

Tracking the Progress of The Sustainable Development Goals: Water

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The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal, inclusive agenda to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The SDGs work in the spirit of partnership and pragmatism to make the right choices now to improve life, in a sustainable way for future generations. They provide clear guidelines and targets for all countries to adopt in accordance with their own priorities and the environmental challenges of the world at large.¹

Achieving the global goals for sustainable development while leaving no one behind requires a continued commitment to evidence-based policy analysis. Given that a total of 17 goals with 169 targets² are to be achieved by 2030, it is important to develop a process of tracking the progress rate of these goals to better inform governments where exactly specific policy interventions are to be made and to what extent.

For our analysis, we have tried to establish a method of identifying the gaps in the delivery of development services and the actual propensity of consumption of these services, specifically those taken toward the achievement of “Global Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation”. We have chosen Dominican Republic as the sample country of analysis. Our analysis combines a georeferenced data set, obtained from the DHS Spatial Data Repository Program and the World Bank, LAC Equity Lab- “Human Opportunity Index (sub-national) (HOI)” data to find which regions in the Dominican Republic have access to an improved water source but lack in capacity to make use of the facilities due to structural or institutional constraints. This analysis is to provide policy makers a better understanding of the challenges faced in specific regions while trying to provide access and the ability to make use of development services.

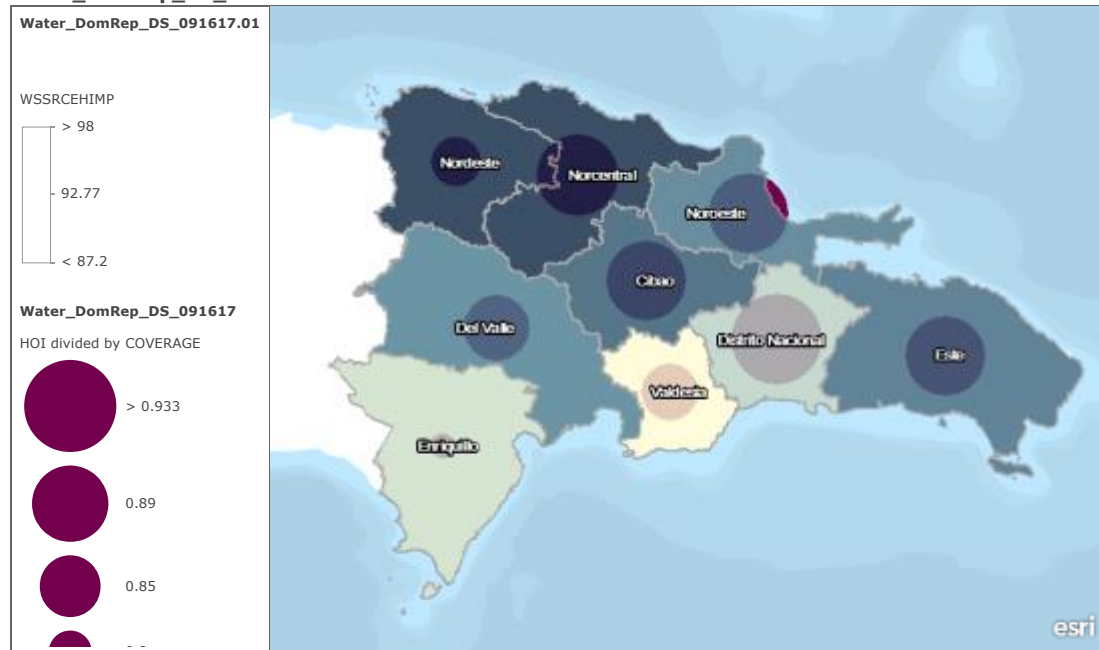
The DHS data provides information about households using an improved water source. The HOI measures the availability of services that are necessary to progress in life (say, safe water), discounted or “penalized” by the inequality of service distribution among the population.³ The HOI recognizes the problem to have an uneven playing field from the start, a problem of equity of opportunities, rather than equality. The HOI data provides information about the population coverage of access to an improved water source and the population actually making use of these services. The gap in the coverage and HOI reflects the presence of institutional or structural barriers in the region which limits the opportunity of making use of these services. The combination of these two data sets thus informs governments which regions need improved services and specifically where more impetus must be allowed to boost service delivery mechanisms to ensure greater inclusion of populations.

¹ <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

² <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

³ <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/482361468224408372/pdf/656560PUB0EPI2065717B09780821386996.pdf>

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Access to water

USGS The National Map: National Boundaries Dataset, 3DEP Elevation Program, Geographic Names Information System, National Hydrography Dataset, National Land Cover Database, National Structures Dataset, and National Transportation Dataset; U.S. Census Bureau - TIGER/Line and USFS Road Data

KEY:

WSSRCEHIMP : Households with improved water source.

COVERAGE: Populations with improved water source

HOI: Human Opportunity Index.

Although the regions of Nordeste and Norcentral have the most percentage of households having access to an improved water source, they suffer from relatively poor distribution of this service. Distrito Nacional on the other hand does not fare well in terms of having most households getting access to an improved water source but has fairly high equity in ensuring that most populations enjoy the same services. The region of Enriquillo lacks behind in terms of availability and distribution.

Thus, this method of analysis can be seen as a visual tool to better inform governments where better policy interventions are to be made and which regions are to be given more support to ensure a more fair and equitable distribution of resources and services. It is only by providing a better assessment platform to decision makers can progress of the SDGs be tracked and the goals met. This analysis seeks to provide a model framework policy makers might intend to adopt in order to apply it across the other SDGs and targets.