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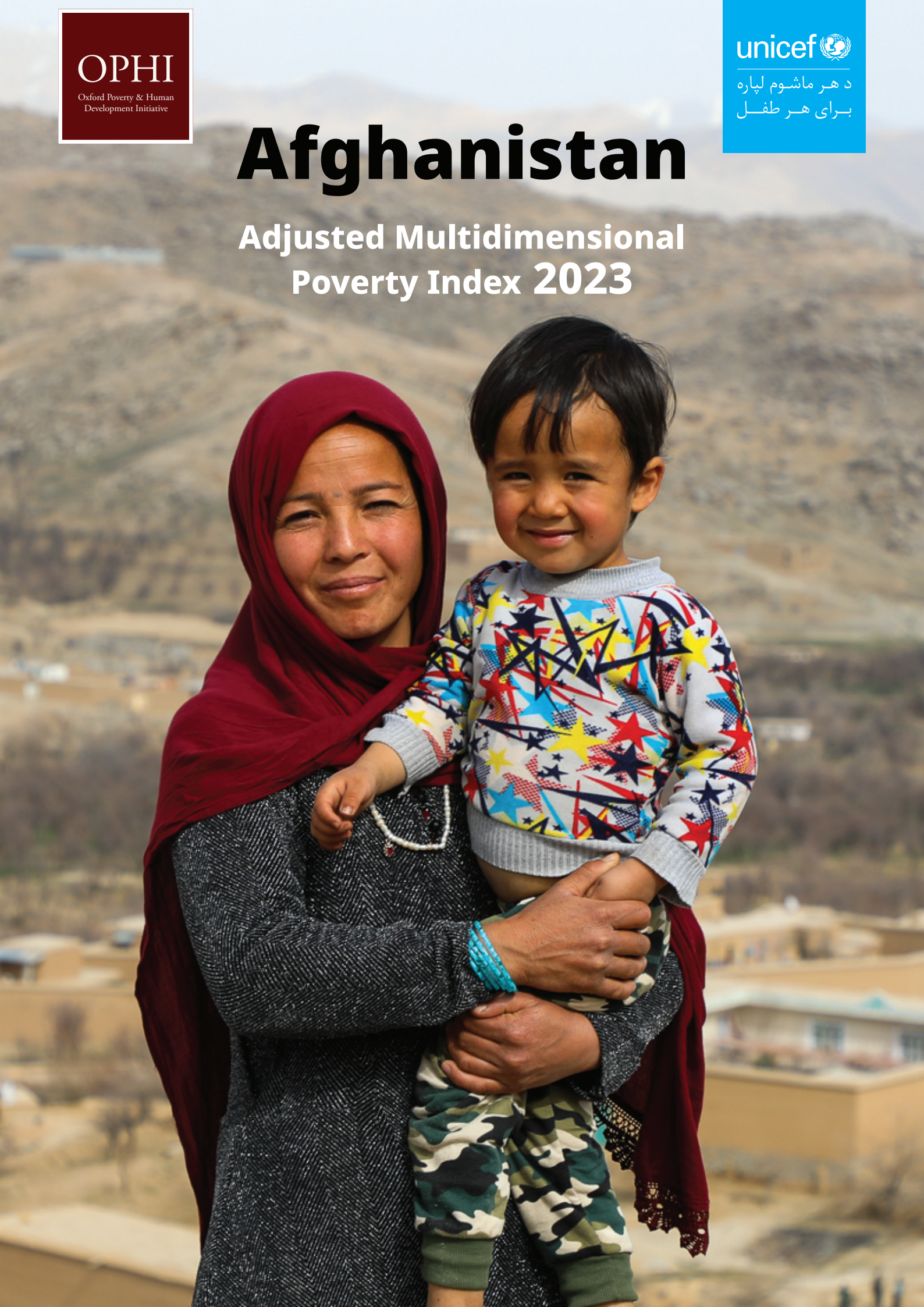
Afghanistan

Adjusted Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023



Afghanistan's Adjusted Multidimensional Poverty Index (based on MICS 2022-23) and Child Multidimensional Poverty Index Report and Analysis.

Afghanistan's Adjusted Multidimensional Poverty Index (based on MICS 2022-23) and Child Multidimensional Poverty Index was developed by UNICEF and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford.

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Foreword

It is my privilege to introduce this pivotal report on the Adjusted MPI and Child MPI of Afghanistan. This report provides a stark, yet essential, portrayal of the challenges faced by millions of Afghan children and families. It reveals that over 62.3% of the population lives in multidimensional poverty, with an average intensity of 58.3%, indicating that those in poverty are deprived in more than half of the weighted indicators.

The rapid rise in multidimensional poverty, from 50.8% in 2020 to 62.3% in 2023, underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that addresses the root causes of deprivation. The data highlights a particularly troubling disparity among children, with 66.9% of children experiencing multidimensional poverty compared to 56.8% of adults.

The Child MPI value of 0.396, significantly higher than the adult MPI of 0.323, illustrates the severity of the deprivations faced by Afghan children, especially in rural areas. This widespread issue spans 32 out of 34 provinces and is primarily driven by high deprivations in education, particularly in female schooling and school attendance. To address these urgent challenges, the report calls for targeted interventions focusing on improving education, girl's education and health conditions for children, particularly in rural areas.

The findings in this report highlight the critical importance of a multifaceted approach that combines immediate relief with long-term development efforts across all dimensions of poverty. It is only through such a comprehensive strategy that we can effectively reduce overall deprivation and improve the lives of Afghan children and families.

Together, we must leverage these insights to drive advocacy efforts, prompting policy changes and increased investments in child-focused programs. Let us commit that every Afghan girl and boy has the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to this report.

Dr. Tajudeen Oyewale

Representative, UNICEF Afghanistan

Message

This report offers a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the state of multidimensional poverty in Afghanistan, highlighting critical issues that demand immediate and sustained action. In turbulent times, it is imperative to understand the depth of poverty and its precise composition to effectively address and mitigate its effects. Multidimensional poverty extends beyond monetary deficits; it covers deprivations across dimensions of education, health, and living standards.

The Adjusted Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) for Afghanistan provides a nuanced perspective on the scope of poverty in 2022-23. It finds that over 62.3% of the Afghan population, amounting to more than 25 million individuals, are poor. This high statistic emphasizes the gravity of the situation and underscores the need for immediate and comprehensive interventions.

The report also sheds light on the geographic disparities, with rural areas and specific provinces bearing the brunt of poverty. The stark contrast between urban and rural poverty rates calls for tailored regional strategies that prioritize the needs of the most affected areas. Provinces like Helmand, Kandahar, and Herat, which have high poverty rates and large numbers of poor people, require extra efforts to alleviate poverty and improve living conditions.

Another pressing concern as per the linked Child MPI, is the severe impact of multidimensional poverty on children. Poverty in Afghanistan disproportionately burdens its youngest citizens: 77.6% of children under 18 years of age are multidimensionally poor. Children experience significant deprivations in nutrition, early childhood education and primary schooling, which perpetuate the cycle of poverty and hinder their future prospects. The data also show that the proportion of boys and girls that are out of primary school has risen significantly. This calls for child-specific policies and programs that address these critical areas, including enhanced educational opportunities, improved healthcare access, and targeted social protection measures.

It is our hope that policymakers, stakeholders, and development partners collaborate and leverage the insights from the Adjusted MPI and linked Child MPI results. The data not only highlight the extent of multidimensional poverty but also serve as a call to action for implementing effective poverty reduction strategies.

Sabina Alkire

Director, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative

Acknowledgements

This report on Afghanistan's Adjusted Multidimensional Poverty Index (Adjusted MPI) and Child Multidimensional Poverty Index (Child MPI), which is based on MICS 2022-23, is the product of a collective effort of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Afghanistan and the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford. The report was led by Jawad Aslam, Nkandu Chilombo and Atal Khan Gardiwal from the Social Policy team of UNICEF Afghanistan and by Sabina Alkire, Tshoki Zangmo, and Rizwan Ul Haq from OPHI. The estimates underlying this briefing have been produced using the Stata package mpitb developed by Suppa (2023)[1]. Our special thanks go to team that prepared the Afghanistan MICS 2022-23 data. The report also benefitted from comments from Mihail Peleah and Muhammad Nassim Attahi from UNDP Afghanistan, as well as Oscar Barriga Cabanillas and Silvia Redaelli from the World Bank for the strategic insights on the development of the Adjusted MPI and linked Child MPI structure. The OPHI team are also grateful to our colleagues Maya Evans for communications and Irini Hatzimichali for administrative support.

[1]Suppa, Nicolai. (2023). "mpitb: A toolbox for multidimensional poverty indices" The Stata Journal, Vol. 23(3), pp. 625–657.

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Glossary

Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	The MPI value is the product of the incidence and the intensity of multidimensional poverty. The value ranges between 0 and 1, with 1 indicating that everyone is multidimensionally poor and deprived in all indicators and 0 indicating no poverty and no deprivations at all.
Headcount ratio (H)	Also referred to as the incidence of multidimensional poverty or poverty rate. It refers to the proportion of people who are multidimensionally poor. It ranges from 0 to 100%.
Intensity (A)	Refers to the average share of weighted deprivations, or average deprivation score, among multidimensionally poor people. It ranges from the poverty cut-off to 100%.
Uncensored Headcount Ratio	Refers to the proportion of people who are deprived in a particular indicator, regardless of whether or not they are multidimensionally poor. Expressed in percentage, it ranges from 0 to 100%
Censored Headcount Ratio	Refers to the proportion of people who are both multidimensionally poor and who are deprived in a particular indicator. It ranges from 0 to the MPI headcount ratio.
Deprivation cut-off	Refers to the standard or threshold below which a person or household is considered to be deprived in a given indicator.
Poverty cut-off (k)	Acts as the multidimensional poverty line. If a person's deprivation score is at least as high or higher than the poverty cut-off they are identified as poor. It is reported as a percentage.
Weights	Refers to the relative weights assigned to indicators. Weights are normalized (that is, the total weight sums up to 1 or 100%) and indicate the relative importance of each indicator within the MPI.
Percentage contribution to MPI (of an indicator)	Refers to the percentage of the total MPI value that is attributed to a given indicator. An indicator's contribution is a function of both its censored headcount ratio and its weight. It ranges from 0 to 100%.
Absolute contribution of an indicator to the MPI	Refers to the amount of the total MPI value that is attributed to a given indicator. An indicator's contribution is a function of both its censored headcount ratio and its weight. It ranges from 0 to the MPI value.

Executive Summary

UNICEF Afghanistan, with technical expertise from OPHI at the University of Oxford, analyzed the recent Afghanistan Multiple Indictor Cluster Survey (MICS) 2022-23 to generate the Adjusted Afghanistan Multidimensional Poverty Index (Adjusted MPI). This report presents Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI based on the MICS along with a linked Child MPI. Ideally, Afghanistan's national A-MPI, launched in 2019 based on the Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS) 2016-17, would have been updated. However, due to data limitations from the MICS 2022-23, the entire structure of the original national MPI could not be retained. By preserving most of the indicators from the original A-MPI, what is here called the "Adjusted MPI" of Afghanistan uses a reduced number of dimensions and indicators from the original A-MPI to assess multidimensional poverty as rigorously as possible using MICS data.

Overall, the report provides key insights into three critical dimensions of the Adjusted MPI, namely health, education, and living standards, within the post-COVID context. Indicators were harmonized to evaluate changes over time using Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS) 2016-17, Income and Expenditure and Labour Force Survey (IE&LFS) 2020 and MICS 2022-23 data. To probe in detail the unique needs of children, the report includes a linked Child MPI. This is a specific measure for individual children aged 0-17 that includes all of the same indicators as the Adjusted MPI (so all children who are poor by the Adjusted MPI are poor by the Child MPI), and adds a fourth dimension covering age-specific deprivations across the lifecycle of childhood including undernutrition, school lag, and childhood development.

In Afghanistan, over 62.3% of the population live in multidimensional poverty as per the Adjusted MPI based on MICS. The average intensity of poverty stands at 58.3%, reflecting that individuals in poverty are deprived in more than half of the weighted indicators. The Adjusted MPI value of 0.363 suggests that multidimensionally poor people experience 36.3% of the total possible deprivations. Between 2020 and 2023, there has been a notable increase in multidimensional poverty, with the Adjusted MPI rising from 0.270 to 0.363 and the poverty incidence climbing from 50.8% to 62.3%. This significant rise highlights the urgent need for a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that combines immediate relief with long-term development efforts across all dimensions of poverty. The data also reveals a troubling disparity in multidimensional poverty among children compared to adults. Children face higher poverty rates, with an Adjusted MPI value of 0.396 versus 0.323 for adults, and 66.9% of children are multidimensionally poor,

compared to 56.8% of adults. The incidence of multidimensional poverty among children has increased substantially from 55.4% in 2020 to 66.9% in 2023. The analysis calls for targeted interventions focusing on improving education and health conditions for children, especially in rural areas. Additionally, households with children who have functional disabilities face more severe poverty, further emphasizing the need for specialized social protection programs. Rural areas also experience higher multidimensional poverty compared to urban areas, necessitating targeted rural development initiatives. The report concludes that addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, combining immediate aid with strategies for sustainable development to reduce overall deprivation.

The high incidence of multidimensional poverty among children in Afghanistan is concerning, with 77.6% of children affected. This widespread issue spans 32 out of 34 provinces, highlighting a deep-rooted problem. The primary drivers of this poverty are high deprivations in indicators under the education dimension, particularly in female schooling and school attendance. To address these challenges, there is an urgent need for targeted interventions such as increased cash transfers and expanded school feeding programs, and improved healthcare access for vulnerable populations. Implementing these measures can mitigate immediate impacts and support long-term improvements in child welfare. Raising awareness through the Child MPI can drive advocacy efforts, prompting policy changes and increased investments in child-focused programs, with active engagement from government, civil society, and international organizations.

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Introduction

This chapter offers the background context on poverty in Afghanistan and highlights the significance of measuring multidimensional poverty for informing policy decisions.

Country context

After experiencing a cumulative contraction of 27 percent in 2021 and 2022, the economy recorded a positive GDP growth of 2.7% in the fiscal year end of 2023-24[2]. The sanctions on the defacto authorities which came into power in August 2021 has resulted in the suspension of budget support and overall decline in international aid, resulting in negative per capita growth rate as population growth is significantly larger than real GDP growth rate. In addition to over 40 decades of war and the COVID-19 pandemic, Afghanistan continues to face shocks such as earthquakes and drought. The October 2023 earthquake damaged critical infrastructure, reducing GDP growth by estimated 0.5-0.8 percent.

This has created an urgent need for data to guide social assistance and protection. By 2024, a report[3] by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) indicates that over half of the country's population–that includes 54.6%[4] of children–will necessitate humanitarian assistance. The nation's economy, heavily reliant on human itarian aid and remittances, remains fragile, worsened by the marginalization of women from economic activities.

The UNOCHA report also states that income poverty remains pervasive, affecting nearly half of all Afghans, with particularly high rates observed among women. Despite some economic stabilization observed in 2023, a significant portion of families, around 65%, still encountered economic shocks. These precarious economic conditions are anticipated to perpetuate acute food insecurity throughout 2024, impacting approximately 15.8 million individuals. Afghanistan is also confronted with climate-change-induced crises, with drought-like conditions affecting 25 out of 34 provinces.

However, a lack of data has made accurate responses unusually difficult to plan and execute. The latest Income and Expenditure & Labor Force survey 2020 (IE&LFS 2020) was taken before the Covid-19 pandemic, and before the August 2021 change of government. Both events contributed to considerable internal and external population migrations in both directions. The latter also led to institutional changes in government services, the consequences of which are not yet covered in household surveys. Therefore, UNICEF supported a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) (2022-23), which covers key indicators ranging from child nutrition, vaccination, and cognitive development to school attendance and complete schooling to services of water, sanitation, housing, energy, and birth histories.

[2]National Statistica and Information Authority 2023-24 Statistical Yearbook
[3]Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024 (December 2023), UNOCHA
[4]United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2024). World Population Prospects 2024, Online Edition.
[5]Afghanistan-WHO 2024 Health Emergency Appeal
[6]Income and Labour Force Survey Report, 2021, NBS

Furthermore, natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods have disrupted education, damaging schools and disrupting learning for thousands of children. Afghanistan's healthcare system is also confronting significant instability, with citizens facing daily struggles such as food shortages, malnutrition, and a high burden of both communicable and non-communicable diseases as per World Health Organization report[5]. As per this report, a substantial portion of the population, comprising 9.5 million individuals residing in over 20,000 villages, lacks access to basic healthcare services. This health crisis disproportionately affects Afghan women and children, who are increasingly vulnerable to adverse health outcomes.

Monetary poverty in Afghanistan

Post August 2021 there have been no poverty surveys (household budget surveys), and the absence of poverty data (although proxies have been estimated) challenges policy responses. The latest official poverty figures are from IE&FL 2020 which reported that 47.1% of the population were living in income poverty, with an additional 45.0% at risk of falling into poverty, as they live on less than 1.5 times the poverty line[6]. The same report stated that between 2016–17 and 2020, Afghanistan witnessed a decrease in income poverty from 54.6% to 47.1%, driven primarily by a decline in rural income poverty from 59.0% to 48.0%. However, urban monetary poverty saw an increase from 42.0% to 46.0%. This led to a substantial narrowing of the urban-rural poverty gap, with only a two-percentage-point difference remaining. Despite this progress, poverty remains predominantly rural due to demographic factors, with nearly three-quarters of the poor residing in rural areas. Furthermore, a considerable portion of the population—half of the country's populace—still falls below the minimum standard of living. Moreover, poverty rates remain higher than in previous years, surpassing levels seen in 2007–08 (34.0%) and 2011–12 (38.0%).

The IE&FL 2020 report also observed that demographic characteristics in Afghanistan are closely linked with monetary poverty rates. For instance, larger households tend to have higher monetary poverty rates. Additionally, low educational attainment is widespread, with 62.0% of the population residing in households where the heads are illiterate. On average, 52.8% of these households are income poor, compared to 36.0% with literate heads.

The labor market status of the household head also correlates with income poverty, although having a fully employed head does not guarantee avoidance of poverty; 42.8% of the population residing in households with employed heads still live in monetary poverty (IE&FL 2020). Afghans living in households where the heads work in construction or agriculture face poverty rates higher than the national average (55.0 and 49.0%, respectively), comprising over a third of the impoverished population. Households with unemployed or inactive heads also experience high poverty rates, at 54.0% and 48.0%, respectively.

[5]Afghanistan-WHO 2024 Health Emergency Appeal
[6]Income and Labour Force Survey Report, 2021, NBS

Why multidimensional poverty in Afghanistan?

Poverty has traditionally been measured in terms of income or consumption expenditure. However, focusing solely on monetary poverty fails to capture the complex and multifaceted nature of poverty as it is experienced in reality. Measures of multidimensional poverty assess whether people are living in poverty based on the deprivations they face. Such measures recognize that individuals experiencing poverty often face multiple deprivations simultaneously. By making visible clustered deprivations, multisectoral policy responses can be more targeted and effective, ensuring that individuals receive the support they need efficiently.

In the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1), which aims to eradicate poverty in all its forms, it is imperative to have an effective measure for multidimensional poverty. Target 1.2 of SDG 1 specifically aims to 'reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions'. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) emerges as a crucial measure to address this formidable challenge and is reported as SDG indicator 1.2.2. Complementing monetary poverty measures the MPI provides a nuanced and accurate portrayal of non-monetary deprivations.

The MPI is based on the Alkire-Foster (AF) method which offers a comprehensive approach to measuring the joint distribution of deprivations, assessing both the incidence and intensity of multidimensional poverty. A prominent application of the AF method is the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which evaluates acute multidimensional poverty in over 100 countries. It is calculated using data from the most recent Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), MICS, and national surveys. The global MPI uses three dimensions and 10 indicators. The 2023 Global MPI report recorded the MPI value for Afghanistan at 0.272 with 0.328 value in rural areas and 0.094 value in urban. The incidence of multidimensional poverty was 55.9%, and the intensity was 48.6%. Since the Global MPI indicators are standardized, they are as comparable as possible across countries.

In addition to the global MPI, many countries including Afghanistan have official National MPIs. National MPIs are tailored to meet local needs and country-specific contexts, making each national MPI distinct. The Afghanistan Multidimensional Poverty Index (A-MPI) was launched in 2019 as the official measure of multidimensional poverty, complementing the monetary poverty indicators. The 2019 national A-MPI was estimated using data from the

Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS) 2016–17, conducted by the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA). The A-MPI design process involved extensive consultations with key government ministries, leaders and technical experts.

The A-MPI is made up of five[7] dimensions and 18 indicators, reflecting the country's policy priorities. The A-MPI value for 2016-17 was 0.272, indicating that poor people in Afghanistan experience over 27% of the deprivations that would be faced if the entire population were deprived in all indicators. The multidimensional poverty headcount ratio stood at 51.7% in 2020. The intensity of multidimensional poverty was 52.5%, which means that, on average, Afghans are deprived in 52.5% of the 18 weighted indicators that form the A-MPI. This measure complements Afghanistan's national monetary poverty measure, revealing that those who are monetarily poor are not necessarily multidimensionally poor. While 51.7% of people were MPI poor and 54.5% were monetarily poor, only about 36.3% of people in Afghanistan were poor by both measures. Both measures are necessary to adequately illuminate poverty in its many forms and dimensions.

In 2021, a modeling exercise was carried out to compute A-MPI using data from the IE&FLS 2020, showing a slight decrease to a value of 0.265. Policy analyses were published in a policy brief funded by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) along with OPHI, UNDP, and UNICEF. The data indicated that 49.4% of Afghanistan's population were multidimensionally poor, with an average intensity of poverty recorded at 53.6%. This means that poor individuals were deprived in over half of the indicators, indicating that the intensity of poverty remained relatively high. No updates have been available for the post-COVID era to date.

[7]The original A-MPI uses an equal nested-weight scheme, assigning a weight of 1/5 to each of the five dimensions of education, health, living standards, work, and shocks. For the dimensions of education and shocks, two indicators have a weight equal to 1/20; however, the indicators of school attendance and security have a weight equal to 1/10. Child school attendance and adult years of schooling (male and female combined) are roughly equal in importance, and gendered adult schooling indicators illuminate gendered outcomes. Finally, in the case of the shocks dimension, security in the context of Afghanistan covers the vital aspect of personal security from violence, whereas production and income are related to security from sudden economic hardship. A person is identified as poor if they are deprived in at least 40% or more of the dimensions or weighted indicators.

The Adjusted MPI of Afghanistan based on 2022-2023 MICS: An Introduction

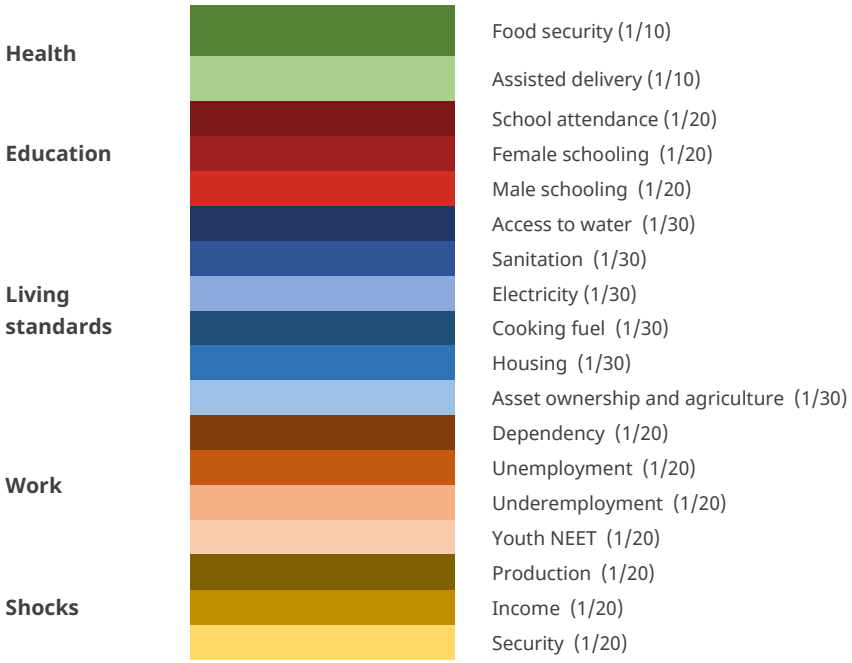
The findings from the national MPI highlight the persistent and multifaceted nature of poverty in Afghanistan, requiring continued policy interventions to reduce multidimensional poverty. Hence, consistently evaluating the progress of deprivations across crucial poverty indicators is essential. Furthermore, understanding the level of poverty after the pandemic and intervening events is crucial. The pandemic strained Afghanistan's healthcare system, potentially increasing illness and reducing access to preventative care. Similarly, school closures and disruptions due to COVID could have worsened educational attainment, particularly for vulnerable groups. Socio-economic impacts such as urban-rural migration also may have affected people's living conditions. Therefore, having a clearer picture of the post-COVID level and indicator composition of poverty enables efficient resource allocation to address the most pressing issues.

It would have been ideal to update the official A-MPI using 2023 data and to compare it with previous estimates (2016-17 and 2020) to gain insights into the current poverty situation. However, the MICS 2022-23 data does not include any indicators for two dimensions of the official A-MPI measure: work, and shocks, and also does not include three other indicators: food security (in health), housing, and cooking fuel (in living standards) (Figure 1).

However, it is possible to estimate multidimensional poverty through a reduced version of the original A-MPI that includes exactly eight indicators under the three dimensions of health, education, and living standards. The Adjusted MPI (Figure 2) of Afghanistan was harmonized across the three time periods to shed light on changes in health, education, living standard deprivations. The Adjusted MPI has been further analyzed by key subgroups to assess provincial-level multidimensional poverty, providing insight into where social protection measures should be directed for maximum impact.

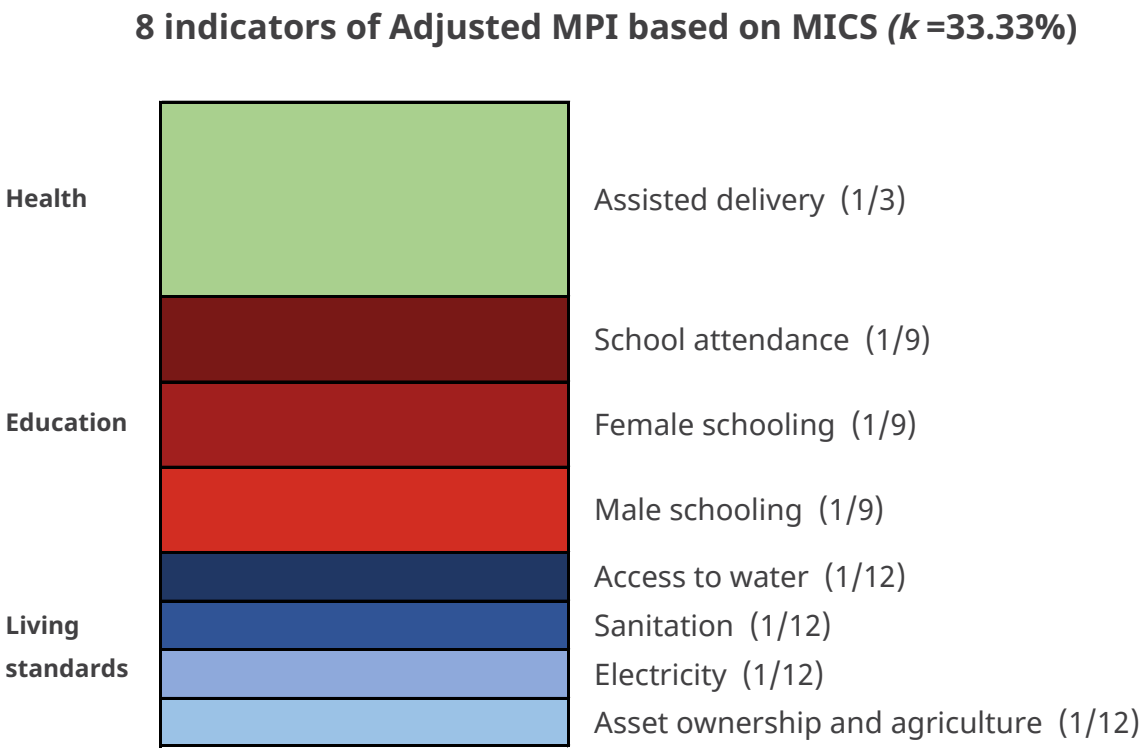
Afghanistan's demographic profile shows it to be a young country. To further understand the living conditions for children in Afghanistan, a Child MPI is also generated. Deprivations in essential areas such as nutrition and early stimulation significantly hinder early childhood development and perpetuate cycles of poverty. The Child MPI is linked to the Adjusted MPI based on MICS 2022-23 and provides actionable insights into the various deprivations affecting children in Afghanistan.

Figure 1 Structure of the original A-MPI



Source: Afghanistan Multidimensional Poverty Index 2016–17.

Figure 2 Structure of the Adjusted MPI based on MICS 2022-23



Source: Authors' inputs based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Part 1

Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI based on MICS

I. Structure of the Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI based on MICS

This section introduces readers to the Alkire-Foster method, the data used for this report, and the overall structure of the Adjusted MPI.

1.1 Data source

The Afghanistan MICS 2022-23 was conducted by the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office in collaboration with the National Statistics and Information Authority of Afghanistan (NSIA) as part of the Global MICS Programme. Data collection commenced in September 2022 and concluded in February 2023. The sample was designed to provide estimates for numerous indicators concerning the status of women and children at the national level, across urban and rural areas, and for all 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

The sampling methodology involved stratification of urban and rural areas within each province, with households selected in two stages. Primary sampling units (PSUs) were defined as enumeration areas (EAs) from the 2019 Satellite Imagery based frame, systematically selected with probability proportional to size. Following household listings within selected EAs, a systematic sample of 24 households was drawn in each sample enumeration area, resulting in an overall sample size of 23,568 households across 982 sample enumeration areas. MICS surveys employ Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI), utilizing the CS Pro (Census and Survey Processing System) software, Version 7.7, along with a dedicated data management platform tailored for MICS. The analyses of trends over time uses data from the ALCS 2016-17, as well as the 2020 IE&LFS, which are subsequently harmonized to evaluate changes over three time periods.

1.2 Alkire-Foster method

A Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) identifies who is poor and shows how they are poor by focusing on the profile of deprivations that poor people experience. These deprivations usually relate to people's life circumstances, their living conditions, and their capabilities. Importantly, a multidimensional measure of poverty recognises that a person who is poor can suffer multiple disadvantages at the same time – for example, they may have poor health or malnutrition, a lack of clean water or electricity, poor quality of work or little schooling. An MPI reflects the overlapping disadvantages that affect poor people, illuminating which disadvantages cluster together in some areas and for specific groups, so policies can address them effectively. The AF method is a useful framework for measuring multidimensional poverty because of the information it generates. The MPI and all related statistics can also be disaggregated by characteristics like age, ethnicity, urban/rural

areas, and subnational regions to show who is poorest and how they are poor. The MPI is a simple tool, based on an intuitive counting method, yet provides an information platform that illuminates the complex problem of multidimensional poverty. The evidence it generates can inform more accurate and better targeted solutions.

Short explanation of how the AF method works

The Alkire-Foster (AF) method developed by Sabina Alkire and James Foster is used to measure multidimensional poverty. The structure of the measure – that is, the dimensions and indicators that together measure poverty in a given context – are flexible, and their selection lies at the heart of an MPI. The indicators are the fundamental components of the MPI and capture the disadvantages that define poverty. The dimensions are the conceptual groupings of those indicators. The AF method first considers if a person is deprived or non-deprived in each indicator according to the indicator's chosen deprivation cut-off. Each indicator is assigned a weight. Indicators may take the same or different weights according to their relative importance. A person's weighted deprivations are added up to create their deprivation score, which shows the share of weighted deprivations they experience. A person is identified as multidimensionally poor if their deprivation score is at or above a poverty cut-off.

The following are some key statistics used to describe multidimensional poverty:

- **Incidence** (H) is the proportion of the population who are multidimensionally poor. It is sometimes called the headcount ratio or poverty rate.
- **Intensity** (A) is the average percentage of weighted indicators in which poor people are deprived – that is, the average deprivation score among poor people.
- **MPI** is the share of possible deprivations that poor people experience. The MPI is computed by multiplying the incidence by the intensity **(MPI=H x A).**
- **Censored headcount ratios** are the share of population who are both deprived in each given indicator and are multidimensionally poor.
- **Percentage contribution** refers to the relative percentage contribution of an indicator to the overall MPI value to see which indicators are contributing the most to poverty.
- **Absolute contribution** refers to the amount of the total MPI that can be attributed to a given indicator which is useful for comparing the composition of poverty between groups.

1.3 Unit of identification and analysis

The unit of identification for Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI is the household. This approach assumes intra-household caring and sharing, and thus considers a household as a unit formed by individuals whose lives are deeply intertwined. For instance, for school attendance, if a child is out of school, all household members are considered to be deprived. The unit of analysis, meaning the unit for which results are reported and analyzed, is the individual. Thus, the headcount ratio represents the percentage of people who are identified as poor.

1.4 Dimensions, indicators, deprivation cut-offs, and weights

Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI based on MICS comprises three dimensions and eight common indicators from the original A-MPI based on the availability of data in MICS 2022-23 (Table 1). Two dimensions, shocks and work, have been excluded as have three indicators: food security, cooking fuel and housing. The trend analysis is based on harmonized results over three survey periods (ALCS 2016-17, IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2022-23).

The following section offers a description of the three dimensions of the Adjusted MPI. Table 1 provides the structure of the Adjusted MPI.

1. **Health:** Under the health dimension, due to the lack of a food security indicator in the MICS 2022-23, the only remaining indicator was assisted delivery. As per this indicator, a household is deprived if any woman who was pregnant in the last two years preceding the interview received fewer than four antenatal care visits, or if the delivery did not take place at a health facility, or if it was not attended by a doctor or a nurse. For this indicator, the reference period was changed from five years in the ALCS to two years due to the MICS's shorter recall period.

2. **Education:** The education dimension comprises three indicators. One of these indicate whether any male aged 10 and above has completed primary schooling (grade 6 and above) in the household. The second indicator shows whether any female aged 10 and above has completed primary schooling. The inquiry regarding literacy (reading and writing), which was part of the years of schooling indicator in the official A-MPI, has been dropped because this information was not included in the 2023 MICS. The school attendance indicator considers a household to be deprived if any child aged 7-13 is not attending school or has never attended.

3. **Living standards:** The living standards dimension has four indicators: water, sanitation, electricity and asset ownership. Access to water assesses whether households lack access to improved water sources (deprived if water source is unprotected, surface water or unspecified). In terms of sanitation, households are deprived if they use a pit latrine without slab, an open pit, no facility or other. If a household has no electricity from any source it is deprived in electricity. In the ALCS 2016-17, the reference period for electricity was one month, whereas the MICS 2022-23 does not specify a reference period. In MICS 2022-23, a household is considered non-deprived if it has access to electricity via either an interconnected grid or an off-grid source. The asset[8] ownership indicator identifies a household as deprived if households own less than 3 assets (refrigerator, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, gas cylinder, iron, television, mobile, satellite dish, bicycle and motorbike, and agricultural items (land and livestock)), Urban dwellers are deprived if they own less than 3 of refrigerator, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, gas cylinder, iron, television, mobile, satellite dish, bicycle and motorbike. Agriculture items are not applicable for urban dwellers.

[8]A sharp rise in deprivations of iron, and of livestock ownership in rural areas was observed. Iron ownership plummeted in MICS 2023 (64.5% in 2016 to 15.2% in 2023). Livestock ownership also decreased in rural areas from 70.2% in 2016 to 66.2% in 2020 to 34.8% in 2023. Across provinces, Kunarha livestock deprivations increased from 15.9% in 2020 to 86.7% in 2023. Kunduz increased deprivations from 20.9% in 2020 to 83.5%. Baghlan increased deprivations from 24.5% in 2020 to 76.3% in 2023. Faryab also increased deprivations 29.9% in 2020 to 70.8% in 2023. The asset data are retained but readers are asked to bear in mind possible data challenges

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Table 1 Structure of the Adjusted MPI based on MICS 2022-23

Dimensions of Adjusted MPI based on MICS	Indicators	Household is deprived if...	Weight
Health	Assisted delivery	Any woman who was pregnant in the last 2 years preceding the interview received less than 4 antenatal care visits OR the delivery did not take place at a health facility OR was not attended by a doctor or a nurse	1/3
Education	School attendance	At least one child aged 7-13 is not attending school or never did	1/9
	Female schooling	No female aged 10+ has completed primary schooling (grade 6 or above)	1/9
	Male schooling	No male aged 10+ has completed primary schooling (grade 6 or above)	1/9
Living standards	Access to water	They lack access to improved water sources (deprived if water source is unprotected, surface water or unspecified)	1/12
	Sanitation	They lack access to improved sanitation facilities (deprived if pit latrine without slab/open pit, or no facility or other.)	1/12
	Electricity	There is no electricity from any source	1/12
	Asset ownership and agriculture	They own less than 3 assets (refrigerator, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, gas cylinder, iron, television, mobile, satellite dish, bicycle and motorbike, and agricultural items (land and livestock))".	1/12

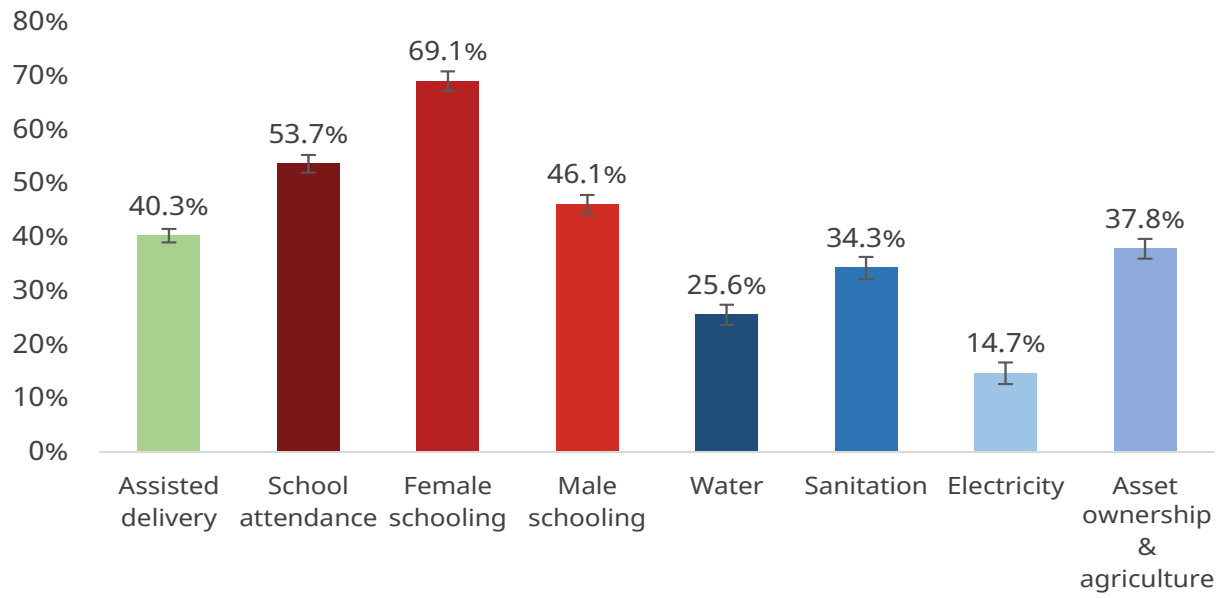
Notes:1. Improved sources are those that have the potential to deliver safe water by nature of their design and construction. These include piped supplies and non-piped supplies (such as boreholes, protected wells and springs, rainwater, and packaged or delivered water, e.g. by tanker trucks). Unimproved drinking water sources that do not protect against contamination are unprotected springs and wells. 2. An improved sanitation facility is defined as one that hygienically separates human excreta from human contact. These facilities include wet sanitation technologies (flush and pour flush toilets connecting to sewers, septic tanks or pit latrines) and dry sanitation technologies (ventilated improved pit latrines, pit latrines with slabs and composting toilets).

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

1.5 Uncensored headcount ratios

The uncensored headcount ratio of each indicator represents the proportion of the population who are deprived in each indicator, irrespective of their poverty status. These ratios are computed for every indicator, reflecting the percentage of individuals experiencing deprivation in each specific indicator, regardless of their overall poverty status. As Figure 3 shows, the highest deprivations are found in the education dimension; female years of schooling (with 69.1% of the population living with a female who has not completed the primary years of schooling), school attendance (53.7% of the households have children aged 7-13 not attending school or never did) and male years of schooling (46.1%). The lowest deprivation is observed in electricity, with 14.7% of people living in the households lacking access.

Figure 3 Uncensored headcount ratios, 2022-2023



Source: Author's calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

1.6 Weights

Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI based on MICS uses an equal nested-weight scheme, assigning a weight of 1/3 to each of the three dimensions of education, health and living standards (Table 1). The adopted scheme of equal weights for every dimension implies an identical relative importance for each one. Within the dimensions of health, living standards, and education each indicator is equally weighted. For instance, each of the three indicators in the education dimension carries a weight of 1/9th. Since health has only one indicator, assisted delivery is given a weight of 1/3rd. In living standards, each of the four indicators has a weight of 1/12th.

1.7 Poverty and deprivation cut-offs

There are two types of cut-offs used to determine if an individual is deprived and multidimensionally poor:

1. an indicator-specific cut-off (deprivation cut-off) which identifies deprivation in each indicator if the individual's attainment falls below the specified cut-off, and

2. a cross-indicator cut-off (or poverty cut-off), which sets the minimum share of deprivations (or deprivation score) required for an individual to be classified as multidimensionally poor.

Table 1 summarizes the deprivation cut-off for the eight indicators. The poverty cutoff or the k-value was set at 33.3%. This means that a person is considered poor if they are deprived in 33.3% or more of the weighted deprivations.

II. Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI based on MICS: Results

This section presents the results of the Adjusted MPI, along with the poverty incidence and intensity among the poor. Then, disaggregated results by household and individual characteristics are shared.

2.1 Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI based on MICS - Key results

Table 2 presents the Adjusted MPI value alongside the headcount ratio or poverty rate (H), also known as the incidence of poverty (the proportion of people identified as multidimensionally poor), and the intensity of poverty (the average weighted deprivations experienced by the poor, A). As shown in the table, the incidence of multidimensional poverty is 62.3% which translates to roughly 25 million people in poverty. Since this estimate is based on a sample, it includes a margin of error, with a 95% confidence interval indicating that the true multidimensional poverty headcount ratio lies between 60.5% and 64.1%.

The intensity of poverty, which reflects the weighted deprivations each poor person experiences on average, is 58.3%. This means that each poor person is, on average, deprived in more than half of the weighted indicators. The MPI, which is the product of H and A, is 0.363. This indicates that multidimensionally poor people in Afghanistan experience 36.3% of the total deprivations that would be experienced if all people were deprived in all indicators.

Table 2 Adjusted MPI, incidence and intensity, 2022-2023

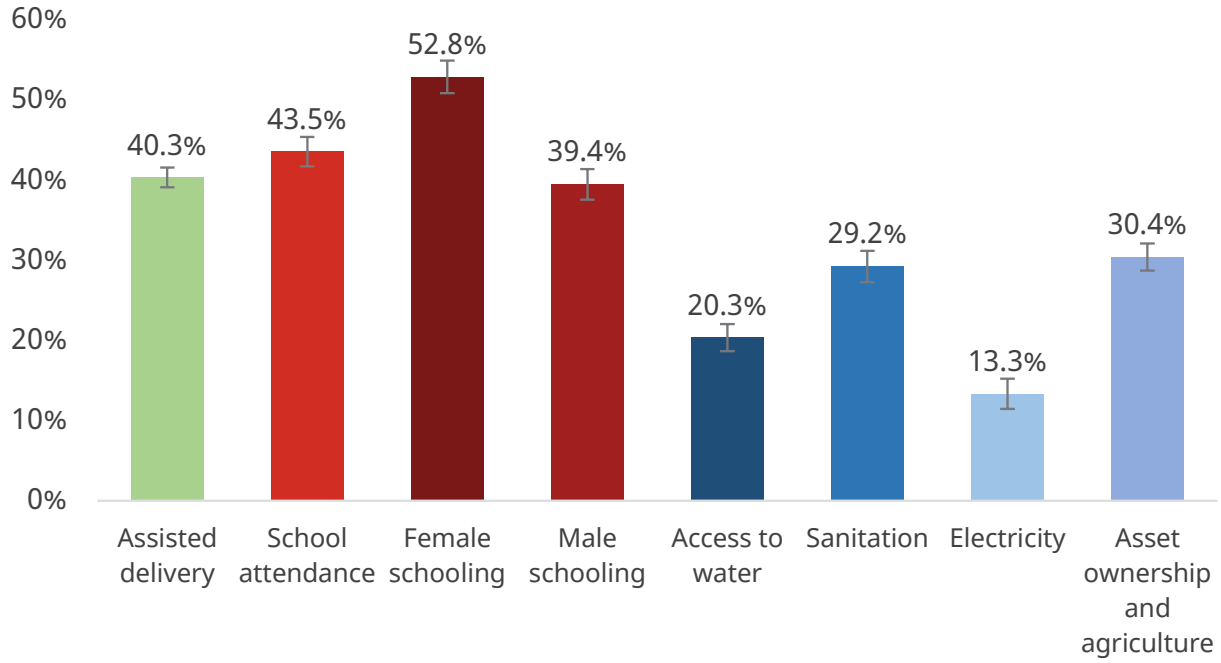
Poverty cut-off (k)	Measure	Value	*Confidence Interval (95%)*	
***k* value=33.33%**	**Adjusted MPI**	0.363	*0.350*	*0.376*
	Headcount ratio (H, %)	62.3	*60.5*	*64.1*
	Intensity (A, %)	58.3	*57.5*	*59.0*

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Figure 4 indicates that the highest censored headcount ratios are associated with female schooling, with 52.8% of the population being both poor and deprived in this indicator. This is followed by school attendance at 43.5% and male schooling at 39.4%. Additionally, the assisted delivery indicator shows a high deprivation rate, with approximately 40.3% of the population being both poor and deprived. These findings emphasize the need for targeted policy interventions, particularly in the education and health sectors.

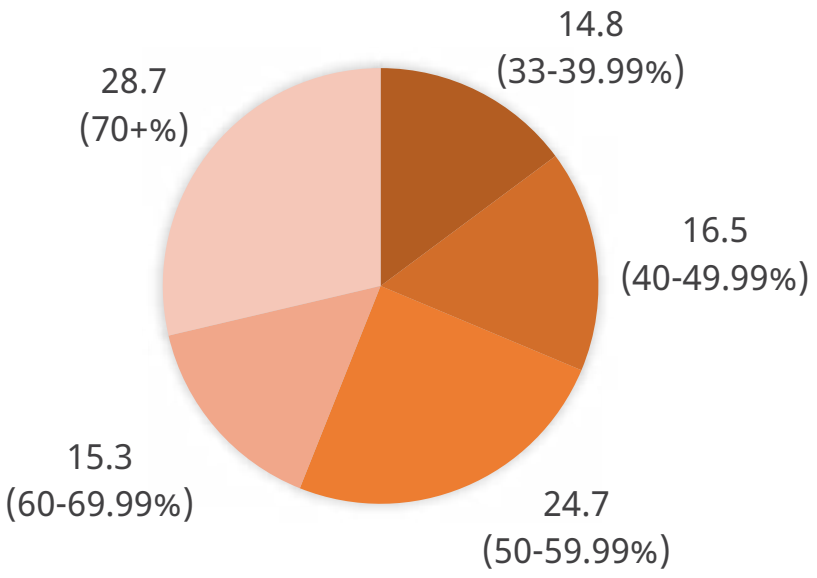
Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of the intensity of poverty among the poor, reflecting the weighted deprivations equal to or greater than 33.33%, which corresponds to the population identified as multidimensionally poor. Approximately 14.8% of the poor in Afghanistan fall within the lowest intensity band, ranging from 33.33% to 39.99%. 28.% of the poor experience the highest intensities of poverty, being deprived in at least 70% of the weighted indicators. This indicates that achieving further progress in reducing the MPI is a viable policy objective in both the short and medium term, as a significant portion of the poor are close to the multidimensional poverty line.

Figure 4 Censored headcount ratios, 2022-2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Figure 5 Intensity gradient (%), 2022-2023



Source: Author's calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

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2.2 Disaggregated by rural[9] and urban areas

Table 3 presents the Adjusted MPI value, incidence, and intensity of poverty for rural and urban areas. The data reveal significant disparities across the areas. The majority of Afghanistan's population (74.6%) resides in rural areas, which exhibit markedly higher poverty levels than urban regions. 70.8% of the rural population is multidimensionally poor, significantly higher that the poverty headcount ratio in urban areas (37.4%). Rural poor individuals face deprivations in nearly 60% of the weighted deprivations, as compared to 48.9% experienced by their urban counterparts. Consequently, the MPI in rural areas is 0.424, compared to 0.183 in urban areas. The high incidence and intensity of poverty in rural areas suggest a critical need for targeted development programs to address multidimensional poverty.

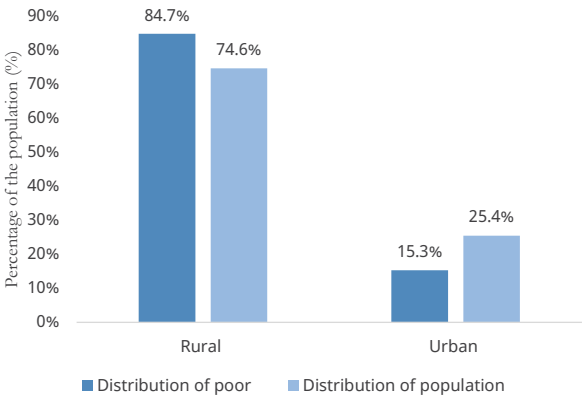
Table 3 Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI by urban and rural areas, 2022-2023

	Rural				Urban				
Measure	**Value**	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		**Population share (%)**	**Share of poor people (%)**	**Value**	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		Population share (%)	Share of poor people (%)
Adjusted MPI	0.424	*0.408*	*0.441*			0.183	*0.165*	*0.202*		
Headcount ratio (H, %)	70.8	*68.5*	*72.9*	74.6	84.7	37.4	*34.2*	*40.8*	25.4	15.3
Intensity (A, %)	59.9	*59.2*	*60.7*			48.9	*47.7*	*50.1*		

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Figure 6 illustrates the disparity in residential distribution between the poor and the general population. As cited earlier, rural areas bear the brunt of poverty with 84.7% of poor people living in rural areas, whereas urban areas which comprise only 15.3% of the poor population, exhibit lower poverty rates. This urban-rural divide emphasizes significant socioeconomic disparities across different geographical regions. Policymakers should prioritize the allocation of resources to rural areas, where the majority of poor people live.

Figure 6 Distribution of the poor population by urban and rural areas, 2022-2023



Source: Author's calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

[9]The nomadic Kuchi population is classified as a distinct area, separate from rural and urban areas. However, for the MICS 2023, Kuchi area was not specified and hence, analysis only by rural and urban areas could be carried out.

2.3 Disaggregated by provinces

Table 4 presents estimates for the Adjusted MPI value, poverty incidence, and poverty intensity at the provincial level. Notably, in 29 out of the 34 provinces more than half of the population experiences multidimensional poverty. Seven provinces have an alarming rate where over 80% of their population suffer from multidimensional poverty: Nooristan (87.8%), Zabul (87.5%), Helmand (85.1%), Ghor (84.9%), Badghis (85.0%), Urozgan (82.8%), and Paktika (82.9%). Provinces such as Farah (79.3%), Kandahar (78.4%), Samangan (76.3%), Khost (75.7%), Faryab (73.5%), Kapisa (71.7%) and Baghlan (70.3%) also exhibit high poverty incidence.

In the capital, Kabul, the incidence of poverty is comparatively low at 27.2%. However, due to its dense population (12.9% of the national population), the absolute number of poor people is large, with over one in every 17 poor persons (5.6%) living in Kabul, placing it among the five provinces with the highest number of poor. Helmand has the highest number of poor: one in ten or 9.7% of all poor people live in Helmand. Herat ranks second highest in terms of number of poor with 7.3% of all poor people followed by Nangarhar with 6.8% of poor people. Assessing the poverty rate (headcount ratio) may lead policy officials to focus differently. Hence, its crucial to note that the scale of poverty in terms of the number of poor must be assessed together with the intensity and MPI levels.

Table 4 Multidimensional poverty by provinces (ordered by Adjusted MPI value), 2022-2023

Province	Adjusted MPI	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		Headcount ratio (H, %)	Confidence Interval (95%)		Intensity (A, %)	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		Share of poor (%))	Population share
Zabul	0.559	*0.521*	*0.596*	87.5%	82.7%	91.1%	63.8%	*62.2%*	*65.5%*	1.85%	1.3%
Helmand	0.558	*0.493*	*0.621*	85.1%	77.4%	90.4%	65.6%	*62.2%*	*68.9%*	9.73%	7.1%
Nooristan	0.541	*0.505*	*0.576*	87.8%	83.6%	91.0%	61.6%	*59.7%*	*63.5%*	0.66%	0.5%
Ghor	0.524	*0.475*	*0.573*	84.9%	77.8%	90.0%	61.8%	*59.5%*	*64.0%*	3.35%	2.5%
Farah	0.515	*0.447*	*0.582*	79.3%	71.9%	85.2%	64.9%	*60.9%*	*68.7%*	2.29%	1.8%
Paktika	0.509	*0.451*	*0.567*	82.9%	76.2%	88.0%	61.4%	*58.2%*	*64.6%*	2.14%	1.6%
Badghis	0.506	*0.444*	*0.569*	85.0%	73.8%	92.0%	59.6%	*57.0%*	*62.1%*	3.02%	2.2%
Urozgan	0.483	*0.436*	*0.531*	82.8%	77.1%	87.4%	58.3%	*55.4%*	*61.2%*	1.96%	1.5%
Kandahar	0.482	*0.424*	*0.541*	78.4%	70.2%	84.8%	61.5%	*58.9%*	*64.1%*	5.92%	4.7%
Samangan	0.461	*0.396*	*0.527*	76.3%	66.7%	83.8%	60.4%	*57.6%*	*63.1%*	1.83%	1.5%
Kapisa	0.445	*0.383*	*0.508*	71.7%	64.8%	77.7%	62.1%	*58.3%*	*65.7%*	1.45%	1.3%
Faryab	0.438	*0.366*	*0.513*	73.5%	64.2%	81.1%	59.6%	*55.4%*	*63.6%*	4.53%	3.8%
Khost	0.431	*0.390*	*0.473*	75.7%	69.5%	80.9%	57.0%	*54.7%*	*59.2%*	3.28%	2.7%
Kunarha	0.412	*0.351*	*0.475*	68.7%	60.2%	76.2%	59.9%	*57.1%*	*62.5%*	1.61%	1.5%
Kunduz	0.402	*0.342*	*0.464*	68.6%	60.2%	75.8%	58.6%	*55.5%*	*61.5%*	3.73%	3.4%

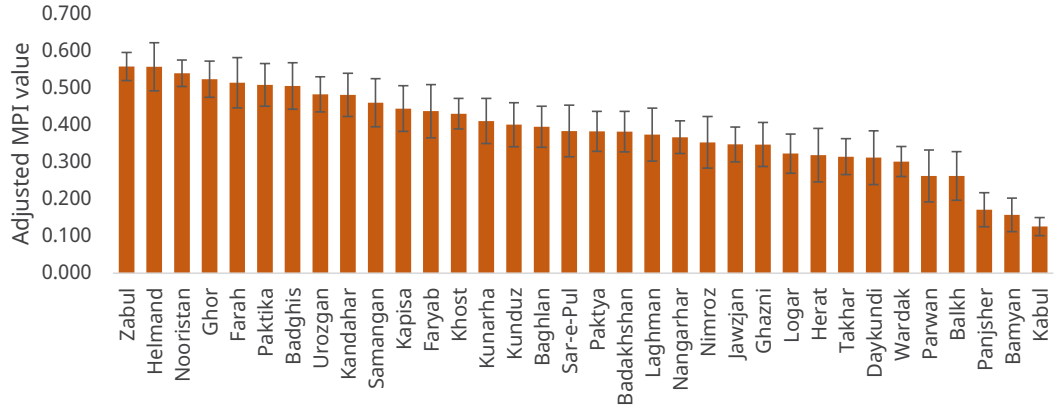
Province	Adjusted MPI	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		Headcount ratio (H, %)	Confidence Interval (95%)		Intensity (A, %)	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		Share of poor (%))	Population share
Baghlan	0.396	*0.340*	*0.454*	70.3%	60.8%	78.2%	56.3%	*54.3%*	*58.3%*	2.93%	2.6%
Sar-e-Pul	0.385	*0.315*	*0.459*	65.8%	55.5%	74.7%	58.5%	*55.1%*	*61.8%*	1.89%	1.8%
Paktya	0.383	*0.330*	*0.440*	67.2%	60.0%	73.6%	57.1%	*53.9%*	*60.1%*	2.09%	1.9%
Bada-khshan	0.383	*0.328*	*0.441*	66.8%	58.2%	74.4%	57.3%	*54.9%*	*59.7%*	3.74%	3.5%
Laghman	0.375	*0.303*	*0.452*	64.3%	54.3%	73.1%	58.3%	*54.0%*	*62.4%*	1.97%	1.9%
Nangarhar	0.368	*0.323*	*0.415*	64.4%	56.7%	71.4%	57.1%	*55.1%*	*59.1%*	6.80%	6.6%
Nimroz	0.354	*0.284*	*0.430*	62.9%	52.9%	71.9%	56.2%	*52.2%*	*60.2%*	1.02%	1.0%
Jawzjan	0.348	*0.301*	*0.399*	63.9%	56.6%	70.7%	54.5%	*51.8%*	*57.1%*	2.33%	2.3%
Ghazni	0.348	*0.289*	*0.412*	62.2%	53.0%	70.6%	55.9%	*53.1%*	*58.7%*	3.00%	3.0%
Logar	0.323	*0.270*	*0.381*	59.5%	51.3%	67.3%	54.3%	*50.9%*	*57.7%*	1.21%	1.3%
Herat	0.319	*0.247*	*0.401*	55.7%	45.3%	65.7%	57.3%	*53.0%*	*61.4%*	7.34%	8.2%
Takhar	0.315	*0.266*	*0.368*	57.4%	49.3%	65.1%	54.9%	*52.1%*	*57.6%*	3.03%	3.3%
Daykundi	0.312	*0.240*	*0.395*	54.5%	43.6%	65.1%	57.3%	*53.9%*	*60.6%*	1.89%	2.2%
Wardak	0.302	*0.261*	*0.346*	54.4%	47.4%	61.2%	55.5%	*54.0%*	*57.0%*	1.57%	1.8%
Parwan	0.263	*0.193*	*0.348*	47.8%	37.6%	58.1%	55.1%	*49.7%*	*60.3%*	1.71%	2.2%
Balkh	0.263	*0.197*	*0.341*	48.0%	38.4%	57.7%	54.8%	*50.4%*	*59.1%*	3.85%	5.0%
Panjsher	0.172	*0.126*	*0.230*	34.1%	26.1%	43.0%	50.3%	*46.8%*	*53.9%*	0.14%	0.3%
Bamyan	0.158	*0.112*	*0.216*	31.1%	23.2%	40.2%	50.7%	*46.9%*	*54.5%*	0.52%	1.1%
Kabul	0.126	*0.102*	*0.155*	27.2%	22.5%	32.5%	46.2%	*43.9%*	*48.6%*	5.62%	12.9%

Source: Author's calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Zabul is the poorest province with the highest MPI value of 0.559 (Figure 7). However, note that the confidence intervals are overlapping with that of Helmand (0.588), Nooristan (0.541), Ghor (0.524), Farah (0.515) and others indicating that Zabul is not significantly poorer than these provinces. Provinces such as Kandahar (0.482), Samangan (0.461), Kapisa (0.445), Faryab (0.438), and Khost (0.431) fall into the next-poorest range of MPI. In contrast, provinces Bamyan (0.158), Panjsher (0.172) and Balkh (0.263) have relatively lower MPI values, indicating less multidimensional poverty compared to others. The capital Kabul has the lowest MPI at 0.127.

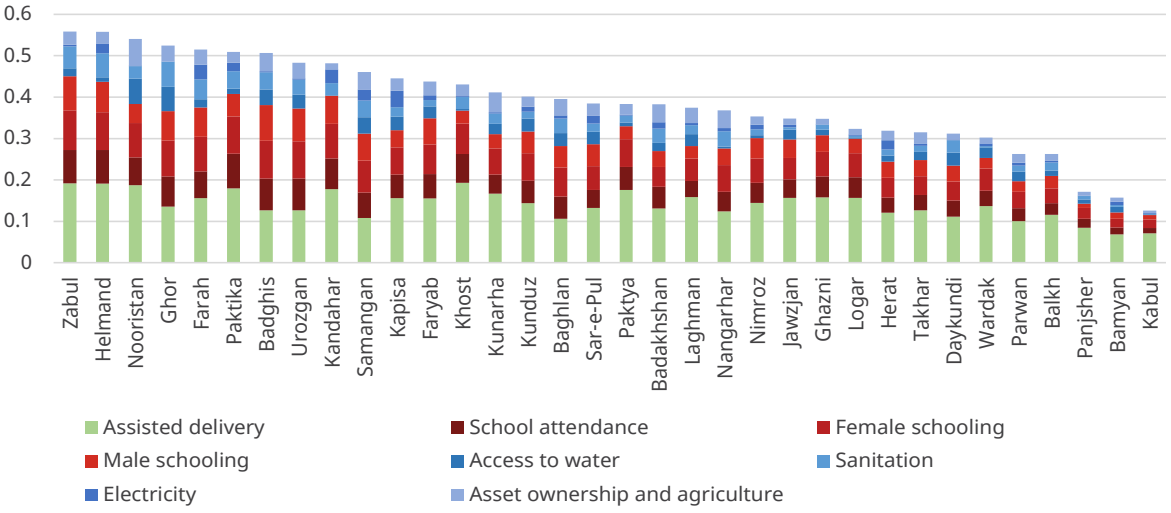
Figure 7b shows the indicator composition of poverty. Zabul and Helmand have the same composition/drivers. While in Urozgan and Kandahar the situation is different as both have about the same levels of poverty, but the compositions differ; deprivations in maternal health are far bigger in Kandahar – at the same level as Zabul. Deprivations in school attendance, and female/male schooling and water in Kandahar and Urozgan are very similar. But Urozgan has more deprivations in assets and sanitation, whereas in Kandahar the problem is electricity. If we compare female schooling with male schooling in Paktika and Badghis, we see that gender disparities in education are higher in Paktika – as they are also in Kapisa, Khost, Kunara, Laghman, and Logar for example. So the composition of MPI shows how responses to poverty should vary across different regions.

Figure 7a Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI based on MICS 2022-23 by provinces, 2022-2023



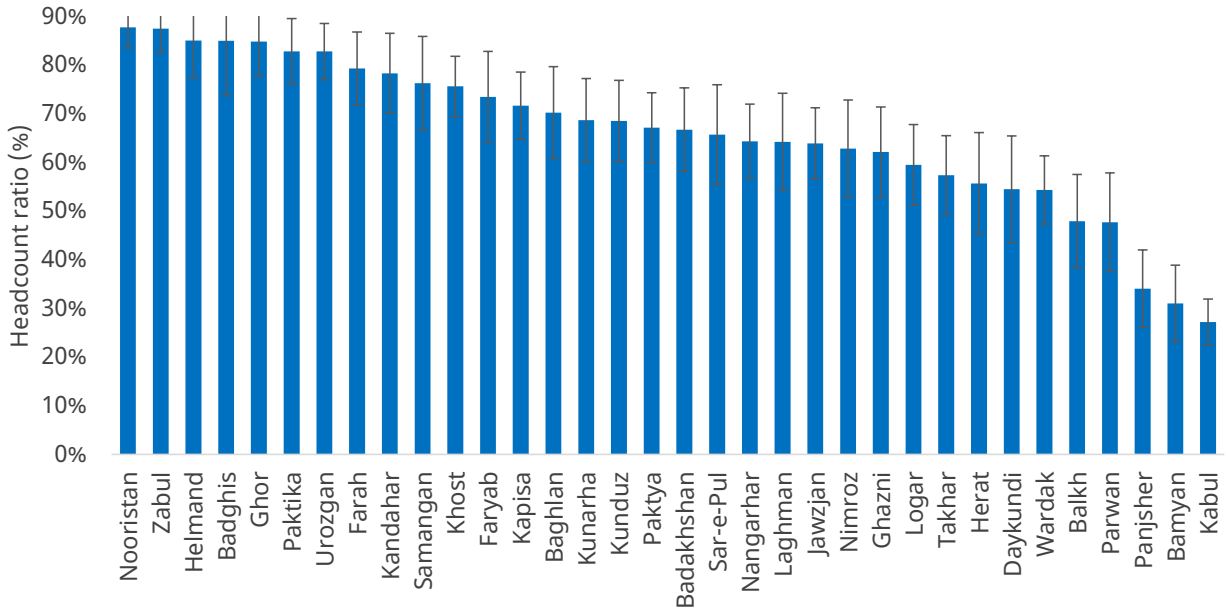
Note: Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Figure 7b Absolute contributions of each indicator to Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI (ordered by the Adjusted MPI value 2022-2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Figure 8 Poverty incidence by provinces, 2022-2023



Province	Headcount ratio (H, %)	Confidence Interval (95%)	
Nooristan	87.8%	83.6%	91.0%
Zabul	87.5%	82.7%	91.1%
Helmand	85.1%	77.4%	90.4%
Badghis	85.0%	73.8%	92.0%
Ghor	84.9%	77.8%	90.0%
Paktika	82.9%	76.2%	88.0%
Urozgan	82.8%	77.1%	87.4%
Farah	79.3%	71.9%	85.2%
Kandahar	78.4%	70.2%	84.8%
Samangan	76.3%	66.7%	83.8%
Khost	75.7%	69.5%	80.9%
Faryab	73.5%	64.2%	81.1%
Kapisa	71.7%	64.8%	77.7%
Baghlan	70.3%	60.8%	78.2%
Kunarha	68.7%	60.2%	76.2%
Kunduz	68.6%	60.2%	75.8%
Paktya	67.2%	60.0%	73.6%
Badakhshan	66.8%	58.2%	74.4%
Sar-e-Pul	65.8%	55.5%	74.7%
Nangarhar	64.4%	56.7%	71.4%

Province	Headcount ratio (H, %)	Confidence Interval (95%)	
Laghman	64.3%	54.3%	73.1%
Jawzjan	63.9%	56.6%	70.7%
Nimroz	62.9%	52.9%	71.9%
Ghazni	62.2%	53.0%	70.6%
Logar	59.5%	51.3%	67.3%
Takhar	57.4%	49.3%	65.1%
Herat	55.7%	45.3%	65.7%
Daykundi	54.5%	43.6%	65.1%
Wardak	54.4%	47.4%	61.2%
Balkh	48.0%	38.4%	57.7%
Parwan	47.8%	37.6%	58.1%
Panjsher	34.1%	26.1%	43.0%
Bamyan	31.1%	23.2%	40.2%
Kabul	27.2%	22.5%	32.5%

Note: Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Figure 9 depicts where MPI poor people live across the different provinces in Afghanistan. This graph is particularly important because it combines the size of the province in terms of population with the incidence of multidimensional poverty. Nearly a quarter of poor people live in just three provinces; Helmand (9.7% of all poor people), Herat (7.3%) and Nangarhar (6.8%). Provinces like Panjsher (0.14%) and Bamyan (0.52%) are among those with the lowest proportions of poor people. Nooristan, despite having the highest poverty incidence, has only 0.7% of all poor people. There is a gradual increase in the number of poor people as you move towards the southern and southwestern provinces like Helmand, Kandahar, and Herat. The central provinces such as Kabul, despite being the capital, still have a notable proportion of poor people (5.6%).

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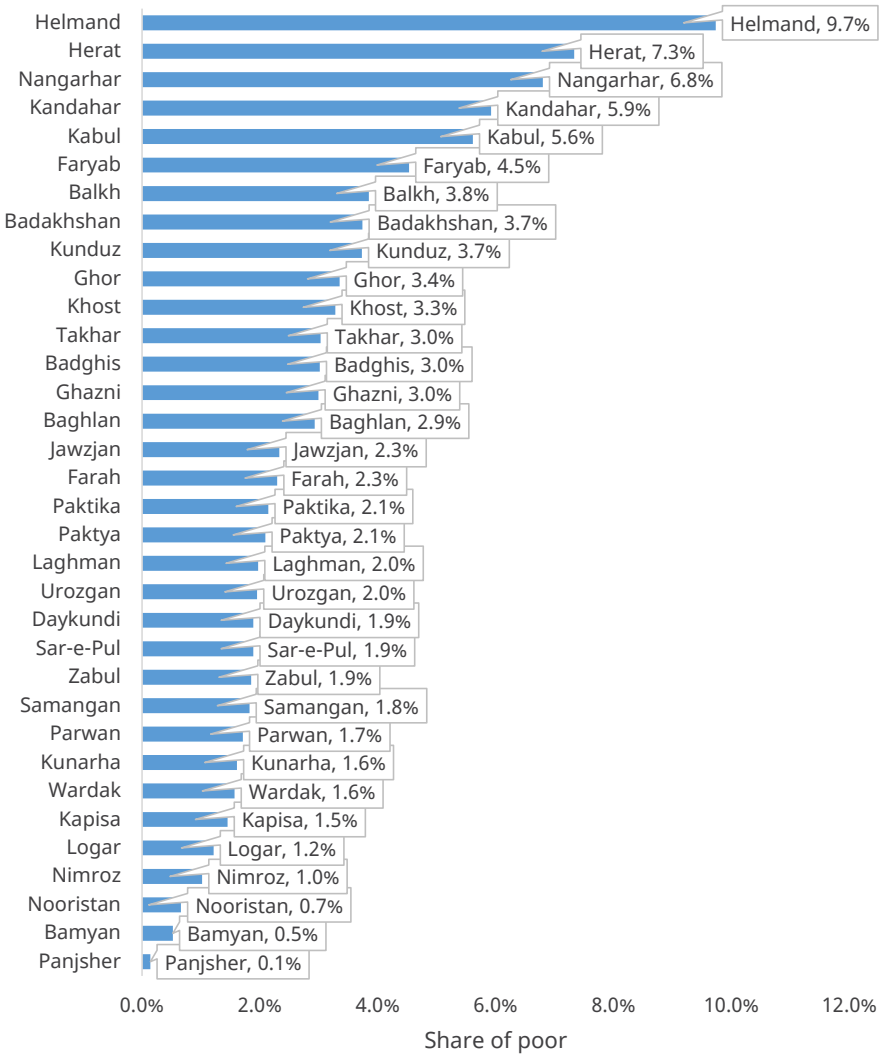
Figure 9 Share of Afghanistan's poor people in each province, 2022-2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Table 5 shows the censored headcount ratios which indicates the proportion of people who are poor and deprived in the respective indicators by provinces. The provinces display significant disparities across key indicators. In Helmand province, which is among the provinces with the highest MPI value and highest number of poor people, the proportion of poor and deprived in female schooling (82.1%) is highest across all indicators followed by school attendance (73.2%) and male schooling (66.5%). In Nooristan, which has the highest poverty incidence, 74.8% are of people are poor and deprived in female schooling, while 41.2% are poor and deprived in male schooling.

Zabul also exhibits a high proportion of poor people and deprived in schooling for both females (86.5%) and males (74.1%). Ghor stands out for its high deprivation in access to water (70.4%) and sanitation (72.3%) among the poor while the proportion of people who are poor and deprived in electricity is low (0.9%). These variations highlight the uneven distribution of resources and services across the provinces, with each area facing unique challenges.

Table 5 Censored headcount ratios by provinces' MPI (ordered by the Adjusted MPI value), 2022-2023

Province	Assisted delivery	School attendance	Female schooling	Male schooling	Access to water	Sanitation	Electricity	Asset ownership and agriculture	Adjusted MPI
Zabul	57.6%	72.3%	86.5%	74.1%	23.1%	63.3%	5.1%	38.3%	0.559
Helmand	57.3%	73.2%	82.1%	66.5%	13.0%	69.4%	28.0%	34.2%	0.558
Nooristan	56.1%	60.7%	74.8%	41.2%	73.5%	35.8%	2.1%	77.0%	0.541
Ghor	40.7%	65.5%	78.0%	64.0%	70.4%	72.3%	0.9%	46.1%	0.524
Farah	46.9%	57.8%	75.4%	63.9%	23.1%	57.7%	42.8%	43.7%	0.515
Paktika	53.8%	75.7%	80.9%	48.6%	16.0%	49.9%	24.7%	31.6%	0.509
Badghis	38.1%	68.7%	81.9%	77.8%	45.3%	49.5%	3.3%	52.7%	0.506
Urozgan	38.0%	68.9%	81.2%	71.2%	39.9%	43.5%	4.2%	45.3%	0.483
Kandahar	53.3%	66.9%	75.1%	60.9%	2.0%	34.9%	40.4%	17.6%	0.482
Samangan	32.4%	55.3%	69.4%	58.6%	47.5%	48.2%	32.4%	50.7%	0.461
Kapisa	46.8%	51.6%	58.6%	37.8%	39.0%	27.2%	47.8%	35.5%	0.445
Faryab	46.7%	53.0%	63.9%	57.2%	34.7%	18.3%	13.3%	40.3%	0.438
Khost	57.9%	62.5%	66.3%	28.3%	4.7%	34.8%	2.9%	33.7%	0.431
Kunarha	50.2%	40.9%	57.4%	30.8%	29.4%	30.5%	3.9%	57.3%	0.412
Kunduz	43.2%	48.7%	59.6%	47.5%	37.6%	19.9%	14.4%	29.2%	0.402
Baghlan	31.8%	48.7%	62.9%	46.8%	37.2%	41.9%	9.6%	47.6%	0.396
Sar-e-Pul	39.8%	38.9%	51.9%	47.6%	35.9%	23.6%	22.6%	35.7%	0.385
Paktya	52.7%	50.3%	60.2%	28.2%	10.9%	20.2%	2.8%	30.7%	0.383
Badakhshan	39.3%	47.3%	43.4%	34.1%	23.6%	42.0%	18.4%	51.7%	0.383
Laghman	47.7%	34.8%	48.6%	27.0%	34.7%	26.5%	6.1%	44.3%	0.375
Nangarhar	37.2%	43.0%	57.7%	36.3%	4.9%	44.4%	9.8%	50.8%	0.368
Nimroz	43.4%	43.6%	53.1%	43.9%	8.8%	17.0%	13.5%	24.2%	0.354
Jawzjan	47.0%	40.0%	46.9%	39.8%	28.4%	7.5%	6.6%	18.4%	0.348
Ghazni	47.4%	45.2%	53.6%	36.4%	15.9%	14.5%	0.3%	17.0%	0.348
Logar	47.0%	44.6%	52.7%	31.5%	3.5%	4.6%	4.1%	15.8%	0.323
Herat	36.3%	32.8%	42.9%	35.3%	17.7%	17.7%	26.5%	27.7%	0.319
Takhar	38.0%	33.5%	40.9%	34.9%	23.4%	18.4%	4.8%	33.7%	0.315
Daykundi	33.5%	34.7%	41.7%	34.6%	37.0%	36.1%	2.4%	17.4%	0.312
Wardak	41.1%	33.4%	48.3%	22.8%	30.7%	4.1%	7.8%	16.3%	0.302
Parwan	30.1%	28.7%	35.4%	22.7%	27.7%	17.7%	8.4%	25.7%	0.263
Balkh	34.7%	25.2%	32.5%	26.8%	15.3%	23.7%	4.6%	20.3%	0.263
Panjsher	25.3%	19.5%	23.8%	8.8%	12.8%	9.8%	1.1%	11.4%	0.172
Bamyan	20.6%	14.7%	19.3%	13.4%	16.5%	5.0%	10.3%	11.6%	0.158
Kabul	21.4%	11.4%	18.2%	9.8%	2.1%	1.8%	2.3%	6.7%	0.126

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

2.4 Disaggregated by age groups

Table 6 shows that the Adjusted MPI value is higher among children (0.396) than adults (0.323), indicating that children face greater deprivation in multiple dimensions. There are nearly one-third more poor children than there are poor adults. Over two-thirds of children are poor 66.9% compared to 56.8% of adult meaning 58.5% of all poor people are children. The intensity level which measures the average percentage of deprivations experienced by the poor, is also higher for children (59.2%) than for adults (56.9%).

Table 6 Multidimensional poverty by age groups, 2022-2023

	0-17				18+				
Measure	**Value**	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		**Population share (%)**	**Share of poor (%)**	**Value**	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		Population share (%)	Share of poor (%)
Adjusted MPI	0.396	*0.383*	*0.410*	54.5	58.5	0.323	*0.310*	*0.336*		
Headcount ratio (H, %)	66.9	*65.1*	*68.6*			56.8	*54.9*	*58.7*	45.5	41.5
Intensity (A, %)	59.2	*58.5*	*60*			56.9	*56.2*	*57.6*		

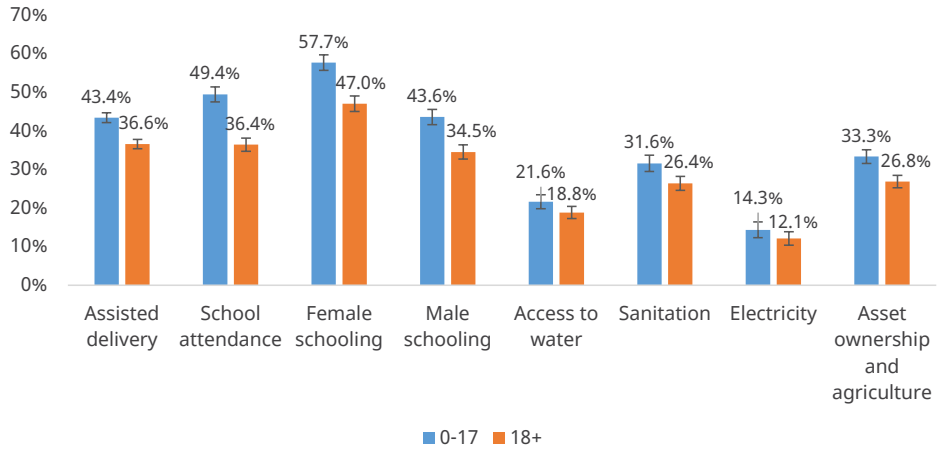
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Across almost all the indicators (Figure 10), children experience higher levels of censored headcount ratios compared to adults, highlighting the urgent need for interventions to be targeted towards improving the lives of poor children in Afghanistan. This disparity is especially pronounced in the education dimension.

Assisted delivery shows that the proportion of poor and deprived to be 43.4% among children, compared to 36.6% among adults. School attendance is another critical area where children face higher deprivation, with 49.4% of children being poor and deprived, compared to 36.4% of adults. Deprivation in female schooling is particularly noticeable, with 57.7% of female children poor and living in households where no female has completed primary school, compared to 47.0% of adult women who are poor and deprived. Addressing this requires specific programs to support and retain girls in schools, tackling cultural barriers, and promoting role models of educated women to inspire and encourage female education. Male schooling also shows higher deprivation among children (43.6%) compared to adults (34.5%), reinforcing the need for a holistic approach to education that includes both boys and girls.

Access to basic services remains a challenge, with 21.6% of children poor and deprived of access to water, compared to 18.8% of adults. Improving infrastructure to provide clean and safe water sources is essential. Similarly, sanitation deprivation affects children more than adults with 31.6% of children who are poor and deprived when compared to 26.4% of adults, highlighting the need for better sanitation facilities and hygiene education programs.

Figure 10 Censored headcount ratio by age groups, 2022-2023



Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

2.5 Disaggregated by disability status

Table 7 indicates multidimensional poverty by disability status. Disability status here refers to households with at least one child with functional[10] difficulty. The Adjusted MPI value is significantly higher for households with children who have functional difficulties (0.488) compared to those without. Nearly four-fifths (78.6%) of households with children who have disabilities are multidimensionally poor, compared to three-fifths (60.7%) of households without children with disabilities. One in 11 people live in a household in which a child has functional difficulties – and these households need to be prioritized in poverty reduction programs. Additionally, the intensity of poverty is substantially greater for households with children who have functional difficulties. These findings highlight the importance of implementing targeted social protection programs specifically for households with children who have functional difficulties.

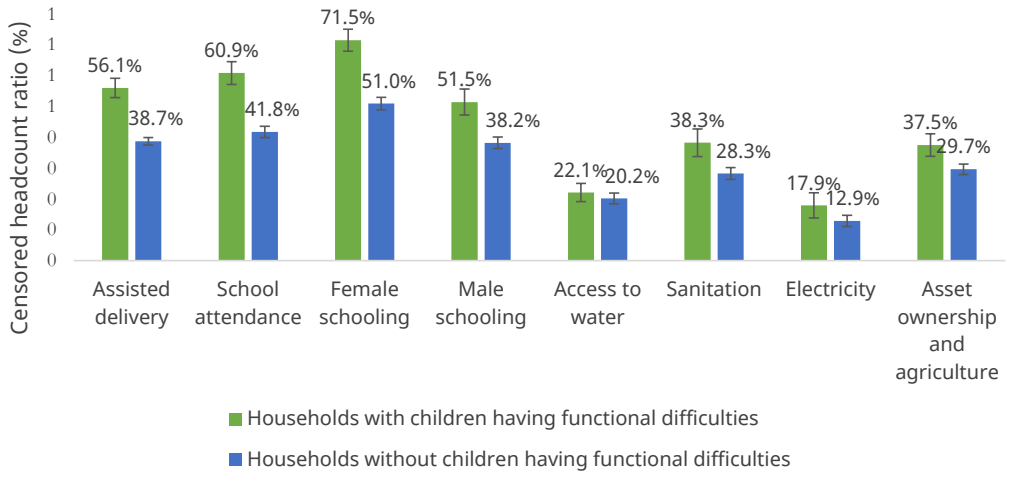
Table 7 Multidimensional poverty by disability status, 2022-2023

	Households with children having functional difficulties					Households without children having functional difficulties				
Measure	Value	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		Population share (%)	Share of poor (%)	Value	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		Population share (%)	Share of poor (%)
Adjusted MPI	0.488	*0.462*	*0.513*			0.350	*0.337*	*0.364*		
Headcount ratio (H, %)	78.6	*75.4*	*81.4*	9.1	11.5	60.7	*58.8*	*62.5*	90.9	88.5
Intensity (A, %)	62.1	*60.5*	*63.6*			57.8	*57.0*	*58.5*		

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

In almost all indicators, the proportion of poor and deprived is higher among households with children having functional difficulties (Figure 11). This disparity is particularly pronounced in female schooling, where 75.1% of households with children having functional difficulties experience deprivation compared to 51.0% of those without. Similarly, households with children having functional difficulties face greater deprivations across all education domain indicators.

Figure 11 Censored headcount ratios by disability status, 2022-2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

[10]Functional difficulty for children age 2-4 years (24 -59 months of age) are defined as having responded "A lot of difficulty" or " Cannot at all" to questions for 'seeing' 'hearing' 'walking' 'fine motor' 'communication' 'learning' and 'playing'.

III. Afghanistan's harmonized Adjusted MPI over time, 2016-17 to 2023

A crucial question is how multidimensional poverty in Afghanistan has evolved in the periods 2016-17 to 2020 to 2023. To track changes over time, the Adjusted MPI was harmonized across these three time periods using ALCS 2016-17, IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023. The harmonization process is explained in appendix D. This section examines national and subnational trends on key statistics of harmonized Adjusted MPI. It also identifies indicators that have either improved or deteriorated over time, providing critical direction for policy development.

3.1 Changes in the levels and composition of harmonized Adjusted MPI

Turning to the three key statistics of the MPI, Table 8 illustrates the incidence, intensity, and the MPI over three points in time. Between 2016-17 and 2020, the MPI value decreased significantly from 0.301 to 0.270, and the incidence or headcount ratio (H) fell from 54.4% to 50.8%; both reductions are statistically significant. However, the same cannot be said for the trends between 2020 to 2023 and 2016-17 to 2023. The MPI value increased significantly from 2020 (0.270) to 2023 (0.363) Likewise, poverty incidence increased by 9.3 percentage points in absolute terms from 2020 to 2023, from 50.8% to 62.3%. The intensity of poverty also increased significantly from 53.1% in 2020 to 58.3% in 2023.

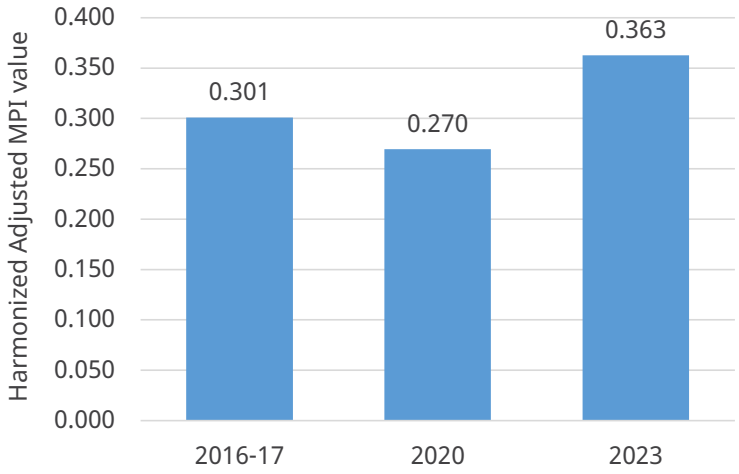
Table 8 Change in Adjusted MPI, incidence and intensity between 2016-17 and 2023

Measure	2016-17	2020	2023	Change 2016-17 to 2020		Change 2020 to 2023		Change 206-17 to 2023	
				Absolute	Relative	Absolute	Relative	Absolute	Relative
Adjusted MPI	0.301	0.270	0.363	-0.030***	-10.4***	0.093***	34.6***	0.062***	20.6***
Headcount ratio (H, %)	54.4	50.8	62.3	-3.6**	-6.6**	9.3***	22.7***	7.9***	14.6***
Intensity (A, %)	55.3	53.1	58.3	-2.2***	-4.0***	5.2***	9.7***	2.9***	5.3***

*Note: ** statistically significant at α=0.05, *** statistically significant at α=0.01*

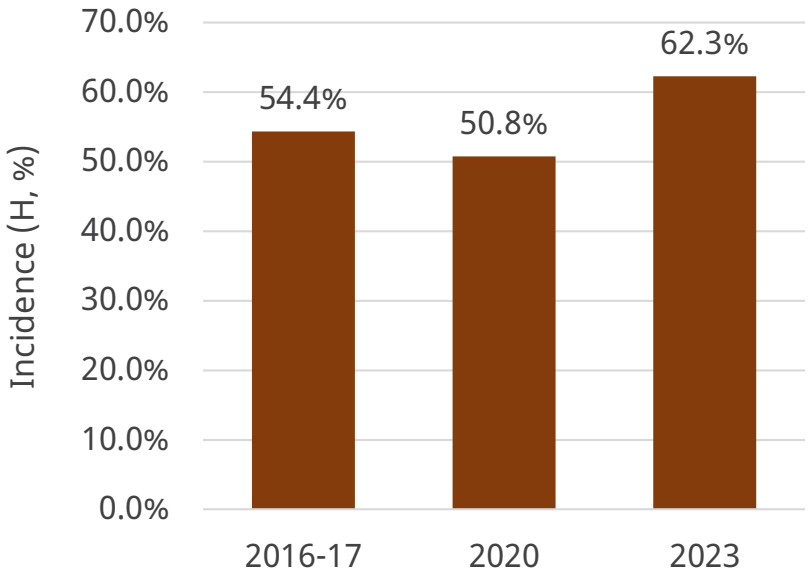
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from ALCS 2016-17, IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

Figure 12 Multidimensional poverty in Afghanistan based on harmonized Adjusted MPI, 2016-17 to 2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from ALCS 2016-17, IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

Figure 13 Incidence of Multidimensional Poverty in Afghanistan based on harmonized Adjusted MPI, 2016-17 to 2023



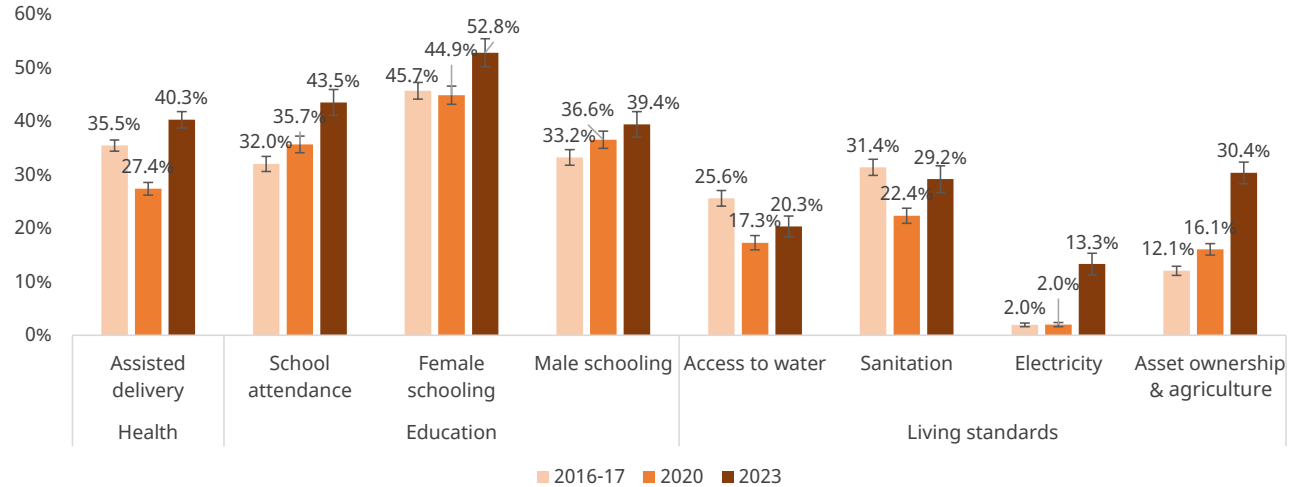
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from ALCS 2016-17, IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

To understand how poverty has changed over time, we examine the changes in the harmonized Adjusted MPI by each of its component indicators (Figure 14). The censored headcount ratios, which measure the percentage of people who are both poor and deprived in a given indicator, are presented for three different periods. Almost all the indicators showed significant increase in deprivations in the reference time period (2020 to 2023).

There has been a significant increase in the proportion of people who are both poor and deprived in assisted delivery, school attendance, female and male schooling, sanitation, electricity and asset ownership indicators. Assisted delivery saw an increase in deprivation from 27.4% to 40.3%, indicating a reduced access to maternal healthcare from 2020 to 2023. School attendance deprivation increased from 35.7% to 43.5%. Female schooling deprivation rose from 44.9% to 52.8%, showing a widening gender disparity in education. Male schooling deprivation also increased slightly from 36.6% to 39.4% between 2020 and 2023. For the same time period, deprivation in sanitation increased from 22.4% to 29.2%, pointing to declining hygiene conditions. Electricity deprivation increased substantially from 2.0% to 13.3%, indicating worsening access to power. Asset ownership deprivation grew from 16.1% to 30.4%, reflecting deteriorating economic conditions and livelihoods.

Overall, these findings highlight the need for sustained and focused policy interventions to combat multidimensional poverty. For female education, in particular, there is an urgent need for strategies that address both enrollment and retention, ensuring that girls not only start school but also continue their education through to completion. Female students in Afghanistan are not allowed to attend school beyond the primary level. Addressing the barriers to female education can have far-reaching impacts on broader socio-economic development, as educated women are more likely to contribute positively to their families and communities.

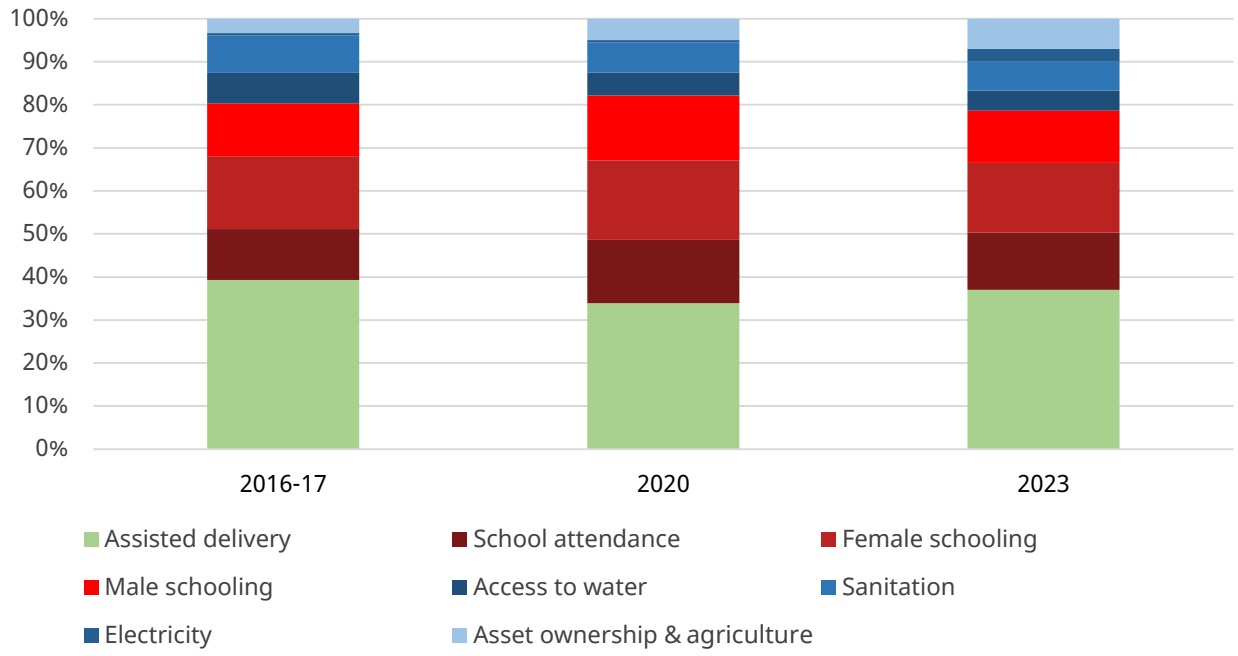
Figure 14 National Censored Headcount Ratios, 2016-17, 2020 and 2023



Note: Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from ALCS 2016-17, IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

To determine which indicator contributes the most to the MPI, we typically look at the highest percentages contributions, as these indicate greater levels of poverty (Figure 15). The assisted delivery indicator under the health dimension starts with the highest percentage in all three years. This is followed by the education dimension, where the female schooling indicator contributes substantially to the overall MPI followed by male schooling and school attendance indicators.

Figure 15 Percentage contribution to harmonized Adjusted MPI, 2016-17 to 2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from ALCS 2016-17, IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

3.2 Changes in the levels and composition of harmonized Adjusted MPI by areas

Table 9 reveal the trends in poverty across rural and urban areas. For urban areas, the decrease in MPI value from 0.136 in 2016-17 to 0.123 in 2020 was not significant. However, it was followed by a significant increase to 0.184 in 2023, indicating an absolute rise of 0.048 percentage points since 2016-17. Similarly, the headcount ratio in urban areas increased significantly from 28.9% to 37.4% between 2016-17 and 2023, marking a 29.3% relative increase since 2016-17.

In rural areas, the MPI showed a similar pattern, dropping significantly from 0.342 to 0.309 between 2016-17 and 2020, then drastically increasing to 0.425 in 2023. The headcount ratio in rural areas followed this trend, decreasing from 60.8% to 57.5% initially, and then rising significantly to 70.9% in 2023. Overall, these trends highlight the significant increases in poverty levels in both urban and rural areas from 2020 to 2023, despite initial improvements between 2016-17 and 2020. The MICS 2022-23 does not include Kuchi so we are not able to make comparisons for this group.

Table 9 Change in harmonized Adjusted MPI and incidence (H) between 2016-17, 2020 and 2023 by rural and urban areas.

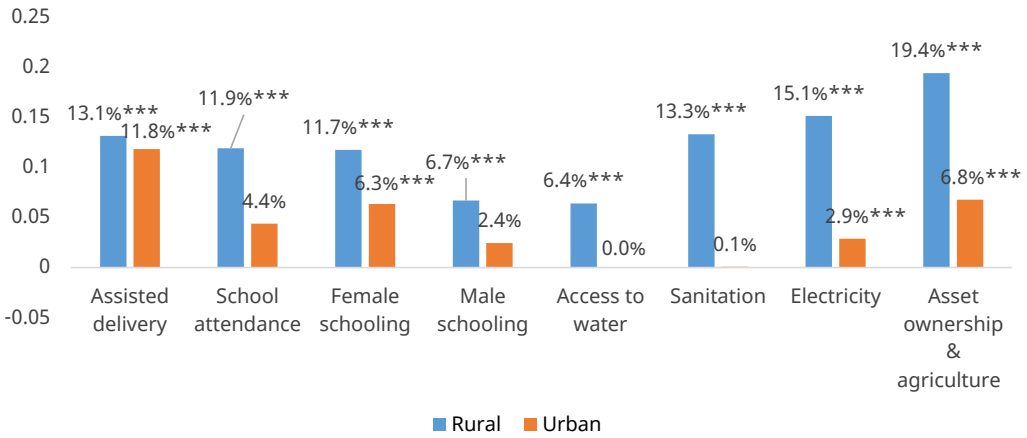
Area	2016-17	2020	2023	Absolute change 2016/17-2020	Sig	Relative change 2016-17 to2020	Absolute change 2020-2023	Sig	Relative change 2020-2023	Absolute change 2016-17 to 2023	Sig	Relative change 2016-17 to 2023
Adjusted MPI												
Urban	0.136	0.123	0.184	-0.013		-10.2	0.06	***	50.0	0.048	***	34.7
Rural	0.342	0.309	0.425	-0.033	***	-9.7	0.12	***	37.4	0.083	***	24.1
Headcount ratio (H, %)												
Urban	28.9%	25.6%	37.4%	-3.3%	*	-11.6	11.8%	***	46.3	8.5%	***	29.3
Rural	60.8%	57.5%	70.9%	-3.3%	**	-5.1	13.4%	***	23.3	10.1	***	16.5

*Note: ** statistically significant at α=0.05, *** statistically significant at α=0.01*
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from ALCS 2016-17, IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

The data on censored headcount ratios, which measure the number of people who are both poor and deprived in specific indicators, reveals that deprivations in almost all indicators increased significantly in both rural and urban areas (2020-2023) (Figure 16). Overall, deprivations in rural areas rose more than in urban areas. The percentage of people who are poor and deprived in assisted delivery increased by 13.1 percentage points in rural areas and 11.8 percentage points in urban areas. For education, deprivations in school attendance rose by 11.9 percentage points in rural areas and 4.4 percentage points in urban areas, while female schooling deprivations increased by 11.7 percentage points in rural areas and 6.3 percentage points in urban areas. Male schooling deprivation also went up by 6.7 percentage points in rural areas and 2.4 percentage points in urban areas.

Regarding living standards, deprivation in access to water has no significant change in urban areas but in rural areas increased by 6.4 percentage points. Sanitation deprivations increased by 13.3 percentage points in rural areas but had no significant change in urban areas. Deprivation in electricity access saw a significant increase of 15.1 percentage points in rural areas. Finally, asset ownership deprivation rose sharply by 19.4 percentage points in rural areas and 6.8 points in urban areas.

Figure 16 Absolute changes in censored headcount ratios by areas, 2020 to 2023.



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.
*Note: *** statistically significant at α=0.01*

3.3. Changes in the levels and composition harmonized Adjusted MPI by provinces.

Table 10 provides the changes in the MPI values across time. Kapisa experienced a notable increase in MPI from 0.144 in 2020 to 0.445 in 2023, indicating a substantial absolute change of 0.301. Zabul witnessed a significant increase in MPI from 0.276 in 2020 to 0.559 in 2023, reflecting a significant absolute rise of 0.283. Ghor also showed an increase in MPI from 0.412 in 2020 to 0.524 in 2023. Paktya like most provinces, experienced a significant decrease in MPI from 2016-17 to 2020 but a drastic increase in MPI from 0.244 in 2020 to 0.509 in 2023, indicating a significant absolute change of 0.265. Similarly, MPI decreased significantly for Samangan from 2016-17 to 2020, but saw a significant increase in MPI from 0.313 in 2020 to 0.461 in 2023, resulting in a notable absolute change of 0.148. Faryab also reduced its MPI in the initial period but showed a significant increase in MPI from 0.299 in 2020 to 0.438 in 2023.

When studying trends over time it is important to consider the possibility that internal or external migration trends or indeed, tragedies such as fatalities from COVID or other causes, have affected provincial comparisons. Population shifts can affect the measured levels of poverty and deprivations by indicator, as can policy interventions, or natural disasters and other events. However, it is particularly difficult to analyze population shifts precisely in the datasets used. Table 3.3 also provides the population shares by province according to the two surveys (2020 and 2023) used, and readers are urged to consider these possible population shifts when interpreting poverty trends in Afghanistan.

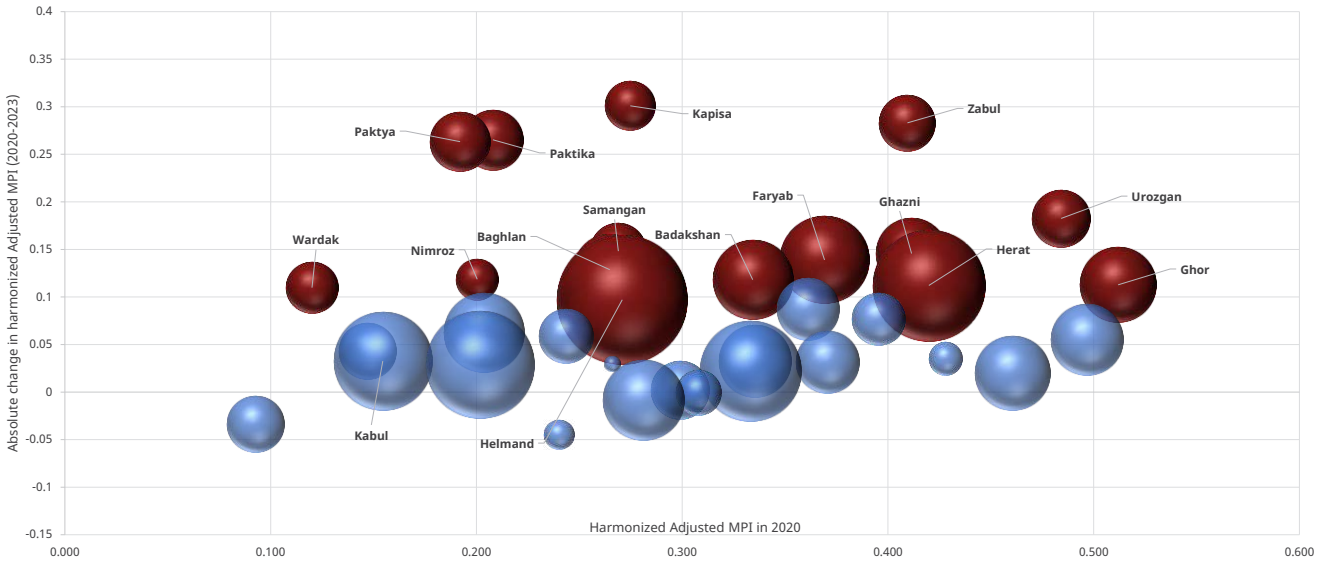
Table 10 Change in harmonized Adjusted MPI between 2016-17, 2020 and 2023 by provinces.

Harmonized Adjusted MPI	2016/17	2020	2023	Absolute changes 2016/17-2020	Sig	Relative changes 2016/17-2020	Absolute changes 2020-2023	Sig	Relative changes 2020-2023	Population share (2020)	Population share (2023
Zabul	0.594	0.276	0.559	-0.319	***	-53.6	0.283	***	102.7	1.3%	1.3%
Helmand	0.448	0.461	0.558	0.013		2.842	0.097	**	21.1	4.2%	7.1%
Nooristan	0.483	0.505	0.541	0.022		4.458	0.036		7.1	0.5%	0.5%
Ghor	0.448	0.412	0.524	-0.037		-8.16	0.113	***	27.4	2.5%	2.5%
Farah	0.428	0.428	0.515	-0.001		-0.11	0.087	**	20.3	1.8%	1.8%
Paktika	0.330	0.244	0.509	-0.086	**	-26	0.265	***	108.8	2.5%	1.6%
Badghis	0.508	0.451	0.506	-0.057		-11.2	0.055		12.2	1.7%	2.2%
Urozgan	0.294	0.301	0.483	0.006		2.14	0.183	***	60.8	1.5%	1.5%
Kandahar	0.456	0.461	0.482	0.005		1.071	0.022		4.7	4.2%	4.7%
Samangan	0.480	0.313	0.461	-0.167	***	-34.8	0.148	***	47.4	1.3%	1.5%
Kapisa	0.185	0.144	0.445	-0.041		-22.2	0.301	***	209.1	1.5%	1.3%
Faryab	0.419	0.299	0.438	-0.121	***	-28.7	0.139	**	46.5	3.7%	3.8%
Khost	0.414	0.411	0.431	-0.003		-0.62	0.020		4.9	1.9%	2.7%
Kunarha	0.323	0.335	0.412	0.011		3.485	0.077	*	22.9	1.6%	1.5%
Kunduz	0.338	0.339	0.402	0.002		0.476	0.062	*	18.4	3.5%	3.4%
Baghlan	0.257	0.267	0.396	0.010		3.96	0.129	***	48.2	2.7%	2.6%
Sar-e-Pul	0.411	0.418	0.385	0.007		1.807	-0.034		-8.0	2.0%	1.8%
Paktya	0.312	0.120	0.383	-0.192	***	-61.5	0.263	***	219.3	1.1%	1.9%
Badakhshan	0.346	0.265	0.383	-0.082	**	-23.5	0.118	***	44.7	3.5%	3.5%
Laghman	0.326	0.372	0.375	0.046		14.2	0.002		0.6	1.7%	1.9%
Nangarhar	0.336	0.339	0.368	0.003		0.828	0.029		8.4	5.9%	6.6%
Nimroz	0.405	0.235	0.354	-0.170	***	-42	0.119	**	50.5	0.6%	1.0%
Jawzjan	0.281	0.317	0.348	0.036		12.97	0.031		9.8	1.9%	2.3%
Ghazni	0.232	0.202	0.348	-0.030		-13	0.146	***	72.1	4.6%	3.0%
Logar	0.382	0.324	0.323	-0.059		-15.4	0.000		-0.1	2.1%	1.3%
Herat	0.282	0.207	0.319	-0.075	**	-26.7	0.112	**	54.2	6.9%	8.2%
Takhar	0.266	0.283	0.315	0.017		6.471	0.032		11.5	3.4%	3.3%
Daykundi	0.348	0.269	0.312	-0.079	**	-22.7	0.043		15.9	1.6%	2.2%
Wardak	0.321	0.192	0.302	-0.129	***	-40.2	0.110	***	57.1	2.4%	1.8%
Parwan	0.236	0.204	0.263	-0.032		-13.6	0.059		28.7	2.5%	2.2%
Balkh	0.234	0.272	0.263	0.038		16.25	-0.009		-3.2	4.8%	5.0%
Panjsher	0.163	0.141	0.172	-0.021		-13	0.030		21.4	0.6%	0.3%
Bamyan	0.208	0.202	0.158	-0.006		-2.72	-0.045		-22.2	1.5%	1.1%
Kabul	0.121	0.093	0.126	-0.027	**	-22.7	0.033	**	34.9	16.6%	12.9%

*Note: ** statistically significant at α=0.05, *** statistically significant at α=0.01*
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from ALCS 2016-17, IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

Figure 17 compares the changes in the harmonized Adjusted MPI values between two time periods 2020 and 2023. Alarmingly, not even one province had a significant reduction of MPI in that period. 17 of the 34 provinces experienced significant increases in MPI in absolute terms demanding targeted intervention responses.

Figure 17 Absolute changes in harmonized Adjusted MPI by provinces 2020 to 2023



Note: Size of the bubble corresponds to the share of the poor in the province in 2020[11]. Bubbles colored red indicates significance at 95%. Bubbles above zero indicate that poverty increased.
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

Changes in poverty incidence varied significantly across provinces in Afghanistan during the period analyzed (Table 11). For instance, Zabul province notably reduced its poverty incidence from 91.4% in 2016-17 to 58.9% in 2020, marking a substantial improvement. However, from 2020 to 2023, there was a significant increase in poverty incidence to 87.5%, highlighting challenges in sustaining initial gains. Similarly, Paktika initially showed improvement, but poverty nearly doubled from 2020 to 2023. Paktya province also demonstrated notable reductions 2016-17 to 2020, but a subsequent increase from 2020 to 2023 (32.5% to 67.2%). Both Nimroz and Maidan Wardak experienced significant decreases in poverty from 2016-17 to 2020; however, the trend did not continue from 2020 to 2023, indicating varied and evolving challenges in poverty reduction efforts.

[11]United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

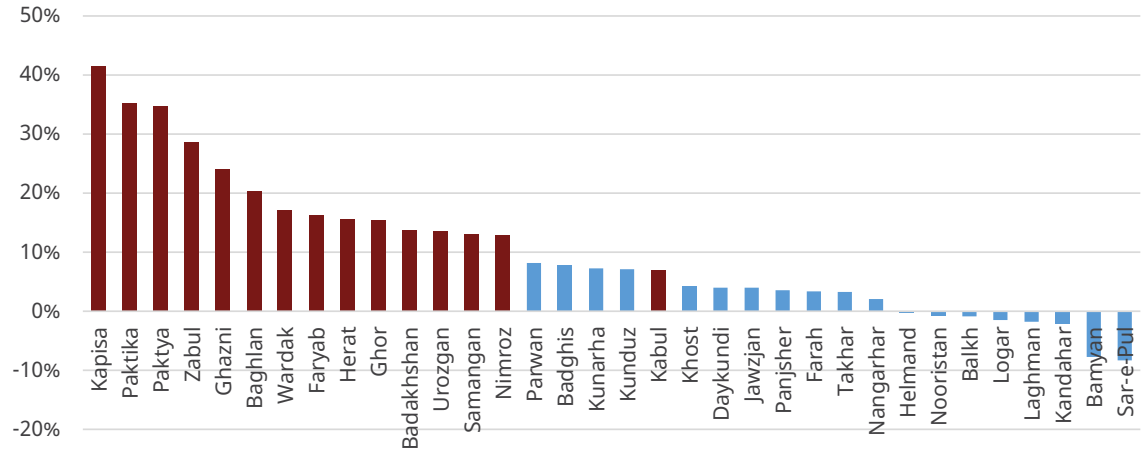
Table 11 Change in headcount ratios between 2016-17, 2020 and 2023 by provinces (ordered by headcount ratio of 2023)

Headcount ratio (H, %)	2016-17	2020	2023	Absolute changes 2016-17 to 2020	Sig	Relative changes 2016-17 to 2020	Absolute changes 2020-2023	Sig	Relative changes 2020-2023
Nooristan	81.3%	88.5%	87.8%	7.2%	*	8.9	-0.8%		-0.9
Zabul	91.4%	58.9%	87.5%	-32.6%	***	-35.6	28.7%	***	48.7
Helmand	81.5%	85.3%	85.1%	3.8%		4.7	-0.2%		-0.2
Badghis	85.2%	77.2%	85.0%	-7.9%		-9.3	7.8%		10.1
Ghor	73.6%	69.5%	84.9%	-4.0%		-5.5	15.4%	***	22.1
Paktika	63.2%	47.7%	82.9%	-15.5%	***	-24.6	35.2%	***	73.8
Urozgan	59.7%	69.3%	82.8%	9.6%		16.1	13.5%	**	19.5
Farah	73.5%	76.0%	79.3%	2.4%		3.3	3.4%		4.5
Kandahar	80.5%	80.5%	78.4%	0.0%		0.0	-2.1%		-2.6
Samangan	79.7%	63.3%	76.3%	-16.4%	***	-20.5	13.0%	**	20.6
Khost	72.1%	71.4%	75.7%	-0.8%		-1.1	4.3%		6.0
Faryab	70.6%	57.3%	73.5%	-13.3%	**	-18.9	16.2%	**	28.3
Kapisa	34.9%	30.3%	71.7%	-4.6%		-13.2	41.4%	***	136.7
Baghlan	46.6%	49.9%	70.3%	3.4%		7.3	20.3%	***	40.7
Kunarha	57.9%	61.5%	68.7%	3.5%		6.1	7.3%		11.8
Kunduz	62.0%	61.5%	68.6%	-0.6%		-0.9	7.1%		11.6
Paktya	55.4%	32.5%	67.2%	-22.9%	***	-41.3	34.7%	***	106.5
Badakhshan	62.7%	53.0%	66.8%	-9.6%		-15.4	13.8%	**	26.0
Sar-e-Pul	70.6%	74.0%	65.8%	3.4%		4.8	-8.3%		-11.2
Nangarhar	61.8%	62.3%	64.4%	0.6%		0.9	2.1%		3.3
Laghman	59.2%	66.0%	64.3%	6.9%		11.6	-1.8%		-2.7
Jawzjan	53.5%	59.9%	63.9%	6.4%		12.0	4.0%		6.7
Nimroz	70.4%	49.9%	62.9%	-20.5%	***	-29.1	13.0%	**	25.9
Ghazni	41.8%	38.2%	62.2%	-3.6%		-8.7	24.0%	***	62.9
Logar	64.0%	61.0%	59.5%	-2.9%		-4.6	-1.5%		-2.4
Takhar	50.5%	54.1%	57.4%	3.7%		7.3	3.3%		6.1
Herat	52.5%	40.1%	55.7%	-12.4%	**	-23.7	15.6%	**	39.0
Daykundi	62.4%	50.5%	54.5%	-11.9%	**	-19.1	4.0%		7.9
Wardak	56.5%	37.4%	54.4%	-19.1%	***	-33.8	17.0%	**	45.5
Balkh	43.4%	48.8%	48.0%	5.4%		12.5	-0.9%		-1.8
Parwan	43.7%	39.6%	47.8%	-4.1%		-9.5	8.2%		20.6
Panjsher	31.8%	30.5%	34.1%	-1.3%		-4.1	3.6%		11.6
Bamyan	38.8%	38.8%	31.1%	0.0%		-0.1	-7.7%		-19.9
Kabul	25.6%	20.3%	27.2%	-5.3%	**	-20.7	6.9%	**	34.1

*Note: ** statistically significant at α=0.05, *** statistically significant at α=0.01*
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from ALCS 2016-17, IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

Kapisa observed the highest increase in the headcount ratio by 41.4 percentage points in absolute terms (Figure 18). Paktya saw a significant rise in its headcount ratio by 35.2 percentage points, while Paktika experienced an increase of 34.7 percentage points.

Figure 18 Absolute changes in headcount ratios by provinces, 2020-2023



Note: Red colour bar indicates statistical significance at α=0.05; blue colour bars are statistically insignificant.

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

Table 12 reveals significant changes in censored headcount ratios across different provinces from 2016-17 to 2023, highlighting both positive and negative trends. The proportion of people who are poor and deprived in assisted delivery witnessed a significant decrease in Zabul, Helmand, Nooristan, Paktika, Urozgar, Samangan, Kapisa, Faryab, Paktya, Ghazni, Logar, Wardak and Kabul from 2016-17 to 2020. However, these provinces were not able to sustain improvements, instead a significant increase in the censored headcount ratio of assisted delivery was witnessed from 2020 to 2023. For example, in Zabul the proportion of poor people and deprived in assisted delivery reduced by 65.8 percentage points from 2016-17 to 2020, only to increase drastically by 49.9 percentage points from 2020 to 2023. In terms of school attendance, conditions in Kapisa (+36.3 percentage points), Paktika (+35.7 percentage points), and Paktya (+51.2 percentage points) deteriorated between 2020 and 2023. For female schooling, Zabul, Ghor, Paktika, Urozgan, Kapisa, Faryab, Kunduz, Baghlan, Paktya, Ghazni, Herat and Wardak recorded marked increases in deprivations between 2020 and 2023.

The access to water indicator improved in Ghor, Paktya and Badakshan, from 2016-17 to 2020 but deteriorated from 2020 to 2023. The proportion of poor and deprived in sanitation increased in Zabul (+34.4 percentage points), Helmand (+30.7 percentage points), Ghor (+34.9 percentage points), Farah (+23.1 percentage points), Paktika (+33.9 percentage points), Urozgan (+23.0 percentage points), Samangang (+34.2 percentage points), Kapisa (+13.2 percentage points), Baghlan (+18.1 percentage points), Paktya (+16.0 percentage points), Badakshan (+38.0 percentage points), Nangarhar (+20.2 percentage points) and Jawzjan (+5.1 percentage points) between 2020 and 2023. In 21 of the 34 provinces, the censored headcount ratio for asset ownership indicator saw significant increases from 2020 to 2023. These findings show provincial disparities and the varying setbacks across different provinces in the later trend period.

Table 12 Absolute changes in censored headcount ratios by provinces, 2016-17, 2020 to 2023 (ordered by 2023 Adjusted MPI value)

	Assisted delivery		School attendance		Female schooling		Male schooling		Access to water		Sanitation		Electricity		Asset ownership and agriculture	
	2016/17-2020	2020-2023	2016/17-2020	2020-2023	2016/17-2020	2020-2023	2016/17-2020	2020-2023	2016/17-2020	2020-2023	2016/17-2020	2020-2023	2016/17-2020	2020-2023	2016/17-2020	2020-2023
Zabul	-65.8%	49.9%	-11.4%	19.9%	-29.9%	27.8%	-18.5%	19.4%	-28.9%	2.6%	-35.6%	34.4%	2.1%	3.1%	22.8%	10.6%
Helmand	-12.3%	18.5%	4.0%	-2.8%	9.7%	-2.9%	15.6%	-9.2%	-24.3%	-0.4%	23.2%	30.7%	-1.9%	27.6%	28.4%	4.4%
Nooristan	-14.3%	26.7%	-4.5%	15.6%	17.5%	-12.0%	34.1%	-37.1%	2.4%	8.4%	7.6%	-39.5%	-0.3%	0.7%	10.7%	11.2%
Ghor	-4.0%	-9.0%	3.9%	34.4%	4.2%	12.5%	12.2%	9.3%	-24.4%	38.0%	-23.4%	34.9%	-1.2%	0.2%	-5.9%	23.3%
Farah	13.5%	-4.3%	2.4%	5.3%	1.0%	5.3%	4.7%	-0.3%	-30.3%	8.4%	-25.0%	23.1%	-4.9%	42.2%	-5.0%	34.1%
Paktika	-25.7%	27.6%	8.2%	35.7%	-8.6%	34.2%	10.3%	20.1%	-3.3%	2.4%	-0.4%	33.9%	-7.6%	24.5%	-2.0%	27.0%
Badghis	-9.9%	8.9%	8.1%	11.3%	-8.3%	6.1%	-7.3%	7.3%	-24.5%	2.6%	-8.2%	-12.7%	-0.5%	2.5%	14.6%	5.1%
Urozgan	-11.0%	37.8%	9.9%	8.1%	12.2%	11.9%	33.1%	3.2%	0.4%	-11.7%	-38.2%	23.0%	0.4%	3.8%	15.5%	21.8%
Kandahar	2.7%	-1.2%	3.3%	-0.1%	1.6%	-5.2%	5.6%	-8.3%	-11.6%	-1.4%	-8.9%	1.1%	-1.9%	38.8%	3.4%	10.5%
Samangan	-19.5%	12.3%	-0.3%	13.8%	-12.9%	12.3%	-8.6%	9.9%	-32.9%	6.3%	-64.6%	34.2%	-0.8%	28.0%	5.0%	12.1%
Kapisa	-10.3%	31.3%	0.0%	36.3%	-2.1%	38.9%	-1.9%	25.7%	-6.8%	21.3%	-5.4%	13.2%	-0.5%	46.7%	10.1%	20.4%
Faryab	-12.7%	14.5%	-11.9%	12.7%	-14.0%	17.7%	-1.3%	10.7%	-13.4%	4.4%	-46.0%	4.4%	-1.6%	13.2%	3.6%	32.3%
Khost	1.2%	2.7%	15.3%	2.2%	1.6%	-0.1%	-0.3%	-6.3%	-13.4%	-7.7%	-17.2%	-0.2%	-0.6%	1.2%	1.3%	25.4%
Kunarha	1.8%	5.6%	8.8%	-3.8%	3.0%	5.6%	5.2%	6.8%	0.9%	8.5%	-16.8%	8.6%	-0.9%	3.2%	0.5%	38.0%
Kunduz	0.7%	4.3%	9.1%	2.6%	-5.3%	11.3%	-5.4%	14.0%	-4.0%	2.8%	1.1%	-11.3%	3.4%	10.4%	0.8%	18.5%
Baghlan	-5.7%	6.5%	8.5%	19.0%	6.2%	14.7%	0.6%	16.0%	3.9%	3.6%	11.3%	18.1%	-1.3%	8.8%	0.7%	31.8%
Sar-e-Pul	-6.6%	17.7%	10.5%	-14.3%	5.5%	-17.6%	4.0%	-13.7%	-5.5%	-16.9%	1.3%	-41.0%	2.1%	19.7%	10.6%	-11.9%
Paktya	-39.5%	51.2%	-3.0%	20.4%	-16.6%	27.7%	2.9%	-3.0%	-9.5%	9.1%	-44.5%	16.0%	-0.3%	2.8%	4.6%	23.3%
Badkhshan	-2.7%	-2.9%	-3.4%	15.6%	-7.3%	8.8%	-5.3%	5.5%	-11.1%	17.9%	-33.9%	38.0%	0.2%	17.5%	-21.1%	40.1%
Laghman	0.3%	4.5%	-1.8%	2.9%	7.7%	-10.1%	4.1%	-8.5%	-3.9%	13.3%	37.6%	-29.2%	1.4%	4.5%	5.6%	16.8%
Nangarhar	-12.0%	3.4%	10.7%	-3.2%	7.7%	0.6%	10.4%	-3.6%	-2.3%	-4.7%	-0.6%	20.2%	1.1%	1.6%	14.7%	11.7%
Nimroz	-28.6%	34.5%	-9.5%	5.1%	-16.3%	5.3%	-10.3%	-2.2%	-23.1%	-8.5%	-28.1%	11.9%	14.4%	-4.7%	-5.4%	-5.3%
Jawzjan	1.1%	16.2%	8.8%	-5.7%	8.7%	-7.8%	7.2%	-7.9%	6.0%	-1.3%	-19.5%	5.1%	2.5%	4.0%	17.3%	-6.6%
Ghazni	-10.3%	28.0%	1.8%	23.6%	-1.5%	19.6%	4.9%	10.9%	1.5%	0.8%	-13.0%	-13.4%	2.7%	-4.5%	6.7%	7.8%
Logar	-19.2%	21.2%	2.3%	-5.1%	-8.4%	-1.8%	6.9%	-13.0%	13.0%	-31.9%	-20.8%	-29.3%	0.0%	4.1%	13.1%	-1.3%
Herat	-0.8%	11.1%	-9.3%	12.1%	-13.4%	12.1%	-10.6%	4.6%	-24.4%	9.3%	-15.2%	-2.0%	-0.9%	26.0%	-2.7%	18.2%
Takhar	-4.5%	6.5%	10.6%	-1.6%	8.5%	-3.5%	9.0%	-3.5%	-4.8%	10.5%	-1.3%	3.0%	-1.3%	4.1%	8.7%	6.8%
Daykundi	-9.4%	7.4%	0.4%	1.8%	-9.5%	5.5%	-8.0%	4.1%	-22.7%	6.8%	-3.8%	-2.8%	-6.2%	2.3%	-1.9%	0.7%
Wardak	-18.4%	22.2%	-9.5%	7.3%	-18.1%	15.0%	-2.4%	0.4%	-22.4%	9.8%	-23.6%	-9.1%	0.0%	7.6%	5.1%	4.7%
Parwan	-5.8%	7.0%	0.1%	6.5%	-4.9%	2.2%	0.4%	1.0%	-1.7%	10.7%	1.7%	-9.3%	-2.9%	7.4%	-6.8%	20.6%
Balkh	2.7%	-1.5%	4.9%	-4.2%	5.0%	-5.5%	7.6%	-4.0%	-0.9%	-5.3%	9.1%	7.1%	0.5%	3.5%	3.0%	8.5%
Panjsher	-6.6%	5.3%	8.1%	4.3%	0.1%	1.7%	3.2%	-4.4%	0.8%	-3.1%	-12.3%	5.0%	-2.4%	1.1%	-0.3%	9.8%
Bamyan	1.4%	-4.5%	4.7%	-8.4%	0.7%	-10.6%	-1.0%	-8.5%	-10.3%	-4.1%	-9.4%	-4.4%	0.7%	9.2%	0.8%	-0.1%
Kabul	-13.7%	14.1%	6.2%	-4.1%	1.6%	0.3%	5.7%	-6.1%	0.6%	0.2%	-1.1%	-5.4%	1.9%	-0.2%	2.4%	1.5%

Note: Both red and green texts statistically significant at α=0.05, and black text indicates insignificance. Red colour indicates significant increase and green colour indicates significant decrease in censored headcount ratios.
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from ALCS 2016-17, IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

3.4. Changes in the levels and composition harmonized Adjusted MPI by age groups

Table 13 reveals significant trends in multidimensional poverty for both children (0-17 years) and adults (18+ years) in Afghanistan between 2016-17, 2020, and 2023. For children, the harmonized Adjusted MPI had no significant change between 2016/17 to 2020. However, it sharply increased to 0.396 in 2023, a 33.6% rise compared to 2020. Similarly, the headcount ratio for children remained relatively same between 2016-17 and 2020, but then increased by 20.9% from 2020 to 2023, reaching 66.9%. The intensity of poverty among children followed a similar pattern, with a slight but significant decline from 2016-17 to 2020 (3.4%) and a subsequent increase of 10.5% by 2023. For adults, the Adjusted MPI dropped significantly (19.5%) between 2016-17 and 2020, but then observed an increase of 36.3% from 2020 to 2023. The adult headcount ratio saw a 15.1% reduction between 2016-17 and 2020, followed by a 25.5% rise by 2023. There was a reduction of 5.2% in the intensity of poverty for adults from 2016-17 to 2020 and a rise of 8.6% from 2020 to 2023. These trends indicate a concerning rise in multidimensional poverty, particularly between 2020 and 2023, suggesting the need for targeted policy interventions to address these escalating deprivations.

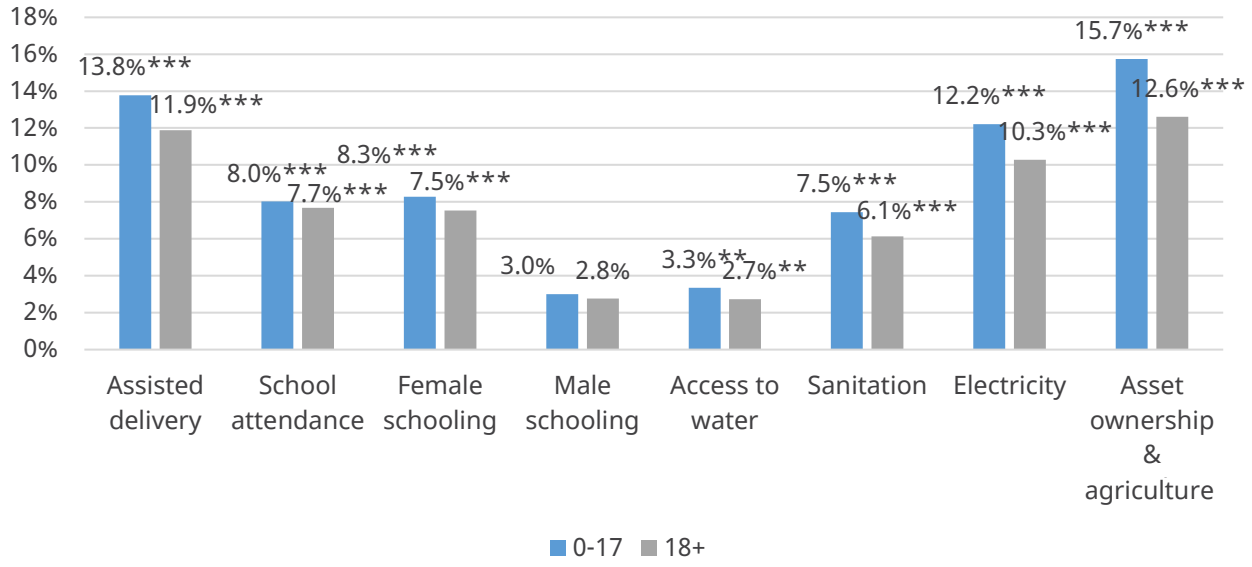
Table 13 Change in harmonized Adjusted MPI between 2016-17, 2020 and 2023 by age groups

	2016-17	2020	2023	Absolute changes 2016/17-2020	Sig	Relative changes 2016/17-2020	Absolute changes 2020-2023	Sig	Relative changes 2020-2023
Harmonized Adjusted MPI									
0-17	0.310	0.297	0.396	-0.013		-4.2	0.100	***	33.6
18+	0.294	0.237	0.323	-0.057	***	-19.5	0.086	***	36.3
Headcount ratio (H, %)									
0-17	55.9%	55.4%	66.9%	-0.005		-0.9	0.116	***	20.9
18+	53.3%	45.2%	56.8%	-0.081	***	-15.1	0.116	***	25.5
Intensity (A, %)									
0-17	55.4%	53.6%	59.2%	-0.019	***	-3.4	0.057	***	10.5
18+	55.3%	52.4%	56.9%	-0.029	***	-5.2	0.045	***	8.6

*Note: ** statistically significant at α=0.01, *** statistically significant at α=0.001*
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from ALCS 2016-17, IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

Figure 19 depicts the changes in censored headcount ratios across the eight indicators from 2020 to 2023 in absolute terms. There is a significant increase in the proportion of poor and deprived individuals across both children and adults in all the indicators except for male schooling and access to water. There is a notably higher increase in deprivations among children compared to adults. For instance, over the period from 2020 to 2023, significant increases in the proportion of people who are poor and deprived in assisted delivery for both children (+13.8 percentage points) and adults (+11.9 percentage points) indicate a decline in maternal and newborn health services. This suggests potential barriers to healthcare access, such as inadequate healthcare infrastructure or financial constraints. Similarly, higher absolute increases in deprivations in school attendance among children (+8.0 percentage points) compared to adults (+7.7 percentage points) point to disruptions in educational services, possibly due to conflict, economic hardships, or the pandemic. There is also a significant absolute increase in the proportion of poor people and deprived in the female schooling indicator in both the child (+8.3 percentage points) and adult (+7.5 percentage points) population. This disparity suggests that girls face more significant obstacles to education. Such trends can lead to long-term negative impacts on literacy rates and economic productivity.

Figure 19 Absolute changes in censored headcount ratios by age groups, 2020-2023.



*Note: ** statistically significant at α=0.05, *** statistically significant at α=0.01*
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

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Part 2

Child MPI

In Afghanistan, an unusually high percentage of the population, namely 54.5%, is under 18 years of age. Addressing child poverty is exceptionally crucial, as emphasized by the SDGs, which target reducing child poverty under Goal 1. Recall that, according to the Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI discussed in part 1 of this report, 66.9% of children are considered poor (approximately 15 million children), compared to 56.8% of adults (over 10.6 million adults). How can we go further into individual child outcomes?

The Child MPI presented here focuses on children aged 0-17. It assesses individual child poverty by aligning with the Adjusted MPI and emphasizing distinct deprivations specific to child-related life conditions. This linked Child MPI captures all deprivations within the three dimensions of the Adjusted MPI and adds an additional dimension while tracking simultaneous deprivations within specific child-related indicators. This means any child classified as poor by the Adjusted MPI is also considered poor by the Child MPI. Importantly, the Child MPI identifies additional children from non-poor households who require attention due to specific hardships faced by children living in these households.

IV. Structure of the Child MPI of Afghanistan based on MICS.

4.1. Data source

The Child MPI is based on Afghanistan MICS 2022-23 developed by the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office in collaboration with the National Statistics and Information Authority of Afghanistan (NSIA) as part of the Global MICS Programme.

4.2 Alkire Foster method

The Child MPI, similar to the Afghanistan Adjusted MPI, uses the Alkire-Foster method to distinguish between poor and non-poor children in Afghanistan. Additionally, the Child MPI and related statistics can be broken down by factors such as age, ethnicity, urban/rural status, and subnational regions to identify who is the poorest and the specific deprivations they face.

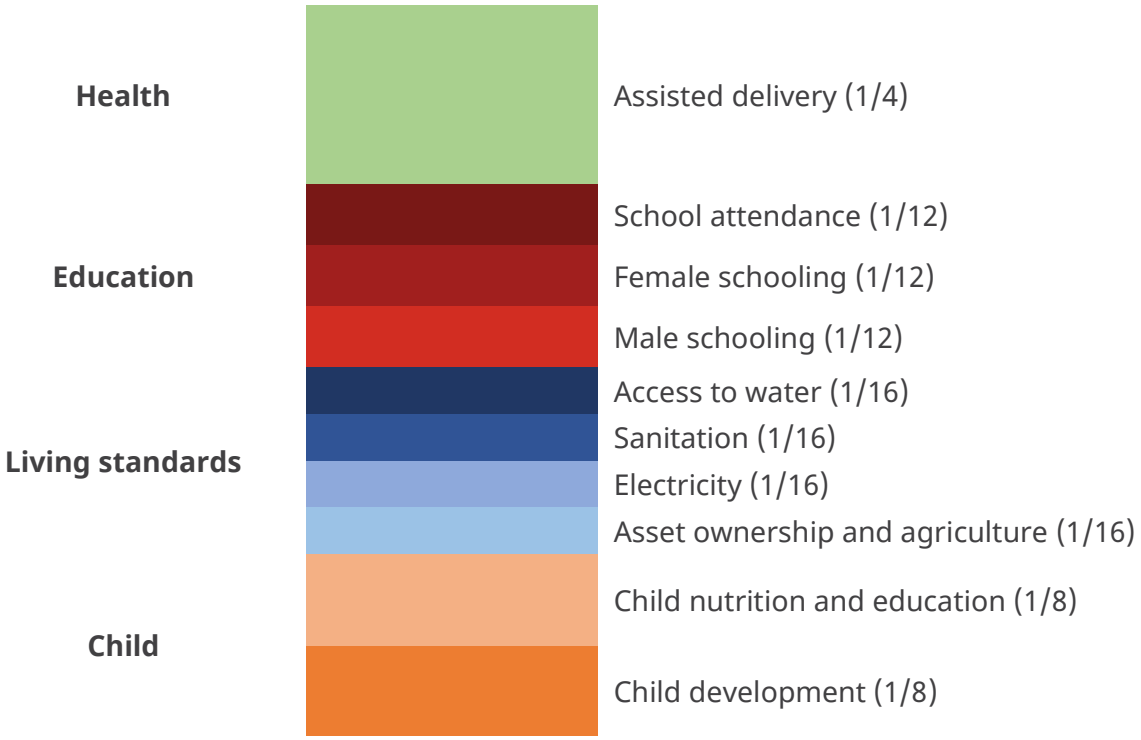
4.3 Unit of identification and analysis

The unit of identification for the Child MPI is the individual child. The unit of analysis, meaning the unit for which results are reported and analyzed, is also the individual child. Thus, the headcount ratio represents the percentage of children who are identified as poor.

4.4 Dimensions, indicators, deprivation cut-offs and weights

Like the Adjusted MPI, the Child MPI is generated using the MICS 2022-23 dataset. The Child MPI is composed of four dimensions (education, health, standard of living, and child and 10 indicators (Figure 20). The first three dimensions are identical to the Adjusted MPI and capture the deprivations of the household across the eight indicators. The fourth child dimension measures two individual and age-specific deprivations in children, related to child nutrition and education, and child development. Table 4.1 presents the deprivation cut-offs for two new indicators under the child dimension. Overall, the Child MPI has four dimensions and 10 indicators. Similar to Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI, each dimension in the child MPI is equally weighted, and within the child dimension, the two indicators are also equally weighted (Table 14). A child aged 0-17 is considered multidimensionally poor if they are deprived in at least 25.0% of the total weighted indicators.

Figure 20 Structure of the Child MPI in Afghanistan, 2022-2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-2023.

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Table 14 Dimensions, indicators and weights of the Child MPI of Afghanistan (aged 0-18) 2022-2023

Dimensions of Child MPI	Indicators	Household is deprived if...	Weight
Health	Assisted delivery	Any woman who was pregnant in the last 2 years preceding the interview received less than 4 antenatal care visits OR the delivery did not take place at a health facility OR was not attended by a doctor or a nurse	1/4
Education	School attendance	At least one child aged 7-13 is not attending school or never did	1/12
	Female schooling	No female aged 10+ has completed primary schooling (grade 6 or above)	1/12
	Male schooling	No male aged 10+ has completed primary schooling (grade 6 or above)	1/12
Living standards	Access to water	They lack access to improved water sources (deprived if water source is unprotected, surface water or unspecified)	1/16
	Sanitation	They lack access to improved sanitation facilities (deprived if pit latrine without slab/open pit, or no facility or other.)	1/16
	Electricity	There is no electricity from any source	1/16
	Asset ownership and agriculture	They own less than 3 assets (refrigerator, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, gas cylinder, iron, television, mobile, satellite dish, bicycle and motorbike including agricultural items (land and livestock). Agriculture items are not considered for urban dwellers.	1/16
Child	Child nutrition and education	A child below 5 years of age is underweight or stunted	1/8
		A 5-6 years old child in not in preschool and there is no literate female in the household	
		A 7-13 years old child in is not attending school and has not completed 6 years of schooling	
		A 14-17 years old child has not completed 6 years of schooling	
	Child development	A child below 6 months of age is not exclusively breastfed.	1/8
		A child between 6 to 11 months of age is deprived if his/her birth was not registered	
		A child between 12 to 35 months of age is deprived if s/he did not get at least one dose of each vaccination of basic antigens (BCG, OPV, IPV, DTP, Measles 1), based on both mother's report and vaccination records.	
		A child is deprived if a 3 year old is deprived in at least 2 out of 7 indicators and 4 year old is deprived in at least 1 indicator.	
		A child 5-7 years old is deprived if living in a household where no adult has completed 6 years of schooling	
		A child is deprived if children 8 years old have 1 year lag or those 9-14 years old have 2 or more years of school lag. Those who are out of school are considered non-deprived as this is captured in the other child indicator.	
		A boy 15-17 years of age is deprived if there is no computer, phone or internet access in the household. A girl 15-17 years of age is deprived if there is no computer, phone or internet access in the household and if she did not use a mobile, computer or internet at least once a week in the last three months OR if she is married with a child.	

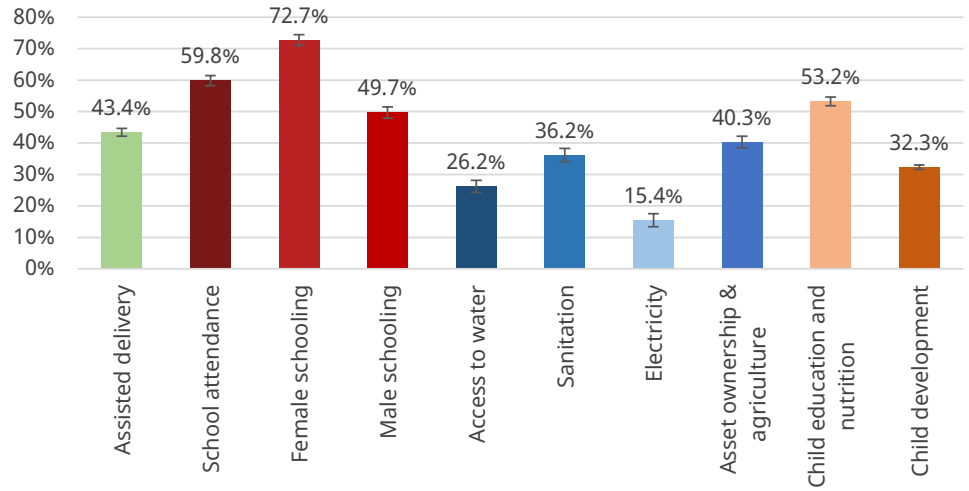
Note 1: The seven indicators are: EC21, EC22, EC25, EC28, EC36, and EC38 from Early Childhood Development questions from the Children Under 5 questionnaire, plus EC26 (for three year olds only), EC27 (for four year olds only).

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-2023.

4.5 Uncensored headcount ratios

Figure 21 indicates that the highest uncensored headcount ratios (which measure indicator deprivations among both the poor and the non-poor) are associated with female schooling, with 72.7% of the population deprived in this indicator. This is followed by school attendance at 59.8% and child nutrition and education at 53.2%.

Figure 21 Uncensored headcount ratios of Child MPI based on MICS 2022-2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-2023.

V: Afghanistan's Child MPI based on MICS: Key results

This section presents the key results of the Child MPI, detailing both the poverty incidence and the intensity of poverty among poor children.

5.1 Child MPI based on MICS - Key results

The Child MPI, which is calculated by multiplying the percentage of children who are multidimensionally poor (the incidence, H) by the average share of weighted indicators in which poor children are deprived (the intensity, A), has a value of 0.418 (Table 15). This means that multidimensionally poor children in Afghanistan experience 41.8 per cent of the total deprivations that would be experienced if all children aged 0-17 were deprived in all the indicators. With 95 percent confidence, the true value of the child MPI is between 0.406 and 0.430. The headcount ratio (incidence) stands at 77.6%, signifying that 77.6% of children are deprived in at least 25% of the weighted indicators12. This equates to two-thirds of the entire population of Afghanistan (67.9%) being a poor child according to the Child MPI.

[12]The incidence of Child MPI is higher than the incidence of Adjusted MPI disaggregated by age group for children. In the Child MPI, more dimensions and indicators were added to the Adjusted MPI thereby retaining the original Adjusted MPI and re-adjusting indicators' weights and poverty cut-off in such a way that poor children according to the Adjusted MPI remained poor according to the Child MPI. As a result, 10.7% of non-poor children according to the Adjusted MPI became poor based on the child MPI, which lead to an increase in the incidence of child MPI.

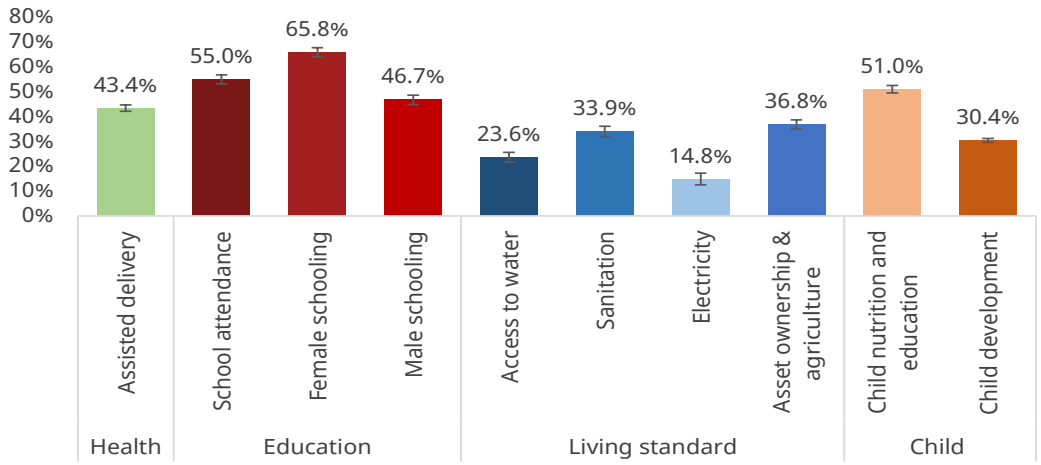
Table 15 Child MPI, incidence and intensity, 2022-2023

Poverty cut-off (k)	Measure	Value	*Confidence Interval (95%)*	
k value=25.0%	**Adjusted MPI**	0.418	*0.406*	*0.430*
	Headcount ratio (H, %)	77.6%	*76.1*	*79.1*
	Intensity (A, %)	53.8%	*53.1*	*54.6*

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-2023.

Figure 22 gives the censored headcount ratios for each indicator. These ratios represent the percentage of children aged 0-17 years who are poor and deprived in each indicator. The data reveals that the highest levels of deprivation are female schooling (65.8%) and school attendance (55.0%) under the education dimension followed by child education and nutrition indicator (51.0%) in the child dimension.

Figure 22 Censored headcount ratios as per Child MPI, 2022-2023



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

5.2 Child MPI disaggregated by rural and urban areas

As in the case of Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI, the Child MPI reveals stark disparities across rural and urban areas in incidence and intensity. In terms of population shares, three-quarters of children live in rurals areas (76.4%) and five out of six poor children are rural dwellers. Table 16 shows that 84.7% of children in rural areas are multidimensionally poor compared to 54.9% of children living in urban areas. Multidimensionally poor children in rural areas also experience on an average a higher intensity of deprivations compared to their urban counterparts. They face deprivations in 55.8% of the weighted deprivations, compared to 44.2% for their urban counterparts. The Child MPI is almost double in rural areas (0.472 vs 0.243). This calls for an urgent need to invest in poverty reduction strategies for rural poor children (83.3% of all poor children by the Child MPI). Similar to the findings from Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI, the brunt of poverty even among children is borne by rural areas.

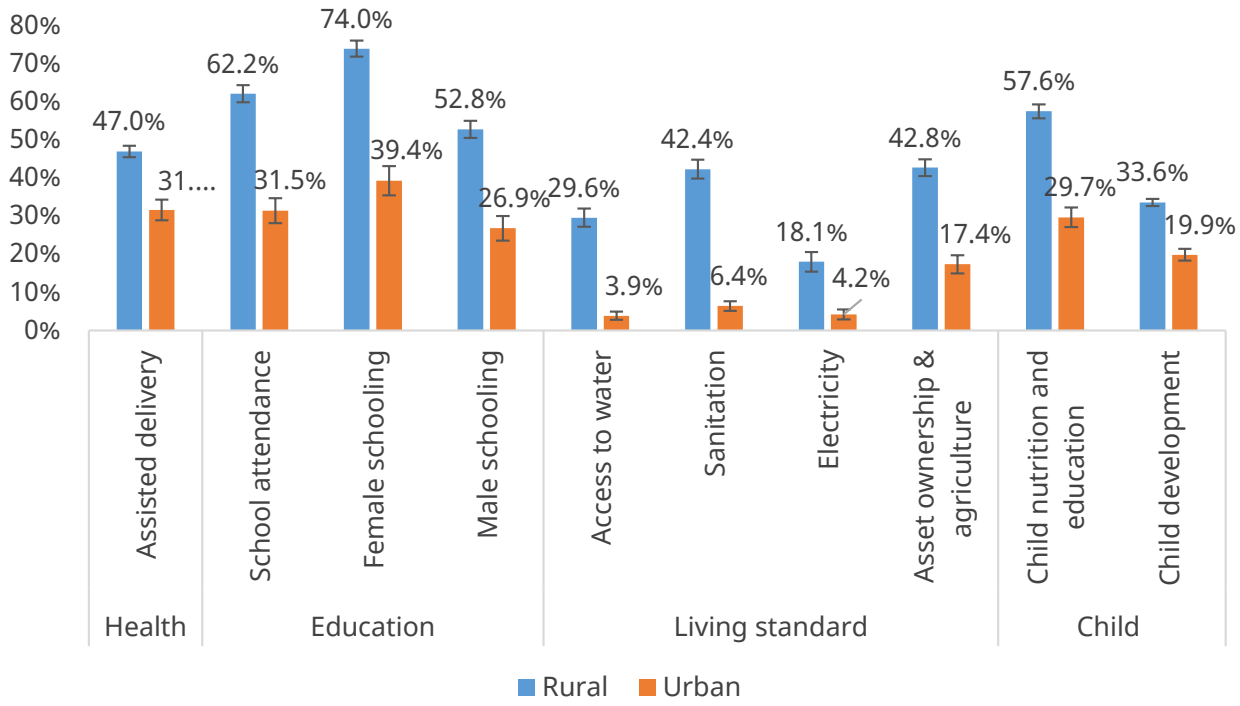
Table 16 Child MPI based on MICS by urban and rural areas, 2022-2023

	Rural					Urban				
Measure	Value	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		Population share (%)	Share of poor (%)	Value	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		Population share (%)	Share of poor (%)
Child MPI	0.472	*0.457*	*0.486*			0.243	*0.223*	*0.263*		
Headcount ratio (H, %)	84.7	*82.9*	*86.2*	76.4	83.3	54.9	*51.2*	*58.5*	23.6	16.7
Intensity (A, %)	55.8	*54.9*	*56.6*			44.2	*43.1*	*45.4*		

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Across the 10 indicators of the Child MPI, rural poor children (Figure 23) experience the highest deprivations in female schooling. 74.0% of rural children are poor and deprived in female schooling. Among urban poor children, the female schooling indicator has the highest deprivation (39.4%). This is followed by assisted delivery and school attendance wherein close to one-third (31.7% and 31.5% respectively) of urban children are poor and experience deprivations in these indicators.

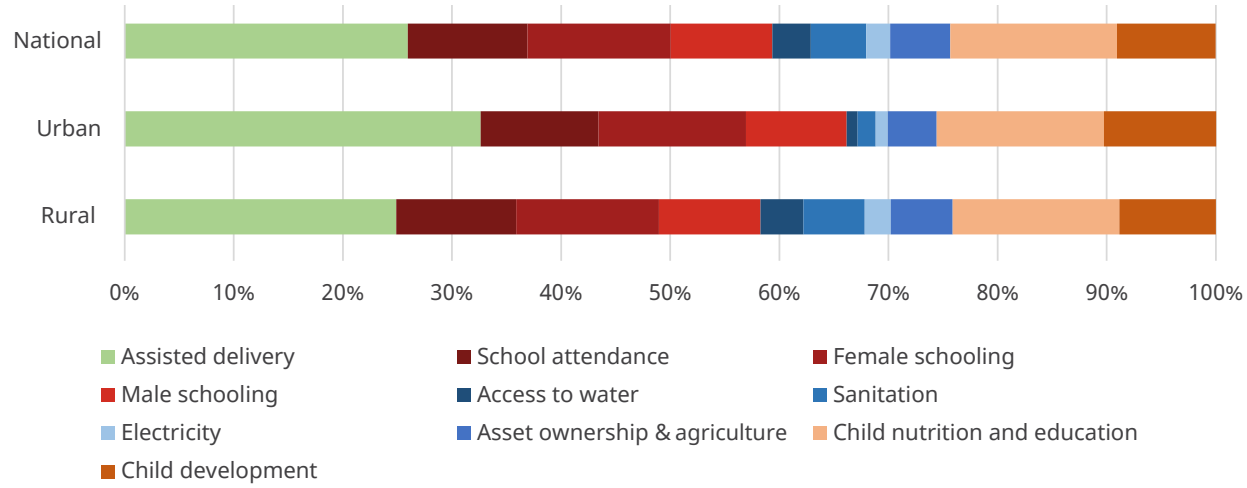
Figure 23 Censored headcount ratios as per Child MPI by areas, 2022-2023



Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Figure 24 shows the percentage contribution to the Child MPI. Note indicators with higher weights will contribute more to the Child MPI. Given that the assisted delivery indicator is the only indicator under the health dimension, its percentage contribution is highest across all areas.

Figure 24 Percentage contribution to Child MPI, 2022-2023



5.3 Child MPI disaggregated by age

Table 17 Child MPI based on MICS by age, 2022-2023

	Children aged 0-4 years					Children aged 5-17 years				
Measure	**Value**	***Confidence Interval (95%)***		**Population share (%)**	**Share of poor (%)**	**Value**	***Confidence Interval (95%)***		**Population share (%)**	**Share of poor (%)**
Child MPI	0.471	*0.459*	*0.482*			0.396	*0.383*	*0.409*		
Headcount ratio (H)	84.5%	*83.3%*	*85.8%*	29.5%	32.1%	74.8%	*73.1%*	*76.4%*	70.5%	67.9
Intensity (A)	55.7%	*54.9%*	*56.4%*			53.0%	*52.2%*	*53.8%*		

Source for Figure 24 and Table 17: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-2023.

The focus of the Child MPI is on children under 18 years of age, which is a heterogeneous group as the development needs are different for children in different phases of their childhood. We divide the children in two age groups, 0-4 and 5-17, and present the results in table 17. Among these children, less than one-third are below 5 years of age while more than 70% of children are 5-17 years of age. The incidence of poverty is nearly 10 percentage points higher for the younger cohort (84.5% as compared to 74.8%). Similarly, MPI is also strikingly higher for children below 5 years of age. Out of these poor children, around two-thirds are between 5-17 years of age while one-third are below 5.

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5.4 Child MPI disaggregated by age

To further understand the poverty dynamics of children, we present the uncensored headcount ratios of the sub-indicators for boys and girls in the following table.

Table 18 Uncensored Headcount Ratios for sub-indicators among boys and girls 2022-2023

Sub-indicators	Uncensored Headcount ratio	95% Confidence Interval		N
		lower bound	Upper bound	
Nutritional status				
Children below 5 years of age	47.5%	*46.4%*	*48.6%*	32,147
Boys	48.6%	*47.2%*	*49.9%*	16,427
Girls	46.3%	*44.9%*	*47.7%*	15,720
Early childhood education				
Children 5-6 years	59.7%	*57.7%*	*61.6%*	13,695
Boys	58.7%	*56.5%*	*60.9%*	7,155
Girls	60.7%	*58.4%*	*63.1%*	6,540
Child school attendance *				
Children 7-13 years	52.6%	*50.8%*	*54.5%*	42,829
Boys	46.5%	*44.6%*	*48.4%*	21,908
Girls	59.1%	*57.0%*	*61.2%*	20,921
Years of schooling *				
Children 14-17 years	59.6%	*57.6%*	*61.6%*	18,855
Boys	52.1%	*49.8%*	*54.4%*	9,308
Girls	66.8%	*64.5%*	*69.1%*	9,547
Breastfeeding				
Children below 6 months of age	37.1%	*34.5%*	*39.6%*	3,214
Boys	35.8%	*32.3%*	*39.2%*	1,655
Girls	38.5%	*35.2%*	*41.7%*	1,559
Birth Registration:				
Children 6-11 months of age	46.7%	*43.7%*	*49.7%*	3,083
Boys	46.5%	*42.6%*	*50.4%*	1,578
Girls	46.9%	*43.2%*	*50.6%*	1,505
Immunisation				
Children 12-35 months of age	62.6%	*60.3%*	*65.0%*	12,151
Boys	61.4%	*58.5%*	*64.2%*	6,179
Girls	63.9%	*61.0%*	*66.9%*	5,972
Early chilldhood development Index				
Children 36-59 months of age	42.0%	*40.6%*	*43.3%*	13,699
Boys	42.6%	*40.9%*	*44.2%*	7,015
Girls	41.4%	*39.5%*	*43.2%*	6,684
No educated adult in the hh				
Children 5-7 years	48.0%	*46.0%*	*50.0%*	20,764
Boys	48.6%	*46.5%*	*50.7%*	10,732
Girls	47.4%	*45.1%*	*49.7%*	10,032
School lag *				
Children 8-14 years	16.0%	*15.2%*	*16.8%*	40,586
Boys	18.4%	*17.4%*	*19.5%*	20,781
Girls	13.5%	*12.5%*	*14.4%*	19,805
Communication/technology/ Early marriage *				
Children 15-17 years	16.5%	*14.9%*	*18.1%*	14,029
Boys	13.8%	*11.8%*	*15.8%*	6,858
Girls	19.0%	*17.3%*	*20.7%*	7,171

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-2023.
**indicates that the gender difference is statistically significant at 5% level of significance.*

Girls are significantly more deprived in school attendance (age 7-13) and years of schooling (age 14-17), as well as Communication / technology / early marriage (age 15-17). For school lag, however, boys (aged 8-14) are significantly worse off compared to girls. This is because the indicator regards out-of-school children as non-deprived and captures only those who are in school and have school lag.

Table 19 presents the gender disaggregated results for Child MPI. Interestingly, the MPI, H and A are not significantly different. Among children below 18 years age, boys are in greater number than girls and there are around 104 boys per 100 girls. The incidence of poverty is slightly higher among girls but the different is not significantly different at 5% level of significance. In terms of the number of poor among boys and girls, we observe only a difference of 0.1 million (8.75 million boys are poor as compared to 8.65 million girls). The MPI is significantly higher for girls if we consider 90% confidence intervals.

Table 19 Child MPI among boys and girls 2022-2023

	Girls					Boys				
Measure	Value	Confidence Interval (95%)		Population share (%)	Share of poor (%)	Value	Confidence Interval (95%)		Popula-tion share (%)	Share of poor (%)
Child MPI	0.424	*0.411*	*0.436*			0.412	0.400	0.425		
Headcount ratio (H, %)	78.7%	*77.1%*	*80.2%*	49.0%	49.1	*76.6%*	*75.1%*	*78.1%*	*51.0%*	50.8
Intensity (A, %)	53.8%	*53.1%*	*54.6%*			*53.8%*	*53.0%*	*54.6%*		
Sex ratio (m/f)	104									

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-2023.

5.5 Child MPI disaggregated by provinces

Table 20 provides a nuanced view of multidimensional poverty across various provinces in Afghanistan, highlighting significant disparities in the levels of deprivation experienced by different regions. In 32 of the 34 provinces, more than half of children are multidimensionally poor. Provinces like Zabul and Helmand exhibit some of the highest Child MPI values, 0.604 and 0.585 respectively. In contrast, provinces such as Kabul and Bamyan, while still facing poverty, show relatively lower Child MPI values of 0.177 and 0.207, respectively.

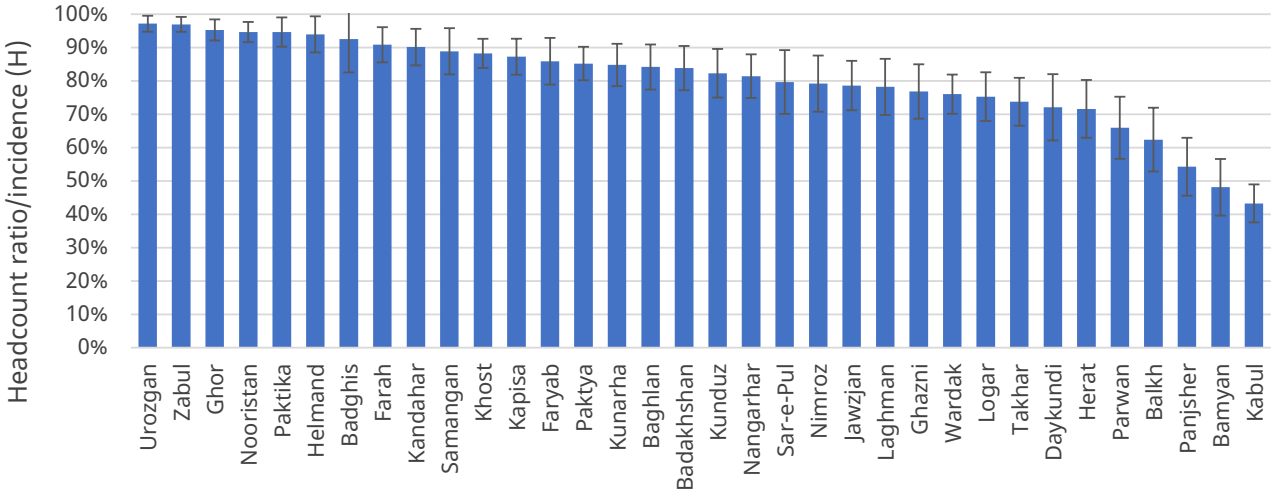
At least 9 out of every 10 children are multidimensionally poor in Zabul (96.9%), Helmand (94.0%), Urozgan (97.1%), Ghor (95.3%), Nooristan (94.6%), Farah (90.8%), Badghis (92.6%), Paktika (94.7%) and Kandahar (90.1%). The highest number of poor children is in Helmand (nearly one in ten or 9.5% of all poor children in Afghanistan) followed by Herat where over 7.3% of all poor children live. While the incidence of poverty is comparatively lower for children in Kabul, it houses one in seventeen or 6.3% of all multidimensionally poor children.

Table 20 Multidimensional poverty by provinces (ordered by Child MPI value), 2022-2023

Province	Child MPI	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		Head-count ratio (H)	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		Intensity (A)	*Confidence Interval (95%)*		Share of poor (%)	Population share of children
Zabul	0.604	*0.575*	0.632	96.9%	*94.7%*	*98.3%*	62.3%	*60.2%*	*64.4%*	1.8%	1.41%
Helmand	0.585	*0.530*	0.638	94.0%	*88.6%*	*96.9%*	62.2%	*58.3%*	*65.9%*	9.5%	7.88%
Urozgan	0.577	*0.541*	0.613	97.1%	*94.7%*	*98.5%*	59.4%	*56.4%*	*62.4%*	1.8%	1.47%
Ghor	0.575	*0.539*	0.611	95.3%	*92.1%*	*97.2%*	60.4%	*57.7%*	*62.9%*	3.1%	2.49%
Nooristan	0.556	*0.522*	0.590	94.6%	*91.6%*	*96.6%*	58.8%	*56.4%*	*61.1%*	0.6%	0.48%
Farah	0.552	*0.493*	0.609	90.9%	*85.6%*	*94.3%*	60.7%	*56.3%*	*64.9%*	2.2%	1.89%
Badghis	0.551	*0.497*	0.604	92.6%	*82.8%*	*97.0%*	59.5%	*56.8%*	*62.1%*	2.9%	2.41%
Paktika	0.550	*0.505*	0.594	94.7%	*90.3%*	*97.2%*	58.1%	*54.9%*	*61.1%*	2.1%	1.68%
Kandahar	0.528	*0.481*	0.575	90.1%	*84.6%*	*93.8%*	58.6%	*55.9%*	*61.3%*	5.8%	5.00%
Samangan	0.509	*0.454*	0.564	88.8%	*81.8%*	*93.3%*	57.3%	*54.0%*	*60.6%*	1.6%	1.43%
Kapisa	0.505	*0.449*	0.560	87.3%	*81.9%*	*91.3%*	57.8%	*54.0%*	*61.5%*	1.3%	1.20%
Faryab	0.478	*0.416*	0.540	85.9%	*78.9%*	*90.8%*	55.6%	*51.4%*	*59.7%*	4.6%	4.17%
Khost	0.457	*0.423*	0.492	88.3%	*83.9%*	*91.6%*	51.8%	*49.8%*	*53.8%*	3.2%	2.85%
Kunarha	0.453	*0.402*	0.504	84.7%	*78.3%*	*89.4%*	53.5%	*50.3%*	*56.6%*	1.7%	1.53%
Baghlan	0.451	*0.407*	0.496	84.1%	*77.4%*	*89.1%*	53.6%	*51.4%*	*55.8%*	2.9%	2.66%
Kunduz	0.448	*0.394*	0.504	82.4%	*75.1%*	*87.9%*	54.4%	*51.4%*	*57.5%*	3.7%	3.49%
Badakhshan	0.441	*0.393*	0.491	83.9%	*77.3%*	*88.8%*	52.6%	*49.9%*	*55.2%*	3.8%	3.55%
Paktya	0.438	*0.392*	0.485	85.2%	*80.2%*	*89.1%*	51.4%	*48.2%*	*54.6%*	2.0%	1.82%
Sar-e-pul	0.428	*0.359*	0.500	79.6%	*70.0%*	*86.8%*	53.8%	*49.9%*	*57.6%*	1.8%	1.76%
Nangarhar	0.424	*0.384*	0.465	81.5%	*74.9%*	*86.6%*	52.0%	*50.1%*	*54.0%*	7.1%	6.77%
Nimroz	0.412	*0.347*	0.481	79.5%	*71.1%*	*85.9%*	51.9%	*47.3%*	*56.4%*	1.1%	1.06%
Laghman	0.405	*0.342*	0.473	78.2%	*69.8%*	*84.8%*	51.8%	*47.6%*	*56.0%*	2.0%	1.97%
Ghazni	0.402	*0.346*	0.462	76.9%	*68.8%*	*83.4%*	52.3%	*49.2%*	*55.4%*	3.0%	3.07%
Jawzjan	0.395	*0.348*	0.445	78.6%	*71.2%*	*84.5%*	50.3%	*47.7%*	*52.9%*	2.2%	2.19%
Herat	0.371	*0.304*	0.444	71.6%	*62.9%*	*78.9%*	51.9%	*47.1%*	*56.6%*	7.3%	7.94%
Logar	0.371	*0.322*	0.422	75.4%	*68.1%*	*81.5%*	49.2%	*45.9%*	*52.4%*	1.2%	1.28%
Maidan wardak	0.367	*0.332*	0.404	76.0%	*70.1%*	*81.0%*	48.3%	*46.7%*	*49.9%*	1.7%	1.78%
Takhar	0.366	*0.319*	0.417	73.8%	*66.6%*	*79.9%*	49.6%	*46.8%*	*52.5%*	3.2%	3.39%
Daykundi	0.364	*0.297*	0.437	72.1%	*62.2%*	*80.3%*	50.5%	*46.5%*	*54.5%*	1.9%	2.10%
Parwan	0.323	*0.254*	0.401	66.1%	*56.8%*	*74.3%*	48.9%	*43.1%*	*54.7%*	1.8%	2.08%
Balkh	0.305	*0.241*	0.377	62.6%	*53.0%*	*71.2%*	48.7%	*44.3%*	*53.1%*	3.8%	4.73%
Panjsher	0.242	*0.192*	0.299	54.4%	*45.7%*	*62.9%*	44.4%	*41.0%*	*47.8%*	0.2%	0.23%
Bamyan	0.207	*0.160*	0.262	48.1%	*39.6%*	*56.7%*	43.0%	*39.6%*	*46.4%*	0.6%	0.95%
Kabul	0.177	*0.149*	0.209	43.3%	*37.6%*	*49.3%*	40.9%	*38.7%*	*43.1%*	6.3%	11.30%

Source: Author's calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Figure 25 Poverty incidence by provinces as per Child MPI, 2022-2023



Province	Headcount ratio (H)	Confidence Interval (95%)	
Urozgan	97.1%	94.8%	98.5%
Zabul	97.0%	94.7%	98.3%
Ghor	95.3%	92.1%	97.2%
Nooristan	94.6%	91.6%	96.6%
Paktika	94.6%	90.3%	97.1%
Helmand	94.0%	88.5%	96.9%
Badghis	92.5%	82.5%	97.0%
Farah	90.8%	85.6%	94.3%
Kandahar	90.1%	84.6%	93.8%
Samangan	88.9%	82.0%	93.4%
Khost	88.3%	83.9%	91.6%
Kapisa	87.2%	81.8%	91.2%
Faryab	85.9%	78.9%	90.8%
Paktya	85.2%	80.2%	89.1%
Kunarha	84.8%	78.4%	89.5%
Baghlan	84.2%	77.4%	89.2%
Badakhshan	83.8%	77.2%	88.8%
Kunduz	82.3%	75.0%	87.8%
Nangarhar	81.4%	74.9%	86.6%
Sar-e-Pul	79.7%	70.1%	86.8%
Nimroz	79.2%	70.8%	85.7%
Jawzjan	78.6%	71.2%	84.5%

Province	Headcount ratio (H)	Confidence Interval (95%)	
Laghman	78.2%	69.8%	84.8%
Ghazni	76.8%	68.7%	83.4%
Wardak	76.0%	70.1%	81.0%
Logar	75.3%	68.0%	81.4%
Takhar	73.7%	66.6%	79.9%
Daykundi	72.1%	62.2%	80.2%
Herat	71.6%	62.9%	78.9%
Parwan	65.9%	56.6%	74.2%
Balkh	62.4%	52.8%	71.1%
Panjsher	54.3%	45.6%	62.7%
Bamyan	48.1%	39.6%	56.7%
Kabul	43.3%	37.6%	49.1%

Note: Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Table 21 shows the censored headcount ratios as per the Child MPI, which indicates the proportion of people who are poor and deprived in the respective indicators by provinces. The provinces display significant disparities across key indicators. In Zabul province, which is among the provinces with highest Child MPI value, the proportion of children who are poor and deprived in female schooling (95.7%) is highest amongst all indicators followed by school attendance (80.9%) and child nutrition and education (75.6%). In Urozgan, which has the highest poverty incidence as per the Child MPI, 95.1% of children are poor and deprived in female schooling while 85.9% of children are poor and deprived in the child nutrition and education indicator. Ghor, which had the third highest poverty incidence as per the Child MPI, also exhibits high censored headcount ratios in schooling for both female schooling (86.0%) and child nutrition and education (76.7%) indicators. Across all provinces, the proportion of children who are poor and deprived in the child nutrition and education indicator is higher than those deprived in the child development indicator.

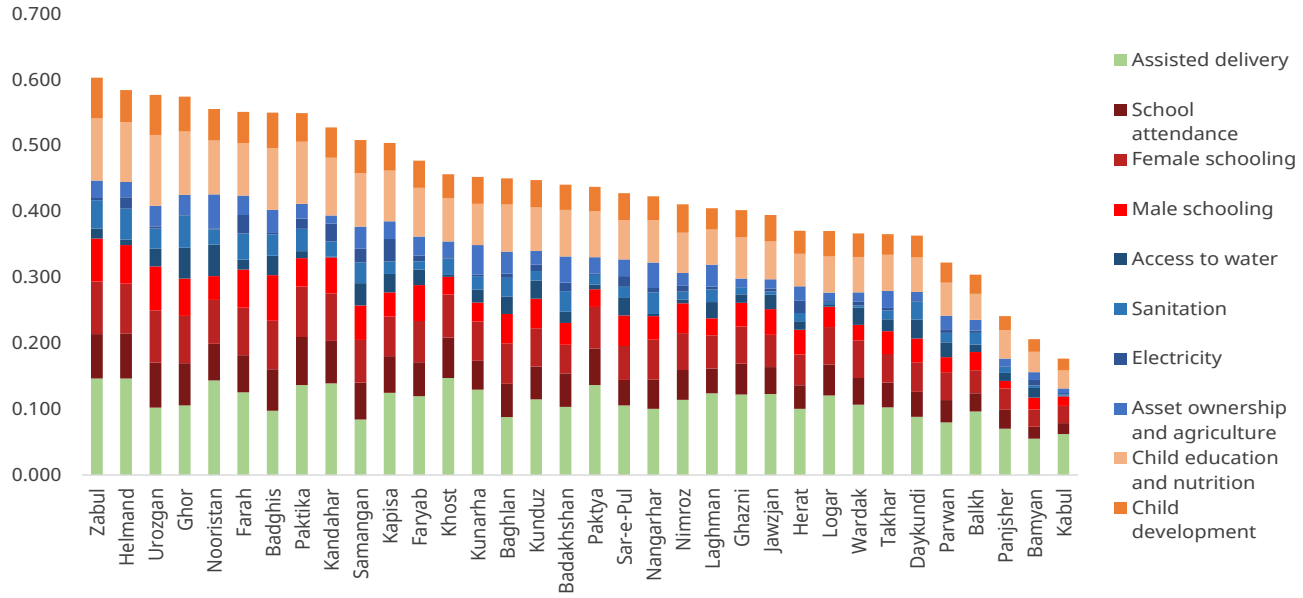
Table 21 Censored headcount ratios by provinces as per Child MPI (ordered by the Child MPI value), 2022-2023

Province	Assisted delivery	School attend-ance	Female school-ing	Male school-ing	Ac-cess to water	Sanita-tion	Elec-tricity	Asset owner-ship and agricul-ture	Child nutrition and edu-cation	Child develop-ment	Child MPI
Zabul	58.8%	80.9%	95.7%	78.3%	24.2%	69.0%	5.4%	42.2%	75.6%	49.6%	0.604
Helmand	58.8%	82.1%	90.8%	70.2%	13.5%	75.1%	27.7%	37.0%	72.8%	38.8%	0.585
Urozgan	41.1%	82.1%	95.1%	79.8%	43.5%	48.8%	4.8%	50.4%	85.9%	48.7%	0.577
Ghor	42.3%	77.2%	86.0%	67.9%	75.1%	78.8%	1.0%	49.1%	76.8%	42.7%	0.575
Nooristan	57.5%	66.9%	79.9%	43.2%	76.7%	37.0%	2.4%	82.8%	65.4%	38.2%	0.556
Farah	50.2%	67.9%	86.5%	69.7%	23.8%	63.9%	44.8%	47.1%	63.7%	37.9%	0.552
Badghis	39.1%	75.5%	88.6%	83.4%	46.9%	52.2%	3.5%	56.2%	74.7%	43.4%	0.551
Paktika	54.8%	87.3%	92.2%	51.7%	17.0%	54.0%	25.3%	35.5%	75.6%	34.8%	0.55
Kandahar	55.8%	77.3%	86.4%	65.5%	2.2%	37.1%	43.3%	19.6%	70.2%	36.7%	0.528
Samangan	33.8%	67.6%	77.7%	62.6%	54.4%	51.1%	32.7%	53.9%	65.1%	40.1%	0.509
Kapisa	50.0%	67.0%	72.0%	44.0%	45.2%	29.9%	55.0%	43.2%	61.5%	33.6%	0.505
Faryab	48.0%	61.7%	75.1%	65.3%	37.9%	20.1%	14.2%	45.8%	59.3%	33.0%	0.478
Khost	59.0%	73.9%	78.5%	32.1%	5.0%	40.2%	3.1%	38.3%	52.4%	29.1%	0.457
Kunarha	51.8%	52.9%	71.3%	34.5%	31.9%	32.8%	4.0%	71.2%	50.2%	32.5%	0.453
Baghlan	35.3%	60.4%	73.9%	53.5%	41.6%	46.3%	9.6%	53.6%	57.3%	32.2%	0.451
Kunduz	46.0%	59.6%	70.0%	54.0%	43.9%	22.9%	15.5%	33.4%	52.8%	33.5%	0.448
Bada-khshan	41.5%	61.0%	52.1%	39.7%	27.4%	49.9%	20.9%	63.7%	56.4%	30.6%	0.441
Paktya	54.8%	66.1%	76.0%	32.4%	11.7%	23.0%	3.1%	40.5%	55.7%	29.6%	0.438
Sar-e-pul	42.3%	46.6%	61.8%	55.8%	42.2%	27.1%	25.9%	40.4%	47.6%	33.1%	0.428
Nangarhar	40.3%	53.1%	73.0%	43.0%	5.4%	52.3%	10.9%	62.1%	51.4%	29.1%	0.424
Nimroz	45.8%	54.1%	67.5%	54.2%	9.6%	19.1%	14.9%	30.4%	49.0%	35.1%	0.412
Laghman	49.8%	44.9%	60.5%	31.1%	39.7%	30.6%	7.2%	52.6%	42.9%	25.9%	0.405
Ghazni	48.9%	56.3%	67.6%	43.5%	20.4%	17.3%	0.5%	20.6%	50.1%	33.0%	0.402
Jawzjan	49.2%	49.3%	58.5%	46.9%	34.7%	8.4%	7.2%	22.8%	46.0%	32.1%	0.395
Herat	40.2%	43.4%	56.0%	45.0%	20.5%	20.4%	30.1%	34.6%	39.5%	28.0%	0.371
Logar	48.3%	56.7%	68.0%	37.1%	4.4%	5.0%	4.3%	20.4%	44.0%	30.9%	0.371
Maidan wardak	42.8%	48.5%	68.7%	28.5%	42.0%	4.9%	10.3%	21.9%	42.9%	28.7%	0.367
Takhar	41.1%	45.0%	52.4%	41.3%	28.7%	21.6%	6.1%	41.6%	43.8%	25.3%	0.366
Daykundi	35.4%	45.8%	54.0%	43.2%	46.1%	44.3%	3.0%	20.0%	41.8%	26.9%	0.364
Parwan	31.9%	40.9%	50.7%	27.6%	35.8%	23.0%	9.2%	32.8%	40.1%	24.5%	0.323
Balkh	38.7%	33.1%	41.9%	33.2%	18.5%	27.8%	5.7%	26.1%	31.7%	23.4%	0.305
Panjsher	28.1%	34.7%	38.8%	13.9%	19.5%	15.1%	1.4%	18.4%	34.7%	16.9%	0.242
Bamyan	22.1%	21.9%	31.3%	21.7%	23.2%	6.3%	13.8%	18.4%	24.8%	15.3%	0.207
Kabul	25.0%	19.9%	31.2%	17.4%	2.6%	2.7%	2.7%	11.8%	21.7%	14.5%	0.177

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

We see that in every province, the child dimension contributes more than living standard deprivations, and sometimes more than health deprivations too. Deprivations in child education and nutrition are the highest in every province, signaling a strong priority to be given to nutrition and school attendance across the life cycle of childhood in every province.

Figure 26 Absolute contributions of each indicator to the Child MPI of Afghanistan (ordered by the Child MPI value) 2022-2023.



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

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Part 3

Policy Implications of the Adjusted MPI and Child MPI of Afghanistan based on MICS

VI. Policy implications from Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI

More than six out of every ten people (multidimensional poverty incidence of 62.3%) in Afghanistan experience multidimensional poverty as defined by the Adjusted MPI based on MICS. Therefore, millions of Afghans in 2023 experienced multidimensional poverty. The average intensity of poverty is 58.3%, indicating that each poor person is, on average, deprived in more than half of the eight weighted indicators of the Adjusted MPI. The Adjusted MPI value, which is the product of the incidence (H) and intensity (A), is 0.363. This indicates that multidimensionally poor people in Afghanistan experience 36.3% of the total deprivations that would be experienced if all people were deprived in all indicators.

Significant increase in multidimensional poverty in Afghanistan between 2020 and 2023 based on harmonized Adjusted MPI

From 2016-17 to 2020, Afghanistan's harmonized Adjusted MPI value declined from 0.301 to 0.270, and the poverty headcount ratio (H) decreased from 54.4% to 50.8%, with both reductions being statistically significant. However, the trends reversed between 2020 and 2023, with the harmonized Adjusted MPI value rising significantly from 0.270 to 0.363. Correspondingly, the poverty incidence increased by 9.3 percentage points, from 50.8% in 2020 to 62.3% in 2023. The intensity of poverty also worsened, rising from 53.1% in 2020 to 58.3% in 2023. The sharp rise in multidimensional poverty between 2020 and 2023 necessitates a holistic poverty reduction strategy that integrates immediate relief measures with sustainable long-term development across all eight indicators of the Adjusted MPI.

Children have a higher incidence of multidimensional poverty compared to adults

The Adjusted MPI value is higher among children (0.396) compared to adults (0.323), demonstrating that children endure greater deprivations across multiple dimensions. Notably, 66.9% of children are classified as multidimensionally poor – nearly three out of every five children. In contrast 56.8% of adults are poor, amounting to just over two out of every five poor adults. There was a significant increase in the incidence of multidimensional poverty among children from 2020 (55.4%) to 2023 (66.9%). These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions focused on improving the life conditions of children, particularly among rural areas.

From 2020 to 2023, there has been a significant increase in poverty across all figures: the harmonized Adjusted MPI, incidence of poverty, and intensity levels for both children and adults, as indicated in Table 13. Among children, the poverty incidence remained unchanged between 2016/17 and 2020; but increased significantly between 2020 and 2023. The persistence of multidimensional poverty among children suggests the need for long-term strategies to break the cycle of poverty. Policies should focus on sustainable development, ensuring that children have access to education and opportunities that enable them to escape poverty in the future.

Households where children have functional disability experience higher poverty and deprivations

The Adjusted MPI value is notably higher for households with children experiencing functional difficulties (0.488) than for those (0.350) without. 78.6% of households with children with disabilities are multidimensionally poor, in contrast to 60.7% of households without children with disabilities. Furthermore, the intensity of poverty is significantly more severe in households with children who have functional challenges. These results emphasize the need for targeted social protection programs specifically designed for households with children facing functional difficulties.

The incidence of multidimensional poverty is higher in rural areas

70.8% of the rural population in Afghanistan is multidimensionally poor, a significantly higher percentage compared to 37.4% of urban population. Six out of every seven poor people (84.7%) reside in rural areas, with the remaining population in urban areas. This calls for targeted rural development programs to alleviate multidimensional poverty, by prioritizing the enhancement of access to education, health services, sanitation and livelihood opportunities.

Helmand, Herat, Nangahar, Kandahar, Kabul and Faryab house the highest number of poor

Among the provinces with poverty rates exceeding 70.0%, Helmand and Kandahar are notable due to their large populations, placing them among the top four provinces with the highest number of impoverished individuals. Helmand not only has one of the highest poverty rates but also exhibits the highest average level of deprivation among its poor population. In Kabul, the incidence of poverty is relatively low at 27.2%. However, due to its high population density (12.9% of the national population), the absolute number of poor individuals is substantial, positioning it among the five provinces with the highest number of poor residents. Herat ranks second in terms of the number of poor individuals, being home to 7.3% of all poor people. Nangarhar follows with over 6.8% of poor people. To effectively reduce multidimensional poverty in these provinces, resources and social protection programs will need to be directed to these provinces with high poverty rates and large populations of poor people.

Multidimensional poverty mostly driven by education and health dimensions

Censored headcount ratios for the health and education dimensions are among the highest. 40.3% of Afghans live in a household that is poor and where at least one woman lacked sufficient ante-natal care or support at the birth in childbirth. The proportion of Afghans who are poor and deprived in assisted delivery increased from 27.4% to 40.3% from 2020 to 2023, reflecting reduced access to maternal healthcare from 2020 to 2023. To improve assisted delivery rates, it is crucial to increase access to maternal health services by establishing more maternal health clinics, particularly in rural and underserved areas, and by training and deploying more midwives and birth attendants. Addressing financial barriers in accessing health especially for for pregnant women can also make a significant difference. Additionally, conducting community-based education programs on the importance of assisted delivery and utilizing local media to spread awareness about maternal health services can help.

Another pivotal area is education, which has worsened in the past period (2020 to 2023). Afghanistan's Adjusted MPI based on MICS focuses on the most basic aim which is providing primary school access to all children and adults. 43.5% of Afghans live in a household where at least one school-aged child (aged 7-13) is not attending primary school. In 2023, 39.4% of Afghans live in a household where no male has completed primary school, and 52.8% live in a household where no female has done so. This highlights the critical importance of adult literacy and numeracy, vocational training, and lifelong learning as pivotal and cross-cutting investments that could rapidly impact society and worker productivity.

The proportion of people who are poor and deprived in school attendance rose from 35.7% to 43.5% between 2020 and 2023. Female schooling deprivation escalated from 44.9% to 52.8%, highlighting a growing gender disparity in education. Deprivation in education indicators worsened in rural areas. The proportion of those who are poor and deprived in school attendance rose by 11.9 percentage points in rural areas and 4.4 percentage points in urban areas, while female schooling deprivations increased by 11.7 percentage points in rural areas and 6.3 percentage points in urban areas. Reopening secondary and tertiary education for girls is crucial, as the current restrictions represent a significant barrier to their progress. Working with community leaders to address cultural barriers and promoting role models and success stories of educated women and men can further support this goal. Improving school attendance requires enhancing school infrastructure by building more schools in remote areas and ensuring existing schools are safe, accessible, and well-equipped with necessary learning materials. Offering scholarships, stipends, or financial assistance to low-income families and providing free school meals can incentivize attendance. Engaging local communities in promoting the value of education and implementing after-school programs to support students and keep them engaged are also effective strategies.

VII. Policy implications from Child MPI

High incidence of multidimensional poverty among children

The high headcount ratio of 77.6% indicates that a vast majority of children in Afghanistan – over three-quarters – are experiencing multidimensional poverty, being deprived in at least 25% of the weighted indicators. The fact that poverty incidence among children exceeds 50% in 32 out of Afghanistan's 34 provinces highlights a widespread and entrenched problem. There is an urgent need for child-specific policies that address these deprivations. This might involve increasing cash transfers, school feeding programs, and healthcare subsidies to alleviate the immediate impacts of poverty.

Child MPI driven by deprivations in education dimension

The findings show that the proportion of children who are poor and deprived is highest in female schooling (65.8%) and school attendance (54.9%) under the education dimension, followed by child education and nutrition (51.0%) under the child dimension. The deprivations in child education and nutrition calls for the expansion of early childhood education programs, as well as school feeding and nutrition initiatives. Although primary schooling for girls is permitted so many girls as well as boys still remain out of primary school. Integrating hot meal services into schools can help address both educational and nutritional deficiencies.

The Child MPI overall can be used to raise awareness about the severity of child poverty in Afghanistan. Advocacy efforts can push for policy changes and increased investment in child-focused development programs. Engaging stakeholders at all levels, including government, civil society, and international organizations, can help drive collective action.

VIII. Conclusion

This report offers a comprehensive analysis of multidimensional poverty, utilizing the Adjusted MPI and Child MPI based on MICS 2022-23 data. The findings reveal that 62.3% of the population is multidimensionally poor according to the Adjusted MPI, with significant variations across different areas and provinces. The Adjusted MPI provides essential statistics to identify where interventions are needed, allocate resources effectively, design multisectoral policies, and coordinate efforts to combat poverty. The Child MPI, with a similar focus on child poverty, complements this data. Since the data was collected post-pandemic, it also sheds light on the pandemic's impact on the poor. Moving forward, both the Adjusted MPI and Child MPI will serve as vital tools for monitoring poverty trends, as any reduction in deprivation among the poor will directly lead to a decline in the MPI.

Appendices

Appendix A1: Missing values and sample drop details for the Adjusted MPI

Province	Sample drop	Sample retained	Total
Kabul	9	6,244	6,253
Kapisa	11	5,378	5,389
Parwan	24	6,148	6,172
Maidan wardak	0	6,080	6,080
Logar	0	6,666	6,666
Nangarhar	0	7,037	7,037
Laghman	0	5,995	5,995
Panjsher	0	5,347	5,347
Baghlan	9	4,573	4,582
Bamyan	0	5,169	5,169
Ghazni	5	5,350	5,355
Paktika	0	6,801	6,801
Paktya	9	7,778	7,787
Khost	0	8,136	8,136
Kunarha	59	6,159	6,218
Nooristan	0	6,490	6,490
Badakhshan	8	5,039	5,047
Takhar	8	4,874	4,882
Kunduz	11	5,347	5,358
Samangan	0	5,120	5,120
Balkh	4	4,451	4,455
Sar-e-pul	8	5,265	5,273
Ghor	0	5,464	5,464
Daykundi	0	4,483	4,483
Urozgan	19	5,793	5,812
Zabul	11	6,604	6,615
Kandahar	57	7,734	7,791
Jawzjan	0	6,339	6,339
Faryab	0	5,019	5,019
Helmand	0	6,845	6,845
Badghis	11	4,752	4,763
Herat	7	5,815	5,822
Farah	7	5,244	5,251
Nimroz	3	5,535	5,538
Afghanistan	**280**	**199,074**	**199,354**

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Appendix A2: Missing values and sample drop details for Child MPI

Province	Sample drop	Sample retained	Total
Kabul	80	2,912	2,992
Kapisa	22	2,773	2,795
Parwan	29	3,103	3,132
Maidan wardak	24	3,259	3,283
Logar	32	3,606	3,638
Nangarhar	22	3,872	3,894
Laghman	12	3,371	3,383
Panjsher	23	2,530	2,553
Baghlan	34	2,519	2,553
Bamyan	10	2,551	2,561
Ghazni	27	2,913	2,940
Paktika	74	3,757	3,831
Paktya	54	3,930	3,984
Khost	84	4,569	4,653
Kunarha	75	3,457	3,532
Nooristan	32	3,624	3,656
Badakhshan	55	2,752	2,807
Takhar	24	2,705	2,729
Kunduz	50	2,944	2,994
Samangan	26	2,621	2,647
Balkh	27	2,260	2,287
Sar-e-pul	27	2,811	2,838
Ghor	55	2,950	3,005
Daykundi	17	2,367	2,384
Urozgan	65	3,106	3,171
Zabul	92	3,762	3,854
Kandahar	58	4,461	4,519
Jawzjan	25	3,292	3,317
Faryab	24	2,907	2,931
Helmand	90	3,991	4,081
Badghis	33	2,795	2,828
Herat	63	3,006	3,069
Farah	42	2,946	2,988
Nimroz	79	3,104	3,183
Afghanistan	**1,486**	**107,526**	**109,012**

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Appendix B: Harmonization principles and decisions

Dimensions of Adjusted MPI based on MICS	Indicators	Household is deprived if...	Comments
Health	Assisted delivery	Any woman who was pregnant in the last 2 years preceding the interview received less than 4 antenatal care visits OR the delivery did not take place at a health facility OR was not attended by a doctor or a nurse	The reference period of 2 years was used in the MICS whereas for the ALCS 2016-17 and IE&LFS 2020 the questions were asked for the last four years. Based on the date of survey and the last birth of the child, we filtered those women who have given birth in the last two years and harmonized the indicator.
Education	School attendance	At least one child aged 7-13 is not attending school or never did	The indicator was comparable across all three data sets.
	Female schooling	No female aged 10+ has completed primary schooling (grade 6 or above)	The indicator was comparable across all three data sets.
	Male schooling	No male aged 10+ has completed primary schooling (grade 6 or above)	The indicator was comparable across all three data sets.
Living standards	Access to water	They lack access to improved water sources (deprived if water source is unprotected, surface water or unspecified)	The indicators were comparable across all three data sets, except for 'package water', which was only present in the MICS and was categorized as non-deprived.
	Sanitation	They lack access to improved sanitation facilities (deprived if pit latrine without slab/open pit, or no facility or other).	The indicator was comparable across all three data sets.
	Electricity	There is no electricity from any source	In the MICS, the question about access to electricity does not include any reference period. In ALCS 2016-17 and IE&LFS 2020, however, a reference period of the last month was used.
	Asset ownership and agriculture	They own less than 3 assets (refrigerator, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, gas cylinder, iron, television, mobile, satellite dish, bicycle and motorbike including agricultural items (land and livestock).	The indicator was comparable across all three data sets.

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from ALCS 2016-17, IE&LFS 2020 and MICS 2023.

Appendix C: Robustness analysis

Robustness analysis is carried out for both the Adjusted MPI and the Child MPI to ensure that the MPI results are not sensitive to the k cut-off and to examine to what extent the results are convergent in terms of the MPI. Considering the standard errors, pairwise comparisons of the provincial rankings were compared with alternative specifications. For instance, if province A is significantly poorer than province B by the k cut-off of 33% and it holds true for other alternative specifications, then pairwise comparison between these two provinces is robust. For the national Adjusted MPI we used three poverty cut-offs, 20%, 33% and 40%, and observed that more than 95% of province - level significant orderings are identical taking the k cut-off of 33% as the baseline specification. For the child MPI, pairwise comparisons of three specifications of k cut-offs (17%, 25% and 33%) were compared. Considering the k cut-off of 25% as the baseline specification, 96.9% of the statistically significant orderings were identical across the three specifications.

Table C1. Pairwise comparisons (PWC) of AMPI using k cut-offs of 25%, 33% and 40%

Number of provinces	Possible comparisons	PWC consistent across all specifications	PWC significant by the k cut-off of 33% and consistent across all specifications
34	561	517/561= 92.2%	314/330=95.2%

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Table C2. Pairwise comparisons (PWC) of Child MPI using k cut-offs of 17%, 25% and 40%

Number of provinces	Possible comparisons	PWC consistent across all specifications	PWC significant by the k cut-off of 25% and consistent across all specifications
34	561	535/561= 95.4%	339/350=96.9%

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

The pairwise comparisons for both AMPI and Child MPI for Afghanistan show that considering the standard errors the provincial rankings are robust.

Appendix D: Redundancy analysis

We carried out the Redundancy analyses between the MPI indicators for both the Adjusted MPI and Child MPI. The measure of redundancy, R0, provides the association of deprivations for two indicators at a time. The R0 is the proportion of people deprived in both indicators, as a percentage of those deprived in the indicator having the lower uncensored headcount ratio. We present the results for R0 below for Adjusted MPI and Child MPI.

Redundancy test results for Adjusted MPI indicators

	Assisted delivery	Female schooling	Male schooling	School attendance	Access to water	Sanitation	Electricity	Asset ownership and agriculture
Assisted delivery	.							
Female schooling	0.614	.						
Male schooling	0.788	0.841	.					
School attendance	0.524	0.687	0.886	.				
Access to water	0.437	0.614	0.782	0.581	.			
Sanitation	0.475	0.688	0.862	0.631	0.483	.		
Electricity	0.5	0.696	0.870	0.686	0.341	0.564	.	
Asset ownership and agriculture	0.428	0.622	0.835	0.62	0.51	0.541	0.607	.
Uncensored Head count ratio	**40.3%**	**53.7%**	**69.0%**	**46.1%**	**25.6%**	**34.3%**	**14.7%**	**37.8%**

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

Redundancy test results for Child MPI indicators

	Assisted delivery	School attendance	Female schooling	Male schooling	Access to water	Sanitation	Electricity	Asset ownership and agriculture	Child nutrition and education	Child Development
Assisted delivery	.									
School attendance	0.656	.								
Female schooling	0.809	0.855	.							
Male schooling	0.548	0.734	0.892	.						
Access to water	0.464	0.672	0.803	0.605	.					
Sanitation	0.498	0.739	0.874	0.650	0.491	.				
Electricity	0.524	0.753	0.884	0.704	0.340	0.57	.			
Asset ownership and agriculture	0.452	0.673	0.847	0.637	0.53	0.553	0.622	.		
Child nutrition and education	0.573	0.795	0.879	0.686	0.618	0.677	0.699	0.634	.	
Child development	0.513	0.621	0.849	0.677	0.369	0.427	0.394	0.476	0.554	.
Uncensored Headcount ratio	**43.4%**	**59.8%**	**72.7%**	**49.6%**	**26.2%**	**36.2%**	**15.4%**	**40.3%**	**53.2%**	**32.3%**

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from MICS 2022-23.

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