

Monrovia, Liberia
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News release

Liberians strongly endorse women's political leadership, Afrobarometer survey shows

A large majority of Liberians believe that women should have the same chance of being elected to public office as men, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

While many survey respondents think that women will gain standing in the community if they run for elective office, the poll also indicates that women could be criticised or harassed if they do so.

Liberia became the first African country to elect a woman as head of state in 2006, when Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became president. But women's representation in public life remains low, according to the United Nations Development Programme. The country's general elections in October will include female candidates in parliamentary races but not in the presidential contest.

Survey responses also show that a majority of Liberians support gender equality in hiring and that most citizens want their government and elected officials to do more to advance the rights and equality of women.

Key findings

- More than three-quarters (78%) of Liberians say women should have the same chance as men of being elected to public office (Figure 1).
- More than eight in 10 respondents (86%) think women will gain standing in the community if they run for office. But two-thirds (65%) consider it likely that others in the community will criticise or harass them, and more than half (54%) think they will probably face problems with their families (Figure 2).
- Four in 10 Liberians (40%) say that men should be given priority over women in hiring when jobs are scarce, while 59% reject this form of gender discrimination. Men trail women (55% vs. 64%) in insisting on gender equality when it comes to jobs. Citizens with post-secondary education and those with no formal schooling are equally likely to support equality in hiring (Figure 3).
- Two-thirds (67%) of Liberians say the government should do more to promote equal rights and opportunities for women, including a majority (55%) who think it should do "much more" (Figure 4).

Afrobarometer surveys

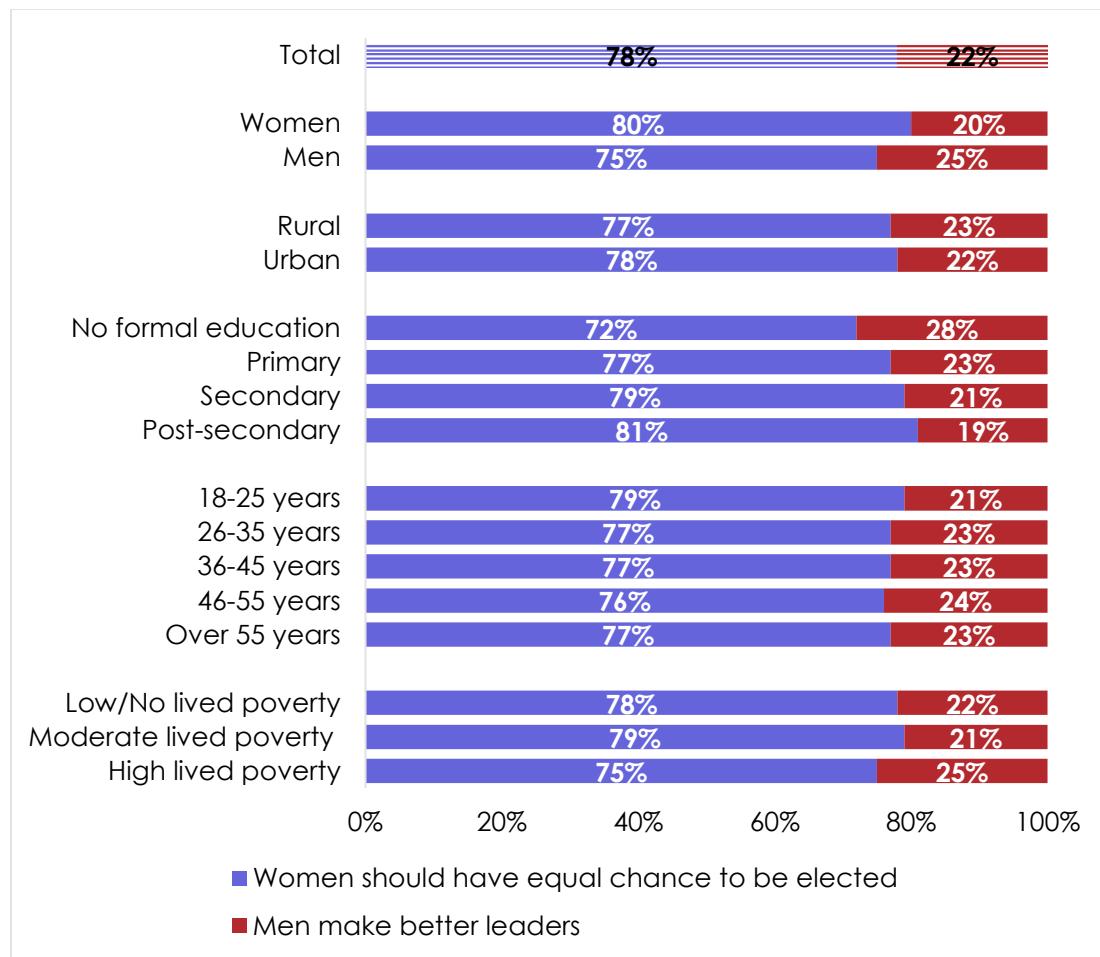
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight survey rounds in up to 39 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2023) are currently under way. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Liberia, led by the Center for Democratic Governance (CDG), interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult citizens between 25 August

and 2 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 Liberia in 2008, 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2020.

Charts

Figure 1: Should women have an equal chance to be elected? | by demographic group | Liberia | 2022

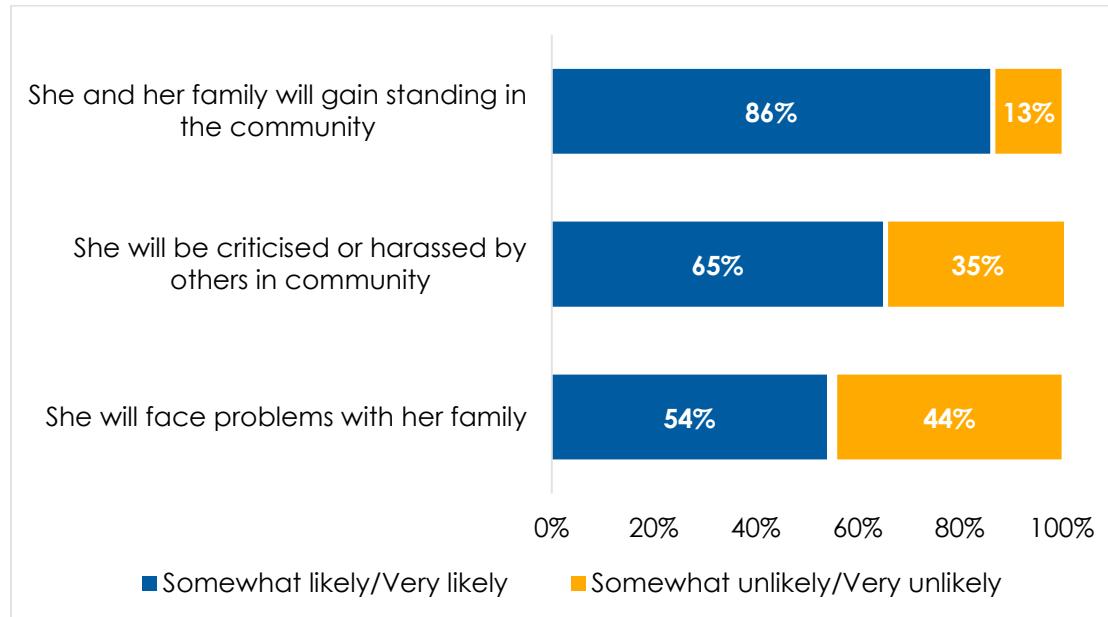


Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Men make better political leaders than women and should be elected rather than women. Statement 2: Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men.

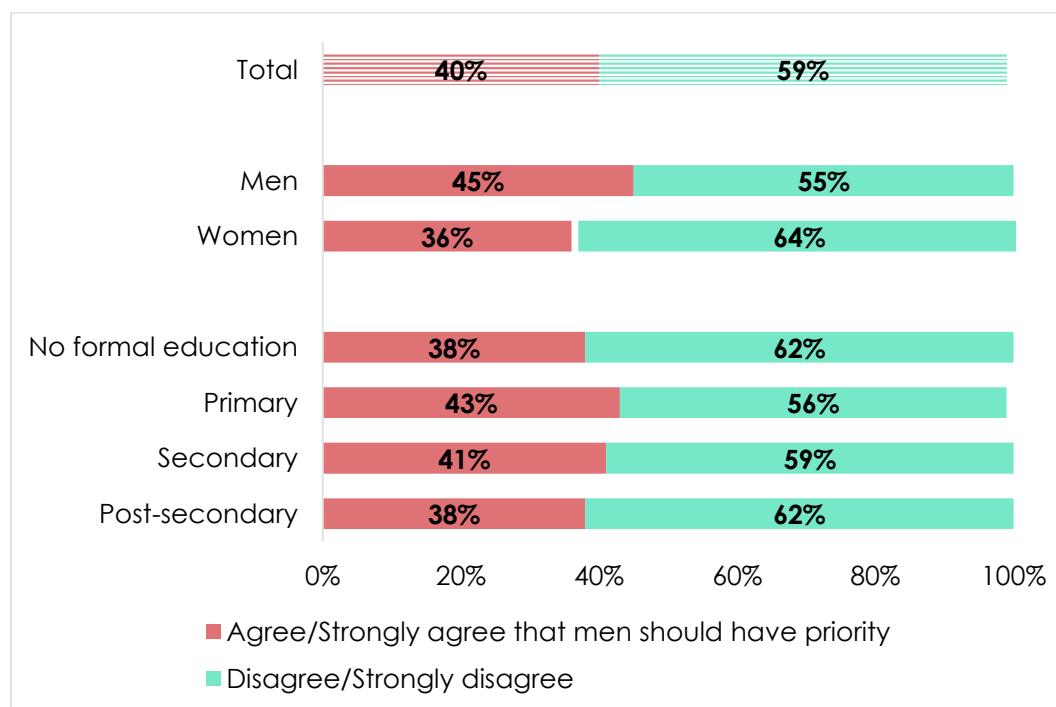
(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Figure 2: How running for elective office might affect women's lives | Liberia | 2022



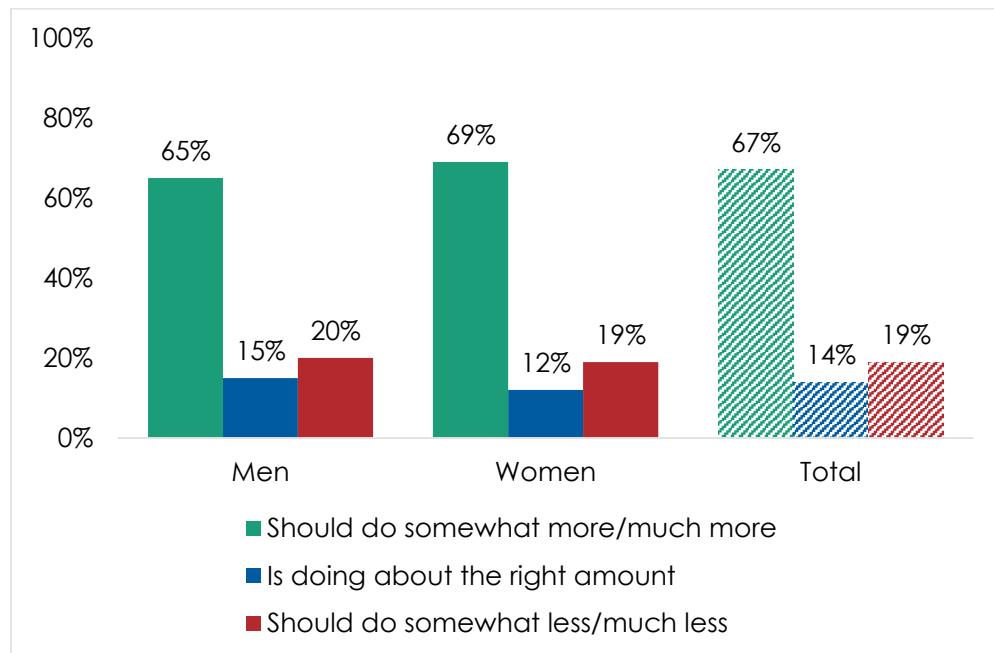
Respondents were asked: If a woman in your community runs for elected office, how likely or unlikely is it that the following things might occur: She and her family will gain standing in the community? She will be criticised, called names, or harassed by others in the community? She will face problems with her family?

Figure 3: Should men have priority for scarce jobs? | by gender and education level | Liberia | 2022



Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree: When jobs are scarce, men should have more rights to a job than women.

Figure 4: Should government do more or less to promote equal rights? | by gender | Liberia | 2022



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, should government and elected officials be doing more than they are doing now to advance the rights and equality of women, or should they be doing less, or are they doing about the right amount?

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