

Including Children in the Policy Responses to the Global Economic Recession in West and Central Africa

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This study simulates the impacts of the global economic crisis and alternative policy responses on child poverty and hunger in Western and Central Africa over the period 2009-2011. It is based on country studies for Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Ghana, which broadly represent the diversity of economic conditions in Western and Central Africa countries. In order to capture the complex macro-economic effects of the crisis and the various policy responses – on trade, investment, remittances, aid flows, goods and factor markets – and to then trace their consequences in terms of child poverty and hunger (caloric poverty) – an innovative combination of macro- and micro-analysis is adopted. The simulations suggest that the global economic recession slows economic growth in Western and Central Africa countries. As a consequence, children in households with few economic opportunities are at a higher risk of falling into (monetary) poverty and suffering from hunger. Considerable variation within and between countries is noted, with Ghana being the country where children are predicted to suffer most. Among the policy responses examined to counteract the negative effects of the crisis on child well-being, a targeted cash transfer to predicted poor children is by far the most effective.