

A world  
free  
from child  
poverty

# Milestone 1 Building a national pathway to end child poverty



**END CHILD  
POVERTY**  
GLOBAL COALITION



unicef 



# Milestone 1

## Building a national pathway to end child poverty



### KEY MESSAGES

- In many countries there remains no explicit focus on the measurement, analysis or response to child poverty.
- The inclusion of child poverty in global goals can (and should) provide a foundation for action in every country.
- Agreeing national milestones of progress with partners can give a clear (and widely owned) intention on how to work on child poverty.
- National experts hold the information that can help determine how to move forward, so determining national milestones can be quite fast and simple.

In many countries there is little or no explicit focus on the measurement, analysis and response to child poverty. For these countries this first step gives some ideas and experiences of how to get started. With the inclusion of targets specifying the reduction of child poverty in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), all countries should be monitoring and working towards ending child poverty by 2030.

However, with 169 targets and over 200 indicators, some of the SDGs may in practice receive less attention than others. As such, the SDGs offer an important opportunity to bring stakeholders together to thoughtfully consider where a country is on child poverty, and what the key steps or milestones to progress may be.

For the many countries already explicitly working on addressing child poverty this milestone may not be needed, although in some contexts revisiting some of these issues may usefully refresh a united sense of purpose and direction.

## KEY STEPS TO ACHIEVING MILESTONE 1

- A** BUILDING A TEAM: WHO COULD JOIN AND HOW THEY CAN BE INVOLVED.
- B** TAKING STOCK: DOES AN INCREASED NATIONAL FOCUS ON CHILD POVERTY MAKE SENSE?
- C** DEVELOPING A NATIONAL PATHWAY TO REDUCE AND END CHILD POVERTY.



## A. Building a team: who could join and how they can be involved

Across countries a broad range of stakeholders have been involved in stressing the importance of child poverty and acting to address it. In countries looking to build national policy and programme responses, perhaps most important have been the government ministries or departments that lead in the area, particularly those with expertise on poverty work, children and statistics such as Ministries of Finance, Ministries of Children or their equivalents, and National Statistical Offices.

Other stakeholders vary but frequently include civil society groups, both national and international, focused on issues of children and poverty, including members of the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty who have put this guide together. Civil society organizations can often play dual roles, both engaging in policy debate and advocacy to support national priorities, as well as directing work to address the poverty of children and their families.

Think tanks and research organizations are also crucial, with national researchers playing a vital role both in providing objective national expertise and in building a sustainable foundation of action over time. Finally, in relevant countries, the UN Country Team (such as UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank) can provide many strengths including expertise on children, poverty and strong relationships with governments.

Particularly if this is a first engagement on the issue it can be very useful to think beyond the minimum group of actors directly involved in poverty and child poverty measurement. Box 1.1 gives an overview of how stakeholder participation can evolve from a small core team to build broad support.

***Wherever possible, appropriate involvement of children, young people and their families makes a big difference to the quality, credibility and reach of the work.***

As work progresses and future milestones come into view, partners involved now can become crucial active allies. For example, it may be useful to involve journalists (at this stage for their perspectives rather than to build the story). Wherever possible, appropriate involvement of children, young people and their families makes a big difference to the quality, credibility and reach of the work.

BOX 1.1

## AN ORGANIZING TEAM, ALLIES AND THE UNAWARE

Across all work on addressing child poverty there is perhaps no question more important or more driven by national context than who is involved and who leads in different aspects of child poverty work. One way of thinking through stakeholders who may be involved is to identify the organizing team, building allies and reaching the unaware:

**A STRONG ORGANIZING TEAM:** In many countries a small core team of partners can play a crucial role in giving directions and focus to the work, and in organizing stakeholders, events and analysis to help move the child poverty agenda forward. Leadership is of course important, and depending on context this group may be led by government and include international organizations, local and/or international civil society organizations. The involvement of local researchers can be important both for immediate knowledge and impact and sustainability over time. Finally, as will be stressed repeatedly throughout this guide, engaging children, young people and their families, particularly those living in poverty, through CSOs or other relevant mechanisms, is hugely important to truly understand the situation of child poverty and its solutions. The composition of this group is often relatively fixed over time and its vision shared to allow for easy communication and decision making. Members of the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty – who worked on this guide – may be members of this team in many countries.

**ALLIES:** Outside of this small core team are the stakeholders who actively support the child poverty agenda and have influence over it either through direct decision making (such as government partners) or through their advocacy and support (such as members of the public). The scope of this group can be large, including government partners such as sectoral ministries and the Ministry of Finance, media, MPs, research bodies, faith-based organizations, NGO/INGOs, international bodies including financial institutions, and young people themselves. Throughout the process of working on child poverty these stakeholders will play a crucial role in advising, supporting, deciding and at key moments helping forge a shared consensus on next steps.

**POTENTIAL (BUT UNAWARE) ALLIES:** Of the stakeholders outlined above, not everyone starts as an ally. Many who have great influence and importance will not be aware of the challenges of child poverty in a country, the ability to change the situation or what their role may be. Key ‘unaware’ allies will likely include those who don’t work directly with children or on their issues, but with direct and indirect influence over the child poverty situation.

### OVER TIME – MAINTAINING AND BUILDING MOMENTUM

Addressing child poverty and moving through milestones that are established is a time-consuming process that requires dedication.

**MAINTAINING A STRONG CORE TEAM OVER TIME:** People change and so does the focus of institutions. Maintaining a strong organizing team through these changes is crucial to success. While the organizing team should remain stable, it may require changes over time, including in chairing.

**BUILD ALLIES OVER TIME:** Through stakeholder involvement and advocacy, a core aim is to build the number of stakeholders who are aware and actively engaged as needed in putting child poverty on the agenda. Of course, different allies will be needed at different moments, whether for technical analysis, media support or a big speech.

## Building an understanding of why child poverty matters

There is often an intuitive sense of why child poverty matters, and for many on an organizing team around child poverty these will be implicitly understood. However, many important partners may not be knowledgeable on why child poverty is such an important issue. Explicitly framing these arguments can be important to help build the understanding of stakeholders who may not already be knowledgeable on child poverty, and to share and package key arguments for allies to share with others.

The most useful arguments on the importance of child poverty will be nationally based. The extent of this evidence base varies by country (and issues of child poverty do not always receive high levels of research attention). While building this evidence base is important, it can take time. However, the universal nature of childhood can mean that global evidence can also be powerful in national contexts. Box 1.2 outlines seven reasons why child poverty deserves urgent attention that may be able to be tailored to national contexts.



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BOX 1.2

## **7 REASONS WHY CHILD POVERTY MATTERS:**

- 1. BECAUSE IT MATTERS TO CHILDREN AND IS A VIOLATION OF THEIR RIGHTS.**
- 2. BECAUSE CHILD POVERTY HAS DEVASTATING EFFECTS THAT LAST A LIFETIME.**
- 3. BECAUSE ALMOST EVERYWHERE, CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO LIVE IN POVERTY THAN ADULTS.**
- 4. BECAUSE ENDING CHILD POVERTY IS CRUCIAL IN BREAKING THE INTER-GENERATIONAL CYCLE OF POVERTY AND ADDRESSING POVERTY OVERALL.**
- 5. BECAUSE FAILURE TO END CHILD POVERTY IS ONE OF THE MOST COSTLY MISTAKES THAT SOCIETY CAN MAKE.**
- 6. BECAUSE DESPITE THE URGENCY CHILD POVERTY HAS RECEIVED TOO LITTLE ATTENTION.**
- 7. BECAUSE CHILD POVERTY IS A PROBLEM WITH PROVEN SOLUTIONS.**

### **1. BECAUSE IT MATTERS TO CHILDREN AND IS A VIOLATION OF THEIR RIGHTS**

Children make up around a third of the population globally, and as much as half in some countries. Yet their voices are seldom heard and more rarely listened to in political and decision making processes. When you listen, you hear how profoundly aware they are of the impacts of poverty on their lives (see, for example, Box 3.2 on pages 108-9). For some, perhaps many, of those who have the power to make a difference in children's lives, these voices may be more powerful than statistics and graphs.

The importance of poverty for children is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which articulates children's right to an adequate standard of living, and to be free from deprivations across crucial aspects of their lives including their health, education, nutrition, care and protection. Growing up in poverty is a direct violation of these rights. See for example Table 1.1 according to the CRC.



## 2. BECAUSE CHILD POVERTY HAS DEVASTATING EFFECTS THAT LAST A LIFETIME

Due to their particular life stage, poverty has especially devastating effects on children's development, often resulting in deficits that cannot be overcome later. In countries with household surveys it is relatively easy to show the scale of multidimensional child poverty (see Milestone 2) or that children living in income poverty (or those in the poorest quintile depending on the survey) are less well nourished, educated and have poorer health.

The effects of these deprivations can be enduring with long-term consequences. There is a growing body of evidence across sectors of the long-term impacts of these deprivations:

- Undernutrition can permanently impact a child's growth, resulting in stunting and reduced mental development, and can lead to life-long learning difficulties and poor health.
- A lack of education strongly impacts lifetime earnings.
- Girls' education, in particular, significantly impacts both their ability to control decisions and the wellbeing of their children.
- Early childhood education is shown as being crucial for school readiness and social-emotional development.
- Poor health, even where not resulting in chronic conditions, can have long-term consequences, and impacts children's ability to play and learn.

## 3. BECAUSE ALMOST EVERYWHERE, CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO LIVE IN POVERTY THAN ADULTS

In almost every country with data, children are more likely to live in poverty than adults. Globally, for example, children make up about 33 per cent of the population of developing countries, but are vastly overrepresented among those in poverty, making up almost half (47 per cent) of those living under \$1.90 a day. Data also shows children are more likely to live in multidimensional poverty than adults. A powerful advocacy message in many countries has been comparing child and adults' poverty nationally (see Milestone 3).

## 4. BECAUSE ENDING CHILD POVERTY IS CRUCIAL IN BREAKING THE INTERGENERATIONAL CYCLE OF POVERTY

Breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty can only be achieved through priority attention to children in poverty. As children become poor adults and parents, poverty is then passed on to the next generation of children. While a strongly intuitive argument, evidence to support it can help make the case. Much of the research in this area is for richer countries, but it is growing in lower- and middle-income countries too.

Some of the evidence that exists shows:

- Children growing up in poverty are more likely to be poor as adults. A study of child poverty in the US found that children who experienced poverty at any point during childhood were more than three times as likely to be poor at age 30 as those who were never poor as children. The longer a child was poor, the greater the risk of being poor in adulthood.
- A substantial number of studies document the strong relationship between parent and child incomes as adults, suggesting that although income mobility varies substantially by country, it is much lower than generally thought. Most studies focus on developed countries, due to data limitations, but when estimates are calculated for Latin America and other developing countries, they show even lower levels of intergenerational mobility than most developed countries.
- Intergenerational mobility goes hand in hand with inequality: countries with low mobility tend to have high levels of inequality. In contrast, highly mobile societies are also the ones with the lowest levels of inequality.

Addressing this intergenerational transmission of poverty is vital to addressing poverty reduction, and with children representing around a third to a half of those living in poverty across countries, addressing poverty without focusing on child poverty is impossible.

## 5. BECAUSE FAILURE TO END CHILD POVERTY IS ONE OF THE MOST COSTLY MISTAKES THAT SOCIETY CAN MAKE

Child poverty results in lower skills and productivity, lower levels of health and educational achievement, increased likelihood of unemployment, and lower social cohesion. These have societal and economic impacts.

- **Child poverty is strongly linked to other national priorities.** For example, child mortality is closely linked to poverty. According to UNICEF, 22,000 children die each day due to poverty, mostly from preventable conditions and diseases.
- **Child poverty destroys national potential.** An article by The Lancet, for example, estimates that poverty and associated health, nutrition and social factors prevent at least 200 million children in developing countries from attaining their development potential, with long-term implications for economies and societies.
- **The economic costs of child poverty are high.** While there is not research on this area in all regions, an estimate of the economic costs of child poverty in the US finds that the lost productivity and extra health and crime costs stemming from child poverty add up to roughly 500 billion US dollars a year, or 3.8 per cent of GDP. A different estimate in the UK, finds that the total annual cost of child poverty in the UK is £25 billion per year, equivalent to about 2 per cent of GDP.

## 6. BECAUSE DESPITE THE URGENCY CHILD POVERTY HAS RECEIVED TOO LITTLE ATTENTION

Despite all these reasons to act urgently on child poverty, many countries still don't prioritize children in their policies and programmes to end poverty. A UNICEF survey, for example, found only around a third of countries are routinely measuring child poverty (see page 13 of the Overview).

## 7. BECAUSE CHILD POVERTY IS A PROBLEM WITH PROVEN SOLUTIONS

Knowing that child poverty has devastating effect on children and societies, and that children are overrepresented among those living in poverty, is a strong call to action. But what compels us – morally and practically – to act is that child poverty is a problem with a solution.

Milestone 4 investigates in detail the policies and programmes that can make a difference for the poorest children. It outlines that while there are many important nuances in how countries can approach addressing child poverty, there are also common threads that apply universally. At their core, the policies and programme to address child poverty will:

- (i) provide universal and high quality public services and ensure access for the most deprived children – including in areas such as nutrition, education and health which represent their multidimensional poverty and drive whether children will be able to fulfil their potential and end the cycle of poverty; and
- (ii) support families and households to have a minimum income and ensure financial barriers don't prevent children from reaching their potential.

This simple mix is the basis for a global platform of action to address child poverty, and countries that have succeeded in addressing child poverty have succeeded in these areas. But few, if any, would say the work is complete.

**Table 1.1: Child well-being dimensions according to the CRC**

Categories	Dimensions	Source
Survival	Food, nutrition	CRC Article 24
	Water	CRC Article 24
	Health Care	CRC Article 24
	Shelter, housing	CRC Article 27
	Environment, pollution	CRC Article 24
Development	Education	CRC Article 28
	Leisure	CRC Article 31
	Cultural activities	CRC Article 31
	Information	CRC Article 13-17
Protection	Exploitation, child labour	CRC Article 32
	Other forms of exploitation	CRC Article 33-36
	Cruelty, violence	CRC Article 19, 37
	Violence at school	CRC Article 28
	Social security	CRC Article 16, 26, 27
Participation	Birth registration;	CRC Article 7, 8
	Nationality	
	Information	CRC Article 13, 17
	Freedom of expression, views, opinions; being heard; freedom of association	CRC Article 12-15

Source: cross-country MODA study. Technical Note. De Neubourg et al. Nov 2012.

## B. Taking stock: does an increased national focus on child poverty make sense?

As underlined in the SDGs, every country should be explicitly monitoring and working to address child poverty. However, as different countries find themselves in different stages and in different contexts, the most effective approaches vary. Understanding the situation in a country and assessing whether and how an increased focus on child poverty makes sense can be a useful starting point to move things forward.

### Three steps to building an answer

One approach to answering this question is to break it down into three initial questions to reach an answer:

1. **What is the overall role of poverty analysis in forming national policies and programmes?**
  - ▶ In most instances the influence of child poverty measures and analysis occurs as part of broader poverty analysis debates and action. Understanding this broader framing is crucial, both in determining if child poverty measurement and analysis will have traction as well as understanding which approaches may be most effective.
2. **Where are we on child poverty? Is it being measured, analysed and used?**
  - ▶ Reflecting on the progress made so far on child poverty nationally provides a sense of what, if anything, there is to build on, and the frontiers ahead that could be tackled. If there is current work, what does it say about the situation of children in poverty?
3. **Does an increased national focus on child poverty make sense?**
  - ▶ With answers to the above questions, stakeholders can reflect whether an increased national focus on child poverty makes sense. If so, some initial ideas on future directions may emerge. If not, it may be useful to record clearly why as a reference to consider as the context evolves.

#### AN APPROACH TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

The core information to answer the above questions is likely to be readily held by relevant national experts. The best way of bringing the information together will vary both by the common working modalities within countries as well as time constraints in cases where there are particular opportunities to progress.



***Where appropriate, a participatory workshop could both provide the answers and engage relevant stakeholders***

In some circumstances, individual interviews can produce a technically sound analysis of the questions, although this may not be the most effective approach to create a discussion that can air all points of view and reach a meaningful consensus.

Where appropriate, a participatory workshop could both provide the answers and engage relevant stakeholders. In some circumstances it might be helpful to hold key informant interviews with some key stakeholders to build knowledge and understanding ahead of a workshop or meeting.

Below are three exercises that provide an approach to answering the questions. They begin by answering smaller questions and building up to an agreed overall analysis.



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## EXERCISE 1.1

What is the overall role of poverty analysis in forming national policies and programmes?

Experts may include: Ministries of Finance; President/Prime Minister's Office; journalists

POVERTY ANALYSIS AND REPORTING		Conclusions	Overall conclusion - is poverty a national priority that is guiding policies and programmes?
Does the country routinely measure poverty?	..... ..... .....	Is there regular analysis and monitoring of poverty?	
Does the country regularly report on the MDG on poverty and will the country report on the poverty SDGs?	..... ..... .....		
Is the focus on monetary, multidimensional poverty or both?	..... ..... .....		
THE ROLE OF POVERTY ANALYSIS IN SHAPING THE NATIONAL AGENDA		What role does poverty analysis play in shaping the national agenda?	
Is poverty part of the National Development plan (or equivalent)?	..... ..... .....		
In practice, is poverty a central part of government discussions and does it guide policy and programme priorities, including State of the National address?	..... ..... .....		
THE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES DRIVING POVERTY REDUCTION		What are some of the key policies and programmes driving poverty reduction?	
What are the signature policies and programmes driving poverty reduction?	..... ..... .....		
Is there a poverty reduction plan or equivalent?	..... ..... .....		



## EXERCISE 1.2

Where are we on child poverty – is it being measured, analysed and used?

Experts may include: Ministry of Children or similar; civil society organizations; National Statistical Office; research institutions

IS CHILD POVERTY BEING MEASURED AND ANALYSED, AND IF SO BY WHO?		Conclusions	Overall conclusion – is child poverty being measured, analysed and addressed?
Are there recent national child poverty numbers? Is child poverty routinely measured? Are the measures monetary or multidimensional?	..... ..... .....	Is child poverty being measured and analysed, and if so by who?	
Are child/young people involved in the process of defining or analysing child poverty nationally?	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	
Is there recent report information on child poverty? What key facts about child poverty do we know?	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	
Who leads nationally on child poverty measurement and analysis?	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	
IS CHILD POVERTY PART OF THE NATIONAL AGENDA AND FRAMING DOCUMENTS?		Is child poverty part of the national agenda and framing documents?	
Is child poverty addressed by decision makers? Is there media focus on child poverty?	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	
Is child poverty part of the national development plan (or similar)?	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	
IS CHILD POVERTY ADDRESSED IN NATIONAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES?		Is child poverty addressed in national policies and programmes?	
Are children specifically included in general poverty policies and programmes?	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	
Are there specific policies and programmes to address child poverty?	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	
Is child poverty explicitly included in poverty reduction plans or is there a specific child poverty action plan?	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	
INCLUDING CHILDREN AND THEIR CARETAKERS		Are children and their caregivers effectively included in analysis and decision making around child poverty?	
Are there mechanisms to engage children and their caregivers in child poverty analysis and policy responses?	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	

## EXERCISE 1.3

With a clearer sense of the role poverty plays in guiding national policies and programmes and the status of child poverty measurement, a conclusion can be reached on whether an increased focus on child poverty makes sense. If so, some future directions may emerge. If not, it can be useful to record why for future processes.

Exercise



Does an increased focus on child poverty make sense, and if so what are some ways forward? (Some indicative scenarios)

	Is poverty a national priority that is guiding policies and programmes?	Is child poverty being measured, analysed and addressed?	Does an increased focus on child poverty make sense?	<p><b>NEXT STEPS</b></p> <p><i>Does an increased focus on child poverty make sense?</i></p> <p><i>If yes: The exercises can also give an indication of directions of future work. A more detailed analysis is then needed, on what the pathway to reducing child poverty is nationally, and the steps in that process.</i></p> <p><i>If no: Record the rationale for review at a future point as contexts evolve.</i></p>
<b>SCENARIO A</b>	Country routinely measures and reports on poverty. It is included in national plans, major speeches and there is a poverty reduction strategy outlining policy and programme response.	No current measurement of child poverty, either monetary or multidimensional.	<b>Yes:</b> Poverty is guiding programmes and policy, but child poverty not included. Need to measure for SDGs and opportunity to inform policy and programmes to reduce child poverty.	
<b>SCENARIO B</b>	Country routinely measures and reports on poverty. It is included in national plans, major speeches and there is a poverty reduction strategy outlining policy and programme response.	Child poverty measured and report, but not routinely. Significant analysis of child poverty available showing key deprivations for children, but no clear influence on overall policies.	<b>Yes:</b> Child poverty measures and analysis routinized for SDGs. Possible need for further policy analysis and advocacy towards policies and programmes reducing CP.	
<b>SCENARIO C</b>	Monetary poverty has been routinely monitored and reported for MDGs, but not driving the policy agenda or discussed publically. No current interest in multidimensional poverty.	Children living under national monetary poverty lines reported and shows children are more likely to be poor than adults, but no further analysis.	<b>No:</b> Unless CP advocacy could help create a national poverty focus. Routine CP monitoring already sufficient for SDG reporting.	



## BOX 1.3

## Reasons not to focus on child poverty and when they might be overcome: some examples from conversations with practitioners.

In the course of working on child poverty a number of reasons not to focus on child poverty come up. All are valid, some can be addressed, and others mean progressing may not be possible or that different approaches are needed. Let us know if you have come across different questions or different answers/approaches.

### Poverty is too politically sensitive to discuss.

*In these circumstances progressing on child poverty is very challenging. Unless issues of child poverty can open up this space, one option could be to focus on child well-being instead of child poverty. Measures and conclusions may be similar, but it may be a more constructive way to open discussion. Noting of course that reporting on poverty and the poverty of children is now part of the SDGs. See milestones 1 and 2.*

### There is no political appetite for child poverty specifically.

*Where there is interest in adult poverty there is normally room to focus on children, and initial results can be put together quickly. Milestone 1 and 3 outline ways of building relationships with stakeholders and advocating around child poverty.*

### Measurement is too complex with competing methodologies.

*Initial measurement of child poverty can be done very simply where there are existing poverty methodologies and can be a quick starting point. Building child-specific measures of multidimensional poverty can be more complex, but they are well tested and clear guidance is available. Milestone 2 focuses on these challenges.*

### Solutions are the same so policy makers don't see the benefit.

*Solutions can actually be very different, both regarding specific child-focused approaches, and adjustments to general poverty reduction. Milestone 4 outlines approaches and examples.*

### In fragile or humanitarian contexts, trying to measure child poverty doesn't make sense.

*Where there is a full humanitarian response, undertaking child poverty measurement and analysis can be very difficult, and may not be constructive. In fragile contexts, having ready information and analysis on child poverty and vulnerability can help build resilience through supporting programmes such as social protection, and inform humanitarian actors in their response should that become necessary. In these contexts, more specific experience sharing and guidance is needed.*

### Poverty is a field dominated by other institutions who have expertise in this area – what difference can we make?

*While many are focusing on poverty in general, the poverty of children is often forgotten – there may be no-one else who is bringing the perspectives of the poorest children to the table. Recognising and building partnerships with others working on poverty nationally, including bringing in their expertise, is vital to help ensure work on child poverty is impactful. In particular, measurement and analysis-specific expertise from national or international partners can be important for key parts of the process.*

### There are so many other issues for children, focusing on child poverty isn't the best use of our time and resources.

*Focusing on child poverty provides support to other areas of importance for children. It can put the issues of the poorest child on the agenda of the highest levels of government, as well as identify solutions to both particular sectoral problems and those that cut across sectors. Milestone 4 looks at these in more detail.*



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## C. Developing a national pathway to address child poverty

If it is clear that an increased focus on child poverty is needed, then the next step is to determine what constitutes a plausible national pathway to affect change. There is no easy or correct answer to this question, and perhaps most importantly real life always gets in the way of the best laid plans – bringing both new opportunities and unforeseen roadblocks.

Accordingly, the aim need not be to create the perfect detailed plan, but think through a plausible pathway of progress and the milestones on the way, as well as the activities that can help these milestones be reached. This approach can help build a shared national understanding of the overall goal and the steps to achieve it. It can also help identify how changing circumstances can help or hinder progress.

Exercise 1.4 suggests a hypothesized set of national milestones – a sort of ‘average’ approach distilled from experiences across countries. It outlines both a possible set of milestones, as well as the actions and activities, key actors and assumptions and indicators that can guide progress.

This ‘average’ approach can hopefully be useful as a guide, but every country is likely to have a different pathway. Not only will starting points vary, but national contexts will mean both key milestones and the activities that can help achieve them will also change.

In many contexts this pathway and milestones are thought through by a small organizing team working on child poverty, and often not explicitly. This has proven successful, and if it's not broken don't fix it! But making these milestones explicit, including through the collaboration of those with expertise and ability to make crucial decisions, can build clarity and strong foundations.

## Building a national pathway: starting and end points

### THE STARTING POINT

While the end points may be fixed by SDG obligations, the starting points will vary greatly by country. This starting point can be based on national expertise, including the previous exercise.

### THE END POINT

The SDGs provide a clear end goal signed onto by member states, namely the elimination of extreme poverty (which includes children) and halving the poverty of children by national definitions.



## Determining the milestones in the middle

**A milestone is “an action or event marking a significant change or stage of development”.**

With starting and end points defined, it can be useful to determine clear milestones of progress along the way. A milestone is “an action or event marking a significant change or stage of development”. Identifying and agreeing on key milestones with national stakeholders is helpful in both guiding immediate actions and checking on progress to see if different strategies are needed.

## A POSSIBLE PROCESS FOR IDENTIFYING A NATIONAL PATHWAY OF PROGRESS

With a crucial goal being including all national expertise on poverty and child poverty, as well as those who can make crucial decisions, involving relevant stakeholders may be an effective way of integrating views of reaching a shared agreement on milestones and activities. Where not feasible or effective, working towards consensus through key informant interviews and the creation of a nationally owned report with recommendations on next steps could be an alternative.

Some general steps in a process may be:

1. **Outlining starting and end points:** It is likely that not all stakeholders will be aware of the commitments in the SDGs, the importance of child poverty, or where the country currently is in measuring, analysing and addressing child poverty. Providing this information to stakeholders (if possible by the relevant experts) for discussion can help give everyone a shared starting point.
2. **Identifying the milestones (activities and indicators):** With a clear sense of starting and end points stakeholders can work towards identifying the key milestones in the middle. If using a workshop, one approach is to put starting and end points on different ends of a spectrum and ask participants to suggest milestones in the middle and place them in a sequence. The following pages give some examples.

**Milestones:** Limiting the sequence to no more than five or so milestones (including the beginning and end) can keep things manageable. Placing these beginning and end points on a spectrum, and encouraging stakeholders to suggest milestones in the middle, can quickly bring together a broad range of views. Sharing the indicative global sequence or possible milestones in Exercise 1.4 may be helpful.

**Indicators:** Depending on what works nationally, milestones chosen are generally broad, and then indicators will specify what it being aimed for concretely. For example, the milestone may be “national child poverty measurement”, while indicators may be: child poverty rate calculated (monetary and/or multidimensional); child poverty included in national report; routine measurement agreed by the National Statistical Office.

**Activities:** In thinking through milestones, activities can also emerge (essentially an activity is a stepping stone that will help move from one milestone to the next). The tools on the following page, and the example of China, give some examples. It of course makes sense to spend most time on the activities needed to reach the next milestones, than on milestones that are further in the future.

3. **Revising, learning and flexibility.** While a broad collection of stakeholders are often needed to chart the broader course, the organizing team may be the ones pushing the day-to-day activities and involving key stakeholders as needed. An important role these groups often play is learning from what’s working and what isn’t and being flexible to changing circumstances and bringing stakeholders back together when needed. It is important to note that very different groups may be needed to support progress on different milestones.



1. Building a national pathway to end child poverty

2. Measuring child poverty

3. Putting child poverty on the map: child poverty advocacy

4. Reducing child poverty through policy and programme change

5. Ending extreme child poverty and halving it by national definitions

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Exercise



## Exercise 1.4

### Identifying milestones and indicators

**01** → **02** → **03** → **04** → **05**

**MILESTONES:**  
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**INDICATORS:**  
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**INDICATORS:**  
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**MILESTONES:**  
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**Starting point:**  
This will vary by country - it might be 'child poverty not measured'

**End point:**  
Halve child poverty by 2030 according to national definitions

#### EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE MILESTONES OR INDICATORS

Social protection programme designed or adjusted to reduce child poverty	Evaluation of agricultural programme included impact on child poverty and recommendations	Creation and implementation of a national action plan to halve child poverty
Child poverty part of national debate and discussion across media	Inclusion of child poverty in national development plan	National poverty eradication plan includes the policies and programmes that will have child poverty
Child poverty routinely measured by government	Chapter on child poverty included in annual progress report on poverty reduction	Budget process explicitly includes consideration of child poverty

**FIGURE 1.1:** Possible milestones and activities towards halving child poverty being part of a national poverty reduction plan.



POSSIBLE ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES				
1	2	3	4	5
<p>National stakeholders discuss where an increased focus makes sense.</p> <p>If increased focus agreed, national stakeholders create a national path of progress on child poverty and national milestones.</p>	<p>Determine with government, appropriate national approaches to measuring child poverty.</p> <p>Work with government to generate and produce disaggregated child poverty estimates (multidimensional and/or monetary).</p> <p>Provide technical training and support on child poverty analysis to relevant government and other counterparts.</p> <p>Work with governments to understand causes and determinants of child poverty.</p>	<p>Develop advocacy objectives, indicators and key messages building on measurement.</p> <p>Write national child poverty report with government.</p> <p>Engage in major policy discussions (e.g. Budget Framework Papers, State of the Nation etc...) with actors such as MoF, World Bank and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>Carry out in-depth analysis of the causes of child poverty.</p> <p>Mapping of existing policies and programmes to reduce child poverty.</p> <p>Targeted technical analysis and advocacy on programmes and policies that could reduce child poverty.</p>	<p>Comprehensive analysis with government and stakeholders on policy and programme mix that could halve child poverty.</p> <p>Development of an action plan to halve child poverty and inclusion in a national Poverty Action Plan (or similar).</p> <p>Develop and support monitoring evaluation and reporting back on progress as determined by national processes.</p>
POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF PROGRESS				
<p>Meeting with key stakeholders at appropriate levels completed.</p> <p>National pathway of progress created and key milestones identified.</p>	<p>Child poverty rate (monetary and/or multidimensional) calculated.</p> <p>Child poverty rate published in appropriate government or independent report or similar.</p> <p>Routine monitoring agreed.</p>	<p>Completion and launch of child poverty report including analysis of key bottlenecks and opportunities.</p> <p>Child poverty appears in media/social media.</p> <p>Child poverty measures stressed in major policy discussions e.g. budget framework papers and State of the Nation address.</p> <p>Actors such as Ministries of Finance and World Bank use child poverty analysis in publications.</p> <p>Stakeholders are stressing the importance of child poverty.</p>	<p>Evidence on child poverty becomes part of the formulation, goals and evaluation process of major programmes (e.g. social protection programmes, budget planning).</p> <p>Change in implementation and scale of programmes and policies, such as social protection programmes.</p>	<p>Actions to halve child poverty incorporated into a national poverty reduction plan or similar (or specific Child Poverty Action Plan created).</p> <p>Resources allocated to support implementation.</p> <p>Reductions in the child poverty rate in line with SDGs.</p> <p>Independent evaluation of progress with recommendations.</p>



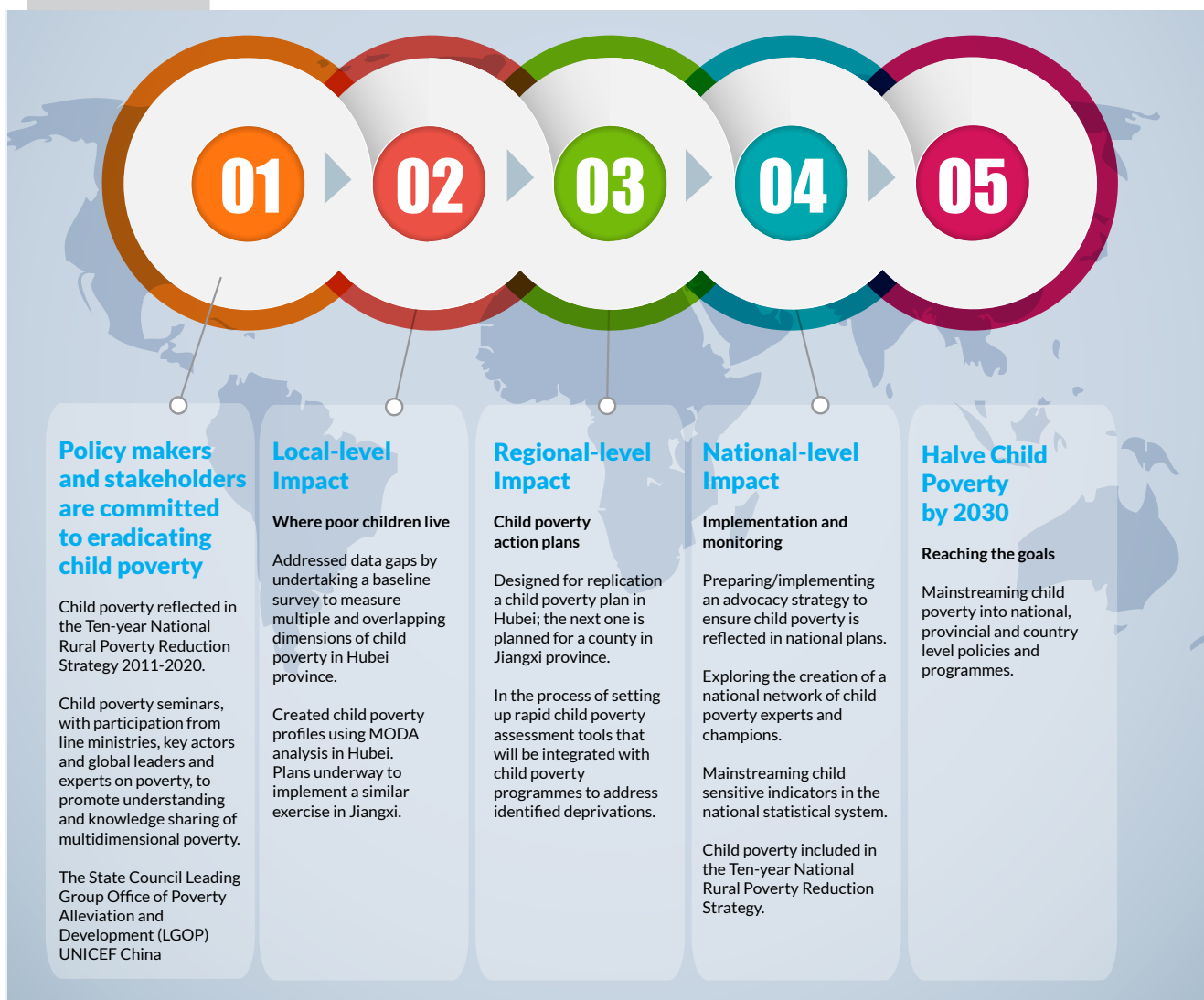
# CHINA

## Generating momentum to end child poverty, one county at a time

The Government of China recently announced its ambition to lift 70 million people out of poverty before 2020, which aligns well with the SDGs to end poverty in all its dimensions. Until recently, poverty reduction strategies were linked to economic growth and development; however, with increased efforts on strengthening capacity, there is mounting emphasis on integrated interventions addressing multiple deprivations and disparities. China's pathway to address child poverty spans the entire policy spectrum from identifying, recognizing and measuring child poverty to using the evidence to design, implement, monitor and resource relevant county child poverty plans.

FIGURE 1.2

China's approach to addressing child poverty





## Addressing child poverty in China: milestones, indicators, actions and actors

Steps on the pathway	Indicators	Activities to complete the step	Key actors
Starting point: the lack of strategic focus on child poverty, separate to adult poverty, and as a key development priority for China.	n/a	n/a	n/a
Policy makers and stakeholders are committed to eradicating child poverty.	Child poverty reflected in the Ten-year National Rural Poverty Reduction Strategy 2011-2020.	Child poverty seminars, with participation from line ministries, key actors and global leaders and experts on poverty, to promote understanding and knowledge sharing of multidimensional poverty.	The State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development (LGOP) and UNICEF China.
Local level impact: child poverty action plans at the county-level will be implemented.	Hubei Baseline Child Poverty Survey. Hubei MODA survey. Hubei Child Poverty Analysis. Hubei Child Poverty Action Plan.	Analyse survey to produce an analysis, and a child poverty action plan in collaboration with stakeholders.  Conduct a workshop on Child Poverty Reduction and Integrated Child Development in Hubei.  Raised funds through the private sector and Bestseller foundation to implement the plan.	Academic Institution, Provincial LGOP, LGOP and UNICEF China.
Regional level impact	Review of the Hubei child poverty strategy - the baseline survey, analysis and child poverty plan.  Understanding of child poverty and evidence based planning expanded to other counties.	Explore the creation of multidisciplinary 'champions' comprised of policy-makers, researchers and practitioners working on child poverty in China.	LGOP, provincial LGOP, local government and UNICEF China.
National level impact	Guidelines for county-level implementation of child poverty plans.  Child Poverty Report for China.  Stakeholder ratings on the relevance, acceptance, appropriateness and effectiveness of UNICEF support.  Sustained or increased national government expenditure on essential social services as share of GDP.	Workshop to discuss, contextualise and refine the Guidelines.  Design and implement stakeholder assessment.  Disseminate the Guidelines to maximise the advocacy impact of the approach.  Identify potential funding opportunities with the government and private sector.	The State Council Leading Group of Poverty Alleviation and Development.  UNICEF China.  Ministry of Finance.
End point: SDG achieved by 2030 (end of extreme child poverty and halving of child poverty by national definitions).	An identified set of priority SDG indicators most critical for children in China.	Translate the SDGs to be relevant and a strategic priority for China, through seminars, policy briefs and other advocacy efforts.	LGOP, National Bureau of Statistics, National Working Committee on Children and Women, and UNICEF China.

## Conclusion

This milestone has aimed to give some ideas and tools towards reaching national agreement on whether an increased focus on child poverty makes sense, and if so to identify the best ways forward. The milestones that follow look at approaches and examples from a range of contexts that have helped countries take the next steps, and measure, advocate and respond to child poverty.

### MILESTONE 1 CHECKLIST: INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

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- ✓ Relationships built with key stakeholders.
- ✓ Clear understanding of the role poverty measurement and analysis plays in national decision making.
- ✓ Clear understanding on the situation of child poverty measurement and analysis, and agreement on whether increased action is needed.
- ✓ As appropriate, agreement on key milestones and activities to measure and address child poverty.

