

# Public Administration & ICT for Human Development in Turkey: How to Remove Limitations

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper deals with the issue of ICT (Information Communication and Technology) for human development in Turkey and the role of public administration as a service provider, and as a macro organization. The human side of development is important at least as technological investments to balance inequalities and environmental risks. After having an overview of the Turkish case, a number of possible solutions have been argued to reach knowledge of happiness and well-being.*

*Keywords: Human Development, Information Communication and Technology, Information Communication and Technology & Human Development, Public Administration, Turkey, Turkish Public Administration*

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## INTRODUCTION

“Development of information society requires a strategic combination of technical (computers and telecommunications), human (employees and consumers), legal, administrative, business and information resources (software and information). An improvement in any of these areas brings positive results, however in the long run; progress is only possible when limitations in other areas removed. Therefore a harmonious and coordinated development of all areas helps smooth transition into the information society” (UNDP, 2002; Kaminska, 2010, p. 283).

As we could argue, *it is not computers which are magical in development of societies,*

*it is human beings....* This paper deals with the problem of ICT for human development from the perspective of the limits of public administration in Turkey by referring to the basic indicators, by a general overview of public administration in Turkey, by arguing limitations on public human resources, and by presenting a number of solutions.

## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN TURKEY

Human Development Index 2011 (of United Nations Development Program - UNDP) for Turkey has some indications. One should remember that measuring by itself is a problematic issue, and UN has some reservations and explaining articles on how to arrive consensus

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and conclusions. Especially when it comes to measuring “human development”, OECD also has an interactive web site enabling “citizens” to take part in and have a say on what or which variable (housing, job, etc.) is more important in “quality of life” for instance. As an economist from Turkey points out that “defining the measuring unit” is a major problem (e.g., for inflation index, what goods or services to choose, preferences on sub-indexes) and its rates directly influences the economic policy (Akat, 2011a). National income, welfare comparisons between countries, per capita income measurements are all have some limitations since they do not take health, education, income distribution. Report on Human Development in Turkey (<http://www.undp.org.tr>) has been released in November 2011, and Turkey has been placed at 67th level among 187 countries in terms of purchasing power. For non-income index, social dimension, which is measurable, objective and reflecting income distribution, has been employed averaging health (life expectancy at birth: 74) and education (average years of adult education: (6.5) and expected years of education for the babies born this year: 11.8) indicators as investments in human beings. Turkey has been placed as 112th. When those two indicators (67 and 112) unified, its rank is 92.

*Relatively lower nominal foreign exchange rate and overvalued Turkish currency (Lira) places Turkey in a better position in terms of per capita income, and another measurement problematic issue has been emphasized as “welfare distribution” as a result of public policy and social preference of governments depending on whether private consumption or social welfare expenses are preferred (Akat, 2011b). Those countries focusing on health and education are climbing to the higher levels in the ranking. That means a country with a lower (even a half) per capita income would also be at a closer rank with Turkey in human development index.*

In the case of health services, the minister states that there is gap between the number of human resources and patients; “the number of

medical practitioners for each 100 thousand people is 340 in Europe, and 156 in Turkey” (Akdağ, 2011). That means a doctor could spare ‘nine minutes (although doubled in last decade) for each patient, however this timing is not enough and should be at least 15 or 20 minutes.’ Ministry of Health has been prepared to better its services by increasing the number of medical practitioners through employing foreign nationals at private hospitals. E-Health system also helped to improve this picture.

In terms of economic indicators, a study reveals that there are considerable gaps in between Turkish regions in the distribution of production and income, distribution of employment among sectors and density of population (Mihçi & Köksal, 2010, p. 89). And in the case of school enrolment ratios the gap is not so big. However human capital has the highest share in the explanation of regional income differences. Another variable is the share of labor employed in industrial sector. Industrial clusters, electricity per capita income consumption, proxy for capital stock (Ankara city as centered geographically becomes a rational choice for relatively easier access from different regions) are other variables in per capita income difference equation. That study estimates that the amount of public investments and total length of roads have no significant impact on cross provincial per capita income disparity in Turkey. And it suggests that “the most effective policy mix for alleviating provincial inequalities is lessening educational differences and balancing industrial composition of employment, whilst encouraging physical capital accumulation within low-income regions” (Mihçi & Köksal, 2010, p. 90). Thus, for this paper’s purposes, we can arrive at a solution that education services among others are important for human development and e-learning and/or distance learning opportunities should be explored for better support of educational services. However, regarding the e-learning, the number of people (percentage of individuals) using the Internet for doing an online course: 2% (2007), and percentage of individuals using the Internet

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