

Afrobarometer
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News release

Africans see progress – though uneven – in government delivery of basic services, survey shows

Africans see more improvement than decline in their governments' delivery of basic public services, according to new Afrobarometer survey findings from across the continent.



Though uneven, progress is reported in the state's provision of education, medical care, identity documents, and police assistance. On average across 34 surveyed countries, service delivery is most often seen as easy to access, timely, courteous, and responsive to complaints. But countries vary greatly in popular assessments of government performance, and petty corruption is still a frequent experience.

An analysis of survey responses shows that three main factors drive whether Africans see their governments as getting better or worse at delivering services: how easy or difficult the service was to obtain, whether officials will respond to complaints, and whether citizens had to pay a bribe.

The analysis, available at www.afrobarometer.org, is the fourth of Afrobarometer's Pan-Africa Profiles based on 45,823 interviews in all regions of Africa.

Key findings

- On average across 34 countries, majorities of Africans who had contact with key public services during the previous year report that access to public education, identity documents, medical care, and police assistance is "easy." Household utilities are regarded as more "difficult" to obtain (Figure 1).
- In general, service delivery is seen as quite timely; slightly more people report receiving services after "short" rather than "long" delays. But citizens disagree over the timeliness of police assistance; when compared with other services, police assistance is more likely to occur either "right away" or "never" (Figure 2).
- A majority of Africans say the treatment they receive from public officials is courteous.
- Africans are about twice as likely to report paying a bribe for police assistance (26%) as for school (15%) or medical (13%) services (Figure 3).
- If they report misconduct by schoolteachers or a crime, most Africans think it's likely they will get "someone to take action." But when reporting corruption, a positive outcome is widely seen as "not likely" (Figure 4).
- Overall, Africans are more likely to see improvements than deterioration in state delivery of key public services (Figure 5). But on average fewer than one in five citizens see simultaneous improvements in the performance of all three of the state agencies charged with public safety, education, and medical care (Figure 6).
- In explaining perceived improvement in state delivery of public services, three factors matter: ease of access, responsiveness to complaints, and – most importantly – not having to pay a bribe.

Afrobarometer surveys

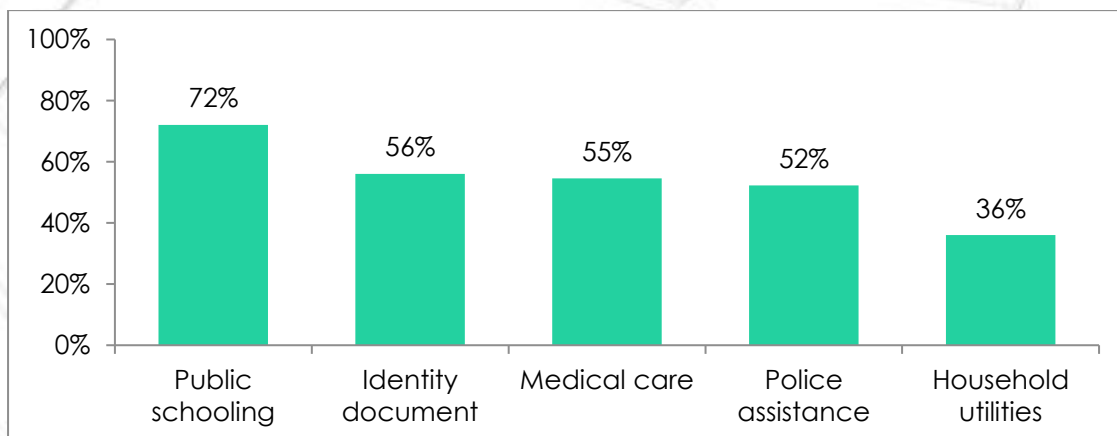
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Six rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2015, and findings from Round 7 surveys (2016-2018) are currently being released. Interested readers may follow our releases at #VoicesAfrica and sign up for our distribution list at www.afrobarometer.org.

Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2 to +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

Round 7 Pan-Africa Profiles draw on data collected in 34 countries between September 2016 and September 2018. The countries covered are home to almost 80% of the continent's population.

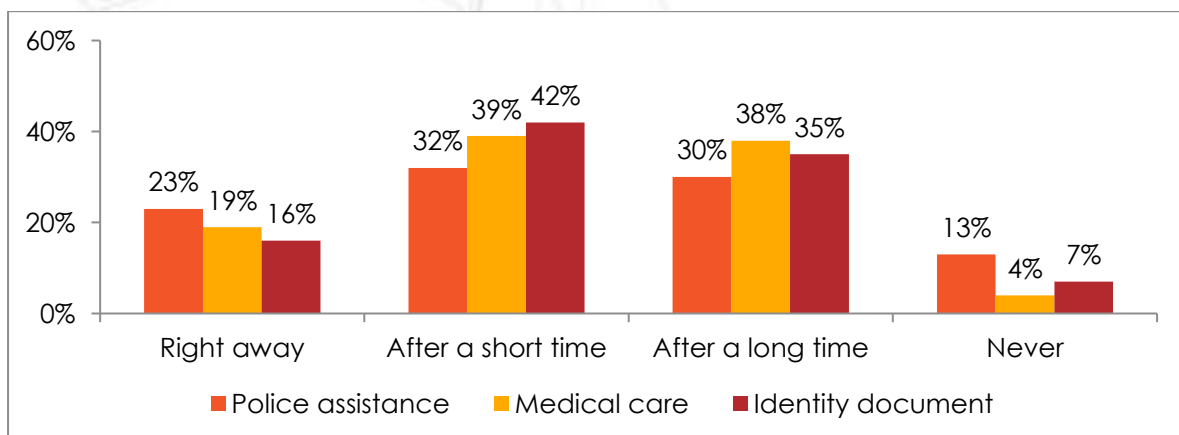
Charts

Figure 1: Reported ease of access to services | 34 countries | 2016/2018



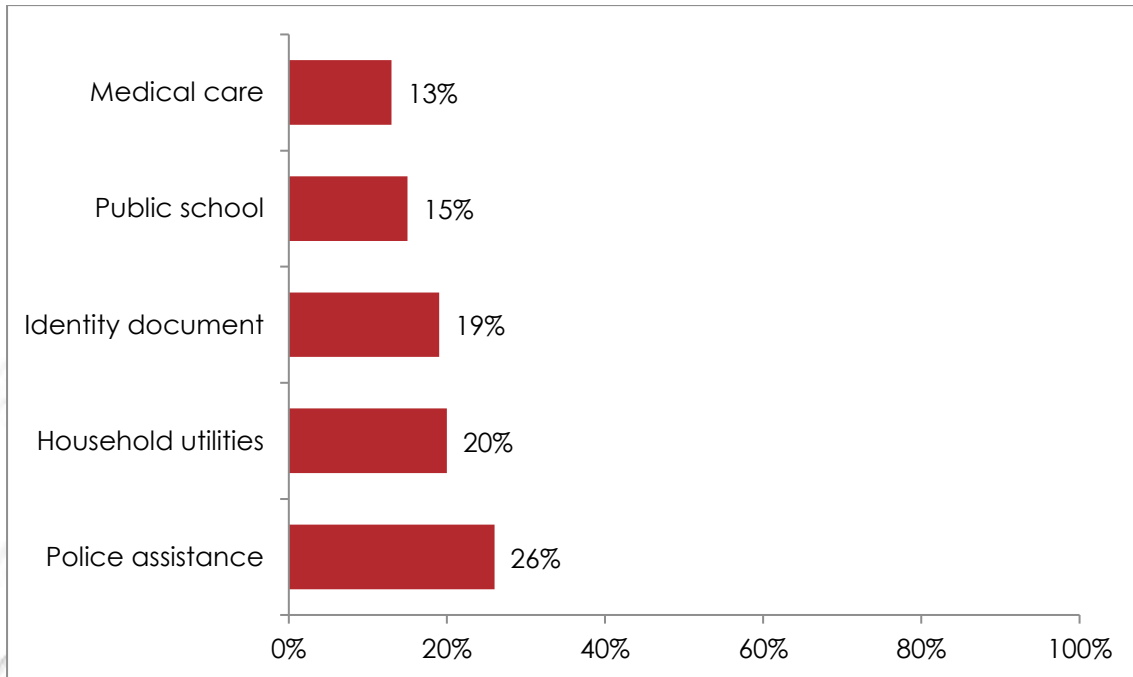
Respondents who had contact with key public services were asked: How easy or difficult was it to obtain the services you needed? (% who say "easy" or "very easy")

Figure 2: Reported timeliness of service delivery | 34 countries | 2016/2018



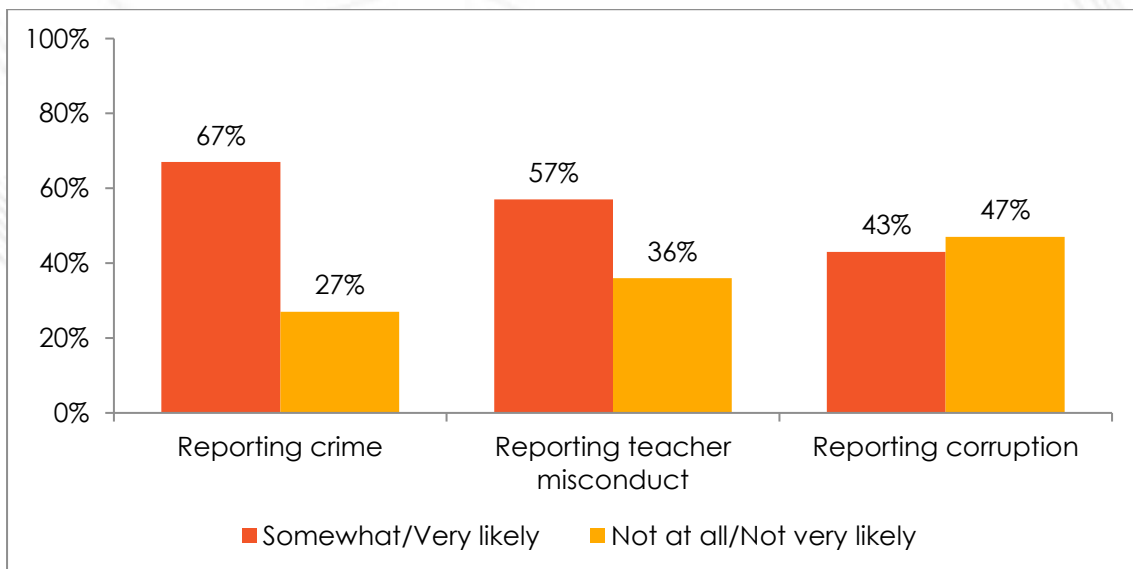
Respondents who had contact with key public services were asked: How long did it take for you to receive (the service) that you needed?

Figure 3: Reported payment of bribes | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents who had contact with key public services were asked: How often, if ever, did you have to pay a bribe, give gift, or do a favour for (a public official) in order to get the service you needed?

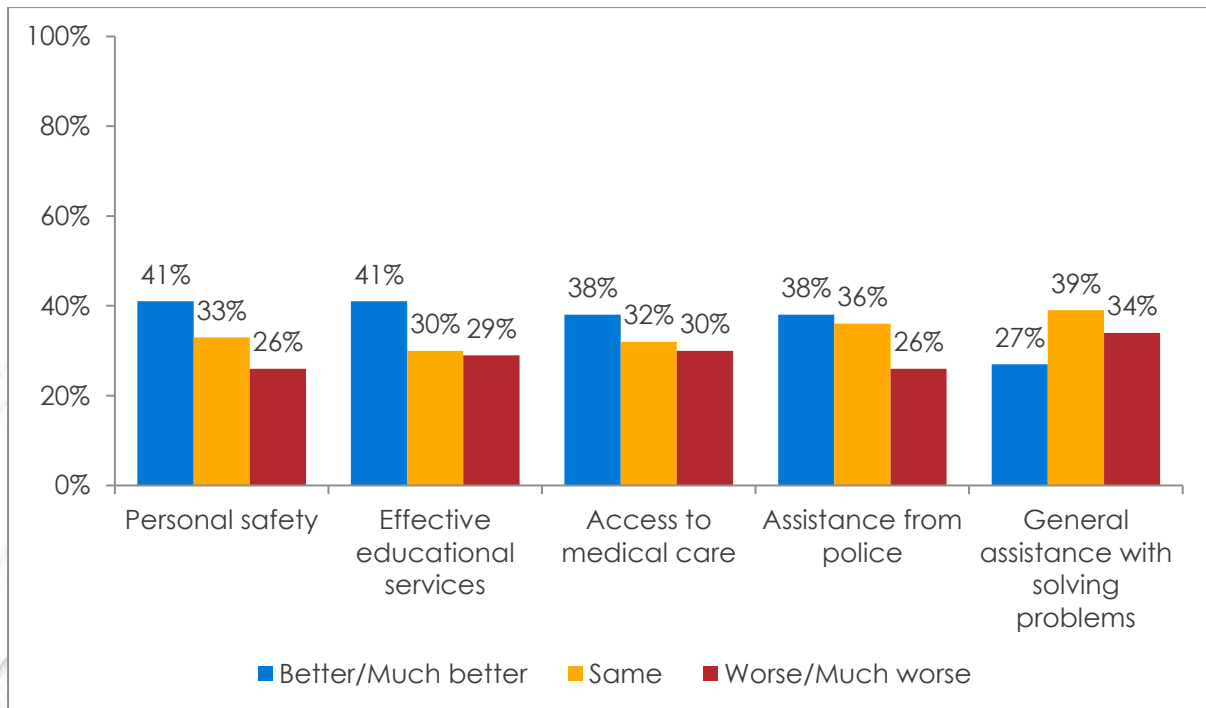
Figure 4: Expected likelihood of official response | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: How likely is it that you could get someone to take action if you went to a government office or other public institution to report the following problems, or haven't you heard enough to say?

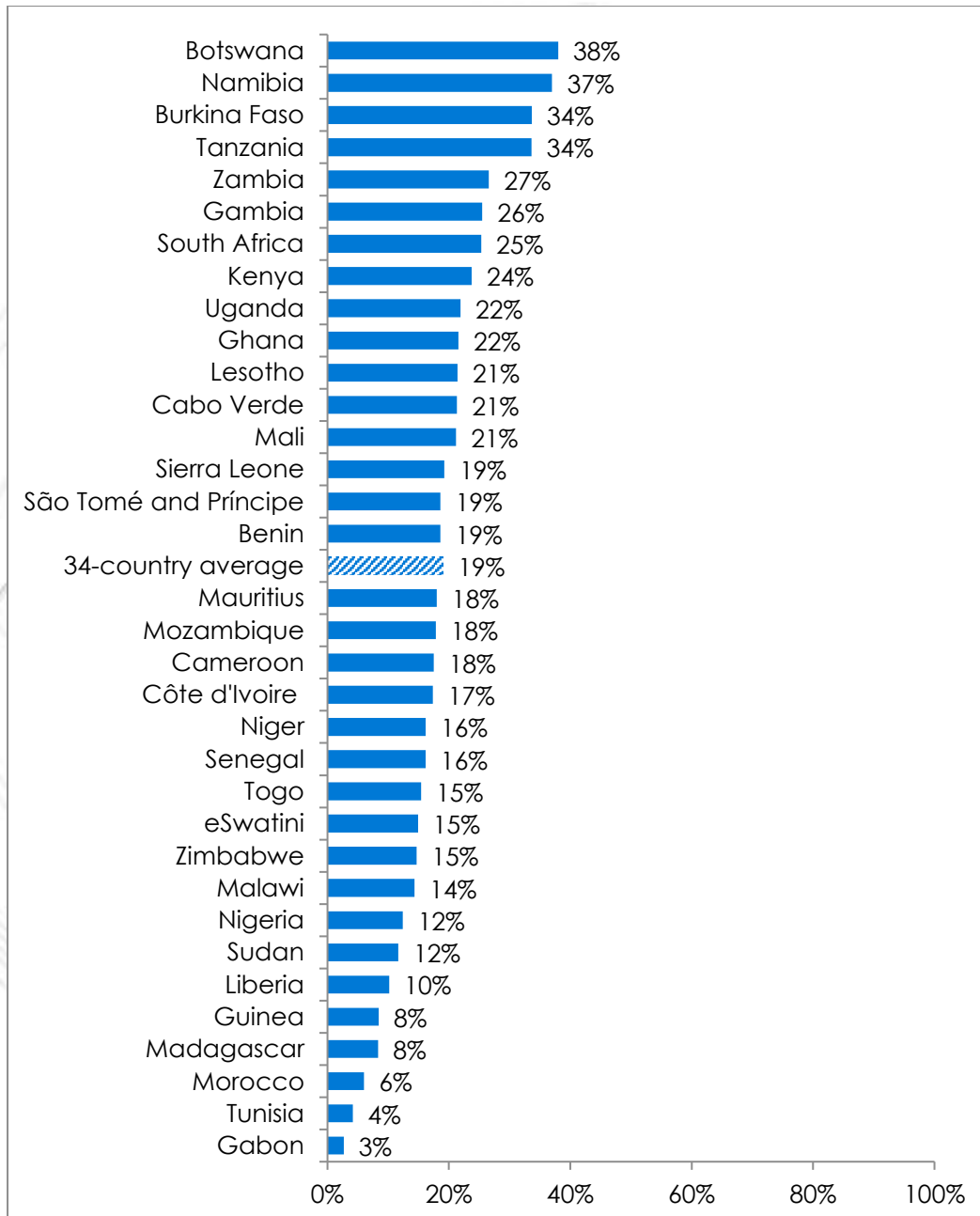
- If you went to the local school to report teacher misbehaviour such as absenteeism or mistreatment of students?
- If you went to your [local government office] to report corrupt behaviour like misuse of funds or requests for bribes by government officers, police, or school or clinic staff?
- If you went to the local police to report a crime?

Figure 5: Perceived trends in state performance | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: Please tell me if the following things are worse or better now than they were a few years ago, or are they about the same: Your ability to get medical care when you need it? Your personal safety from crime and violence? The government's effectiveness in addressing educational needs? The ability of ordinary people to get help from the police when they need it? The ability of ordinary people to get assistance from government to resolve problems for themselves or their communities?

Figure 6: Perceived improvement in state performance for three services | by country | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: Please tell me if the following things are worse or better now than they were a few years ago, or are they about the same: Your ability to get medical care when you need it? The government's effectiveness in addressing educational needs? The ability of ordinary people to get help from the police when they need it? (Figure shows % of respondents who say that all three have gotten "better" or "much better")

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