The 2026 Global Youth Outlook

How youth want governments to listen, serve and act



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Table of contents

- **Executive summary** 03
- **Key findings** 04
- **The trust signal** 06
- **Government priorities and performance** 10
- **Digital transformation and AI governance** 17
- **Spending priorities and efficiency demands** 23
- **Climate action and clean-energy investment** 27
- **Geopolitical security and digital threats** 31
- **Youth voice and participation channels** 34
- **Everyday concerns and government response** 37
- **Scope and methodology** 41

Executive summary

Around the world, young people are playing an increasingly influential role in shaping public policy, economic development and societal change. From climate action and digital transformation to economic opportunities, their priorities are helping to redefine public policy and national agendas.

PwC's 2026 Global Youth Outlook contributes to this dialogue by capturing the views of 5,591 young people, aged between 15 and 30 years, across 42 countries and territories. The report provides a global perspective on how youth assess government priorities, public services and future opportunities, while identifying practical actions to strengthen trust, improve policy outcomes and deepen partnerships. More broadly, it aims to support an ongoing policy dialogue around the role of youth in shaping more responsive, accountable and effective government.

The survey findings point to a fundamental shift in how governments are judged. Young people see them as central to creating opportunity, but confidence increasingly depends on delivery rather than intent. Economic growth remains important, yet it is no longer sufficient on its own. Instead, young people evaluate government performance through outcomes they experience directly: affordable living, quality healthcare, better education and responsive public services. Trust is increasingly earned through improvements in everyday life.

As part of an evolving model of public leadership, young people support digital transformation but want governments to build strong digital foundations before accelerating AI adoption. They see cybersecurity as a core pillar of national resilience, support climate action where it strengthens economic opportunity and quality of life and favour structured and trusted channels for participating in public decision-making.

In PwC's Global Youth Outlook 2024[1], we examined how deeply young people were connected to the Sustainable Development Goals. This report builds on that foundation and takes the conversation global to explore what youth now expect from governments.

These findings suggest that by embedding youth perspectives in policymaking and strengthening accountability, governments can build more inclusive, resilient and future-ready societies.



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1. PwC, 'Global Youth Outlook 2024', PwC, https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/industries/government-public-sector/global-youth-outlook.html, accessed 28 September 2026.

Key findings

38%

of global youth are confident that governments will create opportunities for them over the next three years

64%

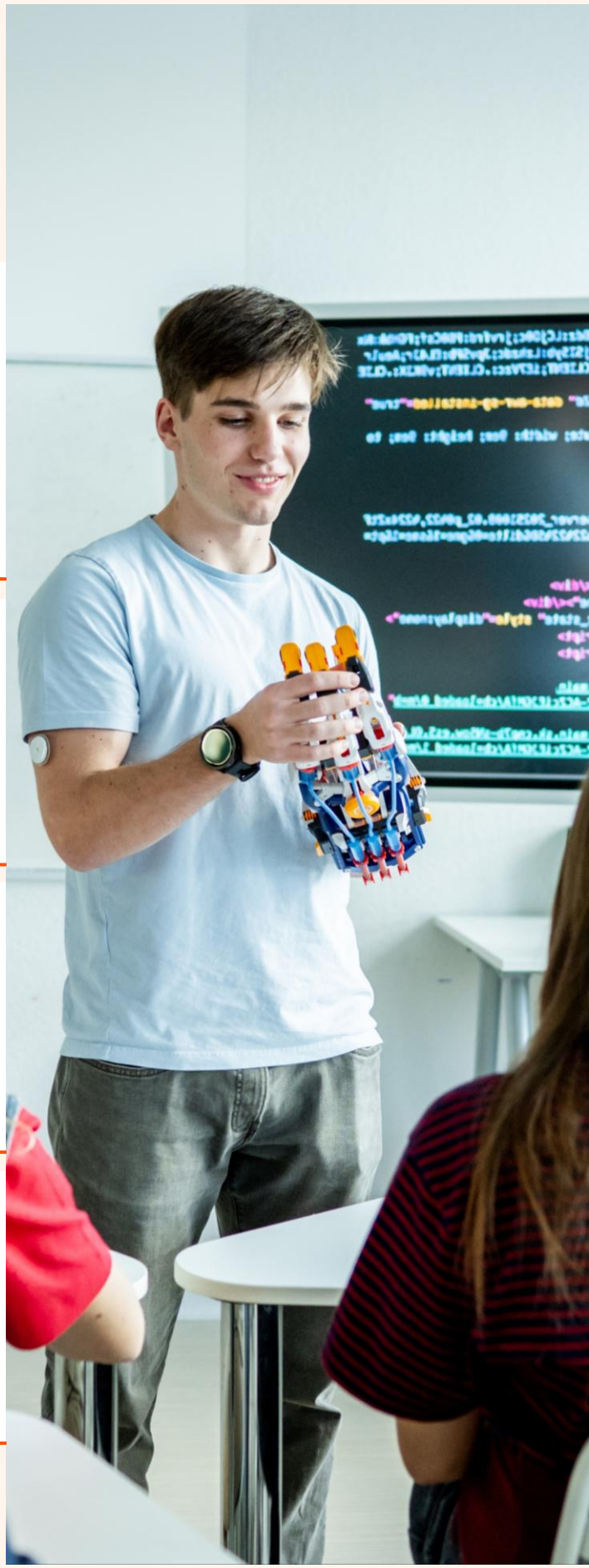
rank cost of living as their top daily concern, reinforced by job security **(44%)** and housing affordability **(30%)**

55%

prioritise healthcare spending, followed by economic development **(30%)**

51%

prioritise formal education as the main route for youth participation, followed by online platforms **(35%)**





43%

rank cybersecurity as the leading geopolitical security priority, ahead of territorial security **(37%)**

38%

rank digital skills and literacy as the top digital priority

36%

place clean and renewable energy at the top of the climate agenda

42%

believe governments prioritise economic growth



01 The trust signal

Around the world, young people are playing an increasingly influential role in shaping public policy, economic development and societal change. From climate action and digital transformation to economic opportunities, their priorities are helping to redefine public policy and national agendas.

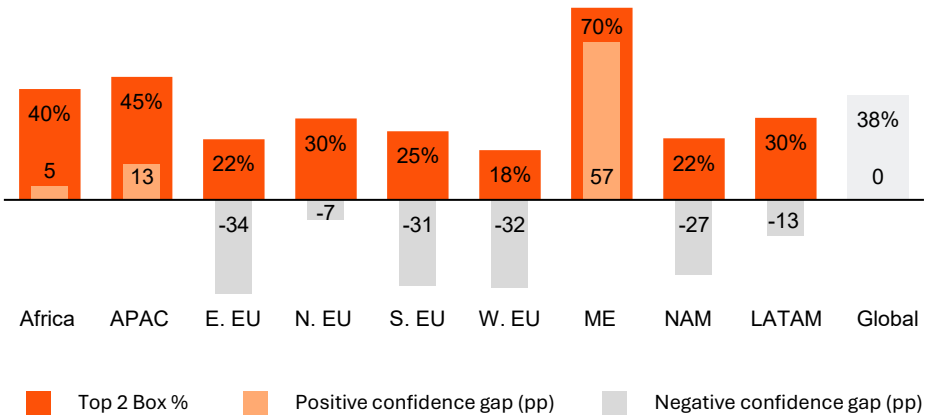
This year's survey shows varied levels of confidence across regions: Globally, **38%** of youth say they are confident their government will create good opportunities for them over the next three years (see Figure 1), while an equal share are not. Confidence is higher in the Middle East, where **70%** of youth express confidence in their government, resulting in a net confidence score of +57 percentage points (pp). Across Europe, net confidence differs by region, from -7pp in Northern Europe to -34pp in Eastern Europe, highlighting notable differences in youth perceptions across geographies.



Q. **How confident are you that your government will create good opportunities for youth over the next 3 years?**

Figure 1 – Trust in government by region
Youth perceptions vary across regions

Note: The graph shows the **Top 2 Box** (Very confident + Fairly confident) scores for each region, as well as the **Net Confidence Gap**, calculated as the difference between the Top 2 Box (Very confident + Fairly confident) and Bottom 2 Box (Not very confident + Not confident at all).



Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026



The gender divide

41% men | **35%** women

Globally, young men are slightly more confident than young women that governments will create good opportunities for youth over the next three years

What sustains the confidence

Confidence is earned when governments deliver on the economic and social outcomes that most directly affect young people's lives. The 2026 findings indicate that economic well-being remains central to how young people assess government performance. Everyday pressures, such as cost of living, housing affordability, healthcare and education, represent the key areas where the gap between youth expectations and government action is most visible. These are the outcomes through which trust is ultimately strengthened or eroded.



This indicates areas for governments to address in 2026. In a time of universal cost-of-living pressures, governments should act decisively on translating growth into lived outcomes. That means improving the value and effectiveness of public spending and engaging young people through the institutions and channels they already trust.







02 Government priorities and performance

Value moves when growth is felt, not just measured

According to the survey, 42% of young people identify economic growth as a current priority for governments (see Figure 2), while only 34% see it as a desired priority, indicating the widest positive expectation gap recorded (+8pp). Digital transformation (+6pp) and infrastructure development (+6pp) are likewise seen as receiving more government attention than youth would prefer.

At the other end of the spectrum, healthcare and cost of living register the steepest negative expectation gaps (-11pp each), revealing a disconnect between perceived government action and youth priorities; poverty reduction (-9pp), education (-8pp) and job creation (-6pp) follow close behind.

Taken together, the results suggest that young people acknowledge economic growth as the central policy objective of governments but expect its benefits to translate more clearly into affordability, healthcare and poverty reduction. By linking macroeconomic gains to the outcomes people care about most, governments are well placed to build stronger public confidence.

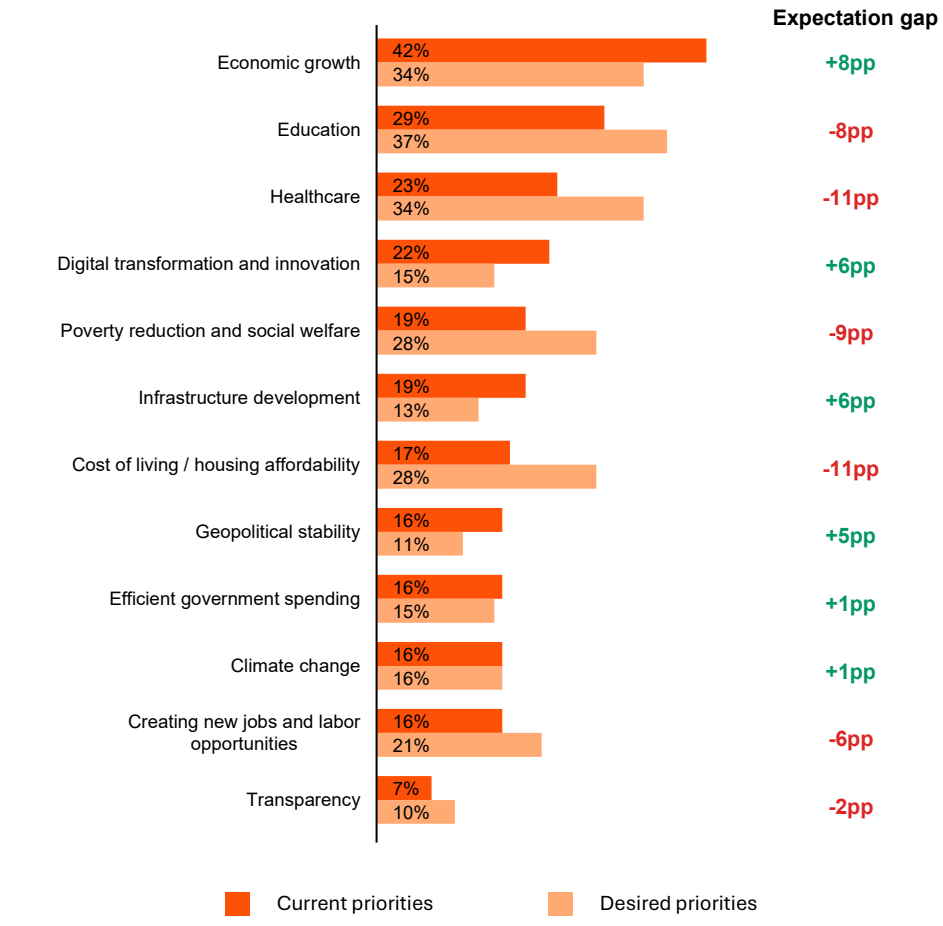
Ultimately, value emerges when people experience growth in their daily lives – not merely when it appears in the statistics.



Q. What are the current and desired priorities of your country's government?

Figure 2 – Government priorities gap analysis
Youth want growth translated into affordability, health, education and social outcomes

Note: The chart compares perceived government priorities with youth-desired priorities. Negative expectation gaps reflect areas where young people want greater government focus, while positive gaps indicate areas they believe are currently over-prioritised.



Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026

Top 3 under-prioritised areas:

- **-11pp** Healthcare
- **-11pp** Cost of living
- **-9pp** Poverty reduction

Top 3 over-prioritised areas:

- **+8pp** Economic growth
- **+6pp** Digital transformation
- **+6pp** Infrastructure development



Different priorities, shared expectations

Significant gender differences for core priority areas

Gender differences reveal distinct expectations on what government should prioritise most. Healthcare stands out as a higher priority for women (38% vs. 29% for men), while men place greater emphasis on digital transformation and innovation (20% vs. 11% of women). Economic growth also attracts stronger support among men (37% vs. 31% women), reinforcing a broader divergence in how different groups define value and progress.

Digital ambition is strongest where the digital gap is widest

Africa (24%) and the Middle East (23%) place significantly greater emphasis on digital transformation as a desired government priority far more than Northern Europe (8%), Southern Europe (7%), Western Europe (8%) or North America (7%). This 17pp gap between Africa and Southern Europe marks the largest regional divergence on any single government desired priority in the survey and flips the conventional narrative. The explanation is simple: in digitally mature regions, the focus has shifted from building infrastructure to governing it. In developing regions, digital transformation remains an unfulfilled promise – and youth are calling for it to be delivered.

Government performance is measured in lived outcomes, not policy intent

While governments often measure performance through the lenses of geopolitical security, innovation and economic growth, youth judge performance by whether these translate into tangible improvements in their daily lives, including affordability, opportunity and responsive public services. The gap between policy ambition and lived experience is a critical factor that shapes confidence in government.

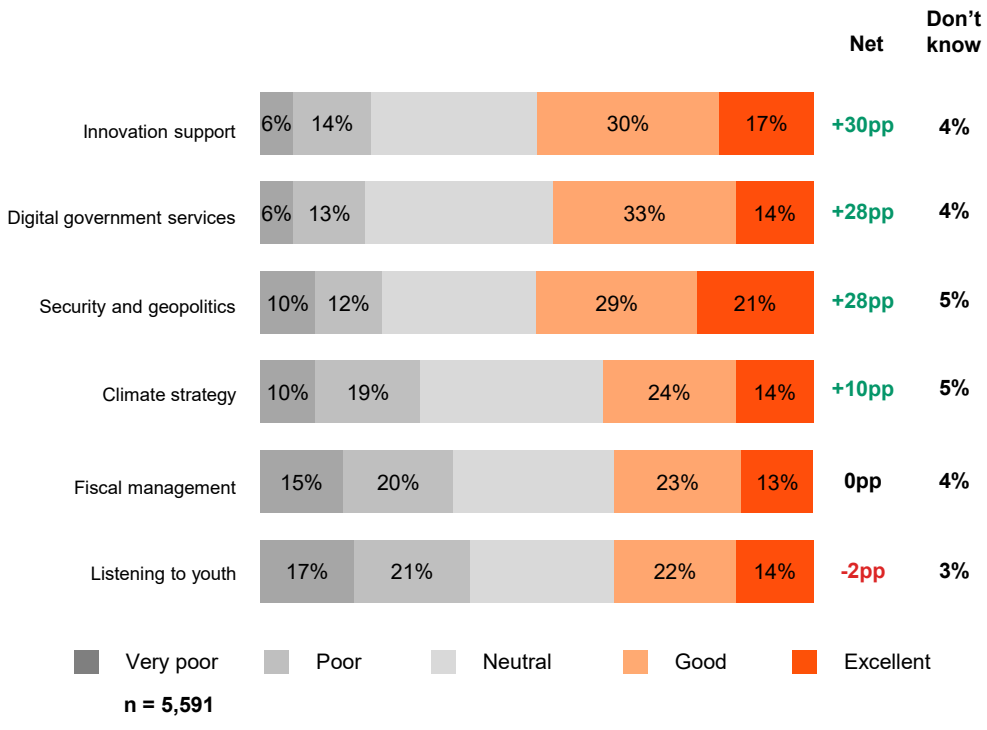
Data from this year's survey shows that positive ratings of government performance are strongest for national security and geopolitical integration, and innovation support across technology and startups, both at 50%, followed by digital integration into public services and operations at 47% (see Figure 3).

By contrast, net sentiment is weakest where outcomes feel least visible. Nearly four in 10 respondents (38%) believe governments perform poorly in listening to and addressing young people's needs and expectations, while 35% express similar negative views of the efficient and transparent management of public funds.

Q. **How would you rate your government's performance in each of the following areas?**

Figure 3 – Government performance areas, net sentiment among respondents
Youth perceptions of government performance are lowest when it comes to the efficient use of public funds and engagement with youth needs and expectations

Note: The diverging bar chart shows how public ratings of government performance vary across each area. Negative ratings (Poor and Very poor) are shown to the left of the centre line, while positive ratings (Good and Excellent) are shown to the right. The chart also shows the Net score, which represents the difference between positive and negative ratings (excellent + good - very poor + poor) and the Don't know answers.



Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026

Figure 4 – Government performance net score heatmap

Theme	Global	Africa	Asia	E. Europe	N. Europe	S. Europe	W. Europe	ME	N. America	S. America
Security & geopolitics	28	24	37	21	25	2	14	73	7	8
Innovation support	30	25	36	17	28	8	26	62	19	18
Digital services	28	21	38	19	23	10	23	61	12	15
Climate strategy	10	12	17	-4	10	-7	-6	43	-4	-8
Listening to youth	-2	-9	12	-24	-16	-22	-31	37	-10	-1
Fiscal management	0	-12	7	-19	4	-28	-7	45	-12	-9

Strong positive ≥ 25 | Positive (1 to 24) | Neutral (0) | Negative (-1 to -24) | Strong negative (≥ - 25)

Note: The heatmap shows the net government performance score across all regions and performance themes; Values = Net Satisfaction Score (% Excellent + Good) minus (% Poor + Very poor).

Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026

Perceptions of government performance vary considerably across regions, pointing to different levels of confidence and trust. The Middle East records the highest net satisfaction across the areas assessed. Scores are especially strong for security and geopolitics (73% net satisfaction), innovation support (62%) and digital government services (61%).

Across Europe, satisfaction levels are more mixed. Western, Southern and Eastern Europe record lower net satisfaction in several areas, particularly fiscal management and government responsiveness to youth needs and expectations. Asia is the only region, after the Middle East, expressing a positive net satisfaction score for government responsiveness to youth needs and expectations (12%).

Youth in Saudi Arabia and the UAE report the highest levels of satisfaction globally with the integration of digital technologies into public services. Over half of Saudi and Emirati youth rate government digital integration as ‘excellent’, which is nearly 4x the global rate (14%).

Government effectiveness in addressing climate change challenges is negatively evaluated in most regions, recording the lowest satisfaction scores in South America (-8%) and Southern Europe (-7%), while the Middle East (+43%) and Asia (+17%) record the strongest positive net satisfaction. Southern Europe also stands out for its low confidence in government performance on security and geopolitics, with a net satisfaction score of only 2%, compared with the global average of 28%.



Where to act now: Governments should consider shifting the focus from measuring activity to delivering outcomes that improve people's everyday lives. While economic growth, digital transformation and infrastructure remain important, their success will increasingly be judged by whether they improve affordability, healthcare, education and economic opportunity. Closing the expectation gap will require governments to strengthen accountability, make the impact of public spending more visible and ensure that economic progress translates into tangible benefits for citizens.



03 Digital transformation and AI governance

Youth want a digital government built on trust

When asked what the government's digital transformation priorities should be, young people identified a clear sequence of priorities: build trust and capability before accelerating the adoption of advanced technologies.

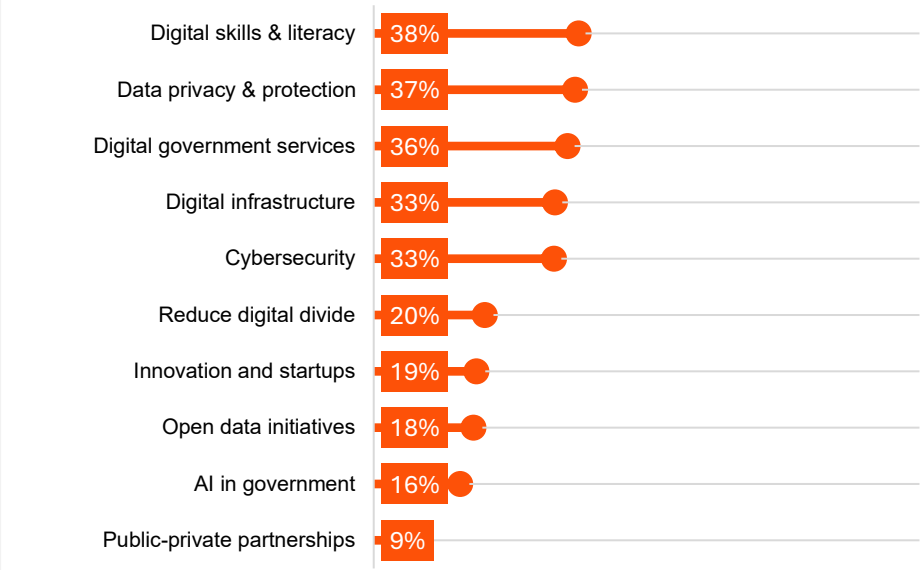
Expanding digital skills and literacy (see Figure 5) tops the digital transformation agenda (38%), closely followed by ensuring strong data privacy and protection (37%) and improving digital government services (36%). From a gender perspective, young women are more interested in data privacy and protection than young men (40% vs 33%).

By contrast, the adoption of AI and emerging technologies in government services ranks among the lowest priorities, with only 16% of youth considering it a key digital transformation priority. The data is likely to indicate that young people expect governments to establish the foundations for responsible digital transformation first, through stronger digital skills, trusted public services and robust data governance.



Q. **What should be the main digital transformation priorities for your country's government?**

Figure 5 – Government digital transformation priorities
AI is part of the future, but building strong digital skills and safeguarding data privacy come first.



Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026

Africa and the Middle East are the only regions where expanding digital government services ranks as the top digital transformation priority, cited by 47% and 45% of youth respectively. In both regions, it is ahead of digital skills and literacy (45% in Africa; 35% in the Middle East) and data privacy and protection (24% and 33%), highlighting a stronger demand for accessible, effective digital public services.



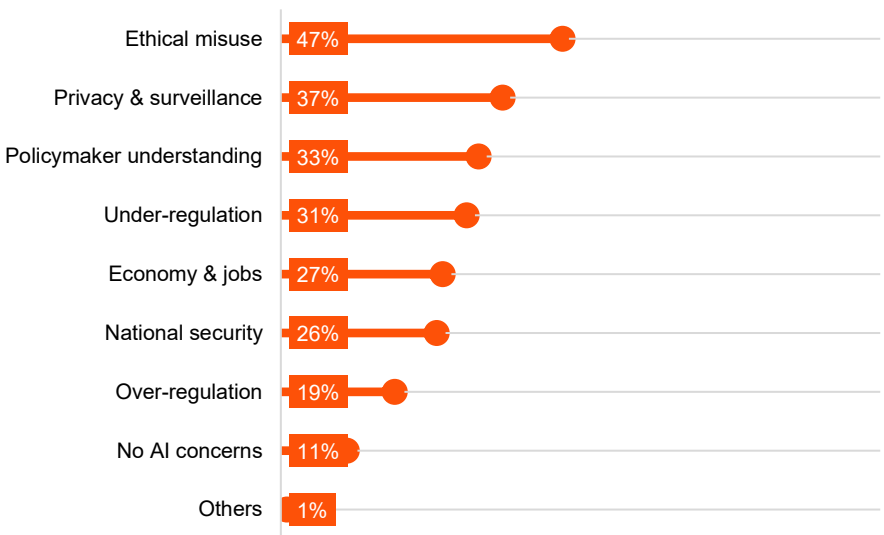
Building AI confidence starts with capability and accountability

Youth concerns about government use of AI are led by a fear of ethical misuse (see Figure 6) – the most frequently cited concern globally (47%), and it rises steadily with education level, from 40% among primary school leavers to 54% among postgraduates. Privacy and surveillance risks rank second, cited by 37% of young people globally.

A third concern points to a wider capability gap: one in three of the survey respondents believe policymakers lack the understanding needed to govern AI effectively. This perception matters. As AI becomes more deeply embedded in public services, education, work, and everyday life, youth are looking to governments not just to regulate technology, but to demonstrate accountable leadership.

Q. **Which of the following concerns do you have regarding governments and AI?**

Figure 6 – Youth concerns regarding governments and AI
Ethics, privacy and understanding define the AI governance credibility gap



Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026

Young men and women want fundamentally different AI governance

From a demographic perspective, young men and women express fundamentally different views on how AI should be governed. This gender divide is not a question of degree – it is a question of direction on policy choices. Women are more likely than men to worry about AI's negative impact on the economy and jobs (30% vs. 24%), privacy and surveillance risks (39% vs. 35%) and ethical misuse (49% vs. 45%). Men, by contrast, are more concerned that over-regulation will limit innovation (22% vs. 16%) and are more likely to believe that policymakers lack sufficient understanding of AI (36% vs. 31%).



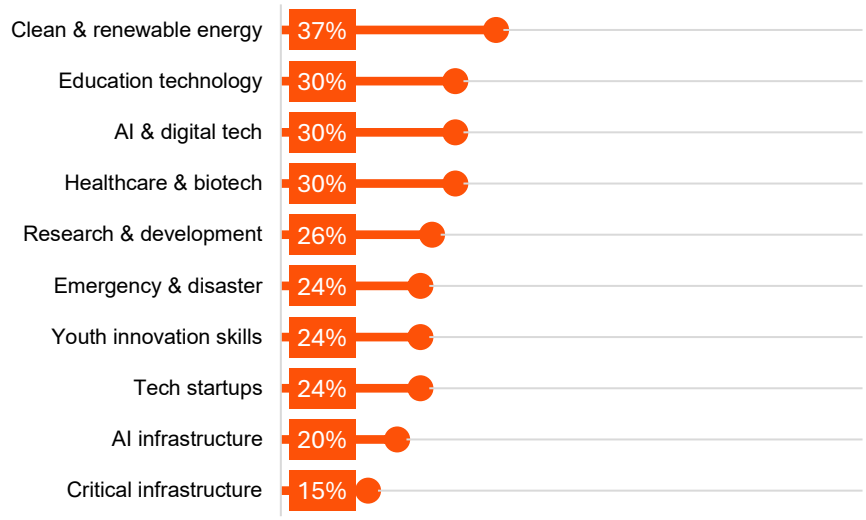
Innovation gains momentum when benefits are felt

When we asked the youth to pick the most important innovation areas where governments should focus, there was a clear winner: clean and renewable energy transition (37%). Driving educational innovation and digital learning, advancing digital technologies such as AI and improving innovation in healthcare and biotech were each selected by 30% of respondents (see Figure 7), forming a second tier of priorities.

Building AI and data centre infrastructure, as well as protecting critical infrastructure (transport, energy, water, communications) are the least important innovation areas for youth (20% and 15%), suggesting that innovation priorities are outcome-driven, not technology-driven. Youth signal clear preference for innovation areas that deliver tangible public value – energy transition, education, healthcare and applied digital technologies – over foundational or back-end infrastructure. The message is a call for innovation that improves daily life, skills and affordability.

Q. **What are the most important innovation areas where your government should focus?**

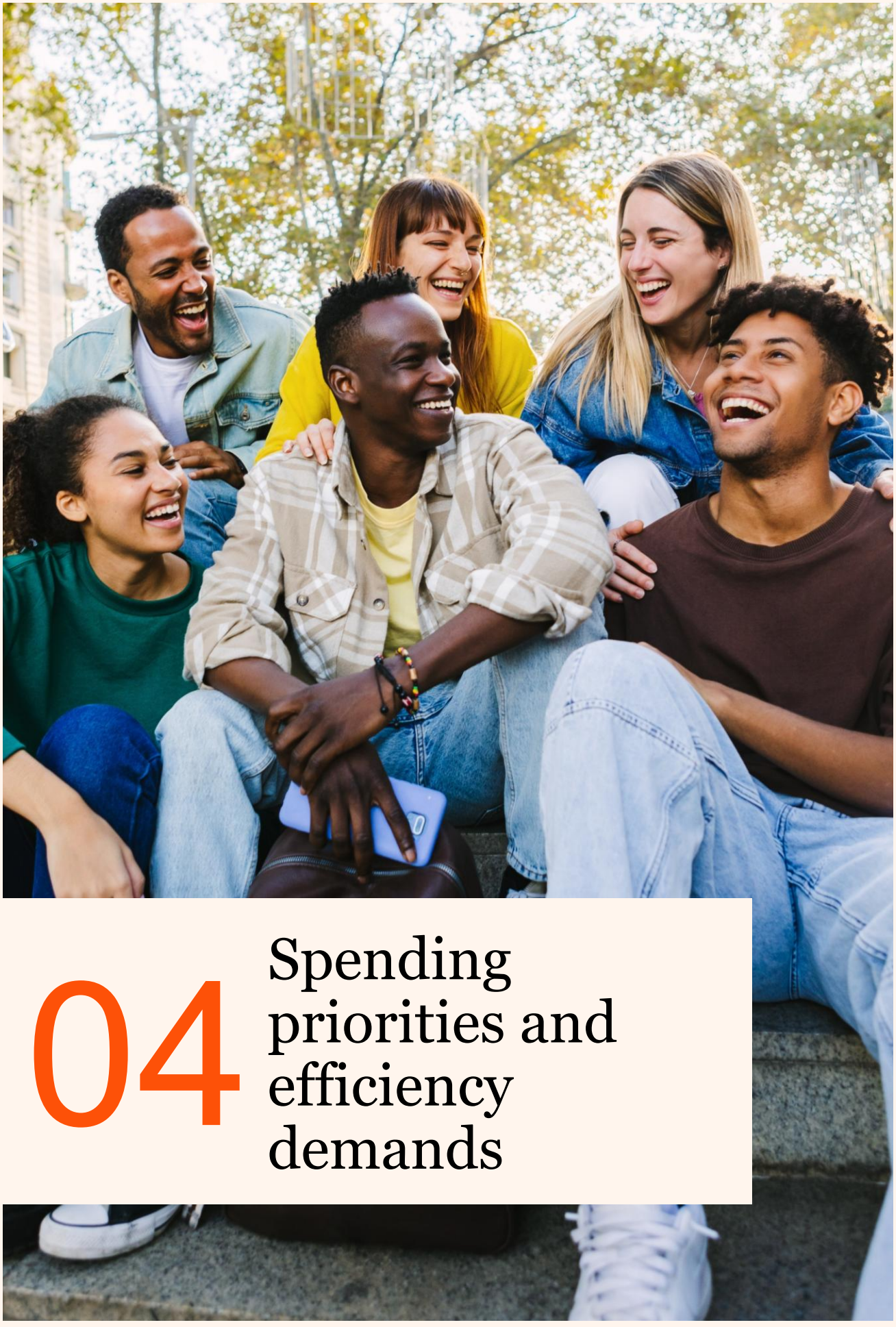
Figure 7 – Most important areas for innovation. Powering the energy transition, education technology and AI and digital tech are shaping the innovation agenda



Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026



Where to act now: Governments should consider sequencing digital ambition around three priorities: strengthening digital literacy, embedding robust governance and demonstrating that AI can be deployed responsibly and transparently. This is not resistance to innovation, but a call for digital transformation that is trusted, human-centred and grounded in real public value.



04 Spending priorities and efficiency demands

Youth want better outcomes from existing spend

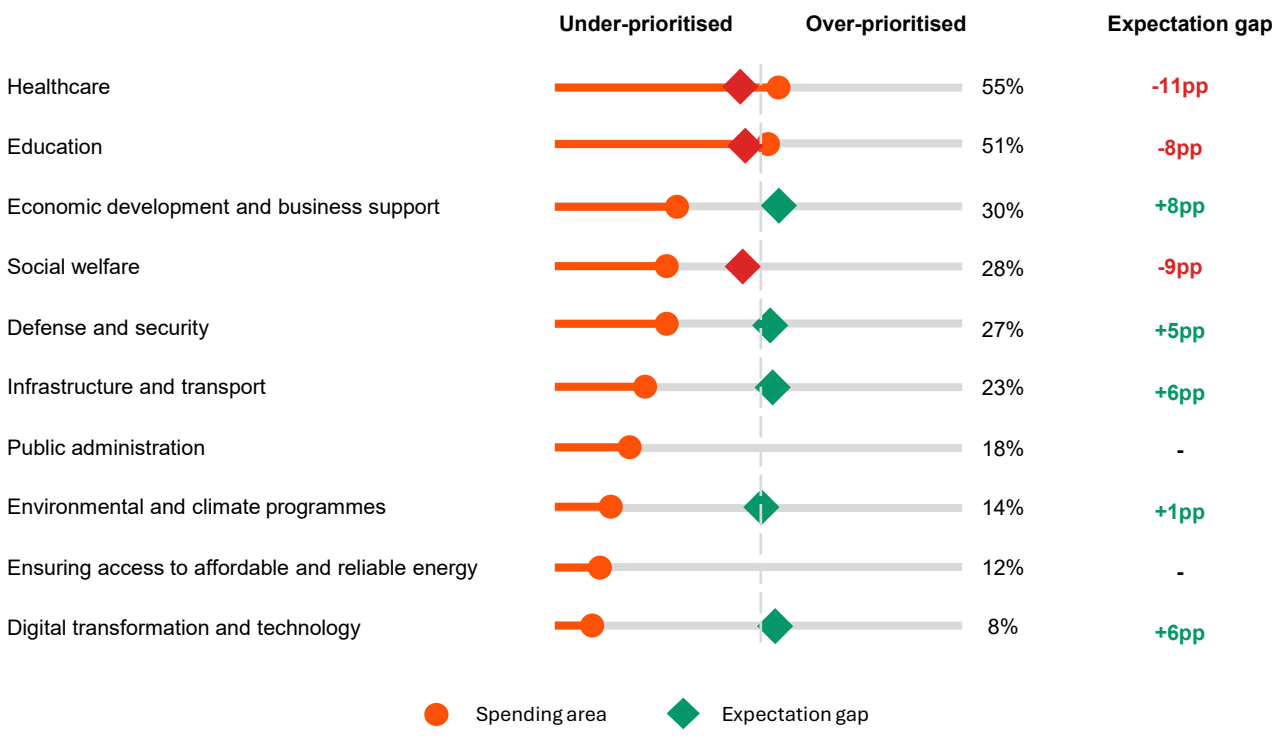
Healthcare (55%) emerges as the leading priority area for greater spending efficiency and transparency (see Figure 8), closely followed by education (51%). These are also the areas where young people see the largest gaps between current and desired government priorities, suggesting that this age group wants a government that delivers on what it already promises, not just by the scale of public expenditure. Young people are looking for more effective public services, better outcomes and greater accountability – not simply higher levels of spending.

Economic development and business support rank as the third highest priority for spending efficiency. This suggests that young people want governments to demonstrate how public investment translates into better jobs, stronger skills and greater economic opportunity.

By contrast, relatively few respondents identify climate programmes or digital transformation as areas requiring greater spending efficiency.



Figure 8 – Spending areas requiring greater efficiency and transparency



Note: The Expectation Gap represents the difference between current government priorities and youth desired government priorities. The negative gap shows the areas youth consider under-prioritised by governments, while the positive gap reflects the over-prioritised areas.

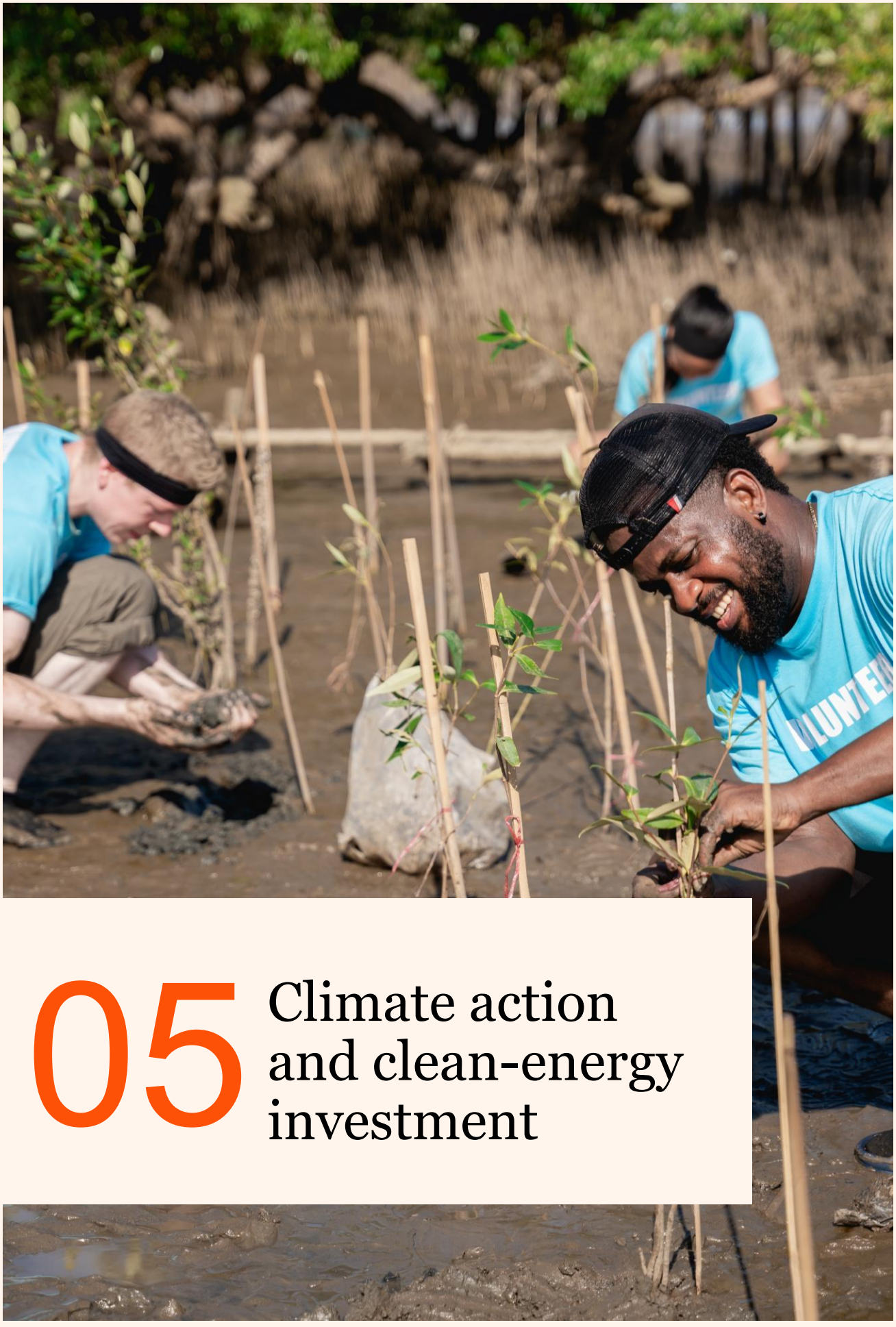
Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026

From a demographic perspective, concern about public sector spending efficiency increases with education level. More highly educated young people are significantly more likely to point to inefficiencies across core spending areas, notably healthcare, education and economic development. Gender differences are narrower, but still visible: women express greater concern than men about the efficiency of healthcare spending (59% vs. 51%) and education spending (52% vs. 50%).

Regionally, the need for greater healthcare spending efficiency is highest in South America (79%) and North America (66%), compared with Asia Pacific (41%) and the Middle East (43%). Education spending efficiency is the most demanded in South America (69%) and Africa (57%), and the lowest in Northern and Western Europe (both 45%).

Where to act now: In an era of greater fiscal scrutiny and rising public expectations, governments need to demonstrate the outcomes that spending creates. This requires a shift from measuring activity to measuring impact, embedding value-based budgeting, increasing transparency around public expenditure and ensuring that economic investment translates into tangible improvements in jobs, skills and productivity.



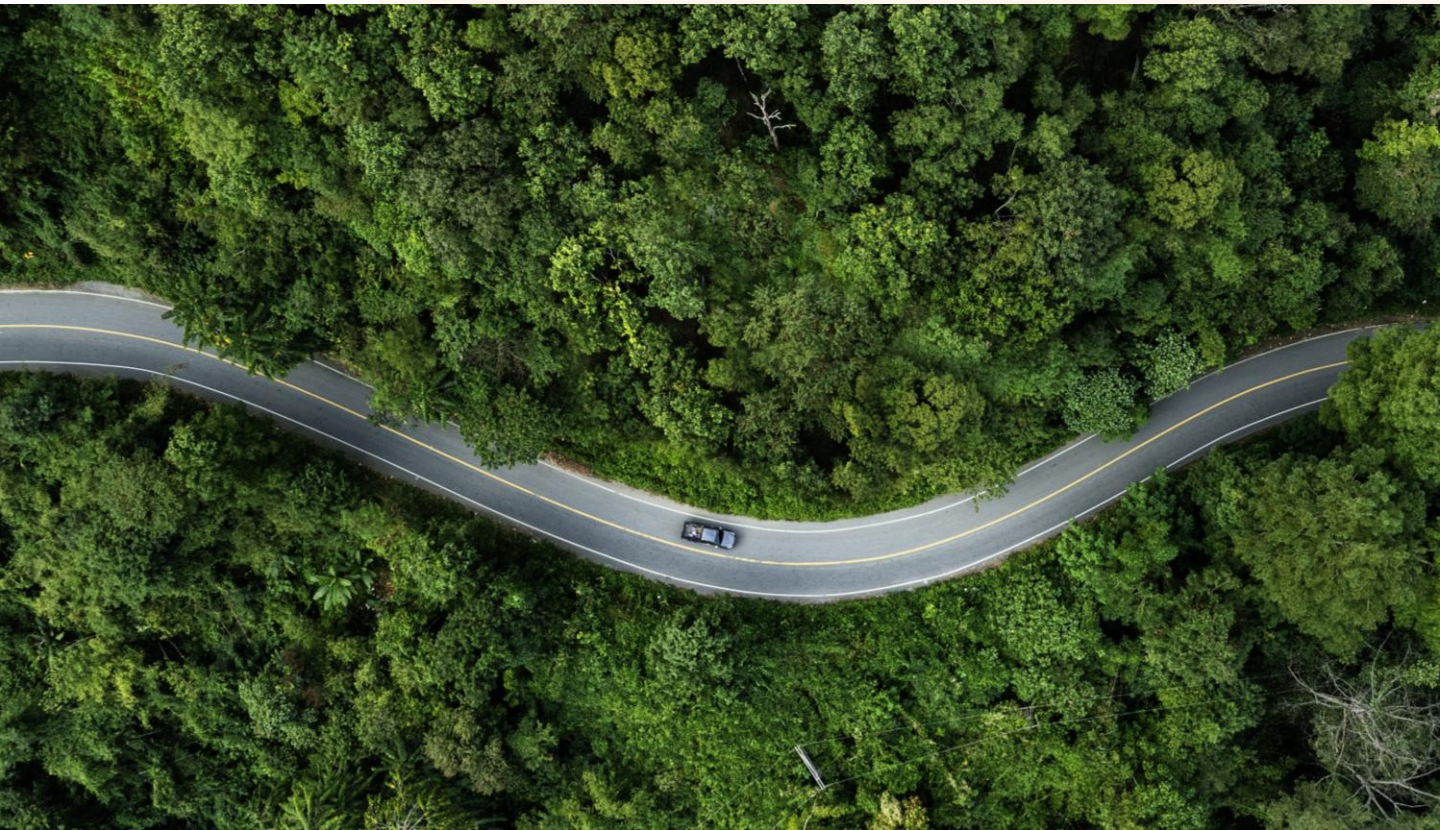


05 Climate action and clean-energy investment

Climate matters more as a policy priority than a personal concern

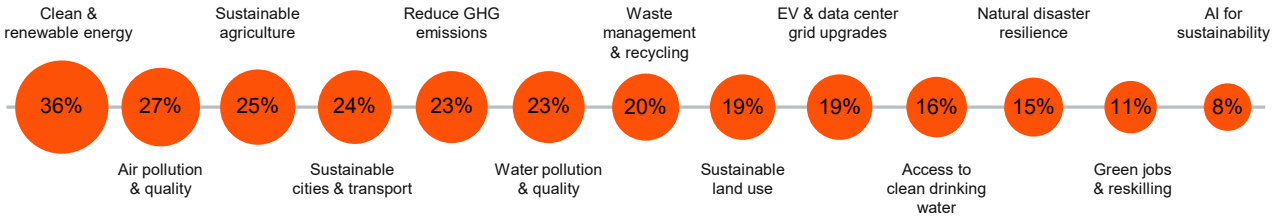
According to survey findings, climate change is far less prominent as an immediate personal concern for youth. Only 14% of young people identify it as a major issue in their daily lives, well behind the cost of living, job security, housing affordability, public safety and access to healthcare. Asia-Pacific and Northern Europe are the only regions where climate and environmental risks do not rank among the least pressing concerns, rising up to 20% in Asia and to 17% in Northern Europe.

However, climate and energy priorities are considered by the youth as critical government agendas, especially where innovation, environmental sustainability and security are concerned. For 37% of global youth, clean and renewable energy ranked as the most important area for innovation investment (see Figure 7), while for 36% it was the top environmental priority for their governments (see Figure 9). Moreover, 32% ranked energy and resource security as the fourth most important geopolitical priority for governments (see Figure 11).



Q. Which environmental issue should be a top priority for your country's government?

Figure 9 – Environmental priorities for governments



Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026



22pp

gap between climate policy aspiration and lived urgency – **36%** of youth consider climate change a policy priority, while only **14%** of them perceive it as a personal concern.

26%

of youth in Northern Europe consider climate change as a desired government priority, while South America stands at 9% – nearly a threefold difference.

Green is the one language every region speaks – with distinct regional pathways

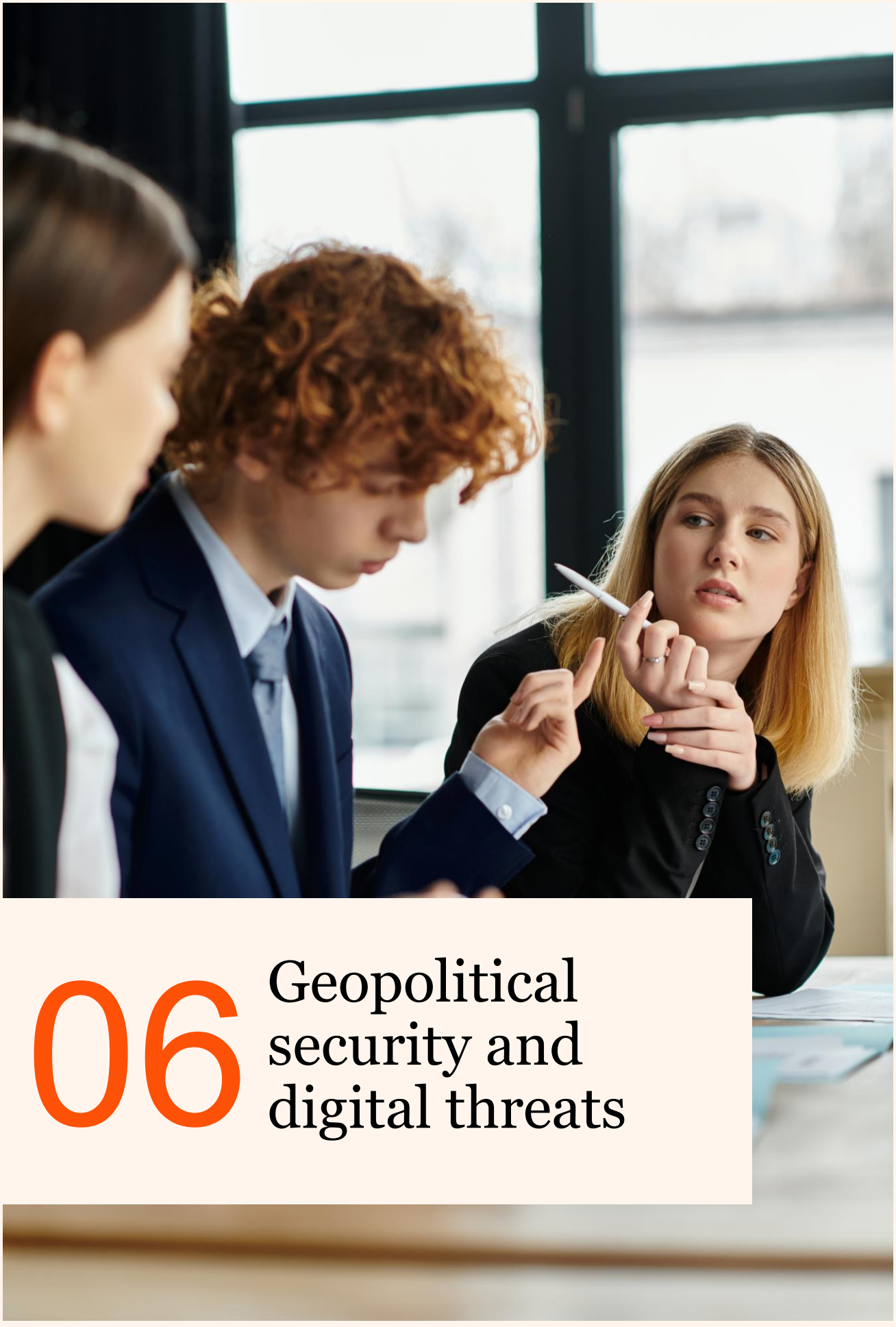
Clean and renewable energy is the leading environmental priority across most regions (see Figure 10), but the priorities that follow reveal distinct regional pathways. In Africa, sustainable agriculture ranks second (32%), followed by upgrades to electricity infrastructure to support electric vehicles (29%). Northern and Western Europe place greater emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions (29% and 28%, respectively), while Southern Europe prioritises sustainable cities and transport (34%) after clean energy. Support for the clean energy transition is strongest in South America (43%) and the Middle East (41%). In Asia-Pacific, air pollution and quality and clean and renewable energy are closely ranked, indicating that young people place similar weight on immediate environmental concerns and the longer-term energy transition.

Figure 10 – Regional environmental priorities heatmap

	Total	Africa	APAC	E. Europe	N. Europe	S. Europe	W. Europe	M. East	N. America	S. America
Clean & renewable energy	36%	36%	32%	36%	37%	35%	35%	41%	39%	43%
Air pollution & quality	27%	16%	33%	32%	27%	26%	33%	19%	33%	24%
Sustainable agriculture	25%	32%	27%	23%	21%	24%	23%	28%	21%	16%
Sustainable cities & transport	24%	19%	25%	25%	24%	34%	25%	16%	27%	28%
Reduce GHG emissions	23%	17%	25%	18%	29%	25%	28%	22%	26%	25%
Water pollution & quality	23%	20%	20%	28%	27%	18%	27%	20%	28%	24%
Waste management & recycling	20%	21%	22%	24%	18%	23%	19%	20%	20%	16%
Sustainable land use	19%	15%	21%	19%	22%	18%	15%	16%	23%	24%
EV & data center grid upgrades	19%	29%	20%	16%	12%	11%	13%	25%	15%	10%
Access to clean drinking water	16%	19%	10%	16%	12%	14%	16%	16%	22%	25%
Natural disaster resilience	15%	16%	19%	14%	11%	11%	11%	12%	9%	17%
Green jobs & reskilling	11%	15%	9%	9%	7%	12%	9%	13%	6%	12%
AI for sustainability	8%	11%	8%	9%	10%	5%	5%	11%	5%	6%

Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026

Where to act now: Governments should consider making climate action tangible, linking it to affordability, jobs and quality of life, while leveraging clean energy as a cross-sector growth engine to close the gap between ambition and lived experience.



06 Geopolitical security and digital threats

In an unstable world, cybersecurity is youth's clearest security consensus

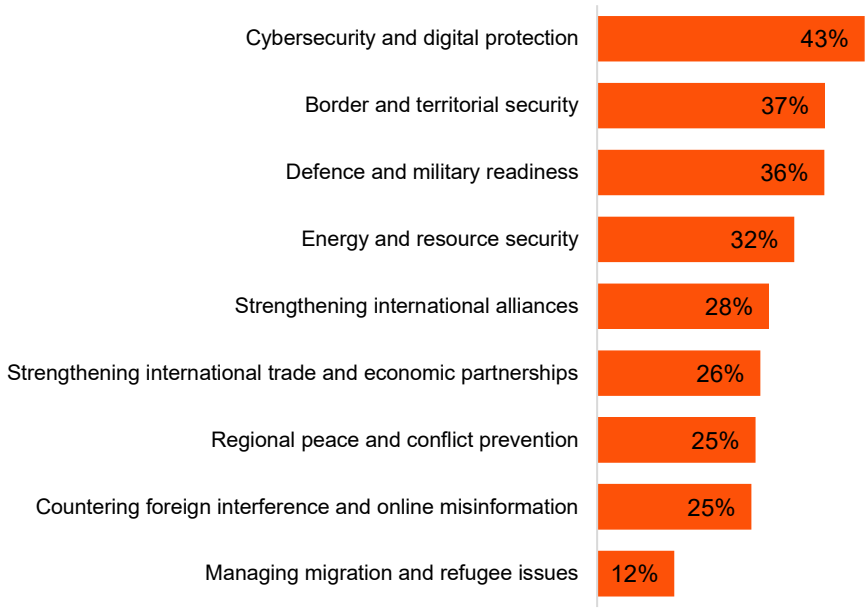
As governments, businesses and citizens become more interconnected, cyber threats increasingly disrupt essential services, compromise personal data, undermine confidence in institutions and expose economies to new forms of geopolitical risk. As the most digitally connected generation, young people are often exposed to threats such as phishing, identity theft, account compromise and online harassment. When asked about which aspect of geopolitical security and stability should governments focus on, 43% of youth worldwide rank cybersecurity and digital protection (see Figure 11) as the most important geopolitical security priority – outpacing border security (37%) or military strength (36%).

Cybersecurity ranks among the top three geopolitical security priorities across every region surveyed, with significant nuances. In Eastern Europe and the Middle East, cybersecurity is outpaced by traditional defence. In Eastern Europe, border and territorial security comes first at 46%, while in the Middle East defence and military readiness tops youth priorities at 44%. South America's most pressing geopolitical security priorities are also border and territorial security (39%), closely followed by regional peace and conflict prevention (37%). Southern Europe, on the other hand, stands out as the only region where energy and resource security is the first geopolitical security focus (36%), surpassing cybersecurity or traditional defence. Managing migration and refugee issues ranks last globally, with only 12% of youth seeing it as a top security concern globally.



Q. **Which aspect of geopolitical security and stability should your government focus on?**

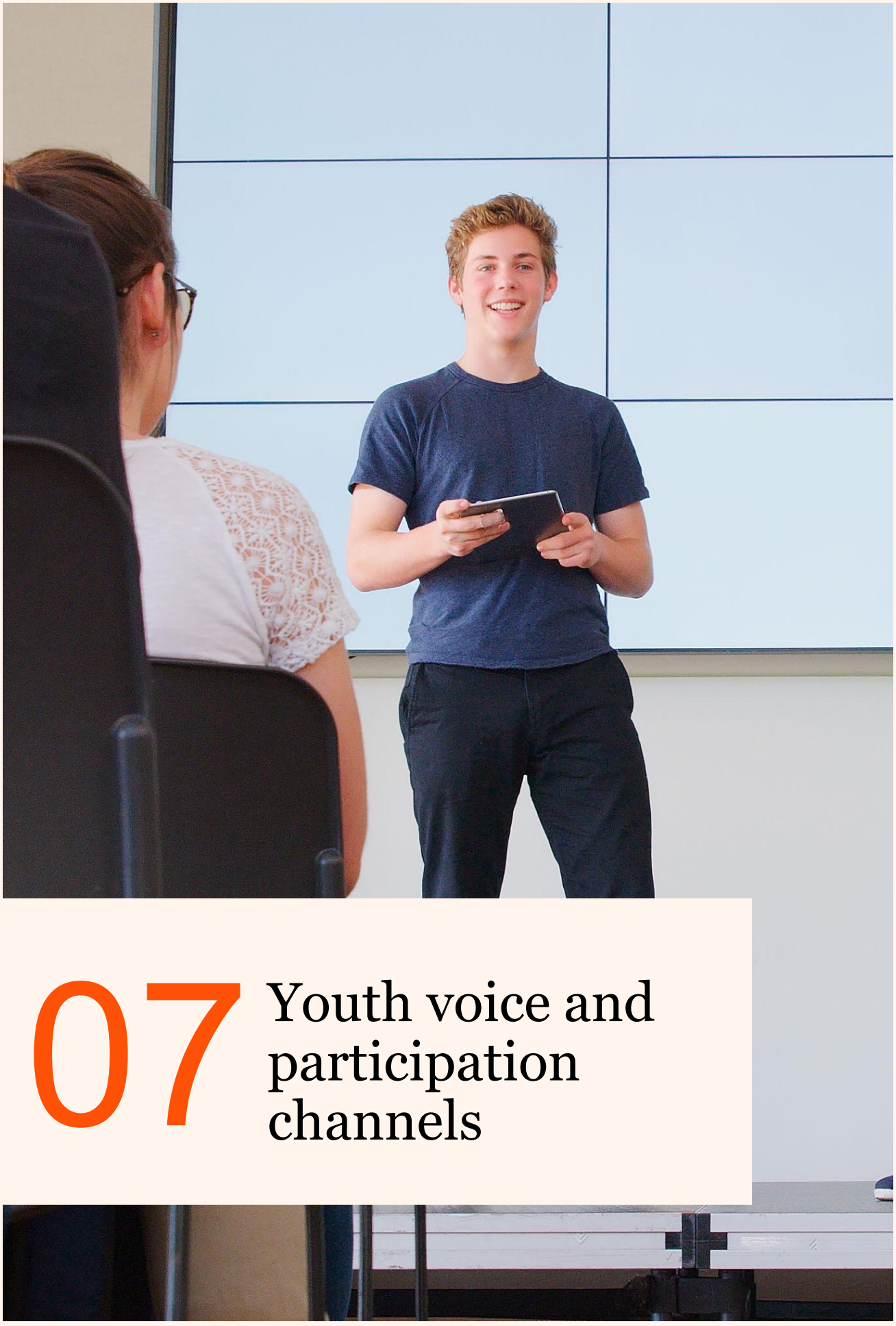
Figure 11 – Geopolitical security government priorities
Cybersecurity is one of the few cross-regional agendas where governments can build trust through visible action



Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026



Where to act now: For governments, the redefinition of security requires a structural rebalancing of strategies: elevating cybersecurity and digital resilience to core pillars of national security while maintaining context-specific defence capabilities. Delivering visible, citizen-centric digital protection across public services, financial systems and critical infrastructure, offers a clear opportunity to build lasting trust in an increasingly interconnected world.



07 Youth voice and participation channels

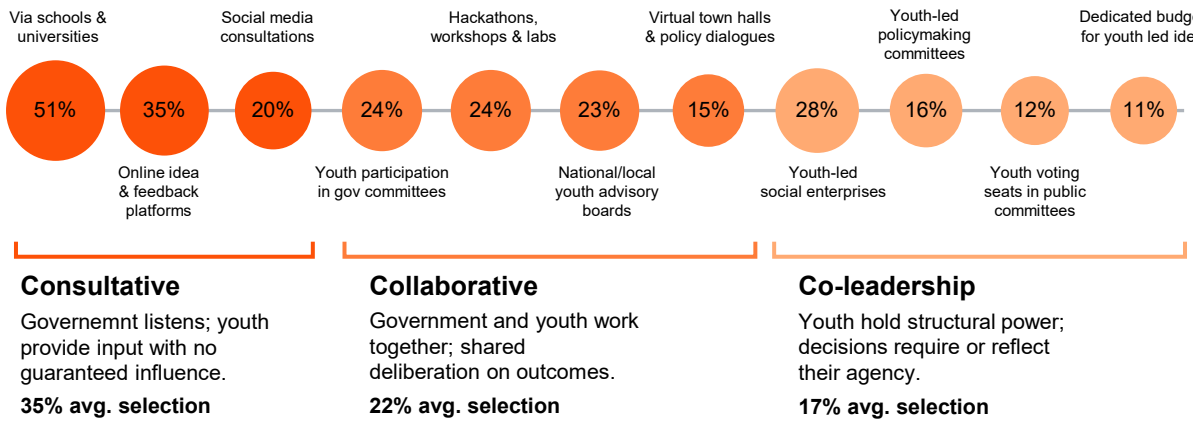
Youth want participation that is structured, trusted and visible

Our survey findings have indicated that youth trust institutions more than governments assume, but only when engagement is genuine, structured and impactful. More than half of youth globally prefer institutional engagement channels – schools or universities (51%) – over social media consultations (20%) or virtual town halls (15%). Online platforms where youth can share ideas and feedback is the second most preferred channel (35%), which makes consultative engagement the most accessible way for governments to reach youth (see Figure 12). Co-leadership formats, such as youth-led policymaking committees (16%), youth seats with voting power in public committees (12%) and dedicated budgets for youth-led ideas (11%) are the least preferred channels, showing that youth value access, structure and visibility over formal power-sharing mechanisms.



Q. What are the most effective ways for your government to involve young people in shaping policies and solutions?

Figure 12 – Youth preferred engagement channels
Youth gravitate toward what's familiar and accessible. Engagement preference falls sharply from low-barrier consultative channels to co-leadership structures.



Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026

In the Middle East, youth place greater emphasis on decisive government action accompanied by clear accountability. National advisory boards (32%) emerge as the most distinctive engagement channel in the region – well above the global average (23%) – complementing continued reliance on institutional channels (45%) and online platforms (35%). Other regions show greater appetite for hands-on, collaborative formats. Asia-Pacific and Northern Europe stand out as the regions with the highest preference for youth-led hackathons, workshops, or innovation labs, at 29% each.

Where to act now: Youth trust in engagement is not driven by symbolic inclusion or governance roles, but by whether their voice can be expressed easily, heard consistently and translated into visible outcomes. Governments should therefore scale accessible feedback channels, integrate youth engagement into education systems and ensure clear feedback loops that demonstrate how input shapes decisions.



08 Everyday concerns and government response

Cost of living is the single most cited concern in every region, across every demographic

Cost of living stands out as the most pressing concern for young people globally, cited by 64% of respondents, followed by job security and income (44%) and housing affordability (30%). This is an area where government performance is rated weakest. Cost of living records a weighted net efficiency score of -18pp(see Figure 13), while housing affordability comes second at -9pp, the lowest score across all issues assessed. This is the most acute pressure point in the youth-government relationship. This gap suggests that young people are judging economic progress increasingly through lived outcomes, whether they can afford housing, secure stable incomes and manage everyday costs.

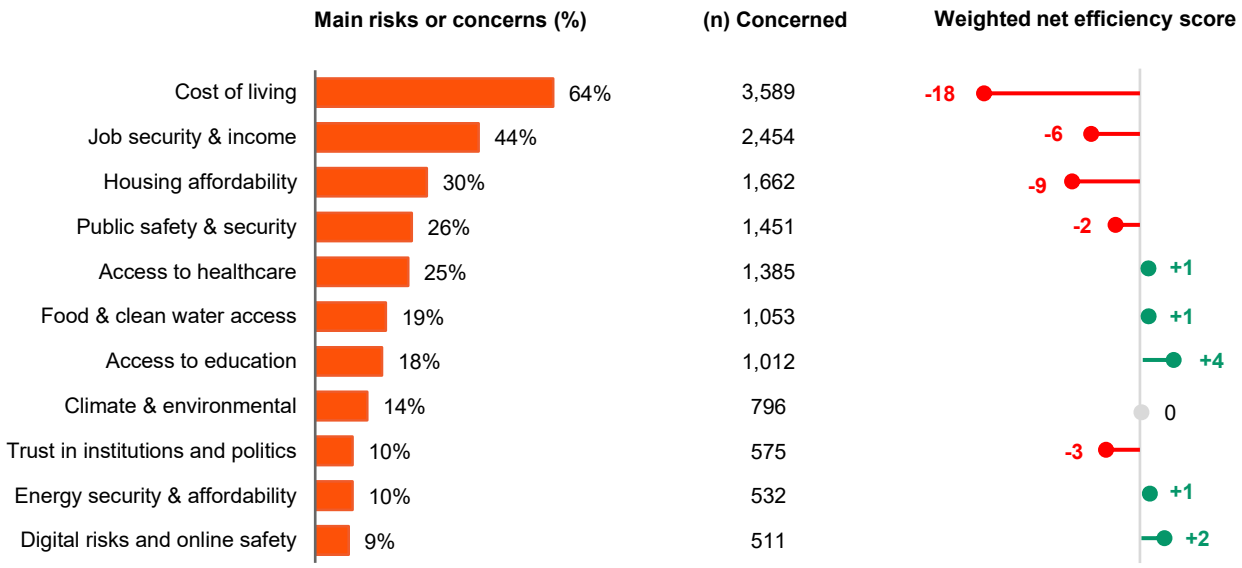
Affordability pressures are particularly acute among 25-30-year-olds, who are more directly exposed to labour and housing markets. Cost of living is cited by 66% of this group, compared with 61% of those aged 15-17, pointing to a widening gap between economic growth narratives and the financial realities facing young adults.

Housing affordability concern reinforces a broader pattern seen across regions: economic performance and wealth do not automatically translate into accessible living conditions, and it is this gap that increasingly shapes youth perceptions of government effectiveness.



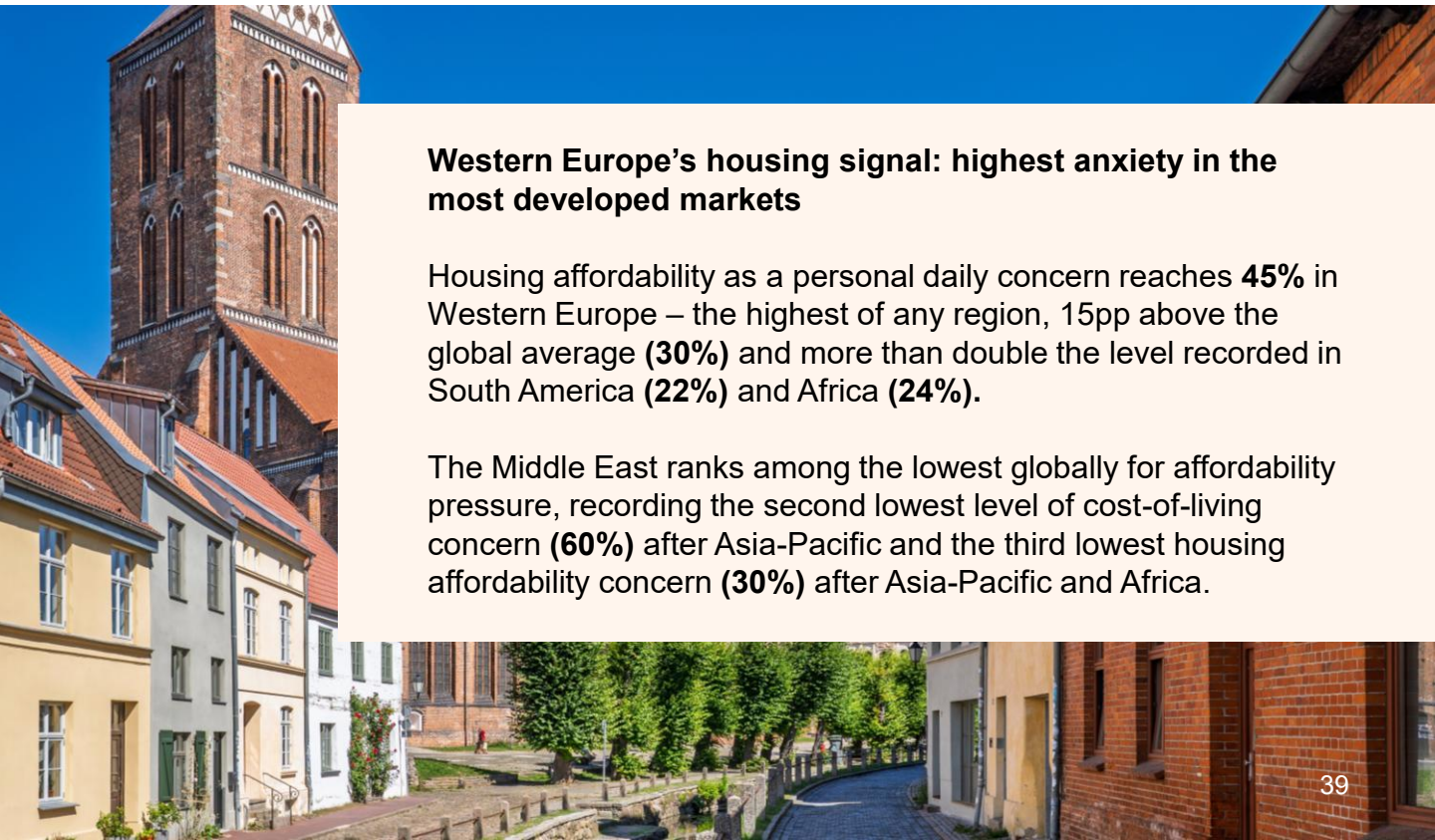
Q. Which issues or risks cause you the most concern in your daily life and how effective is the government in addressing them?

Figure 13 – Perceived daily life concerns vs government effectiveness in addressing them
Cost of living, jobs and housing are not background issues; they are the primary lens through which youth evaluate government performance.



Note: The chart shows youth's most important daily life concerns, as well as the government effectiveness in addressing them. The Weighted Net Efficiency Score is calculated as the difference between top 2 box (very effective + effective) and bottom 2 box (ineffective + very ineffective), weighted against (or multiplied by) the percentage of respondents for each risk/concern.

Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026



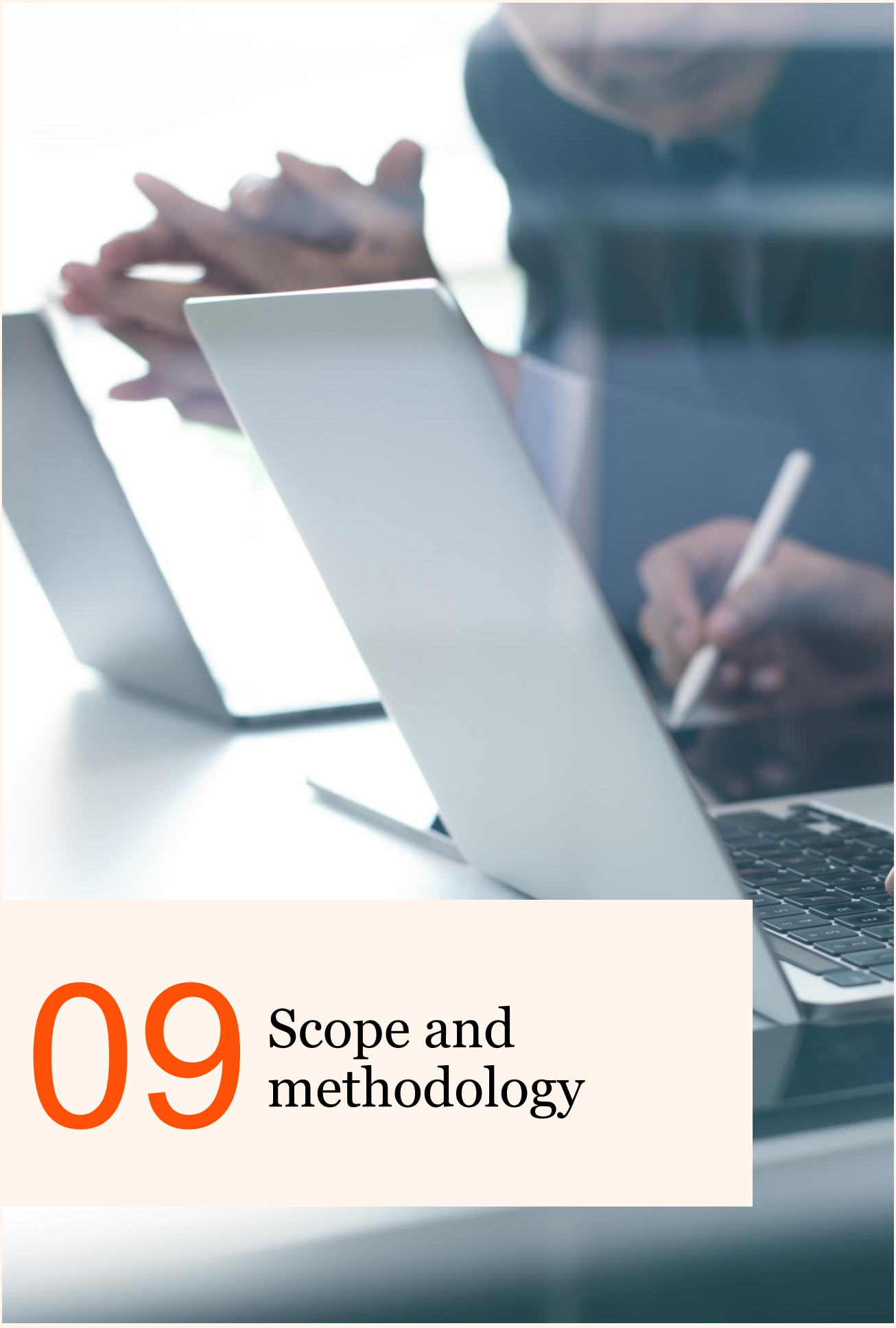
Western Europe's housing signal: highest anxiety in the most developed markets

Housing affordability as a personal daily concern reaches **45%** in Western Europe – the highest of any region, 15pp above the global average **(30%)** and more than double the level recorded in South America **(22%)** and Africa **(24%).**

The Middle East ranks among the lowest globally for affordability pressure, recording the second lowest level of cost-of-living concern **(60%)** after Asia-Pacific and the third lowest housing affordability concern **(30%)** after Asia-Pacific and Africa.

Where to act now: Affordability is an increasingly important lens through which to understand how economic growth translates into people's everyday experience. Housing affordability, in particular, highlights a potential disconnect between strong economic performance and the realities facing young people. Tracking outcomes across housing access, household financial security and everyday living costs can provide a clearer picture of whether the benefits of growth are being felt more broadly. The gap is measurable, and progress in narrowing it can help strengthen confidence in future economic opportunity.





09 Scope and methodology

We surveyed 5,591 young people across 42 countries and territories in March 2026, using a stratified sample by age and gender.
The survey was designed to capture the views of the global youth across seven public-sector themes in focus: Government priorities, digital transformation, AI, fiscal management, climate change, geopolitical security and youth engagement. The sentiments captured in the report reflect views at the time of the survey.

Note
Percentages in charts may not add up to 100%, a result of rounding percentages; multi-selection answer options; and the decision in certain cases to exclude the display of certain responses, including 'Other,' 'Not applicable' and 'Don't know.'

The global and regional figures in this report are weighted proportionally to country nominal GDP, so the youth's views are broadly representative across all major regions.

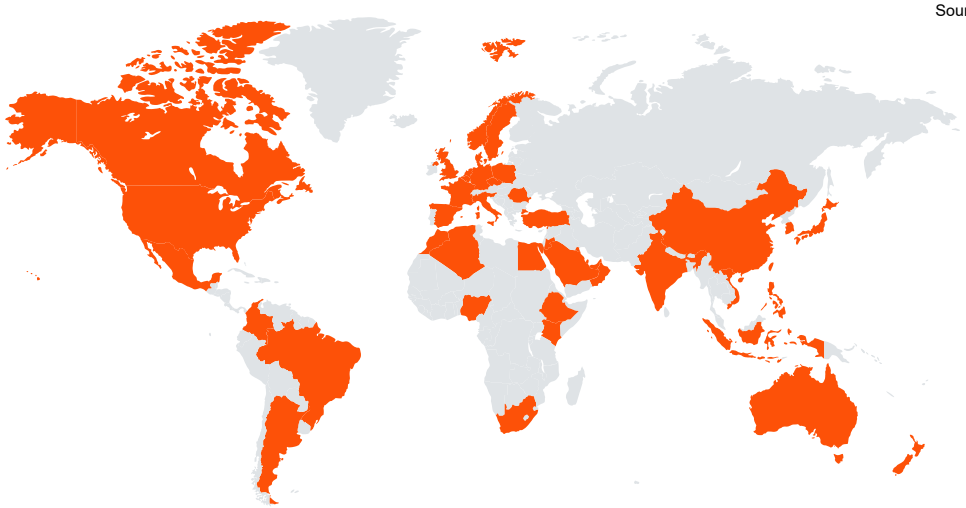
5,591
Total youth respondents aged 15-30

42
Countries spanning 9 geopolitical regions

86%
Of the global economic output (GDP)

66%
Of the global youth population (15-40)

Source: PwC's Global Youth Outlook Survey 2026



9 Regions covered

Africa, Asia & Pacific, Eastern Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Europe, Western Europe, Middle East, North America and South America.*

Youth demographics

By gender	By age			Urban vs. rural
55% female	**15-17**	**18-24**	**25-30**	78% urban
45% male	25%	30%	45%	22% rural

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