



Lusaka, Zambia
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News release

More Zambians going without basic necessities, Afrobarometer survey shows

The number of Zambians who suffer repeated shortages of basic necessities such as food, clean water, and medical care has increased in recent years, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

An overwhelming majority of citizens say the government is doing a bad job of improving living standards of the poor, keeping prices stable, and creating jobs. Citizens' ratings of the government's performance on a wide range of issues have declined compared to 2017.

Health, management of the economy, infrastructure/ roads, education, and unemployment are the top five problems that Zambians want the government to address.

Key findings

- The proportion of Zambians going without basic necessities increased compared to 2017 (Figure 1).
 - Majorities say they went without needed medical care (61%) and without a cash income (78%) at least "several times" during the previous year.
 - Substantial minorities report having gone without enough food (46%), without enough clean water (39%), and without enough cooking fuel (27%) at least "several times."
- Fewer than half of citizens approve of government performance on a wide range of key indicators. Most performance ratings have declined compared to 2017 (Figure 2).
 - Only three in 10 citizens (29%) say the government is doing a good job of improving living standards of the poor, and even fewer approve of the government's performance on creating jobs (15%) and keeping prices stable (6%).
- Health, management of the economy, infrastructure/roads, education, and unemployment are the most important problems that citizens want the government to address (Figure 3).

Afrobarometer surveys

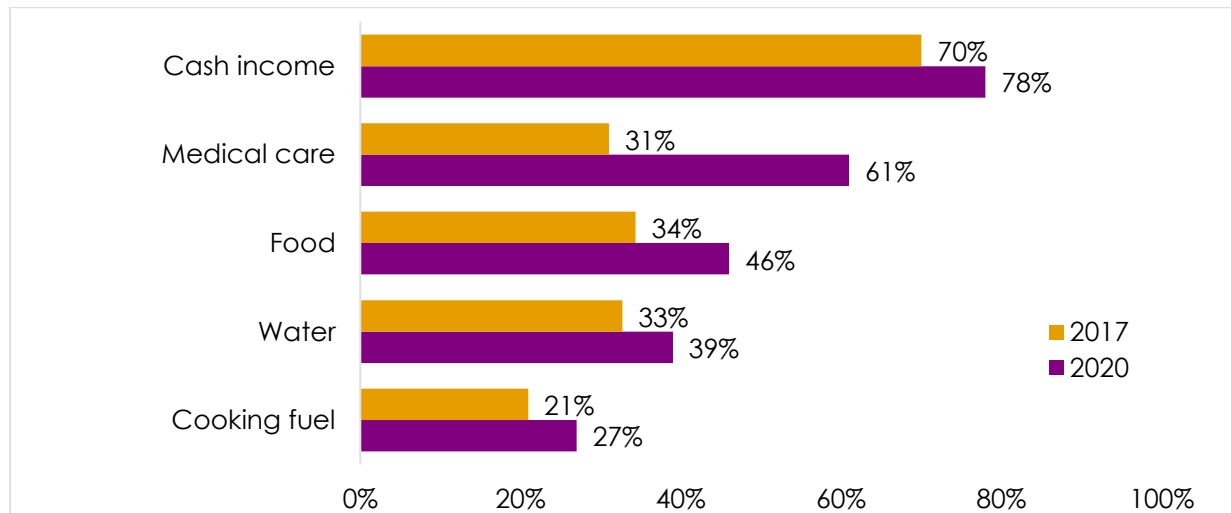
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Seven rounds of surveys were completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys (2019/2021) cover 34 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Zambia, led by the Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR), a research unit of the University of Zambia, interviewed a nationally representative,

random, stratified probability sample of 1,200 Zambian adults in November-December 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 Zambia in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2014, and 2017.

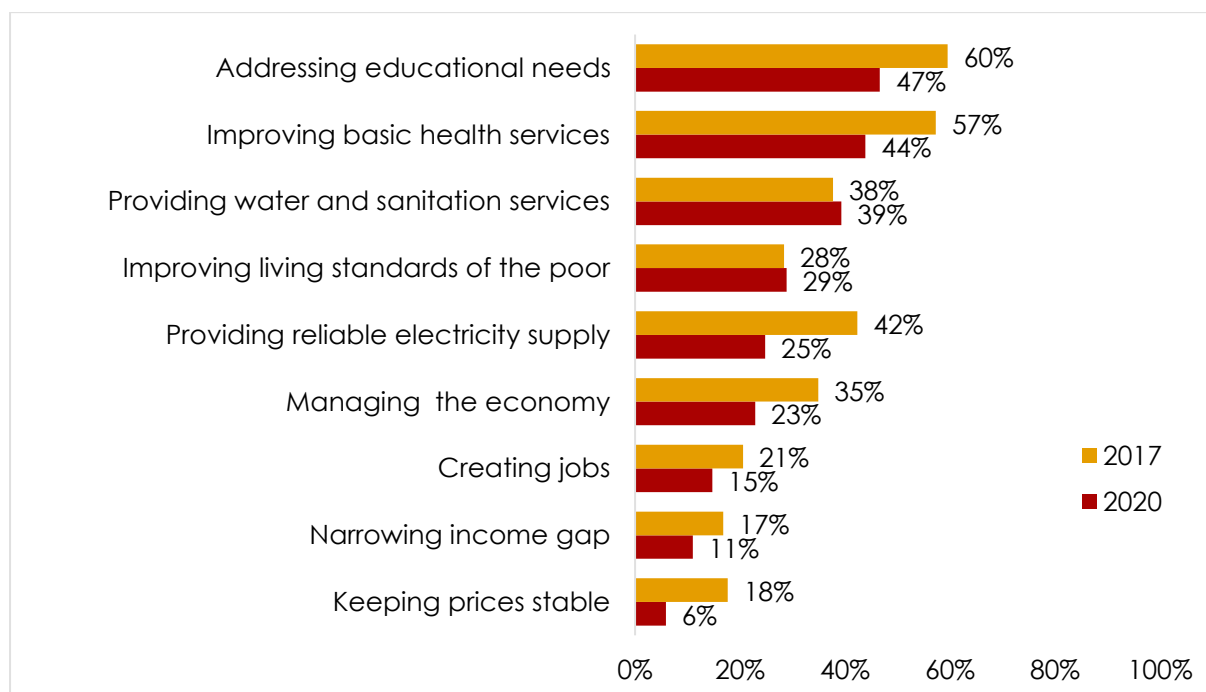
Charts

Figure 1: Going without basic necessities | Zambia | 2017-2020



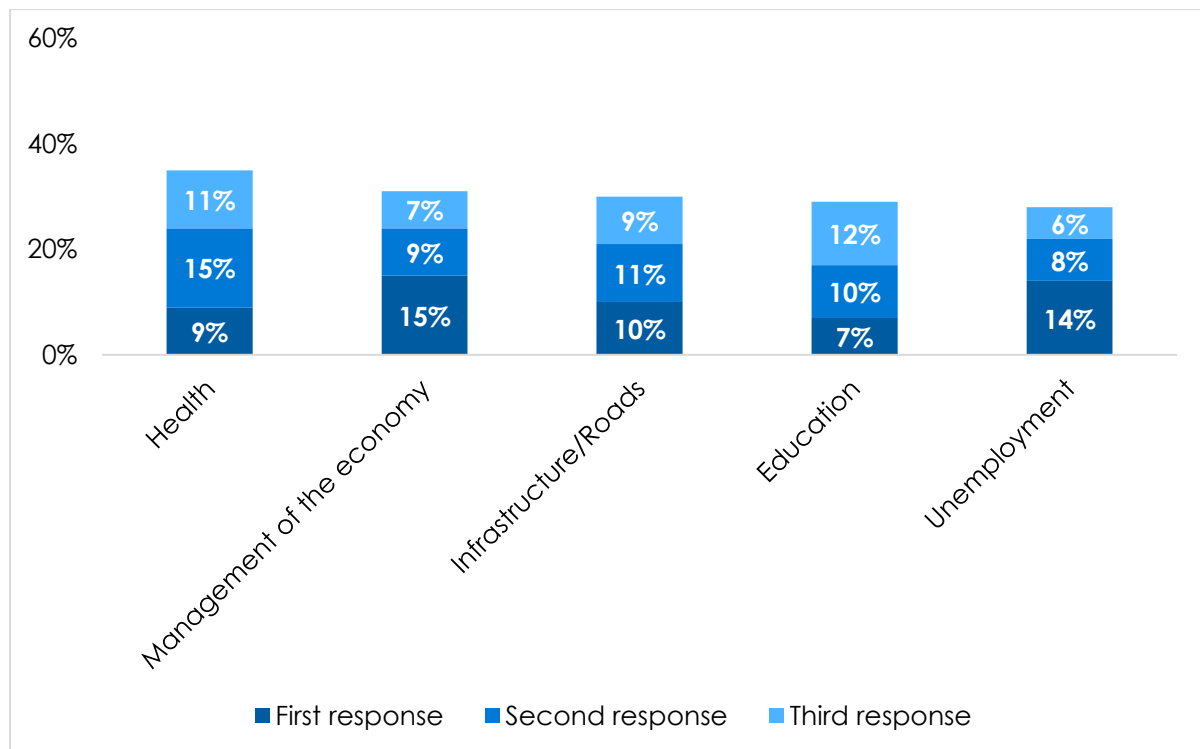
Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income? (% who say "several times," "many times," or "always")

Figure 2: Approval of government performance | Zambia | 2017-2020



Respondents 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? (% who say "fairly well" or "very well")

Figure 3: Most important problems government should address | Zambia | 2020



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

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