

# CHILD POVERTY

What drives it and what it means  
to children across the world

A report for Save the Children



**Save the Children**

**Front cover photo:****Two children play in the market area of Yirimadjo, Mali**

(Photo: Tanya Bindra/Save the Children)

**Preface photo:****Olga, 22 years old, and John, 1 year old, at their house in the rural region of Huancavelica in Peru. Their skin is damaged due to the low temperatures, the dry air and exposure to the sun.**

(Photo: Alejandro Kirchuk/Save the Children)

Save the Children works in more than 120 countries.

We save children's lives.

We fight for their rights.

We help them fulfil their potential.

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Rahaf, 11 years old, helps with the daily chores. Rifaq and her family are among the 3.1 million displaced people in Iraq. Due to armed conflict the family of nine, were forced to leave their home and flee. They have been living in a camp for internally displaced people since August 2014.

Photo: C. Clarke/Save the Children

# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AROPE</b>	At Risk of Poverty and Exclusion (index)
<b>AYE</b>	Adolescent and Youth Empowerment
<b>CCT</b>	Conditional Cash Transfer
<b>CEE/CIS</b>	Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>CONEVAL</b>	Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social
<b>CPIA</b>	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>CSL</b>	Child-sensitive Livelihoods
<b>CSSP</b>	Child-sensitive Social Protection
<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>HDI</b>	Human Development Index
<b>HIC</b>	High Income Country
<b>HOI</b>	Human Opportunities Index
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>LIC</b>	Low Income Country
<b>LMIC</b>	Lower-Middle Income Country
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MIC</b>	Middle Income Country
<b>MODA</b>	Multiple Overlapping Deprivations Analysis
<b>MPI</b>	Multidimensional Poverty Index
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>RTE</b>	Right to Education (Act, India)
<b>SC</b>	Scheduled Castes
<b>SCST</b>	Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UMIC</b>	Upper-Middle Income Country



# PREFACE

This Report on the patterns, drivers and meaning to children of the worldwide phenomenon of poverty in childhood was commissioned by Save the Children's Global Initiative on Child Poverty, with the support of its cross-movement Steering Committee. The aim of Save the Children's new Global Initiative is to understand the nature of child poverty in different contexts and societies and to catalyse effective, evidence-based actions by governments, societies and international partners to address this widely neglected challenge with urgency, at scale.

We believe that only by giving proper recognition and priority to the progressive reduction of child poverty and the deprivations which are closely associated with it, can countries achieve sustained and equitable progress towards ending child deaths, ensuring that all children learn and guaranteeing them protection from all forms of violence, among other key development goals. Strategies and actions to tackle child poverty in all its dimensions both by Save the Children and its partners, as well as by leaders at all levels of societies must be based on sound analysis and on listening to the perspectives and experience of children themselves. We hope that this Report will contribute to the recognition of this challenge and action in the best interests of children in poverty among adults across the world.

Immense thanks are given to the Report's lead author Charlotte Harland Scott, research assistant Romina Istratii, and peer reviewers Paul Dornan at Oxford University and Keetie Roelen at the Institute of Development Studies (Sussex University), as well as to the Save the Children offices and members who contributed materials to the illustrative country sections within this Report. The Child Poverty Global Initiative Steering Committee and Core Team played critical roles in reviewing, debating and finalizing this work and seeing it through to completion.

We hope this Report will strengthen the focus on children living in poverty and provide impetus for effective action for their rights among decision-makers and partners worldwide.

**Richard Morgan**  
Director, Child Poverty Global Initiative  
Save the Children

Photo: Alejandro Kirchuk/Save the Children

# INTRODUCTION

This report examines the situation of children living in poverty in countries around the world. It looks at the drivers that underpin child poverty, and why it persists, in a wide range of different circumstances. It also presents the views of children living in poverty, whose voices are often not heard.

There are at least 570 million children living in severe monetary poverty worldwide, and many more living in multidimensional, moderate, relative and near-poverty (see Box 1 on numbers, and Chapter 1 on definitions). There is also reason to think that these figures contain substantial underestimates. The majority of these children are in the low and middle income countries of the developing world. The report describes how, for them, poverty is experienced as stark deprivations in realising basic needs, and in damaging exposures to unsafe work, child marriage and other sources of harm. It also looks at the circumstances of children living in poverty in the wealthiest economies, where they live with reduced access to food, shelter and social services, and the damaging effects of social and economic exclusion. In all circumstances, the report shows that shortcomings in childhood are very likely to lead to disadvantages in adulthood, strongly reinforcing the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Around the world, being rich provides security and protection from harm. Being poor means insecurity and risk. The manifestations of insecurity and risk change in different contexts, and even day-by-day, but children in poverty everywhere are the most exposed. The report examines how children in poverty are at risk of exploitation, child marriage, trafficking, the effects of climate shocks, and environmental hazard.

The impacts of poverty and insecurity can lead to significant disruption in families, interruption to education, harm to health and nutrition, exploitation, harmful labour, migration and displacement. Children living in poverty lack protection from abuse, and get little support to recover from harm.

## BOX 1 HOW MANY CHILDREN LIVE IN POVERTY WORLDWIDE?

The World Bank says that just over 1 billion people live below the \$1.25 poverty line. The Bank also estimates that there are **400 million** are children under 12 living in the developing world. This suggests a total of **570 million** children under 18 living in extreme monetary poverty worldwide.

The Human Development Report 2014 says that 1.5 billion people are subject to multidimensional poverty; at least half of these are likely to be children, around **750 million**.

There are around **30 million** children living in severe relative poverty in OECD countries.

Many children are simultaneously subject to income poverty and multidimensional poverty, but emerging evidence suggests that in some contexts as many as 50 percent of those in either category don't fall in the other. If this is so, there may be up to **880 million** children living in extreme income poverty and/or multidimensional poverty. Further, there are a further 1.5 billion people living on less than \$2.50 a day, and 0.8 billion living near to the multidimensional poverty line. Around half of these will be under 18, putting as many as **950 million** more children at risk of falling into poverty.

These estimates are all based on current statistics. This report highlights recent evidence that suggests that these surveys exclude many of the poorest children, understating poverty perhaps by up to 25 percent.

The report discusses how child poverty is underpinned by inequalities. Economic inequalities are reinforced by social exclusion, by institutional bias in policy and service delivery, and by broad based structural inequalities.

The report also shows how children living in poverty around the world unanimously highlight the pain and harm they experience as a result of marginalisation and discrimination. Poverty reflects patterns of social exclusion that confer lesser status and disadvantage according to identity. Children endure stigma, shame and a diminished sense of confidence and self-worth. In many societies, the outward signs of child poverty attract ridicule or insult, causing deep personal and psychological harm.

With the adoption by all governments in 2015 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the elimination of child

poverty worldwide is now a universal commitment as well as an urgent global priority. The new Goals incorporate the commitment to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere” by 2030. The SDG targets recognise not only income poverty, but also “poverty in all its dimensions” as it affects “children of all ages.”<sup>2</sup> Without explicit and dedicated programmes to address child poverty, however, this first and arguably primary SDG will not be met and global poverty will persist.

This report explores the realities of child poverty across the world. It shows how poverty profoundly affects the lives of children, explores why it persists, and conveys what it means to children themselves. Although it finds great differences between societies, it highlights some fundamental similarities in the drivers and experiences of child poverty, and in the essential solutions.



Photo: Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children

Awa, forty years old, sits with her son Modiba and his siblings at their home in Benigorola, Sikasso region, Mali. Modiba is suffering from severe malnutrition and malaria. He weighs only 5kg and is 70cm in height, 20cm shorter than he should be for his age.



An 18 year old seamstress, now running her own business in the town of Puntland, Somalia after completing vocational training with Save the Children



Photo: Hedinn Halldórsson/Save the Children

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CHILD POVERTY, AND HOW DO WE MEASURE IT?

## Key messages of this chapter

- Poverty is not only about income; poverty is also about material, social and emotional deprivation, as well as impoverished living conditions, access to services, and exclusion.
- Children are more likely to be poor than adults. They experience poverty differently to adults. Being raised in poverty impacts on healthy development and learning, and increases exposure to risk. These effects can last a life-time, and be passed on to the next generation.
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a holistic normative framework, framing our understanding of deprivation and poverty.
- There are many ways of assessing poverty. These include measures of household income, quantitative indices of multidimensional poverty, and others including qualitative, longitudinal and well-being approaches.
- Quantitative assessments of child poverty may exclude something like a quarter of the world's poorest children, who fall outside data and registration systems.

At first glance, defining and then measuring poverty may seem a simple endeavour; child poverty might be assumed to be some sub-set of the same. On closer examination, however, it is clear that understanding exactly what we mean by poverty and by child poverty, and how well different measures can serve that understanding, is more complicated. This section gives an overview of the different ways that we try to measure poverty, and how this relates to our understanding of what poverty means.

There is broad consensus that being poor is about more than just lack of money and assets. Indeed, a major definition of poverty adopted at a global level is as *“a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to social services.”*<sup>3,4</sup> The multidimensionality of poverty is reiterated in the articulation of targets for the new Sustainable

Development Goals, which highlight not only the elimination of extreme income poverty, but also a halving of “poverty in all its dimensions” as it affects “men, women and children of all ages.”<sup>5</sup>

Although this definition clearly incorporates important interests for children, child poverty is not just a sub-set of adult poverty. Children experience poverty in different ways to adults. Child poverty has been more specifically described as *“deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed [for children] to survive, develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society.”*<sup>6</sup> Poverty impacts more acutely on children than on adults, as they are more vulnerable to the effects of deprivation (both immediate and long-term), less able to address or change their situation, and more greatly at risk of exploitation and other failures to meet and protect their rights.<sup>7</sup>

The four key characteristics specific to child poverty can be summarised as:

- **Poverty is multidimensional** – poverty creates obstacles to children’s survival, development, protection and participation in decisions that affect their lives.

- **The impact of poverty changes over the course of childhood** – in terms of vulnerabilities and coping capacities; for example, young infants have much lower capacities than teenagers to cope with shocks without adult care and support.
- **Resilience to poverty is intimately linked to the status of caregivers** – given the dependence of children on the care, support and protection of adults. Especially in the earlier years of childhood, the individual vulnerabilities (and resilience) of children are often compounded by the vulnerabilities and risks experienced by their caregivers (owing to their gender, ethnicity, location and so on).
- **Lack of voice in society** – although marginalised groups often lack voice and opportunities for participation, voicelessness in childhood has a particular quality, owing to legal and cultural systems that reinforce children’s marginalisation.<sup>8</sup>

Besides the special nature of child poverty, it is also true that children are more likely to live in poverty than adults, as the poorest people tend to have more children than less poor people. Moreover, as population increase is highest amongst the poorest communities (especially in Africa), even where the proportion of a population living in income poverty falls, the actual number may not reduce, and may even expand. In this regard, projections suggest that unless sustained and targeted actions are taken in line with the newly adopted SDGs, 500 million children may still be living in severe income poverty by 2030.<sup>9</sup>

Even though there is now broad consensus around these characteristics of poverty and child poverty, devising means of measuring them has been much harder. Approaches to poverty measurement need to be accurate, informative, comparable and affordable – and also understandable, including to policy makers and the public. The importance of broad based understanding has featured in recent debates on measuring income inequality – a vocal argument in favour of the newly proposed Palma measure<sup>10</sup> is that saying “*the top 10 percent have gone from being twice to three times as rich than the bottom 40 percent*” has a much clearer meaning than saying that the Gini coefficient has risen from 0.46 to 0.55.<sup>11</sup> The “\$1 a day” measure, devised as a cut-off for extreme income poverty in the 1980s, was also designed for widespread use: “*We intended to have some impact with it,*” Martin Ravallion recalls, “*Make well-heeled people realise how poor many people in the world are.*”<sup>12</sup> The Palma measure and the “\$1.25 a day” clearly have both meaning and resonance; and they are both reflected in SDG targets addressing inequality and poverty respectively.

Measures of poverty usually serve one or both of two functions, described by Amartya Sen.<sup>13</sup> One is about *identifying* the poor, and being able to distinguish the extreme poor, moderate poor and non-poor; and hence those whose economic status is deemed acceptable or otherwise. The other is about creating *aggregate* measures of poverty, seeking a quantified indicator describing the lives of those who are poor through a range of deprivations across significant dimensions. Some measures are uniquely oriented to one or other of these functions, while others (to varying degrees) serve both. Measures of poverty thus vary in the extent to which they seek to represent multidimensional poverty: one-dimensional measures look simply at income, while multidimensional measures seek to provide a composite of indicators selected to fit a given description of poverty.

Measures of income poverty are the most commonly used means of identifying people who are poor, or assessing poverty’s prevalence. They are determined through setting poverty lines, based on either income or consumption, or a value imputed through measures of household production. Such measures depend on household surveys; many countries conduct periodic national income surveys, which provide the basis for reporting on progress towards poverty reduction and other goals. Household-level income poverty assessments generally consider children as part of the household unit, without special or specific dimensions.<sup>14</sup> They assume an equal share for all household members, without examination of intra-household allocation of resources, or the particular needs of children of different ages.<sup>15</sup> Monetary poverty assessments routinely show a larger proportion of children living in poverty than adults, related to the larger number of children and household sizes of the poor.<sup>16</sup>

Income poverty lines are often pegged around the cost of a basic food basket, and a higher level that includes other basic commodities in the basket. Falling below the higher line indicates poverty, while falling below both lines indicates extreme poverty. A basket approach allows for comparison between different locations, where prices may vary. It also provides the opportunity to establish some measure of income equivalence between rural and urban locations, factoring in family food production, differences in the cost of housing and transport, and so on.

Global income poverty measures such as “\$1 a day” and “\$2 a day” are perhaps the most frequently cited poverty measures, and have been widely used in assessing progress towards the MDGs.<sup>1</sup> There has been much debate on the use of these measures. Arguments in favour of measuring simple monetary poverty are

<sup>1</sup> In household-level income poverty assessments, children are considered as part of the household unit and are calculated as a standard fraction of an adult. Imbalances in intra-household allocation of resources, or the particular needs of individual children of different ages, are not taken into account. In fact, the “dollar a day” is in fact \$1.08 per capita per day, in 1993 values in purchasing power parity to US prices, with children imputed as a fraction of an adult. This line usually guides the design of national poverty lines, which allows for comparisons across the world.

that this allows for direct comparison, is highly responsive to shocks and upswings, accurately predicts other circumstances related to poverty, and offers a single objective means of describing people's circumstances.<sup>17,18</sup>

Other commentators have been more critical.<sup>2</sup> Some have highlighted just how low both these figures are, while pointing to evidence that households who cross these lines show little change in terms of deprivations, vulnerability or security. This, it is argued, understates the deprivations and indeed poverty of many children in poor countries whose families are designated non-poor, and therefore deemed to be living acceptable lives. Using the example of under-5 mortality rates, it is shown that crossing a very low income poverty line does not result in any tangible difference in the quality of life and exposure to risk faced by low income families and their children. Although far from empirically demonstrated, it has been suggested that the poverty line should lie at a point where any fall in income results in an accelerating deterioration in term of basic needs. It has been suggested by some that this line can be observed at a much higher line, around \$15 per day.<sup>19</sup> Others suggest that the household income measure obscures the fact that the resources available to people are not only the consequence of income. People living in rich countries (or better-off areas in poor countries) have access to services and infrastructure that are not available to those in poor countries or under-served areas. The availability of such public goods represents a very significant transfer to the better-served, which is not reflected in measures of household income.<sup>20</sup>

“Asset poverty” is a broader way of looking at monetary poverty. It refers more broadly to the set of resources that an individual or household has, that can be used to generate an income. In the context of a developing country, asset poverty is sometimes used to describe command over capital goods (savings, investments, equipment, land, livestock, housing), as well as human capital (education, social networks), and considerations relating to time horizons and capacity to take risks. In a high income context, asset poverty often refers more specifically to the assets that protect against unemployment, including housing security, savings, capital assets and insurance, as well as debt.<sup>21</sup> Although perhaps harder to encompass in a single indicator, asset poverty provides a means of describing the complex dimensions of poverty in a way that “\$1 a day” does not.

Monetary poverty, whether in terms of incomes or assets, is at the heart of the experience and deprivations affecting many people around the world. But for many, especially children, poverty is about much more than income. Deprivations in other domains – health, education, water and sanitation, safety, housing

conditions – have particularly strong effects on children. Moreover, even when household income is above the poverty line, expenditures on children may be disproportionately low, or access to basic services constrained for other reasons: in this regard, there are undoubtedly children living in poverty in non-poor households across the world.

Determining what constitutes a threshold of acceptable standards in a wealthy context creates challenges. In poorer societies, it is relatively easy to derive indicators of deprivation from agreed normative frameworks, especially the CRC (which for example guides the UNICEF / Bristol approach; see below). In wealthy contexts, determining what is acceptable and indicative of a decent standard of living depends on prevailing norms, which vary by country. As a result, poverty in wealthy countries is generally understood as a relative condition, defined against a *general standard of living in a given country, below which people are considered as unable to conduct a normal life and to participate in ordinary economic, social and cultural activities*.<sup>22</sup> Relative poverty has in many cases been measured through an income threshold, defined as a percentage of the mean or median national income. The choice of threshold varies: the European Commission generally uses the minus 60% threshold to describe ‘risk of poverty’, while the OECD uses a threshold of minus 50%. A key problem with this approach is that of comparison: what is poor in a very rich country will be comparatively well off in a medium-rich country, and the standard of living may not differ widely. Relative poverty lines can serve as a guide for pegging levels of social security payments, shaping policy by defining the minimum acceptable standard of living in a given country. Such measures change over time not only because of the cost of living, which might attach to a fixed basket of calories and basic needs, but also because what is viewed as a minimum acceptable standard of living changes over time, sometimes quite rapidly.

For the vast majority of the world's poor, income poverty is not a transient state, but a chronic and trans-generational condition (within which many short-run fluctuations occur). Income poverty often brings with it multiple deprivations, especially for children, many of which have life-long effects. Consequently, there has been great interest not just in establishing how many families fall short in terms of income, but rather in building a more informative picture of the forms, depths, distributions and interconnected dimensions of child poverty.<sup>23</sup>

It is not in dispute that children experience poverty differently from adults, and that the effects of child poverty can last a lifetime. However, it is also true that the majority of children living in poverty live in families,

<sup>2</sup> These, and other questions around the measurement of income poverty, are under review by the World Bank's recently established Commission on Global Poverty; some changes, potentially significant, may be recommended by mid-2016.

cared for by parents or other relatives. Their poverty is strongly influenced by their parent's own childhoods, and their economic and social status. Moreover, while accounts of child poverty often highlight violence, abuse and neglect as factors that entrench deprivation, this can encourage the view that poor people are poor parents. It is very clear, however, that for many this is far from correct. In many cases parents, mothers particularly, try to protect their children by sacrificing their own consumption, security and well-being. Even where parental decisions seem to militate against the interests of children, their intention may be to protect their children over time.<sup>24</sup>

With greater focus on the multidimensional nature of poverty, and of child poverty, many analysts have moved away from the simple measure of income towards the construction of composite measures. The first widely-used such measure was the Human Development Index, first used in 1990, which combines income poverty with life expectancy and education.<sup>25</sup> These indicators were chosen to represent the domains of a decent standard of living, longevity and knowledge, deemed to be both universally valued, and basic (meaning their lack would foreclose many other human capabilities).<sup>26</sup>

More recently, several other measures of multi-dimensional poverty (including child poverty) have been proposed, seeking to provide a more accurate picture of poverty as it is experienced. Key amongst attempts to develop composite indices are the UNICEF-supported University of Bristol's multidimensional child poverty measure (2003),<sup>27</sup> and Oxford University's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI; not specifically focused on children, but including indicators on the health and education of children).<sup>28</sup> Similar composite indices include the EU Child Well-being Index, and the US Child Welfare Index.<sup>29</sup> Other more holistic approaches for assessing child poverty are not so tightly focused on the development of quantified indices, such as the Oxford University's Young Lives project. This method, discussed further below, uses multiple methods to build a holistic analysis of the lives of children living in poverty over time, and through the ages and phases of childhood. Implicit in this approach is acceptance of complex, evolving and sometime contradictory nature of child poverty.

Child poverty is intrinsically related to children's rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) sets out normative standards which have been used to guide the development of various approaches to multidimensional child poverty and deprivation. The four core principles of the CRC are as follows:<sup>30</sup>

- The right to life, survival, and development
- Non-discrimination
- Consideration of the best interests of the child
- Respect for the views of the child

Articles 26 and 27 are also of particular relevance to the issue of child poverty:<sup>31</sup>

- Article 26 (Social security): Children – either through their guardians or directly – have the right to help from the state if they are poor or in need.
- Article 27 (Adequate standard of living): Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. Governments should help families and guardians who cannot afford to provide this, particularly with regard to food, clothing and housing.

The concept of rights gives people who are poor the opportunity, as rights holders, to claim from their governments, as the main duty bearers, the policies and conditions that will improve their lives. The principle of non-discrimination and the recognition of the equality of rights place an emphasis on those who are most marginalized and whose rights are denied. A rights-based approach therefore requires disaggregated analysis of poverty in terms of factors such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, caste, disability, and social status.<sup>32</sup>

A rights-based approach to poverty reduction views people who are poor as rights-holders with dignity, aspirations, and ambition, and the potential to shape their own destiny. It looks at how people's initiatives may be frustrated not only by immediate conditions but also by persistent systemic challenges, such as poorly functioning state social service delivery systems and unequal access to resources. There is a focus on structural barriers that may impede people from exercising rights, building their capabilities, and having the capacity to choose.<sup>33</sup>

The CRC has been almost universally ratified, albeit with reservations in the case of some countries. Its holistic approach offers a coherent framework and four core principles for addressing child poverty which can bring to an end the invisibility of children living in poverty in society. The CRC refers to the conditions of material, social, economic, civil and political deprivation which underpin poverty, including: the rights to life, survival and development, social security, an adequate standard of living, education, family relations and parental guidance, birth registration and participation. A rights-based approach to poverty would therefore define a child as poor if his or her rights within the CRC which are of particular relevance to the issue of poverty are not fulfilled.<sup>34</sup>

In line with the CRC and other human rights frameworks, composite indices of poverty do not necessarily incorporate measures of economic poverty. Rather, they seek to incorporate a range of indicators focused on deprivation in key domains as defined by human rights frameworks, and establish thresholds for adequacy, deprivation and severe deprivation. Although very closely related, deprivation was distinguished from poverty by Peter Townsend, whose work provides the

foundation of much current thinking on poverty measurement:

Deprivation may be defined as a state of observable and demonstrable disadvantage relative to the local community or the wider society or nation [or globally agreed norms, e.g. as defined by international human rights conventions]<sup>3</sup> to which an individual, family or group belongs. The idea has come to be applied to conditions (that is, physical, emotional or social states or circumstances) rather than resources and to specific and not only general circumstances, and therefore can be distinguished from the concept of poverty.<sup>35</sup>

Poverty and deprivation are therefore closely linked: deprivation refers to conditions common to people who are poor; while poverty refers to the lack of income and other economic resources that lead many people to experience deprivations, and makes it hard to escape from them.<sup>36</sup> In this context, advocates of composite indices argue that the direct measurement of the conditions of poverty provide a more accurate insight and understanding.

The core principles of the CRC are inter-related and are not considered to serve as any sort of proxy for each other. However, it is clear that some lend themselves more readily to objective and quantified measurement than others. This may result in greater emphasis on some child rights than on others. This dilemma is also reflected in the various approaches to assessing multidimensional child poverty, with similar trade-offs arising between focusing on simple, objective and quantifiable indicators and exploring a more complete picture of the drivers, experiences and consequences of child poverty.

The Bristol approach took UNICEF's response to the resolution of the 2007 UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Children as a starting point.<sup>37</sup> The UNGASS resolution stated that "*Children living in poverty are deprived of nutrition, water and sanitation facilities, access to basic health-care services, shelter, education, participation and protection, and that while a severe lack of goods and services hurts every human being, it is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential and to participate as full members of the society.*" In line with this recognition of the special nature of child poverty, the Bristol team argued that child poverty must be understood as the denial of a range of rights laid out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).<sup>38</sup>

The Bristol team proceeded to develop evidence-based thresholds for deprivation and severe deprivation with regard to food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, healthcare facilities, shelter, education and information, as well as income / consumption. The approach deems children to be moderately or severely deprived when they experience two or more moderate or severe deprivations in each of eight core domains. This method

forms the basis of on-going study of global poverty and disparities in over 150 countries.

One key consideration in the use of composite indicators is whether they are based on household indicators or national averages. The Bristol approach and the Multidimensional Poverty Index both use household level information, producing a national indicator that reflects the number of children falling below the thresholds for moderate and severe deprivation. The advantages of this approach is that it is robust and clear, in the sense that the indicator gives exactly the information that it is intended to. The disadvantage is that all indicators need to be accessed from the same individual households, and hence from a single household survey. In practice, this significantly limits the selection of indicators. In particular, major household surveys are far more likely to contain information on material conditions (water and sanitation, for example) and access to basic services than they are on issues relating to child protection, exploitation, social security and participation.<sup>39</sup>

In contrast, other composite scales (including the Human Development Index and Save the Children's Child Development Index) are built from national averages. This has the merit of being easy to calculate without needing to handle full data sets, and able to put together from a range of best-available data sources and even estimates. However, critics argue that such indicators become an "average of averages", with an inherent statistical loss of meaning, and limited information on the breadth and depth of poverty.

Furthermore, the process of aggregation can create unwanted distortion. For example, it has been observed that the HDI multiplies indices on income and life expectancy, which results in a much lower value being placed on an extra year of life for the poor than for the rich.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, both household and national composites inevitably create a quantified statistical relationship between different outcomes across a range of domains of deprivation. For example, in the Bristol approach, having an earth floor is equivalent to being severely stunted;<sup>41</sup> the Multidimensional Poverty Index ranks an earth floor as one-third of the value of having lost a child in the previous five years.<sup>42</sup> Some discomfort has been expressed over approaches that quantify equivalence across important but inherently different domains of deprivation.

UNICEF has developed the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) approach, which seeks to combine the deprivation "count" approach of the Bristol team with an index approach, such as the HDI. Currently providing results across some 40 countries, MODA is not only child-centred but sensitive to the changing nature of child poverty through the life-course.<sup>43</sup> However, the above methodological concerns are still relevant.

<sup>3</sup> Author's bracket



Photo: Save the Children

Melody, 11 years old, and her younger sister Caroline were caught up in flooding in Southern Zimbabwe and are among more than 11,000 people who were evacuated to bushland 100km away from their homes. Melody and her siblings fled with what little they could carry.

The World Bank has developed the Human Opportunities Index (HOI), and applied it in a number of Latin American countries. It incorporates a specific focus on children, combining indicators of access to a range basic of needs (primary education, housing) with a measure of inequality (reflecting the degree to which the distribution of those opportunities is conditional on circumstances exogenous to children). Risks for inequality that available from household surveys include gender, residence (urban or rural), the education level of family head, household income, single-parent household, and the number of siblings ages 0–16. Others, such as race and ethnicity, could be considered if available. The HOI provides indices reflecting the probability of people securing key outcomes, and the dissimilarity of outcomes across the population.<sup>44</sup>

While much attention has been paid to the merits of different ways of measuring poverty, child poverty and deprivation, it is harder to determine the extent to which different approaches yield different results, and the significance of these differences. The limited evidence suggests a fair degree of similarity, with some notable exceptions. Some suggest that increases in income may in some cases be at the expense of child wellbeing, for example if the accumulation of such wealth is a result of child labour, or an increase in land or livestock leads to children playing a substantial role in household production.<sup>45</sup> New work from Ethiopia and Vietnam is beginning to explore this distinction, and suggests that there are greater differences in the incidence or experience of multidimensional and monetary poverty than may have been assumed.<sup>46</sup>

## BOX 2 HOW RELIABLE ARE GLOBAL POVERTY DATA?

In poor countries, assessment of progress towards development goals is based primarily on household surveys, which generally omit *by design* the homeless, people in institutions, and mobile, nomadic or pastoralist populations. *In practice*, household surveys also tend to under-represent people living in urban slums (because of the difficulty of identifying and interviewing), as well as those in dangerous places and fragile or transient households. In other words, the very people that the Sustainable Development

Goals are aiming to reach as highest priority – so that no one is left behind – are often left uncouncted. As many as 350 million people could be missed worldwide from these surveys. Considering the demographic they represent, it is likely that a substantial number of the estimated 350 million will be living on less than \$1.25 a day. **In other words, extreme poverty figures, including among children, could be understated by at least one-quarter.**

Both monetary and multidimensional measures of poverty generally draw data from large scale national surveys, which often provide the basis of national planning and budgeting. However, there is concern that these surveys routinely miss the poorest and most vulnerable children – including children on the street, children without adult caregivers, children in custody, children sleeping at workplaces, trafficked children, irregular migrant and refugee children. Although such exclusion has often been cited as a post-script, it should be an issue of central concern, as it may imply an understatement of global poverty perhaps as large as a quarter (Box 2).<sup>47</sup>

Children with disabilities are also not considered as a specific group, perhaps because sample sizes are too small to allow disaggregation or because the assessment of disabilities is found to be too expensive or complex. However, neglect of this issue results in a major oversight as well as a lack of insight into important relationships between disability and child poverty: not only are children with disabilities more likely to be found in poor households, but children from those households are more likely to become disabled.<sup>48</sup>

The move towards composite indicators, starting with the HDI, was intended to focus the attention of policy makers on the broader status of human development, beyond economic indicators alone. This created an opportunity to develop measures of child poverty that reflect both material and non-economic dimensions of children's rights. Despite the power of a single number to command attention, Amartya Sen expressed concerns about the difficulties of capturing the full complexity of human development in an index, especially those aspects related to rights, freedoms and human agency.<sup>49</sup> Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, a former director of the Human Development Report, comments that *“the very success of the HDI has contributed to this narrow interpretation of the human development approach... to a widespread misperception of human development as equivalent to social development combined with equitable economic growth. The human development concept has been trapped inside its reduced measure.”*<sup>50</sup>

The response to such concerns has been the emergence of several more holistic approaches to the measurement of multi-dimensional child poverty, not constrained by the aim of producing a single indicator. Prominent among these has been the fifteen-year longitudinal study of 12,000 children in four countries by Oxford University's *Young Lives* project.

As a comparative study, the challenge in framing the *Young Lives* definition of child poverty was to accommodate both the local and the global, encompassing the universal aspects of childhood, whilst allowing for socio-cultural difference. The approach taken was based on a definition of child poverty derived from the Convention of the Rights of the Child, using the core themes of survival, protection, development

and participation, and the universal locations of childhood – home, school and community.<sup>51</sup> This resulted in the identification of six child-specific outcomes: nutrition, physical morbidity, mental morbidity, life skills, developmental stage-for-age, and children's perceptions of well-being and life chances.

The *Young Lives* project aims to examine the causes, complexities, consequences and inter-linkages that drive child poverty and its effects. Unlike the other means of measuring child poverty discussed above, it does not seek to produce a comprehensive set of indicators or a single indicator. The project uses quantitative and qualitative research methods, and embraces the subjective perceptions of children in poverty.

The project offers a practical example of research that incorporates assessment of subjective poverty, in this case using the well-being approach. 'Well-being' is summarised as a combination of the material, the relational and the subjective with regards to:

- What a person has (the resources that a person is able to command)
- What a person can do with what they have (what they are able to achieve with those resources – what needs and goals they are able to meet)
- How they think about what they have and can do (the meaning that they give to the goals they achieve and the processes in which they engage).<sup>52</sup>

In contrast to income-based and even human development indicators that deal primarily with material and objectively observable (or reportable) dimensions of human wellbeing, more holistic approaches to measuring child poverty and well-being combine 'needs satisfaction indicators', 'human agency indicators' and 'quality of life indicators'.<sup>53</sup> While there may be challenges in summarising and disseminating clear, policy-oriented messages from holistic research on child well-being, it is clear that complex mixed methods founded on a strong conceptual framework do provide an important opportunity to understand the experiences, opportunities and constraints faced by children living in poverty.

Subjective assessments often focus on what people understand about themselves, in relation to poverty. Perhaps the least informative approach is a single question often included in quantitative poverty surveys, asking people whether they consider themselves to be poor (which, with a poverty line of \$1.25 per day, they invariably do in greater numbers than contained in the "objective" assessments). More useful approaches seek to understand what people seek to have or to be, the barriers that prevent them achieving these goals, and the consequences of being in this predicament. As will be seen in Chapter 3, subjective assessment can suggest a need to reorient an understanding of the experience of poverty: rather than focusing on material and physical



needs, many children dwell on the misery caused by the social exclusion and stigma that attaches to poverty. Subjective assessments can also help explain why people may not be able to access opportunities or exit poverty in certain circumstances. A common reason might be revealed as a tension between individual economic goals, and the desire or need to conform to social norms and expectations.

The value of well-implemented subjective approaches that draw attention to “lived-in” and changing experiences of poverty among different groups of children is hard to overstate. However, the voices of children are too often “sound-bites”, derived from once-off research and selected to give credibility to the arguments of technical experts, politicians, or well-meaning people. This report includes a chapter reporting children’s views on poverty, not chosen to illustrate pre-conceived priorities or conclusions, but in fact somewhat in contrast with the more quantitative analysis of the patterns and drivers of child poverty which are discussed. Children’s perspectives on the nature and meaning of poverty to their lives are of central importance to this report, and to Save the Children’s approach to child poverty.

This report cites secondary data which include evidence on child poverty from across the full range of approaches. At one end of the spectrum, uni-dimensional indicators of economic poverty and related deprivations are widely available (including from MDG monitoring data bases). These provide important information on the immediate rights-failures for children world-wide, or in different regions and types of country, with data on some deprivations now widely disaggregated by household wealth quintile. Alongside, various indices provide a more human-oriented index by using multidimensional indicators. The Bristol index specifically focuses on indicators illustrative of children’s rights, albeit still from the high-altitude perspective of national statistics. While these allow us to rank and to track progress over time, they do not provide specific insight into the drivers of child poverty or lives of people who are poor. In contrast, more holistic assessments such as those produced in a few countries by Young Lives allow us to think more deeply about the drivers and consequences of poverty for children there.

But before research, whether monetary, multidimensional or holistic, is discussed, it is first important to hear what children affected by poverty themselves have to say.



Monowara with her 2 year old child Mim and husband Alauddin. Alauddin is visually impaired and when their home and livelihood was destroyed by a devastating cyclone Save the Children provided immediate support by distributing much-needed non-food items and house building materials with cash support to Monowara’s family and other families in Bangladesh.

# 2 CHILDREN'S VOICES: WHY DOES CHILD POVERTY MATTER TO CHILDREN?

## Key messages of this chapter

- Children are often not heard or consulted. When they are, children living in poverty have less voice than their better-off peers, especially those from developing countries.
- Children living in poverty are repeatedly exposed to stigma and discrimination, and are greatly disturbed by experiences of exclusion and humiliation, which causes stress, anxiety, frustration and anger.
- Children living in poverty often express feelings of hopelessness. They are frustrated and angry to be denied opportunity, and feel certain that nothing will improve.
- Children living in poverty describe discrimination and exclusion in public institutions, especially school. School policies as well as bullying by teachers and pupils are reported around the world. Children often give up as a consequence.
- Children living in poverty highlight the problems of being forced into adult roles – in the home, as wives or as workers.
- Children living in poverty may be exposed to violence or alcohol abuse at home or outside. Most cannot avoid this without exposure to further danger.

The norms and goals that adults have established around child poverty certainly describe very important areas of deprivation. Standards for children have been agreed through human rights conventions and other important commitments including the MDGs and SDGs. Progress can be quantified and compared against targets, as we seek to ensure that all children everywhere have the best opportunities for survival, development, growth and protection. However, what can be measured and how children feel about their status are not the same. In addition to understanding who is poor, and how that poverty manifests itself, we need to understand how poverty matters to children living in poverty.

Only occasionally do children living in poverty get a chance to say what they think about their lives. The vast majority are unheard, including poor children with disabilities, and denied opportunity to express their views about a wide range of experiences. However, it is fortunate that some research exists, from a range of locations that gives voice to children living in poverty. Biases certainly exist in this literature. For example, the interests of funders may shape or constrain the conversation (focusing on the benefits of their intervention, for example), analysis and reporting is usually produced by adults, indigenous children and those who cannot converse in official languages may be left out, and there appears to be more material on poor children in high income countries than the majority elsewhere. However, this chapter is based on research and consultations that have sought to give voice to children to express their own views and experiences, and to do so without constraint or bias. These pieces of work have usually taken place at strategic moments in policy development or planning, or at a time when the importance of exploring matters – usually taken for granted – is exposed.

This section draws on this literature, presenting the views of children in poverty on matters that are important to

them. It looks at the impact on children of not being able to access what they consider to be necessary elements of a good life, what they do in response, and how this affects their hopes and ambitions. The framework for presentation is drawn from a simple analysis of the key themes cited by children around the world. Although the literature is too scant to suggest any regional differences, what is striking is the similarity in views expressed and experiences recounted by children in vastly different circumstances.

## MISSING THE NECESSARY ELEMENTS OF A GOOD LIFE

A range of consultations with children across the world present very similar evidence, suggesting that children in very different contexts want very similar things:

- Children want to live in security, with love and care in the family.
- They want to interact socially, to have friends, to play, and to be part of a community.
- They want to be healthy.
- They want to go to school, and get an education.

From greatly impoverished war zones to the most advanced economies, children in greatly different circumstances and cultures repeat these four desires. In all contexts, poverty creates a major impediment to all of these desired states.

A report from consultations with children in Vietnam on the design of the Poverty Reduction Strategy says that: *children and young people drew attention to the psychological effects of poverty. They gave a much higher priority to psychological well-being than they did to cash income. Being loved and cared for by their parents, being in good health and having access to education and recreation were the most important issues for them. However, they strongly connected these issues with poverty.*<sup>54</sup>

## PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS

Not being able to access these needs creates considerable psychological stress on individual children. A 14 year old boy in South Sudan says he “feels sad when chased [away from school] for school fees”,<sup>55</sup> while a 13 year old girl in Wales says that if you live in poverty “you feel worthless, a failure – it can make you feel so fed up and depressed”.<sup>56</sup> Children in Vietnam were very vocal about the fear, insecurity and despondency caused by poverty.<sup>57</sup>

Diverse research with children and young people shows that poverty can cause “significant anxiety and sometimes depression. Children can feel different and inferior and they can be anxious and .... Poverty brings uncertainty and

*insecurity to children’s lives, sapping self-esteem and confidence and undermining children’s everyday lives and their faith in future wellbeing*”.<sup>58</sup> Research with British children found that “children were sad about being ‘poor’, and described how the experience of poverty made them feel ‘anxious, frightened, frustrated and/or angry’”.<sup>59</sup>

The immediate conditions of poverty can also create psychological stress. Girls living in poverty in India report how their limited access to water and sanitation affects them:<sup>60</sup>

*There are few useable public toilets in our area. These toilets have neither water nor electricity, and women feel scared to use them in the evening.* (14 year old girl, Pune)

*In summer, with acute water shortage, we are made to stand in queue from 4am to get water from Government tankers... I feel ashamed to have to stay here.* (17 year old girl, Delhi)

Children in Northern Ireland recognise that poverty can cause psychological stress: “...it can be kinda depressing, you know, knowing that they [parents] are depressed about bills and things,” says one teenager.

## EXCLUSION AND STIGMA

Perhaps the most common and acute anxiety expressed by children living in poverty worldwide are feelings of exclusion and discrimination. Being unable to participate in a normal social life, while seeing others doing so, is hugely painful for poor children everywhere. School is an important focus of discussion around exclusion, which extends out of the playground and into wider social interactions.

In Northern Ireland, it is reported that:<sup>61</sup>

There was general agreement amongst children living in poverty that people who have more money were treated better than those whose families ‘don’t have much money’.

*“Folk look down on them. They don’t have the things everyone else has like trainers, a nice school bag, a school bag with a name – names are important”.*

(Researcher): Are they really?

*“Yeah, it starts towards the end of primary school and the start of secondary school and doesn’t end.”*

*“(They can’t) go to parties....”*

(Researcher): Why wouldn’t they go to parties, they don’t have to pay to go like they do to go to the cinema?

*“Because they might not have enough money to buy a present for the kid”*

Similar feelings extend across the world, with students who are poorer than others report being left out, and describe bullying, stigma and shame attached to being poorer than others. "Other students make fun of me", says the 14 year old from South Sudan. "It's important to be able to go around without being afraid that people will make fun of you", says a child in Italy. "Sometimes at school the others make fun of you, and you feel isolated as if every day you were doing something wrong".<sup>62</sup>

A girl living in poverty in Canada described what happened when her friend went to a food bank with her mother:<sup>63</sup>

*Well she just said it was really awful...she just said I can't believe we'd ever get that tight...she was embarrassed because her friend saw her walking into the food bank and she told everybody at school, and she just said 'I really was embarrassed.'*

(Researcher): Why do you think that was embarrassing for her?

*She said it was embarrassing because everybody thought she was poor after her friend spread the news and it was just a rumour that she was poor and stuff.*

## INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination stretches into the institutional sphere, particularly in education. Despite legislation, in India stigma attached to poverty intersects with discrimination against scheduled castes and tribes (SCST). Children experience extreme exclusion in the community, which extends into school, perpetrated by teachers, pupils and school staff. Human Rights Watch recounts findings at one school, where all 58 ST pupils were placed in a single class, regardless of age, separate from other students. An eight year old girl described her experiences: <sup>64</sup>

*If we go to drink water, or go to the toilet, and accidentally touch children from the other community, they yell at us saying 'You dirty Ghasiya, why are you touching us?' and then go and complain to the teacher. The teacher then scolds us saying 'Why are you touching these children?' We are made to sit separately in a class and the teachers don't even teach us. The teacher doesn't even sit in our class, she sits in the other class. The teacher just tells us to write or read whatever we want.*

*We don't eat lunch with the other children. If we ever go to ask for any more food, the cook shouts at us asking us to go away saying 'You eat so much.' But when there is food left, the cook calls the children from the other community and offers it to them. If we ever complain to the teachers, they warn us that if we go and tell anyone they will cut our names from the school.*

*The boys from the other community always call us names, call us dirty. Even if we bathe and go, the other children call us dirty, and say we smell. When we tell our parents, they tell us they will go and complain to the teachers but they don't.*

Children in poverty in Somalia expressed the view that they could not trust their teachers or their families<sup>65</sup>. In Sri Lanka, girls who had left home to be soldiers said that negative attitudes and behaviour from teachers had contributed to their decision to run away: "Often, the teachers were very punitive and hit or scolded students for being weak in a subject."<sup>66</sup> An Egyptian girl raised in a poor neighbourhood who went to High School in a nearby wealthier district recalled her experience: "My female classmates from the Tonsy area regarded themselves as something better. Everyday they annoyed me. They yanked my barrettes out and threw my school stuff out of the window."<sup>67</sup>

Young Lives tells the story of a 16 year old boy from an ethnic minority group in Vietnam: "Y Think says that another boy 'mocked me for being 'an ethnic'" and then "punched me with his fist". He could not put up with the continued bullying and adds, "I couldn't digest the lessons. So I felt tired of learning." He has now left school and is working on the family farm."<sup>68</sup>

Discrimination extends to much wealthier countries, where children living in poverty may face punishment for having the wrong uniform or equipment, stigma from systems that make entitlement to free school meals highly conspicuous, and miss out on trips and outings because they don't have money. Experiences in the UK are not so very different: "Teachers don't understand that we have problems at home – we're passed round to different teachers and end up walking around school. Getting kicked out of school is down to stress at home for poor families and teachers not prepared to listen and help out with problems."<sup>69</sup>

Young people say:

*I hate [school] because my mum and dad can't afford the trousers so I have to wear trackies. But I always really annoy [the head]. He goes 'You've got to get your trousers sorted out!'<sup>70</sup>*

*I mean some kids get to the point where they won't even go in, they would just bunk that lesson rather than get in trouble for being in non-uniform.<sup>71</sup>*

A parent says:

*My child enjoys most of his school meals. He's becoming aware that not everyone gets them free though, and this is a cause for embarrassment – if the school could come up with a system where everyone had a lunch ticket, paid for in advance, that would save a lot of heartache. (Parent)<sup>72</sup>*

The result of such experiences is isolation, and frequently an early end to education.

## CHILD ABUSE BY POLICE

Institutional malpractice can extend from discrimination and bullying to widespread physical and sexual abuse. Children subject to abuse often find it difficult to get help – and when the child has inadequate support from home and the abuse is perpetrated by the police, there is very little that they can do. Children living in poverty often have little recourse to legal representation, age-appropriate services and rehabilitation. Even bail can be difficult, while their parents and caregivers are often powerless to intervene. Police and other institutions that seek out children to abuse will be aware of where power lies, picking out poor and vulnerable children so as to avoid any consequences for their actions.

Few children exposed to such abuse have the opportunity to narrate their experiences. One study from Papua New Guinea<sup>73</sup> has sought testimony, although it is important to note that this problem is not unique to that country.

The report recounts many stories of physical abuse against boys suspected of crimes, with or without reason, and against those in detention:

Nelson R. told us he was fourteen years old but did not know the year he was born; he looked younger. He said he was arrested the week before for stealing a man's shoes and taken to Waigani police station in Port Moresby.

*There's a room where they take people for writing reports. It has tables and chairs. . . . There were about seven policemen present. They were from the task force—they had on dark blue uniforms with six pockets. There were three policemen. They pushed me in the back, lifted me up, and threw me down on the floor. They hit me with a stick, and I blocked it with my arm. Blood came out of my head because they threw me head first onto the cement floor. It really hurt. They swore at me, and told me to "kaikai kan [eat cunt]." They said, "If you get in trouble, you will really feel some pain." . . .*

*They took my statement there. I don't know what the statement said. They didn't show me.*

*I was telling the police, "it's my first time, don't beat me up," but they didn't listen to me.*

Gabriel R., age twelve, said that task force police beat him with an iron bar in front of his home in June 2004:

*They hit me on the face, and I had a swollen face and legs. . . . I was bleeding from my mouth and my nose, and my legs were swollen and they hurt. I couldn't really walk after that. . . . At my house the police asked me, 'Did you guys hold up a vehicle?' I said, "No."*

Yoshidah T., age sixteen, said he was held in a Port Moresby station overnight and then released without charge:

*There was another guy in the cell, but he was bigger than me—maybe twenty or twenty-one. The police had really bashed him up. He had two black eyes and had been shot in the foot. The cell was smelly and there was blood all over it. The toilet was next to where we would sleep, so I didn't sleep. I just stood all night. I had my shirt over my face all night because of the smell. Blood was coming out of the guy's foot. There was blood all around on the floor. No one brought him any medicine or bandages. They did give us tea and bread—we shared a little piece of bread.*

Girls found out of their homes or schools are at risk of sexual abuse. Those engaged in sex work, or accused of it, at regularly raped by the police. However, given the stigma attached to rape, and the vulnerability of the girls who have been raped, Human Rights Watch decided that direct interviews were not acceptable. They explain that "Police often detain girls and women on pretextual grounds, rape them, and release them without ever taking them to the police station; in some cases police demand sex in exchange for release. "They never take us to the station and charge us," explained a nineteen-year-old woman who later said she had witnessed police rape others. "They take us to the bushes and forcefully have sex with us." A policeman in Goroka told an NGO/UNICEF researcher in 2004 that it is common for night duty police to threaten young women in police custody with long prison sentences "unless they agree to let the police take turns having intercourse with them." He also admitted that police often offer lifts to young girls on the roadside and rape them."

The report provides one account from an eye-witness:

Misibel P. described witnessing police officers rape her sixteen-year-old half-sister in September 2004. The Tuesday before we interviewed her, she said, at around 7 p.m., she and her sister were selling betel nut and cigarettes with a group of vendors in Goroka when a police car came and chased them:

*We were the unfortunate ones because we got caught. They told us to stop because we were holding betel nut and smokes [which are illegal to sell in Goroka]. . . . They said things like, "pipia meri—you garbage women. Don't walk around town. Sell your garbage where you live." They said, "We are going to the station to sort out the problems." We were scared so we got into the car, but they never took us to the police station.*

After driving around for about an hour, smoking and chewing betel nut, the police took her, her sister, and another woman in her mid-twenties up to a local mountain, Misibel P. said:

*Police officers told [the two others] to get out of the vehicles and chose them. Forcefully. Some policemen asked me to have sex but I said, "I have a lot of kids." . . . [My sister] was a virgin—sixteen years old. She had just had a period one week before. They*

took her up. The other one was a sex worker. I witnessed it. I saw it a few meters away with my own eyes. I saw everything.

When they finished, they returned our betel nut and smokes because we had sex with them. . . They let us out at about 8:30.

## A WORSE PERSON

Many children in poverty around the world also strongly believe that poverty labels them as lesser beings. Whether poverty is marked by wearing rags, or by not having an iPod, children raised in poverty experience exclusion, bullying and stigma that results from social shaming of poverty, whether subtle or explicit. From the UK, a young person commented:

*It does label you, there's no question about it... you are considered to be worse in some ways, socially worse – you are literally socially worse, but even as a person, quality of character, it's automatically 'you're poor' therefore you steal or may steal. You're not worthy, you're untrustworthy.*<sup>74</sup>

In Zambia, a child working as a gardener says: *“They eat at the table and I eat from outside. As much as I eat three meals a day, I eat from plastic plates and the rest of the family eats from breakables. There is nothing wrong but it just shows that you are different from the rest.”*<sup>75</sup>

Seven and eight year old boys in Ireland agreed that children whose families do not have much money would be treated differently by other children:

*“Eh, they won't treat you nicely and won't take you anywhere. You won't get taken to the beach or nothing.”*

(Researcher): But do you think say if the other children were going to the beach, say and they had a space in the car, and their mum said you can bring somebody with you... do you think the other children wouldn't bring them if they didn't have much money?

*“No... I would, but other children might not”.*

## PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF POVERTY

Poverty has physical impacts that can affect health, create unwanted outward signs of deprivation, and reinforce psychological effects. A mother in Northern Ireland narrates that damp and mould is having a severe impact on her children's health: *‘My oldest little boy [Ben] is having difficulties at school. And he's had so much time off, so when you have lots of time off it makes things much worse.’* The children's mental health is also being affected. Ben is being teased at school because his clothes smell of damp, which is affecting his self-confidence. *“It's not right...to be told that you smell. Kids are so cruel. [Ben] was teased for it. He's seeing the child psychologist now because he has low self-esteem.”* The condition of the house

makes it difficult for him to have friends around to play, which is impacting on his social development.<sup>76</sup>



Photo: Save the Children

**Kasturi, 8 years old, is the youngest in a family of four living in Andhra Pradesh, India. Her family's financial situation went from bad to worse just before Kasturi was born. As a baby Kasturi suffered from malnutrition which her teachers believe has had a negative impact on her brain development.**

Girls in India discussed problems of water shortage. Besides the effects of water shortage on health and schooling, a fifteen year old in Mumbai also said: *“We have taps in the house but the connection doesn't work and we don't get water at home. So people have to use the common taps and there are major fights due to that. Sometimes it affects our friendship, as our mothers fight to fill water for our homes.”*<sup>77</sup>

Housing is also a serious issue for poor children in Sweden. A thirteen year old girl says:

*Now it is three years ago since we had a real home. That is when all the horrible things started to happen. First me and my mum started to move around all the time, to different friends' houses, one friend here, one mate there, back and forth, until my mum found a short-term let. . . If we were lucky we could stay in one place for three months, 6 months, and then we had to pack our things again. . . As soon as you feel at home in one place it is time to move to another place. And you know, I lost all my things. . . I have no bed, no bookshelf, no things that are my own. . . it is really hard. The last time we had to move, it went overboard. For a whole week I felt really sad, really depressed. I didn't go to school, I felt like I couldn't do it. And I couldn't find my school books. . . I had nothing, I had no clothes.*<sup>78</sup>

## TAKING ADULT RESPONSIBILITY

Children feel greatly responsible for supporting their families. In one study, child migrants in Africa “spoke of their desire to earn money and help support their family and siblings”. One boy in South Africa said “When I left them I told them, ‘Whether I live or die it is up to me. I want to look after my family because I’m the oldest boy’”<sup>79</sup>

A twelve year old Syrian refugee in Jordan also explained why he worked, and did not go to school: “I feel responsible for my family. I feel like I am still a child, and would live to go back to school, but my only option is to work hard to put food on the table for my family”.<sup>80</sup>

In a refugee camp in Ethiopia, a sixteen year old female South Sudanese refugee describes her responsibility for her siblings, and recounts how she lost her parents.

*Now I am the mother of the house. The responsibility for taking care of four children is hard. I wake up early in the morning to prepare food, collect firewood, and fetch water. Every month I bring the ration food to our home. We lost our mother due to illness and got separated from our father during the war.*<sup>81</sup>

In the aftermath of natural disaster, children may experience rapid changes that mean a rapid increase in responsibilities. “With Yolanda, children are forced to mature and will prioritise activities that would make the family survive first”, says one adolescent boy affected by Hurricane Haiyan / Yolanda in the Philippines. “Children have no more time to meet with friends, and no time for gimmicks (fun).”<sup>82</sup>

Getting married very young is a very likely outcome for girls raised in poverty in some countries. Lucky is Bangladeshi, and the youngest of the three girls. Her older sisters married at ages 11 and 12, and she married at 15. “We were very poor— sometimes we would eat every two or three days. Even though [my parents] really wanted all three of their daughters to study it wasn’t possible, so they got me married.”<sup>83</sup>

Also in Bangladesh, 14 year old Azima recounts how poverty and social pressure meant that she had to get married, in case the chances of contracting a marriage for herself and her sisters became even harder in future.<sup>84</sup>

*Azima said that people in the community had been “shaming her” for still being unmarried because she is tall and looks old for her age. “I protested a lot to my parents but they said, ‘It is a shame for us to keep you in the house.’ I wanted to continue my education, but my mother said, ‘Your father has fixed your marriage and if you don’t listen to your father, people will say what kind of girl is that who doesn’t listen to her father?’”*

*Azima said, “I am the oldest and only after I get married can [my sisters] think about getting*

*married. If the river takes the house it will be hard for them to get married.” Azima’s sisters are ages 12, 10, and 8 years old; her parents are now considering a marriage for the 12-year-old.*

*Azima married a 17-year-old boy three days after his parents decided she was an acceptable bride. “They’ve already asked me to have children,” Azima, now age 14, said of her in-laws. “I live in their house – I have to keep them happy. My husband has also asked me to have children. I said I wanted to wait for two years, but they said, ‘No, you should have children now.’ So I guess I will have to have children now.”*

In Uganda too, girls describe “pressure put on the parents by some community members to marry off the girl – that she has grown up, so she doesn’t finish school.”<sup>85</sup>

## WORKING CHILDREN

Children sometimes work because they want to contribute to the family. Often, however, they have no choice but to work. Many children work on family farms, while others are employed or beg for a living. A Roma boy, displaced from Kosovo to Montenegro says: “I think that children work because they have to, because they are poor and they make them do it. Children don’t like to work, and it’s not normal to have children work.”<sup>86</sup>

Working children often endure physical harm as a result of hazardous work and long hours. Two other Syrian children recount:

*“When the man selling the diesel gives it to his customer I stand next to him and soak up the diesel that has spilled on the ground with a sponge. I hate the diesel market and the clothes that I wear there; all of it makes me sick. One day some red spots appeared on my body and when I went to the doctor he said it was because of the diesel. He told me to use medical soap. I hate that people treat me badly. One time there was a big explosion at the market; I saw a man fly through the air and there was so much blood. I ran away. Now I feel so scared when I see someone with matches or lighting a cigarette near the market. I immediately run away fearing another explosion.”*

*“Once we arrive at the field, we are given huge bags that we attach to our waist. We then start harvesting potatoes. We have to be really fast and we shouldn’t leave any potato behind or else we get beaten with a plastic hose. We work non-stop until our 10-minute breakfast break at 10am. We then continue working until 2pm. The job is really hard and the bag becomes really heavy – it weighs more than 10 kilograms when it is full. I collect about 30 bags of potatoes each day and my back hurts a lot. When we come back to the tent, I immediately go to sleep. When I wake up, I have something to*

*eat with my family and then I go outside and play with my friends, some of whom work with me while others go to school.”*

A 14 year old boy from the Philippines works 12 hours a day in a small scale gold mine:

*Sometimes I would accidentally drop the sack of ore on my toes. It's 30 kilos.... It's tough, carrying the ore and pulling it. It's so heavy that when I take a rest, I feel weak.... I didn't like being there. It's tough being there. It's frightening because it might collapse.<sup>87</sup>*

In extended family systems in Africa, it is not unusual for children to move from rural areas to town to stay with relatives, ostensibly to go to school and have a better life. For poor girls, however, this custom is often the gateway to domestic labour. A group of child domestic workers in Zambia were interviewed:

(Researcher): If a relative wants to find a young girl or boy to help in their house, how do they find someone?

*They just ask those who are keeping you .... but they don't tell the truth. They say we want her to go to school, but when you go it's a different story.<sup>88</sup>*

Another child described how the how “a teacher from around the village informed his parents that I needed to go to Lusaka where I could progress in school and also have the opportunity of living in Lusaka”. In reality, the boy ended up living in Mandevu (a low-income area) working in a family shop attached to the house, and carrying out domestic work when the shop was closed. At first the employer told him to wait for a place at school. “Whenever a customer came to the shop I would be called from the house to attend to them, then I would go back to work in the house. I used to open the shop at 06.00 hours and close it at 22. I was so tired I couldn't even ask about how the search for a school was going.” After a while he

found out that they had lied to his parents saying that he was attending a good school.<sup>89</sup>

In Ethiopia, a teenage girl who lives with her aunt reports that she has more domestic responsibilities than her cousins: “I am 14 years old and 8th grade student. I live with my aunt since I was 3 years old child. My aunt told me that my father and mother are divorced, and that my mother (her sister) sent me to her because she was unable to care for me. My aunt has three children of her own, two of them are older than me and one is younger. I used to take care of the younger child at home when she was little. I also do all domestic work at my aunt's house, except for baking Ingera (local meal). I wake up early in the morning and prepare breakfast and coffee to the family. And then I go to school. When I am back from school, I do remaining work at home and if I have time I study or do my homework”.<sup>90</sup>

Whether expecting to go to school or not, children in domestic employment face exclusion, physical and sexual violence.<sup>91</sup>

*I sleep at the sitting room as much as there is a spare room. I am not allowed to sleep there – they say it is for relatives. I also sleep late because usually I have to wait until my employer finish watching TV. Sometimes when they are watching TV, I sit in the kitchen or wait outside because they do not allow me to watch TV. (17 year old girl)*

*The man used to rape me whenever the wife was not there. One day I told his wife but instead I received a beating from her, saying I was accusing her husband of doing such a thing. (17 year old girl)*

Some children said they were hit, slapped and ‘beaten’ by the woman of the house. Another relayed how the children of the house sometimes kicked her and how her woman employer had thrown the water left over from cleaning fish in her face when she had made a mistake.<sup>92</sup>





## AWAY FROM HOME

Children may leave home when the situation is intolerable, and they feel unable to stay. Besides extreme income poverty and other hardships, children may move away when their home is not a source of care or love. In Uganda, for example, children cited alcohol and family conflict as two of the three most significant causes of poverty.<sup>93</sup>

Children displaced from Kosovo to Montenegro describe the abuse that forces them to work. As circumstances endure and children grow older, children with such experiences are likely to think about moving:<sup>94</sup>

*When he has a few drinks he shouts at all of us, not just the one who has done something wrong. He blames us all for something then, doesn't do anything but spends what he earns on drinks and leaves us without any food. If it weren't for my brother and me, sometimes we'd have no food for days. Luckily, he doesn't drink every day.*

*I'm sick of it, but then again I know I have to beg because father would beat me or shout at me, and because we have to eat. I know all that, and still I don't feel like doing it.*

Departure from home may happen in stages. At the young age of 9, a girl in Ethiopia is already thinking about running away from her situation: "Since I work collecting rubbish, I don't have money to go to hospital if I get sick, or to buy bread for my children. My living standard is below everybody's... When I talk too much and remember the situation, I get disturbed and want to run away. My way of life is worse."<sup>95</sup>

Others spend more time away from home before leaving for good. An 11 year old boy in Bhubaneswar, India says:

*I do not like school or staying at home because of the problems between my father and mother. I'd rather stay on the street all the time even when there is no work. When I am working, I do not mind the number of hours. Most of the time at home, there is shouting and beating. My father takes out his anger on us and beats us without mercy. Sometimes, I run away to my grandfather's place. Once I slept in the yard of a mosque. Sometimes I feel hatred for my parents because they have turned the house into a hell.*<sup>96</sup>

An Eastern European child agrees. "At the time I decided to leave home, I was just happy to do that. I couldn't think of anything else. Life at my home was impossible."<sup>97</sup>

An 18 year old boy from the Gambia recounted what happened when his father died, and his mother entered sex work as her only means of supporting the family:

*It became unbearable for me to live in the village. I was always fighting people who offended my mother, and I started hating my mum. I always*

*quarrelled with her when I was at home. So I decided to go away, far away from her, to find some peace in my life.*<sup>98</sup>

Unaccompanied children on the move face multiple threats in transit, and at destination. Even where children are aware of risks of physical harm, exploitation and human trafficking, they may find it difficult to remain safe. Children all over the world face similar risks:<sup>99</sup>

*One girl travelling across the border from Zimbabwe into South Africa told us: after we had crossed the river and jumped the first fence we met other guys hiding in the bushes... They advanced on us with sharp knives and axes... They ordered us to lie down and they started beating us... They took our money..."*

*One 15 year old boy in Cambodia said A woman asked me to go to Cambodia to make shoes for her company. She promised I would not have to work hard and would earn good money. When I arrived... She kept me in a room... there were about 10 children there... She forced us to work for long hours without allowing us to go out.*

*A girl from Latvia said: My cousin told me she could offer me a pleasant holiday... My parents were against the idea but later they accepted it... [when I got] there, my cousin's husband told me I was going to be a prostitute; he locked me up and took away my identity documents.*

Other children in poverty live away from parents because their parents have died, or left. Children are often moved between grandparents, aunts and uncles, and other relatives, which can cause distress. A girl from Canada says:

*I don't get much time to spend with my mom or my dad, because I don't even know my dad, all I know is my step dad, because when I was born, my dad abandoned my mom. I only get to spend summers with my mom, and that's all I get to spend with her and like sometimes she comes down here on holidays to see me, but I only get to see her on holidays and summer... it makes me sad when my mom goes.*<sup>100</sup>

Loss of a parent, and a home, has significant effects on schooling. A group of out-of-school boys aged 11 to 14 in Uganda told researchers why they dropped out of school:<sup>101</sup>

*My father who was paying the school fees died.*

*My mother died and abandoned us.*

*Father died, mummy abandoned me, I actually do not know her.*

*My parents died.*

*My parents do not care.*

*My parents died, I stay with aunt who does not care.*

## PEER SUPPORT

Children who leave home, and others whose home life is unable to offer sufficient care and support, often seek alternative arrangements as a substitute.

Sometimes, children who live without a caring family may find an institution that offers them an opportunity to build a supportive peer network. Fathema is a 16 year old Bangladeshi girl, who used to work selling alcohol, cutting bricks and in domestic work to support her mother. Since she got involved in Child Brigade,<sup>4</sup> her life has improved and now she earns money teaching other children and is getting an education herself. Besides this, she describes the emotional support she gets from the group:

*We have fun too. We stay together and are good to each other. We have lots of support from our brothers (other Child Brigade<sup>4</sup> members), from the older ones and also from the younger ones. If we face any kind of problem in the street, our brothers support us; if we do anything wrong, they give us advice. They see us as little sisters and don't let us do bad things. We went for a picnic outside of Dhaka and had lots of fun. We have very good mutual understanding.*<sup>102</sup>

More often, however, alternative means of coping with the lack of care and support can be risky. A boy in a street gang in Jaipur India says “We have much brotherhood among ourselves. Whenever I am in trouble, I approach the big boys who help us. Yes, this has always been the case.”

In Honduras, consultations with children and young people reported that they “made a major link between poverty and the disintegration of families. Children talked of parents migrating to the USA for work and children being left without adequate parental support. Participants emphasised children’s need for care and support, and explained that if parents were not able to provide it then young people might turn to gangs for peer support and a sense of belonging.”<sup>103</sup>

## EASING THE STRESS

Another escape from the physical and mental stress of poverty, lack of care and exploitation is drugs. In Bangladesh, a boy of 13 or 14 who survives alone on the streets by rubbish-picking said “I sniff glue so I don't feel the hunger. The glue also helps me not notice how bad the smell is when I collect rubbish.”<sup>104</sup>

In richer countries, young people often take the same approach to dealing with problems including poverty. A fifteen year old boy in the UK explains: “You get stressed out. You think drink and drugs will help but of course they don't really – then you have to steal to buy the drugs

and it's downhill all the way”.<sup>105</sup> Another boy in the same group said “You feel so worthless – drugs can make you feel better but in the end you're just seen as a ‘druggie’ and ‘scum’. You can't get a good job so again – you're stuck”<sup>106</sup>

## ENDURING EFFECTS OF POVERTY

The long term life-course of children raised in poverty is often shaped by their economic predicament. The loss of a secure home environment, diminished education, social exclusion, shouldering of responsibilities, work, marriage and migration all have a profound effect on the prospects and life-chances of those affected.

Children raised in poverty often feel hopeless, with little prospects for the future. “If you're poor you're bullied, which means you won't try your best in school. You give up..... If you don't do well in school you'll end up with a crap job and no money” says a Welsh teenager.<sup>107</sup> A 16 year old Syrian refugee girl in Turkey was unable to enrol in school in 2013, because she didn't have a residency permit. “Now that I can't go to school, it's a tough situation. It's hard to get used to it. I work occasionally, filling in for my sisters at the factory. When I picture my future, I see nothing.”<sup>108</sup> For many, the effects of poverty do indeed endure for a life time. Besides well documented effects on health, earnings and even life-span, some people who have succeeded in escaping from poverty and achieving a comfortable standard of living report feeling like a “fake and a fraud”.<sup>109</sup>

For this reason, children living in poverty express an urgent and immediate need for action to combat the effects of poverty. What they suggest is common for children around the world. “The face of poverty might change for one place to the next, but how poverty is felt is the same,” say young people living in poverty in New York.<sup>110</sup> Worldwide, jobs for parents and guardians, school, love and care, friends, inclusion, social standing, the absence of shame, protection and a decent safe living environment are the simple desires described by children who clearly lack the basic requirements of a decent childhood.

A 16 year old boy from Guatemala sums this up:

***I often hear that we as children are the future of the nation, and we are. But we are also the present, and I want my rights to be fulfilled now***

<sup>4</sup> Child Brigade is a child-led organisation of urban working children in Bangladesh. The organisation supports literacy and numeracy skills for children like them. They also provide other support such as spaces for children to discuss issues they face.

# 3 PATTERNS AND DRIVERS OF CHILD POVERTY AROUND THE WORLD

## Key messages of this chapter

- Child poverty exists in all contexts – from the poorest fragile states to the richest and most equal societies. There are differences in how children experience poverty but remarkable similarities in the drivers of poverty and in its effects.
- Children living in poverty experience worse outcomes than their non-poor peers, with challenges to survival, good health and education, and greater exposure to risk of all kinds. The damage of these effects can be life-long, disadvantaging the next generation.
- There is no guarantee of knock-on or trickle down benefits from economic growth; equitable benefits depend on pro-poor / pro-child policies.
- Child poverty is underpinned by social and economic exclusion, reinforced by political and institutional inequalities that sanction the persistence of deprivation, discrimination, and the intergenerational transmission of child poverty.
- Members of minority groups, children with disabilities, members of disadvantaged groups (including caste and tribe) and migrants experience greater levels of poverty, intertwined and reinforced by discrimination and stigma.
- Girls and boys experience poverty differently, especially as they reach adolescence. Girls are more likely to leave school, get married and/or begin child bearing, while boys are more readily exposed to hazardous work.

In all countries around the world, children are subject to poverty. Whether in a well-off and highly developed country, or in others beset by the challenges of climate, economic malaise and conflict, children experience deprivations, rights failures, and live in long-term poverty that is likely to stay with them for life.

There are obvious differences as well as important similarities in child poverty across the world. Children in poverty world wide experience worse health than their peers, struggle to access a decent education, and are exposed to diverse risks and threats. They are often subject to discrimination and stigma, which leaves deep psychological scars. Children are especially vulnerable to the effects of all such deprivations. The effects of diverse harm inflicted on children often last a life-time.

Around the world, child deprivations are driven by different circumstances, depending on the economic and social factors. Depending on the economic progress, political and social relations and the distribution of wealth, who is subject to child poverty and the reasons that it persists will vary.

The following sections look at child poverty in several different circumstances: in low income and fragile countries, in middle income countries, in high income countries, in countries affected by climate change, and amongst children on the move. Although there is no single form of child poverty in each of these circumstances, this framework provides an opportunity to explore some of the common features as well as differences. In doing so, examples from a range of countries are used to look in more depth at how children experience poverty and why it persists.

## CHILD POVERTY IN LOW INCOME, FRAGILE & CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES

- Most low income countries are fragile and conflict affected
- The number of poor people in fragile countries has hardly reduced in 25 years, and is not projected to reduce significantly
- Low income fragile states have performed badly on MDG achievements, while other fragile states risk a reversal of previous gains
- Children living in poverty in low income fragile states face rights failures, diverse threats, insecurity and vulnerability, with little in terms of safety nets or protection
- Poverty is increasingly urbanised, although the number of poor people in rural Africa is not expected to fall
- The interests of governments may not be aligned with the interests of the poor; even if they are, resources may be scant, and directed to other purposes

Low income countries (LICs) are defined by the World Bank as those where annual per capita Gross National Income (GNI) is below \$1,045.<sup>111</sup> Since 2001, the number of LICs has fallen substantially, from 65 to 31. Twenty seven of the remaining LICs are in sub-Saharan Africa (exceptions being Cambodia, Haiti, Afghanistan and North Korea).<sup>112</sup> Some 613 million people live in LICs, about 8.5 percent of the world's population.<sup>113</sup>

All but four current LICs are ranked by the World Bank as fragile – those that are not fragile being Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia and Tanzania.<sup>114</sup> With GNI per capita levels drawing close to the MIC threshold, the latter two are expected to graduate in the near future.<sup>115</sup> In these circumstances, it is clear that the persistence of low income status is very closely associated with the characteristics of fragility and conflict.

Amongst the 27 LICs that are fragile, eight are in a state of war or armed conflict<sup>116</sup>, and three are post-conflict.<sup>117</sup> The fragility of states is defined in terms of five domains by the OECD (violence, access to justice, effective institutions, enabling economy and vulnerability to shocks and disasters; see Box 4).<sup>118</sup> Nineteen of the fragile LICs are vulnerable in four or five of these domains. The fragile states that are *not* LICs are all MICs, and fall into one of four categories (except North Korea, which is in most senses a unique case).

- States affected by armed conflict and significant instability in North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia;
- Weak and highly unequal states in Sub-Saharan Africa; in most cases both economy and politics are dominated by oil and mineral extraction;
- Weak island states of the Pacific;
- Post-conflict states in Europe (Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo).

### BOX 3 WORLD BANK'S LIST OF FRAGILE COUNTRIES, WITH INCOME STATUS

Countries that are fragile and low income		
Afghanistan	The Gambia	Nepal
Burundi	Guinea	Niger
Central African Republic	Guinea-Bissau	Rwanda
Chad	Haiti	S Sudan
Comoros	Liberia	Sierra Leone
DPR Korea	Madagascar	Somalia
DR Congo	Malawi	Togo
Eritrea	Mali	Uganda
Ethiopia	Mozambique	Zimbabwe

Countries that are low income but not fragile	
Benin	Cambodia
Burkina Faso	Tanzania

Countries that are fragile and middle income		
Bangladesh	Libya	Sri Lanka
Cameroon	Marshall Islands	Sudan
Congo	Mauritania	Syria
Cote d'Ivoire	Micronesia	Timor-Leste
Egypt	Myanmar	Tuvalu
Iraq	Nigeria	West Bank & Gaza
Kenya	Pakistan	Yemen
Kiribati	Solomon Islands	

**BOX 4 MEASURING FRAGILITY**

Indices and lists vary widely in their approach to conceptualising and measuring fragility. The most common approach looks at the degree to which states meet a set of basic functions: legitimacy, typically defined in terms of electoral democracy and civic and human rights protections; welfare, defined in terms of economic and social development; and security, measured in conflict and personal insecurity.

Function-oriented indices include the Carleton University Country Indicators for Foreign Policy Index, the Brookings Index of State Weakness in the Developing World, and the State Fragility Index. The World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) also focuses on basic state functions and policies, but emphasises bureaucratic capacity and economic and regulatory policy, and does not address political, human and civic rights.

A second approach to measuring fragility focuses on identifying pressures and stress factors that can lead to war or institutional breakdown. Factors include uneven economic opportunity across social groups, elite factionalisation and weaknesses in the security sector. The primary example of this approach is the Fragile States Index produced by The Fund for Peace.

A third approach focuses on events and was developed by the Political Instability Task Force. This index identified and ranked states according to specific types of conflicts and institutional breakdowns (e.g. civil war, regime instability, ethnic conflict). The primary limitation with this approach is

that it is backward looking, and does not reflect emerging risk.

Any list that results from collapsing several measures into one dimension has limitations and cannot capture the diversity of fragile situations, or the spectrum of responses from societies that are actively attempting to reduce risk and increase resilience. The new OECD method measures fragility based on internationally agreed global priorities for reducing fragility and building resilience, related directly to post-2015:

1. Violence: reduction of violence
2. Justice: access to justice for all
3. Institutions: effective, accountable and inclusive institutions
4. Economic foundations: economic foundations, inclusion and stability
5. Resilience: capacity to prevent and adapt to shocks and disasters.

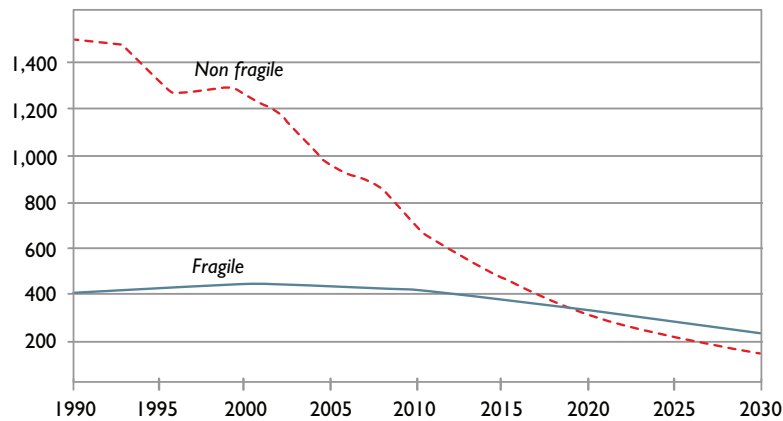
Three dimensions relate directly to fragility and are drawn from the proposed new SDG 16, which encompasses the goal of peaceful societies, justice for all and effective institutions. Two additional dimensions cover the threats faced by fragile states and the resources available to them – that is, their resilience when confronted with external and internal shocks and disasters, and their economic foundations for sustainable development.

Fragility, like poverty, is persistent. More than half of today's fragile states have been ranked so according to *all* approaches to measuring fragility, for eight years or longer. While some have "graduated" from various measures of fragility after many years, those that remain are likely to remain fragile for many years to come, and the poverty profile is not expected to change without significant acceleration in improving the function of institutions, economies and the rule of law.<sup>119</sup>

Some 20 percent of the world's population live in fragile states, yet they are home to 43 percent of the global population living in absolute income poverty. While the numbers of poor people and the size of the poverty gap in other developing countries are reducing, this is not the case in the countries that remain LICs (hence largely fragile) today, where the aggregate poverty gap *increased by 33 percent* between 1981 and 2010.<sup>120</sup> This is attributed to an increase in the number of extremely poor individuals in fragile countries of more than 100 million, and the strangulation of their average incomes throughout this period.<sup>121</sup>

Estimates using Multidimensional Poverty Index measures of multidimensional poverty dating back up to 10 years show a concentration of global poor populations in fragile LICs and stable MICs.<sup>122</sup> However, projections show that the proportion of the world's poorest living in fragile states will continue to grow rapidly, while more stable MICs are likely to achieve poverty reduction. Even under the best-case scenario, estimates suggest that 62 percent of the global poor will live in fragile states by 2030.<sup>123</sup> Poverty is most persistent in these states, where institutions are weak, shocks and conflict cause multiple disruptions, and the functioning of the state does not aggressively prioritise poverty reduction. Analysts have commented that recent years have seen a significant shift in the global poverty landscape *away* from stable, low-income environments, towards a situation characterized by fragility and inequality, with resulting challenges in how poverty can be measured, understood and addressed.<sup>124</sup>

**FIGURE 1** MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN EXTREME INCOME POVERTY IN FRAGILE AND STABLE COUNTRIES, 1990 – 2010 (ACTUAL) – 2030 (PROJECTIONS)



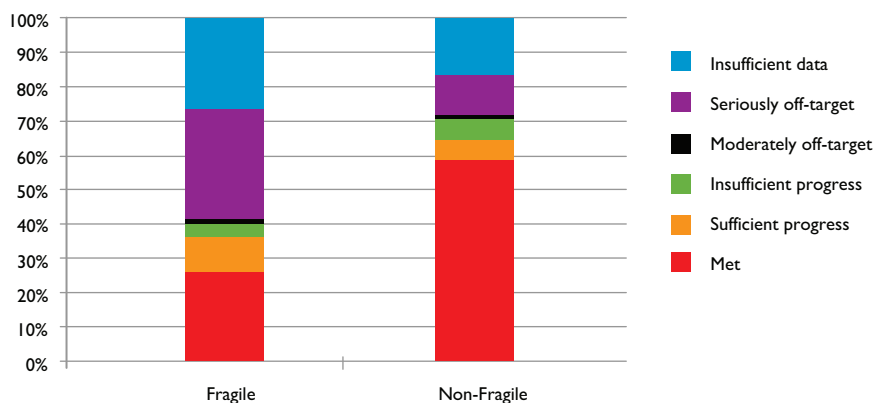
Children living in countries that are extremely poor, fragile with weak institutions, or in a state of conflict and instability are extremely vulnerable to poverty, and are very likely to experience multiple rights failures. Young children and adolescents are profoundly affected by unstable economies and livelihoods, gaps and disruptions in service delivery, pressures and distortions of the social and cultural environment, and effects of stress driven by conflict, insecurity and poverty. The combination of developmental set-backs, reduced access to health and education, and exposure to multiple serious risks combine to ensure irreversible harm to children, with effects that reach into adulthood, and on to the next generation.

Although the events and structures that create low income, fragile and conflict states vary considerably, children often experience similar deprivations. In some instances, states are in political crisis, have deeply corrupt or ineffective regimes, and a weak rule of law. In others, regional or cross-border conflict has substantially challenged or even replaced the authority and functioning of the state. In any such cases, resources are

not used to meet the needs of children, institutions are run down or misdirected, and the needs, security and prospects of the population becomes a lesser concern. With the neglect of the human rights and dignity of the population, it follows that the rights of children, women and other groups are also disregarded.

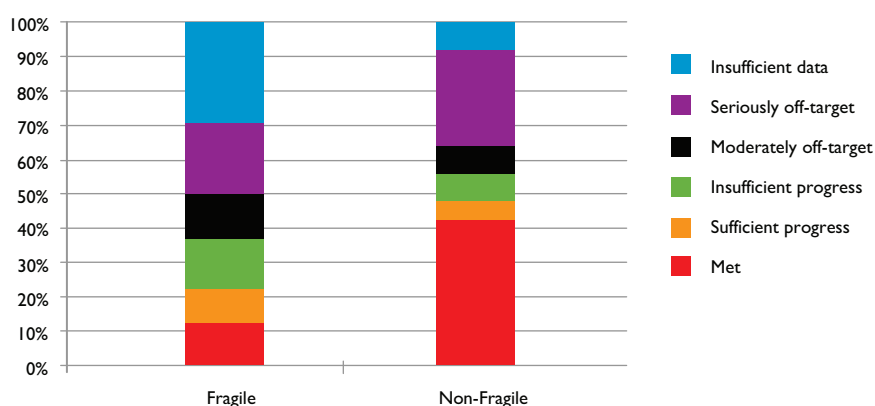
In this context, it is expected that populations of low income and fragile states would fall short in terms of progress towards development goals. Figure 2 and Figure 3 show that fragile states are lagging behind in progress towards the MDGs related to income poverty and education. The pattern is similar with regards to other targets: 15% of non-fragile states are projected to reduce the under-five mortality rate by two-thirds by 2015, but only one fragile state will reach this goal; 28% of fragile states are on track to halve the number of their citizens without access to safe water, while 61% of non-fragile countries have reached this target; fragile states have also made slower progress on sanitation.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, it is likely that progress such as it is in fragile states is largely concentrated in MICs rather than LICs.<sup>126, 5</sup>

**FIGURE 2** MDG 1A (HALVE, BETWEEN 1990 AND 2015, THE PROPORTION OF PEOPLE LIVING ON LESS THAN USD 1.25 A DAY): PROGRESS IN FRAGILE AND NON-FRAGILE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, 2014

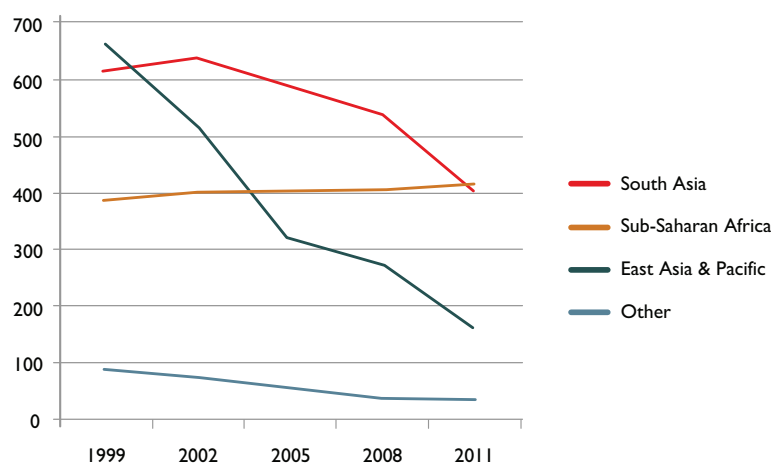


<sup>5</sup> The 2014 MDG report on Africa gives the most stark assessment, saying “none of the fragile/conflict-affected states [in Africa] will achieve any of the goals, with the exception of Liberia which is on track to meet MDG 4.” However, note that the report may be referring to “whole” goals rather than targets. In addition to Liberia, there are some states considered fragile according to the OECD that will meet some of the 18 MDG targets.

**FIGURE 3 MDG 2A (ENSURE THAT BY 2015, CHILDREN EVERYWHERE, BOYS AND GIRLS ALIKE, COMPLETE PRIMARY SCHOOL): PROGRESS IN FRAGILE AND NON-FRAGILE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, 2014**



**FIGURE 4 POPULATION OF POOR PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS BY REGION 1999-2011 (MILLIONS)**



Just over three-quarters of the world's poor live in rural areas, mostly depending on subsistence agriculture.<sup>127</sup> Although the number of rural poor is falling rapidly in East Asia, Figure 4 shows that it remains high in South Asia, and is increasing in Africa, especially in LIC and fragile states.<sup>128</sup> There is ample evidence of multiple deprivations amongst children raised in poverty in poor rural areas, ranging from food insecurity, access to services, and vulnerability to a range of exploitative and harmful practices.

Children in rural areas are more likely to be hungry than children living in urban areas. In 2008, there were four underweight rural children for every one underweight urban child in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>129</sup> Although some progress was made in improving child nutrition levels in the 1990s, many of the countries that succeeded in this regard have at the same time graduated to MIC status (Bangladesh, Rwanda, Ghana and Vietnam). Amongst the remaining

LICs, many have experienced stagnating or even worsening outcomes in child malnutrition (for example, DR Congo, Sudan, Central African Republic, Mauritania and Guinea).<sup>130</sup>

Notwithstanding the predominance of rural poverty in low-income countries, there is increasing concern about urbanisation, and its consequences for children and young people. By 2050, it is expected that 70 percent of the world's population will live in cities – a reversal of the status quo just 100 years earlier.<sup>131</sup> Children in urban areas may face significant challenges in terms of housing and living conditions, with significant impacts on health, and are also vulnerable to hazards including exploitation, exclusion, and difficulty in accessing education. Along with their families, they may be deemed illegal, either squatters, homeless or unregistered, and thus often uncounted or un-served. In some countries, the poorest urban children suffer worse outcomes than the rural poor.<sup>132</sup>

In either rural or urban location, people living in poverty in low income countries may find it more difficult to access services and improve their livelihoods than others. While a lack of education and skills may present immediate constraints, the structure of markets and prevailing economic frameworks may also serve to entrench poverty. For example, a lack of competition, information, credit, insurance and high transaction costs can all work against the interests of the poor. These effects can be compounded by macroeconomic policy frameworks that have imposed sometimes decades of *de facto* austerity. High interest rates and curtailed public spending are often employed as measures to contain inflation, thus blocking opportunity for the poor. Moreover, the efficiency of public spending can often be called into question; in some cases the costs of central government take precedence, while in others, structural barriers, dubious practice, bureaucracy and lack of coherent policy can all undermine performance. Services and priorities that most benefit the non-poor may take precedence over those that reach the poorest: public expenditure reviews in many countries provide diverse examples of how this is so.

Nonetheless, where poorly resourced Governments do extend decent services to the poor, there are many good examples of how poor people benefit very greatly. The provision of good quality basic services, accessible and relevant to the needs of children living in poverty, can yield significant results. Moreover, where spending actively targets the poorest, with emphasis on their needs, impacts have been shown to be greatest. This is especially so for interventions addressing health, nutrition, education, and social protection. Programmes that explicitly target the poorest children, households and communities are shown to accelerate progress towards development goals, and to achieve these results with greater cost-efficiency.<sup>133</sup> Nonetheless, however

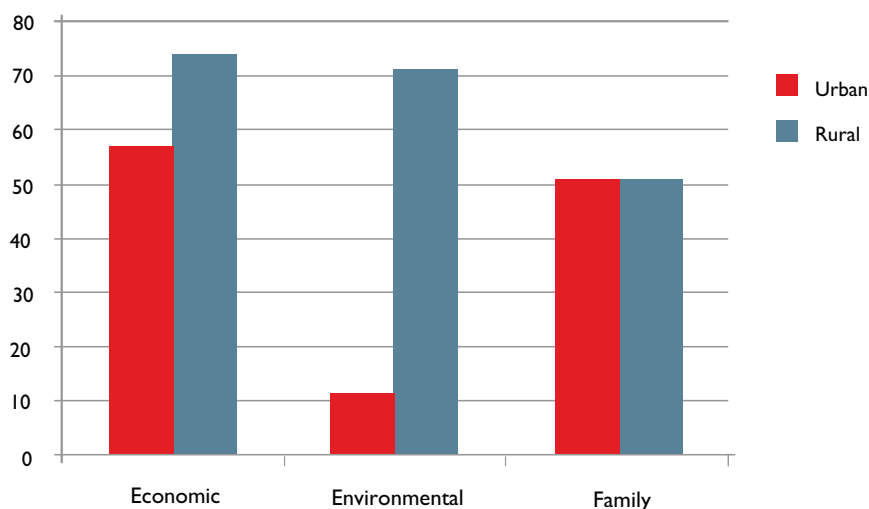
effective the programmes are, the reality for many people living in poverty in low income and fragile states is that they are unable to access services.

There is a consistent picture across the world that shows that poor households have more members (including more dependents), together with less education, fewer assets and less land, and less adequate housing, water and other living conditions.<sup>134</sup> In fragile LICs, this situation is compounded by weak institutions, public services and policy environment, which provide limited opportunities to exit poverty, and little in terms of protection from the effects of natural and man-made shocks and hazards. Poor households lack resilience, and what are termed “coping strategies” are not only often a cost to children (for example less food or withdrawing from school), but also often contingent on the agency or participation of children.

The effects of these deprivations have different effects on girls and boys, especially as they reach adolescence. In most circumstances, girls are less likely to go to school than boys, and more likely to be drawn into work to support family domestic needs, and into early marriage. Family decision making may favour boys where the opportunities exist; where they do not, boys are more likely to enter work on family farms or paid work. Risks too affect girls and boys differently. Girls exposed to poverty in many low-income and fragile contexts are more likely to experience sexual abuse, child marriage, health impacts resulting from early pregnancy and gender based violence. In contrast, boys may be subject to injury and disability resulting from hazardous labour, and to violence, crime, combat and detention.

In Ethiopia, the Young Lives project reports frequent exposure to economic, environmental and family shocks, especially in rural households (see Figure 5).<sup>135</sup>

**FIGURE 5** HOUSEHOLDS AFFECTED BY ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND FAMILY SHOCKS, AVERAGE PERCENTAGE, YOUNG LIVES ETHIOPIA ROUNDS 1 TO 3





Young Lives reports that the effects of shock events are particularly persistent for children, as the immediate effects and responses have irreversible physical, developmental or psychological effects. Moreover, the knock-on effects continue over time, often triggering other negative events. Qualitative research shows that a fall in household income (for example triggered by an environmental shock, or by household ill-health) often leads to a halt in school attendance, reduced food intake and shortages in essential requirements. The migration of a parent looking for work means that children left at home are exposed to heightened vulnerability (often different for boys and girls); the movement of a child can also have the same effect. Children recount immediate health impacts, physical harm resulting from dangerous work or accidents, an end to learning and deep rooted emotional and psychological impacts.<sup>136</sup>

Much of the discussion on shocks, coping mechanisms and protection has in the past been focused on income poverty in stable low-income countries.<sup>137</sup> This has shaped thinking around what sort of shocks occur, what sort of family and household arrangements exist to manage shocks, and the possible policy and institutional capacities that may be strengthened to support prevention, mitigation and protection. However, with 90 percent of the world's poor no longer in such countries, and LICs no longer characteristically stable, the need to understand shock events, and their impact, has increased significantly. Girls and boys in fragile states, including conflict states, are vulnerable to a much greater range and magnitude of shock: the risk of destitution and displacement are heightened, and threats of violence are elevated. Girls are at increased risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking, while boys face violence, recruitment into armed forces, and crime. Children with disabilities face even more grave threats. In unstable situations, services that offer protection, support and learning may be largely inaccessible.

## MALI: FRAGILE GAINS REVERSED AS CONFLICT BREAKS OUT

One example of a fragile LIC is Mali. It is a predominantly agricultural low income country, with widespread income poverty, hostile climate, poor infrastructure and weak institutions. Until recently, Mali was a stable low income country, making progress towards improving child outcomes despite a challenging Sahel climate. More recently, however, Mali experienced conflict that now renders it very much a fragile state. Both man-made shocks – emerging from within the countries own political dispensation – and natural factors contribute to challenge the wellbeing of Malians, and the ability of children to grow and flourish.

In early 2012, a crisis broke out in the north of Mali, when insurgents demanded autonomy from the south. Within 3 months, the army launched a coup d'état, and

suspended the constitution. The conflict continued, and northern Mali was soon captured by the rebels. By mid-2012, however, the rebels lost control of the north to fundamentalist groups. Although African and French troops helped the Malian Government to retake much of the north, peace deals have been breached and ceasefires failed. The country remains very unstable, with serious threats to safety and wellbeing.<sup>138</sup> The Security Council, International Criminal Court, Human Rights Watch and others have cited many human rights violations, including the use of child soldiers, and sexual violence against girls and women.<sup>139, 140</sup> The conflict has caused long-term damage to social and economic livelihoods.

Prior to the conflict, Mali's economic growth had been stable, although lower than forecast.<sup>141</sup> Weak performance was attributed to the global financial crisis, on-going challenges of farming in this environment, and the slow implementation of appropriate economic policy measures.<sup>142</sup> Mali's economy has been supported by high levels of remittances, which even before the conflict reached over 40 percent of households in some regions.<sup>143</sup>

In 2010, 43.6 percent of the population was poor, with 22 percent being extremely poor.<sup>144, 145</sup> Income poverty was lower amongst adolescents and the active age population than amongst younger children and elderly people.<sup>146</sup> Few people accessed social protection support. In rural areas, home to around two-thirds of the population, income poverty rates are much higher; the region of Sikasso had the highest rates at 85 percent,<sup>147</sup> (compared to the capital Bamako at just 9 percent).<sup>148</sup> Rural populations chiefly rely on subsistence agriculture, hampered by a challenging and changing climate, both droughts and floods, and regular plagues of locusts and crop diseases.<sup>149</sup> These figures are from before the conflict; the current situation is very much worse.

A study by UNICEF, using data from before the conflict, compared the child monetary poverty rate and a multidimensional deprivation index. It found that the national child multidimensional deprivation rate was 50%, slightly higher than the national monetary child poverty rate of 46%. The deprivation headcount is 60% in rural areas versus 16% in urban areas, rising to over 70 percent in selected rural areas.<sup>150</sup> Even before the conflict, progress towards larger and more child-centred policies and programmes aimed at addressing high levels of child poverty (including social protection) was limited.<sup>151</sup>

One of the key manifestations of poverty in Mali is child mortality. Child mortality in Mali is one of the highest in Africa, with 184 of every 1,000 children likely to die before their fifth birthday.<sup>152</sup> High rates of mortality are underpinned by malnutrition, which according to UN estimates is responsible for at least 35 percent of child deaths in the country. The north of the country has

been described as being in a constant state of nutrition emergency.<sup>153</sup> Although acute malnutrition decreased between 2006 and 2012, in the latter year it still reached 38 percent. Stunting currently affects about 27.8, wasting 8.9 and underweight 18.9 percent of the child population. Vitamin A coverage in the country is at 96 percent. However, as of 2012-2013, 82 percent of all children between 6 and 59 months in five southern regions were reported anaemic.<sup>154</sup>

Poverty among Malian children up to 2 years of age manifests largely as deprivations in nutrition, health and sanitation. This reflects problems of food security, inadequate infant feeding practices, and lack of toilet facilities.<sup>155</sup> Access to clean water and sanitation was limited, at 65.4 percent (2010) and 21.6 percent (2006) respectively, with deprivation rates up to 50 percentage points higher in rural areas.<sup>157</sup> Health status is undermined by very limited health facilities and health workers. In 2006, Mali had just 729 registered doctors, or one physician for every 10,000 patients.

Child work is pervasive throughout Mali. In rural areas, children largely help on family farms, which undermines school attendance and performance. In urban areas children are more likely to be engaged in harmful child labour, exposed to a range of threats of exploitation and harm. Most vulnerable groups include street children, children in institutions, children with disabilities, and children living away from parents (especially those whose relatives cannot afford to take care of them, and those used as domestic or other workers). The widespread practice of children attending Qur'anic schools in cities like Bamako has been, in turn, associated with increased numbers of begging.<sup>158</sup>

The 2012 conflict caused widespread displacement, with long-term implications. The United Nations Office of Humanitarian Affairs estimated that in the first four months of the conflict alone, about 280,000 people were displaced. Around 60 percent have moved within Mali, while the rest fled to neighbouring countries.<sup>159</sup> A Watch List report in 2013 estimated that this number had risen to 475,000 Malians.<sup>160</sup> An estimated 80 percent of those displaced are women and children. Displacement has brought serious disruption to livelihoods, as production has been damaged and markets have collapsed.<sup>161</sup>

During the crisis, the use of boys as child soldiers was widespread, with profound implications for the immediate and long term prospects for each affected child. Many child soldiers were forced to commit crimes against their own families and communities, raising the prospect of future retaliation, or exclusion in the aftermath of the crisis.<sup>162</sup> Others were maimed or injured, and rendered vulnerable through disability.<sup>163</sup> Witness accounts report multiple cases of abuse, including the forcible administration of drugs.<sup>164</sup>

Many girls have been subject to sexual violence, with rape and forced marriage being some of the more widespread crimes committed against them.<sup>165</sup> Indeed,

Mali is identified as one of the places where sexual violence has been most widely used as a tactic for terrorism.<sup>166</sup> Many girls have been subject to sexual violence by combatants, while others who seek to leave conflict areas face the threat of sexual exploitation and trafficking.<sup>167</sup> The threat and the consequences of sexual violence have serious consequences for health, education and social status for victims and their families. In this context, it is very unlikely that sufficient progress will be made against the widespread practices of early marriage, early pregnancy and FGM (28%, 14%, 90%, respectively at national level in 2010).<sup>168</sup>

Prior to the conflict, school enrolment was low, at 62.1 percent, with regional differences ranging from less than 50 percent to 88 percent, and a strong pattern of gender inequality.<sup>169</sup> In the north, conflict has worsened the situation considerably. Many schools have been pillaged, occupied or entirely destroyed, resulting in some 1,500 schools being in serious need of repair, and over 700,000 children experiencing significant disruption to their education.<sup>170</sup> Many teachers have left rural areas, while parents often keep children at home to protect them from being attacked or recruited on the way to school.<sup>171</sup> Children in more remote areas have been at greater risk, and it is reported that mothers hide their daughters under beds during the night to protect them from militants.<sup>172</sup>

The case of Mali reminds us that children in low income countries have over many years faced multiple rights failures, even where resource-poor Governments have been struggling to make improvements. When conditions abruptly change, and the state and population are overtaken by conflict, any priority that may have been attached to the realization of children's rights is rapidly overtaken. Disruptions to livelihoods and communities affect children greatly, while threats and occurrences of physical harm and displacement cause profound stress and harm to girls and boys. Family and individual behaviour aimed at avoiding such risks may also create long term damage, as children miss school, girls are hidden from threats of sexual violence, and boys seek to avoid recruitment as child soldiers.

However, not all fragile countries are LICs, and not all fragile states are subject to insurgency and armed conflict. Box 4 set out five dimensions of fragility – prevalence of violence, failures in justice and the rule of law, weak institutions, weak economic foundations, and lack of resilience to prevent and adapt to shocks and disasters. These conditions may evolve over some time, until the legitimacy and capacity of states to govern reach a critical point.

In some instances, such conditions occur when senior state actors use their power to engage in dubious activities, and of course to strengthen and prolong their incumbency. With links to international crime, and more recently to terrorism, there are certainly some fragile LICs and MICs in Africa that are increasingly the subject

of international concern over large scale corruption, money laundering, drug trafficking, lawlessness and arms dealing.<sup>173</sup>

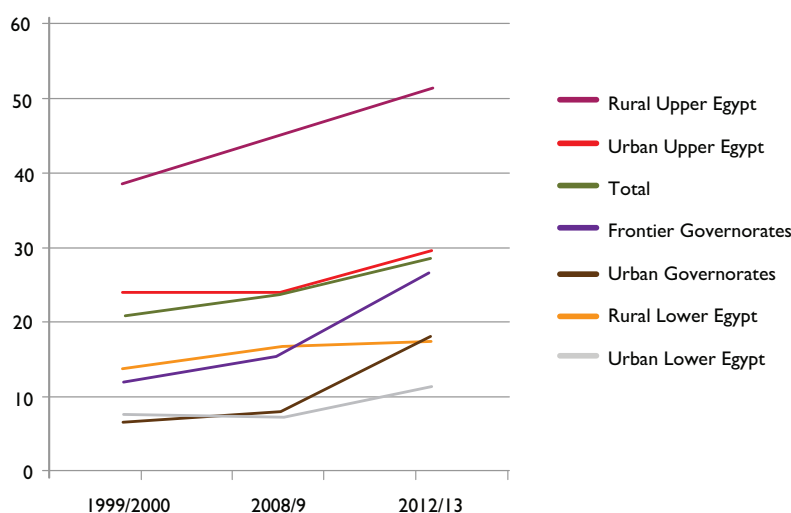
In other instances, (and perhaps in some cases in response to political corruption), fragile states have resulted from popular frustration and dissatisfaction at economic, social and environmental inequalities. For example, in many middle income countries across North Africa, the events of the Arab Spring were a response to evident inequalities in opportunities and benefits of economic growth, growing demands for social justice and accountability, and rising competition for land, water, food and energy.<sup>174</sup> Young people, including children, frustrated by stagnation, autocracy and the desire for a better future, have played significant

roles in these movements. However, in many cases, progress towards the desired change is incomplete. Power may remain contested between different interests, and states may lack the capacity to meet the expectations of citizens. Revitalising economies may depend on developing skills and capacities that are not currently available. The demand amongst young people to learn and to build a better future may far exceed opportunity. The result can be very difficult for children, as the impact of fragility extends through the political, economic and social domains.

One such example is Egypt, ranked as fragile by the OECD in 2015,<sup>175</sup> as worsening “alert” status in the 2014 Fragile States Index,<sup>176</sup> and as a “state to watch” as far back as 2008 by the Brookings Institute.<sup>177</sup>

## EGYPT: RAPIDLY GROWING URBAN CENTRES IN A FRAGILE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

FIGURE 6 POPULATION IN EXTREME CHILD POVERTY IN EGYPT 1999-2012



Egypt has faced significant social and political uncertainty in recent years, culminating in a revolution in 2011. For the decade leading up to the revolution, Egypt’s growth failed to translate into reduced rates of income poverty, improved employment opportunities, or better standard of living both among its rural and its urban populations.<sup>178</sup> In the decade leading to the revolution, increased volatility in food and commodity prices heightened awareness of stagnating incomes. National surveys showed declining household welfare, significant changes in people’s life satisfaction, and a growing aversion to inequality, especially amongst poorer people.<sup>179</sup>

From 1990 to 2008/9, Egypt sustained stable economic growth, while income poverty increased. In the years

after the revolution, economic growth has deteriorated, and multidimensional indicators of poverty have worsened. In 2013, an estimated 50 percent of the poor had become poor since 2011.<sup>180</sup> The 2012/13 Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey (HIECS) estimates that out of total population of 82 million, some 45 million are poor, with 22 million living in extreme income poverty.<sup>181</sup>

Child income poverty has grown consistently during the last 15 years, accelerating after the 2011 political changes. In 2012-2013 child poverty reached 52.2 percent, which translated into 16.7 million children aged 0-17 living in monetary poverty. This poverty is distributed unequally across regions, and between rural and urban areas, with rural poverty rates double those

in urban areas. There are also very large disparities in income within urban areas, with poverty rates in some slums running as high as in some rural areas. However, disaggregation of national data does not allow for comparison within urban areas. In 2012/13, Rural Upper Egypt displayed both the highest extreme child income poverty rate (51.2 percent) and the largest absolute number of extremely poor children (4.9 million).

Failures in child survival are a major result of child poverty in Egypt. Children born to the poorest mothers are most likely to be underweight at birth, less likely to be immunised, more likely to have fever or diarrhoea, and less likely to see a health worker when sick.<sup>182</sup> Increasing food prices have created food insecurity in many households, and the decline in purchasing power has led to a reduction in the diversity and quality of diets.<sup>183</sup> Reduced dietary diversity has contributed to falls in a range of nutrition indicators, including increasing levels of obesity (a consequence of poor diet amongst children in poor households), with diverse implications for children's health.<sup>184</sup> One in five Egyptian children is stunted, and 8 percent are wasted.<sup>185</sup> These poor outcomes are related not only to availability of food, but also to poor living conditions, prevalence of diarrhoea and other diseases, and lack of access to health services.

As rural poverty has continued to rise, increasing numbers of adults and children have migrated to town in response to failing agricultural livelihoods, lack of services, and the conviction that nothing will improve. Once in town, they join a fast growing population that includes nearly 250,000 registered refugees and asylum seekers, mostly from Syria, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Iraq.<sup>186</sup> Unregistered migrants are not included in this estimate, and are thought to considerably outnumber those who are registered.<sup>187</sup>

Informal settlements and slums have expanded, and 45 percent of Egypt's population now lives in slum conditions.<sup>188</sup> Between 2009 and 2011, urban income poverty increased by about 40 percent, to affect more than 15 million people.<sup>189</sup> Greater Cairo now includes three of the world's largest slums, and its population includes a larger number of poor people than other urban areas with much higher poverty rates.<sup>190</sup> With such rapid rises in the urban population, the Government has been unable to provide adequate services, housing and jobs. Overcrowding, substandard housing, 'squatting' on public land (building houses overnight to claim ownership) are prevalent.<sup>191</sup>

Urban child extreme monetary poverty has risen sharply,<sup>192</sup> and multidimensional poverty affects many children living in slums. All children sampled for a 2013 study of children in slums were severely deprived in at least one dimension, and more than 50 percent of them experienced multidimensional poverty. The main drivers of child poverty in the slums relates to severe deprivation in terms of sanitation and shelter, affecting

at least half of all children. For younger children, nutrition and water are also critical deficits, while for older children, lack of access to education is prevalent, with over 40 percent of children over 12 experiencing severe deprivation.<sup>193</sup>

There are in addition significant threats to poor children that are not measured as part of the multidimensional poverty index. These include physical threats from unsafe structures, open drains, and uncollected garbage,<sup>194</sup> as well as threats resulting from the lack of policing and high levels of crime. Being a slum dweller carries social stigma and results in discrimination, contributing to social marginalization and a reduction in opportunity. There is increasing evidence that young people are frustrated with limited opportunities for education or for making progress towards their social and economic goals. Political and civil rights are also limited.<sup>195</sup>

Security is a general problem in Egypt, especially in urban areas and particularly for girls. Girls are often exposed to street harassment, reflecting deep-rooted gender inequalities.<sup>196</sup> Harassment takes place in a social context where adults and boys believe that girls who are harassed have invited such behaviour, and "deserve what they get". Unaccompanied adolescent girls and young women (on the street, migrants and asylum seekers) are especially vulnerable to multiple risks.<sup>197</sup> In response to the significant threats facing girls and young women, some families opt to marry their daughters off as children or shortly afterwards, ostensibly offering protection from the greater dangers affecting unmarried women.<sup>198</sup> Another harmful practice, FGM, is illegal in Egypt, but is still widely practiced. Parents and children in some regions are beginning to express doubts about the practice. However, FGM remains prevalent, and it is still widely considered both normal and necessary to ensure that girls are decent, respectful and have a good reputation.<sup>199</sup>

Deteriorating economic conditions have also resulted in a rising number of Egyptian children taking up paid work.<sup>200</sup> Nearly 20 percent of the poorest children aged 5 to 17 are considered to be involved in child work and child labour.<sup>201</sup> Rural children are more likely to work than urban children, usually in agriculture, where they are reported to work up to 11 hours per day, often in harsh conditions.<sup>202</sup> As men migrate to seek work in the cities, many of these children will be from vulnerable female headed households. Agricultural labour is highly seasonal, and as many as one million children enter the labour force during the cotton harvest.<sup>203</sup> In urban areas, boys are hired in the informal sector, agriculture, construction sites and other hazardous work, while many girls are employed as domestic workers, and others recruited into the sex industry.<sup>204</sup>

In this context, many children face problems in realising their rights to education. Although enrolment is high, and MDG targets have reportedly been met, drop-out

and non-attendance rates remain a concern. Entrenched disadvantages persist for girls, rural children, children with disabilities, and poor children. Families may not consider completing education necessary for girls, while there may not be schools within reach for many rural children.<sup>205</sup> Poor children may lack money to attend, or may drop out if they need to work. A seasonal absence may lead to a permanent exit from school. Once in school, children follow an out-of-date curriculum, while large class sizes and limited learning resources reduce learning.<sup>206</sup>

Poverty undermines girls' access to education. As household income levels fall, parents are less willing to pay for girls' education, preferring to focus resources on their sons. There are few schools in the slums, and girls who travel to go to school face the risk of violence and harassment on the way, and stigma and discrimination when they arrive.<sup>207</sup>

The prevalence of violence and abuse in schools, especially directed at boys, also encourages early exit. According to a recent study, corporal punishment is seen as a pedagogical strategy, and is used pervasively by parents, religious teachers, and others. Teachers say that boys are usually beaten with sticks, slippers, hoses, belts or knives, or that they even receive electric shocks/ exposure to bare wires, but claim that girls are only beaten softly on their hands with a ruler. Girls, however, disagree, reporting that they are slapped in the face, hit on the hands or other parts of the body with various tools or even kicked.<sup>208</sup>

Egypt ranks low in terms of human rights and rule of law on the fragile states index,<sup>209</sup> with implications for child poverty in many domains. One important mechanism relates to restrictions on the role of civil society and the media, and on the opportunities for the poor, including children, to be heard. Where the experiences, views and shortcomings experienced by children in poverty have no means of expression, those whose actions harm children – such as those committing violence against children – are unlikely to be held accountable.

The profile of child poverty in low income countries has changed in recent decades. Low income countries are very largely characterised by substantial fragility and conflict. This creates substantial risks for children, as access to services deteriorates and threats and risks multiply. Child poverty is defined and driven by these circumstances, and shares many characteristics with the other fragile and conflict states.



Photo: Save the Children

A 1 year old girl and her brother, 4 years old, wait to receive their polio vaccinations in Greater Cairo, Egypt. Save the Children is working in Greater Cairo to support a nationwide awareness campaign which encourages parents of all nationalities to have their children (aged between 0-5 years) protected against polio.

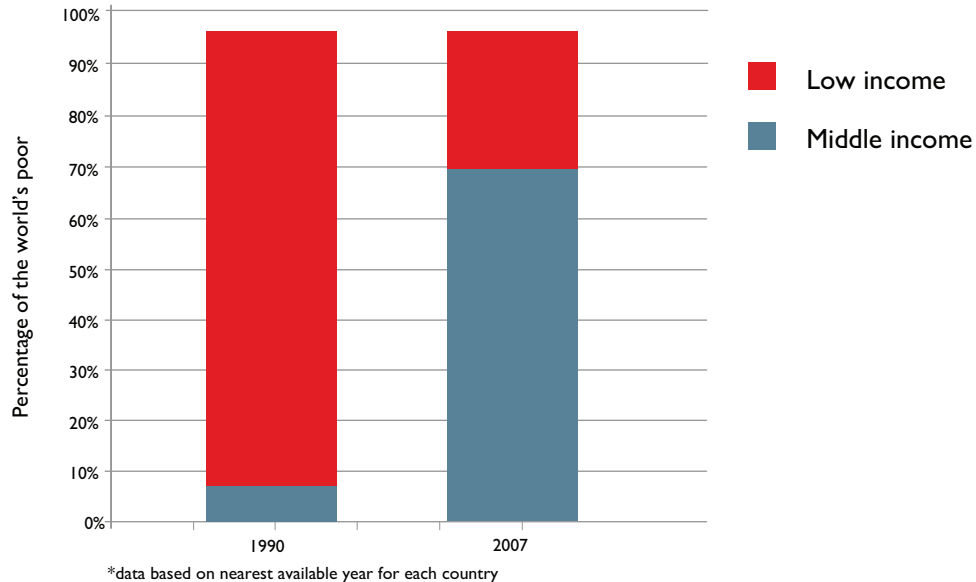
## CHILD POVERTY IN MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES

- Some 73 percent of the world's poor now live in middle income countries
- The patterns and drivers of child poverty in middle income countries are influenced by the nature of economic progress. Where growth is driven by oil and minerals, inequality may remain high. Where it is more broad-based, outcomes are often more inclusive, and child poverty may reduce
- Changing economies bring both opportunity and risk for children. Protective policies can help reduce potentially negative effects of urbanisation, migration, and changes in labour markets and income opportunities for the poor
- Economic progress can entrench discriminatory social norms, excluding identifiable groups from participation in new opportunities. Children growing up in marginalised households often experience the effects of deprivation into adulthood, driving the intergenerational transmission of poverty

Two decades ago, 93 percent of the world's poor people lived in low income countries.<sup>210</sup> This has now changed dramatically. With the graduation of many formerly low income countries to middle income status over the last 15 years, around three-quarters of the world's population

now live in middle income countries,<sup>211</sup> including over 70 percent of the world's extreme poor.<sup>212</sup> With such a large and diverse range of countries, societies and economies, the range of patterns and drivers of child poverty in MICs is inevitably very wide.

**FIGURE 7** CHANGE IN THE GLOBAL POPULATION OF POOR PEOPLE 1990 TO 2007



The entry of many of the countries to low-middle income (LMIC) status has been driven by fast change in economies across Africa and Asia over this period. In many cases, this expansion followed qualification for international debt relief, and a period of sustained growth.<sup>213, 214</sup> In some countries growth has been driven by expansion in oil or mineral production, while others have shown more diverse expansion in the

manufacturing or industrial sectors.<sup>215</sup> Many new LMICs have shown substantially higher growth rates through the period of global economic crisis than much higher income countries, although, with generally higher population growth and economic inequality, this has translated into rather lower growth per capita.<sup>216</sup> With rapid transformation to the structure of national economies, some parts of the population are affected by

the effects of change, especially with regards to migration / urbanisation, labour markets and social provision. For others, poverty has endured for families who are still living in the same places and doing the same work (often small scale agriculture) before their countries graduated.<sup>217</sup> Whether affected by change or excluded from it, many children remain subject to multiple deprivations. Bangladesh, India and Zambia are amongst those countries that can illustrate patterns and drivers of child poverty in this context.

Other MICs may in the past have shown high levels of growth, but in recent years (or even decades) have experienced significant growth slow-down, and stagnation. Many countries in Latin America and the Middle East in particular have fitted the definition of “emerging markets” for more than forty years; of the 101 countries classified as MIC in 1960, only 13 have transitioned to high income status.<sup>218</sup> There has been extensive analysis and debate around the drivers of “middle income traps” that undermine prospects for further transition. Social and economic inequalities along with shortfalls in social provision are amongst the key factors that undermine progress towards achieving a more innovative, high-productivity economy, from which higher incomes would be derived.<sup>219, 220</sup> With limited opportunities for securing adequate incomes across the population, internal divisions may manifest in frustration for excluded groups, and political or social tension.<sup>221</sup> Egypt and Mexico are countries that fall within this cluster, providing examples of patterns and drivers of child poverty in this context.

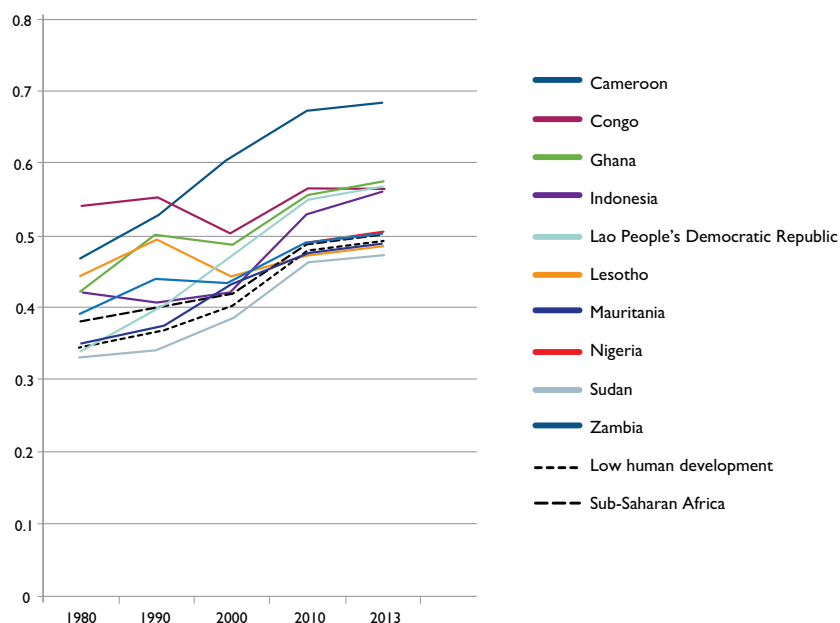
The revenues available to Governments in middle income countries have been sufficient to support pro-poor social investment in some cases. Importantly, these have included a growing number of social protection programmes, some targeting poorer households and individuals with a range of benefits including cash transfer programmes, labour-based programmes, programmes to increase and extend school enrolment, and others.

This analysis will focus on these two clusters of experience in MICs, using Zambia, India and Bangladesh as examples of newly transitioned LMICs, and Mexico as an example of a longer-established UMIC.

## CHILD POVERTY IN NEWLY TRANSITIONED LMICS

All countries that have transitioned to LMIC status in recent years have also seen an improvement in the human development index.<sup>6</sup> For countries where the transition to LMIC has been attributed to mineral discoveries and/or increased exploitation, the rise in HDI is generally relatively recent, and may follow years of lower or more variable HDI (see Figure 8)

FIGURE 8 CHANGE IN HDI NEWLY TRANSITIONED LMICS – MINERAL

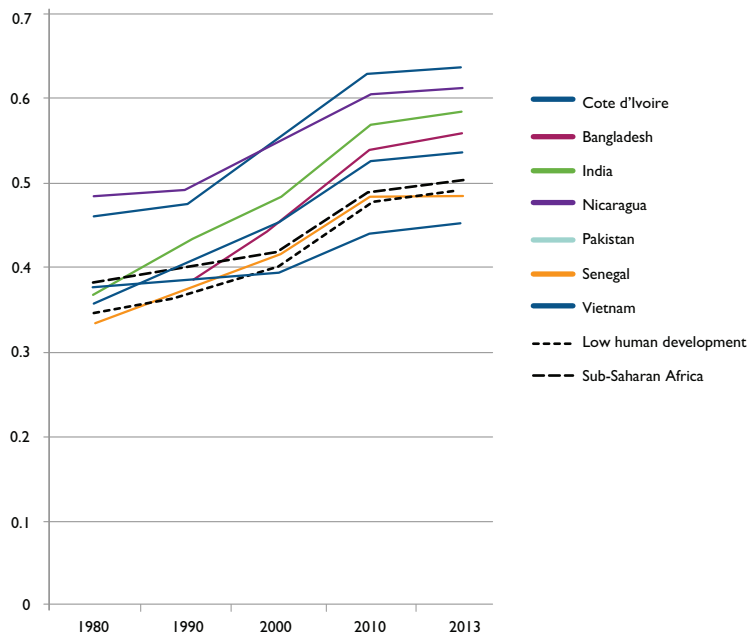


<sup>6</sup> Although HDI is not specifically related to outcomes for children, it includes measures related to household incomes as well as life expectancy and education that increase vulnerability for children. HDI data is available for many countries over a long period of time, and hence offers a useful means of looking at change over time. Further development and dissemination of other indices more sensitive to child development would be useful e.g. as proposed in Save the Children, 2008. *Child Development Index*. London: Save the Children.

Fewer countries have transitioned from LIC to LMIC without the economic boost of oil or mineral discoveries, and/or considerable increases in these sectors.<sup>7</sup> In these cases, it is notable that progress on human development index has been more gradual, and sustained over a longer period of time (see Figure 9). This may be related to the fact that (outside the former CEE/CIS), economic progress in these

countries was derived from more diversified growth based on manufacturing and industry. Such growth took place over a longer period of time, and was to a greater extent dependent on broader participation in new labour markets, which was associated with better performance with regards to health, basic education, and other elements of human development.

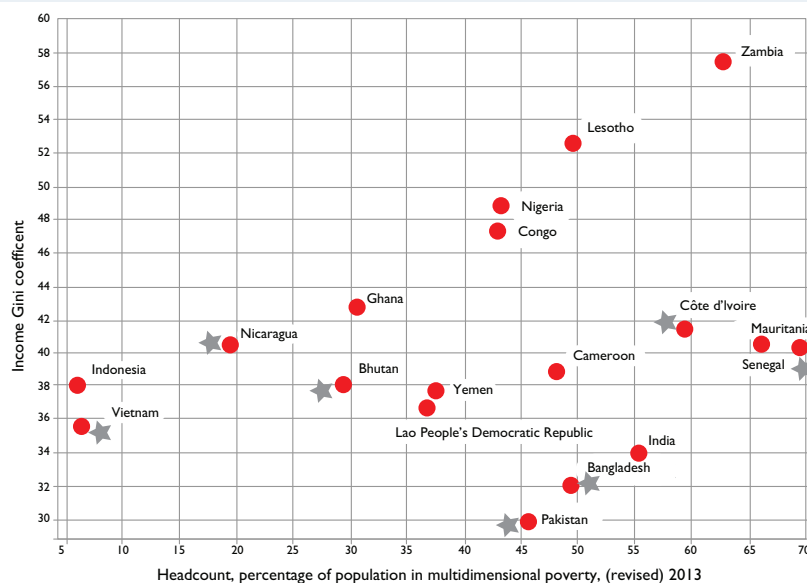
**FIGURE 9 CHANGE IN HDI- NEWLY TRANSITIONED LMICS (NON-MINERAL)**



Measures of both income poverty and economic inequality (Gini coefficient) for countries that have

transitioned from LIC to LMIC show significant variation with respect to both indicators (see Figure 10).

**FIGURE 10 INCOME POVERTY HEADCOUNT AND GINI COEFFICIENT: NEW LMICS**



<sup>7</sup> Graduated / non-CEECIS countries without significant new mineral / oil discoveries are Bhutan, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Senegal, Vietnam, and Solomon Islands. (Source: World Bank 2015. *Global Economic Prospects, January 2015: Having Fiscal Space and Using It*. Washington, DC: World Bank)



Figure 11 shows all new LMICs<sup>8</sup>, and highlights the six countries where transition was *not* driven by minerals and oil. It is noticeable that in all six cases, regardless of poverty levels, the Gini measure of inequality is among the lower values for new LMICs. Further, analyses of inequality using the Palma measure of inequality<sup>9</sup> show that the non-mineral/oil transitioning countries tended to improve in terms of economic inequalities between 2000 and 2010 compared to other LMICs. Pakistan, India and Nicaragua all fell one quartile in terms of MIC ranking on the Palma index, while Senegal fell two quartiles (Vietnam stayed the same, staying in the second-best quartile). In contrast, none of the other newly transitioned LMICs fell in terms of inequality ranking, and Nigeria and Ghana deteriorated.<sup>222</sup>

The transition of different countries to middle income status is therefore reflective of a complex set of circumstances. At one extreme, states may have been and may remain apparently indifferent to poverty reduction, good governance and public accountability. Changes in national economies may be largely concentrated on an elite, with weak political and economic governance mingled with corruption and policy failure. At the other, transition may be strongly driven by ideology, policy and good governance, with

good programmes reaping population-wide benefits. Governance may not be a guarantee of rapid economic progress, but it would appear that it is important in making the best of whatever opportunities exist.

Development agencies have made limited moves towards understanding local political economies, seeking both to work within and to promote change where needed. However, many concerns are voiced, especially around contradictions between advice handed down, and the action of foreign governments themselves. One example includes scepticism around the different levels of concern expressed on human rights and governance towards regimes that offer economic benefits as compared to those that don't. Another is the discrepancy between the expressed wish for equality and the elimination of poverty, and the unwillingness to address tax avoidance, illicit financial flows, trade imbalances and so on.

Governance is therefore very important for addressing child poverty in middle income countries. However, this concern extends beyond the borders of the state, and into the governance of other states and multilateral institutions.

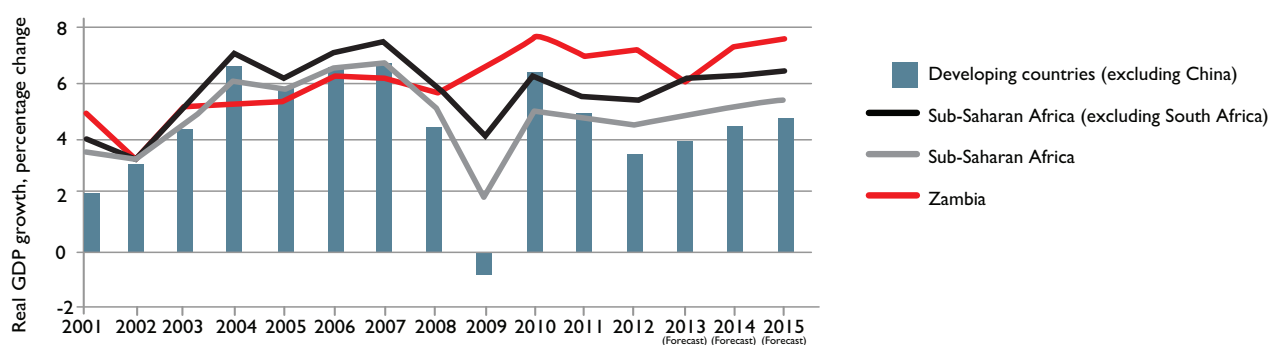
Zambia, Bangladesh and India provide contrasting examples of child poverty in LMICs.

## ZAMBIA: COPPER DRIVES ECONOMIC GROWTH, BUT DISPARITIES REMAIN SUBSTANTIAL

Zambia's population is very young, with 53 percent of the population of 13 million people aged under 18 years.<sup>223</sup> The median age of the population is just 16.6, the 9th youngest population in the world.<sup>224</sup> Zambia's growth is driven by greatly increased copper production, high commodity prices and significant

foreign direct investment. This has boosted gross national income, without commensurate change in income poverty levels or employment, other than in limited urban settings.<sup>225</sup> This means that for many Zambian children, increasing national income has had little effect.

FIGURE 11 ZAMBIA: GDP GROWTH 2001-2015



<sup>8</sup> For which data is available.

<sup>9</sup> The Palma ratio is the ratio of the income share of the top 10% to that of the bottom 40%. In more equal societies this ratio will be one or below, meaning that the top 10% does not receive a larger share of national income than the bottom 40%. In the most unequal societies, the ratio may be as large as 7. The Palma ratio addresses the Gini index's over-sensitivity to changes in the middle of the distribution and insensitivity to changes at the top and bottom. (Source: The Inequality Trust. Accessed at <https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/how-economic-inequality-defined>)

Sixty-one percent of the population live in rural areas, almost all of whom are engaged in small scale farming. Income poverty distribution is strongly influenced by the rural / urban divide: 77.9 percent of the rural population is poor (57.7 extreme poor), as compared to 27.5 percent of the urban population (13.1 percent extreme poor).<sup>226</sup> Rural poverty is not evenly distributed: the more remote provinces have overall poverty rates as high as 83 percent while those on the “line of rail” is lower, especially for extreme poverty. Information on poverty distribution by district is limited, but what is available shows “vast” variation

(between 18 and 95 percent), with the highest levels of poverty in remote areas.<sup>227</sup>

Official estimates suggest that there are some 1.6 million orphans and vulnerable children in Zambia, out of a total of 6.89 million children. However, this figure is clearly an underestimate given that it is intended to include all orphans (1.3 million)<sup>228</sup>, all extremely poor children (over 3 million children)<sup>229</sup>, all HIV positive children (95,000)<sup>230</sup>, all disabled children, plus those without care and in other very vulnerable categories.

FIGURE 12 POVERTY RATES IN ZAMBIA 1998-2010

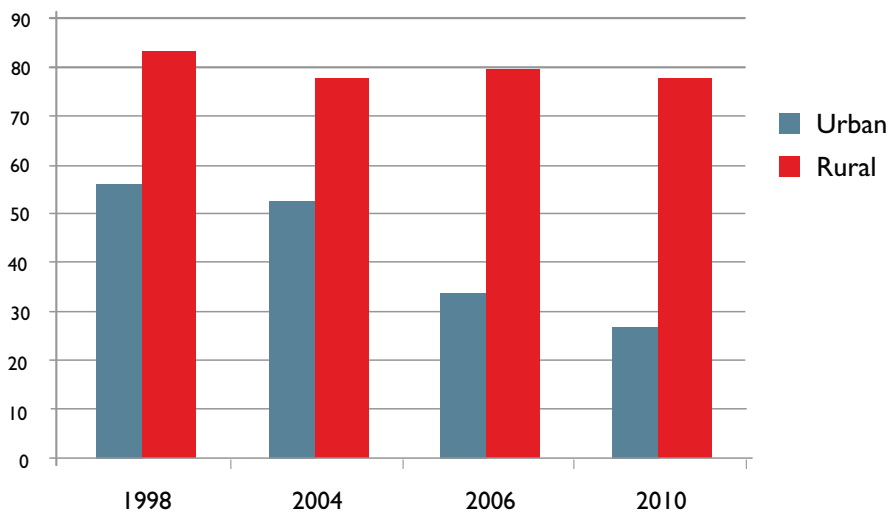
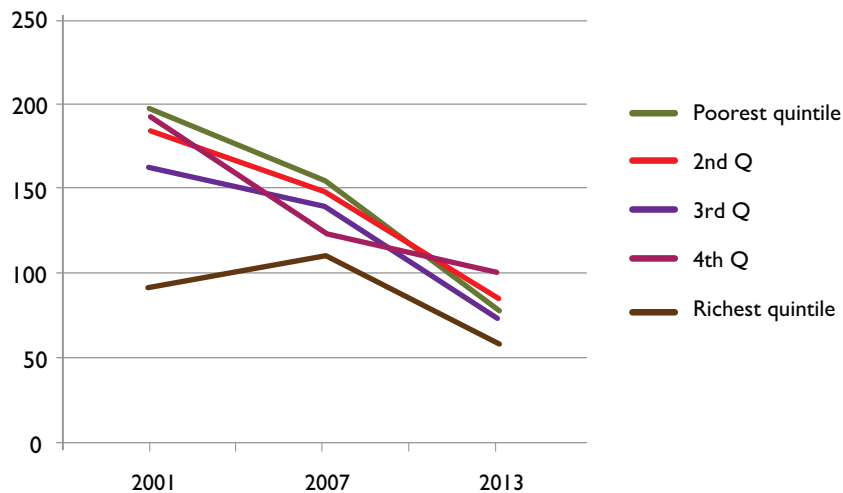


FIGURE 13 UNDER-5 MORTALITY, ZAMBIA 2001-2013



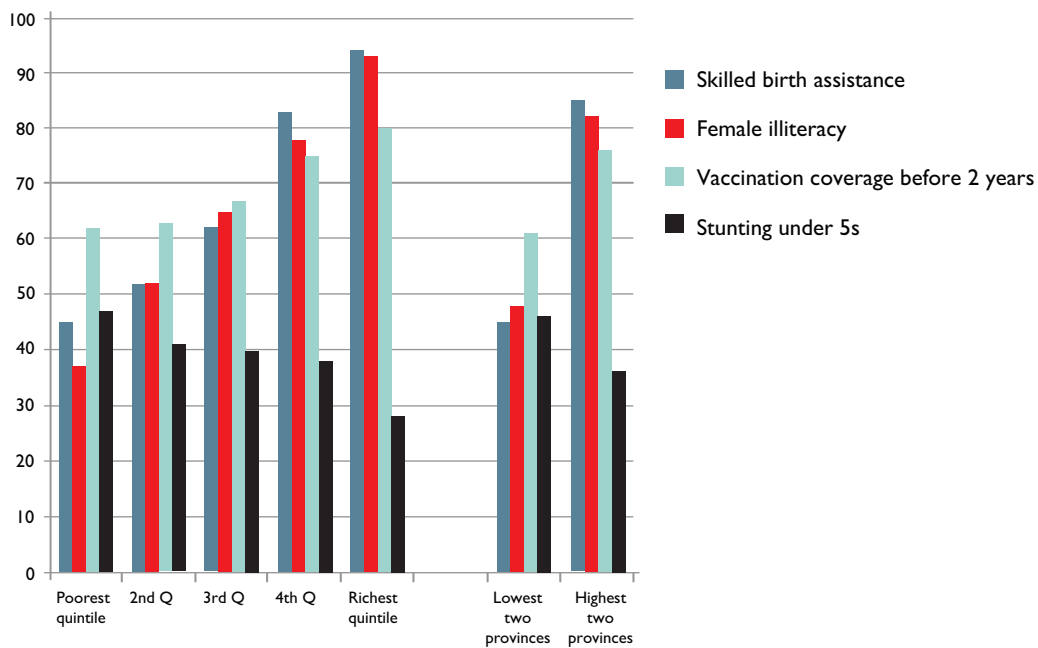
Children living in poverty in rural Zambia are subject to the cycle of intergenerational poverty that affects many low income households across the world. Poor children experience higher mortality and morbidity, and access only low quality education. They leave school early, and girls in particular marry and/or start childbearing in their mid-teens. Accessing scant economic opportunity, their children are highly likely to live a similar life.<sup>231</sup>

Rates of early childhood mortality have been falling in Zambia, although the MDG target is unlikely to be achieved.<sup>232</sup> For example, under 5 mortality rates have been falling in all income groups over more than a decade, towards the MDG target of 63.6 deaths per 1000 live births. However, it is important to note that child mortality in the poorest groups remains nearly double what it is for the richest, and that progress towards the MDG target will mask significant

inequalities in outcomes amongst rich and poor. Further, there is substantial variation between the ten provinces, with the more remote rural districts showing much worse outcomes than those on the “line of rail” (Eastern province has an under-5 mortality rate of 115, worse than the national poorest quintile, while three more have rates above 85, higher than the second poorest national quintile. These provinces are home to one third of Zambia’s population).<sup>233, 234</sup>

Similar patterns are found in respect of all key drivers of under-five morbidity and mortality.<sup>235</sup> The poorest two quintiles (the extreme poor) and people from the more remote rural provinces (where extreme income poverty is high) have worse outcomes with regards to vaccination coverage, access to basic services, feeding practices, nutrition status, access to clean water, female illiteracy, and early pregnancy.

**FIGURE 14 RISK FACTORS FOR CHILD SURVIVAL IN ZAMBIA (PERCENT), BY WEALTH QUINTILE AND BY PROVINCE**



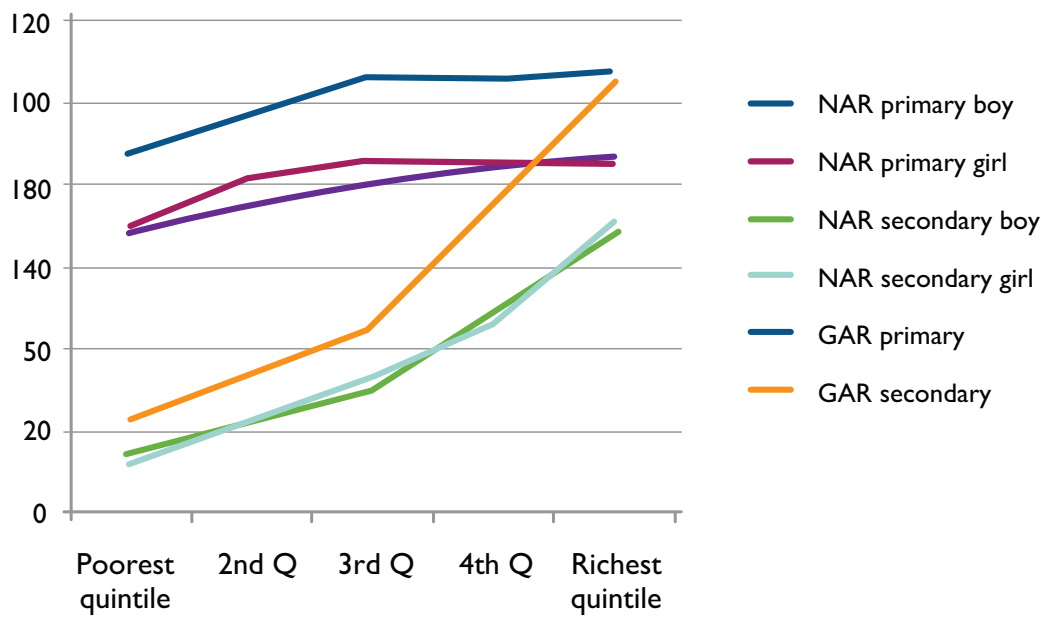
Initial rates of school enrolment are high, and the number of children with no education at all is falling (in 2007, 4.3 percent of girls aged 15 to 19 had never been to school; by 2013 this fell to 2.5 percent; the figure for boys was stable at around 2 percent).<sup>236</sup> However, as children proceed through school, progression and retention increasingly reflect household income poverty. Figure 15 shows net attendance in primary school across all economic groups, showing disparities especially for the poorest children. At secondary level, attendance for girls and boys in the poorest quintiles is very low.

As children grow older, girls in particular face diverse risk and vulnerability. From the age of 12, girls’ attendance at school falls. By the age of 16, some

40 percent have dropped out of school (compared to 14 percent of boys);<sup>237</sup> this will include virtually all girls from poor rural areas.

Girls raised in poverty are highly likely to become pregnant in their mid-teens. For the poorest girls, 44.5 percent have begun childbearing between the ages of 15 and 19, compared to 10 percent of girls from the wealthiest quintile. Poorest girls are also five times more likely to get married than either educated or non-poor girls. Nine percent of girls are married by the age of 15 and 42 percent before 18, including 63 percent of the poorest girls.<sup>238</sup> Early marriages are driven by coercion via entrenched social and cultural norms. Girls experience pressure to marry from families, and from communities that stigmatise unmarried and childless young women.<sup>239</sup>

**FIGURE 15** NET ATTENDANCE RATES BY SEX AND GROSS ATTENDANCE RATES – PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL, ZAMBIA



Experiences of gender based violence in Zambia are common, with 43.4 percent of women aged 15 to 49 reporting experiencing violence in a period of year. Violence is most common for married or divorced women, and over 90 percent of victims of violence report that the perpetrator was a current or former husband or partner. A minority of married women say they are never afraid of their husbands.<sup>240</sup> This means that a very large proportion of children in Zambia are being brought up in circumstances where they witness violence, and where relationships are predicated on fear.

The Zambian Government has over a decade or more moved cautiously towards the introduction of a range of social protection interventions. These have included social cash transfers, as well as school bursaries, disability and old-age grants, maternity grants, and fertiliser subsidies. The social cash transfers have been shown, like others in the region, to both protect the poorest (especially through increasing the number of meals eaten and smoothing consumption) and to promote increased livelihoods amongst rural beneficiaries.<sup>241</sup> By targeting the poorest households in the poorest areas, the programme has reduced the extreme poverty headcount by 4.3 percentage points, and the poverty gap by 7.9 percentage points. The programme also had a significant effect on the material assets available to children, increasing the proportion with shoes, a blanket and change of clothes from 16 to 58 percent in two years. School enrolment also increased, especially for both female and male adolescents, where attendance was higher and more prolonged.<sup>242</sup> Despite strong results, however, political

commitment to expanding the programme has been hesitant, with concerns about fiscal space, as well as unfounded fears of dependency, wastage and rent-seeking.<sup>243</sup> Recent commitment to sustaining and increasing public funding has been welcomed, although public statements suggest that targeting will be less child sensitive than in the past.

The overall analysis of child poverty in Zambia highlights significant disparities for the poorest, and for children in remote rural areas. However, even in urban areas where overall income poverty rates are falling, young people face particular challenges as they embark on working and family life. Urban unemployment rates for 20- to 24-year-olds have been estimated to be as much as five times greater than for older adults.<sup>244</sup> The reasons for this include a lack of appropriate relevant skills, and lack of entrepreneurship and business training. With high levels of unemployment, even unskilled jobs are reserved for secondary school or even university graduates. Labour markets adhere to entrenched gender norms, and young women are usually lower paid than their male peers. Many jobs are informal, casual or temporary, and observance of labour laws is scant.<sup>245</sup>

Economic growth in Zambia may have served to increase national income. However, the lives of the majority of rural children have changed very little, and remain deeply constrained by poverty. Urban youths live in a more fast-changing and dynamic economic environment, but nonetheless face particular problems in securing incomes for themselves and their families.



Photo: Chishaba Masengu/Save the Children

Pupils sitting together in an improvised community classroom in Lufwanyama district on the Copperbelt province.

## BANGLADESH: INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH CREATES NEW OPPORTUNITIES, AND NEW CHALLENGES TOO

In contrast, economic growth in Bangladesh has been more inclusive, and its effects much more widely felt. In recent years, Bangladesh has been hailed as a success story in terms of both economic growth and poverty reduction. In the past two decades income poverty was reduced by over one-third to 31.5 percent and life expectancy, literacy and per capita food production have increased significantly.<sup>246</sup> This reduction is driven largely by increasing opportunities for employment. The economy has grown over the past 25 years, built on a growing manufacturing sector, extending employment to a semi-skilled labour force, largely comprising young men and women.<sup>247</sup> The fact that this is so underpins comparatively low levels of economic inequality.<sup>248</sup> This success is perhaps all the more impressive given that Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, facing shortages of staple food in the context of natural, environmental and human-induced disasters. Flooding, cyclones, drought, arsenic and saline contamination in water and deforestation are all common.<sup>249</sup>

Given the extent of economic and environmental change in Bangladesh, it is expected that the profile of child poverty has also been changing. Where people live, how they make a living, and the make-up of social relations and community life all affect the lives of children, their access to health and education, and their safety and security. Many girls and boys in Bangladesh have been affected by urbanisation (those who migrate as well as those left behind), by changes in the labour markets (including child labour), and shocks to rural livelihoods. How people experience change also depends considerably on religion, ethnicity and place of origin and residence.

Poor children are often engaged in child labour in Bangladesh, with one in six children engaged in work.<sup>250</sup> In recent years, the number of children who are working has fallen overall, but remains very high in certain settings, amongst boys, and amongst the children of poor families. It is notable that any falls in child labour has not resulted in a rise in school attendance, however, and it is suggested that changes in how child labour is measured may in part account for the apparent fall in prevalence.<sup>251</sup>

Although most child workers are in rural areas, mainly in agriculture, urban child labour levels are comparatively high in comparison to other developing countries.<sup>252</sup> Some 19.1 percent of slum-dwelling children aged 5 to 14 are engaged in child labour, over 50 percent more than the national prevalence of 12.8 percent.<sup>253</sup> There are strong gender patterns in child work: girls are concentrated in domestic work, while boys are spread across a range of sectors including agriculture,

### BOX 5 CHILD LABOUR IN BANGLADESH

Over 1.3 children below the age of 12 years were in employment and an additional 1.7 million (12-14 year-old) children in employment were below the minimum age for this type of work in 2006. A further two million older, 15-17 year-old children were at work in hazardous employment. Summing these three groups yields a total of 5.1 million 5-17 year-old children in child labour.

construction, fishing, manufacturing and other occupations.<sup>254</sup>

Despite the vulnerabilities of children employed as domestic workers (75 percent of whom are girls), evidence on their experience is scant. A 2005 baseline survey found that most child domestic workers were from very poor rural households, and had migrated to urban areas with the intention of entering domestic work. With over 90 percent sleeping at their employer's homes, and virtually all working every day of the week, many child domestic workers report restricted freedom to move around or to contact friends and family. Some 60 percent reported physical or sexual abuse, and more than half receive no wage other than their food and clothing. Only half of child domestic workers have ever enrolled at school.<sup>255</sup>

The children engaged in labour face significant challenges in terms of education. In rural areas, children engaged in agricultural work often drop out of school, particularly where school is some distance from home. Children living in urban slums are less likely to go to school and more likely to drop out than others: only 65 percent of children in slums attend primary school; children in slums are six times more likely to drop out of primary and secondary school compared to the national average; and only 18 percent of children in slums attend secondary school.<sup>256</sup>

Amongst children who are working and not attending school, hazardous forms of labour are very common.<sup>10</sup> Nearly two-thirds of child labourers aged 5 to 9 years are engaged in hazardous work, and a similar proportion work for over 43 hours a week. These include children in battery recycling, welding, vehicle repairs and rickshaw pulling, all of which pose significant risks of harm.<sup>257</sup> Child labourers are subject to a range of health problems as an immediate effect of their work, undermining their rights and impacting their future economic prospects and welfare as adults.<sup>258</sup> Illness, injury, and exhaustion are all associated with child labour; with greater incidence amongst those who work longest hours. Younger children are more likely to suffer from backaches and other health problems (infection, burns, and lung diseases), while older children (who may be taking on a full adult burden of work) report the highest levels of exhaustion.<sup>259</sup> A survey of children working in brick / stone breaking showed

<sup>10</sup> This data is not collected for children who both work and go to school

almost all were suffering from respiratory illnesses, while none had been provided with safety equipment.<sup>260</sup>

Although not classified as child work and not systematically counted, urbanisation has also brought with it an increase in the number of children on the streets of Dhaka. This includes children who beg, those who live on the streets, and those who roam, work and interact with criminal activities. Most child beggars and street children do not attend school at all; those that do mostly attend informal NGO-run centres and schools, or *madrassa*. A survey of begging children showed that 66 percent are boys, mostly between the ages of 10 to 14. Girls on the streets are extremely vulnerable to sexual harassment and exploitation.<sup>261</sup>

With growing economic opportunity, children from poor families still play a significant role in the economy, sought by employers because they are cheap (most child workers do not receive a cash wage)<sup>262</sup> and obedient.<sup>263</sup> Some industries still depend significantly on child workers, including hazardous occupations and domestic work, undermining children's access to education and causing long term damage to health. In contrast, less poor children are increasingly likely to continue in school. In this regard, the divide between working and non-working children appears to be becoming more entrenched. Children engaged in the hazardous work, working longest hours and in domestic work largely come from the poorest households.<sup>264</sup> Their work does little to alleviate household poverty, only serving to provide a poor quality meal for the working child. It has even been suggested that some slum-dwelling parents send children to work as a means of protection from greater threats that would be encountered in the slums and on the streets. Those in child labour are less educated and more harmed by their childhood experiences, not benefiting from national growth, and likely to face very great challenges to escape poverty in future.

While children and families in Bangladesh have experienced substantial change over recent years, in some respects there is comparatively little change. Long-standing social norms remain powerful: one important example of this is the persistence of child marriage amongst poor families with little or no education. UNICEF estimates that 29 percent of girls are married before the age of 15, and 65 percent before 18 years, giving Bangladesh the fourth highest child marriage rates in the world.<sup>265</sup>

The overriding reason for child marriage is cited as poverty, which creates both direct and indirect pressures that push girls into early marriage. The first and most immediate reason offered by child brides and parents is that marrying off a daughter will reduce the number of mouths to feed, allowing meagre resources to be concentrated on remaining sons. Besides immediate food shortage, Human Rights Watch describes a complex set of drivers that perpetuate child marriage, especially amongst poor girls:

- Social norms mean that being married at a fairly young age is essential – not necessarily as a child, but fairly shortly afterwards.
- An unmarried daughter is considered to bring shame to a family.
- Dowry, although illegal, is very common. Many people believe that without sufficient dowry, a bride is more likely to be mistreated by her husband's family, or abandoned.
- As girls grow older, their prospects for marriage will become harder, and the cost of their dowry will rise.
- If poor girls become more educated, it will be harder to find a husband: educated wives are thought to be potentially difficult.
- Families living in poverty face difficulties meeting the costs of school, and many prefer to invest their financial resources in boys.
- It is feared that a girl out of school and unsupervised may be subject to harassment and abuse, or tempted into a romantic or even sexual relationship.
- Any suggestion of impropriety will greatly damage her reputation, and raise the cost of her dowry.
- Insecure incomes mean that family capacity to meet the cost of marriage may fail at any time.

Faced with this situation, poorer girls are highly likely to be married as soon as possible.<sup>266</sup>

It is reported that many girls want to stay at school after marriage, but even where this has been agreed beforehand, it rarely happens. More likely is an early start to child bearing, which brings with it an elevated risk of mortality for mother and child, obstructed labour, and fistula.<sup>267</sup> Half of all Bangladeshi girls give birth as children themselves.<sup>268</sup> Girls in child marriages have the lowest rates of contraception uptake, and of attendance by a skilled health worker during child birth. While violence against women is pervasive, women who marry as children and poor women are even more likely to have experienced physical or sexual violence by their husbands.<sup>269</sup> However, divorce or separation are highly stigmatised, and a girl's parents may be unwilling or unable to have her come back to their house.<sup>270</sup>

For young women in particular, economic growth has created new opportunities for paid work in manufacturing, particularly in the garment industry. This has driven the decrease in income poverty, and contributed to an improvement in living standards for many. For some, the chance of a job may have served to delay marriage and child birth, with positive effects for both women and children. As the Bangladeshi economy grows, it is likely that the premium on skills and education will continue to grow. For girls still growing up in poverty, health and education are not only a right, but also essential if they are to have a more secure life as adults. However, current trends suggest that continuing progress in poverty reduction will be made difficult by the persistence of practices that take poor children out of school, into work, and into child marriage.



Two children walking hand in hand in a remote area of Habiganj district in Bangladesh. Save the children built fully equipped clinics staffed by highly trained professional health workers in this area to provide vital, life-saving medical services to the local people who were previously cut off from any kind of proper healthcare.



## INDIA: SUBSTANTIAL POVERTY REDUCTION MARRED BY DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION

Like Bangladesh, India's economic growth has been marked by significant urban migration. Three of the world's eight largest megacities are in India.<sup>271</sup> From a predominantly rural economic and social make-up, the urban population is projected to exceed 50 percent by 2030. From around 20 percent higher two decades ago, income poverty levels for rural and urban people are now virtually identical.<sup>272</sup> Economic inequality has grown in urban areas, while falling in rural areas.<sup>273</sup> Some 27 percent of India's poor are now urban dwellers.<sup>274</sup>

Like other countries experiencing rapid urbanisation, the profile of child poverty has also changed rapidly in India. Children left behind, perhaps with mothers or other relatives, often endure economic hardship, social discrimination and risk of abuse that results from having lost the presence of a father or male caregiver. Children who migrate often end up in slums and low-cost housing. Access to school is disrupted if they arrive mid-year, can't find a place at school, or perhaps are not registered in their new municipality.<sup>275</sup> Family bonds are weakened, either because parents are out working all day, or when children have migrated alone or with siblings.<sup>276</sup> Urban children are subject to rising levels of child labour, exposing both boys and girls to significant harm. Girls are particularly at risk of being forced into the sex trade, and boys are also vulnerable.<sup>277</sup> In terms of the effects of rapid urbanisation, the experience of Indian children is not dissimilar to others across the world – as shown in the examples cited from both Bangladesh and Egypt.<sup>278</sup>

Another driver of child poverty that has particular significance in India is discrimination and exclusion based on group identity. Despite rapid progress for large numbers of Indians, excluded groups are subject to long standing barriers that actively diminish the realisation of rights to education, as well as restricting economic opportunity, and freedom of movement, expression and participation. Despite legislation to the contrary, India's scheduled castes and tribes (SCST), minority religious groups (especially Muslims) and other excluded groups are subject to significant inequalities, resulting in substantially worse outcomes in relation to most if not all indicators of poverty and wellbeing. Some 25 percent of India's population belongs to SCST, which also comprise half of all poor children.<sup>279</sup> SCST comprise 31 percent of the rural population, and 17 percent of the urban population, suggesting that urban migration has been slower for these groups.<sup>280</sup>

Children from SCST face significant disadvantage in the attainment of MDG targets.<sup>281</sup> For example, while under five mortality is 74 per 1,000 live births for rural and urban children, it is 88.2 and 95.7 for scheduled castes and tribes respectively. With an MDG target of 49, it is clear that the achievement of the targets will not include improvements for SCST.<sup>282</sup> Moreover, while disparities in outcomes between urban and rural children have been reducing, those between SCST and others have widened.<sup>283</sup>

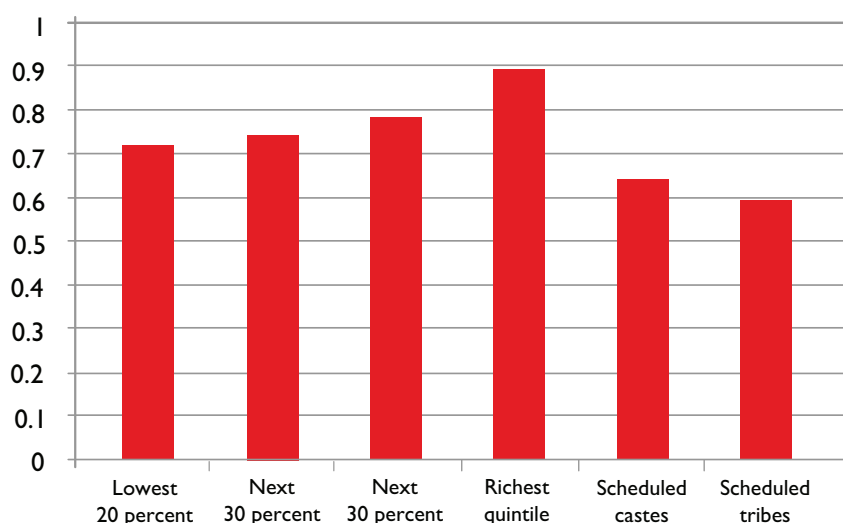
Access to education, and to attaining MDG targets for enrolment and gender parity, is a major challenge for poor children, especially those from SCST. The desire for universal rights to education was strongly expressed in the shaping of India's modern culture, in its freedom movement, and its constitution.<sup>284</sup> The importance attached to education by the Indian population is perhaps hard to understate. The Young Lives programme shows very high levels of aspiration for full schooling, vocational and tertiary education.<sup>285</sup> However, inequalities in education provide an important insight into the structures that distribute opportunities and inclusion in its growing economy.

Over many years, there have been a range of policy measures intended to increase access to education. Most recently, the Right to Education Act of 2009 enshrined the universal right to nine years of free compulsory education for all children, and established legal parameters for minimum quality of infrastructure and teaching. Schools have been created in locations that previously had none, a new curriculum introduced, and better systems of management and oversight implemented.<sup>286</sup>

However, a large number of children are still very likely to stay away from school, or to drop out early. Poor children, as well as girls, SCST, Muslims and children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to curtailed educational opportunities, as demonstrated by lower rates of school attendance and literacy levels. Net attendance rates amongst primary aged children in the richest quintile are 95.7 percent, as compared to 69.4 percent amongst the poorest quintile. By secondary age, the difference has widened much further, to 82.6 percent for the richest and 29.1 percent for the poorest.<sup>287</sup>

For the non-poorest and majority communities, progress towards gender parity has been notable. However, gender parity in literacy rates is worse amongst poorer groups, and amongst SCST the differences remain very substantial.<sup>288</sup>

FIGURE 16 GENDER PARITY IN LITERACY RATES, BY WEALTH CATEGORY AND SCST



In addition, there are other groups who perform poorly with regards to educational indicators, for whom outcomes are often not measured. These include street children, child workers, children in conflict areas, children engaged in highly stigmatised occupations (scavenging, sex work, waste picking) and homeless children.<sup>289</sup>

The accessibility of school places is a constraint for both rural and urban children. In an estimated 4 percent of hilly and remote rural areas, schools may still be too far for children to walk. In urban areas, 17 percent of the nation's schools serve 27.4% of children in the age group of 7 to 18 years, and places are not sufficient to accommodate all children. While the 2011 Census shows a 12.8 percent increase in the urban population over the preceding decade, while school provision was largely static.<sup>290</sup>

Other challenges to implementing the RTE Act, including compliance to the standards set out in law.<sup>291</sup> For example, there are many reported examples of discrimination against SC children. On the way to school, they may face harassment and objection if their route passes through dominant communities. Once there, SC children – usually girls – are often made to do the cleaning of classrooms, playgrounds and most often toilets. They may also be excluded from certain activities within the school. Some have reported not being allowed to participate in *pooja* and other religious observances, and others are forced to eat separately and to use their own plates for the midday meal programme. 78 percent of Dalit children in a study in Madhya Pradesh reported having to sit at the back of the class. SCST children are rarely selected for leadership positions in school, or for extra-curricular activities.<sup>292</sup> Other reports cite being denied water at school,<sup>293</sup> and

widespread bullying by dominant caste children.<sup>294</sup> In such circumstances, it is not surprising that progression and completion rates for SCST children are much lower than for majority communities. SC girls have the lowest school participation rate of any group of Indian children.

Despite being outlawed under the RTE Act, corporal punishment is rife in Indian schools, especially amongst younger children and older boys. Around 65 percent of children aged between 5 and 18 report being beaten and physically punished, particularly where classes are larger. “Reasons” for punishment include absences and lateness, not studying, making mistakes and getting poor marks, not having correct uniform or equipment, going to the toilet, and not paying teachers for extra lessons.<sup>295</sup> There are a wide range of reasons why children from poor households and SCST children are more likely to commit any one of these transgressions, and hence are more likely to be beaten. Children also report being insulted, with caste and tribe being the focus for verbal abuse.<sup>296</sup>

In recent years, India has witnessed a very rapid growth in the private school sector, including low-cost private schools. From 10 percent in 1996, enrolment in private primary schools had risen to 28 percent by 2005.<sup>297</sup> The Young Lives research shows a dramatic change in schooling between the older and younger cohorts. In 2006, 24 percent of 8 year olds attended private school. By 2013, 44 percent of 8 year olds attended private school. The proportion in private schools was highest in urban areas.<sup>298</sup>

In deciding to pay for their children's education, parents were reacting to perceived poor quality in Government schools, especially in terms of teaching, accountability and efficiency. Such concerns are driven by absenteeism,

retirees and transferees sitting on teaching posts but not teaching, ghost teachers (and perhaps even ghost schools).<sup>299</sup> Despite being up to two-thirds cheaper to run than Government schools (due largely to paying lower salaries to teachers), exam results and teaching are generally found to be better, and the links between schools and parents are somewhat stronger than in Government schools.<sup>300</sup> Since low-cost schools are often considered cheap enough for many poor families, and vouchers suggested as a possible means of extending access to those that can't afford, market-based education is increasingly cited as a possible means of accelerating current slow progress towards improved, broad-based education.

However, there are many concerns raised about whether the low-cost schools are in fact delivering improved universal education. One study in Uttar Pradesh shows that SCST children are greatly underrepresented in low-cost schools compared to

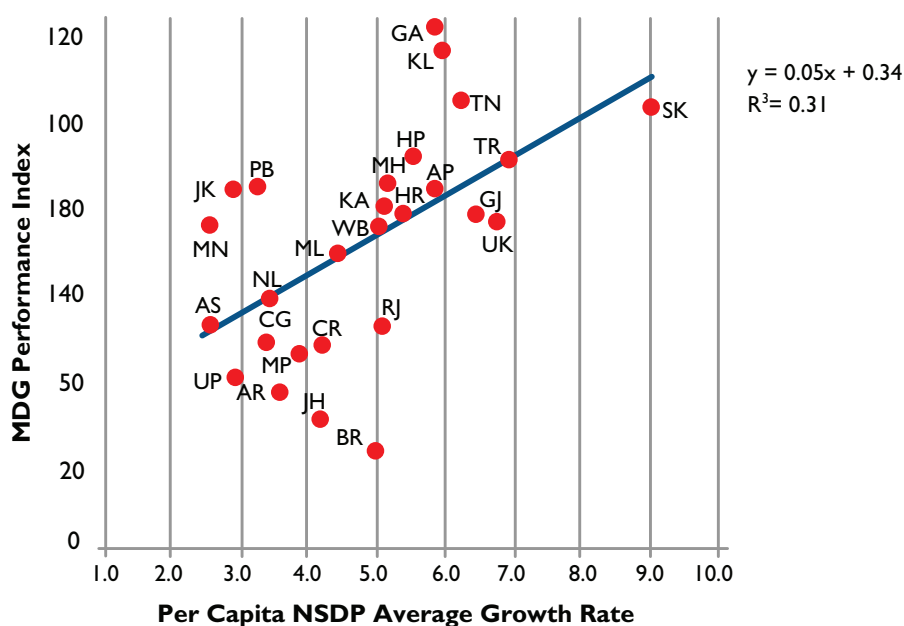
other castes (23.2 percent as compared to 67.5 percent);<sup>301</sup> in Andhra Pradesh, Young Lives shows that there is 50 to 70 percent less chance that SCST children will attend private school.<sup>302</sup> Low-cost schools may also reinforce gender-preference behaviour, with parents choosing to invest more in their sons than in daughters especially as they get older (similar results are found for low-cost private health care).<sup>303</sup> Simple examination of the total cost requirements, besides fees, show low-cost schools to be inaccessible to the poorest two quintiles – and therefore, to people under the income poverty line.<sup>304</sup> Further, an apparent preference for private schools may often be more akin to desperation, where either there is no Government school available, or it is so understaffed as to offer no meaningful education.<sup>305</sup> There are no specific reports of SCST exclusion in private schools, but given reports of discrimination and harassment elsewhere, it is highly likely that low participation is not solely driven by economic reasons.



Photo: Susannah Ireland/Save the Children

Agraji is severely malnourished and has suffered a catalogue of illnesses. Agraji lives in a slum settlement in Delhi, India. It is a sprawling settlement, spread out over 145 acres with an estimated 4,000 households. Here Save the Children distributes protein rich foods to children like Agraji at a government health and education centre.

FIGURE 17 MDG PERFORMANCE INDEX AND ECONOMIC GROWTH BY STATE IN INDIA



India has exceeded MDG targets for income poverty reduction. Where economic growth has been highest, MDG performance (even where targets have not been achieved) has generally been best (Figure 17).<sup>306</sup> However, despite broad based improvements on a very wide scale, the distribution of progress and challenges gives cause for concern. SCST and other minority

groups remain very over-represented in the poorest groups, with worse outcomes with regards to most indicators, including access to education. The exclusions experienced by the poorest, especially SCST, are not merely residual or soon-to-be-overcome challenges, but rather are strongly reinforced by entrenched social attitudes.

It has been argued that continued growth in upper middle income countries is strongly related to reducing inequalities, reducing age-dependency (especially the youth bulge), and increasing the extent to which the economy is driven by skilled occupations.<sup>307</sup> Despite such analyses being focused on macroeconomic interests, the important implications for child poverty and development are clear.

Upper middle income countries fall into, or between, two typologies:

In the first, high levels of inequality persist. UMIC status represents an uncomfortable average in a bifurcated state, in which a highly developed wealthy sector of society and the economy coexists with a much poorer sector. Increases in national income have little effect on poverty levels, and redistribution may not facilitate economic progress for the poor.<sup>308</sup> Divisions may exist along geographical lines, and may also include ethnic divisions, and for people with disabilities; discrimination may be common. Outcomes for children depend very largely on

the families and communities of birth. In the second, inequalities are lower, and participation in the economy is more broad-based. Economic growth translates into income poverty reduction up to three times faster than in more unequal countries.<sup>309</sup> Segments of the population at greater risk may be brought into the economy through appropriate investment (e.g. in rural incomes, credit and markets that reach the poor, education services adapted for the needs of ethnic and linguistic minorities and children with disabilities). Child outcomes improve in a fairly equal manner, and social mobility means that the economy benefits from the national stock of human capital.

These typologies represent the extremes. However, for child poverty as well as national development, they also provide a useful means of understanding how child poverty persists. Countries where inequalities are rising not only tend to reach a “middle income trap”, but also show slower progress in achieving the MDGs.<sup>310</sup> Mexico is one such example.

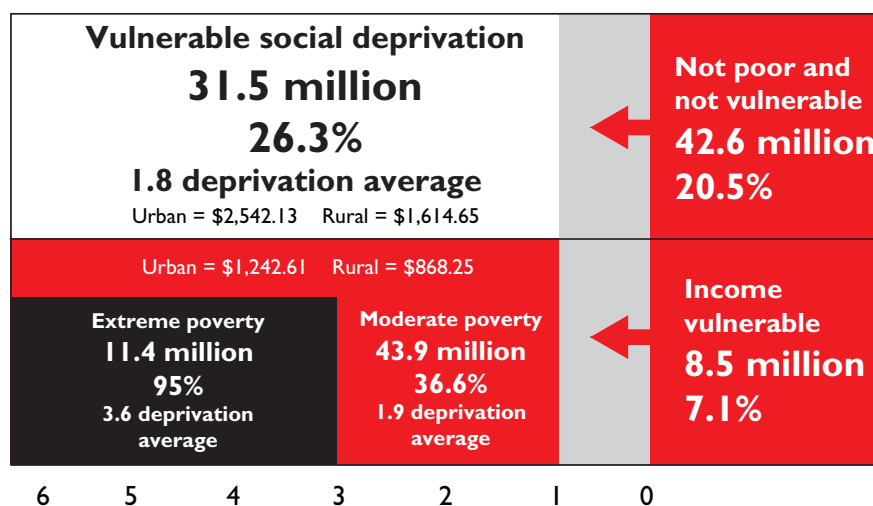
## MEXICO: INEQUALITIES PERSIST IN A MIDDLE-INCOME TRAP

Mexico is the world's thirteenth largest economy, and Latin America's second largest. However, despite some positive outcomes, and a strategy of redistribution through the well-known *Oportunidades* programme, Mexico is also an example of a country in which high levels of inequality have a strong effect on the national economy, and on child poverty.<sup>311</sup>

Poverty in Mexico has risen over the past twenty years, as a result of domestic and international economic crisis. The country also has one of the highest Gini coefficients in the world.<sup>312</sup> Mexico's National Council

for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy measures poverty using the CONEVAL mixed method of multidimensional indicators of deprivation and income poverty. To be considered poor, people would fall under the income threshold and experience at least one social deprivation (defined around education, health, social security, housing, basic services and food security); extreme income poverty is defined according to a lower poverty line (a food-only income line), and three or more social deprivations. This model (see Figure 18) shows further cause for concern for those who are above the income poverty line, but experiencing an average of 1.8 social deprivations (26.3 percent of the population), and others who are below the income poverty line but not experiencing social deprivations (7.1 percent).<sup>313</sup>

FIGURE 18 POVERTY IN MEXICO 2015



Poverty has a strong regional and geographic distribution.<sup>314</sup> The southern and central regions are particularly affected. Poverty strongly affected Mexico's indigenous population, who are concentrated in the same regions. Ten percent of the Mexican population is indigenous; 80 percent of those who speak an indigenous language live in the south and central regions, and they comprise 50 percent of the population of Yucatan and 45 percent of Oaxaca. Indigenous people are far more likely to be poor than non-indigenous people (73.2 percent as compared to 43.2 percent), and twenty eight percent of the indigenous population is in the poorest category.<sup>315</sup>

Indigenous people fare worse than the overall Mexican population in the realisation of children's rights. UNICEF presents a range of most recent data:

- Seventy percent of the population between the ages of three and 17 who speak an indigenous language

live in conditions of food poverty, compared with 22.6 percent of non-indigenous children in the same age group

- Thirty-three percent of indigenous children under the age of five, are stunted in comparison to 12.7 percent of all children of the same age.
- The infant mortality rate among indigenous populations is 60 percent higher than in non-indigenous populations
- Illiteracy among indigenous populations is four times higher (26 percent of the population aged 15 and older) than the national average (7.4 percent).
- Thirteen percent of sixth grade indigenous students are placed in the highest group for reading comprehension (national average 33 percent), whereas 51 percent are in the lowest level (national average 25 percent).<sup>316</sup>

Notwithstanding the importance of poverty facing indigenous populations, non-indigenous people also experience significant poverty, particularly those living in urban slums. In total, in Mexico there are 55.3 million people living in poverty, 8.7 million of them are indigenous and 46.6 are non-indigenous people (CONEVAL 2015). 70% of the people in poverty live in urban areas (CONEVAL 2012). For indigenous and non-indigenous populations alike, children are more likely to be poor than adults. There are high levels of poverty in households with children and particularly those that are larger, in both rural and indigenous areas.<sup>317</sup> The 2014 CONEVAL results show that 46.2 percent of the population live in poverty, compared to 53.9 percent of under-18s, with 9.5 and 11.5 percent (respectively) living in extreme poverty.<sup>318</sup>

Outcomes for children are strongly influenced by poverty, place of residence, and indigenous status. Comparing the poorest to the richest regions, maternal mortality varies from 14.8 to 64.4 deaths per 100,000 live births.<sup>319</sup> National rates of under-five mortality fell from 41 in 1991 to 15.8 per 1000 live births in 2013,<sup>320</sup> one of the strongest rates of improvement in the world. Despite this, the worse performing municipalities have mortality rates in excess of twice the national rates.<sup>321</sup> Poorer children experience worse outcomes not only as a result of worse living conditions and poor diet, but also because they do not access health care, and receive fewer services when they do. For example, one survey found that 24 percent of under-5s with uneducated mothers had had fever in the previous months, and only 38 percent of them received antibiotics. In contrast, 17 percent of the same aged children with whose mothers have secondary education had experienced fever, and 58 percent of them received antibiotic treatment.<sup>322</sup> Outcomes around education show similar patterns across all indicators.

Children living in poverty are more vulnerable to threats that result from exploitation, violence and crime. Gender based violence, physical aggression, corporal punishment (at home and at school) and emotional abuse are all common. Parents' level of education is inversely related to children's experience of violence. Levels of abuse are high with 55-62 percent of secondary school students reporting they have experienced abuse, and just 36 percent of children aged 14-17 saying they have never witnessed violence between their parents or in a romantic relationship of their own.<sup>323</sup> In this context, and with a very high prevalence of crime,<sup>324</sup> it is perhaps not surprising that many Mexican adolescents get drawn into crime. With half of all crimes committed by young people aged 18 to 25 (90 percent male), and a strong presence of gangs, younger adolescents are often involved. In the two years to 2010, the youth homicide rate tripled to 25.5 per 100,000,<sup>325</sup> comprising 38 percent of homicides in Mexico, and ranking amongst the highest worldwide.<sup>326</sup> In parallel with this situation, young girls are also vulnerable to sexual exploitation. In one study, the 25 percent of sex workers who reported having

been forced into prostitution as minors were found to be four times more likely to be infected with HIV.<sup>327</sup>

There are a number of drivers that sustain the inequalities and prevailing threats that shape the experiences of children living in poverty.

Around half the labour force works in the informal sector, and as a result lacks job security, health insurance, pension plans or any other form of social security. The prominence of oil in the Mexican economy has perhaps overshadowed the development of a more broad-based and inclusive economy. When crisis occurs, which it has in the 1990s as well as 2008, there is little in place to protect families from the full impact of a downswing. The *Oportunidades* programme has certainly shown significant results around nutrition, health seeking behaviour and retention at school, and other social protection schemes add to this effect.<sup>328</sup> However, coverage is limited to 20 percent of the population, and results such as staying at school say little about quality of learning. While *Oportunidades* has undoubtedly shown the possible scope and effect of large scale cash transfer programmes, in any circumstances social provision can only partially make up for the effects of significant disparity in the labour market.

Mexico provides a clear example of a country where long-standing upper middle income status has not translated into rapid improvements for the poor, or to greater levels of equality. Although some improvements have been made towards MDG targets, poverty levels have not reduced. Children raised in poverty face significant challenges in health, education, housing and protection, driving the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Underpinned by structural marginalization, discrimination and exclusion of indigenous people results in widespread poverty amongst these groups in particular.

Some 75 percent of the world's population, and 75 percent of countries worldwide, are middle income. The extent to which it is possible to identify meaningful common patterns and drivers of child poverty is limited. However, it is reasonable to end by pointing to the importance of economic policy, and particularly to the extent to which economic policy is inclusive. Child poverty is focused and entrenched in those areas where economic policy excludes whole sections of the population – in rural areas, amongst urban migrants, in marginalised ethnic groups and indigenous people and for women. Greater fairness and inclusion in the distribution of economic opportunity would benefit children greatly; as we will see in chapter 4, it would in fact benefit everyone.



This family is one of thousands of migrant families – the majority of them from indigenous communities – who moved to the state of Sinaloa, Mexico from neighbouring areas to work in the land to escape poverty.

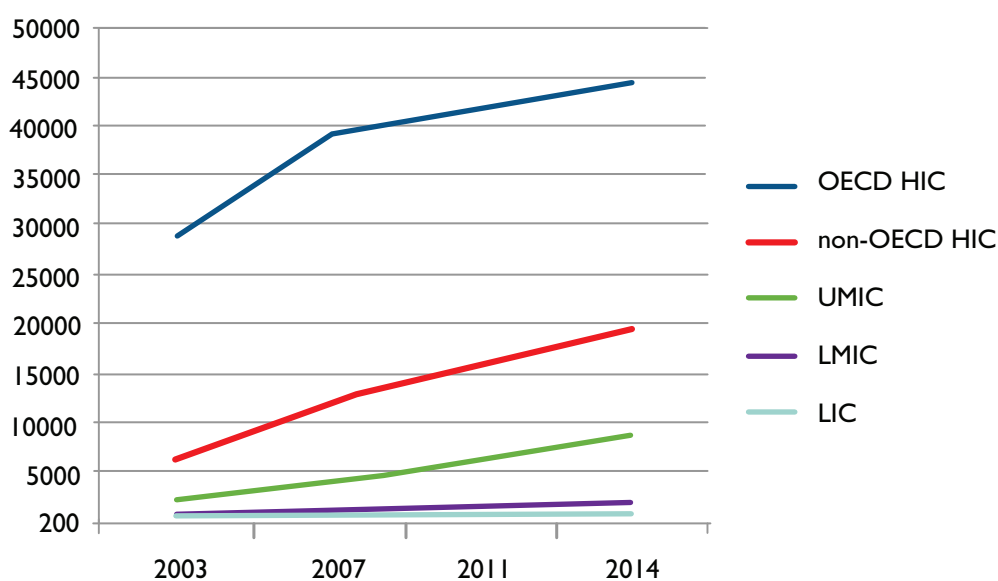
## CHILD POVERTY IN HIGH INCOME COUNTRIES

- Child poverty in high income countries is often shaped by the nature of labour markets and social security. Where employment is temporary, casual or illegal, pay is often below the minimum wage and families miss out on social security. These vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by financial crisis.
- Children are especially affected when social security cover is limited in provision for working mothers, single mothers, new migrants and young parents.
- Access to basic needs, most notably adequate and warm housing and clothing, affect children even in the world's richest countries.
- Children living in poverty may face discrimination in freely accessing quality education. School uniforms, school trips, school meals and transport are all the source of concern for children in many high income countries.
- Poverty also brings exclusion from social participation, which often revolves around activities that need to be paid for.

There are 80 countries worldwide with average incomes above \$12,736, and therefore ranked as high income countries.<sup>329</sup> These are commonly sub-divided in into 34 OECD states, and other non-OECD states, often used as a proxy to distinguish the world's wealthiest countries.<sup>11</sup> This section focuses on OECD and EU states.

In the last twelve years, average incomes in these countries have risen by over 50 percent, although the rate of increase has slowed since the global financial crisis of 2008 and later (Figure 19). Although as a percentage this is smaller than increases in MICs and LICs, the magnitude of the increase is very substantial in comparison to others.

**FIGURE 19** GNI PER CAPITA IN HIGH INCOME COUNTRIES, OECD AND NON-OECD HICS, UMIC, LMIC AND LIC



<sup>11</sup> In fact OECD represents the wealthiest democratic and free market economies. OECD does not include some other notably wealthy countries, for example Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Brunei. However, most non-OECD HICs are less wealthy than OECD HICs.



Poverty in wealthy countries is sometimes disregarded, with the argument that the conditions of poverty cannot be compared to those of the poor in low and middle income countries. The indicators sometimes used to signify child deprivation are sometimes cited to reinforce that view – to the effect that not owning roller skates or having a holiday<sup>330</sup> cannot be compared to not having enough to eat. However, it would be wrong to suppose that poor children in rich countries always have enough to eat; this is far from true. There are number of reasons why poverty in wealthy nations is an important issue, and these are particularly pertinent for children.

Besides using relative poverty lines, usually defined as 50 or 60 percent below the average level of consumption, the European Union has adopted a composite indicator called AROPE (at risk of poverty and social exclusion), which combines relative shortfall in disposable income with indicators of very low work intensity, and severe material deprivation. There are in addition several multidimensional poverty indices, intended to provide a better insight into the experience of the poor, including poor children.

However measured, the first critical issue in child poverty in wealthy countries is its distribution, and its persistence amongst identifiable groups. Even in countries with apparently sophisticated social provision, identifiable groups of children in certain households, geographical locations and ethnic groups experience worse outcomes as children, with irreversible effects that significantly restrict their lives as adults.

The AROPE indicator, disaggregated to examine child poverty, shows that 27 percent of children in Europe are at risk of poverty and social exclusion (a larger proportion than working-age adults or the elderly, at 24.3 percent and 20.5 percent respectively). While not all the countries in this analysis classify as wealthy, the drivers of child poverty they reveal are common across the EU. In particular, AROPE shows that child poverty is very strongly linked to parent's education, being the child of a single parent and/or a foreign-born parent, and being in a household of very low work intensity (less than 20 percent working time). With poor children performing less well in school, and staying in education for a shorter time, there is clear evidence that children brought up in poverty are likely to remain poor, and to bring up their own children in poverty.<sup>331</sup>

In the USA, many studies of child poverty show consistent disadvantage to certain groups, strongly defined by geography (areas where deprivation is widespread), and also by ethnic group or race. One example of this is the child poverty that affects African American and other minority ethnic groups, for whom incomes are lower, and other indicators of well-being also fall below the norm. Low incomes clearly manifest as disadvantage across areas where goods and services are commonly accessed in the market (including

housing and health care), and similar disparities also extend into the public domain. For example, poor African American and other minority ethnic groups experience significant disadvantage in the public education sector, which remains significantly segregated, with significant differences in quality and expenditure. Almost 40 percent of black and Hispanic students attend schools where more than 90 percent of students are non-white, while the average white student attends a school where 77 percent of his or her peers are also white. Such racially isolated schools make up one-third of the country's schools.<sup>332</sup> Funded through a combination of local revenues, State and Federal funds, the intention is that shortfalls in local revenues in poor areas should be topped up by external subventions. In practice, however, top-up funding is often inadequate, and indeed at State level distribution may be regressive, favouring already better-off areas.<sup>333</sup> The result is that less is spent on the education of non-white students in lower income areas: schools that enrol 90 percent or more non-white students spend \$733 less per pupil per year than schools that enrol 90 percent or more white students. Nationwide, schools spend \$334 more on every white student than on every non-white student.<sup>334</sup> Disadvantaged access has a clear impact on achievement, and on subsequent employment and other life-chances.<sup>335</sup>

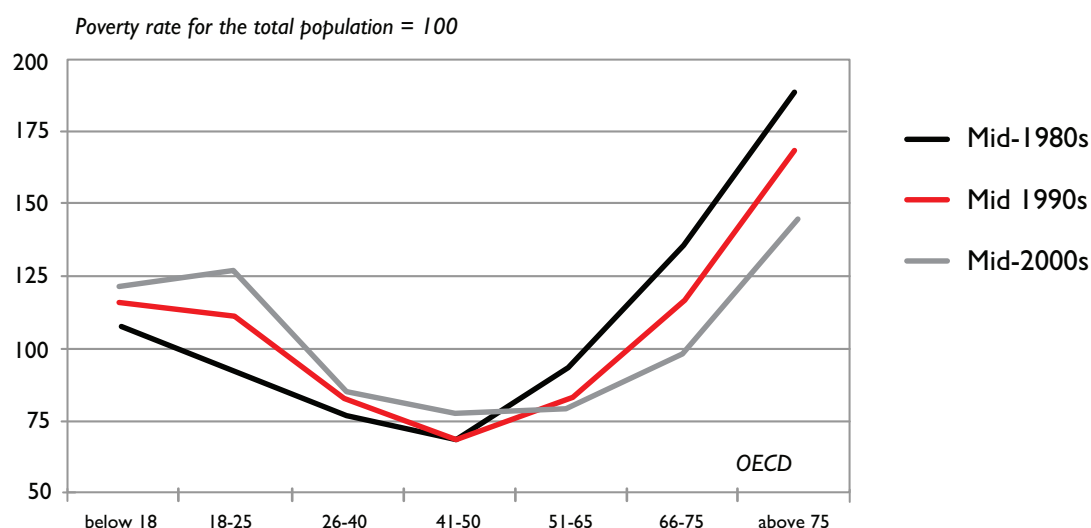
In many European countries, the Roma community lives very largely in poverty, and children experience significant discrimination. Roma children show particularly poor outcomes in terms of survival and learning. Life expectancy amongst Roma in Italy and the Netherlands is 20 years and 12 years respectively less than for non-Roma. Estimates of child mortality are scant, but suggest a rates of around three times higher than the general population.<sup>336</sup> In France, travelling children and Roma may be refused admission to school, in the UK specialist Traveller Education Support Services tend to focus largely on primary aged children, and in Greece and several eastern European countries, Roma children are often taught in segregated classes or in schools for children with learning disabilities.<sup>337</sup> The cycle of child poverty, exclusion and discrimination has repeated over many generations.

The second critical issue with regards to child poverty are the non-material effects resulting from poverty and inequalities, which often manifest as shame and stigma. Sometimes this is associated with the immediate signs of insufficient income. One example is the quality of clothing: in the UK, children report that having the "uncool" clothes or missing items of school uniform makes them unpopular at school, and results in bullying and social marginalisation.<sup>338</sup> Another is lack of money to join social events (going swimming, joining sports clubs, taking the bus to town), or feeling unable to invite friends to visit overcrowded or low standard housing. Children have also reported stigma and bullying around having dirty clothes, and smelling of damp.<sup>339</sup>

Efforts to support children in poverty can also inadvertently add to stigma and shame, by highlighting the identity of “beneficiaries”. One very common issue in this regard is the entitlement to free school meals, which is a source of significant stigma and shame to many children. In some instances, children receiving free meals have to show a special coupon or pass where others pay, or even stand in a separate line and eat from a different menu.<sup>340</sup> Even where the efforts have been made to maintain anonymity over free meals entitlement, children in the UK report anxiety around being “found out”, to the extent that some miss the meals in any case.<sup>341</sup> Even in wealthy countries, schools have been slow to introduce cashless or swipe card systems, which brings significant relief to children living in poverty.<sup>342</sup>

The third critical issue in wealthy countries is how child poverty is changing over time. Over recent years, the global financial crisis most certainly affected children in wealthy countries. Rates of child poverty and poverty amongst young adults in the OECD have risen markedly since the 1980s, while poverty amongst adults has risen only marginally, and fallen amongst pensioners.<sup>343</sup> Between 2008 and 2012, the AROPE index showed an increase of 1 million children at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the European Union plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Only six countries amongst these 32 showed a fall in the proportion of children at risk of poverty and social exclusion.<sup>344</sup> However, even in these countries, growing inequalities mean that those children that remain in poverty have suffered the effects of crisis disproportionately.<sup>345</sup>

**FIGURE 20 POVERTY RATES BY AGE 1980S-2000S, OECD COUNTRIES**



The economic crisis has hit both the labour market and the welfare systems, entrenching deprivation for the existing poor, and allowing many more people to fall into poverty. Insecure employment, unemployment and cuts in provision of social services and welfare benefits have immediate impacts on children. Budget analyses suggest that 70 percent of the burden of cuts in benefits and services have fallen on women, with significant impact on childcare and family life.<sup>346</sup>

Material deprivations resulting from the crisis include a fall in access to decent housing (including heating), fall in nutritional levels, and loss of household basics including the opportunity to wash. School head teachers in the UK report that some schools have extended provision to pupils to shower and wash clothes at school.<sup>347</sup> The increase in dependence on food banks is also widely discussed. Socially, children affected by crisis have fewer opportunities to participate in social events, withdrawing from school events and other peer group

activities.<sup>348</sup> Psychologically, children in low income homes experience anxiety and insecurity, and may develop feelings of ambivalence or hopelessness about their own future in the workforce.<sup>349</sup>

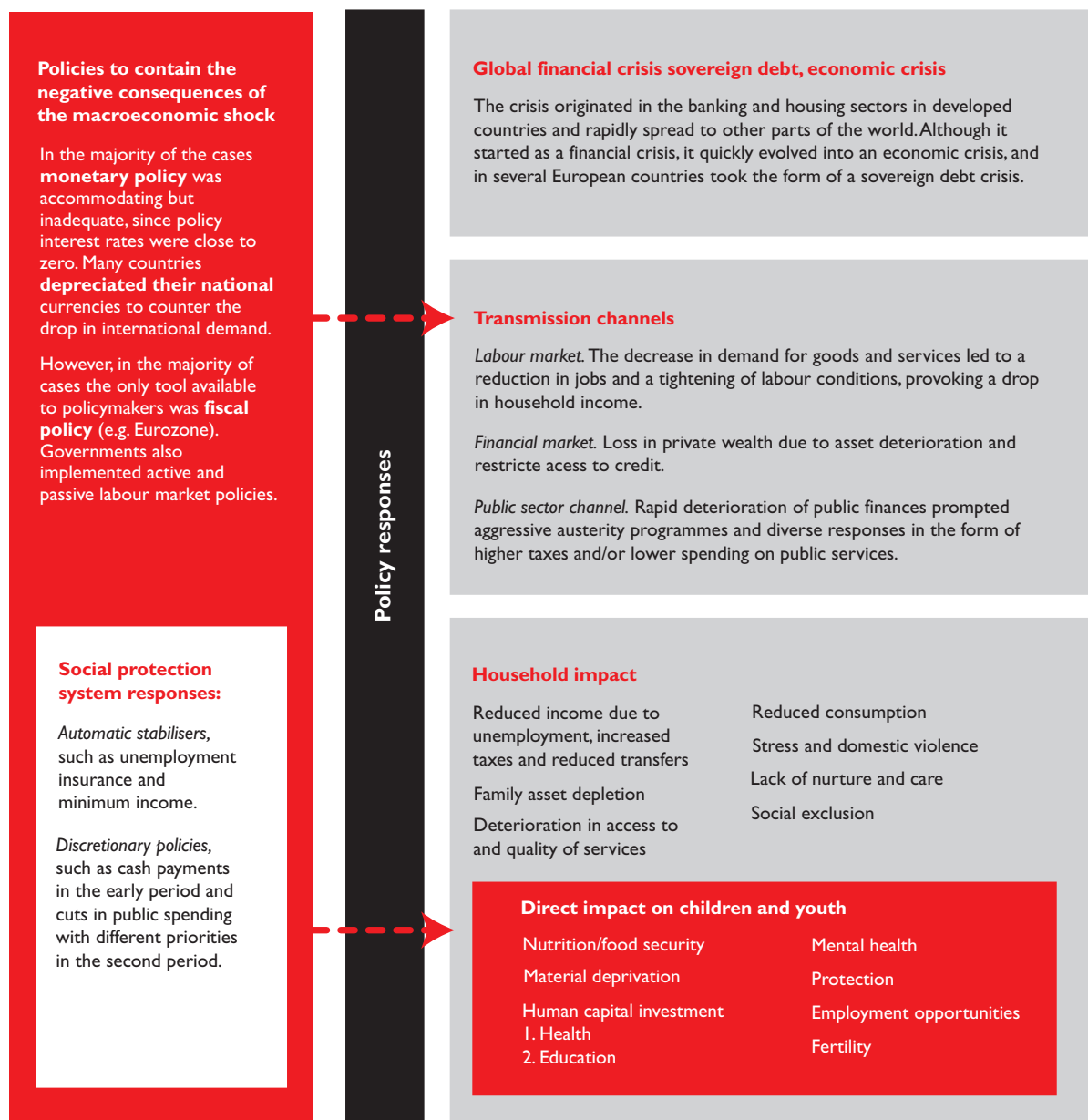
Social protection responses in wealthy countries have varied greatly in magnitude. However, in many cases and especially where austerity measures have been implemented, services and benefits have been inadequate to prevent a substantial deterioration in well-being for children.<sup>350</sup> The exact nature of this change depends to a large extent on prevailing economic conditions, on the scale and nature of social security systems, and on the existing and changing distribution of poverty and deprivation in each country.

The nature and extent of social protection was an important factor in determining the impact of financial crisis on children. The countries most affected by the crisis were eastern European countries already

supported by the IMF or the European Central Bank, which rapidly implemented fiscal adjustments, as well as those with evident fiscal problems (including Greece, Italy, Ireland and Portugal). Effects were also felt in wealthier countries, particularly those that were running a substantial debt.<sup>351</sup> In each case, as shown in Figure 21,

the effects of the crisis were felt at household level through changes in labour markets, financial markets, and deterioration the public sector. The children of young parents were particularly strongly affected, as youth unemployment rose sharply.

**FIGURE 21** HOW THE FINANCIAL CRISIS TURNED INTO A CRISIS FOR CHILDREN



The extent to which the impacts of crisis affected children were strongly mitigated by the level and nature of public spending, especially on the social protection measures indicated on the left. In the most affected countries that spent least on social protection, child poverty rose by as much as 100 percent (Greece, Ireland, Spain, Croatia), while in others child poverty fell over this period (Canada, Australia, Finland and Japan).

Such differences may be driven by financial imperative, but are more often the result of prevailing policy objectives.<sup>352</sup>

The cases of Italy and Sweden, where child poverty has been of increasing concern in recent years, provide contrasting examples.

**FIGURE 22 CHILD POVERTY RATES BEFORE & AFTER TAXES AND TRANSFERS – FOUR EXAMPLES**

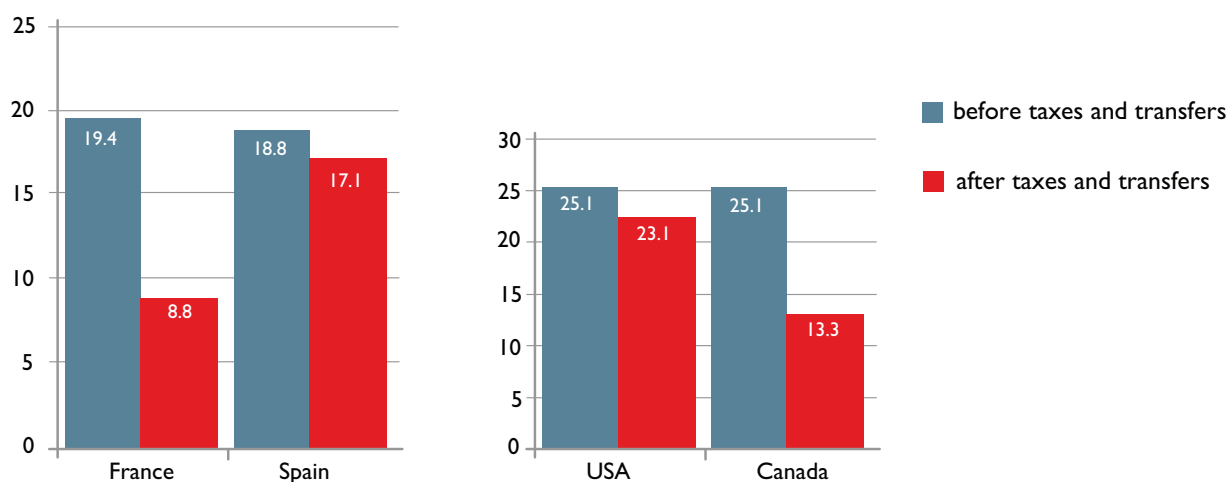


Photo: Tracy Manners/Save the Children

Save the Children is supporting a community centre at the Sacred Heart Church in McAllen Texas. It provides services to families who have been released from U.S. processing facilities and are about to make journeys by bus to reunite with family members across the US.

## ITALY: CHILD POVERTY PERSISTS, BEFORE & AFTER THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

Poverty in Italy has been historically tied to geography, with the less developed South displaying higher numbers of poor households than the North.<sup>353</sup> Between 1997-2007, the proportion of families with children at risk of income poverty was 13-15 percent nationally, rising to 36-37.9 percent in the south.<sup>354</sup> Using the EU AROPE measure, some 34 percent of Italian children are at risk of poverty and social exclusion.<sup>355</sup> Following the economic crisis and subsequent austerity measures, however, income poverty levels in the previously well-off North have also risen. Between 2008 and 2014, overall absolute poverty in the north doubled from 2.7 to 5.7, while in the South it increased from 5.2 to 9.<sup>356</sup>

Across the country, the impact of growing poverty has been greater in larger households with a greater number of dependents (children and elderly), younger children, parents of lower education, and unemployed or low work intensity.<sup>357</sup> Although most recent figures suggest a levelling off and even an improvement, the situation remains very serious in Italy – Europe’s 4th largest economy, and the 8th largest globally. One in every fourteen children live in income poverty, totalling more than 1 million, their families unable to meet their basic needs.<sup>358</sup>

Along with Greece and Spain, Italy has been one of the EU / OECD countries most greatly affected by the global economic crisis.<sup>359</sup> Along with growing poverty, the number of young people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training spiked from 16.6 in 2008 to 22.2 percent in 2013,<sup>360</sup> one of the highest levels in the EU. For those that find jobs, work tends to be casual, sessional, seasonal or zero-hours, and hence low paid, insecure, and unlikely to contribute to a more stable working life.

Prior to the crisis, poverty in Italy was attributed primarily to the nature of the labour market and the nature of the welfare state.<sup>361</sup> The economic downturn and the subsequent austerity increased child poverty by compounding these existing structural problems. Austerity abated provision of healthcare, education and nutrition services, but also the lack of “child-centred” strategies to contrast child poverty weakened the impact of social spending at reducing the risk of poverty for families with children.<sup>362</sup>

These effects have been compounded by Italy’s rising wealth inequality. According to one OECD report, between the mid-1980s and 2000s, household incomes among Italians in the bottom wealth decile increased at a rate of 0.2 percent, as compared to 1.1 percent for the top decile.<sup>363</sup> During the course of the crisis, the incomes of the wealthiest have not been greatly affected, the poor have remained poor, and the middle income group has experienced a rapid downturn in their standard of living.<sup>364, 365</sup>

The combination of under/unemployment, deteriorating social provision, and inequality has affected children in many ways. Material deprivation and falling standards of living have affected consumption, nutrition, health and the home environment. Evidence suggests that the number of children experiencing deprivation in food consumption has doubled since the onset of crisis.<sup>366</sup>

One approach to understanding the complex and multidimensional nature of child poverty in Italy has been designed by a group of eminent Italian academics, working with Save the Children. This has resulted in a set of 14 indicators, comprising an Index of Educational Poverty. The Index aims at measuring the educational poverty as the deprivation of opportunities for children to acquire those skills and capabilities that enable them to reach their full potential. In particular, it has been used to assess deprivation in terms of access and quality for children age 3 to age 17. The 14 indicators are:

1. Public provision of early childhood education and care service
2. Full-time classes at primary school
3. Full-time classes at lower secondary school
4. School complexes with a school meals service
5. Schools with a certificate of occupancy
6. Classrooms with Internet access
7. School dropout rate
8. Children who have been to the theatre
9. Children who have been to a museum or exhibition
10. Children who have visited a monument or archaeological site
11. Children who have been to a concert
12. Children who regularly practise a sport
13. Children who use the Internet
14. Children who have read a book

Even before the crisis, educational achievement is very strongly determined by parents’ education. Only 9 percent of Italians aged 25-34 whose parents had not completed upper secondary education obtained a higher education degree (compared to the OECD average is 20%), while 44% also failed to complete upper secondary education.<sup>367</sup> After the crisis, when the Index was launched, not only were overall results generally lower than expectations, but (with two notable exceptions) educational poverty in each region was strongly related to child poverty status.<sup>368</sup>

Children are affected by poverty both mentally and emotionally. Many children, feeling anxious themselves, also suffer the effects of their parent’s stress and worry. Anxiety rises where parents are unemployed, underemployed or underpaid. Stress at home extends to school, as a reduced standard of living may leave children stigmatised, excluded, and subject to bullying.<sup>369</sup>

The primary driver of rising levels of child poverty in Italy has been the prolonged economic crisis. Increased unemployment has directly reduced the incomes and standards of living, and placed social security under unprecedented stress.<sup>370</sup> As the effects of crisis continue, human capital deteriorates, risking long term structural changes as the proportion of unskilled, inexperienced and unqualified people on work force rises. Further, as poverty entrenches, existing propensities towards intergenerational poverty will strengthen.



Photo: Giuseppe Chiantera

Children write on their blackboard in Italy where around 1 million children live in poverty.

The Italian social security system has largely focused in the past on pensions, and in particular has not featured significant provision to help working mothers with child care and other incentives to work. Rather, families have relied on relatives, and on a notably low proportion of mothers being in employment.<sup>371</sup> Limited support from the public sector is compounded by an underdeveloped private child care sector. As a consequence, economic recovery on both family and national scale is hampered by the difficulties faced by women in particular, juggling family and work obligations. With a significant proportion of the labour force largely unable to work, the Italian economy will not enjoy the recovery that could be supported by full employment.

Another way in which social security has exacerbated child poverty is through the design and implementation of benefit systems. Like other southern countries, the administrative challenges of social security systems meant that many potential beneficiaries were not reached, even before the crisis, leaving many of the poorest without public support.<sup>372</sup> Further, social benefits in Italy have largely been designed to target the poorest of the poor, intended to provide relief from

absolute poverty. In contrast, social benefits intended to support people to leave poverty, and to get into work, have been minimal. As a result, the economic return that might be generated from helping people to join the labour force has not been realised. Without help, many Italians continue to struggle to meet their needs, and the recovery does not benefit from their participation.

## SWEDEN: GAPS IN AN ADVANCED SYSTEM OF SOCIAL SECURITY

In contrast, poverty in Sweden remains low in comparison to other countries. Measured as the population whose income lies below 40 (extreme poor) and 60 (broad poverty) percent of the national median income, some 3.7 or 12.9 percent of the population lives in relative poverty.<sup>373</sup> This suggests Sweden has the sixth lowest income poverty rate in Europe, although the fact that these figures are based on median national incomes means they are not directly comparable.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, although low, poverty, income inequality and regional disparities have been growing in Sweden in recent years. Since the middle of the 1990s, when Sweden was hit by a financial crisis, the income gap between the richest and the poorest families has increased drastically. According to UNICEF, Sweden find itself in the bottom half of the league table of rich countries when judged by the depth of relative poverty into which poor children are allowed to fall.<sup>374</sup>

With such low rates of poverty, it might be assumed that poverty, including child poverty, was a marginal or residual issue in Sweden. Measures of multidimensional poverty rates Swedish child poverty as second lowest in Europe (EU plus Norway and Iceland).<sup>375</sup> It could also be assumed that the experience of poverty is short-lived, as the fairly small number of people who fall into poverty would soon be restored to a better state. After all, Sweden's strong social spending accounts for 20 percent of GDP, the highest in the OECD.<sup>376</sup> Income inequality is low (gini coefficient of 0.27, compared to OECD average of 0.31),<sup>377</sup> maintained by national values and policies that maintain redistribution.<sup>378</sup> The notion that developed welfare states have "democratized" poverty underpins this view, suggesting that risk varies within the life-course, rather than between individuals – a mainstream event affecting a large number of people for a comparatively short period of time.<sup>379</sup>

However, this is not the case. The burden of poverty does not lie on the short term poor in Sweden, but rather on a smaller number of long term poor. Just 9 percent of all years spent in poverty were contributed by the people whose poverty was short lived, while 69 percent of people in poverty have been poor for over five years – and half of these for over ten years.<sup>380</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Median incomes vary widely. In Sweden, the median monthly income is €1524, meaning the cut-off for 60 percent relative poverty is €915 per month. In comparison, Czech Republic, which has the lowest rate of relative poverty, has a median monthly income of €820, and the threshold for €60 percent relative poverty is €504. There are hence many people who are not ranked poor in Czech Republic who would be well below the poverty threshold in Sweden. (Eurostat 2010 data).

Underpinning this is the fact that poverty in Sweden is strongly, persistently and increasingly attached to specific demographic vulnerabilities. Groups most affected include children with foreign-born parents, children of single mothers, and women.

The definition of child poverty developed by Save the Children in Sweden combine indicators of families on low incomes and families that receive needs-assessed benefits (social welfare) at least once during a year. Low income standard is a measure developed by the Swedish National Bureau of statistics relating disposable income per family member to a norm on living costs plus a norm on costs for housing.<sup>381</sup> It should, however, be noted that this measure excludes children that are in the asylum process, undocumented migrants and the relatively large group of children in Sweden whose parents are heavily indebted.

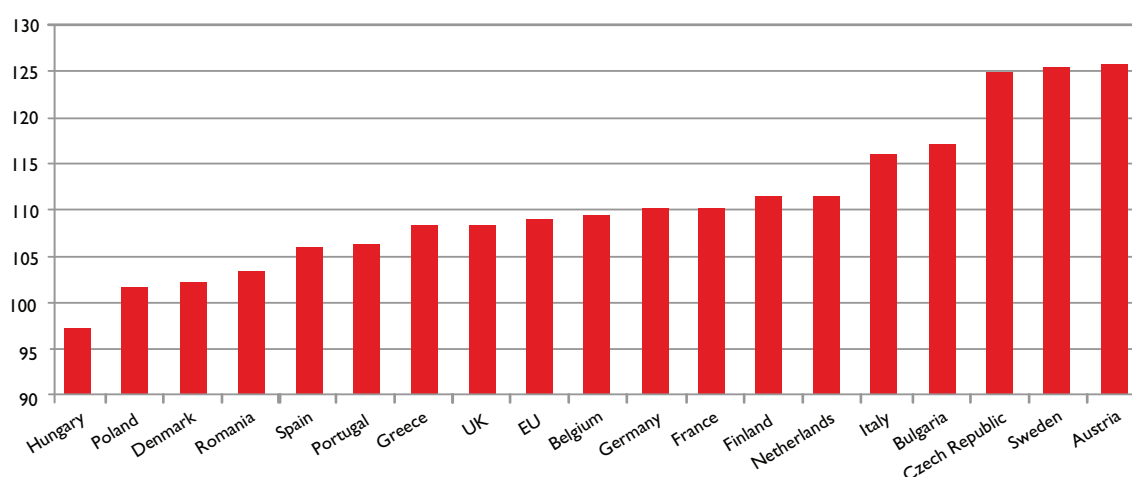
Children's economic vulnerability increased dramatically in the first half of the 1990s in Sweden and then

successively decreased until 2003. The rate has since then been fairly stable, around 12–13 percent at a national level. Children growing up in lone parents and/or parents with foreign background have a distinctly higher risk experiencing income poverty in Sweden.<sup>382</sup>

The strong links between poverty in Sweden and foreign birth suggest also a link with poverty in low income countries. Since many immigrants are refugees, whose own childhood, education, health and other early experiences have been highly compromised. It would appear that the long term effects of childhood poverty are not easily or necessarily removed, even when the person in question has moved to a much wealthier country, with apparently more opportunity.

Poverty amongst women is proportionally higher than poverty amongst men in Sweden, and amongst the highest in Europe, both proportionately (see Figure 23) and in terms of percentage points.<sup>383</sup>

**FIGURE 24** WOMEN'S POVERTY AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEN'S POVERTY: EUROPEAN COUNTRIES



Amongst women and children, risk of poverty is strongly related to ethnicity, particularly amongst people who originate from outside the European Union. Poverty affects just 2 percent of children born to ethnic Swedes, rising to 52 percent of children of single mothers born overseas. Children at such risk of poverty are not limited to new arrivals; many children growing up poor were born in Sweden.

The drivers of poverty are strongly linked to labour markets, and to the structure of the welfare state. These combine to mean that single mothers and foreign-born families have lower access to work, and inadequate cover from the welfare system. Those worst affected include young parents, particularly single mothers, with repercussions for young children in particular.

Younger people, single women with children and immigrants are at particular risk of unemployment,<sup>384</sup> which stands at 7.8 percent of the workforce, and

underemployment. For many in employment, including more than 50 percent of young people, contracts are temporary, sessional, seasonal, casual or zero hours. As secure employment levels fall, women's unemployment has grown more rapidly than men's.<sup>385</sup> Foreign-born job-seekers also experience difficulties in finding work, and there is strong evidence of discrimination in labour recruitment.<sup>386</sup> They also receive lower pay: this applies not just to young workers or new recruits, but remains the case even after being employed in Sweden for as long as 20 years.<sup>387</sup> Some 80-90 of children with unemployed parents are poor.<sup>388</sup>

There are three main causes driving child poverty in Sweden: the household structure, the parent(s) relationship with the labour market, and access to the social security system. The Swedish social security system can be understood in three parts: 1) benefits for families, 2) sickness benefits 3) pensions. Unemployment insurance is administered by the trade unions and

assumes trade union membership as well as previous employment for people to qualify. In addition, there is a social welfare payment which is administered by the local authorities. The social welfare payment was originally meant for short term emergency situation, but as an increasing number of people in Sweden fail to qualify for other types of benefits, either because they have never worked or because they are long-term-sick, dependency on social welfare has increased drastically in the past 10-15 years. As a consequence, despite evident need for social assistance, the design of benefits means that recipients who are unemployed single parents and underemployed people may remain in poverty. This includes many foreign-born people, who are six times more likely to be in poverty than ethnic Swedes.<sup>389</sup>



This mother and her 7-day-old baby, along with her husband and their 2 year old son, arrived at Save the Children's unit in a Croatian camp for refugees fleeing Syria. This family left their home in Syria a few weeks ago when the constant fighting and occupation of their home by armed men became too much to bear. Despite being heavily pregnant, they risked the journey so their children have a chance to get an education. They hope to make it to Norway or Sweden.

In Sweden, patterns of inequality are significantly noticeable on a neighborhood level, and has increased drastically since the 1990s. As a result differences between children's living conditions became more noticeable, and, poverty became more concentrated in certain areas. The income among poor households have remained stable, or sometimes decreased, while the wealth in more affluent areas increased. Neighbourhoods with high fractions of visible minorities have increasingly higher child poverty rates than neighbourhoods dominated by the majority population.

However, it is low parental employment and low parental education that are most prominent when predicting high neighbourhood child poverty rates. The largest gaps between neighbourhoods are to be found in the big cities. Malmö has the highest child income poverty rate at over 30 percent, while other municipalities are as low as 5 percent. Even within a city, with the poorest neighbourhoods having child income poverty rates of 62 percent. In Stockholm, overall child income poverty is low, but in some areas of the city rises to 30-40 percent.<sup>390</sup> These areas also have worse housing, and public services may be weaker.

A growing concern in Sweden is the increase in homelessness among families that live in poverty. The lack of affordable and accessible housing for people on low income has contributed to a drastic increase in the number of families with children that are placed in emergency accommodation such as hostels. In Stockholm the number of children living in such circumstance has tripled over five years. The impact on children can be detrimental.

Relative poverty means that certain children and their families are prevented from enjoying what is otherwise considered normal or self-evident, lacking the material means to live what is considered a normal standard of life. This means that they are unable to participate in activities that their peers do, including sports and other leisure-time activities.<sup>391</sup> Despite a strong public commitment to free education, only 11 percent of schools have a "no extra costs" policy in place, and as a result, poor children may be unable to participate in activities such as school trips and swimming lessons.<sup>392</sup> This leads to stigma, social exclusion, and risk of bullying.<sup>393</sup> The psychological state of the child may be affected, and undoubtedly contributes to the fact that children raised in poverty experience higher levels of mental health problems.<sup>394</sup>

It is erroneous to say that child poverty in high income countries is of marginal interest, or that the impact on children cannot be compared to the experience of children in developing countries. In fact, children experiencing poverty in high income countries suffer impacts on health, education and security. Child poverty is strongly linked to social exclusion, and damaging effects of stigma and bullying. While there is no way of comparing the tenacity of child poverty in high income countries with others, evidence from a range of countries suggests that the effects of exclusion and deprivation are strongly intergenerational.



## CHILD POVERTY IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

In recent years, the growing threat of climate change has resulted in a growing number of natural hazards, including droughts, flooding, heat waves and extreme rainfall, as well as typhoons and cyclones, that can cause disaster to local communities.<sup>395</sup>

Both poverty and the effects of climate change have a strong geographical distribution. While some effects of climate change are not closely associated with parts of the world with a high proportion of the world's poor, others including drought, extreme high temperature, floods and cyclone show considerable overlap. Models of global climate hazard and poverty projections predict that major effects for poor regions will include:

- Drought will increasingly affect South Asia, Southern Africa and Madagascar;
- The same areas as well as South America, the Middle East and central Asia are at risk of high temperature;
- Floods (including flash flooding) are likely to affect Madagascar, South Asia, the Sahel and southern Africa;
- Cyclones will continue to threaten Bangladesh and the Philippines

(It is also the case that in some places, the effects of climate change might be less significant, or even somewhat helpful. However, even where overall change is helpful, increased climate variability may remain a challenge).

Rapid-onset natural disasters do not necessarily have to result in large scale human suffering. Similar scale events cause disaster in one place, compared to minimal effects in others with adequate preparation and response strategies and capacities. Similarly, in the majority of circumstances, the slow-onset impact of climate change can be mitigated, through the adoption of more resilient strategies for livelihoods, water supply and so on. Consequently, those most at risk of the effects of climate change live in countries (i) with high numbers or proportions of poor people; (ii) exposed to one or more significant threats as a result of climate change; (iii) lack the capacity, policies, resources, or political will to manage disaster risks and adapt to climate change. In these countries, there is a significant risk that progress in poverty reduction will be halted, or even reversed.<sup>396</sup>

Disasters and climate-related shocks have greater effects on the poor, especially on rural dwellers who depend on agriculture, in both the short and long term. When assets and livelihoods are destroyed, and social

networks are similarly affected, families have little choice but to engage in harmful coping strategies, which include withdrawing children from school, cutting down on consumption, and migration.

For children in particular, the effects of these cuts can last a life-time. A study of the long-term effects of China's 1959-61 famine found that survivors were suffering from serious health and economic defects, especially those who were in their early childhood during the famine. These effects included a significant negative impact on their ability to work, and earnings.<sup>397</sup> Studies in other countries on the long term impact of famine concluded that by adulthood, affected children who were under the age of 36 months during a famine are significantly shorter than older cohorts, by at least 3cm. They are also less likely to have completed primary school, and more likely to have experienced recent illness. Indicative calculations show that this may have led to income losses of between 3% and 8% per year over their lifetime.<sup>398</sup> In Kenya, being born in a drought year increases the likelihood of being malnourished by 50 percent, and in Niger, children affected by drought before the age of two are 72 percent more likely to be stunted.<sup>399</sup>

Even smaller events have significant effects. Young Lives shows that in Vietnam, when crops fail children from poor households with limited opportunities for borrowing were 15.8 percent more likely to have dropped out of school than children who did not experience the shock. The study time out of school for these children was reduced by 31 percent compared with poor children who did not experience a shock.<sup>400</sup> This shows the extent to which poverty can deepen as a consequence of environmental shock.

Slow-onset impacts of climate change also damage children. Water shortages and rising temperature contribute to disease: indeed, incidence of malaria has re-emerged in temperate climates where it has not been seen for a long time. Weakening farming systems reduce productivity, and undermine household food security, resulting in malnutrition. Rising waters wash away homes and fields, with devastating effects.<sup>401</sup> Families may be displaced or forced to migrate, with children exchanging their communities for the hazards of urban slums.

There are many countries where climate change is already creating diverse harm for children. One example is the Philippines.

## PHILIPPINES: CHILDREN VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE DISASTERS

The Philippines is a middle income country that has achieved stable economic growth, with low inflation, a sound financial system, and a sustainable fiscal and external position.<sup>402</sup> This has been attributed in part to strengthened governance, linked to increased levels of foreign investment, and to remittances sent home by millions of overseas Filipino workers.

Despite this, between 1992 and 2001, a total of 5,809,986 Filipinos were killed or injured as a result of natural disasters, war, and other calamities.<sup>403</sup> The Philippines ranks fourth in the global climate risk index, which identifies countries affected by extreme weather events in specific time periods.<sup>404</sup> The Philippines faces a full range of hazards, including floods, El Nino-induced droughts, typhoons, earthquakes, landslides, and volcanic eruptions. The country is situated along the Pacific Ring of Fire, a geological region characterised by active volcanos and frequent earthquakes. It is also exposed to storm surges and sea-level changes.<sup>405</sup>

Income poverty in the Philippines stands at 25.2 percent (2012), slightly higher than it was nine years ago, at 24.9 percent.<sup>406</sup> Successive impacts of natural disasters, food and fuel price increases, the global economic crisis, and successive incidences of *El Nino* climate phenomenon have driven this upward trend, which is expected to continue.<sup>407</sup> The national average figure masks a huge contrast between urban and rural income poverty rates: urban income poverty is 14.3 percent,<sup>408</sup> falling to 3.8 percent in Metro Manila.<sup>409</sup>

Poverty is strongly related to physical isolation, and to exposure to typhoons and other disasters. Income poverty is strongly regional, and strongly rural, and affects fisherfolk and farmers significantly more than the general population at 39.2 and 38.2 percent respectively.<sup>410</sup> Areas frequently hit by natural disasters are highly prone to entrenched poverty, both as a cause and a consequence: poverty is the most significant factor in determining vulnerability to disaster, and vice versa.<sup>411</sup>

For rural people, living in communities that largely depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, both rapid and slower on-set disasters are damaging agricultural productivity, with significant impacts for poor families and children. In this regard, the Philippines is similar to other countries in Asia and the Pacific, where 53% of the extreme poor and 85% of the moderate poor live in areas where the environment is the primary cause of income poverty.<sup>412</sup> The urban poor (although few as a proportion of the population) may also have strong links to rural areas: for example, many have migrated to town as their rural livelihoods repeatedly fail. In many cases this has benefited both the

migrant and the family at home, but for less well educated migrants and migrants who were poorest to start with, this is less likely to be so.<sup>413</sup>

Income poverty affects about one third of the population of age 0-18, which for 2009 was equivalent to 13.4 million people (about one third of all children). This is an increase of around 2.3 million since 2003.<sup>414</sup> As income poverty has increased, so have measures of multiple deprivations also worsened.<sup>415</sup> Poverty is more prevalent among families with a large number of children (particularly those with more than six members), and with parents with elementary schooling or below.<sup>416</sup> Children living in poverty in the Philippines have poor access to services, suffering worse outcomes with regards to survival, learning and protection. A 2014 study found that children face multiple deprivations, with most significant being lack of sanitation, safe water and shelter. Three out of every four poor children live in rural areas; 80 percent lack adequate sanitation, and 70 percent do not have access to safe water.<sup>417</sup> An analysis of multiple deprivations shows that these are the most common deprivations. Over 4 million children have inadequate access to both water and sanitation, with the Zamboanga Peninsula, Eastern Visayas and Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao the most deeply affected.<sup>418</sup>

In rural areas, the scarcity and distribution of schools may contribute to fewer rural children attending school, especially at the secondary level. This is compounded by the fact that many poor families are unable to meet the costs for books, uniforms and meals.<sup>419</sup> In urban areas, the fast pace of urbanisation has not been accompanied by fast infrastructure development, which means that urban populations may find themselves without adequate residential, water, health, educational, and other facilities.

Chronic poverty, disasters and shocks may also push children into work, which has been a growing phenomenon in the Philippines. The 2011 census of working children by NSO found 5,492 million children aged 5 to 11 years engaged in some forms of labour (18.9 percent of this age group). Of the total population of working children, nearly half belonged to the 15–17 and 10–14 age groups (46.7 percent and 45.1 percent respectively) and the few remaining were aged 5 to 9 years (8.2 percent). Amongst these, 58.4 percent met the ILO definition of working children, working longer hours than acceptable for their age, or in more hazardous occupations. Amongst these, there were 3.21 million children engaged in child labour, including 2.99 million doing work of a hazardous nature.<sup>420</sup> The sectors engaging the largest number of children were identified to be agriculture (65.4), services (29.4) and industry (5.3). Two thirds of these were boys. While girls are at high risk of being trafficked into the sex industry, an increasing number of boys are also reported to have been recruited for sexual exploitation, including for pornography. Girls also often work as domestic workers, usually living with their employers, earning

very low wages (or unpaid) for long hours work, at risk of sexual exploitation, and significantly isolated from family and community. Child soldiering has also been reported for anti-government and terrorist organizations, such as those located in the Moro islands.<sup>421</sup>

Expanding child poverty in the Philippines is thus largely driven by two strongly correlated factors.<sup>422</sup>

- First, years of positive economic performance has yielded less for rural people, and little for those in remote rural communities. Income poverty is compounded by scarcity of land, and the poor delivery of basic services at local government level.
- Second, rapid and slower on-set climatic issue have also most strongly affected the same communities, undermining efforts to secure family well-being, and exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities and multiple deprivations. For example, Region 8, the hardest hit region by typhoon Haiyan is the poorest region in the Philippines, with 54.9 percent of the population extremely poor. Since natural disasters have widespread effects (for example typhoon Haiyan destroyed the livelihoods of 1.1 million coconut farmers), rendering informal protection and coping strategies highly ineffective.

Children are particularly vulnerable to the immediate threats to survival resulting from natural disasters, because of their physical, physiologic, and cognitive immaturity<sup>423</sup> Among the immediate risks of climate change are severe injury, disability, drowning and potentially fatal conditions including hyperthermia, heat stress, renal disease, and respiratory illness.

In the aftermath of disaster, children also face risks associated with both mental and physical health. The high levels of malnutrition already affecting children in the Philippines mean that not only will nutritional status deteriorate further, but also children will be more vulnerable to the effects of infectious disease. Where water supply, sanitation and other physical infrastructure are damaged, children will rapidly also be exposed to the effects of water borne disease, disease spread by flies and other insects, injury and pollution-related diseases.

Natural disasters often result in displacement, for unaccompanied children as well as families. Some will end up in evacuation centres, where conditions (including sanitation) are often very inadequate. Displacement enhances risks of human trafficking, migration for work, sexual exploitation and family break-up. The poorest households, with fewest assets or savings, will be most vulnerable in this regard. For children who remain in their place of residence, many will immediately start to work to help restore home and livelihood, often in hazardous environments where injury is common.<sup>424</sup>

Natural disasters also interfere with education. Some children are displaced, and therefore far from school, some schools are destroyed, and others used as temporary shelters. Each of these eventualities lead to disruption in regular class schedules, sometimes prolonged.

The Philippines has conditional cash transfer scheme for chronically poor families, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps). Evaluations have shown some positive impact, especially for younger children.<sup>425</sup> New measures are being taken to extend the programme to increase the impact on older children, and to increase retention in secondary school in particular.<sup>426</sup> Despite these promising moves, however, it is clear that in times of natural disaster, when external support is most desperately needed, recipients are less likely to receive their benefits. Further, displacement and migration of the poorest people will also result in a loss of registration, either short term or more permanently.

Examples from around the world show that susceptibility to natural hazard depends as much on economics as it does on climate and related events. Where households and communities are able to access decent infrastructure (housing and schools in particular), or to invest in more resilient livelihoods, insurance and technology, the long term effects are significantly reduced. Similarly, where early warning systems are in place, the impact of disasters is greatly reduced. In many contexts, these protective measures are accessed by better-off people, or people in towns, but not available to the poor or to people in remote communities. Once again, it is the poor, and especially children living in poverty, who are least likely to be protected, and most likely to experience the greatest and most long-lasting effects of shocks.

## INVISIBLE CHILDREN: POVERTY AMONGST MIGRANT, REFUGEE, INSTITUTIONALISED AND HOMELESS CHILDREN

Any discussion of child poverty needs to recognize that the poorest and most vulnerable children are often those who are not counted.<sup>427</sup> Within a country, children without adult caregivers, homeless and institutionalized children, and children in illegal occupations or highly stigmatized groups are all likely to be excluded from national statistics, and from service provision. In addition, children who are on the move, and particularly on the move between countries, are often excluded – indeed, transnational migrant and refugee children have even been missed out in discussions of exclusion from data collection. The numbers thus overlooked can be very substantial, in all countries including high income countries.

Having left their household of origin, children are often uncared for and unsettled, either on the streets, in temporary shelter, in institutions, or on the move. Children who have left home may experience more than one of these conditions, as their circumstances easily change. For example, children on the streets may move, or be detained; former detainees and institutionalised children may run away; children on the move are vulnerable to trafficking or detention. At any time, circumstances may be involuntary, or forced, and many children are at risk of losing their freedom entirely. Box 6 narrates how conflict, migration, detention, child labour and homelessness all intertwine in one boy's life, with risk and insecurities forcing a series of changes over which Samir has little power.



Photo: Save the Children

Catherine, four years old, and her family live in a remote riverside community in Eastern Samar, Philippines which was affected by Typhoon Hagupit. A mango tree fell on their house; and their community was submerged in approximately 4-foot deep floodwater for days. They were left homeless.

**BOX 6 SAMIR'S STORY**

'...My name is Samir. I am 17 years old. I come from Darfur in Sudan. My father died during an attack on our village by government forces several years ago and I went to live with my uncle along with my siblings. I married very young, when I had just turned 17 in accordance with tradition. I married my uncle's daughter in order to preserve my father's name. I never had the chance to go to school. I earned a living by working in the market, running errands for a business man. One day I was taking some money, (equivalent of) 150 Euros, to a local school for orphans on behalf of my boss when the police caught me and took me to a prison. They kept me there for a month, gave me electric shocks, beat me with weapons. Sometimes I was starved for days and also threatened with rape. My uncle managed to get me released because of his connections but the police imposed a lot of conditions which made it very unsafe for me to stay there.

My family thought I should leave for my own safety. My uncle paid 600 Euros to a smuggler to get me to Libya. I was put in a truck; there were 80 of us, Eritreans and Sudanese. The journey across the Sahara took six days and we survived on the little food and water we had taken with us. Some people died from hunger and thirst. When we arrived at the Libyan border, the smugglers divided us up into smaller groups and took us by car to Ajdabiya. People who had money were released immediately. As I didn't have enough, the smuggler took me to a farm and made me work there for 20 days without payment, following which he dropped me off in Tripoli. After about a month, in May 2014, I was arrested and taken to Abu Salim jail. I was kept there for ten days and then transferred to Ain Zara for 20 days. There was no legal process in either facility; no lawyers or judges, the only requirement was to pay but I did not have any money for my release. The UN visited Abu Salim one day and took away a sick person. No-one visited us in Ain Zara.

Men and women were separated in both facilities but minors were kept with adults. The officers beat us every day.

In Ain Zara, I didn't know how many women there were, I saw them from afar. The guards used to rape them. We heard the women screaming all the time. I used to see officers walking and talking about rape.

We only had one meal a day in both places – macaroni, rice. The drinking water was salty. The toilets were inside the cells in Abu Salim; we put some clothes up for a bit of privacy. The toilets were outside in Ain Zara but too few of them, only three bathrooms for 400 people. If you couldn't find a space in the cell at night, you had to sleep in the bathroom. There was no health care; one man was very sick in Ain Zara but there was no doctor and he died. We were taken out every day from both places to work in the officers' houses, doing cleaning, building works. One day, one of the bosses at Ain Zara took me and another detainee to clean his house. Then, on account of it being Ramadan, he just let us go.

After leaving detention, I worked in a factory in Tripoli for a while but had to leave there due to fighting in the city in around June 2014. I went to Garabulli. I got together the 1000 Libyan dinars required to go to Italy through my own savings and with the help of my friends. When gathering people for the journey, the smuggler kept us locked up in a farm for three days. Then one morning, they took us to the sea, put us on the boat, gave us a phone to call the Italians and a map, and set us off. We spent two days at sea and then called the Italians after which a boat arrived and took us to Sardinia. We were then taken to Torino, given food, clothes and a shower, and let go. They did not take my fingerprints in Italy. I decided to go to France because I saw people who had applied for asylum in Italy living on the streets. I left with a group of Eritreans, and when we arrived in Paris, we learnt that is a place called Calais from which we could go to England "because British protects you". I stayed in Calais for two months – even though I was in a tent in the 'jungle', I felt safe, at least I wasn't worried that the government would try and get someone to kill me.....'

*This testimony was given by a 17 year old male asylum-seeker from Sudan who was detained in Abu Salim and Ain Zara facilities in Libya in mid 2014.*

*He was interviewed in Calais, France in December 2014, and was later reported to have arrived in the UK in early 2015.*

*'Samir' is a pseudonym*

Children are found on the street in towns and cities across the world, yet they remain very largely uncounted and unreached. They may be running away from domestic abuse and dysfunction, victims of conflict or natural disaster, marginalised groups or minorities. They may be seeking to survive, to earn an income, or to escape from unbearable home circumstances. In most contexts, boys are more likely to be found on the streets than girls – attributed to their greater propensity to run away from an abusive family environment, and the greater susceptibility of girls to being trafficked or kept off the streets for the purpose of exploitation.<sup>428</sup> Both boys and girls on the street work, most commonly combining begging, hawking, portering and scavenging. On the streets, they face injuries, health and hygiene problems, abuse and harassment, substance abuse and addiction, and diverse forms of sexual exploitation. To cope with these risks they often join gangs, which offer support and protection, albeit at a price. With gang membership comes an introduction to criminal activities, with children often used as pick-pockets, drugs-couriers, in the service of older gang members. Children on the streets are mobile, cautious of authority, and often show significant behavioural problems; as a result, the limited services that exist face manifold difficulties in reaching, retaining contact and helping with street children.<sup>429</sup>

In the countries of eastern Europe and central Asia, children from poor families are at risk of institutionalisation, especially children with disabilities and from minority ethnic groups. More than one in every 100 children is in institutional care; despite commitments, this number is in fact rising in 12 countries.<sup>430</sup> Children in institutions lack the individual care they need, resulting in physical, cognitive and emotional damage. Children in institutions are on average smaller than children who grow up in families, and reach developmental milestones more slowly. In general, they show poor cognitive performance, lower than average IQs and perform worse at school. They are over represented in special education and vocational schools, limiting their ability to secure employment later in life. Their diminished relationships as children limits their ability to form normal relationships, even as adults.<sup>431</sup>

For migrants, children in transit and at destination are largely invisible, unless and until they are legally recognized in their new place of residence. Even then, migrant and refugee children face multiple problems and inequalities. Interventions and public pronouncements addressing or seeking to “deal” with migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are very largely focused on adults, particularly men. However, in reality, this renders invisible the very large number of children who are themselves international migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, or who are affected by this growing phenomenon.

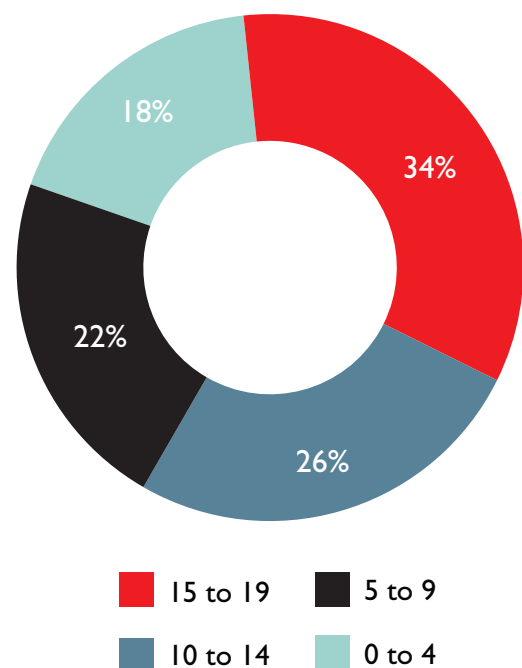
UNICEF and the UN Population Division highlight the fact that a growing ‘youth bulge’ in low and middle income countries is happening while fertility rates in

developed countries fall and populations age.<sup>432</sup> This creates a situation in which international migration is likely to increase, resulting in more people migrating from developing to more developed societies in search of opportunities and services that they cannot access at home. In this context, the issue of well-being of transnational children is likely to become more important in future.

According to UN statistics, the total number of international migrants in the world in 2013 was 231,522,000, of whom almost 50 percent were women.<sup>433</sup> This number has increased from about 176 million in 2000.<sup>434</sup> Most of international migrants are found in Europe (72.45 million), United States (45.78), sub-Saharan Africa (17.22), the Russian Federation (11.04) and Germany (9.84). Many are also found in France, Canada and Australia. In 2013, Greece received a little less than a million, Italy about 5.71 million, and Sweden about 1.5 million. In Sweden migrants constitute 15.9 percent of the total population, whereas in Italy migrants are a little above 9 percent.<sup>435</sup>

Children make up a substantial proportion of migrants. An estimated 33 million of the migrant population are under 20 years old, about 16 percent of the total.<sup>436</sup> Studies show that in some locations, children for a much larger proportion of the migrant population.<sup>437</sup> Regional analyses show a variation from 28 percent in Africa to 10 percent in the Americas,<sup>438</sup> while an ILO study estimated that 42 percent of migrants at the Cambodia-Thai border were minors.<sup>439</sup> Amongst this population, middle and later adolescents are more numerous, but perhaps not by as much as may often be thought to be the case (see Figure 25).

FIGURE 25 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT CHILDREN, PERCENT



About 20 million international migrants under 20 reside in least developed or developing countries, as compared to 13 million in developed countries.<sup>440</sup> This is a very similar distribution to the destination of adult migrants.<sup>441</sup>

Gender differentials are small: there are about 95 female for every 100 male child and adolescent migrants globally.<sup>442</sup> In Africa, the gender balance is reversed, and there are about 108 female for every 100 male child and adolescent migrants.<sup>443</sup>

### CHILDREN AT ORIGIN, IN TRANSIT, AT DESTINATION, AND LEFT BEHIND

**At origin:** The reasons behind children's moves are multiple. Both "pull" and "push" factors affect decisions to **migrate**, but behind most of them is the imperative to find a more secure life, in terms of physical safety, economic opportunity, and personal freedom.

Amongst the critical push factors driving child migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are the need to escape debilitating levels of poverty, and associated deprivations (including disease, hazardous work and living conditions, and lack of opportunity for schooling). Environmental disasters, earthquakes, and climate change that compound vulnerabilities all contribute to movements of children (for example, in Philippines). Danger, in the form of wars, conflict, lawlessness and criminal activity are additional factors, relevant particularly to countries with volatile political or military status (Mali, Mexico). Social factors including gender based violence and forced marriage also prompt children to migrate.

Man-made shocks and political drivers also lead children and their families to flee in search of viable livelihoods. One example of this is the case of Moldovans, who fled their country after the collapse of the Soviet Union in search for better labour opportunities, and are currently spread across various European countries including Italy, Poland, France and Greece.<sup>444</sup> Poverty, lack of freedom and censorship may be yet another reason for leading individuals to move, particularly youth and adolescents, while in countries including Eritrea, where conscription is mandatory, young men and women admit leaving the country in order to avoid military service.

For migrants, departure may be planned, or not. Planned migration often involves families contributing to the costs (sometimes repeatedly) of a chosen family member seeking economic opportunities elsewhere. In other cases, migration is sudden: for example, in the first four months of the conflict in Mali, some 280,000 people were displaced, including many who fled into neighbouring countries;<sup>445</sup> in Syria, over 4 million have left the country since 2012, in addition to over 7 million internally displaced people.<sup>446</sup>

**In transit:** Since 2000, the IOM estimates that about 40,000 migrants died in transit.<sup>447</sup> This figure appears to be growing rapidly. In recent months the number of refugees and migrants dying on their journey to Europe driven a substantial increase, and brought this issue to greater prominence: in 2013, IOM estimated a global total of 2,400 deaths in the course of migration,<sup>448</sup> rising to over 3000 in 2014<sup>449</sup> and, in the first nine months of 2015, to 3620.<sup>450</sup>

Unsafe transit affects all migrants, but is expected to be more urgent in relation to children. When children travel on their own they become vulnerable to additional kinds of threats, including exploitation. Girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment, and abuse. According to one report, girls who migrated to South Africa from other countries were forced to have sex with the guards at the border in order to be allowed to cross.<sup>451</sup> If children are undocumented, such risks are compounded because children are 'invisible' to authorities, and untraceable by their families. Children are usually transported with the help of intermediaries, who often take no safety measures. There seems to be no mechanism to ensure that children arrive at their destinations safely and that their families are informed.

#### BOX 7 EGYPT: ORIGIN, TRANSIT AND DESTINATION

In recent years, Egypt has served as a source, transit and destination country for international immigration. A growing number of Egyptian youth seek to reach to Europe, in search of higher standards of living and better employment opportunities, despite the known risks of doing so. According to one study, most youth want to migrate temporarily (less than five years), with boys and men between 15 and 20 most likely to want to go. Many of those wanting to migrate have already moved from rural to urban areas, as a result of poverty. In Cairo and other cities, they find many refugees and asylum seekers from Syria, Yemen, Eritrea and other countries, arriving in Egypt – either to stay, or in the hope of moving on. Wider society, public institutions, and infrastructure are unable to cope with the growing numbers of migrants, and schools are overcrowded. This results in increased hostility and discrimination against refugees, who are perceived to compete with the meagre available goods and opportunities of the already poor locals.

**BOX 8 MEXICAN YOUTH DETAINED IN TRANSIT**

Mexico has a youthful population, and struggles to provide health, educational and economic opportunities to this growing population. Due to internal insecurity, drug wars, poverty, and lack of opportunity, many young people are turning to migration. Many families pay intermediaries to take their children to the U.S border, where they are

frequently arrested by US border guards. Children are then taken to detention centres, where they stay in cramped conditions, receive little care, and physical and mental activity. Between January and September 2014, 230 migrants crossing the Mexico-U.S border died, which was the third highest in the world.

**At destination:** Short term: When children arrive at a new destination, much depends on whether they have documentation or not, and whether they are alone or with a trusted adult. If documented, they will technically have access to health, educational and other services as citizens in the host country. If undocumented, they will often be detained.<sup>452</sup> If not caught, and without documentation, they will have no legal status in the host country and no access to social protection or basic civil rights. Children are a particularly vulnerable group in this case because they may be easily exploited, and any earnings withheld by employers who are aware of children's legal 'invisibility'. Girls may have little alternative to domestic care work or other informal sector jobs, and are at high risk of sexual exploitation, whether at another work place or in sex work.<sup>453, 454</sup> In Italy for example, 90 percent of sex workers are

migrants, and many African, Caribbean and Eastern European girls and women end up becoming prostitutes.<sup>455</sup>

Even children with documentation endure multiple rights failures. Asylum-seekers must wait in detention centres until they go to court and obtain a right to stay in the country. Children may be held in adult conditions, as a result of "age-dispute", in which destination countries make an assessment of the age of a child without adequate proof of birth date. In these centres, conditions may be unsanitary, and detainees may receive no regular health services, opportunity for physical activity, clean water, communication with their families, and so forth. Schooling is rare. In most cases children are cramped together, often without their parents, or other care and supervision.<sup>456</sup>

**BOX 9 LONG TERM PROBLEMS FOR MIGRANTS IN SWEDEN**

As of 2008, about 13.8 of Sweden's population was foreign-born. Among some of the most common countries of origin are Iraq, Iran and Bosnia-and-Herzegovina, as well as Chile, Somalia, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey. Foreign-born adults are six times more likely to receive social assistance than ethnic Swedes, with most recipients being young adults. Just 2 percent of ethnic Swede children are poor, compared to 52 percent of children with single foreign born

mothers. Although absolute poverty has been reduced by about a half since 1990s, the wealth gap between migrant and ethnic Swede families has remained large (about 1 to 10). Studies show that there is ethnic discrimination in Sweden, particularly in the labour market. Migrants have more difficulty finding a job, and receive lower salaries. Even migrants who have been in Sweden for over 20 years stay receive lower wages than native Swedes.

**Long-term:** In the long term, migrant children often experience prolonged income poverty, poor housing, and challenges accessing education and health services. The same situation extends to children of migrant parents, born in their new country. Children may be disadvantaged in accessing quality education and decent employment due to discriminatory attitudes and practices in the host society. In Sweden (and indeed in many other European countries), migrants have issues with finding employment as a result of racial discrimination.<sup>457</sup> Immigrants with higher levels of education often do not usually practise the professions they have been trained in their original countries – this may be due to language problems, which can also be an impediment to taking required accreditation exams. Difficulties in finding employment leaves families in poor housing and deprived areas, where educational

opportunities for children are often of a lower standard than elsewhere.<sup>458</sup> Subsequently, the children of these parents (foreign or born in host countries) are at a disadvantage, driven by material deprivation, lack of opportunities, social exclusion and discrimination.

Migrants facing difficulties in securing employment often end up taking low paid and insecure forms of employment, including part-time, casual, sessional, zero-hours and seasonal work. In many instances, this is associated with reduced access to social security protection in the event of job losses, and may also be below minimum wage. Having a child or children in a household with parents engaged in this type of work is strongly associated with 'working poverty' (working, but below the income poverty line). In Italy, some 20.2 percent of migrant children live in working



poverty<sup>459</sup>, which is almost triple that a household of no children (Innocenti Report Card, 2014: 17).

**Trafficking:** It is important to note that not all child migrants have moved as a result of their own or their family's decision, or in response to prevailing conditions. In fact, children are often moved without their consent, through trafficking. The crime of trafficking of children is defined as recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation.<sup>460</sup> Trafficking is a crime against humanity, and a comprehensive abuse of children's rights. Knowledge on the magnitude of child trafficking is scant. ILO's 2002 estimate of 1,200,000 trafficked children worldwide remains one reference point.<sup>461</sup> More recent US Government estimates suggest 600,000 – 800,000 people are bought and sold across international borders annually: since some 27 percent of human trafficking victims are children, of whom two-thirds are girls,<sup>462</sup> this suggests that up to 200,000 children are trafficked internationally each year. Most children trafficked are exploited through sex work or forced labour. In some regions, trafficked children are also used in conflict (both as child soldiers and for sexual exploitation), rituals, begging and forced marriage.<sup>463</sup> In others, illegal adoption is also significant: these children may be used for crime, in slavery, or sex work.<sup>464</sup> Children are at particular risk of traffickers where they lack secure, adult caregivers. This may be when they are already on the move, when they have been orphaned, when they have run away from abuse in the family, or when they are already engaged in work to support household incomes.<sup>465</sup>

**Children left behind:** Children left behind are sometimes considered privileged, often as a result of the remittances sent by parents or siblings abroad. Remittances to developing countries are three times greater than overseas development assistance, and in many instances greater than foreign direct investment. Where countries have large populations overseas, remittances can comprise a major contribution to the economy. For example, the Philippines, with a population of 98 million, has some 8.23 million Filipinos abroad, leaving between 3 and 6 million children behind,<sup>466</sup> has personal remittances amounting to 10 percent of GDP (2010-14).<sup>467</sup> Sharp rises in remittances are usually seen following natural disasters – for example, in 2010 in Haiti (following the earthquake) and Pakistan (following floods), suggesting that transfers to family in home countries make an important contribution to social protection.<sup>468</sup> However, children in homes benefitting from remittances have reported discrimination and bullying, arising from the perceptions of others that they are better off.<sup>469</sup>

Notwithstanding this, not all families and children left behind receive remittances. A large number of refugees and migrants are in developing countries, where opportunities for income earning are limited. Forced migration due to extreme circumstances (conflict and rapid onset disasters) has pushed populations out of

countries such as Syria, into countries that offer little in terms of opportunity. The largest number of refugees world wide are in Iran and Pakistan, struggling to meet daily needs.<sup>470</sup>

Further, regardless of remittance receipts, various studies have shown that children left at home experience the effects of lack of parental attention, feelings of abandonment, and lack of persons to confide in and trust.<sup>471</sup> Although in most cases, when parents leave, family members move in to take care of the children, the absence of the parent can have long-term effects. Studies report that children whose mothers left when they were still very young, often experience psychological effects.<sup>472</sup>

Evidence from Sri Lanka suggests that the daughters of migrant mothers are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse, rape and incest. While research into such issues is fraught with ethical and methodological issues, the report argues that experiences of child abuse are highest in districts where female migration is highest, and points to a study that concluded that 50 percent of incest cases occur in families where the mother has migrated. Further, it identifies reasons to believe that risk of incest and sexual abuse is greatest in households where “unhealthy family backgrounds” (alcoholism, violence etc) was the most important reason why the mother left the household. The report suggests that the children (both boys and girls) of migrant mothers are more likely to be subject to commercial sexual exploitation, often linked to the tourism industry in Sri Lanka.<sup>473</sup>

Data from China shows that many parents chose to leave their children behind rather than bring the children with them when they migrate domestically for employment, with experts putting the total number of left behind children at 69.7 million in 2014.<sup>474</sup> Of these, it is estimated that over 9 million do not meet their parents even once a year.<sup>475</sup> While each child is unique and exact guardianship arrangements vary from family to family, Chinese academic research does suggest that in aggregate this phenomenon has significant impacts including impacts on children's health, psycho-socio development and learning outcomes.<sup>476</sup>

Qualitative studies based on children's accounts suggest that children may feel depressed, lonely and resentful for being left alone, but also increasingly perceive their parents only as a source of money and gifts,<sup>477</sup> particularly when the migrant parent is the father.<sup>478</sup> Children with migrant fathers are also affected by the emotional, social and economic impact of separation on their mothers, whose capacity to raise children may be undermined as a result. One study from Central Asia reportedly found that children left behind more often suffered from nutritional and health problems, showed impaired emotional or physical development, became sexually active earlier in life, resorted to substance abuse, and were more frequently infected with diseases including STDs.<sup>479</sup>

Children living in poverty are at highest risk of homelessness, being on the street, in institutions, on the move, migration and trafficking. In such circumstances, they are regularly exposed to hazardous conditions in transit and at destination. Children who may not be poor prior to migration, or to the events that forced them to move, are at strong risk of poverty and deprivation during transit and at destination. For many child migrants, poverty is accompanied by rights failures, especially in terms of education, and by discrimination and exclusion. The underlying drivers of their experience are usually

poverty, political and natural shocks. Even where these exist as drivers of migration, however, they are not the only drivers of harmful migration. The experiences described above are also the result of inadequate institutions, rent-seeking and abuse of authority, crime and human rights abuse, inequalities, willingness to overlook and strongly negative and discriminatory attitudes. Even in the event that migration happens, including migration of poor children, the risks and harm that result are as much a consequence of poor management of the situation as it is of the situation itself.

## CONCLUSION: PATTERNS AND DRIVERS OF CHILD POVERTY

Children live in poverty in all countries – in the lowest income and most fragile or conflict affected countries, in a wide range of middle income countries and in high income countries with sophisticated social security systems. Children also experience poverty in countries affected by climate change. Some of the poorest children are those who are largely invisible or overlooked – homeless, institutionalised, in illegal housing, exploited or trafficked.

Experiences of poverty combine material deprivation with diminished access to services and social exclusion. This combination of effects are found in the developing world and are mirrored in the experiences of children living in poverty in rich countries. Moreover, children around the world report very similar feelings in response to stigma and exclusion, expressing frustration, hopelessness and anxiety about their circumstances and prospects for the future.

Child poverty is driven by a range of factors at different levels. These are common in all settings, although the depth and relative importance of each factor varies.

- In terms of *identity*, children who belong to excluded groups – for example minority ethnic groups, indigenous people, disabled children, children of certain caste and tribe – are in many instances more likely to experience poverty, discrimination and stigma;
- At a *household* level, child poverty is strongly affected by their parents own background – their education, status in the labour market, whether they are young or a single mother;
- At *institutional* level, children living in poverty experience exclusion and discrimination, undermining equitable access to quality education, health, policing, and other essential services;
- Child poverty is strongly influenced by *economic and social policy*. Where policy is strongly inclusive and pro-employment, backed up by strong social provisions, child poverty will be reduced;
- *Labour markets* affect child poverty. Besides child work, labour markets also influence migration, household income security, and the availability of work for women as well as men;
- *Insecurity* created by climate change, conflict, natural disaster and other widespread shocks are significant drivers of child poverty, with particular and long-lasting effects especially for young children;
- *Politics, governance, and the rule of law* affects child poverty. Where the poor exert influence and exercise voice in the context of an accountable and democratic government, the interests of the poor are better reflected in national priorities.



Luis tried to migrate to the US from Guatemala after his community was impacted by coffee rust. There were very few jobs and he felt there were no opportunities in his community to live a good life. He wanted to study, it is his dream to get a degree. But Luis had a long and difficult journey, during which he became very sick with dehydration and in a confused state, fell under a train and lost his leg. Luis, now back in Guatemala, uses his experience to warn others from going down the same road as he did.

# 4 WHY DOES CHILD POVERTY PERSIST?

## Key messages of this chapter

- Child poverty is underpinned by structural inequalities, that drive long term poverty for most of the world's poor.
- In the economic domain, children are greatly over-represented amongst the poor. Their position is entrenched by lack of opportunity to gain skills for improved work / livelihoods, lack of assets, and exposure to the effect of shocks.
- Poverty is also driven by social inequalities and discrimination. Stigma and exclusion attaches to poverty, and to groups that commonly experience poverty, creating powerful barriers to change.
- Gender inequalities create particular problems for girls and women. At all ages, gender violence reinforces poverty for many. From adolescence onwards, girls are most likely to drop out of school, get married and/or start childbearing.
- Environmental inequalities also expose poor children to the greatest burden of hazard, though pollution, toxicity, resource depletion and loss of assets.
- Child poverty exists in all settings, but is most entrenched, enduring and damaging in contexts where the political will to address poverty is weak.

For most families and children, poverty is strongly persistent. It persists because prevailing conditions do not allow access to the resources and opportunities to strengthen livelihoods and build a secure life, and hence prevent them from moving out of poverty. This is the consequence of prevailing economic policy and social structures that largely ensure that the distribution of deprivation endures.

Inequalities in economic and social domains significantly influence the opportunities and prospects of us all: for many people, they significantly limit outcomes across all domains. Since poverty is enduring, childhood is for many the beginning of a life that will be characterised by deprivation and/or disadvantage compared to others. Deficiencies in childhood mean that as they grow, children raised in poverty will be less healthy, less educated, less able to build a comfortable life as adults and less confident that they have the abilities or opportunities to do so. The inequalities they experience in opportunity inevitably

translate into inequalities in outcomes. Through the same process, their children will often inherit the same state.

Intergenerational poverty is also driven by the fact that girls raised in poverty are more likely to marry young, and to start child bearing at an early age. In low income countries, social norms around child marriage are strongly associated with poverty. Poor girls are twice as likely to marry as their non-poor peers, who are more likely to remain unmarried and in education.<sup>480</sup> Child marriage may be considered normal and acceptable, and may also be driven by the wish to legitimise an unwanted pregnancy, to control or limit the “risky behaviours” of single girls, and the hope of financial benefits for either girls or their families.<sup>481</sup> Young brides often have little knowledge of sexual and reproductive health, and use of contraception may be unheard of.<sup>482</sup> Similar patterns are found in richer countries, with teenage pregnancy strongly shaped by economic status. In the UK and USA, girls from poor families are eight times more likely to give birth young than those from richer groups.<sup>483</sup> Young mothers are likely to have poor outcomes around education, employment and income. Their children have been shown to be more likely to be underweight and/or premature, and to experience worse physical and mental health, impaired cognitive development, poor socialisation and lower

learning outcomes.<sup>484</sup> Moreover, the children of teenage mothers are at high risk of poverty themselves.<sup>485</sup> Research in the USA shows that their daughters are more likely to give birth young themselves, and their sons are more likely to go to prison.<sup>486</sup> This provides an important transmission channel for child poverty.

#### BOX 10 INEQUALITIES IN SURVIVAL AROUND THE WORLD

**In Niger**, a child born in the subnational region with the highest mortality rate in 2012 was nearly five times more likely to die before their fifth birthday than a child born in the region with the lowest rate. These inequalities in life chances have doubled since 1998.

**In Indonesia**, a child born into the poorest 40% of households in 2012 was nearly two and a half times more likely to die than a child in the richest 10%. This inequality has doubled since 2002.

**In Honduras**, in 2012, a child born in Islas de Bahia region was three and a half times more likely to die than a child born in the most advantaged regions of the country. This inequality has increased considerably since 2006.

In Vietnam, children born into the Kinh ethnic group in 2010 were nearly three and a half times less likely to die than their non-Kinh peers.

Equality is a core value of the Millennium Declaration, and indeed of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Yet strong evidence of the intergenerational nature of poverty in very different contexts around the world suggests that global commitments to end poverty and accelerate development for people are hampered by sustained inequalities. Such inequalities systematically limit the realisation of human potential in countries all around the world, which in turn undermines economic progress, exacerbates social and environmental vulnerabilities, and contributes to disharmony and conflict. In this regard, the adoption of a specific SDG and target on inequalities represents a significant step forward.

Inequalities drive the “lottery of birth”: the fact a child’s survival and the fulfilment of many other children’s rights very largely depends upon the wealth, place of residence and ethnicity of their parents.<sup>487</sup> Inequalities mean that some children are born to very young mothers, or parents with little or no education or income, will suffer the effects of preventable disease, have less opportunity to learn than others, and may be exposed to a range of risks and hazards.

Inequality can be discussed in terms of opportunities and outcomes. A focus on *unequal opportunities* highlights the disadvantages that attach to specific groups, such as women, people with disabilities or members of different

racial or ethnic groups. Disparities and discrimination mean that membership of these groups strongly affects a person’s opportunities, and inevitably their outcomes too. Some argue that *unequal outcomes* are good, in the sense that they spur competition and ambition. However, when interests of the wealthy predominate and exclusion of certain groups is deep-rooted, the elite have a much better opportunity to secure good outcomes for themselves and their children. In contrast, poor and excluded people have scant opportunity to do so. As this gap widens, inequalities entrench to the extent that a person’s birth overwhelmingly determines both opportunities and outcomes.<sup>488</sup>

#### BOX 11 SDG 10: REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND BETWEEN COUNTRIES

##### Targets:

- 10.1** By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 percent of the population at a rate higher than the national average
- 10.2** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
- 10.3** Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
- 10.4** Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality
- 10.5** Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations
- 10.6** Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions
- 10.7** Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies

Societies that are more equal, whether rich or poor, are those in which Governments are prioritising access to universal and inclusive services, in the context of inclusive economic and fiscal policies, and social security. In such contexts, progress towards eliminating child poverty is most rapid. Indeed, the case study in chapter 3 on Sweden points out that the small but persistent pattern of child poverty that remains in that wealthy and generally very equal society is underpinned by specific issues in the design social security and operations of labour markets. In contrast, child poverty is more widespread where commitment to economic inclusion and universal access to basic services and social security is more ambivalent.

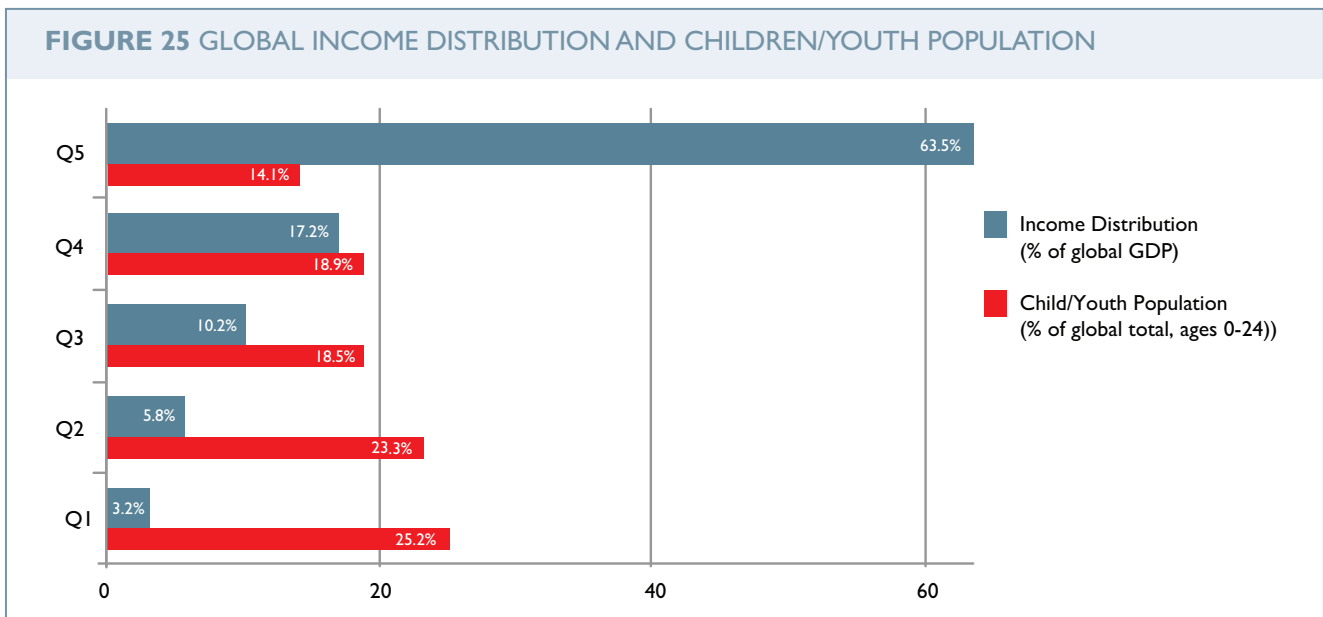
This chapter reviews the key manifestations of economic and social inequalities that underpin household poverty across generations, building a causal link between poverty in childhood, and subsequent poverty amongst adults, and their children. It also reviews the effects of gender inequalities, environmental inequalities, and the effects of crisis and shock on child poverty.

## ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES

Economic inequalities exist between countries, and within them. In the past two decades, progress towards closing the vast gap between countries has been made, inequalities within countries has increased. Indeed, the extent to which in-country inequality has risen means that the world is just as unequal today as it was thirty years ago.<sup>489</sup> Today, we live in a world in which the top 20 percent of the global population enjoys more than 70 percent of total income and in which the top one percent owns more than 30 percent of total wealth and about one quarter of total income. Approximately 50 percent of children and young people are living below the \$2/day international income poverty line, with many more not far above.<sup>490</sup>

Children are much more likely to be poor than adults. Most children live in the poorest income quintiles – globally, 48.5 percent of children are in the bottom two income quintiles, with access to just 9 percent of the world’s resources.<sup>491</sup> Figure 25 shows the global distribution of resources across income quintiles, together with the distribution of children across these groups.

FIGURE 25 GLOBAL INCOME DISTRIBUTION AND CHILDREN/YOUTH POPULATION



The growth and change in the global economy over the last three decades has been profound. The extent to which economies, labour markets and finance have been forged together means that the lives and incomes of people across the world are now closely interlinked. The behaviour of markets, financial institutions and the private sector have changed, as countries compete with each other to attract investment, and to sell goods and services. There are a range of ways in which this has affected children.

One of the most significant changes in many economies has been the change in labour markets. In many developing countries, economic growth has not met the expectations for work of growing urban populations.

Youth unemployment is around three times greater than adult unemployment worldwide, with substantial disparities in all regions of the world.<sup>492</sup> In a broader context in which casual work, informal employment, zero-hours, seasonal and other precarious forms of work form 90 percent of employment globally,<sup>493</sup> youth are particularly likely to remain in work for short periods of time.<sup>494</sup> Youth unemployment is a huge loss to the economy in terms of unrealised productivity. Research in the UK suggests that the £20 million per week paid out in Job Seekers Allowance for youth is dwarfed by the lost value of their work: an additional £70 million lost to the economy, and to incomes that would in many instances impact on young children.<sup>495</sup>

Women also face difficulties, remaining greatly under-represented at higher levels in all parts of the labour market, and more likely to be in the informal sector than men. This is driven by two important factors. First, lower access to education and early drop outs mean that many women are less well qualified for work. This is caused by discriminatory social and institutional norms, and by the prevalence of early marriage and pregnancy. Second, discriminatory norms also exclude women from traditionally male occupations, and create a preference for men in employment.<sup>496</sup> As economies grow, women's work is said to remain largely focused on the "four-Cs" (care, catering, cleaning, cash-registers), to which clothing manufacture, micro-level vending and subsistence farming could be added to represent a very large proportion of working women. Women at all levels earn less than men. Moreover, evidence from India suggests that where legislation has sought to reduce the gender pay gap, the effect has simply been to push women out of the formal labour market, and into the informal sector.<sup>497</sup>

Migrant workers face similar problems to women and youth in the labour market, with lower status jobs, lower wages, insecure forms of employment, and less access to social security. Where migrants are undocumented or do not have the right to work, these problems are more acute.

These labour market effects have significant implications for children of all ages. As parents – especially young parents, single mothers, and migrants – struggle to secure employment, children are more likely to be raised in poverty. This trend is observable in a range of contexts, including wealthy countries where social security systems aim to protect children from poverty. As children grow, they are also very much away of the situation of their older peers. Known difficulties in entering the work force, let alone realising aspirations for the type of work they want to do, affect motivation, school performance, and even mental health. In some parts of the world, they also render children vulnerable to trafficking, and trigger the decision to migrate.

## PRIVATISATION POLICIES

Many of the policy prescriptions that have contributed to globalisation tend to favour a strongly market-driven approach. Rather than focusing on the provision of universal access to quality services, such policies emphasise "cost-sharing" between Governments and users, with limited provision for exemption.

The move towards privatisation of basic services, subject of the World Bank's World Development Report 1993,<sup>498</sup> introduced "disastrous" health user-fee policies<sup>499</sup> across many impoverished countries, along with similar policies for education and water. There are examples of circumstances in which these policies had consequences for the poor, for example, limiting their access to health services and pushing some households further into poverty.<sup>500</sup> Education user fees also barred many children

from accessing school, and exposed others to damaging trade-offs as parents cut other necessary spending to afford schooling. Although reversed in some countries/sectors, the impact of these policies endures especially in Africa.

### BOX 12 EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECTS OF USER FEES 2002

Around 3 million people are driven into poverty in Vietnam each year as a result of meeting healthcare payments – a 4 percent rise in the poverty headcount

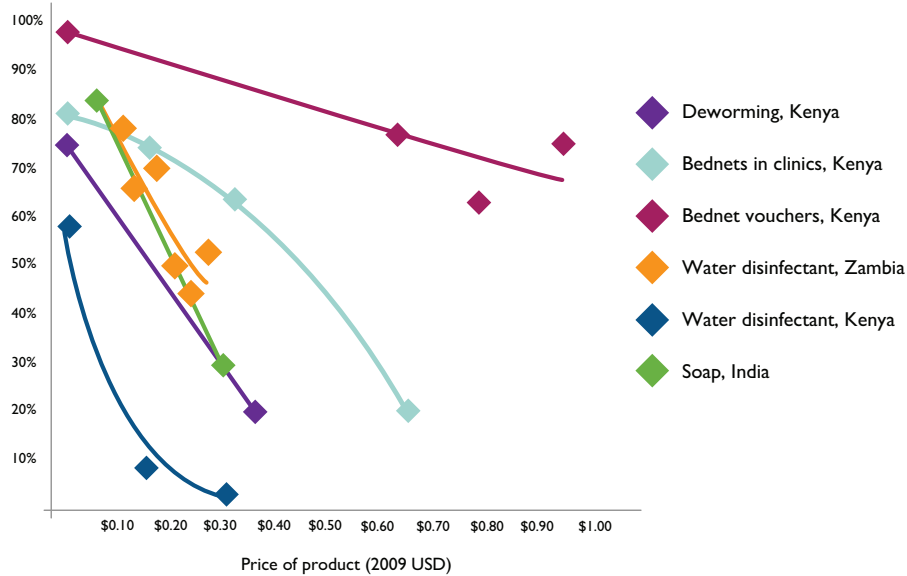
Half of all urban families in financial crisis in Bangladesh cite medical costs of a family member as the cause of their problems

In one survey in Cambodia, 45 percent of rural families found to have lost their land had done so as a result of debts relating to medical expenses – the largest single category

The introduction of user fees was in many instances coincident with structural adjustment policies, which weakened public services. Many private health and education service providers mushroomed, which pushed many poor families towards a range of low-cost and largely unregulated services.<sup>501</sup> The growth in low cost education, and associated issues for children living in poverty was discussed in the previous chapter, in the context of India. There are some parallels in the low-cost health sector, with local clinics also competing with traditional healers, herbalists and other alternative health practitioners. The growth of higher-cost private services tends to cater for the better off, and to those able to contract potentially harmful debt to pay for them, leaving the poorest to access whatever public services can provide.<sup>502</sup>

Another legacy of the privatisation of basic services is the utilisation of the market for the distribution of primary health products. Social marketing and similar approaches are founded on the premise that the market will be better able to distribute basic commodities, and indeed this mechanism has been successful in distributing condoms and contraception. Subsidies may be used to prime demand, or to reduce wholesale prices. However, evidence from a series of evaluations from 2009-2011 shows that demand for a wider range of products of significant benefit to children is highly sensitive to cost, with significant drop-off in utilisation for a range of essential items with even a small price (see Figure 26).<sup>503</sup> In this regard, it is important to understand better the opportunities and constraints of the commodification of essential products for children living in poverty.

**FIGURE 26 DEMAND FOR PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE PRODUCTS BASED ON PRICE**



Another effect of the user fee policy has been the habit of allowing public health providers to offer a “high cost” alternative, in which patients who can pay enjoy additional care and facilities. This arrangement can serve to create distortions in the quality of services received, and in effect provide a subsidy for those able to pay, and undermines equity in access to health services.

Privatisation in the water sector is perhaps the most enduring component of the push for market based service provision inherent in the structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and 90s. It is also amongst the least discussed, with significant implications for children. Despite the unanimous declaration of the UN General Assembly in 2010 that access to clean drinking water is a human right,<sup>504</sup> many Governments and international institutions maintain that water should be paid for. The African Development Bank is robust in its position, challenging the “misconception that rights entitle people to free water; instead, water and sanitation should be clean, accessible and affordable for all. People are expected to contribute financially or otherwise to the extent that they can do so.”<sup>505</sup> This position, echoed loudly by the World Bank and others, is premised on the notion that public provision of water can only lead to wastage, and indeed that water services are best managed through privatised water utility companies. Further, it is variously assumed that costs of water are “marginal” (by implication affordable for all), and that companies that are able to deliver water are similarly capable of implementing targeted cost-waiver schemes. However, a number of examples worldwide suggest that such policies have greatly disadvantaged families and children living in poverty.<sup>506</sup> In the absence of *effective* systems to *guarantee* access to the poor, it is evident that such policies reduce access of children living in poverty to clean drinking water, and hence to good health and other rights.

### ASSET INEQUALITIES

Another important driver of child poverty is the extent of inequalities in asset ownership. Differences in asset ownership does not in itself constitute inequalities, but rather what is important is the social, legal and institutional structures that create and reproduce large disparities in ownership and control of resources over time.

In many places, there are customary or statutory restrictions to the rights of women and other disadvantaged groups to own property. Indigenous peoples are also in many instances affected by such restrictions. Even where ownership is possible, inequalities may also be created through disparities in access to legal or administrative institutions necessary for that ownership to be recognised. Such institutions may have explicitly discriminatory policies and systems, or may reproduce patterns of social exclusion that tend to deter and exclude people living in poverty and disadvantaged groups (for example, in conducting business in official languages only).<sup>507</sup> Factors that limit access to land are a critical element with regards to asset inequalities. Disparities in access to land have long-standing historical roots in many countries, with women and members of minority ethnic or linguistic groups and castes often lacking equal entitlements compared to other members of the same communities.<sup>508</sup>

These factors strongly determine the prospects and opportunities for children, and leave many in poverty throughout their childhood, and into adulthood.



## CRISIS & SHOCK

The global economic crisis created multiple shocks around the world. While the richest have been protected, and even enjoyed growing levels of wealth, people living in poverty bore the brunt of the downturn.<sup>509</sup> Children were significantly affected, as parents lost jobs, and austerity measures led to cuts in social spending, including social safety nets. Whether during the era of structural adjustment,<sup>510</sup> or more recently in response to economic crisis, austerity measures have been shown to disproportionately affect the poorest, especially children.<sup>511</sup>

With children more likely to live in poorer households (see Figure 26), where competition for scant resources is greatest, analyses of the income available specifically for children's needs shows that compared to adults, they experienced approximately double the level of income inequality as a result of the crisis.<sup>512</sup> Research on a sample of 32 low- and middle-income countries by Save the Children showed that in two-thirds of these countries, the income effectively available to children in the poorest groups grew more slowly than the richer groups between the 1990 and 2010, and in 12 countries, the rate of growth available to children in the richest decile was at least double that for the poorest. In six countries, the incomes available to the poorest children fell.<sup>513</sup>

The effects of the crisis were focused on the poor, and on particularly vulnerable groups including children in rural areas, of ethnic minorities, and of single mothers. In many countries, such groups saw little benefit from any period of growth before the crisis, and in many instances already weakened by international commodity price rises, domestic economic crises, and local environmental shocks. Data from Young Lives shows how such shocks tend to compound each other, with the vulnerabilities exacerbated by one event leaving a household more exposed to the effects of subsequent shocks. The effect of the global crisis was simply to add yet another severe shock.<sup>514</sup> In this context, while poor families struggle to maintain their livelihoods, the economic crisis also led to a freeze or even reduction in core social spending in many countries.<sup>515</sup> Many children already in need of improved health care, education and social protection were only able to access reduced services, at a time when demand for support can only have been increasing. As a result, children were affected through worse nutrition, depleted household asset levels or increased household debts. In these circumstances, the probability of chronic poverty is high, reinforcing the intergenerational transmission of poverty.<sup>516</sup>

## SOCIAL INEQUALITIES AND DISCRIMINATION

At the core of social inequalities lie circumstances that deny some people equal standing with others. People subject to social inequalities experience feelings of being second class citizens, undermining their worth and

dignity. The examples cited in this report and especially in the previous chapter where children living in poverty have expressed their views, demonstrate people living in poverty worldwide cite discrimination and stigma as one of the most important characteristics of poverty. The children's testimonies reported in chapter 2 suggest that a growing realisation of their "lesser" status is a common and defining experience for those growing up in poverty, and the cause of anxiety, depression, anger, falling aspirations, or a decision to escape.

Being poor is a stigmatised state in and of itself. The outwards signs of poverty amongst children – how you look, what you wear, what you eat, where you live and what you are able to do – is enough to attract various manifestations of exclusion. However, people living in poverty are often also members of other groups that also experience discrimination. The tight links between poverty and caste (India), poverty and ethnicity (Mexico), poverty and migrant status (many instances) are all examples of how just as poverty is strongly associated with other characteristics, so can the focus of exclusion and stigma become blurred.

Social inequalities are often attached to groups according to hereditary or other factors beyond the control of those affected. These can include sex, ethnicity, caste, gender, disability, sexuality, religion or place of residence. Local or indigenous language and culture can further perpetuate exclusion. Groups defined in this way may have only limited integration into society, with lesser educational opportunities and even legal impediments translating social exclusion into economic deprivation. Certain livelihoods are also stigmatised, including domestic workers, rag-pickers, night-soil cleaners and others. It is important to note that the people doing these jobs are often predominantly those whose heritage gives them few other options, and that children often enter these occupations at a young age.

Social inequalities underpin strong institutional discrimination in different contexts around the world. This report has highlighted examples including discrimination based on caste, economic status, place of residence, race, ethnicity, and disability. Where social inequalities are driven by strong and discriminatory social norms, children in these groups are shunned, marginalised and subject to exclusion and abuse without sanction. This can extend as far as the policy and legal spheres, where neglect for certain groups can be sanctioned. This is strongly linked with persistent poverty, as children are unable to enjoy social, economic and civil rights. Disability is both a cause and a consequence of child poverty, and the special needs of children living with disabilities are often overlooked. Besides physical needs and special services, which are often inadequate especially in poorer countries, children with disabilities are often excluded from social and community life, from opportunities for participation and voice.

High levels of social inequalities and discrimination are associated with hopelessness and falling self-esteem. For this reason, higher levels of social inequalities have been linked to a rise in negative behaviours, including drug and alcohol abuse, crime and violence.<sup>517</sup> Young men are particularly vulnerable to homicide, suicide and drug-related problems, while women are exposed to early pregnancy, gender based violence and other forms of abuse.<sup>518</sup> Children growing up in affected families and communities are exposed to multiple risks, and increased probability of similar experiences in adolescence and beyond.

### ENVIRONMENTAL INEQUALITIES

Environmental inequalities describe the way in which people in poverty are exposed to disproportionate environmental hazard, and reduced access to the natural resources necessary for a decent life. Such inequalities have a profound effect on children, inter alia exposing them to diverse and life-threatening chemical hazard.

At a global level, activities that are banned or regulated in wealthier countries are relocated to the poorer countries. One stark example of this is toxic, hazardous and electronic waste dumping. At the heart of this trade is the fact that rich countries are producing an increasing amount of waste, while introducing increasingly stringent, and expensive, regulations around disposal. In contrast, disposing of such waste in a poor country can cost a fraction of the amount, reflecting lower standards, less regulation, and ineffective public opposition to the trade. Moves towards banning this trade are progressing, but are far from complete, especially with regards to e-waste.<sup>519</sup> Some 80 percent of e-waste from developing countries is currently shipped to developing countries, where waste-pickers expose themselves to significant health hazards, especially from exposure to mercury and heavy metals, as they seek to retrieve valuable components from the dumped items.<sup>520</sup> Although the numbers are not known, ILO concludes that a “significant proportion” of these endangered labourers are children, some as young as five years old.<sup>521</sup>

Similar patterns exist within countries too, with industrial contamination, sewerage and other waste disposal impinging on areas inhabited by the poor, not the rich. These too create multiple risks for children, undermining healthy development.

### GENDER INEQUALITIES

Within all poor and disadvantaged groups, girls and women will usually fare worse than men. With lesser access to food, health services, education, assets and voice, in most cases girls and women living in poverty experience significant disadvantage in comparison to male family members.

One particularly important driver of child poverty among girls and women is the extent of disparities in

education. Despite significant progress in improving access to primary education for girls since the adoption of the MDGs in 2000, achievement for many girls living in poverty remains weak, and usually weaker than their male counterparts. As adolescence approaches, many girls face social pressure to move out of school and into marriage.<sup>522</sup> With the changing global economy demanding a more skilled and educated workforce, young women find themselves left out, with little option besides less valued occupations and the lower end of the informal sector.<sup>523</sup>

The poverty of girls and women is also perpetuated by the significant burden of family care and unpaid domestic work. Besides giving them less time for study and work, domestic work can create a significant physical burden, made worse for those whose nutrition and health status is compromised, or who are young. The poorest women, including single parents, usually face the greatest problems balancing domestic and paid work, as household survival depends on their capacity to manage a very substantial workload. In such circumstances, girls may be required to leave school in order to help maintain the household, care for children, collect water, and other domestic responsibilities.

Gender based violence is not limited to girls and women living in poverty, although there is a link between social exclusion, poverty and violence.<sup>524</sup> Moreover, many women living in poverty and experiencing domestic violence are unable to change their situation, because a lack of financial resources and limited independent income and/or control over their own finances. The Addressing Inequalities world-wide consultation on the post-2015 development agenda observed that gender based violence was “deeply grounded in fundamental inequalities between men and women, established by varying but nonetheless similar norms around gender.”<sup>525</sup> Gender based violence is a manifestation of structural inequalities between the sexes, in economic and social spheres. Many contributors to the consultation argued that “gender-based violence, including psychological and sexual abuse, often represents a perverse expression of dissatisfaction with regard to power and self-worth on the part of the perpetrator. It is fuelled by a desire to feel and to appear “like a man”, in line with regressive norms of masculinity, and in particular a perceived privilege and entitlement.”<sup>526</sup> Moreover, it is clear that where conflict and violence is rife, gender-based violence against girls and women can escalate rapidly.<sup>527</sup>

Violence and abuse is a driver of child poverty. Children who experience or witness violence are vulnerable to significant damage to physical and mental health and emotional well-being. Where violence is encountered in the home, children will often also have experienced material and emotional neglect. At school, where violence is common in many countries, learning will be reduced or curtailed completely. In places of conflict, children experience profound psychological and physical

effects of violence, particularly from sexual violence against girls. Physical injury resulting from sexual violence can be very severe, with risk of infertility, fistula and other significant health problems.<sup>528</sup> Social impacts can also be grave, with girls who are known to have experienced sexual abuse subject to rejection in society, and condemned to a life of poverty and further exploitation. A 13 year old who has been subjected to sexual assault in the DR Congo says: “I don’t go to school nowadays – I don’t feel up to it. I don’t like to hang around with other girls in my area either, because they gossip and talk a lot. Today I feel like I’m ill – I don’t feel right. I feel like I am suffering from something and I don’t know what it is. I think about what happened a lot.”<sup>529</sup> Prospects for education and the realisation of a better life will be greatly undermined, and child poverty likely to be repeated in the next generation.

### BOX 13 VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Every year up to 1.5 billion children are subjected to violence, and 150 million girls and 73 million boys are raped or subject to sexual violence.

Studies in several countries of Africa found that 70% of all children had experienced physical and/or emotional and/or sexual violence before they reached their 18th birthday.

As many as 68% of female adolescents with intellectual disabilities have been abused before the age of 18.

Violence has a devastating impact upon children, threatening both their survival and development. Its impact has been captured by the Committee on the Rights of the Child:

- Fatal or non-fatal injury (possibly leading to disability).
- Health problems (including failure to thrive, and lung, heart and liver disease and sexually-transmitted infections in later life).
- Cognitive impairment (including impaired school and work performance)
- Psychological and emotional consequences (feelings of rejection, impaired attachment, trauma, fear, anxiety, insecurity and shattered self-esteem).
- Mental health problems (anxiety and depression, hallucinations, memory disturbances and suicide attempts).
- Risky behaviours (substance abuse and early initiation of sexual activity).
- Developmental and behavioural consequences, such as non-attendance at school, and antisocial and destructive behaviour, leading to poor relationships, school exclusion and conflict with the law.

## PERSISTENT CHILD POVERTY

This chapter has highlighted a number of very significant manifestations of inequalities that drive child poverty. Inequalities in wealth distribution, labour markets, social spending, and the impact of crises considerably disadvantage the poor, and create significant barriers to exiting poverty. Further, social exclusion and environmental inequalities entrench deprivation, and undermine prospects for change.

This range of inequalities are mutually reinforcing, as exposure to inequalities in one domain increases the chances of being subject to inequalities in another. For example, people from minority ethnic or low caste backgrounds are likely to have less chance of a job or secure livelihood, poor access to land, housing and services, and exposure to hazardous environmental conditions. This serves to reduce health status, lower educational achievement of children, entrench poverty, and perpetuate the same experience for subsequent generations. Moreover, since these drivers of poverty are so firmly interlinked, the possible benefits of opportunity to make progress in one dimension can be undermined by disadvantage in others. For example, improving access to school for children subject to multiple inequalities may not result in improved performance or attendance if the child is hungry, sick, or has to walk long distances.

For children, structural inequalities explain why poverty is persistent, and why it is multidimensional. If poverty were transient, caused by a particular event or circumstance, it would be possible to locate and address that cause. However, powerfully constructed inequalities create a set of mutually reinforcing circumstances, which together serve to entrench child poverty in a range of domains.

Few of the factors that entrench child poverty are beyond the domain of influence of Governments and leaders. Better policy, services and political will to address child poverty can in any given context be transformative for the lives of children who currently face little prospect of change. In some cases the failings of governance are stark, and in others much more subtle, but in all cases there are many choices that are made that benefit more privileged interests at the cost of vulnerable children. Getting free school meals organised in Europe or the USA in a way that enables poor children to access them without shame and stigma is not as stark an issue as having no books available in a rural classroom in Africa. However, both create serious impediments to learning, and cement social exclusion; and significant and rapid progress could be made to resolving either situation if political leaders were sufficiently interested in doing so.



Chuickne Traore, 6 years old at his school after receiving some schools supplies, including a new rucksack. Chuickne has been displaced by the violence in the North of Mali and now lives with his mother in Bamako. His father remains in Timbuktu, where he is from.

# 5 WHY WE NEED TO END CHILD POVERTY

## Key messages of this chapter

- Child poverty and associated deprivations are incompatible with the realisation of human rights, especially children's rights.
- The effects of child poverty last a life-time, and are transmitted through the generations.
- National development and the well-being of populations at large are damaged by the persistence of child poverty.

This chapter summarises the four most important reasons why Governments worldwide need to work together, and with non-state actors, to end child poverty in all countries.

## CHILD POVERTY IS A VIOLATION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Child poverty is a violation of children's rights. Children have a right to an adequate standard of living, and to enjoy rights to health, education, nutrition, care and protection.

International commitment to the realisation of children's rights is long-standing. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989. It became the fastest and most widely ratified of all human rights treaties, with the United States the only country that has not completed the ratification process.

Global commitment to children's rights continued: a year later, 159 countries attended the World Summit for Children at Head of State or senior level. The summit adopted a Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and a Plan of Action. The Summit recognized that the Convention on the Rights of the Child provided a "new opportunity to make respect for children's rights and welfare truly universal".<sup>530</sup>

The goals of the World Summit for Children were in many senses the precursor of the Millennium Development Goals. However, the prominence and extent of progress around these earlier goals was much lower. This is probably attributable to the structural adjustment programmes implemented in many countries in the 1990s,

which dominated development discourse and caused significant and long-lasting harm to many children living in poverty.<sup>531</sup> Moreover, the sense of a *global* commitment and a *shared* drive for results was probably harder to sustain in a pre-digital era.

The MDGs were agreed ten years later, at the largest ever gathering of world leaders at the United Nations. Since then, the MDGs have been the focus of a shift in how business is conducted between Governments, multilateral organisations and other development partners. Growing realisation that results depend on coordinated action, with partnerships supporting and strengthening national programmes resulted in the development of national Poverty Reduction Strategies (and their successors), the Paris Declaration, and other measures. According to Ban Ki-moon, the results have been "profound and consistent gains" that "have taught us how governments, business, and civil society can work together to achieve transformational breakthroughs."<sup>532</sup>

Following the adoption of the CRC, which makes explicit reference to the rights to an adequate standard of living and to social security, the link between child poverty and children's rights was further highlighted by a UN resolution in 2007. It states that "*children living in poverty are deprived of nutrition, water and sanitation facilities, access to basic health care services, shelter, education, participation and protection, and that while a severe lack of goods and services hurts every human being, it is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential and to participate as full members of society*".<sup>533</sup> While children who are not poor face multiple rights' failures, it is certainly the case that children living in poverty are profoundly unable to realise their rights. Addressing child poverty is an absolute requirement for the realisation of children's rights.

**BOX 14 MAJOR GOALS AGREED AT THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN**

**Between 1990 and the year 2000**, reduction of infant and under-5 child mortality rate by one third or to 50 and 70 per 1,000 live births respectively, whichever is less;

**Between 1990 and the year 2000**, reduction of maternal mortality rate by half;

**Between 1990 and the year 2000**, reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by half;

Universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitary means of excreta disposal;

**By the year 2000**, universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 percent of primary school-age children;

Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to at least half its 1990 level with emphasis on female literacy;

Improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances.

If child poverty is a matter of rights, shared global commitments also tell us where the responsibilities lie in addressing it. The human rights framework sets out the duties and obligations of state and other actors in fulfilling human rights. States as the main duty bearers are obliged to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. All non-state actors should respect and promote human rights. This includes private sector actors, who are in particular accountable for respecting rights around labour, environmental standards and the actions of their operations, all of which have significant implications for children.

The UN Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, adopted by the Human Rights Council in September 2012, spell out the specific implications of human rights obligations in relation to people living in extreme poverty, including children. The Principles, which in essence set out global policy guidelines, say:<sup>534</sup>

*Given that most of those living in poverty are children and that poverty in childhood is a root cause of poverty in adulthood, children's rights must be accorded priority. Even short periods of deprivation and exclusion can dramatically and irreversibly harm a child's right to survival and development. To eradicate poverty, States must take immediate action to combat childhood poverty.*

*States must ensure that all children have equal access to basic services, including within the household. At a minimum, children are entitled to a package of basic*

*social services that includes high-quality health care, adequate food, housing, safe drinking water and sanitation and primary education, so that they can grow to their full potential, free of disease, malnutrition, illiteracy and other deprivations.*

*Poverty renders children, in particular girls, vulnerable to exploitation, neglect and abuse. States must respect and promote the rights of children living in poverty, including by strengthening and allocating the necessary resources to child protection strategies and programmes, with a particular focus on marginalized children, such as street children, child soldiers, children with disabilities, victims of trafficking, child heads of households and children living in care institutions, all of whom are at a heightened risk of exploitation and abuse.*

### **States must promote children's right to have their voices heard in decision-making processes relevant to their lives.**

Obligations to address child poverty can also be derived from a range of other human rights treaties, including the Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention of the Rights of Disabled People, the Worst Forms of Child Labour ILO Convention 182, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and others.

The realisation of human rights incorporates the notion of "progressive realisation". This is sometimes seen as justification to accept rights failures – rights are raised to the level of aspiration or ideals, and not in any practical sense treated with any urgency. However, the Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights address this matter, stating that: *States have an immediate obligation to take steps towards the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights, and human rights law demands that at least minimum essential levels of all rights should always be ensured. International human rights law does allow, if resource constraints dictate, for the progressive realization of some aspects of economic, social and cultural rights over a period of time and with well-defined indicators.*<sup>535</sup>

This observation is critical to children, especially children living in poverty, as it strongly limits the scope of progressive realisation. It dictates that states are obliged to provide for at least minimum essential levels of all rights with no delay. Further, there is no provision for delay or progressive realisation in realisation of rights unless directly related to resource constraints.

Even in a poor country, there is no justification not to immediately address rights failures that do not require substantial funds. An important example cited around the world would be the exclusion and mistreatment of poor children at school. In a wealthy state, the progressive realisation is by no means a let-out or “weak clause”, but rather an obligation to take “deliberate, concrete and targeted” measures. “Progressive realisation requires a clear programme or plan of action for the progressive implementation” of rights.<sup>536</sup>

The shared global commitment to children’s rights, and specifically to the elimination of child poverty, is driven by the evident importance of this urgent task.

## CHILD POVERTY AND ITS ASSOCIATED DEPRIVATIONS CAN LAST A LIFE TIME

The effects of child poverty and its associated deprivations are profound. Children living in poverty are up to three times more likely to die in childhood than their non-poor peers.<sup>537</sup> The evidence cited in this report shows how children suffer the long term physical and cognitive effects of ill-health, malnutrition, and harm resulting from work, injury and environmental hazard. Social exclusion, discrimination and stigma can have significant mental effects, provoking hopelessness, resignation, anger and destructive behaviour.

Malnutrition in early childhood, especially stunting, can irreversibly harm both physical and cognitive development. There is well-documented evidence linking malnutrition to reduced language development and cognition, with serious implications for learning at school.<sup>538</sup> Young Lives has extended analysis of the effects of stunting to include measures of psychosocial well-being, showing that low height for age at around 8 years was associated with lower self-efficacy, self-esteem and educational aspirations among children at 12 years.<sup>539</sup> Although Young Lives has also shown that a degree of “catch-up” can be achieved if circumstances improve (for example through cash transfers, health interventions, and improved household incomes), such opportunities elude many children living in poverty.<sup>540</sup>

Reduced access to education affects children in poverty. Worldwide, some 58 million children of primary school age remain out of school, most of them girls, many living in rural areas, or in countries affected by conflict.<sup>541</sup> Children living in poverty that attend school often fall behind richer children, even those who started school performing well.<sup>542</sup> As children reach upper primary and secondary age, children living in poverty are increasingly unlikely to remain in school. The inability to meet costs of education (which usually rise as children get older), the need for children to work, and prevailing social and gender norms, all serve to create significant shortfall in educational achievement for poor children. The disadvantages that result from an early exit from school

last a life time: for example, education is strongly linked to finding a secure job or having a successful business; each additional year of school is estimated to increase life-time earnings by 10 percent; educated women have substantially less chance of maternal mortality. The benefit to earnings from education cuts across both formal and informal workplace, and rural and urban areas.<sup>543</sup>

Children raised in poverty are also more vulnerable to diverse forms of harm. The evidence presented in this report describes a range of abuse and exploitation, particularly affecting children with least security and protection. Sexual violence, physical abuse, injury and environmental harm, trafficking, hazardous labour and crime all most likely affect poor children, particularly those on the move, on the streets, or without adequate adult care. Means of avoiding such threats can themselves involve other forms of harm. For example, girls may be forced into child marriage as a means of reducing threats of sexual abuse directed at adolescents that remain unmarried; boys may be sent to work as a means of keeping them away from the hazards they would be exposed to if left to roam slums or streets.

## CHILD POVERTY IS TRANSMITTED THROUGH THE GENERATIONS

The disadvantages of a childhood of poverty and deprivation readily translate into adult poverty, and from there to the next generation. The tenacity of poverty between generations is the result of a complex set of factors, that over time create limitations and disadvantages which become increasingly hard to escape. Since its drivers are numerous and mutually reinforcing, poverty is likely to persist.

An analysis of the literature on intergenerational poverty reveals that both household and wider factors influence the extent to which poverty is transmitted between generations. Household factors include income, but also household composition, early childbearing, lack of productive assets, low education and skills, poor health, experience of violence, and inadequate care. Wider factors include conflict, prevailing cultural and social norms, discrimination, exposure to economic shocks, and poor governance.<sup>544</sup>

The transmission of poverty can be reinforced where parenting is compromised. Where parenting is harsh or insufficiently responsive, cognitive and emotional development can be impacted. Crime, violence, substance abuse and similar factors can all severely undermine the quality of parenting, leaving children more likely to remain in poverty, and to transmit poverty to their own children. Where children are removed from their birth family, perhaps following the death of a parent, or migration, the quality of parenting may also be reduced. In many contexts, orphanhood results not only in increased likelihood of financial stress, but also in experiences of discrimination and in psychological and social deficits.<sup>545</sup>

Childhood health is strongly related to adult economic status. In particular, malnutrition, iodine deficiency, anaemia and inadequate cognitive stimulation all contribute to impairments in cognition and reduced educational achievement. Children born to women whose childhood was affected by poor health are likely to also impact directly on their children's cognitive development, especially if the mother's nutritional status remains poor.<sup>546</sup>



Nirob, 5 months old, plays with his neighbour in their village in Bangladesh. Nirob has had continuous sicknesses including pneumonia, diarrhoea and is malnourished but his family cannot afford to travel to the nearest health clinic (a two day journey) or to pay for his treatment.

More attention has been directed to the analysis of intergenerational poverty in wealthy countries. A summary of research in the USA reports a range of studies showing that children who have experienced poverty as children are between two and seven times more likely to be poor as adults as children brought up non-poor, varying with the ages, data sources and definitions. Intergenerational transmission of poverty is particularly strong for African-American children, and risk of future poverty is also higher for non-poor African-American children. This suggests that both poverty in childhood and race are strong risks for adult poverty in the US. Further, non-completion of High School is strongly related to household poverty, and a strong indicator of future poverty. The UK shows similar findings with regards to educational achievement.<sup>547</sup>

## CHILD POVERTY HAS BROADER IMPACTS ON SOCIETIES AND ECONOMIES

The effects of child poverty extend well beyond the individuals and families who live in poverty. Rather, the persistence of child poverty has deep consequences for everyone in society.

Societies where inequalities are high, and children are left in poverty, do less well than others in terms of secure economic growth. In both developed and developing countries, a higher level of inequality is linked to slower growth,<sup>548</sup> and shorter periods of growth.<sup>549</sup> Prevailing macro-economic thought from the IMF now focuses on the idea that income inequalities prevent low-income households from being healthy, accumulating assets, and investing in human capital – importantly, in children's education. This reduces both productivity and aggregate demand. Further, income inequalities create threats of financial crisis, global imbalances, and conflict.<sup>550</sup> In contrast, investing in children, bringing their parents into the labour market, and promoting safe, skilled and productive work are all useful ways of stabilising household well-being, maximising national productivity, sustaining demand and building a strong economy.

In contrast, high levels of inequality divides societies. If inequalities are sustained, these divides deepen, with deterioration in social cohesion, and risk of insecurity and conflict. The idea that the poor are somehow bad, different or responsible for their predicament grows. If inequalities are addressed, those who have previously enjoyed privilege may resent the high cost associated with investing in significantly disadvantaged segments of the population. The compromise may be an uncomfortable truce, in which the poor have to work hard to secure a level of redistribution that is inadequate to make substantial difference. This is a regular theme in the discussion of the issue of conditionalities attached to cash transfers: *“Most notably, the explicit conditionality of CCTs is a useful means to buy the support of the middle classes. While directly transferring money to the poorest deciles of the population without asking for anything ‘in exchange’ may be an unpopular policy, ... conditioning the transfers on the adoption of positive behaviours is more politically feasible as it creates a sense of the ‘co-responsibility’ of the poor. Even the most ‘resentful’ of the middle classes would not dare to argue against conditioning a transfer to guarantee a better future for children. The intergenerational element of CCTs and the attempt to establish an ‘explicit contract’ between tax-payers and beneficiaries, therefore, increases their political feasibility.”*<sup>551</sup>

The circumstances that perpetuate child poverty can have grave long term effects. Conflict, environmental damage, crime and abuse have all been related to the effects of entrenched inequality. Children who find themselves in these societies are exposed to responsibilities and trauma beyond their years, and deprived of the right to a safe, secure childhood. This represents a profound failure of their rights as children, and a significant threat to the well-being of society at large.



# 6 HOW WE CAN END CHILD POVERTY?

This report has examined child poverty worldwide, in the poorest and most fragile countries, in middle income countries which are home to three-quarters of the world's population, in rich countries, and in countries affected by climate change. It has described children's experiences of poverty, examined the distribution of poverty, and looked at why child poverty persists. It has also shown that children are more likely to be poor than adults, and more likely to remain poor when circumstances improve.

The persistence of child poverty is underpinned by inequalities. Inequalities in different forms reinforce each other, forging extreme differences in opportunities and outcomes for children in different families, communities and countries. The scale and magnitude of inequalities across the world create multiple deprivations, entrench rights failures, and limit opportunity for people to improve their lives. Child poverty is chiefly driven by manifestations of inequalities in four domains:

Child poverty is clearly strongly driven by economic inequalities that drive **monetary poverty**. Being in a low income household denies boys and girls the opportunity for the childhood they are entitled to, through failures with respect to survival and good health, learning, and protection from diverse hazard and risk. In low- and middle-income countries, these effects are felt in terms of absolute deprivations, as food and other basic needs are not adequately met. Indeed, monetary poverty is an important reason why children are separated from homes and/or caregivers, raising risks yet further. Monetary poverty also leads to exclusion and stigma, loss of aspiration and hopelessness, and consequences for mental health; even in wealthy countries, where children's absolute material status is as badly deprived as their counterparts in low- and middle-income countries, this effect is significant. Being raised in poverty is intrinsically linked to fundamental failure in human rights.

Child poverty is also driven by inequalities in **access to quality services**. Children being raised in poverty can have limited physical access to schools, health services, social welfare, justice and so on. Even where

they are close to services, however, they are often inadequate or inappropriate for their needs. Services that may be accessible to the poor (for example in slums or impoverished rural areas) are often lower quality than those available to the better-off. For children affected by conflict and climate change, and children on the move, services may be physically inaccessible, perhaps damaged, unstaffed, or closed. Far from "levelling up" or directing special attention to address the needs of the poor, public institutions may even be the source of further inequalities, actively favouring advantaged people while castigating the poor in countries of all levels of economic development. Financial provision often entrenches this situation, with a greater level of funding directed towards services accessed by the non-poor.

Child poverty is firmly intertwined with **discrimination and social exclusion**. Structural inequalities tied to status, discrimination and stigma are attached to various categories of people: people with disabilities, minority ethnic and racial groups, indigenous people, travelling people, religious groups, castes, people living in particular areas, the chronically poor, and many others. It also applies particularly to women in all these groups and to other women too. Discrimination is underpinned by prevailing social attitudes, which are reproduced in political and institutional spheres, and in law. Excluded people have little opportunity for voice, and are greatly under-represented. Children raised in these circumstances are comprehensively disadvantaged, as the effects of their "lesser" status diminish outcomes and opportunities at all stages.

These drivers of child poverty are all underpinned by **broad structural inequalities**, which permit powerful interests to dominate economic and fiscal policy, political participation, public debate, service provision and redistribution, and the functioning of police and courts of law. Such inequalities exist within nations, and between them. They render the poor (especially the poor in less wealthy and powerful nations, and in particular children), largely powerless to exercise voice, participate on an equitable footing, demand change or claim rights.

Three problems apply to well-meaning attempts to address child poverty. First, the false assumption that economic growth will inevitably reduce poverty is often extended to make similar assumptions about how children living in poverty will benefit from general "development" efforts. By raising average standards, it is assumed that

poor families, including children, will be included. However, this is no more likely to be true than long-gone convictions around the likelihood of economic “trickle down”.<sup>552</sup> For children living in poverty to realise benefit, policies and programmes need to explicitly and directly address their needs.

The second is the fact that even policies and interventions that explicitly address child poverty often address matters of evident importance in one or other of the above domains of inequalities, but not others. Examples of these include some very effective programmes to reduce mortality, improve health or increase school attendance. These may yield good results, and provide necessary contributions to reducing child poverty. However, in the context of structural inequalities, inequitable governance, entrenched discriminatory norms and social exclusion, the effects of positive change may be rendered marginal by the powerful structural norms. Without simultaneous change in other domains, these important results will not be sufficient to have a sustainable impact on child poverty. The long-term impact of better health or more schooling will be overridden by sustained inequalities in other domains, and reduce the extent to which selected improvements can lead to sustained poverty reduction.

A third is the extent to which efforts to address child poverty sometimes emphasise narrow or means-tested assistance, in place of an emphasis on more broad based services, and a more inclusive economic policy environment. Narrow means tested approaches evidently serve a purpose, but broader application of assistance to a group of children (particularly in an area where average outcomes are poor) can often be more effective. For example, addressing budget limitations and institutional discrimination that undermine the delivery of quality, inclusive services can serve to reach the most deprived children, while being less costly, overall and per child; less likely to cause stigma; and more cost-effective and sustainable. Moreover, targeted programs can only really be effective where effective and inclusive systems are available, including health, education and protection.

Reducing child poverty is therefore contingent on reducing inequalities in all domains, through programming that directly addresses the needs of children. This depends on engagement at *all levels* – at individual and household level, at community level, in society at large, in institutions, at a political level, and at international level.

Countries that show low poverty rates compared to others at a similar level of income tend to perform well at all of these levels. At an individual and family level, a combination of universally accessible health, education and social services ensure that children from more vulnerable households do not suffer the learning and cognitive disadvantages and other long lasting effects of disadvantage in childhood. Eliminating the “postcode lottery” that determines the realisation of human capital is not only fulfilling children’s rights, but also maximising the potential contribution of the workforce. At a macroeconomic level, therefore, successful countries

also take measures to incorporate a very high proportion adults in the workforce, including provision for young people, for retraining and up-skilling (active labour market interventions), and for working mothers. This supports more equal *primary* distribution of wealth, as full labour market participation and wage regulation greatly reduces the number of children growing up in low income households. Social security, protective services and targeted measures represent *secondary* redistribution, addressing the needs of individuals whose circumstances still render them vulnerable.

Sustaining low levels of child poverty therefore requires a **combination** of (i) **universal quality services** (education and health, also water, housing, policing, justice and other services); (ii) **economic inclusion** and maximised employment, and (iii) **secondary redistribution** and the targeted provision of social security to those unable to access adequate economic opportunity.

It is important to note that these conditions are most reliably met in circumstances where governments and indeed populations value equality, human rights, good governance and accountability. In this regard, lowering child poverty also depends on (iv) **participation and voice** for poor children and their families.

It is notable that the fulfilment of these conditions is primarily the duty of national Governments. Where Governments respect and seek to pursue these goals, partnerships with civil society and international organisations can facilitate rapid change.

The elimination of child poverty depends on transformational change in all of these key domains:

#### UNIVERSAL SERVICES:

**Child survival:** Children living in poverty are more likely to die, and to experience poor health and malnutrition. These outcomes are very stark in poorer countries and populations subject to extreme poverty, but also present in richer countries with lower rates of relative poverty. They driven by a range of shortcomings and deprivations, related to the design and delivery of health services, household incomes, parental knowledge and practices, social attitudes, prioritisation in the allocation of national and international resources, and the prevalence of practices that disempower women and children including gender based violence, child marriage and discrimination and exclusion. These drivers are not discrete; rather, they are mutually reinforcing, thus entrenching poor outcomes for children.

**Learning:** Children living in poverty have a lower chance of going to school, staying at school, and achieving learning goals through good quality education at every level. While progress has been made around enrolment at primary school, as children reach adolescence, these disadvantages become more pronounced. Many girls drop out of school, and child marriage and early childbirth are much more common for girls raised in poverty. For boys, an early exit from

school usually results in entry onto the labour market. These unequal outcomes underpin intergenerational poverty. They are driven by similar factors to disparities in survival: the design and delivery of education services, cost of accessing school and the economic necessity of children's work, wages or marriage, parental and social attitudes, prioritisation in the allocation of national and international resources, and sustained gender inequalities. For children on the move, and those in countries affected by climate change and conflict, learning is often interrupted; once this has happened, it becomes much harder to catch up.

## ECONOMIC INCLUSION

**Economic strengthening:** Families of children living in poverty are usually found at the margins of the economy, in occupations that are low paid, with little opportunity to earn a return for skills. Low-paid workers and people in the subsistence economy lack security, and are exposed to the full effects of shocks. As countries transition from low to middle income, families and children move from subsistence agriculture into paid work (often hazardous) in rural and urban areas. Children often bear the brunt of “coping” as households depend on children's earnings, reduce expenditure on children, send children away, or expose them to the risks of migration. This situation is driven at a household level by shortcomings in skills, capital and training, and also at a higher level in terms of economic policy, functioning of labour markets, and availability of financial services. For the poor in richer nations, economic disadvantage is driven by adverse labour markets, with temporary, casual and other employment arrangements undermining security and incomes. At national and international level, financial practices including tax avoidance, transfer pricing and capital flight distort national economies, and substantially impact on revenues available for children.<sup>553</sup>

## TARGETED PROVISION OF SOCIAL SECURITY

**Protective services:** Children living in poverty are most likely to experience violence, abuse, trafficking, hazardous work and other serious violations. They are most likely to leave home, with or without parents, or be homeless, or found on the streets. They may be exposed to the effects of crime, alcohol and drug abuse, and other negative practices. This situation is sustained by a severe lack of social protection, which would sustain family incomes, reduce the necessity for migration, and by the lack of services for children without care and/or subject to exploitation. These services are often substantially under-funded, driven by a lack of social and political concern for the situation of children in these circumstances, as shown by negative attitudes towards exploited children. These circumstances affect children living in poverty worldwide, as their invisibility, lesser status, reduced access to adequate care and lack of voice reduces the likelihood that they can call on any source

of help to address abuse and exploitation.<sup>13</sup>

**Social protection:** Where adults are unable to participate in labour markets, and household incomes fall (perhaps due to ill-health, old age, disability or social problems), incomes often fall to the extent that households are unable to fulfil their basic needs. For children in these households, the effect of insecure and low incomes can be very substantial, with long term effects. Social protection can ensure that households do not fall below minimum income levels, protecting consumption and assets, and in many cases providing for longer term improvement in individual and family welfare.

## PARTICIPATION AND VOICE

**Participation, visibility and empowerment:** Children's voices are rarely heard, even on matters that directly affect them. When they are, children living in poverty – especially those with disabilities or from minority groups – are often left out. Opportunities to express voice or to participate in a meaningful manner, commensurate with age, are often limited by social norms that constraint the agency of children. Invisibility extends from children's immediate environment – home, school and community – through to their absence in the articulation of policy. Significant gaps in how the poorest and most vulnerable children are counted reinforce this problem; by missing out the homeless, institutionalised, irregular migrants, nomads or slum-dwellers, their very existence is diminished.

**Addressing discriminatory social norms:** Any widespread or influential acceptance of discrimination and exclusion will undermine any attempt to combat child poverty. As long as the marginalisation of identifiable groups is accepted, or even supported, children of such groups will not enjoy the same rights and opportunities as their peers, and will inevitably continue to endure lower economic and social status. The elimination of child poverty is hence contingent on recognising the persistence of social inequalities in all societies – in communities, in the workplace, in institutions and in politics – and on addressing them.

Addressing child poverty by picking a limited selection of actions across these priorities may show results, but will not address the inequalities that sustain child poverty. Rather, achieving priority results that will contribute to ending child poverty depends on incorporating actions at all levels to tackle inequalities that drive existing disparity and deprivation.

The following table provides *examples* of the scope and nature of actions that could support child poverty reduction, while simultaneously addressing the underlying inequalities. In any given context, the exact nature and blend of actions needed will vary, as will the opportunity and capacity to deliver programmes.

<sup>13</sup> Some of the most disturbing and graphic testimony from children living in poverty comes from boys and girls who have experienced violence and sexual assault by police, teachers and other agents of the state who abuse their duty of care.

## Priority area for reducing child poverty

### Inequalities / drivers of child poverty

	Child survival	Learning	Protection	Economic strengthening	Participation, visibility & empowerment
Monetary inequalities	<p>Child sensitive social protection.</p> <p>Nutrition and health-focused social protection, including nutrition support.</p>	<p>Child sensitive social protection.</p> <p>School based programming re feeding, school expenses &amp; requisites.</p>	<p>Social protection focused on emergency needs / sudden-onset risks and threats.</p> <p>Address risks of violence, trafficking, violence, irregular migration etc.</p>	<p>Building economic resilience &amp; child sensitive livelihoods for families with children, including families at risk of shocks.</p>	<p>Financial literacy for adolescents.</p> <p>Savings accounts for adolescents/ asset based development.</p>
Institutional inequalities	<p>Inclusive quality service provision, explicitly addressing the needs of the poor &amp; excluded groups in location and service mix.</p> <p>Sexual &amp; reproductive health knowledge for adolescent girls.</p> <p>Public investment in housing, water &amp; sanitation.</p>	<p>Levelling-up programmes &amp; policies to raise enrolment, quality &amp; retention in schools serving poor people, and to support access to secondary education &amp; beyond.</p> <p>Special focus on services likely to keep girls in schools.</p>	<p>Services that detect threats to children's security, and provide comprehensive response to cases.</p> <p>Rehabilitation services, re-entry into school / vocational training.</p>	<p>Economic policies that protect and promote local producers and small scale business.</p> <p>Promotion of local markets.</p> <p>Incentivise financial services for the poor.</p>	<p>Development of improved data systems reflecting outcomes for all children.</p>
Social & cultural inequalities	<p>Advocacy and enforcement of legal protection of disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Training and oversight of public sector workers (teachers, health workers, police) to address discrimination.</p> <p>Positive discrimination for increasing recruitment of young women and members of poor / excluded groups as public sector workers.</p>		<p>Prioritisation of risks facing children in excluded groups especially girls.</p> <p>Programming on child marriage, girls education, and other manifestations of discrimination.</p>	<p>Adolescent transition skills / promotion of training, vocational skills and preparation for work for young women and members of poor/excluded groups.</p>	<p>Creating space for children to participate in civil society through child-led organisations, including with non-state actors &amp; the media (especially children subject to discrimination &amp; exclusion).</p>
Structural inequalities	<p>Policy and budget analysis to promote child-sensitive expenditures and focus on health, education, social protection.</p> <p>Increase civil society demand for accountability around equity in outcomes and poverty reduction.</p>		<p>Legal protection / domestication of the CRC. Strengthening / implementation of the law against trafficking, violence and other abuse.</p> <p>Regulation of child labour.</p>	<p>Economic and labour policies aimed at agriculture, small scale skilled businesses, and areas of the economy where poor people are found.</p>	<p>Child participation in child sensitive budgeting.</p> <p>Child rights governance, child participation &amp; voice, especially for girls.</p>

Critical within the above set of programmes, and important within any given context of child poverty, is child-sensitive social protection (CSSP). CSSP refers to child-focused or family-based programmes that directly address children's needs and rights and improve child development, and also to measures that ensure that *all* social protection is child-sensitive, by maximising impacts and minimising harms on children. CSSP often involves the transfer of resources, including cash but also vouchers, food and other commodities, intended to safeguard and protect children's access to food and basic services. While such transfers may be similar to other social transfer programmes, which may very well create benefits for children, what makes social protection specifically *child sensitive* is an explicit aim and deliberate measures to maximise benefits and minimise harm for children. CSSP seeks to reach vulnerable children: target groups may include very poor families with young children, excluded groups, mothers with very young children, children at risk of dropping out of school, children without adequate family care, and families with children that have experienced shocks. Transfers are accompanied by behaviour change communication (including measures for the empowerment of women and girls in family decision making) aimed at beneficiary households and communities, increasing local engagement around child survival, growth, learning and protection. There has been much learned about CSSP over the last decade, often at a sub-national level; there is still an important need to sharing these experiences more widely, with the aim of influencing national governments to expand national social protection programming.

Child sensitive livelihoods (CSL) interventions are also an important means of addressing both long-term poverty, and poverty resulting from shocks and disasters, while emphasising benefits for children. Where poor people depend largely on the informal sector or subsistence agriculture, CSL offers a means of increasing household resilience, protecting against the impact of future shocks, and ensuring that children benefit from improved household incomes. In some senses, CSL interventions deliver a similar range of services as regular livelihoods activities – business training, access to capital and equipment, provision of assets, financial services, and savings. However, like CSSP, they also have features aimed to maximise benefits to children, and minimise harm. They target population groups whose weak livelihoods particularly harm children (for example single mothers, or households struggling to send children to school). They also incorporate behaviour change elements, promoting investment in children including improved feeding practices, increased dietary intake, child care and health-seeking behaviours, and school readiness. CSL interventions promote livelihoods

activities that are compatible with adequate child-care and child safety and that do not depend on child labour or on seasonal migration.

For adolescents and young people who have been subject to poverty and exclusion, accessing or responding to economic opportunity can be very difficult. With less education, and confidence undermined by their low status, they lack relevant knowledge as well as competencies including social networks, confidence, self-esteem and negotiation skills. They may avoid participating in available activities, or take part only on the margins. The promotion of adolescent and youth empowerment programmes (AYE) tackles these deficits, helping to address the effects of a disadvantaged childhood as young people approach the world of work. This can include financial literacy, interpersonal skills and entrepreneurship training, mentoring, and apprenticeship / internship experience. For highly disadvantaged adolescents and youth, including migrants who find themselves in an unfamiliar environment, empowerment programmes serve to help them into safer and more secure work. With the gap between childhood and parenthood narrow or even absent for some, this protects not only the beneficiaries, but often their children too.

Strong, sustained national investments in these and other measures for reducing child poverty as an urgent priority will be more effective in societies where the underlying inequalities affecting children are also tackled. They should also be underpinned by policies which are child-sensitive (rather than child-blind) in both design and impact. The 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development sets out the clear recognition by Governments of the centrality of “investing in children and youth” to achieving equitable and sustainable development which realizes the rights of all children. Such investments will depend on turn on drawing down of international support for countries which face the most severe economic constraints and also on more robust national financing frameworks. Save the Children has been among the agencies calling on Governments to increase their domestic tax takes where necessary for stepping up spending to reduce childhood deprivations; and urging international partners to crack down on corruption and illicit financial flows to recapture resources which are needed for the survival and wellbeing of their children.

At the start of this report, the problem of gaps in data was highlighted. The design and implementation of national statistics may leave out the poorest, including the homeless, people in institutions, and mobile, nomadic or pastoralist populations, people living in urban slums and dangerous places, trafficked people and

<sup>14</sup> The Demographic and Health Surveys (funded by USAID and others for 30 years), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (funded by UNICEF for 20 years) and Living Standards Monitoring Surveys (funded by the World Bank for 35 years) are three major household survey programmes, each working in developing countries across the world for over 20 years. The first official meeting of the directors of these initiatives took place in Washington DC in May 2015. It concluded with agreement to collaborate around timing, compatibility and methods.

irregular migrants, and people on the move. An estimated 350 million people worldwide – at least half of them children – may be being overlooked by national and global data. It is likely that most of these are in extreme income poverty. It is possible, and even probable, that the extent of child poverty has been underestimated by around a quarter. These data gaps are critical. A major report on this issue states *“To put it starkly, it is highly problematic that we set global targets to reduce poverty in all its forms without the ability to know whether or not those targets have been met.”*<sup>554</sup>

Improved data would not only track results, but would enable planning, policy design and service delivery to be more effective and efficient. This could be achieved through the incorporation of new approaches to data collection, including new and technology-driven data sources, better coordination and compatibility between major surveys (such as DHS, MICS and LSMS)<sup>14</sup>, inclusion of modules on multidimensional poverty, and integration with administrative data. With this approach, Governments can save money, increase transparency, and provide useable information to civil society, development agencies and investors. At the same time, the integration of better data on accessible platforms and the use of new technology can have two-way benefits. For example, in Chhattisgarh, India, the use of web-based and SMS technology has greatly improved the delivery of subsidised food to the poor through the Public Distribution System, reducing vast leakages and exclusion errors to marginal levels.<sup>555</sup>

Along with numbers, it is important to know what children affected by poverty think about their circumstances, prospects and aspirations for the future.<sup>556</sup> This report has featured the views of many children living in poverty. Available literature suggests that the views of children living in poverty in rich

countries are more often sought than their peers in poorer countries. Voices of children in poorer countries, including views on child poverty, are more likely to be expressed by non-poor children, and to be limited to an agenda defined by the activities of development agencies. Notwithstanding this, it is interesting to note that there are broad similarities in what children living in poverty around the world have to say, when they have the chance. Far from concentrating on the observable conditions that outsiders observe and quantify, children worldwide focus most strongly on stigma and exclusion, and on the hopelessness, frustration, shame, and sense of injustice they experience as a result of poverty.

The elimination of child poverty is critical to the achievement of the sustainable development goals, agreed in 2015 after an unprecedented process of consultation and consensus building. The first SDG articulates a global commitment to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere”, along with other goals relating to hunger, health, education, gender equality, water and sanitation, inequalities and jobs. For children living in poverty in all countries of the world, the SDGs offer a shared commitment to achieving results for *all* children, not incremental gains for some. By committing to the SDGs, all nations have recognised their obligations to children – not only within their borders or for their citizens, but as part of a global commitment. These obligations are not just focused on development cooperation, but on addressing exclusion and deprivation in all its forms, especially for children. As this collaboration moves forward, we have an unprecedented opportunity to work together, across the world, to end child poverty.



School children attend a class at a school in Pukra in Habiganj district, Bangladesh

# ANNEX I

## NOTE ON RESEARCH METHODS

This report has been prepared through a combination of literature review, secondary data analysis, and key informant interview.

The study took as its starting point the following:

- A normative framework guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- A conceptual framework guided by the well-being approach. This requires openness to combining the analysis of quantified deprivations in material or economic domains with evidence of relational and subjective deprivation in political, social and personal well-being.
- An ethnographic approach to secondary research, which takes an iterative and inductive approach to identifying and elucidating the complexities of the subject under enquiry, seeking to understand complexity rather than define an objective condition.

The research process was based on a series of discussions with key informants, based in twelve countries around the world, and literature review. The literature includes much outside the scope of peer-reviewed journals, and care was taken to scrutinise all sources for quality, methodology and other evidence of credibility.

The inclusion of material generated by children was also subject to scrutiny. Work that did not reference provision for ethical review was treated with particular caution, especially where the subject matter and/or age of children gave cause for concern. Further, work that appeared limited to generating approval for projects and programmes was also excluded, as were exercises in

which non-poor children were selected to speak as a substitute for children living in poverty.

Material generated by children was sorted and presented according to themes raised by children from around the world. In this regard, there was no attempt to seek or select material that addresses what the author perceived to be an important range of subjects; rather, the content was shaped by the available materials. In this way, children's lives were described as much as possible in their own terms. However, it is important to note that the views expressed are limited to children who are able to speak. One major bias in this regard is that the views expressed are generally those of older children, whose experience and priorities may not be the same as their younger counterparts.

One consultation with children from Papua New Guinea was omitted. The narration of experiences by boys and girls who had been violently and/or sexually assaulted was highly disturbing, and not suitable for inclusion in a report of this nature. Editing their voices or selecting from the small number of the slightly "milder" examples seemed tantamount to censorship or a denial of their experience. In this regard, it must be recognised that horrific experiences endured of some poor children is often invisible, with bias towards that which is a little less brutal. Moreover, many children who have been treated with extreme brutality may not have the opportunity or bravery to discuss their experience. It is important to recognise that an unknown number of children living in poverty have been subject to abuse that is worse than that which is reported here.

The observations, conclusions and recommendations of this report all emerge from this process. The key points highlighted emerge from a range of literature and/or observations from a range of relevant sources.

## ANNEX 2

## LIST OF PEOPLE CONSULTED

Save the Children Bangladesh	Sharon Hauser Michael McGrath
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Save the Children Sweden	Tove Samzelius
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# ANNEX 3

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# CHILD POVERTY

What drives it and what it means  
to children across the world

**This new report looks at the situation of children living in poverty in countries around the world, shining a light on the drivers of child poverty and exploring why it persists, even in some of the wealthiest places. We also hear from children in poverty themselves: our best guides to understanding the urgency of this challenge.**

Our new report is part of a concerted effort by Save the Children, together with our partners in the *Global Coalition to End Child Poverty*, to ensure that the poorest children across the world receive the attention that they deserve. While there are great differences between societies, it is clear that fundamental similarities exist in the drivers and experiences of child poverty. The same is true of the essential solutions. Acting with determination to achieve these solutions is an imperative for us all.

