



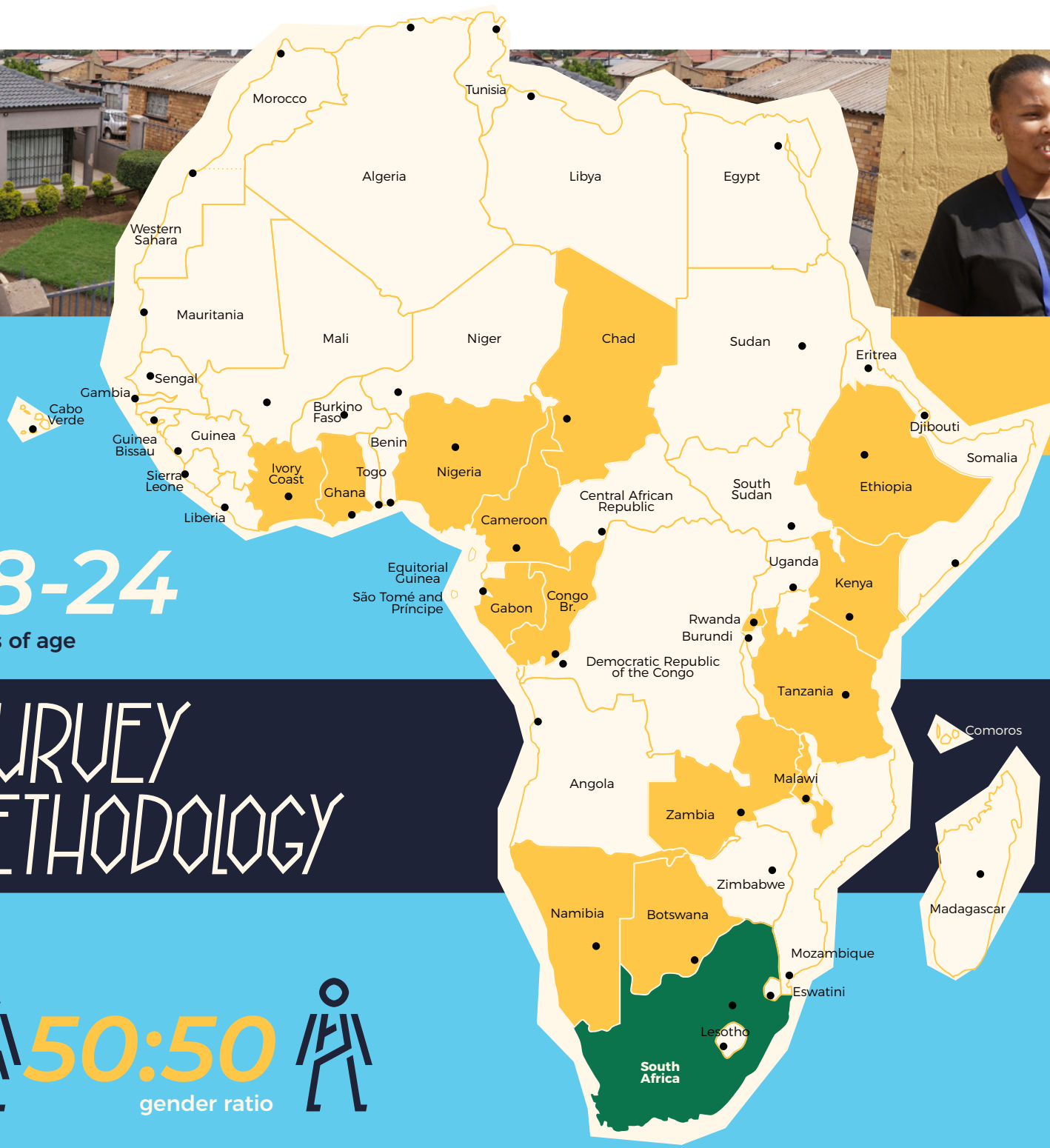
AFRICAN YOUTH SURVEY

2024

 **iff**
ICHIKOWITZ
FAMILY FOUNDATION

SOUTH AFRICA

SPECIAL REPORT 30 YEARS OF
DEMOCRACY



18-24
years of age

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

 **50:50** 
gender ratio



South Africa n=1,046

Gauteng Province - n=301

KwaZulu-Natal Province - n=235

Limpopo Province - n=136

Eastern Cape Province - n=142

Western Cape Province - n=144

North West Province - n=88

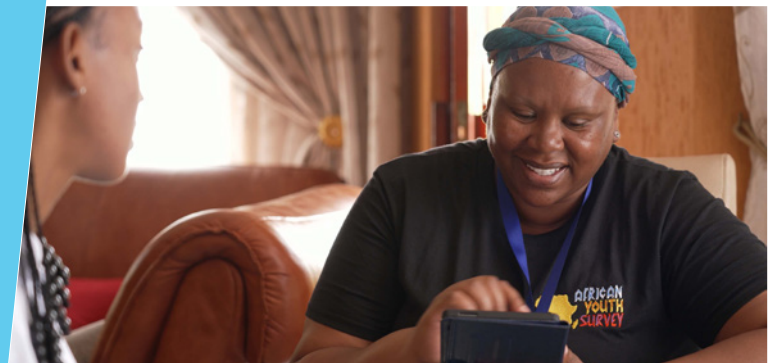


The Ichikowitz Family Foundation launched the African Youth Survey in 2020 to provide governments, the private sector and civil society with insights into the aspirations, motivations, and viewpoints of Africa's youth.

PSB Insights, a global insights consultancy, has conducted three waves of research among youth across the Continent for the African Youth Survey. Each wave consisted of:

- Face-to-face interviews across the continent (approx. 300 per market; approx. 1,000 in South Africa in 2024)
- African youth (nationals of each country) between the age of 18-24
- Sample split 50:50 male to female
- Three distinct interview locations across each country, increasing to 18 locations in South Africa in 2024
- Five separate districts within each interview location
- Respondents offered to take the survey in a range of local languages for each country
- Responses recorded electronically via tablet

As part of the African Youth Survey 2024, the number of interviews in South Africa was increased to 1,046 to enable the creation of the 'South Africa Special Report: 30 Years of Democracy', which explores in more detail the attitudes and beliefs of South African youth 30 years on from the end of Apartheid.



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KEY FINDINGS

Current State of South Africa - Confidence in South Africa's future direction has plummeted, with three-quarters believing the nation is going in the wrong direction. This sentiment has skyrocketed 24% since 2020, and amidst deepening crises in South Africa, youth are calling for urgent action to reduce corruption, create jobs, and improve basic needs and services

Addressing Corruption - Concern about corruption has hit an all-time high, and a staggering 76% of youth are dissatisfied with the South African government's efforts to tackle corruption. There is a palpable desire for systemic change, with overwhelming support for a range of policies and approaches aimed at eradicating corruption in the country

Attitudes Towards Democracy - Appetite for democracy remains strong but given the current challenges faced by South Africa there are growing signs that youth are open to change

Democratic Engagement - Youth engagement in the political process is high and many agree that their voice matters to leadership. However, there are serious concerns about the impact of misinformation and fake news on elections and wider societal issues

Treatment of Individuals - Belief in equality of all under law is being undermined by perceptions of unfair treatment and limited satisfaction by police and security services. There are rising concerns about gender-based violence and women's rights, the lack of protection for ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ communities, and the impact of illegal immigration and refugees in South Africa

Life in South Africa - Most youth feel the post-Apartheid reality in South Africa has fallen far short of successfully addressing a range of issues, as satisfaction with public services is staggeringly low and declining across a range of basic services. There is a growing expectation that standards have plateaued both in the near future and longer-term

Personal Ambitions - The bleak employment and entrepreneurial outlook in South Africa is being exacerbated by perceptions of widespread corruption plaguing the country. Unless the current challenges facing South Africa are properly addressed, youth's consideration to look elsewhere in the world in order to achieve their future ambitions will continue to rise

FOREWORD

SOUTH Africa's much vaunted Long Walk to Freedom could be in a very different place in the next five years if the latest edition of the African Youth Survey is anything to go by, which takes the pulse of this vital demographic, Africa's leaders of tomorrow, across the continent.

More than being the future, the youth are also the proverbial canary in the coal mine, because unlike their elders, they are often far more vocal, unafraid to speak their minds in an open and honest fashion. As such, they are a critical litmus test of real sentiment and a valuable indicator of what governments need to prioritise in their planning.

As South Africa celebrates its 30th anniversary since Nelson Mandela first voted in 1994, the current generation of youth is not very optimistic. Youth unemployment, currently the highest in the world, is a major headache for the more than 1,000 respondents who took part in this edition of the African Youth Survey, the third since the biennial initiative was established.

First released in 2020 and then again in 2022 after the pandemic and now in 2024, this survey which speaks to 5,700 respondents across 16 countries, drawn equally between male and female, has been eerily prescient.

For this edition of the survey, South Africa's 30th anniversary since breaking free from its apartheid past, provided a signal opportunity for us to focus on a country that was the last in Africa to be free as well as the continent's biggest economy¹. We more than tripled the number of South African respondents, over and above the 4,700 interviewed across the rest of Africa, to ensure that the survey would take a proper deep dive into the pulse of the country's future leaders in a way that was unequivocally quantifiable and verifiable.

The South Africa of 2024 is in a very different place than the country that took its first brave steps to freedom in 1994, but the Born Frees, so-called locally because they were born during or after this watershed appear to have little of the nostalgia that might still sway their parents or grandparents. Instead, their loyalty is transactional; the price of their support is service delivery, real structural changes to the apartheid legacy that still infuses much of South Africa's geographical and economic reality and decisive action on corruption.

¹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-04-18/nigeria-s-economy-once-africa-s-biggest-slips-to-fourth-place>

But as much as their sentiment is a reality check for the administration, knowledge is power – and as such their responses also provide a critical roadmap for the government to structure their agenda to properly address their concerns.

The youth are deeply concerned about the levels of corruption in South Africa. They are unhappy with the pace of service delivery, tired of having to plan around regular power cuts from the national energy supplier and increasing water cuts in under pressure municipalities.

The two biggest triggers for South African youth are corruption and the difficulty of finding a job in a country which now boasts the world's highest youth unemployment². The same number of respondents are deeply concerned about gender-based violence. The youth's faith in the police and security services appears to have dropped commensurately; 77% of black respondents are concerned while (by the South African definition), an unprecedented 92% of white, coloured, Indian and Asian youth are concerned. It is heartening that most believe that the Rule of Law is still intact, with most of them believing they are equal in the eyes of the law, but only a third are satisfied with the police and security services.

South African youth are keen for the situation to improve. After 30 years, South Africa's youth still believe in democracy, in fact nearly half of them say they are going to vote at the end of May, but a growing percentage do not want the western system that they have grown up under. What they want is an African form of democracy, with a noticeable minority

² <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/Media%20release%20QLFS%20Q4%202023.pdf>

developing an appetite for non-democratic government if it means their concerns about service delivery and good governance will be answered.

The youth don't want corrupt politicians to be able to stand for office, three quarters of them want political leaders to publish their financial and business records. There is also a very real trend developing for more powers to be devolved to the provinces, not in the Western Cape, which has been run by the official national opposition for several terms now, but in the financial hub of Gauteng and beyond.

The youth are concerned about the rights and protections of minorities in South Africa and for the LGBTQ community, but what is immensely worrying – is the latent xenophobia that simmers in this demographic: more than half feel refugees have a negative impact on the country, while their dislike for illegal immigrants is the highest in Africa according to the survey, with just under 90% of respondents feeling that illegal immigrants take jobs that they could do, that they divert government services and that they drive up crime. In fact, 85% of the respondents believe that illegal immigrants should be forcefully removed.

It is a worrying trend because, as Pastor Martin Niemoller famously reminded us in 1946, intolerance of one group can just as easily shape shift to another vulnerable minority – and be weaponised by the unscrupulous to play on the very real fears of those who feel powerless and impotent in their own country. The saving grace in this instance is that this group is anything but powerless or impotent, they want change, and they will do what they can to bring it about.

They should not be blamed for their criticism of South Africa at 30. South Africans generally have very high expectations of their country, fomented in those first heady days of 1994, bolstered

by a sense of exceptionalism and series of promises at the hustings in five yearly intervals ever since.

This time it's very clear what the youth expect – and because of that there are very distinct signs that the country's current trajectory will be subject to intense contestation in the years to come. The youth want action, not lip service, irrespective of who is in the Union Buildings in the years to come.

Read and draw your own conclusions – there are, as always, great reasons to be hopeful about the future of this Continent and South Africa more specifically, but it would be foolhardy to ignore the warnings that are being expressed by youth.

IVOR ICHIKOWITZ
Chairman of the Ichikowitz Family Foundation



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Continuing the trend seen in the African Youth Survey 2022, overall sentiment towards the direction of South Africa among its youth remains negative and declining. Nearly three-quarters of South African youth now say that their country is headed in the wrong direction, up from just 50% in 2020. This is supported by drops in broader positivity and optimism and increasing feelings of concern and uncertainty. Specific concerns about corruption and the lack of employment opportunities are front of mind for youth, while concerns about environmental issues have also seen large spikes since 2022. While feelings among youth have not yet descended into pessimism, there is a palpable desire for urgent change to tackle corruption, create jobs, improve basic needs and services, and improve South Africa's near future and long-term trajectory.

The issue of widespread corruption in South Africa is at the forefront in the minds of youth, with concern about this issue hitting an all-time high particularly in relation to the national governments, provincial governments, and police and security services. A staggering 76% of youth are dissatisfied with the South African government's efforts to tackle corruption, and there is a growing desire for systemic change to address the issue. Youth overwhelmingly support policies aimed at eradicating corruption in the country, and are looking to the government and leaders in public office to implement comprehensive change.

While South Africa is seen to be facing challenges, appetite for democracy remains strong overall, however, there are growing signs that youth may be open to alternative forms of government. Furthermore, youth in South Africa are now also divided on the suitability of Western style democracies in Africa. These shifts in sentiment can likely be attributed to a growing desire for change in South Africa, driven by declining positivity about the future and increasing concern about the current state of the country among youth.

There are high levels of active engagement to make their voice heard with nearly two-thirds (63%) saying they registered to vote. However, there are serious concerns about the impact of misinformation and fake news on both elections and broader societal relations. Fake news is seen to be a serious problem in communities, has proliferated since the rise of artificial intelligence, has hindered the ability to stay informed, and overall has led to greater divisions within society. The majority of South African youth believe fakes news and misinformation is deliberately utilised by actors inside and outside of the country as a tool to push their desired agendas.

While concerns at home are high, youth are looking for their leaders to balance domestic, regional, and international relations. Most youth believe African leaders can drive global change and participate in key

discussions. The US and China remain the most influential foreign powers, with growing positive perceptions of their impact due to deepening relations – both economic and social. While the perception of positive influence on the country has risen for all countries and international organisations since 2022, concerns over resource exploitation by foreign companies remain significantly heightened. Additionally, despite the longstanding relations between South Africa and Russia, the latter’s engagement in conflicts is straining positive perceptions as youth in South Africa may be feeling the consequences of the Russia-Ukraine conflict impacting their day-to-day lives.

Shifting focus to the treatment of individuals in South African society, belief in equality of all under law is being undermined by perceptions of unfair treatment and limited satisfaction by police and security services. There are rising concerns about gender-based violence and women’s rights, the lack of protection for ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ communities, and the impact of illegal immigration and refugees in South Africa.

These rising concerns about the treatment of individuals are in the context of broader challenges within South Africa that mean the ‘Born Free’ generation are grappling with a post-Apartheid reality that has failed to deliver on its promises. Most youth feel the post-Apartheid reality in South Africa has fallen far short of successfully addressing a range of issues. Given concerns around corruption in the country are so salient, this is the area where the government is felt to have performed worst. However, youth also feel racial inequalities still persist as agreement is low that the government has successfully created a non-racial society and addressed racial inequality. Furthermore, satisfaction with public services is staggeringly low and declining across a range of basic services, and there is a growing sense that standards of living and quality of life have stagnated, both in the near future and longer-term.

Nonetheless, South African youth can clearly envisage the future they want for themselves, with the overwhelming majority already assured that they know what they want to do with their lives and confident in the timing and size of starting a family. However, this is mired in a bleak employment and entrepreneurial outlook in South Africa that is being exacerbated by perceptions of widespread corruption plaguing the country. Corruption is disproportionately seen to be the top reason to consider emigrating outside of South Africa, and this consideration has increased substantially since 2022. Unless current challenges facing South Africa are properly addressed, the potential for youth to look elsewhere in the world in order to achieve their future ambitions will continue to rise.

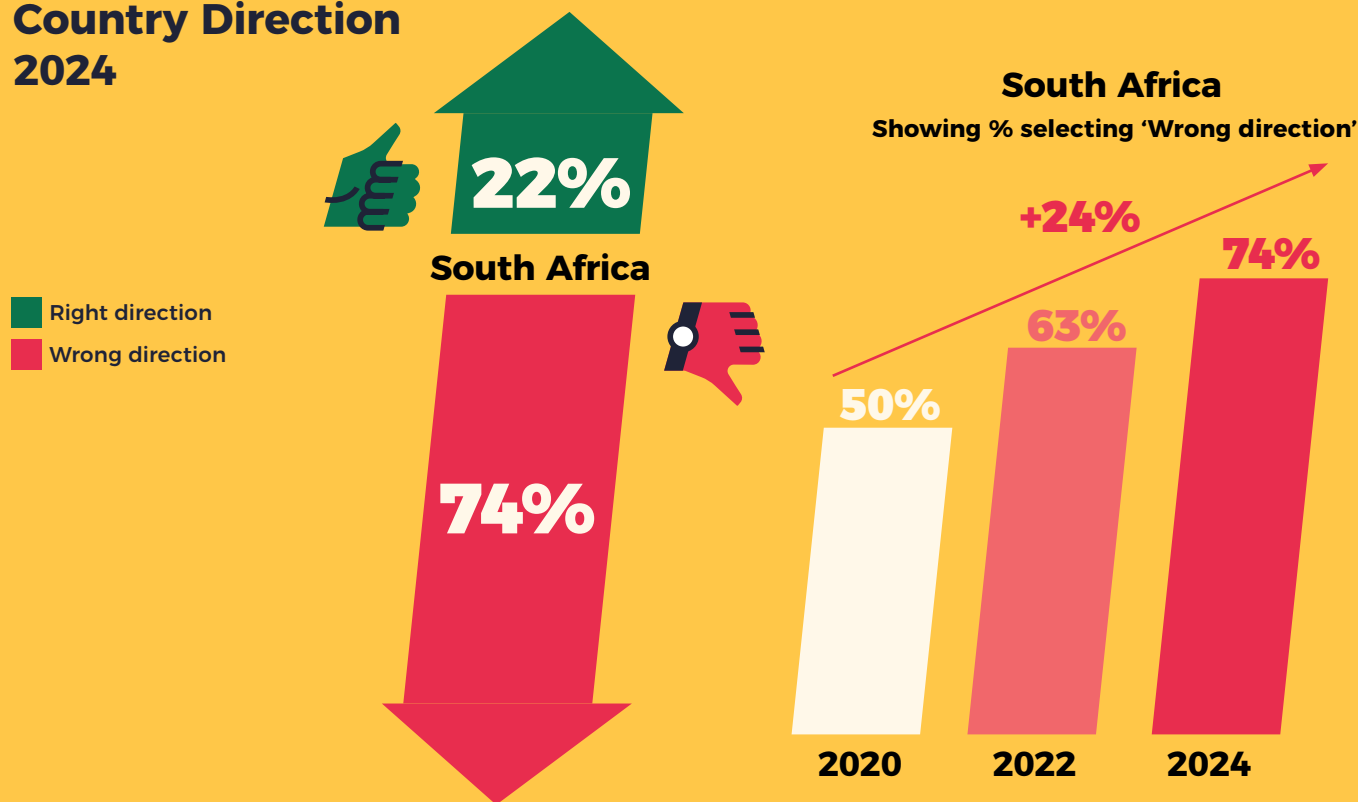
1 Current State of South Africa

Confidence in South Africa's future direction has plummeted, with three-quarters believing the nation is going in the wrong direction. This sentiment has skyrocketed 24% since 2020, and amidst deepening crises in South Africa, youth are calling for urgent action to reduce corruption, create jobs, and improve basic needs and services

Youth Continue to Say South Africa is Headed in the Wrong Direction

Continuing the trend seen in the African Youth Survey 2022, the dip in positivity towards the future of South Africa has concerningly turned into a slide as confidence among youth about the future continues to fall. The sense that the country is going in the wrong direction has increased from 50% in 2020 to 63% in 2022 and now reaches 74% in 2024 – a 24% rise in just five years. In contrast, confidence among African youth across the Continent has rebounded post-COVID, and for the first time since the survey began in 2020 negativity in South Africa has surpassed the wider Continental average. Negativity towards the direction of the country is consistent across the country and by different demographics.

Country Direction 2024

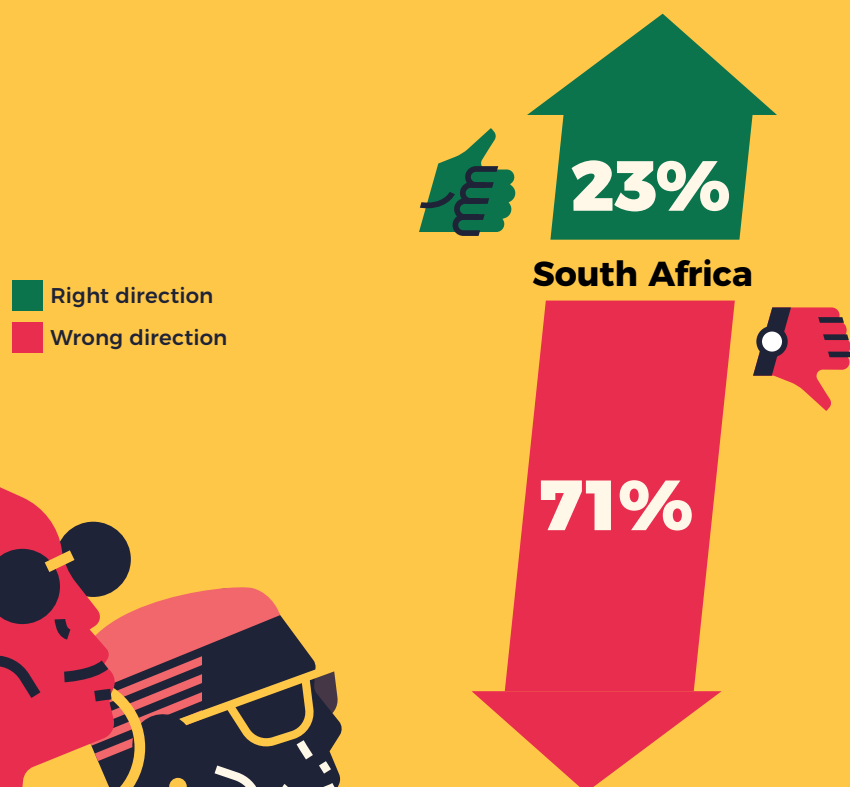


Alongside this negativity towards the future direction of the country, views among South African youth that the national economy is heading in the wrong direction have starkly increased from 61% in 2022 to 71% in 2024. On the other hand, negative perceptions among African youth towards the national economy remain stable from 2022 to 2024, with levels of negativity among South African youth now on par with the Continental average. Among youth in South Africa, those that have completed a university degree or higher are less negative about the economic direction with only 61% saying it is headed in the wrong direction compared to 73% whose education is below degree-level.

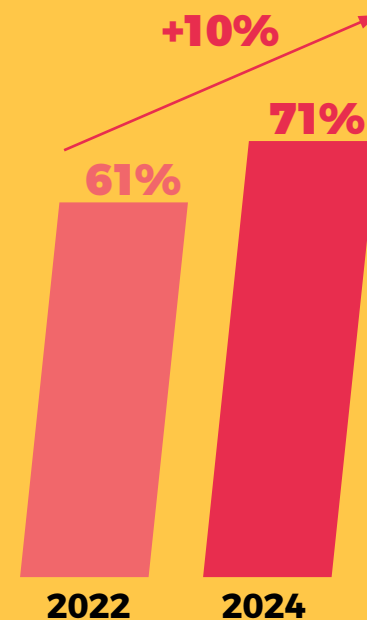
The stability in perceptions among African youth towards their country's economic direction is in line with expectations from the United Nations' World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024 report, which predicts economic growth in Africa to remain weak but stable in the context of economic challenges, climate issues and geopolitical instability.¹ Conversely, the economic picture in South Africa is expected to remain bleak due to significant economic slowdown (the economy experienced lackluster growth of 0.5% in 2023) and ongoing water and electricity crises.²

¹ https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/WESP_2024_Web.pdf
² https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/WESP_2024_Web.pdf

National Economy Direction 2024*



South Africa Showing % selecting 'Wrong direction'



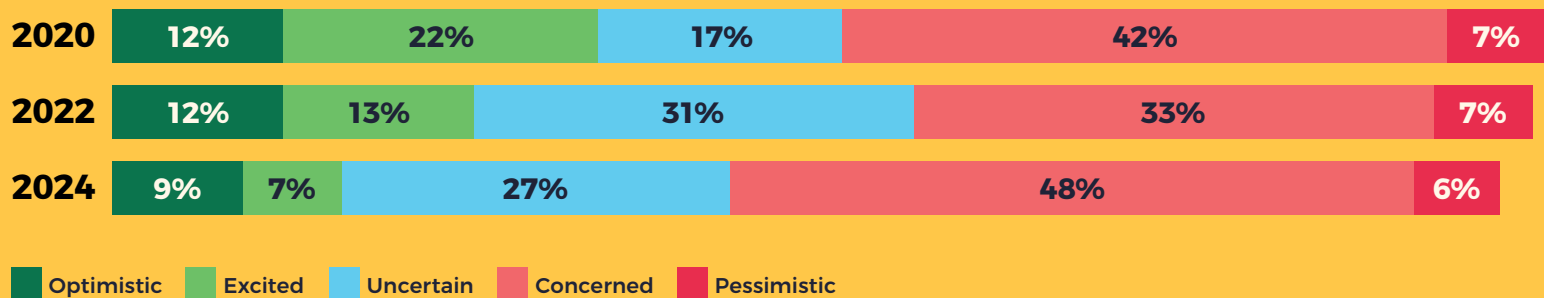
* Question not asked in African Youth Survey 2020

Widespread Concern and Uncertainty

The slide in positivity for the future of the country has given rise to increased concern among youth in South Africa. Just 16% report feeling 'optimistic' or 'excited' about the future of the country, falling from 34% in 2020 and 25% in 2022. Conversely, the proportion of youth feeling concerned has now risen to nearly half (48%), a huge jump from the 36% who said so in 2022. Over a quarter (27%) of youth in South Africa are now uncertain about the future.

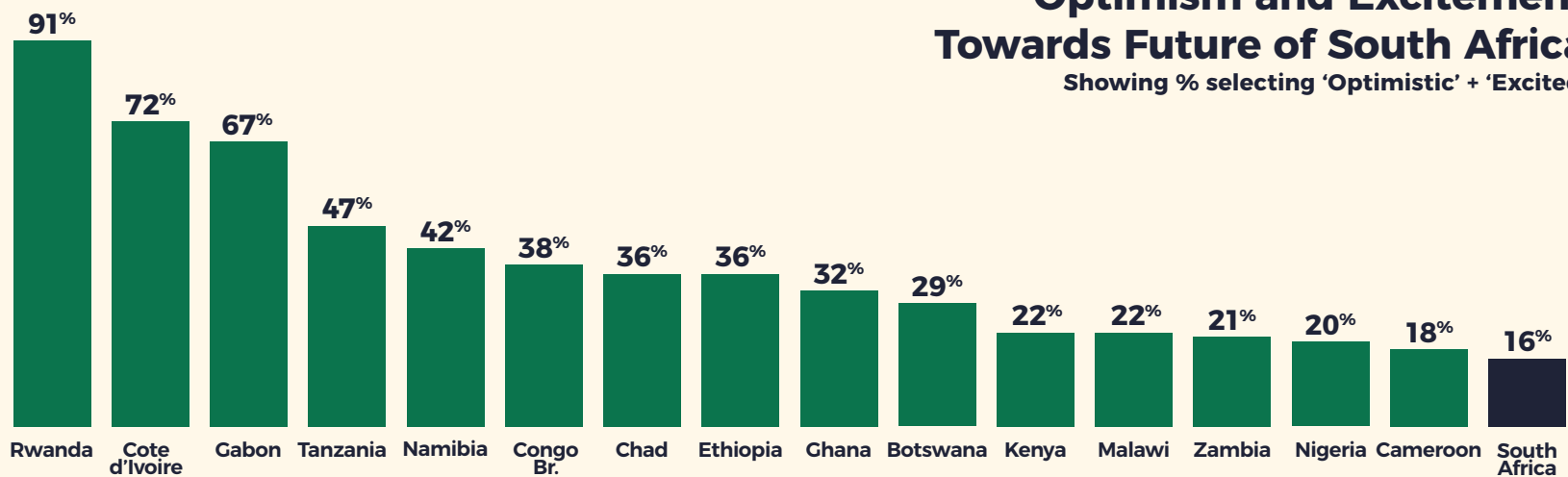
By contrast, positivity among African youth across the Continent has risen out of the dip experienced in the African Youth Survey 2022, which was likely attributed to the global COVID-19 pandemic. While declining positivity and increasing concern among South African youth is evident, it is important to note that this has not yet descended into pessimism, with this sentiment remaining stable and low at 7% in 2020, 7% in 2022 and 6% in 2024. This indicates that while feelings of positivity and optimism towards South Africa's future are waning, youth have not resigned themselves to expect the worst and are instead expressing a desire for change to correct South Africa's near future and long-term trajectory.

Feelings about Future of Country



Optimism and Excitement Towards Future of South Africa

Showing % selecting 'Optimistic' + 'Excited'



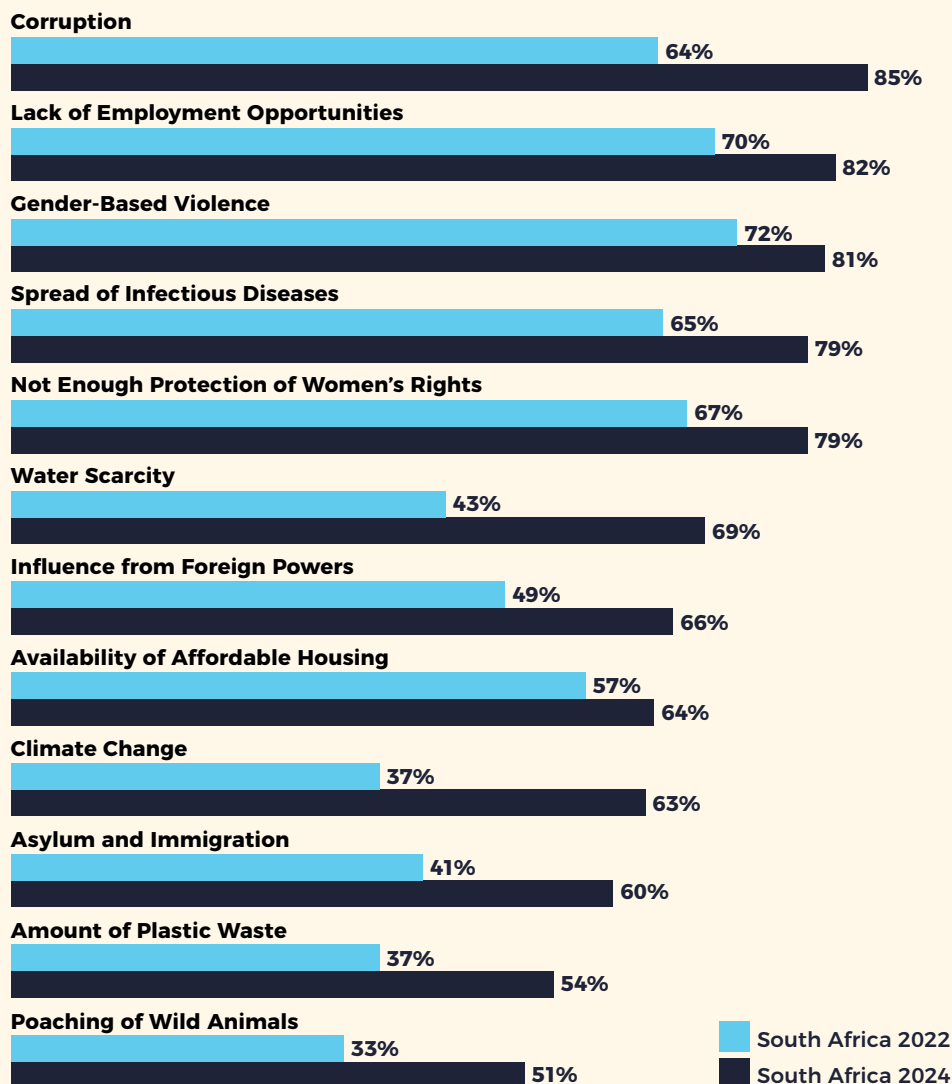
Current and Future Challenges

Looking deeper into the increasing concern expressed by South African youth towards the future, there is recognition of the growing challenges facing the country across a range of issues, both global and national in nature. Corruption in South Africa is now the biggest concern in the minds of youth, rising from 64% 'very concerned' in 2022 to 85% in 2024. Other issue areas with extremely high levels of concern among South African youth are lack of employment opportunities (82% 'very concerned'), and concern surrounding gender-based violence (81% 'very concerned'). Finally, environmental issues have also seen the largest increase in concern since 2022, with climate change rising from 37% 'very concerned' to 63% and water scarcity jumping from 43% to 69%.

Looking ahead to the next five years, South African youth believe that the key priorities to tackle these concerns and achieve progress are reducing government corruption and creating new, well-paying jobs (25% respectively). Concurrently, increasing access to basic needs and services (21%) is also seen as key and increasing priority for unlocking future progress, rising from 17% in 2022. This may indicate a desire among South African youth to prioritise improving the essential, day-to-day needs of society, particularly in the context of deepening energy, electricity and water crises. While feelings among youth in South Africa have not yet descended into pessimism about the future, there is a clear sense that immediate action needs to be taken in order to address current and future challenges facing South Africa.

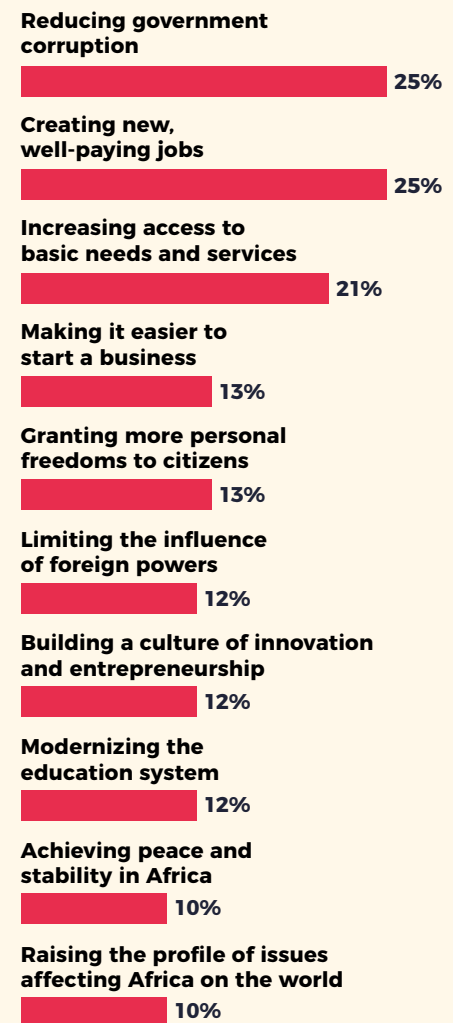
Concern Towards Issues in South Africa

Showing % selecting 'Very concerned'



Priorities for Africa to Progress

Showing Top 10



2 Addressing Corruption

Concern about corruption has hit an all-time high, and a staggering 76% of youth are dissatisfied with the South African government's efforts to tackle corruption. There is a palpable desire for systemic change, with overwhelming support for a range of policies and approaches aimed at eradicating corruption in the country

Concern about Corruption is Skyrocketing

The 2024 findings lay bare the perceived levels of corruption in South Africa, with this issue now gathering the highest levels of concern among youth. In order for the country to progress moving forward, youth in South Africa now place greatest significance on reducing corruption (25%) alongside increasing employment opportunities (25%).

Concern about corruption is widespread, with around four-in-five saying they are concerned about corruption at the national government level, the provincial government level, and among the police and security services. Levels of concern are also split across ethnic groups, with higher levels of concern among White/Coloured/Indian/Asian (WCIA) youth compared to Black African youth. This is particularly true for the

national government, where 92% of WCIA youth express concern compared to 77% of Black African youth, and for police and security services, where 86% of WCIA youth convey concern compared to 78% of Black African youth.



Concern about Corruption within...

Combining % selecting 'Very concerned' + 'Somewhat concerned'

81% National Government

79% Police & Security Services

79% Provincial/Local Government

76% of youth in South Africa are dissatisfied with the government's performance on tackling corruption in the country

Reinforcing this widespread concern, discontent for how the South African Government is addressing the issue of corruption is palpable. Three-quarters (76%) of youth say they are dissatisfied with the government's performance on tackling corruption in the country, over half (54%) of which are 'not at all satisfied'. Tied to this, three-in-five youth (57%) in South Africa firmly believe that penalties and punishments for breaking the law are not harsh enough, while only a quarter (26%) of youth feel current penalties are adequately severe. Looking at how Freedom House have scored South Africa on Functioning of Government within their Political Rights pillar, the country scores a two out of four on strong and effective safeguards against official corruption indicating there is clear room for improvement to bolster the current anti-corruption laws and policies in South Africa.¹

¹ Scores are based on evaluations of different anti-corruption policies from the implementation of anti-corruption laws to legal protections for whistleblowers and journalists: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/south-africa/freedom-world/2024>; <https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology>

**Are the penalties
in your country
tough enough?**

Not harsh enough

57%

About right

26%

Too harsh
13%

84%

**Approve of
tougher penalties
for corruption
convictions**

Policies for Tackling Corruption

85% Approve of a police taskforce to tackle government corruption

81% Approve of preventing those convicted of corruption to stand for public office

79% Support not allowing candidates with a criminal record to run for office

74% Approve of requiring leaders to publish financial and business records

Systemic Change is Needed

While youth are acutely concerned with the issue of corruption and how it is being addressed, they do express overwhelming support for a range of policies aimed at eradicating corruption from the country. Over four-in-five (84%) youth in South Africa are calling for the introduction of tougher punishments (e.g. longer jail sentences) for those convicted of corruption, with 62% strongly approving of this policy stance. Another four-in-five youth approve of creating an independent police taskforce to address government corruption (85%), preventing those convicted of corruption from standing for public office (81%), and requiring that candidates running for positions in public office must not have a criminal record (79%). Furthermore, three-quarters (74%) approve of requiring leaders to publish financial and business records each year. Finally, just under half (48%) 'strongly approve' of setting term limits for the President, while conversely only a quarter (24%) 'strongly approve' of leaders being able to appoint family members to key positions in government.

Given the high levels of approval for these policies and the concern placed on the issue of corruption, it is evident that South African youth are looking to the government and leaders in public office to implement comprehensive change. Furthermore, it is clear that this change needs to be systemic, as the wider South African general population feel the 'system in the country is broken'. South Africa ranks second highest on Ipsos's "system is broken index", which measures discontent towards the prevailing political establishment and the desire of the public for leaders to break rules in order to fix the country.² Clearly, youth in South Africa alongside the wider South African general public are aligned in their views that the current system has to change and leaders must take comprehensive steps in order to improve South Africa's future direction.

² Ipsos' "system is broken index" evaluates economic imbalance favoring the rich, political disconnect, the need for a strong rule-breaking leader, a desire to reclaim the country from the powerful, and a perceived lack of understanding from experts: <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2024-02/ipsos-Populism-Survey-2024.pdf>

3 Attitudes Towards Democracy

Appetite for democracy remains strong but given the current challenges faced by South Africa there are growing signs that youth are open to change



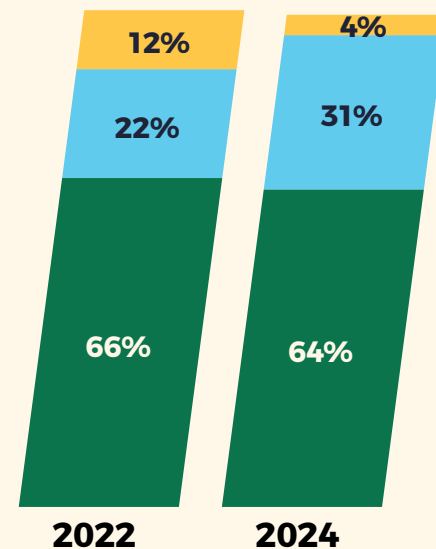
Growing Consideration for Non-Democratic Government

Appetite for democracy remains strong in South Africa, with two-thirds (64%) of youth seeing it as the preferred form of government their country should pursue. However, given the current challenges facing South Africa, there are initial signs that youth may be open to other options. When asked whether there are certain situations in which alternative forms of government can work, an increasing proportion of youth would support a non-democratic government, rising from 22% in 2022 to 31% in 2024. This increase mainly comes from those that were previously unsure of which government structure they preferred, which has declined from 12% in 2022 to 4% in 2024.

Furthermore, youth in South Africa are now also divided on the suitability of Western style democracies in Africa. Around half continue to say they are not suitable and African countries need to create their own democratic structures and systems, while 44% assert that African countries should emulate Western democracies, an increase from 36% in 2022. Again, this increase in sentiment towards emulating Western democracies is driven by those who previously said 'Don't Know' when asked, reinforcing a growing desire for change in the country due to concerns about corruption and dissatisfaction with the current trajectory of the country and economy.

Appetite for Democracy

- Don't know
- In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable
- Democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government, and should be pursued



Balance of Power in Government

When asked whether it would be beneficial for more power to sit with the national or regional governments in South Africa, there is a clear divide among youth on where power should be concentrated. Half (51%) believe more should be given to local and provincial governments, while 45% believe that granting more power to the national government would be most beneficial. Views on power in government are also split along ethnic lines. Half (50%) of Black African youth believe giving greater power to local governments is more beneficial, while 46% feel more power should go to the national government. On the other hand, White/Coloured/Indian/Asian (WCIA) youth are much more in favour of distributing power to local governments (58%) rather than centralising with the national government (38%).

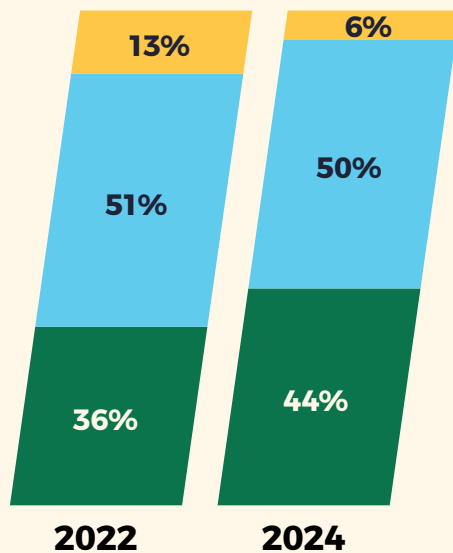
Approval for Election and Government Policies

Showing % selecting 'Strongly approve'

- 48%** Introducing term limits for Presidents / Prime Ministers
- 32%** Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office
- 30%** Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the president can decide everything
- 28%** The army comes in to govern the country
- 24%** Leaders can appoint family members to key government positions

Suitability of Western Style Democracies in Africa

- Don't know
- Western style democracy is not suitable, African countries need to find their own democratic structures and system
- African countries should seek to emulate the structure and governing systems of Western democracies



Power in Government

South Africa



Gauteng Province



Limpopo Province



North West Province



Western Cape Province



Eastern Cape Province



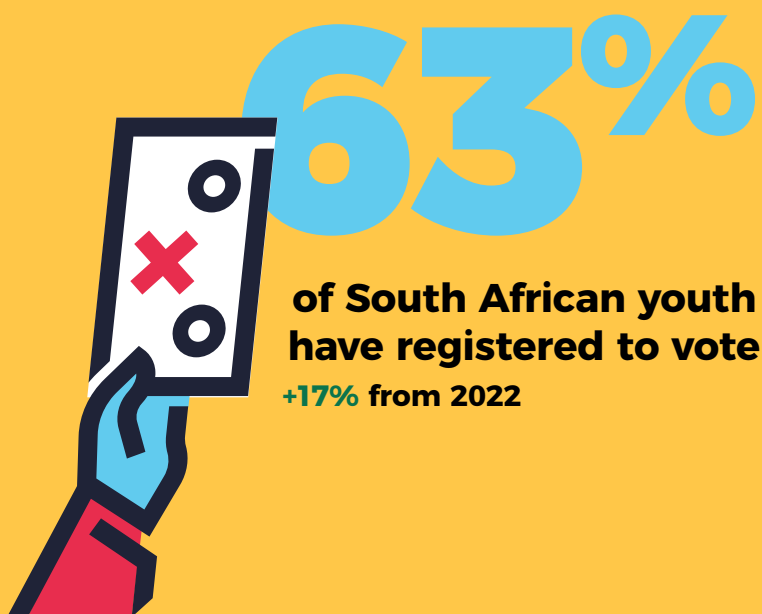
KwaZulu-Natal



- More power given to local and regional governments
- More power given to the national government
- Don't know

4 Democratic Engagement

Youth engagement in the political process is high and many agree that their voice matters to leadership. However, there are serious concerns about the impact of misinformation and fake news on elections and wider societal issues



Youth are increasingly confident that their voice matters to their country's leadership, rising from 54% in 2022 to 69% in 2024. Alongside the general perception that their voice matters to the leadership, there are high levels of active engagement to make their voice heard with nearly two-thirds (63%) saying they registered to vote. Voter registration is higher among older youth (68% of 22-24 year olds say they are registered), but it is still strong among those 18-21 years old with 57% saying they are registered. Similarly, education levels are a good predictor of likelihood to register to vote with just 47% of those who say they have only completed some secondary school registered compared to 72% of those with a university degree or higher.

Fake news and misinformation are particular issues of concern among South African youth, with four-in-five (79%) expressing concern towards the impact of misinformation campaigns and fake news stories could have on the upcoming election. There is particularly heightened concern towards this issue among White/Coloured/Indian/Asian youth, rising to nine-in-10 (89%) compared to 76% of Black African youth. Furthermore, concern is not just concentrated on the impact of fake news and misinformation on the upcoming election,

but is widespread across society. Four-in-five youth in South Africa feel that fake news is a serious problem in their community (83%), its spread has been proliferated with the rise of artificial intelligence (83%), it hinders abilities to stay informed about issues (80%), and it has created greater divisions within society (78%).

Likewise, South African youth believe fake news is deliberately utilised by politicians (82%), terrorist and criminal organisations (81%), foreign governments (80%) and religious organisations (77%) to push their agendas. The spread of fake news and misinformation is a threat to a stable and prosperous South Africa, with external and internal actors targeting the country with misinformation campaigns to curate narratives and sow distrust among the public.¹

¹ <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/mapping-a-surge-of-disinformation-in-africa/>



Youth are Concerned about Fake News and Agree that...



83% Fake news is a serious problem in my community today

83% I worry that artificial intelligence (AI) has made it easier to create and spread fake news

82% Politicians deliberately share fake news to push their agenda

81% Terrorist and criminal organisations deliberately share fake news to push their agenda

80% Fake news impacts my ability to stay informed about issues that matter to me

80% Foreign governments deliberately share fake news to push their agenda

78% Fake news has led to greater divide within my society

77% Religious organisations deliberately share fake news to push their agenda

5 Treatment of Individuals

Belief in equality of all under law is being undermined by perceptions of unfair treatment and limited satisfaction by police and security services. There are rising concerns about gender-based violence and women's rights, the lack of protection for ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ communities, and the impact of illegal immigration and refugees in South Africa

Equality Before Law

Just half (51%) of youth in South Africa feel everyone is equal before the law, and the country scores a two out of four in Freedom House's evaluation of the laws, policies and practices that guarantee equal treatment of various population segments.¹ Furthermore, only a third (33%) express satisfaction with police and security services, and there is limited agreement that these services treat youth fairly and with respect (51%). The link between satisfaction with police and security services and perceptions of equality before the law is apparent – among the minority (33%) that are satisfied with the police and security services, two-thirds (67%) say they are treated equally before the law compared to just 40% who say the same among those who are not satisfied with the police and security services. This also translates into perceptions about youth being treated fairly and with respect by the police and security services, with just 51% agreeing.

¹ Freedom House assesses equal treatment of population segments by considering the exercise of rights, violence against distinct groups, discrimination, noncitizen rights, and refugee protection laws: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/south-africa/freedom-world/2024>

51% Agree everyone in South Africa is equal before the law
+6% from 2022



33% Of South African youth are satisfied with police and security services
-2% from 2022

51% Agree they are treated fairly and with respect by police and security services



Concern about Gender-Based Violence



Concern about Not Enough Protection of Women's Rights



■ South Africa 2022

■ South Africa 2024



79% More should be done to protect rights of ethnic minorities

77% More should be done to protect the rights of LGBTQ people



Greater Protections Needed

These concerns with the treatment of individuals in South Africa are also reflected in rising concern about gender-based violence, increasing from 72% in 2022 to 81% in 2024, and the lack of protection of women's rights, jumping from 67% to 79%. There is also monumental economic disparity between men and women in South Africa, with recent findings in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report highlighting that South African women earn between 23% and 35% less than men doing the same role.² In line with these rising concerns towards the protection of women in society, youth also express widespread agreement that more should be done to protect the rights of ethnic minorities (79%) and LGBTQ people (77%) in South Africa. It is abundantly evident that South African youth are highlighting the need for urgent change in order to improve current treatment and protection of all parts of society.

² https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2023.pdf

Illegal Immigration and Refugees

Among the other countries considered in the study, youth highlight South Africa as by far the most appealing destination within Africa to consider emigrating to. However, its appeal as a destination may also be driving concerns among South African youth about the impact of illegal immigration on the country. Nearly nine-in-ten youth feel illegal immigration takes jobs away from locals (88%), takes government resources away from citizens (88%) and leads to increased crime (86%). A further 85% of South African youth agree measures should be taken to remove illegal immigrants from the country. Similarly, negative sentiment towards the impact of refugees in South Africa is increasing. Over half (56%) of youth now feel refugees have a negative impact on the country and should not be allowed to enter, an increase from 44% in 2022. However, there is still a sizable minority that feel South Africa has a moral obligation to help refugees from neighbouring countries regardless of their impact (40%), but that has dropped from 45% in 2022.

Illegal Immigration

Showing % selecting 'Strongly agree' or 'Somewhat agree'

Illegal immigrants are taking the jobs of locals



Illegal immigrants are taking government resources away from citizens



Illegal immigrants are driving up crime in my area



Illegal immigrants should be forcefully removed



40%

My country has a moral obligation to help refugees from neighbouring countries regardless of their impact

56%

Refugees have a negative impact on my country and should not be allowed to enter



6 Life in South Africa

Most youth feel the post-Apartheid reality in South Africa has fallen far short of successfully addressing a range of issues, as satisfaction with public services is staggeringly low and declining across a range of basic services. There is a growing expectation that standards have plateaued both in the near future and longer-term

Legacy of Apartheid

The findings of the 2024 survey paint a deeply troubling picture for South Africa's 'Born Free' generation. Despite having never lived through Apartheid, current challenges within South Africa mean that this generation are grappling with a post-Apartheid reality that has failed to deliver on its aspiration. The government is felt to have been most successful at improving the education system in South Africa, with just over half (55%) saying that they have been 'very' or 'somewhat successful'.

However, the persisting racial inequalities are glaring, as only 45% of young South Africans agree that the government has been successful in ending Apartheid and only 40% agree that they have been successful both in creating a non-racial society and addressing racial inequality. South Africa's status as the most unequal country in the world according to the World Bank's database of Gini coefficients, alongside its ranking first out of 164 countries in the World Bank's global poverty database for levels of inequality is testament to these disparities. Race is identified as the largest driver of this inequality, with the legacy of Apartheid continuing to intensify economic disparities.¹

Given concerns around corruption in the country are so salient, this is the area where the government is felt to have performed worst with just a quarter (26%) of young South Africans agreeing that the government has been 'very' or 'somewhat successful' in addressing this issue. There is some

¹ The Gini coefficient is a statistical distribution of welfare indicators commonly used to measure inequality, such as in income or consumption. It ranges between 0 and 1 (or 100), where 0 means perfect equality and 1 (or 100 percent) perfect inequality: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099125303072236903/pdf/P1649270c02a1f06b0a3ae02e57eadd7a82.pdf>; <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099125003072240961/pdf/P1649270b73f1f0b5093fb0e644d33bc6f1.pdf>

evidence that a failure to address corruption and inequality are undermining perceptions of democracy in South Africa, as under half (43%) of South African youth agree that the government has been successful in establishing a democratic government.

According to the World Bank, the enduring effects of colonialism and Apartheid, which are entrenched in racial and spatial segregation, continue to amplify and exacerbate disparities in outcome that are hindering South Africa's progress and development.²

² <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099125003072240961/pdf/P1649270b73f1f0b5093fb0e644d33bc6f1.pdf>; https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-07/sa-nhdr-2022_web_0.pdf

Success of Addressing Issues Since Apartheid

Improving the education system



Bringing an end to apartheid



Creating a democratic government



Developing a non-racial society



Addressing racial inequality



Addressing income inequality



Addressing the issue of state capture



Addressing land reform



Creating equal opportunities for all



Tackling social unrest / crime



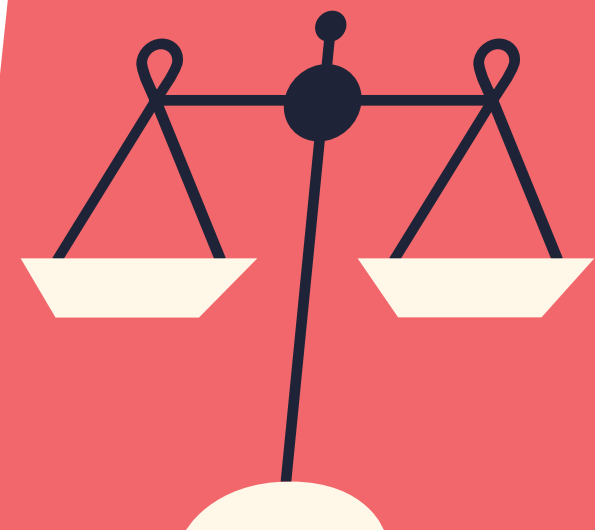
Improving job creation / employment for young people



Tackling corruption



Very successful Somewhat successful % TOTAL



Inadequate Public Services and Infrastructure

Assessing the conditions of their day-to-day lives in South Africa, youth express concerningly low levels of satisfaction towards a wide range of public services and infrastructure in the country. Only around half of youth are happy with the quality of education and public schools (51%), public transportation (49%) and recycling (49%). Satisfaction with basic services such as telecoms and data networks (43%), water and sanitation (36%), roads (34%), and especially energy availability and electricity (26%) is low and falling. Since 2022, satisfaction with water and sanitation has fallen 25 percentage points, roads has declined 17 points, energy availability/electricity has dropped 15 points, and telecoms and data networks has slipped 14 points. In the World Bank's Human Capital Index, South Africa ranks 135th out of 173 countries on the ability to achieve the economic and professional potential of its citizens. The report attributes rapidly deteriorating public infrastructure and high levels of crime in South Africa as key factors for its very low ranking.³

The particularly high dissatisfaction towards energy and electricity can likely be attributed to the ongoing energy crisis in South Africa that is requiring widespread national blackouts of electricity supply due to loadshedding. This has averaged around eight hours per day and is costing the country 2-3% in GDP growth each year.⁴ Alongside this, the drop in satisfaction towards water and sanitation is likely driven by the severe water shortages in recent years that have impacted the lives and livelihoods of those living in South Africa.

According to the World Resources Institute, South Africa ranks 22nd out of 164 countries for levels of water stress and is in the extremely high bracket, regularly using almost their entire water supply each year.⁵ South Africa's extreme vulnerability to climate change coupled with inefficient water usage, deteriorating water infrastructure and surging demand have resulted in towns and cities across the country struggling to deal with water scarcity.⁶

³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/human-capital#Index>; <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/db7f895796c12c71469bbc98330a0541-0140022023/original/Factsheet-HCP-Nov-2023.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/10/25/south-africa-afe-world-bank-backs-reforms-to-advance-energy-security-and-low-carbon-transition>

⁵ <https://www.wri.org/insights/highest-water-stressed-countries>

⁶ <https://impact.economist.com/sustainability/resilience-and-adaptation/how-improving-institutions-can-help-solve-south-africas-water-crisis>

Satisfaction with Public Services and Infrastructure

Showing % selecting 'Very satisfied' + 'Somewhat Satisfied'

Education and public schools



Mass transit / public transport



Recycling



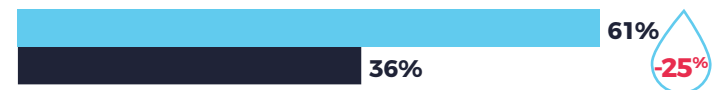
Telecommunications and data networks



Healthcare / Clinics



Water and sanitation



Roads



Police & security

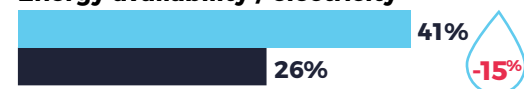


Housing*

Not recorded in 2022



Energy availability / electricity



South Africa 2022

South Africa 2024

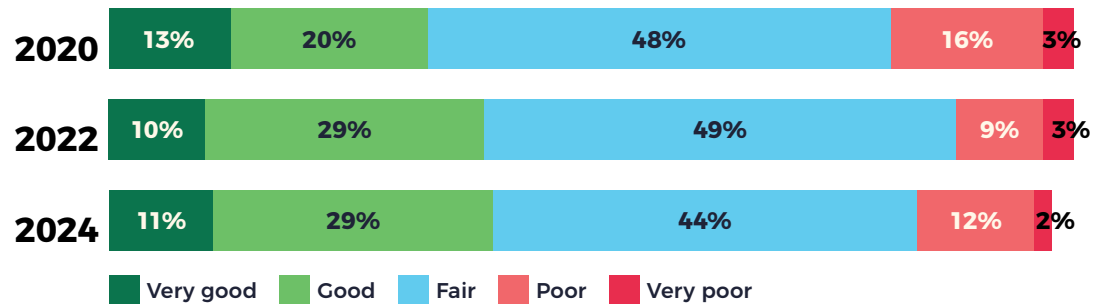
*New option added in African Youth Survey 2024

Future Improvements Plateauing

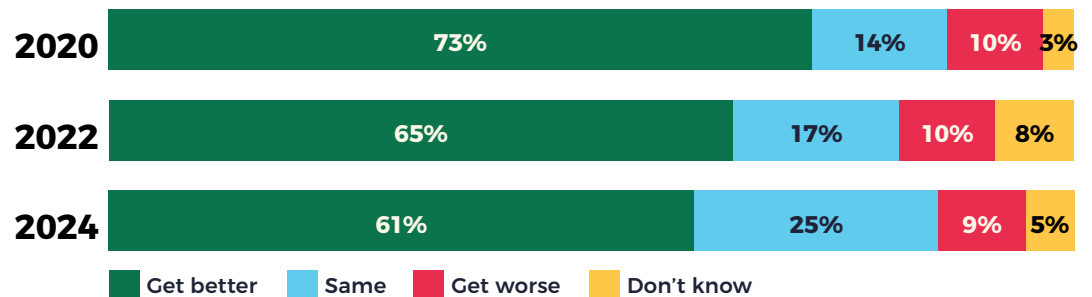
Despite concerns about the future of South Africa, most youth continue to describe their standard of living as 'fair' or 'good' (84%) and this sentiment remains relatively stable from 2020 (81%) and 2022 (88%). However, this stability is giving rise to a growing sense of 'stagnation' on improving standards of living in the future. While the proportion of those saying they expect their standard of living to stay the same or get better (86%) has stayed fairly flat from 2020 (87%) and 2022 (82%), those that think things will stay the same over the next two years (25%) continues to increase from 14% in 2020 and 17% in 2022. This sense of 'stagnation' carries into longer-term perceptions about future quality of life. Four-in-five (86%) South African youth believe they will have at least the same or better quality of life than their parents did, a slight increase from 83% in 2022. However, the proportion of youth that think their quality of life will be the same as their parents has increased from 13% in 2022 to 21% in 2024. Reflecting these findings, since 2020, South Africa's Human Development Index (HDI) score has plateaued and started to decline. While the country remains in the 'high' HDI bracket, perceptions towards having a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living are not improving and are beginning to waiver.⁷

⁷ <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/ZAF>

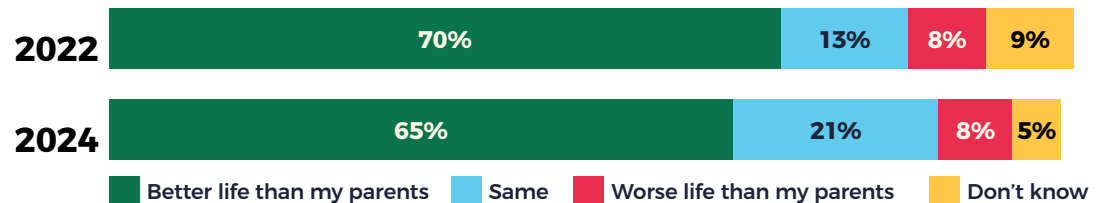
Current Standard of Living



Standard of Living in Two Years



Future Quality of Life Compared to their parents



Missing values = Don't know

7 Personal Ambitions

The bleak employment and entrepreneurial outlook in South Africa is being exacerbated by perceptions of widespread corruption plaguing the country. Unless the current challenges facing South Africa are properly addressed, youth's consideration to look elsewhere in the world in order to achieve their future ambitions will continue to rise

Future Intentions

South African youth can clearly envisage the future they want for themselves, with nearly nine-in-ten (85%) already assured that they know what they want to do with their lives. Most youth are more confident that they want to start a family and plan on having fewer children (77%), starting a family later (75%) and getting married later in life (67%) than their parents did, sentiments which have all grown over time. However, given the deepening concerns and desire for change that youth have expressed, grappling with a bleak future in South Africa may mean the reality of achieving these goals is increasingly grim.

77% Plan on having fewer children than their parents did
+12% from 2022

75% Plan on starting a family later than their parents did
+6% from 2022

67% Plan on getting married later than their parents did
+2% from 2022

Bleak Employment Outlook

When asked about job creation and employment, there appears to be a growing disparity between South African youth's prioritisation of job creation for future progress and current satisfaction levels with the state of the employment market in the country. A staggering three-quarters (77%) of youth in South Africa express dissatisfaction towards the government's efforts on job creation and fighting unemployment. Tied to this, over half (53%) of youth say it is 'very difficult' to find a new job in the current job market, with another quarter (25%) feeling it is 'somewhat difficult'. The perception that it is difficult to find a job falls as education levels rise, with 58% of those who have a secondary degree or less saying it is 'very difficult' compared to 46% of those who have started university or above. Recent



unemployment data from Statistics South Africa's Quarterly Labour Force Survey shows the proportion of unemployed youth now sitting at 44.3% in Q4 2023, with overall unemployment levels at 32.1%.¹ There are growing calls and expectations for the South African Government to increase spending on job creation, reinforcing youth's escalating concern towards the lack of employment opportunities.²

Youth pinpoint corruption (48%) as by far the biggest barrier to finding employment in South Africa, followed by the current lack of well-paid jobs available (30%) and not receiving feedback on unsuccessful applications (28%). This concern about corruption hindering employment opportunities is widespread across both national (77%) and international (71%) companies and businesses. While levels of concern about corruption in national companies are high, it appears that concern among employed youth in South Africa is slightly lower (69%) than it is among those unemployed (79%), indicating that concerns about corruption may fade slightly once securing a job. When comparing those that have or have not completed a university degree, there are some sizable differences in the barriers to unemployment.

While corruption is the top barrier for both, there is a 9 percentage point difference (50% among those without a university degree compared to 41% among those with a university degree). Similarly, there is a perception among those that have a university degree that there is not enough digital technologies and infrastructure, with a 12 percentage point gap compared to those who do not have a university degree (27% of those with a university degree compared to 15% of those without a university degree). It is clear that there is a need for a sizable investment in digital infrastructure in order to retain the educated youth and ensure that they are set up to build and grow the South African economy of the future.

1 <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/Media%20release%20QLFS%20Q4%202023.pdf>

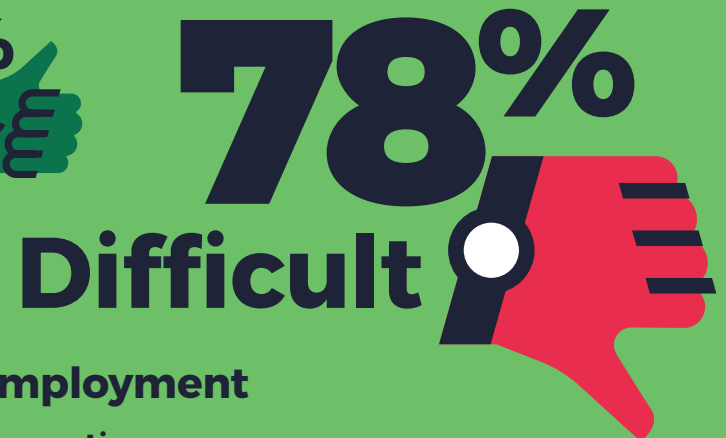
2 <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2024-02/ipsos-Populism-Survey-2024.pdf>



Finding a new job is...

Easy is the % selecting 'Very easy' + 'Somewhat easy'

Difficult is the % selecting 'Very difficult' + 'Somewhat difficult'



Barriers to Employment

- 48%** Too much corruption
- 30%** Not enough well paying jobs
- 28%** Not receiving feedback on applications
- 26%** Not enough government support
- 24%** Lack of opportunities to achieve qualification
- 23%** Lack of appropriate training and education
- 20%** Opportunities in my local area are limited
- 19%** Uncertain economic environment
- 19%** I do not have the right connections or networks
- 17%** Lack of available digital technologies or infrastructure
- 14%** Lack of forums/websites to search for available jobs

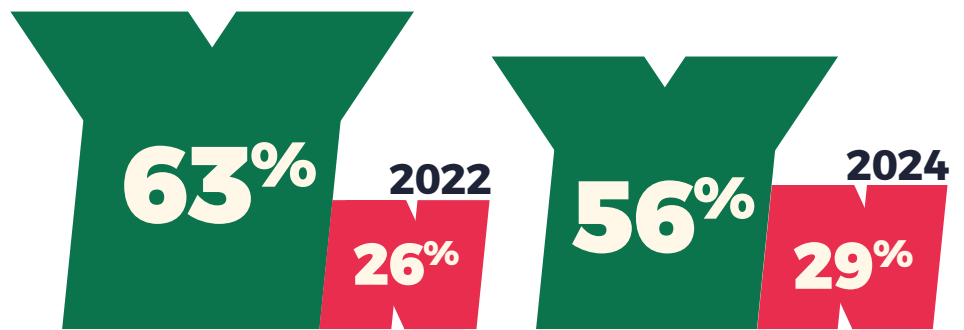
Constrained Entrepreneurial Spirit

Looking at the entrepreneurial spirit in South Africa, over half (56%) of youth continue to say they intend to start their own business within the next five years, slightly declining from 63% in 2022 but an increase from 47% in 2020. However, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Context Index – which measures the national level of entrepreneurial activity of countries – between 2022 and 2023 South Africa declined from 4.1 to 3.6 out of 10 and is now ranked third lowest out of the 49 participating countries in the study.³ Similar to employment barriers, when asked to identify the biggest barrier to setting up a business, youth highlighted corruption (52%) as the main obstacle to achieving their entrepreneurial aspirations, rising from 45% in 2022 and overtaking lack of access to capital as the top barrier, which fell from 52% in 2022 to 45% in 2024.

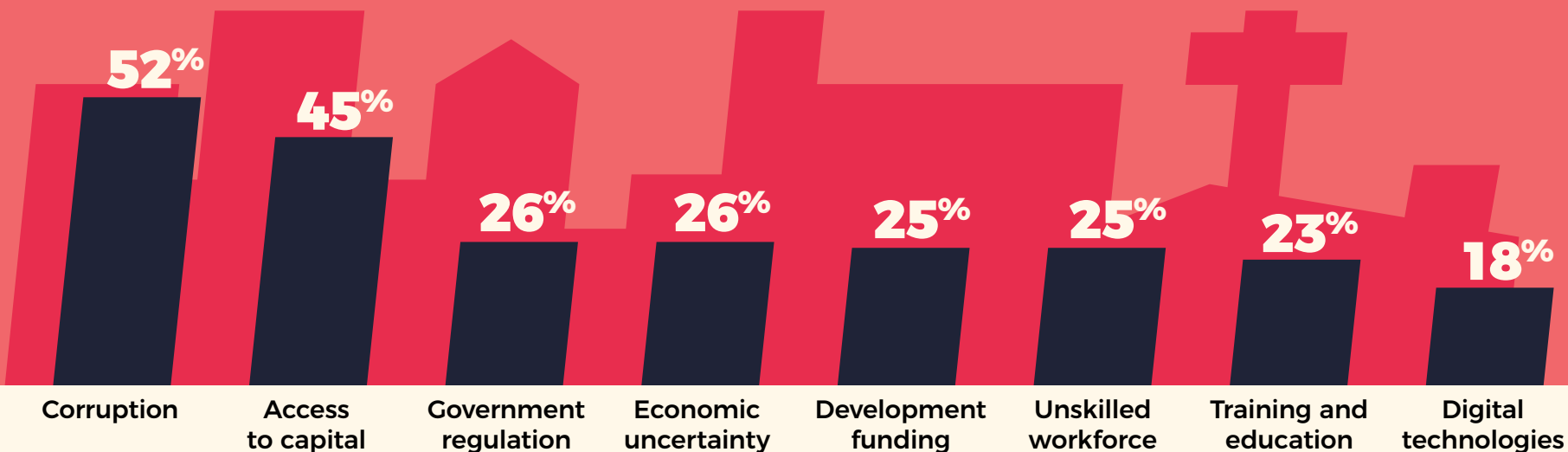
³ <https://www.gemconsortium.org/news/entrepreneurship-on-the-decline-in-south-africa-according-to-gem-research-#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20GEM%202023,11%20of%20the%2013%20EFCs>



Intention to Start a Business



Barriers to starting a business



Prosperity Beckoning Elsewhere?

Unless properly addressed, there is a sense that the issues surrounding employment opportunities and entrepreneurship, as well as wider concerns for the current and future state of the country may encourage youth to look beyond the borders of South Africa. Nearly half (48%) of youth are now likely to consider emigrating from the country in the next three years, an increase of 13 percentage points from 2022. The main reasons driving consideration to emigrate align with the key priorities youth outlined for achieving progress moving forward. Corruption is disproportionately seen to be the top reason to emigrate among South African youth, doubling from 19% in 2022 to 38% in 2024. This is followed by economic reasons (e.g. employment opportunities) (37%), education opportunities (30%), and lack of basic needs and services (22%). It is evident that if left unaddressed in South Africa, the issues surrounding corruption, employment and basic needs and services will likely drive more youth to broaden their horizons and look elsewhere in the world in order to achieve their personal and professional ambitions.

Corruption in my country



Economic reasons



Education opportunities



Lack of basic needs and services



Lack of personal freedoms



Political reasons



Security reasons



Climate change



Religious reasons



Reuniting with family members abroad



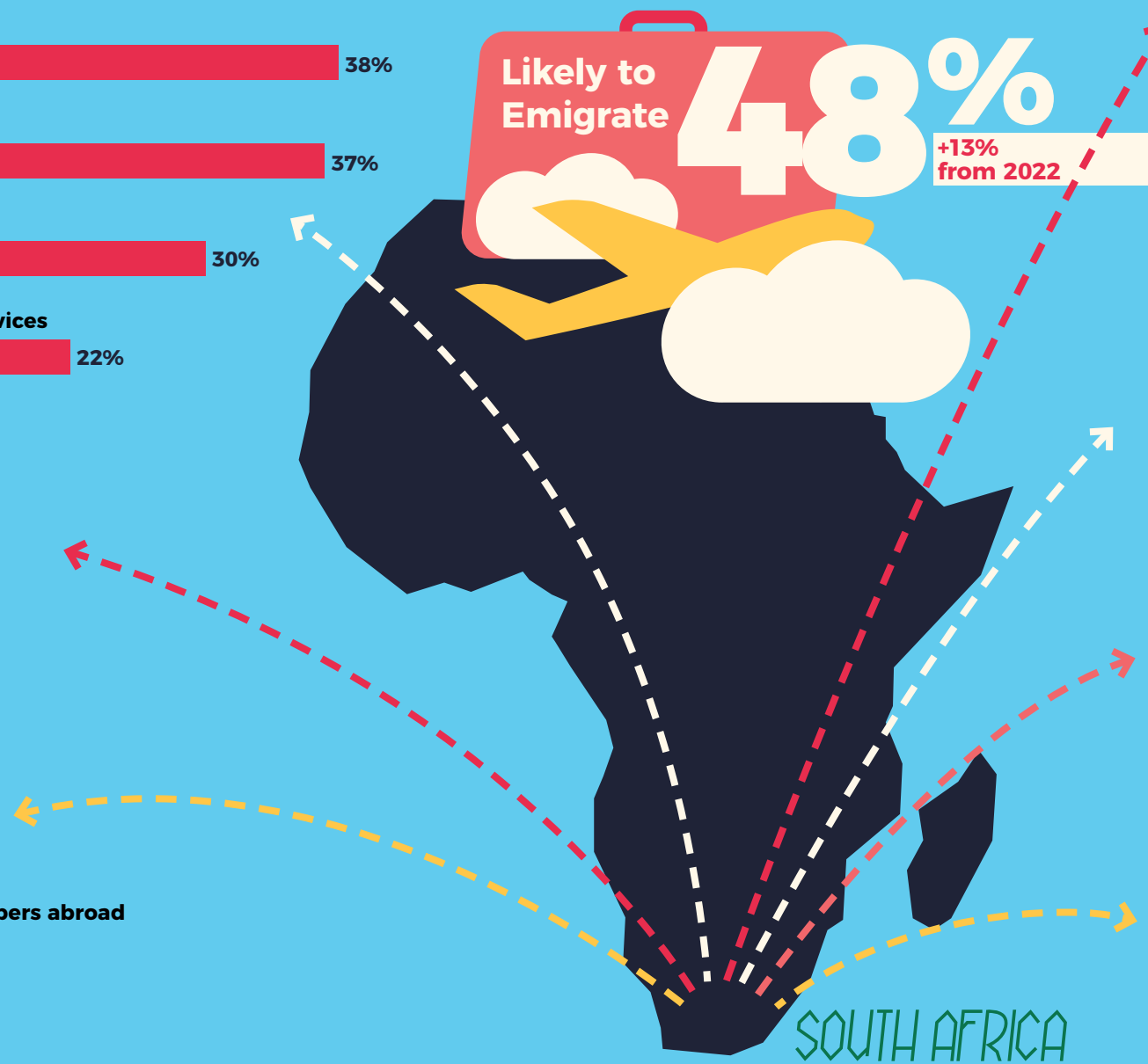
Don't know



Likely to Emigrate

48%

+13% from 2022



From a challenging past of adversity and hardship, it's the people of Africa that make this continent special; they tell a story of triumph of the human spirit and the power of human beings to forge new beginnings from the ashes of injustice and build a future based on equality and democracy. When you are on this continent you will be awed by our infrastructure, bedazzled by our beauty and humbled by our people and you will know what it means to say: "anything is possible".

At the heart of our common humanity, is our instinct to forge an environment in which we can thrive and flourish.

Democracy provides the environment for this. But, democracy is not simply elections – our power to vote for the people who make decisions is important; but that is not where our responsibility ends. We must work tirelessly, every day to craft our society in a way that is just, equitable and dignified.

And we commit to this. We pledge to building citizens for action through inspiration, insight and sustainability.

This is our promise.

The Ichikowitz Family Foundation

Citizen Action through inspiration, insight and sustainability

The Ichikowitz Family Foundation (IFF) has committed itself to the kind of active citizenship that promotes the preservation of our heritage, the conservation of our environment, and the education of our people.

We use various channels, such as film, music, research, publications and art to foster dialogue between people, to be a torchbearer for innovation and to conserve Africa's biodiversity and heritage for future generations.

We aim to help build a continent where people are encouraged to dream big, to challenge the inconceivable and achieve the impossible



Key Programmes

#IamConstitution

#IamConstitution encouraged South Africans to read, embrace and live the Constitution, to celebrate the achievements of South Africa and constructively confront challenges and offer solutions. The result – a campaign that has touched the lives of millions of South Africans.

The African Oral History Archive

Our African Oral History Archive charts the untold stories of Africa's vivid history, magnificent heritage and collective memory. Over 160 interviews in the African Oral History Archive have been recorded to date. To celebrate 20 years of South Africa's Democracy, the Foundation produced a series of films, books and artworks to celebrate our most acclaimed and unknown history makers. The award-winning documentary series, The Rainbow Makers, is in distribution across broadcast, educational and multi-media platforms. Currently, lesson plans are being developed for distribution to high schools.

Conservation

The Ichikowitz Family Foundation has a strong track record of conservation leadership within Africa having financed and initiated innovative anti-poaching and environmental programmes for ten years.

The Foundation's anti-poaching initiatives include the donation of surveillance aircraft and other critical equipment to national parks, training programmes to strengthen the capabilities of park rangers and counter-poaching units, the implementation of award-winning global and national campaigns to raise awareness of the plight of endangered species, and the creation of one of the largest Anti-Poaching and K9 Training Academy's in Africa.



Inspire

Torchbearer for innovation. Building self-belief and confidence among Africans.



Insight

Promote an understanding of our complex history. Insights into the hopes and aspirations of Africa's youth.



Sustain

Conserve the continent and biodiversity.



www.ichikowitzfoundation.com