

Child Poverty: Deprivations and Disparities in East Asia and the Pacific

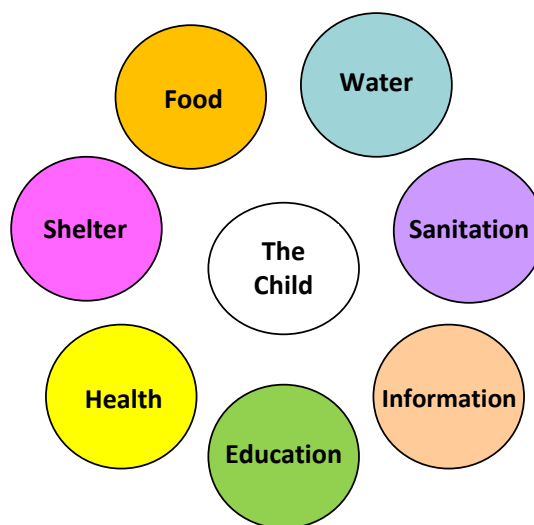
Children constitute a major part of the population in countries in East Asia and the Pacific, ranging from about a quarter of the population in Thailand to **almost half of the population** in Lao PDR. It is therefore essential to understand how children experience poverty.

Children have basic needs, such as adequate nutrition and healthcare, that if unmet could result in **long-term consequences**, including limitations on their physical and cognitive development, and consequently, on opportunities in adulthood.

Children have no income of their own and the fulfillment of their needs is determined by intrahousehold dynamics and **availability of essential services**.

Country	Total Population (thousands)	Population under 18 years (%)
Cambodia	14562	41.6
Lao PDR	6205	45.5
Mongolia	2641	33.2
Philippines	90348	40.7
Thailand	67386	26.7
Vanuatu	234	45.7
Viet Nam	87096	32.9

The Non-Income Dimensions of Child Poverty

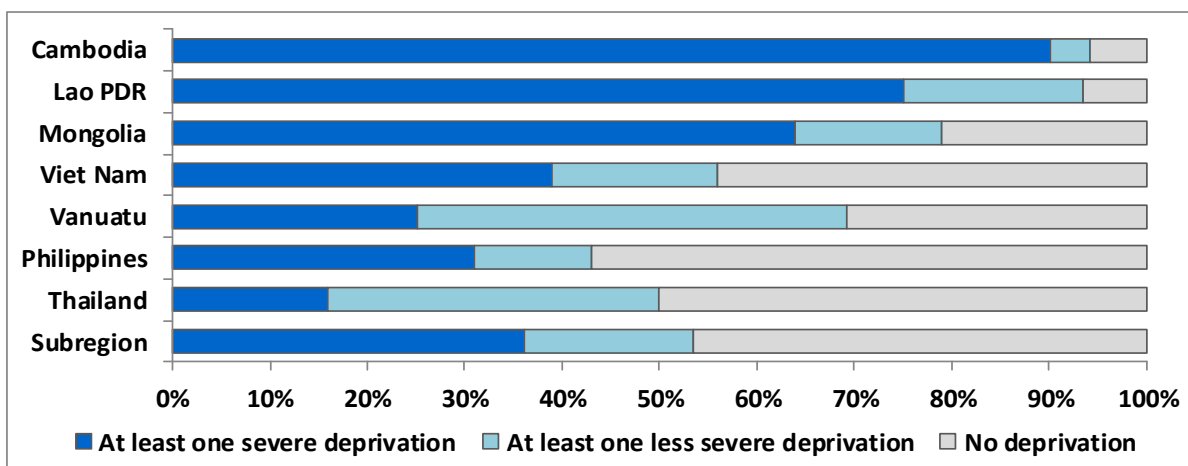


A newly unemployed adult is likely to eventually find work. A child who does not eat enough will be stunted for life. A child who drops out of school will probably never resume their education.

Of the 93.3 million children living in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vanuatu and Viet Nam, approximately **54% (50 million) experience poverty** as measured by deprivation in the non-income dimensions presented above.

In 2006, more than **30 million children were severely deprived in at least one dimension**. Over **13 million children** were severely deprived in **two or more dimensions**.

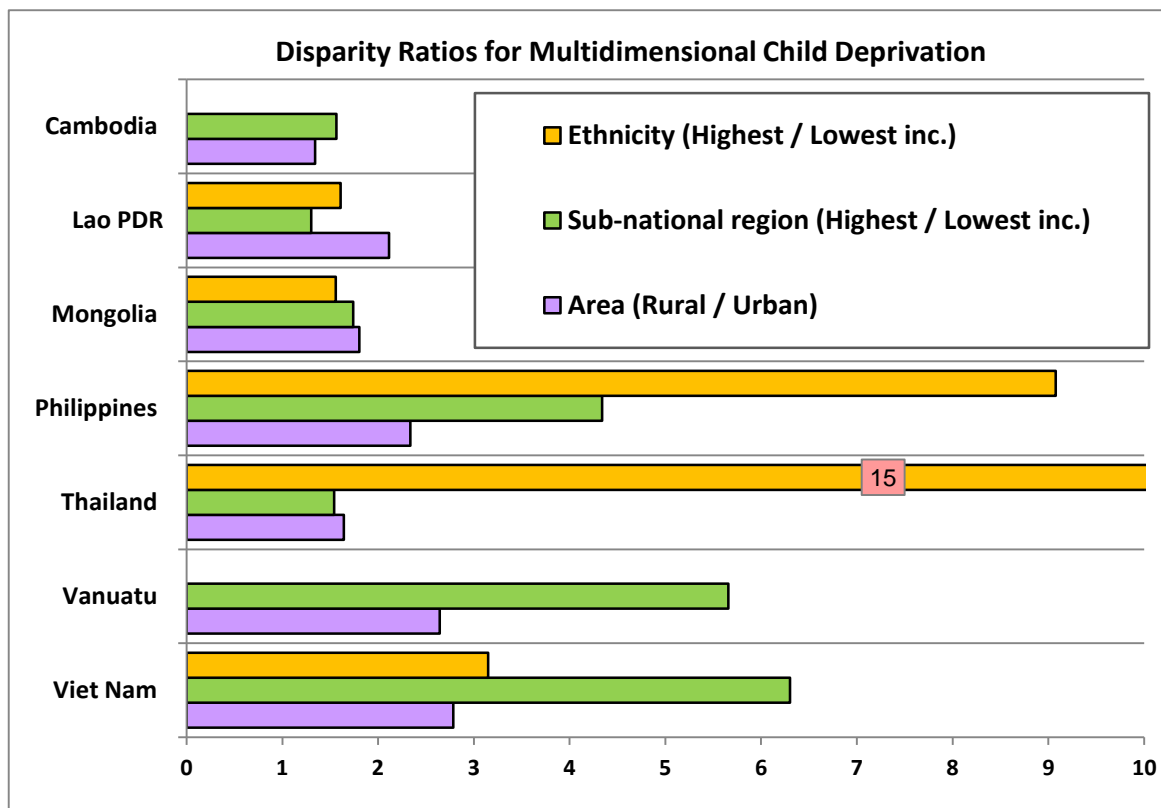
The study found considerable variation in child poverty across the seven countries. As shown in the figure below, **severe deprivation ranged from 16% in Thailand to 90% in Cambodia**.



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Considerable **variation in child poverty** was found within countries. Children in **rural** areas, in certain sub-national regions or **provinces**, and from **ethnic minority** backgrounds are more likely to be deprived.

As examples, ethnic minority children are 9 times and 15 times as likely to be severely deprived as ethnic majority children in the Philippines and Thailand respectively. Similarly, in Vanuatu and Viet Nam, children in worse off provinces are almost 6-7 times as likely to be severely deprived as their counterparts in better provinces.



This study highlights that rapid economic progress in East Asia and the Pacific has often not resulted in gains for all children, even in middle income countries.

To realize the basic rights of all children and address poverty that persists despite economic gains, governments in the region will need to:

- **Broaden poverty measurement** to include child poverty, taking into account deprivations in food, water, shelter, sanitation, health, education and information;
- Pay **greater attention to the needs of children** in national development plans and poverty reduction strategies;
- Use the evidence on multidimensional deprivations and disparities to **allocate resources more equitably**;
- Address the needs of the most vulnerable children through **sectoral policies** and **child-sensitive social protection systems**.