

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2015

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The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is an index of acute multidimensional poverty that covers over 100 developing countries. It assesses the nature and intensity of poverty, by directly measuring the overlapping deprivations poor people experience at once, then building up from this information. 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 through integrated policy interventions that tackle the many different aspects of poverty together.

This brief explains how the Global MPI is constructed and how it can be used, and summarises a number of analyses of the Global MPI figures released in June 2015.

Inside this briefing

- Page 2:** What is the Global MPI?
- Page 3 and 4:** Global poverty – Regional differences
- Page 5:** MPI and \$1.25/day: Complementary angles on poverty
- Page 6:** How people are poor: The composition of poverty
- Page 7:** Data and analysis: Improvements in the first five years
- Page 8:** Disaggregated data: Subnational poverty

Global MPI 2015: Updates and coverage

- Since 2010 we have published 217 Global MPI estimations for 117 countries using data 2000–2014.
- Since 2010, estimations have been published for 1362 sub-national regions in 100 countries.
- In 2015, we have added 6 new countries and updated 32 countries since 2014.
- This 2015 analysis covers 101 countries with data 2004–14 only. The countries analysed include 31 Low-Income Countries, 68 Middle-Income Countries and 2 High-Income Countries.
- These countries have a total population of 5.2 billion people, which is 75% of the world's population.¹

Key findings from 2015

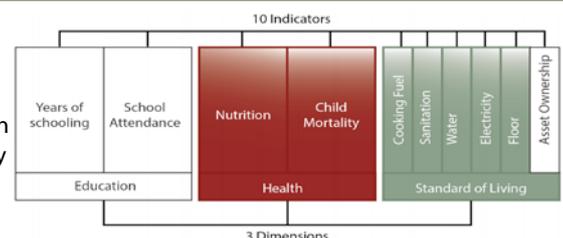
Each year, we report key findings for countries whose data fall within a 10-year period, presently 2004–2014.

- A total of 1.6 billion people are living in multidimensional poverty; about 30% of the people living in the countries analysed.
- Of these 1.6 billion people, 54% live in South Asia, and 31% in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Most MPI poor people – 69.6% – live in Middle Income Countries.
- The MPI has been disaggregated into 884 subnational regions, the poorest of which is in Chad.
- In countries classified as in very high alert by the Fragile States Index, on average 72% of people are multidimensionally poor.
- The country with the highest MPI is Niger. The country with the highest percentage of MPI poor people is South Sudan, where 91% of people are poor.
- The Global MPI is robust to changes in weights and poverty cut-offs (considering standard errors), and overall robustness has increased since the first MPI results in 2010.
- Nearly half of all MPI poor people are destitute – 736 million. Destitution is computed for 82 countries that are home to 1.5 billion of the 1.6 billion MPI poor people covered in this briefing. 91% of destitute people live in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Salihine – an individual poverty profile



Salihine and his family – including his wife, mother, sibling, and five children – live in the town of Touboro, Cameroon. Their rudimentary hut has an earthen floor and no electricity or toilet. They source their water from an unprotected well. To eat, as well as earn a living, the family farm cereals and cotton. During the dry season, Salihine also works as a bricklayer and construction worker, and collects wood to sell, to try to gather enough resources for his family. However, the family can't eat regularly and are malnourished – they have experienced the loss of two children under the age of five. Salihine and his family are multidimensionally poor. The coloured boxes in the graphic show the deprivations he faces.



The coloured indicators show Salihine's deprivations: he is deprived in 61% of the MPI dimensions. On average, people in Cameroon are deprived in 54% of weighted indicators – that is their average intensity of poverty.

¹ Unless otherwise specified, all aggregates are population-weighted, and use 2011 data from the 2012 Population Revision of UNDESA's Population Division (2012).

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL MPI?

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL MPI?

The Global MPI looks at poverty through a ‘high-resolution’ lens. It directly measures the nature and magnitude of overlapping deprivations in health, education and living standard at the household level. In this way, the MPI provides vital information on who is poor and how they are poor, enabling policymakers to design policies and assign resources more effectively.

The Global MPI is the first international measure to reflect the **intensity** of poverty – the number of deprivations each person faces at the same time. It complements measures of income poverty because the poverty indicators it uses are directly comparable across populations, without the need for exchange rates. It can be broken down by social group and geographical area to reveal poverty patterns within and across countries, and can also be used to track changes in poverty over time.

The Global MPI was developed in 2010 by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for their flagship Human Development Reports (Alkire and Santos 2010, UNDP 2010). The figures and analysis have been updated using newly released data for each *Human Development Report* since then.²

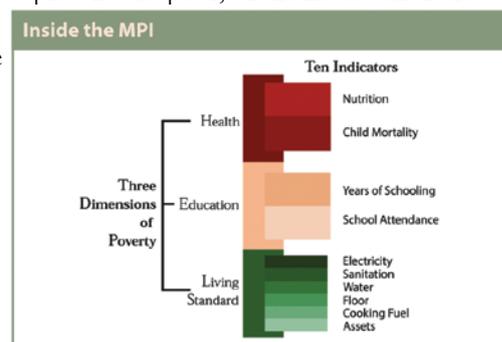
INSIDE THE MPI: THREE DIMENSIONS, TEN INDICATORS

Who is poor? A person is identified as **multidimensionally poor** (or ‘MPI poor’) if they are deprived in **at least one third** of the weighted MPI indicators set out in the table below.

CONSTRUCTING THE GLOBAL MPI

The Global MPI was created using a method developed by Sabina Alkire and James Foster. The **Alkire Foster** methodology is flexible and can be used with different dimensions, indicators, weights and cut-offs to create measures specific to different societies and situations. The MPI is the product of two components: **1) Incidence** – the percentage of people who are poor, or the headcount ratio (**H**); and **2)**

Intensity – the average share of indicators in which poor people are deprived (**A**). So **MPI = H x A**.



The dimensions, indicators, deprivation thresholds and weights of the MPI³

Dimension	Indicator	Deprived if...	Relative Weight
Education	Years of Schooling	No household member aged 10 or older has completed five years of schooling.	1/6
	Child School Attendance	Any school-aged child is not attending school up to the age at which they would complete class 8.	1/6
Health	Child Mortality	Any child has died in the household within the last five years.	1/6
	Nutrition	Any adult or child for whom there is nutritional information is malnourished.	1/6
Living Standard	Electricity	The household has no electricity.	1/18
	Improved Sanitation	The household’s sanitation facility is not improved (according to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)), or it is improved but shared with other households.	1/18
	Safe Drinking Water	The household does not have access to safe drinking water (according to MDG guidelines) or safe drinking water is a 30-minute walk or more from home, roundtrip.	1/18
	Flooring	The household has a dirt, sand or dung floor.	1/18
	Cooking Fuel	The household cooks with dung, wood or charcoal.	1/18
	Assets	The household does not own more than one radio, TV, telephone, bike, motorbike or refrigerator and does not own a car or truck.	1/18

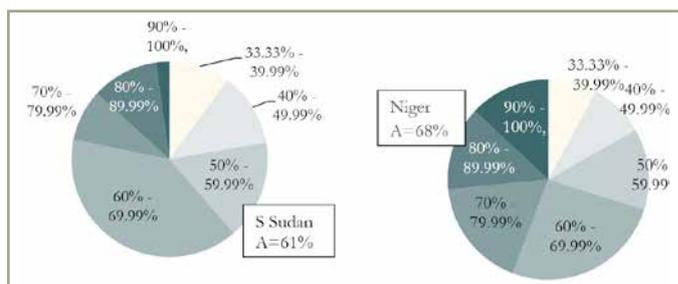
Why knowing the percentage of poor people isn’t enough – the MPI adds intensity

Most of the graphics below focus on the percentage of poor people because it is easy to understand. But the MPI always includes intensity too. This means we get a clearer picture of people’s experience in each dimension of poverty, and can compare the situation in different places more accurately.

For example, in South Sudan, roughly 91% of the population (9 million people) are MPI poor whereas in Niger it is 89.3% (just over 15 million). In South Sudan, the intensity of poverty (A) is about 61% whereas in Niger it is 68%.

The pie charts below show how many poor people are deprived in different proportions of deprivations. Recall that Salihine pictured on the front page is deprived in 61% of the Global MPI poverty dimensions; he belongs to the 50–59.9% group. Across all poor people in South Sudan, less than one-quarter are deprived in 70% or more dimensions at the same

time. However, in Niger, more than one-third of poor people experience this intensity of deprivations. In South Sudan, very few people are deprived in 90% of indicators, whereas in Niger, one-eighth of the poor people – nearly 2 million human beings – experience this terrible situation. The MPI – which is computed using both H and A – brings this difference into view.



² Alkire, Roche, Santos and Seth 2011; Alkire, Conconi and Roche 2013; Alkire, Conconi and Seth 2014; Alkire, Conconi, Robles and Seth Winter 2014/2015; and Alkire and Robles 2015.
³ For more details, see Alkire and Robles (2015).

GLOBAL POVERTY – REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

The Global MPI 2015 covers **101 countries**, which are home to **5.2 billion** people using 2011 population data (UNDESA 2012). In 2015, a total of **1.6 billion people** are living in multidimensional poverty; roughly 30% of all people living in the countries covered. Across all of the countries measured, the least poor country is Belarus, and the poorest overall is Niger.

LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES

31 of 101 countries in the Global MPI are low income countries, 39 are lower middle, 29 are upper middle and 2 are high income countries. So in which of these do MPI poor people live? Nearly 70% of MPI poor people live in middle income countries – 1088 million. The remaining 30% of the MPI poor people live in low income countries, around 474 million people. The number of poor people in high income countries is not statistically different from 0.

Human Development Index

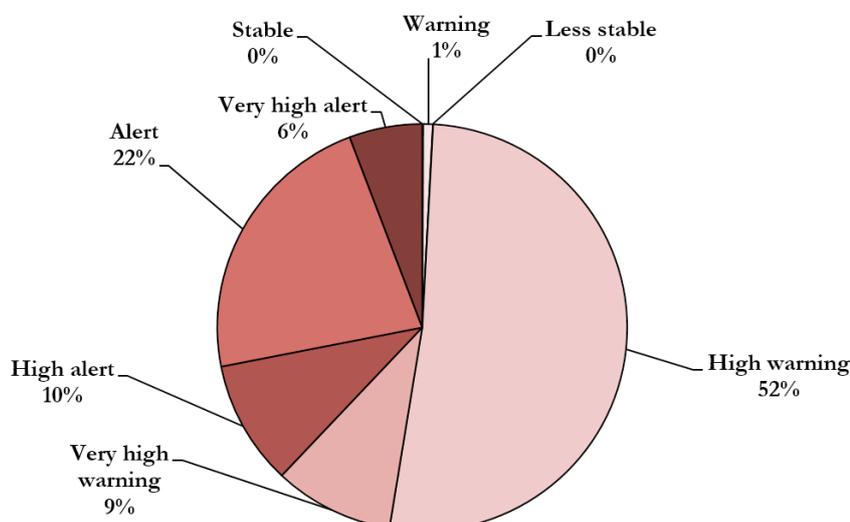
The Human Development Index (HDI) offers a perspective on people's well-being across the globe. The dimensions are education, health and income, for the MPI follows the HDI structure. Both indices complement each other. Both the HDI and the MPI have been reported in the Human Development Reports since 2010. The HDI measures well-being; the MPI measures poverty. The HDI is built from national averages for variables from different datasets, the MPI focuses on the joint distribution of deprivations using micro data for each household. The MPI can be disaggregated by indicator and by subnational groups and regions. Although their association is stronger than that of the GPI or EDBI, they do not measure the same thing: more than 60% of MPI poor people live in countries rated as having medium and high human development.

Category (Number of Countries)	MPI	H (% of population who are MPI poor)	A (average % intensity of poverty)	MPI poor people (millions)	Total population (millions)
Region (101)	0.157	29.9	52.5	1562.1	5222.7
Europe and Central Asia	0.008	2.0	38.1	3.0	152.1
Latin America and Caribbean	0.022	5.2	42.5	26.0	499.3
East Asia and the Pacific	0.031	7.3	42.4	138.7	1889.0
Arab States	0.109	20.7	52.7	54.4	263.3
South Asia	0.275	52.5	52.3	844.0	1607.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.343	61.1	56.2	496.0	811.5
Income Group (101)	0.157	29.9	52.5	1562.1	5222.7
High income: non-OECD	0.017	4.8	35.1	0.1	1.6
Upper middle income	0.021	5.1	40.6	104.9	2063.5
Lower middle income	0.212	40.5	52.5	983.0	2428.7
Low income	0.359	65.0	55.2	474.1	729.0
Failed States Index (98)	0.157	29.9	52.5	1562.0	5218.2
Stable	0.011	2.9	37.6	1.2	40.7
Warning	0.014	3.7	39.1	11.9	320.4
Less stable	0.029	7.0	40.7	0.3	3.7
High warning	0.124	24.3	50.7	807.8	3318.7
Very high warning	0.194	36.7	52.8	147.7	402.3
High alert	0.234	44.2	53.1	154.5	349.9
Alert	0.296	53.0	55.8	348.7	657.4
Very high alert	0.401	72.0	55.7	90.0	125.1
Human Dev't Index (99)	0.156	29.7	52.4	1544.6	5202.5
Very high	0.011	2.9	37.6	1.2	40.7
High	0.019	4.7	40.7	93.8	1989.6
Medium	0.199	38.7	51.3	839.5	2166.6
Low	0.338	60.7	55.7	610.1	1005.5
Ease of Doing Business (100)	0.156	29.8	52.4	1554.1	5212.8
2	0.033	7.6	42.9	154.9	2029.6
1st (Top 20 countries)	0.036	8.3	43.9	36.7	441.4
3	0.253	47.4	53.4	913.8	1927.8
4	0.279	52.5	53.0	136.3	259.5
5 (Bottom 20 countries)	0.310	56.3	55.0	312.4	554.5
Global Peace Index: 92	0.157	29.9	52.5	1561.6	5215.9
Less peaceful	0.065	13.5	48.4	254.0	1886.9
More peaceful	0.085	18.4	46.1	98.5	534.7
Most peaceful	0.119	27.2	43.9	0.2	0.7
Medium peaceful	0.128	24.0	53.2	97.2	404.7
Least peaceful	0.251	46.5	53.9	1111.8	2388.9

THE MPI AND FAILED STATES

98 countries of the 101 countries in this 2015 Global MPI are also measured by the Failed States Index (FSI). Here, the interesting finding is that 62% of MPI poor people do not live in failed states – that is, in states that are graded as alert, high alert, or very high alert countries on the FSI. That being said, less stable countries according to this index have a high MPI. In the 'alert' countries, where 22% of MPI poor people live, on average 53% of people are poor. In the 'very high alert' countries, where 6% of MPI poor people live, on average 72% of people are MPI poor.

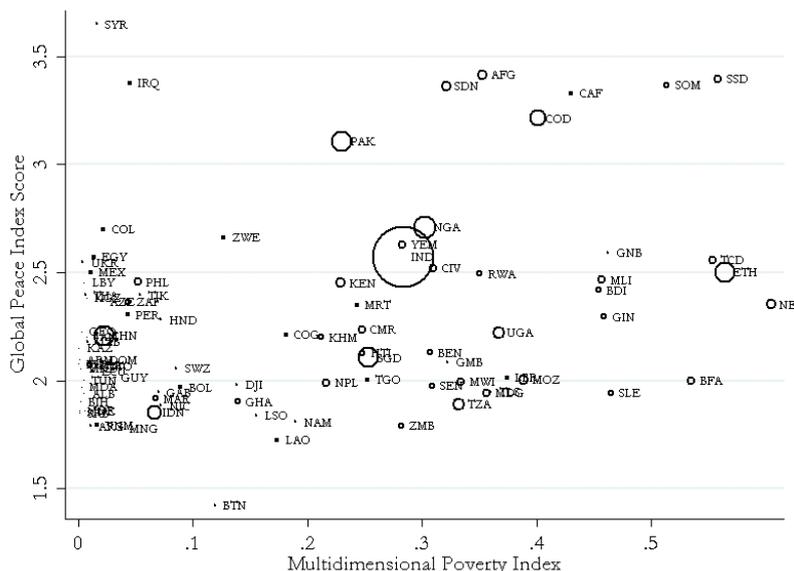
MPI poor people in each FSI category



GLOBAL POVERTY – REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

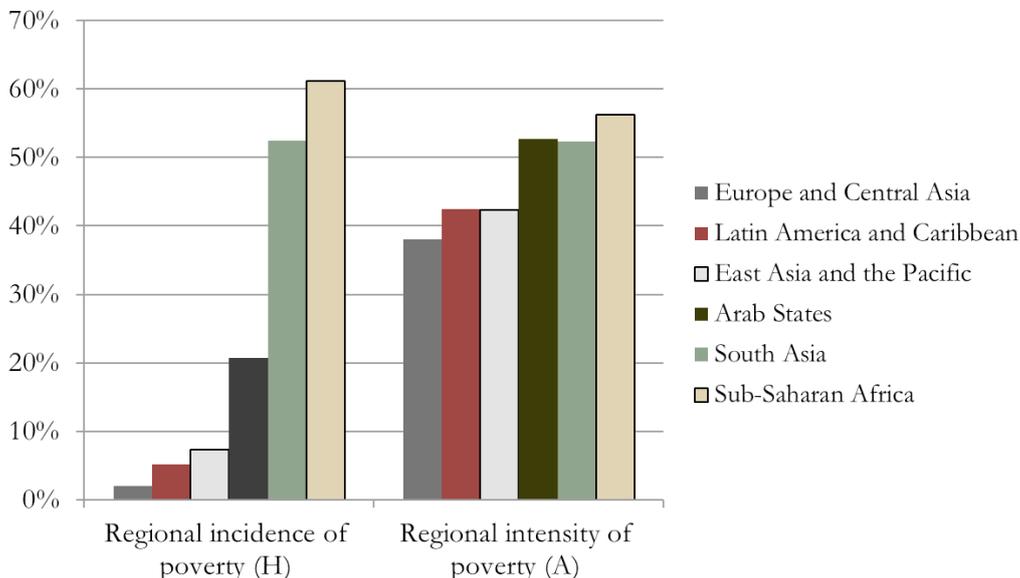
GLOBAL PEACE INDEX

The global peace index measures national peacefulness by combining information on the level of safety and security, domestic and international conflicts as well as the degree of militarisation. Countries are ranked using 22 qualitative and quantitative indicators and placed into 5 categories ranging from more peaceful to less peaceful. We see below that **71% of all MPI poor people live in countries that are 'least peaceful' according to the GPI**. But from the table on page 3, we see the countries in the second least peaceful GPI category are the least poor, although the 'least peaceful' GPI countries are the poorest by MPI. Indeed as the scatterplot shows, there is no association between GPI and MPI values – they focus on different topics, both of which are vitally important.



GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS

In 2015, 54% of global MPI poor people live in South Asia, and 31% in Sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest incidence and intensity of MPI, and Europe the lowest. In the Arab States, although the headcount ratio is far lower than South Asia, the intensity of poverty is higher due to high intensity poverty in Somalia. We also see transparently the importance of including intensity, not just incidence, because on average each poor person in Africa is deprived in 1/6 more indicators than in Europe at the same time. If we only consider incidence, we overlook this important difference.



EASE OF DOING BUSINESS INDEX

The Ease of Doing Business Index (EDBI) ranks countries according to whether their regulatory environment is conducive to business operations. Countries are grouped into 5 categories, from most business-friendly regulations (1) to least business-friendly (5).

If we order countries according to the Ease of Doing Business Index, we see that MPI incidence in each of its three lower categories is similar: 47-56% of the population is classified as MPI poor. Yet, the intensity of poverty plays a fundamental role: it increases as the ease of doing business worsens. Hence, the MPI is higher in those countries with lower ease of doing business.

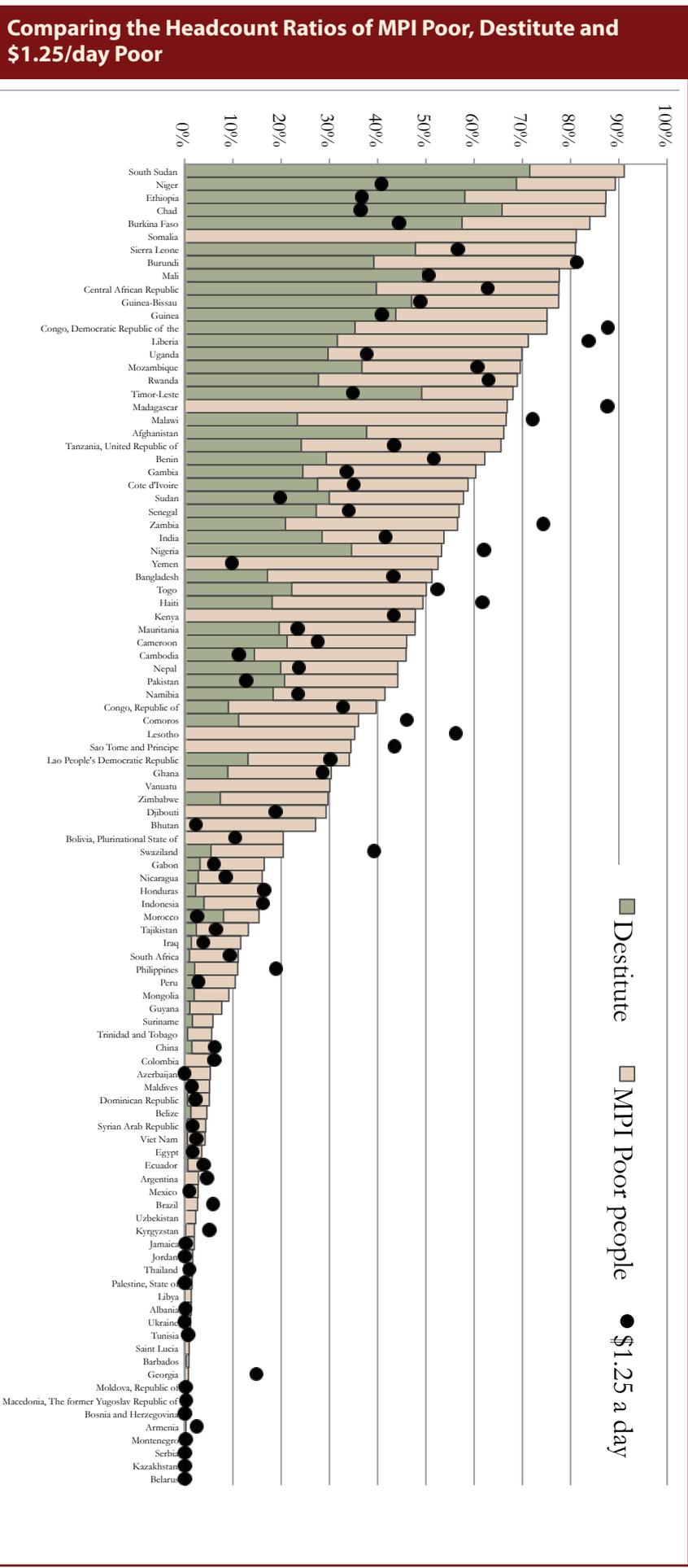
MPI & \$1.25/DAY: COMPLEMENTARY ANGLES ON POVERTY

Since the launch of the Global MPI in 2010, we have stressed that the Global MPI complements the \$1.25/day measure of poverty, and brings into view non-income dimensions of poverty. By using our two eyes we can see more clearly. In a similar way using the MPI and \$1.25/day helps the true reality of poverty become more visible.

The Global MPI identifies more people as poor than the \$1.25/day measure. Looking at the 87 countries for which we have data on both MPI and \$1.25/day poverty (see figure on right), we find that 1.52 billion people or 29.7% of all people in these countries are MPI poor, and 1.19 billion people or 23.3% of people live on less than \$1.25 a day. This comparison however may be affected by the differences in survey years as well as by how old the surveys are. Thus, in order to facilitate a more precise and robust comparison, we re-estimate two alternative sets of comparative figures.

We also compare the MPI headcount poverty rates and the \$1.25/day headcount poverty rates across countries for which surveys were fielded within three years of each other. In this set of 67 countries, 29.2% or 1.4 billion people are MPI poor, and 22.1% or 1.07 billion are \$1.25/day poor.⁴

Clearly there is a positive relationship between these two types of headcount ratios, but this relationship is definitely subject to high variability. For example, certain countries have at least one million MPI poor people, and the number of MPI poor people is more than twice the number of people who are \$1.25/day poor. These countries are Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mauritania, Mexico, Niger, Pakistan, Peru, Sudan, Tajikistan, and Yemen. Furthermore, Chad, Ethiopia, Niger, Pakistan, and Sudan are home to 1.5 times as many people who are multidimensionally destitute (defined in the following pages) as those who are \$1.25/day poor. The levels of both measures cannot be assumed to coincide.



⁴ If we drop India, which has old MPI data (2005/6), the difference is even higher (22.2% vs 15.5%).

HOW ARE PEOPLE POOR? THE COMPOSITION OF POVERTY

What else does an MPI add to these analyses of geographic regions, failed states, business environment, peacefulness, human development, level of income per capita? The MPI differs from the above indices in two ways. First, it looks at the profile of deprivations and provides a combined score for each person or unit. All the other indices summarize aggregate statistics in different dimensions into a national total.

Second, the MPI identifies whether each person is poor and constructs a poverty measure reflecting their deprivations – the others do not focus on conditions of poor people. Because of its ‘bottom up’ structure, the MPI can be broken down to reveal what poverty is like among subnational groups and according to different dimensions.

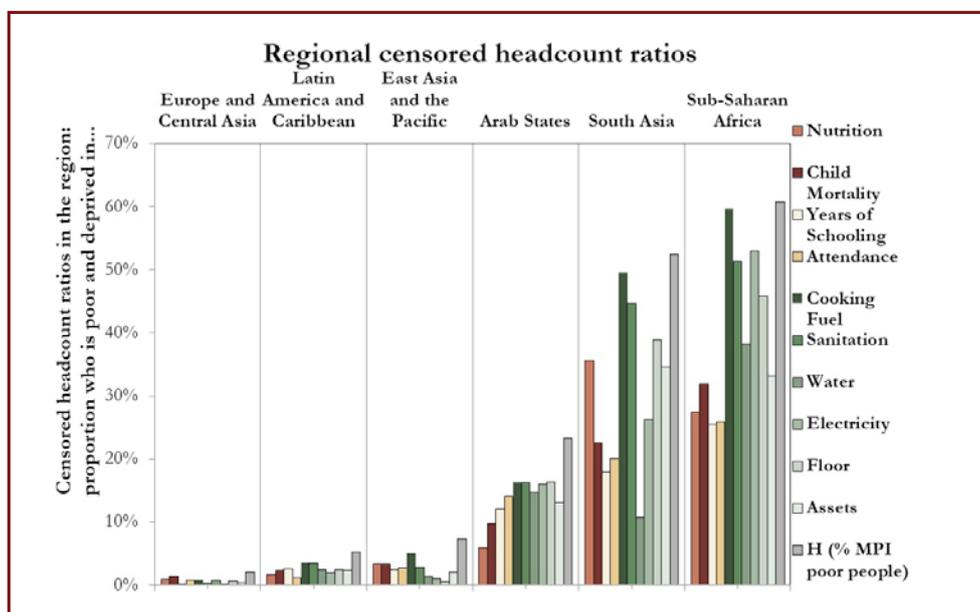
Such analysis is used to plan how to reduce poverty. Any reduction of any deprivation among the poor reduces overall MPI – either by reducing the intensity of a person’s poverty, or by reducing incidence because that person moves out of poverty.

Our analysis shows that many multidimensionally poor people are deprived in cooking fuel and sanitation around the world, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The lack of nutrition is highest in South Asia, and access to electricity and improved flooring are weakest in Sub-Saharan Africa. Deprivations in water are higher in the Arab States than South Asia.

DESTITUTION – KEY FINDINGS

To shine a light on the poorest of the MPI poor we identify those who experience destitution. Destitute people are deprived in at least one-third of the MPI weighted indicators, but according to more **extreme criteria** than the MPI poor. Estimations of destitution are available for 82 countries in 2015.

- Across these 82 countries 49.3% of MPI poor people are destitute, or 736 million people.
- The large majority of destitute people – **91%** – live in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. India is home to 348 million, followed by Nigeria with 57 million and Ethiopia with 52 million.
- Most destitute people – **70.7%** – live in Middle Income Countries – a higher share than those who are MPI poor.
- In South Sudan, 71.5% of the population is destitute – the highest rate of any country. In Niger this figure is **68.8%** and in Chad, 65.8%. At subnational level, there are 25 regions with an incidence of destitution levels that are even higher than South Sudan’s. These regions belong to Chad, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger, Ethiopia, Uganda and South Sudan. The two regions with the highest shares of destitution – above 89% – are both in Chad.

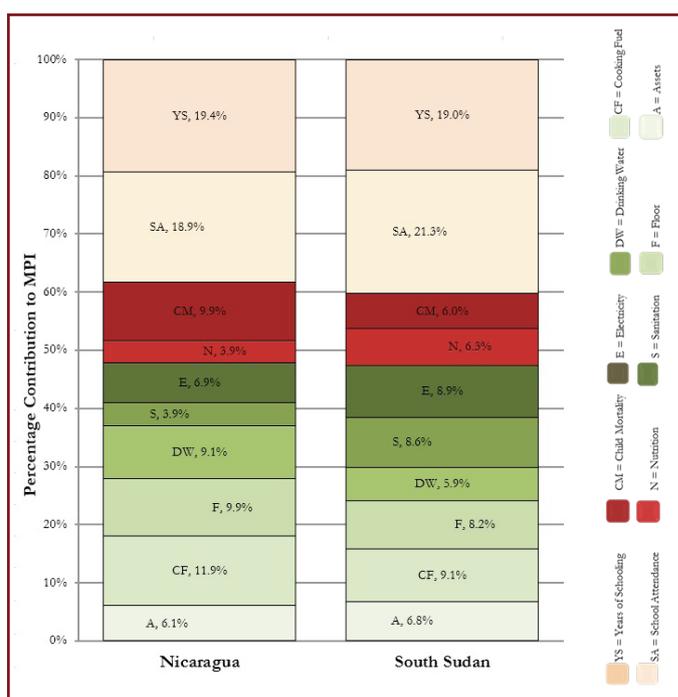


Country-specific challenges: Insights from different poverty indicators

Although national levels of MPI vary greatly, each country can analyse which indicators and dimensions contribute most to its own poverty.

Nicaragua and South Sudan are very diverse countries in different regions. In Nicaragua, a small country, only 16% of the people are poor. In contrast, in South Sudan, 91% of people are poor. Yet we can see in the figure below that Nicaragua and South Sudan face similar challenges in reducing deprivation in Years of Schooling (YS) and School Attendance (SA), which are the indicators that contribute most to poverty in each country. Differences also emerge: poverty in Nicaragua is concentrated in rural areas, whereas the challenge for South Sudan is large in both urban and rural areas.

Naturally an integrated and intersectoral approach is required to redress *all* dimensions of poverty – not just the one that contributes most. But sectoral responses should reflect the shape of poverty.



DATA AND ANALYSIS: IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

The data and analysis underlying the global MPI have dramatically improved since 2010, the first year that the MPI was published.

Data sources and main MPI tables:

The MPI relies on the most recent data available, mainly from two datasets that are publicly available and comparable for many developing countries: USAID's Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and UNICEF's Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS).

In 2010 we also analysed two national datasets and 2003 World Health Survey (WHS) data in 19 countries. In 2015 we used special surveys for urban Argentina (ENNyS), Brazil (PNDS), Mexico (ENSANUT), Morocco (ENNVN and LSMS), South Africa (NIDS), Ecuador (ECV), Jamaica (JSLC) and China (CFPS), as well as PAPFAM surveys for Palestine 2007, Libya 2007, Morocco 2011 and Syria 2009.

In every MPI 2010-2015, MPI tables have included:

MPI, H, A, total number of MPI poor people, income poverty figures, HDI, GDP per capita, GDP growth rate, and GINI coefficient. In 2011 we added vulnerability, severity, population on the year of survey, income category, and we provided disaggregation by subnational regions and a special table for comparisons over time. In 2013 we added GNI figures. In 2014 we added two new measures: destitution and inequality among the poor, and provided urban and rural disaggregation. In 2015 we include standard errors for MPI and H, destitution figures disaggregated across subnational regions and a new table of all computations, all years, plus all previous figures.

Number of countries and datasets:

- In 2010, the Global MPI covered 104 countries using data from 2000–2008.
- Since the Global MPI was first published, 217 national MPI estimations have been produced, using 2000–2014 datasets, for 117 countries. Interestingly, one-third of the Global MPI estimations produced since 2010 are for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, showing recent improvements in data availability.
- In 2015 the Global MPI Tables use the 101 countries whose surveys were fielded 2004-2014.

Number of indicators in each survey:

- In 2010, 60% of countries only had all 10 indicators, 8% had 8 indicators and 3% had 7.
- In 2015, 83% of the 101 countries included in the Global MPI have all 10 indicators. Only two countries (2%) have 8 indicators. No countries have only seven indicators.

Year of survey:

- The most up-to-date data in the 2010 Global MPI was from 2008. In the 2015 MPI, fully 87 countries have data that was fielded subsequently – from 2009–2014.

Subnational decompositions:

In 2010, decompositions by subnational regions were shown for India and Kenya. Now they are shown for every country whose dataset can be decomposed. To date, decompositions to 1362 subnational regions have been published for 100 country-periods. In addition, rural-urban decompositions are available for every country in 2015.

Other tools: In 2010, standard errors, destitution, and inequality among the poor were not computed; now they are released in every update, and data visualization is available for every country and subnational region, for every MPI-related statistic.

- **Standard errors** are available for MPI and H for all countries except Argentina.
- **Destitution** figures are available for 82 countries and 804 subnational regions, covering 1.5 of the 1.6 billion MPI poor people.
- **Inequality** among the poor is available for all countries except Argentina.
- **Online interactive data visualization:** it is now possible to construct maps and graphics using any of the MPI indicators or complementary data through the online interactive databank.

Changes over time:

In 2010, changes over time were available for three countries. In 2015 changes in MPI and its components, as well as changes in destitution and inequality, are available for more than 34 countries and 331 subnational regions – and more comparisons will be completed during the coming year.

Robustness:

The robustness tests were implemented in 2010, and extensive and improved results were published in Alkire and Santos 2014.

- The most recent analysis of changes in the weights and the poverty cut-off (k) shows that, overall, the robustness of the Global MPI has increased in 2015 relative to 2010. This was assessed using pairwise statistically significant comparisons across the included countries.

DISAGGREGATED DATA: SUBNATIONAL POVERTY

One of the advantages of the MPI is that it can be broken down to reveal what life is like in sub-national regions, in rural and urban areas, and among different population subgroups. This is essential for ensuring that resources and policies can be most effectively targeted.

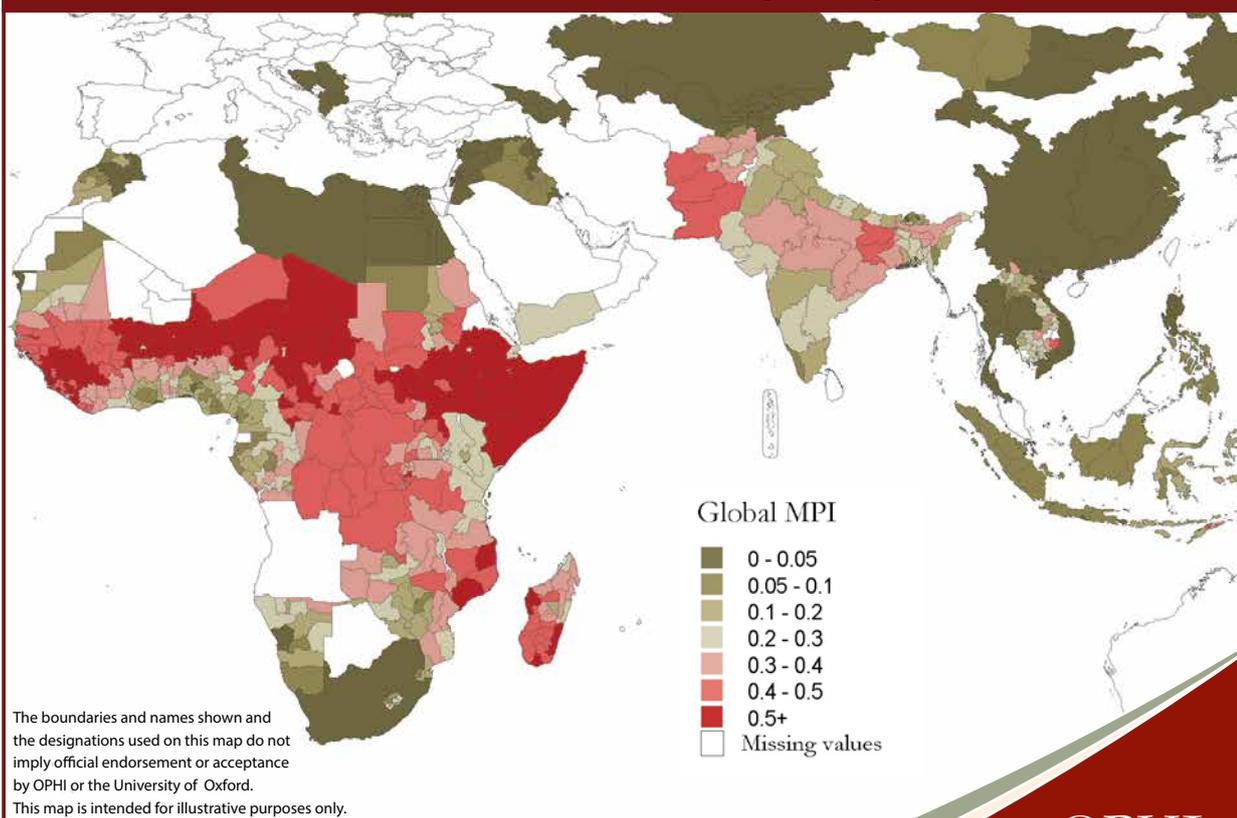
Starting at the bottom, the poorest region of all 884 that we have data for is Salamat in Chad. Salamat's 2010 data shows that nearly 98 per cent of its 365,000 inhabitants are poor. On average, each poor person in Salamat is deprived in nearly 75% of the ten indicators included in the Global MPI, which also makes it the region with the highest intensity of poverty. In fact, three of the five poorest regions of the world are in Chad and two are in Burkina Faso. Yet significantly, the poorest country overall is neither of these – it is Niger.

For every sub-national region, the Global MPI can be broken down to reveal the deprivations experienced by each household. We can also see which regions are most deprived in particular indicators. For example, the region with the highest proportion of people who are multidimensionally poor and simultaneously deprived in nutrition is Affar in Ethiopia, and that with most child mortality is Nord-Ouest in Cote d'Ivoire. Warap in South Sudan is the most deprived region for sanitation and electricity, Wad Fira in Chad is most deprived for drinking water and years of schooling, Androy, Madagascar, has the highest rates of people that don't own more than one asset, while Lakes in South Sudan has most children out of school. Interestingly, none of these regions is Salamat in Chad. In Salamat, however, there are consistently high rates of deprivation in many different indicators at the same time.

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Multidimensional Poverty across 101 countries and 884 subnational regions using data 2004–2014



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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.