

Banjul, the Gambia  
17 August 2021

## News release

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### **Majority of Gambians say their country is heading in the wrong direction, Afrobarometer survey shows**

A growing number of Gambians think their country is heading in the wrong direction and want their government to prioritize the economy and public service delivery, the latest Afrobarometer study shows.

Over the past three years, the share of Gambians who describe the country's economy and their personal living conditions as good has decreased significantly, while more citizens are going without basic necessities such as enough food, enough water, and medical care.

Approval ratings for the government and leaders have declined significantly since 2018.

Health, management of the economy, water supply and education are the most important problems that citizens want the government to address.

The Gambia is ranked 172th out of 189 countries in the 2019 United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index. The country is currently implementing a three-year National Development Plan that is expected to end in 2021.

#### **Key findings**

- Six in 10 Gambians (60%) say the country is heading in “the wrong direction,” double the proportion recorded in 2018 (29%) (Figure 1).
- The proportion of Gambians who describe their personal living conditions as “fairly good” or “very good” has decreased drastically, from 66% in 2018 to 35% (Figure 2).
- The proportion who say they went without basic necessities such as enough food, enough water, and medical care during the previous year increased significantly compared to 2018 (Figure 3).
- Health (39%), management of the economy (38%), water supply (27%), and education (26%) are the most important problems that citizens want the government to address (Figure 4).
  - The share of respondents who cite management of the economy as a priority problem has more than doubled since 2018.
- Citizens' ratings of the government's performance on the economy, infrastructure, and basic services have declined sharply over the past three years (Figure 5 and Figure 6).
- Approval ratings for the performance of key government leaders have also declined since 2018 (Figure 7).

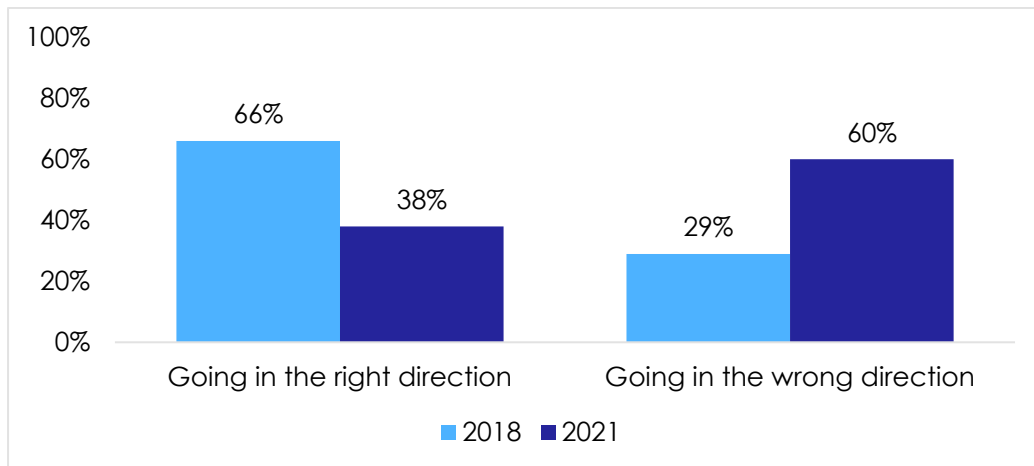
## Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on Africans' experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Seven rounds of surveys were completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys (2019/2021) cover 34 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in the Gambia, led by the Center for Policy, Research and Strategic Studies (CepRass), interviewed 1,200 adult Gambians between 30 January and 23 February 2021. 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 Afrobarometer survey was conducted in the Gambia in 2018.

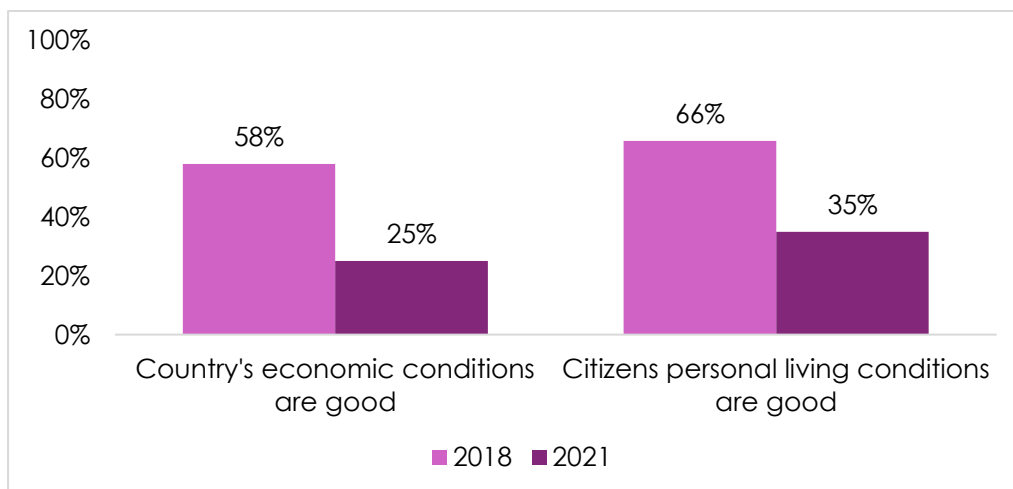
## Charts

**Figure 1: Overall direction of the country | The Gambia | 2018-2021**



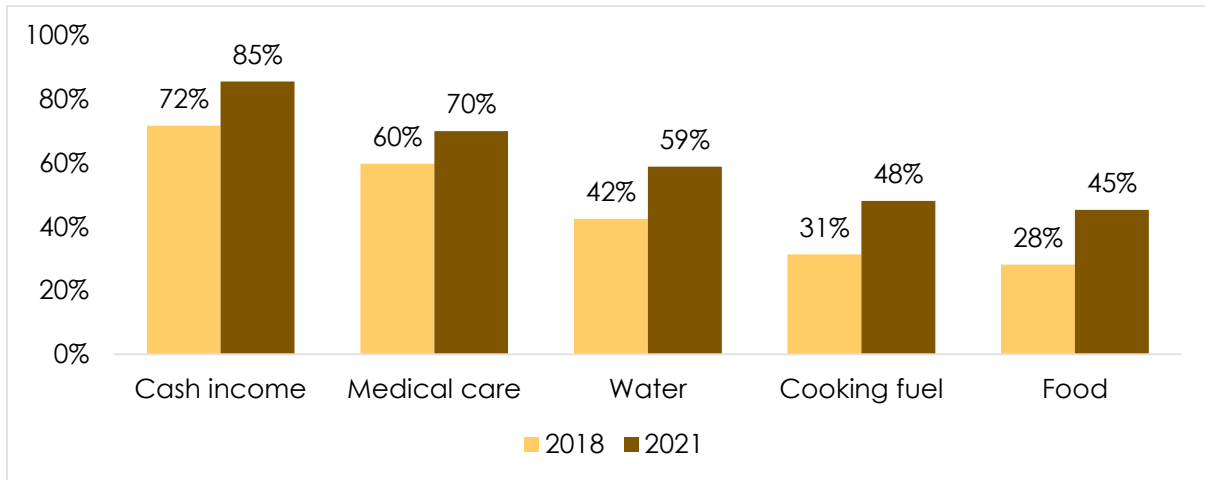
**Respondents were asked:** *Would you say that the country is going in the wrong direction or going in the right direction?*

**Figure 2: Country's economic condition and personal living conditions | The Gambia | 2018-2021**



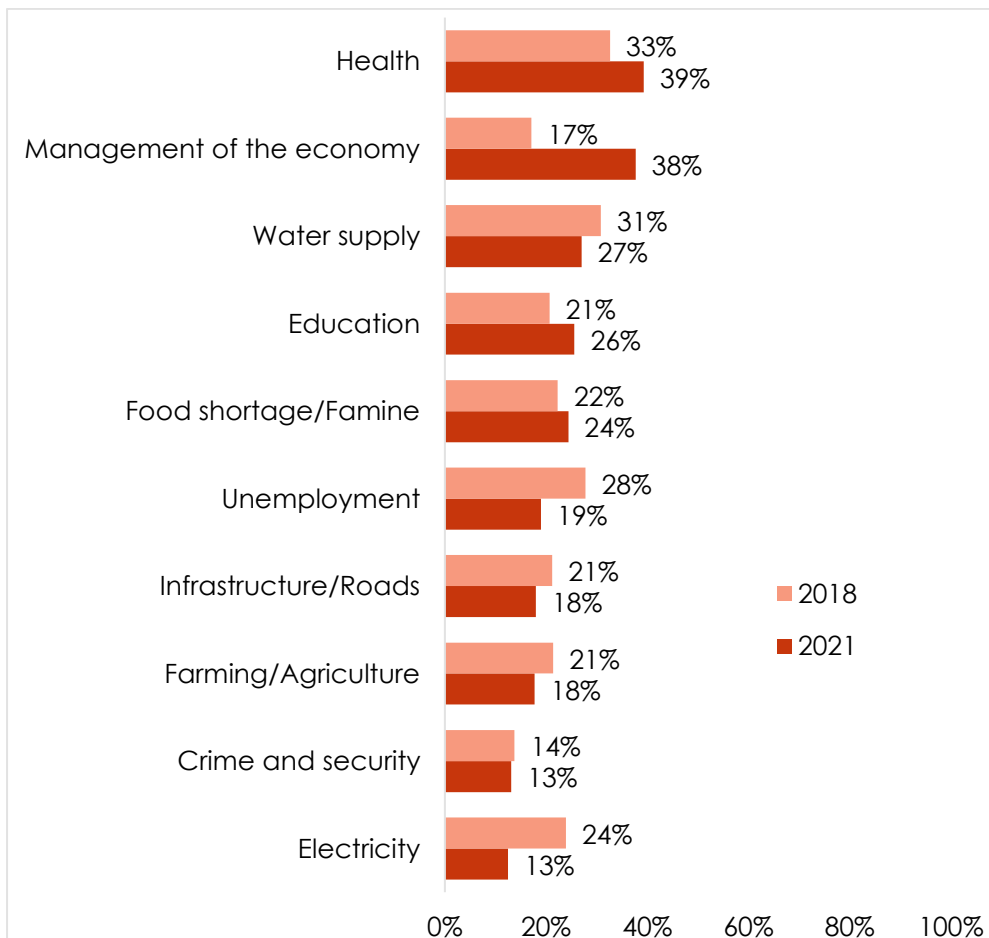
**Respondents were asked:** *In general, how would you describe: The present economic condition of this country? Your own present living conditions? (% who say "fairly good" or "very good")*

**Figure 3: Going without basic necessities | The Gambia | 2018-2021**



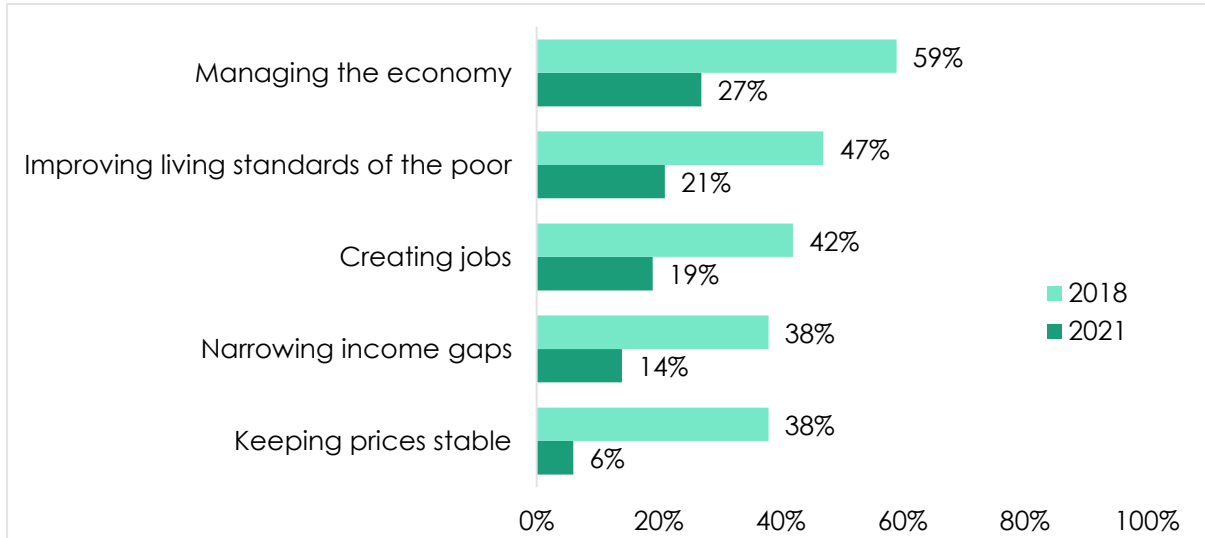
**Respondents were asked:** Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: Gone without enough food to eat? Gone without enough clean water for home use? Gone without medicines or medical treatment? Gone without enough fuel to cook your food? Gone without a cash income? (% who say “just once or twice,” “several times,” “many times,” or “always”)

**Figure 4: Most important problems | The Gambia | 2018-2021**



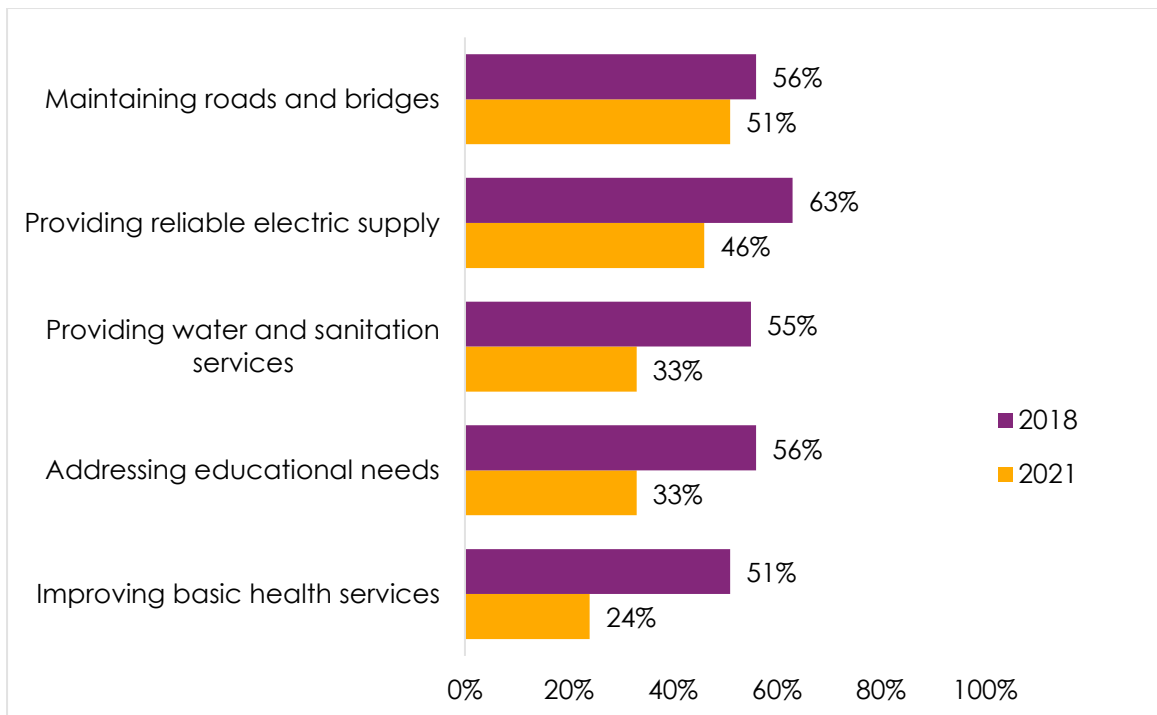
**Respondents were asked:** In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Note: Respondents were allowed up to three responses. Figure shows % who cite each issue among their top three concerns.)

**Figure 5: Government economic performance** | The Gambia | 2018-2021



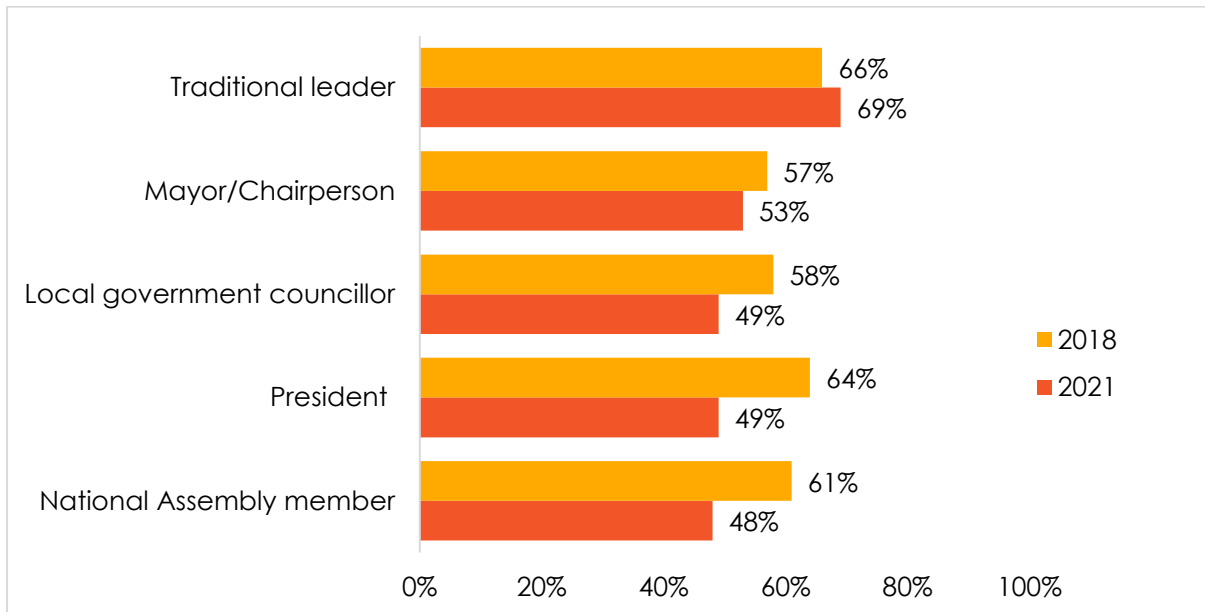
**Respondents were asked:** How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say? (% who say "fairly well" or "very well")

**Figure 6: Government performance on providing infrastructure and basic services** | The Gambia | 2018-2021



**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? (% who say "fairly well" or "very well")

**Figure 7: Approval of leaders' job performance | The Gambia | 2018-2021**



**Respondents were asked:** Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past 12 months, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (% who "approve" or "strongly approve")

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