

News release

Many Ghanaians consider emigration, driven by economic challenges

A majority of Ghanaians have considered leaving the country, in most cases to improve their economic lot, according to the latest Afrobarometer survey.

The proportion of citizens who have given “a lot” of thought to emigrating has more than doubled since 2017. The most common reasons are the search for work opportunities and the desire to escape economic hardship.

The highly educated, young people, and unemployed citizens are most likely to consider emigration. North America is the most popular destination, followed by Europe.

According to recent data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Ghana ranks sixth among ECOWAS countries in terms of emigration rates. While migration within Africa is often dominated by lower-skilled labour, highly educated and skilled individuals are more likely to migrate to OECD countries.

Key findings

- Six in 10 respondents (61%) say they have considered leaving Ghana, a 20-percentage-point increase compared to 2017 (41%) (Figure 1). The share who say they have given “a lot” of thought to the idea has more than doubled, from 20% to 44%.
 - Thoughts of emigrating are most common among the most educated citizens (78% of those with post-secondary education) and the youth (72% of 18- to 35-year-olds) (Figure 2).
 - More than two-thirds (68%) of people who are currently unemployed have thought about leaving Ghana, while nearly as many part-time workers (65%) and full-time workers (63%) have considered emigration.
- The most common reasons cited for potential emigration are finding work opportunities (55%) and escaping economic hardship (33%) (Figure 3).
- The most popular destinations among potential emigrants are North America (55%) and Europe (24%) (Figure 4).

Afrobarometer surveys

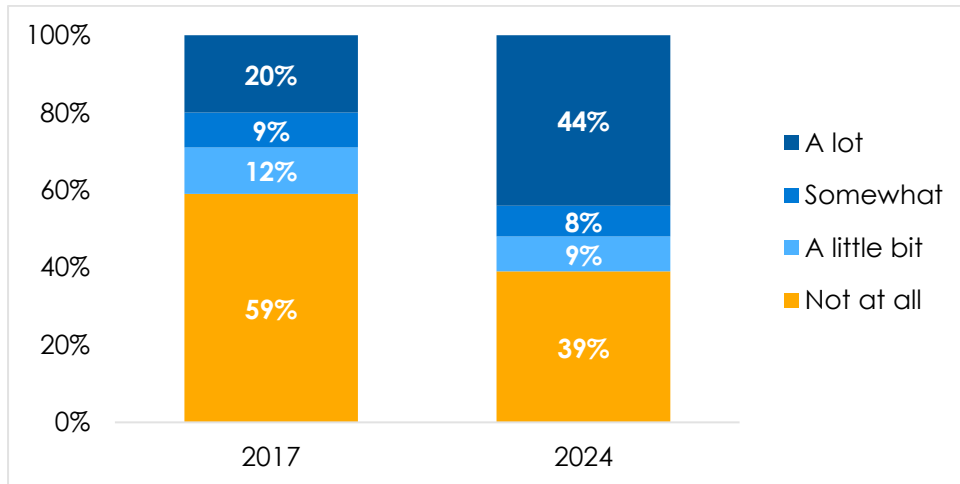
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 10 were launched in January 2024. Afrobarometer’s national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent’s choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Ghana, led by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 2,400 adult Ghanaians in August 2024. A

sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Ghana in 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2019, and 2022.

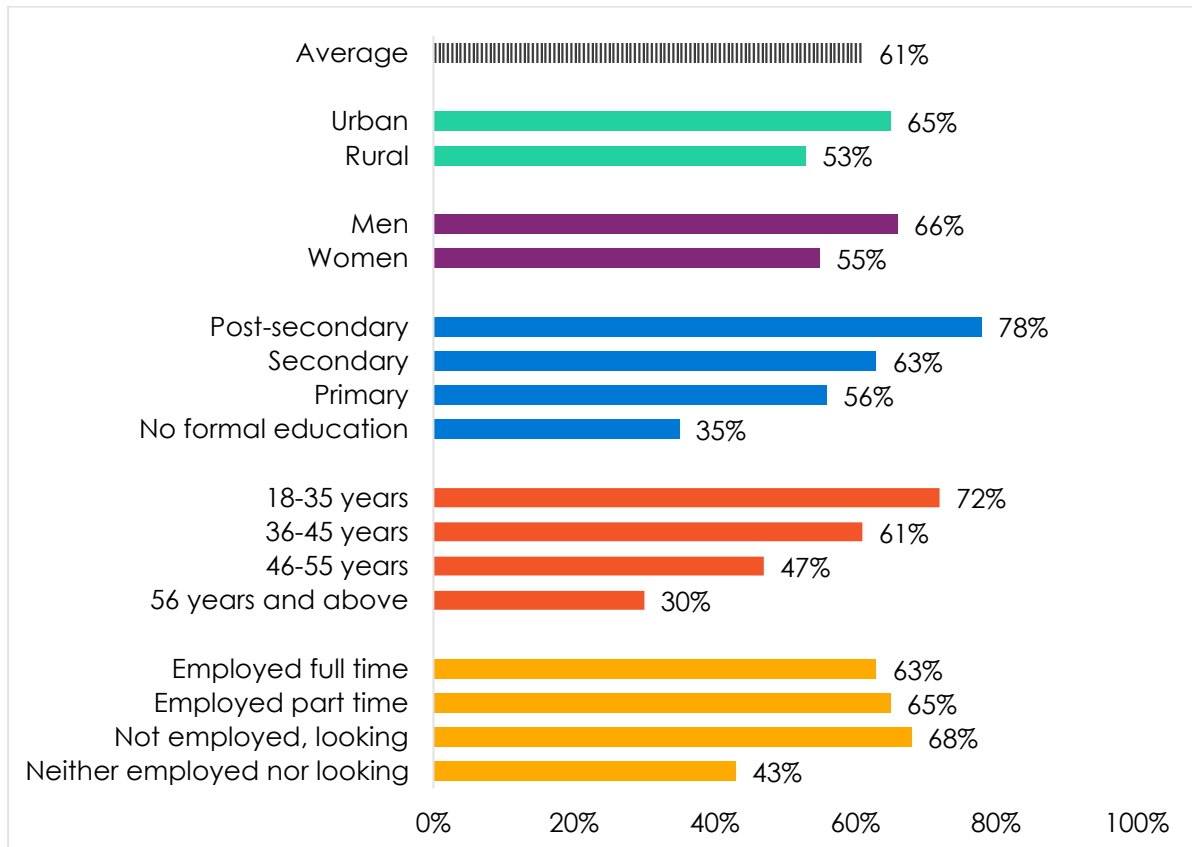
Charts

Figure 1: Considered emigrating | Ghana | 2017-2024



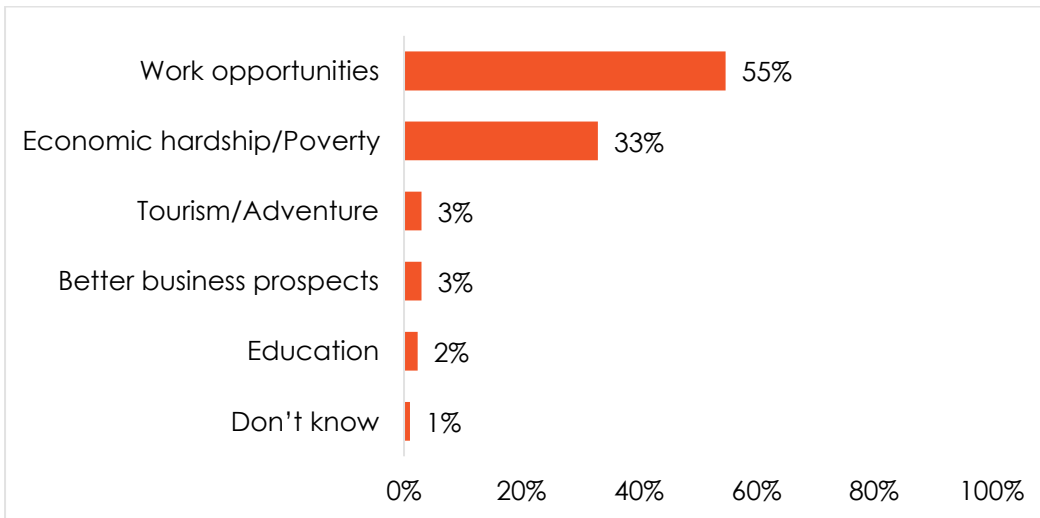
Respondents were asked: How much, if at all, have you considered moving to another country to live?

Figure 2: Considered emigrating | by demographic group | Ghana | 2024



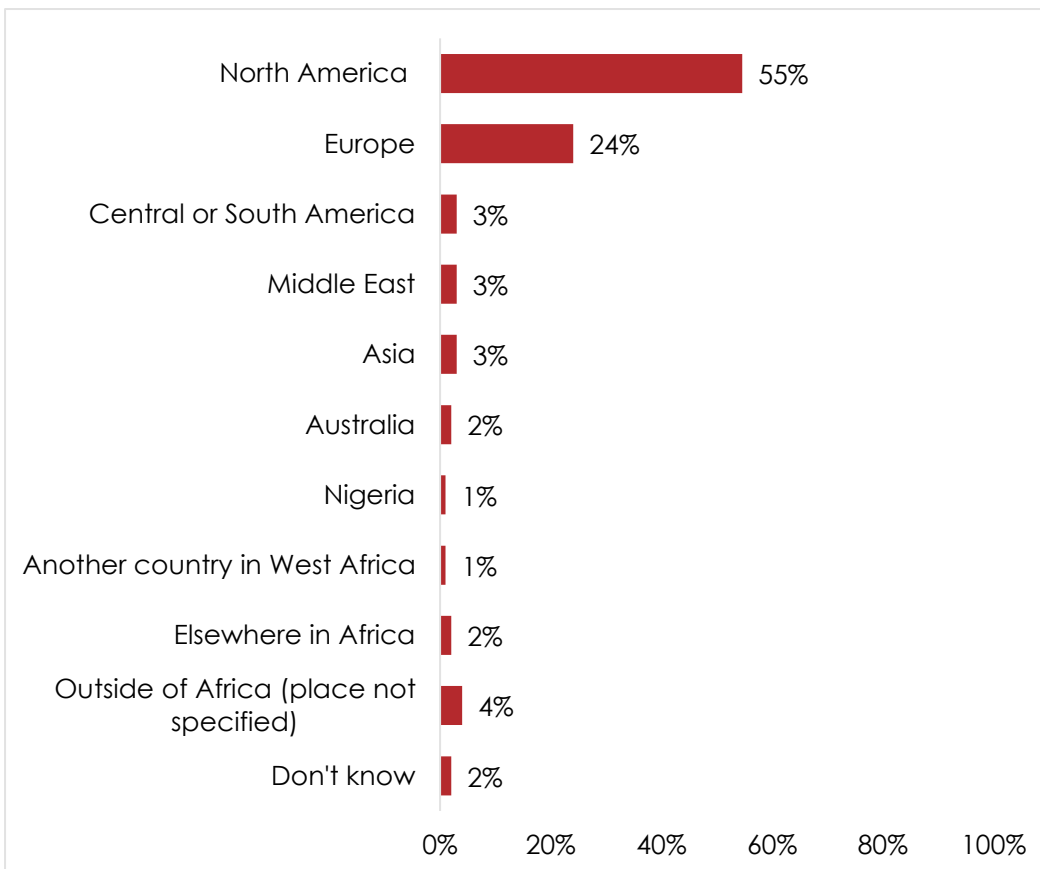
Respondents were asked: How much, if at all, have you considered moving to another country to live? (% who say "a little bit," "somewhat," or "a lot")

Figure 3: Main reason to consider emigration | Ghana | 2024



Respondents who say they have considered emigrating were asked: What is the most important reason why you would consider moving from Ghana? (Respondents who say they have not considered emigrating are excluded.)

Figure 4: Preferred destination for emigration | Ghana | 2024



Respondents who say they have considered emigrating were asked: If you were to move to another country, where would you be most likely to go? (Respondents who say they have not considered emigrating are excluded.)

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