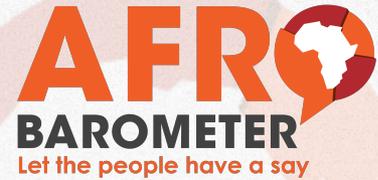




# Eswatini approve of government's COVID-19 response, but remain skeptical about vaccines

Findings from Afrobarometer Round 8 survey in Eswatini

# At a glance



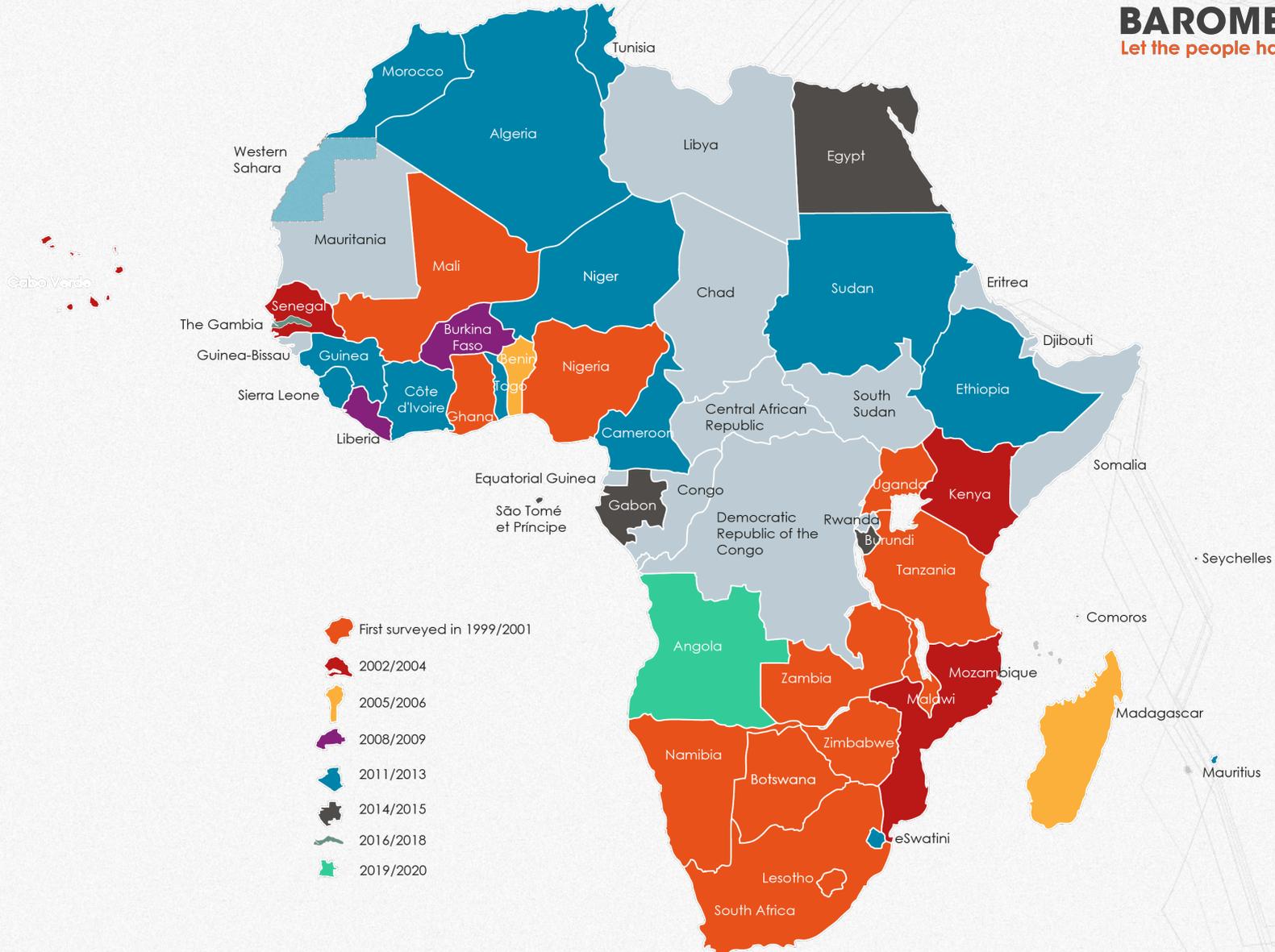
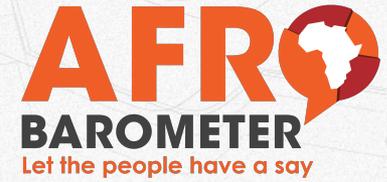
- **Impact of COVID-19:** Half (49%) of Eswatini report that someone in their household lost a job, business, or primary source of income as a result of the pandemic.
- **Government performance:** Overall, most citizens are satisfied with the government's efforts to manage the COVID-19 response (83%) and keep the public informed (90%).
- **Views on vaccines:** Fewer than four in 10 citizens (37%) indicate that they are likely to try to get vaccinated.

# What is Afrobarometer?



- A pan-African, non-partisan, non-profit research network that measures citizen attitudes on democracy and governance, the economy, civil society, and other topics.
- Started in 12 African countries in 1999. Round 8 surveys in 2019/2021 cover 34 countries.
- **Goal:** To give the public a voice in policymaking by providing high-quality public opinion data to policymakers, policy advocates, civil society organizations, academics, news media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans.
- A national partner in each country conducts the survey. In Eswatini, Afrobarometer Round 8 survey was conducted by ActivQuest.

# Where Afrobarometer works



# Methodology



- Nationally representative sample of adult citizens
  - ❑ All respondents are *randomly* selected.
  - ❑ Sample is distributed across regions/states/provinces and urban/rural areas in proportion to their share in the national population.
  - ❑ Every adult citizen has an *equal* chance of being selected.
- Face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.
- Standard questionnaire allows comparisons across countries and over time.
- Sample size in Eswatini of 1,200 adult citizens yields a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.
- Fieldwork for Round 8 in Eswatini was conducted in March-April 2021.

# Survey demographics

Gender		%
	Men	49
	Women	51
Residence		
	Urban	27
	Rural	73
Education		
	No formal education	9
	Primary	15
	Secondary	59
	Post-secondary	16
Religion		
	Christian	93
	Muslim	0.1
	Other	6.2



# Findings

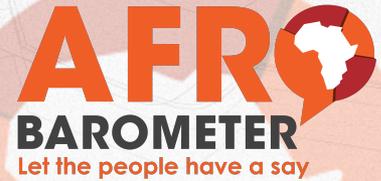




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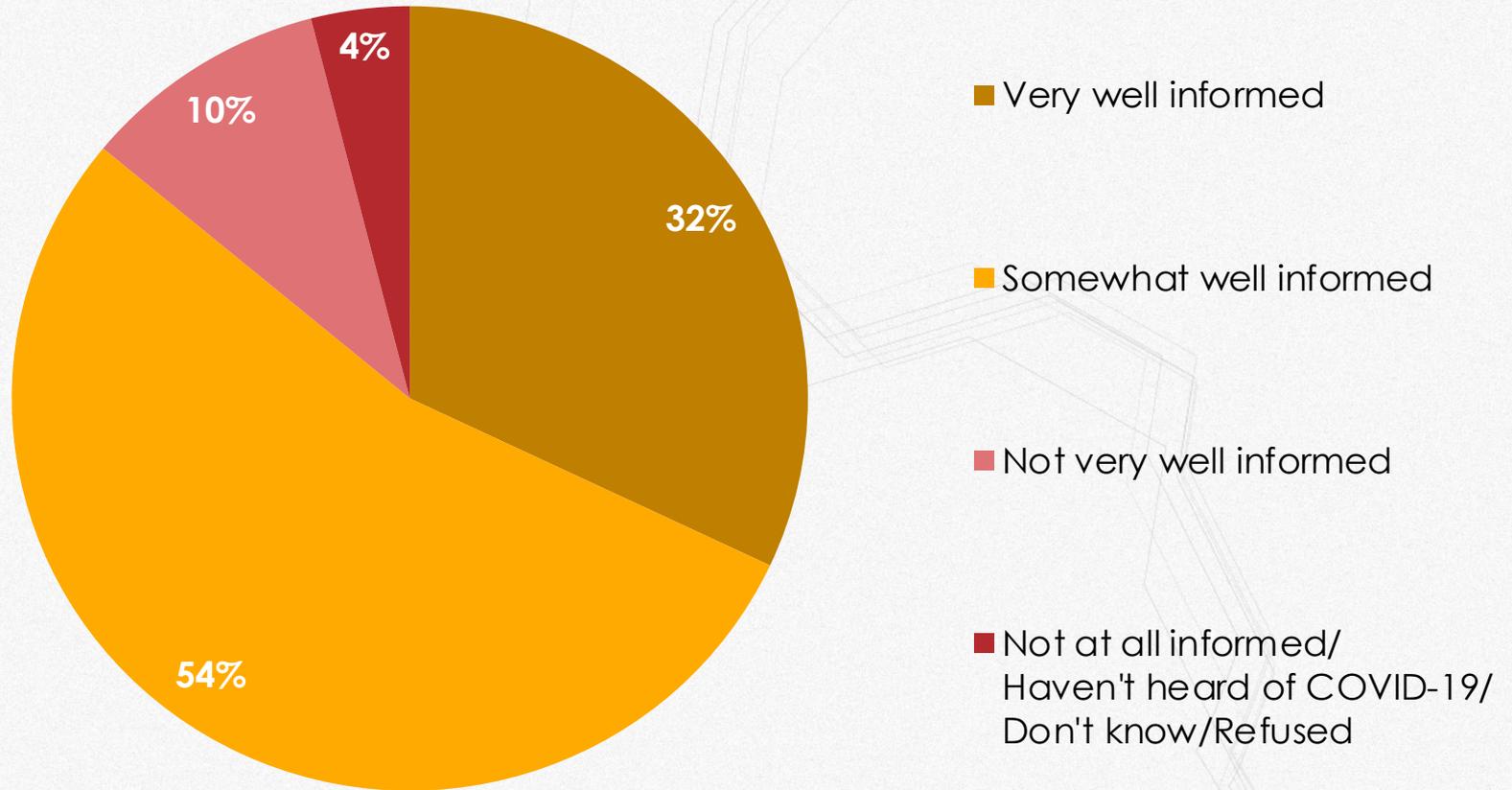
# Awareness and impact of COVID-19

# Key findings



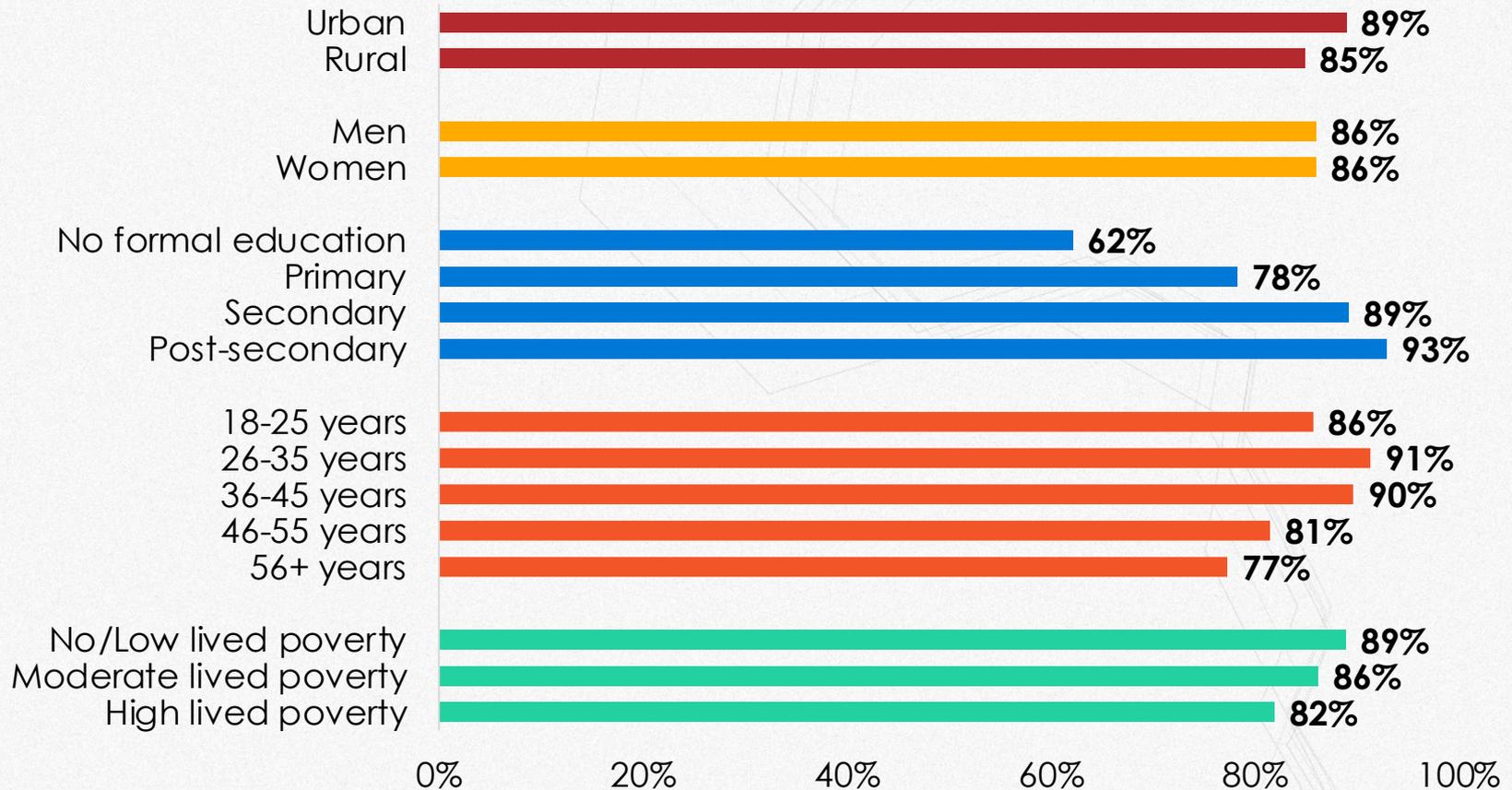
- The overwhelming majority of Eswatini consider themselves “somewhat well informed” (54%) or “very well informed” (32%) about COVID-19 and efforts to combat it.
  - Awareness is lower among citizens with no formal education (62%).
- About one in seven respondents (15%) say a household member became ill with COVID-19.
- One in two (49%) report that someone in the household lost a job, business, or primary source of income as a result of the pandemic.

# Awareness of COVID-19 | Eswatini | 2021



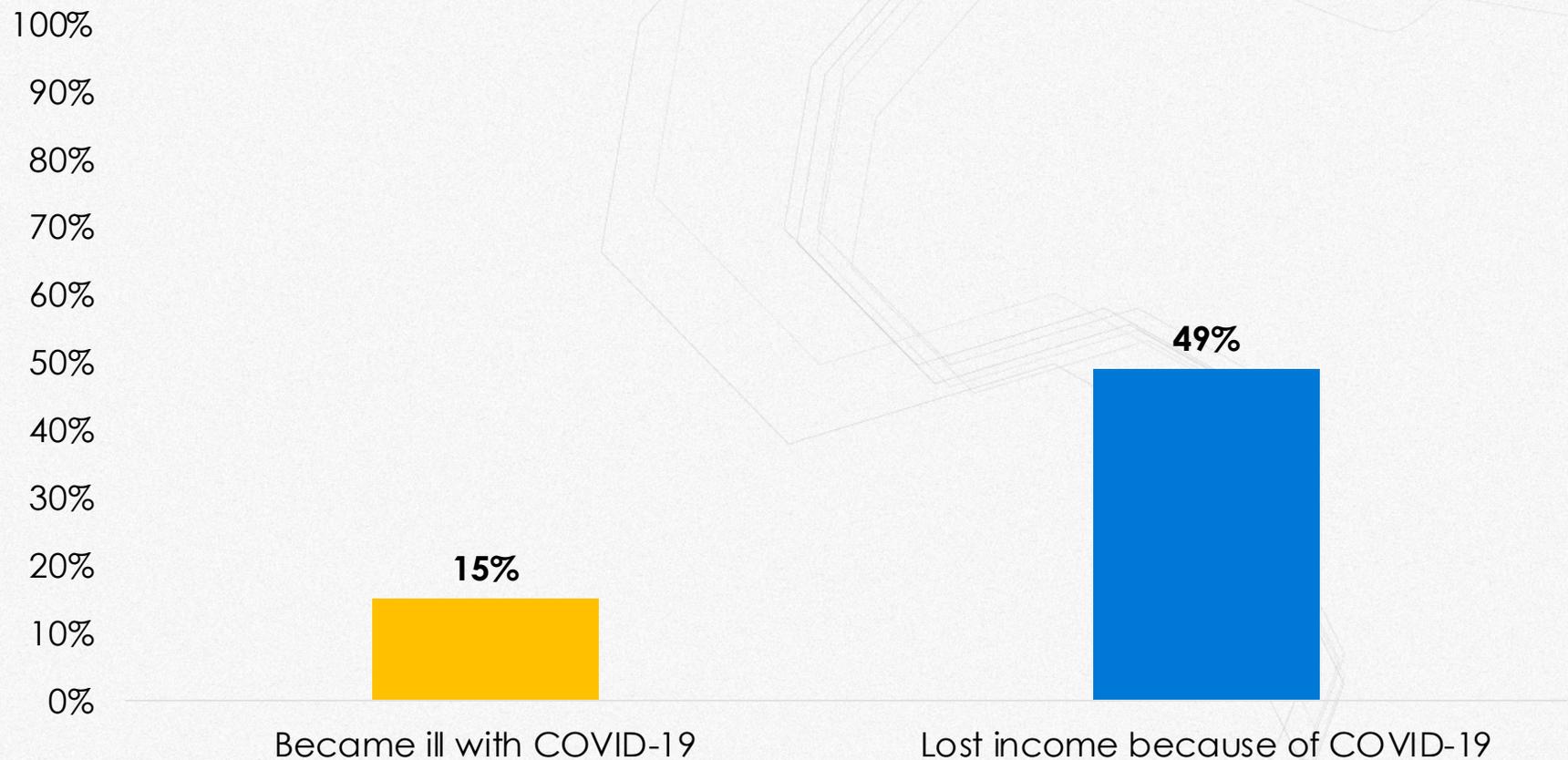
**Respondents were asked:** How well informed would you say you are about the coronavirus, or the COVID-19 pandemic, and efforts to combat it?

# Awareness of COVID-19 | by socio-demographic group | Eswatini | 2021



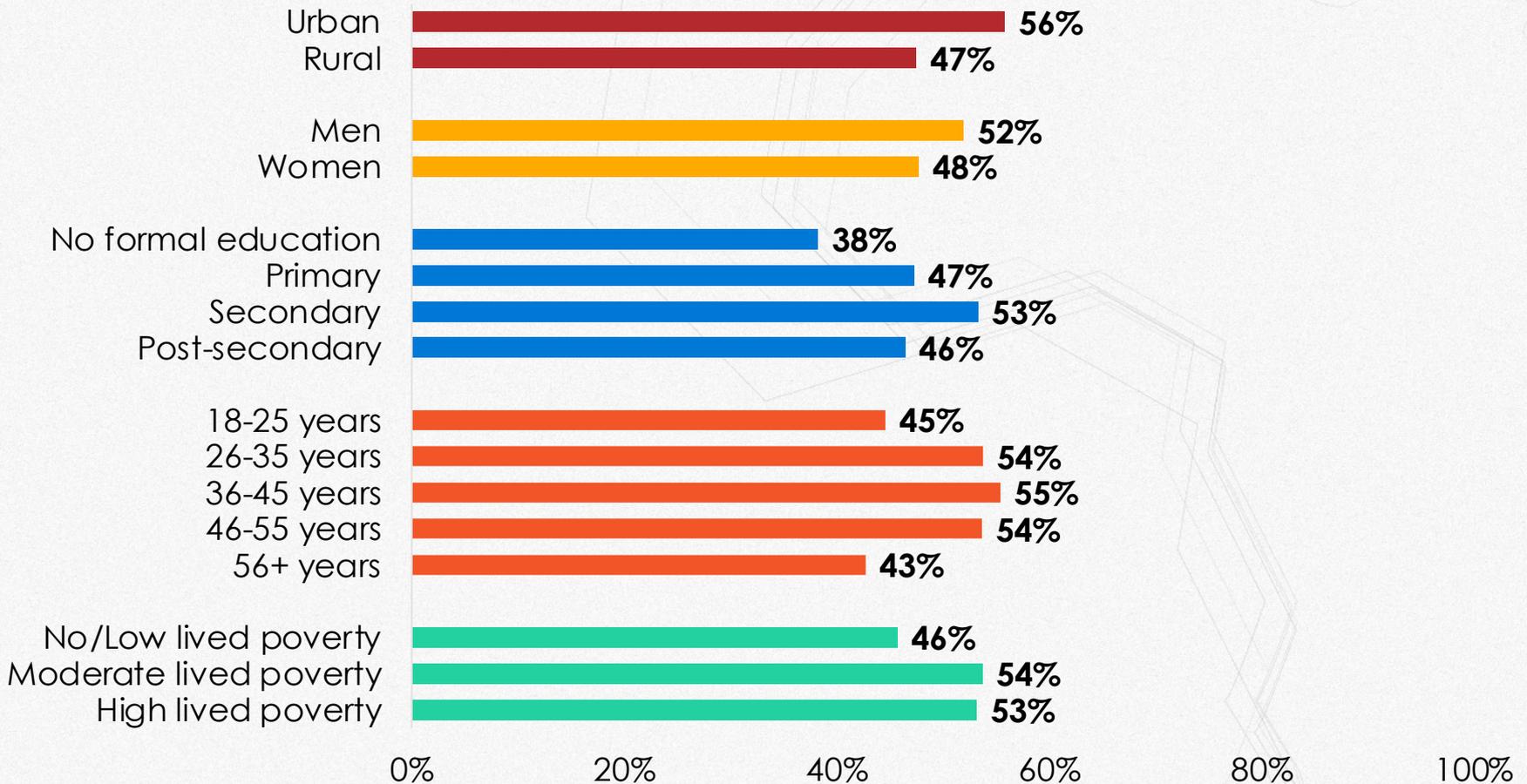
**Respondents were asked:** How well informed would you say you are about the coronavirus, or the COVID-19 pandemic, and efforts to combat it? (% who say “somewhat” or “very” well informed)

# Impacts of the pandemic | Eswatini | 2021



**Respondents were asked:** Please tell me if you personally or any other member of your household have been affected in any of the following ways by the COVID-19 pandemic: Became ill with COVID-19? Temporarily or permanently lost a job, business, or primary source of income?

# Lost income due to the pandemic | by socio-demographic group | Eswatini | 2021

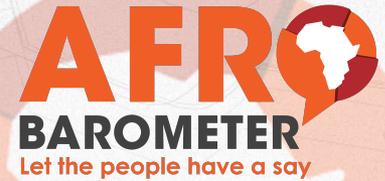


**Respondents were asked:** Please tell me if you personally or any other member of your household have been affected in any of the following ways by the COVID-19 pandemic: Temporarily or permanently lost a job, business, or primary source of income? (% "yes")

# Lockdowns and school closures

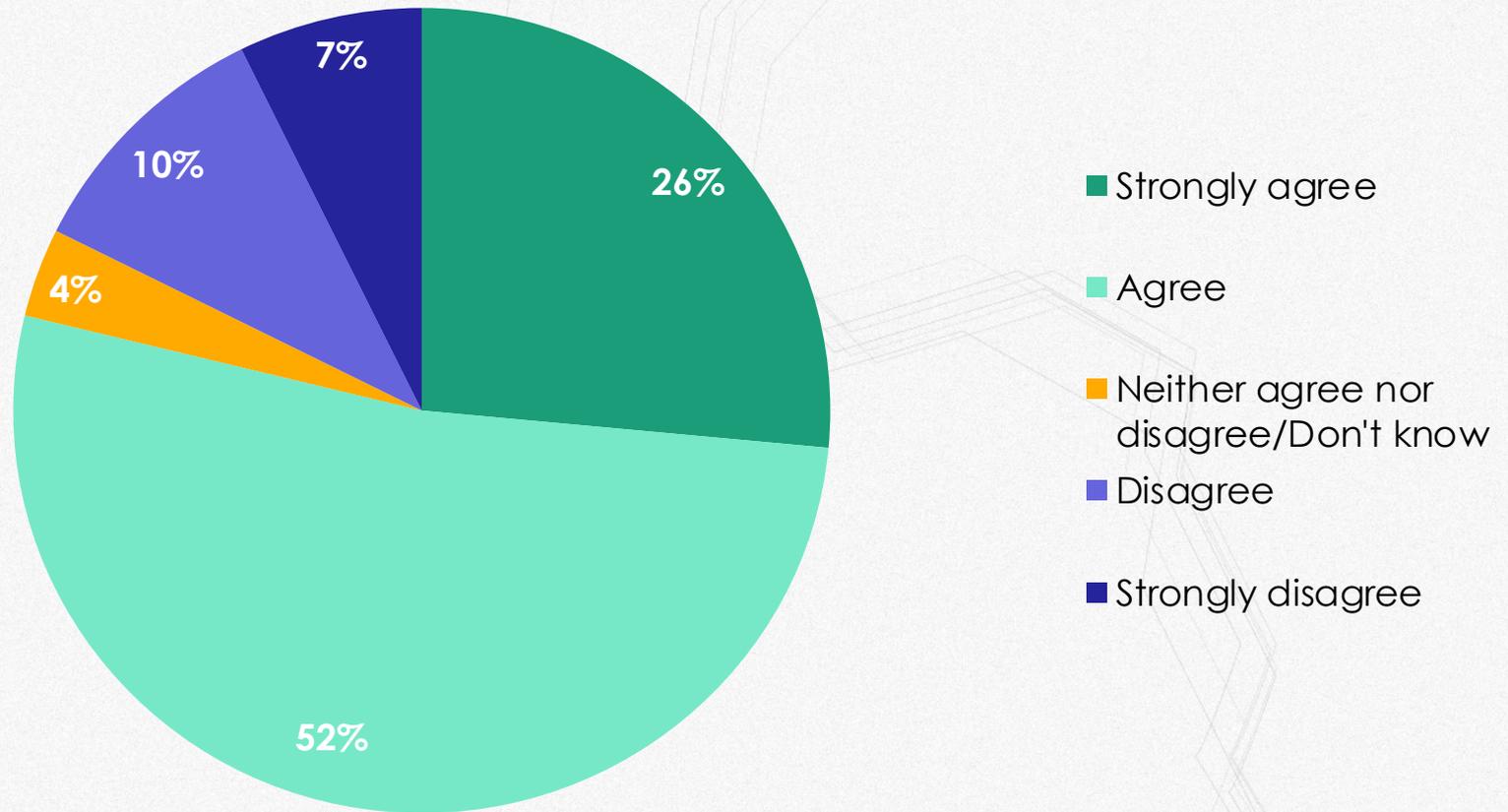


# Key findings



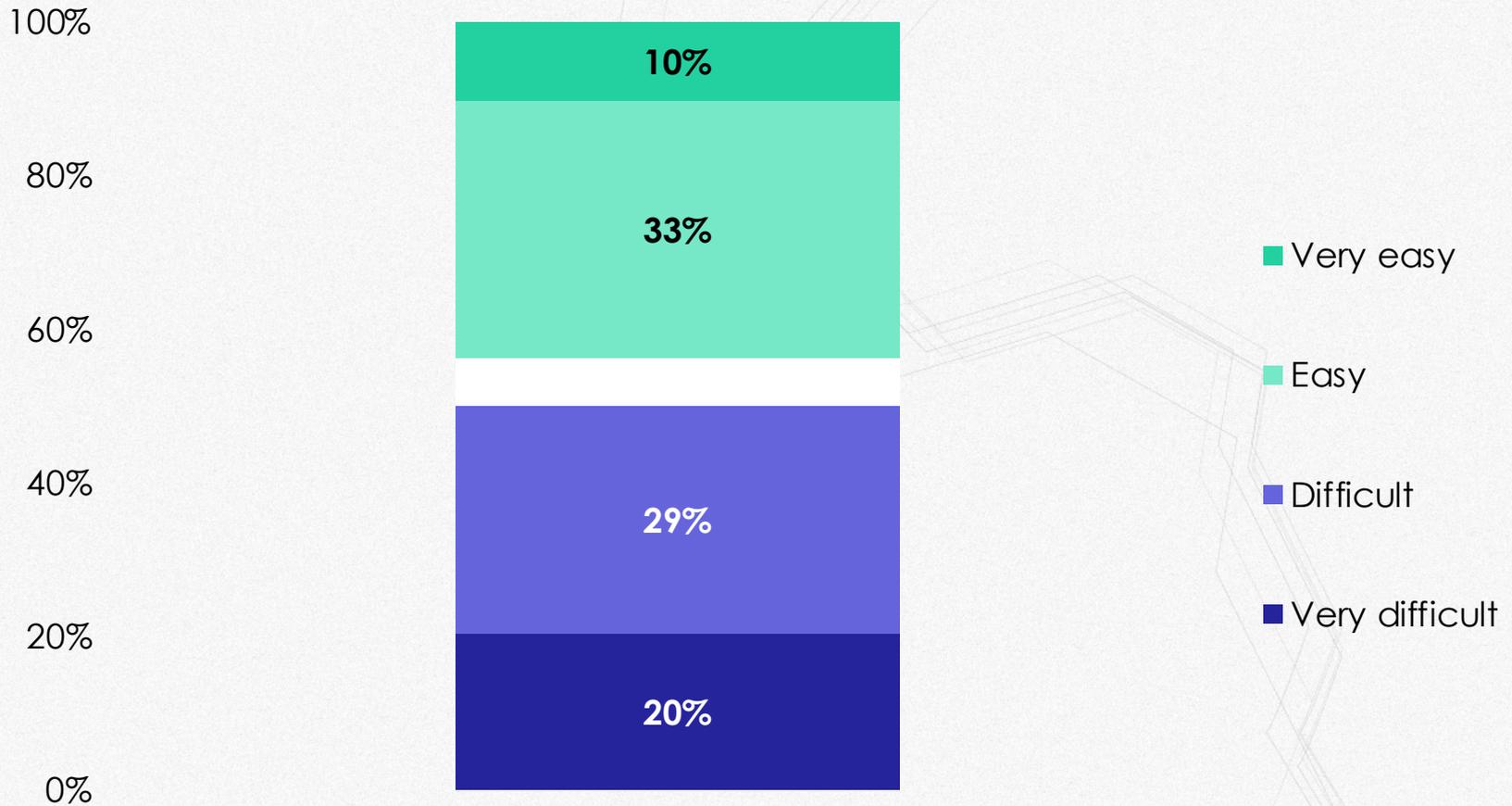
- Most Emaswati agree that lockdown restrictions and school closures were necessary to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- About half (49%) say they found it difficult to comply with the restrictions.
- Nine out of 10 (93%) say the schools were closed for too long.

# Support for lockdown | Eswatini | 2021



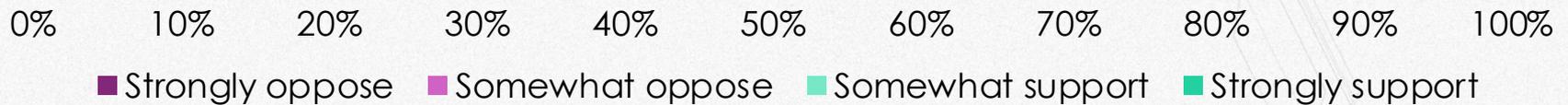
**Respondents were asked:** Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Even if the lockdown or curfew had negative impacts on the economy and people's livelihoods, it was necessary to limit the spread of COVID-19?

# Difficulty of complying with lockdown | Eswatini | 2021



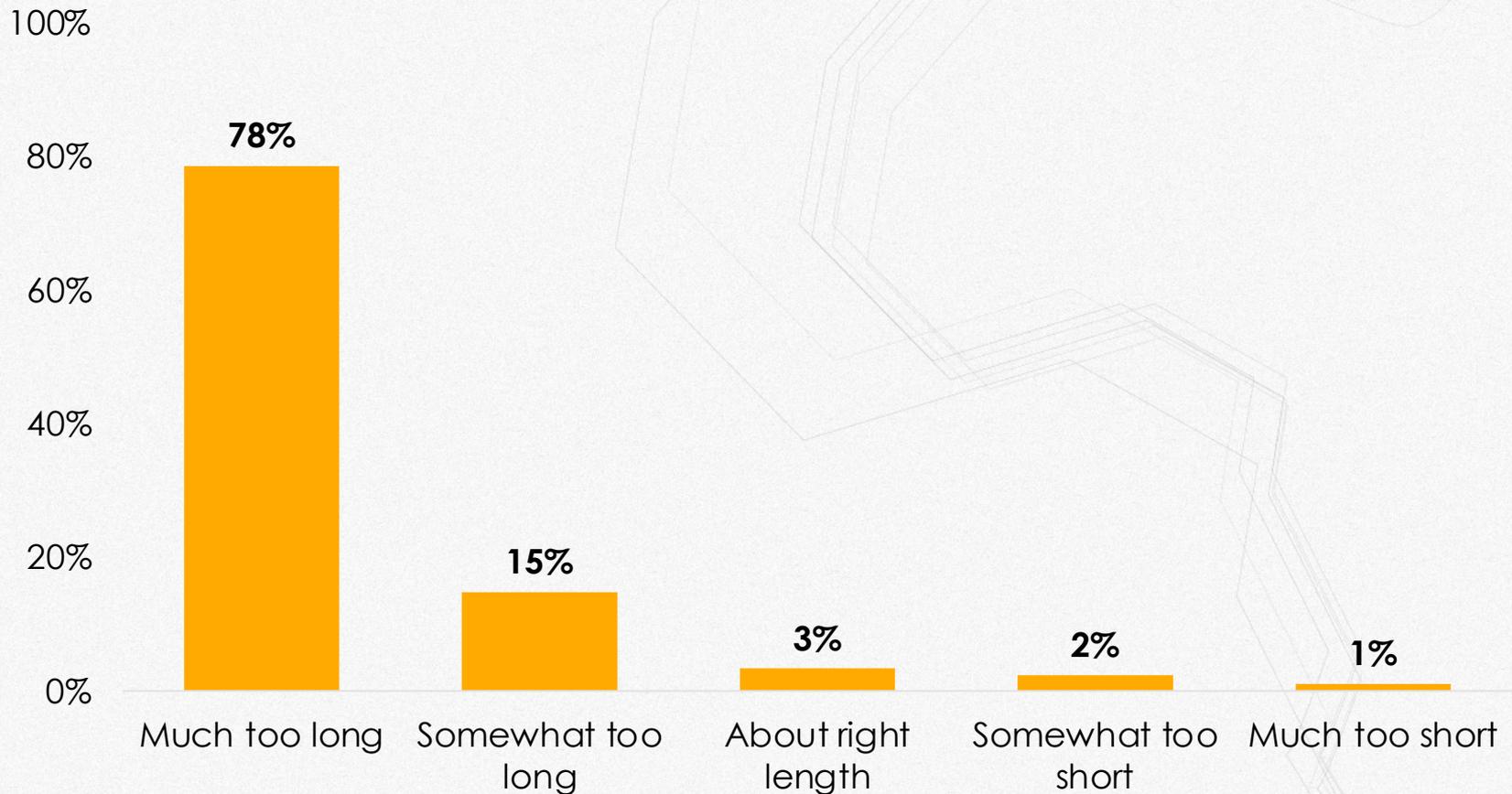
**Respondents were asked:** How easy or difficult was it for you and your household to comply with the lockdown or curfew restrictions imposed by the government?

# Support for school closures | Eswatini | 2021

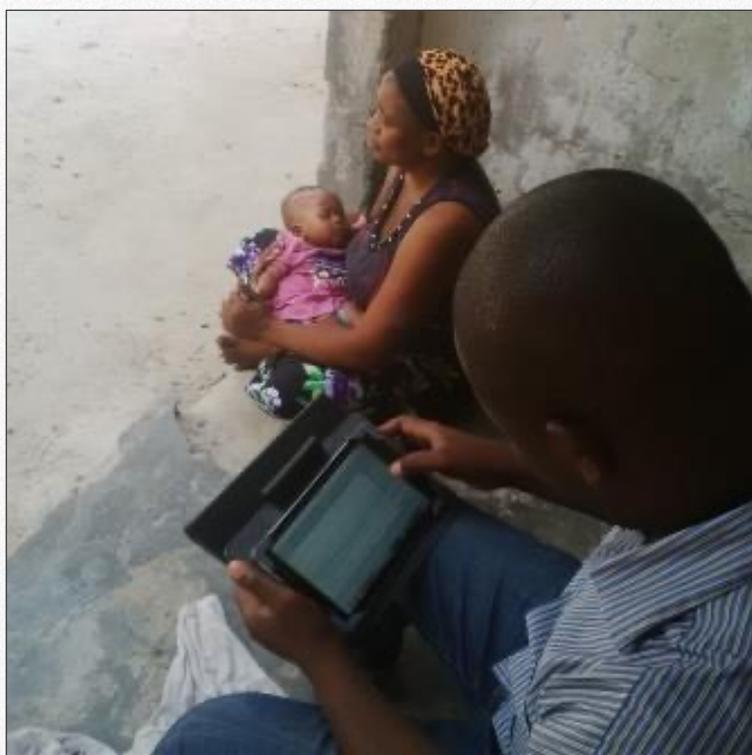


**Respondents were asked:** *Did you support or oppose the government's decision to close schools in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19?*

# Length of school closures | Eswatini | 2021



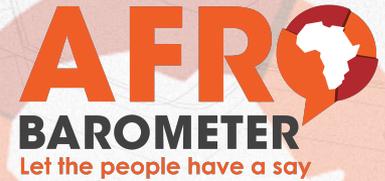
**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, was the period during which schools were closed too long or too short?*



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# Government assistance and performance managing pandemic

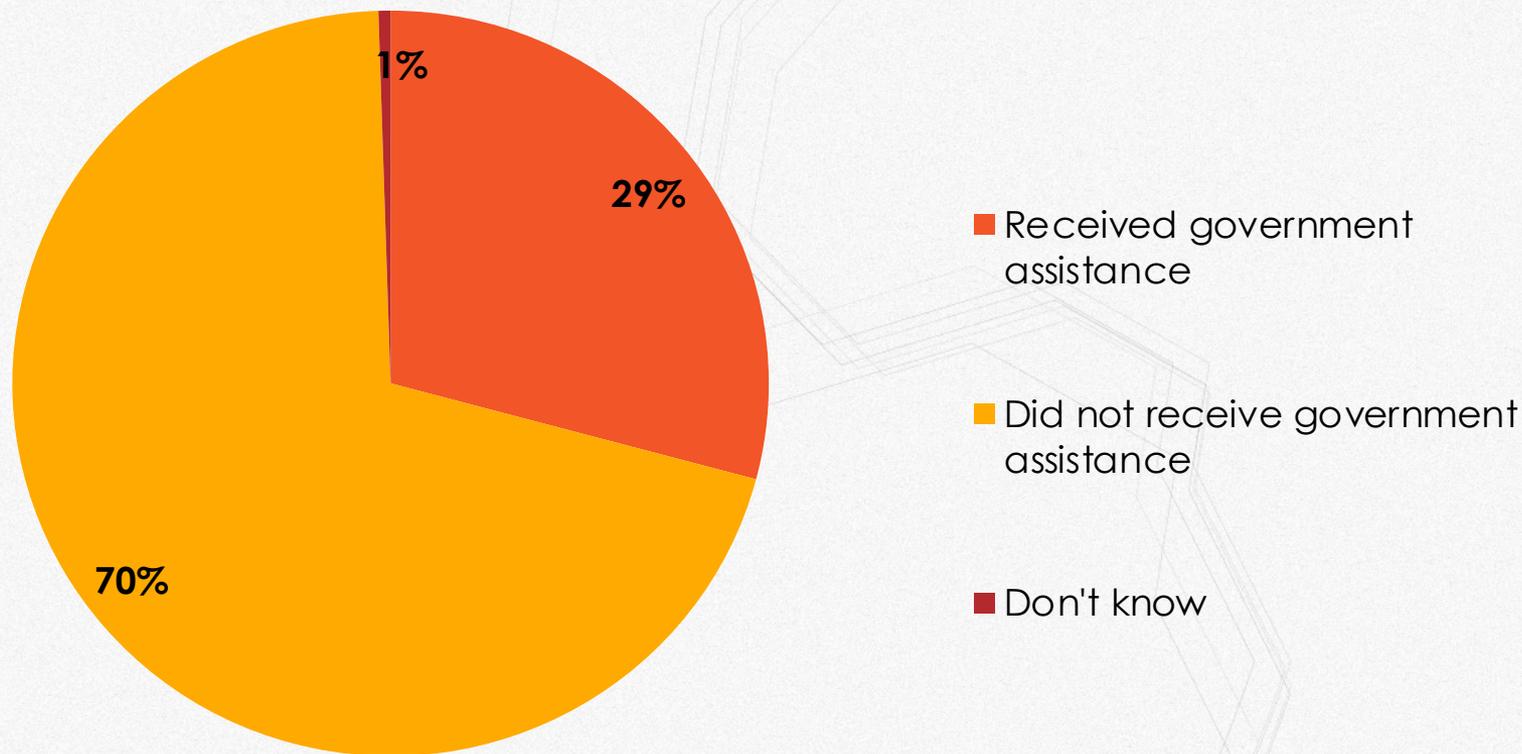
# Key findings



- Only three in 10 citizens (29%) say their household received special government assistance during the pandemic.
- Two-thirds (65%) say pandemic-related assistance was distributed unfairly.
- Overall, most citizens are satisfied with the government's efforts to manage the COVID-19 response (83%) and keep the public informed (90%).
  - However, only 38% say they trust official COVID-19 statistics, and more than three-fourths (77%) believe that “some” or “a lot” of the resources available for responding to the pandemic were lost to government corruption.

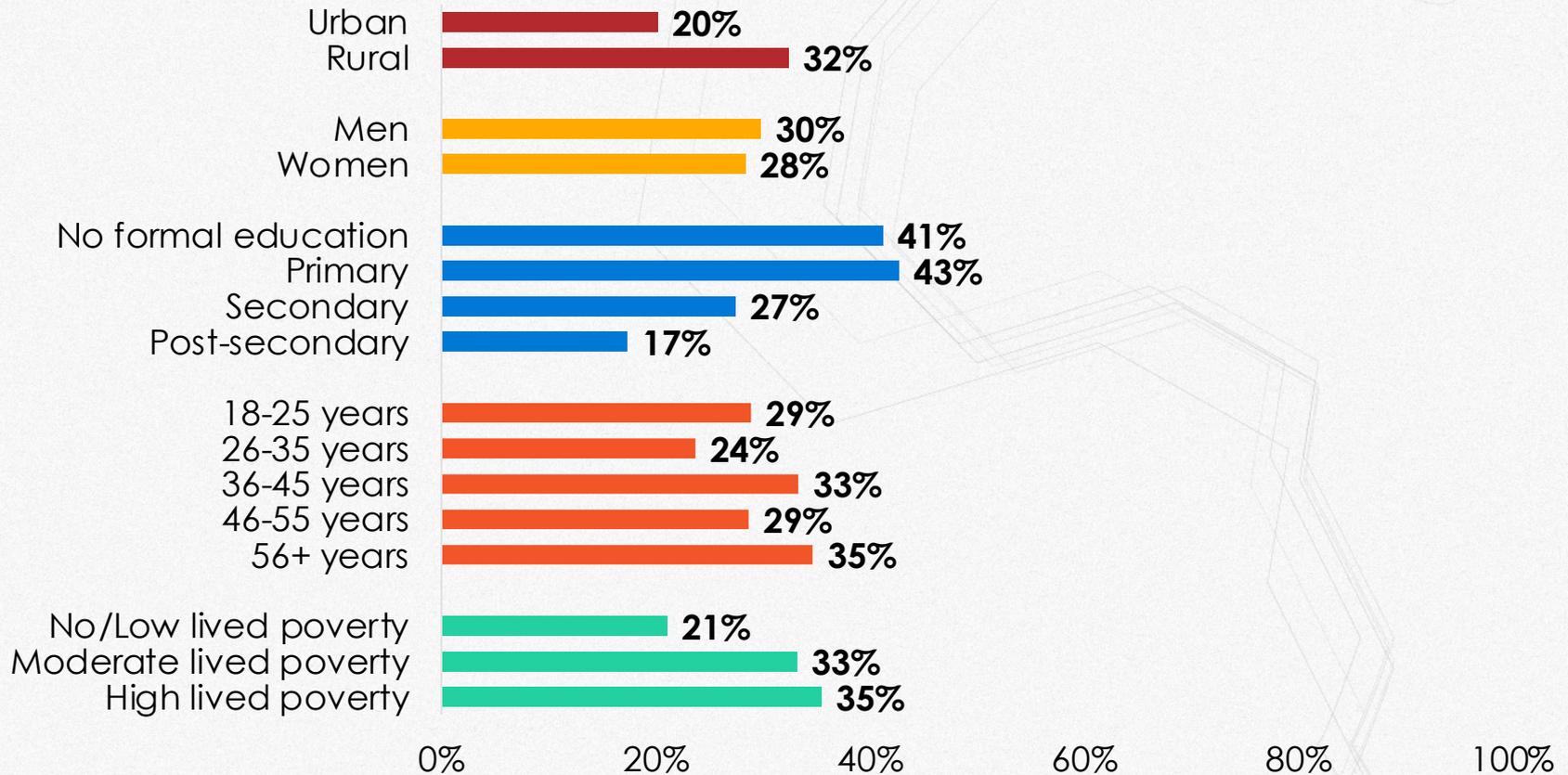
# Received government assistance | Eswatini

## | 2021



**Respondents were asked:** Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, have you or your household received any assistance from government, like food, cash payments, relief from bill payments, or other assistance that you were not normally receiving before the pandemic?

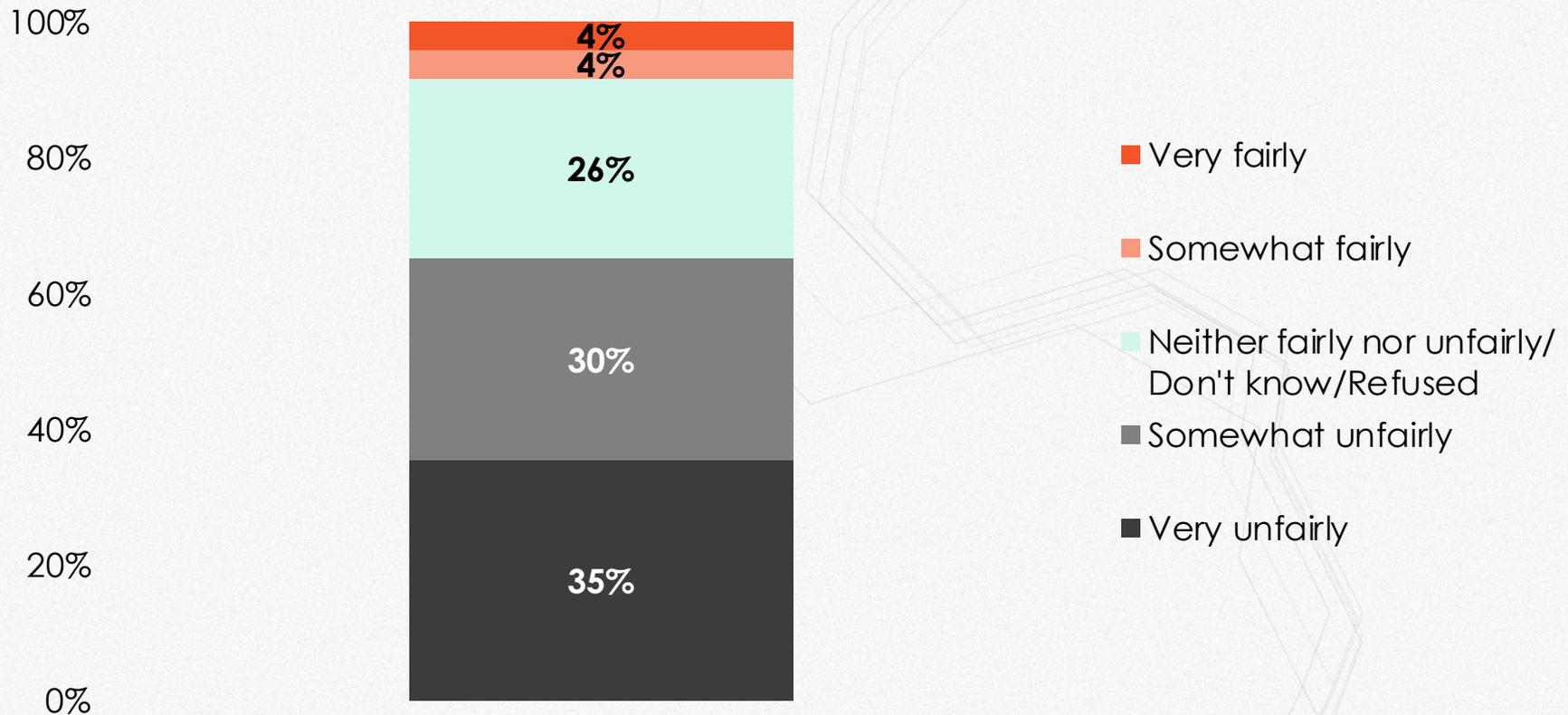
# Received government assistance | by socio-demographic group | Eswatini | 2021



**Respondents were asked:** Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, have you or your household received any assistance from government, like food, cash payments, relief from bill payments, or other assistance that you were not normally receiving before the pandemic? (% "yes")

# Fairness of government assistance | Eswatini

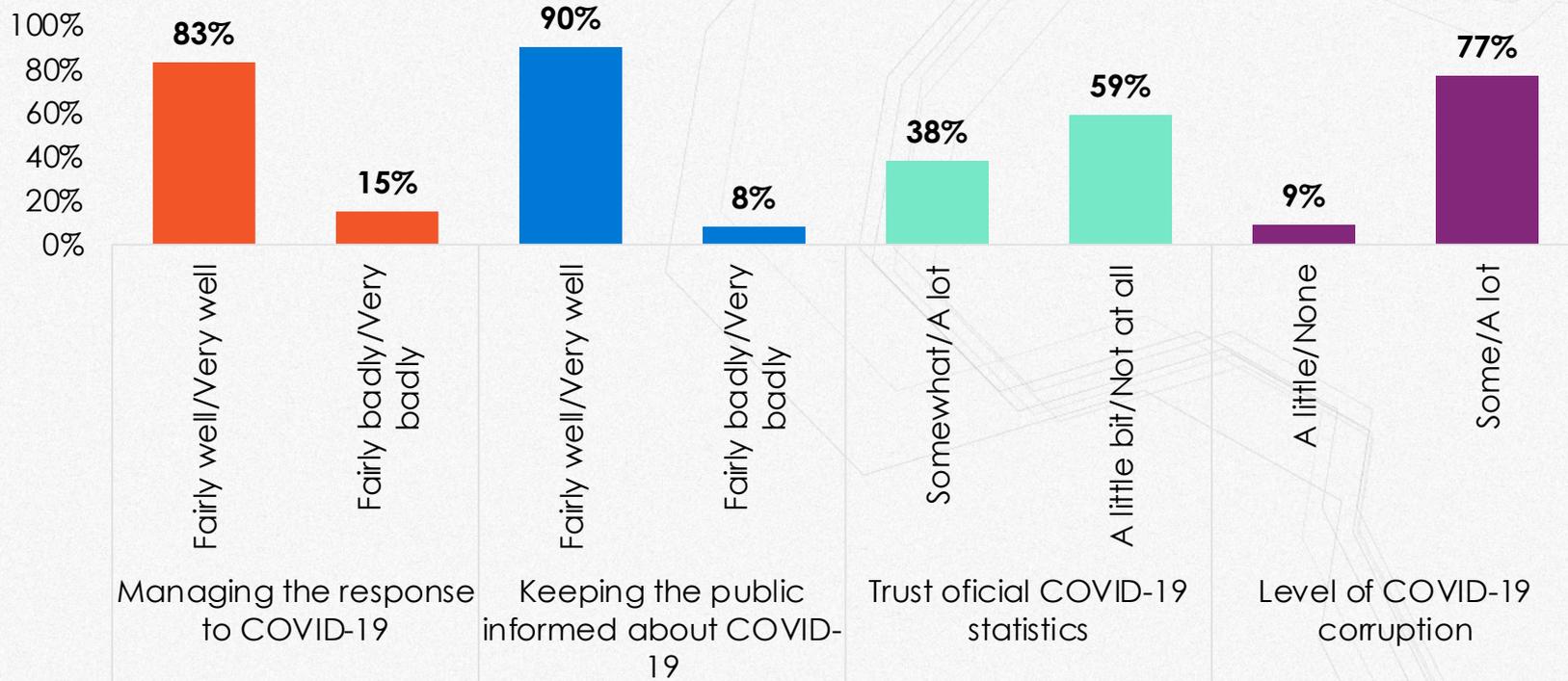
## | 2021



**Respondents were asked:** Do you think that the benefits of government programs to support people during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example through food packages or cash payments, have been distributed fairly, or that the distribution was unfair, for example by favoring certain groups or regions?

# Assessment of government efforts during the pandemic

## | Eswatini | 2021



### Respondents were asked:

How well or badly would you say the current government has handled the following matters since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, or haven't you heard enough to say: Managing the response to the COVID-19 pandemic? Keeping the public informed about COVID-19?

How much do you trust the official statistics provided by government on the number of infections and deaths due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Considering all of the funds and resources that were available to the government for combatting and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, how much do you think was lost or stolen due to corruption among government officials?

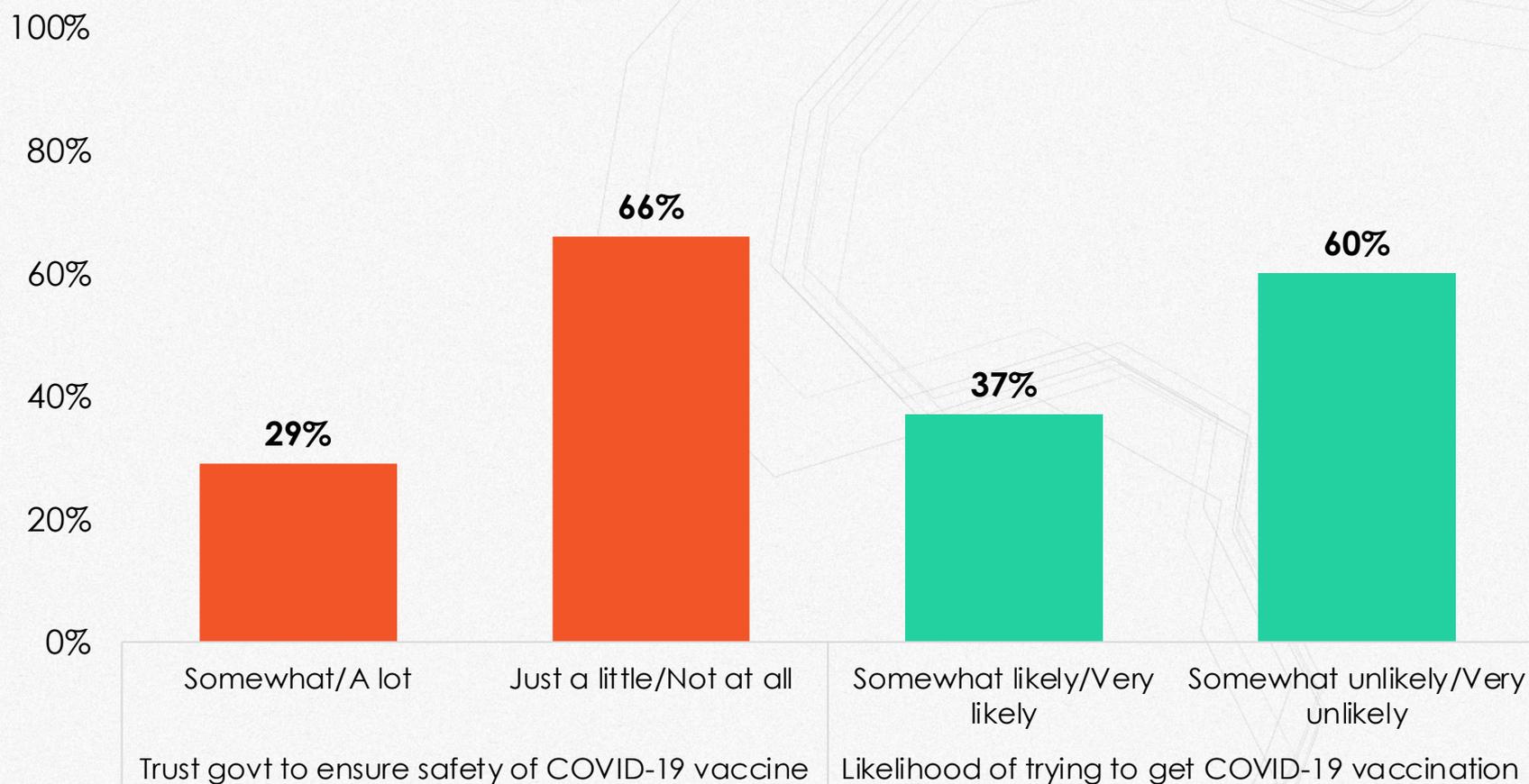
# Views on vaccines

# Key findings



- Fewer than one-third (29%) of citizens say they trust the government to ensure the safety of any COVID-19 vaccine.
- Only 37% indicate that they are likely to try to get vaccinated.
- More than four in 10 Eswatini (43%) believe that prayer is more effective than a vaccine would be in preventing COVID-19 infection.
- Half (50%) of citizens say the government should increase its investments in special preparations to respond to health emergencies like COVID-19.

# Attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccines | Eswatini | 2021

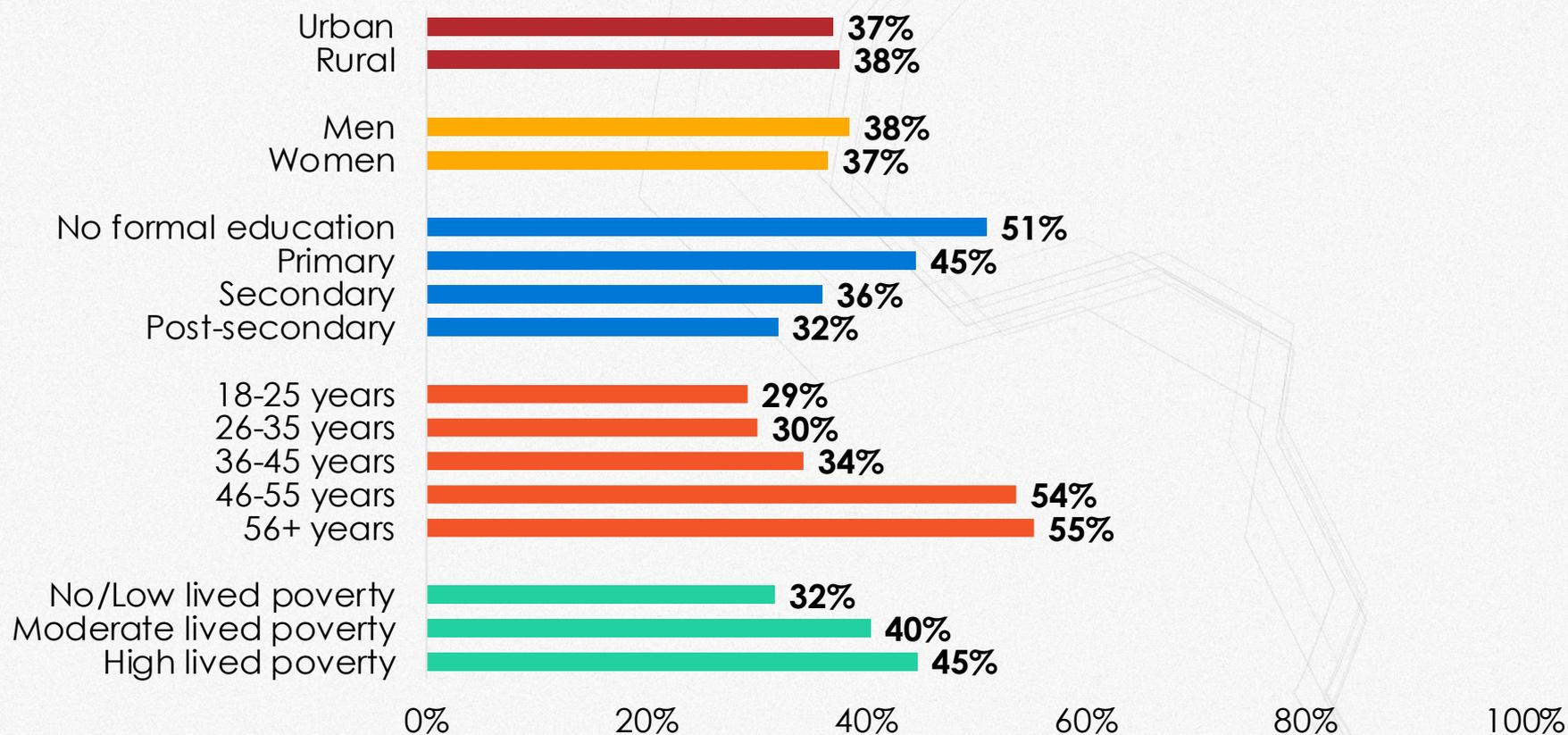


## Respondents were asked:

*How much do you trust the government to ensure that any vaccine for COVID-19 that is developed or offered to Swati citizens is safe before it is used in this country?*

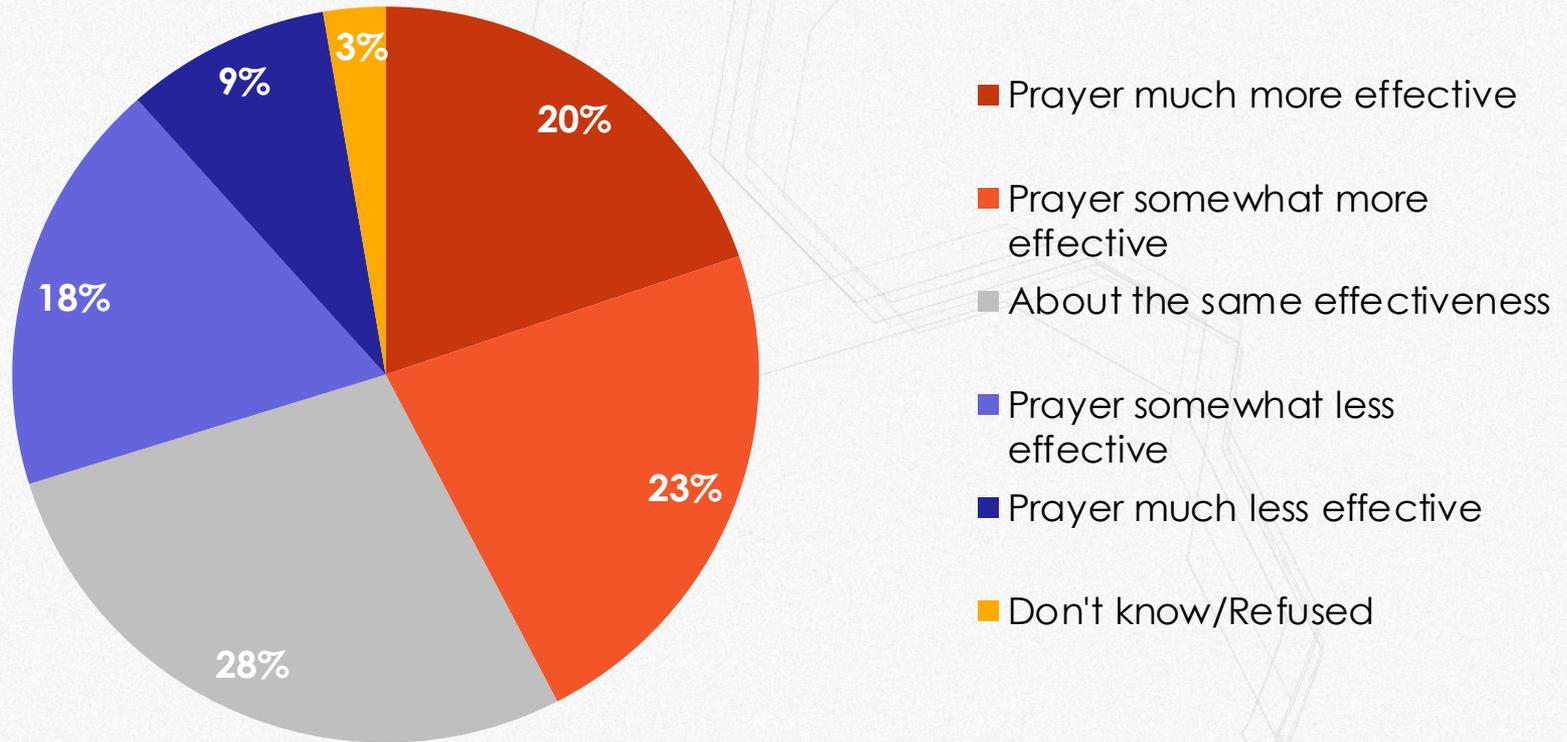
*If a vaccine for COVID-19 becomes available and the government says it is safe, how likely are you to try to get vaccinated?*

# Likely to try to get vaccinated | by socio-demographic group | Eswatini | 2021



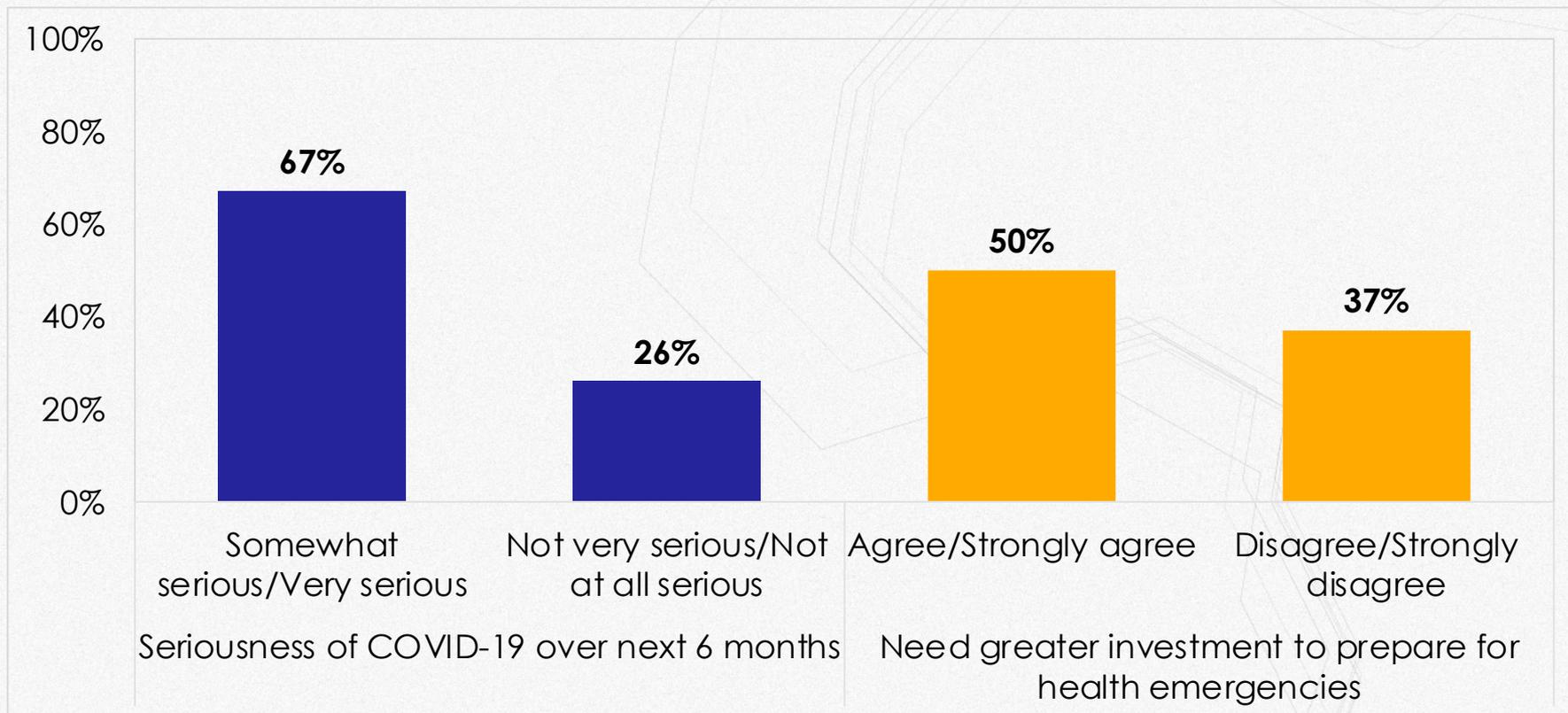
**Respondents were asked:** *If a vaccine for COVID-19 becomes available and the government says it is safe, how likely are you to try to get vaccinated? (% who say “somewhat likely” or “very likely”)*

# Prayer vs. vaccine: Which is more effective against COVID-19? | Eswatini | 2021



**Respondents were asked:** Some people think that prayer is an effective way to alter events in the world. Others put more faith in science to solve problems. Some people believe in both. What about you? Do you think that prayer is more effective or less effective than a vaccine would be in preventing COVID-19 infection?

# Future impacts of COVID-19 | Eswatini | 2021



## Respondents were asked:

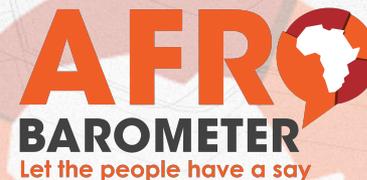
*Looking ahead, how serious of a problem do you think the COVID-19 pandemic will be for Eswatini over the next six months?*

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Our government needs to invest more of our health resources in special preparations to respond to health emergencies like COVID-19, even if it means fewer resources are available for other health services?*



# Restricting freedoms during a pandemic

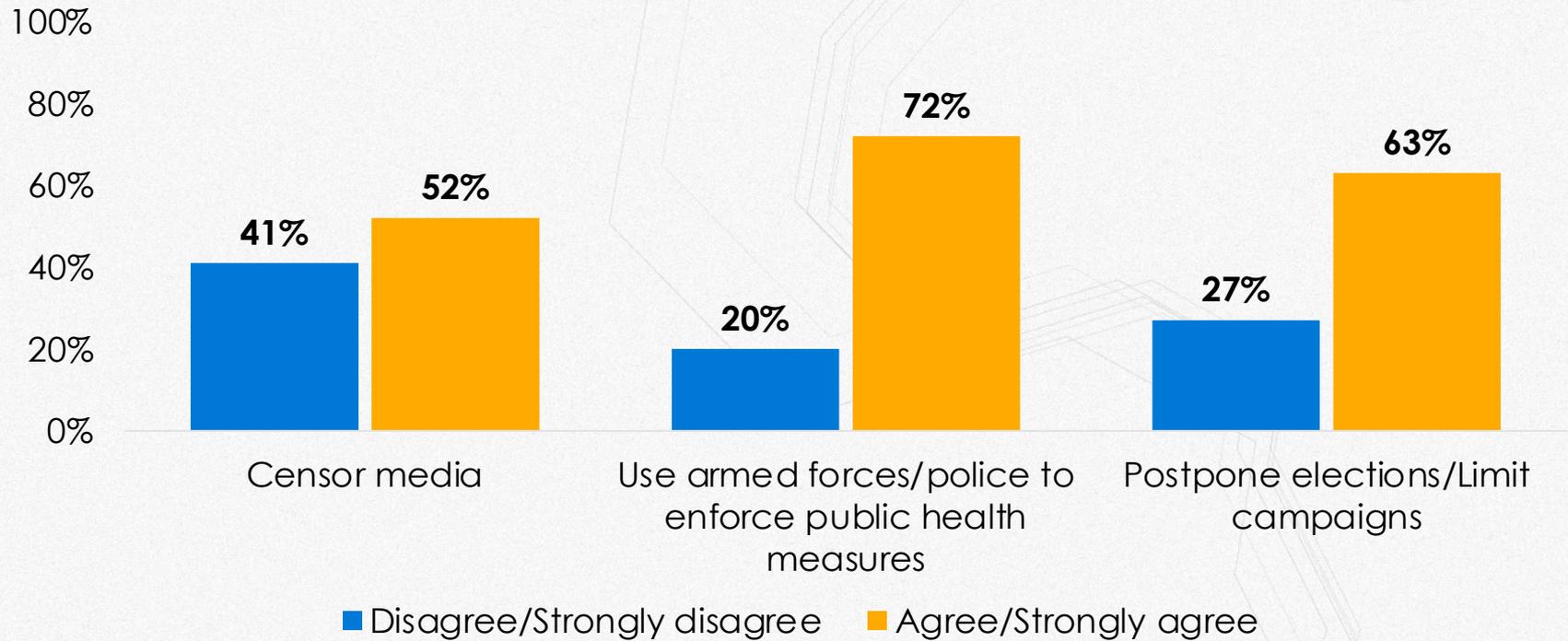
# Key findings



- A majority of citizens say the government is justified in using measures that infringe on democratic freedoms during a public health emergency, such as censoring the media (52%), using security forces to enforce public health mandates (72%), and postponing elections or limiting political campaigns (63%).
- Almost half (47%) of citizens say they are worried about politicians taking advantage of the pandemic to increase their power.

# Restrict freedoms during health emergency? | Eswatini

## | 2021



**Respondents were asked:** When the country is facing a public health emergency like the COVID-19 pandemic, do you agree or disagree that it is justified for the government to temporarily limit democracy or democratic freedoms by taking the following measures:

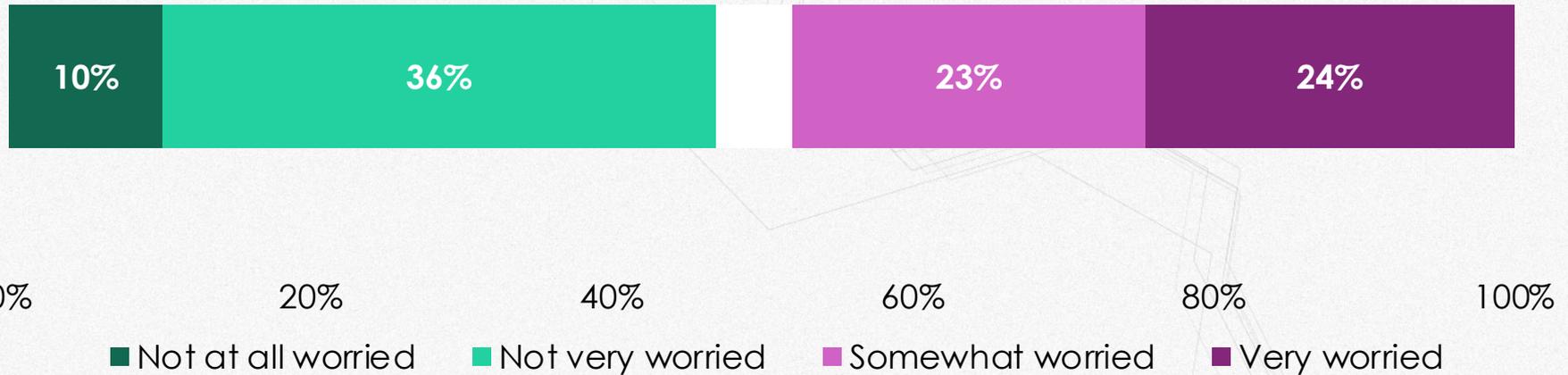
Censoring media reporting?

Using the police and security forces to enforce public health mandates like lockdown orders, mask requirements, or restrictions on public gatherings?

Postponing elections or limiting political campaigning?

# Worried about politicians' intentions? | Eswatini

## | 2021



**Respondents were asked:** *In some countries, people have been worried that governments and politicians are trying to take advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to increase their wealth or power, or to permanently restrict freedoms or political competition. What about you? How worried are you, if at all, that the following things are taking place or might take place in Eswatini: Politicians are using the pandemic as an opportunity to increase their power and authority?*

# Conclusions

# Conclusions

- Citizens are satisfied with the government's overall management of the COVID-19 response.
- However, survey findings also highlight challenges that the government faces with the response, including:
  - Distributing assistance in a manner that is perceived as fair
  - Eliminating corruption from the management of pandemic-related resources
  - Build public trust in the government's ability to ensure the safety of COVID-19 vaccines.
- With only about one-third of citizens indicating a willingness to be vaccinated, the government's vaccination campaign will require extensive public education and persuasion if it is to succeed.

Thank you

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