

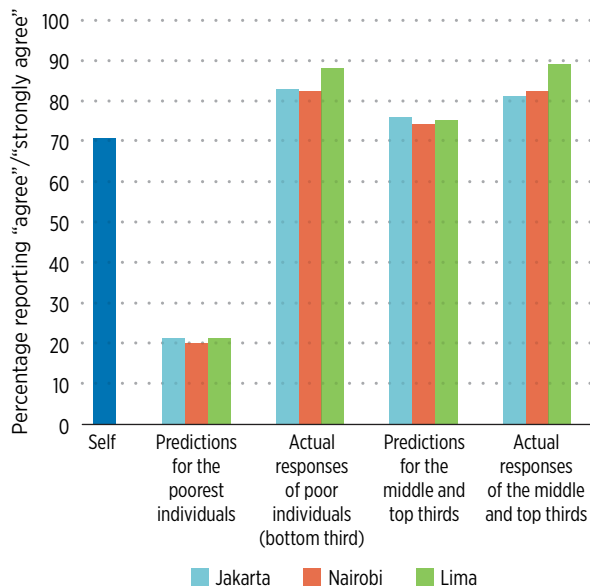
Box 10.3 It may be difficult for development professionals to accurately predict the views of poor people

As part of the research for this Report, data were collected both from development professionals within the World Bank and from individuals in the bottom, middle, and top thirds of the wealth distribution in the capital cities of selected developing countries (Jakarta, Indonesia; Nairobi, Kenya; and Lima, Peru). The data reveal a large gap between how development professionals perceive the context of poverty and how the bottom third views it. In the three figures that follow, this difference can be seen clearly in three distinct areas crucial to development: whether the bottom third thinks of themselves as having control over their lives (figure B10.3.1, panel a), how helpless they feel in dealing with the problems in their life (panel b), and their knowledge about health services (their attitudes toward vaccinations, for example) (panel c).

Figure B10.3.1 How World Bank staff predicted the views of poor people

a. Control of the future

Survey question: What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me.



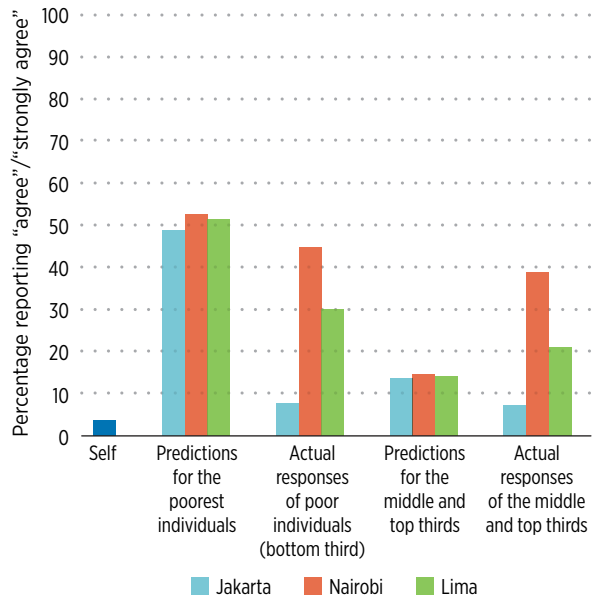
Source: WDR 2015 team survey data.

Panels a and b reveal a large disparity between how development professionals believe poor individuals (bottom third) will answer these questions and how poor individuals in fact answered them. Development professionals imagine that poor individuals are very different from themselves in their self-perceptions, but in fact they are not. In all cases, responses by the bottom and by the middle and top thirds of the income distribution are similar. However, development professionals believe there is a large disparity between the poor and the rest and see themselves as closer to the upper-level groups than to poor individuals.

In another area, development professionals imagine poor individuals to be much more suspicious of vaccines than they actually are (panel c). In each instance, the responses of poor individuals are very close to

b. Helplessness in dealing with life's problems

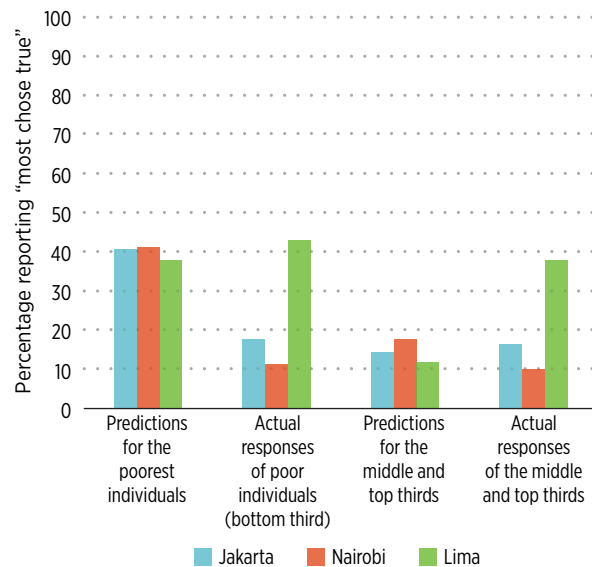
Survey question: I feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life.



Source: WDR 2015 team survey data.

c. The dangers of vaccines

Survey question: Vaccines are risky because they can cause sterilization.



Source: WDR 2015 team survey data.

those of the rest of the population. This finding suggests that development professionals assume that poor individuals are less autonomous, less responsible, less hopeful, and less knowledgeable than they in fact are. These beliefs about the context of poverty shape policy choices. It is important to check these beliefs against reality.