ARE COUNTRIES COMMITTED TO ENDING CHILD POVERTY BY 2030?

A review of SDG VNR reports from 2017 to 2021

Introduction

2020 marked the opening of the **Decade of Action** to accelerate solutions to achieve the ambitious goals to end poverty, including for children, under the SDG Agenda: Countries must eradicate extreme child poverty by 2030 as internationally defined (PPP $1.90) and halve the number of children living in poverty in all its dimensions, according to national definitions. The ongoing socio-economic crisis caused by COVID-19 has pushed **100 million** more children into poverty, effectively wiping out progress made since the Sustainable Development Goals was adopted.
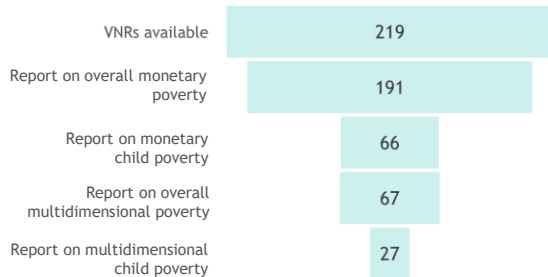
One way to gauge progress on SDG implementation is to survey the data and the narrative content that countries present in their **Voluntary National Reviews** (VNRs). **The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty**, a 20+ member partnership who works to support national processes to achieve the SDG Goal of ending child poverty, assesses VNRs from a child poverty perspective, looking at how countries mention and discuss their efforts to end child poverty, through measurement and policies.
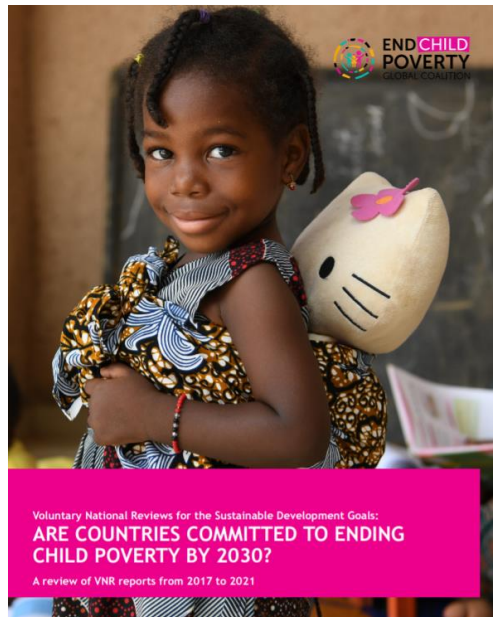
Key Highlights

In 2021 the Coalition published its **third annual VNR analysis** (see **2020** and **2019** analysis), highlighting:

Measuring Child Poverty: Between 2017 and 2021, there were 66 VNRs which reported on **monetary child poverty** but only 27 reported on **multidimensional child poverty**.
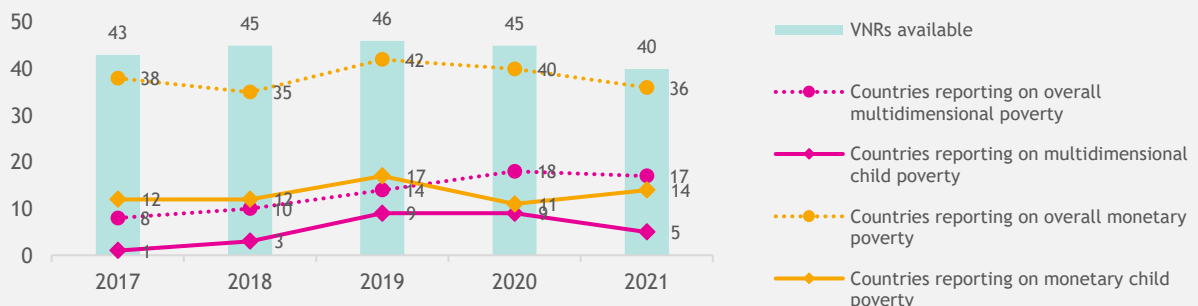
VNRs from 2017-2021

VNRs available	219
Report on overall monetary poverty	191
Report on monetary child poverty	66
Report on overall multidimensional poverty	67
Report on multidimensional child poverty	27

There was a slight uptick in the number of countries reporting on monetary child poverty between 2020 and 2021, and a slight decrease in countries reporting on multidimensional child poverty.
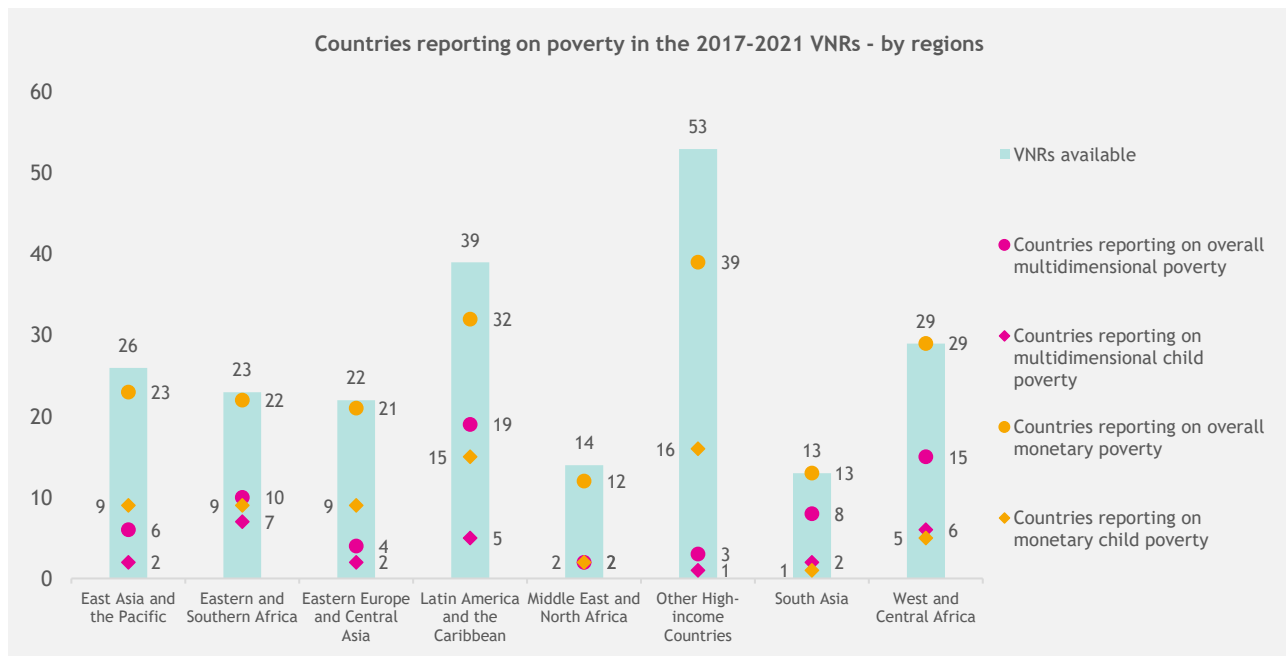

Voluntary National Reviews for the Sustainable Development Goals:
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Countries reporting from 2017 to 2021 in VNRs

- VNRs available
- Countries reporting on overall multidimensional poverty
- Countries reporting on multidimensional child poverty
- Countries reporting on overall monetary poverty
- Countries reporting on monetary child poverty

Year	VNRs available	Overall multidimensional poverty	Multidimensional child poverty	Overall monetary poverty	Monetary child poverty
2017	43	8	1	38	12
2018	45	10	3	35	10
2019	46	14	9	42	17
2020	45	18	9	40	11
2021	40	17	5	36	14

There are large variations between regions on the reporting of poverty in the VNRs. In Latin America and the Caribbean, West and Central Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) there is fairly high reporting on overall multidimensional poverty, and the ESA region has the highest proportion of countries reporting on multidimensional child poverty specifically. High income countries rely solely on monetary poverty measures, with a large group of countries reporting on monetary child poverty.

Countries reporting on poverty in the 2017-2021 VNRs - by regions

Legend:
- ■ VNRs available
- ● Countries reporting on overall multidimensional poverty
- ◆ Countries reporting on multidimensional child poverty
- ● Countries reporting on overall monetary poverty
- ◆ Countries reporting on monetary child poverty

Addressing Child Poverty through policies, budgets and programmes: To achieve the 2030 agenda on child poverty, SDG targets 1.3, 1.4 and 1.b highlight the importance of social protection systems, improved access of the poor to essential public services and pro-poor public social spending.
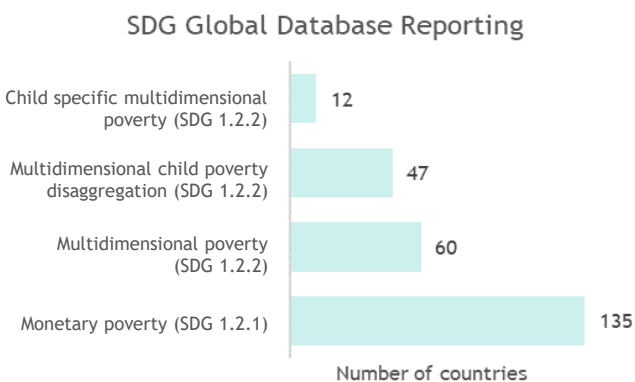
126 countries outlined in their VNR between 2017 and 2021 the measures implemented to support families and children in poverty through policies, programmes and budgets. The measures are broadly divided into the following categories:

- building and expanding child-sensitive social protection systems
- improving access, quality and utilization of public servic by the poorest
- prioritizing child poverty in national development plans and strategies.

In addition to social assistance measures, some countries emphasized labor market policies, such as paid parental leave, to support families and children living in and/or vulnerable to poverty. Despite the high number of reporting on interventions, comprehensive national plans and strategies to reduce child poverty were largely absent in all but the four countries.

SDG Global Database: A key platform for SDG reporting is the **United Nations SDG Global Database** which provides access to data on more than 210 SDG indicators, including the poverty-related SDG indicators. As of October 2021, analysis of SDG 1.2.2. in the SDG database shows that 47 countries reported on multidimensional child poverty and only 12 countries have reported on child-specific multidimensional poverty. The majority are from European Region, followed by a critical mass from the Latin America and Caribbean region.

Unfortunately, the UN SDG Global Database does not include age disaggregation of SDG indicator 1.1.1 and 1.2.1 on the proportion of the population living below the international poverty line and national poverty line.

SDG Global Database Reporting

	Number of countries
Child specific multidimensional poverty (SDG 1.2.2)	12
Multidimensional child poverty disaggregation (SDG 1.2.2)	47
Multidimensional poverty (SDG 1.2.2)	60
Monetary poverty (SDG 1.2.1)	135

COVID-19 and Child Poverty: Among the countries who submitted their VNRs in 2020 and 2021, the majority highlighted the impact of the pandemic on public health, societies, and economies. Countries also discussed responses to the crisis, including social protection measures ranging from unemployment benefits to cash assistance, some of which supplemented and expanded the existing social protection schemes. Yet focus on children living in poverty were still largely missing from the COVID-19 analysis of the VNRs – despite children's extreme vulnerability to monetary and multidimensional poverty.

The Way Forward

With the impact of COVID-19 crisis on child poverty expected to be severe and long term, achieving SDG 1 targets will require urgent and sustained efforts. To reach this enormous but achievable goal, the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty encourages countries to:

- report on SDG 1 child poverty indicators to establish baseline, monitor progress and guide policies build comprehensive national agenda to reach the SDG child poverty targets

- engage with non-state stakeholders, including children and individuals living in poverty in designing strategies and solutions, and monitoring progress

- share experience of innovative national strategies to measure and address child poverty

The Coalition hopes to see child poverty reporting improve and stands ready to act as a platform to facilitate inter-country exchanges through research and advocacy.

Method Note

The findings above are mainly based on VNR reports from 2017-2021 available on **the SDG portal**. A two steps approach was followed for the analysis, first by reviewing key report chapters that discuss poverty and inequality; second by performing key word search to capture mentions of child poverty. The analysis quantifies countries reporting on monetary and multidimensional child poverty, policies, budget, and programmes addressing child poverty. The full **briefing note** from 2021 also provides examples of good practices and innovations.

Review of the **United Nations SDG Global Database** was added to the 2021 analysis, with a focus on analysis of SDG 1-related poverty indicators (SDG 1.2.1 and 1.2.2) through quantifying country reporting data with regional disaggregation.

It is important to note that there are countries who are monitoring and responding to child poverty, but are not including this in their VNRs, and consequently these efforts are not reflected in our child poverty focused VNR analysis.