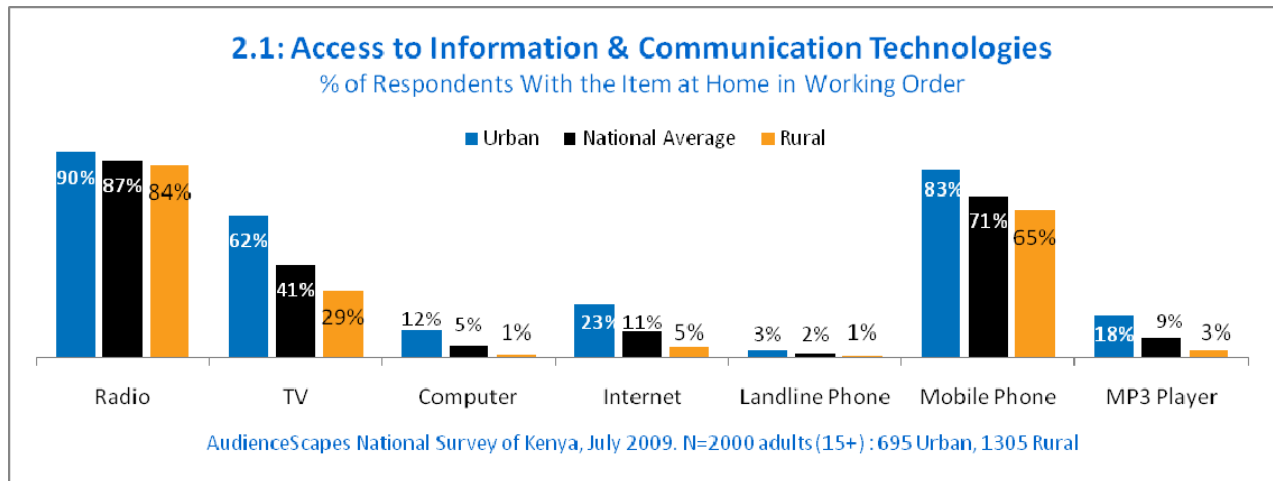


Chapter 2: Information Gathering and Sharing - An Overview

2.1 Access to Media and ICTs

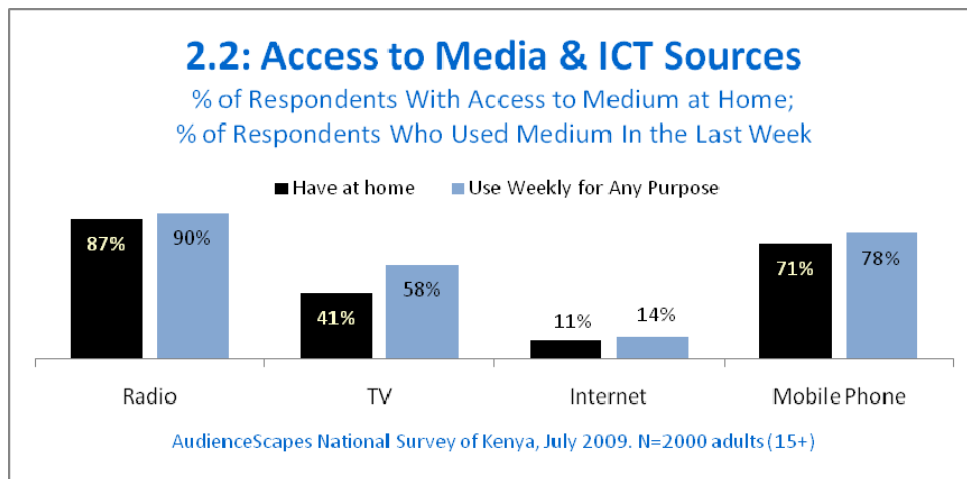
Among media and ICT platforms, radio remains the most widely available, reaching directly into more than 85 percent of Kenyan adults' homes, according to the AudienceScapes survey. Mobile phones are increasingly widespread, but they have not yet reached the near-universal coverage of radio. Fewer than half of all adults can watch TV in their homes, and other ICTs such as computers and MP3 players are available at home to only a tiny minority of Kenyans.

Rural dwellers have significantly lower access to most media and ICT platforms (Chart 2.1). In addition, respondents in the Coast and North Eastern regions reported much lower levels of access than respondents in other regions



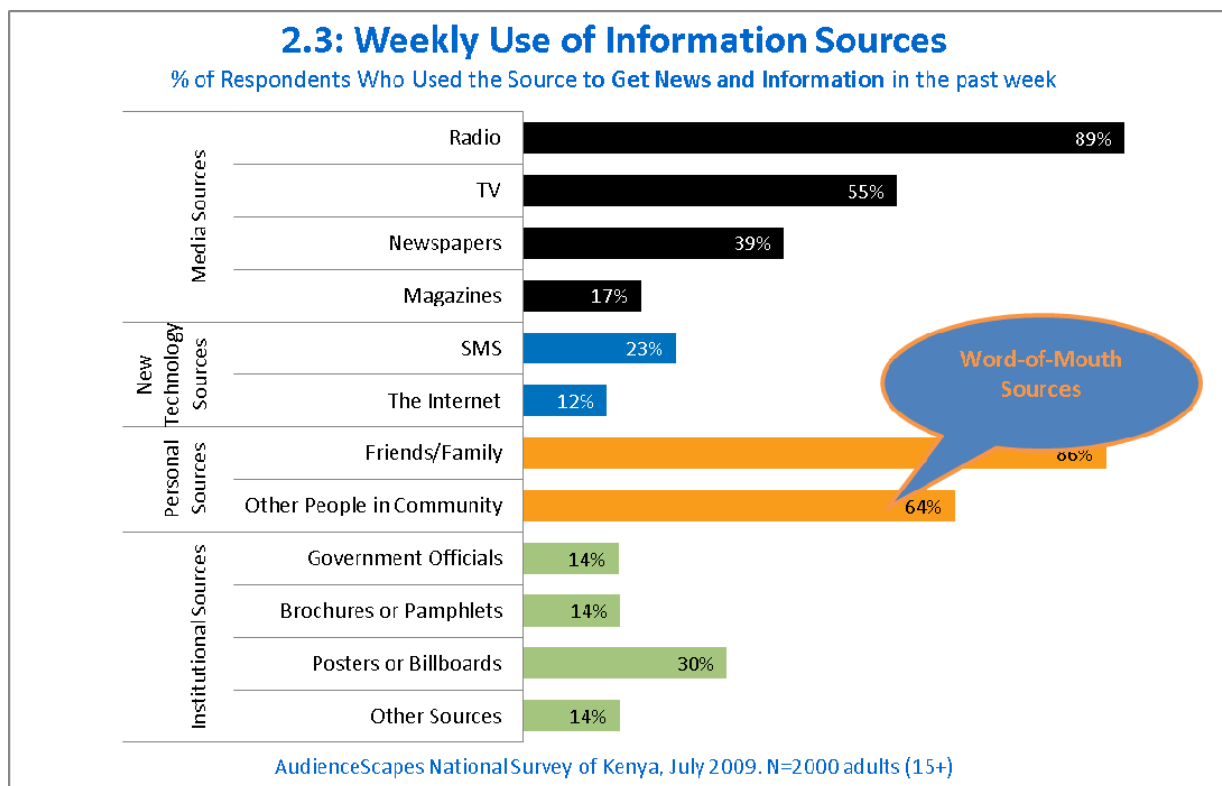
Of course, many Kenyans are able to use media and ICTs even when these items are not available in their homes—for example, by using those of friends or family living elsewhere, or by going to a public internet cafe or other public facility.

Many regular viewers are evidently finding places to watch TV even though they do not have direct access in their homes (Chart 2.2). What's more, even when respondents who watched outside the home are included, fewer than 60 percent of those surveyed had watched TV within the past week. **Although Kenyans already find ways to circumvent some barriers, other barriers remain; the reasons that people do not use each source of information are discussed in Chapter 3 below.**



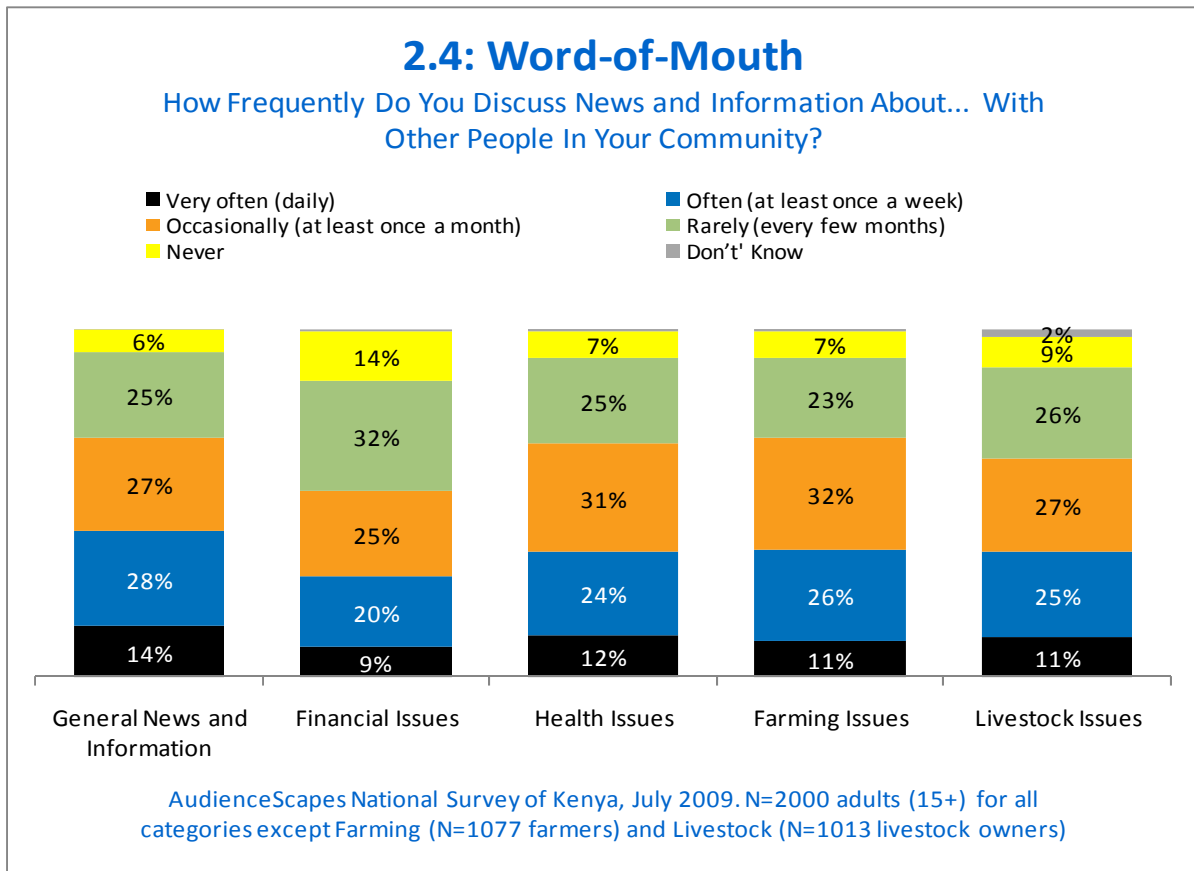
2.2 Use of Media and ICTs for Gathering News and Information

Access to media and ICTs is only one side of the communication story; use patterns also require close study to understand how access translates into action. As Chart 2.3 shows, word-of-mouth sources (“friends and family” and “other people in the community”) are about as important to survey respondents as are radio and television for staying informed. And though mobile phones have become more accessible for general use, they are not widely used for formal news collection via SMS services. Institutional sources, such as government officials or literature produced by public agencies, are also lower on the news and information totem pole for Kenyans surveyed.



2.3 The Importance of Word-of-Mouth Communication

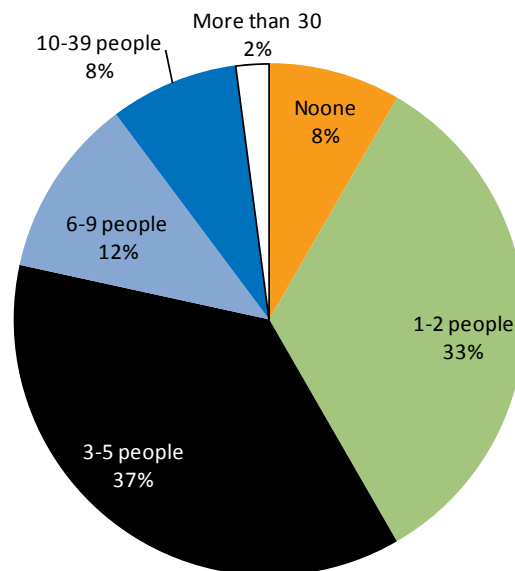
The importance of personal sources of information—friends, family and other community members—cannot be overemphasized. The news that passes through all of the media and ICT sources discussed in this chapter is often passed around communities, from person to person, throughout the country. Respondents in all demographic groups said they discuss news and information regularly with others, and that their conversations cover a number of issues (Chart 2.4).



More than half of those surveyed said they discuss health, agriculture and general news and information (including current events) with others on at least a monthly basis; discussion of financial issues lags slightly, but is still common. Most respondents said fewer than 10 people look to them for opinions and advice, but about 10 percent have very large networks, with some helping more than 30 other people to interpret news (Chart 2.5).

2.5: Size of Word-of-Mouth Networks

% of Respondents Who Said That Many People Look to Them for Opinions/Advice



AudienceScapes National Survey of Kenya, July 2009. N=2000 adults (15+), Excluded 81 (weighted responses of "Don't Know" or "Refused")

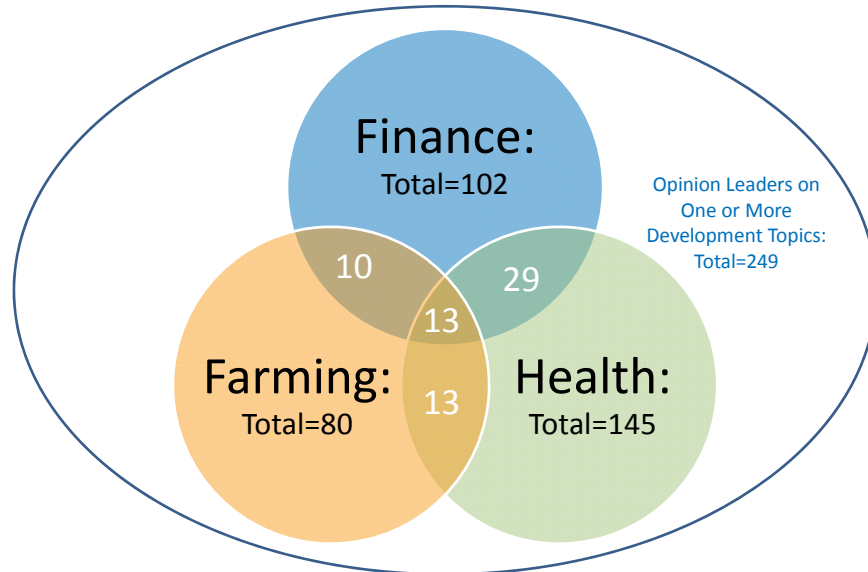
Opinion Leaders

An important aspect of word-of-mouth information networks is the roles played by news “hubs”—people who tend to be at the center of such networks and are thus in a position to transmit information more broadly and efficiently within a target group. For each of the three development topics examined in depth later in this report (personal finance, health and agriculture), we identify the types of people who are most likely to have strong word-of-mouth networks relative to the population as a whole. Such “opinion leaders,” one type of hub, are thus of potential interest to development organizations as key local partners or champions in project efforts.¹

Demographically speaking, hubs are more likely to be male and better educated, and to use media and ICT sources of information more frequently than others do. However, there was very little overlap between the respondents who identified themselves as opinion leaders in a given development topic. This suggests that respondents were fairly honest, for the most part, about their opinion leadership status; in other words, there were few respondents who asserted their opinion leadership on every topic.

Overlap Among Opinion Leaders

Number of Respondents (Weighted) Categorized as Opinion Leaders for Each Topic

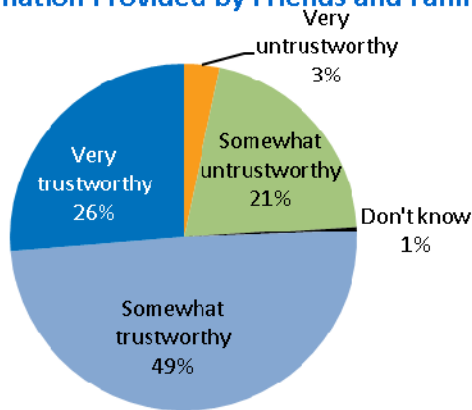


Source: AudienceScapes National Survey of Kenya, July 2009. N=264 adults (15+) who said that people come to them very often for advice/opinions about one or more development topics.

Opinion leaders can potentially help spread information and shape public opinion among a wide audience; although this group was defined by how *frequently* they are consulted for opinions and advice, we can also look at *how many people* come to them to help interpret news and information. For example, opinion leaders for general news and information reported larger networks on average: 52 percent said that between one and five people regularly look to them for opinions or advice about major news topics, 35 percent said they advise between 6 and 15 people and 12 percent said that their opinion leadership regularly reaches more than 15 people (6 percent said more than 30 people). In contrast, 78 percent of all other respondents said that five people or fewer ask their opinions or advice about major topics in the news (9 percent said no one looks to them for opinions or advice).

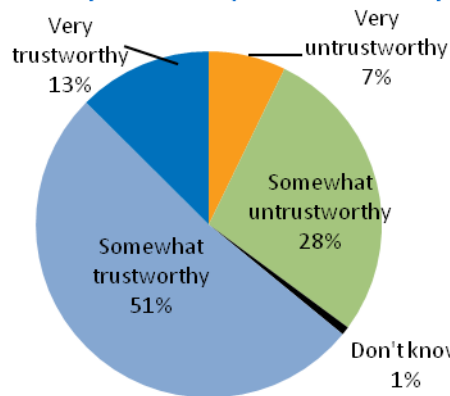
Although Kenyans report word-of-mouth to be one of their most important and frequent sources of development information, they do not necessarily consider those sources to be very trustworthy (Charts 2.6 and 2.7). By way of comparison, about 96 percent of respondents rated radio news and information as somewhat or very trustworthy, compared to 75 percent if the source is “friends and family,” and 61 percent if the source is “other people in the community.”

2.6: Trustworthiness of the News and Information Provided by Friends and Family



AudienceScapes National Survey of Kenya, July 2009. N=1982 adults (15+); excluded 18 (weighted) responses) of "Do not use for news and information"

2.7: Trustworthiness of the News and Information Provided by Other People in Community



AudienceScapes National Survey of Kenya, July 2009. N=1913 adults (15+); excluded 89 (weighted) responses) of "Do not use for news and information" or "Refused"

2.4 Differing Communication Patterns of Rural and Urban Residents

The stark rural-urban split in access to most media and ICTs shown in Table 2a helps to explain why a relatively high percentage of rural residents said they rely on word-of-mouth sources as a regular (weekly) news source. Note in Table 2b that there are three sources that are used regularly by a higher percentage of rural than by urban dwellers, and that all three are human sources: "friends and family," "other people in the community" and "government officials."

Tables 2a and 2b: Urban and Rural Communication Access and Use

2a	% of Respondents with the Item at Home in Working Order	
	Urban	Rural
Radio**	90%	84%
TV**	62%	29%
Computer**	12%	1%
Internet**	23%	5%
Landline Phone**	3%	1%
Mobile Phone**	83%	65%
MP3 Player**	18%	3%
N	697	1303

2b	% Getting News from the Source Weekly	
	Urban	Rural
Radio*	91%	88%
TV**	76%	44%
Friends/ Family**	83%	88%
Newspapers**	56%	29%
SMS**	29%	19%
Other People in Community**	57%	67%
Government Officials	13%	14%
Brochures or Pamphlets**	26%	8%
Posters or Billboards**	50%	19%
Magazines**	31%	10%
Internet**	26%	5%
Other sources	17%	12%
N	697	1303

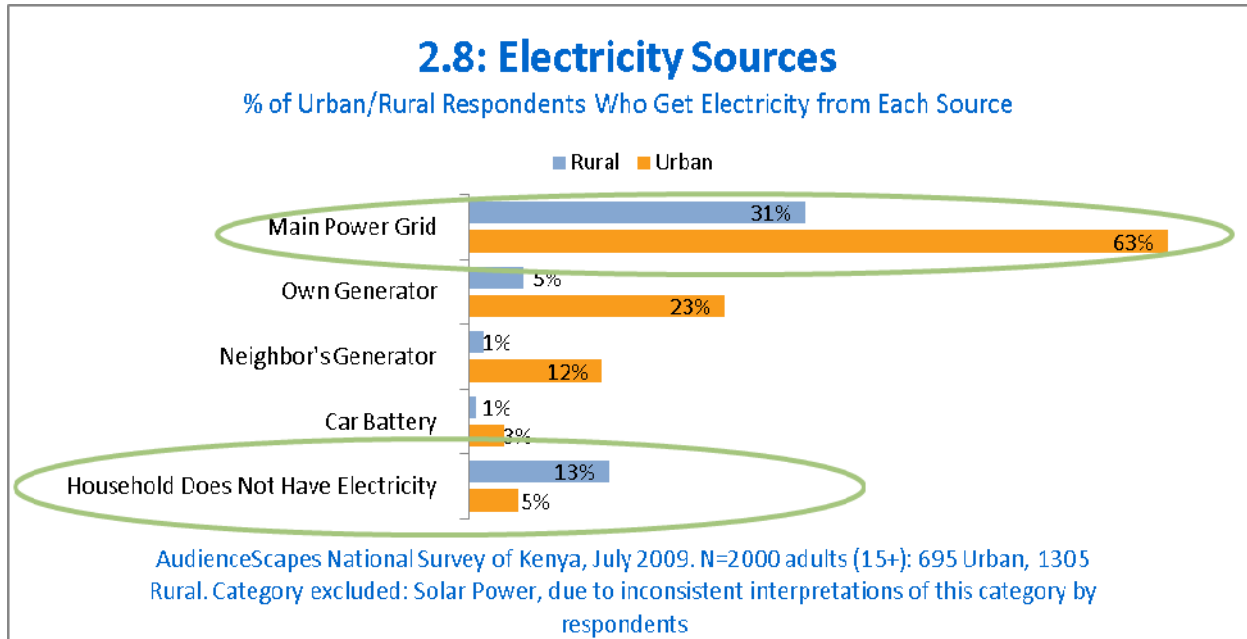
AudienceScapes National Survey of Kenya, July 2009. N=2000: 695 Urban and 1305 Rural.

*=differences statistically significant at the 5 percent level, **= differences statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

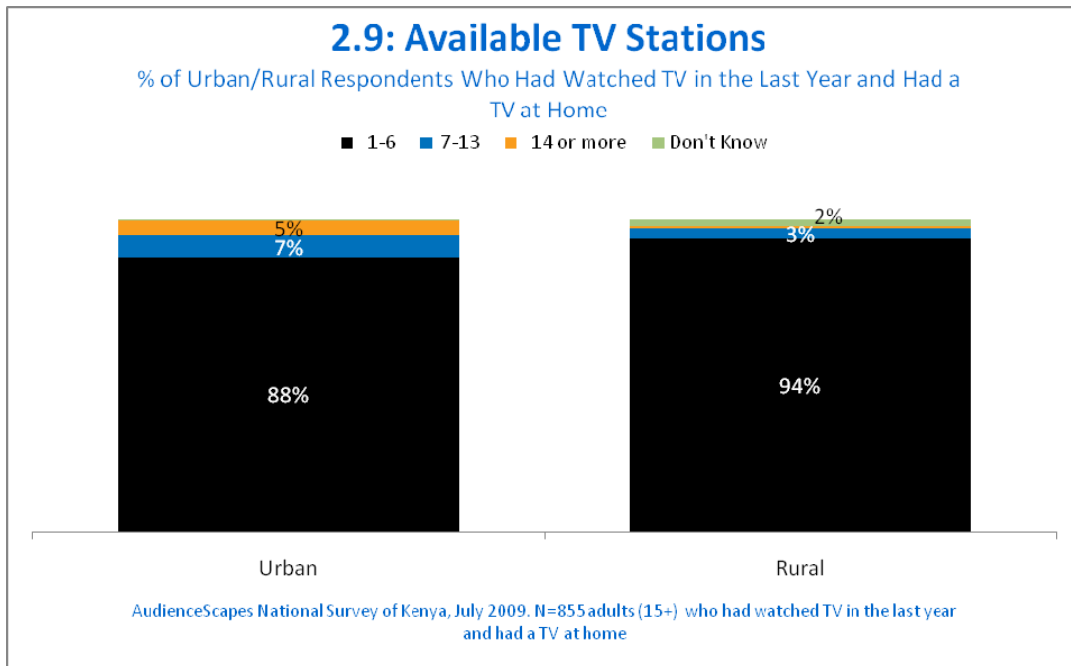
Lower access and use could be linked to several possible factors, including poor infrastructure for accessing media and ICTs, lower socioeconomic status (notably in terms of lower income and educational attainment) or lack of interest either in using a particular source or in obtaining news and information.

The AudienceScapes data suggest that all these factors except lack of interest come into play in rural areas: the proportion of nonusers who list “I am not interested” as one reason they do not use the medium was higher for urban than for rural residents for radio, TV and newspapers. Similarly, the proportion of nonusers who listed “I do not need [the item]” as one reason they do not use ICTs was higher for urban than for rural residents for both the internet and for mobile phones. Since rural residents did not express lower levels of interest in obtaining news from these sources, we can seek answers about rural information habits by looking at infrastructure, income and education.

Rural infrastructure shortfalls include electricity and signal reception. As shown in Chart 2.8, rural households are less likely than urban ones to have electricity of any kind and are far less likely to be connected to the main power grid.

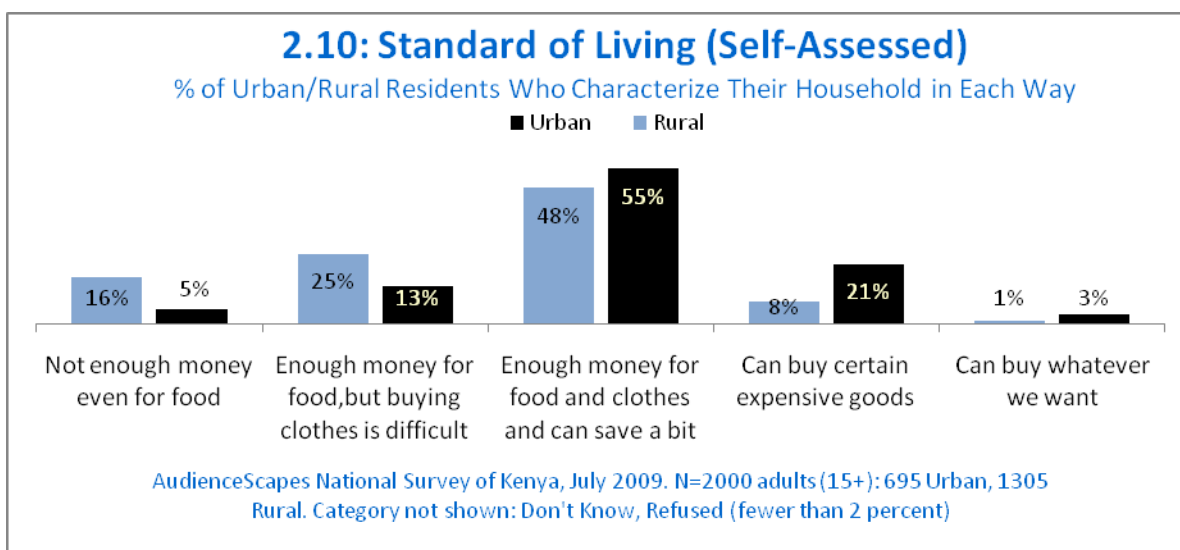


Another indicator of the impact of poor supporting infrastructure on the availability of news and information is the number and variety of media outlets: do as many broadcast signals and newspaper deliveries reach rural residents as reach city dwellers? The survey results suggest they do not (Chart 2.9). Rural respondents, on average, have fewer TV channels available to them at home.



Newspaper use also suffers from limited reach, though of print delivery infrastructure rather than of transmission signals. Twenty percent of those in rural areas who did not read a newspaper at all in the last year (N=565) said one reason was that newspapers are not available in their area; only 10 percent of their urban counterparts (N=143) cited this reason. Regarding radio, there were no significant rural-urban differences in the proportion of people reporting they did not listen because no signals are available to them; that said, the number of respondents who said they do not listen to the radio was already quite small.

Rural residents' lower average incomes, measured by the survey's subjective self-measurement of economic status (Chart 2.10), is an obvious impediment to accessing relatively costly information sources such as TVs, the internet, and personal mobile phones. When asked to characterize what their household is able to afford, 41 percent of rural inhabitants (versus 18 percent of urban households) indicated that they have trouble even affording basic necessities such as food or clothing, or both.



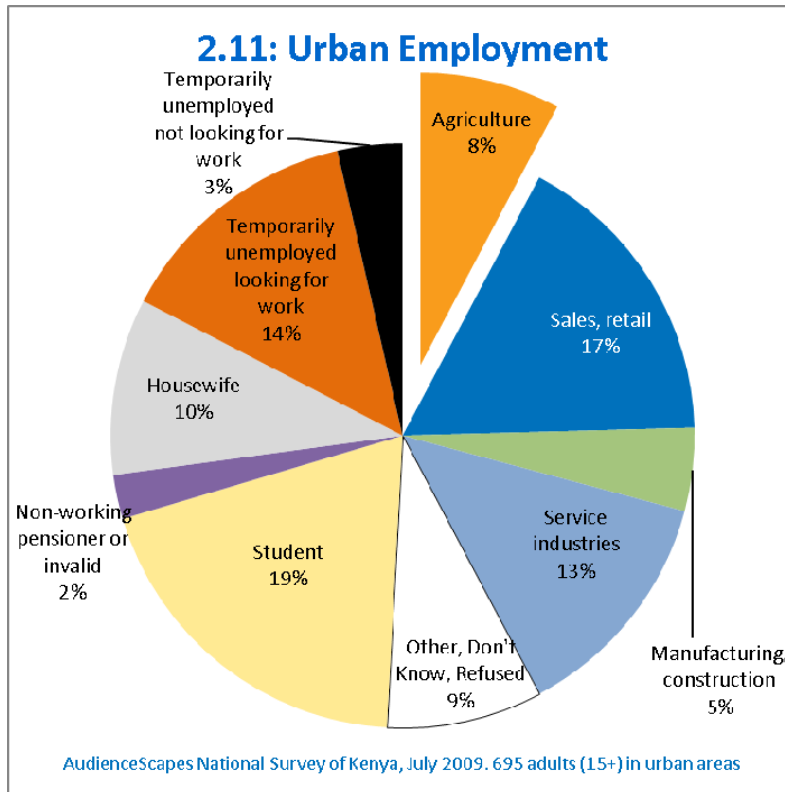
Corroborating this subjective assessment, the survey's more-objective measures of households' socioeconomic status also demonstrate the large differences in urban and rural lifestyles (Tables 2c and 2d).

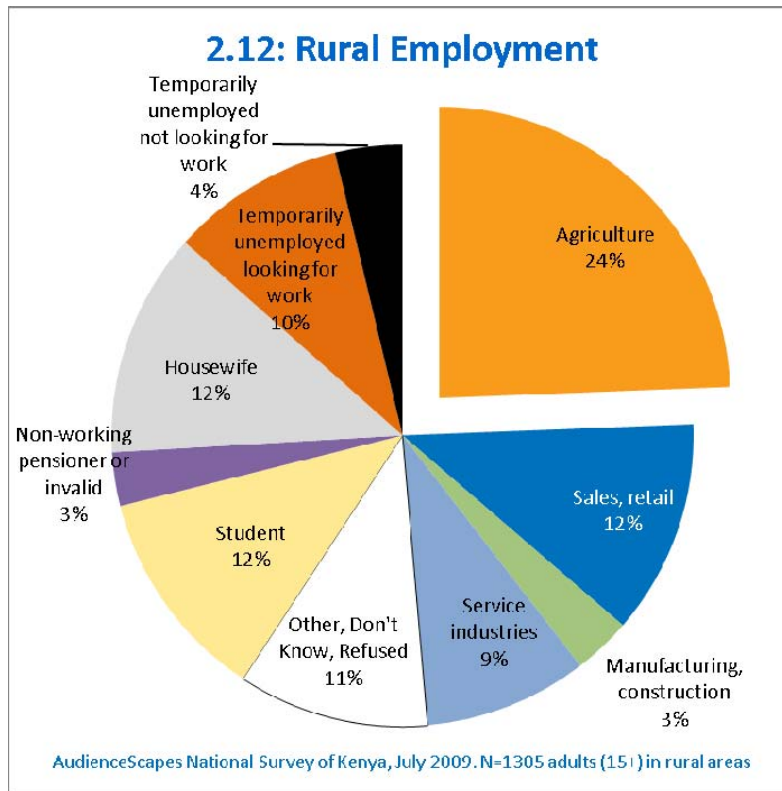
Tables 2c and 2d Indicators of Household Socioeconomic Status

2c Type of Sanitation	Urban	Rural	2d Primary Water Source	Urban	Rural
Water closet, connected to sewerage system	30%	2%	Inside pipe tap	24%	2%
Water closet, connected to septic tank	8%	2%	Outside pipe tap	37%	17%
Latrine or ventilated improved pit latrine	60%	88%	Own well water, borehole	5%	16%
None	1%	4%	Communal well, borehole	10%	33%
Other	1%	4%	Communal, street tap	10%	4%
			Rain water	0%	1%
			Other	2%	2%

AudienceScapes National Survey of Kenya, July 2009. N=2000 adults (15+): 695 urban, 1305 rural. Differences between urban and rural are statistically significant at the 1% level.

Granted, a somewhat larger percentage of rural than urban residents said they are working full or part time as opposed to not working (Charts 2.11 and 2.12). However, rural dwellers' predominant occupation is farming, which tends to be a low-wage or subsistence activity for many Kenyans.





Lower levels of education in rural areas also limit the scope for information gathering, particularly given that new ICTs such as the internet and SMS services usually require literate audiences. Fourteen percent of rural respondents said they have had no formal education, compared to 4 percent of urban respondents. At the other end of the spectrum, only 10 percent of rural respondents said they have more than a secondary education, versus 27 percent in urban areas. (The differences in education between urban and rural residents are statistically significant at the 1 percent level.)

Controlling for education levels (that is, comparing only respondents with similar levels of education to each other), some of the differences in urban and rural residents' frequency of media use narrow or become statistically insignificant. Many differences remain, however: at many levels of education, rural residents still watch TV less frequently, read newspapers and magazines less frequently, use the internet and SMS services less frequently and use word-of-mouth sources of news and information somewhat more frequently than urban residents do. This supports the conclusion that lower average levels of education in rural areas help explain some of the urban-rural communication gap, but that there are other factors at work as well.

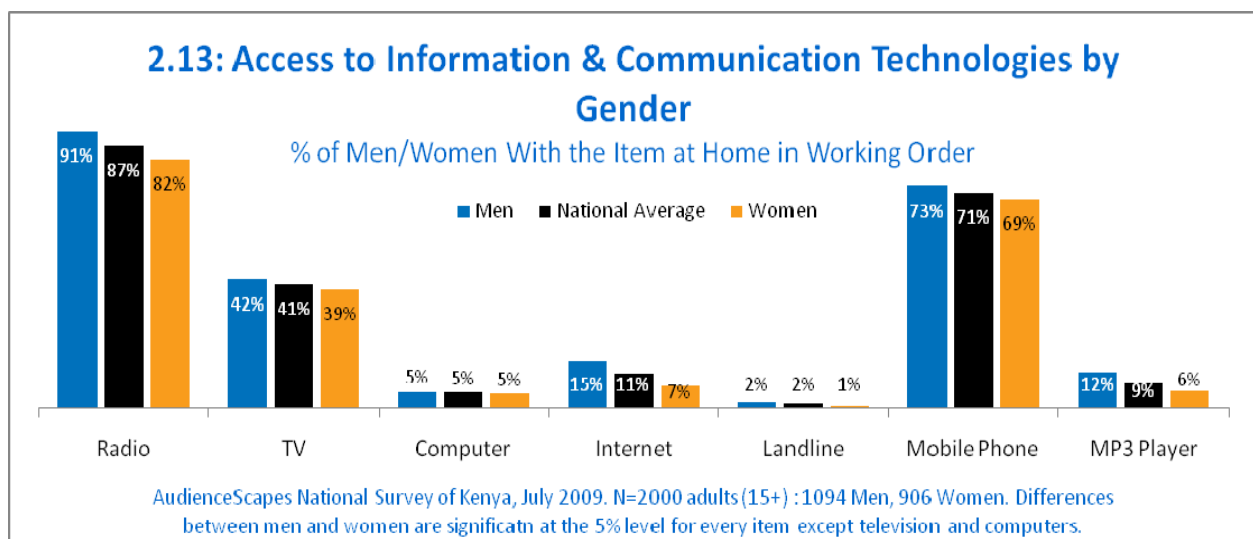
Literacy aside, understanding Kenya's official languages of English and Kiswahili is also key to using newspapers, government documents, the internet, and SMS services, all which are primarily in those two languages. Speaking and understanding Kiswahili is nearly universal nationwide, with 95 percent of rural respondents and 99 percent of urban respondents saying they do so. However, only 59 percent of

rural respondents said they can speak and understand English, compared to 80 percent of those in urban areas.

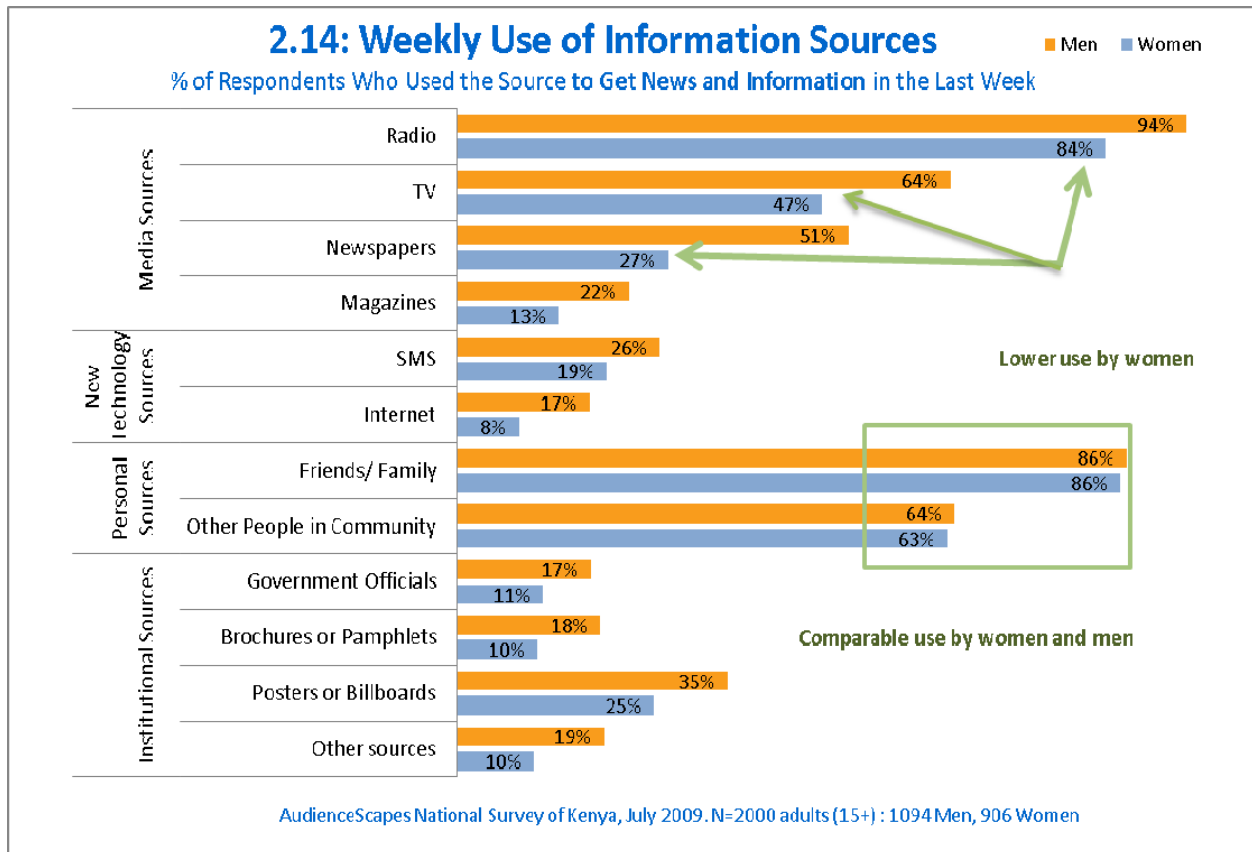
2.5 Facing the Gender Gap in Access and Use of Information Sources

Communication often needs to be tailored by gender to account for differing socioeconomic conditions of men and women, cultural norms about household roles and the use of leisure time, or gender differences in preferences and tastes. Education offers one easily measured indicator of the types of challenges facing women that might affect their access to and use of information: in the AudienceScapes survey, women were more likely than men to have received no formal schooling (14 percent of women in the survey versus 8 percent of men), while they were half as likely as men to achieve a university degree.

The survey also provides evidence of these barriers in the lower household access to ICTs reported by women. Since the survey participants' selection was randomized down to the individual level, one would not expect to see differences between men and women in terms of their household access. One possible explanation is that women did not report having an item at home if they themselves do not have access to it (Chart 2.13).



In addition, women's self-reported use of media, ICT, and institutional sources to access news and information registered at significantly lower levels than men's self-reported use across the board (Chart 2.14).

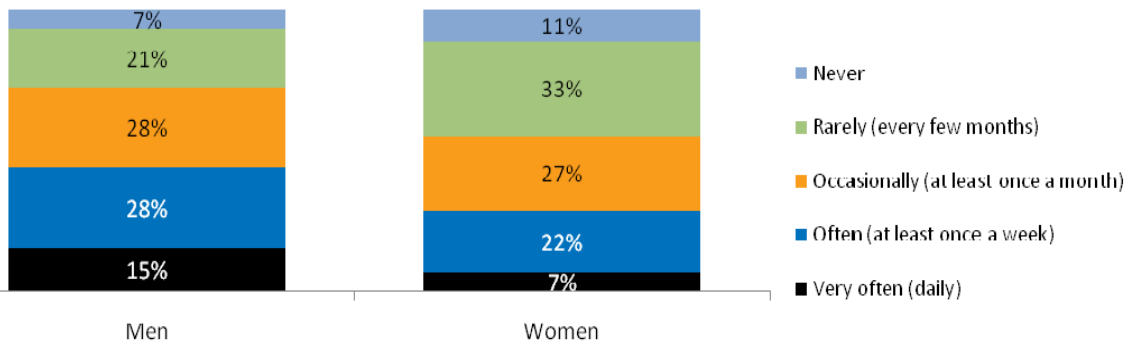


Interestingly, women said they use word-of-mouth sources (friends and family or other people in their communities) as much as men do. In fact, friends and family are women's most-cited sources for news and information in the last week, narrowly beating radio. Women were significantly less likely to have accessed news and information from newspapers, and only about half as likely as men to have accessed news and information from the internet in the last week. Thus, personal sources of information probably need to play a relatively larger role in any communication or outreach strategy aimed at women rather than at men.

That said, it is not clear whether such personal sources will necessarily be women speaking to women. The survey data indicate that women are less active than men as *sources* of either news and information, or advice and opinions (Charts 2.15 and 2.16).

2.15: How Often Do People Come to You to Get News and Information?

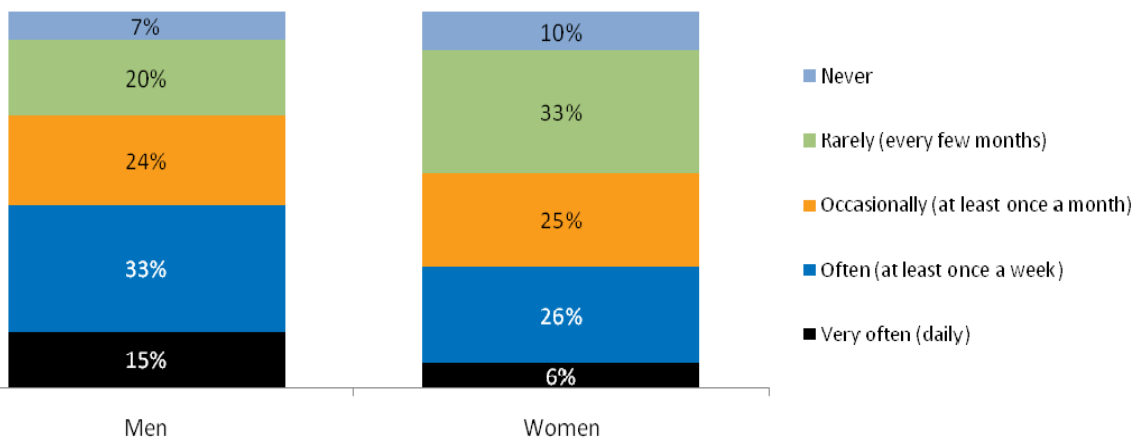
% of Men/Women



AudienceScapes National Survey of Kenya, July 2009. N=2000 adults (15+): 1094 Men, 906 Women. Category not shown: "Don't Know"

2.16: How Often Do People Come to You to Get Advice and Opinions on Major News Stories?

% of Men/Women



AudienceScapes National Survey of Kenya, July 2009. N=2000 adults (15+): 1094 Men, 906 Women. Category not shown: "Don't Know"

Not only do people come to women less often to talk about general news and information, but women also report that *fewer* people rely on them for opinions or advice on the news: 9 percent said that no one does (compared to 7 percent of men), and another 71 percent said that fewer than five people look

to their opinions (compared to 64 percent of men). The upshot here is that women who say they rely heavily on word-of-mouth for information are not only turning to other women for this information, but also to men in their communities. Therefore, a word-of-mouth communication strategy targeting women must not only involve women, but also has to include men.

For more information, contact us at audiencescapes@intermedia.org.

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¹ Throughout this paper, “Opinion leaders” are defined as respondents who said that people come to them “very often” for opinions and advice about each issue.