

Accra, Ghana  
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## News release

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### Day of the African Child: Afrobarometer survey shows majority support for corporal punishment, but opposition growing

A majority of Africans view using physical force to discipline children as justified, but opposition to this practice has increased significantly over the past five years, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

Support for corporal punishment is the majority view in 28 of 36 African countries surveyed in 2021/2022, approaching nine out of 10 citizens in Benin, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, and Niger.

But opposition to the use of physical force to discipline children has risen and approaches three-fourths majorities in Malawi, Tanzania, and Morocco. Rejection of physical discipline is somewhat more common among educated and economically better-off citizens.

The World Health Organization describes corporal punishment as a violation of a child's rights and harmful to his or her development, but as of 2022, only 12 African countries had prohibited all forms of corporal punishment.

#### Key findings

- On average across 36 African countries surveyed in 2021/2022, about four in 10 citizens (38%) say it is “never” justified for parents to use physical force to discipline their children. Six in 10 respondents (61%) say it is “sometimes” or “always” justified (Figure 1).
  - Opposition to the use of physical force to discipline children is strongest in Malawi (74%), Tanzania (72%), and Morocco (72%), while support for the practice is strongest in Benin (88%), Cameroon (87%), Burkina Faso (86%), and Niger (85%).
- On average across 32 countries surveyed in both 2016/2018 and 2021/2022, opposition to physical discipline of children has increased by 5 percentage points (Figure 2).
  - Rejection of corporal punishment increased dramatically in several countries, including Tanzania (by 32 percentage points), Kenya (24 points), Liberia (22 points), Eswatini (19 points), and Nigeria (17 points) (Figure 3).
- Opposition to the use of physical force in disciplining children is stronger among citizens with formal education (40%-41%) than among those with no formal schooling (29%) and increases with respondents' economic status, ranging from 34% of those experiencing high lived poverty to 49% of those with no lived poverty. Urban residents (40%) are somewhat more likely than rural residents (36%) to reject corporal punishment (Figure 4).

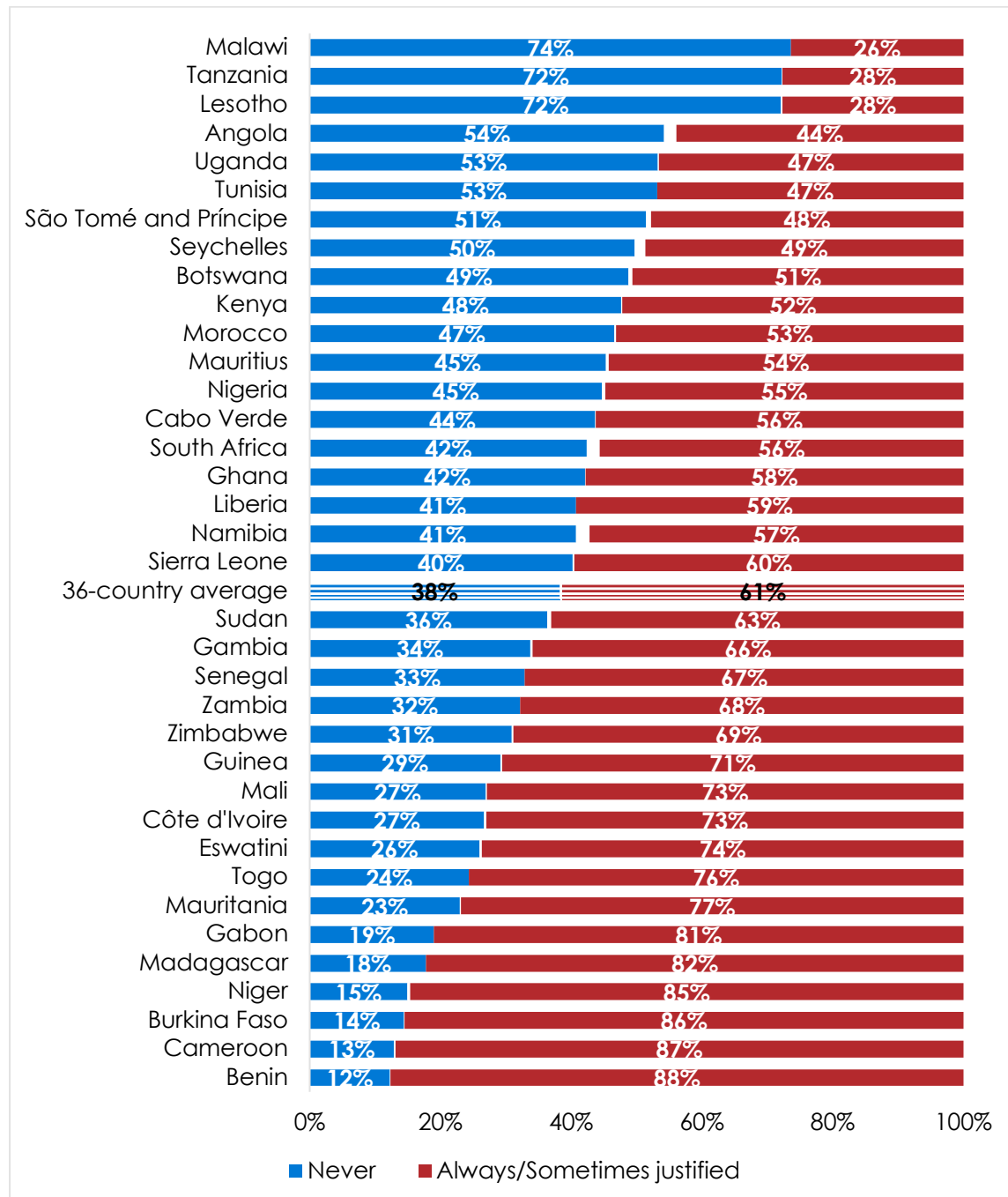
#### Afrobarometer surveys

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 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 with nationally representative samples of 1,200-2,400, which yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2 to +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

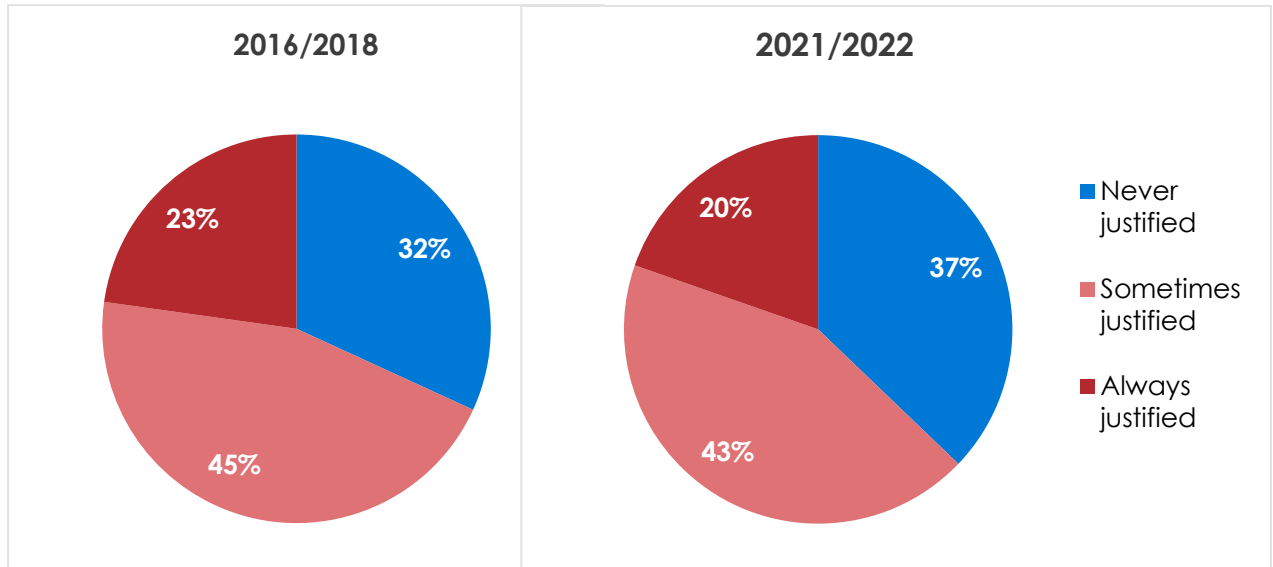
**Charts**

**Figure 1: Should parents physically discipline children? | 36 countries | 2021/2022**



**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: Should parents physically discipline children? | 32 countries | 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 3: Changes in rejection of physical discipline of children (percentage points)**  
 | 32 countries | 2016-2022

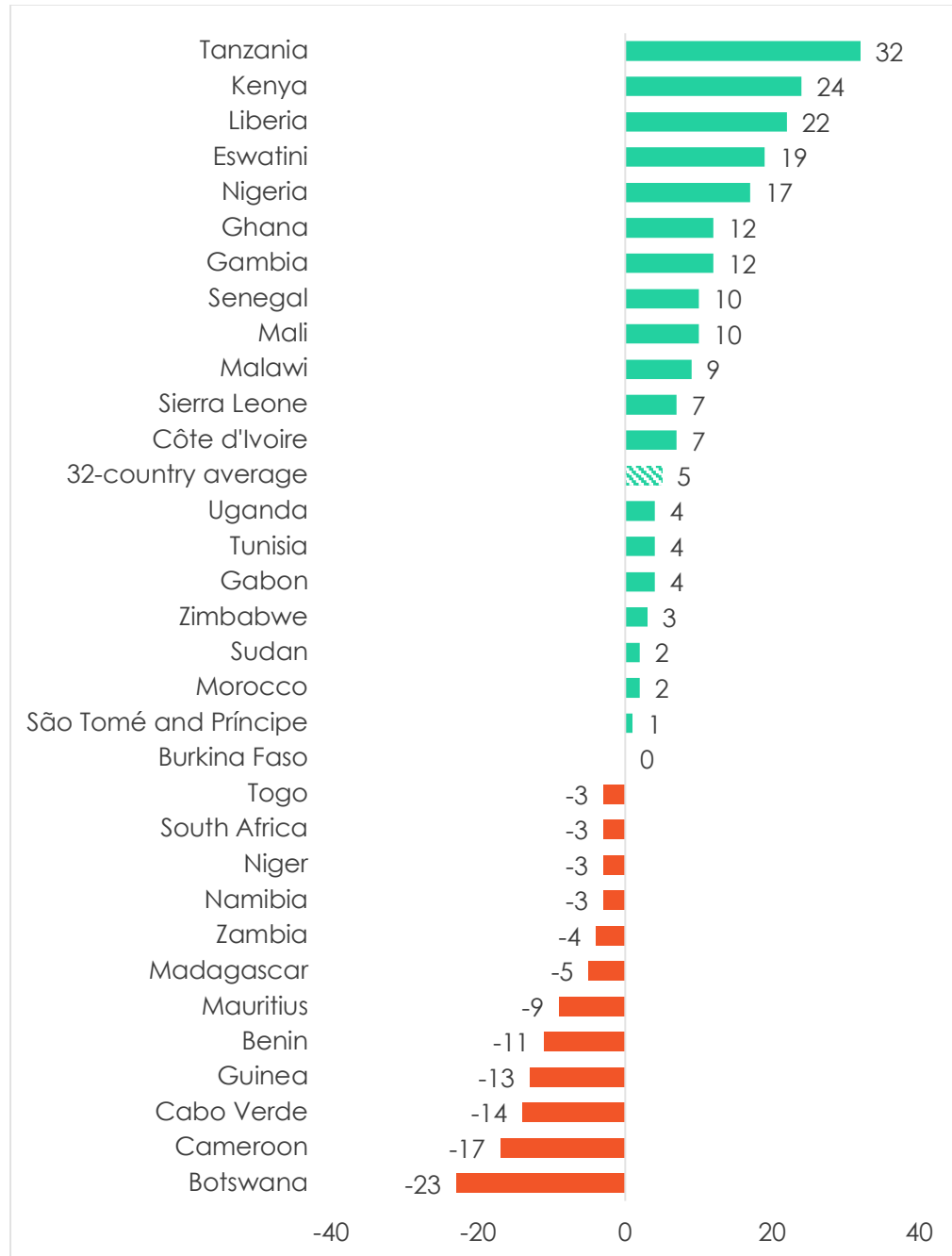
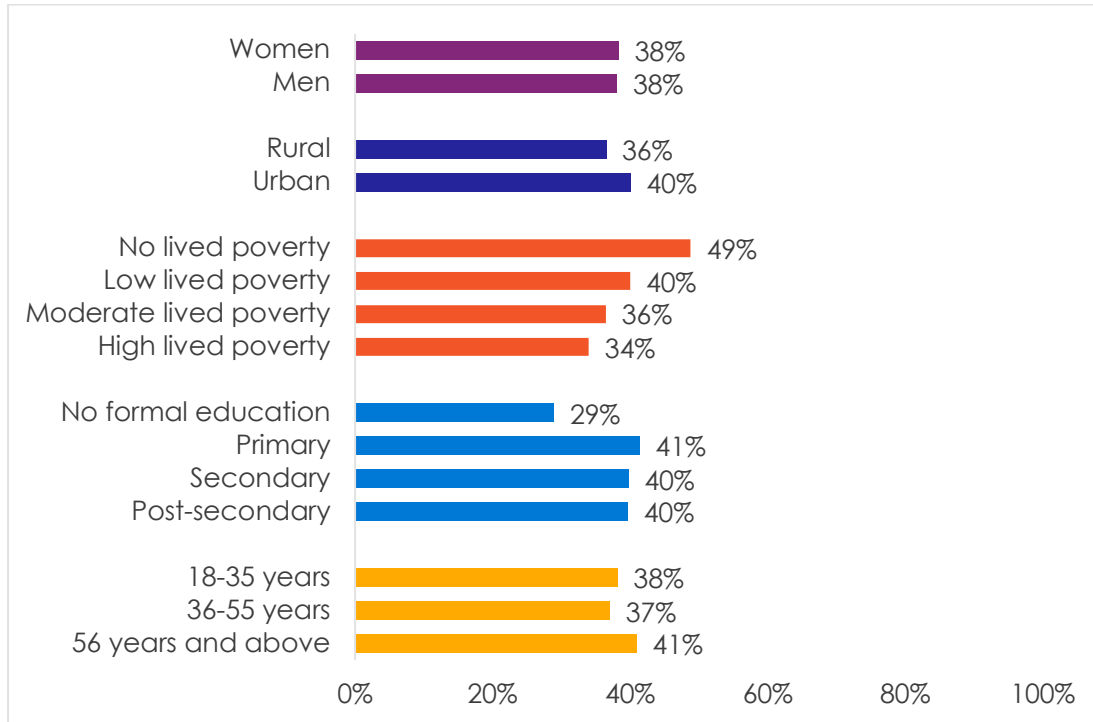


Figure shows changes (in percentage points) between 2016/2018 and 2021/2022 in the proportion of respondents who say using physical force to discipline children can never be justified. Positive numbers reflect increased rejection of physical discipline.

**Figure 4: Never justified for parents to physically discipline children**  
 | by demographic group | 36 countries | 2021/2022



**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? (who say "never justified")

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