



Lusaka, Zambia
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News release

Majority of Zambians say vulnerable children lack needed help and support in their community, Afrobarometer survey shows

A majority of Zambians say vulnerable children are often unable to obtain needed help and support in their community, a recent Afrobarometer study shows.

About four in 10 Zambians describe child abuse and neglect as common in their community. A majority say out-of-school children are a frequent occurrence.

Fewer than half of survey respondents say children who are abused or neglected, who are living with disability, or who have mental or emotional problems are generally able to get the help they need.

Despite these challenges, a majority of Zambians say their government is doing a good job of promoting the well-being of vulnerable children.

Key findings

- More than half (54%) of Zambians say the use of physical force to discipline children is not very common in their community. But more than four in 10 see this as a “somewhat frequent” (28%) or “very frequent” (17%) occurrence (Figure 1).
- Four in 10 Zambians (40%) say that children in their community are frequently abused, mistreated, or neglected. More than six in 10 (63%) say it is common in their community to see school-age children who are not in school (Figure 2).
 - Child abuse and neglect are more commonly reported as a frequent problem in cities (45%) than in rural areas (35%) (Figure 3). On the contrary, concern about out-of-school children is more common in rural than in urban areas (66% vs. 60%) (Figure 4).
- Only 40% of Zambians say children who are victims of abuse or neglect are generally able to receive help in their community. Almost half (48%) say support is available for children living with disability, but only 31% say the same for children and adults with mental or emotional problems (Figure 5).
 - Citizens who are poor and those who have no formal education are considerably less likely than their better-off and more educated counterparts to report that support services for vulnerable children are available in their community (Figure 6 and Figure 7).
- A majority (61%) of Zambians say the government is doing a good job of protecting and promoting the well-being of vulnerable children, with only three in 10 (32%) who disagree (Figure 8).

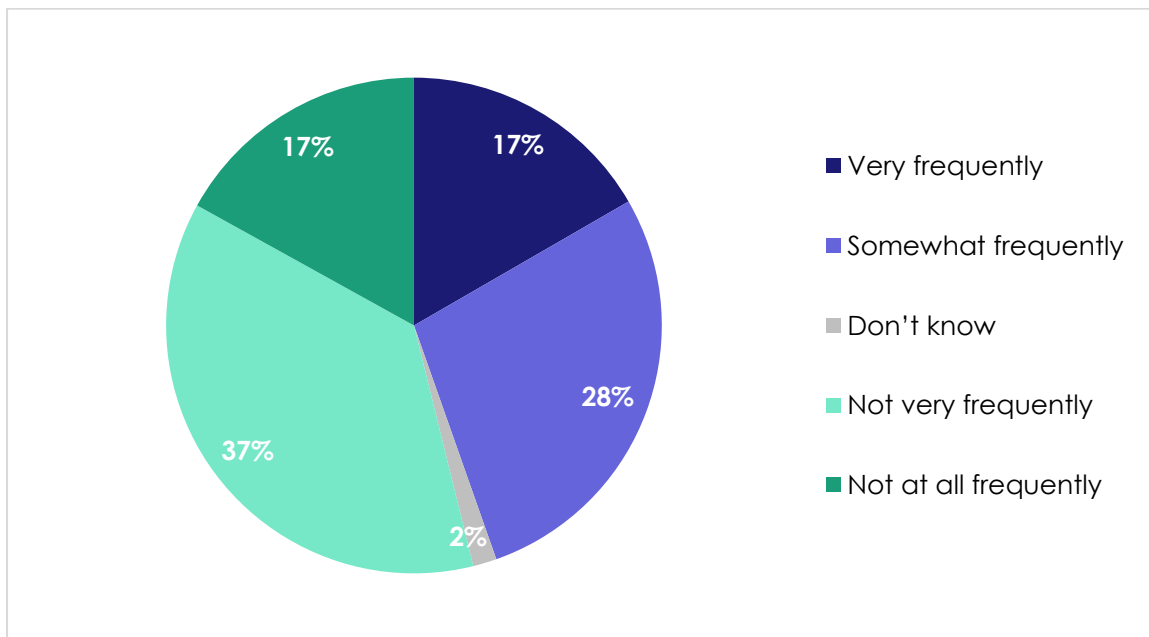
Afrobarometer surveys

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 conducted in up to 39 countries since 1999. Round 9 surveys are being completed in 2023. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Zambia, led by the Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR), a research wing of the University of Zambia, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 1,200 Zambian adults between 3 August and 7 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 have been conducted in Zambia in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2020.

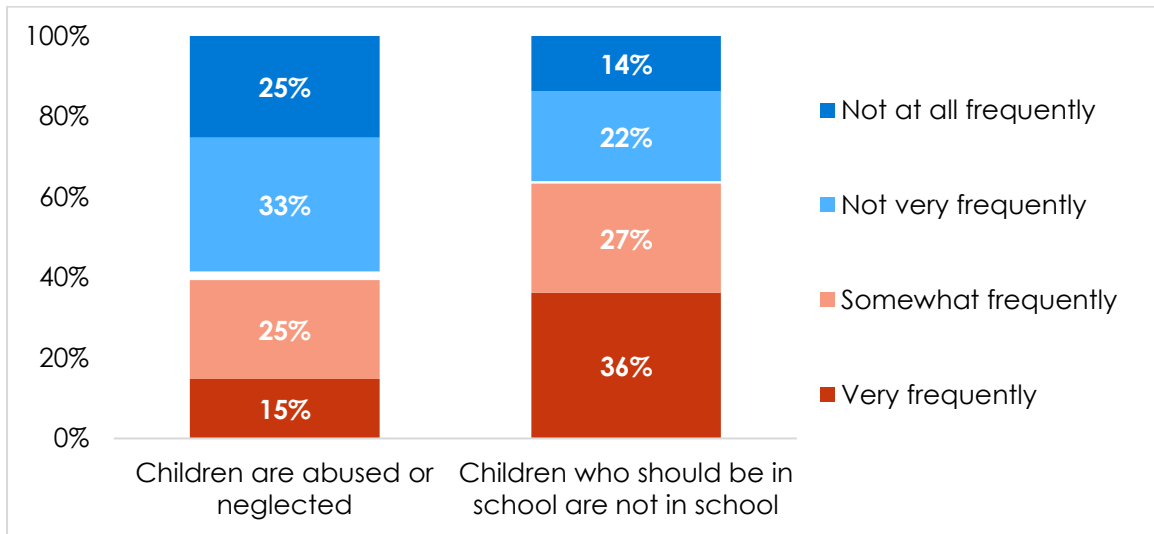
Charts

Figure 1: Use of physical force to discipline children | Zambia | 2022



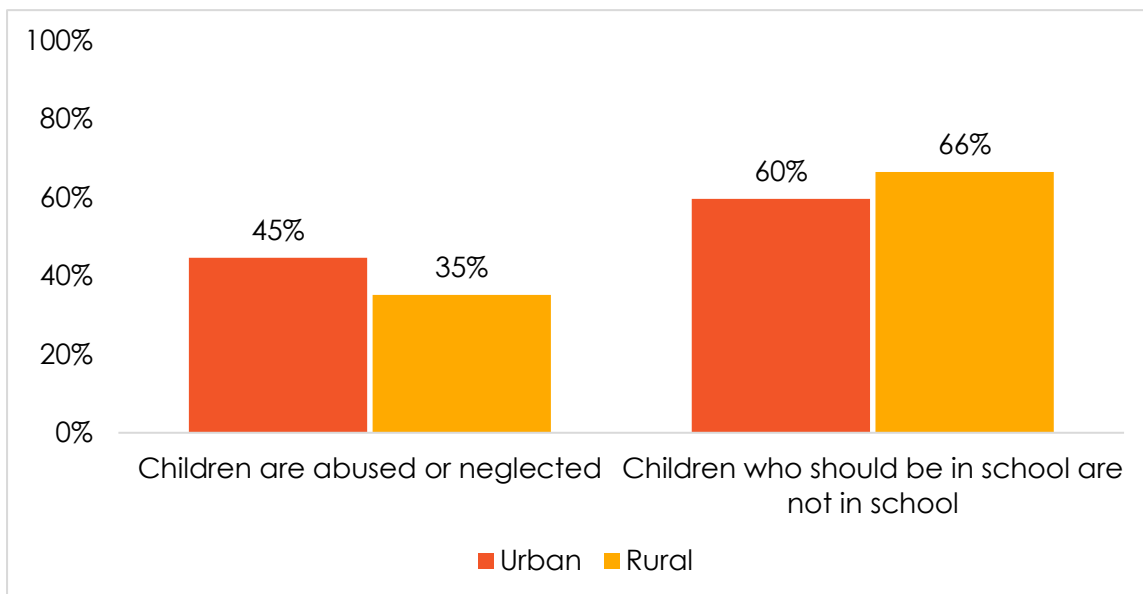
Respondents were asked: How frequently do you think the following things occur in your community or neighbourhood: Adults use physical force to discipline children?

Figure 2: How often are children abused, mistreated, or neglected? | Zambia | 2022



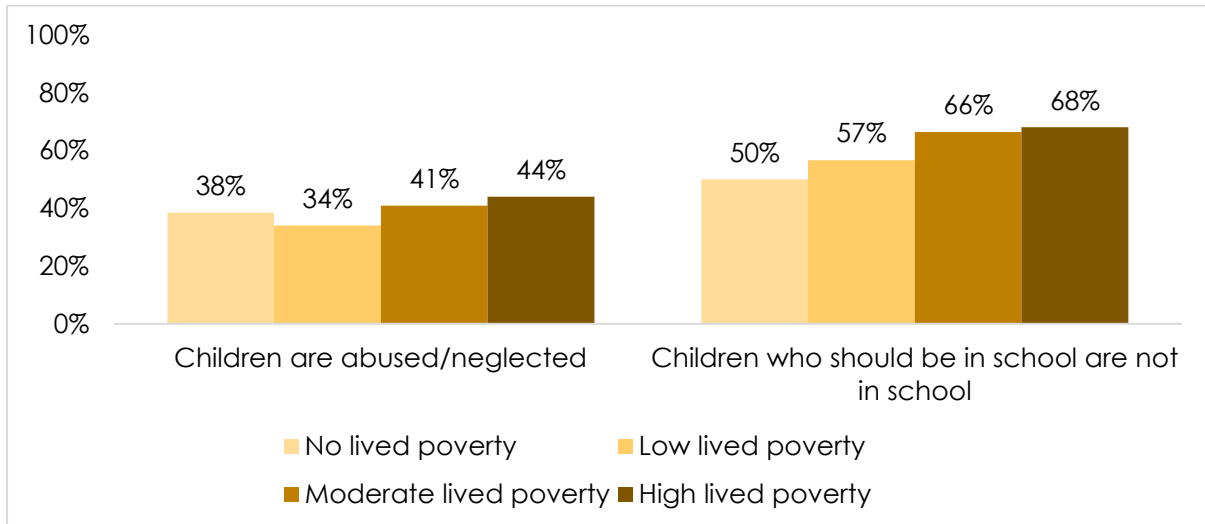
Respondents were asked: How frequently do you think the following things occur in your community or neighbourhood: Children are abused, mistreated, or neglected? Children who should be in school are not in school?

Figure 3: Perception that children are frequently abused or neglected | by urban-rural location | Zambia | 2022



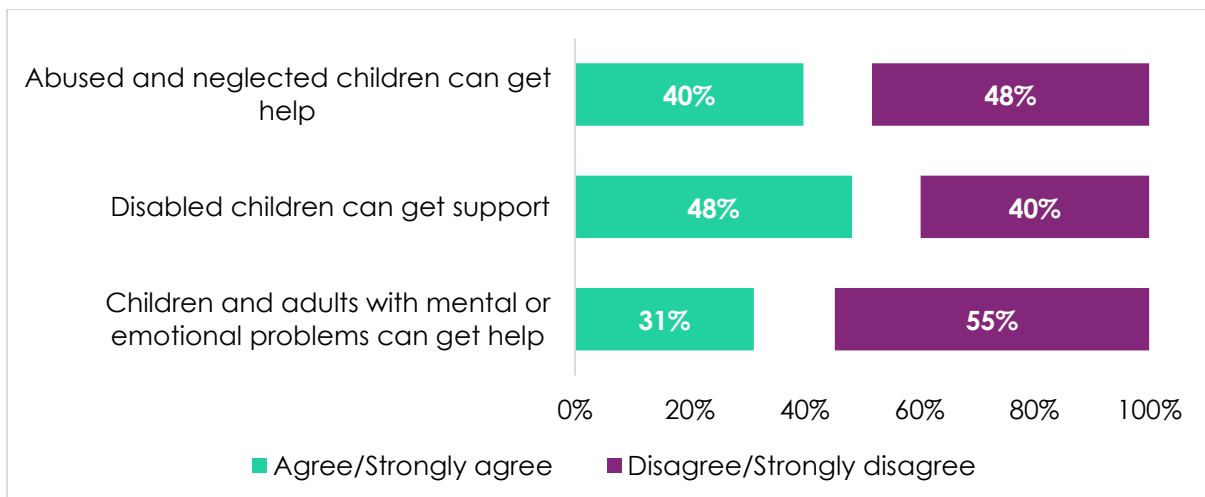
Respondents were asked: How frequently do you think the following things occur in your community or neighbourhood: Children are abused, mistreated, or neglected? Children who should be in school are not in school? (% who say "somewhat frequently" or "very frequently")

Figure 4: Perception that children are frequently abused or neglected | by lived poverty | Zambia | 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? (% who say "somewhat frequently" or "very frequently")

Figure 5: Availability of help for vulnerable children | Zambia | 2022



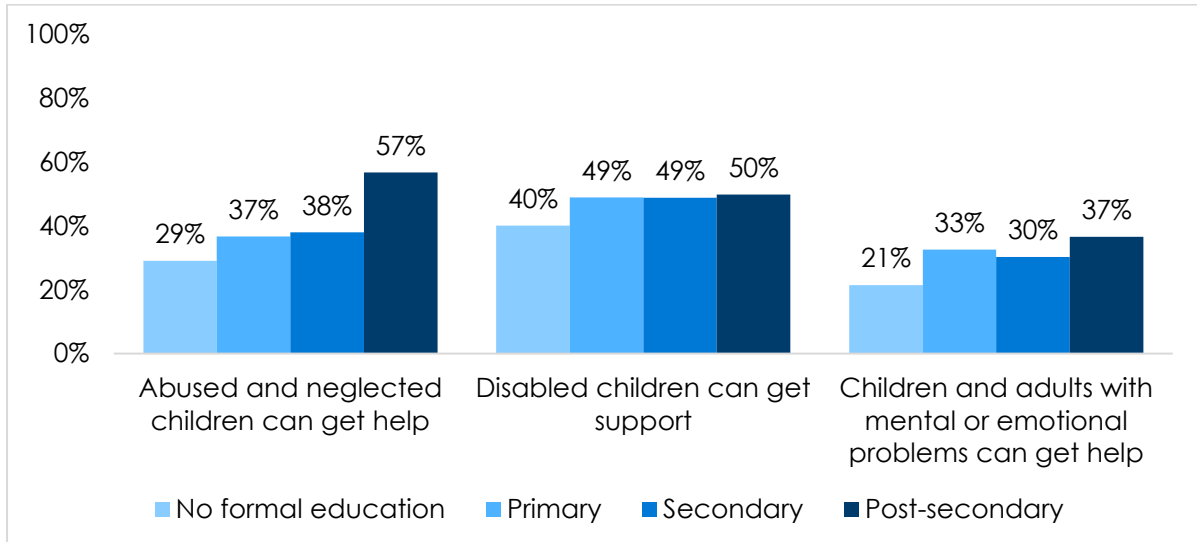
Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree.

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 6: Availability of help for vulnerable children | by education level | Zambia | 2022



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

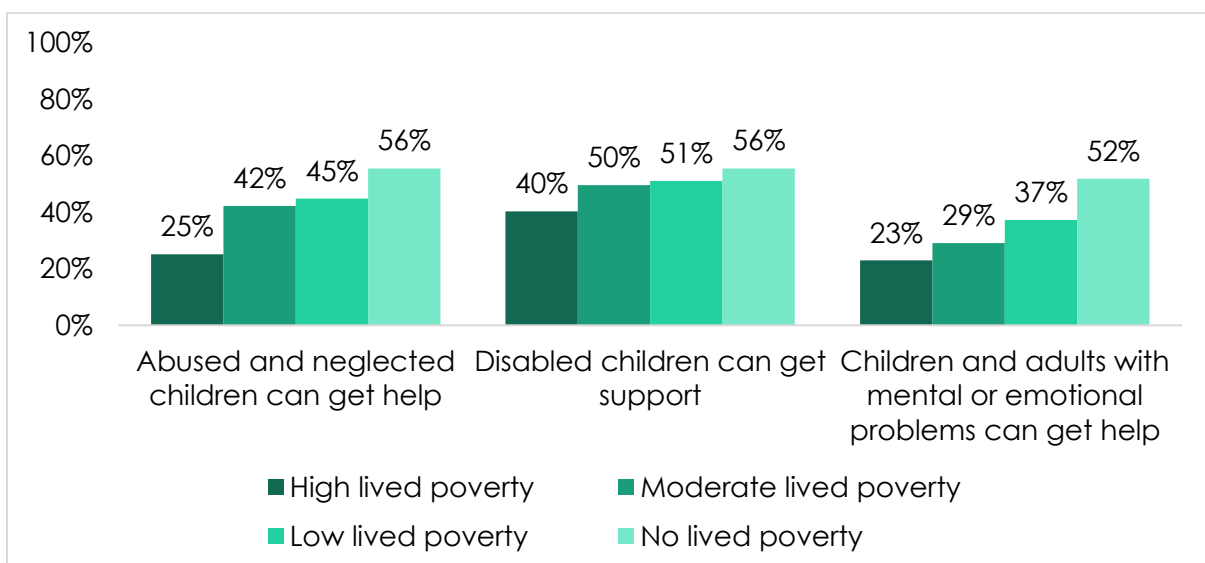
In general, people in this community are able to get help for children who are abused, mistreated, or neglected.

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.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree")

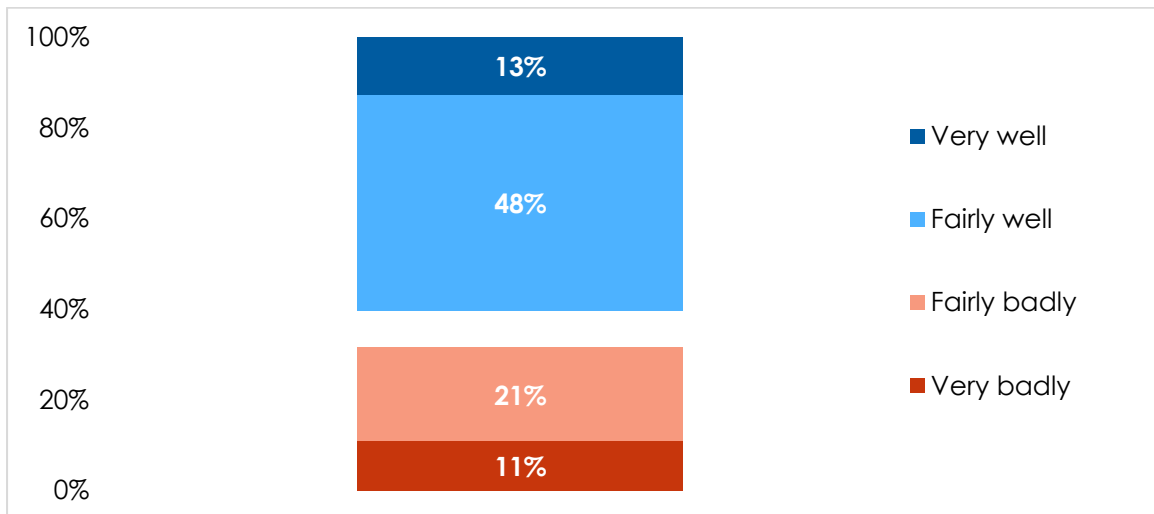
Figure 7: Availability of help for vulnerable children | by lived poverty | Zambia | 2022



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.
 (% who say "agree" or "agree strongly")

Figure 8: Government performance on child welfare | Zambia | 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?

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