

International conference on

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS: TWO DECADES OF ADVANCEMENT, WHAT'S NEXT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH?

AGENCY AND PARTICIPATION FOR ENHANCING EQUITY

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

24-25th October 2011

During the last two decades the Human Development and the Human Rights Paradigms have been the fundamental theoretical and operational frameworks for UN agencies.

On the one hand, the Human Development Paradigm, rooted on Amartya Sen's Capability Approach, has been utilized by UNDP for the last 20 years to evaluate people's wellbeing. Human Development aims to expand people's freedoms - *the capabilities they have reason to value* - and empower people to actively engage in development processes¹. People, including children and youth, are active agents in this process, both as individuals and as a group. The Paradigm helps decision makers to choose proper policies on the basis of principles such as justice, equality, human rights, and sustainability.² The space of evaluation of public policies is what people are actually able to do, the number of opportunities among which they can choose, that is their freedom. In the end, functionings are, according to Sen, the most realistic space of evaluation.³

On the other hand, in 1989 and subsequent years, almost all countries adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This important legal instrument has been the result of a major shift recognizing children as subjects of rights and the State as major duty-bearer. UNICEF uses the UNCRC as theoretical and practical framework for analysis worldwide. The human rights framework reaffirms the indivisibility, universality, inalienability, interdependence and no discrimination of civil, political, economical, social and cultural rights.

¹ Sen, 1999.

² Alkire, 2010, p.39

³ PNUD/ODHRD, 2009, p. 5

Therefore, Human Development and Human Rights can provide a theoretical and analytical framework for better policies and responses to improve the situation of children and youth worldwide. The first has much potential to develop a child-centred theory and analyses, while the latter can complement and reinforce the Human Development paradigm.

The human rights framework provides legal guarantees to fundamental capabilities, that is, what people value to be and to do. Specifically, it recognizes children and youth as subjects of rights, therefore as social actors who can contribute to their own development and to the development of their communities. Furthermore, it offers a base for a holistic analysis of youth and children's wellbeing and for selecting a list of capabilities for children and youth.

On the other side, the human development paradigm provides a theoretical framework to evaluate the factors that expand or limit the real opportunities that people have, that is, the context that enable people to do and to be what they value. It offers a wider framework for the analysis of the situation of children and youth, and for the design of efficient public policies. Furthermore, it provides tools to prioritize public policies and to evaluate them under the principles of equity, sustainability, justice, and empowerment.

UNICEF and UNDP in Dominican Republic are pioneers in introducing the child perspective into the Provincial Human Development Reports. This project, started in 2009, required a theoretical discussion and a practical fieldwork which contribute to the international debate on the integration of the Human Development and Human Rights framework applied to children. Despite the increasing interest of academics and experts around the integration of the two paradigms, a space for open discussion is needed to address fundamental questions that are emerging from a child-centered perspective.

Three groups of relevant questions emerge from this debate:

- How did the human rights framework and the human development approach understand and theorize youth and children's participation and agency? How could both approaches learn to each other in theorizing youth and children's participation and agency?
- How do agency and participation enhance equity in the case of children and youth? How can we analyze it through both approaches? How do we measure it?
- Which are the implications of the relation between youth/child agency and equity for policy making and programming? Are there good practices?

CALL FOR PAPERS

UNDP through the Human Development Office and UNICEF are jointly organizing an international conference on “Human Development and Human Rights: two decades of advancement, what’s next for children and youth? Agency and participation for enhancing equity” in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

The conference aims at bringing together UNICEF and UNDP experts from country offices as well as researchers in the fields of Human Development and Human Rights Paradigms oriented at analyzing young people and children’s issues.

The Conference will provide a space for the discussion of major benefits and challenges of the **integration of Human Rights and Human Development frameworks** and their usefulness for designing better policies, programs and projects directed to children and youth. In particular, the debate will focus on children’s and youth participation and agency, examining their relation with inequity reduction.

The conference objectives are thus:

- ✓ To gain a better understanding of the **conceptual relation between Human Development and the Human Rights paradigm** as applied to children and youth, with a focus on the concepts of participation, agency and equity.
- ✓ To **integrate both paradigms** in order to produce **better analyses** of children wellbeing and translate it in more effective **public policies, programs and projects for children and youth.**
- ✓ To encourage a **common space for inter-agency exchange of experiences and knowledge**, favoring **inter-agency cooperation.**

The conference will consist of plenary presentation sessions of papers presented by experts, followed by discussion sessions. Participants will also engage in a workshop aimed at providing a set of public policy recommendations. The conference is also expected to provide useful theoretical and analytical insights for the preparation of the provincial Human Development Reports in the Dominican Republic. Finally, the conference will provide space for active participation of youth and it will seek to foster a process for strengthening a platform for action of local youth networks and organizations.

Full Papers: Individuals are welcome to submit theoretical papers, to present findings from completed research or to present ongoing work that raises methodological or conceptual issues. Full papers will be allocated 30 minutes in total including 25 minutes for presentation. Paper can be submitted either in Spanish or English.

Proposals for full papers should be 250-300 words in length

Final papers are expected to be around @6000 words in length.

Submissions for conference papers and discussion topics should be made by email to michela.darodda@undp.org.

Key Dates

Submission Deadline

Proposal for Full Paper → 15 July 2011

Notification of Outcome before 30 July 2011

Completed Full Paper due for the 30 September 2011

Further details about the conference can be found online by visiting the UNICEF and UNDP website at <http://www.unicef.org/republicadominicana/> and <http://odh.pnud.org.do>, or contacting Michela Da Rodda (michela.darodda@undp.org).

Accommodation and Travel

Every participant should provide for his/her travel arrangements and accommodation. Information regarding how to get to the Conference and a list of recommended hotels will be available on UNICEF and UNDP/Human Development Office country website by the end of June.

Registration

Both speakers and general public are welcomed to the conference. UNDP and UNICEF personnel are encouraged to participate in the conference. Every participant is required to pay a registration fee. The registration fee will include refreshments (morning and afternoon) and lunch on Monday 24 and Tuesday 25 October.

Rates are as follows:

For Dominican participants : RDS1,000.00

For non Dominican participants: : USD 100

The deadline for registration is Monday 15 September 2011.