



Harare, Zimbabwe  
13 August 2021



## News release

---

### Zimbabweans embrace social media but are alert to its dangers to society

Most Zimbabweans who are familiar with social media see its overall effects on society as positive, according to a new Afrobarometer survey. Most citizens want to protect unrestricted access to social media and the Internet.

Most citizens are familiar with social media, and about four in 10 say it is a regular source of news for them.

A large majority of those familiar with social media say it helps keep people informed about current events, though many are also alert to negative effects of social media, such as making people less tolerant and more likely to believe lies.

#### Key findings

- Eight in 10 adult Zimbabweans (80%) say they have heard about social media (Figure 1).
- More than four out of 10 (42%) say they get news from social media “every day” or “a few times a week” (Figure 2).
- Among those who have heard about social media:
  - Nine out of 10 (91%) say it makes people more informed about current events, and about half (49%) believe it helps people have more impact on political processes (Figure 3).
  - But seven out of 10 (71%) also say social media makes people more likely to believe false information, and 44% think it makes people more intolerant of those who hold different opinions.
  - Overall, a majority (61%) see the effects of social media on society as “somewhat positive” or “very positive” (Figure 4).
- Almost two-thirds (65%) hold the view that social media and the Internet help keep citizens informed and active and that unrestricted access to them must be protected (Figure 5).

#### Afrobarometer surveys

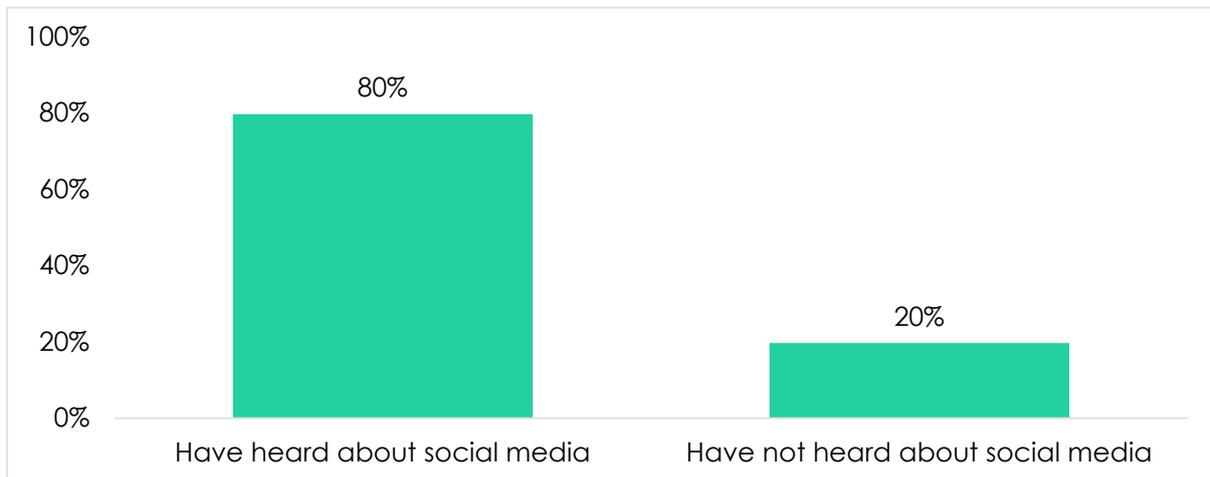
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Seven rounds of surveys were conducted in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys (2019/2021) cover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

The Afrobarometer team in Zimbabwe, led by the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI), interviewed 1,200 adult citizens of Zimbabwe in April 2021. A statistically representative sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points

at a 95% confidence level. Previous rounds of Afrobarometer surveys were conducted in Zimbabwe in 1999, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014, and 2017.

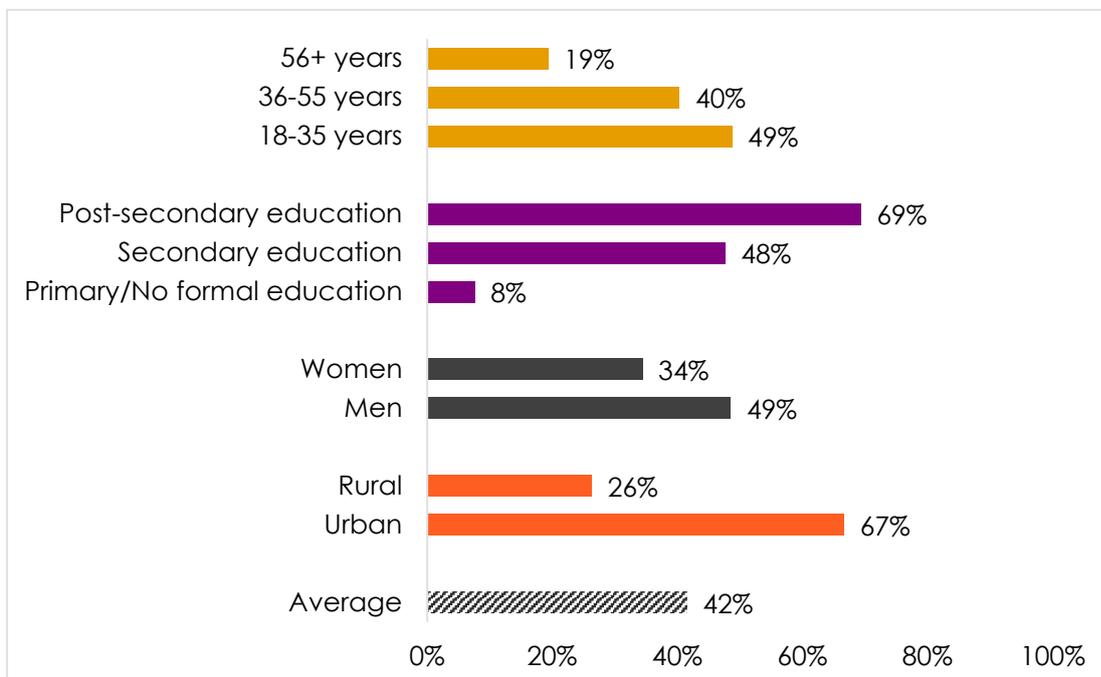
## Charts

**Figure 1: Have heard about social media** | Zimbabwe | 2021



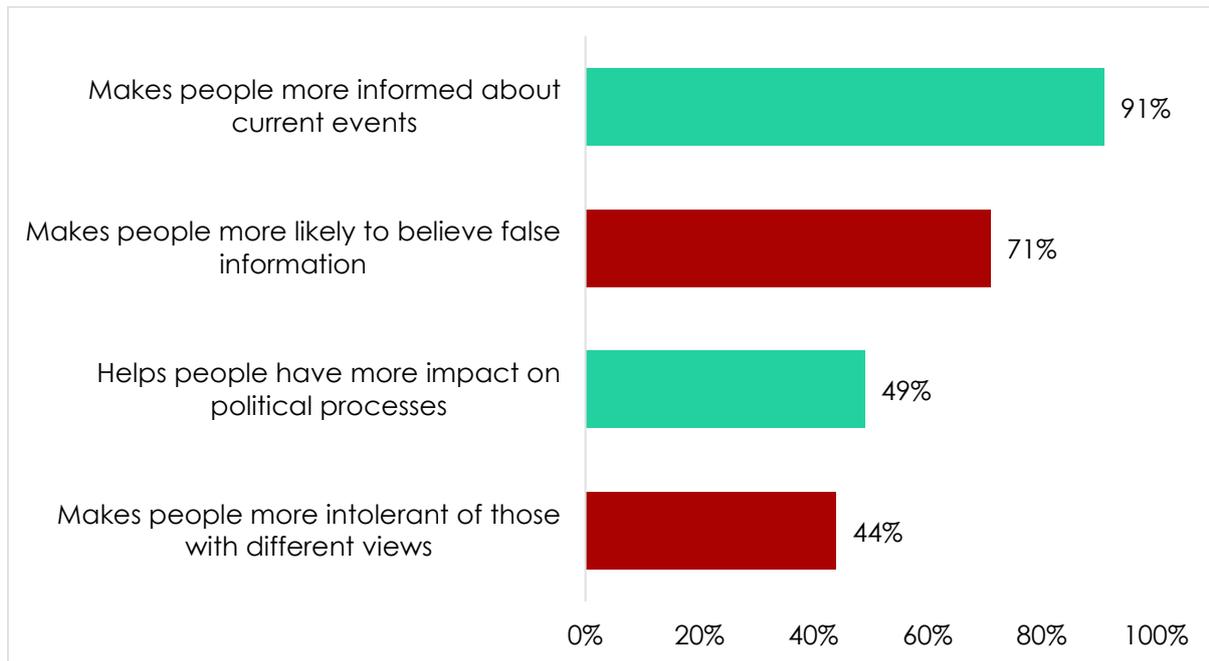
**Respondents were asked:** Have you heard about social media, for example, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp?

**Figure 2: Regularly get news from social media** | by demographic group | Zimbabwe | 2021



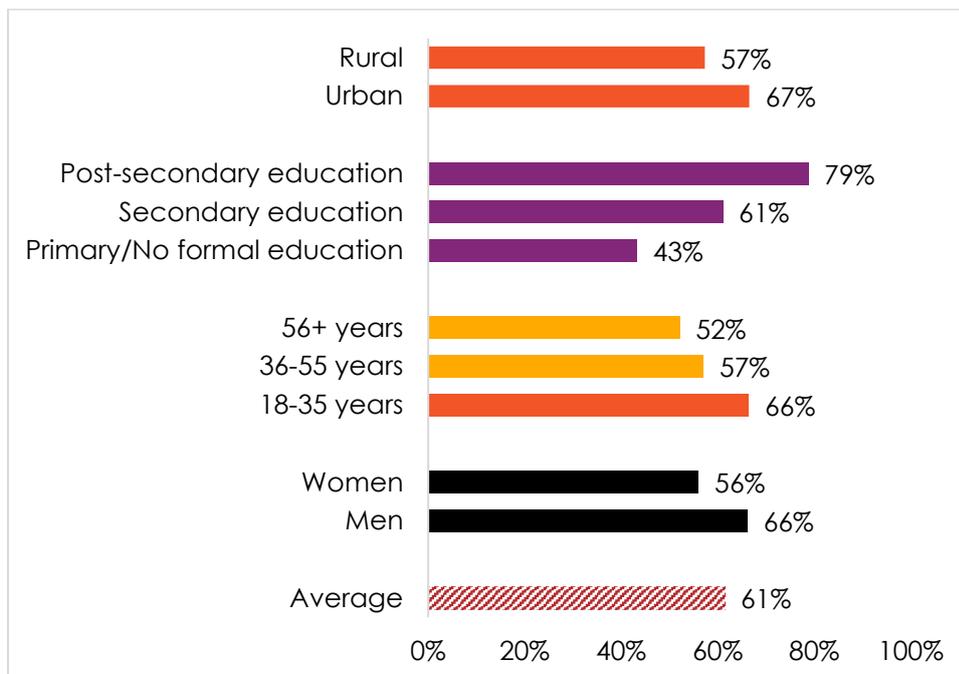
**Respondents were asked:** How often do you get news from the following sources: Social media? (% who say "every day" or "a few times a week")

**Figure 3: Specific positive and negative effects of social media | Zimbabwe | 2021**



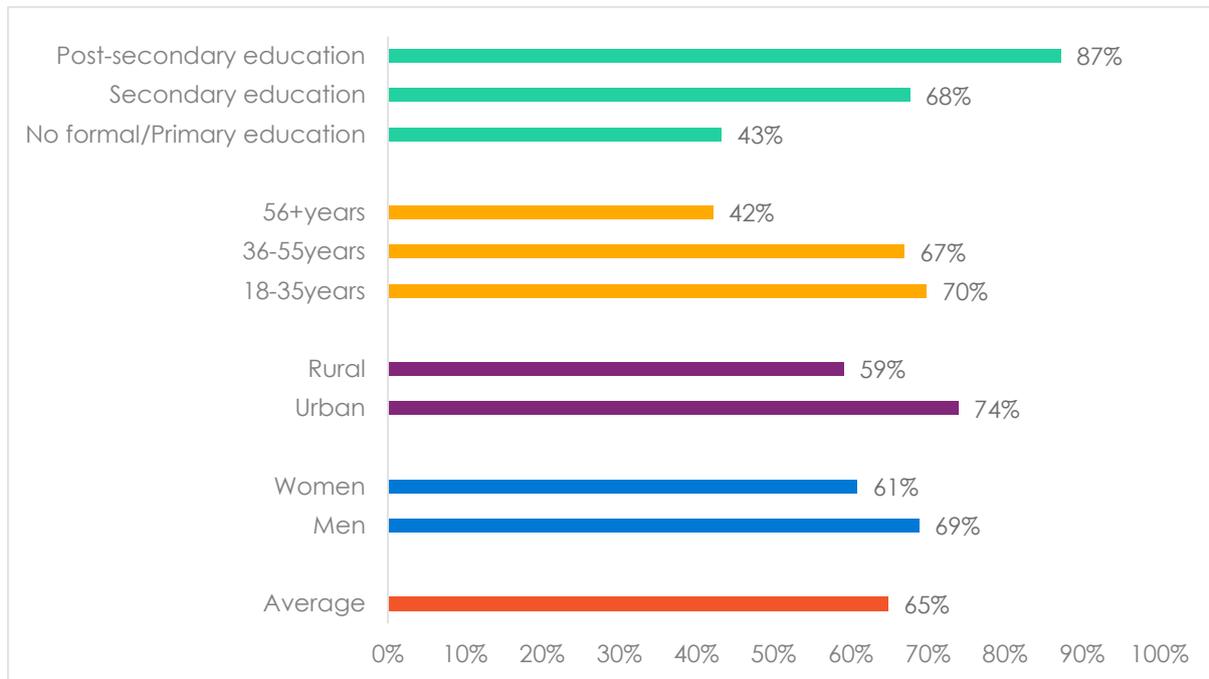
**Respondents who say they have heard of social media were asked:** Regardless of whether you personally use social media yourself, please tell me whether you agree or disagree that social media. ... (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

**Figure 4: Overall effects of social media on society are positive | by demographic group | Zimbabwe | 2021**



**Respondents were asked:** Overall, do you think that the effects of social media on society are mostly positive, mostly negative, or haven't you heard enough to say? (% who say "somewhat positive" or "very positive")

**Figure 5: Support for unrestricted access to the internet** | by demographic group | Zimbabwe | 2021



**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Choose Statement 1 or Statement 2.

Statement 1: Unrestricted access to the Internet and social media helps people to be more informed and active citizens and should be protected.

Statement 2: Information shared on the Internet and social media is dividing Zimbabweans, so access should be regulated by government.

**For more information, please contact:**

Mass Public Opinion Institute  
 E.V Masunungure  
 Telephone: +263-242-771358  
 Email: info@mpoi.org.zw

Visit us online at:  
[www.mpoi.net](http://www.mpoi.net)  
[www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org)

Follow our releases on #VoicesAfrica.

