



## Child poverty measurement

### Evaluation of UNICEF's work in contributing to child poverty reduction, including in humanitarian and fragile settings

#### Key messages



**333 million**

children living in extreme poverty



**one billion**

living in multidimensional poverty worldwide

The good practices outlined in this document showcase two or more of the following criteria



**evidence-based approach** grounded in robust data and analysis



**innovation and creativity** in employing novel solutions



**replicability and adaptability**, allowing the practices to be applied in various contexts



a focus on **capacity building** and ensuring stakeholder ownership



demonstrated **sustainability and scalability**, with long-term impact and potential for expansion



measurable positive outcomes and **tangible impact**



**collaborative and multi-sectoral engagement** involving diverse stakeholders



an emphasis on **inclusiveness and equity**



## Introduction

Recent measurements of monetary child poverty estimate 333 million children living in extreme poverty, while methodologies that quantify multi-dimensional poverty place the number at approximately one billion.<sup>1 2</sup> Understanding and effectively measuring the various dimensions of child poverty and strengthening national governments' capacities to undertake these measurements remains crucial. This good practice note aims to highlight UNICEF's work in child poverty measurement, showcasing adaptability, collaborative approaches, and methodological innovations of Country Offices (COs) in varied contexts. The cases from Uganda and Rwanda, highlighted in this good practice note demonstrate UNICEF's dynamic approach to accurately measuring child poverty. The cases illustrate the importance of aligning strategies to government needs, responding to changing political and humanitarian environments and engaging in effective partnerships to develop government capacities. This good practice note underscores how UNICEF's adaptability in various contexts significantly enhances UNICEF's ability to foster government ownership and effectively utilise poverty measurement tools. This approach not only ensures the sustainability of initiatives but also amplifies the impact on reducing child poverty.

The good practices outlined in this document showcase two or more of the following criteria: i) an **evidence-based approach** grounded in robust data and analysis; ii) **replicability and adaptability**, allowing the practices to be applied in various contexts; iii) demonstrated **sustainability and scalability**, with long-term impact and potential for expansion; iv) **collaborative and multi-sectoral engagement** involving diverse stakeholders; v) **innovation and creativity** in employing novel solutions; vi) a focus on **capacity building** and ensuring stakeholder ownership; vii) measurable positive outcomes and **tangible impact**; and viii) an emphasis on **inclusiveness and equity**, targeting the most vulnerable and promoting fairness. The primary aim of this document is to provide valuable insights and serve as a guide for other COs to design, implement and improve processes for child poverty measurement and government ownership of this process. This good practice note will highlight activities undertaken by UNICEF COs to support governments in measuring and using child poverty estimates in different contexts. These activities highlighted are aligned with the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty's guide to reducing child poverty, *A World Free from Child Poverty*,<sup>3</sup> specifically relating to Milestone 2: Measuring Child Poverty.

## Highlighted good practices

### UNICEF's collaboration with the Ugandan government: Adapting methodologies of child poverty measurement for enhanced engagement and government ownership

#### Summary of the good practice

The UNICEF work in Uganda demonstrates an **evidence-based approach, replicability and adaptability**, and a focus on **capacity building and ownership**. The adaptation of the measurement methodology to the Consensual approach fostered greater government engagement and ownership. This led to the independent production of child poverty reports by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, showcasing the sustainability of the initiative. In 2014, the Uganda CO, in partnership with the Ugandan government, with analysis by Partnerships for Economic Policy (PEP), launched the first multidimensional child poverty report, revealing that 55 per cent of children in Uganda were living in poverty. Since then, UNICEF has actively supported subsequent measurement exercises and contributed to improving government engagement and ownership.

#### Adapting methodologies to align with government needs.

This initial report employed the Bristol approach.<sup>4</sup> While this method offered a comprehensive view of the situation of children, it struggled to fully engage the Ugandan government. Its limited resonance with government perspectives led to minimal government involvement and ownership in the measurement process. Recognising the limitations, UNICEF Uganda pivoted to the Consensual approach, which proved more effective in capturing the unique aspects of child poverty in Uganda.<sup>5</sup> The adaption of the method was key in fostering government ownership due to its ability to “produce practical and policy-relevant measures in many African countries” and engagement in the poverty measurement process.

#### Integration and impact of the consensual approach in national surveys

UNICEF's advocacy, technical expertise and capacity development were pivotal in the incorporation of the multidimensional poverty Consensual approach into Uganda's 2016/2017 national household survey.<sup>6</sup> The integration was made possible by UNICEF's successful advocacy to include an excerpt in the National Household Survey Report, focusing on going beyond monetary poverty by using the Consensual Approach.<sup>7 8</sup> The prominence of the section going beyond monetary poverty caught the attention of key government stakeholders, leading to increased interest by government stakeholders in engaging in child poverty measurement. The increased interest resulted in the production of detailed child poverty reports co-authored by UNICEF and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics that were more aligned with the government's perspective and priorities.

	<p><b>Fostering government ownership to enhance the sustainability of the measurement.</b></p>
<p><b>Key results achieved</b></p>	<p>After the integration of the multidimensional child poverty module in the 2016/17 survey, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) initiated the 2019/20 data collection for the national household survey without financial support from UNICEF and will be launching the forthcoming child poverty reports independently.<sup>9</sup> The transition in government ownership showcases the success of UNICEF's efforts in fostering sustainable, government-led initiatives in poverty assessment, ensuring long-term commitment and ownership in tackling child poverty in Uganda.</p> <p>Through UNICEF's efforts, multidimensional child poverty measures were fully integrated into the Uganda National Household Survey series. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) published and launched comprehensive multidimensional Child Poverty Deprivation Reports for 2019/2020 using the 2016/2017 UNHS, including both quantitative and qualitative analyses of child deprivations. Additional flagship publications, such as regional-level reports and situation analyses, were also produced by the Republic of Uganda and UNICEF, offering more disaggregated data for targeted interventions.<sup>10</sup></p> <p>As a result of the contributions of UNICEF to the one-page excerpt of the Consensual approach to child poverty measurement in the 2016/2017 national household survey report, the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund, a five-year social Protection and Affirmative Programme implemented under the Office of the Prime Minister, integrated the child poverty measurement within their Monitoring and Evaluation framework.<sup>11</sup></p> <p>With UNICEF's technical support, UBOS produced estimates of district and sub-county level poverty using the small area estimation methodology.<sup>12</sup> This granular approach to poverty measurement was crucial for tailoring programmes and policy interventions at the local level, ensuring that the most vulnerable children in different regions of Uganda received the attention and resources they needed.</p>
<p><b>Lessons learnt</b></p>	<p>Adopting a flexible approach to child poverty measurement methodologies, ensuring aligning of measurement methodologies with governmental priorities, and collaborating with government bodies on methodological development ensures contextually relevant, and sustainable measurements of child poverty. The integration of poverty measurements within national surveys and government statistical infrastructure fosters deeper governmental ownership, enhancing the effectiveness, sustainability of poverty measures, and informs programmes, policies, and budgets to effectively tackle child poverty.</p>

## UNICEF Rwanda Country Office's success in fostering government ownership of child poverty measurement through advocacy and capacity building

### Summary of the good practice

UNICEF Rwanda's work demonstrates **collaborative and multi-sectoral** engagement through their partnership with the national statistics agency, **capacity building and ownership** by strengthening the agency's measurement capabilities, and **impact and results** seen in the use of child poverty data for policy and budget decisions. Through UNICEF's persistent technical support and capacity building to NISR, UNICEF supported the integration of child poverty measurements into national statistical systems, which is imperative to inform government programmes, policy planning and budget allocation. This collaboration enabled the preparation of thematic reports on child poverty based on general census data and, ultimately, the use of these measures by MINECOFIN to allocate resources more effectively.

### Advocating and building capacities of the NISR on child poverty measurement

In Rwanda, UNICEF has played a pivotal role in fostering government ownership, providing invaluable advocacy, capacity building, and technical advice, especially in developing thematic reports on child poverty grounded in general census data. The partnership reached a milestone with the publication of the inaugural child poverty report in 2018, a collaborative effort led by UNICEF with NISR.<sup>13</sup> Recognising the critical need for governmental ownership and sustained engagement, UNICEF advocated for the importance of ongoing child poverty measurement and championed the development of NISR's capabilities in measurement to ensure enduring ownership and routine measurement.<sup>14</sup>

UNICEF's role in capacity development extended to refreshing NISR's training in the Multidimensional Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) methodology, which significantly enhanced the capabilities of sixteen statisticians who were further trained in data analysis by UNICEF.<sup>15</sup> This refresher training was pivotal following the initial MODA report launch in 2018, which featured a limited role for NISR. Through persistent capacity enhancement and hands-on technical assistance, child poverty measurement was integrated seamlessly into Rwanda's routine Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV) 6 household survey.<sup>16</sup> The result was the transition from a UNICEF-led report in 2018 to a nationally-led and owned child poverty report in 2022, cementing the institutionalisation and sustainability of poverty measurement in Rwanda.

### Strengthening society's engagement with child poverty data for more informed decision-making

Incorporating child poverty within the broader society has also been a focus. Technical and financial support from UNICEF facilitated NISR's engagement with a wider audience, including high school teachers, university lecturers, researchers, and students. 'Reading Data with Youth' events and targeted journalist training have expanded skills in evidence-based storytelling, which in turn enhances the use of statistics in educational settings.<sup>17</sup> These efforts have not only increased data accuracy but also its accessibility, contributing to a culture of data-driven decision-making. In addition to efforts to strengthen societal engagement with child poverty data, UNICEF played a key role in engaging with policymakers to support capacity building on the use of child poverty measurements to plan, mobilise and allocate resources. This included engagement with MINECOFIN for a social protection financing and resource mobilising strategy.<sup>18</sup>

<p><b>Key results achieved</b></p>	<p>The 2022 MODA report stands as a testament to Rwanda’s ownership of child poverty measurement, with NISR statisticians independently conducting the child poverty analysis and publishing the reports. The training facilitated by UNICEF and continued advocacy efforts empowered NISR with the capability to conduct such poverty analyses autonomously and embedded the necessity for child poverty measurement within the national statistical infrastructure as a routine part of the multi-year integrated household survey process.<sup>19</sup></p> <p>A result of the ownership of child poverty measurement has been the successful application in refining planning and budgeting processes, allowing the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) to use the measurements to allocate resources more effectively.<sup>20</sup></p> <p>Through collaborations with entities such as BRAC’s Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative and MINALOC, UNICEF has helped develop options to measure graduation from extreme poverty, informing a comprehensive Graduation strategy that now incorporates child poverty measurements.<sup>21</sup> The increased proficiency of duty-bearers at all levels of government in applying evidence from these measurements ensures strategic planning and resource distribution, enhancing Rwanda’s capacity to address child poverty systematically.</p>
<p><b>Lessons learnt</b></p>	<p>The integration of child poverty measurements into national statistical systems is imperative for their adoption in government planning and budget allocation. It is crucial for UNICEF Country Offices to go beyond offering technical support for these measurements and ensure they also focus on capacity building. This ensures that government partners are equipped with the necessary expertise to independently conduct and utilise these measurements for policy and programme development.</p> <p>In order to support the use of child poverty measurement to inform policies and programmes and budget allocations, UNICEF needs to go beyond capacity building for measurement activities to include capacity building of duty-bearers at national and sub-national levels to use the evidence to plan, mobilise and allocate resources.</p> <p>They must be seamlessly integrated into the existing national poverty measurement infrastructure, such as the Poverty Measurement Tool (PMT). This integration is essential to expand the tool’s reach and to ensure its accessibility to all stakeholders, enabling a more comprehensive approach to addressing child poverty.<sup>22</sup></p>

## Abbreviations

<b>COs</b>	Country Office
<b>EPRI</b>	Economic Policy Research Institute
<b>EICV</b>	Household Living Conditions Survey
<b>PEP</b>	Partnerships for Economic Policy
<b>UBOS</b>	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
<b>UNHS</b>	Uganda National Household Survey

## Endnotes

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