

Poverty & Equity Brief

Africa Western & Central

Cameroon

April 2021

Poverty remains high in Cameroon, with about two in five individuals (37.5 percent) living below the national poverty line in 2014. This corresponds to an absolute number of 8.3 million poor individuals, most of which (59.7 percent) reside in rural areas. The 2014 poverty rate represents a slight decline from 39.9 percent in 2007 and 40.2 percent in 2001. The poverty incidence is much higher in rural areas (56.8 percent), compared to urban areas (9.0 percent). There are significant geographic disparities in poverty incidence ranging from lows of 4.2 percent and 5.4 percent in the two main cities of Douala and Yaoundé to a high of 74.3 percent in the Far-North Region. Such spatial disparities can fuel tensions between poorer and richer areas.

Given its status as a lower middle-income country, Cameroon is underperforming on non-monetary dimensions of welfare, with over 37 percent of the population estimated to be multidimensionally poor in 2014. Access to basic services is limited, especially for the poor. There has been some progress over time. For example, in 2018, three in every five Cameroonians (62 percent) had access to electricity, compared to 88 percent for lower middle-income countries. The 2018 level correspond to an increase of 8 percentage points from 2011, when about half (54 percent) of household had access to electricity (DHS 2018). Ownership of productive assets such as a motorbike and cellphone has risen overtime.

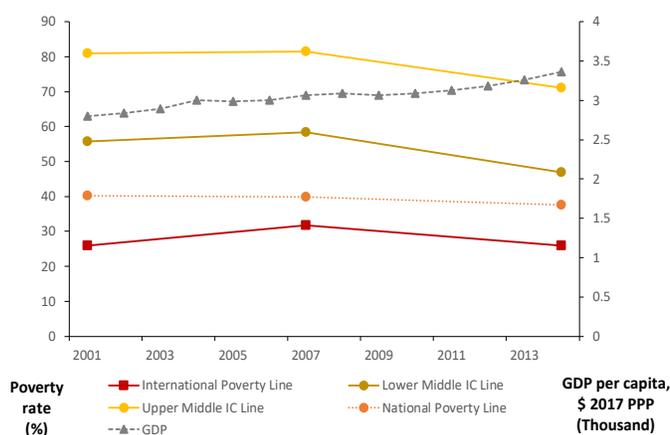
The COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic downturn are having an adverse effect on progress made on poverty reduction. Despite light containment measures of the COVID-19 outbreak, the negative impact of the pandemic resulted in a contraction of the services and agriculture sectors. As a result, real GDP growth was projected to contract by 2.5 percent in 2020. The continued pressures on security expenditure may further affect social spending. This is most likely to disproportionately affect the poor and may lead to increased inequality.

The challenge in accelerating poverty reduction is the result of a rapid population growth combined with opposite poverty trends between rural and urban areas and across regions due to a concentration of investments in the two main cities (Douala and Yaoundé) and growing insecurity. This result in high income inequality with the Gini index increasing by 3.8 percentage points between 2007 and 2014 (46.6 in 2014). The Boko Haram conflict in the Far North and the ongoing conflict in the anglophone regions as well as recent escalation of violence in the Lake Chad region and in the Central African Republic are likely to adversely impact already low human capital, but also further hinder progress on poverty reduction and equity.

POVERTY	Number of Poor (million)	Rate (%)	Period
National Poverty Line	8.3	37.5	2014
International Poverty Line 492.4 in CFA franc (2014) or US\$1.90 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	5.9	26.0	2014
Lower Middle Income Class Poverty Line 829.2 in CFA franc (2014) or US\$3.20 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	10.7	47.0	2014
Upper Middle Income Class Poverty Line 1425.2 in CFA franc (2014) or US\$5.50 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	16.1	71.0	2014
Multidimensional Poverty Measure		37.7	2014
SHARED PROSPERITY			
Annualized Consumption Growth per capita of the bottom 40 percent		1.41	2007-2014
INEQUALITY			
Gini Index		46.6	2014
Shared Prosperity Premium = Growth of the bottom 40 - Average Growth		-2.43	2007-2014
GROWTH			
Annualized GDP per capita growth		1.34	2007-2014
Annualized Consumption Growth per capita from Household Survey		3.84	2007-2014
MEDIAN INCOME			
Growth of the annual median income/consumption per capita		3.51	2007-2014

Sources: WDI for GDP, National Statistical Offices for national poverty rates, POVCALNET as of February 2021, and Global Monitoring Database for the rest.

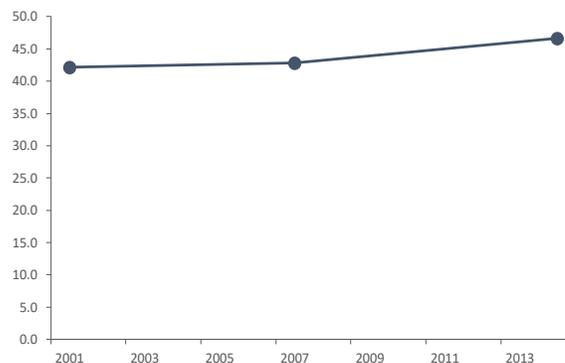
POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE, 2001-2014



Source: World Bank using ECAM-IV/SSAPOV/GMD

INEQUALITY TRENDS, 2001-2014

Gini Index



Source: World Bank using ECAM-IV/SSAPOV/GMD

KEY INDICATORS

Distribution among groups: 2014	International Poverty Line(%)		Relative group (%)		Multidimensional Poverty Measures: 2014 (% of population)
	Non-Poor	Poor	Bottom 40	Top 60	
Urban population	97	3	10	90	Monetary poverty (Consumption) Daily consumption less than US\$1.90 per person 26.0
Rural population	58	42	61	39	
Males	75	25	39	61	Education At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school 15.9 No adult has completed primary education 24.4
Females	73	27	41	59	
0 to 14 years old	67	33	49	51	Access to basic infrastructure No access to limited-standard drinking water 23.2 No access to limited-standard sanitation 38.9 No access to electricity 1.2
15 to 64 years old	80	20	32	68	
65 and older	73	27	46	54	
Without education (16+)	55	45	63	37	
Primary education (16+)	78	22	37	63	
Secondary education (16+)	90	10	19	81	
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)	99	N/A*	3	97	

Source: World Bank using ECAM-IV/SSAPOV/GMD

Source: World Bank using ECAM-IV/SSAPOV/GMD

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

POVERTY DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The Cameroon Household Survey (ECAM) series provide a strong basis for identifying the poor through poverty profiles and for analyzing the dynamics and dimensions of poverty. The three household surveys (2001, 2007, and 2014) used for these estimates were conducted to produce sound data for poverty analysis. The sample size of these surveys is between 10,000 and 12,000 households, and the samples are designed to be representative at the regional level (10 regions and the two major cities: Douala and Yaounde). The design of the three surveys, the questionnaires, and the methodology of data collection are very similar, making the results easily comparable. However, these surveys are not implemented frequently, with a gap of at least six years between two surveys during the past 19 years. There is also a need to improve the surveys' design to better consider issues of public policy (labor market, gender, social protection, agriculture, conflict and vulnerability, etc.). The next Cameroon Household Survey (ECAM 5), set to be conducted between September 2021 and August 2022, is financed through the Cameroon - Strengthening Public Sector Effectiveness and Statistical Capacity Program (P151155).

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 three 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.