



## MODULE 6

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### Case Study Guinea-Bissau (West Africa)

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### MODULE AIMS

- To understand a case study from an underreported African country.
- To present selected push and pull factors for a country recognized with low human development indicators.
- To sensitize participants for the human story behind numbers.



### LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this module, in parallel to previous case studies so they are all internationally comparable, participants should be able:

- To discuss the complexity of decisions made by migrants and refugees.  
→ **Affective LO: Responding**
- To explain what the audiences need to know about migration so they are empowered to make informed decisions. → **Cognitive LO: Understanding**
- To use knowledge and sources to prepare a short country profile and a short profile on migration and forced displacement. → **Cognitive LO: Applying**
- To analyse – from a global perspective – the country case study of Guinea-Bissau.  
→ **Cognitive LO: Analysing**

### Outline

Guinea-Bissau is uniquely positioned to put Lusophone countries on the map to investigate African issues of migrants and refugees, in addition to the widely used case studies from Anglophone and Francophone Africa.<sup>1</sup> Guinea-Bissau is an under-researched and under-reported country, not only in academia and journalism, but also in global studies. Guinea-Bissau, however, showcases some important context factors of migration and forced displacement, for instance poverty, but also recognition of stateless people. The country has been confined to the lowest ranks of human development since independence in 1974, and the population has been trapped in a cycle of political instability, corruption, poverty and lack of opportunities.

### Country profile

Guinea-Bissau is a small coastal West African country. It is small by land size (36,000 km<sup>2</sup>)<sup>2</sup> and population (2 million), particularly in comparison to its direct neighbours Guinea (13 million people and 250,000 km<sup>2</sup>) and Senegal (17 million people and 200,000 km<sup>2</sup>). In Europe, Guinea-Bissau compares in surface area to Belgium, and in population numbers to Latvia, all being coastal countries (UNdata, 2019).

1 Six African countries are Lusophone or Portuguese speaking (Angola, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe; CPLP, 2020).

2 Numbers and decimals are rounded in this text, keeping a good balance between accuracy and readability.

It is estimated that the population of Guinea-Bissau will grow from today's 2 million to over 3.5 million by 2050 (UNDESA, 2019b, pp. 24-25). Fertility will go down from 4.51 live births per woman (2015-2020) to 3 live births per woman (2045-2050; UNDESA, 2019b, pp. 138-139), and the average annual rate of population growth will decline from 2.5% (2015-2020) to 1.65% (2045-2050; UNDESA, 2019b, p. 59).

The population of Guinea-Bissau is ethnically diverse.<sup>4</sup> Islam is the dominant religion, Christianity is a minority and the practice of indigenous animist beliefs is widespread. People speak many distinct languages which obviously affects the practice and impact of journalism and journalism education. The official language is Portuguese but people usually speak Kriol (Creole) or a variety of native African languages (Ocrisse-Aka & Bossard, 2006).

Guinea-Bissau's land is lush, green and fertile; its unique biodiversity comprises pristine national parks, dense tropical forests, vast agricultural lands, rivers, mangrove swamps and an archipelago with dozens of islands. This dormant economic potential comprises timber production, bauxite and phosphate extraction, and high-value international tourism. The advantageous geographical location is conducive to maritime and inland waterway transport and trade. Albeit, this richness lies fallow. Agricultural products, mainly cashew nuts, are sold unprocessed and much of the economy is not monetized, based instead on bartering. Public sector management is challenged in serving society beyond the political and military elites. Guinea-Bissau underperforms relative to most of its peers in West Africa,<sup>5</sup> which is reflected in the HDI (UNDP, 2019c, pp. 300-303). On an optimistic note, development has occurred. The country's overall human development value improved continuously since 2010 (UNDP, 2019a) despite losing three ranks between 2013 and 2018 (UNDP, 2019c, p. 306). Life expectancy has increased by almost eight years for women and nine for men since the year 2000 and is now at 61 years for women and 57 years for men<sup>6</sup> (UNDESA, 2019b, pp. 188-189). The life expectancy in the other two case studies of this handbook is 62 years for women and 59 years for men in Cameroon, 84 years for German women and 80 years for German men (UNDESA, 2019b, pp. 180-215). Bissau-Guineans have a healthy life expectancy<sup>7</sup> of 52 years (Cameroonians: 55 years; Germans: 70 years; UNDP, 2019b, pp. 6-9).

Guinea-Bissau stands out as the “first sub-Saharan African nation [that] unilaterally declared its sovereignty from European colonialism following a protracted armed struggle. Most African nations gained their independence from colonial powers by negotiation and peaceful transfer of authority” (Lobban, 1974, p. 15). The high hopes of independence were superseded by decades of disillusion

3 Data refer to a 5-year period preceding the reference year (UNdata, 2019).

4 Fula (25%), Balanta (25%), Mandingo (14%), Papel (9%), Manjaca (9%) and Mancanha people according to UNIOGBIS (2020).

5 Member countries making up the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo (ECOWAS, 2016; only Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Sierra Leone have a lower HDI rank than Guinea-Bissau; UNDP, 2019c, pp. 300-303).

6 Data refers to a 5-year period preceding the reference year (UNdata, 2019).

7 Healthy life expectancy at birth is defined as the average number of years that a person can expect to live in full health by taking into account years lived in less than full health because of disease and injury (UNDP, 2019b, p. 9, Notes).

through chronic political instability with coup d'états and political assassinations. The year 2019 promised to mark a historic turning point: For the first time, a president completed an uninterrupted five year mandate, democratic legislative elections were held in March, followed by the presentation of a gender-balanced cabinet in July and presidential elections in November with a second round in December. Last but not least, the judicial police seized its largest ever quantity of cocaine (almost 800 kilograms) on 9 March 2019, the night before the legislative elections, and six months later a further 1,800 kilograms. However, a subsequent report assessed there had been “a reconstituting of the old military criminal entrepreneur network that has been responsible for trafficking in Guinea-Bissau since 2007” (Shaw & Gomes, 2020, p. 14). The US, in July 2020, expressed concerns “whether or not the political will exists to do the necessary in terms of stopping the flows of drugs through that region” (US Department of State, 2020). The fact that Guinea-Bissau’s president dismissed two leading figures in the fight against drug trafficking – the justice minister and the head of the judicial police – was noted as troublesome. The BBC reports the developments with an optimistic headline: “How Africa’s ‘narco-state’ is trying to kick its habit” (Shryock, 2020).

## Migration profile

As one of the countries in the “low human development” category of the HDI (UNDP, 2019a), Bissau-Guineans show mobility in many ways, and the country is home to people from other parts of West Africa.

### *Internal migration*

The first migratory step is usually from rural to urban settings. The net migration in the country’s regions is considerable. Almost 44 % of the population live in the few urban areas, and the share is increasing (UNdata, 2019). Here, people find the most and best of the nation’s limited services and the lowest poverty incidence compared to regions like Oio, Bafata, Cacheu or Gabú. Particularly Bissau, Gabú and Oio have become the starting point for “irregular migration [...] a widespread phenomenon lately” (IOM, 2018). These moves are also shown in a study of arrivals from Guinea-Bissau through the Mediterranean Sea route to Italy: 37 % of all Bissau-Guinean respondents are from the capital city Bissau followed by 23 % from Gabú (the Eastern-most region bordering with Senegal and Guinea) and 18 % from Oio (the Northern region bordering with Senegal; Scarabello, 2019, p. 44). Abreu (2012), in his dissertation on migration and development in Guinea-Bissau through a case study of two villages, describes out-migration of striking dimensions.

### *Internally Displaced People (IDPs)*

The magnitude of IDPs has been described earlier in this handbook as an increasing challenge for Africa. In Guinea-Bissau, the UNHCR reports incidents only for 1998, the time of the civil war (fought from 7 June 1998 to 10 May 1999) when almost 200,000 people were internally displaced (UNHCR, 2020b); this equates to 17 % of the total population of around 1.2 million people in 1998

(UNDESA, 2019b, p. 24). The IDMC observes and reports displacement resulting from conflict, disaster and development. For Guinea-Bissau, the IDMC-report assumes comparatively low incidences. The annual conflict and disaster displacement figures do not show any displacements due to conflict. New displacements due to disasters are recorded for 2008 (500 people), 2010 (2,000), 2018 (3,700), and 2019 (410). Recorded displacements are mainly weather related. The 2020 rainy season (May to October) destroyed hundreds of homes, exposing tenants to food insecurity and deteriorating health conditions, particularly under conditions of Covid-19. As unfortunate and traumatizing as displacement is for these individuals, the numbers are manageable for those who are mandated to support them. In the future, IDMC foresees on average 770 people to be displaced annually due to disaster (IDMC, 2020), which is expected to be exacerbated by climate change (see Module 3).

### *Intra-African migration*

The ECOWAS allows free movement of persons. But it is more than the ease of logistics and geographical proximity that make people move regionally. Today's nation states of Guinea-Bissau and its neighbours Guinea and Senegal host many of the same ethnicities: the Fulani, for instance, live in considerable numbers in Guinea-Bissau, Guinea and also in The Gambia; the Malinke live in Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, The Gambia and Senegal. The "concept of ethnicity with its three basic elements of shared cultural attributes, consciousness, and cultural boundaries" (Young, 2017) is tangible in this West African region. Common properties include shared ancestry, language, social practices, naming conventions, rituals etc. Nevertheless, sub-ethnic identity is a key element in the political process that is also apparent in electoral competitions (Young, 2017). Temudo (2009) shows how the Balanta people in Guinea-Bissau clearly refined their distinction, which carried their Party for Social Renovation (PRS) to the presidency in the elections of 2000, eliciting a reprimand for Balanta "tribalism" (Temudo, 2019, p. 57) by competing political parties like the PAIGC.<sup>8</sup> The merging of ethnicity and politics, tradition and contemporaneity, is described by Lundy (2018, pp. 13-14).

### *International immigration and emigration*

The international migrant stock<sup>9</sup> in Guinea-Bissau (27,000 people in 2019) is mainly represented by citizens from Senegal (13,600), Guinea (5,400) and The Gambia (1,600); reciprocally, most Bissau-Guineans move to these same countries as far as Africa is concerned: Senegal (30,600), The Gambia (13,800) and Guinea (4,300). The West African island country of Cape Verde<sup>10</sup> is a top destination for Bissau-Guineans (5,300; 2019) while the number of Cape Verdeans moving to Guinea-Bissau is negligible (606). The numbers of immigrants from Europe and North America are

8 PAIGC, African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, was founded by Amílcar Cabral. PAIGC led the country, after a long war for independence from the colonial power Portugal in the 1960s, to independence in 1974.

9 Statistics refer to international migrant stocks. Stocks include all foreign-born residents in a country regardless of when they entered the country. For the definition of migrant stock, see the glossaries recommended in Module 2 (EMN, 2018; IOM, 2019a).

10 Cape Verde is one of the most developed West African countries. It is ranked 126 of 189 countries in the medium human development category as shown in the HDI (UNDP, 2019c, pp. 300-303).

insignificant while migration to Europe has increased from 29% of all international migrants from Guinea-Bissau in 1990 to 42% in 2019. At the same time, migration to African countries has declined from 71% of all international migrants from Guinea-Bissau in 1990 to 57% in 2019 (UNDESA, 2019a). These Bissau-Guinean trends coincide with those observed for the African continent in general (see Module 9). A recent study confirms the shift: The number of Bissau-Guinean nationals regularly residing in Italy quintupled from 2012 to 2018, slowly at first (by around 100 residents annually), jumping after 2015 (increase by over 600 people from 2017 to 2018), and the number of asylum applications quadrupled between 2012 and 2018 (Scarabello, 2019, pp. 39-40).

Usually, migration predominantly takes place within spatial or cultural proximity, e.g. Bissau-Guineans opt for Lusophone and Francophone<sup>11</sup> countries, which are Senegal (30,600 immigrants from Guinea-Bissau), Cape Verde (5,300) and Guinea (4,300) in the region, and Portugal (29,000 immigrants from Guinea-Bissau in 2019), France (3,400) and Brazil (1,300) in Europe and the Americas (data for 2019; UNDESA, 2019a).

#### *Regular international migration 1: Destination Portugal (Europe)*

Immigration to Portugal follows the special relationship with the former colonial power, not only sharing an official language and institutional links through the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) but also enjoying special immigration rules and regulations. Every citizen of Guinea-Bissau who wishes to travel to Portugal in documented ways (regular migration) needs to apply for a visa (the process has been outsourced to the private company VFS Global). Visas are either free of charge (children up to 6 years), usually cost €60 in fees and up to €75 for student visa and work permit visa (Portugal Visa Application Centre in Guinea-Bissau & VFS Global, 2020). A Bissau-Guinean journalist has a salary of less than €100 per month, if she or he gets paid at all. Thus, visa fees easily equate to one month of salary but the expectation is to find work in Portugal and to quickly amortize visa and travel costs. The chances are, however, low. Capucha et al. (2016, p. 10) report unemployment rates in Portugal among immigrants from Lusophone African countries that are much higher than those for immigrants from other countries (40% among Bissau-Guineans versus 15% for Ukrainians). The jobs Lusophone Africans secure require lower skills than the positions the general population holds (37% of Lusophone African immigrants worked in lower skilled jobs in Portugal versus 13% of the general population, data from 2011). The wages that immigrants from Lusophone Africa receive are below those of the general population (€500 versus €600). Abreu (2012, p. 222) found out that most of the economically active migrants from his case study villages were working in Portugal as construction workers or were unemployed. Scarabello (2019, pp. 44-46) shows that Bissau-Guinean migrants are predominantly young men (aged 19 to 30 years) and not well educated (30% have not completed any type of formal education);

<sup>11</sup> Guinea-Bissau is a member of the community of Portuguese speaking countries (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa, CPLP) and of the community of French speaking countries (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), La Francophonie).

most declared that they had been (self-) employed (54 % of respondents<sup>12</sup>) – mostly in construction, transportation, agriculture – or unemployed (37 % of respondents) before leaving Guinea-Bissau. As for the factors that pushed them to migrate, most indicated war or conflict (34 %) and the economy (32 %), followed by personal violence (21 %) and limited humanitarian services (10%). It is noteworthy that migrants did not necessarily head directly from Guinea-Bissau for Europe but often after extended stays in Libya (Scarabello, 2019, pp. 45-46).

Portuguese law provides some types of residence visas for Bissau-Guinean citizens for employment, self-employment, studies, and family reunion. Under an agreement between the two countries, Bissau-Guineans can travel with a temporary visa for medical reasons to Portugal. Subsequently, some migrants obtain a residency permit because they found employment or because their medical condition prevents them from returning home. The medical facilities in Guinea-Bissau are insufficient to provide the necessary services to the population. The assessment of progress in achieving SDG 3 (“Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being at all ages”; UNDESA, n. d.) is “stagnating” and “major challenges remain” (Sachs et al., 2020, p. 45, Figure 19; pp. 242-243).

In 2020, major developments supported migrants and refugees in Portugal: Under the impact of Covid-19, the government decided to temporarily grant them full citizenship rights. The move was taken in order to permit full access to healthcare and reduce the risks for public health (Schengen Visa Info, 2020). A second development enables children of migrants to become Portuguese citizens if their parents have held residence permits for one year (before, the national law had set the residence requirement at two years, according to the European Union; 2020).



**SUGGESTION FOR AN EXERCISE TO ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE SKILLS OF UNDERSTANDING AND EVALUATING AS WELL AS THE AFFECTIVE SKILLS OF RESPONDING:**

A senior student of the Institute of Journalism, TU Dortmund University, and practicing TV journalist, Chantal Beil, has prepared a couple of video features on migration and forced displacement in regards to context factors from/to Guinea-Bissau. Chantal Beil has also trained Bissau-Guinean journalists in Bissau with the UN on how to best deliver a migration story as a TV journalist.

The feature stories are available on the project portal [www.mediaandmigration.com](http://www.mediaandmigration.com). Show them in class.

<sup>12</sup> The interviews were conducted in IOM’s DTM surveys of national groups arriving through the Central Mediterranean route between 2016 and 2018, according to Scarabello (2019, p. 42).

Each participant should write a 1-page media critique of the journalistic work, following the questions:

- Which messages on matters concerning migrants and refugees does Beil deliver?
- How does she structure her story?
- Which journalistic story telling techniques does she apply?
- Is her view Eurocentric or is she telling rather one of the African or Bissau-Guinean stories of migrants and refugees?
- Does her work reflect knowledge about Guinea-Bissau?
- Are the aspects that audiences need to know about migration and forced displacement reflected in the stories so that they can make their own informed decisions?
- What could Beil have done better?

#### *Irregular migration from Guinea-Bissau*

According to the IOM, irregular migration, especially from the Bissau-Guinean regions of Gabú, Oio and Bafata, has “become a widespread phenomenon lately with an increasing number of youth falling prey to unscrupulous smugglers [...]” (IOM, 2018). In the worst cases, these young people pass away in their attempt to cross the Sahara Desert or the Mediterranean Sea. Lack of knowledge about the dangers of irregular migration often triggers the departure. While en-route, many young people end up in appalling conditions, stripped of their rights. One way to return home safely and voluntarily is through the EU-IOM joint initiative for migration protection and reintegration. The IOM assists voluntary returnees in making a living at home, either by funding a business plan or helping with some cash-for-work projects (see the video features by Chantal Beil, details in Suggestion for classroom, above; EU & IOM, 2020; IOM, 2019b).

Stakeholders across the board report that Guinea-Bissau is heavily affected by trafficking in persons, including child trafficking for forced labour and sexual exploitation. The most evident and reported form is the trafficking of children (known as talibés) to Senegal. Parents entrust their children to adults who claim to be religious leaders and to provide religious education to the children. The children often end up in forced labour or begging and experience severe abuses (Gama, 2020). Einarsdóttir and Boiro (2016, p. 863) describe the expectations of the childrens’ families.

#### *Regular international migration 2: Destination Brazil*

As a destination country for migration, Brazil gained relevance for Bissau-Guineans when President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva took office as president in 2003 and introduced policy changes.



The number of Bissau-Guinean migrants increased from no data in 2000 to 1,270 in 2019 (UNDESA, 2019a). For Brazil, Africa had become a top foreign priority – the rationale has included strategic approaches to strengthen its role in the South-South cooperation and as a BRICS country.<sup>13</sup> Africa was important as a source of raw materials and as a market for Brazilian products; history connects the countries as millions of West Africans were forcibly taken to Brazil in the transatlantic slave trade. Geographical and cultural proximity also facilitated cooperation. Portuguese is a common official language and both countries are members of the CPLP. Guinea-Bissau was included when Brazil cancelled around \$900 million in African debts (Abdenur & Neto, 2013). African history has become an integral part of school curricula, and a university has been established that is open to African students, particularly from Lusophone countries (Abdenur & Neto, 2014, p. 56). The situation on the ground in 2020, however, is different. Antonio Brasil, a TV journalist and journalism professor at the University in Florianopolis, Brasil, explains that there has been a change of priorities regarding Brazilian international relations and economic strategies (Brasil, 2020).

Nevertheless, people from Guinea-Bissau and other countries in West Africa hope to find a better life in Brazil, work, and remit money home or study for free. But migrants describe the 3,000 kilometre long journey as challenging (Phillips, 2018).

### *Asylum*

The number of refugees, asylum seekers, returned refugees, stateless people and others who sought shelter and protection in Guinea-Bissau shows a picture of conflict-induced migration in the region. Over the years, the majority of refugees in Guinea-Bissau have come from Senegal's protracted Casamance-conflict (the Casamance is a region bordering Guinea-Bissau). Refugees from Sierra Leone surged during the country's years of civil war (1991-2002; UNHCR, 2020a).

The number of asylum seekers from Guinea-Bissau in Europe is very low. In 2019, 740 asylum seekers and first-time asylum applicants were registered, which is modest in comparison to the neighbouring countries of Guinea (13,590) and Senegal (6,695). In 2019, the numbers were down to the mid-2010s level – they had peaked during the height of the refugee crisis with 1,240 (2015) and 1,315 (2016) asylum seekers. The chances for positive decisions of asylum applications are low. In 2019, 65 first instance decisions were positive, of which 30 were based on the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol (see Module 2), 25 were taken for humanitarian reasons and 770 were rejected (Eurostat, 2020).

<sup>13</sup> BRICS is the acronym for five major national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa.



### **SUGGESTION FOR AN EXERCISE TO ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE SKILLS OF APPLYING AND ANALYSING AS WELL AS TO ADDRESS THE AFFECTIVE SKILLS OF RESPONDING:**

Allow the class to acquire some knowledge of Guinea-Bissau as a country of migrants and refugees before studying the country's pull and push factors.

Invite participants to prepare a short country profile and a short profile on migration and forced displacement of Guinea-Bissau.

- To compose these two profiles, participants select their data from the sources shown in Module 2, particularly the Migration Data Portal country page on Guinea-Bissau (Migration Data Portal, 2020).
- To bring the data to life, participants explore media reports from or about Guinea-Bissau which they consider enlightening and telling.
- Present the two profiles in plenary and conclude with five highlights to identify the top characteristics for Guinea-Bissau.

### **SUGGESTION FOR THE CLASSROOM TO ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE SKILLS OF UNDERSTANDING:**

Task the participants to describe which aspects of the country profile are relevant for the audiences, particularly regarding those aspects that empower them to make informed decisions on migration and forced displacement.

## **Selected context factors 1: poverty**

Poverty affects the majority of Guinea-Bissau's population. SDG 1 calls for an end to poverty in all its manifestations by 2030, e.g. in ten years from writing this handbook. The HDR (UNDP, 2019c, p. 67) concedes that "poverty reduction may not be fast enough to end extreme poverty by 2030 [...] after decades of progress, poverty reduction is slowing". Poverty can indeed be eradicated as global progress has shown one billion fewer people living in extreme poverty in 2015 than in 1990. In 1990, 36% of the world's people lived in extreme poverty on less than \$1.90 a day compared to 8.6% in 2018. The opposite is true for sub-Saharan Africa where the number of people living in extreme poverty has grown from an estimated 278 million in 1990 to 413 million in 2015. If current trends continue, by 2030, nearly 90% of the world's people living in extreme poverty will be in sub-Saharan Africa. Guinea-Bissau may be one of them (UNDP, 2019c, p. 67; World Bank, 2018a, pp. 1-2).

What does it mean to be poor? Poverty is multidimensional<sup>14</sup>, and income poverty is only one form. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)<sup>15</sup> addresses three dimensions of poverty (health, education, living standards) with ten indicators (nutrition, child mortality; years of schooling, school; cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing and assets; OPHI, 2019, p. 1; OPHI, & UNDP, 2018). In Bissau, over 67 %<sup>16</sup> of the population live below the income poverty line of \$ 1.90 a day which is substantial even in the sub-Saharan African context where 45% of the population live below the income poverty line. While severe poverty is rampant in the capital city of Bissau, it is much worse in the rural areas (OPHI, 2019; UNDP, 2019c, pp. 67-70, p. 320).

Services are minimal, if they exist at all (IMF, & Government of Guinea-Bissau, 2011, pp. 22-72). Only 53% of the rural population has access to safe drinking water, compared to 84% of the urban population. Only 5% of the rural population uses improved sanitation facilities versus 35% in urban areas. Less than 10% of women in rural areas are literate as opposed to 40% at the national level, and over 50% in the capital city of Bissau (data from 2010). Electricity is not always available, and especially communities in rural areas do not usually have access. In urban environments, power is frequently cut, and not available to all households. The operating costs are high, as are the losses owed to theft and low rates of bill collection. Since 2019, the city of Bissau has been supplied with electricity from a ship docked in the port of Bissau. The national road network comprises 2,746 km of which only 770 km (28%) are paved. Road transport, however, is the main means of access to most of the rural towns and communities. It is not only a hazard for people to reach, for instance, medical facilities, but it also limits the timely transportation of agricultural goods to the consumers in the urban areas. Internet and phone lines are mainly unavailable in the inner part of the country. Not even 3% of the population in Guinea-Bissau are able to use the Internet (Migration Data Portal, 2020).

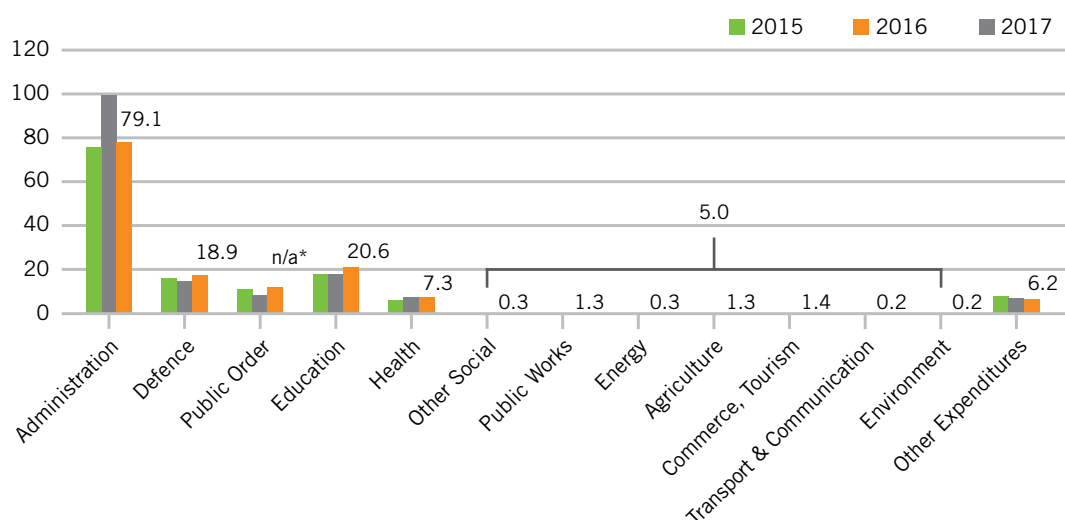
“Seizing the moment” is the aspirational title of a report published in 2018 (World Bank, 2018b). It shows that the country had 4.7 security personnel per 1,000 inhabitants on the payroll compared to less than 1 per 1,000 for frontline health workers (data of 2017; World Bank, 2018b, p. 4; p. 38, Figure 2.2; p. 40, Table 2.2). The dearth of investment in core sectors of the country is shown in the overview of public expenditures by sectors with data from the country’s Ministry of Economy and Finance (see Figure 19).

Poverty is distributive inequality and “not only deprives but also oppresses” (UNDP, 2019c, p. 89). In Guinea-Bissau, the richest 10% of the society hold 42% of the income, while only 12.8% of the

14 This handbook considers two approaches: The one published annually in the Human Development Report (HDR) and the one published by the World Bank. Each uses different indicators, but both approaches are internationally comparable. The World Bank’s global multidimensional poverty measuring includes monetary poverty – measured as having less than \$ 1.90 a day – and deprivations in education and in basic infrastructure such as water, sanitation and electricity (World Bank, 2018c; World Bank, 2020b; World Bank, 2020a).

15 The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) prepares the MPI, and the Human Development Reports publish the MPI since 2010 (OPHI, & UNDP, 2018).

16 2007-2017. Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified (UNDP, 2019c, pp. 320-321, footnote c).

**Figure 19: Guinea-Bissau: expenditure by sector (\$) 2015-2017**


Development in Guinea-Bissau is still challenged, and resources are limited: “Government spending on the social sectors is low, which, combined with low efficiency, translated into weak outcomes. In health and education, not only does the country spend less than most Sub-Saharan African countries but also achieves poor outcomes for every dollar spent” (World Bank, 2018b, p. 1). \*Data missing in the source document. Source: World Bank (2018b, p. 123, Figure 6.15). Own illustration.

income is held by the poorest 40% (2010-2017<sup>17</sup>) – this is almost an inverted pyramid. The Gini coefficient<sup>18</sup> stands at 50.7, which is very high compared to the neighbouring countries Senegal (40.3) and Guinea (33.7), and among the highest globally. Bissau-Guineans also agonize over higher inequalities than their neighbours in most inequalities measured in the inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (UNDP, 2019c, pp. 308-311). The other two case studies of this handbook represent a Gini coefficient of 46.8 (Cameroon) and 31.7 (Germany). The best Gini performers globally are the Ukraine at 25.0, Slovakia at 26.5 and Finland at 27.1 while South Africa has the highest Gini coefficient with 63.0, followed by Namibia with 59.1 and the Central African Republic with 56.2 (UNDP, 2019c, pp. 308-311).

## Selected context factors 2: population growth and youth

As outlined earlier (see Module 3), population growth is one of the macro factors impacting migration. The “youth bulge” may be a “dividend” if, for instance, governments invest in health, education and in the empowerment of women; otherwise, population growth may add to the challenges in achieving the SDGs. In reference to the SDGs, population growth is “sometimes called the elephant in the room [...] widely perceived as a politically sensitive topic” and not contextu-

<sup>17</sup> Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified (UNDP, 2019c, p. 311, Notes e).

<sup>18</sup> Gini coefficient: Measure of the deviation of the distribution of income among individuals or households within a country from a perfectly equal distribution. A value of 0 represents absolute equality, a value of 100 absolute inequality (UNDP, 2019c, p. 311, Notes).

alized “explicitly” (Abel et al., 2016, p. 14298). SDGs addressing child mortality, maternal mortality, causes of death, and reproductive health and particularly education are, however, related – the more educated women are, the lower birth rates and child mortality (Abel et al., 2016, p. 14298).

Population growth in Guinea-Bissau has risen steadily from 1950 (1.47% annually) up to its current rate of 2.5% (2015-2020), and is predicted to decrease to 1.65% annually by 2050 (UNDESA, 2019b, pp. 58-59). Fertility rose from the 1950s until the highest rate was recorded in the early 1980s (1980-1985) with 6.7 children per woman after which the numbers progressively decreased to (2015-2020) 4.51 children per woman (UNDESA, 2019b, pp. 138-139). As is the case throughout Africa, Guinea-Bissau’s population is young: The median age of the total population is 18.8 years (2020; sub-Saharan Africa: 18.7 years<sup>19</sup>; UNDESA, 2020). These young people need opportunities in education and career development which the country barely offers.

UNESCO finds unvarnished words for a schooling system that is “simply due for a radical overhaul” (UNESCO, 2016, p. 1). The knowledge of a big proportion of the population “is of such limited level that the country’s prospects of economic take-off [and of alleviating poverty] are bleak” (UNESCO, 2016, p. 1). The households, impoverished as the MPI describes them (see above), bear the greater share of the country’s educational expenditure. Imagine a mother of three, making some money as a domestic worker, not being paid regularly, affording – or owing when she is unable to pay – the tuition fees, the school feeding and the uniform for the kids at private schools (see the video features by Chantal Beil, Suggestion for classroom, above). Guinea-Bissau, writes UNESCO, has an “abnormally low level of full school provision” (UNESCO, 2016, p. 2).

About half of all children aged six years and almost one third of children between the ages of 6 and 11 “have never attended school” (World Bank, 2018b, p. 74; data from 2014). In the rural areas, and for poor households, the situation is compounded: Among those who do go to school, dropout rates “gradually rise from 5 to 44% between the ages of 12 and 24 years” (World Bank, 2018b, p. 74). Nearly 40% of pupils aged six to eleven years in rural areas have never attended school – compared to 12% in urban areas (World Bank, 2018b, pp. 74-75). The gross attendance rates in secondary education are lower than 25% in some regions – compared to 115%<sup>20</sup> in Bissau (World Bank, 2018b, p. 73). The three most disadvantaged groups in the education system are girls, children in rural areas and the bottom income group, whereas public spending “tends to favour wealthier households” (World Bank, 2018b, p. 76).

19 In comparison, the median age of the total population in Europe is 42.5 years, in Latin America and the Caribbean 31 years (UNDESA, 2020).

20 The Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR) “can exceed 100% due to inclusion of over-aged and under-aged students. Reasons include early or late entry, and grade repetition. For tertiary education, the GAR can exceed 100% due to the inclusion of students outside the 5-year age group starting from the official secondary school graduation age” (UNESCO UIS, 2021).

Teachers themselves are deprived of both knowledge and remuneration. State-employed new entrants were paid for only six months in 2013, and this is not an exception. Periodically, teachers strike for pay or students strike to protest the teachers' strikes (AfricaNews, 2019). Learning outcomes are poor also due to the low quality of the teachers' knowledge. The regional Program for the Analysis of Education Systems (PASEC) found that nearly 94 % of teachers in Grade 5 were unable to answer all questions in Portuguese – the language of instruction – and 98% in mathematics (World Bank, 2018b, p. 76).

Given this lack of opportunities, young people have dreams of better lives elsewhere, as Bordonaro (2009) reveals. He shares the hopes of young men from the Bijagó islands who want to be modern, and modernity is the “Ideal Elsewhere” (Ramsey-Kurz & Ganapathy-Doré, 2011; see Module 7). As for the young men of Bissau portrayed by Vigh (2006), “migration is one – if not the easiest – ‘navigational tactics’ to escape from social exclusion and marginalization” (Bordonaro, 2009, p. 135). Europe is the dream destination: “The fancied migratory paths lead towards Bissau, Dakar, Conakry, but everybody’s dream is still Europe [...] an idealized spring of power and wealth” (Bordonaro, 2009, p. 135). In Europe, the vision goes, there are income opportunities that their country does not provide – with an unemployment rate of 6 % that doubles for the youth (12 %; Migration Data Portal, 2020). It is expected that “there”, in Europe, it is very easy to make good money, and the “sole option for becoming a socially acknowledged adult” (Bordonaro, 2009, p. 135). Bordonaro (2009) and Lundy (2018) suggest that migration may have become the modern version of traditional initiation practices for young men. Schrover, & Moloney (2013, p. 17), too, describe a “lust for adventure” which creates a “culture of migration” as a standard stage of adult life. Traditional initiation for the Balanta, for instance, comprises several stages including competitions at harvest dances, wrestling in tournaments, stealing cattle, circumcision, etc. before the elderly decide time is ripe for the young man to participate in a rather dangerous honour. Physically, he spends two months in the bush, now spiritually “vulnerable to witchcraft attacks” by enemies (Lundy, 2018, p. 10). International migration, Lundy (2018) speculates, may be the new space to express adult masculinity, closely aligned with ideas around global citizenship. Migration, however, is a luxury that only a few can afford in Guinea-Bissau. Carling (2002) has coined the term of “involuntary immobility” which has not yet made it into the migration glossaries.

### **Selected context factors 3: pulling into Bissau**

Given the “implementation gap” on the otherwise forthcoming AU policy and definition of refugees (see Module 9), it is remarkable that Guinea-Bissau is leading in Africa to naturalizing stateless people. The UNHCR representative in Bissau welcomed the “salutary decision [...] unprecedented in West Africa and I would say even in the world” (UNIIOGBIS, 2018, pp. 1, 6). A solution was found for refugees who had been living in the country for as long as 20 years. The UNHCR’s request to grant nationality to all Senegalese refugees was accepted in 2018. Some 7,000 Senegalese refugees from the Casamance conflict were issued valid identity documents, and refugees from

Liberia and Sierra Leone are also included in the UNHCR agreement with the Government of Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS, 2018, p. 6).

A few factors qualify Guinea-Bissau as a destination or point in transit for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from the region, for instance, the relative peace in the absence of hot conflicts. The largest outbreak of Ebola in history circumvented Bissau while it ravaged the West African region (Gamma et al., 2017) and even Covid-19 did not impact Guinea-Bissau as much as it affected other countries in Africa (WHO, 2020). Last but not least, free movement within the ECOWAS community facilitates migration (Adepoju et al., 2010).



### **SUGGESTION FOR AN EXERCISE TO ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE SKILLS OF APPLYING AND ANALYSING AS WELL AS THE AFFECTIVE SKILLS OF RESPONDING:**

Assign participants to identify and outline two selected context factors – two push factors or two pull factors or a combination of one each – for Guinea-Bissau.

- In order to identify two context factors, participants can use Module 3 of this handbook. Ideally, participants will also introduce new context factors as the listing of Module 3 is not inclusive.
- Bringing the conditions to life that prompt Bissau-Guineans to leave their homes and others to turn to Guinea-Bissau, participants will explore media reports or testimonials.
- Presenting their selected context factors in plenary, participants will attempt to strike a balance between theory and the human element behind the theory.

With its move to naturalize stateless people, the country has made it as very good news into the World Migration Report 2020 and the news media (IOM, 2019c, p. 41; Maclean, 2018).



### **SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENT TO ADDRESS THE AFFECTIVE SKILLS OF RESPONDING AND THE COGNITIVE SKILLS OF APPLYING AND ANALYSING:**

Ask your participants to make a case for migrating to or seeking refuge in Guinea-Bissau.

- Consult the resources that have been introduced, for instance the Migration Data Portal (Migration Data Portal, 2020), the Human Development Indicators (UNDP, 2020b) or media reports (The New Humanitarian, 2020).

- Consider the case of stateless people. Present country of origin of migrants or forcibly displaced people briefly, using the above sources.
- Make the case for why Bissau is appealing as a destination country, use photos, videos or other media.

Perhaps a person from Cameroon appreciates the relative peace? A person from Mali thrives on the opportunity to make a living as a fisherman? A person from Portugal blends in easily because the same official language is spoken? Show that a country shaken by political turmoil and low human development with a dearth of services has the power to attract people from outside its borders.

### SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENT TO ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE SKILLS OF UNDERSTANDING AND EVALUATING:

Find reports about Guinea-Bissau in your local or international media and provide fellow students with one report. Each participant should write a 1-page media critique of the journalistic work, assessing the quality.



### RECOMMENDED READING:

#### Academic:

Abreu, A. J. (2012). *Migration and Development in contemporary Guinea-Bissau: A Political Economy Approach*. (PhD Thesis). London, UK: SOAS, University of London.

#### Journalistic:

DW reports regularly on developments in Guinea-Bissau in English and the official language of Guinea-Bissau, Portuguese (DW, 2020).

#### Institutional:

World Bank (2016). *Guinea-Bissau: Turning challenges into opportunities for poverty reduction and inclusive growth: Systematic country diagnostic (SCD)*. (Report No. 106725-GB). Washington, D.C. Retrieved November 18, 2020, from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/24695/Guinea0Bissau00try0diagnostic00SCD0.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>



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