

# Poverty & Equity Brief

Africa Western & Central

## Cameroon

October 2021

Poverty remains high, with 37.5% people living below the national poverty line in 2014. This corresponds to an absolute number of 8.3 million poor individuals, most of who (59.7%) 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 pace of poverty reduction was affected by a high rate of population growth, resulting in an increase in the number of poor. 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 affect social cohesion and fuel tensions.

Findings from the 2018 DHS suggest progress in improving access to basic social services. However, the country is still performing below expectations given its status as a Lower Middle-Income Country (LMIC). For example, in 2018, 62% Cameroonian had access to electricity, compared to 88 percent for LMICs. The 2018 level corresponds to an increase of 8 percentage points from 2011, when 54% of household had access to electricity. Between 2010 and 2020, while the HCI value for Cameroon increased from 0.38 to 0.40, a child born in Cameroon today will be 40 percent as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health. This is slightly lower than the average for Sub-Saharan Africa and lower than the LMIC average.

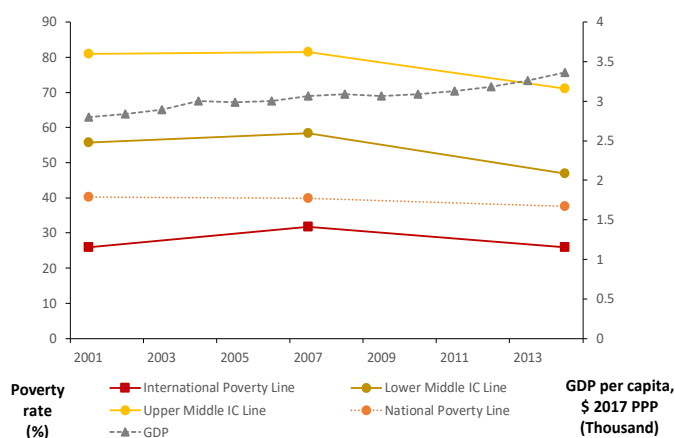
The COVID-19 pandemic is having a negative impact on the economy. Real GDP per capita growth was projected to contract by 4.6 percent in 2020. Findings of a national phone survey conducted between April-May 2020 indicated that the pandemic led to a slowdown of business activities and jobs and income losses, both in the formal and informal sectors. Food security has deteriorated, especially in conflict-affected areas.

Challenges in accelerating poverty reduction include misallocation of resources. Investments are concentrated in the two main cities, which have the lowest incidence of poverty. Income inequality remains high, 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. According to UNHCR, by the end of 2020, Cameroon was host to approximately 1.96 million people of concern, including some 1 million IDPs.

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

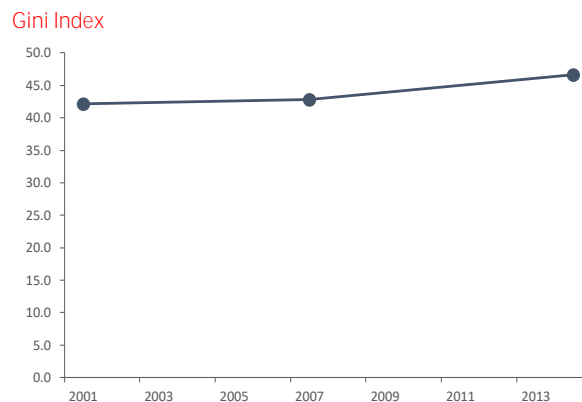
Sources: WDI for GDP, National Statistical Offices for national poverty rates, POVCALNET as of September 2021, and Global Monitoring Database for the rest.

## POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE, 2001-2014



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

## INEQUALITY TRENDS, 2001-2014



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	<b>Monetary poverty (Consumption)</b>	
Rural population	58	42	61	39	Daily consumption less than US\$1.90 per person	26.0
Males	75	25	39	61	<b>Education</b>	
Females	73	27	41	59	At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school	15.9
0 to 14 years old	67	33	49	51	No adult has completed primary education	24.4
15 to 64 years old	80	20	32	68	<b>Access to basic infrastructure</b>	
65 and older	73	27	46	54	No access to limited-standard drinking water	23.2
Without education (16+)	55	45	63	37	No access to limited-standard sanitation	38.9
Primary education (16+)	78	22	37	63	No access to electricity	1.2
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 Yaoundé). 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.

The next Cameroon Household Survey (ECAM 5), set to be conducted between October 2021 and September 2022, is financed through the Cameroon - Strengthening Public Sector Effectiveness and Statistical Capacity Program (P151155). ECAM 5 methodology is based on the recent best practice on poverty measurement (WAEMU project), including: (i) a focus on measuring consumption rather than expenditure; and (ii) three rounds of data collection spanning on 12 months to capture seasonality. In addition, an experimental survey will be conducted in parallel following the old ECAM methodology, to ensure robust poverty trend analysis.

## 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.