

# Multidimensional Child Poverty Reduction in China

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# Background

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**Research and application of multidimensional child poverty measurement system in accurate poverty alleviation – study and practice:**

- I. Application, promotion, and acceptance of multidimensional child poverty measurement system in China
  - II. Multidimensional child poverty in poverty alleviation work in China, effectiveness of the interventions, and their impact on child wellbeing
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# Research and application of multidimensional child poverty measurement system

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## Mainly two types of application:

1. The MODA approach developed by UNICEF (which looks into eight dimensions of income, nutrition, education, water, transportation and sanitation facilities, housing, information and social protection) in child poverty alleviation programs implemented by the LGOP, to provide evidence for the development of policies and programs for poverty alleviation.
  2. Based on the CRC and the Law on the protection of the Minors, an indicator system is developed (which looks into five dimensions of survival, participation, health, protection and development). Based on existing data, AF methodologies is used to study on the situation of multidimensional poverty situation, to provide evidence for policy-making on child poverty reduction.
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# Research and application of multidimensional child poverty measurement system

Researchers	Program areas	Dimensions	Most deprived dimensions (top three by level of importance)
Research team of Multidimensional Child Poverty Project in Hubei (2014)	Five poverty blocks including Qinba Mountain, Wuyi Mountain, Dabie Mountain and Mufu Mountain	Eight	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sanitation: the most outstanding poverty dimensions - 65.1% children do not have sanitation facilities at home.</li> <li>2. Nutrition: 41.8% children are suffering from diseases caused by malnutrition.</li> <li>3. Water: 29.7% children do not have access to safe drinking water.</li> </ol>
Shang Xiaoyuan, Wang Xiaolin (2012)	120 villages in 12 counties of five provinces of Yunnan, Xinjiang, Sichuan, Henan and Shanxi	Five	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Health: poor sanitation with 91% lacking access to sanitary toilet. In program areas in Sichuan, 45.45% children do not have the habit of teeth brushing, and 87.17% do not have safe drinking water at home.</li> <li>2. Survival: children's routine diet is not guaranteed. 25% of children eat less than three meals per day, which put them under the risks of malnutrition.</li> <li>3. Participation: children's capacity of making decisions for themselves are limited. 35% of children do not have a say on their living, learning and extracurriculum activities, 27% of children can not make their own decisions on the friends they make.</li> </ol>

# Research and application of multidimensional child poverty measurement system

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- Based on the research findings, the most deprived dimensions of poverty among rural children are sanitary facilities, nutrition, housing and drinking water. Whereas for the incidence and index of multidimensional poverty, there is no common opinion among the academicians.
  - The research and application of multidimensional child poverty is only at a nascent stage in China. The methodologies are not yet robust, and there has not been many findings. However, this has provided much valuable experience for more standardized and robust research in the future.
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# Practical intervention on multidimensional child poverty in poverty alleviation work in China

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- 1. Interventions on multidimensional child poverty in targeted poverty alleviation**
  - 2. Government interventions and main results**
  - 3. Social organization interventions and main results**
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# Interventions on multidimensional child poverty in targeted poverty alleviation

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## Integrated intervention

- Targeted poverty alleviation has pulled together all the relevant resources of the government. The level of commitment and results are unprecedented.
  - “Two Worries-free and Three Guarantees” has included several dimensions of child poverty, including income, education, nutrition, housing, etc.. Since 2016, the Central Government has stepped up its poverty-alleviation investment in housing, drinking water and road construction, etc., which will fully improve the housing condition as well as public infrastructure and services for the children.
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# Interventions on multidimensional child poverty in targeted poverty alleviation

Child poverty dimensions	Measures in targeted poverty alleviation	Gaps/areas to improve
Income	Poverty lines developed at provincial level in reference to national poverty line, to identify poverty households; and through multiple means to improve their income, or to provide assistances through the civil affairs system	Lack of effective protection for children outside of families, e.g. street children, orphans, abandoned children, etc.; only a small percentage of these children can receive the care from welfare institutions
Education	Enhance enrolment rate to kindergartens; improve the boarding conditions for left-behind children; improve teaching facilities of rural schools	Accessibility to education is still poor, it is difficult for children to attend a school close to home. ECD in rural areas is yet to be developed, and the allocation of education resources to urban and rural areas, and to public and private education facilities need to be balanced.
Nutrition, health and sanitation	Expand the coverage and improve the quality of nutritious meals provided to boarding children	Investment to poverty areas is not sufficient; nutrition issues of pre-school aged children is yet to be addressed

# Interventions on multidimensional child poverty in targeted poverty alleviation

Child poverty dimensions	Measures in targeted poverty alleviation	Gaps/areas to improve
Housing	Housing is a key area of targeted poverty alleviation. Local areas is allowed to integrate funding resources to address housing issues of poverty households	Actual subsidies are too little for the poor to address their housing issue, which has affected the children in poverty households
Water, road and sanitation	Special requirements and funds are in place for water supply and road to villages	No targeted measures to address issues of sanitation facilities or energy; water supply and road construction are not implemented effectively enough for remote poverty areas
Information	fast development at national level; and online teaching resources are being promoted by the education sector	Children in the poverty household have not access or knowhow to utilize such resources; currently these resources are only used by some social organizations to address the deprivation of information
Social protection	Not yet elevated to policy level	There are some organization who are implementing programs on girls' protection, but the education sector does not pay much attention on this issue

# Government intervention-Child Poverty Reduction and Integrated Development in Poverty Blocks in Hubei

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**Introduction:** the program is a collaboration between the Bestseller Foundation from Denmark and IPRCC, aiming to address multidimensional child poverty through multisectoral effort (2014-2017)

**Results:** the multidimensional poverty index, and poverty rate under different K values in program villages are lower than those of the control villages; 2. Children's service center has become an important base for the service provision for children; 3. the program has funded renovation of 5 village schools and improvement of facilities in 21 village kindergartens; 4. the program has supported 269 vulnerable children to address their needs of medical services, hukou, and housing.

**Characteristics:** at the preliminary stage, the program accurately identified the multiple dimensions of child poverty through scientific research. Through multisectoral effort led by local LGOP office, and participated by departments of civil affairs, health, education, the program aims to take integrate approaches to address multidimensional child poverties, which has become an example for child poverty alleviation

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# Government intervention – Child Welfare Director Program

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**Introduction:** the program is a collaboration between Department of Social Welfare of MCA, UNICEF, CPRI of BNU, as well as other universities and institutes (2010-2015)

**Results:** 1. Village-based child welfare directors are the first groups of people working in the village (grassroots level) to deliver child welfare services; 2. the body height and weight of children in the five program provinces are improved; 3. Vaccination coverage significantly improved, and u-5 mortality in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture; 3 Parents and caregivers' awareness on ECD has been well-improved; Enrolment rate of primary school has been improved; the program played a vital role in registering children with hukou, entitling vulnerable children to different assistances and insurances, e.g. New Rural Cooperative Medical Insurance, assistance for orphans, dibao, etc..

**Characteristics:** many interventions in the program is related to the multiple dimensions of child poverty. It has extended the service delivery arm all the way to the village level, and the work by child welfare directors will have long-term impact on child poverty issue. This program was recognized and widely shared with other countries by UNICEF HQ in May 2014; also, it has provided important support to the issuance of the Opinion by the State Council ***on Strengthening Protection for Vulnerable Children***.

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# Government intervention – Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD)

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**Introduction:** this program is a collaboration between NHFPC, ACWF, MCA, LGOP, UNICEF and supported by Porches China (2012-2016)

**Results:** professional workers provided integrated services, including nutrition, health, early stimulation, child protection, child welfare etc., to 0-3 children in 80 administrative villages in Shanxi and Guizhou. According to statistics, the suspected developmental delays in the domains of communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, personal social have declined. The overall suspected development delay has dropped by 18.6%. The prevalence rate of malnutrition has dropped from 19.2% to 12.9%.

**Characteristics:** this program established a mechanism for multisectoral collaboration at all levels. Professional staff from the sectors of health, women's federation, civil affairs, poverty alleviation are working together at village level to provide integrated intervention in the domains of nutrition, health, early childhood education, child protection, etc.. This program has also provided a model for government, private sectors, and international organizations to address the issue of multidimensional child poverty.

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# Government intervention - Child Poverty Reduction and Integrated Development

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**Introduction:** A collaboration between LGOP and UNICEF to address multidimensional child poverty issue in seven villages in Gansu and Sichuan (2010-2012)

**Results:** 1. Children's perspective are included in the overall development plan of villages; 2. child poverty, especially the dimensions with sufficient funding support, e.g. drinking water, nutrition, housing, etc., have been alleviated; 3. Families have gained certain self-development capacity through the training and support they receive in plantation and husbandry.

**Characteristics:** 这It was the very first time for the multidimensional perspective to be adopted in China to identify child poverty issue, and also for the multidimensional child poverty perspective to be included in the national strategy of "whole-village advancement." It has provided important experience for the roll out of poverty alleviation work with a focus on children.

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# Intervention by social organization - Proxy Mothers for the Children

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**Introduction:** launched in 2015, this program is a collaboration between China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, Sichuan Provincial Youth League, and Guizhou Provincial Department of Civil Affairs.

**Results:** this program has helped 921 children to register in the hukou system, 241 children to receive assistance for orphans, 260 children to return to school and 1,360 children to receive dibao and temporary assistance and 1,392 children to receive assistance for catastrophic diseases.

**Policy impact:** this model has been replicated in Sichuan and Guizhou, and proposals for the model to be adopted at full-scale have been submitted by relevant government departments to the provincial political consultative conference;

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# Conclusion

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- The research and application of multidimensional child poverty is only at a nascent stage in China. Even though there has been some research findings, they are still too limited for us to develop a localized indicator system for multidimensional child poverty in China.
  - Poverty alleviation work in China has its institutional advantages. With such high emphasize, targeted poverty alleviation has become an sound model which will undoubtedly benefit the children. However, due to lack of data, we still do not have a clear picture on the progress of multidimensional child poverty alleviation.
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# Conclusion

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- Though much has been achieved through poverty alleviation, children in poverty are only indirect beneficiaries, and many are still “untargeted”. In the current poverty alleviation work, children are not recognized as a subject of rights.
  - Government of China and social organizations are exploring for effective means to address multidimensional child poverty. The many programs implemented by the government and social organizations mentioned earlier can contribute effectively to the elimination of multidimensional child poverty.
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# Recommendations

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- Reflect on the multidimensional perspectives, to explore for a multidimensional child poverty identification system which fits into Chinese context.
  - Develop a scientific statistical monitoring system to dynamically monitor the poverty status of the children.
  - Insist on targeted poverty alleviation, to provided integrated intervention to address multidimensional child poverty based on accurate understanding of the issue.
  - Actively carry out pilot projects, and develop dedicated programs for multidimensional child poverty reduction.
  - Encourage social organizations to make explorations and innovations in multidimensional child poverty reduction.
  - Promote for grassroots level government to provide sustainable interventions for multidimensional child poverty reduction.
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