



Harare, Zimbabwe
20 November 2024

News release

Zimbabweans say substance abuse is pervasive in their communities, trust schools and family members to combat the problem

An overwhelming majority of Zimbabweans say drug and substance abuse is widespread in their communities, a new Afrobarometer survey indicates.

Youth and urban respondents are especially likely to report that drug abuse is pervasive.

Arresting and imposing severe penalties on offenders is most widely seen as an effective strategy to curb drug and substance abuse, followed by educating citizens on the dangers of drug abuse and intensifying efforts to reduce drug peddling.

Most citizens say they trust schools and family members to play an effective role in combating drug abuse in Zimbabwe, while lesser majorities express confidence in religious leaders and judges and magistrates.

Key findings

- Eight in 10 Zimbabweans (79%) report that drug and substance abuse is widespread in their communities, including a majority (56%) who consider it to be “very widespread” (Figure 1).
 - Youth (82%) are more likely than older respondents (73%-78%) to identify drug abuse as a pervasive problem, while more educated respondents are 12-14 percentage points more likely than those with primary schooling or less to say the same (81%-83% vs. 69%) (Figure 2).
 - The perception of drug abuse as a far-reaching problem increases with lived poverty, ranging from 76% among the better-off to 82% among the poor.
 - More than nine in 10 respondents in urban areas (93%) say drug abuse is a pervasive problem, compared to seven in 10 (70%) in rural areas. Virtually all Harare residents (97%) agree, as do more than four-fifths of Mashonaland East and Mashonaland West residents (both 83%) (Figure 3).
- Zimbabweans say the most effective strategy for reducing the problem of drug abuse is arresting and imposing severe penalties on drug users or offenders (cited by 39% of respondents) (Figure 4.)
 - Nearly one-fourth think the authorities should educate citizens on the dangers of drug abuse (23%) or intensify efforts to reduce drug peddling (23%), while only one-tenth (11%) believe that providing mandatory rehabilitation services for drug users would be the most effective solution.
- Seven in 10 citizens say they trust schools (71%) and family members (69%) to effectively combat drug abuse in Zimbabwe. Lesser majorities place their trust in religious leaders (61%) and judges and magistrates (56%), while half (50%) look to the police (Figure 5).

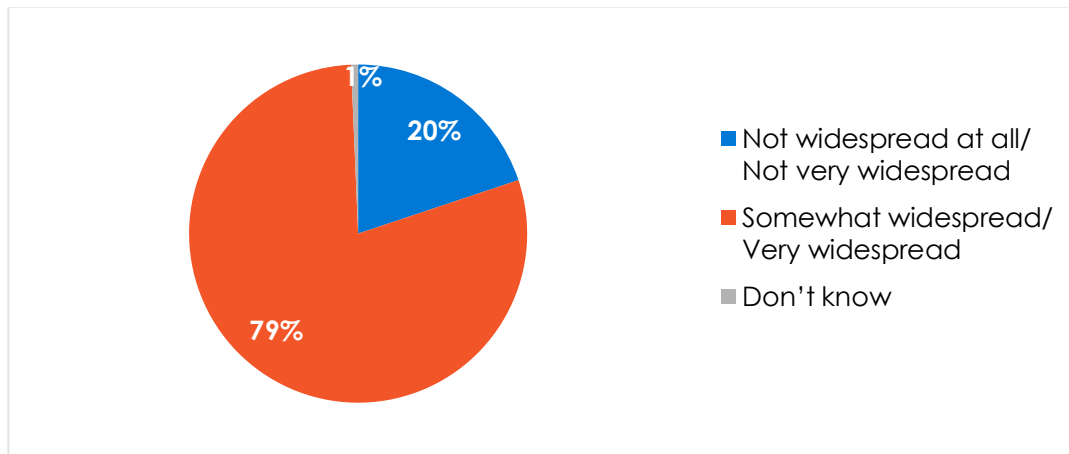
Afrobarometer surveys

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 10 surveys are currently underway. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Zimbabwe, led by the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI), interviewed 1,200 adult citizens in June 2024. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous standard Afrobarometer surveys were conducted in Zimbabwe in 1999, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2021, and 2022.

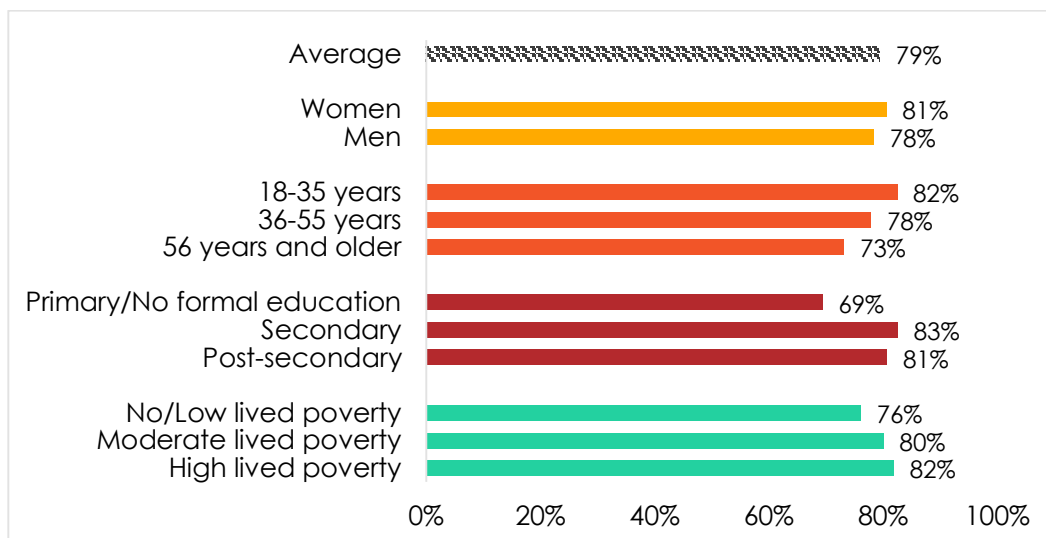
Charts

Figure 1: Extent of drug abuse | Zimbabwe | 2024



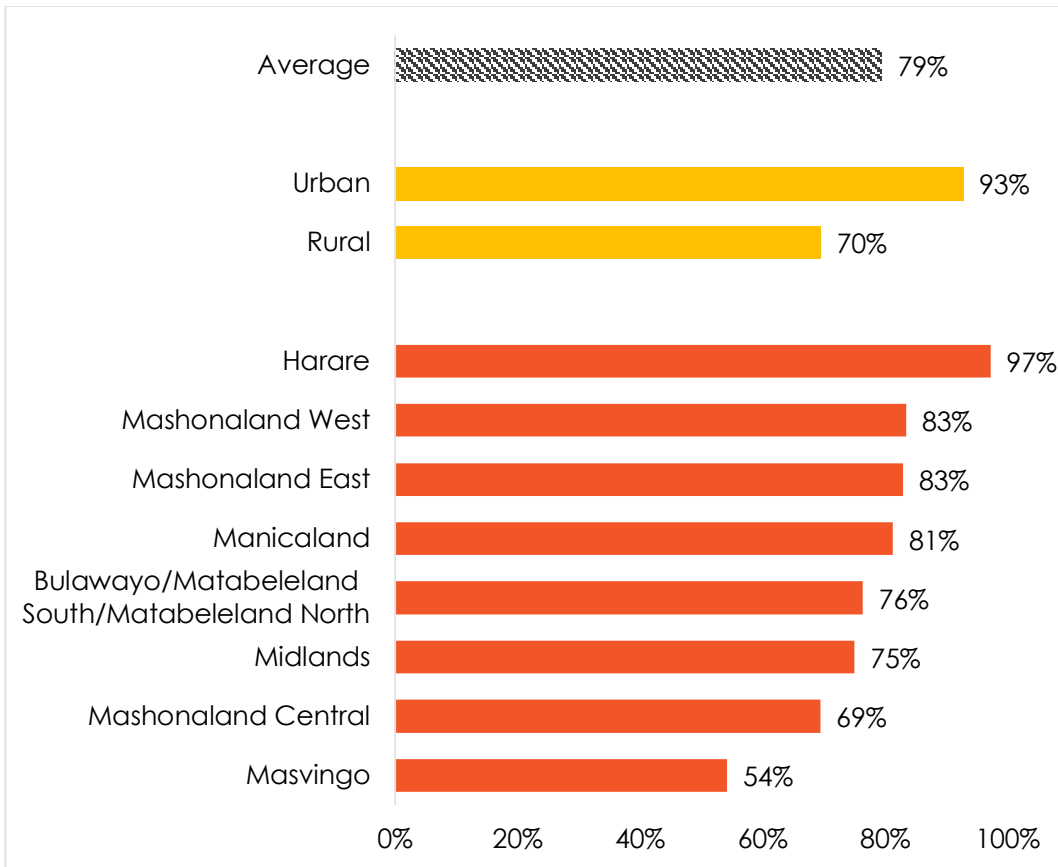
Respondents were asked: How widespread would you say the problem of drug and substance abuse is in your community?

Figure 2: Drug abuse is widespread | by demographic group | Zimbabwe | 2024



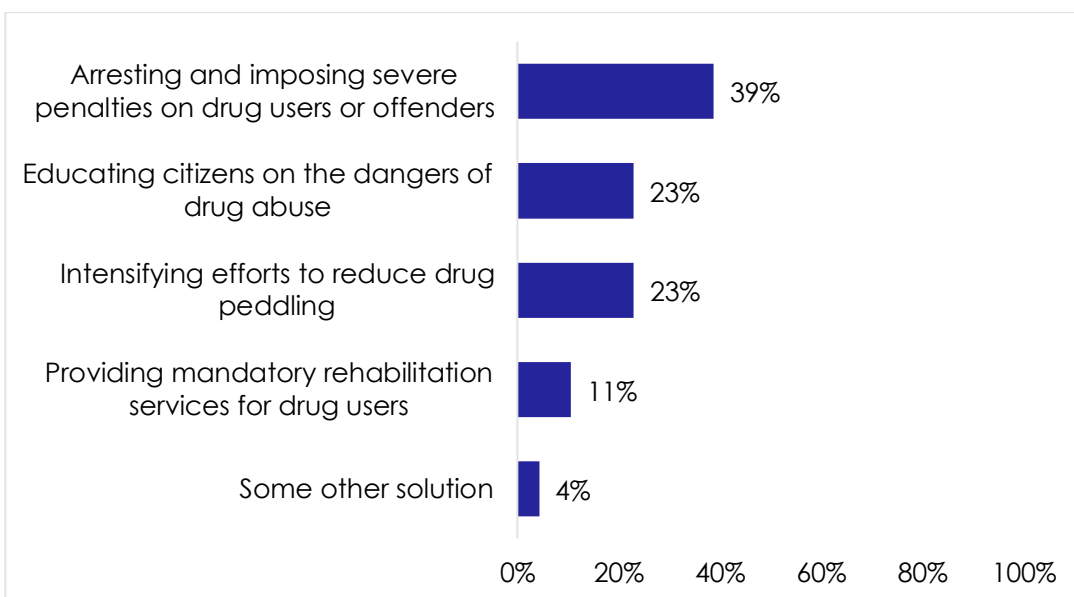
Respondents were asked: How widespread would you say the problem of drug and substance abuse is in your community? (% who say "somewhat widespread" or "very widespread")

Figure 3: Drug abuse is widespread | by urban-rural location and province
 | Zimbabwe | 2024



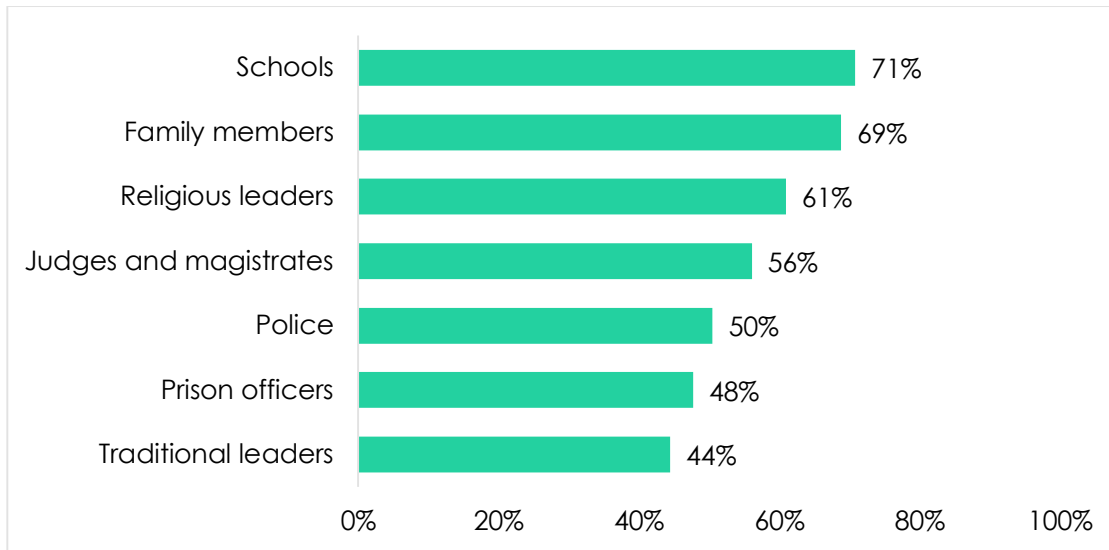
Respondents were asked: How widespread would you say the problem of drug and substance abuse is in your community? (% who say "somewhat widespread" or "very widespread")

Figure 4: Most effective strategy for combating drug abuse | Zimbabwe | 2024



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, which of the following propositions would be the most effective strategy for combating drug and substance abuse in Zimbabwe today?

Figure 5: Trust in institutions to combat drug abuse | Zimbabwe | 2024



Respondents were asked: How much do you trust the following groups to play an effective role in combating drug abuse in Zimbabwe today? (% who say "somewhat" or "a lot")

For more information, please contact:

Mass Public Opinion Institute
 Eldred V. Masunungure
 Telephone: +263 772100409
 Email: director@mpoi.org.zw

Visit us online at: www.mpoi.net
www.afrobarometer.org
 Follow our releases on #VoicesAfrica.

