

Child Poverty in Egypt

Statistics in Focus: 01. 2015

9.2 million children live in monetary poverty in Egypt
- more than half in Upper Egypt

Latest evidence highlights the urgent need for
effective action to address child poverty across the country



In 2012/13, 28.8% of Egypt's children (aged 0-17) were living in extreme monetary poverty, corresponding to around 9.2 million children.

An additional 7.5 million children were vulnerable to extreme poverty, living somewhere between the national lower and upper poverty lines.

Child poverty has grown continuously in Egypt over the past 15 years, with a marked acceleration since 2010/11.

The bulk of poor children live in rural areas of Upper Egypt, but Urban Governorates account for a large part of the increase in child poverty in recent years, reflecting the impact of the prolonged economic stagnation that started in 2011.

Poverty Lines and Poverty Measurement

This brief draws on the microdata of the 2012/13 Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey (HIECS) carried out by Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS).

It explores data on poverty prevalence and trends in relation to Egypt's 'lower poverty line', where average value in 2012/13 was LE 3,920 per person per year (LE 10.7 per day) – the threshold for extreme poverty, which reflects extremely low levels of consumption. The brief also makes reference to the 'upper poverty line' of LE 5,066 per person per year (LE 13.9 per day) – a threshold that leaves households vulnerable to extreme poverty.

A child (or any other individual) is considered poor if he/she lives in a poor household, i.e. a household with a consumption level that falls below the poverty line. The child poverty rate reflects the percentage of children (aged 0-17) who live in poor households.



Children living in monetary poverty & children vulnerable to poverty (2012/13)

Around 22 million Egyptians were living in extreme monetary poverty in 2012/13, in households with consumption levels below the lower national poverty line. Of these, 9.2 million were children aged 0-17 years, meaning that two in every five poor Egyptians were children.

The child poverty rate in 2012/13 was 28.8 per cent (Figure

1), a level higher than the poverty rate for the overall population; an indication that households with children are at higher risk of poverty than other households.

An additional 7.5 million children (23.4 per cent) were living in households between the lower and upper national lines and were, therefore, vulnerable to extreme poverty.

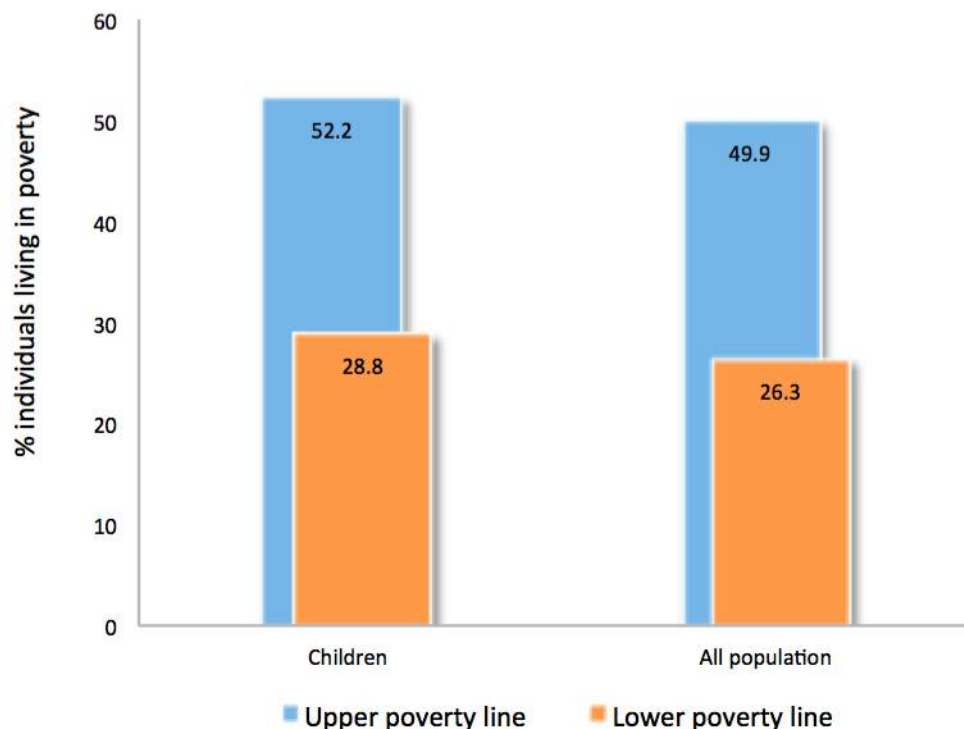


Figure 1: Child poverty and overall population poverty in Egypt, according to the lower and the upper national poverty lines, 2012/13.

Note: Elaboration of data from the 2012/13 round of the Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey (HIECS) 2012/13. The population under the Lower poverty line is considered as living in extreme monetary poverty; the share of population which is vulnerable to extreme poverty is given by the different between the share of population living under the Upper poverty line and the share of population living under the Lower poverty line.

Trends in monetary poverty 1999/2000 to 2012/2013

Poverty rates have grown continuously in Egypt since 1999 – steadily until 2010 and then at an accelerated pace in recent years (Figure 2).

Between 1999/2000 and 2008/09 – a period of relatively sustained economic growth – the share of children living in poverty increased by around 3 percentage points, indicating that the poorest people were excluded from the benefits of Egypt’s positive economic trends. In more recent years, and in line with economic stagnation, the poverty figures have grown at a faster pace. In the four years between 2008/09 and 2012/13, the child poverty rate increased by 5 percentage points.

The growing poverty rates have been compounded by Egypt’s demographic dynamics, resulting in a fast growth of the total number of children in poverty: in 1999/2000, the number of children living in poverty was estimated at around 5.7 million, rising to around 7 million in 2008/09 and reaching 9.2 million in 2012/13.

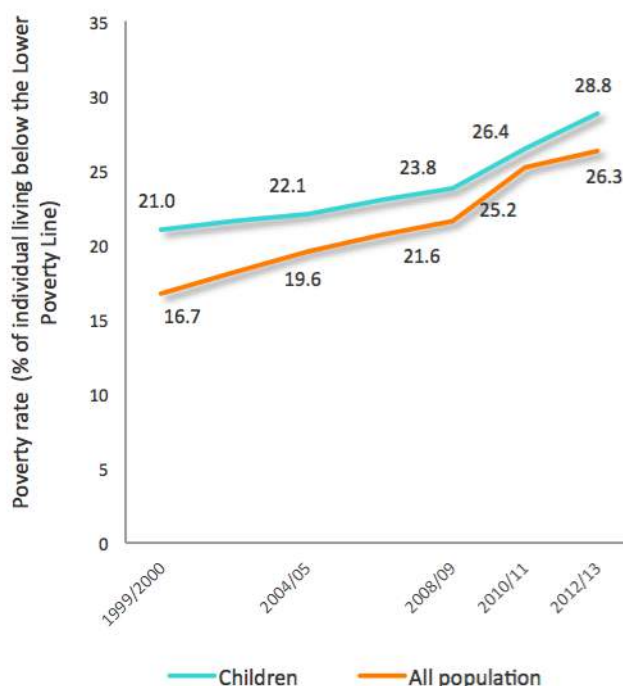


Figure 2: Trends of child poverty and overall population poverty rates, 1999/2000 to 2012/13.

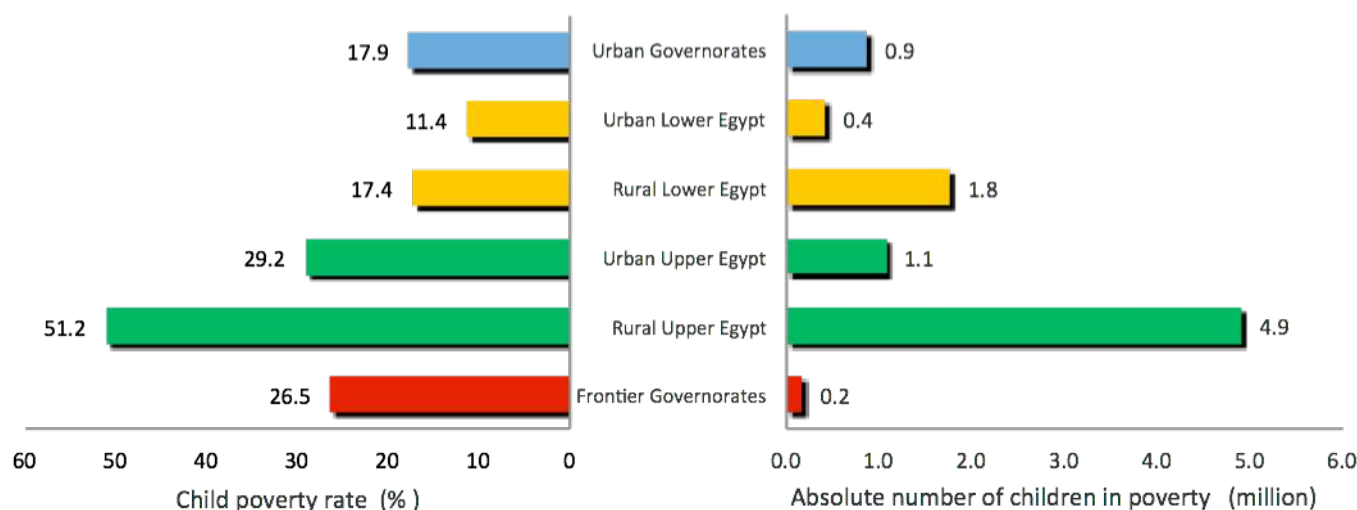
Note: Elaboration of data from different rounds of the Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey (HIECS)

Child poverty in Egypt's regions

Poverty prevalence in Egypt varies markedly across regions. The highest rate was found in rural Upper Egypt where more than half of all children lived in monetary poverty in 2012/13. Very high levels of poverty were also found in Urban Upper Egypt (29 per cent) and Frontier

Governorates (26.5 per cent). However, child poverty rates were substantial also in other regions: 11.4 per cent in Urban Lower Egypt; 17.4 per cent in Rural Lower Egypt; and 17.9 per cent in the Urban Governorates (Figure 3, left panel).

Figure 3: Child poverty rates (left panel) and absolute number of children in poverty (right panel) 2012/13.



Note: Elaboration of data from the 2012/13 round of the Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey (HIECS) 2012/13

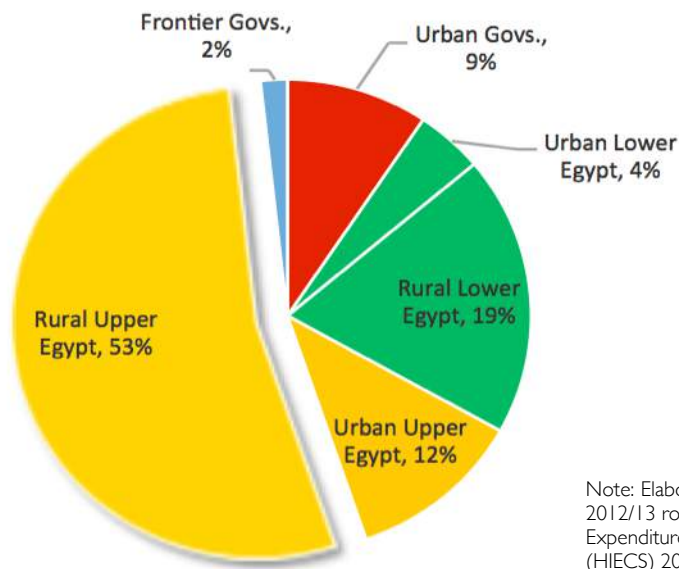
When child poverty rates are translated into the absolute numbers of children living in poverty (Figure 3, right panel), the picture is quite different: the region with the highest numbers is Rural Upper Egypt (with 4.9 million children living in poverty), followed by Rural Lower Egypt (1.8 million) and Urban Upper Egypt (1.1 million). In Urban Governorates there are around 900,000 children living in poverty.

Figure 4 shows that, of the 9.2 million children in poverty in 2012/13, 53 per cent were in Rural Upper Egypt and slightly less than 20 per cent were in Rural Lower Egypt. Overall, rural areas were home to around three quarters of all poor children living in the country.

There are also marked differences in the regional distribution of the 7.5 million children who are vulnerable to poverty (i.e. those children living in households with consumption above the lower poverty line but below the upper line): around 36 per cent of children who are vulnerable to poverty live in Rural Lower Egypt, while the rest are distributed equally between Urban Governorates, Urban Lower Egypt,

Urban Upper Egypt and Rural Upper Egypt (each region is home to around 15 per cent of the children who are vulnerable to poverty).

Figure 4: Percentage distribution of children living in poverty across the Egypt's regions. 2012/13.



Note: Elaboration of data from the 2012/13 round of the Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey (HIECS) 2012/13

Trends of child poverty in the Egyptian regions

While the past 15 years have seen a continuous growth in child poverty rates across Egypt, a closer analysis reveals variations in the pace of this growth and in regional dynamics (Table 1).

In the first phase, between 1999/2000 and 2008/09, poverty increased by 2.8 percentage points at the national level. While there was little change in poverty prevalence rates in urban areas, rural areas saw serious deterioration, especially in Rural Upper Egypt, where the child poverty rate increased by 6.4 percentage points.

In the second phase, between 2008/09 and 2012/13, the rate

of children living in poverty grew by 5 percentage points. While the rate deteriorated once again Rural Upper Egypt, there was also a notable deterioration in urban areas, especially in Urban Governorates where the child poverty rate increased by 10 percentage points.

Frontier Governorates (home to less than 2 per cent of all Egyptian children) also registered a dramatic increase in their child poverty rates, in the order of 11 percentage points.

Overall, these more recent trends reflect the economic slowdown of 2009/2010 and the economic stagnation that began in 2011.

Table 1: Change in child poverty rates in Egypt's regions, 1999/2000 to 2012/13.

	1999/2000	2008/09	2012/13	difference	difference
	(child poverty rate, percentage)			1999/2000–2008/09	2008/09–2012/13
				(change, in percentage points)	
Urban Governorates	6.7	7.9	17.9	1.2	10
Urban Lower Egypt	7.7	7.5	11.4	-0.2	3.9
Rural Lower Egypt	13.7	16.6	17.4	2.9	0.8
Urban Upper Egypt	23.7	24.0	29.2	0.3	5.2
Rural Upper Egypt	38.7	45.1	51.2	6.4	6.1
Frontier Governorates	12.0	15.5	26.5	3.5	11.0
Total Egypt	21.0	23.8	28.8	2.8	5.0

Note: Elaboration of data from different rounds of the Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey (HIECS)

Conclusion

Child poverty in Egypt is high and rising, increasing substantially in the most recent years. Three-quarters of the 9.2 million children living in poverty in 2012/13 lived in rural areas, but recent data show that more and more children in urban areas are experiencing poverty.

Between 2008/09 and 2012/13 the child poverty rate more than doubled in Urban Governorates, which are now home to 1 in every 10 Egyptian children who live in poor households.

Another concern is the high number of children who are vulnerable to poverty (living just above the poverty line): around 7.5 million in 2012/13, with more than one third living in Rural Lower Egypt and the rest distributed fairly

evenly between Urban Governorates, Urban Lower Egypt, Urban Upper Egypt and Rural Upper Egypt.

The Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey has provided key data to assess the proportion and numbers of children living in or vulnerable to poverty, finding that children are at greater risk of poverty than the population as a whole.

Such data reinforce the need for urgent action to halt the increase in both the numbers and proportion of children living in extreme poverty, to lift children out of poverty and to ensure that other vulnerable children do not fall into extreme poverty.



This Brief has been jointly prepared by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) and UNICEF Egypt. It is based on the analysis of data from the HIECS 2012/13.

For more information, please contact:

CAPMAS, pres_capmas@capmas.gov.eg and UNICEF Egypt, cairo@unicef.org