

Accra, Ghana
18 December 2024

News release

International Migrants Day: Almost half of Africans have considered emigrating, Afrobarometer survey shows

Almost half of Africans have considered emigrating, a significant increase compared to the proportion recorded in 2016/2018, new Afrobarometer findings from 24 African countries show.

While the desire to migrate has increased in many countries, Tanzania stands out as the only country where emigration intentions have declined. North America and Europe are the most preferred destinations, although a significant proportion of potential migrants would prefer to relocate within Africa.

The findings show that the primary motivating factors for emigrating are to find jobs and escape economic hardship.

Key findings

- On average across 24 African countries surveyed in 2024, almost half (47%) of respondents say they have considered moving to live in another country, including 27% who have given emigration “a lot” of thought (Figure 1).
 - Thoughts of emigrating are most common in Liberia (78%), the Gambia (68%), Cabo Verde (64%), and Ghana (61%). In contrast, very few Tanzanians (9%) express an interest in leaving.
- On average across 22 countries surveyed consistently since 2016/2018, the share of citizens who have thought at least “a little bit” about emigration has increased by 9 percentage points, with double-digit increases recorded in Liberia (28 percentage points), Mauritius (27 points), Nigeria (21 points), Ghana (20 points), Cameroon (15 points), Namibia (12 points), the Gambia (12 points), and Zimbabwe (11 points) (Figure 2).
 - Tanzania is the only surveyed country where the proportion of citizens giving at least some thought to emigration has decreased (-5 points).
- The most popular destinations for potential emigrants are North America (31%) and Europe (29%) (Figure 3).
 - However, almost a quarter (22%) would move to another country within the region or elsewhere on the African continent.
- Among those who have considered migrating, about half (49%) cite finding work as the most important reason, while 29% are motivated by a desire to escape economic hardship or poverty (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.

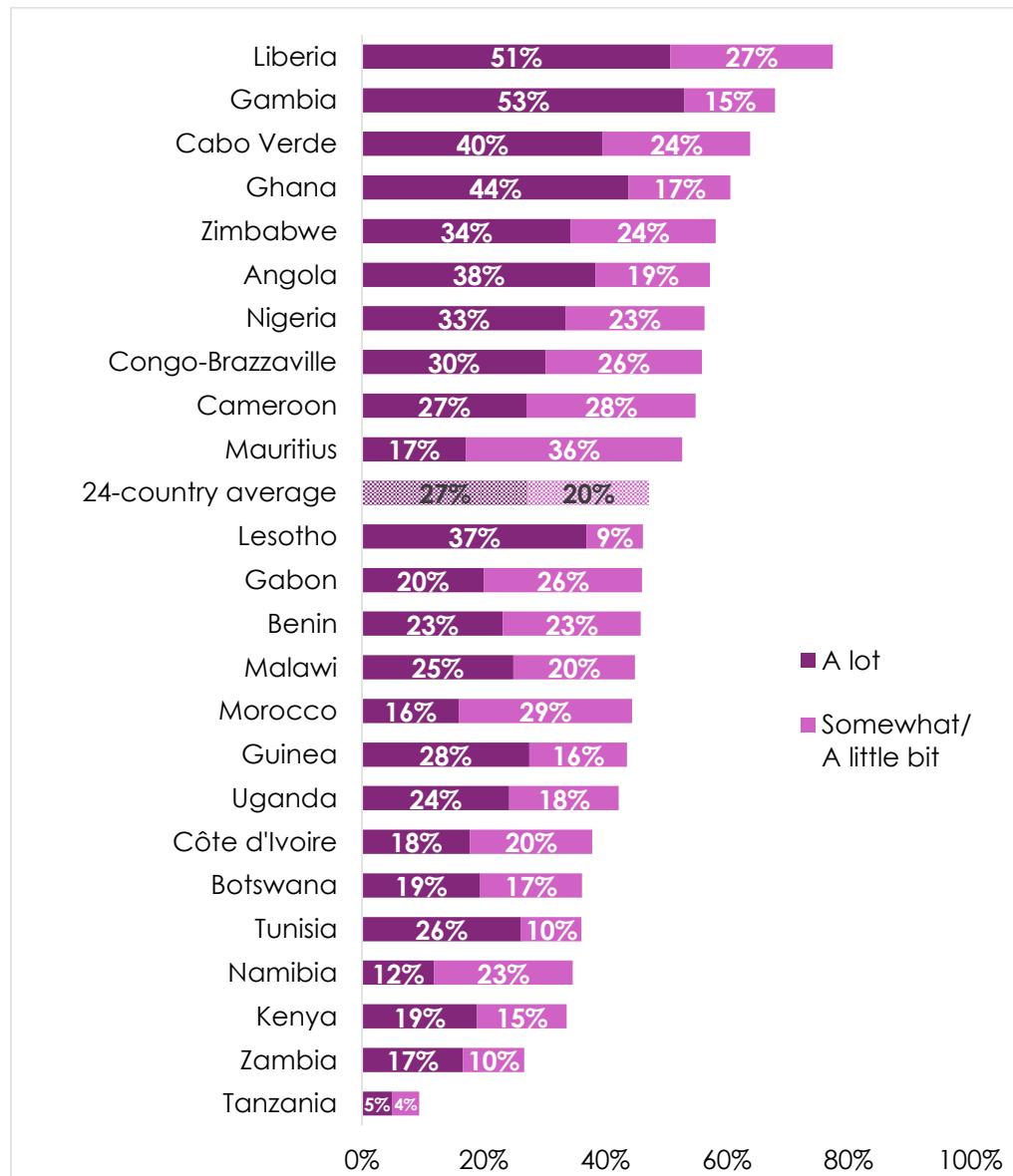


Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 10 surveys were launched in January 2024.

Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with samples of 1,200-2,400 adults that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2 to +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

Charts

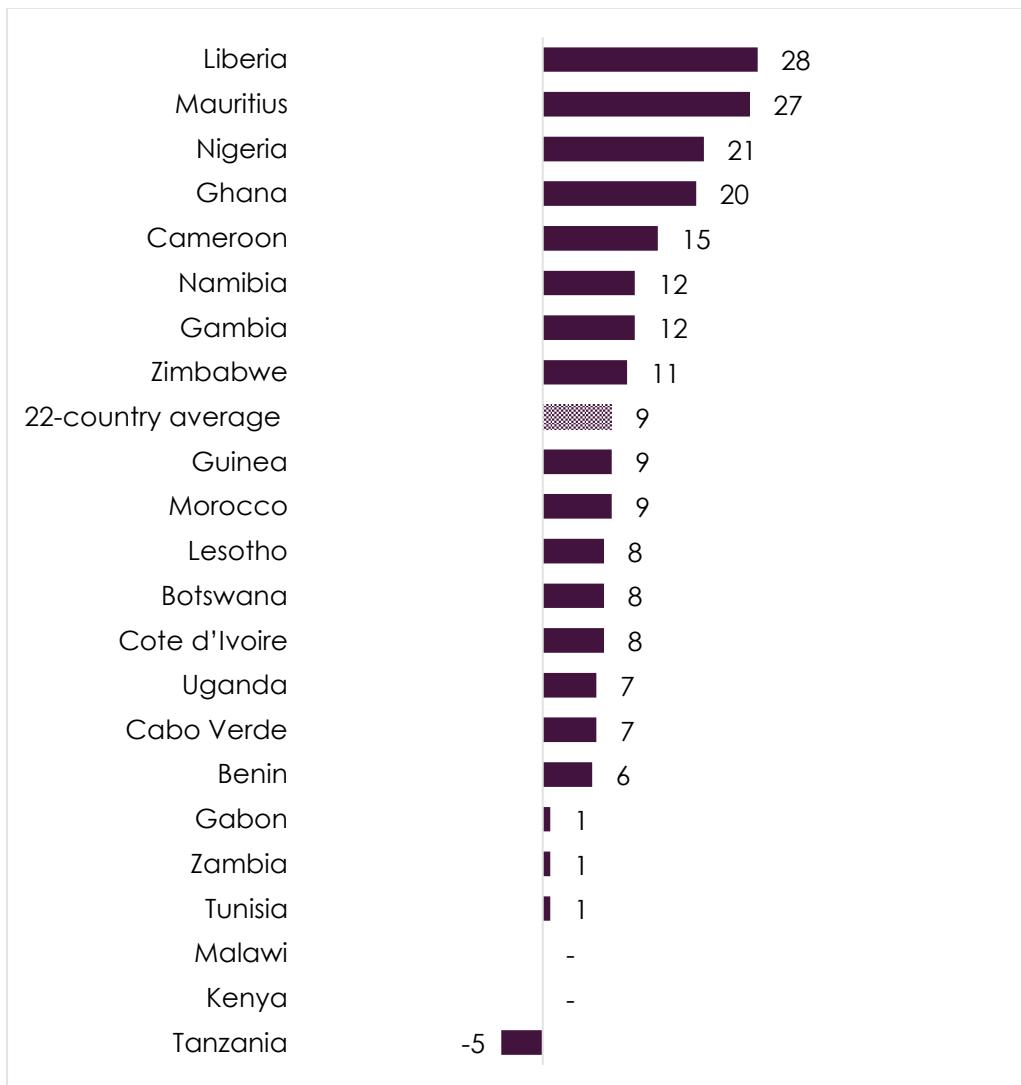
Figure 1: Considered emigrating | 24 countries | 2024



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

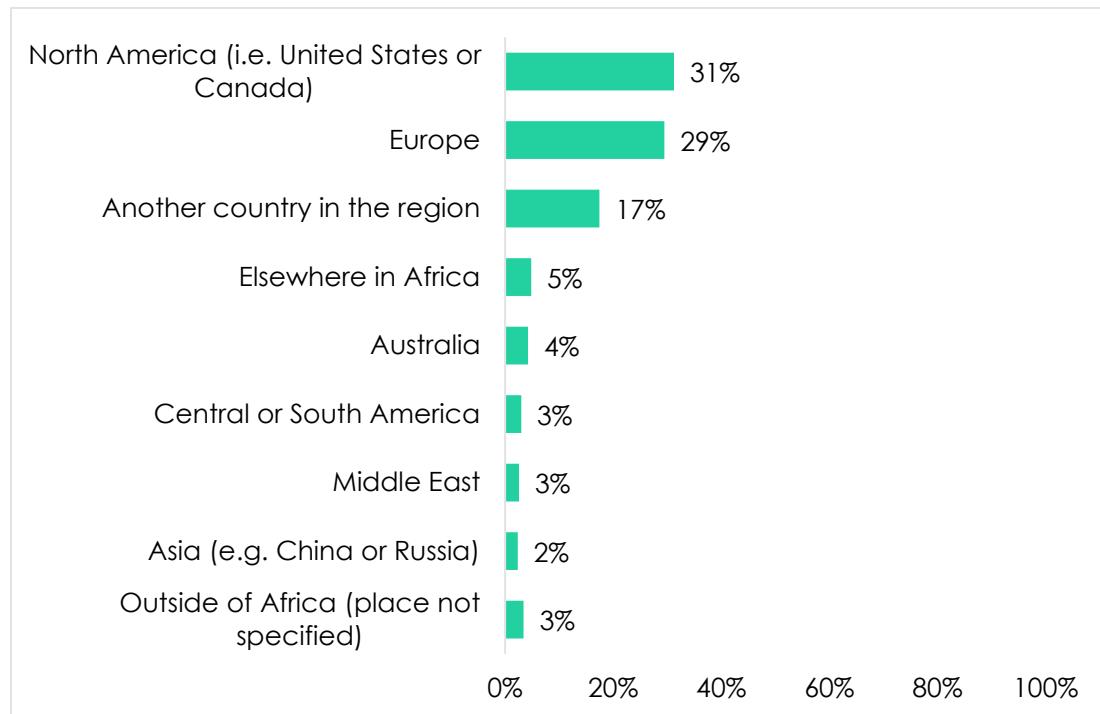


Figure 2: Changes in thoughts of emigrating (percentage points) | 22 countries | 2016-2024



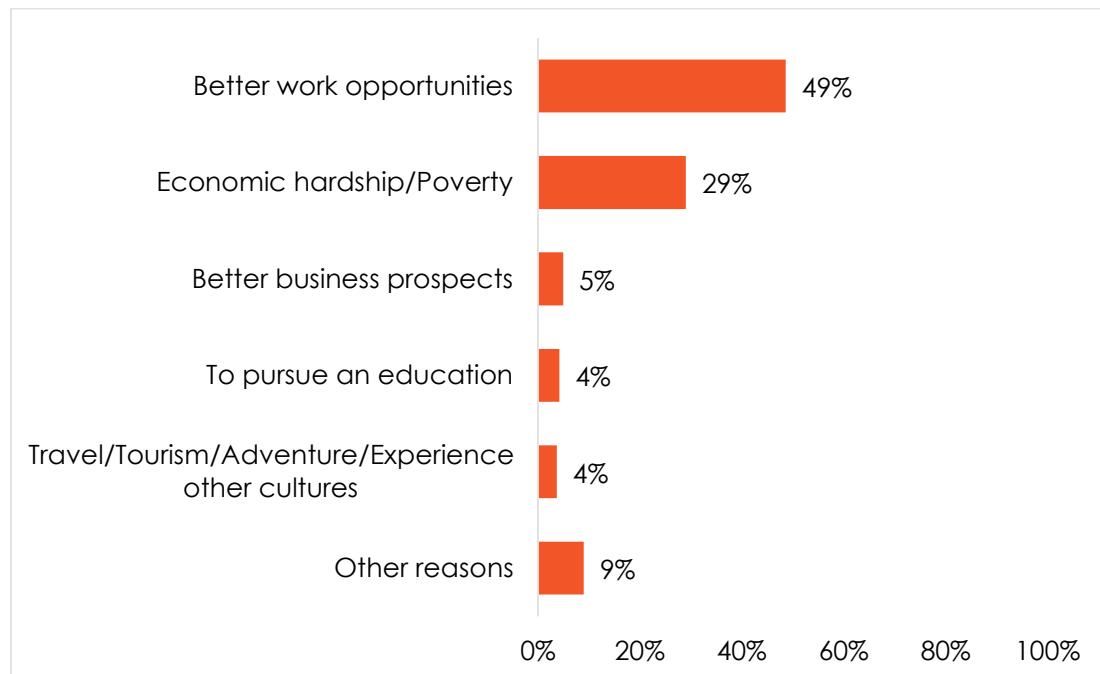
Respondents were asked: How much, if at all, have you considered moving to another country to live? Figure shows changes (in percentage points) in the proportions between 2016/2018 and 2024 who said they had considered emigration "a little bit," "somewhat" or "a lot."

Figure 3: Preferred destination | 24 countries | 2024



Respondents who say they have considered emigrating were asked: If you were to move to another country, where would you be most likely to go? (Respondents who say they have considered emigrating are excluded.)

Figure 4: Reasons for emigration | 24 countries | 2024



Respondents who say they have considered emigrating were asked: There are several reasons why people leave their home to live in another country for an extended period of time. What about you? What is the most important reason why you would consider moving from [country]? (Respondents who say they have not considered emigrating are excluded.)

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