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Poverty & Equity Brief

October 2026

THAILAND

Thailand has achieved rapid poverty reduction, with the headcount rate at the upper-middle-income line ($8.30 per day, 2021 PPP) falling from 74 percent in 1990 to 11.7 percent in 2024. Three factors drove this decline. Export-led industrialization moved workers out of agriculture into better-paid jobs, with median real wages growing annually by 2.9 percent between 1991 and 2025, and the largest gains concentrated at the bottom of the distribution. Agricultural modernization raised rural incomes. A strong social policy focus in the 2000s, notably universal health coverage and rural credit, protected households and built human capital.

Since 2015, however, progress has slowed. With structural transformation stalling, real farm profits falling and post-pandemic growth near 2 percent, labor income has contributed little, and social assistance has been the main driver of poverty reduction since 2017. Poverty remains concentrated among agricultural households and in lagging regions, mostly in the rural Northeast and the South. People with no schooling are nearly five times as likely to be poor as those with secondary education. Many households remain exposed to informal work (63 percent of employment), household debt is near 87 percent of GDP and are prone to climate and energy shocks. Further gains are therefore fragile with higher fuel and transport costs posing additional downside risks.

Inequality has fallen but remains high. The consumption Gini declined from 45 in 1990 to 33 in 2024, aided by progressive wage growth and redistributive fiscal policy. Yet the income Gini (43 in 2021) was the highest in East Asia and Pacific, the richest 10 percent earn nearly half of national income and hold about three-quarters of wealth, and in 2020 Bangkok's GDP per capita was more than 6.5 times that of the Northeast. Unequal opportunity sustains these gaps: only 5 percent of youth from the poorest quintile complete tertiary education, compared with 52 percent from the richest. Sustaining progress will require better jobs beyond Bangkok, higher farm productivity, and adequate social protection for children and informal workers as Thailand ages.

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$3.00 Poverty Rate	$8.30 Poverty Rate	Gini Index	Prosperity Gap
2024	2024	2024	2024
0%	11.7%	33.3	2.0

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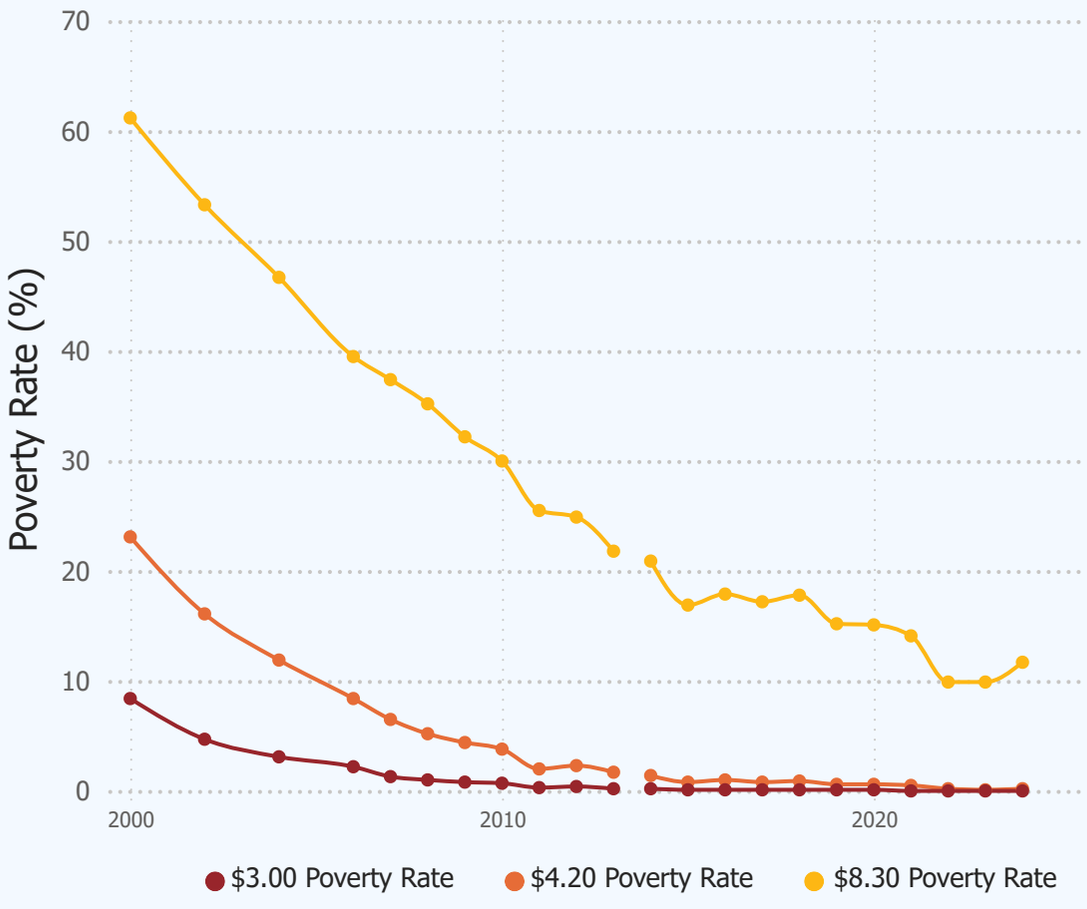
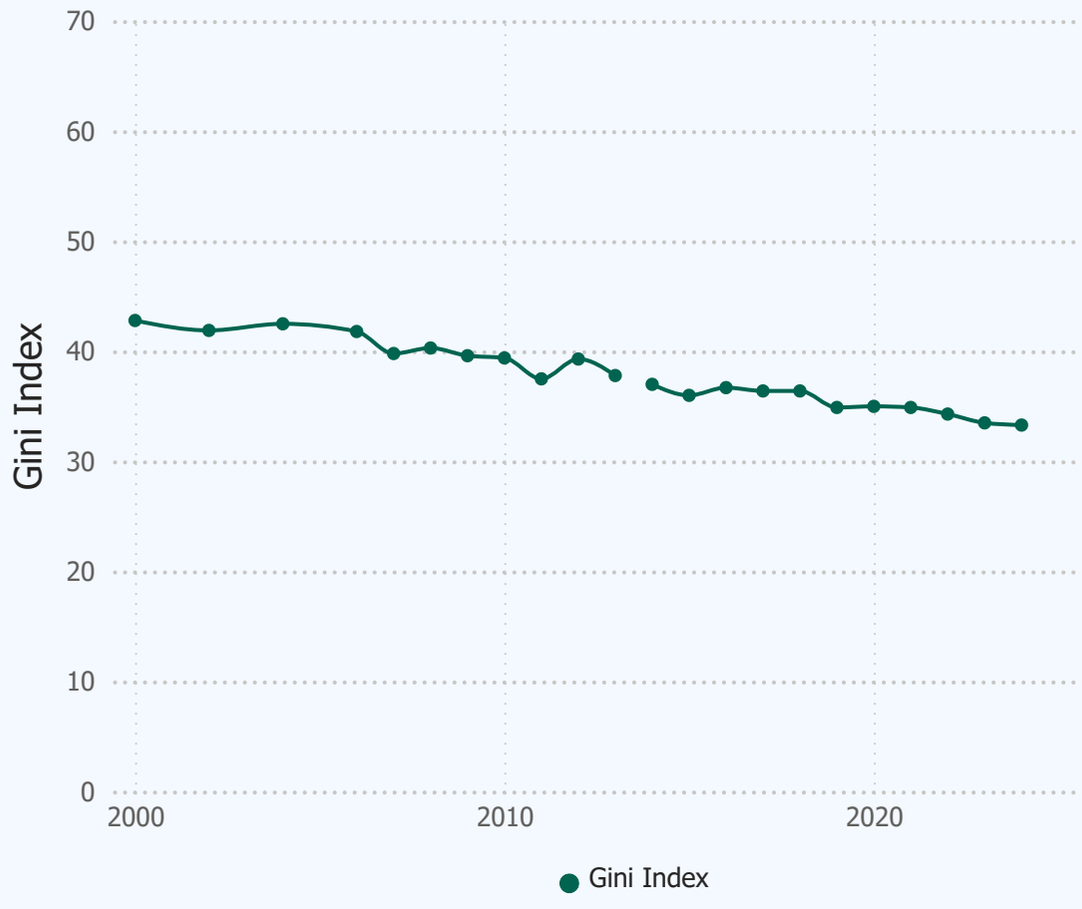
Poverty Rate



Inequality



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Poverty at Different Lines

Poverty Line	Number of Poor (Thousands)	Rate (%)	Year
National Poverty Line	2,445.1	3.4	2023
International Poverty Line ($3.00/day)	10.5	0.0	2024
Lower Middle Income Class Poverty Line ($4.20/day)	158.9	0.2	2024
Upper Middle Income Class Poverty Line ($8.30/day)	8,366.0	11.7	2024
Multidimensional Poverty Measure		0.1	2024

Group and Multidimensional Poverty

Poverty by Group	Poverty Rate (%)
Urban population	N/A
Rural population	N/A
Males	12.0
Females	11.4
0 to 14 years old	20.7
15 to 64 years old	9.3
65 and older	14.0
Without education (16+)	25.3
Primary education (16+)	14.7
Secondary education (16+)	7.3
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)	1.0

Multidimensional Poverty Components	(% of Pop.)
Daily income less than US$3.00 per person	0
At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school	0.4
No adult has completed primary education	10.8
No access to limited-standard drinking water	0.4
No access to limited-standard sanitation	0.1
No access to electricity	0

Note:
N/A denotes a missing/removed value, while N/A* refers to a value which was removed due to having fewer than 30 observations.
The rates in the Poverty by Group table above are shown at the $8.30 upper-middle income line.
Data for the Poverty by Group table is derived from a 2024 survey and data for the Multidimensional Poverty Components table is derived from a 2024 survey.

Poverty Data & Methodology

Poverty and inequality statistics are estimated using data from the Thailand Socio-Economic Survey (SES), which is conducted annually by the National Statistical Office of Thailand. The National Economic and Social Development Council is responsible for producing and disseminating the official poverty and inequality statistics. While national and international trends in poverty generally align, they do not match exactly due to methodological differences. Both national and international measures use a welfare aggregate based on nominal consumption per capita. However, the main discrepancies arise from the different poverty lines employed. Thailand's national poverty estimates use household-level poverty lines that vary by household composition (age and gender) and incorporate regional price differences. In contrast, the World Bank measure is based on a single poverty line, which facilitates easier comparability across countries.

Harmonization

The numbers presented in this brief are based on the EAPPOV database. EAPPOV is a database of socio-economic statistics constructed using microdata from household surveys in the East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) region. Harmonized surveys in the EAPPOV database are compiled into 4 modules following Global Monitoring Database (GMD) Harmonization guidelines. A subset of the harmonized variables forms the basis of the GMD collection, including the welfare aggregates which is used for Global Poverty Monitoring. Terms of use of the data adhere to agreements with the original data producers.

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