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LINES OF SIGHT



THREE WAYS TO COMPARE MONETARY AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY

OXFORD POVERTY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Lines of Sight: Three Ways to Compare Monetary and Multidimensional Poverty

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY iv

I. INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Data Sources and Country Coverage 3

II. LEVELS OF POVERTY 4

2.1 The Incidence of Global MPI, $3, $4.20 and $8.30/day measures 4

2.2 Supplementing Incidence with Intensity or Normalised Gap 6

2.3 Number of Poor People by Each Measure across World Regions 7

III. THE 10 FASTEST TRENDS: DISTINCTIVE INSIGHTS THROUGH THREE LENSES 10

3.1 Absolute Reduction 10

3.2 Relative Reduction 11

3.3 Number of Poor People 12

3.4 In Summary: Applying the three lenses to global measures 13

IV. SYSTEMATIC TREND COMPARISONS OF GLOBAL MEASURES 15

4.1 Direction of Change 15

4.2 Speed of Change 19

4.3 Summary of Direction and Speed by Tercile 21

V. LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND IN MULTIDIMENSIONAL AND MONETARY POVERTY 22

5.1 National and Regional Trends 22

5.2 Subnational Trends in Multidimensional and Monetary Poverty 22

VI. COMPLETING THE STORY: NATIONAL MONETARY AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDICES 32

6.1 From Complexity to Clarity: Applying four measures to one country 32

6.2 Changes in National Measures: A systematic overview 34

6.3 Using the “4x3” Framework: From complexity to clarity 34

VII. CONCLUSION 38

REFERENCES 40

ENDNOTES 41

APPENDIX A: DATA, COVERAGE AND COMPARABILITY 42

APPENDIX B: DATA SOURCES AND RULES 44

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Poverty is not a single condition, and progress against poverty cannot be fully described by a single statistic. That is the central proposition of *Lines of Sight: Three Ways to Compare Monetary and Multidimensional Poverty*. The report asks a question with major implications for poverty monitoring and policy: **when we say poverty is falling, what exactly do we mean – and does the answer change depending on what we measure and how we measure progress?**

The evidence presented here shows that it does. Monetary and multidimensional poverty illuminate different aspects of poor people's lives. Global and national poverty measures serve different policy purposes. And even after a measure has been selected, the apparent scale and pace of progress depend on whether change is assessed in **absolute terms, relative terms, or by the number of people living in poverty.** These are not competing accounts from which policymakers must choose one. They are three different lines of sight on poverty, each answering a distinct and important question.

The report therefore proposes a simple but powerful 4×3 framework. Poverty should be considered using **four measures**:

1. **global monetary poverty,**
2. **global multidimensional poverty,**
3. **national monetary poverty and**
4. **national multidimensional poverty.**

Trends in each should, where data permit, be viewed through three lenses:

1. **absolute change,**
2. **relative change and**
3. **change in the number of poor people.**

Absolute change based on incidence captures the percentage-point reduction in poverty each year; relative change captures the share of the distance travelled towards zero poverty; and change in the number of poor people explicitly counts the human lives affected.

Why use all three? No single measure captures poverty in all its forms, and no single lens provides a context-free definition of progress. Starting level, population size and growth, national definitions of poverty, and the geography of progress within countries all deserve attention.

Understanding poverty metrics becomes particularly important as the international community approaches 2030 and begins to consider future poverty aims. The SDG 1 indicators include measures 1 (global monetary poverty), 3 (national monetary poverty) and 4 (national multidimensional poverty), but leave out measure 2 (global multidimensional poverty). And the first two SDG 1 poverty targets are set in terms of lens 2 (relative change): eliminating extreme poverty and reducing national monetary and multidimensional poverty incidence by at least half. But relative targets create a much steeper challenge for countries beginning with very high poverty: they do not provide a level playing field.

This report hence proposes that the 4×3 analyses should be clearly communicated and used beyond 2030. Doing so would make visible different forms of genuine progress.

Monetary and Multidimensional Poverty: Different insights on the same places

The report brings together internationally comparable monetary poverty data from the World Bank with the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The $3.00 per person per day ($3/day) international poverty line identifies the share of the population living below a $3/day monetary threshold expressed in purchasing-power-parity terms (PPP 2021). The global MPI directly measures overlapping deprivations across 10 indicators in health, education and living standards, identifying people as multidimensionally poor when their weighted deprivation score reaches at least one-third. The analysis also considers alternative poverty lines.

The international monetary poverty data are matched to the years and countries included in the global MPI dataset, which covers 108 countries and 6.3 billion people. A total of 1.2 billion people are poor according to the data in the 2026 global MPI. In the same years and countries, 971 million

are poor according to the $3/day monetary poverty measure.

Country patterns differ substantially in both directions. MPI incidence exceeds $3/day poverty in 60 of the 108 countries; the $3/day headcount is higher in the other 48. The divergence is particularly striking in sub-Saharan Africa. Of the 40 sub-Saharan countries included in the comparison, only 12 have MPI and $3/day poverty incidence within ten percentage points of one another. In 16, MPI incidence is 12–54 percentage points higher; in the other 12, monetary poverty is 10–39 percentage points higher.

The global measures have different regional patterns. Sub-Saharan Africa contains the largest number of poor people under both measures: approximately 616 million MPI-poor people and 564 million people living below $3/day. But South Asia accounts for about one-third of the MPI-poor population – 393 million people – compared with around one-fifth of the $3/day poor population, or 194 million people. East Asia and the Pacific displays the opposite relationship, with more people identified as poor by the $3/day line than by the global MPI. These regional estimates refer to the 108 countries covered by the 2026 global MPI.

The implication is fundamental. The two measures are not alternative ways of reproducing the same information. Monetary poverty captures command over economic resources. The global MPI makes visible direct deprivations in areas including nutrition, schooling, sanitation, electricity and housing. Looking at only one risks overlooking important hardships captured by the other.

Poverty Is Not Only About Incidence

The report also warns against exclusively analysing changes in the poverty incidence or the headcount ratio – the share of the population who are poor – because incidence does not show how poor they are.

For monetary poverty, the normalised poverty gap captures how far below the poverty line poor people's incomes or consumption fall on average. For multidimensional poverty, intensity captures the average share of weighted deprivations experienced by multidimensionally poor people.

A striking general pattern emerges: where poverty incidence is highest, poverty also tends to be deeper or more intense. This matters for policy because people can experience significant improvements without crossing the poverty threshold. A household may resolve some deprivations, or move substantially closer to the monetary poverty line, but not cross out of poverty. Incidence alone will not register that progress. The report therefore identifies deeper analysis using the MPI itself and monetary poverty gaps – not incidence/headcount ratios alone – as an important direction for future work.

The Methodological Proposition: A 4×3 framework

The report's principal proposal is to monitor poverty trends using the 4×3 framework going forward. Global measures make cross-country comparisons possible by applying common definitions. Official national poverty measures are designed by countries to reflect their circumstances and policy priorities. They are indispensable for domestic policymaking but cannot be used to compare poverty levels or trends across countries.

The 4×3 framework deliberately refuses the false choice between these approaches. Global measures provide comparability that national measures cannot. National measures provide contextual and policy relevance that global measures cannot. Monetary and multidimensional measures similarly illuminate different domains. The report's proposition is to use them as complementary sources of evidence.

For example, across the report's 167 matched country episodes or time periods – referred to in this report as 'spells' – monetary and multidimensional poverty have the same direction of change in 110. But they move in genuinely opposite directions in 28 spells. In 21 of these, the global MPI declines while $3/day poverty increases; 18 of those 21 spells are in sub-Saharan Africa. In seven spells, the reverse occurs.

Agreement and disagreement are both useful. When independently constructed measures move together, they provide mutually reinforcing evidence. When they diverge, the divergence is itself policy-relevant information: it signals a need to investigate what is happening to household resources on the one hand and direct deprivations on the other.

The three lenses then address another problem: even using the same poverty measure, there is more

than one meaningful way to describe annualised progress.

1. **Absolute change** subtracts poverty in one year from poverty in another. Countries with high poverty have greater scope to make large absolute reductions. If incidence is used (as in this report), it measures the annual percentage-point change in poverty, showing the share of people who moved out of poverty.
2. **Relative change** measures annual progress in proportion to the initial poverty level – the share of the distance towards zero poverty travelled. This lens can reveal substantial progress in countries where poverty is already low and large percentage-point reductions are no longer possible.
3. **Change in the number of poor people** compares the number living in poverty at the beginning and end of a period, incorporating population change. It asks a different question again: how much has the number of poor people changed?

The point is not to determine which lens is correct. All three are correct answers to different questions, and all three are influenced by countries' starting conditions. The proposed solution is not to discard the SDGs' relative targets. It is to look at progress from more than one angle.

Applying the Three Lenses Empirically Reveals Different Forms of Progress

The report identifies the ten countries that had the fastest reduction by global monetary and MPI measures using the three lenses.

Using **absolute poverty reduction,** sub-Saharan Africa stands out (UNECA 2025). Eight of the ten fastest MPI-reducing spells and nine of the ten fastest $3/day-reducing spells are in the region. Yet only two spells – Togo in 2013/14–2017 and Liberia in 2007–13 – appear among the ten fastest under both measures. Thus, even when progress is defined identically, monetary and multidimensional poverty often identify different episodes of rapid reduction.

Switch to **relative reduction,** and the landscape changes sharply. Most of the fastest relative reducers began with low levels of poverty. Eswatini is the only sub-Saharan African country among the ten fastest relative reductions under either global measure, despite the region's prominence under the absolute lens. Serbia in 2014–19 and China in 2010–14 are the only spells appearing among the ten fastest relative reductions under both the MPI and $3/day measure.

The **number-of-poor lens** changes the picture once again. Seven country spells – in India, China, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Pakistan – feature prominently under both monetary and multidimensional measures. Large countries can make enormous contributions to reducing the global number of poor people even without recording the fastest rates. While not among the fastest 20 countries in absolute reduction nor the fastest 60 spells in relative terms, from 2016/17 to 2021 Nigeria moved 9.5 million people out of multidimensional poverty – ranking among the top 10 spells with the largest annualised number of poor people leaving poverty, although numbers increased subsequently. Also, from 2010 to 2021 Burkina Faso reduced poverty strongly by nearly 20 percentage points, from 83.7% to 64.5%. However, the number of poor persons increased by 644,000 during that period.

The converse is equally important: poverty incidence can fall while the number of poor people rises. Across the 167 spells, the number of MPI-poor people increased in 50 countries, while the number living below $3/day increased in 65.

For development policy, the distinction is consequential. Incidence indicates prevalence. Absolute and relative rates illuminate pace from different starting positions. Numbers reveal scale and demographic pressure. Governments planning and budgeting for schools, health systems, social protection, infrastructure and employment policies need data on the number of poor people.

The Geography of Progress: Looking below national averages

This report demonstrates the importance of scrutinising poverty trends below the national level. A national poverty rate can fall while some of the country's poorest regions lag behind. The commitment to 'leave no one behind' therefore requires attention not only to whether poverty is declining, but to where or for whom it is declining fastest.

The report examines this by relating subnational regions' initial poverty levels to their subsequent absolute rates of poverty reduction. A population-weighted downward-sloping relationship indicates a pro-poor or convergent pattern: initially poorer regions are reducing poverty faster than initially better-off ones. An upward slope suggests the reverse.

Bolivia displays strongly pro-poor patterns in both multidimensional and monetary poverty: initially poorer regions reduce poverty faster and catch up. Niger's earlier MPI spell provides a contrasting pattern, with its least-poor region progressing markedly faster than other regions.

Across the broader analysis, roughly three-quarters of the spells for both multidimensional and monetary poverty have at least gently downward-sloping, population-weighted subnational patterns, indicating some degree of pro-poor convergence. But the patterns often do not coincide: only 29 of the 84 countries considered have at least one spell displaying a downward-sloping relationship for both MPI and monetary poverty.

Perhaps the most important conclusion from the subnational analysis is that subnational convergence is common but not universal – and is least reliable where poverty is higher. This raises an important question for development policy: even where national poverty is falling, are the poorest territories progressing quickly enough to close internal gaps?

This report is deliberately cautious. The subnational monetary and MPI datasets are not matched by year, year span or territory; the convergence question is thus estimated separately in each source. Administrative regions vary, and confidence intervals can be wide. The analysis is best understood as identifying broad patterns and cases for deeper investigation, not as providing another basis for ranking countries. This caution does not diminish the policy significance. It highlights the need for funders not to leave high-quality disaggregated poverty data behind.

The 4×3 Framework in One Country: From headline statistic to diagnostic tool

Is the 4×3 framework too complicated for policy? The report closes by bringing the pieces together through country applications: a simple graphical figure and corresponding panels consolidate key information at a glance.

Examples show the value added. Thailand and Mexico have very low global MPI and $3/day poverty, while their national poverty measures identify substantially higher levels of deprivation and meaningful subsequent reductions. In Malawi, the $3/day poverty incidence remains high, while its global MPI falls markedly and its official national MPI also records substantial reduction. In Afghanistan, after earlier periods of reduction in the two national measures, the two global measures rise in rough agreement, although survey changes complicate comparability. The 4×3 framework thus organises different lines of sight into a coherent at-a-glance diagnostic. On Mozambique, it reveals a mixed case, as national monetary poverty rose even as the other three measures fell.

Implications for Poverty Monitoring and Policy

For national governments, international organisations, the World Bank and development partners, five implications stand out:

1. **Monetary and multidimensional poverty should be analysed together and treated as complements.** Their convergence strengthens the evidence of broad-based progress; their divergence identifies issues requiring investigation.
2. **Progress should be communicated through multiple lenses.** Absolute reduction, relative reduction and changes in the number of poor people recognise different, legitimate forms of achievement.
3. **Global and national measures should both be used.** International measures enable comparison across countries. National measures are designed for national policy. Neither can perform the other's function.
4. **Subnational analysis is essential.** If leaving no one behind is to be assessed empirically, it is necessary to ask whether the groups or regions beginning with the highest poverty are catching up.
5. **All measurement depends upon regular household survey poverty data.** The report repeatedly encounters gaps in survey fre-

quency, temporal alignment, geographic comparability and disaggregation – which are constraints on poverty policy, not merely technical inconveniences.

The report is clear about its own data limitations. Yet these qualifications strengthen rather than weaken the report's underlying proposition: poverty must be measured clearly and precisely, not reduced to a single convenient number.

From Despair to Dynamism: The choice of poverty measures shapes incentives

The report begins from Amartya Sen's observation that description involves choice. The choice of poverty measures and lenses makes certain conditions and certain forms of progress visible.

A monetary metric illuminates one domain; an MPI illuminates another. A global measure privileges comparability; a national measure reflects context. Absolute reduction makes large advances visible; relative reduction recognises the size of the step towards eradication; changes in the number of poor people show the human scale of progress. National averages summarise, while subnational trajectories tell us whether poorer places are catching up.

The problem is therefore not that any of these measures or lenses is wrong. It is that a partial description can too easily be mistaken for the whole story. Yet, at the same time, too much information can overwhelm and stymie action.

The report's central message is simple: there is no single line of sight that adequately describes poverty trends. But choosing only a relative target fails to recognise the absolute and number-of-poor gains that matter tremendously – especially in the poorest places and largest countries. Ignoring these gains also matters, as recognition creates ongoing positive incentives.

The report's 4×3 framework offers a practical response. Rather than searching for one poverty statistic capable of doing every job, it introduces three clear lines of sight whose distinctive insights are relevant and actionable. The framework makes it possible to recognise, commend and learn from progress in various contexts. Positive recognition of different forms of poverty reduction can level the playing field, provide positive incentives to policy actors and hence help change the poverty narrative from despair to dynamism.



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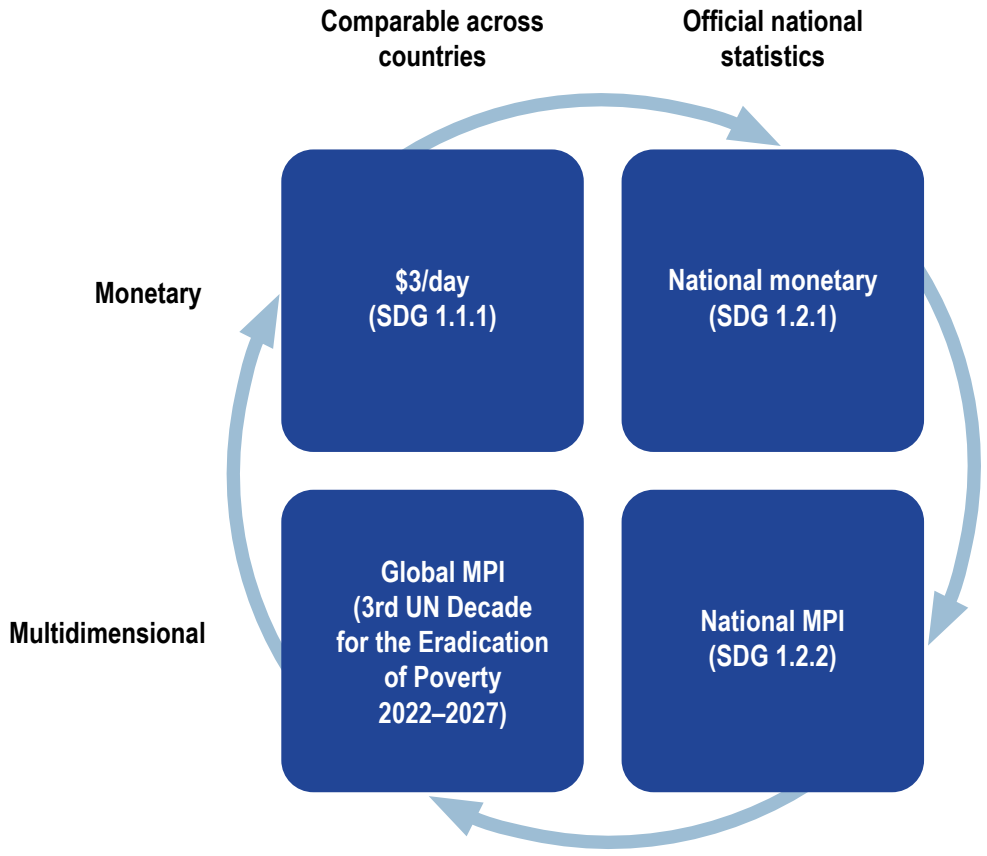
I. INTRODUCTION

In 'Description as Choice', Amartya Sen observed that measurement is, incorrectly, not necessarily considered a serious intellectual endeavour. '[T]o characterise a work in the social sciences as "purely descriptive"', he wrote, 'would not normally be regarded as high praise' (1980, p. 353). Yet 'description' – in the case of poverty measures, for example – is rather more demanding than it might seem. As Sen put it, 'description inevitably involves selection. It can be usefully seen as a choice of a subset from a set of possible statements' (1980, p. 367).

The reach of description and the challenge of selecting correctly is particularly clear in the case of poverty measurement. What is measured, and how success in poverty reduction is judged, makes a difference – as this report will demonstrate. Moreover, the subset of possible measures may give divergent conclusions about the same situation.

Rather than evading these complexities or settling for a quick selection, this report proposes tracking poverty in four poverty measures – both global and national, monetary and multidimensional (Figure 1) – and assessing progress using three lenses: absolute, relative and number-of-poor change. **Absolute** change shows the share of the population who leave poverty each year; **relative** shows the percentage of the distance to zero poverty that was travelled each year, and **number of poor** reports the change in the number of poor people each year. Using the three lenses together enables actors to recognise and celebrate poverty reduction across

FIGURE 1. Four core poverty measures



Source: Alkire 2025, updated.

Country	Population year 1	Population year 2	Poverty year 1	Poverty year 2	Absolute change	Relative change	Poor year 1	Poor year 2	Change in number of poor people
A	1M	1.1M	50%	30%	20pp	40%	500k	330k	–170k
B	100M	108M	10%	5%	5pp	50%	10,000k	5,400k	–4,600k

diverse contexts. We call this the 4×3 framework.

The framework includes the main poverty statistics used across the world (Alkire, 2025). **Global** measures can be compared across countries. The monetary poverty statistics are the **extreme monetary poverty line of $3/day** reported as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 1.1.1, supplemented in some situations by $4.20 or $8.30/day poverty measures.[1] The multidimensional statistics are the acute **global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)**, sometimes supplemented by the severe poverty line (50%) or the vulnerability cutoff (20%).[2] Official national poverty measures are permanent statistics of country governments that are tailored to context and guide policy, but cannot be compared across countries. These are **national monetary poverty measures** (reported as SDG Indicator 1.2.1) and the **national MPIs** (reported as SDG Indicator 1.2.2).

To introduce the three lenses, consider two countries, where the incidence of poverty is 50% in Country A, and 10% in Country B. How do we assess and compare their rates of poverty reduction?

Absolute: In the same year, A reduces its poverty to 30%, and B to 5%. So in absolute terms, 20% (50% - 30% = 20%) of the population of **Country A** left poverty – a far bigger share than Country B, where 5% (10%-5% = 5%) left poverty. Country A clearly does better regarding the **absolute share of the population who left poverty.**

Relative: But in relative terms, Country A progressed 40% of the way towards zero poverty [40% = (50%-30%)/50%], while Country B progressed 50% = [(10%-5%)/10%] – halfway to zero poverty. In this comparison, Country B goes further in terms of the **relative distance travelled to zero poverty.**

Number of poor: To estimate how many people left poverty, we count the number of poor people at the start of the spell (incidence × population at year 1) and at the end (incidence × population at year 2) and take the difference. In Country A, 500,000 people are poor in year 1 (1M × 50%), falling to 330,000 in year 2 (1.1M × 30%) – 170,000 fewer people. In Country B, 10 million people are poor initially (100M × 10%), falling to 5.4 million in year 2 (108M × 5%) – 4.6 million fewer people. Because both countries' populations are growing, the number of people who are no longer poor is smaller than a simple 'incidence change × one population figure' calculation would suggest. This is also why the number of MPI-poor people can rise even where the MPI incidence falls: population growth can outpace the rate of poverty reduction.

This matters as the first two SDG poverty targets were set in relative terms. SDG Target 1.1 is to end extreme monetary poverty according to the $3/day poverty line (which is equivalent to a 100% relative reduction). SDG Target 1.2 is to cut the incidence of official national monetary and multidimensional poverty metrics by half (a 50% relative reduction). But the SDGs' relative poverty targets slant the field to favour countries with lower starting levels of poverty. Halving poverty for a country with 8% of its population in poverty is quite different than halving poverty where 80% of people are poor. It is not surprising, therefore, that the poorest countries are often assessed as progressing more slowly – especially when change is via incidence not the MPI or poverty gap.

Statistics have become a performance indicator (Atkinson, 2019). Yet the SDGs' poverty targets, framed only in relative terms, do not offer an equal chance of success to every country. To level the playing field, poverty trends should be measured in more than one way, giving different (especially poorer) countries an opportunity to be recognised for their progress (Alkire, 2025).

This report explores this empirically by applying these lenses to matched global monetary and multidimensional poverty datasets to probe the extent of agreement and disagreement and show the different 'top performers' and overall matches by each of the three measures. Points of agreement are important because when complementary measures of

poverty point in the same direction, this strengthens the case for a given priority. Distinctions are also important, as they clarify when and how it may be essential to merge the insights of both measures instead of relying on only one. The three lenses and multidimensional and monetary datasets profile different best-performing countries. Rather than selecting only one angle, going forward, absolute, relative and number of poor changes in monetary and multidimensional poverty trends should be measured. These three ways of describing trends give all countries clear possibilities to register important progress.[3]

The analysis proceeds in stages. We first compare current poverty **levels** under the two global measures, examining poverty incidence by the global MPI and the $3/day extreme monetary poverty incidence as well as the MPI and poverty gap values. We then compare **changes** in incidence over time for the two global measures, considering whether monetary and multidimensional poverty move in the same direction and at similar speeds in the same periods. Starting nationally then moving to the **subnational** level, we assess whether initially poorer territories by these global measures are catching up with better-off territories. Finally, we fold in national monetary and MPI measures alongside the global measures and include case studies that overlay trajectories by the three lenses in all four measures, thus demonstrating how the 4×3 framework can be clearly and compactly communicated.

The empirical results demonstrate the value-added of measuring and analysing trends in the four measures and three lenses together. As the world community begins to look beyond the SDG Agenda 2030, we suggest that the 4×3 framework be used to recognise progress in poverty reduction in the future.

1.1 DATA SOURCES AND COUNTRY COVERAGE

In 1990, the World Bank established its $1/day poverty line to measure 'the inability to attain a minimal standard of living' (World Bank, 1990, p. 26); in 2010, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) established the global MPI to give direct visibility to some core non-monetary deprivations that poor people experience. Alongside these globally comparable measures, the World Bank, OPHI, UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund, among others, also support national governments to measure and use country-defined official national poverty measures – both monetary and multidimensional (which cannot be compared). A critical mass of trend data in each are now available, making the present report possible.

The report uses complementary data sources: the global MPI (Alkire et al., 2026a; 2026b), the World Bank's Poverty and Inequality Platform (PIP) (World Bank Group, 2026a) and Subnational Poverty and Inequality Database (SPID) (World Bank Group, 2025), OPHI's dataset containing official national multidimensional poverty indices,[4] and national monetary poverty measures from the World Development Indicators (WDI) database (World Bank Group, 2026b). The first three allow internationally harmonised comparisons for the same countries and years, while official national MPIs and monetary poverty measures provide a country-specific perspective. The analysis here refers to the countries and spells retained for this report (see Appendix A), not to the full coverage of each original database. PIP and SPID contain additional countries, but for comparability this analysis matches countries included in the global MPI for which sufficiently close or arguably comparable monetary observations can be constructed. Given the different characteristics of the four datasets used for this analysis, we acknowledge imperfect comparability. Importantly, our analyses draw on comparisons of mean point estimates because, while MPI datasets include standard errors around these estimates, PIP and SPID data do not; however assessments of total error remain vitally important.[5]

II. LEVELS OF POVERTY

2.1 THE INCIDENCE OF GLOBAL MPI, $3, $4.20 AND $8.30/DAY MEASURES

How do levels of poverty according to the global MPI compare to international poverty lines reported on the same year? The global MPI considers a person to be poor if they are deprived in at least one-third of the weighted indicators.

Figure 2 compares the incidence of multidimensional poverty with various monetary thresholds in matched years. Overall, the incidence of the MPI exceeds $3/day poverty in 60 of the 108 countries. The gap is widest in Guinea (66.2% MPI vs 12.2% monetary poverty), Mauritania (58.5% vs 10.5%), Chad (84.2% vs 41.0%) and Sudan (52.3% vs 10.1%) – each showing a difference of over 40 percentage points. An additional 11 countries have an MPI incidence that is 20–33 percentage points higher than the $3/day measure: Ethiopia, Mali, Senegal, Benin, Guinea-Bissau, Pakistan, Myanmar, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia and Guatemala.

In 48 countries, the incidence of $3/day poverty is higher than that of the MPI. The largest gaps are in Eswatini (43.3% monetary poverty vs 7.9% MPI) and Yemen (69.3% vs 37.4%) and span over 30 percentage points. Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa and Lesotho all show extreme monetary poverty exceeding the MPI by 20 percentage points or more.

There is greater agreement between $3/day and the MPI incidence in the lower part of the distribution. The size of disparities tends to be highest among the poorer countries.

In 22 countries, the gap between the two measures is under 1 percentage point, although this close alignment is largely a feature of countries with lower poverty: 21 of these 22 countries have an MPI incidence below 12%. Burundi is the exception, where the headcount ratio of multidimensional poverty is 75.1%, closely matching the monetary headcount ratio of 75.5% at the $3/day measure. But overall, the patterns by incidence tend to vary quite strongly, in both directions.

BOX 1. THE GLOBAL MPI AND $3/DAY LEVELS OF POVERTY

The global MPI counts a person as poor if they are deprived in at least one-third (33.33%) of a set of weighted health, education and living standards indicators: severe poverty uses a cutoff of 50%.*

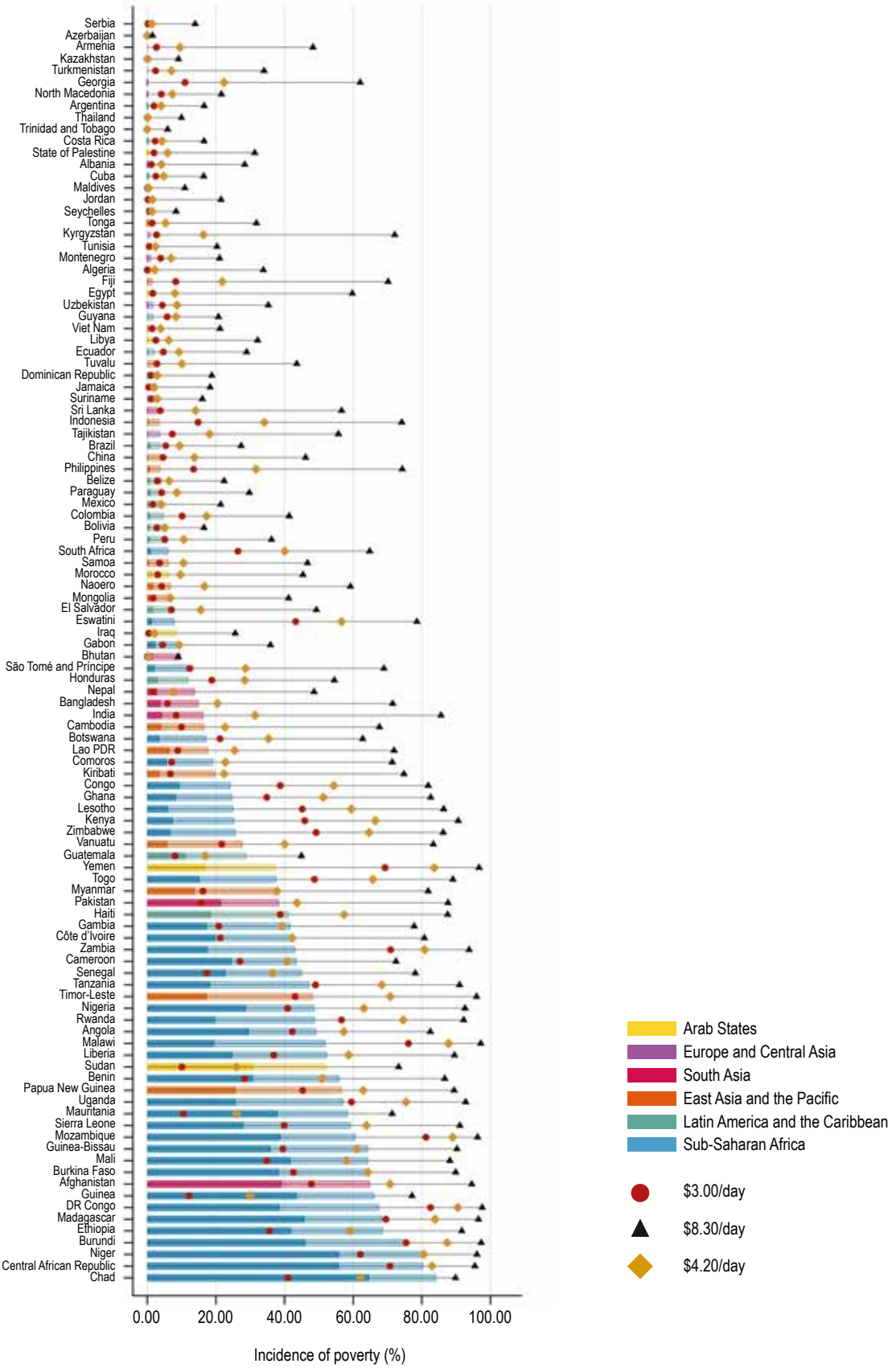
The $3/day poverty line measures the share of population living below $3 per person per day in 2021 purchasing power parity terms (where all currencies are aligned on a common scale of what $1 will buy). Other cutoffs such as $4.20 and $8.30 are also published.

Beyond incidence (share of the population that is poor), we also report intensity (for the MPI: the average share of indicators a poor person is deprived in) and the normalised gap (for monetary poverty: how far below the line a poor person's income falls, on average). Two countries with the same incidence can differ sharply on these.

All level comparisons used matched years: each country's monetary estimate (from PIP) is drawn from the same year as its MPI survey. See Appendix A for more details.

* Global MPI data tables also implement poverty lines of 1%, 20%, 40%, 70% and 100% (Alkire et al., 2026a, Table 2), so extensive comparisons are possible, but for simplicity Figure 2 only considers 33.33% and 50%.

FIGURE 2. Overlapping multidimensional and monetary poverty measures show each offers distinctive information



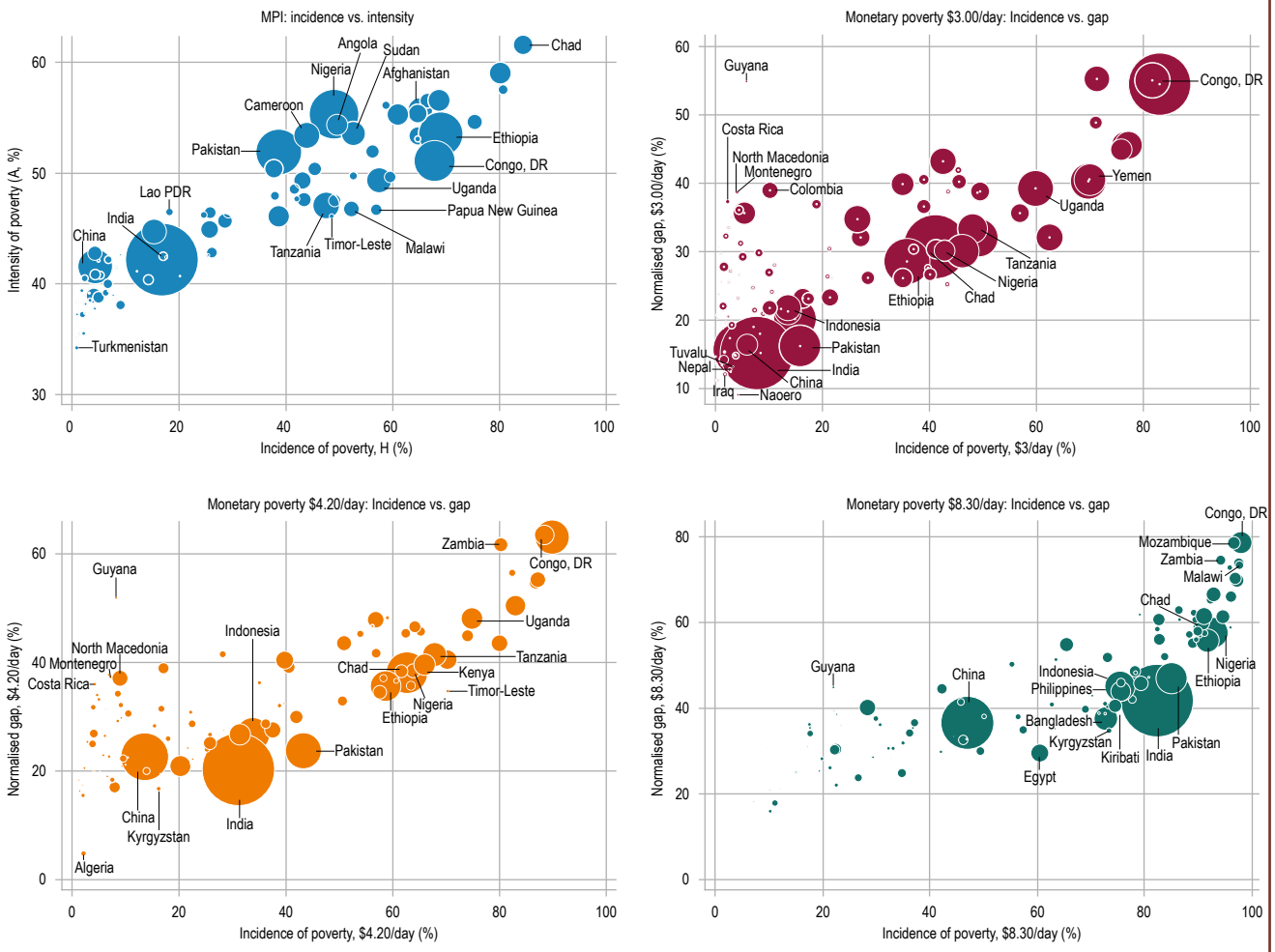
Note: Darker shading within bars indicates the incidence of severe multidimensional poverty.
Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

The divergence between the MPI and $3/day incidence is highest in sub-Saharan Africa. Only 12 of the 40 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have MPI and $3/day incidence rates within 10 percentage points of each other. In contrast, 16 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have MPI rates that are 12–54 percentage points higher than $3/day rates, and 12 have $3/day monetary poverty rates 10–39 percentage points higher than the MPI.

2.2 SUPPLEMENTING INCIDENCE WITH INTENSITY OR NORMALISED GAP

The above analysis focused on the incidence or headcount ratio of global poverty measures – the percentage of the population who are poor. However, as argued forcefully for decades, the headcount ratio faces several policy challenges. In monetary poverty measures, the incidence does not capture how far poor people's income is below the poverty line – an income of $1/day is far worse than one of $2.90/day, but both are simply considered poor. In multidimensional poverty, incidence does not reflect the intensity of poverty – being deprived in 90% of weighted indicators is worse than being deprived in 35%. Furthermore, the multidimensional poverty incidence cannot be broken down to show the exact number of poor people who are deprived in each indicator.[6] The most fundamental problem may be that the reduction of incidence does not recognise the gains (or losses) among the poorest people, who often, for example, reduce their gap or intensity but fail to cross the threshold

FIGURE 3. Across both monetary and multidimensional poverty measures and monetary poverty lines, as the incidence of poverty rises, so do the intensity and normalised gap



Note: The size of bubbles is proportional to the number of poor, using 2024 population estimates.
Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

out of poverty (Alkire et al. 2021). How would the comparison across countries change if we focus on the poverty gap in monetary space, and the MPI in multidimensional space?

Figure 3 shows the relationship between incidence and intensity/gap, using the same structure for monetary and multidimensional poverty measures. The horizontal axis shows the incidence of poverty, and the vertical axis shows the intensity or normalised gap for $3/day, $4.20 and $8.30 monetary measures. In all four figures, the same unfortunate pattern is evident: as the incidence rises – that is, towards the right of the figure – so do the intensity and gap. This means that in places where the highest share of the population is poor, each poor person, on average, has a lower income, or carries a higher deprivation burden, than poor people in countries with a lower incidence.

For example, in India, 16.4% of people are poor by the MPI, with the average deprivation score of each poor person being 42%. In Chad, the poorest country by the MPI, 84.2% of people are poor. On average, a poor person here is deprived in 61.4% of the weighted indicators – so will carry one additional deprivation in a health or education indicator (undernutrition, child mortality, a child out of school, or no one in the household with six years of schooling) or three to four additional deprivations in living standards indicators such as drinking water or electricity, compared to the average poor person in India. Turning to the $3/day measure, in Pakistan, 15.8% of people are poor and the normalised gap is 16.2%, meaning that, on average, each poor person's income is $3 × (100% – 16.2%) or $2.51 per day in purchasing power parity terms. But in Mozambique, where over 80% of people are monetarily poor, each poor person has an average income of only $1.36 ($3 × (100% – 54.8%)). These differences in the gap or intensity are not mere numbers – they have a real impact on poor people's lives.

However, there is a range of country experiences. Several countries have the same incidence, but the associated vertical gap or intensity varies significantly, showing that countries do have space to reduce intensity or gap. For example, Angola and Burkina Faso have almost identical incidence at the $3/day line – 42.3% and 42.6%, respectively, yet their normalised gaps diverge at 43.0% and 30.0%. The same holds in multidimensional poverty. Timor Leste and Nigeria have very similar incidence of MPI (48.3% and 48.7%), but the average intensity among poor people differs by nine percentage points (45.9% and 55.1%). So, to what extent does the relationship between the MPI and poverty gap measures differ from the relationship between the two incidence measures alone? As incidence levels diverge, particularly in the poorest countries which are crucial for poverty reduction, it is useful to explore this further.

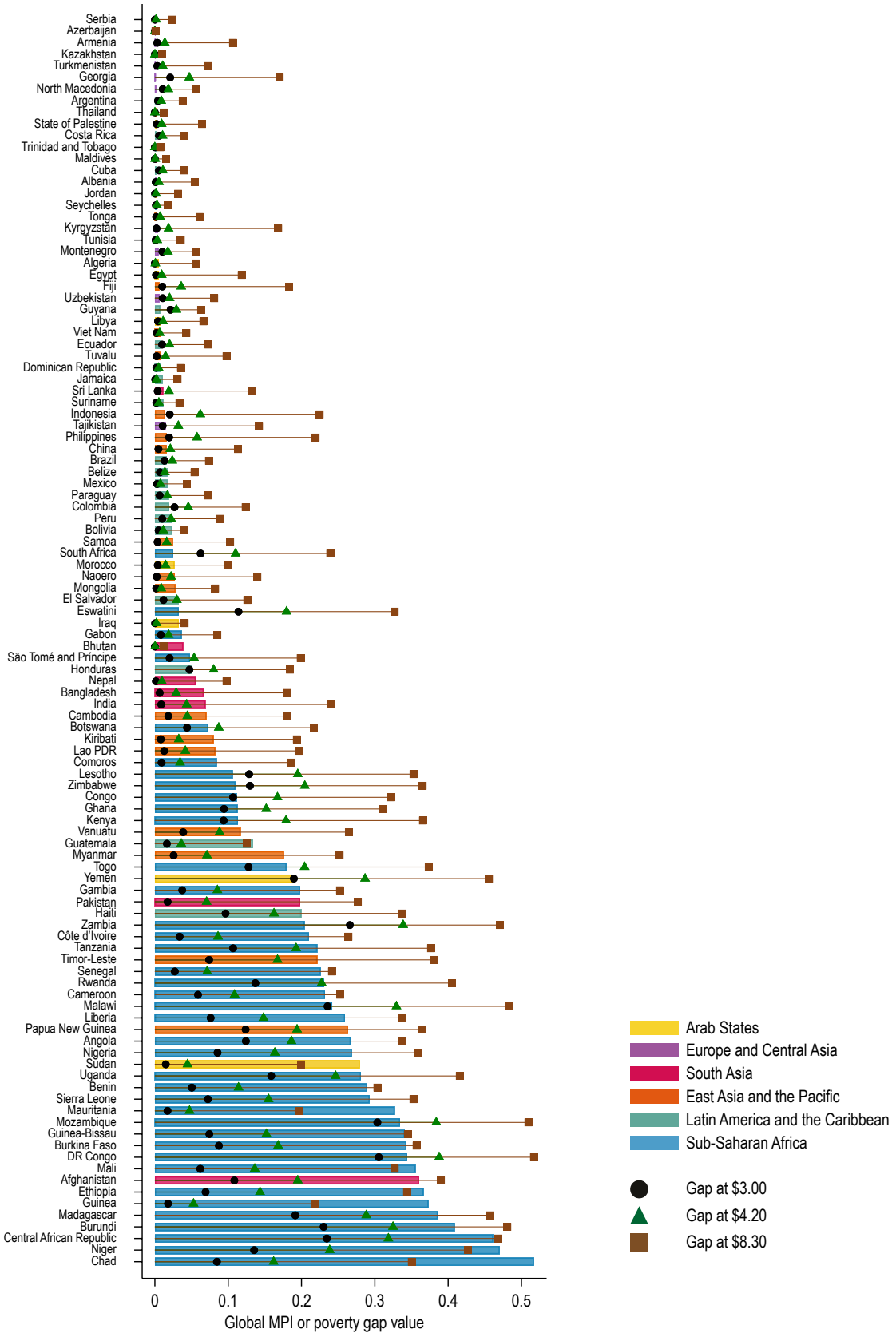
To compare the MPI and the poverty gap per country, Figure 4 plots the MPI (incidence × intensity of poverty, which ranges from 0 to 1) against the monetary poverty gap (incidence × normalised income gap, which ranges from 0 to 1). The rank correlation between the incidence of both measures is 0.794; between the MPI and the poverty gap it is fractionally lower, at 0.740.

The poverty gap and the MPI are more precise and offer better policy guidance. The reason why this report primarily examines the incidence of monetary and multidimensional poverty is due to their direct comparability and wide public familiarity. Further analyses on the more precise measures, however, are certainly worthwhile.

2.3 NUMBER OF POOR PEOPLE BY EACH MEASURE ACROSS WORLD REGIONS

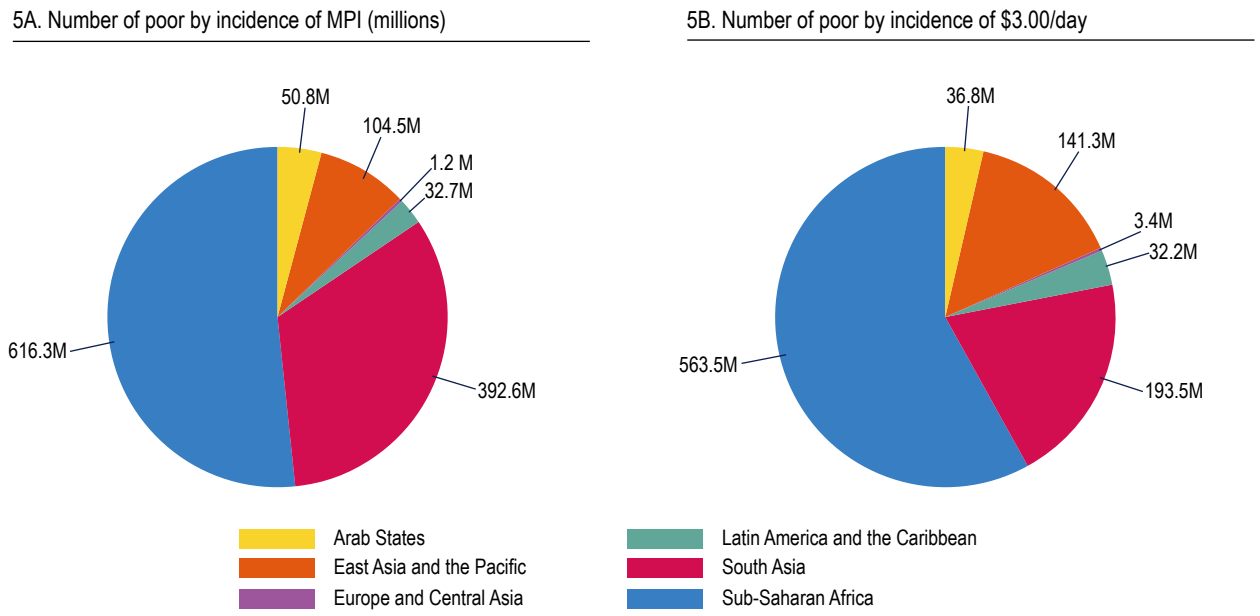
Differences in incidence provide the first indication that the two measures identify poverty differently. Their global policy significance, however, also depends on the size of the populations concerned. If one country has a population of 1 million, and 80% of people are poor, then in total 800,000 people are poor. Another country with a population of 100 million, of whom 20% are poor, would be home to 20 million poor people. It is necessary always to complement an analysis of the level of poverty with that of the number of poor people to create accurate comparisons. This section examines the total number of people identified as poor under each measure by world region (Figure 5).

FIGURE 4. Comparing the MPI and the monetary poverty gap per country for different monetary poverty lines



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

FIGURE 5. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are home to the vast majority of both multidimensionally and monetarily poor people



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A and 2024 population estimates from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 2024).

There are 1.2 billion poor people by the global MPI, and 971 million are poor at the $3/day line in the same years,[7] meaning roughly 277 million more people are multidimensionally poor than monetarily poor.

Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest number of poor people in both measures, but its share varies. The region accounts for 51.4% of MPI-poor people (616 million) and 58.1% of $3/day poor people (564 million – a smaller number despite a higher share since the overall population in poverty is lower at the $3/day line). East Asia and the Pacific shows a clear divergence between the two measures, with one in 11 people poor according to the global MPI (8.7% or 105 million) compared to one in seven under the $3/day line (14.6% or 141 million). South Asia shows the sharpest contrast: home to one-third of all MPI-poor people (32.8%, 393 million), yet only one in five of those living on $3/day (19.9%, 194 million).[8]

The total contribution of other regions – the Arab States, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean – never exceeds roughly 7% of poor people under either measure. But while the numbers of monetary and multidimensional poor people nearly match in Latin America and the Caribbean, the measured countries of Europe and Central Asia have nearly three times as many people living in monetary poverty as in multidimensional poverty. Together, the different regional compositions show that the MPI and monetary poverty measures are not simply two versions of the same concept of poverty; they capture different populations and regional make ups, and the picture of poverty across the world looks meaningfully different depending on the poverty measure used – hence we view both as essential and complementary.

III. THE 10 FASTEST TRENDS: DISTINCTIVE INSIGHTS THROUGH THREE LENSES

Considering trends across 167 matched country-year periods (spells), a clear question emerges: is the rate of reduction of the MPI and $3/day incidence similar across countries and spells? If not, which country spells were best in reducing each kind of poverty and when, and how does the list of fastest reducers vary between the global MPI and $3/day measure? To do this, we first compare the 10 fastest reducers in terms of the absolute speed of poverty reduction by $3/day and the global MPI. Next, we list the fastest relative reductions of the same measures. Finally, we consider the 10 countries in which the highest number of people exited poverty by each measure.

3.1 ABSOLUTE REDUCTION

The most common measure of poverty reduction is absolute change. When applied to the incidence of the MPI or $3/day measure, it shows the share of the population who leave poverty each year. Clearly, holding population constant, it is better if 5% of the population move out of poverty per year than only 1%. For example, in Eswatini between 2006/7 and 2010, 4.7% of the population left poverty each year, as monetary poverty fell from 38.7 to 22.3% in merely 3.5 years (Table 1).[9] In Mali (2015–18), 7.2% of the population moved out of poverty each year, as monetary poverty fell from 54.3% to 32.6%.

Of the fastest 10 out of 167 country spells to reduce the MPI and the fastest 10 to reduce the monetary poverty, only two spells appear on both lists: Togo (2013/14–2017) and Liberia (2007–13). However, eight of the fastest ten countries to reduce the MPI incidence are in sub-Saharan Africa, as are nine of the fastest countries to reduce $3/day. So, in both contexts, poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa

BOX 2. KEY TERMS

We track changes in poverty through three lenses:
- **Absolute** (percentage point change in incidence per year)
- **Relative** (percent of the distance to zero poverty travelled per year)
- **Number of poor** (annual change in the number of people in poverty, using population at the start and end of the period).

Spell: Each country period is known as a spell: across 89 countries we cover 167 spells, as some countries have multiple MPI observations. Monetary poverty estimates are matched to each spell. Where an MPI survey year spans two calendar years (e.g. 2015–16), the matched monetary poverty estimate is the simple average of the $3.00 headcount ratio in both years (see Appendix A).

Stable trend: Where a spell's absolute annual change is 0.1 percentage points or less, or relative change is 1.0% or less, we classify this spell as 'stable' rather than as an increase or decrease.

Important caveats: Rates (absolute, relative and number of poor) are annualised for comparability, but this does not mean annualised rates are strictly comparable. Spells range from 1 to 12 years, so annualised rates from short and long spells should be interpreted accordingly. Also, some monetary trends track consumption, others income. While harmonised MPI trends are comparable over time for the same country, some spells are missing an indicator or do not cover nutrition for the same age group, which needs to be considered when comparing countries.* A full assessment of country performance would need to weigh trends alongside measurement, historical and policy considerations. Our aim here is more modest: to illustrate what each of the three lenses adds.

* Appendix A details all the dataset specificities, while Appendix B presents the analytical conventions and limitations used in this report.

TABLE 1. Fastest annualised absolute poverty reduction by the MPI and $3/day measure

FASTEST ABSOLUTE MPI (H) REDUCTION					FASTEST ABSOLUTE $3/DAY REDUCTION				
Country	**Start**	**End**	**MPI (H) change (pp)**	**$3/day change (pp)**	**Country**	**Start**	**End**	**MPI (H) change (pp)**	**$3/day change (pp)**
Eswatini	2006/07	2010	**–4.69**	–1.23	Mali	2015	2018	–2.52	**–7.23**
Sierra Leone	2013	2017	**–4.03**	0.22	Benin	2017/18	2021/22	–2.51	**–5.36**
São Tomé and Príncipe	2008/09	2014	**–3.61**	–0.45	Guinea-Bissau	2014	2018/19	–0.37	**–4.56**
Timor-Leste	2009/10	2016	**–3.50**	–1.18	**Liberia**	**2007**	**2013**	–2.99	**–4.52**
Togo	**2013/14**	**2017**	**–3.48**	–4.13	Benin	2014	2017/18	0.80	**–4.51**
Lao PDR	2011/12	2017	**–3.14**	–1.19	Senegal	2010/11	2017	–1.29	**–4.18**
Congo, Rep.	2005	2014/15	**–3.06**	–1.65	**Togo**	**2013/14**	**2017**	–3.48	**–4.13**
Côte d'Ivoire	2011/12	2016	**–3.03**	–2.91	China	2010	2014	–1.32	**–4.00**
Liberia	**2007**	**2013**	**–2.99**	–4.52	Senegal	2017	2019	–1.07	**–3.50**
Ethiopia	2016	2019	**–2.88**	0.83	Côte d'Ivoire	2016	2021	–0.47	**–3.30**

Note: Higher negative value signifies faster reduction.
Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

leads all other regions (UNECA 2025). Similarly, 15 of the fastest 20 countries according to both measures are distinct. Yet, again, across the fastest 20 countries to reduce poverty by either the MPI or $3/day or both in absolute terms, sub-Saharan Africa has the most countries.

The low MPI–$3/day overlap means that the countries which are considered fastest in reducing poverty depend heavily on which measure a country is reducing. Looking at the starting incidence of the MPI, in the 10 country spells with the fastest reductions, their initial MPI range was 40 to 81.5%, and among the fastest 20 countries only one spell – in Nepal – had a starting incidence of less than 30%. For monetary poverty, the initial incidence ranged from 20 to 63% for the fastest 10 and from 16% to 83% for the fastest 20. These ranges point to a mechanical fact: that countries starting from a higher incidence simply have more room to fall, so large absolute reductions are structurally possible – but are impossible for countries already close to eliminating poverty. This means that absolute speed should be read alongside where a country started, and not considered a standalone measure of failure.

3.2 RELATIVE REDUCTION

Annualised relative reduction measures the percentage of the distance towards zero poverty that was travelled each year. For example, if poverty in one country was 40% at the start and 20% at the finish, then it reduced by half – a relative reduction of 50%. If poverty in another country fell from 4% to 2% it also fell by 50%. If instead poverty fell from 40% to 30%, it fell by only 25% in relative terms. Table 2 presents the countries with the fastest rates of relative poverty reduction.[10]

The picture of successful spells changes radically when reduction is measured in relative instead of absolute terms. A different set of countries now emerge, with the fastest for the MPI being Kyrgyz Republic (2014–18) where poverty fell from 2.2% to 0.4%, followed by North Macedonia (2005/06–2011), Serbia (2014–19) and China (2010–14), the latter two also being the only overlapping spells with the fastest for $3/day. The top five for $3/day also include Moldova (2005–12), Mongolia (2010–13) and Thailand (2012–2015/16). Eswatini is the only country that appears in the fastest 10 for both relative and absolute MPI reduction, and China is the only one for $3/day. It is also striking that Eswatini is the only sub-Saharan African country among the fastest 10 relative reductions by either measure, yet the region dominated the absolute rankings. The best-performing countries

TABLE 2. Fastest annualised relative poverty reduction by the MPI and $3/day measure

FASTEST RELATIVE MPI (H) REDUCTION					FASTEST RELATIVE $3/DAY REDUCTION				
Country	**Start**	**End**	**MPI (H) % change**	**$3/day % change**	**Country**	**Start**	**End**	**MPI (H) % change**	**$3/day % change**
Kyrgyz Republic	2014	2018	**–34.84**	–7.62	**Serbia**	**2014**	**2019**	–18.74	**–53.19**
North Macedonia	2005/06	2011	**–20.22**	20.83	Moldova	2005	2012	–7.36	**–39.37**
Serbia	**2014**	**2019**	**–18.74**	–53.19	Mongolia	2010	2013	–11.95	**–36.41**
China	**2010**	**2014**	**–18.35**	–31.26	Thailand	2012	2015/16	–9.28	**–32.70**
Azerbaijan	2006	2023	**–16.93**	–	**China**	**2010**	**2014**	–18.35	**–31.26**
Egypt	2014	2021	**–16.27**	1.93	Mexico	2020	2021	–1.47	**–30.23**
Eswatini	2006/07	2010	**–14.58**	–2.11	Ukraine	2007	2012	–7.97	**–27.52**
Armenia	2010	2015/16	**–14.40**	–1.90	Dominican Republic	2014	2019	–5.27	**–24.59**
Mexico	2023	2024	**–14.21**	–15.79	Kazakhstan	2010/11	2015	–5.72	**–24.30**
Viet Nam	2013/14	2020/21	**–12.60**	–11.65	Mexico	2021	2022	22.73	**–23.33**

Note: Higher negative value signifies faster reduction.

Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

are spread through Europe and Central Asia, the Arab States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and East Asia and the Pacific. However, South Asian countries Bangladesh, Nepal and India do figure among the fastest 20, as do Mali and Senegal from sub-Saharan Africa for $3/day.

Starting conditions explain much of this divide. Except for Eswatini – a clear outlier – the nine fastest country spells to reduce the MPI in relative terms had starting levels of poverty under 10%, and seven of these (across both the MPI and $3/day lists) started with an incidence of less than 5%. Only Serbia, Moldova and China started with 8.9% to 20.6% of their population below the $3/day line. Almost all countries that reduced poverty fastest in relative terms therefore had low levels of poverty at the start of their spell, which contrasts sharply with the high incidence sub-Saharan African spells that led on absolute reductions.

3.3 NUMBER OF POOR PEOPLE

A third way to appreciate poverty reduction is to count the net number of people who leave poverty. Based on the latest MPI data available in 2026 and the 2024 population figures, there are 1.2 billion MPI-poor people and 971 million $3/day poor people worldwide in matched years. So which countries had the greatest success in graduating large numbers of poor people out of poverty truly matters.

Here the story changes sharply since this lens naturally profiles countries with more people to move out of poverty in absolute numbers. The same seven country spells top both charts, only in a slightly different order: India (2015/16–2019/21) and (2005/6–2015/16), and China (2010–14) top the charts, followed by Bangladesh (2014–19) and (2019–22), and Indonesia (2012–17) as well as Pakistan (2012/13–2017/18).

Nigeria (2016/17–2018 and 2018–21) and Ethiopia (2016–19) complete the top 10 for the MPI, while the Philippines (2013–17), Mexico (2020–21) and Mali (2015–18) complete the $3/day top 10 (Table 3).[11] In contrast to the divergence at the top of the fastest and relative-fastest rankings, this degree of agreement points to the simple fact that population size, alongside the level of poverty and speed-based rankings, becomes an important factor once the question shifts from how fast to how many.

Reporting the changes in the number of poor people is important for other reasons, as exemplified by Nigeria. In 2016/17–2018 and 2018–21, Nigeria reduced poverty by 2.4 percentage points per year then 1.4, respectively – which is steady but not rapid (its rank of absolute reduction was 25 then

TABLE 3. Fastest annualised reduction in the number of poor people by the MPI and $3/day measure

HIGHEST ANNUALISED # LEAVING MPI POVERTY					HIGHEST ANNUALISED # LEAVING $3/DAY POVERTY				
Country	Start	End	# leaving MPI (annualised) Thousands	# leaving $3/ day (annualised) Thousands	Country	Start	End	# leaving MPI Thousands	# leaving $3/day Thousands
India	2015/16	2019/21	**31,144**	20,192	China	2010	2014	**17,403**	53,644
India	2005/06	2015/16	**27,398**	30,348	India	2005/06	2015/16	**27,398**	30,348
China	2010	2014	**17,403**	53,644	India	2015/16	2019/21	**31,144**	20,192
Bangladesh	2014	2019	**4,217**	3,296	Indonesia	2012	2017	**1,551**	5,530
Nigeria	2016/17	2018	**3,639**	54	Bangladesh	2014	2019	**4,217**	3,296
Bangladesh	2019	2022	**2,539**	2,496	Pakistan	2012/13	2017/18	**1,378**	2,878
Indonesia	2012	2017	**1,551**	5,530	Bangladesh	2019	2022	**2,539**	2,496
Pakistan	2012/13	2017/18	**1,378**	2,878	Philippines	2013	2017	**580**	1,762
Nigeria	2018	2021	**1,360**	–6,229	Mexico	2020	2021	**42**	1,623
Ethiopia	2016	2019	**1,011**	–1,960	Mali	2015	2018	**59**	1,144

Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

53, with 1 being the fastest). Its relative annualised reduction was also modest, at 6% then 3.9% (ranked 69 and 92 out of 167 spells). But in those two time periods, a total of 9.5 million poor people left poverty (5.5 million in the first spell and 4 million in the second). Nigeria's progress is worth celebrating, but its significant accomplishment is not visible if we consider only the absolute and relative speed of reduction. It is also fragile – from 2021–24, the number of poor people in Nigeria sharply increased, emphasising that analysis by spells must be complemented with full analyses over time by country (see Section 4.2).

3.4 IN SUMMARY: APPLYING THE THREE LENSES TO GLOBAL MEASURES

This section compares the best-performing countries in poverty reduction using the global MPI and $3/day measures in terms of absolute, relative and number of people reductions. It is evident that the MPI and $3/day measures do not unanimously concur on the best-performing countries, and that champions for each measure are almost completely different for the three lenses (Table 4).

Each lens also has a structural catch. It is nearly impossible for a country already close to eliminating poverty to perform well in absolute reduction terms. Thailand's $3/day incidence fell 75% (relatively) over 3.5 years (from 0.4% to 0.1%), but that is only a 0.09 percentage point per year in absolute terms. Relative reduction is nearly impossible for a country starting from high poverty: for Liberia to match a 75% relative reduction from a starting incidence of 81.5%, poverty would need to fall 60.1 percentage points to 21.3%. And large reductions in the number of poor people are only possible for countries with a large poor population to begin with. None of this makes any country's successes less real; it means a country's speed on any one lens should be read alongside its starting conditions, not as a standalone measure of success or failure.

TABLE 4. Fastest reducers by two global measures and all three lenses on poverty (annualised)

FASTEST ABSOLUTE MPI (H) REDUCTION

Country	Start	End	MPI (H) change (pp)
Eswatini	2006/07	2010	-4.69
Sierra Leone	2013	2017	-4.03
São Tomé and Príncipe	2008/09	2014	-3.61
Timor-Leste	2009/10	2016	-3.5
Togo	2013/14	2017	-3.48
Lao PDR	2011/12	2017	-3.14
Congo, Rep.	2005	2014/15	-3.06
Côte d'Ivoire	2011/12	2016	-3.03
Liberia	2007	2013	-2.99
Ethiopia	2016	2019	-2.88

FASTEST RELATIVE MPI (H) REDUCTION

Country	Start	End	MPI (H) % change
Kyrgyz Republic	2014	2018	-34.84
North Macedonia	2005/06	2011	-20.22
Serbia	2014	2019	-18.74
China	2010	2014	-18.35
Azerbaijan	2006	2023	-16.93
Egypt	2014	2021	-16.27
Eswatini	2006/07	2010	-14.58
Armenia	2010	2015/16	-14.4
Mexico	2023	2024	-14.21
Viet Nam	2013/14	2020/21	-12.6

HIGHEST # LEAVING MPI POVERTY

Country	Start	End	# leaving MPI (annualised) (thousands)
India	2015/16	2019/21	31,144
India	2005/06	2015/16	27,398
China	2010	2014	17,403
Bangladesh	2014	2019	4,217
Nigeria	2016/17	2018	3,639
Bangladesh	2019	2022	2,539
Indonesia	2012	2017	1,551
Pakistan	2012/13	2017/18	1,378
Nigeria	2018	2021	1,360
Ethiopia	2016	2019	1,011

FASTEST ABSOLUTE $3/DAY REDUCTION

Country	Start	End	$3/day change (pp)
Mali	2015	2018	-7.23
Benin	2017/18	2021/22	-5.36
Guinea-Bissau	2014	2018/19	-4.56
Liberia	2007	2013	-4.52
Benin	2014	2017/18	-4.51
Senegal	2010/11	2017	-4.18
Togo	2013/14	2017	-4.13
China	2010	2014	-4
Senegal	2017	2019	-3.5
Côte d'Ivoire	2016	2021	-3.3

FASTEST RELATIVE $3/DAY REDUCTION

Country	Start	End	$3/day % change
Serbia	2014	2019	-53.19
Moldova	2005	2012	-39.37
Mongolia	2010	2013	-36.41
Thailand	2012	2015/16	-32.7
China	2010	2014	-31.26
Mexico	2020	2021	-30.23
Ukraine	2007	2012	-27.52
Dominican Republic	2014	2019	-24.59
Kazakhstan	2010/11	2015	-24.3
Mexico	2021	2022	-23.33

HIGHEST # LEAVING $3/DAY POVERTY

Country	Start	End	# leaving $3/day (annualised) (thousands)
China	2010	2014	53,644
India	2005/06	2015/16	30,348
India	2015/16	2019/21	20,192
Indonesia	2012	2017	5,530
Bangladesh	2014	2019	3,296
Pakistan	2012/13	2017/18	2,878
Bangladesh	2019	2022	2,496
Philippines	2013	2017	1,762
Mexico	2020	2021	1,623
Mali	2015	2018	1,144

Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

IV. SYSTEMATIC TREND COMPARISONS OF GLOBAL MEASURES

Going beyond the fastest 10, this section systematically explores the trends of the global MPI and $3/day monetary poverty across all 167 country spells, to identify points of convergence and divergence in the direction of change and speed of change, and summarise these results by tercile.

4.1 DIRECTION OF CHANGE

This section systematically compares trends in the incidence of multidimensional poverty with trends in the incidence of the $3/day monetary poverty line across all spells, not just the fastest 10. As standard errors are available for the MPI but not the $3/day measure, the comparisons cannot consider the statistical significance of changes; however, consideration of sampling error and total error is vital going forward (World Bank, 2017).

In the MPI trends, 134 of the 167 spells show a reduction of the MPI incidence, 11 show an increase and 22 remain stable under the pre-defined tolerance rate. The monetary poverty trends differ: 114 spells show a reduction, while 25 show no change and 28 show an increase (Table 5).

The multidimensional and monetary poverty headcount ratios share the same direction of change in 110 of the 167 spells (nearly two-thirds). In 98 spells, both measures decline; in 3, both increase; and in 9, the change is less than or equal to 0.1, which, in absence of standard errors for monetary poverty estimates, is referred to as stable.

Both poverty measures move in opposite directions in 28 spells. In three-quarters of the spells (21), multidimensional poverty declines, while monetary poverty rises, compared with only seven in which monetary poverty falls while multidimensional poverty rises. This pattern is markedly concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for 18 of the 21 spells. This suggests that improvements in the indicators included in the MPI do occur, even where household income or consumption remains under pressure. Sierra Leone (2013–17) provides the clearest example, as multidimensional poverty incidence fell by approximately four percentage points per year while monetary poverty increased slightly.

Taken together, 57 spells – more than one-third of the sample – show either opposite movements or change in only one measure, which again highlights the value of considering trends in both measures to see the fuller picture (Table 6).

TABLE 5. Country spells and absolute and relative direction typology

Direction typology	Spells	Percentage of country spells	Cumulative percentage
1. Both decrease	98	58.7	58.7
2. Both increase	3	1.8	60.5
3. Both stable	9	5.4	65.9
4. H decreases, $3 headcount increases	21	12.6	78.4
5. H increases, $3 headcount decreases	7	4.2	82.6
6. H decreases, $3 headcount stable	15	9.0	91.6
7. H stable, $3 headcount decreases	9	5.4	97.0
8. H increases, $3 headcount stable	1	0.6	97.6
9. H stable, $3 headcount increases	4	2.4	100
Total Spells:	167	100	

Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

TABLE 6. Country spells with divergent trends

Type	6	7	4	5	8	9
$3	Stable	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	Stable	Increase
MPI	Decrease	Stable	Decrease	Increase	Increase	Stable
	Albania (2008/09–2017/18) Algeria (2012/13–2018/19) Azerbaijan (2006–2023) Bosnia and Herzegovina (2006–2011/12) Chad (2014/15–2019) DR of the Congo (2017/18–2023/24) Ecuador (2013/14–2018) Egypt (2014–2021) Gabon (2012–2019/21) Iraq (2011–2018) Mexico (2016–2020) Peru (2019–2021) Suriname (2010–2018) Thailand (2012–2015/16) Trinidad and Tobago (2011–2022)	Chad (2010–2014/15) Mexico (2020–2021) Moldova (2005–2012) Peru (2018–2019) Peru (2021–2022) Serbia (2014–2019) Tunisia (2011/12–2018) Turkmenistan (2015/16–2019) Turkmenistan (2019–2024)	Angola (2015/16–2023/24) DR of the Congo (2013/14–2017/18) Ethiopia (2016–2019) Gambia (2018/19–2020) Kenya (2014–2022) Liberia (2013–2019/20) Madagascar (2008/09–2018) Madagascar (2018–2021) Malawi (2015/16–2019/20) Mali (2018–2023/24) Mongolia (2013–2018) Mozambique (2011–2022/23) Nigeria (2018–2021) North Macedonia (2005/06–2011) Peru (2022–2023) Sierra Leone (2013–2017) Uganda (2011–2016) Zambia (2013/14–2018) Zambia (2018–2024) Zimbabwe (2010/11–2015) Zimbabwe (2015–2019)	Benin (2014–2017/18) Guinea (2016–2018) Kyrgyzstan (2018–2023) Mauritania (2015–2019/21) Mexico (2021–2022) Mexico (2022–2023) Peru (2023–2024)	Nigeria (2021–2024)	Malawi (2019/20–2024) State of Palestine (2014–2019/20) Serbia (2010–2014) Yemen (2013–2022/23)

Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

A more systematic assessment of the number of poor people cannot be precise for a number of reasons – the central reason being that the number of poor people is counted using the population during the year of the survey, and the year spans vary in number of years and spans per country, so there is no clear comparability across countries. To describe the data that do exist, while the absolute and relative incidence of the MPI increased in only 14 of the 167 spells, the number of MPI-poor people increased in 50 spells, because poverty reduction was outpaced by population growth. These 50 spells increased the number of people in poverty by 90.9 million. What this makes transparent is that a statistically significant reduction of poverty – even at a strong absolute pace like Burkina Faso (2010–21) at 1.75 percentage points per year, falling from 83.7% to 64.5% – can go alongside an increase in the number of poor people – in this case by 644,000, as population growth outpaced this reduction.

Given the caveats of limited comparability noted above, a systematic assessment would also wish to probe and celebrate the historic contributions of India and China to global changes. For example, focusing on the total reduction in number of MPI-poor people (603 million across 117 spells, ignoring those that increased the number of poor people), 80% of all people who moved out of poverty lived in India or China. Of the net reduction of 512 million people globally according to the global MPI, India was home to 81%, and India and China together to 94%, of those leaving poverty.

The monetary data pattern for these same country spells is distinct. The number of poor people increased in 65 of the 167 spells, a total increase of 162 million people – compared with 90.9 million added across the 50 spells where the number of MPI-poor people increased. The $3/day poverty incidence increased in 37 of these 65 spells, compared with only 14 spells for the MPI.

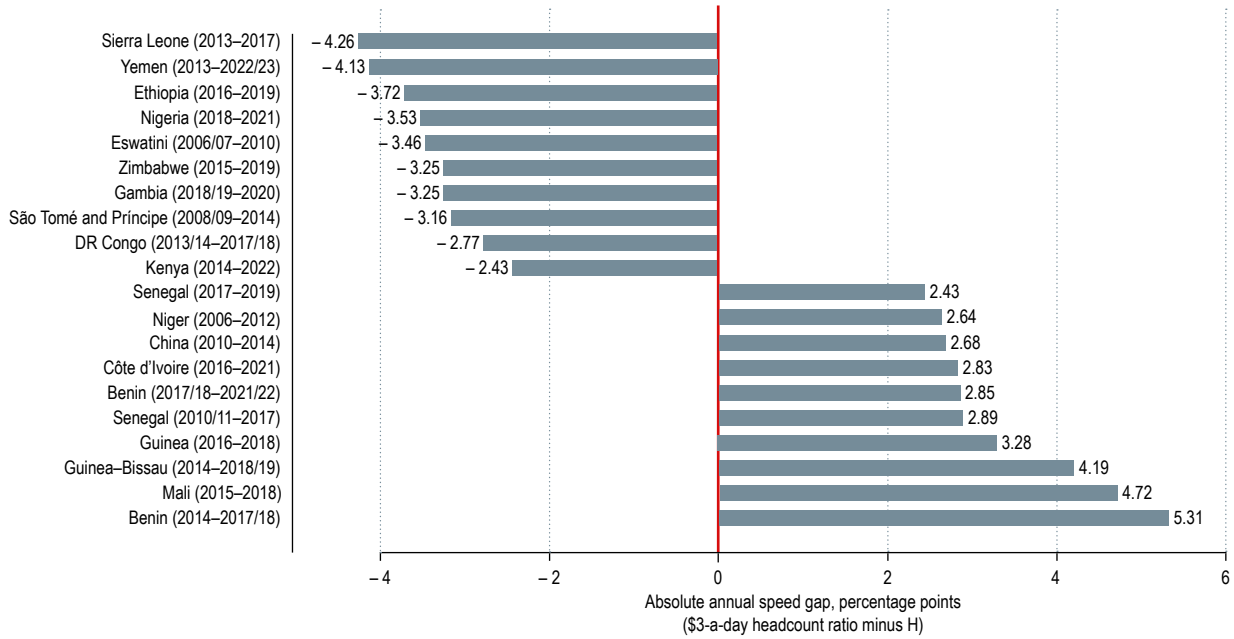
Yet India and China both had historic reductions in extreme monetary poverty in different time periods. Considering the total reduction in the number of monetarily poor people, 83% of all people who moved out of poverty lived in India or China.

It must be stressed that these changes are an incomplete vista and ideally would be cross-checked with the full PIP dataset's data points. If the same periods were available for all countries, patterns would change. For example, India's data across two periods span 14.5 years, a longer total span than is



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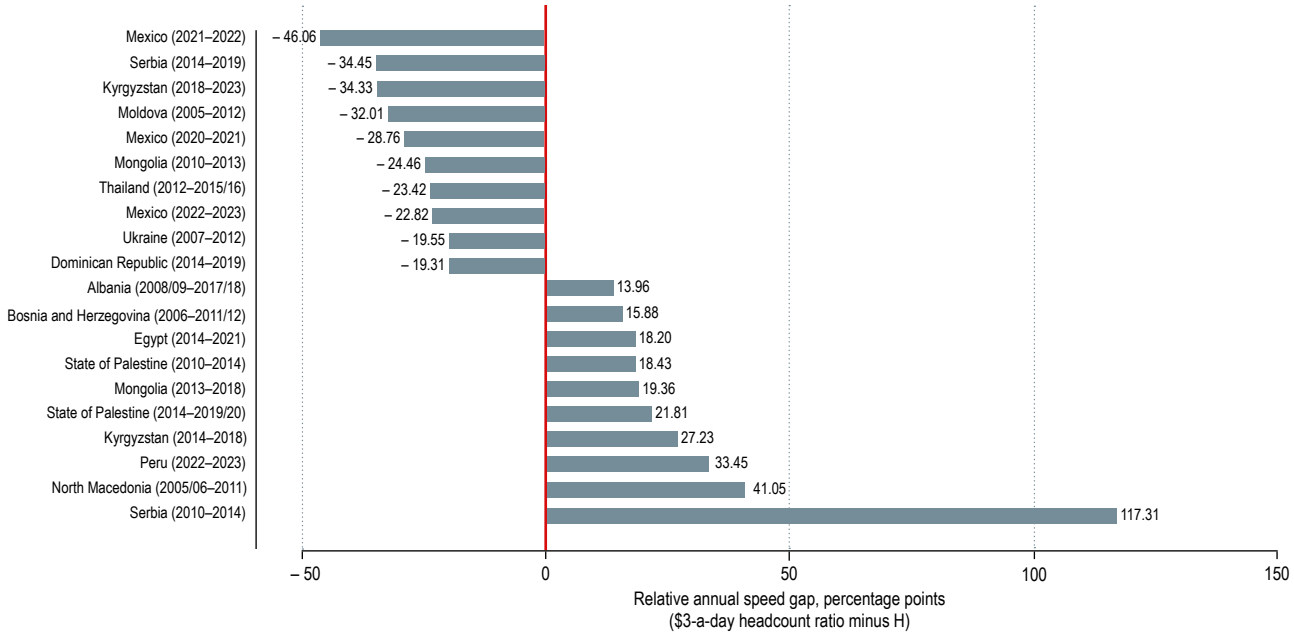
FIGURE 6. The absolute speed of change: 20 spells where the difference between absolute reduction of monetary and multidimensional poverty incidence is the highest



Note: The left-hand side shows countries where the MPI reduction was faster than monetary poverty reduction, while to the right, monetary poverty reduction was faster.

Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

FIGURE 7. The relative speed of change: 20 spells where the difference between the relative change in monetary and multidimensional poverty incidence is the highest



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

available for 76 of the 88 covered countries. More data would likely bring into view additional vital information about progress in poverty reduction. The dearth of regular disaggregated poverty data, especially in the poorest places, makes ongoing investments in household survey data that obtain multidimensional and monetary poverty estimates a critical and too often sidelined priority.

4.2 SPEED OF CHANGE

The next step is to scrutinise the speed of change. Figure 6 shows the 20 spells in which the difference in the absolute speed of change between monetary and multidimensional poverty incidence is the highest.

The top 10 spells are those in which absolute MPI reduction most outpaced changes in the $3/day measure: for example, Sierra Leone, Yemen, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Eswatini. The bottom 10 show the reverse. MPI progress was far outpaced by improvements in the $3/day measure in Benin, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea and Senegal. The biggest divergence across countries in the levels of MPI versus $3/day poverty was in sub-Saharan Africa, and again, the disagreement between the absolute speed of change is dominated by trends in sub-Saharan Africa.

Figure 7 shows the divergence in the relative speed of poverty reduction between the incidence of $3/day versus the MPI. The divergencies are not unsurprising given our analysis of relative reduction, in that these differences are clustered in countries that have lower levels of poverty in the initial period, and span many regions (Table 8). But the details are fascinating. Mexico consistently shows faster MPI reduction, with three of the ten spells (over one-year periods) in which MPI progress greatly outpaced monetary poverty change. From 2010–14, Serbia's progress in monetary terms far outstripped the MPI relative reduction, by 117 percentage points, but in the next period (2014–19) its MPI outpaced monetary poverty change by

TABLE 7. Annualised gap in the absolute rate of change of monetary and multidimensional poverty incidence by country spells

Country - Spell	Absolute $3/day change	Absolute MPI change	Speed Gap
Benin (2014–2017/18)	–4.5	0.8	5.3
Mali (2015–2018)	–7.2	–2.5	4.7
Guinea-Bissau (2014–2018/19)	–4.6	–0.4	4.2
Guinea (2016–2018)	–1.8	1.5	3.3
Senegal (2010/11–2017)	–4.2	–1.3	2.9
Benin (2017/18–2021/22)	–5.4	–2.5	2.9
Côte d'Ivoire (2016–2021)	–3.3	–0.5	2.8
China (2010–2014)	–4.0	-1.3	2.7
Niger (2006–2012)	–3.1	-0.5	2.6
Senegal (2017–2019)	–3.5	–1.1	2.4
Kenya (2014–2022)	0.9	–1.5	–2.4
DR Congo (2013/14–2017/18)	0.8	–1.9	–2.8
São Tomé and Príncipe (2008/09–2014)	–0.4	–3.6	–3.2
Gambia (2018/19–2020)	0.9	–2.3	–3.2
Zimbabwe (2015–2019)	2.2	–1.1	–3.3
Eswatini (2006/07–2010)	–1.2	–4.7	–3.5
Nigeria (2018–2021)	2.1	–1.4	–3.5
Ethiopia (2016–2019)	0.8	–2.9	–3.7
Yemen (2013–2022/23)	4.1	–0.1	–4.1
Sierra Leone (2013–2017)	0.2	–4.0	–4.3

Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

TABLE 8. Annualised gap in the relative rate of change of monetary and multidimensional poverty incidence by country (across all periods)

Country - Spell	Rel. Monetary change ($3/day)	Rel. H change (MPI)	Speed Gap
Serbia (2010–2014)	133.4	16.1	117.3
North Macedonia (2005/06–2011)	20.8	–20.2	41.0
Peru (2022–2023)	22.9	–10.5	33.5
Kyrgyzstan (2014–2018)	–7.6	–34.8	27.2
State of Palestine (2014–2019/20)	15.1	–6.7	21.8
Mongolia (2013–2018)	13.6	–5.8	19.4
State of Palestine (2010–2014)	10.7	–7.8	18.4
Egypt (2014–2021)	1.9	–16.3	18.2
Bosnia and Herzegovina (2006–2011/12)	5.7	–10.2	15.9
Albania (2008/09–2017/18)	2.6	–11.3	14.0
Dominican Republic (2014–2019)	–24.6	–5.3	–19.3
Ukraine (2007–2012)	–27.5	–8.0	–19.6
Mexico (2022–2023)	–17.4	5.4	–22.8
Thailand (2012–2015/16)	–32.7	–9.3	–23.4
Mongolia (2010–2013)	–36.4	–12.0	–24.5
Mexico (2020–2021)	–30.2	–1.5	–28.8
Moldova (2005–2012)	–39.4	–7.4	–32.0
Kyrgyzstan (2018–2023)	–14.5	19.9	–34.3
Serbia (2014–2019)	–53.2	–18.7	–34.5
Mexico (2021–2022)	–23.3	22.7	–46.1

Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

TABLE 9. Cross-tabulation of rank terciles for annualised absolute reductions of monetary and multidimensional poverty

		$3 incidence annualised absolute speed of change			
		Slowest third	Middle third	Fastest third	Total
Global MPI incidence (H) annualised absolute speed of change	Slowest third	29	18	9	56
	Middle third	19	23	14	56
	Fastest third	8	15	32	55
	Total	**56**	**56**	**55**	**167**

Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

34 percentage points (Table 8). In Mongolia, the sequence is reversed: from 2010–13, the MPI reduction was 24 percentage points more rapid, but from 2013–18 monetary poverty gains were nearly 20 percentage points higher.

Overall, these patterns emphasise that monetary and multidimensional poverty do not always move in tandem, and improvement in one does not guarantee improvement in the other. While the two measures both reduce in 98 spells, the speed of absolute change frequently diverges and in 69 of 167 spells, their direction diverges. This reinforces the fact that both monetary and multidimensional measures need to be analysed when studying trends in poverty, as relying on monetary poverty data alone risks overlooking developments in health, education and living standards, while looking at MPI data alone risks missing shifts in household income and consumption.

4.3 SUMMARY OF DIRECTION AND SPEED BY TERCILE

To provide a simple systematic overview of the divergencies and coherence across the speed of poverty trends, we rank the 167 country spells into three groups of 55 or 56 spells. The pace of MPI and $3/day changes are sorted into these three categories separately.

For absolute reduction (Table 9), across the 167 spells, roughly half (84) fall into the same category: 32 are in the fastest reduction for both and 29 in the slowest. However, roughly half of the spells are mismatched. Seventeen spells sit at opposite ends, with nine[12] where multidimensional poverty reduction is among the fastest while monetary poverty reduction is among the slowest and eight[13] where the reverse holds.

Table 10, focusing on relative reduction, covers 162 rather than 167 spells.[14] Here, only 68 of the 162 spells fall into the same speed category, while 25 are in completely opposite categories: fastest third for one, and slowest for the other.

Table 11 extends the tercile analysis for each region, checking the share of spells where multidimensional and monetary poverty agree on both the direction of change and speed of change (i.e. falling into the same speed tercile). Agreement is highest in South Asia, where eight of 10 spells (including India) show both the same direction and same tercile agreement – although this could in part be due to the small number of countries and spells in South Asia and the large populations of several countries. In contrast, sub-Saharan Africa shows greater disagreement than agreement, pointing to considerable heterogeneity within the region in how closely the pace and direction of monetary and multidimensional poverty reduction align or differ.

The national results establish that the two measures do not provide the same account of poverty reduction, even if there is convergence in many cases. But are the lagging areas the least poor or the poorest countries or subnational regions within countries?

TABLE 10. Cross-tabulation of rank terciles for annualised relative reductions of monetary and multidimensional poverty

		$3 incidence annualised relative speed of change			
		Slowest third	**Middle third**	**Fastest third**	**Total**
MPI incidence (H) annualised relative speed of change	Slowest third	25	17	14	56
	Middle third	18	19	16	53
	Fastest third	11	18	24	53
	Total	**54**	**54**	**54**	**162**

Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

TABLE 11. Direction and speed tercile agreement or disagreement by world regions and spells

	Same direction and same speed tercile		
Region	**No**	**Yes**	**Total**
Arab States	7	5	12
East Asia and the Pacific	7	10*	17
Europe and Central Asia	13	8	21
Latin America and the Caribbean	22	8	30
South Asia	2	8*	10
Sub-Saharan Africa	47	30	77
Total	**98**	**69**	**167**

Note: * indicates the location of China and India.

Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

V. LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND IN MULTIDIMENSIONAL AND MONETARY POVERTY

5.1 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS

To scrutinise pro-poorness we turn to a pillar of the SDGs, which was the impetus to address the poorest people first, and to ensure that poverty policies were successful in 'leaving no one behind'. This section and the next assess what we will call the pro-poorness of trends by asking how the absolute monetary and MPI trends across countries and subnational regions compare when we consider the starting levels of poverty in each spell. For the figures in both sections, the horizontal axis plots the incidence of MPI or monetary poverty at the start of the spell, hence the poorest regions are towards the right. The vertical position shows their annualised absolute rate of poverty reduction, with the regions reducing poverty fastest towards the bottom of the figure. The size of the bubble shows the number of poor people in the starting year, which ranges from 2001 to 2023. The pro-poorness of each of these countries' trends can be partly summarised by noting the slope and intercept of the regression line. A downward sloping line indicates some degree of pro-poorness across regions in relative terms, a negative intercept suggests a baseline rate of reduction. The MPI datasets can also distinguish statistically significant changes, which subnational $3/day trends currently cannot, but official national monetary measures may.

Figures 8 and 9 provide the global picture of level and absolute poverty trends for the global MPI and $3/day incidence. The regression line shows the degree of pro-poorness and is weighted by the number of poor people in the starting period. For visual clarity, and to illustrate the methodology, rather than showing 167 spells, figures depict the most recent spell in each of the countries with trend data and the trends with and without China and India, given their large population sizes. We recognise that this choice likewise introduces incomparabilities, as the most recent spells span different years and differing number of years per spell, but this graphic is used to introduce an easy yet powerful pro-poorness analysis that could be implemented with greater precision in subsequent studies.

The pro-poorness patterns of the global MPI and $3/day measures differ. For the same time periods and countries, the $3/day measure is upward sloping for all countries and almost flat when including India and China, indicating that given their starting levels of monetary poverty, less-poor countries tended to have a slightly faster absolute reduction in $3/day than the poorest.

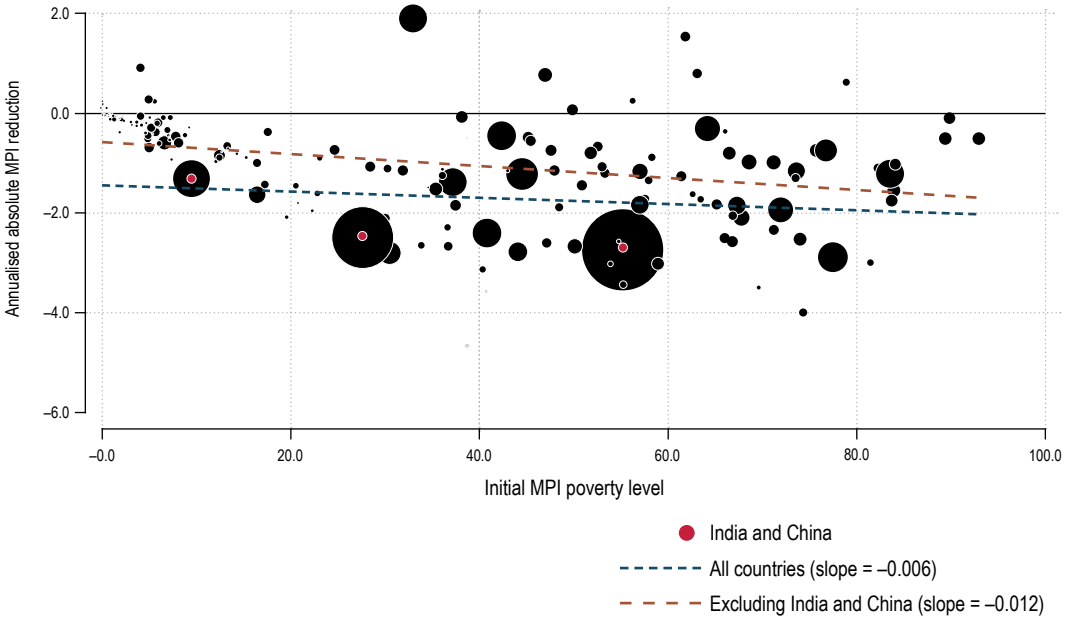
Figures 10 and 11 consider both global patterns by world regions. The regional pictures based on the MPI changes show that the within-region patterns are, on average, pro-poor with the exception of South Asia due to the slower progress of Pakistan and the sharp increase in multidimensional poverty in Afghanistan in the covered periods (if India's 2005/6 to 2015/16 period were included, the regional trend would be pro-poor).

Through the lens of monetary poverty, only East Asia and the Pacific and Europe and Central Asia show solidly pro-poor patterns. The Arab States and South Asia show regressive patterns, while Latin America and the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa have close-to-neutral patterns. East Asia and the Pacific has solidly pro-poor cross-national patterns in both monetary and multidimensional poverty reduction. However, reductions in incidence are blind to the progress of the poorest – those whose intensity or normalised gap reduces (or increases) but who do not move out of poverty. A fuller analysis of all trends in this report, using the more precise MPI and poverty gap statistics, will be helpful in future analyses to assess progress among the poorest.

5.2 SUBNATIONAL TRENDS IN MULTIDIMENSIONAL AND MONETARY POVERTY

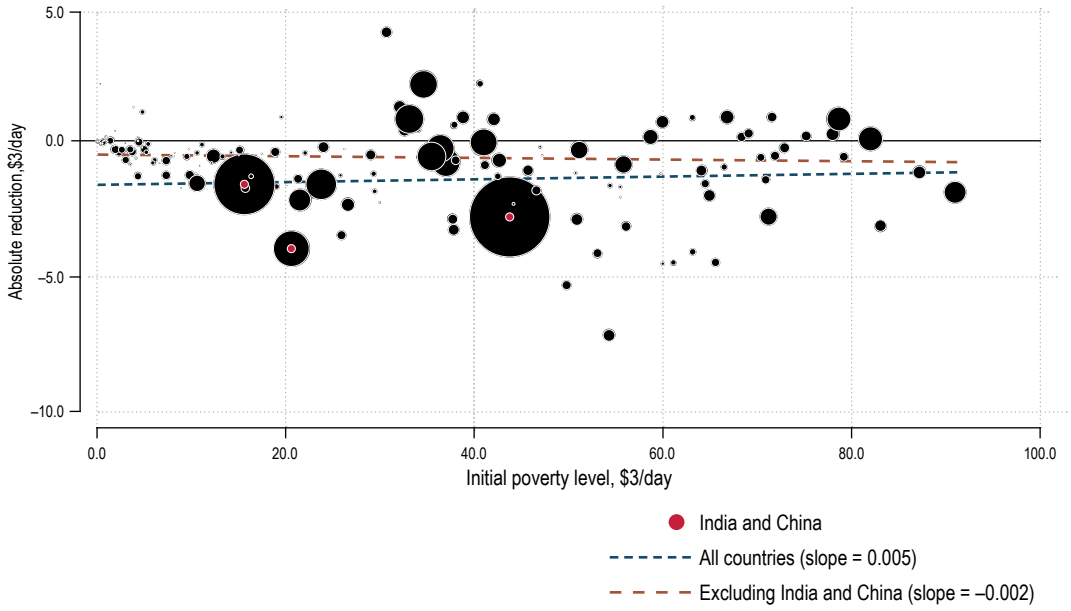
The global MPI is disaggregated by rural/urban areas, age cohorts, gender of the household head, and subnational regions. Some years it is also disaggregated by households in which one or more people are living with a disability, and by other social characteristics such as ethnicity and race. Such disaggregated trends provide the data required to track whether the poorest groups have a faster absolute

FIGURE 8. Pro-poor MPI patterns: whether including or excluding India and China, the MPI trend is downward sloping – poorer countries tended to have faster absolute annualised progress in reducing the MPI incidence – but country patterns vary considerably



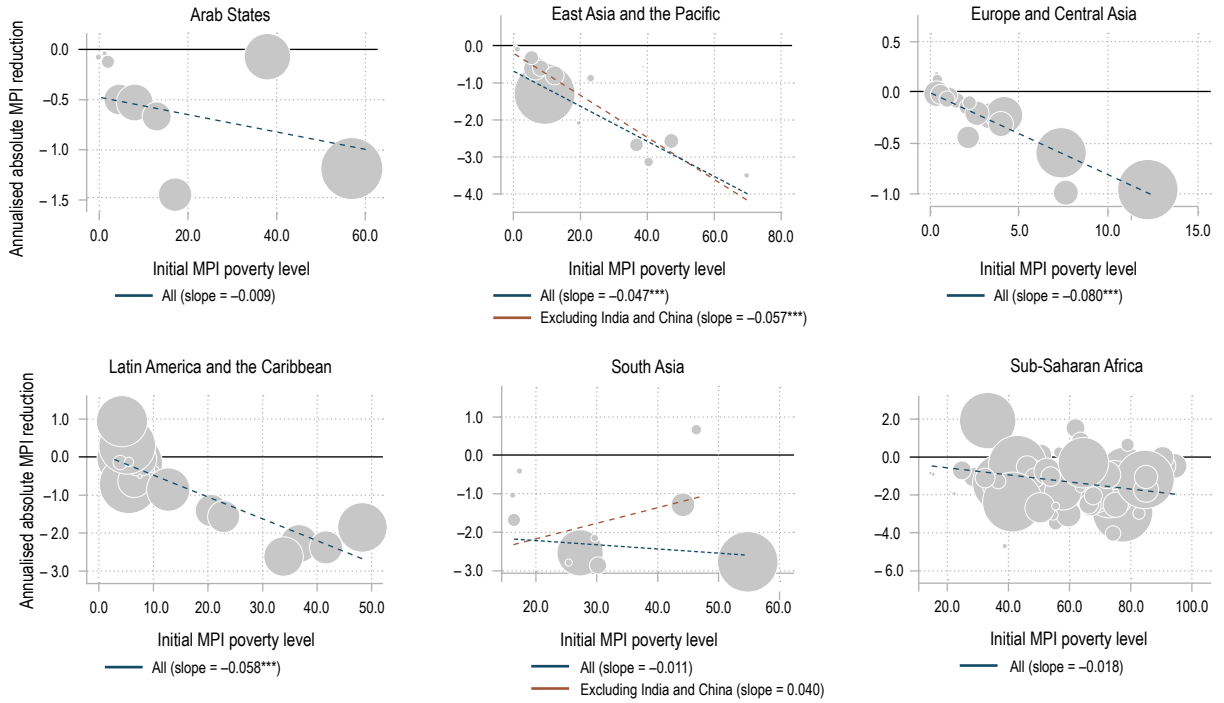
Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

FIGURE 9. Pro-poorness challenges: less-poor countries tended to have a slightly faster absolute reduction in the $3/day measure than the poorest



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

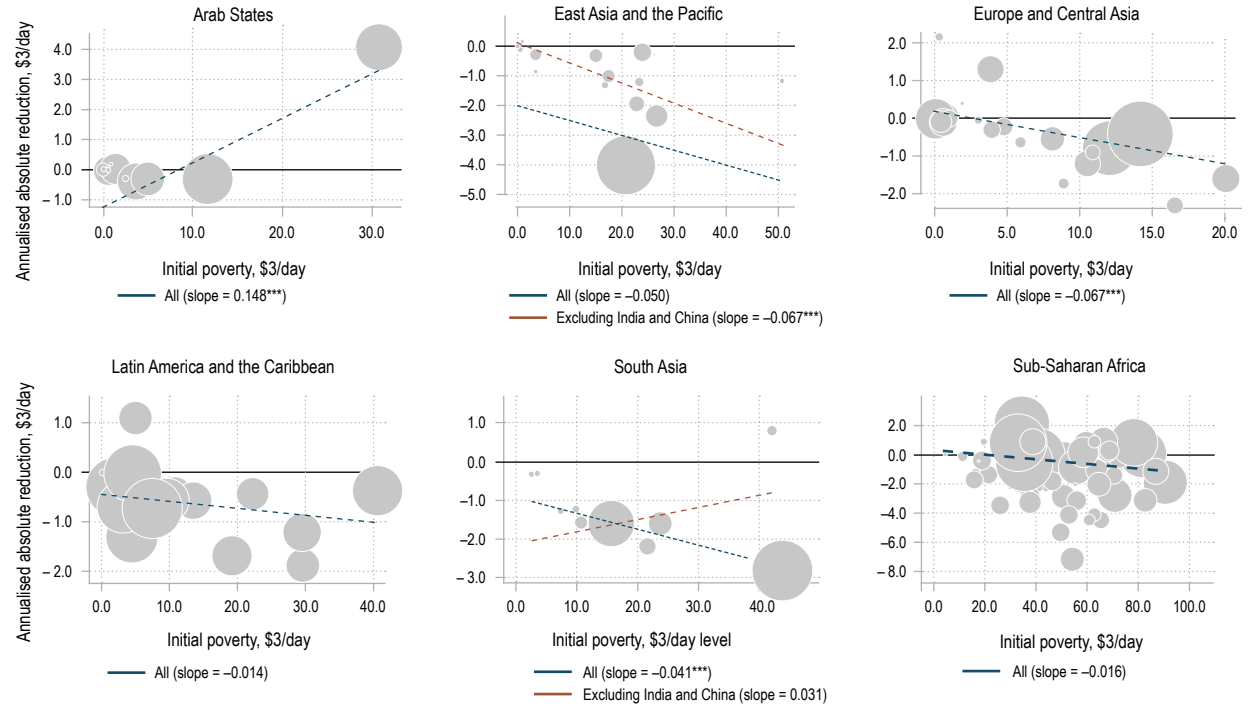
FIGURE 10. Global patterns by world regions: multidimensional poverty patterns are, on average, pro-poor within regions, with the exception of South Asia



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

*p < 0.10; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

FIGURE 11. Global patterns by world regions: through the lens of monetary poverty, only East Asia and the Pacific and Europe and Central Asia show solidly pro-poor patterns



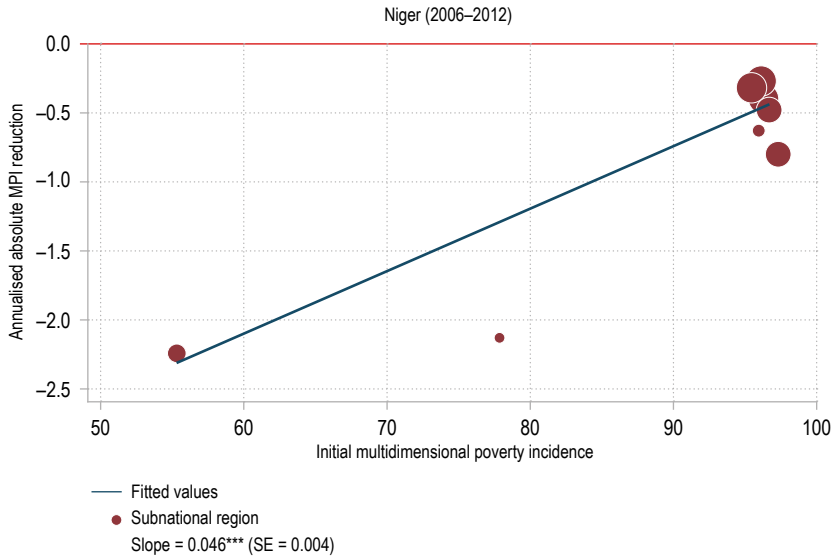
Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

*p < 0.10; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

pace of poverty reduction. We use this to analyse trends of subnational regions within countries, as these disaggregations are available for the $3/day measure.

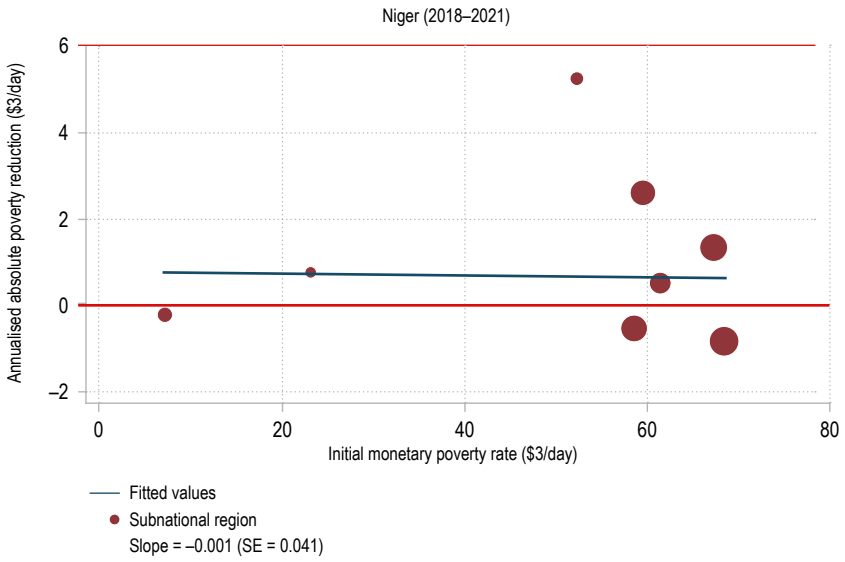
Since it is not possible to match the years of disaggregated monetary and global MPI datasets, we estimate this relationship separately for monetary and multidimensional poverty, which needs to be kept in mind when interpreting the results presented here.

FIGURE 12. Subnational trends: From 2006–12, Niger's least-poor region experienced markedly faster MPI incidence reduction compared to the rest of the country



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

FIGURE 13. Subnational trends: From 2018–21, the monetary poverty reduction of all regions across Niger was the same in absolute terms – there was no pro-poor trend



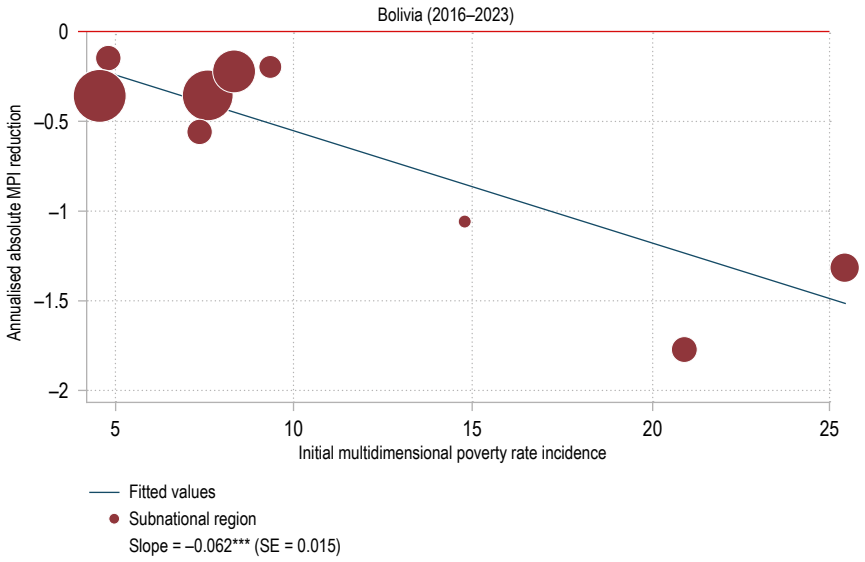
Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

The three examples below introduce the three main patterns and illustrate the importance of considering multidimensional and monetary poverty lenses in tandem.

Unfortunately, using the MPI data in 2006–12, Niger's subnational pattern was regressive, with the least-poor region experiencing markedly faster MPI incidence reduction compared to the rest of the country (Figure 12). In a later period, 2018–21, the population-weighted slope of the regression line of monetary poverty reduction is horizontal (Figure 13). This indicates that, on average, the reduction of all regions across the country was the same in absolute terms: there was no pro-poor trend.

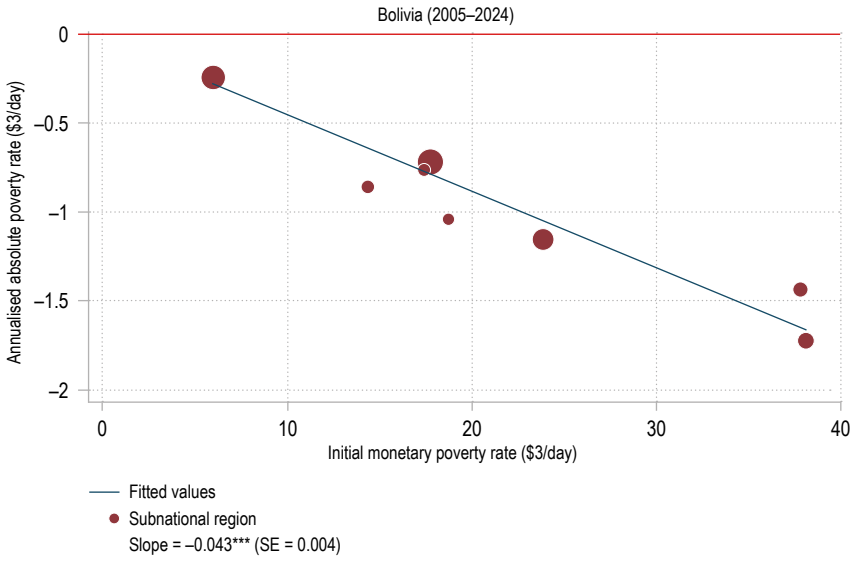
In contrast, Bolivia 2016–23 (figure 14) and 2005–24 (figure 15) have a strongly pro-poor downward sloping trend line for both multidimensional and monetary poverty. This shows that the regions that

FIGURE 14. Subnational trends: Bolivia has a strongly pro-poor downward sloping trend line for multidimensional poverty



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

FIGURE 15. Subnational trends: Bolivia has a strongly pro-poor downward sloping trend line for monetary poverty



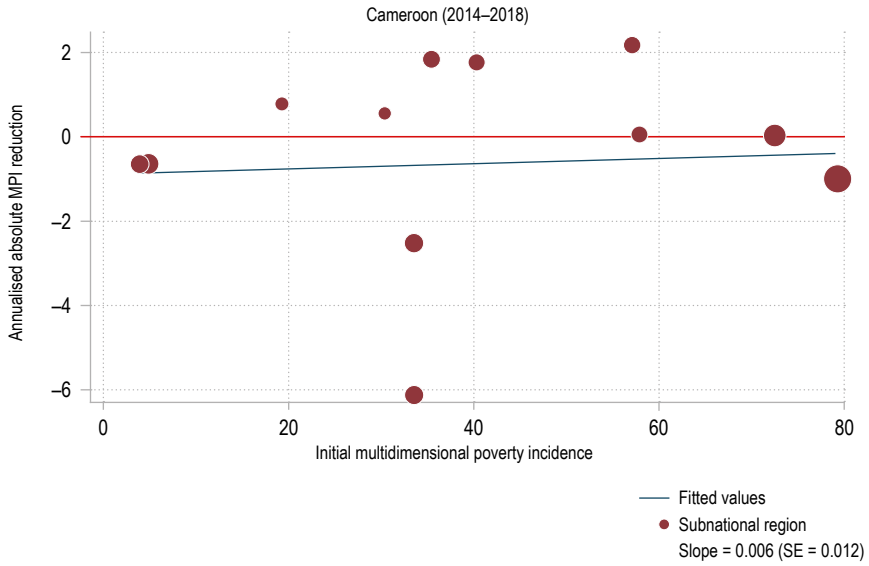
Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

were initially poorest in monetary and multidimensional terms had, on average, faster rates of absolute reduction than the less poor regions. Because the poorest groups are making faster progress they are catching up rather than being left behind.

Through a monetary lens, for Cameroon from 2001–14, the within-country pattern is regressive (Figure 17). The poorest regions have, on average, slower absolute progress than the less-poor regions – so they are being left behind. The MPI measure for Cameroon in 2014–18 (Figure 16), shows a flat line, with no evidence of either a pro-poor or a regressive pattern.

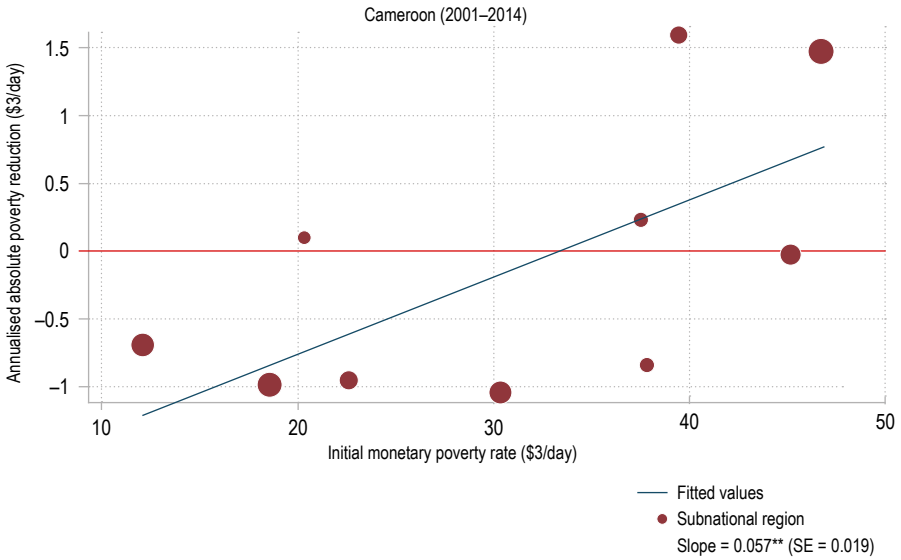
Were the subnational units comparable, a steeper downward slope could indicate a stronger pro-poor pattern. If the line crosses the axis below zero

FIGURE 16. Subnational trends: Cameroon shows no evidence of either a pro-poor or a regressive pattern in multidimensional poverty



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

FIGURE 17. Subnational trends: on monetary poverty, Cameroon's poorest regions have, on average, slower absolute progress than its less-poor regions



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

– so the intercept is negative – it further indicates that all regions had some reduction in measured poverty. One would ideally consider both whether the absolute reduction of MPI was statistically significant (these data are always reported) as well as whether the slope is significantly downward. But, to maintain comparability with the $3/day measure, we do not consider the significance of absolute change in the MPI.

How can we compare these subnational trends across all spells with subnational data? It must be noted that comparisons across countries cannot be done without considering how a country's subnational configurations vary. To seek to recognise the important value of having subnational disaggregations, we undertake a first-generation analysis at scale, applying one of the methodologies proposed in Alkire et al. (2024). For simplicity, we examine only whether spells have a pro-poor or downward sloping line or not, but do not try to identify the most pro-poor patterns due to the incomparability issues in subnational units, spell years and year spans. All regression lines are population-weighted to reflect the overall trends, given the number of poor people in each subnational unit in the first period.

National poverty statistics can hide large differences within a country. To see whether poverty reduction has been pro-poor, figures 18 and 19 plot for every country and time period in the sample a coefficient of the slope, showing how a region's change in poverty relates to its starting level. A negative or downward slope means regions that started poorer saw larger subsequent reductions and are therefore catching up. A positive slope means poorer regions are falling further behind.

As the figures show, roughly three-quarters of the spells of both MPI and monetary poverty have at least gently downward sloping curves across their population-weighted subnational regions, indicating some level of pro-poorness. However, these patterns often do not coincide – only 29 of the 84 considered countries have at least one spell showing a downward sloping pattern for both the MPI and monetary poverty.

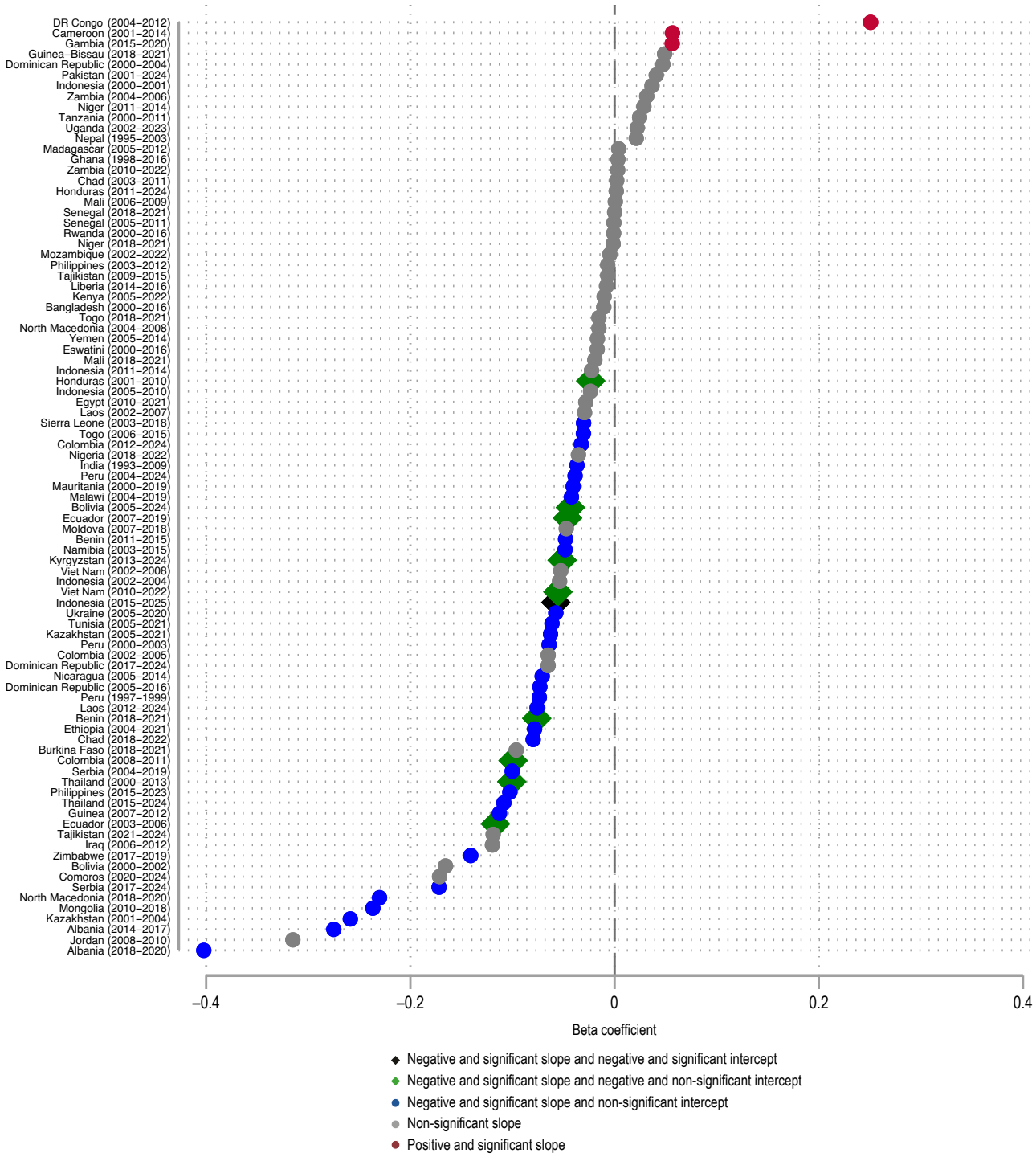
Each dot's colour and shape carry more information than direction alone. Beyond whether the poorer regions' catch-up itself is statistically real, we also check whether poverty is falling for the country as a whole in a simple regression framework applied to each country and spell separately. The subnational annualised rate of poverty reduction is regressed against the initial poverty level, so that standard errors for the slope and intercept reflect within-country variation. Black diamonds mark the clearest cases: poorer regions catching up and overall poverty clearly declining. Green diamonds also show poorer regions catching up, but the overall decline is not yet statistically confirmed. Blue dots show a confirmed catch-up, but the overall country trend is not confirmed as negative – so the equalising could partly reflect stagnation among better-off regions rather than a genuine surge among the poorest. Grey dots show no statistically reliable pattern either way. Red dots are the clearest warning sign: poorer regions are losing ground relative to better-off regions.

Figure 18 (monetary poverty) shows most country-periods' slope estimate sitting to the left of zero (pro-poor), with only a couple of clear outliers showing the opposite, regressive pattern. Figure 19 (multidimensional poverty) is more mixed: more countries in the red, regressive category, clustering among some of the highest-poverty countries at the top of the chart, including several in sub-Saharan Africa, such as Liberia (2007–13), Niger (2006–12) and Mozambique (2003–11). This suggests that addressing interconnected packages of indicators included in the global MPI is proving harder than closing income gaps in some of the world's poorest contexts.

Together, the two figures point to the same conclusion: subnational convergence is common but not universal, and it is least reliable exactly where poverty is higher. Note also that many confidence intervals remain wide (hence the non-significant colouring), so Figures 18 and 19 are best used to flag broad patterns and candidate case studies rather than to label any single country conclusively as convergent or divergent.

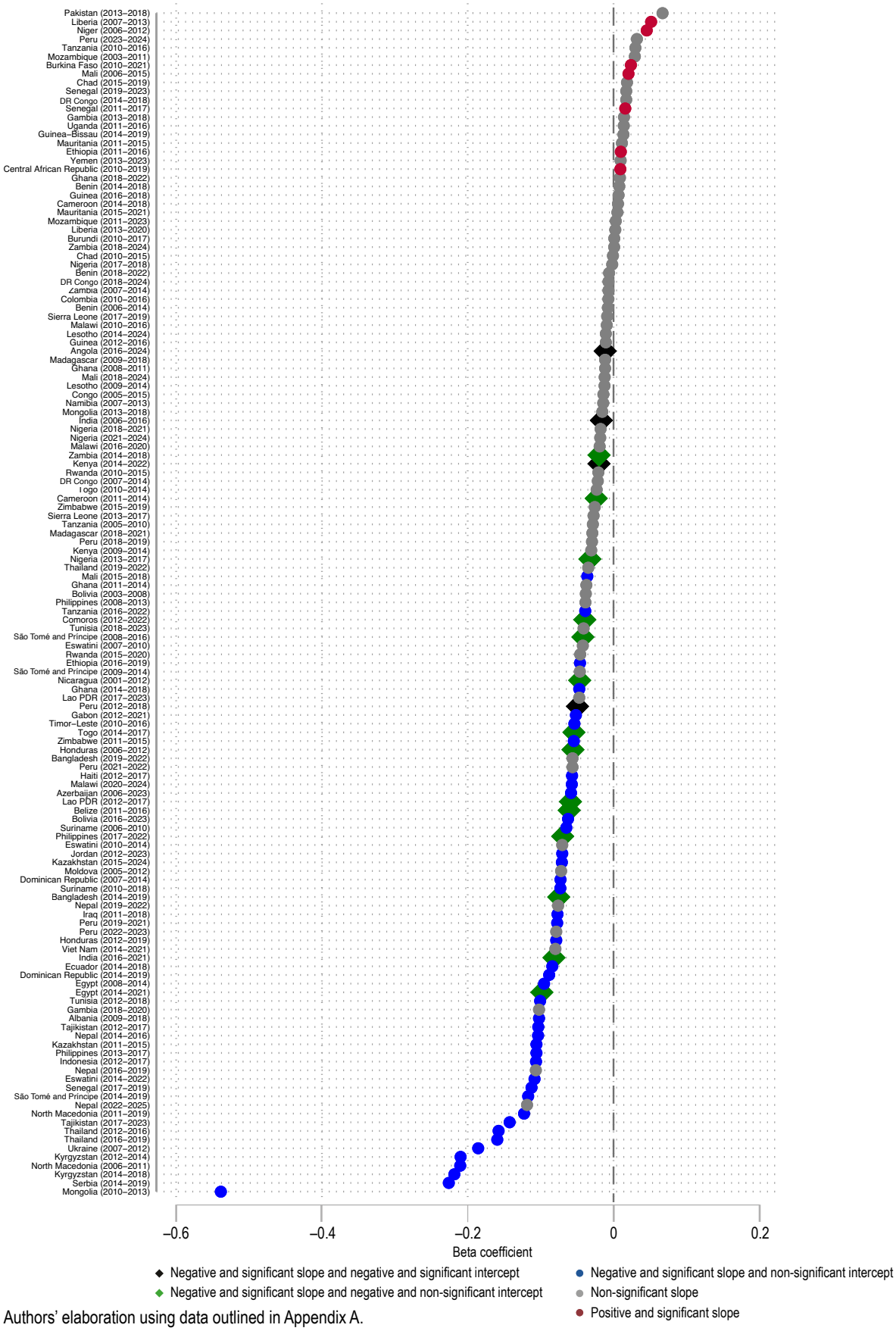
This matters because if we overlay the lists of top 10 fastest absolute, fastest relative, and fastest number of poor reductions, we observe that of the 10 fastest countries by absolute MPI reductions, all (except possibly Liberia) had at least a slightly pro-poor trend. In relative terms, all the best-performing countries had some degree of pro-poorness. But in the cadre of the highest number leaving poverty,

FIGURE 18. Subnational convergence in monetary poverty is common but not universal, and it is least reliable exactly where poverty is higher



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

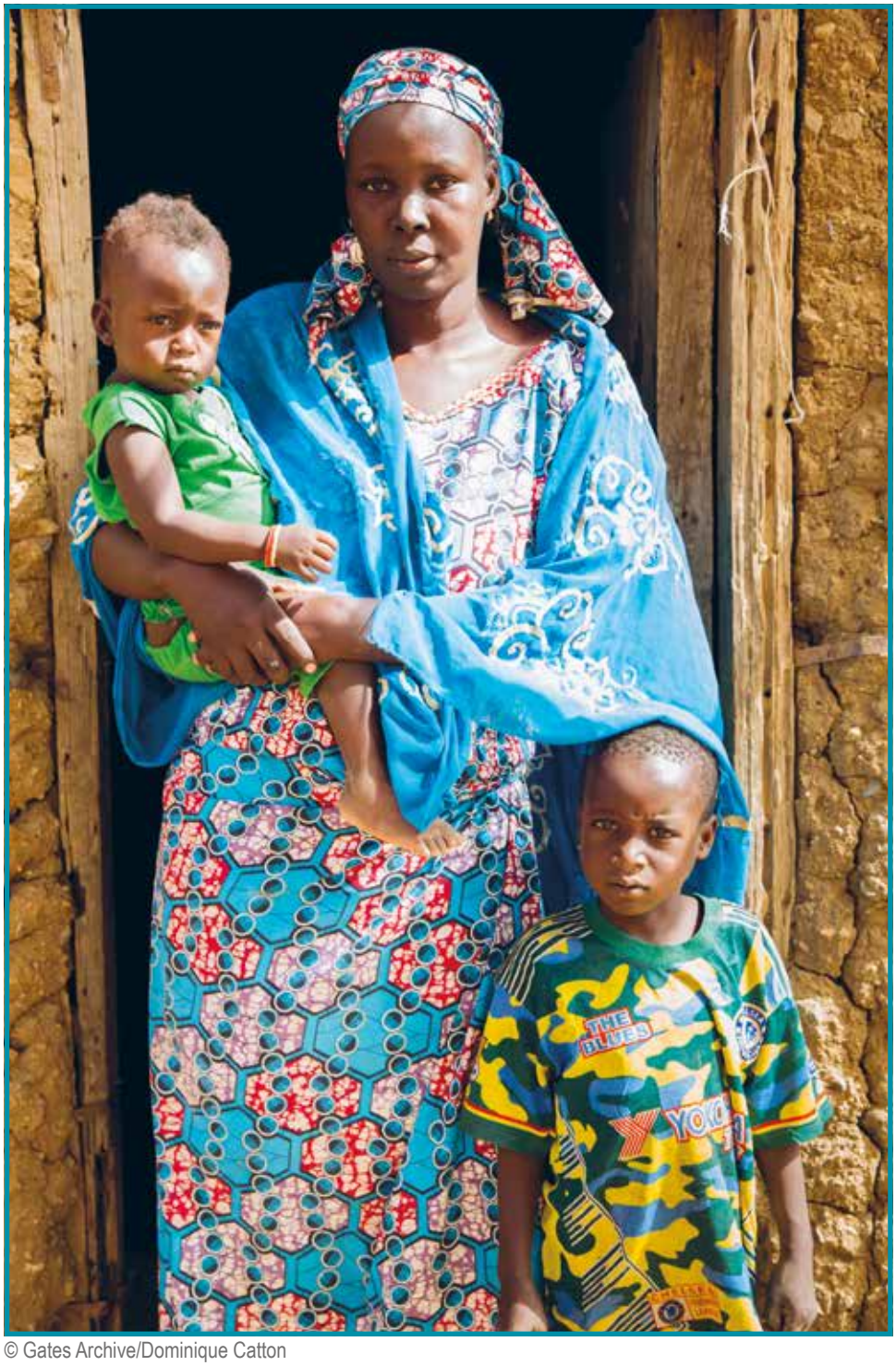
FIGURE 19. Subnational convergence in multidimensional poverty is common but not universal, and it is least reliable exactly where poverty is higher



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

Pakistan was the worst-performing country, with a regressive pattern across provinces, while India, China, Bangladesh and Nigeria (2013–16/17) had pro-poor trends across their subnational regions.

In monetary terms, the subnational spell years are distinct from the MPI and matched $3/day country trend spells, so a precise comparison eludes us. But, by and large, the fastest 10 countries in absolute and relative terms at least did not appear to have poverty-increasing patterns in the changes in the number of poor people. Equally, Pakistan had a strongly regressive subnational pattern despite moving large numbers of people out of poverty.



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VI. COMPLETING THE STORY: NATIONAL MONETARY AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDICES

6.1 FROM COMPLEXITY TO CLARITY: APPLYING FOUR MEASURES TO ONE COUNTRY

Assessing whether a country is winning the fight against poverty is not as simple as reading off a single trend line. National versus globally comparable definitions of multidimensional and monetary poverty, and absolute, relative and number of poor ways of expressing change, each tell a defensible but incomplete story on their own. We now use the 4×3 diagnostic grid – four conceptions of poverty (the global MPI, the international $3/day line, each country's own national MPI, and national poverty line) crossed with three lenses on change (absolute, relative and number of poor people) – and apply it to various countries, to illustrate what each component adds and how, together, they build up a rich account of change.

Following the recommendation of the 2017 Atkinson Commission Report *Monitoring Global Poverty*, this section overlays the four poverty measures for four countries, to illustrate how doing so can offer a useful view of the levels of and trends poverty in all its forms. When a country's global and national MPI and its national and global monetary poverty measures move in the same direction over a comparable period, poverty is reducing in many ways. Where the metrics levels and/or trends diverge for the same country, that divergence is worth flagging for closer investigation.

Taken together, the country panels in Figure 20 make a simple but quite important point: overlaying the four poverty measures tells a more complete story – whether the measures agree or diverge.

Mexico has relatively low rates of the global MPI and $3/day measures, with mild declines. Its national MPI and monetary poverty measures are much higher; they overlap and were stable for several years, then recently declined. In Mexico, the higher levels of its national poverty statistics reflect the tracking of more relevant thresholds of poverty compared to the global metrics of extreme monetary and acute multidimensional poverty.

Malawi has a different landscape. Its $3/day headcount ratio is high but did not decline, and indeed ticked upward, which on its own would read as stagnation or regression. The global MPI, by contrast, fell markedly then more slowly over the same years then flatlined, from roughly two-thirds of the population to just over half. Its national monetary

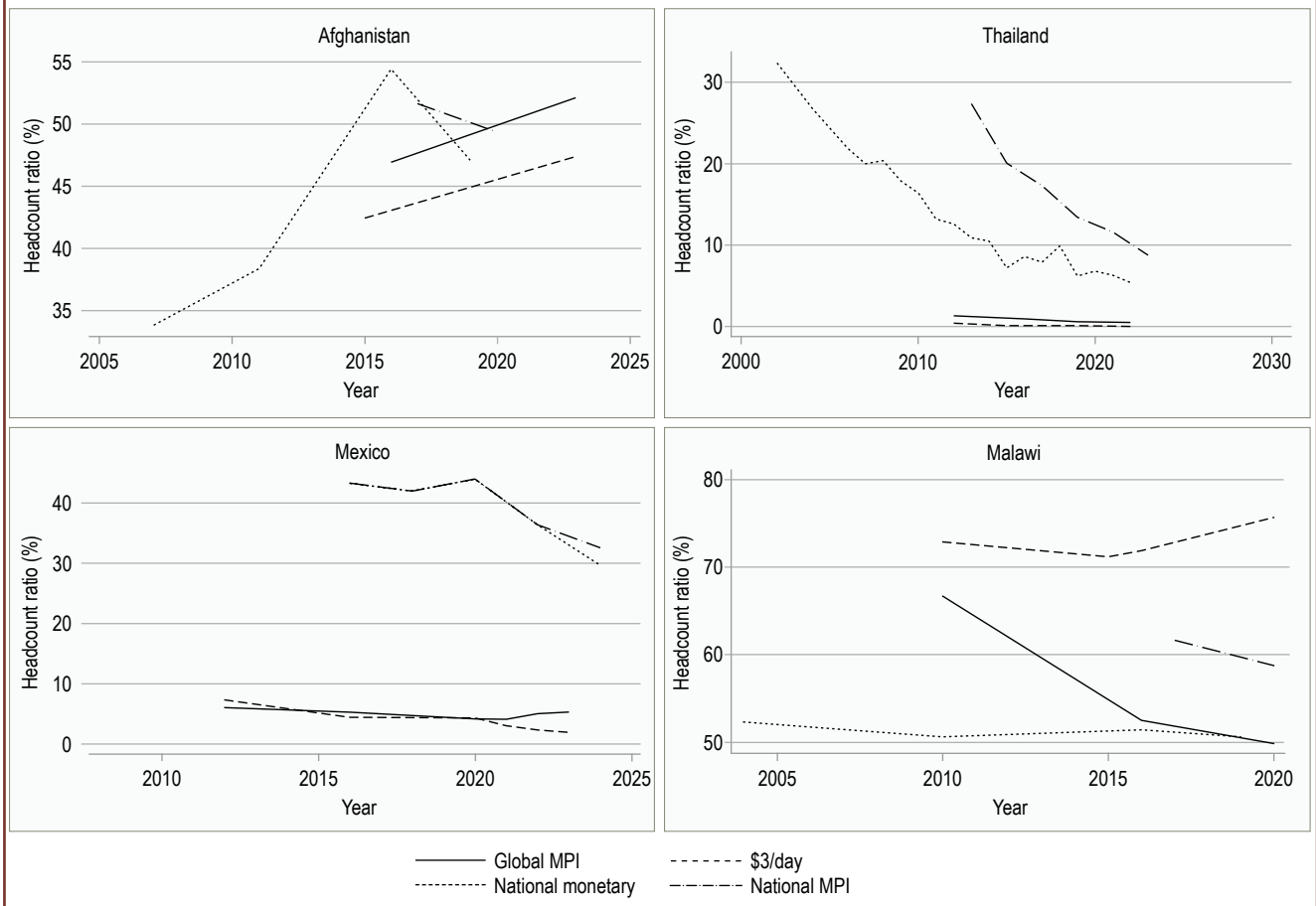
BOX 3. INTERPRETING NATIONAL MEASURES

Alongside the global MPI and $3/day measure, we report each country's official national MPI and national monetary poverty line – each built independently by governments using their own indicators, weights and thresholds.

Neither the official monetary poverty statistics nor the official national MPIs are comparable across countries so they cannot be used to rank countries' levels or trends, as a one-point change means something different in each country because the underlying indicators and poverty cutoffs vary.

National statistics offices also periodically revise indicators or rebase poverty lines. Where this happens, successive values are not points on one continuous trend but partly reflect definitional change. Here, we report the single longest internally consistent series available for each country, rather than averaging across revisions; future studies could and should undertake more detailed analyses.

FIGURE 20. Comparing trends across measures: Overlaying the four poverty measures tells a more complete story – whether the measures agree or diverge



Note: Note that the axes of each country differ.
Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

poverty measure is very low, while its official national MPI started out much higher and showed a strong reduction. Both global and national MPI trends suggest sizable gains in the non-monetary dimensions that neither the global nor the national monetary measure detects.

Afghanistan has yet another configuration. Here the two global measures move in rough agreement, unfortunately rising over the 2015–23 spell. The national monetary measure declines from 2015 to 2019, as does the national MPI from 2016/17 to 2019/20, after which the survey changed, affecting the comparability of subsequent estimates.

The policy implication of this simple analysis is straightforward: a country's poverty reduction performance cannot be read off one trend line. Global measures are built for cross-country comparability, which means they use a common threshold and a common set of indicators, and as Mexico shows, that may not reflect a country's own nationally defined hardships. National MPI and national monetary measures are tailored to each country's circumstances, hence they give policymakers a picture of national priorities and are essential for domestic policy applicability even though they cannot be compared across borders. It is not a matter of choosing between global and national measures, or between monetary and MPI measures as substitutes, but of recognising that each does a job the other cannot.

6.2 CHANGES IN NATIONAL MEASURES: A SYSTEMATIC OVERVIEW

Earlier we systematically compared global MPI and $3/day levels and trends. Official national poverty statistics cannot be compared. The national MPI and monetary poverty measures cannot be compared for the same country either. In some contexts, the level of one measure is higher than another's and in other countries it is reversed – these each reflect diverse aspirations and national standards which would need to be understood individually.

The 4×3 framework proposes to consider national and global measures for each country one by one. Nevertheless, it can be useful to simply describe national MPI and monetary poverty trends according to official statistics.

Figure 21 reports annualised absolute changes in poverty headcount ratios at the country level. The panel on the left uses each country's official national MPI incidence, while the right-hand panel uses the headcount ratio by the officially defined national monetary poverty line. Read individually, both figures are useful – they show, for a given country and period, whether poverty was rising or falling and roughly how fast.

Before turning to specific countries, it is worth being precise about what the time window behind each point represents. For the global MPI and $3/day poverty measure, a country's annualised rate is rarely drawn from a single unbroken time series. Most countries have been surveyed several times, producing multiple back-to-back spells (for example, 2013–16 then 2017–19). Figure 21 is a year-weighted average across those spells – longer spells count for more, shorter ones for less – so the labelled span runs from the earliest spell's start to the latest spell's end, and the rate is the blended pace across everything observed in between. For $3/day these are drawn from the WDI database with one line per country.

The national MPI is not entered into the WDI dataset, the global SDG database is less up to date, and there is at present no international agency custodian for national MPI data. Furthermore, a country's own index, its indicators, weights and thresholds may be back harmonised to different datasets and periodically revised by the national statistical office. While the database underlying the left part of Figure 21 is therefore known to be incomplete, each national MPI spell reported here only depicts one single, internally consistent series and its span is that series' own first-to-last observation. There may be more than one spell for a given country, and they may overlap in years as good statistical practice is to report both series for certain years.

Figure 21, on the left, shows the annualised absolute change in the official national MPI. The pattern is nearly uniform, as virtually all series sit left of the zero line, showing that official national multidimensional poverty indices fell almost across the board. The sole exception is Sri Lanka (2016–2019), where poverty rose by this measure. Figure 21, on the right, on the other hand, shows that a considerable number of countries' national monetary poverty measures increased on average over the covered periods, or had very low or zero changes. Others had radically swift poverty reduction, while Nigeria (2018–2022) and Uruguay (2022–2024) had the sharpest increases in monetary poverty.

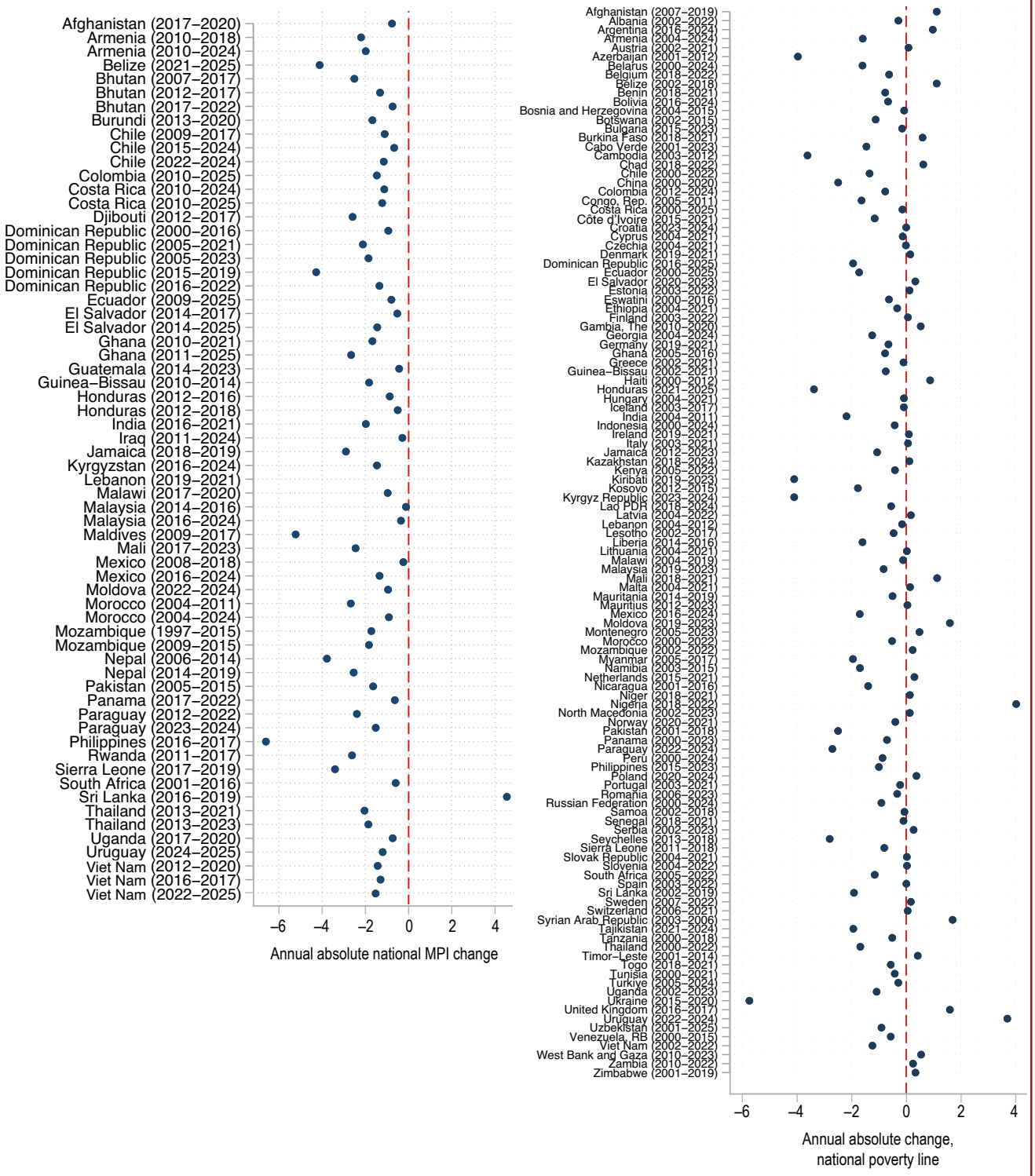
6.3 USING THE 4×3 FRAMEWORK: FROM COMPLEXITY TO CLARITY

This last section puts all the pieces together and applies the proposed framework. It shows how one figure and three panels provide an informative yet compact overview of poverty using the four measures and three lines of sight.

The previous section simply observed levels of poverty and visual cues on change – which are helpful. But they lack precise and quotable data on trends. This section complements that graphical figure with three panels. Together the figures and corresponding three panels implement the 4×3 framework.

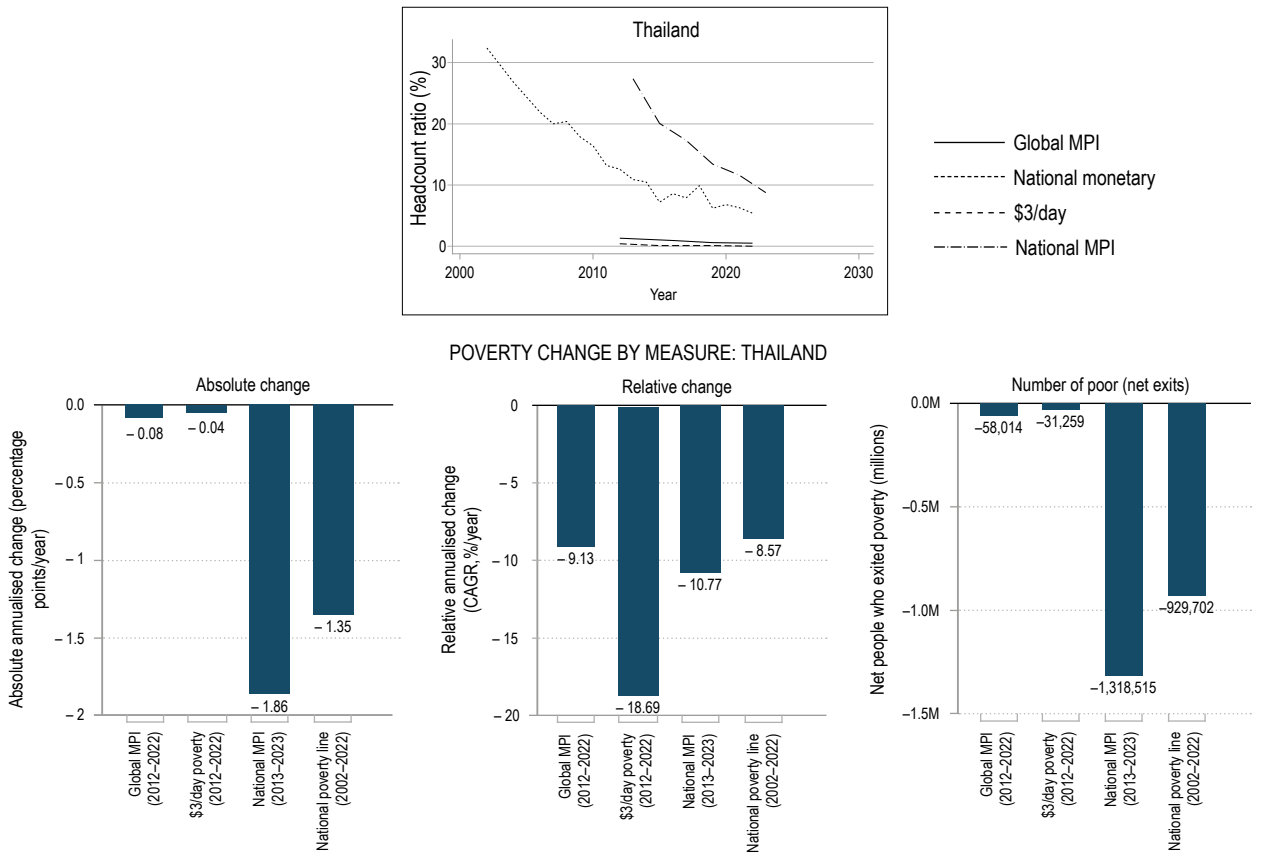
In Figure 22, both the global MPI and the international $3/day line for Thailand are very low for most of the observation period, suggesting acute and extreme poverty has been almost eliminated. In sharp contrast, the national monetary poverty rate starts above 30% and falls significantly over two decades. The national MPI shows an even steeper decline over a shorter period. Overall, the four measures give a strong story of both keeping acute and extreme poverty at bay, and of meeting the SDG target 1.2 of halving both national poverty measures.

FIGURE 21. Changes over time in national measures: individually, both figures are useful, showing whether poverty was rising or falling and roughly how fast



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

FIGURE 22. A 4×3 approach shows a strong story of poverty reduction in Thailand



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

Thailand's panels add trends data. In terms of absolute change, the global measures barely moved – because their levels were already so low. In contrast the national measures reduced by 1.4 to 1.9 percentage points per year.

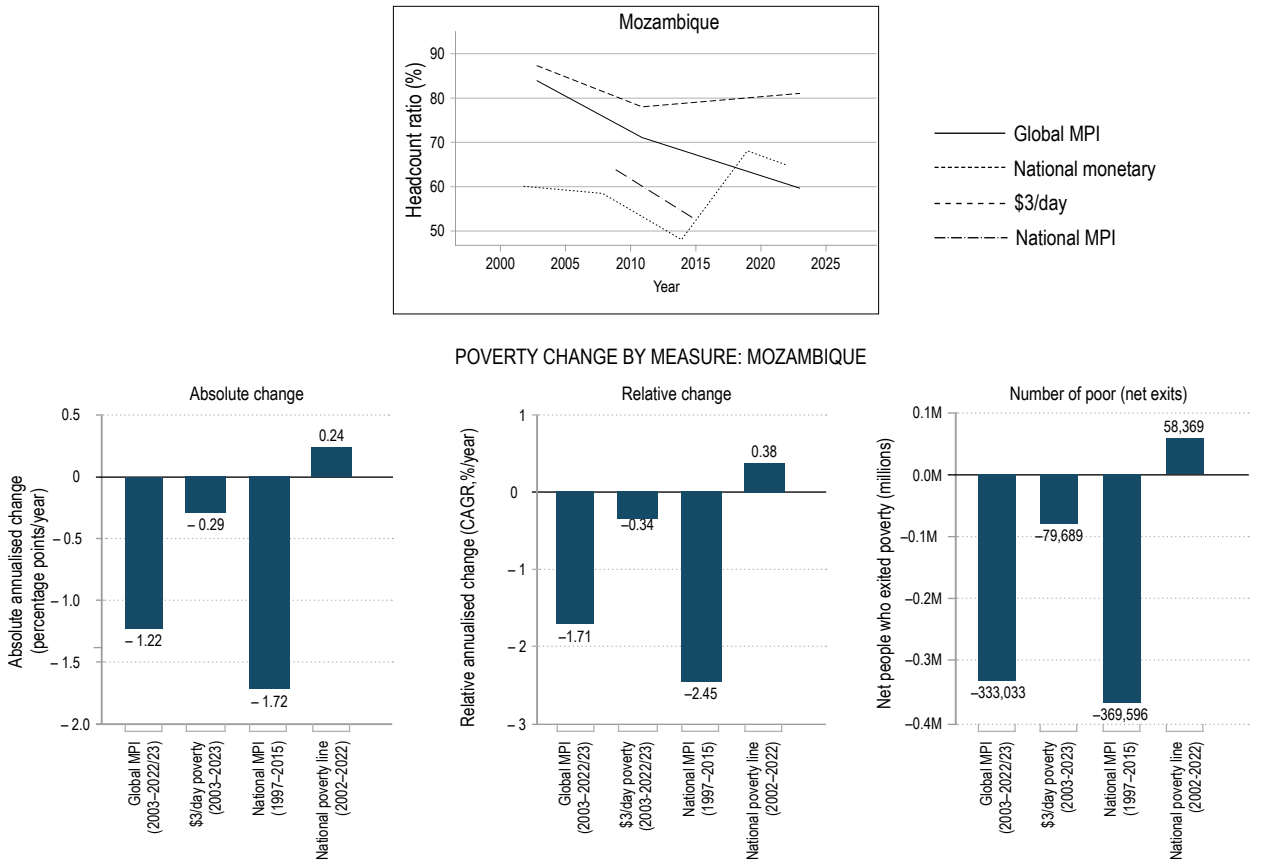
In relative terms, all measures show surprisingly strong change. The largest relative reduction is observed in the $3/day measure that had the lowest level of poverty – illuminating how relative metrics are highly sensitive in the lowest poverty contexts.

Thailand's example consolidates earlier discussions of relative change. It is easy to observe that both the global MPI and the national poverty measure have nearly the same relative change – and then glance swiftly at Figure 22 and note how different their starting points are. Absolute changes imply this. Notwithstanding their difference, the national MPI stepped 10.8% of the way to zero poverty each year over a decade, which was also a strong performance in relative terms.

In terms of the number of poor persons exiting, these are vanishingly small by the global metrics (due to its very low levels), but far larger in national metrics where more people were poor in the early periods. The last panel shows the number of people leaving poverty annually – 1.3 million by the national MPI and 930,000 by the national monetary measures. By the two global measures, markedly fewer people moved out of poverty each year, naturally, as far fewer people are identified as poor by these measures (as Figure 22 clearly shows).

Mozambique has a contrasting story (Figure 23). Poverty is highest by the $3/day measure followed by the global MPI, national MPI, and then the national monetary measure. Note that the axis only portrays headcount ratios of 50% or above, so all measures show relatively high levels of poverty – allowing space for strong absolute reductions. Mozambique had visible progress, with the global MPI falling from 83.9% in 2003 to 59.9% in 2022 and

FIGURE 23. A 4×3 approach shows a more complicated story for Mozambique



Source: Authors' elaboration using data outlined in Appendix A.

national MPI falling even more steeply, while the trend of $3/day – which had the highest initial level of poverty – fell more slowly. There was an overall rise in national monetary poverty over the period.

Turning to the three panels, the fastest absolute reductions were in the national MPI, where 1.7% of the population left poverty each year, followed by the global MPI which graduated 1.2% of people. The pattern in this case is very similar for relative change – although each included year Mozambique advanced at most 2.45% towards zero poverty (in the national MPI). In annualised numbers of people, this same ordering holds. Nearly 370,000 people moved out of poverty each year by the national MPI and around 333,000 by the global MPI, but only around 80,000 by $3/day. By the national poverty line, about 58,000 additional people entered poverty each year.

Taken together, the 4×3 grid turns one ambiguous question, 'is poverty falling?', into a small set of precise, cross-checked questions – how fast, by how much, for how many people, and under which definition of poverty? Each of these questions can be scanned at speed to understand and celebrate different countries' signal achievements given their poverty contexts. The 4×3 analysis should be completed with subnational analyses by different groups to assess who is being left behind in poverty reduction and who is catching up and to see whether these vary by different poverty measures.

VII. CONCLUSION

Returning to Sen's description as choice, if the aim is to describe and celebrate global poverty reduction in ways that seek to understand poverty in its many dimensions, then both monetary and multidimensional global and national measures seem necessary. Furthermore, if the aim is not to choose winners based on their starting levels of poverty, nor populations, but give varying contexts a chance to demonstrate poverty reduction in ways that meaningfully change lives, there does not seem to be a one-size-fits-all lens.

Absolute poverty reduction has a clear logic, in recognising the share of the population that has left poverty. But it has one catch: if a country has very low poverty, it is simply impossible for that country to perform well in terms of absolute speed of reduction. For example, in 2012, Thailand's $3/day incidence was 0.4%. Over a 3.5-year period, it fell 75% in relative terms to 0.1%. But in absolute terms, it fell only 0.09 percentage points per year.

Relative poverty reduction – which shows the size of the step towards zero poverty – makes it possible to celebrate considerable proportional gains in countries that already have low poverty and are nearing eradication. However, it is far more difficult for countries with high starting poverty levels and/or short spells to have a strong relative reduction.

Regarding the **number of people leaving poverty** per country, note that the countries that top the list must have a large number of poor people at the beginning of that spell. It would be impossible for a country with a population of 1 million to graduate 30 million people out of poverty. It would also be impossible for a country of 100 million people, of whom only 1% (1 million) were poor, to graduate 30 million. Yet each life matters, and so it remains important to recognise the populous countries and/or those with high levels of poverty, that do manage to contribute to global poverty reduction by graduating large numbers of poor people out of poverty whether or not they top the other charts.

This report has scrutinised monetary and multidimensional poverty levels and trends through the three lenses. Five implications of this empirical analysis stand out.

1. Monetary and multidimensional poverty should be analysed together and treated as complements. Their convergence strengthens the evidence of broad-based progress; their divergence identifies issues requiring investigation.
2. Progress should be communicated through multiple lenses. Absolute reduction, relative reduction and changes in the number of poor people recognise different, legitimate forms of achievement.
3. Global and national measures should both be used. International measures enable comparison across countries. National measures are designed for national policy. Neither can perform the other's function.
4. Subnational analysis is essential. If leaving no one behind is to be assessed empirically, it is necessary to ask whether the groups or regions beginning with the highest poverty are catching up.
5. All measurement depends upon regular household survey poverty data. The report repeatedly encounters gaps in survey frequency, temporal alignment, geographic comparability and disaggregation – which are constraints on poverty policy, not merely technical inconveniences.

The report is clear about its own data limitations. Yet these qualifications strengthen rather than weaken the report's underlying proposition: poverty must be measured clearly and precisely, not reduced to a single convenient number.

The report's central message is simple: there is no single line of sight that adequately describes poverty trends. Using only a relative trend overlooks and fails to recognise different countries' commendable achievements – which is important as recognition creates ongoing positive incentives to sustain change.

The report's 4×3 framework suggests a practical response. Rather than choosing one poverty statistic or target, it introduces three clear lines of sight whose distinctive insights are relevant and actionable. The framework makes it possible to recognise and learn from progress in various contexts. Accurate recognition of different forms of poverty reduction can level the playing field and provide positive incentives to policy actors. If the 4×3 framework plus the Leaving No One Behind subnational analysis is used to monitor global poverty trends going forward, the poverty reduction achievements of countries of all sizes and levels and forms of poverty can be clearly seen and recognised.



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ENDNOTES

1 In this report, all references to dollar denominations refer to US dollars.

2 A global Moderate Multidimensional Poverty Index is under development (Ul Haq et al. 2026).

3 For the very poorest situations, it can be important to go beyond changes in incidence to scrutinise pro-poor changes using the MPI and poverty gap. This is a task for future research.

4 This dataset was compiled by Jakob Dirksen, Azul Fourcade and Niall Maher: we are grateful for their strenuous and patient work.

5 The data underlying this analysis are detailed in Appendix A, and further in Nogales et al. 2026.

6 Other measures, such as the squared poverty gap (Foster, Greer and Thorbecke, 1984) or M-gamma class of multidimensional poverty measures (Alkire and Foster, 2011), go further to adjust for inequality among poor people.

7 The number of poor people is estimated by applying the incidence of poverty of both measures to 2024 population estimates from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), World Population Prospects. Because the incidence and population estimates may not always refer to the same reference year, the resulting figures are approximations and should be interpreted with this in mind.

8 Several studies have probed this divergence – see Evans, Nogales and Robson (2024) and the references therein.

9 The next 10 fastest spells (ranks 11–20) for MPI reduction are Bangladesh (2014–19), Nepal (2016–19), India (2005/06–2015/16), Lesotho (2009–14), Cambodia (2014–2021/22), Kenya (2008/09–2014), Bolivia (2003–08), Gambia (2013–18), Cambodia (2010–14) and Malawi (2010–2015/16). For $3/day, they are Ghana (2008–11), Niger (2006–12), Côte d'Ivoire (2011/12–2016), Cameroon (2011–14), India (2005/06–2015/16), Tanzania (2004/05–2010), Indonesia (2012–17), Namibia (2006/07–2013), Cambodia (2010–14) and Moldova (2005–12).

10 The next 10 fastest spells (ranks 11–20) for MPI reduction are Thailand (2015/16–2019), Indonesia (2012–17), Nepal (2016–19), Mongolia (2010–13), Bangladesh (2014–19), São Tomé and Príncipe (2008/09–2014), Morocco (2011–2017/18), Albania (2008/09–2017/18), Turkmenistan (2006–2015/16) and Bangladesh (2019–22). In terms of $3/day, they are Nepal (2016–19), Tunisia (2011/12–2018), Bangladesh (2019–22), Mexico (2022–23), Belize (2011–2015/16), Mexico (2023–24), Mali (2015–18), Egypt (2008–14), Senegal (2017–19) and Kyrgyzstan (2018–23).

11 The next 10 fastest spells (ranks 11–20) for MPI reduction are Kenya (2014–22), Egypt (2014–21), the Philippines (2008–13), Ethiopia (2016–19), Morocco (2011–2017/18), Cambodia (2014–2021/22), Viet Nam (2013/14–2020/21), Philippines (2013–17), Nepal (2016–19) and Egypt (2008–2014). For the $3/day measure, these are Mexico (2012–16), Tanzania (2004/05–2010), Senegal (2010/11–2017), Benin (2017/18–2021/22), Côte d'Ivoire (2011/12–2016), Egypt (2008–14), Viet Nam (2013/14–2020/21), Mexico (2020–21), Ghana (2008–11) and Cameroon (2011–14).

12 Benin (2014–2017/18), Chad (2010–2014/15), Guinea (2016–18), Guinea-Bissau (2014–2018/19), Kyrgyzstan (2012–14), Mexico (2020–21), Moldova (2005–12), Serbia (2014–19) and Turkmenistan (2006–2015/16).

13 Democratic Republic of the Congo (2013/14–2017/18), Ethiopia (2016–19), Gambia (2018–2019/20), Kenya (2014–22), Liberia (2013–2019/20), Nigeria (2018–21), Sierra Leone (2013–17), Uganda (2011–16).

14 Algeria, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Thailand and Trinidad and Tobago all registered zero change in monetary poverty in absolute or relative terms due to having effectively already eradicated poverty.

15 More details can be found at the World Bank methodology page. The World Bank calls the interpolated/extrapolated datapoints the 'line-up' years, and uses national accounts growth rates (gross domestic product (GDP) or consumption) to estimate welfare means for global temporal alignment.

APPENDIX A: Data, Coverage and Comparability

The global MPI is produced jointly by UNDP's Human Development Report Office and OPHI. It applies the Alkire-Foster method to identify overlapping deprivations across 10 indicators in health, education and living standards.

Levels of poverty: The matched national-level analysis covers 108 countries across six developing regions. Monetary poverty at the national level is measured using the World Bank's Poverty and Inequality Platform (PIP), which compiles poverty estimates from household survey income or consumption distributions (World Bank Group, 2026a) and extends them to a complete panel for each country.[15] The data matched with that of the global MPI contains 108 countries, with reference periods between 2014 and 2025. Sixty-five countries have a single-year global MPI reference period, while 43 have surveys spanning two calendar years. In the latter cases, monetary poverty estimates from the corresponding years are averaged for our analysis.

National poverty trends: As some countries are observed in more than two time points, the trend dataset provides 167 comparable country-specific spells for 89 countries between 2001 and 2025. As timespans are uneven, a 'spell' denotes a comparison between two comparable survey periods rather than an observation from a conventional annual panel. The PIP matched trend dataset covers the same 89 countries and 167 country-specific spells (PIP also covers additional countries and spells). The initial periods range from 2001 to 2023 and final periods from 2008 to 2025. Spell lengths range from one to 12 years, with a median of five years. For each spell, the data include the poverty headcount ratio at the international poverty lines of $3.00, $4.20 and $8.30 per person per day in 2021 purchasing-power-parity terms. Of the 167 spells, 141 are based on consumption and 26 on income aggregates.

Subnational poverty trends: For the subnational analysis, the 2026 global MPI data contain 1,360 territories in 100 countries, of which 38 are in sub-Saharan Africa, 20 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 16 in East Asia and the Pacific, 10 in the Arab States, nine in Europe and Central Asia, and seven in South Asia.

TABLE A1. Data sources for monetary and multidimensional poverty level and trend analyses

Analysis	Multidimensional source[a]	Monetary source[b]	Coverage, period and matching rule
National levels	Global MPI 2026 country results (Table 1).	PIP: headcount, poverty at $3.00, $4.20 and $8.30.	108 countries; six regions; 2014–2025. PIP estimates are matched to the MPI survey year(s); two-year windows use the simple average.
National trends	Global MPI 2026 comparable country trends (Table 6).	PIP estimates matched to each global MPI spell.	89 countries; 167 spells. Initial periods: 2001–2023; final periods: 2008–2025. Intervals: 1–17 years (median five); changes annualised.
Subnational levels	Global MPI 2026 Table 5: 1,360 regions in 100 countries.	SPID source coverage: 8,399 territory-years in 73 matched countries.	Global MPI surveys: 2014–2025; SPID: 1993–2025. No direct region-year matching is attempted.
Subnational trends	Global MPI: 73 countries, 141 country-spells and 1,691 territory-spell observations.	SPID: 63 countries, 94 valid comparability spells and 7,714 territory-years.	The two sources are analysed separately. Changes use comparable territories within source-specific spells and are annualised.
National monetary poverty trends	Not applicable (see National MPI trends).	WDI: poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population); 1,172 country-year observations for 160 economies, 1985–2025.	2000–2025. 119 economies with at least two observations since 2000 (1,063 observations), of which 72 are global MPI countries. Changes computed between consecutive observed years within each country's series and annualised; values are not comparable across countries.
National MPI trends	Official national MPI compilation: 61 countries and 101 country-source series; 42 countries and 64 series support H trends.	See 'National monetary poverty trends', the row above.	1997–2025. Only observations within the same national source series are combined; values are not comparable across countries.

Notes: a) Global MPI data are taken from Alkire, Mishra and Suppa 2026a, Table 1; 2026b, Table 5; 2026c, Table 6.
b) World Bank's Poverty and Inequality Platform (PIP) for national monetary-poverty measures, Subnational Poverty and Inequality Database (SPID) for subnational monetary-poverty measures, and World Development Indicators (WDI) for monetary poverty based on national poverty lines.

Source: Authors' elaboration from data described above.

Subnational monetary poverty estimates are drawn from the Subnational Poverty and Inequality Database (SPID), which reports direct survey-based estimates for administrative and survey-specific territories (World Bank Group, 2025). Because survey designs, welfare aggregates and geographic boundaries may change over time, SPID assigns comparability codes that identify observations that can legitimately be compared over time. We strictly compare observations only when they belong to the same country, geographic unit and comparability series. Requiring at least two observed years within a comparable series, our matched dataset contains a trend sample of 1,691 territory-year observations, covering 63 countries and 94 country-comparability spells between 1993 and 2025. These spells contain between two and 21 observed survey years, with a median of four.

Official national poverty measures: Official national MPIs and monetary poverty measures provide a country-specific lens. The assembled database contains 420 published national MPI estimates from 61 countries, organised into 101 country-source series and covering reference years from 1997 to 2025.

MPI incidence estimates are available for 399 observations. The comparable trend data contain 64 series from 42 countries with at least two observations. Comparisons are made only within the same country and strict comparability conditions, because national MPI structures may be revised over time and because their dimensions, indicators, deprivation thresholds and weights differ across countries. This national MPI dataset is available at OPHI 'Countries with national MPIs' page. National MPI levels should therefore not be interpreted as internationally comparable. The official monetary poverty measures are taken from the World Bank's World Development Indicators database.

Finally, across all four sources, changes are calculated only between periods that are actually observed in the data. Absolute changes are systematically expressed as annual percentage-point changes, while relative changes are annualised in proportion to the initial poverty level. When several valid comparisons exist within the same country and comparability series, rates are calculated separately before being averaged. This approach preserves all available temporal information while avoiding artificial interpolation and comparisons across incompatible surveys, geographic definitions or national MPI methodologies.



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APPENDIX B: Data Sources and Rules

This appendix documents the sources and rules underlying Table A1. Counts refer to the analytical files used for this report and distinguish source coverage from the samples that support temporal comparisons.

GLOBAL MPI 2026 DATA

The global MPI 2026 national file covers 108 countries in six world regions, with survey reference periods from 2014 to 2025. It reports the MPI, the multidimensional headcount ratio (H), intensity (A), vulnerability, severe poverty, indicator-specific deprivation measures, population and sampling uncertainty. These national observations provide the multidimensional side of the level comparison with PIP.

The national trend file contains 89 countries and 167 observed country-spells. At the subnational level, Table 5 of the global MPI 2026 reports 1,360 regions in 100 countries. The subnational trend file used for convergence contains 1,691 territory-spell observations from 73 countries and 141 country-spells from 2001–25. Comparisons retain geographic units that can be followed consistently within each MPI spell; changes are annualised between observed survey rounds.

NATIONAL MONETARY POVERTY DATA

The monetary poverty data are drawn from the World Bank's Poverty and Inequality Platform (PIP). Two matched data sources are used: one that contains static data for comparing contemporaneous (exactly matched due to line-up years in PIP) monetary and multidimensional poverty levels, and a trend file for comparing changes over time over the observed periods in the global MPI data and the corresponding lined-up periods in the PIP data. Because PIP covers more countries and years than the global MPI, both files are restricted to countries represented in the global MPI analysis. We emphasise that we use lined-up (i.e. estimated) data available in the PIP dataset so that monetary estimates are temporally matched exactly to the corresponding global MPI survey reference period.

The static sample covers all 108 global MPI countries: 40 in sub-Saharan Africa, 20 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 18 in East Asia and the Pacific, 12 in Europe and Central Asia, 10 in the Arab States and eight in South Asia. Survey reference periods range from 2014 to 2025. Sixty-five countries have a single-year MPI reference period as well as 11 additional countries that are not included in the global MPI – we use all the information available in WDI. For the remaining 43 countries, whose MPI surveys span two calendar years, the corresponding annual PIP estimates are averaged, which is possible because we use the lined-up years' PIP dataset.

PIP provides headcount ratios, poverty gaps and squared poverty gaps at the $3.00, $4.20 and $8.30 international poverty lines. Among the 108 static observations, 89 use consumption aggregates and 19 use income aggregates. The distinction is retained because income generally displays greater short-term volatility than consumption.

The national trend sample contains 89 countries and 167 country-specific spells. A spell is a comparison between an observed initial period and a later period, not an annual panel observation. Initial periods range from 2001 to 2023 and final periods from 2008 to 2025. Elapsed time ranges from one to 17 years, with a median of five years; changes are therefore annualised.

Sub-Saharan Africa includes 38 countries and 77 spells; Latin America and the Caribbean has 14 countries and 30 spells; Europe and Central Asia includes 13 countries and 21 spells; East Asia and the Pacific has 10 countries and 17 spells; the Arab States cover nine countries and 12 spells; and South Asia includes five countries and 10 spells.

Thirty-eight countries contribute one spell, 33 contribute two, 13 contribute three, three contribute four, and Mexico and Peru contribute six each. Of the 167 spells, 141 use consumption aggregates and 26 use income aggregates. The analytical file records the country, survey periods, welfare aggregate and available poverty lines for every spell.

Ninety-one spells have single-year start and end points; 62 have a two-year window at either the beginning or the end; and 14 have two-year windows at both ends. When a survey period spans two years, the corresponding annual PIP estimates are averaged. In the rare case of a three-year MPI window, its middle year is used for matching.

SUBNATIONAL MONETARY POVERTY DATA

The subnational monetary poverty data are drawn from the World Bank's Subnational Poverty and Inequality Database (SPID), constructed from harmonised household surveys in the Global Monitoring Database. SPID estimates are calculated from the underlying surveys rather than from spatial modelling or small-area estimation. The data form an unbalanced panel because countries differ in survey frequency, years covered and geographic disaggregation.

In our work, SPID data are restricted to countries represented in the global MPI, but the two subnational sources are not merged by year or territory. The matched SPID source contains 8,399 territory-year observations from 73 countries from 1993–2025. Four countries have one observed survey year; the median country has four; and the maximum is 28. These are observed survey rounds, not a balanced annual panel.

The matched file contains 1,269 survey-specific geographic identifiers and 1,187 harmonised geographic identifiers. Of the 8,399 observations, 6,783 refer to first-level administrative units, 703 to second-level units, 137 to third-level units, four to national units and 772 to survey-specific geographic classifications. The units should therefore be understood as representative survey domains rather than as a globally uniform administrative geography.

For each territory and survey year, SPID reports mean welfare in 2021 purchasing-power-parity terms and poverty headcounts at $3.00, $4.20 and $8.30 per person per day. The welfare aggregate is consumption in 5,917 observations and income in 2,482.

Temporal comparisons follow SPID's country-specific comparability codes. Within a country, survey rounds carrying the same code form a comparability spell. A change in code signals a potential break in survey instrument, sampling frame, geographic coverage, questionnaire, recall period or welfare aggregate. Codes are identifiers rather than rankings and have no substantive meaning across countries.

Spells with only one survey year are excluded. Requiring at least two years within a country-specific comparability code leaves 63 countries, 94 valid country-spells and 7,714 territory-year observations. Valid spells contain between two and 21 survey years, with a median of four, and cover 1993–2025. Ten matched countries – Angola, Belize, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, Gabon, Haiti, Lesotho, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Suriname – have no valid multi-year spell.

Within each comparability spell, territories are linked across survey rounds using the harmonised geographic identifier. This additional requirement is necessary because national survey comparability does not by itself guarantee that geographic units remain unchanged. Country-spells lacking sufficient territorial variation cannot support a convergence regression.

Survey intervals differ across countries and within spells. Changes are calculated only between consecutive observed survey rounds and are annualised before their pace is compared across territories.

OFFICIAL NATIONAL MPI DATA

The national MPI database compiles 420 published estimates from official national sources for 61 countries, 101 country-source series and years from 1997 to 2025. The indicators, weights and poverty cutoffs are country-specific; the estimates are therefore intended for within-country analysis and not for cross-country ranking. The headcount ratio is available for 399 observations in 100 source series.

Trend calculations require at least two observations with the same country and source-series code. This leaves 41 countries and 63 comparable series. For each series, annual absolute and compound relative changes are calculated between consecutive observed years. When more than one interval is available, interval-specific annual rates are averaged; a standard error is retained when at least two rates contribute.

COMMON ANALYTICAL CONVENTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

A spell is an observed comparison between an initial and a later survey period, not an observation from an annual panel. Absolute changes are expressed in percentage points per year; relative changes are compound annual rates. Where a global MPI survey spans two years, matched PIP estimates are averaged across those years. Results therefore describe change between observed rounds and should not be interpreted as continuously observed annual trajectories.

National, global MPI and PIP comparisons are aligned by country and reference period. Subnational global MPI and SPID estimates are not merged because their survey years and geographic definitions differ; the same convergence question is estimated separately in each source. The analysis uses repeated cross-sections rather than household panel data and cannot establish whether the same people enter or leave poverty.

Regional summaries refer only to countries covered by the global MPI 2026 and should not be interpreted as estimates for every country in a region. Counts of poor people apply poverty incidence to 2024 UNDESA population estimates; where the poverty and population reference years differ, the resulting totals are approximations.



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