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“There are substantial differences between urban and rural residents in the perceived progress of the MDGs. While there is a general census that poverty issues are the most serious problems facing Zambia”

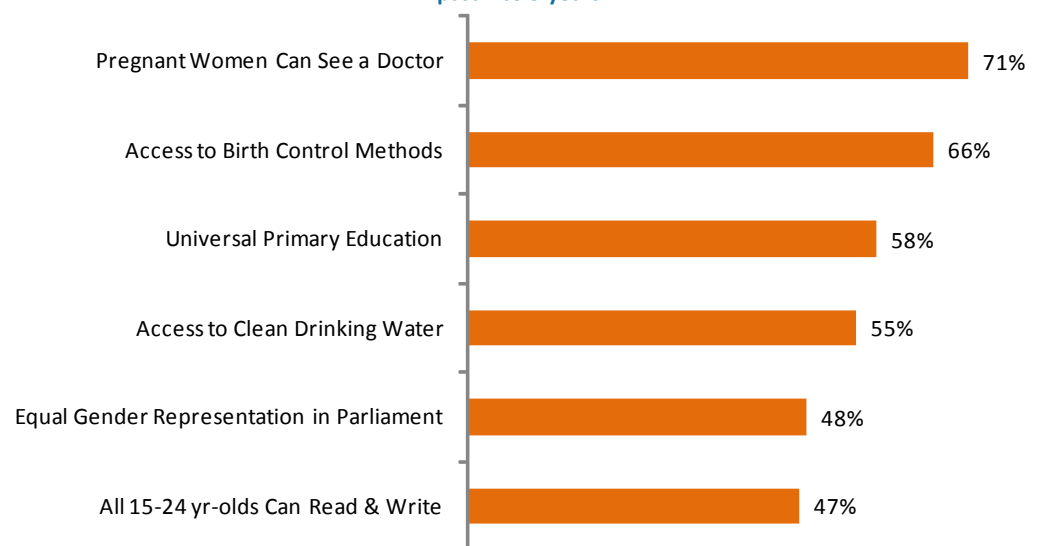
## Zambia: Public Opinion on MDGs Highlights Perception-Reality Gap

July 2010

**Public opinions on the level of progress made towards meeting the United Nations millennium development goals (MDGs) do not always square with a country's actual MDG status. This comes across in the AudienceScapes surveys of African countries.**

When Zambians were asked about their country's degree of progress on meeting six key MDG criteria (which are supposed to be met by 2015), **more than two-thirds of Zambian respondents perceived either some or a lot of progress in maternal health care and family planning (other possible responses were “not a lot of progress” and “no progress at all”). But national statistics indicate that there is still a great deal that needs to be done in these areas**, particularly if Zambia is to reach its MDG goals of reducing its maternal mortality rate by three-quarters and granting universal access to contraception.\*

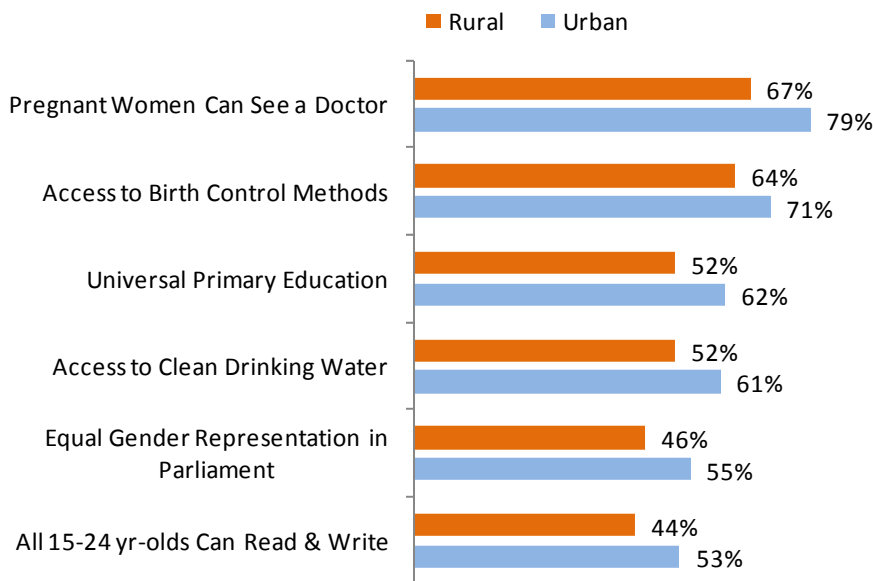
**Chart 1 Zambia: Progress of Millenium Development Goals**  
% respondents answering "some progress" or "a lot of progress" has been made over past 4 to 5 years



AudienceScapes National Survey of Zambia April 2010: survey of adults (15+) n=2000

Conversely, only 58 percent of respondents reported seeing progress in achieving universal primary education, even though it is one of the few MDGs Zambia is likely to meet by 2015. This may reflect Zambians' frustration with the country's inability to significantly increase literacy rates and make a secondary education accessible to all. In fact, from 1990 to 2004, literacy rates among 15 to 24 year-olds decreased from 79 percent to 70 percent; net enrollment in secondary school is less than 45 percent.\*\*

**Zambia: Urban-Rural Opinions on Progress of MDGs**  
 % of respondents answering "some progress" or "a lot of progress" has been made over past 4 to 5 years



AudienceScapes National Survey of Zambia April 2010: survey of adults (15+) n=2000

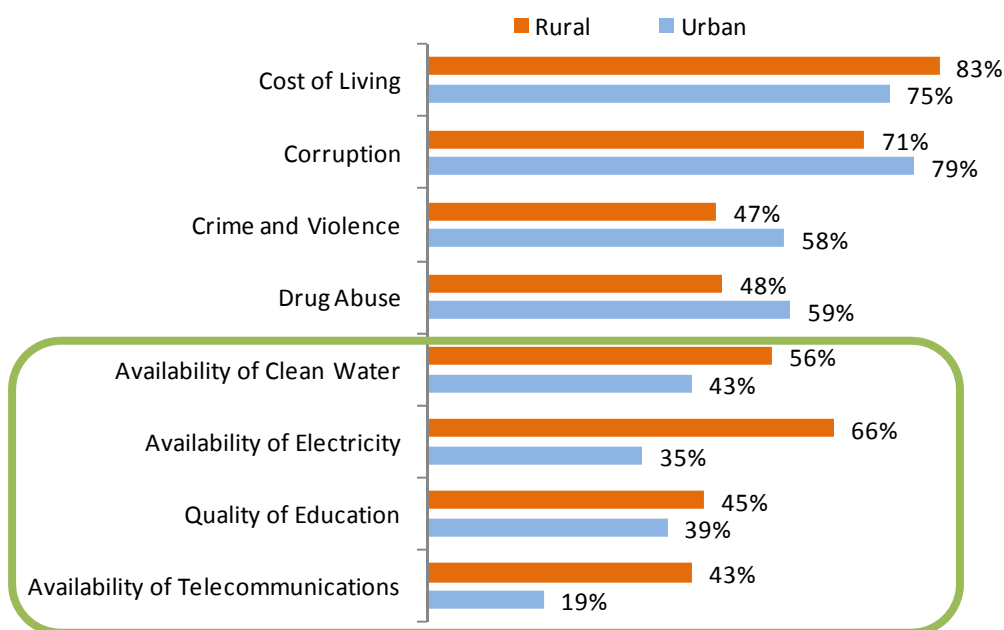
**Chart 2 highlights the substantial gap between urban and rural residents in their perceptions of progress on the MDGs.** In general, urban and better educated respondents were more likely to say that there has been “some” or “a lot of progress” made on MDGs over the past four or five years. This might not be surprising, given that urbanites tend to have better access to such services as education and health, and generally have higher incomes than rural dwellers.

*Opinion Gap on Zambian Development Priorities*

A similar divide emerged when AudienceScapes researchers asked respondents to assess the level of urgency of various high-profile development issues. While urban respondents consider crime and corruption to be serious problems, rural residents are more concerned about the struggle of living without reliable electricity or drinking water supplies. However, there is general agreement that the most serious problems facing the country involve poverty, unemployment, and the cost of living.

**Rural-urban differences on development priorities again reflected differences in access to amenities.** According to the AudienceScapes survey, urban Zambians were three times more likely to have access to electricity than their rural counterparts and much more likely to have household access to telecommunications such as mobile phones or the internet. The same concern for access to public utilities and telecommunications was felt by those who are less affluent and lesser educated. Respondents with greater educational or income attainment were progressively less likely to see these issues as “somewhat” or “very serious”.

**Zambia: Importance of Development Issues in Urban-Rural Areas**  
 % of respondents answering that the problem is "somewhat serious" or "very serious"



AudienceScapes National Survey of Zambia April 2010: survey of adults (15+) n=2000

**The survey findings can assist development organizations and policymakers to understand MDG perceptions at the grassroots level, as an aid in planning priorities for action. In particular, the surveys show that a greater effort may be required to keep the public informed about the state of play in MDG work and also to ensure that the benefits of any progress reach all segments of society.**

**The AudienceScapes project ([www.audiencescapes.org](http://www.audiencescapes.org)) is aimed at bridging knowledge gaps about media preferences, personal communication habits and the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in Africa and in other developing regions. It is also a tool for identifying needs in media, communication technologies, development information and development policy.**

The project’s name refers to the benefits for development organizations of understanding the changing communication preferences and needs of their ‘audiences’—the target populations and policymakers whom they are trying to support. Launched in April 2009 with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation\*\*\*, AudienceScapes comprises four main elements:

- **National quantitative surveys** looking at (1) the general population’s access to and use of media, access to and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and word-of-mouth communication habits; and (2) how these factors affect people’s acquisition of knowledge about key development topics. Pilot projects are taking place in Ghana, Kenya and Zambia.
- **In-Depth Interviews** with policymakers to find out how they gather, assess, share and disseminate critical information related to development topics, and find out how global development partners can play a constructive role in this process. The interviews were begun in the same three African countries.
- **The AudienceScapes website** which provides access to the program’s analytical reports as well as the quantitative survey data. The website also has detailed “Country Communication Profiles” of several countries in multiple developing regions, plus other resources for development practitioners working in communication, media development, technology development and policy dialogue.
- **Custom Research and Analysis** for organizations and companies in need of reports catering to their specific research needs.

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InterMedia ([www.intermedia.org](http://www.intermedia.org)) is a nonprofit research, evaluation and consulting company with expertise in media, communications and development. We creatively equip clients to understand audiences, design projects, target communications and gauge project impact in developing and transitional societies worldwide.

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\* “Zambia Millennium Development Goals: Progress Report 2008”. United Nations Development Programme.  
[http://www.undp.org.zm/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=5:mdgs-progress-reports&catid=3:publications&Itemid=5](http://www.undp.org.zm/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5:mdgs-progress-reports&catid=3:publications&Itemid=5)

\*\* “UIS Statistics Brief: Zambia Education Brief”. UNESCO Institute of Statistics. 2008.  
[http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF\\_Language=eng&BR\\_Country=8940&BR\\_Region=40540](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=8940&BR_Region=40540)

\*\*\*The findings and conclusions of the AudienceScapes research project are those of InterMedia and do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.