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Why National Poverty Estimates Need to Consider Child Poverty as Distinct Issue

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Dr Shailen Nandy

Email: NandyS1@Cardiff.ac.uk

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shaping society

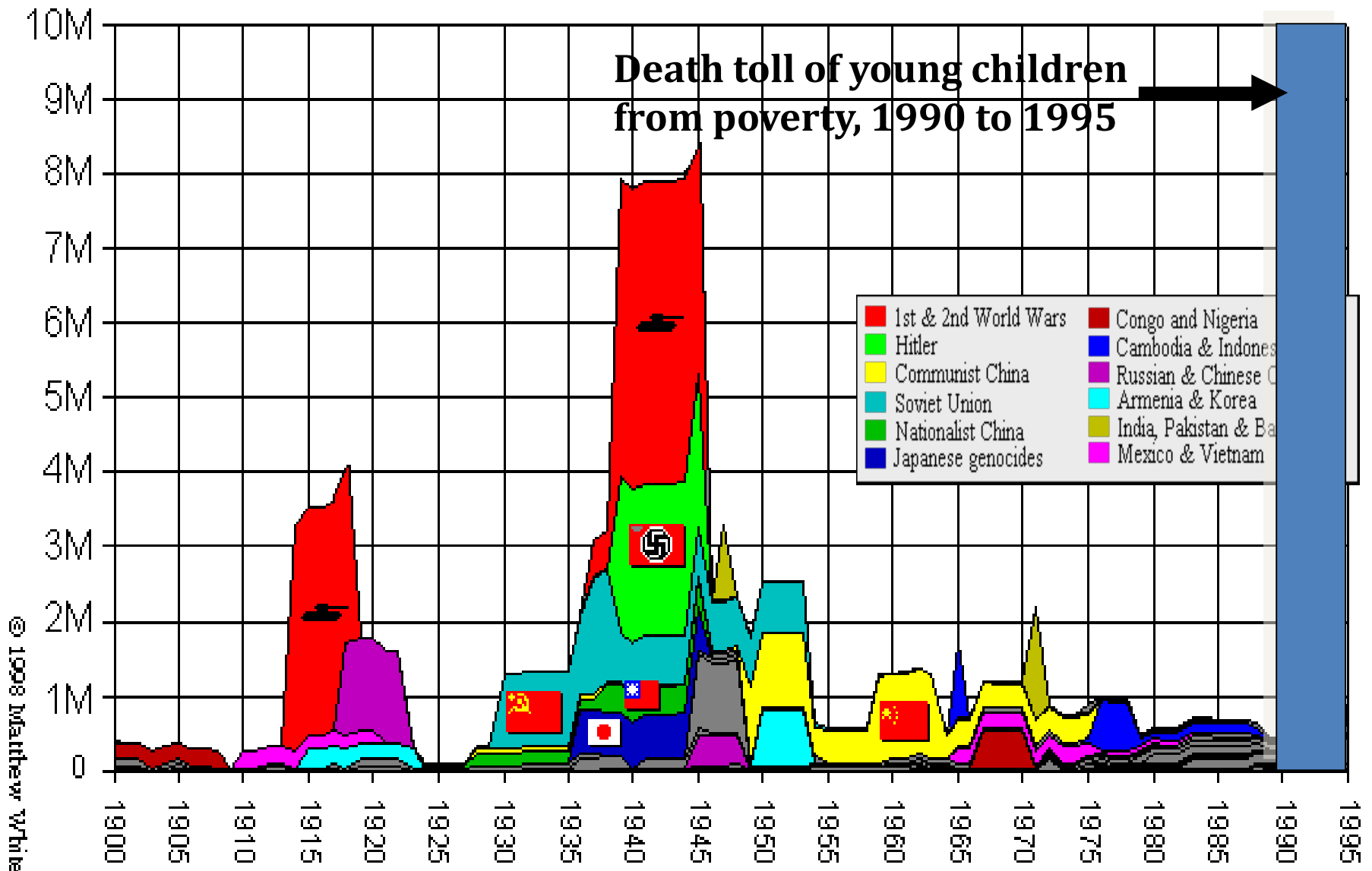
 **GCRF**
Global Challenges Research Fund

Why is child poverty important in its own right?

- International agreements/commitments (UNCRC, MDGS,SDGs)
- Immediate serious and *long term impacts on survival, health and development*
- *Vulnerability* of children and *dependence* on adults
- Conventional *routes out of poverty* available to adults (e.g. paid employment) are often not (legitimately) open to children
- Children account for a large share of the population and of the total poor, thus *to tackle societal poverty requires tackling causes/drivers of child poverty*
- Impact of macro-economic policies on children – what is ‘good’ for the economy might be bad for children (e.g. cutting funding to public services)

Death Toll of 20th Century Atrocities

<http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/war-1900.htm>

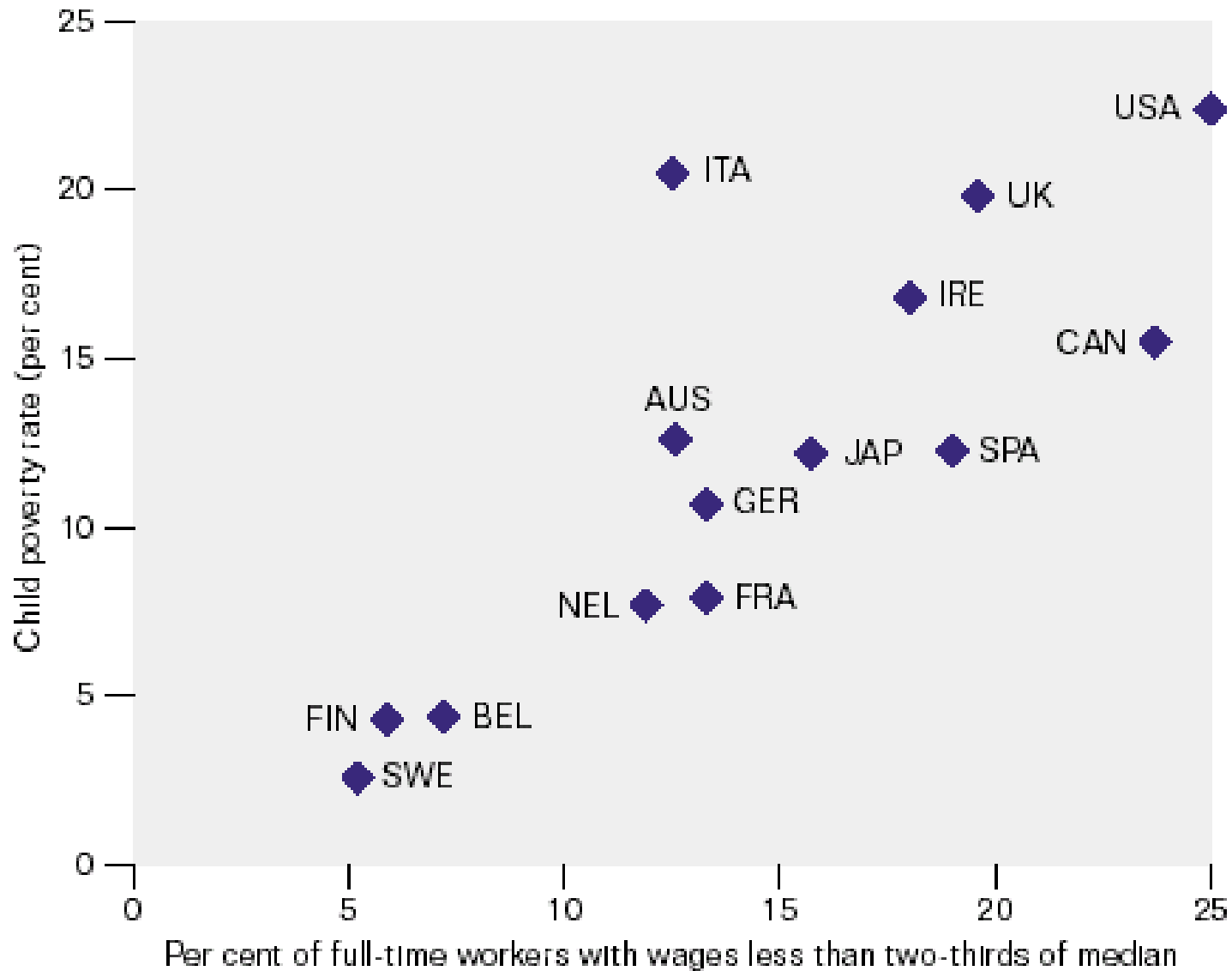


**UN General Assembly Definition of Child Poverty,
December 2006**

“Children living in poverty are deprived of nutrition, water and sanitation facilities, access to basic health-care services, shelter, education, participation and protection, and that while a severe lack of goods and services hurts every human being, it is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential and to participate as full members of the society”

The Role and Importance of Social and Economic Policy

Drivers of Poverty: Low Wages



Drivers of Poverty: low social expenditure on families and children

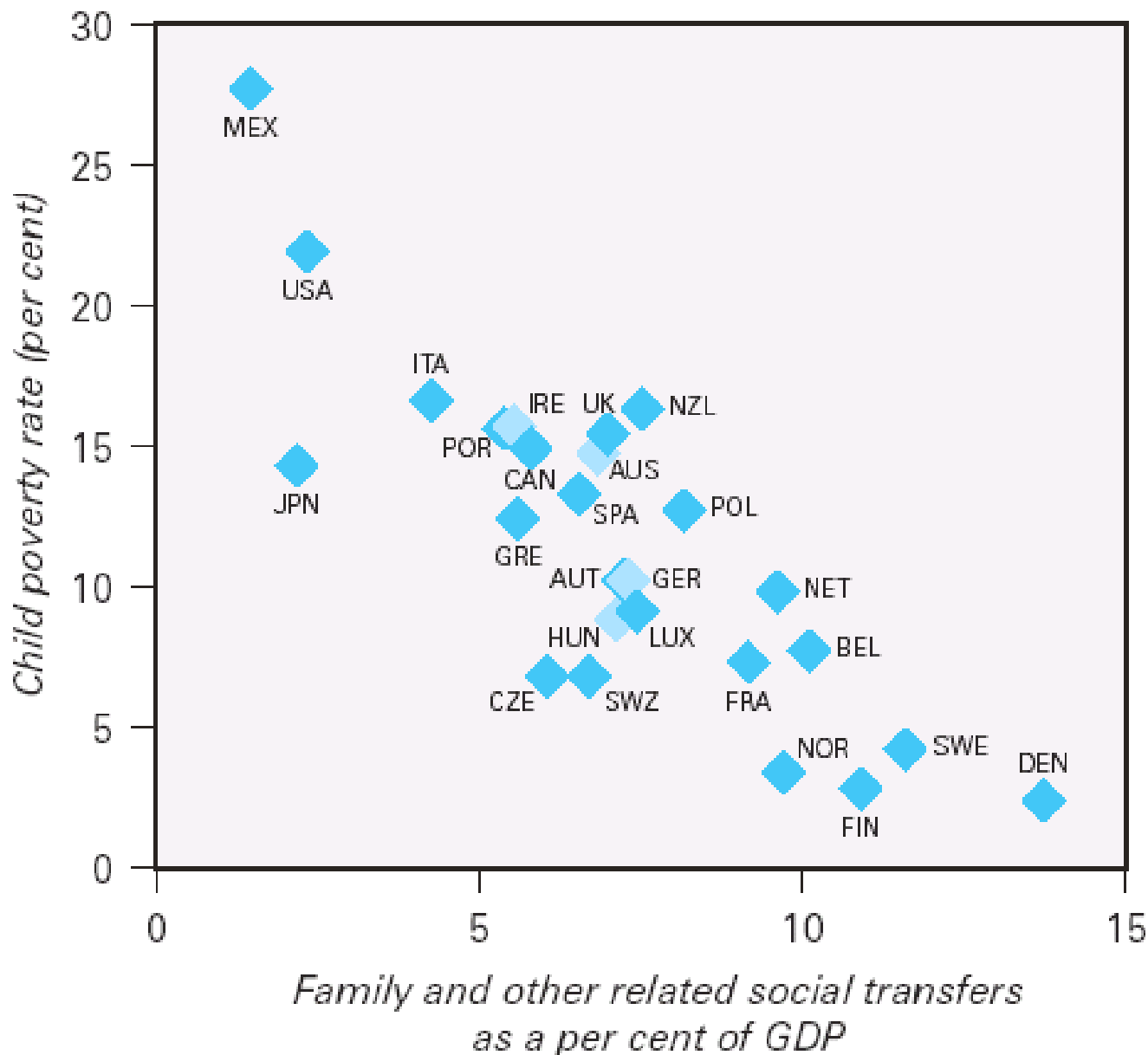
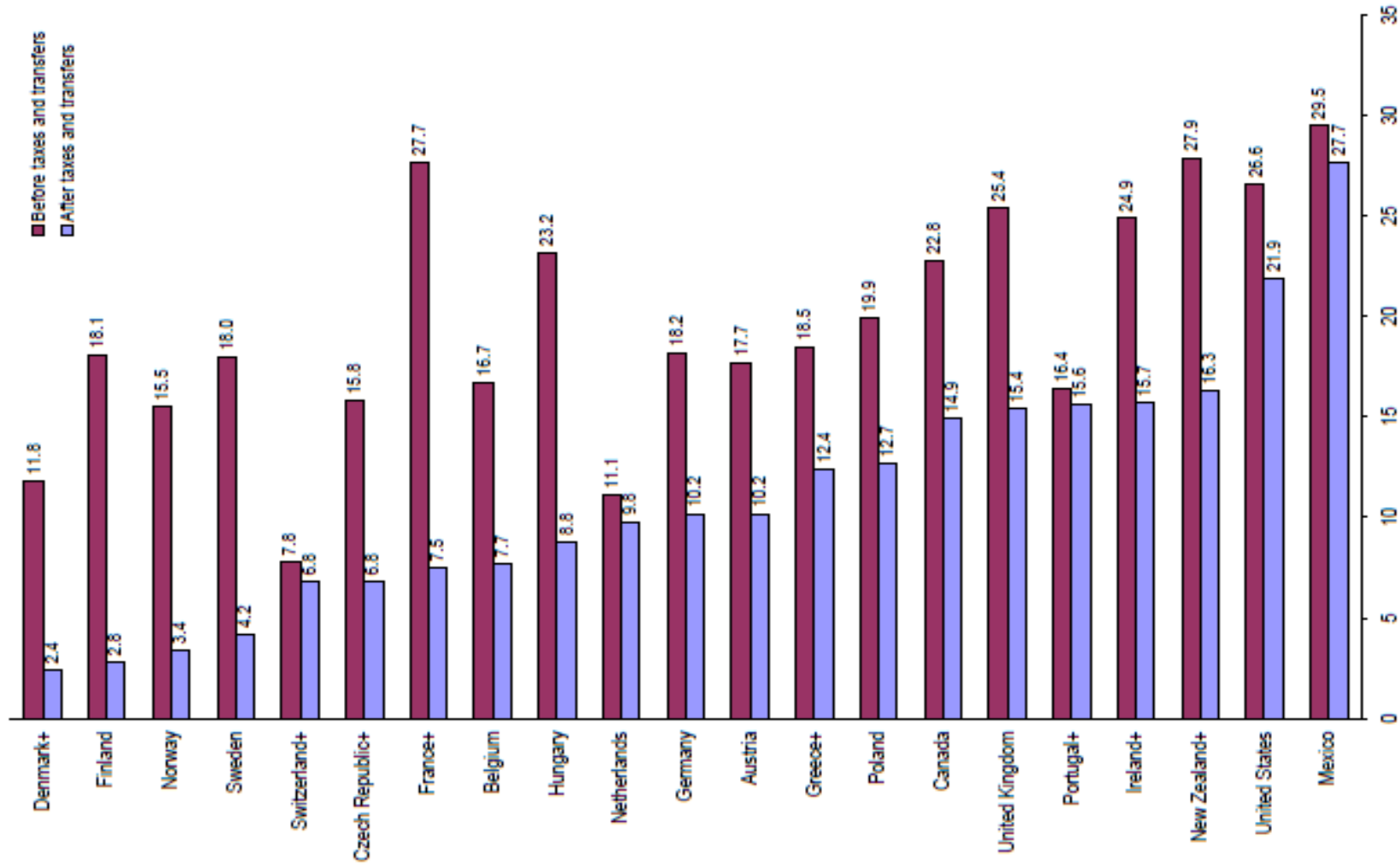


Figure 7: Child low income rates in the OECD based on market sources and disposable income: late 1990s and early 2000s



Policies to tackle child poverty (UK example)

Making work pay

- Welfare to work programs (New Deal)
- Making work pay policies:
 - National minimum wage
 - Working Families Tax Credit
 - Reduced payroll taxes for low-income workers

Raising incomes for families with children

- Real increases in:
 - Child Benefit
 - Welfare grants for children under 10
 - New Child Tax Credit for low-income families
 - New Child Trust Funds

Investing in children

- Paid maternity leave extended to 9 months
- Two weeks paid paternity leave
- Higher maternity grants for low-income families
- Right to request flexible hours
- Universal preschool for 3- and 4-year olds
- Preschool for disadvantaged 2-year olds
- Children's Centres for poorest areas
- Literacy and numeracy hours
- Increased education spending (from 4.5% to 5.6% GDP)
- Educational Maintenance Allowances

Results

~1% national income spent on policies for children and families

Anti-poverty initiatives amounted to a large increase in spending on children.

By 2002-03, UK government spending an **additional £9billion/yr** [0.9% of GDP].

Families with children gained £1,200/yr in real terms; *families in bottom 20% gained twice as much.*

By April 2010, families with children were £2,000/yr better off; families in bottom 20% were £4,500/yr better off.

The Effect of Policy

In 1999, 3.4 million children (1 in 4) were in poverty and 2.6 million (1 in 5) were materially deprived.

By 2007/08, absolute poverty fell by 1.7 million – a 50% reduction

Relative poverty fell by 500,000 – a 15% reduction

Material deprivation fell by 400,000 – a 15% reduction.

Absolute poverty is income <60% median income in 1998/99, uprated only for inflation;

Relative poverty is income <60% contemporary median income.

Material deprivation combines an index of lacking basic necessities & having low income.

Global Child Poverty

In 2000

- over one billion children – **half** the children in the world - experienced severe deprivation of basic human need
- **30%** (650 million) were living in absolute poverty (two or more severe deprivations).

In 2010

- over one billion children – **almost half (48%)** of **all** children in the world – experienced severe deprivation of basic human need
- **28%** (615 million) were living in absolute poverty (two or more severe deprivations).

Severe Deprivation of Basic Human Need for Children in 2010

(Items in **Bold** have improved since 2000)

- Almost a third of the world's children live in dwellings with more than five people per room or which have a mud floor.
- Over half a billion children (25%) have no toilet facilities.
- Seventeen percent of children under five years are severely malnourished, almost half of whom are in South Asia.
- **Over 230 million children (11%) are using unsafe (open) water sources or have more than a 30-minute round trip to walk to collect water.**
- **About one child in ten, aged 3 to 18, lacks access to radio, television, telephone or newspapers at home.**
- **80 million children (9%) have not been immunised against any diseases or have had a recent illness causing diarrhoea and have not received any medical advice or treatment.**
- **One child in fifteen aged between 7 and 18 (over 87 million) are severely educationally deprived - they have never been to school.**

Shelter]
Sanitation] **Physical Capital Items**
Water]

Information

Food]
Health] **Human Capital Items**
Education]

It is deprivations of 'physical capital' items (shelter, water and sanitation) which affect the greatest number of children.

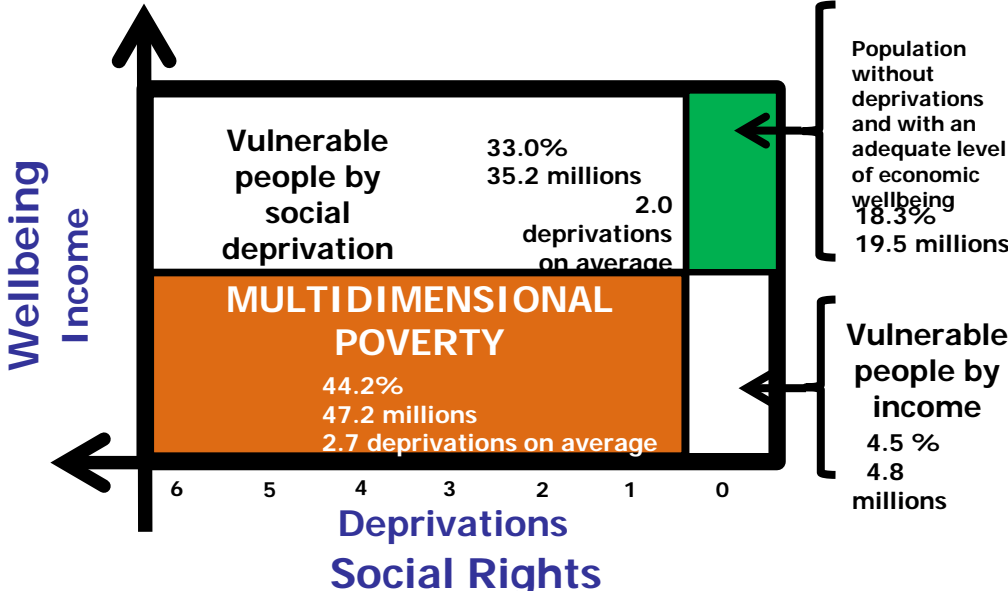
Whilst fewer children suffer from deprivations of 'human capital' items, (health, education and nutrition), most of the world's anti-poverty policies are aimed at improving that human capital, particularly in urban areas.

Policy Recommendation: maintain investment in human capital, increase attention on physical capital items, and bring attention to deprivation in rural areas.

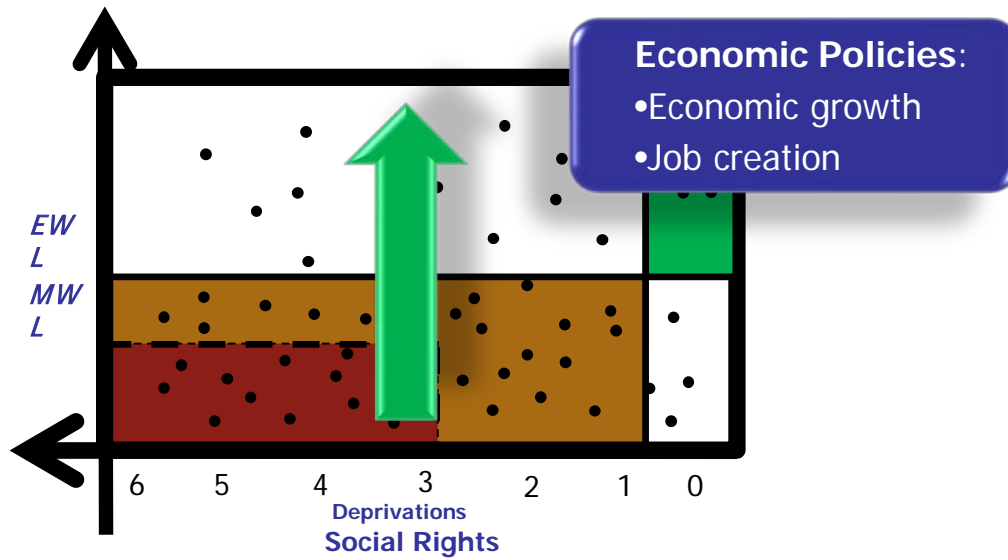
THE MEXICO EXAMPLE

Mexico Poverty Measurement

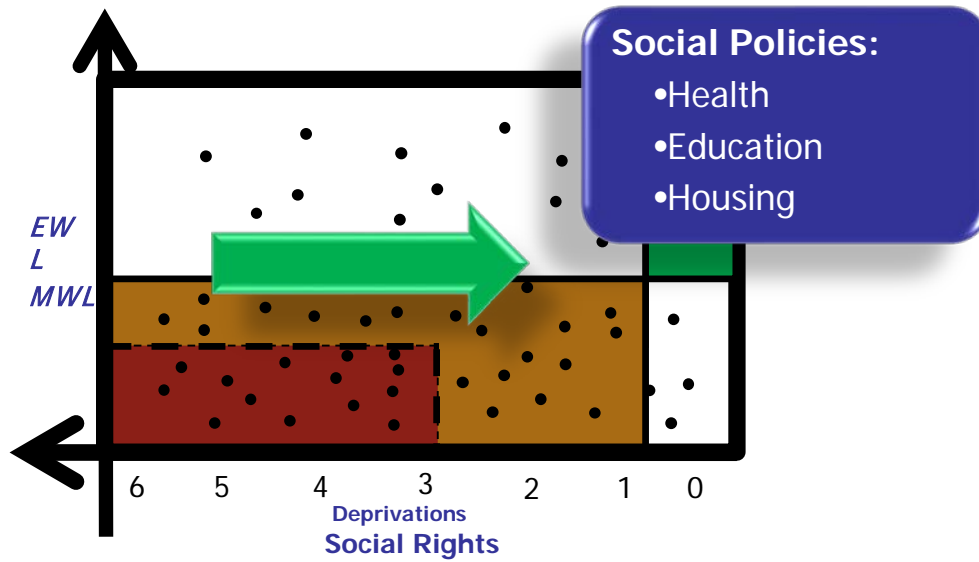
Total population 2008 (106,680,526)



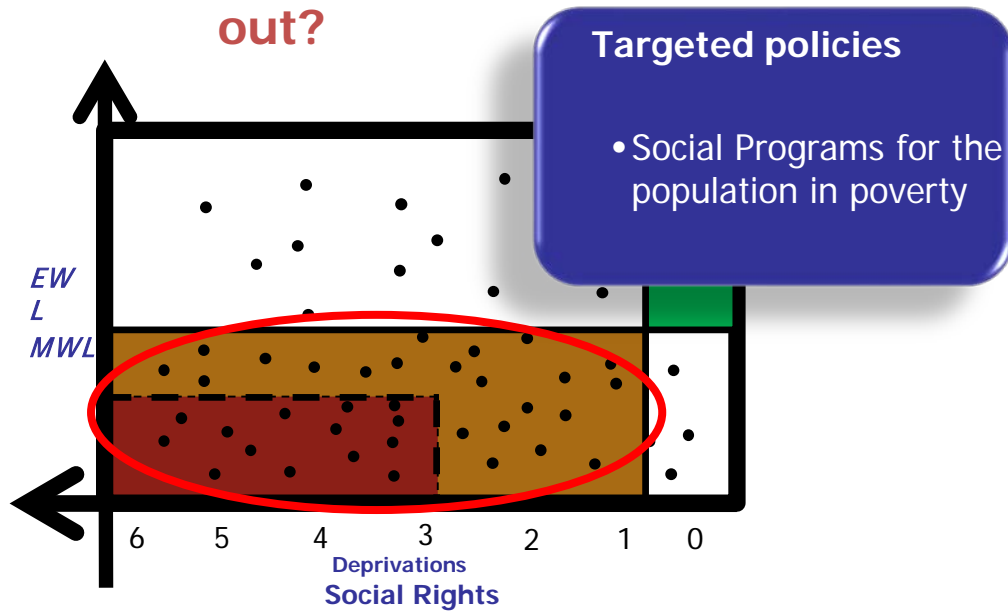
What policies should be carried out?



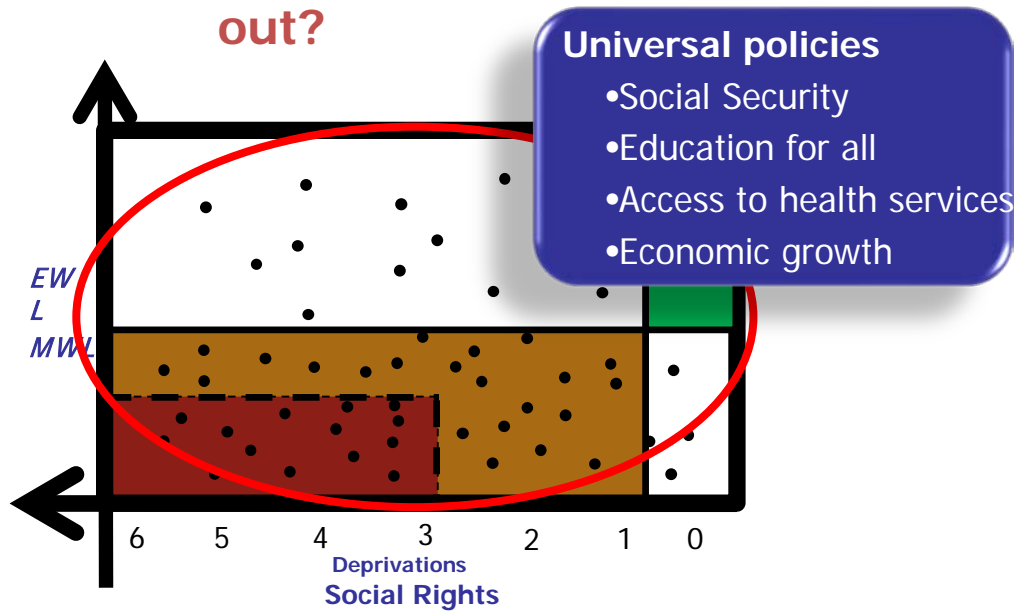
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What policies should be carried out?



- Poverty, and child poverty in particular, is not an act of God – it is a matter of policy
- Objective, reliable measures of poverty can be used to inform policy makers about the needs of children and their families
- Tonga's Statistics Office is collecting data to develop more effective anti-policies, relating to the needs of children and adults, based on national and democratic definitions and measures of poverty

First National Poverty Conference in Tonga, November 2016

“If the misery of the poor be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin.”

Charles Darwin

Since then

- Tonga is shaping the way poverty is being assessed and addressed across the Pacific
- South-south collaboration with Uganda BOS
- Training and capacity development network with the UK, SPC and UNICEF South Pacific