

Least Developed Countries and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

Sabina Alkire and Gisela Robles Aguilar, April 2012

In 2011, the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was released for 109 countries¹. Of these, 39 countries are identified as 'least developed countries' (LDCs)². This note provides briefing facts regarding MPI in these countries³. Out of the 48 countries listed as LDCs, the MPI analyses 81.25% of those countries with 717.4 million people, which represent 90.06% of the population in LDCs covered by the MPI⁴. It is important to note that from the remaining 148 countries in the world that are not classified as LDCs, the MPI analyses almost half of them (70 countries or 47.29%) with 4,582.5 million people, which represent 76.58 % of the population in non-LDCs.

MPI is higher in LDCs

Overall, the MPI of least developed countries, as well as the headcount ratio and the intensity of poverty, is higher in LDCs than in the 70 other developing countries for which MPI was calculated.

- The average MPI for LDCs is 0.406 in comparison with 0.224 for the non-LDC countries
- The average percentage of MPI poor people in LDCs is 67.4% in comparison with 25.5% for the non-LDC countries
- The average intensity of MPI poverty in LDCs is 56.4% in comparison with 50.9% for the non-LDC countries
- The MPI among LDCs ranges from 0.119 in Bhutan and 0.129 in Vanuatu to 0.642 in Niger; this contrasts with the MPI in non-LDCs, which ranges from zero to 0.353 in Code d'Ivoire.

All of the poorest MPI countries are LDCs

If we focus on the MPI poorest countries, one hundred percent of them are identified as least developed countries. In particular:

- All 22 countries in which the value of MPI exceeds 0.36 are identified as LDCs
- All 25 countries in which more than 62% of people are identified as MPI poor are LDCs.
- All 20 countries in which the average intensity is greater than 54% are LDCs

Still, 71% of MPI poor people do not live in LDCs; only 29% of MPI poor people live in LDCs

If we look across the 109 countries, 1.65 billion people are identified as MPI poor. Of these, 483.3 million live in LDCs, and 1166.5 million live in non-LDC countries. That is, there are 2.4 times more MPI poor people in non-LDCs than in LDCs.

Region	MPI Poor (millions 2008)	Population (millions 2008)	Regional H	Regional A	Regional M0
Least developed countries	483.3	717.4	0.674	0.564	0.380
Other countries	1166.5	4582.5	0.255	0.509	0.129
Total 109 countries	1649.86	5299.93			

¹ This note relies on data from Alkire, S., J.M. Roche, M.E. Santos and S. Seth (November 2011) available on <http://ophi.qeh.ox.ac.uk>.

² UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, UN General Assembly (<http://www.unohrls.org/en/ldc/25/>) [DE, accessed on 31 January 2012].

³ The LDC countries for which MPI estimations have been released are: Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Haiti, Lao, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Vanuatu, Yemen, and Zambia.

⁴ The LDC not included in the MPI estimations are Afghanistan, Equatorial-Guinea, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sudan and Tuvalu with a total population of 71.12 million people.

Multidimensional Poverty

Category	Country	Survey	Year	Multidimensional Poverty			MPI Poor (millions 2008)	Population (millions, 2008)
				MPI k=33%	H k=33%	A k=33%		
Least Developed Countries (LDC)							483.3	717.4
	Angola	MICS	2001	0.452	77.4	58.4	14.0	18.0
	Bangladesh	DHS	2007	0.292	57.8	50.4	84.1	145.5
	Benin	DHS	2006	0.412	71.8	57.4	6.0	8.4
	Bhutan	MICS	2010	0.119	27.2	43.9	0.2	0.7
	Burkina Faso	MICS	2006	0.536	82.6	64.9	12.8	15.5
	Burundi	MICS	2005	0.530	84.5	62.7	6.7	7.9
	Cambodia	DHS	2005	0.251	52.0	48.4	7.2	13.8
	Central African Republic	MICS	2000	0.512	86.4	59.3	3.7	4.2
	Chad	WHS	2003	0.344	62.9	54.7	6.7	10.7
	Comoros	MICS	2000	0.408	73.9	55.2	0.5	0.7
	Djibouti	MICS	2006	0.139	29.3	47.3	0.3	0.9
	DR Congo	DHS	2007	0.393	73.2	53.7	45.7	62.5
	Ethiopia	DHS	2005	0.562	88.6	63.5	70.4	79.4
	Gambia	MICS	2006	0.324	60.4	53.6	1.0	1.6
	Guinea	DHS	2005	0.506	82.5	61.3	7.9	9.6
	Haiti	DHS	2006	0.299	56.4	53.0	5.5	9.7
	Lao	MICS	2006	0.267	47.2	56.5	2.8	6.0
	Lesotho	DHS	2009	0.156	35.3	44.1	0.8	2.1
	Liberia	DHS	2007	0.485	83.9	57.7	3.1	3.7
	Madagascar	DHS	2009	0.357	66.9	53.3	13.1	19.5
	Malawi	DHS	2004	0.381	72.1	52.8	10.1	14.0
	Mali	DHS	2006	0.558	86.6	64.4	12.5	14.5
	Mauritania	MICS	2007	0.352	61.7	57.1	2.0	3.3
	Mozambique	DHS	2009	0.512	79.3	64.6	17.7	22.3
	Myanmar	MICS	2000	0.154	31.8	48.3	15.0	47.3
	Nepal	DHS	2006	0.350	64.7	54.0	18.7	28.9
	Niger	DHS	2006	0.642	92.4	69.4	13.4	14.5
	Rwanda	DHS	2005	0.426	80.2	53.2	8.0	10.0
	Sao Tome and Principe	DHS	2009	0.154	34.5	44.7	0.1	0.2
	Senegal	DHS	2005	0.384	66.9	57.4	7.9	11.8
	Sierra Leone	DHS	2008	0.439	77.0	57.0	4.3	5.6
	Somalia	MICS	2006	0.514	81.2	63.3	7.2	8.9
	Tanzania	DHS	2008	0.367	65.2	56.3	27.6	42.3
	Timor-Leste	DHS	2009	0.360	68.1	52.9	0.7	1.1
	Togo	MICS	2006	0.284	54.3	52.4	3.1	5.8
	Uganda	DHS	2006	0.367	72.3	50.7	22.7	31.3
	Vanuatu	MICS	2007	0.129	30.1	42.7	0.1	0.2
	Yemen	MICS	2006	0.283	52.5	53.9	11.9	22.6
	Zambia	DHS	2007	0.328	64.2	51.2	7.9	12.4