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News release

More than half of Namibians experienced moderate or high lived poverty in past year, Afrobarometer survey shows

More than half of Namibians repeatedly went without basic life necessities during the previous year, placing them in the category of “moderate lived poverty” or “high lived poverty,” a recent Afrobarometer survey indicates.

The proportion of citizens who suffered frequent deprivation of basic life necessities has risen steadily, to the highest levels recorded since 2006. The most vulnerable are the elderly, rural residents, and those with little or no formal education.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the share of Namibians who went without a cash income “many times” or “always” increased by one-third.

Key findings

- Eight in 10 Namibians (79%) went without a cash income at least once during the past year, while majorities went without enough food (64%) and without needed medical care (57%) at least once (Figure 1).
- More than half of Namibians experienced “moderate lived poverty” (34%) or “high lived poverty” (22%) during the previous year, meaning they frequently went without basic life necessities. This is an 11-percentage-point increase, from 45% to 56%, compared to 2019 (Figure 2).
- Looking at the most vulnerable, one-quarter (24%) of Namibians went without enough food “many times” or “always,” and substantial proportions suffered frequent deprivation of water (21%), medical care (17%), and cooking fuel (15%). More than two-fifths (42%) went without a cash income “many times” or “always,” an 11-percentage-point increase compared to 2019. These numbers surpass previous peaks recorded in 2008 (Figure 3).
- Moderate and high lived poverty are more common in rural areas (63%) than in cities (52%) (Figure 4).
 - Older Namibians report higher levels of moderate or high lived poverty, ranging from 49% of respondents aged 18-25 years to 63% of those over age 55.
 - Citizens with no formal education or only primary schooling report the highest levels of lived poverty (75% and 73%, respectively, compared to 34% of those with post-secondary qualifications).

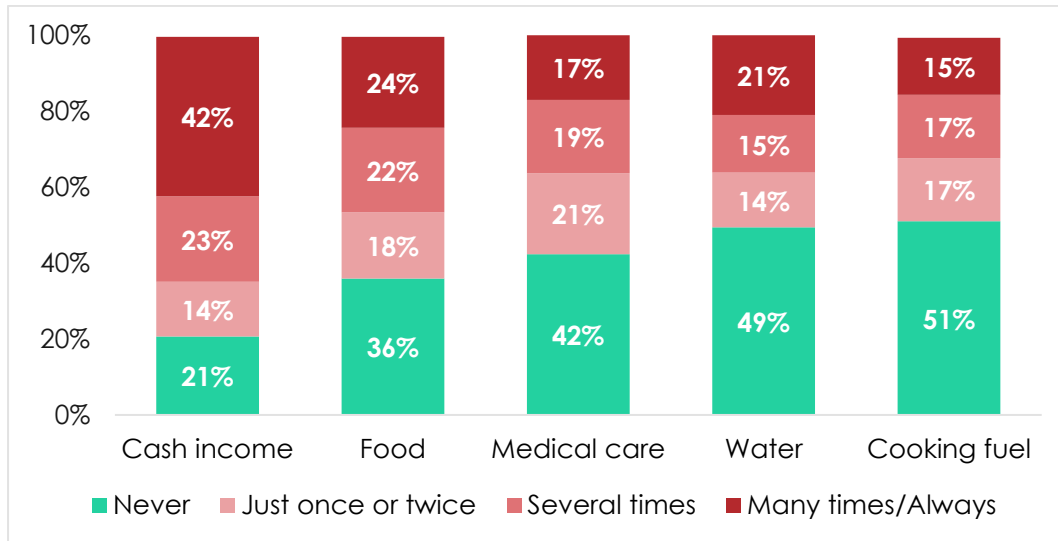
Afrobarometer surveys

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. Eight survey rounds in up to 39 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2022) are currently underway. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Namibia, led by national partner Survey Warehouse, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult Namibians in October and November 2021. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Namibia in 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2019.

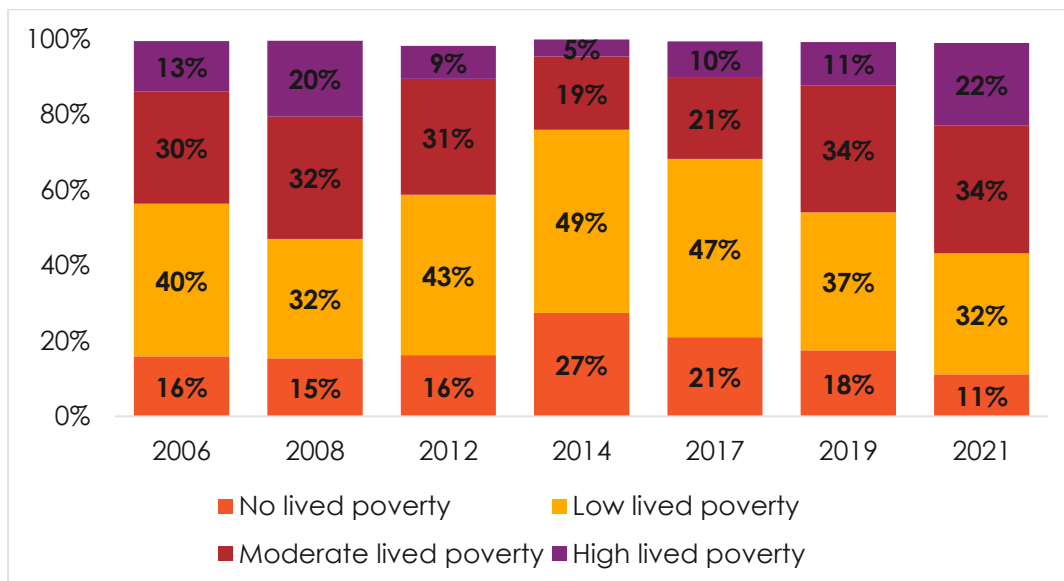
Charts

Figure 1: Went without basic necessities | Namibia | 2021



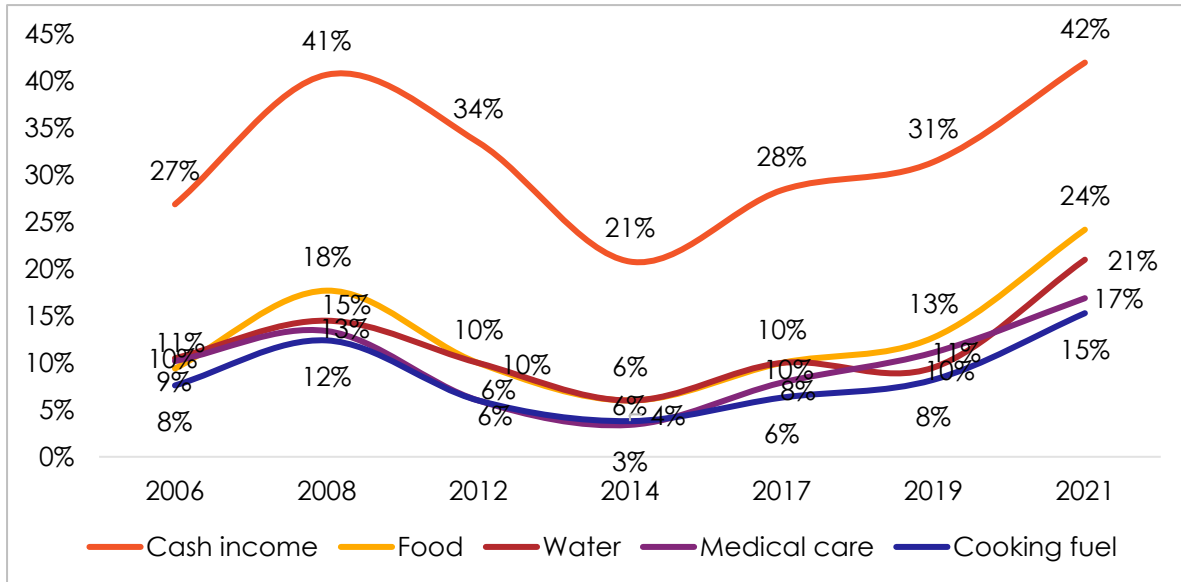
Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income?

Figure 2: Lived poverty | Namibia | 2006-2021



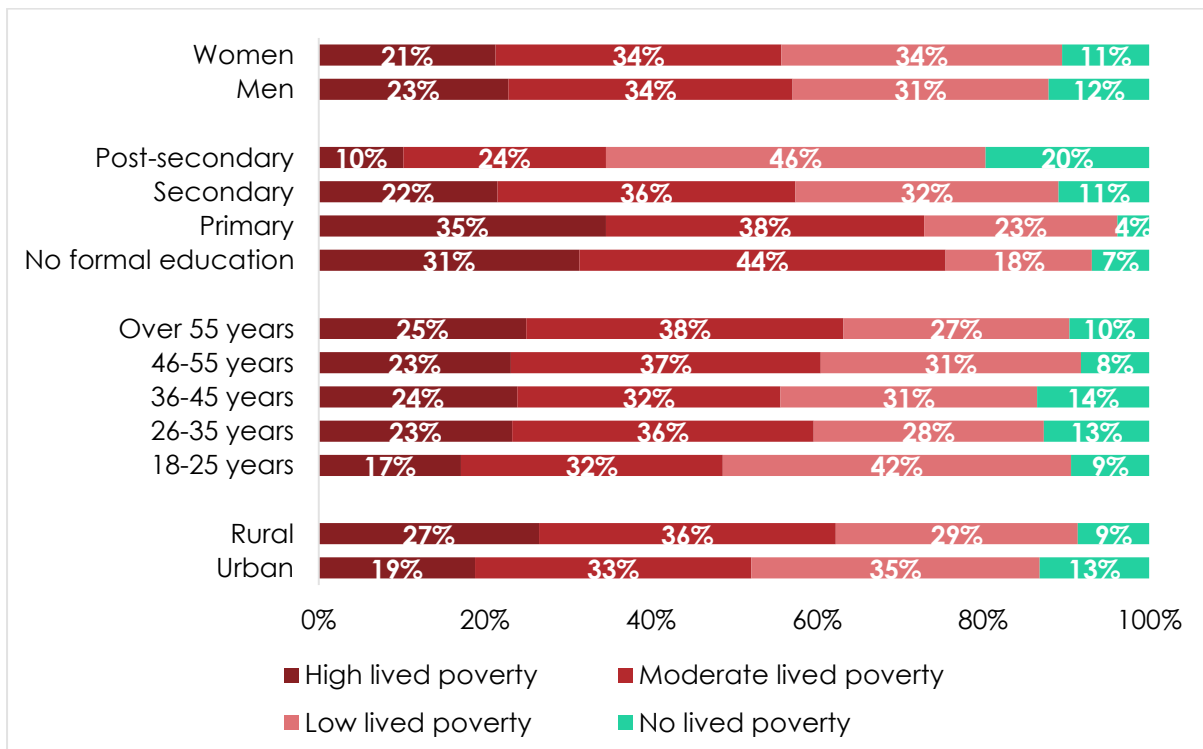
Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income?

Figure 3: Deprivation of basic necessities for the most vulnerable | Namibia
| 2006-2021



Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income? (% who say “many times” or “always”)

Figure 4: Lived poverty | by gender, education, age, and urban-rural location
| Namibia | 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? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income?

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