

Port-Louis, Mauritius
22 September 2022

News release

Mauritians value national identity and express high levels of trust and tolerance

Mauritians express a strong sense of national identity and display high levels of tolerance and trust in the community, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

Most citizens value their national identity as Mauritians at least as highly as their ethnic-group identity. Most also say they trust their neighbours and other citizens, and express tolerant attitudes toward people of different religions, ethnicities, nationalities, and sexual orientations.

However, almost half say the government treats their ethnic group unfairly at least "sometimes."

Despite attitudes indicating openness to community, citizens report limited community engagement, such as participation in community meetings or contact with elected officials.

Key findings

- More than eight in 10 Mauritians (83%) say they value their national identity at least as highly as their ethnic-group identity. Fewer than two in 10 say they feel more ethnic than Mauritian (13%) or identify only with their ethnic group (5%) (Figure 1).
 - The largest share (55%) say they value their national and ethnic-group identities equally.
 - Self-identification as "only Mauritian" or "more Mauritian than (ethnic group)," selected by 28% overall, is more pronounced among urban residents (32%), youth (32%), and poorer citizens (33%) (Figure 2).
- Almost half (46%) of Mauritians say members of their ethnic group are "sometimes" (30%), "often" (12%), or "always" (4%) treated unfairly by the government (Figure 3).
 - The proportion of citizens who say the government "never" treats their ethnic group unfairly has declined by 20 percentage points compared to 2017.
 - The perception that their ethnic groups are "often" or "always" treated unfairly by the government increases with citizens' level of lived poverty, ranging from just 8% among economically better-off citizens to 35% among poorer citizens. This view is also more pronounced among young respondents (22%) (Figure 4).
- Strong majorities of Mauritians say they trust their relatives (87%), their neighbours (69%), and other citizens (64%) "somewhat" or "a lot" (Figure 5).
- Mauritians overwhelmingly express tolerant attitudes toward people of different religions (94%), members of different ethnic groups (93%), and supporters of different political parties (89%), saying they "would somewhat like it," "would strongly like it," or "would not care" if they had these people as neighbours (Figure 6).
 - Strong majorities also express tolerance toward immigrants and foreign workers (72%) and homosexuals (60%).

- More than two-thirds (69%) say they would like it or would not care if a family member married someone from a different ethnic group (Figure 7).
- Mauritians report limited community engagement. About one in five say they attended a community meeting during the previous year (19%), while 26% say they joined others to raise an issue (Figure 8).
 - About three in 10 (29%) say they contacted a municipal or district councillor at least once during the preceding year, while fewer report contacting a member of Parliament (14%) or a political party official (17%) (Figure 9).

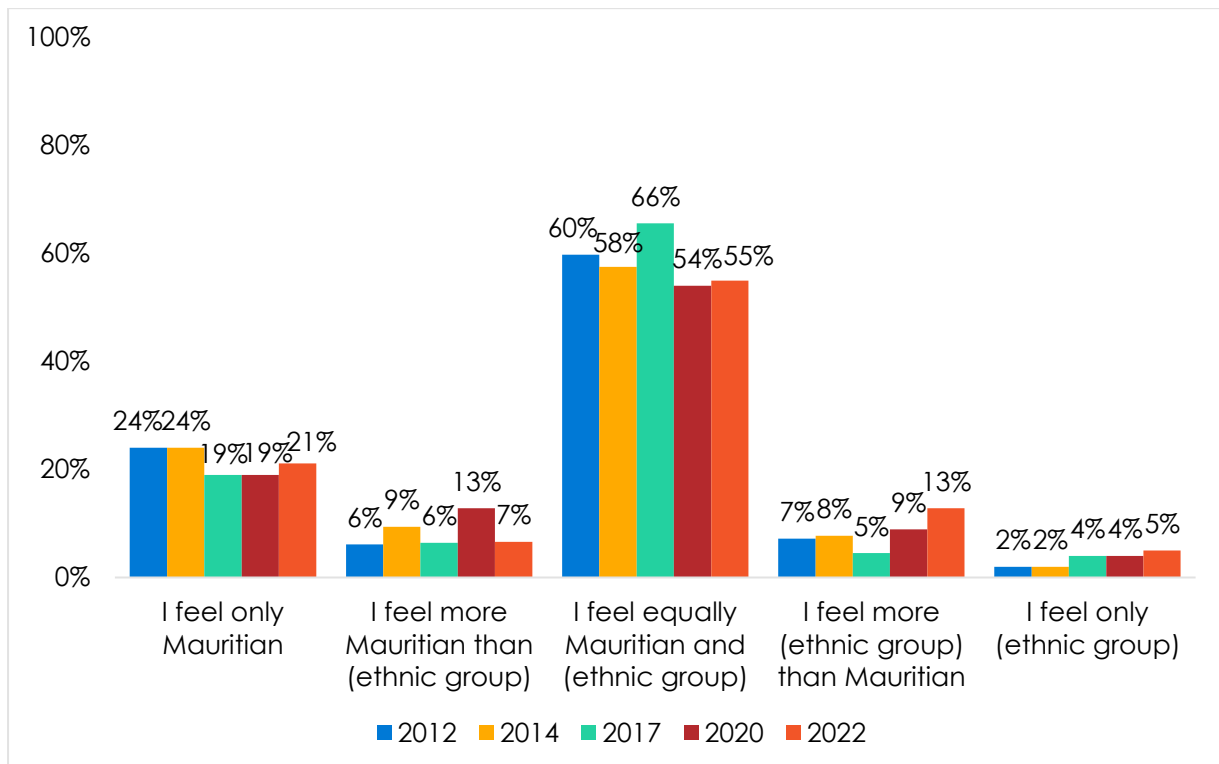
Afrobarometer surveys

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 Mauritius, led by StraConsult Ltd., interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult Mauritians in March 2022. 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 Mauritius in 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2020.

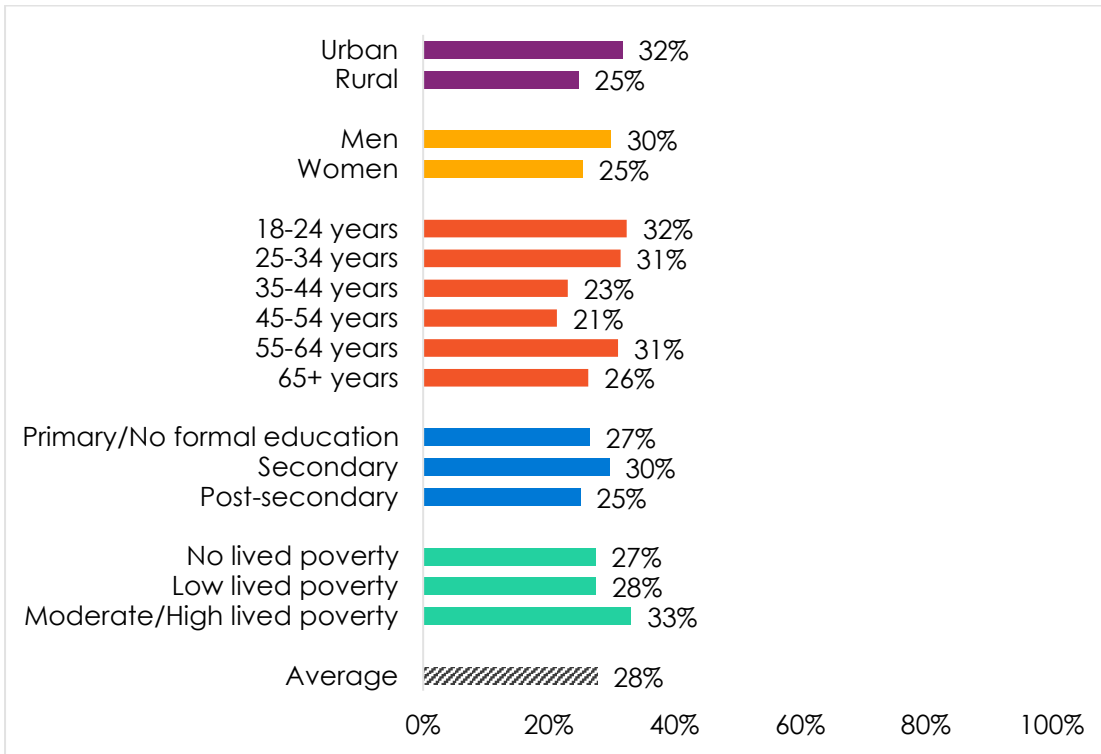
Charts

Figure 1: Citizens' choice of identity: Ethnic or Mauritian? | Mauritius | 2012-2022



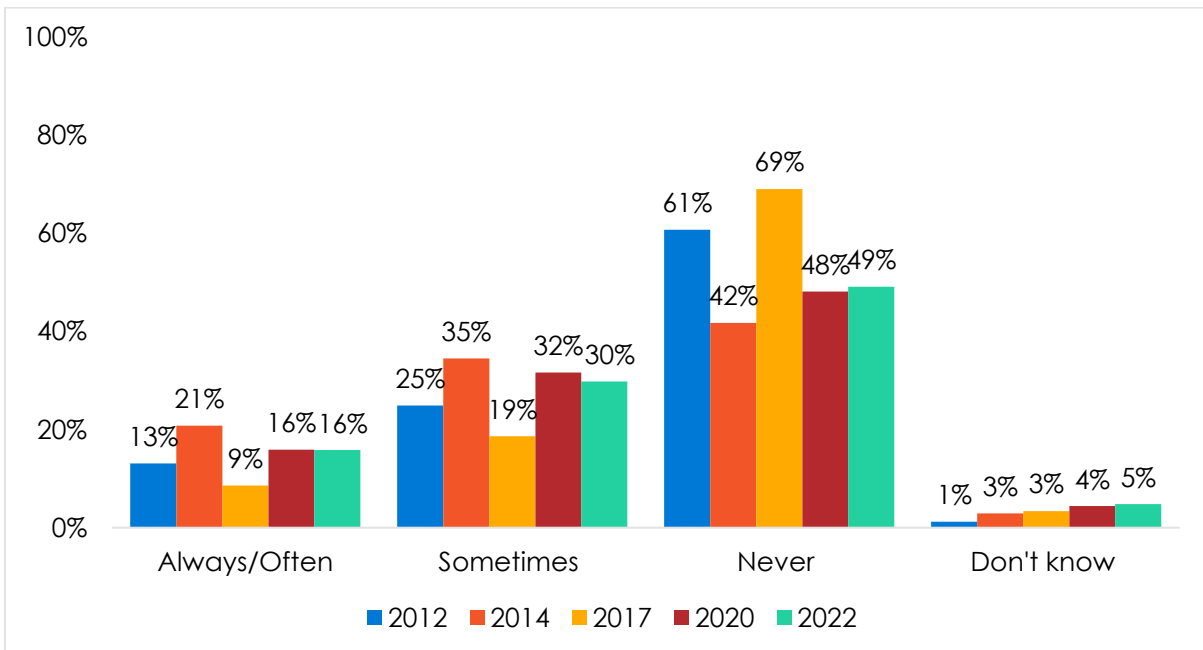
Respondents were asked: Let us suppose that you had to choose between being a Mauritian and being a _____ [member of the respondent's ethnic group]. Which of the following statements best expresses your feelings?

Figure 2: Feel only or more Mauritian | by demographic group | Mauritius | 2022



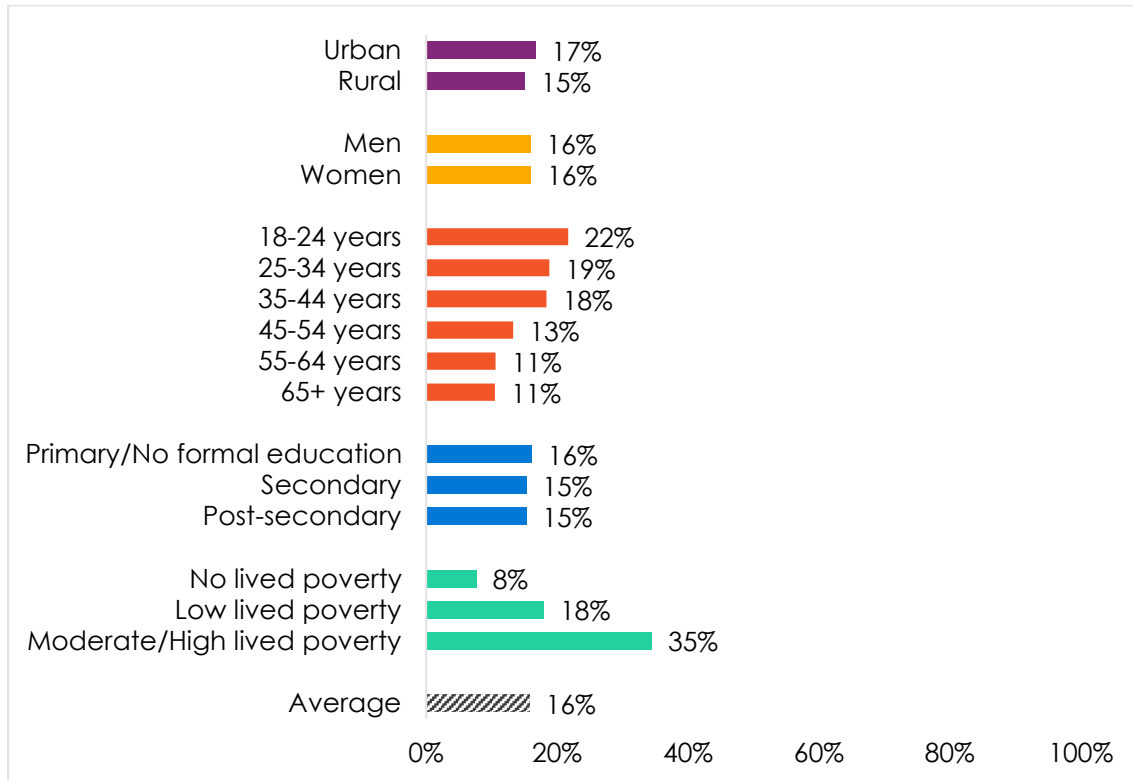
Respondents were asked: Let us suppose that you had to choose between being a Mauritian and being a _____ [member of the respondent's ethnic group]. Which of the following statements best expresses your feelings? (% who say they "feel only Mauritian" or "feel more Mauritian than (ethnic group)")

Figure 3: Unfair treatment of ethnic groups by government | Mauritius | 2012-2022



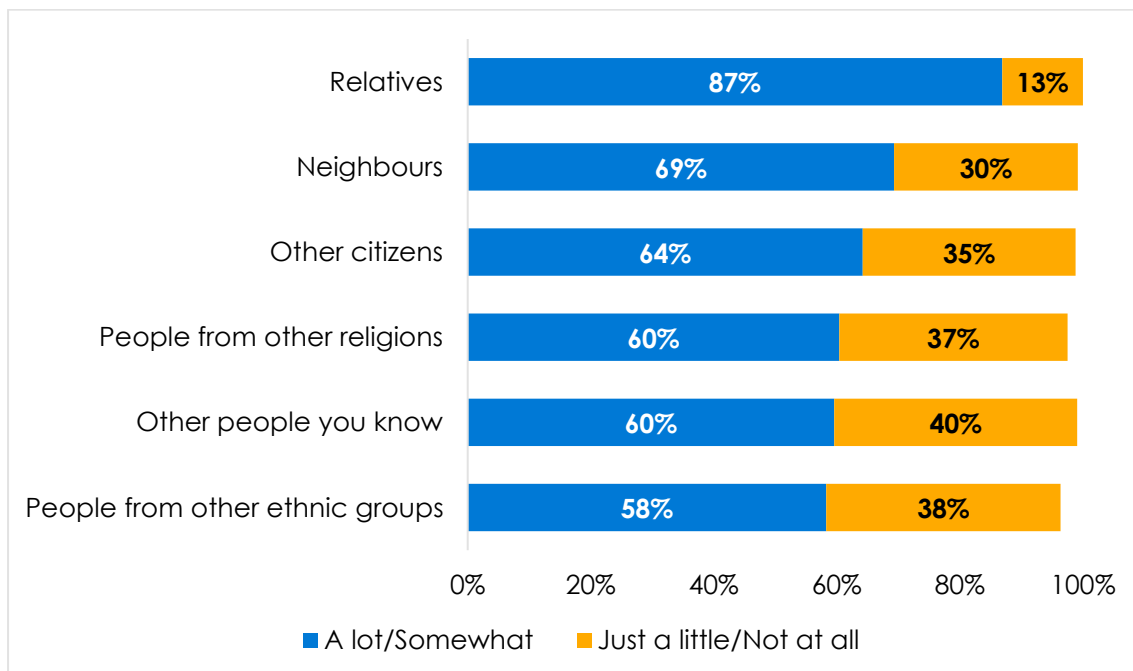
Respondents were asked: How often, if ever, are _____ [members of the respondent's ethnic group] treated unfairly by the government?

Figure 4: Frequent unfair treatment of ethnic groups by government | by demographic group | Mauritius | 2022



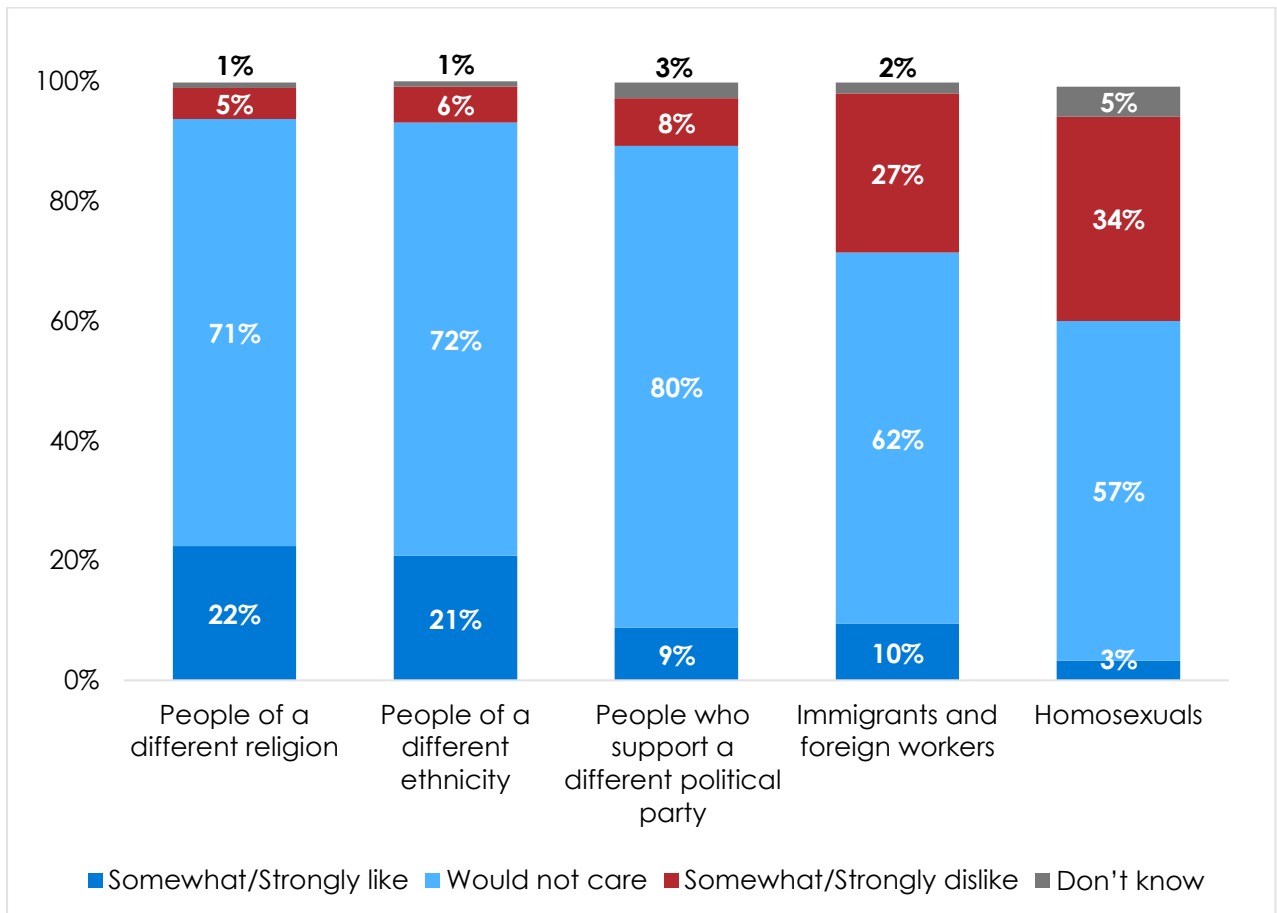
Respondents were asked: How often, if ever, are _____ [members of the respondent's ethnic group] treated unfairly by the government? (% who say "often" or "always")

Figure 5: Levels of trust in the community | Mauritius | 2022



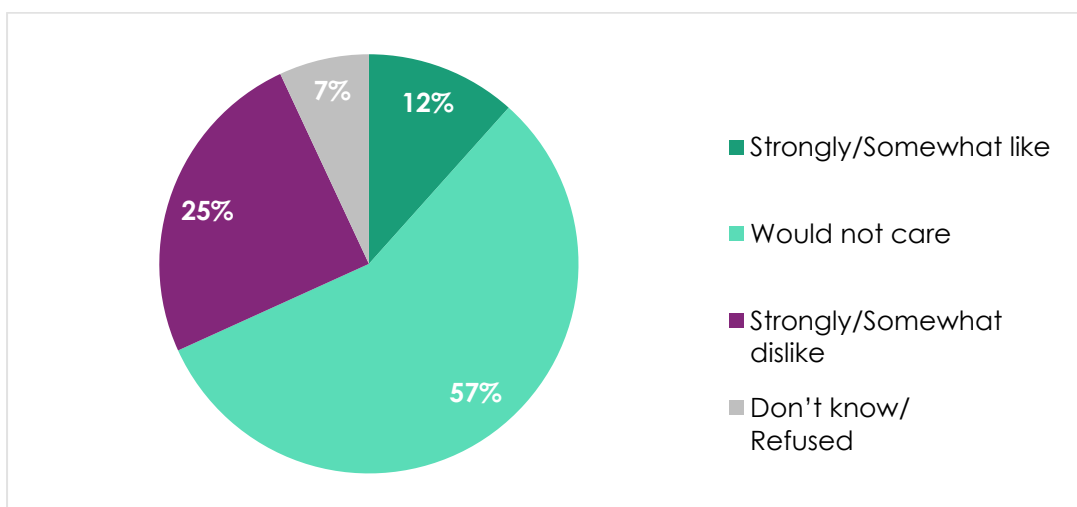
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following types of people?

Figure 6: Social tolerance | Mauritius | 2022



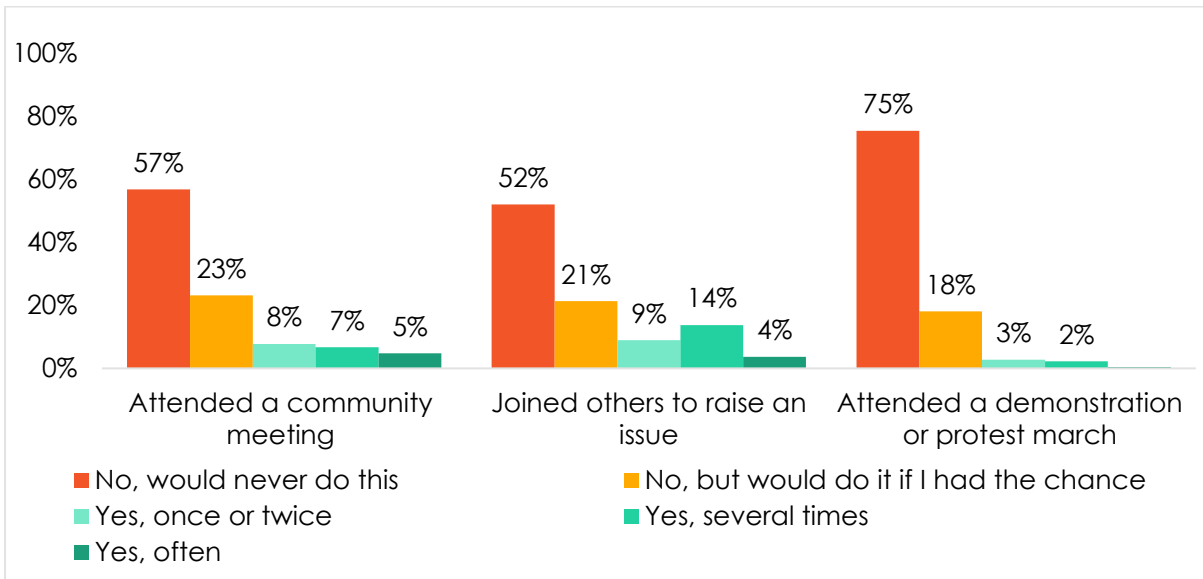
Respondents were asked: For each of the following types of people, please tell me whether you would like having people from this group as neighbours, dislike it, or not care?

Figure 7: Interethnic marriage | Mauritius | 2022



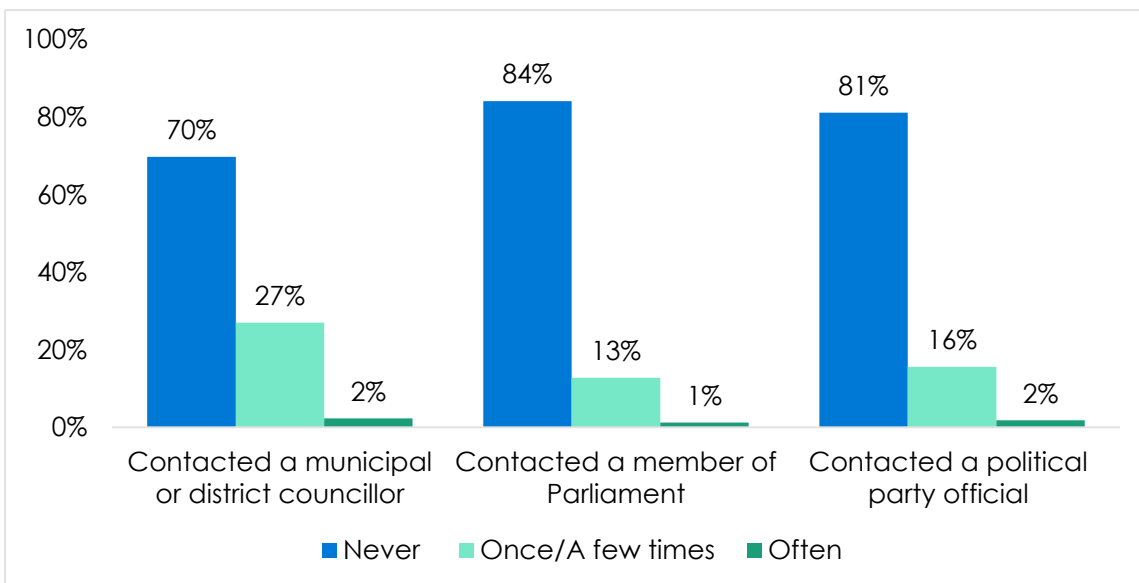
Respondents were asked: Please tell me whether you would like having a family member marry a person from a different ethnic group, dislike it, or not care?

Figure 8: Community engagement | Mauritius | 2022



Respondents were asked: Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year. [If yes:] Was this often, several times, or once or twice? [If no:] Would you do this if you had the chance?

Figure 9: Contact with elected officials | Mauritius | 2022



Respondents were asked: During the past year, how often have you contacted any of the following persons about some important problem or to give them your views?

For more information, please contact:

L. Amédée Darga
 StraConsult Ltd.
 Telephone: +230-2107033
 Email: straconsult@intnet.mu

Nazrana Hurroo
StraConsult Ltd.
Telephone: +2107033
Email: prgresearch@straconsult.intnet.mu

Visit us online at: www.straconsult.com and www.afrobarometer.org.

Follow our releases on #VoicesAfrica.

