

Poverty & Equity Brief

October 2025

BURUNDI

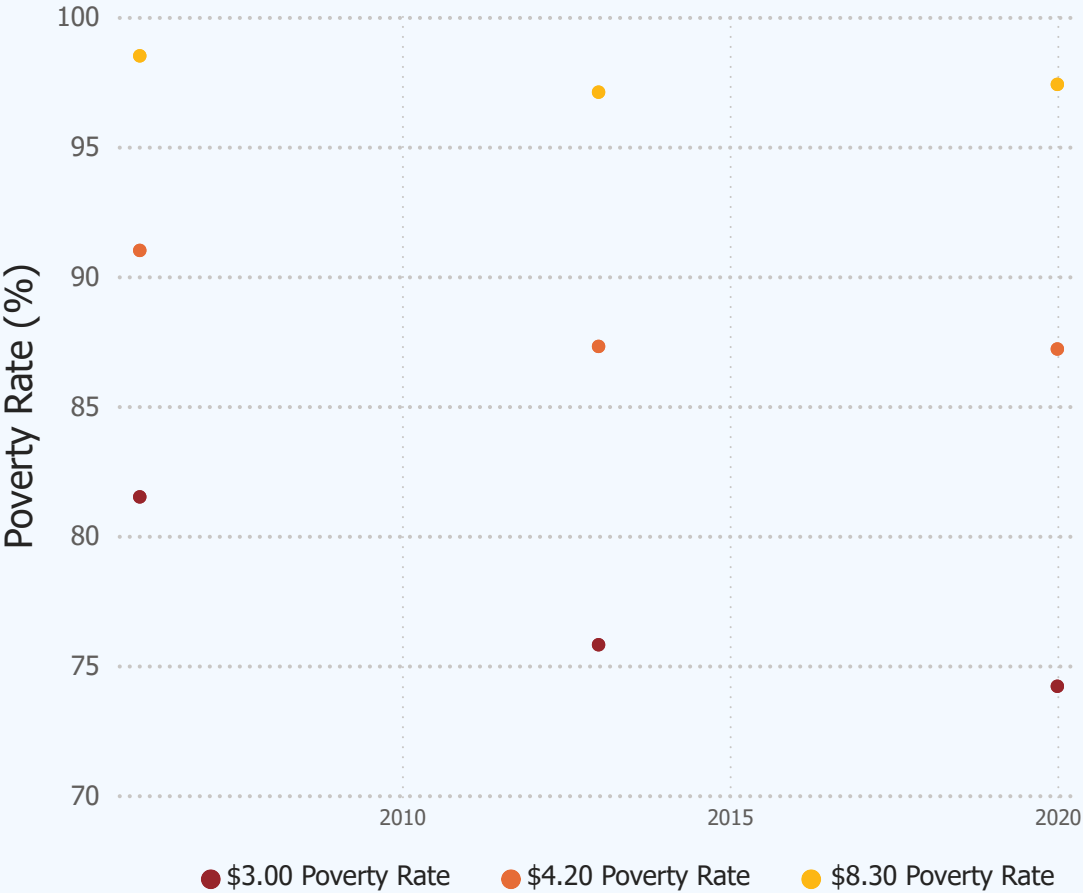
Poverty reduction has been elusive in Burundi. Following the socio-political crisis of 2015, real per capita GDP contracted by an annualized rate of 1.9 percent between 2015 and 2020. The poverty rate in 2020, the year of the most recent household survey, was 51 percent at the national poverty line. At the international poverty line (\$3.00 per day, 2021 PPP), the poverty rate was 74.2 percent, with 9.4 million people living in poverty. Nowcast estimates indicate poverty increasing to 74.8 percent in 2024 due to a contraction in real per capita private consumption. Inequality was moderate with a Gini index of 37.5 in 2020.

Poverty is predominantly rural, with 79 percent of the rural population living below the international poverty line, compared to 35 percent of the urban population. The agricultural sector employs over 85 percent of the workforce but contributes only 40 percent to GDP, with most of the poor engaged in low-productivity subsistence farming. Continued high inflation (38.8 percent year-on-year in July 2025), driven by higher food and transport costs, undermines household purchasing power, disproportionately affecting the poor who tend to spend a larger income share on food. As households cope by reducing meals, liquidating assets, or taking children out of school, this has the potential to deepen poverty and adversely impact human capital.

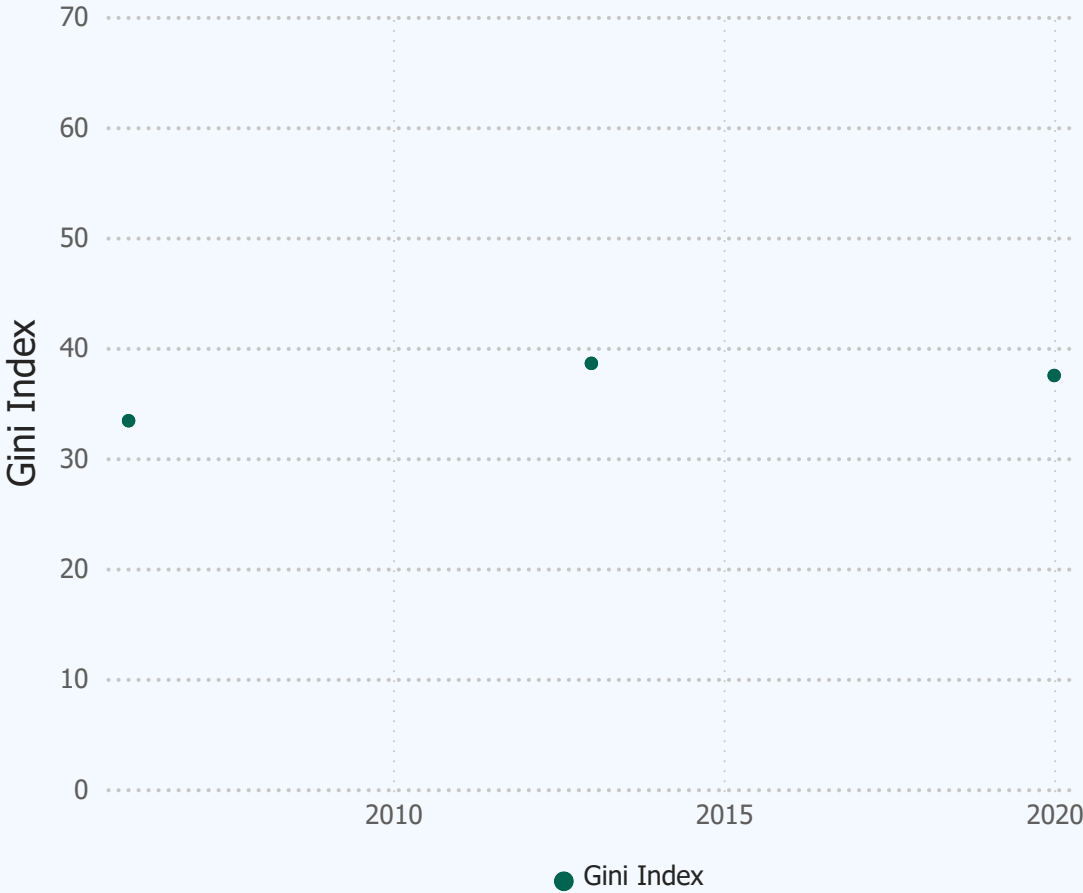
Burundi's Human Capital Index is low (HCI of 0.39 in 2020), meaning a child born in Burundi will be 39 percent as productive when she grows up as she could be with complete education and full health. Five out of 10 children do not finish primary school, and 7 out of 10 do not finish secondary school, depriving Burundi of the human capital needed to transform its economy away from subsistence agriculture. Food insecurity remains widespread, and stunting prevalence is among the highest in the world, with nearly 56 percent of children under five chronically malnourished in 2022. Access to basic infrastructure is limited, with 9 out of 10 people lacking access to electricity, and 9 out of 10 lacking access to adequate sanitation.



Poverty Rate



Inequality



Poverty at Different Lines

Poverty Line	Number of Poor (Thousands)	Rate (%)	Year
National Poverty Line	6,232.3	51.0	2020
International Poverty Line (\$3.00/day)	9,361.7	74.2	2020
Lower Middle Income Class Poverty Line (\$4.20/day)	10,999.3	87.2	2020
Upper Middle Income Class Poverty Line (\$8.30/day)	12,293.4	97.4	2020
Multidimensional Poverty Measure		84.2	2020

Group and Multidimensional Poverty

Poverty by Group	Poverty Rate (%)	Multidimensional Poverty Components	(% of Pop.)
Urban population	35.2	Daily income less than US\$3.00 per person	74.2
Rural population	78.7	At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school	34.2
Males	73.9	No adult has completed primary education	44.1
Females	74.5	No access to limited-standard drinking water	12.0
0 to 14 years old	79.7	No access to limited-standard sanitation	91.0
15 to 64 years old	69.5	No access to electricity	90.6
65 and older	62.3		
Without education (16+)	76.8		
Primary education (16+)	71.4		
Secondary education (16+)	64.6		
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)	13.3		

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 \$3.00 international line.

Data for the Poverty by Group table is derived from a 2020 survey and data for the Multidimensional Poverty Components table is derived from a 2020 survey.

Poverty Data & Methodology

Poverty in Burundi is measured using the cost of basic needs approach. The national poverty line in 2020/21 equals BIF 1,584 per adult equivalent per day, and the food poverty line represents a daily caloric requirement of 2,200 calories per adult equivalent per day. The welfare aggregate used with the national poverty line is consumption per adult equivalent, whereas consumption per capita is used with the international poverty line. The most recent household survey to measure poverty is the 2020/21 Enquête Intégrée sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages au Burundi (EICVMB), an LSMS-type survey containing information on multiple topics including household consumption, employment, education, health, shocks, among others. The 2020/21 EICVMB is not comparable to the previous survey (2013/14 ECVMB) due to survey design changes incorporating the latest international best practices, but a supplemental survey was fielded in 2020 to assess the poverty changes relative to 2013. The household survey microdata are not yet available in web-based microdata catalogues, and public access must be requested directly from the National Statistical Institute of Burundi.

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 three 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.