

ChildFund Australia Fact Sheet 5 - The DEV Framework

What do the terms deprivation, exclusion, vulnerability mean?

The DEV framework was developed by ChildFund Alliance based on findings from research conducted in 2003. The research, which involved extensive consultation with children, found that poverty is a deeply relational, dynamic, and multi-dimensional experience. It concluded that how children perceive and respond to poverty is often different to adults.

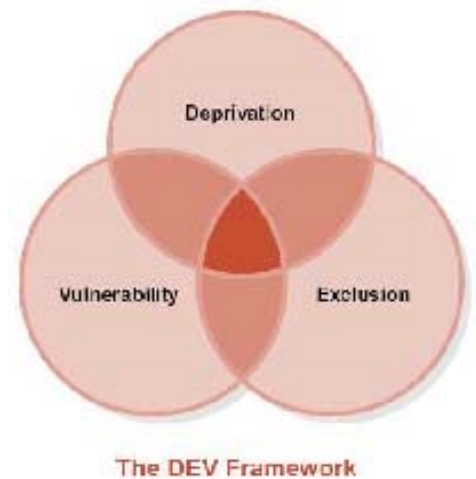
The DEV framework is composed of three inter-related dimensions and was developed as a tool in order to achieve a better understanding of children's experience of poverty.

Deprivation: the lack of essential material conditions and services such as food, safe drinking water, health, shelter and education. The severity (degree of threat to physical or psychological wellbeing), intensity (multiple level threats), and context of children's suffering are aspects of deprivation to be taken into consideration.

Exclusion: the extent to which individuals or groups of children are prevented from full participation in their society on the basis of gender, class, age, ethnicity, etc. Children are usually acutely aware of these exclusions, particularly those already engaged in work where differences in social and economic status are apparent.

Vulnerability: includes threats and uncertainties within the environment and the ability to defend oneself against adversity. Vulnerability can be transient or chronic, internal or external, and needs to be understood over a period of time.

It is important to recognise that there is a constant interplay of these dimensions which affect a child and community's resilience to adversity and their ability to cope.

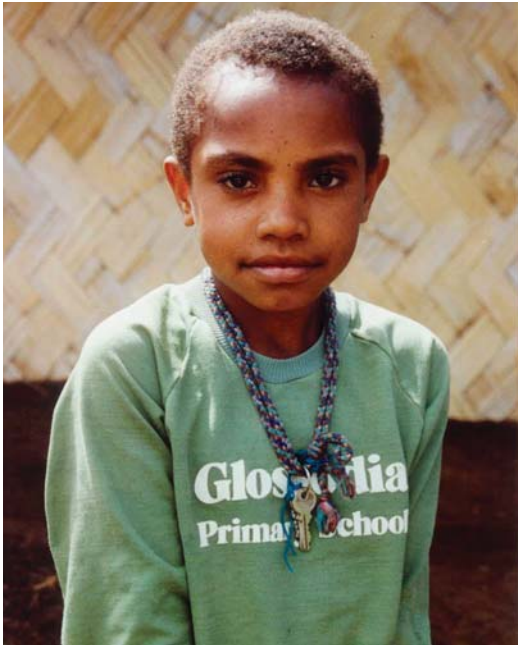


What are some common examples of these dimensions?

Deprivation	Exclusion	Vulnerability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limited or non-existent basic social services ● Lack of access to clean water, adequate food, clothing, shelter, security ● Absence of community networks and local support structures ● Denial of basic rights ● Limited or no access to basic resources ● Limited or no access to quality financial services ● Limited or no access to knowledge and learning opportunities ● Poor implementation of government policy/ limited legal literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discrimination based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age - Gender - Race/ethnicity - Language - Religion - Political beliefs - Health status - Physical and intellectual ability ● Geographic marginalisation (e.g. rural /urban/remote locations) ● Isolation of street children or those living in slum areas ● Children who have been orphaned ● Children who are in jail ● Children who have not been legally registered ● Children who live in HIV and AIDS affected households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of parenting skills ● Natural and human-made disasters ● Political/social conflict ● Migration and trafficking ● Social beliefs/cultural practices (e.g. early marriage) ● Family debts ● Loss of heritage ● Corruption/unofficial costs ● Lending schemes – formal and informal ● Changing government policy ● Poor implementation of government policy/ limited legal literacy ● Poor leadership/local capacity ● Abuse and exploitation ● Health status ● Physical/intellectual ability ● HIV and AIDS

How do children understand and experience poverty?

Childhood is complex and dynamic. It is not a uniform phase and the circumstances, expectations, achievements, and vulnerabilities of children are highly variable over time. Children's understanding and experience of poverty is constantly changing. Fundamentally a child experiences poverty as a form of adversity, where material needs and lack of income are often compounded by inequity and powerlessness.



Children are acutely aware of poverty, feeling its effects not merely as a lack of income, education or health, but also in terms of shame, social stigmatisation, humiliation and exclusion. In fact it is the relational aspect of poverty that children often regard as most hurtful and damaging.

Children are not passive victims but are active contributors to their own wellbeing and development. They think of themselves as contributors to their families, playing their own part in the care of younger siblings, incapacitated adults and in household maintenance, income generation and survival.

While poverty can be constant in a family's life, it is also often a transient experience that results from random events such as family or personal loss or major societal crisis. Research indicates that those families whose members work collaboratively to maintain the household are most likely to withstand poverty. Therefore, it is essential that a child has a supportive family network throughout her or his development.

How does ChildFund use the DEV framework in its development work?

The DEV framework was formally adopted to aid ChildFund in improving the quality of work and move us from an adult poverty orientation to a demonstrable child focus in all program sectors. When turning DEV understanding into practice, the three poverty dimensions are considered as well as a range of other factors such as the development pathways that children embark upon and the child-context relationships affecting a child's development into adulthood. Programs aim to be informed by all of these factors as these determine how we understand, measure, and respond to child poverty in all its forms.

A DEV analysis is undertaken as an essential step in the design and evaluation of ChildFund's development interventions. This involves identification and assessment of the relative impact of factors in the three dimensions affecting the child and their community. DEV factors are considered when undertaking needs analyses and baseline surveys and benchmarks are being set in order to measure progress toward desired outcomes.

Application of the DEV framework also involves facilitating meaningful participation of children and young people in order to understand how they themselves experience deprivation, exclusion and vulnerability. A participative process enables children and other community members to formulate appropriate responses to address the issues and to determine how to evaluate the effectiveness of any intervention.

