National Human Rights Commission of Zubrowka
WORKING WITH INDICATORS AND BENCHMARKS
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Working with Indicators

Working with Benchmarks
What is an indicator?

- A piece of information that tells us ‘how much’, ‘how many’ or ‘to what extent’.
- Is often data that can be expressed in the form of numbers, ratios, or percentages.
- Can be based on qualitative information converted into quantitative or categorical data.

What is a benchmark?

- An agreed upon goal or target that should be achievable and time bound.
- A reference point against which to judge indicators.
- A predetermined standard for comparing performance.
USES OF QUANTITATIVE MEASURES

- An indicator uses data to measure “how much” or “how many” or “to what extent” or “what size”.

- It can demonstrate the level where something is, the direction it is headed, and how far it is from a target.
## Indicator Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fact Based</strong></td>
<td>E.g. Ratification status of ILO Agreement on Child Labor; type of gender-based health products that enjoy tax breaks</td>
<td>E.g. Percent of children registered for pre-school education; number of cases denied access to medical treatment at emergency rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opinion or Perception Based</strong></td>
<td>E.g. Case studies that show status of rights enjoyment; expert opinion on whether piece of legislation ensures the right to water.</td>
<td>E.g. Hospital database on level of patient satisfaction; percent of parents satisfied with the school curriculum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HUMAN RIGHTS
INDICATORS
MEASURE NORMS
Indicators that show people’s standard of living have been used in the development field for a long time (e.g. Human Development Reports).

However, these indicators are not necessarily human rights indicators.

To become human rights indicators they need to reflect human rights norms and standards.

This means that, in particular, indicators should capture states’ obligations of conduct, as well as result.

Obligations of conduct are those about what the state should be or doing.

Obligations of result are those about what the outcomes should be.
## Linking Principles with Ways to Measure

### Outcomes
- **What is the level of rights enjoyment overall?**
  - Minimum core obligations
- **Are there differences between populations?**
  - Non-discrimination
- **How have things changed over time?**
  - Progressive Realization

### Policy Efforts
- **What legal and policy commitments has the state made?**
  - Take steps
- **How have policies been implemented?**
  - AAAQ Criteria
- **What was policy-making process?**
  - Participation, transparency, accountability

### Resources
- **How are resources are allocated and spent?**
  - Maximum Resources
- **How are resource generated?**
  - Availability of Resources
- **What was the budget-making process?**
  - Participation, transparency, accountability

### Assessment
- **What other determinants affect rights holders?**
  - Indivisibility and Interdependence
- **What constraints face the state?**
  - Respect, Protect, Duty to Cooperate
- **Is the state complying with its human rights obligations?**
  - Obligation to Fulfill
OUTCOME VS POLICY EFFORT INDICATORS

- Obligations of conduct (what the state should be or doing) are generally measured by policy effort indicators

- Obligations of result are generally measured by outcome indicators

- EXAMPLE: indicators related to maternal health
  - Maternal mortality ratio
  - Number of births attended by trained birth attendants; percentage of women with access to emergency obstetric care
WE NEED TO BE STRATEGIC IN WHAT WE MEASURE
DROWNING IN A SEA OF INFORMATION

- Information age – data increasing exponentially
- What indicators to use, and why?
Indicators, as their name implies, give an indication of what a particular situation is. So questions around causality versus correlations.

Data on quantitative indicators can be well suited to diagnosing a situation by answering the questions ‘how much’, ‘how many’, ‘to what extent’, ‘where’ or ‘when’.

But more limited in terms of uncovering ‘why’ a situation is the way it is—an important question in human rights assessment.

Qualitative indicators, narrative testimony, and other ways of capturing lived reality also important.
## CRITERIA FOR JUDGING INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How closely does the indicator relate to the right being measured?</th>
<th>Does the indicator relate to a specific recommendation from an international or national source?</th>
<th>Does the indicator tell us something new about how government actions are impacting on the right?</th>
<th>What would ordinary people think of the indicator?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GREEN</strong></td>
<td>Indicator is a precise measure of the right.</td>
<td>Indicator is directly connected to a recommendation.</td>
<td>Indicator directly improves our understanding of how actions impact rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ORANGE</strong></td>
<td>Indicator is a reasonable, well-established proxy of the right.</td>
<td>Indicator is moderately connected to a recommendation.</td>
<td>Indicator duplicates other indicators and adds little new insight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RED</strong></td>
<td>Indicator is only vaguely connected to the right.</td>
<td>Indicator is not connected to a recommendation.</td>
<td>Indicator is not directly related to government action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Working with Indicators

Working with Benchmarks
In identifying and developing human rights benchmarks there are two main considerations about the quality of the benchmark:

- First, how well grounded is the benchmark in international human rights standards and how does well does it reflect these?
- Second, what is the strategic value of the benchmark? In other words, how will it help us achieve change?
- This question can be broken down into two additional questions:
  - How are responsible individuals or organizations are likely to respond to it?
  - How much support it is likely to enjoy from affected communities and others?
HUMAN RIGHTS BENCHMARKS CAN COME FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES
**SOURCES OF BENCHMARKS**

- International or Regional Agreements
  - Sustainable Development Goals
- International or National Standards
  - Specialized UN agencies like FAO, WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO
- National Commitments
  - Indicators in National Action Plans (e.g. on development, human rights, business and human rights, SDGs etc.)
  - Indicators in government policies (e.g. Scotland's National Outcomes)
  - Recommendations from NHRI reports?
- “Bottom up” approaches with affected groups, including minority groups
Percentage of deaths due to communicable, maternal, prenatal or nutritional conditions, selected upper middle income countries (2016)

Source: World Bank, 2018c
FEATURES OF HUMAN RIGHTS BENCHMARKS

- Linked to human rights standards and helps make them more concrete
- Enjoys broad legitimacy
  - Process transparent and participatory
  - Informed by community expectations of what is reasonable or just.
  - Consensus developed on benchmark
- S.M.A.R.T.

S – specific
M – measurable
A – ambitious
R – realistic
T – time-bound
COLLECTING AND SCRUTINIZING SECONDARY DATA
TYPES OF SECONDARY DATA

Outcomes
- Socio-economic and administrative statistics
- Perception and opinion surveys
- Events-based data

Policy Efforts
- Socio-economic and administrative statistics
- Perception and opinion surveys
- Expert judgments
- Events-based data

Resources
- Administrative statistics
- Budgetary information
- Events-based data

Assessment
- Perception and opinion surveys
- Expert judgments
JUDGING SECONDARY DATA

- Reliability
  - Data should be consistent and dependable without ambiguities or biases.

- Impartiality
  - Data should be collected in an objective, professional and transparent manner.

- Regularity
  - Data should be collected on a regularly reoccurring basis.

- Ability to disaggregated
  - To be most useful data should be able to be disaggregated.
UNDERSTANDING METADATA

What is metadata?

- Metadata is “data that provides information about other data”
- Ex: Library card catalogues

Why is metadata important in human rights analysis?

- Meta data can provide information on data sources, computation methods, measures of variability and description of errors (e.g. bias and sampling errors)

Example of metadata from World Bank:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long definition</th>
<th>Adult literacy rate is the percentage of people ages 15 and above who can both read and write with understanding a short simple statement about their everyday life.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Periodicity</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregation method</td>
<td>Weighted average</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WHAT NORMS MIGHT WE WANT TO ANALYZE?

Aggregate levels of enjoyment: What are overall levels of enjoyment?

- Data can be assessed against benchmarks or compared against similar countries. Deviations can point to whether or not a country’s performance is reasonable.

Disparities in rights enjoyment between groups: Are any groups being discriminated against?

- Disaggregated data can uncover differences between groups.

Progress over time: Are things getting better or worse?

- Socio-economic data can be compared over time to indicate progress or deterioration and whether disparities are growing or reducing.