

Africa's New Stories On Multidimensional Poverty

Sabina Alkire, Adriana Conconi, Bouba Housseini, Suman Seth and Ana Vaz | June 2014

The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is an index of acute multidimensional poverty that in 2014 covers 108 developing countries. It assesses the nature and intensity of poverty at the individual level, by directly measuring the overlapping deprivations poor people experience simultaneously. It provides a vivid picture of how and where people are poor, within and across countries, regions and the world, enabling policymakers to better target their resources at those most in need.

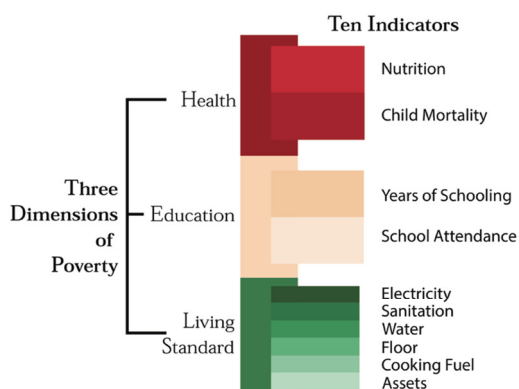
GLOBAL MPI – AT A GLANCE

The Global MPI was developed in 2010 by OPHI and the United Nations Development Programme for UNDP's flagship Human Development Reports, and has been published in the reports since then. The Global MPI has three dimensions and 10 indicators (see graphic below); for details of the indicators, see www.ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index.

A person is identified as **multidimensionally poor** (or 'MPI poor') if they are deprived in **at least one third** of the dimensions. **The MPI** is calculated by multiplying the **incidence** of poverty by the average **intensity** of poverty across the poor; as a result, it reflects both the share of people in poverty and the degree to which they are deprived.

The Global MPI is a powerful tool for policymakers because it shows us not just which people are poor and where, but also how they are poor: **which disadvantages they are experiencing simultaneously**. It reveals different intensities of poverty, as some people are deprived in a bigger share of indicators than others. And it can be decomposed to reveal varying rates of poverty reduction in different parts of a country, or between ethnicities, castes or other social groups.

Inside the MPI



Africa's highlights from 2014 results

- The MPI 2014 covers **37 Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries**, which are home to 94% of the population of the region. **58.5 percent** of them – 462 million people – are identified as multidimensionally poor; this is nearly 30% of total MPI poor of the World out of 108 countries analyzed.
- Of the 462 million people identified as MPI poor, **85.8% live in rural areas**; significantly higher than income poverty estimate of 73.8%.
- Out of the 20 MPI **poorest countries** of the world, **17 are from SSA** with Niger the poorest country; and out of the 100 subnational poorest regions of the World, 98 are from SSA.
- **Highest levels of inequality** are found in SSA countries; the greatest inequality among the poor was in **Burkina Faso** out of the 90 countries analyzed.
- Nearly all countries that **reduced** multidimensional poverty also reduced inequality among the poor.

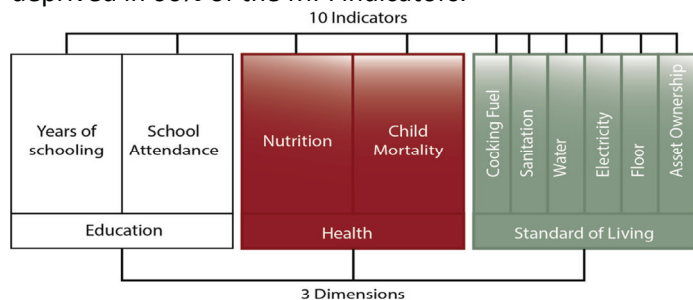
More than half of the SSA MPI poor are destitute

In 2014, we also released a new **measure of destitution**, which identifies a subset of poor people as destitute if they experience a number of extreme deprivations like severe malnutrition, losing two children, having all primary-aged school children out of school, and practicing open defecation.

- Across the 24 SSA countries analysed so far, **53.3%** of all MPI poor people **are destitute**
- In **Niger**, 68.8% of the population is destitute – the highest share of any country
- Although still 58% of Ethiopians are destitute, **Ethiopia** masterfully reduced destitution by 30 percentage points between 2000 and 2011 – the most of any country.

Nathalie - an individual poverty profile

Nathalie is a vivacious 20-year old in the northeast of Cameroon. Nathalie is married, and she and her husband's other wife together have five children. The family lives in rudimentary huts with earth floors. They have no sanitation, and defecate in the bush. The water they use for drinking, cooking and washing comes from an unprotected well and they lack electricity, and cook over open fires. Her life and that of her community have worsened because bandits stole their cattle, but she stands tall and hopes for a better future. The coloured indicators show the deprivations Nathalie faces: she is deprived in 66% of the MPI indicators.



Africa MPI 2014: Updates and coverage

- **Updates of MPI estimates for 14 African countries:** Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Togo.
- **In 2014, we cover 37 countries.** Fully 27 of them have data that are 2008 or later. For 23 Countries we use data that are 2010 or later. This is thanks to many new DHS and MICS surveys.
- MPI statistics are available for **363 subnational regions** across 34 Sub-Saharan African countries.

Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI)

Oxford Department of International Development (ODID)
Queen Elizabeth House (QEH)
University of Oxford, Mansfield Road
Oxford OX1 3TB UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1865 271915

Email: ophi@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Website: www.ophi.org.uk

OPHI gratefully acknowledges support from research councils, non-governmental and governmental organisations, and private benefactors. For a list of our funders and donors, please visit our website: www.ophi.org.uk.

DYNAMICS – HOW IS MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY CHANGING IN AFRICA?

We have changes in multidimensional poverty over time now for **20 African countries**. The top performers in reducing MPI were: **Rwanda** (between 2005 and 2010), **Ghana** (2003-2008), **Tanzania** (2008-2010) and **Uganda** (2006-2011) and **Ethiopia** (2000-2005).

The changes over time are also available for **subnational regions** in most African countries, and **by indicator**. There is good news here too:

Every Indicator - Gabon, Mozambique and Rwanda reduced all 10 indicators of multidimensional poverty statistically significantly. [Nutrition, Child mortality, Years of Schooling, Child School Attendance, Water, Sanitation, Electricity, Flooring, Cooking Fuel, Assets]

Every Region - Gabon, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, and Rwanda significantly reduced MPI in every single subnational region.

Poorest Region - Looking now at Africa's achievements for the poorest, in Egypt, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and Niger, the poorest region reduced poverty the most, enhancing equity across the land.

Poorest Ethnic Group - and in Kenya the poorest ethnic group reduced multidimensional poverty the fastest – it was closing the gap.

More on the OPHI's website

You can see this breakdown in each of the Country Briefings, or via the Global MPI Interactive Databank - visit www.ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index.

A GLOBAL MPI FOR POST-2015

The Alkire Foster method that underlies the Global MPI has been used to official create national MPIs in Colombia, Mexico, Bhutan and the Philippines, each tailored to reflect national priorities. These measures are being used for allocation, targeting, and monitoring, as well as policy coordination.

In June 2013, the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN) was created to support the implementation of national and subnational multidimensional measures. The MPPN and OPHI have proposed that the Alkire Foster method be used to create a Global MPI2015+: a headline indicator that reflects the new agenda post-2015 and tracks deprivations in multiple aspects of poverty.

REFERENCES

Alkire, S., A. Conconi, and S. Seth (2014), 'Multidimensional Poverty Index 2014: Brief Methodological Note and Results', Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, University of Oxford.

Alkire, S., A. Conconi, and S. Seth (2014), 'Multidimensional Destitution: an ordinal counting methodology for constructing linked subsets of the poor'. OPHI Research in Progress.

Alkire, S. and Foster, J. (2011), 'Counting and Multidimensional Poverty Measurement'. Journal of Public Economics, 95(7-8): 476-487.

Alkire S, J. M. Roche, and A. Vaz (2014), 'Multidimensional Poverty Dynamics: Methodology and Results for 34 Countries'. OPHI Research in Progress.

Seth S. and S. Alkire (2014), 'Measuring and Decomposing Inequality among the Multidimensionally Poor Using Ordinal Data: A Counting Approach', OPHI Working Paper 68, OPHI, University of Oxford.