

### 01 **Insularity is the majority mindset.**

Nearly 7 in 10 South Africans (68%) say they are hesitant or unwilling to trust people who are different from them, with only 32% open to engaging across differences.

### 02 **A decade-long distrust cycle breaks.**

For the first time since 2014, trust has stabilised across income groups, with neither high- nor low-income South Africans in outright distrust of institutions.

### 03 **Trade-related job fears hit all-time high.**

Concern about international trade and tariff conflicts harming employers has risen sharply among South African employees, climbing 14 points since 2019 to 72% in 2026, the highest level recorded.

### 04 **Fear of foreign-driven disinformation surges.**

€ In South Africa, concern that foreign actors are deliberately spreading falsehoods to deepen domestic divisions has risen sharply, increasing 16 points since 2021 to 67% in 2026.

### 05 **Optimism about the next generation remains weak.**

Just 33% of South Africans believe the next generation will be better off compared to today, broadly in line with the global average.

### 06 **Exposure to opposing views remains rare for majority.**

Just 44% of South Africans engage with sources that hold different political views than their own at least weekly, reinforcing a broader turn inward.

### 07 **Workplace division begins to erode productivity.**

Among South African employees, 28% say they would rather switch departments than report to a manager with different values, while 25% admit they would put less effort into helping a team leader with different political beliefs succeed.

### 08 **Trust becomes highly concentrated within insular groups.**

Among South Africans with an insular mindset, trust is highest in immediate and familiar figures, with 69% trusting their own CEO (among employees), followed by neighbours (55%) and CEOs more broadly (50%), while trust is markedly lower for journalists (43%) and government leaders (20%).

### 09 **Employers carry the strongest mandate to broker trust.**

South African employees are most likely to place responsibility on their employer (81%) to bridge divides and facilitate trust building between groups who distrust each other, followed by government (80%), business (78%), media (77%), and NGOs (76%).

### 10 **Grievance is more likely with an insular mindset.**

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of South Africans report a moderate or higher sense of grievance. This rises sharply among those with an insular mindset (79% vs. 60% among the open), a 19-point gap that underscores how perceived exclusion and inequality go hand in hand with distrust.