

Advison Lesotho
Maseru, Lesotho
22 October 2020



News release

Amid lucrative exports of natural resources, Basotho overwhelmingly feel left out

Basotho overwhelmingly believe that the export of diamonds, water, and wool does not benefit ordinary citizens, the most recent Afrobarometer survey shows. Indeed, though rich in natural resources, the country's mountainous areas also record higher lived poverty and poorer access to basic infrastructure than other regions.

The survey also shows that a majority of Basotho went without enough food and clean water at least once during the previous 12 months.

These findings suggest that new approaches to the exploitation and sharing of the country's natural resources are needed.

The data were collected in February-March 2020, just as African countries began reporting their first cases of the coronavirus. While Lesotho had recorded fewer than 50 deaths due to COVID-19 as of October 2020, global economic pressures as a result of the pandemic are likely to affect the country's economic outlook and performance.

Key findings

- About two-thirds of Basotho say they went without enough food (65%) and clean water (60%) at least once during the previous year (Figure 1). On average, lived poverty in Lesotho has increased since 2017 (Figure 2).
- The country's mountainous areas, home to many of its natural resources, experience higher lived poverty and worse access to basic electricity, water, and road infrastructure than the foothills and lowlands.
- Nine out of 10 Basotho say ordinary people do not benefit "much" or "at all" from the export of diamonds (89%) (Figure 3) and water (88%) (Figure 4).
- More than three-fourths (77%) say ordinary Basotho do not benefit from the export of wool (Figure 5).

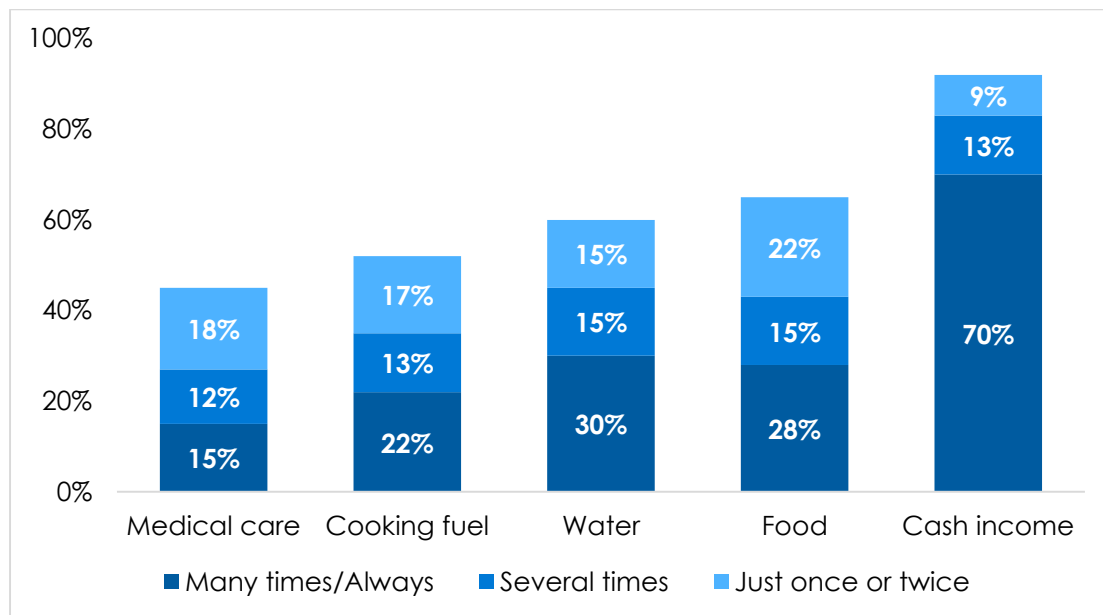
Afrobarometer surveys

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 are planned in at least 35 countries in 2019/2020. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Lesotho, led by Advison Lesotho, interviewed 1,200 adult Basotho in February-March 2020. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Lesotho in 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2017.

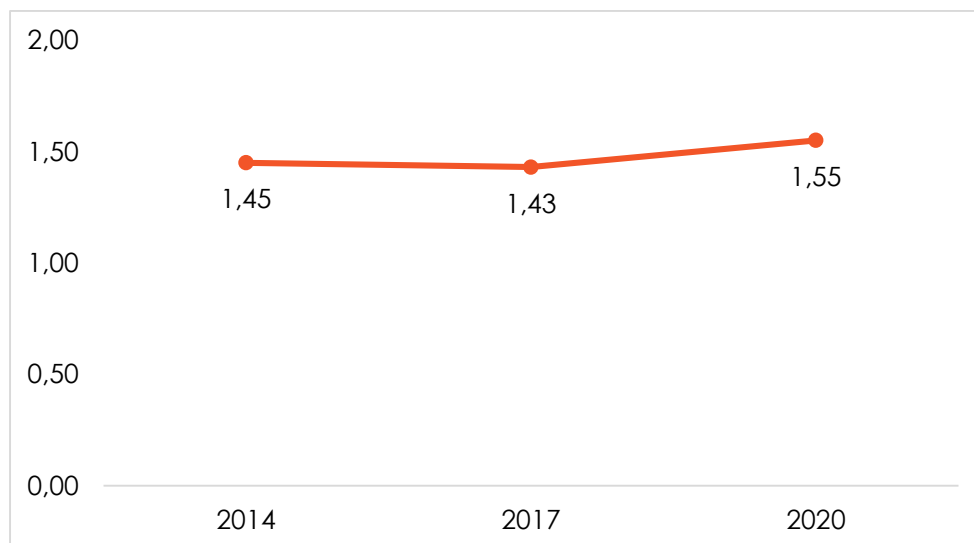
Charts

Figure 1: Lived poverty | Lesotho | 2020



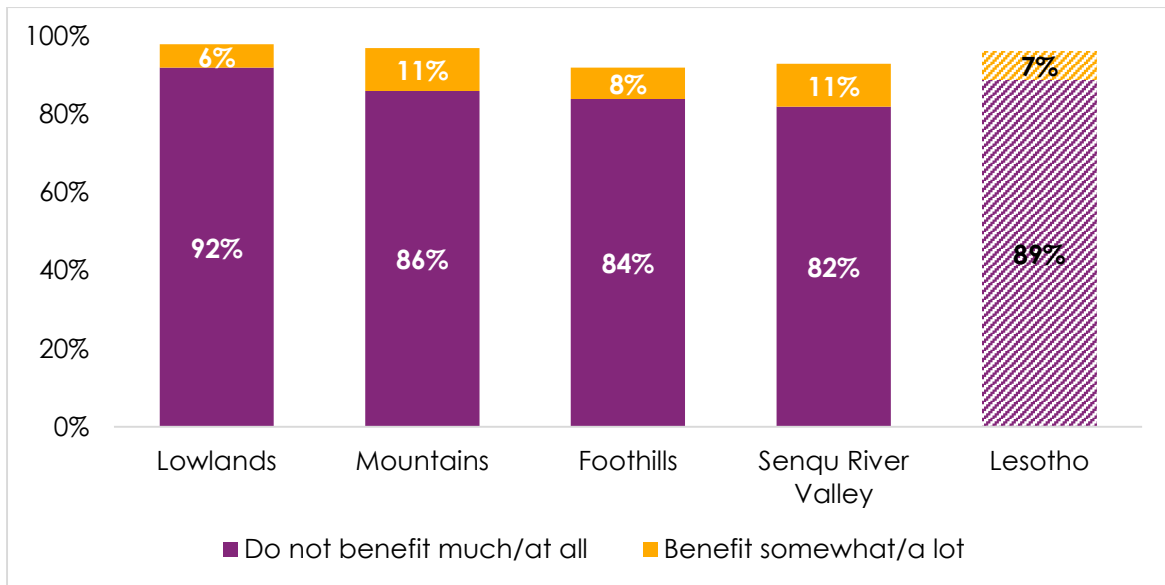
Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicine or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook food? A cash income?

Figure 2: Lived Poverty Index | Lesotho | 2014-2020



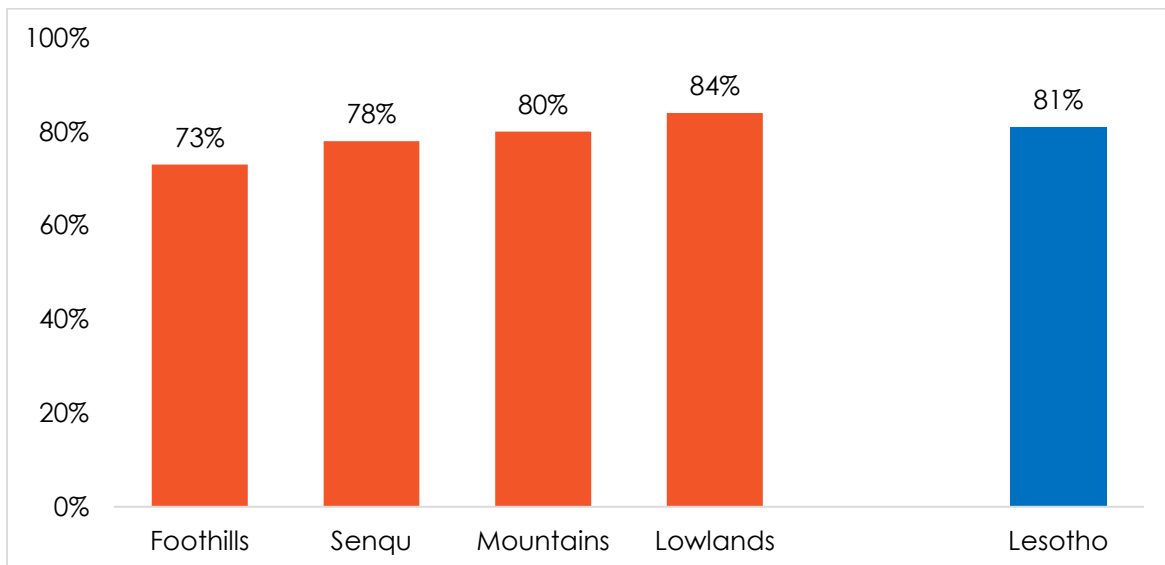
Lived Poverty Index (LPI) scores reflect average deprivation of five basic necessities on a scale of 0 (no deprivation) to 4 (constant absence of all basic necessities).

Figure 3: Do ordinary Basotho benefit from diamond exports? | by ecological zone | Lesotho | 2020



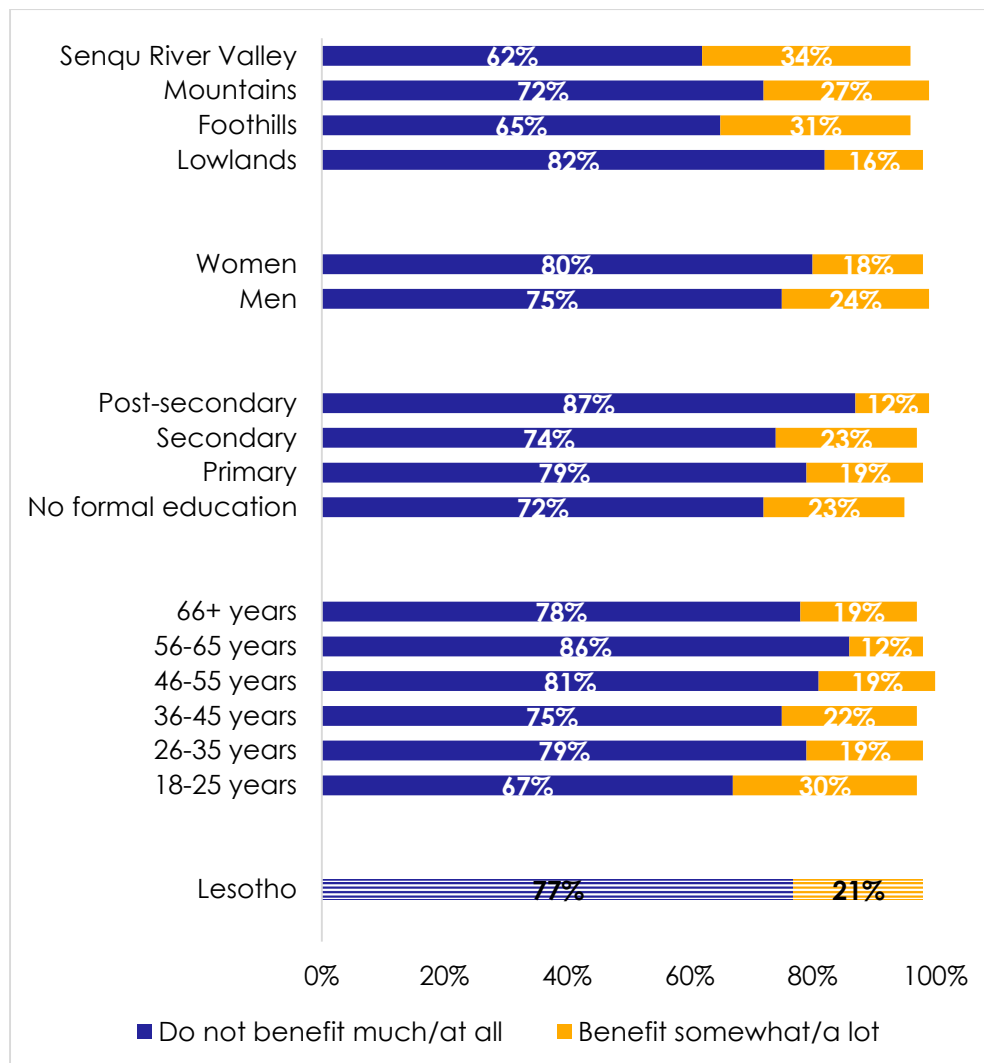
Respondents were asked: Let us now talk about the exportation of some natural resources of this country. In your opinion, do you think ordinary Basotho benefit from the export of these natural resources or not: Diamonds?

Figure 4: 'No benefit at all' from water exports | by ecological zone | Lesotho | 2020



Respondents were asked: Let us now talk about the exportation of some natural resources of this country. In your opinion, do you think ordinary Basotho benefit from the export of these natural resources or not: Water? (% who say "do not benefit at all")

Figure 5: Do ordinary Basotho benefit from wool exports? | by socio-demographic group | Lesotho | 2020



Respondents were asked: Let us now talk about the exportation of some natural resources of this country. In your opinion, do you think ordinary Basotho benefit from the export of these natural resources or not: Wool?

For more information, please contact:

Libuseng Malephane
 Telephone: +266 5788 1022 or +27 79 015 4684
 Email: libusengmalephane@gmail.com

Visit us online at www.afrobarometer.org.

Follow our releases on #VoicesAfrica.

