

KEY MESSAGES



ACCELERATING POVERTY REDUCTION IN AFRICA

Main Features of African Poverty

- Poverty in Africa has fallen substantially—from 54 percent in 1990 to 41 percent in 2015—but the number of poor has increased, from 278 million in 1990 to 413 million in 2015.
- Given business-as-usual, the poverty rate is expected to decline to 23 percent by 2030. Africa's share of global poverty would increase from 56 percent in 2015 to 90 percent in 2030.
- Most of the poor (82 percent) live in rural areas, often with better agroecological potential. They earn their living primarily in farming, with nonwage microenterprises the main source of nonagricultural employment and income.
- Poverty is a mix of chronic and transitory poverty. Fragile and conflict-affected states have notably higher poverty rates.
- Low human capital and high gender inequality impede poverty-reduction efforts.

Principles of Engagement

- Put the poor directly in the driver's seat of poverty reduction by focusing on raising their income directly.
- Strive for capturing synergies from better integration of interventions.
- Leverage and leapfrog with technology to the maximum extent.
- Address glaring gender inequalities.

Four Primary Areas for Policy Action

- *Accelerate the fertility transition.* Rapid population growth holds back poverty reduction through multiple channels. Family planning programs will play an important, cost-effective role in accelerating the fertility transition, complementing the effect of increasing female education and empowering women.
- *Leverage the food system.* Inclusive value chain development, complementary investment in rural public goods and technological leapfrogging are high return investments to raise smallholder agricultural productivity, with raising staple crop productivity still an area of primary attention.
- *Mitigate fragility.* Uninsured risks and conflict entrap people or push them back into poverty. Many risk management solutions already exist, with roles for both the private and public sectors, but an important hurdle remains incentivizing the public and private actors to act now, before the shocks and conflict occur.
- *Address the poverty financing gap.* In addition to the continued need for official development assistance (ODA) to finance this poverty reduction agenda, domestic tax compliance and international tax avoidance need to be addressed, as well as making public spending more pro-poor and more efficient.

The "Key Messages" are from the book, *Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa* edited by Kathleen Beegle and Luc Christiaensen, doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-1232-3. To learn more about the book and download it for free please visit <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32354> or scan the attached QR Code with your mobile device. Print copies can be purchased through Amazon.com.

