Poverty & Equity Brief
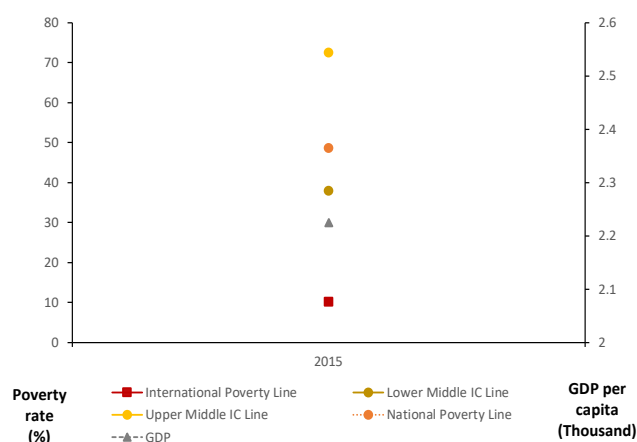
Sub-Saharan Africa

The Gambia

April 2020

In the Gambia, 10.1 percent of the population lived below the international poverty line in 2015 (poverty measured at 2011 PPP US$1.9 a day). In the Greater Banjul Area, which includes the local government areas of Banjul and Kanifing, the country's hub of key economic activities, the poverty rate was lower than in other urban areas. Poverty rates were highest in rural areas, where the poor typically work in the low-productivity agricultural sector, while in urban areas they work in the low-productivity informal service sectors. Even though poverty rates are high in the interior of the country compared to the coastal urban areas, the highest concentration of the poor population is found in direct proximity to the Greater Banjul Area, in the local government area of Brikama. Rapid urbanization in the past triggered by high rural-to-urban migration, led to amassing of poor people, many in their youth, in and around congested urban areas where inequality is high, traditional support systems are typically weak, and women face barriers in labor market participation. As growth declines in 2020 and trigger job losses, labor income will drop. Lower remittances, higher health spending and rising food prices would also impose a burden on household welfare. Poverty is expected to drop marginally to 8.0 percent in 2020 and will decline to 6.7 percent in 2022 as growth recovers.

High levels of poverty are closely intertwined with deficits to human capital accumulation and limited access to basic infrastructure. 15.4 percent of the population were multidimensionally poor, reflecting low consumption levels, limited educational attainment, and gaps in access to drinking water, sanitation and electricity. Access to basic services and facilities is worse in rural areas and shows a strong divide between the capital city region and the rest of the country. Deprivations are often overlapping and contribute to the depth, complexity, and persistence of poverty. These deficits translate into low levels of productivity and limited resilience, as well as economic and social exclusion. The poor are more likely to live in larger family units that are more likely to be polygamous and have more dependent children, have high adult and youth illiteracy rates, and are significantly more exposed to weather shocks than others.

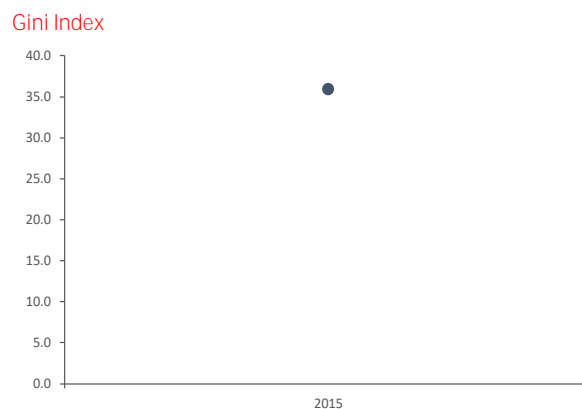| POVERTY	Number of Poor (thousand)	Rate (%)	Period
National Poverty Line	961.1	48.6	2015
International Poverty Line 26.2 in Gambian dalasi (2015) or US$1.90 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	211.7	10.1	2015
Lower Middle Income Class Poverty Line 44.2 in Gambian dalasi (2015) or US$3.20 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	789.1	37.8	2015
Upper Middle Income Class Poverty Line 75.9 in Gambian dalasi (2015) or US$5.50 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	1,511.9	72.5	2015
Multidimentional Poverty Measure		15.4	2015
SHARED PROSPERITY			
Annualized Income or Consumption Growth per capita of the bottom 40 percent		N/A	N/A
INEQUALITY			
Gini Index		35.9	2015
Shared Prosperity Premium = Growth of the bottom 40 - Average Growth		N/A	N/A
GROWTH			
Annualized GDP per capita growth		-2.59	2010-2015
Annualized Income or Consumption Growth per capita from Household Survey		N/A	N/A
MEDIAN INCOME			
Growth of the annual median income/consumption per capita		N/A	N/A

Sources: WDI for GDP, National Statistical Offices for national poverty rates, POVCALNET as of Feburary 2020, and Global Monitoring Database for the rest.

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POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE, 2015

Source: World Bank using IHS/SSAPOV/GMD

INEQUALITY TRENDS, 2015

Gini Index

Source: World Bank using IHS/SSAPOV/GMD

KEY INDICATORS

Distribution among groups: 2015	International Poverty Line(%)		Relative group (%)	
	Non-Poor	Poor	Bottom 40	Top 60
Urban population	98	2	23	77
Rural population	80	20	61	39
Males	90	10	40	60
Females	90	10	40	60
0 to 14 years old	88	12	46	54
15 to 64 years old	92	8	35	65
65 and older	90	10	42	58
Without education (16+)	88	12	46	54
Primary education (16+)	93	7	33	67
Secondary education (16+)	95	5	25	75
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)	99	1	9	91

Multidimensional Poverty Measures (% of people):	2015
Monetary poverty (Consumption)	
Daily consumption less than US$1.90 per person	10.1
Education	
At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school	6.1
No adult has completed primary education	29.9
Access to basic infrastructure	
No access to limited-standard drinking water	8.2
No access to limited-standard sanitation	58.2
No access to electricity	8.0

Source: World Bank using IHS/SSAPOV/GMD

Source: World Bank using IHS/SSAPOV/GMD

Notes: N/A missing value, N/A* value removed due to less than 30 observations

POVERTY DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Poverty and inequality statistics in the Gambia are produced by the Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS), based on the national Integrated Household Survey (IHS). The last round of the household survey was completed in 2015/16 (microdata is available on the World Bank Data Catalog). The survey was designed to be representative at the district level (sample size: 14,000). Official poverty estimates are based on the cost of basic needs approach, which determines two poverty lines: (1) the national food poverty line, which uses the minimum required level of calories; and (2) the national absolute poverty line, which also includes a non-food component.

The World Bank's international poverty rates are calculated for international comparison. International poverty lines are used to count the number of poor people in the world in terms of an absolute standard and to measure progress on global goals set by the World Bank, the United Nations, and other development partners. For this purpose, the World Bank publishes poverty rates calculated with three poverty lines: US$1.90 a day; US$3.2 a day; and US$5.5 a day, all in 2011 PPP terms. The level of national and international poverty rates differs because the poverty threshold is set at different amounts.

HARMONIZATION

The numbers presented in this brief are based on the SSAPOV database. SSAPOV is a database of harmonized nationally representative household surveys managed by Sub-Saharan Team for Statistical Development. It contains more than 100 surveys covering 45 out of the 48 countries in the SSA region. The four countries not covered in the database are Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, and Somalia. Terms of use of the data adhere to agreements with the original data producers.

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