



# Multidimensional Child Poverty in Mozambique

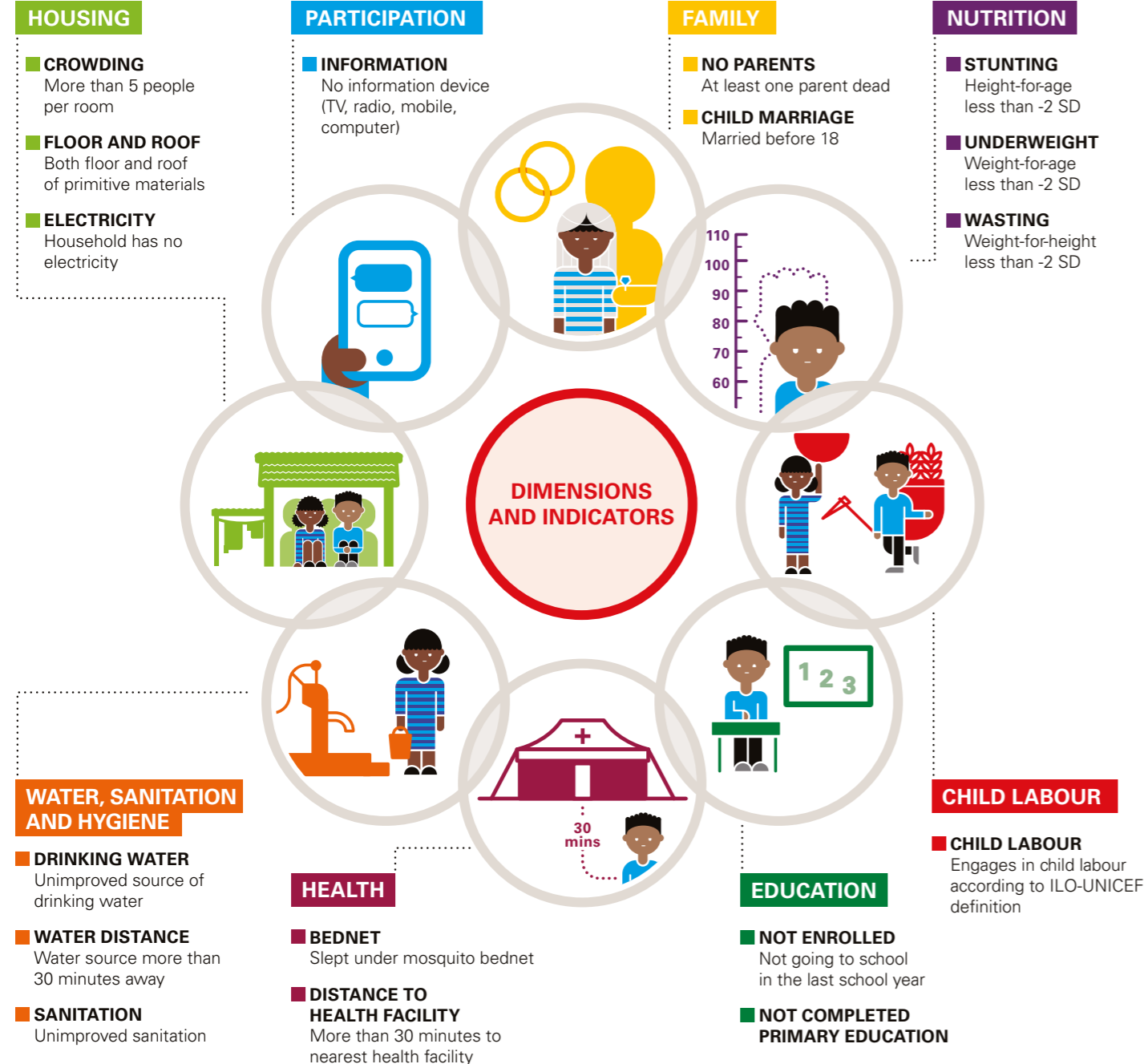
Summary Report

End poverty in all  
its forms everywhere



SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  GOALS

## Multidimensional Child Poverty in Mozambique



## Key findings

Out of 14 million children, nearly **10 million** across the country experience poverty in one form or another.\*

**46%**

Almost **one in two** Mozambican children **aged 0–17** can be considered multidimensionally poor based on the definition agreed with national stakeholders. This implies that some of the **basic rights of around seven million children are not met.**

**28%**

Almost **a third of children experience both monetary and multidimensional poverty**: they are consumption poor and deprived in multiple dimensions at the same time.

**49% vs 46%**

The rate of **monetary child poverty is higher than that of the general population**, showing that monetary poverty affects the young population more.

**49%**

Half of the child population **aged 0–17 are monetary poor**, meaning that they live in a family whose consumption is **below the national poverty line.**

\*Data refer to child population aged 0-17 (2017)

# Motivation

Last year marked the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and 25 years since the Government of Mozambique demonstrated its own commitment to fulfil the rights of the country's 14 million children – 51 per cent of country's population. Multidimensional child poverty and deprivation analysis provides an opportunity and the means to assess the nation's progress in fulfilling its commitment to the CRC and meeting the challenges of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1 – 'No poverty' for children. The report presents this analysis and identifies recommended areas for the Government's immediate and decisive action.

This report presents the level of poverty and deprivation among Mozambican children (ages 0–17), based on a multidimensional poverty analysis, a child-centred approach that identifies the scale and severity of deprivations in key areas of child well-being. **Childhood poverty is deprivation of the material and psychological resources needed for children to survive, develop and thrive.**

Mozambique experienced significant growth between 2000 and 2016, when GDP per capita<sup>1</sup> more than doubled. However, the nation's children did not fully share the benefits; they are likely to be among the most deprived

children in the world as they live in a country which retains some of the highest levels of extreme poverty.<sup>2</sup> This reality is the result of a long-term process of unequal growth and limited policy reforms in key sectors that should benefit children. Moreover, the recent disaster caused by cyclones Idai and Kenneth highlighted the extreme vulnerability of the country to natural disasters and their devastating impact on the lives of the most vulnerable populations, especially children.

There is much uncertainty about the levels of Mozambique's social priority spending by 2024; this will depend on internal growth rates, the external context, and the outcome of the Government's negotiations with donors. There is no doubt, however, about the urgency with which the country needs to address poverty and deprivation affecting children and their families by prioritizing public spending in areas that directly address child deprivations, and can reduce the alarming equity gaps.



## Why do multidimensional measures of poverty matter?

Traditional monetary measures of poverty give us an indication of the financial means of the family to satisfy its needs. Deprivation indicators measure 'lacks' and give us information on the degree to which some of these needs are actually met. Both measures are important as they help us understand better the nature of poverty. **The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target 1.2, recognizes for the first time the multidimensional nature of poverty and calls on governments to reduce it by half by 2030.**

## Why does it matter for children?

Children have specific needs and they experience poverty differently from adults. This is because children cannot act independently from their caregivers: they do not have their own income/resources and cannot make their own decisions on purchasing goods or services they need.

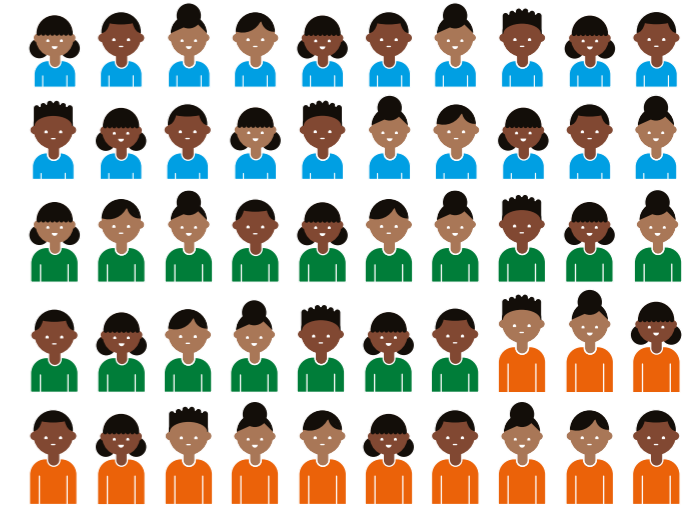
Moreover, their childhood experiences depend heavily on the ability of public authorities to deliver quality services including education, health, clean water and sanitation.

**Mozambique experienced significant growth between 2000 and 2016, when GDP per capita more than doubled. However, the nation's children did not fully share the benefits.**

<sup>1</sup> GDP is measured in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) 2011, adjusted.

<sup>2</sup> According to the World Bank definition of USD 1.90 a day (2011 PPP).

In Mozambique there are  
**14,261,208 children**



**5,626,986 aged 0-5**

**4,935,145 aged 6-11**

**3,699,077 aged 12-17**

Based on Census 2017



# Data and Methodology

The analysis presented in this report draws on the background research produced by the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) in collaboration with UNICEF Mozambique Country Office, UNU-WIDER, and the UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti.

Analysis is based on the national household budget survey (2014/15 Household Budget Survey – Inquérito aos Agregados Familiares sobre Orçamento Familiar, (IOF)), which collects information on daily, monthly and yearly consumption expenditures, housing characteristics, employment, health status, education, anthropometric characteristics of children and other relevant data. The data are disaggregated at the national, urban/rural, regional, and provincial levels. The report also refers to the Fiscal Space Analysis of Mozambique 2018,<sup>3</sup> other recent documents and reports for contextual background.

**Indicators were selected to represent different age groups (0-17) reflecting needs of children at different stages of development.**



## Defining Multidimensional Child Poverty in Mozambique

The dimensions and indicators of multidimensional child poverty in Mozambique were selected during an inception workshop with key stakeholders in Mozambique. Eight child deprivation dimensions and 17 indicators were agreed upon as important aspects of child deprivation in Mozambique. Indicators were selected to represent different age groups (0–4, 5–12 and 13–17 years) reflecting different needs of children at different stages of development.

The headline figures were estimated using the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) methodology, which estimates multidimensional poverty incidence (a headcount measure) as the proportion of those who are deprived in at least one-third of 17 weighted indicators.<sup>4</sup>

**Deprivation in any single dimension can be seen as a violation of child rights as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).**

Intensity of multidimensional poverty is the average number of deprivations experienced by the poor. Multidimensional child poverty index reflects both the incidence and the intensity of multidimensional poverty and expressed as the product of both. Further analysis was made using the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) focusing on how Mozambican children suffer overlapping deprivations simultaneously.

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF Mozambique 2018.

<sup>4</sup> In the case of Mozambique, a weighted deprivation count has been established at anything greater than one third of the weighted indicators. Increasing this poverty cut-off shows the expected reduction in the proportion of children affected, but it does not fundamentally alter the urban/rural and provincial differences identified in the existing cut-off. (Source: Mahrt, 2018)



# Results: Magnitude and Characteristics

## Multidimensional Child Poverty Index

**Children of the 4 poorest provinces – Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Zambézia – are 45 times more likely to be poor than those in the richest – Maputo city.**

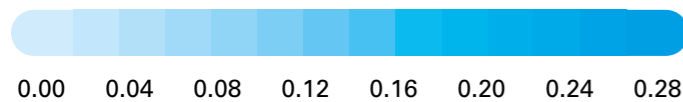
The multidimensional child poverty index is simply a factor of multidimensional poverty incidence and its intensity. The higher the index the higher the incidence and intensity of child poverty.



The incidence and intensity of multidimensional poverty grows from the south to the north.

### Multidimensional Child Poverty Index by province

(0 = no poverty)

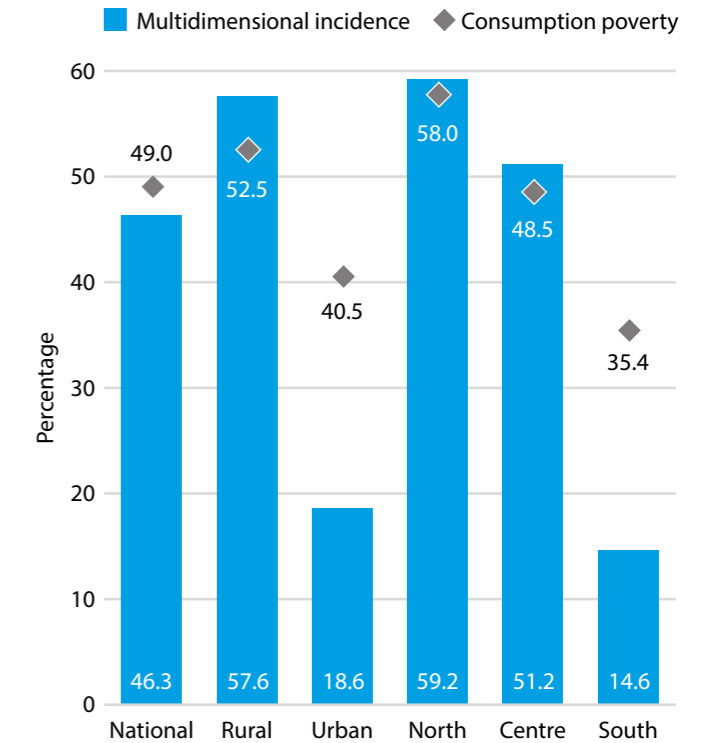


## Geographical and structural disparity is a fundamental attribute of child poverty and deprivation in Mozambique

Figure 1 shows that there is a **de facto lottery of birth** that punishes those born in the rural areas or in 'non-southern' provinces. Overall, almost half (46 per cent) of all children in Mozambique are multidimensionally poor. Meanwhile the prevalence of multidimensional child poverty in rural areas is three times higher than in urban areas – 58 per cent compared to 19 per cent. **Regional and provincial disparities are even greater with the north four times poorer than the south (59 per cent compared to 15 per cent)**, largely driven by the situation of Maputo city. Multidimensional and consumption poverty rates are similar where both are the highest: rural areas, and central and northern regions. In contrast, urban child poverty is driven by the lack of financial resources or low consumption: 41 per cent of children in urban areas are monetary poor but only 19 per cent are multidimensionally poor.



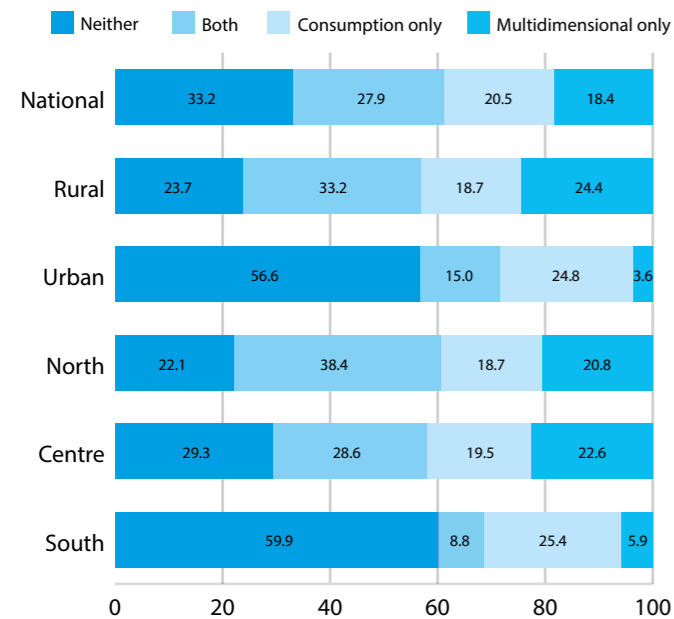
Figure 1. Multidimensional and monetary child poverty



Source: Mahrt et al (2018) based on IOF 2014/2015 data and MEF (2016)

As high as 38 per cent of children in the northern region and 33 per cent of children in rural areas are both monetary poor and multidimensionally deprived (compared to 9 and 15 per cent in urban areas and the south). At the same time, more than half of urban children (57 per cent) are neither deprived nor monetary poor (Figure 2).

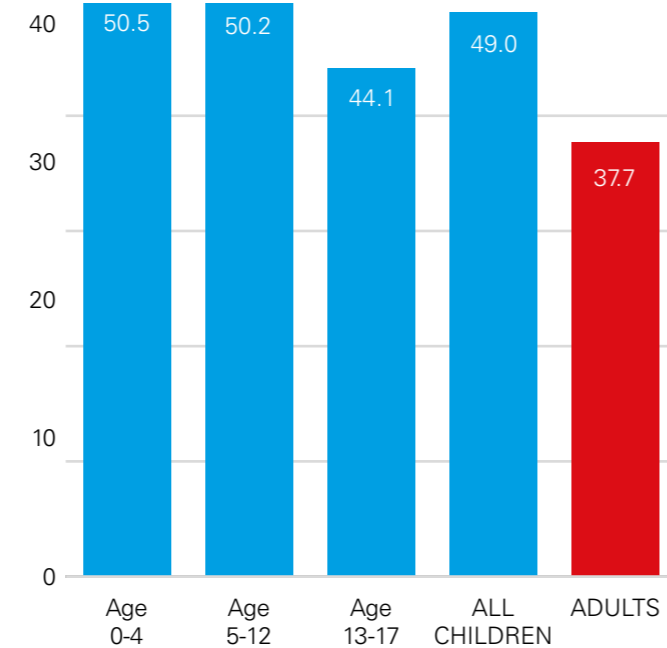
Figure 2. **The overlap between monetary and multidimensional child poverty**



Source: Mahrt et al (2018), based on IOF 2014/2015 data and MEF (2016)

A child in Mozambique has a higher chance of being monetary poor than an adult (age above 18 years). Any of the three age ranges of child poverty (0–4, 5–12, 13–17) consistently show higher levels of monetary poverty than that of the average of the population, and the adult population (Figure 3). Children constitute the majority of Mozambique’s poor.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 3. **Monetary poverty rates for children and adults**



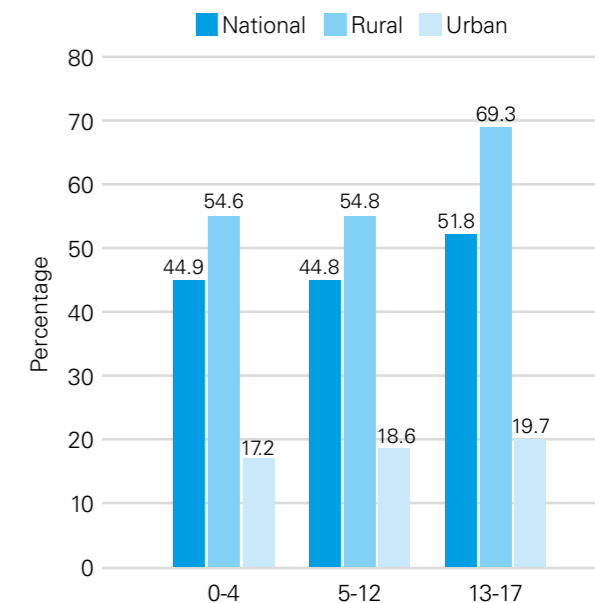
Source: Mahrt et al (2018) based on IOF 2014/2015 data and MEF (2016)

<sup>5</sup> Mahrt et al (2018). Adult (ages 18+) and child consumption poverty rates are estimated based on the first quarter of IOF data. Due to differences in methodological approaches the officially reported population poverty rate is different standing at 46.1 per cent, but is still lower than that for the child population.

Figure 4 indicates that the incidence of multiple deprivations is higher among adolescents (52 per cent), compared to the average of 45 per cent among other age groups. This is driven by the high level of non-completion of primary education. The situation is particularly acute for rural youth (69 per cent) while the rate for children living in urban areas has little variation across ages.

**Multidimensional poverty is highest among adolescents. The situation is particularly acute for rural youth.**

Figure 4. **Multidimensional poverty by age group and area**



Data source: Mahrt et al (2018), based on IOF 2014/2015 data and MEF (2016)

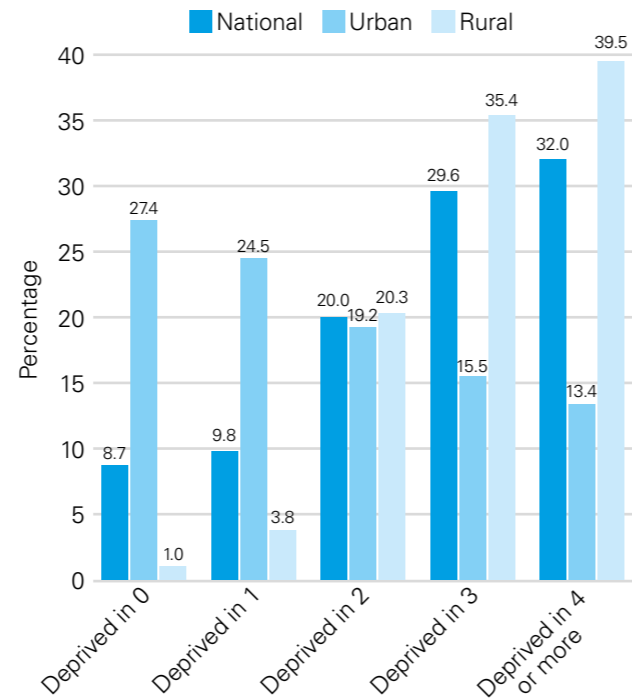


**Deprivations experienced by children in Mozambique are deep and cumulative**

Figure 5 shows that most children in Mozambique (82 per cent) suffer more than one form of deprivation at a time. Almost a third of children (30 per cent) experience three simultaneous deprivations at a time. Another third of the country's children (32 per cent) are affected by four or more forms of deprivation. The differences between children living in urban and rural areas are quite dramatic particularly in higher levels of cumulative deprivations: 40 per cent of all rural children suffer from four or more forms of deprivations compared to just 13 per cent of urban children.

**Child rights deprivations are especially severe in rural areas – as high as 75% of rural children are deprived in three or more dimensions simultaneously.**

Figure 5. Proportion of deprived children per number of deprivations and location.



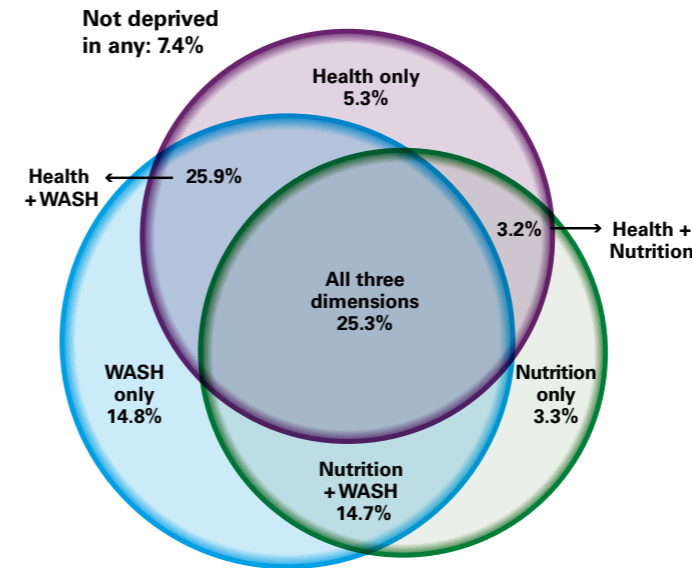
Source: Ferrone, Rossi and Bruckauf (2018), based on IOF 2014/2015 data and MEF (2016)

**Drivers of Multidimensional Child Poverty**

**Rural location, low education of parents and the type of jobs parents hold are the major determinants of multidimensional child poverty.** Children living in rural areas, in female-headed households, with poorly educated household heads, and those working in low-paid jobs in the agricultural sector are most at risk. The extreme weather events also play an important role in heightening the risk of multidimensional poverty (Figure 7). The likelihood of child deprivation in housing, water and sanitation is higher when the household faced an extreme weather event in the last year. The deprivation rate is 16 and 11 percentage points higher for children who experienced climatic shock.

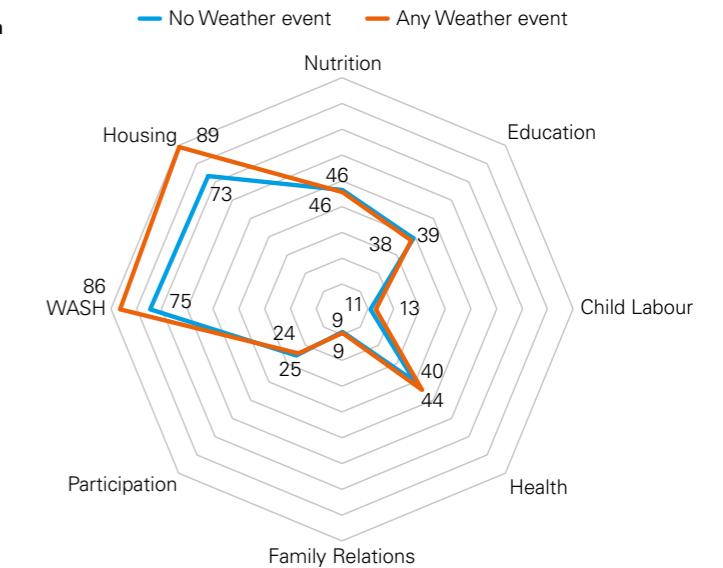
Analysis indicated that policy focus has to be directed towards an integrated approach, particularly in Nutrition, Health and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) with approximately one in four children (25 per cent) being simultaneously deprived in all three dimensions (Figure 6). Another area of strong overlap is WASH and Housing where one in three (32 per cent) children are simultaneously deprived in all three areas.

Figure 6. Overlap of deprivations in Nutrition, Health and WASH



Source: Ferrone, Rossi and Bruckauf (2018), based on IOF 2014/2015 data and MEF (2016)

Figure 7. Deprivation in each dimension by extreme weather event



Source: Ferrone, Rossi and Bruckauf (2018), based on IOF 2014/2015 data and MEF (2016)



### Key deprivations in Right to Survival

- **An overwhelming majority of children lack access to basic infrastructure and decent housing – structural domains of multidimensional poverty.** Almost three-quarters of Mozambican children (74 per cent) lack proper access to sanitation and electricity, and four out of ten (43 per cent) lack clean and accessible sources of water. An estimated 16 per cent of children share a room with four or more people and more than half (57 per cent) live in a house with floors and roofs made out of primitive natural materials prone to severe damage when natural disasters occur. The most basic needs of these children are not met, leaving them unjustifiably far behind (Table 1).

- **Stunting, or chronic malnutrition measured by low height for age, is an area requiring urgent policy action for children under five:** 42 per cent of Mozambican children under five are stunted, yet progress in reducing stunting has been limited. Together with child marriage, this problem has not improved tangibly between 1996/97 (49 per cent) and 2014/15 (42 per cent), representing an estimated annual reduction which is less than one percentage point. The gender gap is remarkable in the stunting indicator, where boys' deprivation is nine and seven percentage points higher than girls' in the rural and urban sectors, respectively. On the other hand, the wasting rate or acute malnutrition (measured by low weight for height) was halved between 1996/1997 and 2014/15 (from 7 to 4 per cent) while underweight fell from 20 per cent in 2008/09 to 16 per cent in 2014/15 (Table 2).
- Meanwhile, the most recent household data shows **notable progress in children's access to mosquito bednets, improved sanitation and a reduction in wasting.** The deprivation rate in access to mosquito nets – the main protection from malaria risks – decreased from 54 per cent to 39 per cent between 2008/09 and 2014/15 (Table 2).

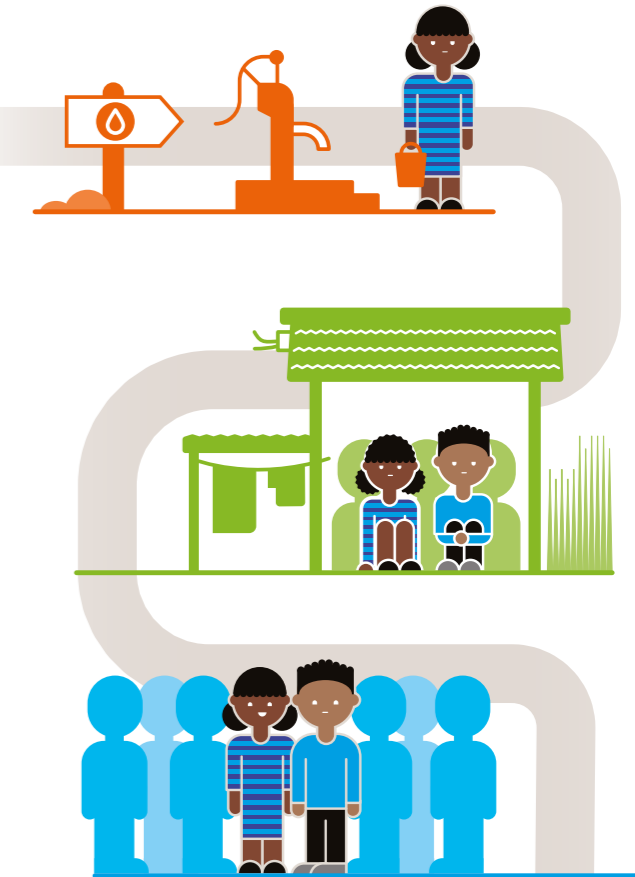


### Key deprivations in Right to Development

- **Completion of primary education is the top policy priority for children aged 12 and over.** A staggering two-thirds (68 per cent) of children aged between 13 and 17 had not completed primary school based on the key source of data of this report (IOF 2014/15), while a quarter (26 per cent) of children aged between 5 and 12 are not even attending (Table 2).

### Key deprivations in Right to Protection

- **The marriage or union of children under the age of 18 is an extensive and profoundly harmful practice that has life-long consequences for individuals, particularly girls, in the rural areas.** A total of 6.4 per cent of Mozambican children reported being married before age 18. The practice was higher in the rural areas (7.7 per cent) and in northern and central provinces (7.6 and 6.7 per cent, respectively). The situation for girls is systematically worse than for boys in this specific deprivation. Based on IOF survey data, the child marriage rate stagnated between 2008/09 and 2014/15.



**A Child Grant is a viable and most direct social protection measure to reduce monetary, as well as multidimensional, child poverty.** A wealth of evidence from the South East Africa region shows the positive impact of child grants on improving a household's consumption, food security, food diversity, increasing older children's schooling and other outcomes. It is a policy option that can combine fiscal prudence and notable poverty reduction. The analysis presented in this report shows that a cash transfer of 600 meticals (roughly two-thirds of the poverty line) delivered to families with children aged between 0 and 2 years old, and implemented in the poorest districts of the country, can be effective in reducing child and adult poverty. This approach is fiscally sustainable as it costs only around one per cent of GDP.



**Table 1. Deprivation rates by indicators and dimensions (%)**

Dimension	Indicators	Age	National	Rural	Urban	North	Centre	South
FAMILY	No parents	0–12	9.6	9.1	10.9	8.1	10.1	11.2
	Child marriage	13–17	6.3	7.6	4.1	7.3	6.8	4.4
NUTRITION	Stunting	0–4	42.4	45.2	34.4	49.8	43.4	25.6
	Underweight		15.7	17.4	10.8	19.6	16.0	6.9
	Wasting		4.4	4.8	3.5	6.6	3.8	1.8
EDUCATION	Not enrolled	5–12	25.9	29.9	15.4	37.9	24.5	7.6
	Not completed primary education	13–17	68.1	80.3	45.6	82.2	73.7	42.5
LABOUR	Child labour	5–17	11.5	14.6	4.5	13.0	11.6	9.1
HEALTH	No mosquito bednet	0–4	38.6	42.8	26.9	33.0	41.3	42.4
	More than 30 minutes to nearest health facility	0–17	32.8	35.8	25.6	41.3	32.8	19.2
WASH	Unimproved drinking water	0–17	42.5	54.4	13.3	50.7	48.5	15.9
	Water source more than 30 minutes away		9.0	11.8	2.1	12.8	7.6	5.7
	Unimproved sanitation		73.5	85.6	44.0	79.0	81.0	48.4
PARTICIPATION	Lack of access to information	0–17	24.9	30.2	12.0	35.2	26.5	4.7
HOUSING	Overcrowding	0–17	16.2	20.1	6.9	11.6	20.9	13.9
	Primitive floor/roof		57.2	71.2	23.0	73.3	66.2	11.7
	No electricity		73.6	91.3	30.1	78.4	82.6	46.3

Source: Calculations based on 2014/15 Mozambican household budget survey data (IOF 2014/15)

**Table 2. Trends in deprivation rates by indicator and survey year (%)**

Dimension	Indicators	1996/7	2002/3	2008/9	2014/15	Annual level change (pp)
FAMILY	No parents			8.5	9.6	0.53
	Child marriage	8.0	8.4	6.9	6.3	-0.09
NUTRITION	Stunting	49.2		45.2	42.4	-0.38
	Underweight	25.5		19.8	15.7	-0.55
	Wasting	8.4		7.2	4.4	-0.22
EDUCATION	Not enrolled	48.7	25.5	19.5	25.9	-1.27
	Not completed primary education	94.9	90.2	76.6	68.1	-1.49
HEALTH	No mosquito bednet			54.1	38.6	-2.58
WASH	Unimproved drinking water		63.4	58.4	42.5	-1.75
	Unimproved sanitation		86.8	83.4	73.5	-1.10
PARTICIPATION	Lack of access to information	61.9	42.6	37.5	24.9	-2.05
HOUSING	Overcrowding	11.6		10.2	16.2	0.26
	Primitive floor/roof	74.6		66.6	57.2	-0.96
	No electricity	93.9	91.6	85.8	73.6	-1.13

Note: National estimates. The definition of safe water differs slightly in 2003/3 and 2008/9 due to survey differences. Trend data on child labour are not available.

# Recommended Policy Action

The global and regional experience of the last two decades proves that child-sensitive policies can improve not only children's welfare in critical areas such as nutrition, health and education but also contribute to longer-term national development. The political will to address child poverty in all its forms within the next Five-year National Development Plan (PQG) and the renewed commitment of public institutions and international donors would offer Mozambique's children a real opportunity for progress and protection.

The analysis presented in this report leads to the following recommendations.

## Protect children's rights in public policies

**Explicitly include the indicators of child poverty and deprivations** disaggregated by regions, geographical areas and other socioeconomic characteristics into the National Five-year Development Plan (PQG 2020–2024) and the localized SDG framework to ensure a focus on improving child well-being.

**Increase spending on child-sensitive social sectors and increase its efficiency.** Despite the challenging economic context, it is important to guarantee that children have a pre-eminent position in the budgetary targets of the next few years. Government expenditures in child-focused policies and sectors should be protected even during economic slowdowns.

**Prioritize policies and plans to address inequalities to reach the most vulnerable children.** Address regional and rural/urban inequalities through a more equitable formula of budget allocations by prioritizing the most disadvantaged areas/groups and improvement of basic services, especially in rural areas.

**Institutionalize cross-sectoral integration on child-sensitive policies and interventions** through planning and implementation processes to tackle multiple issues immediately. This is key to achieve tangible reductions in multidimensional child poverty. National plans should include cross-sectoral integration of health and nutrition with water and sanitation to reduce child stunting in children aged under five. Government should support communities in improving housing conditions.

**Reform the education system to enable every child regardless of gender, place of birth or religion to complete at least basic levels of education and learn how to read and write.** Investing in pre-primary education will help to ensure school readiness and progression and pave the way for long-term outcomes.

**Expand child-sensitive social protection (e.g. child grants) in and beyond the poorest districts of the country to tackle both monetary and multiple deprivation poverty.** A holistic approach of integrating cash transfers with in-kind support and assistance (e.g. psychosocial support, improved access to services and information), already successfully tested in many countries of this region, has a strong potential to reduce the risk of multidimensional poverty among the most vulnerable groups of children.

## The 14 million children of Mozambique deserve better policies and a real chance for a fair future.

**Improve evidence-based policymaking to increase transparency as well as accountability in child-related policies at national and subnational levels.**

**Institutionalize assessment of multidimensional child poverty as a part of policy action so that progress is accurately measured.** Increasing the frequency of national household survey data and the availability of quality administrative data disaggregated by subnational levels, types of communities (rural/urban), gender and other characteristics will ensure that the government makes informed decisions and carries out decentralized actions for the improvement of basic social services and child protection.

**Use high quality evidence on the effectiveness and impact of child-relevant social programmes and service delivery** for more efficient use of public resources and stronger relationships between the Government of Mozambique and its international partners.



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