Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 statistical update

Human Development Dashboards 1-5
Frequently Asked Questions

What is a dashboard? Why the Human Indices and Indicators: A Statistical Update 2018 adds the dashboards?

The dashboard approach has become popular for monitoring development outcomes. The Human Indices and Indicators: A Statistical Update 2018 brings five colour-coded tables also termed dashboards: Dashboard 1 on quality of human development, dashboard 2 on life-course gender gap, dashboard 3 on women's empowerment, dashboard 4 on environmental sustainability and dashboard 5 on socioeconomic sustainability. The colour-coded tables evaluate progress of human development by highlighting levels and changes of various indicators.

What is the rational for partial grouping used in dashboards? How different is the partial grouping from the grouping of countries by the Human Development Index?

The dashboards visualize grouping of countries by each indicator, thus partially, contrary to a complete grouping by a composite measure, which combines all listed indicators after making them commensurable. A good example of a complete grouping is the grouping of countries into four human development groups by the Human Development Index (HDI). The complete grouping by a composite index depends on the way the component indicators are combined into the index. On the other hand, the partial grouping does not require any assumption on normalization, weighting or the functional form of the composite index. A partial grouping may depend on the predefined values considered as thresholds needed for grouping, such as what is considered a good performance or as a target to be achieved.

How is the number of groups and colours decided for partial grouping of countries?

The decision was to group countries to a small number of groups, say three, according to the values of an indicator achieved by countries. Countries are divided into three groups of approximately equal sizes (terciles): the top third, the middle third and the bottom third. A distinct shade of a selected colour is attached to a group of countries with a similar level of performance. The colour-coding scale graduates from darkest to lightest. The darker shade of pink represents the top third group; the moderate shade represents the middle third; and the lightest shade of pink represents the bottom third of countries. Partial grouping of countries applies to all indicators listed in five dashboards. Sex ratio at birth of Dashboard 2 is an exception—countries are divided into two groups: the natural group (countries with a value between 1.04-1.07, inclusive), which uses darker shading, and the gender-biased group (all other countries), which uses lighter shading. For some very skewed distributions (e.g., total unemployment rate, female to male ratio), the groups differ in sizes greatly. See Technical note 6 at http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2016_technical_notes.pdf for details

What are the observed ranges of values that define tercile groups?

When grouping countries into tercile groups according to each indicator, the intention is not to suggest thresholds or target values for any indicator, but rather to allow a crude assessment of country's performance relative to others. A country that is in the top group performs better than at least two thirds of countries (i.e., it is among the top third performers); a country that is in the middle group performs better than at least one third but worse than at least one third (i.e., it is among the medium third performers); and a country that is in the bottom third performs worse than at least two thirds of countries (i.e., it is among the bottom third performers). The observed ranges of values that define tercile groups for all indicators in dashboards 1-5 are given in Technical note 6 at http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2018_technical_notes.pdf.

How are the countries grouped according to indicators expressed as female to male ratios?

Countries with values of ratios around 1 form the group with the top achievements in that indicator. Large gaps in favor of men are treated equally as those in favor of women.

Countries are not grouped into tercile groups by all the indicators? Why?
In dashboard 4 on environmental sustainability, countries are not grouped by percentage of total land area under forest, but rather by the change in forest area since 1990. The reason is to respect the fact that the forest area is in a way determined by environmental and climate conditions, while the recent change in forest area is caused by men's activities. Similarly, in dashboard 5 on socioeconomic sustainability, indicator military expenditure (% of GDP) was not used for grouping of countries, instead the ratio of education and health expenditure to military expenditure was used for grouping and coloring. The reason is that military expenditure was not considered as an indicator in this table, but rather as an auxiliary indicator.

How is the colour determined for the aggregates at the bottom of each dashboard?
Group aggregates were not used to define the tercile groups. However, based on the value of an aggregate, it was placed in a tercile group and coloured accordingly.

What is the policy relevance of these dashboards?

> **Dashboard 1: Quality of human development,** contains a selection of 13 indicators associated with the quality of health, education and standard of living. By observing in which tercile group a country is, it is possible to understand the quality of main human development dimensions and propose policies that would lead to their better quality of human development.

> **Dashboard 2: Life-course gender gap,** contains a selection of 12 key indicators that display gender gaps in choices and opportunities over the life course – childhood and youth (5 indicators): sex ratio at birth, gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary, primary and secondary school level, and youth unemployment rate; adulthood (6 indicators): population with at least some secondary education,

total unemployment rate, female share of employment in nonagriculture, share of seats in parliament held by women, and time spent on unpaid domestic chores and care work; and older age (one indicator): old-age pension recipients. The indicators refer to health, education, labour market and work, political representation, time use and social protection. Most indicators (9) are presented as a ratio of female to male values, and three are presented only for women. Life-course gender gap dashboard could be an effective tool for measuring gender equality. The colour-coded table shows the levels and gender gaps over the life course on various indicators. Although this dashboard does not convey a definitive conclusion on country achievements as the composite indices, GDI and GII do, it is a useful tool to highlight the relative position of the country on various indicators of gender equality and human development and help policy analysts to picture the countries performance and inform policy makers about the possible improvements.

Dashboard 3: Women's empowerment, contains a selection of 13 woman-specific empowerment indicators that allows empowerment to be compared across indicators and countries. Indicators represent three distinct empowerment dimensions – reproductive health and family planning (6 indicators), violence against girls and women (3 indicators), and socioeconomic empowerment (4 indicators). Most countries have at least one indicator in each tercile, which implies that women's empowerment is unequal across indicators and across countries. This dashboard is a good analytic tool, which can direct efforts of the government, civil society, advocates and other interested parties to better focus on areas of women's empowerment in which a country is lagging behind others.

Dashboard 4: Environmental sustainability, contains a selection of 10 indicators that cover environmental sustainability and environmental threats. On environmental sustainability there are 7 level and change indicators related to energy consumption, carbon dioxide emissions, change in forest area and fresh water withdrawals. Three environmental threats indicators are mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution and to unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene service and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural resources' Red List Index that measures aggregate extinction risk across groups of species. This dashboard can serve as a good tool for evaluation of progress towards environmental sustainability. The colour-coded table shows the levels and/or changes on these indicators, clearly indicating areas that are lagging behind others and which need new policies and regulations.

Dashboard 5: Socioeconomic sustainability, contains a selection of 11 indicators that cover economic and social sustainability. The 6 economic sustainability indicators are: adjusted net savings, total debt service, gross capital formation, skilled labour force, diversity of exports and expenditure on research and development. The 4 social sustainability indicators are: the ratio of education and health expenditure to military expenditure, change in overall loss in HDI value due to inequality, and changes in gender and income inequality. In this dashboard no conclusive relationship between socioeconomic sustainability and the level of human development index has emerged. A country performing well on economic sustainability does not guaranty it can as well keep the same level of performance on social sustainable development. This dashboard seems to be an appropriate vehicle for data visualization and dissemination aimed at aiding policy analysts and policy makers in policy changes leading to sustainable development.