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Briefing note

Multiple deprivations in children in Madagascar

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KEY MESSAGES

- More than two in three children (67.6%) are multidimensionally poor in Madagascar, meaning that they suffer material deprivation in at least two different dimensions of well-being. 23.7% of children are in a situation of extreme poverty (4+ dimensions of well-being).
- The rate of extreme poverty is more than twice as high in rural areas (27%) as in urban areas (13%). The south-west of the country is the most seriously affected: nearly one in two children live in extreme poverty in the regions of Atsimo Andrefana (49.3%) and Ihorombe (49.1%).
- Children with multiple vulnerabilities are particularly likely to be poor. For example, the analysis shows that the rate of extreme poverty is almost seven times higher among children living in households headed by uneducated and non-Christian women in rural areas (53.4%) than among children without none of these characteristics (7.4%).
- There are pockets of severe deprivation hiding in non-poor households. For example, the analysis points out that children who are relinquished or double orphans are particularly likely to suffer more deprivation than other children in the same household. In particular, these children are twice as likely to experience sexual violence as the average. Children with disabilities also tend to experience more deprivations than other household members, especially as regards nutrition, education and immunizations.
- Boys tend to have much more deprivation than girls when it comes to education. This could be explained in part by the fact that boys are more likely to work than girls. Boys are also more likely to experience violent discipline. On the other hand, girls are more likely to be assigned the chore of fetching water.
- Education of parents, especially that of mothers, is strongly associated with reduced deprivation in children, even after taking into account that more educated parents tend to be wealthier, more urban, and older than average. However, beyond the primary level, other social and economic pressures come into play, which can negatively affect the well-being of some children (non-breastfeeding, violence, etc.).



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INTRODUCTION

This note presents the main findings from the analysis of MICS-6 data, using the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) methodology developed by UNICEF. This study was carried out jointly with the National Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) and should serve as a reference line for monitoring SDG 1.2.2. on multidimensional child poverty.

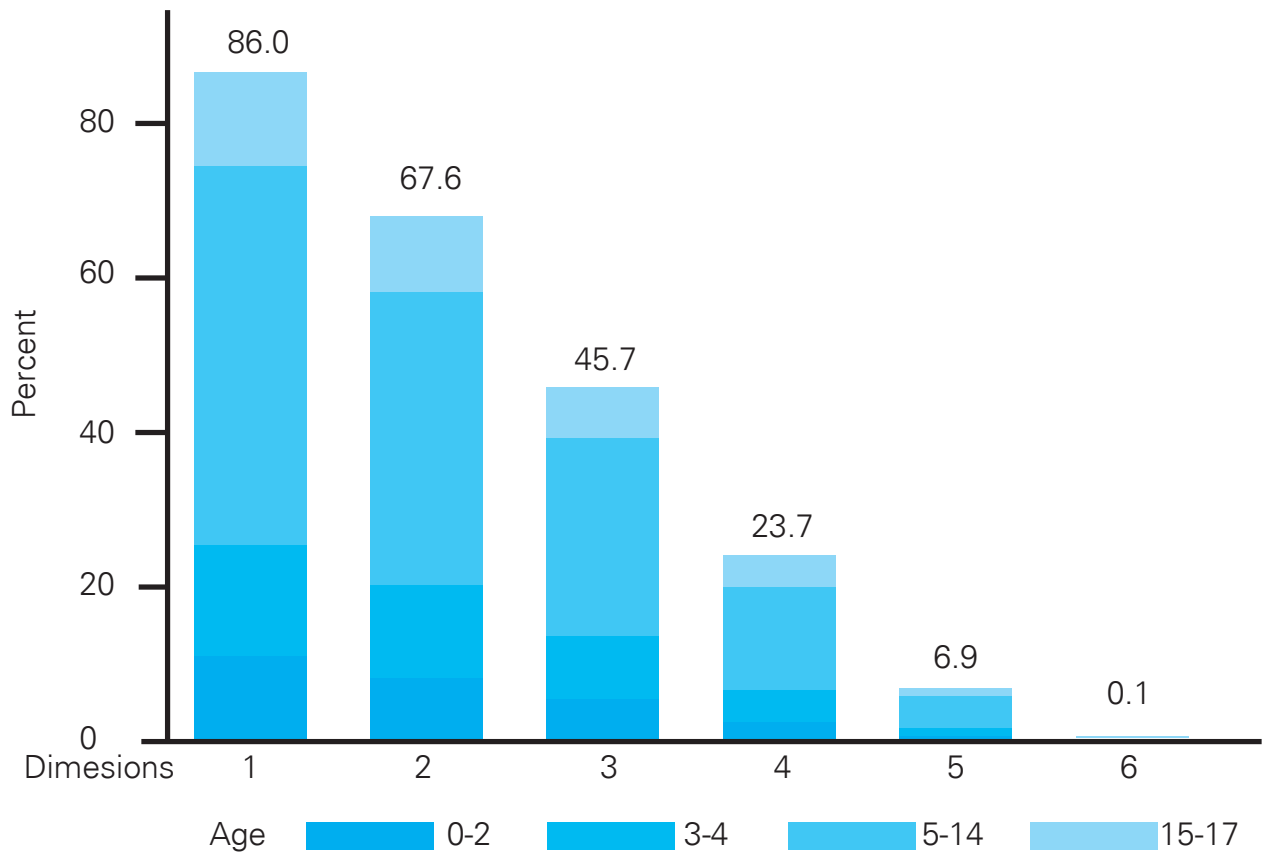
MODA analysis is used to overcome several limitations of traditional approaches to poverty analysis in terms of measuring child well-being. First, conventional measures assess poverty at the household level and are therefore unable to identify any discrimination that may exist within the household itself. Then, traditional measures examine poverty from a purely monetary point of view, although children have complex needs that are only indirectly linked to financial constraints.

One of the main advantages of the MODA approach is that it allows us to see the overlapping deprivation in children. The idea is that the more a child suffers from deprivations simultaneously, the more disadvantaged they will be. For example, a child who is malnourished and lives far from a health centre will be less able to cope with illness. Therefore, it is interesting to know not only how many children suffer from different deprivations, but also whether it is the same children who suffer from different deprivations.

PROFILE OF POOR CHILDREN

More than two thirds (67.6%) of Malagasy children suffer from material deprivation in at least two dimensions of well-being simultaneously and 23.7% suffer from deprivation in four or more dimensions of well-being.

Chart 1: Children suffering from deprivation in at least 0-6 dimensions of well-being, by age group



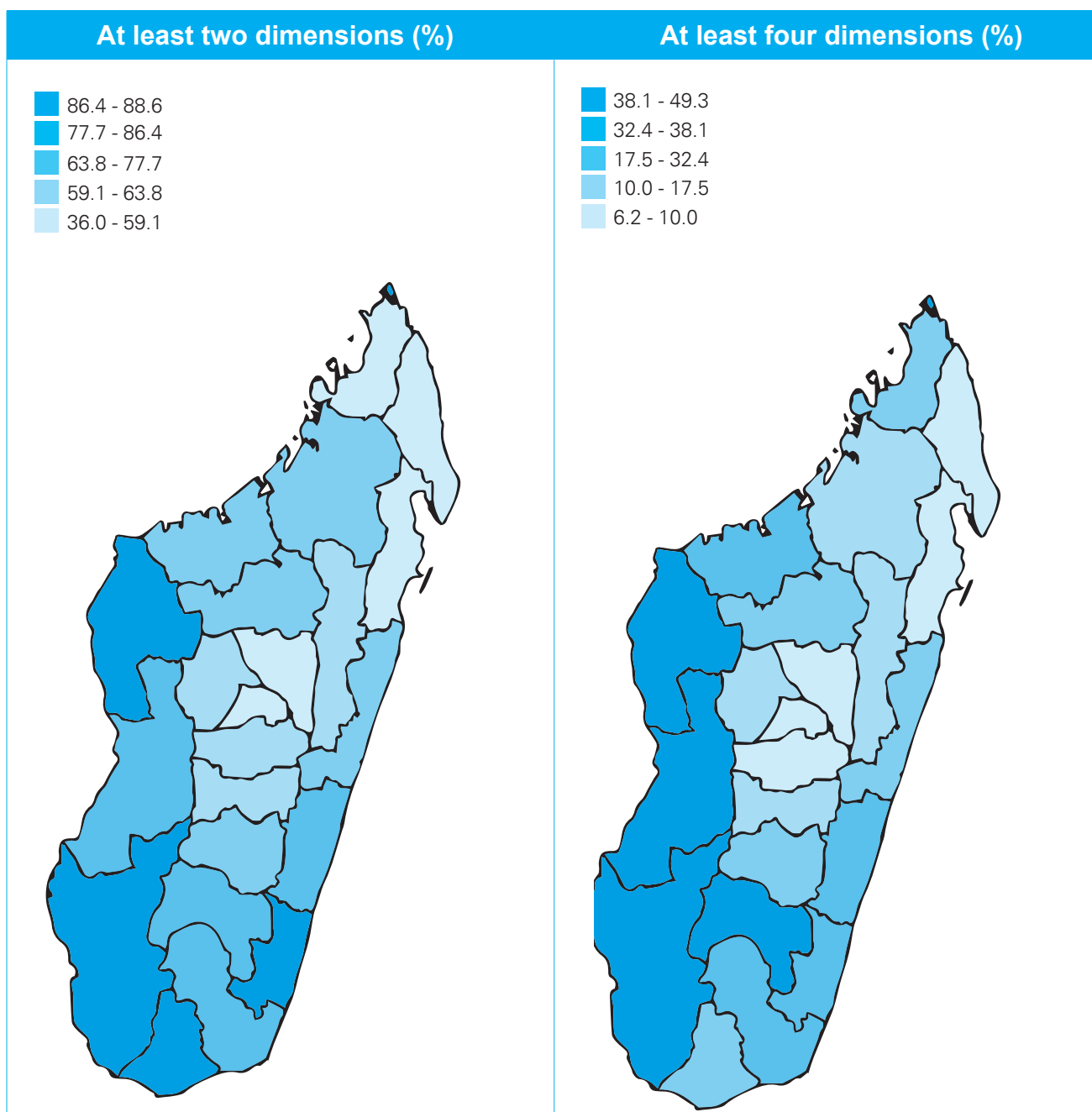
Source : Author's calculations based on MICS-6 data



The proportion of poor children is highest in the south and west of Madagascar, while the central plateau and north-east of the country have the lowest poverty rates. In the regions of Atsimo Andrefana and Ihorombe, for example,

nearly one in two children (49.3% and 49.1%, respectively) suffers from material deprivation in at least four dimensions of well-being simultaneously, compared to less than 5% in Analamanga¹.

Map 1: Children suffering from material deprivation in at least 2/4 dimensions of well-being (%), by region



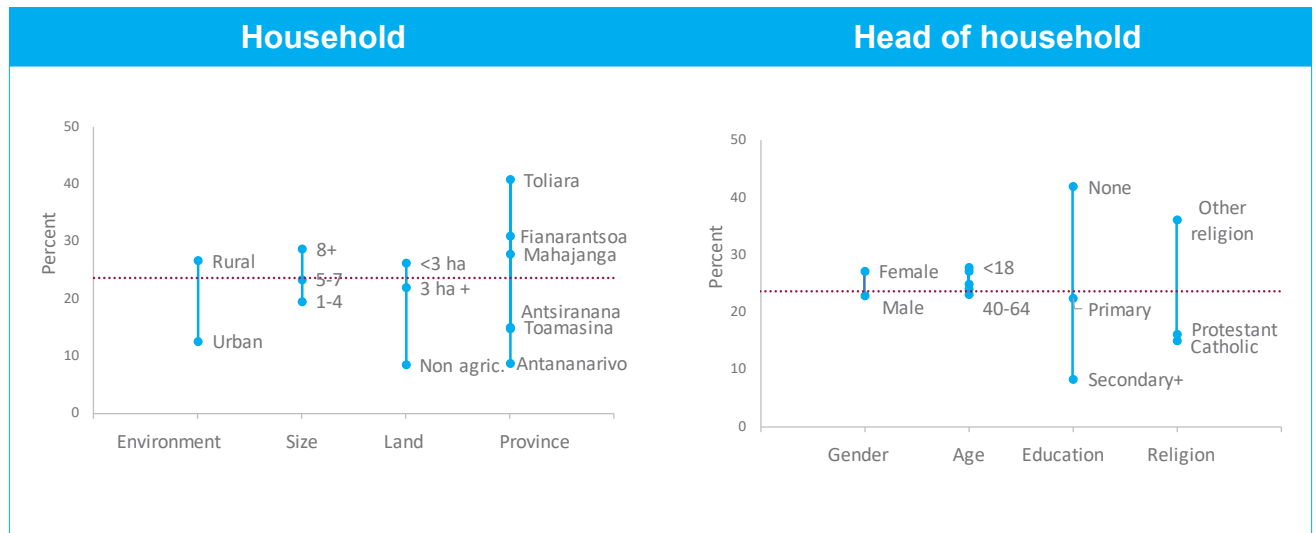
Source: Author's calculations based on MICS-6 data

¹ Due to constraints on space, the 22 regions were grouped into six provinces in the following tables and charts.

The breakdown by household characteristics shows that the extreme poverty rate (4+ deprivations) reaches more than 40% among households headed by people without education, against less than 10% among those with a secondary education or more. Other decisive

factors are the religion, age, and gender of the head of household, as well as the place of residence and household size. Breakdowns by sex of child and head of household do not reveal significant differences between the sexes in terms of material deprivation.

Chart 2: Children suffering from extreme poverty (4+ dimensions), by characteristics of the households and heads of household

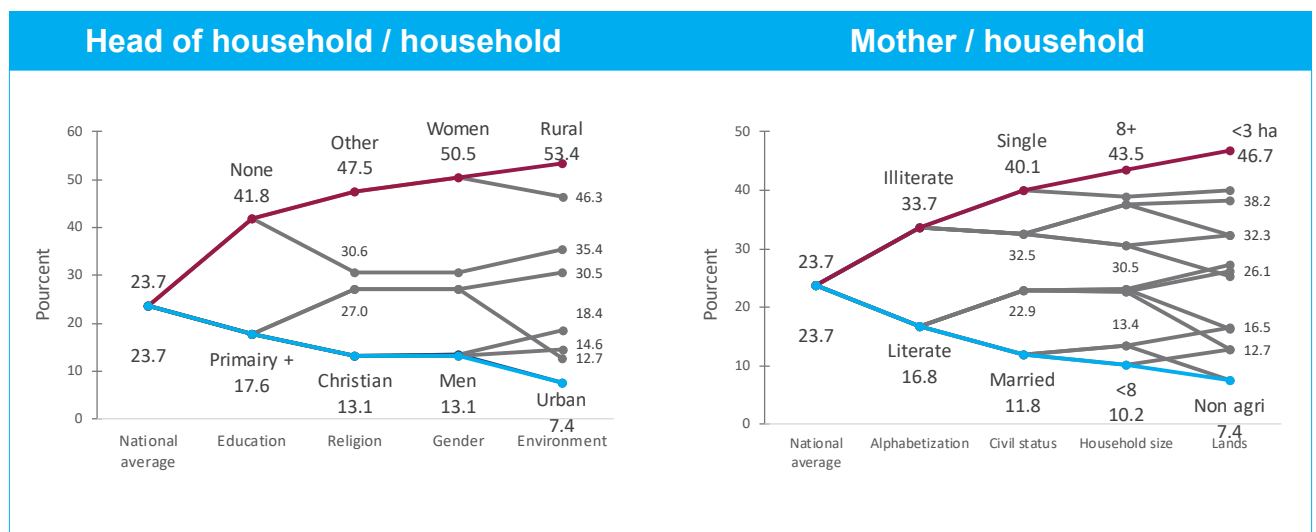


Source: Author's calculations based on MICS-6 data

Children with multiple vulnerabilities are particularly likely to be poor. For example, the chart below shows that more than half (53.4%) of children living in non-Christian households, headed by women with no

education in rural areas suffer from at least four simultaneous deprivations, i.e. almost seven times more than among children exhibiting none of these characteristics (7.4%).

Chart 3 : Disintegration of the extreme poverty rate, by cumulative vulnerability factors



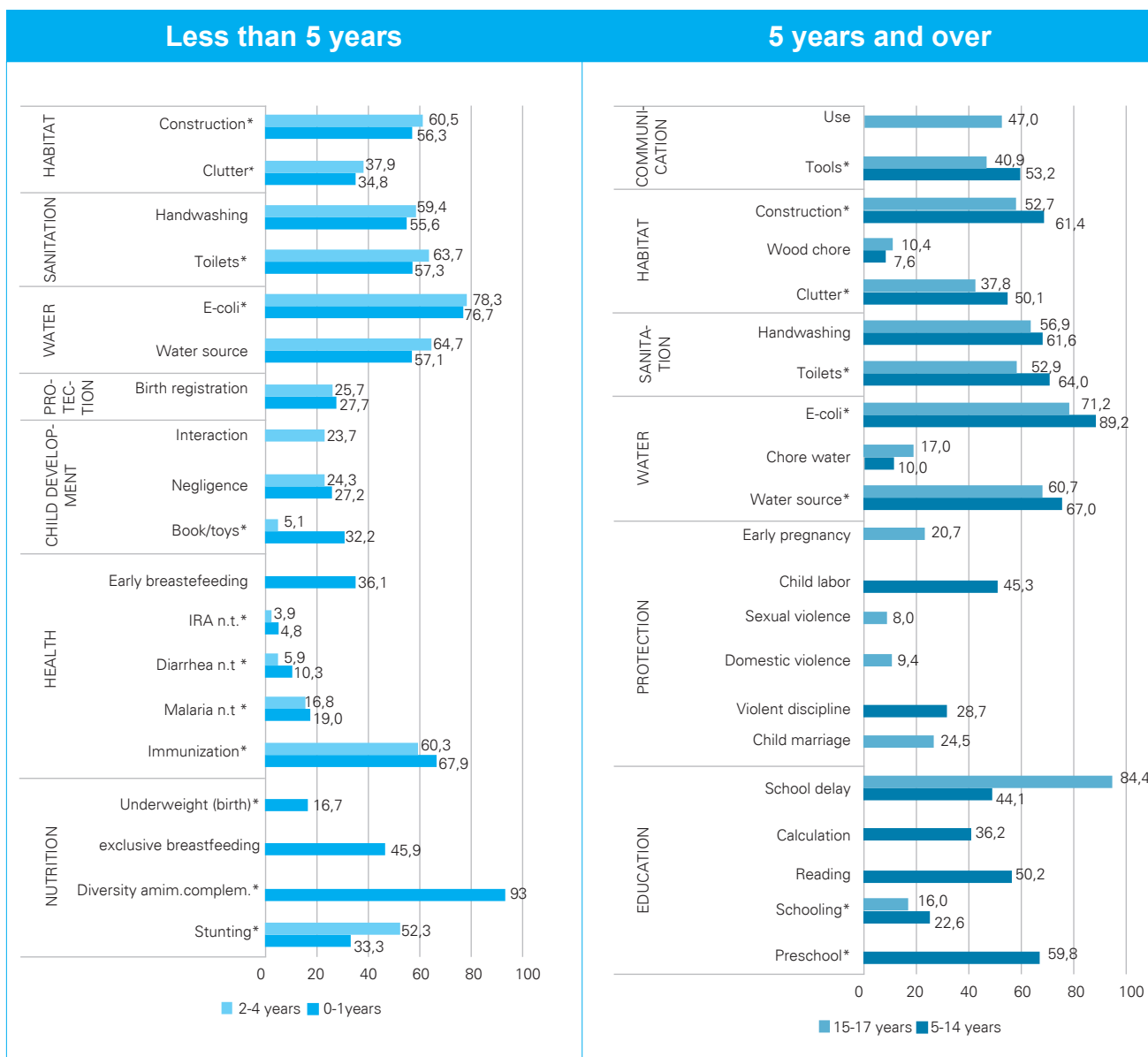
Source: Author's calculations based on MICS-6 data

DEPRIVATIONS OF POOR CHILDREN

The analysis of simple deprivation shows that over 93% of poor children aged 6 to 23 months do not consume at least five of the eight recommended food groups (infant feeding).

Among poor children between the ages of 15 and 17 years old, 84.4% are more than three years behind in their schooling.

Chart 4: Incidence of deprivation (%) among poor children, by age group



Source: Author's calculations based on MICS-6 data

Boys tend to experience more deprivation than girls in several of the indicators included in the Well-Being Index, especially with regard to schooling and learning. Boys also have higher rates of domestic violence and malnutrition. There are, however, several notable exceptions,

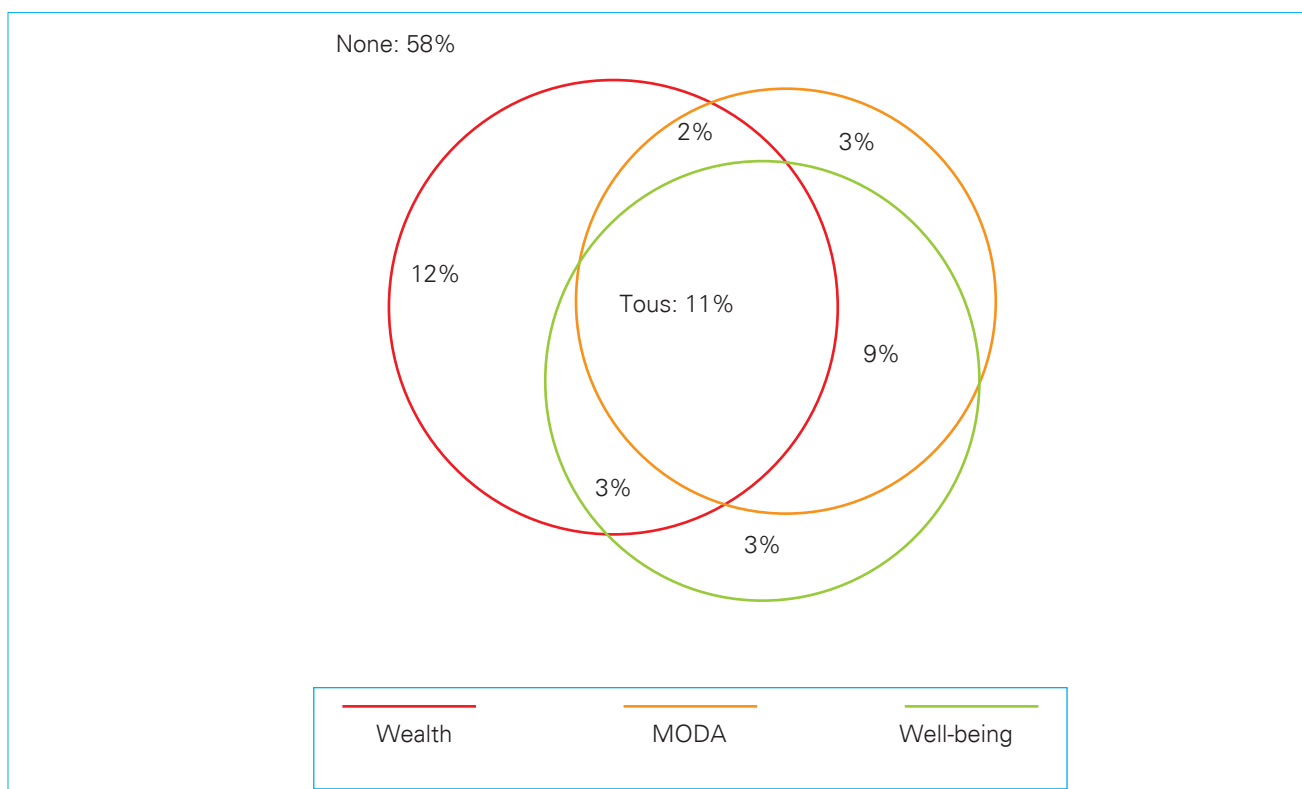
such as the fact that girls are twice as likely to be assigned the chore of carrying water as boys. It will be important to continue refining the index to ensure that it reflects issues relevant to gender issues.

HIDDEN POCKETS OF DEPRIVATION

The comparison of the MODA index with the wealth index shows that almost half of children in extreme poverty (deprivation in at least four MODA dimensions) are not in the poorest quarter of the wealth index. This highlights

once again the importance of looking wider than the household wealth issue in order to fully understand the factors that affect the well-being of children.

Chart 5 : Concordance between wealth index, MODA index and child well-being index (bottom quarter)



Source: Author's calculations based on MICS-6 data

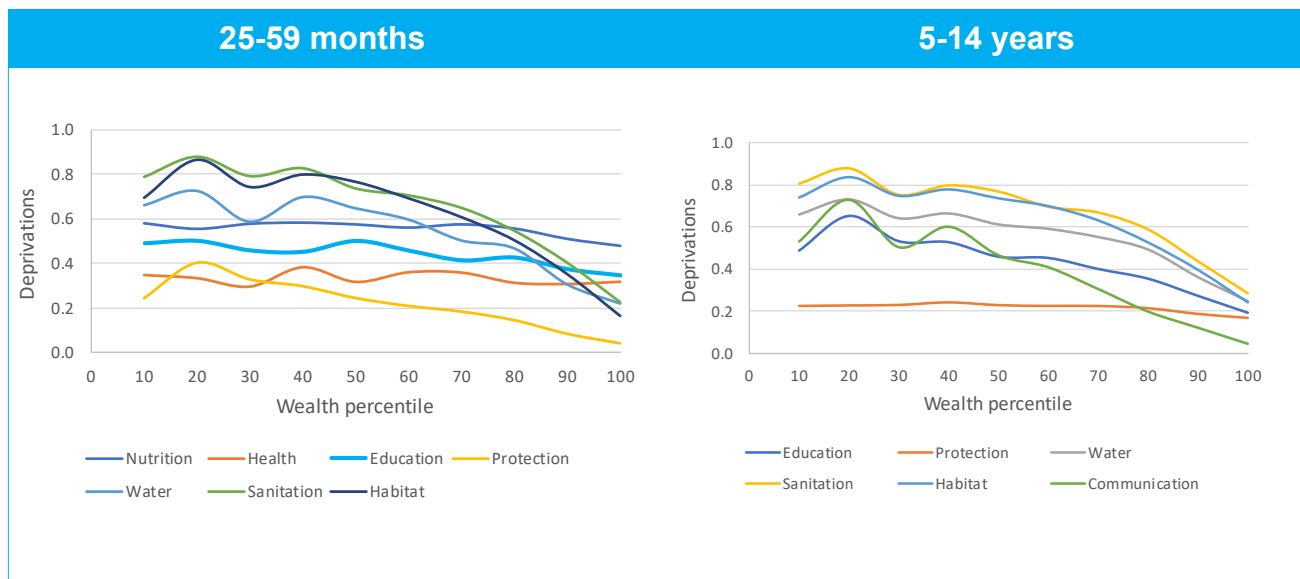


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The breakdown by well-being dimension shows that the correlation between wealth and well-being is particularly weak among children under 5 with regard to nutrition, health and child education / development. The combination of factors other than household income is helpful in determining deprivations (e.g. social norms and behaviour, access to services and quality of services,

availability of infrastructure, mobility, etc.). For older children, protection is weakly correlated with wealth – possibly due to the issue of underreporting of abuse among poor households, and to the fact that child labour generates revenue for the affected households.

Chart 6 : Relationship between the wealth index and the proportion of deprivation in each dimension of well-being, by age group



Source: Author's calculations based on MICS-6 data



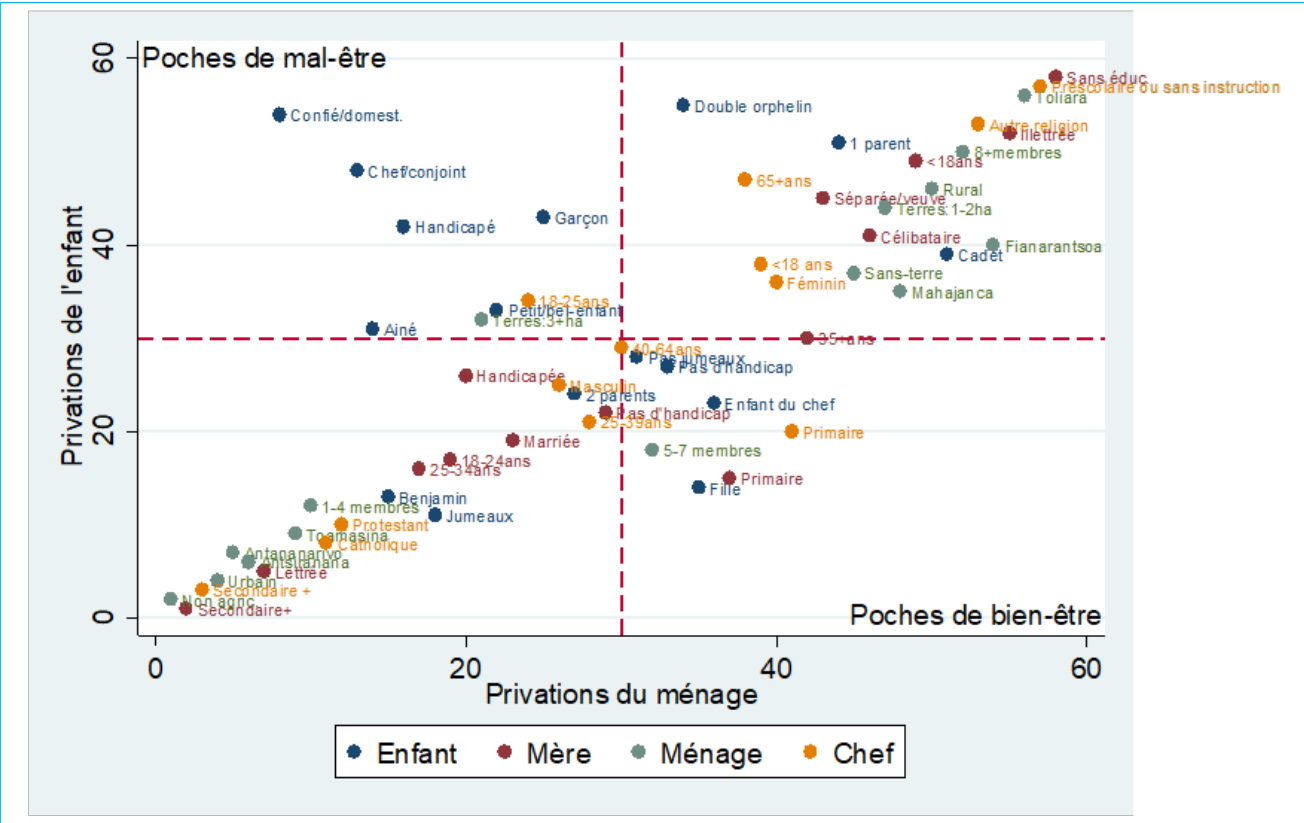
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When we compare individual deprivations with household deprivations², we manage to identify pockets of deprivation that are sometimes hiding within rich households. In particular, children who are relinquished / domestic workers and children who are heads of household or spouses are distinguished by the fact that they have much more individual deprivations than the median, even if they live in households which have much less deprivation than the median.

Girls who are relinquished, as well as double orphans, are particularly at risk with regard to sexual violence and its associated deprivations (pregnancies, school drop-out, etc.). Child heads of household or married children have deprivations linked to their status (marriage, pregnancies, etc.).

Conversely, children whose parents have completed primary education tend to have less deprivation at the individual level than at the household level. This suggests that they live in rather poor households, but that they partly manage to compensate for their material disadvantage through compensatory strategies. Indeed, the breakdown by type of deprivation confirms that these children mainly have deprivations in access to water, sanitation and housing, which are closely linked to the level of household wealth. However, they have above-average enrolment rates and fewer behavioural deprivations, such as breastfeeding.

Chart 7 : Ranking according to the average intensity of individual and household deprivations , by group



Source: Author's calculations based on MICS-6 data

² By "household deprivation" we mean deprivation that affects all members of the household equally. For example, lack of access to safe drinking water is the same for all household members, although the consequences will be different for different members.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

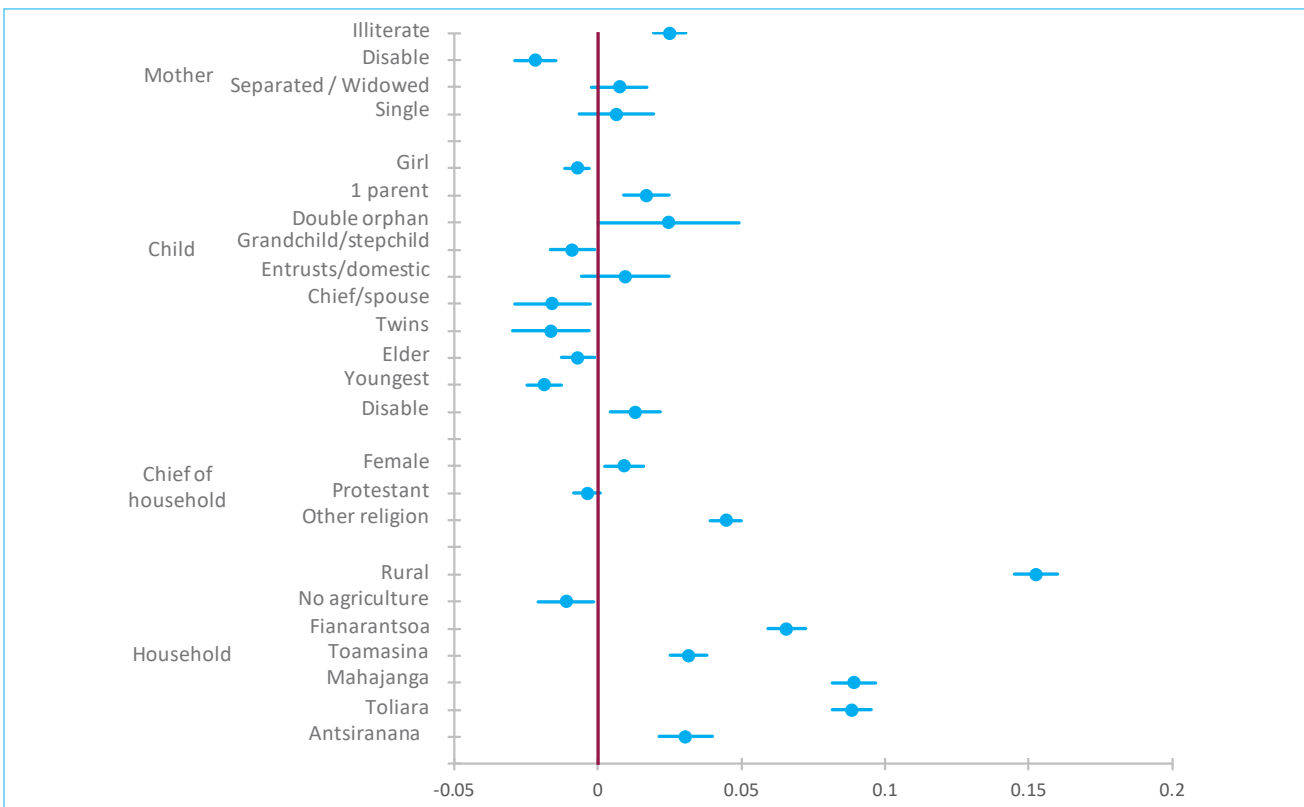
Multivariable regression analysis can lead to more robust conclusions, which take into account the interaction between different vulnerability factors. This analysis highlights that children living in rural areas suffer, on average, from a surplus of 14% of deprivation compared to those living in urban areas, all other things being equal. This excess can therefore be explained neither by the difference in the level of wealth, nor by education, nor by demographic differences. Hence, it must be due to differences related to infrastructure and behaviour.

Moreover, the analysis confirms the very clear disadvantage of non-Christian children, as well as that of orphans, the disabled, the elderly and boys. Once again, the excess deprivation of these groups is not explained by differences in wealth, education or others. They must therefore be caused by cultural factors or internal discrimination within the household.

Nonetheless, the excess deprivation among the children of single mothers appears to be entirely due to the fact that these mothers tend to be less wealthy, less educated and younger than other mothers. Once these differences are taken into account, the excess deprivation disappears. The same goes for mothers with disabilities. This therefore seems to confirm that these mothers partly manage to make up for their material disadvantage through compensatory strategies.

In particular, children of mothers with disabilities tend to have relatively few deprivations in education, while children of single mothers are much less likely than other children to suffer from deprivation in child protection (violence, marriage, pregnancies).

Chart 8 : Weight of factors explaining the number of deprivations suffered by the child (95% confidence interval)



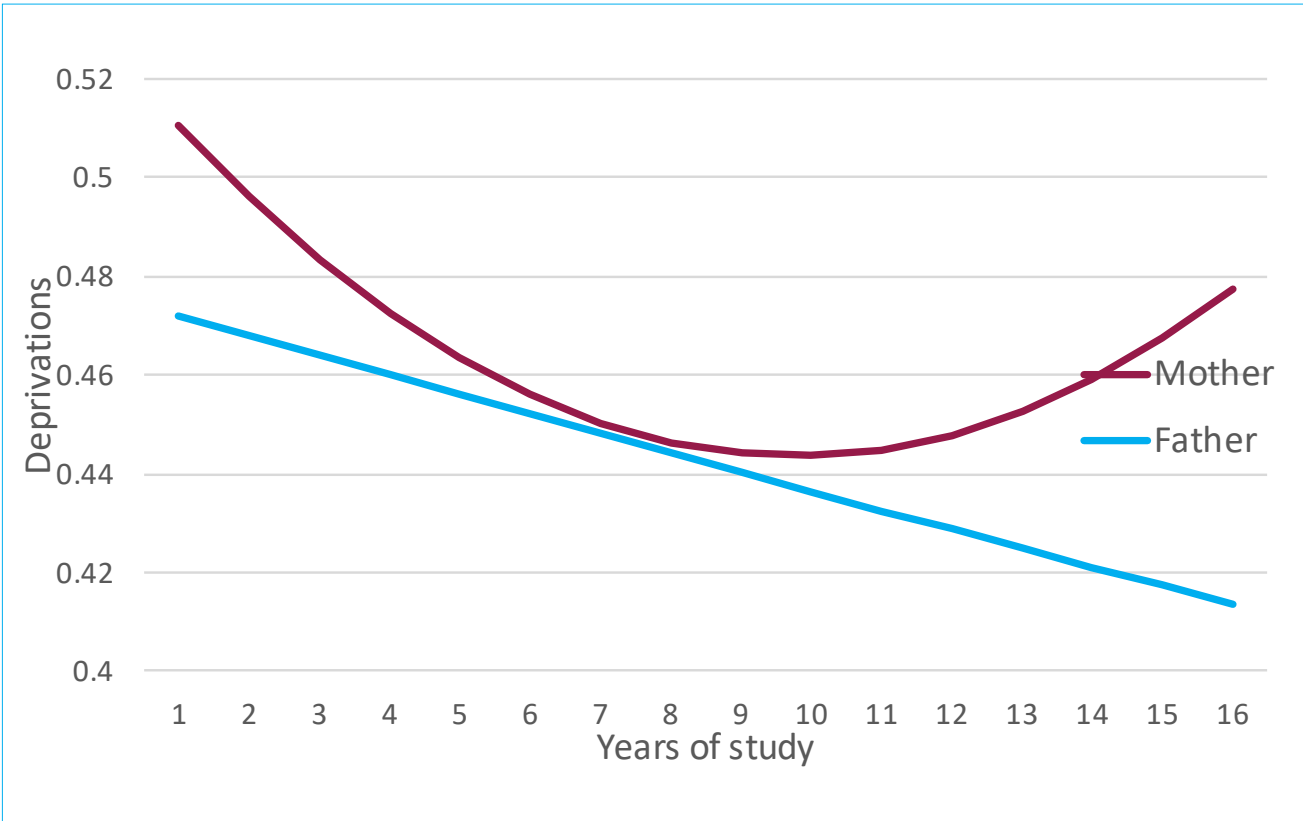
Source: Author's calculations based on MICS-6 data

A more detailed analysis of the role of parental education indicates that the primary education of the mother plays a crucial role, more than the education of the father, in reducing the deprivation of the child³. Children of mothers with no education are almost five times more likely to be in extreme poverty (42%) than children of mothers with secondary or higher education (8.5%).

However, beyond the primary level, other social and economic pressures come into play, which can have a negative effect on the well-being of some children (non-breastfeeding, neglect, etc.). This could explain the slight increase in deprivation beyond the mother's seventh year of schooling. Further research will be required to fully understand this paradoxical phenomenon.

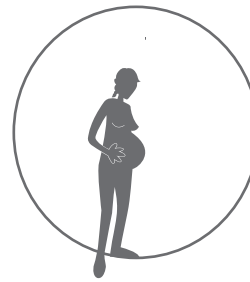


Chart 9 : Deprivation of the child according to the education of the parents



Source: Author's calculations based on MICS-6 data

³ Although the effect of parental education is statistically significant, it is relatively small in absolute terms, since the deprivation gap is only 5% between children of educated and uneducated parents.



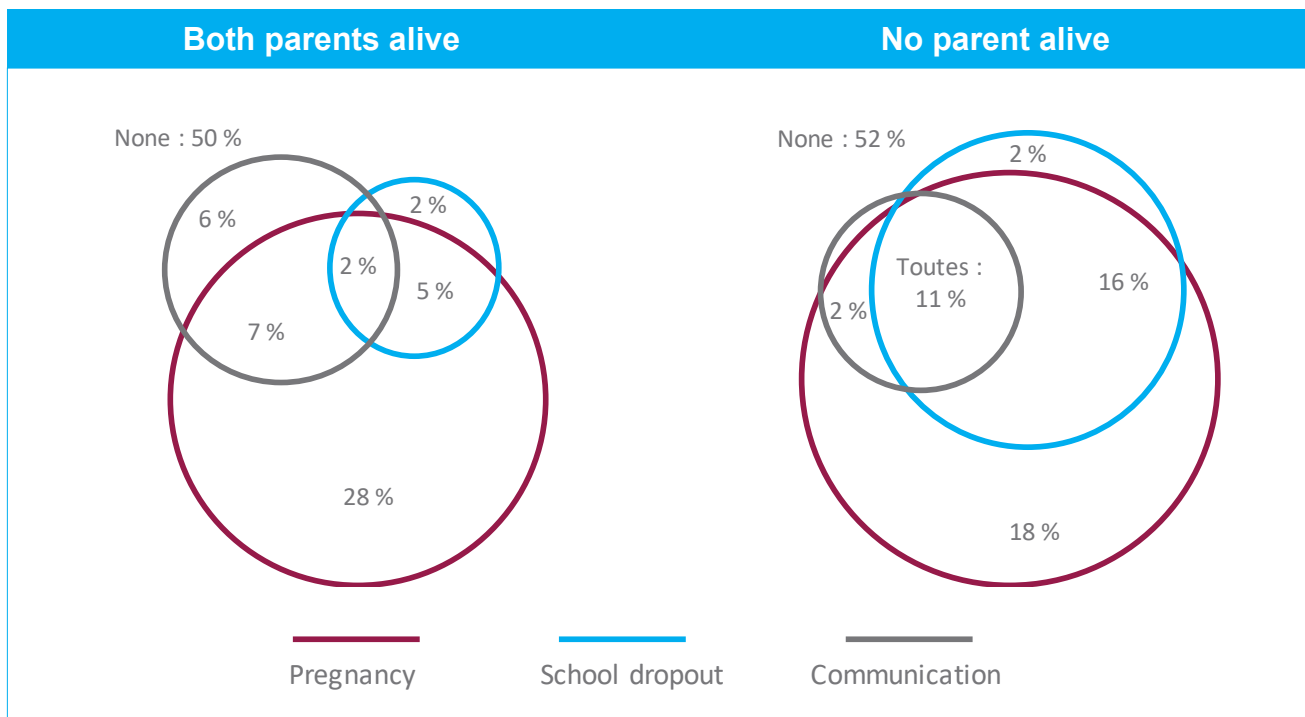
Overlapping analysis also allows us to better understand the interaction between different types of deprivation. As an example, we looked into the overlap between access to information and teenage pregnancies, as well as school drop-out among double orphans and girls with both parents alive.

The analysis shows that almost all orphans who become pregnant also have communication deprivation, whereas the overlap between these two deprivations is much less among non-orphans. In addition, the analysis reveals that almost none of the orphans with a pregnancy

go to school. Among non-orphans, on the other hand, the large majority of pregnant girls attend school⁴.

While not establishing direct causal links, these analyses highlight the importance of information and prevention campaigns for vulnerable groups, as well as the role of family and social networks in addressing shocks, such as pregnancies, to avoid triggering the snowball effect between different deprivations.

Chart 10: Overlapping of deprivations in protection, education, communication, by parents alive



Source: Author's calculations based on MICS-6 data

⁴ Despite the limited sample size (<50 obs. for double orphans), the differences between the enrolment rates are statistically significant



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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report should serve as a baseline for monitoring SDGs 1.2.1. and 1.2.2. on poverty in Madagascar. On the basis of the results of this study, the following recommendations can be formulated and the implementation thereof is important within the framework of the “Plan Emergence Madagascar (PEM)” :

- The study emphasizes the importance of developing social policies targeting the hidden deprivations of children suffering from discrimination or inequality within the household, such as relinquished children or orphans. This has implications, for example, for social transfers which often target entire households.
- Each region suffers from different problems, but no region is free from deprivation. It is therefore important to formulate policies that are contextualized with respect to the realities and issues specific to each region.
- The primary education of mothers is one of the most important factors in reducing child deprivation. It is all the more important to fight against the deprivations that contribute to girls 'school drop-out, such as teenage pregnancies, child marriages, sexual violence, etc.
- Many deprivations and vulnerability factors are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. It is therefore important to provide cross-programmatic responses capable of providing a holistic response to complex multiple cause problems.
- Follow-up studies should be carried out in order to explore some of the surprising results and to better understand the underlying causal mechanisms that may explain the deprivation patterns in different groups of children.

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