

Poverty & Equity Brief

Africa Western & Central

Sierra Leone

October 2020

The poverty rate (as measured by \$1.9 poverty line, 2011 PPP) was estimated at 43.0 percent of the population in 2018 based on the Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey (SLIHS). This represented a significant decline from 54.7 percent in 2011. Despite a rapidly growing population, the number of poor also fell from 3.6 million to 3.3 million during 2011-2018.

Sierra Leone's trajectory of poverty reduction has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown. According to the data from the high frequency survey, COVID-19 Impact Monitoring Survey, about six in ten households report a decline in income, with income from self-employment being the hardest hit. Moreover, declines in income from other sources, such as non-farm self-employment left farmers without cash to purchase adequate seeds, thus rice production (a staple) will likely be negatively affected. Consequently, poverty is projected to increase to 44.2 percent in 2020 from 40.6 percent in 2019.

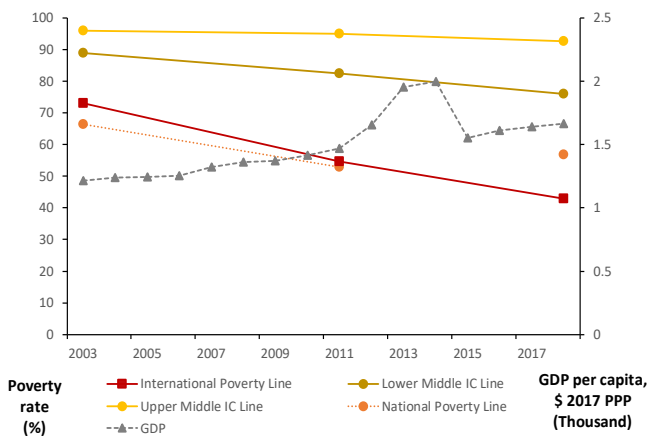
Poverty in Sierra Leone has a strong spatial component. While 60 percent of the rural population lives in poverty, 20 percent of the urban population is poor. Poverty is highest in the North region and lowest in the West. Greater Freetown has a significantly lower poverty rate than elsewhere, including other urban areas.

Despite, the improvement in poverty rates, inequality is rising. The Gini coefficient rose from 0.33 to 0.36 between 2011 and 2018. Areas that are less poor to begin with (urban areas) have experienced higher consumption growth and greater poverty reduction.

POVERTY	Number of Poor (million)	Rate (%)	Period
National Poverty Line	4.3	56.8	2018
International Poverty Line 6413.1 in Sierra Leonean leone (2018) or US\$1.90 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	3.3	43.0	2018
Lower Middle Income Class Poverty Line 10801.1 in Sierra Leonean leone (2018) or US\$3.20 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	5.8	76.0	2018
Upper Middle Income Class Poverty Line 18564.3 in Sierra Leonean leone (2018) or US\$5.50 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	7.1	92.7	2018
Multidimensional Poverty Measure		61.7	2018
SHARED PROSPERITY			
Annualized Consumption Growth per capita of the bottom 40 percent		2.67	2011-2018
INEQUALITY			
Gini Index		35.7	2018
Shared Prosperity Premium = Growth of the bottom 40 - Average Growth		-0.20	2011-2018
GROWTH			
Annualized GDP per capita growth		1.79	2011-2018
Annualized Consumption Growth per capita from Household Survey		2.86	2011-2018
MEDIAN INCOME			
Growth of the annual median income/consumption per capita		2.38	2011-2018

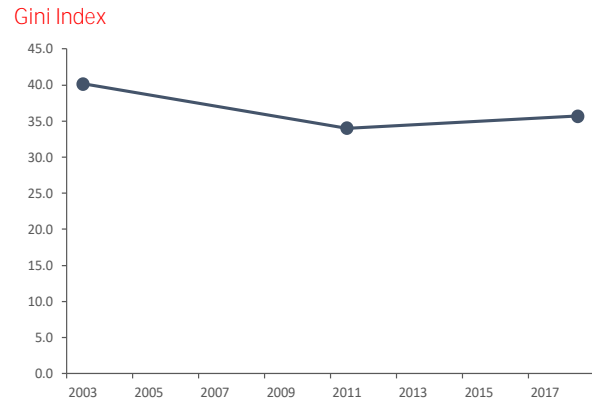
Sources: WDI for GDP, National Statistical Offices for national poverty rates, POVCALNET as of September 2020, and Global Monitoring Database for the rest.

POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE, 2003-2018



Source: World Bank using SLIHS/SSAPOV/GMD

INEQUALITY TRENDS, 2003-2018



Source: World Bank using SLIHS/SSAPOV/GMD

KEY INDICATORS

Distribution among groups: 2018	International Poverty Line(%)		Relative group (%)		Multidimensional Poverty Measures: 2018 (% of population)
	Non-Poor	Poor	Bottom 40	Top 60	
Urban population	79	21	19	81	Monetary poverty (Consumption) Daily consumption less than US\$1.90 per person 43.0
Rural population	40	60	56	44	
Males	58	42	39	61	Education At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school 18.7 No adult has completed primary education 28.7
Females	56	44	41	59	
0 to 14 years old	51	49	46	54	Access to basic infrastructure No access to limited-standard drinking water 33.8 No access to limited-standard sanitation 87.2 No access to electricity 68.7
15 to 64 years old	62	38	35	65	
65 and older	52	48	46	54	
Without education (16+)	97	3	3	97	
Primary education (16+)	55	45	42	58	
Secondary education (16+)	72	28	25	75	
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)	88	12	10	90	

Source: World Bank using SLIHS/SSAPOV/GMD

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

POVERTY DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The 2018 Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey is the most recent household survey available to estimate poverty in the country. It has informed the evolution of poverty since 2011. The World Bank assisted with the implementation of the 2018 household survey with a grant of \$1.33 ml from the Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building. The Government has embarked on developing its statistics system as outlined in its National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). The World Bank is providing support through a statistical support project (2020–2024) with emphasis on the production and dissemination of a core package of social and economic statistics. In addition, the World Bank with other donors is supporting the high-frequency survey, COVID-19 Impact Monitoring Survey, to monitor the impact of the global pandemic on the population.

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.