Tackling Child Poverty: A Holistic Approach on Measurement and Programme Design

As part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), countries have committed to eradicate extreme child poverty and cut in half the number of children living in poverty. Nonetheless, the economic downturn since these pledges were made, alongside soaring prices of essential commodities and the escalating climate crisis, have exacerbated household financial strains and overall well-being, disproportionately impacting children.

Amidst this global challenge, it is crucial to comprehensively understand various facets of child vulnerability to inform the design and implementation of effective policies. However, there is a live debate on which methodological approaches can best support this, addressing the multidimensional nature of child poverty and deprivation. Similarly, integrating child poverty considerations into social policy has the potential to both directly reduce vulnerability and enhance the benefits of existing programming.

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To guide countries through this complex array of monitoring methodologies and enable the evidence-based design of child benefit programmes, **the Development Analytics team has established partnerships with multilateral agencies, including multiple UNICEF offices, to support child poverty reduction efforts.** We are at the forefront of crafting and executing methodological approaches to **measure monetary and multidimensional child poverty,** alongside providing specialized insights for designing relevant child benefit policy and programme framework.

Our team possesses the data and tools to measure child poverty across diverse national contexts. Rather than solely employing a singular approach to measure child poverty, we are able to utilize varied methodologies based on requirements in the country context, in order to measure both monetary and multidimensional child poverty. **Examining child poverty from various perspectives allows us to identify which children are more susceptible to living in vulnerability under different criteria**, considering their unique needs and characteristics. This comprehensive understanding empowers us to design child benefit programs that take a holistic approach, effectively defining and targeting the most vulnerable children.

How would this research study be useful?

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- Navigating the complex methodology options to develop the most effective one for your context.
- Tailoring methodologies to local contexts by setting nationally relevant dimensions.
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- Exploring the intersection between children living in monetary poverty and those facing multidimensional deprivation.
- Developing scenarios for different child benefit options based on insights gleaned from child poverty analysis and stakeholder input.
- Creating interactive tools to empower policymakers, humanitarian agencies, and governments to engage with data directly, enabling them to simulate various child benefit outcomes independently of predefined targeting scenarios crafted by technical experts.

What kind of datasets are needed to carry out such a study?

To conduct such a study effectively, **a household survey** including details on expenditure or income, along with key variables related to health, education, and other indicators of child well-being, is essential. These surveys offer invaluable insights into the financial status and overall welfare of children by capturing data on household expenditure, income, asset ownership, as well as various individual and household-level indicators ranging from vaccination and school attendance to child labor. Furthermore, the systematically collected data from a sample of the target population enables us to analyze vulnerability patterns, evaluate welfare levels, and differentiate between poor children and non-poor children as defined by various methodologies. Through meticulous data analysis, our team aims to leverage household surveys to inform policy decisions related to the wellbeing of children aimed at designing or revising child benefit programs.

What are the previous project references where Development Analytics carried out this study or studies related to targeting of cash transfers in humanitarian contexts?

Development Analytics has led mixed methods analyses at the intersection of measuring child poverty and designing child benefit programmes in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Madagascar, Moldova, Nigeria, St. Lucia and Türkiye. Development Analytics has an expert team in

quantitative and qualitative research techniques and a demonstrated record of projects over the last 20 years with many international multilateral and bilateral agencies. Projects to date include:

- **Assessment of Potential Impact of Different Social Protection Measures on Child Deprivation and Poverty in Georgia:** A considerable portion of children in Georgia grapple with monetary poverty. In 2022, while the overall poverty rate for the population stood at 15.6%, the child poverty rate was notably higher, reaching 20.4%. Material deprivation also remains a pressing concern among Georgian children, with 37.8% lacking at least 3 out of 16 essential items.

  Given this background, our expert team designed an approach to analyse the potential effects of different social protection interventions (such as cash transfers) in Georgia on child poverty as well as material deprivation, while also estimating the cost implications of the interventions. To accomplish this, microsimulation models were constructed by utilizing nationally representative surveys.

  Through this collaboration, we helped UNUCE Georgia to incorporate both monetary and multidimensional approaches in measuring child poverty in Georgia. We enhanced this analytical component with a holistic and applied approach to design child benefit interventions and estimated the cost implications of interventions with a focus on empowering policymakers in their endeavour to efficiently design at-scale social policy programs in the country.

- **Developing a Shock Responsive Social Protection Model for Children in Türkiye in the Aftermath of the Earthquakes using the Interactive Social Policy Simulator (ISPS).** As a response to the recent major earthquakes on February 6, 2023, affecting 11 provinces and a population of 14 million people, UNICEF Türkiye planned to design and implement a cash transfer program with a budget of at least $40 million as part of the United Nations Flash Appeal and UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal.

  In this capacity, our team estimated the potential impact of the earthquakes on household poverty and child poverty and then designed and analysed the poverty-alleviating impacts of various cash transfer scenarios. An interactive social policy simulator (ISPS) was also designed to allow UNICEF to see the results of cash transfer scenarios interactively by choosing from various targeting and transfer level options.

  The study's initial outputs were used to develop a business case that demonstrates the added value and models of cash transfer programs in the short term and will assist technical preparations and

advocacy of UNICEF vis-a-vis the government, donors, and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in the medium term.

- **Multidimensional Child Poverty Measurement in Nigeria:** In Nigeria, almost half of the population lives below the international poverty line, and child poverty is particularly high in the country.[1]

  Considering the multifaceted challenges that Nigerian children face in the country, this study examined the extent and depth of multidimensional child poverty using the MODA (Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis) approach. The study tailored the approach to Nigeria, designing nationally-relevant dimensions and indicators of child deprivation in consultation with experts from UNICEF Nigeria.

  By analysing these contextually-tailored dimensions of child deprivation, our team provided valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners looking to address the issue of child poverty in Nigeria. The empirical evidence shed light on the multidimensional nature of child poverty in the country, serving as an important step to inform the design and implementation of effective policies and programs aimed at reducing child poverty and promoting the well-being of children.

If you're interested in reaching out to us to explore conducting a study in your country that measures child poverty and designs child benefit programme, please click to register your interest and discuss the specifics with us. Following your registration, we'll reach out to coordinate a suitable date and time for a meeting to understand your research needs and the details of such a study.

<div style="background:#E0611B;color:white;text-align:center;padding:8px;"><u>Register your Interest</u></div>

We look forward to being in touch !

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Sources

[1] World Bank statistics (2019) cited by NBS Nigeria (2022). *Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (2022),* National Bureau of Statistics of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, FCT Abuja.