

MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX 2015

22 June 2015

HIGHLIGHTS ~ SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

At present, the Global MPI has national estimates for a total of 39 Sub-Saharan Africa countries, and 811.5 Million people, which is nearly 96% of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa. Of these, a total of 496 million are MPI poor – nearly half a billion people. On average, 61% of people in Sub-Saharan Africa are MPI poor, and the average intensity of poverty for each poor person is 56%.¹

In 2015, we release new estimations for 17 of these Sub-Saharan African countries and 198 subnational regions. This is a major update and provides new estimations for roughly 43% of the covered population and of the MPI poor people in Sub-Saharan Africa. If we combine the 2014 and 2015 MPI updates alone, we have released estimations based on new datasets for fully 30 Sub-Saharan African countries which are home to 62% of the population covered and 58% of the MPI poor people. In fact, one-third of all updated national MPI estimations published since 2010 have been for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In particular, in 2015 we add new MPI estimations for **South Sudan** and **Comoros**, and update estimations of the MPI for 15 Sub-African countries: **Benin, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Senegal, Nigeria, Mali, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mauritania, Namibia, Senegal, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe**. Every single updated country has disaggregated data by rural-urban areas and by subnational regions.

- The 2015 Global MPI estimations are taken from surveys fielded 2010-2014 in 34 countries, covering 92% of the people – 744 out of 811 million people. To give a sense of how important this is, we remind readers that the original Global MPI, launched in 2010, covered 37 African countries, using data from 2000-2007 with one country (Tanzania) having data for 2008. In 2015, **all except for one of the 39 countries covered have data that are 2008/9 or newer**. Every SSA country has been updated since 2010, thanks to new DHS/MICS surveys.
- We also have disaggregated data for 391 **subnational regions** in **37 African countries**. **The poorest region in Sub-Saharan Africa** is Salamat in Chad, followed by regions within Burkina Faso, Niger, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Nigeria, Uganda, Guinea and Sierra Leone. These regions range from an MPI poverty rate of less than 10% in the cities and regions of Bulawayo, Nairobi, Harare, Libreville, Yaounde, Douala, Accra, Lagos, and Dakhlett, to poverty rates of 50% and above in 274 regions, and 75% or above in 158 regions. We lack subnational decompositions for two Sub-Saharan African countries: Guinea-Bissau and South Africa.²
- **Intensity** varies greatly – in 10 subnational regions, poor people on average experience deprivations in less than 40% of the weighted indicators of the global MPI. But in 215 countries, the average intensity is 50% or greater – half of the MPI dimensions. And in 10 regions, sadly, each poor person (and in each of these regions over 90% of people are poor) experience deprivations in 70% or more of the MPI indicators at the same time.

¹ To give an intuitive feel, this means that on average, poor people are deprived in something like four living standards indicators, and three health or education indicators among the 10 weighted MPI indicators.

² South Africa has created a census-based MPI, the [South Africa Multidimensional Poverty Index \(SAMPI\)](#), whose indicators are different, but which do provide subnational decompositions at very local levels.

- What do we learn from these decompositions? **In 53 African regions, 90% or more of the population are poor.** That is, 116 million people live in these regions, and fully 107 million of them are poor. These regions are found in 15 countries: South Sudan, Chad, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Niger, Madagascar, Ethiopia, Benin, Central African Republic, Guinea, Gambia, Nigeria, and Mali.
- We now have **destitution** for 35 of our 39 African countries or 92% of our covered populations (last year it was 24 countries). Our **measure of destitution** identifies a subset of poor people as destitute if they experience a number of extreme deprivations like severe malnutrition, losing two children, having all primary-aged school children out of school, and practicing open defecation. On average, across Africa, **55% of MPI poor people are destitute.** Destitution ranges from a low of **1% in South Africa and 3% in Gabon** to a high of 68.8% in Niger **71.5% in South Sudan.** More than half of the population are also destitute in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Chad.
- When we consider **destitution in subnational regions**, an even starker pattern emerges. In 97 subnational regions with a total population of 231 million people, more than 50% of the population are destitute. More than 80% of people are destitute in 13 regions belonging to Chad, South Sudan, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria.