

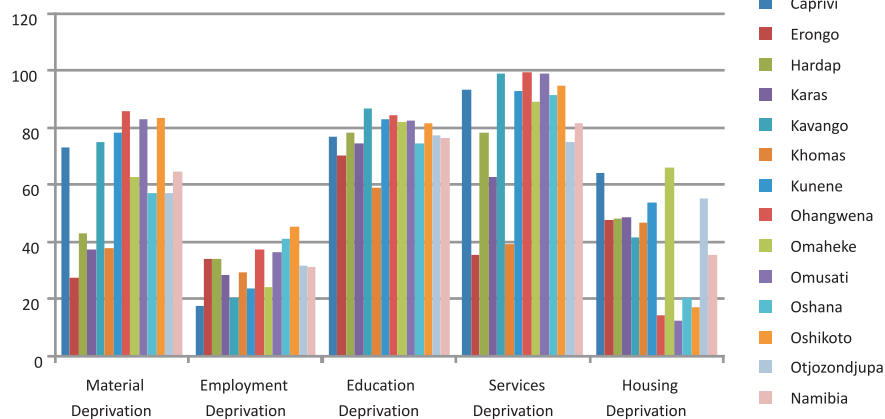
A Review of Regional Patterns of Multiple Deprivation in Namibia

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Namibia, classified as an upper middle-income country with an estimated per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$5,502, remains one of the most unequal societies in the world, not only in terms of income levels but also with respect to access to basic services. While the economy has grown steadily in the recent past, with the exception of 2009, the country is still faced with the twin problems of high levels of poverty and unemployment. And as the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) draws near, there are mixed results, with good progress recorded with respect to attainment of universal primary education, gender equality and empowerment of women, reduction in infant mortality, reduction in HIV prevalence, and ensuring environmental sustainability. Maternal deaths, however, remain high, with a doubling of the numbers between 1992 and 2006.

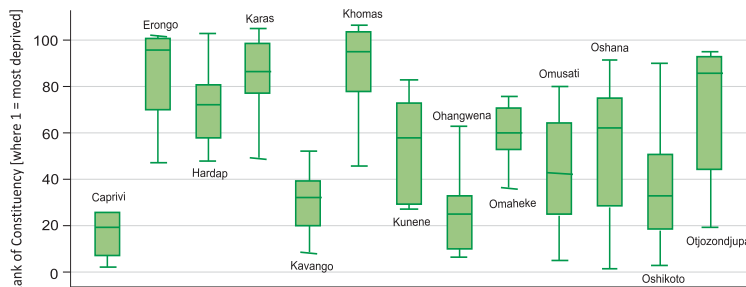
Still, national aggregate figures often mask sub-national and local-level realities with respect to progress towards the MDGs and, specifically, the state of deprivation with respect to access to basic services. A review of deprivation at the sub-national level reveals wide inter- and intra-regional variations in the rates of deprivation—that is, percentages of populations that are deprived of basic services, as shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. Access to Basic Services in Namibia, by Region



In terms of multiple deprivation, estimated at the constituency level but aggregated and presented at regional level, Caprivi, Ohangwena, Oshikoto and Kavango regions have their constituencies concentrated at the most deprived end of the spectrum, while Hardap, Erongo, Karas and Khomas, in that order, have their constituencies concentrated in the least deprived part of the national distribution, with Omusati, Oshana, Kunene, Otjozondjupa and Omaheke occupying the middle range, as shown in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2. Namibian Index of Multiple Deprivation 2001, Constituency Level by Region: Interquartile Range



These findings point to wide variations in the rates of deprivation in the six domains and provide a useful starting point for interrogating the reasons for the existence of such wide inter- and intra-regional inequality and inequity in access to basic services. The study also provides a useful basis for informing public policy discourse with regards to resource allocation and, importantly, ring fencing and targeting those resources to areas or sectors where the particular regions are most deprived, as part of an overall re-design of the country's development planning landscape. The study could also be useful in providing a basis for linking development to the exercise of

political and other forms of leadership, and accountability for results and impact, at the lowest possible level. The findings of this study could also make a useful contribution to policy and decision-making related to the institutionalisation of the Namibia Index of Multiple Deprivation-weighted Equalization Fund (NIMDEF). In that context, regions, and subsequently constituencies, would receive and apply development funds, including the three-year, multi-billion-dollar Targeted Intervention Programme for Employment and Economic Growth (TIPEEG), on the basis of the relative weights of their index of multiple deprivation and population size. More broadly, the study could be useful as the country moves towards a green economy driven by a combination of public and private investments that reduce carbon emission and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, with the aim of improving human well-being and social equity.

Reference:

UNDP (Forthcoming). *Constituency-level Namibian Index of Multiple Deprivation 2001*. New York, UNDP.

