

Africa

# talent trends.

2026



## About ACCA.

We are ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants), the only truly global professional accountancy body.

Since we were founded in 1904, we've been breaking down barriers to the accountancy profession. Today we proudly support a diverse community of over **257,900** members and **530,100** future members in **180** countries.

We're redefining accountancy. Our cutting-edge qualifications, continuous learning and insights are respected and valued by employers in every sector. They equip individuals with the business and finance expertise and ethical judgement to lead and drive sustainable value in organisations and economies worldwide.

Guided by our purpose and values, we're leading the accountancy profession for a changed world. Partnering with policymakers, standard setters, the donor community, educators and other accountancy bodies, we're strengthening and building a profession that focuses on people, planet and prosperity to create value for all.

Find out more at [accaglobal.com](https://accaglobal.com)

## Africa talent trends 2026.

**ACCA's *Global talent trends 2026* report remains the world's largest annual survey of careers, jobs and working life in finance and accounting.**

The latest edition highlights the key issues facing finance professionals this year – drawing on valuable data, insights, and perspectives from over **11,000** respondents across **175** countries on the evolving world of work.

With approximately **15% of participants based in Africa** – respondents from the region provided important insights on workplace culture and policies, AI adoption and related concerns, the rising cost of living and wage expectations, as well as environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations in the workplace.

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# Foreword.

**Our annual *Africa talent trends* report provides insights and analysis on evolving talent patterns across the region – set against the backdrop of a rapidly changing world of work and the forces driving this transformation.**

This report draws on findings from our [Global talent trends 2026](#) survey of over **11,000** accountants and finance professionals, approximately 15% of whom are based in Africa. It offers forward-looking insights into key talent risks and opportunities for employers, regulators, academics, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

The survey highlights the growing adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) within the profession and the continuously rising entrepreneurial ambition across Africa, reflecting a shift from traditional financial reporting to business leadership. It also underscores a strong desire for job security and a clear expectation that employers demonstrate meaningful social impact – pointing to a profession committed to contributing positively to society.

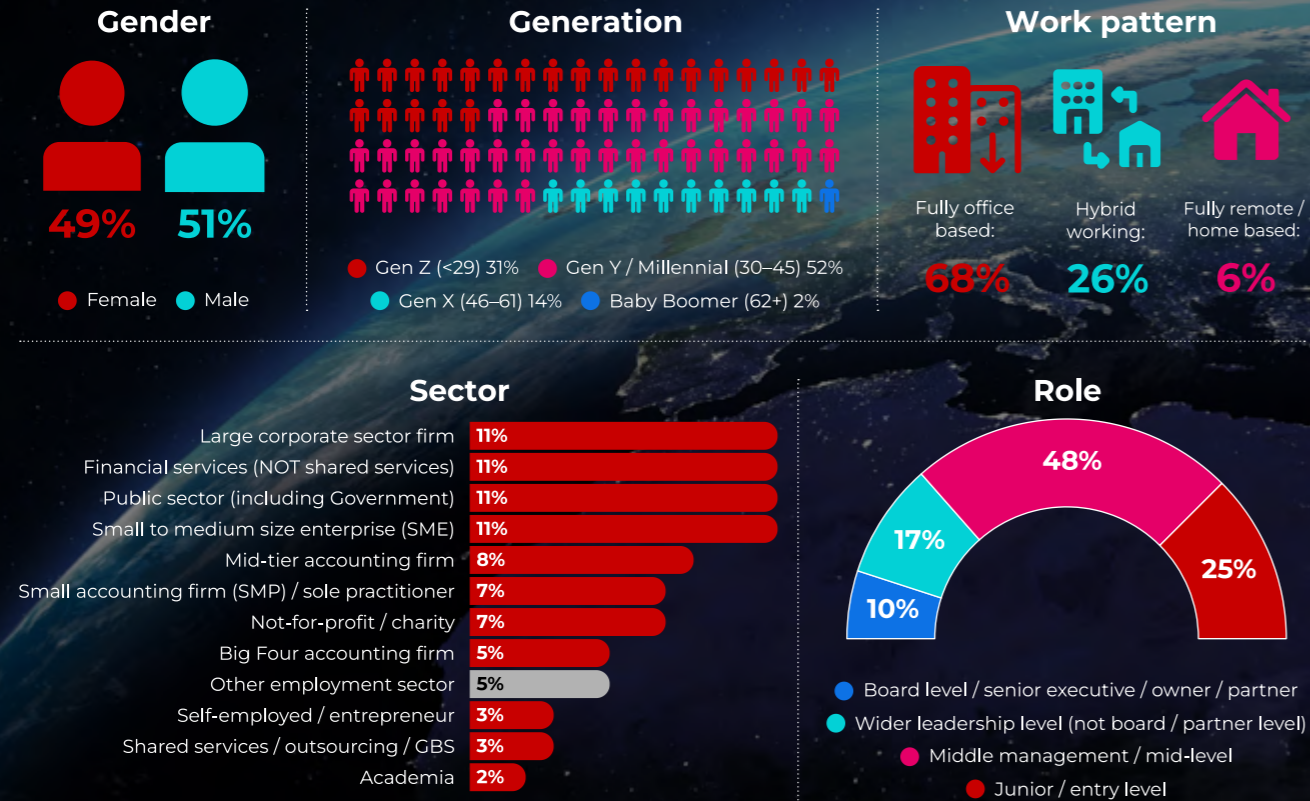
We are pleased to share our report and hope its findings will provide valuable guidance to all stakeholders, and inspire meaningful dialogue and action going forward.



**Jamil Ampomah**  
ACCA Director for Africa

# Demographics.

A total of 1,635 accountancy and finance professionals from across Africa participated in our annual *Global talent trends 2026* survey – comprised of up of 31% ACCA members, 66% ACCA students/ future members, and 3% other finance professionals.



# Methodology.

From our regional survey, 79% of respondents work across 11 sectors – providing insights on workplace policies, AI adoption and hiring practices, rising cost of living, employment security, social impact of jobs, and opportunities in the accounting profession.

In addition to the quantitative data, an African roundtable comprising of finance and accountancy professionals, talent experts, and employers across sectors was able to elicit qualitative responses.

Country-specific analyses were conducted in locations with at least 80 respondents, including Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. These findings – together with relevant literature from ACCA and other sources – informed the country-specific analysis in our report.

SECTOR (for those indicating full time employment)	Big Four accounting firm	Mid-tier accounting firm	SMP	Public sector	Financial services	Not-for-profit	Large corporate sector firm	Shared services	SME	Academia	Self-employed / entrepreneur	NET: Accounting firms	NET: Large corporates / fin. services	NET: Employed
	<b>TOTAL</b>	5%	8%	7%	11%	11%	7%	11%	3%	11%	2%	3%	22%	22%
<b>Generation classification</b>	Gen Z (<29)	49%	52%	24%	8%	19%	9%	17%	35%	28%	34%	28%		
	Gen Y (30–45)	47%	41%	46%	64%	65%	66%	68%	54%	58%	31%	49%		
	Gen X (46–61)	1%	8%	16%	25%	15%	24%	14%	11%	12%	24%	19%		
	Baby Boomer (62+)	1%		14%	3%	1%	1%	1%		1%	10%	5%		
<b>Current working pattern</b>	Fully office based	49%	73%	47%	91%	70%	66%	79%	44%	74%	59%	23%		
	Fully remote / home based	5%	1%	14%		2%	8%	4%	11%	4%	10%	37%		
	Hybrid working	46%	27%	38%	9%	29%	27%	17%	44%	22%	31%	40%		
<b>Gender</b>	Female	47%	58%	65%	54%	54%	48%	62%	44%	49%	55%	49%		
	Male	52%	41%	34%	45%	45%	51%	38%	54%	51%	45%	51%		



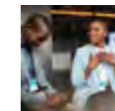
# 8 key findings for Africa.



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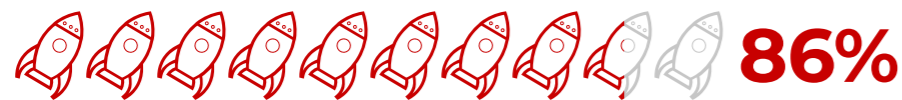
8. Social impact: A new frontier in the race for finance talent? →

## 1. Entrepreneurial ambitions burn brightest in Africa.

Africa continues to record the highest entrepreneurial ambition globally – for the second consecutive year.

Aspirations to become an entrepreneur have risen to **86%** – at least **80%** across all generations (except Baby Boomers) have plans to run their own business. Yet only **3%** are currently taking the entrepreneurial pathway. This trend is influenced by cultural norms that support entrepreneurship and macroeconomic conditions. Entrepreneurial employees often bring creativity, innovation, problem-solving abilities, and strong communication skills that add significant organisational value.

**86%** of Africa respondents indicated aspirations to run their own business, compared with **54%** globally



‘Organisations can tap into this skill set by fostering an empowering workplace where employees who identify business opportunities feel recognised and valued.’

[Explore in more detail →](#)

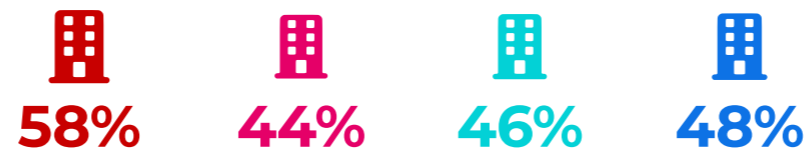
## 2. Gen Z sees value in office presence for career progression.

Employees show a strong preference for hybrid work, while many employers continue to favour mandated office attendance.

There’s a sustained employee expectation for physical presence with **74%** expecting a minimum number of in-office days. Consequently, **68%** of employees remain fully office based – while almost half (**49%**) believe office presence positively influences future career prospects. This is pronounced among younger generations – with **58%** of Gen Z agreeing.

**58%** of Gen Z believe being in the office improves career progression, compared with **49%** of all Africa respondents

● Gen Z (<29) ● Gen Y (30–45) ● Gen X (46–61) ● Baby Boomer (62+)



‘Ultimately, organisations should adopt workforce models aligned to strategy, operations and talent priorities – balancing collaboration, performance and flexibility for optimal outcomes.’

[Explore in more detail →](#)

## 3. A clear opportunity to strengthen intergenerational collaboration.

Changing workplace demographics are driving shifts – and sometimes tensions – in working styles.

In Africa, **41%** experience challenges in cross-generational collaboration – primarily due to differing approaches to work-life balance and misalignment of work values and expectations. In terms of diversity priorities, socio-economic mobility (**16%**) and valuing older employees (**15%**) – amid concerns about ageism – are most frequently cited.

**41%** of Africa respondents across all age groups experience organisational challenges in enabling effective collaboration



‘Organisations therefore have a responsibility to create inclusive environments that provide equitable access to opportunities for growth and advancement – regardless of age or socio-economic background.’

[Explore in more detail →](#)

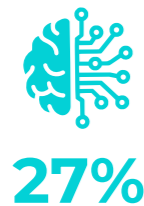
## 4. AI adoption and confidence grow amid upskilling concerns.

AI's growing impact on finance and accounting reflects its expanding adoption – particularly among senior executives.

With AI adoption increasing – **50%** are concerned about the growing impact on their roles (**41%** in 2025). Confidence in individual ability to acquire new skills remains strong at **87%**, but there are concerns about organisational support. Although **54%** report limited AI upskilling opportunities, access is improving – with **33%** now reporting opportunities for upskilling (up from **27%** last year).

**33%** of Africa respondents report their employer is now providing AI upskilling opportunities, up from **27%** in 2025

● 2025  
● 2026



**‘When addressing AI concerns, organisations should be mindful of ethical considerations, comply with regulatory rules, and create constant training opportunities.’**

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## 5. AI hiring practices in finance are sparking concerns.

AI is increasingly used in recruitment – helping to manage application volumes and support, but not to replace human judgment.

However, confidence in AI's fairness and objectivity remain limited – with **41%** confident while **48%** express concerns. This concern is reflected across virtually all seniority roles – with **51%** of board members/senior executives unconvinced that AI-driven recruitment promotes fairness and objectivity.

**48%** of Africa respondents have concerns about the use of AI algorithms in hiring processes



**‘In response, recruiters are placing greater emphasis on assessing communication abilities, interpersonal skills, and direct engagement to determine overall fit.’**

[Explore in more detail →](#)

## 6. Wage increase remains priority as cost of living rises.

Inflation remains employees' top concern – with Africa respondents reporting the lowest pay satisfaction globally.

Only **22%** are satisfied with their pay, while **71%** report dissatisfaction. Despite this, just **59%** plan to request a pay rise from their employers (**62%** globally), even as **79%** intend to leave their current roles within two years. Across Africa, the majority of respondents (**54%**) expect a salary increase of more than 10%.

**71%** of Africa respondents indicate dissatisfaction with their salaries, yet only **59%** intend to ask their employers for a pay rise



**‘Employers should align retention strategies with market realities, benchmarking compensation and leveraging non-financial benefits to effectively motivate and retain talent.’**

[Explore in more detail →](#)

## 7. Preference for stable roles – complemented by freelance opportunities.

While some professionals are open to freelance work – most prefer it alongside a stable income.

Job security remains a key concern – with **32%** (the largest globally) feeling insecure in their current roles. The top three factors contributing to this sense of job insecurity are:

- limited or unclear career progression opportunities (**29%**)
- fear of layoffs and job cuts in the organisation (**13%**)
- unclear direction from leaders on organisation plans (**12%**).

**32%** of Africa respondents report feeling insecure in their current roles



While **8%** are open to freelance work, the majority (**62%**) prefer it alongside stable income. Although macroeconomic factors influence job insecurity:

**‘Employers should strategically communicate career progression opportunities and the organisation’s plans.’**

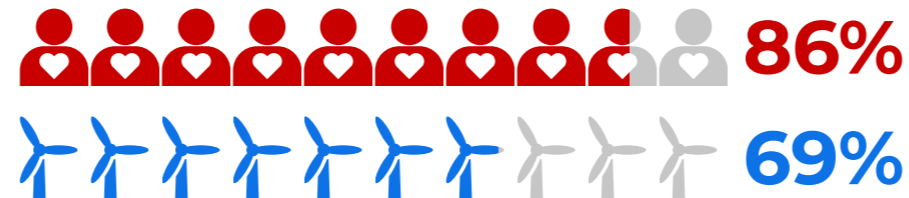
[Explore in more detail →](#)

## 8. Social impact: A new frontier in the race for finance talent?

Professionals increasingly value an employer’s social and environmental impact, and their own role in contributing to it.

In Africa, **86%** factor an employer’s social impact credentials when deciding whether to apply for a job – with Gen Z most influenced by ESG-related factors (**90%**). However, challenges remain regarding employee trust in organisational commitments – with **44%** believing their organisation’s ESG actions are not genuine, while a further **26%** are uncertain.

**86%** of Africa respondents factor an employer’s social impact credentials when deciding to apply for a job, and **69%** say environmental issues would be a key factor



**‘For organisations progressing on their sustainability journey, this highlights the need for greater transparency, credibility, and employee engagement.’**

[Explore in more detail →](#)





# 1. Entrepreneurial ambitions burn brightest in Africa.

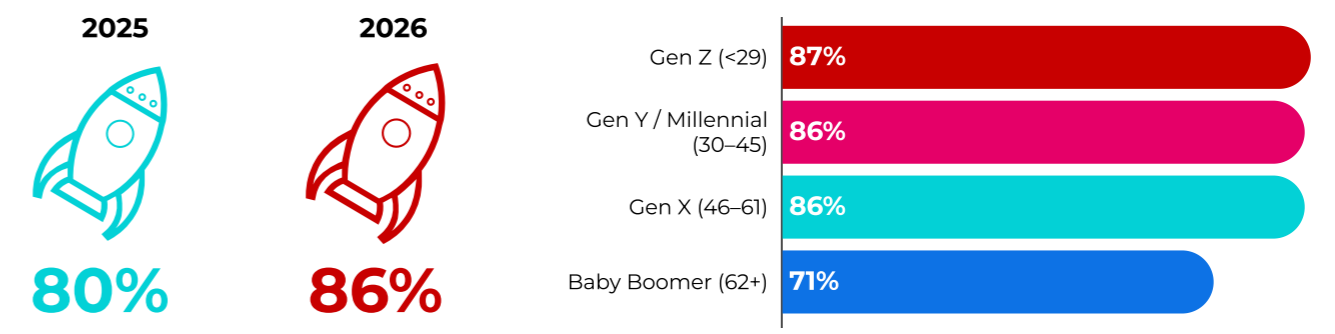
For the second consecutive year, Africa records the highest level of entrepreneurial ambition compared with other regions, globally.

Africa respondents' entrepreneurial aspirations increased from **80%** in the previous year to **86%** in 2026 – indicating that this momentum is unlikely to slow in the short-term.

At least **80%** across all generations (except Baby Boomers) have plans to pursue entrepreneurship. However, only **3%** are currently self-employed or running a business, highlighting a significant gap between ambition and reality.

From an African perspective, entrepreneurship is deeply rooted in cultural norms that support entrepreneurship. As a result, even individuals in formal employment often seek additional income streams – a tendency further reinforced by prevailing macroeconomic conditions across the continent.

## Entrepreneurial ambitions continue to rise in Africa overall, and by generation



Roundtable participants were not surprised by this strong entrepreneurial drive – with one noting that employers (particularly in less structured environments such as SMPs and SMEs) often value employees with an entrepreneurial mindset. Beyond technical competence, these individuals contribute strong problem-solving and innovative capabilities – fostering an empowering workplace where employees who identify business opportunities feel recognised and valued.

Conversely, some employers in highly structured, high-performance organisations may be less receptive to entrepreneurial mindsets, particularly among junior-level staff.

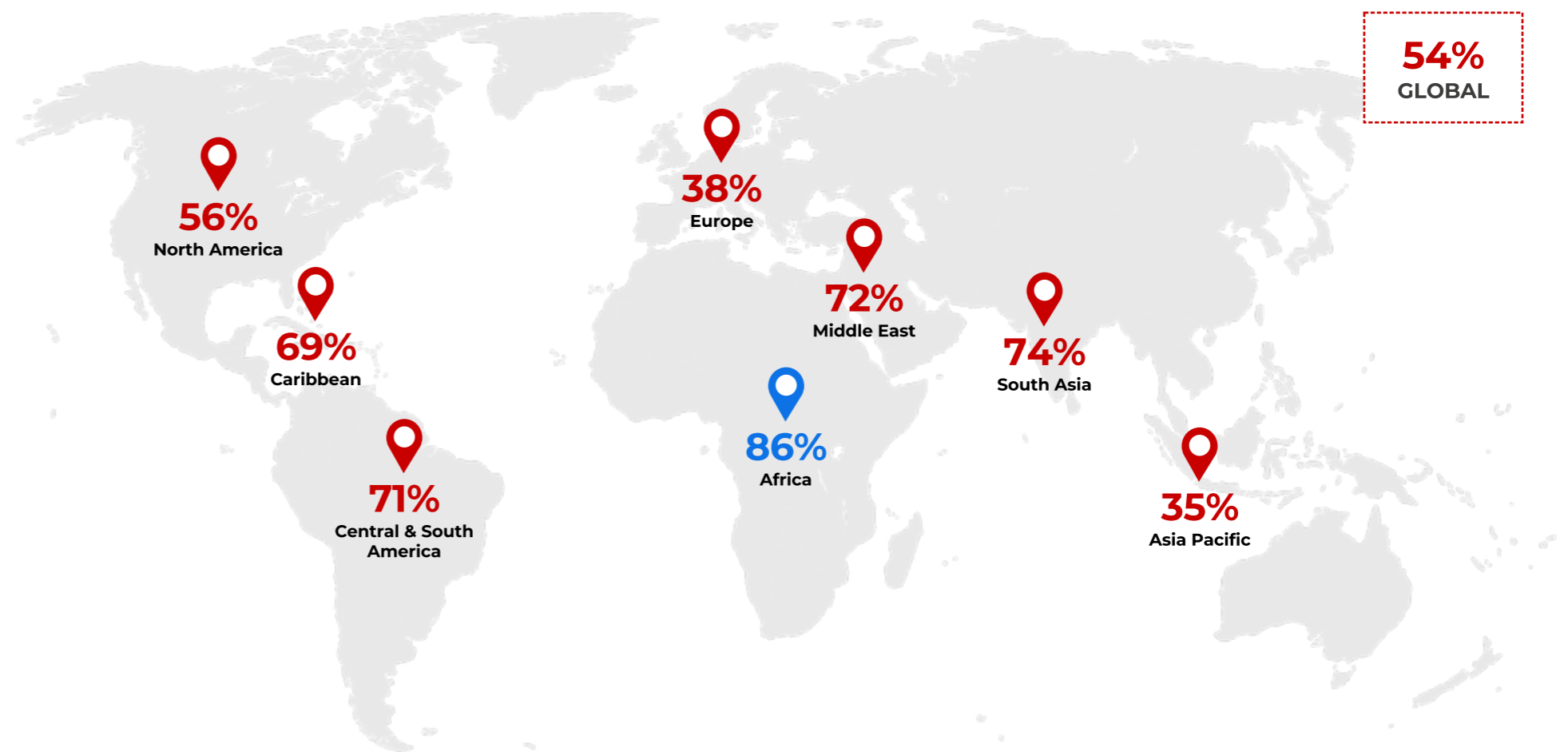
Entrepreneurs are commonly associated with creativity, innovation, problem-solving ability, and strong communication skills, all of which can add significant value to organisations.

Intending entrepreneurs would need all the support they can get.

**‘Further effort is required to ensure that accountants with entrepreneurial aspirations receive appropriate support from government, policy makers and all relevant stakeholders. Access to relevant skills, capital, and enabling infrastructure will be critical as it is these forms of support that can transform ideas into viable businesses.’**

Lee-Anne Macpherson, Senior lecturer and Acting Head of Department, Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

## Entrepreneurial ambitions – by region



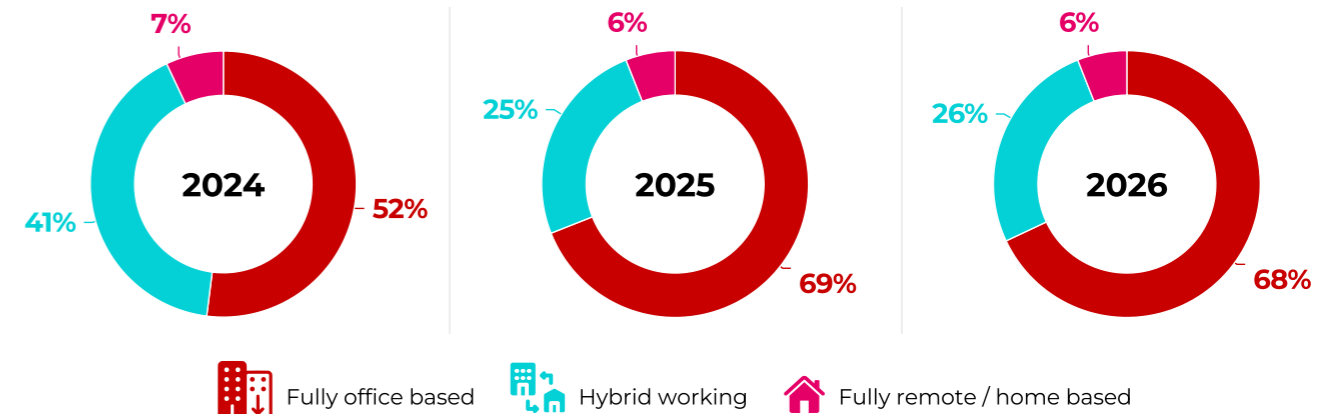


## 2. Gen Z sees value in office presence for career progression.

**Our three-year survey trend indicates a sustained employer preference for physical office presence, which is contrary to the employees' overwhelming preference for hybrid working globally and in Africa.**

Approximately **68%** of respondents in Africa remain fully office-based in 2026, which is consistent with earlier findings. In addition, there is an employee expectation for physical presence with **74%** expecting a minimum number of in-office days. This appears to support the employer's view that physical presence delivers meaningful collaboration benefits.

### Current work patterns over 3 years



However, there are varying perceptions on the benefit of physical presence for career progression – with almost half of Africa respondents (**49%**, the second lowest globally), believing that increased office presence positively influences future promotion prospects.

This sentiment is particularly pronounced among younger professionals – with **58%** of Gen Z respondents reporting that physical presence positively impacts career advancement. Given that many Gen Z employees occupy junior roles, this suggests a generational divide in perceptions regarding the value of in-person work. Also, by seniority, mid-level managers are the least likely to perceive value in physical office presence.

Insights from our roundtable discussions further contextualise these findings. Employers emphasised the importance of physical presence in fostering team cohesion, capability development, and organisational culture.

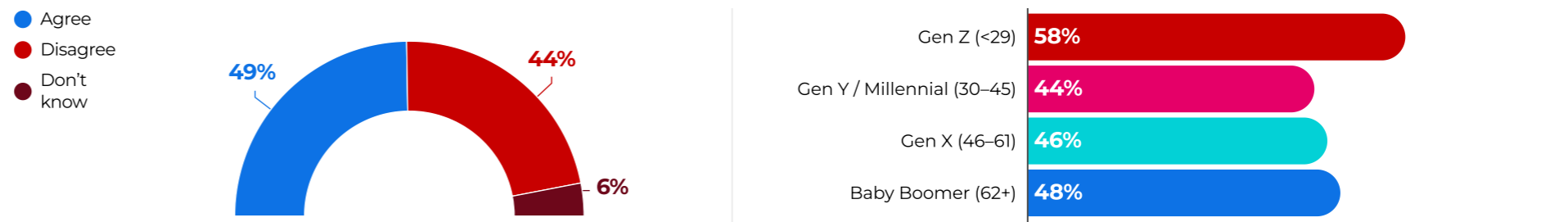
**‘Trainees, as junior employees, are required to be in the office daily, where a dedicated team provides in-person training, supervision and support. It is important to communicate this clearly and align expectations from the outset. At more senior levels, employees have greater flexibility in their working arrangements, as they require less direct supervision.’**

Mark Willimott, Managing Director, BDO Wave, South Africa

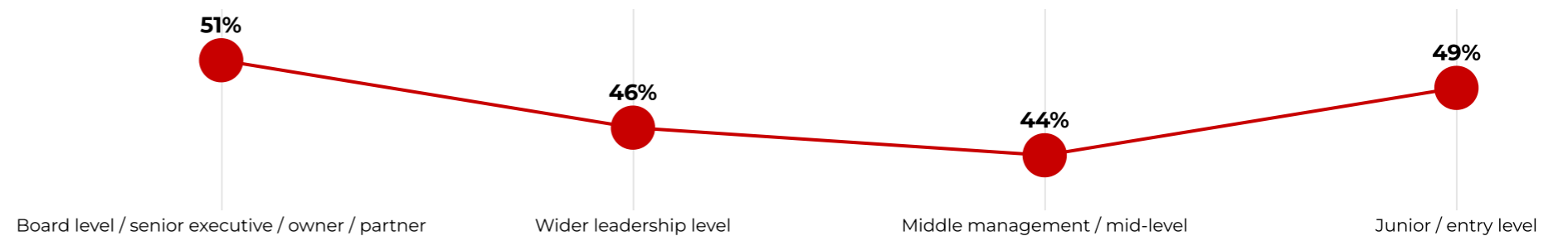
Most respondents agree organisations should require employees to spend a set number of days in the office per week



There are varying perceptions on the benefit of physical presence for career progression, with Gen Z respondents most likely to believe office presence has a positive impact on future career opportunities



A greater office presence has a positive impact on future career promotion opportunities – by level



During our roundtable, physical presence was also perceived by employers to improve productivity, reduce multitasking, and have fewer distractions. Another participant highlighted that while physical presence is important, it should be complemented by clearly defined performance metrics and a strong focus on measurable outputs.

Commute time was identified as a key factor driving demand for hybrid work models – with concerns that organisations lacking flexibility may struggle to attract and retain top talent.

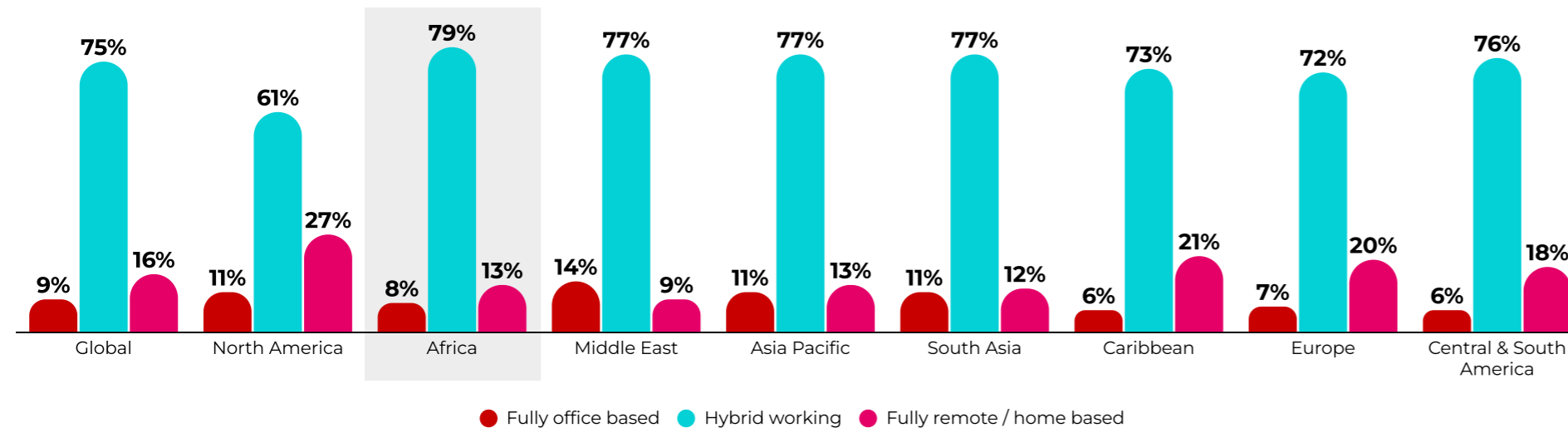
**‘Ultimately, organisations should adopt a workforce model aligned to their strategic objectives, operational needs, and talent priorities, which balances collaboration, performance, and flexibility to achieve optimal outcomes.’**

## ADVICE FOR EMPLOYERS

### How employers can manage employee expectations on hybrid working:

- **Communicate clearly:** Company policies on work style should be clear and properly communicated to all employees.
- **Be adaptable:** Be willing to change depending on the circumstances. A roundtable participant stated that the company allows for hybrid working during off-peak season and full office presence during peak season.
- **Be empathetic:** Employers should be open to individual circumstances, which may allow for flexible work in certain situations – such as health concerns, family issues, emergencies etc.

### Preferred working pattern – by region





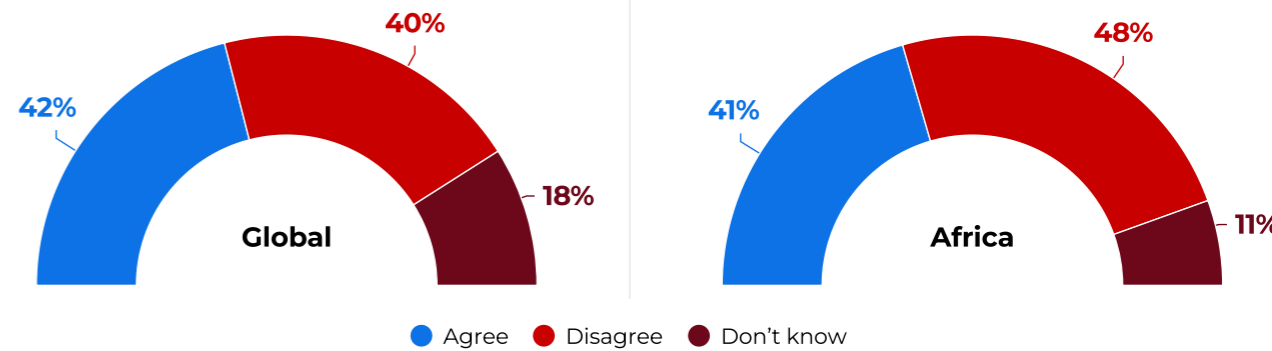
### 3. A clear opportunity to strengthen intergenerational collaboration.

Changing workplace demographics are contributing to the shifts and, at times, tensions in working styles – with **41% of Africa respondents experiencing organisational challenges in enabling effective collaboration.**

At least one-third of respondents (**41%**) across all age groups indicate difficulties in building collaboration across generations. Organisations that proactively implement strategies to foster cross-generational alignment are therefore likely to enhance overall productivity.

Roundtable discussions highlighted the importance of understanding generational dynamics. One participant noted that unconscious bias can arise from perceived generational boundaries. To foster effective collaboration – organisations must understand what motivates each cohort.

**My organisation experiences challenges in supporting effective collaboration across different generations**



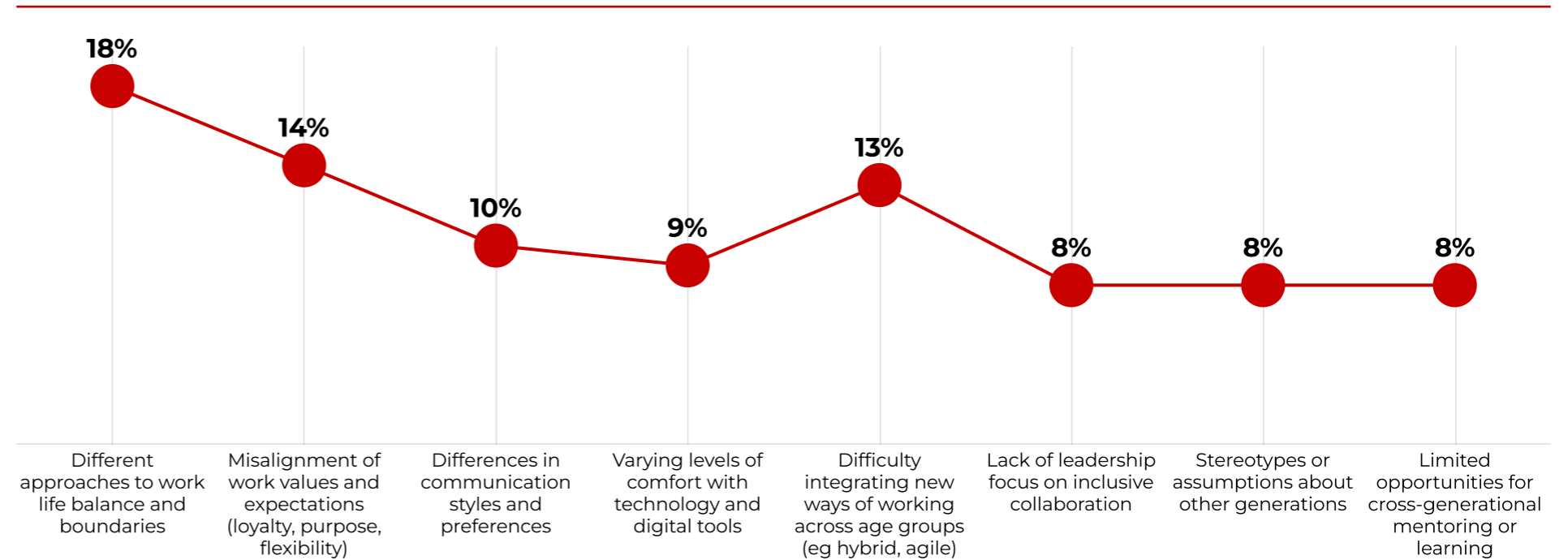
The top three biggest challenges to effective collaboration are:

- different approaches to work-life balance and boundaries (18%)
- misalignment of work values and expectations – eg flexibility, purpose, loyalty (14%)
- difficulty in integrating new ways of working across the various age groups (13%).

**‘Gen Z professionals, while more inclined toward mobility and gig-based opportunities, bring strong digital fluency and adaptability to new technologies. Millennials often serve as a bridge between Gen Z and Gen X, demonstrating high levels of adaptability. Meanwhile, Gen X employees contribute a strong work ethic and a consistent focus on productivity, both of which are critical to sustained organisational performance.’**

Christine Wamukoya, Regional Manager, People and Talent Development, PKF Eastern Africa

### What do you see as the biggest challenges of enabling effective collaboration across the generations?

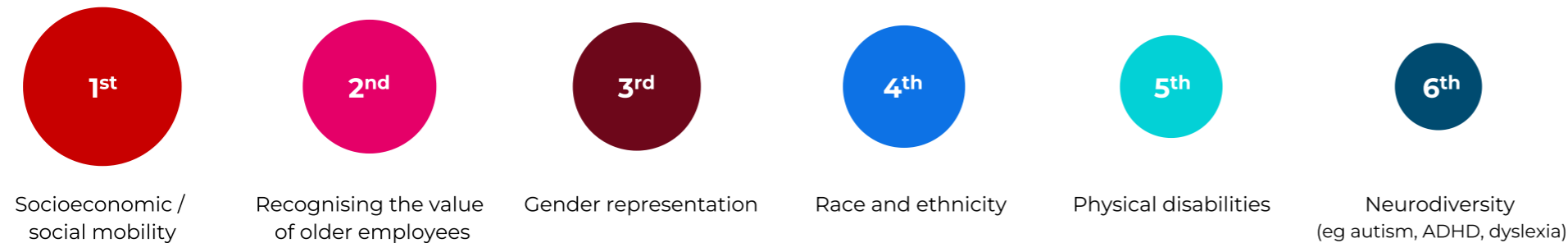


Socioeconomic mobility continues to be the top aspect of diversity requiring organisational focus, and a major area of concern for respondents in Africa (**16%**). This is closely followed by the need to recognise and leverage the value of older employees amid concerns about ageism – as there’s a link between employer recognition, collaboration and overall productivity.

While Africa’s youthful population is highly motivated to advance economically – there is also recognition of the experience and institutional knowledge held by older professionals.

**‘Organisations therefore have a responsibility to create inclusive environments that provide equitable access to opportunities for growth and advancement – regardless of age or socio-economic background.’**

If you had to choose one marker of diversity where you think greater progress needs to be made, which would it be?



## ADVICE FOR EMPLOYERS

### Strategies for boosting intergenerational collaboration:

- **Structured understanding of generational differences:** Employers should establish a deliberate approach to understanding what motivates each generation and implement systems that promote collaboration while reducing unconscious bias. As one roundtable participant noted: *‘recognising generational strengths requires targeted leadership training.’*
- **Have clear policies encouraging collaboration:** Providing clear guidance in policy documents on work expectations – which integrates new ways of working – would enhance collaboration.
- **Workplace practices should aim to be inclusive:** Develop initiatives that implement policies fostering genuine collaboration rather than symbolic actions. Inclusive teams are more likely to sustain long-term collaboration.
- **Frequent communication:** Establish frequent two-way communication channels to share updates and gather feedback on what’s working, what needs improvement, and what should stop. Organisations that actively seek feedback tend to have more loyal employees.

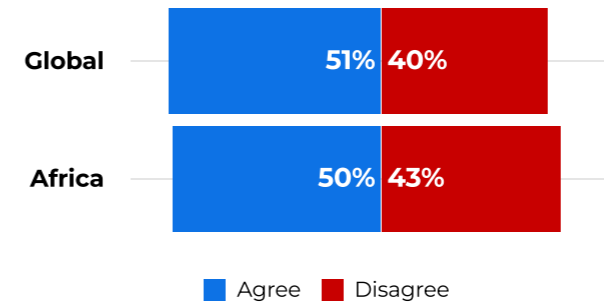


## 4. AI adoption and confidence grow amid upskilling concerns.

Consistent with global trends, half of African respondents (50%) express concern about the growing impact of AI on their roles – an increase of 9% from 2025.

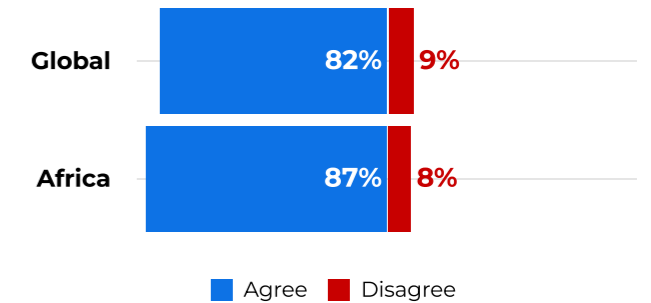
This reflects the expanding adoption of AI in finance and accountancy. Confidence in the ability to acquire new skills remains strong at 87%, and 50% of respondents report they are already using AI tools.

I have concerns about the impact of AI on my role



'Don't knows' remain the balancing figure for each response.

I feel confident in my ability to learn AI-related skills



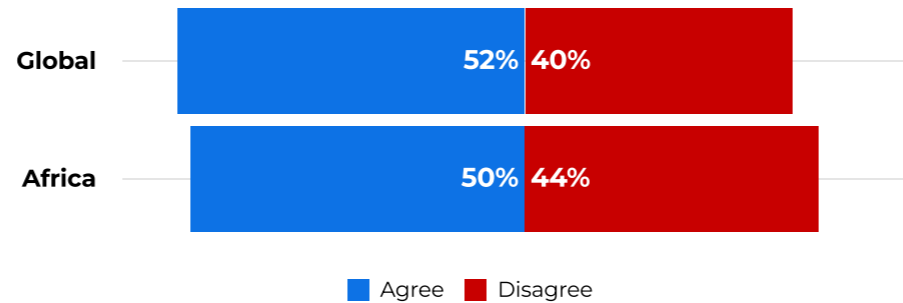
'Don't knows' remain the balancing figure for each response.

In Africa, AI adoption is highest among board members and senior executives – with nearly two-thirds of respondents (62%) indicating they use AI tools, compared with 41% of junior or entry-level employees. However, concerns remain about organisational support – 54% believe their organisations are not providing sufficient opportunities to develop relevant AI capabilities.

The outlook is not entirely negative. There has been a slight improvement from last year – with 33% of respondents (up from 27% previously) now believing that their organisations are providing opportunities to develop AI-related skills.

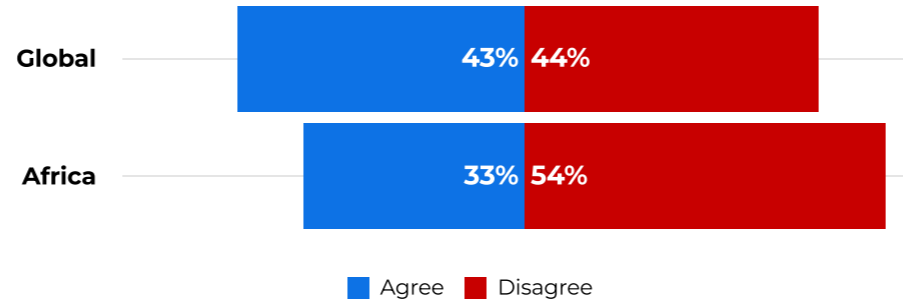
**‘Upskilling should not solely be the employer’s responsibility, and these training opportunities should address both technical skills development and ethical issues.’**

### In my current role, I am regularly using AI technologies



‘Don’t knows’ remain the balancing figure for each response.

### My organisation is currently providing opportunities for me to learn AI-related skills



‘Don’t knows’ remain the balancing figure for each response.

### In my current role, I am regularly using AI technologies – by level



● Board level / senior executive / owner / partner



● Wider leadership level



● Middle management / mid-level



● Junior / entry level

From our survey, we see AI being used predominantly in:

- enhancing data insights / decision making (15%)
- delivering productivity growth (12%)
- driving innovation (12%).

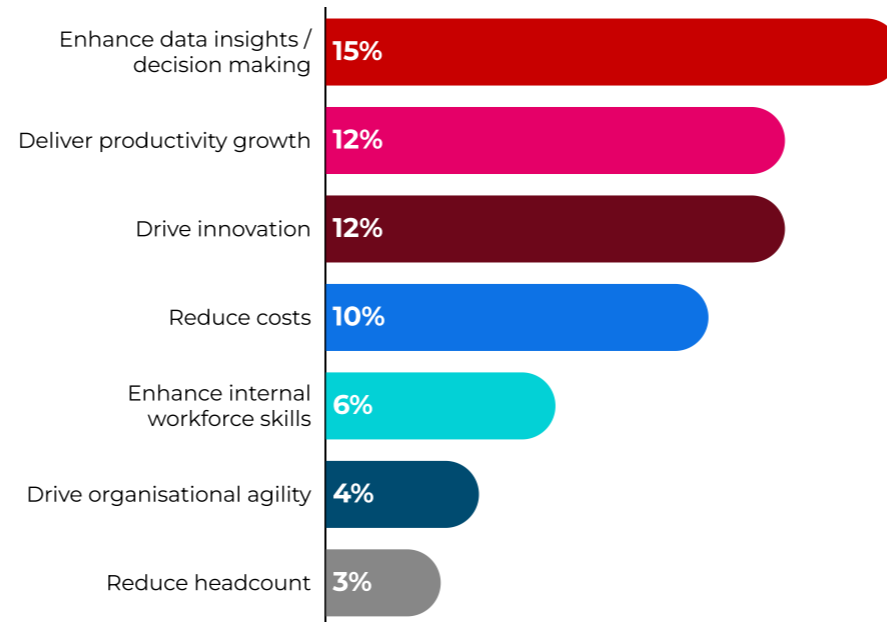
Roundtable participants acknowledged the increasing integration of AI within the profession but noted that broader adoption will depend on the regulation around its use.

Participants generally view AI as an efficiency enabler, particularly in areas such as data analysis and repetitive processes. However, core competencies such as professional judgement and professional scepticism remain inherently human.

**‘The impact of AI on audit functions is likely to be short-term, as high-value tasks still require human judgment and sign-off.’**

Africa roundtable participant

I believe the primary reason why my organisation is currently investing in AI technologies is to...



## ADVICE FOR STAKEHOLDERS

### Addressing AI adoption concerns:

- **Be mindful of ethical considerations:** Employers should be mindful of ethical risks associated with AI – such as privacy and security concerns, inaccuracies, bias, and discrimination etc – and implement measures to mitigate them.
- **Comply with regulatory rules:** As regulators and policymakers develop guidelines for AI, employers and employees must ensure compliance with these requirements.
- **Create constant training opportunities:** Upskilling should not solely be the employer’s responsibility, and these training opportunities should address both technical skills development and ethical issues.
- **Accounting education should be forward-looking:** Accounting education likewise has a critical role to play in establishing a strong foundation for responsible AI use. As noted by one roundtable participant: *‘digital curricula should be student-centric and designed to strengthen critical thinking capabilities’.*

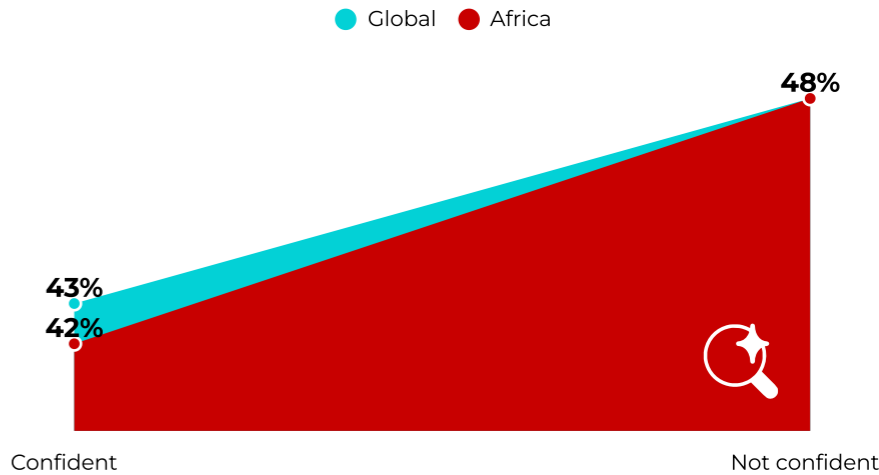


# 5. AI hiring practices are sparking concerns.

The growing use of AI is also evident in talent acquisition – with HR managers and finance leaders increasingly integrating AI into recruitment processes.

However, confidence in its fairness remains limited, both globally and regionally. In Africa, less than half of all respondents (41%) express confidence in AI’s ability to support a fair and unbiased recruitment process, while 48% lack confidence.

How confident are you in the use of AI algorithms to support fair and unbiased recruitment processes?



This concern is not confined to entry-level roles – across virtually all seniority levels, **51%** of board members/senior executives are unconvinced that AI-driven recruitment promotes fairness and objectivity.

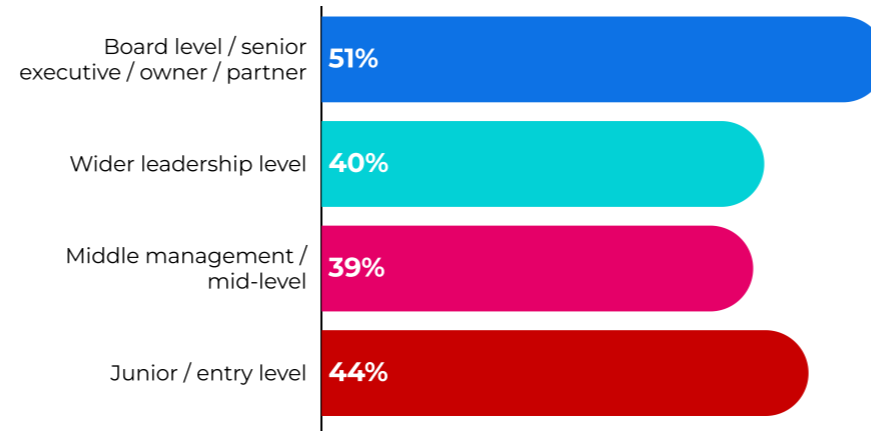
Integrating AI into the recruitment process can help manage the growing volume of applications for vacant roles and streamline traditionally manual hiring procedures. A roundtable participant who supports AI adoption noted that candidates are increasingly using AI tools in preparing job applications – resulting in a significant rise in application volumes.

In this context, AI can serve as an effective first-level screening tool to shortlist candidates who meet a defined criteria. AI must be used to augment human judgment in the recruitment process – not replace it.

Conversely, opposing perspectives from our roundtable on the use of AI in recruitment argue that AI systems may perpetuate bias – as outcomes are influenced by the data on which algorithms are trained. Additionally, the prompts and parameters set by hiring managers may inadvertently reflect human biases.

In response, recruiters are placing greater emphasis on assessing communication abilities, interpersonal skills, and direct engagement to determine overall fit.

### Especially at board level, the majority of respondents are not confident about the use of AI in recruitment



**‘While concerns around bias and fairness persist, AI appears likely to remain a feature of recruitment processes – especially in the initial screening and shortlisting stages.’**



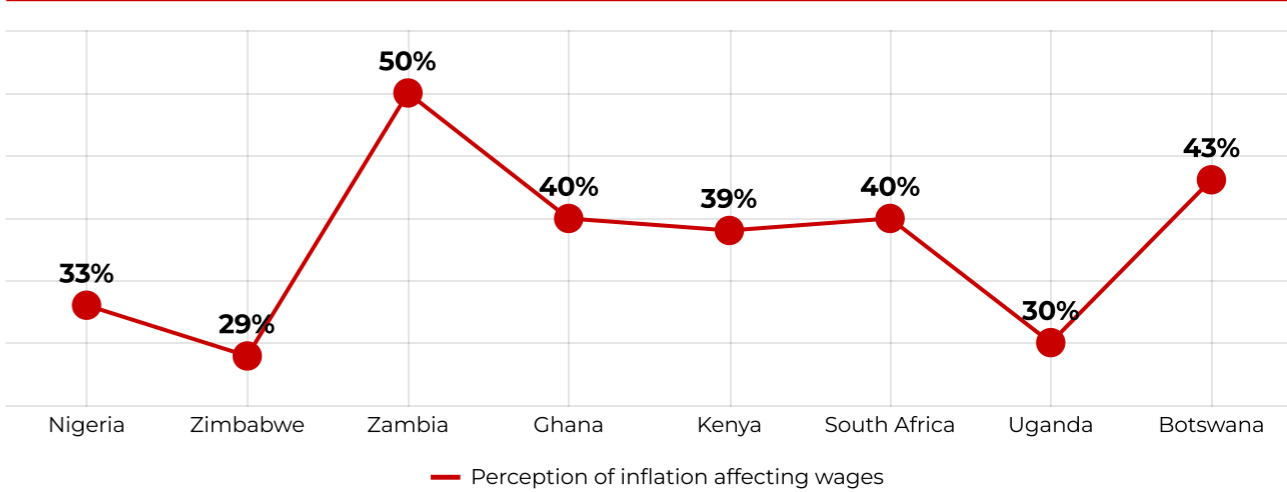


# 6. Wage increase remains priority amid rising cost of living.

**Inflation stays the top concern for employees – consistent with the last three years both globally, and in Africa.**

Notably, Africa has the lowest proportion of employees across all regions who are satisfied with their earnings. Although official inflation rates have declined year-on-year in most countries<sup>1</sup> in the region – employees’ perception of the impact on their wages remains significantly higher than the official figures. This highlights a clear gap between statistical data and lived experience.

Current perception of inflation on wages



<sup>1</sup> [World Economic Outlook \(October 2025\) – Inflation rate, average consumer prices](#) (only Botswana had an increased official inflation compared to 2025 – other countries are, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa & Uganda).

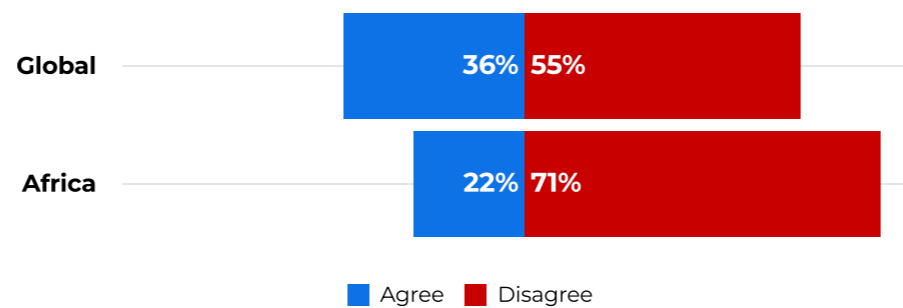
Fewer than a quarter of Africa respondents (**22%**) report being satisfied with their pay (compared to a global average of **36%**), while about **71%** indicate dissatisfaction with their salaries. Across Africa, the majority of respondents (**54%**) expect a salary increase of more than 10%.

However, expectations of higher pay do not necessarily translate into direct requests for salary increases. Only **59%** of Africa respondents say they intend to ask their employers for a pay rise – compared to **62%** globally despite higher overall salary satisfaction.

**‘Employers must be transparent about compensation expectations. Clear communication is essential, outlining the performance standards required for salary progression and the structure of any increases. Compensation frameworks may combine fixed pay with performance-related incentives, with the latter linked to measurable effort and outcomes.’**

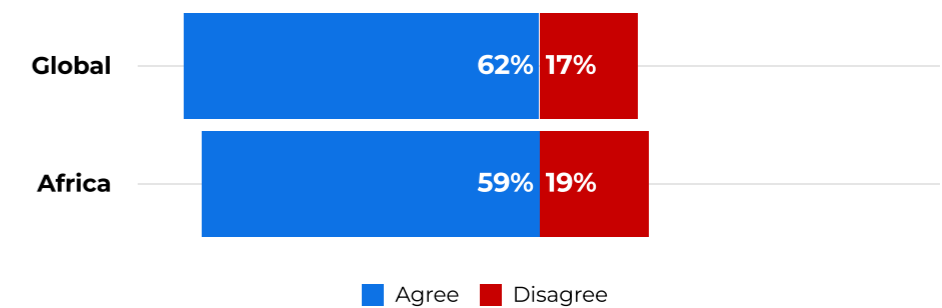
Risper Alaro FCCA, Group Finance Director, Centum Investments Company Plc, Kenya

### I am satisfied with the pay I receive for the role I perform



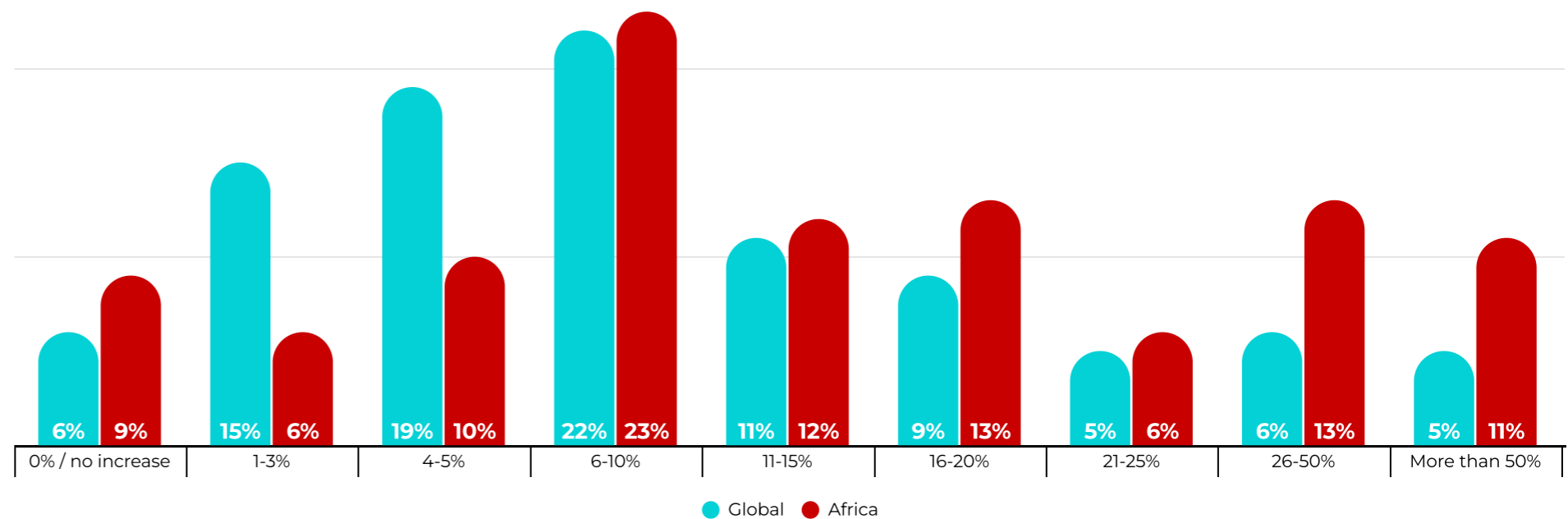
'Don't knows' remain the balancing figure for each response.

### I will ask my employer for a pay rise in the next 12 months



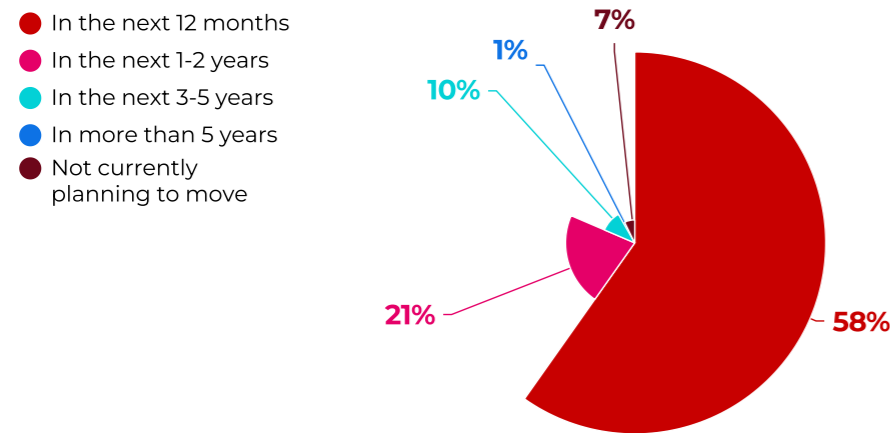
'Don't knows' remain the balancing figure for each response.

### What is the minimum pay rise you would expect next year from your employer?



Instead, similar to last year's findings, **79%** of employee respondents in Africa indicate that they plan to leave their current roles within the next two years. Whether this reluctance to request pay increases is culturally influenced or not – employers should take this into account when developing short- to medium-term talent retention and motivation strategies.

### How soon would you like to move to your next role?



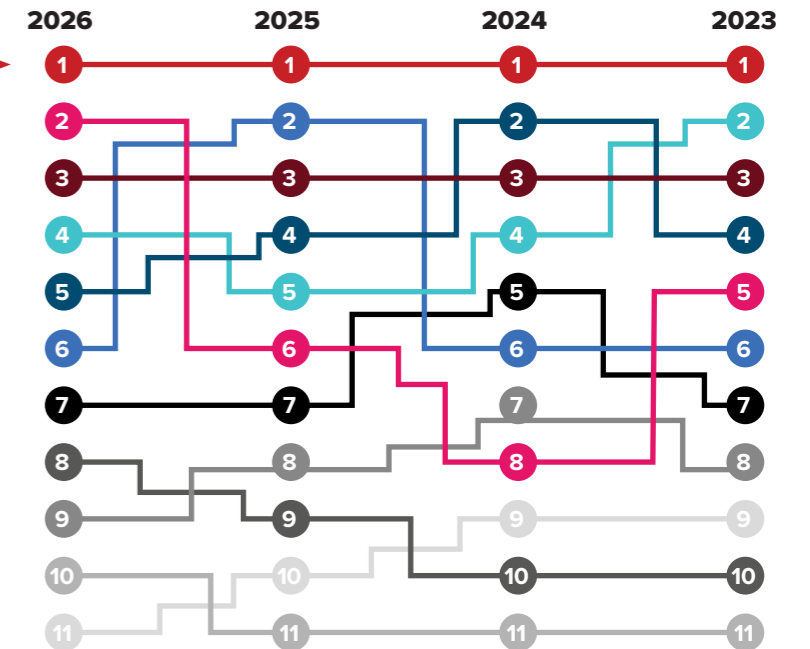
It's also important for employers to benchmark compensation – not only against industry standards but also against prevailing macroeconomic conditions, particularly inflation and cost of living pressures. In addition to financial remuneration, non-financial benefits can play a meaningful role in motivating and retaining talent.

For small and medium-sized practices (SMPs) and SMEs, inflation and rising living costs present additional retention challenges – as employees may seek higher-paying opportunities elsewhere.

### The biggest work-related concerns for the future

- 1 Inflation impacting my real wage / salary
- 2 Jobs being replaced by technology
- 3 A global economic downturn
- 4 Wellbeing / mental health
- 5 Poor career development opportunities
- 6 Not having relevant skills for the future
- 7 Workload / insufficient resources to carry out role
- 8 Poor education systems that don't future vital workplace skills
- 9 Job opportunities moving to other parts of the world
- 10 Increasing retirement age
- 11 Employee equality in the workplace

**4 years in a row** inflation impacting real wages has been the biggest work-related concern



These firms must balance talent management with prudent cash-flow management, which may include offering short-term, project-based contracts where appropriate.

SMPs can also differentiate themselves by providing valuable professional experiences, exposure to diverse industries, and structured growth opportunities. Additionally, employers may consider offering financial literacy support to help employees manage their income effectively and make informed financial decisions.

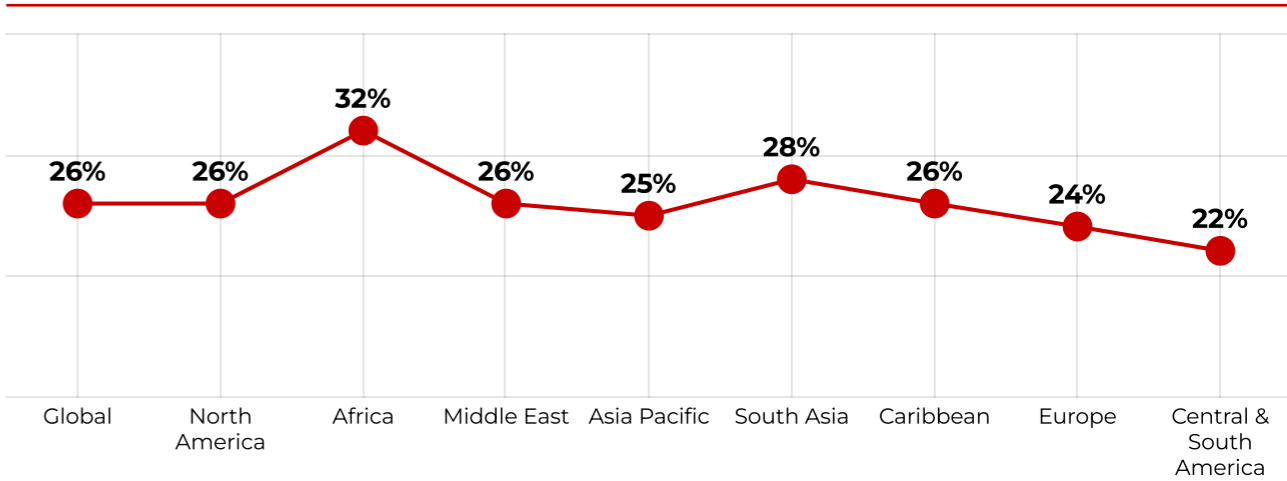


# 7. Preference for stable roles – complemented by freelance opportunities.

**In an increasingly volatile and rapidly evolving global environment, job security remains a significant concern for many professionals.**

Insights from the previous year highlighted a steady rise in ‘side hustles’, driven largely by the expansion of online work and greater internet penetration. These developments have created growing freelance and remote opportunities within the profession – enabling accountants to diversify their income streams.

I do not feel secure in my role

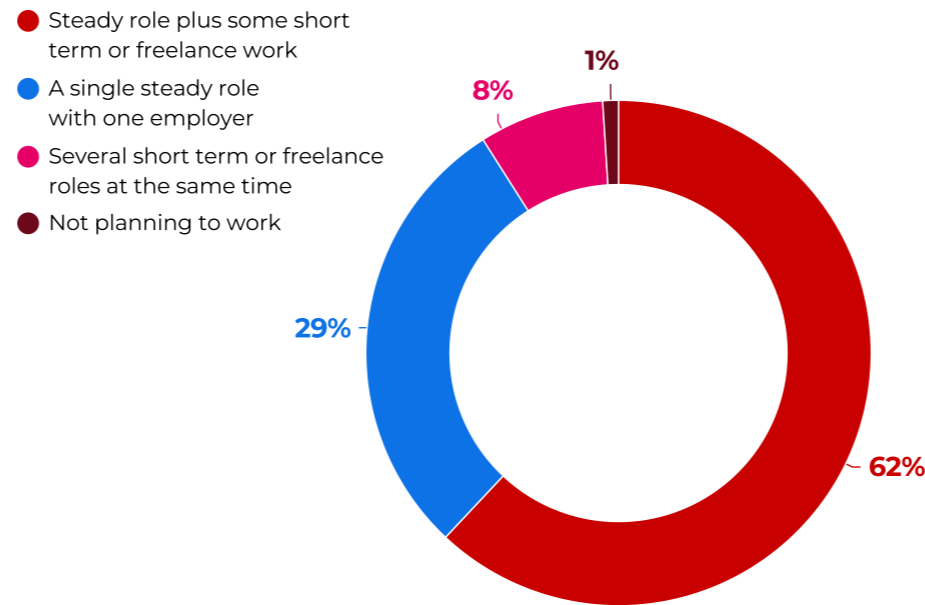


However, findings from this year’s global survey suggest a nuanced shift in preference. While many respondents remain open to freelance work, the majority would prefer to pursue it alongside a stable, primary source of income. Notably, over **60%** of Africa respondents – spread across the various generations – indicated that they would choose to engage in freelance work while holding a steady role.

In contrast, only **8%** of respondents in Africa expressed a preference for relying solely on multiple short-term or gig-based roles. A larger proportion (**29%**) stated a clear preference for stable employment with a single employer. Specific findings from our survey indicate that the top three factors contributing to this sense of job insecurity are:

- limited or unclear career progression opportunities (**29%**)
- fear of layoffs and job cuts in the organisation (**13%**)
- unclear direction from leaders on future organisation plans (**12%**).

### What type of work would you prefer in the future?



These findings suggest that rising living costs and broader economic uncertainty are reinforcing the importance of predictable income and job stability for accountants across the region. This is further compounded by the fact that nearly half of respondents (**48%**) believe it would be difficult to secure another role in the current job market.

Providing further context, a roundtable participant observed that job security is influenced not only by local economic realities but also by global geopolitical developments and sustained macroeconomic pressures.

At the same time, ongoing digital transformation and rapid technological advancement are reshaping career pathways within the profession. While these changes are creating new opportunities – they are also contributing to a sense of vulnerability, particularly among accountants who are not actively upskilling to keep pace with evolving industry demands.

**‘Job security is influenced not only by local economic realities but also by global geopolitical developments and sustained macroeconomic pressures.’**

Africa roundtable participant

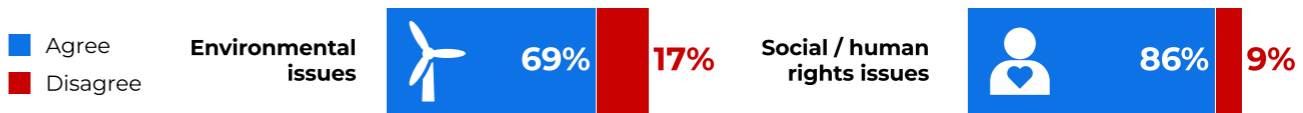


# 8. Social impact: A new frontier in the race for finance talent?

When choosing an employer, professionals increasingly consider an organisation’s social impact and how they can contribute towards it.

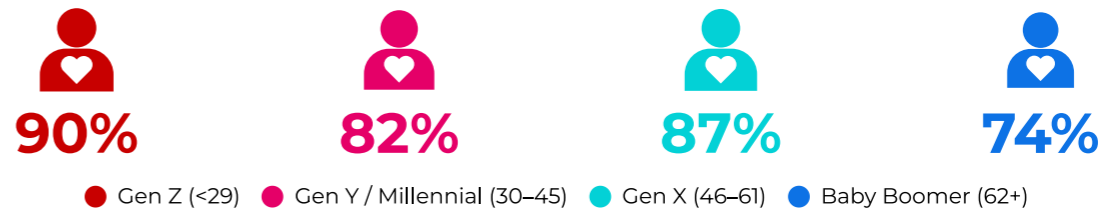
While environmental considerations often receive the most attention, social factors remain the most important for respondents in Africa – with **86%** deciding to work for an employer because of their stance on social/human rights issues, rising to **90%** for Gen Z.

An organisation’s stance on environmental / social and human rights issues would be a key factor in deciding to work there or not



Percentage agreeing or disagreeing that environmental / social impact is key to whether or not they are attracted to work at an organisation. 'Don't knows' remain the balancing figure for each response.

An organisation’s stance on social and human rights issues would be a key factor in deciding to work there or not – by generation



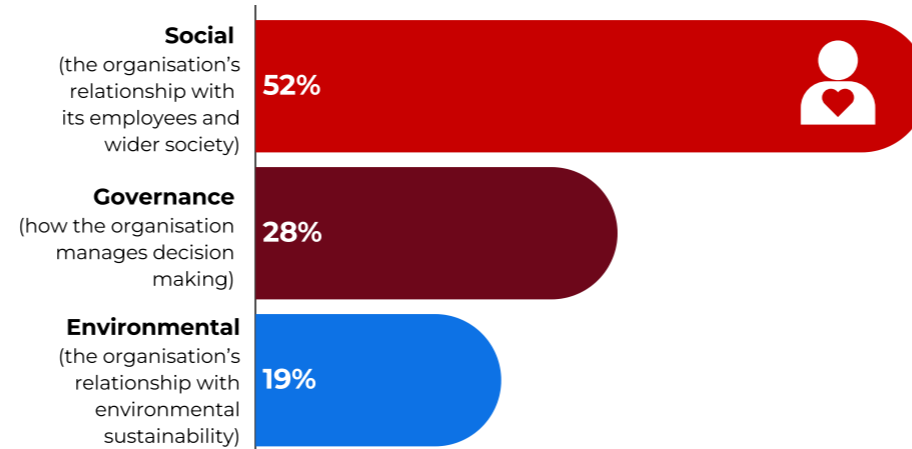
Beyond social impact, the environmental consequences of an organisation's activities are also a key factor in attracting and retaining talent, particularly among younger generations. Notably, **75%** of Gen Z respondents indicated that they would consider an organisation's environmental and climate impact before accepting a role.

In Africa, **45%** of respondents state that their current role contributes to their organisation's response to environmental and climate-related issues. Encouragingly, **69%** – significantly higher than the global average of **58%** – said they would be willing to move to another organisation that prioritises ESG. This reflects a growing expectation that employers demonstrate genuine commitment to sustainable and responsible business practices.

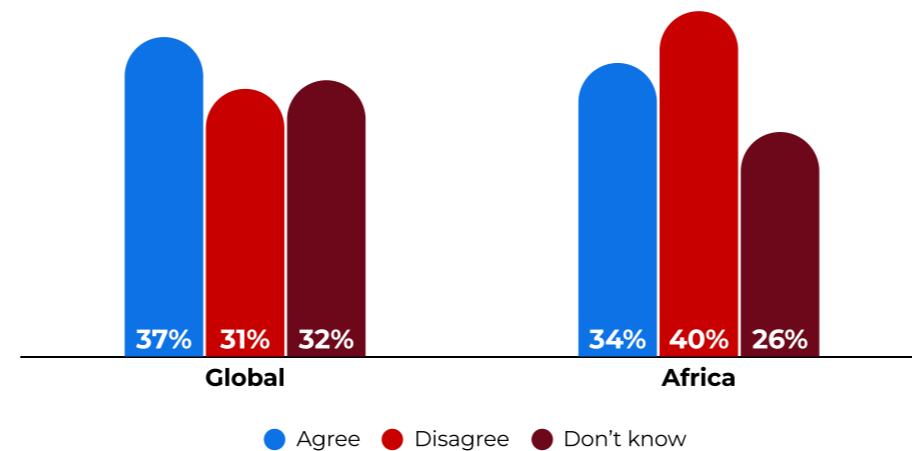
Issues such as fair wages, equal opportunities, health and safety, and positive community impact are central concerns for employees and other stakeholders. These elements form a critical part of how organisations are evaluated from an ESG perspective. For employers and HR/talent leaders – prioritising social issues delivers wide-ranging benefits for all stakeholders especially their employees, the community, and regulators.

However, there are still challenges regarding employee trust in organisational ESG commitments. Around **34%** of respondents in Africa do not believe their organisation's ESG actions are genuine, while a further **26%** are uncertain. For organisations progressing on their sustainability journey, this highlights the need for greater transparency, credibility, and employee engagement.

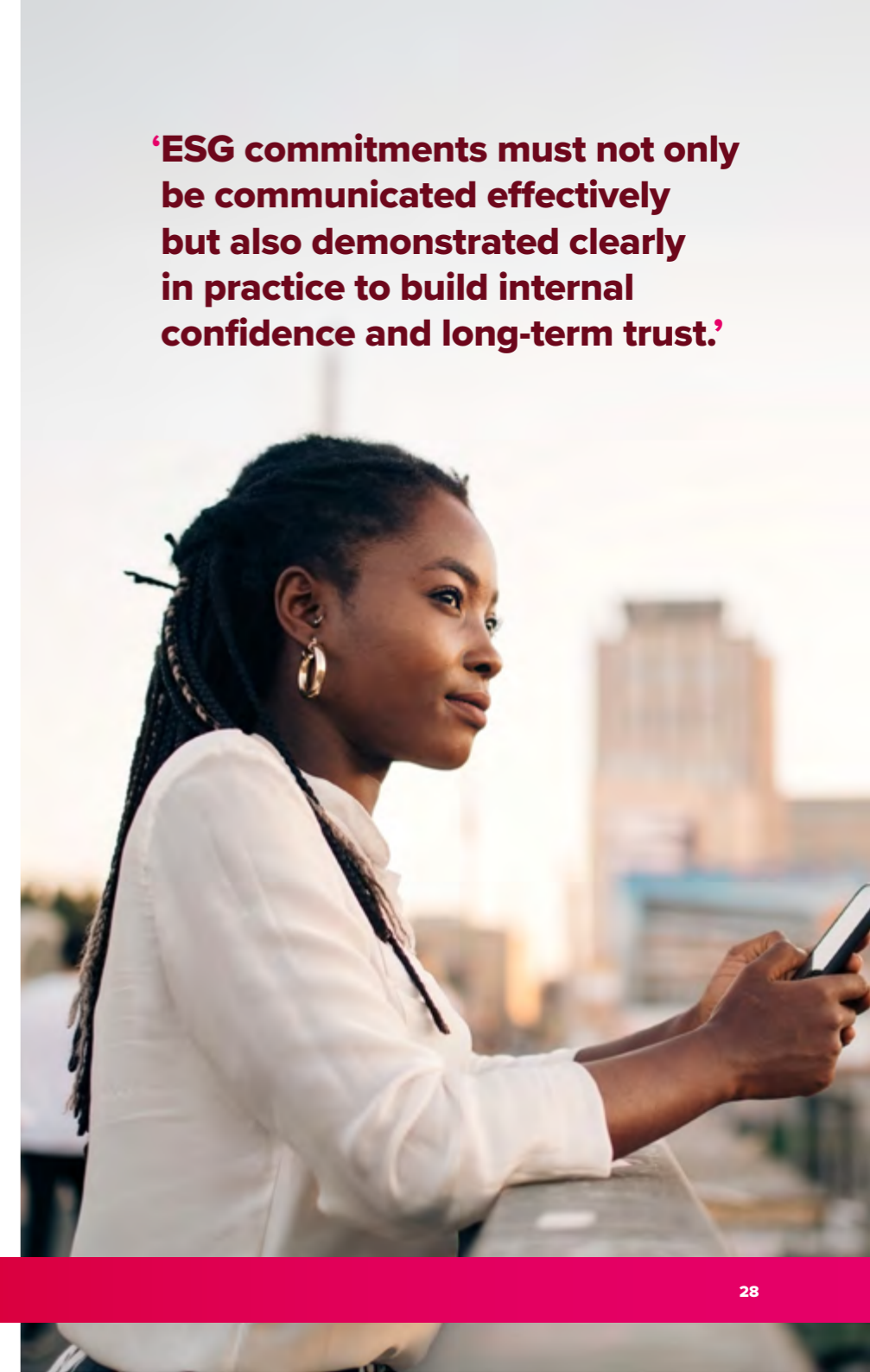
### Which aspect of the ESG agenda matters to you most?



### My organisations approach to ESG feels more like a branding exercise than a genuine commitment



**‘ESG commitments must not only be communicated effectively but also demonstrated clearly in practice to build internal confidence and long-term trust.’**



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