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.

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.

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.
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


