

Poverty in liberia

[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



What is poverty? To be poor is to be underprivileged, to live a lifestyle not deemed a proper and healthy one to most, and, as is the main connotation, to have an insufficient amount of money. Fourteen years of civil war has left the infrastructure of Liberia in ruin, affecting water, sanitation, food security and livelihood in general. This has left Liberia the third poorest country in the world, in terms of GDP per capita. In actuality, there are only two classes in Liberia: the very rich and the very poor, with the majority classified as the latter.

A reporter from the African Development Bank Group estimated that only 4.8% of Liberia's population could be considered middle class (the lowest percent on the continent). There is no middle class, but rather, a working poor. Infrastructure The civil war decimated the infrastructure of Liberia, leaving most Liberians void of safe drinking water, access to proper sanitation facilities, electricity, and roads. More than half of all Liberians are without access to clean water and functioning sanitation facilities. 8% of all deaths in Liberia are caused by deficiencies in water and sanitation. Hepatitis A, typhoid fever, and bacterial and protozoic diarrhea are very infectious diseases that are found in Liberia's unsanitary water. As for electricity, most of Liberians live in the dark, with a choice few relying on loud and unreliable diesel generators. Paved roads are scarce as well, stunting transportation and, in turn, affecting the economy in Liberia. Not Enough Money 76% of Liberians are now living below the poverty line (\$1/day) and 52% live in extreme poverty (\$0.50/day).

Most workers in the middle class, or the working poor in other words, of Liberia earn \$100 a month plus \$30 of transportation stipend and a bag of

rice. \$300 a month is an upper-middle salary, about four times more than what policemen earns, and 10 times more than what half of all Liberians live on. These half of the Liberians live on the “dollar-a-day” policy. The GDP per capita in Liberia is \$392, which is lower than all nations in the world except for Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This means that the average person in Liberia only makes around \$400 dollars a year.

Not Enough Food Not enough money means not enough food, especially since the previous civil war destroyed the agricultural sector of Liberia. Before the civil war, most Liberians lived off the land, making a living off of agriculture. Since the war effort took up so much of the time and hard work of Liberians, this changed, leaving them reliant upon expensive exported goods. Over 60% of households currently report not being able to afford three meals a day, and 40% of Liberian children experience stunted growth. 20% percent of them are underweight. 35% of Liberians are malnourished.

Human Rights In Liberia most poor children work for family businesses. The families sometimes have no money to hire employees and so they use their own family members instead. They may work in farms, or take part in street trading, or domestic work. Some are even trafficked out of the country from rural areas to urban areas or to diamond mining areas for purposes of sexual exploitation or forced labor. These acts are with the sole purpose of making money. Liberia is the oldest free nation in Africa, is rich in resources, and was a refuge for African American slaves in the 1800s.

Friction between the newcomers and natives led to turmoil, eventually landing Liberia in the place as one of the poorest counties in the world. Poverty paints all aspects of Liberian life, from water and food to human

dignity. Is there a brighter future for Liberia? “ I'm sure by the time this man gets your age, he will live a better life than what I have lived” said a 55 year old man living int West Point, the poorest slum in Monrovia, to a reporter, as he hugged his grandson. As long as the Liberian people have hope, there is hope for Liberia.