

Child Poverty in the Arab States

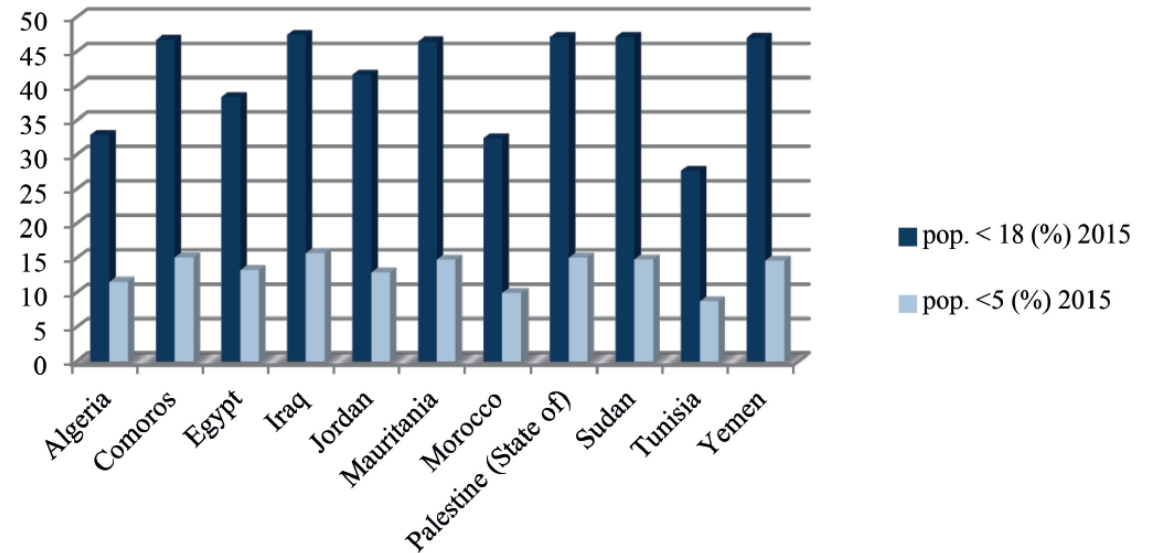
Arthur van Diesen

Regional Social Policy Adviser, UNICEF MENARO

Why focus on child poverty?

- A young region
- Different aspects of poverty matter for children and adults
- Poverty in childhood can have a life-long impact
- Household level indicators may mask differences within households

Figure 2: Percentage of Population Under 18 and Under 5 in 11 Countries Studied



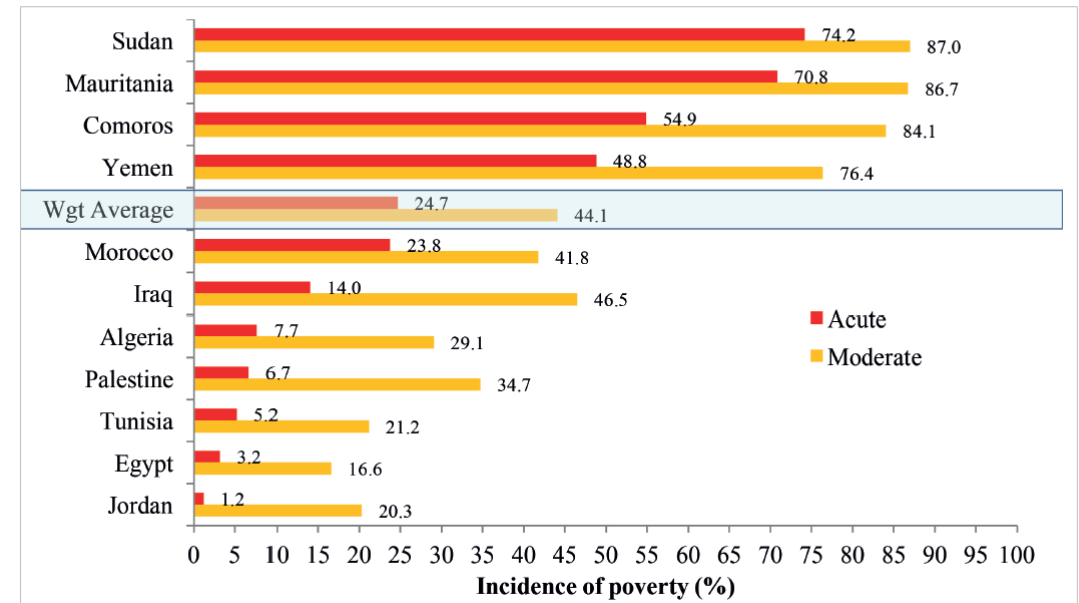
Methodology – Dimensions and Indicators used

Dimensions	Acute Deprivation	Moderate Deprivation	Age
Water	Unimproved source of water	Household does not have piped water into dwelling or yard	All children 0-17
	Distance of more than 30 minutes roundtrip	N.A.	
Sanitation	Unimproved toilet facility	Unimproved toilet facility	All children 0-17
	N.A.	Shared toilet	
Housing	Primitive floor/type of household	Primitive floor/type of household	All children 0-17
	Overcrowding (more than 4 people per room)	Overcrowding (more than 3 people per room)	
Health	Un-skilled birth assistance (0-23 months)	Un-skilled birth assistance (0-23 months)	Children 0-4
	Not immunized: DPT3	Not fully immunized	
	N.A.	No ante-natal care (0-23 months)	
Nutrition	Infant and young child feeding (IYCF)	Infant and young child feeding (IYCF)	Children 0-4
	Wasting	Wasting	
	N.A.	Stunting (>24 months)	
	N.A.	Obesity (>24 months)	
Education	Not enrolled in primary school (children of primary age)	Not enrolled in school (all ages)	Children 5-17
	Did not finish primary (from age of end of primary to 17)	Two or more grades behind school	
Information	No access to any information or communication device	No access to any information device	Children 5-17
	N.A.	No access to any communication device	

Multidimensional child poverty - a reality in the Arab States

- Close to half of children (44.1%, 52.5 million) in countries studied experience multidimensional poverty
- Out of them, 29.3 million (24.7% of the child population) suffer acute poverty

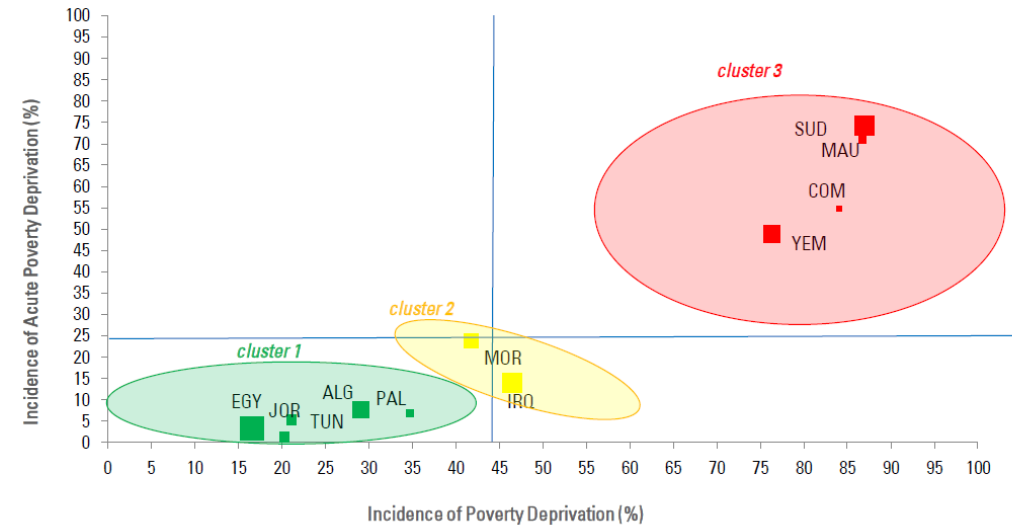
Figure 3: Incidence of Moderate and Acute Poverty (%)



Marked inequality between countries

- Children are sixty times more likely to be acutely poor in Sudan than in Jordan
- Acute poverty is largely concentrated in cluster 3 countries (74.1% of all acutely poor children), but moderate poverty is more widespread (53.5% in cluster 3 countries)

Figure 3. clusters of countries in child poverty

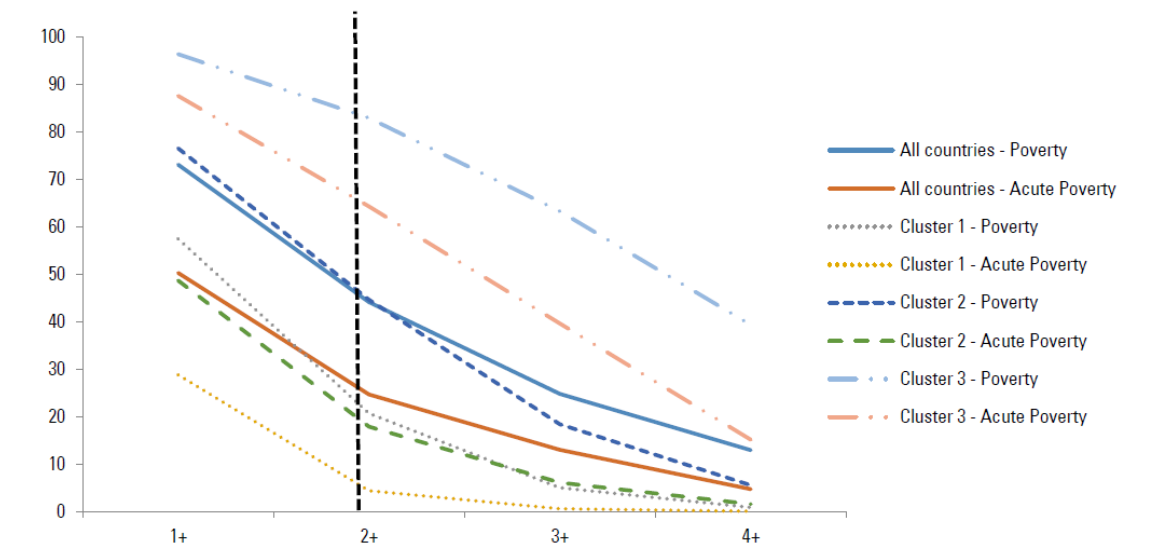


- Notes:
- (i) Size point reflects size of population U18.
 - (ii) Blue lines indicate weighted average of countries.

Depth of child poverty

- In cluster 1 countries, where the child poverty headcount is low, still more than half of the children experience one moderate deprivation and a third face one acute deprivation
- In cluster 3 countries, the headcount is high and a significant proportion experience 3, 4 or more deprivations simultaneously. About 40% experience 4+ deprivations.

Figure 7. Distribution of child population by number of deprivations



The profile of poverty in each country is unique and needs a tailored response

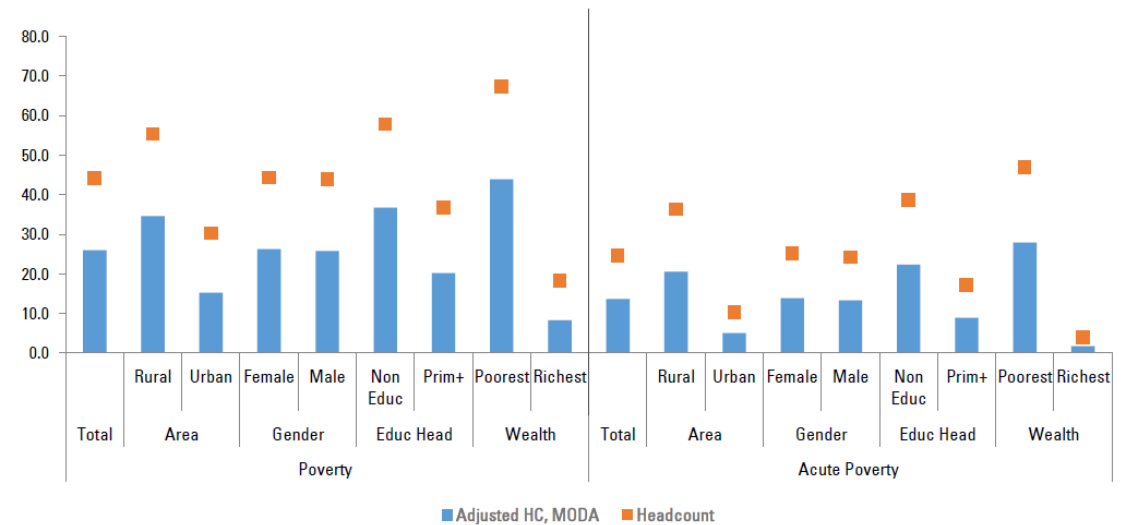
Table 3.1: Acute and Moderate Deprivation by Dimension (in %)

Country	Housing		Water		Sanitation		Nutrition		Health		Education		Information		
	Acute	Moderate	Acute	Moderate	Acute	Moderate	Acute	Moderate	Acute	Moderate	Acute	Moderate	Acute	Moderate	
All countries	32.2	44.7	20.5	39.3	17.5	22.3	26.7	42.7	17.0	44.1	12.4	24.5	4.4	15.8	
Cluster 1	9.9	21.0	8.5	19.5	1.3	5.1	25.2	38.8	5.0	32.9	7.1	18.4	0.3	6.4	
Jordan	7.5	26.8	7.0	44.9	0.1	0.2	22.0	27.5	1.8	33.8	1.8	10.1	0.0	0.6	
Egypt	9.3	17.2	3.2	9.5	0.2	2.5	26.2	42.3	5.4	39.3	10.3	19.2	0.2	6.2	
Tunisia	9.0	18.3	7.0	36.8	4.9	8.1	23.5	33.0	4.0	16.9	3.2	16.5	0.4	3.9	
Palestine	7.2	26.0	40.6	44.4	0.3	1.4	15.5	23.3	1.0	24.1	2.7	6.0	1.8	42.8	
Algeria	12.9	29.6	17.9	31.9	4.0	13.3	24.6	34.3	5.2	18.8	2.1	21.1	0.1	3.2	
Cluster 2	27.7	47.8	14.7	38.7	8.2	12.4	24.3	38.2	23.0	49.1	14.7	26.3	0.8	5.6	
Iraq	28.5	54.4	10.1	38.9	3.6	6.7	25.1	39.6	25.4	46.8	13.6	29.6	0.3	2.4	
Morocco	26.4	37.1	21.8	38.4	15.3	21.2	22.9	35.7	18.5	53.2	16.2	21.4	1.6	10.3	
Cluster 3	73.3	81.8	45.4	72.9	52.4	59.6	31.7	54.1	35.2	61.6	19.4	33.3	14.2	39.7	
Yemen	49.2	66.6	48.7	81.8	35.1	40.6	30.6	58.5	43.9	81.6	12.8	20.5	8.9	25.9	
Comoros	42.4	53.8	28.1	69.0	63.4	77.4	33.9	51.5	25.1	60.1	10.0	47.8	19.1	48.5	
Mauritania	70.4	79.2	56.1	71.9	59.7	71.0	36.7	54.4	44.9	68.3	26.5	37.7	10.2	38.7	
Sudan	90.2	92.8	42.5	67.1	63.0	70.7	31.7	51.5	28.2	46.7	23.8	42.2	18.2	49.1	
More than 25% below the weighted average of all countries.				Within 25% of the weighted average of all countries.						More than 25% above the weighted average of all countries.					

Drivers of inequality in child poverty – household wealth, location and education of the household head

- Children in households in the lowest wealth quintile are 12 times as likely to be acutely multidimensionally poor than those in households in the wealthiest quintile
- Children in rural households are 3.5 times more likely to be acutely poor than children in urban households
- Children in households where the head has no or incomplete primary education are 2.3 times more likely to be acutely poor

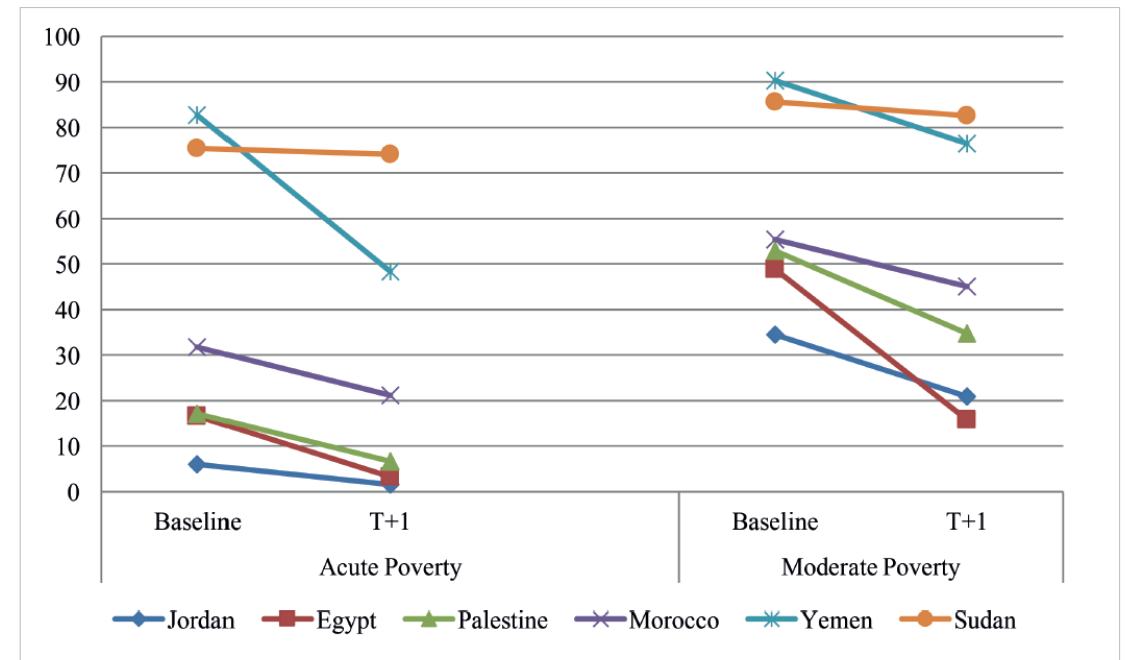
Figure 10. Child poverty and acute child poverty by area, gender, education of household head and wealth



Trends are positive, but not universally so

- Limited countries with comparable data sets
- Significant reductions in child poverty between ca 2000 and ca 2015, with the exception of Sudan
- Differential progress in acute and overall poverty per country (note, Yemen data from pre-2015)

Figure 6: Child Poverty (2+) Headcount Trends



Recommendations

- A tailored policy response to child poverty is required for each country
- The inter-generational transmission of poverty needs to be broken and the best way to do this is to address child poverty
- Governments must invest in childhood to secure future peace and prosperity
- Social protection is key to ensure children have access to the full range of services they need to realise their potential, irrespective of their family's poverty and social status
- Education stands out as a priority area of investment, as it is central to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Access and quality both need attention
- The region suffers a double burden of malnutrition, which needs urgent action
- Evidence gaps in child poverty need addressing, particularly for conflict-affected countries, children on the move, and high-income countries

