

Banjul, Gambia
20 April 2023

News release

Gambians to government: Focus on the economy, health, and food shortages

Management of the economy, health, and food shortages are the most important problems that Gambians want their government to address, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

Public assessments of the government's economic performance have worsened sharply since 2018, and about one-third of Gambians experienced high levels of lived poverty during the year preceding the survey. Meanwhile, the proportions of Gambians who report having experienced shortages of medical care and food continue to increase.

Countering economic and development challenges is a goal of the "green recovery-focused" national development plan (2023-2027) the government is currently developing, prioritising recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic along with forward-looking climate and environmental policies. A national health insurance scheme that is being rolled out will perhaps contribute to addressing inadequate access to health care.

Key findings

- Management of the economy (48%) is the most frequently cited problem that Gambians want the government to address, followed by health (44%), and food shortages (24%) (Figure 1).
- Citizens' ratings of the government's economic performance have declined sharply compared to previous years. Only small minorities say the government is doing a good job on managing the economy (13%), creating jobs (12%), improving living standards of the poor (10%), narrowing gaps between rich and poor (7%), and keeping prices stable (3%) (Figure 2).
- About one-third (34%) of Gambians experienced high lived poverty during the previous year (Figure 3).
- About three-fourths (76%) of Gambians say they or someone in their household went without medical care at least once during the previous year, a 16-percentage-point increase compared to 2018. The share of households that went without enough food increased by 21 points over the same period, to 49% (Figure 4).

Afrobarometer surveys

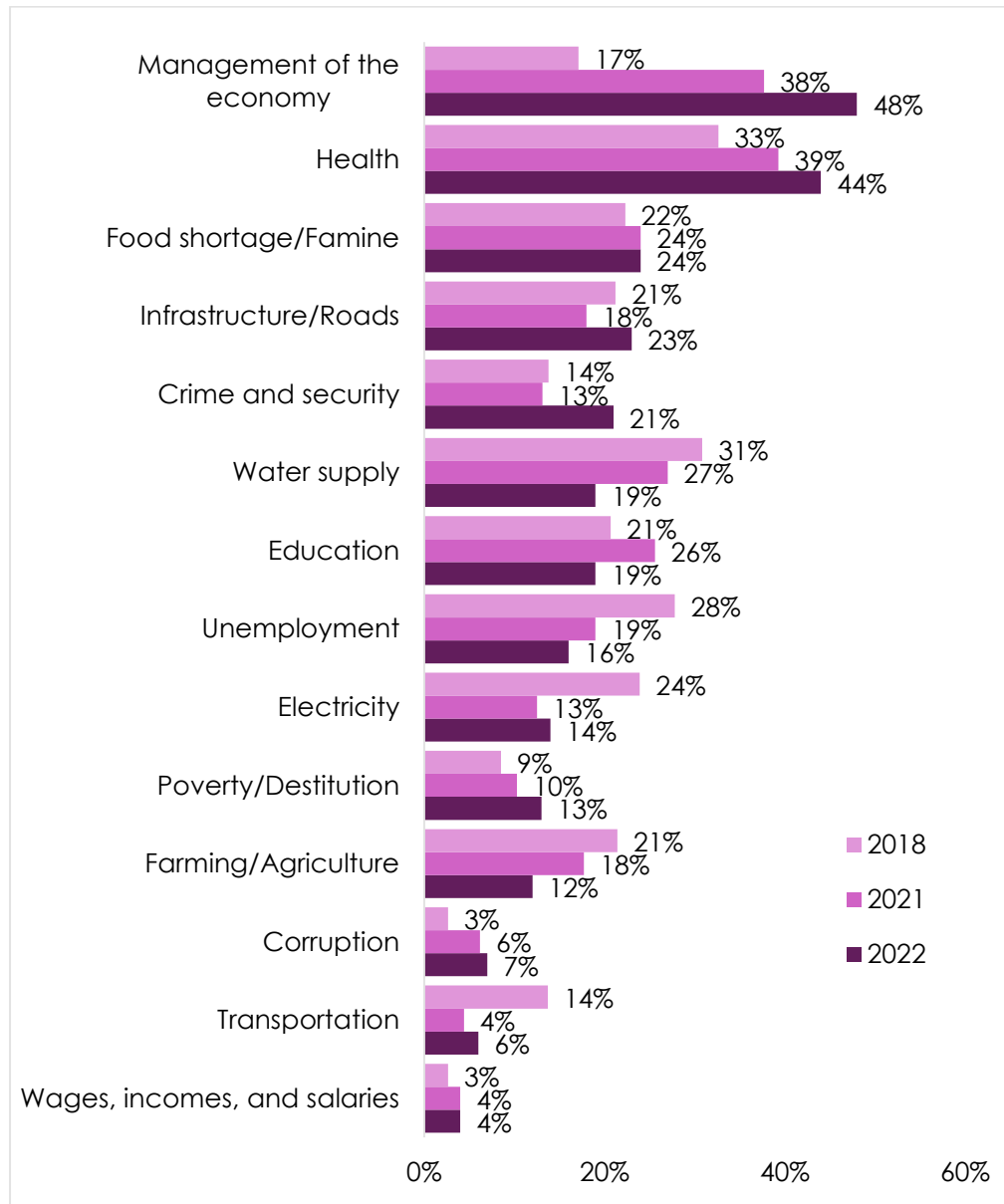
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight rounds of surveys have been completed in up to 39 countries since 1999, and Round 9 surveys are currently underway. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in the Gambia, led by the Center for Policy, Research and Strategic Studies (CepRass), interviewed 1,200 adult citizens between 30 August and 19 September 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 the Gambia in 2018 and 2021.

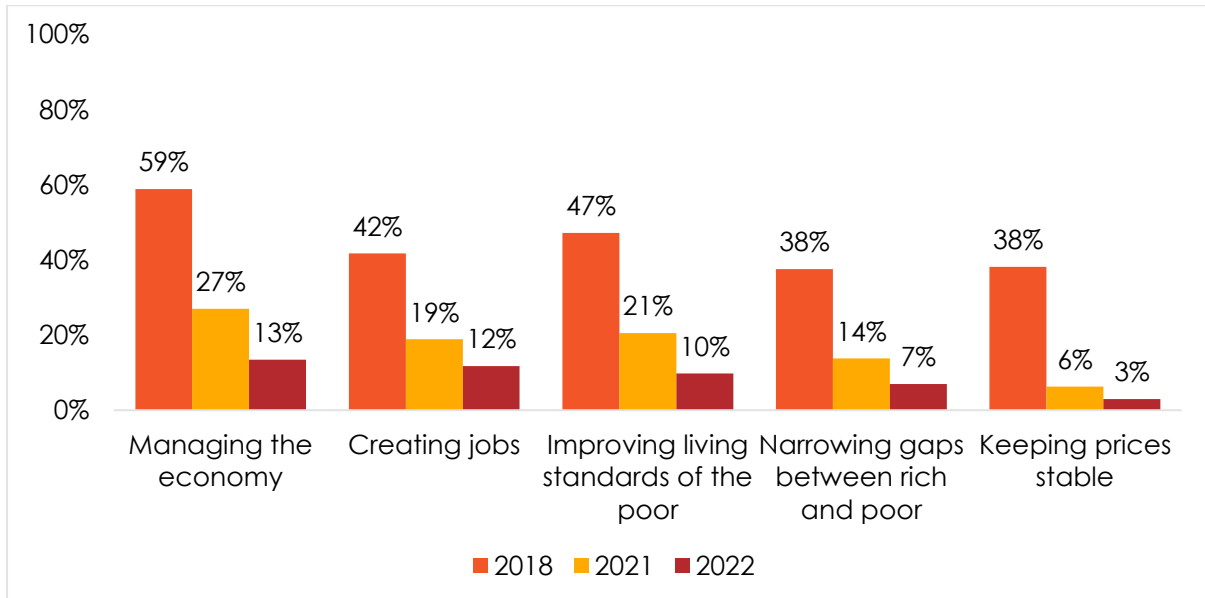
Charts

Figure 1: Most important problems | Gambia | 2018-2022



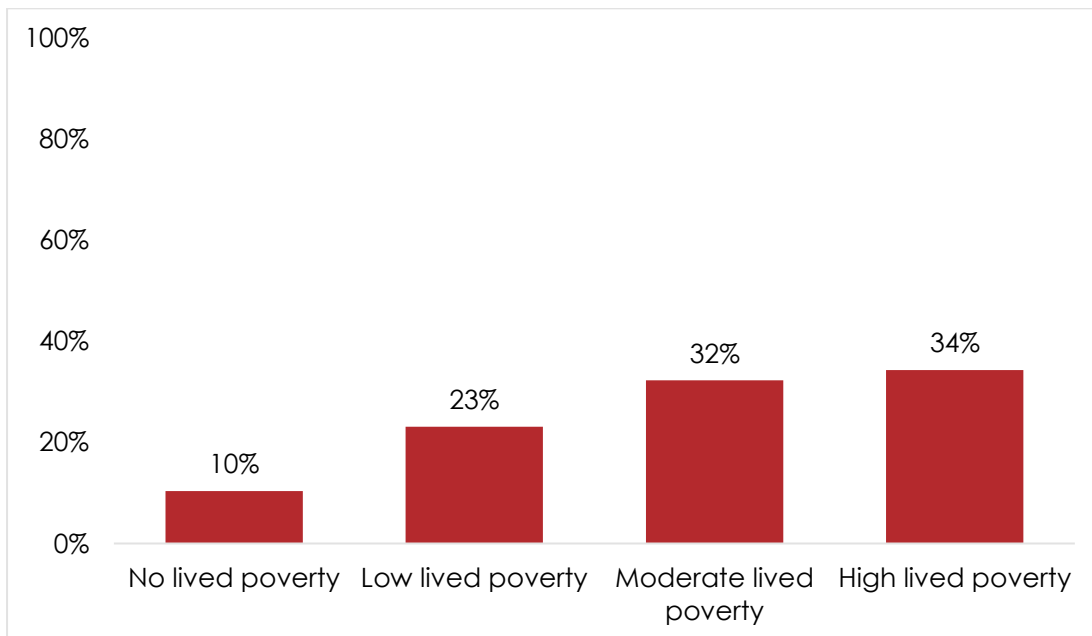
Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that the government should address? (Respondents could give up to three answers. Figure shows the percentage of respondents who cite each problem as one of their three priorities.)*

Figure 2: Positive assessments of government economic performance | Gambia | 2018-2022



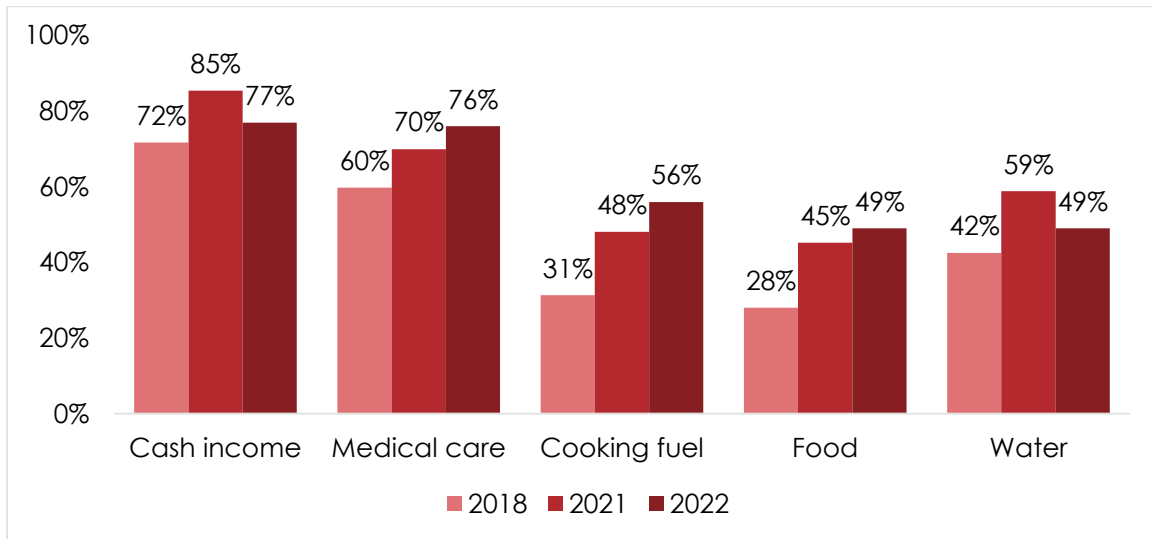
Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say? (% who say "fairly well" or "very well")

Figure 3: Lived poverty | Gambia | 2022



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 4: Deprivation of basic necessities | Gambia | 2018-2022



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? (% who say “just once or twice,” “several times,” “many times,” or “always”)

For more information, please contact:

Sait Matty Jaw
 Center for Policy, Research and Strategic Studies
 Telephone: 7917039
 Email: saitjaw@gmail.com

Visit us online at www.afrobarometer.org.

Follow our releases on #VoicesAfrica.

