

Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 Key Messages on Multidimensional Poverty

Prepared by the [Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network](#)

[Full report here](#)

This document presents highlights of the 2019 GSDR related to Multidimensional Poverty. The text in bold is our summary for skimming. The non-bold text are direct quotes from the GSDR, and are presented with the page numbers from which they are drawn.

The world is not on track for achieving the SDGs and in some areas is even falling behind. Mobilising 15 independent scientists, the new UN-commissioned Global Sustainable Development Report highlights the need for drastic, transformational change if we are to achieve the 169 targets within the decade or indeed alternative time frames. Integrated, evidence-based approaches from governments, institutions, agencies, private sector and civil society are essential. In doing so, the report emphasizes the need for multidimensional approaches to poverty.

The GSDR argues for expanding poverty measures to address multidimensional poverty.

Eradicating poverty, advancing gender equality and reducing other forms of inequality are closely interrelated objectives and require expanding interventions and measures far beyond the monetary thresholds of extreme deprivations to address the multidimensional and overlapping nature of poverty.

The GSDR highlights 6 key entry points to leverage interlinkages and accelerate progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The first entry point is to expand human well-being and capabilities, in part by fighting poverty in all its dimensions:

“Eradicating world poverty and reducing inequality are closely interrelated goals that require expanding interventions and measures to address the multidimensional and overlapping nature of poverty in education, health care, access to safely managed drinking water and energy, access to sanitation services, exposure to infectious diseases and many other critical dimensions of well-being. Economic growth can contribute to absolute income poverty alleviation, but GDP growth will not address multidimensional poverty by itself.” (p 38)

The GSDR advocates special attention to “Overlapping and concentrated deprivations” It also profiles the global MPI.

Income poverty, poor health, low levels of education, lack of access to water and sanitation, and other deprivations tend to overlap. Households and individuals often suffer multiple forms of poverty. This can be illustrated using the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) which captures the severe deprivations that each person faces with respect to education, health and living standards. In 2015, the number of people living in extreme poverty on less than \$1.90 a day had dropped to 736 million. However, the 2018 multidimensional poverty index that covered 105 countries, presents a more sobering picture, indicating that 1.3 billion people live in households with overlapping deprivations. There is also clear evidence that multidimensional poverty has been decreasing more slowly than income poverty. (page 73)

The GSDR notes who is poorest, multidimensionally:

Of the [1.3 billion] multidimensionally poor, 1.1 billion live in rural areas and almost half are children. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 342 million of multidimensionally poor people, followed by South Asia with 546 million. Those regions are also home to a majority of extremely poor people and in Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of extremely poor is growing.

To fight multidimensional poverty, Growth is not enough

Reducing income poverty can be achieved through equitable economic growth. But addressing multidimensional poverty is more complex, and requires other interventions that need to be carried out simultaneously. (p 74)

Health and Education are both means and ends of development

Although health and education are often considered as outcomes of successful development in the Sustainable Development Agenda, they are also means to achieving other key elements of the Agenda. Good health, for example, contributes to reducing poverty, attaining quality education and reducing inequalities; likewise, quality education is a precondition for many areas of sustainable development, from reproductive health, mortality and poverty to social equity, social cohesion and environmental sustainability. (p 74)

The GSDR calls for Integrated pathways to transformation

Pathways to advance human well-being ultimately require cooperation, collaboration and dialogue between multiple actors and employing many levers of change. There is no single pathway, and different combinations of efforts are required across regions and for countries in special situations. (p 81)

GSDR: Integrated policies do not operate in silos

Just as issues of sustainable development do not operate in silos, the levers of governance, economies, behaviour and technologies are intrinsically linked and changes in one area trigger changes in the others, links that need to be mapped and understood to inform actions for well-being. (p 81)

The GSDR advocates “A multidimensional approach” to poverty measurement nationally.

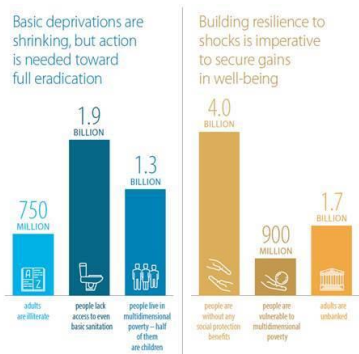
Countries should measure and address poverty in a multidimensional way, with special attention to those dimensions that are the most pertinent in their context and according to their own definitions.

The GSDR: Fighting Multidimensional Poverty can increase coordination among actors.

Multiple stakeholders usually led by the government, should agree to an understanding of multidimensional poverty that typically includes deprivations in education, health, food/nutrition, housing and social security, and other dimensions that seem important for each country, according to their internal agreements. On that basis they can rethink the country’s development process to address multiple Sustainable Development Goals and increase communication and coordination among various actors and between ministries (see box 2-12). (p 82)

GSDR: Multidimensional poverty measures coherently coordinate efforts to leave no one behind.

Multidimensional poverty measurements identify the prevalent vulnerability dimensions among the population and measure them accordingly. Those who are deprived in those dimensions, meaning that they don’t have access to the rights, services or goods they refer to, can be characterized at a national level as being left behind. Countries can then coordinate social development efforts between dimensions and sectors to leave no one behind under one coherent logic: a multidimensional poverty measure. (p 82)



(p 39)

The GSDR describes how governments tailor MPIs to their context.

The selected dimensions vary between countries and may be selected based on the country's constitutional priorities, by identifying the basic conditions needed to guarantee better life outcomes. Countries such as Bhutan, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama and others have all designed their own multidimensional poverty methodology from their specific country needs and priorities. For many of them, the support of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) has been very important. This has generated data that can be disaggregated by vulnerable sub-groups and provided indicators that can be monitored through time to track progress and help shape public policy. (p 82)

In 2009, Mexico became the first country to officially implement a multidimensional poverty measurement. El Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL) developed a measure composed of six equally weighted social dimensions – education and health services, social security, quality and space in the dwelling, basic services in the dwelling and food insecurity. There were also two income thresholds: an income poverty line, and an extreme income poverty line. The social dimensions established in this indicator are part of the 2030 Agenda. Mexico is also simultaneously addressing Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10 and 11. (p 82)

Mexico's MPI motivated different levels of government to work together – successfully.

Based on CONEVAL data, federal, state and municipal governments work together to decrease social deprivations. Through working groups, government ministries coordinate and focus on poverty relief programmes with specific targets for each poverty dimension. Between 2014 and 2016, multidimensional extreme poverty fell from 10 to 8 per cent. (p 82)

GSDR: child poverty must be seen: half of all people suffering from overlapping deprivations in health, education and assets are below the age of 18, according to the global MPI; and in 35 countries, half of all children are poor. (p 148)