

Poverty & Equity Brief

October 2025

GABON

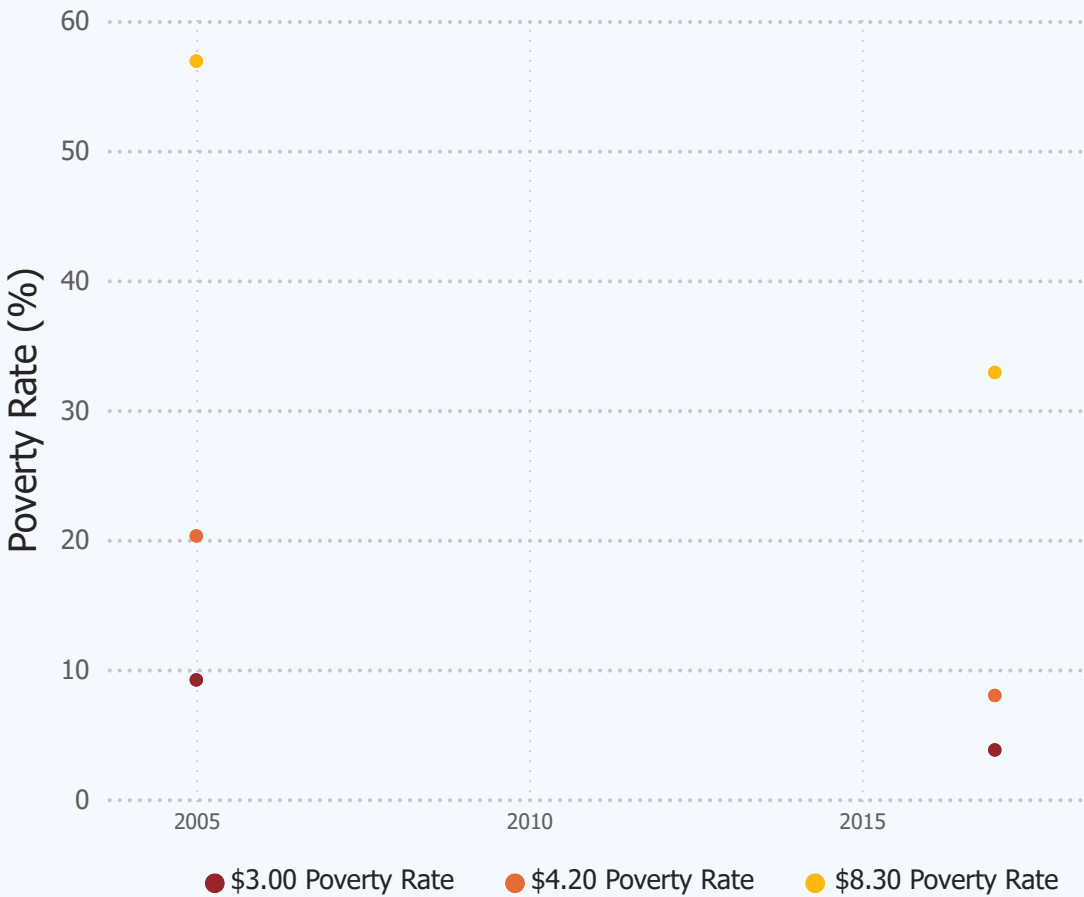
Gabon stands out in Sub-Saharan Africa for its high income per capita, abundant natural resources, and predominantly urban population—about 89 percent of residents live in urban areas. Yet, poverty remains a significant challenge. In 2017, an estimated one in three Gabonese (32.9 percent) lived below the World Bank’s international upper-middle-income poverty line of US\$8.30 (2021 PPP), a threshold closely aligned with the national poverty line of CFAF 2,304 (about US\$8.37, 2021 PPP). Multidimensional poverty affected 8.4 percent of the population. Inequality is moderate but persistent, with a Gini index around 38, and substantial disparities between urban and rural areas and across social groups impede progress toward shared prosperity and sustainable poverty reduction.

Service access gaps between rural and urban areas are pronounced in Gabon compared with other MICs and UMICs. For instance, the rural–urban gap in access to drinking water is about 33 percentage points, versus roughly 11 points in lower-middle-income countries (LMICs) and 3 points in upper-middle-income countries (UMICs). Adults in urban areas average about 8.9 years of schooling versus 6.2 years in rural areas. Only 20 percent of urban adults have not completed primary education compared to 52 percent of rural adults. Secondary school attendance is roughly 60 percent in urban areas versus 26 percent in rural areas. Human capital outcomes mirror these challenges: Gabon’s Human Capital Index is low at about 0.45, reflecting additional deficits in learning due to a lack of safe sanitation and drinking water. Labor market outcomes reflect these constraints. Unemployment is high, especially among young people—Estimates from the most recent Labor Force Survey (2019) indicate that roughly a third of youth are unemployed (35.2 percent), among the highest rates globally. The informal sector accounts for more than half of total employment, while the public sector dominates formal jobs, signaling sluggish private-sector job creation. High informality translates into lower job quality, limited social protection, and lower wages relative to formal work, often trapping young entrants in low productivity self employment or unpaid family roles.

Economic growth has been slow and volatile, constrained by overreliance on the oil sector and longstanding governance challenges. These factors limited fiscal space for investments in human development. The new government launched ambitious reforms and pro-poor programs, including investments in roads and housing and an expansion of social transfers. In the near term, these measures are expected to reduce poverty by less than half a percentage point, with the share living below US\$8.30 (2021 PPP) declining from 34.5 percent in 2025 to 34.1 percent in 2027. Stronger and sustained growth—especially in the non-oil economy—will be essential to put Gabon on a durable poverty-reduction path and align poverty levels more closely with those of peer countries.



Poverty Rate



Inequality



Poverty at Different Lines

Poverty Line	Number of Poor (Thousands)	Rate (%)	Year
National Poverty Line	676.4	33.4	2017
International Poverty Line (\$3.00/day)	82.2	3.8	2017
Lower Middle Income Class Poverty Line (\$4.20/day)	172.8	8.0	2017
Upper Middle Income Class Poverty Line (\$8.30/day)	709.0	32.9	2017
Multidimensional Poverty Measure		9.3	2017

Group and Multidimensional Poverty

Poverty by Group	Poverty Rate (%)	Multidimensional Poverty Components	(% of Pop.)
Urban population	29.6	Daily income less than US\$3.00 per person	3.8
Rural population	48.3	At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school	7.9
Males	31.8	No adult has completed primary education	11.3
Females	33.9	No access to limited-standard drinking water	11.5
0 to 14 years old	41.2	No access to limited-standard sanitation	68.2
15 to 64 years old	27.2	No access to electricity	8.6
65 and older	37.4		
Without education (16+)	35.0		
Primary education (16+)	41.6		
Secondary education (16+)	25.3		
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)	7.5		

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 2017 survey and data for the Multidimensional Poverty Components table is derived from a 2017 survey.

Poverty Data & Methodology

Over the past two decades, Gabon's National Statistical Office (NSO) conducted two household living conditions surveys—EGEP 2005 and EGEP 2017—each with samples of about 8,000 households, representative at national, urban/rural, and provincial levels. They are the official data sources for measuring poverty and inequality, calibrating the Consumer Price Index basket, and informing the design and implementation of pro-poor policies and programs. The EGEP 2017 used an LSMS-type methodology, with a core food consumption module based on a seven-day recall, a substantial shift from the 2005 CWIQ approach, which used an average one-month recall. These methodological differences complicate cross-temporal comparisons. The 2017 design aimed to address CWIQ shortcomings in accurately capturing household consumption, a critical component of the welfare aggregate used to measure poverty. Under the Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in West and Central Africa – Series of Projects Two (HISWACA SOP2, P180085), preparations are underway for a new EGEP in 2026. Building on WAEMU's experience, the CEMAC Commission is working with member countries to align fieldwork calendars and harmonize survey instruments and protocols for the next round, improving cross-country comparability in the region.

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.