



Policy Research Brief

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Dimensional and Regional Distribution of Multi-Poverty in Cameroon

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CHARACTERIZATION OF MULTI-POVERTY IN CAMEROON

In the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals, development strategies are now focused on specific priorities for the improvement of living conditions in developing countries.

The objective of this study, conducted by a team of Cameroonian researchers, was to capture multi-poverty using the method of “Dimensional Scores”. This method can measure, distinctively, the level and distribution of poverty in each welfare dimension – such as health, education, income, infrastructure, etc. – rather than the typical approach of comprising several of these values within one single indicator.

The analysis of “Dimensional Scores” provides a fuller characterization of the nature and spatial distribution of poverty within the population of Cameroon, which is crucial to assist in pro-poor policy formulation.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

- *Health* is the dimensional aspect in which the Cameroon population is, overall, the poorest - followed by *living environment*, *monetary income*, *education* and *basic infrastructure*.
- Each region (including the cities of Douala and Yaoundé) is affected by particular types of poverty while no form of poverty is unique to a single region - see [policy recommendations for results on spatial distribution](#).
- Similarly, each type of poverty has specific determinants, although some of them are common to several dimensions. For example, socioeconomic factors such as polygamy and household size lead to deficiencies in 4 of the 5 pre-cited dimensions.
- Several dimensions are interrelated, making it possible to combat one aspect of poverty or deprivation by improving living conditions in other dimensions.

REGIONAL TARGETING OF POLICY INTERVENTIONS

A comparison with previous approaches shows that dimensional scores are more appropriate for identifying the specific needs of population groups in the fight against poverty. We thus propose to use dimensional scores for regional targeting of multi-poverty in policy formulation.

Results from this particular study suggest that policies that aim to alleviate poverty in the dimension of:

- *Living environment*, will have the greatest effect if implemented in the East, Central and North-West regions of the country.
- *Education*, should target populations living in the North, North-West and South-West areas.
- *Basic social infrastructure* investments would have greater impact on poverty in the Center, South and North-West regions.
- *Monetary income* would be more effective in the East, North-West and South-West regions.
- And *Health* interventions should first aim to improve quality of care services, especially in the Southern and coastal regions, as well as in the city area of Douala.

Impact curves for poverty dimensions

