

The decline of non-monetary child deprivation in Argentina: 2004-2021.

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Abstract

The non-monetary dimensions of child poverty are contemplated as rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which became constitutional in Argentina in 1994. More than 30 years after the signing of the Convention, 28% of the country's children, around 3.7 million, still do not exercise their rights effectively.

The available information shows that between 2004 and 2021, the child non-monetary poverty fell. Which of the six dimensions that can be measured with the available data —education, social protection, housing, sanitation, water and habitat— were responsible for this fall? Our research question leads us to assess the weight of each dimension and to analyze the role of other factors that are highly correlated with non-monetary deprivation.

Permanent Household Survey data is used and the panel data structure is exploited to observe the transitions of children between poverty and non-poverty of rights between 2004 and 2021. Multivariate analysis is used to assess the importance of their associated factors; and decomposition techniques are applied to estimate their relative importance in each dimension. The multivariate models yield the probabilities of moving into or out of poverty according to factors that can be observed in the survey. The main result will be to determine the weight of each factor in these transits.

Deprivation of rights went from 58% in 2004 to 28% in 2021 and, unlike monetary deprivation, declined during the coronavirus pandemic. The descriptive analysis shows that between these years the proportion of children outside the social protection system decreased ostensibly, although the proportion of deprived children in all other dimensions also decreased. The dynamic analysis and the analysis of the associated factors will make it possible to explore the underlying reasons for this decline in greater depth.

The study will make it possible to evaluate the importance of factors associated with non-monetary child poverty. In particular, programs such as the Universal Child Allowance have achieved visible and positive results in the well-being of children, especially with regard to deprivations considered severe. The results could provide guidance on ways to deepen and accelerate this process, identifying those dimensions and associated factors that still keep a very high number of children outside the effective exercise of their rights.