



Zomba, Malawi
6 April 2023

News release

Malawi youth agenda faces priority of 'wisdom of the elders' and limited political participation

Most Malawians, including the youth themselves, prioritise the “wisdom of the elders” over fresh ideas from young people, according to the latest Afrobarometer survey.

Survey findings show that the leading priorities for young Malawians are business loans, creation of job opportunities, job training, and education.

Like their older counterparts, young citizens cite management of the economy as the most important problem the government should address.

But levels of political participation by young people do not reflect an active quest for a place at the decision-making table, and voter turnout remains far lower among young adults than among their elders.

Key findings

- Two-thirds (67%) of citizens believe that for the country to do well, Malawians should listen more to the wisdom of the elders. Only 30% think they should instead listen more to fresh ideas from young people (Figure 1).
 - Even among young respondents (aged 18-35), 61% prioritise the wisdom of the elders.
- Young Malawians' priorities for increased government spending to help young people are business loans (33%), job creation (30%), job training (16%), and education (15%) (Figure 2).
- Like their elders, young citizens cite management of the economy as the most important problem the government should address (Figure 3).
- One in four young respondents (25%) say they “frequently” discuss politics with family and friends (Figure 4). About one in eight (13%) say they contacted a member of Parliament during the previous year, while 18% say they contacted their local government councillor.
- Six in 10 young respondents (60%) say they voted in the most recent national election, compared to 85% of their elders (Figure 5).

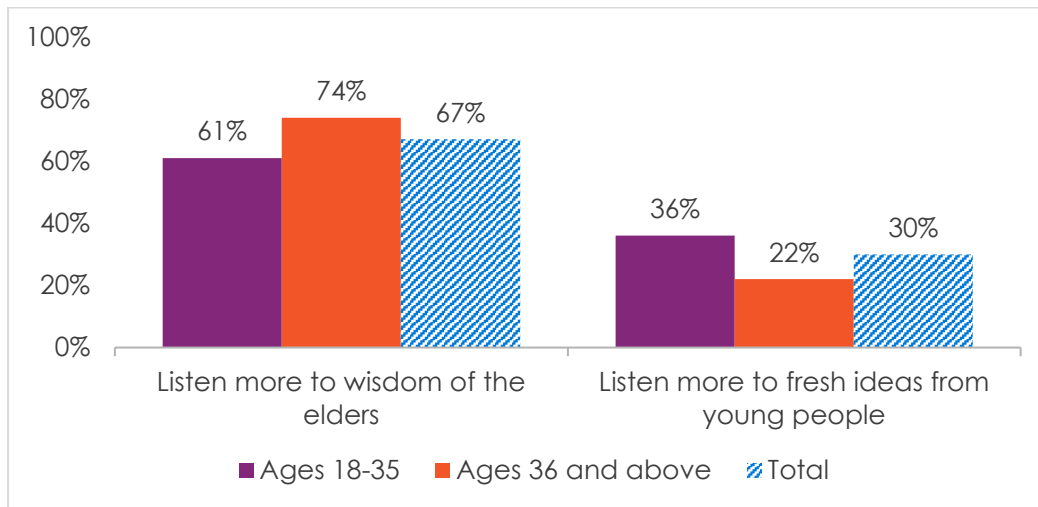
Afrobarometer surveys

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. 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 Malawi, led by the Centre for Social Research, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult Malawians in February 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 Malawi in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2019.

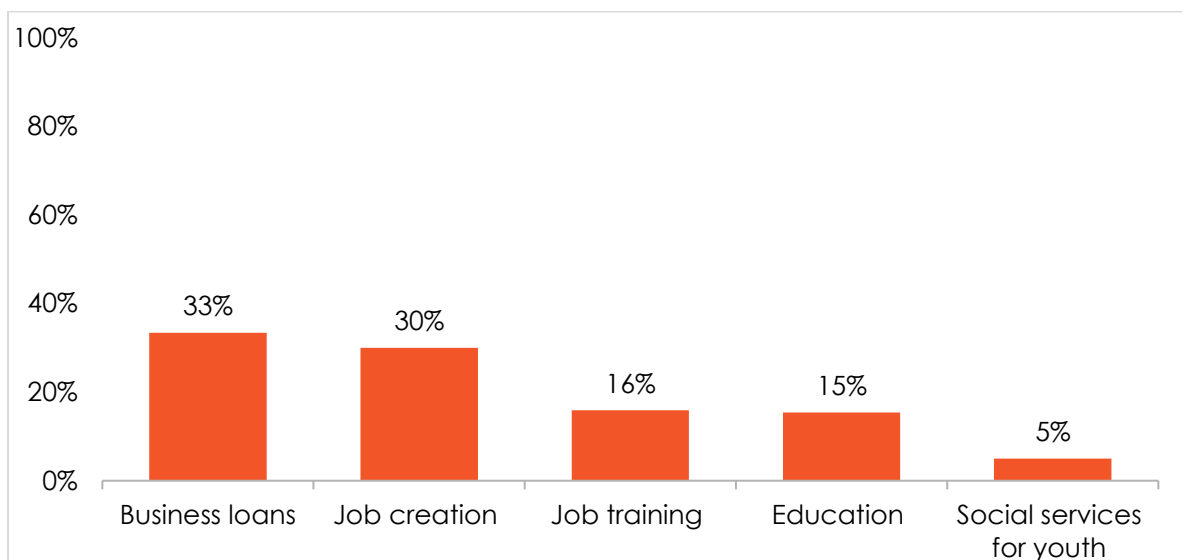
Charts

Figure 1: Fresh ideas from young people vs. wisdom of the elders | by age group | Malawi | 2019



Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: In order for our country to do well, we should listen more to the wisdom of our elders.
 Statement 2: In order for our country to do well, we should listen more to fresh ideas from young people.
 (% who “agree” or “strongly agree” with each statement)

Figure 2: Priorities for government investment in youth | 18- to 35-year-olds | Malawi | 2019



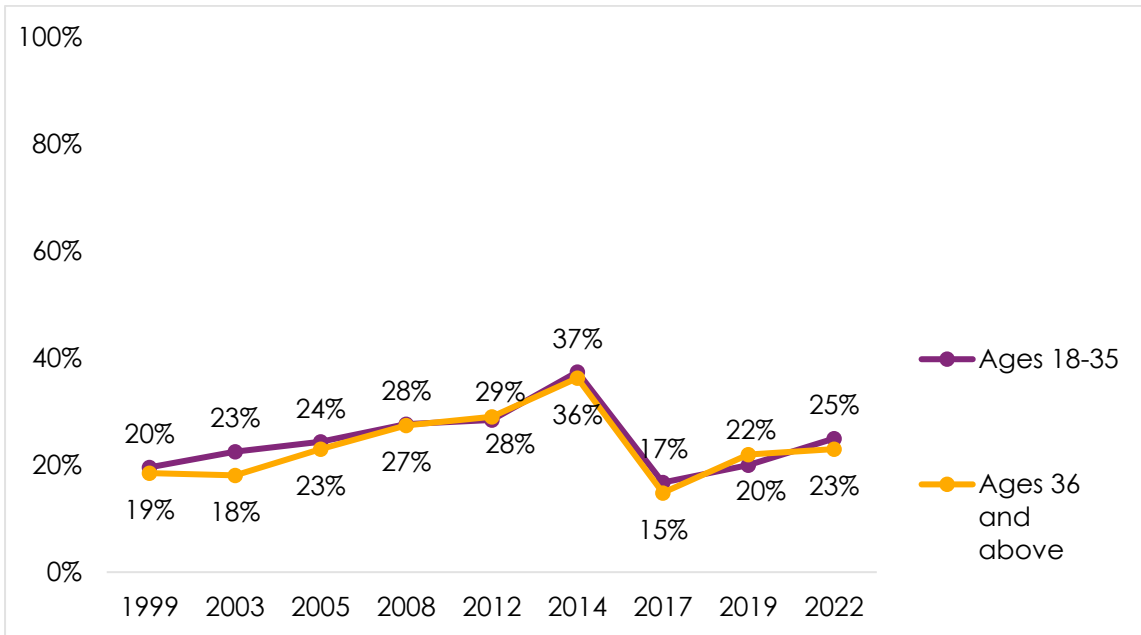
Respondents were asked: If the government could increase its spending on programmes to help young people, which of the following areas do you think should be the highest priority for additional investment? (Figure shows responses of those aged 18-35.)

Table 1: Top five most important problems | by age group | Malawi | 2022

Rank	Ages 18-35	Ages 36 and above
1	Management of the economy	Management of the economy
2	Food shortage	Food shortage
3	Agriculture	Agriculture
4	Wages, incomes, and salaries	Poverty
5	Poverty	Corruption

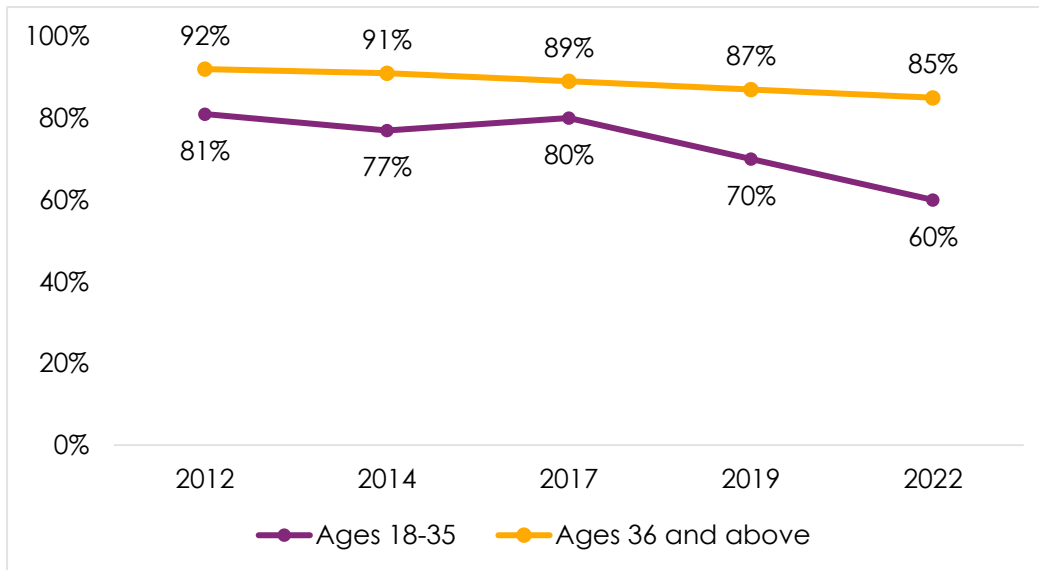
Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address?*

Figure 3: Frequently discuss politics | by age group | Malawi | 1999-2022



Respondents were asked: *When you get together with your friends or family, how often would you say you discuss political matters? (% of those who say "frequently")*

Figure 4: Voted in the most recent election | by age group | Malawi | 2012-2022



Respondents were asked: People are not always able to vote in elections, for example, because they weren't registered, they were unable to go, or someone prevented them from voting. How about you? In the last national election, held in [year], did you vote, or not, or were you too young to vote? Or can't you remember whether you voted? (% who say they voted. Excludes respondents who were too young to vote.)

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