There is great inequality across countries and regions. North America is 3.5 times richer than the world average, but its relative income per capita has been falling. By contrast, relative incomes are rising in South Asia and East Asia & Pacific.

Relative GDP per capita (1x = world average)

One simple way to measure inequality within a country is to consider the share of people living below 50 percent of its median income.

The share of people living below 50 percent of median income is correlated with the Gini index—a measure of inequality...

... but not with GNI per capita, a measure of economic development.

Changes in inequality can be measured by the relative income growth of the poorest 40 percent of people.

Annualized growth rate, Peru, 2009–14 (%)

In Peru the average income growth for the population was 3.1 percent. But the incomes of the poorest 40 percent grew faster, at 5.8 percent.

In 61 countries income growth among the poorest was faster than average.

Annualized growth rate, circa 2009–14 (%)

In 34 countries income growth among the poorest was slower than average.

Annualized growth rate, circa 2009–14 (%)

Note: Growth rates refer to real survey mean consumption or income.
Source: World Bank Global Database of Shared Prosperity. WDI (SP.SPR.PCAP.ZG; SP.SPR.PC40.ZG; SI.SPR.PCAP; SI.DST.FRST.20; SI.DST.02ND.20; SI.DST.03RD.20; SI.DST.04TH.20; SI.DST.05TH.20).
Personal remittances are an important source of income for people in low- and middle-income countries. But the average cost of sending this money remains high.

**Average cost of sending remittances to a country, Q1 2017 (% of transaction)**

People pay remittance companies to send money. The costs remain high for several reasons, including a lack of transparency in the market, making it difficult for consumers to compare costs, and insufficient competition among companies.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the most expensive region to send money to, with an average transaction cost of 9.3 percent.

On average, there is a 10 percent transaction cost for sending money to China. Someone sending $200 to the country would typically pay $20 in fees.

**The cost of sending remittances also varies by the country from which they are sent.**

**Average cost of sending remittances from a country, Q1 2017 (% of transaction)**

The United States is the largest source of remittances in the world. Over $66 billion was sent in 2016. The average transaction cost to send those funds was 5.8 percent.

It is cheap to send money from the Russian Federation, with an average transaction cost of 1.7 percent, and from India where the cost is under 1 percent.

Globally, the average cost to send remittances fell from 9.1 percent to 7.1 percent over the last four years, but it remains above the SDG target of 3 percent.

Average cost of remittance services, by receiving region (% of transaction)

Remittance costs vary between sending and receiving country corridors. The SDG target aims to bring all corridor costs to below 5 percent of the amount remitted.

Average cost of sending remittances between countries (% of transaction)

The average cost of sending money from the United States to India is 0.8 percent.


Note: The costs shown use the Smart Remitter Target methodology, which averages the three cheapest services for remitting money. Remittance corridors with the largest flows of money are shown. The dataset does not cover corridors where remittance flows are relatively small.