



POVERTY IN A RISING AFRICA

Measuring poverty in Africa remains a challenge.

- The coverage, comparability, and quality of household surveys to monitor living standards have improved. Still, by 2012, only 27 of the region's 48 countries had conducted at least two comparable surveys since 1990 to track poverty.
- Regular and good-quality GDP, price, and census data are also lacking.
- Technical approaches can fill in some gaps, but there is no good alternative to regular and good-quality data. A regionwide effort to strengthen Africa's statistics is called for.

Poverty in Africa may be lower than current estimates suggest, but more people are poor today than in 1990.

- The latest estimates from the World Bank show that the share of Africans who are poor fell from 57 percent in 1990 to 43 percent in 2012. Limiting estimates to comparable surveys, drawing on nonconsumption surveys, and applying alternative price deflators suggest that poverty may have declined by even more.
- Nonetheless, even given the most optimistic estimates, still many more people are poor because of population growth: more than 330 million in 2012, up from about 280 million in 1990.
- Poverty reduction has been slowest in fragile countries, and rural areas remain much

poorer, although the urban-rural gap has narrowed. Chronic poverty is substantial.

Nonmonetary dimensions of poverty have been improving.

- Health, nutrition, education, and empowerment have improved; and violence has diminished.
- But the challenges remain enormous: more than two in five adults are still illiterate, and the quality of schooling is often low; after a decade of relative peace, conflict is on the rise.
- Nonmonetary welfare indicators are weaker in resource-rich countries, conditional on income, pointing to the unmet potential of natural resource wealth.

Inequality in Africa has many dimensions.

- The data do not reveal a systematic increase in inequality across countries in Africa. But these data do not capture extremely wealthy Africans, whose numbers and wealth are increasing.
- Spatial inequalities (differences between urban and rural areas and across regions) are large.
- Intergenerational mobility in areas such as education and occupation has improved, but mobility is still low and perpetuates inequality.

The "Key Messages" are from the book, *Poverty in a Rising Africa* by Kathleen Beegle, Luc Christiaensen, Andrew Dabalen, and Isis Gaddis, doi: 10.1596/978-1-4648-0723-7. To learn more about the book and download it for free please visit <http://bit.ly/AfricaPovertyReport> or scan the attached QR Code with your mobile device. Print copies can be purchased through Amazon.com.

