Putting Children First:
New Frontiers in the Fight Against Child Poverty in Africa

Edited by
Keetie Roelen, Richard Morgan, Yisak Tafere

CROP

END CHILD POVERTY
GLOBAL COALITION

ibidem

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About CROP

CROP, the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty, is a response from the academic community to the problems of poverty. The programme was initiated by the International Social Science Council (ISSC) in 1992, and the CROP Secretariat hosted by the University of Bergen (UiB) was officially opened in June 1993 by the Director General of UNESCO, Dr Frederico Mayor. In 2018, the ISSC merged with the International Council for Science (ICSU) to become the International Science Council (ISC).

In recent years, poverty-related issues have moved up on the international agenda, with poverty eradication now defined as the greatest global challenge facing the world today. In co-operation with the ISC and the UiB, CROP works with knowledge networks, institutions and scholars to establish independent and critical poverty research in order to help shape policies for long-term poverty prevention and eradication.

The CROP network comprises scholars engaged in poverty-related research across a variety of academic disciplines. Researchers from more than a hundred different countries are represented in the network, which is coordinated by the CROP Secretariat at the University of Bergen, Norway.

The CROP series on *International Studies in Poverty Research* presents expert research and essential analyses of different aspects of poverty worldwide. By promoting a fuller understanding of the nature, extent, depth, distribution, trends, causes and effects of poverty and poverty-related issues, this series will contribute to knowledge concerning the prevention and eradication of poverty at global, regional, national and local levels.

Keetie Roelen, Richard Morgan
and Yisak Tafere (Eds.)

PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST

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INTRODUCTION

Keetie Roelen, Richard Morgan and Yisak Tafere

1.   Introduction

Child poverty is devastating in its effects and presents one of the most urgent challenges for any society. Poverty in all its dimensions is detrimental for early childhood development (Walker et al. 2007) and leads to often irreversible damage for the lives of girls and boys, locking children and families into intergenerational poverty. Confronting child poverty is an ethical and practical necessity; fulfilling the rights of children, including adolescents, by lifting intersecting deprivations and through expanding opportunities can unlock vast economic and social dividends.

Despite important strides in the fight against poverty in the past two decades, child poverty remains widespread and persistent. Worldwide and throughout Africa, children are much more likely to be poor than adults are. Poverty rates are highest among children in sub-Saharan Africa; one in five children grow up in extreme monetary poverty (UNICEF and World Bank, 2016), and two-thirds of children in the region experience multidimensional poverty (OPHI, 2017), including high rates of mortality and malnutrition; poor living conditions and educational outcomes; and often high risks of exposure to different forms of violence. One in four children in the Arab States—which include Northern Africa— experience multidimensional poverty. Estimates suggest that by 2030, nine out of ten children suffering from extreme monetary poverty will be living in sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 2016).

A fast-changing world means that the face of child poverty and its drivers are ever-evolving. While the majority of poor children can still be found in rural areas, the world is growing increasingly urban (UN, 2014), posing new challenges to children and their families in terms of navigating their lives and livelihoods. Undernutrition remains a global challenge, with 174 million children estimated to be malnourished in 2010 (Black et al., 2017). High unemployment and scant provision of good-quality basic services challenges families' abilities to provide an enabling environment for their children, and for adolescents to move safely from childhood into

adulthood. The onset of climate change, environmental shocks and ongoing conflict have led to an age of displacement across the region (see UNICEF, 2015), presenting a huge challenge to fighting poverty for those most vulnerable.

In 2015, the world explicitly committed itself to the eradication of child poverty. Target 1.2 in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 1) calls for the eradication of poverty in all its forms for individuals of all ages, making the elimination of child poverty "a universal commitment as well as an urgent global priority" (Harland, 2016: 8). Combatting child poverty in Africa calls for nuanced understandings of the complex realities that children face, and effective and innovative policy responses for boys and girls across their life courses. This edited volume brings together applied research from across the continent, aiming to contribute to academic understandings and to appropriate and effective policy initiatives. It is based on the framing of and contributions to the international conference *Putting Children First: Identifying Solutions and Taking Action to Tackle Poverty and Inequality in Africa* that was held from 23–25 October 2017 in Addis Ababa. The conference included 150 researchers, practitioners, policy makers and civil society activists involved in the fight against child poverty. This edited volume reflects a bridging of debates on how to address child poverty in Africa from across academic and policy spaces, and aims to push the frontiers by challenging existing narratives, exploring alternative understandings of the complexities and dynamics underpinning child poverty and—crucially—examining policy options that work to reduce it.

This volume presents new and applied research from across the continent in three themes, namely (i) manifestations of child poverty, (ii) child-sensitive social protection, and (iii) transitions from childhood into adulthood. Policy makers, practitioners and researchers joined by the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty identified these as key themes within which more evidence was needed, particularly for bringing research into the policy sphere.

2.   Key themes in the fight against child poverty

2.1. Manifestations of child poverty

An important first step towards achieving SDG 1 and the eradication of child poverty involves the identification of children who are living in poverty and understanding their needs and vulnerabilities. The availability of data and efforts to measure and map child poverty has led to a rapid expansion in the evidence base on children's living conditions as well as causes and trajectories out of poverty. It is now widely accepted that different measures lead to differential estimates of poverty and identify different groups of children as being poor (Roelen, 2017). This is exemplified by the recent estimates published by the World Bank and UNICEF, and by Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI). It is therefore crucial that different measures are used in complementary ways and that advances are made to further improve them. Important strides forward include UNICEF's Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) (Plavgo and Milliano, 2014), the extension of OPHI's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to children (OPHI, 2017) and recent global estimates of monetary child poverty by the World Bank and UNICEF (Newhouse et al. 2016). All of these provide crucial impetus to policy efforts towards reduction of child poverty (UNICEF and the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, 2017).

Notwithstanding the important strides in child poverty measurement, current quantitative understandings overlook important psychosocial and relational issues that are core components of children's experiences of living in poverty. It has long been asserted, for example, that shame lies at the 'irreducible, absolutist core' of poverty (Sen, 1983: 159) and has been shown to be a cross-cultural experience (Walker et al., 2013) also affecting children (Dornan and Oganda-Portela, 2016).

Knowledge gaps also persist with respect to malnutrition and hunger, arguably among the most pressing issues facing children and undermining their rights and opportunities. Malnutrition, especially in the first two years of life, poses a serious threat to children's physical and cognitive development with potentially irreversible and cumulative damaging effects that persist during their life-cycle (Smith and Haddad, 2015). A greater understanding of its interactions with other dimensions of child poverty and deprivation is required.

Any assessment of poverty, including child poverty, also needs to acknowledge its dynamic nature. A recognition of the non-static nature of poverty has long been a key argument for adopting more longitudinal approaches to its study (Baulch and Hoddinott, 2000). The need for understanding movements in and out of poverty is compounded by African children increasingly facing multiple shocks in an age of climate change (UNICEF, 2014a), urbanisation (Ruthstein et al., 2016), and conflict. These new realities change the experiences of poverty and the nature of children's vulnerabilities. Most crucially, they change the necessary responses to prevent falls into poverty, and to promote moves out of it.

Furthermore, while the acknowledgement that measurement of child poverty needs to be based on complementary and dynamic approaches reflects the recognition that child poverty is complex and multi-faceted, the focus on rigid and quantified categorisations of poverty can be considered to undermine nuanced understandings of children's lives. Taking account of complex realities for children in research and child poverty assessments may require a more open-minded approach.

Contributions in this volume in relation to this theme reflect on the advances made in terms of complementary measurement. The early chapters challenge existing narratives underpinning poverty measurement. They illuminate poverty's complexities—particularly in relation to measuring child nutrition—and explore alternative understandings using new conceptual and analytical entry points.

Firstly, **Elizabeth Ngutuku** challenges conventional approaches to understanding child poverty and vulnerability, arguing for and applying a "rhizomatic" approach that aims to defy categorisation and give explicit voice to children in articulating their experiences. Drawing on in-depth case study research, she offers compelling insight into children's lived experiences in Kenya and highlights that the nature of childhood poverty is complex, fluid and highly inter-relational. The contribution by **Grace Bantebya-Kyomuhendo, Elaine Chase and Florence Muhanguzi** also highlights the need for moving beyond standard measures and understandings of child poverty by offering a fine-grained analysis of the pervasiveness of poverty-induced shame and children's strategies for managing such shame. Spatial analysis in Uganda and the United Kingdom

suggests that shame is omnipresent in children's lives and that children adopt complex strategies for managing this.

Winnie Sambu and Katherine Hall provide detailed longitudinal analysis of an area of child deprivation that remains a challenge across the African continent, namely hunger and malnutrition. They undertake descriptive and regression analysis across three household survey data sets in South Africa, finding a strong interaction between poverty, hunger and lack of dietary diversity. Their research also highlights the complexities and stringent data requirements for investigating issues of hunger and malnutrition. The chapter by **Oluwaseyi Dolapo Somefun, Joshua Odunayo Akinyemi and Clifford Odimegwu** extends the analysis of malnutrition by examining the relationship between child stunting, family structure and community characteristics across countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Parental presence appears to be a strong factor in child nutrition, although it can only mildly offset the effects of widespread poverty at community level.

Tassew Woldehanna and Yisak Tafere provide testimony to the importance of undertaking longitudinal and mixed methods analysis of child poverty. Their dynamic analysis of children's multiple overlapping deprivations in Ethiopia confirm the devastating impact of household shocks such as death of livestock and loss of unemployment. They find education of caregivers to be crucial for mitigating such shocks. The qualitative analysis shows that quantitative measures of deprivation are in line with children's perspectives of poverty and offers valuable additional insights into the psychosocial side of poverty and exclusion.

2.2. Child-sensitive social protection

In the last decade, social protection has become a central part of global and national development agendas and is now widely recognised as one of the foremost interventions within the policy package for fighting child poverty (UNICEF and Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, 2017). Child-sensitive social protection (CSSP) encompasses programmes that aim to maximise positive impacts on children and to minimise potential unintended side effects (DFID et al., 2009). This includes both direct interventions (i.e. child-focused or targeted) and indirect interventions such as social pensions, public works (Roelen and Karki Chettri, 2016). Its role in advancing child wellbeing and rights in Africa is widely recognised,

such as during the sixth International Policy Conference on the African Child held in Addis Ababa in 2014 (ACPF, 2014).

An expanding evidence base provides testimony that social protection—and cash transfers in particular—can improve food security and dietary diversity, increase school enrolment, reduce child labour and improve access to health services (Bastagli et al., 2016). However, less poverty does not necessarily go hand-in-hand with lower rates of malnutrition. Despite significant improvements in food security in South Africa in conjunction with stark reductions in child poverty (Delany et al., 2016) and rapid expansion of cash grants for children, malnutrition remains widespread (Devereux and Waidler, 2017). This disjuncture between poverty reduction and improvements in child nutrition has strong ramifications for policies aiming to reduce malnutrition, not least for social protection.

Evidence increasingly suggests that the provision of cash alone is not a 'magic bullet.' More nuanced understandings of the impact of social protection on children have led to debates on the most effective and appropriate social protection instruments for improving child outcomes, including in the area of nutrition (De Groot et al., 2017). The need for more integrated approaches that combine cash with other types of services is widely recognised and increasingly tested, sometimes referred to as "cash plus" programmes (Roelen et al., 2017). Such interventions often incorporate communication and information to empower parents and caregivers and promote care, feeding and hygiene practices that are likely to be positive for children. Exactly how different modalities can be brought together into more comprehensive packages of support in a cost-effective way requires more learning and debate.

Contributions in this volume consider the role of social protection in addressing malnutrition, explore the role of "cash plus" programming, and highlight the need for multisectoral and holistic responses. The research that is presented also emphasises the importance of design and implementation of interventions in effecting change for children (see also Bastagli et al., 2016), including the frequency and size of transfers, as well as understanding and addressing the crucial role of contextual and structural barriers.

The contribution by **Stephen Devereux, Coretta Jonah and Julian May** reflects on options for making policies more child- and nutrition-

sensitive, including social protection, in light of the 'food security paradox' in South Africa. In line with findings by Sambu and Hall, they find strong associations between poverty and malnutrition, but also explore other factors including maternal care and healthy environments to explain largely stagnant malnutrition rates against falling poverty rates. Programmes that take a holistic approach and includes material and non-material support are considered key for addressing the nutrition challenge in South Africa.

Nicola Hypher, Luke Harman, Kerina Zvobgo and Oluwatosin Akomolafe explore the potential of "cash plus" approaches for improving nutrition and provide a comprehensive review of impacts of various programmes from across the continent. "Cash plus" interventions are found to improve care knowledge and practices across the board, and reduce stunting and wasting in a few cases. This chapter also elaborates on policy implications, highlighting the importance of appropriate design and effective implementation and taking into account context and structural barriers. The importance of design and implementation for social protection to affect children is also evident from the contribution by **Billow Hassan, Stephen Mutiso and Munshi Sulaiman**. Their research investigated how different frequencies and amounts of cash transfers as well as labelling of transfers has a differential effect on children's outcomes in Somalia. They find that lump-sum transfers that are labelled as business grants do increase business income, assets and food security more than small cash transfers do, but that they have limited impacts on children. This in turn may reinforce the need for consideration of complementary interventions alongside economic support to households that are poor.

2.3. Transitions from childhood into adulthood

Young people are the fastest-growing demographic group in Africa, accounting for 547 million people in 2015 and estimated to increase to almost one billion by mid-century (UNICEF, 2014b). This demographic shift gives rise to questions about which actions are needed to convert the "youth bulge" into a "demographic dividend." Many countries have witnessed a generational shift with young people now having gained more years of schooling than their parents at the same age. New technologies are rapidly changing young people's experiences and aspirations.

Adolescence is a critical turning point at which pre-existing inequalities can translate into lower life chances that persist into adulthood. It is also a further critical window of opportunity during which policies aiming to support young people's development may help equalise opportunities and generate high economic and social returns for both these individuals and their societies (Sheehan et al., 2017). Interventions for this rising demographic of young people are central to Africa's ambitions for inclusive and sustainable growth.

Fostering employment features heavily in debates about youth and transitions into adulthood. Youth unemployment presents a major challenge in countries across the region. This challenge raises questions about job creation and about the role of entrepreneurship and self-employment as well as young people's own aspirations (Ayele et al., 2017). Access to information and markets is crucial, with the use of rising technology such as cell phones facilitating mobility through the expansion of social networks (Porter et al., 2012). Programmes to promote employment, individual capabilities and skills training have been crucial in increasing young people's access to labour markets and maintaining positive outcomes in the long run (Dekker and Hollander, 2017). At the same time, youth employment programmes are criticised for being too heavily grounded in individualistic notions of the problem and overly reliant on interventions addressing the supply of labour while ignoring the structural lack of demand (Flynn et al., 2017).

Adolescence represents a time of life-changing decisions, growing responsibilities and increasingly pronounced social roles. During this stage in life, gender norms often become more important and accentuated. These norms can affect access to schooling, learning outcomes and aspirations, and roles and responsibilities with respect to paid work and unpaid care. They may also relate to experiences of bullying and other forms of violence (Winter, 2016). The SDGs direct attention towards one particular form of violence against adolescents, namely child, early and forced marriage. In addition to increasing the likelihood of gender-based violence, child marriage is also associated with poorer early childhood development among those born to mothers aged less than 18 years of age (Efevbera et al., 2017).

Contributions in this volume in relation to the theme of transitions from childhood into adulthood investigate young people's experiences of

finding work, negotiating widespread forms of physical and psychological violence and the role of social connectedness in support of safe transitions. The contributions highlight how the life phase of adolescence is one that requires many strategies to negotiate highly intricate sets of interactions between family members, peers, community members and authority figures. It becomes evident that policy interventions only have a chance of success when accounting for the context and wider systems within which young people seek to shape a life of their own.

Firstly, the contribution by **Nikhit D'Sa, Sarah Press, Anna Du Vent, Ahmed Farahat, and Sita Conklin** offers a critical reflection on the role of youth livelihood development interventions and argues for a greater role for peers, family and communities in strengthening their impact. Based on an assessment of youth education and livelihood projects in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda, they find that family and community members act as gatekeepers for young people to enhance their skills and find work, and that youth have to negotiate strong negative stereotypes within families and communities regarding their level of motivation and dedication. Further consideration of the issue of youth employment is offered by **Gina Porter, Kate Hampshire, Alister Munthali and Elsbeth Robson** as they explore the role of physical and virtual mobility in young people's lives in Malawi. They find that limited physical mobility as a result of poor infrastructure and weak access to transport greatly shape the locations and types of work that are available to young people. Mobile phones may offer opportunities for some to establish and strengthen connections in support of finding work, but contextual factors limit such opportunities. Overall they find that rurality, gender and disadvantageous economic conditions undermine the possibilities that physical and virtual mobility that may afford youth in finding employment.

The contribution by **Nicola Jones, Marie Francoise Umutoni, Bekele Tefera, Ernestina Coast, Workneh Yadete, Roberte Isimbi, Guday Emirie and Kassahun Tilahun** moves on to provide detailed insights into experiences of violence among adolescents in Ethiopia and Rwanda. Their work provides evidence for the pervasiveness of violence at home, in school and within communities. Both boys and girls experience beatings, bullying and punishments, particularly in school. Certain forms of violence are particularly gender-specific, including child

marriage in Ethiopia and labia elongation in Rwanda. The research is a powerful reminder of the complex lives of children and adolescents, and the need for multisectoral responses in ensuring safe and secure transitions to adulthood.

Finally, **Marlene Ogawa, Shirley Pendlebury and Carmel Marock** investigate the role of social connections, relationships and social capital in the transition to healthy adulthood in South Africa. Through a careful examination of a programme that aimed to help young people to achieve their aspirations by strengthening their social connectedness, they show that greater connectedness can be beneficial for many and present a turning point for some in terms of moving out of poverty. Nonetheless, their contribution is also a potent reminder of the structural conditions of poverty and that addressing these is a complex task which needs multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

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PART ONE
Manifestations of Child Poverty

CHAPTER 1
Beyond Categories: Rhizomatic Experiences of Child Poverty and Vulnerability in Kenya

Elizabeth Ngutuku

1. Going beyond categories in understanding child poverty experience

By the year 2014, it was estimated that there were 21,064,614 children below the age of 18 in Kenya, 49 percent of the total population in the country (KNBS and UNICEF 2017: 102). Child poverty and deprivation is an important lens through which children and childhood in Kenya is understood and an average child in Kenya is seen as a poor child (UNICEF and Government of Kenya 2014: 8). In the combined Third, Fourth and Fifth State Party Report to the United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Kenyan government noted that in Kenya, children "are not only vulnerable to poverty [but] poverty tends to affect children more than any other age group" (GoK, 2012b: 31).

   Child poverty and vulnerability in Kenya has been understood and measured through various lenses including categorical approaches, monetary and multi-dimensional measures. For example, the category "Orphaned and Vulnerable Child" (OVC) is used in understanding the experience of children with poverty and vulnerability. According to the Social Protection Sector Review, in 2012, 3.6 million children were orphaned or classified as vulnerable in Kenya (GoK 2012); of these, one million children were orphaned, having lost one or both parents. HIV/AIDS has also shaped the context in which child poverty and vulnerability is experienced. According to UNICEF's 2015 State of the World's Children Report (2014: 56), in 2013 there were roughly 190,000 children living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya; 1.1 million children were orphaned by AIDS and 2.5 million other children were orphaned by other causes. There is therefore sometimes a conflation between being orphaned and living in poverty, based on the assumption that households with OVCs tend to be poor, and households that are child-headed are more vulnerable due to lack of endowments.

It is widely acknowledged that child poverty goes beyond income deprivation, and that it is multi-dimensional and affects children differently from adults (Abdu and Delamonica 2018; Delamonica 2014; Roelen 2017). More recently, methods that combine monetary and multi-dimensional perspectives have been utilised in estimating child poverty in Kenya (KNBS and UNICEF 2017: 83). These measures are based on children's rights, which are universal and indivisible, and are embedded in the United Nation Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) (UN 1989). These rights-based approaches utilise specific rights, commonly known as constitutive rights, to child poverty, and these rights are given equal weight. They include health, nutrition, education, information, water sanitation and housing (Delamonica 2014). Deprivation of rights in these areas are considered manifestations of poverty.

In 2014, the Government of Kenya (GOK) and UNICEF used the Bristol Index, a rights-based approach that measures child deprivation in relation to access to clean water, health, food, medical care, education, and information (GoK and UNICEF 2014: xvi). Accordingly, as noted in *Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Kenya: Our Children, Our Future* (2014), they found that 7.8 million children were deprived of access to safe drinking water. 15.8 million children were deprived of access to improved sanitation, and 13.1 million had inadequate shelter. At the same time, 5.3 million children aged 6–17 years old were deprived of adequate education. In addition, 20 to 30 percent of children were still not completing primary education, including 400,000 who never enrolled even after the re-institution of the policy of free primary policy in education (ibid.). In health, 1.1 million children who were younger than 2 years old had not received all recommended vaccinations, and 2.1 million children were stunted (ibid.: xvi).

More recently, another right-based approach has been used, namely the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA), which "identifies children as poor if they are deprived in basic goods and services that are crucial for them to survive, develop, and thrive" (UNICEF and KNBS 2017: 8). MODA focusses on the child and not the household, by measuring whether and how many needs of a child are met and how the child may experience multiple deprivations simultaneously (Plavgo and Milliano 2018). Poverty is seen as affecting children differently from adults and this measure is also based on life-stage specific needs. The approach has

been lauded for paying attention to the processes of accessing services instead of solely relying on statistics. It also utilizes qualitative data to understand the experiences of children (Chzhen et al. 2016; KNBS and UNICEF 2017). In a first ever MODA study in Kenya in 2017, 45 percent of all children in Kenya—9.5 million children—were seen as "severely deprived in at least 3 or more basic needs for their wellbeing" and therefore multi-dimensionally poor (ibid.: 25).

2.   Understanding child poverty and vulnerability differently

Even though rights-based approaches acknowledge the multi-dimensional nature of child poverty, I argue that in themselves they do not capture the complex experience of child poverty. There is a need to do research that opens possibilities for complex experiences of poverty and produces new understandings. Additionally, there is a need for an approach that focusses on finer textures of children's experiences beyond deprivation and the dominant categories of poor and vulnerable children (e.g. OVC). For instance, among rights-based approaches, only specific indicators of material deprivation are utilised, as this is deemed important to ensure that the measure can be grasped by policy makers (Abdu and Delamonica 2018). In addition, only deprivations that are underpinned by constitutive rights are incorporated, leaving out other rights-based deprivations such as child labour. Other indicators, regardless of their importance to children's lives and their rights, are seen as spuriously correlated and potentially undermining the measure's validity (Abdu and Delamonica 2018: 887). Similar issues also apply to categorical approaches that use entirely qualitative indicators of poverty and vulnerability. In the policy sphere, categories are used to define groups who are assumed to share particular qualities; this makes it reasonable to subject them to the same outcomes of policy (Bakewell, 2008: 436).

While important for policy and programme thinking, I contend that categories may eschew diversity and gloss over experiences that deviate from well-known categories (Reynolds 2014: 138). While Urban (2016) concurs that research should be useful for policy, she notes that a focus on ends(in this case policy considerations) rather than the means, points to the power of discourse for framing what is seen as useful science in policy discussions. She notes that policy makers would want perspectives that

articulate global impacts of a phenomenon, and that providing solutions and justifications through good science are seen as secondary (2016: 110). As a result, complex experiences may be overlooked. Even within more qualitative approaches to research, one of the difficulties in capturing the lived experiences of child poverty and vulnerability has been the lack of voice of children. Caregivers tend to speak on children's behalf. For example, Boyden et al. (2003) noted the absence of children's voices in programmes on child poverty arguing that, "there is [far] too little understanding of how children experience poverty, what impoverishment means to them" (21). Tafere (2012) made a similar observation that little attention had been given to children's perspectives of poverty.

I concur with the authors above that children's voices would enable a better understanding of lived experiences of child poverty and vulnerability. I however also draw from James (2007), who noted that we should be careful about methodological pitfalls when invoking children's voice. This is because children's voices may be edited or smoothed over by adult voices, may be influenced by power relations, may be contradictory, and children's silence may indicate voice (Mazzei 2007; Spyrou 2016). All of this requires methods attuned to properly capturing such voice.

Drawing from my one-year research on child poverty and vulnerability in Siaya, Kenya in 2016–2017, I enter into the debate of children's lived experiences of child poverty and vulnerability in two ways. First, I offer a perspective on the methodology I utilised to investigate the complex lived experiences of child poverty and vulnerability in Kenya, and how I moved beyond studying the dominant categories of children who are living in poverty and vulnerability. I elaborate on how I used rhizomatic mapping for capturing complexity and connectivity in children's experiences, instead of relying on linear perspectives of measurement and categorization. Secondly, I provide four illustrations of the experiences of child poverty and vulnerability that point to a need for going beyond current thinking and practice in categorization.

3.   Researching like a Rhizome: Theoretical and methodological considerations

I explored the experiences of child poverty and vulnerability in three interrelated spaces in children's lives, namely the household, the school and programmes of support to vulnerable and poor children. Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) philosophy of rhizome guided my understanding of children's experience as well as well as the methodology for the research.

Deleuze and Guattari used the image of a rhizome to reflect a reality that is not linear or hierarchical, but heterogeneous and complex. A rhizome is a non-arboreal plant that grows laterally and unpredictably and whose different nodes proliferate in the ground. Examples of rhizomes include ginger, grass, among others (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). They contrast a rhizome with a tree which is hierarchical, with a root and trunk system of growth. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), a rhizome is governed by several principles that can be used in analysing diverse realities in society. Here I explore three principles that guided my research and the arguments in this chapter. These are the principles of connectivity, multiplicity and cartography.

Connectivity refers to a rhizome only being composed of lines that are connected with each other in complex ways. Seeing things rhizomatically therefore means focusing on the connections between and within what might otherwise be seen as discrete entities. Guided by this principle, I explored the interconnected nature of the experiences of children.

The principle of multiplicity means that a rhizome does not grow in a unilinear way, but that it is non-hierarchical, and its multiple nodes can be connected to other nodes forming an "assemblage" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 7). Such a principle enabled me to capture the interaction of complex factors in the experience of children, instead of a linear approach of causes and effects of poverty. I explored how this multiplicity of experience is formed around diverse processes and factors including material lack, gaps in policies, social relations and norms.

The principle of mapping or a cartography guides the overall narrative in the chapter. Deleuze and Guattari noted that a "the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits" (1987: 21). Thus, I see the experience of children as