



unicef

kuri buri mwana



**A SNAPSHOT OF  
MULTIDIMENSIONAL CHILD  
POVERTY IN RWANDA**

Insights from Rwanda's 2025 National Integrated  
Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV 7)

# Summary

The EICV7 MODA Thematic Report (2023/24) provides critical insights into the multidimensional poverty affecting children in Rwanda. While significant progress has been achieved since 2016/17, with multidimensional child poverty nearly halved for those aged 5–14 and reduced by a third among adolescents aged 15–17, overlapping deprivations remain a major challenge. For younger children, housing and water are the most pressing issues, with over 60% facing inadequate housing conditions and more than 40% lacking reliable access to safe water. For adolescents, education emerges as the greatest concern, with over half experiencing deprivation in school attainment, attendance, or literacy.

Regional disparities are pronounced, with Southern, Western, and Eastern provinces experiencing the highest deprivation rates, while Kigali consistently shows the lowest. Rural children are significantly more likely to be deprived than their urban peers. Importantly, children in female-headed households or households headed by non-educated adults are at greater risk of multiple deprivations. Housing challenges linked to poor garbage disposal, inadequate lighting, and environmental shocks remain persistent and, in some cases, have worsened over time.

These findings underscore the urgency of adopting integrated, multi-sectoral approaches that combine improvements in education, water, housing, health, and sanitation, while prioritizing the most vulnerable children and districts within the regions. Strengthening resilience against environmental risks and ensuring equitable access to services will be key to sustaining Rwanda's progress toward halving child poverty in line with SDG 1.2 by 2030.



## What is MODA?



The Multidimensional Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) is a methodology developed by UNICEF to measure child poverty beyond income. It captures the multiple deprivations children face in key dimensions of well-being: health, education, water, sanitation, and housing. By analyzing overlapping deprivations, MODA helps policymakers identify which groups of children are most deprived and in what areas, enabling more targeted and effective interventions.

This brief summarises insights from Rwanda's 2025 National Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV 7) carried out in 2023/24. It is focused on children between 5-17 years of age.

## Children aged 5-14 years old

**Just over one in every ten (11.9%) children aged 5-14 are multidimensionally poor. In other words, they are deprived in three or more dimensions of well-being.**

Appropriate housing as well as access to water and health care are the main deprivations faced by this population group. Overall, more than six in ten children are deprived in the housing dimension, while four out of ten children suffer from deprivation in water (see Figure 1).

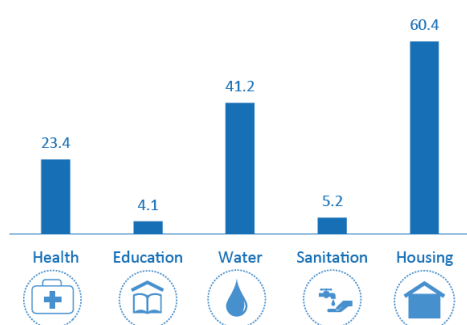


Figure 1 Deprivation Headcount Ratio (%) in the main dimensions of a child's wellbeing

National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, EICV7

To illustrate these findings in greater detail, Figure 2 highlights:



**38.4% of children** live in households that do not properly dispose of rubbish or garbage.



As many as **36.7% of children** must travel over 500 meters in rural areas, or more than 200 meters in urban settings, just to reach the nearest water source.



**27.1% of children** depend on inadequate sources of lighting in their homes.



**19.5% live in households** that have experienced floods, landslides, severe rains, or other forms of environmental damage within the past year.

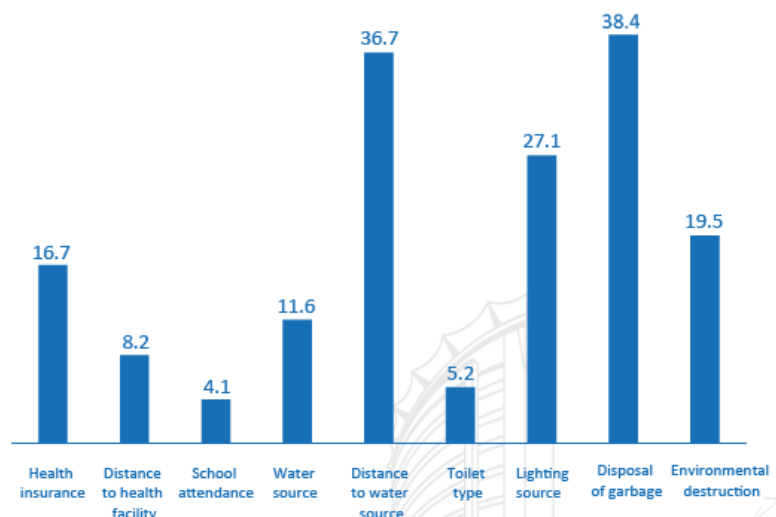


**16.7%** of these children lack health insurance.



**11.6%** rely on unsafe water sources at home.

Figure 2 Deprivation Headcount Ratio (%) in each indicator of a child's wellbeing

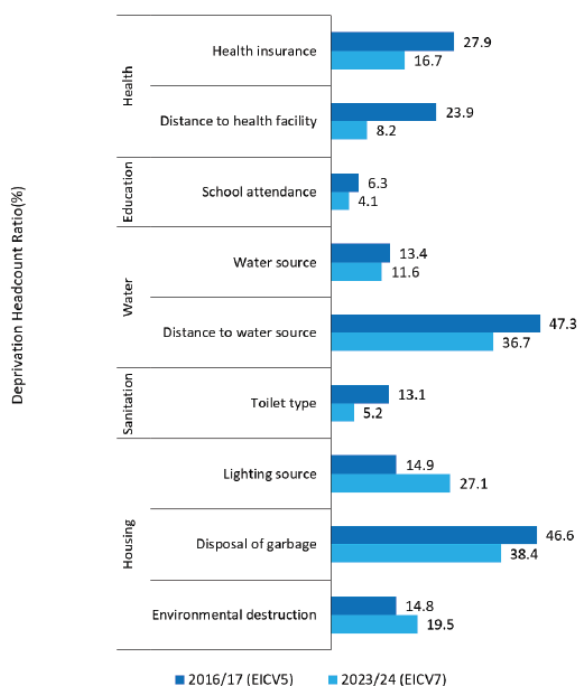


Source: National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, EICV7

Children aged 5-14 in Rwanda experience relatively lower vulnerability regarding school attendance (4.1%), access to improved toilets (5.2%), and proximity to health facilities (8.2%) when compared to other aspects of well-being.

**Between 2016/17 and 2023/24, Rwanda achieved significant progress in reducing multidimensional poverty among children aged 5–14. The share of multidimensionally poor fell from 25.3% to 11.9%, nearly halving in just seven years.** Deprivations in health dropped sharply (from 44% to 23%), as did sanitation (from 13% to 5%), while water deprivation also improved by 11 percentage points. Education deprivation remained low throughout, falling slightly (about 4 percentage points). However, housing deprivation showed no improvement (stuck at ~60%), with environmental destruction and lighting challenges worsening over time. Overall, progress is clear, but housing remains the Achilles’ heel for this age group.

Figure 3: Comparison of deprivations by dimensions of wellbeing for EICV5 and EICV 7 results for 5-14 year olds



Source: National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, EICV7 and EICV 5.



## Children aged 15-17 years old

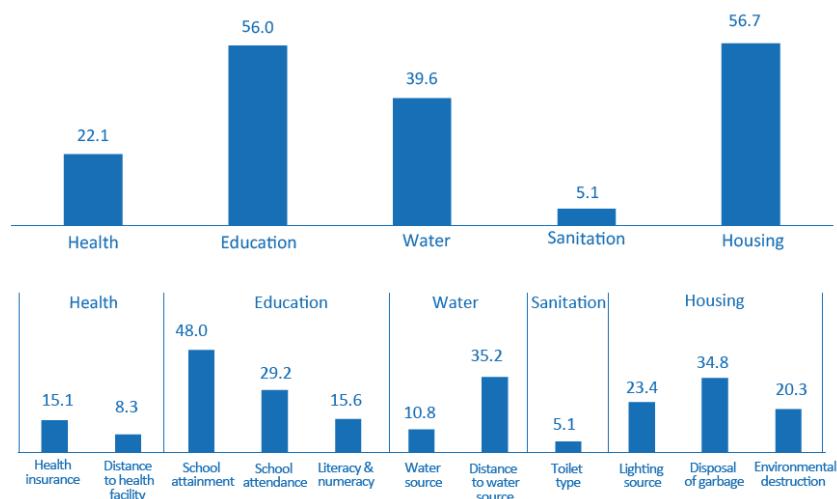
**Nearly one in four Rwandan teens (15-17) face hardship in at least three crucial areas, marking them multidimensionally poor.** According to Figure 4, school attainment tops the list—almost half (48%) of these youth miss out on reaching basic education. Long walks to fetch water (35.2%) and poor garbage disposal (34.8%) are also major concerns.

Other challenges include:

- 1 in 3 teens not attending school (29.2%)
- 15.6% struggle with basic reading, writing, or math
- 1 in 5 affected by environmental disasters

On a positive note, few lack improved toilets (5.1%), live far from health facilities (8.3%), or depend on unsafe water (10.8%).

Figure 4 Deprivation Headcount Ratio (%) in each dimension of a child's wellbeing, at national level (15-17 year olds)



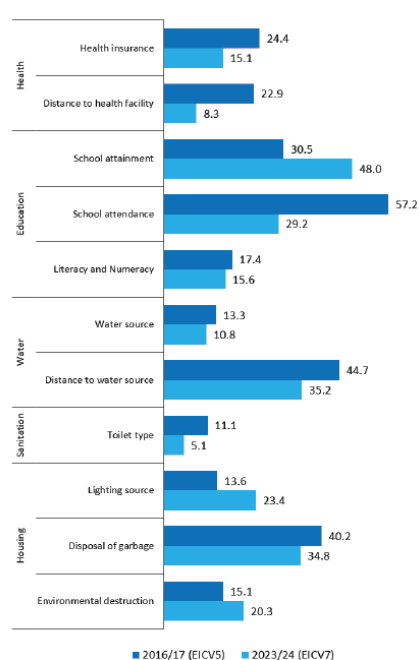
Source: National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, EICV7



**For adolescents, multidimensional poverty has fallen between 2016/17 and 2023/24 but remains stubbornly high.** The headcount dropped from 40.1% in 2016/17 to 26.8% in 2023/24, reflecting progress, though over one in four adolescents is still deprived in at least three dimensions. Gains were strongest in health (40% - 22%) and sanitation (11% - 5%), alongside a 10-point reduction in water deprivation.

However, education deprivation remains alarmingly high, improving only slightly (57% - 56%), driven by weak school attainment and literacy outcomes. Housing deprivation worsened slightly (55% - 57%) due to rising environmental shocks and unimproved lighting. In short, while adolescent poverty has declined, the education crisis and persistent housing risks threaten to undo broader gains.

Figure 5 Comparison of deprivations by dimensions of wellbeing for EICV5 and EICV 7 results for 5-14 year olds



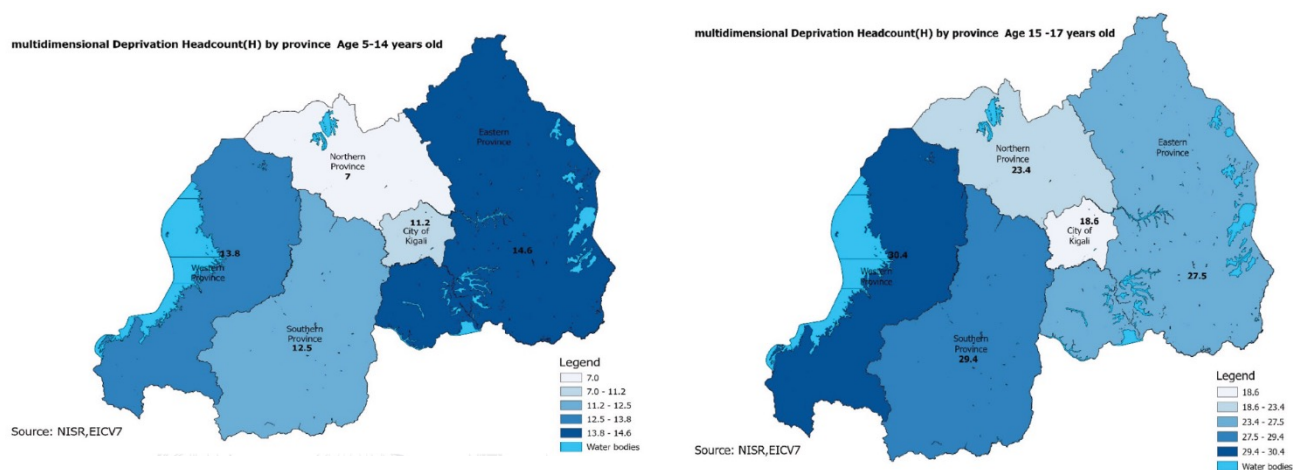
Source: National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, EICV7 and EICV 5.



## Regional and Demographic Patterns of Child Deprivation in Rwanda

Children living in rural areas and in the Southern, Western and Eastern provinces experience higher levels of multidimensional deprivation (Figure 6). For example, 29.5% of children aged 15-17 years living in rural areas are multidimensionally deprived compared to 17.8% of children this age living in urban areas. Kigali City presents the lowest rate of multidimensional deprivation. In addition, children living with non-educated household heads are more likely to be deprived in at least three dimensions of their well-being as opposed to children living with educated household heads.

Figure 6 Multidimensional Poverty by region Age 5-14 years old (left figure) and Age 15-17 years old (right figure)



Source: National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, EICV7



**5–14 year children in the western and eastern provinces have the highest number of deprivations across the various dimensions of wellbeing (Figure 7).** In the western province distance to water source and disposal of garbage and environmental destructions are particularly acute and for the eastern province both distance to water and quality of the water are a challenge. This province also has the highest deprivation in terms of distance to health facilities.

Figure 7 Deprivation Headcount Ratio (%) in each indicator of a child's wellbeing by region 5-14 year-olds

National/Area of residence/Province	Health insurance	Distance to health facility	School attendance	Water source	Distance to water source	Toilet type	Lighting source	Disposal of garbage	Environmental destruction
Kigali City	20.9	4.6	4.3	2.3	30.8	0.4	10.7	38.4	12
Southern	17	8.4	3.4	9.9	35	5.3	34.1	38.8	21.4
Western	18.4	10	4.8	9.2	39.9	5.1	26.5	42.2	21.1
Northern	9.5	4.5	2.4	8.3	35	4.7	30.9	42.6	16.4
Eastern	17.7	10.5	4.8	14.6	38.6	5.1	26.2	32.7	16.7
Rural	16.2	9.7	4.3	14.3	37.1	6.3	31.4	38.7	20.9
Urban	18.2	4	3.4	3.4	35.5	1.8	14.1	37.6	15.4
National	16.7	8.2	4.1	11.6	36.7	5.2	27.1	38.4	19.5

Source: National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, EICV7



**For 15–17-year-olds the eastern and western provinces are similarly the most deprived.** The eastern province is particularly deprived of education related wellbeing indicators with more than half of the adolescents not completing primary school education. In the western province distance to water source as well as disposal of garbage are challenges that adolescents face (Figure 8).

Figure 8 Deprivation Headcount Ratio (%) in each indicator of a child's wellbeing by region 15–17-year-olds

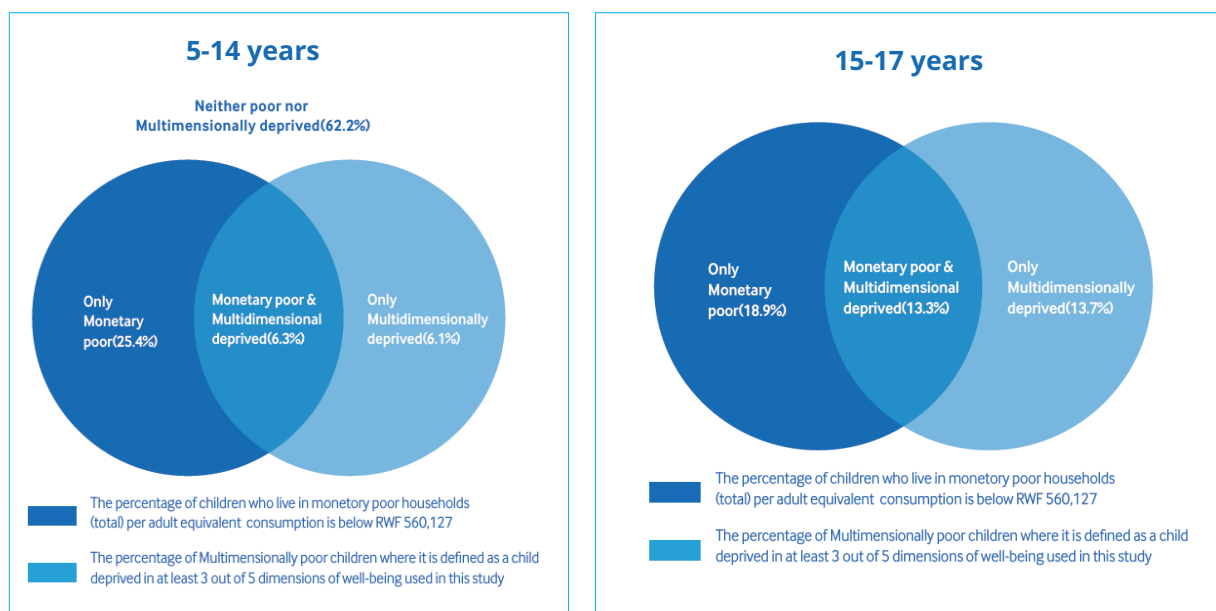
Area of residence/Province	Health insurance	Distance to health facility	School attainment	School attendance	Literacy & numeracy	Water source	Distance to water	Toilet type	Lighting source	Disposal of garbage	Environmental destruction
Kigali City	15.6	5.1	31.1	26.9	6.5	2.2	26.2	1	12.1	34.9	12.9
Southern Province	15.8	8	49.9	29	17.2	10.7	35.1	7.9	29.5	34.7	26.9
Western Province	17.8	10.7	48.1	27.8	16	14.2	40.4	5.4	21.9	39.2	20.4
Northern Province	8.8	5.9	47	31.1	11.9	7.6	35	4.3	28.1	38.9	15.2
Eastern Province	15.5	9.2	52.9	30.2	19.3	13.1	34.7	4.5	21.4	29.6	20.2
Rural	14.9	9.9	52.7	30.6	18	13.3	36.2	6	27.6	35.2	21.9
Urban	15.4	3.8	34.1	25.2	8.9	3.4	32.1	2.3	11.3	33.6	15.5
National	15.1	8.3	48	29.2	15.6	10.8	35.2	5.1	23.4	34.8	20.3

Source: National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, EICV7

### Overlap with Monetary Poverty

**Monetary poverty and multidimensional deprivation do not always affect the same children.** For example, only 6.3% of children aged 5–14 and 13.3% of those aged 15–17 are both monetarily poor and experience multidimensional deprivation at the same time. Meanwhile, 6.1% of children aged 5–14 and 13.7% of those aged 15–17 are deprived in multiple dimensions but are not considered monetarily poor. Conversely, 25.4% of children aged 5–14 and 18.9% of those aged 15–17 are classified as monetarily poor but do not experience multidimensional deprivation.

These findings demonstrate that relying solely on monetary poverty measures can miss important aspects of children’s well-being. A multidimensional approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges children face and is essential for effective policy targeting.



## Policy recommendations

The analysis of MODA highlights the main deprivations that children and adolescents face across different dimensions of wellbeing and its variations across the regions. Below are a set of policy recommendations to further improve the wellbeing of children and adolescents in the coming years.

**Prioritise the most vulnerable children** - Target rural areas and Southern, Western, and Eastern provinces, where multidimensional poverty is highest. Where possible look at deprivations at district and sector level to ensure a more focused approach to dealing with deprivations against a constraining fiscal environment.

Moreover, provide tailored support to children in female-headed households and those with non-educated household heads, who face higher risks of multiple deprivations and where possible expand the coverage of social protection for households where children experience both monetary and multidimensional poverty.

**Adopt a holistic and multi-sectoral response** - Promote a joined-up approach across education, health, water, sanitation, housing, and climate resilience. Moreover, strengthen coordination and integration between ministries and local governments to reduce overlap and costs. Ensure child poverty data (MODA) is systematically integrated into planning, budgeting, and monitoring.

**Tackle persistent housing and water deprivations** - Invest in safe water infrastructure, particularly in Eastern and Western provinces, where distance and quality remain major barriers. Expand off-grid and renewable lighting solutions in hard-to-reach areas. Finally, scale up community waste management systems and awareness campaigns on safe disposal of garbage and waste and integrate climate resilience into housing policies to reduce vulnerability to environmental destruction (floods, landslides, severe rains).

**Address the education crisis among adolescents** - Strengthen retention and transition from primary to secondary education to reduce school attainment gaps. Improve literacy and numeracy outcomes through better teacher training, remedial support, and parental engagement. Promote flexible learning and skills pathways (e.g. TVET, apprenticeships) for older children at risk of dropping out. Finally develop mentorship and guidance programmes to encourage continued schooling beyond compulsory age.

**Sustain gains in health and sanitation** - Maintain progress in health insurance coverage and ensure affordability for the poorest families. Ensure universal access to improved toilets and strengthen hygiene promotion in schools and communities.



