

Institute for Public Policy Research
Windhoek, Namibia
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News release

Namibia continues to lessen lived poverty

Namibia has experienced a dramatic decline in inequality and poverty over the past decades, according to official statistics from the National Statistics Agency and the National Planning Commission. The Gini coefficient (the measure of income distribution of a nation's residents and shows inequality levels) has decreased from over 7.4 in the 1990s to 6.8 in 2001 and 5.8 in the latest Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2009-2010). In the last Afrobarometer Lived Poverty Index (2011-2013) Namibia ranked the 9th least affected by lived poverty (0.99) out of 34 countries surveyed. This correlates with the latest World Bank data (2009) showing a low poverty gap (based on per capita consumption estimated from household survey data) in Namibia of 8.8, one of the lowest on the continent.

Afrobarometer asked Namibians in the latest survey (2014) about access to food, medical care, cooking fuel, water for drinking and food to eat in the past year. A significant majority of respondents only experience "never" experiencing shortages, for example almost four out of five Namibians "never" or "just once or twice" (78%) experience a lack of food but cash income is less available than all other lived poverty items, linking it to unemployment. About one in two (41%) Namibians believe unemployment is the top most important problem.

Key findings

- Over the past year, a majority of respondents reported "never" or "just once or twice" going without water (88%), medicines or medical treatment (88%), fuel to cook (90%) and cash income (58%) (Figure 1).
- Urban and male respondents were more likely to "never" face food shortage (9%) and only three regions (Zambezi, Erongo, and Hardap) featured more than half of the respondents "never" experienced a shortage of cash income.
- Kunene, Kavango West, and Ohangwena were the only regions to experience less than half of respondents "never" going without food. Namibian respondents were only likely to experience food shortage "several", or "many times", or "always" with one in five (21%) in agreement. These are also historically the poorest regions of Namibia.

Afrobarometer

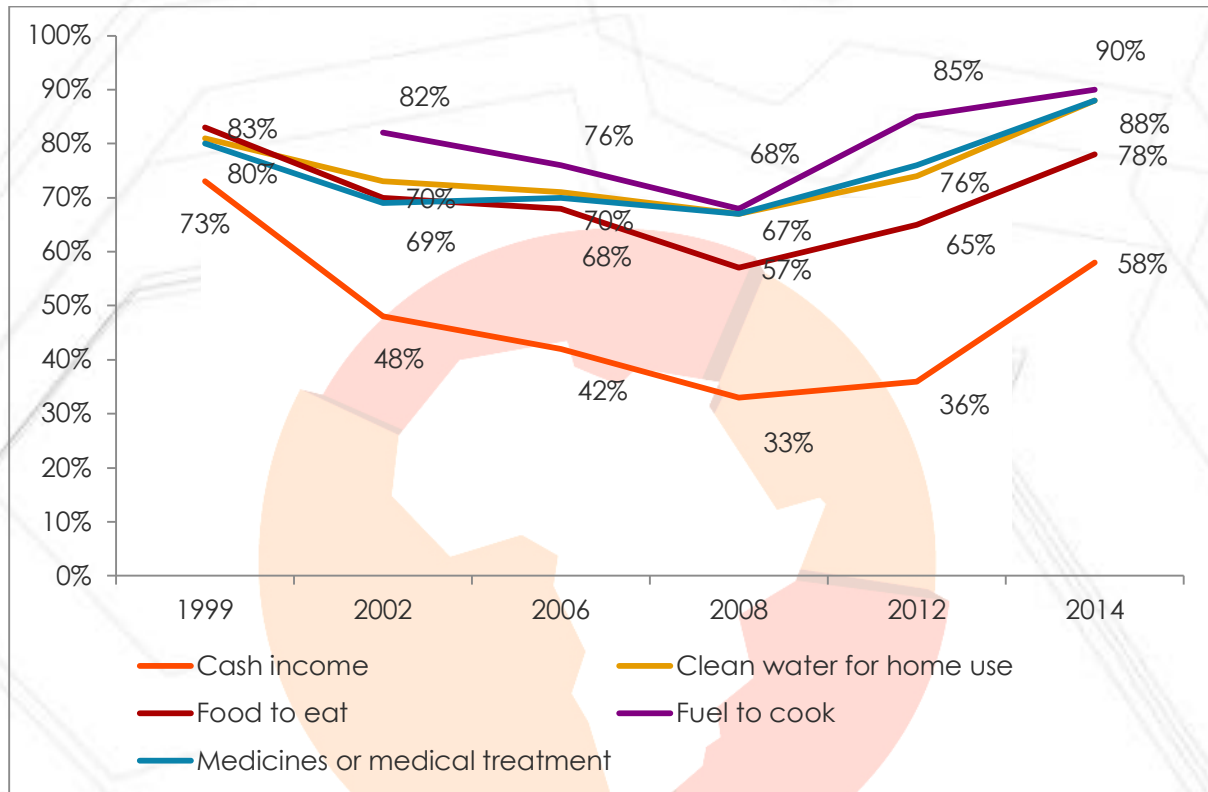
Afrobarometer is an African-led, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and Round 6 surveys are currently 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 Namibia is led by Institute for Public Policy Research and Survey Warehouse interviewed 1,200 adult Namibians in August and September 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 Namibia in 1999, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2008 and 2012.

Charts

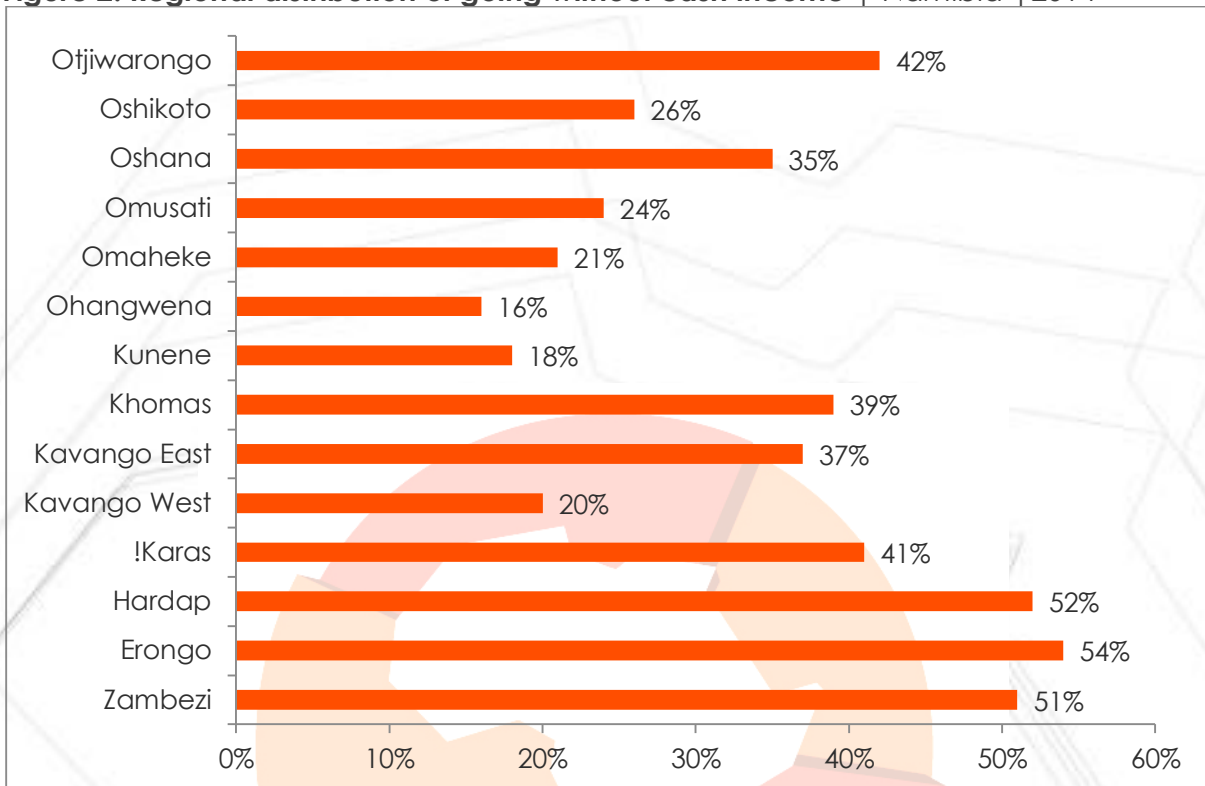
Figure 1: Gone without enough | Namibia | 1999-2014



Respondents were asked:

Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: Gone without enough cash income, food to eat, cooking fuel, medicines or medical care, water?

Figure 2: Regional distribution of going without cash income | Namibia | 2014



Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: Gone without enough cash income?

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ⁱ African Development Bank, 2011. "Middle of the pyramid: Dynamics of the middle class in Africa."