



Policy recommendations for addressing multidimensional poverty in the Arab region

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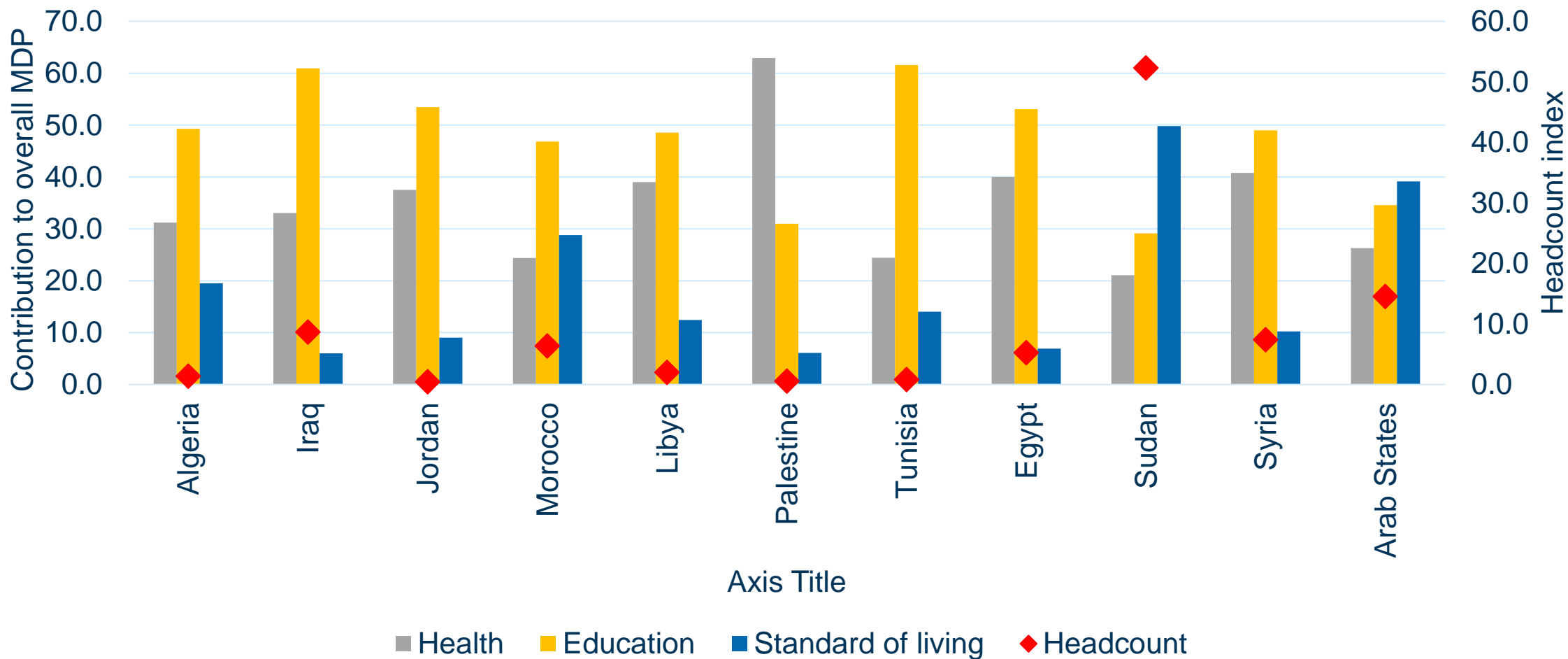
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Multidimensional Poverty in the Arab region

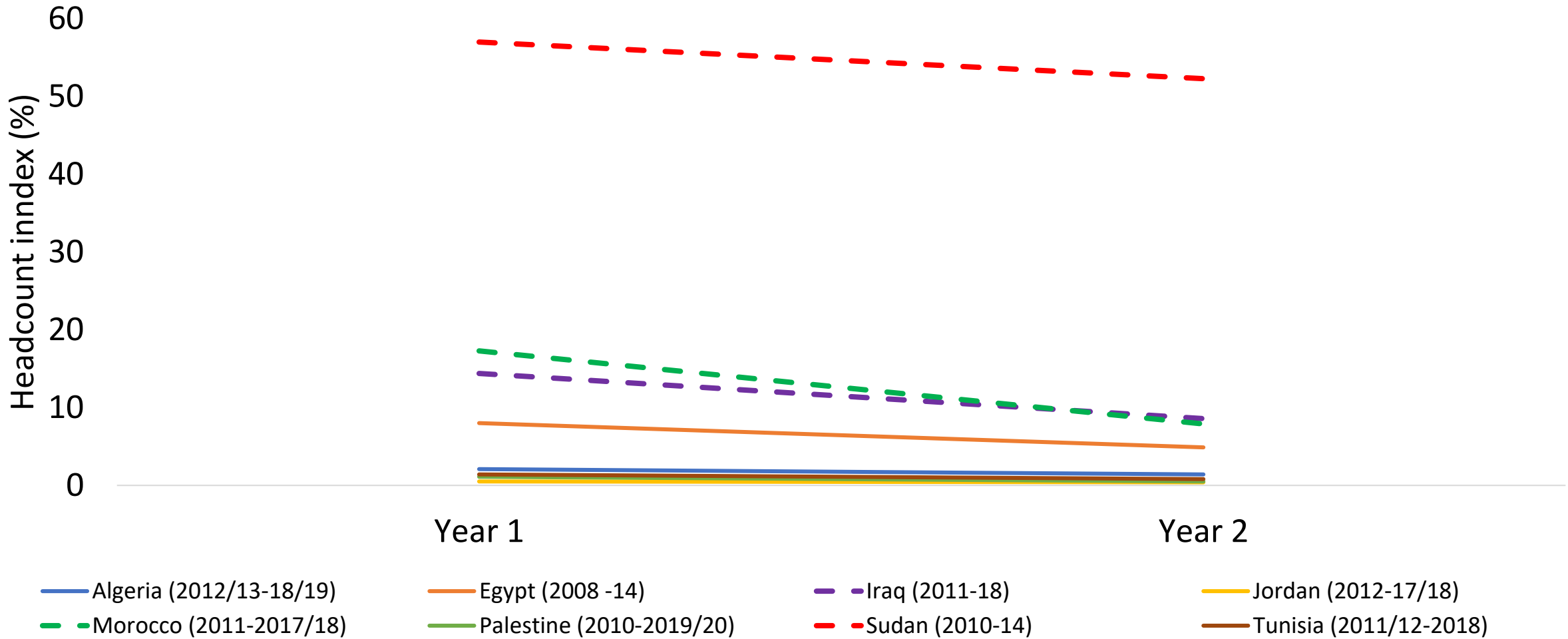
- Arab states 14.5% (down from 15.8% according to the 2020 report) are multidimensionally poor
- Contributions of dimensions
 - Health: 26.3%
 - Education: 34.6%
 - Standard of living: 39.1%

http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2021_mpi_statistical_data_table_1_and_2_en.pdf

MDP and contribution of dimensions



Changes over time



Major challenges in the region

- Inequitable access to and low quality of basic social services
- Data—not available, not frequent, not accessible
- Digital divide—noticeable disparities among countries.
- Effect of conflict—tremendous impact on food security, education and health outcomes (destruction of infrastructure, misallocation of resources)
- High youth and women unemployment; mismatch between progress in education attainment and school enrolment rates and labor market opportunities for the youth
- Spatial and gender disparities
- MCH rights
 - Women and girls of childbearing age continue to suffer disproportionately high rates of illness and death in many countries
 - Infant mortality aggravated by conflicts and inequities in distribution of health services
- Reaching the informal economy—especially in low income and conflict affected countries
- Social protection—coverage gaps, lack of data, lack of optimal targeting and exclusion errors, under-investment in SP and limited fiscal space
- Institutions and policy orientation—especially regarding the provision of basic services

Some of these challenges were worsened by COVID-19, but there are also positive ones



- Education (possibly negative, with unequal digital access)
- Social protection (positive)—though poorer countries are likely to have less of social protection interventions.
- Food security (possibly negative, with people losing jobs and reduction in income and increase in food prices)
- Living standards—potentially negative impact
- Inequalities—further deepened by COVID-19
- Data (positive, with countries embarking on use of digital solutions for rapid data collection, and exploring the use of big data to understand the impact and design quick responses)

Education, Health and Nutrition



- Relooking at policies and strategies—reprioritizing public spending and delivery of services
 - The orientation of the health systems.
 - Emphasis on maternal and child health, including SRH,
 - Quality of education
 - Implement inclusive policies targeting the educational attainment
 - Food consumption habits and reducing food waste
- Access, quality and equity in basic social services
- Emphasis on LNOB—focusing on gender
- Digital solutions in the delivery of basic social services

Expanding access to social protection

- Build shock-responsive social protection systems, ensuring that these systems are inclusive and gender-responsive
- Rationalize fiscal spending and expand fiscal space. Explore options to expand fiscal space—e.g., looking at switching from fossil fuel subsidies to social protection
- Expanding access to social protection while at the same time **ensuring equity** (food security, health, education)
- Digitalization of social protection systems.

Cross-cutting

- **Data**—invest in better and more comprehensive, disaggregated, data collection, including the potential use of big data
- Managing risks and building resilience
 - Addressing political instability is crucial—lack of peace and security affects access to basic social services, nutrition, etc. leading to worsening development conditions such as education, health and nutrition outcomes
 - Preparing the youth for the jobs of the future
 - Enterprise development—addressing informality, MSME access to finance...
- Addressing inequality/ LNOB—address spatial differences (urban/rural), gender differences- targeted poverty-reduction interventions to reduce disparities within the country are important.

Cross-cutting

- Addressing the **digital divide** and shock proofing the social and economic development outcomes through digitalization and digital transformation
- Addressing climate change and ensuring green recovery
 - Especially in relation to food security
- Institutional capacity building:
 - Implement/operationalize the Arab Framework for the Eradication of Multidimensional poverty.
 - Nationalization of the Framework (integration of the Framework in national development planning frameworks)?
 - Resourcing the Arab Center for MDP and Social Policy Analysis

