Burundi is one of the poorest countries worldwide. In 2013, 64.9 percent of the population lived below the national poverty line, with half of the non-poor population vulnerable to falling into poverty. Burundi faced an electoral crisis in 2015 that severely contracted the economy. A rapid household survey conducted in 2017 indicates that the crisis did not have a major effect on poverty nationwide. Yet, it resulted in an increase of poverty by 4 percentage points as well as an increase in unemployment from 14.2 percent in 2014 to 23.2 percent in 2017 in Bujumbura, its capital city, where most of the protests took place during the 2015 crisis. Additionally, 72 percent of the population considered themselves poor in 2017, with 22.4 percent considering themselves very poor.
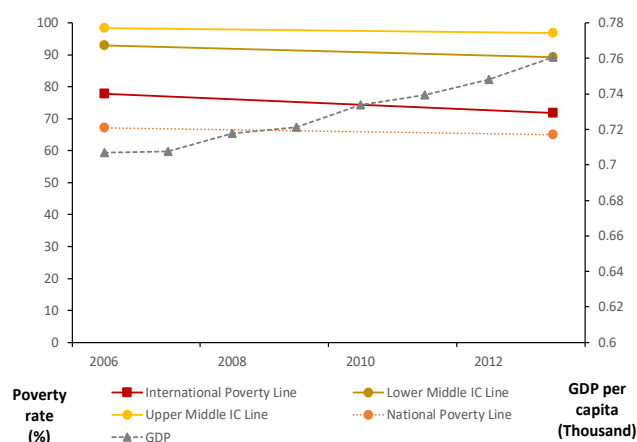
The Gini index is at 38.6 which is below the SSA average of 45 - even though it masks inter-regional inequality. Food insecurity is alarming, with 56 percent of children under 5 stunted. Access to services, including access to safely managed water and sanitation is low, and only about 8 percent of the total population has access to electricity. Albeit progress has been made regarding education and health, Burundi's Human Capital Index remains low. Children in Burundi today will live up to only 38 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. Agriculture, where 85 percent of the working population are employed, is dominated by small-scale subsistence farming highly vulnerable to climate change and economic shocks. The lack of land followed by the lack of cattle, and high floods and droughts appear as the most striking causes of poverty.

The indirect effects of the recent COVID-19 outbreak could translate into higher unemployment and informality in urban areas as tourism and related services are likely to see cutbacks. Tea and coffee farmers may be hit hard following shocks to aggregate demand. Households are likely to experience decreases in remittances as flows appear affected worldwide, with major providers filing for bankruptcy. Due to border closures and related supply disruptions, higher import prices of consumer products and importantly food are likely to ensue, putting poor households further at risk. An uncontained spread of COVID-19 could impact all households across the income distribution but would be particularly severe for the poor who may be forced to sell productive assets or reduce expenditures on education and food, with long-lasting repercussions to human capital.

POVERTY	Number of Poor (million)	Rate (%)	Period
National Poverty Line	6.2	64.9	2013
International Poverty Line 1206.9 in Burundi franc (2013) or US$1.90 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	6.8	71.8	2013
Lower Middle Income Class Poverty Line 2032.7 in Burundi franc (2013) or US$3.20 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	8.5	89.3	2013
Upper Middle Income Class Poverty Line 3493.8 in Burundi franc (2013) or US$5.50 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	9.2	96.8	2013
Multidimentional Poverty Measure		86.8	2013
SHARED PROSPERITY			
Annualized Income or Consumption Growth per capita of the bottom 40 percent		N/A	N/A
INEQUALITY			
Gini Index		38.6	2013
Shared Prosperity Premium = Growth of the bottom 40 - Average Growth		N/A	N/A
GROWTH			
Annualized GDP per capita growth		1.17	2008-2013
Annualized Income or Consumption Growth per capita from Household Survey		N/A	N/A
MEDIAN INCOME			
Growth of the annual median income/consumption per capita		N/A	N/A

Sources: WDI for GDP, National Statistical Offices for national poverty rates, POVCALNET as of Feburary 2020, and Global Monitoring Database for the rest.
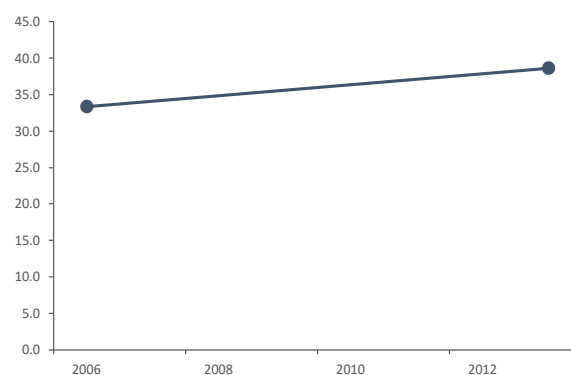
POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE, 2006-2013

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

Source: World Bank using ECVMB/SSAPOV/GMD

INEQUALITY TRENDS, 2006-2013

Gini Index

Source: World Bank using ECVMB/SSAPOV/GMD

KEY INDICATORS

Distribution among groups: 2013	International Poverty Line(%)		Relative group (%)	
	Non-Poor	Poor	Bottom 40	Top 60
Urban population	70	30	13	87
Rural population	24	76	43	57
Males	29	71	39	61
Females	27	73	41	59
0 to 14 years old	23	77	45	55
15 to 64 years old	33	67	36	64
65 and older	43	57	28	72
Without education (16+)	25	75	42	58
Primary education (16+)	34	66	33	67
Secondary education (16+)	59	41	16	84
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)	91	N/A*	N/A*	99

Multidimensional Poverty Measures (% of people):	2013
Monetary poverty (Consumption)	
Daily consumption less than US$1.90 per person	71.8
Education	
At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school	18.9
No adult has completed primary education	66.3
Access to basic infrastructure	
No access to limited-standard drinking water	20.6
No access to limited-standard sanitation	94.3
No access to electricity	91.8

Source: World Bank using ECVMB/SSAPOV/GMD

Source: World Bank using ECVMB/SSAPOV/GMD

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

POVERTY DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Burundi's Statistical Office (ISTEEBU) conducted four household surveys since the turn of the millennium, namely QUIBB 2006, PMS 2012, ECVMB 2013/14, and a rapid ECVMB 2017 for the analysis of vulnerability and framing antipoverty programs. The first two surveys focus on nonmonetary aspects of welfare and are limited in terms of data collected on living standards such as consumption and income. ECVMB 2013/14 overcomes part of this limitation by collecting data on consumption expenditure of comparable quality to that available in common Household Budget Surveys for the measurement of poverty incidence. The survey includes three phases, with phases 1 and 2 designed to measure employment, living conditions, and the informal sector, and phase 3 designed to assess households' living standards and monetary poverty indicators. Consumption expenditure data, in phase 3, are generally collected after the harvest season, which can lead to an underestimation of poverty, as consumption during this period can be relatively high. The rapid ECVMB 2017 collects information on key indicators of household living conditions and socio-economic characteristics to update indicators on living standards following the 2015 crisis.

The poverty headcount is based on the cost of basic needs approach. The food line is based on the cost of a food basket that delivers 2,200 calories per adult equivalent per day. The basic needs poverty line adds an allowance for basic nonfood necessities to the food line.

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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