

Advison Lesotho
Maseru, Lesotho
30 June 2020

News release

Basotho gloomy about the country's general direction and economy, survey shows

Most Basotho see the nation's economy as deteriorating and the country as headed "in the wrong direction," a new Afrobarometer survey shows.

The proportion of citizens who see the country as going in the wrong direction almost doubled between 2017 and early 2020.

Even so, a majority of citizens said they expected things to improve during the coming year.

The data was collected in February-March 2020, just as African countries began reporting their first cases of the coronavirus. While Lesotho has not recorded any deaths due to COVID-19, global economic pressures as a result of the pandemic are likely to affect the country's economic outlook.

Key findings

- More than eight in 10 Basotho (82%) said the country is going "in the wrong direction" – a 40-percentage-point increase compared to 2017 (Figure 1).
- Those most unhappy with the general direction the country is taking included urban and peri-urban residents (88%) and opposition party supporters (86%), while citizens with no formal education (70%) and the youngest respondents (77%) were slightly less negative in their assessments (Figure 2).
- About three-quarters (74%) of Basotho rated the country's economic condition as "fairly bad" or "very bad," up from 60% in 2014. Almost as many (70%) described their personal living conditions as bad (Figure 3).
- Almost two-thirds (63%) of respondents said that economic conditions had gotten "worse" or "much worse" over the preceding 12 months, an increase from 36% in 2017. However, only one in five (21%) expected things to get worse over the coming year, while a large majority (69%) expressed optimism that economic conditions would improve.
- Nearly nine out of 10 respondents said the government is doing a "fairly bad" or "very bad" job of managing the economy (87%) and improving living standards of the poor (86%). Even more (95%) disapproved of the government's performance on creating jobs (Figure 4).

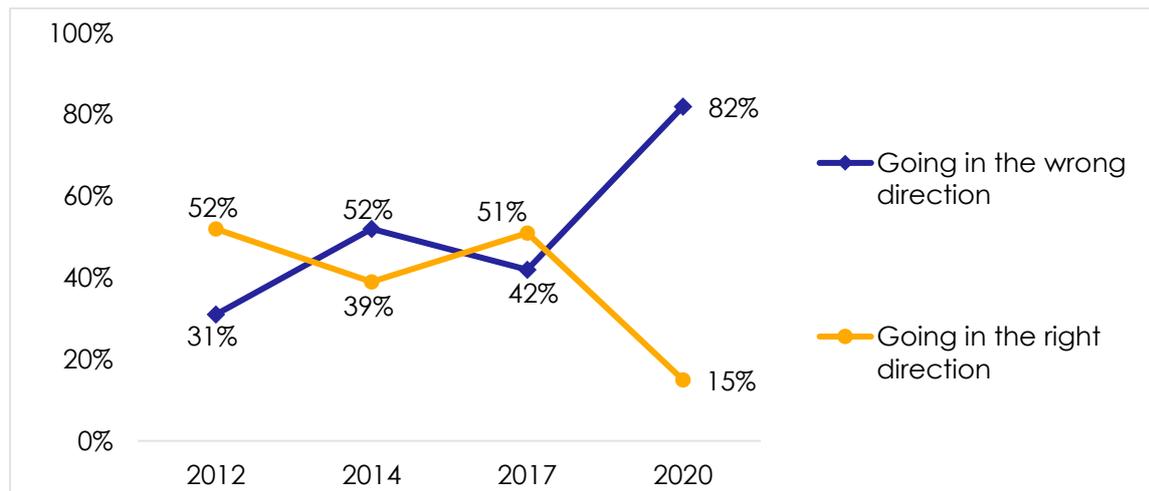
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Seven rounds of surveys were completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys are planned in at least 35 countries in 2019/2020. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Lesotho, led by Advision Lesotho, interviewed 1,200 adult Basotho in February-March 2020. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Lesotho in 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2017.

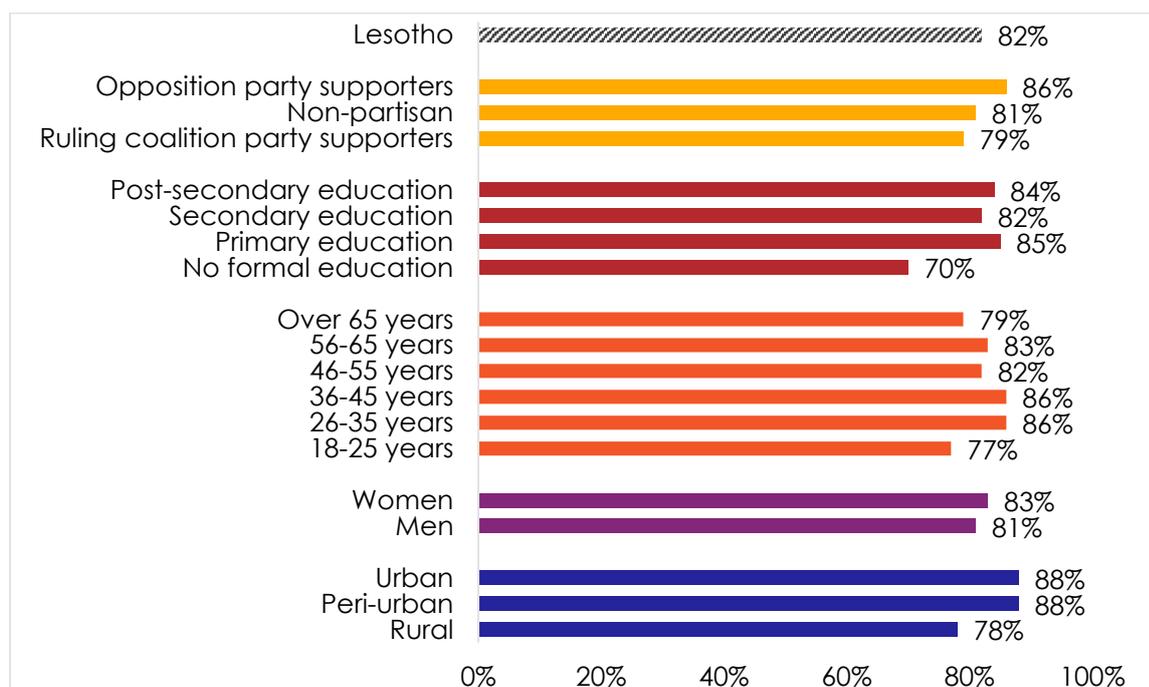
Charts

Figure 1: Overall direction of the country | Lesotho | 2012 - 2020



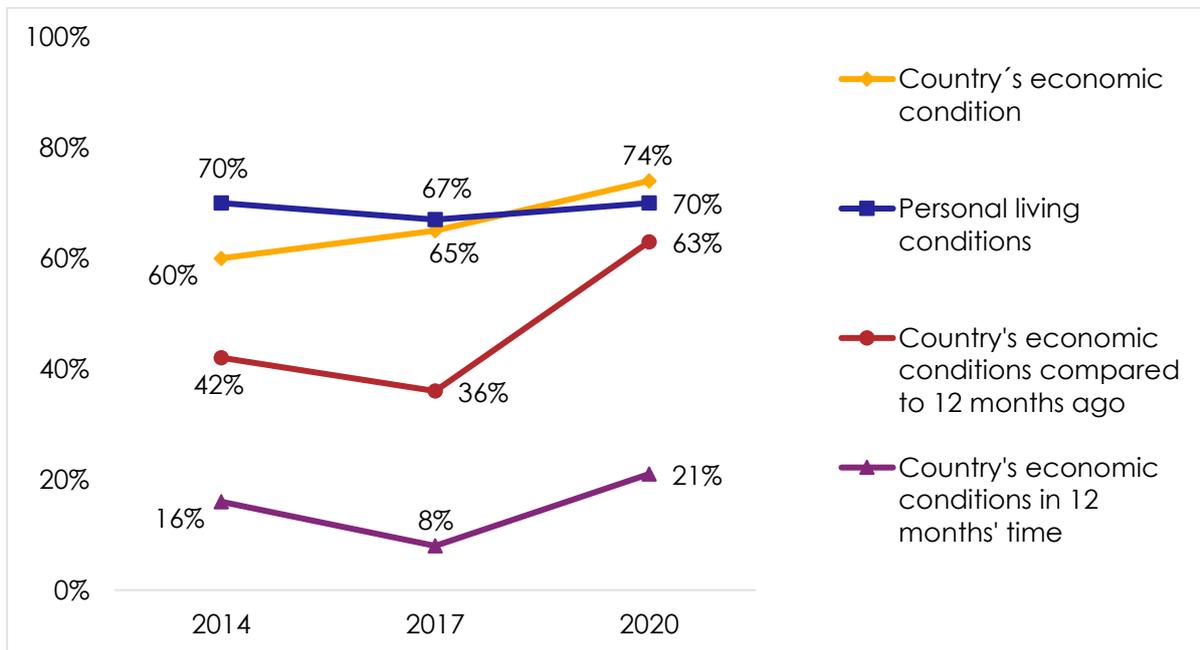
Respondents were asked: Some people might think the country is going in the wrong direction. Others may feel it is going in the right direction. So let me ask you about the overall direction of the country: Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or in the right direction?

Figure 2: Country going in the wrong direction | by socio-demographic group | Lesotho | 2020



Respondents were asked: Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or in the right direction? (% who say the country is going in the wrong direction)

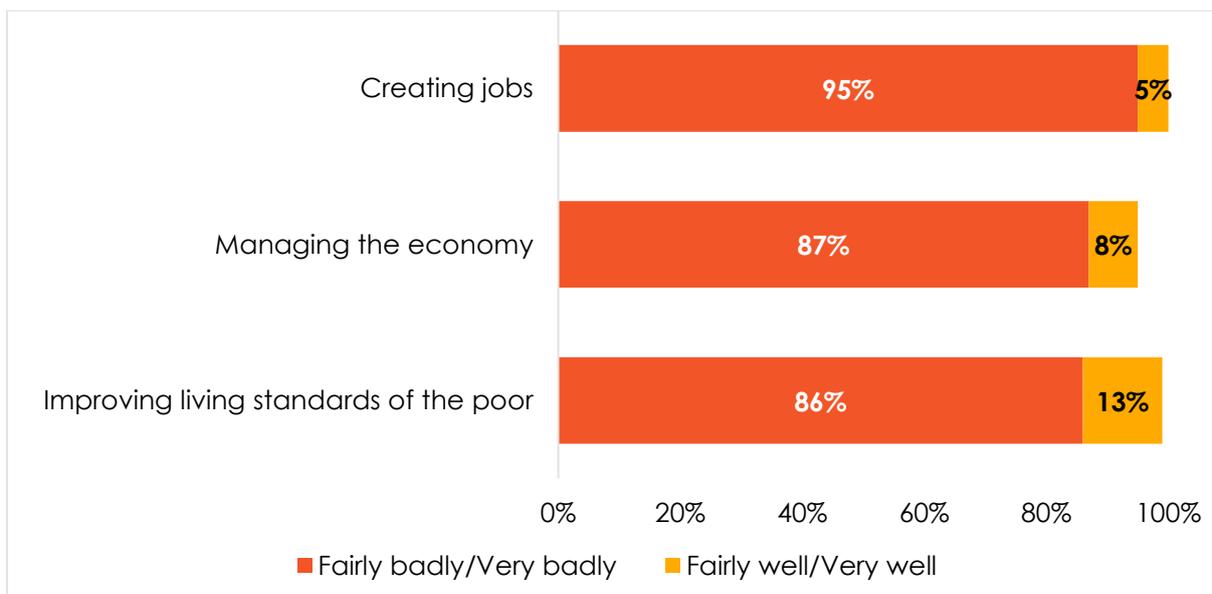
Figure 3: Negative assessments of economic conditions | Lesotho | 2014-2020



Respondents were asked:

- In general, how would you describe the present economic conditions of the country? (% who say "fairly bad" or "very bad")*
- In general, how would you describe your own living conditions? (% who say "fairly bad" or "very bad")*
- Looking back, how do you rate economic conditions in this country compared to 12 months ago? (% who say "worse" or "much worse")*
- Looking ahead, do you expect economic conditions in this country to be better or worse in 12 months' time? (% who say "worse" or "much worse")*

Figure 3: Assessment of government handling of economic matters | Lesotho | 2020



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?*

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