

Poverty & Equity Brief

Sub-Saharan Africa

Benin

April 2020

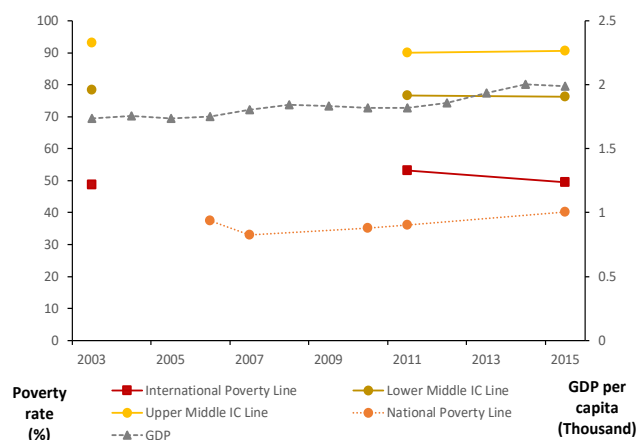
Due to a low per capita GDP growth rate of 2.5 percent over the period 2013-2019, poverty remains widespread in Benin. National headcount fell from 37.5 percent in 2006 to 35.2 percent in 2010 and then increased to 40.1 percent in 2015. However, using the same official consumption aggregates and applying the \$1.90 a day (2011 PPP) poverty line suggest that poverty dropped from 53.1 to 49.5 percent (2011-2015). Survey to survey imputations also indicate a declining trend – a decrease in the poverty rate by up to 5 percentage points between 2010 and 2015. Many non-monetary poverty indicators have improved over this period. Although there is some variation in the magnitude of the changes, these factors all point to a decline in poverty between 2006 and 2010, but slower or no poverty reduction in the 2010-2015 period. 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 drop to 4.5 percent in 2020 (from 6.4 percent in 2019 and 3.4 percent per capita), but should pick-up to 6.7 percent in 2020. World Bank projections using the \$1.9/day PPP poverty line indicate that poverty headcount rate is expected to decrease from 46.7 percent in 2018 to 41.8 in 2022. In 2015, the Gini index commonly used to measure inequality was estimated at 47.8, which suggests relatively elevated levels of inequality in the country.

Albeit progress has been made regarding education and health, Benin's Human Capital Index remains low. Children in Benin today will live up to only 40.6 percent of their productive potential compared to the counterfactual if they had enjoyed full health, including adequate nutrition, and education. Literacy rates remain particularly low among women and rural residents. Food insecurity is concerning, with 32 percent of children under 5 stunted (35 percent in rural area versus 28 percent in urban area). Access to safely managed water and sanitation is improving (more than 7 households out of 10 have access to improved water sources while half of them do not have toilets), and 37 percent of households have access to electricity (only one fifth in rural area). The Multidimensional Poverty Measurement (MPM) that takes into account the multiple dimensions of poverty deprivations is set at 71.7 percent for 2015 using the national household survey data (EMICoV 2015). This high rate suggests that non-monetary poverty indicators, continue to pose major challenges, despite steady improvements, for the well-being of Beninese population.

POVERTY	Number of Poor (million)	Rate (%)	Period
National Poverty Line	4.2	40.1	2015
International Poverty Line 456.8 in CFA franc (2015) or US\$1.90 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	5.2	49.5	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	76.2	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
Multidimensional Poverty Measure		71.7	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		2.21	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 February 2020, and Global Monitoring Database for the rest.

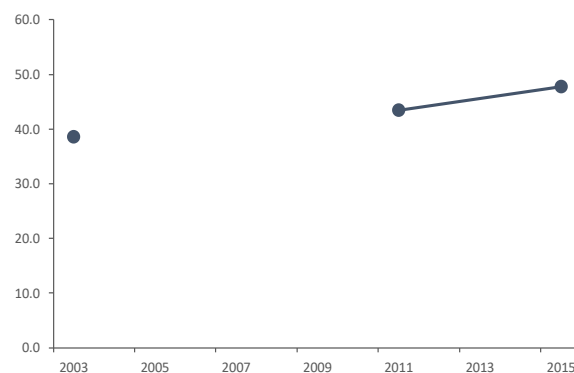
POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE, 2003-2015



Source: World Bank using EMICOV/SSAPOV/GMD

INEQUALITY TRENDS, 2003-2015

Gini Index



Source: World Bank using EMICOV/SSAPOV/GMD

KEY INDICATORS

Distribution among groups: 2015	International Poverty Line (%)		Relative group (%)		Multidimensional Poverty Measures (% of people):	2015
	Non-Poor	Poor	Bottom 40	Top 60		
Urban population	64	36	28	72	Monetary poverty (Consumption)	
Rural population	40	60	50	50	Daily consumption less than US\$1.90 per person	49.5
Males	51	49	40	60	Education	
Females	50	50	40	60	At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school	25.5
0 to 14 years old	44	56	46	54	No adult has completed primary education	61.6
15 to 64 years old	56	44	35	65	Access to basic infrastructure	
65 and older	57	43	34	66	No access to limited-standard drinking water	26.9
Without education (16+)	47	53	43	57	No access to limited-standard sanitation	70.7
Primary education (16+)	63	37	29	71	No access to electricity	69.0
Secondary education (16+)	71	29	22	78		
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)	88	12	9	91		

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 Integrated Modular Household Living Conditions Survey (EMICoV) based on 18,000 to 20,000+ households (2006, 2007, 2010, 2011, and 2015). Benin calculates over 140 poverty lines, representative at 77 urban/rural Communes' level. According to the Statistical office, this approach meets the government's expectations as the decentralization of government functions is rolled out. The NSO also used a basket defined in the 1980s corresponding to 2400 calories/day/person. Each poverty line is computed using the same basket at the survey year's price. This introduces distortion in welfare comparisons between surveys and strata. The national poverty line is implicit and reaches the same number of poor as when adding up the poor by commune using the multiple lines. Poverty trends obtained from national and international poverty lines (1.90US\$ 2011 PPP, used for international comparisons) are similar, though levels are different (40.1 percent and 49.6 percent respectively), denoting methodological issues due to the national definition of several poverty lines and aggregation of the poor. Benin is implementing the Harmonized households survey adopted by all the member states of the West African Economic and Monetary Union. The field work has now been completed, and updates to poverty trends expected in the first quarter 2020, a delay with regard to the November 2019 forecast due to complex data cleaning issues. A second and comparable survey is planned for 2021-22. The NSO shared its household surveys microdata and metadata (EMICoV 2010-2015) and is open to work with the Bank to improve data access. Benin has expressed interest in participating in the future in a project such as the regional project for statistical capacity building. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the World Bank is preparing jointly with the NSO a high frequency mobile phone survey to help the government and partners monitoring the impact of the pandemic on households.

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.