



May 2020

The P20 in Benin

From consultation to consensus

report

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Executive summary

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set an ambitious agenda for change. In 2015 countries committed to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind first. Although progress has been made at an aggregate level, the income gap¹ between the poorest 20% of people and everyone else has been widening, both globally and in most countries. People are being left behind – excluded from progress as a result of their poverty, location or aspects of their identity that contribute to their marginalisation. Leaving no one behind requires a different way of thinking and a radical approach to improving data and evidence for all countries – one based on collecting and analysing disaggregated data, and that looks at people, not averages, to understand the characteristics of those groups and individuals who are at risk of being left behind. It will also require ensuring that everyone is counted in official data – especially those who are less likely to be counted in household surveys, censuses and administrative data.

The P20 approach² focuses on a small number of indicators linked to the SDGs to assess whether the people in the poorest 20% of the population (the P20) are being included in progress. To leave no one behind, the progress of the P20 needs to be fast enough to narrow the gap between them and everyone else. The approach highlights the importance of disaggregation by wealth quintile, gender, geography, age and disability to track the inclusion of different groups.

The governments of Switzerland and Benin have been working with Development Initiatives (DI) to apply the P20 approach, examining the extent to which the poorest 20% of people are included in progress in their own countries. They shared initial lessons, challenges³ and experiences at a High-Level Political Forum side event,⁴ in 2018.

To build on this momentum, the Ministry of Planning and Development with support from the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, the Maison de la Société Civile (MdSC), and DI brought together relevant stakeholders in Benin at a high-level roundtable and technical workshop in Cotonou in November 2019. The technical workshop included participation from civil society organisations, several ministries, technical and financial partners, and academia. Three ministers, senior representatives from the United Nations system, local government and civil society took part. They discussed current trends among the P20 in Benin, with a focus on the departments of Alibori and Borgou and how the commitment to leave no one behind could be operationalised at both national and subnational levels. Key findings and recommendations have been integrated into this report and are also attached in Appendix 3.

This report is not meant to provide a comprehensive view of the wellbeing of the P20 in each of the 77 communes, or in each sector. Rather, this report is meant to start a dialogue about the potential of the P20 approach drawing on a subset of issues and a preliminary discussion of how the P20 approach might be applied at a subnational level.

Key findings

While there have been improvements in average household consumption, nutrition, birth registration and other sectors in Benin, the gap between the P20 and the rest of the population is growing. The latest data indicates that the average per capita income for Benin's P20 decreased to almost half their 2011 level by 2015, dropping from \$0.82 per day to \$0.44 per day.⁵ The P20 approach also proved to be a useful framework to identifying challenges and opportunities at a subnational level and within specific sectors. Discussions with local government and civil society in Alibori and Borgou Departments on the planning and allocation of resources showed that the P20 approach provides a useful framework for guiding conversations to ensure that the impact policies and interventions have on the P20 is considered – even if data analysis remains a challenge in those contexts.

There are promising efforts to improve data, count missing populations and provide social safety nets that could substantially improve the lives of populations at risk of being left behind. Digitising civil registration systems and the development of the *Assurance pour le Renforcement du Capital Humain* (ARCH) system of social safety nets are two major policy areas touching on key challenges for the P20.

Recommendations

In order to meet the commitment to leave no one behind by 2030, several actions could help accelerate P20 progress in Benin in three key areas:

- Sharing policy responses and learning across government departments and together with stakeholders by regular consultations at national and subnational levels on implementing leaving no one behind.
- Supporting a robust, independent national statistical system to provide and share better statistics and data.
- Addressing data gaps in official and unofficial sources, with a particular focus on data related to being left behind.

Concrete recommendations to enable key stakeholders to take these actions forward are outlined below:

For the Ministry of Planning and Development:

- Create a multi-stakeholder thematic grouping to better understand the challenges faced by the P20 in Benin and share policy responses and learning.
- Increase Institut Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Analyse Economique's (INSAE's) independence while also focusing on funding sustainable data systems.
- Prioritise public investments in the health and education sectors for the poorest communities and citizens.

For local governments:

- Invest in fully digitised civil registration systems with appropriate training for staff.

- Apply the P20 approach for the *Plan de Developpement Communal* and other planning processes.

For INSAE:

- Apply the P20 approach in publications and strengthen availability of relevant microdata and administrative data for analysis.
- Accompany sectoral ministries in strengthening their administrative data management systems.
- Add Washington Group short set questions on disability to major surveys and censuses.

For civil society:

- Develop analytical capacity and incorporate the P20 approach in advocacy work.
- Apply the P20 approach to work conducted by organisations as possible.

For technical and financial partners:

- Apply the P20 approach internally, exploring the extent to which efforts are promoting the interests of the P20.
- Support the development of a robust, independent national statistical system, administrative data systems, and human resources for INSAE.

DI will seek to provide support as possible with the following stakeholders to implement these recommendations and to further explore other cross-cutting issues discussed in this report.

Introduction

While Benin has experienced economic growth over the past few years and has been carrying out key economic and structural reforms, the country ranks among the world's poorest countries. Benin saw its gross domestic product (GDP) grow from 5.7% in 2017 to 6.7% in 2018 according to INSAE. The World Bank's Global Economic Prospect estimate 6.4% growth in GDP for 2019 and 6.7% growth per year for the next three years.

As of 2015, the World Bank estimated that 49% of the Benin population lived below the extreme poverty line of \$1.90 per person per day. About 67% of the population lives in multidimensional poverty according to the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative's Multidimensional Poverty Index. This estimate is based on analysis of indicators in the 2017–2018 Demographic and Health Survey. 41% of Benin's population is estimated to be experiencing severe multidimensional poverty. The Multidimensional Poverty Index recognises that people can experience poverty across different aspects of their lives and it measures poverty in housing, education, health and household assets in a combined index.⁶ When assessing progress on dimensions of health, education and standard of living, Benin has a Human Development Index score of 0.520, ranking it 163rd in 2018.

With a population of about 11.88 million people,⁷ Benin is experiencing a rapid population growth rate – 2.88% for 2018⁸ – and has one of the youngest populations in the world with 47% of the population younger than 15.⁹ This population growth provides opportunities and challenges related to demographic shifts.

INSAE reports that the 2018 GDP for Benin was 7,844 billion CFA francs.¹⁰ Recent revisions with support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) led to a re-evaluation of the GDP with an increase of 35.7% for the base year of 2015. A note from INSAE¹¹ indicates that the revisions better capture commerce in agriculture, fisheries, the informal economy, gasoline brought across the border, and other factors.

Benin ranks 127th out of 157 countries in the World Bank's Human Capital Index with the index suggesting that a child born in Benin today would be 41% as productive as they could be at adulthood if they had full education and health. The World Bank estimates this productivity as a component of the human capital index. The index takes a value of 1 only if a child born today can expect to have full health and education. This is defined as having no stunting and surviving up to age 60 and having 14 years of high-quality schooling by age 18. The index attempts to measure how far from those goals the population is.¹²

Benin continues to face several development challenges. It is classified as a Heavily Indebted Poor Country with the 2018 debt-to-GDP ratio estimated at 56.8%.¹³

Policies to leave no one behind in Benin

“We’re the first to apply the P20 approach, here in Benin, along with Switzerland – and I think if we’re able to incorporate the P20 into our local planning we can really make it so that no one will be left behind.”

Charles Lougoudou, Head of Alibori Branch, Bethesda International

The government of Benin has been active in incorporating the SDGs into its national planning frameworks and is engaging on ways to accelerate progress. It has presented voluntary national reviews (VNRs)¹⁴ of progress against the SDGs to the UN in 2017 and 2018. Benin is one of two African countries which took part in a costing exercise on financing needed to achieve the SDGs in education, water and sanitation and health. The IMF estimated that an additional 21.3% of real GDP needed to be spent per year to achieve the SDGs in Benin.¹⁵

The 2017 VNR highlighted that 49 SDG targets had been established and that 60–70% of the SDG targets had been incorporated into national policies and strategies. Furthermore, the Ministry of Planning and Development has established thematic workgroups to work with stakeholders and a General Directorate in charge of SDG Coordination and Monitoring (*DG-CS*) to coordinate efforts.

The 2018 VNR outlined how national planning documents map to the SDG targets beyond the implementation targets. These include the government’s Action Programme (*Programme d’Actions du Gouvernement – PAG*) which outlines its flagship initiatives, sectoral policies and reform plan for the period 2016–2021¹⁶ and the National Development Plan¹⁷ (*Plan National de Développement – PND*) which is being operationalised over the period of 2018–2025 with support from technical and financial partners through the programme of growth and sustainable development (*Programme de Croissance pour le Développement Durable – PC2D 2018–2021*).

The 2018 VNR also highlighted four major areas of government activities to leave no one behind:

1. Social protection for all
2. Social safety nets for the most vulnerable
3. Legislation for the most vulnerable
4. Geographically balanced development initiatives.

The government’s Action Programme aims to favour not only productivity and innovation but equally social inclusion, access to drinking water and education. A key initiative is the *Assurance pour le Renforcement du Capital Humain (ARCH)* which aims to provide health insurance, professional training, microcredit and pensions for those at risk of being left behind.

The National Development Plan (PND) set the goal of inclusive sustained growth of at least 10% by 2025 through improvements in agroindustry, tourism, and local and national governance with improvements in human capital and infrastructure.

A 2019 evaluation of progress towards the *Programme de Croissance pour le Développement Durable* identified some progress towards goals in several sectors but also significant challenges and in sectors such as health and education.¹⁸ Human capital – health and education – are key priorities for the government but are also areas of notable challenges in Benin. These sectors warrant further exploration separately.

Health

Providing universal healthcare has been an objective for the government for decades. Currently the government has several programmes to reduce inequalities in healthcare and to ensure that vulnerable populations receive adequate care. The Ministry of Health has focused on providing malaria treatment and prevention for children under five and pregnant women. The government has also sought to decrease infant mortality and improve maternal health by increasing access to healthcare and covering the costs of caesarean sections. The government has also completed the form on the ban on double practice (which prohibits doctors from serving in both the public and private sectors).

The government has made many efforts to improve health in the country through laws, decrees and bans. They have notably worked on improving sanitation of the pharmaceutical sector, countered fake drugs, reorganised work houses for health workers in public health centres, strengthened the technical platforms for reference hospitals and improved working conditions (through bonuses and penalties, among other interventions). Despite these efforts, public health workers sometimes find it difficult to provide services to people in need. The ARCH programme has been joined with several initiatives to increase health resources for communities with the highest need and, if fully implemented, could increase the resources available for families to address financial shocks related to healthcare.

Education

Benin's efforts to encourage improved enrolment rates and outcomes have focused on leaving no one behind. There have been two major policy focuses on this in primary education. Benin has made primary education enrolment mandatory for school-aged children. Additionally, the government has provided free school meals in school canteens in certain localities. Government priorities have focused further on increasing access to education for those who have left schooling, providing certification programmes for those in trades, improving access to facilities for those with disabilities, and building schools in areas with lower enrolment rates. The government has also worked to improve education outcomes through a programme for teacher and instructor training. Furthermore, the government has produced a programme for strengthening human resources and recruiting new teachers. Despite these efforts, as described in more detail below, enrolment rates have recently declined. Some of the biggest declines in enrolment occurred in the north. Focusing on the P20 could help identify potential solutions for these trends.

The P20 in Benin

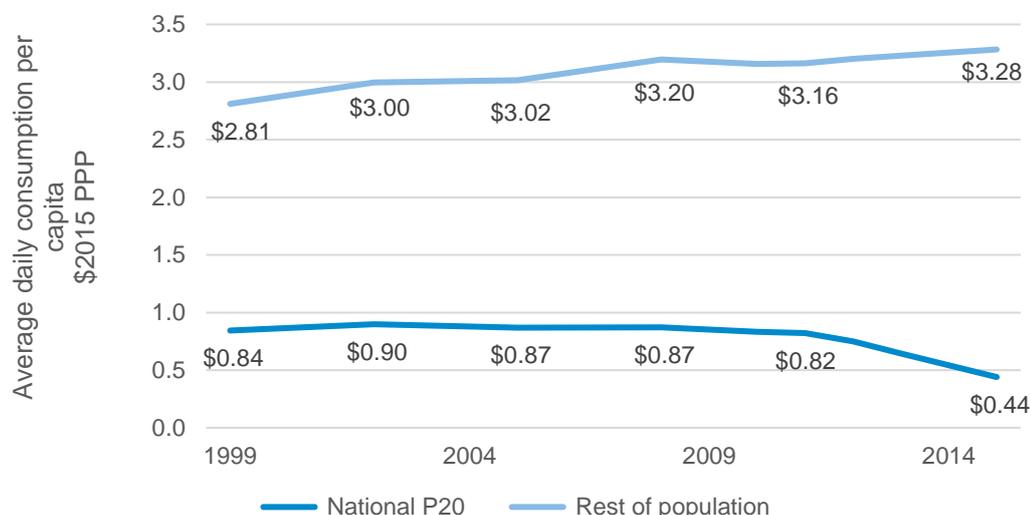
The P20 approach is flexible and adaptable. It focuses on a few indicators (in this instance income, nutrition and Civil Registration and Vital Statistics – CRVS) to assess whether the people in the poorest 20% of the population (the P20) are being included in progress or left behind. A detailed methodology is outlined in Appendix 2 and has been used to assess trends among the P20 in Benin.

Income

Trends among the P20 in Benin

The P20 approach shows that despite increasing average household consumption in Benin, people in the bottom quintile – or poorest 20% of people – are being left behind. Under SDG 1, countries have pledged to eliminate poverty in all its forms everywhere.¹⁹ The government of Benin has set itself the goal of reducing the national poverty rate by half among men, women and children of all ages by 2030. In Benin, the average consumption of the poorest 20% of people has decreased from \$0.84 per person per day in 1999 to \$0.44 in 2015 (the latest year for which data is available).²⁰ Meanwhile, the rest of the population saw their consumption increase from \$2.81 in 1999 to \$3.28 in 2015. The trends look even more negative when disaggregated beyond the bottom quintile. The biggest decreases in consumption were seen in the very bottom percentiles among the P20. This means that although the average consumption of the rest of the population remains slightly above the international moderate poverty line of \$3.20, conditions have become worse for the poorest 20% of people in Benin.

Figure 1: The growing gap in consumption between the P20 and the rest of the population



Source: Development Initiatives based on World Bank's PovcalNet 2019

It is not entirely clear why the P20 saw such strong declines in progress between 2011 and 2015. Further research will be needed to explore the distributional effects, but two major economic events coexisted with the declining consumption – global cotton prices decreased, and the economy of Nigeria saw a slowdown – Benin's largest trading partner.

Recently, the results of a regional study on employment, the informal sector, governance, peace and security were published for Benin. INSAE conducted the *Enquête Régionale Intégrée sur l'Emploi et le Secteur Informel* (ERI-ESI) with support from the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and Observatoire Economique et Statistique d'Afrique Subsaharienne (AFRISTAT). The study concluded that inequality in Benin is growing. It reports that in 2018 the bottom quintile received 1.7% of the wealth generated for the year, while the top quintile received 57%.²¹ INSAE is also currently conducting another household survey for poverty mapping. Data collection has not yet begun for the survey and are not expected to be available during 2020.

Operationalising the commitment to leave no one behind

The period 2011–2015 had an average annual GDP growth rate of 5.35%.²² This strong growth happened at the same time that the P20 saw significant decreases in their consumption, confirming that growth alone is not enough to ensure that no one is left behind. While much of the government's current strategy documents emphasise economic growth, more needs to be done to ensure that policies also consider ways to make that growth inclusive.

“If we can collect data on the P20, the last quintile, we can know in terms of nutrition, are they being included. In terms of birth registration, are we counting them and putting quality projects in place? In this way, we can address questions of poverty.”

Magloire Aguessy, Director General in Charge of SDGs Coordination and Monitoring, Ministry of Planning and Development

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance plays a major role in addressing the needs of people being left behind. The ministry has specific programmes developed for orphans and vulnerable children, older persons, people with disabilities, women who are victims of violence, vulnerable families and child marriage. Interviewees indicate that the ministry faces significant constraints due to its limited budget. The ministry collects rich data on challenges faced by people at risk of being left behind in Benin; currently it is not digitised, although efforts to do so are in progress.

The government’s highest profile recent initiative to reduce poverty is an ambitious social protection scheme. The *Assurance pour le renforcement du capital humain* (ARCH) is being implemented throughout the country and aims to provide support to the most vulnerable groups of the population.

Beneficiaries are targeted through the following process:

1. Community meetings are held during which community members develop a list of those in their communities believed to be poor.
2. RAVIP officials accompany officials who conduct proxy means testing to see if households identified by communities meet the official definitions of poor or extremely poor.
3. RAVIP representatives provide digital identity cards and register those households not already recorded by RAVIP.
4. ARCH officials conduct community meetings to report the results of the proxy means testing.
5. Other groups eligible for ARCH benefits – artisans, older persons, people with disabilities – have their eligibility registered through RAVIP (with the participation of other actors as appropriate).

This process enables the poorest to be targeted without conducting a study of the poverty of every house, reducing cost and time for targeting. It is anticipated that the ARCH programme will be fully launched in 2020; and in three years, the process of identifying eligibility to participate will be repeated. The use of digital identification, the role of community involvement and the participation of multiple ministries provide potential for this approach. Interviewees indicated that there were some concerns about financing the project and accurate classification of participants.

Detailed data on participation in the programme are not publicly available; however, administrative data on this programme would be very useful for tracking the status of the P20, particularly if there are periodic follow up periods on participants.

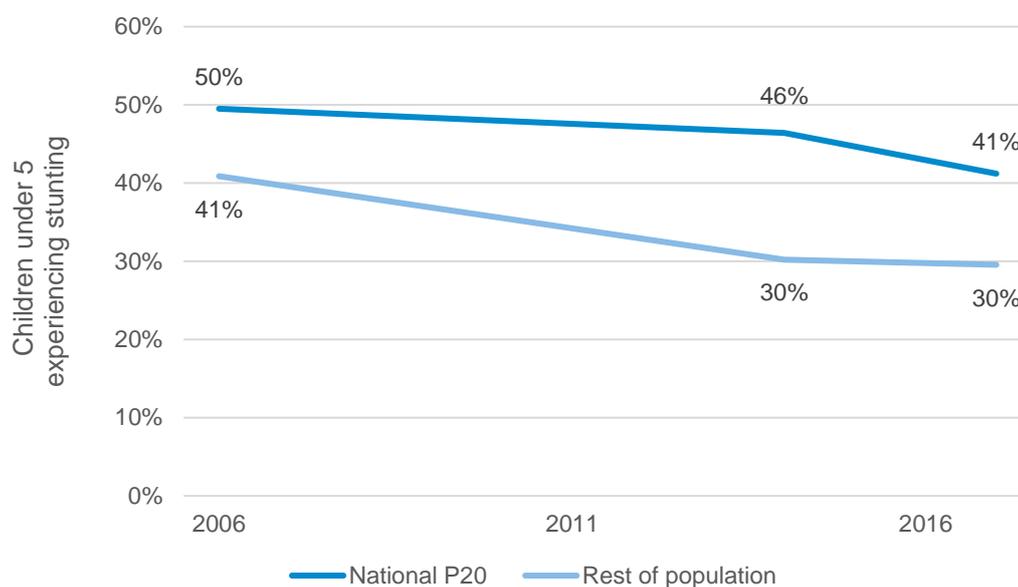
Nutrition

Trends among the P20 in Benin

Under SDG 2, countries have pledged to end hunger. The government of Benin has set itself the goal of eliminating hunger, all forms of malnutrition (particularly among children, pregnant and nursing women and older persons), and to double the productivity of agricultural producers. Stunting is a key indicator of chronic malnutrition and other deprivations among children under 5 and can have long-term effects on opportunities. Stunting is an indicator of prolonged nutritional deprivation, but it is also linked with low levels of stimulation. It has been linked to physical functions including decreased brain size, complications during pregnancy, labour force productivity and other factors. The World Food Programme (WFP) reports that 9.6% of the population experienced food insecurity as of 2017.²³

The data indicates that the poorest 20% of people in Benin saw the proportion of children experiencing stunting decrease from 50% to 46% between 2006 and 2014, but improvements were more significant in the rest of the population. Between 2014 and 2017/18, the poorest 20% of people saw stunting rates decrease by 5% from 46% to 41% but, overall between 2006 and 2017/18, the difference between the P20 and the rest increased.

Figure 2: Stunting rates between the P20 and the rest of the population



Source: Development Initiatives based on Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and World Bank's PovcalNet

Recently, INSAE launched updated food balance sheets to bring methods up to date with FAO. The report indicated that between 2015 and 2016 the total amount of food calories available per person per day increased by 13%.²⁴

Operationalising the commitment to leave no one behind

School canteens, one of the key nutritional programmes in the country, will not have a direct effect on stunting rates as stunting is largely a result of nutritional shortages before children are old enough to begin school.

Civil registration and vital statistics

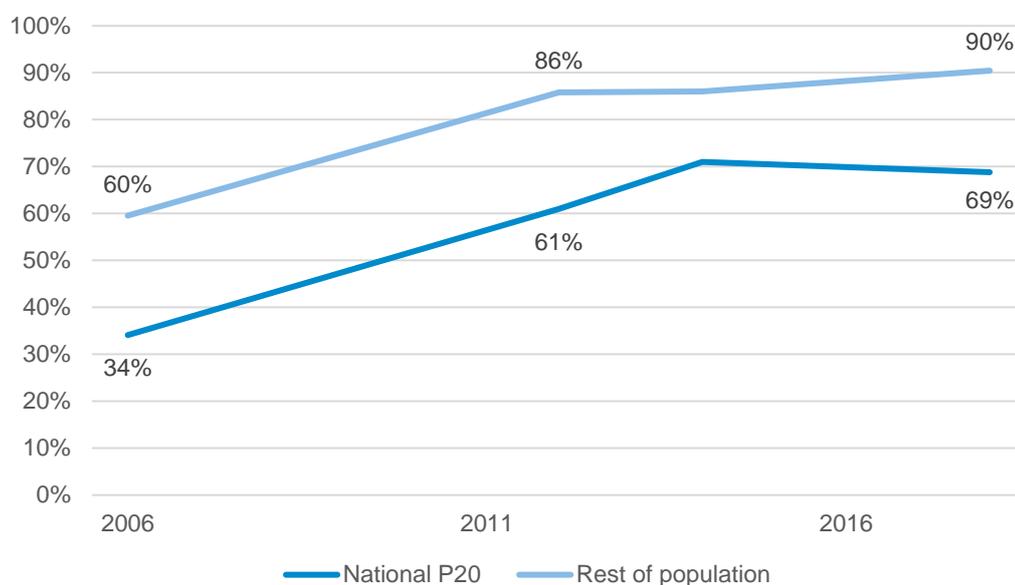
Trends among the P20 in Benin

The P20 approach indicates that national averages mask recent challenges experienced by the P20 and that the P20 are less likely to be counted.

Under SDG 16, countries have pledged to create inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The government of Benin has pledged to have all births registered in a civil registration system. This is in line with SDG Target 16.9. Birth registration is a key component of a well-functioning data system and can enhance child protection and access to government services. Despite general progress, birth registration rates decreased slightly from 71% to 69% between the 2014 Multiple

Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) and the 2017/18 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) for the poorest 20% of children in Benin.

Figure 3: Children under 5 with births registered between the P20 and the rest of the population



Source: Development Initiative's calculations based on Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and Demographic and Health Surveys

Parents are given the 21 days following a birth to register the newborn. After this, they are required to go through a legal process to receive their birth records. Many of the records in Benin are stored on paper, rather than digitised. While digitisation efforts are ongoing in many communes, there are still numerous records that have not been digitised. Consequently, birth registrations may be lost or damaged, and significant resources are devoted to searching ageing books to verify identity documents. This can prevent children from enrolling in school or receiving other government services until the family goes through a legal procedure.

Nationally, birth registration rates slightly improved for children under 5 between the 2014 MICS and the 2017/18 DHS, increasing from 84.8% to 85.5%. In Alibori, the rate increased less than a percentage point, going from 82.6% to 83.4%. In Borgou, there was a significant drop from 75% to 65.4%.

The government's new national identification campaign, *Recensement administratif à vocation d'identification de la population* (RAVIP), provides significant potential for ensuring that those in need are counted and their progress is monitored. RAVIP is distinct from CRVS but can be a powerful tool for ensuring that all births and deaths are registered. This is not simply a matter of statistics, identity and civil registration are part of a broader developmental concern touching on many elements.

Operationalising the commitment to leave no one behind

The commune of Kandi has recently devoted a significant share of its resources to fully digitising its CRVS system. All records dating back to the 1950s have been digitised and all new births are digitally reported, with unique ID numbers assigned to each person.

These numbers are distinct from the RAVIP ID numbers. There are still challenges around public awareness, which means births are not fully reported. Marriages, divorces and deaths are rarely reported to the office; however, the digitised system significantly increases the efficiency of the office.

Education

Trends among the P20 in Benin

Human capital accumulation is a key priority for sustainable development. Investments in health and education are important for ensuring that people can translate their labour into sustainable improvements. Human capital is about producing economic growth from the population but requires investments in young people, with long-term potential payoffs in countries with young average populations such as Benin. There are also strong arguments to be made for investments in human capital on moral ground for its potential to enrich the lives of populations regardless of the economic consequences.

There have been recent reversals in education in Benin. Primary gross enrolment rates decreased from 97.5% according to the 2014 MICS to 88.7% according to the 2017/18 DHS. To better understand the context, participants in our workshop were invited to provide insights about education both in Alibori and Borgou and in Cotonou. Several observations emerged. Early marriage and young pregnancies are a significant challenge to keeping girls in school. Teacher retention was a key challenge in Alibori and Borgou particularly in lower income areas. In Alibori, some civil society members raised questions about radical religious schools opening, but local officials assured that they are taking efforts to ensure that only recognised schools remain open.

In northern schools, civil society members reported that some teachers were assigned to two or three classrooms, not having time to adequately address the educational needs of students. This is diminishing the intellectual level of the children. To compensate for these challenges, there are stories of parents raising personal funds to bring temporary teachers to their schools.

Operationalising the commitment to leave no one behind

From a data systems approach, Benin's educational sectoral plan published in 2018 sets the goal of developing a *systeme d'informations et de gestion de secteur de l'education* (SIGE).²⁵ Such systems if adequately digitised and used can significantly improve gaps in delivering services in the system and can improve the ability of the country to track progress among students and target challenges.

Health

Trends among the P20 in Benin

Several key challenges were raised in discussions on health. Two major challenges mentioned in Borgou and Alibori were reduced access by rural populations to emergency and routine care. This was a result of inadequate means of transportation between hospitals and rural areas impeded by an inadequate number of ambulances, poor road conditions, and the closing of some rural health clinics. Additionally, many people said that there is a strong need for additional funds for those unable to afford care.

Operationalising the commitment to leave no one behind

The data systems for administrative data seem strong in Benin. Each department has several sanitary zones. Zone statisticians collect data from health facilities in the private and public sectors and submit them to the central data warehouse where data are validated. Procedures for sharing data with the public are not clearly established, reducing some of the potential usefulness of these systems. Regularly updated data posted in an accessible format on the Ministry of Health's website and INSAE's website would increase use.

Cross-cutting issues and the P20

Several cross-cutting issues were raised about the P20 in the course of the technical workshop and high-level roundtable in Cotonou. There are other sectors that merit further exploration of policies and the data to identify key needs for the P20. While some general insights are provided from these meetings, it is worth mentioning that the experiences of people in the P20 in Benin are likely to be different from the rest of the population with respect to infrastructure, water, sanitation, electrification, agriculture, entrepreneurship, internet access, security, governance, environmental degradation, among others. Future studies are needed to apply the P20 approach with greater depth to identify key issues in other sectors.

Data in Benin

Key issues for the National Statistical System in Benin

INSAE is the key focal point for official statistics in the country, however it faces several challenges. In terms of capacity, INSAE has approximately 70 employees responsible for everything including data dissemination, survey design, survey sampling, coordinating enumerators, assessing the validity of data published by third parties, census management, macroeconomic indicators such as GDP, labour force statistics, coordination and validation of administrative data.

Another key challenge centres on the availability of administrative data systems and automated data systems. Digitising records such as those used for case management or with administrative data systems within the work of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance could increase the efficiency of work and provide rich data for analysis on those in the P20. Additional investments in other administrative data – especially vital statistics and civil registration – can significantly improve the sustainability of the data ecosystem in Benin and can provide a better understanding of populations at risk of being left behind.

The benefits of disaggregation

There are many reasons why particular groups of people get left out of progress. The differences according to aspects of identity such as age, gender or disability can be very significant. Where a person lives is often another important factor in terms of the chances and opportunities available to them. The P20 approach recommends using data disaggregated not just by wealth but also by gender, age, geography and disability to gain a better understanding of the inclusion of different groups and assess who is being left behind. Key insights from applying this approach in Benin are outlined in further detail below, alongside recommendations on how existing national statistical systems can be improved and non-traditional sources of data can be used to fill data gaps.

Tools such as satellite imagery, call data records, social media data and other types of non-traditional data clearly hold potential for advancing development and planning. These tools cannot be a substitute for official data sources, but they can complement or provide additional information beyond official sources. INSAE should be at the heart of the official and unofficial statistics. While the poorest may be excluded from many of these new sources of data because they are less likely to have mobile phones or to be on social media, such data sources can highlight other dimensions of exclusion. Furthermore, the digital economy is likely to become an increasing engine for economic growth in Benin which could have broader impacts on the lives of the P20.

Gender

One of the barriers frequently mentioned in Borgou and Alibori was girls being married before the age of 18. Borgou and Alibori have the highest incidence of early marriage, which has implications for human rights and health. Data from the 2017/18 DHS shows that in Alibori, 48% of married women between the ages of 20 and 24 were married before they were 18. In Borgou, the rate was 42.8% (this marked an increase from 39.3% in the 2014 MICS).

It is not just marriage practice that increases the risk of women/girls being left behind; households headed by women are significantly poorer than those headed by men. Nationally, households headed by women are reported to have seen their household consumption decrease by 2.4% between 2011 and 2015, compared to a 14.3% gain among households headed by men.

The ERI-ESI 2018 report also indicates some gender disaggregated data. It reports that 52% of men over 15 are literate compared to 32% of women. However, the data may require further exploration to better understand data that are more complicated. For instance, it reports that 35% of women against 69% of men report having access to electricity at home.

It is worth mentioning that there are a few challenges with gender data. First, many currently defined indicators are better at describing households than people so inequalities within the household are not always visible in the data. This is true for factors such as electrification, clean water, latrines, but also factors such as consumption, income, assets and wealth. Second, there are many issues that are of particular concern to women for which there is relatively little data such as specific security concerns or caregiving or time use. However, Benin does have some useful data on gender through a time use module in EMICOV 2015. This survey found that women report spending 3 hours 35 minutes on domestic activities per day while men average 42 minutes.

Age

Age is a key component linked to exclusion and vulnerability, but it is frequently difficult to find data that is disaggregated by age. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance is currently developing a digitised database on people benefiting from their programmes, which – if joined with data from ARCH or RAVIP – could provide valuable insights on the status of older people and vulnerable children. Improving death registration rates could also be important in this respect. Better data on disability, illness and death could also provide richer data on how inequalities and age are linked to exclusion.

Indicators on time use also show the intersection of age and gender. The 2015 EMICOV time use section reports that married men over 65 report spending 21 minutes per day on domestic labour compared to three hours for women, a nine-fold difference. Among children aged 6–18, girls report spending 3 hours 34 minutes per day compared to 42 minutes on domestic tasks for boys.²⁶

INSAE could collaborate with the UN Statistical Commission's Titchfield City Group on Ageing Statistics to participate in ongoing discussions on official statistics on ageing and age disaggregation.

Geography

“You can see this 20% of the population in every commune. When you look on the ground, you see that there needs to be more human security, there needs to be more human capital strengthening. There needs to be more activities and resources to ensure that people can participate in our economies and reach their potential.”

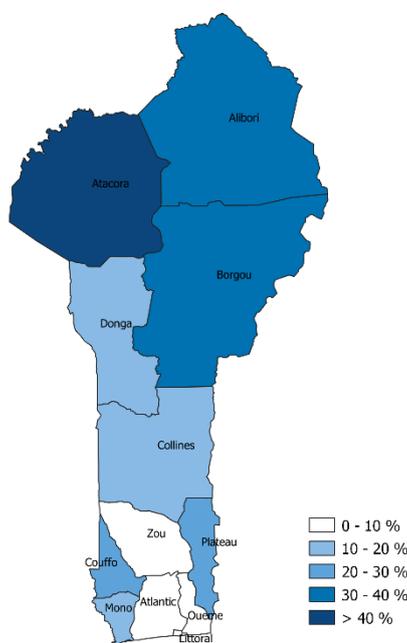
Nicaise Kotchami Fagnon, Mayor of Dassa-Zoume

The P20 approach can be applied at different levels of government and in different sectors. For instance, it can help those at a departmental level to better understand the wellbeing of their populations, or for ministries (such as the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Primary and Maternal Education) and civil society organisations to look at the people in the poorest 20% of the populations they aim to serve.

To better understand the relevance of the P20 approach in different contexts, DI visited two departments (Alibori and Borgou) with relatively high P20 headcounts. These visits included discussions and trends with civil society organisations, members of the MdSC who are dedicated to health and education for Borgou and Alibori, as well as key informant interviews with civil society and local officials in health, education, civil registration and welfare. Public and private health clinics, civil registration offices, and a private primary school were visited to better understand key challenges and to better understand data collection procedures.

DI's latest estimates show that the three northernmost regions have the highest share of their population in the national P20. 33% of Alibori's population is in the P20, and 30% of Borgou's is. These regions also face other developmental challenges, for instance, only 45% of children aged 6–11 attend school in Alibori. For Borgou, the rate is 62%.

Figure 4: Share of the population in the national P20



Source: Development Initiatives based on Demographic and Health Survey 2017/18 and PovcalNet

With support from the MdSC, we discussed the P20 approach with civil society organisations and local government officials working in health and education.

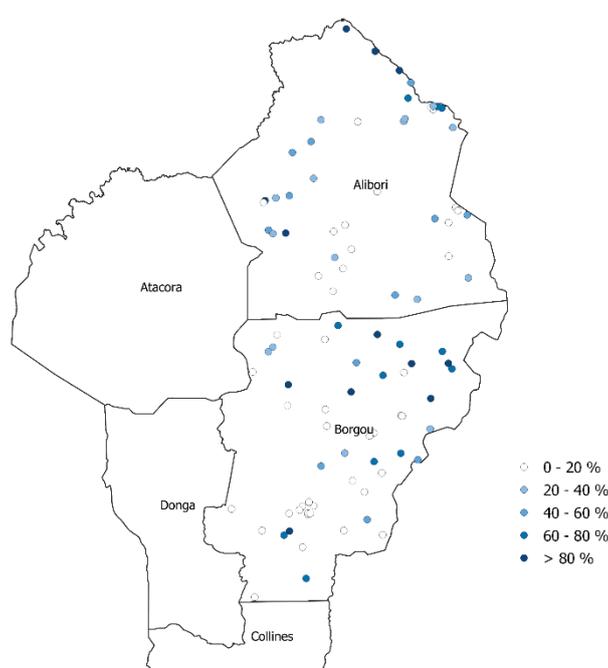
These conversations helped us identify several major challenges and opportunities in the two departments:

1. Support is needed for those not able to afford healthcare while reforms are under way.
2. Schools in remote, high poverty areas struggle to recruit and retain adequate numbers of teachers. This may have contributed to the national trend of gross primary enrolment rates decreasing from 97.5% in 2014 to 88.7% in 2017/18. For girls, the rate dropped from 95% to 83.5%.
3. Civil registration offices continue to face challenges related to a reliance on paper-based documents and social challenges related to parents being unwilling to register their children's births but there have been some significant gains in digitisation.
4. Administrative data for the health sector and for vital statistics benefits from a strong database at the ministry level; however, data at the facility level is frequently recorded in generic notebooks, raising the possibility of errors in data transmission and recording.
5. The government's new national identification campaign, RAVIP, provides significant potential to ensure that those in need are counted and their progress is monitored. RAVIP is distinct from CRVS but can be a powerful tool for ensuring that all births and deaths are registered.

Geographic disaggregation allows for much more targeted interventions and can permit closer monitoring of progress among those most at risk of being left behind. Averages, even at the department level, can mask significant variation. Monitoring progress at a highly disaggregated level will be required to ensure no one is left behind. This will require the assimilation of non-traditional data sources, such as big data, citizen-generated data or data from other actors.

A recent trend in poverty research has sought to provide granular estimates of poverty based on satellite imagery (using both daytime and nighttime images). Such assessments can be a powerful complement to data collected on the ground but cannot be considered as a viable substitute for engagement with the population on the ground.

Figure 5: P20 headcount by survey cluster in Alibori and Borgou



Source: Development initiatives calculations based on the 2017/18 DHS

Disability

People in Benin with disabilities are eligible for benefits through several programmes. Eligibility is determined following the legal definition of disabilities. Comprehensive data on disabilities in Benin is limited. The 2013 Population and Household Census reports that about 92,495 Beninese people have a disability. Disabilities follow the legal definition and are described as being motor disabilities, visual, audio-visual, intellectual or mental illness.

One particularly useful approach from a statistical perspective is to use the UN Statistical Division's Washington Group on Disability Statistics' set of six questions to collect data on

disability levels. These questions have been used in dozens of countries to provide useful, reliable methods for disaggregating data. They have been included in several household surveys including DHS, MICS, censuses, administrative data or household income/expenditure surveys. These questions have been designed to avoid potentially biased responses to questions due to stigma against the term 'disability'. To date, these questions have not been used to collect data in Benin. Adding the Washington Group questions to surveys and censuses would be a low-cost intervention with significant improvements in the data available for leaving no one behind.

“In giving voice to civil society organizations on the ground, the challenges of the population can be elevated to the national level. I think the P20 gives us an opportunity. We are going to accelerate the adoption of the approach by civil society organizations.”

Fiacre Nouwadjro, Director of Programming, Maison de la Société Civile

Conclusions and recommendations

There are several initiatives aiming to improve the lives of the poorest 20% of people in Benin. However, in order to meet the commitment to leave no one behind by 2030, a number of actions could help accelerate P20 progress in Benin.

All stakeholders involved in the technical workshop and high-level roundtable, including representatives from local and national government, civil society organisations and technical and financial partners, recognised the added value that the P20 approach provides. The approach ensures that the impact their policies and interventions have on the P20 is considered – even if data analysis remains a challenge in those contexts.

The Ministry of Planning and Development, with responsibility for SDG implementation and monitoring could translate the objective of leaving no one behind into practical action by creating a P20 thematic grouping or delivery unit. This unit should hold regular meetings once a quarter to evaluate trends among the poorest 20% of the population, key concerns, the P20 approach compared against the implementation of sectoral plans, national plans, and local plans. These meetings should involve the participation of technical and financial partners, civil society, focal points in key ministries and other engaged groups to discuss issues of concern related to leaving no one behind generally and the P20 approach. The P20 delivery unit should work closely with INSAE to address key data challenges and to support INSAE in providing the data required. Technical and financial partners would be key contributors to the quarterly meetings and could provide some financial support.

Data is a potentially powerful tool first to identify and monitor progress and second to better target those at risk of being left behind. There are many sources of data within the country to help target these populations, however, many of the most vulnerable people risk being excluded from administrative data and survey data. People living outside of households are likely to experience higher levels of need and challenges with civil registration and will not appear in the major household surveys.

INSAE has recently approved a national strategy for the development of statistics. Implementing this strategy, applying a P20 approach in its publications and increasing the availability of relevant microdata and administrative data for analysis will be crucial for ensuring that quality data is available to better target populations being left behind.

Furthermore, digital identity systems linked to CRVS systems will ensure that the poorest 20% of people are included in official data systems. Pairing RAVIP with civil registries and social protection programmes is a promising advance in this respect; it will require significant effort, but the digitisation of civil registration in Kandi shows this is possible even with limited resources.

By focusing efforts on including those left furthest behind, data can be used to better ensure that everyone is included in growth. DI hopes it can continue to support Benin and its partners in adapting the P20 approach to meet their needs and in delivering on the commitment to leave no one behind.

Appendix 1: Acronyms and abbreviations

AFRISTAT	Observatoire Economique et Statistique d'Afrique Subsaharienne
ARCH	Assurance pour le Renforcement du Capital Humain
CRVS	Civil registration and vital statistics
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DI	Development Initiatives
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMICOV	Enquête Modulaire Intégrée sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages
GDP	Gross domestic product
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
IHSN	International Household Survey Network
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSAE	Institut National de la Statistique et de l'Analyse Economique
MdSC	Maison de la Société Civile
MICS	Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey
MoPD	Ministry of Planning and Development
ODD	Objectifs de développement durable
OSC	Organisations de la société civile
PAG	Programme d'Actions du Gouvernement
PDC	Plan de développement communal
PND	Plan National de Développement
PPP	Purchasing power parity
RAVIP	Recensement administratif à vocation d'identification de la population
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VNR	Voluntary national review
WFP	World Food Programme

Appendix 2: Methodology

The P20 approach is flexible and adaptable. It is able to demonstrate the potential ways to address data and policies and to underscore the potential to improve data sources. A first step is to identify what data are currently available and to try to identify possible methods for disaggregating target populations by wealth. There are important differences between who might be identified as the P20 by one definition of living standards (income vs consumption vs assets vs multidimensional indexes) but these different definitions do not necessarily preclude an analysis by any method. There are trade-offs in the measurement of living standards but an analysis by different methods can highlight the different dimensions of exclusion that may impact lives.

In many databases, there are no clear methods for disaggregating averages by wealth status. In principle, datasets could be joined. This would require unique IDs that could be linked from one government dataset to another. This linking would not be public but could be a tool for analysis within the government.

As a first instance, this report sought to identify key data sources for potential analysis through a rough data landscape. This data landscape was first conducted drawing on international data sources. This includes a review of the World Bank's Statistical Capacity Indicator which highlights data frequency and quality issues across economic, health, agricultural, demographic and education indicators. Open Data Watch's Open Data Inventory contains similar information with some additional data types considered and insights about the openness and the types of disaggregation that are found in publications from national statistics offices. Furthermore, PARIS21's Statistical Capacity Monitor provided additional insights about the data availability and the operations of the statistical system.

Following a review of those elements, the website of INSAE was searched for databases, reports and microdata. Additionally, a review was made of the currently available data through the International Household Survey Network (IHSN) website. EMICOV data and the DHS and MICS microdata are the key sources of available microdata. Other micro datasets which have not been included in this analysis but may be included in future analyses include the Enquete sur la transition vers la Vie Active (ETVA 2012, 2014), AGVAS 2008, AGVSAN 2013, and so forth. This approach brought to light key sources of potential data as well as challenges and gaps, which were discussed in further depth during key informant interviews and meetings with groups of stakeholders.

To produce internationally comparable data on consumption, the World Bank's PovcalNet was evaluated. Thresholds were used to identify what poverty line includes 20% of the global population. Once these thresholds were found, PovcalNet was queried to identify the poverty headcount, the poverty gap and the average incomes of those below and above these lines. Because the poverty gap indicates the average distance below the poverty line people in poverty lie, it is a straightforward transformation to identify the average income of those below any poverty line that is selected. PovcalNet reports the

average household income for the population, making it easy to calculate the average income of the rest of the population.

Disaggregating indicators by P20 classification is simple with DHS and MICS microdata. These surveys include several questions on household asset ownership, asking about ownership of refrigerators, radios, or bicycles, for instance. From this, the DHS or MICS creates a principal component analysis index of wealth and provides a report for the quintile of wealth for each household which can then be linked to each person. Identifying a threshold on the wealth index to distinguish the P20 from the rest of the population is very straightforward, allowing for easy summaries between the P20 and the rest of the population. For most comparisons between the P20 and the rest of the population, we have simply used the quintile disaggregation comparisons published by INSAE's analysis of DHS and MICS. We have taken the bottom quintile as the P20 and have averaged the top four quintiles to calculate the status of the rest of the population.

There are challenges ensuring consistent definitions of the P20. Data from PovcalNet or EMICOV would identify a different set of people as in the bottom quintile when measuring consumption than the population that would be identified using the DHS and MICS wealth index. Additionally, the questions about household assets in DHS and MICS are changed from survey to survey meaning that people defined as being in the bottom quintile in one survey may not be in the next. The P20 approach is meant to be flexible rather than definitive. It is meant to provide an approach for thinking about populations at risk of being left behind rather than a definitive definition of who those populations are.

Exclusion and poverty are multifaceted. To highlight some basic dimensions of exclusion, we drew on the monetary dimensions of exclusion through the graph of the widening gap in consumption between the P20 and the rest. We then calculated the differences for stunting and birth registration drawing on microdata from MICS and DHS. After reviewing the SDG indicator data and recent publications from INSAE, additional data were added to the report as appropriate.

To develop maps of the P20 headcount, the geospatial data from the most recent Demographic and Health Survey (2017–2018) were used. As a household survey, the data are collected using a stratified sample from INSAE. This sampling indicates that data should be representative at the department level. Using the survey weights provided, it was possible to calculate the percentage of the population in the P20 in each department. DHS also publishes partly anonymised geospatial data on where survey clusters are located. These are randomly scattered within 5–10 kilometres of the centre of where enumerators conducted surveys with 1% of the GPS coordinates being randomised even further. The DHS microdata indicate the cluster to which each household belongs for a simple calculation of the percentage of households in each cluster that is in the P20. Because of the random sampling and the anonymisation process, the GPS coordinates and percentages for each cluster mapped should be taken as indicative rather than definitive.

In 2018, key informant interviews were conducted with the primary persons responsible for SDG reporting from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Primary Education, the Ministry of Secondary Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Artisans, and the Ministry of Water and Electricity.

In 2019, DI developed a relationship with the MdSC, who in October 2019, helped organise a trip for Development Initiatives to the Alibori and Borgou departments. MdSC is the national structure for strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations in Benin. They play a key role in the development of the civil society's official response to the Ministry of Planning and Development's SDG reports. The organisation has key partners in each department and holds periodic meetings for discussions around certain themes. MdSC organised meetings in Kandi and in Parakou with civil society members of the health cluster and separate meetings with the education cluster. Time and resource constraints prevented further visits to municipalities beyond Kandi and Parakou.

Alibori and Borgou departments were selected as areas of focus because they provided an opportunity to explore the potential to apply the P20 in different contexts from Cotonou. Borgou is home to the second largest city in the country but is in a different climate zone with different ethnicities and different economic considerations. Alibori is even further from the capital, is much more rural and is home to many municipalities with the highest levels of poverty. Further engagement with other municipalities and departments in the future would provide a richer picture still.

In Borgou, a departmental education official participated in part of the meetings on education. Separately, meetings were held with other civil society members, local health and education workers in public and private sector and local officials working on social affairs, civil registration and municipal planning.

Meetings with civil society in health and education with the assistance of the MdSC had between 1 and 25 participants. These meetings included a general description of who the P20 are and a desire to better understand the challenges the P20 in the district may face, thoughts about policy responses to their needs and thoughts about data. Additionally, respondents were generally asked if they felt that the P20 approach was useful. All who were asked said that the P20 approach would be useful with one vocal exception. One civil society member in Borgou said that the reality is that almost everyone is poor. Even the leaders of civil society face high levels of insecurity. It is only the elites and the ministers in the south that have confidence that their children will always be able to eat well.

Key informant interviews focused on a few key actors. As with the theme meetings, these were not highly structured and are meant to identify some key issues, the validity of the P20 approach and potential data sources. Two days were spent in meetings and key informant interviews in Kandi and two days were spent in Parakou.

In November 2019, a technical workshop was held with the participant list developed with assistance from technical and financial partners, MdSC the Ministry of Planning and Development. Technical experts were invited from the donor community, civil society, academia, ministries, INSAE and the Ministry of Planning and Development. Following a presentation on preliminary insights from DI and comments from the Ministry of Planning and Development, MdSC organised a 'World Coffee' style meeting asking for recommendations and challenges for the P20. There were approximately 50 participants with diverse employers and specialties. Participants were assigned to three different groups and were asked to provide feedback and recommendations as a group sequentially on education, health and cross-cutting issues. The results of their comments are in Appendix 3.

The MdSC was a valuable partner in the production of this report. They helped arrange for a broad amount of stakeholder engagement in Borgou and Alibori and designed and recorded notes for the report as seen in Appendix 3.

Appendix 3: Technical workshop outcomes

The tables below present a synthesis of issues related to world café.

Health		
	Findings	Recommendations
Cost of care	High cost of care	Accelerate the implementation of the Human Capital Strengthening Insurance (ARCH) project
Infrastructure	Inadequate suitable equipment in health centres	Strengthen the technical platform
	Lack of appropriate health centres	Build population-close health centres
	Distance of health centres from population	Ensure that health centres are accessible to people with special needs
		Upgrade health centres
Human resources	Irresponsibility of some health workers	Improve the quality of hospitality and care
	Inadequacies in qualified human resources	Provide health centres with qualified staff
	Low motivation for human resources	–
Low budget allocation	Non-compliance with the 15% of the state's general budget to be allocated to health	Meet regional commitments
	Suppressing or delaying care for needy	Accelerate the implementation of the ARCH project Strengthen funding through the Commons/Health System Development Fund and the plan to decentralise health services

Education

	Findings	Recommendations
Accountability of local authorities	Weak accountability of local authorities	Empower local authorities
Human resources	Low recruitment of human resources (teachers)	Recruit qualified teachers
Infrastructure	Weak school infrastructure	Make it easier to access school infrastructure
Training programs	Inadequate training programmes	–
School calendar	Inadequate school calendar in some communities	Fund a study on the school calendar
Accessibility of school infrastructure	Difficulties in accessing school infrastructure	Make it easier to access school infrastructure

Related areas

	Findings	Recommendations
Territories	Access to transport infrastructure: a problem for P20 (Karimama case)	Make it easier to access transport infrastructure
	Most of the interventions of the technical and financial partners takes place in the South of Benin, while the poorest 20% (P20) live in the North	Integrate digital settings
	Socio-demographic characteristics of P20	Strongly involve religious leaders in the declaration of births
	Telephone isolation of certain communities	Involve nutrition structures to achieve results
	Not taking into account or low consideration of territorial information (provided by municipalities)	Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations' (CSOs') frameworks around the Sustainable Development Goals and other CSOs on the P20
Data	Non-use of data from the Integrated Modular Household Living Conditions Survey (EMICoV) or the Harmonized Household Living Conditions Survey (HCVM) on consumption	Better explain methodological steps
	Lack of recent data	Consider EMICoV/EHCVM data

Related areas

What is the link between the data from this study and the development plans of the municipalities concerned?	Involve those involved in the water, electricity, digital, etc.
Data on access to safe drinking water	Raise awareness of accountability among all SDG targets
The data dates back to 2015: why not exploit recent data?	
What do these figures mean in practice for the situation of the people concerned? How many times do they eat a day? Etc.	Ensure greater involvement of P20 in the development process
More data on children living in families that are among the poorest	
What are the most numerous social groups among P20s?	
Lack of use of data of global analysis of vulnerability, food security and nutrition	
No appropriation or understanding on the part of the P20	
Lack of presentation of methodological approach	
Ethnicity among poverty factors	
Definition of more accurate P20s for better understanding	
Study methodology	
The P20 analysis criteria	
What about the use of the results presented?	
Level of involvement of the P20 in development planning	

P20 approach

Related areas

Why only use income, nutrition and marital status as criteria? Some interesting aspects, such as access to water and electricity, are not taken into account.

Others

Wouldn't it be interesting if the numbers assigned during the digitisation of civil registration records were the same as for the Population Identification Administrative Census (RAVIP)? (Kandi)

Restriction of assessment on health and education (low in other areas)

In which family situations are we most likely to belong to the poorest 20%? (foyer (single-parent home run by a woman, a family with more than four children, etc.))

Appendix 4: Interviewees and participants

People from the following institutions participated in groups or interviews. Any errors are those of the author.

Ministry of Planning and Development
Ministry of Planning and Development-General Directorate for SDG Coordination and Monitoring
Ministry of Planning and Development-General Directorate of Public Investment Programming and Monitoring
Ministry of Planning and Development-General Directorate of Development Policy
Ministry of Planning and Development-General Directorate of Development Financing
Ministry of Digitization
Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Pre-Primary and Primary Education
Ministry of Secondary Education, Technical Education and Professional Training
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Ministry of Decentralization and Local Governance
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries
Ministry of the Economy and Finance
Ministry of Livelihoods and Sustainable Development
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts
Ministry of Energy
Ministry of Water and Mines
INSAE
ARCH
Swiss Development Cooperation
Belgian Cooperation
ENABEL-Belgium
Germany-GIZ
World Bank
UNFPA
European Union
JICA-Japan
UNICEF
Global Affairs Canada
WHO
USAID
FAO
UNDP
City of Kandi
Department of Alibori
City of Parakou

Department of Borgou

APIDA-Association for the Promotion of Development of Organizations of Alibori

ANCB-National Association of Communes of Benin

City of Dassa-Zoume

TT-GV

CSA

Social Watch Benin

IJEB Benin

Bethesda NGO

Maison de la Société Civile

CARE

African School of Economics

ONG ALINAGNON

Generation Vigilants

IREEP

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Notes

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- ¹⁸ Rapport d'avancement 2018 du programme de Croissance pour le Développement Durable (PC2D 2018-2021), Ministère de l'économie et Finances, Septembre 2019.
- ¹⁹ Globally the poorest 20% of the population has seen its average daily consumption increase from \$1.07 per person per day in 1999 to \$1.80 in 2015 (the latest year for which data is available). In absolute terms the rest of the global population saw their average daily consumption grow even more: from \$13.71 in 1999 to \$18.37 in 2015.
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