

ADVISION LESOTHO (PTY) LTD

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Maseru, Lesotho

PRESS RELEASE

**FEW BASOTHO SPEAK TO ELECTED LEADERS**  
**A MAJORITY SAY POLITICS IS TOO COMPLICATED FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE**

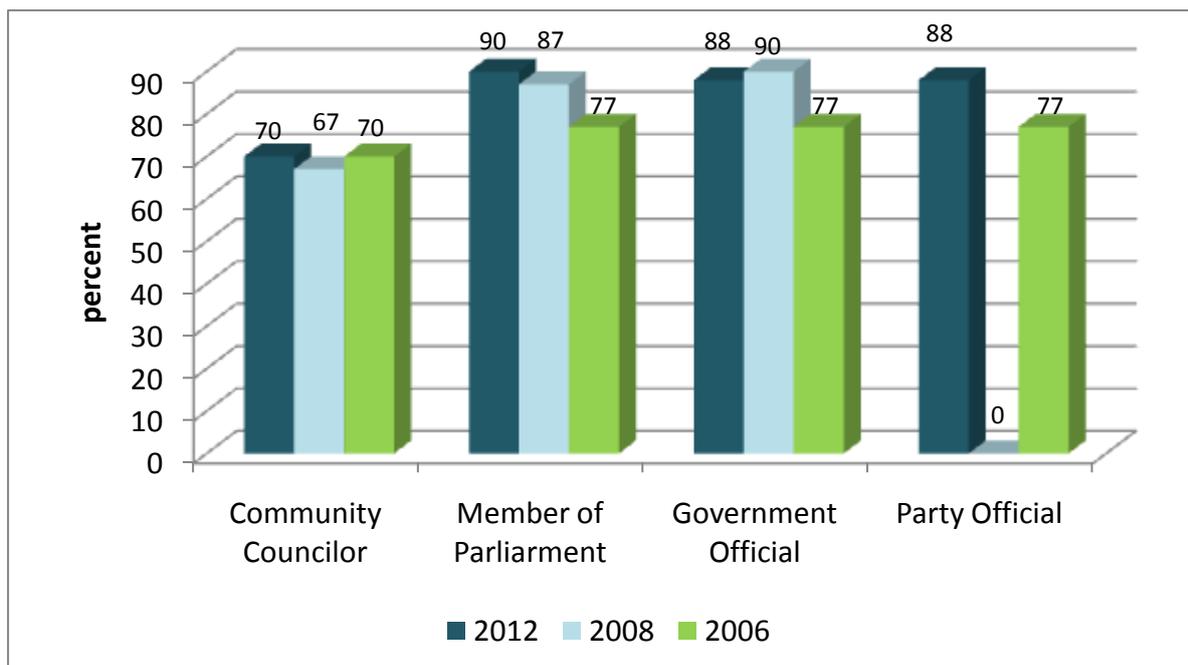
Political participation in Lesotho remains stubbornly low with majorities reporting they had no contact with government officials and that they do not understand politics and government, according to the latest Afrobarometer survey.

The majority who are intimidated by politics has narrowed, however, with just 57% saying that politics and government are too complicated for an ordinary person, compared with 69% in 2008.

Contact with elected officials has shown no significant change since 2008. Ninety percent of people surveyed by Afrobarometer had never contacted a member of parliament, compared with 87% in 2008; 88% had never contacted any government official compared with 90% in 2008 and 88% had never contacted a party official.

Even local government appeared to be out of reach for most people: 70% of respondents said they had never contacted a local councillor.

**Figure 1: A majority of Basotho did not speak to political or government leaders in the last year**  
*Respondents were asked: During the past year, how often have you contacted any of the following persons about some important problem or to give them your views? The percent who said never:*

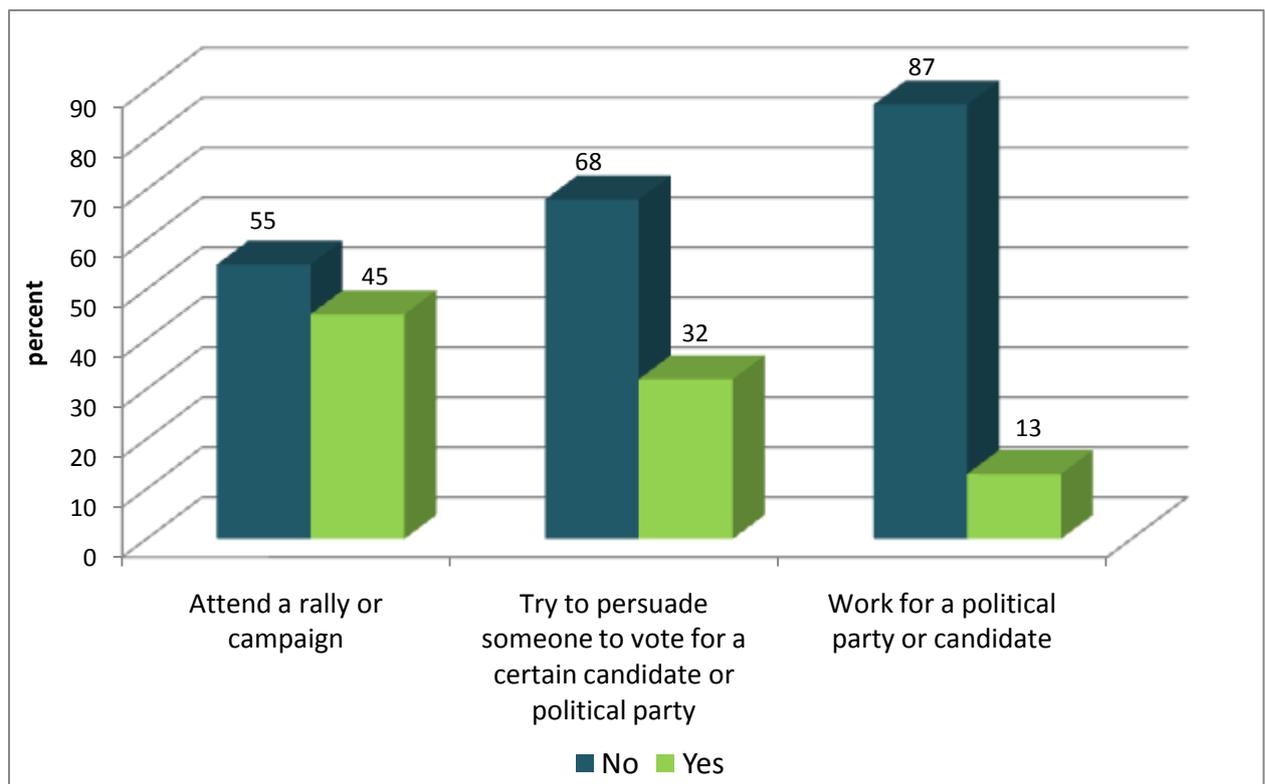


## Attitudes towards politics and actions in politics

Majorities said they did not participate in any public political actions during the May 2012 elections. Eighty-seven percent said they hadn't worked for a candidate or political party; 68% said they had not tried to persuade someone to vote for any party or candidate; 55% said they'd never attended a campaign meeting or rally. However, 73% said they voted though election records say just 51% did so.

**Figure 2: Majorities shun election rallies and avoid influencing elections**

*Participants were asked: Thinking about the last national election in May 2012, did you attend a meeting, try to persuade voters for a candidate or political party, or work for a candidate or political party. Percentages who said yes and no:*



The results suggest that ordinary Basotho feel that politics passes them by -- only a small majority has voted; minorities attend campaign meetings or rallies or even try to persuade their friends to vote for a party or candidate. The apathy challenges the government and opposition to do more to convince ordinary people that voting, campaigning and working for a party they support is worthwhile.

## Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer conducts public attitude surveys, covering up to 35 African countries in Round 5 (2011-2013). The surveys measure public opinions on democracy and its alternatives, and evaluations of the quality of governance and economic performance. In addition, the survey assesses the views of the electorate on critical political issues in the surveyed countries. The Afrobarometer also provides comparisons over time, as four rounds of surveys have been held from 1999 to 2008 and Round 5 is currently underway.

In Lesotho, Afrobarometer work is coordinated by a research team of Advision Lesotho. A research Consultancy Organisation based in Maseru. The Round 5 fieldwork was conducted in Lesotho from November 26, 2012 to 16 December 2012. 1200 adult Basotho were interviewed by the survey and this sample size yields results with a margin error of +/- 3% at a 95% confidence level.

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**For further information, please contact Lipholo Makhetha ,**

**Email: [advision@ecoweb.co.ls](mailto:advision@ecoweb.co.ls)**

**Phone: +266 63010368**

**Advision Lesotho**

**Mafike House**

**P.O. Box 8975**

**Maseru 101 LESOTHO.**