

ADVISION LESOTHO

Advision Lesotho
Maseru, Lesotho
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News release

Basotho support women's political leadership but oppose allowing traditional leadership role

Basotho women still find it hard to attain leadership positions due to discriminatory cultural practices and laws, according to Afrobarometer's most recent survey. Survey results also suggest women are less active than men in community and political organising.

Even though three-fourths of women say that women should have the same chance as men of being elected to political office, a majority still support the law that allows only sons to succeed to chieftaincy in Lesotho. Also the support for women's political leadership has declined from seven in 10 (70%) in 2012 to nearly six in ten (57%) in 2014.

Women are less likely than men to participate in community meetings, join with others to raise issues, and attend campaign rallies, the May 2014 survey indicates.

The Constitution of Lesotho prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender, and the Electoral Law endorses political participation by women. But gender discrimination is maintained when it comes to chieftaincy succession. The survey results suggest that gender advocacy efforts are needed to redress discrimination and legislation barring daughters from succession to traditional leadership roles.

The survey was conducted in May 2014, just after the Appeal court upheld the Constitutional Court ruling against Senate Gabasheane Masupha, the only daughter of the late Chief David Masupha who petitioned the court, among others, to declare Section 10 of the Chieftaincy Act as unconstitutional to the extent that it disqualified her to succeed to the Principal Chieftainship.

Key findings

- Two-thirds (67%) of women say women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men. But support for this position has declined among both women and men and is lower in Lesotho than in five other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries surveyed in 2014.
- Fewer than half of women (46%) say the law barring daughters from succeeding to the chieftaincy should be changed.
- Six women out of 10 (62%) say they attended a community meeting at least several times in the previous year, compared to 73% of men; women were roughly half as likely as men to have joined with others to raise an issue (22% vs. 38%).

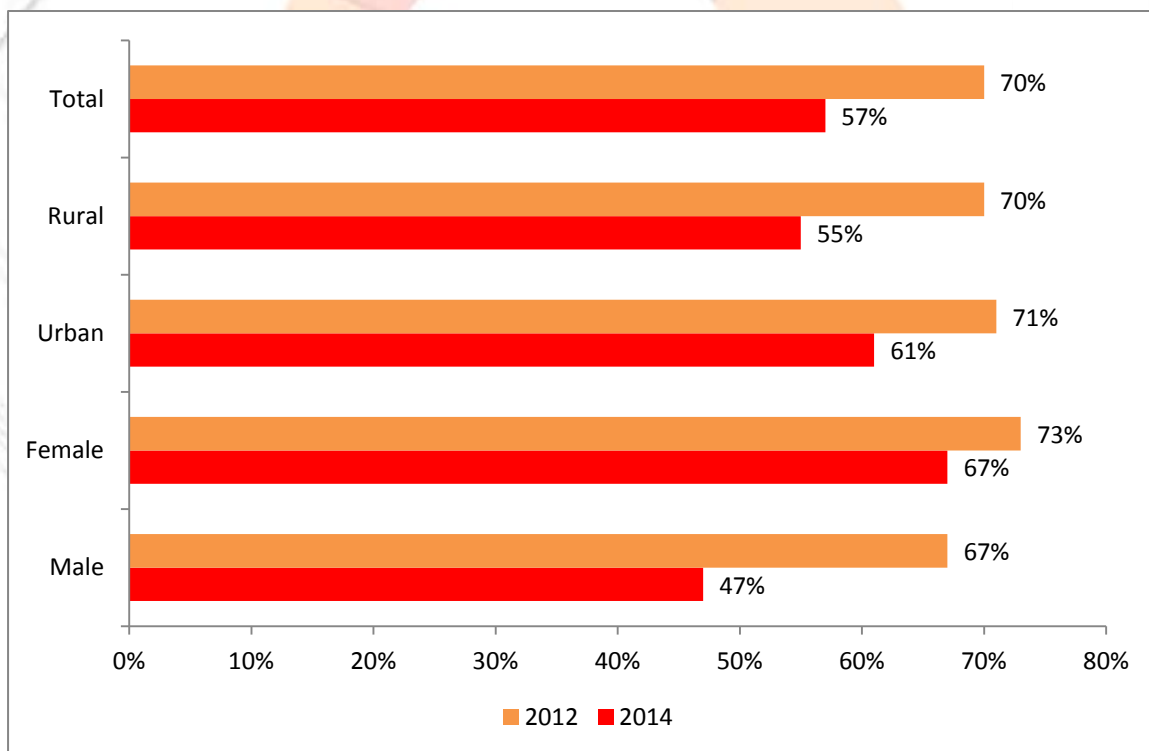
Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is an African-led, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and Round 6 surveys are currently under way (2014-2015). Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of between 1,200 and 2,400 respondents.

The Afrobarometer team in Lesotho, led by Advision Lesotho, interviewed 1,200 adult Basotho in May 2014. A sample of this size yields results with a margin of error of +/-3% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in Lesotho in 2000, 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2012.

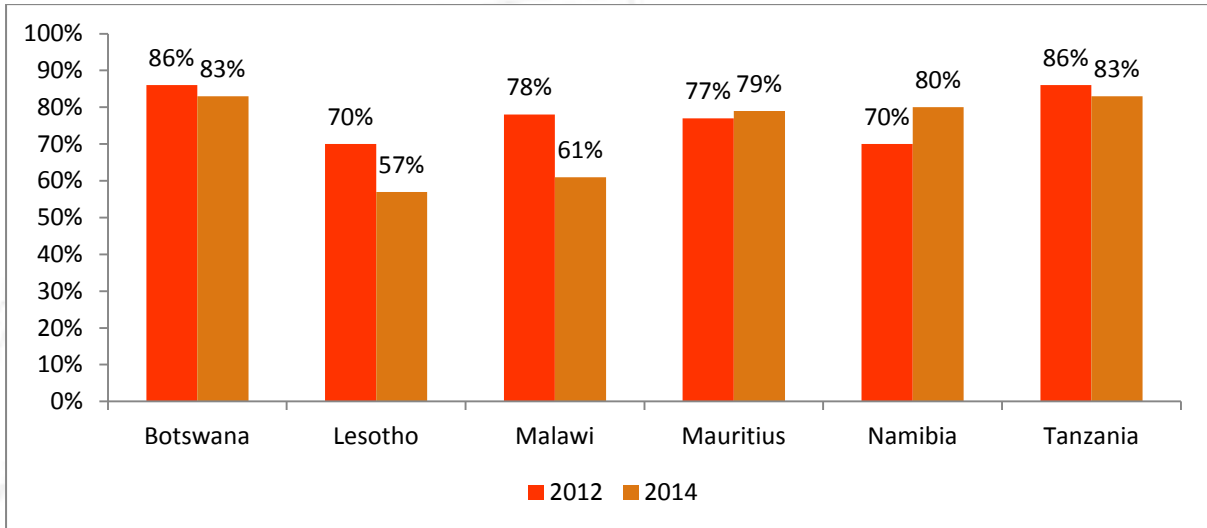
Charts

Figure 1: Support for political leadership by women | by gender and location
 | Lesotho 2012 - 2014



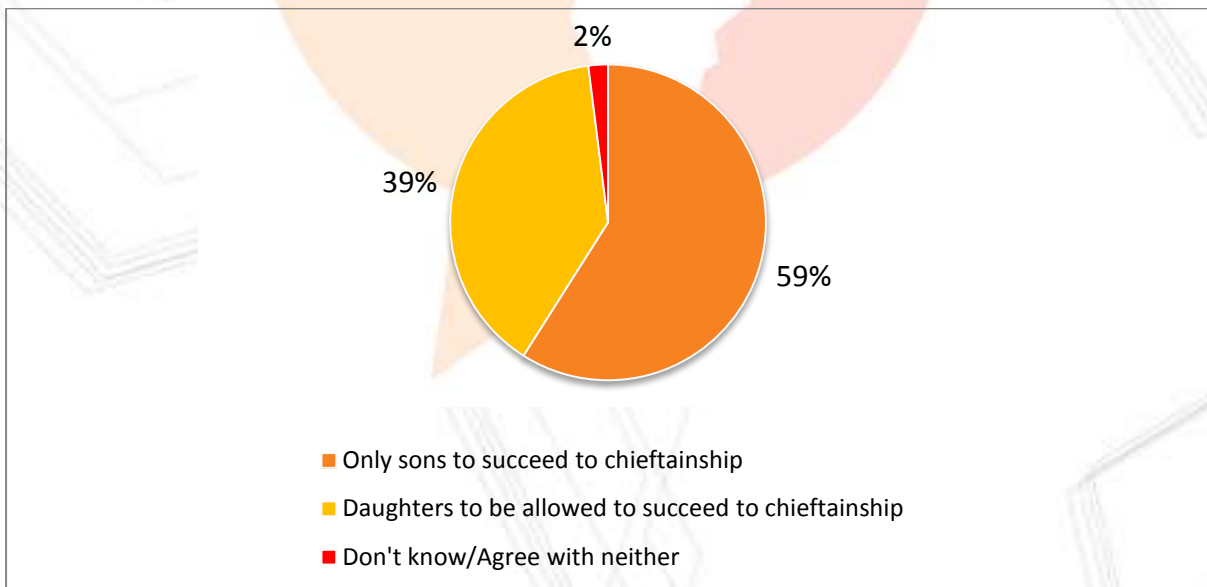
Participants were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2. Statement 1: Men make better political leaders than women, and should be elected rather than women. Statement 2: Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men. (% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with Statement 2)

Figure 1: Support for political leadership by women | by SADC country | 2012 – 2014



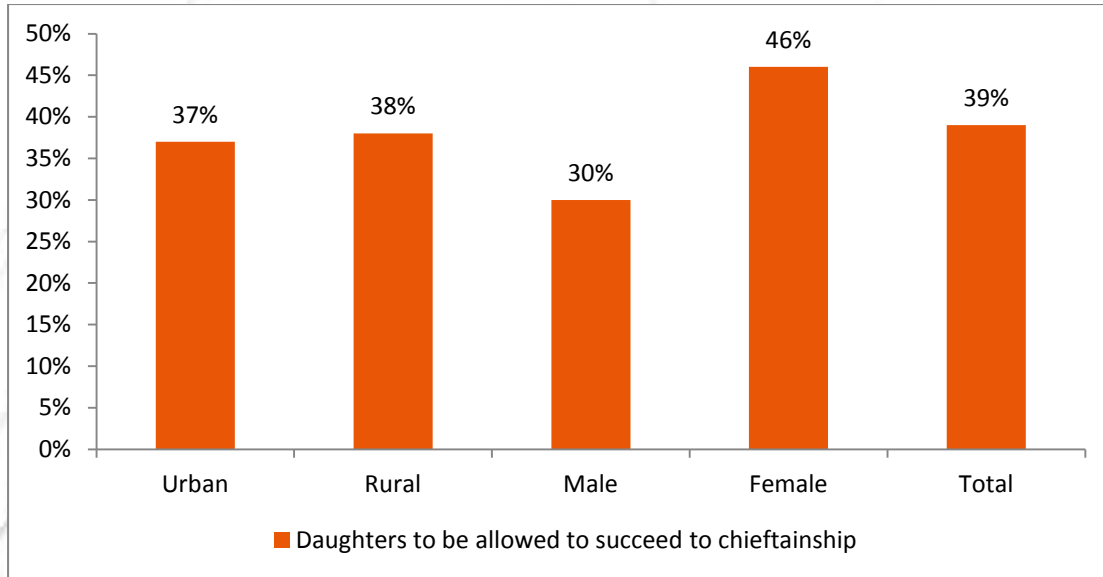
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Figure 3: Chieftaincy succession by daughters | Lesotho | 2014



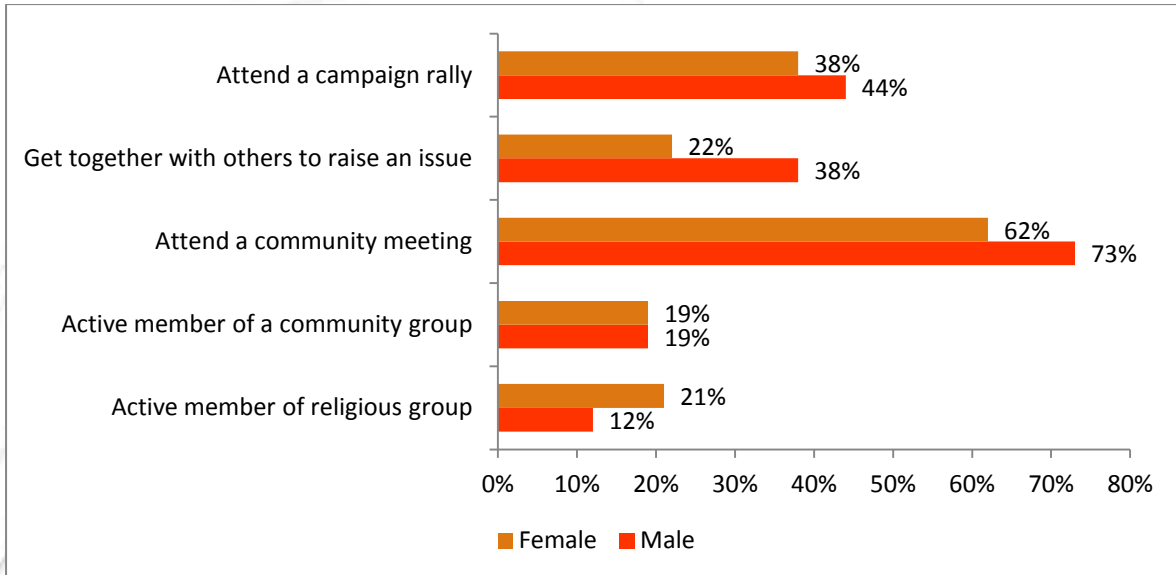
Participants were asked: Let's talk for a moment about the kind of society you would like to have in this country. Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2. Statement 1: The current customary law which provides that only sons can succeed to the chieftaincy has served Lesotho well and should therefore be maintained. Statement 2: The customary law requiring that only sons should succeed to the chieftaincy should be replaced to allow for the succession of daughters. (% who “agree” or “agree very strongly”)

Figure 4: Support for succession of daughters to chieftaincy | by gender and location | Lesotho 2014



Participants were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? "The current customary law which provides that only sons can succeed to the chieftaincy has served Lesotho well and should therefore be maintained; The customary law requiring that only sons should succeed to the chieftaincy should be replaced to allow for the succession of daughters." (Proportion of those who agree and agree strongly with the 2nd statement).

Figure 5: Active participation in community and political matters | by gender
 | Lesotho 2014



Participants were asked:

1. Let's turn to your role in the community. Now I am going to read out a list of groups that people join or attend. For each one, could you tell me whether you are an official leader, an active member, an inactive member, or not a member: A religious group that meets outside of regular worship service? Some other voluntary association or community group?
2. Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year: Attend a community meeting? Get together with others to raise an issue? If not, would you do this if you had the chance?
3. Thinking about the last national election in May 2012, did you: Attend a campaign rally? (% who said "yes")

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