



Freetown, Sierra Leone  
31 January 2023

## News release

---

### **Majority of Sierra Leoneans say vulnerable children lack needed support, Afrobarometer survey shows**

A majority of Sierra Leoneans say vulnerable children are often unable to obtain needed help and support in their community, according to the latest Afrobarometer survey.

Most survey respondents say child abuse and neglect and out-of-school children are infrequent problems in their community, and a majority commend the government's efforts to protect and promote the well-being of vulnerable children.

But fewer than one-third of citizens say children who are abused or neglected, who live with disability, or who have mental or emotional problems are generally able to get the help they need.

A majority of respondents say parents are justified in the use of physical force to discipline their children, although opposition to corporal punishment has increased.

#### **Key findings**

- A solid majority (60%) of Sierra Leoneans say parents are “sometimes” or “always” justified in using physical force to discipline their children. But opposition to physical discipline has increased from 33% in 2018 to 40% in 2022 (Figure 1).
- Most Sierra Leoneans say child abuse and neglect (75%) and out-of-school children (60%) are infrequent problems in their community (Figure 2).
- Fewer than one-third of Sierra Leoneans say resources are available in their community to help abused and neglected children (29%) and children with disability (27%). Even fewer (19%) say children and adults with mental or emotional problems can usually get help (Figure 3).
- A majority (58%) of Sierra Leoneans say the government is doing a good job of protecting and promoting the well-being of vulnerable children (Figure 4).

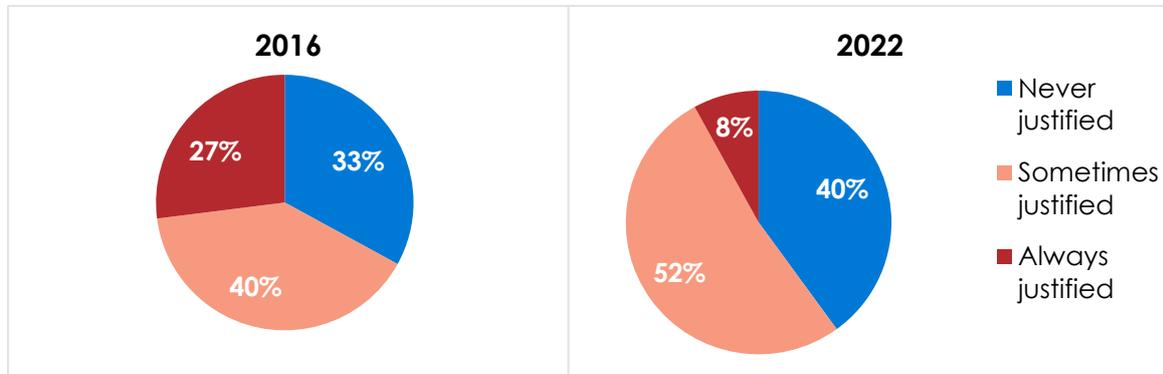
#### **Afrobarometer surveys**

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 conducted since 1999. Round 9 surveys are being completed in early 2023. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Sierra Leone, led by the Institute for Governance Reform (IGR), interviewed 1,200 adult citizens of Sierra Leone between 13 June and 9 July 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 Sierra Leone in 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2020.

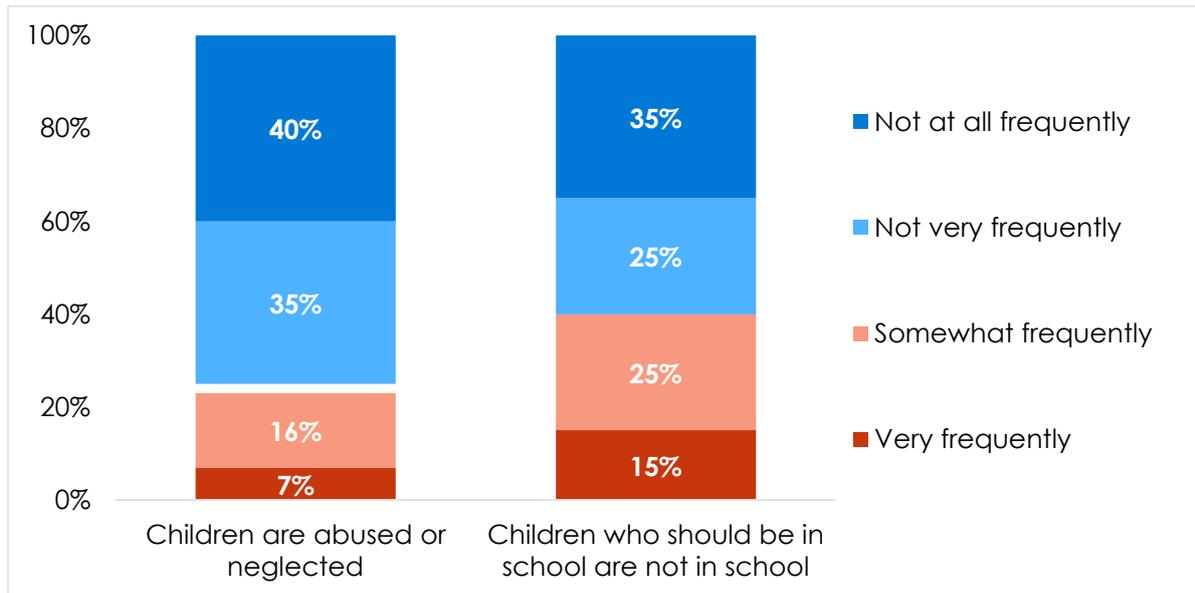
**Charts**

**Figure 1: Should parents physically discipline children? | Sierra Leone | 2016-2022**



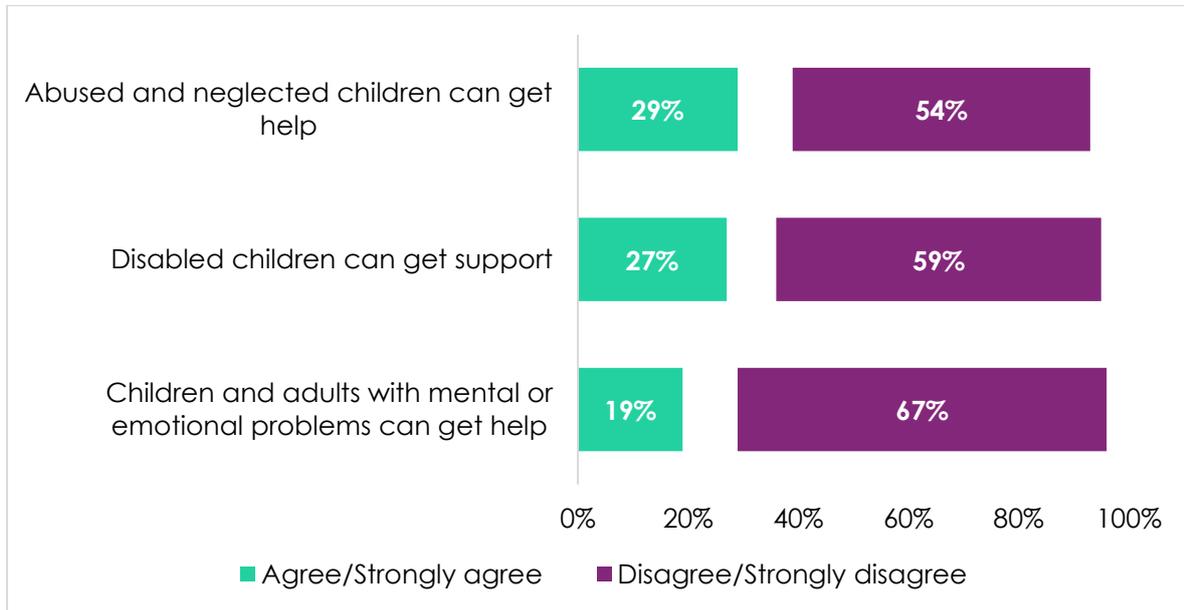
**Respondents were asked:** For each of the following actions, please tell me whether you think it can always be justified, sometimes be justified, or never be justified: For parents to use physical force to discipline their children?

**Figure 2: How often are children abused, mistreated, or neglected? | Sierra Leone | 2022**



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

**Figure 3: Is help available for vulnerable children? | Sierra Leone | 2022**



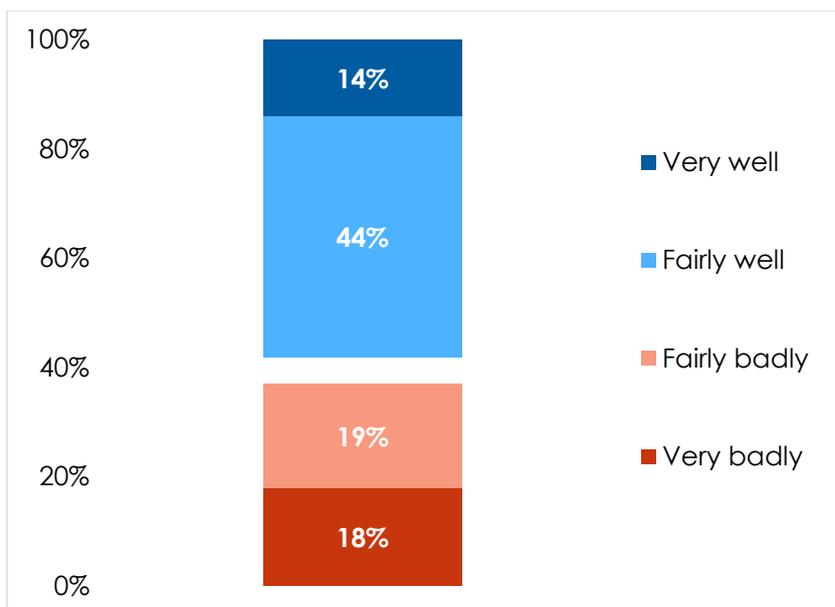
**Respondents were asked:** For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree.

*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 4: Government performance on child welfare | Sierra Leone | 2022**



**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: Protecting and promoting the well-being of vulnerable children?

**For more information, please contact:**

Andrew Lavali  
Institute for Governance Reform  
Telephone: +232 (0) 78399388  
Email: info@igrsl.org

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

Follow our releases on #VoicesAfrica.

