

Data for Governance Alliance Policy Brief No. 25

Assessing the gaps: Africans look for greater progress on education

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Assessing the gaps: Africans look for greater progress on education

Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 768 | Richard Adjadeh

Summary

Sub-Saharan Africa has the world's highest rates of out-of-school children, including more than one in five 6- to 11-year-olds and almost three in five 15- to 17-year-olds (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

The pursuit of education, essential for societal progress and individual growth, is a global challenge highlighted by the United Nations' (2024) Sustainable Development Goal No. 4,



which calls on countries to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."

Despite progress in primary school enrolment (World Bank, 2023), African countries face persistent barriers to achieving that goal, from school fees and too few rural schools to a shortage of qualified teachers (Klapper & Panchamia, 2023; Mayekoo, 2023).

As it did throughout much of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic delivered a major setback for education goals in African countries as children lost months – in some cases years – of instruction (Asim, Gera, & Singhal, 2022; Human Rights Watch, 2020; UNICEF Africa, 2022). Countries in sub-Saharan Africa recorded an average of more than 30 weeks of school closures (United Nations, 2022), raising dropout rates and exacerbating social and gender inequalities (Kidman, Breton, Behrman, & Kohler, 2022; Klapper & Panchamia, 2023; Davids, 2023; Warah, 2022).

Afrobarometer's Round 9 survey findings from 39 African countries show that while younger citizens have more education than their elders, educational attainment varies widely by country and reflects persistent disadvantages among women, the poor, and rural residents. Many respondents report out-of-school children as a frequent problem in their community.

Among adults who had recent contact with a public school, most say they found it easy to obtain the services they needed and were treated with respect, though a sizeable minority report having to pay bribes.

Overall, fewer than half of Africans are satisfied with their government's performance on education, which ranks sixth among the most important problem that citizens think need urgent action.

Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2023) cover 39 countries. (See Appendix Table A.1 for a list of countries and fieldwork dates.)



Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with samples of 1,200-2,400 adults that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-3 to +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

The data are weighted to ensure nationally representative samples. When reporting multicountry averages, all countries are weighted equally (rather than in proportion to population size).

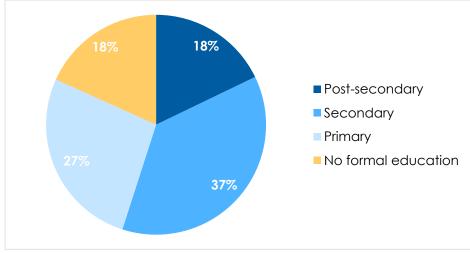
Key findings

- On average across 39 African countries, more than half (55%) of adults have secondary (37%) or post-secondary (18%) education, while 27% have primary schooling and 18% have no formal education.
 - Educational attainment varies widely across countries and demographic groups, reflecting disadvantages among women, the poor, and rural residents. Younger Africans have more education than their elders.
- Almost half (48%) of Africans say school-age children who are not in school are a "somewhat frequent" or "very frequent" problem in their community, reaching as high as 83% in Liberia and 71% in Angola.
- Among citizens who had contact with public schools during the previous year, threefourths (74%) say they found it easy to obtain the services they needed.
 - And three-fourths (74%) say that teachers or other school officials treated them with respect.
 - But one in five (19%) say they had to pay a bribe to get the needed services, ranging from 2% in Cabo Verde to 50% in Liberia. Poor respondents are twice as likely as well-off citizens to report having to pay a bribe to a teacher or school official.
- Fewer than half (46%) of Africans think their government is performing "fairly well" or "very well" on education, while 52% give their leaders poor marks.
- Education ranks sixth among the most important problems that Africans want their governments to address, but takes the top spot in Liberia and Mauritania.

Educational attainment

On average across 39 African countries, almost two in 10 adults (18%) have post-secondary education, while the same proportion (18%) report having no formal schooling. The largest share (37%) claim secondary school as their highest level of education, while 27% have primary schooling (Figure 1).







Countries vary widely in the education levels of their citizens (Figure 2). While about four in 10 adults have post-secondary qualifications in Gabon (41%) and Seychelles (39%), the same is true of only about one in 20 citizens in Niger (4%), Malawi (4%), Mozambique (5%), Burkina Faso (6%), Tanzania (6%), and Madagascar (6%).

Ten of the 39 surveyed countries record more than 95% of all adults with some form of formal education, led by Seychelles (99%), Zimbabwe (98%), and Mauritius (98%). At the other end of the spectrum, half or more of citizens report no formal schooling in Niger (65%), Burkina Faso (55%), Mali (52%), and Guinea (50%).

Survey findings confirm that on average, younger Africans have more education than their elders (Figure 3). Across 39 countries, about two-thirds (65%) of respondents aged 18-35 have had at least some secondary education, compared to 52%, 44%, and 35% of the progressively older cohorts.¹ One in eight young adults (13%) report having no formal education, fewer than half as many as among those above age 55 (30%).

Educational attainment varies significantly by respondents' demographic characteristics (Figure 4). Women are less likely than men to have secondary or post-secondary education (51% vs. 59%) and more likely to lack formal education altogether (20% vs. 16%).

The poorest respondents² are more than three times as likely as the best-off to lack formal schooling (25% vs. 7%) and less than one-third as likely to have post-secondary qualifications (11% vs. 37%).

The same pattern holds for rural vs. urban residents: 27% vs. 9% lack formal schooling, and 9% vs. 28% have post-secondary education.

Respondents were asked: What is your highest level of education?

¹ Due to rounding, percentages for combined categories reported in the text may differ slightly from the sum of sub-categories shown in figures (e.g. among 18- to 35-year-olds, 20% "secondary" and 44% "post-secondary" sum to 65%).

² Afrobarometer's Lived Poverty Index (LPI) measures respondents' levels of material deprivation by asking how often they or their families went without basic necessities (enough food, enough water, medical care, enough cooking fuel, and a cash income) during the preceding year. For more on lived poverty, see Mattes and Patel (2022).

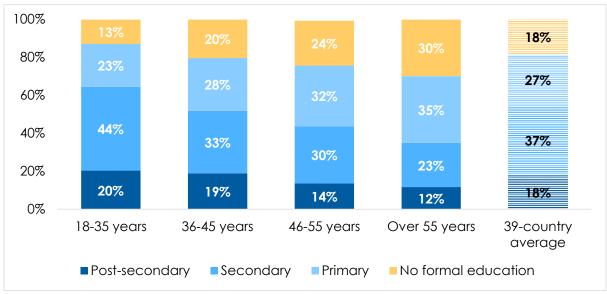


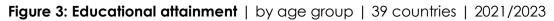
Gabon		41%			4	6%		119	% <mark>3%</mark>
Seychelles		39%				7%			% 1 <mark>%</mark>
Morocco		34%		19%		33%			76
Sudan		34%		30%	7		1%		76
Congo-Brazzaville		33%		,	49%			16%	
South Africa		29%			56%				3%
Mauritius		28%		4	8%			21%	2%
Cameroon		27%		-	55%			15%	
Eswatini		6%			58%			13%	
Namibia		5%		46%			20		8%
Zimbabwe		3%		5	8%			17%	
Nigeria		3%		43%			18%		7
Kenya	22			41%			33%		4%
Tunisia	22			36%		3	3%		7%
Liberia	209		32%			31%		18%	
Botswana	19%			50%		-	20%		1%
Ghana	19%	7	4	1%		25	5%	15%	
39-country average	18%	6	37	%		27%		18%	
Togo	17%			5%			25%		%
Gambia	16%	2	9 %	10	%		45%		
Guinea	15%	20%		15%			50%		
Côte d'Ivoire	15%		42%	76		27%	, 5	16%	7
Zambia	15%		4	7%			33%		6%
Cabo Verde	14%		38%			39	%		7%
Sierra Leone	13%	3	5%		12%		40%	7	
Ethiopia	13%	18%		36%	6		3	4%	
Angola	12%		44%			28%	76	13	%
Senegal	12%	27%		22	7。		399	76	
Benin	11%	28%		2	6%		36	5%	
Lesotho	11%	4	0%			41%	76		8%
Mauritania	10%	23%		26%			41%	0	
Uganda	10%	35%	76			46%		9	7%
Mali	10%	13%	25%	7		5	2%		
São Tomé and Príncipe	10%		52%	76			35%	,)	3%
Madagascar	6%	42%	6			46%	76		6%
Tanzania	6%	18%			65%			1	1%
Burkina Faso	6%	18%	21%	6		55	5%		
Mozambique	5%	33%			42%	0		19%	
Malawi	4%	29 %			6	0%			7%
Niger	4% 15	5% 17%	%			65%			
()%	20%		40%	60%	6	80%	76	100

Figure 2: Educational attainment by country | 39 countries | 2021/2023

Respondents were asked: What is your highest level of education?

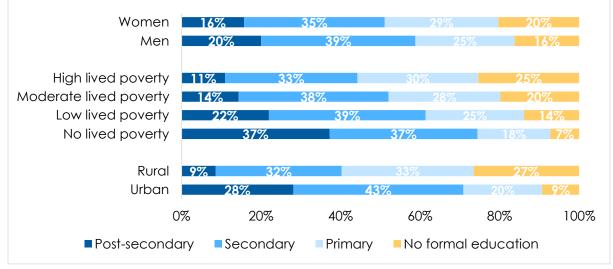






Respondents were asked: What is your highest level of education?

Figure 4: Educational attainment | by demographic group | 39 countries | 2021/2023



Respondents were asked: What is your highest level of education?

Women's 4-percentage-point disadvantage, on average, when it comes to having at least some level of formal education includes significant variation by country, including doubledigit gaps in Guinea (15 percentage points), Benin (15 points), Togo (13 points), Sierra Leone (12 points), Mali (12 points), Liberia (10 points), and Ethiopia (10 points) (Figure 5). Lesotho is the only surveyed country where the gap favours women (by 9 percentage points), while 13 countries record gaps of less than 3 percentage points.

When it comes to post-secondary education, six countries register double-digit gaps favouring men, led by Sierra Leone (13 percentage points), while Tunisia and Seychelles report more women than men with higher education (by 5 and 4 percentage points, respectively).



Women more likely Women less likely to lack to achieve formal education post-secondary education Guinea 15 -10 Benin 15 -9 Togo 13 -11 Sierra Leone 12 -13 Mali 12 -8 Liberia 10 -10 Ethiopia 10 -7 Ghana 9 -11 Nigeria 8 -11 7 Niger 0 7 Uganda -5 7 Tunisia 5 Côte d'Ivoire 6 -8 Cabo Verde 5 1 5 Zambia 0 Gambia 5 -6 Mozambique 4 1 39-country average 4 -4 ////// Tanzania 4 -2 São Tomé and Príncipe 4 -5 Malawi 4 -4 Mauritania 4 -4 Sudan 3 -9 Madagascar 3 -3 Congo-Brazzaville 3 -1 Angola 3 -3 Morocco 2 -2 Kenya 2 -6 Zimbabwe 1 0 Namibia 1 Eswatini 1 -8 Cameroon 1 -3 Botswana 1 1 Gabon 1 -4 Seychelles 1 4 South Africa 0 1 Mauritius 0 -3 Senegal 0 -8 Burkina Faso -1 .2 Lesotho -9 -4

Figure 5: Gender gaps in lack of formal education and achievement of postsecondary education | 39 countries | 2021/2023

Respondents were asked: What is your highest level of education? (The figures show the percentage of women minus the percentage of men reporting lack of formal education (left) and achievement of post-secondary education (right). Positive numbers indicate more women than men; negative numbers indicate fewer women than men.)



Out-of-school children

Inclusive and quality education cannot be achieved if many children are not attending school. On average across 39 countries, almost half (48%) of adults say school-age children who are not in school are a "somewhat frequent" or "very frequent" problem in their community (Figure 6).

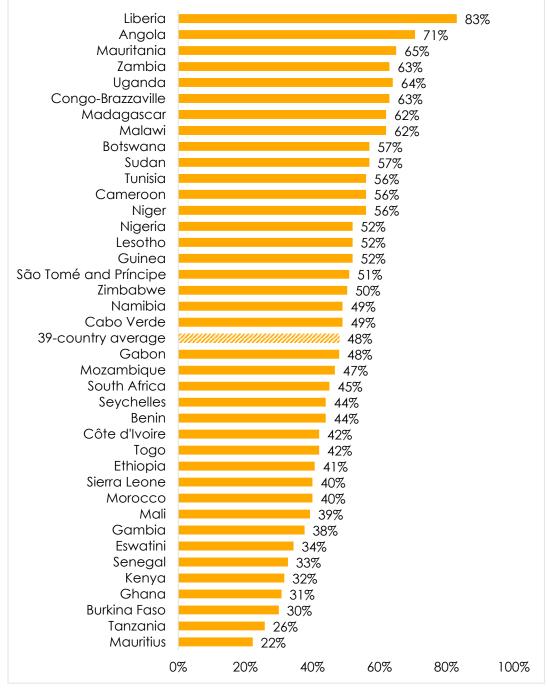


Figure 6: Out-of-school children a frequent problem | 39 countries | 2021/2023

Respondents were asked: How frequently do you think the following things occur in your community or neighbourhood: Children who should be in school are not in school? (% who say "somewhat frequently" or "very frequently")



The perception of out-of-school children as a widespread issue is the majority view in 17 countries, reaching as high as 83% in Liberia and 71% in Angola. Only six countries record fewer than one-third of citizens who share this view, led by Mauritius (22%) and Tanzania (26%).

Citizens' experience with public schools

Access to education generally requires access to a school. On average across 39 countries, Afrobarometer enumerators found that 83% of the enumeration areas they visited had at least one public or private school within easy walking distance.³

No nearby schools were found in 20% of rural zones and 12% of urban zones. In 29 of the surveyed countries, rural zones were more likely than cities to lack a nearby school, with rural disadvantages of up to 53 percentage points in Botswana and 47 points in Angola (Figure 7). Rural zones without a nearby school were most common in Mauritania (76%), Angola (65%), and Botswana (62%), while only 4% of visited rural zones in Togo, Madagascar, Niger, and Morocco lacked a school within easy walking distance.

Do your own analysis of Afrobarometer data – on any question, for any country and survey round. It's easy and free at www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis.

³ Afrobarometer samples are based on a selection of enumeration areas (EAs) drawn randomly from the national census frame. In most countries, eight interviews are conducted in each selected EA, so interview teams usually visit between 150 (for surveys with n=1,200) and 300 (for surveys with n=2,400) EAs. In each EA, the team records the presence or absence of basic infrastructure, such as schools, and services, such as electricity supply. Because of the smaller sample sizes, the margin of error on the figures reported here for presence of school facilities is higher than for findings captured in individual interviews.



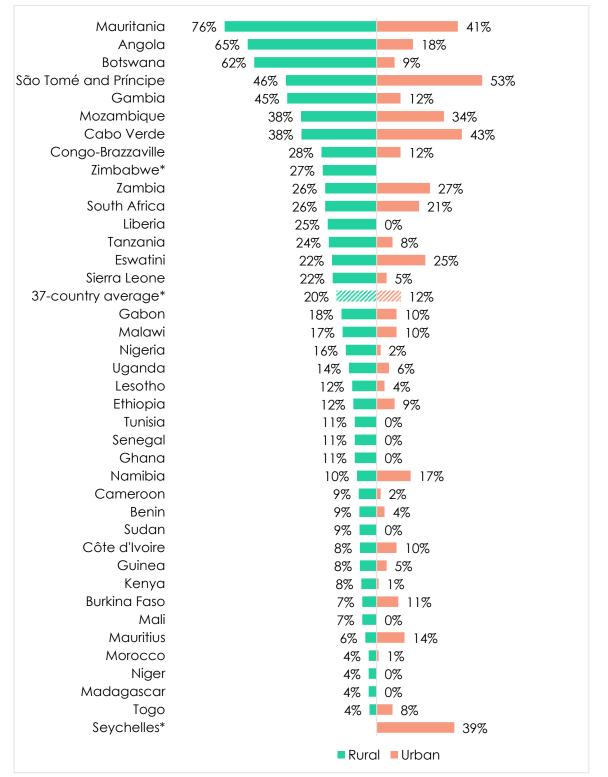
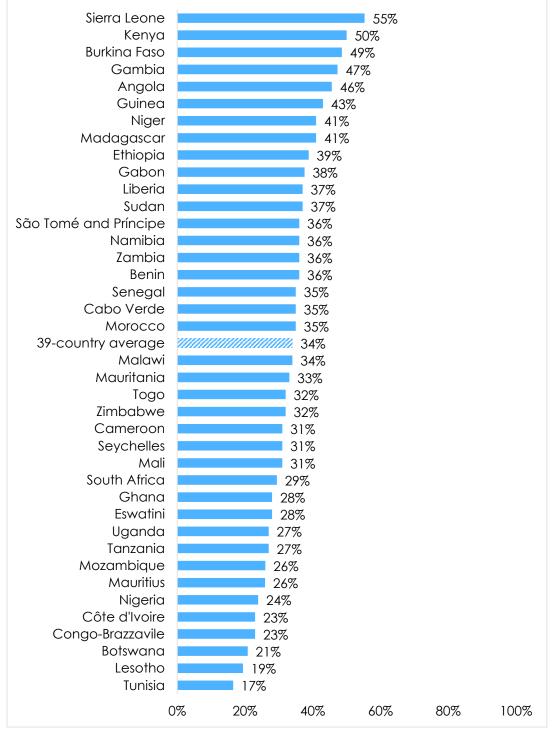


Figure 7: No school within easy walking distance | 39 countries* | 2021/2023

Survey enumerators were asked: Are the following facilities present in the primary sampling unit/enumeration area or within easy walking distance: A school (private or public or both)? (% "no") * The 37-country averages do not include Seychelles, where data are not disaggregated by urban-rural location, or Zimbabwe, where a suspected data-collection error produced a finding of 46% of urban zones without a nearby school, compared to 2% in 2021.



One-third (34%) of respondents say they had contact with a public school during the year preceding the survey, ranging from fewer than one in five Tunisians (17%) and Basotho (19%) to half or more of Sierra Leoneans (55%) and Kenyans (50%) (Figure 8).





Respondents were asked: In the past 12 months, have you had contact with a public school? (% who say "yes")



Among respondents who had contact with public schools, three-fourths (74%) say they found it "easy" or "very "easy" to obtain the services they needed from teachers or other school officials (Figure 9). Almost all Mauritians (95%) agree with this assessment, and even in the least satisfied countries – Angola (53%) and Liberia (57%) – majorities report few difficulties.

Mauritius		95%	0		5%
Seychelles	89%				10%
Niger	87%				13%
Tanzania	87%			13 9	
Benin	86%				14%
Morocco		85%		15%	
South Africa		84%			6%
Mali		84%			6%
Ethiopia		83%			7%
Lesotho		82%			8%
Ghana 📃		82%			8%
Botswana		82%			9%
Cabo Verde		81%			9%
Mauritania		80%)%
Burkina Faso		80%			1%
Eswatini		79 %			%
Zambia		74%		267	
São Tomé and Príncipe		74%		25%	
Sierra Leone		74%		267	
39-country average		74%		269	
Namibia		74%		267	
Kenya		73%		27%	
Mozambique		72%		26%	
Togo		72%		27%	
Nigeria		72%		28%	
Gambia		72%		28%	
Cameroon		69 %		31%	
Madagascar		69 %		31%	
Senegal		68%		31%	
Zimbabwe					
		66%		35%	
Uganda		65%		35%	
Sudan		64%		36%	
Côte d'Ivoire		6 4 %		36%	
Tunisia		53%		37%	
Guinea		33 %		37%	
Malawi	62%			38%	
Gabon		0%		40%	
Congo-Brazzaville		2%		41%	
Liberia	57			43%	
Angola	53%	0		47%	
0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%

Figure 9: Ease of obtaining public school services | 39 countries | 2021/2023

Respondents who had contact with a public school during the previous 12 months were asked: How easy or difficult was it to obtain the services you needed from teachers or school officials? (Respondents who had no contact with a public school are excluded.)



On average, 74% of respondents who had contact with public schools say they were treated with respect – "somewhat" or "a lot" – by teachers and other school officials. Majorities in all surveyed countries report respectful treatment in their interactions with public schools, ranging from 54% in Mauritania and Gabon to 91% in Cabo Verde and Madagascar (Figure 10).

Cabo Verde 🗖	91%		4%5%
Madagascar 🗖	91%		5% 5%
Seychelles	87%		4% 8%
Guinea	86%		6% 8%
Gambia	84%		5% 11%
Mauritius	83%		12% 5%
Zimbabwe	82%		0% 8%
Tanzania	81%		13% 6%
São Tomé and Príncipe 🗖	81%		1% 8%
Niger	80%		1% 9%
Kenya 🗖	80%		4% 7%
Lesotho	79%		7 11%
Mali	78%		% 10%
Ghana	78%		3% 9%
Botswana	78%		<mark>% 11%</mark>
Burkina Faso	78%		% 11%
Ethiopia	78%		1% 8%
Zambia	77%		5% <mark>8</mark> %
Sierra Leone	77%		<mark>% 12%</mark>
Tunisia	76%		8% 6%
Benin	75%	169	
Nigeria	74%	19	
39-country average	74%	15%	
Liberia	73%	21	
Uganda	72%	16%	
Togo	72%	20%	
Eswatini	71%	17%	
South Africa	70%	18%	12%
Senegal	70%	13%	17%
Sudan	70%	16%	15%
Côte d'Ivoire	67%	24%	9%
Morocco	66%	13%	21%
Congo-Brazzavile	65%	23%	12%
Angola	64%	19%	15%
Malawi	59%	26%	15%
Cameroon	58%	34%	8%
Mozambique	57%	32%	10%
Namibia	56%	24%	19%
Mauritania	54%	• •	26%
Gabon	54%	33%	13%
0%	20% 40% 6	50% 80%	100
078	↓lot ■A little bit ■Not a	.0.70 0070	100

Figure 10: Respect from public school officials | 39 countries | 2021/2023

Respondents who had contact with a public school during the previous 12 months were asked: In general, when dealing with teachers and school officials, how much do you feel that they treat you with respect? (Respondents who had no contact with a public school are excluded.)



Even so, a significant share of the population report having to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour for teachers or other school officials to obtain the service they needed. On average, one in five respondents who had contact with a public school during the previous year (19%) say they participated in this form of corruption "once or twice," "a few times," or "often." This experience was especially common in Liberia (50%), Congo-Brazzaville (41%), and Angola (39%), while it was fairly rare in Cabo Verde (2%), Seychelles (3%), and Mauritius (3%) (Figure 11).

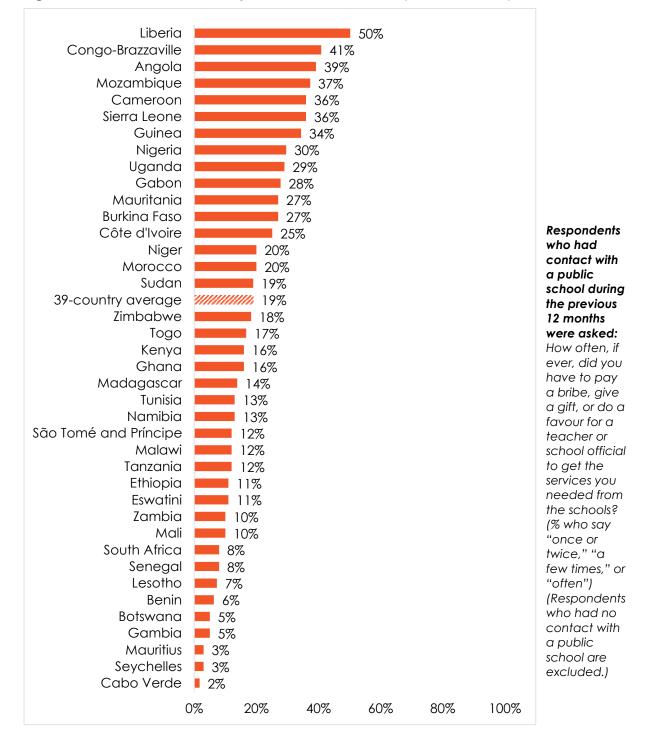
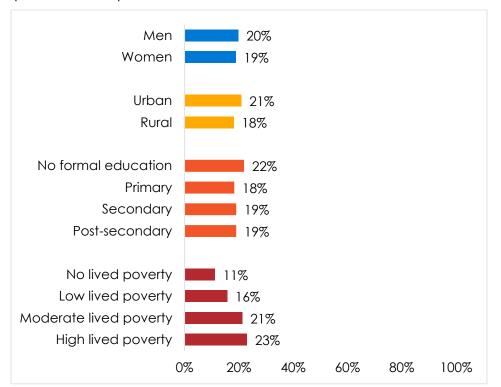


Figure 11: Paid bribe to obtain public school services | 39 countries | 2021/2023



Having to pay a bribe to obtain a public school service is twice as common among citizens experiencing moderate (21%) or high (23%) levels of lived poverty than among their well-off counterparts (11%) (Figure 12). Respondents with no formal schooling (22%) are slightly more likely to report having to pay a bribe than those with primary education or more (18%-19%).





Respondents who had contact with a public school during the previous 12 months were asked: How often, if ever, did you have to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour for a teacher or school official to get the services you needed from the schools? (% who say "once or twice," "a few times," or "often") (Respondents who had no contact with a public school are excluded.)

Government performance on education

How satisfied are Africans with their government's performance in addressing educational needs? On average across the 39 surveyed countries, fewer than half (46%) of respondents think their government is performing "fairly well" or "very well" on education, while 52% give their leaders poor marks (Figure 13).

Assessments are overwhelmingly favourable in some countries, led by Zambia (82%), Tanzania (82%), and Sierra Leone (75%). At the other extreme, fewer than one in four citizens think their government is doing a good job on education in Sudan (16%), Gabon (19%), Lesotho (21%), and Tunisia (23%).



Zambia		82%		1	101	
Tanzania			16% 18%			
Sierra Leone		82% 75%		25%		
Benin				32%		
Seychelles		68%				
,		68%	25% 32%			
Ethiopia		68%	32%			
Kenya		5%		38%		
Botswana Mali)%		40%		
	59		40% 42%			
Mozambique	579		42%			
	56%					
Cabo Verde	56%		42%			
Madagascar	56%		44 %			
Côte d'Ivoire	55%		45%			
Togo	55%			45%		
Burkina Faso	54%			46%		
São Tomé and Príncipe	53%		33%			
Namibia	49%		51%			
Mauritius	48%		50%			
South Africa	48%			49%		
Uganda	48%			52%		
Cameroon	47%			53%		
39-country average	46%			52%		
Malawi	43%		55%			
Morocco	39%		61%			
Senegal	39%	61%				
Ghana	38%		61			
Gambia	33%		67%			
Eswatini	33%		66%			
Zimbabwe	32%		66%			
Guinea	31%		69 %			
Angola	28%		70%			
Nigeria	28 %		71%			
Mauritania	27%		73%			
Congo-Brazzaville	27%		73%			
Liberia	26%		74%			
Tunisia	23%		72 %			
Lesotho	21%		78 %			
Gabon	19%		81%			
Sudan	16%		83%			
09	% 20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	
E Fairly M	ell/Very well	Eairly b	adly/Very b	adly		

Figure 13: Government performance on education | 39 countries | 2021/2023

Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Addressing educational needs?



Evaluations of government performance on education are similar across genders and urbanrural locations (Figure 14). But approval rates are relatively low among the most educated respondents (42%, vs. 47%-48% among those with less schooling) and among the poorest respondents (37%, vs. 53% among well-off citizens).

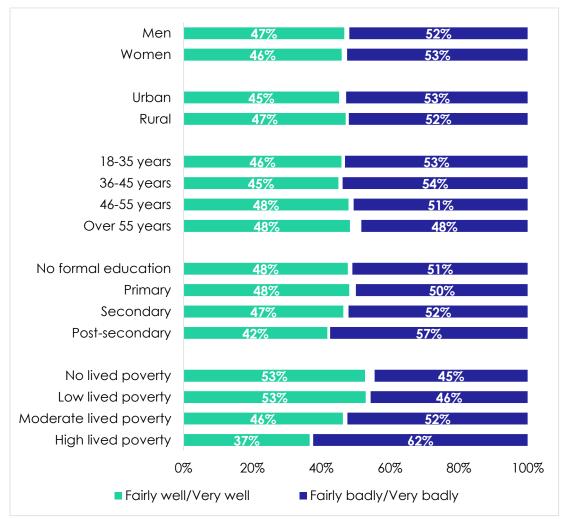


Figure 14: Government performance on education | by demographic group | 39 countries | 2021/2023

Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Addressing educational needs?

On average across 29 countries where this question was asked in each of four previous survey rounds, approval of government performance on education dropped by 12 percentage points between 2011/2013 and 2019/2021, from 60% to 48%, but has held steady since then (49% in 2021/2023) (Figure 15).

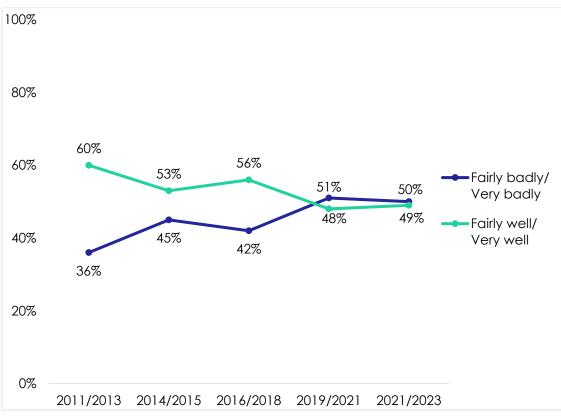
This suggests that while satisfaction with public education has declined, Africans in general do not hold their governments responsible for disruptions to their children's education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, a majority (54%) of respondents say they are "fairly satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their government's efforts to minimise such disruptions, including about three-fourths of Sierra Leoneans (77%), Tanzanians (76%), Zambians (75%),



and Ethiopians (74%) (Figure 16). Majorities in 12 countries disagree, led by Gabon (77%) and Lesotho (76%).

These results are in line with 2021 Afrobarometer findings in 15 African countries of strong support (64%) for government decisions to close the schools to limit the spread of COVID-19, though most respondents (79%) also said the schools should have reopened more quickly (Amakoh, 2022).





Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Addressing educational needs? * Question was not asked in Sudan in 2014/2015.



Sierra Leone Tanzania Zambia		77%		22	~	
Tanzania		11/0			2 /2	
		76%		23		
		75%		23		
Ethiopia		74%		26%		
Cabo Verde		74%		27%		
Benin		70%		30%		
São Tomé and Príncipe		67%		28%		
Seychelles		56%		19%		
Togo		55%		35%		
Botswana		3% 3%				
				34%		
Senegal		2%		38%		
Kenya		2%		38%		
Namibia		%		37%		
Liberia		%		39%		
Malawi	60			36%		
Mauritania	60			40%		
Burkina Faso	60			39%		
Ghana	59		40%			
Côte d'Ivoire		57%		42%		
South Africa		57%		38%		
Mali	57%			41%		
Niger	56%			39%		
Mozambique	56%			42%		
39-country average	54%	•		44%		
Cameroon	49%			50%		
Morocco	49%			48%		
Guinea	48%			51%		
Gambia	47%		52%			
Mauritius	46%	46%		51%		
Madagascar	45%		52%			
Tunisia	45%		48%			
Angola	42%			48%		
Congo-Brazzaville	40%		60)%		
Eswatini	38%		61	%		
Nigeria	Nigeria 37% 61%					
Uganda	35%		64%			
Sudan	34%		61			
Zimbabwe	28%		70%			
Gabon	23%		77%			
Lesotho	21%		76%			
	0% 20%	40%	60%	80%	100	

Figure 16: Views on government efforts to minimise disruptions to education during COVID-19 pandemic | 39 countries | 2021/2023

Respondents were asked: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the government's response to COVID-19 in the following areas: Ensuring that disruptions to children's education are kept to a minimum?



Summary of perceptions on education

Table 1 summarises citizens' experiences with their public schools and assessments of their government's performance on addressing educational needs. The first three columns show country results on indicators of positive outcomes (satisfactory government performance, ease of obtaining services, and respectful treatment), colour-coded from dark green (best) to dark yellow (worst). The last column displays the proportions of respondents who say they paid a bribe to obtain school services, a negative outcome, coded from light pink (least bad) to dark red (worst).

We see that no country achieves scores in the best category on all four indicators. Tanzania comes close, with top scores on government performance, ease of service, and respectful treatment, along with a fairly good score on bribe paying.

Five countries record scores in the best range on ease of service, respectful treatment, and bribe paying: Seychelles, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Mauritius, and Lesotho. But their assessments of government performance vary dramatically, from 68% in Seychelles down to just 21% in Lesotho.

At the other end of the spectrum, no country scores in the lowest category on more than one indicator. But Gabon, Liberia, Congo-Brazzaville, Mauritania, Nigeria, Angola, and Guinea share very or fairly low approval ratings for the government's performance and very or fairly high proportions of citizens who have to pay bribes to obtain school services.



			school officials	public school services
		POSITIVE OUTCOME	S	NEGATIVE OUTCOME
Zambia	82%	74%	77%	10%
Tanzania	82%	87%	81%	12%
Sierra Leone	75%	74%	77%	36%
Benin	68%	86%	75%	6%
Seychelles	68%	89%	87%	3%
Ethiopia	68%	83%	78%	11%
Kenya	65%	73%	80%	16%
Botswana	60%	82%	78%	5%
Mali	59%	84%	78%	10%
Mozambique	57%	72%	57%	37%
Niger	56%	87%	80%	20%
Cabo Verde	56%	81%	91%	2%
Madagascar	56%	69%	91%	14%
Côte d'Ivoire	55%	64%	67%	25%
Тодо	55%	72%	72%	17%
Burkina Faso	54%	80%	78%	27%
São Tomé and Príncipe	53%	74%	81%	12%
Namibia	49%	74%	56%	13%
Mauritius	48%	95%	83%	3%
South Africa	48%	84%	70%	8%
Uganda	48%	65%	72%	29%
Cameroon	47%	69%	58%	36%
Malawi	43%	62%	59%	12%
Morocco	39%	85%	66%	20%
Senegal	39%	68%	70%	8%
Ghana	38%	82%	78%	16%
Eswatini	33%	79%	71%	11%
Gambia	33%	72%	84%	5%
Zimbabwe	32%	66%	82%	18%
Guinea	31%	63%	86%	34%
Angola	28%	53%	64%	39%
Nigeria	28%	72%	74%	30%
Mauritania	27%	80%	54%	27%
Congo-Brazzaville	27%	59%	65%	41%
Liberia	26%	57%	73%	50%
Tunisia	23%	63%	76%	13%
Lesotho	21%	82%	79%	7%
Gabon	19%	60%	54%	28%
Sudan	16%	64%	70%	19%
39-country average	46%	74%	74%	19%
		< <u>25%</u> 25%-50%		<10%
Key 51%-55%				10%-20% 21%-30%
		>75%		>30%

Table 1: Public schools: Assessments and experiences | 39 countries | 2021/2023

Note: The questions on ease of obtaining services, respectful treatment, and bribe paying were asked only of respondents who had contact with a public school during the previous year.



Education as a public priority

Education ties with crime/security for sixth place among the most important problems that Africans want their government to address (Figure 17). Cited by 20% of respondents as one of their top three priorities for government action, education trails unemployment, management of the economy, health, water supply, and infrastructure/roads on citizens' policy agenda.

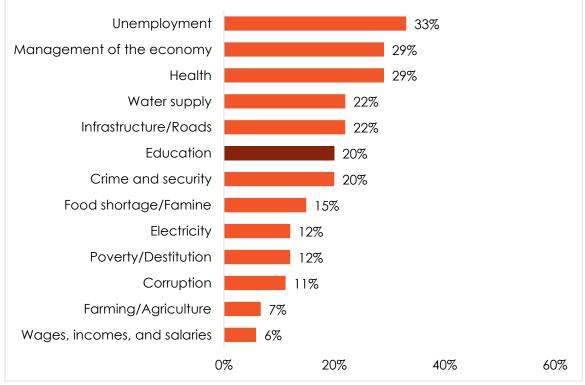


Figure 17: Most important problems | 39 countries | 2021/2023

Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Respondents could give up to three responses. Figure shows % of respondents who cite each problem as one of their three priorities.)

Countries vary widely in how they rank education among their most urgent problems (Figure 18). It is the most frequently cited concern in Liberia (mentioned by 47% of respondents) and in Mauritania (42%), ranks second in Uganda (33%), and places third in Gabon (43%), Sudan (31%), and Eswatini (27%). In contrast, only 4% of Mauritians and Batswana cite education as a top concern, placing it far down on their list of priorities for government action.

On average across 30 countries surveyed consistently over the past decade, the proportion of respondents who cite education as one of their top priorities for government action has not changed significantly. But at the country level, we see substantial changes in the prioritisation of education between survey rounds in 2011/2013 and 2021/2023 (Figure 19).

In Sierra Leone, for example, the share of respondents who consider education one of their country's three most important problems has dropped by almost half, from 42% to 23%. Other countries where significantly fewer respondents prioritise education, shown on the left side of the figure, include Zambia (a 19-percentage-point decline), Botswana (-11 points), Burkina Faso (-11 points), and Ghana (-11 points).



On the other hand, nine countries recorded significant increases in the percentage of respondents who consider education a top problem, including Uganda (+15 percentage points), Guinea (+14 points), Tunisia (+10 points), and Eswatini (+10 points).

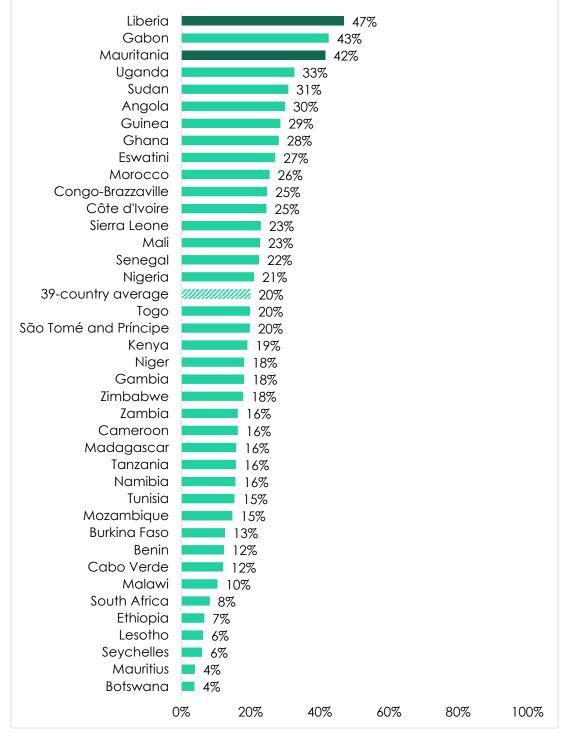
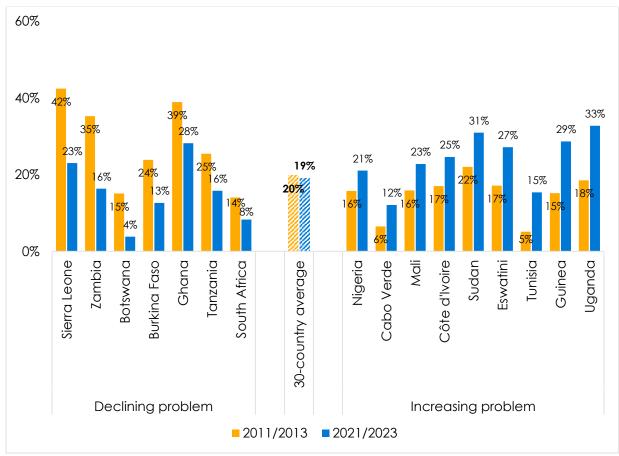


Figure 18: Education as a priority problem | 39 countries | 2021/2023

Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Respondents could give up to three responses. Figure shows % of respondents who cite education as one of their three priorities.)







Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Respondents could give up to three responses. Figure shows % of respondents who cite education as one of their three priorities.)

* Figure shows only countries with gains or losses of more than 5 percentage points between 2011/2013 and 2021/2023.

Conclusion

Afrobarometer survey findings show progress in educational attainment and give most public schools passing marks for responsiveness and respectful treatment of the public.

But the findings also highlight a number of challenges, including persistent disadvantages in educational attainment by women, poor people, and rural residents; the widespread problem of out-of-school children; and demands for bribes in exchange for services.

Countries vary widely in their experiences and assessments, including where they rank education on their agenda for urgent action. Overall, a majority of Africans are dissatisfied with their government's performance on education, though they appreciate their leaders' efforts to minimise disruptions to schooling due to COVID-19.



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Appendix

Table A.1: Afrobarometer Round 9 fieldwork dates and previous survey rounds

Country	Round 9 fieldwork	Previous survey rounds
Angola	FebMarch 2022	2019
Benin	Jan. 2022	2005, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020
Botswana	June-July 2022	1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2019
Burkina Faso	SeptOct. 2022	2008, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2019
Cabo Verde	July-Aug. 2022	2002, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2019
Cameroon	March 2022	2013, 2015, 2018, 2021
Congo-Brazzaville	June-July 2023	NA
Côte d'Ivoire	NovDec. 2021	2013, 2014, 2017, 2019
Eswatini	OctNov. 2022	2013, 2015, 2018, 2021
Ethiopia	May-June 2023	2013, 2020
Gabon	NovDec. 2021	2015, 2017, 2020
Gambia	AugSept. 2022	2018, 2021
Ghana	April 2022	1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2019
Guinea	Aug. 2022	2013, 2015, 2017, 2019
Kenya	NovDec. 2021	2003, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2016, 2019
Lesotho	FebMarch 2022	2000, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020
Liberia	AugSept. 2022	2008, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2020
Madagascar	April-May 2022	2005, 2008, 2013, 2015, 2018
Malawi	Feb. 2022	1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2019
Mali	July 2022	2001, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2020
Mauritania	Nov. 2022	NA
Mauritius	March 2022	2012, 2014, 2017, 2020
Morocco	AugSept. 2022	2013, 2015, 2018, 2021
Mozambique	OctNov. 2022	2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021
Namibia	OctNov. 2021	1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2019
Niger	June 2022	2013, 2015, 2018, 2020
Nigeria	March 2022	2000, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2020
São Tomé and Príncipe	Dec. 2022	2015, 2018
Senegal	May-June 2022	2002, 2005, 2008, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2021
Seychelles	Dec. 2022	NA
Sierra Leone	June-July 2022	2012, 2015, 2018, 2020
South Africa	NovDec. 2022	2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2015, 2018, 2021
Sudan	NovDec. 2022	2013, 2015, 2018, 2021
Tanzania	SeptOct. 2022	2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2021
Тодо	March 2022	2012, 2014, 2017, 2021
Tunisia	FebMarch 2022	2013, 2015, 2018, 2020
Uganda	Jan. 2022	2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2019
Zambia	AugSept. 2022	1999, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2020
Zimbabwe	March-April 2022	1999, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2021



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