

Introduction

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10 In December 2006, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)
11 adopted, for the first time, an international definition of child poverty.
12 It recognised that:

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14 ... children living in poverty are deprived of nutrition,
15 water and sanitation facilities, access to basic health-care
16 services, shelter, education, participation and protection,
17 and that while a severe lack of goods and services hurts
18 every human being, it is most threatening and harmful to
19 children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach
20 their full potential and to participate as full members of
21 society. (UNGA, 2006, para 460)

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23 The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the agency charged
24 with promoting international child welfare and which had campaigned
25 for agreement on a definition, noted:

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27 Measuring child poverty can no longer be lumped together
28 with general poverty assessments which often focus solely
29 on income levels, but must take into consideration access to
30 basic social services, especially nutrition, water, sanitation,
31 shelter, education and information. (UNICEF, 2007)

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33 These internationally accepted and agreed statements and definitions
34 were a major step forward for everyone interested in the issues of
35 child well-being and child poverty. The definitions provided a clear
36 and unambiguous direction to governments, advocacy groups and
37 others interested in dealing with child poverty as to which dimensions
38 future research and indicators needed to reflect. The measurement
39 and analysis of child poverty requires consideration of a wide range
40 of non-monetary dimensions and factors, all of which are known to
41 have a well-documented impact on children's survival, well-being and
42 development. These dimensions include, as the definitions set out:

1 children's living conditions, their access to basic services, their ability
2 to participate in normal society as full citizens, the right to be free of
3 any kind of discrimination and exclusion and their rights to protection
4 from exploitation and abuse. In summary, this measurement and analysis
5 addresses equal opportunities for all boys and girls in all countries and all
6 situations. When viewed in conjunction with the sentiments expressed
7 in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC),
8 where state parties were enjoined under Article 27 (among others) 'to
9 recognise the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for
10 the child's physical, mental, moral and social development' (UN, 1989),
11 two things are apparent. First, evidence from around the world, from
12 rich, middle-income and poor countries alike, confirms that many
13 millions of children continue to experience deep poverty, deprivation
14 and exclusion (Micklewright and Stewart, 2001; Gordon et al, 2003;
15 Richardson et al, 2008). Second, that despite the binding commitments
16 of the UNCRC over 20 years ago, the most basic rights of children
17 continue to be infringed (van Bueren, 2002; Redmond, 2008).

18 This book presents a collection of work by leading international
19 academics, researchers and policy makers concerned with the
20 measurement and mitigation of child poverty. It brings together many
21 of the actors involved in the development of indicators and measures
22 of child poverty and well-being, and through a series of national
23 and regional level case studies, demonstrates how research on child
24 poverty has developed over the last two decades. Until 1999, few
25 researchers concentrated on child poverty as a concern that deserved
26 special emphasis. Poverty meant adult and household poverty, and the
27 prevalent approach to measurement relied on income/consumption
28 indicators. No information on child poverty was available at a global
29 or regional level, and only a handful of countries estimated the number
30 of children living in income-poor households. In 1999, the UN Expert
31 Group on Poverty Statistics met in Portugal and researchers such as
32 Alberto Minujin and Peter Townsend made the case for documenting
33 child poverty in statistical and policy terms. The concept at that
34 meeting was based on the over-representation of children among the
35 poor and utilised only the money metric approach. By the end of
36 1999, however, UNICEF, under the leadership of Jan Vandemoortele,
37 Enrique Delamonica and Alberto Minujin, furthered the effort by
38 coining the phrase 'Poverty reduction starts with children' (UNICEF,
39 2000b) in order to influence the design and implementation of the
40 Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), which had recently
41 been established by The World Bank. In 2003, a research team led by
42 Professors Peter Townsend and David Gordon, produced the first ever

1 global estimates of child poverty for UNICEF (Gordon et al, 2003) as
2 an outgrowth of the Portugal meetings and UNICEF action plan. When
3 data from the report were used in the *State of the World's Children 2005*
4 report (UNICEF, 2004) to show that over one billion children were
5 severely deprived of one or more basic needs, there was immediate and
6 widespread recognition that more needed to be done to tackle child
7 poverty. In the years that followed, academics and activists developed
8 an international network of actors, all of whom were involved in
9 developing research on child well-being and poverty. With the issue
10 of child poverty now placed at the centre of the international stage,
11 there was (and continues to be) a significant increase in activity and
12 research on child poverty around the world (Boyden et al, 2003; Feeny
13 and Boyden, 2003; Minujin and Delamonica, 2003; Seager and de Wet,
14 2003; White et al, 2003; Noble et al, 2004, 2006; Corak, 2005; G.A.
15 Jones, 2005; N. Jones, 2005; Minujin et al, 2005, 2006; Delamonica and
16 Minujin, 2007; Lyytikainen et al, 2006; Doek et al, 2009; Nandy and
17 Gordon, 2009; Jones and Sumner, 2011).

18 Much of this activity built on another earlier body of work about
19 children and poverty, typified by UNICEF's landmark study *Adjustment*
20 *with a human face* (Cornia et al, 1987). The report detailed the impact
21 on children of another global financial crisis (during the 1980s), and
22 called for the collection and use of data on the 'human' dimensions
23 of adjustment. Such data might include information about people's
24 access to education and health services, rather than simply conventional
25 macroeconomic indicators. It also noted the need for status (or impact)
26 indicators (for example, nutrition status, education level), process
27 indicators (for example, availability of food, or education), and input
28 indicators at three levels: household, government and community
29 (Stewart, 1987, p 258). To assess the impacts on children of the by then
30 widely implemented policies of structural adjustment, the report argued
31 one would need to know how different input indicators affected the
32 process indicators, and in turn how these affected status indicators.
33 At the time, reliable and readily accessible household survey data for
34 most poor countries were scarce, but *Adjustment with a human face*
35 demonstrated that data on the 'human' dimension were available, from
36 different sources such as nutrition surveys and hospital records. These,
37 it argued, could be used to create a 'composite index of social stress' to
38 serve as an early warning system to denote when conditions for children
39 were unfavourable and likely to have a negative impact on them.
40 Components of such an index could include indicators of malnutrition,
41 cases of Kwashiorkor or other important diseases, the proportion of
42 babies born with a low birth weight, food prices in regional markets

1 and even rainfall patterns. In time, other indicators could be added, but
2 what was key was a call to incorporate into conventional econometric
3 and planning models those factors that directly affected children. The
4 report concluded that 'it is important to aim at a systematic set of
5 human accounts, on a par with the economic accounts' (p 264) and
6 that 'information is not a luxury to be added on as an afterthought ...
7 but an essential pre-requisite for devising good programmes' (p 262).
8 Given the current ongoing global financial crisis, it is perhaps obvious
9 that we recommend readers revisit the arguments and issues covered in
10 *Adjustment with a human face* (Cornia et al, 1987), as well as other work
11 from the era (MacPherson, 1987; Cornia et al, 1992; Kent, 1995) which
12 examined child poverty on its own merits. UNICEF's current Global
13 Study on Child Poverty and Disparities (see Chapter Twenty-One,
14 this volume) is detailing the impact of the current economic crisis on
15 children around the world (Mendoza, 2009).

16 The chapters of this book focus primarily on the measurement
17 of child poverty. They provide insights into recent theoretical,
18 methodological and policy developments, from a number of geographic
19 and intellectual positions. In doing so, the book benefits from material
20 from case studies on countries that might not otherwise have appeared
21 alongside each other. Important empirical work from countries
22 as diverse as Congo Brazzaville, Tanzania, South Africa, Vietnam,
23 Bangladesh, Morocco, Iran and Haiti is presented, to show how, even
24 in challenging contexts, research on children is developing in new
25 and innovative ways. Wider regional level portraits are also presented,
26 with analyses of the European Union (EU), the United States (US),
27 and countries of Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of
28 Independent States (CEE/CIS), of South Asia and Sub-Saharan
29 Africa. The methodological discussions presented in each chapter
30 provide readers with a wide range of information about working with
31 multidimensional child poverty measures, and may suggest analyses that
32 could be applied in other countries. Many of the chapters present data
33 to show changes over time, and these will no doubt form key sources
34 of information for future studies aiming to assess progress towards the
35 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the target date of 2015.
36 Their importance is accentuated given there is no single distinct goal
37 or target for child poverty per se. However, given the ever-increasing
38 availability of household survey data and developments in various
39 methodologies, it is reasonable to expect that in the not too distant
40 future, specific global targets for child poverty might be set and adopted
41 as they have already been in some regions (European Commission,
42 2008; OECD, 2009).

1 **Who is this book for?**

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3 Given child poverty is acknowledged to be the result of overlapping
4 dimensions of deprivation, as well as the non-fulfilment of many
5 basic economic, social and human rights, this book is intended for an
6 audience from many disciplines. We hope it will be of use and interest
7 to specialists in their fields, as well as those with a more general interest
8 in the topic. Where relevant, each chapter sets out its working definition
9 of child poverty, the conceptual approach taken, and relates these to the
10 indicators developed and used. The presentation of empirical data on
11 child poverty and disparities should give policy makers and advocates
12 of children's rights sufficient evidence on which to challenge the
13 shape of existing policies when they clearly appear to fail. We hope
14 the methodologies described and tested here will encourage others to
15 make their own forays into research, applying what is shown here to
16 their own countries and contexts.

17 18 **Outline of the book**

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20 The book has four main parts, and between each there will inevitably
21 be some degree of overlap. The first part includes this introduction,
22 as well as two chapters that set out some of the key debates relating
23 to the study of child poverty and its measurement. **Chapter Two**, by
24 Simon Pemberton and colleagues, examines international human rights
25 frameworks and conventions to reveal their potential as mechanisms
26 to hold key international players, both governmental and non-
27 governmental, to account when children's basic needs are unmet and
28 rights thus infringed. It details a series of practical obstacles which
29 stand in the way of ensuring that rights are realised, and how these
30 might be overcome, given sufficient political and popular will. It also
31 shows how children's rights and child poverty are closely linked, and
32 how, using methods similar to those used by other contributors to this
33 book, an account can be made of how children's rights continue to
34 be violated, despite governments having agreed clear core obligations
35 to meet such rights.

36 **Chapter Three**, by Jan Vandemoortele, tackles the issue of economic
37 growth, until recently depicted as the *sine qua non* for development
38 and poverty reduction. He argues that an idea which has dominated
39 international development discourse – that economic growth is a
40 sufficient condition to reduce poverty – is flawed on a number of
41 levels, and that the key international metric of international poverty –
42 the so-called 'dollar-a-day' poverty line – is particularly problematic.

1 He sets out his reasons, with evidence, and builds a strong case for a
2 greater focus on issues of equity and the need to ensure that any poverty
3 reduction strategy considers at its core, the needs of and implications for
4 children. Given international concerns about the global financial crisis,
5 and growing recognition of the need to protect those least responsible
6 for the crisis, he posits that ‘child-focused policies can be a Trojan horse
7 for introducing equity-enhancing measures in social and economic
8 policy making’ which would benefit societies as a whole.

9 Part 2 builds on some of the themes raised by the chapters in Part
10 1, and shows how different measures of child poverty, deprivation and
11 well-being can be developed and applied. **Chapter Four**, by David
12 Gordon and Shailen Nandy, sets out in some detail what has come
13 to be known as the ‘Bristol Approach’ (Minujin et al, 2005; Roelen
14 and Gassmann, 2008). It explains the theory and rationale behind the
15 approach, showing how it was built on the long history of poverty
16 research in the UK and around the world. The chapter also discusses
17 how *not* to measure child poverty, providing a critique of some other
18 commonly used measures, including The World Bank’s popular ‘US\$1/
19 day’ indicator, the Asset Ownership-based Wealth Index also developed
20 by The World Bank (Filmer and Pritchett, 1998, 2001), and the recently
21 developed Multidimensional Poverty Index (Alkire and Foster, 2008;
22 Roche, 2009), which replaces the United Nations Development
23 Programme’s (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI). **Chapter**
24 **Five**, by Sabina Alkire and José Manuel Roche, shows how researchers
25 are building on the ‘Bristol Approach’, to develop indicators that reflect
26 the depth, intensity and composition of multidimensional poverty.
27 Using data from Bangladesh, they set out the Alkire and Foster method
28 for developing a multidimensional poverty indicator for children under
29 the age of five. They experiment with varying thresholds and cut-offs
30 to show how sensitivity analyses can be used to refine such indicators,
31 and then present, in detail, changes in the index over a 10-year period
32 (1997–2007) at both national and subnational level.

33 **Chapter Six**, by Helen Barnes and Gemma Wright of the University
34 of Oxford, presents a different approach to assessing child poverty.
35 Their work is part of a wider project on the measurement of poverty
36 in South Africa (Noble et al, 2004, 2006), which involves, among other
37 things, the application of the socially perceived necessities approach
38 (Mack and Lansley, 1985; Halleröd, 1994; Gordon and Pantazis, 1997).
39 Poverty in this instance is treated as an enforced lack (due to insufficient
40 resources) of items and services identified by society as essential for
41 an acceptable standard of living, and the chapter presents a fascinating
42 account of the methodology being used to elicit children’s perspectives

1 about poverty in South Africa. The material resulting from focus groups
2 run with children showed that children were more than capable of
3 identifying which items and services they believed as essential (as
4 opposed to luxuries). While there was some overlap between what
5 adults and children thought were necessary, there were also some
6 significant differences. For example, school transport, school equipment,
7 access to a doctor and having warm, dry clothing were all accorded
8 a greater importance by children than by adults. These findings, and
9 others in the chapter, have important implications for other similar
10 consensus-based measures and indexes, if based solely on the responses
11 of adults. The chapter provides an excellent example of how measures
12 of child poverty can be augmented by consulting children about their
13 experiences and opinions.

14 In **Chapter Seven**, Sarah Burd-Sharps and colleagues make the
15 case for the development and use of a 'Tots Index' for the US. Despite
16 having per capita incomes well in excess of most other countries,
17 the US also has some of the highest rates of child poverty in the
18 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)
19 (2009; see also UNICEF, 2000a). The authors, whose American HDI
20 (Burd-Sharps et al, 2008) received international attention in 2008,
21 show why an index focusing on children under the age of five in the
22 US is warranted. Most of the issues raised in the chapter are universally
23 relevant and applicable, and, as the chapters by Petra Hoelscher et al
24 (**Chapter Eight**) and Isabelle Maquet-Engsted (**Chapter Nine**) show,
25 multidimensional indexes of child well-being, poverty and deprivation
26 are being developed in a number of regions (the CEE/CIS states and
27 the EU) and have begun to influence policy makers. One aim of
28 this book is that readers might be spurred into applying some of the
29 methods presented and eventually to develop similar indexes that focus
30 on children. To this end, **Chapter Ten**, by Shirley Gatenio-Gabel and
31 Sheila B. Kamerman, provides a summary of the types of data available
32 to researchers, both on outcomes and on policies for children. They
33 propose a preliminary child policy paradigm, which encompasses the
34 dimensions key to child survival and development, including health,
35 family economic well-being, education, child welfare and protection
36 and children's rights.

37 Part 3 presents seven cases studies of recent research on multidimensional
38 poverty among children from around the world. Alberto Minujin and
39 Enrique Delamonica (**Chapter Eleven**) report on work done with
40 UNICEF colleagues in Tanzania, developing a child poverty and
41 deprivation measure. They provide an example of how a UNICEF
42 country office applied the methodology developed by David Gordon

1 and Peter Townsend to examine subnational differences and disparities,
2 and to also assess change over time. The resulting information, which
3 shows where progress is occurring or stalling, can help in the design and
4 targeting of future programmes and resources. The next three chapters
5 all report on work done by academics connected to the Maastricht
6 Graduate School of Governance in The Netherlands. In recent years,
7 the School has been involved with UNICEF and other organisations,
8 in developing and using multidimensional poverty indexes for a
9 number of countries. In **Chapter Twelve**, Geranda Notten, Chris de
10 Neubourg, Bethuel Makosso and Alain Beltran Mpoue present a profile
11 of multidimensional child poverty in Congo Brazzaville. They use
12 their index to go beyond the provision of a poverty headcount, instead
13 examining the overlaps between different dimensions of deprivation.
14 The disaggregation of results, showing which groups are most likely to
15 experience which types of deprivation, and the use of Venn diagrams
16 to show overlaps between key dimensions, exemplify the value and
17 merit of a multidimensional approach to poverty assessment. **Chapter**
18 **Thirteen**, by Keetie Roelen and Franziska Gassmann, discusses the
19 results of a study on multidimensional child poverty in Vietnam. Using
20 indicators and thresholds appropriate to the Vietnamese context,
21 they also provide a detailed analysis of child poverty and prevailing
22 disparities, particularly between urban and rural areas, regions and,
23 interestingly, by ethnicity. The chapter also includes an overlap analysis
24 of the different dimensions. Analyses of poverty from Iran are limited
25 in number, so we consider ourselves fortunate to include the chapter
26 by Sepideh Yousefzadeh Faal Deghati, Andrés Mideros Mora and
27 Chris de Neubourg (**Chapter Fourteen**) on child poverty in Iran.
28 Using a nationally representative survey on household income and
29 expenditure, the authors develop their own index of multidimensional
30 poverty, encompassing the three dimensions of provision, participation
31 and protection. They report considerable regional, socioeconomic and
32 gender disparities in various dimensions of deprivation. Unfortunately,
33 ongoing restrictions of access to survey data on Iran means there is
34 limited scope for others interested in following up this work, and
35 developing it further.

36 **Chapter Fifteen**, by David Gordon and colleagues, presents results
37 of the first ever study of child poverty for Haiti, the poorest country in
38 the Americas. The world is now familiar with images of the aftermath
39 and impact of the magnitude 7.0 earthquake that struck the island
40 on 12 January 2010. Over 200,000 people are estimated to have died,
41 with many more losing their homes and livelihoods. Children were
42 particularly badly affected in the days and months following, with more

1 than 5,000 schools destroyed. The chapter shows how in the decade
2 before the earthquake, between 2000 and 2005, there was no statistically
3 significant decrease in child poverty in Haiti. The findings also show
4 little or no reduction in the prevalence of severe deprivation for key
5 basic needs among children. This information, disheartening as it is,
6 provides some context for interpreting efforts to 'rebuild' the country.

7 The final two chapters of Part 3 present regional level analyses of
8 child poverty and deprivation. Ernesto Espíndola and María Nieves
9 Rico (**Chapter Sixteen**), from the Social Development Division of
10 the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
11 (ECLAC), present results from the first ever study of multidimensional
12 child poverty for the region (CEPAL and UNICEF, 2010). Taking
13 advantage of national household surveys, and using a combination
14 of both deprivation and monetary indicators, they estimate that, in
15 2007, around one child in six in the region (18%, or around 32 million
16 children) experienced extreme poverty (that is, children experiencing
17 a severe deprivation of at least one basic need). Using slightly less
18 stringent thresholds to reflect a more moderate degree of deprivation
19 (but arguably no less indicative of poverty), they found nearly half
20 (45%, 81 million) of all children in the region were affected. The
21 depth of child poverty in the region is shown to be directly linked to
22 its prevalence, and thus also to the extent to which states have ensured
23 the fulfilment of children's basic rights. Given the region is party to
24 some of the greatest socioeconomic inequalities and disparities, it is no
25 surprise the study found child poverty rates highest in rural areas, among
26 indigenous communities, and among African-Caribbean groups. The
27 data provide yet more evidence of the extent of unmet needs for large
28 sections of the region's population, suggesting where future resources
29 and programmes need to be applied. **Chapter Seventeen**, by Shailen
30 Nandy, focuses on the two poorest regions of the world, South Asia and
31 Sub-Saharan Africa. He provides evidence to show how these regions
32 fared at the end of the 20th century with regard to the extent of child
33 poverty. Using data from household surveys covering almost all children
34 in the two regions (80% of children in South Asia in 2000, and 97%
35 of children in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2000), he presents two rounds of
36 estimates, for 1995 and 2000, to shed light on the dynamics of child
37 poverty in the regions. Estimates are also presented for urban and rural
38 areas, and for boys and girls (for specific deprivations), which provide
39 some indication as to the direction of change regarding disparities and
40 inequality. Nandy reports contrasting fortunes for the regions, with a
41 decline in child poverty in South Asia and an increase in Sub-Saharan
42 Africa between 1995 and 2000. The story is more complex than it first

1 appears, however, with disparities between children living in urban and
2 rural areas decreasing in Sub-Saharan Africa and increasing in South
3 Asia. What are the drivers behind these apparently counter-intuitive
4 results? More rapid *increases* in *urban* poverty than rural poverty in
5 Sub-Saharan Africa, and *less rapid decreases* in *rural* poverty than urban
6 poverty in South Asia. Sadly, as the data in the chapter show, there
7 were roughly 30 million *more* children living in absolute poverty in
8 Sub-Saharan Africa in 2000 than in 1995; during the same period, the
9 number in South Asia decreased by roughly 63 million, to about 290
10 million children.

11 Moving away from a focus on measurement, the chapters in Part
12 4 discuss issues of causation and the nature of policies being used to
13 tackle child poverty. Ruth Levitas (**Chapter Eighteen**) considers the
14 principles on which societies need to be based in order to guarantee
15 *genuine eradication* of child poverty. She shows that calls for policies which
16 made universal provision of allowances to families with children have
17 a long pedigree, and argues that a persistent problem with many anti-
18 poverty policies (not just with regards child poverty) is that they are
19 just not ambitious enough in their consistent and continuing adherence
20 to a belief in the inevitability of at least some poverty, deprivation and
21 inequality. Levitas sets out an architecture for the design of policies
22 that, if implemented, would go some way to tackling the structural
23 causes and propagators of poverty. The underlying principles of this
24 architecture include the promotion of equality, a revaluing of care and
25 its provision, a reconsideration of what counts as wealth and productive
26 activity, the universal provision of child benefit and a guaranteed basic
27 income for all, the mainstreaming of sustainability and the prioritising of
28 human flourishing and well-being. **Chapter Nineteen** by Jo Boyden,
29 Abby Hardgrove and Caroline Knowles provides an overview of the
30 ongoing longitudinal study of children's lives in four poor countries
31 (Vietnam, Ethiopia, Peru and the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh), the
32 Young Lives project. The authors detail the project's conceptual and
33 analytical framework, and report on some early findings concerning
34 trends in children's welfare and the dynamics of child poverty. The
35 project is one of the few international longitudinal studies of children
36 and child poverty, and the lessons learned will be of real value to policy
37 makers around the world. Based on their findings to date, they conclude
38 that economic growth, by itself, will not solve the problems associated
39 with poverty in childhood, and in some instances, can accentuate
40 inequalities. They also conclude that the experience of deprivations
41 during childhood can have longer-term impacts for children as they
42 grow and develop, and also that properly designed social policies for

1 children do have a protective effect against economic shocks (such as
2 the global financial crisis). Importantly, data from the project have been
3 deposited with the UK Data Archive and are available to researchers.

4 **Chapter Twenty** by Hicham Ait Mansour presents a case study
5 of Morocco. He focuses on the implications for policy of using a
6 multidimensional approach to examining child poverty. Using both
7 monetary and non-monetary indicators, he shows (as others have)
8 that children are far more likely to be identified as deprived (of basic
9 needs, such as shelter etc) than income-poor. This is a key issue with
10 regards the measurement of child poverty and is also discussed by
11 others in this book (see Chapters Two, Three, Four, Eleven, Twelve and
12 Thirteen, this volume). Future assessments of child poverty and well-
13 being, intending to apply the UNGA definition set out at the start of
14 this chapter, will almost certainly end up following the examples set
15 in this book, including in the chapter on Morocco. Ait Mansour also
16 provides an interesting take on counterfactuals – in a short exercise he
17 shows how estimates of child poverty would be affected if individual
18 deprivations were eradicated (that is, were not experienced by any
19 children). In his example, child poverty in Morocco would fall from
20 around 41% to 35% were sanitation deprivation to be eradicated. If,
21 instead, overcrowding in households was tackled (that is, his indicator
22 for shelter deprivation), child poverty rates would fall from 41% to 29%.
23 Of course, it is not as simple as tackling a single deprivation at a time,
24 and anti-poverty strategies need to work across many different sectors
25 simultaneously (Mehrotra, 2004; Mehrotra and Jolly, 1997; Mehrotra
26 and Delamonica, 2002).

27 Many of the chapters in this book report on work either done
28 by, with, or for, UNICEF. Its role in international efforts to tackle
29 child poverty is uncontested, and the Global Study on Child Poverty
30 and Disparities is now taking place in over 50 countries, covering
31 1.5 billion children. **Chapter Twenty-One** by Gaspar Fajth, Sharmila
32 Kurukulasuyria and Sólrún Engilbertsdóttir sets out the aims of the
33 Global Study, and reflects on findings from a number of countries. By
34 also focusing on disparities and examining national policies, the Study
35 is producing valuable information about the determinants of child
36 poverty in different settings, and documenting cases where policies
37 for children have been shown to have positive effects. Importantly,
38 at a time of international financial crises and government cuts to
39 social and public expenditure, the Global Study is documenting the
40 effects on children and their families. All of the countries involved in
41 the Study are using a combination of monetary and non-monetary
42 deprivation indicators to reflect the multidimensional aspects of child

1 poverty. The constantly expanding network of researchers and policy
2 makers involved that has emerged will ensure the issue of child poverty,
3 its conceptualisation and measurement, remains a key issue on the
4 international agenda. Qualitative methods have been used to great
5 effect in the Global Study (and also in Young Lives) to contextualise
6 children's experiences of poverty, and these in turn will lead to the
7 development of better quantitative indicators.

8 It is only fitting that Peter Townsend (**Chapter Twenty-Two**) has
9 the final word. In the years before his death, Peter campaigned with
10 passion and vigour, with the International Labour Organization (ILO),
11 for the adoption by the UN of an international child benefit (Townsend,
12 2007, 2008, 2009). He advocated the use and implementation of
13 an international currency transfers tax along the lines proposed by
14 James Tobin in the 1970s and 1990s. Peter's work throughout his life
15 made clear the degree of real need around the world, not just among
16 children. Many of the contributors to this book would acknowledge
17 the considerable influence Peter had on their work, either directly
18 or indirectly. Peter sets out in his chapter why many previous global
19 strategies at poverty reduction (for example, the trickle-down policies
20 of the 1980s) failed, and also how sufficient resources might be raised
21 to ensure that every man, woman and child on the planet could still
22 be covered by systems of social security to ensure they have a decent
23 standard of living. A universal child benefit with an extra amount for
24 children with a severe disability, he believed, would have an immediate
25 and direct effect on household purchasing power, and thus reduce
26 child poverty. He was well aware of the scale of forces (and degree of
27 scepticism) arrayed against him, but never backed down. In an earlier
28 report for the ILO, he sounded a forceful call to arms:

29
30 ... the growing number of scarifying accounts of the
31 hunger, exposure to conflict and abuse, extreme poverty
32 and premature death still experienced by many millions
33 of children across the world must concentrate the public
34 mind.... It is not enough to set new goals. Finding – and
35 agreeing – the necessary replacement policy is the top
36 priority. New policies have to be devised to replace those
37 that have failed. They have to have large-scale direct and
38 positive effects. The time for elaborate pretence, with
39 selectively helpful pilot projects for a very few children and
40 for image-building by organisations at token cost, is over....
41 (Townsend, 2008, p 3)
42

1 We hope the material in this book, and the detailed examples from
 2 around the world, contribute something to concentrating the public
 3 mind on global child poverty. We also hope that the methodologies
 4 described, and the indicators developed, will be used to demonstrate
 5 how and when policies fail or succeed. Poverty is not a law of nature.
 6 It can be eradicated, through the implementation of policies and
 7 programmes that guarantee universal and equitable access to basic
 8 social services as was nearly achieved in Europe after the Second World
 9 War. The lives and fortunes of hundreds of millions of people around
 10 the world are too important to leave to the whims of the free market.
 11

12 References

- 13
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