

Windhoek, Namibia

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News release

Majority of Namibians approve of parents using physical force to discipline their children

More than half of Namibians believe parents are justified in using physical force to discipline their children, at least on some occasions, a recent Afrobarometer survey indicates. Four in 10 say the practice is never justified.

Views are similarly divided on other aspects of child well-being, with four in 10 citizens reporting that child abuse and neglect are widespread in their communities and half saying school-age children are frequently not attending school.

But a majority of Namibians are confident that people in their communities can secure help for abused, mistreated, or neglected children.

And they say that help and support are also available for children with physical disabilities and for adults and children with mental health problems.

Key findings

- More than half of Namibians (57%) believe that it is either “always justified” (23%) or “sometimes justified” (34%) for parents to discipline their children using physical force. Four in 10 (41%) consider it “never justified” (Figure 1).
 - The view that using physical force to discipline children is justified is slightly more common in cities than in rural areas (59% vs. 55%).
- Almost half (47%) of citizens say physical disciplining of children is “very frequent” (19%) or “somewhat frequent” (28%) in their communities (Figure 2).
 - Urbanites are significantly more likely than rural residents to report that adults frequently use physical force to discipline their children (52% vs. 39%).
- More than four in 10 Namibians (42%) report that child abuse and neglect occur “very frequently” (15%) or “somewhat frequently” (27%) in their communities (Figure 3).
 - Even more (49%) say that school-age children are often not in school.
 - More urbanites than rural residents see both child abuse/neglect (47% vs. 37%) and out-of-school children (52% vs. 45%) as frequent occurrences (Figure 4).
- Slim majorities say that help and support are available in their communities for children who are abused or neglected (55%), children with physical disabilities (56%), and children and adults with mental or emotional problems (53%) (Figure 5).
 - Residents in urban areas report better access to support services than their rural counterparts for children with physical disabilities (62% vs. 51%) and for children and adults with mental or emotional problems (56% vs. 51%) (Figure 6).

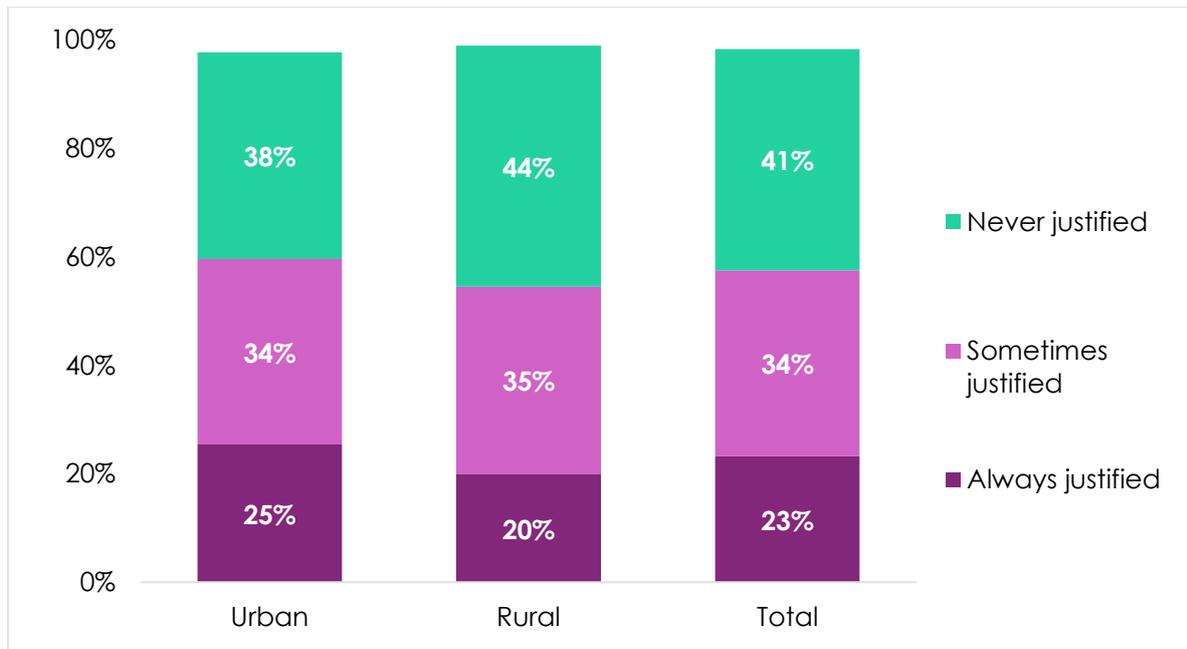
Afrobarometer surveys

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. Eight survey rounds in up to 39 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2022) are currently underway. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Namibia, led by national partner Survey Warehouse, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult Namibians in October and November 2021. 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 Namibia in 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2019.

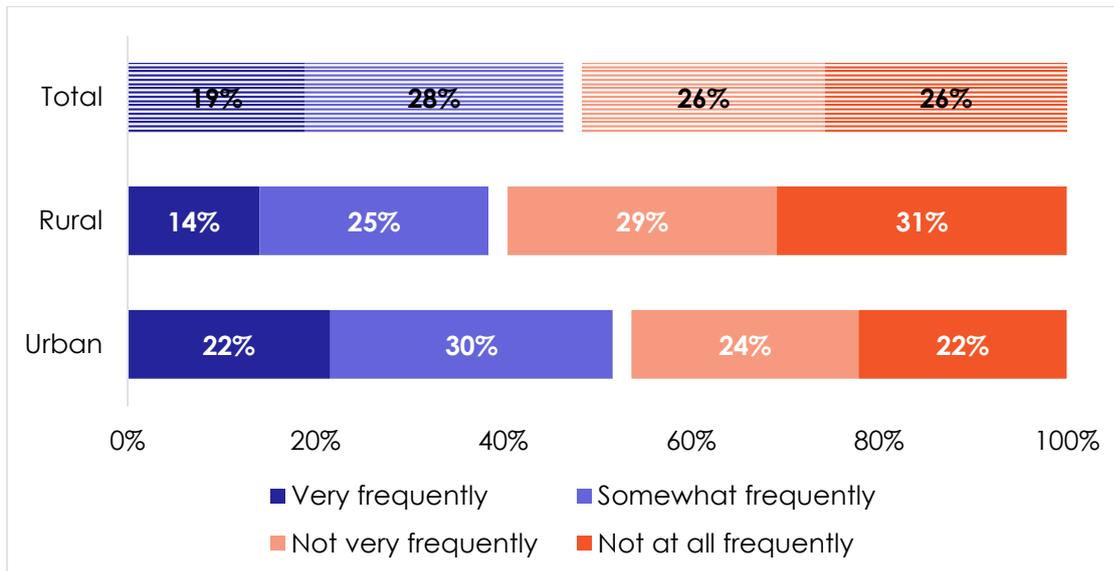
Charts

Figure 1: Is it justified for parents to physically discipline their children? | by urban-rural location | Namibia | 2021



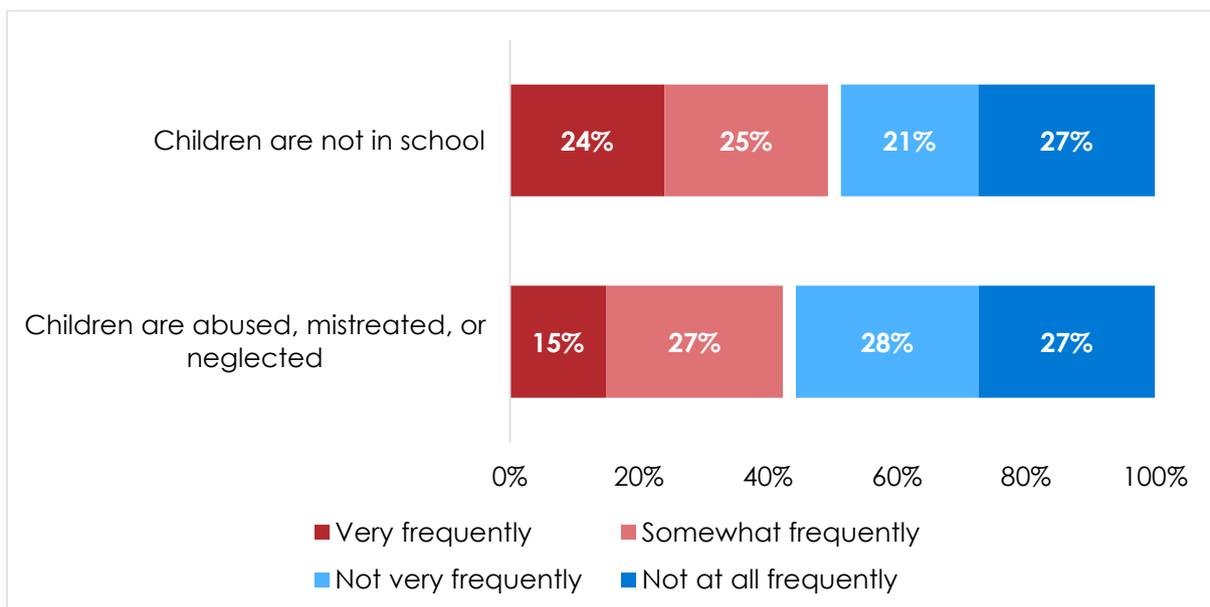
Respondents were asked: For each of the following actions, please tell me whether you think it can always be justified, sometimes be justified, or never be justified: For parents to use physical force to discipline their children?

Figure 2: How often do adults physically discipline their children? | by urban-rural location | Namibia | 2021



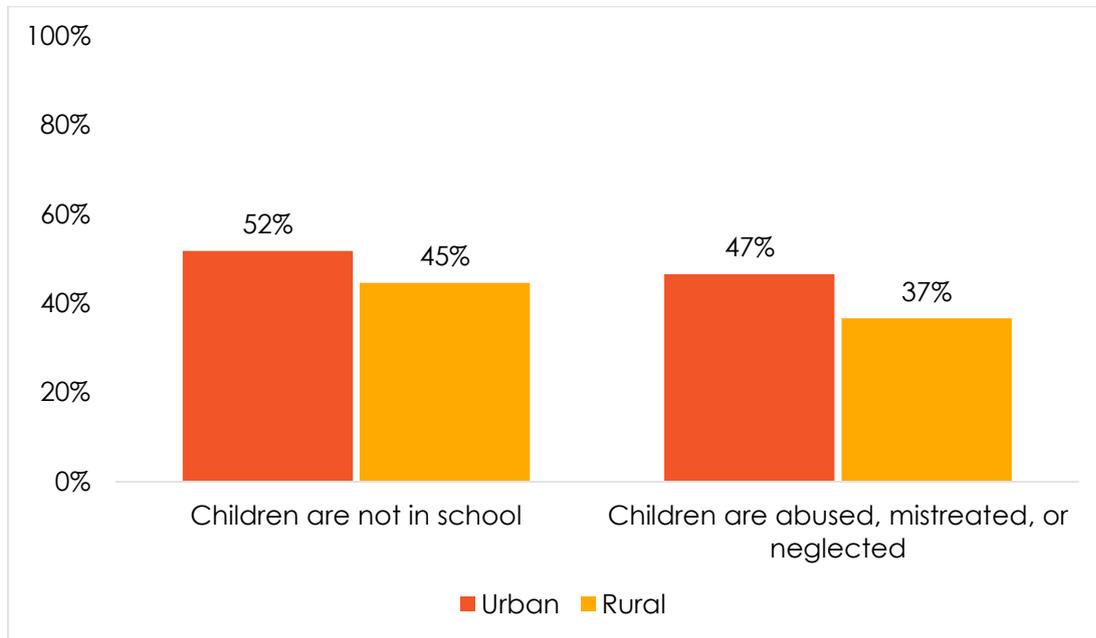
Respondents were asked: How frequently do you think the following things occur in your community or neighbourhood: Adults use physical force to discipline children?

Figure 3: Frequency of child abuse and neglect | Namibia | 2021



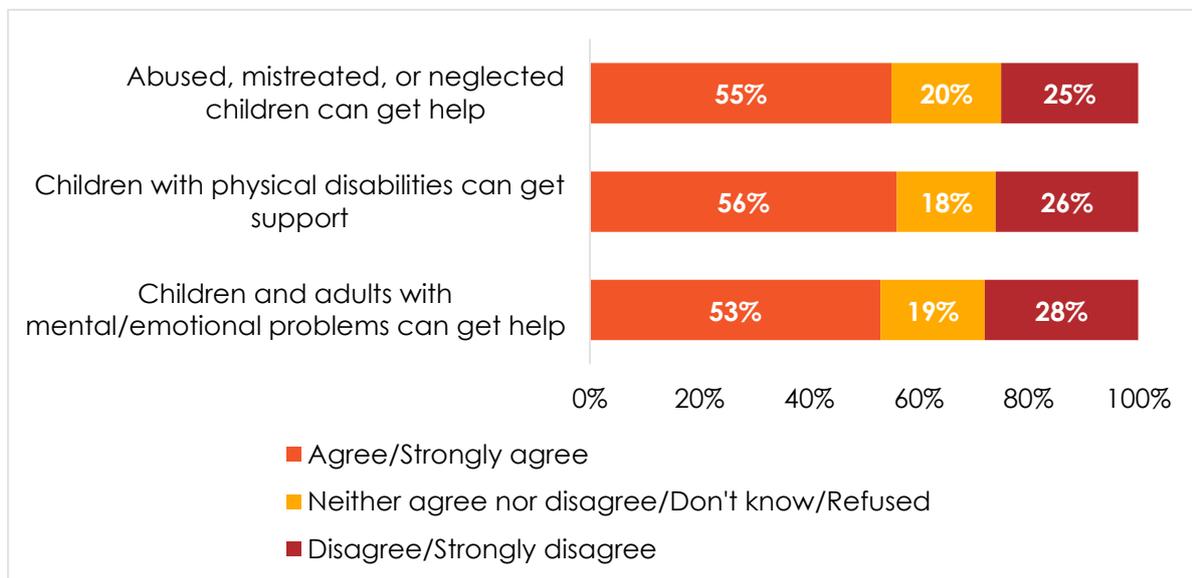
Respondents were asked: How frequently do you think the following things occur in your community or neighbourhood: Children who should be in school are not in school? Children are abused, mistreated, or neglected?

Figure 4: Child abuse and neglect occur frequently | by urban-rural location
| Namibia | 2021



Respondents were asked: How frequently do you think the following things occur in your community or neighbourhood: Children who should be in school are not in school? Children are abused, mistreated, or neglected? (% who say “very frequently” or “somewhat frequently”)

Figure 5: Access to help and support for children in need | Namibia | 2021



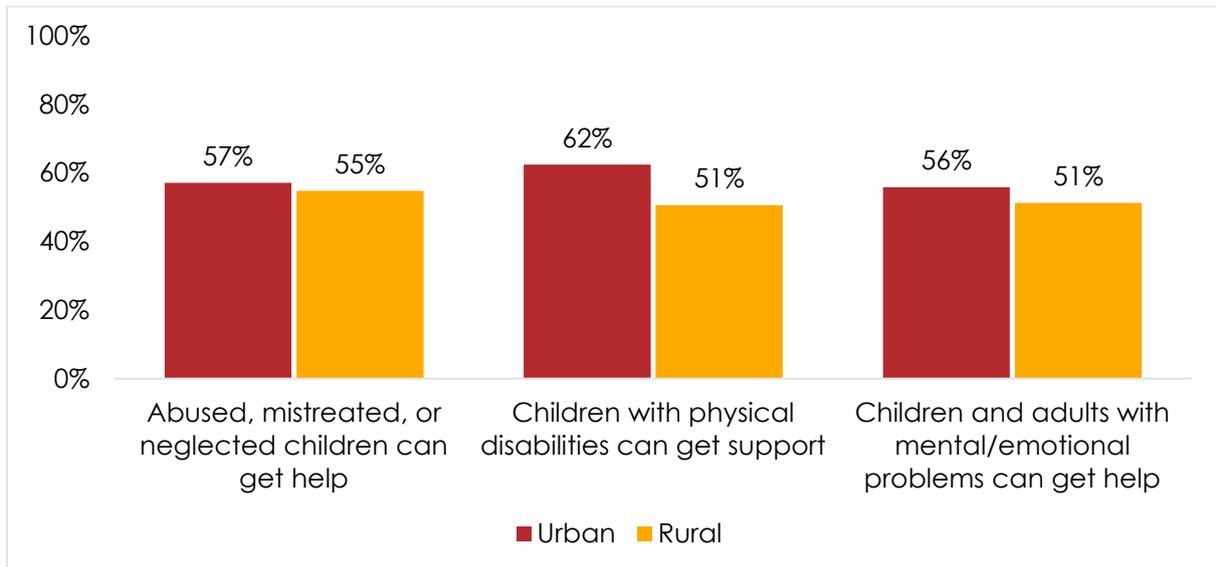
Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree.

In general, people in this community are able to get help for children who are abused, mistreated, or neglected.

In my community, children who have a physical disability are generally able to get the support they need to succeed in life.

In my community, children and adults who have mental or emotional problems are generally able to get the help they need to have a good life.

Figure 6: Access to help and support for children in need | by urban-rural location | Namibia | 2021



Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree.

In general, people in this community are able to get help for children who are abused, mistreated, or neglected.

In my community, children who have a physical disability are generally able to get the support they need to succeed in life.

In my community, children and adults who have mental or emotional problems are generally able to get the help they need to have a good life.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree")

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