

# Child poverty and inequality<sup>1</sup>

*This is one in a series of topical guides developed for PAN:Children that provides key information on the current state of affairs in South Africa related to the topic and highlight practical guidance, lessons learned and case studies (both national and international) that will be helpful in policy development dialogue and knowledge sharing.*

## 1. International, African and national Instruments governing the right to equality and protection against poverty

The obligations on the state to protect, respect and promote the right of children to equality and freedom from poverty are governed by international, African and national legal instruments. These include:

1. The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (United Nations, 1990);
2. The [African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child](#) (African Union, 1999); and
3. The [United Nations Millennium Development Declaration](#) (UN General Assembly, 2000);
4. The [Constitution of the Republic of South Africa](#) (Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996).

## 2. National policies and laws

The State has responded to its obligations to address poverty and inequality through a range of national policies and laws that chart the intended development trajectory of the country. These include the instruments listed below that expressly refer to national poverty and inequality reduction goals and objectives. They also include instruments that make provision for the delivery of social and economic benefits and services to children and their families living in poverty. The latter documents are not listed here, but are identified in the remainder of the reference guides that make up this compendium.

[The White Paper on Social Welfare](#) provides the policy framework for post-apartheid restructuring of social welfare services, programmes and social security and emphasises the need for attaining equity and redress through social development (Department of Welfare, 1997).

[The Medium Term Strategic Plan 2010/11 – 2012/13](#) documents South Africa's economic development plan for the medium term. It is contextualised against the prioritisation of South Africa as a developmental state and targets the development of human resources and the reduction of inequality (Ministry of Economic Development, 2010).

[Delivery Agreement for Outcome 4: Decent employment through inclusive growth](#) documents the commitments made by different departments to addressing unemployment as a key driver of poverty and inequality in South Africa (The Presidency, 2010).

[National Development Plan 2030: Our future – make it work](#) documents South Africa's social and economic plan for eliminating poverty and reducing inequality which incorporates a number of child-specific developmental goals (National Planning Commission, 2012).

## 3. Situation assessment and analysis

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### **3. a Measuring child poverty and inequality in South Africa**

The determination of the number or percentage of children living in poverty can only be done once one has defined poverty. There are various ways of defining and measuring poverty.

The most obvious, but limited method, is to consider levels of income/consumption. This does not however measure the multiple causes and consequences of child poverty. Therefore it is increasingly common to adopt a multidimensional approach which measures child poverty by reference to a set of child-specific social indicators - in addition to income - to reflect the unique, multiple and interrelated causes and consequences of child poverty [\(UNICEF Social and Economic Policy Working Briefs, February 2011\)](#) [\(Ortiz, Daniles, & Solrun Engilbertsdottir, 2012\)](#).

There are a number of different multidimensional poverty frameworks which recognise the need to use multiple social indicators alongside income as a measure of poverty. The different frameworks use different social indicators of deprivation in different combinations, they allocate different weightings to each, and use different mapping tools to determine the location and density of child poverty [\(The Presidency, Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development, 11 May 2011\)](#) [\(Ortiz, Daniles, & Solrun Engilbertsdottir, 2012\)](#) (Minukin, Nandy, (Eds). 2012). These include the UNICEF/Bristol approach which encompasses eight dimensions of poverty and regards children who suffer two or more deprivations as [poor](#) [\(UNICEF Social and Economic Policy Working Briefs, February 2011\)](#). There is also the Alkire-Foster approach [\(Alkire, Roche, Santos, & Seth, December 2011\)](#), the World Bank's Human Opportunity Index, [\(The World Bank, 2012\)](#), and the Oxford Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The MPI has three equally weighted dimensions (health, education and living standards) and uses 10 indicators [\(University of Oxford, 2011\)](#). The latter is used by the South African Index of Multiple Deprivation which uses the multiple domains of deprivation to spatially map pockets of child poverty in South Africa [\(Barnes, Wright, Noble, & Dawes, 2007\)](#). Noble, Wright and Cluver's proposed multidimensional child poverty measurement framework in turn presents eight domains of deprivation as well as a suite of indicators related to access to quality services that relate to children specifically [\(Noble, Wright, & Cluver, 2007\)](#).

Household income remains one of the core measures (alongside social indicators) used to measure poverty. However, different income thresholds are used by different agencies and analysts to draw the income poverty-line – that is to say the income thresholds below which people are regarded as living in poverty. Moreover, the chosen poverty lines are often presented on a sliding scale, ranging from an 'ultra-poverty' - to 'lower-bound' - to an 'upper bound' poverty line (Barnes, H, 2009) (Statistics South Africa, National Treasury, 2007).

Two common 'ultra-poor' levels used for global analysis by international agencies, such as the United Nations and the World Bank, are \$1,25 and \$ 2 per day [\(UNICEF Social and Economic Policy Working Briefs, February 2011\)](#).

Statistics South Africa uses a lower-bound level of R 322 per capita and an upper-bound level of R 593 per capita (Statistics South Africa, National Treasury, 2007). The National Planning Commission uses R 432 per person per month. (National Planning Commission, 2011) (National Planning Commission, 2012) The Children's Institute draws on the work of leading South Africa economists such as Hoogeeven and Ósler to draw a 'lower-bound' poverty line of R 552 per person per month in 2009 prices and an upper-bound poverty line of R 1 016 per person per month in 2009 prices (Hall & Chennells, 2011). In addition, there is the R 2 800 per caregiver poverty-line implied by the means thresholds for determining eligibility for the Child Support Grant. It is calculated at ten times the value of the grant, and is thus R 2 800 per month for a single caregiver in 2012, but will change annually in accordance with the adjusted value of the grant.

This guide will use a multidimensional child poverty framework. It will address child poverty and inequality by reference to a multiple set of indicators that relate to income as well as the living conditions of children, including health, nutrition, education, water, and sanitation.

### ***3.b Assessing the levels of child poverty and inequality in South Africa***

Poverty and inequality levels in South Africa are high. The National Planning Commission estimates that 39% of people in South Africa live below the R 432 per person per month poverty line (National Planning Commission, 2012). South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world with a Gini Co-Efficient of .69 (National Planning Commission, 2012) (World Bank, 2009). Moreover, inequality has increased since 1993 when it was 0.66 (Leibbrandt, Woolard, Finn, & Argent, 2010).

Children are more severely affected by poverty than adults. More children than adults live in poverty, they are exposed to higher levels of poverty than their adult counterparts, they experience poverty differently to adults, and the consequences of poverty are more severe for children (Hall, Chennells, 2011). (Department of Women Children and People with Disabilities; SAHRC; UNICEF, 2011) (Ortiz, Daniles, & Solrun Engilbertsdottir, 2012). In addition, child poverty has strong gender dimensions to it (Ortiz, Daniles, & Solrun Engilbertsdottir, 2012).

Using 2009 General Household Survey national income data<sup>2</sup>, the Children's Institute calculated that 37% of children, compared to 24% of adults live in extreme poverty, 61% compared to 42% live under the 'lower-bound' poverty line of R 552 per person per month, and 76% of children, compared to 60% of adults live below the 'upper-bound' line of R 1 016 per person per month in 2009 prices (Hall, Chennells, 2011).

Updated 2010 figures show that, whilst there has been an improvement in child poverty levels, the majority of children in South Africa continue to live in income poverty. Using 2010 Statistics South Africa General Household Survey data, the Children's Institute estimates that in 2010, 75% of children lived below the upper-bound line, 60% lived below the lower-bound line and 35% lived in extreme poverty on less than \$ 2 per day (Hall K. , Income and social grants - Children living in poverty, 2012).

Poverty is not equally experienced among children in South Africa. Child poverty and inequality are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. The circumstances into which children are born determine the likelihood, depth and severity of poverty (The World Bank, 2012). The number of children living in poverty is much higher, as is the depth and severity of poverty experienced by children in historically marginalised, predominantly rural provinces which fall within the boundaries of the former apartheid homelands. This is attributable to historical apartheid labour, migration, spatial planning and governance patterns which have accumulatively located more Black African children in the predominantly former homelands which were, and continue to be marked by high levels of unemployment, poor services and infrastructure, high levels of poverty, predominantly women-headed households, households housing younger children and/or orphans, and housing children living with either only their mothers or with non-parents (Hall & Wright, 2011) (Bhorat, Kanbur (Eds), 2006) (UNICEF South Africa, 2010). (Department of Women Children and People with Disabilities; SAHRC; UNICEF, 2011) (Statistics South Africa, 2011) (The World Bank, 2012) (Leibbrandt, Woolard, Finn, & Argent, Trends in South African Income Distribution and Poverty since the Fall of Apartheid, 2010) (Barnes, H, 2009) (UNICEF South Africa, 2010) (Wright, Noble, Barnes, & Noble, 2009).

The highest numbers of poor children live in the predominantly rural provinces of Limpopo and the Eastern Cape (over 70%). Fewer children in the predominantly urban provinces of Gauteng (38%) and the Western

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<sup>2</sup> The CI recognises the limits implicit in the use of the GHS data given that it is based on income and not expenditure. However, given that it is the only national survey that allows for regular monitoring of child poverty indicators and given the plausibility of the income poverty rates based on the GHS when compared to results from other sources such as the Community Survey, the CI accepts this as a legitimate source of data.

Cape (32%) live in poverty (Chennells & Hall, 2011). Accumulatively, 82,8% of children in rural areas lived in poverty in 2009 compared to 48,6% of urban children (UNICEF South Africa, 2010) (Van der Bergh, et al, 2010). Similarly, rural children live in deeper poverty and experience it more intensely (UNICEF South Africa, 2010) (Van der Bergh, et al, 2010). There are stark inequalities in child poverty between districts and municipalities, with children in districts and municipalities falling within the former homelands experiencing much higher levels and depths of poverty (Wright, Noble, Barnes, & Noble, 2009).

Historical inequities persist along racial lines too. Significantly more Black African children (67%) lived in poverty in 2010, compared to Coloured children (31%), Indian (14%), and White children (4%) (Hall K. , [Income and social grants - Children living in poverty, 2012](#)) (Hall, Chennells, 2011). Likewise, Black African children's depth and intensity of poverty is quantified at the much higher rates of 0.261 and 0.156 compared to the negligible rates of 0.006 and 0.004 for White children (UNICEF South Africa, 2010) (Van der Bergh, et al, 2010).

Whilst poverty is higher in rural areas, it is increasing faster in urban areas as more people leave rural areas. The resultant increasing child deprivation density in informal urban areas is reshaping the spatial dimensions and density of poverty to prejudice an increasing number of children living in informal urban areas ([Bhorat, Kanbur \(Eds\), 2006](#)) (The Presidency, Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development, 11 May 2011).

Lack of household income is one of a number of key indicators of child poverty. Children in households with unemployed adults live in greater levels of poverty (IDASA, 2006) In 2010, approximately 7 million children (37%) lived in households where no adults were working (Hall, Chennells, 2011) (The Presidency, Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development, 11 May 2011). The link between adult employment and child poverty makes children very vulnerable to economic shocks brought about by economic decline or crisis. Social protection policies – in the form of both material and cash resource transfers – are a vital buffer against economic shocks in vulnerable households. (Department of Social Development and UNICEF South Africa, 2010).

Whilst the level of child income-poverty is cause for concern, it has nonetheless decreased over the last ten years by more than 13 percentage points since 2003. (UNICEF South Africa, 2010) This reduction is linked to the expansive child-focussed social security programme in South Africa, most notably the near universal Child Support Grant (CSG) which is a monthly unconditional cash transfer of R 280 per month (in 2012). (Chennells & Hall, 2011) (DSD, SASSA, and UNICEF, 2012) (Department of Social Development, The South African Social Security Agency, UNICEF, 2011) (Van De Berg; Siebrits, Krige & Bongisa, 2010) (Woolard & Leibrandt, 2010). <http://children.pan.org.za/node/8980> In 2012, more than 11 million children (out of a total of 18, 5 million) were benefiting from the CSG (SASSA, 2012).

Whilst social assistance has reduced child poverty, income inequality remains very high and this continues to drive the inequitable prevalence, depth and experiences of child poverty in South Africa. Income poverty “is at the heart of many of the inequities that children face in the country.” (UNICEF South Africa, 2010) Income-deprived families are unable to secure access to essential and quality services such as health, water, sanitation, and education for their children (Hall K. , 2012) (The World Bank, 2012) (The Presidency, Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development, 11 May 2011).

South Africa has developed and implemented a host of policies and programmes offering the requisite developmental services to children, ranging from free and subsidised health care, to free education. However, a significant number of children, especially Black African children, children in rural areas, young children, girl children, children living in poverty and in informal urban areas do not enjoy access to a wide range of these services and benefits necessary to equalise their opportunities to escape poverty.

For example, many vulnerable children lack access to clean drinking water. In 2010, 74% of adults, compared to 64% of children lived in households with access to clean water on site. The situation has not improved significantly for children since 2002. It is especially acute in provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, and the Eastern Cape where only 49%, 45% and 34% of children enjoy access to clean running water on site. Rural, racial, and income inequalities are especially pronounced with only 58% of African children, compared to 95% of other population groups having access to adequate water, and only 46% of children in the poorest 20% of households, compared to over 90% in the richest 20% have access to clean running water [\(Hall, K, 2012 \(a\)\)](#).

Similar patterns of inequitable access are evident in relation to housing [\(Hall, K, 2012\(b\)\)](#), access to sanitation [\(Lake & Hall, 2012\)](#), and access to electricity [\(Hall, K, 2012\(c\)\)](#) [\(The World Bank, 2012\)](#) [\(Statistics South Africa, 2011\)](#) [\(OPHI Country Briefing, 2011\)](#).

Furthermore, similar patterns of exclusion are evident in relation to access to health care, food and nutrition, HIV and AIDS services, child protection services, educational outcomes and youth employment. Please refer to the reference guides on each of these topics for further details and references.

### **3.c Child poverty and inequality policy and implementation gaps**

#### **Structural barriers**

The structural and intergenerational nature of child poverty requires the development and implementation of a host of reinforcing policies and programmes that address the causes and consequences of child poverty. This requires programmes that promote adult unemployment, that increase household income through social assistance, and that secure multiple services essential to the wellbeing of children. In addition, it requires the development of programmes and service delivery models and vehicles that recognise and respond to barriers that prevent especially vulnerable groups of children from benefiting from national poverty alleviation programmes [\(IDASA, 2006\)](#) [\(Ortiz, Daniles, & Solrun Engilbertsdottir, 2012\)](#) [\(The World Bank, 2012\)](#).

South Africa has developed many child-specific poverty alleviation policies and programmes that are well-targeted to reach the majority of beneficiaries and have, in the case of the CSG, succeeded in reducing child poverty and income inequality levels across provinces, race and gender divides. [\(Van De Berg, Siebrits, Krige & Bongisa, 2010\)](#) [\(DSD, SASSA, and UNICEF, 2012\)](#) [\(Woolard & Leibrandt, 2010\)](#)<http://children.pan.org.za/node/8980> [\(Department of Social Development, The South African Social Security Agency, UNICEF, 2011\)](#) Moreover, they have reduced the vulnerability of families and children to the impact of economic shocks brought about economic decline and other causes. [\(Department of Social Development and UNICEF South Africa, 2010\)](#)

However, deep-seated structural barriers continue to frustrate access to many of the social services and benefits by the most marginalised and vulnerable children, thus entrenching their poverty and inequality in South Africa. [\(UNICEF South Africa, 2010\)](#) [\(UNICEF South Africa, 2010\)](#)

For example, whilst the CSG is accessed by more than 11 million children, 17% of children who fall into the historically most vulnerable groups cannot access the benefit. This includes very young children (under the age of one year), the geographically marginalised (rural children), urban displaced children and orphans, and the newly eligible youth [\(UNICEF South Africa, 2010\)](#). For many, lack of access to documents and an inability to comply with related administrative application requirements, along with lack of accurate knowledge of the means test and other application processes excludes them from accessing the CSG [\(The Presidency, Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development, 11 May 2011\)](#) [\(Department of Women Children and People with Disabilities; SAHRC; UNICEF, 2011\)](#) [\(Peters & Williams, 2009\)](#) [\(Department of Social Development, The South African Social Security Agency, UNICEF, 2011\)](#) [\(The World Bank, 2012\)](#) [\(DSD, SASSA, and UNICEF, 2012\)](#).

Similar patterns of exclusion are evident in relation to access to well-targeted free and subsidised health care programmes, subsidised early childhood development services, enjoyment of free quality education for children in the poorest quintiles, and access to protection services. Please refer to the relevant reference guides on these topics for further details and references.

Errors of exclusion and inclusion, especially of the most vulnerable, are caused by a host of barriers including:

1. Targeting instruments (such as the means test) and qualifying criteria which serve to exclude the most vulnerable (please see the social protection and early childhood development reference guides for details and references);
2. Provincial and district-level variations in the in the quality of service management and provision. “Severe delivery bottlenecks at the provincial and municipal levels” which “relate to skills shortage, the procurement process, weaknesses in oversight, and generally gaps in accountability to citizens” frustrate access to services and benefits for the most marginalised children and hence drive inequality. The problem is especially acute at municipal level as “much of local government is indeed in distress, and this state of affairs has become deeply-rooted within our system of governance.” In consequence, there is a close correlation between the geographical of child deprivation and the “institutional vulnerability” of municipalities (UNICEF South Africa, 2010) (Wright, Noble, Barnes, & Noble, 2009) . Please see the child survival, education, and HIV and AIDS reference guides for further details of provincial and district-level variations and causes;
3. Transport associated difficulties and costs (UNICEF South Africa, 2010). Please see the social protection, child survival and HIV and AIDS guides for further details; and
4. Lack of access to information, resulting in insufficient knowledge of policies, qualifying requirements, and how to navigate associated administrative processes (UNICEF South Africa, 2010). Please see the social protection, early childhood development and child survival guides for further details.

Proposed solutions include:

1. The universalisation of services and benefits [\(The Presidency, Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development, 11 May 2011\)](#) [\(Cook, May 2011\)](#);
2. The simplification of administrative processes and requirements for accessing services and benefits [\(DSD, SASSA, and UNICEF, 2012\)](#) [\(Department of Social Development and UNICEF South Africa, 2010\)](#) [\(Giese, Budlender, Berry, Motlatla, & Zide, 2011\)](#) [\(Department of Basic Education, Department of Social Development and UNICEF, 2010\)](#);
3. Removing deep-seated service delivery bottlenecks by, inter alia, targeting the resourcing and development of service providers in vulnerable municipalities and districts (UNICEF South Africa, 2010) [\(Sanders, Bradshaw, & Ngongol, 2010\)](#) [\(Bamford, et al., 2011\)](#) [\(Department of Health, 2008\)](#) [\(Chopra, Daviaud, Pattinson, Fonn, & Levin, 2009\)](#) [\(UNICEF Bangladesh, 2010\)](#); and
4. The introduction of innovative transport solutions for vulnerable groups [\(Mashiri, Maponya, Nkuna, Dube, & Chakwizia, 2008\)](#) ; [\(Porter, 2007\)](#)
5. The development of communication campaigns using messaging and media platforms designed to reach marginalised communities and children [\(DSD, SASSA, and UNICEF, 2012\)](#) [\(Department of Social Development, The South African Social Security Agency, UNICEF, 2011\)](#) [\(Bamford, et al., 2011\)](#) [\(Department of Health, Antenatal HIV Survey, 2011\)](#) (UNICEF South Africa, 2010).

### ***No common national poverty framework or poverty line***

The development and implementation of policies and programmes that recognise and respond to patterns and drivers of inequity and exclusion are problematized by the lack of an official poverty line in South Africa. In the absence of an agreed and appropriate poverty-line or framework, there is little chance of nationally coherent and proper planning, targeting and monitoring of interventions. The application of different models and tools by different national, regional and international agencies is detrimental to the adequate identification of

poverty pockets, the drivers of exclusion, and hence is detrimental to responsive policy planning. There is a need to develop a nationally consistent and appropriate poverty line and measurement tool to ensure appropriate, adequate and consistent policy and programme responses to reach persistently vulnerable groups of children [\(The Presidency, Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development, 11 May 2011\)](#) [\(UNICEF South Africa, 2010\)](#) [\(Statistics South Africa, National Treasury, 2007\)](#).

#### ***Insufficient evidence of what works to guide future planning***

There is little evidence to show what impact programmes – other than the CSG – have had on reducing child poverty and inequality. There is a need for additional research as to the impact of other poverty alleviation programmes, such as subsidised ECD services and free health care, amongst others, on reducing child poverty and inequality [\(The Presidency, Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development, 11 May 2011\)](#).

#### ***Consideration of children in national poverty reduction and macroeconomic policies***

Whilst South Africa has developed numerous child-specific policies and programmes which target and reach children in poverty, there is less conscious consideration of the needs and potential impact on children of broader national poverty reduction strategies. Children are not adequately considered within broader national macroeconomic and employment policies. Given the interrelated nature of child poverty and the broader economic landscape, and the intergenerational nature of poverty, it is critical that national poverty reduction strategies consider the impact of proposed interventions on children. It is not only important from a child rights, but also a development perspective. The reduction of poverty and increased access to opportunity services – such health, education and sanitation – is fundamentally linked to national economic growth and development [\(Espey, Perezniето, Harper, Jones, & Walker, 2010\)](#) [\(Ortiz, Daniles, & Solrun Engilbertsdottir, 2012\)](#) [\(Cook, May 2011\)](#).

## **4. Guidelines and advice on the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programme**

**Global Child Poverty and Well-Being: Measurement, Concepts, Policy and Action** provides an extensive collection of essays on the different methods of conceptualising and measuring child poverty as well as the policy implications of the different methodologies. The book provides a strong evidentiary foundation for the development of appropriate multidimensional poverty frameworks and measurement tools that move beyond poverty headcounts to address social and structural determinants of poverty and inequality. The different approaches and their policy implications are illustrated by number case studies of the application of multidimensional child poverty frameworks in Southern African countries such as Tanzania and Congo Brazzaville, and Latin American countries (Minukin, Nandy (Eds), 2012).

**A national poverty line for South Africa** documents why South Africa needs an official poverty line. It provides a comprehensive overview of the different poverty lines and indices for measuring progress and motivates for the adoption of an income-based line calculated as a measure of income adequacy to meet a basic package of household needs and services. The paper proposes a poverty line of R 431 per person. It provides guidance on factors to take into account when setting (and adjusting a poverty line), including adjusting the value to take into account changing package prices over time and adjusting the value for spatial variations between, for example, rural and urban areas (Statistics South Africa, National Treasury, 2007).

**Developing a child-focused and multidimensional model of child poverty for South Africa** provides guidance on the development of an appropriate method and multidimensional model for measuring child poverty in South Africa with both absolute and relative poverty components. The authors argue that relative poverty should be defined by necessities for social inclusion as well as by research-delineated child needs. They recognise that this combination presents challenges for measurement, but argue that these challenges are

overridden by the evidence-based guidance that this approach is capable of providing for effective policy – making. The proposed model follows the Copenhagen Declaration and includes basic needs such as food and shelter. It presents eight domains of deprivation as well as a suite of indicators related to access to quality services. It also provides an overview of the conceptual frameworks, definitions, and measurements of poverty in the international and national contexts (Noble, Wright, & Cluver, 2007).

**Children’s Views of an Acceptable Standard of Living for Children in South Africa** provides an invaluable source of information for policy makers in the development of a child poverty line and framework against which to benchmark progress towards the eradication of poverty and inequality. The report documents the views of children who were invited to provide a list of the items that they believe are essential for an acceptable standard of living. The lacks of these are intended by the authors, to provide a direct measure of child poverty (Barnes, March 2009).

[Improving the prominence of child rights in poverty reduction strategy processes](#) recognises the need to mainstream and integrate child poverty into the national poverty reduction strategies. It further recognises that this often does not happen outside of child-specific programmes. It provides guidance to policy makers and child rights advocates on how to use a five-stage conceptual framework to ensure the conscious consideration and inclusion of child-poverty within national poverty reduction strategies. Through the five stage conceptual framework, the authors argue that one can identify and overcome the blockages that prevent effective integration of child rights issues into the national social and economic development agenda and plan of action (Espey, Pereznieto, Harper, Jones, & Walker, 2010).

[Escaping Poverty Traps – Children and Chronic Poverty](#) provides an overview of the drivers and consequences of chronic poverty for children. The report reviews five common responses to chronic poverty and argues that while necessary, on their own they will not be able to address chronic child poverty. The report argues that policies tackling chronic child poverty require a specific focus beyond merely attaining household improvements. It provides six recommendations to guide policy makers in effective child poverty programme development, ranging from addressing gender discrimination in the family, school and workplace, to the promotion of children’s participation in policy-making, to child and gender-sensitive social protection, and the promotion of girls access to services by addressing gender-specific barriers, amongst others (Harper, Alder, & Pereznieto, 2012).

[Combating Poverty & Inequality: Structural Change, Social Policy and Politics](#) provides concrete direction to policy makers for actioning the key theme from the UNRISD Report of the same title – that poverty and inequality cannot be dealt with in isolation of each as they are causally connected. The author draws attention to, and recommends that countries battling high levels of poverty and inequality, follow the approach adopted by countries that have succeeded in addressing the dual scourge. The recommended approach focuses on the development of socially inclusive macroeconomic policies that have generated employment and have been developed through political processes that are sensitive to the needs of the poor population. The author indicates how this approach can specifically benefit children (Cook, May 2011).

The [Global Study on Child Poverty and Disparities 2007 – 2008 Guide](#) provides an overview of the gaps and opportunities in national poverty reduction strategies in over 40 countries to address child poverty and inequality. Moreover, based on the comparative analysis, the report provides guidance on how public policies could more effectively reduce child deprivations through better services for all children and families caring for children (UNICEF Global Policy Section, 2007).

**A Break with History: Fifteen Years of Inequality Reduction in Latin America** documents the reduction in inequality in Latin America over the past fifteen years and identifies the drivers of this regional progress. Drivers include improvements in labour income as well as improved access to education. The report also considers the sustainability of the decline in inequality and offers a number of policy recommendations to avoid a reversal of the gains that have been made. These include the collection of data to identify the drivers of positive

change; continued improvements in education for low-income children; strengthened targeting measures; reversing childhood poverty and malnutrition; and strengthened safety nets to protect vulnerable households against economic and climatic shocks (World Bank, 2011).

**[Transport, \(im\) mobility and spatial poverty traps: issues for rural women and girl children in sub-Saharan Africa](#)** identifies the structural, spatial, and economic barriers that prevent girls and women living in rural areas in sub-Saharan Africa from accessing services and agricultural markets and other off-farm livelihood opportunities. It identifies travel and transport – both distance and associated opportunity costs – as key barriers. The report provides guidance on interventions that will specifically benefit women and girls, as opposed to those that will impact more generally on rural travel barriers. For example, whilst road construction and increasing access to improved transport service are obvious solutions, the authors argue that these interventions are often not the most beneficial for addressing rural inequalities amongst girls and women because their state of poverty often prevents their use of the improved facilities. The authors recommend a series of policy and programmatic interventions that are best suited to address the multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities that shape child and gender-based inequality in rural areas (Porter, 2007).

**[Towards an Anti-poverty Strategy for South Africa: A discussion document](#)** proposes a draft strategic plan to eradicate intergenerational poverty through the creation of economic opportunities and enabling or empowering communities and individuals to access these opportunities. Critical elements include targeting government support at measures that will create economic opportunities for historically marginalised communities (The Presidency, 2008).

## **5. Case studies**

**[Children in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Budgets: Senegal Perspectives](#)** provides an analysis, using the Senegal poverty reduction strategy and development process as a case study, of the impact that poverty reduction strategies and processes can have on children. It further explores the impact of resource allocation and public finance and administrative systems on service delivery for children. The report seeks to identify policy entry points within the poverty reduction strategy development process and seeks to share insights into PRSPs and MTEFs “as ongoing processes to increase accountability and the focus on results” (MacAuslan & Fall, 2010).

**[Progress in child well-being: Building on what works](#)** provides an overview of improvements in child wellbeing indicators commonly associated with child poverty and inequality. It identifies policy innovations in the respective countries behind this progress. In addition, it documents a number of detailed case studies of middle income countries that have reduced child poverty and inequality through social protection policies and policies targeting the most marginalised and vulnerable groups. For example, it includes a case study of Vietnam which has achieved significant successes in reducing child poverty through the adoption of an explicit child-focussed development strategy with increased spending on children’s health, nutrition, education and access to clean water and sanitation. From the accumulated case studies, the report identifies what drives progress and urges countries to follow suit in the development of their national development strategies to simultaneously address poverty and inequality (ODI, 2012).

**[Sharpening the equity focus](#)** documents a series of case studies of national policies, programmes and projects which have successfully bridged the equity gap in access to services that are essential for children to escape the poverty trap for especially marginalised groups of children. Case studies include Bangladesh’s Reach Every District (RED) strategy to address poor access to immunization in districts that perform poorly compared to the generally high national average rate of access. The programme involved building capacity in the targeted poorly performing districts by empowering them to plan, implement and monitor their relevant activities. The programme resulted in substantial access increases and the virtual elimination of geographical disparities (UNICEF, December 2011).

### [A Case for Geographic Targeting of Basic Social Services to Mitigate Inequalities in Bangladesh](#)

documents large geographical disparities in child well-being outcomes in Bangladesh and makes a case for “effective geographic targeting of interventions in favour of the least performing districts” as key to accelerating progress towards equity (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2010).

[Child friendly municipal planning benefits more than 300,000 rural children](#) documents a case study in Morocco of the devolution of child-friendly planning and budgeting down to municipal level to address poverty and inequalities between rural and urban children. Morocco is similar to South Africa in that it is a middle income country with significant inequalities between rural and urban children’s poverty and access to services. This was caused by an insufficient focus on local needs and development. The municipalities are the closest to vulnerable communities and have significant potential to promote local services for vulnerable communities, but lack the capacity and guidance to effectively fulfil this mandate. The Government and UNICEF implemented a package of reforms to facilitate the development of a local government approach to child-focussed local situational analysis and planning. Participation of communities is critical to all stages of the model – from the situation analysis, to identification of bottle necks and the prioritization of interventions and implementation. Using the model, 5 municipalities developed Municipal Development Plans with a strong focus on children’s and women’s rights. The Ministry of Interior has since scaled up the project to 106 municipalities’ benefiting more than 300,000 children. An additional 400 municipalities have, with the support of other agencies, adopted a similar approach (UNICEF, April 2012).

## 6. References

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First published: August 2012

This Topical Guide was peer reviewed prior to publication by two peer reviewers.

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