

# Measuring Child Poverty

Mary Eming Young  
Children and Youth

World Bank, Human Development Network

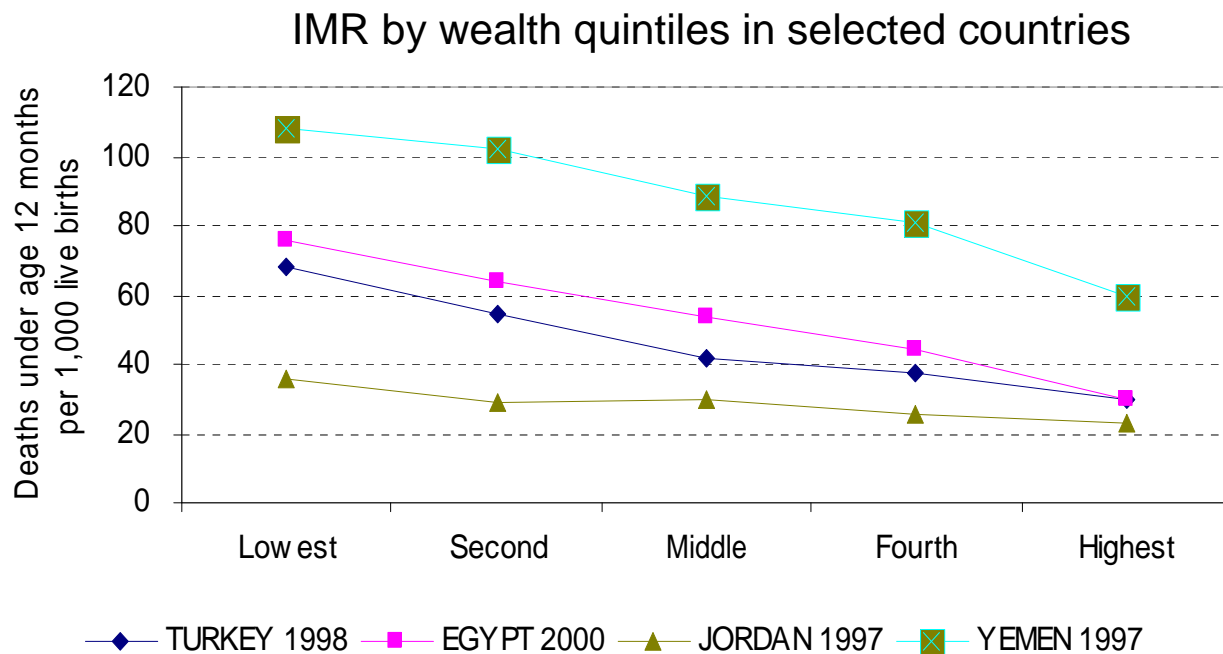
Based on: Dunkelberg, Osicka & van der Gaag 2006 “Measuring Child Poverty in Albania and Morocco: A Comparative Analysis using Different Welfare Measures”

# Outline

- Why is it important to measure child poverty?
- The importance of doing comparative child poverty research
- Towards a more comprehensive measure of child well being – the Child Welfare Index
- From measuring child poverty to action

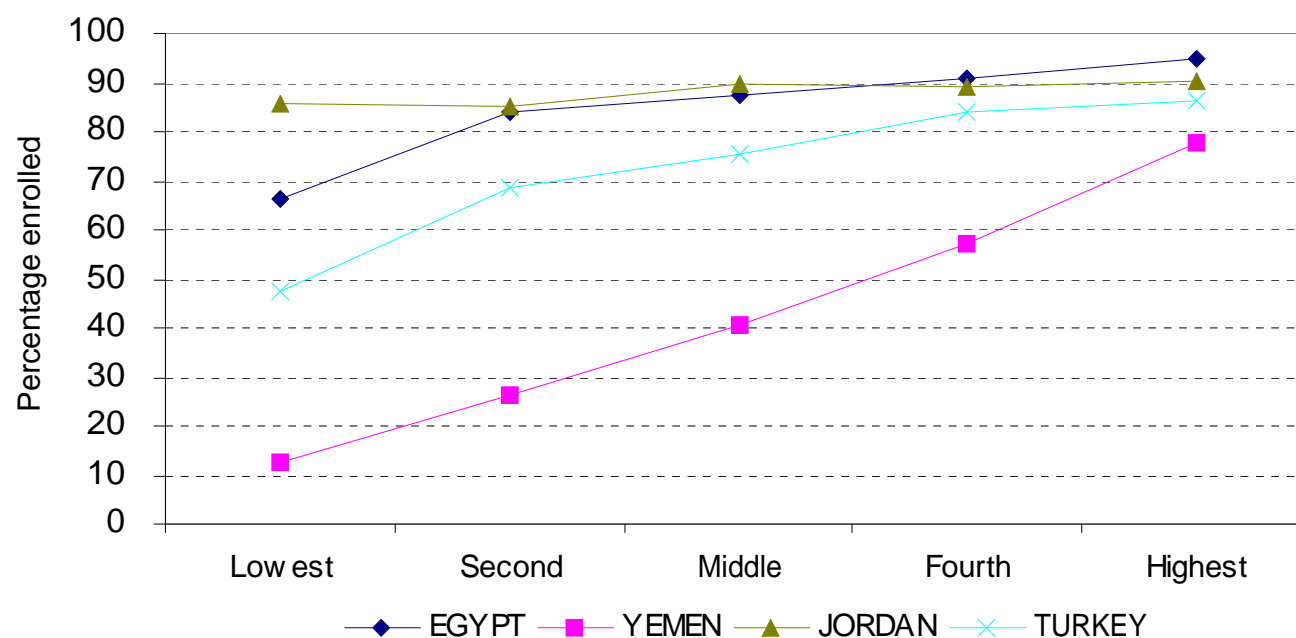
# I. Why is it Important to Measure Child Poverty?

Child poverty correlates strongly with important child well-being indicators



# I. Why is it Important to Measure Child Poverty?

Enrolment in primary school, girls ages 6 to 10 yrs old, by wealth quintiles



# **I. Why is it Important to Measure Child Poverty? - Conclusion**

- Child poverty correlates strongly with important child well-being indicators**
- Poor children grow up in resource poor environments, have long term detrimental consequences**

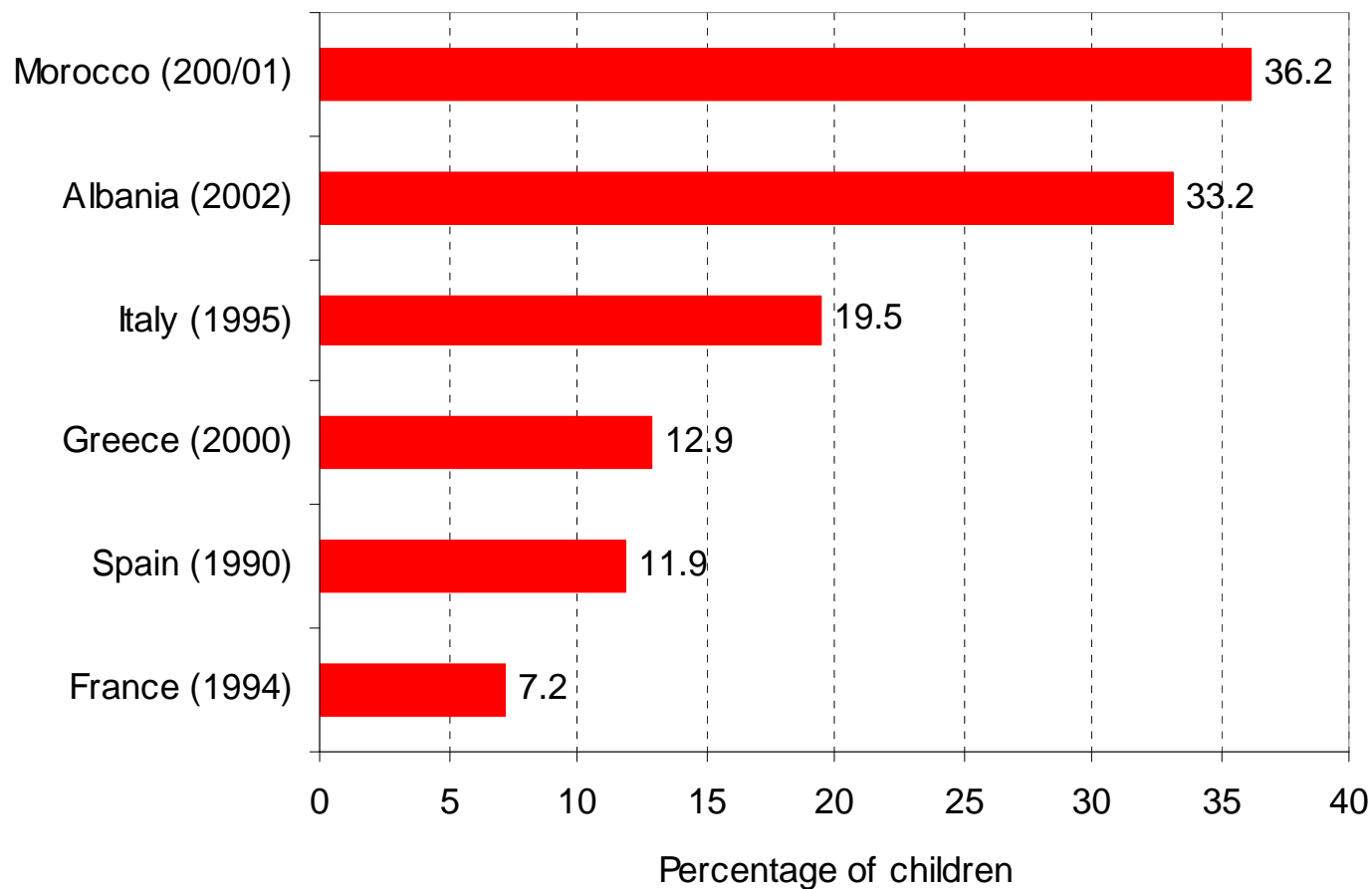
## II. The Importance of Doing Comparative Child Poverty Research

- By comparing child poverty levels and profiles across countries we can identify policies and programs that have been successful in fostering child welfare
- Comparisons are only meaningful if the same method of analysis is being used for all countries
- In this presentation we adopt the methodology proposed by Rainwater and Smeeding in their book *“Poor Kids in Rich countries”*

## **II. Results on Child Poverty in 5 Mediterranean Countries**

- Measure of welfare: per capita disposable income
- Poverty line: half the medium
- Poverty measure: percentage of children (birth to 18 yrs old) who are born and grow up in poverty

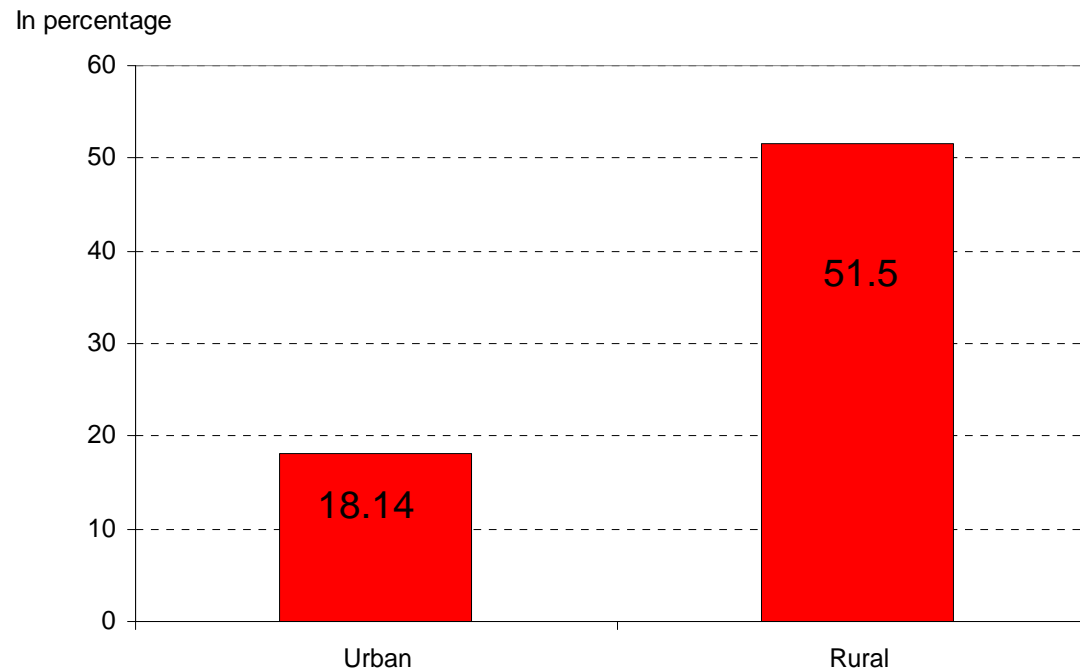
# II. Child Poverty in 5 Mediterranean Countries



Source: author's calculations

# II. Child Poverty in Morocco by Urban and Rural

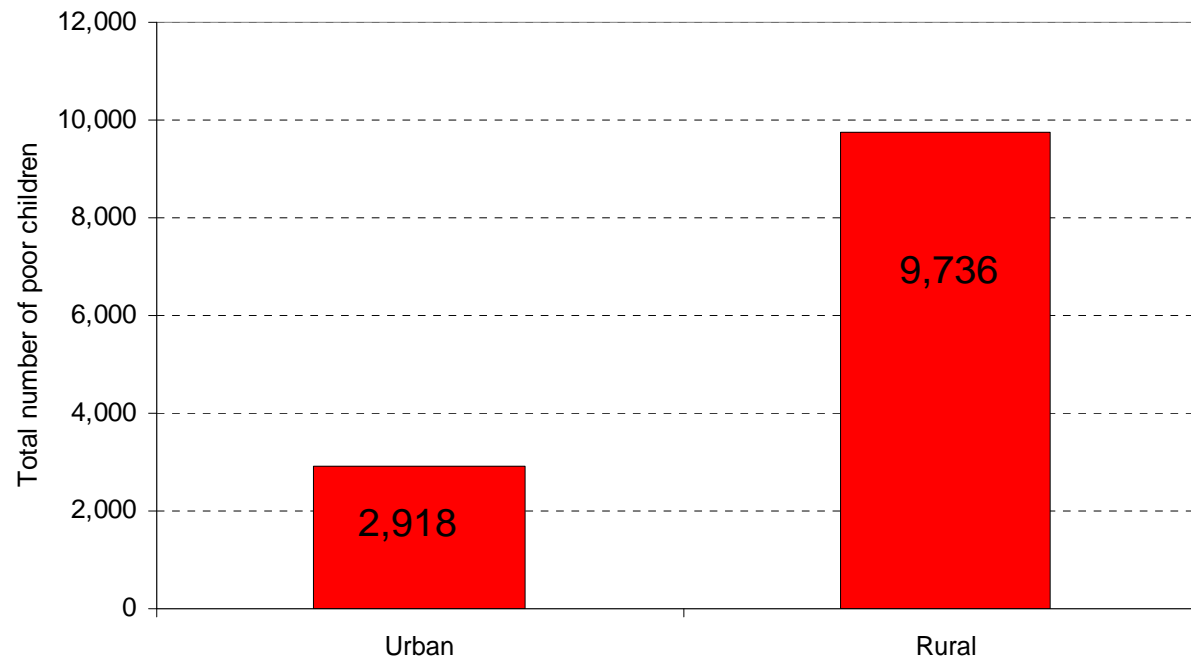
Percentage of children living in urban and rural households who are poor



Source: author's calculations

# II. Child Poverty in Morocco by Urban and Rural

Total number of poor children living in urban and rural households

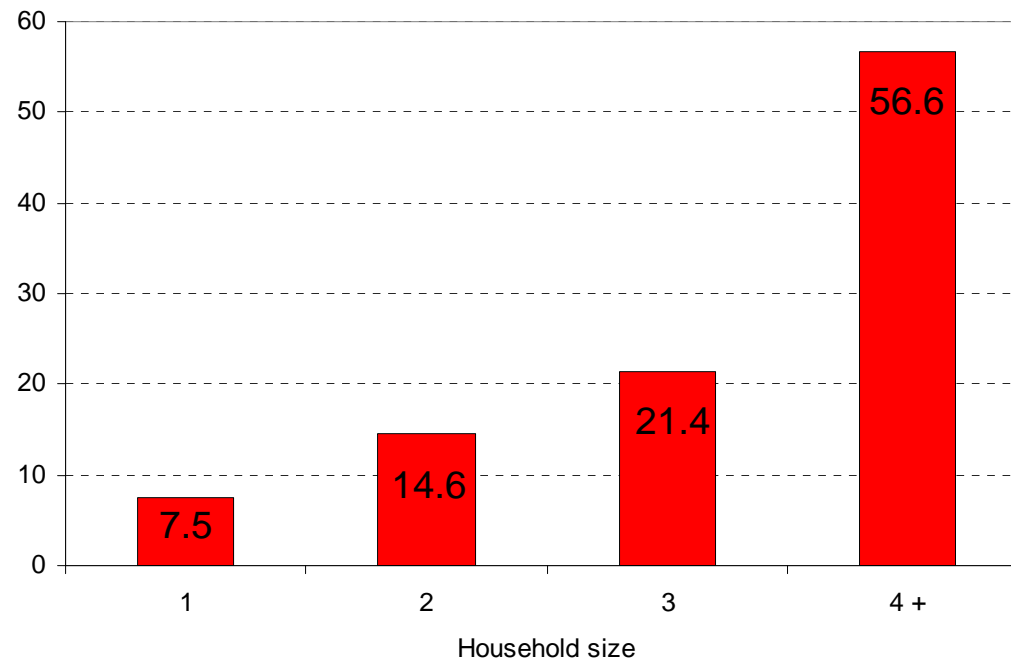


Source: author's calculations

# II. Child Poverty in Morocco by Household Size

Number of Children in Poor Households

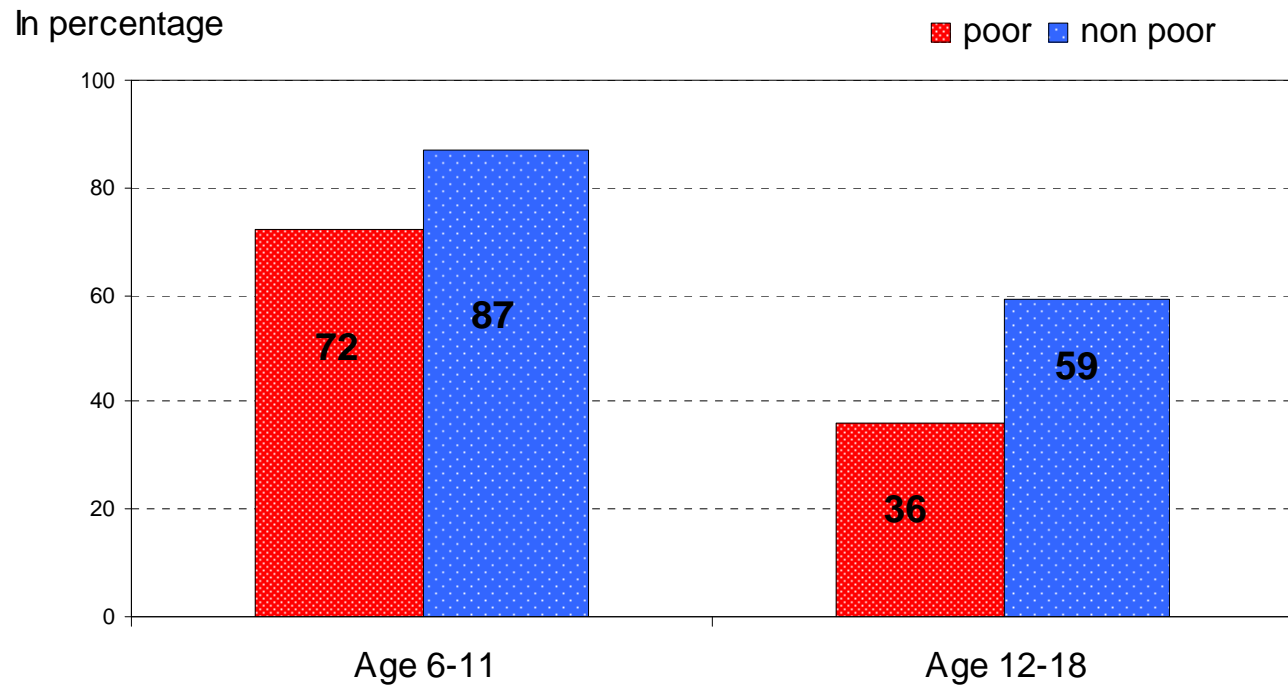
In percentage



Source: author's calculations

# II. Correlates of Child Poverty in Morocco

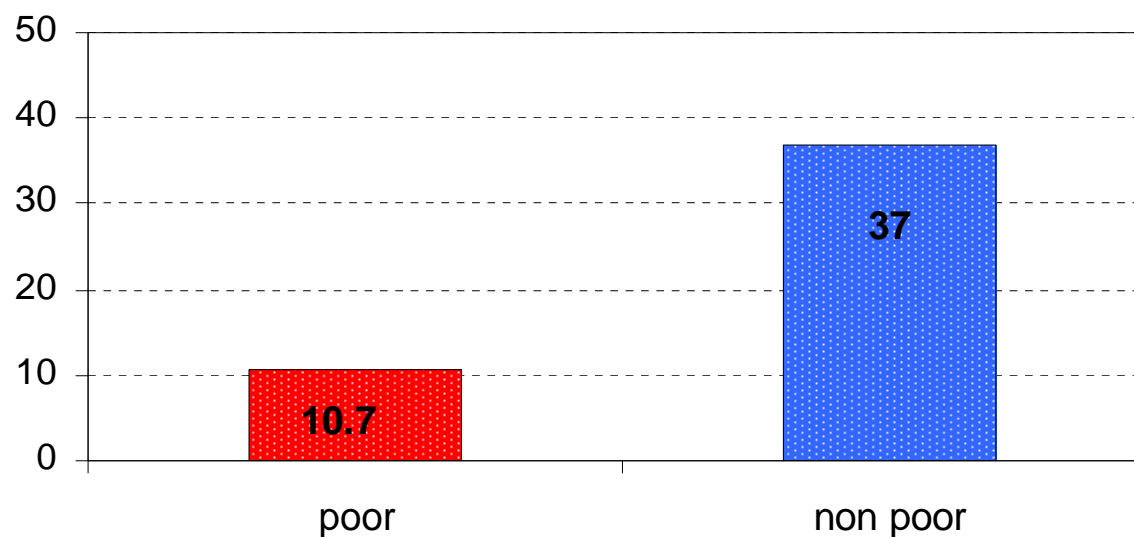
## Net Enrollment Rates for Poor and Non Poor



# IV. Enrolment in ECD in Morocco

Percentage of children ages 3 to 5 attending preschool programs, poor and non poor

In percentage



Source: author's calculations

## **II. Child Poverty in Morocco**

### **Conclusions**

- 36.2 % of children ages birth to 18 are poor
- Majority live in rural areas are poor – 51 %
- Most poor children live in large households with four or more children
- Poor children are less likely to be enrolled in school

# **III. Towards a More Comprehensive Measure of Child Well-Being: The CWI**

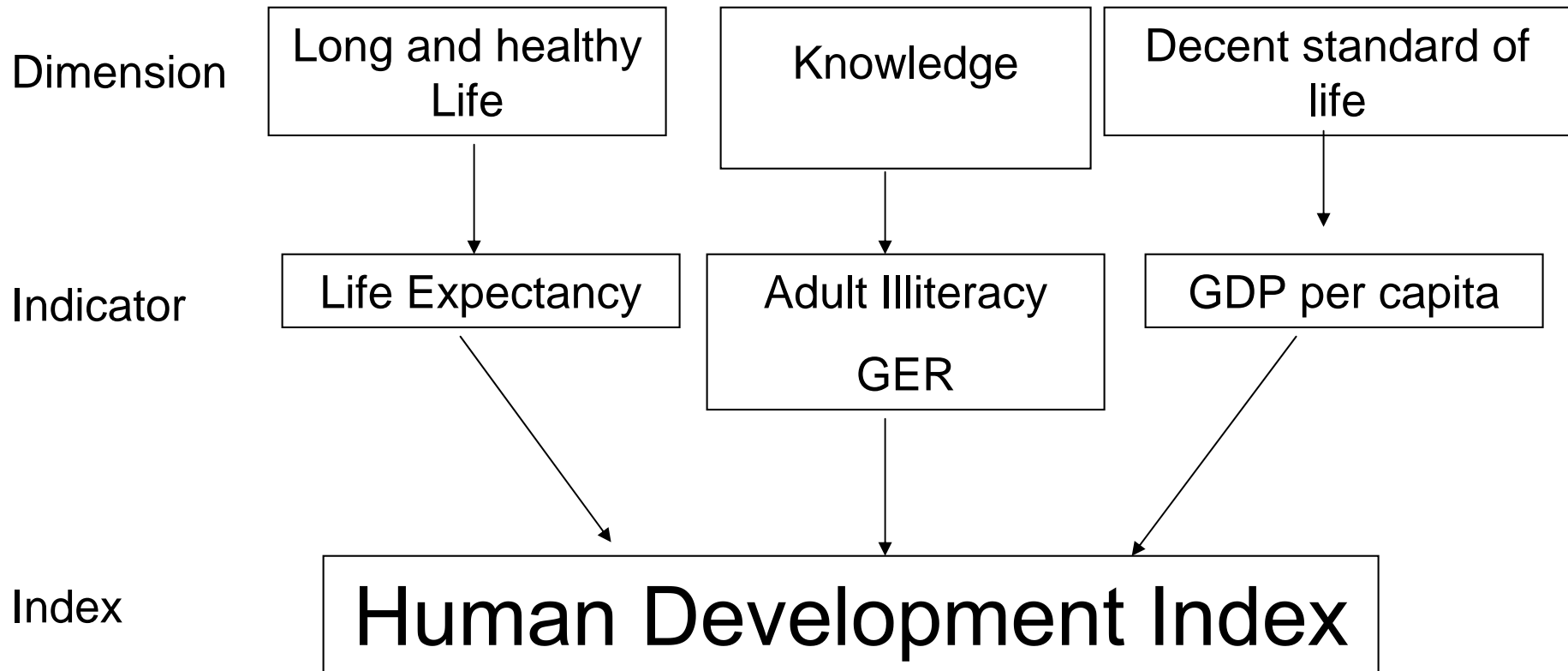
- To compare well-being across countries the welfare measure used was always GDP per capita
- In 1990 UNDP proposed to use a more comprehensive measure: the Human Development Index

# III. Components of the HD Index

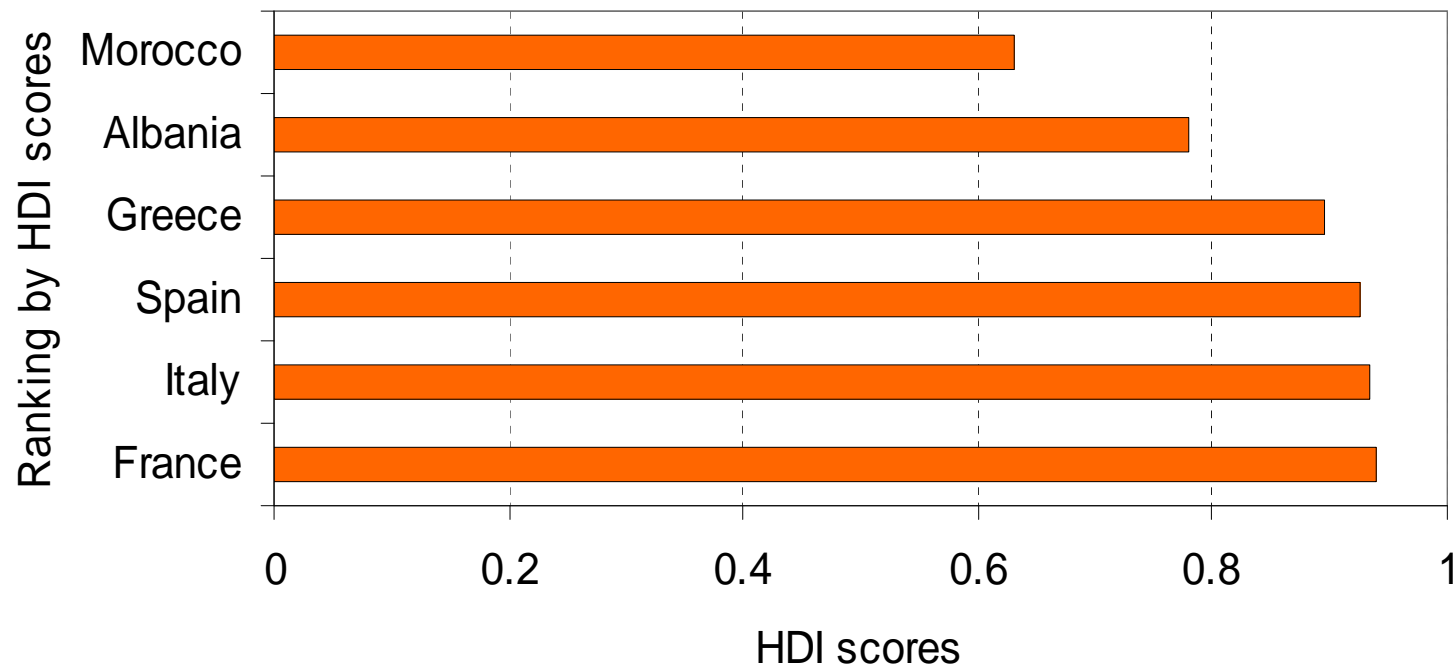
## Dimensions and Indicators

- A long and healthy life → life expectancy at birth
- Knowledge → adult illiteracy rate, Gross enrolment rate
- Decent standard of life → GDP per capita

# III. Components of the HD Index

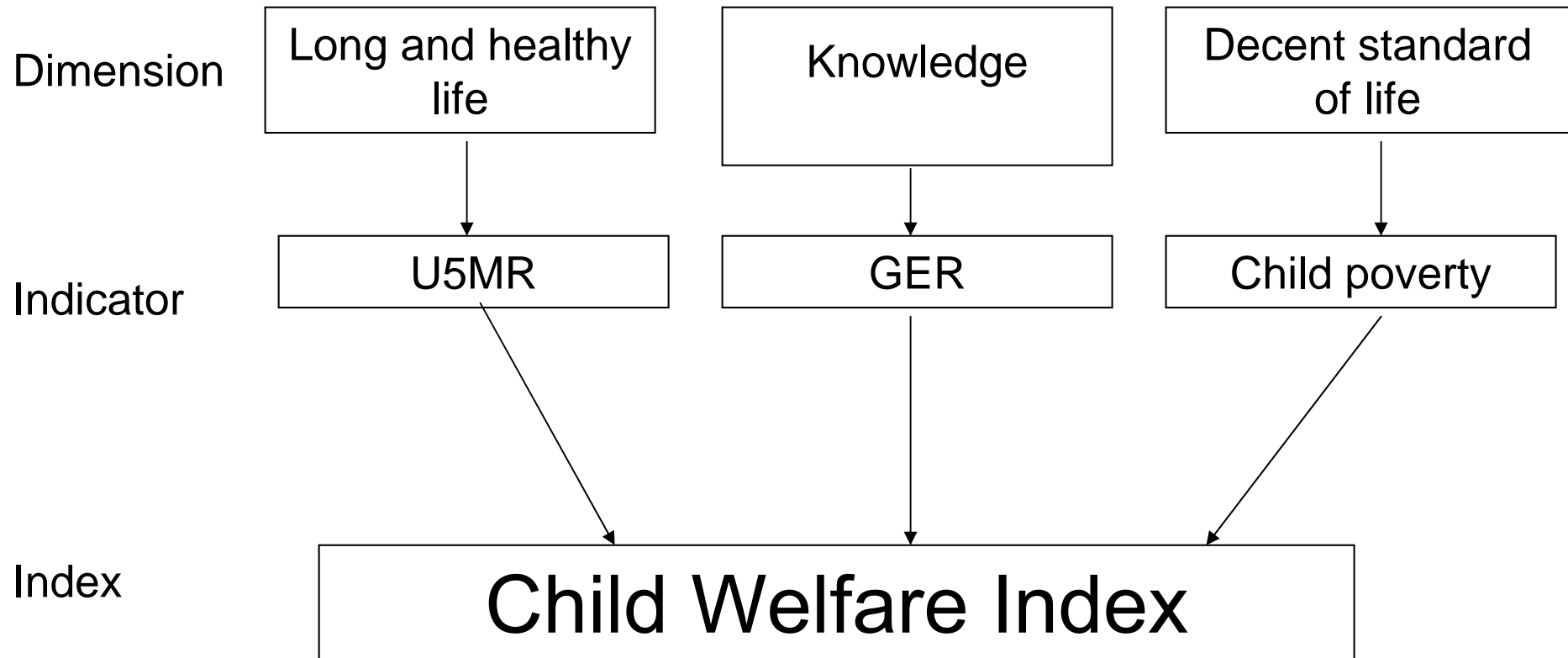


# III. HDI Results for 5 Mediterranean Countries – ranking by HDI



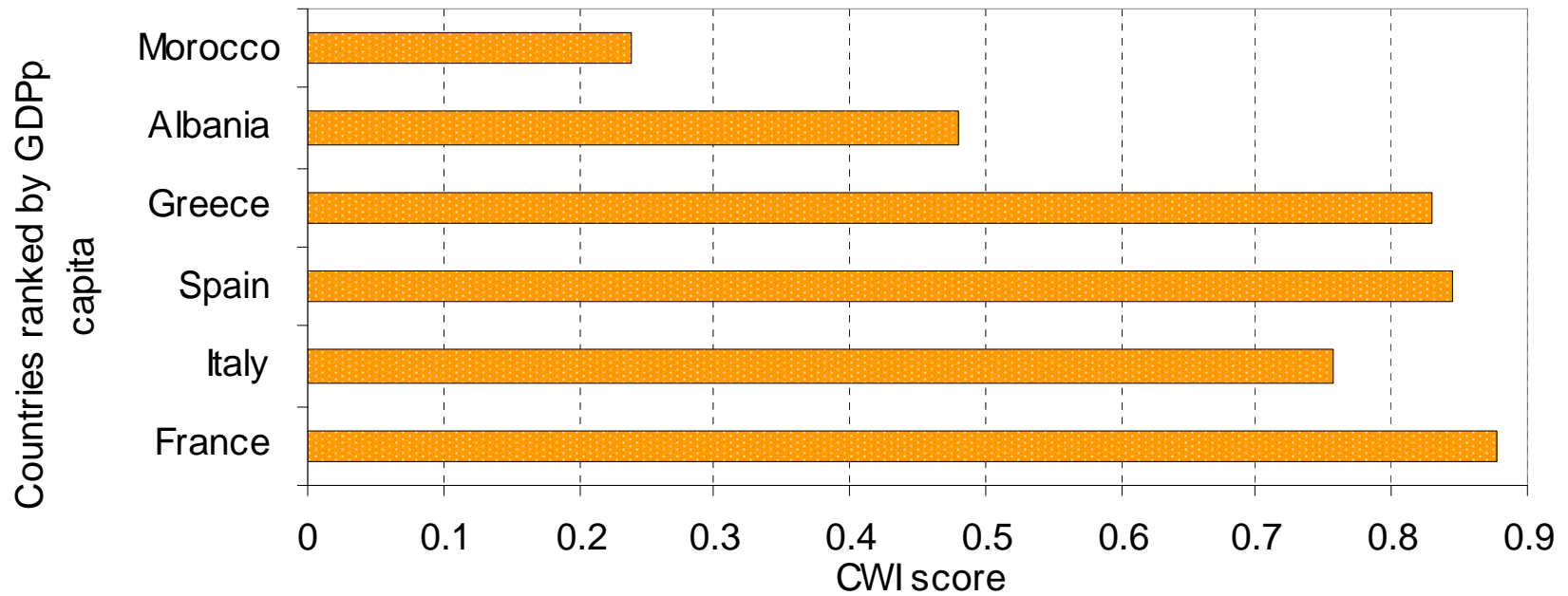
Source: author's calculations

# III. The Child Welfare Index



# III. The Child Welfare Index

**CWI scores for Six Mediterranean countries**



Source: author's calculations

# **IV. From Measuring Child Poverty to Action**

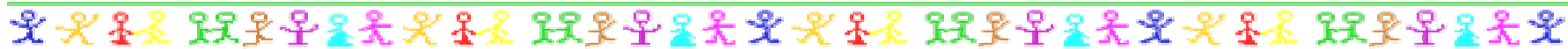
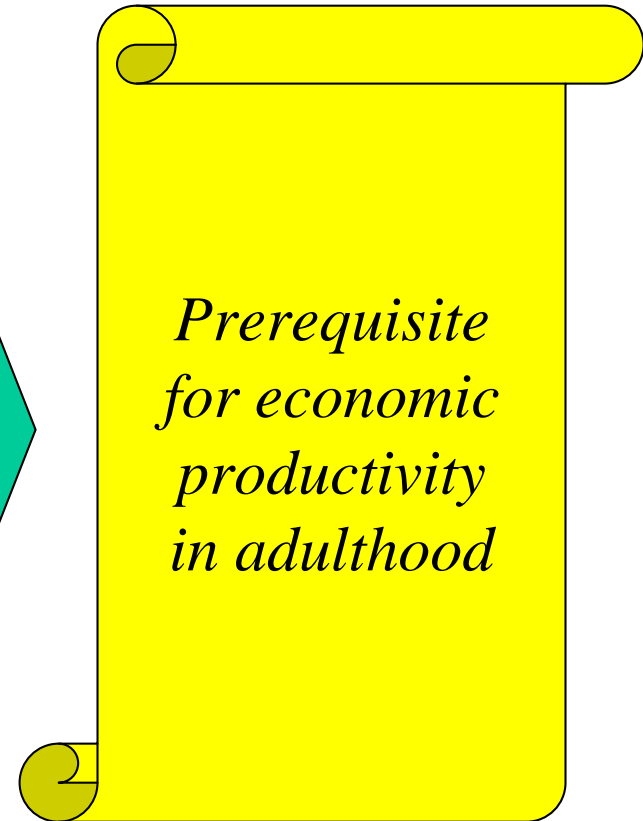
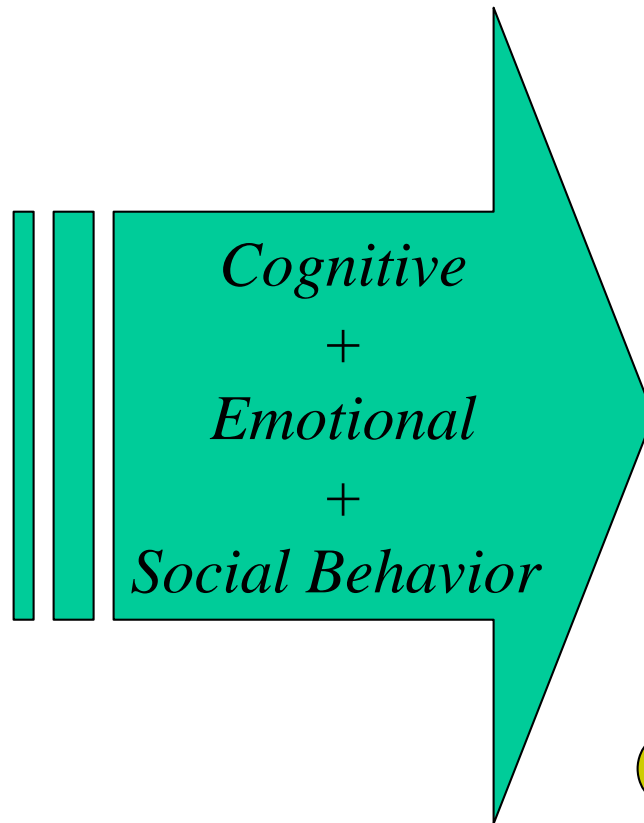
- What is the relevance to the topic of this conference – Youth?
- Detrimental effects of child poverty on brain development – more negative during early childhood than later life stages
- ECD programs can break the intergenerational transmission of poverty





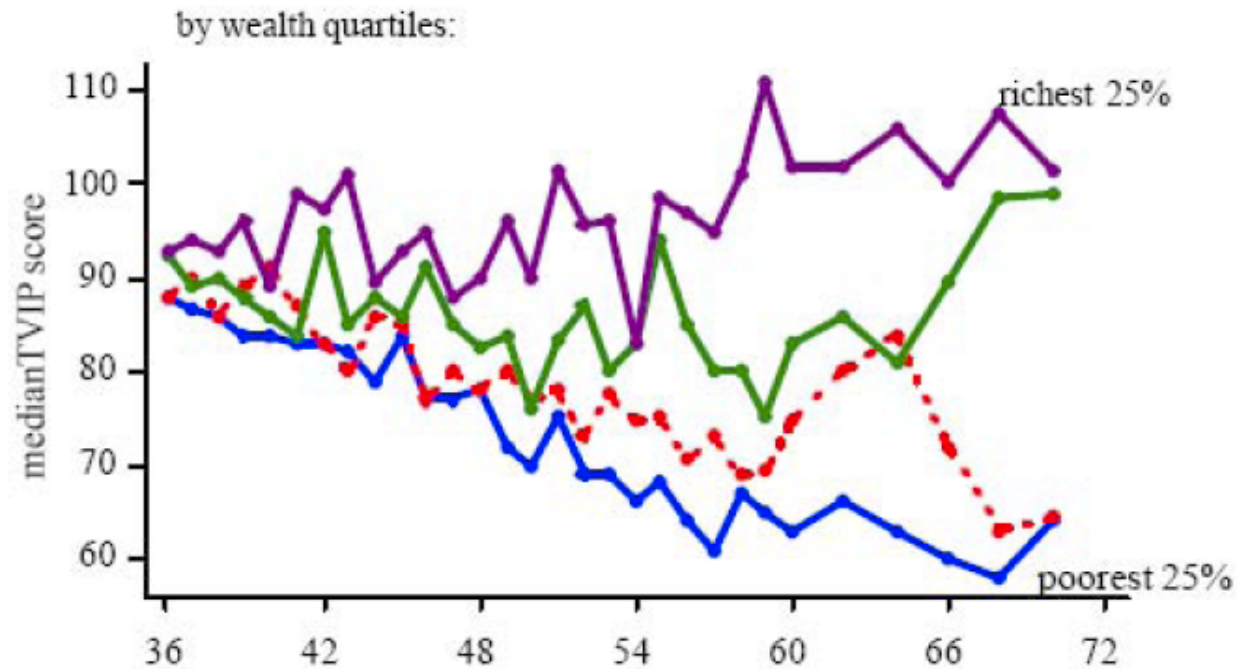
# *Findings from Neuroscience: Early Experiences Shape...*

*Brain architecture*  
*Neurochemistry*  
*Gene expression*



# IV. Differences on child development outcomes between poor and non poor children manifest early

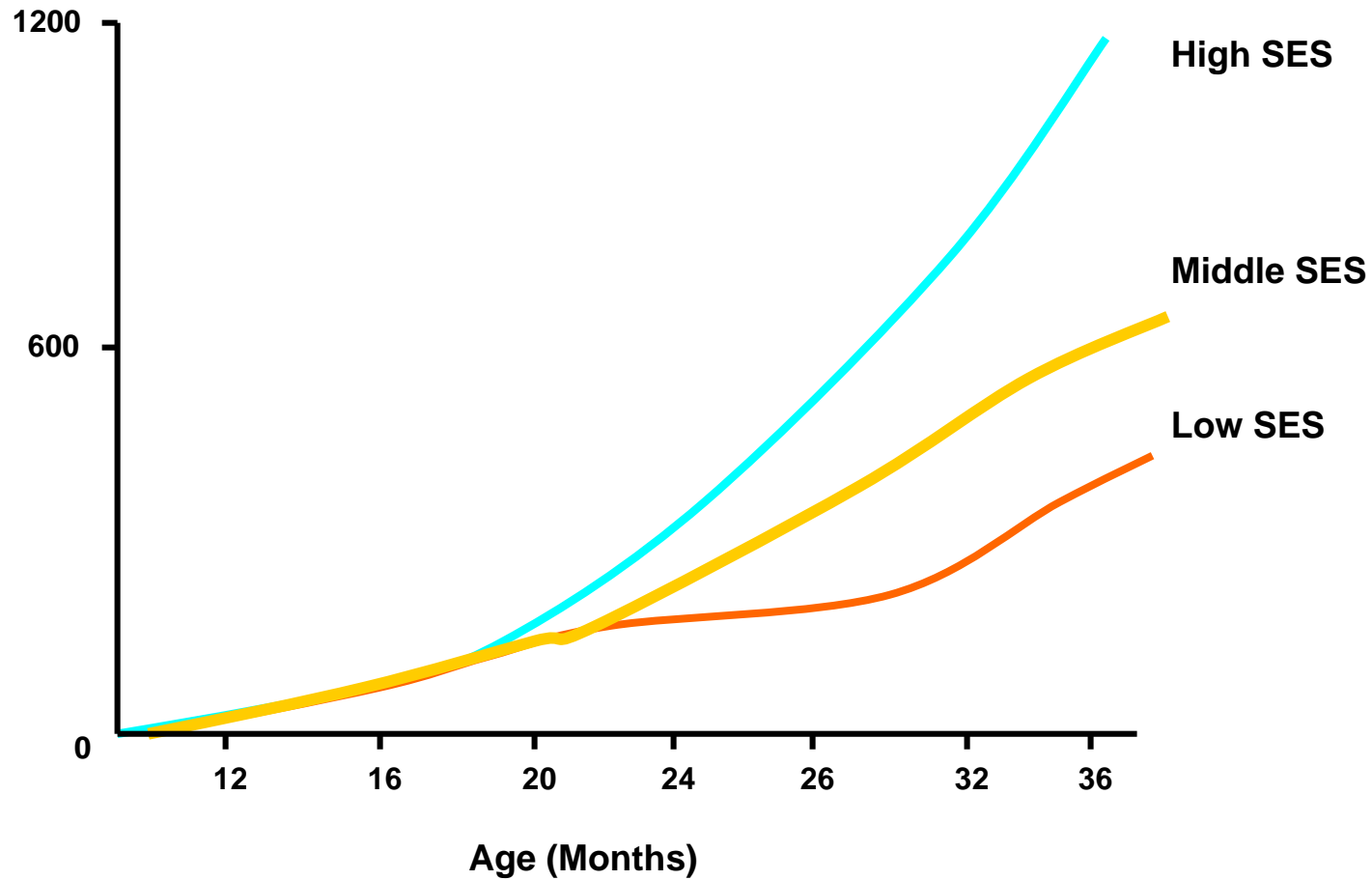
Vocabulary Scores by SES Quartiles  
in 36 to 72 month old Children in Ecuador



Source: Paxson & Shady, 2005

# Literacy and Vocabulary Growth – First 3 Years

Vocabulary



Source: B.Hart & T. Risley. *Meaningful Differences in Everyday Experiences of Young American Children*, 1995.

# **IV. Benefits of ECD Programs for High Risk Children**

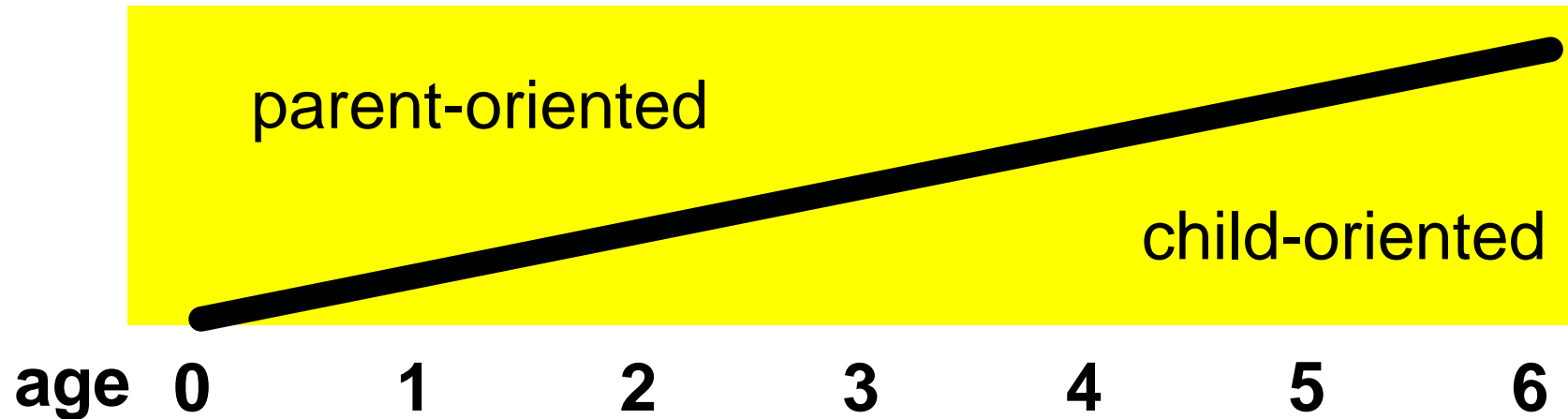
- Higher Employment
- Higher High school completions
- Less Crime
- Less Teenage pregnancies
- Less Drug use

## IV. ECD Menu of Options

ECD interventions include:

- Delivering services to children birth to age 6
- Training caregivers and educating parents
- Building public awareness and strengthening demand

# Source of Brain Stimulation



## Components of Early Childhood Development and Parenting Centers:

- ECD & care (parental and non-parental) arrangements
- Play-based learning
- Resources
- Prenatal & postnatal supports
- Nutrition programs

# **IV. World Bank ECD Portfolio in MENA Region**

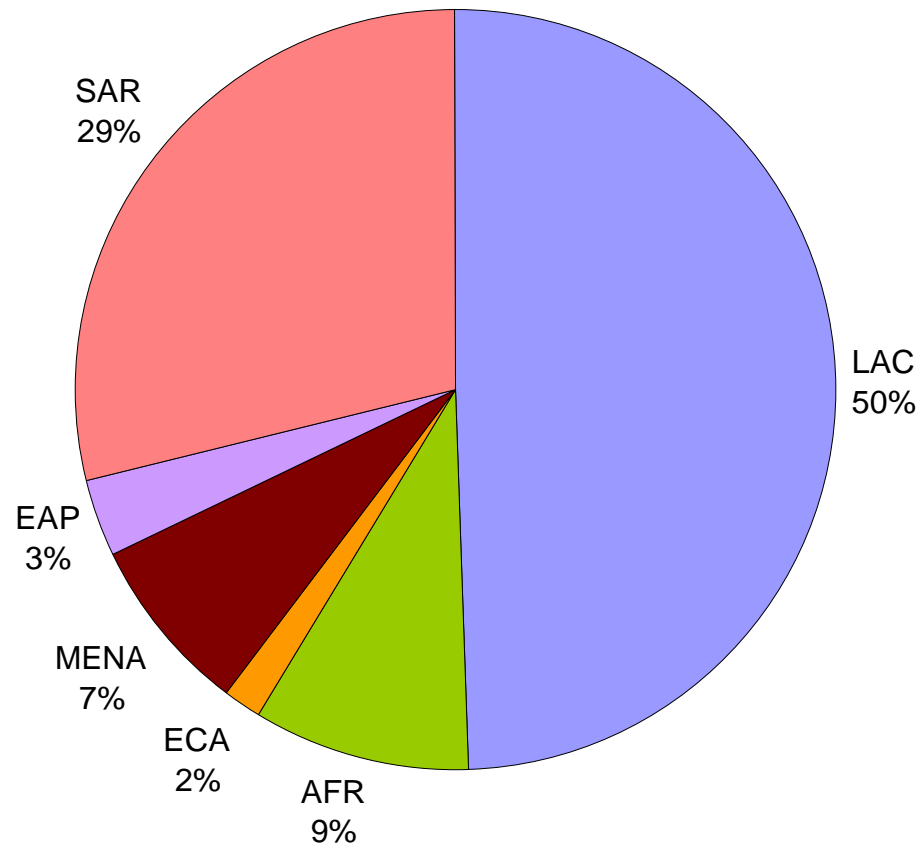
World Bank supported ECD Projects in  
MENA region:

- Yemen – Child Development Project
- Jordan - Education for Knowledge  
Economy
- Egypt – Early Enhancement Project

# World Bank Cumulative Lending for ECD

## More than \$1.6 billion over 15 years

By Region 1990–2005 (in US\$ million)



# Conclusions

- If child welfare is the focus: Study child poverty
- Child poverty is highly correlated with health and education outcomes and life chances
- More comprehensive measure of child welfare is feasible :
  - Use HDI as an example
  - CWI should include child poverty
- From measurement to action: ECD is a powerful weapon to break the intergenerational transfer of poverty