USER GUIDE TO GRID: CHILD INEQUALITY TRACKER

Save the Children
GRID shines a light on children being left behind in health, education, protection and other child rights indicators in over 100 low- and middle income countries. This tool monitors progress in reducing group-based inequalities and shows where action is needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

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THE PLEDGE TO

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Last year, two-year-old Umelma received her measles/rubella vaccination as part of a Save the Children vaccination campaign in Wajir county, Kenya. Unfortunately, what should be a routine process is often not in the Northeast of Kenya as GRID shows. Only 4 out of 10 children were vaccinated with basic vaccines in Wajir, significantly less than the national average of more than 7 in 10.

Data on inequalities like these is extremely important for increasing accountability to children like Umelma, ensuring that they are granted the same chances in life as children living in more privileged areas. However, this requires granular data on children’s outcomes being publicly and easily available for everyone to use.

Measuring Progress towards Sustainable Development

In 2015, world leaders from 193 countries came together to set out the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – a blueprint to create a more prosperous, sustainable and inclusive world. This landmark agreement, of which the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form the backbone, is supported by a data framework to track and report on progress and gaps. Perhaps the most important principle underpinning the SDGs is the pledge to Leave No One Behind, and to reach the furthest behind first. This principle is a commitment by world leaders to reduce inequality and tackle discrimination. It is a recognition that a child living in Wajir, for example, counts as much as a child living in Nairobi, London or New York.

To breathe life into this principle, data needs to reflect the different conditions which different groups of children are facing. For those of us who are tracking progress on the SDGs, it means understanding who and crucially, why, certain groups are falling behind or being excluded from broader development gains. This is essential for policy makers to make better decisions and to address specific vulnerabilities facing the most deprived and marginalised children. And it allows civil society organisations and citizens to hold governments and other actors to account for their commitments and policy decisions.

What does this mean in practice? In effect, monitoring inequalities requires disaggregated data, which means indicators on health, education, child protection and other areas need to go beyond national averages and reveal group-based inequalities (for instance by gender, socio-economic status, geographic location, ethnicity or other characteristics). There is increasing consensus that addressing group-based inequalities, also referred to as horizontal inequalities, is critical to peace, stability and sustainable development. Global and national level statistics can be helpful in showing aggregate progress, but they mask persistent, underlying inequalities and much slower rates of improvement for the hardest to reach or most marginalised populations. In different contexts and for different thematic areas, the disaggregation dimensions may look slightly different, but in almost all circumstances a national estimate alone won’t tell us what we need to know.

It is only when children like Umelma and her peers are counted and visible to policy makers through data that we will meet the SDGs and our promise to Leave No One Behind. This is the reason why we have created GRID, Save the Children’s Child Inequality Tracker.
GRID, Save the Children’s Child Inequality Tracker, helps to identify groups being left behind, monitor their progress, and build public and political understanding about the importance of reaching them. The GRID tools show inequalities in selected children’s wellbeing indicators across health, education and child protection, including more than 400 household surveys for more than 100 mostly low- and middle-income countries. All data presented is free and publicly available in our online tools (www.childinequality.org or savethechildren.net/grid), providing a visual and interactive representation of the inequalities that persist between different groups of children across key SDG and child rights indicators.

The SDGs identify 169 ‘targets’ to be achieved by 2030, creating an unprecedented demand for disaggregated data. GRID helps us to amplify the crucial role that data plays in the 2030 Agenda set out by SDGs, and in particular by the pledge to leave no one behind. It supports us to focus policies and drive governments and other actors to make better decisions. And it is needed to measure progress towards targets and to hold governments accountable to their commitments on the SDGs.

**How can GRID help you?**

**Identify which children are left behind:** The different tools help identify which children are most deprived and marginalized at a global, regional, country, and subnational level. This information can help inform programming, policy and advocacy work. For example, you can use GRID to provide the data you need for programme proposals, country-level strategies, or impact evaluations.

**Make your own graphs to highlight inequalities:** Anyone can create their own graphs and download them for presentations, policy briefs, or reports. The online tools provide a wide range of different perspectives and views, including subnational maps.

**Access data from over 400 surveys with a one-stop shop:** Behind GRID is a powerful database of more than 400 surveys and 80 child-relevant indicators that can be a useful basis for a wide range of different research pieces as well as internal and external reporting purposes, for instance for reports to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child or SDG Voluntary National Reviews.

**Make the case for more disaggregated data:** We are relying on evidence from GRID when advocating globally for the collection, processing and reporting of more disaggregated data to close existing gaps.

**How is GRID different from other tools?**

Our focus on children and inequality distinguishes GRID clearly from a fast-growing number of data visualisation tools. GRID draws on multiple data sets from the UN and other multilateral organisations, compiling disaggregated data across Save the Children’s core objectives to ensure that all children Survive, Learn and are Protected. But, unlike many data sources, our Child Inequality Tracker goes beyond just presenting the data available for children by adding additional levels of analysis. For instance, GRID analyses data to offer trends and projections, allowing users to estimate progress towards 2030. This has proved to be a powerful advocacy tool, depicting the necessary scale and urgency of action. Our database covers low- and middle-income countries.
INTRODUCING GRID

What data is included in GRID?
Our GRID online tools include child relevant development indicators across health, education and protection. While many are SDG indicators, we also include some additional indicators which are relevant for children’s wellbeing and provide important context.

Health & Nutrition (SDG 2 & 3)
Under-five mortality, Infant mortality, Stunting, Care seeking for pneumonia, Basic vaccinations, Exclusive breastfeeding

Education (SDG 4)
Early Childhood Development Index, School completion (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary), Foundational reading/numeracy skills

Child protection (SDG 5 & 16)
Birth registration, Child marriage, Teenage pregnancy

Where does the data come from?
The main sources of data for GRID are widely implemented and comparable household surveys, notably USAID’s Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and UNICEF’s Multi-Indicator and Cluster Surveys (MICS). Both surveys are used to report on many SDG indicators and cover a wide range of health, education and child protection issues. These surveys provide representative estimates, which means the findings can be applied to the population as a whole. We also incorporate other datasets which use DHS, MICS and other household surveys to compute relevant disaggregated data, i.e. the World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) by UNESCO or the WHO/UNICEF/World Bank Joint Malnutrition Estimates for malnutrition data. We also draw on additional data from UN agencies where relevant, including administrative data and data reported by governments.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic makes it much harder to collect data with traditional methods such as household surveys. Innovative solutions, for instance as widespread phone surveys, can partially close this gap and provide timely and important data on the impact COVID-19 on children. To provide some timely insights and better understand COVID-19’s impact on children’s rights, we have started to analyse phone survey data by the World Bank, Innovations for Poverty Action and Young Lives and present the findings in a new GRID dashboard.

All of our online tools include data tables and detailed information about the data source to provide full transparency about where the data comes from.

How can you start exploring GRID?
There are many different ways to present and visualise data, and different visualisations are helpful for different purposes. To help users to better find data most relevant to them, we have split GRID into three dashboards when you access the online tools via savethechildren.net/grid.

Each dashboard consists of multiple tools and visualisations. The following guide provides an overview of the different tools, how the data can be understood and interpreted, and how you can adjust the different visualisations to see data which answers your questions.
SNAPSHOTS OF INEQUALITY
IDENTIFY CHILDREN FURTHEST BEHIND

Understanding the structural inequalities many children are facing and identifying those children which are most deprived is often the first step in analysing inequalities. Data for mostly low- and middle-income countries presented in GRID shows repeatedly that children are denied their right to survive, learn and be protected due to the wealth of their families, the region they grow up in or as a consequence of discrimination because of their gender, ethnicity or disability.

Group-based inequalities
The group-based inequalities tool can be found in both the global and the country dashboard. The tool allows you to explore child welfare outcomes for different groups of children, by gender, economic groups, location, subnational region, and ethnicity. In the global dashboard, the tool allows for comparisons both between and within countries, whereas in the country dashboard the focus is on one country only. Let’s take a look at each in turn.

This graph displays under-five mortality rates in Rwanda, and how they differ across children’s subgroups for all disaggregation measures available.

You can use filters to tailor the infographic to obtain the information you are looking for. From left to right, you can select the country, indicator, and group(s) of interest thanks to the drop-down menu, and markers in the graph will change accordingly.

Some notes on the side of the graph help you to understand better what the data represents.

Each marker represents data for a subgroup. If you hover over any marker, you’ll see more information about what it represents, such as the number of children in the group, its value, and the data source.

The axis represents the child mortality rate, while each column represents a different group of children – except for the red marker, which shows the national average.

The more distant markers in a column are, the bigger the gap in outcomes. Rural children have a much higher mortality rate than their urban peers.

The wealth gap is even larger: 84 children (out of 1,000 live births) are dying before turning five when born into the poorest 20% of households. For children in the richest 20% of households, the risk is only 40/1,000 births. We can therefore say that the poorest children are around twice as likely to die before turning 5 than the richest (84/40=2.1).
SNAPSHOTS OF INEQUALITY: IDENTIFY CHILDREN FURTHEST BEHIND

GLOBAL DASHBOARD
This screenshot shows GRID’s group-based inequality tool in the global dashboard. This allows you to compare inequalities within countries as well as between different countries. This particular example shows the prevalence of stunting in South Asian countries.

Select Indicator: Stunting
Select Region: South Asia
Select Countries: (All)
Select Groups: (Multiple values)

Stunting
Prevalence of stunting, height for age (% of children under 5) in 6 selected country(ies)

- Afghanistan
- India
- Pakistan
- Nepal
- Bangladesh
- Maldives

The axis represents the stunting rate, while each row corresponds to a country.

The global group-based inequality tool also allows us to compare specific groups in one country with other groups in another country. For instance, we see that the proportion of children being stunted on average across India (national average of 38%) is similar to the stunting rates experienced by children living in the poorest households in neighbouring Bangladesh.

You can use filters to tailor the infographic to obtain the information you are looking for.

Aggregate data for multiple countries

You can now combine multiple countries to produce an aggregated estimate, for instance for South Asia. As a result, the graph will look similar to the one in the country dashboard.

Combine

Different colours represent different groups. When you compare the national averages across countries (red markers), you can see that Afghanistan is the highest-burden country in the region (among those we have data for), followed closely by India and Pakistan.

When it comes to disparities between children’s subgroups, you will notice that rural children (light pink) consistently fare worse than their urban peers (darker pink), i.e. they experience a higher rate of deprivation.

The different shades of green represent different wealth groups. In all countries, the poorest children experience higher stunting rates than those living in richer households.
**Subnational inequalities**

Region of residence is often the greatest determinant of deprivation, which makes the sub-national level of disaggregation extremely important. The subnational inequalities tool, featured in the country dashboard, has two functions: first, it shows inequalities between children living in different regions of a country. Additionally, it shows inequalities among subgroups within each subnational region, and how they compare to the corresponding national values. So, the tool allows you to compare groups within a region, to the corresponding national value for that group as a whole, and to the national average.

You can see that teenage pregnancy is more common in Zinder and Tahoua and less so in Dosso and Agadez, with Diffa, Maradi, and Tillabery falling in the middle.

In this map, you can see the prevalence of teenage pregnancy across Niger. The tool also allows you to deep-dive into a specific region by selecting a region on the map on the left.

The tool also allows you to deep-dive into a specific region. By selecting a region on the map on the left, bars will appear on the right, showing the value of the indicator for subgroups within that region. For example, the figure on the right shows teenage pregnancy rates across children’s subgroups in Niger’s region of Zinder and allows to compare those to the national correspondent values. This granular analysis can provide valuable insights. For instance, here we find that urban girls in Zinder aren’t any more affected by teenage pregnancy than girls country-wide (the dark blue bar is on par with the grey dot, which represents the national average). This fact shows that the high inequality in Zinder is particular driven by teenage pregnancy in rural areas (see the light blue bar).
**Intersecting inequalities**

This tool explores how children can face more than one kind of disadvantage (for example being poor and living in a rural area), and how different inequalities intersect to fuel and compound deprivation and marginalization. An intersectional lens is crucial in tackling the structural causes that perpetuate inequalities.

The graph shows the prevalence of child marriage in Bangladesh and how this varies for girls based on household wealth and location.

The axis represents the child marriage rate, so the higher a marker is located, the is the higher the prevalence of child marriage in that subgroup.

With a gap of 10 percentage points (44 vs 54%), you can see that rural girls are substantially more likely to be married by age 18 than their urban counterparts.

When we take into account location, the gap widens further: the child marriage rate for the richest urban girls goes down to 36%, whereas that of poor, rural girls spikes to 63%, a 26 percentage point difference and almost double as much. Also, being privileged in one dimension does not necessarily offset a disadvantage in another: the richest girls in rural areas are still more likely to be married before 18 than the richest girls in cities, just like the poorest urban girls still face a lower risk of child marriage than the poorest girls in the countryside.

Use the filters above the graph to select the country, the indicator, and the two groups you are interested in. Due to the structure of the data, only some combinations are possible.

Hover over any marker to find out what it represents, the value for the group, the number of children belonging to it, and its source. The size of each marker reflects the child population they represent: for instance in Bangladesh, many more girls age 20-24 years are living in rural than in urban areas.
The SDG pledge to leave no one behind requires progress towards the SDG targets that narrows and eliminates the gaps between deprived and more advantaged social groups. Comparing trends in child outcomes across different groups and projecting the likely path forward presents us with some powerful insights. First, while projections until 2030 are by nature uncertain, they help us to better understand if and which groups are likely to reach the SDG targets. Second, trends and projections provide us with a measure of what we sometimes call inclusive progress: this means we see both progress towards the agreed targets as well as gaps between the most deprived children and their more advantaged peers closing. While we would hope that both concepts go together, you will find many examples where we see either only one of them or neither.

**Trends & projections**

The trends and projections tool can be found in both the global and the country dashboard. The tool allows you to compare inequality trends across different groups and the varying progress that different groups of children are making towards SDG targets.

**Progress is significant and inclusive, meaning that not only is under five mortality decreasing overall, but the poorest children (light green) have taken the greatest strides forward.**

**Projections (highlighted by the grey shadow) help us to understand how indicators progress towards the SDG targets (indicated by the dashed line). In this case of India we see that both the national average and the richest reach the target, but the poorest are likely to fail the threshold.**
This screenshot shows GRID's trends & projections tool in the global dashboard. The graph compares different trajectories in progress in under-five mortality for Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, featuring again the national average, the richest children, and the poorest ones.

In each country, progress unfolds differently: Bangladesh and India started from similar mortality rates, but over the past two decades, Bangladesh witnessed much more inclusive progress, with gaps between the poorest and the richest closing and all groups set to reach the target by 2030. By contrast, while gaps closed in India as well, they did so more slowly, and while the richest children will reach the target first, their poorest peers will not reach it at all. While rates in Pakistan across between the poor and the rich narrowed, we do not expect any group to reach the global SDG target by 2030.
Leave No One Behind Maps

Maps are a great way to give a snapshot of inequalities worldwide or for a world region and gain a bird’s-eye view of where progress needs to be made. The maps in GRID’s global dashboard can answer various questions, for instance which groups are on track to meet the SDGs in each country and whether gaps between groups are closing within country.

The map illustrates which countries worldwide are on track to achieve the target for birth registration, which is a specific target (16.9) under SDG 16 “Peace, justice, and strong institutions.”

You can change the view to the other question. “Are gaps between different groups closing”, which illustrates if countries experience inclusive progress. That is if gaps between the most and least disadvantaged groups are closing, and that the further behind children are progressing the fastest.

This legend will guide you in interpreting the color-coding on the map.

For a country to show as green, all children’s groups must be on track. By contrast, if a country shows up as red, then no group is projected to meet the target by 2030. The colour yellow sits somewhere in between, meaning some groups are on track. Because it is related to the 2030 agenda, the map only shows indicators that have a corresponding SDG.
TIPPING THE BALANCE
CONNECTING ACCESS TO SERVICES AND CHILD OUTCOMES

Understanding inequalities, having evidence to identify children furthest behind and to monitor their progress is essential to hold governments to account for their pledge to leave no one behind and their commitments to uphold the rights of each child. But data can also play an important role in describing a path forward and identifying and advocating for new public policies, which help to accelerate inclusive and equitable progress.

Based mainly on data from GRID, our report Tipping the Balance in 2019 not only described the social inequalities in child survival, but showed that many children face a double jeopardy: those with the highest mortality and stunting rates are those who face the lowest access to services, capturing a less than fair share of health services. While we increasingly try to facilitate those complex analyses in GRID, more work is needed to highlight the interplay between policy and financing decisions, the provision of basic services and child development outcomes.

Equitable access to services

This tool analyses the relationship between access to services and inequalities in outcomes and for different groups. To reduce inequalities, all children should be granted access to quality services, with a focus on meeting the needs of the furthest behind groups first. However, the opposite is often true: children with the highest mortality and malnutrition rates have the lowest access to services.

The graph shows the correlation between access to antenatal care visits and under-five mortality in Mali.
**Tables and data sources**

This tool allows you to explore inequalities in child outcomes displayed as a table. We provide all data points and detailed sources in one tab in each dashboard to serve as a useful basis for other analyses and making it more relevant for your own work. Also, you can reach out to us if you are interested in accessing more data.

Use the filters above the table to select the relevant country, indicator, and group(s).

For each group and the national average, the table features sources, value, year, sample size, and standard error.

The table shows primary school completion rates for the national average, poorest, richest, urban, and rural children in Colombia, with data from the latest representative survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National average</td>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education/ECV 2018</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>26,208</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban/rural</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education/ECV 2018</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>13,413</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education/ECV 2018</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>12,795</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>Fourth quintile</td>
<td>UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education/ECV 2018</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2,835</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle quintile</td>
<td>UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education/ECV 2018</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2,665</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poorest</td>
<td>UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education/ECV 2018</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>3,316</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richest</td>
<td>UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education/ECV 2018</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1,794</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second quintile</td>
<td>UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education/ECV 2018</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2,888</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COVID-19 has dealt an unprecedented blow to lives and livelihoods worldwide. While children may not be the face of the coronavirus pandemic, they are becoming the biggest victims of its social and economic impacts. The impacts of COVID-19 will not be equally felt, with the world’s poorest and most vulnerable children likely to bear the greatest burden of the socio-economic consequences. Therefore, measuring, analysing and understanding inequalities in child outcomes becomes even more important.

Unfortunately, the pandemic makes it much harder to collect data with traditional methods such as household surveys. Innovative solutions, such as widespread phone surveys, can partially close this gap and can provide timely and important insights into the impact COVID-19 on children.

Our COVID-19 dashboard illustrates insights we have gained since spring 2020 from phone surveys by the World Bank and other organisations. It highlights not only the pandemic’s impact on food security, education prospects and government support, but also allows us to understand which children and families are being left behind and bear the greatest burden.

National averages
The COVID-19 dashboard landing page presents you with an overview of the effects of the pandemic on families and their children, e.g. for food security, their access to health care or their ability to participate in remote learning.
**Group-based inequalities**

This tab shows group-specific effects of the COVID-19 on families and children, and allows us to study the differences by location, region or wealth. In doing so, the page mirrors the group-based inequalities tool and the subnational inequalities tool featured in the country dashboard.

**COVID-19 DASHBOARD**

This graph shows group-based inequalities for remote learning in Burkina Faso.

The bar chart shows the effects for the selected indicator by group for which we have data (national average, location, wealth, disability). If you hover over the bar, a pop-up box will display the name of the group it represents, its value, its source, and number of observations. In our example, the chart shows the extent to which children from different backgrounds are missing out on remote learning in Burkina Faso.

In many countries, multiple rounds of phone surveys have been conducted since spring 2020. A newly added third tool allows us to illustrate those changes over time. For instance, in Burkina Faso, children in rural and poor communities were more likely to miss remote learning activities in December 2020 than earlier in the year.

The last tab provides an overview of data availability and sources.

You can use these filters to select the country and indicator you are interested in.

The circles show the absolute number of children in each group which are affected.

The map is showing how the outcome varies by region. Hovering over a region will display its name and value, together with source and number of observations.
THE WORLD’S MISSING MILLIONS
CHILDREN NOT COUNTED IN THE DATA

We have made good progress in increasing the availability of disaggregated data across many countries and contexts around families’ wealth and income, where children grow up, their gender and ethnicity. However, many other children are either falling through the cracks of global data collection efforts (for instance, children living on the streets or in pastoral regions and internally displaced children) or have only limited data available (for instance for children with disabilities). Qualitative data and more research on excluded children are essential to make sure we are not leaving children behind from progress. Until every last child is counted, we will not achieve the pledge to Leave No One Behind and the realisation of children’s rights all over the world.

Disaggregated data – data broken down by different dimensions and characteristics – is essential to explore inequalities and measure progress towards the pledge to ‘leave no one behind’. In GRID, we rely mostly on international comparable household surveys such as DHS and MICS, which allow us to analyse health, education and protection indicators by gender, wealth, location, ethnicity and some other categories. However, those surveys also lack other key dimensions of inequality and marginalisation, such as disability (although newer MICS surveys increasingly collect this data), migration status and other attributes which may lead to discrimination (e.g. LGBTQ and migratory status). Also, very little data is disaggregated by age, and surveys rarely capture the challenges faced by different age groups, with 10–14-year-olds often completely invisible. In addition, household surveys do by definition not include children which are not living in traditional households, most notably homeless people, people living in institutions, and people on the move, including those displaced by crisis.

There is an urgent need for more and better data on children living in and affected by humanitarian contexts. By 2030, half of the world’s poor is projected to live in conflict-affected areas. The world’s poorest and most vulnerable people are disproportionately represented in the groups that are missed by household surveys, a significant proportion of whom are children. These ‘invisible’ groups of children include children living on the street or in orphanages, and detained or imprisoned children. So little is known about these groups that even estimates of their size are uncertain.

Much greater investment is required to fill these critical data gaps, including through dedicated surveys, new technology and better birth and death registration systems. GRID is an important tool for us to both highlight the progress we have seen in better and more disaggregated data, but also to point out where more and better data is needed to capture children’s rights to survive, learn and be protected across characteristics, contexts and countries.