

C. VULNERABLE CHILDREN

The Poverty Reduction Strategy and MKUKUTA have recognized the problems of groups of people who are particularly vulnerable and who therefore need special attention. There are data from the population census which shed some light on the conditions of specific groups who might be considered to be most at risk, and they are presented here.

The general perception of vulnerable groups, including vulnerable children, is that they live under disadvantaged conditions and that they are therefore more likely to be poor. Except for the Labour Force Survey which explicitly sought information on working children,⁵⁷ specific vulnerable groups go largely undetected in most surveys. The small size of these groups makes them statistically invisible, especially in small surveys. Poverty mapping techniques⁵⁸ and analysis of the 2002 population census data has made it possible to assess in greater detail some specific aspects of vulnerability. Estimates of income poverty and indicators of vulnerability are possible at district level, allowing for a geographic focus. In addition, it is possible to attribute poverty based on information from the household budget survey to individual characteristics as reported in the population census.

Since MKUKUTA puts special emphasis on the protection of vulnerable children, and particularly the increasing numbers of those who have been orphaned, analysis with poverty mapping techniques has been undertaken to look into aspects of vulnerability among:

- children with a disability
- children who have lost at least one parent (single or double orphans)
- children living in child-headed households
- children living in households with adults aged 60 and above (i.e. without 'productive' adults)⁵⁹

A study on poverty among people with disabilities (Lindeboom 2005) also looked into the educational attainment of children from households headed by a person with a disability.

Additional work could be undertaken for similar analyses of other groups which can be identified from the census information, such as the elderly, and it is expected that this will be done in the near future.

CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY

There is a clear link between the prevalence of disability among children and district poverty levels. The disabled tend to live in poorer areas. Also at the household/individual level there appears to be a relation between poverty and child disability. The application of poverty mapping techniques for small socio-economic groups suggests that children from households with disabled children have higher probabilities of being poor than those from households without disabled children.

Children with disabilities have relatively low primary school attendance, and there is a marked difference in years of schooling between disabled and non-disabled children.

⁵⁷ See Poverty and Human Development Report 2003 and Chapter 3, Spatial Analysis, below.

⁵⁸ The methodology is summarised in the following chapter, Spatial Analysis, and in more detail in Kilama and Lindeboom, et al., Where are the Poor in Tanzania, forthcoming.

⁵⁹ Study on Vulnerable Children (UNICEF, 2005 under revision)

Thus, at the age of 17, children with disabilities have missed 4 years of primary education compared to 1.7 years among children without disabilities.

ORPHANHOOD

The relationship between orphanhood and poverty mirrors the association between poverty and HIV/AIDS prevalence at district level. Orphanhood, in particular maternal orphanhood, is more prevalent in better-off districts which also have higher population densities.

At the individual level the relationship between orphanhood and poverty is more intuitive, though it is not a strong one. Slightly more children from households with orphans are estimated to be living below the poverty line compared to children from households without orphans (42 per cent compared with 37 per cent). Living conditions, indicated by the availability of household assets, access to clean water and housing characteristics, do not seem to differ between households with orphans and those without orphans.

Though differences are small, census data also suggest that a slightly larger proportion of orphaned children is working, compared to non-orphaned children, and these differences are more pronounced in urban than in rural areas. Differences in years of primary schooling between orphaned children and others are also small. At the age of 17, orphaned and non-orphaned children lack, on average, 2 and 1.7 years of primary education, respectively.

CHILDREN FROM CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

Geographically, child-headed households are more common in urban than in rural areas, and in better-off districts.

At an individual level, children from child-headed households are more likely to be working than children from adult-headed households. Roughly 16 per cent of 10 year olds from child-headed households were working (paid, unpaid or self employed), compared to 10 per cent of children of the same age from adult-headed households, and a larger percentage of urban children than rural children were working.

There are very small differences in years of schooling between children from child-headed households compared to those from adult-headed households, and this shows up only among rural children, where there is a 0.3 year gap in years of primary education among 17 year-olds; 2.3 years missed for those from child-headed households and 2 years missed for children aged 17 from adult-headed households.

CHILDREN LIVING WITH THE ELDERLY

The elderly and older children play an increasing role in caring for people living with HIV/AIDS and orphaned children. Households consisting of only elderly persons and children (without adults in the productive age-groups) are more prevalent in rural areas (3.4 per cent versus 0.7 per cent in Dar es Salaam and 1.7 per cent in other urban areas). In the district-level analysis, overall, such households do not appear to be disproportionately poorer than others. In rural areas, living conditions of children from households with elderly persons and children are comparable with those of children from households with adults in the productive age-groups. In urban areas, however, these children seem to be worse off in terms of possession of household assets, energy use, use of improved drinking water sources and quality of housing.

Neither years of schooling nor working status seems to be influenced by the absence of productive adults in the household. The differences in lack of years of primary education and the proportion of children working are small and not statistically significant.

CHILDREN FROM HOUSEHOLDS HEADED BY A DISABLED PERSON

The disability of the head of a household is likely to be an important impoverishing force for the household as a whole and, given the general belief that poverty is inter-generational, it is fair to assume that children will also be impoverished.

According to Lindeboom (2005), within urban areas there were substantial differences in household and housing characteristics between households headed by a person with a disability and other households. Urban households headed by a disabled person were worse off in terms of household assets and quality of housing. These differences were also observed in rural areas but were less pronounced.

The number of years of schooling of children in households headed by a person with a disability are slightly fewer than those of children in other households; again differences being more pronounced in urban compared to rural areas.

Small and statistically insignificant differences were found in the proportion of children working in households headed by a person with a disability compared with children in other households.

WHAT MAKES CHILDREN VULNERABLE?

Given the limited set of indicators provided by the 2002 Housing and Population Census, it is not possible to assess all aspects of children's vulnerability. Results from two studies, one on vulnerable children, the other on disability, suggest that household conditions have a limited impact on years of schooling and working status. These impacts are felt more within urban than rural environments.

It should be noted that this conclusion is the result of an initial analysis of the quantitative information available from national data sets. This analysis needs to be complemented by more qualitative, sociological analyses and more specific follow-up in smaller areas of the country where the indications are that children, households and communities are disproportionately more vulnerable.

A category of children that is significantly deprived of opportunities is children living with a disability. They tend to live in poorer areas. Further, their educational performance lags far behind that of physically able children. Census data suggest that the number of disabled children is relatively small, though it is likely that the number is under-reported. Their specific educational needs merit priority attention.