

2024 Edelman Trust Barometer Kenya Report Reveals NGOs Most Trusted To Integrate Innovation Into Society

76% of Kenyans say they trust their peers to tell them the truth about new innovations and technologies compared to scientists (74%), journalists (63%), business leaders (61%) and government leaders (37%).

50% of Kenyans believe that science has become politicised in this country.

April 09, 2024 - NAIROBI - The 2024 Edelman Trust Barometer Kenya report reveals that NGOs are the most trusted to integrate innovation into society with 76% of Kenyans trusting them – putting them ahead of business (70% trust), media (66%), and government (47%).

This elevated trust in NGOs can be attributed to a lack of confidence in other institutions, with 80% of Kenyans worried about government leaders, 72% about business leaders, and 65% about journalists and reporters "purposely trying to mislead people by saying things they know are false or gross exaggerations." Kenyans are more inclined to trust their peers (76%) and scientists (74%) for truthful information about new innovations and technologies, even ahead of expert sources.

The report further states that 72% of Kenyans say if business partners with the government, they will trust it more with technology-led changes which emphasises the need for businesses to collaborate with other stakeholders for change and for science to integrate with society through dialogue and engagement.

Alarmingly, 50% of Kenyans believe science has become politicised in Kenya, and 63% say that government and organisations funding research wield excessive influence over scientific endeavours. This perception contributes to a broader perception that innovation is mismanaged, with those perceiving poor management more likely to believe technology and society are changing too quickly and not in ways that benefit "people like me."

"Building trust in innovation is critical and failing to do so can lead to skepticism, resistance, and missed opportunities for progress. It's imperative that we not only innovate but also communicate effectively, ensuring that advancements are understood, accessible, and aligned with the needs of Kenyans," said Corazon Sefu Wandimi, Managing Director of Edelman Kenya.

When it comes to acceptance of innovation, 65% of Kenyans say that they reject the growing use of GMO foods, while the same percentage embraces green energy. Furthermore, Kenyans have overwhelmingly endorsed technical experts (85%), scientists (84%), and academics (83%) to lead the charge in implementing innovation, underscoring the need for these leaders to play a significant role in managing the introduction of new technologies. However, a notable 41% of Kenyans—nearly on par with the global average of 45%—express that scientists do not know how to communicate with "people like me," calling for science to be made more transparent and accessible to the public.

This brings out the key importance of giving individuals control over their future when it comes to embracing innovation. The report acknowledges that when people feel in control of how innovations affect their lives, they are more likely to embrace them. These findings underscore a unique trust dynamic within an African context, presenting an unparalleled opportunity for stakeholders to harness this trust in forwarding technological and societal advancements.

Restoring trust in the promise of innovation necessitates prioritising its implementation as much as the innovation itself; creating an environment for business to partner for change; integrating science with society; and giving people control over how innovation impacts their future.

Other key findings for Kenya from the 2024 Edelman Trust Barometer include:

1. 76% of Kenyans trust NGOs to integrate innovation into society, putting them ahead of government, business and media.
2. Social media leads as the top source of information about new technologies and innovations for Kenyans, ahead of online searches, national media and local media. This is where Kenyans say they get most of their information about new technologies and innovations:
 - 76% Social media (net)
 - 67% Online searches
 - 50% National media
 - 50% Local media
 - 43% Online influencers
3. To earn or keep their trust as good managers of change, about 9 in 10 Kenyans say business and government should give them a voice to raise their concerns, while business, government, and media should be transparent about both the benefits and risks.
4. 56% of Kenyans believe that Government regulators lack adequate understanding of emerging technologies to regulate them effectively.
5. 41% of Kenyans say scientists do not know how to communicate with “people like me.”

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About the Edelman Trust Barometer

The 2024 Edelman Trust Barometer is the firm's 24th annual trust and credibility survey. The research was produced by the Edelman Trust Institute and consisted of 30-minute online interviews conducted between November 3 and November 22, 2023. The 2024 Edelman Trust Barometer online survey sampled more than 32,000 respondents across 28 countries.

Published every January, the report covers a range of timely and important societal indicators of trust among business, media, government and NGOs, shaping conversation and setting the agenda for the year ahead. For more information, visit <https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer>