

Kampala, Uganda
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News release

Ugandans view social-services provision as top problem government should address, but are unwilling to pay more taxes for better services

Social services – including health care, education, and water supply – top the list of the most important problems that Ugandans want their government to address, recent Afrobarometer surveys show.

Many citizens who sought key public services during the previous year said it was difficult to obtain the services they needed, and substantial proportions say they had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour to obtain them.

But a majority of citizens would prefer to pay lower taxes, even if it means fewer government services, rather than pay higher taxes in exchange for better services. And many doubt that the government uses tax revenues for the well-being of citizens.

While the country is grappling with how to raise more domestic revenues to support its development, these findings suggest that citizen participation in the allocation of state resources and a more transparent utilization of public monies might improve public perceptions of the government's resource management.

Key findings

- Ugandans view social services as the most important problem the government should address, including health (cited by 53% of respondents), education (31%), and water supply (24%) (Figure 1).
- Among Ugandans who had contact with key public services during the previous year, three-quarters (75%) say they had to pay a bribe to obtain police assistance. Four in 10 (42%) had to pay a bribe to obtain medical care or to get a government document (40%) (Figure 2).
- A majority (54%) of Ugandans would prefer to pay lower taxes, even if it means there will be fewer services provided by government, rather than pay higher taxes for more government services (Figure 3).
- Fewer than half (46%) of citizens believe that the government generally uses tax revenues it collects for the well-being of citizens (Figure 4).

Afrobarometer surveys

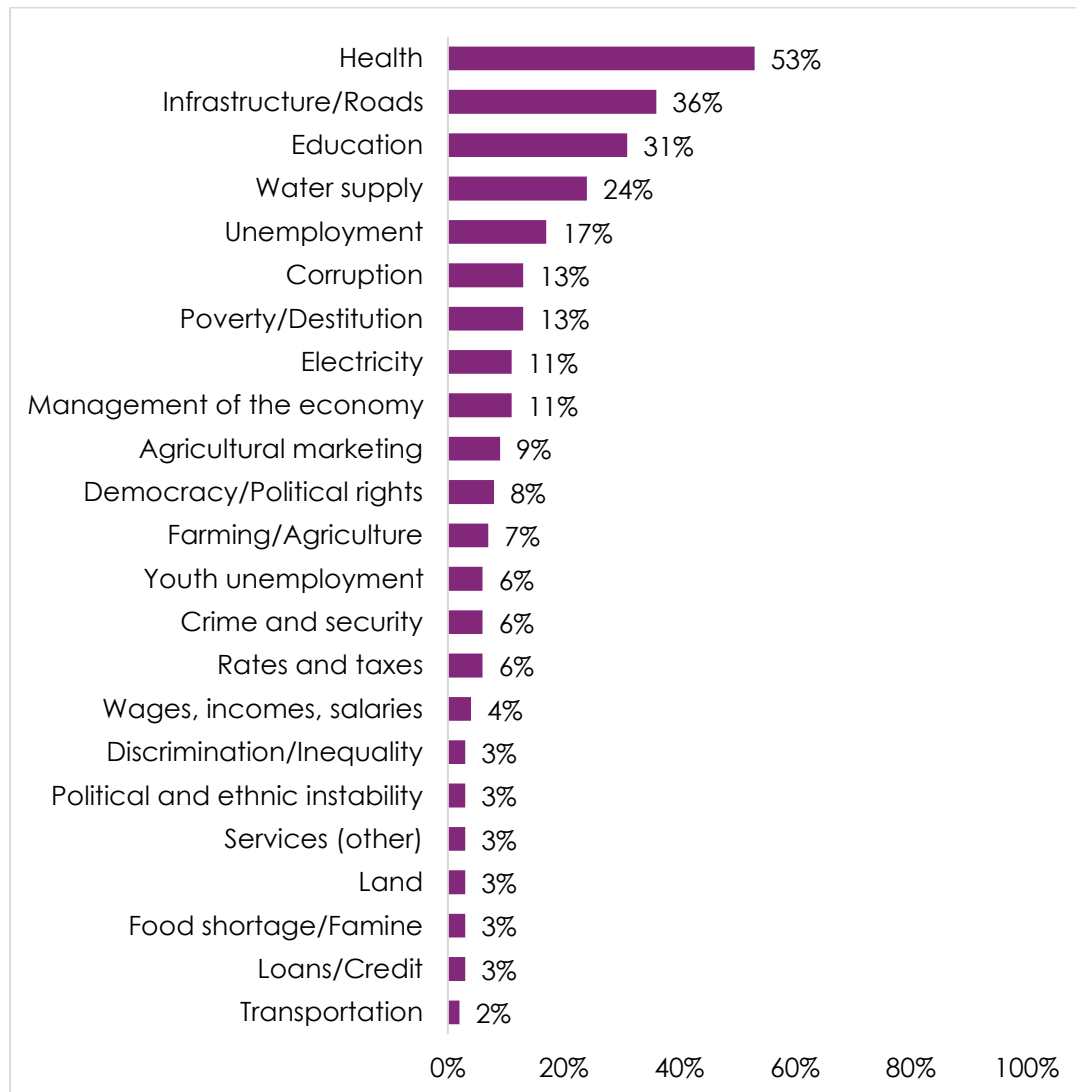
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that has provided reliable data on experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life in 39 African countries since 1999. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

With financial support from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Uganda, the Afrobarometer team in Uganda, led by Hatchile Consult Ltd., interviewed 1,200 adult

Ugandans between 30 September and 31 October 2019 and 2,400 adult Ugandans between 22 December 2020 and 7 January 2021 in 300 enumeration areas across 110 districts. These samples yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-3 and +/-3 percentage points, respectively, at a 95% confidence level.

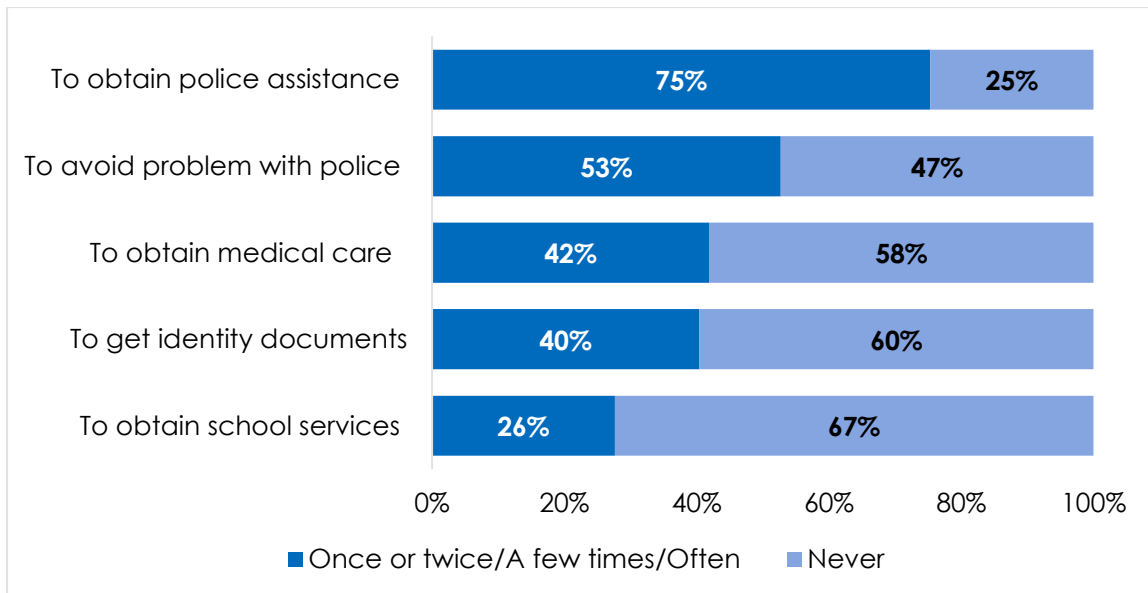
Charts

Figure 1: Most important problems that government should address | Uganda | 2021



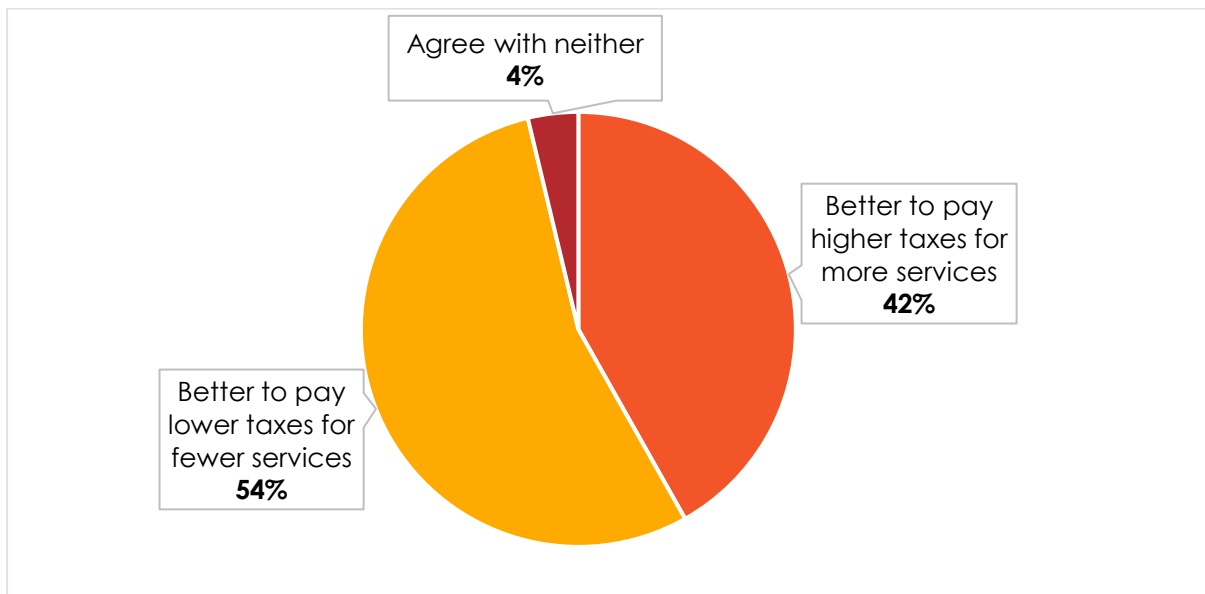
Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Up to three responses per respondent)*

Figure 2: Paid a bribe to obtain public services | Uganda | 2019



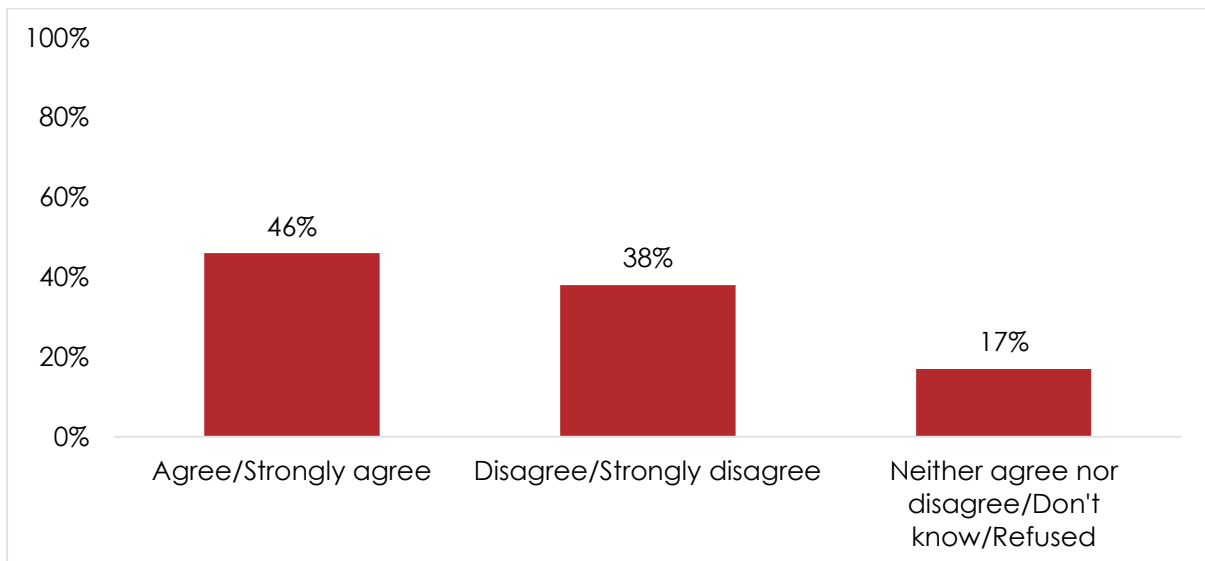
Respondents who said they had contact with key public services were asked: How often, if ever, did you have to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour [to obtain the needed services]? (Note: Respondents who said they had no contact with these services during the previous year are excluded.)

Figure 3: Higher taxes for more services? | Uganda | 2019



Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: It is better to pay higher taxes if it means that there will be more services provided by government.
 Statement 2: It is better to pay lower taxes, even if it means there will be fewer services provided by government.
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Figure 4: Does government use taxes for the well-being of citizens? | Uganda | 2019



Respondents were asked: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The government usually uses the tax revenues it collects for the well-being of citizens?

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