



OPHI WORKING PAPER NO. 00

The Missing Dimensions of Poverty Data

An Introduction

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May 2007

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to draw attention to ‘missing dimensions’ of poverty data – dimensions that are of value to poor people, but for which we have scant or no data. Amartya Sen frames development as the process of expanding the freedoms that people value and have reason to value. Although the most widely-known measure of human development includes income, longevity, and education, many have argued that people’s values, and consequently multidimensional poverty, extends beyond these domains. In order to advance these multiple areas, it is at times necessary to conduct empirical studies using individual or household-level data on multiple dimensions of poverty. A critical barrier for international analyses of multidimensional poverty is that few or no high-quality indicators are available across countries and respondents in key domains that are deeply important to poor people and of potentially critical instrumental importance.

Keywords: poverty, human development, data, survey methods, freedoms

JEL classification: C8, I3, O15, Y20

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This study has been prepared within the OPHI theme on The Missing Dimensions of Poverty Data.

OPHI gratefully acknowledges support for its research and activities from the Government of Canada through the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID).

ISSN 2040-8188

ISBN 978-1-907194-00-9

A modified version of this paper was published in the December 2007 issue of *Oxford Development Studies*, vol 35, no. 4.

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The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) is a research centre within the Oxford Department of International Development, Queen Elizabeth House, at the University of Oxford. Led by Sabina Alkire, OPHI aspires to build and advance a more systematic methodological and economic framework for reducing multidimensional poverty, grounded in people's experiences and values.

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1. Introduction

Human Development is the process of expanding the freedoms that people value and have reason to value.¹ However to create institutions that undergird human flourishing requires information on valuable freedoms in order to monitor their expansion and to study practical issues, for example related to their interconnections and the sequencing of interventions.

The well-known measure of human development, the HDI or Human Development Index, includes income, longevity, and education.² Yet it is widely agreed that human development extends beyond these domains.³ Multidimensional poverty analyses identify a number of relevant dimensions and indicators of poverty.⁴ This paper will argue, however, that the lack of sound, internationally comparable data at the individual/household level in key domains creates a critical bottleneck for studies of human development and multidimensional poverty.⁵ In particular, brief modules on employment quality, empowerment, safety from violence, the ability to go about without shame, and psychological and subjective well-being could be useful additions to standard survey instruments.

The themes were addressed at the launch workshop of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), which took place 29-30 May 2007 at the University of Oxford, and at the Centre for Human and Economic Development Studies (CHEDS), 3-4 November 2007, University of Beijing. The Oxford workshop, entitled ‘Missing Dimensions of Poverty Data’, provided the occasion to engage in the first part of a broader research agenda, which seeks to devise a new framework for multidimensional poverty reduction grounded in the capability approach and related ideas.

This first workshop addressed three questions:

- 1) What data are needed to evaluate the richer concept of multidimensional poverty and deprivation found in the capability approach?
- 2) What indicators and questions representing the ‘missing dimensions’ will shed light on research and policy questions that require cross-national comparisons?
- 3) How might a preliminary data collection and research effort be carried forward?

To spark debate, we identified five areas for which insufficient data exist:

- **Employment**, particularly informal employment, with special attention as to the quality of employment (Lugo 2007).
- **Empowerment**, or agency: the ability to advance goals one values and has reason to value (Ibrahim and Alkire 2007);
- **Physical safety**, focusing on security from violence to property and person, as well as perceived violence (Diprose 2007);
- **The ability to go about without shame**, to emphasize the importance of dignity, respect and freedom from humiliation (Zavaleta 2007);

¹ Sen 1983, 1985a, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1999, 2000a, UNDP 1990, 2004

² UNDP 1990, Anand and Sen 1994

³ Alkire 2002, Fukuda-Parr and Kumar 2003, Ranis et al. 2006

⁴ Anand and Sen 1997, Ranis et al. 2006, Grusky et al. 2006, Kakwani and Silber 2007

⁵ McGillivray 2005

- **Psychological and subjective wellbeing**, to emphasize meaning, its determinants, and satisfaction (Samman 2007).

The first four of these are dimensions of poverty. We do not strictly consider psychological and subjective wellbeing to be a dimension of poverty as there is doubt, which we share, over the extent to which people who are lacking in this dimension might be considered to be poor, and as to its policy relevance. At the same time, it does appear to be an important aspect meriting future study and thus a 'missing dimension' of data. Participants were of the view that these five areas were appropriate ones to pursue; debate focused on what indicators and questions would best measure these dimensions, and what types of analysis would be needed to explore the value-added and when appropriate, encourage regular data collection.

This paper describes the rationale for focusing upon the problem of missing data and specifically upon expanding the range of questions asked in internationally-comparable individual and household surveys that are nationally representative – particularly in developing countries where the need is greatest both because of more poverty and less existing data. It then justifies the choice of the five aforementioned dimensions, introduces the five articles in this issue, each of which presents the survey questions and indicators proposed, and identifies research and policy questions that could be analysed with these data.

2. Missing Data

If we understand development to be the process of expanding the freedoms that people value and have reason to value (Sen 1990), then a key aspect of assessing these freedoms is to measure them in a manner that is consistent and comparable over time and space. The Human Development Index, for instance, considers education and longevity as well as income, however this has long been recognized as an incomplete measure. Sen (2004) writes:

The 'Human Development Index'...has been remarkably successful in serving as a measure of development, rivaling the gross national product (GNP). Based on three components, viz. indicators of basic education, longevity and income per head, it is not exclusively focused on economic opulence (as the GNP is), and it certainly has served to broaden empirical attention in assessing the process of development. However it is a very limited indicator of development.

In a recent empirical exploration of this point, Ranis et al. (2006) showed that the HDI is poorly correlated with a range of important dimensions of life: mental wellbeing, empowerment, political freedom, social and community relations, inequality, work conditions, leisure, political and economic stability, and the environment. On the basis of this work, they concluded that 'extending the concept and measurement of Human Development to a broader set of dimensions seriously affects the way one should measure and assess country performance' (p. 349) but comment on the dearth of data for this purpose – 'data are unavailable or seriously incomplete, covering only a small sample of countries' (p. 330).

There are a number of reasons why an initiative to identify and advocate a small set of indicators for important but non-standard dimensions of human development may be both useful and feasible.

First, more such data exist than in any previous generation, to such an extent that more data exist in some countries than are fully analysed. The indicators are generated by household surveys and community-based surveys, as well as censuses and demographic and social surveys. Thus there is a

wealth of experience with non-standard indicators which can inform the selection of technically accurate and cross-culturally comparable indicators.

Second, a number of initiatives are already exploring how to measure capabilities and functionings in these five areas, and how to structure national and regional assessments. For example, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) has developed an instrument on employment that includes informal work; Alsop, Narayan and others have promoted indicators on empowerment. Efforts drawing on the capability approach include EU countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and the UK, as well as OECD initiatives and others. Furthermore individual researchers working to advance capability measurement are developing surveys and undertaking studies using both micro and primary data. Finally, community based monitoring systems have incorporated and explored missing indicators related to capabilities and functionings. This initiative to shortlist key ‘missing’ indicators of human development for international data collection has drawn upon and endeavoured to support such initiatives.

Third, these dimensions may be important triggers of human development in other dimensions (and oversight of them may also block or slow poverty reduction in other spaces); for each of these dimensions seem to be causally interconnected with other aspects of poverty in complex ways. The lowest ranking countries in terms of the HDI are countries in or emerging from violent conflict.⁶ It has been argued repeatedly that empowerment is instrumentally significant for poverty reduction;⁷ and addressing social exclusion and disrespect by caste, age, religion, race, or other categories seems an inescapable part of addressing poverty.

Fourth, and as will be argued below, the missing dimensions are arguably intrinsically important – hence their selection. Furthermore, multidimensional poverty measures can illuminate certain issues better, for example targeting, and distribution of acute poverty, if data are aggregated first across dimensions, and secondly across individuals. For the HDI, data are aggregated across all individuals for each domain. However a distinct advantage emerges if the data are all available from the same survey, or from surveys that can be matched at the individual level. To give an elementary example, Table 1 shows data that might be available for 4 individuals in the left three columns (bold). The right 3 columns show data that would be available if the three named modules were included in the household survey. If poverty lines or bands are set for each dimension of poverty,⁸ we may identify if each person is poor or non-poor in each domain. Considering the first three columns on the left, we can see that individuals 1 and 2 are each poor in only 1 of 3 dimensions, and so their deprivation would be equivalent if each dimension were weighted equally; persons 3 and 4 are poor in each of the 3 dimensions, thus are equally poor, and poorer than individuals 1 and 2. If we now have access to the data in the right three columns, the relative ranking of the four individuals changes. If each dimension were equally weighted, person 4 would be the poorest, followed by person 1. If the dimensions have specific weights, the relative poverty of each person would depend upon these.⁹ Identifying the nature and depth of poverties that individuals and households face – even when these are interconnected or correlated – is of significant relevance for policy purposes.¹⁰ As the matching of surveys is both ethically and logistically difficult, particularly in developing countries, we focus on light modules that could be added to existing survey instruments.

⁶ UNDP 2006

⁷ World Bank 2000, Alsop and Heinsohn 2005, Narayan-Parker 2005

⁸ Bourguignon and Chakravarty 2003

⁹ For multidimensional poverty measures see Tsui 2002, Bourguignon and Chakravarty 2003, Alkire 2007, Alkire and Foster 2007, Maasoumi and Lugo 2007

¹⁰ Ruggeri-Laderchi 2008

Table 1. Individual level data for different dimensions of poverty

Dimensions (and poverty status for each dimension)	Health	Education	Income	Physical safety	Employment	Empowerment
Individual 1	NP	P	NP	P	P	P
Individual 2	NP	NP	P	NP	P	NP
Individual 3	P	P	P	NP	NP	NP
Individual 4	P	P	P	P	P	P

3. Data Sources

The Millennium Development Goals Campaign has clearly identified and advocated international data collection and reporting on 49 indicators. Such data considerably enrich the analyses of human development, and this advance is rightly celebrated. The Millennium Development Goals have undoubtedly served as a springboard for accelerated and expanded data collection, cleaning and reporting relating to some pivotal dimensions of wellbeing – education, health, nutrition, gender, etc. Nonetheless, it remains the case that in certain fundamental areas of human development, internationally comparable indicators at the individual and household levels are missing. For the MDG indicators, as critical as they are, do not encompass all fundamental dimensions of human development nor, for that matter, of human security or human rights.¹¹ The United Nations *Millennium Declaration*, passed by the General Assembly in 2000, gave rise to the MDGs. But the same document also recognized other aspects of human life to be fundamentally important, such as protection from violence.¹² Deepa Narayan and others' study of the *Voices of the Poor* found that the poor valued employment, safety, dignity, 'freedom of choice and action' and 'peace of mind'.¹³ Amartya Sen has repeatedly drawn attention to the importance of valuable freedoms, and of people as active agents – which is often discussed under the title empowerment. Like *Voices of the Poor*, he also discusses people's ability to go about without shame, a dimension that is somewhat captured in current literature on social exclusion and inclusion.¹⁴ Many other authors advance similar observations regarding critically important dimensions for which scant data are available.

This data constraint deeply affects researchers' ability to probe human development empirically. Accordingly a focus on seeking to generate missing data can be considered as an investment in our ability to undertake sound multidimensional poverty research in the future.

¹¹ For a discussion of the interrelationship and distinction between these three concepts see Sen 2003: 8-9

¹² United Nations 2000

¹³ Narayan-Parker 2000a, 2000b

¹⁴ Burchardt 2000, Klasen 2000, Sen 2000b, Bossert et al. 2004

Among the various data collection instruments currently collecting the relevant data, four well-known surveys already are drawn upon by countries to collect check and report data on multidimensional poverty and the Millennium Development Goals: the World Bank Living Standards and Measurement Survey (LSMS), the World Bank Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ); the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Demographic and Health Survey (DHS); and the UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). In all these surveys, the dimensions we propose are largely absent – though some countries have adopted particular questions relating to some dimensions.

In 1980, the World Bank initiated the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) to generate policy relevant data that illuminated the determinants of outcomes such as unemployment, income poverty, and low levels of education and health.¹⁵ The LSMS aims to enable countries to improve data quality, to strengthen statistical institutes data-gathering and analysis, and make the data public. The modules on the LSMS questionnaire at the household level are:

- Household composition
- Economic activities
- Food expenditures
- Other income
- Non-food expenditures
- Savings and credit
- Housing
- Education
- Durable goods
- Health
- Non-farm self-employment
- Migration
- Agro-pastoral activities
- Anthropometrics
- Fertility

None of the five areas appears as a module; however some countries have modified the LSMS to include questions relating to informal employment, subjective well-being, etc.

The DHS are large nationally representative population-based surveys that provide information on health, nutrition and demographic indicators on the following variables:

- Characteristics of households
- Fertility
- Family planning
- Other proximate determinants of fertility
- Fertility preferences
- Early childhood mortality
- Maternal and child health
- Maternal and child nutrition
- HIV/AIDS
- Female genital cutting
- Malaria

None of the five topics appear as survey modules. However some countries' DHS have had particular questions relating to some dimensions, for example household decision-making, or sexual violence.

The Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ) survey is designed to produce standardized indicators of social welfare quickly. CWIQ is often 4 double sided pages and takes only 20 minutes. It covers:

¹⁵ <http://www.worldbank.org/lms/guide/select.html>

- Interview information
- List of household members
- Education
- Health
- Employment
- Household assets
- Household amenities
- Poverty predictors
- Child roster of children under 5 years of age

The CWIQ has questions that could provide basic information on informal employment, but does not gather complete information, nor does it address the other four areas.

Finally, MICS provides economic and social data from 195 countries and territories, with particular reference to children's well-being. For example, the MICs surveys enable UNICEF to monitor MDGs relating to child malnutrition, immunization, infant, under-five and maternal mortality rates, access to improved water sources and sanitation, HIV prevalence among pregnant women, school enrolment and completion rates, and so on. Again some countries have introduced particular related questions, but MICS in general does not address the five dimensions.

In addition to these survey instruments, each author considered others such as the regional 'Barometer' surveys, European surveys (European Social Survey, Survey on Income and Living Conditions), and specialized surveys such as crime and victimization surveys. In national integrated and multi-topic household surveys, the dimensions we propose are also usually missing. Even when present, they are difficult to discover, and often provide too little information. Research is also constrained because the search functions embedded in household survey databases¹⁶ and standard multi-topic survey search engines do not permit searches by any of the five areas (employment being 'informal' or 'self-employed').

4. Grounds of Indicator Selection

Data may be generated through different collection methods and at different levels of analysis (e.g., survey, participatory exercises, administrative records, census). The articles in this symposium all concentrate on one method of data collection: individual and household surveys (hereafter, termed household surveys) that are internationally comparable and nationally representative. These surveys have many strengths that justify this emphasis: the depth and breadth of coverage; the possibility of comparing data on the proposed dimensions with data that are already collected, particularly data relevant to the Millennium Development Goals; and the ability to feed directly into policy-relevant research. Household surveys can be used to generate various types of data – quantitative and qualitative, objective and subjective. Here we are open to exploring their use for collecting all these types of information as they bear upon the missing dimensions. It should be noted that this method nonetheless contains important limitations: by design, household surveys overlook other levels of analysis – for example, issues that are crucial to human wellbeing such as intrahousehold and community factors, institutional and national/global issues. While household surveys are at the forefront of this particular research agenda, clearly they are but one relevant level of information.

The following criteria were used by all actors in this project to choose suitable indicators for inclusion in individual or household surveys. First, the indicators needed to be *internationally comparable*. This is particularly important as there is a dearth of information available on comparative indicators of our

¹⁶ Search tools included the California Centre for Population Research (CCPR), BREAD, STICERD and IUCPSR.

‘missing dimensions’. Second, the indicators seek to assess not only the instrumental but also the *intrinsically valuable* aspects of the dimensions we propose. Third, it was essential to select indicators that would be able to identify *changes* in each dimension over time. Fourth, and crucially, the choice of the indicators draws on *experience with particular indicators* to date, i.e., how frequently these indicators have been previously fielded and found to be ‘adequate’ measures for research purposes. The perception-based indicators have been less frequently used in nationally-representative surveys but have been subject to psychometric testing for reliability and validity; however, these indicators ought to be further scrutinized particularly in the context of poorer countries.

5. Missing Dimensions

Having pointed to the need for additional data and to the proposed collection method, we selected specific dimensions that are valued by poor people and have policy relevance. Here we describe the rationale behind the five dimensions that have been selected.¹⁷ Table 2 shows that these dimensions are considered human rights; are identified in *Voices of the Poor*; and are regarded as important dimensions in Rawls’ political theory, as well as by philosophers, economists, and those working on human security.

As noted above, these include employment (with a focus on quality), empowerment, physical security, the ability to go about without shame, and psychological and subjective wellbeing. In addition, having identified the dimensions, there is a need to move to tangible indicators and questions that represent the key elements of each dimension. The end result of this process was to devise a list of 5-8 indicators for each category that could comprise a ‘light’ module that could be appended to standard survey instruments by conventionally trained enumerators. These modules appear in each of the subsequent articles. Each dimension is discussed in turn.

Employment Quality

Employment is certainly not a new dimension of wellbeing, but it is sometimes forgotten in human development and poverty reduction policies or, at least, not considered in sufficient depth. Employment is the main source of income for most families in the world. Having a good and decent job is generally associated with being out of poverty, however poverty is defined. Additionally, employment can give a sense of self-respect and fulfilment.¹⁸ There is hence no question as to the importance of employment as a fundamental aspect of individual wellbeing. However, existing employment data generally focuses on formal employment and overlooks the kinds of employment open to poor people, as well as indications of the potential meaning of employment. Lugo (2007) proposes five indicators of employment to help answer these questions, at a global level. Four of these relate to the *quality* of employment. These comprise informal employment; income from self-employment; occupational safety and health; and under- and over-employment. The final indicator relates to *quantity*; it seeks to determine the level of discouraged unemployment – i.e., people who would like to be working but have stopped looking for a job.

¹⁷ For a discussion of problem of choosing dimensions see Alkire 2007

¹⁸ Sen 1975, 1984, 1996, 2000c, Sen et al. 1987

Table 2. Missing dimensions of data of widely recognized importance

Dimensions	Ranis, Stewart & Samman	<i>Voices of the Poor</i>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights	HDR 1994 Human Security	Rawls political theory	Finnis - philosophy
Work	Work	Material wellbeing – having enough work	Work, equal pay, trade union protection, etc.	Economic security	Freedom of movement & choice of occupation	Meaningful work
Agency	Empowerment	Freedom of choice & action	Freedom of expression/ conscience/ religion.	Political security & personal security	Opportunities, liberties (plan of life), positions of responsibility	Authentic self-direction
Safety	Security	Security	Life, liberty & security	Personal security	Rights	Life – survival
Respect	Social relations	Social wellbeing	Dignity, equality non-discrimination	Community security	Social bases of self respect	Relationships
Meaning	Spiritual wellbeing	Psychological wellbeing	n/a	n/a	n/a	Harmony, meaning & value
Others	Bodily wellbeing Material wellbeing Mental development Political freedom Respect for other species	Bodily wellbeing: being & appearing well Material wellbeing: having enough food & assets	Slavery/trade Torture Legal rights Interference Movement Asylum Nationality Marriage Property Peaceful assembly Political rights Social security and socio-economic rights Standard of living Education Cultural life International order Limitations (morality/ public order/ general welfare)	Environmental security Health security Food security	Income & wealth	Life – health, reproduction Knowledge Self-integration

Agency and Empowerment

Agency has been defined as ‘what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important’ (Sen 1985b: 206) and more simply, as ‘someone who acts and

brings about change' (Sen 1999: 19). The opposite of a person with agency is someone who is coerced, oppressed or passive. Agency and its expansion (empowerment) recurs as a variable that is of intrinsic and instrumental importance to impoverished communities. Building on a growing body of empirical research, Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) propose a 'short list' of indicators aimed at capturing the individual and collective facets of agency. In brief, they use *decision-making* questions to identify perceptions of control, who makes decisions about different areas of household life and whether the respondent could if he or she chose. To measure the extent to which people feel themselves to be coerced, and/or acting on their own initiative, the article proposes, uniquely, *autonomy* measures from psychology that have been tested across cultures and recently in poor communities. Other questions explore the extent to which individuals feel empowered to bring about change at both the individual and communal levels.

Physical Safety

One of the greatest impediments to human security in the post-Cold War era is not war fought by the armed forces of nation states, but violence perpetrated by individuals, groups and state actors within nations' internal borders (Hegre et al. 2001, Sen 2006, Commission on Human Security 2003). Violence undoes the development gains achieved in areas such as education, health, employment, income generation and infrastructure provision. Further, it impedes human freedom to live safely and security, and can sustain poverty traps in many communities. However, violence is not inevitable to human interaction. Most multi-ethnic, multi-religious and poor peoples live in peace. There is a need for reliable and comparable data of violence against both person and property to greater inform our understanding of these concepts. Diprose (2007) proposes a series of questions to measure violence derived from both conflict and crime – two categories that are not normally combined in survey instruments. In particular, the article seeks to identify the incidence and frequency of both general crime and conflict-related violence against person and property; as well as perceptions of threat(s) to security and safety, both now and in the future.

The Ability to go about without Shame

Shame and humiliation are essential to our understanding of poverty yet internationally comparable data on these dimensions are missing.¹⁹ Based on existing indicators from related fields, Zavaleta (2007) proposes eight indicators to measure specific aspects of shame and humiliation. Indicators for measuring shame have been selected from the HIV/AIDS-related stigma literature, from literature on discrimination, and from instruments used in psychology. The first indicator relates to the *shame of being associated with poverty*, or the *stigma of poverty*. The second indicator relates to *shame proneness*, which refers to 'the tendency to experience the emotion of shame in response to specific negative events' (Tangney and Dearing 2002: 2,003). Shame proneness is particularly relevant because it affects social relationships, self-respect and 'the ability to go about without shame', which are all aspects of capability poverty. Indicators of humiliation refer to that experienced in response to external events and to the internal experience of humiliation. The questions on external humiliation centre on respectful treatment, unfair treatment, discrimination and perceptions that one's background impedes mobility; the question on internal humiliation seeks to gauge levels of accumulated humiliation at the individual level.

¹⁹ Sen 1997, 2000b

Psychological and Subjective Wellbeing

The final aspect we consider pertains to psychological and subjective states of wellbeing, which have clear intrinsic and instrumental value. They are a key component of the other dimensions proposed here, as well as an end result of their attainment. Moreover, they stand to contribute a richer perspective to our understanding of human experience and values, and particularly the importance of its non-material components. Samman (2007) advocates a two-pronged approach to psychological wellbeing based on 1) perceptions of *meaning in life*, defined by the respondent based on his/her own unique potential; and 2) the ability to strive towards excellence in fulfilling this idea. To develop these concepts, she draws on Steger's Meaning in Life questionnaire (Steger et al. 2006), and on Deci and Ryan's measures of the psychological needs associated with goal identification and pursuit, which in turn predict 'optimal functioning' (Ryan and Deci 2000, 2001). These needs are autonomy, competence and relatedness. To capture *subjective wellbeing*, she proposes the separate measurement of life satisfaction and happiness, and that the satisfaction measure consider life overall and several distinct domains that are argued to be important – namely, material wellbeing (food, income, housing); health, work, physical safety, relations with friends and with family, education, one's neighborhood, the ability to actively help others, and wellbeing from spiritual/religious/philosophical beliefs.

6. Next steps

OPHI Working Papers 1 to 5 propose numerous indicators and questionnaires to represent the dimensions, all of which were subject to extensive debate and improvement during the workshop. However these papers represent only the first stage in the process which will go on to include critical examination and testing of these indicators and questions, research as to their value added and contribution, and advocacy of their inclusion in various data collection instruments. The comments of all workshop participants, and the remarks of discussants Grace Bediako (Chief, Social and Housing Statistics Division, United Nations), François Bourguignon (Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, the World Bank) and Stephan Klasen (University of Goettingen and Institute for the Study of Labor – IZA, Bonn) (see ODS 2007) helped to shape and refine OPHI's future agenda by giving valuable suggestions for fostering the inclusion of the proposed modules in existing data collection instruments, and for future research with these data.

Finally, it is important also to recognize the limitations of this exercise. The eventual goal is not merely to *measure* poverty but to create a framework for research and policy that will lead to lasting poverty reduction. Household surveys appear to be one of the strongest ways of collecting needed data but of course contains numerous constraints: they overlook intrahousehold issues and are expensive processes. Moreover, it remains to be determined whether a few questions will suffice to address the complex dimensions we are seeking to incorporate. Nevertheless, we strongly believe the potential gains to be derived from this initiative more than outweigh the disadvantages.

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