

Sources of International Poverty and Inequality Data for Monitoring MDG 1: Primary, Secondary and Household survey data sources

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I. Primary sources of Poverty and Inequality Data

A number of international agencies compute and post poverty and inequality indicators derived for many countries using comparable methods and based on household survey data. Groups that report but do not estimate poverty and inequality indicators estimated by national governments, researchers or other agencies are included in group II below. Note: the underlined text in this pdf file are hyperlinks that take can be “clicked” to see the relevant web page if you are connected to the internet.¹.

1. The [Socio-Economic Database for Latin America and the Caribbean](#)² (SEDLAC) maintained by CEDLAS Universidad Nacional de La Plata and The World Bank's LAC Poverty Group (LCSP) and MECOVI Program. Their web site “*includes statistics on poverty and other distributional and social variables for 21 Latin American and Caribbean countries computed from the main household surveys assembled by the MECOVI, (see part III below) a joint initiative of the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations ECLAC. Statistics are updated periodically as new surveys become available.*”

To access the poverty and inequality data (as of November 2007): Go the [SEDLAC webpage](#) and select Poverty or Inequality from menu on your left. **For poverty rates**, you will have two choices: poverty from official Sources (country estimates or regional estimates) and poverty estimates using CEDLAS methodology (country estimates or regional estimates). Click on the desired category and open the zip file. You will get an excel file with the countries, year, estimates and sources. **For inequality indicators** there is only one “inequality” data file: open this zip file and extract the excel file containing inequality indicators including income shares by deciles, income ratios, the Gini coefficient, Theil index, coefficient of variation, Atkinson index, and the generalized entropy index as well as Wolfson and EGR bipolarization indices. Each measure is reported for most Latin American and a few Caribbean countries in available survey years over the 1986 to 2005 period. This database is updated regularly as new surveys become available.

2. The World Bank's [PovcalNet](#) “*is an interactive computational tool that allows you to replicate the calculations made by the World Bank's researchers in estimating the extent of absolute poverty in the world, including the \$1 a day poverty measures... also allows you to calculate the poverty measures under different assumptions and to assemble the estimates using alternative country groupings or for any set of individual countries of you're choosing.*” For example, you can calculate poverty rates for different \$PPP poverty lines. The site also provides information on the surveys and price indices used to compute each poverty rate.

To access poverty and inequality data:³ On the main [PovcalNet webpage](#) click one of the “Choose your own country/aggregates” buttons. In the next control box selects the countries you want poverty and inequality data for (selecting all countries works fine). Click the continue button to move to the next window and choose a Poverty Line (PL): the default is \$1/day or \$32.74 a month. You can also select some or all available survey years. Click “Submit” to have Povcal compute the headcount poverty rate, poverty gap, squared poverty gap, the Watts index, Gini coefficient and MLD inequality indices (the survey means and inequality indicators do not depend on the poverty line chosen). Each heading is a hyperlink to that that indicator's definition. Click “detail Output” to see documentation on price deflators, survey coverage, and references to related poverty studies for that country and time period.

¹ Or you can right-click and copy the link directly to an other file or browser.

² [Socio-Economic Database for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (www.depeco.econo.unlp.edu.ar/cedlas/sedlac/)

³For data access as of November 2007 go to: <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/jsp/index.jsp> .

3. [CEPAL Stat's Social Indicators and Statistics Database](#)⁴ (BADEINSO), “gathers data, estimates and projections from various international organizations, as well as information from censuses and household surveys supplied by national statistical systems. BADEINSO presents data on the following topics: Demography, Education, Health, Housing, Employment, Wages, Poverty and income distribution, Economy, and the Millennium Development Goals.” It includes “more than 130 indicators summarizing the past and present social evolution of the 33 Latin American and Caribbean ECLAC member countries, as well as that of seven non-independent, associate member Caribbean territories”.

To access poverty and inequality data:* The [BADEINSO webpage](#) has several scroll-down menus. Use the first to choose the BADEINSO database. The second menu selects the area or topic, choose “Poverty and Income Distribution”. The third menu allows you to choose an indicator, the Gini Coefficient for example. Finally, select the regions you want: geographical area, country and year (click to highlight your choices). Your output table can be saved in spreadsheet or HTML format (see the bottom right of the screen).

4. The [African Development Bank's](#)⁵ [Gender, Poverty and Environmental Indicators on African Countries 2007 \(Section 2\)](#), compiles poverty and inequality indicators from survey data, along with other social indicators, for the 53 African countries.

To access poverty and inequality data:⁶ The above link for *Gender, Poverty and Environmental Indicators on African Countries 2007 (Section 2)* will take you directly to a .pdf file. In this document you will find various tables with the abovementioned indicators.

5. [Eurostat](#) is the Statistical Office of the European Communities and it contains comparable relative poverty and risk-of-poverty and inequality [indicators](#) for the European countries and some for countries seeking accession to the EU (Bulgaria for example). **To access poverty and inequality data:*** The [Eurostat Indicators](#)⁷ page displays a number of indicators on will see various indicators categories under Poverty and Social Exclusion. Clicking on the + sign next to Monetary poverty for example yields a list of indicators. Select a table, graph and/or map by clicking on the icons next to the name of the indicator.

6. [Inter-American Development Bank](#): The [Equity and Social Indicators](#)⁸ (Eqxis) “is a tool developed by the Poverty and Inequality Unit (SDS/POV) to monitor disaggregated data on social indicators, in particular, those proposed for measuring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. This disaggregation measures discrepancies among different population groups. EQxIS displays social indicators by income quintile, gender, urban/rural area and race/ethnicity, using information from the households surveys databank of the MECOVI Program for 20 countries.” It estimates “four points in time starting from 1990 to the latest available year, use microdata from the Household Surveys Databank of the MECOVI Program and definitions of indicators from the United Nations for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).” **To access poverty and inequality data:*** The [EQxIS](#) webpage provides several options to display inequality data. Choosing Tables, for example, allows access to a country, year and indicator in table format: clicking “view excel table” under the heading downloads the data in spreadsheet format.

⁴ For data access as of November 2007 go to: <http://websie.eclac.cl/sisgen/ConsultaIntegrada.asp>

⁵ http://www.afdb.org/portal/page?_pageid=473.1&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

⁶ *This is the data access process as of November 2007.

⁷ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1996.45323734&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&screen=welcomeref&op=en=&product=sdi_ps&depth=2

⁸ For data access as of November 2007 go to <http://www.iadb.org/xindicators/>

II. Secondary Sources of Standardized Poverty and Inequality Data

These groups and agencies gather poverty and inequality data computed by national governments or other international agencies and attempt to present it in a standardized format. Some agencies, including UN Wider and the UNSD for example, also rate and classify the data by origin and quality.

1. [Wider](#) Inequality Data Base (updated May 2007): “*The [UNU-WIDER World Income Inequality Database \(WIID\)](#) collects and stores information on income inequality for developed, developing, and transition countries”. The database covers 156 countries from 1960 to 2005. It includes calculations for Gini coefficients and income distribution by quintiles or deciles. The latest update also includes “survey means and medians along with the income shares of the richest 5% and the poorest 5%”. Documentation is provided in standard format, with data quality rated on a scale of one to four, a score of four indicates inequality statistics that are not adequately documented. **To access poverty and inequality data:*** *The [Wider Database](#)⁹ page displays a box under the title “WIID2 and its documentation consist of.” Click on the first choice spreadsheet file to download a zipped file containing the data for all countries. A user guide, country information sheets and revision notes of latest updates are also available.**
2. Deininger and Squire ([World Bank](#)): The [Measuring Income Inequality Database](#)¹⁰ “contains data for 138 countries, over the period 1890-1996 (with data on Gini coefficients and cumulative quintile shares). It was put together in 1997 by Klaus Deininger and Lyn Squire.” **To access poverty and inequality data:*** *On the database’s webpage, click “Dataset in Zipped Format” at the bottom of the page. When the zip file opens you will see several files. The data is in the Excel file under NDATA.xls (it is also available in a text file under NDATA.txt). The README files (Word or Text files) provides definitions of the database variables.*
3. The [United Nations Economic and Social Commission](#) for Asia and the Pacific ([ESCAP](#)) provides an online database, called [Annual Core Indicators](#)¹¹, that compiles poverty and inequality statistics (from WB and UNSD) for ESCAP member countries. **To access poverty and inequality data:*** *ESCAP’s [Annual Core Indicators](#) page provides menu on the left, use it to select “Poverty and Income Distribution”. Particular indicators can be chosen by using check boxes by that indicator’s name. You can choose all or some ESCAP countries. Finally, click continue to get a data table that can be download in three formats (see top left of the screen): CSV (comma separated values), TXT (text file) or XML (Extensible Markup Language).*
4. The official United Nations site for the MDG indicators is the [UN Statistics Division MDG Indicators](#) site ([mdgs.un.org](#)). The poverty and inequality indicators associated with MDG 1 are available on this data base, including \$1/day poverty rates and national poverty rates (incomplete coverage) and the share of income or expenditures commanded by the bottom 20% of the population. The UNSD MDG database is easily accessible for country and regional queries. The UNSD site marks the global monitoring poverty indicators it reports with a “G” for global estimates, while the subset of national poverty rates that reported for Bangladesh are marked “CA” for “country adjusted.” In November 2007 the UNSD discussed above was made available on a new [MDG Monitor](#)¹² site through UN initiative involving the UNSD, the UNDP, UNICEF, DESA, UNICEF and OCHA with support by Google and Cisco systems.
5. The World Bank also maintains a [Global Data Monitoring](#)¹³ Information system which also has a “quick query “system for country data. The World Bank provides additional information and definitions of each of these variables in its WDI database. Most poverty estimates are from the [World Bank’s Povcal.net group](#), a similar set of poverty estimates are published by World Bank’s World Development indicators (the WDI).

⁹For data access as of November 2007 go to: <http://www.wider.unu.edu/wiid/wiid.htm>

¹⁰<http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/0,,contentMDK:20699070~pagePK:64214825~piPK:64214943~theSitePK:469382,00.html>

¹¹ For data access as of November 2007 go to: <http://www.unescap.org/stat/data/index.asp>

¹² <http://www.mdgmonitor.org/>

¹³ <http://developmentgoals.org/>

III. Household Survey Data Quality and Sources

These groups and agencies gather and standardize household data in preparation for estimating poverty and inequality indicators and for basic research on policy impacts. All of these organizations attempt to promote comparable surveys across countries.

1. [MECOVI](#)¹⁴: “*The objective of the Program for the Improvement of Surveys and the Measurement of Living Conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean (MECOVI), is to generate adequate and high quality information about the living conditions of people in the region, in terms of scope, coverage, reliability, timeliness and policy relevance.*” This program is undertaken by the World Bank (IBRD), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL).
2. [LSMS](#) are the World Bank’s [Living Standards Measurement Study \(LSMS\) household surveys](#)¹⁵. They are available for many countries (and some for several years) such as Albania (1996, 2002-2005), Cote d’Ivoire (1985-1988), Ecuador (1994-1995, 1998) and Nepal (2003/04).
3. [Demographic and Health Surveys](#)¹⁶ ([DHS](#)) “*are nationally-representative household surveys with large sample sizes (usually between 5,000 and 30,000 households). DHS surveys provide data for a wide range of monitoring and impact evaluation indicators in the areas of population, health, and nutrition.*”
4. International Food Policy Research Institute ([IFPRI](#)): “*In collaboration with institutions throughout the world, IFPRI is often involved in the collection of primary data and the compilation and processing of secondary data. The resulting [datasets](#)¹⁷ provide a wealth of information at the local (household and community), national, and global levels.*” Some of the household and community-level datasets made available by IFPRI include the South African KwaZulu-Natal Income Dynamics Study (KIDS) 1993-1998 and the Nicaraguan Red de Protección Social (RPS) Evaluation Dataset (2000-2002).
5. The Rio group published the [Compendium of best practices in poverty measurement](#)¹⁸ in 2006, a compilation of the “*most well-developed practices in poverty measurement.*” The Compendium “*offers a “menu” of poverty measurement approaches and methodologies. A discussion is also provided of the most important aspects relating to their implementation.*”
6. The [International Household Survey Network](#)¹⁹ (IHSN) “*is a partnership of international organizations seeking to improve the availability, quality and use of survey data in developing countries. This informal network was established as a recommendation of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics.*” It provides a [Central Survey Catalog](#)²⁰ that allows searching for household surveys by country, year and survey type (types include, for example, the LSMS and DHS surveys).

¹⁴ web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/LACEXT/EXTLACREGTOPPOVANA/0,,contentMDK:20886217~pagePK:34004173~piPK:34003707~theSitePK:841175,00.html

¹⁵ <http://www.worldbank.org/LSMS/guide/select.html>

¹⁶ <http://www.measuredhs.com/aboutsurveys/dhs/start.cfm>

¹⁷ <http://www.ifpri.org/data/dataset.asp>

¹⁸ http://www.ibge.gov.br/poverty/pdf/rio_group_compendium.pdf

¹⁹ <http://surveynetwork.org/home/>

²⁰ <http://surveynetwork.org/home/?lv11=activities&lv12=catalog&lv13=surveys&ihsn=320-2000-002>