

ADVISION LESOTHO



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Basotho see increased corruption despite government efforts

Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 15 | Libuseng Malephane

Summary

Basotho perceive an increased level of corruption in the past year, with the highest levels of perceived corruption among the police and business executives, according to Afrobarometer's most recent survey. Survey results show that citizens are divided in their assessment of the government's handling of the fight against corruption.

Most Basotho say ordinary people can make a difference in the fight against corruption. The most frequently cited way for citizens to help fight corruption is by reporting corruption when it occurs. However, fewer than half of the population say they trust the Directorate for Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO), the institution to which these reports should be made, and a significant proportion (30%) haven't heard enough about the DCEO to comment on it.

These findings highlight the need for the DCEO to become more visible in order to build the public confidence and cooperation it needs to play its role effectively.

Afrobarometer survey

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.

Key findings

- A majority (58%) of Basotho say the level of corruption in Lesotho has increased over the past year.
- The police and business executives are perceived as the most corrupt categories of officials/leaders.
- Basotho are divided in their assessment of the government's performance in fighting corruption and in their perceptions of the DCEO.
- Six in 10 respondents (59%) say ordinary Basotho can make a difference in the fight against corruption, most effectively by reporting corruption when it occurs. This highlights the importance of addressing the significant proportion (30%) of the

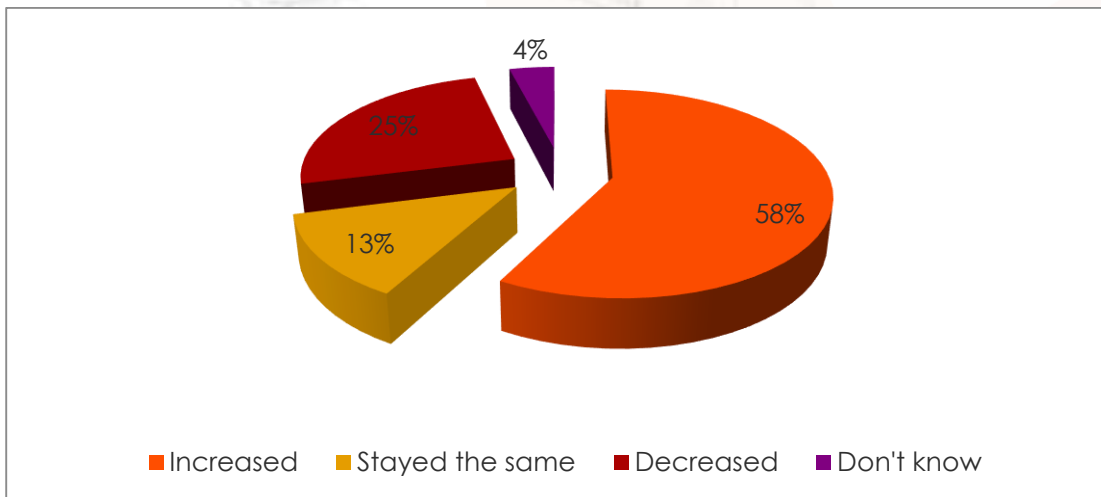
population that has not heard enough about the institution responsible for combating corruption in the country (DCEO).

Perceived level of corruption in Lesotho

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Lesotho at No. 55 of 175 countries (with No. 1 being the least corrupt), fifth in Africa (see www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results#myAnchor1). Its 2014 score of 49/100 is an improvement from the 2012 score of 45/100 but still indicates that corruption is endemic in Lesotho. Reflecting public concern about the issue, corruption has been one of the campaign points for political parties in the 2012 and 2015 elections. In 2013 and 2014, high-profile cases of corruption were brought before the courts.

The Afrobarometer survey of 2014 shows that nearly six in 10 Basotho (58%) say corruption has increased over the past year (Figure 1). More rural (59%) than urban (53%) residents say corruption has increased (Figure 2). Among nine other African countries where Afrobarometer Round 6 data is already available, majorities in eight countries similarly perceive increased corruption (Figure 3). In Lesotho, perceptions of corruption are highest with regard to the police (with 39% of respondents saying “most” or “all” police are corrupt) and business executives (30%) and lowest with regard to religious leaders (5%). For five of eight categories of officials and leaders, perceptions of corruption increased slightly from 2012 to 2014 (Figure 4). Perceptions of corruption among police and business executives are high in most of the 10 African countries surveyed to date in Round 6. In all categories, perceptions of corruption are higher among urban Basotho than among their rural counterparts (Figure 5).

Figure 1: Perceptions of corruption levels over the past year | Lesotho | 2014



Participants were asked: *In your opinion, over the past year, has the level of corruption in this country increased, decreased, or stayed the same? (“increased”=“increased somewhat” or “increased a lot”; “decreased”=“decreased somewhat” or “decreased a lot”)*

Figure 2: Perceptions of corruption levels over the past year | by location | Lesotho | 2014

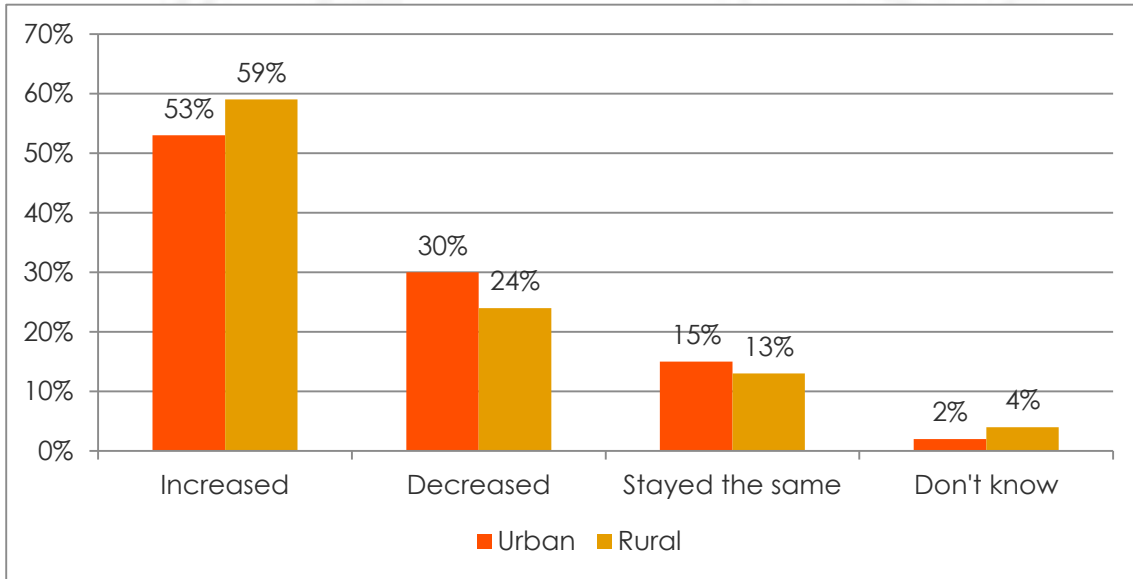
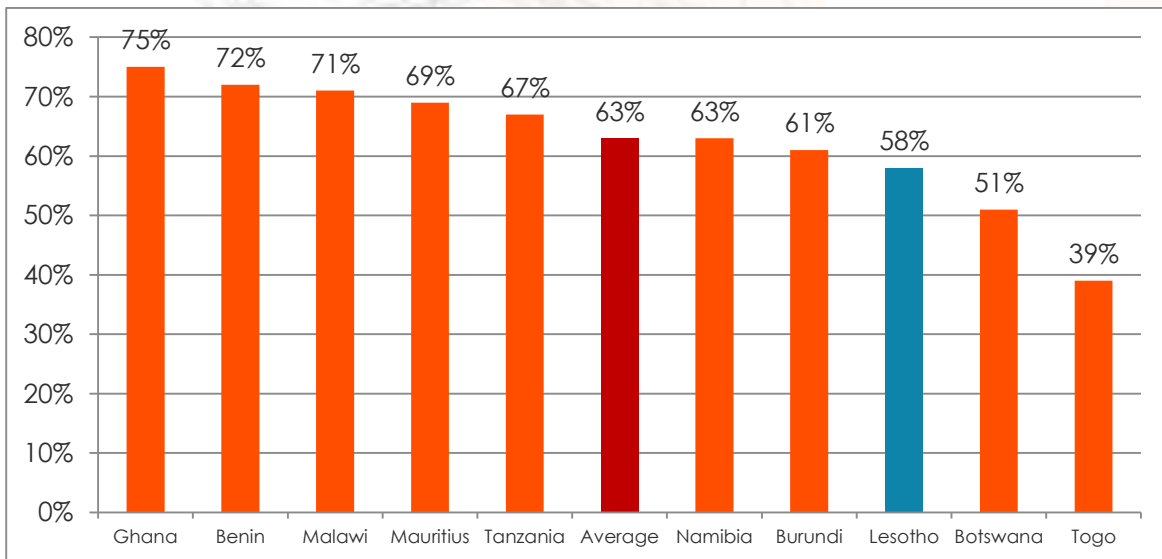
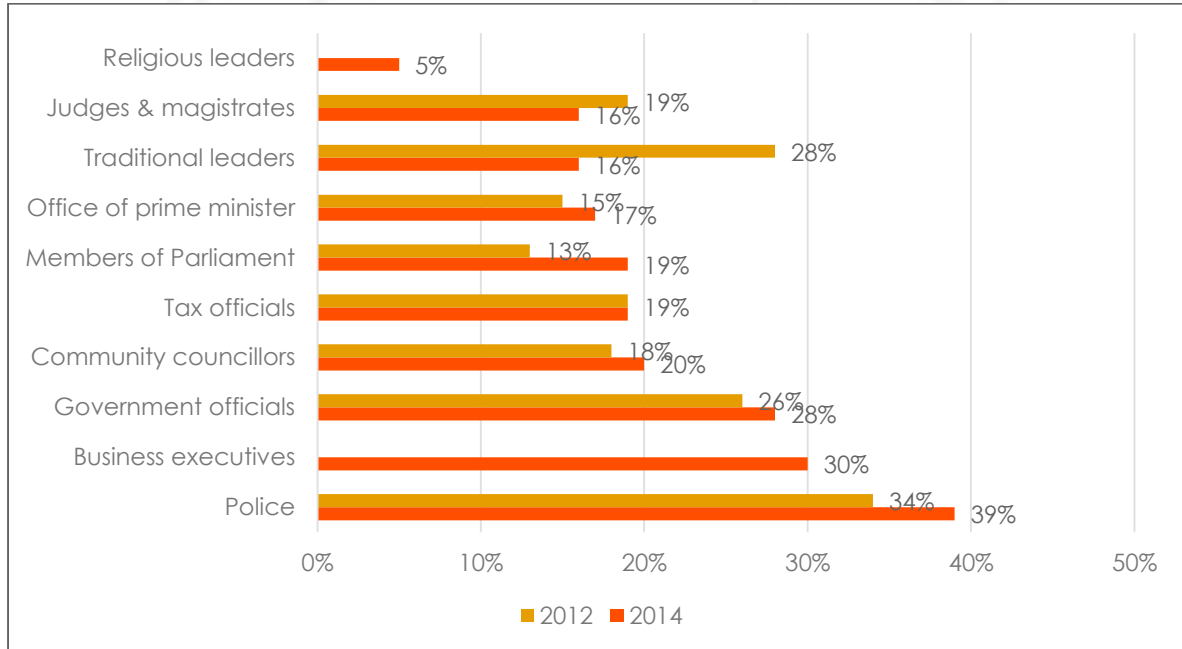


Figure 3: Perceptions of corruption levels over the past year | 10 countries | 2014



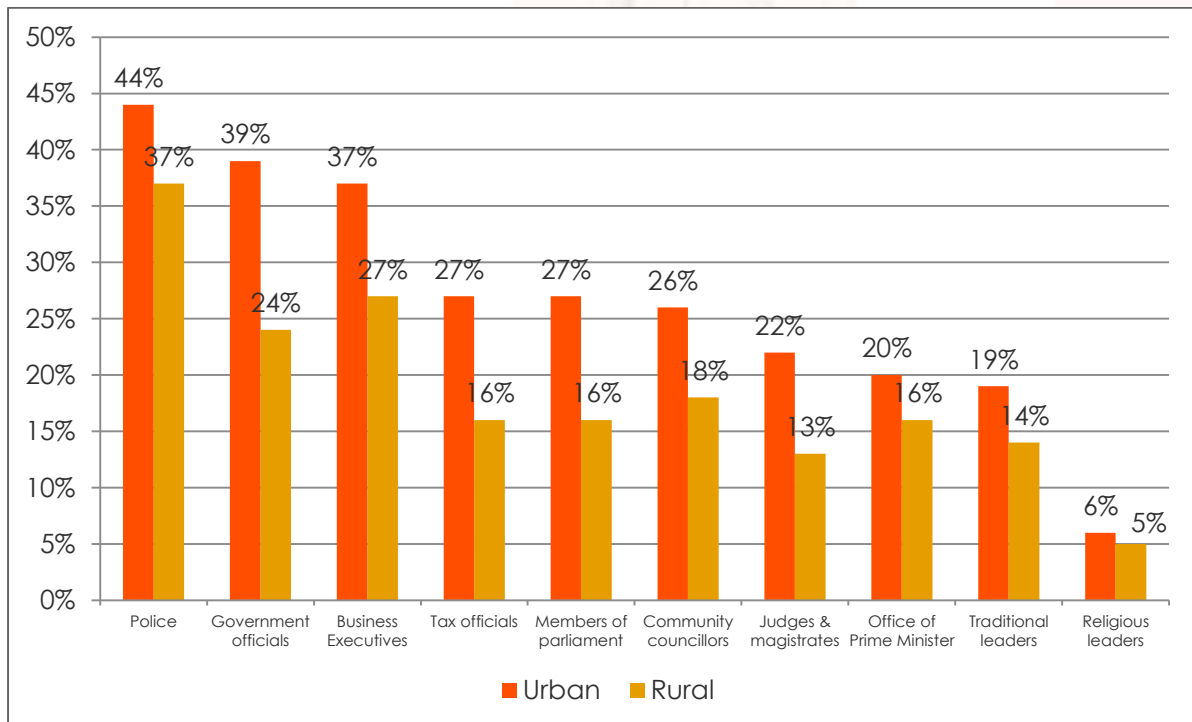
(% who say "increased a lot" or "increased somewhat")

Figure 4: Perceptions of corruption among officials/leaders | Lesotho | 2012-2014



Participants were asked: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (% who say "most of them" or "all of them")

Figure 5: Perceptions of corruption among officials/leaders | by location | Lesotho | 2014

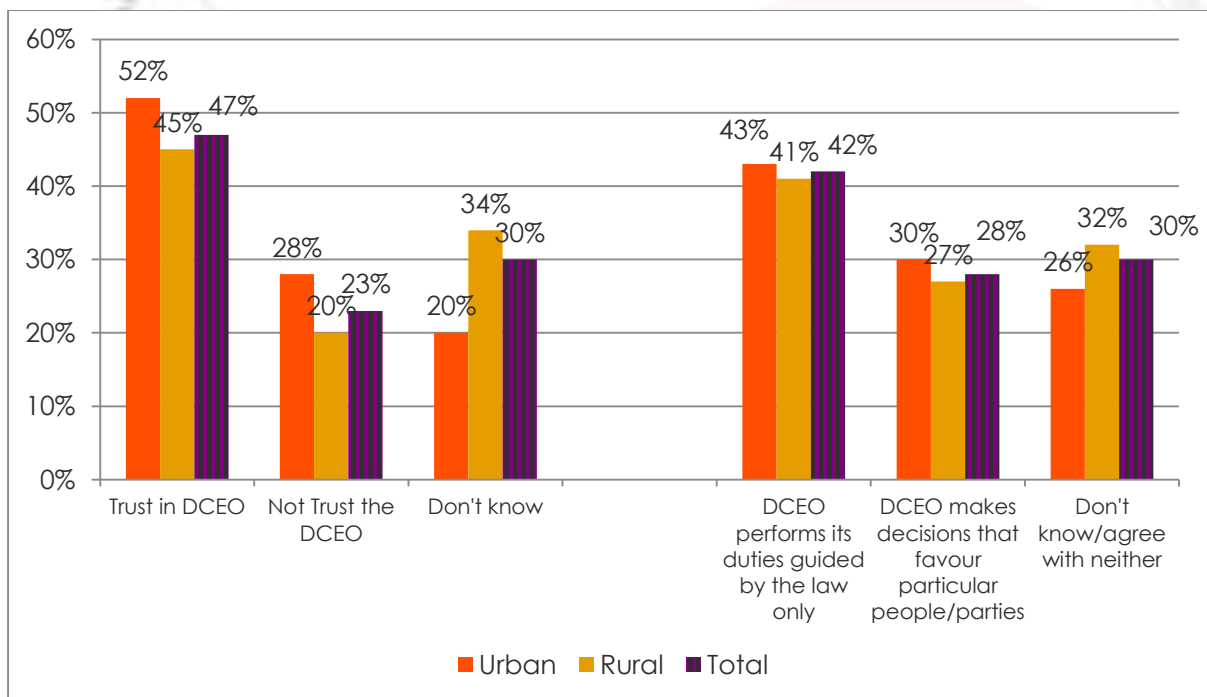


Participants were asked: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (% who say "most of them" or "all of them")

Combating corruption

The Directorate for Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) was established through an Act of Parliament to prevent and investigate corruption and economic crime. The 2014 Afrobarometer survey shows that fewer than half (47%) of Basotho trust the DCEO, and only four of 10 (42%) say the DCEO performs its duties as a neutral body guided only by the law (Figure 6). About one in five do not trust the DCEO (23%), and a similar percentage say that the DCEO favours certain people or parties (28%). Importantly, a significant proportion (30%) of the population does not know enough about the DCEO to respond. Here, too, there is a significant difference between the urban and rural population. More urban (52%) than rural (45%) residents trust the DCEO, and more rural (34%) than urban (20%) residents do not know about the DCEO.

Figure 6: Perceptions of the DCEO | by location | Lesotho | 2014



Participants were asked:

How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The Directorate for Corruption and Economic Offences? (% who say "somewhat" or "a lot")

Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.

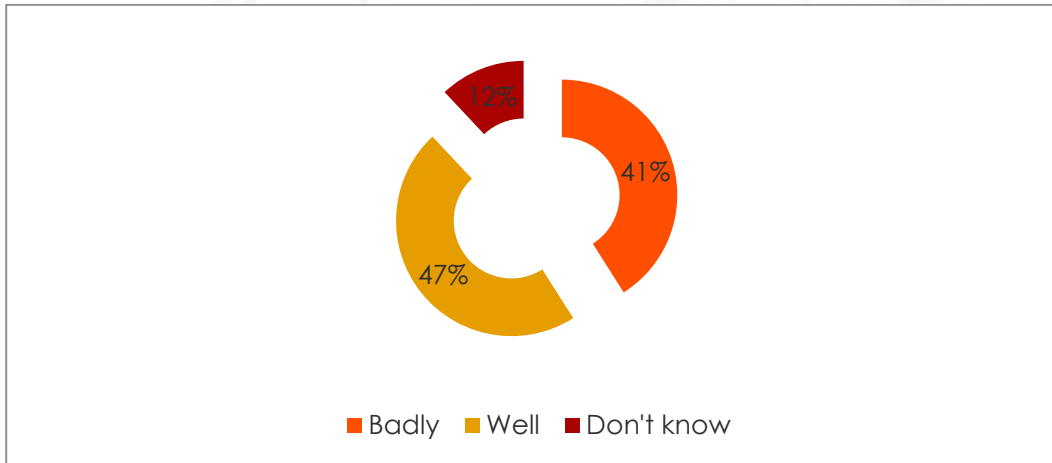
Statement 1: The Directorate for Corruption and Economic Offences performs its duties as a neutral body guided only by the law.

Statement 2: The Directorate for Corruption and Economic Offences makes decisions that favour particular people, parties, and interests.

(% who "agree" or "agree very strongly")

Basotho are divided in their assessment of the government's efforts to fight corruption, with 46% saying the government is performing "fairly well" or "very well" and 41% saying it is performing "fairly badly" or "very badly" (Figure 7). A majority (53%) of urban Basotho say the government is doing a good job handling the fight against corruption, compared to 45% of rural residents.

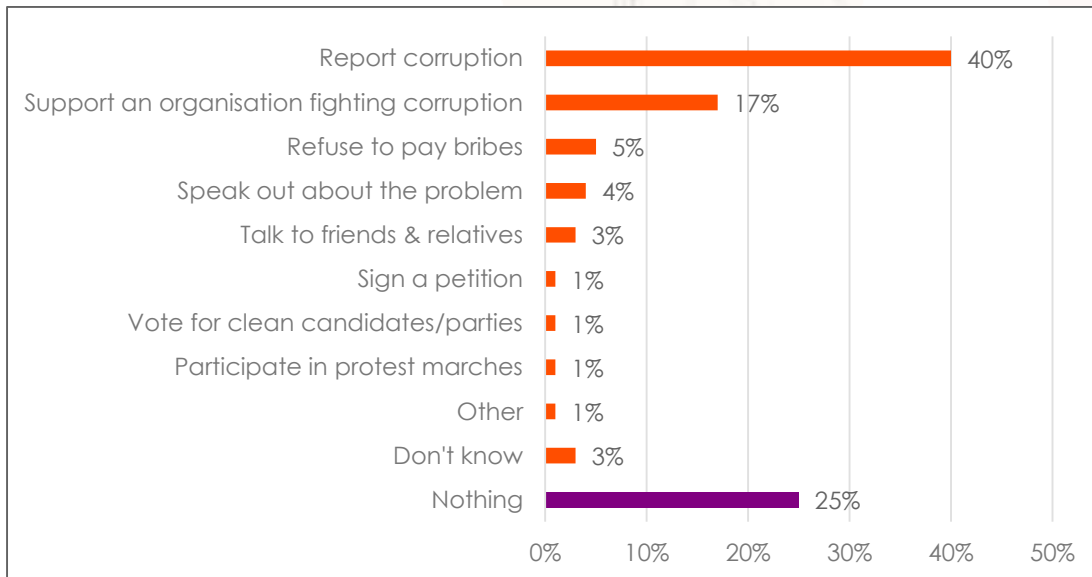
Figure 7: Government's handling of corruption | Lesotho | 2014



Participants 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: Fighting corruption in government? ("badly"="fairly badly" or "very badly"; "well"="fairly well" or "very well")

On the question of the public's role in the fight against corruption, six in 10 respondents (59%) say ordinary Basotho can make a difference. Reporting corruption is the most frequently cited way in which an ordinary person can help combat corruption (Figure 8). This shows that it is important that the DCEO be known and visible to enable the reporting of corruption when it is seen and experienced.

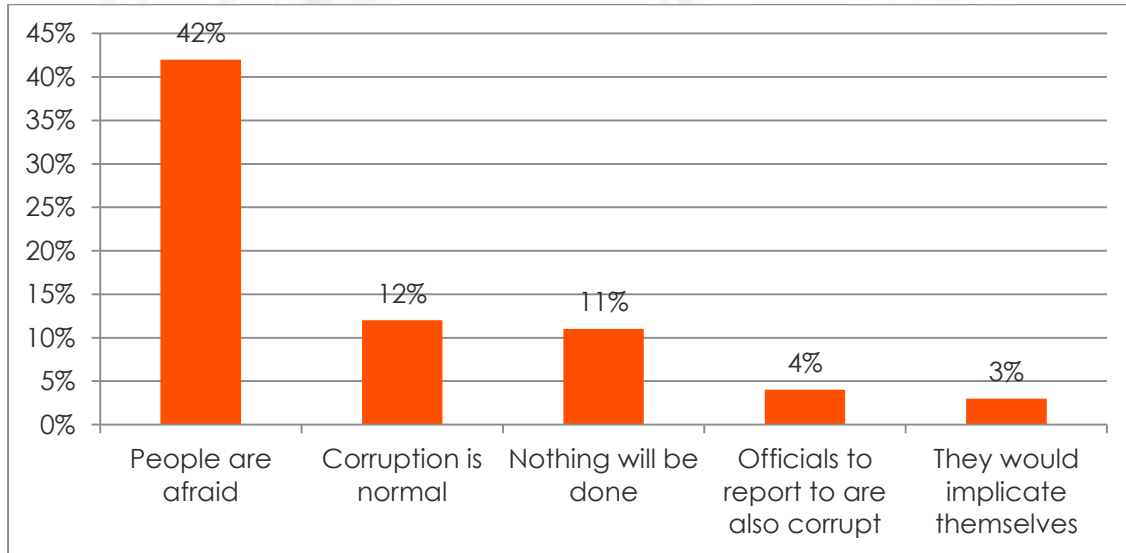
Figure 8: Effective ways of combating corruption | Lesotho | 2014



Participants were asked: What is the most effective thing that an ordinary person like you can do to help combat corruption in this country? (%)

The most frequently cited reason (mentioned by 42% of respondents) why incidents of corruption are not reported to the authorities is that people are afraid of the consequences (Figure 9). One in 10 respondents say that corruption is normal (12%) and that nothing would be done (11%).

Figure 9: Reasons why incidents of corruption are not reported | Lesotho | 2014



Participants were asked: *Some people say that many incidents of corruption are never reported. Based on your experience, what do you think is the main reason why many people do not report corruption when it occurs? (%)*

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Afrobarometer is produced collaboratively by social scientists from more than 30 African countries. Coordination is provided by the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) in Ghana, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in South Africa, the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Nairobi in Kenya, and the Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IREEP) in Benin. Michigan State University (MSU) and the University of Cape Town (UCT) provide technical support to the network.

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For more information, please visit www.afrobarometer.org.

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