

challenges

Number 10, May 2010

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Newsletter on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals from a child rights perspective

>> Child poverty: a priority challenge



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Child poverty: rights violation and outstanding debt

Measurements of poverty in terms of the principles of access to, and exercise of, a specific number of rights in areas like nutrition, safe drinking water, sanitation, housing, education and information show that 32 million children in Latin America were living in extreme poverty in 2007, and that the overall number of persons in poverty stood at almost 81 million.

This issue of Challenges resumes the analysis of child poverty that was addressed in the first issue of the publication. The main article presents data on child poverty in Latin America, but explicitly measures it with a rights approach. This means considering children to be poor when at least one of their rights is unmet, or when they suffer at least one basic deprivation. Nonetheless, in child poverty, multiple deprivations occur simultaneously, reinforcing each other and undermining children's and adolescents' development.

This article posits the need to redesign poverty reduction policies and provide universal coverage. To prevent the reproduction of poverty and inequality, actions must be taken based on the assumption that child poverty is multidimensional and its consequences multifaceted.

As in previous issues, children's perspectives have been included with drawings and opinions gathered for this publication. Viewpoints presents an interview of an expert who contributes to the understanding of child poverty as differentiated from adult poverty. Learning from Experience presents two cases: (i) Chile's Child Protection System, and (ii) the multidimensional poverty measurement applied by Mexico's National Council for the Evaluation of Social Policy. Lastly, the issue describes activities underway in the region and refers to important documents on the topic.

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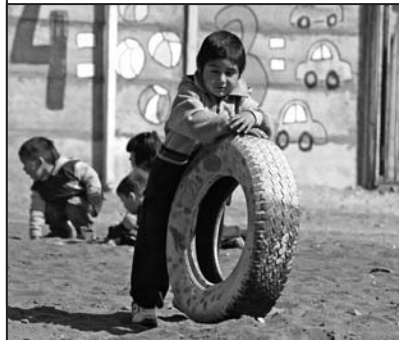
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Recent events

>> Solidarity with Haiti

On 12 January 2010, a powerful earthquake shook Haiti. The number of deaths and disappearances was enormous, and even now the situation of the survivors remains critical. Persons under 18 –around 46% of the total population– are the ones most affected. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued a call for international assistance, which triggered a show of solidarity around the world to reconstruct a country in our region.

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/haiti_52435.html

>> Twenty years since the Convention on the Rights of the Child

On 20 November 2009, the United Nations General Assembly celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This binding Convention, which was ratified by all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, establishes a development model for all of society, because the respect for children's rights ensures progress towards poverty eradication.

http://www.unicef.es/derechos/docs/CDN_06.pdf

>> World Youth Conference 2010

At the conference, which is to be held in Mexico from 24 to 27 August 2010, participants will debate young people's role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Special consideration will be given to the fact that young people, the age group with the highest unemployment levels, are also one of the groups most seriously affected by the financial crisis.

<http://www.youthlac.org/content/view/668/1/>

Key documents



>> IIEP-UNESCO/OEI, 2009

"Primera infancia en América Latina: la situación actual y las respuestas desde el Estado. Informe sobre tendencias sociales y educativas en América Latina", Buenos Aires, November, 2009.



>> ECLAC/WFP, 2009

"El costo del hambre: impacto social y económico de la desnutrición infantil en el Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, el Ecuador, el Paraguay y el Perú", *Project document*, No. 260 (LC/W.260), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), June 2009.



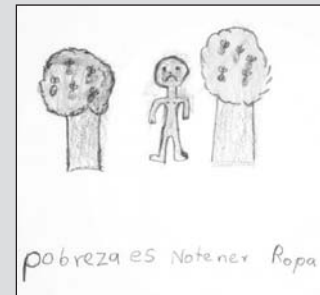
>> Plurinational State of Bolivia, Ministry of Planning and Development /Economic and Social Policy Analysis Unit (UDAPE)/UNICEF, 2008

"Bolivia. Inversión social en la niñez y adolescencia: un análisis del gasto público social en niveles subnacionales", La Paz, July, 2008.

Poverty as seen by children:



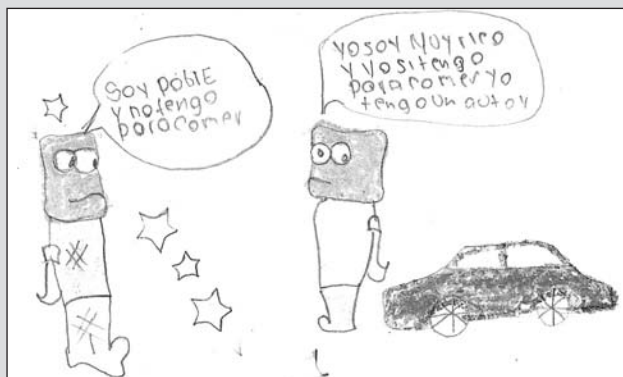
Poverty is a house made of cardboard.
Arcadio, age 7



Poverty is not having clothing.
José, age 8



Title: Poverty. Xitle School / Child 1: "I sell chewing gum."
Child 2: "I want to go to school." Aldo, age 12



Person 1: "I'm poor and I don't have enough money for food."
Person 2: "I'm very rich and I do have enough money for food. I have a car."
Marcelino, age 13

Poverty ...

"means not having money for the doctor".

Alfonso, age 11

"means having cardboard houses and picking up food that people throw out because it's gone bad".

Benito, age 13

"means we don't have anything for breakfast in my family".

Fernando, age 7

"means that I don't always do my homework because I don't have money for materials".

Moisés, age 10

Source: The drawings and quotes in this section are from Mexican children participating in activities led by Ednica (www.ednica.org.mx). We thank them for telling us about child poverty in their own words.

Child poverty:

Child poverty and the rights approach

The way poverty is conceived and measured is important for framing policies to overcome it. In different studies around the world, the term “poverty” has taken on different connotations and acquired profoundly different meanings. Nevertheless, there is a consensus that poverty results from social and economic processes –with cultural and political components– in which people are deprived of the assets and opportunities to which all human beings are entitled. Also, poverty is strongly associated with social exclusion and inequality, which contribute to a lack of justice and equity in the distribution of resources. This is a central cause of poverty and of its persistence.

Today, poverty continues to be a challenge for the countries of Latin America. According to estimates based on household income, in 2008 some 33% of the population was living in poverty, and around 13% lived in households with incomes insufficient to satisfy their basic nutritional needs. This means that 180 million persons are poor and 71 million are indigent (ECLAC, 2009). Furthermore, income inequalities are the most regressive in the world and have improved little over the past 20 years.

The many dimensions of poverty as expressed through specific individual and collective circumstances contribute to an understanding of the multiple types of poverty. For example, poverty is caused by inequalities between genders and among ethnic and age groups. A significant percentage of all children and adolescents in this region face adversities in this phase of their life cycle that will affect them for the rest of their lives and be transmitted to coming generations.

Most studies view child poverty as a complex, multidimensional phenomenon that involves human relations and they recognize that to understand what happens to impoverished children, it is indispensable to understand the social context of poverty and inequality in which they live. As noted in the present article, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) have made a contribution in this direction.

The State of the World’s Children 2005 affirms that “Children living in poverty experience deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed to survive,

a priority challenge

Ernesto Espíndola and María Nieves Rico, Social Development Division, ECLAC

develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society” (UNICEF, 2005, p. 18).

Along with material deprivation, this approach to child poverty focuses on access to basic services and other factors associated with survival, discrimination and exclusion that affect children’s psychosocial development. It thus goes beyond the strictly monetary view that predominates in many studies on poverty (Minujin, 2005).

In addition to expanding the bounds of poverty analysis beyond considerations of income, this definition proposes an explicit link between children’s poverty and the violation of their human rights. Policies and institutions responsible for formulating and implementing strategies to overcome poverty and strengthen national development must be governed by the rules and principles of human rights established in international law (Abramovich, 2006). This approach, as a framework for both conceptualization and action, seeks to have the excluded and most vulnerable individuals and groups treated in an equitable and non-discriminatory way, given that they are holders of rights (Pautassi, 2007; Hunt and others, 2002).

This perspective affects the definition of indicators for measuring child poverty and for identifying poor children and adolescents and their needs. UNICEF (2004) argues that the concept of child poverty and its ramifications can be constructed according to the principle of access to a specific number of economic, social and cultural rights included in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international instruments.

These considerations were applied by UNICEF in 2003 when, together with researchers from the University of Bristol and the London School of Economics, it made the first global effort to measure child poverty using a rights approach. The study proposed a set of goods and services considered essential for guaranteeing children’s well-being and adopted seven dimensions of their rights, which were to be used as a guiding principle: adequate nutrition, safe drinking water, decent sanitation services, health, housing, education and information, for each of which an indicator was designed (Gordon and others, 2003).

Measuring child poverty

In keeping with the global initiative, in 2008 and 2009 ECLAC and the UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean conducted the first comparative study of child poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean. The study sought to analyse the characteristics and multiple dimensions of child poverty and establish a regional baseline for use in subsequent versions (Espindola and Rico, 2010; Rico, Espindola and Jimenez, 2010). The study also provides relevant empirical data to facilitate making political decisions for overcoming poverty based on a comprehensive and rights approach.

The ECLAC study measured child poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean with two traditional methodologies: (i) direct methods, in the case unmet basic needs, which were adapted to measure several levels of deprivation among children, based on the proposal by the University of Bristol and the London School of Economics; and (ii) indirect methods, represented by the measurement of absolute poverty according to per capita household income.

The basis for this was an analysis of available surveys of living conditions in the households in the region, including data for the implementation of both methodologies. Given the lack of anthropometric measurements with which to construct undernutrition indicators, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and Demographic and Health Surveys were examined to build models capable of estimating the probability of undernutrition in subsequent household surveys.

Whereas the thresholds of deprivation used in the global study refer only to the most severe situations of child deprivation, the study of Latin America and the Caribbean also opted to identify thresholds of moderate deprivation, which reflect needs that undermine children’s well-being and development. This makes it possible to measure the magnitude and depth of extreme child poverty (severe deprivations) and overall child poverty (the sum of severe and moderate deprivations) in the countries of the region (see table 1).

Under the child rights approach, each deprivation was considered to be an indicator of poverty, since it represents a violation of or failure to comply with at least one right. This

Table 1
CHILD POVERTY: DIMENSIONS, INDICATORS AND THRESHOLDS FOR SEVERE AND MODERATE DEPRIVATION IN CHILDREN

Levels of deprivation Dimensions and indicators of deprivation	Moderate (not excluding severe)	Severe/serious	Article of the Convention on the Rights of the Child that is violated ^{a/}
Nutrition Weight/age ratio Size/age ratio	Moderately/severely underweight (general undernutrition) or moderately/severely undersize for age (chronic undernutrition): less than -2 standard deviations from benchmark	Severely underweight or severely undersize: less than -3 standard deviations from benchmark	24 (2) (c)
Safe drinking water Access to safe drinking water by: -origin -supply -access time (if available)	(a) Origin: well or pump (b) Water supplied from outside or away from the house (for example, public cisterns, water trucks, etc.)	(a) Unsafe water source: natural sources (rivers, springs) (b) If indicator of access time is available, 15 minutes or more	24 (2) (e)
Sanitation Connection to sewage system (excreta disposal)	No sewage connection (for example, cesspools) or access outside of house or beyond land parcel	No sewage service (for example, channelled directly into a river)	24 (2) (c)
Housing Number of persons per bedroom/room Floor material Wall material Roofing material	Crowding: three or more persons per bedroom/room (excluding bathroom and kitchen), dirt floor ^{b/} , unsafe building materials (walls or roof of mud or similar materials)	Overcrowding: five or more persons per bedroom/room, temporary housing (tents, etc.), walls or roofs built with waste materials	27 (3)
Education School attendance and number of years of school completed	Children and adolescents who have attended school but dropped out before completing secondary school	Children and adolescents who have never attended school	28 (1) (a)/(b)
Information Access to electricity, possession of a radio, television or telephone	No household access to electricity, telephone (landline or mobile) or radio/TV (at least two of these unavailable)	No household access to electricity, telephone or radio/TV (simultaneously)	13/17

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of David Gordon and others, *Child Poverty in the Developing World*, Bristol, The Policy Press, 2003.

^{a/} For additional details on the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, see <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>.

^{b/} Whereas the Bristol Study considered dirt floors an indication of severe deprivation, this article considers them indicative of moderate deprivation.

Note: Given that the situations described above are indicative of deprivation, the thresholds are determined implicitly and point to situations of higher well-being than indicated in each cell.

One of every three children living in extreme poverty is deprived of more than one of the fundamental rights whose absence constitutes poverty

methodology considers children poor when any of their rights are not met, regardless of geographic location, ethnic origin or other social or cultural characteristics.

In addition, the proportion and number of children affected by insufficient household income was reviewed, and children were classified by their households' potential capacity to meet their basic needs through market mechanisms. This was done by comparing per capita income with the indigence and poverty lines in order to distinguish among the indigent, the non-indigent poor and the non-poor.

Although at first glance income-related poverty correlates strongly with deprivation-based child poverty, at the individual level and even at the household level this

One of every five children in Latin America —or a total of more than 32 million children— lives in extreme poverty, while overall poverty affects 81 million persons, that is, nearly half of all persons under 18

Table 2
LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES): EXTREME CHILD POVERTY AND OVERALL CHILD POVERTY TOTAL
(Percentages and thousands of children)

Country	Children up to 17 years of age			
	Extreme child poverty		Total child poverty ^{a/}	
	Porcentaje	Number of Children	Porcentaje	Number of Children
Argentina (urban, 2006)	10.0	730.1	28.7	2 097.2
Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (2007)	48.6	2 040.1	77.2	3 241.3
Brazil (2007)	14.6	8 554.3	38.8	22 713.4
Chile (2006)	6.1	289.7	23.2	1 097.0
Colombia (2008)	15.6	2 409.7	38.5	5 952.1
Costa Rica (2007)	4.4	63.7	20.5	297.9
Dominican Republic (2007)	7.7	269.2	49.3	1 724.5
Ecuador (2007)	20.4	1 069.9	50.4	2 638.6
El Salvador (2004)	39.0	1 071.3	86.8	2 383.8
Guatemala (2006)	47.2	2 978.6	79.7	5 029.5
Honduras (2007)	29.2	1 032.5	67.9	2 404.7
Mexico (2006)	11.0	4 301.3	40.4	15 843.9
Nicaragua (2005)	42.4	940.7	78.5	1 740.3
Panama (2003)	26.9	310.5	51.1	590.1
Paraguay (2007)	13.7	345.4	56.5	1 425.8
Peru (2008)	38.0	4 104.0	73.4	7 916.0
Uruguay (2007)	6.2	58.1	23.9	224.9
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (2007)	16.4	1 631.8	35.7	3 557.2
Latin America (2007)	17.9	32 201.1	45.0	80 878.5

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special tabulations of data from national household surveys.

^{a/} Includes extremely poor children.

it is four times higher (see table 2). These differences are found because of the inclusion of characteristics regarding housing, access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and they reflect housing and services infrastructure deficiencies and the need for policies to reduce child poverty.

At the regional level, of the more than 32 million extremely poor children, 22.7 million suffer a single severe deprivation. With overall child poverty, the situation is similar: the violation of the rights of 53% of the 80.9 million children living in poverty consists of a single moderate or severe deprivation, and only one of every five poor children suffers deprivation in three or more categories of well-being (see figure 1).

In the countries with the highest levels of extreme child poverty, multiple severe deprivations occur simultaneously. The presence of a “syndrome” of multiple deprivations is a warning sign of the failure to utilize children’s potentials.

correlation is less clear. It was thus necessary to examine the cases using both methodologies, since together they provide valuable information for characterizing the situation of children and for making public-policy decisions.

Child poverty in Latin America

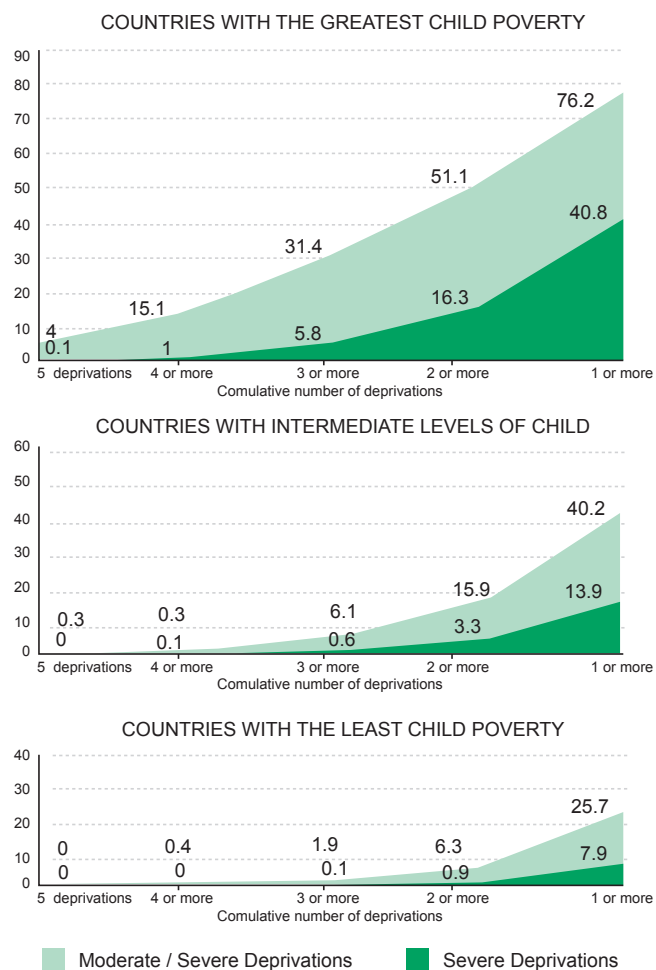
Throughout the region, 17.9% of all children were living in extreme poverty in 2007 —for a total of more than 32 million. These children had one or more serious deprivations: precarious housing; general or chronic undernutrition, or both; lack of access to safe drinking water or sanitation in the home; lack of access to the education system or to means of communication and information (including the lack of electricity in the home).

However, children’s situations differ greatly from one country to another (see table 2). In the countries with the greatest total child poverty in 2007 (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru and Plurinational State of Bolivia), around 41% of the children were living in extreme poverty. In countries with intermediate child poverty (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico and Panama), somewhat less than 14% of the children were extremely poor. And in the countries with the lowest total child poverty rates (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay), only 8% of the children were in this category.

A great number of children suffer severe deprivations, but such cases are mainly confined to rural areas, fringe urban areas or areas where most inhabitants belong to indigenous populations. Moderate deprivation, however, encompasses larger, more heterogeneous populations. In Latin America 45% of all children (nearly 81 million) suffer at least one moderate or serious deprivation.

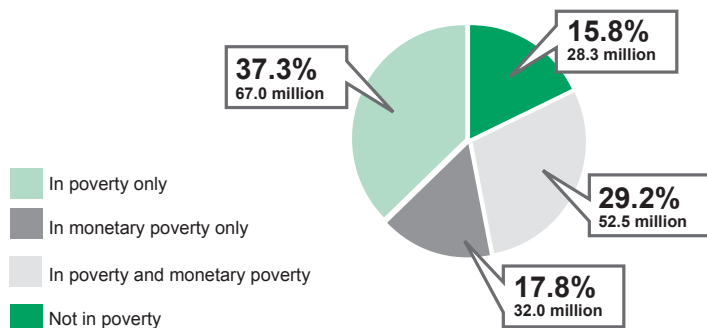
Several countries with low rates of extreme child poverty have high overall poverty levels, because of moderate deprivations. This is the case of the Dominican Republic, where the overall number of poor children is six times higher than that of children in extreme poverty; Costa Rica, where the number is almost five times higher; and Paraguay, where

Figure 1
LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES): POOR AND EXTREMELY POOR CHILDREN, BY NUMBER OF DEPRIVATIONS
(Cumulative percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special tabulations of data from national household surveys.

Figure 2
LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES): INCIDENCE OF CHILD POVERTY AND MONETARY POVERTY



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special tabulations of national household surveys.

The dual nature of child poverty: lack of resources and multiple deprivations

An analysis of child poverty based on indicators of deprivation and rights violations reveals the particular circumstances of the poverty in which children and adolescents live, and these particular circumstances are made clear by a comparison of these indicators with data on poverty according to household income.

Around 43% of all children living in extreme poverty in Latin America belong to households whose incomes are potentially insufficient to satisfy their nutritional needs –that is, in indigent households. Furthermore, 18.4 million children suffer extreme deprivations, even though their household income is below the cost of the minimum food basket and are thus not indigent.

Programmes for overcoming poverty in the region target households as homogeneous units. In some 4.1 million households, children suffer simultaneously the violation of their rights and serious income deficiencies. Children in 6.8 million households, although potentially lacking access to sufficient income to meet their needs, do not suffer a violation, or at least a serious violation, of their rights, according to the Bristol indicators (see figure 2).

Total child poverty is the result of social exclusion and the mechanism by which social exclusion is reproduced. Although children in moderate poverty do not live in extremely poor conditions, their future opportunities are narrowed. Malnutrition, under-attainment and dropping out of school, a lack of expectations and discrimination for being poor not only undermine their rights now but will also ensure that they remain in the lowest social strata. Once they are adults, the precariousness of their well-being and that of future generations will thus be reproduced.

In sum, 29.2% of all children and adolescents in Latin America suffer moderate or serious deprivations, and their families' income is insufficient to meet their basic needs, and 15.8% suffer moderate or serious deprivations, although the family income could be sufficient to avoid those deprivations. Also, 17.8% of children do not suffer deprivations that violate

Almost half of all Latin American children live in households with incomes that place them within the bounds of poverty. More than half of the persons living in indigent households are children

their rights as children, but they belong to households with insufficient income. Overall, 62.7% of all children are touched, in one way or another, by poverty. Around 113 million children in the region are exposed to a level of social exclusion that affects their well-being, and their fundamental rights are either potentially or effectively unmet.

Recommendations: making children a priority

The countries of Latin America have undertaken commitments within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international agreements such as the Millennium Development Goals. These agreements aim to increase the opportunities for and the ability of children and adolescents to have a present and a future free of poverty and to break the cycle of its intergenerational reproduction.

The region cannot continue to maintain that child poverty is an outstanding debt or a mere cause for concern. It must establish clear priorities for satisfying the needs of children and for meeting demands for greater equality among different social sectors.

The severe and moderate deprivations that children suffer can be overcome with direct interventions –to meet needs regarding health and nutrition, safe drinking water or sanitation– and indirect ones, such as to increase household income, either through actions focused on the labour market or through monetary transfers. Social investment and public spending for children should be increased not only to improve children's living conditions but also to promote more inclusive and egalitarian development.

The following are among the most important recommendations that stem from the regional comparisons:

- In the countries with the highest per capita gross income, and therefore with the greatest capacity to finance public policy, the fight against poverty requires comprehensive

programmes and adequate sectoral policy instruments to build an environment in which children's rights will be protected.

- In middle-income countries, addressing child poverty calls for mobilizing greater resources and decisively redesigning anti-poverty policies to benefit children more specifically, since the at-risk population is large and the possibility that the cycle of poverty reproduction will be maintained is high.
- In the countries with the greatest child poverty, enormous resources are necessary to finance actions that will target different types of deprivations. Current budget limitations, as well as the urgent need for intervention, call for the use of multilateral financial mechanisms, the mobilization of international cooperation and a partnership between the public and private sectors.
- For extreme child poverty to be overcome, actions to improve household incomes must be combined with a redesigning of public anti-poverty policy so as to create employment for the adults who care for children and to construct systems to support social protection and advancement.
- Sectoral interventions must promote synergies and be coordinated as part of a comprehensive approach to dealing with poverty. In and of themselves, sectoral actions can reduce deprivation in one area of child poverty, but they do not guarantee fulfilment of children's other rights or protect them from the violation of rights not addressed in anti-poverty measures –like child labour and exploitation or physical, sexual and psychological violence.
- Children and adolescents who live in poverty and belong to social groups that have a better possibility of overcoming deprivations –for example, rural and indigenous populations– should be the target of affirmative actions in keeping with policies for universal coverage.

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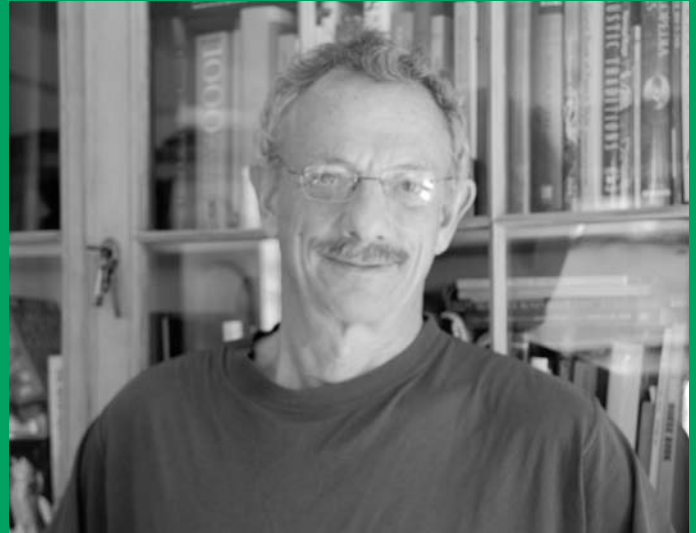
What distinguishes child poverty from adult poverty?

Child poverty is different from adult poverty because it has different causes and effects, and especially owing to its long-term consequences for children and adolescents. The concept of child poverty must be analysed outside of the traditional parameters for measuring poverty—like low income or household consumption—because some aspects of child poverty go undetected by these measurements: insecurity, lack of freedom caused by harassment or abuse and social exclusion. The impact of poverty on children and adolescents, and the way they experience it, must be taken into account, because they do not benefit to the same extent from the income or consumption of the household in which they live. For them, poverty is a profound experience that involves human relations and that is manifested in a relative as well as in a dynamic and multidimensional manner.

At Equity for Children, we propose viewing child poverty in three interrelated domains: (i) deprivation: a lack of the indispensable material conditions and services for children and adolescents to achieve development and reach their full potential; (ii) exclusion: the result of processes by which the dignity, voice and rights of children are denied or their lives are threatened; and (iii) vulnerability: society's inability to curtail the threats faced by persons under 18 in their milieus.

Child poverty cannot be solved solely by increasing individual income levels: it is a complex problem and must be tackled through comprehensive strategies and from different angles. There is no single definition of child poverty, although at the centre there is always a focus on the deprivation of basic needs from a human rights perspective. Fulfilment of the rights of children and adolescents requires eradicating child poverty and general poverty.

Children and adolescents constitute one of the groups most vulnerable to and threatened by poverty. Most of the poor belong to this age group; but suffering this scourge at a very young age also leaves indelible marks that reinforce the vicious circle of poverty: uneducated, undernourished and poor children almost inevitably become uneducated, undernourished and poor adults. To reduce future poverty, it is necessary to combat child poverty today.



Alberto Minujin

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<http://www.equityforchildren.org/>

What policy proposals would you emphasize for eradicating child poverty?

Absolute priority should be given to investing in children and adolescents, in order to deal with the current situation of need and inequity. This year, when many countries are celebrating their bicentennial, it would be good to think about this social debt, which is the most onerous debt faced by our countries.

Furthermore, it is necessary to implement a comprehensive and flexible protection system to guarantee defence of and compliance with the rights of all children and adolescents. This should include universal allocations, day-care and early development systems, quality preschool, primary and secondary education and suitable mechanisms for protection and justice.



© Kelly age, 10, Uruguay

Chile Crece Contigo: Providing equal opportunities beginning in early childhood

Chile Crece Contigo (“Chile Grows with You”) is a comprehensive support system for early childhood that is part of the social protection system. When its creation was announced in 2006, it was charged with comprehensively guiding, protecting and supporting children and their families through universal actions and services, and with providing special support for those at the greatest risk.

The programme has been implemented gradually. In 2007 universal provision of benefits began. Differentiated services –orientation and support from the first prenatal check-up through the beginning of preschool –were rolled out in two phases. First, health and maternity centres in 161 municipalities were incorporated into the programme, and in 2008 those of the remaining 184 municipalities were included. In 2009, through the enactment of Law 20.379, the Intersectoral Social Protection System was created and Chile Crece Contigo was raised to institutional status. The programme thus became a permanent feature of public policy. That year, around 800,000 children under 4 benefited from the different programmes established by agreement of the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Health.

The system coordinates the initiatives, services and programmes for children provided and carried out in different sectors. Children receive prompt access to services and benefits to meet their needs and ongoing support at each stage of their growth. The system also gives families in the programme preferential access to the entire State social network. The aim is to build a more equitable society by providing equal opportunities starting at birth.

Mexico: Multidimensional measurement of poverty

Pursuant to the General Social Development Law of 2004, the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Policy (CONEVAL) of Mexico has developed a multidimensional poverty measurement system based on three benchmarks: economic well-being, social rights and territorial context. Multidimensional poverty is defined as a situation in which a person is not guaranteed the ability to exercise at least one of the rights associated with social development or in which a person lacks sufficient income to acquire goods and services to satisfy his or her needs, or both. The criteria for measuring multidimensional poverty are per capita income, as an indicator of economic well-being; a social deprivation index, which relies on six indicators to identify needs (academic attainment in the home, access to health services, access to social security, housing quality and space, access to basic services in the home and access to food); and the degree of social cohesion, based on indicators of social inequality and of the territorial polarization of municipalities.

This measurement classifies persons into four categories: persons in multidimensional poverty (income below the well-being line and with at least one social deficiency); persons at risk because of social deficiencies (one or more social deficiencies, with an income above the well-being line); persons at risk owing to their income (without social deficiencies, but with income below or at the well-being line); persons not in multidimensional poverty or at risk (income above the well-being line and without any social deficiencies).

With this methodology Mexico has become the first country to have a regulatory framework with legal provisions through which it can adopt an official measurement that recognizes the multidimensional nature of poverty.

Sources: <<http://www.crececontigo.cl/>> and <<http://www.eclac.cl/dds/noticias/paginas/0/37350/presentacion-SusanaQuezada.pdf>>.

Source: National Council of Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL). *Metodología para la medición multidimensional de la pobreza en México*, Mexico City, 2009 [online] <http://www.coneval.gob.mx/coneval2/htmls/medicion_pobreza/HomeMedicionPobreza.jsp> [date of reference: 13 April 2010].

...that six of the eight Millennium Development Goals are directly related to children?

Source: United Nations, Millennium Declaration [online] <http://www.un-documents.net/a55r2.htm>.

...that the earthquake in Haiti on 12 January 2010 seriously damaged or destroyed at least half of the country's 15,000 primary schools and 1,500 of its secondary schools?

Source: United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO), "Reactivating schooling and supporting national education authorities are UNESCO's priorities on the ground in Haiti" [online] http://www.unesco.org/en/education/dynamic-content-single-view/news/unescos_education_priorities_in_haiti/back/9195/cHash/c3bbeff108/.

...that one of every three children in the developing world lacks access to basic sanitation, and one of every five has no access to safe drinking water?

Source: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), "Millennium Development Goals. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger" [online] <http://www.unicef.org/spanish/mdg/poverty.html>, 2009.

...that in Guatemala, 22% of the under-five population suffers chronic undernutrition (that is, they are undersize for their age)?

Source: World Health Organization, "Global Database on Child Growth and Malnutrition" [online] <http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/database/countries/gtm/en/>, 2006-2007.

...that 53.1% of Mexico's children and adolescents suffer poverty and the deprivation of their basic social rights?

Source: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), "El enfoque multidimensional de México contra la pobreza", Mexico City, 10 December 2009 [online] http://www.unicef.org/spanish/media/media_52230.html.

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Child poverty: a priority challenge

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