Poverty & Equity Brief

Africa Western & Central

Benin

October 2020

Due to modest average per capita GDP growth rate of 2.5 percent over the period 2013-2019, poverty remains widespread in Benin. National poverty headcount rate based on the recently released WAEMU Harmonized household survey was 38.5 percent in 2019. This is not comparable to the previous EMICoV survey that showed that poverty rose from 35.2 percent in 2010 to 40.1 percent in 2015. However, using the same official consumption aggregates and applying the $1.90 a day poverty line suggest that poverty dropped from 53.1 to 49.5 percent (2011-2015). Alternative methods such as survey to survey imputations indicate a declining trend by up to 5 percentage points between 2010 and 2015. As a result of an adverse external shock marked by the Nigeria border closure and most importantly the COVID-19 pandemic, real GDP growth is expected to slowdown to 2.0 percent and -1.2 percent in per capita terms in 2020, from 6.9 percent and 4.0 percent per capita in 2019.
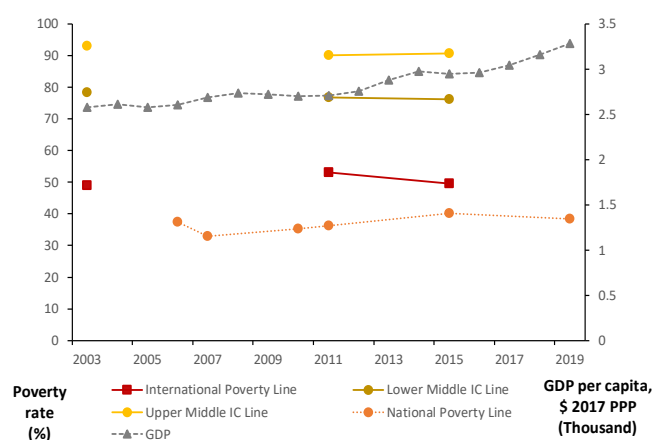
In 2019, the Gini index commonly used to measure inequality was estimated at 34.7 a relatively elevated level of inequality, but among the lowest of WAEMU countries. Albeit progress has been made regarding education and health, Benin's Human Capital Index in 2020 remains low. Children in Benin today will live up to only 40.6 percent of their productive potential compared to the counterfactual as if they had enjoyed full health, including adequate nutrition, and education. Literacy rates remain particularly low among women and rural residents. Access to safely managed water and sanitation is improving as well as access to electricity.

A high frequency survey conducted on 1,500 households in July 2020, to measure the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic suggested that almost half of the household heads had job constraints due to response measures and closure of firms. As a result, ¾ of the households (mainly in the economic capital city) reported lost or decline of revenue. Similarly, most of the households reported several shocks, mainly the increase in the prices of the main staple foods and the loss of jobs. In rural areas, the shock came from the increase in the price of inputs and the drop in the selling price.

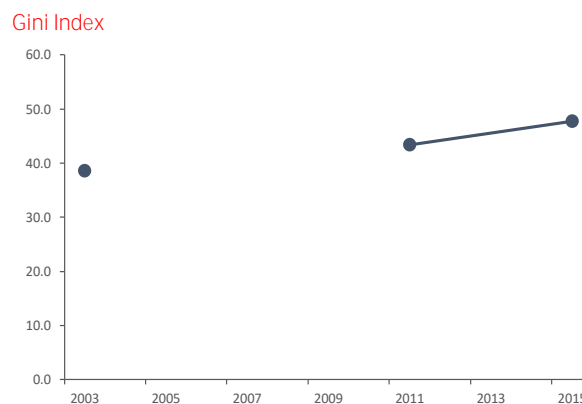| POVERTY	Number of Poor (million)	Rate (%)	Period
National Poverty Line	4.5	38.5	2019
International Poverty Line 456.8 in CFA franc (2015) or US$1.90 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	5.2	49.6	2015
Lower Middle Income Class Poverty Line 769.4 in CFA franc (2015) or US$3.20 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	8.1	76.3	2015
Upper Middle Income Class Poverty Line 1322.4 in CFA franc (2015) or US$5.50 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	9.6	90.6	2015
Multidimentional Poverty Measure		71.8	2015
SHARED PROSPERITY			
Annualized Consumption Growth per capita of the bottom 40 percent		-5.20	2011-2015
INEQUALITY			
Gini Index		47.8	2015
Shared Prosperity Premium = Growth of the bottom 40 - Average Growth		-5.26	2011-2015
GROWTH			
Annualized GDP per capita growth		2.13	2011-2015
Annualized Consumption Growth per capita from Household Survey		0.06	2011-2015
MEDIAN INCOME			
Growth of the annual median income/consumption per capita		1.78	2011-2015

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

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POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE, 2003-2019

Poverty rate (%)	
■ International Poverty Line	● Lower Middle IC Line
● Upper Middle IC Line	● National Poverty Line
▲ GDP	

GDP per capita, $ 2017 PPP (Thousand)

Source: World Bank using EMICOV/SSAPOV/GMD

INEQUALITY TRENDS, 2003-2015

Gini Index

Source: World Bank using EMICOV/SSAPOV/GMD

KEY INDICATORS

	International Poverty Line(%)		Relative group (%)	
	Non-Poor	Poor	Bottom 40	Top 60
Urban population				N/A
Rural population				N/A
Males				N/A
Females				N/A
0 to 14 years old				N/A
15 to 64 years old				N/A
65 and older				N/A
Without education (16+)				N/A
Primary education (16+)				N/A
Secondary education (16+)				N/A
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)				N/A

Multidimensional Poverty Measures: 2015	(% of population)
Monetary poverty (Consumption)	
Daily consumption less than US$1.90 per person	49.6
Education	
At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school	25.5
No adult has completed primary education	61.6
Access to basic infrastructure	
No access to limited-standard drinking water	26.9
No access to limited-standard sanitation	70.7
No access to electricity	69.0

Source: World Bank using EMICOV/SSAPOV/GMD

Source: World Bank using EMICOV/SSAPOV/GMD

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

POVERTY DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Benin completed a Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ) survey in 2003, and since 2006 implements an Integrated Modular Household Living Conditions Survey (EMICoV) based on 18,000 to 20,000+ households (2006, 2007, 2010, 2011, and 2015). In 2018/19 Benin implemented a harmonized households survey adopted by all the member states of the West African Economic and Monetary Union. The results have been released recently. The national poverty headcount rate based on this new survey is 38.5 percent but this is not comparable to the 40.1 percent previously calculated by the NSO using the EMICoV 2015. For instance, the differences come from the welfare aggregate measurement, the questionnaires and field period and the poverty line determination among others. The NSO used a S2S methodology to estimate a comparable poverty rate to the 2019 value for 2015, which estimated a poverty headcount rate of 39.2 percent. The World Bank team has started the preparation for a comprehensive poverty assessment that will allow to produce poverty trends based on robust approaches. The preparation to start a second and comparable survey, planned for 2021-22, is ongoing.

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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