.[3]

The availability of geolocalized and satellite imagery data can inform decisionmakers of where to implement policies, who to target and how to allocate resources efficiently.[4] For example, targeted policies or programmes that require monitoring Human Development Index (HDI) values at the local level. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates HDI values at the national level based on country-level data, but some countries produce subnational estimates. There have been prior efforts to measure HDI values locally, producing a snapshot at the state or province level using survey and administrative data,[5] but these remain spatially coarse and expensive to produce.

A recent collaboration between UNDP and academic researchers uses daytime and night-time satellite imagery to estimate HDI values at highly disaggregated geographic resolution (box figure 1).[6] Using a machine-learning technique, it is possible to train an artificial intelligence algorithm that associates image elements with HDI values, employing these image elements to estimate HDI values at the local scale.

Box figure 1 Estimates of Human Development Index values at the state or province and county levels in selected countries of Africa, the Middle East and Latin America
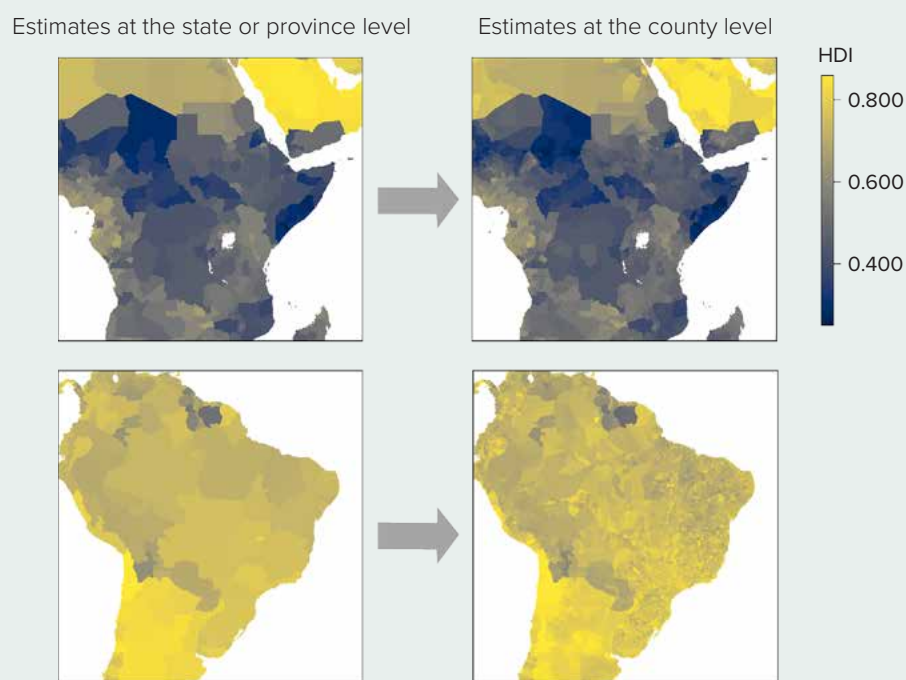
Source: Based on Sherman and others (2022) and Smits and Permanyer (2019). Maps from https://globaldatalab.org/shdi/maps/.

These results are experimental since there are no official local HDI values to fully validate these estimates. Nevertheless, new measurement tools are promising and have great potential to be scaled up, with appropriate benchmarking and data calibration.[7] Combining satellite imagery and machine learning is an exciting direction for future research to expand how the HDI is used for decisionmaking.

Notes
1. Doll, Muller and Elvidge 2000. **2.** Qi, Wang and Sutton 2021. **3.** Andreano and others 2021. **4.** Bedi, Coudouel and Simler 2007. **5.** Smits and Permanyer 2019. **6.** Sherman and others 2022. **7.** Head and others 2017.
Source: Human Development Report Office based on Sherman and others (2022).

Figure 6.3 Accompanying cultural changes with education, recognition and representation

Recognition
- Human rights laws
- Change scripts and narratives
- Media campaigns to prevent discrimination
- Reduce mental health stigma

Representation
- Increase diversity in public spaces
- Transitional justice
- Equal participation in decisionmaking
- Support social movements

Education
- Educational curricula
- Schools embodying diversity
- Horizontal teaching practices
- Build teachers' capacity
- Prevent violent extremisms

Accompany cultural changes

Source: Human Development Report Office based on Lamont (forthcoming).

of diverse sexual orientation and gender identities. The curriculum has contributed to the normalization of same-sex romantic relationships and the reduction of homophobia and homophobic bullying and harassment in schools. It has also led to shifting norms around intimate partner violence, leading to the reduction of such cases as a result.[87]

Discussions of the role of education for change in social norms envisage schools as a space that embodies inclusion and diversity. Teaching practices also affect students' beliefs and trust in institutions. Education not only dictates the content of students' learning—the what—but also the how and with whom. The how relates to teaching practices that have an impact on student beliefs and world views. In some cases educational attainment shapes one's beliefs. Across countries women with higher educational attainment are less likely to believe that husbands are justified in beating their wives if they argue.[88] In addition, research sheds light on how different teaching styles have divergent impacts on students' values. Students who are taught with horizontal teaching practices that entail working in groups on projects are more likely to participate in civic life, believe in cooperation with others and tolerate different ideas.[89]

The question of with whom students receive education is equally critical. Education that provides space

for students of various backgrounds contributes to norm changes, especially tolerance for differences and diversity.[90] For example, students can understand by their lived experiences that gender does not determine one's ability to learn or perform. Teachers' attitudes towards female students also affect how students view equality among the sexes. In India, when the government of Delhi made a policy to provide at least 20 percent of the seating in elite schools to students from low-income households, students with high economic status were more understanding and had less discriminatory views against the poor students.[91] Hence, regular personal interactions enabled by the inclusion and diversity policy in education destigmatized economically marginalized individuals.

By the same token, efforts to prevent violent extremism through education aim to use education to create a space for inclusion and a sense of belonging for young people at risk of joining violent extremist groups. Here, education serves as an alternative for such young people, as one underlying driver to join violent extremist groups appears to be feeling excluded and marginalized in the community and seeking a sense of belonging in militia groups.[92] Education also provides new knowledge and fosters critical thinking to strengthen students' resilience and prevent them from subscribing to extremist ideologies when

exposed to them. It can thus be a catalyst for norm change and an instrument that empowers students to shape new norms and culture.

Recognition to enhance legitimacy

Social recognition can be accomplished through changes in laws and regulations to recognize human rights, media campaigns to raise awareness or changes in policy narratives to recognize the interest of right holders and respect for their identities and values. Take policies on recognizing same-sex relationships. A recent study using data from the European Social Surveys evaluated the change in narratives and attitudes towards different sexual orientations in Europe after 17 countries legalized same-sex marriage and 11 legalized same-sex civil unions. Individuals living in countries with legal recognition of same-sex relationships showed more positive attitudes towards LGBT people. These results are consistent with legitimacy models, where legal recognition legitimates a group in society and attitudes towards the group adjust as a result.[93]

" Social recognition can help change scripts and narratives to portray groups in different ways and build hope in society

Social recognition can help change scripts and narratives to portray groups in different ways and build hope in society. Climate change activism among indigenous young people in New Zealand has faced multiple challenges to transforming narratives, such as anthropocentrism, racism, adultism or generic recommendations to fight planetary change. Nevertheless, through activism and changes in education Māori youth narratives based on stories of colonization and indigenous systems of values and beliefs have had a ripple effect, enabling children and young people to feel a sense of hope and empowerment.[94] "Governance of climate and natural resources emerges best when rooted in stories about human purpose, identity, duty and responsibility."[95]

Nondiscrimination mechanisms can enhance an individual's ability to choose. These include preventing those most likely to be left behind from being discriminated against in access to resources such as health, education, land, natural resources, and labour and financial markets. Media campaigns to prevent discrimination, reduce stigma or promote narratives that influence power balance are examples. Consider the high rates of violence against women and girls in East Africa. A recent innovation randomly implemented a media campaign across 112 villages, reaching more than 10,000 citizens. Results from interviews several months after the experiment showed an increase in the willingness to report violence against women and girls to the authorities.[96]

Media campaigns can also reduce discrimination and stigma, contribute to equal access to resources and increase freedoms and agency. In Bangladesh a popular animated television programme, Meena, portrayed a nine-year-old female lead who dreamed of learning and discovered her math and writing skills through the episodes. The programme reduced the cultural and religious stigma of girls going to school in rural areas and increased their attendance.[97] It focused on describing how religious and cultural practices can generate discrimination and affect girls' lives and health. By influencing beliefs around girls accessing education, the narratives could balance power and change social norms.

More attention is needed as well to dismantle stigmatization of mental health, which can be achieved by changing social norms and narratives.[98] In Ghana and Kenya the Time to Change Global campaign tackled stigma and discrimination against mental health, disseminating on social media videos of real experiences with stigma and myths about mental health. According to an evaluation, there was a significant positive impact: in Ghana the desire to socially distance from people with mental health challenges was reduced, and in Kenya knowledge of mental health increased.[99] Narratives can thus work as lenses that allow people to look at mental health from a different perspective.

Representation to advance inclusiveness

Finally, representation, power and voice can foster people's ability to influence and participate while encouraging others. Increasing the representation, power and voice of diverse experiences in public spaces, institutions, governance processes, leadership positions, art, film, photography, music

and writing can shape the definitions of who matters, foster their agency and encourage other people to participate. Recent research to explore the impact of women's representation in Cameroon's parliament found that their presence increases their participation in decisionmaking structures and influences the topics the parliament debates.[100]

Considering intergenerational relationships can also point out mechanisms related to reparations, reconciliation and transitional justice.[101] Australia's parliament issued an official acknowledgment and apology to the Stolen Generations[102] and their families and a report outlining recommendations to support reconciliation.[103] The Community Arts Network started a program to amplify the voices of indigenous elders to tell their stories of oppression, suffering and survival. The common elements in their narratives were cycles of dispossession, consequences of dispossession in their lives, and cultural continuity and survival. Through spaces of representation the indigenous elders gave voice to their history as part of healing, and the wider community was asked to acknowledge the stories and legacy to understand the land they inhabit.[104]

Participating in decisionmaking and building social networks are key to strengthen representation and agency. Inclusion is essential for devolving decisionmaking power to local contexts, through which equal participation and cooperation at the community level can be achieved.[105] In Kutna Hora, Czechia, the government conducted participatory budgeting with young people and children in 2019. Both primary and high school students participated in the local government's budget allocation. Each class appointed representatives to present a project on behalf of their schools for the budget from the school level up to the municipal level. Young people filled the role of coordinators in the local rounds of budget allocations. In the final phase the budget allocation was opened for all the students to vote. The initial idea from the local government was for young people to experience democracy on their own as executers and decisionmakers. In contrast with similar exercises, this case was motivated by the objective of incorporating young people.[106]

Collective action and social movements shaping culture and coping with uncertainty

Collective action, through social movements and community-level initiatives, can be a source of inspiration for researchers, policymakers and advocates (spotlights 6.6 and 6.7).

To redress inequalities and provide equal opportunities for people to expand their agency and foster human development, transformation is imperative at the level of social norms and culture. Social movements are key to achieving that.

Where we go from here is our choice

We must learn to live with uncertain times and unsettled lives. This year's Human Development Report challenges us to aspire to more than mere accommodation. Unlocking our human potential will require us to let flexibility, creativity, solidarity and inclusion guide us to imagine and create futures in which we thrive.

Where we go from here is our choice. One of the great lessons of our species' history is that we can accomplish a lot with very little if we work in solidarity towards shared goals. Dangerous planetary change, uncharted transitions and polarization are making uncertainty more challenging. Even so, we have more tools than ever to help navigate and course correct, and no amount of technological wizardry is a substitute for good leadership, social cohesion or trust. If we can start fixing the human side of the planetary ledger—and this Report tries to highlight how—then the future, however uncertain, will be more promise than peril, just as it should be.

Principles to be cultivated to navigate uncertainty

Flexibility should be understood as rejecting one-size-fits-all policy solutions and deliberately practicing iteration, variation and recombination in policymaking. For instance, chapter 4 builds on the need to upgrade strategies for human security such as strengthening social protection systems with built-in adaptive capabilities. Practices such as feedback loops, iterative learning and iterative design can be valuable tools to navigate uncertain contexts and find solutions that adapt best to different contexts and moments.

A key factor for creating knowledge and transmitting ideas is cumulative cultural evolution.[1] Because evolution does not necessarily mean efficiency and equality of outcomes, it requires strategies to favour flexibility, allowing adaptation to constantly changing conditions. But efficiency and flexibility need not be interchangeable in policy outcomes if flexibility is based on dynamic mechanisms to enable change.[2] In fact, a balance of both can be superior in uncertain contexts.[3]

Creativity would have a hard time thriving in homogeneous and rigid contexts, and adequate context-aware solutions are hard to find through safe repetition of a narrow set of policies. In chapter 3 successful policy reformers were characterized by their willingness to try creative problem-solving strategies. Uncertainty means we are always facing new and multifaceted challenges. Solutions to these challenges can emerge only in environments with matching dynamism. Chapter 5 points out how our ability to thrive under uncertainty and achieve transformations will depend on creative policy change. In practice, creativity requires exploring tools and approaches such as iterative learning, diverse perspectives and risk management. Creativity depends on societies' interconnectedness, the fidelity of the information and learning transmitted, and cultural trait diversity.[4]

Solidarity should be understood as recognizing our interconnectedness. "Solidarity does not assume that our struggles are the same struggles, or that our pain is the same pain, or that our hope is for the same future. Solidarity involves commitment, and work, as well as the recognition that even if we do not have the same feelings, or the same lives, or the same bodies, we do live in common ground."[5] For example, redistributive policies such as robust social protection recognize how inequities in agency, freedoms and capabilities have direct and indirect consequences for all individuals, groups and societies.

Incorporating solidarity means acknowledging that our lives are interconnected by the multidimensional impacts of our choices and our shared physical, economic and social spaces. In the face of uncertainty, people can turn to default values that go beyond strategic thinking, and in an environment of trust, the default can be solidarity (chapter 4). And transitions to renewable energy can be done in solidarity with the groups and places where the resources reside (chapter 1), while unsustainable arrangements could prevent the consolidation of human development gains for everyone.

Inclusion can enable transformations, as seen in examples throughout the Report. Chapter 4 highlights ensuring access and equity in communications technology. Chapters 2 and 5 discuss regulating artificial intelligence to address algorithmic bias and discrimination. Inclusiveness goes beyond increasing participation and diversity; it requires shifts in institutions' norms and attitudes and the cooperation of relevant stakeholders, society and policymakers to address the roots of unequal treatment.[6]

These four motivating principles are nonexhaustive, but balancing them could help chart paths to transformation. Driving transformation requires acknowledging the links and tensions between them. These principles are not mutually exclusive. They often coexist and enable each other. For instance, inclusion can unlock innovation.[7] Exposure to diversity (of people, practices and institutions)[8] motivates

people to learn,[9] and iterative learning is part of innovation.[10]

Solidarity and inclusion[11] are interdependent. Solidarity requires recognizing and incorporating the diversity of individuals, groups, perspectives and lived experiences that coexist. At the same time greater inclusion contributes to solidarity by fighting divisiveness and inequalities. Social movements can teach us a lot about solidarity in the search for inclusion, leading the way to leave no one behind. Institutions can support the transformations pushed by social movements and community initiatives by listening to the diverse voices of those whose rights are being abridged, allocating resources and informing their research agendas to complement collective actions.[12]

Beyond the multiple intersections there also might be some tensions between these motivating principles. The paradox of diversity represents an example,

as chapter 3 discusses.[13] Cultural trait diversity has perhaps the largest potential to empower creativity because it increases the recombinatorial possibilities. But it also increases coordination costs due to the multitude of perspectives. To address this, the cultural evolution approach analyses how high cultural trait diversity allows for an evolution of approaches favouring the traits that best adapt to the current circumstances,[14] understanding that these traits might fall out of favour if the circumstances change. This requires a high tolerance for diversity, but it also means that there will be inequality of outcomes because some approaches borne out of the recombination might fail and be discarded. However, the successful ones will spread and benefit all.[15] So, although it is generally possible to align flexibility, creativity, solidarity and inclusion, there is not a straightforward path for them to work together, and tensions might mean compromises along the way.

NOTES

1   Muthukrishna and Henrich 2016.

2   Adler, Goldoftas and Levine 1999.

3   Phillips, Chang and Su 2019.

4   Schimmelpfennig and others 2022. Cultural trait diversity refers to the differences in beliefs, behaviours, assumptions, values, technologies and other transmissible traits.

5   Ahmed 2013, p. 189.

6   UNESCO 2021.

7   Hewlett, Marshall and Sherbin 2013.

8   Swidler 2013.

9   Garrett 2016; Gutiérrez and Rogoff 2003.

10 For instance, a recent study presented evidence at the country level on how social tolerance towards homosexuality is positively correlated with positive attitudes towards greater technological innovation (Vu 2022).

11 Going forward, this transformation should be guided by stressing equal dignity and voice and solidarity among members of the community (Bowles and Carlin 2021).

12 Levine 2019.

13 The tension between traits adapted to a specific context and the need for diversity to enable adaptation to new contexts is present even in the collective behaviour of bacteria (Mattingly and Emonet 2022).

14 Schimmelpfennig and others 2022.

15 Schimmelpfennig and others 2022.

How local communities confront rapid environmental change

Consider South Africa, where impoverished rural communities have become proactive in improving their quality of life. Women have organized initiatives that range from local saving clubs and cooperatives to traditional craft and barter systems.[1] For the Zamukphila Women's Community Project, women in Upsher villages formed a vegetable-growing community, growing 70 percent to sell on the roadsides and the rest for self-consumption. The project received support from a corporation that allocated a piece of irrigated land adjacent to the village, while the women provided fertilizer and seeds.[2]

Another project in South Africa—the Mansomani initiative, led by Black women—mobilized community support to convert a piece of land into an irrigated sugar cane field and liaise with a local sugar mill. This helped secure a source of income for community producers. Key success factors were leadership, which persisted for more than 20 years, and external support. In this line, external agents, such as nongovernmental organizations, or governments can support initiatives sensitive to local needs and aspirations, preserving the community's agency.[3] Through this project women used what was already in place—land and irrigation—and invested in crop resources to have more economic independence and be better prepared to face shocks.

In 2012 a group of practitioners in Democratic Republic of the Congo started the African Institute for Integrated Responses to Violence Against Women and HIVAIDS at the Panzi Hospital to research mental health in African contexts. The hospital partnered with a local feminist organization to provide counselling and training in Kiswahili. Capacity building of medical staff along with individual and group counselling sessions using music and dance to facilitate healing and livelihood therapy provided for land and tools for women to restart farming or rebuild assets.[4] Building women's emotional and economic agency translated into more inclusion in political spaces, empowering the women to express solidarity by organizing themselves to raise funds by selling local products.[5] Having the perspective of local women affected by the same structural inequalities facilitated coordination and communication and opened a different array of possible solutions.

NOTES

1   Nel and Binns 2000.

2   Nel and Binns 2000.

3   Nel and Binns 2000.

4   Allowing women who are experiencing distress, stigmatization and isolation to embody positive states of spiritual and social connection can help them heal as they find feelings of connection and belonging in collective voice, movement and creative self-expression (Horn 2020).

5   Horn 2020.

How volunteerism, inclusion and deliberation can work as insurance

Volunteerism can be seen as collective insurance rooted in solidarity that can prepare communities for environmental shocks. In Sudan during seasons of either high demand or drought, communities work together through *nafeer* (calls to mobilize), where people help each other plant and harvest crops. The military engages as well, protecting the harvests from theft and reconstructing mosques and other buildings damaged during conflict. Without trust, collaboration and communication to build a sense of solidarity, this activity could not be accomplished by just one farmer. But when people come together, crops can be harvested faster and more productively.[1]

Policy mechanisms that favour inclusion typically remove barriers or discriminatory attitudes and behaviours to ensure people's participation in social, economic, political and civic spheres.[2] Equal participation fosters agency and increases diversity through opportunities and choice. Inclusion can work as insurance. For example, including smallholder farmers in the design, business models and decisionmaking of digital platform providers would go a long way towards enabling the full potential and benefits of information and communications technology innovations in Africa.[3] There is rising demand for inclusion policies as women, indigenous peoples and migrants continue to be excluded.[4] Since 2017 the Colombian government has provided a special permit to grant Venezuelan immigrants permission to work. In general, the programme has expanded access to the labour market, but barriers such as recognition of credentials or access to financial markets persist, limiting the opportunities for immigrant workers.[5] As part of a set of flexible and inclusive assessment methods, the Netherlands has been working with local migrant and refugee organizations to offer proof of Dutch-equivalent credentials and facilitate the assessment and recognition of Syrian nationals' qualifications.[6]

Deliberation can serve as insurance for polarization[7] and is one of the keys to achieving recognition.[8] Although a natural human capacity, deliberation requires intentional and concerted efforts: rules, to prompt inclusive and civil deliberation; stories that make sense, provide meaning and instil a collective sense of commitment; leadership that engages citizens in a deliberative rhetoric; outcomes that matter to people; and the possibility to pass on and learn the skills to instil a culture of deliberation.[9] Deliberation is especially important for enabling public reasoning in a participatory and inclusive way, where ideas are represented and put forth by all groups irrespective of their political, economic or other status (see chapter 4). Even in the absence of organized deliberation, contact among groups has been shown to decrease dehumanization across groups[10] and reduce hostility.[11] However, negative contact can exacerbate hostilities,[12] pointing to the importance of setting up deliberation and intergroup contact for success through the conditions and settings in which they are encouraged. Beyond deliberation, voting is effective as well because it allows citizens to restrain defectors and reassures cooperative citizens that their efforts are not futile. Accompanying cultural change could consist of a shift in the mindset from exclusively seeking self-interest to believing that people can make decisions for the greater good.[13]

NOTES

1 Lough and others 2018.

2 Yang and others 2016.

3 Sarku 2022.

4 Yang and others 2016.

5 Selee and Bolter 2022.

6 Desiderio 2016.

7 Fishkin and others 2021.

8 Fuentes-Nieva 2022.

9 Ryfe 2005.

10 Bruneau and others 2021.

11 Wojcieszak and Warner 2020.

12 Wojcieszak and Warner 2020.

13 Hauser and others 2014.

Addressing mental distress: Capabilities for people and policymakers

Mental distress can become an obstacle to human development under certain circumstances (see chapter 2). To avoid this, policymakers as well as people themselves can take action and prevent situations that cause mental distress, mitigate crises and build psychological resilience without leaving anyone behind.

Preventing distress

The first layer of policies to tackle the cycle of distress and constrained human development consists of preventing distress. Building safe environments through strong national institutions and international cooperation is the ideal setting. Socioeconomic policymaking can contribute to this goal. Income support, for instance, has been shown to significantly decrease mental distress of children and young people living in a household.[1] Education is key to empowerment, enabling people to filter good-quality information out of abundant information during the digital age. It can also encourage people to take action regarding climate change and other anthropogenic pressures, proving them with ownership and agency to shape their own future.[2] And it can prevent discrimination.[3]

Diplomacy and negotiation can prevent some violent conflicts. But other conflicts can be stopped from turning violent at a much earlier stage through socially cohesive communities as well as tightly knit support networks.[4] Moreover, social embeddedness —social connections and interpersonal relationships within social networks and group identities—has been found to reduce stress and anxiety.[5] In the face of threat and uncertainty, cultural norms are crucial to keep societies cohesive and organized.[6]

Mitigating crises

As demonstrated by the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as by multiple extreme weather events around the globe, crisis prevention may not always be possible in the light of unprecedented threats. In that case socioeconomic policies can provide transitionary continuity and stability. During multiple lockdowns caused by the pandemic, economies with strong social contracts and robust social protection schemes caused fewer worries to the people and were less affected by economic consequences.[7] Examples include universal emergency payments comparable to a temporary universal basic income[8] and some traditional social protection policies such as extended sickness benefits, unemployment protection and benefits for families and older people.[9] The pandemic has shown that strong social institutions can help mitigate crises by contributing to stability. But some of these measures can also help during extreme weather events, when droughts or floods impair harvests, or when livelihoods are damaged during armed conflicts. Relying on tightly knit social protection schemes assures people's livelihoods and can thus alleviate mental distress until crises are overcome.

Building resilience

Not all uncertainties and crises can be prevented or mitigated, but this does not mean that people have to develop mental disorders. With universal access to mental health services as well as other culturally aligned resilience building and healing approaches,[10] people are often able to absorb mental distress and thrive in the context of uncertainties. Many of these services could be offered within existing social structures, such as schools and community centres.

There is a wide variety of mental health and wellbeing interventions, but some have proven especially effective for distress. For example, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing has shown significant improvement of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms,[11] including in veterans and children,[12] exceeding the success of pharmacotherapy.[13] Yoga

can alleviate anxiety, depression and somatization[14] and release stress-related muscle tensions that can cause migraines.[15] Mindfulness exercises and meditation have been used in psychotherapy for a long time,[16] and empirical evidence shows that they can improve depression[17] and aggressive behaviour.[18] Accessible at large scale, this can break cycles of violence and mental distress—one step towards building peaceful societies. More attention needs to be paid to providing universal access to these and other techniques as well as to dismantling stigmatization around mental health. Narratives within the policy discourse can help achieve this and foster hope collectively.[19]

Source: Human Development Report Office.

NOTES

1 Angeles and others 2019; Costello and others 2003.

2 UNDP 2020a.

3 Gronholm and others 2017; Jaramillo 2022; UN 2013; Winthrop 2020.

4 Aall and Crocker 2019.

5 Jetten and others 2009.

6 Jackson, Gelfand and Ember 2020.

7 Abdoul-Azize and El Gamil 2021; Razavi and others 2020.

8 See Serbia, Singapore and the United States.

9 Razavi and others 2020. Other examples include supporting companies in retaining workers through employment retention benefits in order to prevent unemployment, as was the case in Denmark, Dominican Republic, Germany, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands and Thailand; active labour market policies to facilitate job skill-matching, online counselling and job mediation, such as in Belgium, China, Estonia, Republic of Korea and Malaysia; and expanded family leave and childcare benefits during school closures.

10 Dein 2020; Igreja, Kleijn and Richters 2006; Kpobi and Swartz 2019.

11 American Psychiatric Association 2013; Shapiro 1996.

12 van den Berg and others 2015. For a study on veterans, see Silver, Rogers and Russell (2008). For the effect on children see Rodenburg and others (2009). Results may vary according to levels of dissociation in patients, which have been found to reduce the effectiveness of eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy (Bae, Kim and Park 2016). However, in that case, the therapy can be combined with mindfulness exercises that can reduce dissociation.

13 van der Kolk and others 2007.

14 Brown and Gerbarg 2005; Saeed, Antonacci and Bloch 2010. For anxiety, see also Gabriel and others (2018).

15 Gabriel and others 2018.

16 Smith 1975.

17 Butler and others 2008.

18 Singh and others 2007.

19 Lamont 2019. On the controversy around the concept of hope, see Schlosser (2013).

Social media misinformation and freedom of expression

Social media has transformed the landscape of consumption and diffusion of misinformation. People can now immediately find and share content with billions of other users online through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Reddit, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, WhatsApp and YouTube, among many others. Publicity, the arts, entertainment, commerce, advocacy, education, journalism and even public entities have adapted strategies to reach users in online socialization spaces. The same applies to the distribution of news. By 2021 close to 60 percent of users in some world regions were using platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp to get their news (figure S6.5.1).[1]

Along with the potential benefits of rapidly expanding virtual social spaces, social media provide fertile ground for spreading misinformation[2] and fake news,[3] and the targeted and intentional use of platforms to enhance polarization and radicalization.[4] Prominent social media platforms have been called to action on this front by users, policymakers, authorities and their own conviction.

The policy discussion on misinformation often finds tension in the intersection between freedom of expression and both the importance of accurate, verified and trustworthy diffusion of information and the determination of boundaries of respect and civility in online behaviour. "We want to help people stay informed without stifling productive public discourse.

There is also a fine line between false news and satire or opinion."[5] "It's not just what we take down, but how we treat all the content we leave up that gives us the best path forward. (...) An overly aggressive approach towards removals would also have a chilling effect on free speech."[6] Big social media platforms now have policies and guidelines on misinformation and have developed varying strategies to combat it, ranging from user-initiated reporting features to removal of misinformation and restriction of accounts.

Governing bodies, national and international, have shown more interest in the effects of media misinformation. The UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation and the upcoming Global Digital Compact in the context of the Common Agenda incorporate prioritizing digital trust and security for the present and future of digital development.[7] Policy recommendations on misinformation at the international level highlight the importance of protecting human rights and freedom of expression; emphasizing methods that build trust, media literacy and cooperation; and emphasizing the dangers of overusing and misusing censorship.[8]

The European Union has increased its regulation on disinformation and the use of social media. The European Commission developed an action plan that includes a Code of Practice on Disinformation, the European Digital Media Observatory and the European Democracy Action Plan, with guidelines for

Figure S6.5.1 A considerable portion of users across the world get their news from social media platforms
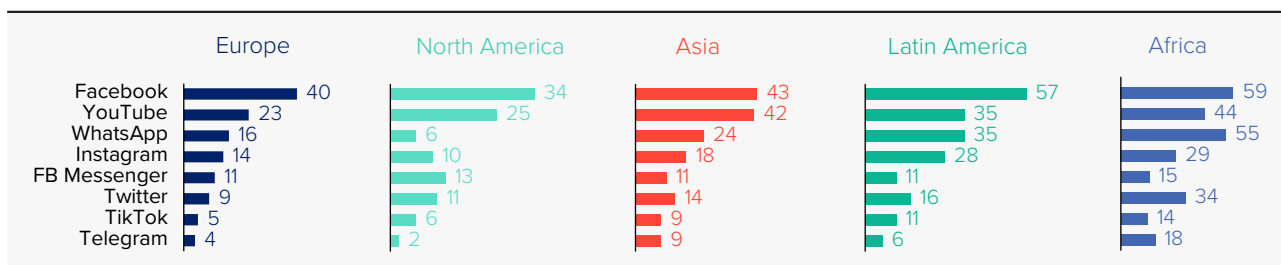
Source: Newman and others 2022.

obligations and accountability of online platforms.[9] The Digital Services Act, a "comprehensive set of new rules regulating the responsibilities of digital services that act as intermediaries within the EU to connect consumers with goods, services and content,"[10] was agreed in April 2022 and will reshape the obligations and relationships between digital services and governance structures in Europe. This will set new rules and enforcement mechanisms on digital activities, including managing misinformation.

NOTES

1   Newman and others 2022.

2   Waszak, Kasprzycka-Waszak and Kubanek 2018.

3   Di Domenico and others 2021.

4   Thompson 2011; Tucker and others 2018.

5   Meta 2022.

6   Mohan 2021.

7   UN 2020c.

8   UN 2022b.

9   European Parliament, European Council and European Economic and Social Committee and European Committee of the Regions 2018.

10 European Commission 2022.

Collective action and social movements shaping culture and coping with uncertainty

Whether it pushes to change cultural configurations or attempts to adapt to hardship, collective action has a transformative power that transmits ideas and shapes narratives and perceptions that can be vital for adaptation.[1]

In the face of uncertainty and institutional shortcomings,[2] feelings of shared discontent and dissatisfaction can motivate a push for solidarity within communities or social groups. This can translate into collective organization and action in search of community resilience and better development outcomes. Social movements are a clear example of how people's choices have supported transformations. Throughout history the world has witnessed the power of social movements, where people connected by a shared purpose or common identity have triggered transformational change for entire societies.[3]

A wide range of social movements develop because of unmet expectations and moral beliefs of fairness and social justice.[4] Some do so through collective identity.[5] In all cases the process is linked to emotions and cultural ideas with the power to transform a personal goal or interest, to adopt the goals and interests of a group.[6] Individuals involving themselves in a social movement develop a shared normative perspective or shared concerns for change that give them a sense of common purpose.[7]

Individuals join social movements and sustain their mobilization because of rational, emotional, behavioural, leadership, organizational and social-normative factors.[8] Even though emotions are present in every phase of the lifecycle of a social movement[9] and they positively motivate individuals, they have often been dismissed or unjustly judged by outsiders.[10] For instance, protestors are often portrayed as irrational or immature,[11] hostile or violent, or as needing to be disciplined.[12] The study of emotions in politics and social movements emerged to recognize that emotions permeate any political action,[13] shape movements' goals and determine their success. This

analysis can provide insights to necessary changes for transformation by encouraging new ways of thinking and approaching policy mechanisms.
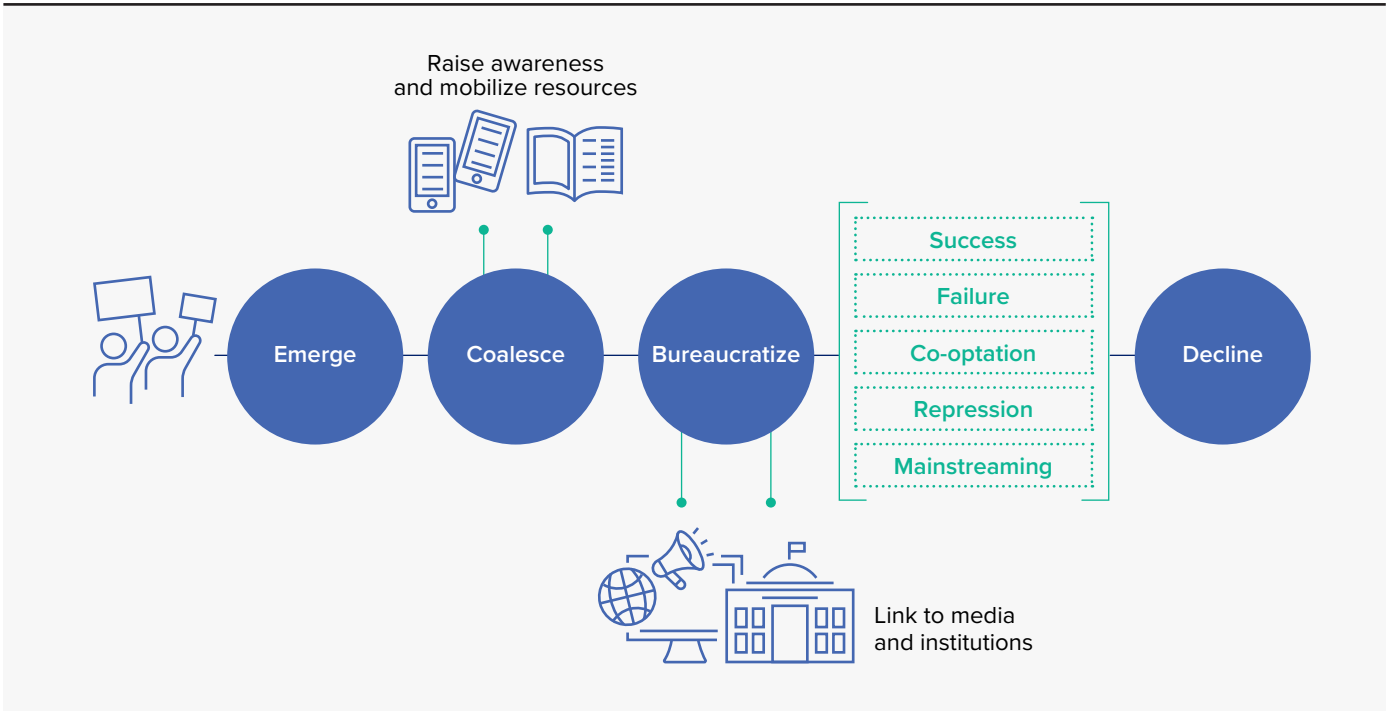
For a social movement to succeed, one of the most important factors is for it to lead towards social change and transformation as well as strategic choices.[14] Social movements can emerge when a large group of people become distressed by a particular situation or driven by leaders who mobilize people and facilitate broader awareness of concerns, then coalesce when they become more organized to raise awareness and mobilize resources. After formal and informal institutions take notice of a movement and bureaucratize it, a social movement can follow several paths before starting to decline (figure S6.6.1).[15]

Successful social movements have demonstrated a commitment to changing norms and attitudes, not just policy reforms. For instance, LGBTQI+ advocates used polling research to reframe public campaign messages on rights to include wording on love and commitment as well; this eventually turned into the "Love is love" slogan and contributed to change in marriage laws.[16]

The frequency of social protests increased by an average of 11.5 percent a year between 2009 and 2019 across all regions of the world, with the largest concentration of activity in the Middle East and North Africa and the fastest growth in Sub-Saharan Africa.[17] The Covid-19 pandemic halted mass protests from March to May 2020, but rather than disappearing, social movements adapted to the pandemic measures and bounced back as restrictions eased.[18]

Identity social movements arise to challenge traditional understandings of power distribution and reframe how certain groups are perceived. These movements aim to reclaim and transform narratives around identity for a group that has been historically discriminated against and oppressed. Confronting traditional beliefs and behaviours constitutes a reclaim of power and provides a sense of agency,

Figure S6.6.1 Social movements connect collective action with institutions

Raise awareness and mobilize resources

Emerge — Coalesce — Bureaucratize

Success
Failure
Co-optation
Repression
Mainstreaming

Decline

Link to media and institutions

Source: Human Development Report Office elaboration adapted from Blumer (1995), Mauss (1975) and Tilly (1977).

pride, self-confidence and equality.[19] This type of movement is both reformative and transformative, as it looks to expand opportunities but also freedoms. Take the example of the feminist movement (spotlight 6.7).

Although powerful in their transformative capacity and as examples of in-group solidarity, identity-based struggles may also reify adversarial narratives between groups and reaffirm structural and social divisions based on certain identity dimensions. This can bring about challenges in broader global cooperation and can lead to violence and conflict. It can also overshadow the freedom that exists within self-identification and the overlapping multidimensional identities across the world. This is especially concerning for movements that seek to encroach on the freedoms of others. As argued in chapter 3, key to addressing these challenges is recognizing that each person comprises multiple, overlapping identities that can acquire different salience depending on context and can change over time.

Social movements' enduring impacts permeate cultural repertoires and transform societies. They can change the way we live, make us question traditional beliefs, reposition identities and eliminate

stereotypes and prejudices. The policy changes that have emerged from protests and movements have depended on broad changes in public attitudes.[20] Mobilizations change culture through different channels: public opinion, memories, language and lifestyle, the media, and political and nonpolitical institutions.[21] They are a way to give momentum and directionality to the feedback cycle between social attitudes and norms and institutional and policy responses.

The nature and tone of media coverage can shift public opinion perceptions, even if indirectly. A study documenting public opinion change as an outcome of the feminist movement in the United States argues that the media coverage had a significant effect on gender attitudes, such that the public started reconsidering traditional roles and adopting alternative views.[22] Although traditional news outlets still dominate news gathering in Europe and the United States[23] and have a strong influence over politics, social media has impacted these dynamics significantly in recent years as the circulation of news stories is increasingly featured on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter and YouTube. Through media and social media, activists have defied traditional portrayals of groups, combated stigma and

increased the representation of groups among writers, producers and performers.[24] More decentralized and open access to media has increased the representation and diversity of perspectives on a platform. But it has also raised concerns about the quality of information and the need for tools to filter, discern and manage violence, hate and misinformation. In these contexts there is a risk for some forms of social movements to spread misinformation and promote forms of injustice, domination and oppression.

Changes in day-to-day behaviours, such as lifestyle or language, are other channels for movements to trigger change. The changes in the law for same-sex marriage has triggered rapid shifts in attitudes. Combined with the activism of LGBTQI+ rights movement, the changes have combatted stigma, reframed gender as a social construct and incorporated inclusive language and gender-neutral pronouns for nonbinary and queer people.[25] However, in some countries where third-gender categories have been officially recognized for decades, many LGBTQI+ activists are campaigning against the forceful imposition of third-gender pronouns, highlighting the importance of people having the agency to determine their own identity rather than having it imposed on them by outside actors.[26] Thanks to the feminist movement the terms machismo or male chauvinist, feminist and sexist have become more widely used and understood.[27]

Other movements such as those linked to environmentalism and social justice have produced lifestyle changes in societies where they are most prominent.[28] People modify their behaviour to be coherent across their ideologies, values and actions. Examples of changes in daily behaviours include boycotting firms that do not comply with raised standards for sustainable behaviour. These conscious consumers are more likely to become politically active[29] and can present incentives for businesses to increasingly declare and act on their social and environmental principles with more inclusive and sustainable practices.[30] Local communities are transforming practices for sustainable food systems as well. Indigenous communities have learned how to live off the earth without damaging the integrity of ecosystems. Māori and Quechua communities have built a platform to reclaim cultural rights over food landscapes by promoting collective rights and responsibilities over land and food, based on their community practices to preserve agrobiodiversity.[31]

When individuals belonging to a community perceive that government institutions or authorities are unreliable and unsupportive, policies and regulation might seem insufficient. This creates a need for action, and collaboration is used as a coping mechanism.[32] In these contexts social movements are rooted in solidarity, key for overcoming injustice, domination and oppression.[33]

NOTES

1   Around the 1980s efforts from social movements to transform dominant cultural behaviours and identities began to be recognized (Goodwin and Jasper 2006; Johnston, Larana and Gusfield 1994).

2   Fransen and others 2021.

3   Zald, Morrill and Rao 2005.

4   Jenkins, Wallace and Fullerton 2008.

5   Polletta and Jasper 2001.

6   Social movements have questioned the status quo—policies, institutions and structures—and have shed light on human rights violations, discrimination and violence (Blumer 1951; Christiansen 2009).

7   DeFronzo and Gill 2020; James and Van Seters 2014.

8   Bate, Bevan and Robert 2004.

9   Jasper 2011.

10   Ferree 1992; Flam 1990.

11   Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2000.

12   Jasper 2021.

13   Goodwin and Jasper 2006.

14   Crutchfield 2018. Being leaderfull implies having an effective leader and people willing to share power and lead from behind, empowering multiple local grassroots leaders and people with a "lived experience" to speak and act on behalf of the issue they are defending.

15   Blumer 1951; Christiansen 2009.

16   Crutchfield 2018.

17   Brannen, Haig and Schmidt 2020, p. 1.

18   Pleyers 2020.

19   DeFronzo and Gill 2020; Gill and DeFronzo 2009.

20   Amenta and Polletta 2019. The cultural impacts from mobilization have been documented in the political and economic arenas (Bosi, Giugni and Uba 2016; Snow and others 2018).

21   Amenta and Polletta 2019.

22   Banaszak and Ondercin 2016.

23   Mitchell and others 2016; Taylor and Keeter 2010. As highlighted in spotlight 6.3, in Africa and South Asia, in particular, a far higher share of the population consumes news through social media apps.

24   Cockrill and Biggs 2018; Perlman 2016.

25   One of the key elements of the media discourse has been the stigmatized condition, which is seen first as involuntary and even linked to fate (Garretson and Suhay 2016).

26   Human Rights Watch 2020b, 2021; Khadgi 2021.

27   Mansbridge and Flaster 2007.

28   Haenfler, Johnson and Jones 2012.

29   Willis and Schor 2012.

30   Crutchfield 2018.

31   Huambachano 2020.

32   Fransen and others 2021.

33   Gould 2018.

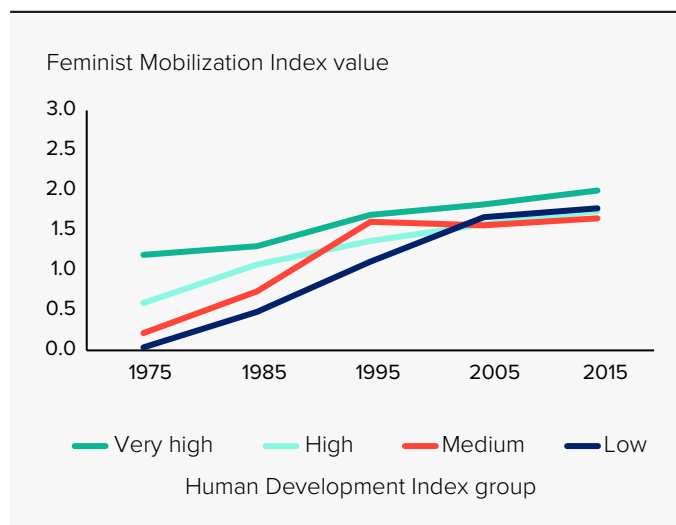# Feminist mobilizations defying gender social norms

Women's and feminist movements have advanced women's rights across a variety of issues, both nationally and globally. Feminist mobilizations are associated with better legal rights to participate in economic life, greater representation in politics, better support for paid and unpaid domestic care work, better protection from sexual harassment, better access to land tenure, financial inclusion,[1] overcoming stigma and raising awareness around violence against women and girls.[2] Feminist mobilizations have grown across every Human Development Index (HDI) group. Low and medium HDI countries have seen the greatest increases in autonomy and strength of feminist movements (figure S6.7.1). Low HDI countries that have seen a greater increase in feminist movements

Figure S6.7.1 Feminist mobilizations have grown in autonomy and strength across every Human Development Index group

Feminist Mobilization Index value

Human Development Index group

— Very high — High — Medium — Low

Note: The Feminist Mobilization Index combines autonomy and strength of movements using a dichotomous coding: FMI = Existence + (Strength*Autonomy). A country without a feminist movement at all is scored a 0 (FMI = 0 + [0*0] = 0). The index awards 1 point for the existence of a movement, so a country with a feminist movement of some variety that is either not strong or not autonomous is scored a 1 (1 + [1*0] or 1 + [0*1]). A country with a strong and autonomous feminist movement is scored a 2 (1 + [1*1]). The countries with the strongest autonomous movements are scored a 3 (1 + [2*1] = 3).
Source: Forester and others 2022.

include Burkina Faso, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal and Uganda. Among medium HDI countries, Bangladesh, Cameroon, India and Morocco, among others, have. South Asia and Latin America have had the highest Feminist Mobilization Index scores on average since 1995, while the Arab States have had the lowest.

Feminist mobilizations defy stereotypes, redefine boundaries and expand agency for women and girls. They can open pathways to enhanced wellbeing and agency for women occupying spaces in all spheres of life, using their voices to bring new perspectives, participate equally in society and hold governments and others in positions of power accountable. Countries with powerful feminist movements or higher women's representation in parliaments adopted an average of five more gender-sensitive measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic than countries without these features.[3] Activists in these countries developed feminist plans and gender budget assessments in addition to demanding action to address violence against women and girls and to improve access to public services. Two examples are the Gender and Covid-19 Roundtable with 79 civil society organizations in Chile[4] and the Women's Caucus in Brazil's legislature[5] (Bancada Feminina) advocating for facilities that aid women and girls who are subject to violence to be declared essential public services.

Women's participation in social movements has promoted changes in traditional gender norms through two main pathways: policy reforms and reframing gender roles and power relations.[6] Countries with a lower presence of women's movements or protests (as measured by the Feminist Mobilization Index) have the highest biases against gender equality and women's empowerment (as measured by the Gender Social Norms Index; figure S6.7.2; see also box S6.7.1). The elevated risks and costs of women mobilizing in these contexts are probably
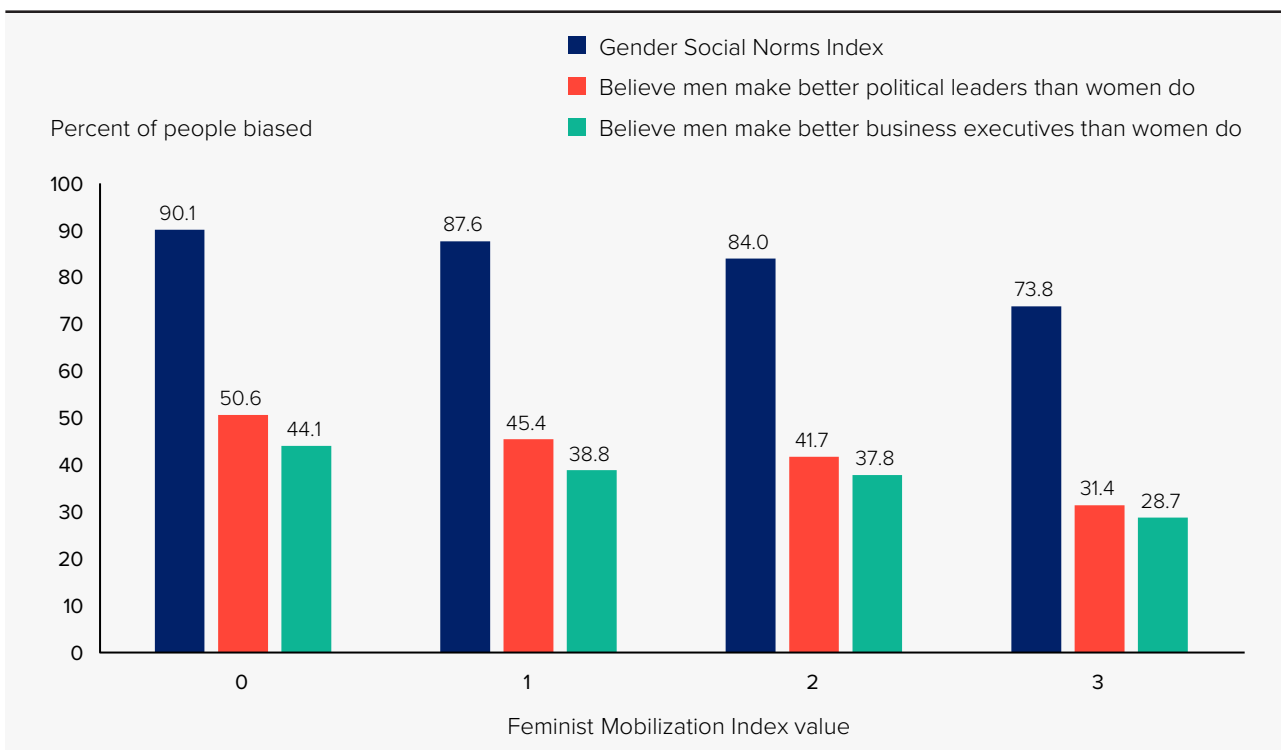
Figure S6.7.2 Countries with less feminist movements have higher biases against gender equality and women's empowerment

Percent of people biased

Legend:
- Gender Social Norms Index (dark blue)
- Believe men make better political leaders than women do (red)
- Believe men make better business executives than women do (green)

Data by Feminist Mobilization Index value:

Feminist Mobilization Index value	Gender Social Norms Index	Better political leaders	Better business executives
0	90.1	50.6	44.1
1	87.6	45.4	38.8
2	84.0	41.7	37.8
3	73.8	31.4	28.7

Feminist Mobilization Index value

Source: UNDP 2020b; Forester and others 2022.

much higher, feeding into a vicious cycle. The association between the presence of biases and lower feminist mobilization appears in political and economic dimensions: in countries with lower feminist mobilizations, almost 50 percent of people think men make better political leaders and more than 40 percent think they make better business executives than women.

How are biases against gender equality and women's empowerment changing? The 2022 Gender Social Norms Index

Gender inequalities persist, and recent shocks, including planetary imbalances, the Covid-19 pandemic and economic crises, are aggravating the current scenario for women all over the world. The Gender Inequality Index (GII) reveals a lack of global improvement in its dimensions, with the world value stagnating at 0.465 for the past three years. Alarmingly, all regions experienced a decline in GII value from 2019 to 2020 except South Asia, which

experienced an increase; from 2020 to 2021 all regions except the Arab States and East Asia and the Pacific registered a decline.[7] While women have seen some progress in basic capabilities, there are still challenges in areas that involve greater agency and power. In 59 countries adult women are more educated than adult men. In those same countries the income gender gap is 39 percent.[8] Behind these calculations social norms help us understand these dynamics of power imbalances.

According to the Gender Social Norms Index, 91 percent of men and 88 percent of women show at least one clear bias against gender equality in areas such as politics, economics, education, intimate partner violence and women's reproductive rights (figure S6.7.3; see also box S6.7.1). Men have high biases in thinking that men make better political leaders than women do (52.8 percent) and that men should have more right to a job than women (50.2 percent). Women present fewer biases across all dimensions.

This year's Gender Social Norms Index results provide hope, showing an improvement from the first

The Gender Social Norms Index, introduced in the 2019 Human Development Report, comprises four dimensions—political, educational, economic and physical integrity. It is constructed based on responses to seven questions from the World Values Survey, which are used to create seven indicators (box figure 1).

Box figure 1 How social beliefs can obstruct gender and women's empowerment

Dimensions

Political | Educational | Economic | Physical integrity

Indicators

Men make better political leaders than women do | Women have the same rights as men | University is more important for a man than for a woman | Men should have more right to a job than women | Men make better business executives than women do | Proxy for intimate partner violence | Proxy for reproductive rights

Dimension index

Political empowerment index | Educational empowerment index | Economic empowerment index | Physical integrity index

Gender social norms index

Note: For more information, see https://hdr.undp.org/content/2020-gender-social-norms-index-gsni.
Source: Mukhopadhyay, Rivera and Tapia 2019.

For each indicator a variable takes the value of 1 when an individual has a bias and 0 when the individual does not. The core index value is an aggregation based on the "union approach," which measures the percentage of people with biases, independent of the number of biases. In many instances it might take only one bias from one person to block a woman's progress in society.

This year's index covers two sets of countries and territories. The first set consists of countries and territories with data for wave 5 (2005–2009), wave 6 (2010–2014) or wave 7 (2017–2022) of the World Values Survey (accessed April 2022) and uses the latest data available. This set includes 76 countries and territories, accounting for more than 84 percent of the global population. The second set consists of only countries and territories with data for wave 6 and wave 7. This set includes 37 countries and territories, accounting for 48 percent of the global population.

Source: Mukhopadhyay, Rivera-Vazquez and Tapia 2019; UNDP 2020b.

time it was calculated. On average, biases against gender equality and women's empowerment declined from 2010–2014 to 2017–2022 (table S6.7.1).

Most countries and territories with time-series data showed progress: women in 23 countries and territories and men in 26 countries and territories showed reduced biases against gender equality and women's empowerment (figure S6.7.4). Progress in the share of people with no bias was greater in Germany, New Zealand, Singapore and Japan. But there were reversals in several countries, among women in 14 countries and men in 11 countries. The greatest reversals took place in the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Chile and Iraq.

Expanding human development and drawing cultural change in a patriarchal society

In line with the two-tier framework presented in chapter 6, the different policy blocks can support the task of defying gender social norms. Investing in gender-sensitive responses to shocks, especially initiatives that build partnerships between governments and civil society,[9] can help women better cope with uncertainty. Strengthening and expanding social protection systems to cover women can work as insurance, increasing their bargaining power at the household level, promoting financial inclusion, supporting long-term income generation and building

Figure S6.7.3 Only 10.3 percent of people worldwide have no gender social norms biases, including 11.5 percent of women and 8.9 percent of men
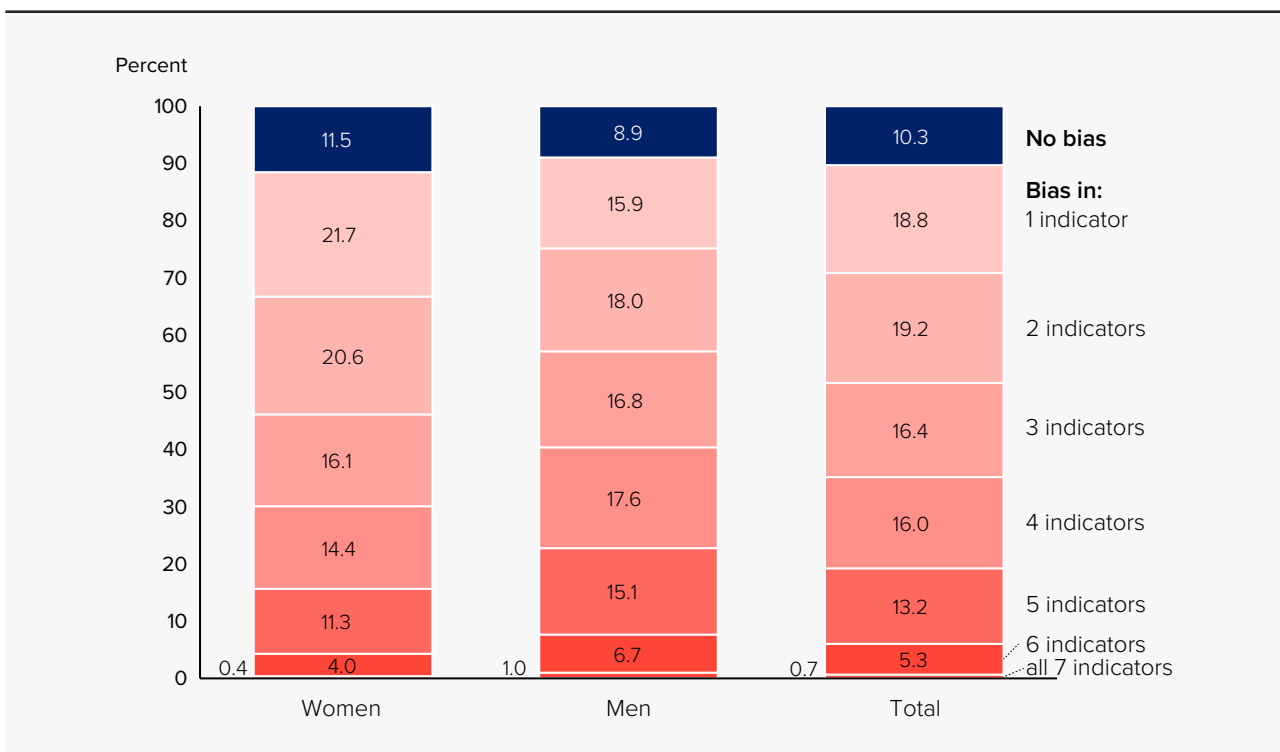
Note: Based on 76 countries and territories with data from wave 6 (2010–2014) or wave 7 (2017–2022) of the World Values Survey, accounting for 84 percent of the global population. Averages are weighted based on the population age 15 and older from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs population data.
Source: Human Development Report Office based on data from the World Values Survey, accessed April 2022.

Table S6.7.1 Percentage of people with at least one bias against gender equality, 2010–2014 and 2017–2022

Group	Percent of people		Change (percentage points)
	2010–2014	2017–2022	
Women	86.5	84.3	−2.2
Men	90.5	87.5	−3.1
Total	88.5	85.7	−2.7

Note: Based on 37 countries and territories with data from wave 6 (2010–2014) and wave 7 (2017–2022) of the World Values Survey, accounting for 48 percent of the global population. Averages are weighted based on the population age 15 and older from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs population data.
Source: Human Development Report Office based on data from the World Values Survey, accessed April 2022.

agency.[10] Encouraging innovative interventions can be a tipping point for traditional norms—for instance, taking advantage of social media to amplify the messages of feminist movements or incorporating new narratives in daily practices or cultural or artistic activities.

The second tier that targets cultural mismatches can go a long way in shifting gender traditional norms—for example, through gender transformative education.[11] This approach uses the whole education system (policies, pedagogies and community engagement) to transform stereotypes, attitudes and practices regarding power relations and gender binaries by raising critical consciousness about the root cause of inequalities. Increasing women's representation in public spaces, institutions, governance processes and leadership positions can change stereotypes and support changes in laws and policies defending women's rights. Recognizing the relevance of shifting social norms for gender equality or of women's right to body and physical integrity can help change scripts and narratives to portray women in a certain way and to build hope.

Feminist movements and women's different forms of resistance and action have come a long way, so amid uncertainty, we can imagine and build a feminist future. In the face of uncertainty and shocks,

Figure S6.7.4 Most countries saw progress on bias against gender equality and women's empowerment between 2010–2014 and 2017–2022—but several countries saw reversals

Note: Based on 37 countries and territories with data from wave 6 (2010–2014) and wave 7 (2017–2022) of the World Values Survey, accounting for 48 percent of the global population.
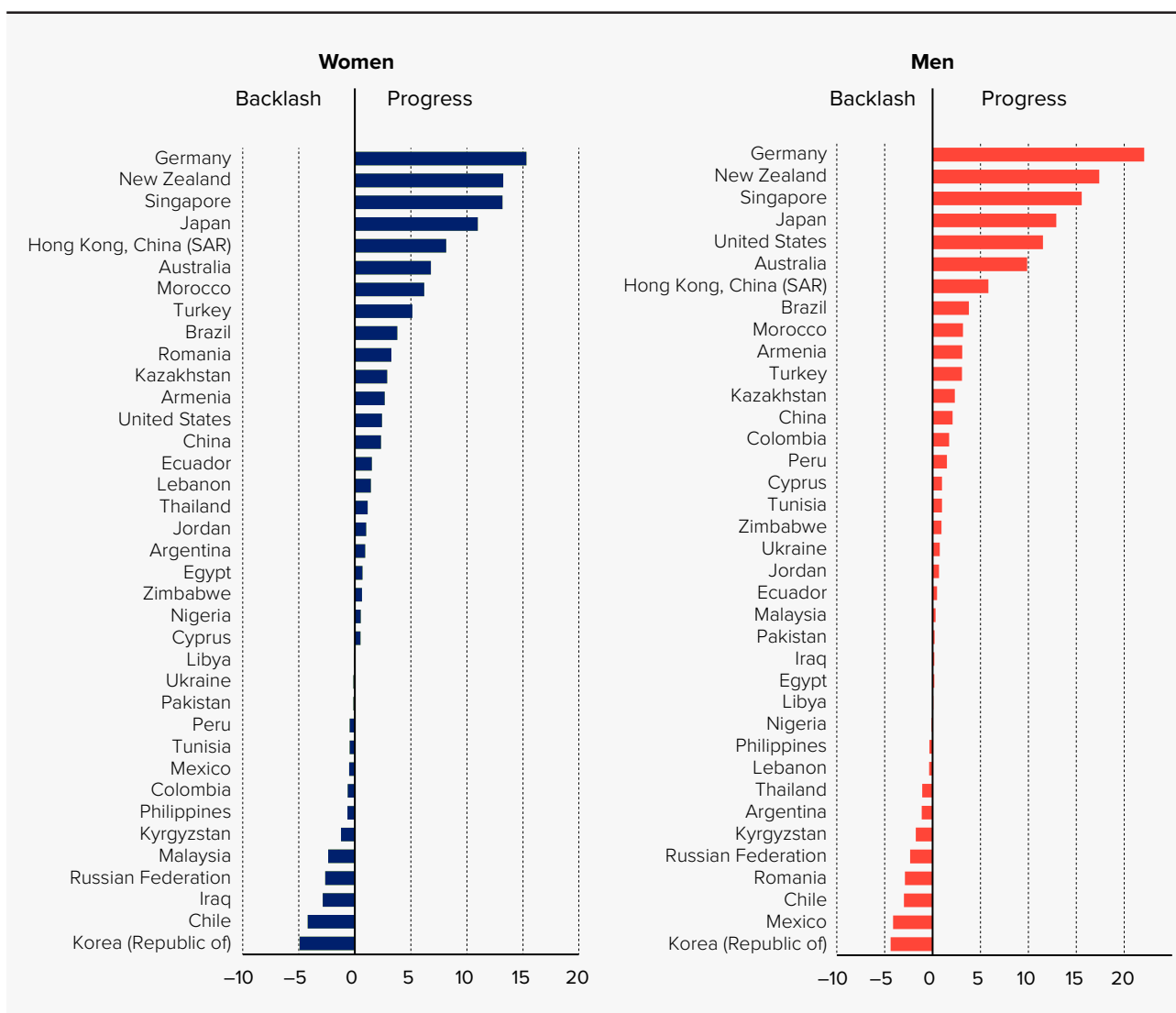**Source:** Human Development Report Office based on data from the World Values Survey, accessed April 2022.

advocates and social movements can demand governments and institutions act to prevent disproportionate increases in and intensity of inequalities. Grassroots and community-level organizations and feminist collectives, as relevant actors within broader movements, can be vital sources of knowledge, experience and perspectives to enable transformation. There is great potential in community-based interventions—apart from institutional reforms—that could be leveraged to move the needle on social norms.

NOTES

1   Weldon and others 2018.
2   Sahay 2021; UN Women and UNDP 2022.
3   UN Women and UNDP 2022, p. 10.
4   Senate of the Republic of Chile 2020.
5   Prange de Oliveira 2021.
6   Jimenez, Harper and George 2021.

7   The GII is a composite metric of gender inequality using three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market. A low GII value indicates low inequality between women and men, and a high GII value indicates high inequality between women and men.

8   Calculations based on data from table 4 in the *Statistical Annex.*

9   UN Women and UNDP 2022.

10   Plank, Marcus and Jones 2018.

11   UNICEF 2021b. Argentina, India, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zimbabwe are already implementing models based on this approach.

Annex table AS6.7.1 Gender Social Norms Index values for most recent available period (76 countries and territories with data from wave 6 or wave 7 and 12 countries or territories with data from wave 5)

Country or territory	Period	Gender Social Norms Index (percent of people with at least one bias)				Percent of people biased, by dimension			
		Total	Women	Men	People with no bias	Political	Educational	Economic	Physical integrity
Countries with data from wave 6 (2010–2014) or wave 7 (2017–2022)									
Algeria	2010–2014	98.67	97.47	99.84	1.33	80.08	37.17	74.08	91.83
Andorra	2017–2022	43.13	41.62	44.60	56.87	23.61	2.59	15.84	21.22
Argentina	2017–2022	74.28	72.01	76.70	25.72	33.90	13.56	24.63	59.82
Armenia	2017–2022	92.07	90.46	95.57	7.93	56.09	18.23	67.29	66.64
Australia	2017–2022	37.01	32.05	43.89	62.99	22.89	2.59	13.29	18.92
Azerbaijan	2010–2014	98.70	97.60	99.80	1.30	83.73	30.24	90.72	70.06
Bangladesh	2017–2022	99.42	99.18	99.66	0.58	66.83	42.83	86.58	87.83
Belarus	2010–2014	90.42	86.81	94.90	9.58	77.85	21.24	58.24	55.50
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	2017–2022	91.29	90.41	92.19	8.71	37.88	21.67	38.03	82.20
Brazil	2017–2022	86.32	85.97	86.75	13.68	37.80	9.59	30.76	76.73
Canada	2017–2022	41.14	34.00	47.94	58.86	27.87	7.02	16.25	24.24
Chile	2017–2022	79.90	77.19	82.91	20.10	56.00	23.40	35.70	56.90
China	2017–2022	91.77	89.92	94.01	8.23	57.44	21.05	56.46	74.57
Colombia	2017–2022	91.18	92.76	89.61	8.82	54.14	18.16	28.16	81.58
Cyprus	2017–2022	81.80	78.19	85.68	18.20	47.40	15.50	51.60	60.20
Ecuador	2017–2022	92.33	91.55	93.19	7.67	51.17	22.08	38.42	81.00
Egypt	2017–2022	99.58	99.31	99.84	0.42	86.58	30.00	93.58	90.42
Estonia	2010–2014	78.28	73.73	83.92	21.72	57.53	16.18	45.79	41.55
Ethiopia	2017–2022	98.86	98.85	98.87	1.14	44.23	16.02	61.54	95.12
Georgia	2010–2014	94.68	93.37	96.20	5.32	65.89	18.14	66.97	76.87
Germany	2017–2022	40.18	36.18	44.41	59.82	13.15	4.19	15.25	25.46
Ghana	2010–2014	98.97	98.83	99.10	1.03	84.47	27.58	76.55	90.34
Greece	2017–2022	64.92	56.99	73.89	35.08	28.67	7.75	45.75	31.75
Guatemala	2017–2022	89.59	88.94	90.31	10.41	58.75	15.38	28.89	76.32
Haiti	2010–2014	98.95	98.04	99.90	1.05	74.95	59.67	71.84	88.48
Hong Kong, China (SAR)	2017–2022	80.82	78.63	83.40	19.18	50.12	18.46	42.27	59.33
India	2010–2014	99.09	98.71	99.39	0.91	64.10	35.24	69.91	92.82
Indonesia	2017–2022	99.66	99.71	99.59	0.34	77.66	43.91	84.28	94.06
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2017–2022	95.53	93.72	97.26	4.47	66.84	46.90	77.45	67.31
Iraq	2017–2022	98.92	98.14	99.67	1.08	83.83	31.50	87.08	87.42
Japan	2017–2022	63.41	61.86	65.42	36.59	34.44	12.49	34.29	30.75
Jordan	2017–2022	98.50	98.15	98.85	1.50	83.04	24.44	87.45	81.46
Kazakhstan	2017–2022	93.42	91.70	95.49	6.58	65.60	27.82	65.75	74.92
Kenya	2017–2022	95.66	94.69	96.55	4.34	71.41	17.85	50.39	85.47
Korea (Republic of)	2017–2022	89.88	86.83	93.08	10.12	72.85	33.73	65.54	59.20
Kuwait	2010–2014	98.31	96.72	99.25	1.69	88.10	36.45	77.13	85.80

(continued)

Country or territory	Period	Gender Social Norms Index (percent of people with at least one bias)				Percent of people biased, by dimension			
		Total	Women	Men	People with no bias	Political	Educational	Economic	Physical integrity
Kyrgyzstan	2017–2022	98.08	97.58	98.91	1.92	77.17	51.83	83.08	90.08
Lebanon	2017–2022	95.58	93.17	98.00	4.42	66.83	15.08	67.83	83.83
Libya	2017–2022	99.67	99.48	99.84	0.33	82.86	30.60	81.61	93.39
Malaysia	2017–2022	99.54	99.70	99.39	0.46	91.77	36.10	59.79	84.62
Mexico	2017–2022	90.18	88.81	91.53	9.82	56.98	18.67	32.85	73.18
Mongolia	2017–2022	97.44	97.40	97.47	2.56	74.18	31.62	66.73	80.16
Morocco	2017–2022	93.67	90.83	96.50	6.33	61.92	20.42	63.42	79.67
Myanmar	2017–2022	99.42	99.67	99.17	0.58	74.50	52.50	89.17	94.42
Netherlands	2010–2014	44.16	37.82	51.47	55.84	21.29	4.63	13.56	27.92
New Zealand	2017–2022	34.44	31.14	38.41	65.56	14.47	2.65	8.99	20.34
Nicaragua	2017–2022	93.17	92.80	93.55	6.83	44.08	20.92	34.33	86.00
Nigeria	2017–2022	99.51	99.01	100.00	0.49	85.53	41.47	79.30	89.98
Pakistan	2017–2022	99.80	99.79	99.81	0.20	84.56	59.50	91.63	92.23
Palestine, State of	2010–2014	98.20	97.46	98.98	1.80	89.30	26.70	79.50	84.00
Peru	2017–2022	89.07	88.68	89.46	10.93	40.07	14.14	32.21	76.79
Philippines	2017–2022	99.50	99.67	99.33	0.50	75.33	43.50	77.83	92.83
Poland	2010–2014	81.37	80.19	82.77	18.63	44.31	11.80	42.44	57.04
Qatar	2010–2014	99.81	99.83	99.80	0.19	91.51	27.45	81.70	87.55
Romania	2017–2022	86.63	83.03	92.15	13.37	49.40	19.09	52.51	63.96
Russian Federation	2017–2022	91.44	88.06	96.25	8.56	68.18	26.69	66.52	58.62
Rwanda	2010–2014	99.15	99.22	99.08	0.85	67.78	36.15	65.68	97.64
Serbia	2017–2022	77.63	70.33	85.60	22.37	42.35	10.42	29.64	57.17
Singapore	2017–2022	77.63	77.02	78.35	22.37	49.35	17.40	37.82	56.56
Slovenia	2010–2014	61.09	55.36	68.89	38.91	33.58	8.04	25.91	33.68
South Africa	2010–2014	97.14	96.32	97.96	2.86	75.73	37.69	55.28	89.69
Spain	2010–2014	53.49	51.89	55.17	46.51	29.52	11.52	20.27	32.04
Sweden	2010–2014	31.76	30.14	33.57	68.24	15.92	2.57	8.87	17.83
Tajikistan	2017–2022	99.92	99.83	100.00	0.08	78.33	51.67	78.08	97.50
Thailand	2017–2022	95.47	95.08	95.85	4.53	65.87	31.40	53.80	81.20
Trinidad and Tobago	2010–2014	87.39	85.77	89.36	12.61	39.14	5.61	37.74	74.77
Tunisia	2017–2022	96.77	95.22	98.57	3.23	82.95	24.75	71.03	77.24
Türkiye	2017–2022	91.64	89.40	93.87	8.36	68.86	32.01	63.98	76.02
Ukraine	2017–2022	86.11	82.35	91.60	13.89	51.12	23.04	52.60	66.18
United States	2017–2022	50.65	51.49	49.93	49.35	34.82	8.59	13.79	31.55
Uruguay	2010–2014	78.60	79.36	77.75	21.40	28.60	9.20	34.30	57.30
Uzbekistan	2010–2014	97.93	97.50	98.62	2.07	78.67	48.60	80.33	84.27
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	2017–2022	92.35	91.28	93.52	7.65	55.80	17.90	31.01	80.84

(continued)

Country or territory	Period	Gender Social Norms Index (percent of people with at least one bias)				Percent of people biased, by dimension			
		Total	Women	Men	People with no bias	Political	Educational	Economic	Physical integrity
Viet Nam	2017–2022	93.75	92.98	94.68	6.25	65.08	27.67	64.33	77.75
Yemen	2010–2014	98.70	97.81	99.60	1.30	87.40	45.30	87.20	85.40
Zimbabwe	2017–2022	98.68	98.86	98.50	1.32	61.56	14.24	55.14	95.47
Overall average[a]	Most recent year available	89.70	88.48	91.07	10.30	59.85	27.39	58.74	76.09
Countries with data from wave 5 (2005–2009)									
Bulgaria	2005–2009	78.22	69.98	87.99	21.78	53.15	10.79	36.16	44.86
Burkina Faso	2005–2009	98.57	98.25	98.84	1.43	65.65	33.05	77.12	90.48
Finland	2005–2009	52.47	45.71	59.71	47.53	25.15	6.80	23.87	31.16
France	2005–2009	57.24	57.01	57.50	42.76	36.16	6.89	26.07	23.18
Hungary	2005–2009	67.33	63.13	72.13	32.67	42.90	18.67	38.23	33.37
Italy	2005–2009	64.43	60.36	68.51	35.57	17.98	7.81	29.35	47.83
Mali	2005–2009	99.48	99.21	99.74	0.52	81.36	47.39	88.53	91.92
Moldova (Republic of)	2005–2009	90.73	89.47	92.12	9.27	60.33	16.73	58.80	67.21
Norway	2005–2009	42.15	39.92	44.36	57.85	19.51	3.71	21.85	18.15
Switzerland	2005–2009	56.89	56.14	57.81	43.11	21.11	8.70	29.01	32.39
United Kingdom	2005–2009	57.73	52.17	63.48	42.27	26.42	6.82	25.17	35.16
Zambia	2005–2009	97.07	95.54	98.55	2.93	65.87	23.53	55.33	89.93

a. Averages are weighted based on the population age 15 and older from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs population data for the 76 countries and territories with data from wave 6 (2010–2014) or wave 7 (2017–2022) of the World Values Survey, accounting for 84 percent of the global population.
Source: Human Development Report Office based on data from the World Values Survey, accessed April 2022.