Multidimensional Poverty Indices for Poverty Reduction Strategies

Beirut, 28-30 November 2022

Biographies of Speakers

Sabina Alkire, Director of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), University of Oxford

Sabina Alkire is the Professor of Poverty and Human Development and directs the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford. Previously, she worked at the George Washington University, Harvard University, the Human Security Commission, and the World Bank. She has a DPhil in Economics from the University of Oxford.

Together with Professor James Foster, Sabina developed the Alkire-Foster (AF) method for measuring multidimensional poverty, a flexible technique that can incorporate different dimensions, or aspects of poverty, to create measures tailored to each context. With colleagues at OPHI this has been applied and implemented empirically to produce a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The MPI offers a tool to identify who is poor by considering the range of deprivations they suffer. It is used to report a headline figure of poverty (the MPI), which can be unpacked to provide a detailed information platform for policy design showing how people are poor nationally, and how they are poor by areas, groups, and by each indicator.

Ana Helena Chacón Echeverría, Former Vice President of Costa Rica and Ambassador to Spain

Ana Helena Chacón is a Costa Rican leader, politician and advocate with an international trajectory on human rights and governance. She is an international relations professional with expertise on management and public policy. Ms. Chacón is recognized for a highly ethical commitment and transparency, both in public office and the private sector.

She has been the ambassador of Costa Rica in Spain since 2018, and the Vice President of the Republic of Costa Rica between 2014 and 2018. Earlier she was the general director of Triángulo de la Solidaridad Programme, an inter-institutional government program for decentralization, citizen participation, and fight against poverty

Sola Afolayan, National Coordinator for the MPI, National Social Investment Office (NSIO), Office of the Vice President, The Presidency, Nigeria

Sola Afolayan works at The Presidency, and is the National Coordinator of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) project, in Nigeria. Under her leadership and within the Nigerian Government's National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy (NPRGS), the MPI is used to complement with monetary poverty measurement to better understand the country's poverty dynamics.

In the last 22 years, Ms. Afolayan has led teams and held leadership positions across 23 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Europe. At these roles, she sought to shape policy discourses in poverty reduction, social protection, budget performance, infrastructure financing, rural electrification, gender related issues, and in deploying public-private partnerships to address conflicts in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

She describes her career highlight as the recent launch of the Nigeria MPI report by the President of Nigeria, and also in 2015 when she helped set up the framework for a GBP 37Million programme, where 186kWp solar Photovoltaic (PV) systems each were installed at 11 Clinics and 172 public schools in rural and per-urban areas of Lagos State; resulting in positive health and education outcomes, with over 140,000 homes being solar powered.

Roni Chaaban, League of Arab States (LAS)

Roni Chaaban is a Lebanese Diplomat working for the League of Arab States. He is a Second Attaché in the Social Affairs Sector- Department of Development and Social Policies and is responsible for the Multidimensional Poverty file in the department.

Manuella Nehme, League of Arab States (LAS)

Manuella Nehme is an economist, with research interests focusing on macroeconomics, development, and political economy. Among her recent projects, she worked as an economic research consultant at the League of Arab States and UN ESCWA on projects related to multidimensional poverty, human development, and conflict in the Arab region. She is also currently an instructor of economics at the Lebanese American University (LAU). Ms. Nehme holds a master's degree in Applied Economics from LAU.

Reham Rizk, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Egypt

Reham Rizk is the Head of the Social Planning and Development Unit at the Egyptian Ministry of Planning and Economic Development and an Associate Professor of Economics in University of London and in the Master's Program in Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University. She is also an Invited Researcher at J-PAL Middle East and North Africa at AUC, and the co-Founder and director of the Egypt Impact Lab, a collaboration between the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development and J-PAL that aims to strengthen the effectiveness of Egypt's poverty reduction policies by rigorously evaluating promising and innovative government programs. She is also a Research Fellow at the Economic Research Forum.

Her work focuses on establishing sustainable partnerships between universities, government, and development practitioners to drive behavioral change, advance policy-driven research and foster effective planning for development initiatives promoting employment, microenterprise development, female empowerment, family development, education and health. Her current focus includes conducting an ongoing randomized evaluation of Unpacking Employment Support: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment with J-PAL MENA and constructing Egypt's Multidimensional Poverty Index with ESCWA and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative.

Mahdi Al-Alak, Former Secretary General of the Iraqi Council of Ministers

Mahdi Al-Alak is the current chairman of the Iraqi Statistical Association. He occupied the position of the Secretary General of the Iraqi Council of Ministers from 2015 to 2019, under which the Iraqi government initiated the first national process of building the Iraqi MPI in collaboration with ESCWA, OPHI and UNICEF. Prior to that he acted as the Chief of the Prime Minister's Office. From 2003 to 2014 he headed the Central Statistics Organization in Iraq, during which he acted as the deputy minister of planning for 7 years. Mr. Al-Alak holds a higher diploma in population and development, and a PhD in applied statistics.

Abeer Al Sheikh, Central Bureau of Statistics, Palestine

Abeer Sheikhhasan is a Statistician and head of Household Budget Division, with nine years of experience at the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. She has a bachelor's degree in Mathematics Applied to Economics and a master's degree in Applied Statistics from Birzeit University in Palestine. She also had the opportunity to experience teaching biostatistics in the Arab American University. At her job, she became recently responsible of Household Expenditure and Consumption Survey, from planning and updating methodologies, training field staff and leading data collection, data processing, data analyses and tabulation, to publishing periodic reports. Besides that, she is a statistical analyst passionate about data science, with sound knowledge of statistical modeling techniques and methodologies, currently using RStudio and SPSS statistics software tools in her work.

Jawad El Saleh, Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics

Jawad Al-Saleh has been part of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) since 2015. Currently he is the Head of Statistical Program at the PCBS. His major field of work include living Conditions statistics, poverty analysis, socio-economic monitoring indicators, child statistics, gender statistics and informal employment. Mr. El Saleh holds two Master degrees in International Economic Integration and in Applied Statistics.

Sonya Helou, Ministry of Social Development in Palestine

Sonia Helou is the director general of social care at the Ministry of Social Development in Palestine. She has a significant experience in social protection including working with people with disabilities, orphans, school dropouts, and prisoners. She is also a member of the national multidimensional poverty reduction strategy team. Sonia is a certified trainer in the field of project management and risk management at the national school of administration (Palestine). She holds a bachelor's and a master's degree in sociology from Birzeit University (Palestine). She also holds a master's degree in project management from the University of Sydney (Australia).

Gonzalo H Licona, Director of the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network

Gonzalo Hernández Licona is Director of the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN), providing strategic direction to the activities of the South-South network of 60 countries and 20 international agencies sharing best practice on how to measure multidimensional poverty.

He was formerly the Executive Secretary of the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL) in Mexico, which is responsible for evaluating social development programmes and carrying out the country's poverty measurement. Previously, he was Head of Evaluation and Monitoring at the Ministry of Social Development in Mexico.

Between 2017 and 2019 he was the author, together with 14 scientists of the 2019 Global Development Sustainable Report for the United Nations. He was full-time Chair Professor at the Autonomous Institute of Technology of Mexico (ITAM) in the Economy Department from 1991–1992 and 1996–2002. He has taught Development Economics at ITAM since 2003.

Pali Lehohla, Former Statistician General, Statistics South Africa

Pali Lehohla is the former Statistician-General of South Africa, a position he held from 2000 up to 2017. He was co-chair of PARIS21 and the Chair of the United Nations Statistics Commission. He was the founding chair of the Statistics Commission of Africa (StatCom Africa) and chaired the African Symposium for Statistical Development (ASSD). He was the Vice President of the International Statistics Institute (ISI). He served as one of the twenty-five-member panel on Data Revolution appointed by the UN Secretary General. Mr. Lehohla has been a forceful advocate for improving the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems in Africa. He consulted extensively in the in conflict, out of conflict and fragile states on matters statistics. Since 2018 he became a Research Associate at Oxford University. For twenty years to date he has been a weekly columnist in the Business Report, over a month to-date he is a weekly columnist in the Sunday Times Daily Online. Mr Lehohla is the co-director of the Economic Modelling Academy (EMA) that aims to train society in economic policy formulation based on the principles and laws of motion of economics.

Michelle Muschett, Former Minister of Social Development, Panama

Michelle Muschett has recently been appointed as Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Ms. Muschett is a social policy and global development specialist with multisectoral experience in leadership positions. She is currently serving as Senior Public Policy Adviser and Executive Education Director for Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, advising governments and policymakers from Africa, Asia and Latin America in their efforts to address multidimensional poverty. She is also Senior Policy and Strategy Adviser for the Fourth Sector Group, providing guidance in mobilizing collective leadership and action for scaling business models and in leveraging development finance to accelerate the transition towards more inclusive, sustainable and resilient economic systems globally.
In the public sector, Ms. Muschett held the position of Deputy Minister and Minister of Social Development of Panama. During her tenure, she led the process of developing the first national Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI); the creation of the first Childhood MPI in the Latin American region; and the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level through civic participation and strategic partnerships. She also chaired the National Concertation Council for Development, a legally-established dialogue space aimed at building consensus among multiple sectors of society around national development priorities.
Ms. Muschett holds master's degrees in Public Administration from Cornell University, United States; Commercial Law from Externado University of Colombia, Colombia; and Management of Heritage and Cultural Projects from the Institute for Art and Restoration Palazzo Spinelli, Italy.

Samheng Boros, Minister Attached to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State at the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), Cambodia

Boros Samheng has recently been appointed as Minister Attached to the Prime Minister along with continuing his important role as Secretary of State of Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY). Mr. Boros is President of the National Social Assistance Fund, Vice Chairman of The Executive Committee of Social Protection Council and Chairman of the Social Assistance National Sub-Committee, with the responsibility to design policies, action plans and regulations for Cambodia's social protection development including a focus on good governance on a national and sub national level in order to implement the social protection programs with effective results and to ensure a productive coordination of the nation's social security and social assistance programs. With nearly 20 years of experience in the field of social work in accordance with government policy, Mr. Boros and his teams have designed many programs which provide support to poor families and other vulnerable groups in the community including access to the social service system in order to improve their livelihoods and to maximize the poverty alleviation impacts and efforts being made in Cambodia. Mr. Boros graduated with a master's in business management from Charles Sturt University, Australia and was awarded the prestigious "Charles Sturt University International Alumni Award in 2022.