

# Poverty & Equity Brief

Sub-Saharan Africa

## Sierra Leone

April 2020

The most recent household survey for which poverty data is available, the 2018 Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey (SLIHS), estimated the incidence of poverty to be 56.8 percent at the national poverty line of Le 2,125,000 annually per adult equivalent. This represents a 5.6 percentage point decrease from 52.9 percent in 2011, the latest poverty statistic available. However, due to fast population growth, the number of poor increased from an estimated 3.5 million in 2011 to 4.7 million in 2018. Poverty rates in rural areas are more than twice those in urban areas, 73.9% compared to 34.8%. Greater Freetown (all urban areas in Western Area) has a significantly lower poverty rate (22.8%) than other urban areas (49.3%).

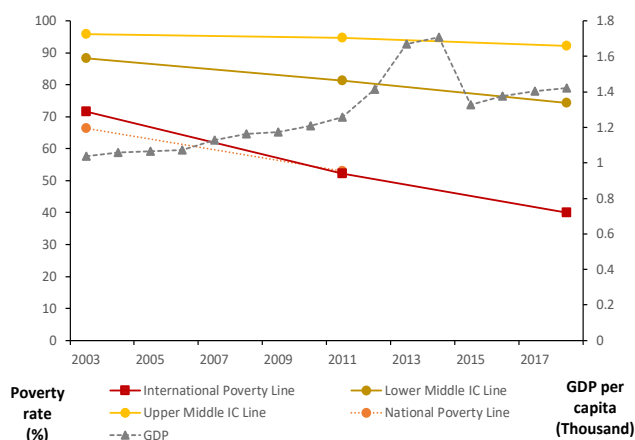
Using comparable measures of welfare for 2011 and 2018, inequality (as measured by the Gini coefficient) increased from 0.33 to 0.36 between 2011 and 2018. This is the predictable result of a situation where the areas that are less poor to begin with (urban areas) have higher growth and greater poverty reduction.

Recent progress in poverty reduction may slowdown or backtrack given the pandemic of COVID-19. Internal trade routes are now disrupted which along with the closure of wholesale markets will affect the supply and price of locally grown food items in urban areas, and the supply and price of all imported goods (including rice) especially in areas outside of Freetown. Externally, a serious outbreak in major rice producing regions could increase the price of rice, pushing some households into poverty. Impacts on human capital through the closure of schools or disruption of health services due to COVID-19 outbreak are also areas of concern should there be a substantial outbreak in Sierra Leone.

POVERTY	Number of Poor (million)	Rate (%)	Period
National Poverty Line	3.5	52.9	2011
International Poverty Line 6413.1 in Sierra Leonean leone (2018) or US\$1.90 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	3.1	40.1	2018
Lower Middle Income Class Poverty Line 10801.1 in Sierra Leonean leone (2018) or US\$3.20 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	5.7	74.4	2018
Upper Middle Income Class Poverty Line 18564.3 in Sierra Leonean leone (2018) or US\$5.50 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	7.0	92.1	2018
Multidimensional Poverty Measure		60.1	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 February 2020, and Global Monitoring Database for the rest.

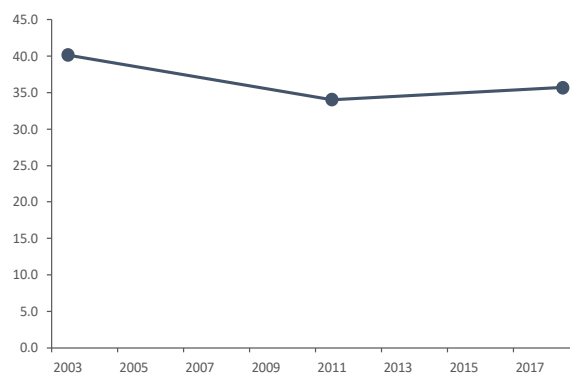
## POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE, 2003-2018



Source: World Bank using SLIHS/SSAPOV/GMD

## INEQUALITY TRENDS, 2003-2018

### Gini Index



Source: World Bank using SLIHS/SSAPOV/GMD

## KEY INDICATORS

Distribution among groups: 2018	International Poverty Line(%)		Relative group (%)		Multidimensional Poverty Measures (% of people):	2018
	Non-Poor	Poor	Bottom 40	Top 60		
Urban population	81	19	19	81	<b>Monetary poverty (Consumption)</b>	
Rural population	43	57	56	44	Daily consumption less than US\$1.90 per person	40.0
Males	61	39	39	61	<b>Education</b>	
Females	59	41	41	59	At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school	18.7
0 to 14 years old	54	46	46	54	No adult has completed primary education	28.7
15 to 64 years old	65	35	35	65	<b>Access to basic infrastructure</b>	
65 and older	54	46	46	54	No access to limited-standard drinking water	33.8
Without education (16+)	97	3	3	97	No access to limited-standard sanitation	87.2
Primary education (16+)	58	42	42	58	No access to electricity	68.7
Secondary education (16+)	75	25	25	75		
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)	90	10	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 the implementation of the 2018 household survey with a grant of \$1.33m from the Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building, but funding for statistics is scarce and a commitment to long term financing is still needed. The World Bank is planning a five-year statistical support project (2020–2024) with emphasis on the production and dissemination of a core package of social and economic statistics. Such a package is in conformity with the government's National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and is designed to support the implementation of the NSDS's strategic focus areas.

## 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.