

Feeling the pressure?

Kenyan citizens' views and experiences of economic stress

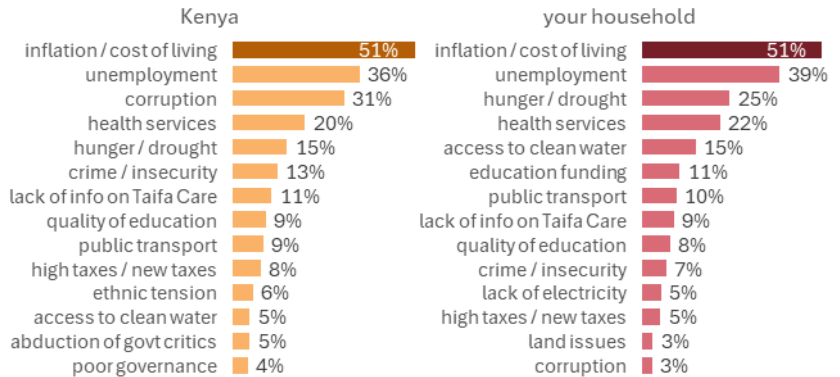
This brief explores the issue of economic pressure, from the perspective of citizens. The data comes from Twaweza's *Sauti za Wananchi* survey, a nationally-representative, high-frequency mobile phone panel survey of public opinion and citizens' experiences. Further details are available from www.twaweza.org/sauti.

Insight 1. Kenyans rank the cost of living and unemployment as the country's biggest challenges

Citizens see economic challenges - specifically the cost of living and unemployment - as the biggest challenges facing both their own households and the country as a whole.

Corruption, health services and hunger / drought also rank high on the list.

What are the three most serious problems facing Kenya / your household today?



Source: Sauti za Wananchi special panel round 13, March-April 2025

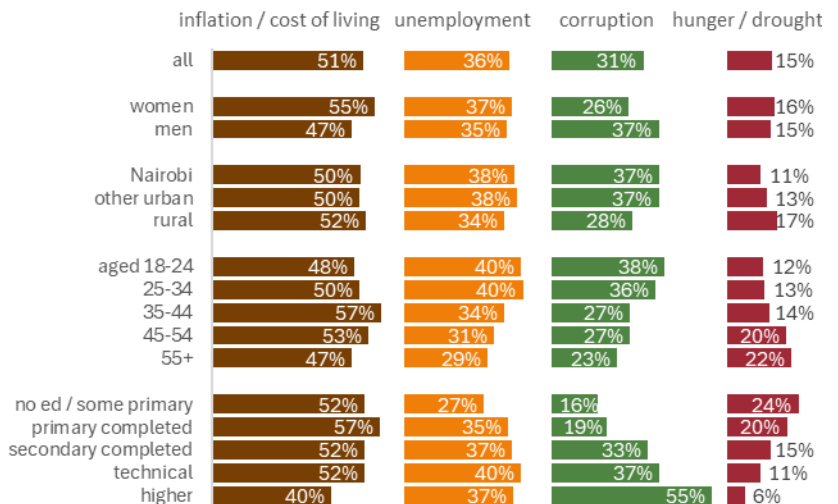
Insight 2. Different demographic groups have differing lists of priority concerns

While the cost of living and unemployment are high on citizens' list of national concerns for all major demographic groups, there are some substantial differences.

In particular, better-educated citizens (also a good measure of economic status) and younger citizens are more likely than others to point to corruption as one of the country's biggest challenges.

Conversely, less well-educated citizens are much more likely than others to highlight hunger / drought as a major challenge.

What are the three most serious problems facing Kenya today?



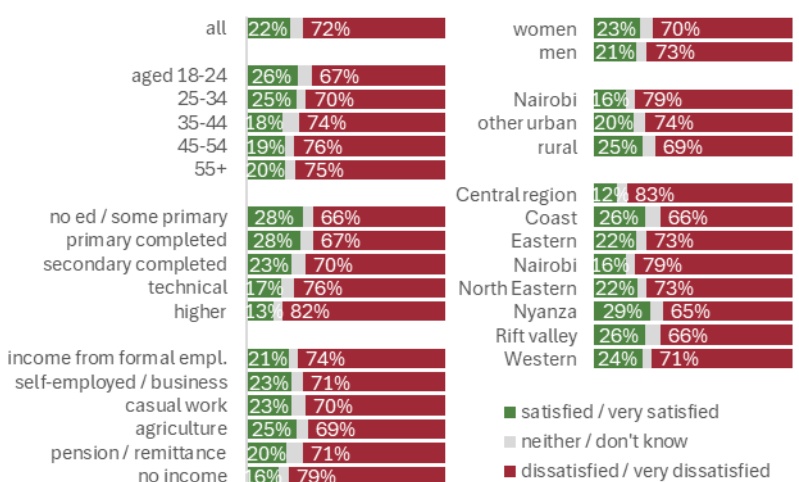
Source: Sauti za Wananchi special panel round 13, March-April 2025

Insight 3. A majority of citizens are dissatisfied with how the country is addressing the cost of living

Three out of four citizens (72%) are dissatisfied with how well the country is doing at addressing the cost of living.

This dissatisfaction is higher among older citizens, better-educated citizens, and residents of Nairobi and Central Region.

How satisfied are you with how the country is addressing the cost of living?



Source: Sauti za Wananchi special panel round 13, March-April 2025

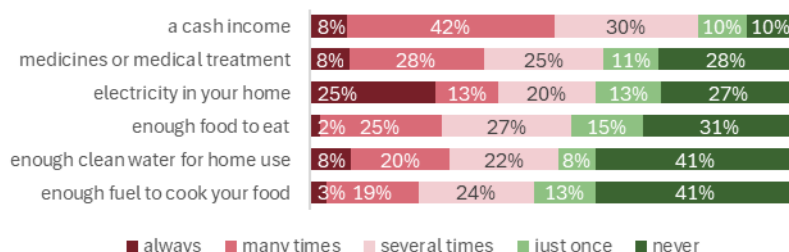
Insight 4. Most citizens had to cope without basic essentials several times in the previous year

Most citizens had to find ways of surviving without basic essentials several times in the previous year. This includes eight out of ten (80%) who had to cope without any cash income several times or more.

Six out of ten had to cope several times without medicines or medical treatment (61%), and the same number had to cope without electricity at home (58%).

A majority had to survive several times without having enough food (54%), and almost as many had to go without clean water (50%) or without sufficient fuel to cook their food (46%).

Over the past year, how often have you or your family gone without the following?



Source: Sauti za Wananchi special panel round 13, March-April 2025

Insight 5. Coping without essentials is common to all demographic groups, though it hits some much harder than others

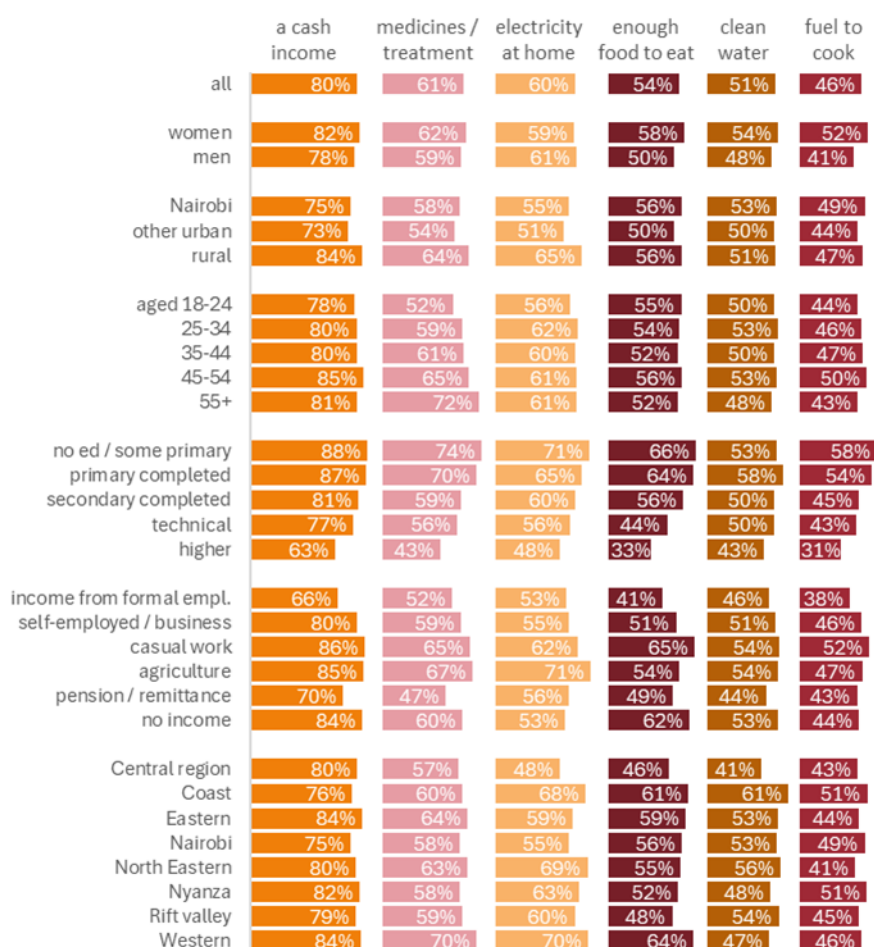
Across all major demographic groups, Kenyans had to find ways of coping without basic essentials in the previous year. However, there are significant differences in the frequency of this experience.

In particular, there are strong links with level of education - considered a good approximate measure of economic status. Less well-educated citizens are much more likely than others to have had to cope without all the essentials included here: cash income, medicines, electricity, food, clean water and fuel.

Those who earn their income primarily from formal employment are less likely than others to experience these forms of economic stress in the previous year, and residents of Central Region are less likely to have had to cope without food, water or fuel.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, older citizens are more likely to have challenges accessing medication or medical treatment - likely due to increased need among this group.

% who have gone without the following several times or more in the past year:



Source: Sauti za Wananchi special panel round 13, March-April 2025

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Sauti za Wananchi

