MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX
MPI

STATISTICAL INSTITUTE OF BELIZE

INCIDENCE OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY AT 22.1% IN SEPTEMBER 2024: DOWN FROM 26.4% ONE YEAR AGO

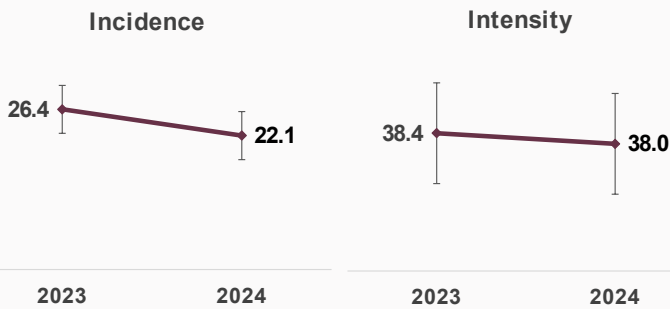### Overview of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI):

The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is a direct measure of poverty, which captures deprivations across various dimensions of well-being such as health, education, employment and living standards. The MPI provides insights into both the incidence and intensity of poverty within a population. **Incidence** measures the share of persons or households that are multidimensionally poor in the population, while **intensity** measures the average level of deprivation experienced among the poor. The MPI is computed by multiplying the incidence by the intensity of poverty and is represented by a number between 0 and 1, where 0 represents no poverty and 1 represents extreme poverty. The MPI complements monetary measures of poverty and serves as a useful tool for the development and monitoring of targeted poverty reduction interventions.

Incidence and Intensity of Poverty:

In September 2024, an estimated 22.1 percent of the population were multidimensionally poor, representing a 4.4 percentage point decline since September 2023 (see Figure 1: Incidence). This drop was mainly attributed to an estimated 14,070 fewer individuals and 3,534 fewer households experiencing multidimensional poverty between September 2023 and September 2024. Notable improvements were observed in deprivations related to 'Improved Sanitation', 'Access to Internet and ICT', and the 'Dependency Ratio'.

While the incidence of poverty decreased between September 2023 and September 2024, the intensity remained largely unchanged, inching down slightly from 38.4 percent in 2023 to 38.0 percent in 2024 (see Figure 1: Intensity).
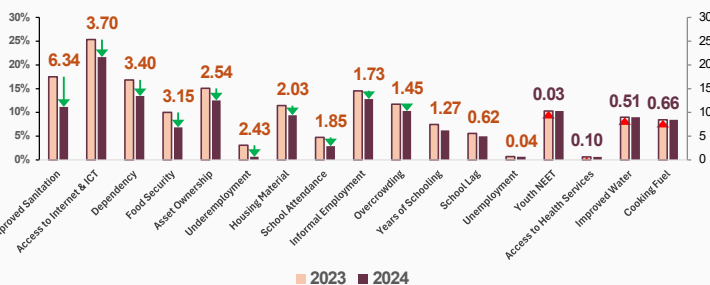

Figure 1: Incidence and Intensity of Multidimensional Poverty, September 2023, and September 2024

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, September 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Study

The **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)**, which is calculated as the incidence multiplied by the intensity of poverty, fell from 0.101 in September 2023 to 0.084 in September 2024, reflecting improvements in multidimensional poverty levels. An estimated 89,874 persons spread across 20,562 households were estimated to be multidimensionally poor in September 2024. Notable improvements were observed in 'Improved sanitation', with the proportion of poor households experiencing this type of deprivation falling by 6.34 percentage points, followed by 'Access to internet and ICT', which dropped by 3.70 percentage points, and 'Dependency', with a decline of 3.40 percentage points. However, slight increases were observed in 'Improved water' and 'Cooking fuel', where deprivations rose by 0.51 and 0.66 percentage points, respectively (see Figure 2).
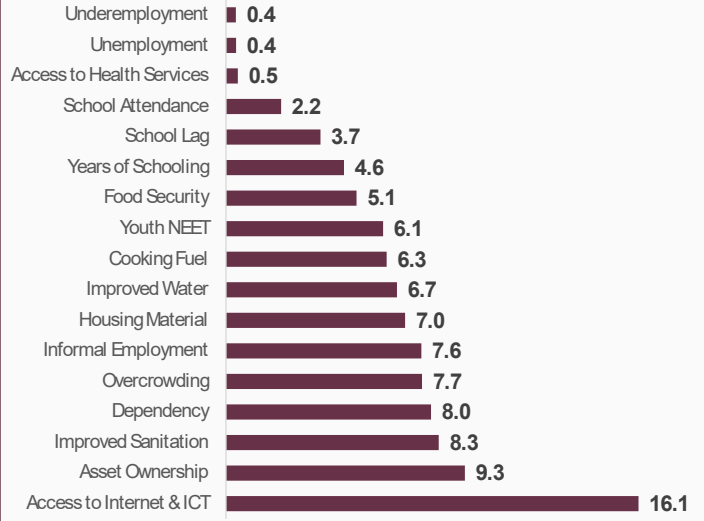

Figure 2: Changes in Deprivation Levels Among the Poor, September 2023 and September 2024

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, September 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Study

Despite these improvements, 'Access to internet and ICT', 'Asset ownership' and 'Improved sanitation' contributed the most to the September 2024 MPI, accounting for 16.1 percent, 9.3 percent, and 8.3 percent, respectively. The indicators contributing the least to the overall MPI were 'Underemployment', 'Unemployment' and 'Access to health services', accounting for 0.4 percent, 0.4 percent, and 0.5 percent, respectively (see Figure 3).

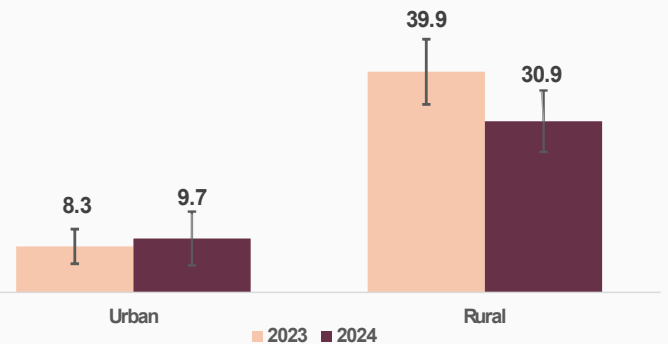Figure 3: Percent Contribution of Indicators to the Multidimensional Poverty Index, September 2024

Indicator	Value
Underemployment	0.4
Unemployment	0.4
Access to Health Services	0.5
School Attendance	2.2
School Lag	3.7
Years of Schooling	4.6
Food Security	5.1
Youth NEET	6.1
Cooking Fuel	6.3
Improved Water	6.7
Housing Material	7.0
Informal Employment	7.6
Overcrowding	7.7
Dependency	8.0
Improved Sanitation	8.3
Asset Ownership	9.3
Access to Internet & ICT	16.1

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, September 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Study

Multidimensional Poverty by Area:

In September 2024, the incidence of multidimensional poverty was significantly higher in rural areas compared to urban areas (see Figure 4). From 2023 to 2024, urban poverty rose slightly from 8.3 percent to 9.7 percent, driven by increased deprivations in 'Overcrowding', 'Food insecurity', and 'Access to drinking water'. In contrast, rural poverty dropped notably from 39.9 percent in 2023 to 30.9 percent in 2024, due to improvements in 'Improved sanitation', 'Access to internet & ICT' and 'Food insecurity'.

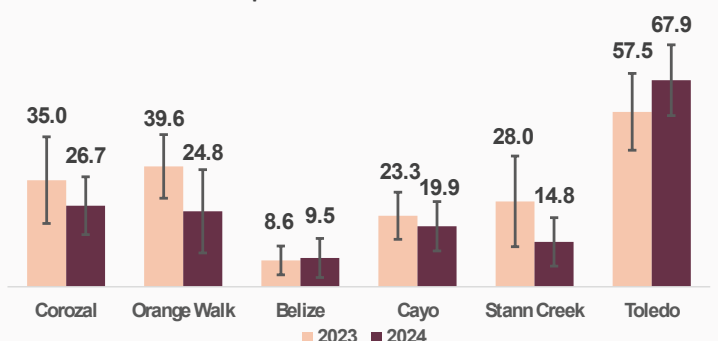Figure 4: Incidence of Multidimensional Poverty by Area, September 2023 and 2024

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, September 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Study

Multidimensional Poverty by District:

Across the districts, Toledo continued to record the highest rate of multidimensional poverty at 67.9 percent of its population, while the Belize District continued to register the lowest at 9.5 percent in September 2024. When compared to one year prior, Orange Walk, Stann Creek and Corozal saw the largest declines in the incidence of poverty, with reductions of 14.8 percentage points, 13.3 percentage points, and 8.4 percentage points, respectively. On the other hand, the Toledo and Belize districts saw increases in the incidence of poverty of 10.4 and 0.8 percentage points, respectively.

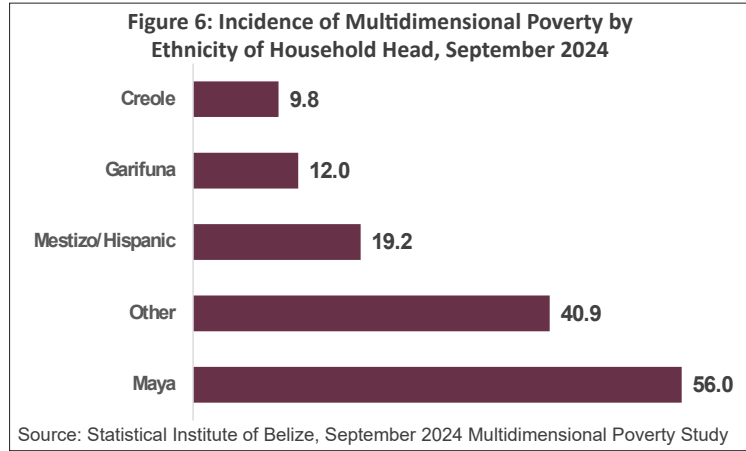Figure 5: Incidence of Multidimensional Poverty by District, September 2023 and 2024

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, September 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Study

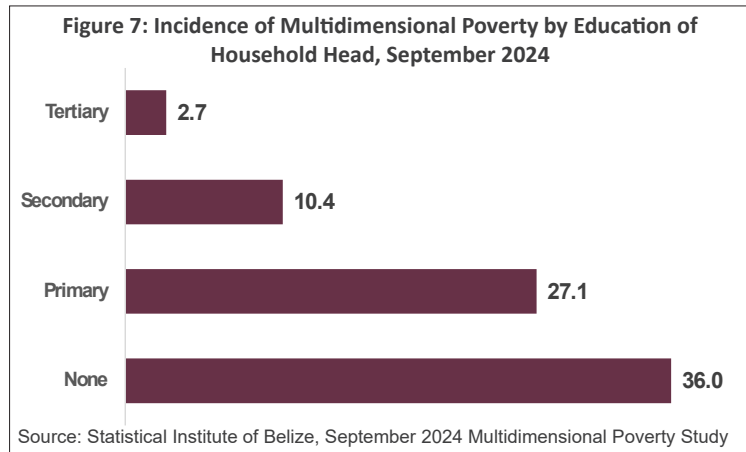## Multidimensional Poverty by Demographic Characteristics:
Multidimensional Poverty by Ethnicity of Household Head

As was observed in September 2023, households headed by persons of Maya ethnicity continued to experience the highest rate of multidimensional poverty at 56 percent in September 2024. Conversely, households headed by persons of Creole ethnicity recorded the lowest incidence at 9.8 percent (see Figure 6).
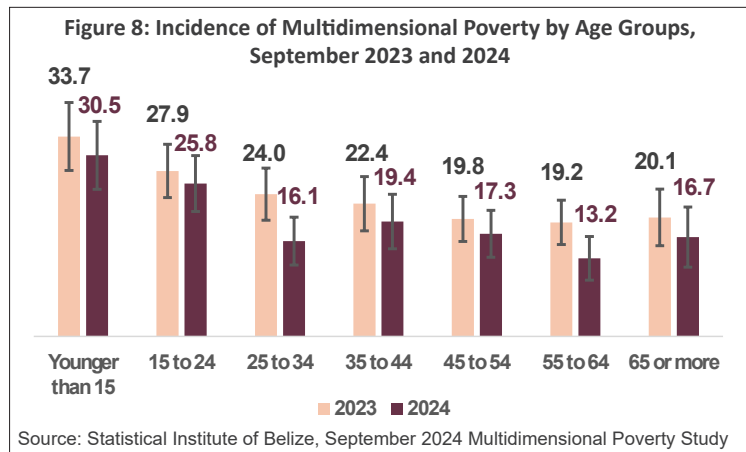
Figure 6: Incidence of Multidimensional Poverty by Ethnicity of Household Head, September 2024

Ethnicity	Percent
Creole	9.8
Garifuna	12.0
Mestizo/Hispanic	19.2
Other	40.9
Maya	56.0

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, September 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Study

Multidimensional Poverty by Education of Household Head:

In September 2024, households headed by persons who had not completed any level of education experienced the highest incidence of poverty at 36 percent. In contrast, households headed by individuals with a tertiary education saw the lowest incidence of poverty at 2.7 percent (see Figure 7).
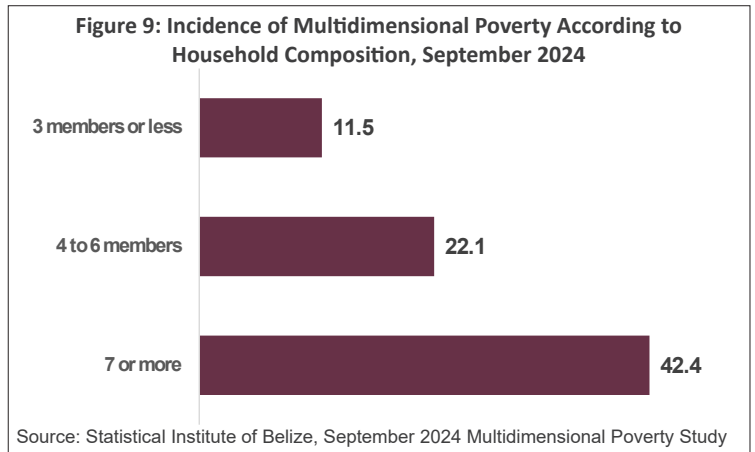
Figure 7: Incidence of Multidimensional Poverty by Education of Household Head, September 2024

Education	Percent
Tertiary	2.7
Secondary	10.4
Primary	27.1
None	36.0

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, September 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Study

Multidimensional Poverty by Age Groups:

As was observed in September 2023, the results indicated that poverty rates continued to differ across age groups in September 2024. The highest incidence of poverty was experienced among individuals aged 0 to 14, at 30.5 percent. Persons aged 25 to 34 saw the greatest improvement, with the incidence of poverty among this group dropping from 24 percent in September 2023 to 16.1 percent in September 2024 (see Figure 8).
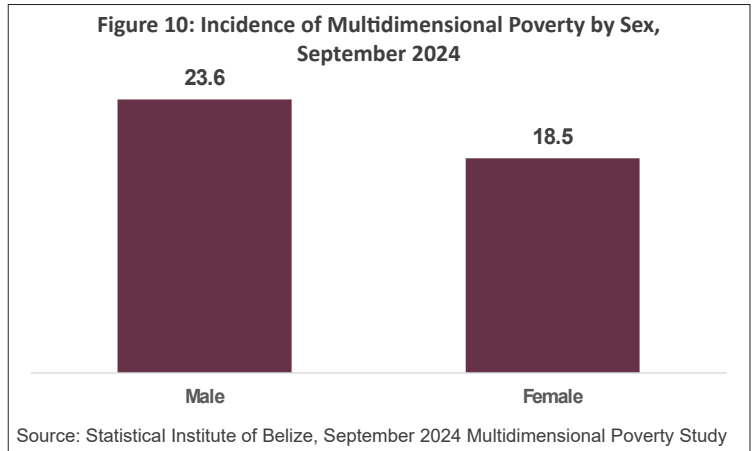
Figure 8: Incidence of Multidimensional Poverty by Age Groups, September 2023 and 2024

Age Group	2023	2024
Younger than 15	33.7	30.5
15 to 24	27.9	25.8
25 to 34	24.0	16.1
35 to 44	22.4	19.4
45 to 54	19.8	17.3
55 to 64	19.2	13.2
65 or more	20.1	16.7

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, September 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Study

Multidimensional Poverty by Household Size:

In September 2024, 11.5 percent of households with three members or less were multidimensionally poor, while larger households faced higher poverty rates. Among households with 4 to 6 members, the incidence of multidimensional poverty was 22.1 percent, while households with seven members or more had the highest at 42.4 percent.
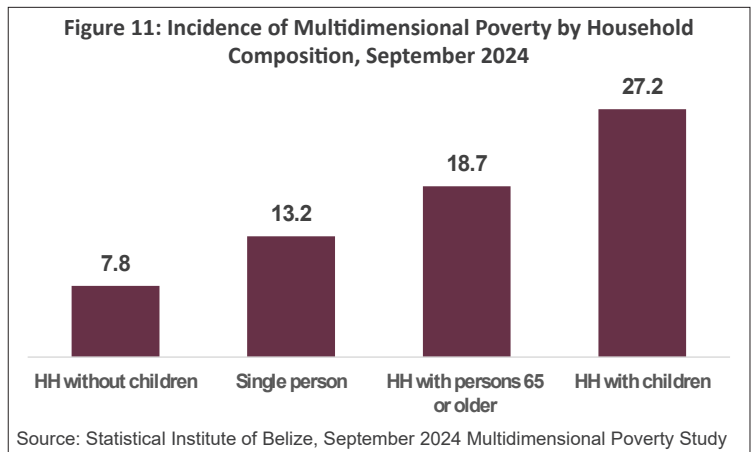
Figure 9: Incidence of Multidimensional Poverty According to Household Composition, September 2024

Household size	Percent
3 members or less	11.5
4 to 6 members	22.1
7 or more	42.4

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, September 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Study

Multidimensional Poverty by Sex of Household Head:

The incidence of multidimensional poverty also differed considerably, depending on the sex of the household head. In September 2024, male-headed households were more likely to be multidimensionally poor with an incidence of 23.6 percent, compared to 18.5 percent in female-headed households (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Incidence of Multidimensional Poverty by Sex, September 2024

Sex	Percent
Male	23.6
Female	18.5

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, September 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Study

Multidimensional Poverty by Household Composition:

The results showed that in September 2024, households without children experienced the lowest incidence of multidimensional poverty at 7.8 percent, followed by single person households at 13.2 percent. Households with children experienced the highest incidence of poverty at 27.2 percent, while those with persons over 65 years recorded an incidence of 18.7 percent.

Figure 11: Incidence of Multidimensional Poverty by Household Composition, September 2024

Household composition	Percent
HH without children	7.8
Single person	13.2
HH with persons 65 or older	18.7
HH with children	27.2

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, September 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Study

Multidimensional Poverty by Employment Status of Household Head:

Employment status, as was seen in September 2023, had a notable impact on multidimensional poverty. In September 2024, households headed by persons outside of the labour force experienced the lowest incidence of poverty at 18.6 percent. In contrast, households headed by persons that were unemployed had an incidence of poverty as high as 50.2 percent (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Incidence of Multidimensional Poverty According to Employment Status of Household Head, September 2024

Employment Status	Percent
Unemployed	50.2
Underemployment	36.8
Employed	22.6
Outside labour force	18.6

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, September 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Study