



Mbabane, Eswatini
26 July 2023

News release

Emaswati want government to address unemployment amid worsening living conditions, new Afrobarometer survey shows

Emaswati assessments of their personal living conditions continue to nosedive, and most citizens expect the situation to keep getting worse, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

Unemployment and incomes outrank education, health, and infrastructure/roads among citizens' priorities for urgent government action.

Eswatini's stagnating economic growth, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest, has had a devastating impact on citizens' livelihoods.

Key findings

- More than two-thirds (68%) of Emaswati describe their living conditions as "fairly bad" or "very bad," more than double the share in 2018 (31%) (Figure 1).
- Negative assessments of personal living conditions are especially common among citizens experiencing high lived poverty (90%) and those with primary schooling or less (80%) (Figure 2).
- Three-fourths (75%) of respondents say the country's economic conditions have worsened over the past year. Only about one in eight (13%) expect economic conditions to improve over the next year, while 71% predict that things will get worse (Figure 3).
- Unemployment ranks at the top of the most important problems that citizens want their government to address (cited by 52% of respondents), followed by incomes (31%), education (28%), and health (23%) (Figure 4).

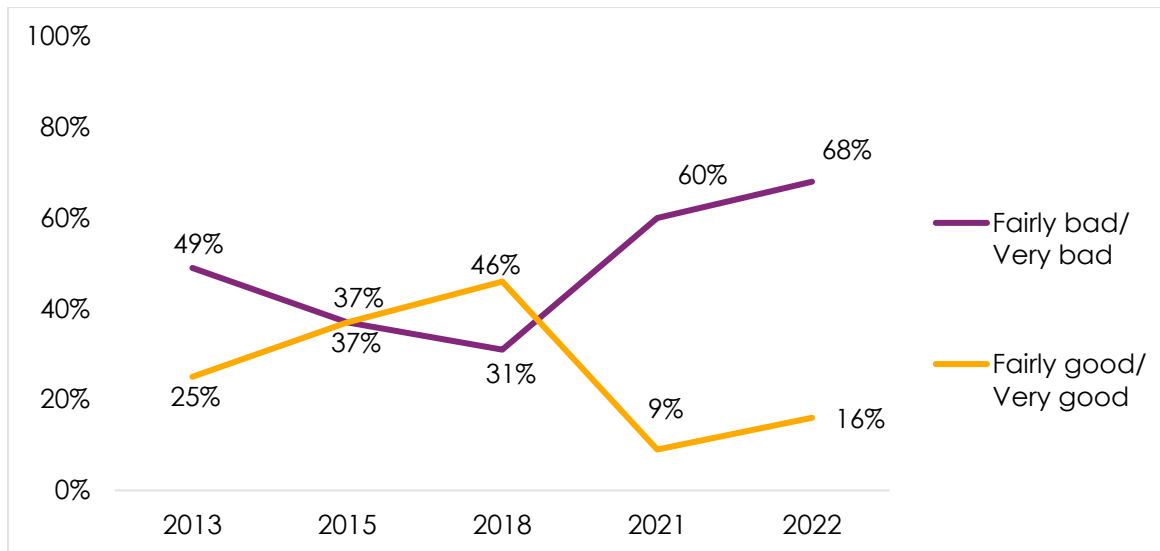
Afrobarometer surveys

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. Nine rounds of surveys have been completed in up to 42 countries since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2023) cover 39 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Eswatini, led by QA Strategic Information, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 1,200 adult citizens in October-November 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 Eswatini in 2013, 2015, 2018, and 2022.

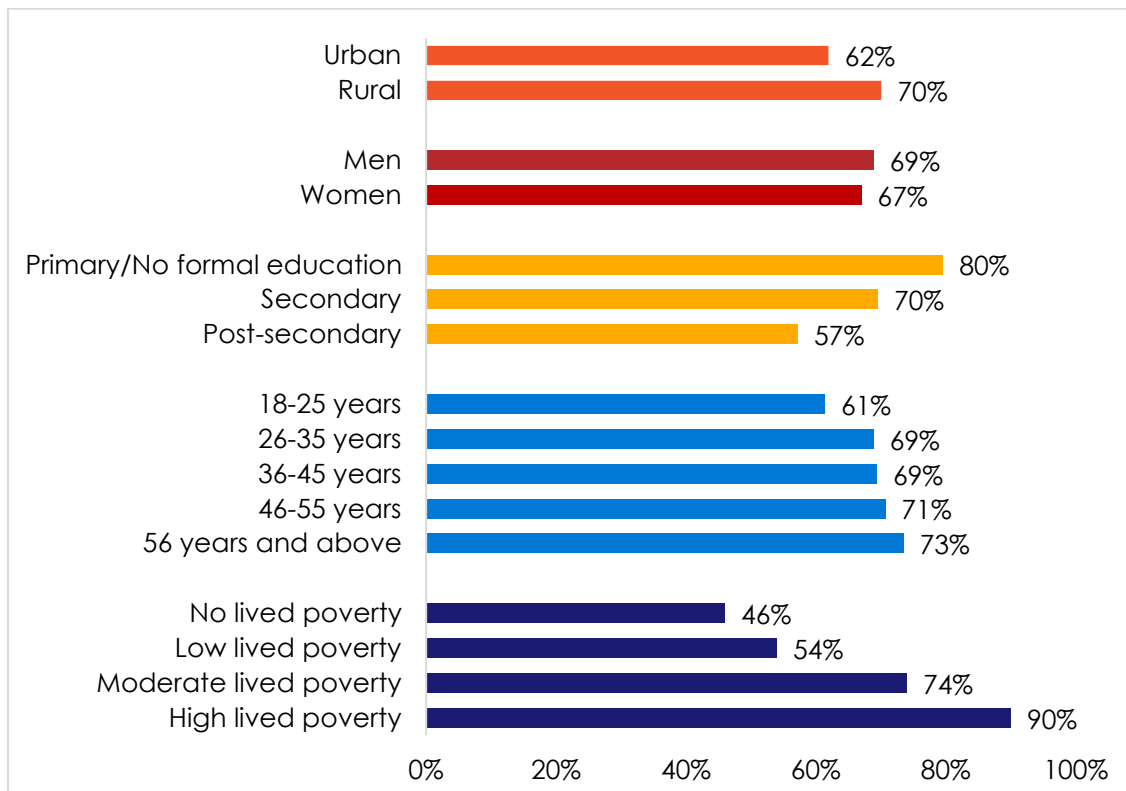
Charts

Figure 1: Personal living conditions | Eswatini | 2013-2022



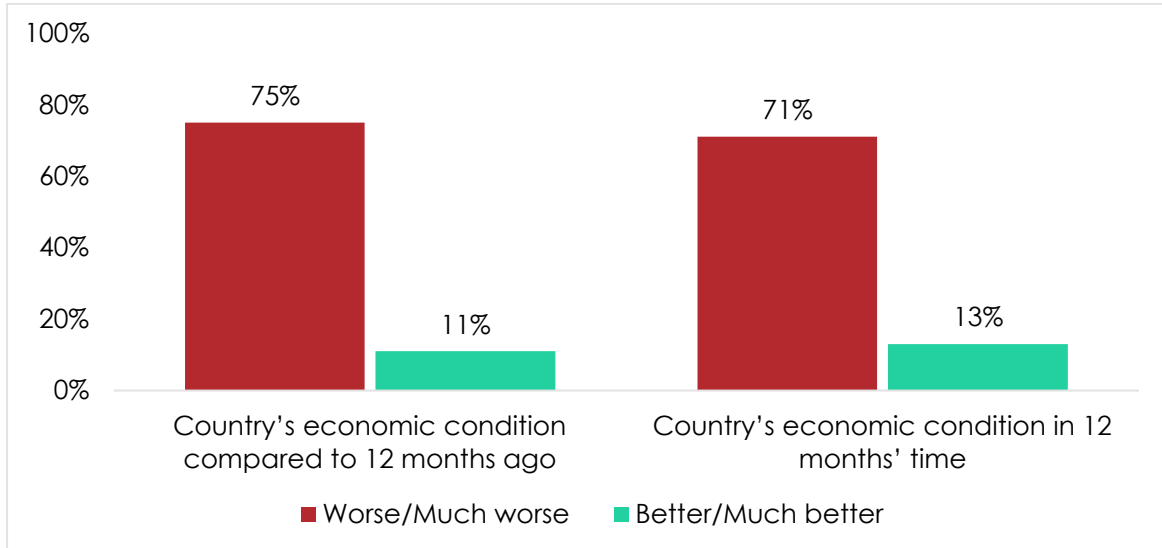
Respondents were asked: In general, how would you describe your own present living conditions?

Figure 2: Negative assessments of personal living conditions | by demographic group | Eswatini | 2022



Respondents were asked: In general, how would you describe your own present living conditions? (% who say "fairly bad" or "very bad")

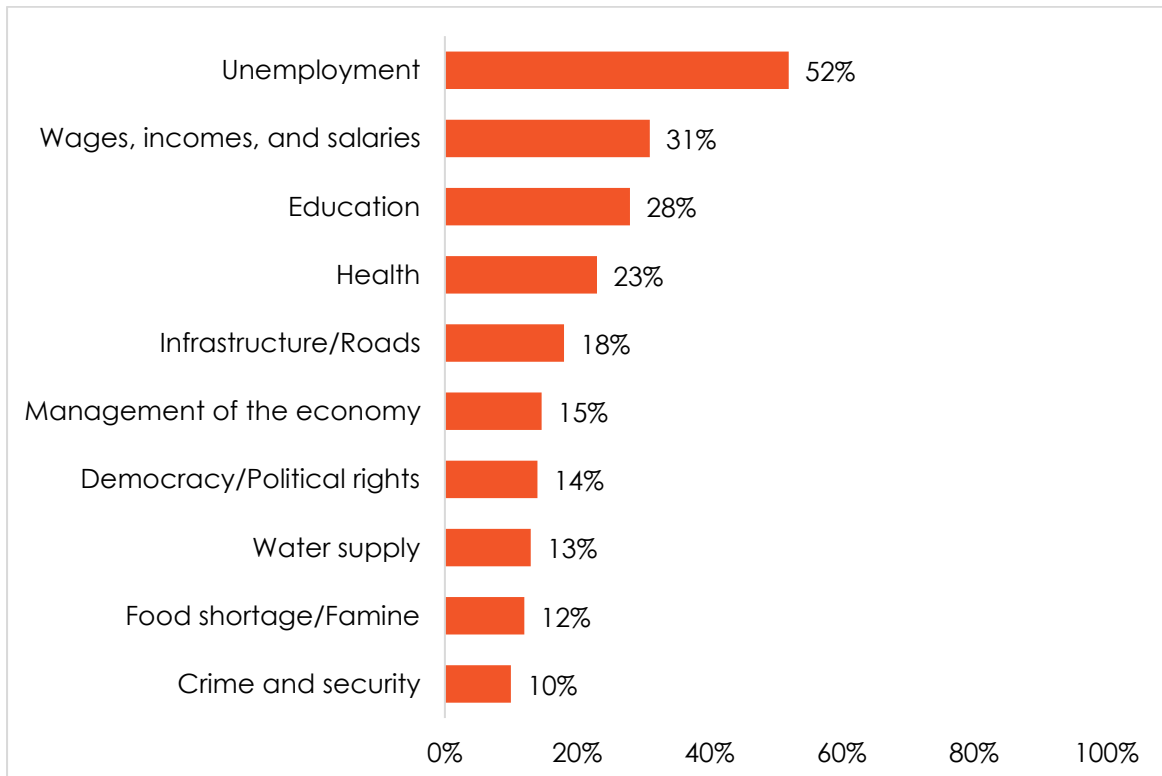
Figure 3: Country's economic condition compared to 12 months ago and projected 12 months ahead | Eswatini | 2022



Respondents were asked:

Looking back, how do you rate economic conditions in this country compared to 12 months ago?
 Looking ahead, do you expect economic conditions in this country to be better or worse in 12 months' time?

Figure 4: Most important problems government should address | Eswatini | 2022



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Note: Respondents could give up to three responses. The figure shows the % of respondents who cite each problem among their three responses.)

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