

October 2019

CITIZEN SATISFACTION

WITH THE QUALITY OF LIFE
IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY
AND SERVICES RENDERED
BY LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

OPINION POLL REPORT

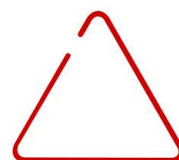


TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Methodological notes | 3 |
| 2. Description of the sample | 4 |
| 3. Summary | 5 |
| 4. General perceptions of the municipality and municipal institutions..... | 9 |
| 5. Contacts of members of the public with municipal services and satisfaction with their operation | 13 |
| 6. Perception of the extent of corruption at the local authority | 21 |
| 7. Directions and priorities of municipal development | 23 |
| 8. Local authority and economic development | 26 |
| 9. Satisfaction with areas of daily life..... | 28 |
| 10.Perceptions of safety..... | 32 |
| 11. Perceptions of living standards | 33 |
| 12. Conclusion | 36 |
| 13.Trends..... | 41 |

1. METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Opinion poll was realised within the programme “**Enhancing Good Governance and Social Inclusion for Municipal Development – Swiss PRO**”, which is supported by the Government of Switzerland in cooperation with the Government of Serbia, and implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in partnership with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM). The survey was carried out by **CeSID**, between **15 March and 20 April 2019** in the municipality of **50 municipalities and cities in Serbia**.

Local authorities were selected for this survey based on the criteria of **(1) demographics; (2) economic development; (3) unemployment rate; (4) education; (5) type of local authority (municipality/city); (6) Nomenclature of Territorial Units for statistics (NUTS); (7) number of local authority staff**. As such, the local authorities surveyed were: *Arilje, Babušnica, Bajina Bašta, Bela Palanka, Bogatić, Bojnik, Boljevac, Bor, Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Doljevac, Gornji Milanovac, Jagodina, Knić, Knjaževac, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Lapovo, Lebane, Leskovac, Loznica, Mali Zvornik, Malo Crniće, Mionica, Niš, Nova Varoš, Novi Pazar, Petrovac na Mlavi, Pirot, Priboj, Rača, Raška, Ražanj, Sjenica, Smederevo, Sokobanja, Svilajnac, Šabac, Topola, Trgovište, Trstenik, Ub, Užice, Velika Plana, Veliko Gradište, Vladičin Han, Vlasotince, Vranje, Vrnjačka Banja, and Zaječar*.

The total sample on which the survey was carried out numbered 11,387 individuals. The representative sample was constructed based on the size of each local authority. A total of 200 respondents were polled in communities with up to 30,000 inhabitants (31 in total); 250 in communities with between 30,000 and 60,000 residents (8); and 300 in communities with more than 60,000 inhabitants (11). For the final report, each LSG was weighted by population.

The survey instrument used was a questionnaire consisting of 89 items developed in collaboration with the client. Interviews were conducted **face-to-face**, in direct contact with respondents. During enumerator training, instructors insisted on adherence to two important rules that, in addition to the structure of the sample, together have a major impact on the representativeness of the survey: *order of steps* and the *first birthday rule*. Adherence to the order of steps ensures that an enumerator can comprehensively cover each survey point, whilst the first birthday rule prevents responses only from members of the public who first answer the door when an enumerator visits. Enumerators were required to interview the member of each household aged 18 or above whose birthday came soonest after the date of the enumerator’s visit. This also ensured the representativeness of respondents by gender, education, and age.

In addition to the survey of residents, CeSID also conducted **in-depth interviews** that sought to capture detailed and qualitative information about communication with the municipal/city authorities, operation of local services, corruption, local development, and resident participation in local decision-making. **Representatives of media outlets, businesses, and civil society organisations (CSOs)** took part in these interviews. Depending on population, **4, 6, or 8 interviews** were organised in each community – total of **260**.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

The following categories of respondents were covered based on the methodology established for the study:

Structure of respondents by gender: 48% women, 52% men.

Respondent age: 18 to 29, 14%; 30 to 39, 15%, 40 to 49, 18%, 50 to 59, 20%, 60 to 69, 19%, 70 and above, 14%.

Structure of respondents by education: primary school or lower, 19%; two- or three-year secondary school, 25%; four-year secondary school, 39%; college/university, 15%; school/university student, 2%.

Respondent occupation: housewife, 13%, farmer, 8%, unskilled or semi-skilled worker, 12%; skilled or highly-skilled worker, 31%; technician, 17%; local civil servant, 1%; civil servant (excluding with local authority), 3%; school/university student, 4%; professional, 9%; employer, 2%.

Current employment status: employed with an employer, 27%; business owner, 2%; employed with local administration, 1%; employed with central administration, 5%; self-employed, 5%; unemployed, 33%; inactive (retired or unable to work), 27%.

Monthly income per member of household: Up to RSD 10,000, 18%; RSD 10,000 to 20,000, 31%; RSD 20,000 to 40,000, 22%; RSD 40,000 to 60,000, 5%; RSD 60,000 to 100,000, 1%; would not say, 23%.

Respondent ethnicity: Serbian, 91%; Bosniak, 6%; Roma, 1%; Albanian, 1%; other, 1%.

3. SUMMARY

➤ General perceptions of the local authority and its institutions

Few respondents (not more than 4%) believe themselves to be 'well aware' of what their local authority does. Another 31% feel they are 'aware to the extent they need to be', **with most feeling 'insufficiently aware'** (as reported by one-third, or 33%, of those polled). Few also feel the local authority takes residents' interests into account 'completely' (5%). Nevertheless, **most respondents (41%) see the local authority as 'mostly' taking their interests into consideration, with a not insignificant proportion believing it mostly 'does not' do so (32%)** or that it does not do so 'at all' and does not provide appropriate services to members of the public (12%).

There are no major differences between perceptions of the political situation at the national, regional, and local levels; **the greatest proportion of those polled reported the situation was 'good'** (between 41 and 47 percent), with a substantial percentage also claiming the situation was 'poor' (27 to 31 percent). Respondents who feel the situation is 'very poor' (between 9 and 10 percent) outnumber those who believe it is 'very good' (4%). Nevertheless, those polled feel national politics are in a somewhat better state than local ones, which, in turn, are slightly better than at the regional level.

Amongst local institutions, most residents trust the Mayor and local administration (civil servants). The respondents expressed more confidence in in local media than the in web sites; and political parties and CSOs are all trusted equally. **Few respondents are aware, and even fewer involved in, participatory activities that permit residents to engage with the local authority** (referendums, public hearings, public consultations, and voluntary local taxes). Depending on the activity, 86 and 89 percent of those polled reported never having heard of these at all in their municipality or city. Between 9 and 12 percent reported being familiar but not having participated. A mere 1 to 2 percent claimed to have taken part.

➤ Contacts of members of the public with municipal services and satisfaction with their operation

The greatest proportion of those polled **feel that there has been no change in the performance of city/municipal services relative to one year previously (as reported by 46%)**. By contrast, **34% believe there has been improvement relative to last year**; respondents who perceived change for the better were more likely to have last interacted with a local service one month or one week before the survey.

Visits to the local authority's offices are infrequent, as borne out by the finding that **the greatest proportion of those polled (37%) last visited the local government's premises one year**

previously. Satisfaction with the performance of local services outweighs dissatisfaction. ***The greatest satisfaction was reported with the general administration department (where a total of 38% of those polled claimed to be either ‘completely’ or ‘partially’ satisfied with its performance).*** That being said, most respondents claimed not to have had any contact in the past six months with local units such as general administration (43%), tax department (57%), social affairs (60%), inspections (74%), and construction and urban planning (72%). Similarly to the previous finding, ***general administration was seen as the best performing department by most of those polled (56%).*** Another one-fifth of all respondents cited the tax department as the most effective.

Respondents who feel progress has been made by local departments mainly cite shorter times required for interaction (29% reported there had been savings of time). Nevertheless, the greatest proportion of those polled believe there has been no change in terms of less time (40%) or money (44%) required, as well as in terms of service quality (43%). ***The greatest proportion of those polled (36%) believe waiting times are acceptable when interacting with the local government.*** By contrast, one-fifth feel interactions can be completed quickly, with one in seven claiming procedures require much waiting and are a waste of time.

The residents see lack of information about procedures, documentation, and the like as the greatest obstacle in communicating with their local administration: this view is reported by 22% of those polled. Slightly fewer (one-fifth) claim complex procedures and excessive documentation are the greatest problems.

Most of those polled reported satisfaction with how local civil servants treat members of the public, with the largest percentages citing the courtesy (43%), professionalism (39%), and expertise (38%) of local staff. The greatest proportion of respondents reported never having had grounds to complain against a local civil servant (80%, as opposed to the 20% who claimed to have had grounds to complain). Those who did have grounds generally chose not to lodge grievances due to ***not knowing who to complain to (54%),*** because the complaints procedure took long to complete (25%), and because all civil servants are perceived as the same and residents do not trust anyone to actually address their complaint (15%).

The greatest number of those polled cited local television channels (28%) and national TV stations (25%) as their first choice for getting news about the local authority. By contrast, the most common ***second choices*** were ***social networks (25%) and local television channels (23%).***

Most residents did not know or could not tell what the local assembly should improve to facilitate public scrutiny of its activities (27%). Those who did have an opinion mainly cited ***more frequent assembly sessions in local community councils (17%),*** and, to a somewhat lesser extent (15%), allowing public access to assembly sessions.

➤ Perception of the extent of corruption at the local authority

Most of those polled had nothing to say about whether local civil servants were corrupt. Those who did generally feel 'few' civil servants are corrupt (16%). ***The vast majority (74%) denied ever having used connections to facilitate their dealings with the local government, with 22% reporting they had relied on relatives or friends*** working for the local authority. The remaining respondents cited local officials, the Mayor, or ruling party politicians. ***An even greater proportion denied ever having paid a local civil official extra in exchange for a service (89%), whereas 11% admitted to having given small gifts such as coffee or drinks.*** A very small number (fewer than 1%) reported having paid a cash bribe.

➤ Directions and priorities of local development

Most respondents believe that ***agriculture should drive local development (33%), with light industry coming second by frequency of responses (21%).*** Further, if the residents were allowed to choose priority areas for investment, most would opt to ***improve youth policy and opportunities for young people (13%).*** The findings show three times fewer of those polled would invest into educational institutions, such as schools and nursery schools (4%) than in healthcare (12%). As expected, the youngest respondents, as well as school and university students, would prioritise youth policy, with elderly residents more focused on healthcare.

To find out more about the directions and priorities for local development, we examined the extent to which local residents were aware of the allocation of their local authority's budget. ***The greatest proportion reported being completely unfamiliar with the budget policy of their municipality or city (84%) or its budgeting priorities;*** the, who claimed to be aware of these arrangements, were divided into two groups: ***those who agree with how the budget is allocated (8%)*** and ***those who disagree with this (8%).*** An additional ***14% of those polled reported they were satisfied with how the local budget was managed,*** whilst ***19% claimed dissatisfaction.*** Again, most respondents were ignorant of how the local budget was allocated (67%). In general, men and university graduates were more likely to be aware of budgeting priorities and to disagree with them.

➤ Local authority and economic development

Local residents are the most optimistic about the national economy: here, 49% claimed the situation was either 'good' or 'very good'. By contrast, the local and regional situation was seen as identical, with ***38% each viewing it as 'good' or 'very good'.*** The greatest proportion of respondents who felt the situation was 'very poor' shared this view for the local level (14%).

The residents believe that ***local governments do not do enough to promote private enterprise***. As few as ***4% of those polled believe their local authority does enough to provide start-up capital***, with ***6% each*** sharing the same view for the remaining three dimensions assessed (*raising awareness for starting one's own business, reforming permitting regulations and procedures, and improving infrastructure*).

➤ ***Satisfaction with areas of daily life***

The residents were also asked to rate their satisfaction with particular dimensions of day-to-day life in their community. ***Satisfaction outweighed dissatisfaction*** in this area. Disaffection was mainly reported for public transportation (urban and suburban) and the availability of parking spaces. Residents were the happiest with the availability of retail outlets (where 66% claimed 'complete' or 'partial' satisfaction'). In the differentiating question, which asked residents to choose only one issue, most reported ***dissatisfaction with water supply and sewerage, as well as with the quality of healthcare services***.

➤ ***Perceptions of safety***

Another important aspect of residents' subjective attitudes towards the quality of life is their sense of security. In general, the respondents mainly reported feeling safe in their communities: ***79% of those polled reported being either 'completely safe' or 'mostly' so, with as few as 3% claiming to be 'completely unsafe'***. ***Crime and poor infrastructure***, such as unlit, unsafe, or potholed streets, top the list of reasons why residents feel unsafe.

➤ ***Perceptions of living standards***

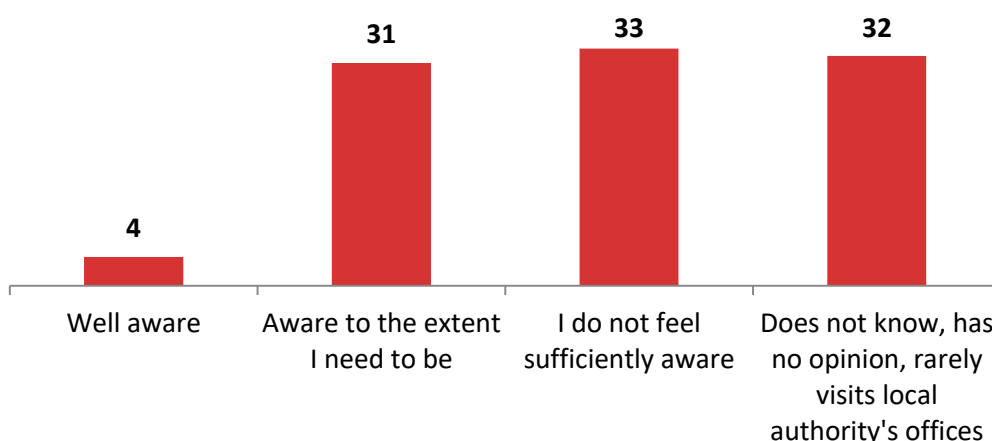
When respondents were asked about their subjective perceptions of the living standards enjoyed by themselves and their families, ***a total of 13% of those polled reported their quality of life was 'good', with another 29% claiming 'mediocre' living standards***. An additional ***35% feel their living standards are 'tolerable', one-fifth claim these are 'barely tolerable', with a final 30% reporting their quality of life is 'intolerable'***. In addition, relative to three years previously, ***60% of those polled claimed their living standards were the same as before***. By contrast, ***those who feel their quality of life has deteriorated (21%) outnumber those reporting improvement (17%)***. Respondents who claim their living standards are poorer than before mainly belong to vulnerable groups (those with low educational attainment, manual workers, farmers, and those aged 50 to 59). ***One-fifth of all respondents believe living standards in their community are lower than in 'most' other places***, with 12% claiming the situation is worse in their town or city than 'anywhere' else.

4. GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE MUNICIPALITY AND MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS

The first section will present findings of the extent to which respondents are aware of what their local authority does, since being informed is a central precondition for being able to objectively and reliably assess the performance of the local government and its services. **Few respondents** (not more than 4%) **believe themselves to be 'well aware' of what their local authority does**. Another 31% feel they are 'aware to the extent they need to be', **with most feeling 'insufficiently aware' (as reported by one-third, or 33%, of those polled)**. A final 32% of those surveyed could not answer or had no opinion.

Some differences are in evidence here based on respondents' social and demographic characteristics, in particular gender. Men were thus more likely to report being 'well aware' of what the local authority does than women, whilst women were much more likely to have no opinion as they rarely visited the local government's offices. University graduates were also much better informed, whilst those with the lowest levels of educational attainment were more likely to report no opinion about this issue. As expected, local civil servants were the best informed, with housewives and school/university students the least aware of these issues.

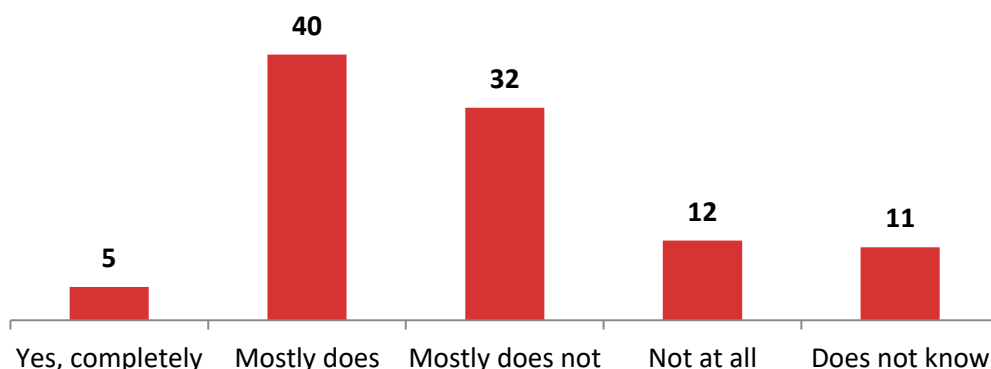
Chart 4.1. *Do you feel you are sufficiently aware of what your municipality does? (%)*



The respondents were also asked about whether the local authority took their interests and needs into account. As few as 5% believe their local government does so 'completely', but **most, 40%, feel the local authority 'mostly' takes their interests into consideration**. In addition, **nearly one-third of those polled (32%) believe that they and their interests are 'mostly' not taken into consideration**, with 12% feeling the local government does not address their needs 'at all'. A final 11% could not answer this question.

Men were more likely to voice positive opinions in this regard than women, especially office workers (including staff of local and central authorities) and those aged 40 to 49.

Chart 4.2. *Does the local authority take the public's interests into consideration and provide services appropriate to the public's needs? (%)*



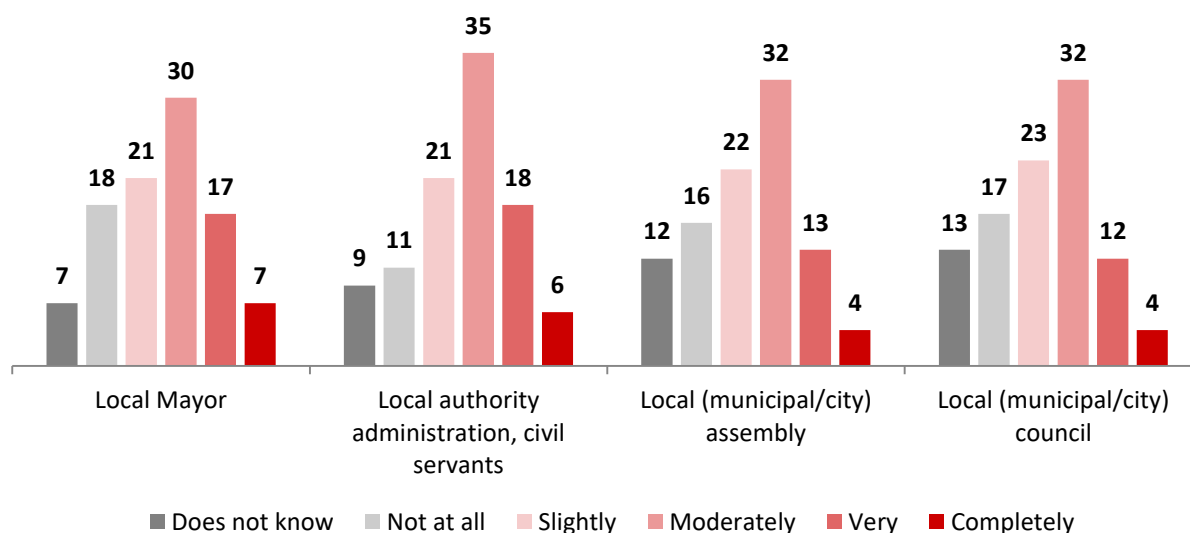
Of all local bodies, the highest degree of trust was reported for the Mayor and the local administration (civil servants), where 25 and 24 percent of those polled, respectively, claimed 'much' or 'very much' trust. The local assembly is trusted by 18% of those polled. The municipal/city council enjoys the confidence of the fewest residents (16%). Most respondents reported 'moderate' trust in all four institutions.

Interestingly, ***most of those who claimed no trust whatsoever reported this view for the Mayor.*** The fact that the Mayor is at the same time mistrusted and trusted by the largest proportion of those polled reveals the high expectations of this office: it is highly personalised, with resident holding the Mayor responsible for both the success and the failure of their local government.

The respondents also reported slightly greater trust in local media (22%) than web sites and social networks (20%). Political parties and CSOs are trusted 'much' or 'very much' by 12% of those polled each.

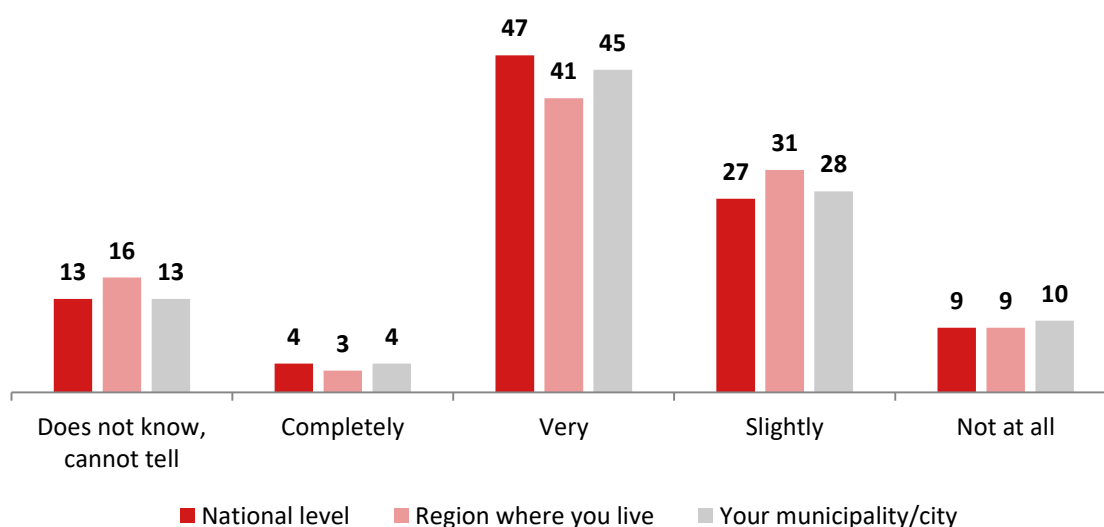
Women were more likely to express confidence in these institutions than men. Respondents with the lowest educational attainment (primary school or lower) were also more likely to report trust. Manual occupations, such as unskilled and semi-skilled workers, have traditionally shown above-average confidence in institutions, with the exception of the local administration, which is more likely to be trusted by civil servants. Farmers reported above-average confidence in the Mayor.

Chart 4.3. Trust in local institutions (%)



As few as 4% of those polled feel the political situation at the national, regional, and local level is 'very good'. **The greatest proportion believe the political situation is 'good', as reported by 47% of those polled for the central level, 41% for the region, and 45% for the city or municipality.** At the opposite end of the scale, the political situation is perceived as 'poor' by 27% for the national level, 31% for the region, and 28% for the local level. The situation is seen as 'very poor' by 9% each at the central and the national level, and by 10% for the local level. The conclusion here is that respondents perceive the political situation as best at the level of Serbia, followed by their city or municipality, with their broader region coming last.

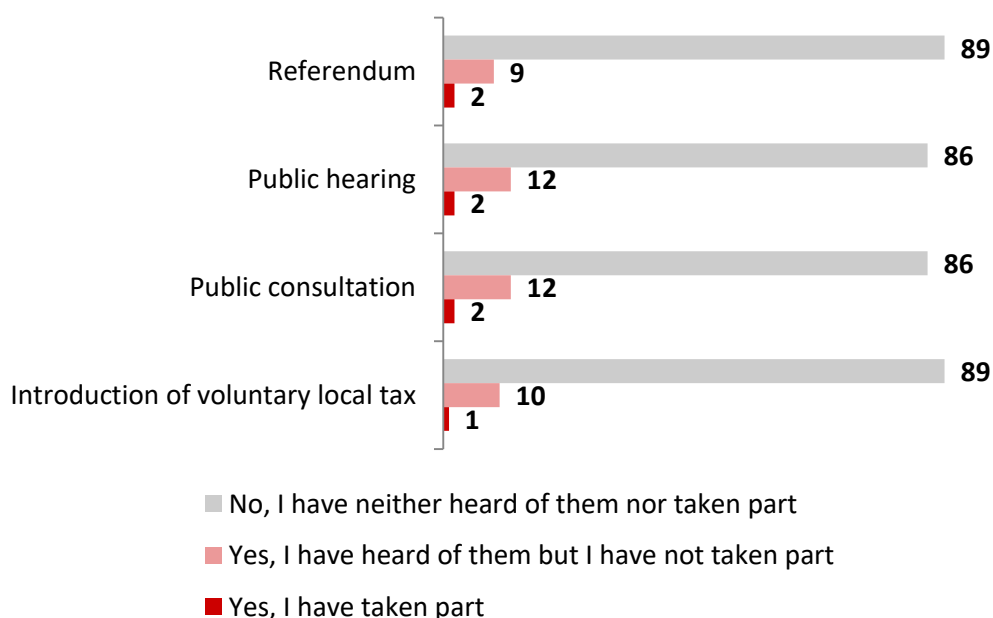
Chart 4.4. Average rating of the political situation at the national, regional, and local level (%)



Men were more optimistic than women about the political situation at all three levels. Those with the lowest educational attainment (primary education or lower) were more likely to see national, regional, and local politics in a favourable light, with pessimism more widespread amongst university graduates.

The survey also extended to issues related to direct civic involvement in local decision-making. The respondents were asked whether they had taken part in, or at least heard about, referendums, public hearings, public consultations, and voluntary local taxes in their city or municipality. **The findings show that public participation is poor**, the consequence of both the lack of readiness on the part of local authorities to engage with the public and the absence of residents' interest to either exert pressure so as to carve out more room for participation or take part in such events as are currently organised.

Chart 4.5. Active participation by the public in local decision-making (%)



The vast majority of those polled reported not being familiar with these activities (89% each for **referendums** and **voluntary local taxes** and 86% each for **public hearings** and **public consultations**). A total of 9% of those polled claimed awareness of referendums in their municipality or city, 12% each reported having heard about public hearings and consultations, and 10% claimed to be aware of voluntary local taxes. Two percent of all respondents claimed to have taken part in referendums, public hearings, and public consultations, whilst 1% reported having taken part in the introduction of a voluntary local tax.

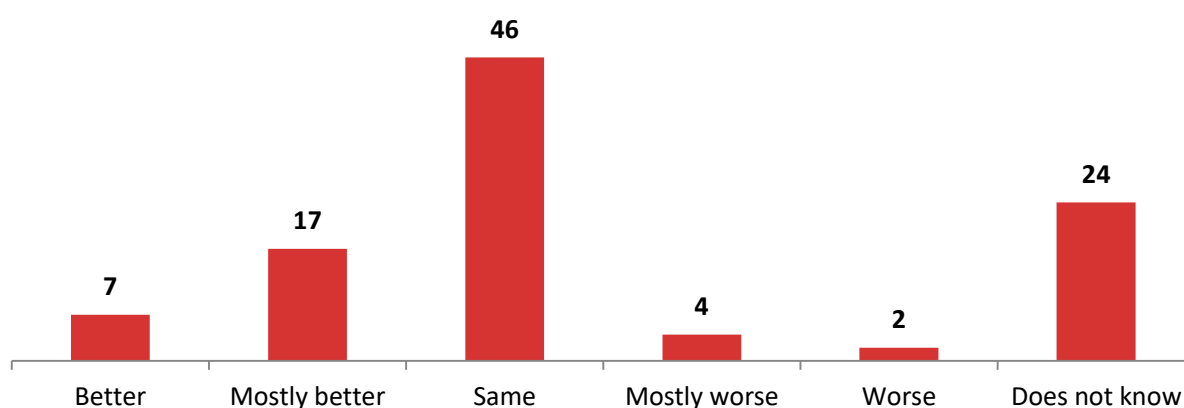
Men are noticeably more engaged in and aware of these participatory instruments, as are university graduates, who were more likely to report having taken part in public hearings and consultations than other educational cohorts.

5. CONTACTS OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WITH MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND SATISFACTION WITH THEIR OPERATION

The first question in this section asked respondents to assess the performance of the municipal/city services relative to one year previously. Here, ***the greatest proportion of those polled felt performance had remained unchanged when compared to the previous year (at 46%)***. By contrast, ***slightly over one-third of those polled (34%) reported improvement with the performance of local services***, of which 7% feel performance is now ‘better’, and 17% believe it is ‘mostly better’.

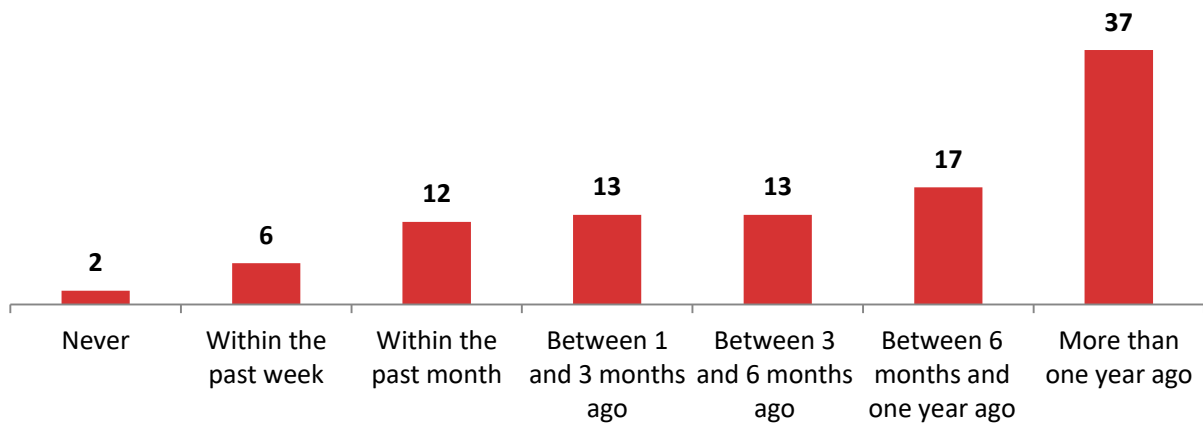
University or college graduates were more likely to report performance was ‘mostly better’ (at 20%), followed by civil servants (other than with the local authority), at 23%, those aged 30 to 39 (19%), and those whose latest interaction with the local government occurred within the preceding week (16%) and month (11%). On the contrary, ***a total of 6% believe performance is ‘poorer’ or ‘mostly poorer’***.

Chart 5.1. Do municipal services operate better, the same as, or worse than three years ago? (%)



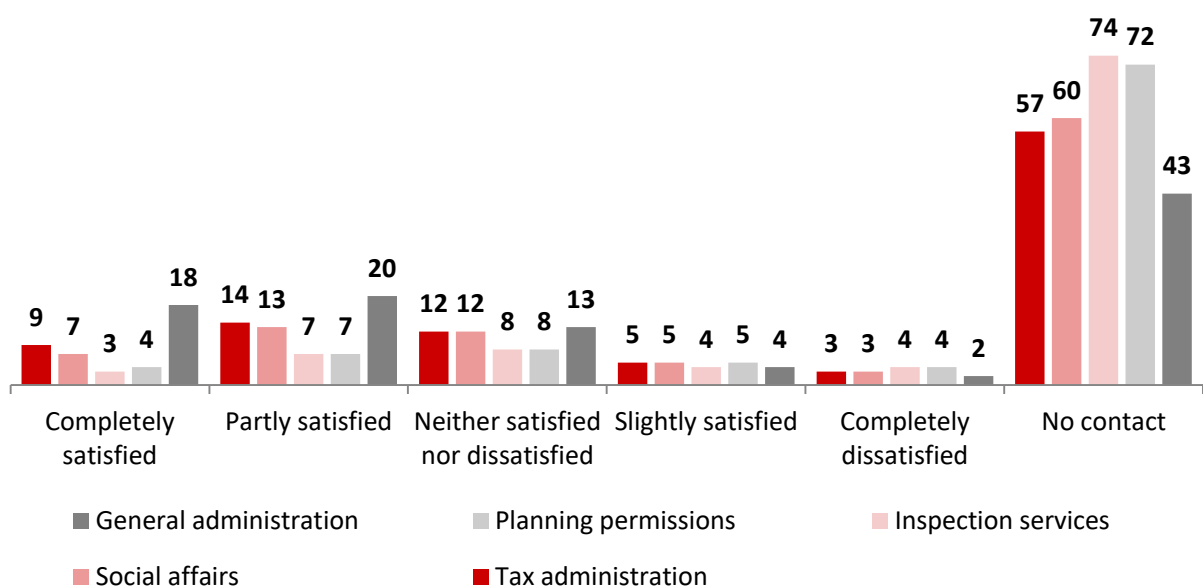
The greatest percentage ***reported having visited the local administration or service centre more than one year prior to the survey (37%)***. In addition, nearly one in six (17%) claimed their latest interaction took place as far back as between six months and one year ago. Conversely, in aggregate, slightly fewer than one-fifth of those polled (18%) claimed to have last visited the local authority’s offices within the past week or month, and 13% each reported their last interaction was between one and three months and three and six months previously. As few as 2% of those polled claimed never to have visited the local authority’s offices.

Chart 5.2. *When was the last time you visited the municipal office or municipal service centre? (%)*



The greatest proportion of those polled reported not having had contact with the local departments tasked with construction and urban planning (72%), inspections (74%), social affairs (60%), taxes (57%), and general administration (43%). The respondents who claimed to have had contact with these units reported **the most satisfaction with the general administration department** (18% were ‘completely satisfied’, and 20% ‘partially satisfied’). In addition to the general administration unit, slightly more than one-fifth of those polled reported being either ‘partially’ or ‘completely’ satisfied with the local tax administration (23%), whilst an even one-fifth claimed to be ‘partially’ or ‘completely’ satisfied with the social affairs department.

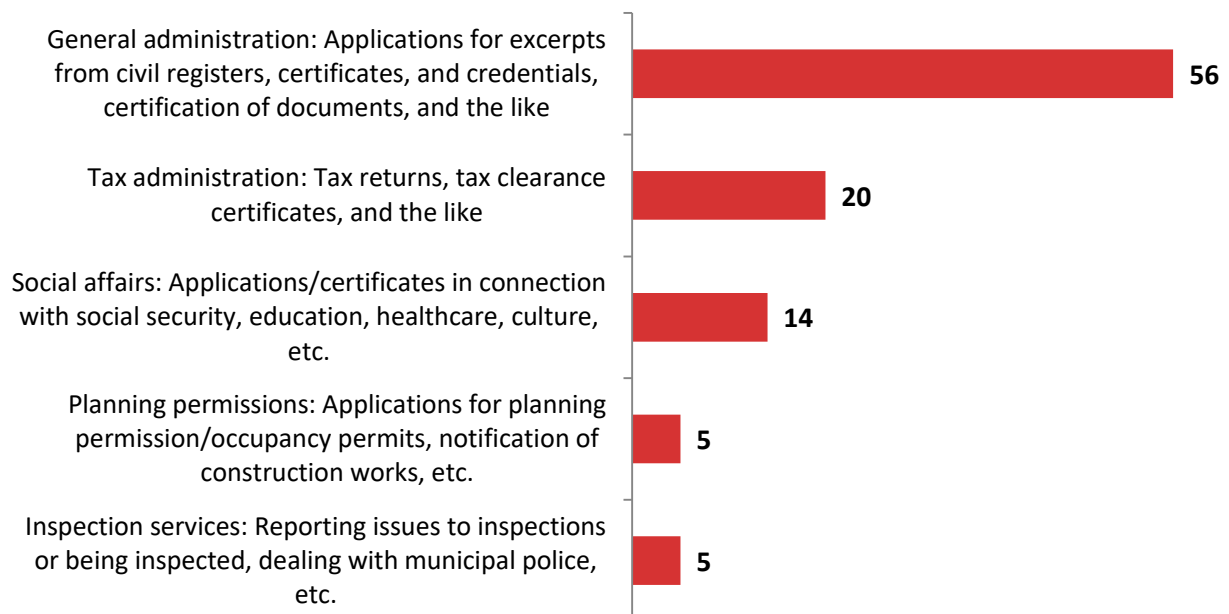
Chart 5.3. *Have you had any contact with any of these departments, and, if so, how would you rate their performance? (%)*



By contrast, **dissatisfaction with local departments is reported by nearly one in ten of those polled**. A total of 6% of all respondents claimed to be either ‘mostly’ or ‘completely’ dissatisfied with the general administration department, followed by construction and urban planning (9%), inspections (8%), social affairs (8%), and the tax department (8%).

As with the above finding, **the greatest proportion of those polled who reported interacting with the local government, 56%, felt the general administration was the best in terms of performance** (this unit is tasked with issuing excerpts from civil registers, certificates, and credentials, and certifying documents). Others cited the tax department (tax returns, back taxes owed, and the like), reported by one-fifth of those polled, with social affairs mentioned by one in seven. In total, one-tenth of those polled feel that the inspections and construction and urban planning departments performed the best.

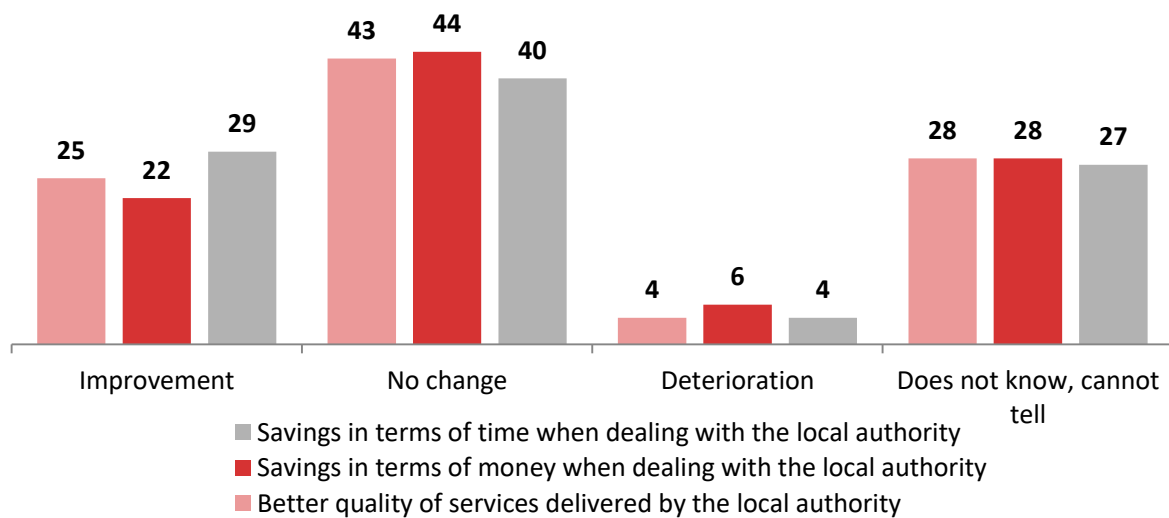
Chart 5.4. Which of the following municipal services operate the best? (%)



When it comes to perceptions of specific aspects of performance by local departments, **the greatest number of respondents feel there has been no change relative to one year previously in terms of savings of time (40%), savings of money (44%), and service quality (43%)**. Conversely, **those polled observed the greatest improvement in terms of how much time they could save when interacting with the local government (29%)**. According to one-quarter of those polled, service quality had also increased, whilst slightly fewer respondents (22%) noted an improvement in terms of savings of time.

Respondents who last interacted with the local government were more likely to report progress (those whose last visit to the local authority’s offices took place within the past week or month).

Chart 5.5. *Relative to past year, has there been progress in the following areas? (%)*

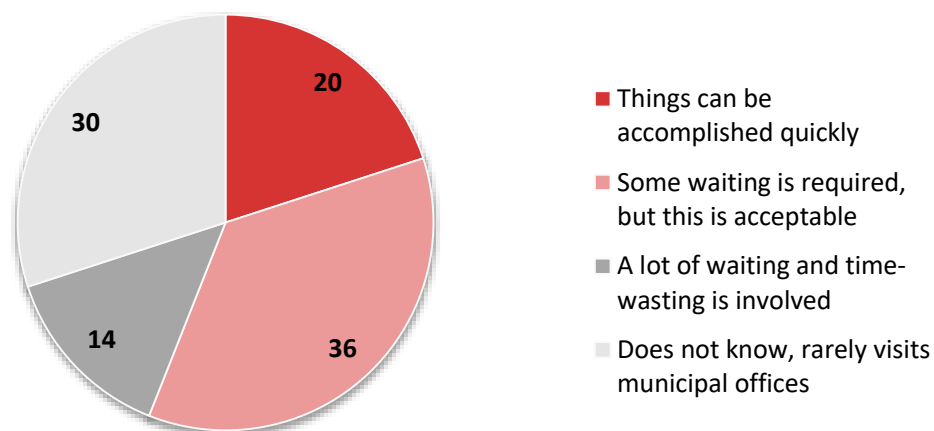


In aggregate, slightly more than one-tenth of those polled (14%) believe these areas have seen a deterioration relative to the previous year. Finally, 28% each could not say whether things had improved or worsened when it comes to service quality and savings of time, with one percentage point fewer (27%) undecided as for savings of money.

When asked how quickly they could complete their business with the local government, ***most residents said waiting times were acceptable (36%)***. By contrast, ***one-fifth feel their interactions with the local government can be completed quickly***, whilst 14% believe excessive waiting constitutes a waste of time. Nearly one-third (30%) claimed not to know how quickly business could be accomplished with the local authority as they rarely visited its offices.

University graduates, professionals, and employers were more likely to report interactions with the local authority could be completed quickly.

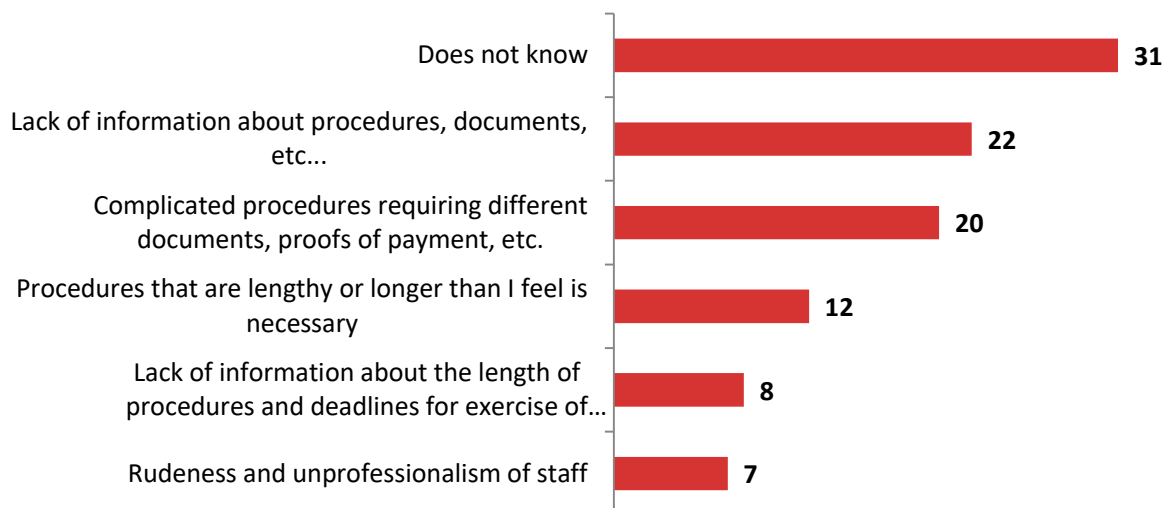
Chart 5.6. *How quickly can you accomplish interactions with the local authority? (%)*



The residents' greatest impediment in communicating with the local authority is the lack of information about procedures, documentation, and the like, as reported by 22% of those polled. Complex procedures and excessive documentation are seen as the most important obstacle by one-fifth of all respondents. In addition, one in eight of those polled mentioned the excessive length of procedures. In total, slightly over one-tenth cited lack of courtesy and professionalism amongst local civil servants (7%) and insufficient information about the duration of procedures and case processing deadlines (8%).

We found no significant differences based on gender in this regard. Lack of courtesy was mostly an issue for employers and the youngest respondents (those aged between 18 and 29), whereas the duration of procedures was cited as the most pressing problem mainly by farmers.

Chart 5.7. *What is the greatest impediment (obstacle) in communicating with the local administration? (%)*



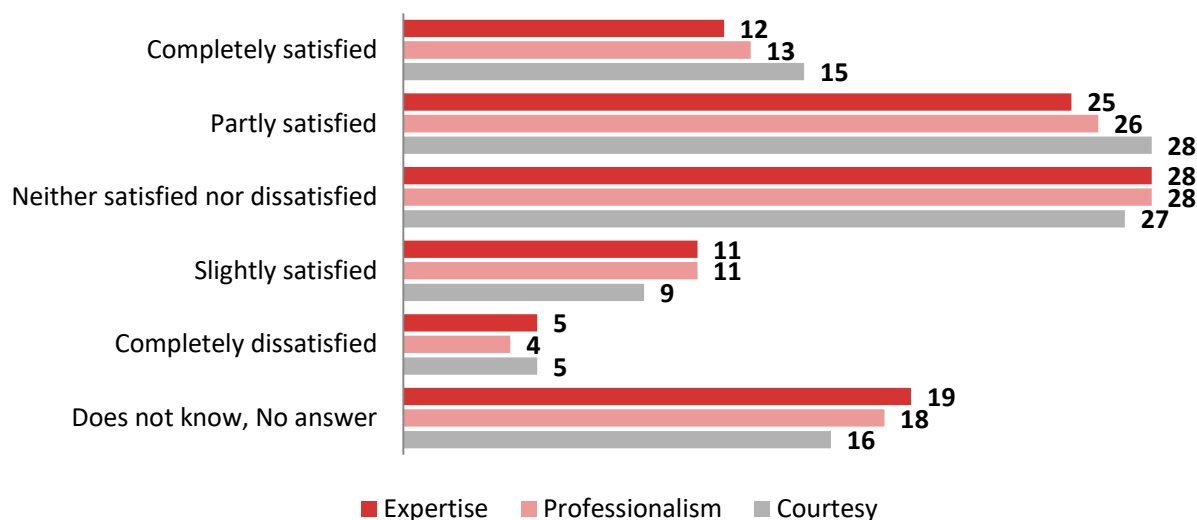
Most of those polled reported being satisfied with how local civil servants treat residents.

Chart 5.8. shows that the greatest proportion of respondents reported being ***either 'mostly' or 'partially' satisfied with the civil servants' courtesy (43%), professionalism (39%), and expertise (38%)***. That said, expertise also attracted the greatest dissatisfaction: 16% of those polled claimed to be either 'mostly' or 'completely' dissatisfied with this dimension. Slightly fewer reported being 'mostly' or 'completely' dissatisfied with the professionalism (15%) and courtesy (14%) of local civil servants.

There are no major contrasts here in terms of gender, but educational and occupational cohorts present a slightly different picture. University and college graduates were more likely to express satisfaction with all three dimensions, whilst, as expected, civil servants were the most satisfied occupational group. Finally, no statistically significant differences were found for age, except for

the 40 to 49 group, which were more likely to express satisfaction with all of the three dimensions.

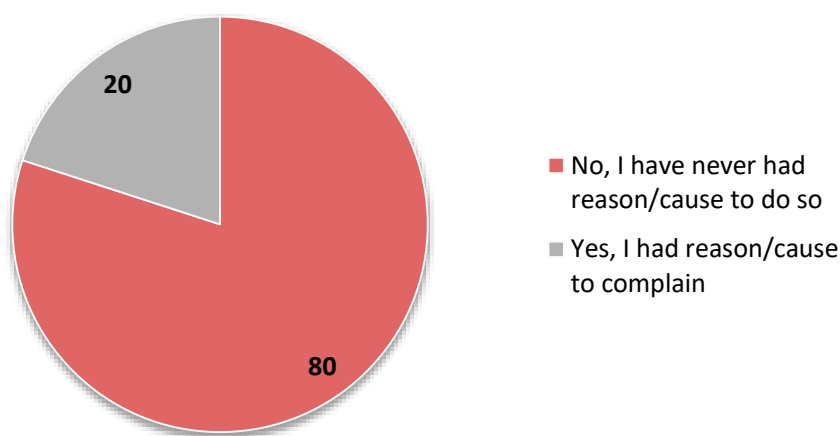
Chart 5.8. *How satisfied are you with the following dimensions of civil servant performance? (%)*



The greatest proportion (80%) of those polled denied ever having had reason or cause to complain about a civil servant. By contrast, 20% claimed to have had such cause.

Men, four-year secondary school graduates, employers, and respondents aged between 40 and 49 were all more likely to have had reason to complain. A significant correlation was also found between a respondent's time of last interaction with the local government and likelihood of having cause to complain: those with more recent interactions were over-represented in the group that reported having had reason to complain. The less recent this contact, the less likely the respondents were to claim they had had grounds to complain against a local civil servant.

Chart 5.9. *Have you ever had reason/cause to complain against a local civil servant? (%)*



Most respondents also claimed never to have lodged a complaint as they did not know who with or how to do so (54%). Another one-quarter reported having decided against complaining as the procedures took a long time and they lacked the time and patience to deal with them. A total of 15% claimed they had not complained as ‘all civil servants were the same’, which is why they lacked confidence in anyone acting on their grievances. Finally, as few as **6% actually lodged a complaint.** The findings reveal a lack of awareness amongst members of the public of the need to complain against civil servants and authorities they may feel are under-performing. It is also very important to raise residents’ awareness of their rights and how to access them, with the ultimate objective of improving the performance of local bodies.

Chart 5.10. *Have you ever actually complained against a civil servant, whether in connection with a procedure or the outcome of a case? (%)*

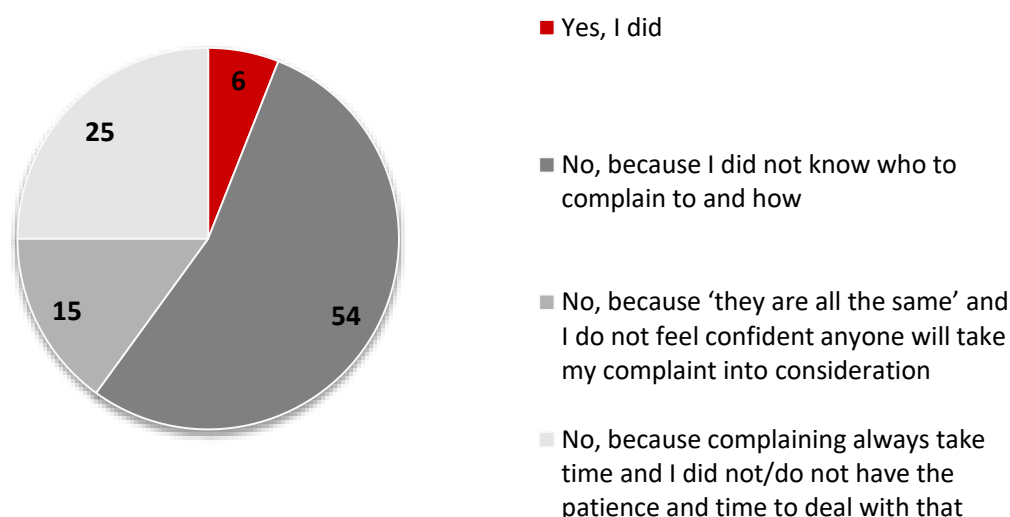
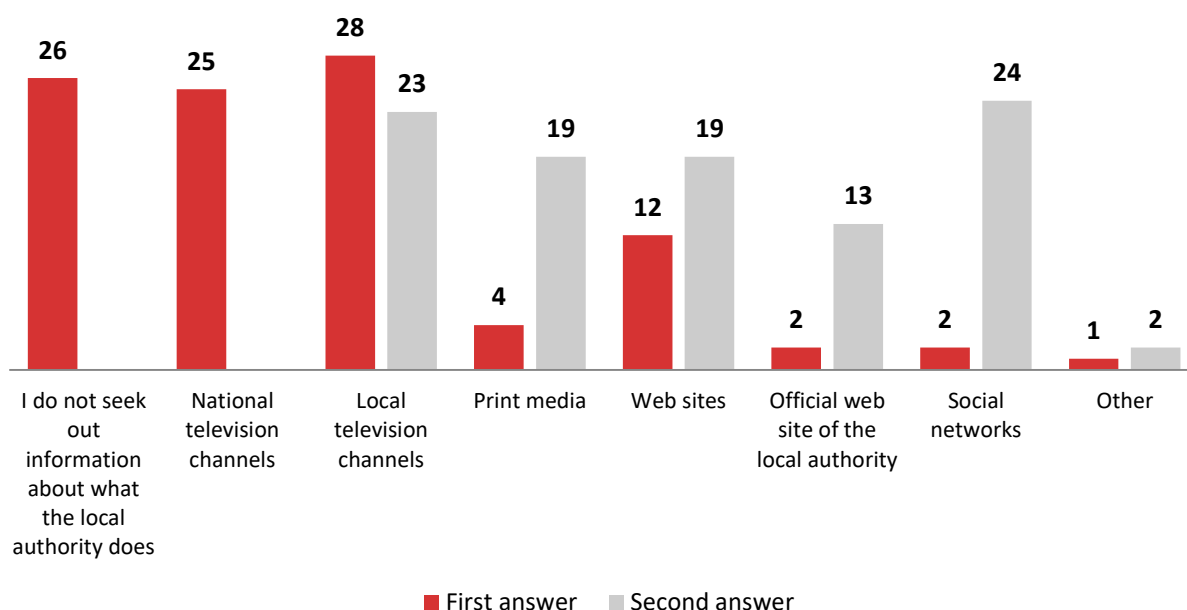


Chart 5.11. reveals that television is the main source of information: **as their first answer to this question, most residents reported local media (28%).** Apart from local TV channels, the respondents mentioned national television as a source of news to a slightly lesser extent (at 25%); one in eight also selected web sites as their first choice. Tellingly, over one-quarter (26%) of those polled do not bother to find out any information about their local authority’s activities at all.

In this question, social networks were the second choice for the highest proportion of those polled, nearly one-quarter (24%). Slightly fewer (23%) cited local television as their second choice, with 19% each reported print media and web sites. The local authority’s web site was mentioned as the second choice by one in eight respondents.

Chart 5.11. Which two media outlets do you most commonly use to learn about what your local authority does? (%)



The largest number of residents (17%) claimed the local government should hold more frequent sittings in local community councils to promote public scrutiny of its operations. The second most commonly cited answer is that the local assembly should allow members of the public to attend its sittings, with one in eight also believing the local assembly should put priority projects to a public vote. In addition, a total of one-fifth of those polled also claimed the local assembly should hold more frequent public consultations (9%), public hearings (7%), and open panel discussions (4%) to facilitate scrutiny of its operations by local residents. One in 13 of all respondents believed the local authority's official web site should be improved for the same reason.

Women were more represented amongst respondents unable to answer this question than men. In addition, men were more likely to advocate more frequent public consultations and sittings in local community councils. University graduates were also over-represented across all dimensions, excepting for sittings in community councils, where this cohort was under-represented.

Chart 5.12. *What should the local assembly do to facilitate public scrutiny of its operations? (%)*

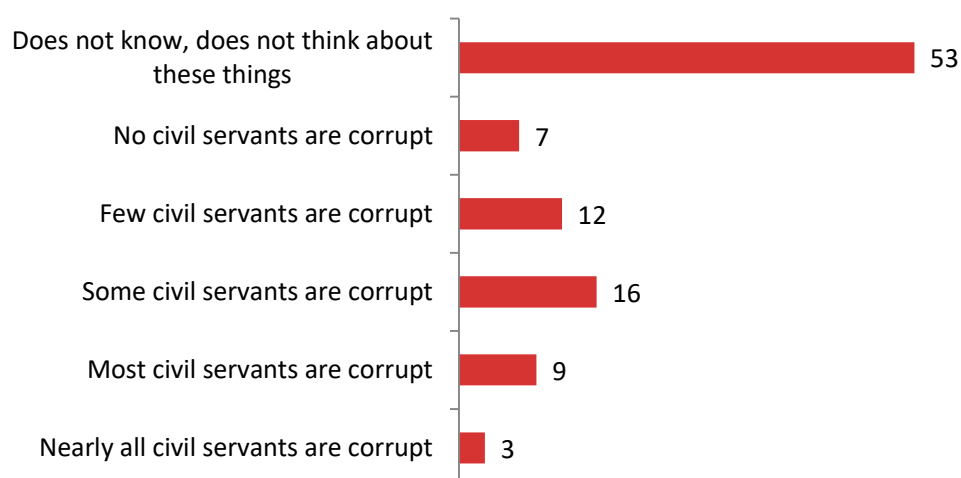


6. PERCEPTION OF THE EXTENT OF CORRUPTION AT THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

The respondents were also asked about their perception of how corrupt local officials were. ***The majority of those polled (53%) said they did not know*** or did not think about these issues. Few respondents, 7%, reported ‘no’ local civil servants were corrupt, with 12% viewing corrupt civil servants as ‘rare’. ***As many as 16% believe ‘some’ civil servants are corrupt.*** In addition, 9% of those polled believe ‘most’ local officials are corrupt, and 3% feel ‘all’ local civil servants are prone to corruption.

Men, university graduates, and those aged between 18 to 29 were more likely to have negative perceptions of corruption and believe either ‘all’ or ‘most’ local civil servants are corrupt.

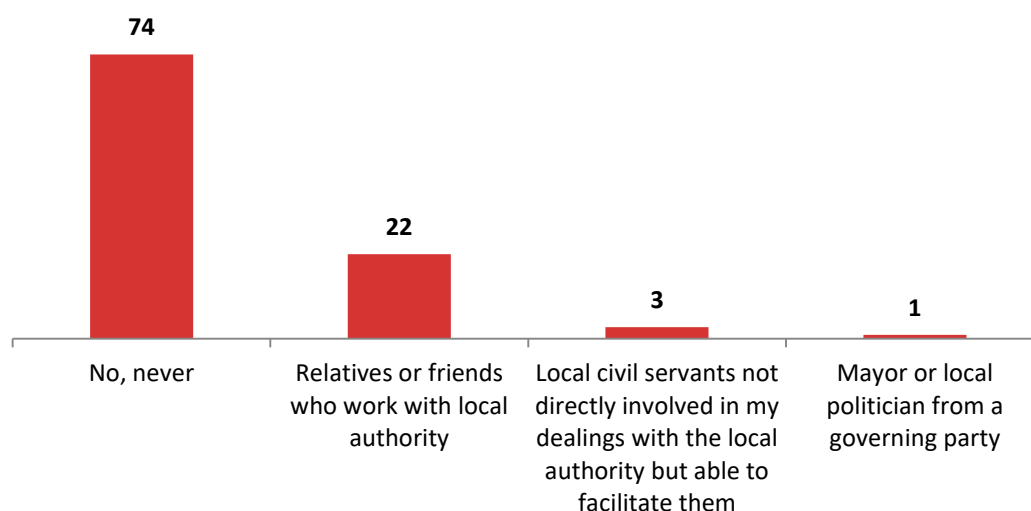
Chart 6.1. *In your view, how widespread is corruption amongst local officials? (%)*



In addition to asking for respondents' opinions of how widespread corruption was in the local authority, we also wanted to know whether they had also ever used personal connections to facilitate their dealings with the local government. **The vast majority of 74% denied ever having 'pulled strings'. Nevertheless, a not insignificant 22% reported relying on friends and family members working for the local administration, 3% claimed to have used connections with municipal officials, and 1% admitted to having called on the Mayor or member of a ruling party** – in sum, 27% admitted to having used connections to expedite their business with the local authority.

In aggregate, university graduates aged from 40 to 49 were more likely to use personal connections. The only exception was the group that reported having 'pulled strings' with the Mayor, in which local civil servants were over-represented.

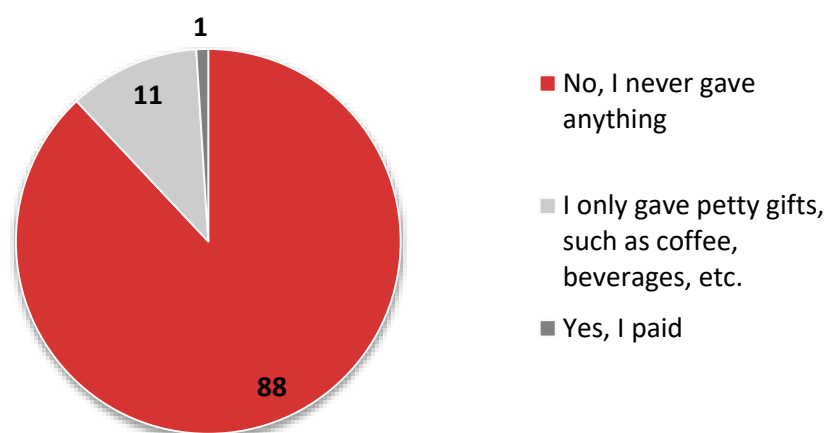
Chart 6.2. *Have you or have you not used connections or acquaintance to facilitate your dealings with the local authority? (%)*



The vast majority of those polled, **88%, reported never having given anything in return for a service. An additional 11% admitted to having made small gifts, such as coffee, drinks, and the like. Slightly fewer than 1% said they had also paid bribes in cash.** Men, respondents with four-year secondary school diplomas, civil servants (other than with the local authority), and farmers were more likely to have given gifts, as were those aged 40 to 49.

Therefore, although a large proportion of those polled seem never to have relied on illicit channels to facilitate their interactions with the local government, a not insignificant proportion directly engaged in such behaviour, either by 'pulling strings' or by giving gifts to civil servants.

Chart 6.3. *Have you ever paid a municipal civil servant extra in exchange for a service? (%)*

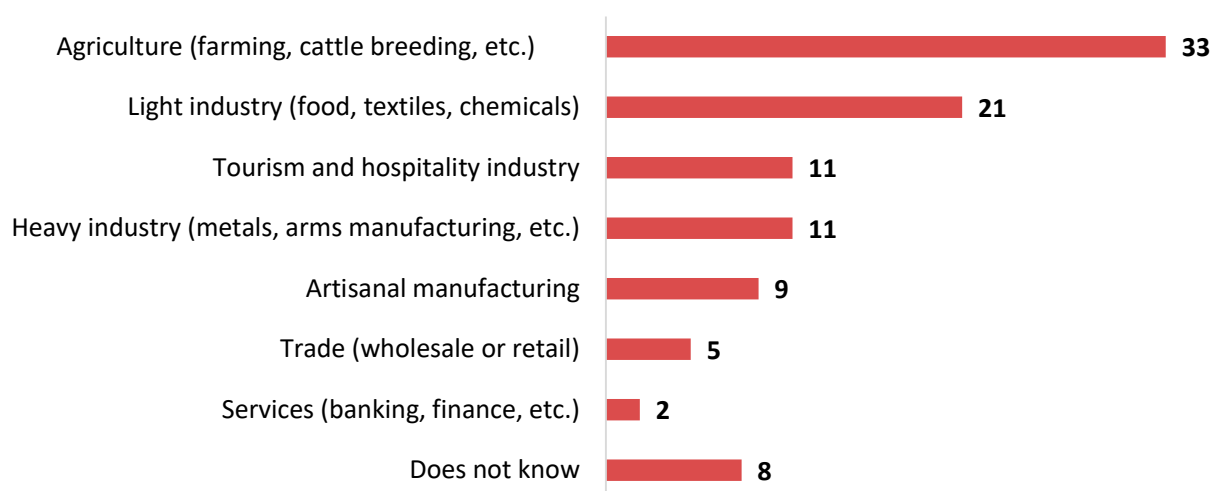


7. DIRECTIONS AND PRIORITIES OF MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

One-third of all residents (33%) perceive agriculture as the sector that ought to drive the development of their communities. Ranked second is light industry, cited by slightly over one-fifth of those polled, or 21%. One in nine respondents noted tourism and the hospitality industry, and the same proportion cited heavy industry, such as iron and steel and the arms industry. Another 9% feel artisanal production should be the backbone of development, and 5% believe growth should be based on trade. Services (such as banking and finance) are ranked the last, with support from as few as 2% of those polled.

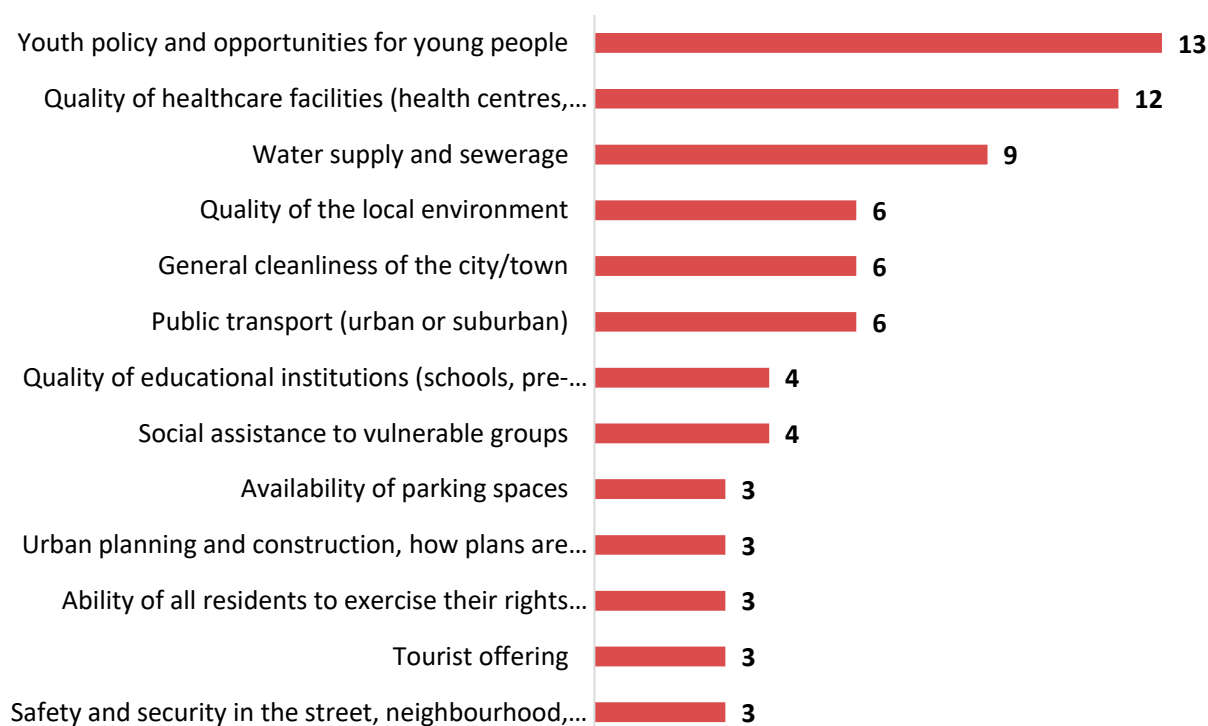
Respondent age is associated of greater likelihood of prioritising agriculture as the key area for development. In addition, its supporters were likely to be women, residents with lower educational attainment, and, as expected, farmers.

Chart 7.1. *Which industry should be the basis of future economic growth of your community? (%)*



Nevertheless, ***if the residents were able to manage the key investments in their local authority, most (13%) would choose youth policy and, more generally, actions to improve opportunities for young people.*** Ranked second, with a slightly lower percentage, 12% would pick healthcare services and investment in refurbishing and constructing health centres and clinics, an indication of how the poor state of the local healthcare system. One in eleven would advocate improvements to the water supply and sewage network in their municipality or city (9%), whilst 6% each would endeavour to improve the environment, cleanliness, and public transport (both urban and suburban). According to the findings, healthcare seems to be in a worse state than education, with residents prioritising healthcare services over schools: ***three times fewer of those polled reported they would rather invest in educational institutions (schools and nursery schools) than in healthcare (4%).*** These percentages can also reveal an ageing population, especially in smaller communities with mass youth emigration. Also close to the bottom of the priority rankings is social assistance to vulnerable groups, mentioned by 4% of those polled. Another five areas were cited by a total of 15% of those polled, 3% each: availability of parking spaces, urban planning, equal access to rights for all residents, state of the local tourism industry, and safety/security in public spaces. Chart 7.2. shows another four areas mentioned by 1% of those polled each: availability of retail outlets, cultural institutions, and facilities for sports and recreation, as well as support for the local civil sector.

Chart 7.2. Which of the following areas should attract the most investment in your community? (%)

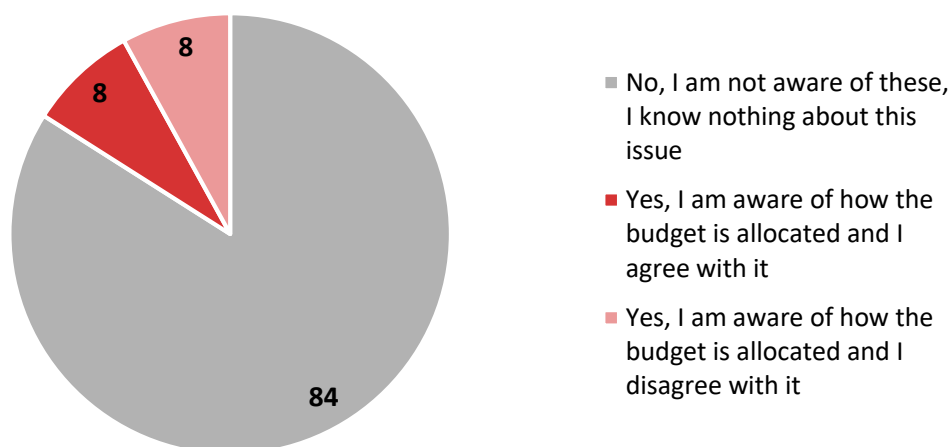


As expected, the youngest age cohorts and school and university students noted investment into youth policy as a priority, coupled with greater opportunities for young people; the elderly were more likely to select spending for healthcare improvements.

Closely linked to priorities for investment is the issue of allocating the local budget. ***The greatest proportion of those polled, however, were unaware of the budgeting policy and budgeting priorities of their local authority (as reported by 84% of all respondents).*** The remaining 16% reported being aware with these priorities, of which 8% claimed to agree with how the funds were allocated, and 8% disagreed.

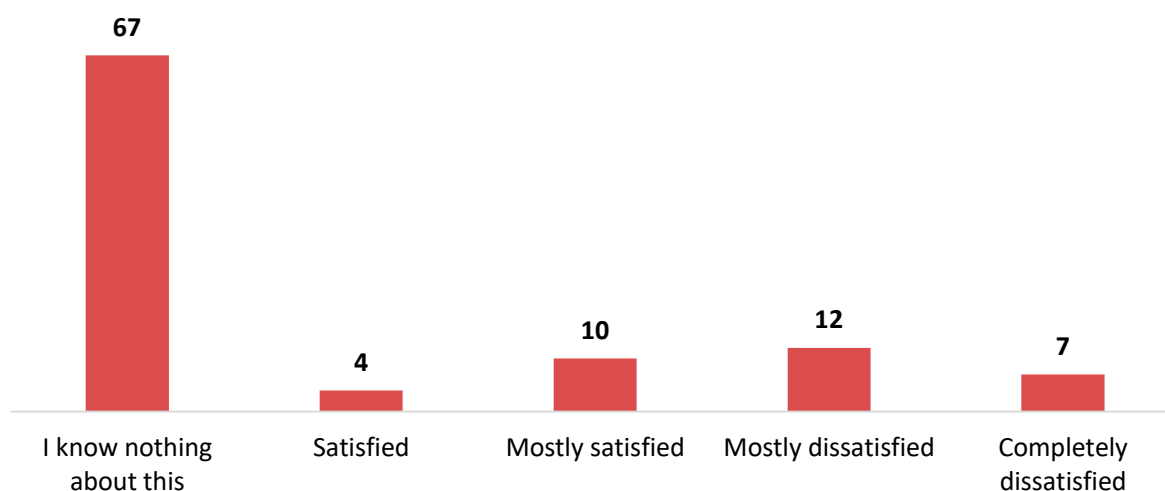
Respondents aged 40 to 49 were more likely to be aware of how the budget was allocated, with men slightly over-represented relative to women. University graduates and professionals were also more likely to report awareness.

Chart 7.3. *Are you aware of budget priorities (allocation of the budget) of your local authority, and do you agree with them? (%)*



To fully understand residents' perceptions of investment and budgeting priorities, we asked them about their satisfaction with how their local authority managed its budget. As with the foregoing answers, where most of those polled reported ignorance of the budgeting priorities of their local government, the greatest proportion of respondents again claimed no knowledge of these issues (67%). Another observation we were able to make is that the residents avoided making 'hard' views in this regard, meaning those at either end of the scale. In other words, ***4% reported being 'completely' satisfied, and 7% 'completely' dissatisfied, with how their local authority managed its budget,*** whilst the greatest proportion of those polled claimed to be 'mostly' dissatisfied (12%), with slightly fewer claiming to be 'mostly' satisfied (one in 10 of those polled).

Chart 7.4. Are you satisfied with how your local authority manages its budget? (%)

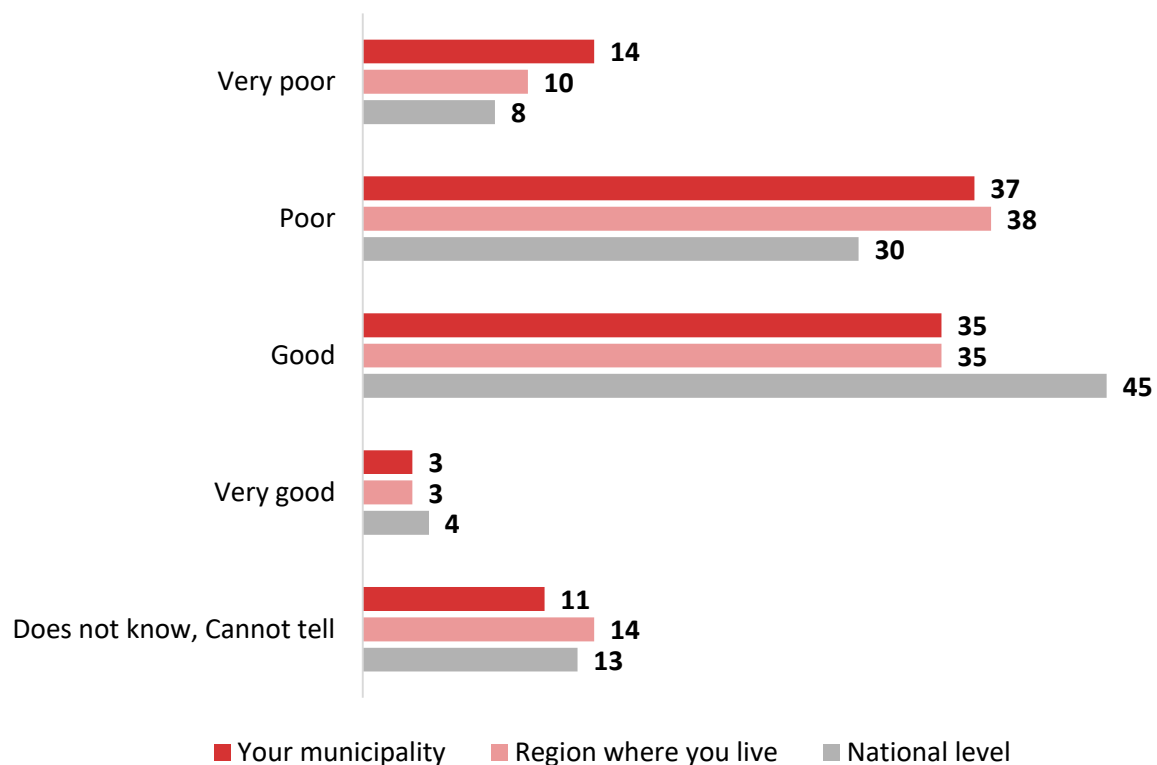


As has already been noted, respondents aged 40 to 49, men more than women, and university graduates and experts were more likely to claim familiarity with the budget. It is this population that was mostly dissatisfied with how the budget is allocated, which shows that residents aware of the budgeting priorities of their communities are less satisfied with them.

8. LOCAL AUTHORITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This section assesses the role of the local authority in local economic development. Here, we asked the respondents to rate the economic situation in Serbia, their region, and the municipality. ***The findings show that nearly one-half of those polled were optimistic about the state of the national economy: 49% claimed the situation at the national level was either 'good' or 'very good'.*** The economy of their local community and the region received equal numbers of positive votes, with 35% claiming the local and regional situation was 'good', and an additional 3% seeing it as 'very good'. By contrast, the most pessimism was shown for the local level: here, 14% claimed the state of the economy was 'very poor'; one in ten shared the same view for the regional level, and the fewest (8%) saw the national economy as 'very poor'. An additional 37% reported the economic situation in their city or municipality was 'poor', 38% shared this view for the region, and a final 30% reported the same opinion for the national level.

Chart 8.1. Average rating of the economic situation at the national, regional, and local level (%)



Men, respondents aged 40 to 49, and college and university graduates were the most likely to voice negative opinions of the economy at all three levels.

In addition to rating the economic situation, the respondents were also asked to say to what extent they believed the local authority was ready to support the development of private enterprise.

The impact of local authorities on entrepreneurship was assessed through four dimensions: *providing start-up capital, raising residents' awareness for starting their own businesses, reforming permitting procedures and regulations, and enhancing infrastructure.*

As for local authorities' ability to provide start-up capital, the respondents were equally divided between 'could do much more' and 'does as much as it can', with 35% each choosing either of the two answers. This is also the dimension in which most residents feel their local authorities are doing 'enough'. In all other dimensions, 6% each of those polled reported the local government was doing 'enough' to promote private enterprise, whilst infrastructure was the only area where the residents believe not enough was being done (as claimed by 32% of those polled).

Table 8.1. *Does the local authority do enough to foster the development of private enterprise?*
(%)

| | <i>Providing start-up capital</i> | <i>Raising awareness for starting own business</i> | <i>Reforming permitting regulations and procedures</i> | <i>Infrastructure (constructing industrial zones, technology parks, etc.)</i> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Does not know | 26 | 27 | 29 | 29 |
| No, it could do much more | 35 | 31 | 30 | 32 |
| It is doing as much as it can | 35 | 36 | 35 | 33 |
| It is doing enough | 4 | 6 | 6 | 6 |

9. SATISFACTION WITH AREAS OF DAILY LIFE

A key aspect of satisfaction surveys is assessing actual satisfaction with a variety of aspects of daily life that make living in a community more or less pleasant. In this regard, we asked the residents to say to what extent they were satisfied (or otherwise) with the quality of these dimensions of day-to-day life in their city or municipality.

The general conclusion we can draw here is that satisfaction outweighs dissatisfaction for most dimensions. More respondents reported dissatisfaction than satisfaction with as few as five of the 16 areas listed below (the proportions were equal for urban planning and support for the local civil sector). These dimensions are mainly related to transportation: the state of urban and suburban public transport, where 37% of those polled claimed to be either ‘completely’ or ‘mostly’ dissatisfied, and the availability of parking places, mentioned by the same number of respondents. Substantial disaffection was also reported for equal exercise of rights and assistance to vulnerable groups (31 and 41 percent, respectively, claimed either complete or partial dissatisfaction). Finally, ***the dimension that attracted the most dissatisfaction in this category was youth policy and opportunities for young people (42%),*** the very area that most respondents claimed needed the most investment.

The availability of retail outlets was the dimension of daily life that attracted the most satisfaction (as reported by 66% of those polled); this is an aspect that forms part of the daily routine for most residents. Importantly, more than one-half of those polled have also reported satisfaction (either complete or partial) with safety/security in public spaces (57%).

Table 9.1. Satisfaction of individual dimensions of daily life in the community (%)

| <i>Dimension</i> | <i>Does not know, no opinion</i> | <i>Completely dissatisfied</i> | <i>Mostly dissatisfied</i> | <i>Indifferent</i> | <i>Mostly satisfied</i> | <i>Completely satisfied</i> |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Water supply and sewerage</i> | 8 | 15 | 18 | 17 | 31 | 11 |
| <i>Public transport (urban or suburban)</i> | 7 | 14 | 23 | 20 | 30 | 6 |
| <i>Availability of parking spaces</i> | 17 | 16 | 21 | 18 | 23 | 5 |
| <i>Cleanliness of the city/municipality</i> | 2 | 13 | 27 | 17 | 34 | 7 |
| <i>Availability of retail outlets</i> | 3 | 5 | 12 | 14 | 41 | 25 |
| <i>State of local farmers' markets</i> | 13 | 4 | 10 | 17 | 37 | 19 |
| <i>Quality of the environment</i> | 3 | 8 | 23 | 21 | 36 | 9 |
| <i>Townscape, urban planning, construction</i> | 28 | 10 | 16 | 20 | 21 | 5 |
| <i>Quality of educational institutions (schools, nursery schools, etc.)</i> | 18 | 4 | 9 | 16 | 38 | 15 |
| <i>Quality of healthcare (clinics, health centres, etc.)</i> | 3 | 12 | 23 | 16 | 35 | 11 |
| <i>Social assistance to vulnerable groups</i> | 27 | 11 | 20 | 19 | 19 | 4 |
| <i>Ability of all local residents to exercise their rights equally</i> | 18 | 18 | 23 | 19 | 18 | 4 |
| <i>Availability of cultural institutions (cinemas, theatres, cultural centres, libraries)</i> | 15 | 9 | 14 | 17 | 30 | 15 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| <i>State of local tourism industry</i> | 21 | 9 | 16 | 20 | 26 | 8 |
| <i>Availability of facilities for sports and recreation</i> | 16 | 7 | 13 | 18 | 32 | 14 |
| <i>Youth policy and opportunities for young people</i> | 21 | 18 | 24 | 18 | 15 | 4 |
| <i>Safety and security in public spaces</i> | 2 | 8 | 19 | 14 | 38 | 19 |
| <i>Support to local civil sector / civic associations</i> | 39 | 6 | 13 | 23 | 16 | 3 |

When responding to the differentiating question we posed to ascertain which of these areas attracted the least satisfaction for those polled, in aggregate ***one in ten respondents mentioned water supply and sewerage, with the same proportion claiming dissatisfaction with the quality of healthcare (clinics and health centres).***

In order to identify the individual aspects of every-day life that need to be bettered in order to improve the quality of life in each local self-government, ***the elements of life in which the citizens express the lowest levels of satisfaction and in which they would invest primarily are presented per each LSG.***

Table 9.2. *Aspects of daily life with which the respondents are least satisfied, and in which they would invest most, per local self-governments*

| <i>LSG</i> | <i>Which of the aspects of daily life are you the least satisfied with? (%)</i> | <i>In which of the aspects of daily life would you invest most? (%)</i> |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Arilje | Public transport (22%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (21%) |
| Babušnica | General cleanliness of LSG (18%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (14%) |
| Bajina Bašta | Availability of parking spaces (7%) i Youth policy and opportunities for young people (7%) | Tourist offering (8%) |
| Bela Palanka | General cleanliness of LSG (18%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (23%) |
| Bogatić | Water supply and sewerage (12%) | Quality of educational institutions (8%) |
| Bojnik | Public transport (urban or suburban) (23%) | Water supply and sewerage (21%) |
| Boljevac | Water supply and sewerage (20%) | Water supply and sewerage (23%) |
| Bor | Quality of the local environment (34%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (28%) |

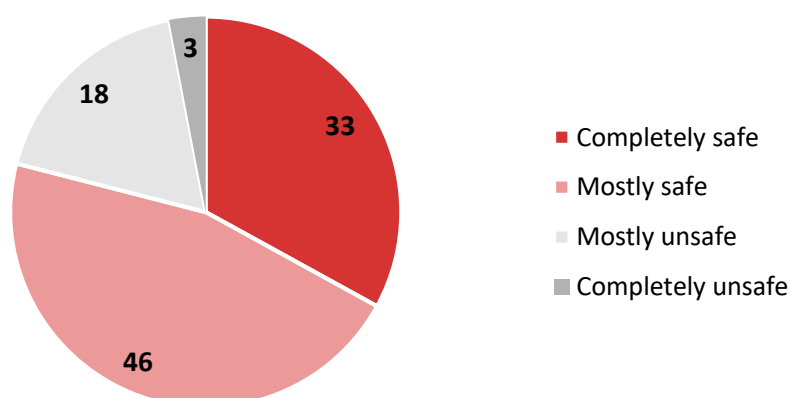
| | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Bosilegrad | Quality of the local environment (17%) i Youth policy and opportunities for young people (17%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (22%) |
| Bujanovac | General cleanliness of LSG (34%) | General cleanliness of LSG (36%) |
| Doljevac | Water supply and sewerage (23%) | Water supply and sewerage (42%) |
| Gornji Milanovac | Quality of healthcare facilities (12%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (8%) |
| Jagodina | Water supply and sewerage (19%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (16%) |
| Knić | Water supply and sewerage (35%) | Water supply and sewerage (37%) |
| Knjaževac | Public transport (urban or suburban) (28%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (18%) |
| Kragujevac | General cleanliness of LSG (16%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (16%) |
| Kraljevo | Quality of healthcare facilities (18%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (17%) |
| Lapovo | Water supply and sewerage (57%) | Water supply and sewerage (60%) |
| Lebane | Public transport (urban or suburban) (24%) | Public transport (urban or suburban) (25%) i Youth policy and opportunities for young people (25%) |
| Leskovac | Ability of all residents to exercise their rights equally (23%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (33%) |
| Loznica | Quality of healthcare facilities (20%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (30%) |
| Mali Zvornik | Quality of healthcare facilities (27%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (27%) |
| Malo Crniće | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (70%) | Water supply and sewerage (46%) |
| Mionica | Public transport (urban or suburban) (22%) | Public transport (urban or suburban) (14%) |
| Niš | Quality of the local environment (13%) | Quality of the local environment (13%) |
| Nova Varoš | Quality of educational institutions (25%) | Tourist offering (42%) |
| Novi Pazar | Public transport (urban or suburban) (17%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (16%) |
| Petrovac | Quality of healthcare facilities (21%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (20%) |
| Pirot | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (16%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (29%) |
| Priboj | General cleanliness of LSG (15%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (14%) |
| Rača | Availability of parking spaces (32%) | Tourist offering (20%) |
| Raška | Quality of healthcare facilities (40%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (49%) |
| Ražanj | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (41%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (43%) |
| Sjenica | Social assistance to vulnerable groups (11%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (14%) |
| Smederevo | Water supply and sewerage (19%) | Water supply and sewerage (21%) |
| Sokobanja | Public transport (urban or suburban) (28%) | Public transport (urban or suburban) (28%) |
| Svilajnac | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (27%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (46%) |

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Šabac | Public transport (urban or suburban) (15%) i Availability of parking spaces (15%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (16%) |
| Topola | Water supply and sewerage (20%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (23%) |
| Trgovište | Social assistance to vulnerable groups (23%) | Social assistance to vulnerable groups (13%) |
| Trstenik | Water supply and sewerage (24%) | Water supply and sewerage (18%) i Quality of healthcare facilities (18%) |
| Ub | Water supply and sewerage (14%) | Water supply and sewerage (11%) |
| Užice | Availability of parking spaces (20%) | Quality of the local environment (19%) |
| Velika Plana | Quality of healthcare facilities (5%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (8%) |
| Veliko Gradište | Water supply and sewerage (53%) | Water supply and sewerage (53%) |
| Vladičin Han | Social assistance to vulnerable groups (25%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (28%) |
| Vlasotince | Ability of all residents to exercise their rights equally (38%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (47%) |
| Vranje | Water supply and sewerage (18%) | Quality of healthcare facilities (17%) |
| Vrnjačka Banja | Water supply and sewerage (25%) | Water supply and sewerage (34%) |
| Zaječar | Quality of the local environment (45%) | Youth policy and opportunities for young people (33%) |

10. PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

The residents' subjective assessment of safety in their home town is a major element of their satisfaction with local living conditions. As we have been able to see in the section above, over one-half of those polled reported being satisfied with the security in their city or municipality. This view is also borne out by the chart below.

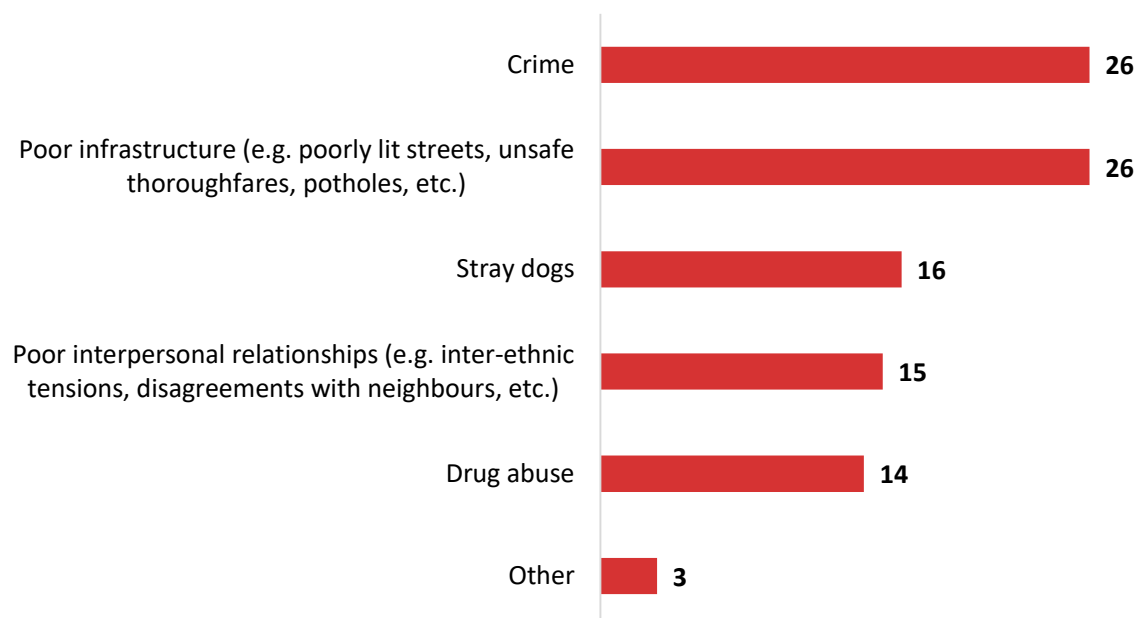
Chart 10.1. *Do you feel safe (secure) where you live? (%)*



One-third of those polled reported being ‘completely’ safe, with 46% claiming they feel ‘mostly’ so. In aggregate, therefore, **79% of those polled believe they are either ‘completely’ or ‘mostly’ safe in their city or municipality.** By contrast, slightly over one-fifth claimed to be unsafe (21%), of which 18% reported being ‘mostly’ so, and **as few as 3% declaring they were ‘completely’ unsafe.** Older women were more likely to report feeling unsafe.

Crime and poor infrastructure, such as poorly lit, unsafe, and potholed streets and roads, top the chart for reasons why residents feel unsafe. These issues, cited by 26% of those polled each, are followed by stray dogs, which represent a major security concern as reported by 16% of all respondents. Another 15% complained about tensions with fellow residents, with drug addiction mentioned by 14% of those polled.

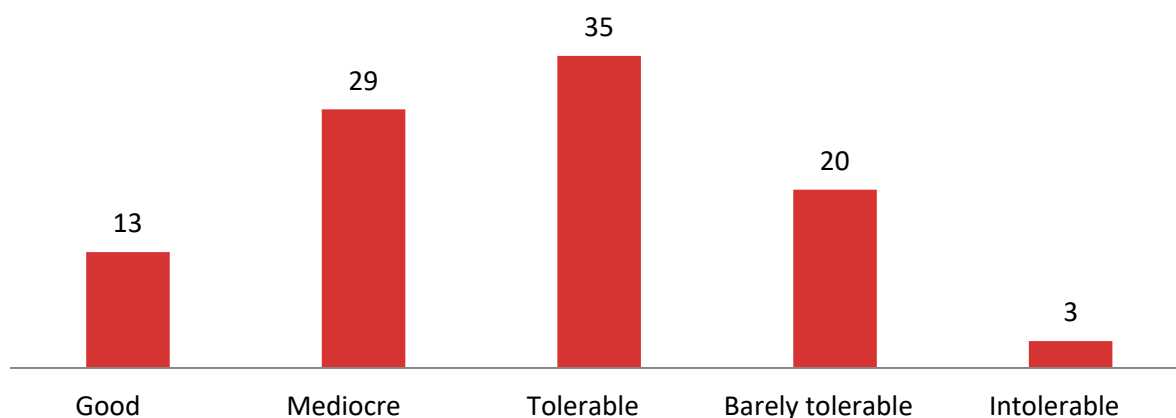
Chart 10.2. What makes you feel unsafe? (%)



11. PERCEPTIONS OF LIVING STANDARDS

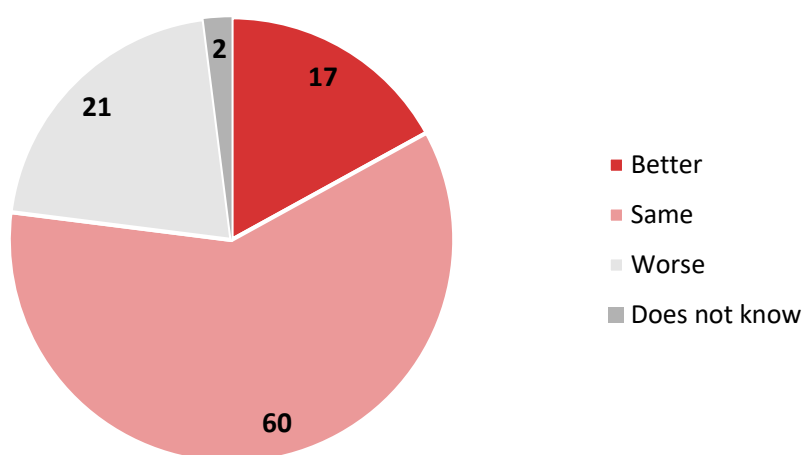
Subjective perceptions of living standards are considered a major element of citizen satisfaction. Nevertheless, with questions such as this, respondents often report the situation as being better than it actually is. Another difficulty with these surveys is the inherent difficulty in distinguishing between what may well be ‘intolerable’ living standards for one person, but ‘good’ for another. When the findings are interpreted in light of these considerations, it comes as no surprise to see **as few as 13% of those polled report ‘good’ living standards, 29% ‘mediocre’ ones, and 35% ‘tolerable’ quality of life. At the other end of the spectrum, one-fifth of all residents reported ‘barely tolerable’ living standards, with a final 3% claiming ‘intolerable’ quality of life.**

Chart 11.1. *What are the circumstances in which you and your family live right now like? (%)*



Some stagnation seems to have taken place in living standards relative to three years ago: **as many as 60% of those polled now report having the same quality of life.** By contrast, there has been **an increase in the proportion of respondents claiming to be ‘worse off’ (21%) relative to those who perceive improvement (17%).** As expected, residents who claimed ‘intolerable’ living standards in the previous survey were now more likely to report a deterioration, with those citing ‘tolerable’ quality of life mainly claiming to change. Poorly educated residents, men, manual workers, farmers, the unemployed, and those aged 50 to 59 were also more likely to report lower living standards.

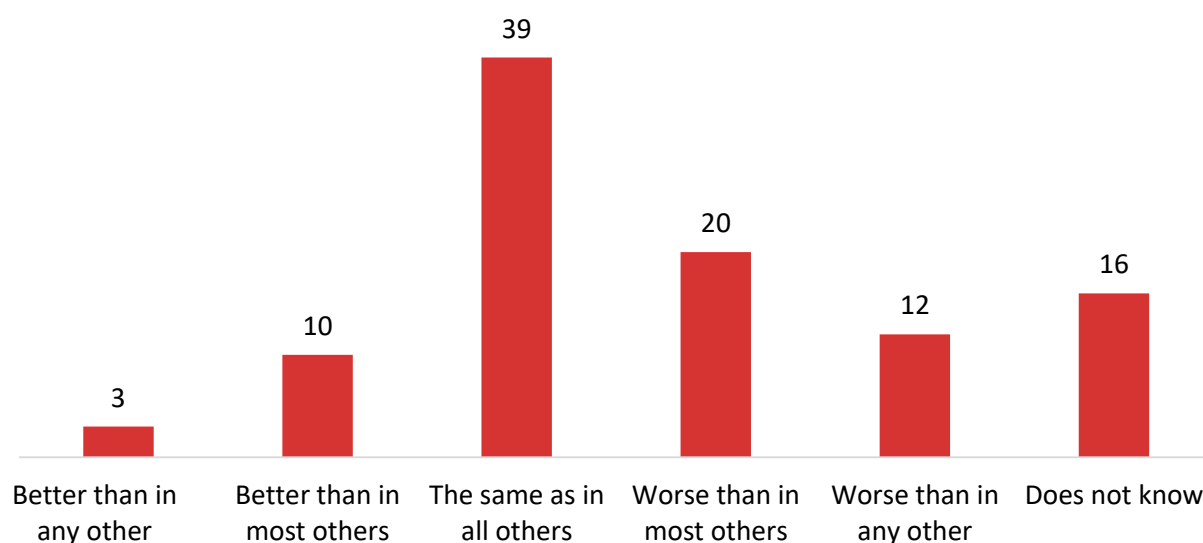
Chart 11.2. *When you compare how you live now with how you lived three years ago, is it better, the same, or worse? (%)*



Even though responses to all three questions in this section tend to cluster around the centre of the chart, in this case a greater proportion of respondents chose the lower end of the scale.

Here, **one-fifth of those polled believe their community enjoys lower living standards than most other parts of Serbia**. An even more drastic view is taken by another 12% who see the situation in terms of living standards and living conditions more generally is worse in their home town than anywhere else. By contrast, **one in ten reported a more optimistic opinion, that their community was a better place to live than most others**. The fewest respondents are completely optimistic and believe **the situation in their home town is better than anywhere else (3%)**.

Chart 11.3. *Are living standards in your community better, the same as, or worse than elsewhere in Serbia? (%)*



As in the above cases, pessimism is the most prevalent amongst men, the poorly educated, manual workers, farmers, and the unemployed.

12. CONCLUSION

- ***There is a need to address the issue of poor awareness of what the local government does.*** In doing so, any interventions must take into account the fact that residents mainly use ***local television channels*** and, alternatively, ***social networks*** as their sources of news. Whilst many residents have remained faithful to traditional media, emerging online news outlets are gaining in popularity.
- ***Poor awareness of and public participation in local decision-making requires additional steps to be taken.*** First and foremost, ***members of the public ought to be made more aware and given the appropriate training*** in how to participate in local governance. ***Residents should also be motivated to take part*** in these activities. ***The local authorities should, finally, consider alternative options for creating more room for residents to make their voices heard,*** for instance by organising relevant activities more often. It ought to be noted that three desirable activities, according to those polled, are ***holding local assembly sessions in community councils, allowing members of the public access to assembly sessions, and permitting residents to vote on priority projects in the local authority.***
- ***The local government should also raise residents' awareness of procedures and documentation*** required for accomplishing their dealings with the local administration, as well as ***about how to complain.***
- The respondents expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the ***courtesy, expertise, and professionalism of local civil servants.*** Nevertheless, ***dissatisfaction with these dimensions of their performance cannot be ignored either: those polled are the unhappiest with professionalism,*** and this is an area with much potential for improvement.
- Local authorities should primarily focus on ***providing better conditions for farmers*** and facilitating the growth of agriculture, a sector that will drive development of these communities.
- Attention should also be paid to ***creating jobs for young people*** and motivating them to ***remain in these communities,*** which should be complemented by the ***development of appropriate youth policy.***
- ***The local authorities ought to do more to increase their transparency, especially in terms of budgeting and budget priorities,*** given that 84% of those polled reported being unaware of this aspect of the local authorities' functions.
- ***The perception of the economic situation at the local level should also be improved,*** since this aspect received the lowest scores relative to the national and the regional levels.

- In addition, the local governments should also work to promote **conditions for private enterprise**, in view of the **exceptionally low proportion of respondents who feel the local authorities are doing enough to help in this regard**.
- **Satisfaction outweighs dissatisfaction** with individual aspects of day-to-day life in these communities.
- Even though safety is perceived to be at a high level (79% of those polled reported being either 'mostly' or 'completely' safe in their home towns), **emphasis should be placed on reducing crime and improving infrastructure**, since **these two aspects are the dominant drivers of insecurity amongst members of the public** in the communities surveyed.
- Local governments should invest special efforts into **improving their residents' living standards**, given that **nearly one-quarter of those polled (23%) have reported a 'barely tolerable' or 'intolerable' quality of life**.

Having in mind the goal of the Programme (to improve local capacities primarily in 99 local self-governments in Šumadija and Western Serbia, and South and Eastern Serbia regions to apply **good governance (GG) principles** in local policies and regulations and thus increase social cohesion), but also the additional goal to positively change the scope and quality of public services rendered to citizens, especially to those from excluded groups, **list of key findings and recommendations is also presented in relation to each of good governance principles:**

- (1) accountability,
- (2) transparency,
- (3) participation,
- (4) non-discrimination and
- (5) efficiency.

Table 12.1. *Key findings and recommendations in relation to good governance principles*

| GG principle | Key findings | Key recommendations |
|----------------|---|--|
| Accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42% respondents believe that their local authority doesn't take residents' interests into account and doesn't provide services appropriate to their needs Trust in local institutions is low: very much or complete trust in Local Mayor is expressed by 29% respondents, in local authority administration/civil servants by 27%, in local assembly by 21%, and in local council by 20% respondents 17% of respondents who had reason to complain about the work of a civil servant did not do so because they did not feel confident anyone will take the complaint into consideration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage municipalities and to provide them with expert support to develop comprehensive or individual (specific issue related) strategic plans and action plans based on previously identified problems in LSG and on the results of (un)satisfaction with the quality of individual aspects of life To encourage direct contact of citizens with their elected representatives - through constituency offices (local parliament members offices), open doors and other means To encourage updating and/or adopting the Code of Conduct of Local Officials in LSGs and invest efforts in promoting this document |
| Transparency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 34% respondents feel that they are not sufficiently aware of what their municipality does 50% of respondents who had reason to complain about the work of a civil servant did not do so because they did not know who to complain to and how 23% respondents as the greatest obstacle in communicating with the local authority stress out lack of information about procedures, documents, etc..., with additional 8% stressing out lack of information about the length of procedures and deadlines for exercise of rights/processing of applications 81% respondents are not aware and do not know nothing about the budgeting priorities (allocation of budget funds) of their local authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve the functioning, visibility and quality of information (constantly providing timely and accurate information) on the official LSGs web sites To ease and make more accessible to citizens to follow the work of local assemblies, in each LSG depending on the most favourable means identified through Survey To train and raise capacities of LSG representatives (from the Public Relations Service and/or individuals responsible for external communication) for the efficient and practical use of social networks as a communication tool, primarily |

| | | |
|----------------------|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62% respondents don't know nothing about how the local authority manages its budget • In order to make easier for citizens to follow the work of local assemblies, 15% respondents believe that access to assembly sessions for interested members of the public should be assured, 14% believe that more frequent public consultations should be held and 13% that assembly sessions should be held in local community areas. | <p>when communicating with younger population in LSG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To digitize all internal regulations in relation to codes of conduct of civil servants and in relation to procedures of filing complaints, and make them publicly available on the web sites and in LSG buildings • For the purpose of easier understanding and orientation of citizens, simplify description of procedures and steps needed for conducting various jobs in LSG and make them easily accessible (through posters, liflete, guidelines) – especially having in mind the workload and capacities of individual municipal services and measured satisfaction of citizens with their work • Depending on the capacities and needs of LSG, to pilot one-stop systems (single administrative points) and/or service centers in the municipalities, i.e. improve citizens' awareness about the purpose and mode of operation of existing service centers • To encourage public involvement in the process of development of the budget — through the introduction of the mechanism of public opinion polls on priority projects and directions of development in the municipality • To introduce the practice of regular publication of the state of local budgets — on the website and/or in LSG |
| Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens' participation in the local decision-making processes is very low: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 89% respondents didn't take part in referendum; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage the practice of public involvement in the decision-making process, through the promotion of the importance of these mechanisms – creating |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 86% respondents didn't take part in public hearings; ○ 85% respondents didn't take part in public consultations; ○ 89% respondents didn't take part in introductions of voluntary local taxes; | <p>promotional materials or short information campaigns about the procedures and about functioning of public hearing and public discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the conditions in each LSG, to redefine Statutes in order to adequately (and in more detail) regulate the question of citizens' participation in the decision-making process |
| Non-discrimination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37% respondents are completely or mostly dissatisfied with ability of all residents to exercise their rights equally | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage and promote the concept of providing free legal aid, in accordance with the draft of the new law |
| Efficiency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of respondents who had reason to complain about the work of a civil servant did not do so because complaining always take time • 51% respondents do not recognize any change in the municipal services performing, comparing to previous year • 43% respondents believe that there has not been any improvements in savings in terms of time when dealing with the local authority, 48% that that there has not been any improvements in savings in terms of money when dealing with the local authority, and 46% that there has not been any improvements in savings in terms of better quality of services delivered by the local authority • 13% respondents as the greatest obstacle in communicating with the local authority stress out long procedures, and 21% complicated procedures (requiring different documents, proofs of payment etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the purpose of easier understanding and orientation of citizens, simplify description of procedures and steps needed for conducting various jobs in LSG and make them easily accessible (through posters, liflete, guidelines) – especially having in mind the workload and capacities of individual municipal services and measured satisfaction of citizens with their work • To invest in introduction of more efficient case management system, in accordance with capacities and needs of each LSG |

13. TRENDS

Survey results indicate that only in two, out of eighteen local self-governments where survey about citizen satisfaction was conducted more than one time, there were no positive trends in none of the examined areas.

In other sixteen local self-governments (Babušnica, Bela Palanka, Bojnik, Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Doljevac, Knjaževac, Lebane, Leskovac, Nova Varoš, Novi Pazar, Priboj, Raška, Trgovište i Vladičin Han) we measured improvement in at least one of the examined areas.

Local self-government with most improved areas regarding previous survey cycles is Bela Palanka and Vladičin Han. On the other hand, Babušnica is a municipality with the largest number of negative trends regarding previous survey cycles.

Table 13.1. *Presentation of positive and negative trends recorded in local self-governments where the survey was conducted in more than one cycle*

| | <i>Positive trends</i> | <i>Negative trends</i> |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Babušnica | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Satisfaction with the local government's general administration department | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level of information citizens has about the work of their local authority• Trust in local institutions• Participation of citizens in the work of local self-government• How quickly citizens can complete their dealings with the local authority• Politeness and professionalism of local civil servants• Familiarity with the budgeting priorities of their municipality |
| Bela Palanka | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attitude towards their local authority and its institutions• Local government takes citizens interests into account and provides services appropriate to their needs• Level of information citizens has about the work of their local authority• Trust in local institutions• Functioning of municipal services• Familiarity with the budgeting priorities of their municipality• Living standard | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corruption amongst local civil servants• Lack of information about procedures and documentation, and procedural complexity |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Bojnik | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of information citizens have about the work of their local authority • Trust in local institutions • How quickly citizens can complete their dealings with the local authority • Living standard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local government takes their interests into account and provides services appropriate to their needs • Reasons to complain about local staff • Corruption amongst local civil servants • Familiarity with the budgeting priorities of their municipality |
| Bosilegrad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of information citizens have about the work of their local authority • Satisfaction with the local government's general administration department • Corruption amongst local civil servants • Familiarity with the budgeting priorities of their municipality • Living standard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust in local institutions • Participation of citizens in some kind of direct democracy • How quickly they could complete their dealings with the local authority • Reasons to complain about local staff |
| Bujanovac | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of information citizens have about the work of their local authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons to complain about local staff • Corruption amongst local civil servants |
| Doljevac | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living standard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local government takes citizens interests into account and provides services appropriate to their needs |
| Knjaževac | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local government takes citizens interests into account and provides services appropriate to their needs • Trust in local institutions • Familiarity with the budgeting priorities of their municipality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption amongst local civil servants |
| Lebane | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude towards their local authority and its institutions • Corruption amongst local civil servants |
| Leskovac | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functioning of local self-government services • Living standard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of information citizens have about the work of their local authority • Local government takes citizens interests into account and provides services appropriate to their needs |

| | | |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Nova Varoš | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude towards their local authority and its institutions • Level of information citizens have about the work of their local authority • Local government takes citizens interests into account and provides services appropriate to their needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living standard |
| Novi Pazar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of information citizens have about the work of their local authority • Living standard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the economic situation in the local self-government |
| Priboj | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living standard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust in local institutions • Attitude towards their local authority and its institutions • Level of information citizens have about the work of their local authority • Local government takes citizens interests into account and provides services appropriate to their needs |
| Raška | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude towards their local authority and its institutions • Level of information citizens have about the work of their local authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust in local institutions |
| Sjenica | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of citizens who use white corruption (friendly, family relations) • Attitude towards their local authority and its institutions • Level of information citizens have about the work of their local authority |
| Trgovište | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functioning of municipal services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of information citizens have about the work of their local authority • Living standard • Familiarity with the budgeting priorities of their municipality |

| | | |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Vladičin Han | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local government takes citizens interests into account and provides services appropriate to their needs • Trust in local institutions • Functioning of municipal services • How quickly they could complete their dealings with the local authority • Living standard • Reasons to complain about local staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of information citizens have about the work of their local authority |
| Vlasotince | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functioning of municipal services • Satisfaction with the local government's general administration department • Living standard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of information citizens have about the work of their local authority • Trust in local institutions • Reasons to complain about local staff |
| Vranje | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction with the local government's general administration department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of information citizens have about the work of their local authority • Trust in local institutions • Participation of citizens in some kind of direct democracy • Familiarity with the budgeting priorities of their municipality |

The production of this report has been enabled within the programme “Enhancing Good Governance and Social Inclusion for Municipal Development – Swiss PRO”. The content of the publication is the sole responsibility of the CeSID and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the Government of Switzerland and Government of Serbia.