

Finding ways to improve living standards in Uganda is a pressing challenge facing both local and national policy makers and development partners. Poverty is a complex multi-dimensional condition, and as is borne out by this report, relative levels of well-being vary considerably over space. Poor people are often clustered in specific places. Information on the spatial distribution of well-being will greatly assist in designing a comprehensive and all inclusive pro-poor agenda for development and, in particular, for poverty reduction. However, availability of such information has long been a formidable challenge facing both policy makers and development partners alike. It is one of the obstacles facing those trying to improve the standard of living in Uganda. This report is, therefore, not only a response to this challenge in part, but also a precursor to a series of reports (and studies) geared towards building sustained time series benchmarks for poverty measurement in Uganda. These reports are necessary for institutionalising an effective monitoring and evaluation system for poverty programmes. The report, for the first time, presents lower area (sub-Region and sub-District) estimates and maps of poverty aimed at spearheading improved targeting of resources to pro-poor programmes. To arrive at these estimates a recently developed methodology is applied.

In brief, the basic principle underlying this recent methodological development involves combining information from the 1992/93 Integrated Household Survey (IHS) and the 1991 Population and Housing Census (PHC) to produce baseline 1992 poverty estimates with a spatial profile ranging from the national level down to the County-level for rural areas and the Subcounty level for urban areas. These estimates were then updated, using information from the 1999/2000 UNHS (a relatively small sample of the same households that were interviewed in the 1992 IHS), to show estimated poverty levels for 1999 and the relative changes in poverty levels over this time period. These latter estimates will be refined and replaced when the 2002 PHC becomes available, but in the meantime, they provide a useful indication of the direction and magnitude of poverty changes during the 1990's.

The availability of spatially disaggregated poverty information is a welcome innovation, particularly in the context of designing, monitoring and evaluating the pro-poor economic recovery and development agenda, as well as for informing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) implementation process. It is envisioned that the new information will be of considerable use to line Ministries, development partners and the entire research community who endeavour to understand the determinants of poverty in order to design policies and/or programmes geared to improving the well-being of Ugandans. Recently, reviews of poverty maps in other parts of the world have concluded that such modes of conveying the geographic dimensions of well-being have become important policy tools for implementing poverty reduction programmes. This, therefore, makes them indispensable in helping to improve effective targeting of public expenditures and investments, making decisions regarding emergency response and food aid programmes, and contributing to the National and sub-National policy formulation process in particular and the development planning process in general.

Additionally, disaggregated poverty estimates and maps can be complemented with spatial data on social amenities like schools and health centres, or biophysical, environmental and agro-climatic information to give rise to more comprehensive and integrated databases that could be immensely valuable towards evidence-based development planning and policy formulation. Further reports in this series will focus on these dimensions, in addition to examining the socio-economic dimensions of well-being and analyses of its spatial determinants. This report aims to fill the information gap that has hitherto been a hindrance to pro-poor development planning and policy formulation. It also aims to raise awareness on spatial dimensions of poverty by encouraging broader participation of all stakeholders, thereby inculcating the culture of evidence based decision making in general.

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