



Nairobi, Kenya
28 September 2020

News release

Kenyans experience increased deprivation of basic necessities, Afrobarometer surveys show

More Kenyans are frequently going without basic necessities such as enough food and clean water, according to Afrobarometer survey findings.

At least half of all Kenyans reported going without enough food, enough clean water, and needed medical care at least once during the year preceding the survey. Compared to 2016, the proportion of Kenyans who experienced frequent shortages of basic necessities, or high levels of “lived poverty,” increased in 2019, while fewer citizens experienced no such deprivation.

The survey also found that poorer citizens were less likely than their better-off counterparts to have access to key service infrastructure and to be optimistic about economic conditions improving during the coming year.

Key findings:

- Half or more of Kenyans went without enough food (51%), enough clean water (50%), medical care (55%), or a cash income (86%) at least once during the 12 months preceding the survey. Substantial proportions of the population experienced these forms of lived poverty “many times” or “always” (Figure 1).
- Shortages of basic necessities as captured by the Lived Poverty Index increased between 2016 and 2019 in Kenya. The proportion experiencing no shortages (no lived poverty) dropped from 12% to 6%, while the share with high lived poverty increased from 11% to 17% (Figure 2).
- Lived poverty was less frequent among more educated, younger, and urban respondents than among their less educated, older, and rural counterparts (Figure 3).
- Respondents with high levels of lived poverty were less likely to have access to key service infrastructure such as an electricity grid, piped water system, and sewage system than their better-off counterparts (Figure 4).
- Citizens who experienced severe shortages of basic necessities were more likely than their better-off compatriots to describe the country’s economic condition as bad (Figure 5) and to be pessimistic about things improving over the next 12 months (Figure 6).
- Poor citizens were less likely than better-off citizens to find it easy to obtain key public services, such as medical care, identity documents, public school services, and police assistance (Table 1).

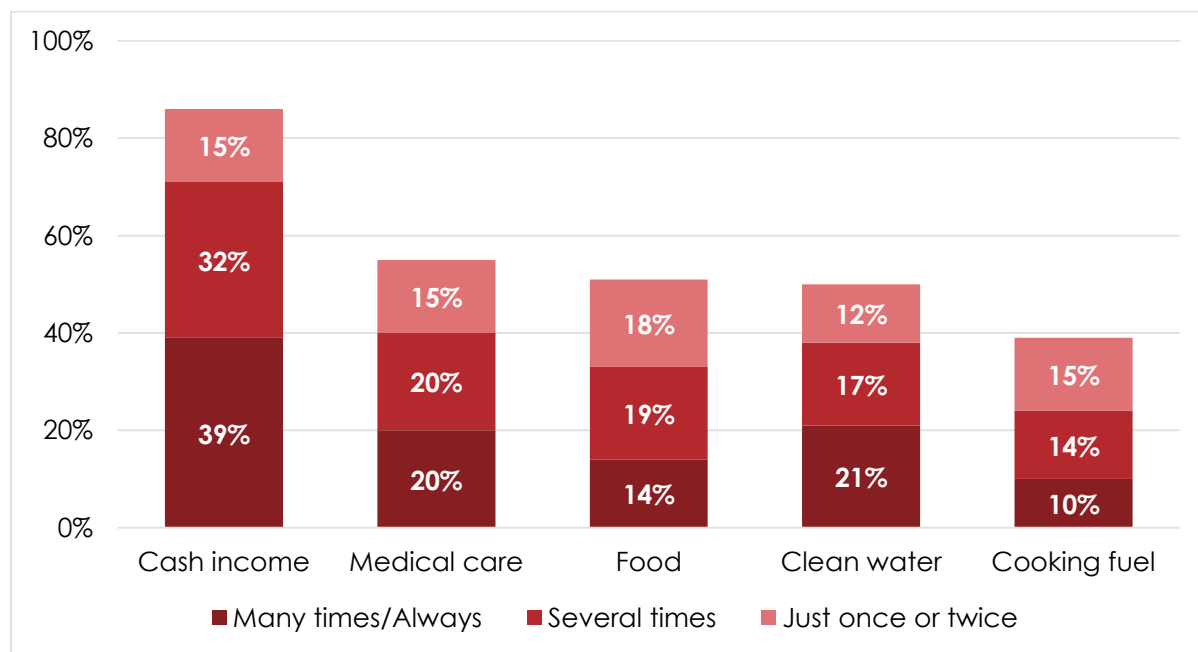
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Seven rounds of surveys were completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys in 2019/2021 are planned in at least 35 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Kenya, led by the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, interviewed 2,400 adult citizens of Kenya in August-September 2019. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Kenya in 2003, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014, and 2016.

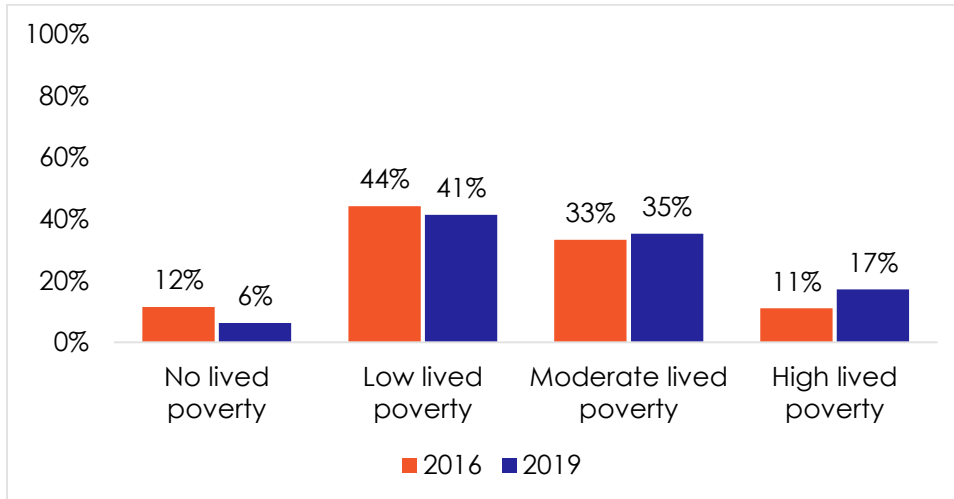
Charts

Figure 1: Going without basic necessities | Kenya | 2019



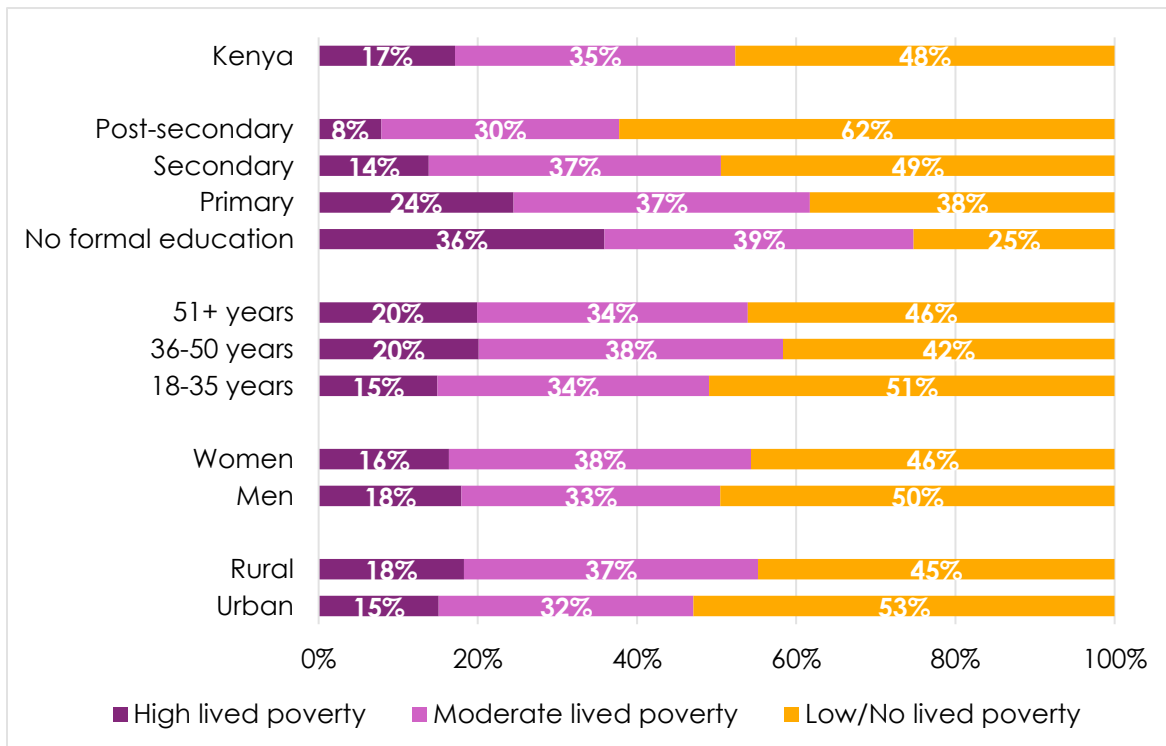
Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income?

Figure 2: Lived poverty | Kenya | 2016-2019



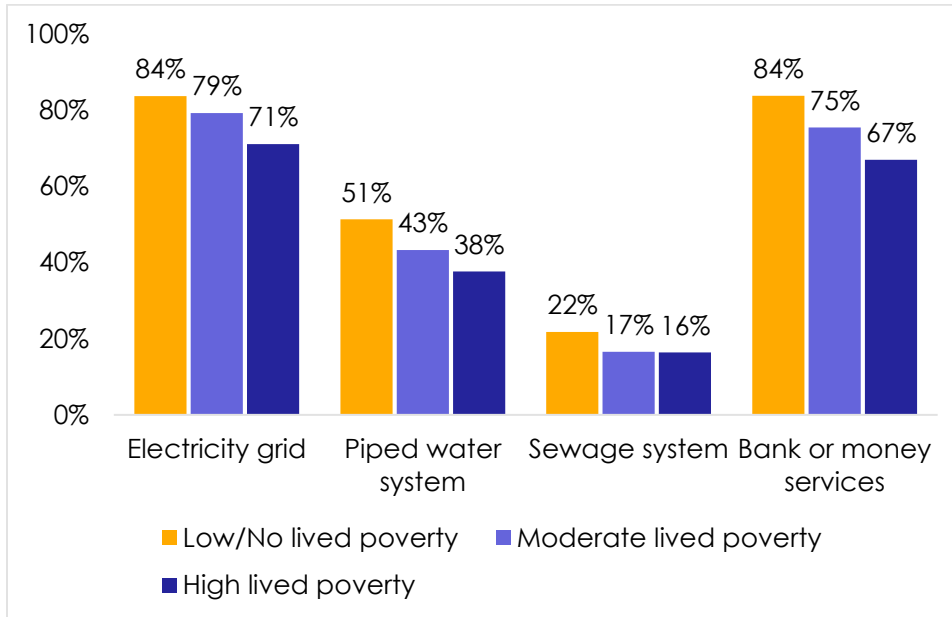
Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income? (Average of responses to all five questions)

Figure 3: Lived poverty | by socio-demographic group | Kenya | 2019



Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income? (Average of responses to all five questions)

Figure 4: Lived poverty and availability of infrastructure | Kenya | 2019



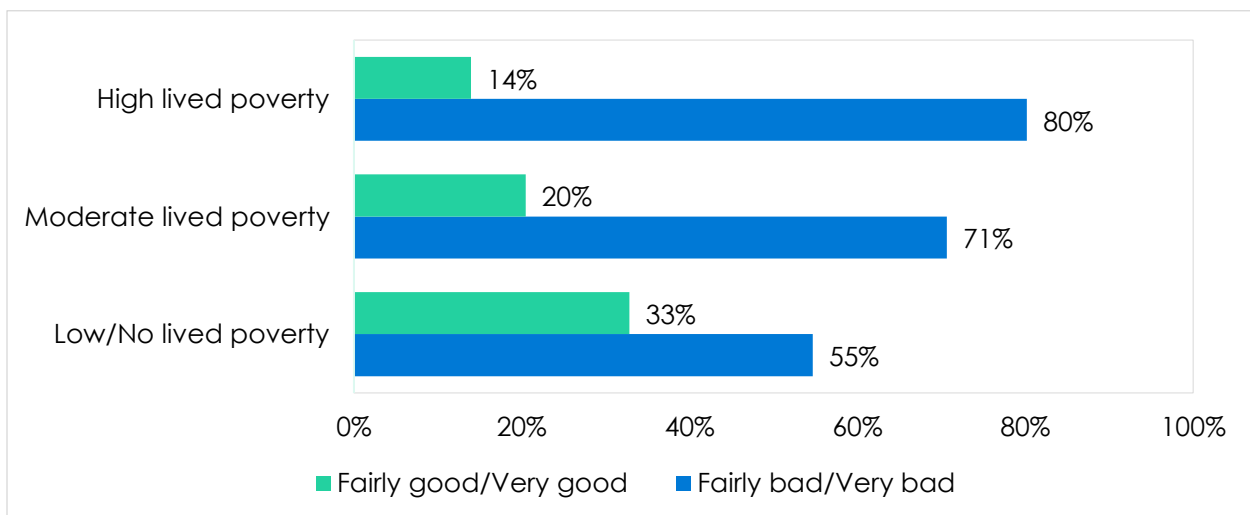
Survey enumerators recorded:

Are the following services present in the primary sampling unit/enumeration area: Electricity grid that most houses can access? Piped water system that most houses can access? Sewage system that most houses can access?

Are the following facilities present in the primary sampling unit/enumeration area or in easy walking distance: Bank, money transfer point, mobile banking services, or ATM?

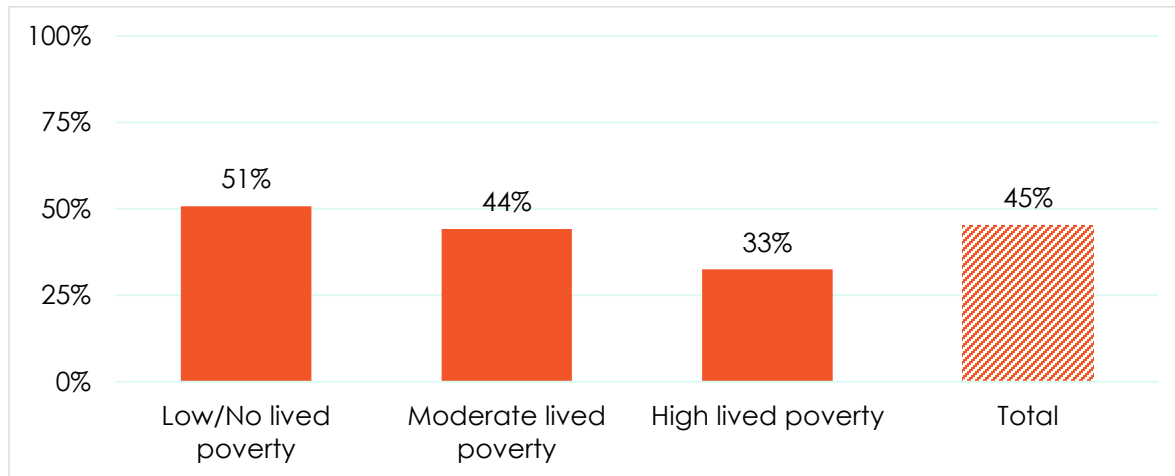
(% "yes")

Figure 5: Country's economic condition | by lived poverty level | Kenya 2019



Respondents were asked: In general, how would you describe the present economic condition of this country?

Figure 6: Country's economic prospects | by lived poverty level | Kenya | 2019



Respondents were asked: Looking ahead, do you expect economic conditions in this country to be better or worse in 12 months' time? (% who say "better" or "much better")

Table 1: Easy to obtain services | by lived poverty level | Kenya | 2019

	Low/No lived poverty	Moderate lived poverty	High lived poverty	Total
Easy to obtain public school services	37%	35%	30%	35%
Easy to obtain medical care	38%	30%	23%	32%
Easy to obtain identity document	20%	13%	11%	16%
Easy to obtain police assistance	20%	13%	11%	16%

Respondents who had contact with key public services during the previous year were asked: How easy or difficult was it to obtain [the service] you needed? (% who say "easy" or "very easy")

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