

**REFORMED ELECTIONS FOR ENHANCED DEMOCRACY AND INCLUSION  
(REDI) PROGRAMME.**



**Abridged Baseline Public Perception Survey Report**

**2026**

## DISCLAIMER

This Baseline Public Perception Survey Report presents a comprehensive overview of the prevailing public perceptions, electoral dynamics, and governance challenges shaping Kenya's democratic landscape. The report establishes a baseline against which the REDI Programme will measure progress in strengthening trust in electoral institutions, promoting national cohesion, enhancing inclusive citizen participation, and supporting credible election monitoring and observation.

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# Executive Summary

This report presents an integrated assessment of electoral integrity, civic engagement, and social cohesion in Kenya ahead of the 2027 elections, combining survey data (n=2,290 across 18 counties) with qualitative insights from community engagements in Mombasa, Nakuru, and Kisumu.

## High Participation, Deepening Trust Deficit:

1

Kenya's electoral landscape is defined by a growing paradox—strong participation alongside declining confidence. While 93.5% of citizens are registered voters, 81.2% participated in 2022, and 84.2% intend to vote in 2027, 28.2% believe voting does not make a difference. At the same time, 67.2% express low trust in the IEBC, 69.0% in the police, and 62.6% in the judiciary, with 50% rejecting the accuracy of election results.

## Electoral Integrity Under Pressure:

2

Perceptions of malpractice are widespread, with 77.0% of respondents reporting vote buying as common and 53.3% having personally experienced it. These concerns are compounded by weak transparency in results management identified as the most distrusted stage of the electoral process.

## Information Gaps and Misinformation Risks:

3

The information environment is a critical vulnerability. 70.8% of citizens have not received any civic education in the past year, while 52.6% report exposure to misinformation. This gap limits citizens' ability to assess electoral processes and reinforces distrust.

## Participation Paradox Beyond Voting:

4

Despite high political awareness, 73.6% of citizens rarely or never engage in civic activities beyond voting, indicating a disconnect between awareness and meaningful participation. This reflects disillusionment, economic pressures, and limited avenues for influence.

## Persistent Structural Exclusion:

5

Barriers to participation remain significant. Youth despite being the largest demographic—are significantly less likely to register and engage, while women remain underrepresented in leadership and persons with disabilities face ongoing accessibility challenges. These overlapping barriers deepen inequality in democratic participation.

## Fragile Social Cohesion and Rising Conflict Risks:

6

While 75.0% report positive inter-group relations and 81.4% are comfortable interacting across communities, 61.5% believe ethnicity influences voting, revealing underlying tensions. 48% of respondents expect electoral violence in 2027, with conflicts increasingly localized and driven by misinformation rather than large-scale ethnic mobilization.

## Weak Conflict Prevention Systems:

7

Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) systems remain ineffective, with only 43.2% aware of their existence, 41.7% of those aware trusting them, and just 13.7% of all respondents considering them effective.

## Systemic Nature of Electoral Fragility:

8

Across all findings, a consistent pattern emerges: electoral challenges are interconnected. Institutional distrust, misinformation, economic vulnerability, exclusion, and weak accountability reinforce one another, creating a cycle of fragility that undermines both electoral credibility and democratic stability.

## Strategic Priorities:

9

- » Scale and redesign civic education to rebuild trust (not just awareness).
- » Strengthen electoral integrity, especially transparency in results management.
- » Rebuild trust across institutions through coordinated reforms.
- » Advance meaningful inclusion for women, youth, and PWDs.
- » Counter misinformation and strengthen conflict prevention systems.

## Conclusion:

The 2027 elections represent both a risk and an opportunity. While citizen participation remains strong, restoring trust, credibility, and inclusion is essential. Without coordinated, system-wide action, Kenya risks entrenching a democracy that is participatory but fragile. With the right interventions, however, there is a clear pathway toward more peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections.

# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

## 1.1 Background and Rationale

Kenya's electoral landscape continues to reflect a tension between strong democratic participation and persistent concerns about credibility, inclusion, and trust. As the country approaches the 2027 elections, this dynamic is unfolding in a rapidly evolving context shaped by digitalisation, widespread misinformation, economic pressures, and a politically aware yet increasingly disillusioned youth population.

In response, the REDI Programme commissioned this baseline study to generate evidence on public perceptions, with the aim of informing targeted interventions to strengthen electoral integrity, civic engagement, and social cohesion ahead of the 2027 elections.

## 1.2 Study Objectives

- » Assess trust in electoral and governance institutions.
- » Identify key electoral integrity challenges (e.g. vote buying, misinformation).
- » Examine patterns of civic participation, especially among youth and marginalized groups.
- » Analyze inclusion and barriers to participation.
- » Explore emerging conflict risks and drivers of tension.
- » Inform evidence-based programme design and reform priorities.

## 1.3 Methodology

### Mixed-Methods Approach:

Combined quantitative survey data with qualitative insights to capture both the scale of trends and the underlying drivers, experiences, and context shaping public perceptions.



## Quantitative Component:

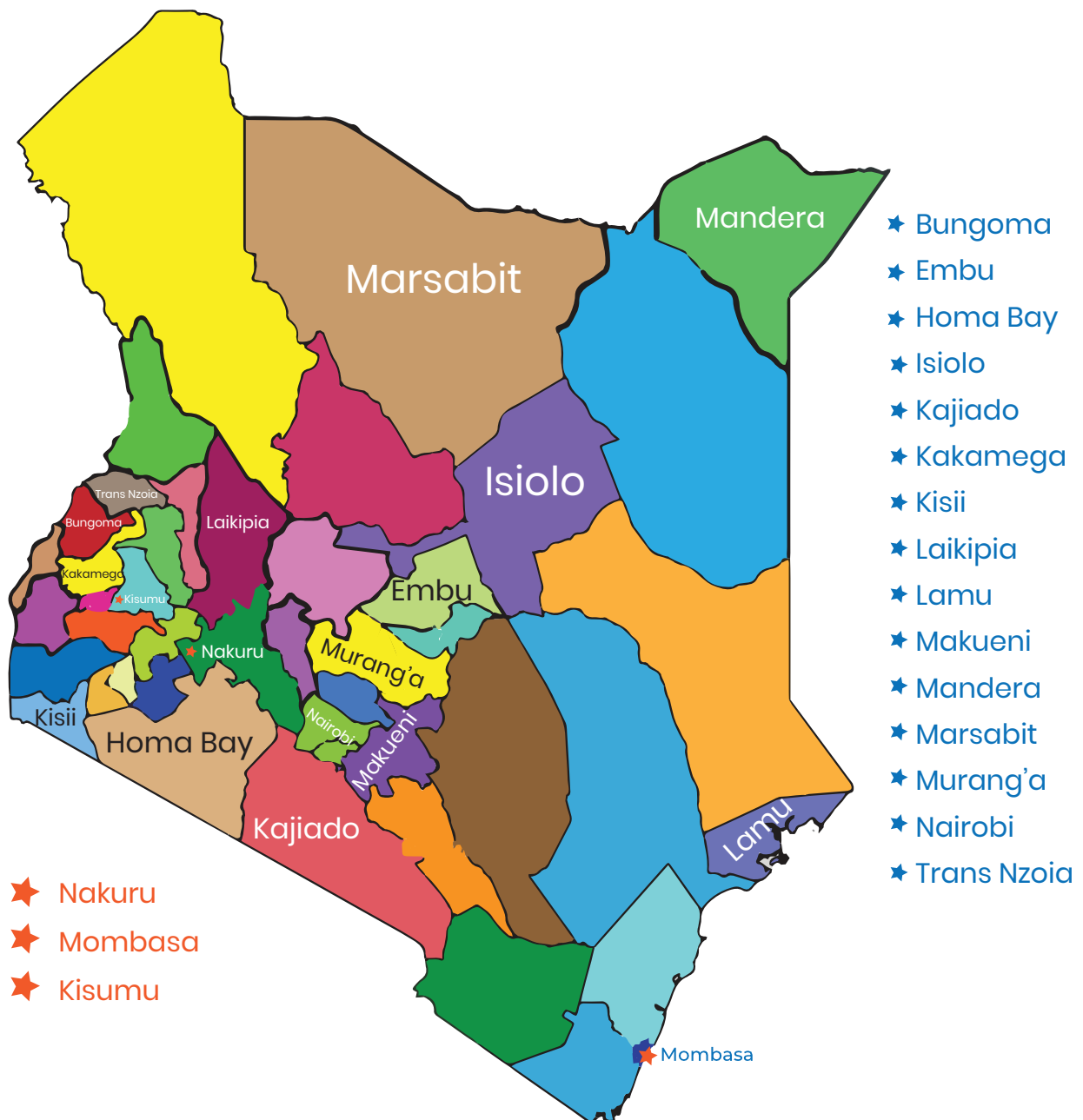
Survey of 2,290 respondents across 18 counties, analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression models to identify patterns, relationships, and programme-relevant insights.

## Qualitative Component:

Focus Group Discussions and participatory workshops (70 participants) in Mombasa, Nakuru, and Kisumu, engaging diverse groups including youth, women, PWDs, and community leaders.

## Analytical Approach:

Thematic analysis used to interpret qualitative data and complement survey findings, providing deeper context to explain key trends.



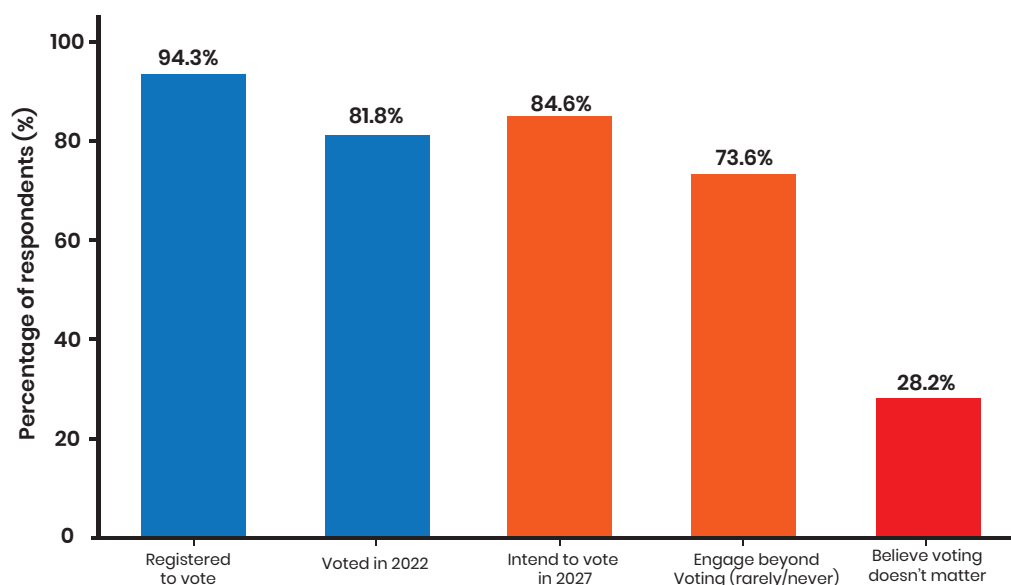
## CHAPTER 2 ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION:

### High Turnout, Low Engagement Depth.

#### Presentation of findings:

Kenya demonstrates strong electoral participation, but limited engagement beyond voting, revealing a gap between participation and perceived influence.

Electoral Participation: Wide Access, Narrowing Depth  
REDI Baseline Perception Survey 2026 (+2,290)



The funnel is wide at entry (registration, voting)  
but narrows sharply in sustained civic engagement.

While voter turnout remains high, participation is largely episodic and transactional, centered on election periods rather than sustained civic engagement. Suggesting strong commitment to the idea of democracy however there is weak confidence in its effectiveness



## Why this is happening?

- » Participants described participation as disconnected from any tangible outcome. Public participation forums are perceived as either inaccessible, poorly communicated, or lacking genuine influence over decisions.

*People come out to vote, but after that, there is very little engagement. It is like participation ends at the ballot*

- » Economic pressures compound this dynamic. Lower-income and youth-dominated demographics, described civic engagement as a luxury they cannot afford when livelihood pressures dominate daily life.
- » Participation becomes rational only when it produces tangible, immediate benefits, and in a context where citizens feel the system is unresponsive, those benefits are increasingly hard to identify.

*People are busy looking for income... they don't have time for meetings that don't help them directly*

### Strategic Implication:

The challenge is not increasing voter turnout, but:

- » Deepening participation beyond elections
- » Rebuilding belief that participation matters
- » Strengthening continuous citizen-state engagement

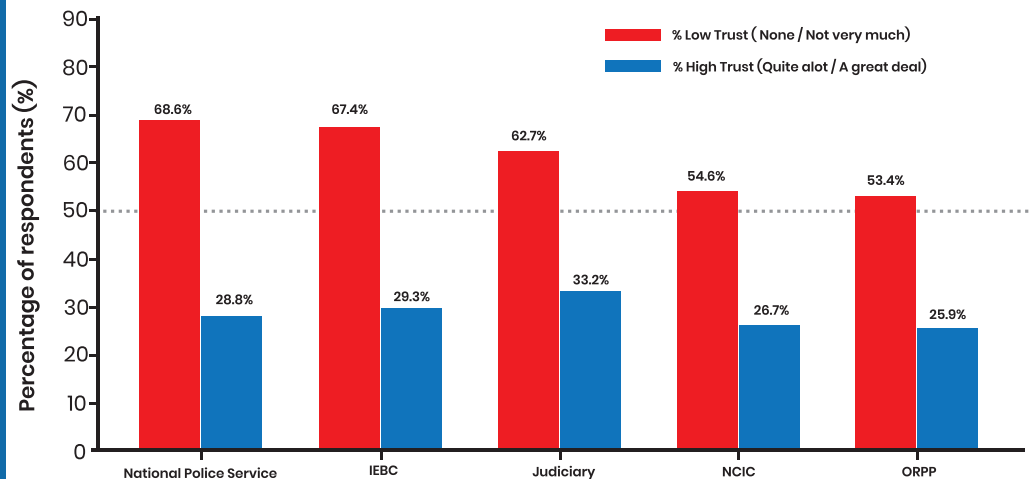
*Kenya risks a “high participation, low impact” democracy, where citizens vote consistently, but feel disconnected from outcomes.*

## CHAPTER 3

# TRUST IN ELECTORAL AND GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS

Public trust in Kenya's electoral and governance institutions is consistently low across the system, pointing to a deep, structural legitimacy challenge.

Figure 2: Institutional Trust Profile – All Five Key Institutions  
REDI Baseline Perception Survey 2026 (n=2,290)



\*\*No institution commands majority public confidence

### What This Means

Distrust is not isolated, it reflects a system-wide credibility deficit:



Institutions are perceived as interconnected



Confidence in one depends on confidence in others



Failures in one institution erode trust across the system



It is not just one institution – people have lost confidence in the whole system



### Why This Matters



Weak trust undermines electoral legitimacy



Reduces citizens' willingness to accept outcomes



Increases vulnerability to conflict and contestation

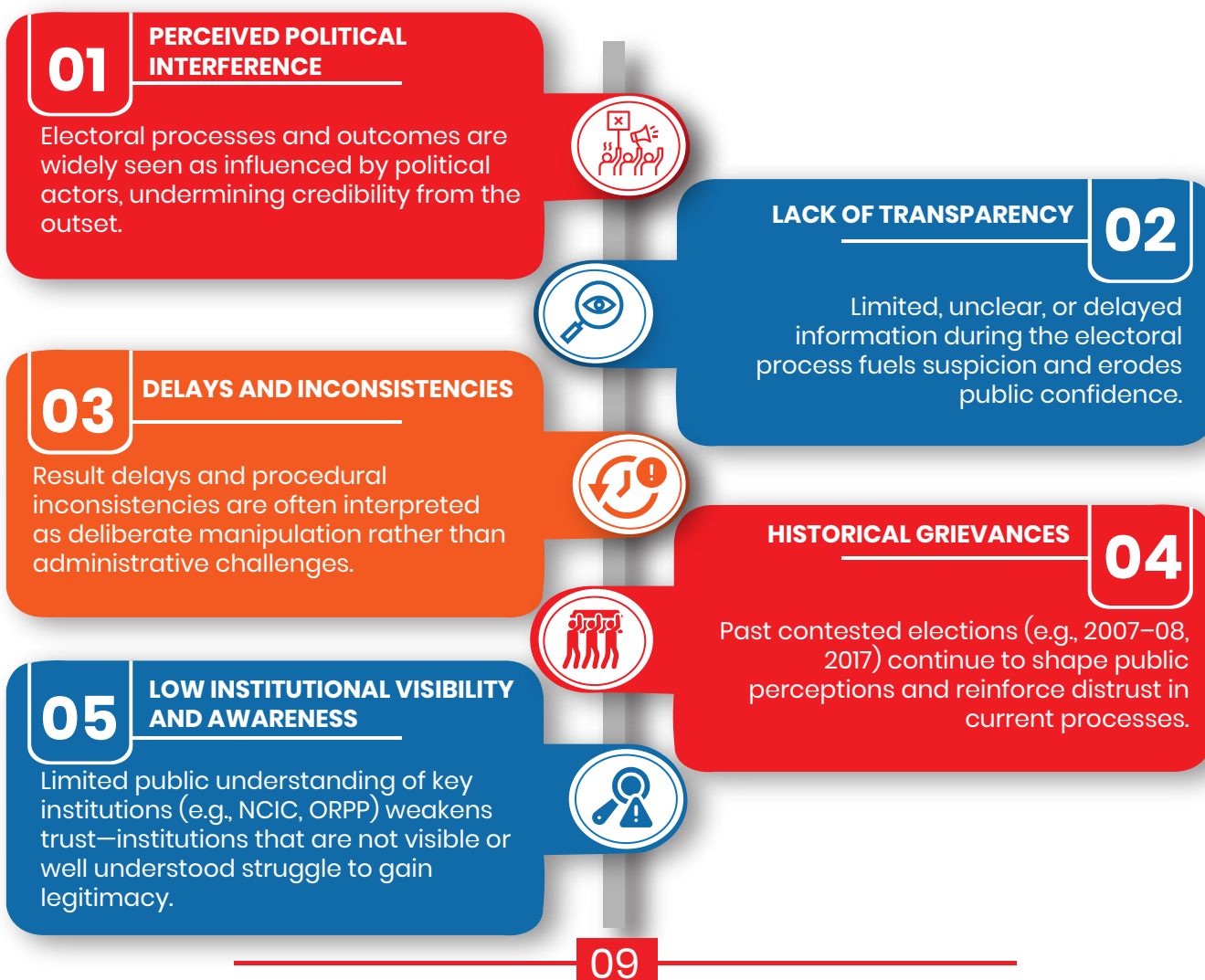
## Strategic Implication: Reforms must move beyond single institutions and instead:



Kenya is facing a crisis of institutional trust, not a failure of individual institutions requiring system-wide responses, not isolated fixes.

### 3.1 Key Drivers of Institutional Distrust.

Public distrust is driven by consistent, experience-based factors that reinforce skepticism across electoral cycles, not isolated perceptions.



## 3.2 The Trust Bundle: A Critical Regression Finding



**What This Means :**  
Distrust is reinforced across time and institutions:

1

Perceptions are shaped by both current experiences and historical memory



2

Weaknesses in one area amplify distrust in others



3

Trust requires consistent, visible, and system-wide credibility



### Implication for REDI

Addressing distrust requires:

1

Protecting institutional independence from political influence



2

Radical transparency in electoral processes



3

Timely, consistent communication



4

Deliberate trust-rebuilding efforts across electoral cycles



5

Increasing visibility and public understanding of institutions



***Institutional distrust in Kenya is deep-rooted and self-reinforcing, it will not be resolved through technical fixes alone, but through visible, sustained credibility-building efforts.***



# CHAPTER 4 ELECTORAL INTEGRITY AND CREDIBILITY.

Perceptions of electoral integrity in Kenya are predominantly negative, with major concerns around fairness, independence, and credibility of results undermining democratic legitimacy.

## ELECTORAL INTEGRITY PERCEPTION DASHBOARD

### KENYA – POST 2022 ELECTIONS

**2,290**  
Citizens surveyed  
18 counties

#### Public Perceptions Key Dimensions Of Electoral Integrity

| DIMENSION                                                                                                                         | KEY FINDING                                                                                                          | SIGNAL / INTERPRETATION                | RISK LEVEL                                                                                       | KEY INSIGHTS                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Electoral Process Fairness (2022 election)      | 45.6% Disagree vs 32.3% Agree<br>   | Majority question election credibility |  HIGH RISK    |  <b>TRUST DEFICIT DOMINATES</b><br>More disagreements than agreement across critical dimension.        |
|  Election Reforms (progress from 2022 elections) | 37.9% Disagree vs 29.3% Agree<br>   | Reforms lack visibility and trust      |  HIGH RISK    |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|  Results Credibility                             | 50.0% Disagree vs 25.9% Agree<br>   | Outcomes widely doubled -high risk     |  HIGH RISK    |  <b>CREDIBILITY CRISIS</b><br>Results credibility and IECB independence are the most contracted areas. |
|  IEBC Independence                               | 57.6% Disagree vs 22.2% Agree<br>   | Strong perception of information       |  HIGH RISK    |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|  IEBC Capacity 2027                             | 56.0% Disagree vs 39.5% Agree<br> | Technical capacity acknowledged        |  MEDIUM RISK |  <b>PARADOX</b><br>IEBC Seen as technically capable but not trust worthy.                              |
|  Vote Buying (Perception)                      | 77.0% Agree                       | Malpractice soon as widespread         |  HIGH RISK  |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|  Vote Buying (Experience)                      | 53.3% Yes                         | Direct citizen exposure is high        |  HIGH RISK  |  <b>SYSTEMIC MALPRACTICE</b><br>Vote buying is both widely perceived and experienced by citizens.    |

#### RISK LEVEL GUIDE



**HIGH RISK**  
Majority views indicate serious trust and credibility



**MEDIUM RISK**  
Mild or moderate perceptions require attention



**LOW RISK**  
Positive perception and lower concern.

### WHAT THIS MEANS:

#### STRONGEST CONCERNS RELATE TO

Credibility of results, Institutional independence, Normalization of malpractice (vote buying)

01

#### A CONSISTENT PATTERN EMERGES

Negative perceptions outweigh positive ones across all dimensions

02

#### KENYA'S ELECTORAL SYSTEM FACES A CRITICAL CREDIBILITY GAP

Technical capacity exists (ability to run elections) but institutional trust is weak (belief in fairness and impartiality)

03

## Implication for election programming: Strengthening electoral integrity requires:



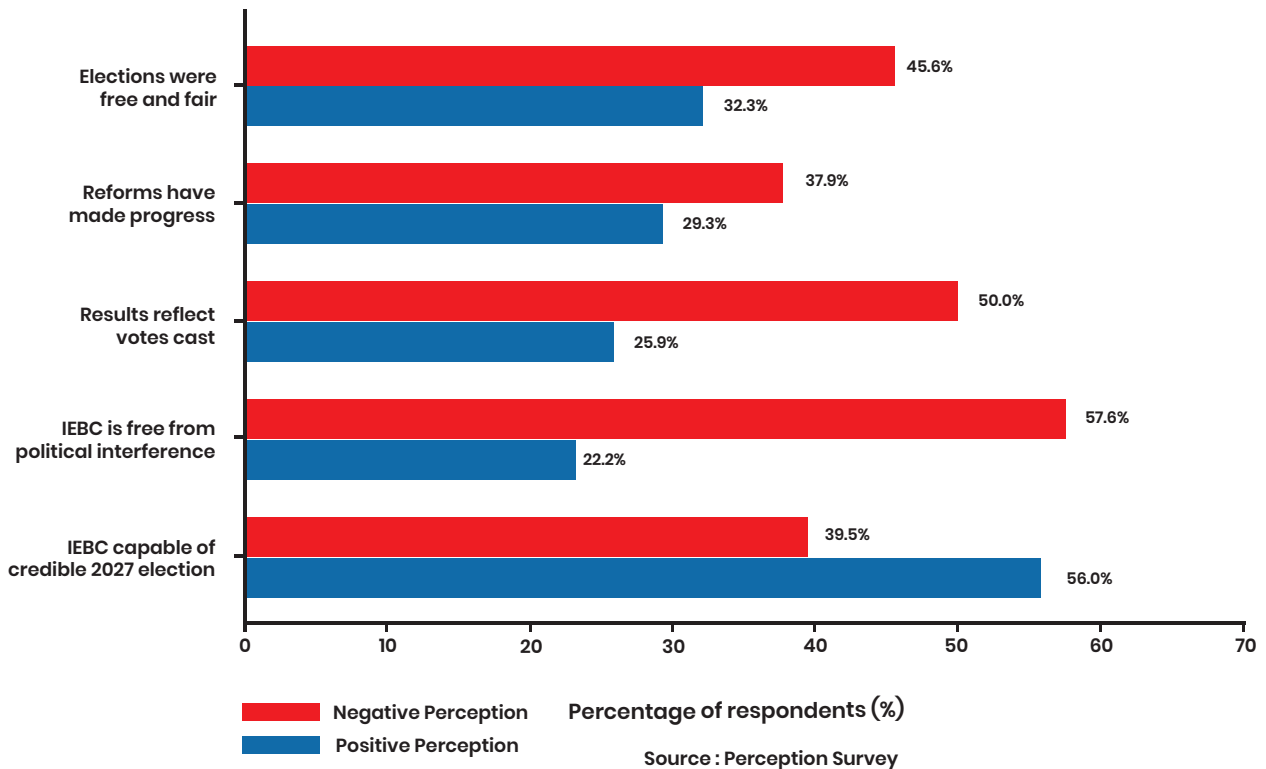
Kenya's challenge is not only to run elections well, but to ensure they are seen as credible, fair, and trustworthy because perception defines legitimacy.

| Dimension                 | Indicator                            | Finding                       | Signal                                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Electoral Fairness        | 2022 elections free and fair?        | 45.6% disagree vs 32.3% agree | Legitimacy gap majority reject credibility            |
| Electoral Reforms         | Progress since 2022                  | 37.9% disagree vs 29.3% agree | Reforms lack public visibility and credibility        |
| Results Credibility       | Results reflect votes cast?          | 50.0% disagree vs 25.9% agree | Majority reject outcome credibility— critical risk    |
| IEBC Independence         | Free from political interference?    | 57.6% disagree vs 22.2% agree | Strong perception of institutional compromise         |
| IEBC Capacity (2027)      | Able to deliver credible elections?  | 56.0% capable vs 39.5% not    | Technical capacity acknowledged; credibility fragile  |
| Vote Buying (perceived)   | Vote buying is common?               | 77.0% agree                   | Electoral malpractice widely normalized               |
| Vote Buying (experienced) | Personally, experienced vote buying? | 53.3% yes                     | Malpractice is not abstract directly affects citizens |

The pattern emerging from these figures is consistent and damning: across every dimension of electoral integrity, negative perceptions significantly outweigh positive ones. The strongest deficits are concentrated in trust in results, perceptions of institutional independence, and the normalization of vote buying.

While some level of confidence exists in the IEBC's technical capacity to organize elections, that confidence does not extend to a belief that elections will be conducted fairly or impartially. The gap between technical competence and institutional credibility is one of the defining tensions in Kenya's electoral environment.

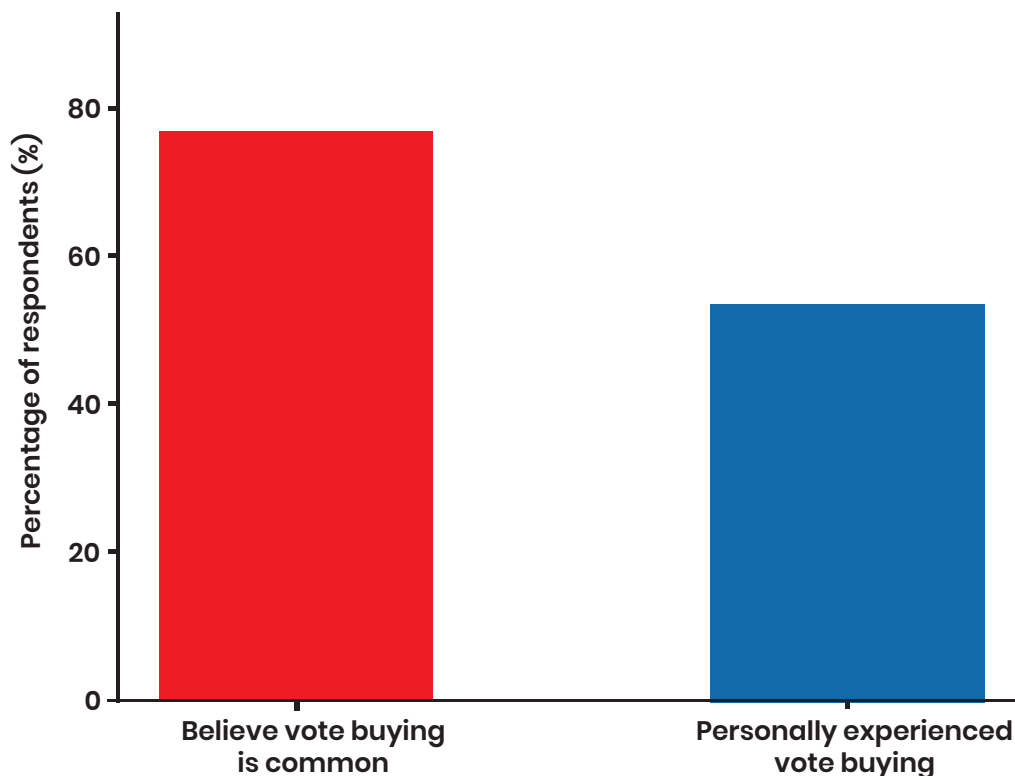
## Electoral Integrity : Perception Profile Across Five Dimensions REDI Baseline Perception Survey 2026 (N=2,290)



### 4.1 Vote Buying, Misinformation, Disinformation and Process Gaps

Electoral integrity is undermined by a combination of normalized malpractice, information disorder, and weak accountability systems creating a reinforcing cycle of distrust.

#### Vote buying: Widely Perceived, Personally Experienced REDI Baseline Perception Survey 2026 (n = 2,290)



# THREATS TO ELECTORAL INTEGRITY



## 1. VOTE BUYING

*From exception to norm.*

Evidence from citizens, reality on the ground.



**WIDELY ACCEPTED**  
as part of elections



**DRIVEN BY**  
economic vulnerability



**SEEN AS A RATIONAL SURVIVAL STRATEGY,**  
not corruption



**BLURS THE LINE**  
between free choice  
and economic necessity

### WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING



“ It has become part of elections – people even expect it ”



“ When people are struggling, they take what they are offered ”



Vote buying normalizes exchange, undermining the very idea of free choice



**WHEN SURVIVAL NEEDS OUTWEIGH DEMOCRATIC VALUES,  
ELECTIONS RISK BECOMING TRANSACTIONS, NOT CHOICES.**



## KEY DRIVERS AND THEIR IMPACT



### 2. MISINFORMATION & DISINFORMATION

*Filling the trust vacuum.*

- Rapid spread via digital platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, TikTok, Facebook)

#### IMPACTS:

- Distorts understanding of electoral processes.
- Amplifies distrust in institutions
- Fuels polarization and fear



Gains traction where trust in official information is low.



### 3. PROCESS GAPS

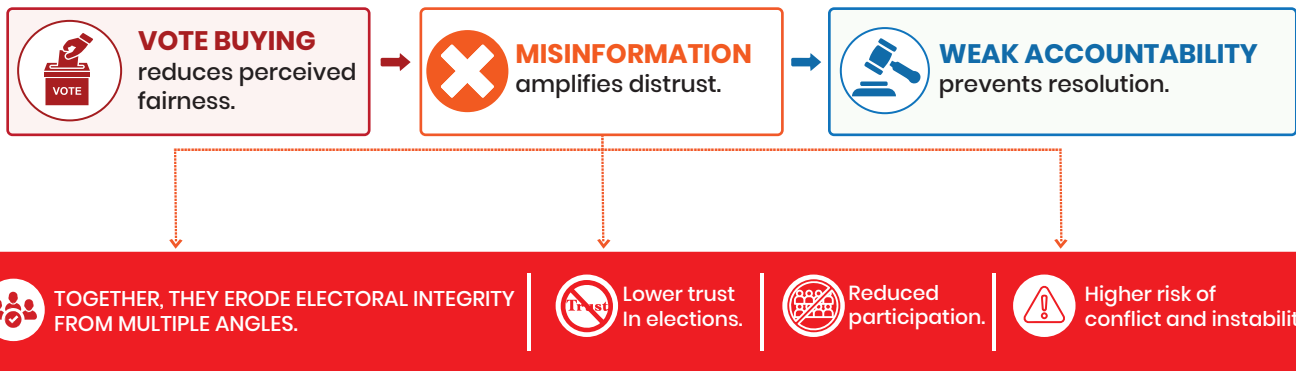
*Weak accountability and transparency.*

- Limited understanding of electoral procedures
- Low awareness of complaint and redress mechanisms
- Perception that violations go unpunished



Weakens confidence that the system can self-correct

WHAT THIS MEANS: THESE FACTORS INTERACT AND REINFORCE EACH OTHER:



## STRATEGIC IMPLICATION

Effective responses must be multi-layered:

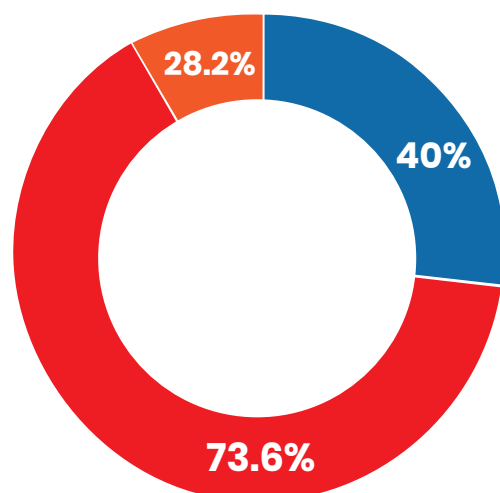
- Address economic drivers of vote buying.
- Strengthen digital literacy and counter-misinformation efforts.
- Improve visibility and accessibility of grievance mechanisms.
- Ensure visible enforcement and accountability.

*Electoral integrity is not weakened by one factor, but by a convergence of behavioral and systemic risks requiring integrated, system-wide solutions.*

## CHAPTER 5 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: THE PARTICIPATION PARADOX.

Kenya exhibits high political awareness but low sustained civic engagement, particularly among youth creating a gap between interest and action.

### Statistics at a glance



**73.6%** rarely/never engage beyond voting

**28.2%** believe voting makes no difference

**40%** youth voter turnout (below national average)

### WHY CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IS LOW?

1

#### POLITICAL DISILLUSIONMENT

- » Belief that outcomes are pre-determined.
- » Limited confidence that participation leads to change.

2

#### FEAR AND RISK PERCEPTION

- » Concerns about personal safety, especially during elections
- » Higher deterrent for women and youth in high-tension areas

3

#### ECONOMIC PRESSURES

- » Daily survival priorities outweigh civic involvement.
- » Engagement seen as valuable only if it yields immediate benefits.

## KEY INSIGHTS

### 1 Participation Is Narrow And Election-focused.

Citizen engagement is largely limited to voting, with low and inconsistent involvement in broader governance processes.

This indicates weak linkages between public awareness and sustained civic action.



### 2 Engagement Is Episodic, With Critical Groups Left Out.

Participation tends to spike around elections but is not sustained over time.

Youth and economically vulnerable groups who are most affected by governance outcomes remain the least consistently engaged, yet are essential for democratic renewal.



### 3 Civic Education Alone Does Not Drive Participation, It Works Through Trust.

Providing information alone does not influence voting behaviour, as it has no direct effect on voting intention.

Its impact is mediated through institutional trust, meaning knowledge only translates into action when citizens perceive the system as credible.



### 4 Institutional Trust Especially In The IECB Is The Key Driver Of Participation.

Trust in electoral institutions is a strong, independent predictor of voting intention, with higher IECB trust significantly increasing the likelihood to vote.

This underscores that rebuilding credibility is more effective than information campaigns alone and requires embedding trust-building within civic education efforts.



### 5 Kenya Risks A “High Awareness, Low Action” Civic Environment

where citizens are politically conscious but structurally disengaged from meaningful participation.



## INCLUSION: WOMEN, YOUTH, AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

Kenya has made progress in formal inclusion, but significant gaps remain in meaningful participation particularly for women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs).

Barriers to registration and voting have reduced but barriers to influence, safety, and decision-making power persist

### 6.1 Women: Participation Without Power



#### At a Glance



**48.9%**  
of respondents are women (near parity)



**34%**  
less likely to be aware of election observer organizations



#### Key Challenges



Political spaces perceived as unsafe and exclusionary.



Women concentrated in mobilization roles, not leadership.



High campaign costs limit entry into competitive politics.



Women are welcomed as supporters but not decision-makers."



Information is intentionally withheld... just to lock women out of democratic processes."



Women are present but not empowered participation does not translate into influence.

### 6.2 Persons with Disabilities: Excluded by Design

#### At a Glance



**8.7%**  
cite disability-related barriers to participation.



#### Key Challenges



Inaccessible polling stations (e.g., stairs, infrastructure barriers).



Lack of assistive materials (braille, large print).



Civic education not designed for inclusive engagement.



The system expects us to adjust, not the other way around."



Participation for PWDs is often dependent and conditional, undermining privacy, autonomy, and dignity."

## 6.3 Youth: Mobilized but Marginalized



### At a Glance



**47.2%**

of respondents  
aged 18–35.



**65%**

less likely to be  
registered (vs.  
ages 36–60).



**29%**

less likely to  
intend to vote in  
2027.



### Key Challenges



Lower registration and participation  
rates despite high awareness.



Limited engagement in formal  
governance processes.



High economic vulnerability.



They are used  
during elections,  
but not included  
afterward.”



### Risk Dynamic



Youth are highly active in mobilization, but not in  
decision-making.



Economic vulnerability increases risk of political  
instrumentalization.

*Youth are visible but not influential, a critical  
gap for democratic sustainability.*

### Strategic inclusion: Advancing inclusion requires:

01



Moving beyond  
access to  
agency, voice,  
and safety.

02



Reducing  
structural and  
economic  
barriers.

03



Designing  
intentionally  
inclusive  
systems and  
processes.

04

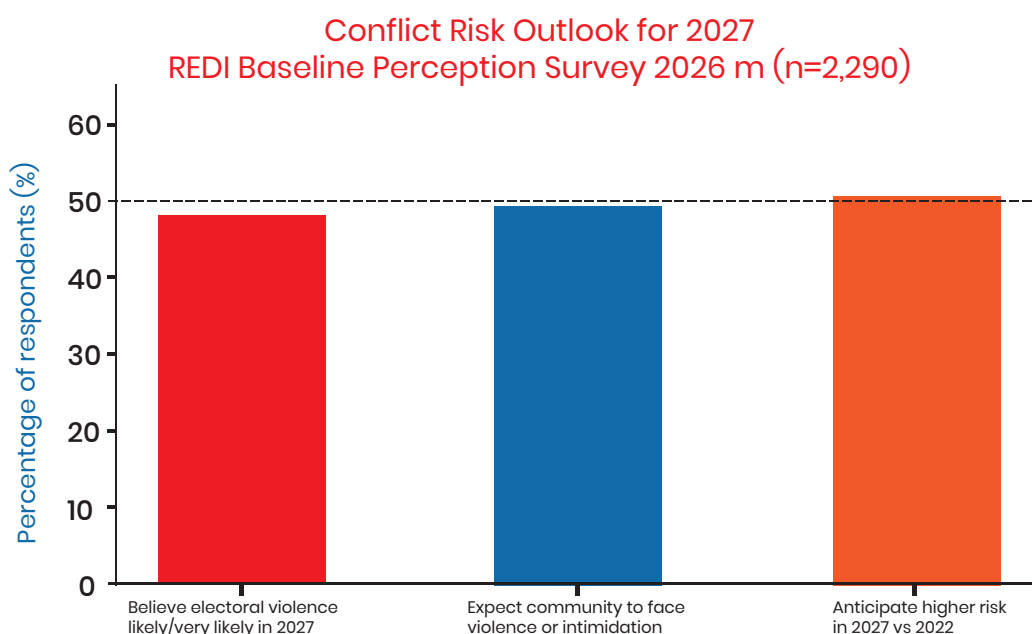


Prioritizing  
youth  
engagement  
across the full  
participation  
cycle.

Kenya's challenge is not only to include citizens in elections, but to ensure they can participate meaningfully, safely, and with influence.

## CHAPTER 7 CONFLICT RISK AND SOCIAL COHESION.

Perceptions of electoral violence risk are high and increasing, creating a self-reinforcing cycle where fear itself can drive instability.



Source : Perception Survey



High expectation of electoral violence - Nearly half of respondents (48.1%) believe violence in 2027 is likely, signaling widespread concern about election-related instability.

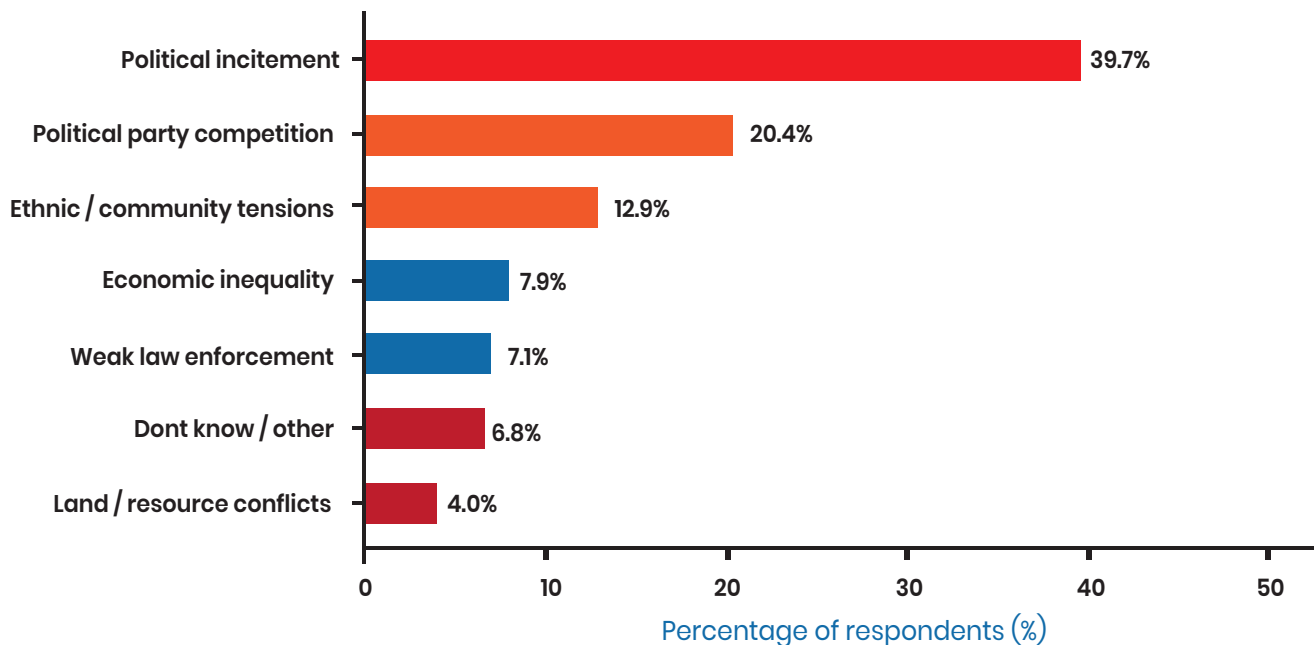


Conflict Risk is local and personal. - Close to half (48.9%) expect violence or intimidation within their own communities, showing that fears are immediate and grounded in lived realities.



Perceptions may fuel actual violence- With 50.9% expecting more violence than in 2022, these beliefs can become self-reinforcing, increasing the likelihood of tension and conflict during the election period.

Figure 3 : Main Perceived Sources of Electoral  
Violence Risk Redi Baseline Perception Survey 2026 (n=2,290) – S4.10



#### Political incitement is the dominant trigger:

A significant share of respondents (39.7%) identify political incitement as the leading cause of electoral violence. This highlights the central role of elite rhetoric and mobilization in shaping conflict risk.



#### Elections are driven by high-stakes political competition:

Political party competition (20.4%) and ethnic tensions (12.9%) together reinforce a zero-sum contest for power and resources. This dynamic makes elections more confrontational, especially where winning determines access to opportunities and influence.



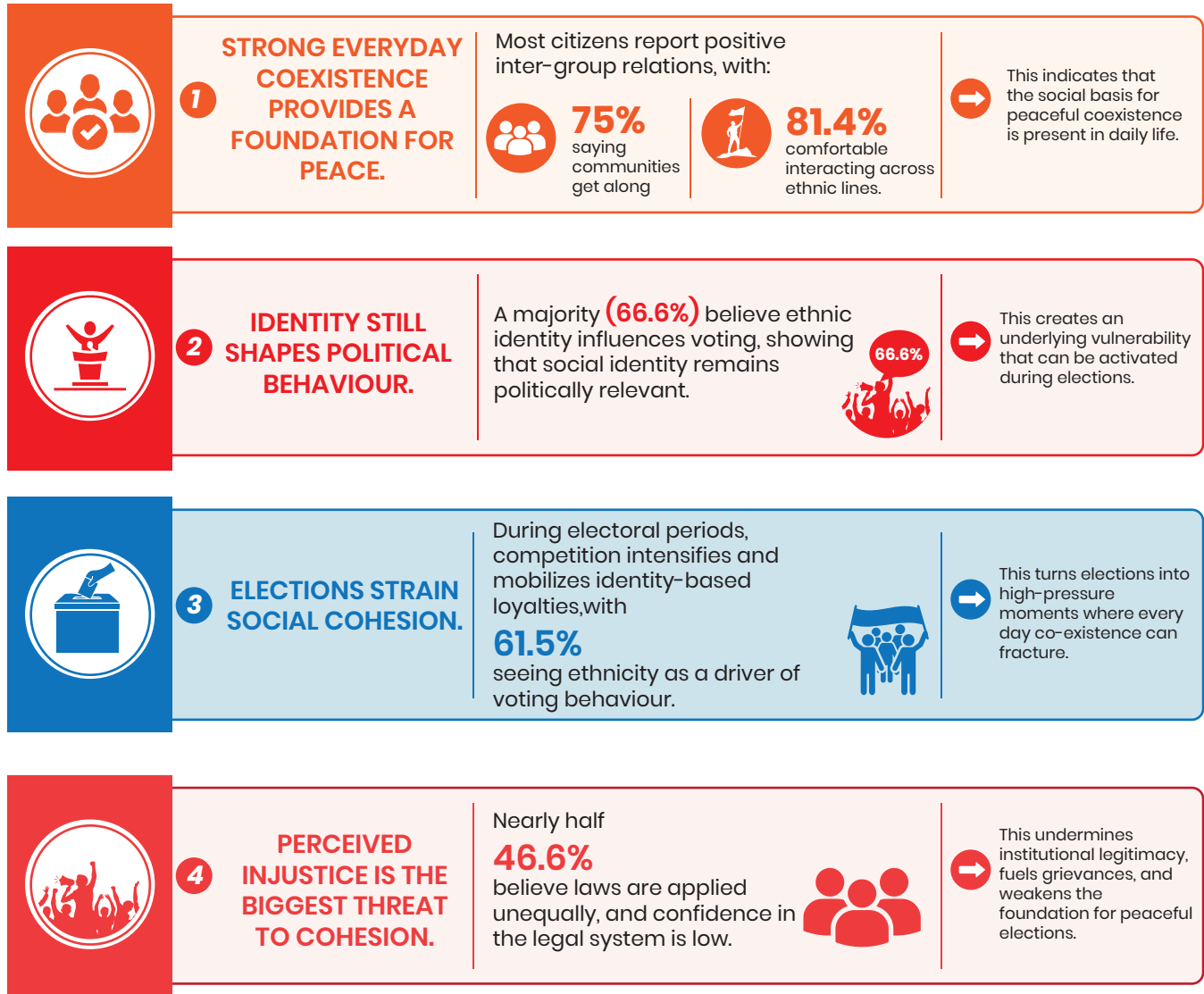
#### Devolution intensifies local-level conflict:

Competition at county, constituency, and ward levels amplifies rivalries within communities. As a result, electoral violence risks are not only national but deeply localized, driven by micro-level political and identity tensions.

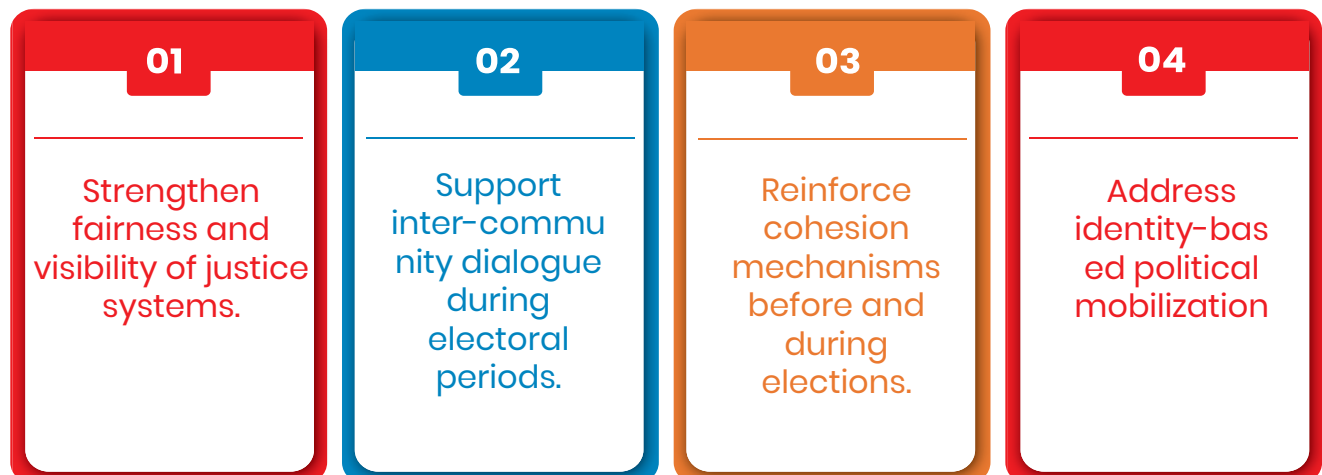
## 7.1 Social Cohesion: Strong Foundations, Fragile Under Pressure

### SOCIAL COHESION: STRENGTHS, VULNERABILITIES & RISKS

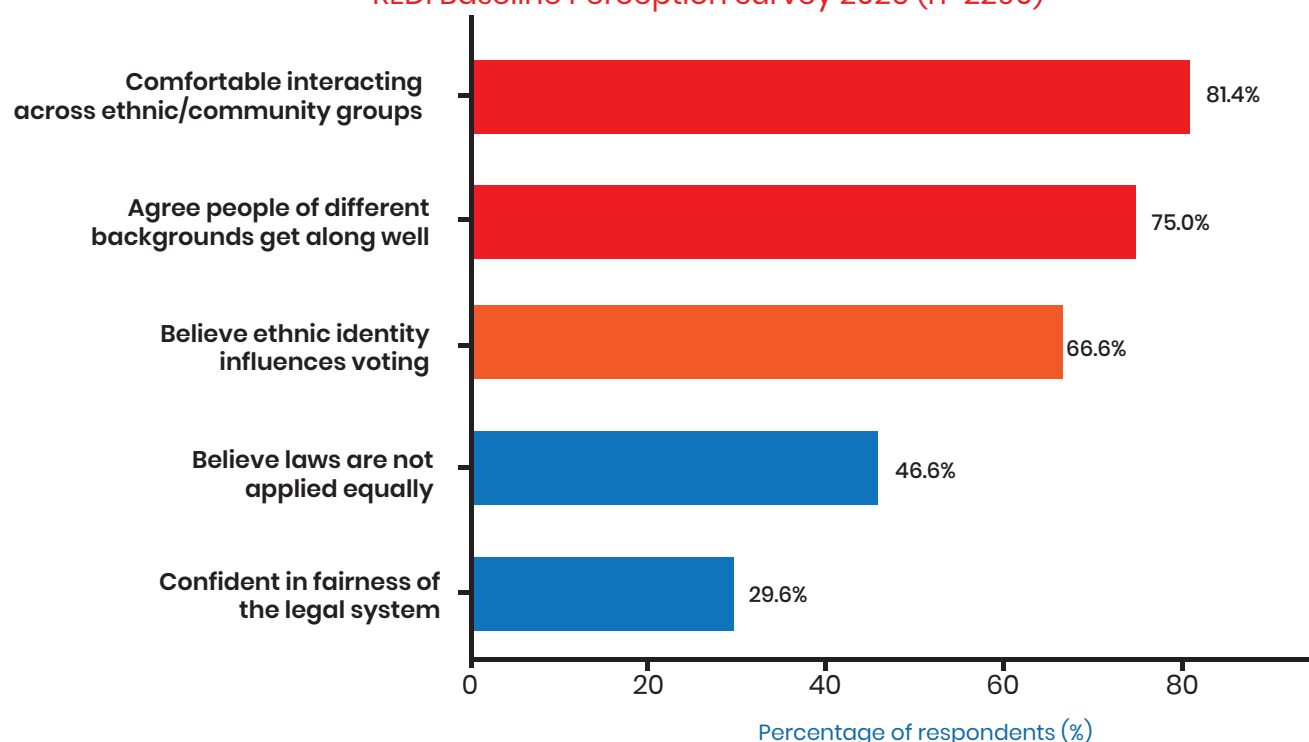
Key insights from citizen perceptions



#### Implication for election programming



Social cohesion: Fragile but present  
REDI Baseline Perception Survey 2026 (n=2290)



Interpersonal cohesion is relatively strong: institutional fairness is the most critical concern.

## 7.2 A Shifting Conflict Landscape

1

### Electoral conflict is becoming more localized.

Violence is increasingly concentrated within specific communities and linked to local political contests over devolved power and resources, rather than nationwide ethnic confrontations.

2

### Conflict is driven by organized local networks.

Emerging risks stem from organized groups and micro-level political competition instead of large-scale ethnic mobilization, making violence more fragmented and difficult to predict.

3

### Misinformation is a growing conflict accelerator.

False information and digital communication enable rumours to spread rapidly, escalating tensions and deepening divisions within communities.

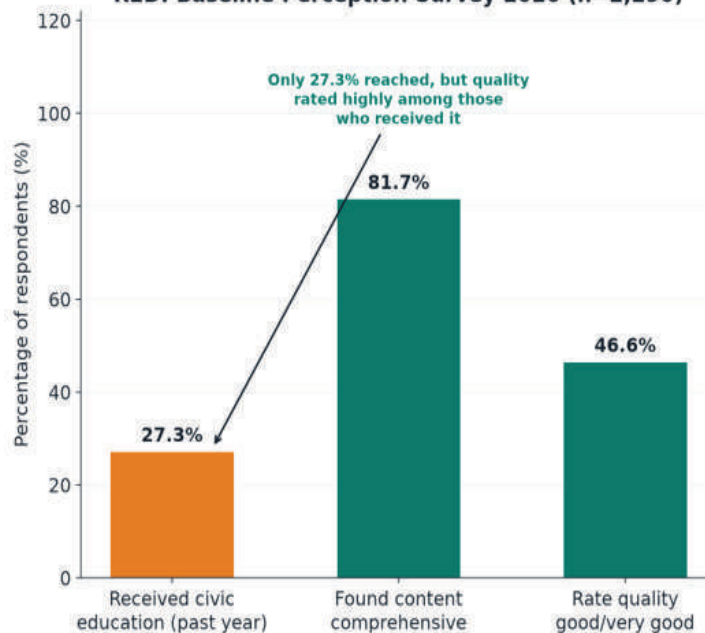
4

### Traditional prevention approaches need to adapt.

As conflict becomes more localized, networked, and misinformation-driven, conventional strategies focused on large-scale ethnic violence are no longer sufficient. Prevention efforts must prioritize early detection, local response mechanisms, and countering misinformation.

## CIVIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM.

**Figure 4: Civic Education — Reach vs Quality**  
REDI Baseline Perception Survey 2026 (n=2,290)



### *Severe access gap in civic education:*

01

Only 27.3% of respondents received civic education in the past year, while 70.8% had none, leaving most citizens approaching the 2027 elections without structured, reliable information.

02

### *Quality is not the problem, scale is:*

Among those reached, civic education is consistently rated as clear, useful, and comprehensive. The system has a proven model, but its limited reach prevents system-wide impact.

03

### *Misinformation fills the vacuum:*

In the absence of widespread civic education, misinformation and disinformation dominate the information space, spreading faster and further than accurate knowledge.

04

### *Civic education alone does not drive participation:*

Evidence shows that civic education influences engagement indirectly through institutional trust, not as a standalone trigger for participation.

05

***Compounding effects on trust and perception:***

Limited civic knowledge makes citizens more vulnerable to manipulation, reinforcing perceptions of electoral bias, and institutional distrust already observed across the study.

06

***Civic education alone does not drive participation:***

Evidence shows that civic education influences engagement indirectly through institutional trust, not as a standalone trigger for participation.

07

***Critical design implication:***

Civic education programmes must shift from pure information delivery to trust-building approaches, explicitly addressing institutional credibility if they are to meaningfully increase citizen participation.

08

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## CHAPTER 9 EARLY WARNING AND PEACE INFRASTRUCTURE.

### Early Warning & Peace Infrastructure (EWER):

#### Present but Constrained.

- Critical frontline system for preventing electoral violence .
- Over half of citizens anticipate violence, yet EWER remains weak at scale.
- A system that exists in principle, but fails in practice.

#### Interlocking System Gaps.

- Under-known: 50.2% unaware of EWER mechanisms.
- Limits community-led detection and reporting .
- Under-trusted: Low confidence (86.3%) due to inaction on reports.

#### Weak feedback loops between citizens and institutions .

- Under-used: Low awareness + low trust = minimal reporting.
- Early warning signals are missed or too late .
- Under-supported: Peace committees & mediators lack funding, training, coordination.

#### Weak links to formal security & governance systems.

- Untapped Asset: Local Peace Structures.
- Trusted, locally embedded, and legitimate.
- Strong potential for early intervention and mediation.
- Main constraint is capacity, not acceptance .
- Limited integration with formal response systems.

#### Strategic Implications.

- Reframe EWER from awareness - trust, credibility, usability.
- Build stronger coordination between community actors & institutions.
- Invest in local peace systems = strengthen prevention capacity.

## CHAPTER 10 STRATEGIC PILLARS FOR STRENGTHENING ELECTORAL INTEGRITY.

Addressing the underlying drivers of low trust, misinformation, exclusion, and conflict risk requires a coordinated and systemic response. The following five strategic pillars provide the framework for that response, each grounded directly in the evidence, and each designed to work together rather than in isolation.

| Strategic Pillar                     | Priority Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Civic Education Scale-Up             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shift from information delivery to trust building.</li> <li>Prioritize content on voting value, results management, and citizen rights, delivered through mass media, digital platforms, and trusted community actors to expand reach and credibility.</li> </ul>                     |
| Electoral Integrity Reform           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve transparency in results tallying and transmission.</li> <li>Strengthen enforcement against malpractice and ensure accessible, effective grievance redress systems.</li> </ul>                                                                                                 |
| Trust & Accountability               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rebuild confidence through coordinated reforms across key institutions (IEBC, police, judiciary, etc.).</li> <li>Improve transparency, communication, and responsiveness of electoral institutions.</li> </ul>                                                                        |
| Inclusion                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safe political spaces for women;</li> <li>Accessible polling for PWDs.</li> <li>Structured governance pathways for youth beyond elections.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                 |
| Disinformation & Conflict Prevention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate information integrity with peacebuilding.</li> <li>Expand digital literacy, strengthen fact checking systems, and enhance the visibility and effectiveness of early warning and response (EWER) systems, alongside sustained support for local peace structures.</li> </ul> |



## CHAPTER 11 CONCLUSION

Kenya's 2027 elections present a defining test of democratic resilience. While citizen participation remains high, it is increasingly occurring alongside deep scepticism about institutional credibility and electoral outcomes.

At the same time, the system is under strain. Low trust in key institutions, widespread vote buying, limited civic education, and rising misinformation are reinforcing a cycle of electoral fragility. These challenges are interconnected and disproportionately affect young people, highlighting the need for a coordinated, system-wide response rather than isolated interventions.

The path forward is clear: rebuild trust through targeted civic education, strengthen the credibility and accountability of electoral and justice institutions, and adopt integrated, inclusive approaches to citizen engagement. With sustained and coordinated action grounded in transparency and inclusion, Kenya has a viable pathway toward peaceful, credible, and trusted elections in 2027.





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