

‘MISSING DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY DATA’:
Multidimensional poverty measurement and its application in Africa

Target audience: This workshop is designed for those interested in multidimensional capability-based approaches to poverty measurement that go beyond income and consumption, complement the MDGs, and measure other important aspects of deprivation. The target audience includes: Statistical officers interested in collecting and using data on multiple aspects of deprivation; practitioners (governments, NGOs) interested in program evaluations based on the ‘Missing Dimensions’; and policymakers and researchers interested in multidimensional approaches to understanding deprivation.

The workshop will present OPHI’s programme on Missing Dimensions of poverty data, an initiative aimed at collecting high quality and internationally comparable data on empowerment, employment quality, physical safety, dignity, and psychological/ subjective wellbeing. It will present the motivation for these dimensions, OPHI’s survey modules on each theme, and findings from survey work to date – notably a nationally representative survey recently collected in Chile. It will then invite discussion on how the Missing Dimensions work might inform data collection efforts in Africa and ways of taking the agenda forward.

Course outline:

OPHI is a research institute within the University of Oxford’s Department of International Development. Our overall aim is to build and advance a more systematic methodological and economic framework for reducing poverty that is grounded in Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen’s capability approach and related ideas. The approach is based on the premise that poverty goes beyond a lack of income to incorporate other fundamental aspects of wellbeing that are both intrinsically and instrumentally important. A critical bottleneck to advancing this approach, however, is a dearth of high-quality internationally comparable data on multiple dimensions of wellbeing. Since its April 2007 launch, OPHI has identified and developed short modules to measure five ‘missing dimensions’ of poverty – aspects that seem to matter to poor people but are often missing from large-scale surveys collected at the individual and household levels:

- Employment quality, including both formal and informal employment, with particular attention to the quality of employment;
- Empowerment, or agency, the ability to advance goals one values and has reason to value;
- Physical safety, focusing on security from violence to person and property, as well as perceptions of violence;
- The ability to go about without shame, to emphasize the importance of dignity, inclusion and freedom from humiliation.

We have also developed one module for an area we do not necessarily consider to be a dimension of poverty, but for which more internationally comparable data are required:

- Psychological and subjective wellbeing, to emphasize meaning, satisfaction and their determinants.

This workshop aims to provide an overview of the Missing Dimensions program and OPHI’s new survey modules, and to present findings from our work to date on how these data might complement standard poverty data. It also aims to invite discussion regarding the relevance of this initiative to understanding poverty in Africa, how it might inform the work of regional statistical offices and governments, and how the Missing Dimensions agenda might be developed further in the region.

Please let us know in advance if you would be interested in attending this workshop by sending an email with your name and institutional affiliation to **ophi@qeh.ox.ac.uk**.