UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES, ASPIRATIONS AND REALITIES OF KENYAN GEN Z, 2026

A Report by Pan-African Research Services Ltd (PARS Research)

Survey Background

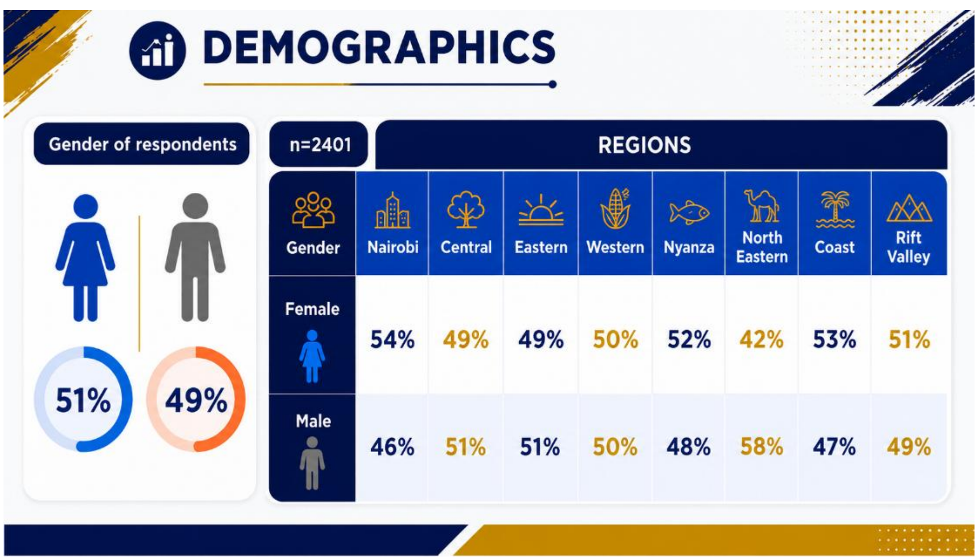
Kenya Generation Z (Gen Z) typically refers to individuals born between 1997 and early 2012. This cohort constitutes a significant demographic group whose attitudes, aspirations, and lived experiences are increasingly influencing the social, economic, and political landscape of Kenya. Between 29th May and 1st June 2026, PARS Research conducted a nationwide survey targeting Gen Z individuals aged 18 - 29 years who possessed a valid Kenyan National Identity Card. This report presents the key findings of the survey, offering insights into the socio-economic and political attitudes, aspirations, and lived realities of Kenya's Gen Z population.

Methodology

A nationally representative sample of 2,401 respondents comprising both male and female participants was interviewed through face-to-face interviews. The sample was distributed proportionately across regions, based on the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 2019 Census data, to ensure national representation. At a 95% confidence level, the survey attained a margin of error of approximately +/-2%.

Demographic Overview

The survey engaged 2,401 respondents, with a nearly equal gender distribution: females accounted for 51%, whereas males accounted for 49%. Regional representation revealed slight variations in gender balance across different areas. Nairobi recorded a higher proportion of females (54%) compared to males (46%), while Central and Eastern regions showed a slight male majority (51% each). Western respondents were evenly split between genders (50% each). Nyanza had a female majority (52%), whereas North Eastern reflected a stronger male presence (58%). Coast respondents leaned female (53%), and Rift Valley maintained near parity, with females at 51% and males at 49%.

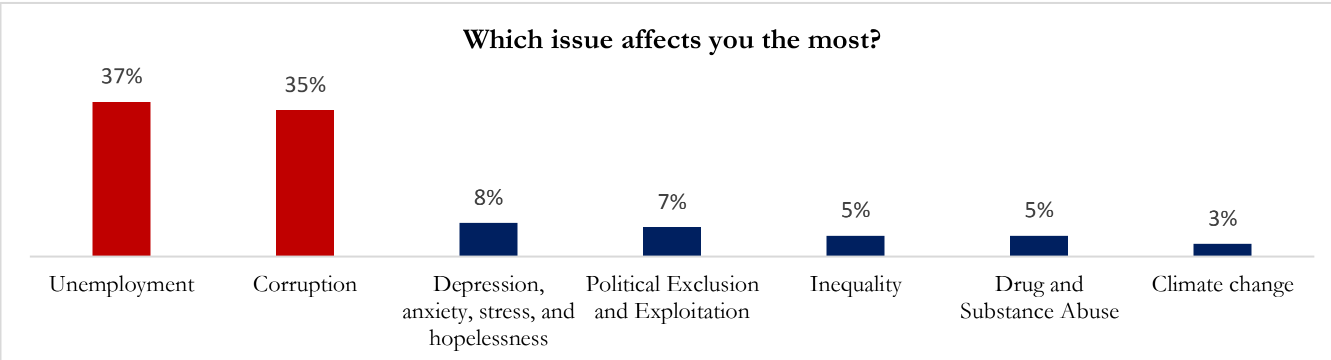


KEY FINDINGS - SOCIO-POLITICAL PERCEPTIONS

Issues that affect Gen Z the most

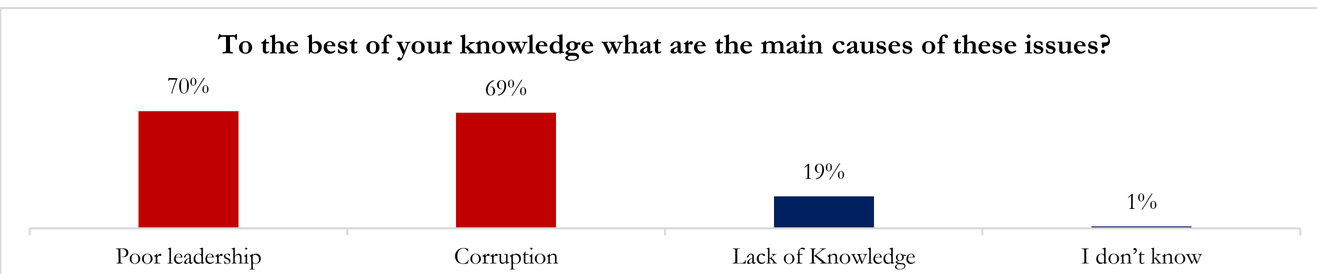
When National Problems Become Personal, unemployment and Corruption Hit Hardest.

When asked about the challenges that most impact their lives, respondents highlighted unemployment (37%) and corruption (35%) as the most pressing concerns. Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, stress, and hopelessness were also noted, though by a smaller proportion (8%). Political exclusion and exploitation emerged as another area of concern (7%), alongside inequality (5%) and drug and substance abuse (5%). Climate change was mentioned by 3% of respondents, while 2% identified other issues not listed.



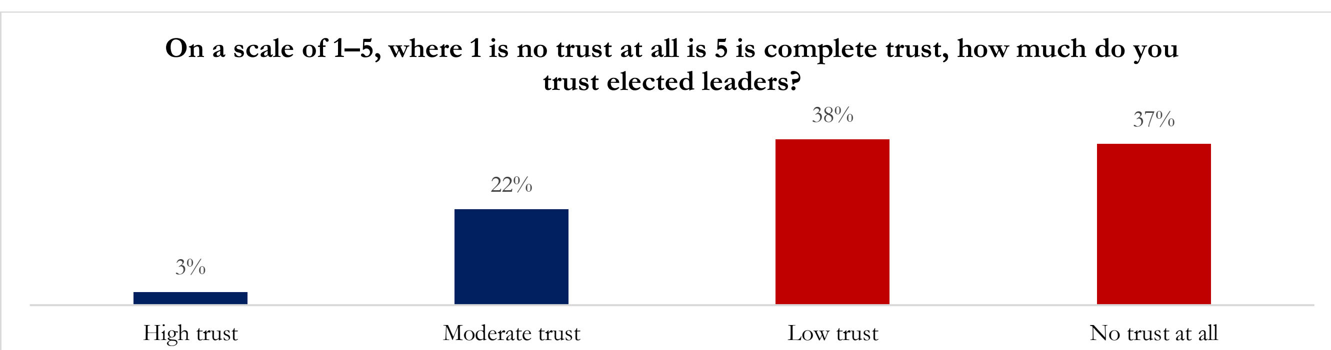
Main causes of these issues

Among respondents, poor leadership (70%) and corruption (69%) emerged as the leading causes of the challenges they face, followed by lack of knowledge (19%). Only 1% of respondents indicated that they did not know the cause.

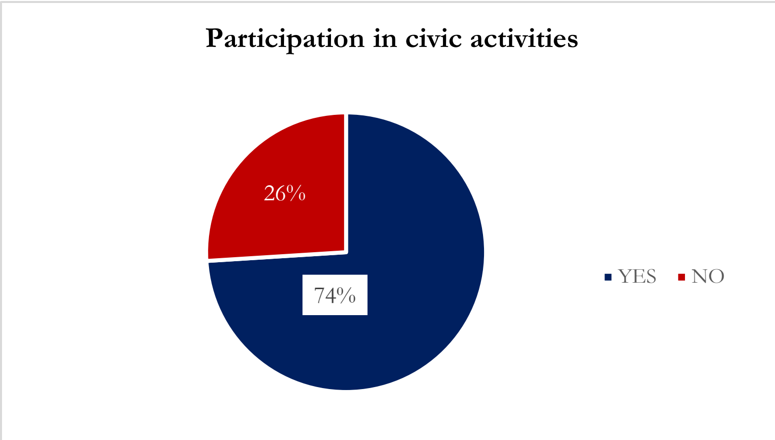


Trust in elected leaders

Trust in elected leaders was generally low among respondents, with the majority expressing limited confidence: 37% reported having no trust at all, while 38% indicated low levels of trust. An additional 22% reported moderate trust, and only 3% expressed high trust in elected leaders.



Engagement in civic activities



Asked about their participation in civic activities such as community forums, public participation, online activism, and voting, most respondents said yes (74%), while 26% reported no involvement.

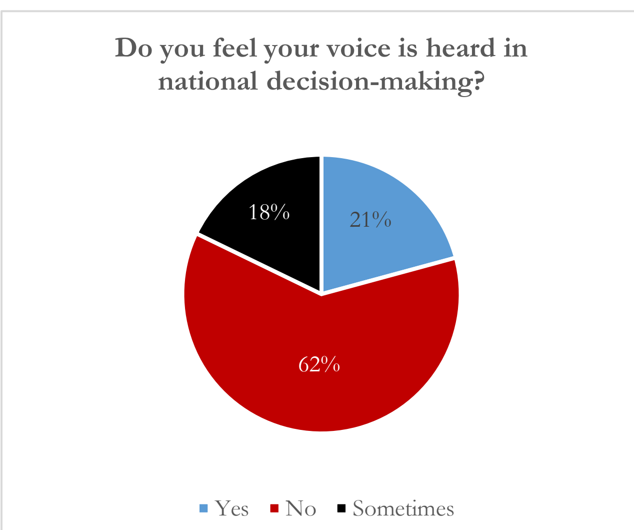
Frequency in engagement in civic activities

Respondents reported varying levels of civic participation across different platforms. Participation in public forums was largely occasional, with 34% indicating they sometimes took part, 33% rarely participated, and 24% never engaged, while only 9% reported participating often. A similar pattern emerged for community forums, where 37% said they sometimes participated, 26% rarely, 24% never, and 13% often. Online activism showed comparatively higher levels of engagement, with 30% indicating they were sometimes active, 25% often active, 21% rarely involved, and 24% never participating.

How often do you participate in community forums, public participations, online activism?

Frequency	Community Forums	Public Participation	Online Activism
Never	24%	24%	24%
Rarely	26%	33%	21%
Sometimes	37%	34%	30%
Often	13%	9%	25%

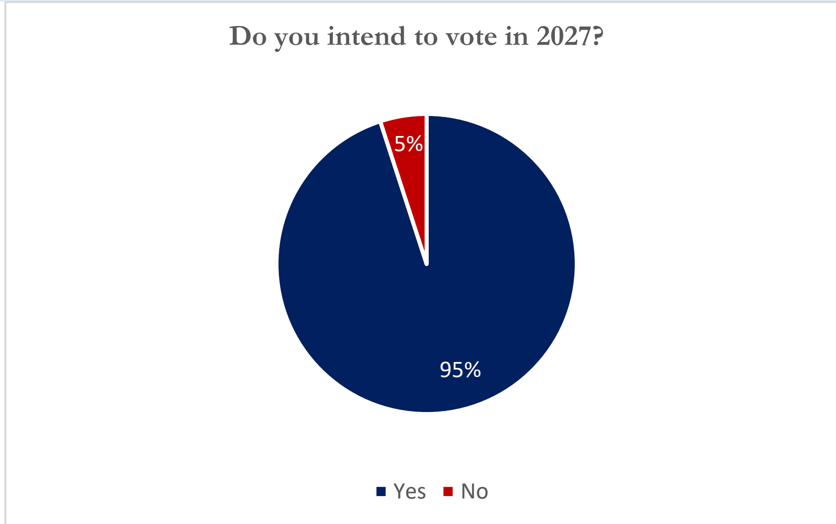
Voice in national discourse



Most respondents felt that their voices are not adequately heard in national decision-making, with 61% indicating that they do not feel represented. In contrast, 21% believed their voices are heard, while 19% reported that this happens only sometimes.

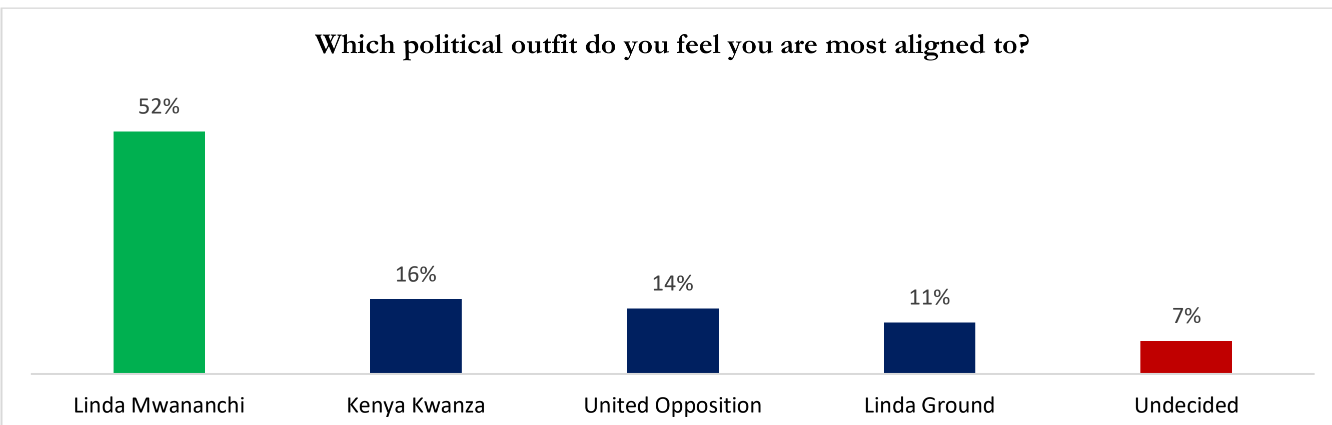
Intention to vote in 2027

An overwhelming majority of respondents (95%) indicated that they intend to vote in the 2027 elections, while only 5% reported that they do not plan to participate.



Political outfit of choice

A majority of respondents (52%) identified most closely with Linda Mwananchi as their preferred political outfit. Kenya Kwanza followed at 16%, while 14% aligned with the United Opposition and 11% with Linda Ground. A further 7% indicated that they were undecided.



Political outfit of choice – regions

A majority of respondents (52%) identified with Linda Mwananchi as the political outfit they felt most aligned to, with particularly strong support recorded in Bungoma (91%) and Uasin Gishu (63%). Kenya Kwanza emerged as the second most preferred outfit nationally at 16%, drawing its strongest support from the North Eastern region (47%). The United Opposition attracted 14% of respondents overall, with relatively higher support in Nairobi (20%) and Central Kenya (17%). Linda Ground accounted for 11% nationally, with its strongest base in Nyanza (34%). Only 7% of respondents indicated that they were undecided. Overall, the findings point to Linda Mwananchi as the leading political outfit among Gen Z respondents, while also revealing distinct regional strongholds for competing formations. Combined, the opposition-leaning outfits would command an estimated 66% of national support if they were to unite.

Gen Z's Political Loyalties are Being Redrawn.

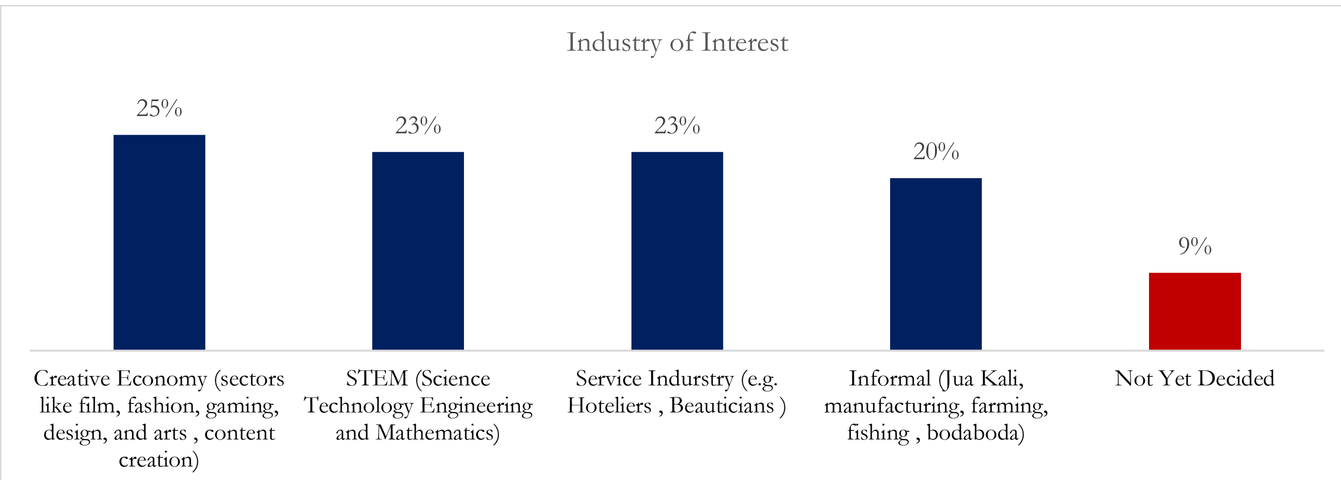
n=2400	REGION								GENDER	
	Nairobi	Central	Eastern	Western	Nyanza	North Eastern	Coastal	Rift Valley	Female	Male
Linda Mwananchi	44%	44%	53%	91%	24%	12%	63%	64%	53%	50%
Linda Ground	9%	9%	8%	0%	34%	4%	11%	15%	11%	11%

United Opposition	20%	17%	20%	1%	11%	34%	7%	5%	14%	14%
Kenya Kwanza	17%	9%	15%	5%	26%	47%	10%	7%	15%	17%
Undecided	10%	20%	4%	3%	5%	2%	8%	8%	8%	7%

Key findings - Socio-economic issues

The Future of Work Is Creative, Digital, and Skills-Driven

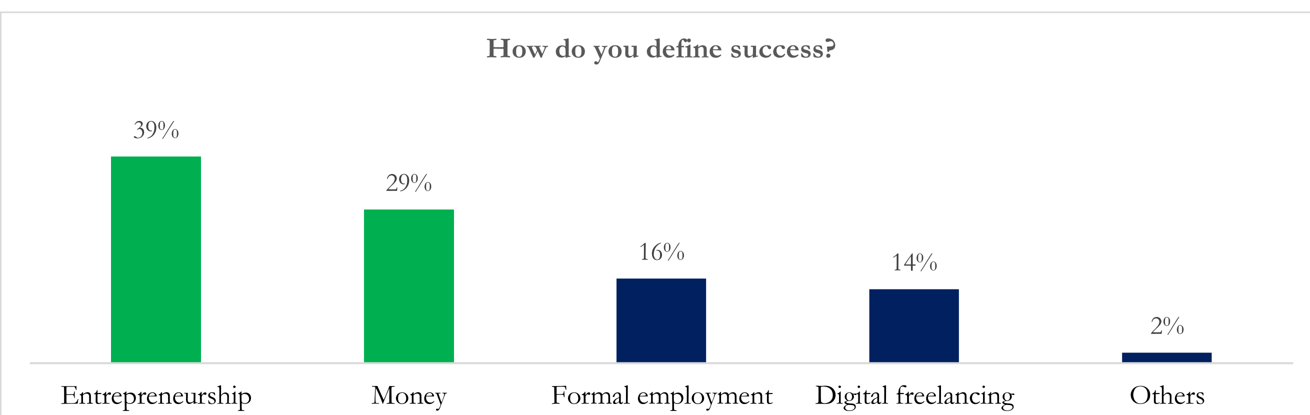
Respondents showed the greatest interest in the creative economy (25%), encompassing areas such as film, fashion, gaming, design, and content creation. Interest in STEM-related careers and the service industry was equally strong, with each attracting 23% of respondents. Meanwhile, 20% expressed a preference for informal sectors, including manufacturing, farming, fishing, and transport. Only 9% indicated that they had not yet decided on their preferred industry.



Definition of success

Gen Z's are chasing freedom, not just employment.

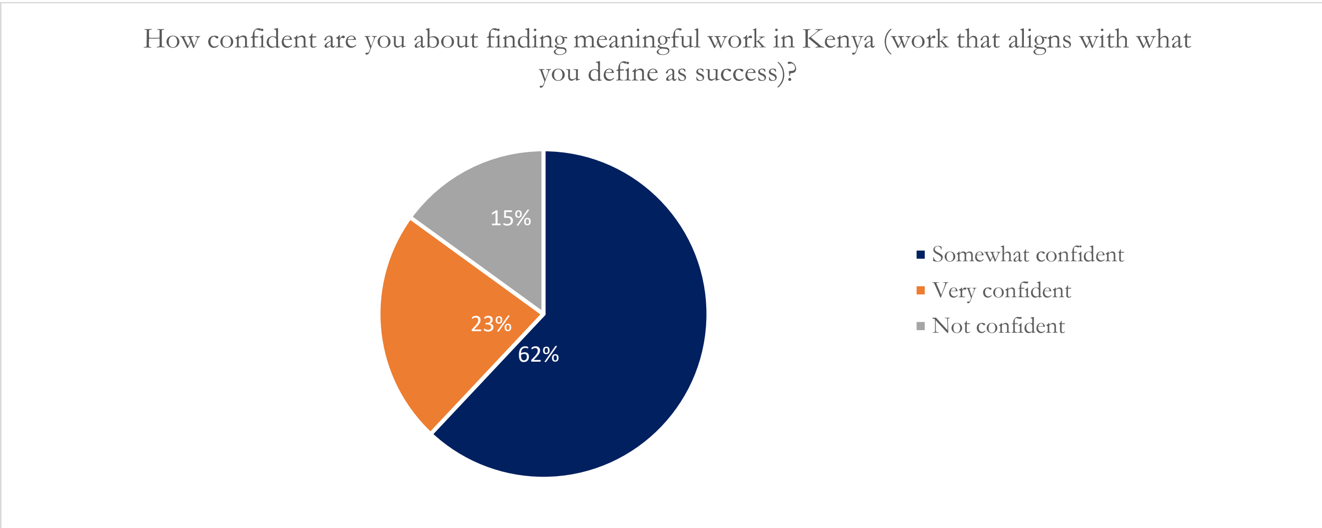
Asked how they define success, most respondents pointed to entrepreneurship (39%), followed by money (29%). Formal employment was chosen by 16%, while 14% associated success with digital freelancing. Only 2% selected other definitions.



Confidence in finding meaningful work

Confidence in finding meaningful work in Kenya was generally positive, with most respondents (62%) reporting that they were somewhat confident about securing work that aligns with their personal sense of success. Nearly a quarter

(23%) expressed strong optimism, indicating they were very confident, while 15% reported low confidence in their ability to find such opportunities.



Barriers to employment

Lack of employment opportunities and corruption emerged as the two most commonly cited obstacles to securing jobs, each mentioned by 34% of respondents. Smaller proportions pointed to low pay (12%), nepotism (10%), and a mismatch between skills and labour market demands (9%) as key barriers to employment.