TRANSFORMING POVERTY MEASUREMENT
DEVELOPING THE INDIVIDUAL DEPRIVATION MEASURE FOR GLOBAL USE

OVERVIEW

More than 20 years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action stressed the importance of sex disaggregated data, poverty is still measured globally at the household level. This makes it impossible to accurately assess how the nature of poverty varies by sex, age, disability and other factors.

Recent adoption of the indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has highlighted the inadequacy of existing disaggregated data collection relevant to these indicators. It has also underlined the importance of individual-level data to support targeting of policy and programming towards achieving the SDGs, and identifying who is being left behind.

Both the World Bank's International Poverty Line (IPL), and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) use data collected at the household level. This data cannot show who in the household is poor, in what ways, to what extent; or whether household deprivation is concentrated in one person or shared equally among household members. So while these approaches are widely used and can provide poverty data about a large number of countries, these data have important limitations.

The Individual Deprivation Measure (IDM) is a new, gender-sensitive and multidimensional measure of poverty developed to assess at the individual level and overcome the limitations of current approaches. It was a key output of a four-year, multidisciplinary international research collaboration involving thousands of participants across 18 sites in six countries. Ground-breaking conceptual work and participatory methods have delivered a new measure that is feasible and internationally comparable.[1]

The Australian Government is now investing in further development of the measure, with the goal that **by 2020 the IDM is ready for global use as an individual measure of deprivation and a tool for tracking how development is changing the lives of the most deprived.** The program will involve collecting additional IDM data, IT development to facilitate useability and accessibility, curriculum development, and outreach and communications to build knowledge about the IDM as a new tool for global poverty measurement.
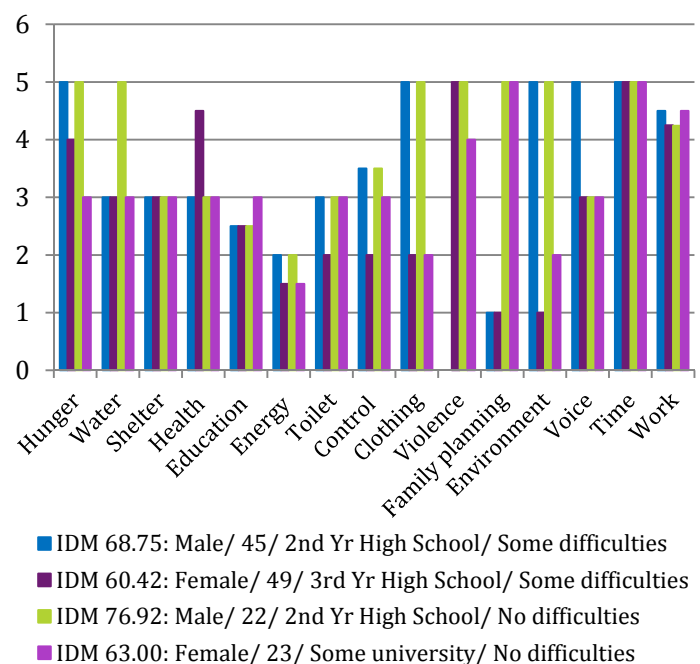
KEY FEATURES OF THE IDM

The IDM offers new insights into poverty and gender equity.

(1) It assesses poverty at the **individual level**, enabling accurate disaggregation of data by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, geographic location and more.

(2) It considers a **wider range of factors** as relevant to measuring poverty, assessing 15 key economic and social dimensions including some especially important for revealing gender disparity (voice in the community, time-use, family planning, personal relationships).

(3) It is **grounded in the views of people with lived experience of poverty** about how it should be defined and measured, and what is required to be not poor**,** while also being comparable across contexts and over time.

(4) The IDM uses a **1 to 5 scale**, overcoming the loss of detail and perverse incentives associated with categorising people as either 'poor' or 'not poor.' Knowing how poor individuals are, in what dimensions, matters for policy and programming, and assessing the effectiveness of action.

(5) The IDM uses an innovative sampling approach that **shows intra-household variation**, randomly selecting households and then seeking to interview all household members over 18 years of age. The importance of intra-household measurement can be seen in the graph below, a case study of a household in the Tavua Tikina of Fiji, from research undertaken in 2015-16 by the International Women's Development Agency and the Fiji Bureau of Statistics with support from the Australian National University and funded by the Australian Government. The household comprises four individuals: two men and two women, some of whom have some functional difficulties. Each individual has a different overall IDM score, and differences in their profile of deprivation. The women are significantly more deprived than the men – a difference that would be obscured by household-level measurement.

- ■ IDM 68.75: Male/ 45/ 2nd Yr High School/ Some difficulties
- ■ IDM 60.42: Female/ 49/ 3rd Yr High School/ Some difficulties
- ■ IDM 76.92: Male/ 22/ 2nd Yr High School/ No difficulties
- ■ IDM 63.00: Female/ 23/ Some university/ No difficulties

(6) The IDM can be sex-disaggregated across 15 dimensions of life relevant to poor women and men, generating a **poverty-relevant gender equity measure**.[2]

(7) The IDM survey is **straightforward and relatively quick to administer**, with particular value in data poor contexts given coverage of both economic and social dimensions.

(8) Because the IDM collects data on 15 dimensions from each individual (as opposed to using existing cross-sectional data) it can **reveal the impact of intersecting deprivations** and inform targeting of deprivations impacting particular populations.
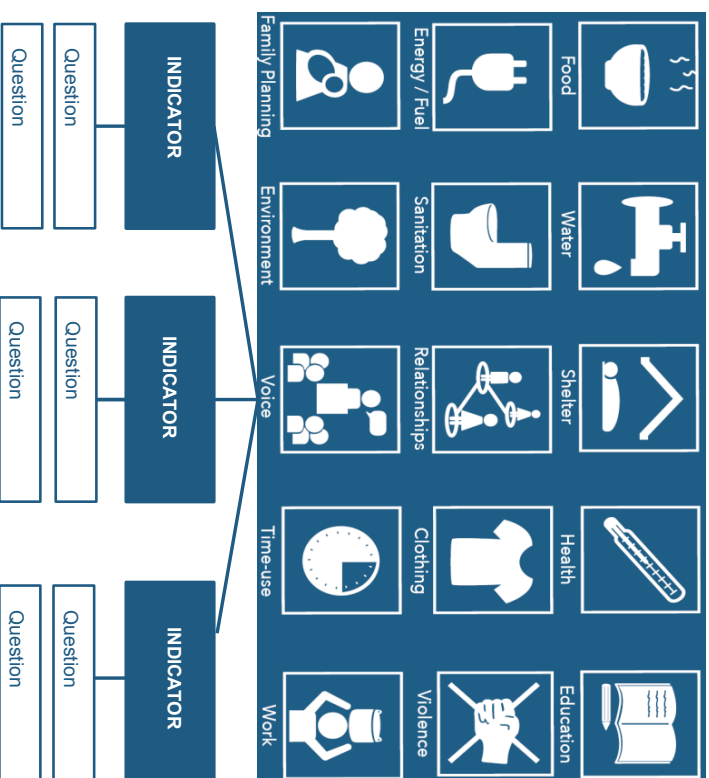
Each participant receives an overall score out of 100, which is the sum of their dimension scores . This determines their level of deprivation based on thresholds set during the trial of the IDM in the Philippines.

The 15 IDM Dimensions are based on participatory fieldwork in 18 sites across six countries, and reflect the priorities of people with lived experience of poverty

Dimension scores are weighted and aggregated to produce the overall IDM score. The dimensions in the middle and bottom rows are given less weighting than those in the first row to reflect the relative priorities of poor women and men. Alternative approaches are possible.

A key consideration in selecting indicators was whether the information could be easily and readily collected. Indicators also draw on the best current thinking, and are already well validated wherever possible. They capture access and achievement. For example, the Health Dimension indicators are Health Status; Health Care Access; and Health Care Quality.

Data for each indicator is generated by questions. For example, the Health Status indicator asks about the last injury or illness, whether this caused a work absence or affected usual duties, and the length of this interruption.

OVERALL IDM SCORE

OVER 90	= NOT DEPRIVED
80-89.99	= SOMEWHAT DEPRIVED
70-79.99	= DEPRIVED
60-69.99	= VERY DEPRIVED
BELOW 60	= EXTREMELY DEPRIVED

Dimensions: Food, Water, Shelter, Health, Education, Energy / Fuel, Sanitation, Relationships, Clothing, Violence, Family Planning, Environment, Voice, Time-use, Work

INDICATOR — Question, Question
INDICATOR — Question, Question
INDICATOR — Question, Question

LEVEL OF ANALYSIS
NATION
REGION
DISTRICT
SETTLEMENT TYPE
HOUSEHOLD
INDIVIDUAL

DISAGGREGATION
DISABILITY
ETHNICITY
AGE
SEX

INTERSECTIONALITY
AGE X SEX
ETHNICITY X SEX
DISABILITY X ETHNICITY
- WITHIN DISTRICT
SETTLEMENT TYPE X DISABILITY X AGE

'Level of analysis' includes geographic information and can be tailored to specifically defined regions of the country in question. Information is available for all dimensions for individuals and whole households.

Disaggregation is possible by sex, age, ethnicity, disability, household size, and any other demographic characteristics relevant to the sample population. Disaggregation can be applied to overall scores, dimensions, indicators, and questions.

Intersections of any disaggregation factors can be analysed, and intersectionality can be examined within any levels of analysis (e.g., disability by ethnicity within settlement type.)

Levels of analysis, disaggregation, and intersectionality can be explored with overall IDM data and with dimensions, indicators, and questions.

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