

Accra, Ghana  
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## News release

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### **Africa's youth are more educated, less employed, and less politically engaged than their elders, Afrobarometer study shows**

Africa's youth are more educated than their elders but are also more likely to be unemployed, according to Afrobarometer's [latest Pan-Africa Profile](#).

The study also shows that African youth are considerably less engaged than their elders in civic and political activities that could spur change, including voting in elections. One encouraging trend is a steady increase in young people's contact with local leaders.

Across 39 African countries surveyed in 2021/2023, unemployment is the top policy priority that 18- to 35-year-olds want their governments to address, followed by economic management. On both issues, overwhelming majorities in most countries see their government as failing. Compared to older generations, young people are less trustful of government institutions and leaders and more likely to view them as corrupt.

Even so, young Africans are just as committed as their elders to democracy and opposed to non-democratic alternatives, including military rule, as their elders. But the youth are particularly dissatisfied with the way democracy works in their countries, and in the event that elected leaders abuse their power, they are more likely than their elders to countenance military intervention.

#### **Key findings**

- Almost two-thirds (64%) of youth (aged 18-35) have had at least some secondary school education, compared to 35% of citizens aged 56 and older (Figure 1).
  - But youth are considerably more likely than their elders to be out of work and looking for a job.
- Unemployment tops the list of the most important problems that African youth want their government to address (cited by 37%), followed by management of the economy (30%) and health (26%) (Figure 2).
  - On average across 39 countries, only two in 10 youth (19%) say their government is performing well on job creation.
- Like their elders, young Africans support democracy (64%) and reject such authoritarian alternatives as one-man rule (80%), one-party rule (78%), and military rule (65%) (Figure 3).
- However, six in 10 (60%) are dissatisfied with the way democracy works in their country.
- Youth are also more willing than their elders to tolerate a military takeover of the government if elected leaders abuse their power (56% among those aged 18-35 vs. 47% among those aged 56 and above) (Figure 4).

- Youth are less likely than older citizens to vote in elections (63% vs. 84%), identify with a political party (37% vs. 45%), attend a community meeting (43% vs. 54%), and join others to raise an issue (39% vs. 45%) (Figure 5).
- But while low, rates of young people's contact with traditional leaders, local government councillors, political party officials, and members of Parliament have increased since 2014/2015.

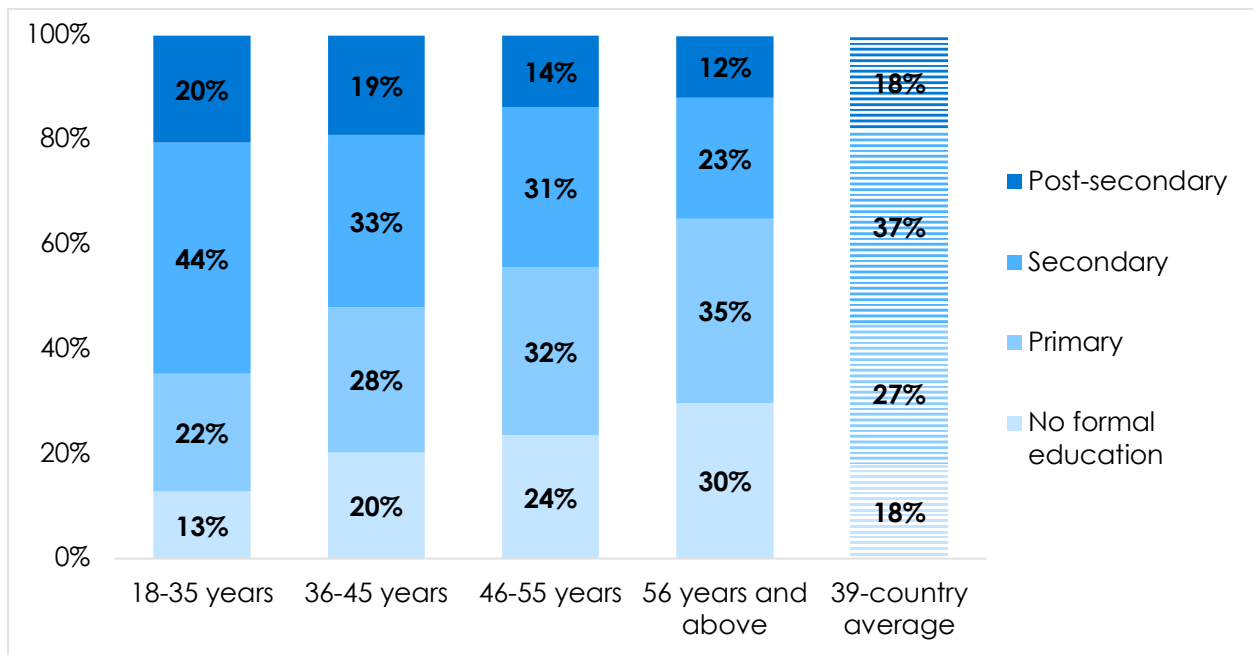
### Afrobarometer surveys

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. Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2023) include 54,436 interviews in 39 countries.

Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2 to +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. The data are weighted to ensure nationally representative samples. When reporting multi-country averages, all countries are weighted equally (rather than in proportion to population size).

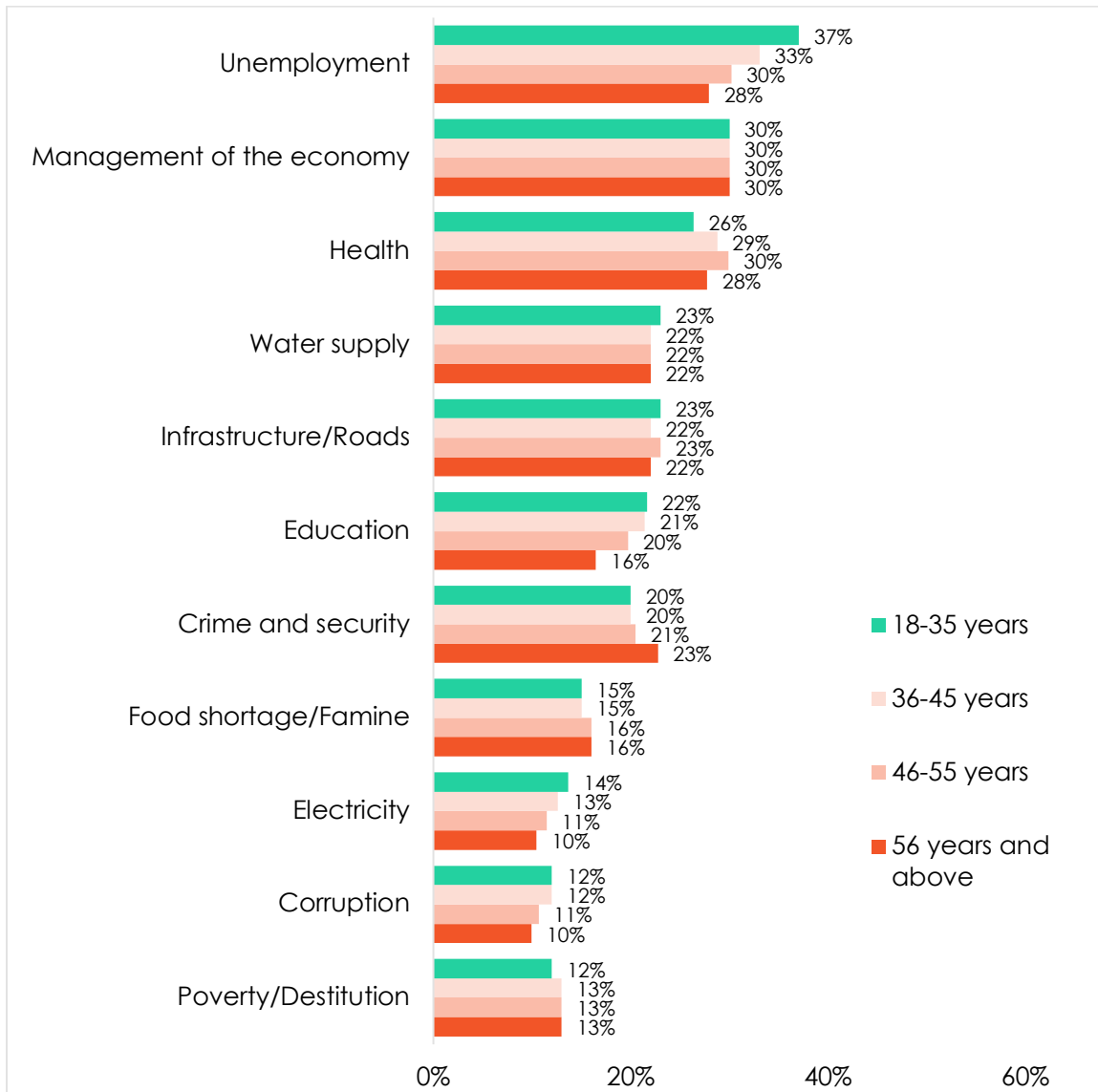
### Charts

**Figure 1: Education level** | by age group | 39 countries | 2021/2023



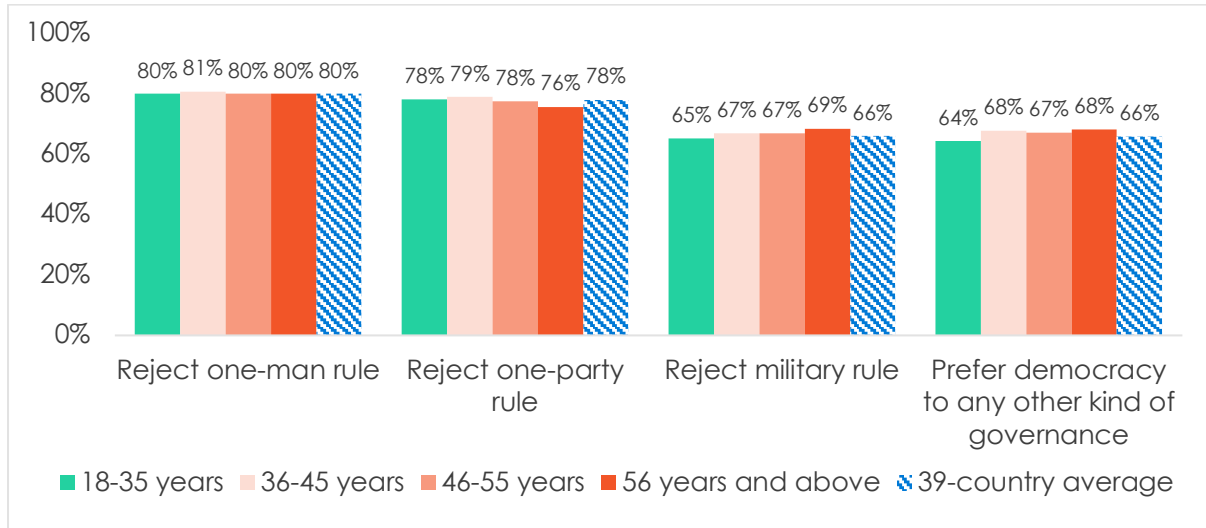
**Respondents were asked:** What is your highest level of education?

**Figure 2: Most important problems** | by age group | 39 countries | 2021/2023



**Respondents were asked:** In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Up to three responses per respondent)

**Figure 3: Support for democracy and rejection of authoritarian rule | by age group**  
 | 39 countries | 2021/2023

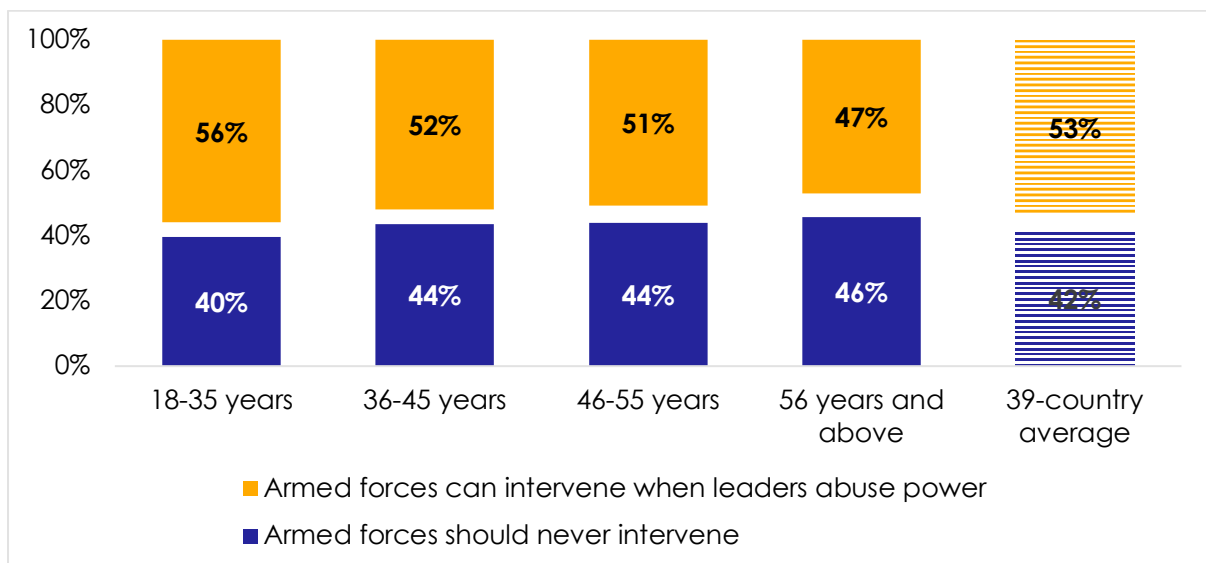


**Respondents were asked:**

Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion? Statement 1: Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. Statement 2: In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable. Statement 3: For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind government we have. (% who say democracy is preferable)

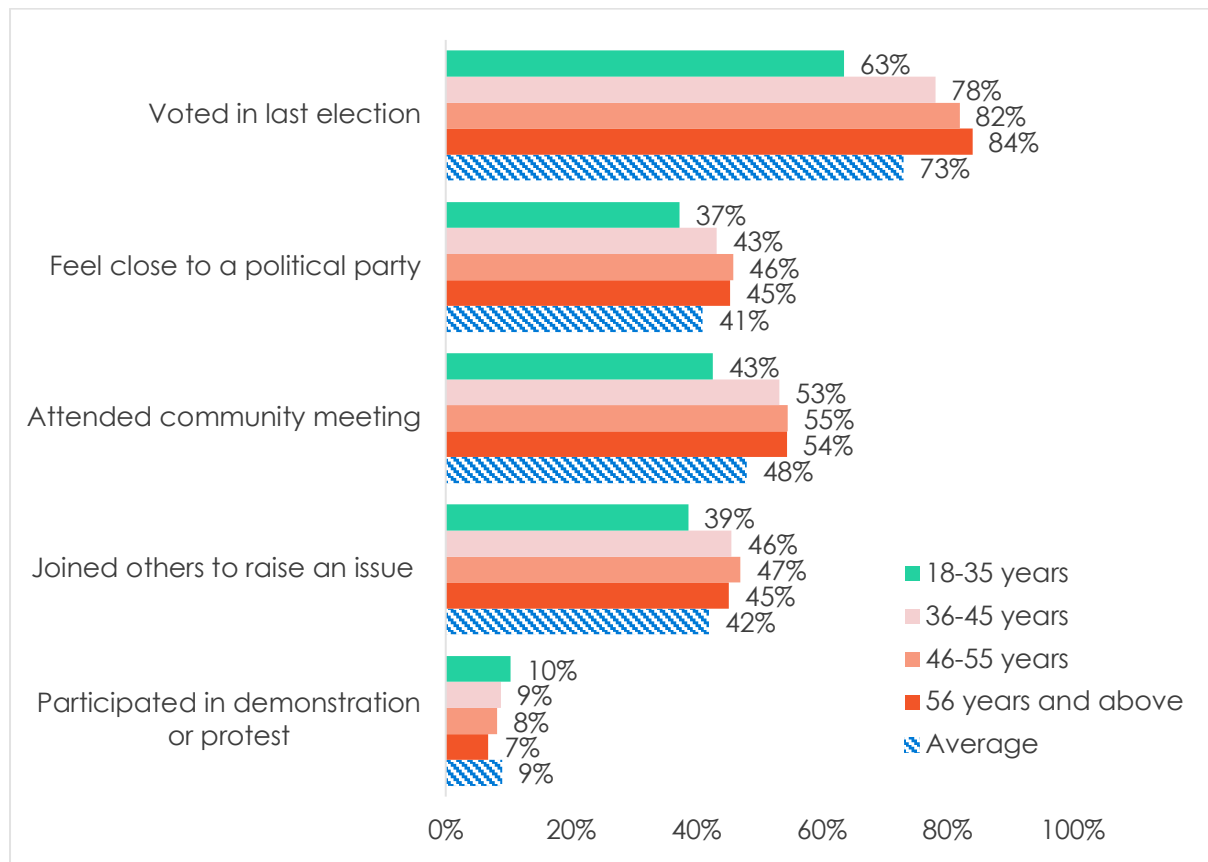
There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office? The army comes in to govern the country? Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything? (% who "disagree" or "strongly disagree")

**Figure 4: Should military intervene when elected leaders abuse power? | by age group**  
 | 39 countries | 2021/2023



**Respondents were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?  
 Statement 1: [Country]'s armed forces should never intervene in the country's political process.  
 Statement 2: It is legitimate for the armed forces to take control of government when elected leaders abuse power for their own ends.  
 (% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

**Figure 5: Political participation** | by age group | 39 countries\* | 2021/2023



**Respondents were asked:**

*In the last national election, held in [year], did you vote, or not, or were you too young to vote? Or can't you remember whether you voted? (Respondents who were too young to vote are excluded.)*

*Do you feel close to any particular political party?*

*Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year: Attended a community meeting? Got together with others to raise an issue? Participated in a demonstration or protest march? (% who say "once or twice," "several times," or "often")*

\* The question about feeling close to a political party was not asked in Eswatini.

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