

Accra, Ghana
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News release

Many Africans experience difficulty and disrespect in accessing public services, new Afrobarometer Pan-Africa Profile shows

Many Africans find it challenging to access public services, with significant minorities reporting disrespectful treatment by service providers, the latest Afrobarometer Pan-Africa Profile shows.

Based on data from 39 African countries, the new report focuses on the experiences of citizens who sought services from public health facilities, public schools, government agencies that provide identity documents, and/or the police during the 12 months preceding the surveys.

Large pluralities say it was difficult to obtain an identity document, police assistance, or medical care. And more than a third each say they were treated with a lack of respect by government agencies and public hospitals or clinics.

Youth and poor citizens are particularly likely to report difficulty in obtaining services as well as disrespectful treatment.

Analysis of the data also shows that experiencing a lack of respect by public service providers is correlated with more negative views of the government and of democracy itself.

Key findings

- On average across 39 countries, substantial proportions of the adult population say they had contact with a public health care facility (58%), a public school (34%), and/or a government agency that provides identification documents such as a birth certificate, driver's licence, passport, or permit (33%). More than four in 10 (45%) say they requested police assistance, encountered the police in other situations, or both.
- Among those who report having contact with these public service providers:
 - Almost half say they found it "difficult" or "very difficult" to obtain an identity document (49%), police assistance (46%), or health services (45%) (Figure 1).
 - More than one-third say they were treated with little or no respect by ID authorities (39%) and medical staff (36%) (Figure 2).
 - A similar proportion (34%) say police officers in their country rarely or never "operate in a professional manner and respect the rights of all citizens."
 - Youth and poor citizens are particularly likely to report difficulty in obtaining services as well as disrespectful treatment by service providers (Figure 3).
- Respondents who felt disrespected by public service providers are more likely to distrust and disapprove of their elected leaders, more likely to be dissatisfied with the way democracy is working in their country, and less likely to support a democratic form of government (Figure 4).



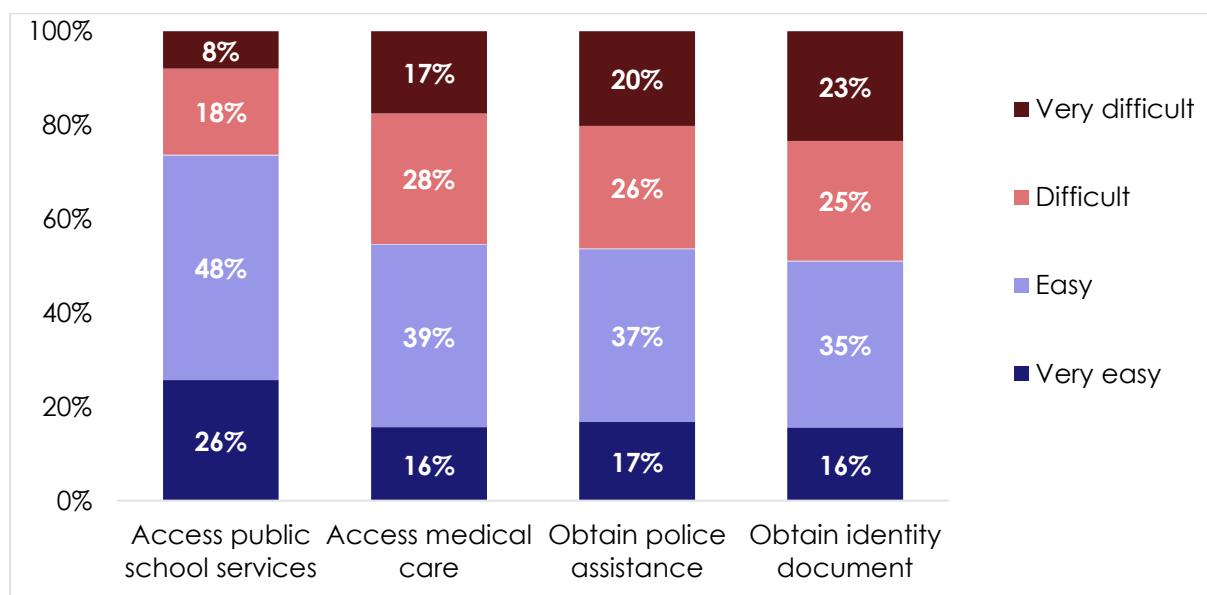
Afrobarometer surveys

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) cover 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.

Charts

Figure 1: Ease of accessing public services | 39 countries | 2021/2023



Respondents who said they sought key public services during the previous year were asked:

How easy or difficult was it to obtain the services you needed from teachers or school officials?

How easy or difficult was it to obtain the medical care or services you needed?

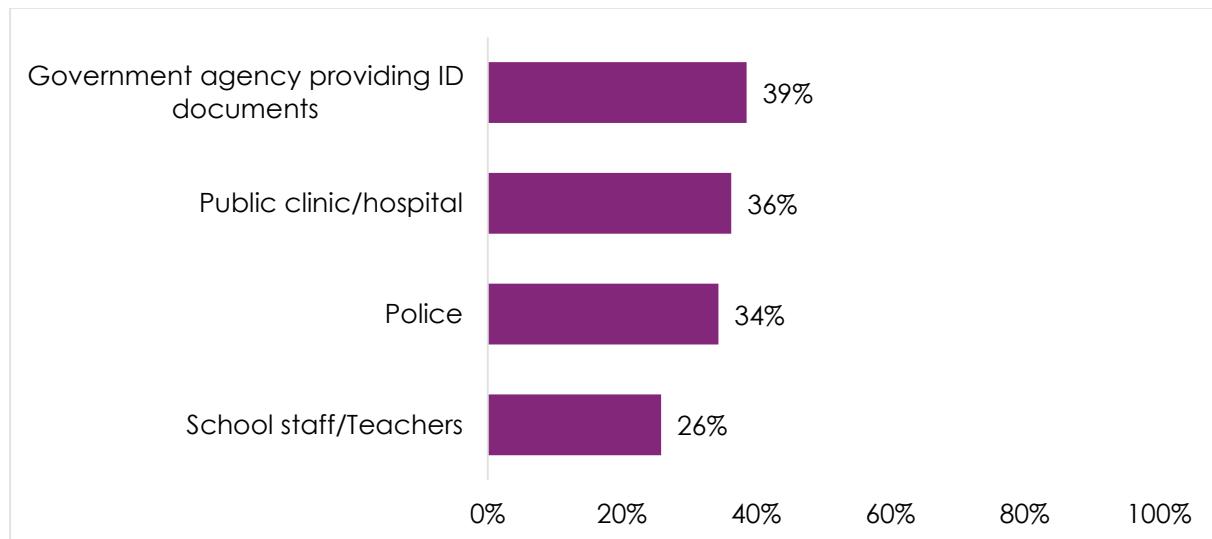
How easy or difficult was it to obtain the document you needed?

How easy or difficult was it to obtain the [police] assistance you needed?

(Respondents who had not sought these services are excluded.)



Figure 2: Experienced lack of respect by public service providers | 39 countries | 2021/2023



Respondents who sought key public services during the previous year were asked:

In general, when dealing with health workers and clinic or hospital staff, how much do you feel that they treat you with respect?

In general, when dealing with government officials to obtain documents, how much do you feel that they treat you with respect?

In general, when dealing with teachers and school officials, how much do you feel that they treat you with respect?

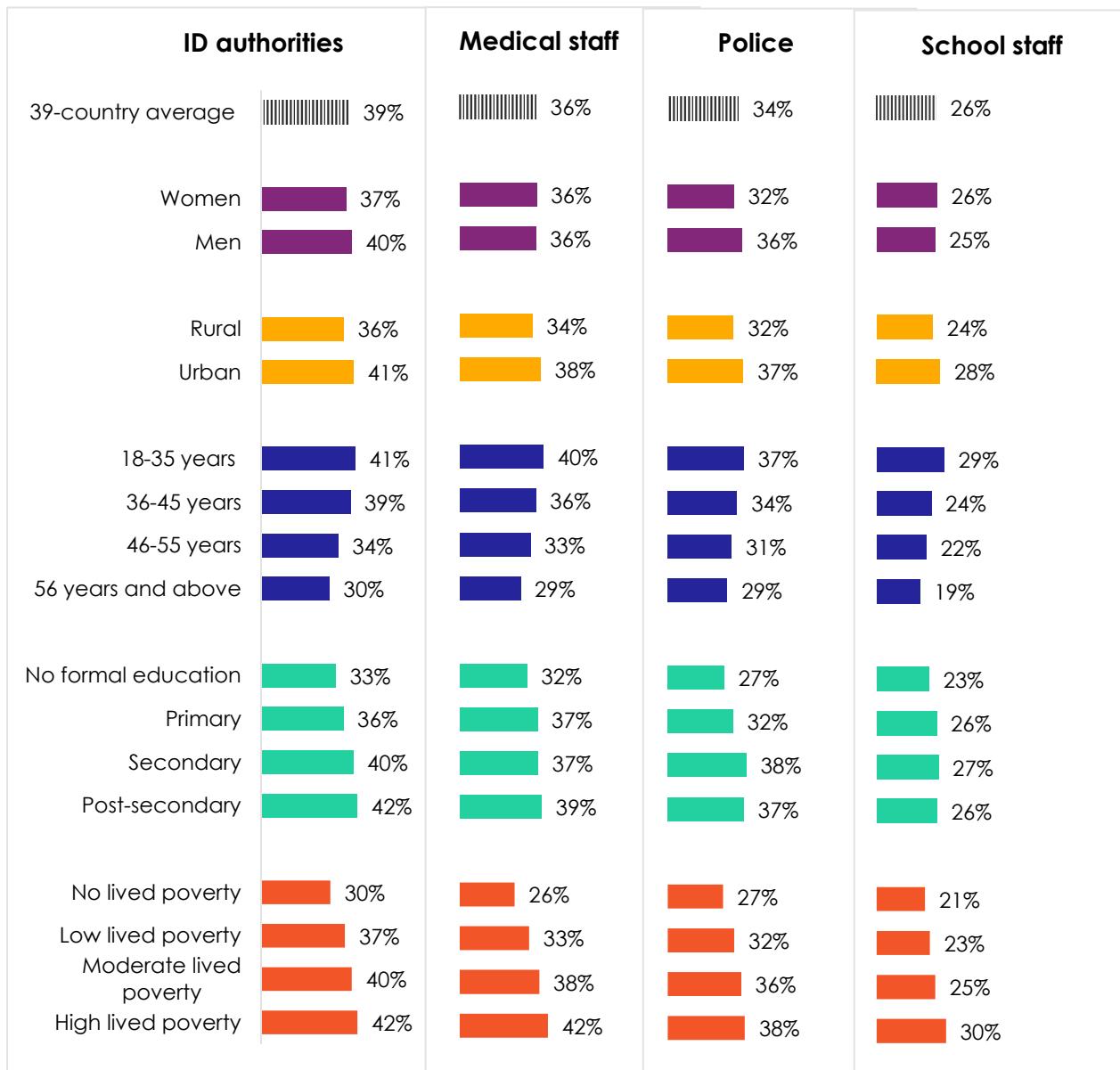
(% who say "not at all" or "a little bit")

(Respondents who had not sought these services are excluded.)

All respondents were asked: *In your opinion, how often do the police in [country] operate in a professional manner and respect the rights of all citizens? (% who say "rarely" or "never")*



Figure 3: Experienced lack of respect by public service providers | by demographic group | 39 countries | 2021/2023



Respondents who sought key public services during the previous year were asked:

In general, when dealing with health workers and clinic or hospital staff, how much do you feel that they treat you with respect?

In general, when dealing with government officials to obtain documents, how much do you feel that they treat you with respect?

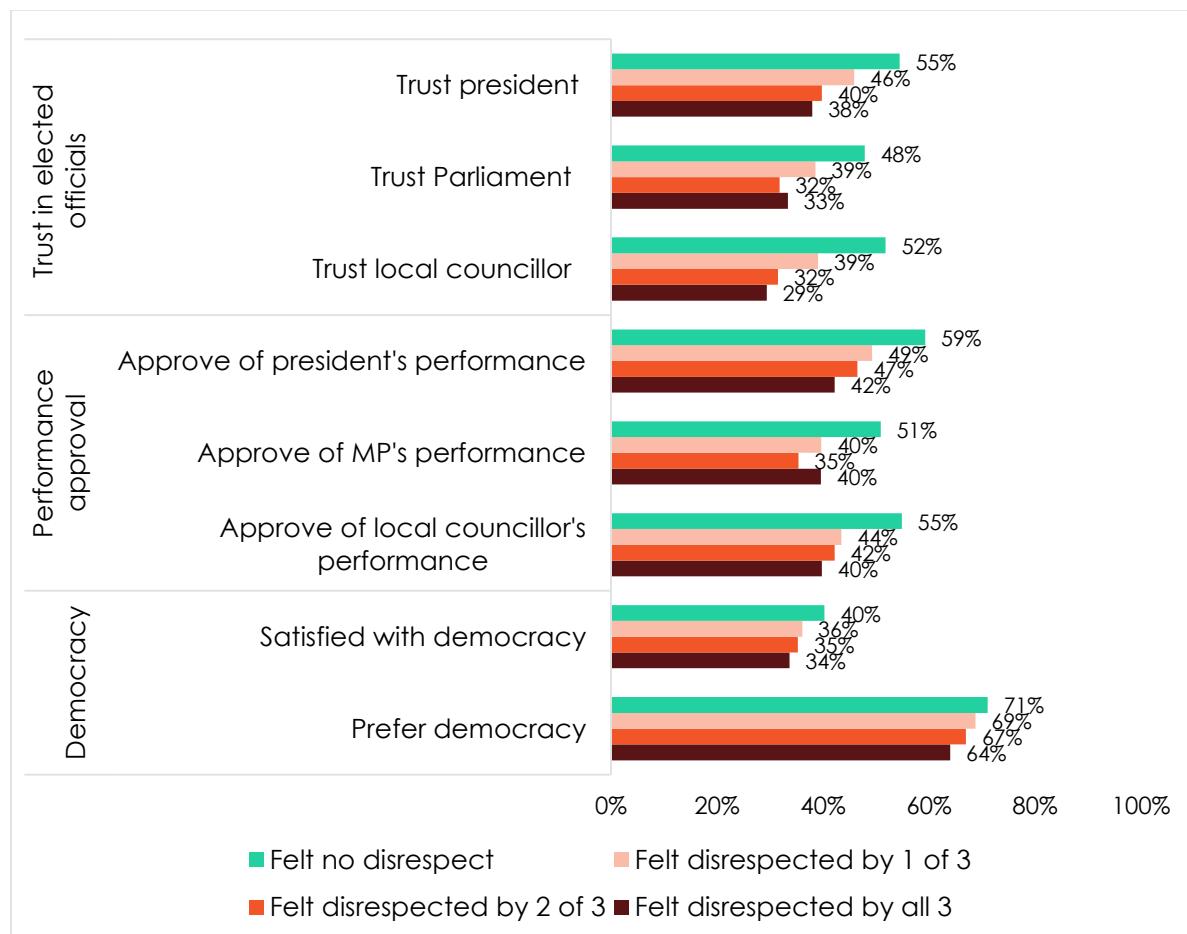
In general, when dealing with teachers and school officials, how much do you feel that they treat you with respect?

(% who say "not at all" or "a little bit") (Respondents who had not sought these services are excluded.)

All respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often do the police in [country] operate in a professional manner and respect the rights of all citizens? (% who say "rarely" or "never")



Figure 4: Experiences of disrespect and evaluations of elected leaders and democracy | 39 countries* | 2021/2023



* Not all questions were asked in all countries (as noted below).

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:

President/Prime Minister [Name]? (not asked in Burkina Faso)

Your member of Parliament/National Assembly? (not asked in Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Sudan)

Your elected [local government councillor]? (not asked in Angola, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Seychelles, and Sudan)

(% who "approve" or "strongly approve")

How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say:
The president/prime minister?

Parliament/National Assembly? (not asked in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Tunisia, and Sudan)

Your [local government council]? (not asked in Angola and Seychelles)

(% who say "somewhat" or "a lot")

Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [country]? (% who say "fairly satisfied" or "very satisfied")

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 of government we have.

(% who agree with Statement 1)



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