



In search of opportunity: Young and educated Africans most likely to consider moving abroad

Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 288 | Josephine Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny, Carolyn Logan, and E. Gyimah-Boadi

Summary

By 2050, it is projected that one in every four humans will be African as the continent doubles its population, accounting for more than half of global population growth (United Nations, 2015; World Economic Forum, 2017). Even with a land mass greater than India, China, the United States, and Europe combined, and blessed with one-third of the earth's mineral resources (Custers & Mattlysen, 2009; Bermudez-Lugo et al., 2014), will Africa be able to provide the livelihood opportunities its people demand and need?



Despite significant economic growth in many African countries over the past two decades (United Nations, 2018), a substantial number of Africans still see leaving their country to seek out a better future as their best option. Willing to risk abuse and enslavement, death in the desert or at sea, and hardship upon arrival, African emigrants have placed themselves on front pages and political agendas around the world (Kekana, 2018; O'Toole, 2018).

Although only 14% of the 258 million international migrants worldwide in 2017 were born in Africa – one-third the number of Asian-born migrants (United Nations, 2017) – sub-Saharan African nations account for eight of the 10 fastest-growing international migrant populations

since 2010 (Pew Research Center, 2018). The number of emigrants from each of these sub-Saharan countries grew by 50% or more between 2010 and 2017. At the country level, only Syria had a higher rate of growth in the number of citizens living in other countries.

While migration can have positive effects – filling labor gaps in destination countries (Rapoza, 2017) and producing remittances to help families back home (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2017) – it can also have negative consequences. Analysts have pointed to its drain on emerging economies (Capuano & Marfouk, 2013), and populist movements in the West have decried immigration as a threat to domestic employment, security, and national culture (Galston, 2018; Roth, 2017; Ratcliffe, 2017).

For policy makers faced with managing the challenges of international migration, a detailed understanding of its forms, patterns, and causes is critical. A growing literature explores “push” and “pull” factors shaping emigration, highlighting the failure of African countries to create economic opportunities for their citizens (Kainth, 2015; Stanojoska & Petreveski, 2015; Gheasi & Nijkamp, 2017) but also arguing for the importance of social and political factors (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016).

This dispatch draws on new Afrobarometer data from 34 national surveys to explore the perceptions and preferences of ordinary Africans when it comes to international migration. Findings show that more than one-third of Africans have considered emigrating, though far fewer are making actual plans to leave. The data support concerns about human-resource drain: The young and the educated are most likely to consider going abroad.

Finding work and escaping economic hardship are the most frequently cited reasons to consider emigrating – fully in line with our earlier findings that unemployment is the most important problem that Africans want their governments to address and that among the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, SDG8 (“decent work and economic growth”) is the highest priority for ordinary Africans (Coulibaly, Silwé, & Logan, 2018).

The most preferred destination for potential emigrants is neither Europe nor the United States, but another African country.

Afrobarometer survey

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. Six rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2015, and findings from Round 7 surveys (2016/2018) are currently being released. Interested readers may follow our releases, including our Pan-Africa Profiles series of Round 7 cross-country analyses, at #VoicesAfrica and sign up for our distribution list at www.afrobarometer.org.

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 to +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

This dispatch relies on data from 45,823 interviews completed in 34 countries between September 2016 and September 2018 (see Appendix Table A.1 for a list of countries and fieldwork dates). The countries covered are home to almost 80% of the continent’s population. The data are weighted to ensure nationally representative samples. Each country is weighted equally; the Africa-wide data below are thus averages of national data, without adjustment for the size of the national populations.

Key findings

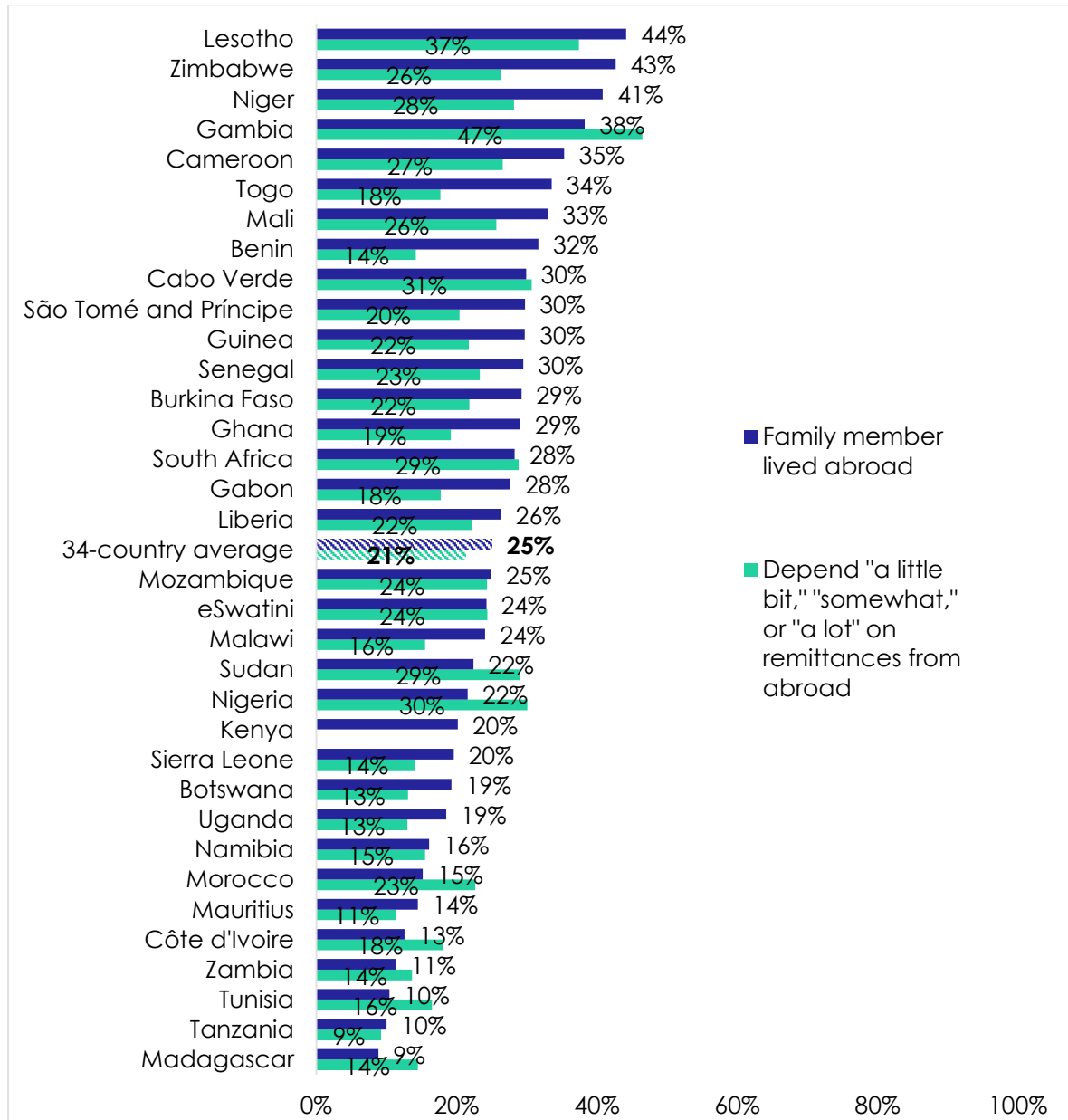
- On average across 34 countries, one in four Africans (25%) say someone in their family has lived in another country during the past three years. About one in five (21%) say they depend at least “a little bit” on remittances sent from abroad.
- More than one in three Africans (37%) have considered emigrating, including 18% who have given this “a lot” of thought. A majority of citizens say they have thought at least “a little bit” about leaving Cabo Verde (57%), Sierra Leone (57%), the Gambia (56%), Togo (54%), and São Tomé and Príncipe (54%).
- Among those who have considered emigrating (“potential emigrants”), on average one in 10 (9%) – or about 3% of the total population – say they are currently making preparations to move. These proportions are highest in Zimbabwe and Lesotho.
- Young adults and highly educated citizens are most likely to consider leaving their country: Around half of each group say they have considered it at least “a little bit.”
- In contrast, individuals' experience of poverty does not have a large impact on their interest in emigrating, though it does significantly affect the reasons why they consider such a move: The poorest are much more likely to see emigration as a means of escape from their hardships, while the wealthiest are more likely to cite diverse motivations such as education, adventure, and business opportunities.
- Among potential emigrants, more than one-third would like to move to another country within their region (29%) or elsewhere in Africa (7%). This preference for staying on the continent is especially strong in Southern Africa (58%) and weakest in North Africa (8%). Europe (27%) and North America (22%) are the most preferred destinations outside Africa.
- In almost all countries, by far the most frequently cited reasons for emigrating are to look for work (44% on average) and to escape poverty and economic hardship (29%).
- In line with widespread interest in intra-regional migration and the pursuit of economic opportunity, a majority (56%) of Africans think people should be able to move freely across international borders within their region. But the same proportion (56%) say they find it difficult to cross borders to work or trade in another country.

Family abroad and remittances

Since general ideas about emigration may be shaped, in part, by family experiences, Afrobarometer started by asking respondents whether they or anyone in their family had gone to live in another country for more than three months during the previous three years. On average across 34 countries, one in four people (25%) say they or relatives had lived abroad, ranging from about one in 10 in Madagascar (9%), Tanzania (10%), Tunisia (10%), and Zambia (11%) to more than four in 10 in Lesotho (44%), Zimbabwe (43%), and Niger (41%) (Figure 1).

When asked to what extent, if at all, they depend on receiving remittances from relatives or friends living in other countries, about one-fifth (21%) of respondents say they rely “a little bit” (10%), “somewhat” (7%), or “a lot” (4%) on such monies from abroad. Almost half (47%) of Gambians say they depend at least “a little bit” on remittances, followed by 37% of Basotho, 31% of Cabo Verdeans, and 30% of Nigerians, compared to fewer than one in 10 Tanzanians (9%).

Figure 1: Family members living abroad, remittances | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked:

During the past three years, have you or anyone in your household gone to live in another country outside [your country] for more than three months?

Considering all the activities you engage in to secure a livelihood, how much, if at all, do you depend on receiving remittances from relatives or friends living in other countries?

(Note: Data on remittances is not available for Kenya.)

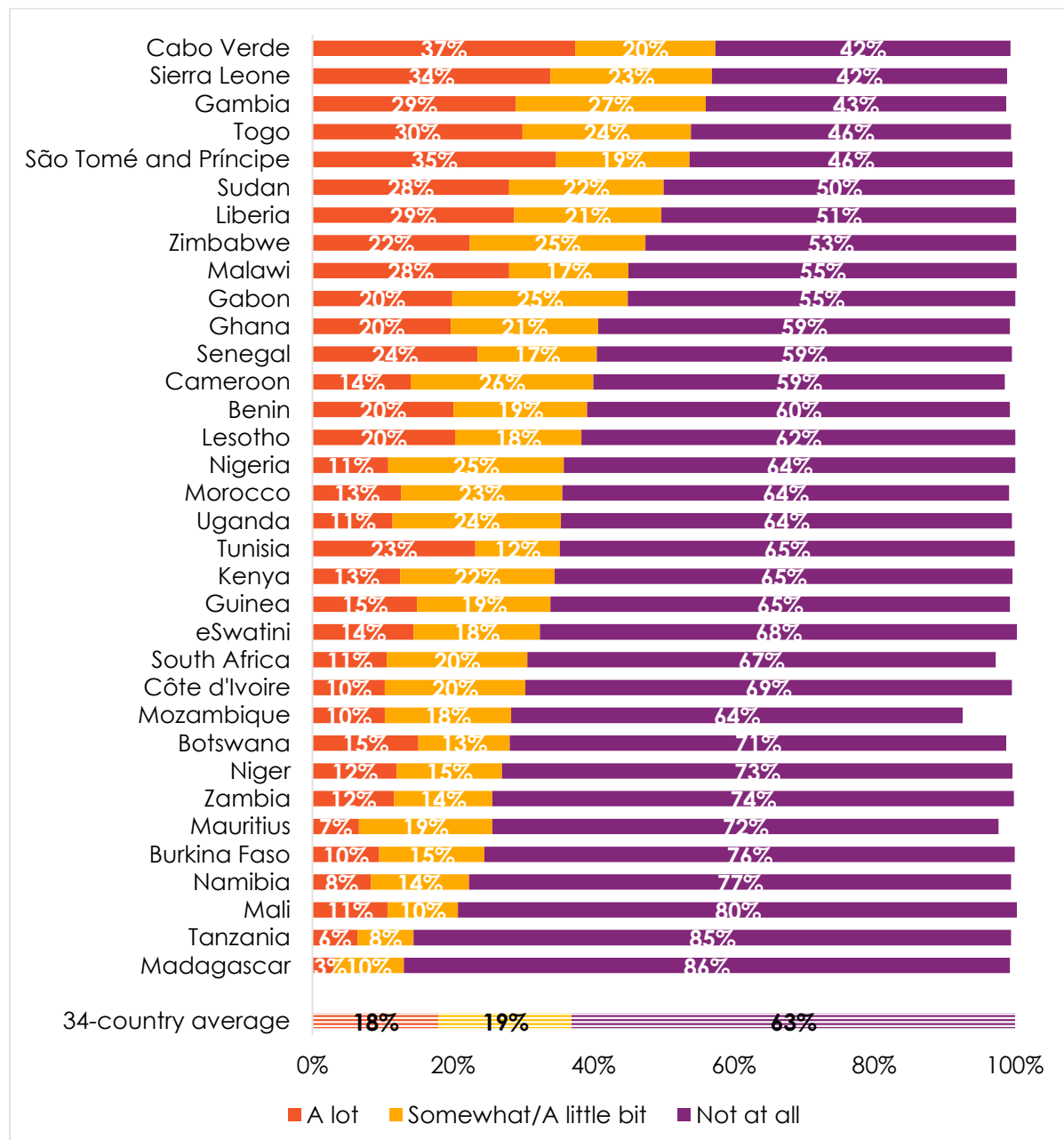
Desire to emigrate

How many Africans are thinking about leaving their home country to live elsewhere? On average across 34 countries, almost four in 10 (37%) say they have considered migrating, including 18% who have given this "a lot" of thought and another 19% who have considered it "somewhat" or "a little bit" (Figure 2). In five countries, more than half of respondents have at least considered migrating ("a little," "somewhat," or "a lot"): Cabo Verde (57%), Sierra Leone (57%), the Gambia (56%), Togo (54%), and São Tomé and Príncipe (54%). More than

one-third of citizens in Cabo Verde, Sierra Leone, and São Tomé and Príncipe have thought “a lot” about leaving their country, and one-fifth or more of citizens have given serious consideration to departing in another 12 countries. Tanzania (14%) and Madagascar (13%) are the only countries where fewer than one in seven citizens have even considered emigration. Only 3% have given this prospect serious consideration in Madagascar, far below all other countries.

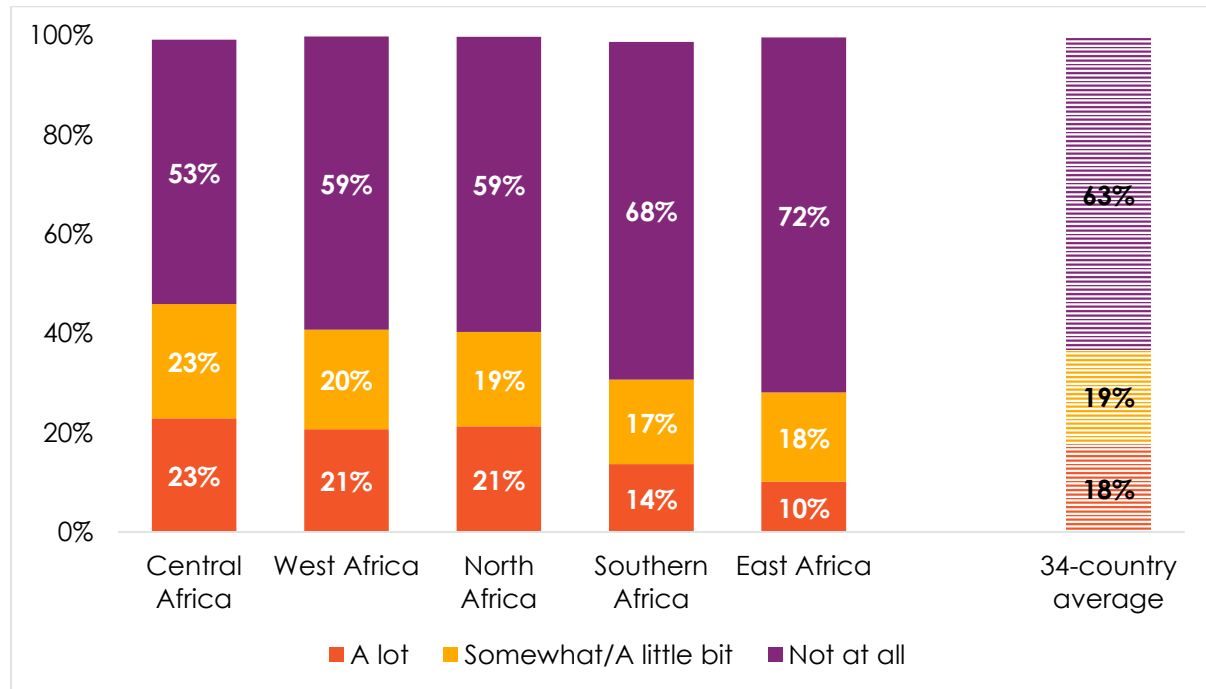
Regionally, the desire to migrate is highest in Central Africa and West Africa, where more than four in 10 citizens (46% and 41%, respectively) have given thought to leaving their country (Figure 3). In contrast, fewer than one in three have considered emigration in Southern and East Africa (31% and 28%, respectively).

Figure 2: Considered emigrating | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: How much, if at all, have you considered moving to another country to live? (“Don’t know/Refused” responses are not shown.)

Figure 3: Considered emigrating | by region | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: How much, if at all, have you considered moving to another country to live?

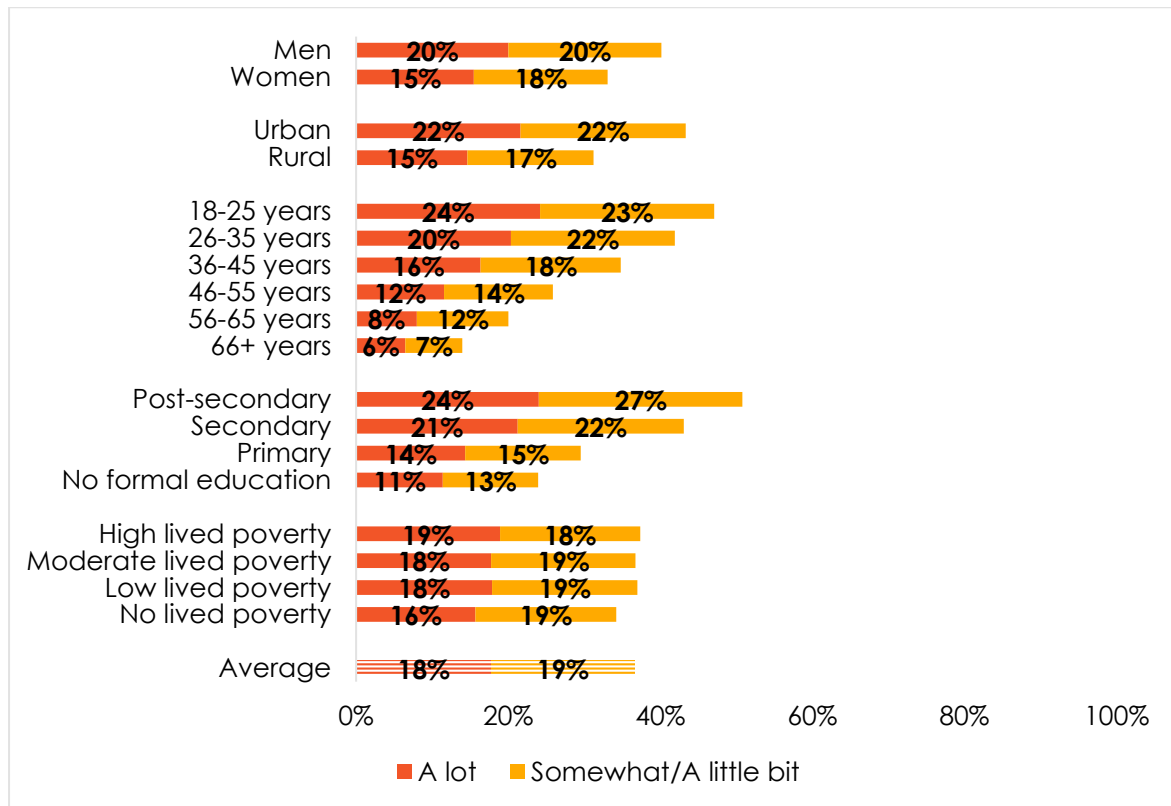
Potential emigrants are more numerous among men (40%) and urban residents (44%) than among women (33%) and rural dwellers (32%), while thoughts of moving abroad are about equally common among the relatively well-off and the poor¹ (Figure 4).

But differences by respondents' education level and age confirm concerns about migration's draining effect on emerging economies, especially the resultant loss of valuable human resources: The most-educated and the youngest adults are most likely to consider leaving their country. On average, more than half (51%) of all respondents with post-secondary educational qualifications say they have given at least "a little" consideration to emigrating, including one in four (24%) who have considered it "a lot." By comparison, potential emigrants make up 43% and 29% of respondents with secondary and primary schooling, respectively, and 24% of those with no formal education.

Similarly, almost half (47%) of the youngest respondents (aged 18-25 years) report having considered moving elsewhere – about two to three times as many as in cohorts above age 45. This pattern of larger proportions of potential emigrants among younger and better-educated respondents is the same in almost all surveyed countries (see breakdown by country, age group, and education level in Appendix Table A.2). But countries vary widely in the proportion of their youngest adults (aged 18-25) who have thought "a lot" about leaving, ranging from one in 10 or fewer in Burkina Faso (10%) and Madagascar (6%) to the extreme of 53% in Cabo Verde (Figure 5).

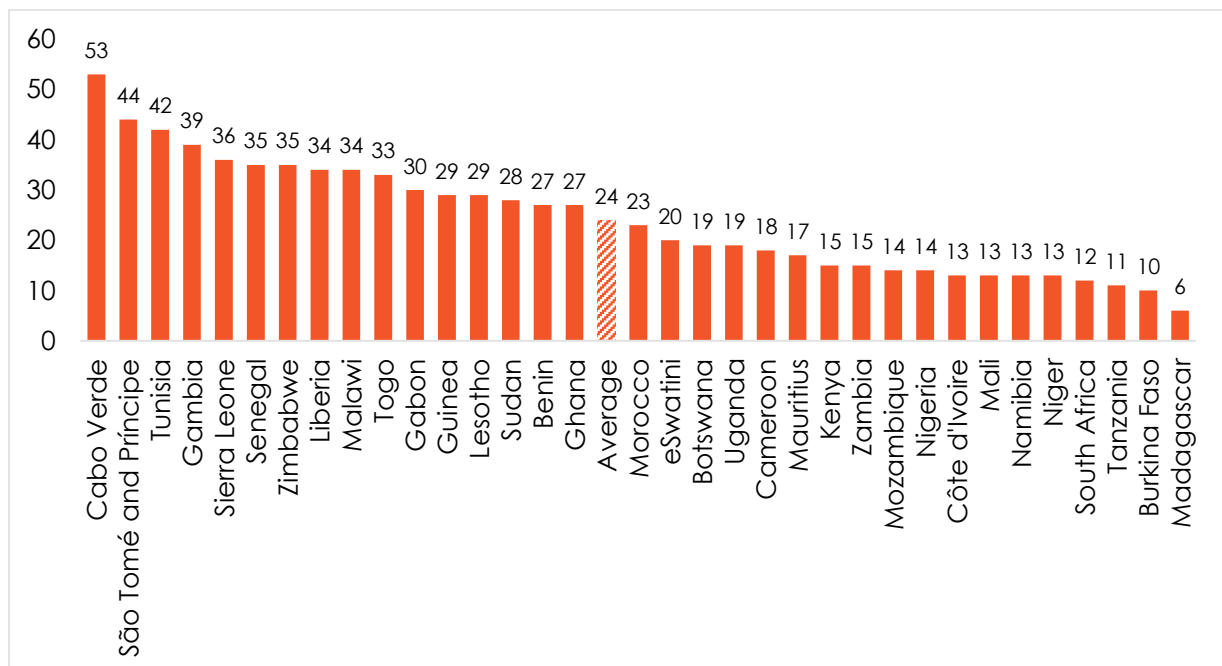
¹ Afrobarometer's Lived Poverty Index (LPI) measures respondents' levels of material deprivation by asking how often they or their families went without basic necessities (enough food, enough water, medical care, enough cooking fuel, and a cash income) during the preceding year. For more on lived poverty, see Mattes, Dulani, & Gyimah-Boadi (2016).

Figure 4: Considered emigrating | by socio-demographic group | 34 countries
 | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: How much, if at all, have you considered moving to another country to live?

Figure 5: 18- to 25-year-olds who considered emigration 'a lot' (%) | 34 countries
 | 2016/2018



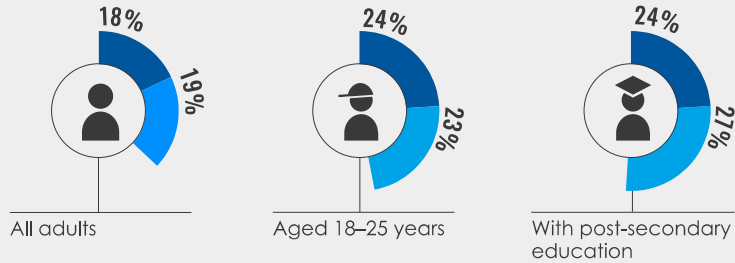
Respondents were asked: How much, if at all, have you considered moving to another country to live? (% who say "a lot")

Looking abroad: Who, why, where

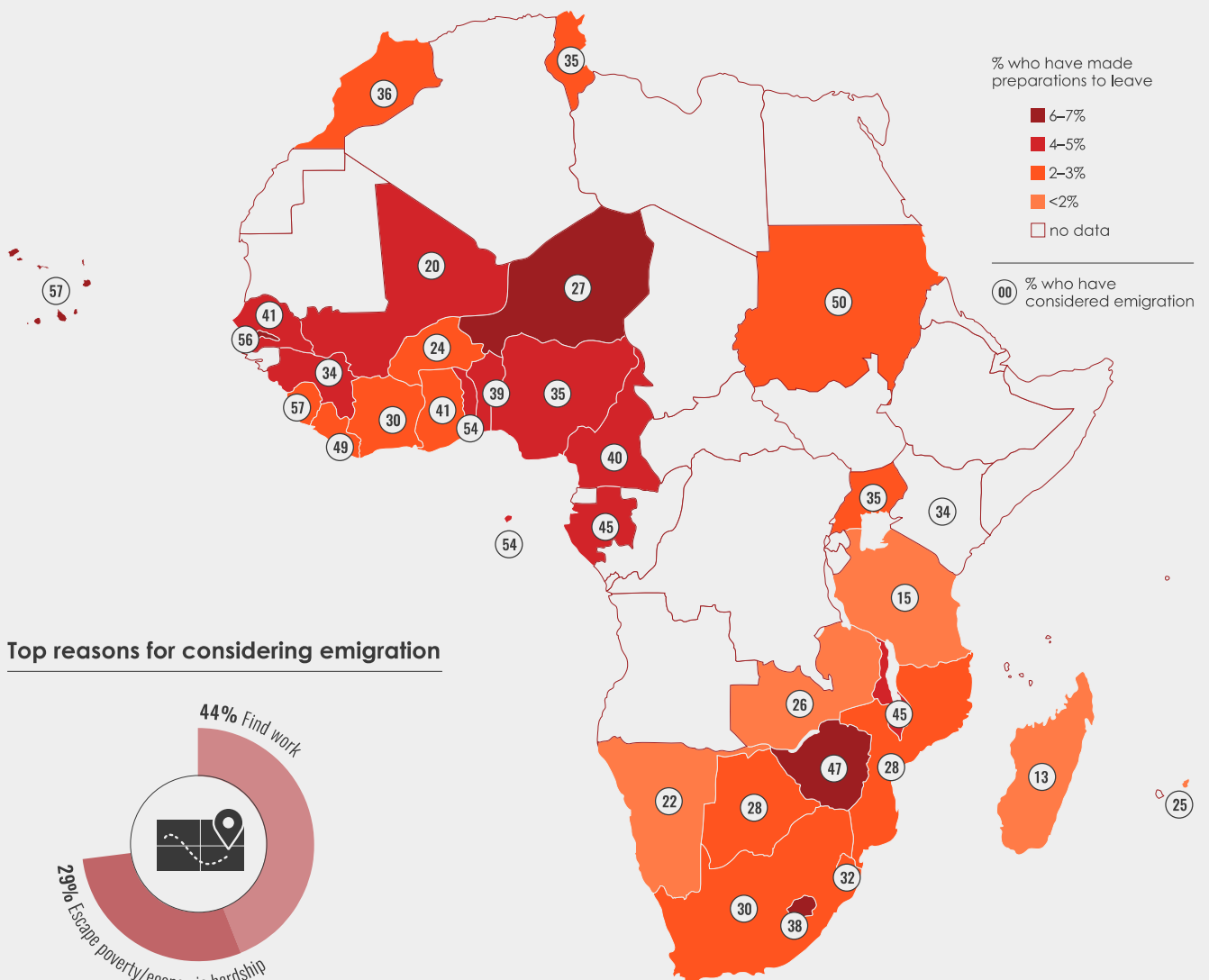
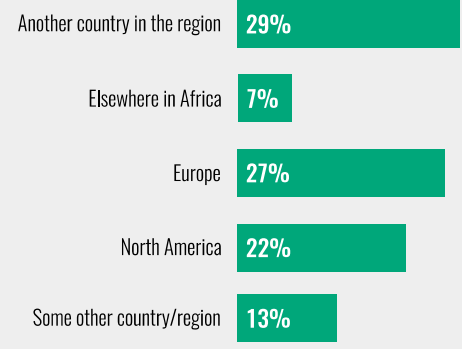
34 African countries | 2016/2018

Have considered emigration

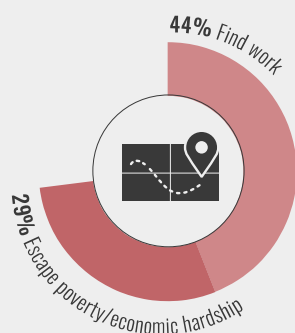
■ considered "a lot" ■ considered "somewhat" or "a little bit"



Top destinations



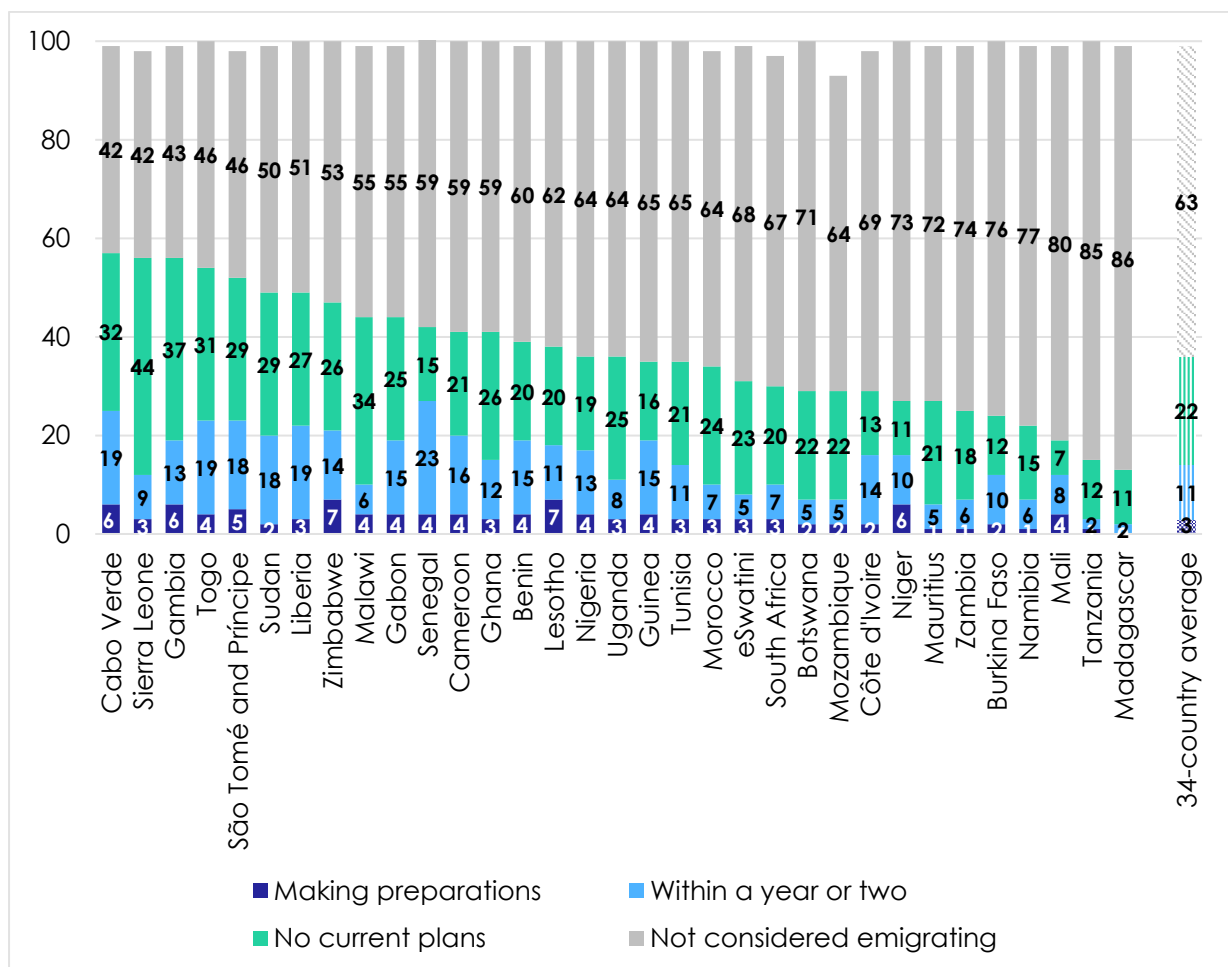
Top reasons for considering emigration



Preparing to go

While these findings reveal that a substantial number of Africans have at least considered moving to another country, far fewer are actually making plans to leave. Among the 37% who say they have thought about emigration, fewer than one in 10 (9%) report that they are seriously engaged in planning and making preparations to leave, such as getting a visa. But even at just 3% of the total population, this still represents substantial numbers of potential near-term migrants. As a proportion of the whole population, about one in nine (11%) say they plan to move in the next year or two but are not currently making preparations, while twice as many (22%) say that although they have considered emigration, they do not have any specific plans to leave their countries (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Considering, planning, or preparing to emigrate? (%) | 33* countries
 | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: How much planning or preparation have you done in order to move to another country to live? (% of all respondents) * Question was not asked in Kenya.

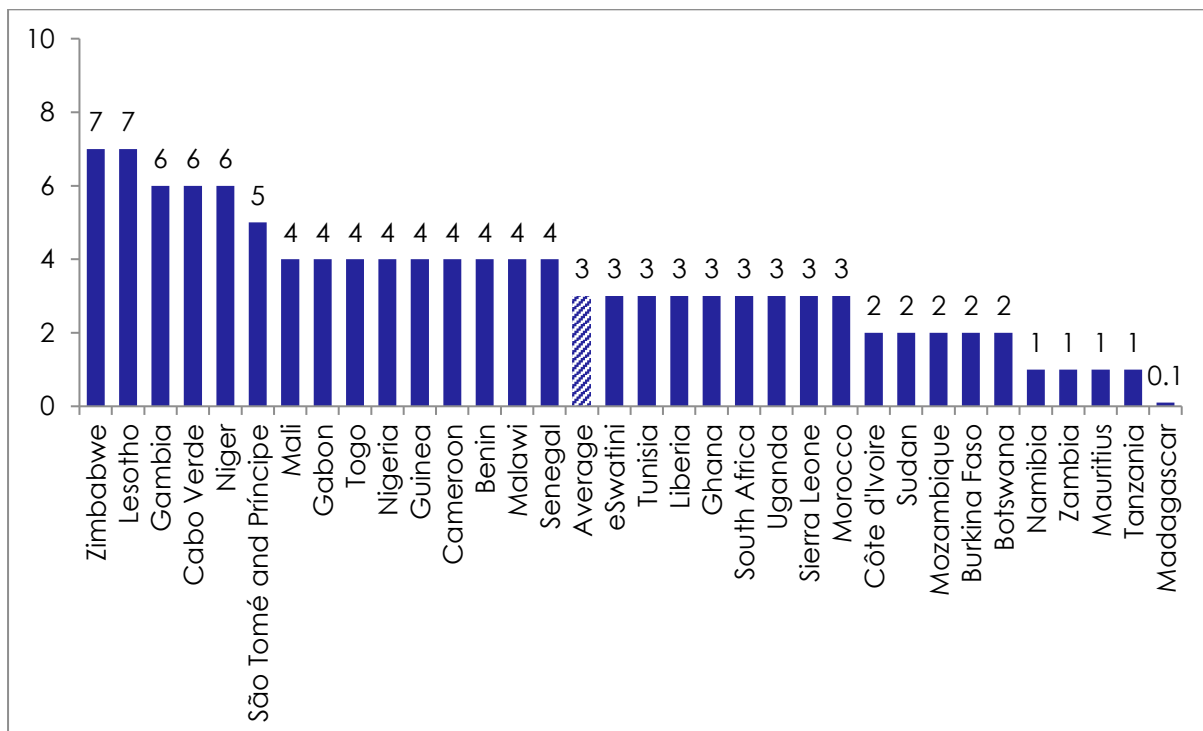
This introduces another layer of distinction among these countries. For example, while Sierra Leoneans and Cabo Verdeans are about equally likely to say they have considered emigrating (57% each),² the proportion who are actually preparing to leave is twice as high

² Due to rounding, percentages for combined categories may differ slightly from the sum of rounded sub-categories.

in Cabo Verde (6% vs. 3%). Viewed in this frame, the five countries with the highest migration potential (proportionately) are Zimbabwe and Lesotho, where 7% of the population say they are making plans to leave, followed by the Gambia, Cabo Verde, and Niger (6% each) (Figure 7). In contrast, just 1% in Namibia, Zambia, Mauritius, and Tanzania are actively preparing to emigrate, and in Madagascar, only one-tenth of 1 percent say they are getting ready to leave.

By key socio-demographic group, the pattern is the same as for considering emigration, with young, educated, urban, and male respondents generally more likely to say they are taking concrete steps (as well as thinking of leaving within a year or two) than their older, less-educated, rural, and female counterparts (not shown).

Figure 7: Preparing to emigrate (%) | 33* countries | 2016/2018



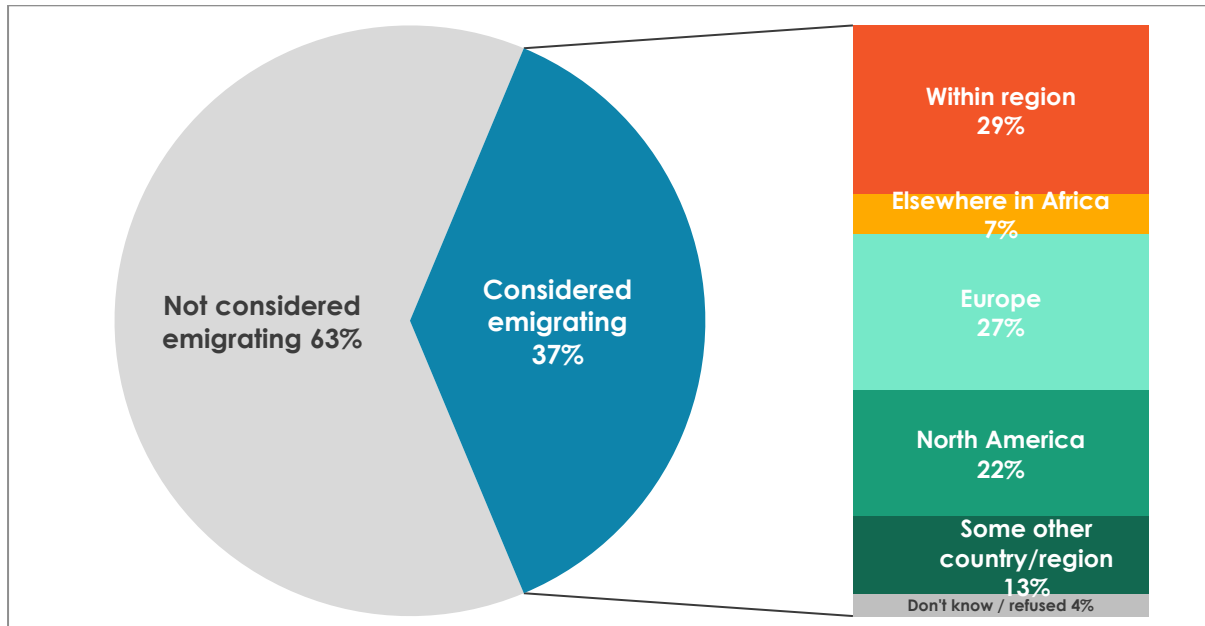
Respondents were asked: How much planning or preparation have you done in order to move to another country to live? (% of all respondents who say they are currently making preparations to move, such as getting a visa) (* Question was not asked in Kenya.)

Staying close to home?

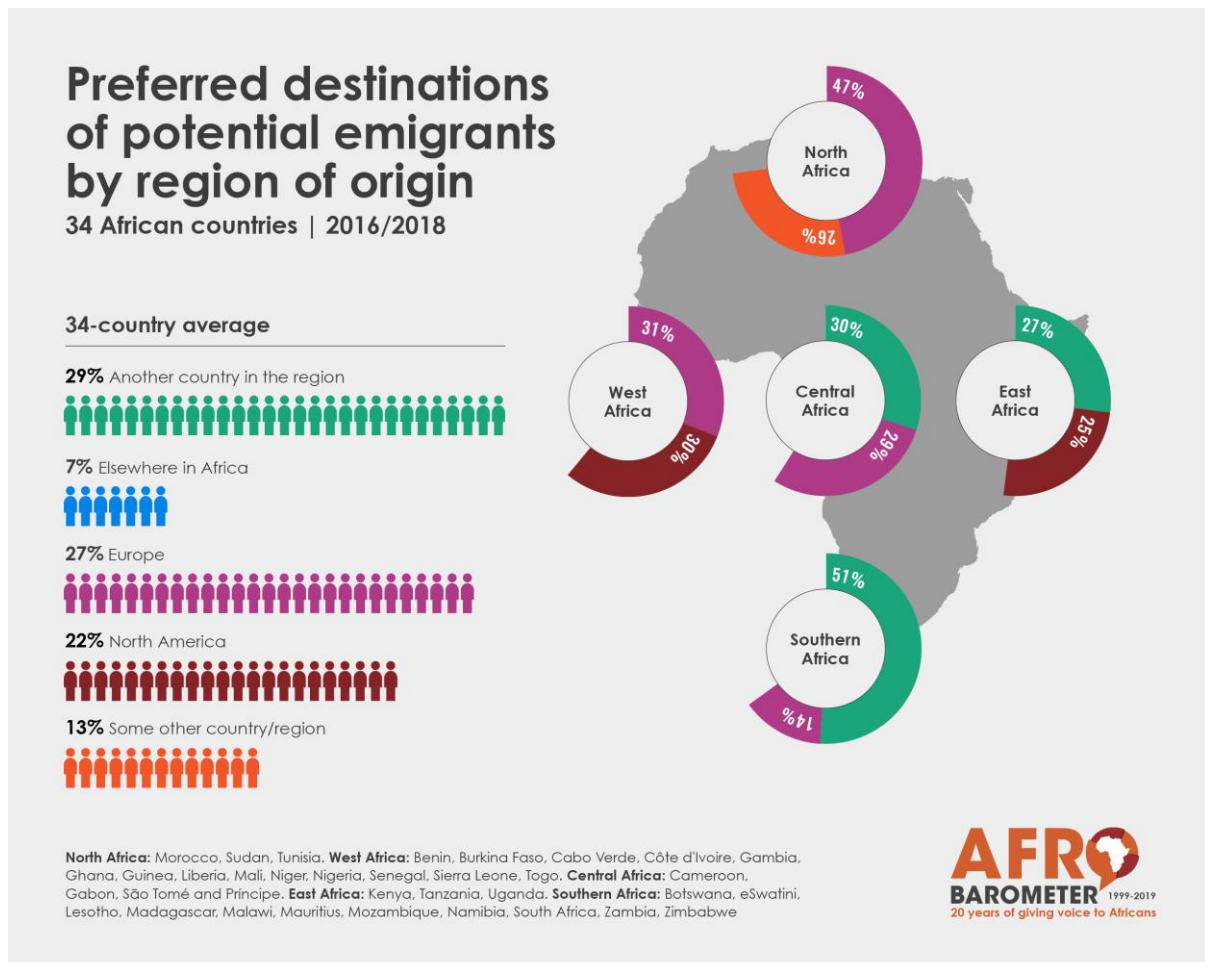
Despite the notion that Africans are on the move in search of greener pastures outside the continent, the International Organization for Migration (2017) reports that in fact more than 80% of Africa's migration involves moving within the continent. This is to some degree reflected in responses when Afrobarometer asked those who have considered emigration where they would be most likely to. A plurality of potential migrants express a preference for a destination within Africa: 29% cite another country within their region, while 7% look elsewhere on the continent (Figure 8).

For many others, the real costs and risks of emigrating may eventually temper ambitions to move around the globe, rather than around the region or the continent. But at least in the prospective stages, substantial numbers also consider destinations outside Africa: About one in four would prefer Europe (27%), followed closely by North America (22%); Australia and the Middle East (3% each) and Asia and Central/South America (2% each) attract much less interest.

Figure 8: Preferred destination for potential emigrants | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Excluding those who said they had “not at all” considered emigration, respondents were asked: If you were to move to another country, where would you be most likely to go?

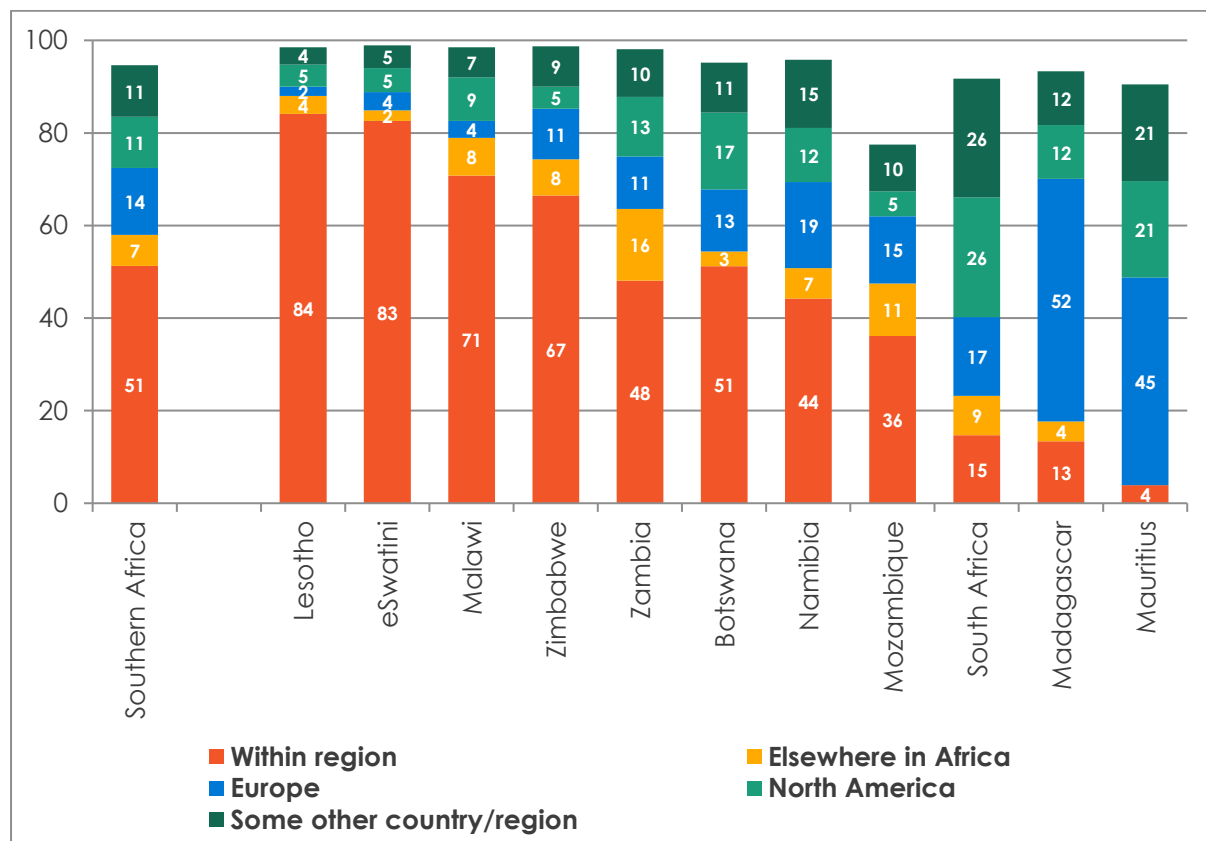


Southern Africans are most likely to want to stay within the region (51%) or on the continent (7%), although there is wide variation across individual countries in the region (Figure 9). More than eight in 10 potential migrants in Lesotho (84%) and eSwatini (83%), and more than two-thirds in Malawi (71%) and Zimbabwe (67%), prefer to remain within the Southern Africa region. In contrast, if residents of South Africa – the primary destination country within the region – are considering migration, they are far more likely to be looking outside the continent (69% say Europe, North America, or some other non-African destination), as are potential emigrants in Mauritius (87%) and Madagascar (76%).

Compared to Southern Africa, residents of other regions are, to varying degrees, more likely to look outward. West Africans look beyond the continent by a margin of nearly 3 to 1 (72% vs. 25%) (Figure 10). But again, variation within the region is enormous: In Niger, 83% would stay in Africa, as would 63% of Burkina Faso, but in Sierra Leone (91%), Senegal (91%), the Gambia (94%), and Cabo Verde (98%), more than nine out of 10 potential emigrants would opt to leave the continent. Europe is the first choice for Ivoirians (45%), Gambians (47%), Senegalese (54%), and Cabo Verdeans (66%), while Liberians (47%) and Sierra Leoneans (56%) are more inclined to look toward North America.

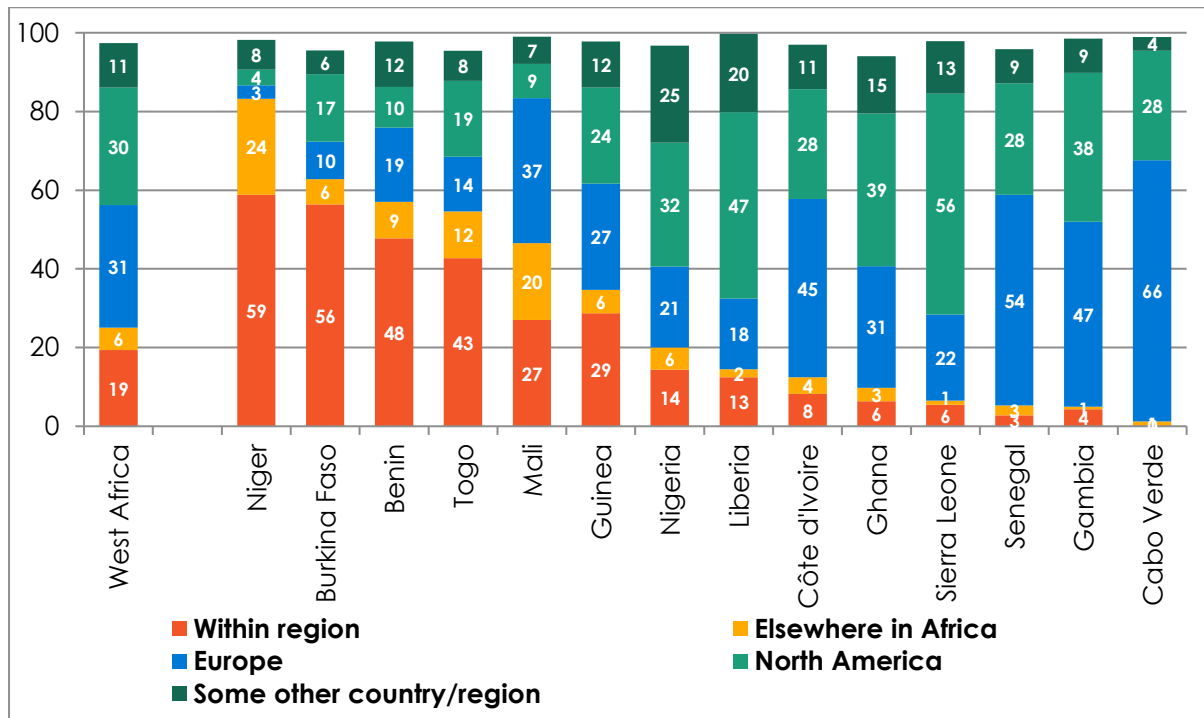
In both Central and East Africa, an average of four in 10 (41% each) say they would stay within the region or the continent, while majorities (56% and 57%, respectively) would leave Africa (Figure 11). Only a handful of potential emigrants in North Africa would stay within the region or continent (just 14% in Sudan, 7% in Tunisia, and 1% in Morocco). Instead, Europe is the most popular destination for a majority in Morocco (68%) and Tunisia (58%), while the preferred destination for Sudanese would be a Middle Eastern country.

Figure 9: Preferred destination for potential migrants (%) | 11 countries in Southern Africa | 2016/2018



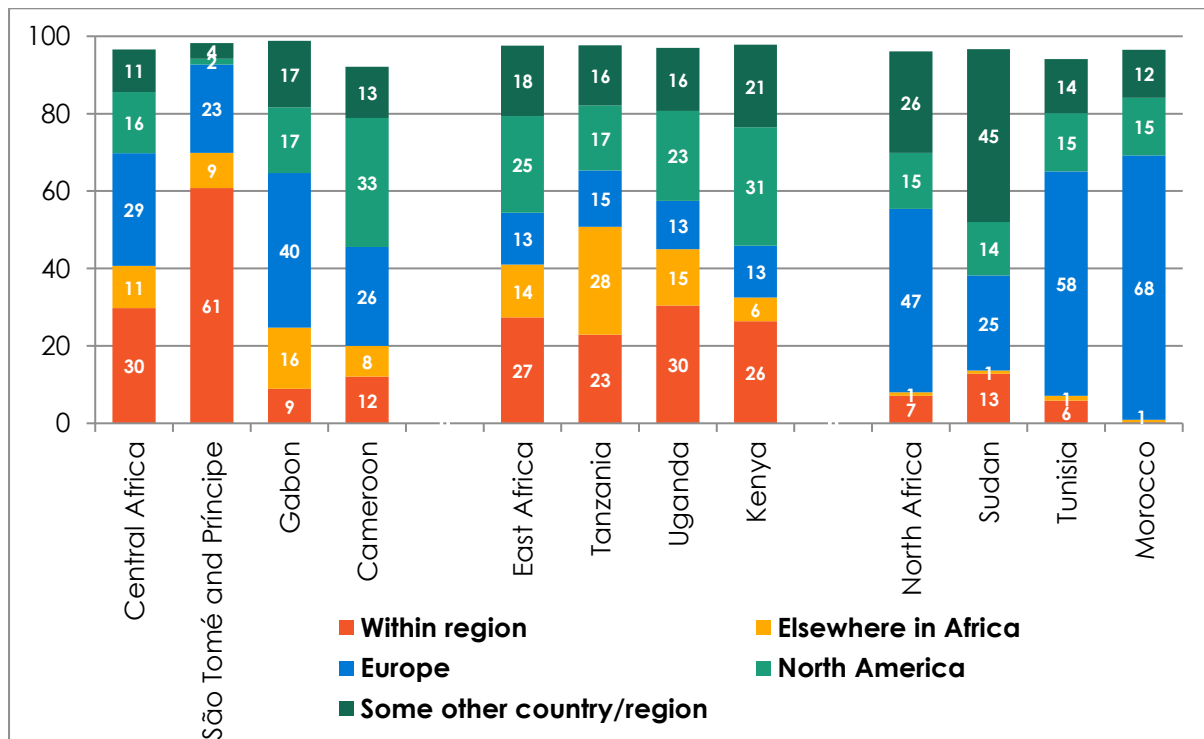
Excluding those who said they had “not at all” considered emigration, respondents were asked: If you were to move to another country, where would you be most likely to go?

Figure 10: Preferred destination for potential migrants (%) | 14 countries in West Africa | 2016/2018



Excluding those who said they had “not at all” considered emigration, respondents were asked: If you were to move to another country, where would you be most likely to go?

Figure 11: Preferred destination for potential migrants (%) | 8 countries in Central, East, and North Africa | 2016/2018



Excluding those who said they had “not at all” considered emigration, respondents were asked: If you were to move to another country, where would you be most likely to go?

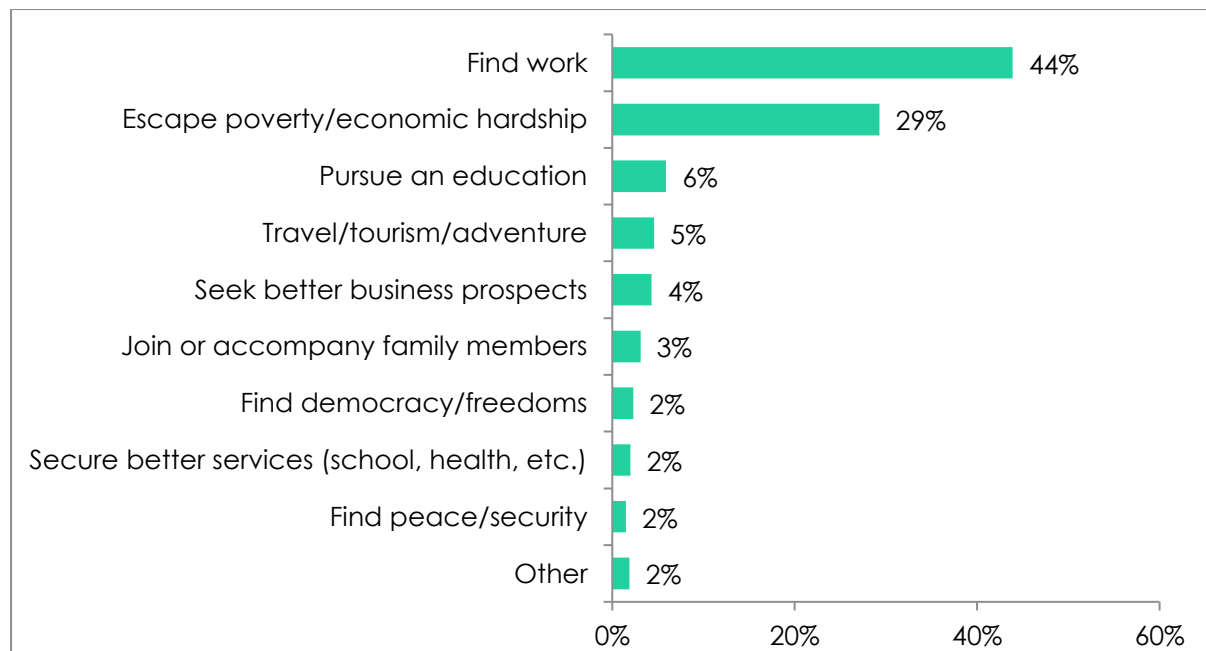
Potential emigrants seek employment and better economic prospects

Every migrant has a story; particular factors push or pull individuals and families to take this momentous step. To fully understand this phenomenon, it is important to recognize the multidimensionality of reasons – economic, demographic, socio-cultural, political, and environmental (Kainth, 2015; Gheasi & Nijkamp, 2017; Stanojoska & Petreveski, 2015; Mark, 2017; Flahaux & De Haas, 2016) – that compel people to leave their homes.

Potential emigrants themselves confirm the common notion that it's the search for greener pastures that motivates most of those who want to move abroad. On average across 34 countries, three-fourths of potential emigrants say the most important reason they would consider leaving is to search for work (44%) or to escape poverty or economic hardship (29%) (Figure 12). Another 4% would leave in search of better business prospects, and 2% each would go elsewhere in search of more democracy or protection of their political and religious freedoms, or to seek personal security (i.e. avoid crime or civil conflict). Pursuing their education abroad draws 6%, while 5% cite the lure of travel, tourism, or adventure, and 3% would go to either join family members already living outside the country or to accompany family members who are leaving (for unspecified reasons).

These findings are consistent with the views of Africans – non-emigrants and potential emigrants alike – regarding the relative importance of problems and goals for their country. As reported in Afrobarometer's recent Pan-Africa Profile on citizen priorities (Coulibaly, Silwé, & Logan, 2018), unemployment tops the list of most important problems that Africans want their governments to tackle, with poverty toward the middle in seventh place. Similarly, the UN Sustainable Development Goal that takes the highest priority for Africans is SDG8, “decent work and economic growth,” while SDG1 (“zero poverty”) comes in at No. 7.

Figure 12: Reasons for considering emigration | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Excluding those who said they had “not at all” considered emigration, respondents were asked: What is the most important reason why you would consider moving from [your country]?

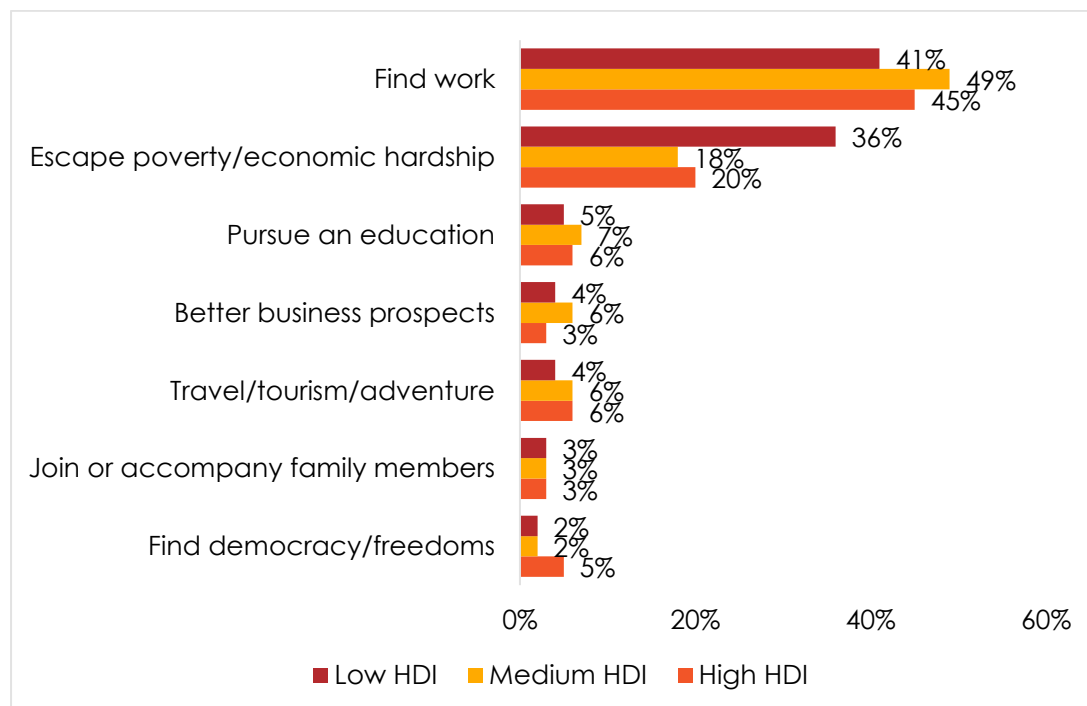
We might expect that the motivation to emigrate would be closely linked to conditions of social and economic development in a country. One useful indicator of this status is the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI). Among the 34 Afrobarometer countries included in Round 7, 20 fall in the “low-HDI” category, 10 are

in the “medium-HDI” group, and four are categorized as “high-HDI” countries.³ We find that overall interest in migrating is not strongly linked to HDI: Those in low-HDI countries are slightly less likely to consider emigrating than others, but the margin is quite narrow (35% in low-HDI countries vs. 39% in medium- and high-HDI countries).

But there do appear to be possible links between HDI and the reasons that people cite for emigrating (Figure 13). Most notably, while the “pull factor” of seeking jobs elsewhere is slightly less important in low-HDI countries, at 41% (vs. 49% for medium- and 45% for high-HDI countries), the differences with regard to the “push factor” of poverty and economic hardship are quite stark. People in low-HDI countries are twice as likely to cite poverty and economic hardship as the reasons for leaving (36%) as are people in medium-HDI (18%) and high-HDI (20%) countries.

Differences across other categories are small but substantive. Fewer than one in five citizens (17%) in low-HDI countries cite pursuing an education, travel/tourism, business prospects, accompanying family, or pursuing democracy and protections as reasons to emigrate, compared to 25% in medium-HDI and 23% in high-HDI countries.

Figure 13: Reasons for considering emigration | by Human Development Index score | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Excluding those who said they had “not at all” considered emigration, respondents were asked: What is the most important reason why you would consider moving from [your country]?

When we take it down to the country level, we see that these same patterns generally hold in most countries, but with a few notable exceptions (Table 1).

³ The 20 countries at low HDI are Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

The 10 countries at medium HDI are Cameroon, Cabo Verde, eSwatini, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Namibia, São Tomé and Príncipe, South Africa, and Zambia.

The four countries at high HDI are Botswana, Gabon, Mauritius, and Tunisia.

Table 1: Reasons for considering emigration | by country | 34 countries | 2016/2018

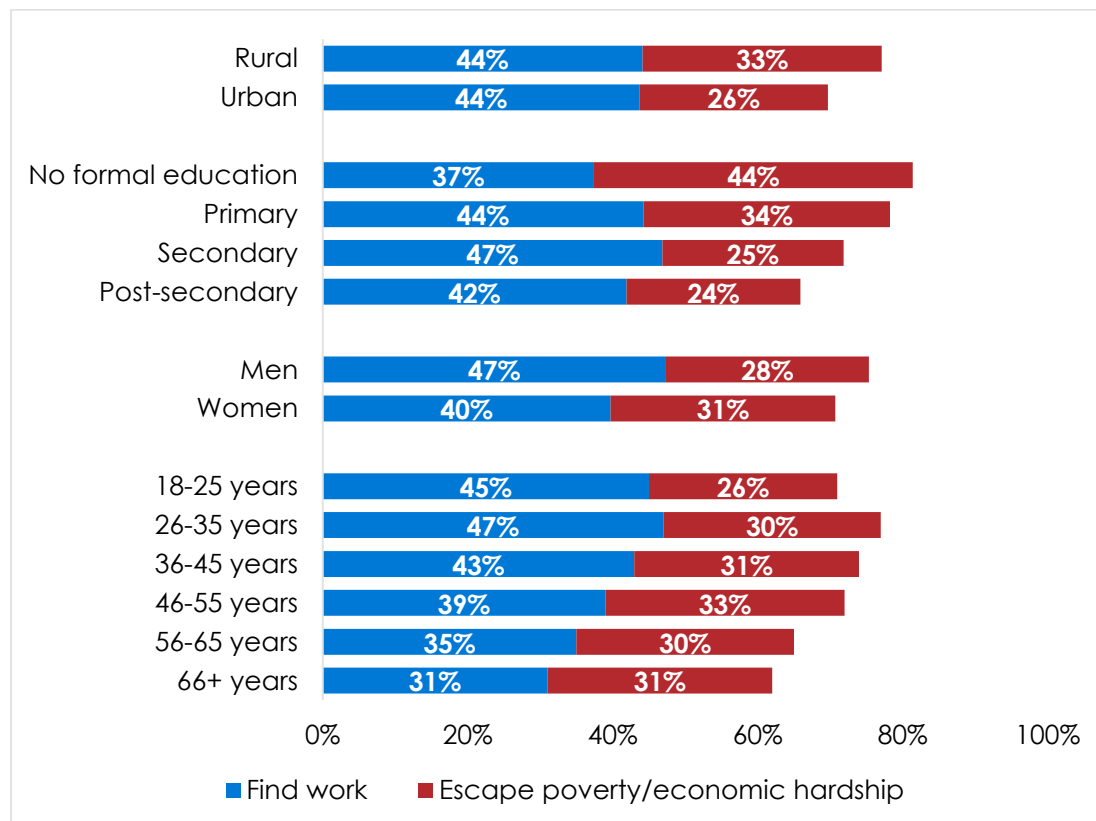
		Find work	Poverty/hardship	Education	Travel/tourism	Business prospects	Join family	Democracy/freedoms	Peace/security	Better services	Other
High HDI	Botswana	54%	22%	4%	4%	3%	2%	2%	1%	2%	3%
	Gabon	22%	26%	15%	9%	4%	2%	5%	5%	4%	7%
	Mauritius	55%	8%	1%	7%	4%	9%	10%	0%	2%	3%
	Tunisia	47%	24%	3%	2%	0%	2%	4%	3%	1%	11%
Medium HDI	Cabo Verde	64%	15%	4%	5%	2%	5%	1%	0%	3%	1%
	Cameroon	35%	24%	10%	7%	6%	2%	3%	6%	2%	2%
	eSwatini	60%	20%	4%	3%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	1%
	Ghana	52%	22%	6%	4%	8%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Kenya	54%	22%	3%	2%	6%	1%	3%	4%	2%	3%
	Morocco	53%	13%	10%	6%	7%	3%	4%	0%	1%	1%
	Namibia	38%	12%	18%	5%	8%	3%	3%	0%	10%	3%
	São Tomé/P	49%	20%	7%	11%	1%	8%	0%	0%	3%	0%
	South Africa	40%	17%	2%	7%	6%	3%	5%	8%	4%	4%
	Zambia	39%	14%	8%	11%	17%	6%	1%	0%	1%	2%
Low HDI	Benin	43%	39%	3%	5%	2%	4%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Burkina Faso	37%	38%	3%	4%	3%	11%	0%	1%	1%	1%
	Côte d'Ivoire	35%	39%	5%	5%	6%	1%	2%	4%	0%	1%
	Gambia	39%	33%	15%	2%	3%	4%	1%	1%	2%	0%
	Guinea	40%	40%	7%	1%	4%	4%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Lesotho	73%	14%	3%	0%	0%	2%	4%	1%	2%	0%
	Liberia	29%	38%	13%	9%	3%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%
	Madagascar	59%	17%	5%	4%	1%	4%	1%	3%	1%	1%
	Malawi	40%	51%	1%	2%	3%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%
	Mali	26%	57%	1%	1%	2%	3%	1%	3%	1%	3%
	Mozambique	39%	26%	3%	6%	5%	2%	3%	1%	4%	4%
	Niger	29%	56%	2%	1%	4%	6%	0%	0%	1%	1%
	Nigeria	35%	31%	6%	5%	10%	2%	2%	1%	5%	4%
	Senegal	54%	26%	7%	2%	5%	2%	1%	0%	1%	2%
	Sierra Leone	36%	39%	10%	5%	3%	3%	1%	0%	1%	1%
	Sudan	30%	51%	2%	3%	4%	2%	4%	0%	2%	1%
	Tanzania	34%	29%	3%	10%	15%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
	Togo	35%	47%	3%	2%	2%	1%	4%	4%	1%	1%
	Uganda	50%	20%	2%	10%	9%	1%	4%	1%	1%	0%
Zimbabwe	63%	27%	2%	0%	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%	0%	
	Average	44%	29%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
		No. 1	No. 2	No. 3							

First, respondents in nearly all countries do cite either finding work or escaping poverty and economic hardship as their top two reasons for considering emigration, although there is variation about which reason is cited more often: Finding work is the top reason in 23 countries, and escaping poverty is the top reason in 10 more, with the two tied for importance in Guinea (40% each).

However, there are three exceptions to this pattern. In Mauritius, Namibia, and Zambia, escaping poverty/economic hardship is not cited as one of the two most important reasons for leaving. In Mauritius (a high-HDI country), only 8% offer this response (the fourth-most-common response), and in Namibia and Zambia (both medium-HDI countries), it is the third-most-frequent response, cited by 12% and 14% of respondents, respectively. In Mauritius, seeking democracy or protection for political or religious freedoms (10%) and joining or accompanying family members (9%) are the second- and third-most-cited reasons for emigrating, after finding work. In Namibia, fully 18% say they may leave to pursue an education, a reason that was also cited by exceptionally high numbers in Gabon (15%), the Gambia (15%), Liberia (13%), Morocco (10%), Sierra Leone (10%), and Cameroon (10%). And in Zambia, 17% would be looking for better business opportunities, a concern that also ranked highly for Tanzanians (15%) and Nigerians (10%).

At the individual level, we see that young people and men are more likely than their elders and women to cite finding work as the most important reason for considering emigrating (Figure 14). Among respondents aged 18-35 years, about half (45%-47%) say finding a job would motivate them to leave their country, compared to about four in 10 (39%-43%) of those aged 36-55 and about one in three (30%-35%) of those aged 56 and above. Seven percentage points separate men (47%) from women (40%) on this indicator.

Figure 14: Top two reasons for considering migration | by socio-demographic group | 34 countries | 2016/2018



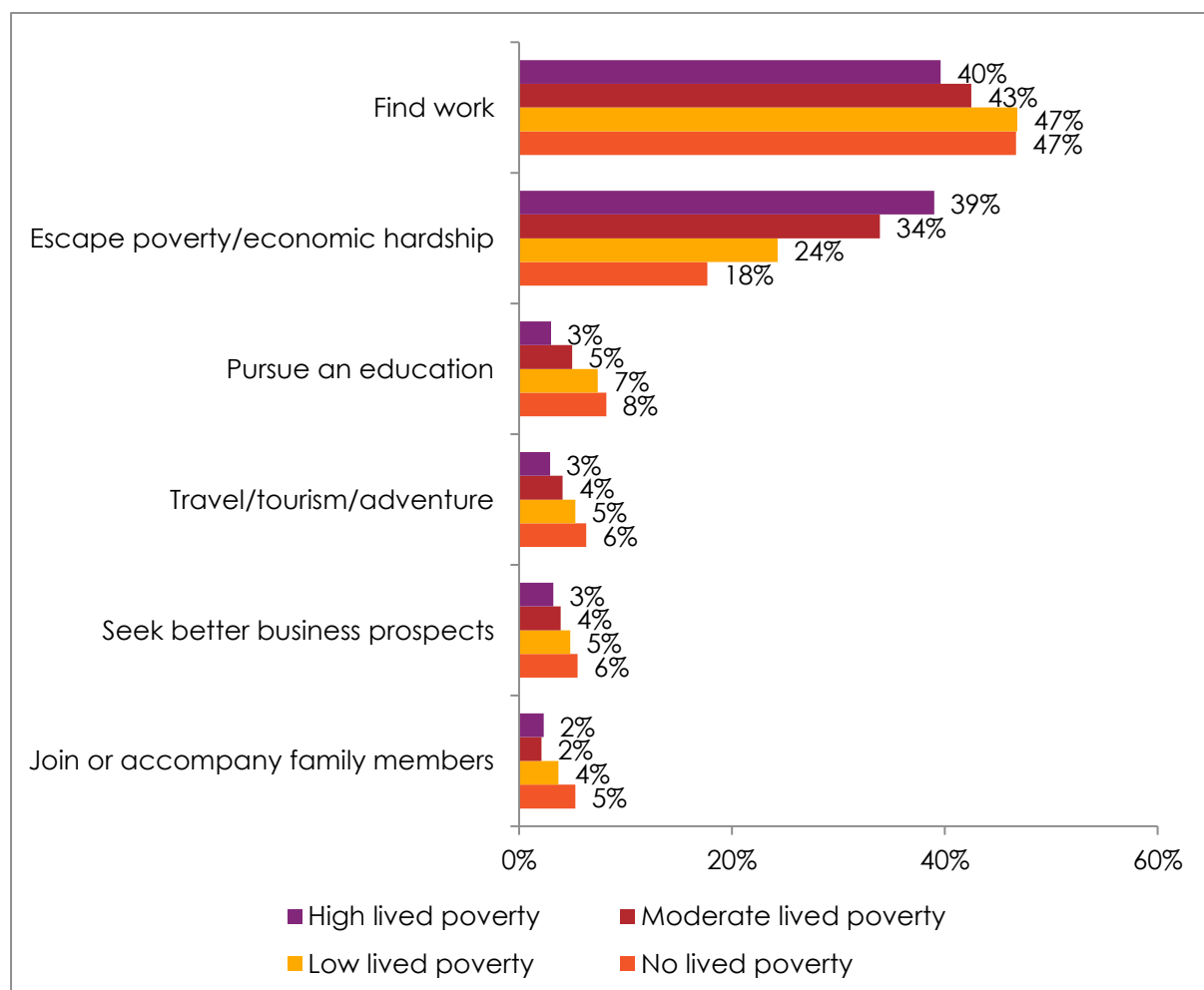
Excluding those who said they had “not at all” considered emigration, respondents were asked: What is the most important reason why you would consider moving from [your country]?

Potential emigrants with some formal education (42%-47%) are also more likely to cite work as their main reason than are those with no formal education (37%). Rural and urban residents are equally likely to be motivated by hopes for employment.

The quest to escape poverty is more often the main motivating factor for respondents with no formal education (44%) than for their more-educated compatriots (24%-34%), and is cited by more rural (33%) than urban (26%) respondents.

The sharpest differences in motivation, though, arise with respect to the level of economic hardship individuals actually experience in their lives. We saw (Figure 4) that there were not large differences in the overall interest in emigrating between individuals who experienced no lived poverty (35% considering emigration) and those who experienced high levels of deprivation (37%). But there are quite substantial differences in their stated motivations (Figure 15). Individuals at the highest levels of lived poverty are more than twice as likely to indicate that harsh economic conditions are the main reason they would consider emigrating (39% vs. 18%), while those who experienced no economic hardship ("no lived poverty") are substantially more likely to cite a search for work as a main motivator (47% vs. 40%) and at least twice as likely to cite reasons such as pursuing an education (8% vs. 3%), travel or tourism (6% vs. 3%), seeking better business prospects (6% vs. 3%), or joining or accompanying family members (5% vs. 2%).

Figure 15: Reasons for considering migration | by poverty level | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Excluding those who said they had "not at all" considered emigration, respondents were asked: What is the most important reason why you would consider moving from [your country]?

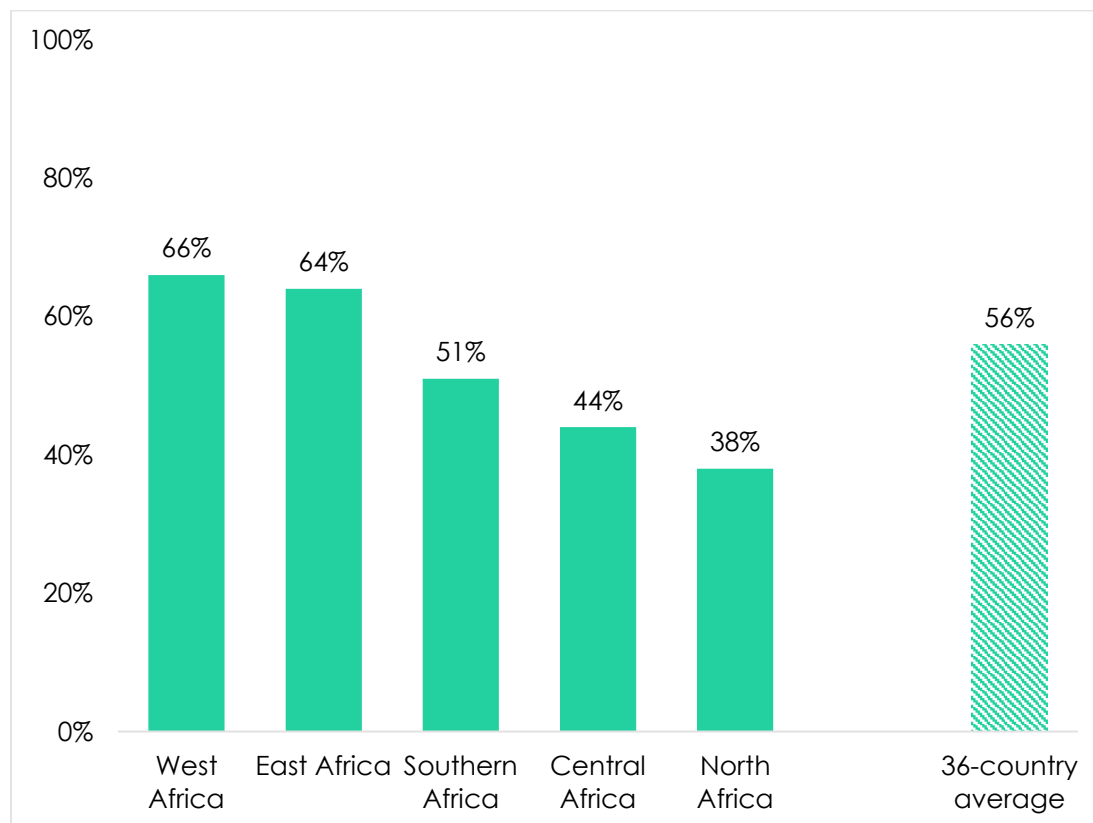
Views on cross-border movement

In line with high interest in intra-regional migration and the pursuit of economic opportunity, a majority of Africans favour free cross-border movement within their region. But they also say that crossing borders is difficult.

In Afrobarometer's Round 6 survey (2014/2015), 56% of respondents across 36 African countries said they "agree" or "agree very strongly" that people should be able to move freely across borders in order to work or trade in other countries in the region. Regionally, the call for citizens to be allowed to move freely across international borders is endorsed most strongly in West Africa (66%) and East Africa (64%) and is least popular in North Africa (38%) and Central Africa (44%) (Figure 16).

More than three-fourths of citizens support free cross-border movement in Burkina Faso (81%), Benin (78%), and Kenya (76%). But in 15 countries, fewer than half of citizens agree. The view that governments should limit cross-border movement to protect citizens against foreign job-seekers and low-priced goods is strongest in Namibia (60%), Gabon (60%), Tunisia (58%), Botswana (57%), and Madagascar (51%) (Figure 17).

Figure 16: Support for free movement across borders | by region | 36 countries | 2014/2015



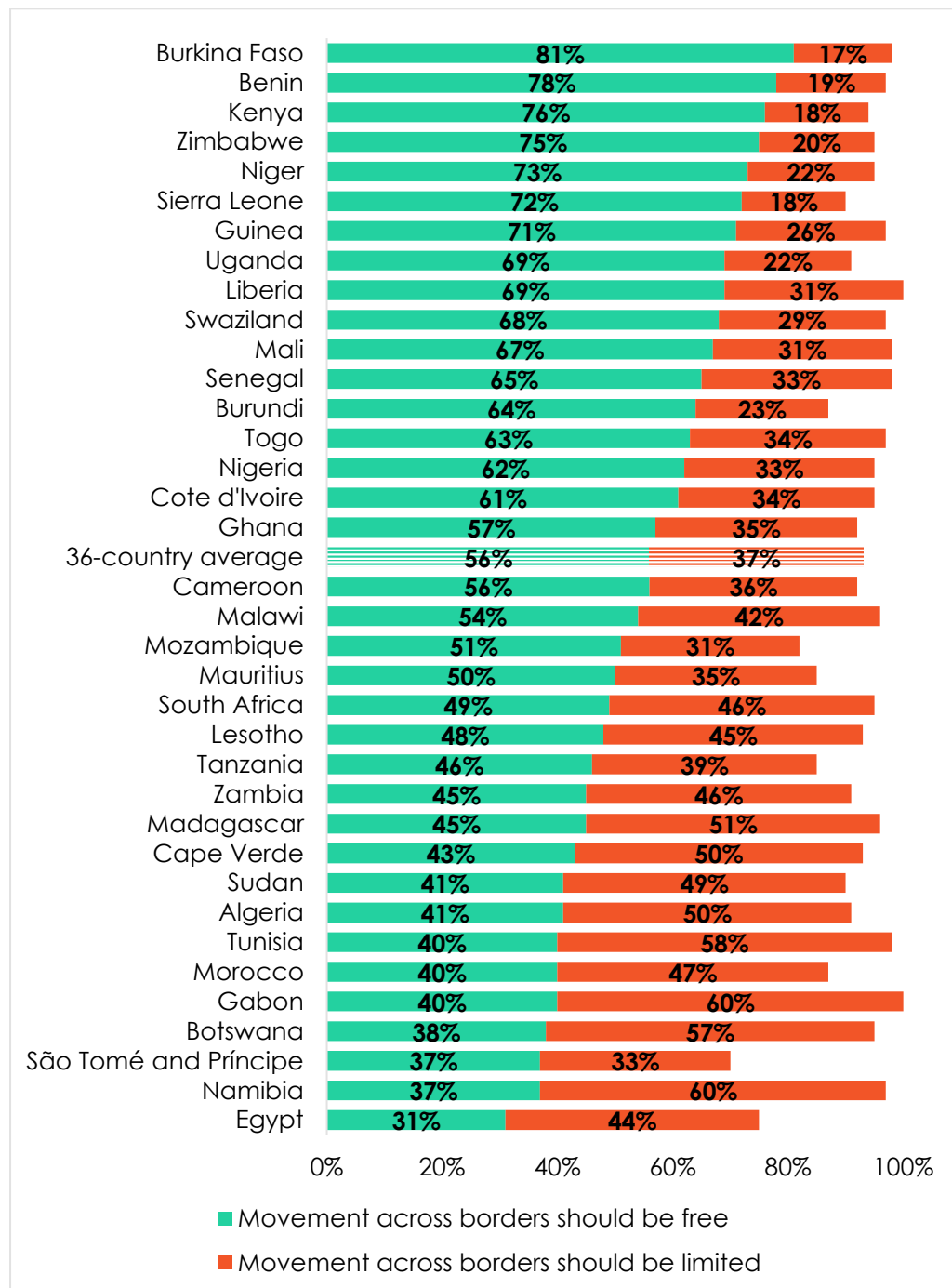
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your views?

Statement 1: People living in [your region of Africa] should be able to move freely across international borders in order to trade or work in other countries.

Statement 2: Because foreign migrants take away jobs, and foreign traders sell their goods at very cheap prices, governments should protect their own citizens and limit the cross-border movement of people and goods.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" that people should be able to move freely across borders)

Figure 17: Views on free movement across borders | 36 countries | 2014/2015



(% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with each statement)

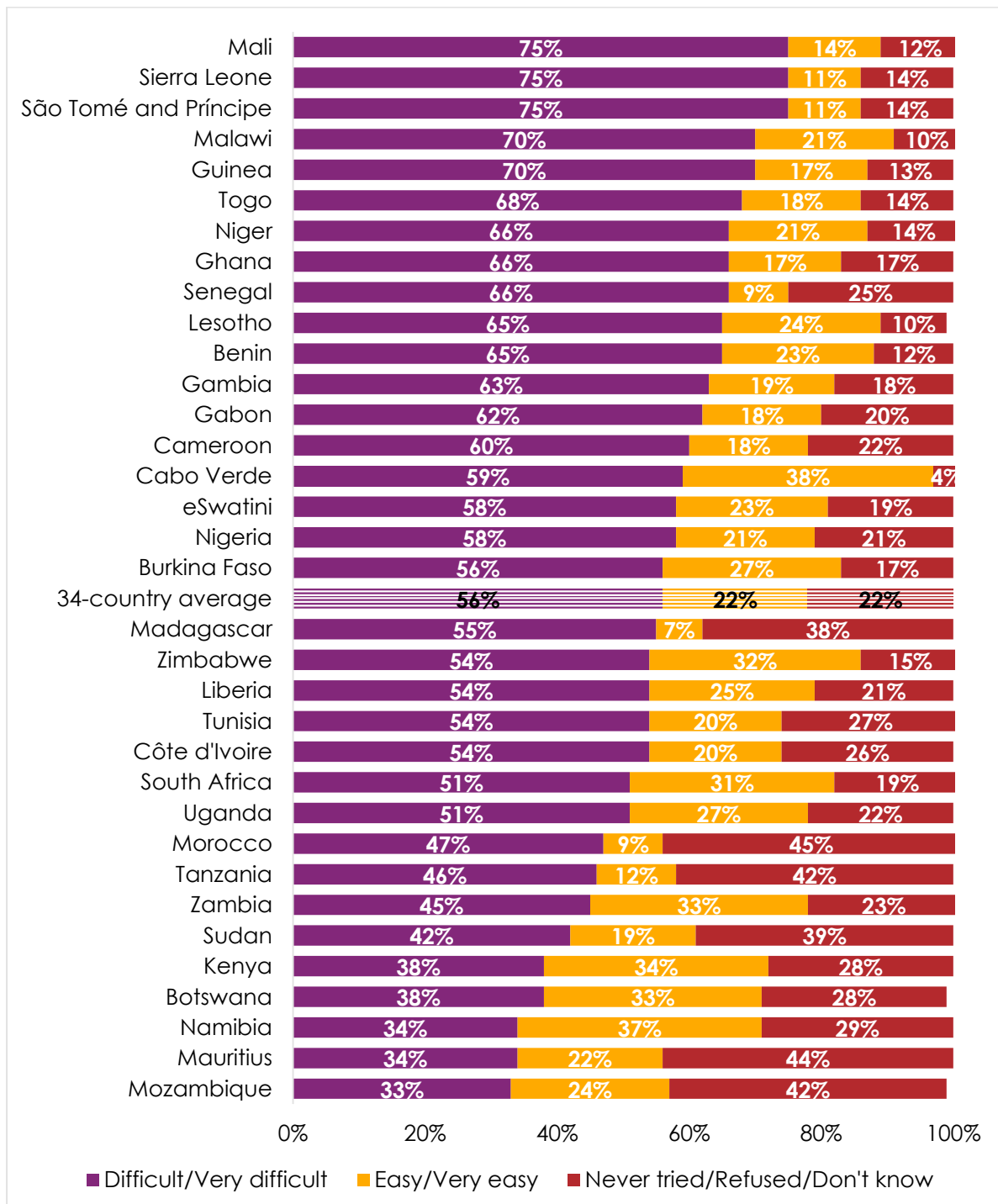
While a majority of Africans want free cross-border movement, the same proportion (56%) say that in fact it is "difficult" or "very difficult" to cross international borders in their region in order to work or trade. In the Round 7 survey, only two in 10 (22%) say cross-border movement is "easy" or "very easy."

At the country level, three-fourths (75%) of citizens in Mali, Sierra Leone, and São Tomé and Príncipe see it as difficult to cross borders (Figure 18). Only nine of the 34 countries don't show majorities that consider border crossing difficult, led by Mozambique (33%) and Mauritius

(34%), and Namibia is the only country where more people think it's "easy" than "difficult" (37% to 34%).

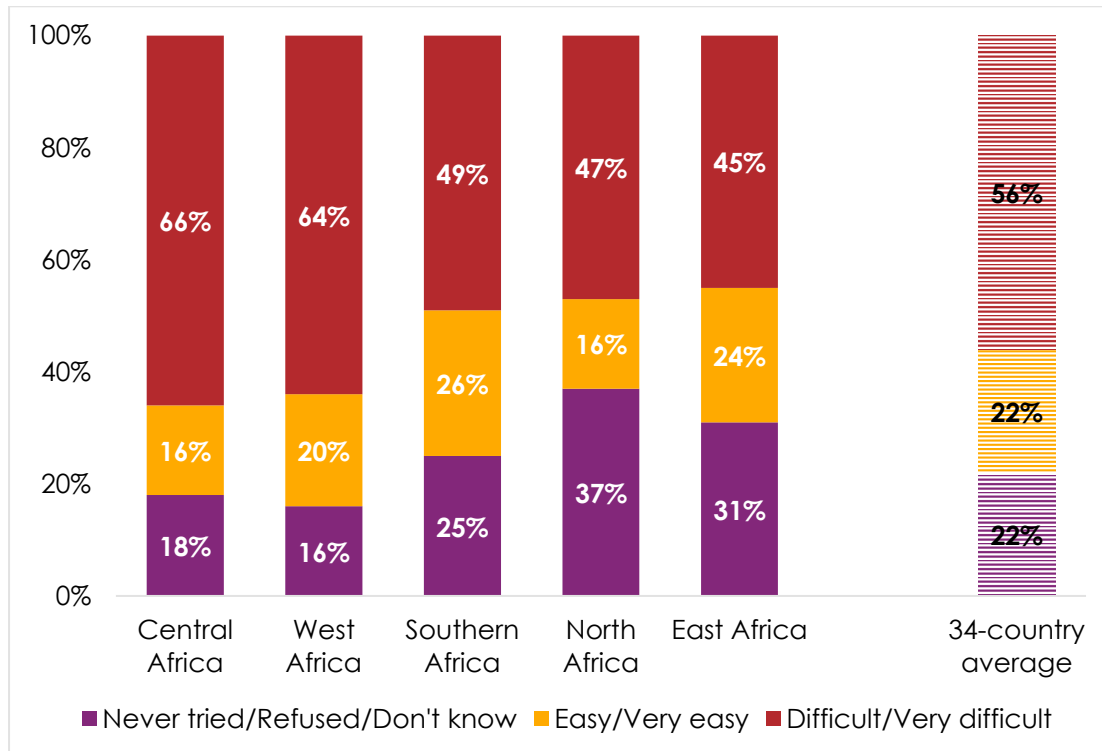
Central and West Africans are most likely to describe crossing borders as difficult (66% and 64%, respectively). Fewer than half of Southern (49%), North (47%), and East Africans (45%) see border crossing as difficult, though they still outnumber their compatriots who see it as easy (Figure 19).

Figure 18: Difficulty in crossing international borders | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how easy or difficult is it for people in [your region] to cross international borders in order to work or trade in other countries, or haven't you heard enough to say?

Figure 19: Difficulty in crossing international borders | by region | 34 countries
 | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, how easy or difficult is it for people in [your region] to cross international borders in order to work or trade in other countries, or haven't you heard enough to say?*

Conclusion

A sampling of the views of ordinary citizens in 34 African countries appears to confirm widespread concerns about the potential scale of out-migration. More than one-third of Africans have at least considered emigrating to another country, including nearly one in five who have given it a lot of thought. And while the proportion of citizens who are actually making plans to move is far lower, this still represents very substantial numbers of potential emigrants in absolute terms.

The profiles of those who consider leaving, and the reasons they give for contemplating this radical option, are revealing. While it is commonly assumed that most migrants are simply a country's most impoverished citizens, Afrobarometer data show that – by large margins – youth and education are far more strongly correlated with interest in emigration than poverty. While we see a mix of both “push” and “pull” factors in the reasons that people cite for considering emigration, the youthful, educated profile of the pool of potential emigrants suggests that the pull of *opportunity* is the key factor here, rather than the push of poverty. Poverty has more impact on shaping the particular motivations individuals cite for seeking greener pastures, but it does not appear to significantly affect the overall desire to do so.

These findings provide some appreciation of the importance of stemming the tide of migrants within and out of Africa – not just for destination countries that are concerned about their ability to absorb large numbers of immigrants, but also for the countries of origin, which are at risk of losing some of their most educated, motivated, and creative young people. In large numbers, Africans are considering – and even taking concrete steps toward – moving abroad, whether within their regional neighbourhood or across the globe. They are overwhelmingly motivated by a hunger for jobs and economic opportunity that they lack at

home. In response, African governments must continue to grow their economies and expand opportunities for gainful employment and secure livelihoods *at home* in order to ensure that they continue to benefit from the productivity and creativity of their youngest, most motivated, and most productive citizens.

Further, in light of strong popular interest in intra-African migration, it is telling that while a majority of Africans demand free movement across international borders within their region, the same proportion find it difficult to cross borders to work or trade in another country. African leaders have little control over stringent entry rules for the European Union and the United States, but they can, in the spirit of integration, act on citizens' call for the removal of barriers to intra-African migration.

Do your own analysis of Afrobarometer data – on any question, for any country and survey round. It's easy and free at www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis.

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Appendix

Table A.1: Afrobarometer Round 7 fieldwork dates and previous survey rounds

Country	Round 7 fieldwork	Previous survey rounds
Benin	Dec 2016-Jan 2017	2005, 2008, 2011, 2014
Botswana	June-July 2017	1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014
Burkina Faso	Oct 2017	2008, 2012, 2015
Cabo Verde	Nov-Dec 2017	2002, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014
Cameroon	May 2018	2013, 2015
Côte d'Ivoire	Dec 2016-Jan 2017	2013, 2014
eSwatini (Swaziland)	March 2018	2013, 2015
Gabon	Nov 2017	2015
Gambia	July-August 2018	N/A
Ghana	Sept 2017	1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014
Guinea	May 2017	2013, 2015
Kenya	Sept-Oct 2016	2003, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014
Lesotho	Nov-Dec 2017	2000, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014
Liberia	June-July 2018	2008, 2012, 2015
Madagascar	Jan-Feb 2018	2005, 2008, 2013, 2015
Malawi	Dec 2016-Jan 2017	1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014
Mali	Feb 2017	2001, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2013, 2014
Mauritius	Oct-Nov 2017	2012, 2014
Morocco	May 2018	2013, 2015
Mozambique	July-August 2018	2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2015
Namibia	Nov 2017	1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014
Niger	April-May 2018	2013, 2015
Nigeria	April-May 2017	2000, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2013, 2015
São Tomé and Príncipe	July 2018	2015
Senegal	Dec 2017	2002, 2005, 2008, 2013, 2014
Sierra Leone	July 2018	2012, 2015
South Africa	August-Sept 2018	2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2015
Sudan	July-August 2018	2013, 2015
Tanzania	April-June 2017	2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014
Togo	Nov 2017	2012, 2014
Tunisia	April-May 2018	2013, 2015
Uganda	Dec 2016-Jan 2017	2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2015
Zambia	April 2017	1999, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2014
Zimbabwe	Jan-Feb 2017	1999, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014

Table A.2: Considered emigrating | by country, age group, and level of education | 34 countries | 2016/2018

Country		Age group						Level of education			
		18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56-65 years	66+ years	No formal education	Primary	Secondary	Post-secondary
Benin	A lot	27%	22%	15%	12%	13%	16%	15%	21%	26%	18%
	Somewhat	9%	11%	13%	5%	5%	8%	7%	11%	12%	9%
	A little bit	13%	9%	9%	7%	7%	5%	7%	9%	13%	11%
	Not at all	49%	58%	63%	77%	74%	71%	71%	59%	48%	57%
Botswana	A lot	19%	21%	15%	7%	7%	1%	6%	7%	16%	26%
	Somewhat	6%	4%	3%	10%	3%	-	2%	5%	4%	7%
	A little bit	14%	11%	8%	4%	3%	3%	1%	4%	8%	18%
	Not at all	60%	64%	73%	78%	87%	91%	92%	84%	73%	49%
Burkina Faso	A lot	10%	13%	7%	8%	6%	4%	7%	11%	14%	21%
	Somewhat	12%	7%	3%	4%	-	-	4%	7%	10%	11%
	A little bit	10%	13%	6%	6%	4%	7%	8%	13%	11%	10%
	Not at all	67%	67%	85%	82%	89%	89%	81%	69%	65%	58%
Cabo Verde	A lot	53%	46%	32%	23%	23%	14%	16%	34%	43%	44%
	Somewhat	12%	15%	17%	12%	8%	8%	6%	14%	14%	11%
	A little bit	7%	6%	8%	10%	7%	4%	5%	6%	9%	5%
	Not at all	27%	32%	42%	53%	62%	72%	72%	45%	34%	40%
Cameroon	A lot	18%	15%	12%	9%	5%	5%	1%	8%	17%	19%
	Somewhat	14%	16%	13%	11%	3%	-	5%	7%	13%	23%
	A little bit	18%	12%	12%	11%	4%	11%	4%	10%	16%	17%
	Not at all	49%	56%	63%	67%	87%	82%	89%	76%	53%	39%
Côte d'Ivoire	A lot	13%	12%	11%	4%	3%	3%	5%	9%	15%	12%
	Somewhat	10%	11%	7%	7%	9%	7%	6%	5%	11%	17%
	A little bit	12%	12%	10%	12%	7%	3%	8%	11%	11%	18%
	Not at all	65%	65%	71%	75%	80%	86%	81%	75%	62%	51%
eSwatini	A lot	20%	17%	16%	9%	2%	4%	6%	8%	15%	26%
	Somewhat	13%	13%	13%	4%	7%	3%	5%	9%	13%	9%
	A little bit	9%	8%	4%	4%	7%	1%	1%	4%	8%	9%

Country		Age group						Level of education			
		18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56-65 years	66+ years	No formal education	Primary	Secondary	Post-secondary
	Not at all	57%	62%	67%	84%	84%	92%	88%	79%	64%	56%
Gabon	A lot	30%	19%	17%	9%	10%	5%	12%	7%	19%	26%
	Somewhat	14%	12%	9%	9%	12%	5%	12%	8%	10%	16%
	A little bit	13%	14%	16%	9%	3%	5%	-	9%	13%	16%
	Not at all	43%	54%	58%	72%	75%	86%	76%	75%	58%	42%
Gambia	A lot	39%	31%	25%	21%	12%	18%	26%	31%	34%	27%
	Somewhat	10%	11%	10%	6%	5%	2%	6%	6%	11%	14%
	A little bit	19%	22%	15%	14%	16%	5%	15%	17%	20%	19%
	Not at all	29%	34%	50%	59%	67%	75%	52%	44%	34%	38%
Ghana	A lot	27%	26%	15%	11%	7%	9%	8%	18%	24%	23%
	Somewhat	13%	9%	9%	4%	5%	1%	4%	7%	11%	13%
	A little bit	15%	15%	11%	9%	7%	3%	10%	9%	13%	17%
	Not at all	44%	49%	65%	75%	81%	84%	77%	65%	53%	47%
Guinea	A lot	29%	15%	16%	9%	4%	3%	11%	12%	28%	22%
	Somewhat	8%	6%	11%	8%	6%	2%	7%	7%	9%	7%
	A little bit	18%	16%	10%	8%	9%	3%	10%	20%	11%	14%
	Not at all	45%	63%	63%	75%	81%	92%	72%	60%	52%	57%
Kenya	A lot	15%	16%	7%	9%	9%	4%	8%	8%	13%	23%
	Somewhat	10%	11%	13%	6%	9%	8%	9%	9%	12%	11%
	A little bit	14%	12%	11%	9%	3%	6%	2%	9%	13%	16%
	Not at all	60%	60%	67%	76%	79%	76%	78%	73%	61%	50%
Lesotho	A lot	29%	26%	20%	18%	14%	8%	19%	17%	24%	24%
	Somewhat	13%	16%	14%	11%	9%	5%	10%	10%	15%	14%
	A little bit	6%	8%	8%	5%	3%	2%	4%	5%	5%	9%
	Not at all	53%	49%	58%	66%	74%	84%	66%	68%	56%	52%
Liberia	A lot	34%	30%	31%	17%	7%	4%	13%	29%	33%	30%
	Somewhat	9%	8%	4%	8%	5%	12%	5%	8%	7%	8%
	A little bit	15%	15%	11%	14%	7%	4%	13%	12%	15%	15%
	Not at all	42%	47%	53%	62%	80%	81%	68%	52%	45%	48%

Country		Age group						Level of education			
		18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56-65 years	66+ years	No formal education	Primary	Secondary	Post-secondary
Madagascar	A lot	6%	2%	3%	3%	1%	-	1%	1%	5%	10%
	Somewhat	2%	2%	3%	0%	3%	-	1%	1%	2%	4%
	A little bit	12%	12%	6%	6%	6%	1%	1%	6%	12%	17%
	Not at all	80%	84%	87%	90%	89%	99%	96%	90%	81%	69%
Malawi	A lot	34%	28%	29%	21%	17%	13%	13%	27%	35%	39%
	Somewhat	7%	8%	11%	7%	2%	6%	4%	7%	13%	11%
	A little bit	5%	12%	10%	12%	3%	7%	8%	8%	10%	11%
	Not at all	53%	51%	50%	60%	78%	74%	75%	58%	41%	39%
Mali	A lot	13%	16%	12%	2%	8%	3%	9%	11%	10%	24%
	Somewhat	3%	4%	4%	5%	3%	1%	3%	3%	8%	3%
	A little bit	10%	5%	6%	6%	1%	1%	4%	10%	11%	9%
	Not at all	74%	75%	78%	87%	89%	94%	84%	75%	71%	64%
Mauritius	A lot	17%	9%	5%	2%	6%	3%	-	4%	7%	13%
	Somewhat	10%	11%	5%	3%	4%	7%	-	5%	7%	8%
	A little bit	16%	15%	17%	8%	12%	5%	-	8%	15%	17%
	Not at all	57%	58%	73%	84%	76%	83%	94%	81%	70%	61%
Morocco	A lot	23%	16%	8%	7%	3%	2%	3%	9%	23%	16%
	Somewhat	13%	11%	6%	3%	3%	-	2%	6%	8%	16%
	A little bit	21%	17%	17%	8%	5%	7%	6%	14%	18%	23%
	Not at all	43%	56%	69%	82%	86%	90%	87%	72%	51%	45%
Mozambique	A lot	14%	11%	7%	7%	8%	3%	9%	9%	13%	10%
	Somewhat	10%	12%	9%	5%	3%	5%	6%	10%	9%	18%
	A little bit	10%	8%	11%	8%	5%	3%	3%	9%	10%	14%
	Not at all	61%	58%	63%	79%	84%	87%	68%	66%	64%	54%
Namibia	A lot	12%	8%	6%	4%	6%	2%	1%	7%	7%	14%
	Somewhat	6%	6%	7%	6%	6%	-	4%	7%	4%	8%
	A little bit	11%	10%	5%	4%	6%	5%	5%	4%	8%	11%
	Not at all	70%	76%	80%	86%	83%	93%	90%	83%	80%	66%
Niger	A lot	13%	15%	12%	10%	6%	5%	9%	17%	22%	-

Country		Age group						Level of education			
		18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56-65 years	66+ years	No formal education	Primary	Secondary	Post-secondary
	Somewhat	10%	5%	7%	7%	10%	5%	6%	14%	7%	-
	A little bit	9%	7%	10%	7%	9%	3%	8%	6%	14%	-
	Not at all	68%	73%	71%	76%	74%	87%	77%	63%	57%	100%
Nigeria	A lot	14%	10%	9%	8%	2%	3%	5%	5%	11%	16%
	Somewhat	9%	8%	6%	13%	8%	6%	3%	10%	8%	12%
	A little bit	19%	15%	13%	11%	18%	3%	12%	13%	17%	17%
	Not at all	57%	66%	71%	68%	72%	87%	79%	71%	63%	56%
São Tomé and Príncipe	A lot	44%	38%	35%	23%	15%	21%	14%	29%	38%	36%
	Somewhat	12%	14%	11%	9%	6%	8%	-	6%	14%	15%
	A little bit	9%	6%	9%	4%	9%	8%	-	5%	10%	7%
	Not at all	35%	42%	44%	64%	70%	64%	86%	58%	38%	42%
Senegal	A lot	35%	25%	21%	17%	6%	9%	23%	24%	26%	22%
	Somewhat	9%	13%	8%	8%	7%	3%	7%	11%	10%	18%
	A little bit	10%	7%	8%	3%	10%	5%	6%	8%	10%	10%
	Not at all	45%	54%	63%	71%	76%	83%	65%	57%	53%	51%
Sierra Leone	A lot	36%	34%	36%	27%	27%	28%	20%	32%	46%	35%
	Somewhat	8%	10%	8%	6%	5%	6%	6%	7%	9%	12%
	A little bit	13%	18%	14%	15%	13%	13%	14%	20%	14%	17%
	Not at all	42%	37%	40%	50%	52%	53%	58%	41%	30%	35%
South Africa	A lot	12%	13%	10%	9%	5%	4%	7%	3%	11%	14%
	Somewhat	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%	4%	10%	3%	4%	9%
	A little bit	19%	15%	12%	13%	8%	5%	8%	10%	13%	20%
	Not at all	58%	64%	68%	70%	78%	84%	71%	80%	68%	56%
Sudan	A lot	28%	38%	24%	23%	8%	5%	18%	22%	24%	35%
	Somewhat	11%	7%	10%	7%	7%	-	6%	5%	11%	9%
	A little bit	15%	13%	13%	7%	14%	5%	18%	9%	11%	14%
	Not at all	46%	41%	54%	63%	71%	89%	57%	63%	54%	41%
Tanzania	A lot	11%	7%	5%	2%	6%	2%	2%	5%	11%	21%
	Somewhat	8%	7%	5%	2%	-	3%	1%	4%	10%	5%

Country		Age group						Level of education			
		18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56-65 years	66+ years	No formal education	Primary	Secondary	Post-secondary
	A little bit	3%	4%	3%	3%	-	-	1%	3%	6%	5%
	Not at all	78%	82%	88%	93%	94%	95%	97%	88%	73%	69%
Togo	A lot	33%	34%	34%	22%	14%	6%	28%	26%	32%	34%
	Somewhat	13%	12%	13%	8%	7%	2%	3%	8%	13%	21%
	A little bit	19%	13%	12%	13%	8%	2%	12%	12%	15%	11%
	Not at all	35%	42%	41%	58%	71%	90%	56%	55%	39%	35%
Tunisia	A lot	42%	35%	22%	15%	7%	4%	5%	18%	27%	34%
	Somewhat	10%	8%	4%	4%	3%	3%	1%	3%	8%	11%
	A little bit	11%	8%	8%	2%	2%	-	2%	5%	7%	8%
	Not at all	37%	48%	66%	78%	87%	94%	92%	74%	59%	47%
Uganda	A lot	19%	10%	10%	6%	6%	-	3%	7%	18%	22%
	Somewhat	13%	15%	11%	14%	4%	2%	5%	11%	17%	12%
	A little bit	13%	11%	10%	12%	12%	6%	7%	11%	11%	18%
	Not at all	54%	63%	68%	68%	78%	91%	85%	69%	54%	48%
Zambia	A lot	15%	12%	11%	10%	4%	-	6%	6%	13%	26%
	Somewhat	8%	6%	4%	1%	-	3%	1%	3%	8%	8%
	A little bit	11%	11%	7%	6%	4%	-	3%	4%	11%	22%
	Not at all	66%	70%	78%	83%	92%	97%	90%	87%	68%	44%
Zimbabwe	A lot	35%	27%	19%	16%	2%	7%	4%	11%	27%	30%
	Somewhat	14%	20%	14%	11%	2%	1%	7%	7%	14%	21%
	A little bit	14%	11%	19%	9%	6%	1%	3%	7%	14%	13%
	Not at all	38%	42%	48%	64%	90%	91%	87%	75%	45%	36%

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