

Poverty and Human Rights

The Added Value of a “Rights Based Approach” to Poverty Reduction

Poverty Reduction Roundtable: Achieving MDG1 in BiH

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Defining development ...

“Development”

- ⇒ Broadening of development term/ shift towards a **holistic notion** going beyond notions of economic development and growth
- ⇒ “Human Development” (inclusion of distinct individual perspective, emphasis on participation, inclusion, choice ...)
- ⇒ Goal of Human Development - “enlarging of choices/ freedoms to live a dignified life”

Defining poverty ...

“Poverty”

- ➔ **paradigm shift towards concept of multidimensional deprivation**, going beyond low income/ low consumption and including low achievements in other areas relevant for human development (education, health, nutrition, housing, participation...)

BiH PRSP 2004-2007 poverty definition: *“To view poverty as **multidimensional phenomenon** ... characterized by lasting or chronic shortage of resources, abilities, choices, security and powers required for an adequate standard of living and **attainment of other civil, economic, social, political and cultural rights**”*

Human Rights and Development: Emergence of a Rights Based Approach (RBA) to Development

Background: Development and HR field developed independently but conceptual merger after 1993 (*World Conference on HR in Vienna*)

- Realization that both fields work towards same goal - **securing basic freedoms and choices**
- **“Fulfillment of all HR as ultimate goal of development”**

RBA to development -

- ⇒ **Framework** for the process of **human development** which makes use of **human rights norms** and of **principles** as guidance for the **process** and the **outcome** of development and aims at the **development of capacities for the realisation of human rights**

Normative framework in BiH : Core HR Treaties as Standard for Human Development

European Level

- European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- European Social Charta (ESC)

Global/ UN level (UDHR 1948 - GA declaration - not legally binding)

- Six Core Treaties
 - Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
 - Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
 - Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
 - Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - Convention against Torture
 - Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women

⇒ By signing/ ratifying the treaties BiH has accepted to meet the HR obligations in the treaties

Core human rights characteristics & principles of RBA

- ❖ **Universality** – all human rights for all
- ❖ **Indivisibility of rights** - civil, political, social, economic, cultural rights on the same footing and creating same obligations
- ❖ **Interdependence and interrelatedness of rights** - realization of rights supported and dependent on realization/ enjoyment of other rights
- ❖ **Participation** as a right (rather than being a managerial best practice) – right holders (beneficiaries) are entitled to participate
- ❖ **Non-discrimination** - positive duty of the state to protect and reach out to the most deprived
- ❖ **Accountability** – development is not a charity, but a **right**. Legal system as back up to enforce fulfillment of obligations by “duty bearers” (Duties: state/ government to **respect/ protect/ fulfill** human rights)

Defining Poverty from a rights based perspective

- Poverty = **extreme form of deprivation related to economic constraints**
- Poverty from human development perspective = **lack of basic choices (capabilities)**
- **HR Perspective: Poverty = denial (non-fulfillment) of those rights that ensure basic choices related to the command over economic resources**
 - Nourishment (food)
 - Adequate clothing and housing
 - Literacy (basic education)
 - Avoidance of preventable morbidity (health)
 - Taking part in life of a community (participation)
- **Only some rights are part of the poverty definition (constitutive relevance), but all rights are part of the strategy to overcome poverty (instrumental value)**

“Added Value” of a RBA to Poverty Reduction (1)

- ❖ RBA recognizes **inter-linkages of development dimensions & inter-linkages of rights**
- ❖ RBA to poverty reduction by making explicit reference to the national and international HR framework stresses **accountability of duty-bearers** (those responsible to act, esp. state)
- ❖ Recognizes that discrimination (exclusion) and poverty are often interrelated and tackles the **structural and institutional root causes of poverty**

“Added Value” of a RBA to Poverty Reduction (2)

- ❖ RBA explicitly acknowledges **right to participation** of those concerned in PRS
- ❖ While economic growth remains a prerequisite for human development, a RBA claims to ensure that such growth is as much as possible **equitable and promotes rather than violates HR**

“Added Value” of a RBA to Poverty Reduction (3)

Summing up, the added value of a RBA lies in both, **in reinforcing existing features** of PRS (national ownership/ participation) as well as **adding further dimensions** which have the potential to advance the goal of poverty reduction

RMAP - Applying a RBA to local development in BiH

- ⇒ UNDP RMAP phases (Assessment, Planning and Implementation)
- ⇒ RMAP uses **RBA** for defining development priorities at the municipal level (“gap-analysis”)
 - identify claim holders and duty bearers (accountability)
 - identify the most disadvantaged at an early stage (inclusion)
 - use participation to complement analysis of collected data
 - identify “gaps” and root causes for non-realization of rights
- ⇒ Presentation and **discussions of assessment findings** to local stakeholders & definition of priority areas
- ⇒ **Local Partnership Group** defining the vision, broader dev.goals, objectives, projects and measures in priority areas
- ⇒ Result: **multi-sectoral, participatory development strategies** comprising prioritized development projects for whole municipality & strategic interventions targeted towards vulnerable groups

Challenges/ “lessons learnt” of a RBA to local development in BiH

- ⇒ Ensuring meaningful participation & danger of “elite capture” (⇒HR analysis/ “focus group” discussions)
- ⇒ Overall lack of reliable data at the local level/ difficulties in setting benchmarks and indicators (⇒increasing attention to local capacities for data collection & management)
- ⇒ Complex delienation of responsibilities/ insufficient concern of higher level authorities for the functioning of municipalities (⇒municipalities as “rights holders” towards higher level & importance of a strengthening a policy/ advocay component to adress respons. of other layers of government)

**Thank you for your
attention!**