

# Lack of access, connection to the electric grid still plagues most rural residents in Angola

**Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 664 | Asafika Mpako and Carlos Pacatolo**

## Summary

In its Power Sector Action Plan, the Angolan government outlines a strategy to achieve a 60% electrification rate by 2025, from a 2020 rate of 47% (República de Angola, 2016; Silva, 2021; World Bank, 2020).

That will require major advances in rural areas, where electrification is estimated at less than 10% (International Trade Administration, 2022; Pugliese, 2022).

Promoting rural electrification is indispensable to a country's socioeconomic development and is highlighted in Sustainable Development Goal 7: to "ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all" by 2030 (United Nations, 2022). By facilitating efficient agricultural production, increases in employment and incomes, improved educational and health outcomes, and cleaner cooking, access to reliable power has been shown to significantly improve the welfare of rural communities (Garrigou, 2017; Grivas, 2021).

A recent Afrobarometer survey provides an on-the-ground look at electricity access in Angola. Findings show that while about two-thirds of Angolans live in zones served by the electric grid, fewer than half enjoy a reliable supply of electricity, including just one in 20 rural residents.

Electricity ranks sixth on the list of problems that Angolans want their government to address, but most citizens say the government is performing poorly on this priority.

## 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. 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.

The Afrobarometer team in Angola, based at Ovilongwa – Estudos de Opinião Pública, interviewed 1,200 adult Angolans in February-March 2022. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. A previous survey was conducted in Angola in 2019.

## Key findings

- About two-thirds (65%) of Angolans live in zones served by the national electric grid, up 4 percentage points since 2019 (61%).
  - But only 14% of rural residents are within reach of the grid, compared to 92% of urban residents. More educated and economically better-off citizens are also far more likely to live in zones served by the electric grid than those with less schooling and lower economic status.

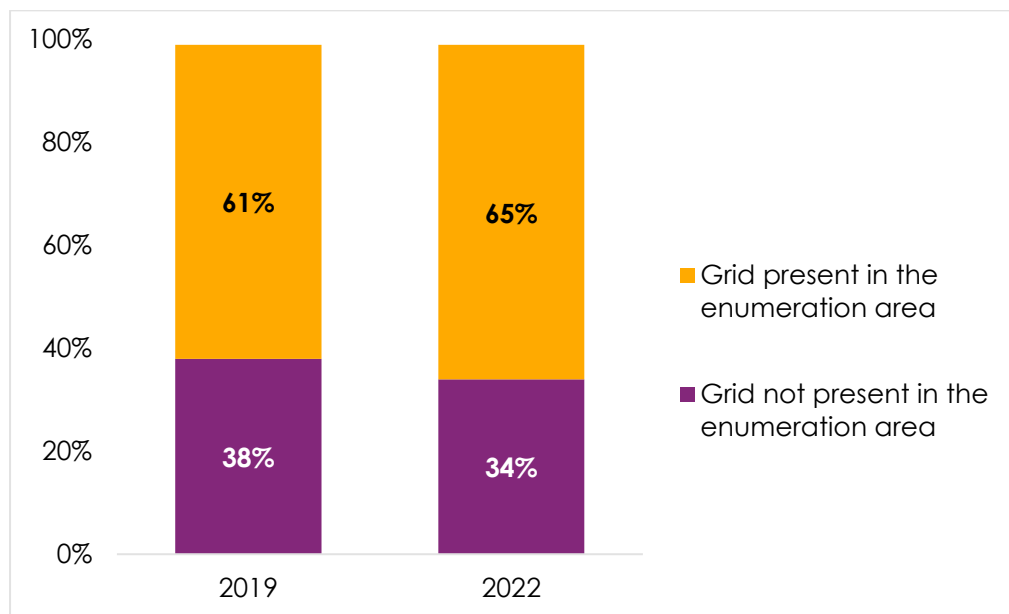
- About six in 10 Angolans (59%) live in households that are connected to the national power grid.
- Among those who are connected to the grid, 78% say their electricity works “most of the time” or “all of the time.”
- Combining connection and reliability rates shows that fewer than half (47%) of all Angolans enjoy a reliable supply of electricity, including just 6% of rural residents and 28% of citizens experiencing high lived poverty.
- Electricity ranks sixth among the most important problems that Angolans want their government to address.
- Two-thirds (66%) of citizens say the government is doing a poor job of providing a reliable supply of electricity. This assessment is particularly widespread among rural residents (83%), the uneducated (79%), and the poor (74%).

### Access to the electric grid

For most households, having access to an electricity grid will remain a prerequisite for obtaining power until alternative energy resources become more widely available.

According to Afrobarometer’s 2022 survey in Angola, about two-thirds (65%) of citizens live in areas served by an electricity grid, a 4-percentage-point increase compared to the previous survey in 2019 (61%) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Presence of electricity grid | Angola | 2019-2022**

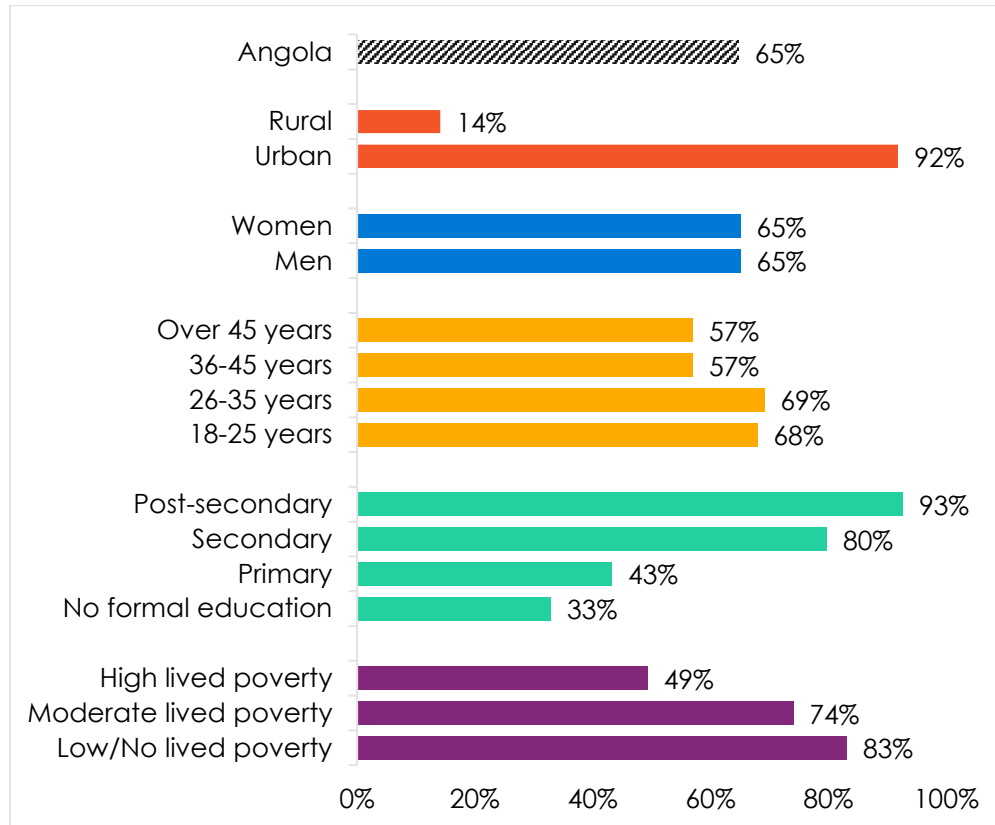


**Survey enumerators were asked to record:** Are the following services present in the primary sampling unit/enumeration area: Electricity grid that most houses can access?

But the presence of the electric grid is far more limited in rural areas: Only 14% of rural residents live within reach of the grid. In contrast, residents in urban areas (92%) are more than six times as likely to live in zones served by the electric grid (Figure 2). Citizens who are

economically well off<sup>1</sup> (83%), those who have at least a secondary education (80%-93%), and youth (68%-69% of those aged 18-35 years) are more likely to live in zones served by an electricity grid than their poorer counterparts (49%), the less educated (33%-43%), and older respondents (57% of those aged 36 years and older).

**Figure 2: Presence of electricity grid | by demographic group | Angola | 2022**



**Survey enumerators were asked to record:** Are the following services present in the primary sampling unit/enumeration area: Electricity grid that most houses can access? (% "yes")

### Connection to the electric grid

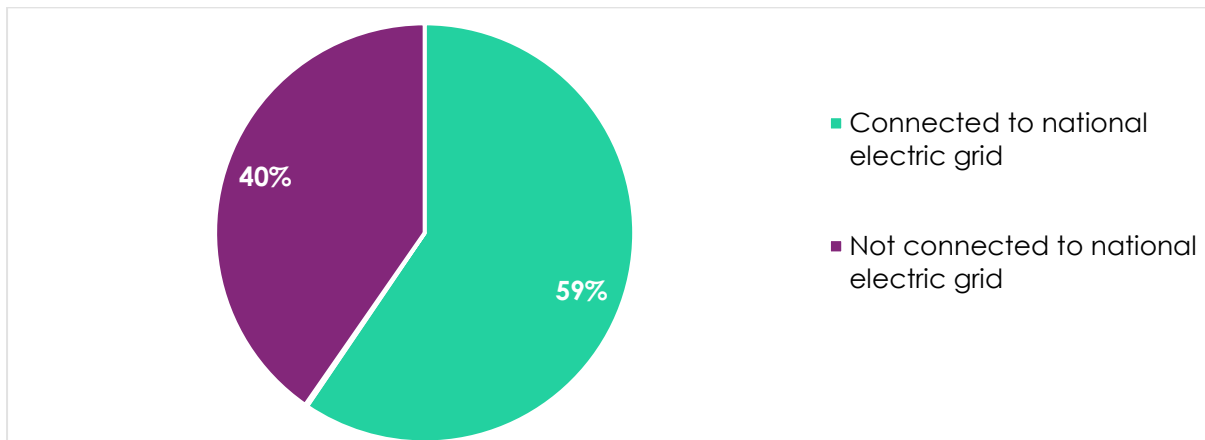
Living in a zone served by an electricity grid does not, of course, guarantee a supply of electricity. Costs associated with service from the power grid – including fees for inspection, house wiring, and connection – may present prohibitive hurdles for many citizens.

How many Angolans are actually connected to the national grid?

About six in 10 citizens (59%) live in households that are connected to the electric grid (Figure 3). As might be expected, urbanities (85%) are far more likely to be connected to the power grid than rural residents (11%), as are the economically well off (82%) and the educated (77%-91%) compared to the poor (42%) and the less educated (23%-34%) (Figure 4). Younger citizens are also more likely to be connected (63%-65% of those aged 18-35 years) than their elders (49%-52% of those aged 36 years and above).

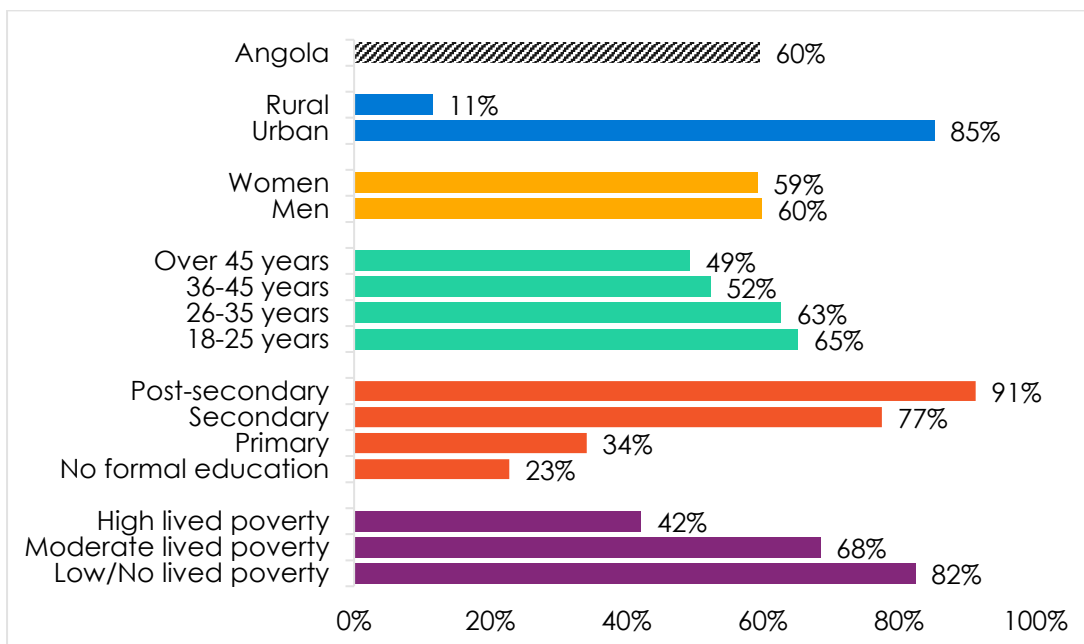
<sup>1</sup> Afrobarometer's Lived Poverty Index (LPI) measures respondents' levels of material deprivation by asking how often they or their families went without basic necessities (enough food, enough water, medical care, enough cooking fuel, and a cash income) during the preceding year. For more on lived poverty, see Mattes and Patel (2022).

**Figure 3: Connection to the national electric grid | Angola | 2022**



**Respondents were asked:** Do you have an electric connection to your home from the National Company of Distribution of Electricity or ENDE?<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 4: Connection to the national electric grid | by demographic group | Angola | 2022**



**Respondents were asked:** Do you have an electric connection to your home from the National Company of Distribution of Electricity or ENDE? (% "yes")

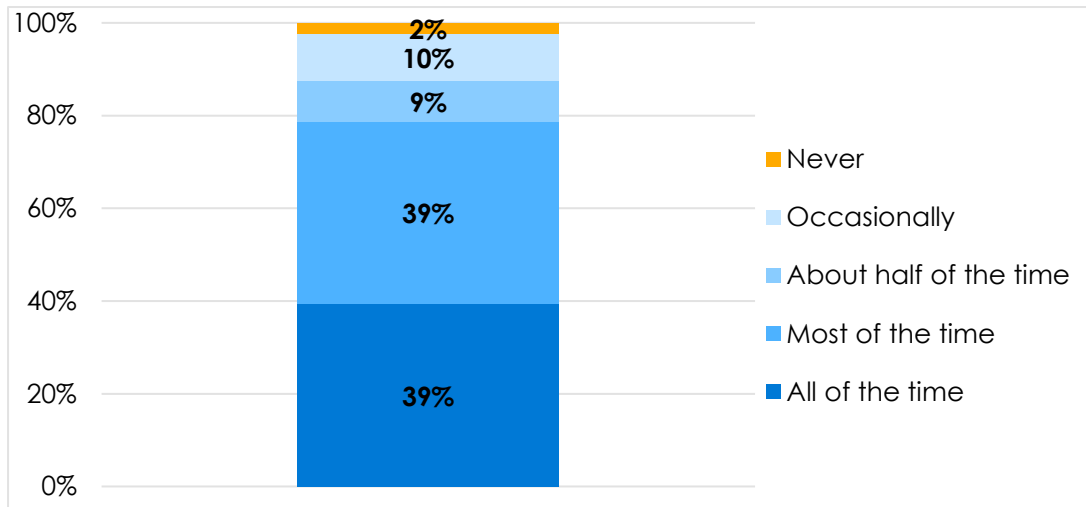
### Reliable supply of electricity

Even if houses are connected to an electric grid, the reliability of their power supply may be poor. How many Angolans actually have reliable electricity?

Among citizens who report being connected to the power grid, more than three-quarters (78%) say that their electricity works "most of the time" (39%) or "all of the time" (39%) (Figure 5). About one-fifth (21%) say that power is available only "about half of the time" or less.

<sup>2</sup> Due to rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100%.

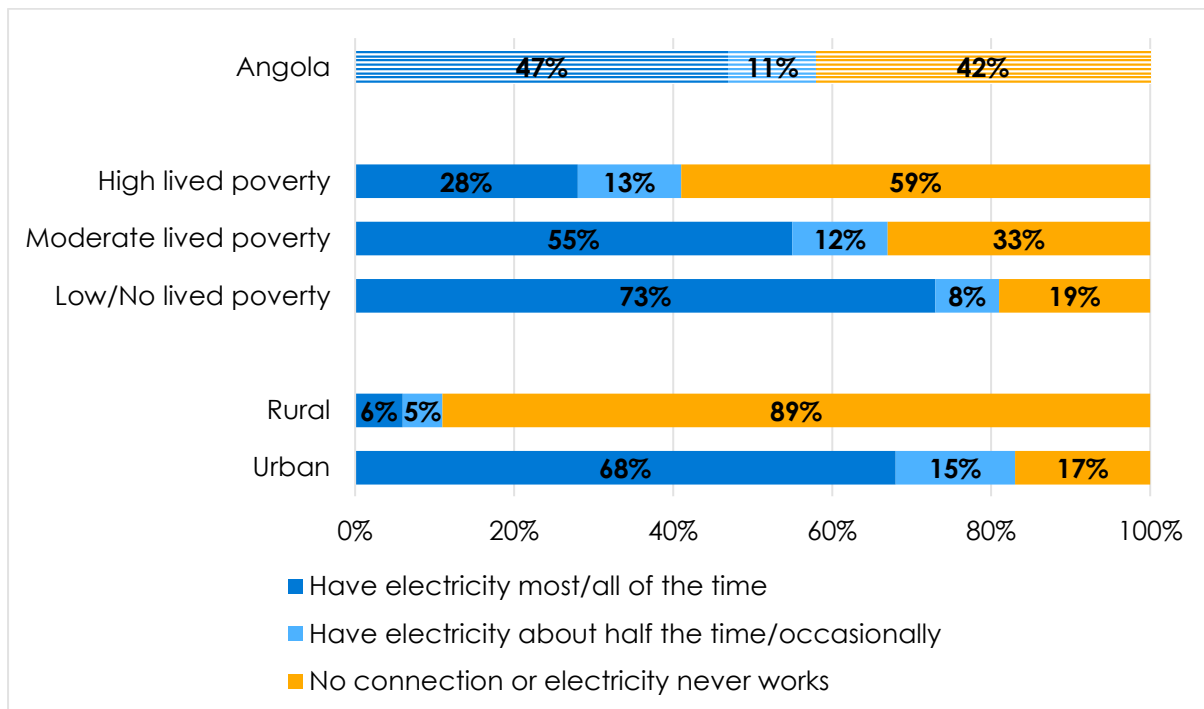
**Figure 5: How often is electricity available (for households connected to the grid)?**  
 | Angola | 2022



**Respondents who said they have a connection to the national electric grid were asked:** How often is electricity actually available from this connection? (Respondents without a connection to the national grid are excluded.)

While these numbers suggest that existing connections are fairly reliable, looking at the entire population (rather than only those who are connected to the grid) shows that fewer than half (47%) of all Angolans report having electricity that works “most” or “all” of the time, with stark differences by economic status and urban-rural location (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: How many citizens have reliable electricity? | by lived poverty and urban-rural location | Angola | 2022**



**Respondents were asked:** Do you have an electric connection to your home from the National Company of Distribution of Electricity or ENDE? (If “yes”:) How often is electricity actually available from this connection?

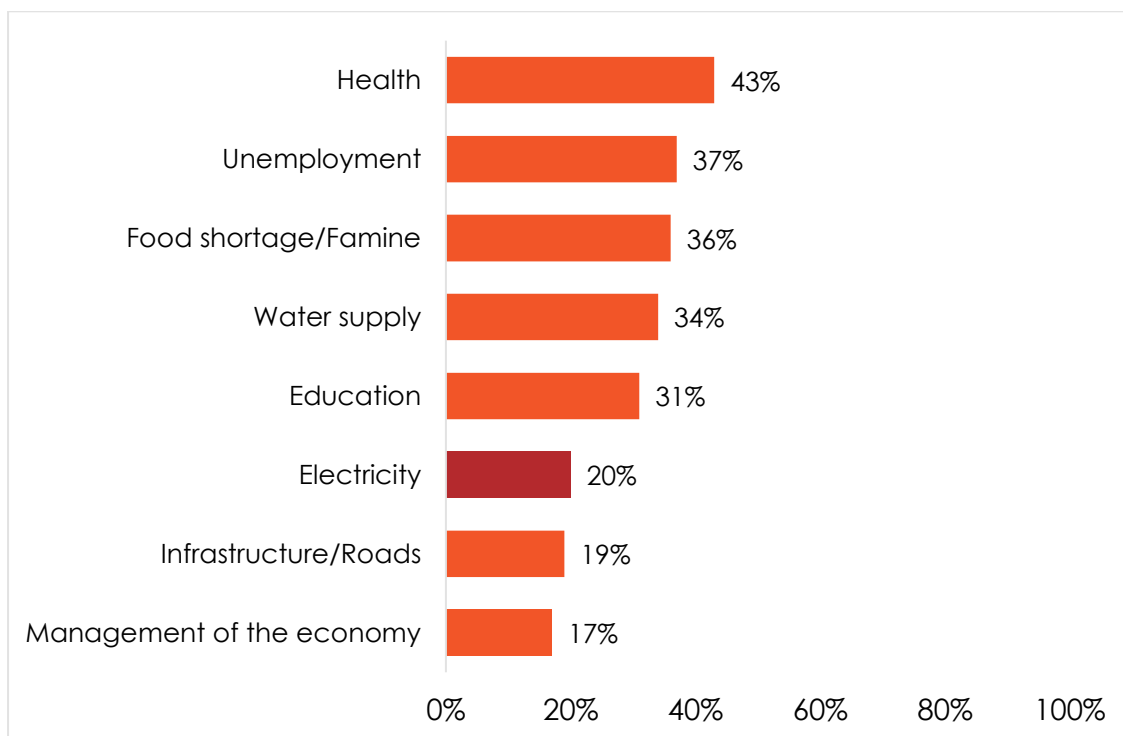
Among poor respondents, only 28% say they have reliable electricity, compared to 73% of those experiencing low or no lived poverty.

And in rural areas, only about one in 20 citizens (6%) enjoy a reliable supply of electricity, vs. 68% of urban residents.

### Priorities and government performance

The provision of electricity ranks sixth among the most important problems that Angolans want their government to address (cited by 20% of respondents as one of their three priorities), well behind health (43%), unemployment (37%), and food shortage/famine (36%) (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Most important problems | Angola | 2022**

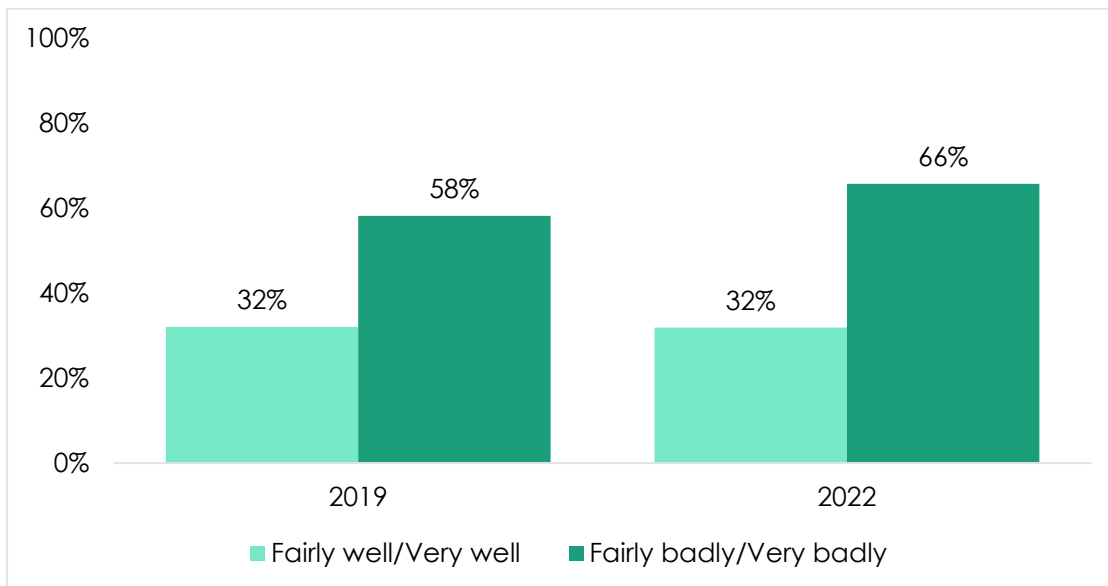


**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Up to three responses per person; figure shows percentage of respondents who cite each problem as one of up to three priorities.)*

Two-thirds (66%) of Angolans say the government is doing a poor job of providing a reliable electricity supply, worse by 8 percentage points than the last Afrobarometer survey in 2019. About one-third (32%) consider its performance “fairly” or “very” good (Figure 8).

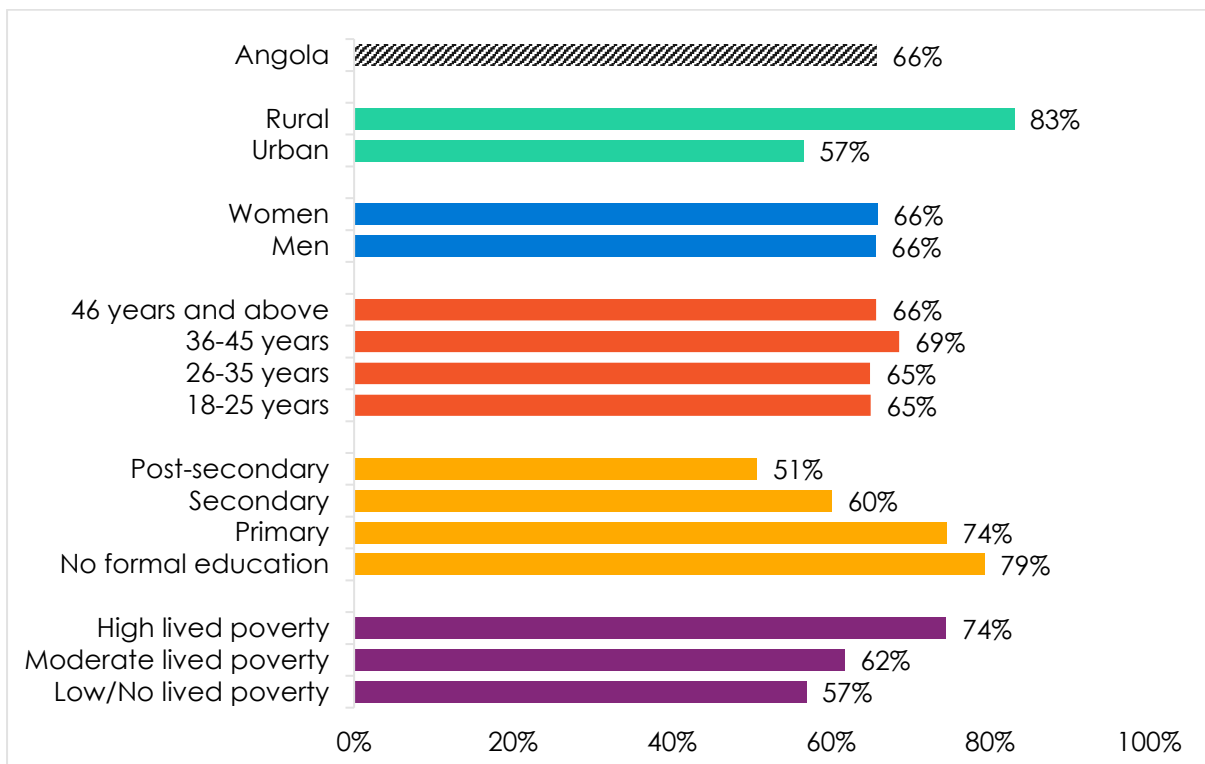
Rural residents (83%) are more likely than urbanites (57%) to disapprove of the government's efforts on electricity. Negative ratings are also higher among citizens with no formal education (79%) and the poor (74%) than among their educated and better-off counterparts (Figure 9).

**Figure 8: Government performance in provision of reliable electricity supply**  
 | Angola | 2019-2022



**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: Providing a reliable supply of electricity?

**Figure 9: Government is performing badly in the provision of reliable electricity supply**  
 | Angola | 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: Providing a reliable supply of electricity? (% who say "fairly/very badly")

## Conclusion

Many Angolans still lack access and connection to the national power grid, and fewer than half enjoy a reliable supply of electricity. Rural residents and the poor are particularly disadvantaged, and this is reflected in their dismal ratings of the government's performance on providing reliable electricity.

These findings point to the need to address the challenges of vulnerable communities by accelerating the pace of gains in access to electricity, most urgently by bridging the urban-rural divide.

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