SIVIO INSTITUTE

2024 Citizens' Perceptions and Expectations Survey Report

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1 Introduction

Background

Zimbabweans went to the polls in 2023. There has not yet been a determination as to whether citizens are better or worse off since the elections. We carried out a Citizens' Perceptions and Expectations (CPE) survey towards the end of October 2024. The survey was carried out just after the completion of the first year of the President's second term. The survey is a tool to assess the extent to which citizens are satisfied or dissatisfied with the performance of the government. This report provides insights into the perceptions of government performance by citizens. The survey is based on a representative sample spread across the country.

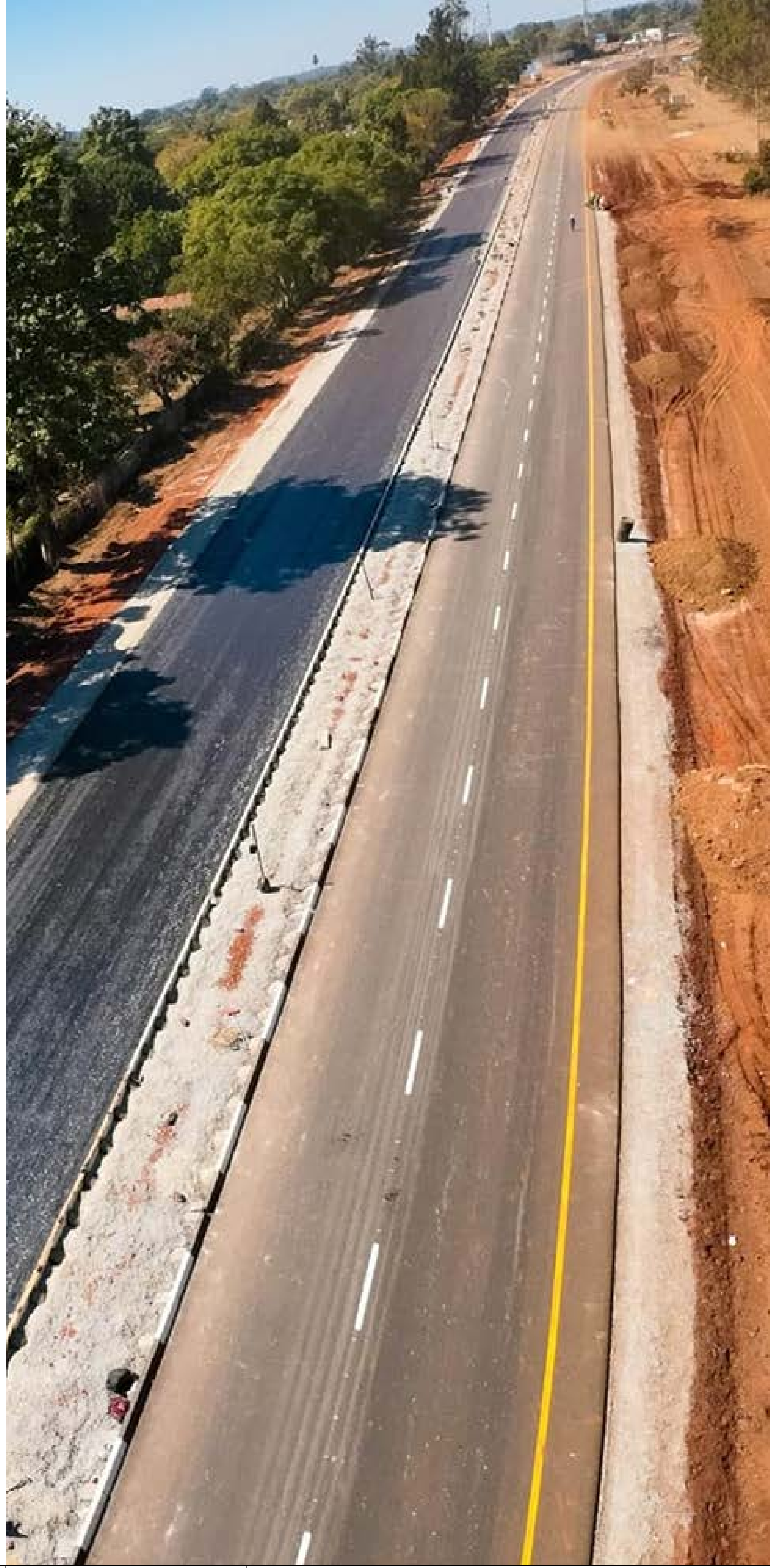
Context

In 2024, many Zimbabweans struggled to make ends meet with limited access to basic services such as healthcare and education. The informal sector continued to be a significant part of the economy, providing livelihoods for many but also highlighting the lack of formal employment opportunities.

Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political landscape was marked by a series of multifaceted challenges alongside significant government initiatives aimed at stabilising the nation. One of the most notable developments in Zimbabwe's economic sphere was the introduction of a new currency, the Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG). This move was part of the government's strategy to stabilise the economy and curb hyperinflation, which had plagued the nation for years. The introduction of ZiG was met with mixed reactions. While it was intended to restore confidence in the financial system, the transition period saw the exchange rate fluctuate significantly, with the rate running from 20 to 30 ZiG against major currencies. This volatility created uncertainty among businesses and consumers, impacting economic activities and planning.

Amidst these challenges, the government embarked on an ambitious infrastructure development drive, with a particular focus on road construction and dam projects. These initiatives were part of a broader strategy to boost economic growth and improve living standards. The road construction projects were especially significant in the run-up to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) heads of state meeting held in August 2024. The government aimed to showcase Zimbabwe's potential as a regional hub by improving connectivity and transportation infrastructure.

Dam construction was another critical component of the infrastructure push, aimed at addressing water scarcity and supporting agricultural activities. These projects were expected to enhance food security and provide a reliable water supply for both urban and rural communities. However, the implementation of these projects faced challenges, including funding constraints and logistical hurdles.



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Methodology

This is the fifth Citizens' Perceptions and Expectations survey that we have conducted since the baseline survey in 2018 (SIVIO Institute, 2019; Murisa, Kushata, and Rwapunga, 2020; Mususa, 2022; Jowah, 2023). The methodology has remained consistent over the five years, as the team employs a random sampling method to ensure a representative sample of 1,200 respondents from the 10 provinces of Zimbabwe. Each province contributed an equal number of respondents, with a balanced gender representation. To align with the national demographic distribution reported in the 2022 national census, we ensured that most of the respondents were from rural areas (Zimstat, 2022).

The enumerators received training on the methodology, and each was tested and tasked with administering the survey to ensure response quality. Once the research team refined and approved the survey, the enumerators were assigned to collect data in October 2024. Based on daily reports generated by the SIVIO team, continuous monitoring and adjustments were made to maintain the quota requirements and ensure data quality.

The survey was designed to gather information from respondents regarding their demographics, livelihoods, community engagement, as well as their perceptions and expectations of their local council or municipality and the central government. No identifying information about the respondents was collected during the survey, and the enumerators typically completed the surveys on their own devices, as they had been assigned data for this purpose. If they were unable to complete the survey due to network issues, they filled out a physical copy, which would be uploaded once connectivity was regained. To ensure accuracy in this method, the enumerator would review the survey with the survey team and then proceed to complete it online, which was subsequently verified by the research team.

The survey was deployed on October 3rd and closed on October 31st to prepare the data for analysis and commence publication writing. After data collection, a total of 1,272 responses were collected across the country. Table 1 below provides a breakdown of the responses collected by province.

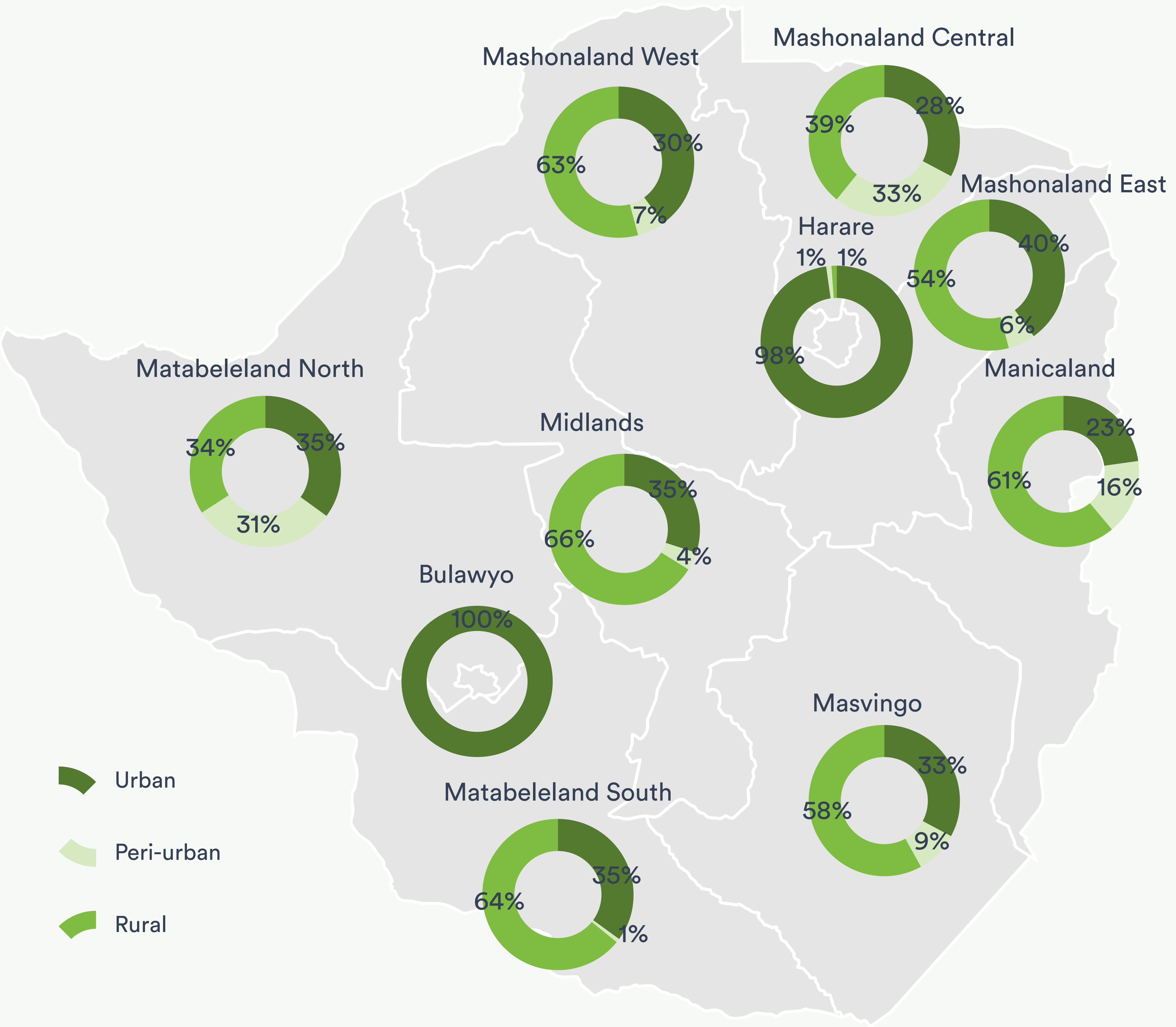
Table 1: Responses Collected in the 2024 CPE

Province	Number of Expected Responses	Number of Actual Responses
Bulawayo	120	126
Harare	120	131
Manicaland	120	128
Mashonaland Central	120	127
Mashonaland East	120	130
Mashonaland West	120	135
Masvingo	120	122
Matabeleland North	120	121
Matabeleland South	120	127
Midlands	120	125
Total	**1 200**	**1 272**

3 Description of Sample

Demographics of Respondents

This section provides an outline of the demographic characteristics of the 1,272 respondents surveyed across Zimbabwe. The sample maintained an equal gender balance (636 male and 636 female respondents) aggregated across the 10 provinces. Most of the respondents (n=685; 54%) were from rural or peri-urban areas, while 46% were from urban areas based on the fact that according to the 2022 census, most (61.4%) Zimbabweans resided in the rural areas.



Province \ Gender	Male	Female
Bulawyo	50%	50%
Harare	47%	53%
Manicaland	49%	51%
Mashonaland Central	52%	48%
Mashonaland East	52%	48%
Mashonaland West	48%	52%
Masvingo	50%	50%
Matabeleland North	50%	50%
Matabeleland South	51%	49%
Midlands	50%	50%

Figure 1: Provincial Breakdown on Gender and Location

Just over half (n=648, 51%) of the sample were youth (18-35 years old), 39% (n=501) were between the ages of 36 and 65 years, and the remaining 10% (n=123) were over 65 years (the official age of retirement in Zimbabwe at the time of the survey). In terms of marital status, 49% of the respondents were married, 32% were single, and another 9% were widowed as highlighted in Table 2.

Most of the respondents (n=1,193, 94%) indicated that they could read and write. In terms of formal education, 87% (n=1,106) indicated that they had achieved education beyond primary school. Of these, forty-one per cent (41%; n=522) had completed secondary school, 21% (n=261) had completed a diploma/apprenticeship/certification, and 25% (n=323) had undergone tertiary education (ranging from Undergraduate to Doctorate level).

Table 2: Overview of Respondents

Demographic	Variable	Respondents	
		Number	Percentage
Total		**1,272**	**100%**
Gender	Male	636	50%
	Female	636	50%
Age	Youth (18-35)	648	51%
	36 – 65	501	39%
	Over 65 years old	123	10%
Marital Status	Single	400	32%
	Married	622	49%
	Separated	53	4%
	Divorced	79	6%
	Widowed	118	9%
Area	Urban	586	44%
	Rural/Peri-urban	714	56%
Literacy	Can read & write	1,193	94%
	Cannot	79	6%
Education Level	No formal education	66	5%
	Primary school	100	8%
	Secondary school	522	41%
	Post-secondary education (diploma, apprenticeship, certification)	261	21%
	Undergraduate	164	13%
	Post-graduate	63	5%
	Post-graduate (Honours)	44	3%
	Post-graduate (Masters)	47	4%
	Doctoral level	5	0%

Living Arrangements

Regarding the living arrangements of the respondents, 40% (n=508) lived with family and friends, 21% (n=273) rented, 17% (n=220) lived in their own, fully paid for accommodation, and another 11% (n=139) had company-owned accommodation. Respondents stayed in a wide range of accommodation types, with 33% (n=420) indicating that they lived in a full house, 26% (n=335) in a homestead, 18% (n=235) living in room(s) in a house and another 10% (n=125) living in a cottage.

When accommodation arrangements were analysed by types of accommodation, it could be noted that for those who indicated that they were living with family and friends, this was mostly within a homestead or full house. For those who indicated that they were renting, it was mostly a room or rooms in a house, followed by rental of a cottage and then a flat. For those who indicated that they owned (fully paid for) their accommodation, most of this accommodation took the form of a full house (See Figure 2).

Accommodation Arrangements	Full house	Homestead	Room(s) in a house	Cottage	Hut	Flat	Shack	Hostel
Own - mortgage	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Informal (squatting, homeless, shelter)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Own - customary tenure	1%	5%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Company owned	5%	1%	1%	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Own - fully paid for	11%	4%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Rental	2%	0%	13%	4%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Living with family & friends	13%	15%	4%	2%	4%	1%	0%	0%

Figure 2: Respondents' Living and Accommodation Arrangements

Employment Status

The livelihoods/employment patterns of respondents are varied; 37% (n=466) of respondents indicated that they were employed, 30% (n=382) were self-employed, 28% (n=353) were unemployed, and 5% (71) were pensioners. Of those working (n=848), 82% (n=692) worked full-time. When those that worked full-time were further disaggregated, 36% (n=304) of respondents indicated that they were working full-time in the informal sector, 20% (n=168) in the private sector, 20% (n=167) for government and 6% (n=54) for the non-profit sector. Thirty-nine percent (39%) indicated that they worked part-time, and another 22% were engaged in consulting (See Figure 3).

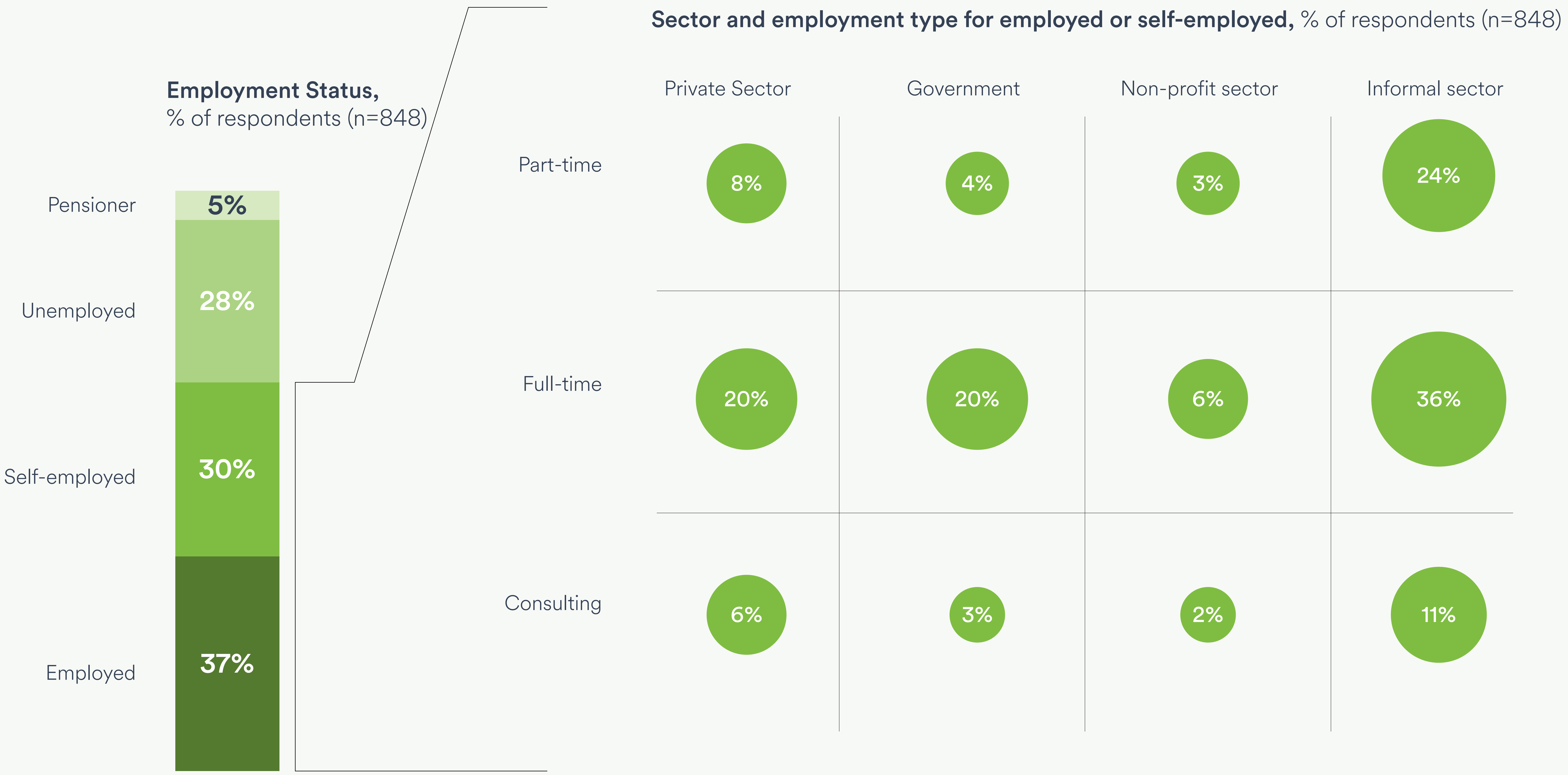


Figure 3: Employment Status and Types of Employment

When employment levels were analysed by age, the highest proportion of unemployed were within the youth age range (18 – 35 years). Within this category, there was an almost equal distribution of youth who were employed (19%); those who were unemployed (17%) and those who were self-employed (15%). For those aged between 35 – 65 years, only 7% of this age group indicated that they were unemployed, with the rest either self-employed (15%) or employed (17%) (See Figure 4).

Employment levels analysed by age, % of respondents (n=848)

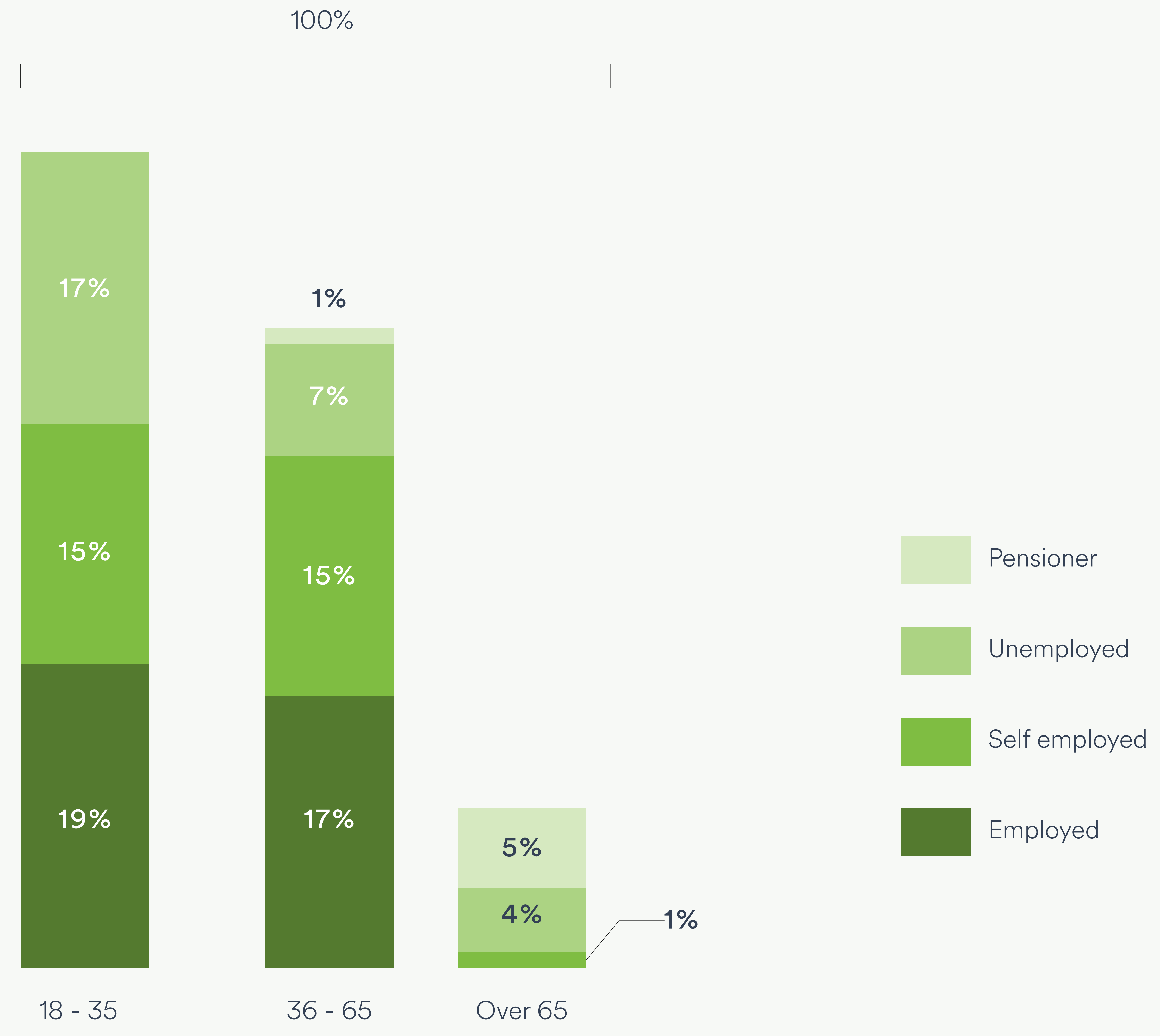


Figure 4: Employment Status Depending on the Age of the Respondent

The biggest sector of employment for the sample was agriculture, with 15% (n=126) of respondents working in this sector, followed by, education (11%, n=90), construction (11%, n=90); Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)/International NGO (INGO)/embassy (8%, n=67), vending (8%; n=66), and health (7%, n=59). Only 2% (n=14) of respondents indicated that they were employed in the manufacturing sector (See Figure 5).

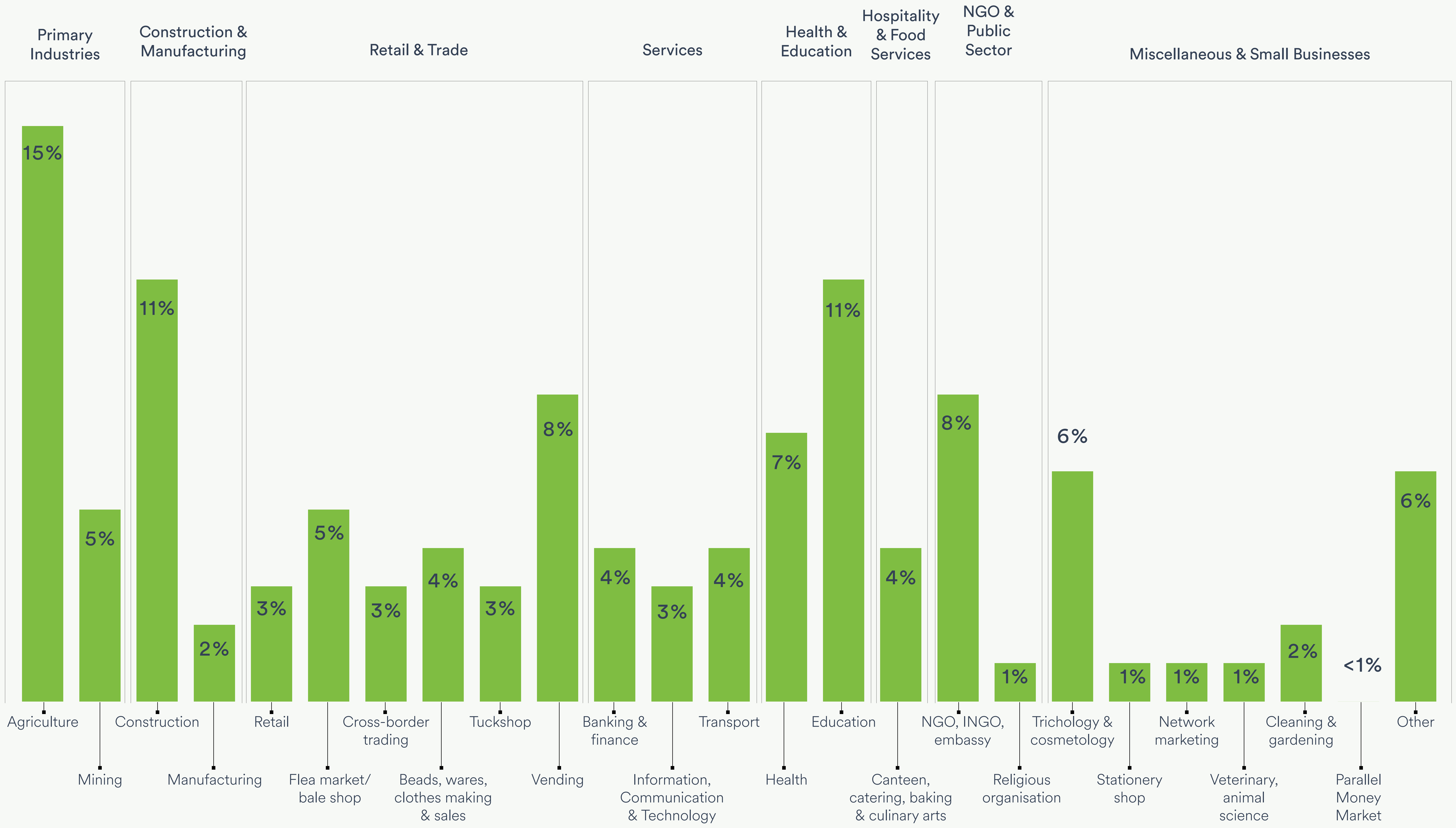


Figure 5: Distribution of Sectors of Employment

For those who indicated that they were employed, their monthly income weighted average was around US$479.86, with the majority (71%, n=598) earning between US$51-US$500. Four percent (4%; n=34) said that they have no monthly income, while another 4% (n=36) indicated that they earned less than US$50.00 a month; 16% (n=139) of respondents earned between US$501-US$1,000 a month. A negligible percentage (0.35%; n=4) indicated that they earned between US$5,000 – US$10,000 a month. None of the respondents indicated that they had a monthly income of above US$10,000.00 (See Figure 6).

71%

earn between US$51-US$500

The majority of monthly incomes (71%) range between US$51 - US$500, (n=848)

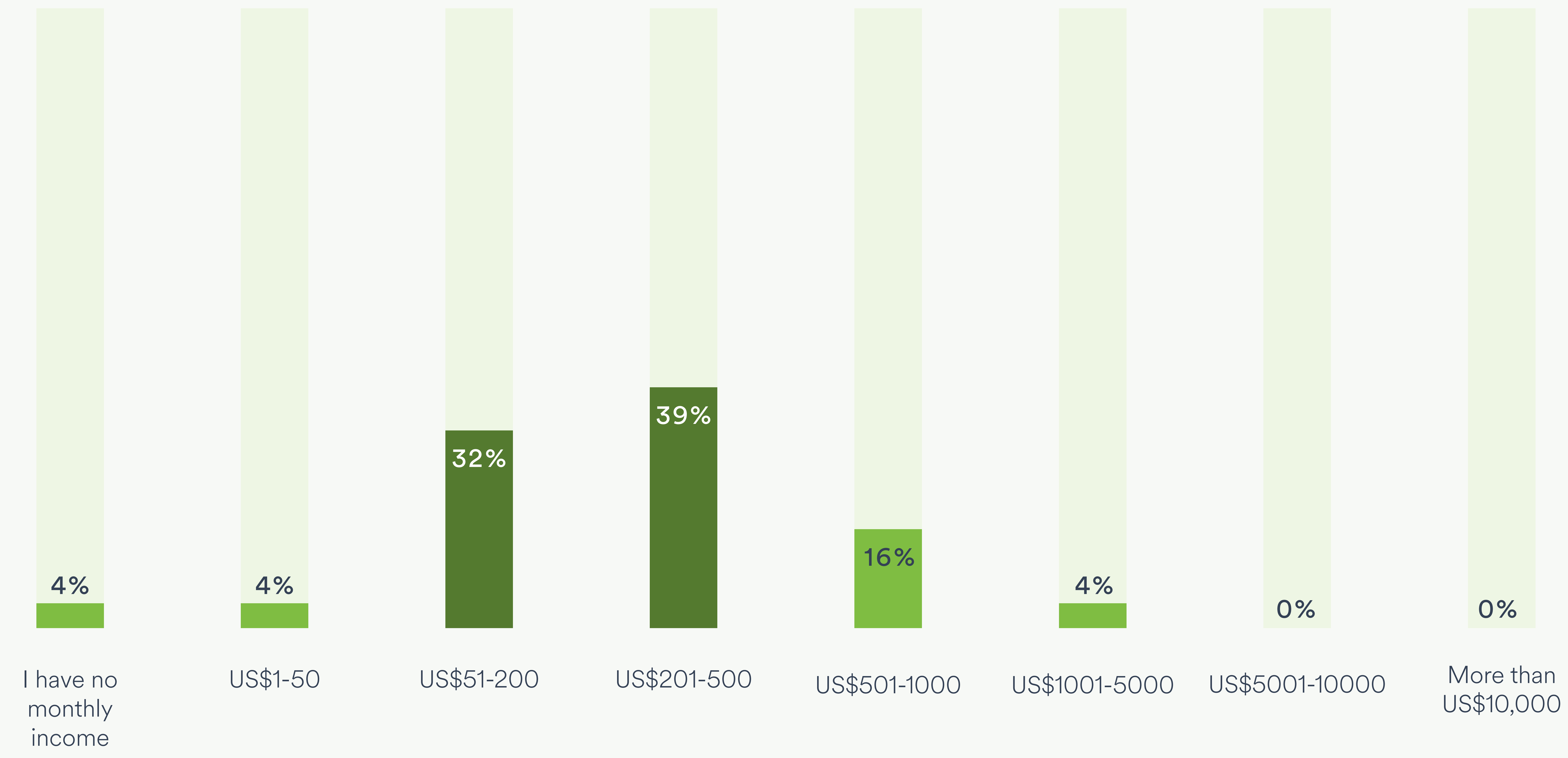


Figure 6: Monthly Income for Those Respondents Who Are Employed

4 Citizens and Community Engagement

The survey sought to assess the level of associational life/community engagement amongst citizens. What citizens do for each other is a key aspect which influences the quality of democracy in a country.

When asked which type of association they were a part of, most respondents (55%, n=705) were part of a religious group. The next highest number of respondents (13%; n=165) belonged to a burial society, followed by 11% (n=139) who belonged to a savings/lending group. Of significance was the 19% (n=243) who indicated that they belonged to none of the associations listed in the survey (See Figure 7).

Most respondents were part of a religious group. (55%, n=705)

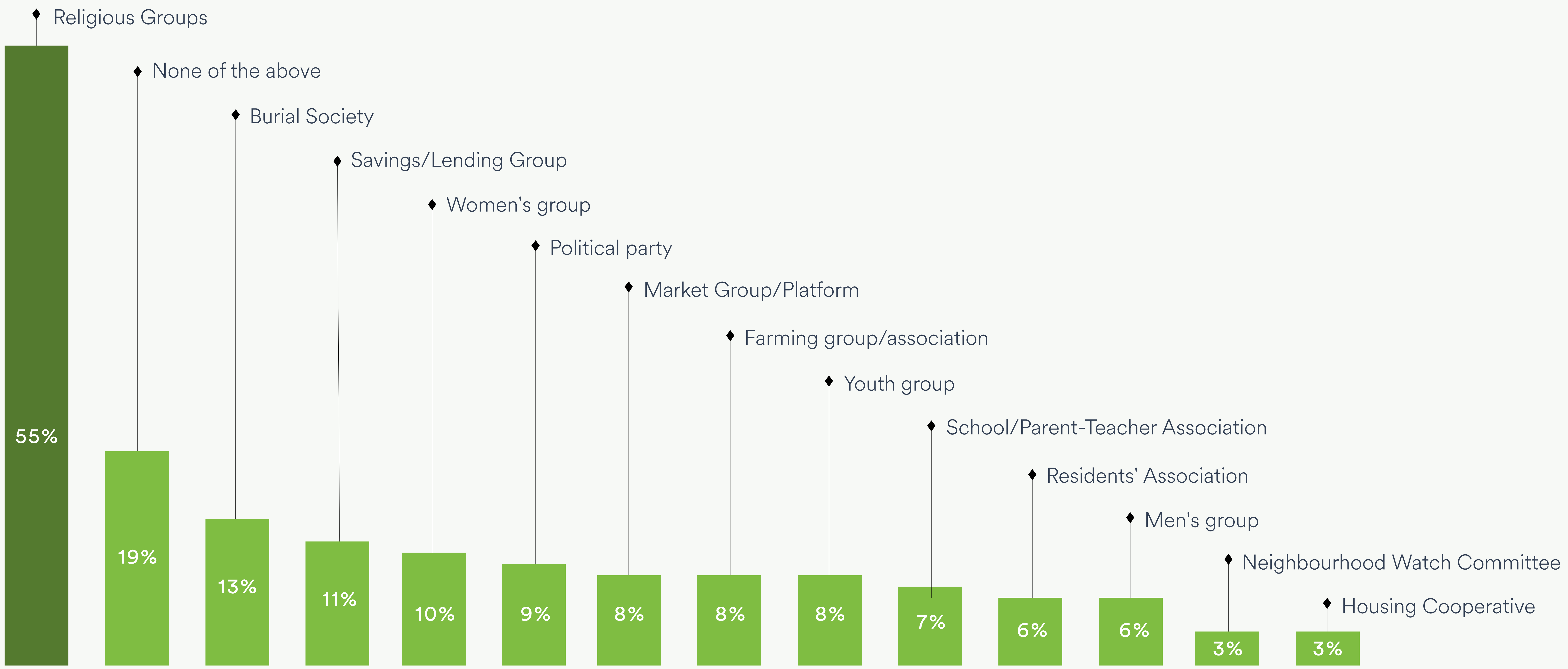


Figure 7: Associations of Respondents

When we consider the engagement of citizens, we see that they are most likely to be affiliated with a religious group. Citizens are less likely to participate in a civic organisation such as a political party, a residents' association, a housing cooperative or neighbourhood watch committee. When we examine the four types of organisations in relation to the respondents' residential status, we start to see the fragility of societal connections. Homeowners are more likely to participate in residents' associations compared to others. Conversely, very few renters are involved in these associations. Interestingly, those who are homeless are the most likely to be members of a political party.

	Political Party	Residents' Association	Neighbourhood Watch Committee	Housing Cooporative
Rental	7%	4%	4%	3%
Living with Others	8%	5%	3%	1%
Company-owned	9%	5%	2%	6%
Fully Paid For	10%	15%	4%	4%
Mortgage	12%	6%	0%	6%
Customary Tenure	13%	5%	4%	4%
Squatting	14%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 8: Impact of Residential Status on Engagement in Civic Organisations

For the majority of respondents who indicated that they belonged to an association, it was in the capacity of being a member.

Members constitute over 70% of roles in market groups, religious groups, men's groups, political groups and savings groups. Conversely, housing cooperatives and neighbourhood watch committees have a higher proportion of management and employee roles.

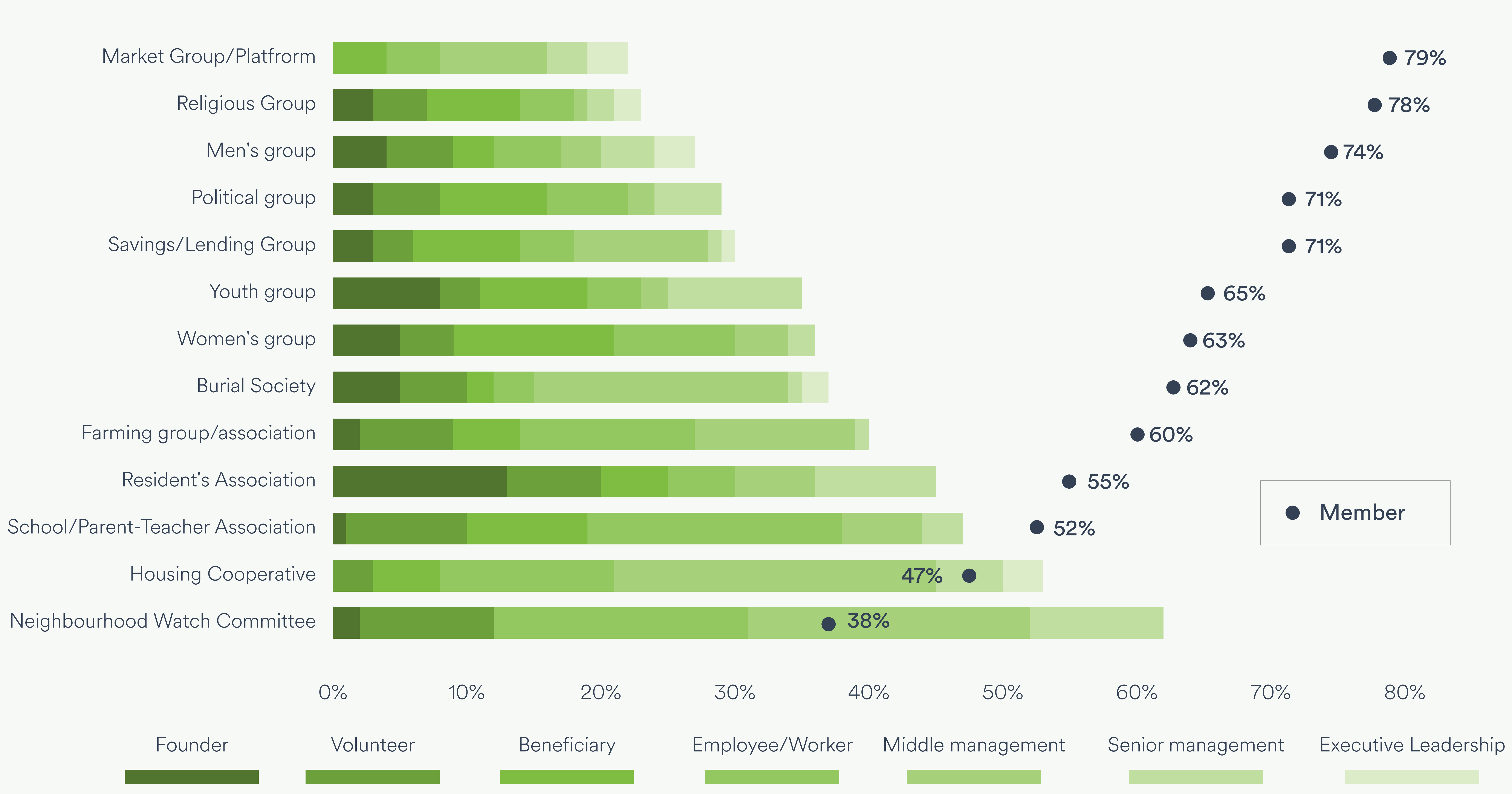


Figure 9: Role That Respondent Holds in the Association

In terms of benefits that respondents said that they derived from being part of an association, for 45%, (n=468) indicated that they benefited by getting spiritual support. This corresponds with the fact that most respondents are part of a religious group. Secondly, respondents benefited from emotional support (29%; n=294) followed by networking (23%, n=241).Of the 243 who indicated that they did not belong to any of the associations listed in the survey, the top three (3) reasons given as to why they did not belong to a group was that they 'did not have enough time' – 29% (n=71); they "did not see the need/value" – 28% (n=67) and thirdly they had other commitments – 21% (n=50).

45%

benefited by getting spiritual support in associations

Most Reported Benefits

Spiritual support (n=468)	45%

Second Most Reported Benefits

Emotional Support (n=294)	29%
Networking (n=241)	23%
Sense of belonging	20%
Exposure to new concepts/ideas	17%
Better social order	16%

Third Most Reported Benefits

Additional income	14%
Changes/Reforms within community	11%
Exchange market opportunities	10%
Defence of rights	7%
Collective Security	6%
Entertainment	6%
Organising/receiving welfare support	6%
Skills exchange	6%

Least Reported Benefits

Improved access to financing	5%
Improved voice in engaging with officeholders	4%
Pooling together assets/savings	3%
Collective ownership of assets	3%
Physical wellbeing	3%
Change in government	3%
Other	1%

Figure 10: Benefits That Respondents Experience as Part of an Association

Figure 11: Reasons That Respondents Gave for Not Belonging to Any of the Associations

5

Levels of Participation in Public Processes

Election Participation

Zimbabwe held general elections in August 2023, and 64% of respondents indicated that they did vote. This is a decrease when compared to the 2023 CPE findings, where 68% of respondents indicated that they had voted in the 2018 elections. Those who have a home that they paid for are the demographic most likely to vote, and those who live with others and are squatting are least likely (See Figure 12).

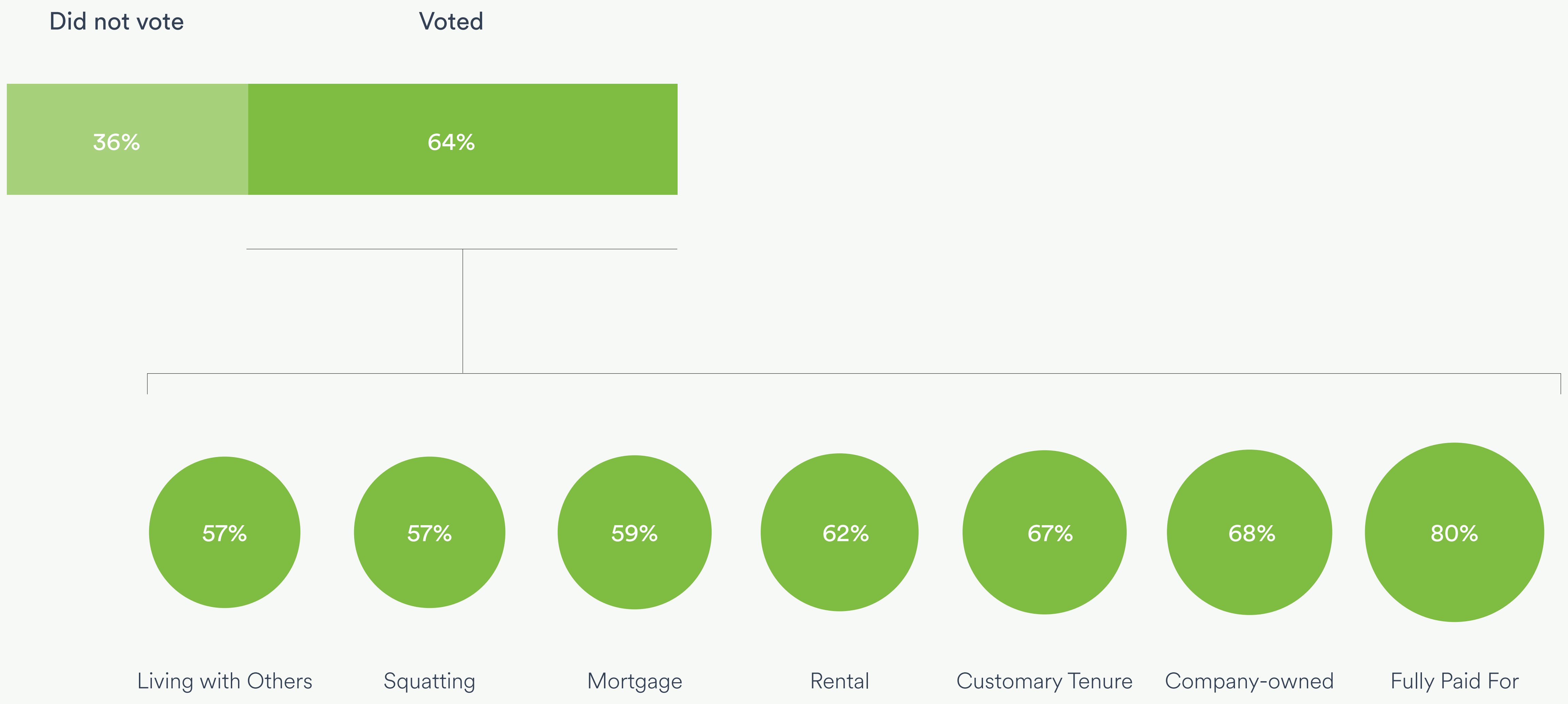


Figure 12: Voting Patterns in 2023

Policy Formulation and Implementation Processes

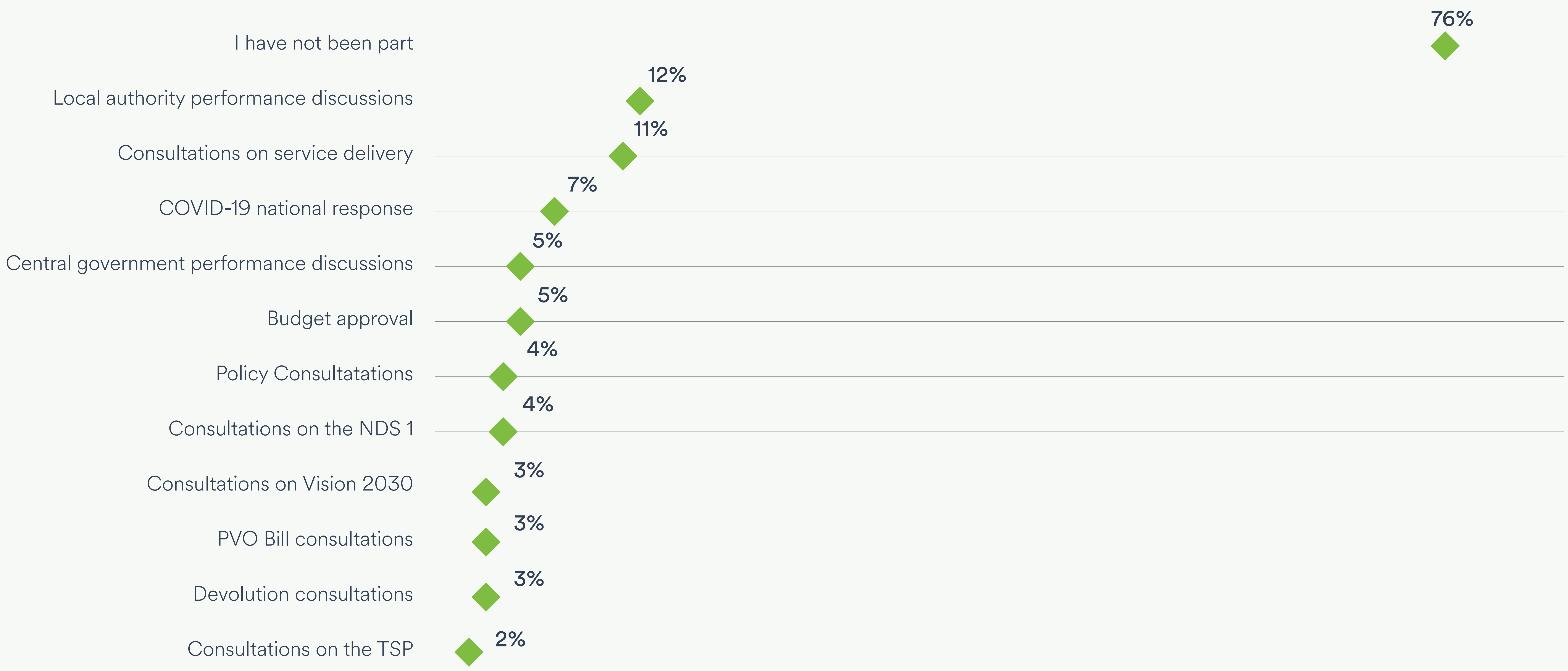


Figure 13: Have You Ever Been Part of the Policy Formulation Process?

The levels of engagement in public processes outside of voting drop significantly when participants were probed further. When asked if they had ever been part of a policy formulation process, 24% (n=311) indicated that they had been. This involvement included discussions on the performance of local government where only 12% (n=153) of the total sample had participated in; consultations on service delivery (11%; n=143), consultations involving the COVID-19 national response (7%; n=84) and discussions on the performance of central government (5%; n=66).

When respondents were asked if they felt that there was room for them to participate in the policy formulation process, most said "no".

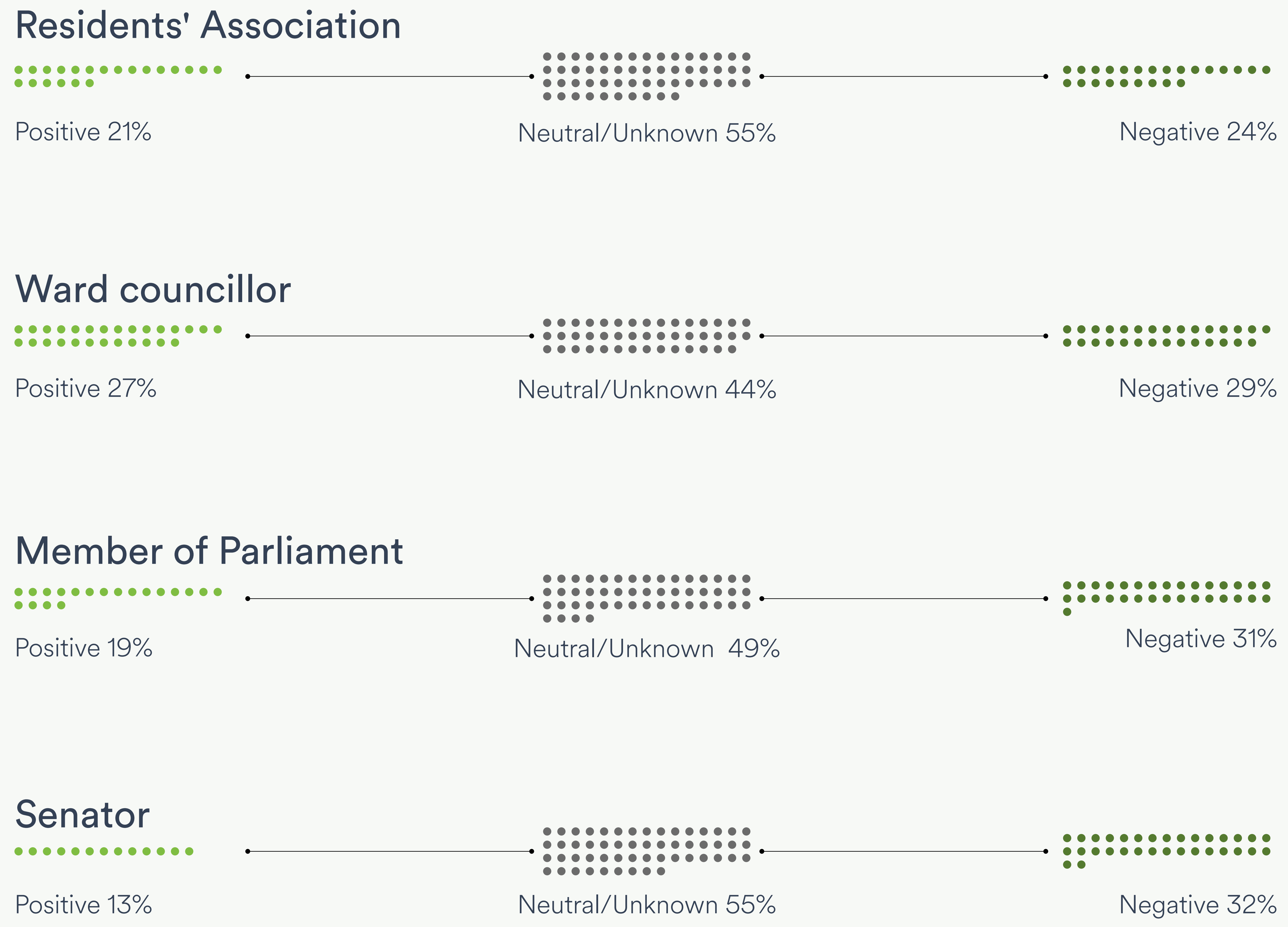
The areas that citizens felt they had the most room for were discussions on the performance of local authority (46%; n=586), consultations on service delivery (43%; n=550), discussions on the performance of central government (34%; n=432), followed by consultations on proposed policies and bills (33%; n=414) – See Figure 14.

Figure 14: Do You Believe There Is Adequate Scope/Room to Give Your Input in the Following Areas?

Citizens' Levels of Satisfaction with the Performance of their Representatives

We asked citizens to also rate the performance of elected and unelected representatives at different levels of government, starting with the local to the national. Respondents rated their residents' association representatives the best with an average of 2.93 out of 5, closely followed by their ward councillors (2.92/5), then their Members of Parliament (MPs) (2.73/5), and Senators (1.96/5). It must be noted that at least one-fifth of respondents indicated that they did not know their residents' association and senator. This could be related to the fact that senators are not elected directly by citizens but rather by proportional representation, and only 6% (n=82) of respondents indicated that they were actively part of a residents' association.

When assessing their performance, 27% of citizens rated their ward councillor positively. This drops to 21% when assessing their residents' associations, 19% for their member of parliament and 13% for their senator. (see Figure 15). Very few citizens (less than 10% of respondents) felt that the performance of all officeholders was "very good".



Note
Positive (Good + Very Good)
Negative (Poor + Very Poor)
Neutral/Unknown (Average + Do not know)

Figure 15: Rating the Performance of Officeholders

6 Citizens' Assessment of Local Government

One objective of the CPE survey is to understand citizens' perceptions and expectations of their local government, which consists of their ward councillors and their city/rural councils. When asked to rate the overall performance of their local government, 50% (n= 631) said their performance was "Medium" since the recent elections, and 44% (n=562) felt that it was "Low".

There has been an increase in the perception of citizens who now rate the performance of local government in their first year of office since the 2023 elections as medium and high compared to the last CPE conducted before elections in 2023. In the 2023 CPE, 48% of citizens rated the performance of their local authority as medium; in the 2024 CPE, this had gone up to 50%. In the 2023 CPE, 4% of citizens rated the performance of the local authority as high. In 2024, this went up to 6% (see Figure 17).

When the data was further disaggregated and analysed across locations (rural, urban and peri-urban), the trends in terms of citizens' assessment of local authority performance remained the same. Those outside of the urban areas are twice as likely to rank their local authority performance as high compared to those in the urban areas, although it must be highlighted that this is under 10% of respondents.

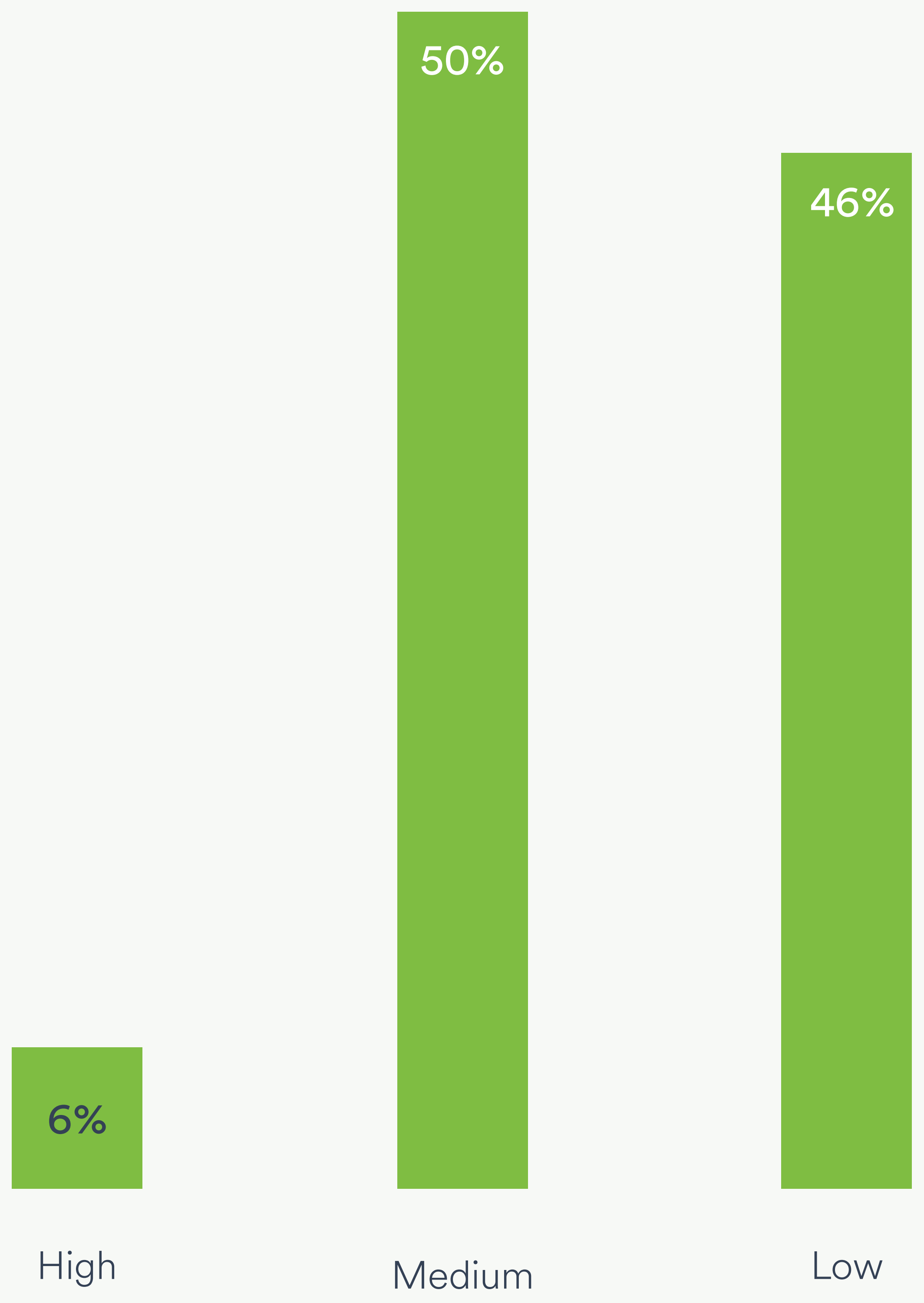


Figure 16: Rate the Performance of the Local Authority Since the Last Election (August 2023

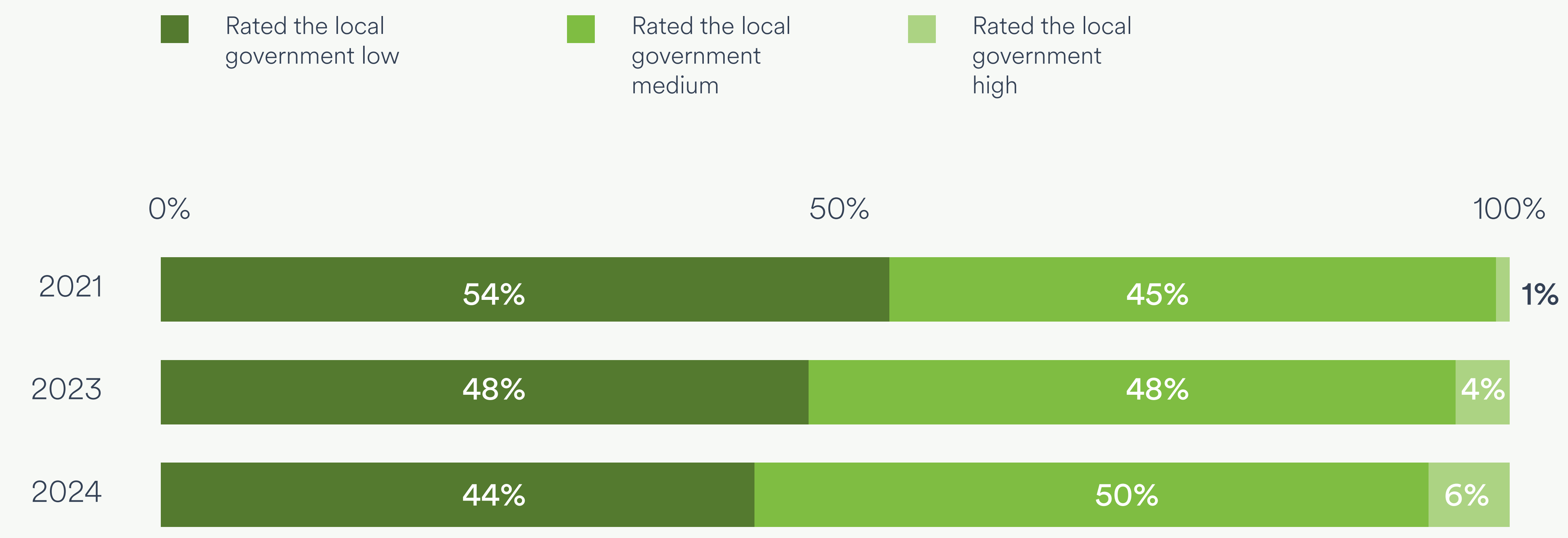


Figure 17: Citizen Assessment of Local Government Performance Since 2021

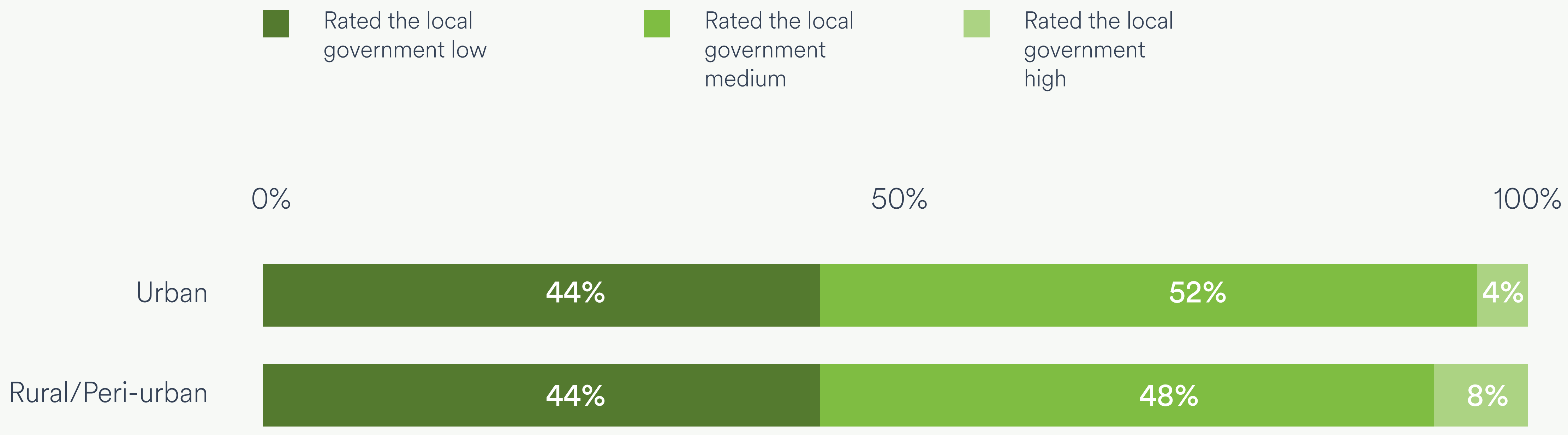


Figure 18: Citizen Ranking of Government Performance Based on Locality

When asked to rate their performance across different areas, local governments performed best in education, road maintenance, and clean water supply. It must be noted that even though these were the stronger indicators, they still scored lower than 3 out of 5. Citizens feel that local authorities performed worst in respect to street light maintenance, employment creation, and garbage disposal..

Education	– 22.0%
Road and bridge network maintenance	↗ 29.7%
Clean water and borehole provision	↗ 27.7%
Healthcare provision	– 20.8%
Food security	– 20.8%
Housing and land allocation	↘ 13.0%
Dip tank maintenace	↘ 12.1%
Sewer reticulation	↘ 11.9%
Garbage disposal	– 15.0%
Employment creation	↘ 10.9%
Streetlight maintenance	↘ 10.1%

	I do not know	Non-existent	Decreased	Remained the same	Moderately improved	Improved a lot
Education	4%	7%	20%	47%	17%	5%
Road and bridge network maintenance	2%	12%	23%	34%	25%	5%
Clean water and borehole provision	2%	14%	24%	33%	21%	7%
Healthcare provision	3%	11%	26%	40%	17%	3%
Food security	5%	16%	26%	33%	16%	5%
Housing and land allocation	10%	18%	22%	37%	11%	2%
Dip tank maintenace	17%	23%	12%	35%	9%	3%
Sewer reticulation	11%	27%	16%	35%	10%	2%
Garbage disposal	7%	29%	20%	29%	11%	4%
Employment creation	6%	28%	27%	29%	9%	2%
Streetlight maintenance	9%	36%	14%	30%	9%	1%

Figure 19: Rate the Local Government's Performance Since the 2023 Elections

Factors Affecting Effective Operation of Local Authorities

As these scores suggest, citizens are not fully satisfied with the performance of their local government, and when asked what hinders their effective performance, 36% (n=497) said corruption, 20% (n=251) felt incompetence by officeholders, 16% (n=199) identified the meddling by the central government, and another 15% said inadequate resources. The top four (4) factors provided by citizens in 2024 are similar to the 2023 CPE findings, with just an exchange between meddling by central government (which was number 3 in the 2023 CPE) and inadequate resources (which was number 4).

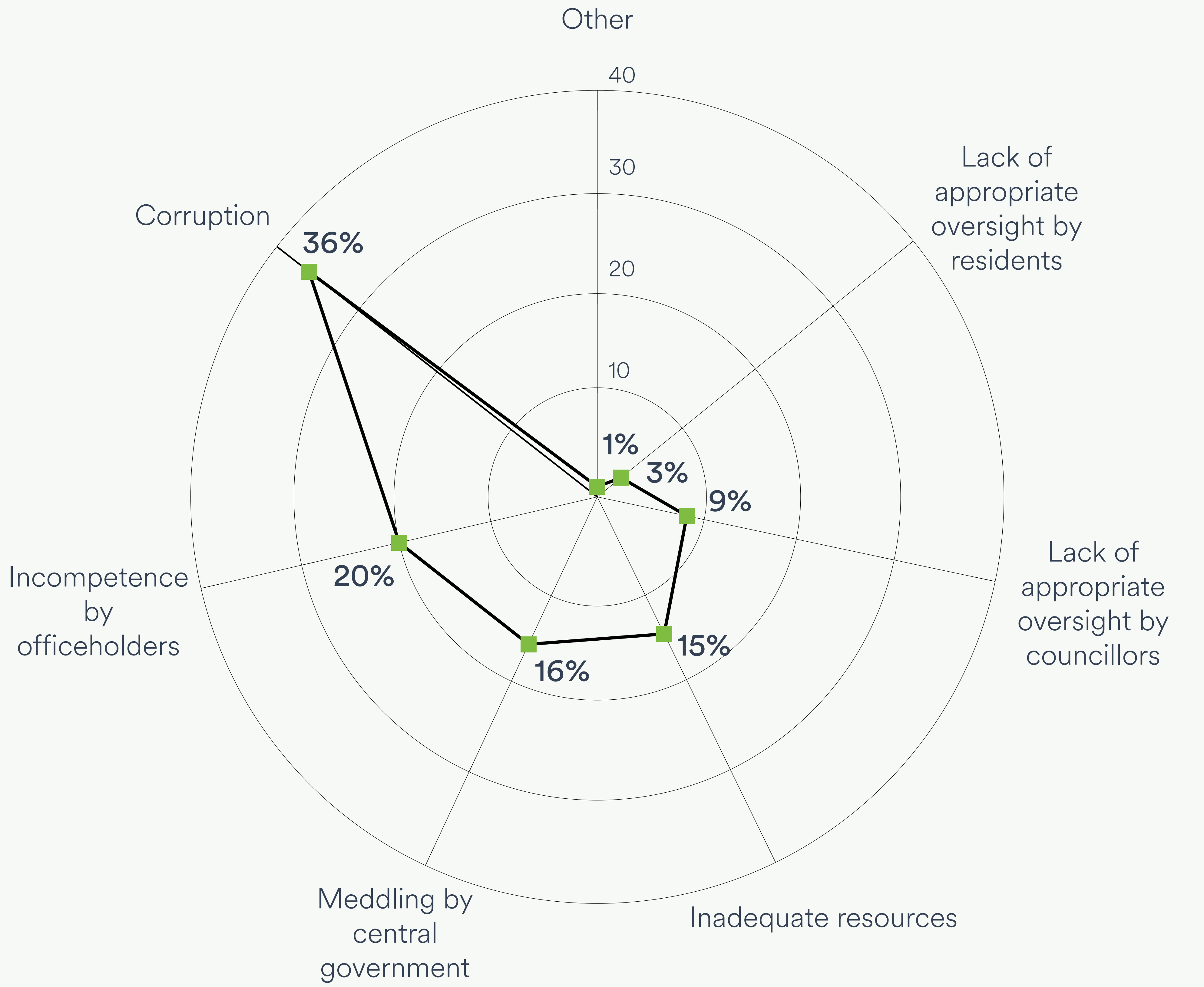


Figure 20: Hindrances to Local Government Effectiveness

Citizens' Perception of Priority Areas for Local Authorities

When citizens were asked to identify the top priorities for their local government to focus on for the next five years (See Figure 21). The top 3 priorities identified by over one-third of respondents were:

1. Clean water supply (n=594, 47%)
2. Functioning and well-equipped clinics (n=469, 37%)
3. Regular road network maintenance (n= 461, 36%)

These three (3) priorities were similar to the findings in the 2023 CPE, and this further highlights the limited improvement in these areas one year after the elections.

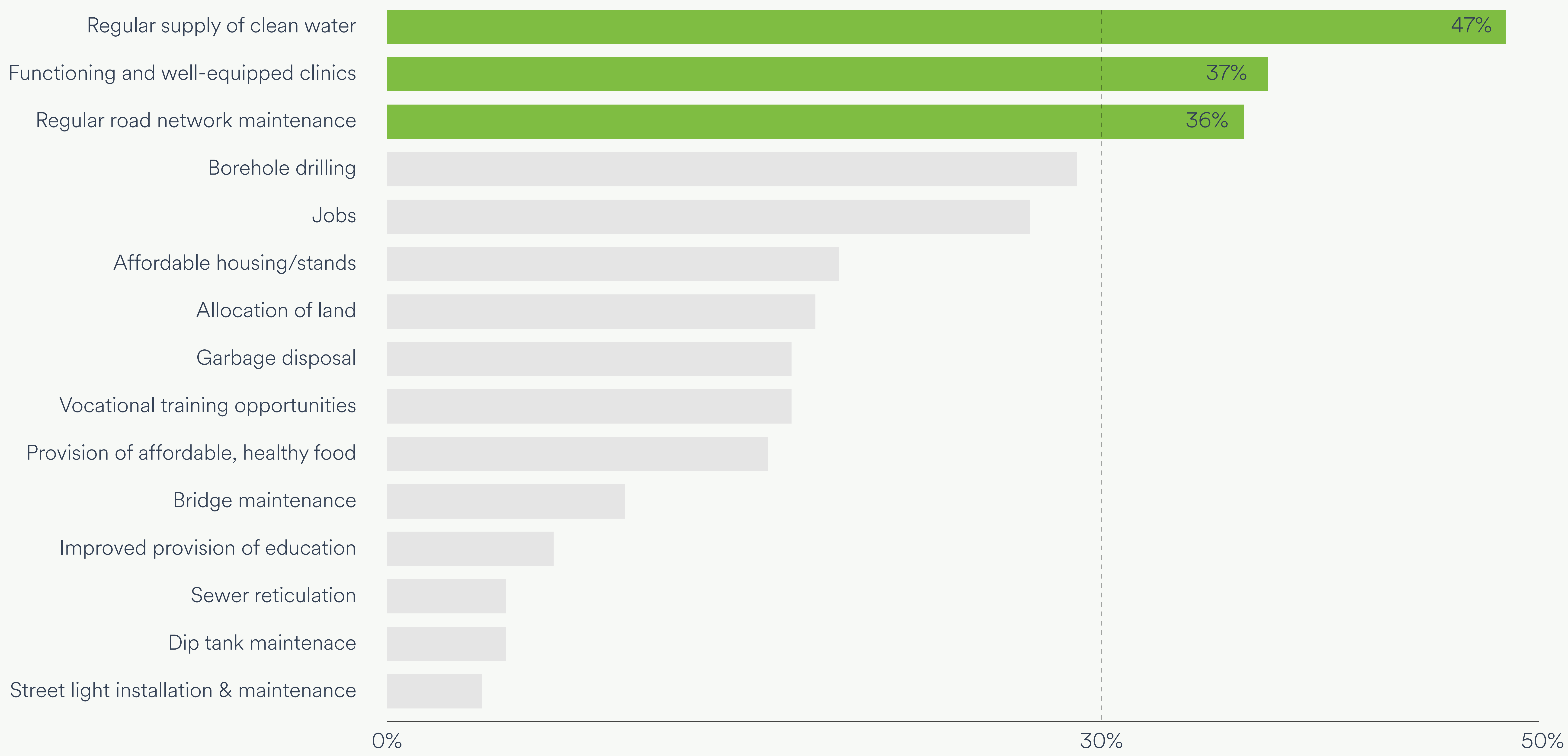


Figure 21: Local Government Priority Area

7

Citizens’ Assessment of Central Government Performance

Citizens were asked to evaluate the performance of the central government, which consists of the president, the executive and the parliament. Over half of the citizens (53%; n=680) rated the government's performance as "Low", and another 42% (n=531) rated it "Medium". Only 5% (n=61) of citizens felt that central government performance had been high since the 2023 elections.

Respondents felt that central government performed best in infrastructure development, food security and education delivery when evaluating specific government functions.. It performed worst in resuscitating industries, job creation, healthcare delivery and price stability. We asked citizens to also assess the level of corruption within central government. A significant proportion (27%) of respondents felt that the level of corruption within central government had increased a lot since the 2023 elections.

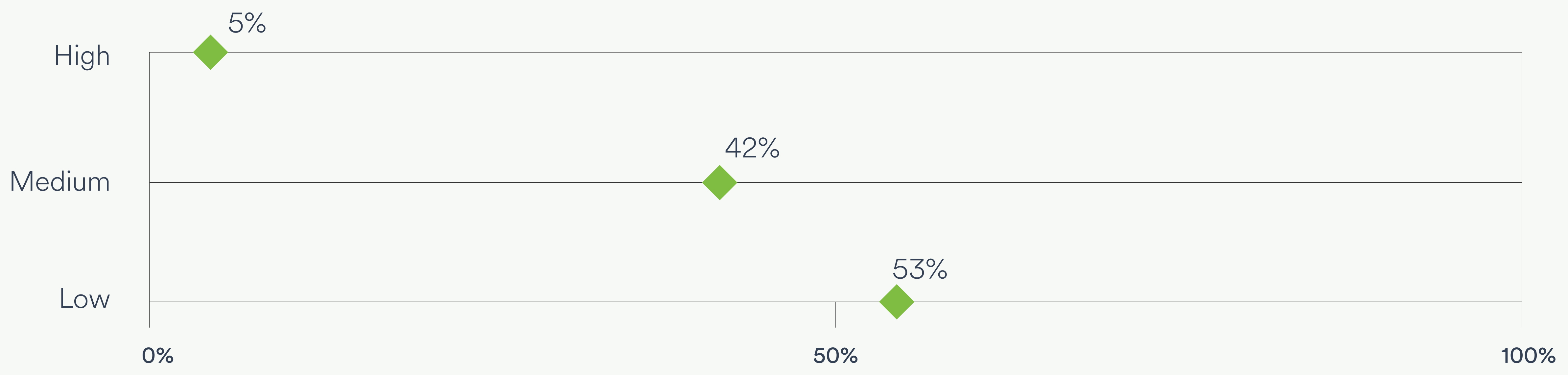


Figure 22: Rate the Performance of the Central Government Since the Last Election (August 2023)

	I do not know	Non-existent	Decreased	Remained the same	Moderately increased	Increased a lot
Affordable housing/stands	7%	19%	25%	37%	9%	2%
Resuscitating industry	6%	32%	19%	30%	11%	2%
Healthcare delivery	2%	14%	32%	36%	14%	3%
Human rights protection	7%	21%	20%	37%	11%	3%
Nation building	6%	22%	25%	34%	11%	3%
Stability of prices	2%	19%	39%	28%	9%	4%
Food security	4%	16%	29%	32%	15%	4%
Creation of jobs	4%	31%	28%	22%	11%	4%
Education delivery	3%	9%	25%	44%	14%	5%
Infrastructure development	3%	12%	19%	32%	27%	6%
Corruption	3%	14%	14%	29%	13%	27%

Figure 23: Respondents' Rating of the Central Government's Performance Since the 2023 Election

Factors Affecting Effective Operation of Central Government

Citizens are not happy with the performance of the central government.

when asked to identify one factor that hinders their effectiveness, respondents identified corruption as the top factor (44%; n=566), followed by incompetence (17%; n=212) and ineffective leadership (10%; n=122). The rating of corruption as the top factor hindering central government performance corresponds to Figure 23, where 27% (n=343) of respondents felt that corruption had increased a lot since the elections in 2023.

When asked if they felt the government had adequate resources to address their priorities, 80% (n=1'019) said "yes". Of the 253 respondents who felt there were inadequate resources, 7% (n=89) said that the government could mobilise more resources through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), 6% (n=72) from leveraging mining resources, and 5% (n=60) felt the government could reduce their expenditure.

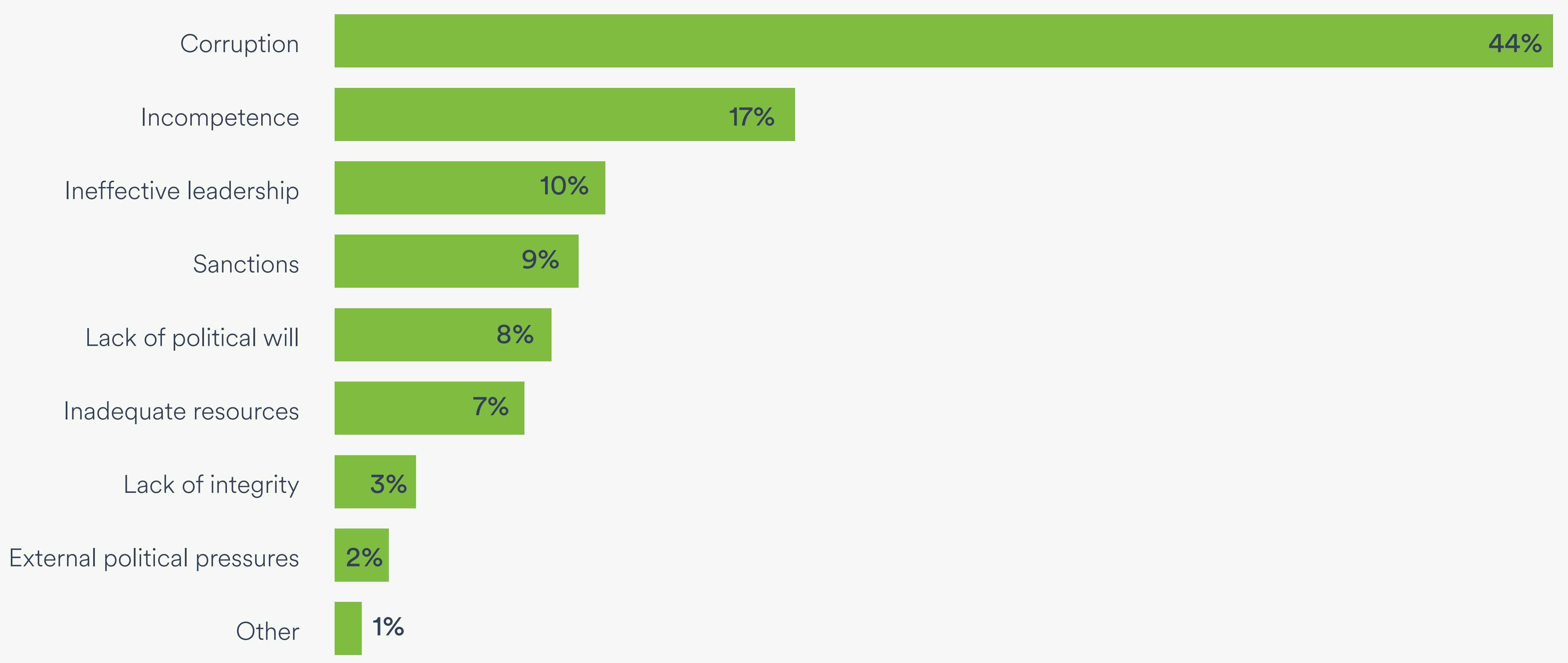


Figure 24: Hindrances to Central Government Effectiveness

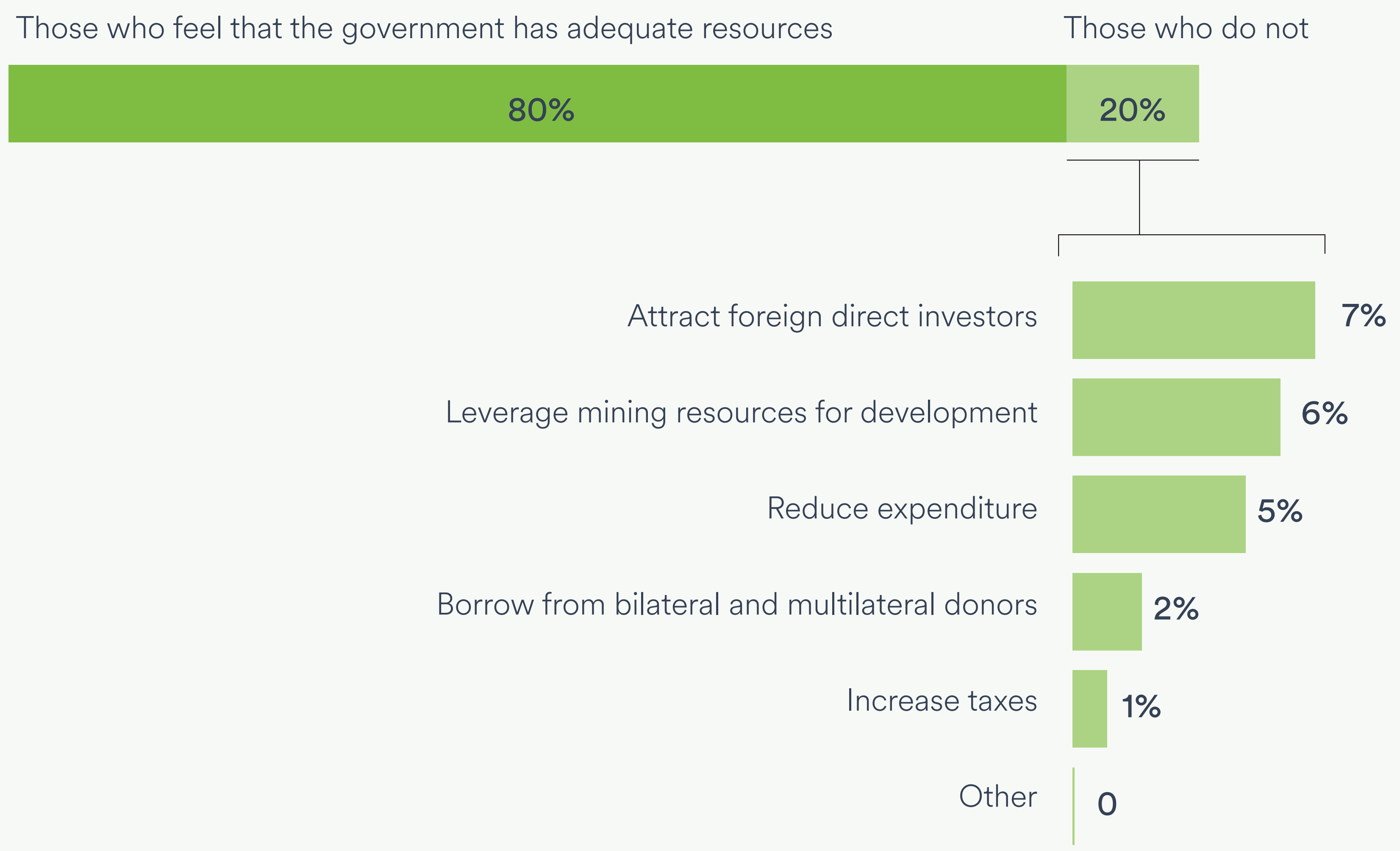


Figure 25: Opinion on Ways to Mobilise Resources

Citizens' Perception of Priority Areas for Central Government

When looking ahead at the next five (5) years, citizens identified the top priority areas for the central government as:

1. Creating employment (62%; n=791)
2. Improving health delivery (37%; n=474)
3. Stabilising prices (34%; n=429)
4. Resuscitating industry (21%; n=269)
5. Dealing with corruption (20%; n=248)

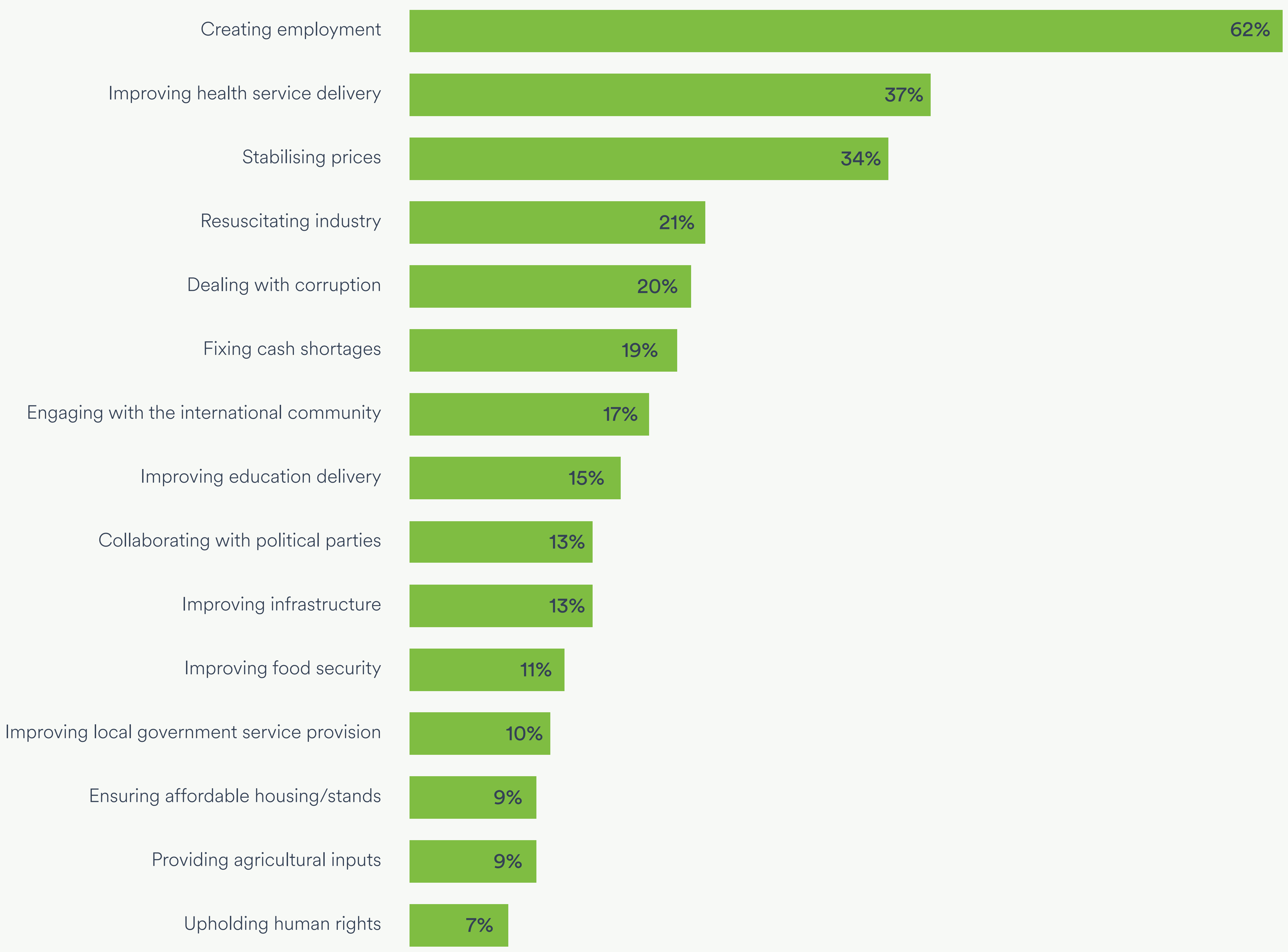


Figure 26: Central Government Priority Areas

Creating employment/Job creation has been the top priority for citizens ever since we first surveyed in 2018.

Price stabilising, resuscitating industry, dealing with corruption and health delivery have been among the top five (5) priorities over the years. In the 2023 CPE survey report, we noted that although citizens continue to view corruption as a barrier to government effectiveness, the proportion of respondents identifying it as a priority area for government has decreased since 2018. This year marks the first time since 2019 that corruption is no longer the second-highest priority; it has now fallen to the fifth position. In its place, we find improved health delivery, which has been a growing priority for citizens since COVID-19 – see Figure 27.

2018	2019	2021	2023	2024
Employement	Stabilising Prices ↗	Employement	Employement —	Employement —
Stabilising Prices	Corruption ↗	Corruption —	Corruption —	Health Delivery ↗
Cash Shortages	Cash Shortages —	Industry ↗	Health Delivery ↗	Stabilising Prices ↗
Corruption	Industry ↗	Stabilising Prices ↘	Stabilising Prices —	Industry ↗
Industry	International Re-engagement ↗	Health Delivery —	Industry ↘	Corruption ↘
Health Delivery	Health Delivery —	International Re-engagement ↘	Infrastructure ↗	Cash Shortages ↗
Infrastructure	Political Party Collaboration	Food Security ↗	Education Delivery	International Re-engagement ↗
International Re-engagement	Food Security ↗	Cash Shortages ↘	International Re-engagement ↘	Education Delivery ↘
Food Security	Infrastructure ↘	Infrastructure —	Cash Shortages ↘	Political Party Collaboration

Figure 27: Citizens' Priorities for Central Government 2018-2024

8 Citizens’ Perceptions of What a Successful Zimbabwe Would Look Like

As Zimbabwe moves forward, it is important to understand what citizens consider to be the indicator of success for their country. The definition of success for almost two-thirds of the citizens surveyed involves:

i. Many of us are in well-paying jobs (26%; n=336)

ii. Industries are open and exporting (17%; n=211)

iii. Stable and affordable prices of goods (15%; n=189)

iv. Our clinics and hospitals can save lives (14%; n=181)

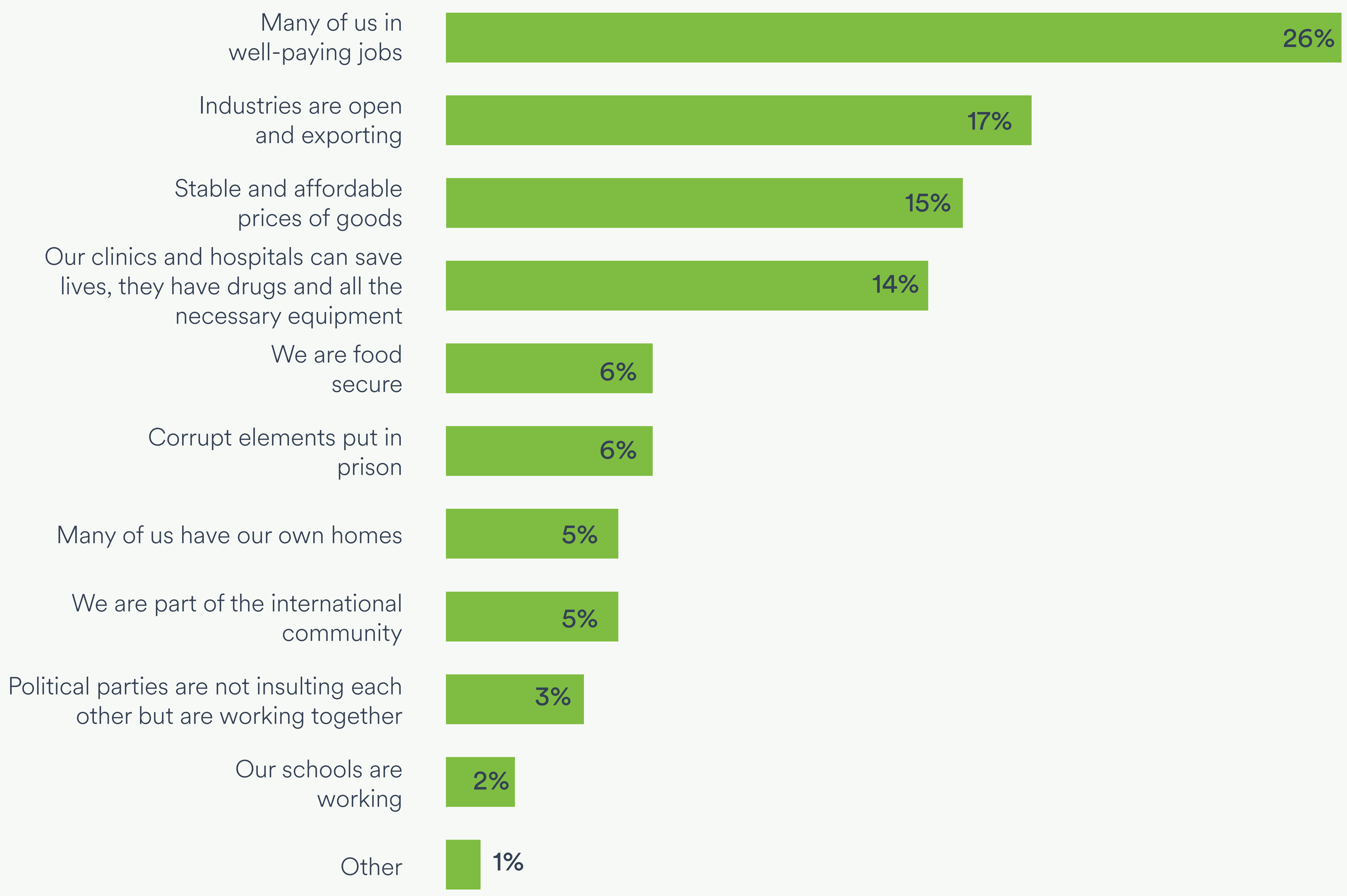


Figure 28: Definition of Success for Zimbabwe

Across all demographics, over two-thirds of respondents felt that the definition of success involves the top four (4) indicators, as noted above. Those least likely to identify well-paying jobs as an indicator are those above the age of 35. For the older generation (over 65 years old) and those who specify they cannot read and write, food security becomes a bigger priority (approximately 10%). Those who are already employed see the effective healthcare sector as a key indicator.

With many of us and our families in well-paying jobs, industries thriving and exporting, stable and affordable prices of goods, and hospitals and clinics effectively saving lives, Zimbabwe is truly on a path to prosperity.

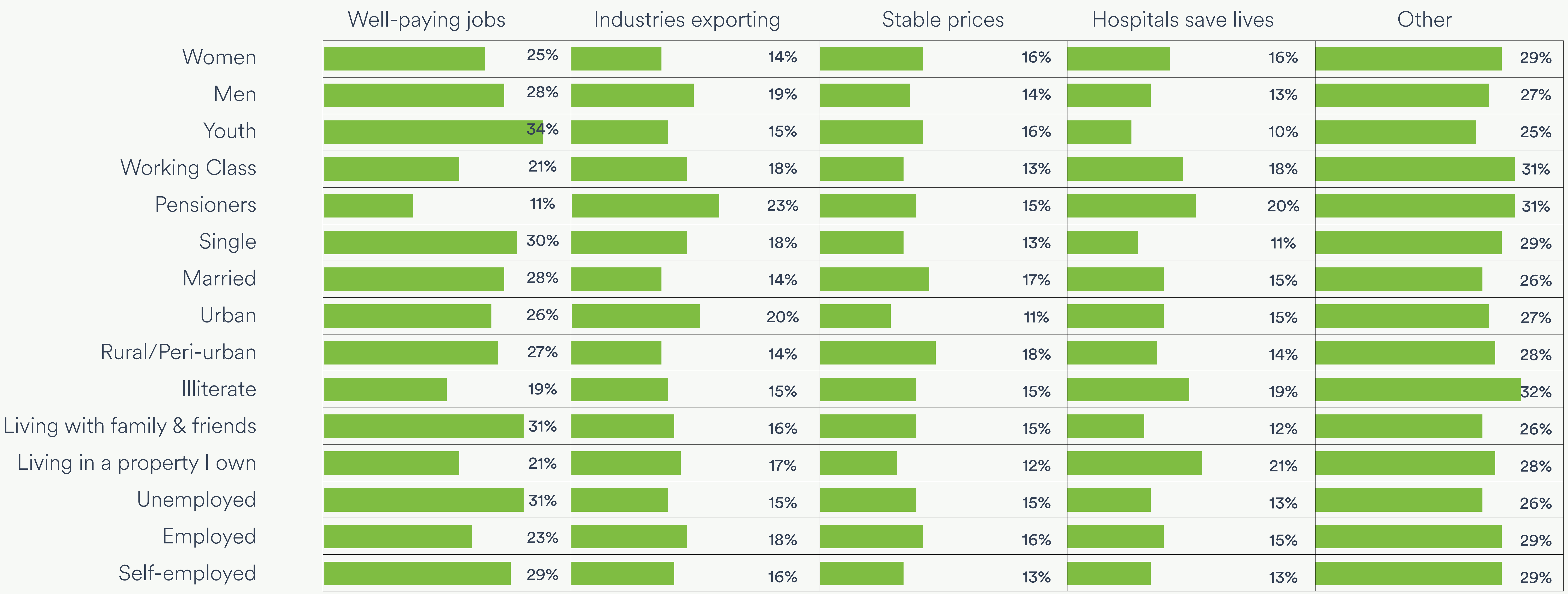


Figure 29: Definition of Success Across Demographics

9 Discussion and Conclusion – What does this all mean?

The 2024 Citizens' Perceptions and Expectations (CPE) Report has underscored some concerning trends previously identified in earlier evaluations, which are crucial for enhancing the quality of democracy. A persistent issue is the overall low level of citizen participation in policy formulation processes. In our past evaluations conducted during the first term of the Second Republic, only an average of 25% of respondents reported involvement in policy formulation. This trend highlights a significant engagement gap and underscores the necessity for more inclusive strategies, which are vital for a robust and inclusive democracy. The issue of exclusion is particularly pronounced at the central government level, where citizens feel their voices are less heard compared to local government discussions. This disparity suggests that while there is potential for inclusion, it is not being fully realised at both national and local levels.

Despite the low participation rates, citizens reported better engagement in local governance processes compared to national-level ones. This could be attributed to more frequent interactions and a stronger sense of community. Local governments and representatives appear more accessible and responsive to citizens than those at the national level. Some of the structures and processes facilitating local engagement could serve as models for national strategies, emphasising the importance of proximity and direct communication in public processes post-elections. It is concerning that this pattern of low participation and engagement in public processes persists into the second term of the Second Republic. Additionally, 65% of respondents felt there was no scope for participation in public processes, up from 60% in the 2023 CPE. This reflects a perception of business-as-usual post-elections regarding citizen inclusion and engagement in public processes.

One year after the 2023 elections, where 64% of respondents indicated they voted, the low levels of participation in public processes suggest that citizens have once again been reduced to mere voters. The government needs to adequately invest in processes that promote public participation for co-production and co-creation.

There is continued disappointment with the performance of both local and central governments. This potentially reflects how government entities continue to overlook citizens' concerns. As with the previous four CPEs conducted between 2018 and 2023, citizens predominantly rate the performance of local and central governments as 'low' to 'medium.' The poor quality of performance remains consistent, even when respondents are disaggregated by rural and urban locations.

Citizens acknowledged moderate improvements in road and bridge networks (local authorities) and infrastructure development (central government). However, these improvements do not align with the top four (4) priority areas that citizens believe the government should focus on. Citizens prioritise improved livelihoods and opportunities, such as employment creation, industry resuscitation, price stabilisation, and health and sanitation improvements, including access to clean water and well-functioning clinics. This mismatch between government focus and citizens' priorities results in dissatisfaction with both local and central government performance and reflects a lack of engagement between citizens and elected officials.

In the 2024 CPE, we introduced questions to assess the level of association life among Zimbabwean citizens. Apart from religious groups, which 55% of the sample indicated they were part of, there was limited engagement in other forms of associations. Across various social, economic, and political associations listed in the survey, less than 13% of respondents reported participation.

This highlights challenges in another critical tenet of democracy beyond elections: citizen-to-citizen interaction and engagement is very low. Vibrant citizen formations or associations provide evidence of quality interaction and engagement. However, outside of religious formations, citizens' interactions with each other are limited. As we continue conducting CPE surveys, this will remain an area of focus and assessment.

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