

Afrobarometer Round 6

New data from
across Africa



Nairobi, Kenya
14 January 2016

News release

Despite progress, basic infrastructure still a challenge in Africa

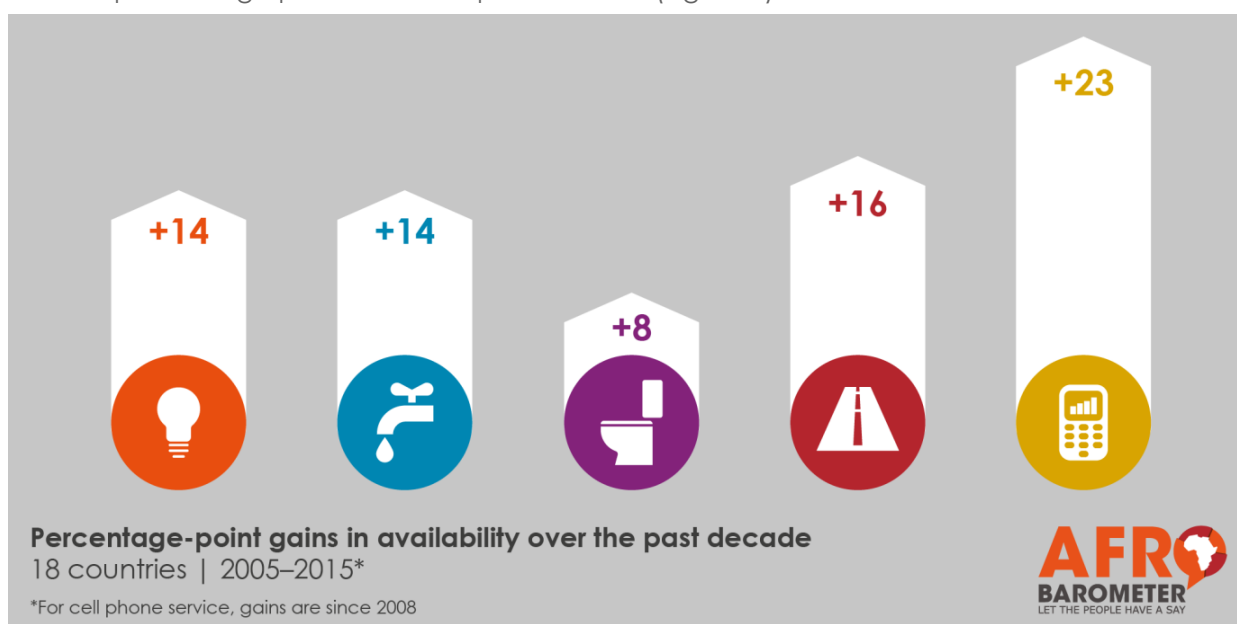
Despite progress over the past decade, the development of infrastructure for electricity, water, sewerage, and roads remains an enormous challenge across Africa, especially in rural areas, new Afrobarometer survey data indicate. In contrast, cell phone service is approaching universal coverage.

Survey findings published today (14 January 2016) in the report "**Building on progress: Infrastructure development still a major challenge in Africa**", are based on field-team observations in 35 African countries in 2014/2015.

These insights into citizens' access to basic services are particularly significant as governments and development partners prioritize investments to ensure inclusive growth.

Key findings

- On average across 35 African countries, only about two-thirds of citizens live in communities with an electric grid (65%) and/or piped water infrastructure (63%), and less than one in three have access to sewerage (30%). More than three times as many have access to cell phone service (93%), while about half (54%) live in zones with tarred or paved roads (Figure 1).
- Eighteen countries tracked since 2005/2006 show steady, though slow, progress in infrastructure development. On average, the availability of all five services has increased. Sewerage shows the least progress, with access increasing by just 8 percentage points over the past decade (Figure 2).



Percentage-point gains in availability over the past decade
18 countries | 2005–2015*

*For cell phone service, gains are since 2008



- Countries vary enormously in their provision of basic service infrastructure. For example, while availability of electricity and piped water is universal in Mauritius and Egypt, only 17% of Burundians live in zones with an electric grid, and only 17% of Liberians have access to piped water.
- Regional comparisons show North Africa with the best availability of all five services, followed closely by Central Africa. East Africa ranks last in the availability of electricity, piped water, sewerage, and cell phone service.
- Rural residents continue to be severely disadvantaged in most countries, with urban-rural gaps of more than 40 percentage points in the average availability of an electric grid, sewerage, and piped water infrastructure (Figure 3).

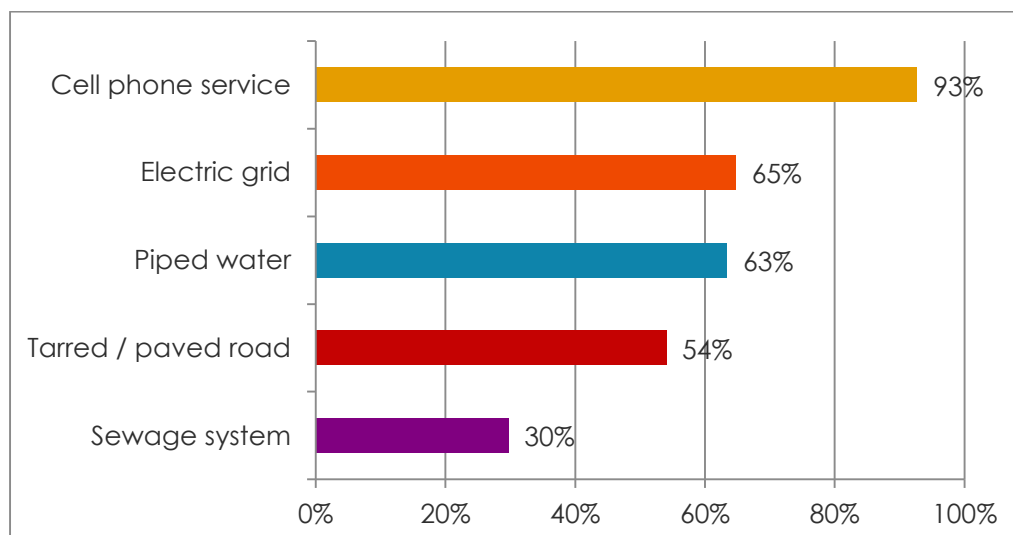
Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and findings from Round 6 surveys (2014/2015) are currently being released. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2% (for samples of 2,400) or +/-3% (for samples of 1,200) at a 95% confidence level.

Interested readers should watch for additional findings to be released over the coming months (see <http://afrobarometer.org/countries/results-round>).

Charts

Figure 1: Availability of services and roads | 35 countries | 2014/2015



Interviewers were asked to record:

1. Whether the following were present in the enumeration area:
 - An electricity grid that most houses could access.
 - A piped water system that most houses could access.
 - A sewage system that most houses could access.
 - Cell-phone service.
2. Whether the road at the start point in the EA was paved or tarred.

Figure 2: Improved availability of basic infrastructure | 18 countries | 2005-2015

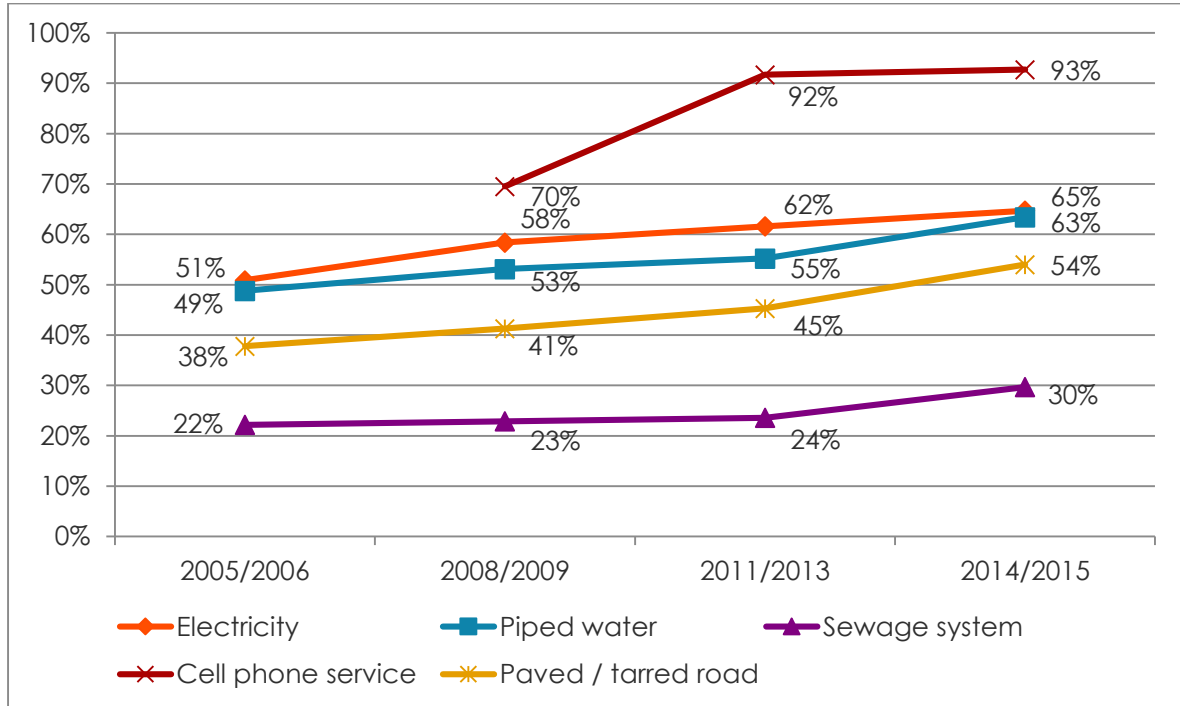
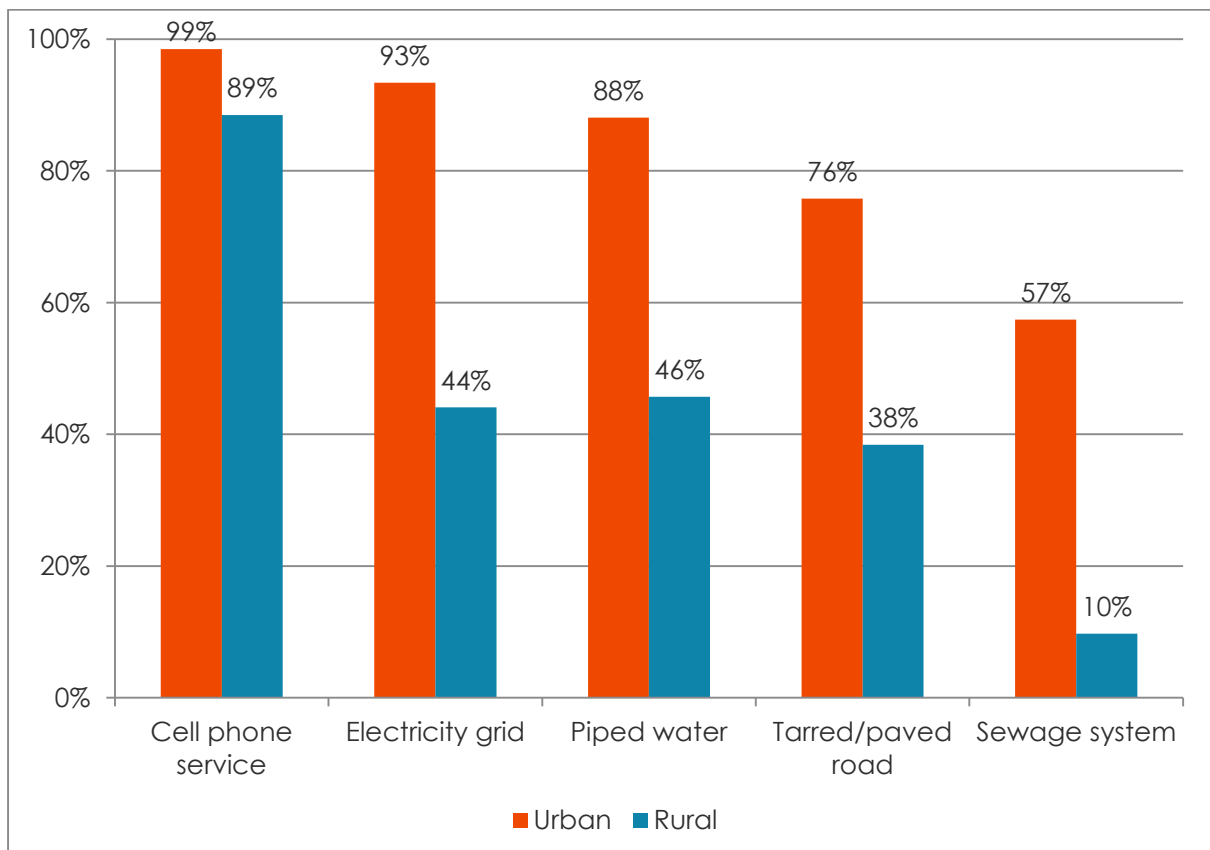


Figure 3: Urban-rural disparities in service availability | 35 countries | 2014/2015



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