

Child Poverty in Uganda

Gideon Rutaremwa

MakerereUniversity

Center for Population and Applied Statistics

ANR Programme: Progress Workshop
IFRA& BIEA/ Nairobi 24-25, November 2011

The idea that poverty can be ended is over 200 years old

The French enlightenment philosopher Marie Jean Antonine Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet argued in *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (published posthumously in 1794 by the government of the new French Republic) that poverty was not a result of natural laws or divine will but was caused by ‘*the present imperfections of the social arts*’

He argued that poverty could be ended by the universal provision of pensions, grants to the young, sickness benefits and state education

Defining Child Poverty

Absolute and Overall Poverty

After the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, 117 countries adopted a declaration and programme of action which included commitments to eradicate “absolute” and reduce “overall” poverty.

Absolute poverty was defined as *"a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services."* (UN, 1995)

Official Definition of Poverty of the World Bank, IMF, UNDP and all other UN Organisations

“Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation”

(UN 1998)

UN General Assembly Definition of Child Poverty,

10th January 2007

“Children living in poverty are deprived of nutrition, water and sanitation facilities, access to basic health-care services, shelter, education, participation and protection, and that while a severe lack of goods and services hurts every human being, it is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential and to participate as full members of the society”

Measuring Absolute Child Poverty

Deprivation can be conceptualised as a continuum which ranges from no deprivation through mild, moderate and severe deprivation to extreme deprivation.

Continuum of deprivation



Measuring absolute poverty among children

- In order to measure absolute poverty amongst children, it is necessary to define the threshold measures of severe deprivation of basic human need for:
 1. Food
 2. Safe drinking water
 3. Sanitation facilities
 4. Health
 5. Shelter
 6. Education
 7. Information
 8. Access to service

Operational Definitions of Severe Deprivation of Basic Human Need for Children

- 1) **Severe Food Deprivation**– severely malnourished children whose highest and weights were more than 3 Standard Deviations below the median of the international reference population e.g. severe anthropometric failure.
- 2) **Severe Water Deprivation** - children who only had access to surface water (e.g. rivers) for drinking or who lived in households where the nearest source of water was more than 30 minutes round trip away (e.g. indicators of severe deprivation of water quality or quantity).
- 3) **Severe Deprivation of Sanitation Facilities** – children who had no access to a toilet of any kind in the vicinity of their dwelling, e.g. no private or communal toilets or latrines.
- 4) **Severe Health Deprivation** – children who had not been immunised against any diseases or young children who had a recent illness and had not received any medical advice or treatment.

Operational Definitions of Severe Deprivation of Basic Human Need for Children

- 5) Severe Shelter Deprivation – children in dwellings with five or more people per room (severe overcrowding) or with no flooring material (e.g. a mud floor).
- 6) Severe Education Deprivation – children aged between 7 and 18 who had never been to school and were not currently attending school (e.g. no professional education of any kind).
- 7) Severe Information Deprivation – children aged between 3 and 18 with no access to newspapers, radio or television or computers or phones at home.
- 8) Severe Deprivation of Access to Basic Services – children living 20 kilometres or more from any type of school or 50 kilometres or more from any medical facility with doctors. Unfortunately, this kind of information was only available for a few countries so it has not been possible to construct accurate regional estimates of severe deprivation of access to basic services.

Initial findings for
Uganda
UNHS 2010

Data

- The 2010 Uganda Household Survey is part of a series of cross sectional surveys that were started in Uganda in 1992.
- These are nationally representative sample surveys that are intended to generate household level socioeconomic development indicators to guide in the development planning process.
- The 2010 survey covered information that are relevant for this study, first information was collected on 56,830 children of ages 0 to 17.

Data

Table 1: Some selected background Characteristics

Age of child	Percent	
0-4	34.9	
5-9	28.1	N=56,830
10-14	25.3	
15-18	11.7	
Sex		
Male	51.1	
Female	49.0	

Severe Education Deprivation

Table 2: Percent of children aged 7-18 years by school attendance and sex

Category	Male	Female
Never attended school	18.7	20.2
Attended	30.4	29.8
Currently attending	50.8	50.0
Total (N)	15,651	14,668

Severe Health Deprivation

Table3: Percentage of children deprived of health in the 30 days preceding the survey

Category	Male	Female
Someone consulted	89.2	88.1
No one consulted	10.8	11.9
Total (N)	12,136	12,123

Sanitation Deprivation

- Nearly **14.2 percent** (N=8,073) of the children had no access to toilet facility – they used the bush as the alternative.

Water Deprivation

- About **23.2 percent** of the children (N=13,171) were using unsafe sources for their drinking water

Way-forward

- Will complete the analysis, examining all the other indicators of child poverty and the trends in this indicators across the data sets.

THANK YOU