

Supporting Families and Children Beyond COVID-19

Learning from previous crises for building back fairer

Poverty and the Sustainable Development Goals:
From the Local to the Global

Sixth Peter Townsend Memorial Conference
April 29th 2021



Key messages

- A story of inequality... local, national, global.. Before during and after
- Don't take the eye of SDGs, poverty risks for children
- Rebalance expenditure to put more into social protection
- Extend Debt Service Suspension Initiative
- Prepare for the long-term
- Take advantage of a changing discourse



Rapid Review: Crises and Disasters

Rapid in onset, wide-ranging geographical reach, disruption of social services and economic sectors without affecting governance systems.

Global financial crisis (2007–2008), West Africa Ebola Virus Disease outbreak (2013), SARS/MERS, H1N1 outbreaks, Indian Ocean tsunami (2003–2004), regional financial crises, extreme weather events, earthquakes

Lessons also drawn from **HIV/AIDS pandemic**



Methodology: Selection criteria

Economic policy responses: economic stimulus; business grants; tax relief, rent/mortgage/utilities relief

Social protection responses:

- Social insurance e.g. pensions, health insurance, paid sick leave
- Social assistance e.g. cash or in-kind transfers, public works
- Job programmes: minimum wage laws, training
- Social services: spending on health and education, social care



Methodology: Selection criteria




Evidence from study designs

- Quantitative and qualitative
- Systematic reviews
- Experimental and quasi-experimental impact evaluation studies
- Descriptive studies, policy reviews and policy papers

Publications ([from 2000-2020](#)): Peer reviewed published articles, grey literature, working papers, monographs, edited books, PhD theses



Outcome domain	Indicators
Income and economic security	poverty, household income, remittances, household consumption, indebtedness, savings, access to credit, food security, asset wealth, inequality
Work	adult employment, child labour, livelihood opportunities
Health	healthcare utilization, SRH, child health and nutrition, mental health, mortality rates, and risky health behaviours.
Child education	literacy, school attendance, enrolment, drop-out, academic skills, cognitive abilities.
Safety, gender equality, GBV	child marriage, intimate partner violence, women's autonomy in decision-making, care work/unpaid work; homelessness, crime.

POLICY RESPONSES TO CRISES & THEIR IMPACTS		Income	Health	Education & Childcare	Work	Safety
 <p>Fiscal Measures</p>	Stimulus	Green	White	White	Orange	White
	Austerity	White	Red	Red	White	Red
 <p>Social Insurance</p>	Health Insurance	White	Green	White	White	White
	Unemployment Insurance	Green	White	White	Orange	White
	Weather Insurance	Green	White	White	White	White
 <p>Social Transfers, Social Services, & Job Programmes</p>	Cash Transfers	Green	Green	Green	Green	White
	Food & School Feeding	White	Green	Green	White	White
	School & Health Subsidies	White	White	Orange	White	White
	Social Services	White	Green	Green	White	White
	Job Programmes	Green	Green	Red	Green	White

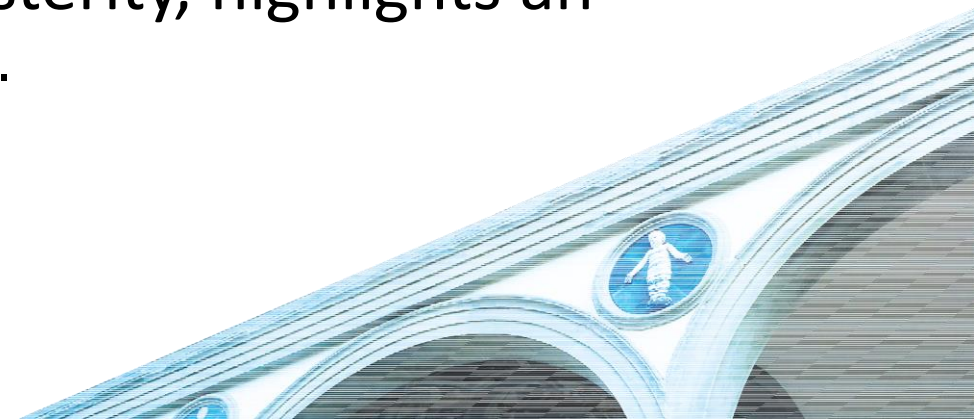
Responses to past crises

One-off emergency cash transfers a common response to natural disasters. Cash transfers rarely long-term.

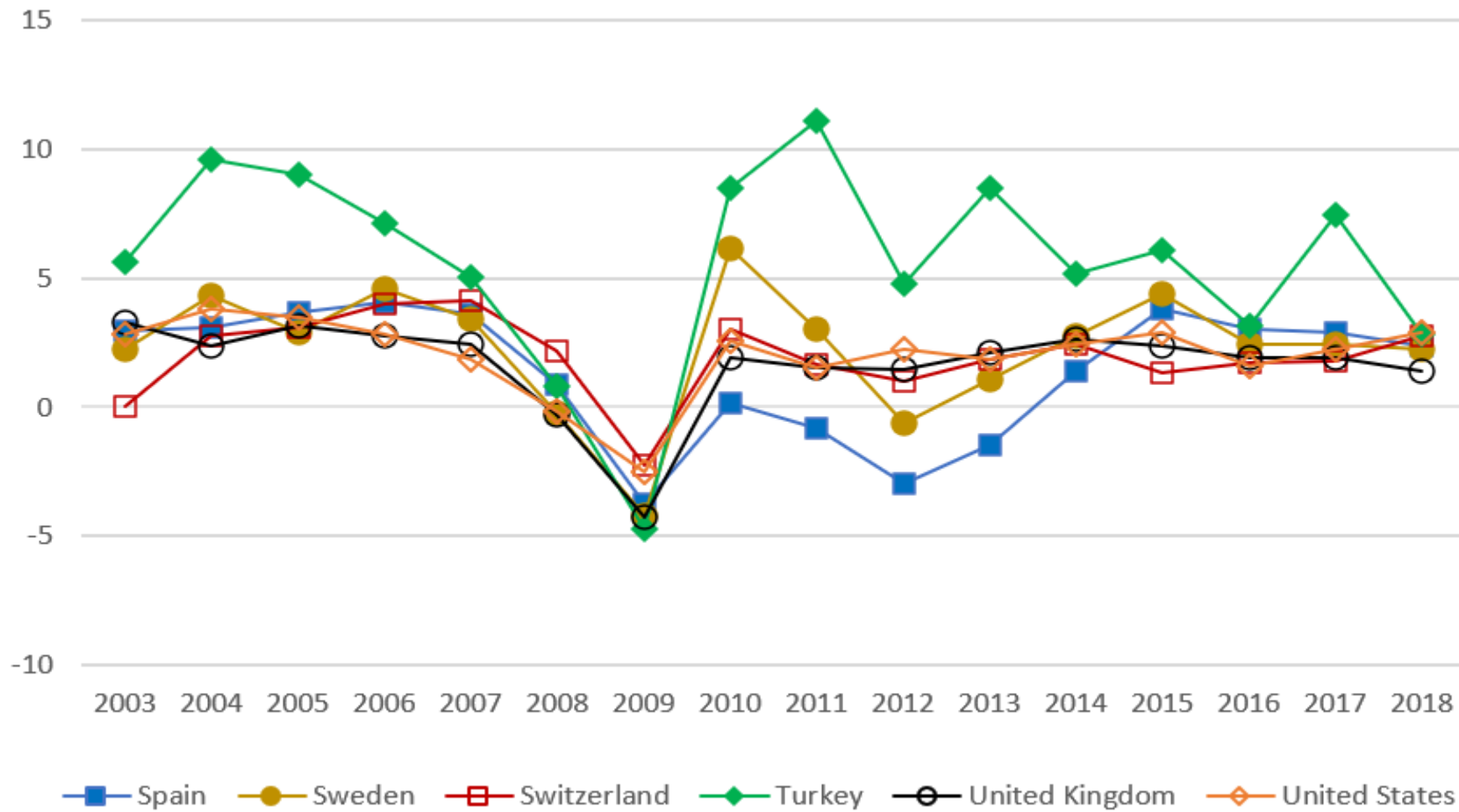
Weak social protection systems and low revenues constrained responses in low-income countries.

High rates of informal labour limit coverage and budgets.

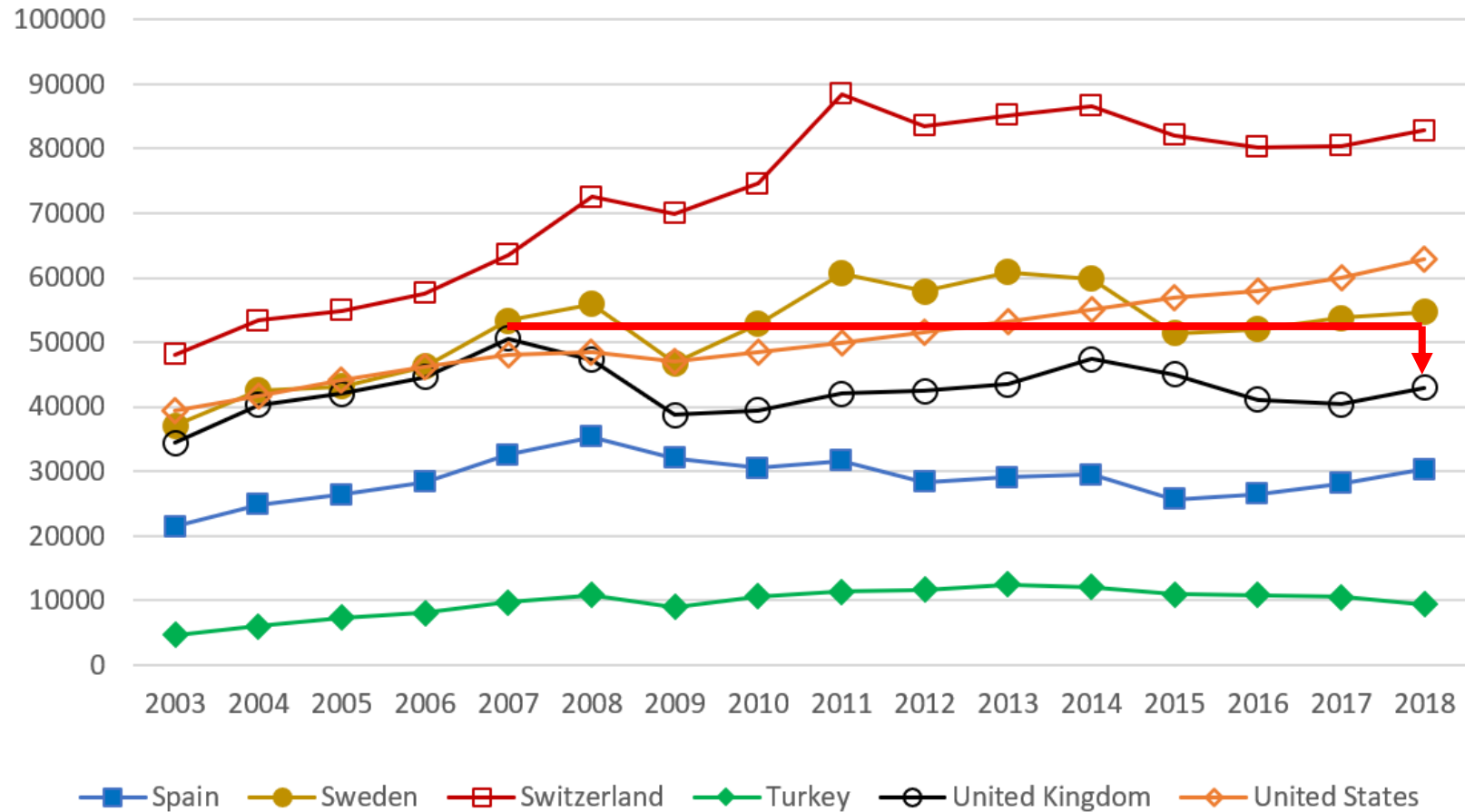
Inequality increased during past crises and austerity, highlights an important mitigation role for social protection.

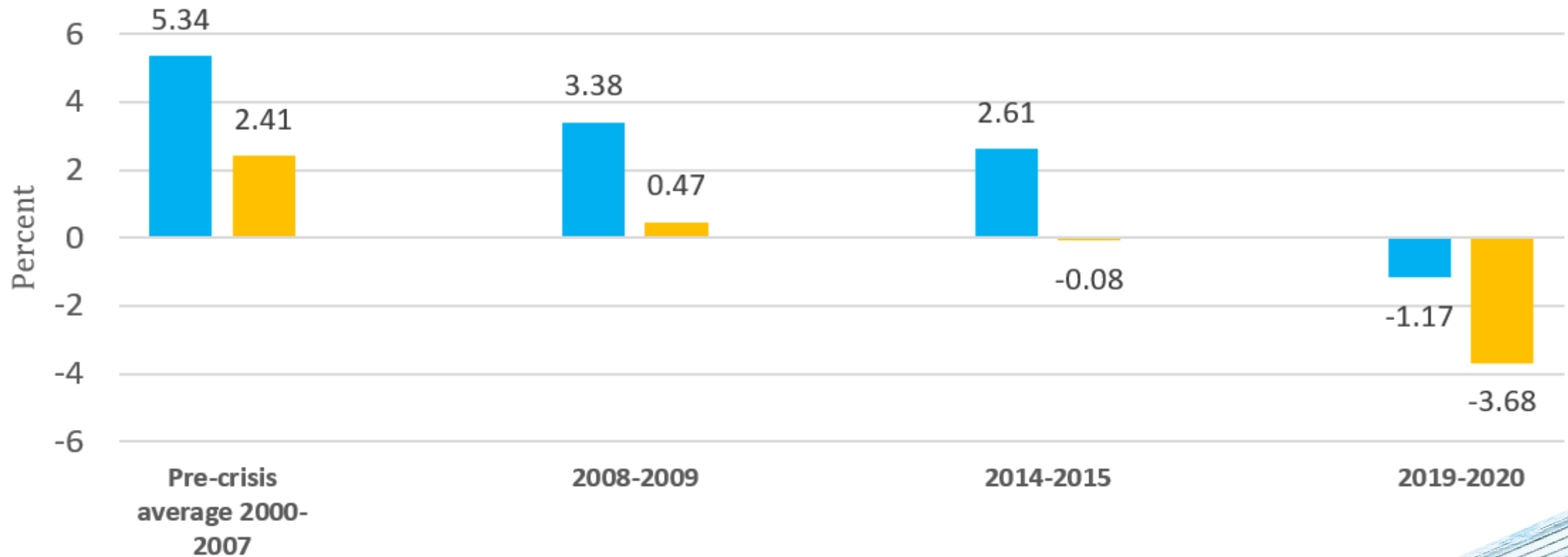


Trends in growth (GDP)



Trends in growth (GDP per capita)



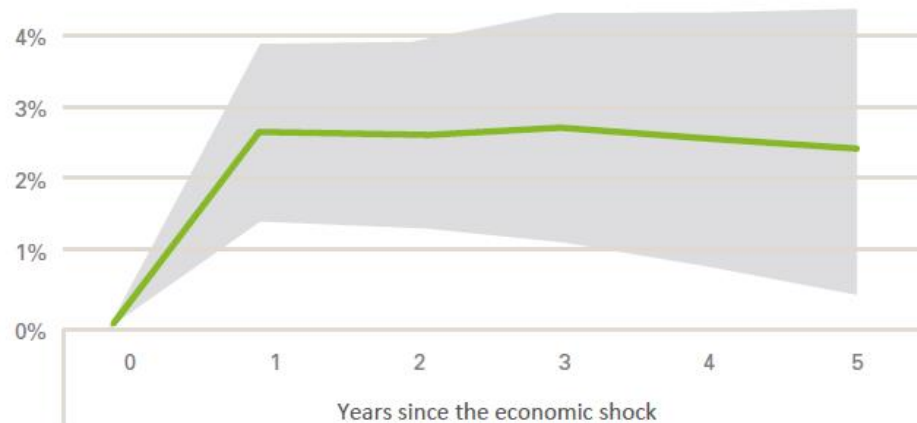


Country	At risk of child income poverty (threshold: below 60% of the median equivalised household income)	Mortality rate (all deaths) per 1000 children aged 5-14	Share of youth who are NEET (% of 15-19)	PISA: Reading Literacy Score	Suicide rate per 100,000 aged 15 to 19	Child homicide (death through intentional injury) rate per 100,000 aged 0 to 14
SDG targets	1.2.1	3.2.2	8.6.1	4.1.1	3.4.2	16.1.1
Australia	17.5	0.84	5.3	503	9.2	0.52
Canada	21.0	0.98	5.9	520	9.6	0.33
Denmark	11.0	0.50	3.5	501	1.4	0.10
Finland	11.1	0.68	4.6	520	7.7	0
France	19.9	0.80	6.8	493	3.2	0.25
Germany	14.5	0.72	3.4	498	4.9	0.23
Ireland	15.8	0.64	6.0	518	7.1	0
Italy	26.2	0.73	11.0	476	2.6	0.06
Sweden	19.3	0.76	6.8	506	5.8	0.06
United Kingdom	23.5	0.78	8.9	504	4.3	0.03
United States	30.0	1.34	7.1	505	9.9	1.43
Average (int.)	19.6	1	6.3	485.1	5.9	0.3

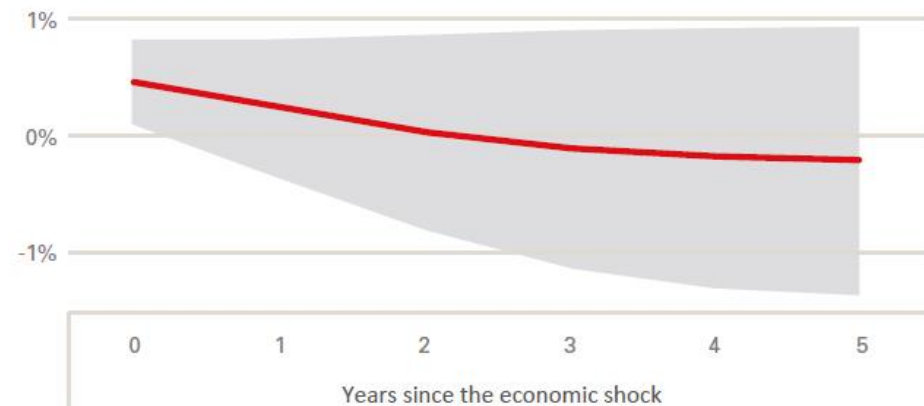
What do we expect to happen to children?

A sustained increased in child poverty, of 3% per 1 SD change growth

GDP per capita effects on child income poverty

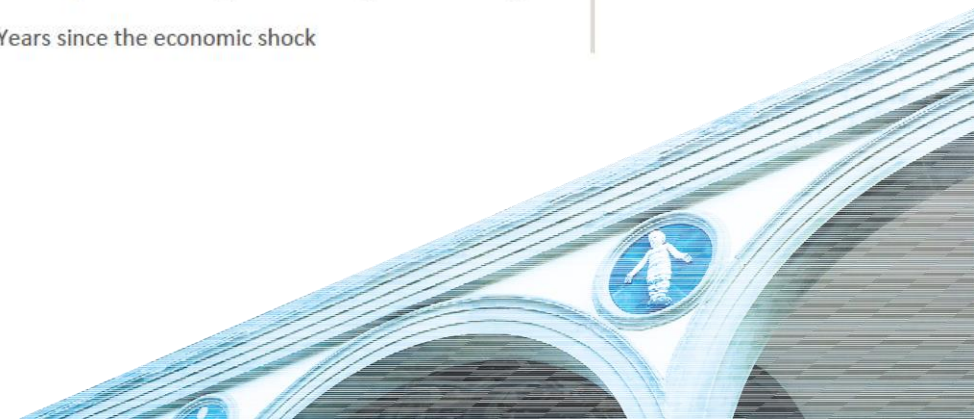


Child income poverty effects on GDP per capita

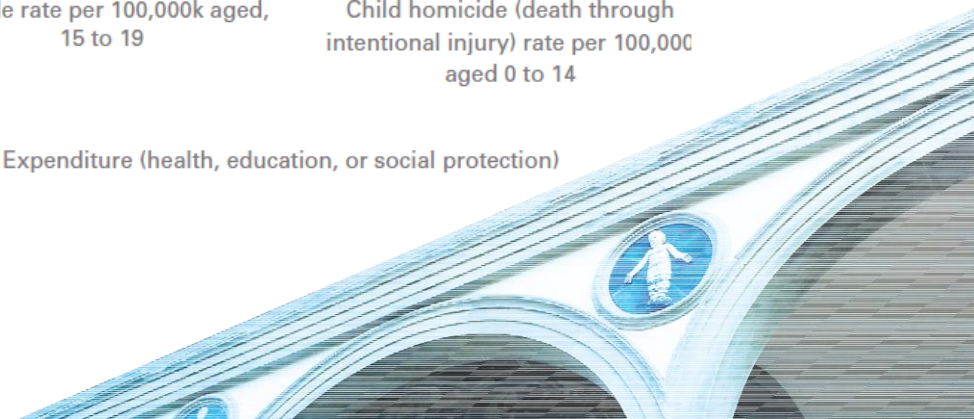
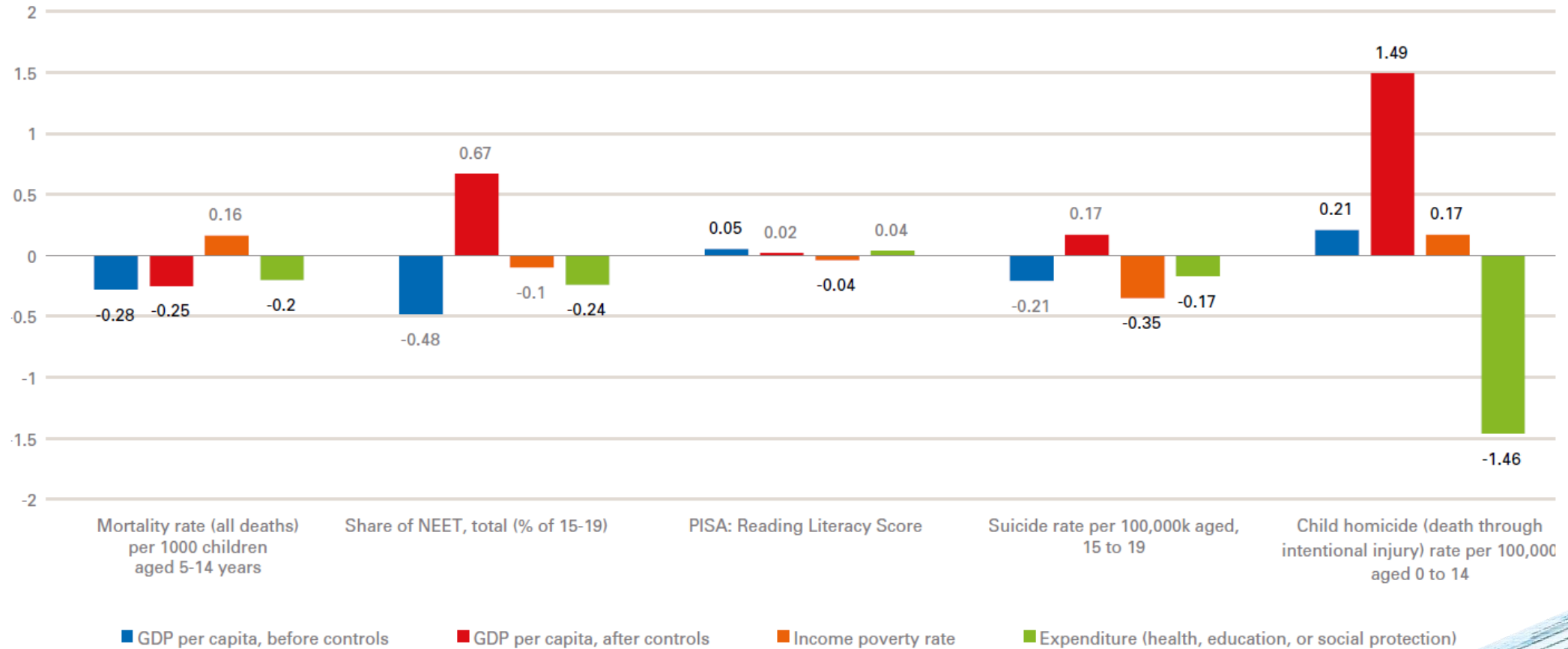


Green: significant at 95%

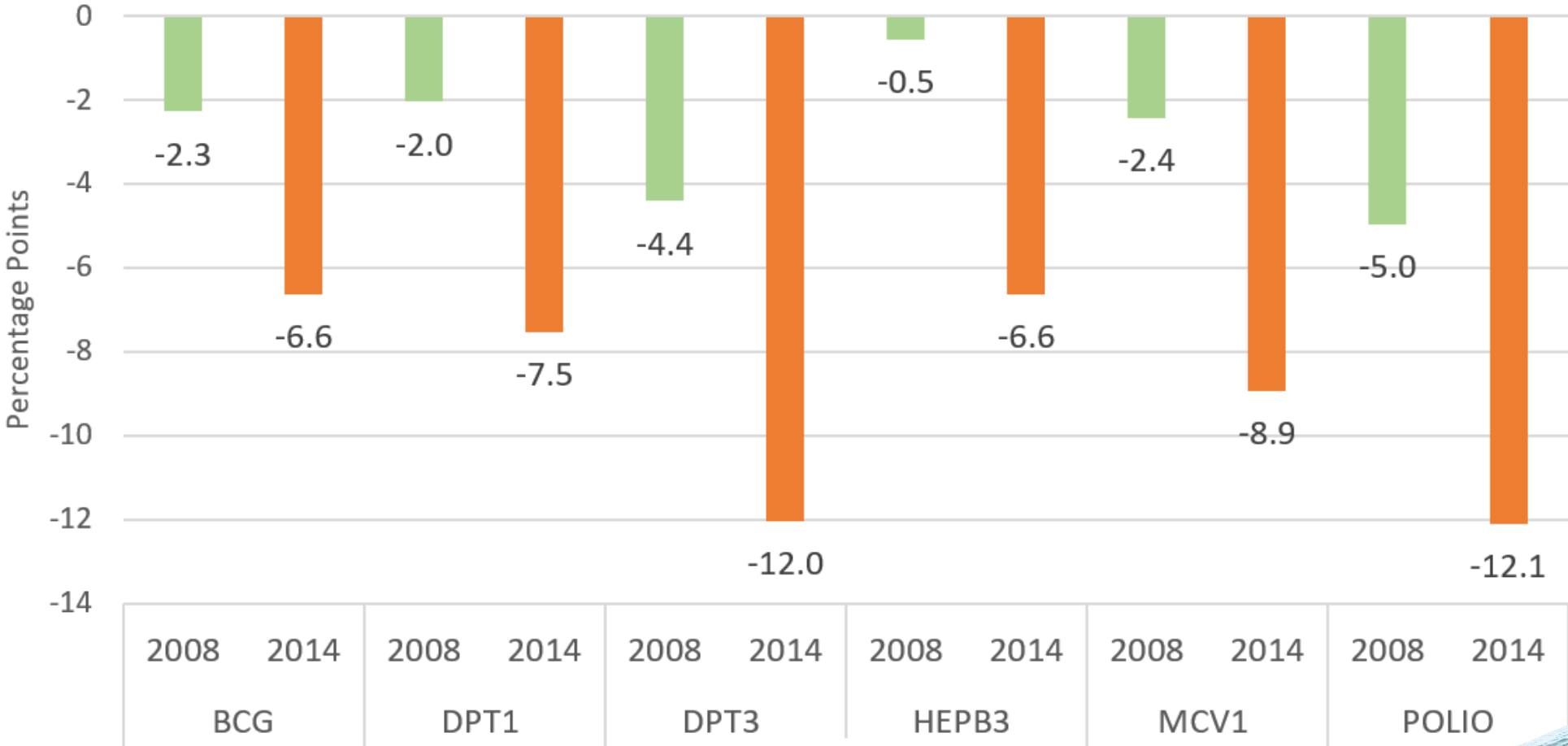
Red: NS



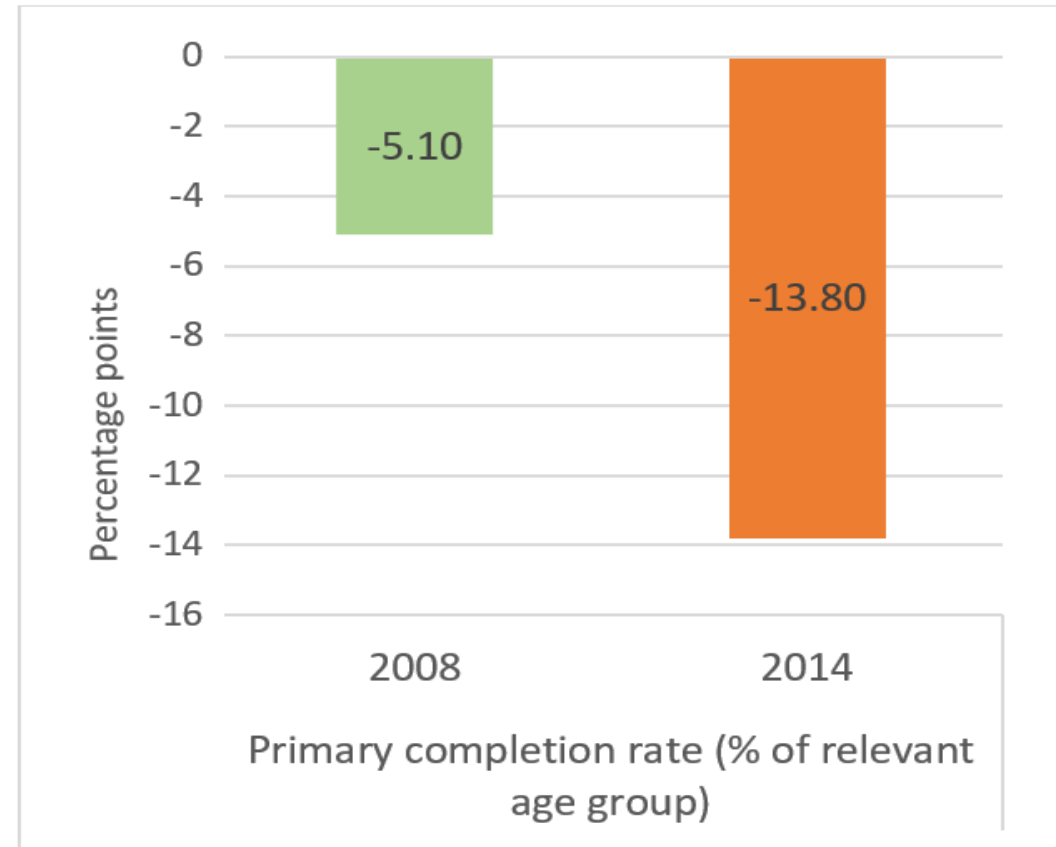
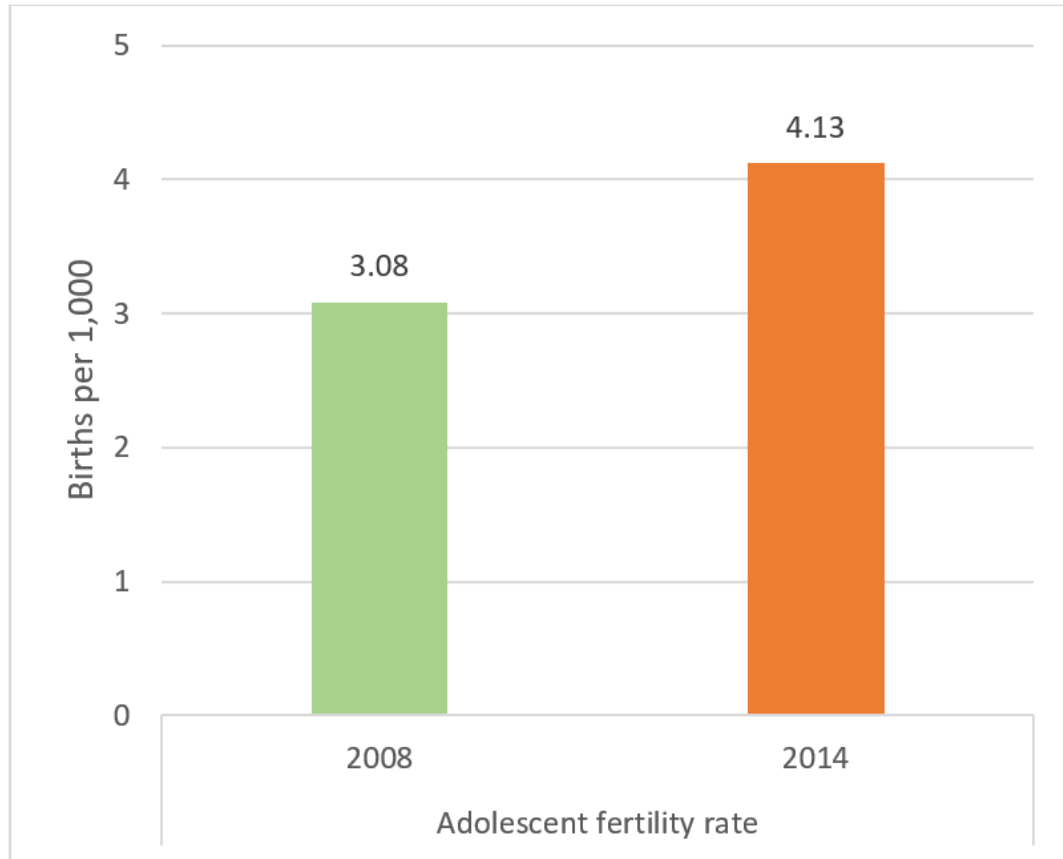
What do we expect to happen to SDGs in HICs?



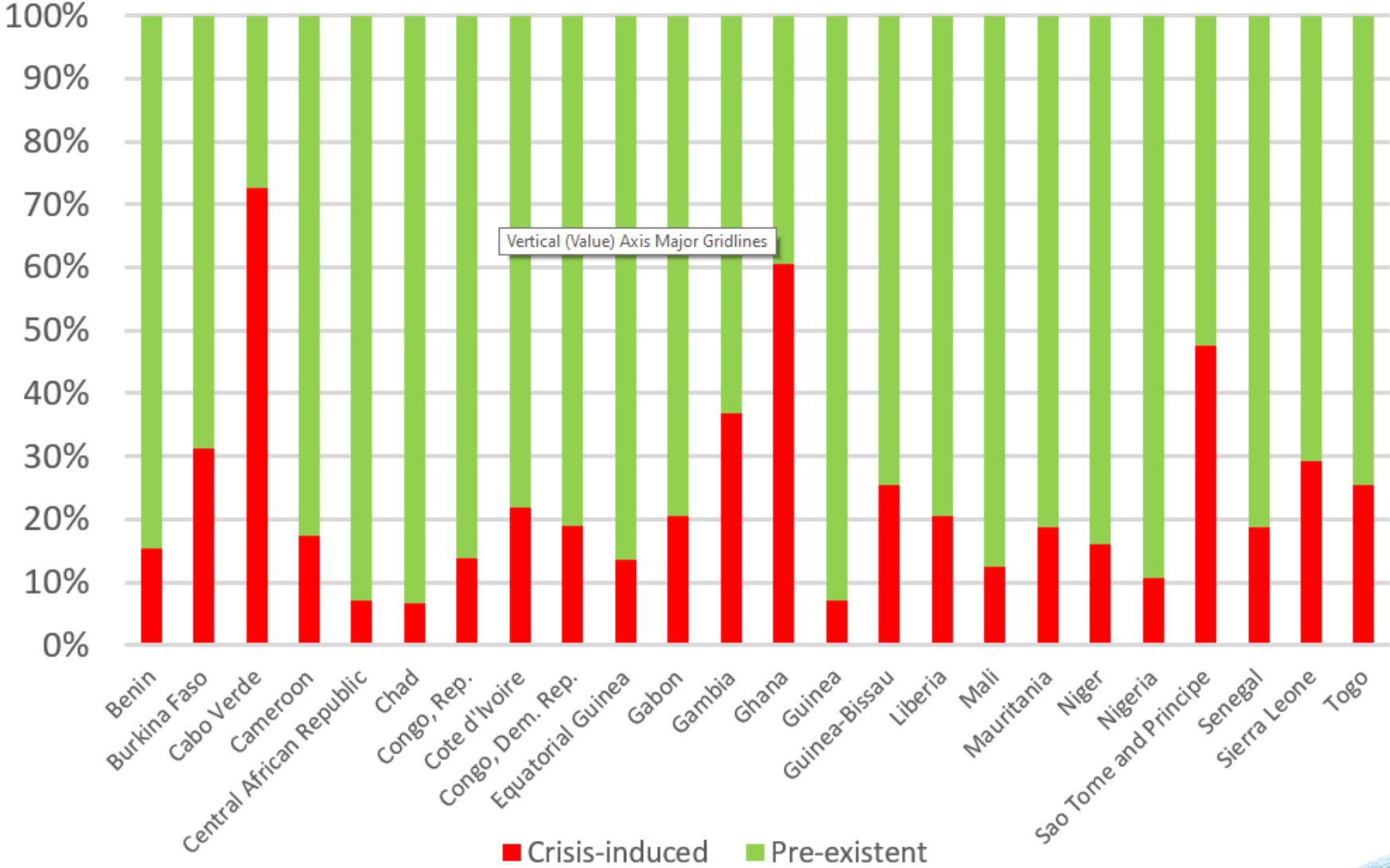
Effects of crises in WCAR I



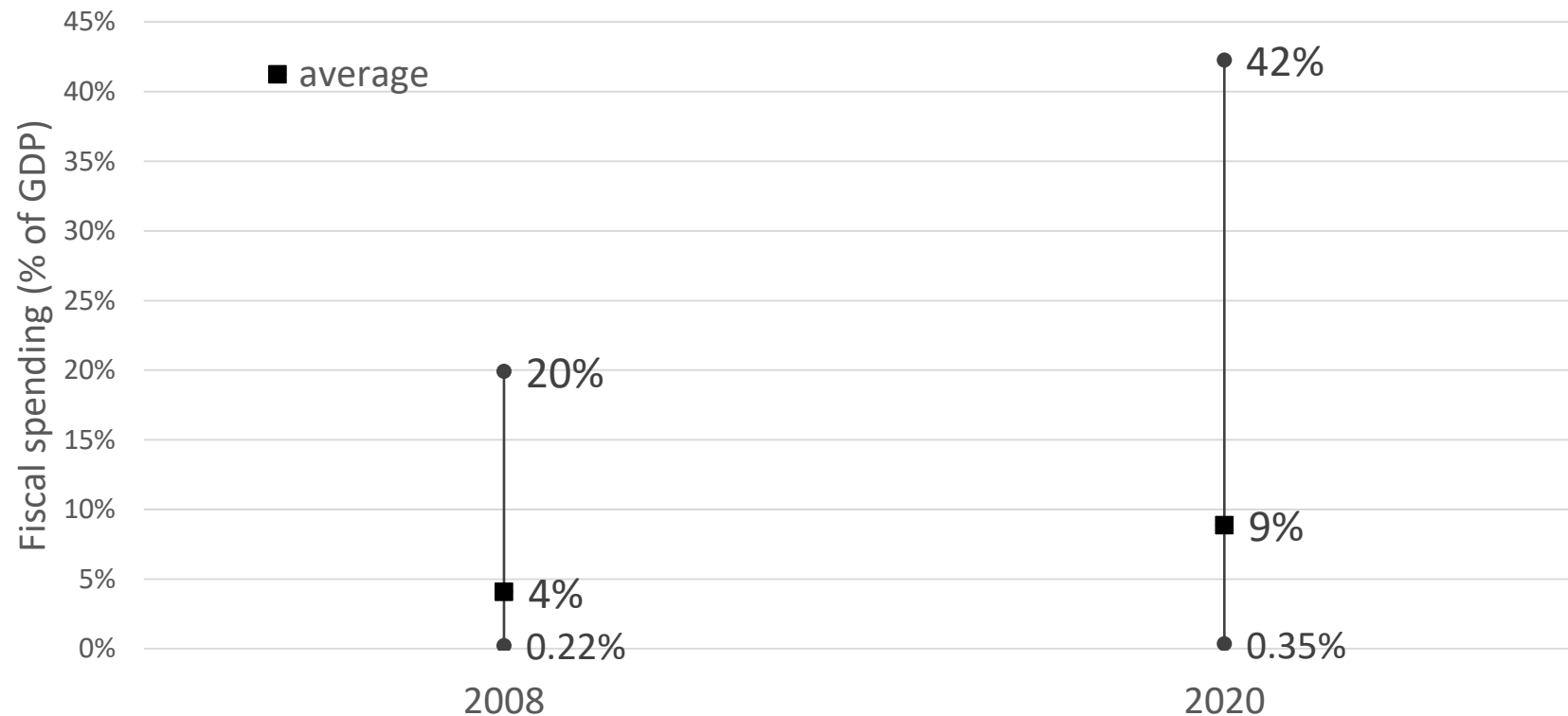
Effects of crises in WCAR II



Non-coverage of DPT Immunization in 2021



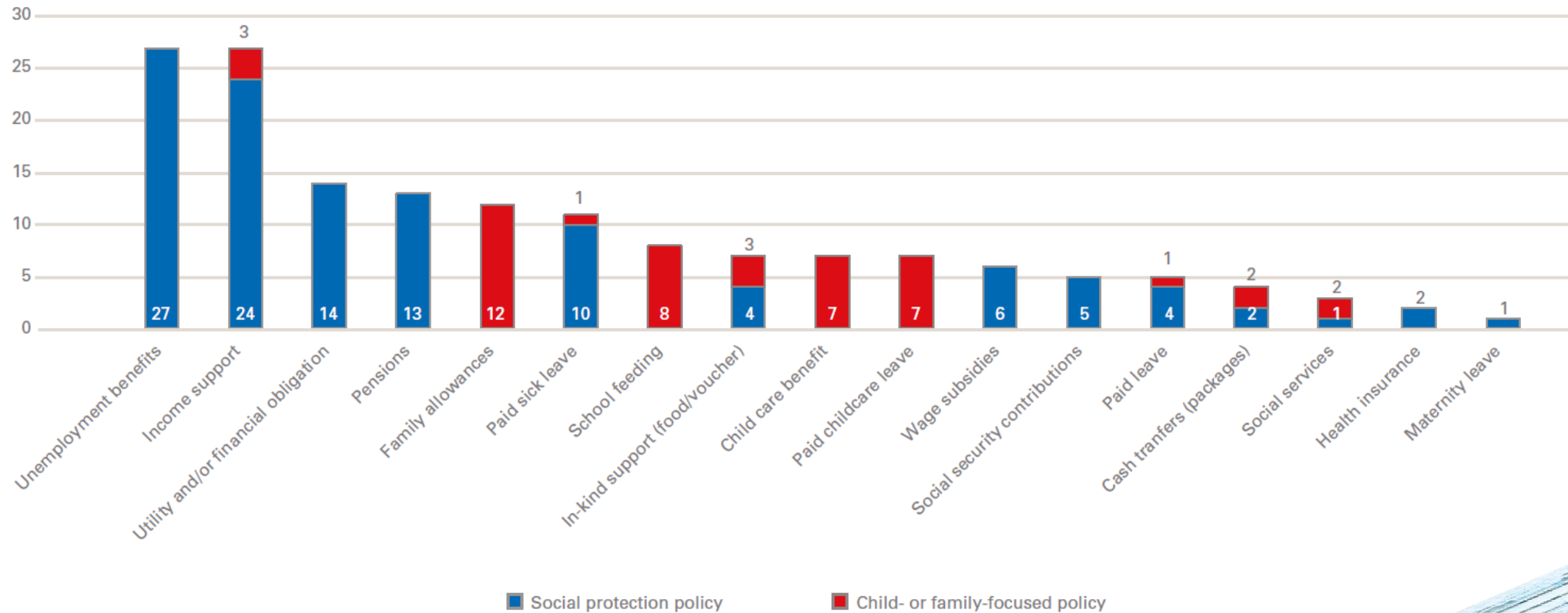
Comparing Economic stimulus packages, 2008-09 and 2020 (18 months to 7 months)



Source: Almenifi et al. 2020: Where is the money coming from?



In HICs, fewer than half of countries have direct child policies



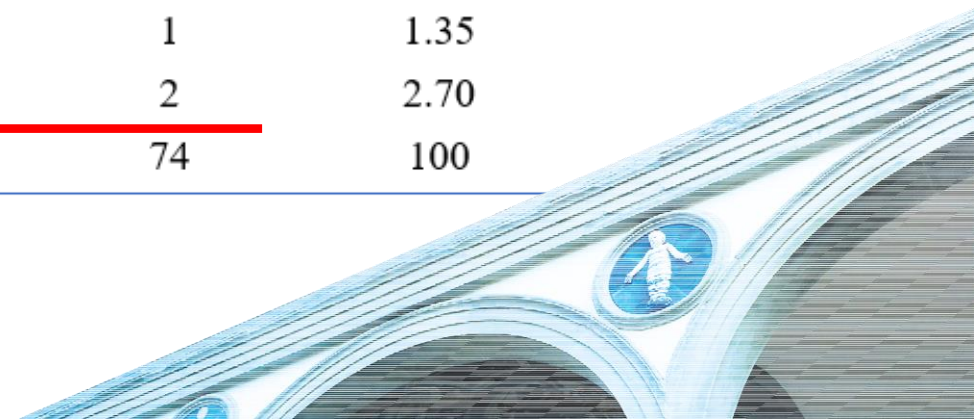
Policies and costs (USD PPP, in billions) for fiscal stimulus and social protection

Type of intervention	No. of responses	No. of costed responses	Total reported costs	Median cost per intervention (based on reported costs)	Estimated cost of all interventions	Proportion (%) of total sum
Fiscal stimulus	182	145	9,686.6	8.8	10,012.3	92,6%
Social protection – all	159	45	688.3	1.0	804.2	7,4%
(Child- and family-specific)	47	15	186.7	2.0	250.3	2,3%
(Social protection – other)	112	31	501.6	0.9		
Total	341	190	10,374.9	...	10,816.5	...













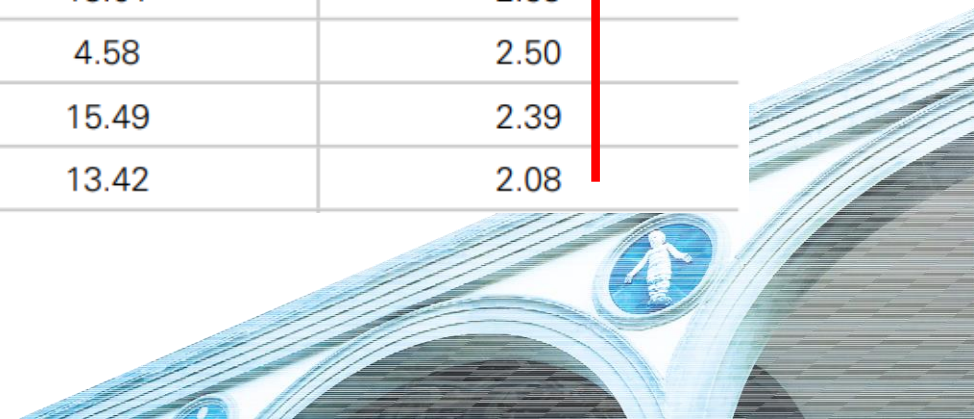
West and Central Africa, end 2020

Social Protection Category	Specific Measures	Number	Share (%)
Cash-based transfer	General Cash Transfer	20	27.03
	Child grant & Childcare support	1	1.35
In-kind transfers	Food, vouchers, etc.	17	22.97
	Child nutrition/School Feeding	3	4.05
Utility waivers & Subsidy	Mobile money user fee	10	13.51
	Water & electricity subsid	12	16.22
	Housing subsidy & Debt/Tax moratorium	4	5.41
Social Insurance	Health Insurance	1	1.35
	Pensions	2	2.70
	Social Security contributions	1	1.35
Wage subsidy	Formal sector workers	1	1.35
	Informal sector workers	2	2.70
		74	100



Debt and social spending

	Country	Total social spending (as % of GDP)*	Debt service (as % of GDP)	Debt service as proportion of social spending
Countries with a red tab: 60% of children living in multidimensional poverty				
Countries with an orange tab: 60% of children living in monetary poor households post-COVID-19				
Countries with a yellow tab: reports of declining public expenditure in response to COVID-19				
1	 South Sudan	1.21	13.54	11.19
2	 Haiti	5.46	21.25	3.89
3	 Gambia (The)	7.19	23.95	3.33
4	 Chad	3.44	10.71	3.11
5	 Togo	6.59	18.45	2.80
6	 Sri Lanka	5.26	14.65	2.79
7	 Ethiopia	5.14	13.01	2.53
8	 Zimbabwe	1.83	4.58	2.50
9	 Ghana	6.47	15.49	2.39
10	 Congo	6.46	13.42	2.08



What do policymakers need to do?

- Take advantage of a changing discourse on poverty
- Rebalance expenditures / address debt, low expenditures
 - System strengthening, coherence of a policy package
 - Set conditions on stimulus
- Ensure there is appropriate policy coverage by type
- Ensure coverage of the 'near poor'
- Protect existing child and family benefits and services
- Seek alternative to austerity / avoid austerity in family and child policy



Sources

[Supporting Families and Children Beyond COVID-19: Social protection in high-income countries \(unicef-irc.org\)](#)

[A Rapid Review of Economic Policy and Social Protection Responses to Health and Economic Crises and Their Effects on Children: Lessons for the COVID-19 pandemic response \(unicef-irc.org\)](#)

[World Bank – Where is the money coming from?](#)

[Supporting Families and Children Beyond COVID-19: Social protection in Southern and Eastern Europe and Central Asia \(unicef-irc.org\)](#)

[Social-spending-series COVID-19-and-the-looming-debt-crisis.pdf \(unicef-irc.org\)](#)

Additional studies from UNICEF Office of Research

[Impacts of Pandemics and Epidemics on Child Protection: Lessons learned from a rapid review in the context of COVID-19; https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/1104-working-paper-impacts-of-pandemics-and-epidemics-on-child-protection-lessons-learned.html?utm_source=covidmicrosite](https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/1104-working-paper-impacts-of-pandemics-and-epidemics-on-child-protection-lessons-learned.html?utm_source=covidmicrosite)