

In recent years, the conceptualization of poverty has undergone an important conceptual and methodological transformation, as it is a phenomenon that affects people in multiple ways and transcends mere insufficiency of economic resources. Despite this, there has been no similar development in the conceptualization and measurement of poverty from a human rights perspective.

Principles of rights



This paper proposes a conceptual framework for the measurement of poverty gaps with a rights-based approach and adapts the Alkire-Foster methodology for multidimensional poverty measurement in a way that is compatible with human rights principles. The essential feature of the rights-based approach is that people are rights holders who, if they are unable to exercise their rights, can claim them and demand their fulfillment from State institutions.

Measuring poverty under a rights-based approach

To explore the feasibility of implementing the methodology in Latin America, the cases of El Salvador, Mexico, Panama and the Dominican Republic were studied.

Eight rights were identified whose violation constitutes poverty:



In the four countries under study, there was a high level of non-compliance with at least one of the rights; this is, the empirical manifestation of at least one of the dimensions of poverty.

Adjusted headcount ratio¹

The adjusted headcount ratio indicates the path that a given society must take to completely eradicate poverty. It is expressed as the quotient of the total number of deprivations experienced by people in multidimensional poverty divided by the number of deprivations that could be experienced in the study population in the extreme case that all people were poor and suffered all the deprivations included in the measurement.



In order to advance in the development of poverty measurements with a rights-based approach, the study recommends:

- 1 Deepen research on the conceptualization and operationalization of the components of rights: availability, accessibility and quality.
- 2 Strengthen social information systems with a rights-based approach.
- 3 Ensure the participation of the population living in poverty.
- 4 Strengthen institutional mechanisms for the respect, protection and guarantee of human rights.

¹: It was concluded that the four countries have the necessary technical capacity to carry out the methodology. However, due to the limited information currently available, the measurement of poverty with a rights-based approach bears certain restrictions.