



END CHILD
POVERTY
GLOBAL COALITION

Child poverty measurement
and monitoring:

The missing children



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A Rohingya refugee girl in queue for food assistance. Around 919,000 Rohingya refugees - 60 percent of them children - now live in southern Bangladesh, the vast majority in the camps and settlements that have sprung up in Cox's Bazar district, close to the border with Myanmar.

Introduction

A key focus of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is leaving no one behind, which includes a call for increased efforts and innovations to count all children living in poverty, in all its forms (monetary and multidimensional). National household surveys are the most commonly used and reliable sources of data to estimate poverty. These surveys have led to increasingly better and more frequent information on the situation of households and individuals living in poverty and, in most countries, they provide the critical data to set baselines for SDG poverty targets.

However, there are certain groups of children living in poverty that are not reflected in these poverty statistics, including poor children not living in households, poor children living in households which are not captured in household survey sample frameworks, and poor children living in households but the household survey data analysis/methods applied do not sufficiently reflect their situation.

These distinct groups of poor children potentially missing from data or from analysis are explored in this brief from the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, with particular attention to the policy and programming implications for poverty reduction, as well as the implications of setting SDG poverty-related baselines and targets where certain groups of children may be missing from these baselines. The brief also outlines prominent and innovative approaches to better capture children currently missing from or not sufficiently reflected in data, and highlights efforts supported by the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, so that groups of children living in poverty but not represented in national poverty statistics can benefit from the focus and progress that the SDGs will bring.



Children in poverty missing from data

Household surveys: More data available, more inclusive than ever

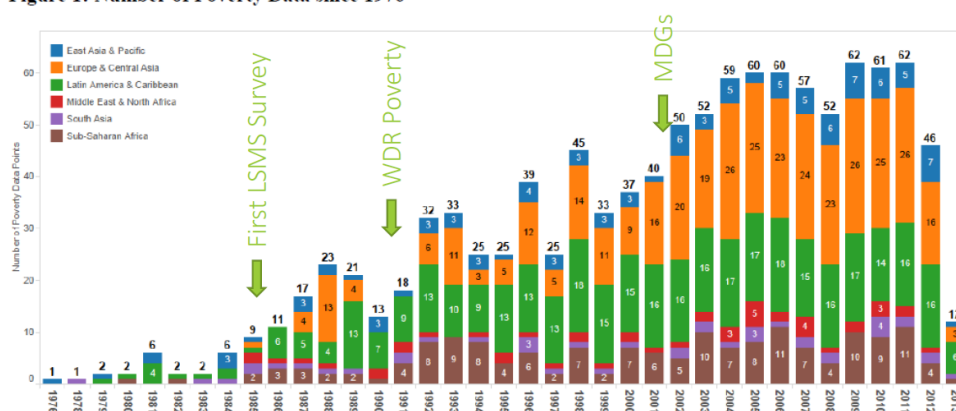
National household surveys¹ are the most common and reliable sources of data to estimate poverty rates, in particular in low- and middle-income countries. Thanks to these household surveys, poverty data availability has increased remarkably in many regions of the world (see figure 1), and much more is known about the situation of poor children and their families today than 20 years ago. It is evident that the Millennium Development Goals provided a push for improved data availability and it remains to be seen whether the SDGs will provide the same impetus.

Prominent household surveys include the Living Standards and Measurement Surveys (LSMS), Household Income and Expenditure Surveys, Socio-Demographic and Expenditure Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions and many others.

We know a lot more about the situation of poor children and their families today than 20 years ago - based on analysis of household survey data.

These household surveys support the measurement of both monetary and non-monetary measures of welfare, and typically cover consumption/income data at the household level and individual-level data on education and health outcomes. Many include labour market outcomes and information on social protection. Each survey comes with its strength and weaknesses; for example, DHS are rich in health-related data and MICS provide rich child-related indicators, but may lack on consumption/income data, etc.

Figure 1: Number of Poverty Data since 1976



Serajuddin et al., 2016, Source of slide -Gero Carletto from presentation at School in Development Economics Prato, June 22nd, 2017

¹ Definitions of households vary between household surveys, but usually include some residency requirements, common food consumption and, in certain surveys, the intermingling of income and/or production decisions. Although the definitions of households vary, household surveys generally do not include people permanently living on the street, nomadic populations, people in refugee or internally displaced persons camps, and people in institutions such as childcare institutions or incarcerated populations.

Uncounted poor children: Who are they?

While these household surveys are a massive leap forward in terms of providing reliable monetary and multidimensional poverty estimates, they may underestimate the magnitude of child poverty. Certain groups of children, often the poorest or those vulnerable to poverty and deprivation, may in fact be missed out by such surveys - or their poverty situation not captured sufficiently in the survey analysis. These groups of children missing from monetary and multidimensional poverty estimates are extremely diverse, as outlined below.

Poor children who are not living in households:

Household surveys are designed to do exactly that - to capture information on households, as well as certain indicators which are captured at the level of individual household members (for example, education and nutrition status) - and for these reasons they understandably do not provide information on poor children who do not live in households. The first group of children potentially missing from poverty data therefore consists of children who are not counted because they do not live in household settings¹, and these include, among others: children living in child care institutions; children in detention; trafficked children; unaccompanied refugee/migrant children; and children living in street situations.

However, for many of these groups, such as children living in street situations or unaccompanied migrant children, it cannot be automatically assumed that they are not captured in household surveys. For example, some children in street situations may spend most of their day on the street but return on a regular basis to a household setting and may be included as members of households during household survey data collection. Likewise, it cannot be automatically assumed that all these children are living in poverty, but for most of these groups outlined above the assumption is that their marginal situation renders them vulnerable to poverty.

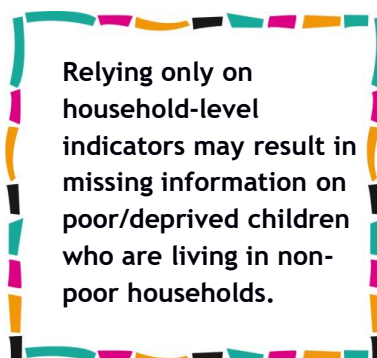


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A boy flies a kite in slum settlement, in the state of Sabah in Malaysia. Sabah is home to many illegal immigrants, including children who may be undocumented.

Poor children living in households - but households not included in sample frames/ data collection: Household survey sample frames commonly depend on national census sampling frames, which are usually updated every 10 years or so. In some countries, census sample frames can be outdated and may not keep up with mobile as well as rapidly urbanizing populations. Certain groups of poor children living in households may not be included in sample frames for household surveys. These include, among others: children in certain conflict zones where there is a high risk to enumerators to collect data or difficulty accessing certain areas; forcibly displaced populations living in areas that are not captured in infrequently updated household survey sampling frames; and children in unregistered dwellings (for example, squatter settlements, as it can be challenging to develop reliable sample frames for slums/unregistered dwellings).

Of the groups of children outlined above, specific attention needs to be paid to forcibly displaced persons (internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers)- as it is estimated that the number of forcibly displaced persons has increased by more than 50 percent over the last 10 years². In many countries forcibly displaced persons are not counted as part of the usual resident population in population census, and consequently their exclusion from population census then implies that they are not part of the sampling frame used in household surveys. In addition, forcibly displaced populations are highly mobile, especially when crisis is unfolding, which complicates survey efforts. And finally, when displaced households are located/included in sampling frames the nonresponse rate might be higher than average because of their wariness to divulge personal information³. Discrepancies in legal categories could also hinder collection of reliable, accurate, timely and comparable data, and complicates the efforts to understand children's experience while on the move - including of poverty and vulnerability⁴. To address this evidence gap, UNICEF, IOM, UNCHR, Eurostat and OECD released a call to action in 2018, emphasizing the need for better data on refugee and migrant children to inform policies and programmes.⁵

Poor children living in households - but their situation is not adequately captured in data collection or reflected in the analysis: Most children worldwide live in households, pointing to the need to continuously improve on household survey design to capture the situation of children living in poverty. Household surveys have come a long way in that regard, and their design is progressively being improved to provide richer information on households and individuals living in households. However, there are groups of poor and vulnerable children who live in households but are not adequately reflected in survey analysis and poverty estimates.



Relying only on household-level indicators may result in missing information on poor/deprived children who are living in non-poor households.

This may be due to their status/characteristics not being adequately captured for various reasons - for example, the survey questions do not capture their individual-level status, or the analysis does not adequately shed light on their situation. This could include, for example, domestic child workers who are deprived in various dimensions, whereas the household-level analysis does not show this, or orphaned children who may have been adopted into wealthier families but do not receive the same access to services and opportunities as other family members, it could include children with disabilities who are not listed as members of the households for various reasons (for example, stigma), and so forth.

In addition, sample sizes can be a challenge, in particular when considering that the poorest children often face intersecting inequalities (multiple deprivations), or layered exclusions, for example girls of an ethnic minority, or children with disabilities living in poor households etc. In such cases the sample size may become inadequate to draw statistically significant conclusions.

Household-level data on poverty are indirect measures to infer child poverty, and although it is extremely important to capture the characteristics of households in which children live and grow up in, household-level indicators alone are insufficient to capture a nuanced picture of child poverty. For example, adequately nourished households are considered as those households where the total household energy intake is more than the sum of the minimum daily energy requirements of all household members, and all members are assumed adequately nourished when using the household measure⁶. However, it is problematic to use a household measure of access as opposed to individual-level consumption¹ - as many studies do find intra-household differences in consumption⁷. Per capita poverty measures often assume equal distribution of resources among household members, but in reality, goods are rarely allocated equally among men, women and children. Recent analysis of individual-level consumption data has revealed hidden poor children living in non-poor households - highlighting that children often receive the smallest share of household resources and are thus more likely to be living in poverty than other members of households⁸. In short, these children living in poverty may be reflected as non-poor as their household is considered non-poor.



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¹ As individual level consumption data is not always available, economic models of intrahousehold resource allocation are used to calculate individual consumption from household-level data.

Estimates of children missing from data

As the groups of children outlined above are extremely diverse, it is no simple task to estimate the number of children not captured in regular household surveys and even more challenging to obtain information on their poverty situation. Nonetheless, there are certain estimates based on data from United Nations agencies, international research institutions, national statistics offices and institutional databases, among others.

The groups of children missing from household survey data are diverse - providing reliable estimates on these groups is extremely challenging.

Yet, as mentioned above, while these children may be uncounted (or their poverty situation not sufficiently captured in analysis) and while the often-marginal circumstances of these children suggest they are likely to be poor, *not everyone in these groups of populations can automatically be considered poor.*

Some of these rough global estimates of children who potentially may be missing from household surveys include:

Refugee children: In recent years, millions of children have migrated across borders (with or without their families), yet reliable, timely and accessible data on them are scarce. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that more than half of the world's refugees and asylum seekers are children, at about 12 million⁹.

Forcibly displaced populations: Some 23 million children were living in internal displacement in 2016, forced to leave their homes because of conflicts or natural hazards, or the intersection of conflict and disasters¹⁰. Household survey sample frames in many countries may not include these rapidly changing populations, as further outlined in the next chapter.

Children living in conflict zones: Latest available data suggests that more than 1 in 6 children - or 357 million - children globally are living in conflict zones, of which 165 million are affected by high-intensity conflicts¹¹. In certain circumstances, household surveys are not carried out in high-conflict areas, and the situation of these children is therefore not reflected.

Trafficked children: While no exact figures exist on trafficked children, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that, globally, around 1.2 million children are trafficked at any given time¹². Countries are increasingly putting in place measures to detect victims of trafficking, with approximately 25,000 persons identified as victims of trafficking in 2016, of which 30 per cent were children. Yet, data on detected victims only reveal the visible part of trafficking, and the real magnitude of persons affected is likely to be much higher, especially for children¹³.

Children deprived of liberty due to conflict with the law: Obtaining data on children deprived of liberty due to conflict with the law remains challenging. One estimate suggests that more than 1 million children are detained through justice systems worldwide at any time¹⁴. Reported numbers on these children are likely to be significantly lower than reality. Data collection is often inconsistent and incomplete, as children awaiting trial or detained with their parents are often not included in reported statistics¹⁵.



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A child walking around Al-Meshqafah camp in Lahj, Al-Faioosh district, Yemen. The conflict-driven humanitarian crisis in Yemen is the largest emergency globally, and has led to internal displacement of 3.6 million people, including 2 million children.

Children in street situations: There are various categories of children in street situations, some permanently live on streets, while others return home at night (and those who return home to a household at night should, by definition, be captured in household surveys). Counting them is particularly challenging due to their mobile and hard-to-reach nature. While most global-level statistics on children in street situations are ‘guesstimates’, it is likely that their numbers are in the tens of millions¹⁶.

Children living in childcare institutions¹: Analysis on available data from 140 countries revealed that about 2.7 million children¹¹ are living in institutional care worldwide¹⁷.

¹ There are different types of care settings for children who live outside their family care, which can be grouped in two broad categories according to the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 2009: 1) Family-based alternative care (placement in a family home by decision of an administrative or judicial body, often called ‘foster care’, or in the home of an extended family member, called ‘kinship care’); 2) child care (placement in a State or non-State facility, ranging from ‘family-like’ care or ‘small group home’ to potentially harmful large-scale establishments often called ‘institutions’).

¹¹ Updated numbers of children living in childcare institutions are expected in 2019, as part of a United Nations study on *Children Deprived of Liberty*. As for other categories of children in alternative care, for example, children living in foster care, if they are living in households they should, by definition, be captured in household survey data.

Uncounted children: What are the implications for poverty reduction?

But what are the implications for national poverty reduction efforts of these groups of children missing from national statistics? As highlighted above, we have fragmented information on the scope, the number of children and the situation of children missing from data. However, what we know is that uncounted children are often among the most economically and socially vulnerable children in societies. They are refugee children, children in childcare institutions, children in detention, children in street situations, children in unregistered settlements and so forth.

In short, uncounted children may be among the poorest and most vulnerable children in many countries.

For these reasons, it is plausible that national poverty statistics based on household survey data alone may not capture some of the poorest children in societies. This is worrisome. Governments cannot create policies and programmes for poor children that are not visible. If efforts to address child poverty do not shed light on these uncounted children, they are likely to be ignored in programme and policy responses, as well as SDG targets (*see box 1*). Commonly used targeting of social assistance programmes may, for example, miss a significant share of the poor, such as poor and deprived children living in households defined as non-poor, children living in households which are not included in sampling frames and children who do not live in households.

However, there are important and telling pockets of information on these uncounted children, as outlined in the prior chapter. A first step is for countries to recognize these pockets of extremely diverse groups of children potentially missing from data (refugee children, internally displaced children, children in living in childcare institutions, etc.) and to explore various approaches (many of which are outlined in the next chapter) to get a fuller picture and data on children currently missing either from household surveys or not sufficiently captured in the analysis of household survey data. This can be explored alongside efforts to continuously improve and update sample frames for household surveys, to better capture these groups of children.

The second challenge is gaining insight on how many of these uncounted children are living in poverty - and, again, we have to rely on pockets of information for this. For example, initial efforts of the World Bank to include urban slums/unregistered dwellings in sampling frameworks for household surveys have highlighted that child health outcomes are worse in slums than elsewhere, which can have important implications for urban policies related to housing and sanitation, among others¹⁸. Hence, these additional efforts may show that the situation of

Uncounted children are often among the most economically and socially vulnerable children in societies.

If efforts to address child poverty do not shed light on these uncounted children, they are likely to be ignored in policy and programme responses

uncounted children is worse/different than that of the general population, and may require a specific policy and programme response.

Furthermore, it is important to understand the implications of relying on household-level statistics for monitoring poverty reduction versus individual-level data, and for the design of policies and programmes to address child poverty. Household-level statistics make strong assumptions regarding the equitable distribution of resources and services across household members, which doesn't always hold true. For example, a study in Bangladesh found substantial inequities in the intra-household distribution of calories, with household heads consuming inequitably large shares of total household calories. Furthermore, the study found more inequitable calorie distributions among undernourished and poor households. Relying solely on such household-level statistics may lead to questionable policies and programmes. In the case of Bangladesh, the findings have implications for food and nutrition programme targeting, which often is based on household-level data ¹⁹.

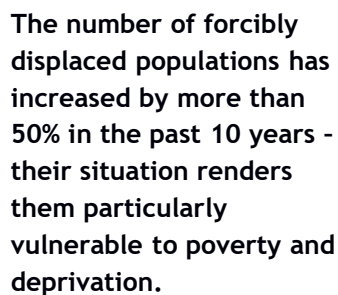
“Advancing our understanding of the poverty of individuals requires a renewed emphasis on data collection and investments in survey data collection methodologies focused on the individual”

World Bank, Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report, 2018

Specific attention needs to be paid to forcibly displaced children and their families, not least because of their large and growing numbers worldwide - and their marginal circumstances rendering them vulnerable to poverty and deprivation. As outlined in the *2018 Poverty and Shared Prosperity report*: *“Socioeconomic surveys on displaced persons are marked with incomplete coverage, unrepresentative samples, and possibly larger-than-usual sampling and non-sampling errors, which results in an underestimate of the level of global poverty and an undercount of the number of poor. To improve the ability to get a complete picture of the poverty situation in the world, and to understand how policy can affect the well-being of displaced persons, a first step is to ensure that they are included in population censuses and the national sample surveys of the country of their residence”*²⁰.

In short, while it is undoubtedly difficult to precisely quantify the numbers of children uncounted in national poverty statistics, it is likely that those uncounted children are extremely vulnerable to poverty and deprivations. A better awareness of who and where these children are can help inform policy design.

With new and improved methods - both in terms of improving household survey sampling frameworks and analysis and exploring new data collection methods - it is possible for countries to go the extra mile to actively identify these groups of uncounted



The number of forcibly displaced populations has increased by more than 50% in the past 10 years - their situation renders them particularly vulnerable to poverty and deprivation.

children to have a more comprehensive child poverty picture to inform national policies and programmes. Some of these promising methods are outlined in the next chapter.

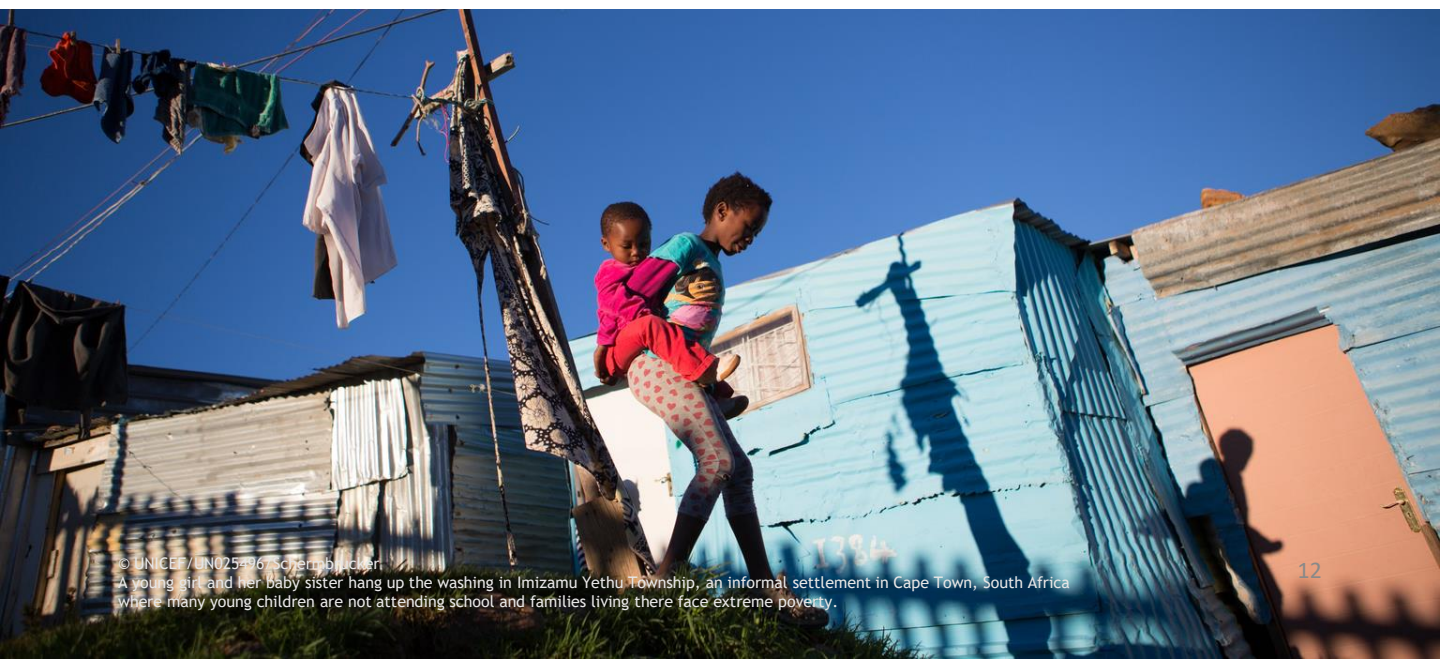
Box 1: SDGs and children missing from data

Most countries globally are now setting, or have set, the baseline for their SDG poverty targets of ending extreme poverty (\$1.90) and halving poverty (monetary and multidimensional) according to national definitions. These baselines are commonly derived from household survey data.

Missing children: As outlined, if important groups of children are not captured in these baselines, then there is the possibility that SDG baselines are underestimating the scope of child poverty. The incentive is low for Governments to then include these missing groups in national statistics when the time comes for reporting on the SDG targets.

Missing attention: Since it is often what is measured that gains policy attention, a key problem if the most disadvantaged children are excluded from poverty measures is that policies and programmes developed to support the acceleration of the SDGs will not deliver for these groups of children.

Missing information: Even when children are counted in household surveys, these rely on the reports of adults (such as the head of household or caregiver). This is an established and important approach. But to fully understand the problems of child poverty, it is important to analyse poverty with the child as the unit of analysis. In addition, in order to get a comprehensive and in-depth picture of child poverty, in particular the lived experiences of children living in poverty, it is important to hear from children themselves - for example, to understand why children living in poverty miss out from school. Children's voices are important to inform policies that support them to achieve their hopes and full potential.



How can we count these children?

As outlined, the reasons why certain categories of vulnerable children are not captured in household surveys are varied and complex, and, consequently, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to move from uncounted children to all children counted. However, various sampling efforts are being undertaken globally to capture these groups of uncounted children.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to move from uncounted children to all children counted

This shows that it can be done, and some of the more prominent approaches are outlined below. These approaches are outlined in great detail in various journals, including the pros and cons, for example, in 'Systems and Strategies for Identifying and Enumerating Children Outside of Family Care'²¹, 'Respondent-Driven Sampling'²², 'Exclusion in Household Surveys'²³, and 'Capture - Recapture to Estimate the Number of Street Children in a City in Brazil'²⁴, among other excellent papers.

Children not living in households

The approaches detailed below are designed to capture populations that are conventionally not captured in household survey sample frames.

- **Time-location sampling:** is a probability-based method used to recruit target population members who are known to gather at specific locations at specific times¹. The technique produces a large and diverse sample of target populations through randomly selecting venue day-time (VDT) and individuals within a sampling framework. As such, it can generate findings that are generalizable, and has been used to estimate various hidden populations, such as people with HIV/AIDS, drug users and children in street situations.
- **Capture/recapture:** For mobile and hard-to-reach populations, sampling techniques such as capture/recapture¹¹ and respondent-driven sampling have proven useful, such as in estimating the number and characteristics of children in street situations²⁵. The method relies on multiple sources of data, and the results are standardized and reproducible, in turn increasing the validity of the estimates.
- **Respondent-driven sampling:** This is a technique that uses peer-driven recruitment to sample hard-to-reach populations, and it yields random and representative samples through

¹Time-location sampling consists of two steps: First, a range of venues, days and times units (VDT) are identified with the help of social workers, NGOs and even members of target population, to construct the sampling framework. To illustrate, VDT can be specific market, Saturday, 2-6pm. Then the total and target population size for each VDTs are estimated. With that, two stage sampling is conducted, first randomly selecting VDTs, followed by random selection of individuals, to produce a large and diverse sample of target population.

¹¹The capture/recapture is a commonly used approach in wildlife sciences to estimate animal populations. In this method, an initial sample is obtained, followed by a second sample drawn independently where individuals recaptured from the first sample is counted. Then the total population is calculated based on the proportion of recaptured individuals to total number of individuals in the second sample.

mathematically correcting for some of the statistical limitations of other chain-referral methods such as snowball sampling¹. As such, estimates based on respondent-driving sampling can provide unbiased information about the most hidden portion of the population²⁶. In Accra, Ghana, for instance, a study that used such sampling found 75 per cent of children in street situations to be girls, most of whom had little to no education at all. This is in contrast to the trend seen elsewhere in the world, where most children living and working on the streets are boys²⁷. In addition to its technical strength in producing random sample, the method is considered child friendly, as children themselves make decision about whether to engage others or visit interview sites through the peer recruitment process²⁸.

- **Neighbourhood method:** This is a method to estimate populations affected by conflict and humanitarian situations. Using this technique, researchers conduct an interview with a member of a household, obtaining direct information about their experience, as well as indirect information about their family members and their immediate three or four neighbours. The method can be useful in estimating the number of children recruited or associated with armed forces, and those who left their homes to live on the streets, are trafficked or are in institutions²⁹.
- **Participatory approaches:** In instances where it is known that household survey sampling frameworks are not capturing certain groups, the participation of local populations in designing surveys or mapping survey areas has shown good results in some countries. For instance, in Madagascar, a participatory mapping exercise has helped to identify the characteristics and deprivations of people living in informal settlements and brought the community together to discuss and find solutions to some of the challenges they face³⁰.

In addition to improving household survey design and sampling techniques to capture all populations, new technologies, complementary surveys, relying on administrative data, qualitative approaches - as well as other approaches, are increasingly being explored - some of which are outlined below.

- **Administrative data:** These data can provide valuable information on child populations living in alternative care or correctional facilities. While the data quality or accessibility may be problematic, it can provide some estimation on how many children are living in such situations and, sometimes, provide an insight into their situation. With national leadership and ownership, countries such as Burundi, Ethiopia, Guatemala and Rwanda were able to enumerate children living in residential care using existing administrative-based records³¹. When using institutional databases, enumeration should not be an end but a means to further understand those children's needs and inform strategies to address needs. For instance, if the records contain basic information such as life history, health and educational status of children, analysis of such data can reveal patterns of children most likely to be separated from their families. Through understanding the potential socio-economic causes for entry into formal care, prevention strategies could be better designed and targeted³². In addition, standardized, disaggregated and publicly available administrative data could also help estimate other groups of invisible children such as refugees and migrants³³.

¹Chain referral methods such as snowball sampling are non-probability sampling techniques used in sociological research. In this technique, researchers first select a small number of people, called seeds, who are members of the subgroup (e.g., children in street situations) and collect data on them. The initial respondents then further recruit subjects for the study, and the process continues for several rounds until the sample reaches desired size.

- **New technologies** are offering approaches to build an understanding of those missed by household surveys. However, it needs to be noted that there are various disclaimers which need to be considered with the use of these new technologies, most notably issues such as privacy and confidentiality.

Innovations such as satellite imagery with on-the-ground verification are increasingly used in developed countries to identify transient groups³⁴. Globally, mobile phone data and GPS technology have also been used to estimate demographics and map population migrations. Recent studies have suggested that mobile phone data can effectively be used for credit scoring, opening up financial lending for millions of individuals who otherwise would be excluded from formal financial services because they lack financial history and collateral. With high-resolution satellite images becoming easily accessible and an increasing adoption of mobile phones in low- and middle-income countries, recent years have seen a large number of studies that use novel data sets to quantify and bridge data gaps, and build real-time maps of indicators such as poverty, literacy and child growth³⁵. While new technologies are showing encouraging results, they are in no way a universal solution for all issues. Data-driven approaches have to be adapted to each local context³⁶.

- **Qualitative methods** do not count children; they seek greater understanding of important processes going on in children's lives. Where a group is known to be missing from other statistics, targeting this group with detailed interviews to talk to children about their lives and circumstances can provide an important complement to quantitative methods. Such approaches can also be used to learn from excluded children about which other children are likely to be missing from statistics, and so to build a stronger picture of which children are not being counted. Because they allow greater detail on processes to emerge, qualitative approaches are better able to understand what happens *within* households and, therefore, to understand the reasons for differences of allocation within households³⁷.

The methods outlined above can be used to identify and enumerate populations missing from national statistics. But what about hidden poor children living in household settings? In order to better reflect these children, existing household surveys could be further enhanced, analysed and made more inclusive, with some of the methods, approaches and examples explained in the following section.

Children living in households but missing from poverty data

Making household surveys more inclusive

Various international organizations are directly involved in the design and/or provide financial support for household surveys. These organizations recognize that certain population groups are not captured in household surveys and continuously support efforts to better capture these population groups currently missing from data. These efforts include both improving on the sample frames and analysis of current household survey efforts, promoting well-designed household surveys, as well as thinking of alternative and additional efforts to household surveys. For example, the World Bank is currently exploring how sampling frames can be improved to systematically capture refugee and internally displaced populations in national household surveys, and they are also exploring how to better capture urban slums in sampling frames³⁸.

With increased migration in recent years and rapidly changing population dynamics, it is more imperative than ever to have frequently updated sampling frameworks, which apply to nationals and non-nationals and refugee populations. Forced displacement is no longer a temporary phenomenon as it has become increasingly protracted. Displacement lasts 20 years on average for refugees and more than 10 years for 90 percent of IDPs³⁹. This further points to the need of including refugees and displaced populations in national census sampling frameworks. In some countries, refugee populations are captured in household surveys, and this is increasingly common. For instance, the latest [Jordanian Household Income and Expenditure survey](#) was expanded to include representation to Jordanian and non-Jordanian nationals, including refugee populations living in camps.

Given the magnitude of forcibly displaced populations, in order to get a complete poverty picture and to understand how policy can affect the well-being of displaced persons, a first step is to ensure that they are included in population censuses and the national sample surveys of the country of their residence⁴⁰.

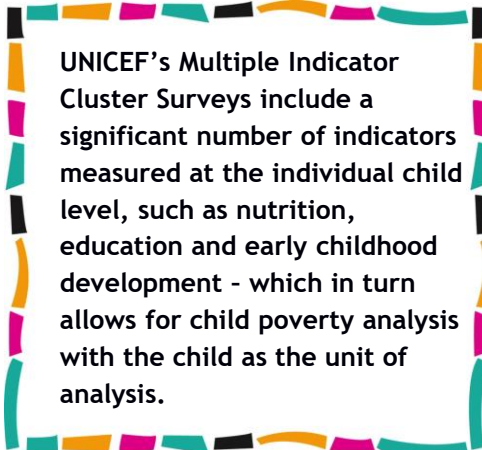
Further mining of the data

Expanding, supplementing and extensive mining of existing household surveys can provide additional insights on hidden children. For instance, prominent household surveys such as the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and UNICEF-supported Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) can identify two groups of children living outside of family care: children ages 15-17 who are heads of households; and children who are distant relatives or unrelated to the household head (the latter can be an indicator for increased vulnerability to exploitation - children engaged in child labour in domestic work are one example, who are often distant relatives of the household head)⁴¹. In this specific example, going a step further in the analysis may reveal the risk factors for orphanhood and low socio-economic status for certain children living in household settings, and inform design and targeting of interventions.

In addition, the World Bank is exploring solutions to the analytical challenges related to welfare measures (consumption/income) being measured at the household level, and the implications of unequal intrahousehold distribution of resources. Emerging evidence on the consumption inequalities among adult and children demands increased focus and emphasis on individual-level data collection, to identify and fully understand poor children hidden in 'non-poor' households.

One response is to encourage the increased collection of individual-level consumption data and a growing number of surveys now include modules collecting individual consumption data⁴². UNICEF's [Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys](#) include a substantial number of measures at the individual level, such as nutrition status of children, education level, early childhood development measures, etc.

Furthermore, longitudinal/panel data provides even richer understanding of the situation of children living in poverty across their life course, allowing for stronger claims to be made on causality.



UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys include a significant number of indicators measured at the individual child level, such as nutrition, education and early childhood development - which in turn allows for child poverty analysis with the child as the unit of analysis.

Complementary surveys

Complementary surveys are being explored and carried out in many countries to capture poverty in specific settings. For instance, unregistered/slum populations are often undercounted or not counted due to the chaotic nature of living situations, lack of adequate sample frames or political biases, but specific surveys to capture unregistered populations can address these challenges. In Egypt, for example, UNICEF and the Informal Settlements Development Agency conducted a community survey in urban slums and unplanned areas of four major cities. The survey revealed hidden pockets of substantial poverty in those areas, as children living in unplanned areas and slums were found 10 percentage points more likely to be monetary poor than their peers who live in rural settings⁴³. More than half of them were also multidimensionally poor, severely deprived in housing, clean water and sanitation, nutrition and education dimensions. The findings generated a policy dialogue among ministries, local governors and non-governmental organizations on a national strategy to address child poverty in urban areas⁴⁴.

For any of the approaches outlined in this chapter, special ethical considerations are needed, as data collection may put certain populations at risk. First, no matter how good the intent, obtaining and keeping information on minors, especially those who are vulnerable, can potentially harm their well-being. In addition, it needs to be considered that certain households may not want to be captured in surveys/data, for various reasons, such as if they belong to persecuted groups. Given these dilemmas, key principles of research involving children, namely those of respect, do no harm, having the best interests of participants in mind and justice need to be strictly followed when using non-traditional data collection and research methods⁴⁵.

In summary, an increasing number of novel and innovative techniques and methodologies are being used to identify, count and understand the experiences of children living in poverty but not reflected in poverty statistics. With each having their pros and cons, the choice of which technique to use will depend on the context and circumstances. To identify who, how many and what deprivations children living outside of households might be facing, innovative sampling and survey strategies could be appropriate tools. Moreover, expansion, further mining and supplements to existing surveys could further shed light on invisible, poor and vulnerable children.



Efforts supported by the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty

Efforts aimed at addressing child poverty need to acknowledge that certain groups of children living in poverty are either absent from national household surveys or not sufficiently captured in the household survey analysis - and consequently not reflected in national poverty statistics.

Building strong data collection and monitoring and evaluation systems that capture basic but critical information on all children regardless of their living arrangement settings is critical for countries to design and deliver the necessary policies and services to reach children living in poverty - and thus achieve the SDG poverty targets.

Efforts to address and end child poverty need to acknowledge the different groups of uncounted children - as well as the need to dig further in existing surveys to further understand the scale and scope of child poverty.

Strengthened international and national commitment is needed to ensure that groups of children living in poverty but missing from data can benefit from progress of the SDGs.

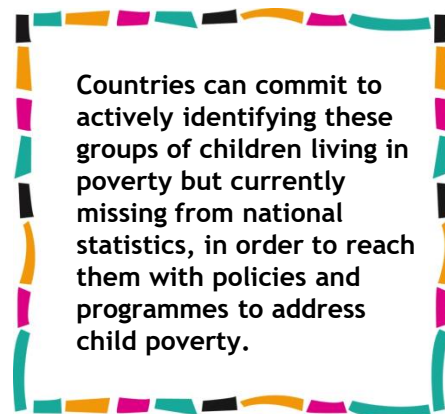
As outlined, it is no easy task to provide reliable estimates on both the number of uncounted children, and the situation of these groups of uncounted children. Nonetheless, it is not an impossible task - it entails governments, international organizations and other partners to place additional momentum and efforts to capture these groups of uncounted children.

The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty calls on global, regional and national actors to not only ensure that uncounted children are counted - but also to ensure that we get rich information on the situation of children living in poverty - to feed into policies and programmes. Countries will need to evaluate which approaches are a good fit and feasible in their country context - for example, a tech-driven approach to identify uncounted children may be feasible in certain country contexts, whereas in other country contexts other approaches can be explored.

There are, however, certain 'quick wins' to consider, some of which are already being explored in many countries - such as further mining of existing household surveys, to analyse the situation of 'hidden' children living in households, as outlined in the prior chapters. An additional step to supplement existing and ongoing household surveys is for countries to conduct a baseline qualitative 'scan' of which groups of people/children may potentially be missing from household survey design, and these groups could be explicitly acknowledged in household survey reports, alongside an outline of the additional national efforts required to capture the situations of these uncounted children.

Some further immediate steps can enable governments and international organizations to improve the inclusion of the poorest and most excluded children in the measurement of child poverty and the monitoring of progress towards the SDG anti-poverty targets. These include, among others:

- **Strengthened international and national commitment and advocacy** to ensure that groups of children living in poverty but missing from data/poverty estimates can benefit from the focus and progress that the SDGs will bring.
- **Clear recognition of the different groups of uncounted children** as potentially vulnerable groups can provide better direction to national data collection efforts.
- **A detailed mapping of national data availability** can shed light on which children may be missing from national statistics and in administrative systems (and which efforts are needed to capture these children and their situation).
- **Increased investment by Governments and international organizations** to follow a multi-pronged approach to capture the various groups of uncounted children, including:
 - **Explore and support early attempts and efforts on making household surveys, including sampling frameworks, more inclusive**, in particular exploring the inclusion of refugee/internally displaced populations in national household surveys and capturing urban slums/unregistered settlements in a representative way.
 - **Further mining/analysis of household surveys** to better capture the situation of poor children living in non-poor households. This would include support to efforts to increasingly collect individual-level data as part of household surveys, in particular individual child-level data - and support to analysis with the individual child as the unit of analysis, both for multidimensional and monetary child poverty analysis (including individual consumption data to expose intra-household differences in consumption). This could entail a small subsample of individual consumption data, which can be used to better infer the incidence of consumption inequality within households, and including food security module questions related to children⁴⁶.
 - **Explore supplementary data collection methods**, reaching specific uncounted populations through specialized surveys.
 - **Complement quantitative methods with qualitative ones** to better understand the gaps in access to social services and identify underlying factors leading to exclusion.
 - **Increased national efforts to enumerate, and monitor with sound information and data, children in alternative care** and children in juvenile care/detention.



With these additional efforts in place governments, international organizations and partners will make great strides in ensuring that children currently missing from national and international poverty statistics are counted and, most importantly, are included in policies and programmes to eradicate child poverty.

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About the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty

The Coalition is a network of like-minded organizations concerned at the devastating effects of poverty in childhood on children and societies. The Coalition promotes the need for countries and development actors to explicitly focus on child poverty and the solutions to it in national, subnational, regional and global policies, budgets and monitoring systems.

Coalition participants share a vision of a world where all children grow up free from poverty, deprivation and exclusion. Working together through the Coalition, as well as independently, Coalition participants aim to support the recognition of child poverty and the practical actions to alleviate it.



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