



Nairobi, Kenya
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News release

Kenyans see worsening economic conditions, cite poor government performance, Afrobarometer survey shows

After recording significant gains between 2014 and 2019, Kenyans' assessments of the country's overall direction, the national economy, and their personal living conditions have taken a nosedive, according to a new Afrobarometer survey.

Large majorities of citizens say the country is headed in the wrong direction and describe their living conditions as bad. Majorities experienced shortages of basic necessities such as food, water, and medical care during the year preceding the survey.

Citizens overwhelmingly give the government poor performance ratings on key economic issues, including management of the economy, job creation, and poverty reduction.

Key findings

- Three-fourths (74%) of Kenyans say the country is going in "the wrong direction," a 20-percentage-point increase compared to 2019 (54%) (Figure 1).
- Almost nine out of 10 citizens (85%) describe the country's economic condition as "fairly bad" or "very bad," a 30-point increase since 2016 (55%) (Figure 2).
- Only one in four Kenyans (25%) describe their personal living conditions as "fairly good" or "very good," a 16-point decline compared to 2019 (41%) (Figure 3).
- Substantial proportions of the population frequently ("many times" or "always") went without a cash income (47%), needed medical care (26%), enough clean water (22%), enough food (18%), and enough cooking fuel (11%) during the previous year, in addition to many who suffered these shortages "just once or twice" or "several times" (Figure 4).
- Based on these reported deprivations, most Kenyans can be described as experiencing moderate lived poverty (37%) or low lived poverty (36%). But more than one in five (22%) fall into the high lived poverty category (Figure 5).
- Most citizens say the government is performing "fairly badly" or "very badly" on managing the economy (83%), improving living standards of the poor (83%), creating jobs (85%), narrowing income gaps (90%), and keeping prices stable (92%) (Figure 6).
- Despite these gloomy perceptions, four in 10 citizens (42%) expect the country's economic condition to improve over the next year (Figure 7).

Afrobarometer surveys

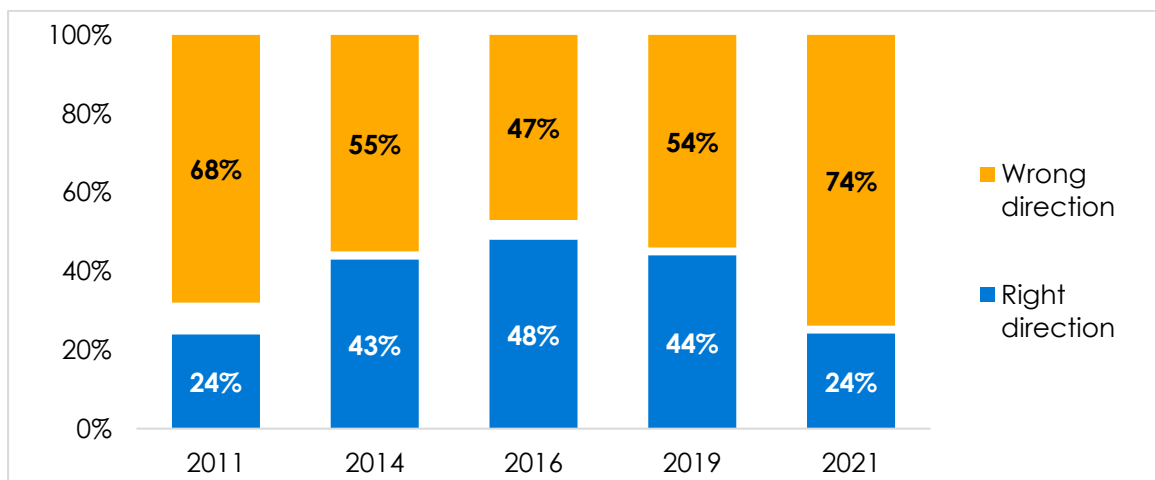
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life.

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 Kenya, based at the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, interviewed 2,400 adult Kenyans in November-December 2021. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Kenya in 2003, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2016, and 2019.

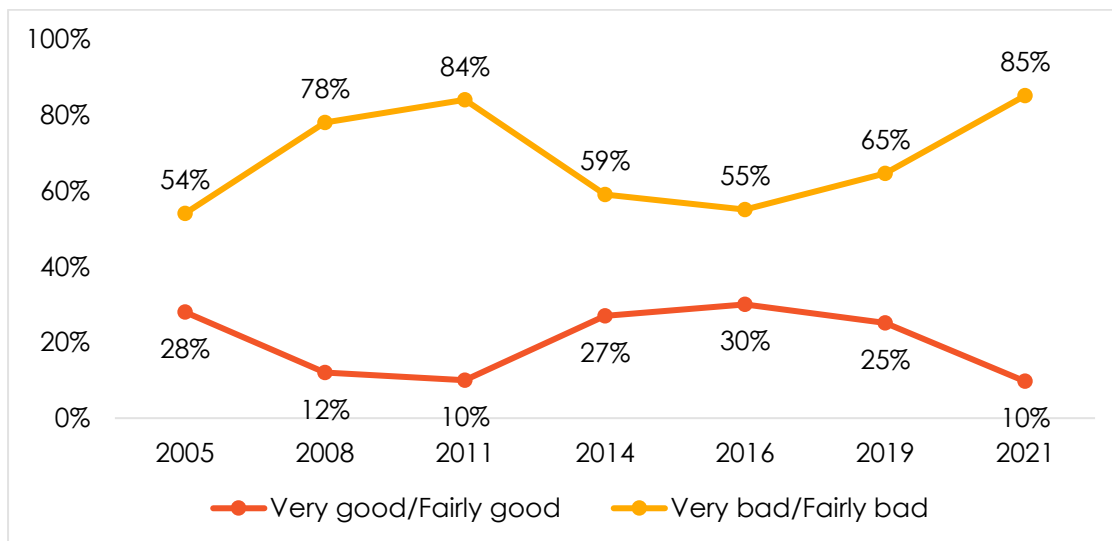
Charts

Figure 1: Is the country going in the right direction? | Kenya | 2011-2021



Respondents were asked: Let's start with your general view about the current direction of our country. Some people might think the country is going in the wrong direction. Others may feel it is going in the right direction. So, let me ask you about the overall direction of the country: Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction? (% who say "right direction")

Figure 2: Country's economic condition | Kenya | 2005-2021



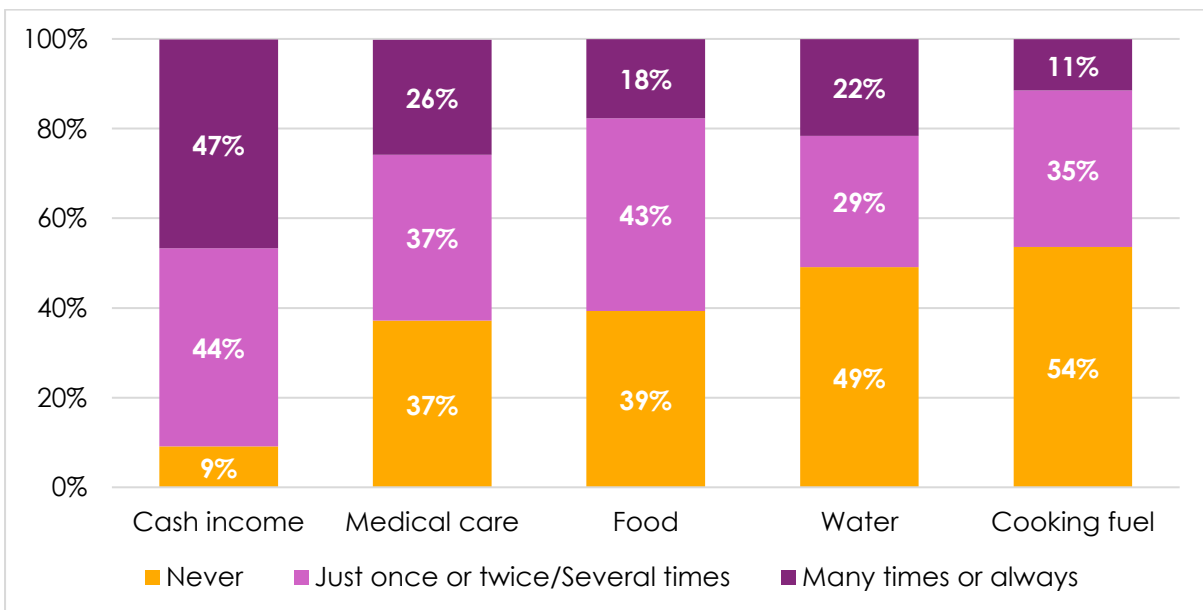
Respondents were asked: In general, how would you describe the present economic condition of this country?

Figure 3: Personal living conditions | Kenya | 2005-2021



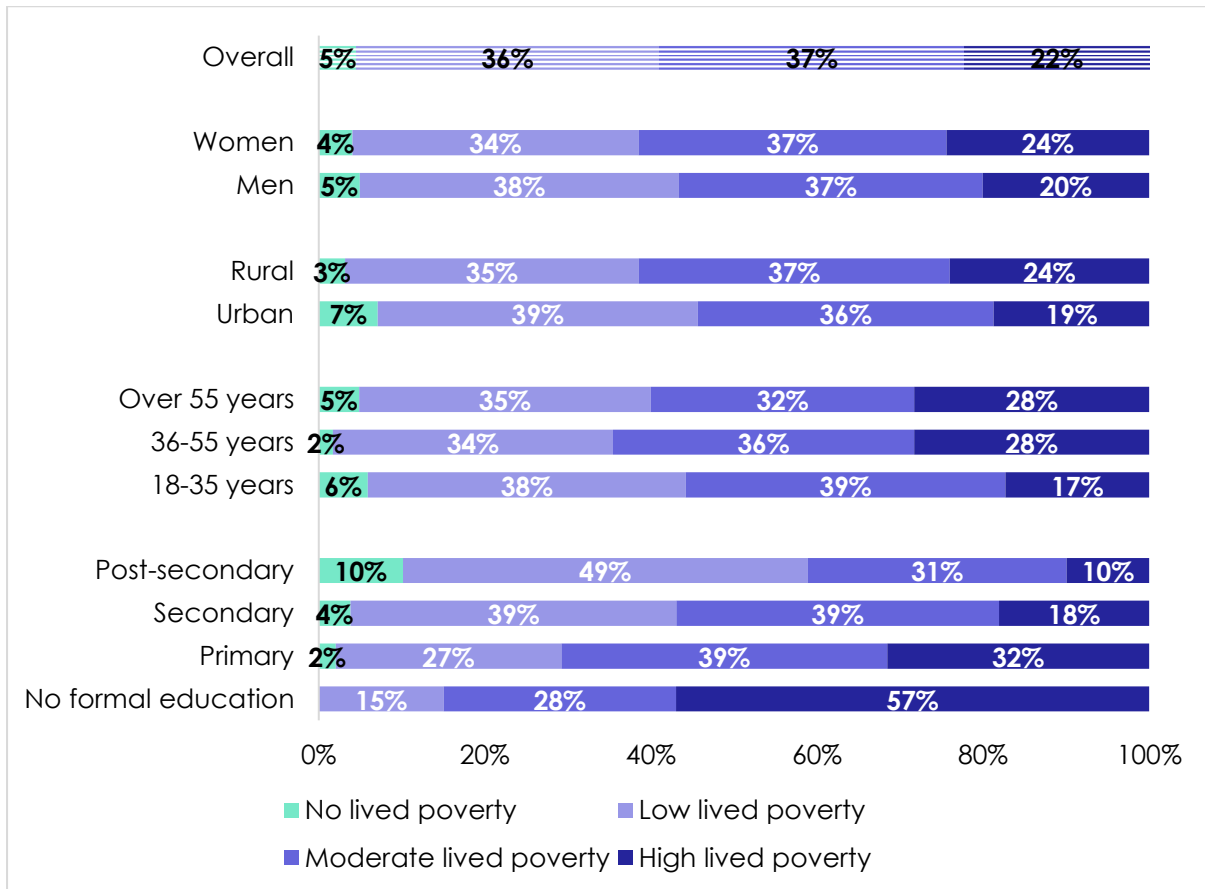
Respondents were asked: In general, how would you describe your own present living conditions?

Figure 4: Going without basic necessities in the past year | Kenya | 2021



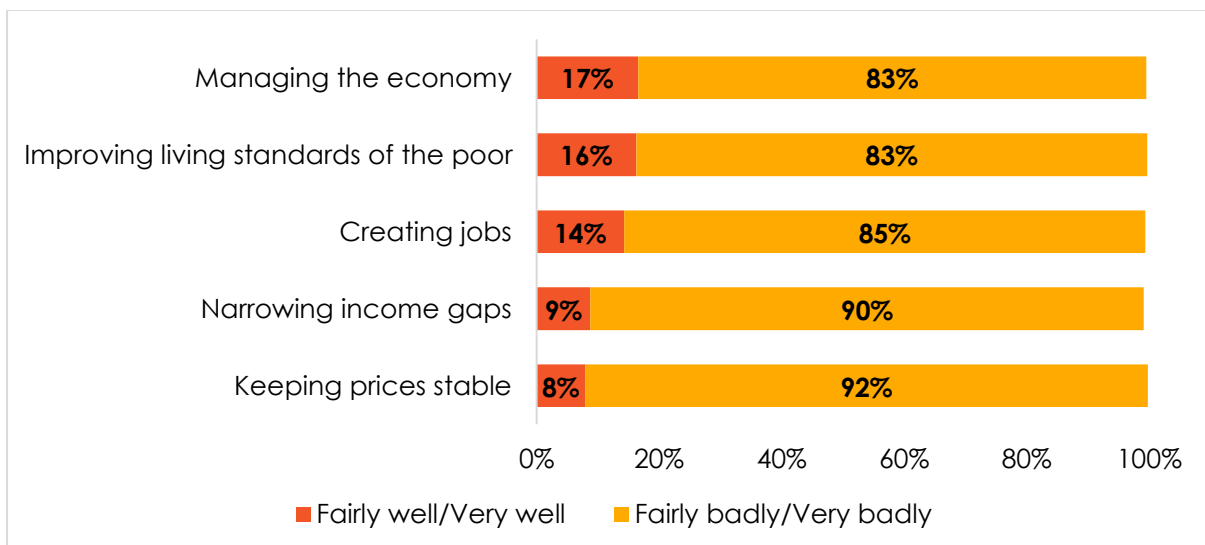
Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income?

Figure 5: Lived Poverty Index | by demographic group | Kenya | 2021



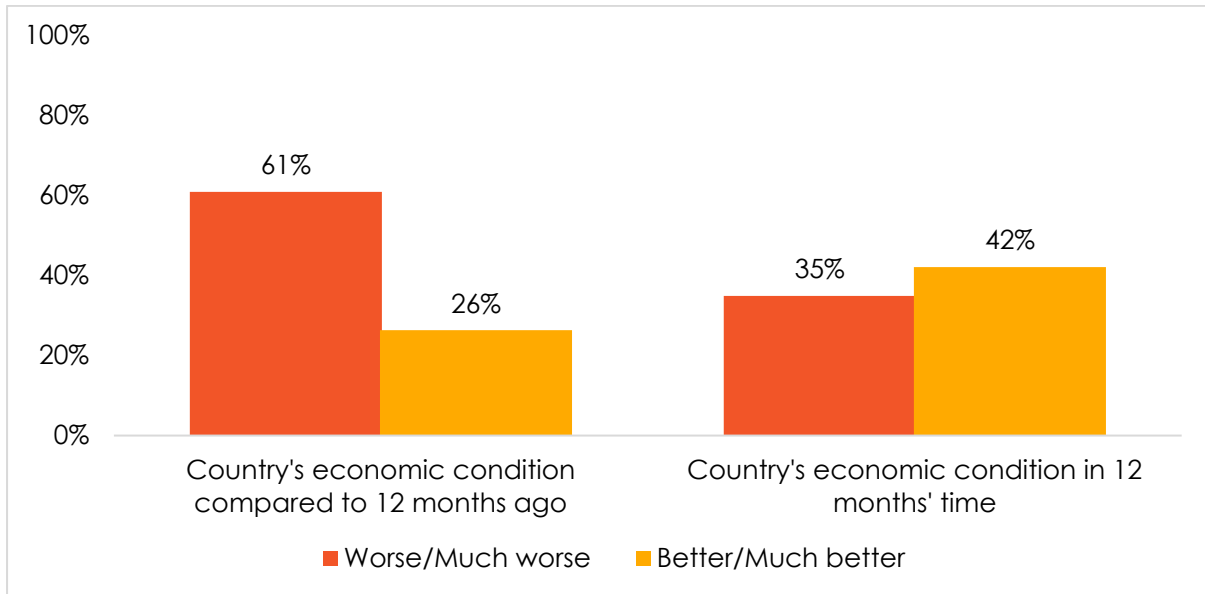
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Figure 6: Government performance on key economic issues | Kenya | 2021



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?

Figure 7: Country's economic conditions in past 12 months and prospects in next 12 months | Kenya | 2021



Respondents were asked:

*Looking back, how do you rate economic conditions in this country compared to 12 months ago?
 Looking ahead, do you expect economic conditions in this country to be better or worse in 12 months' time?*

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