

MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY IN BELIZE

Introduction

This summary report presents estimates of poverty using the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) measure. The estimates are derived from data collected in the September 2021 Labor Force Survey. The MPI encompasses various deprivations that characterize the experience of poverty in Belize, such as lack of education or employment, and is complementary to monetary measures of poverty. This is the first MPI produced for the country, and was done in collaboration with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Methodology

The Multidimensional Poverty Index uses the Alkire-Foster (AF) method, which quantifies the various deprivations that individuals suffer concurrently, such as lack of education or employment, poor health, or poor living conditions. These deprivation profiles are examined to determine who is poor and then used to produce a multidimensional poverty index (MPI). The MPI provides valuable information that can be used to identify vulnerable populations, direct policy initiatives, allocate resources, and evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs aimed at alleviating poverty over time. It also measures the incidence of poverty, which is the percent of people and households who are multidimensionally poor, and the intensity of poverty, which is the average deprivation score of multidimensionally poor households. The product of these two measures results in the Multidimensional Poverty Index.

The national MPI is divided into four equally weighted dimensions: education, living standards, employment, and health. Each dimension has four to five indicators for a total of seventeen indicators. Each indicator is equally weighted within its respective dimension (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.: Multidimensional Poverty Index Indicators

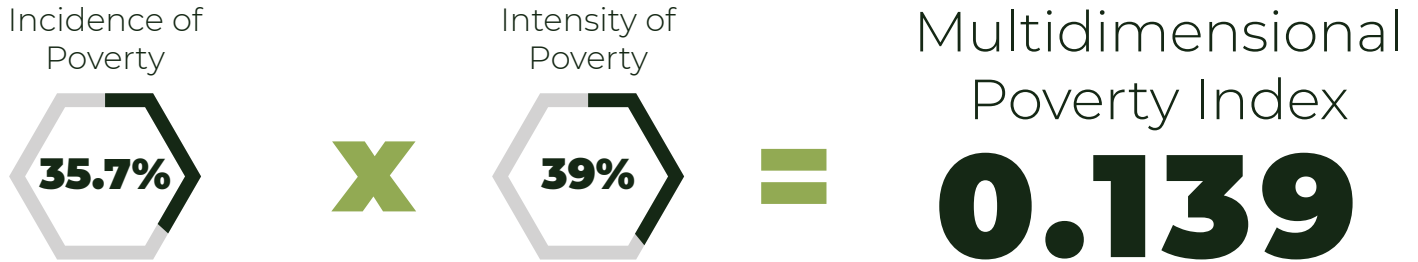
Health	Education	Living Standards	Employment
Improved Sanitation 0.0625	Years of Schooling 0.0625	Housing Materials 0.0625	Underemployment 0.05
Improved Water 0.0625	School Attendance 0.0625	Cooking Fuel 0.0625	Unemployment 0.05
Food Security 0.0625	School Lag 0.0625	Asset Ownership 0.0625	Informal Employment 0.05
Access to Health Services 0.0625	Access to Internet and ICT 0.0625	Overcrowding 0.0625	Youth NEET 0.05
			Dependency 0.05
	0.25	0.25	0.25

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize. Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2022.

Highlights

Official Multidimensional Poverty Estimates, September 2021

The official Multidimensional Poverty Index in September 2021 was 0.139, with 35.7 percent of the population being multidimensionally poor and an intensity rate of 39 percent. It was estimated that 133,516 persons spread across 31,399 households, were multidimensionally poor.

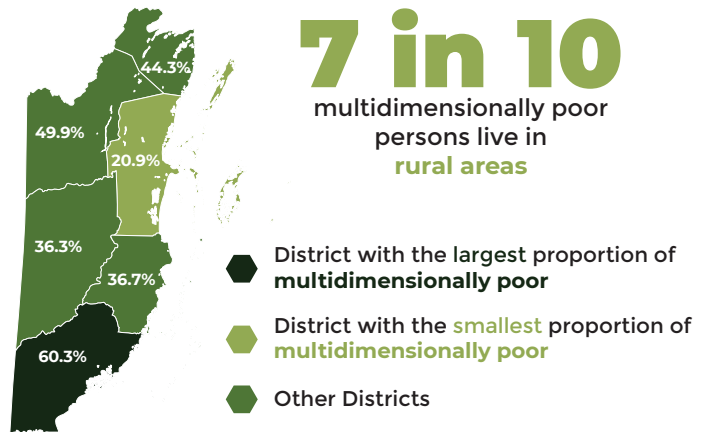


Multidimensional poverty by district

The Toledo District had the highest percentage of multidimensionally poor persons at 60.3 percent, while the Belize District registered the lowest at 20.9 percent (Figure 2).

Persons living in rural areas were multidimensionally poorer than those living in urban areas; 47 percent compared to 23 percent.

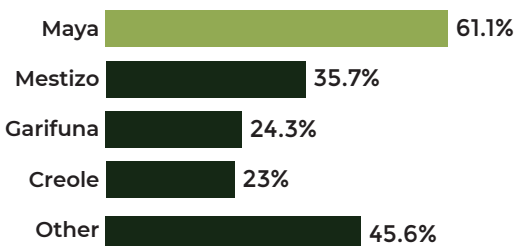
Figure 2
Multidimensional poverty distribution across districts



Multidimensional poverty by ethnicity

Regarding ethnicity, 61.1 percent of Mayas were multidimensionally poor, the highest among the major ethnic groups (Figure 3).

Figure 3
Multidimensionally poor by ethnicity

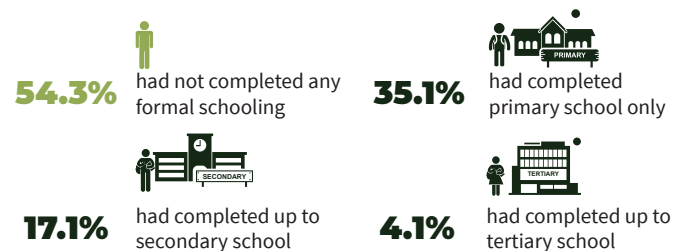


Source: Statistical Institute of Belize. Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2022.

Multidimensional Poverty by education

With respect to educational attainment, households headed by persons who had not completed any level of education had the highest incidence of poverty at 54.3 percent (Figure 4).

Figure 4
Multidimensionally poor by level of education completed of household head

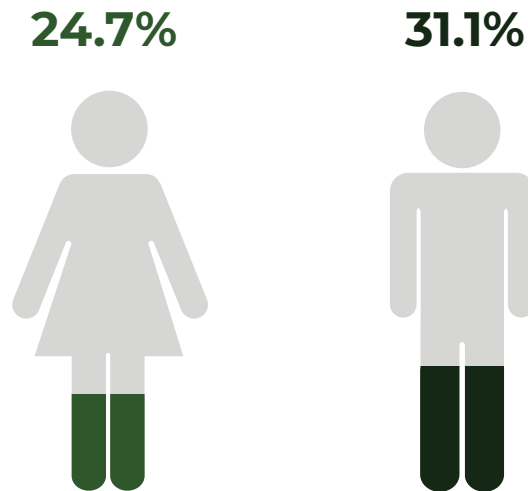


Source: Statistical Institute of Belize. Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2022.

Multidimensional poverty by sex

According to the study results, the incidence of poverty in male-headed households was 31.1 percent, and 24.7 percent in female-headed households (Figure 5).

Figure 5
Incidence of poverty by sex of household head

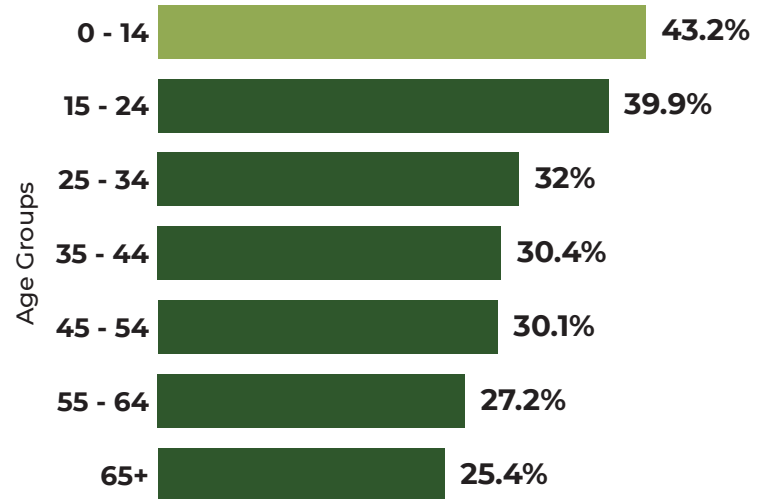


Source: Statistical Institute of Belize. Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2022.

Multidimensional poverty by age

The data shows that poverty rates vary by age group, with the highest incidence of poverty among those aged zero to fourteen years old at 43.2 percent (Figure 6).

Figure 6
Incidence of poverty by age groups



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize. Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2022.

Multidimensional poverty by household size

According to the data, households with three members or less have a relatively low incidence of poverty at 20.1 percent, while larger households are much more likely to experience poverty. Specifically, households with 4-6 members have an incidence of poverty of 34.9 percent, and those with seven members or more have an incidence of poverty as high as 66.2 percent. (Figure 7).



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize. Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2022.