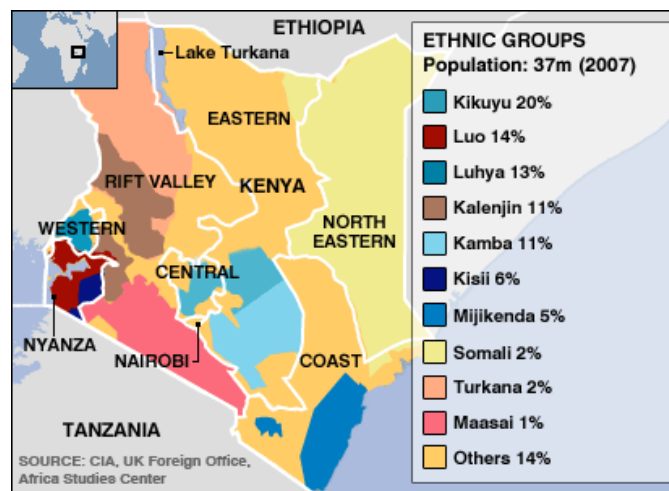


Chapter 1: The Development Context in Kenya

1.1 Politics

The survey research for this report was conducted in July and August 2009, as Kenya continued to grapple with the aftermath of the civil unrest of early 2008. The complex political backdrop included a fragile power-sharing government, pervasive suspicion of official corruption (reflected in the 90 percent of survey respondents who said corruption was a “serious problem” or “very serious problem” in Kenya), and unresolved ethnic tensions within a highly multiethnic population (see Map 1.1).

Map 1.1 Predominant Ethnic Groups by Region

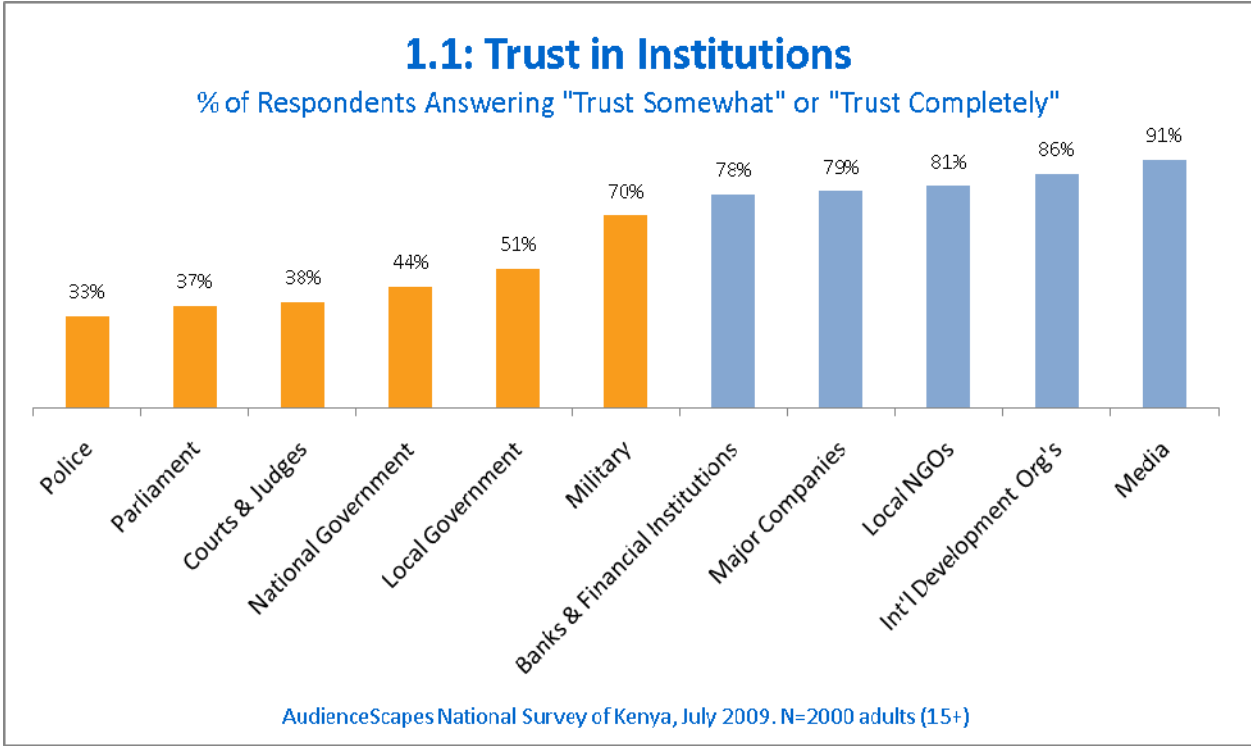


Map Source: Mynott, Adam. “Ethnic Tensions Dividing Kenya,” BBC News Online, 5 January 2008. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/7172038.stm#map

The contested presidential election in December 2007 sparked violence (much of it ethnically driven) that resulted in about 1,500 deaths and half a million displaced persons.ⁱ The crisis ebbed after the formation of a coalition government under incumbent President Mwai Kibaki and the opposition leader (now prime minister) Raila Odinga. Under the deal, the president retains most executive power as chief of state and head of government, while the prime minister leads parliament and has some executive powers.ⁱⁱ The new government has been charged with addressing the constitutional, procedural and political roots of the crisis; though some reforms have already taken place, others have been more drawn out, particularly the drafting of a new constitution that may curtail presidential powers.

Given this unsettled social and political backdrop, it may not be surprising to learn that survey respondents' stated levels of trust in many government institutions trailed trust in other types of institutions by wide margins (Chart 1.1).

International development organizations, which received favorable ratings themselves, can also use these trust numbers as guideposts when they are considering various Kenyan institutions for partners in development communication and implementation efforts. The high trust ratings for media and local NGOs are encouraging, given that they are typical conduits for spreading development information.



1.2 Development Priorities

Although Kenya is a leader in Africa in some key economic sectors—notably in telecommunications—the country still faces ongoing and severe development challenges, made only more difficult by political and social upheaval as well as a recent severe drought. Kenya was ranked a lowly 147th of 182 countries worldwide in the United Nations Development Program's 2009 human development index.ⁱⁱⁱ In the last years for which data were available, the World Bank estimated that:^{iv}

- Forty percent of the population lived below the \$2-a-day poverty line, with half of those falling below the \$1.25-a-day extreme poverty line (2005 estimate).
- Average life expectancy was 54 years, compared to a world average of 69 years and a high-income country average of 79 years (2007 estimate).
- Only 42 percent of the population had improved sanitation facilities, while 57 percent had improved water sources (2006 estimate).^v

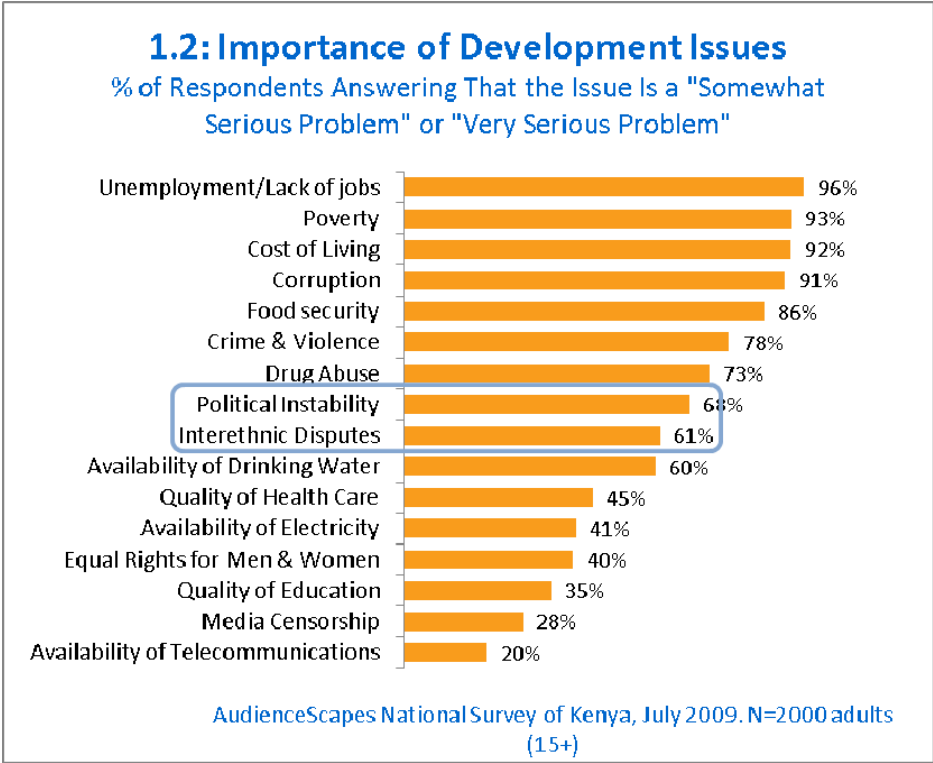
Major deficits remain in health care and education. In its 2008 *Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, the World Health Organization estimated the adult prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Kenya at around 7 percent, above both the global average of 0.8 percent and the Sub-Saharan African average of 5 percent.^{vi} Preventable and treatable malaria and diarrheal diseases are among the leading causes of death for children under five.^{vii}

On a positive note, Kenya has made progress toward the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education, lifting net primary enrollment from 68 percent of primary-age youth in 2000 to 87 percent in 2007.^{viii} Special attention to child health and primary education are warranted in a country where more than 40 percent of the population is under 15.

Providing quality health care, education and other social services to all Kenyans is geographically challenging, given that 78 percent of the population lives in rural areas. Three quarters of the labor force is engaged in agriculture as a primary occupation, although the sector contributes less than one quarter of gross domestic product.^{ix} Improving agricultural yields and accelerating rural development are therefore important steps to Kenya's overall development.

The Kenyan government has committed itself to improving social and economic conditions through its "Vision 2030" strategy, first published in 2007. According to Vision 2030 documents, "the economic, social and political pillars of Kenya Vision 2030 are anchored on macroeconomic stability; continuity in governance reforms; enhanced equity and wealth creation opportunities for the poor; infrastructure; energy; science, technology and innovation (STI); land reform; human resources development; security as well as public sector reforms."^x The full strategy spells out specific economic, social, and political goals for transforming Kenya into a middle-income country, including its transition to the leading supplier of manufactured goods to east and central Africa, improving agricultural productivity, improving ICT skills training and higher education, and promoting transparency and accountability in government.^{xi}

To put official development goals in a popular context, the AudienceScapes national survey asked Kenyans to rate the level of importance of various development issues. Chart 1.2 shows the percentage of respondents answering either "Somewhat serious" or "Very serious" with regard to various problems.

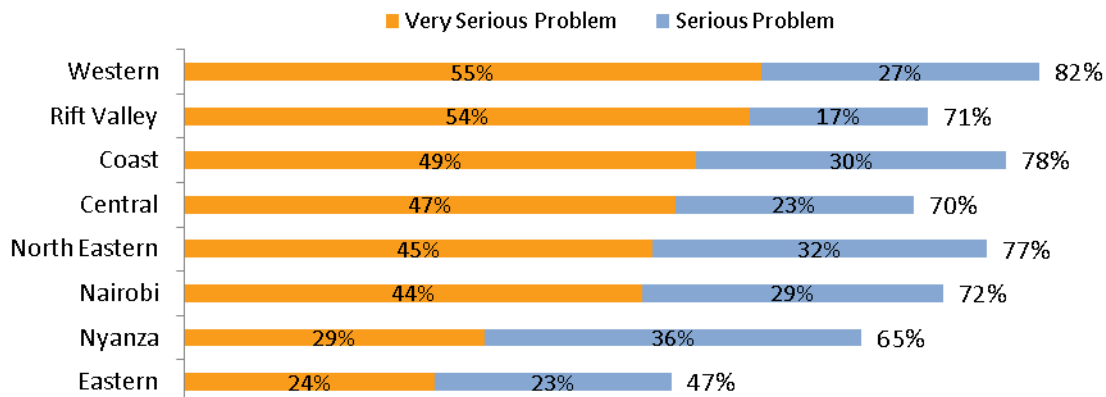


As in other African countries surveyed, high importance was given to jobs, poverty, general cost of living and corruption. Kenyan's addition of food security to the top five serious issues likely reflected the impact of prolonged drought on the availability of food.

Interestingly, political instability and interethnic disputes did not rank closer to the top of the seriousness scale, given recent events in Kenya. This may mean that people did not consider these events to have a direct impact on their everyday well-being; the events were thus viewed as transitory events—important when they occur, but not necessarily requiring ongoing attention. In some regions, these two concerns were more pressing than in others, suggesting that the direct impact varied widely across different parts of the country (Charts 1.3 and 1.4).

1.3: Seriousness of Political Instability

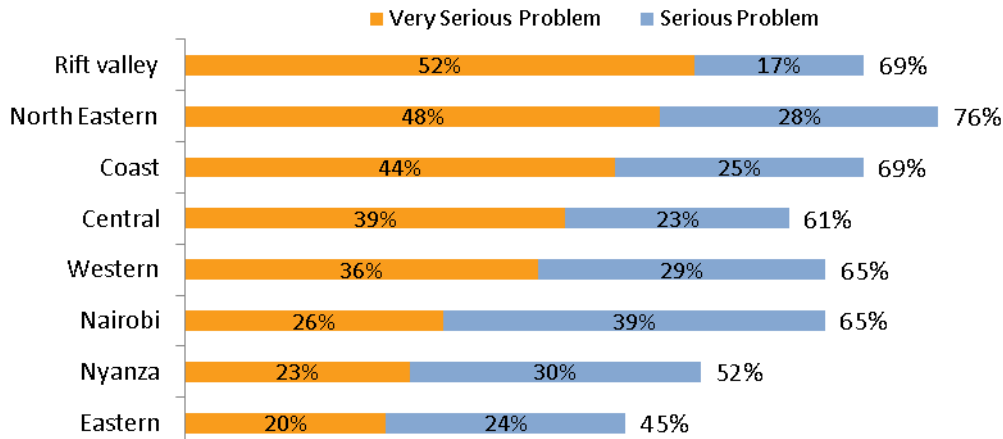
% of Respondents in Each Region Who Said Political Instability Is a...



AudienceScapes National Survey of Kenya, July 2009. N=2000 adults (15+)

1.4: Seriousness of Interethnic Conflicts

% of Respondents in Each Region Who Said Interethnic Conflicts are a...

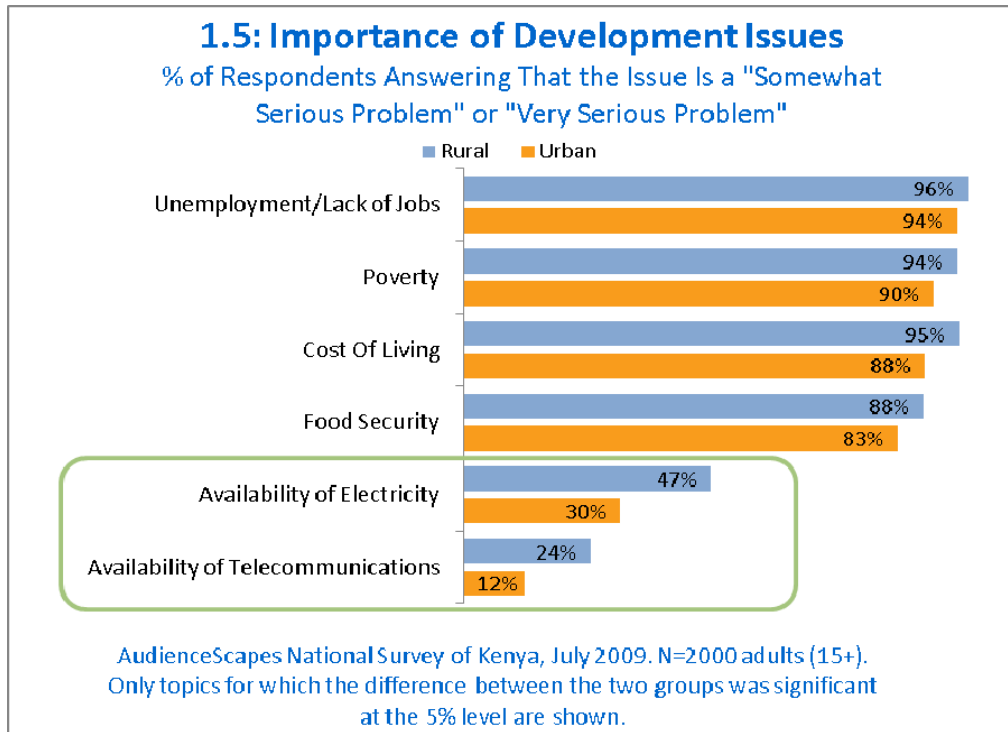


AudienceScapes National Survey of Kenya, July 2009. N=2000 adults (15+)

Some prominent issues addressed by global development organizations (such as quality education or health care) were less frequently cited as serious problems. This may be because Kenyans believe the issues are secondary until more pressing challenges have been addressed, or because they perceive these issues to be more tractable or to be improving already.

As in the case of political instability, it may also reflect different perceptions across various geographic or demographic groups, who might agree on broad economic conditions but not about more-detailed policy issues.

For example, far more rural residents than urban residents said that the availability of electricity and telecommunications are serious problems (Chart 1.5).



Those with no formal education were far more likely to report that the quality of health care and availability of drinking water, electricity and telecommunications are serious or very serious problems (differences significant at the 1 percent level; see Table 1a).

No statistically significant differences are observed between men’s and women’s assessments of development problems. In general, respondents over 30 were more likely to call issues “somewhat serious” or “very serious” than were respondents under 30, though the prioritization of topics was not significantly different.

Table 1a Development Priorities by Education			
% of Each Group Saying the Issue Is “Somewhat Serious” or “Very Serious”			
	Formal Education of Any Kind		No Formal Education
Unemployment/Lack of jobs	95%	<	98%
Poverty	92%	<	96%
Cost of Living	92%	<	98%
Corruption	92%	>	88%
Food security	86%	<	91%
Crime & Violence	78%	>	74%
Drug Abuse	73%		73%
Political Instability	68%		68%
Interethnic Disputes	61%	<	63%
Availability of Drinking Water	59%	<	68%
Quality of Health Care	44%	<	58%
Availability of Electricity	39%	<	55%
Equal Rights for Men & Women	40%	<	46%
Quality of Education	35%	<	38%
Media Censorship	28%	<	31%
Availability of Telecommunications	18%	<	35%

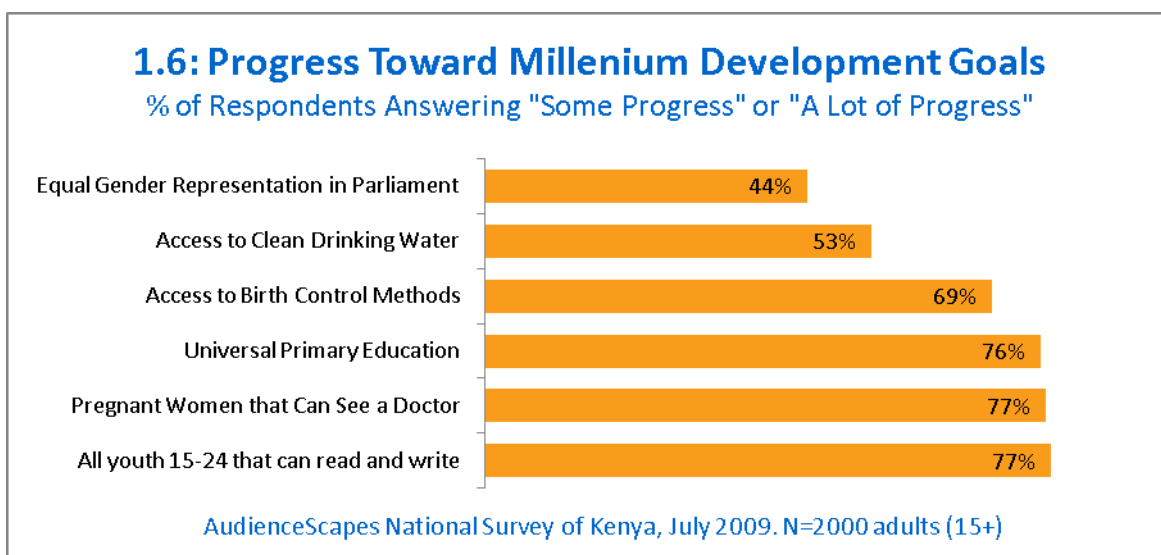
AudienceScapes National Survey of Kenya, July 2009. N=2000 adults (15+): 1794 with formal education of any kind, 204 with no formal education. (Excluded: two who responded “Don’t Know.”)

Media censorship also did not register as a serious issue among the general population or among most demographic subgroups (even among respondents in the North Eastern Region, where censorship was seen by independent observers as most problematic). This result comes despite government attempts to suppress some media coverage during the early 2008 violence, as well as other recent restrictions that have gone against a long tradition of press freedom in Kenya. In its 2009 Freedom of the Press Index, Freedom House described Kenya as “Partly Free,” but ranked the country 128th of 195 countries, exactly on the cutoff point above “Not Free.”^{xii}

One might conjecture that the events of late 2007 and early 2008 actually generated support among certain segments of the population for more rather than less censorship, given that some outlets— notably certain radio stations—were accused of fanning the flames of ethnic violence (other outlets, however, were praised for coverage that contributed to resolution of the crisis). The same dichotomy arose in the new media realm, as talk of “hate SMS” campaigns contrasted with other initiatives seeking to fill information gaps during the period of violence. Notably, the Ushahidi.com website (named for the Swahili word for “testimony”) employs an internet- and SMS-based tool that collected citizens' reports of violence and looting, which were then mapped on the site.

1.3 Gauging Development Progress

The survey also asked respondents to take stock of the country's development success over the past few years, providing a demand-side benchmark for development organizations working on high-profile issues. Survey respondents were asked how much progress had been made during the last four to five years in achieving six key development criteria derived from the [Millennium Development Goals](#), which participating countries have pledged to meet by 2015 (Chart 1.6).^{xiii}

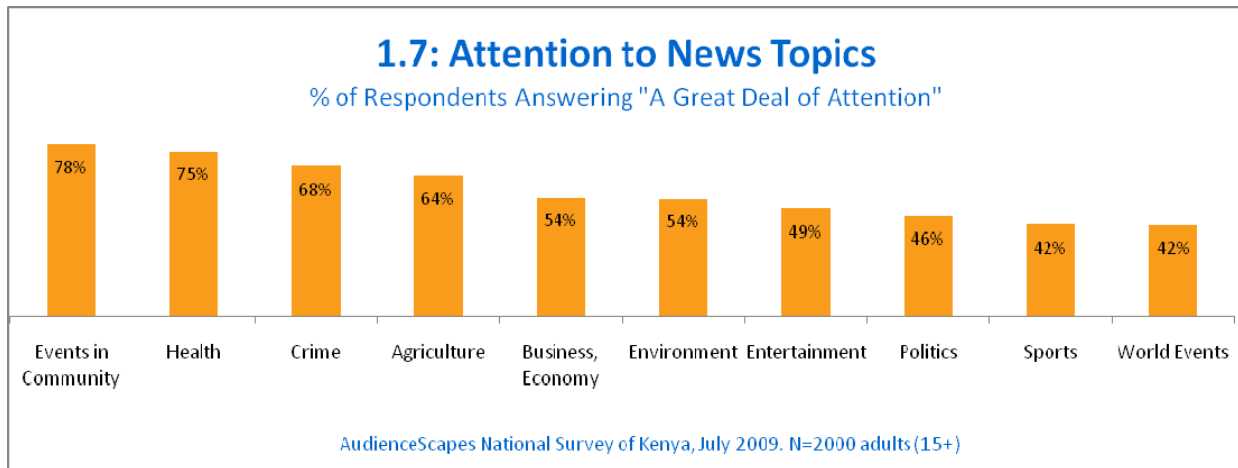


More than two-thirds of respondents perceived either some or a lot of progress in maternal health care and family planning, literacy and primary education (other possible responses were “not a lot of progress” and “no progress at all”). Measured objectively, there clearly is still a great deal of work to be done in these areas, though public perceptions of progress help to explain why the quality of health care and education were less frequently cited as serious problems in the question about issues’ importance.

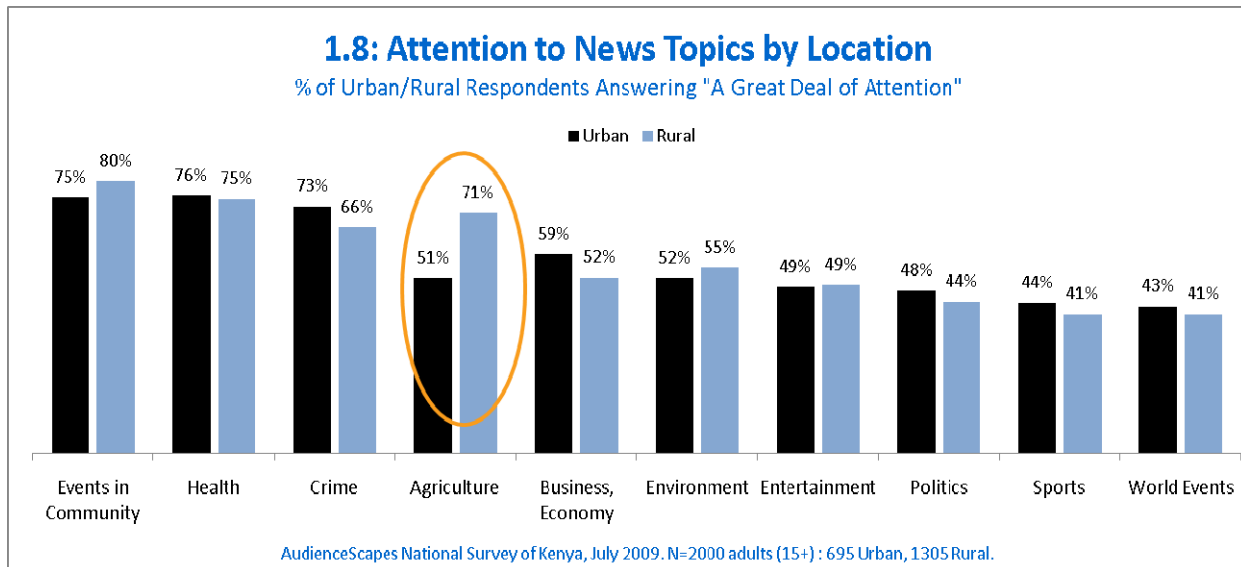
Understanding the grassroots perceptions of development issues, as well as the information upon which those perceptions are based, is a first step in designing effective development programs. But, as will be highlighted throughout this report, the development needs and priorities of Kenyans are not uniform across demographic groups. For example, men in the survey were more likely to say there had been progress toward gender equality in Parliament (47 percent of men said some or a lot of progress had been made, compared to 41 percent of women). Development approaches need to be tailored to the specific views and needs of specific populations.

1.4 Development Topics and News Preferences

Issue priorities can be measured indirectly by looking at the types of news topics that respondents pay most attention to when they watch television, listen to the radio or read a newspaper (Chart 1.7). The responses suggest that most Kenyan adults are eager to read stories about such topics as health, agriculture and the environment, bolstering the chances that development groups involved in these areas will be able to engage target groups through the media.



As might be expected, rural residents said they pay a great deal of attention to news and information about agriculture (Chart 1.8). Otherwise, news priorities of rural and urban respondents appear similar.



While Kenyans may show high levels of interest in certain issues, they are not necessarily receiving a great deal of information about them, nor are they satisfied with the quality of that information. For example, despite expressions of strong interest in health topics, those surveyed were not particularly enthusiastic about the information available to them about common health issues, except about information about HIV/AIDS and malaria (Table 1b).

Table 1b Satisfaction with Health Information

	% of Respondents Answering "Very Satisfied"	% of Respondents Answering "Somewhat Satisfied"
Malaria	50%	38%
HIV/AIDS	54%	32%
Tuberculosis	39%	35%
Family Planning	37%	38%
Polio	33%	36%
Diarrhea	32%	41%
Maternal and Infant Health	30%	37%

AudienceScapes National Survey of Kenya, July 2009. N=2000.

Even fewer respondents expressed satisfaction with information about farming and livestock (Table 1c).

Table 1c Satisfaction with Agricultural Information

	% of Respondents Answering "Very Satisfied"	% of Respondents Answering "Somewhat Satisfied"
Crop Farming		
Use of Fertilizer*	40%	37%
New Seed Varieties*	29%	40%
Irrigation*	28%	28%
Weather Problems*	26%	32%
Pest Infestation*	24%	34%
Market Information*	23%	33%
Soil Problems*	20%	31%
Getting Farms Loans/Credit*	16%	21%
Legal Issues (e.g., land)*	16%	20%
Government Farm Payments*	14%	18%
Livestock Farming		
Vaccinations (livestock)**	44%	32%
Animal Health/Disease**	40%	36%
Animal Nutrition**	37%	36%
Breeding of Animals**	33%	33%
Market Information**	27%	30%
Getting Farm Loans/Credit**	20%	21%
Getting Subsidies**	17%	20%

AudienceScapes National Survey of Kenya, July 2009. *=Asked only of those for whom farming contributed substantially to income in the last year, N=1077. **= Asked only of those who owned/raised animals and relied on them for a major source of income, N=1013.

In particular, information about the business side of agriculture (market information, farm loans, subsidies, legal issues) appears to be largely unsatisfactory in quantity, quality or both. This issue will be explored further in a case study on information for commercial agriculture in Chapter 3.

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InterMedia (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.

ⁱ *2008 Human Rights Report: Kenya*. US Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 25 February 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/119007.htm>

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Human Development Report 2009*. United Nations Development Programme, 2009. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

^{iv} *World Development Indicators*. The World Bank Group, 2009.

^v "Access to an improved water source refers to the percentage of the population with reasonable access to an adequate amount of water from an improved source, such as a household connection, public standpipe, borehole, protected well or spring, and rainwater collection. Unimproved sources include vendors, tanker trucks, and unprotected wells and springs. Reasonable access is defined as the availability of at least 20 liters a person a day from a source within one kilometer of the dwelling. Source: World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund, *Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation* (2008). "Access to improved sanitation facilities refers to the percentage of the population with at least adequate access to excreta disposal facilities that can effectively prevent human, animal, and insect contact with excreta. Improved facilities range from simple but protected pit latrines to flush toilets with a sewerage connection. To be effective, facilities must be correctly constructed and properly maintained. Source: World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund, *Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation* (2008)." (World Development Indicators, 2009, available through the World Bank's WDI online database)

^{vi} "Annex: HIV and AIDS estimates and data, 2007 and 2001," *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*. World Health Organization, 2008, p. 215. http://data.unaids.org/pub/GlobalReport/2008/jc1510_2008_global_report_pp211_234_en.pdf

^{vii} *Core Health Indicators: Kenya*. World Health Organization, 2008. http://apps.who.int/whosis/database/core/core_select_process.cfm

^{viii} *Millennium Development Goals Indicators*. United Nations Statistics Division, <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx>

^{ix} Kenya. CIA World Factbook, 2009. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html>

^x *Kenya Vision 2030: The Popular Version*. Government of the Republic of Kenya, 2007, p. 6.

<http://www.planning.go.ke>

^{xi} Ibid. One definition of “middle-income” status is provided by the World Bank: “Income group: Economies are divided according to 2008 GNI per capita, calculated using the World Bank Atlas method. The groups are: low income, \$975 or less; lower middle income, \$976 - \$3,855; upper middle income, \$3,856 - \$11,905; and high income, \$11,906 or more.” *Country Classification*, The World Bank Group, <http://go.worldbank.org/K2CKM78CC0>

^{xii} *Freedom of the Press 2009*. Freedom House,

http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fop/2009/FreedomofthePress2009_tables.pdf

^{xiii} The complete list of Millennium Development Goals is available at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>