

Sustainable Human Development (60h – 9CFU)

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Course learning objectives and skill acquisition

The main objective of this course is to introduce students to the human development paradigm and the capability approach (HDCA). The students will learn the main concepts and tools –quantitative and qualitative– of the HDCA and how to apply them to number of economic, social and environmental issues, such as gender inequality and empowerment, education, health, poverty, food security, and climate change.

Assessment

The course assessment is based on a written test, consisting of open questions and numerical exercises.

Course general schedule

1. Introduction to the capability approach

In this first part of the course, the basic concepts of the capability approach will be introduced and justified: functionings, capabilities, agency; freedoms and capabilities; standard of living, well-being, and agency achievements. Then the capability approach will be compared with other approaches. The students will learn how to evaluate functioning and capabilities, and how to put the capability approach to work. Some case studies will be presented and discussed.

2. Human Development: concept and measurement

These lectures will firstly introduce the human development approach, proposed in 1990 by ul Haq, the director of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This approach has its theoretical background in Amartya Sen's capability approach and provides an alternative framework for the analysis of development issues to the one advocated by other institutions, such as the World Bank. Since 1990 on the UNDP has published yearly the Human Development Reports, which focus on specific topics related to human development, and describe and interpret country performances following some key indicators.

In a second step, we will focus on the measurement of human development. Before presenting the official indicators elaborated by the UNDP, we will discuss, from a theoretical point of view, how it is possible to encapsulate a complex and multi-faceted concept such as human development into one single index or a dashboard of indices. As an example, we will discuss educational indicators. Then, the most important indicators – the (old and new) Human Development Index, the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index and the Gender Inequality Index – will be analyzed in-depth. In particular, attention will be drawn to the development dimensions considered, to the variables chosen to measure such dimensions, to the standardization procedure and, finally, to the methods used to aggregate the dimensions

into one single composite index. As a conclusion, some cross-country comparisons will be made

3. Agency, Participation and Gender

The first lecture provides students with an overview of the concepts of human freedom and human agency, as promoted by the capability approach and the human development paradigm. It explains the five instrumental freedoms and their relationship to human development. The lecture then explores the difference between different types of human agency. It examines the importance and limitations of individual agency in promoting human wellbeing.

The second lecture introduces the students to the dynamics, limitations and challenges of participation and empowerment. It critically reviews the concepts of 'participation' and 'empowerment' and examines the various critiques to participatory approaches to development. The lecture carefully examines the potential benefits, barriers and challenges encountered in promoting these participatory approaches. It critically explores how civil society organizations can work effectively with local communities to promote empowerment at the grassroots level.

The third lecture will explore the links between gender and poverty and. It will critically examine the concept of agency within the capability and explore the 'feminisation of poverty'. Using a case study approach, the lecture will focus on unequal power relations and gender-based inequalities within the household and in the community and how these inequalities affect not only poverty but also women's agency and empowerment.

4. Education

In traditional economic theories, education is considered as the central pillar of "human capital", an input to be included in the production function. The lecture will briefly review the role of education within these growth-led theories of development and then move towards more people-centered approaches to development. Only with the capability approach education has been investigated in a comprehensive way, recognizing its intrinsic role and multiple economic and social benefits. The lecture will show the direct implications of choosing one approach as compared to another in the design and evaluation of an educational project. The class will also focus on different ways of measuring education. Different educational indicators will be adopted to understand the effects of national and international policies in this sector. The last part of the class will concentrate on the existing evidence of the effects of different (educational and non-educational) policies on educational indicators.

5. Health

The goals of this part are: a. introducing the debate between health and development; b. analyzing health within the capability approach (importance of conversion factors, agency and empowerment, process, etc.); c. introducing the field of global health and the MDGs and SDGs on health; d. examine key global health indicators and inequalities within and across countries in such indicators, with a specific focus on the context of social determinants of health

6. Poverty

The main objective of this part is to analyze different approaches to poverty. We will start with the traditional, monetary approach and distinguish between absolute and relative poverty, and between national and international poverty lines. The main indices of monetary poverty will be introduced and discussed with concrete examples. These are: the headcount ratio, the poverty gap and the squared poverty gap. Overall world and regional trends in income poverty will be examined.

Subsequently, we will focus on measures of multidimensional poverty, especially those grounded on the capability approach. All the different steps required to measure poverty in a multidimensional space will be analyzed, starting from the identification of the relevant dimensions of poverty and concluding with the selection of indices to aggregate multiple components into one single index of poverty. The last part will be devoted to the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) elaborated by OPHI and adopted by the UNDP. The main technicalities, together with their limitations will be presented. During the whole class, different exercises will be carried out. The last lecture of this part will present recent global trends in income and multidimensional poverty.

7. Social Protection

The goals of this part are: a. understanding key concepts of social protection and social policy (e.g. basic services, social insurance, social assistance, labor market policies, contributory vs non-contributory etc.); b. discussing how social protection evolved in the Global South over time and which are the most common approaches used now (e.g., cash transfers, school feeding, etc.); c. being able to reflect on the potential of social protection for human development, and nutrition, health and education in particular, through examples in current research.

8. The capability approach to food security

The first goal of this part is to give a brief critical review of main analytical approaches to food security: food availability, income-based, basic needs, entitlement, sustainable livelihoods, food insecurity experience, capability. The second goal is to explain how to operationalize the capability approach to food security.

9. Environment, Poverty and Human Development

This part will look at the bi-directional relationship between the environment and human development. The lectures will consider these topics in light of both recent research as well as the current national and international political processes. Different data sources will be also presented, that can be used by students. The first lecture will focus on the effects of climate change on human development. Different channels and dimensions will be considered, with a focus on poverty and inequality. The second lecture then looks at how policies that aim to protect the environment and mitigate climate change can, in turn, affect human development. Here a special focus will be on the effects of carbon taxes on poverty. It will also be discussed how the potential negative social effects of climate mitigation policies can be addressed. This will be then linked to the current discussion of “just transitions”, that aim to link climate mitigation and poverty reduction efforts.

Teaching material

Teaching material listed below is either available online (where a web link is indicated) or in Roma Tre library.

1.1 Alkire, S., “Capability and Functionings: Definition & Justification”, Briefing Note, Human Development and Capability Association, 2005. (https://hd-ca.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/HDCA_Briefing_Concepts.pdf).

1.2 Alkire S. and Deneulin S., “The Human Development and Capability Approach”, in Deneulin S. with Shahani L.(eds.), An Introduction to the Human Development and Capability Approach: Freedom and Agency, Earthscan, London, 2009, chap. 2 (<https://www.idrc.ca/en/book/introduction-human-development-and-capability-approach-freedom-and-agency>).

1.3 Sen, A., “Development as Capability Expansion”, Journal of Development Planning, no. 19, pp. 41-58, 1989 (reprinted in Fukuda-Parr S. and A. K. Shiva Kumar. Readings in human development: concepts, measures, and policies for a development paradigm. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

1.4 Sen, A. Development as Freedom, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, chap. III

2.1 Sen, A.K. (1999). “Development as Freedom”, Chapter “The Ends and the Means of Development”.

2.2 Stewart, F. (2019): The Human Development Approach: An Overview. Oxford Development Studies 47(2), 135-153.

2.3 UNDP. 2019. Human Development Report 2019, Technical notes, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2019_technical_notes.pdf (for the calculation of the HDI and the MPI).

3.1 Cleaver, F. (1999) Paradoxes of Participation: Questioning Participatory Approaches to Development, Journal of International Development, vol. 11 (4): p. 597-612.

3.2 Crocker, D. (2008) Ethics of Global Development: Agency, Capability, and Deliberative Democracy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: Chapter 5: Agency, Functioning and Capability: pp. 150-184.

3.3 Ibrahim, S. (2014) The Dynamics of Collective Agency in Practice: Women’s Fight against FGM in Upper Egypt in S. Ibrahim and M. Tiwari (Eds.) The Capability Approach: From Theory to Practice, Palgrave MacMillan.

4.1 Sen, A.K. (1999), Development as Freedom (ed. A. Knopf), sub-chapter “Human Capital and Human Capability” (last section of the book).

4.2 Unterhalter, E. (2009), “Education”, chapter 9 in S. Deneulin and L. Shahani Introduction to the Human Development and Capability Approach. Downloadable at: <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/40248/IDL-40248.pdf>.

5.1 Ariana, P., Naveed, A. (2009), “Health”, chapter 10 in S. Deneulin and L. Shahani Introduction to the Human Development and Capability Approach. Downloadable at: <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/40248/IDL-40248.pdf>

- 5.2 Marmot, M. & Commission on Social Determinants of Health (2007). Achieving health equity: from root causes to fair outcomes. *Lancet* 370: 1153-63. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(07\)61385-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(07)61385-3/fulltext)
- 6.1 Alkire, S. and Santos, E. (2009), "Poverty and Inequality Measurement", chapter 6 in S. Deneulin and L. Shahani Introduction to the Human Development and Capability Approach. Downloadable at: <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/40248/IDL-40248.pdf>.
- 6.2 UNDP. 2010. "Human Development Report 1990": pp. 94-100 ("Measuring poverty— the Multidimensional Poverty Index). <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2010>.
- 7.1 Merrien, F. X. (2013). Social Protection as Development Policy. A New International Agenda for Action. Available open access at: <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/1525>
- Logan Ward, The pros and cons of universal basic income. *The Well*, Tuesday, February 23rd, 2021: <https://thewell.unc.edu/2021/02/23/the-pros-and-cons-of-universal-basic-income/>
- 7.2 Picketty, T. From basic income to inheritance for all. <https://www.lemonde.fr/blog/piketty/2021/05/18/from-basic-income-to-inheritance-for-all/>.
- 8.1 Burchi, F. and De Muro, P. "From food availability to nutritional capabilities: Advancing food security analysis". *Food Policy*, 2016 (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0306919215000354>).
- 8.2 United Nations Development Programme, Africa Human Development Report 2012: Towards a Food Secure Future, New York: UN Publications, 2012, chap. 1 (<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hdr/africa-human-development-report-2012.html>).
9. Malerba, D. (2021). "Climate change". In *Handbook on Social Protection Systems*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781839109119.00085>.