



Funded by the European Union

CONFLICT SCAN Kenya July 2021

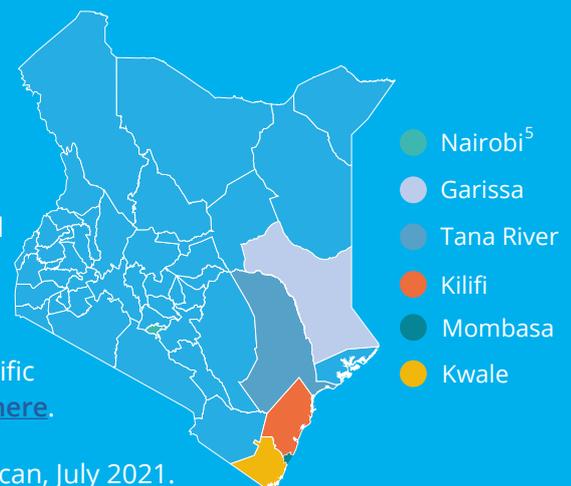
Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya and its sustained socio-economic effects continue to exacerbate communities' vulnerabilities and needs. In the fragile contexts of Garissa and Tana River counties, which have experienced prolonged endemic drought and slow onset of the long rains, food insecurity, resource-based conflicts,¹ and other vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Moreover, as mobility and trade are impacted by the pandemic, the long-running maritime territorial feud across the Indian Ocean between Kenya and Somalia has heightened. Additionally, the renewed push by the government to shut down Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps in the shadow of the pandemic compounds fear and uncertainty faced by thousands of refugees.²

As the economic toll of the pandemic worsens, the majority of Kenyans face loss of livelihoods compounded by the rising inflation of basic goods and commodities. Moreover, the mental health implications of the pandemic continue to rise: 1 out of 4 people seeking health care services have a mental health condition, with increasing rates of depression and alcohol use disorders,³ not only among adults but children as well. Reports of school fires early in the year were linked to increased stress and difficulty in adjusting as physical learning resumes for students.⁴

Data collection and analysis

Data for the third conflict scan was gathered from 18 to 22 May 2021 in six target counties. This report was prepared by the Search for Common Ground Kenya team, with support from Search's COVID-19 Response Programme Team and Institutional Learning Team. For more information on the data collection methodology and tools used by Search for this research, click [here](#). This report is part of a series of regular conflict scans aimed at providing quick and actionable answers to a set of specific questions. The previous reports for Kenya can be found [here](#) & [here](#).



To cite this report: Search for Common Ground, Kenya Conflict Scan, July 2021.

* This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Search for Common Ground and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

1. Due to early migration of livestock to fall back grazing areas, resource based conflicts have been reported in Tana River, where 28 herds of cattle were chopped off and one person killed, [Drought Early Warning Bulletin, May 2021](#).
2. VOA News, "[Kenya's Plan to Close Two Camps Worries Refugees](#)", April 2021.
3. WHO, [Experts join forces for mental health in Kenya](#), May 2021.
4. World Education Blog, "[The impact of COVID-19 school closures and stress on adolescent mental health in Kenya](#)", June 2021.
5. The survey was conducted only in 2 localities in Nairobi (Kibera and Mathare), same as per the previous surveys.



Update: COVID-19 Measures and Impact on Conflict

Kenya faced a third wave in March-April 2021, with more than 25,000 cases monthly⁶ and the highest positivity rate since the pandemic hit Kenya, at 22% compared to 2% in January. The surge in cases was highest in Nairobi county, making up 57% of the country's total number of cases.⁷ As of 24 June 2021, Kenya had 179,876 cumulative cases of COVID-19. The number of casualties also increased significantly with almost a doubled rate between February and June 2021, while the recoveries amounted to 118,621.⁸ Currently, COVID-19 prevention measures in place include:⁹ an extension of night curfew, a face covering mandate within public spaces, and restricted hours of operation for restaurants, eateries, and bars. Additionally, capacity restrictions are in place for religious services, funeral ceremonies, and public transportation, while sports activities and political gatherings¹⁰ are prohibited. In addition, international travelers arriving in Kenya are required to present a negative COVID-19 test.

	Schools open
	Teleworking not mandatory
	Borders/airports open
	All services/sectors open
	Mask wearing mandatory

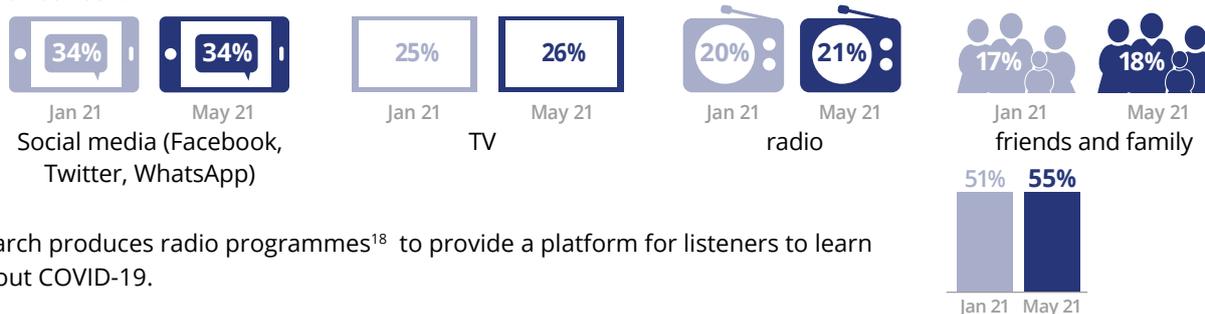
The restrictive measures enacted in the wake of the third wave have caused moments of disruption and chaos. For instance, in the zones with high infection rates, security officers enforced the curfew by blocking major roads, resulting in thousands of motorists stuck in all-night traffic¹¹ and effecting the ability of essential services providers, such as ambulances, to reach their destinations. This resulted in several accidents with injuries.¹² Communities are experiencing prolonged pandemic fatigue characterised by laxity and apathy in adhering to COVID-19 measures such as restrictions on social gatherings and distancing. Concerns about police harassment, intimidation and extortion in enforcing COVID-19 measures were reported in Kilifi and Mombasa counties,¹³ but in most of the other counties, **security actors have adopted citizen-centered soft approaches to enforcing prevention measures.**

The gendered impacts of the pandemic continue to rise, particularly as financial pressures and gender inequalities proliferate, and many women and girls continue to lack access to essential support services. For instance, access to menstrual health needs and services - already low in Kenya - have worsened amid school closures, where many girls received free sanitary products. In the wake of the deteriorating socio-economic situation, some women and particularly young girls have adopted harmful coping mechanisms, such as transactional sex and trafficking in order to meet their basic needs and those of their families.¹⁴ **GBV cases increased by 92% since the onset of the pandemic,** according to Kenya's Department of Gender.¹⁵ Women are disproportionately affected by the compounded effects of the pandemic, creating additional barriers to access services, including reduced income, restricted mobility, and reluctance to seek health services out of fear of infection to them and their children. In the wake of school closures and lockdowns, cases of violence against children such as defilement, child neglect, and physical abuse have significantly increased, as have child labour, child marriage, and FGM.¹⁶

COVID-19's Impact on Social Cohesion & Trust

Trust in information on COVID-19 increased, while information sharing saw a slight drop

The most trusted channels to access information related to COVID-19 remained the same between the second and third rounds¹⁷:

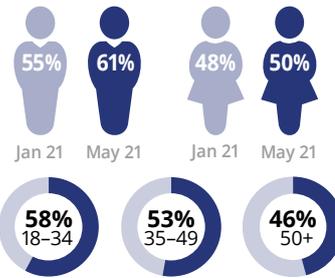


Search produces radio programmes¹⁸ to provide a platform for listeners to learn about COVID-19.

respondents who listen to our programmes

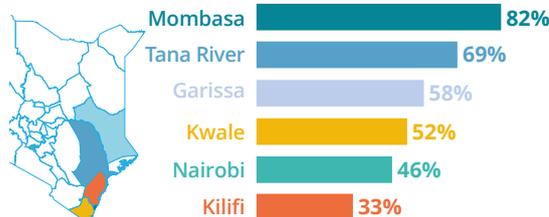
6. The East African, "Covid-19 third wave-Kenya", 25 March, 2021.
 7. DEVEX News, "Kenya hits new peak for covid-19 cases", 26 March 2021.
 8. WHO, "Coronavirus (COVID-Covid 19) dashboard", 8 June 2021.
 9. In response to the third wave, a public order was issued by the President restricting movement in or out of the declared disease infected zone consisting of 5 counties of Nairobi, Kajiado, Machakos, Kiambu and Nakuru counties, which contribute to 60 percent of the GDP. These restrictions were however eased in April 2021.
 10. The President website, "The labour day celebration public order", 1 May 2021.
 11. BBC news, "Kenya Covid rules leave thousands stranded in traffic" 18 April 2021.
 12. Standard Media, "Thika road accident leaves two police officers injured", 20 April 2021.
 13. Search for Common Ground, Kenya Early Warning Early Response (Internal Report), March 2021.
 14. Performance Monitoring for Action | Gender, "Gender & COVID-19: Economic Outcomes and Time Use", November 2020.
 15. State Department for Gender, "Statement on increased gender based violence in Kenya", April 2021.
 16. ANPPCAN, "Impact of COVID-19 on Children in Busia, Loitoktok, Marsabit and Nairobi - Kenya", 2021.
 17. We did not ask this and the subsequent questions on media consumption in round 1 (Sept 2020), as we had not yet started our media broadcasting, so data analysed here are from rounds 2 and 3.
 18. Search produces the INUKA radio magazine programme (composed of different formats: radio drama, round table discussions, features, interview with experts, and vox pox) in Swahili and Somali languages, aired on our partner radio stations Amani FM in Tana River county, Lulu FM in Kilifi county, Kulmiye FM in Garissa county, Pwani FM in Mombasa county, Radio Kaya in Kwale county, Ghetto Radio in Nairobi county and Radio Maisha (nation-wide).

Men continue to have a higher listenership rate than women and saw a small increase in listenership rates. Women likely have lower listenership rates due to airing times (evening hours), which is a time when women are likely preparing meals for their families, etc.

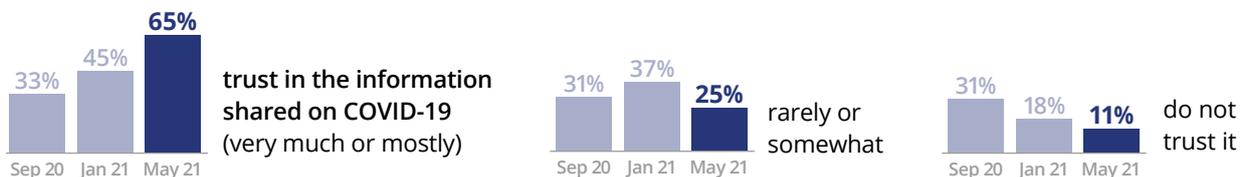


Youth (18-34 years) have higher listenership rates than adults (35-49 years) and elderly respondents (50+ years) have the lowest rate. As youth tend to be more active on social media, higher listenership rates among youth is likely because the radio programme is also integrated on social media platforms.

Mombasa county recorded the highest listenership rate and Kilifi county recorded the lowest rate. The engagement of influencers in the production of the show, especially the radio drama, in Mombasa significantly contributed to high listenership. In addition, Radio Kaya in Kwale County and Lulu FM in Kilifi county also reach Mombasa county and have active listeners there, thus contributing to high rates of listenership in Mombasa.¹⁹



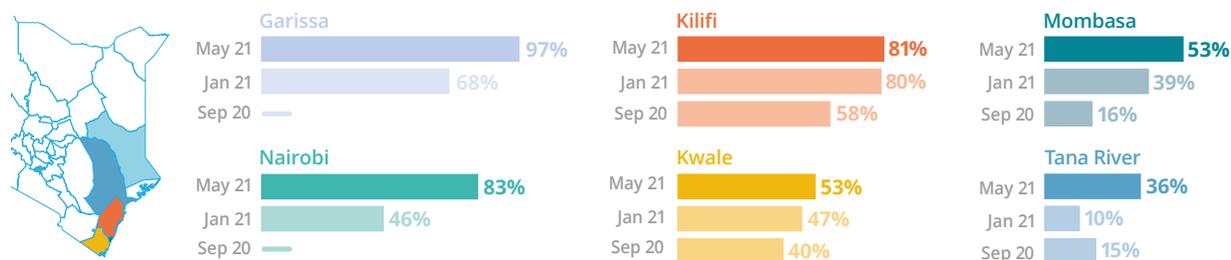
Out of those who listen to the programmes:



Men continue to trust the COVID-19 information more than women. However, trust levels among women increased quite significantly, from the last to this round. Men's trust also rose during this period.



Levels of trust in the radio programmes have significantly improved in all counties.²⁰



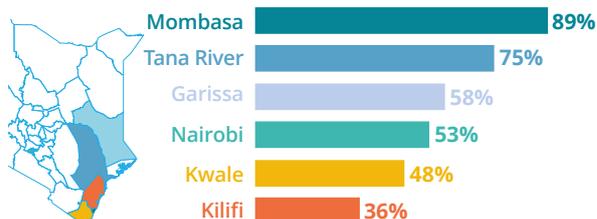
In addition to the radio programs, Search ran a social media campaign called the, "Pamoja dhidi ya Corona". Overall, the viewership rate for the campaign was:



Out of those who followed the social media campaign, the majority were youth, followed by adults and the elderly. According to the Kenya digital insights report, 71% of social media audiences are youth (18-34 years).²¹



Mombasa county had the highest viewership while Kilifi had the lowest. The low levels in Kilifi county is likely due to limited connectivity and ownership of smart devices.



19. Search for Common Ground Kenya, Listenership and Viewership survey report (Internal Report), May 2021.

20. In September 2020, Search's media partners for Nairobi and Garissa counties hadn't been selected yet. Respondents from both counties were therefore excluded for this question.

21. Data Reportal, DIGITAL 2021: KENYA, February 2021.

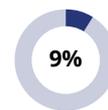
Out of those who engaged with the social media campaign:



71% trust the information shared on COVID-19 (very much or mostly)



20% rarely or somewhat

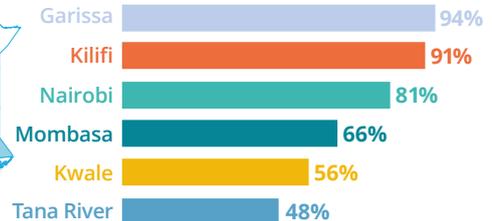


9% do not trust it

Adults have the highest trust levels compared to youth and the elderly.

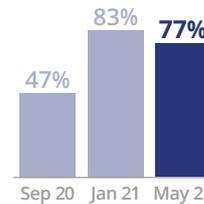


Garissa county trusts the COVID-19 information shared by the social media campaign the most followed by Kilifi, Nairobi, Mombasa, Kwale Tana River. Many communities in Tana River still question the existence of the virus as the county is among the least affected in terms of case numbers.



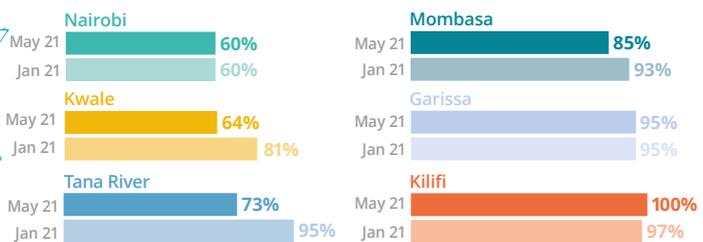
Information sharing on COVID-19 recorded a slight decrease:

Prolonged pandemic fatigue could be a contributing factor to the decline in information sharing, as communities no longer feel motivated to share information. As there now seems to be an overabundance of information about the pandemic in certain parts of Kenya, people have normalised the pandemic, and their enthusiasm to share information has declined as a consequence.

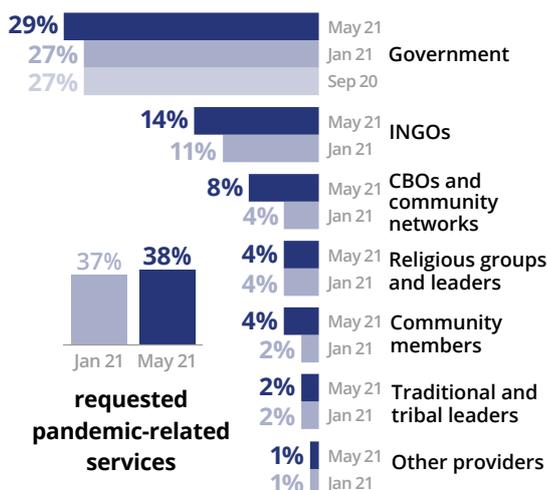


% of respondents who are sharing information heard on trusted media with friends or family

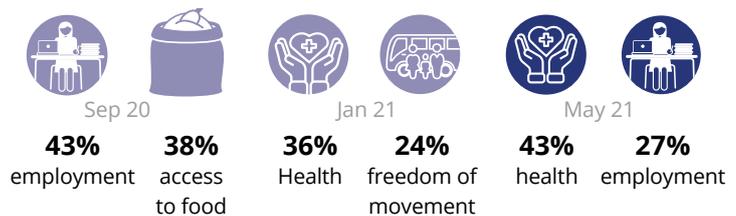
The lowest rate of information sharing is in Nairobi (unchanged from the previous report).



Trust in the government's COVID-19 response and satisfaction with related services is growing, with important regional differences



Top requested Services

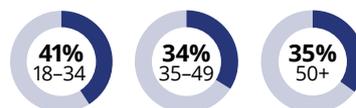


This means citizens continue to heavily rely on the government for COVID-19 service delivery.

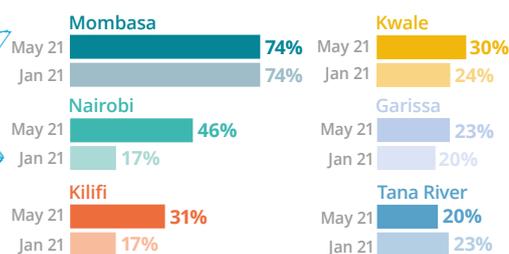
Overall, **health and employment are the top requested services from the government.** As the nation battles with the surge in positive COVID-19 cases and deaths, health needs have significantly increased. However, despite the pressing health needs, utilisation of health services is still below average. Healthcare utilisation decreased by about a third during the pandemic, ostensibly out of fear of imposed quarantine.²² There is still widespread anxiety about the COVID-19 vaccine amongst the population,²³ and so far only 1.92% of the total population has received at least one dose.²⁴

22. Moynihan, Ray, Sharon Sanders, Zoe A. Michaleff, Anna Mae Scott, Justin Clark, Emma J. To, Mark Jones et al. "Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on utilisation of healthcare services: a systematic review." *BMJ open* 11, no. 3 (2021): e045343.
 23. In this third survey for Kenya, we added particular questions on people's trust levels in the COVID-19 vaccines: only 32% of respondents trust the vaccine. A high percentage of the respondents are concerned about the side effects (39%) and the safety of the vaccine (27%). Additionally, 10% do not have any concerns about the vaccine, 9% think it does not meet the current eligibility criteria set by the Ministry of Health, 7% feel the location of COVID-19 vaccination centres is difficult to travel to, and 5% find the vaccine expensive in private facilities. Finally, 4% of the respondents state that they have no information about the vaccine.
 24. Estimated based on statistics of MOH, [Immunisation Status Report](#), consulted on 1st of July 2021.

A higher percentage of youth sought pandemic-related services, compared to adults and the elderly. Youth traditionally face many socio-economic barriers, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.²⁵



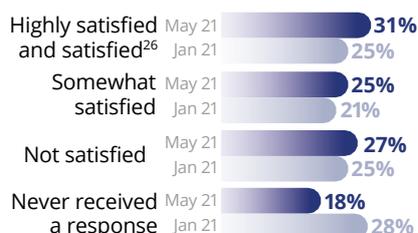
Mombasa county maintained the highest percentage of people seeking COVID-19 related services, followed by Nairobi, Kilifi, Kwale, Garissa and Tana River. Mombasa is the second most affected county for COVID-19 cases. Additionally, it is a referral point for services for other coastal counties (i.e Tana River, Kilifi, Kwale, and Lamu). Tana River is amongst the least affected in terms of COVID-19 cases.



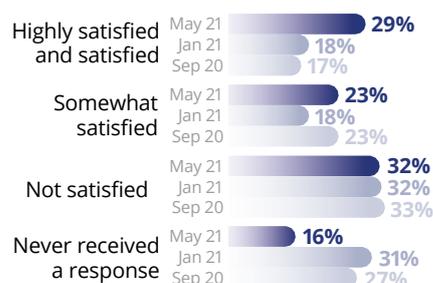
Our data shows that **53% of respondents (or any member of their households) have lost their main income source, fully or partially,** since February 2021 further deepening vulnerability.



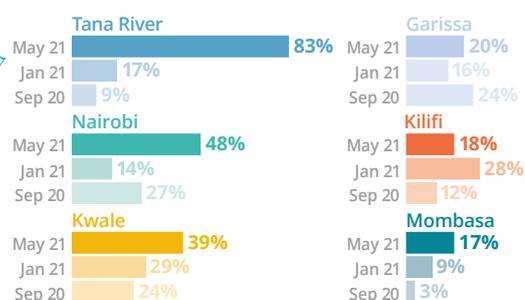
Out of those who sought COVID-19 related services from all service providers combined, **satisfaction with the services provided has improved:**



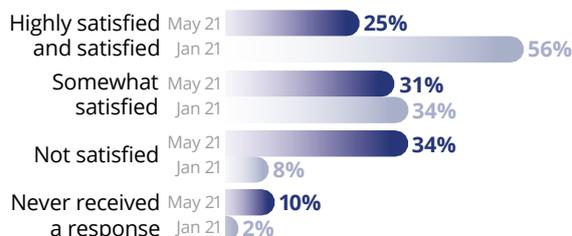
Satisfaction levels in government services have improved. This increase in the level of satisfaction could be attributed to increased government efforts to ensure the COVID-19 response is more inclusive, such as adopting measures to address GBV after growing concerns over rising rates of GBV.²⁷



Tana River county recorded the highest level of satisfaction with government-provided services. The sharp increase in satisfaction in Tana River can be explained by the increased efforts of the local government to bring COVID-19 services (testing, treatment) closer, at sub-county hospitals. Before, Tana River was dependent on other counties for COVID-19 services and had to refer patients to Kilifi or Mombasa counties, with high cost implications.



Satisfaction levels with services provided by the INGOs have significantly decreased. Further research is essential to determine the cause for this decline and the significant differences in demographic related data.

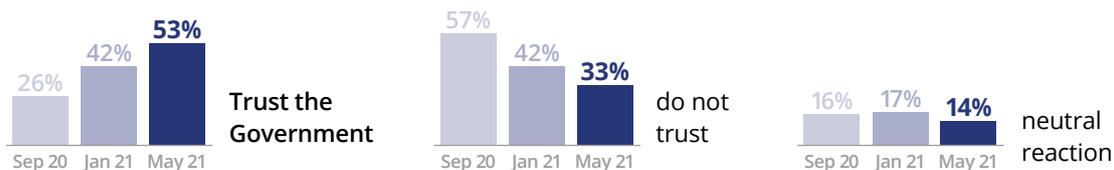


25. ILO, *Youth & COVID-19: Impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being*, August 2020.

26. In round 1 in September 2020 we did not ask about satisfaction levels with all service providers combined, only with services provided by the government.

27. All Africa, Kenya: *State Now Lists SGBV Shelters as Essential Service*, April 2021.

Respondents' **trust levels that the government is doing its best to consider the needs of everyone equally continues to increase.** The ongoing stimulus programme to stimulate economic activity and safeguard livelihoods has reduced the pandemic's impact on Kenya's most vulnerable populace. This, coupled with the government's lenience in imposing stringent preventive measures in favor of economic recovery is likely a major contributing factor to increased trust in the government.²⁸



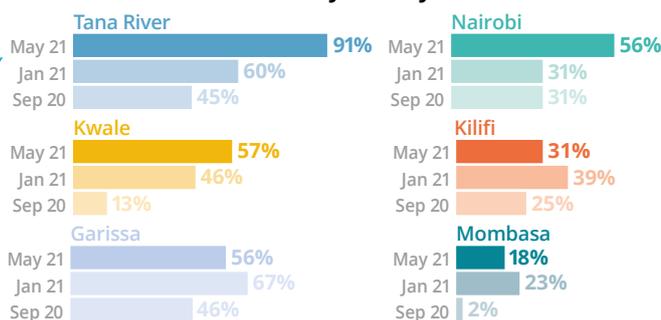
Men trust the government more than women. While the government has made efforts to address the economic impact of the pandemic, women's needs and considerations have not been sufficiently integrated.²⁹



Trust in government increased significantly in Tana River county, Nairobi county, Mathare and Kwale county. On the other hand, respondents' trust decreased in Garissa county, Kilifi and in Mombasa.



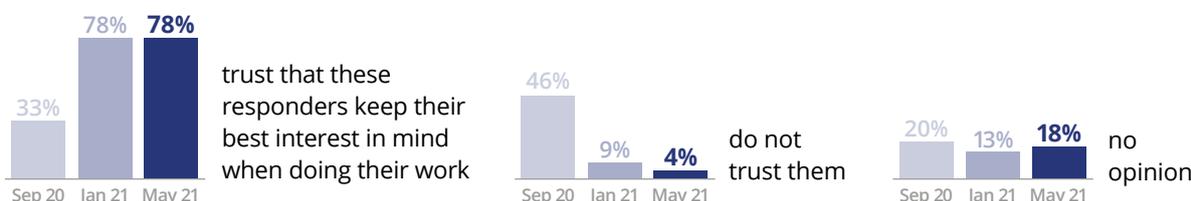
Trust in Government by County



In Tana River county, the county government has made notable progress in operationalising the multi-agency COVID-19 enforcement committee, which is inclusive and representative of diverse needs.

In Mombasa County, concerns were raised around the closures of Madrasas (Islamic religious schools) as well as concerns about directives that could lead to overcrowding in public spaces and therefore a potential rise in infections.³⁰

However, trust in non-governmental COVID-19 responders remains higher than in the government

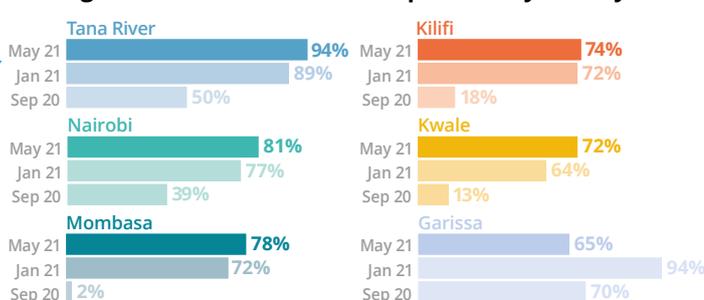


The sustained awareness campaigns, large scale distribution of personal protective equipment and social protection measures to vulnerable and hard to reach communities have had a positive impact on trust in these response efforts.

Trust in other COVID-19 responders increased in each county except Garissa, which recorded a significant decline in trust. High levels of trust are likely due to sustained media campaigns and local initiatives dedicated to informing citizens and raising awareness about the pandemic. Additionally, inclusion of marginalised communities in decision making has improved through the COVID-19 steering committees at county and sub-county levels. Additional research is required in Garissa county to establish the basis for the significant decline.



Trust in Non-governmental COVID-19 Responders by County



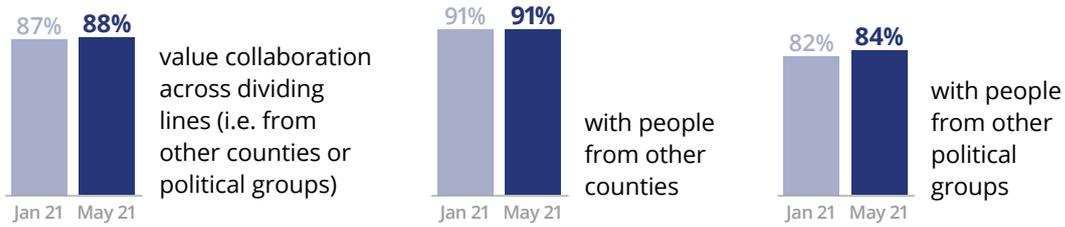
28. Wangari, Edwin N., Peter Gichuki, Angelyne A. Abuor, Jacqueline Wambui, Stephen O. Okeyo, Henry TN Oyatsi, Shadrack Odikara, and Benard W. Kulohoma. "Kenya's response to the COVID-19 pandemic: a balance between minimising morbidity and adverse economic impact." AAS Open Research 4 (2021).

29. UN WOMEN Kenya and others, "COVID-19 Gender Assessment", 2020.

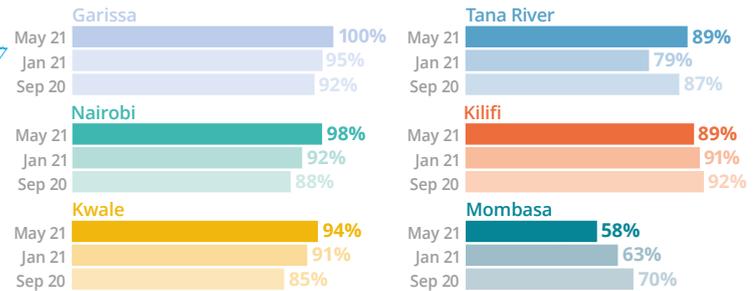
30. Search for Common Ground, Kenya Early Warning Early Response (Internal Report), April 2021.

Horizontal Cohesion: the pandemic and response to it have reduced people's opportunities to meet across dividing lines

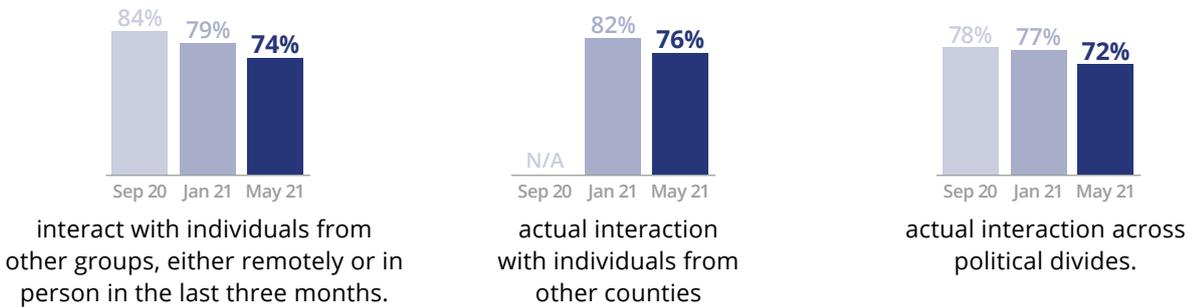
Valuing collaboration for responding to the COVID-19 crisis has remained relatively high and consistent between our reports.



Garissa continues to record the highest level of valuing collaboration across dividing lines, while Mombasa continues to record the lowest levels, decreasing each round. Mombasa remains a politically polarised context, where many citizens support the opposition party and perceptions about ethnicity (i.e. upcountry vs. coastal people) often influence socio-political life.



Actual interaction across dividing lines continues to decrease between rounds despite high levels of valuing collaboration across divides. This decline was attributed to COVID-19 prevention measures limiting mobility and political gatherings.

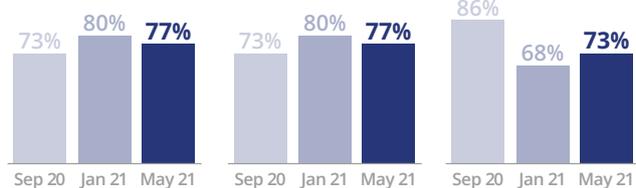


Men interacted more across dividing lines, either remotely or in person, than women. In most communities, socio-cultural norms provide greater opportunities for men to interact with others. E.g. more men are typically engaged in outdoor work that engages others and are more interactive on social media.



Differences among age groups: in this round, interaction decreased slightly for youth and adults and increased for elderly. **The inclusion of elderly as a priority group for COVID-19 vaccination had a major boost in confidence in interaction.**

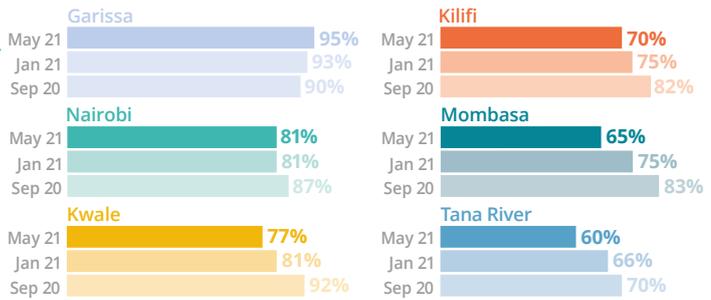
Previously, the elderly avoided contact out of fear of catching the virus. Youth on the other hand at first believed that COVID 19 is a disease for the elderly, but over time this has been proven wrong, compelling increased compliance.



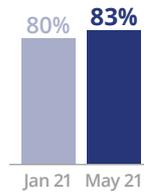
Interaction across dividing lines declined in all counties except Garissa and Nairobi.

Kilifi, Mombasa, and Tana River continue to have the lowest rates of actual interaction. A source from Garissa county reported increased political meetings between the sultans of different clans as a result of shifts in the prevailing political context and in preparation of the 2022 elections. In addition, sociocultural factors where people come together to conduct religious and cultural ceremonies are widely practiced in Garissa, enabling higher rates of interaction across divides.

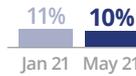
Actual Interaction in the Past 3 Months (in person or remotely) by County



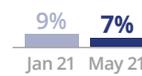
Feelings of safety when interacting with individuals across dividing lines (counties and political groups).



feel safe interacting with individuals across dividing lines (counties and political groups)



do not feel safe

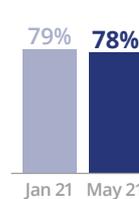


neutral reactions

counties



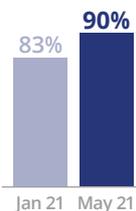
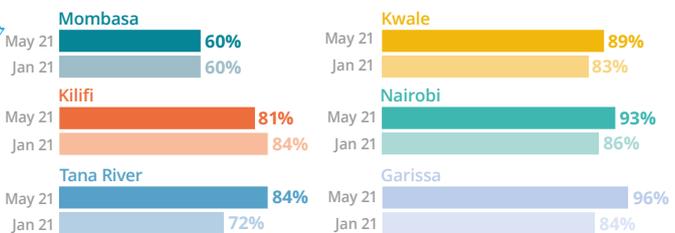
political groups



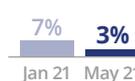
Feelings of safety about interacting with other counties is higher than with other political groups. In general, interaction between individuals from different political affiliations are fraught with tension, at times escalating to clashes between groups.

Respondents from Mombasa continue to have the lowest feelings of safety when interacting with other groups.

In Mombasa, only 42% (unchanged from the second report) feel safe when interacting with individuals from other political groups, accounting for the overall lower average.³¹



Feelings of safety when interacting with the opposite sex inside the household or private sphere



do not feel safe



neutral reactions

31. Mombasa is a cosmopolitan city with a rich diversity of races, ethnicities, and other demographic groups. However, political divisions remain salient. The county largely supports the opposition amid perceptions that the ruling class tends to come from a particular region, fueling grievances and perceptions of historical injustice and oppression. Collaboration across political divides is usually fraught with tension and apprehension.

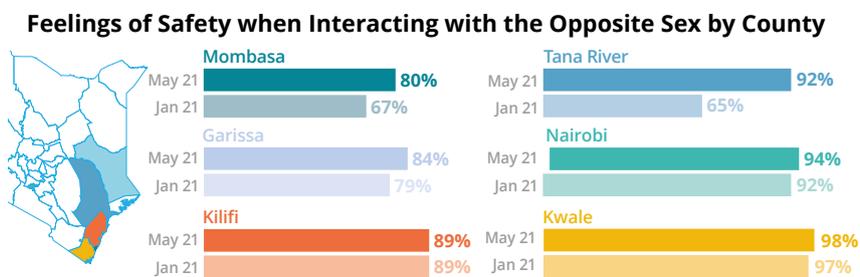
As anticipated, men feel safer than women. The government has made important strides to address the increasing rates of GBV since the onset of the pandemic, which may help explain the increase in women's feeling of safety. In May, the Ministry of Health issued guidelines that deemed health care for GBV survivors as an essential service, and the government included gender considerations into the pandemic response plans.



Youth feel less safe when interacting with the opposite sex than adults and elderly.



Mombasa county recorded the lowest levels of feeling safe when interacting across gender lines; although, the rate is still relatively high and a notable increase from last round.³² Additionally, Tana River county recorded the greatest increase for feelings of safety between this round and last round. In Tana River county, significant strides have been made to address gender based violence (GBV), especially in ending female genital mutilation.



Next Steps For COVID-19 Response Efforts

Ensure diverse, multi-platform communication strategies and better integrate women and youth's concerns

- Our data shows that trust in information disseminated by Search's radio programme continues to increase each round, but more efforts should be made to reach women, including by better integrating their concerns into the programmes.
- Youth are the biggest audience of both our radio programme and social media campaign. Ensuring youth leadership and youth concerns are integrated into communication campaigns can increase overall youth trust in the information as well as capitalise on their innovation and ideas as thought leaders and primary users within the social media realm.

Support a diversity of COVID-19 response providers to continue improving trust and satisfaction with pandemic-related services

- While satisfaction with governmental services and trust in the government's response continue to increase, trust in other COVID-19 responders remains higher than in the government. As such, response provision should be diversified to improve overall trust in the response. Moreover, partnering with non-governmental service providers might ensure services reach the most vulnerable, including out-of-school youth, teenage mothers, or disabled persons. For instance, large INGOs can partner with CBOs or religious associations for improved service provision.

Tailor response efforts to demographic and geographic differences and needs

- Response providers should seek to understand micro-level trends and adapt intervention strategies accordingly. For instance, Mombasa county tends to have lower levels of trust and satisfaction in the government's response and political divisions present a particular risk in terms of social cohesion, which are key considerations to integrate into response strategies. Overall, satisfaction with NGO-provided services has considerably dropped in the past months, which is important to understand and take into consideration for response planning. Lastly, the findings from Tana River county clearly demonstrate that local authorities can make a real difference in people's experience of the pandemic response, thereby contributing to increased trust in authorities.

32. According to Search's internal EWER reports, there has been a lot of sensitisation on domestic and gender based violence in Mombasa by CSOs. Security actors have reported increased police reports filed at the police stations on GBV, possibly indicating increased confidence in security actors' ability to respond to GBV issues.