Orange-Senqu
River Awareness Kit

THE RIVER BASIN | PEOPLE AND THE RIVER | GOVERNANCE | RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

People and the River

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Socio-economics in the Basin: Human Development Indicators:

Use of Statistics

Statistical figures can be valuable tools to see what is happening in a country, and to assist with identifying positive development trends and challenges. However, these figures very rarely tell us the reasons why things are the way they are. In order to understand these things, additional research is necessary.

A special problem is presented by statistical figures that combine different types of data and information to form an index, like the "Human Development Index" or the "Gender Inequality Index". These indices can be used to form certain opinions, and in some cases make decisions. However, if a country has a low ranking in an index, one has to carefully analyse the extent to which people of this country really have a worse life than citizens of countries with higher rankings.

Apart from that, statistical figures are produced by human beings, which means error can be a factor. Human error can contribute to mistakes, such as

- Misinterpretation of definitions;
- Carelessness or input error; or
- A vested interest to produce good (or bad) figures.

These factors apply to all producers of statistics, including large organisations like the UN, the Worldbank and the CIA, as well as smaller organisations.

Therefore, statistics can provide an inital hint or impression of a particular situation, but should not be taken as fact or truth. They should be used to provide information at the beginning of a decision-making process, not as the end or answer.

Statistics provide a departure point for decision-making.
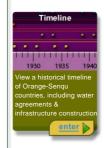*Source:JCKham 2011*
(click to enlarge)

Next: Basic Data

Interactive

Basin Map
Explore the sub-basins of the Orange-Senqu River
enter

Video Tour
Tour video scenes along the Orange-Senqu River related to People and the River
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Timeline
1930 1935 1940
View a historical timeline of Orange-Senqu countries, including water agreements & infrastructure construction
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River Journey
Journey along the Orange-Senqu River through images and interviews
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