

Next Generation

Sudan

March 2024





Contents

Acknowledgements..... 4

Acronyms..... 5

Foreword..... 6

What is the Next Generation Programme?..... 7

Executive Summary..... 9

Introduction..... 12

Methodology..... 19

Analysis..... 24

Theme I: Youth lifestyle and attitudes..... 24

Theme II: Youth voices..... 58

Theme III: Education, work and entrepreneurship..... 87

The way forward..... 106

Policy recommendations..... 107

Conclusion..... 109



Acknowledgements

This independent research was commissioned by the British Council to Conflict Management Consulting (CMC). Primary and secondary research took place between April and December 2023.

The research team was led by Kristian Dalsgård Svendsen (Senior Researcher and Head of PeaceTech, CMC), and included May Yasir (Data Analyst, CMC) and André Kahlmeyer (Senior Researcher and Director, CMC). Additional field research support in Sudan was provided by Sewar Consulting, Labs for Development and Two Fourty Nine Company.

The research team would like to thank all the participants who gave their time and expertise to inform this study. We would also like to acknowledge the work of the stakeholders, local civil society groups and organizations in Sudan that participated in the research by facilitating and/or participating in focus group discussions as well as supported the survey data collection:

The Sudanese Democracy First Group, Sudan Civic Lab, Kulna Ahl Media platform, Manara Initiative, Ministry of Education, Bahri University, Youth Forum Organization (YFO), SITE Initiative, Mobdioon Organization for Development, Youth mechanism for protecting children. Sudan Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), The National Council for Child Welfare, Portive Cultural Center, Nabd Elbalad Association, Al-Qasim Cultural Forum, Savannah Innovation Labs, Geser Organization, The Peace Council, WeHub Sudan, Y-peer network Sudan, 8 of March Feminist Group Sudan, Speaking Hands initiative to support deaf women, Habela Center, Roseiris Youth Center, Droob al Amal initiative, Hay Al-Zohour Youth Center.

The research has been peer reviewed by the following individuals from the British Council:

1. James Perkins, Head of Research Excellence, Research and Insight.
2. Izzah Meyer, Manager Next Generation.
3. Dr Hala Nur, Regional Team Leader Sudan.
4. Amna Ibrahim, Head of English Programmes Sudan.

Disclaimer

The findings of this report are entirely those of the authors and do not reflect the positions or policies of the British Council.



Acronyms

DESA - UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

EPI - Expanded Programme on Immunisation

FGDs - Focus Group Discussions

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

IDP - Internally Displaced Person

KIIs - Key Informant Interviews

OCHA - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

PSUs - Primary Sampling Units

SPLM-N - Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North

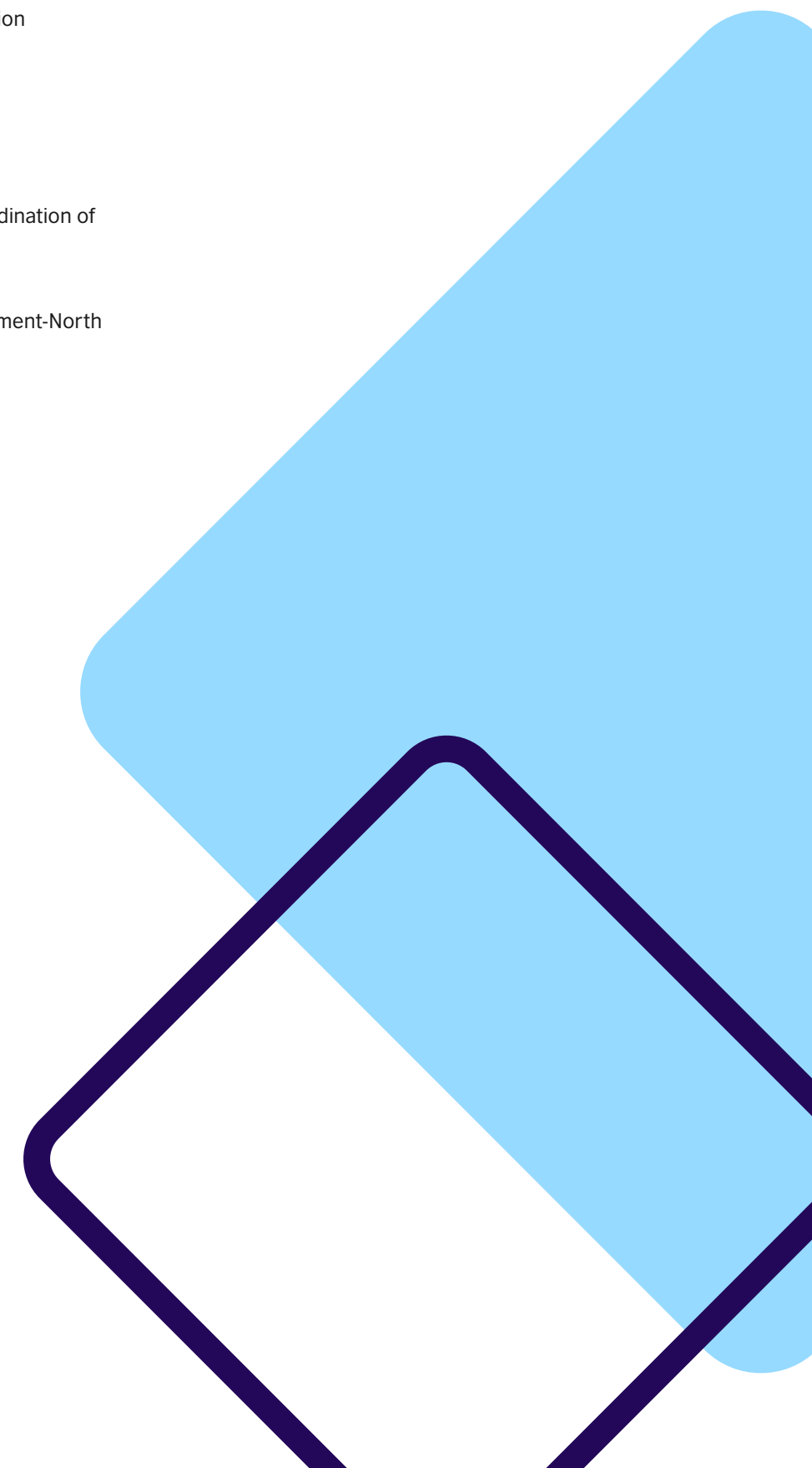
SSUs - Secondary Sampling Units

TMC - Transitional Military Council

UAE - United Arab Emirates

UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund



Foreword

Since 1948, the British Council has facilitated cultural exchange and educational opportunities between Sudan and the United Kingdom. For 75 years, our aim has been to strengthen international links and foster relations between people. During that time, our work has been buffeted by many external upheavals. Throughout, we have continued to advance our mission - non-partisan, focused always on building better understanding between people, and ensuring voices are heard.

We continue to do so now. The Next Generation Sudan 2024 study provides valuable insights at a pivotal juncture in Sudan's history. In the midst of profound societal transformations, this research, conducted since fighting erupted on 15 April 2023, undertakes the formidable task of unravelling and reflecting the perspectives of Sudan's youth. Their views are sometimes surprising and frequently inspirational. We are very grateful to them for their openness in sharing their thoughts with us.

The data generated by this study is not merely a collection of nuanced insights; it provides information that has the potential if used wisely to help shape the trajectory of the nation. Aligned with the global Next Generation initiative, our report aims to amplify the voices of Sudanese youth, providing a platform for their views and concerns and offering suggested solutions. It aims to capture the essence of Sudan's youth, showcasing their resilience in conflict, their creative spirit in adversity, and their enduring optimism for a fairer, more democratic, and prosperous Sudan.

In the current context of ongoing challenges and historic shifts, this research illuminates the aspirations, concerns, and innovative potential of Sudan's youth for practical application. As the country navigates through transformative times, the Next Generation Sudan 2024 report serves as a touchstone of attitudes and aspirations which can guide policymakers, stakeholders, and the global community towards a more informed understanding of Sudan's young people and their potential role to shape their country's future.

There is a vaulting ambition underlying our endeavour – we seek not only to document the current sentiments and experiences of Sudan's youth but also to provide a catalyst for positive change. Through a comprehensive and in-depth portrayal of young people's perspectives, the report aims to inform policy decisions and guide developmental interventions. It is our hope that the findings of this study will guide those steering the nation towards a future that aligns with the aspirations of its dynamic and resilient youth.

The Next Generation Sudan 2024 report is an exploration of perceptions, lifestyles, and aspirations. We hope it is much more: a powerful instrument for all those – Sudanese, British and from the international community - with an ambition to assist the country as it builds its future. Our goal is to capture views which may otherwise be unheard, and for them to contribute to the national discourse, informing policymakers, stakeholders, and the global community about the aspirations of Sudan's next generation.

Country Director Sudan
Stephen Forbes

What is the Next Generation Programme?

Next Generation is a flagship British Council research series that aims to delve deep into understanding the needs, potential and aspirations of young people – the heartbeats of nations. Recognising young individuals not merely as future leaders but as the vibrant present force of societies, this initiative aims to create a space for young people where their voices are acknowledged and truly heard. The series steadfastly believes that understanding and engaging with young people is not an option but a necessity, as they are the ones to mould, innovate, and steer their countries into the future.

Initiated in 2009 with its first report on Pakistan, the Next Generation series has since painted the landscapes of youth sentiment and ambition across varied geographies including: Indonesia, Poland, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nigeria, Italy, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Germany, Sri Lanka, Ireland-Northern Ireland, Kenya, Turkey, the UK, Tanzania, South Africa, Pakistan, Colombia and Albania. Follow up reports have taken place in Myanmar and Lebanon, and an overview report has been conducted on Next Generations countries in Africa. Next Generation has also published a series of global comparative analyses, exploring '[what we know](#)' about youth perceptions across the world. Work is currently underway in Iraq and Bangladesh, and new research will shortly be launched in Brazil, Kyrgyzstan and the UK.

The initiative has been pivotal in bringing to light the dreams, challenges, and the inherent desire among the youth to contribute positively to their societies.

Engaging with over 17,000 young people between the ages of 18–30 through diverse mediums like surveys, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, online diaries, and workshops, the reports have been instrumental in understanding the youth's perspective on a myriad of global and local challenges.

Next Generation research is built on the premise that the conditions fostering creativity, fulfilment, and active citizenship in young people are paramount to understand. The findings have often underscored a stark reality: while young people are eager to engage and contribute to societal development, their voices often go unheard, their potential underappreciated, and their capacity to bring about change, underestimated. This has led to a shift in how young people engage with politics and society, from formal systems of engagement to more grassroots, issue-based activism,

showcasing young people's adaptability and their relentless drive to be heard and make a difference.

In the midst of an ongoing conflict and against the backdrop of significant societal transitions, the Next Generation Sudan 2024 Report emerges as a timely and ground-breaking research initiative. Capitalising on insights gleaned from the global research landscape, this study seizes the opportunity to illuminate the rich history, cultural diversity, and unique socio-political challenges of Sudan. This report holds immense potential, particularly given the urgency presented by the current situation in the country.

Amidst the echoes of the December Revolution of 2018 and recent challenges, this research recognises the critical importance of amplifying the voices of Sudan's youth and offers unique data and insights that can play a pivotal role in shaping the future trajectory of the nation.

Aligned with the global Next Generation initiative, this report aims to amplify the voices of Sudanese youth, providing a platform for their views and concerns, and offer innovative solutions. The report succinctly captures the essence of Sudan's youth, showcasing their resilience in conflict, their innovative spirit in adversity, and their enduring optimism for a more inclusive, democratic, and prosperous Sudan.



Executive summary

The Next Generation Sudan 2024 Report provides a detailed analysis of the current socio-political, educational, and economic landscapes of Sudan's youth. It underscores their resilience, their aspirations, and their pivotal role in navigating the nation's multifaceted challenges towards a more inclusive and prosperous future.

The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, engaging over 2,000 individuals through nationwide surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), and action workshops, tailored to provide a comprehensive understanding of Sudanese youth's lives, aspirations, and challenges. The study surveyed 1,611 young Sudanese aged 18-35, with sampling strategically designed to represent Sudan's diverse geography and demographics, encompassing various regions and accounting for the complex socio-political landscape shaped by recent conflicts and displacement.

The report delves into three main themes:

Theme I: Youth lifestyle and attitudes

In the dynamic landscape of Sudan, young people are navigating a complex interplay of traditional values, modern aspirations, and the effects of globalisation. The pivotal 2018 revolution and subsequent transitional period have been instrumental in shaping their identities, aspirations, and civic engagement roles. The challenges introduced by the outbreak of war on 15th April 2023, have further tested their resilience and innovative spirit.

Sudanese youth are at the forefront of advocating for change, drawing from a rich tapestry of beliefs, values, and aspirations shaped by their experiences with conflict, political instability, and socio-economic challenges. The December Revolution of 2018, in particular, has underscored their significant contribution to fostering a more democratic, inclusive, and prosperous Sudan. Central to their lives are the values of family and community, which provide a sense of belonging, support, and security despite the differences between rural and urban influences.

However, Sudanese youth face significant discrimination based on race, ethnicity, political beliefs, and gender — reflecting deeper systemic issues within the nation's socio-political and economic frameworks. Such discrimination, especially prevalent in regions like Darfur and the Blue Nile, hampers young women's

educational and professional aspirations and impacts youth inclusion and opportunities across various spheres.

Amid these challenges, Sudanese youth are committed to reshaping the national identity to embrace the country's diversity as a strength and unity source. Their efforts towards fostering understanding and cooperation among Sudan's diverse communities are a testament to their vision for a unified Sudan, even as they grapple with the desire to migrate for better opportunities.

The Sudanese revolution has played a crucial role in changing youth perspectives, fostering a sense of inclusivity and awareness that transcends ethnicity, religion, and political affiliation. Despite ongoing conflicts and economic hardships, the revolution's legacy inspires the youth toward building a more inclusive and equitable society.

Yet, Sudanese youth face barriers to achieving their aspirations, including societal attitudes, economic instability, insecurity, and conflict. These barriers are compounded by discrimination, social injustice, and limited access to healthcare, necessitating comprehensive support systems focussing on mental health, trauma recovery, and opportunities for environmental and societal development engagement.

The psychological impacts of ongoing conflicts and societal changes significantly affect Sudanese youth, impacting their mental well-being and future outlooks. Addressing these psychological impacts is critical to supporting the youth's resilience and determination to contribute meaningfully to Sudan's development and shape their future in a rapidly changing world.

Theme II: Youth voices

This theme delves into the intricate role of Sudanese youth within the nation's political and civic realms, amid ongoing conflict and instability. As Sudan faces severe humanitarian crises, especially in conflict-ridden areas like Darfur, the indispensable and multifaceted involvement of its youth in socio-political activities comes to the forefront. These young individuals, seen as vital for establishing a stable and inclusive governance framework, navigate through numerous challenges posed by nationwide conflict with resilience and a nuanced understanding of their political engagement, aspirations, and the barriers encountered.

Motivated by socio-political transformations and personal experiences, the youth's participation in politics is significantly driven by the desire to address economic hardships and advocate for social justice. Despite experiencing frustration and disenfranchisement, a prevailing sense of hopefulness underscores their commitment to fostering a more democratic and equitable society. Their political engagement is further characterised by a complex emotional response towards the current political climate, marked by frustration, fear, and a strong desire for systemic change.

An analysis of survey data and focus group discussions reveals the youth's considerable willingness to actively participate in political activities, including voting, reflecting their desire for a political system that aligns with their values and enables direct influence over decision-making processes. Moreover, the role of media, particularly social media, is highlighted as a critical influencer of youth perspectives and engagement. Despite the challenges of misinformation and online privacy concerns, digital platforms are recognised for their significant contribution to political mobilisation and expression among the youth.

The importance of media literacy and access to credible information is emphasised, pointing to the necessity of developing strategies to effectively navigate the evolving digital media landscape. Engaging with and empowering the voices of Sudanese youth is deemed essential for the country's journey towards reconciliation, healing, and sustainable development. This engagement not only aims to address the root causes of conflict but also promotes dialogue and strengthens institutions, paving the way for a peaceful, stable, and progressive Sudan.

Theme III: Education, work, and entrepreneurship

Education, work, and entrepreneurship stand as pivotal themes in understanding the youth's current realities and aspirations. Despite the ambitious strides towards educational reform, the system remains beleaguered by political instability, outdated curriculums, and inadequate resources, failing to meet the youth's needs or prepare them for future challenges. The lack of alignment between the education system and job market demands exacerbates the unemployment crisis, leaving many young Sudanese grappling with job scarcity and the misalignment of their aspirations with market realities.

Yet, in the face of these adversities, Sudanese youth exhibit a remarkable entrepreneurial spirit. They view entrepreneurship not just as a career path but as a vital strategy for economic self-sufficiency and societal change. However, the journey is fraught with challenges, including access to capital, bureaucratic hurdles, and the need for a supportive policy environment. Despite these barriers, there is a palpable desire among the youth to contribute innovatively to Sudan's economy, with many expressing interests in becoming entrepreneurs or starting their own businesses.

Digital Literacy and Online Learning emerge as crucial elements in the youth's adaptation to the modern world, with many utilising online resources for self-education. Yet, the journey towards digital education is hampered by infrastructural and economic limitations, highlighting the urgent need for investments in digital literacy and infrastructure to empower Sudanese youth further.

The report underscores the need for comprehensive reforms across the education system, political engagement strategies, and support for youth entrepreneurship to harness this generation's potential fully. By addressing these areas, Sudan can pave the way for sustainable development, leveraging the resilience, innovation, and aspirations of its youth.

The Next Generation Sudan 2024 Report paints a portrait of a generation at a crossroads, facing significant challenges but armed with the potential to effect substantial societal and economic changes. Addressing the education system's shortcomings, supporting youth entrepreneurship, and enhancing digital literacy are critical steps towards realising this potential, contributing to Sudan's development and stability.



Chapter 1

Introduction

Sudan, strategically positioned at the crossroads of the ancient Nile and Sahel trading routes, embodies a unique confluence of cultures, merging African, Arab, and other traditions. The Next Generation Sudan 2024 Report is not just an academic exercise; it is a journey into the lives, dreams, and challenges of a demographic that is not only navigating through the nation's historical complexities but also shaping its future trajectory. This study is more than just a piece of research; it is an insightful exploration, setting the stage for a nuanced understanding of Sudanese youth, contextualised within the rich tapestry of the nation's historical and contemporary events.

The socio-economic, political and cultural landscape of Sudan, characterised by its dynamic history, has been marked by significant turning points that have reshaped not just the political contours but also the societal fabric of the nation. The echoes of the December Revolution of 2018, and the disappointments of the transitional process which aimed for democratic elections in 2024 led to nowhere but the repercussions of the September 2021 military takeover, and the profound disruptions caused by the outbreak of war on 15 April 2023, have been instrumental in defining the current era.¹ These events, emblematic of the nation's quest for democracy and stability, have significantly influenced the lifestyles, attitudes, and aspirations of Sudanese youth.

The Next Generation Sudan 2024 Report represents a vital and ambitious undertaking, set to provide invaluable insights during a crucial phase in Sudan's history. Amidst substantial societal shifts, this research tackles the formidable challenge of unravelling and expressing the nuanced perspectives of Sudan's youth. The data produced by this study goes beyond being a mere collection of insights; it constitutes a wealth of information with the potential to significantly influence the course of the nation's development.

The study pivots around three thematic pillars that encapsulate the myriad dimensions of the youth's experiences and aspirations:

Theme I: Youth lifestyle and attitudes

This theme explores the intricate tapestry of Sudanese youth's lifestyles and attitudes, against the backdrop of a nation grappling with the aftermath of the revolution, the repercussions of the 2021 military takeover and the profound disruptions caused by the April 2023 armed conflict. It delves into how these events have shaped young people's identity, their societal interactions, and the dynamics of resilience and adaptability that define their everyday lives. The section aims to unravel the complex interplay of traditional values, contemporary aspirations, and the external forces of a rapidly globalising world that influences the youth of Sudan.

Theme II: Youth voices

At a time when the nation's political landscape undergoes seismic shifts, this theme focuses on the political and civic engagement of Sudanese youth. It examines their role in shaping the socio-political narrative, their mechanisms of expression, and the influence of digital platforms as potent tools for activism and change. The theme also addresses the youth's perspectives on peace, stability, and their aspirations for a democratic Sudan, reflecting on how the recent political turmoil and the outbreak of war have reframed these narratives.

Theme III: Education, work, and entrepreneurship

In the face of economic uncertainty and the evolving job market, this theme scrutinises the current state of education, the challenges of unemployment, and the entrepreneurial spirit among the youth. It assesses the misalignment between educational outcomes and market demands, the impact of digital literacy, and the burgeoning inclination towards entrepreneurship as a beacon of hope and self-reliance. The theme aims to highlight the aspirations, innovations, and the pragmatic approaches of the youth as they navigate through the challenges of building their professional futures in a rapidly changing Sudan.

The three thematic pillars of the study — Sudanese youth lifestyle and attitudes, youth voices in Sudan, and education, work, and entrepreneurship — serve as the framework through which the multifaceted dimensions of the youth's experiences are examined. These themes are not just categories of analysis; they represent the lived realities, the shared experiences, and the collective aspirations of a demographic that is at the forefront of shaping Sudan's present and future.

In delving into these themes, the report will uncover the intricate interplay of cultural heritage, contemporary aspirations, and the challenges posed by a globalising world. It will highlight the youth's role in the socio-political discourse of the nation, their innovative approaches to education and entrepreneurship, and their resilient spirit in the face of adversity.

The Sudanese context

This section provides a deep dive into the intricate socio-political, economic, and environmental factors shaping the lives and aspirations of Sudanese youth. This comprehensive understanding is particularly significant considering the tumultuous events that Sudan has experienced, such as the December Revolution of 2018, the September 2021 military takeover, and the outbreak of war in April 2023.

From revolution to armed conflict : A nation in flux

Sudan's path through the 21st century is a multifaceted saga of hope, resilience, and adversity. A country blessed with cultural diversity and abundant natural resources, its progress has been stymied by enduring political instability and conflicts. The December Revolution of 2018 became a pivotal moment, sparked by the collective frustration over economic mismanagement, corruption, and the stifling of political freedoms. This grassroots movement aimed not merely to overthrow Omar al-Bashir but sought to dismantle the oppressive political system perpetuated by his ruling party. The call for change was a clarion call for democracy, justice, and a life of dignity for all Sudanese.

Transitioning from a deeply entrenched authoritarian regime to a democratic system presented formidable

challenges. The initial triumph of the revolution shifted into navigating a complex political terrain, characterised by a struggle for power among the military, political factions, and civilian groups. The establishment of the Sovereign Council as a transitional governance body marked a significant, albeit tentative, step towards democracy. However, the journey ahead remained fraught with uncertainty, underlining the Sudanese people's continued quest for a democratic and just society.

The period following the ousting of Omar al-Bashir was marked by a tentative hope for a democratic Sudan. However, the transitional government faced numerous challenges in steering the country toward stable governance. The resignation of al-Bashir was not seen as the ultimate solution by the demonstrators, who continued to demand the dismantling of the entire regime. The military's response was to create the Transitional Military Council (TMC) to govern the country, but their attempt to pacify protesters by force only intensified the domestic and international demand for a true democratic transition. The subsequent formation of the Sovereign Council and the transitional government, led by Abdullah Hamdok, signalled a commitment to economic and socio-political reforms. Despite these positive steps, the reforms threatened to undermine the entrenched economic and political position of the military, leading to tensions and eventual conflict (Seregichev, 2023).²

The September 2021 military takeover, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and supported by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (known as 'Hemedti'), was a critical setback in the transitional journey. This military takeover, halted the progress toward democratic governance, emphasising the deep-rooted resistance to change. The removal of civilian leaders from power prompted widespread international rebuke and reignited mass protests across Sudan. These protests, a testament to the Sudanese populace's resolve for democracy, were met with severe repression, resulting in the tragic loss of hundreds of young lives in the ensuing confrontations. This turmoil, coupled with the economic ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic, cast a long shadow over the prospects of a stable, democratic Sudan. The situation highlighted the precarious nature of the transition and the complex interplay of forces vying for power in the

¹ The transitional period in Sudan, established by the constitutional document signed in August 2019, was initially set for 39 months. It was extended following the Juba agreement, commencing anew in October 2020. The sovereignty council has initiated planning for the electoral and constitutional commissions in anticipation of concluding this transitional phase with democratic elections.

² Seregichev, S Y (2023). <https://doi.org/10.28995/2073-6339-2023-1-126-138>

post-revolution landscape (Seregichev, 2023).³

The September 2021 military takeover, led by the military, was a stark reminder of the fragility of Sudan's transitional phase. This event not only disrupted the delicate balance of power but also raised serious questions about the future of the democratic transition. The military takeover, was met with international condemnation and widespread domestic protests, indicating the Sudanese people's unwavering commitment to their democratic aspirations (Reuters, 2021).⁴

Yet, the challenges did not end there. The outbreak of fighting between the country's armed forces and a powerful militia, which had collaborated in the military takeover, in April 2023 further compounded the nation's woes, plunging Sudan into a state of heightened uncertainty and distress. The conflict, with its roots in long-standing ethnic, economic, and political grievances, threatened to reverse the gains made since the revolution. It not only jeopardised the progress towards democracy but also had devastating humanitarian consequences. The war has led to the displacement of millions (figures by OCHA estimated 9.05 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of 31 December 2023, marking it as the largest internal displacement crisis worldwide), widespread destruction, and a severe humanitarian crisis, exacerbating the already dire economic situation (OCHA, 2024).⁵

In this context, Sudan's path to stability and democracy appears more arduous than ever. The nation stands at a critical juncture, with its future hinging on the ability of its leaders and citizens to navigate these complex challenges. The resilience and determination of the Sudanese people, as demonstrated in the December Revolution, provide a glimmer of hope. However, the journey ahead requires unwavering commitment to dialogue, reconciliation, and inclusive governance. The international community's role in supporting Sudan through this transitional phase is also pivotal, offering the necessary support and ensuring that the voices of the Sudanese people are heard and respected.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Reuters. (2021). Explainer: Sudan's political transition in the balance. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/sudans-political-transition-balance-2021-11-22/>

⁵ OCHA (2024). <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/sudan/>

The economic landscape of Sudan

The economic landscape of Sudan, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, was fraught with vulnerabilities. Years of internal conflicts, international sanctions, and economic mismanagement had left the economy on a fragile footing. The onset of the pandemic exacerbated these pre-existing economic challenges, leading to a multifaceted crisis. The global disruption in trade and supply chains hit Sudan particularly hard. As a country heavily reliant on imports for essential goods, the breakdown in global trade networks led to critical shortages and inflated prices of basic commodities. This situation exacerbated inflation, eroded the purchasing power of the populace, and put additional pressure on the already strained foreign currency reserves.

Key sectors that form the backbone of Sudan's economy, like agriculture and services, and particularly tourism and hospitality, faced unprecedented challenges. Agriculture, the primary source of livelihood for a large portion of the population and a significant contributor to the nation's GDP, encountered logistical hurdles, reduced market access, and disruptions in supply chains due to pandemic-induced restrictions. The services sector, another crucial contributor to GDP, saw a dramatic downturn, especially in areas reliant on human interaction, leading to widespread revenue losses and unemployment.

Another critical sector, often overlooked but integral to Sudan's economy and its ongoing conflict, is mining. The control of extractive resources, including gold, has been a central factor in the conflict's dynamics, with proceeds from mining often financing arms purchases. This sector's significance extends beyond its economic contribution, influencing both the conflict's trajectory and the country's broader socio-political landscape.

The financial resources of the country, already limited, were further strained as the government redirected funds to manage the health crisis. Increased healthcare spending was vital but meant that resources were diverted from other critical sectors, exacerbating the economic downturn. The limited fiscal space and the need for emergency health expenditures highlighted the delicate balance the transitional government had to maintain between health crisis management and economic stability.

Amidst this, the country grappled with rapid inflation and currency devaluation, triggered by economic uncertainty and measures such as increased currency printing to finance the government's deficit. This inflationary pressure compounded the economic woes of the populace, making essential goods and services increasingly unaffordable. The transitional government, tasked with steering the country towards democratic governance, faced the daunting challenge of economic stabilisation. Efforts to implement policy reforms aimed at economic recovery were critical. However, these reforms often encountered delays and challenges, stemming from the intricacies of the political transition, the need for consensus among diverse political factions, and the overall global economic slowdown.

The economic challenges of this period were not evenly distributed across the population. The pandemic and the economic downturn disproportionately affected the most vulnerable segments of society, including the poor, women, and children. The absence of a robust social safety net left these groups particularly exposed to the risks of exacerbated poverty and social exclusion.

Youth demographics

Sudan's demographic profile is marked by a youthful population, a key factor shaping its socio-economic landscape. With an average age of approximately 19.7 years, Sudan's population is one of the youngest in the world (UN DESA, 2022).⁶ This demographic characteristic presents both significant challenges and opportunities for the nation's development, particularly in the realms of education, employment, and social policy.

The education landscape for Sudanese youth is diverse, with varying levels of access and quality across the country. Despite efforts to improve educational infrastructure and enrolment rates, challenges persist, including gender disparities in education, regional inequalities, and the impact of ongoing conflicts on

school attendance. The new outbreak of war in Sudan has profoundly impacted the education sector, exacerbating existing challenges and creating new crises. As of November 2023, the situation reached a critical point, with nearly half of the population needing humanitarian aid, including over 19 million school-aged children now out of school due to school closures, occupation by internally displaced persons, or destruction (UNICEF, 2023).⁷ This escalation of the education crisis threatens to create a lost generation without access to learning opportunities, highlighting an urgent need for comprehensive support and intervention to ensure continuity of education.

Recent findings, including this survey, reveal a concerning unemployment rate among Sudanese youth, with approximately 21.6 per cent of respondents actively seeking but unable to find work according to the survey. This high unemployment rate is reflective of the broader economic and socio-political challenges facing the country, including the impact of ongoing conflicts, economic instability, and a lack of investment in sectors key to youth employment. Figures 1 and 2 show survey findings on current employment status and income distribution findings respectively. Furthermore, other reports underscore the critical issue that only 12 per cent of Sudanese are engaged in what can be considered 'decent work', highlighting the scarcity of quality employment opportunities that offer fair wages, job security, and worker protections (CFYE, 2021).^{8 9}

⁶ WPPUN DESA (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division), (2022). World Population Prospects 2022: Data Sources. (UN DESA/POP/2022/DC/NO. 9). https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2022_Data_Sources.pdf (2022). <https://www.statista.com/statistics/727308/average-age-of-the-population-in-sudan>

⁷ UNICEF (2023). <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/13a65d0eb5af45d7b3b25da25cfe0d59>

⁸ "Decent work" refers to employment that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace, and social protection for families. It also encompasses better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in decisions that affect their lives, and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. (See for example: European Commission. (n.d.). Employment and decent work. International Partnerships. Retrieved from https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/sustainable-growth-and-jobs/employment-and-decent-work_en).

⁹ CFYE (2021). <https://fundforyouthemployment.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Scoping-Report-Sudan-2021-Challenge-Fund-for-Youth-Employment.pdf>.

Figure 1. Current employment status (Total sample base n=1611)

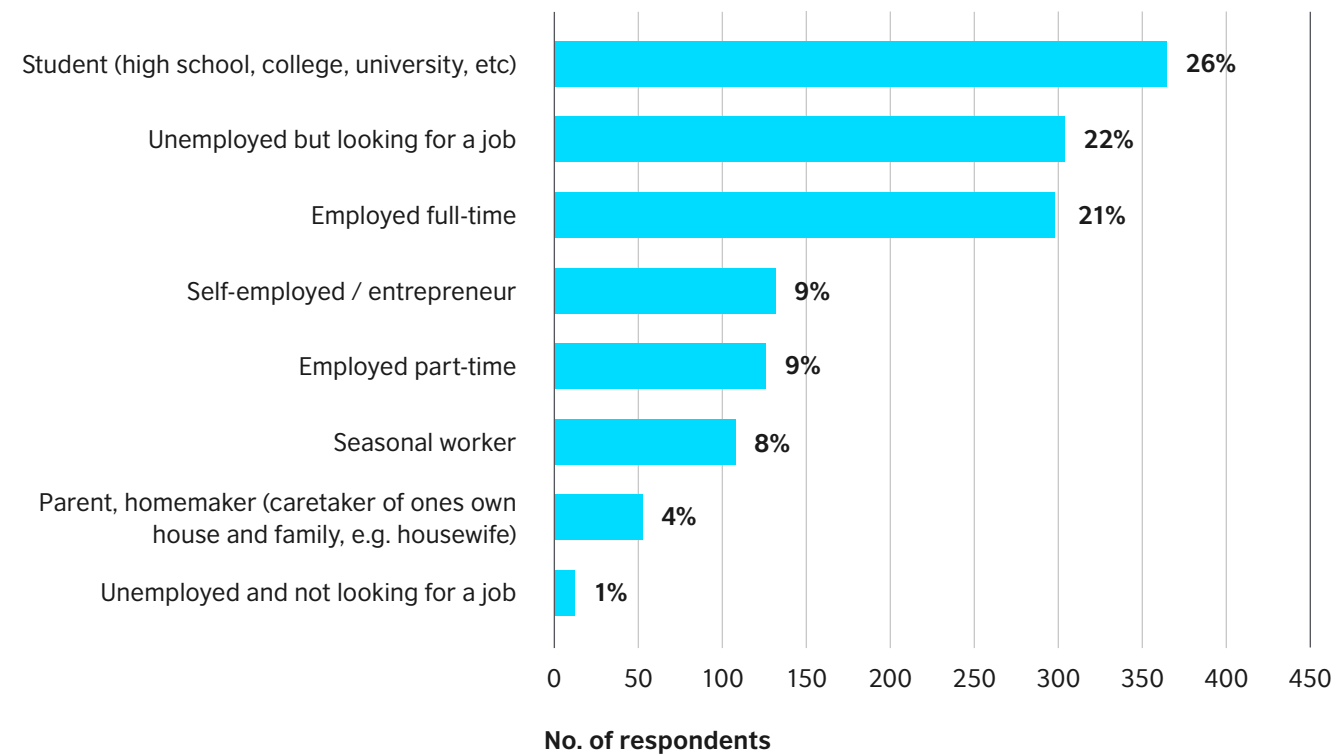
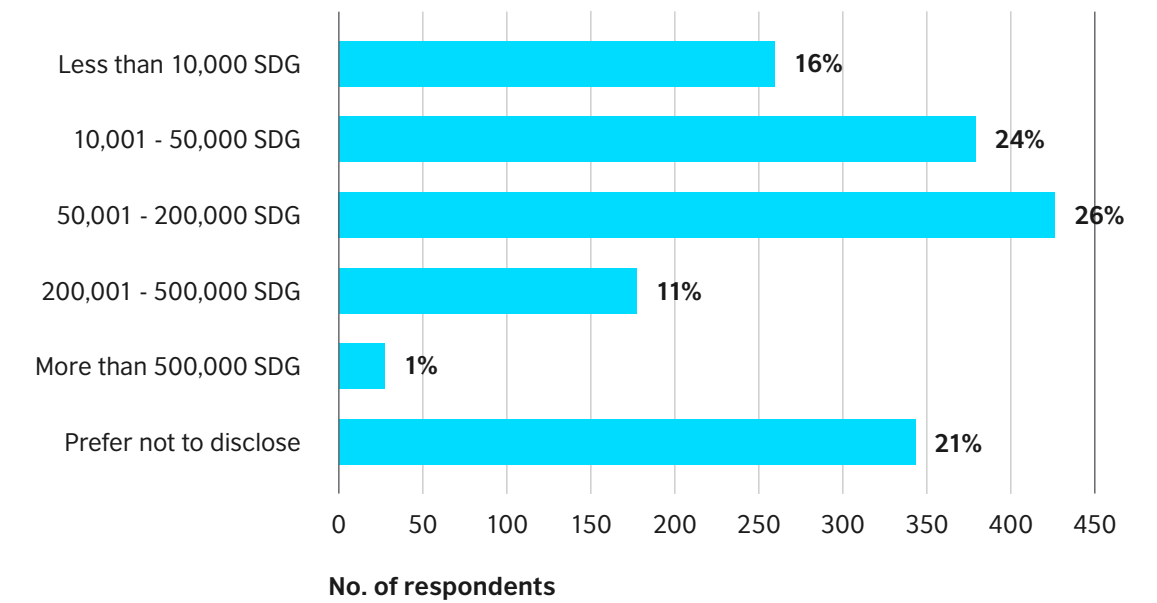


Figure 2. Income distribution (Total sample base n=1611)



Theme III of this report will dive further into educational issues as well as employment and economic participation.

The youth demographic in Sudan represents a significant portion of the country's population, and this has profound implications for its future. Addressing the educational, employment, and participatory challenges faced by young Sudanese is critical for leveraging their potential as drivers of change and development. As Sudan continues to navigate its complex socio-political landscape, investing in the youth will be key to achieving long-term stability and growth.





Chapter 2 Methodology

The methodology of the Next Generation Sudan 2024 Report was meticulously designed to ensure comprehensive data collection and analysis, aiming to provide an in-depth understanding of the lives, aspirations, and challenges of Sudanese youth.

Overview of the research approach

The research was conducted in a series of sequential phases, each tailored to address specific components of the study and to ensure a thorough exploration of the various aspects of the lives of young people in Sudan.

An extensive literature review was carried out to identify existing knowledge and gaps related to Sudanese youth, exploring the main themes of Sudanese youth lifestyle and attitudes, youth voices in Sudan, and education, work, and entrepreneurship.

After the outbreak of war in April 2023, which led to widespread violence and significant population displacement, the initial research strategy had to be re-evaluated. The original plan of a nationwide survey based on face-to-face interviews became unfeasible. To address this, a flexible, multi-pronged sampling approach was adopted, moving from random to a more purposive and quota sampling strategy. The conflict and the displacement of people also introduced data quality risks, such as non-response bias and the potential for inaccuracies due to socially desirable answers or misunderstanding questions under stress. Operational risks, such as logistical challenges and not being able to undertake research in conflict areas like Khartoum, necessitated developing a detailed project plan with contingencies for potential disruptions and coordinating closely with local organisations for logistical support enumerator recruitment and training, and facilitating respondent recruitment. This collaboration ensured the methodology was not only effective and ethical but also impactful, contributing to building local capacity and ensuring that the survey findings would be acted upon. This strengthened collaborative approach allowed navigation through the complexities of the current situation, ensuring that the sample remained representative of the population despite the dramatic demographic changes caused by the conflict and displacement.

For data collection, a mixed methods approach was utilised, relying on both the quantitative survey and

qualitative tools. Qualitatively, KIIs provided in-depth insights from individuals with significant knowledge or influence on the lives of Sudanese youth. In addition, FGDs were conducted across Sudan, these discussions aimed to generate deep empirical knowledge about issues identified during the surveys. The discussions were semi-structured, allowing for free-flowing conversations and ensuring meaningful representation across diverse demographics.

Across the quantitative and qualitative dimensions, a total of 2,000 individuals were directly engaged in this research. This includes 1,611 young Sudanese aged 18-35 through a nationwide survey undertaken after the outbreak of war in April 2023, complemented by insights from 92 participants participating in FGDs (ten FGDs was undertaken), 20 key informants (e.g. youth leaders) participating in KIIs and 48 participants engaging in two action workshops. Additionally, the outreach extended to the Sudanese diaspora, incorporating perspectives from 75 young Sudanese through an online survey. In addition, the field survey had managed to undertake 162 surveys in Khartoum prior to the outbreak of war which will not be included in the research general sample to avoid any major disparity of results. They will however be used for a comparative analysis pre/post conflict outbreak. Overall, the study's robust participant base underscores its comprehensive scope and the in-depth exploration of the lives, aspirations, and challenges of Sudanese youth.

Additionally, two Action Workshops engaged youth participants in identifying policy recommendations based on the research findings. The workshops served multiple functions, including building participants' analytical and participatory capacities, and fostering a deeper understanding of the research findings from the perspective of the target group. Through Action Workshops, participants analysed findings and shared insights, fostering a collaborative environment that underscored the value of participatory research in understanding and addressing the needs and aspirations of Sudanese youth.

The findings from both quantitative and qualitative research components were brought together to produce a comprehensive matrix showcasing the major findings of the study. This phase involved reflecting on the preliminary findings and identifying areas and

results suitable for further exploration.

Throughout the research process, special attention was given to ensuring that the methodology and data collection techniques were sensitive to the socio-cultural context of Sudan. The research team employed enumerators who were locally, and culturally aware, and systematic data collection and analysis were conducted to reflect the diverse experiences and needs of Sudanese youth. Linguistic diversity was a key consideration in our methodology. Surveys and discussions were conducted primarily in Sudanese Arabic, reflecting the prevalent language among participants. Research collaboration with local organizations ensured accurate translation and interpretation. Enumerators and facilitators fluent in both the local dialects and Sudanese Arabic were engaged to ensure clarity in communication and participant understanding. Strategies included the use of bilingual moderators in focus groups and employing back-translation methods for survey questions and responses to maintain the integrity of the data collected from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This approach ensured that language barriers did not impede participation or data integrity.

Qualitative and quantitative data collection was conducted in parallel between October and December 2023.

Literature review

As part of the research, a comprehensive literature review was initially undertaken, that aimed to establish a solid foundation for understanding the current landscape surrounding Sudanese youth. Drawing on a wide range of sources, this review helped to inform the research questions, methodology, and data collection techniques utilized in the study.

Our approach involved an extensive exploration of academic databases, reports from international organizations, media articles, and online platforms focusing on youth in Sudan from 2018 to 2023. Utilizing thematic analysis, we synthesized findings from these varied sources to identify prevalent themes affecting Sudanese youth. The process included data collection, coding, theme development, and data interpretation, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the existing body of knowledge.

From our review, several key themes emerged:

Gender Inequality and Poverty: Studies underscored widespread gender inequality and poverty, disproportionately affecting women and girls, leading to limited access to education and economic opportunities, thus fostering a cycle of disenfranchisement.

Youth Involvement in Transition to Peace and Democracy: Literature emphasized youth's central role in the 2018 revolution and their ongoing commitment to fostering peace and democracy despite facing exclusion from formal political decision-making.

Youth Activism and Social Media: The transformative role of social media in the 2018 revolution was highlighted, serving as a tool for mobilization, information dissemination, and community building, despite challenges in digital literacy.

Civil Society and Social Network Sites Impact: The influence of social networks in shaping civil discourse and youth community formation was evident, underlining the potential of digital platforms in political engagement.

Digital Literacy Challenges: The gap in digital literacy impacts youth's ability to engage politically and socially, revealing a digital divide influenced by socioeconomic status, gender, and regional disparities.

Non-violence in Activism: Non-violent strategies were pivotal during the Sudanese Revolution, illustrating their effectiveness in political change and peaceful protest.

Socioeconomic Challenges and Aspirations: Despite high levels of poverty, unemployment, and barriers to education and healthcare, youth exhibit resilience and a strong desire for an improved future, with some turning to migration as a solution.

Employment and Opportunities: The employment landscape shows a stark contrast between young men's and women's experiences in the urban labour market, with widespread informal employment and significant challenges for young women due to systemic "Wasta" (nepotism or favouritism).

Entrepreneurship as an Alternative: Despite obstacles such as access to capital and the need for social capital, entrepreneurship is viewed positively among Sudanese youth as a means to circumvent traditional employment challenges.

Climate Change Concerns: While there is a general lack of literature focusing on youth perspectives on climate change, emerging discussions indicate a

growing awareness and advocacy among Sudanese youth regarding environmental issues.

The findings from this literature review have directly influenced the Next Generation Sudan 2024 Report's methodological framework. They have guided the formulation of research questions and the design of data collection tools, ensuring that the study addresses the critical issues identified. Furthermore, the review has highlighted the importance of addressing digital literacy and inclusivity in political processes as key areas of focus for our research.

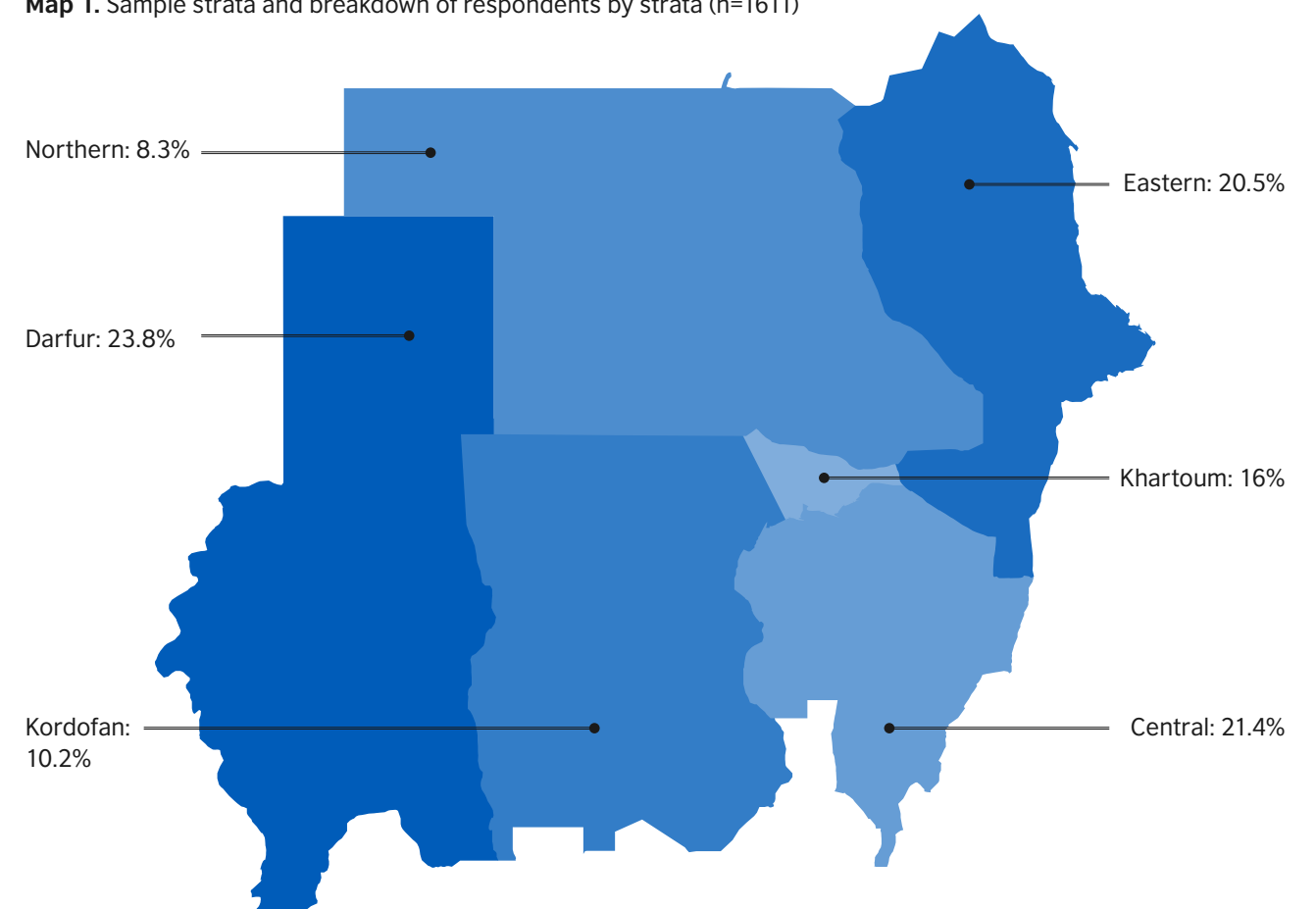
While providing valuable insights, the literature review also identified gaps in current research, particularly concerning the role of social media in activism, barriers to political participation, and the effects of climate change on Sudanese youth. These gaps underscore the need for our research to delve deeper into these areas, facilitating a more nuanced understanding of the youth's perspectives and challenges. This aligns with the overarching goal of the Next Generation Sudan

2024 Report to inform policies and initiatives aimed at effectively addressing the needs and harnessing the potential of Sudanese youth.

Sampling technique

Given the challenges associated with conducting nationwide research in Sudan, including significant population movements and the inaccessibility of certain areas due to conflict or natural barriers, a novel sampling frame was developed. The study leveraged the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) subnational population statistics from 2022, projected from the Sudan Population and Housing Census of 2008, to construct a probability sample of clustered states. This approach facilitated the division of the country into six geographical zones, which were then used as strata for sample size allocation (see map 1).

Map 1. Sample strata and breakdown of respondents by strata (n=1611)



The sampling process was initially designed to be a traditional multi-staged approach including randomly selected settlements as Primary Sampling Units (PSUs), and selecting households/participants as Secondary Sampling Units (SSUs) within the PSUs using the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) method, which involves selecting a central location in the settlement, determining a random direction, and then choosing households along that direction. 15 households/participants were selected in each PSU.

However, in response to the profound changes in Sudan's demographic landscape due to conflict, necessitating the relocation of millions and significantly impacting the distribution of the youth population, the Next Generation Sudan research project underwent significant revisions in its sampling strategy.

The revised strategy for sampling moved from random sampling to utilising a mix of purposive, cluster and quota sampling. Still adhering to the original strategy's reliance on the probability sample of clustered states, based on UNFPA subnational population statistics from 2022, the new approach included considering areas with IDPs from neighbouring clusters/states, allowing for the inclusion of individuals in a cluster they recently had fled from. Quota sampling was employed to ensure the representativeness of the designed strata (origins of respondents) as well as to secure a gender and age balance.

This adjustment ensures that the sampling reflects the demographic realities where millions of Sudanese currently reside in other states than their home, accommodating for the changed distribution within each state due to the conflict.

Sample size

The target population for the survey included Sudanese nationals aged 18 to 35 years residing within Sudan. The survey aimed to achieve statistical significance at a 95 per cent confidence level, ensuring the representation was disaggregated by age, gender, education, location (urban/rural), income, individuals with disabilities, and religion.

A calculated sample size of 1,242 young people was established based on the desired confidence level of 95 per cent, a margin of error of 5 per cent, and an adjustment to account for expected non-responses and potentially improve the margin of error in disaggregated analysis (see Figure 3).

To address the inherent limitations of the existing sampling frame, the study proposed a multi-staged sampling plan that aimed to produce representative estimates for the survey universe as accurately as possible within the existing constraints. This included taking into consideration the significant variations in settlement data and employing various sampling strategies to ensure a diverse and inclusive sample of Sudanese youth.

Figure 3. Sampling sizes calculations

Strata	Total youth population (UNFPA)	Youth population proportion (%)	Calculated sample size	Adjusted sample size	Surveys undertaken after cleaning
Central	3,387,181	25	289	464	344
Darfur	2,971,440	22	264	403	383
Eastern	2,023,436	15	196	361	330
Khartoum	2,972,069	22	255	385	257
Kordofan	1,559,602	11	151	236	164
Northern	836,809	6	87	151	133
Total	13,750,535	101	1,242	2,000	1,611



Chapter 3

Analysis

Theme I: Youth lifestyle and attitudes

Introduction: A tapestry of experiences

In the heart of North Africa, Sudan's youth confront and navigate a complex mosaic of experiences, shaped by a rich history and a series of political, social, and economic transformations. Comprising more than two thirds of the nation's population, these young individuals are not just the backbone but the driving force and the future of Sudan. The Next Generation Sudan research project aims to delve into the multifaceted perceptions of this vibrant demographic, whose narratives are pivotal in shaping the country's path forward.

This section embarks on an exploration of the diverse lifestyles and attitudes prevalent among Sudanese youth, underscored by their resilient spirit and the dynamic interplay between traditional values, contemporary aspirations, and the external forces of a

globalising world. Their stories are woven into the fabric of Sudan's societal tapestry, reflecting a spectrum of experiences – from the throes of economic hardship and political upheaval to the sparks of innovation, creativity, and the relentless pursuit of a more inclusive, democratic, and prosperous future.

Young people's journey in Sudan is marked by a landscape of contrasts – a juxtaposition of enduring cultural heritage against the backdrop of rapid socio-political change. The revolution of 2018 and the subsequent transitional period have been pivotal, not just in shaping the country's political discourse but in moulding the very identity, aspirations, and the civic engagement of its youth. They have been at the forefront, championing the movement for change, advocating for peace, democracy, and equality, and carving out spaces for their voices to be heard, despite facing barriers of exclusion and the shadows of a conflicted past.

Spotlight 1: The December Revolution of 2018 in Sudan

The December Revolution, also known as the Sudanese Revolution, was a monumental event that began in December 2018. It marked a significant turning point in Sudan's history, igniting a series of demonstrations and protests against the economic policies and authoritarian rule of President Omar al-Bashir, who had been in power for nearly three decades.

The revolution was characterised by its widespread nature, with participation from diverse segments of the Sudanese population, including professionals, students, and women's groups. The protests initially focussed on economic grievances but quickly escalated to demands for political change and the establishment of a democratic governance structure.

The revolution unfolded with nationwide protests triggered by the tripling of bread prices, revealing the deep-seated frustrations with economic mismanagement and political repression. Sudanese youth played a pivotal role in the revolution, leveraging social media and digital platforms to organise, mobilise, and disseminate information, echoing broader trends observed in the Arab Spring movements. The protests persisted for months, eventually leading to the military's intervention and the ousting of President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019. The subsequent period saw intricate negotiations between the military, opposition groups, and civilian organisations, culminating in the establishment of a transitional government.

The December Revolution of 2018 is a testament to the resilience and determination of the Sudanese people. It underscores the pivotal role of youth and grassroots movements in driving political and social change. The revolution set the stage for a transformative period in Sudan, opening avenues for addressing longstanding issues of governance, human rights, and socio-economic development.

The outbreak of war on 15th April 2023, marked a pivotal moment, altering the landscape of young people's lives and setting a new stage for the narrative of resilience, adaptation, and transformative potential. Young people's experiences in war-torn Sudan are emblematic of a generation at a crucial crossroads. The outbreak of war severely disrupted lives, aspirations, and plans, plunging the youth into a new reality fraught with uncertainty. Inevitably, this research has been marked by the multifaceted impact of the war on the lifestyles and attitudes of Sudanese youth as the research explored their perspectives on identity, community, and national belonging amidst the shifting social and political landscape, underscoring their agency and innovative spirit in tackling the trials of war.

As agents of change, the youth of Sudan are not mere spectators but active participants in shaping the country's socio-political and economic trajectory. The 2018 December Revolution (see Spotlight 1), the subsequent transitional phase and the recent outbreak of war have accentuated the need for understanding the nuanced nature of youth experiences. Whether shaped by the urban-rural divide, gender roles, or economic status, their stories contribute to a rich tapestry of life in Sudan, reflecting resilience, ambition, and a collective yearning for stability, progress, and meaningful participation in the nation's evolution.

As this chapter progresses, the layers of this rich narrative will be uncovered, exploring how Sudanese youth perceive and interact with their world, the challenges they face, and the aspirations that fuel their journey. The chapter delves deeper into the specifics of the lifestyle and attitudes of Sudan's youth, examining also how the post-conflict environment has shaped their perspectives and how they continue to thrive amidst ongoing challenges. This narrative is not just about survival; it is a story of transformation, resilience, and hope. It celebrates the enduring spirit and adaptability of Sudan's youth during a period of monumental change, poised to redefine their future and that of their nation.

Sudanese youth identity: Dynamics in a transitional society

In recent years, Sudan has undergone significant socio-political transformations, marked by a series of transitions and revolutions that have reshaped the nation's landscape. At the heart of these transformations lies the vibrant and active role of Sudanese youth, a demographic that has proven to be a driving force for change in the country. As the nation grapples with its identity in the aftermath of these upheavals, understanding the perspectives and identities of its youth becomes crucial.

Sudan's youth, having lived through periods of conflict, political instability, and socio-economic challenges, exhibit a complex tapestry of beliefs, values, and aspirations. The recent transitions, notably the December Revolution of 2018, highlighted the pivotal role of young people in advocating for political and social change. This revolution, which led to the ousting of long-time president Omar al-Bashir, was significantly fuelled by the active participation and leadership of the youth, driven by their desire for a more democratic, inclusive, and prosperous Sudan.

As Sudan navigates its transitional phase, its youth are not just passive observers but active participants in shaping the future of their nation. Their engagement is not limited to political activism; it extends to various spheres of life, including culture, education, and social media, where they are redefining traditional norms and values. The intersection of their diverse backgrounds – ethnic, religious, and regional – adds to the complexity of their identity, making them a unique and influential demographic in Sudanese society.

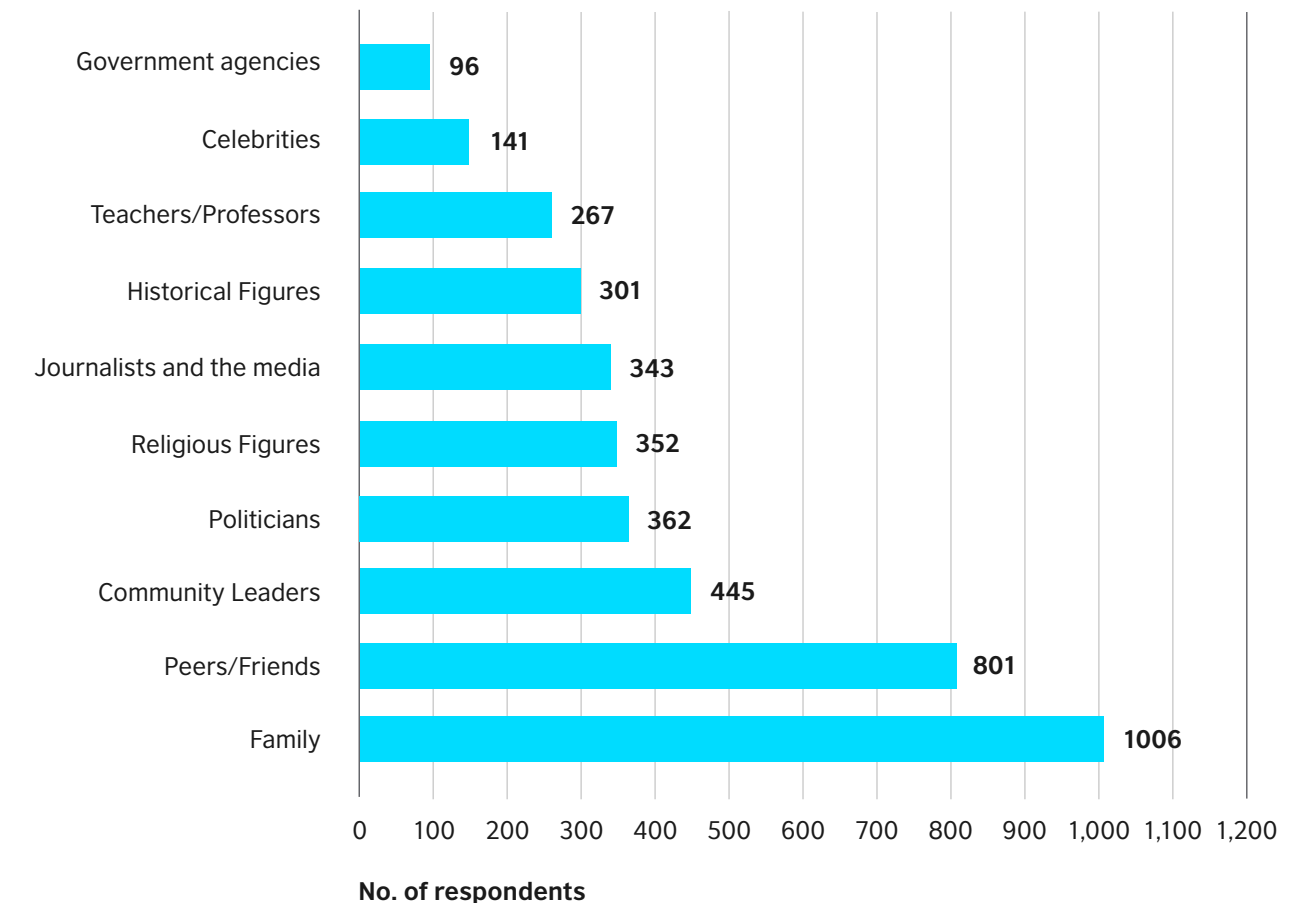
This chapter aims to delve into the dynamics of Sudanese youth identity, exploring how their experiences, beliefs, and aspirations are shaping the country's journey towards a new era. It will draw on various sources, including survey data, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions, to provide a comprehensive picture of how Sudanese youth perceive themselves and their role in a society in transition.

Values and beliefs: Family and community as central values

One of the most striking aspects of Sudanese youth identity is the central importance of family and community. These values serve as cornerstones in their lives, shaping their beliefs, behaviours, and aspirations (El Tayib, 2017).¹⁰ This significance is underscored by the survey results, where 62.4 per cent indicated that family influences their views the most, highlighting the profound respect and pivotal role the family unit plays in shaping individual identity (see Figure 4). In Sudan, the family unit is not just a social construct but a fundamental part of individual identity. It provides a sense of belonging, support, and security in a country often marred by instability and change. The deep-rooted respect for family manifests in various aspects of daily life, from decision-making processes to social interactions and life choices. This respect for family is reflected in the survey results, where a significant portion of the youth prioritised family over other aspects like employment or safety.

While the data reveals certain variations in the influence of community and religious leaders between rural and urban settings, these differences are not starkly pronounced, indicating a broader, more uniform sentiment among Sudanese youth. Community, extending beyond the immediate family, plays a similarly pivotal role. 49.7 per cent chose peers / friends, and 27.6 per cent noted community leaders, as influential in shaping their views, underscoring the community's role as an extended family that provides a network of support, guidance, and collective identity. In lesser populated and rural areas, more than a third (34.9 per cent) of youth regard community leaders as influential, compared to 23 per cent in urban localities.¹¹ Similarly, 23.6 per cent of rural youth find religious leaders influential, versus 20.8 per cent in urban areas. These figures suggest that, while community and religious leaders have a notable presence, they do not command a majority influence, even in more traditional rural settings.

Figure 4. Who influences your views the most? (Total sample base n=1611, multiple choice)



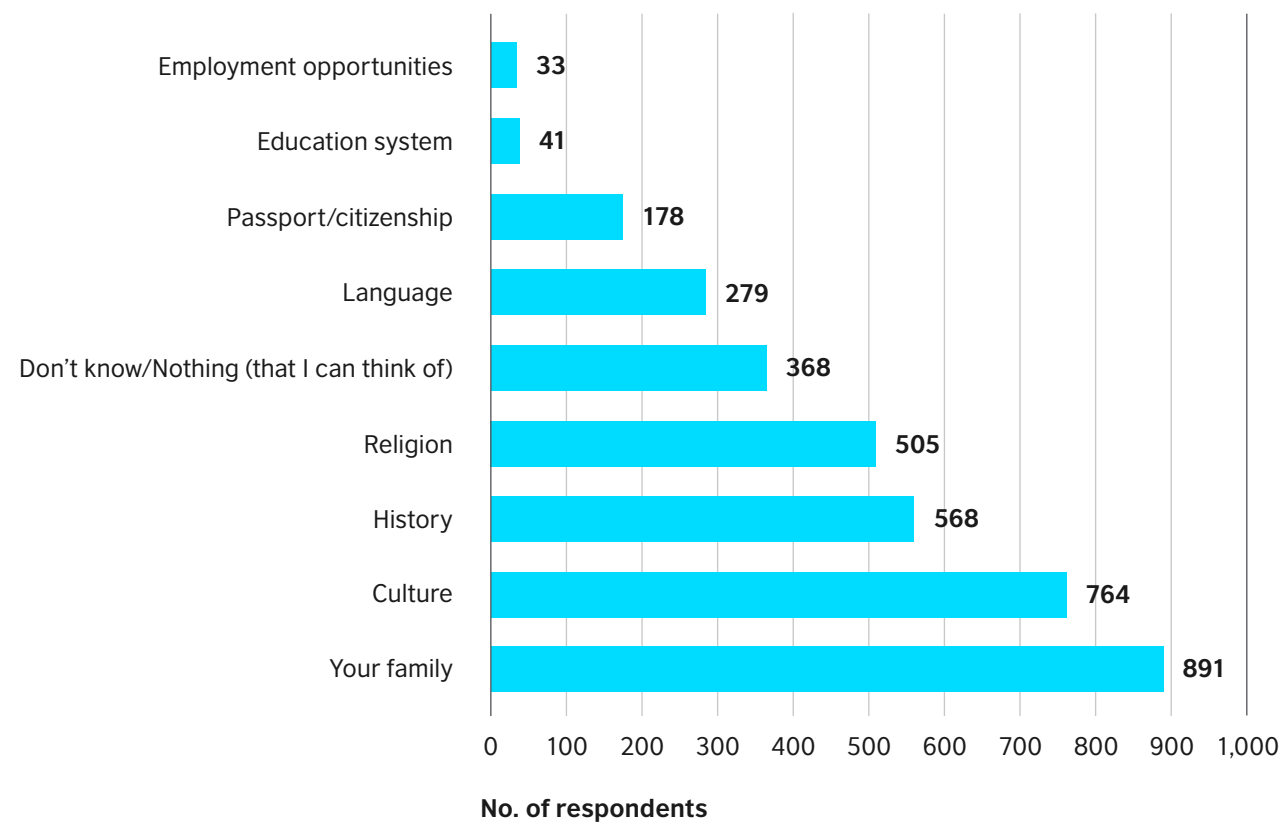
Other influences like teachers/professors, celebrities, and government agencies were less impactful, being chosen by only 16.6 per cent, 8.8 per cent, and 6 per cent of respondents respectively. This illustrates the paramount importance of family and community in the societal fabric of Sudanese youth, steering their daily lives, decision-making processes, and life choices. The subtle differences in the influence of community and religious leaders between rural and urban areas, while notable, further underscore the cohesive and unified role of family as a central pillar in the lives of Sudanese youth.

Interestingly, the paramount importance of family transcends the urban-rural divide. Even in urban areas and major cities, family emerges as the predominant influence, which is also reflected when youth are asked what makes them proud to be a citizen of Sudan (see figure 5). This pervasive respect for the family unit underscores its universal significance in the lives of Sudanese youth, shaping their beliefs, behaviours, and aspirations across different geographical and social landscapes. The findings reflect a cohesive societal fabric where, despite the varying degrees of influence from community and religious leaders, the family consistently remains a central pillar in the identity and decision-making processes of the youth.

¹⁰ El Tayib, A (2017). *Changing Customs of the Sudan*.

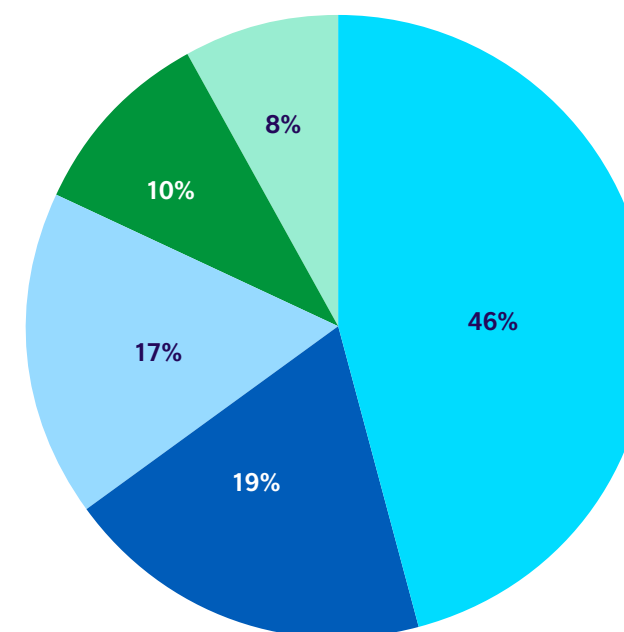
¹¹ In the context mentioned, lesser populated and rural areas" refers to a classification based on survey responses and geographical data from the Sudan Government 2008 census. This classification combines respondents' living conditions with district data to categorize areas into six types: Small Town/Village/Rural (under 20,000 residents), Town (20,000-50,000 residents), Small City (50,000-100,000 residents), Medium City (100,000-250,000 residents), Large City (250,000-500,000 residents), and Major City (over 500,000 residents). When writing "lesser populated and rural areas", we include respondents that origin from a rural area and/or a district where the largest urbanization is a small city or less. Urban localities is calculated from respondents not answering origin from a rural area and from districts where the largest urbanity is a medium city or larger.

Figure 5. What factors make you proud to be a citizen of Sudan? (Total sample base n=1611, multiple choice)



In Sudanese culture, the community often acts as an extended family, offering a network of support, guidance, and collective identity (see Figure 6). 65.3 per cent of respondents felt that they somewhat or very much feel part of a local community, with a bit higher percentage of 69.5 per cent in small towns and rural areas, where community bonds are often stronger and more visible.

Figure 6. Do you feel that you are part of a local community? (Total sample base n=1611)



- ◆ I very much feel like a part of a local community
- ◆ I somewhat feel a part of a local community
- ◆ I feel like a part of a local community
- ◆ I don't feel at all a part of a local community
- ◆ I don't feel much a part of a local community

However, the influence of family and community can also be a double-edged sword. While it provides a strong support system, it can sometimes impose limitations, especially on young women. This survey finds that the experience of community connectedness varies between genders. While 68.4 per cent of male respondents feel a part of, or very much a part of, their local community, this sentiment is only shared by 59.3 per cent of female respondents. This difference points to nuanced ways in which societal structures are navigated and perceived by different genders within Sudanese society.

Traditional expectations and societal norms can restrict their educational and professional aspirations. This dynamic is evident in the focus group discussions, where participants noted that societal norms could limit aspirations, particularly for girls, whose roles are often confined to domestic responsibilities. FGD results from the Habela Center in Port Sudan reflected on these responsibilities and roles within immediate families. They acknowledged the importance of contributing to wider society but also emphasised their focus on the responsibilities towards their small family units. This perspective underscores the balancing act Sudanese youth perform between broader societal obligations and the intimate demands of their familial roles.

“To a great extent, me personally I face some obstacles from the community because of the nature of my work only because I'm a female. I faced many challenges, but I continued my work and sought to be accepted by my community and limited the circle of my life to some close people only.” Female, age 30.

“There is discrimination within families between disabled children and healthy children.” Female, age 30.

“The impact of cultural customs on young people is seen in many families treating girls with distrust and locking them up at home.” Female, age 20.

Despite these challenges, Sudanese youth have shown resilience and adaptability. They navigate these familial and community expectations while carving out their paths and redefining traditional roles. This research found that the youth's ability to balance respect for their cultural heritage with their aspirations for modernity and progress is a significant topic in Sudanese social fabric.

This insight aligns with the broader context of Sudanese society, where family and community have traditionally been cornerstones of social structure. Young people's

consideration for their immediate family highlights the continued relevance of these traditional values, even amidst the rapidly evolving social and political landscape of Sudan. It also speaks to the potential influence these values have on shaping the aspirations, decisions, and actions of Sudanese youth.

In conclusion, family and community values are deeply ingrained in Sudanese youth identity, providing a strong foundation for their social and personal development. As Sudan continues to transition, these values will undoubtedly play a crucial role in shaping the nation's future, with the youth at the forefront of this transformation.

Experiences of discrimination

In Sudan, the intersection of ethnicity, religion, political beliefs, and other societal factors creates a complex landscape where experiences of discrimination are prevalent. While the country's predominantly Muslim identity does influence its cultural and social norms, variations in Islamic practices and the presence of minority religions contribute to a multifaceted religious environment. This complexity is not devoid of consequences, often manifesting as systemic discrimination that impacts youth across various dimensions.

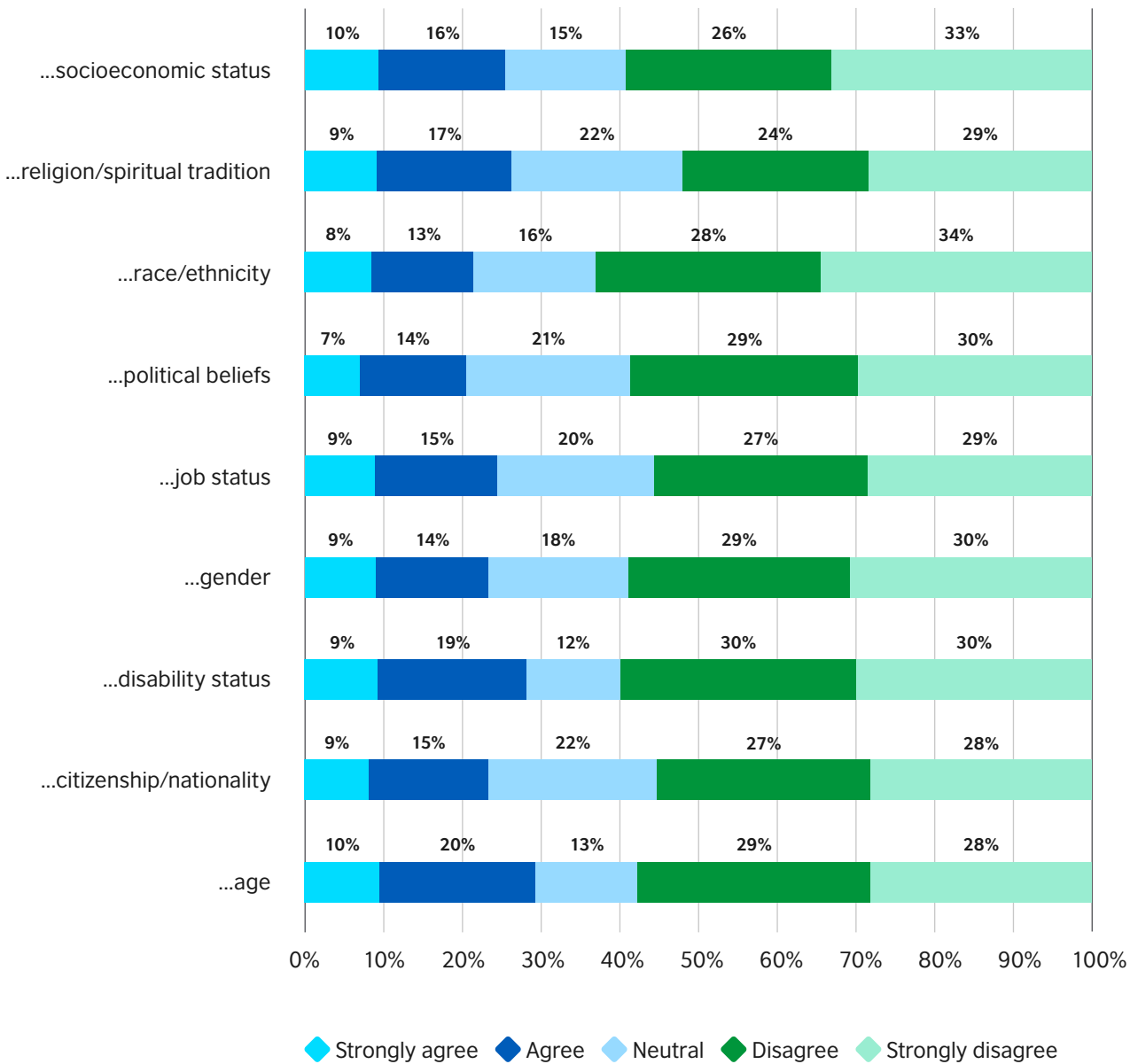
This research indicates a notable perception of inequality among Sudanese youth, with over half reporting discrimination based on race/ethnicity, political beliefs, and gender (see Figure 7). This pervasive discrimination reflects deeper systemic issues within the nation's socio-political and economic structures, which are particularly pronounced in regions like Darfur and the Blue Nile.

"Yes, identity greatly affects the lifestyle of young people, and we see this, for example, in youth songs and cultural content that we see sometimes glorifying one tribe over other tribes." **Male, age 28.**

"In general, young people do not deal with these ethnic and religious stereotypes. Young people are more open." **Female, age 31.**

"Identity greatly affects the lifestyle of young people, and there is great racism and tribalism in the way of life of Sudanese youth." **Male, age 21.**

Figure 7. In Sudan, people are treated equally regardless of their... (Total sample base n=1611)



Ethnic and racial discrimination in Sudan is a widespread social issue, with 62,5 per cent of respondents in the survey disagreeing with the notion of equal treatment across racial and ethnic lines. This type of discrimination is pervasive, manifesting in social exclusion and limited access to opportunities that are fundamental to individual growth, such as education and employment. The regions of Darfur and the Blue Nile are particularly affected, where ethnic identities have a profound impact on daily life and can lead to systemic challenges that hinder the development of young people from minority groups.

The FGDs further illuminate the complex interplay of ethnic and cultural factors in the lives of Sudanese youth. At Al Qasim Cultural Forum in Al Gezira State, participants highlighted the multicultural and multi-ethnic nature of the state but also pointed out the resistance to new cultural influences brought by returning youth, which are sometimes at odds with entrenched societal norms. This dynamic reveals a tension between maintaining traditional norms and embracing evolving cultural identities.

In the Blue Nile State, the Youth Mechanism for the Protection of Children FGD revealed participants' concerns over high-handed control of political space, often leading to the exclusion of young people with differing political views (Sutton 2018), and a lack of respect for local culture, and can breed racist discourse and practices against certain groups like ethnic minorities (or young people with disabilities (Lindsay et al. 2022).^{12 13 14} The power imbalances and lack of representation in political structures contribute to an environment where racist discourse can thrive and be used as a tool for further marginalization (Davis & Gibson-Light, 2020).¹⁵ The impact of these discriminatory practices can also risk affect the mental health and social integration of affected individuals and communities, and addressing political exclusion is therefore essential for promoting inclusion, equality,

and integration within diverse societies (Mbah et al. 2019).¹⁶

"I know a very large number of friends who have had problems because of their race and the fact that they are young." Male, age 28.

"I witnessed young men who were arrested by the police only because they were coming from a certain ethnic background. They were not accused of any crime just because they were from a specific region of Sudan and because their clothes indicated that they were from rich families." Male, age 21.

"In job offices I see young people from different backgrounds, but you will not feel this difference because young people get along well regardless of their background." Male, age 32.

"At university when I said that I am from the Blue Nile I was bullied and even some of my friends' families treated me badly, because I am from the Blue Nile only and they think that we are from an area famous for black magic." Female, age 27.

Gender-based discrimination emerges as a pervasive issue within the fabric of Sudanese society, with 59.1 per cent of survey respondents acknowledging the presence of inequality. This often manifests as societal norms and expectations that inhibit the educational and professional aspirations of young women, thereby impeding their pathways to social and economic empowerment. The weight of these gender disparities is acutely felt in rural areas, where the stronghold of community and cultural norms can significantly influence and often restrict women's roles and opportunities.

In-depth discussions held in FGDs shed further light on the real-world implications of these disparities. Participants at the Roseiris Youth Center in the Blue Nile region identified women as being particularly affected by societal constraints that curtail their freedom and

limit their participation in economic activities. Such restraints not only hinder their personal development but also contribute to broader societal inequality. Echoing this sentiment, an FGD at Hay Al-Zohour Youth Center in Damazin highlighted the unique vulnerabilities that customs and traditions impose on women, often exposing them to a heightened risk of violence and reinforcing the cycle of discrimination.

"Identity affects Blue Nile State. There is direct targeting and clear and systematic exclusion of some groups, based on the government's approach." Female, age 29.

"The loud voice of hate speech in the Blue Nile State making the life of youth harder." Female, age 29.

"I personally come from a mixed-race family in which four different races are involved, and I also see that not all people interact and get to know each other because of these racial differences." Male, age 25.

Intriguingly, a regional analysis of the data reveals a discrepancy in the perception of gender inequality between different strata of Sudanese society. In Darfur, only 40.7 per cent perceive gender-based inequality, which might be indicative of more traditional gender roles being deeply ingrained and not necessarily seen as discriminatory within the local cultural context. This lower percentage could be a reflection of the societal fabric in Darfur, where community cohesion and traditional gender roles are perhaps viewed as stabilising forces against the backdrop of conflict. It suggests a cultural landscape where changes to established gender roles are not actively pursued or are recognised as necessary for maintaining social order.

Conversely, in Eastern Sudan, where the education level is generally higher, there is a significant 70.3 per cent perception of gender inequality. The increased educational attainment in these areas is likely to correlate with greater exposure to and awareness of global gender equality standards, thus sharpening the contrast between these standards and local gender norms. The educated populace in Eastern Sudan, exposed to a broader range of ideas and discussions on gender roles, is more inclined to critique the traditional confines imposed on women and to advocate for change.

We have a huge gender gap in Eastern Sudan, as example us as young men, have greater freedom to express ourselves and find greater opportunities and education, than young girls and women." Male, age 26.

"A while ago I was a department manager in an organisation and the people below me were older than me and they had a problem dealing with me." Female, age 31.

Discrimination rooted in political beliefs and religious traditions presents a significant barrier to the full inclusion of Sudanese youth in the socio-political fabric of the country. While Sudan's political landscape has undergone significant changes, political affiliations continue to impact the inclusion and opportunities available to the youth. Additionally, 52 per cent of survey respondents feel that religious and spiritual traditions lead to unequal treatment, an issue that underscores the critical need for inclusive religious dialogues and more ecumenical practices.

The influence of politics and tribal affiliations on the lives of young people was underscored in several FGDs. For example, participants at the Droob al Amal initiative in Al-Roseiris spoke to the divisive nature of politics, which often segregates youth along tribal lines. This division has tangible effects on various aspects of life for young people. Tribal affiliations, often conflated with political loyalty, can affect employment opportunities, as hiring practices may favour certain tribes over others, especially in sectors influenced by or close to the political sphere. In the public sector or industries dependent on government contracts, such biases can be particularly pronounced, limiting fair access to jobs for individuals from less politically dominant tribes.

Mobility, both in terms of physical freedom to move between regions and social mobility, can also be hindered by political and tribal divisions. Young people from tribes that are perceived as politically opposed or from regions known for resistance may face increased scrutiny and challenges when travelling or seeking to relocate for education or work. This can lead to a sense of confinement within certain areas, contributing to regional disparities in development and opportunities.

For some young people, ethnic identity can impose restrictions on movement and presence in certain areas, shaping their social and economic realities. In the Blue Nile, for instance, several interview respondents told stories about how identity-based divisions have led to prohibitions on movement and presence in specific areas. The complexity of navigating these identities is further complicated by structural barriers that limit access to political positions, employment, and government institutions.

¹² The political landscape of the Blue Nile State in Sudan is complex, marked by a history of conflict and a variety of influential factions. Traditionally under the control of the central Sudanese government, the region has also experienced significant influence from rebel groups, most notably the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). The area's strategic importance and ethnic diversity contribute to its intricate political dynamics, which are part of the broader political and military struggles within Sudan. The transition period following the ousting of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019 introduced a blend of civilian and military governance, yet tensions remain. The Blue Nile State's political class thus encompasses a mix of national government officials, local leaders, military figures, and representatives of various armed and political groups, all within a context of ongoing national political fluctuations and peace negotiations.

¹³ See Sutton, 2018 for an example in the Cambodian context. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/0a923523f25c0cbbf521ae4ab52618641aa8574d>

¹⁴ Lindsay et al. (2022). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362749445_Ableism_and_Workplace_Discrimination_Among_Youth_and_Young_Adults_with_Disabilities_A_Systematic_Review

¹⁵ Davis, A. & Gibson-Light, M. (2020). <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/0016dba4c4095729067161cc1be0b97eb42267b1>

¹⁶ Mbah et al. (2019). <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311886.2019.1565615>

“Currently when I’m travelling from one area to another I am constantly stopped by the police in checkpoints, and they don’t treat other people similarly as a result of their ethnic backgrounds.” Female, age 27.

“I was subjected to a security threat and some charges were imposed against me by the security authorities in Blue Nile State.” Male, age 26.

“The issue of identity is very influential, especially here in the Blue Nile. It affects the lives of young people, and we are unfairly classified as followers of armed movements.” Male, age 26.

In an FGD at the Habela Center in Port Sudan, the participants elaborated on how politics and tribal beliefs are not just abstract notions but exert a profound influence on the daily lives of young individuals. They create divisions that permeate through community relations, social networks, and even the availability of developmental programmes, which can be allocated along tribal lines, further entrenching existing inequalities.

“Politics works to create division among young people. It is based on the tribe here in the Blue Nile State. Therefore, it creates disagreement, division, and major obstacles.” Female, age 26.

“I provide training for young people. Sometimes in these trainings, when we discuss topics related to religion, we find that young people become uncomfortable discussing religious matters.” Female, age 31.

“In education and employment opportunities, there is discrimination among young people that comes from a background of tribal discrimination.” Male, age 26.

The impact of regional disparities on youth experiences is profound. Urban and rural youth in Sudan face different challenges and opportunities, with rural areas often having stronger traditional and community bonds that can both support and limit young people’s aspirations.

To address these challenges, policies and interventions should focus on promoting a more inclusive and equitable society. This includes educational reforms that emphasise diversity and inclusion, initiatives that bridge ethnic and religious divides, and efforts to empower young women and marginalised groups. Creating spaces for open dialogue and understanding among different ethnic, religious, and political groups is essential to fostering a more cohesive society.

In an FGD at Nabad Albalad Association in Al-Rosaires, the complexity of ethnicity and religion was discussed. Participants noted significant barriers to education and inclusion due to these complexities, with many young people feeling inferior and excluded based on their ethnic and religious backgrounds.

“The complexities of ethnicity and religion have created very significant barriers for many groups of young people, leaving them largely excluded from education.” Gender unspecified, age unspecified.

“We see ourselves as contributing to building a new Sudan that accommodates everyone.” Female, age unspecified.

“We have experience in Eastern Sudan in which we worked to bring together the conflicting groups in one location. At first the situation was difficult, but over time good communication occurred between them.” Male, age 28.

A national identity that embraces diversity

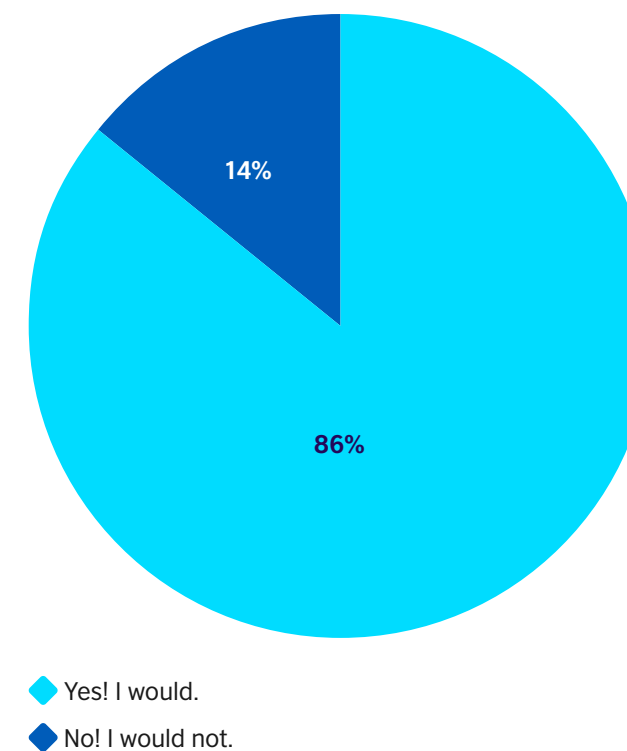
In the evolving narrative of Sudan, the national identity transcends geographical, ethnic, and cultural boundaries, with Sudanese youth playing a pivotal role in both preserving and reshaping this identity to reflect the country’s diverse nature. Their perspectives, informed by a rich blend of regional traditions, languages, and histories, advocate for a Sudan that honours its diversity as a source of strength and unity. This approach resonates across various regions, underscoring the youth’s active participation in forging a more inclusive and united future despite the challenges of regional disparities and historical conflicts.

The survey data and FGDs reveal a nuanced understanding among the youth of the complexities and opportunities that come with Sudan’s diversity. While embracing their unique cultural heritage, they also recognise the need for dialogue, mutual respect, and an inclusive approach to nation-building. Initiatives led by the youth, such as cultural forums and community programmes, are testament to their commitment to fostering understanding and cooperation among Sudan’s diverse communities.

However, despite their willingness to contribute to nation-building, a significant 85.9 per cent of respondents expressed a readiness to move to another

country (Figure 8), seeking opportunities that may not be currently available in Sudan. This sentiment was particularly strong in Darfur, Central, and Khartoum strata of the survey, where 90.1 per cent expressed a willingness to emigrate, while the Eastern and Kordofan strata showed a slightly lower tendency, with figures below 80 per cent (77.3 percent).

Figure 8. Are you willing to move to another country? (Total sample base n=1611)

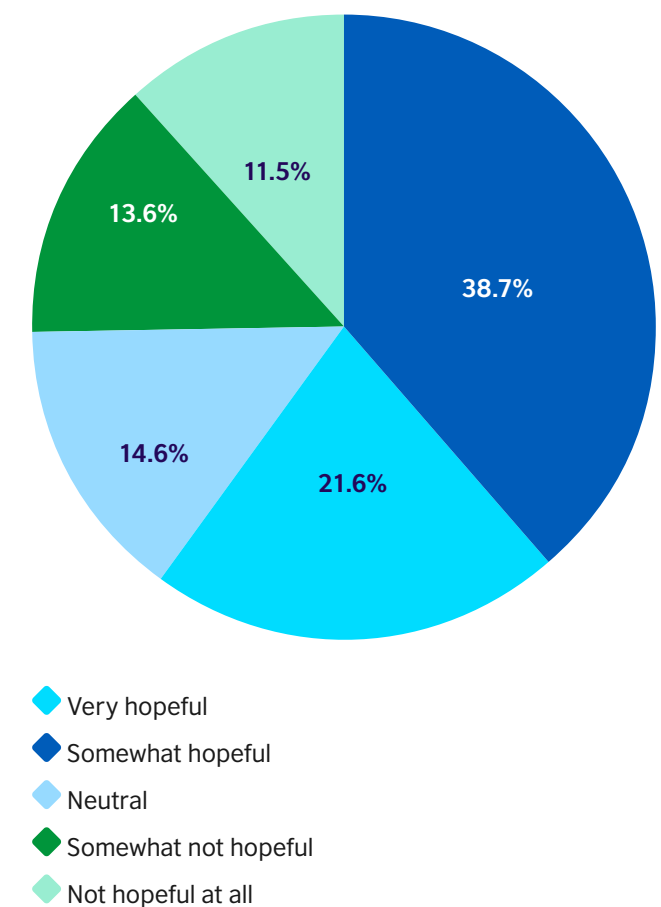


Notably, this trend was not solely a reaction to the crisis post-April 2023; data collected in Khartoum prior to the outbreak of war mirrored these sentiments, with more than 4 out of 5 respondents indicating their willingness to relocate. This underscores that the desire for emigration has been a persistent issue, rooted in factors beyond the immediate crisis, and points to longstanding challenges and aspirations for better opportunities abroad.

When it comes to their outlook on Sudan’s future, the youth’s sentiments are mixed. Overall, 60.2 per cent reported feeling somewhat or very hopeful about the nation’s prospects (Figure 9). This optimism is notably high in the Kordofan strata of the survey, where an impressive 81.1 per cent expressed hopefulness. In contrast, the Northern and Eastern strata displayed

more reserved optimism, with less than half (47.7 per cent) feeling hopeful about the future.

Figure 9. How hopeful are you about the future of Sudan? (Total sample base n=1598)



It can be deduced from the FGDs that the youth of Sudan, particularly in regions like Darfur and the Blue Nile, perceive their role in nation-building as crucial yet challenging. In Gezira State, for example, participants in an FGD described how young people contribute through cultural forums and awareness programmes, aiming to build a better Sudan. However, opinions from FGDs vary with some youth remaining hopeful and engaged in nation-building, while others feel marginalised and consider leaving Sudan due to an unpromising future.

The youth in Blue Nile and Darfur express a need for greater involvement in national matters, calling for opportunities to participate in decision-making processes that shape their future. Their perspectives

reflect a desire for a more inclusive Sudan where every voice, regardless of ethnic or tribal background, is heard and valued.

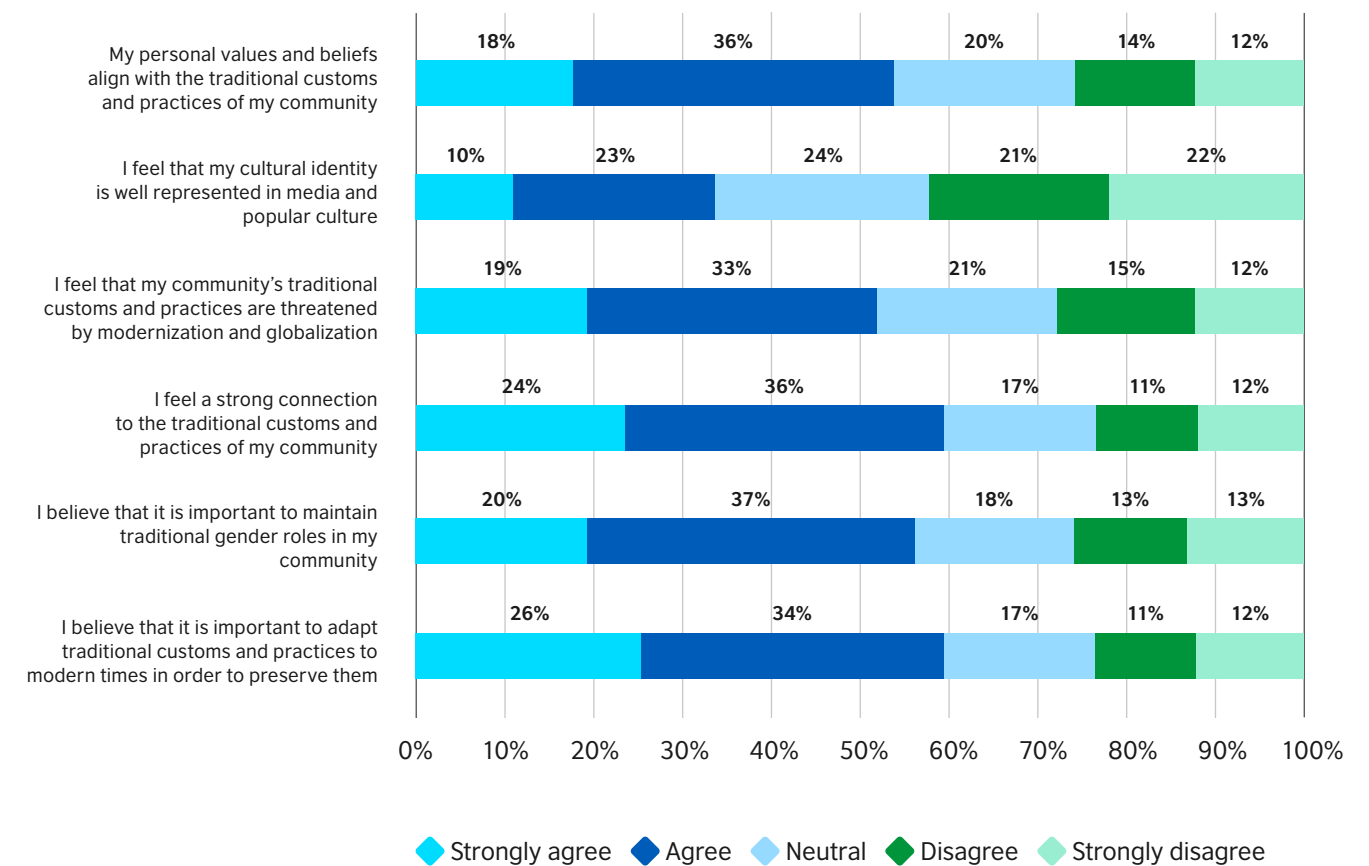
The survey data and FGDs collectively paint a picture of a youth population that, while deeply committed to the ideals of diversity and unity, is also acutely aware of the obstacles and limitations they face. Their willingness to emigrate for better opportunities, coupled with a cautiously optimistic view of the nation's future, reflects the complex interplay of hope, resilience, and pragmatic considerations that define the current generation of Sudanese youth.

Sudan's rich history, diverse cultures, and multiple languages form the foundation of its national identity, as perceived by its youth. Historical narratives, especially those related to independence and revolutions, shape their understanding of what it means to be Sudanese. Cultural practices and traditions, varying across different ethnic and tribal groups, further enrich this identity, providing a sense of belonging and continuity.

However, the youth also recognise the dynamic nature of culture. As indicated in the survey (Figure 10), over half of the respondents (59.8 per cent) feel a strong connection to traditional customs, yet there is a notable push towards adapting these traditions to modern times (59.6 per cent). This balance between tradition and modernity reflects the evolving nature of Sudanese national identity.



Figure 10. How much do you agree with the following statements? (Total sample base n=1611)



The recent political transformations in Sudan, particularly the revolution and its aftermath, have profoundly impacted the youth's sense of national identity. The revolution, as a unifying force, brought together youth from diverse backgrounds, fostering a sense of common purpose and national pride. It challenged the divisive identity politics of the past, promoting a more inclusive understanding of what it means to be Sudanese.

Several youth-led initiatives across Sudan aim to bridge regional divides and foster national unity. These include the Nabd al-Balad Association, We Are All People Initiative, and the Civic Education Network. Such initiatives demonstrate the youth's commitment to creating a more cohesive society, despite the challenges posed by regional and ethnic divisions.

Post-revolution, as the nation navigates through political and social reforms, the youth see themselves playing a crucial role in redefining and strengthening the national identity. They aspire to build a Sudan that transcends ethnic, tribal, and religious divides, as echoed by participants in FGDs.

Sudanese youth today stand at a crossroads, where their views and actions are pivotal in shaping the country's national identity. Their perspectives, influenced by family, culture, history, and recent political shifts, reflect a deep-rooted connection to their heritage while embracing modernity and change. They navigate multiple identities, grappling with challenges of discrimination and exclusion while striving to contribute to nation-building. As Sudan continues to evolve, the youth's role in defining and promoting a unified national identity will be instrumental in shaping the country's future trajectory. Their commitment to a Sudanese identity that is inclusive, diverse, and forward-looking holds the promise of a nation united in its diversity and rich in its cultural heritage.

"[Embracing diversity] is more important than anything else, especially with the increasing voices that support hate speech and the division of the country." **Male, age 28.**

"[Embracing diversity] is very important; basically, Sudan is based on diversity." **Female, age 27.**

"[Embracing diversity] is inevitable to accept our diversity, because our diversity is what created Sudan in the first place, and denying that led to the conflicts we are experiencing now." **Male, age 26.**

"Young people in Al Gezira State accept cultural and tribal diversity to a great extent, and it does not represent any source of difference for us." **Female, age 24.**

"It is very important for the issue of stability of the state, especially if we build a constitution that respects differences and the diversity of ethnic and cultural groups." **Female, age 31.**

"The importance of embracing diversity is great, it may lead to stopping the war." **Female, age 30.**

Revolution's role in changing perspectives

The Sudanese revolution, or December Revolution, was a pivotal moment in the nation's history and has been instrumental in shaping the attitudes and perspectives of the youth towards issues of identity and discrimination. This transformative event marked a departure from the divisive identity politics of the previous regime, which often exploited religious and racial differences for political ends.

During the reign of the previous Islamist rule, religious and racial identities were often exploited to sway the youth. However, the revolution emerged as a major turning point, fostering a more accepting and open-minded youth population, acting as a catalyst for breaking down long-standing barriers of ethnicity, religion, and political affiliation. It brought together youth from diverse backgrounds, united by common goals of freedom, peace, and justice.

As noted by a 32-year-old male participant, the current generation's lifestyle is less affected by racial, religious, or ethnic backgrounds, indicating a shift towards greater openness and acceptance of diversity. Another participant, a 31-year-old male, echoed this sentiment, observing that young people are now more open and less constrained by ethnic and religious stereotypes. These reflections signal a significant change in how young Sudanese view and interact with each other, moving away from the divisive politics of the past. This unity in diversity was a stark contrast to the divisive politics of the past.

"I do not see the lifestyle of the current generation being affected by their racial, religious or ethnic background. Young people have become more open and accepting of others." **Male, age 32.**

"In general, young people do not deal with these ethnic and religious stereotypes. Young people are more open." **Male, age 31.**

"Especially during the days of previous Islamic rule, religion and race were exploited to influence the youth to a great extent. In contrast, when the revolution came, it played a major role in improving the outlook of the youth and the way they live their lives, which no longer depended on religion and race." **Female, age 29.**

The leading role of the youth in the revolution was unprecedented, primarily driven by street demonstrations and sit-ins, which culminated in the ouster of al-Bashir in April 2019. This movement brought together young people from diverse backgrounds, united by common goals of freedom, peace, and justice. In doing so, it fostered a sense of inclusivity and awareness among the youth. It highlighted issues of social justice, equality, and the importance of recognising and celebrating Sudan's diverse cultural fabric. Many young people, previously influenced by ethnic or religious biases, began to embrace a more inclusive national identity.

The revolution empowered youth voices, providing a platform for them to express their views and aspirations for a better Sudan. This empowerment has been instrumental in changing their attitudes towards traditional societal structures and norms, encouraging a more progressive and open-minded outlook.

However, the post-revolution period has not been without its challenges. Despite the progress, the war and ensuing conflicts have, in some instances, rekindled forms of discrimination, notably also particularly expressed in the interactions between displaced individuals and host communities. The challenges of post-revolution Sudan have tested the resilience of these changing perspectives. The resulting economic difficulties and social tensions have in some instances reignited discriminatory attitudes.

For example, a 30-year-old female participant highlighted that "yes, there is discrimination [in the communities] after the war and there is hate speech. For instance, youth in certain states are bullying young people who were displaced from Khartoum to the states". She emphasised the need for reflecting the positive side of the interaction between the displaced and the host community, suggesting that this could play a crucial role in reducing hate speech and promoting inclusivity. Similarly, a 27-year-old female participant from the Blue Nile region shared personal experiences

of being bullied and treated unfairly in her community and workplace due to her ethnic background, highlighting the persistent challenges in achieving true inclusivity. However, the foundation laid by the revolution continues to inspire youth towards building a more inclusive and equitable society.

"Recently, after the war in particular, the lifestyle of young people has become influenced by their identity and ethnic origins." **Female, age 29.**

"Yes, there is discrimination after the war and there is hate speech." **Female, age 30.**

"Of course, Sudan suffers from an identity crisis. Basically, there is a group of young people who have sided in orientations that are against the path of the state, such as the armed movements, and their main position towards governments is the position of identity issues." **Male, age 29.**

"For example, states youth are bullying young people who were displaced from Khartoum to the states." **Female, age 30.**

Despite the progress, the challenges of post-revolution Sudan have tested the resilience of these changing perspectives. The resulting conflicts and economic difficulties have sometimes reignited discriminatory attitudes. However, the foundation laid by the revolution continues to inspire youth towards building a more inclusive and equitable society. The revolution's impact is evident in the way young people navigate the complexities of multiple identities, including ethnicity, tribal, and religious identities. As noted in the FGDs, youth in regions like Darfur perceive their role in the broader Sudanese community and nation-building as significant. They engage in initiatives to bridge regional divides and foster national unity, indicating a continued commitment to the ideals of the revolution.

The post-revolution landscape in Sudan has seen youth-led resistance committees and organisations remain active, focussing on local-level issues and action. While there is no singular body or platform that speaks for Sudanese youth, they remain a significant force, playing a leading role in organising large-scale demonstrations and community actions.

The Sudanese revolution has indeed been transformative, particularly in terms of altering youth perspectives on identity and diversity. While significant progress has been made towards a more inclusive society, the ongoing conflicts and economic hardships

continue to test the resilience of these changing attitudes. Nonetheless, the foundation laid by the revolution offers hope for a future where diversity is celebrated, and equity is a shared goal.

Youth aspirations amidst challenges

Despite significant challenges, many Sudanese youth continue to pursue their dreams, although some aspirations have been deferred. Economic hardships, migration, and the effects of displacement and conflict have shaped their ambitions. The centralisation of governance and services, coupled with limited job opportunities, has led to a high rate of youth migration and a growing inclination towards private work and entrepreneurship over traditional employment.

“There is a temporary setback in the lives of young people, but it is important to implement various quick interventions to help young people overcome this stage.”
Male, age 28.

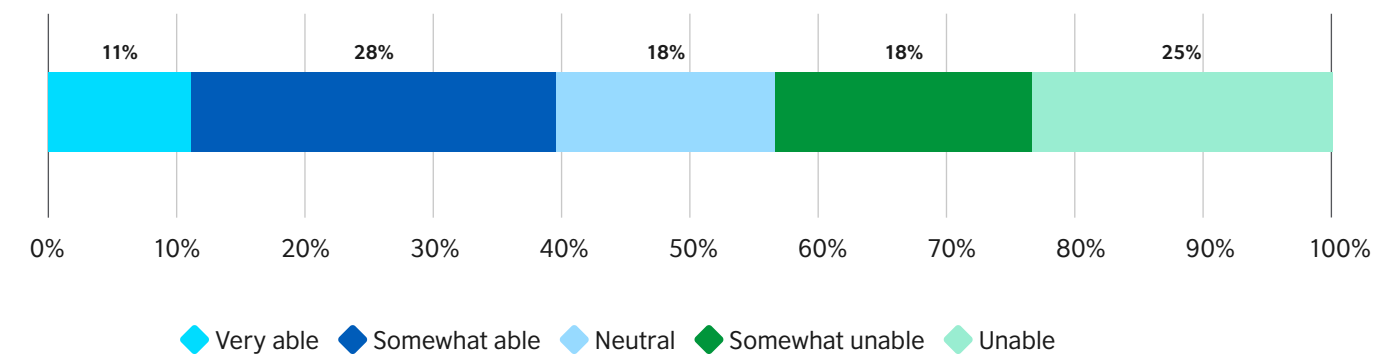
“The challenges of the war are creating a youth with only few visions... the aspirations have shrunk dramatically, and a great state of despair has occurred among the youth.”
Male, age 25.

“The current situation is a state of general frustration for the youth... their ambitions are limited to travelling and leaving the country.”
Female, age 27.

“Most young people are unemployed, and the future is unknown, especially for youth who do not have financial capabilities.”
Male, age 21.

The current state of Sudanese youth is marked by a general sense of frustration due to economic difficulties, educational disruptions, and the broader socio-political landscape. The survey finds that there is a notable diversity in sentiments about shaping their future (Figure 11). Many young Sudanese find themselves in a complex interplay of feeling able or completely unable to decide their future, reflecting the multifaceted challenges they face. This sense of uncertainty is intertwined with their resilience and determination to pursue dreams amidst economic hardships, educational disruptions, and socio-political challenges.

Figure 11. To what degree would you say that you are able to decide what your future is going to be like? (Total sample base n=1611)



A disparity emerges when analysing the survey responses through the lens of gender. While a general sense of uncertainty about the future prevails among the youth, it is more pronounced among young women. The survey reveals that 46.3 per cent of young women aged 18-24 feel very or somewhat unable to decide what their future will be like, compared to 38.7 per cent of young men in the same age group. This discrepancy highlights the additional layers of complexity that young women face in navigating their futures in Sudan.

This difference can be attributed to several factors, including traditional societal norms, expectations, and the unique challenges posed by the socio-economic landscape of Sudan. Young women often encounter more significant barriers to education and employment and face societal pressures that can limit their autonomy and freedom to shape their life paths. The sentiment of feeling unable to decide one's future is not just a reflection of personal aspirations but also an indicator of the broader societal constraints that disproportionately affect young women.

Interview respondents further shed light on the intricate gender dynamics within Sudanese society, revealing a landscape where opportunities and perceptions of capability are deeply influenced by gender. On one hand, there is an acknowledgment of the societal complexities that young women face. The prevailing societal narrative tends to favour young men, providing them with comparatively better opportunities and greater autonomy in shaping their futures. This is particularly pronounced in the current socio-cultural climate of Sudan, where the intricacies of dealing with gender roles often result in limitations on the potential

and freedoms of young women.

On the other hand, there is a growing recognition of the capabilities and significant contributions of young women, especially highlighted during moments of national importance such as the revolution. This acknowledgment serves as a testament to the strength, resilience, and potential of young women, challenging the traditional perceptions and expectations of their roles in society.

“Young men have better opportunities than young women, especially at this time, because our society is complicated in dealing with girls.”
Male, age 21.

“Young women are more capable because since we all witnessed the great participation of women in the revolution.”
Male, age 47.

“In some rural areas, young men have a greater ability than young women to determine their destiny and future.”
Female, age 45.

“Cultural customs affect women more than men because it hinders women from opportunities in work and education.”
Female, age 33.

Survey data reveals a rich tapestry of hopes, desires, and perceived barriers to achieving their goals. Key factors contributing to their sense of success and happiness include travelling, job stability, and financial security. This section delves into these aspirations, examining how achievable Sudanese youth find these goals, and what this tells us about their outlook on life and the future.

Travelling emerges as a prominent aspiration among 49.8 per cent of the youth surveyed, indicative of a strong desire for exploration and experiencing new cultures (Figure 12). This longing for travel reflects a broader yearning for freedom and adventure, a break from the constraints of their current circumstances. However, the practicality of achieving this dream varies, though 29.5 per cent considers it very achievable, suggesting both hope and realism in their outlook.

Job stability is a second significant concern, with 45.7 per cent of respondents valuing it as a contributor to happiness and success. In a context of economic instability and limited job opportunities, this aspiration speaks to a deep-seated need for security and predictability in their professional lives. Their perception of how achievable job stability is, however, is mixed, reflecting the uncertain economic landscape in which these young individuals find themselves.



Figure 12. When thinking about personal success and happiness (both now and in the future), which of the below do you think contribute to this? (Total sample base n=1611, multiple choice)

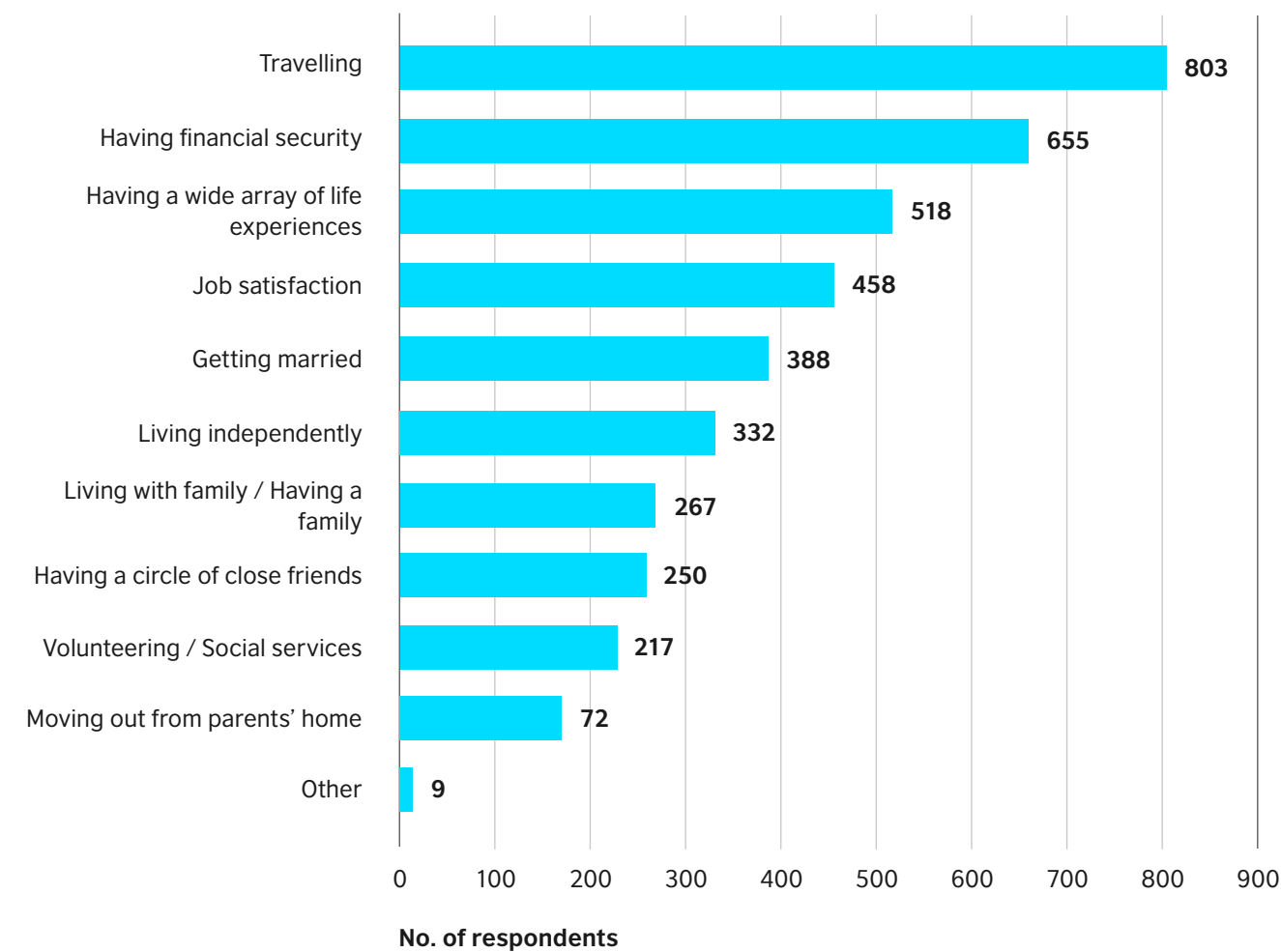
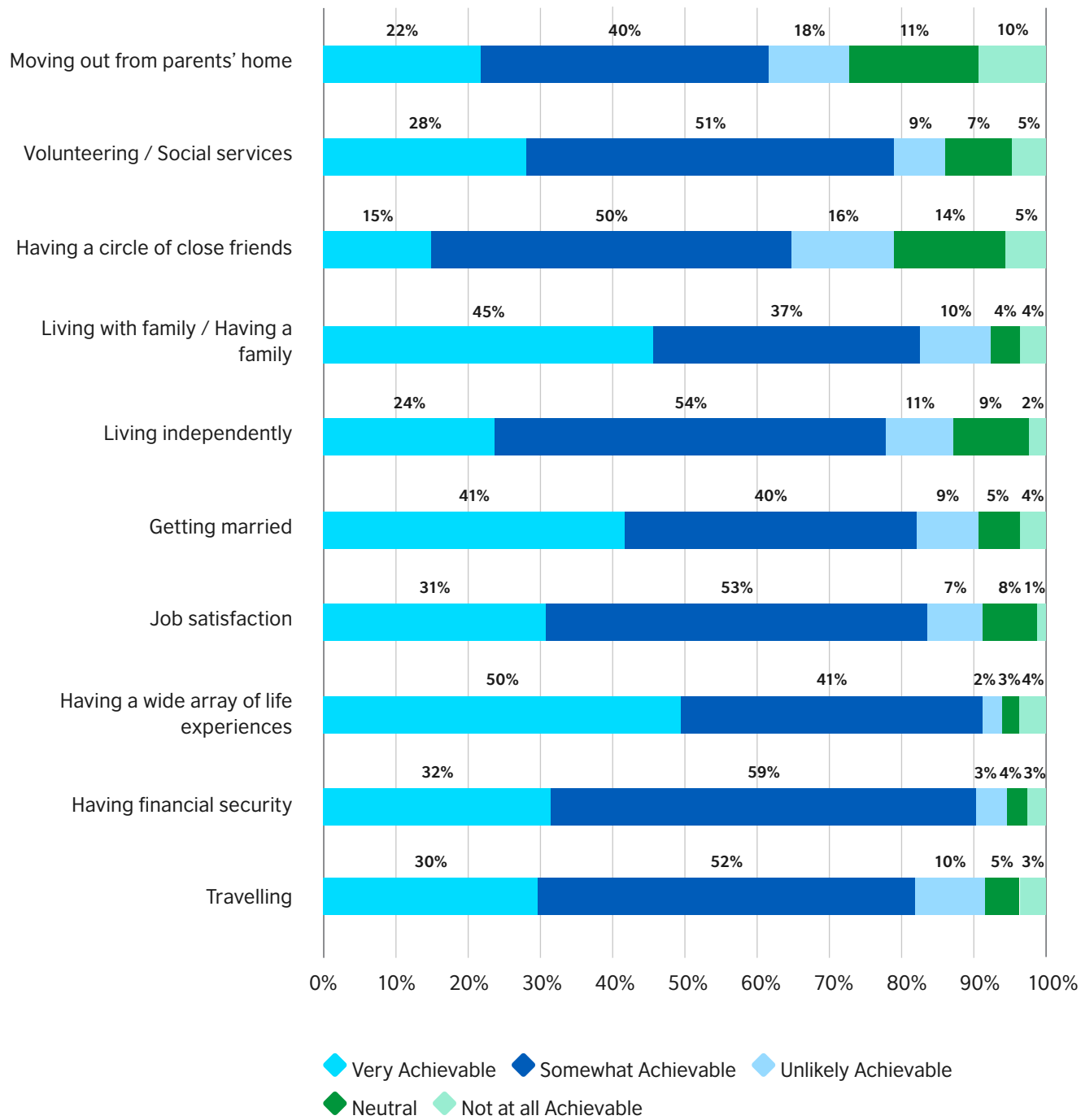


Figure 13. Thinking about your source of happiness, how achievable do you find each of them? (Partial samples based on response to Figure 12).



Financial security is a cornerstone of the youth's aspirations, with 40.7 per cent ranking it highly. This emphasis underscores the challenging economic environment in Sudan and the impact of financial instability on young lives. The pursuit of financial security, while deemed somewhat or very achievable by 64.3 per cent of respondents, highlights their resilience and determination in the face of economic adversity.

"Currently, the vision is very blurry for young people, and no one can determine the future." **Female, age 27.**

"It is very difficult for young people in this situation to determine their future." **Male, age 29.**

"Young people cannot determine their future because the political vision in Sudan now is unclear." **Male, age 32.**

"Youth who left the country after the war breakout, got better opportunities to decide about their future, than the ones still in Sudan." **Female, age 30.**

The survey also sheds light on other aspects of life that Sudanese youth associate with success and happiness. Living independently and having a wide array of life experiences are valued, yet there is an acknowledgment of the challenges in attaining these goals. This balancing act between independence and the constraint of their socio-economic environment is a recurring theme in their aspirations.

Getting married, having a family, and maintaining a circle of close friends are important to many, reflecting the value placed on social connections and community bonds. Volunteering and social services also feature in their vision for a fulfilling life, underscoring a commitment to societal contribution and the importance of civic engagement. The survey finds that many young Sudanese aspire to be actively involved in their communities and contribute to societal development. This includes participation in peacebuilding efforts, reflecting their commitment to societal progress amidst political turmoil.

Despite significant challenges, many Sudanese youth continue to pursue their dreams, although some aspirations have been deferred. Economic hardships, migration, and the effects of displacement and conflict have shaped their ambitions. The centralisation of governance and services, coupled with limited job opportunities, has led to a high rate of youth migration and a growing inclination towards private work and entrepreneurship over traditional employment.

"The challenges of the war are creating a youth with only few visions... the aspirations have shrunk dramatically, and a great state of despair has occurred among the youth." **Male, age 25.**

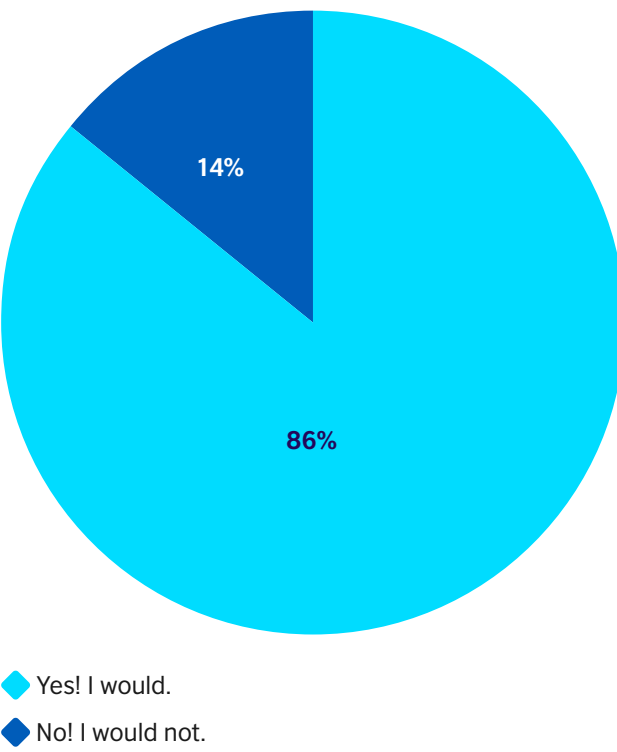
"The current situation is a state of general frustration for the youth... their ambitions are limited to travelling and leaving the country." **Female, age 27.**

"Most young people are unemployed, and the future is unknown, especially for youth who do not have financial capabilities." **Male, age 21.**

Migration as a pathway to economic prosperity and personal fulfilment.

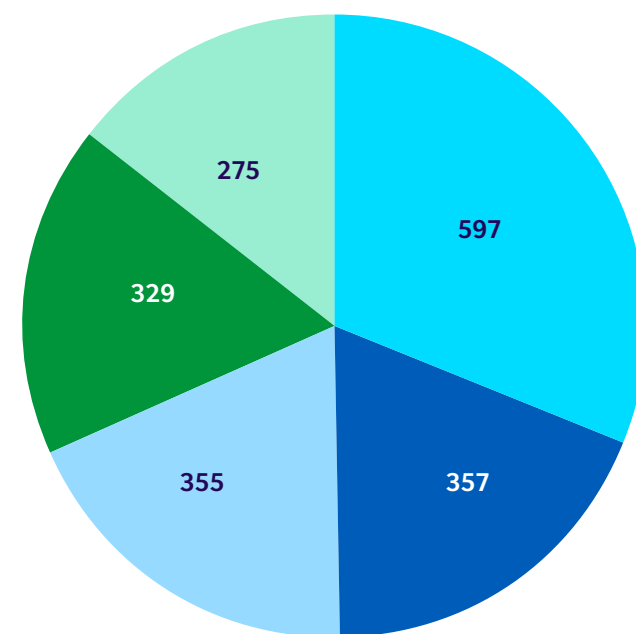
A significant proportion of Sudanese youth exhibit a strong desire for global connectivity, with aspirations deeply intertwined with their views on education, employment, and overall quality of life. The survey data suggests a clear inclination towards migration, as 85.9 per cent of respondents express a willingness to move to another country (Figure 134). This trend is not merely a desire for change of scenery; it is a quest for environments that offer better opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Figure 14. Are you willing to move to another country? (Total sample base n=1611)



When asked about which countries that are attractive to them personally (figure 15), the survey results reveal the United States of America as the most attractive country for respondents, with 597 indicating a preference. This is followed by Saudi Arabia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, illustrating a diverse range of preferred destinations across different continents. Middle Eastern countries like Qatar and the UAE also ranked highly, reflecting regional proximity and cultural ties. European countries, along with Australia and Asian nations, were less favoured, indicating varied migration aspirations among the respondents.

Figure 15. Top five countries most attractive to young people personally. (Total sample base n=1611, multiple choice)

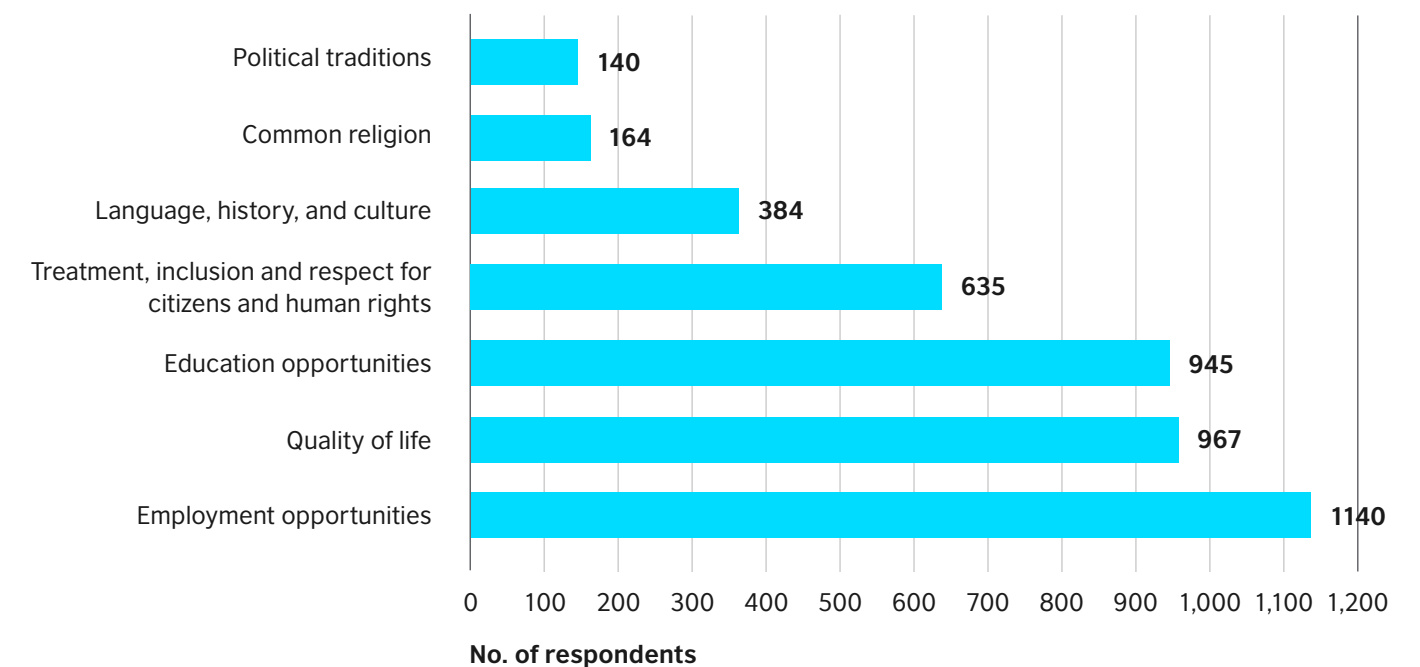


No. of respondents

- United States of America
- Saudi Arabia
- Canada
- United Kingdom
- Qatar

The choice of destination is influenced by various factors, with employment opportunities (74.7 per cent of respondents willing to move), Quality of life, (63.4 per cent) and education (61.9 per cent) being primary motivators (see figure 16). Considerations such as treatment and respect for citizens and human rights (41.6 per cent), as well as language, history, and culture (25.2 per cent), also play significant roles in the choice of destination. This indicates a desire not just for economic stability, but also for a sense of belonging and a respectful, inclusive environment, though secondary to employment and education opportunities.

Figure 16. Based on the countries indicated as attractive to you, select three reasons why? (Total sample base n=1611, multiple choice)



"All that youth think about is to immigrate out of Sudan."
Female, age 25.

"My dream is to travel outside of Sudan." Male, age 26.

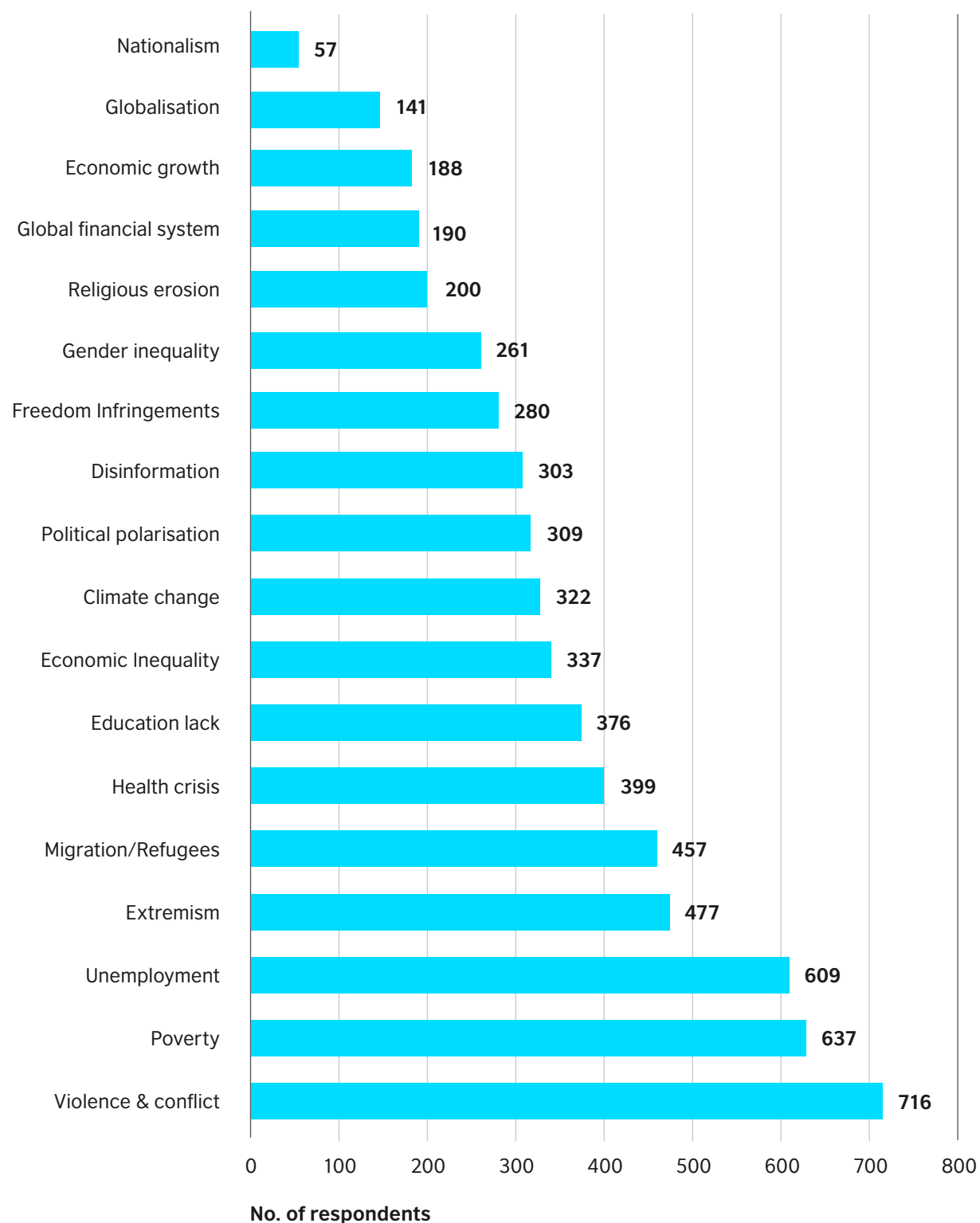
The high percentage of youth willing to migrate, coupled with their choices of destination countries, reflect a multifaceted aspiration. It is not just about economic gains but also about personal growth, educational advancements, and living in societies that align with their values and aspirations. This trend underscores the importance of addressing the underlying factors in Sudan that are prompting this desire for migration.

This aspiration for global mobility raises questions about national loyalty and the role of Sudanese youth in their country's development. The desire to explore global prospects often coexists with a sense of responsibility towards Sudan. Youth must navigate a complex landscape where their global aspirations might seem in conflict with their national identity and the development of their homeland.

Perspectives on global challenges and attitudes towards climate change

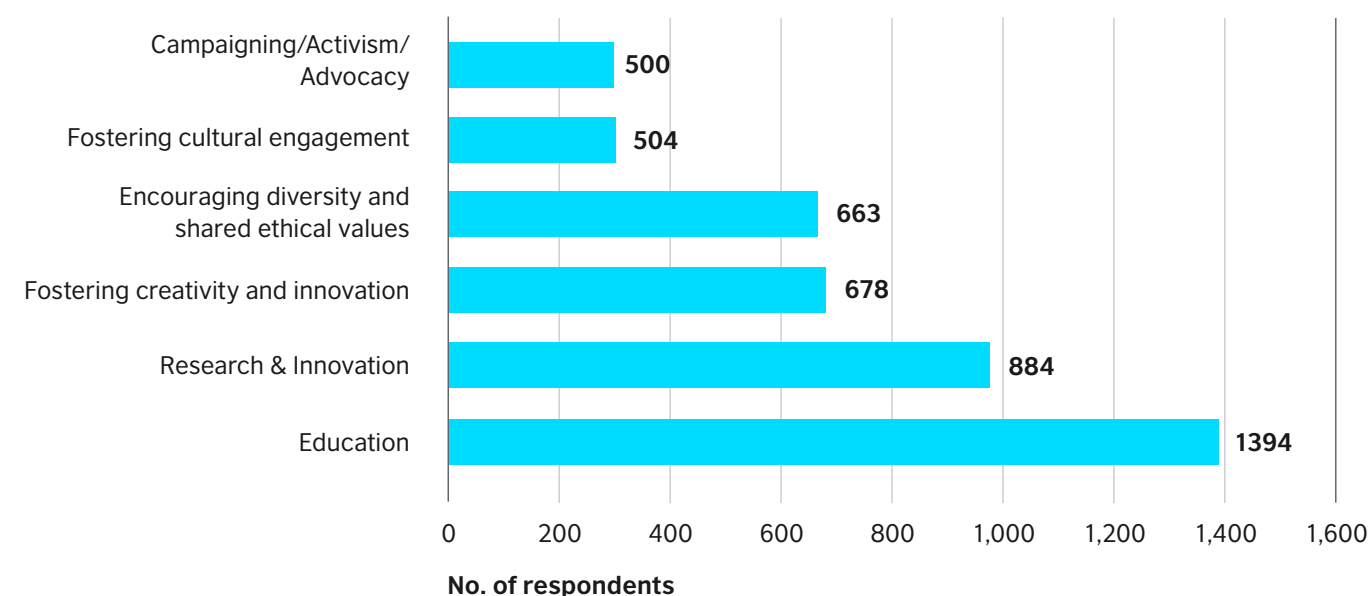
The survey data provides insight into the youth's perspectives on global challenges. Top concerns include violence and conflict (44.9 per cent), poverty (39.9 per cent), and unemployment (38.2 per cent) (Figure 17). These concerns reflect a broader understanding of the interconnected nature of global issues and their impact on individual lives.

Figure 17. Which, if any, of these do you think are the most important issues facing the world today? (Total sample base n=1611, multiple choice)



When considering solutions, education (87.6 per cent) and research and innovation (55.6 per cent) are seen as powerful tools (Figure 18). This emphasis on education and innovation indicates a belief in proactive and informed approaches to tackling global problems. Fostering creativity, diversity, and ethical values are also recognised as essential in creating a more equitable and sustainable world.

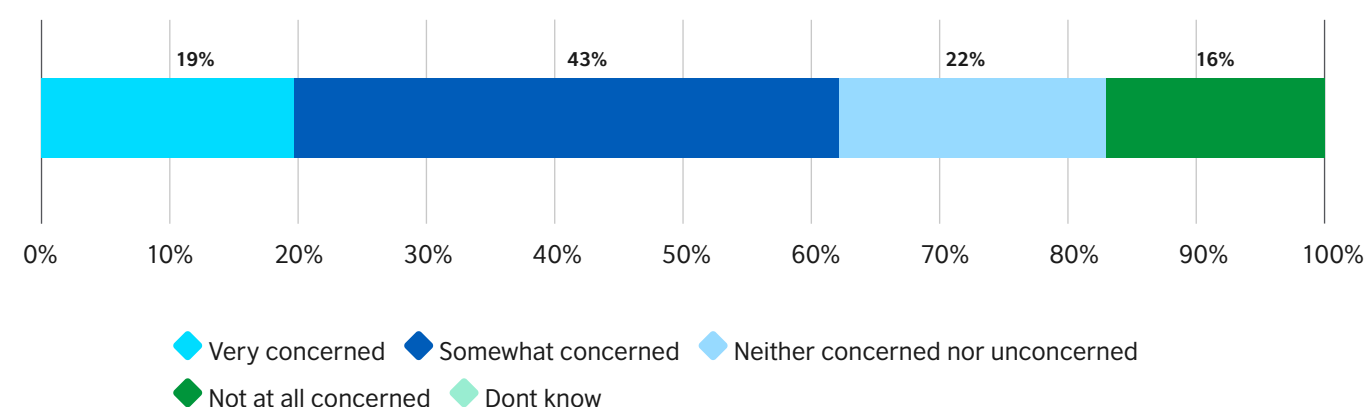
Figure 18. What do you think is the most powerful tool that can be used to deal with the global challenge(s)?



Case Study: Climate change, a relegated priority among global challenges

Against the backdrop of numerous pressing global issues, Sudanese youth have ranked climate change as only the ninth most important global challenge in the survey. This positioning, lower than might be anticipated considering Sudan's acute susceptibility to climate change impacts, sparks a discussion on the reasons behind this ranking.

Figure 19. To what extent are you concerned with the environmental impact that climate change has in your country? (Total sample base n=1611)



A significant number of youths express a high level of concern about climate change, showcasing an awareness of the global and local implications of environmental degradation (Figure 169). These young individuals are likely tuned into the broader discourse on climate issues and understand the direct impacts on their country, such as increased droughts, floods, and other climate-induced challenges. Their concern may stem from personal experiences of environmental change or from education and media exposure.

However, a larger group falls under the 'somewhat concerned' category. This attitude reflects a recognition of the seriousness of climate change, but perhaps with a sense of detachment or a belief that other, more immediate challenges take precedence. This stance could be due to a variety of factors, including the pressing nature of economic and political instability, which often overshadows long-term issues like climate change. For these individuals, the abstract nature of global climate discussions might not resonate with their immediate, day-to-day struggles.

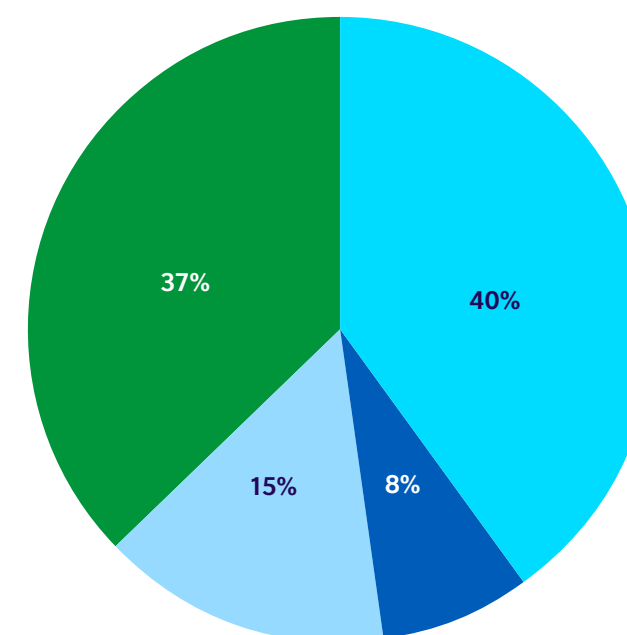
Interestingly, more than half of youth surveyed remains either neutral or unconcerned about climate change. This group's stance raises questions about the accessibility and relevance of climate information and education. It suggests a gap in how climate change is

communicated and understood among the youth. For some, the concept of climate change may seem too distant, abstract, or overwhelming, especially when juxtaposed against urgent issues like unemployment, poverty, and political unrest.

For others, the lack of concern could be attributed to a gap in environmental education or exposure to misinformation. The complex nature of climate science and the politicisation of climate issues globally can lead to confusion and apathy, especially if the youth do not see a clear connection between climate change and their immediate environment.

When asked about the main cause of climate change a significant majority of Sudanese youth recognise human activities as a cause of climate change, though only 40.3 per cent attribute it directly to factors like emissions and deforestation and a significant 36.9 per cent attribute both human and natural causes, while 7.5 per cent deny any human influence (Figure 2017). Awareness of climate change issues is crucial in a country like Sudan, which faces unique environmental challenges exacerbated by climate change, including desertification, irregular rainfall, and resource scarcity.

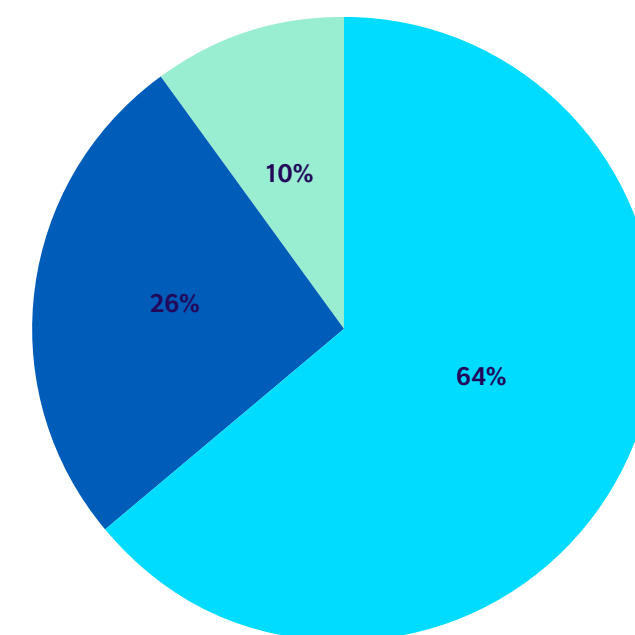
Figure 20. What do you believe is the main cause of climate change? (Total sample base n=1611)



- Human activities (like emissions, deforestation etc.)
- Natural processes
- Don't know
- Other causes
- Both

This lack of awareness is also reflected in a notable gap in taking personal actions to address climate change. Over half of the respondents (63.7 per cent) admit to not having engaged in activities to mitigate environmental degradation (Figure 1821). This gap could stem from various factors, including lack of resources, limited access to information, or a sense of powerlessness in the face of a global issue.

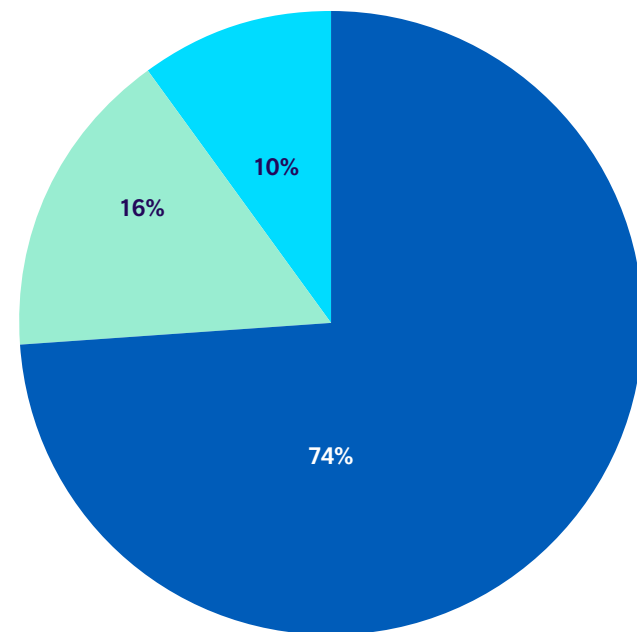
Figure 21. Have you personally taken any actions to address climate change? (Total sample base n=1611)



- No
- Yes
- Don't know

However, there is a silver lining as 74.1 per cent of youth express a willingness to make personal changes to help address climate change (Figure 1922). This indicates a readiness to be part of the solution, provided they are given the right tools and opportunities. Such changes could include reducing energy consumption, using alternative transportation methods, or participating in local environmental initiatives.

Figure 22. Would you be willing to make personal changes to help address climate change ? (Total sample base n=1601)



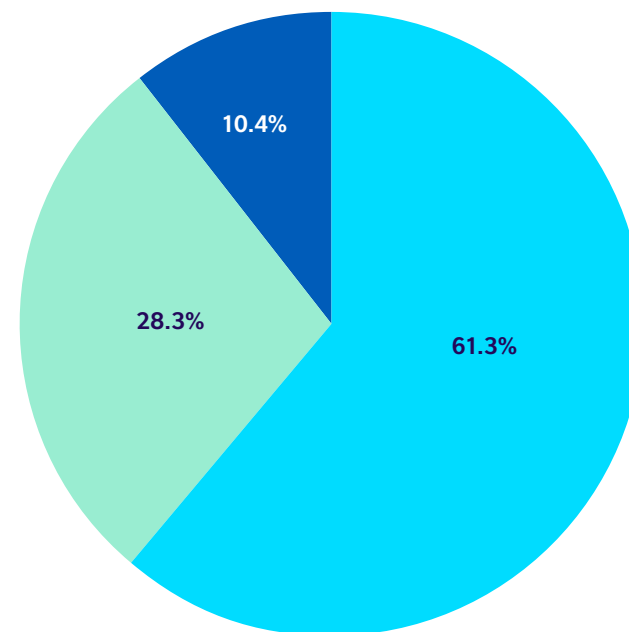
◆ No
◆ Yes
◆ Don't know

In addressing these varied levels of concern, there is a need for multifaceted strategies that not only educate but also contextualise climate change in a manner that resonates with the youth's experiences and priorities. Initiatives that link climate action with addressing immediate socio-economic challenges could be particularly effective. This approach involves integrating climate education with discussions on economic development, public health, and community resilience.

Moreover, creating platforms for youth engagement in environmental decision-making can help bridge the gap between global climate discourse and local realities. By involving young people in climate action planning and implementation, they can see the relevance of climate change to their lives and communities, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.

When asked about their country's efforts in addressing climate change, most of the youth (61.3 per cent) believe that Sudan is not doing enough (Figure 203). This perception could reflect the broader challenges that Sudan faces in terms of political instability and economic struggles, which might overshadow environmental concerns in policymaking.

Figure 23. Is your country doing enough to address climate change ? (Total sample base n=1601)



◆ No
◆ Yes
◆ Don't know

The youth's perspective on climate change is intrinsically linked to broader issues of sustainable development. Concerns about poverty, unemployment, and inequality are intertwined with environmental challenges. Addressing climate change in Sudan therefore requires a holistic approach that considers economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

The diverse concerns about climate change among Sudanese youth highlight the need for tailored communication and education strategies. These strategies must acknowledge the immediate challenges faced by the youth while simultaneously drawing clear connections between these challenges and the broader environmental context. By doing so, there is potential to transform apathy or neutral attitudes into proactive engagement and advocacy for climate action.

Barriers to achieving aspirations

Sudanese youth encounter significant societal barriers that impact their aspirations and self-perception. Predominant societal attitudes often disregard the capabilities and contributions of young people, leading to a sense of disenfranchisement and underestimation.

"The society does not respect the youth and considers them irresponsible, and we are the ones who achieved the real change in the history of Sudan." Male, age 25.

This sentiment echoes a larger issue where the younger generation feels marginalised and undervalued by the older generations. Such societal pressures can significantly affect the confidence and motivation of the youth, hindering their ability to pursue their aspirations effectively.

The economic landscape in Sudan poses another significant challenge. A high unemployment rate and limited job opportunities are prevalent, creating an environment of uncertainty and instability for Sudanese youth.

"Most young people are unemployed, and the future is unknown, especially for youth who do not have financial capabilities." Male, age 21.

This is further compounded by the recent socio-political turmoil, resulting in increased economic hardship. The youth, particularly those without financial backing, find themselves in precarious situations, struggling to find stable employment and financial independence.

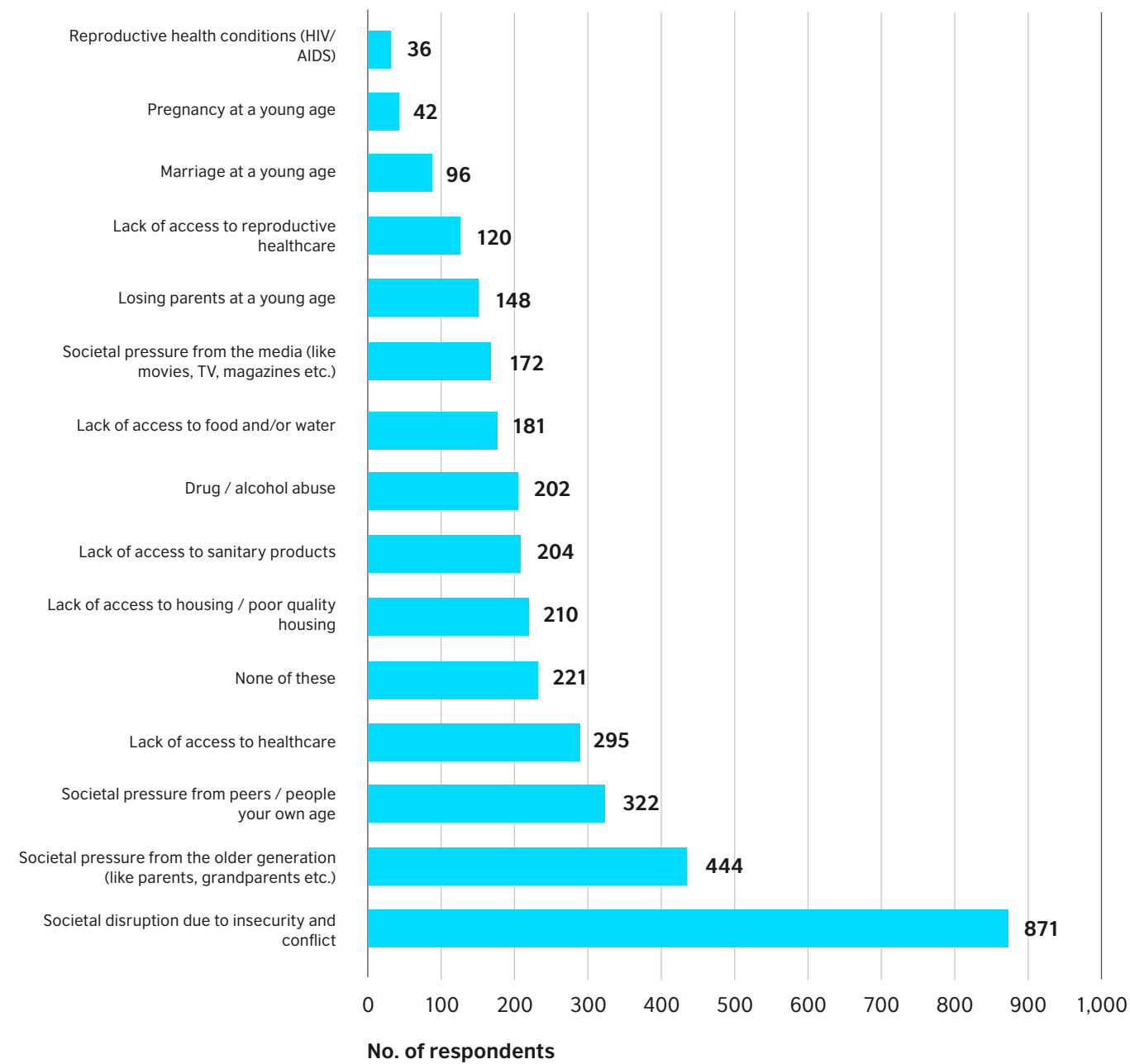
The survey data highlights the extent of societal disruption due to insecurity and conflict, with 54.1 per cent of respondents acknowledging its negative impact. In areas experiencing instability, young people face additional challenges, including limited access to educational and employment opportunities. This is echoed when asked about the biggest challenges facing their communities and survey respondents identified political instability and conflict (65.1 per cent) as the biggest challenge, underlining the deep impact of these factors on their lives and aspirations.

"Before the war, we did not have security instability in the White Nile State, and now we are suffering from that." Male, age 30.

Insecurity and conflict not only disrupt daily life but also impede long-term planning and aspiration fulfilment. The fear and uncertainty bred by unstable environments can deter youth from pursuing higher education or vocational training, limiting their prospects for future success (Figure 24).



Figure 24. Looking back from now and over the past five years, which, if any, of the below challenges would you say have had a negative effect on you personally? (Total sample base n=1611, multiple choice)



Survey responses also indicate significant pressure from the older generation (27.6 per cent) and peers (20,0 per cent). These pressures often manifest in the form of expectations regarding career choices, educational paths, and even personal life decisions.

This societal pressure can be particularly challenging for young people trying to navigate their individual paths. It can lead to a mismatch between personal aspirations and societal expectations, causing stress and conflict for the youth.

The survey data indicates a notable trend in the perception of barriers among Sudanese youth, with the impact of social disruption due to insecurity and conflict being more uniformly distributed across regions than could perhaps have been predicted. While Eastern Sudan still is less affected by conflict and insecurity, the April 2023 outbreak of war has meant that regions such as Khartoum and Central Sudan, which were not historically associated with high levels of conflict (besides Blue Nile State), reported substantial percentages of youth feeling adversely affected by these challenges.

Specifically, in Khartoum (n=257) and Central Sudan (n=344), 55.6 per cent and 66.9 per cent of respondents, respectively, indicated that ‘Social Disruption due to insecurity and/or conflict’ negatively impacted them personally over the past five years. This contrasts with traditionally more conflict-affected regions like Darfur (n=383) and Kordofan (n=164), where ‘only’ 50.1 per cent and 48.9 per cent, respectively, selected this option. This pattern might not only highlight the widespread reach of the recent conflict of April 2023 but also suggest differences in the way youth in various regions experience and react to insecurity and conflict.

Youth in areas like Darfur, which have endured prolonged conflict, may have a different threshold for what constitutes significant disruption due to their extended exposure to unstable conditions. Their experiences might have fostered a certain resilience or adaptation to insecurity, influencing how they perceive and report the impact of such challenges. This adaptation might result in a lower reported rate of negative impact compared to youth in areas like Khartoum and Central Sudan, where the experience of conflict and insecurity might be a more drastic deviation from their norm.

“The youth who grew up in Khartoum is not like the youth who grew up in Darfur or conflict areas. These conflicts have impacted the identity of Sudanese youth.”
Male, age 25.

As seen earlier, the survey data reveals that a significant 42.7 per cent of respondents feel very or somewhat unable to decide what their future will be like, underscoring a general sentiment of uncertainty regarding personal agency and future prospects. However, this sentiment is not uniformly distributed across the country. A deeper dive into the regional specifics of this statistic uncovers telling disparities: while about half of youth from Sudan as a whole express this feeling of uncertainty, the figure drops markedly to 29.1 per cent for youth from the Eastern strata of the survey. This contrast highlights the influence of regional factors on the youth’s perception of their ability to shape their future.

Youth in the Eastern strata, relatively insulated from the immediate hardships of conflict and endowed with more prosperous socio-economic conditions, appear to have a broader horizon for envisioning their future. The identity of these youth may be influenced by a more diverse array of factors, including access to a wider range of educational and cultural experiences, which in turn may contribute to a stronger sense of agency and optimism about their ability to shape their destiny.

Conversely, the youth from conflict-ridden regions like Darfur face a different reality. Their identities and aspirations are forged against the relentless backdrop of conflict and socio-economic instability. These challenging circumstances can profoundly limit young people’s capacity to envision and plan for the future, often fostering a mindset oriented towards survival rather than aspirational goal-setting. The higher percentage of youth feeling unable to decide their future in these regions is a stark indicator of the pervasive impact of conflict on their outlook and life choices.

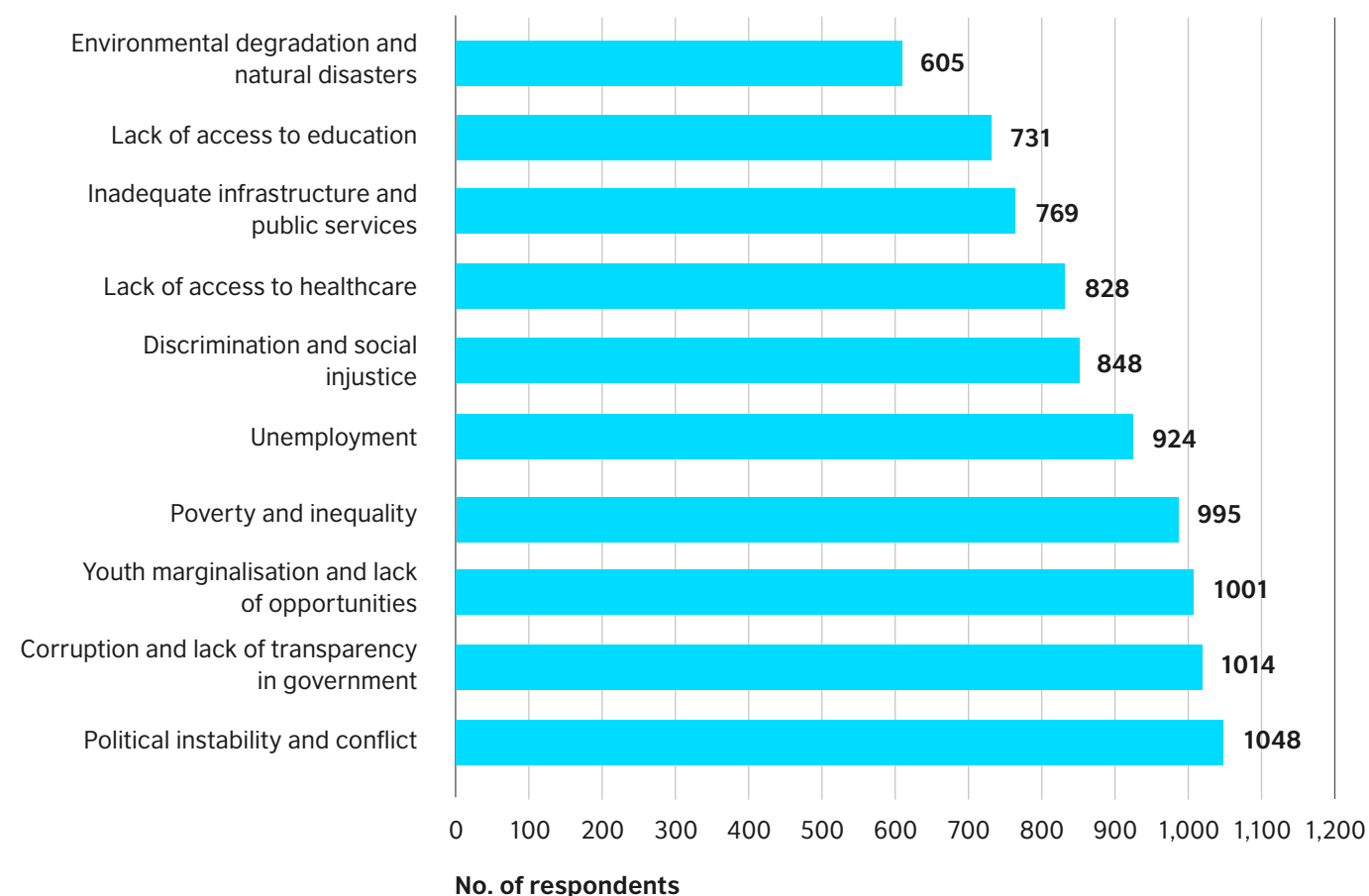
“War in Blue Nile made the dreams of young people very simple... opportunities are very few because there are no companies and factories in our state.”
Male, age 27.

The lack of economic infrastructure, such as companies and factories, in conflict-affected regions like the Blue Nile, leads to limited job opportunities. The absence of these economic institutions not only stifles immediate employment prospects but also hampers the development of a broader vision for personal growth and career development among the youth.

A substantial portion of the youth in Sudan grapples with discrimination and social injustice. This reality is reflected in the survey, where 52.6 per cent of respondents identified discrimination and social injustice as major challenges (Figure 25). These societal hurdles are not merely about unequal treatment; they are about the denial of opportunities,

the silencing of voices, and the marginalisation of entire groups of young people. This discrimination takes various forms, including gender-based disparities, ethnic biases, and socio-economic divisions, all of which significantly hinder young people’s aspirations for a better future.

Figure 25. What do you consider to be the biggest challenges facing your community? (Total sample base n=1611)



Alongside societal challenges, healthcare access remains a critical barrier, with 51.4 per cent of youth acknowledging this issue in the survey. In a country where the healthcare system faces constraints due to political instability and economic challenges, young people often find themselves deprived of basic healthcare services. This lack of access not only affects their physical well-being but also has profound implications for their mental health and overall life satisfaction. In contexts where healthcare is a privilege rather than a right, the dreams and aspirations of young people are invariably impacted, often leading to a sense of helplessness and frustration.

The cumulative impact of these community and healthcare challenges on Sudanese youth is profound. These challenges act as roadblocks to educational achievements, career development, and personal growth. Young people who are constantly battling discrimination or struggling to access basic healthcare services are often left with little time or energy to pursue their dreams. Moreover, these challenges can lead to a vicious cycle of poverty and inequality, further exacerbating the difficulties faced by young people.

In this context, the aspirations of Sudanese youth are not just about achieving personal success; they are deeply tied to overcoming systemic challenges. Each young person’s dream of a better future is, in essence, a hope for a more equitable and accessible community and healthcare system. Recognising and addressing these challenges is crucial not only for the well-being of Sudanese youth but for the overall progress and stability of Sudan as a nation.

Psychological impacts on Sudanese youth

Our qualitative research highlighted a worrying topic of significant psychological impacts on Sudanese youth due to ongoing conflicts and societal changes. The psychological impacts of living in conflict-affected regions like Sudan are multifaceted and deeply entrenched. The youth in these regions face a spectrum of psychological challenges that include, but are not limited to, heightened anxiety, profound stress, and an overwhelming sense of uncertainty about their futures. These impacts are not just individual but also

communal, affecting the collective psyche of youth communities.

“Most of the youth are in a state of general frustration as a result of the current situation and the cessation of the educational process.” Male, age 23.

“Youth have lost all the aspirations after the Khartoum war.” Female, age 30.

Our survey data also indicates a stark decline in young people’s confidence in shaping their futures, with only 38.1 per cent feeling somewhat or very able to decide their future post-outbreak compared to 51.6 per cent prior.¹⁷ This decline mirrors the increased psychological strain from economic and educational disruptions that contribute to stress and uncertainty, severely impacting mental well-being and future outlooks.

Displacement, a common consequence of conflict, disrupts the fabric of everyday life, often leading to a loss of identity and a sense of belonging. For instance, one KI participant said that “young people are psychologically affected more than anything else”, underlining the deep emotional and mental disturbance caused by conflict. Another noted that “the current situation is a state of general frustration for the youth”, capturing the pervasive sense of despair.

“I hope to wake up one day and find the war over.” Male, age 31.

“I don’t see any future ahead of me.” Female, age 29.

“Drug abuse has become one of the methods used by young people to confront crises recently.” Female, age 22.

Economic and educational disruptions further exacerbate this psychological strain and contribute heavily to stress and uncertainty, impacting mental well-being and future outlooks. The gap between aspirations and harsh realities leads to frustration and despair, yet there is a persistent determination to overcome these challenges. Social stigmas and pressures, especially in conflict-affected areas, further exacerbate mental health challenges. As seen in research on South Sudan for example, conflict has a devastating impact on education, affecting both the physical infrastructure and the psychological well-being of students and teachers (Muller, Munslow, and O’dempsey, 2017).¹⁸ Similar trends are being observed

17 For the research, an initial sample of 162 surveys was collected in Khartoum before the conflict began on April 15, 2023. This specific dataset serves as the comparative base here, but is not part of the base sample of n=1611.

18 Muller, B, Munslow, B, and O’dempsey, T (2017). <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/a15b7b6bcf2cd010094d1e68e74db9a11caab131>

in discussions with youth in Sudan, where educational opportunities are curtailed or completely halted, leaving youth with a sense of unfulfillment and a bleak outlook on their future prospects.

The aspirational gap – the difference between what youth hope for and what they can realistically achieve in such turbulent environments – is a significant source of frustration and despair. Yet, amidst these challenges, there is a notable resilience and determination among the youth to overcome these adversities. This resilience, however, does not negate the need for comprehensive support systems that focus on mental health and trauma recovery, highlighting the urgent need for interventions that address these psychological impacts in a conflict-ridden context like Sudan.

In conflict-affected regions like South Sudan, the psychological impact on youth is profound. The ongoing conflict has led to massive displacement, interruption of education, and widespread trauma. These experiences deeply affect youths' mental health, contributing to anxiety, stress, and uncertainty about the future. Schools in crisis-affected areas often serve as zones of peace and provide psychosocial support, crucial for trauma recovery and fostering resilience. Moreover, education in these contexts is vital, offering practical skills and a vision for rebuilding lives.

“There is a temporary setback in the lives of young people, but it is important to implement various quick interventions to help young people overcome this stage. Young people are psychologically affected more than anything else, in my opinion.” Male, age 28.

“A comparison between the beginning of the war and now, the situation was frustrating at the beginning, but now the youth have begun to adapt, opportunities and aspirations have increased, and challenges have decreased.” Male, age 27.

“The general condition of young people is very bad, most of them are unemployed, and the future is unknown, especially for youth who do not have financial capabilities.” Female, age 27.

“The current situation is really hard on youth. The emigration rates increased very significantly for young people...” Male, age 21.

“Basically, I see that the Sudanese youth have been oppressed since the beginning of Sudan's modern history, and the youth have a real problem with leadership...” Male, age 29.

“The current situation for young people is very bad, the unemployment rate is very high, and most of the young people have lost their sources of income.” Male, age 26.

Theme II: Youth voices

Political and civic engagement of Sudanese youth removed from a transitional context

This chapter delves into the political and civic engagement of Sudanese youth amid a challenging and evolving political landscape. While Sudan is still striving to restart the critical transitional phase, the role and engagement of its youth in political and civic activities become even more pivotal. While the transitional period was characterised by efforts to establish a stable and inclusive governance structure, which presented both challenges and opportunities for young citizens, the country is now grappling with a nation-wide conflict, particularly intense in the Darfur region, and this presents further complex and challenging environment for youth participation in civic and political life. The situation has evolved into a severe humanitarian crisis characterised by widespread human rights violations and the displacement of millions.

As described in the earlier chapters of this report, the current political landscape in Sudan is marked by intense fighting between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), leading to increasing instability and violence. The conflict has now extended over several months and has significantly impacted various regions, with the RSF gaining considerable territory. It has the potential for further escalation in major towns like El Fasher, raising grave concerns about civilian safety.

Against this backdrop, the role and engagement of Sudanese youth in political and civic activities are both crucial and complex. This chapter aims to delve into how the recent experiences from revolution over a transitional period to now ongoing conflict and political instability have influenced the youth's engagement in civic life. It explores their motivations, challenges, and aspirations amidst a landscape where traditional avenues for political participation may be disrupted or inaccessible. It aims to examine the extent of their political engagement, their motivations for increased involvement, and their feelings of empowerment or frustration within a context that is far from the idealised democratic process.

“Young people are the pillars of the country and their opinions shape Sudan.” Male, age 26.

“The voice of youth is the only way to build Sudan.” Female, age 30.

“Democracy has become a luxury. Now I just want national security and safety for myself and for the rest of the Sudanese people.” Male, age 25.

“Young people's voice was heard at the beginning of the revolution but disappeared after that.” Male, age 25.

The subsequent sections will analyse these dynamics in detail, shedding light on the unique challenges faced by Sudanese youth as they navigate a landscape of conflict and change. Their participation and engagement are not just crucial for their immediate community but also for shaping the future trajectory of Sudan in these critical times.

The engagement of young people in civic and political life is crucial in shaping the future of nations, especially in transitional contexts. It is essential for the development of societies and for the personal growth of the youth. In Sudan, where the political environment is marked by uncertainty and transformation, understanding the motivations and barriers to youth engagement is critical.

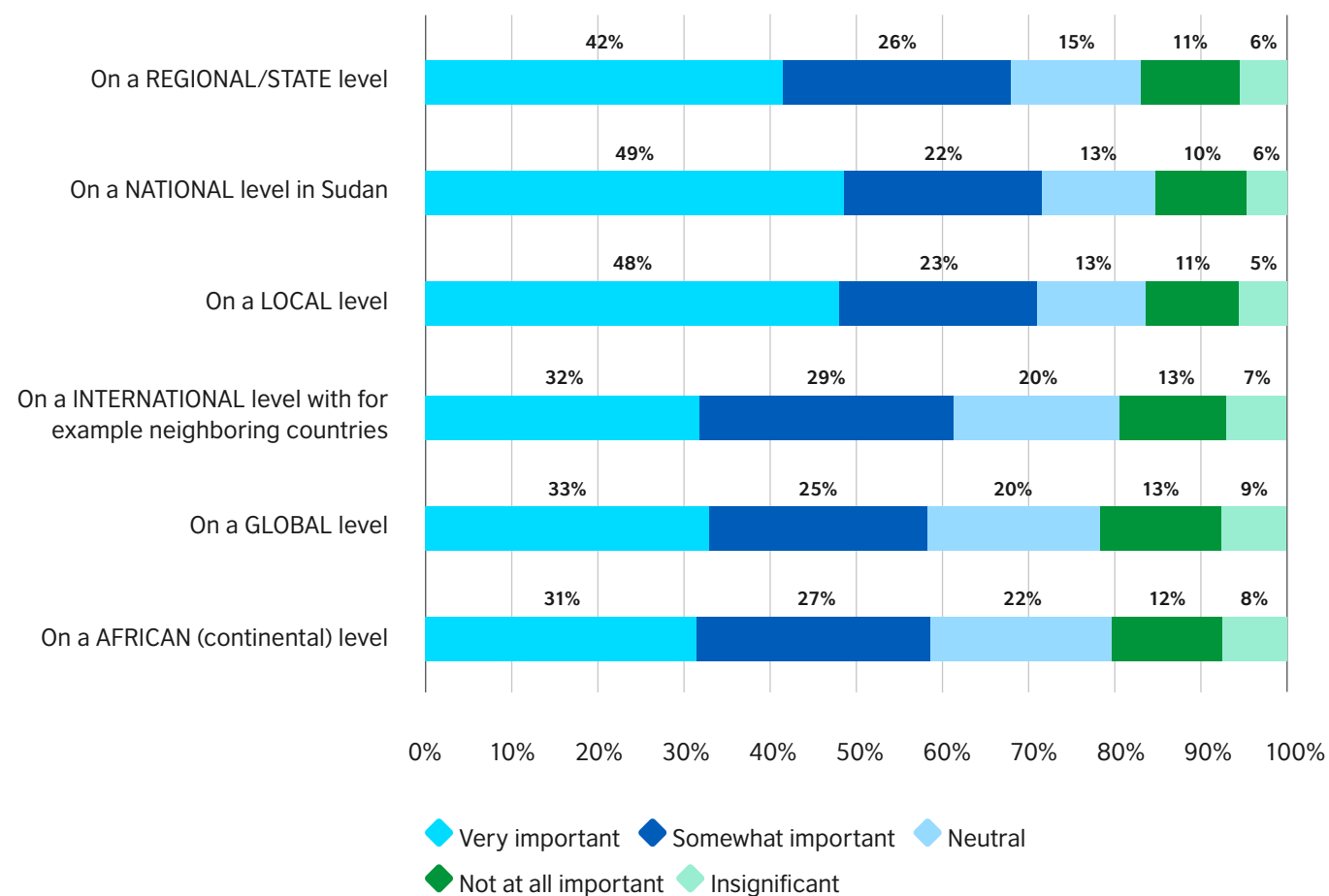
This exploration aims to understand how Sudanese youth navigate these turbulent times. It seeks to uncover the socio-political changes influencing their engagement, the personal experiences that drive their participation, and the impact of peers and community leaders. By examining survey data, interviews, and focus group discussions, the aim is to provide a comprehensive view of Sudanese youth's perspectives and actions in a transitional political environment.

Political engagement and motivations for participation

The assessment of the importance of political engagement among Sudanese youth, as gleaned from survey data, provides a nuanced understanding of their perspectives at various levels - from local to global. A significant proportion of the youth sees engagement at the national level as very important, with 48.6 per cent of respondents endorsing this view (71.1 per cent including respondents responding 'somewhat important') (Figure 23.6). This heightened importance of national involvement likely stems from the direct impact national politics and policies have on their daily lives and futures. In a country navigating through intense socio-political transformations and conflicts, national politics inevitably play a crucial role in shaping the immediate environment and opportunities available to the youth.



Figure 26. How important do you think it is to be engaged with politics at the below levels?
(Total sample base n=1611)



Similarly, local level political engagement is viewed as very important by 47.9 per cent of the respondents. The emphasis on local politics can be understood in the context of immediate community issues and governance, which directly affect the youth's day-to-day experiences. Local politics often provide a more accessible platform for young people to express their opinions, address community-specific issues, and witness tangible outcomes from their civic involvement.

On the other hand, the engagement at the global and African (continental) levels is perceived as less critical, with only 32.9 per cent and 31.2 per cent of respondents, respectively, considering it very important. This lower prioritisation might reflect the perceived distance and indirect impact of global and continental political issues on the youth's personal and immediate community experiences. However, it is essential to note that global and continental political dynamics can have far-reaching implications, influencing national and local politics, especially in a globally interconnected world.

"Since the December Revolution, there have been great aspirations and hopes for young people. But the situation after the fall of the regime failed us all and we became frustrated, but there is still a good percentage of young people who are working to change the situation in their areas, and this means that the youth have not lost the will to change the situation for the better." **Male, age 30.**

"Youth are desperate to be engaged in political activities, but no one wants to give them opportunities to participate." **Female, age 27.**

At the international level, with neighbouring countries, 31.9 per cent of the youth see political engagement as very important. This perspective highlights the recognition among Sudanese youth of the significance of regional politics and its implications for Sudan's stability, peace, and development.

The motivations for political participation among Sudanese youth are shaped by a confluence of socio-political changes, personal experiences, and the influence of peers and community leaders. In a country that has been witnessing significant political upheaval, young people find themselves at the forefront of change, driven by a mix of aspiration, necessity, and circumstance.

One of the primary motivators for youth political engagement in Sudan is the ongoing socio-political transformation. The country's recent history, marked by

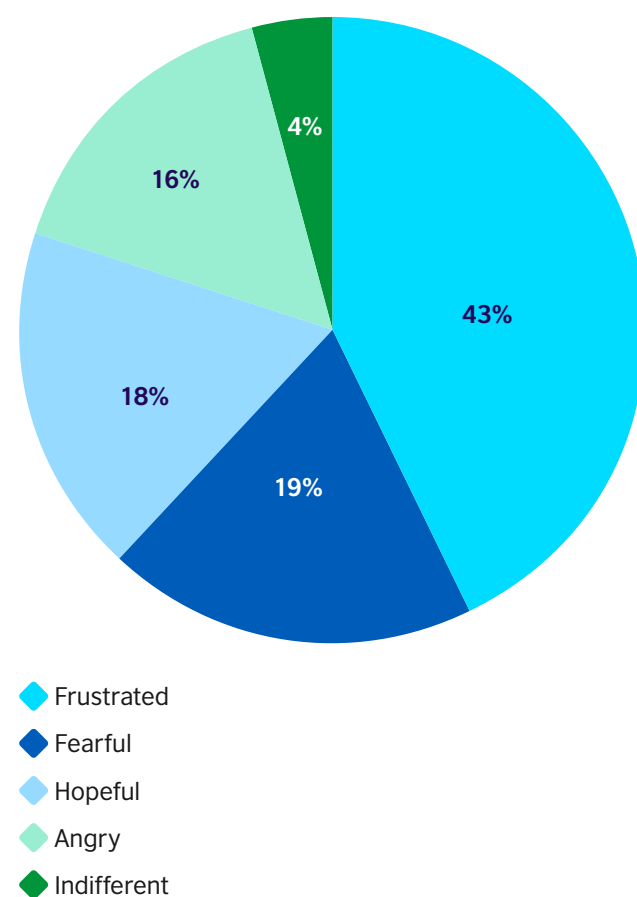
conflict, regime change, and a quest for democracy, has significantly impacted the youth, making them more politically aware and motivated to participate. Young Sudanese have not only witnessed but also been active participants in pivotal movements, such as the protests leading to the fall of Omar al-Bashir's regime. These experiences have heightened their sense of political agency and the belief that their involvement can lead to tangible changes in governance and policy.

Personal experiences also play a critical role in shaping the political engagement of Sudanese youth. The challenges faced by young people in their daily lives, such as unemployment, restricted freedoms, and the impact of conflict, serve as catalysts for political action. Personal encounters with systemic issues motivate young people to seek solutions through political channels, whether by voting, joining political movements, or engaging in community activism.

Perceptions of empowerment and frustration in politics

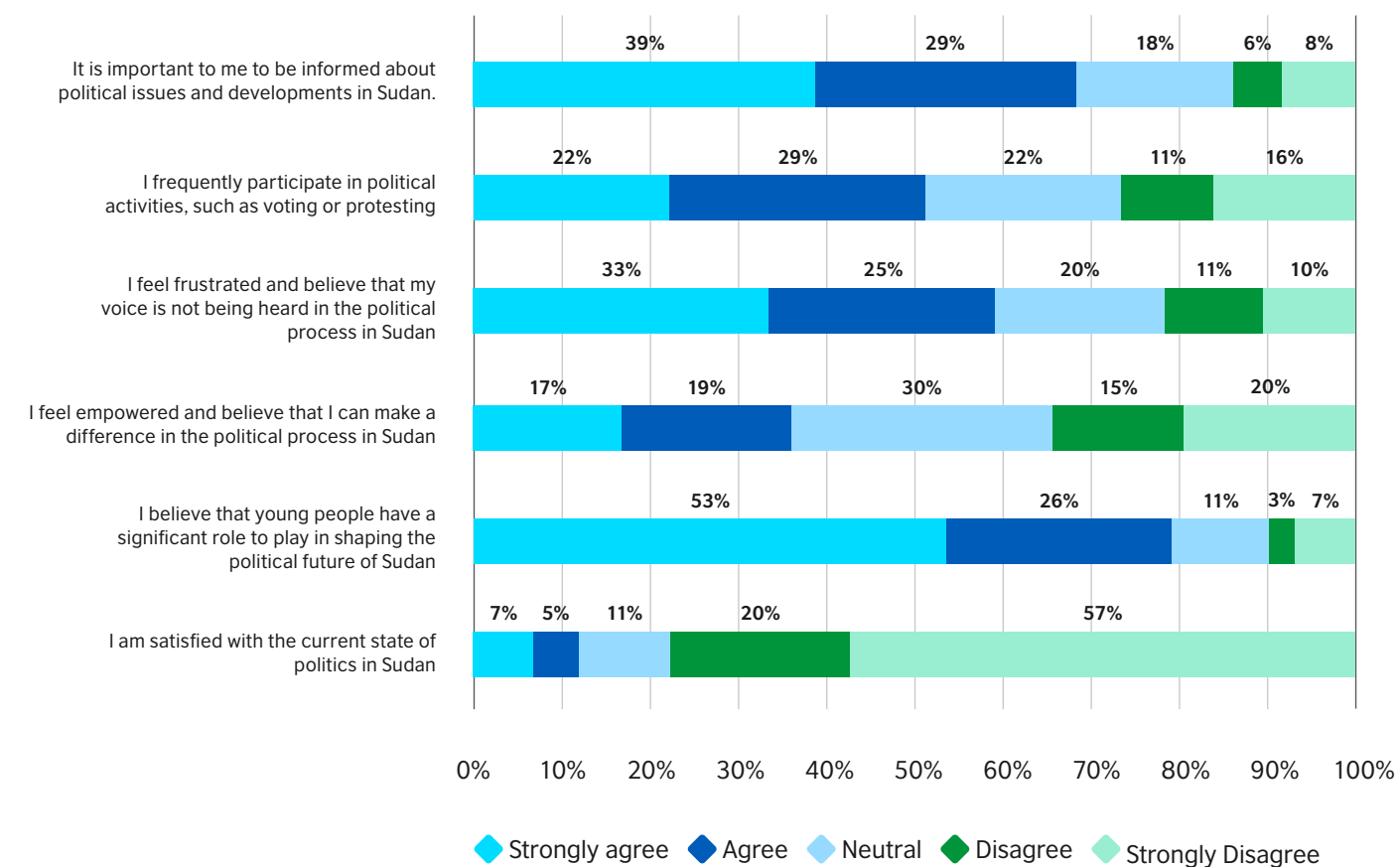
Despite a highly motivated youth, the sentiments of Sudanese youth regarding the more current political situation are heavily marked by frustration and fear, reflecting the turbulent socio-political environment they are navigating. According to the survey, a significant 42.6 per cent of respondents express frustration, while 19.1 per cent report feeling fearful (Figure 247). This indicates a substantial level of discontent and concern among the youth about the direction in which their country is heading.

Figure 27. How do you feel about the current political situation in Sudan? (Total sample base n=1553)



The sense of frustration is further compounded by a feeling of disenfranchisement, as evidenced by the 33.4 per cent of respondents who strongly agree, and 25.46 per cent who agree, that they feel their voices are not being heard in the political process (see Figure 258). This sentiment suggests a disconnect between the youth and the political mechanisms or entities in Sudan, potentially leading to a sense of helplessness or disillusionment with the political system.

Figure 28. When it comes to political engagement, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Total sample base n=1575)



On the other hand, the data (Figure 27) also reveals a sense of hopefulness (18.5 per cent) and anger (15.7 per cent), reflecting a complex emotional response to the political climate. The presence of hopefulness suggests that despite the challenges, some youth see potential for positive change or believe in the possibility of influencing the political process. Anger, meanwhile, can be a powerful motivator for political action, potentially driving youth to become more actively involved in seeking change.

"There is significant grassroots youth participation, but it's limited by funding shortages and security restrictions." **Female, age 26.**

"[For youth to engage in politics] the political parties are the biggest barrier." **Female, age 30.**

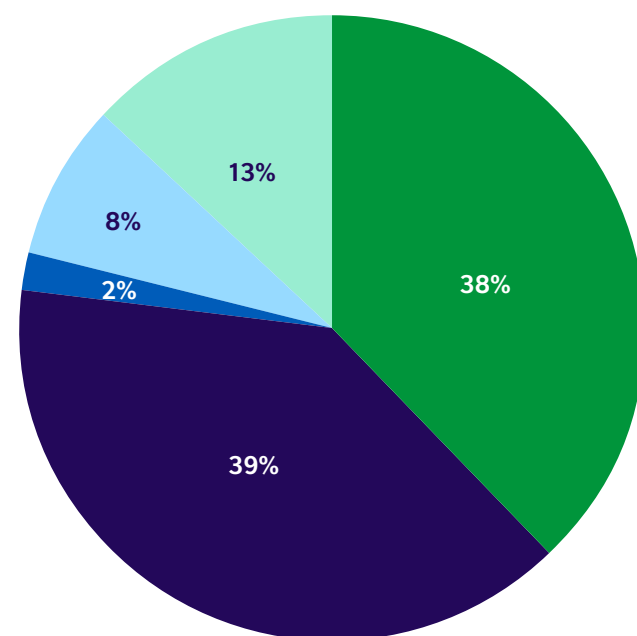
"Young people and their families have a fear of political and civil participation, and I do not know the reason for this fear of participation." **Male, age 21.**

"Participation is weak, certain parties have the control over decision-making which is a major obstacle and there is no clear platforms that conveys the voice of youth. At the same time, there is a weakness with the economic situation that makes young people more interested in improving the economic situation rather than engaging in politics." **Male, age 26.**

"I observe that in my specific region, youth engagement in societal and political activities is significant. However, they face challenges like instability and financial issues. Additionally, there are occasional inquiries from security forces regarding their affiliations to various entities." **Male, age 32.**

In a different question, a striking 37.9 per cent of survey respondents feel that their voices are not being heard at all in national issues, and another 36.9 per cent feel that while their voices might be listened to, there is no subsequent action (Figure 29). This sentiment is a clear indication of dissatisfaction with the current state of political engagement and representation. It suggests that many young people feel their views and concerns are not adequately considered or addressed by the existing political structures. The fact that most of the youth perceive their contributions as either ignored or unaddressed is indicative of a political environment that fails to effectively incorporate or respond to the views and needs of its younger population.

Figure 29. Do you think the voices of young people on national issues are being heard in your country? (Total sample base n=1546)



- ◆ Listened to with some action
- ◆ Listened to but little action
- ◆ Heard to very little extent
- ◆ Listened to but no action
- ◆ Not being heard at all

The data further reveals that a minimal fraction of respondents, 1.6 per cent, feel that their voices are listened to with some subsequent action, and an even

smaller 0.2 per cent feel that their voices are heard well and lead to significant action. These low percentages underscore the challenges in creating a political environment where youth feel their participation is meaningful and impactful.

The discussion among youth in the FGDs shed light on the critical importance of youth political participation in bringing about political change. Participants emphasise the necessity of youth voices in all sectors, governmental and private, highlighting the current situation's significance due to the changing dynamics in the country's governance and policies. The youth's participation is viewed as a pivotal factor in the renaissance of Sudanese politics and plays a major role in building the country's future. However, there is a stark contrast between the importance attributed to youth participation and the actual impact perceived by the youth themselves.

The limited feeling of being heard and the perceived lack of subsequent action might be attributed to several factors. For instance, research suggests that while youth have the potential to influence societal and political changes significantly, their impact might be dampened by external control over decision-making, lack of platforms for youth voices, and economic challenges that prioritise over civic participation. This aligns with the sentiments expressed in the FGDs, where participants note the symbolic representation of youth rather than a real representation and the absence of youth voices in decision-making positions.

"We are talking about the future and the youth are the future. If we do not listen to the voice of the youth, then we have no future." **Male, age 26.**

"Political engagement is very important, because youth are the future of Sudan." **Male, age 32.**

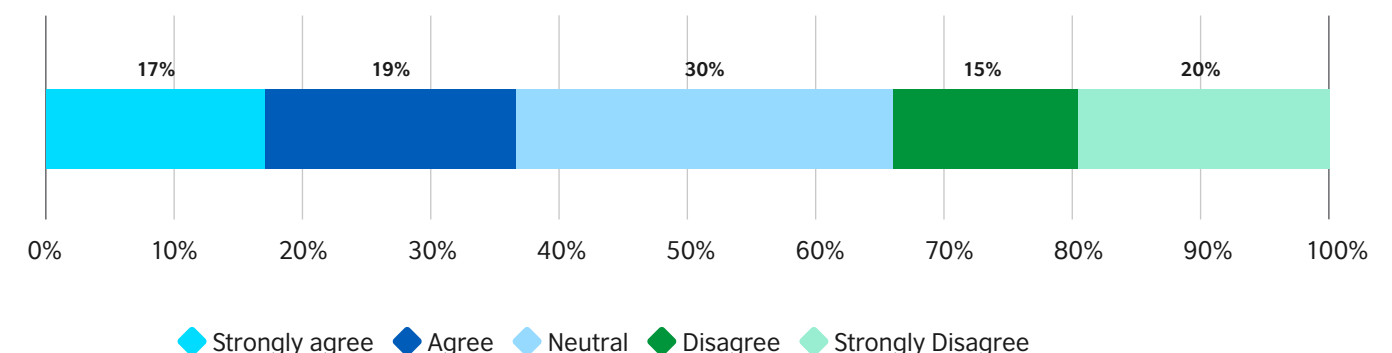
"The December Revolution was built on the shoulders of youth." **Female, age 22.**

This lack of effective voice correlates with the feelings of disempowerment observed in the survey. While a significant portion of the respondents, 29.7 per cent, expressed neutrality when asked if they feel empowered and believe they can make a difference in the political process in Sudan, a substantial number of youths, 34.1 per cent strongly disagree or disagree, adversely feeling disempowered in their ability to impact the political process (see Figure 25 30). This sense of disempowerment could stem from various factors, including the current political instability,

historical experiences of ineffective political participation, or a perception that the political system is unresponsive to their needs and concerns. In addition, the expressed neutrality might indicate uncertainty or mixed feelings about their ability to influence political

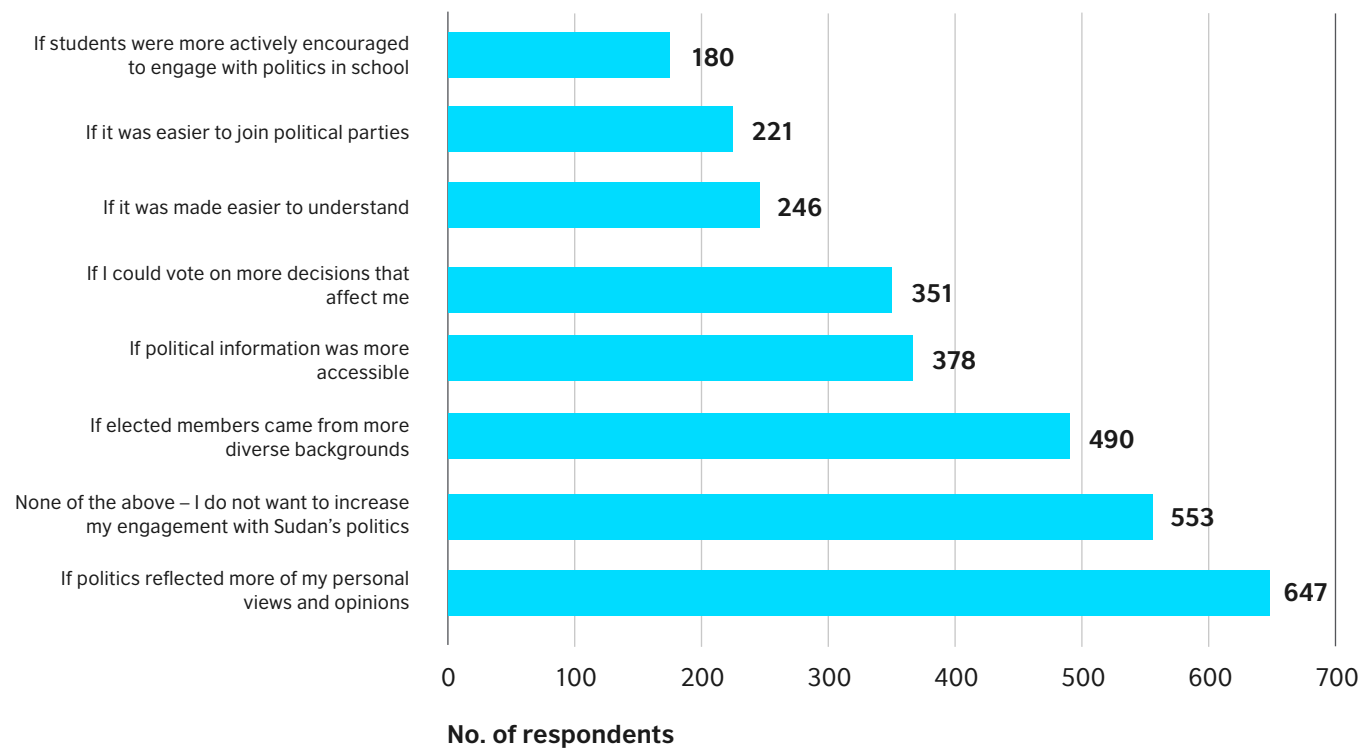
outcomes. It could reflect the complexities of the current political situation in Sudan, where youth may see potential for change but also recognise the barriers and challenges in effecting that change.

Figure 30. When it comes to political engagement, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements "I feel empowered and believe that I can make a difference in the political process in Sudan"? (Total sample base n=1577)



Moreover, when asked what could increase their engagement, a considerable proportion of Sudanese youth, specifically 34.3 per cent, chose 'None of the above – I do not want to increase my engagement with Sudan's politics' (see Figure 31), and this presents a critical dimension to understanding their political engagement. This response is significant and warrants attention as it reflects a segment of the youth population that is either disenchanted with the current political process or feels that engagement would not lead to meaningful change.

Figure 31. Which of the below would encourage you to increase your engagement with politics? (Total sample base n=1611, multiple choice)



Several factors could contribute to this sentiment. The ongoing conflict and political instability, as highlighted in the recent developments in Sudan, undoubtedly have led to a sense of disillusionment or scepticism about the effectiveness of political participation. When young people witness prolonged periods of turmoil, violence, and political upheaval without substantial positive change, it can lead to political apathy or a belief that their involvement won't make a difference.

“Youth participation is hampered by external control over decision-making, lack of a platform for youth voices, and economic challenges prioritised over civic participation.” Male, age 26.

“In my region, youth civic participation is substantial, though instability, financial issues, and inquiries from security forces about affiliations are challenges.” Male, age 32.

“Youth civic participation is extensive, but it faces many hurdles, notably state policies towards youth and suppression of freedom of expression, leading to divisions.” Female, age 27.

“Youth involvement is weak, mainly due to a lack of trust in key political entities like the Military Council and Sovereignty Council.” Male, age 31.

Additionally, this lack of interest in increasing political engagement could stem from a sense of fear or concern for personal safety. In contexts where political activism is met with repression or violence, as has been seen in various instances in Sudan, young people may choose disengagement as a form of self-preservation.

Another possible reason could be the lack of trust in political institutions and leaders. Corruption, perceived inefficiency, and the failure of political entities to address the needs and concerns of the youth can lead to a lack of faith in the political system.

Active participation in politics

The survey data indicates a divided stance on active political participation. Though more than half of the respondents, 57.3 per cent, express that they intend to vote in the next local or general/national election, 19.9 per cent of respondents have no intention to vote, coupled with 18.6 per cent being uncertain (see Figure 2832). This significant portion of youth showing a willingness to vote demonstrates a level of engagement and a belief in the electoral process to influence political change. However, the results also point to a

level of disengagement or scepticism about the effectiveness of voting in the current political climate.

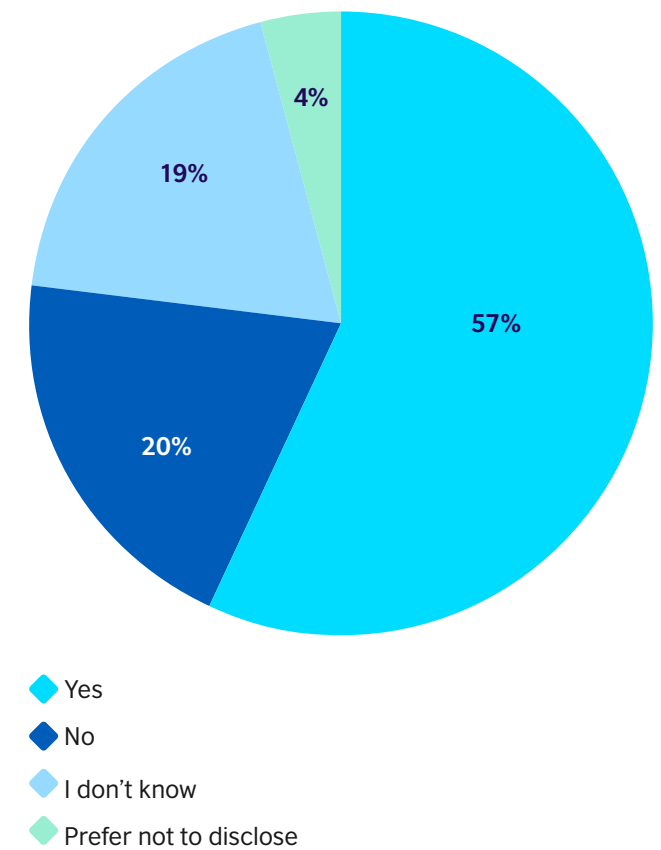
“Young people are not prepared for political activities, which is the biggest obstacle.” Male, age 28.

“Youth participation in civic activities is excellent, but misconceptions about civil society and societal complexities pose challenges” Male, age 25.

“Youth are largely involved, yet old ideas from elders who control civic activities pose obstacles.” Male, age 27.

“All peace and reconciliation initiatives in our state were undertaken by young people before adults.” Female, age 27.

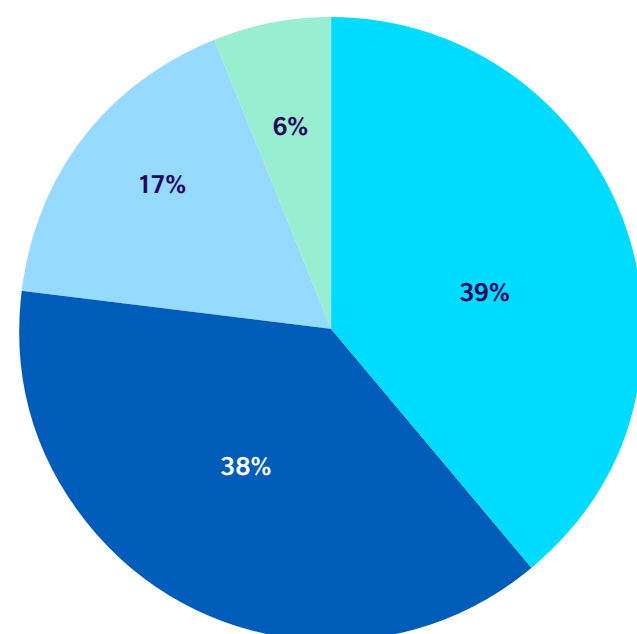
Figure 32. Do you intend to vote in your country's next local or general/national election ? (Total sample base n=1611)



When it comes to engaging in other forms of political activity related to local and national politics, 39.4 per cent of respondents express their intention to do so (see Figure 33). This indicates a considerable interest in political engagement beyond voting, possibly

encompassing activities like activism, attending public forums, or joining political movements. However, the data also shows that an equal proportion of respondents, 38.0 per cent, have no intention of engaging in such activities, highlighting a significant portion of the youth that remains disengaged from active political participation.

Figure 33. Do you intend to engage in other forms of political activity related to local and national politics in Sudan in the future? (Total sample base n=1611)



- ◆ Yes
- ◆ No
- ◆ I don't know
- ◆ Prefer not to disclose



Spotlight 2: Political representation in Sudan

Political representation in Sudan, particularly in the aftermath of the April 2023 conflict, is intricately tied to the country's complex socio-political dynamics, historical conflicts, and the ongoing struggle for power and legitimacy between various factions. Here are some key points that provide context to the political representation landscape in Sudan after April 2023:

Sudan's political structure has been historically dominated by military regimes, with brief interludes of civilian rule. The transitional government established after the ousting of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019 was a hybrid military-civilian body, indicating an attempt to balance these powers. However, the military's influence has remained a contentious issue, with several interventions in the political process, including the conflict after April 2023, undermining the transition to civilian rule.

The political landscape in Sudan is fragmented, with multiple groups vying for power and influence. These include various military factions, political parties, armed groups, and civil society organisations. The Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) alliance, which was pivotal in the anti-Bashir protests, represents a broad coalition of civilian groups. However, internal divisions and the complexity of aligning diverse interests have posed challenges to forming a cohesive and representative political front.

Regions such as Darfur, South Kordofan, and the Blue Nile have historically been marginalised and have witnessed prolonged conflicts. Political representation from these regions is crucial for achieving inclusive governance. However, the ongoing conflict and instability, as mentioned earlier, have exacerbated the challenges in ensuring their adequate representation and addressing their grievances.

Youth and civil society organisations have been at the forefront of demanding change and representation in Sudan's political landscape. The 2019 revolution was largely driven by young people and civil society groups, demanding not just a change in leadership but also a transformation in how the country is governed. Their continued activism is crucial for pushing towards a more inclusive and representative political system.

The international community and regional powers have a significant influence on Sudan's political dynamics. International efforts, including those by the United Nations and the African Union, aim to facilitate the political transition and ensure peace and stability. However, the interests and interventions of regional powers can also complicate the internal political dynamics and influence the representation and decision-making processes.

A significant portion of the respondents, 40.2 per cent, stated that their engagement would increase if politics more accurately reflected their personal views and opinions. This response underscores a desire for a political system and representation that resonates with the youth's values, beliefs, and aspirations. The need for a political platform that aligns with their personal ideologies suggests a gap between the current political discourse and the perspectives of the youth, highlighting an area where reforms or new approaches could enhance youth engagement.

"Political engagement can be increased through education and improving its quality, because education is what creates young people who build the future of the country." **Male, age 21.**

"It is very important that the youth participate in all issues that concern the country, as they are the backbone of the country." **Male, age 29.**

"Youth opinions are very important for building Sudan because youth are the biggest contributor to building societies." **Female, age 31.**

"It is very important that youth share their opinions, because the percentage of youth in Sudan is very high, and that means Sudan is a young country."
Male, age 38.

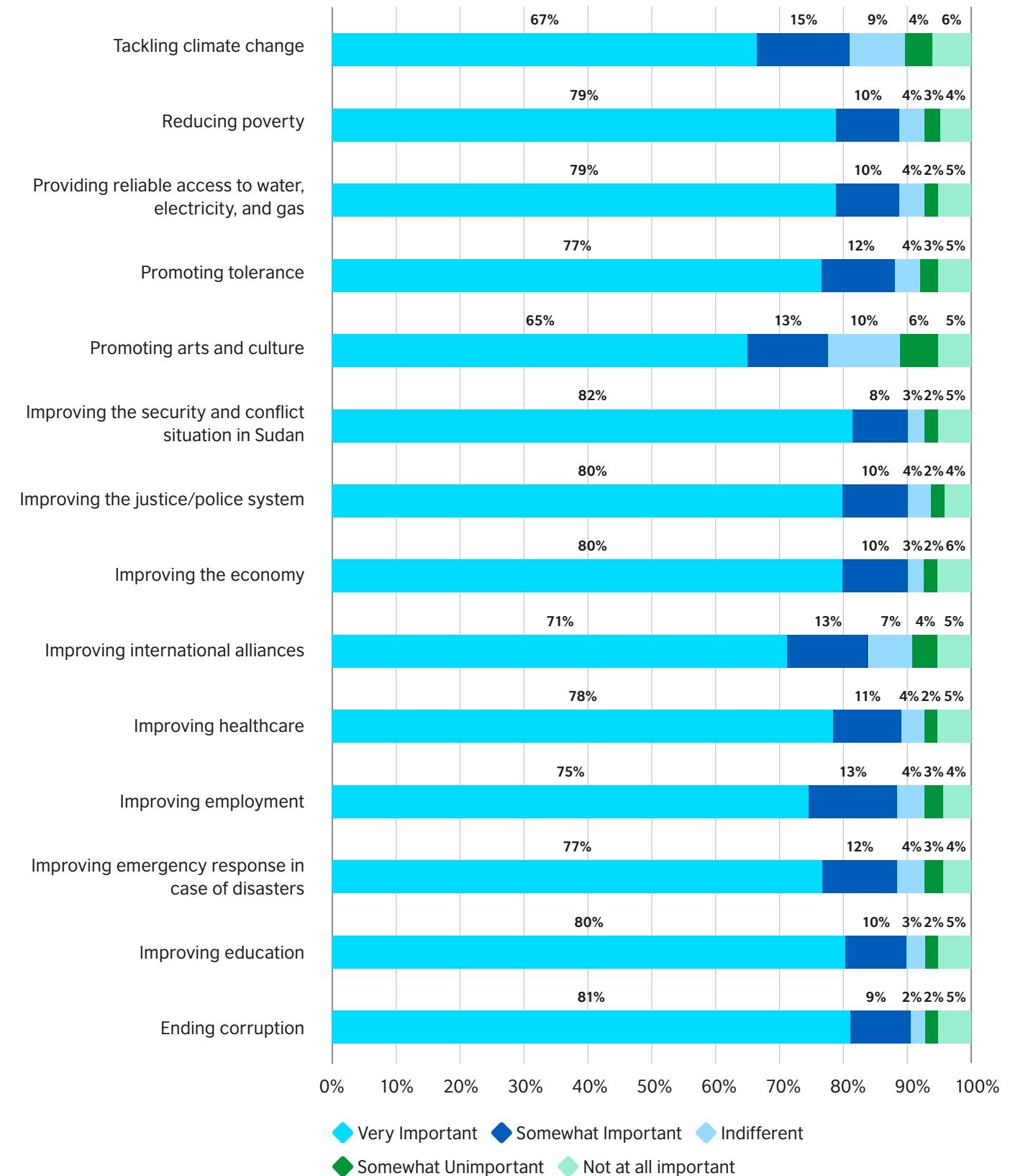
Another notable factor is the desire for more diversity in political representation, with 30.4 per cent of respondents indicating this would motivate them to be more politically active. This preference for diversity reflects the youth's recognition of the importance of inclusive representation that mirrors the diverse demographic and social fabric of Sudan. It points to a need for broader representation in politics, encompassing different ethnicities, genders, and social backgrounds, to ensure a more comprehensive and representative political dialogue. This desire stems from

the historical context of governance in the country, where power has often been concentrated in the hands of a few, neglecting the vast ethnic, cultural, and social diversity of the nation (see Spotlight 2).

Accessibility to political information was also a key factor, with 23.5 per cent of respondents indicating that more accessible political information would encourage their engagement. This finding highlights the importance of transparency and the availability of clear, understandable political content. It suggests that simplifying the complexity of political processes and providing accessible information could be instrumental in enhancing youth participation.



Figure 34. Key political issues identified by Sudanese Youth



The desire for a more direct influence on decisions affecting them was also evident, with 21.8 per cent of respondents expressing that they would be more engaged if they could vote on decisions directly impacting their lives. This preference for direct involvement in decision-making processes reflects a wish for more participatory and direct democracy practices.

The key political issues identified by Sudanese youth in the survey (see Figure X 34) offer a window into their civic engagement and what drives their participation in the political process.

The overwhelming emphasis on anti-corruption (81.3 per cent very important), economic improvement (79.8 per cent very important) and poverty reduction (78.9 per cent very important) reflects the youth's acute awareness and concern about Sudan's economic challenges. This focus suggests that for many young people, their engagement in politics is motivated by the desire for economic stability and growth. The critical issues of job creation, inflation control, and overall economic health are likely at the forefront of their minds as they consider their political choices.

Security and conflict resolution is another significant concern, with 81.9 per cent rating it as very important. In a country marred by ongoing conflicts, the youth's political participation or disengagement might be influenced by their perceptions of how well these critical security issues are being handled. Their political activities, whether voting or engaging in other forms, might be seen to advocate for peace and stability. The strong call for anti-corruption efforts and reliable public utilities underscores the demand for integrity in governance and essential services. This might motivate the considerable portion of youth willing to engage in political activities beyond voting, reflecting a desire to influence these areas more directly.

"There's effective youth participation needing guidance. The main obstacles are security and funding." **Female, age 27.**

"Youth are eager to engage in civic activities but lack opportunities for participation" **Female, age 27.**

"Young people and their families fear political and civic participation for security reasons." **Male, age 21.**

"Youth participation is significant, but it's hindered by inadequate educational and intellectual resources." **Male, age 29.**

The focus on employment opportunities and healthcare improvement, also points to the youth's desire for tangible improvements in areas directly impacting their daily lives. This concern for accessible healthcare and job creation is likely a driving factor in their political engagement, influencing their decisions to support certain policies or leaders.

Additionally, the importance placed on educational development and efficient emergency response highlights the youth's focus on long-term societal growth and immediate crisis management. These issues may significantly influence their political engagement, as they seek to support policies and leaders who prioritise education and disaster preparedness.

The survey also reveals a desire for political representation that aligns with personal values, offers diversity, and provides transparency and direct influence on decision-making. This could explain why a substantial portion of the youth indicate that their political engagement would increase if these conditions were met. Conversely, the lack of engagement from others might stem from a perception that the current political environment does not adequately reflect these preferences.

Youth voice in Sudan

In concluding the section on Youth Voice, it is evident from the survey results that Sudanese youth are a politically engaged demographic. Their participation in the political process is driven by a combination of immediate concerns and long-term aspirations for their country. These young individuals are not passive observers; they are actively shaping their future and that of Sudan. The survey highlights a need for a political system that resonates with their diverse personal views and experiences, reflecting a desire for a more inclusive and responsive political landscape.

"It is very important and the voice of the youth has always been the voice of the future throughout the revolutions that took place in Sudan." **Male, age 28.**

"The youth participation is very important to understand the future of the country." **Male, age 25.**

"65 per cent of the population is youth, of course our opinion and engagement is important to a very great extent" **Male, age 27.**

"Young people have different visions and ideas, and if they are involved, they will change the future of Sudan." **Female, age 27.**

Young people's political engagement is significantly influenced by how well they perceive the political system and its leaders are addressing critical issues like economic stability, poverty reduction, security, employment opportunities, and healthcare. Their engagement extends beyond traditional voting, encompassing activism and other forms of civic participation. However, there is also a notable portion of the youth population that remains disengaged or sceptical about the effectiveness of their political participation, reflecting a need for systemic changes to re-engage and empower this demographic.

The data reveals a youth population deeply affected by the ongoing political turmoil in Sudan. Feelings of frustration and fear are prevalent, yet there are also signs of hope and a strong desire for active participation. Understanding these emotions is crucial for effectively addressing the needs and aspirations of Sudanese youth. Creating safer and more inclusive spaces for political expression, rebuilding trust in political institutions, and ensuring the political process is responsive to their needs are key steps in this direction.

Community dynamics also play a crucial role in shaping the political behaviour of youth. In a society where community bonds are strong, the influence of peers and community leaders is significant. These figures often serve as role models, guiding youth toward civic involvement and political activism. Additionally, the increasing accessibility to information through digital media has expanded the horizons of Sudanese youth, exposing them to a wide range of ideas and enabling them to express their political opinions more freely.

In conclusion, the motivations for political participation among Sudanese youth are complex and multi-dimensional. They are driven by a desire for change, shaped by personal and collective experiences, and influenced by the socio-political environment. Engaging this demographic more effectively in the political process, ensuring their voices are heard, and acting upon their suggestions are crucial for shaping the future of Sudan.

A multi-faceted approach is needed to enhance youth political engagement in Sudan. This includes creating accessible and relevant political platforms at both national and local levels and connecting the youth with broader global and continental issues. Addressing these factors could lead to a more engaged and empowered youth population, contributing actively to the political discourse and development of Sudan.

Case study: A view from the Sudanese diaspora

In the age of global interconnectivity, diasporas have emerged as significant forces for change, wielding the power to influence the political and economic trajectories of their homelands from afar. The Sudanese diaspora, through its proactive engagement and unwavering commitment, exemplifies this potential, particularly in relation to Sudan's ongoing challenges. A comprehensive online survey among Sudanese citizens living abroad has provided valuable insights into their views, echoing the concerns of the youth within Sudan and outlining specific avenues through which the diaspora can contribute to Sudan's development.

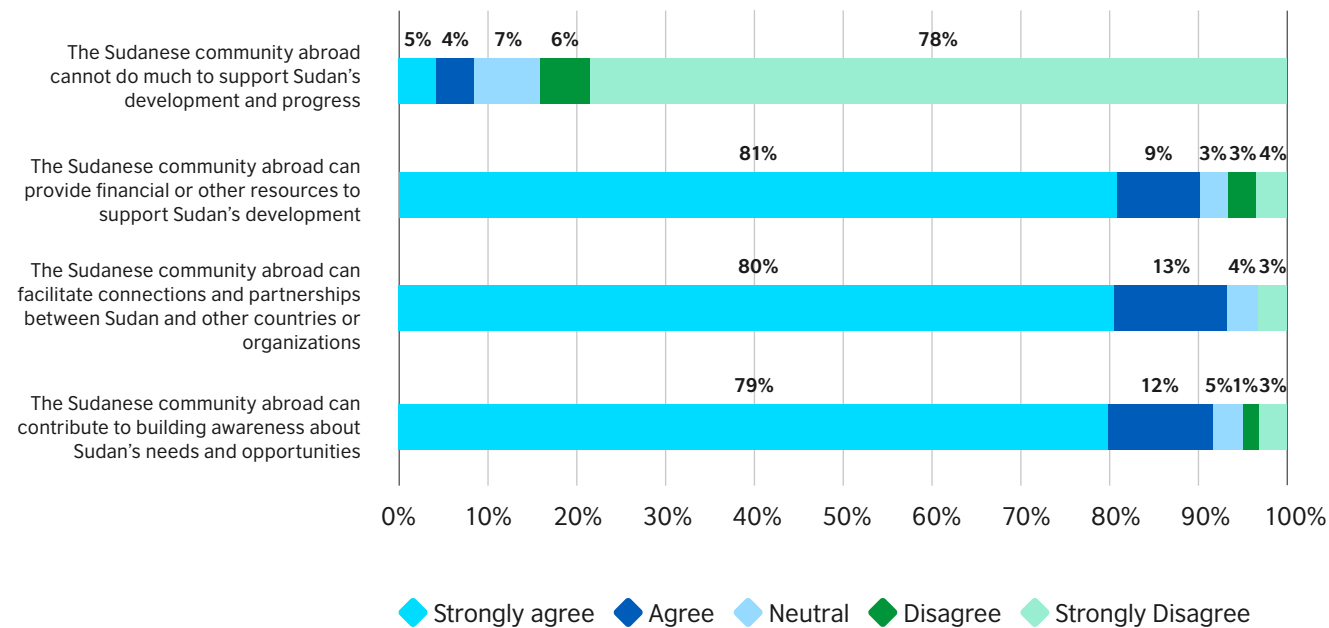
The survey, capturing responses from 75 diaspora members, reveals a deep understanding of and concern for the political landscape in Sudan, mirroring the frustrations and aspirations of their counterparts within the country. Respondents vividly articulated the barriers to political participation for young people, pointing to a system marred by nepotism and exclusivity.

"The bigger political parties have hereditary systems so if you're not from a certain family or affiliated with them you won't reach a position where you can have real influence." **Male, age 30-35, living in Oman.**

This shared perspective underscores the diaspora's keen awareness of the need for political renewal that champions inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. Like the youth in Sudan, the diaspora sees the imperative for meaningful engagement opportunities in politics, advocating for a system that welcomes new voices and ideas.

The diaspora's vision for contribution

Survey respondents outlined a holistic vision for the diaspora's role in Sudan's development, focussing on advocacy, connection-building, skills and knowledge transfer, and cultural exchange. A significant emphasis was placed on the diaspora's ability to raise international awareness of Sudan's needs and opportunities. This aligns with the survey results in Figure 35, illustrating a strong consensus among respondents that building awareness about Sudan's challenges and potential is a critical contribution the diaspora can make.

Figure 35. How do you think the Sudanese community abroad can support development and progress?**Table 2.** Where Sudanese diaspora, part of this research, live now.

Saudi-Arabia	26
United States Canada	22
UAE	14
Qatar	13
Egypt	10
Germany	9
Australia	5
Ethiopia	2
United Kingdom	1
Denmark	1
Dubai	1
Rwanda	1
Kenya	1
Uganda	1
Oman	1
Hungary	1
Bahrain	1
Japan	1
Grand Total	111

By leveraging their global positions, members of the diaspora aim to bridge the gap between Sudan and the international community, advocating for support and investment that can catalyse economic growth and technological advancement. The strategic importance of fostering partnerships is highlighted as a pathway to facilitate economic development and innovation.

The emphasis on skills and knowledge transfer reflects a comprehensive understanding of development. Respondents recognise the importance of contributing intellectual and financial capital to enhance Sudan's economic, educational, and healthcare sectors. This recognition is coupled with a call for promoting political engagement and democratic values, aspiring to a governance model that is inclusive, representative, and responsive to all Sudanese citizens' needs.

Moreover, the value placed on cultural exchange and reinforcing Sudanese identity worldwide underscores the diaspora's role in fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose among Sudanese people across the globe.

Proposed Contributions

Insights from the Sudanese diaspora, through the online survey, resonate with the concerns expressed by Sudan's youth. They highlight a collective desire for systemic reforms to ensure a more inclusive, democratic, and prosperous Sudan. The proposed contributions, spanning from financial investment to cultural exchange, underscore a holistic approach to addressing the nation's challenges.

This case study not only celebrates the diaspora's potential in shaping Sudan's future but also emphasises the importance of linking their efforts with the aspirations of the youth within Sudan. It advocates for a governance model that embraces diversity, innovation, and inclusivity, driven by the collective efforts of the Sudanese people, both at home and abroad.

Information influencers, perception and trust

In an era where information is abundant and accessible through various channels, understanding where Sudanese youth gather their news and current events, and how they perceive the trustworthiness of these sources, is crucial. This section delves into the survey results to gain insights into the information consumption

patterns of the youth in Sudan and their trust in different information sources.

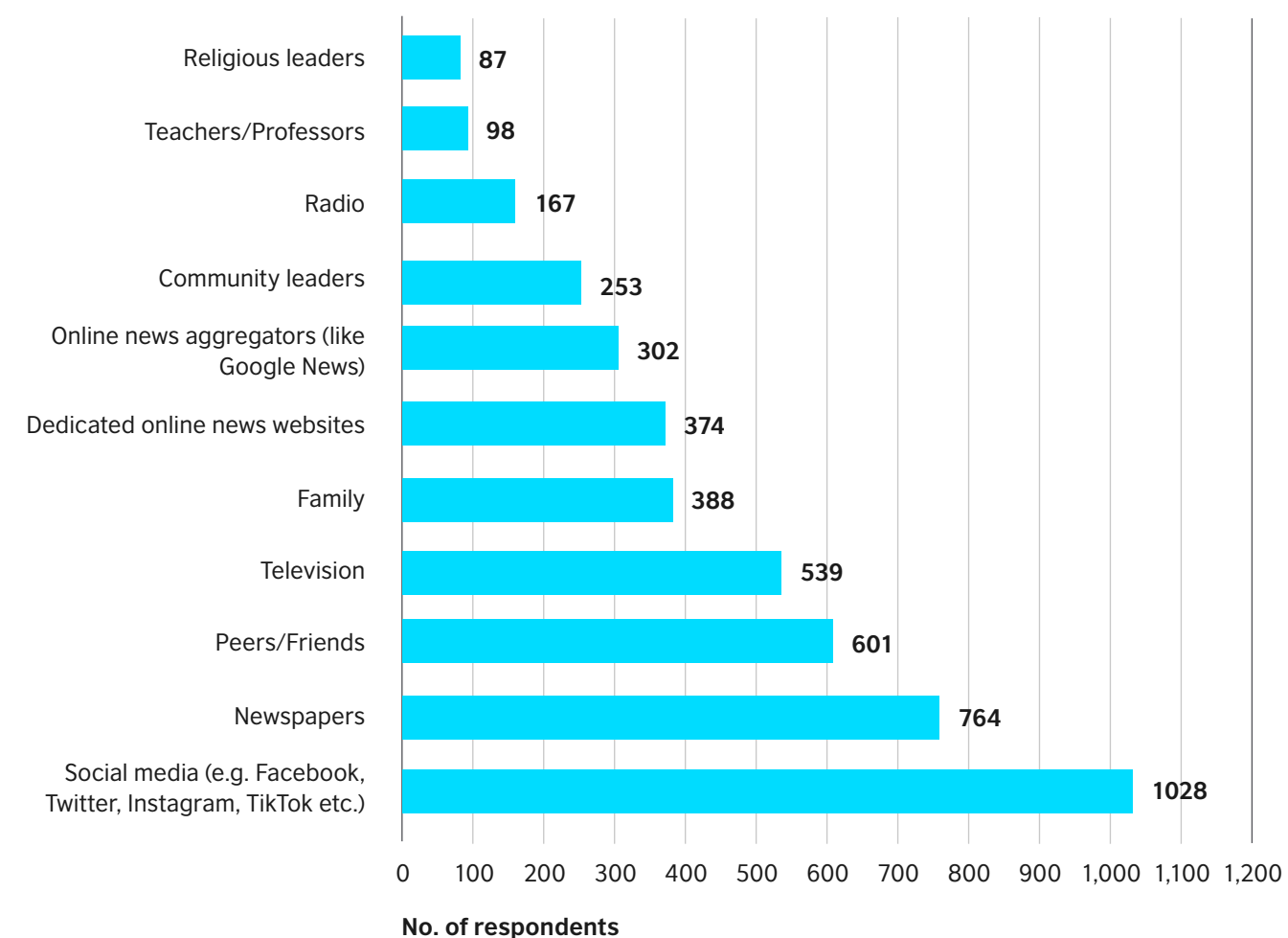
"Different media platforms greatly influence the opinions of young people. The evidence is what happened at the beginning of the December Revolution and how the youth followed the Sudanese Professionals Association, even though it was a page on Facebook. We do not trust media sources, given that all media outlets have an agenda to work on. It is rare to have a neutral platform."
Female, age 27.

"In my opinion the war in Sudan is more on the media than on the ground. The media is used to amplify the war and is trying to make the war look like a tribal war."
Female, age 25.

"The national media represents most of the viewpoints on political issues in the region and around Sudan and the world. For example, here in the Blue Nile, the role of the media was negative in the civil war in the region."
Female, age 20.

The survey indicates a diverse range of information sources for Sudanese youth, with social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tiktok being the most popular, accessed by 63.8 per cent of respondents. This is followed by newspapers (47.4 per cent) and information from peers/friends (37.3 per cent). Television and family are other significant sources, utilised by 33.5 per cent and 24.1 per cent of respondents, respectively (Figure 316).

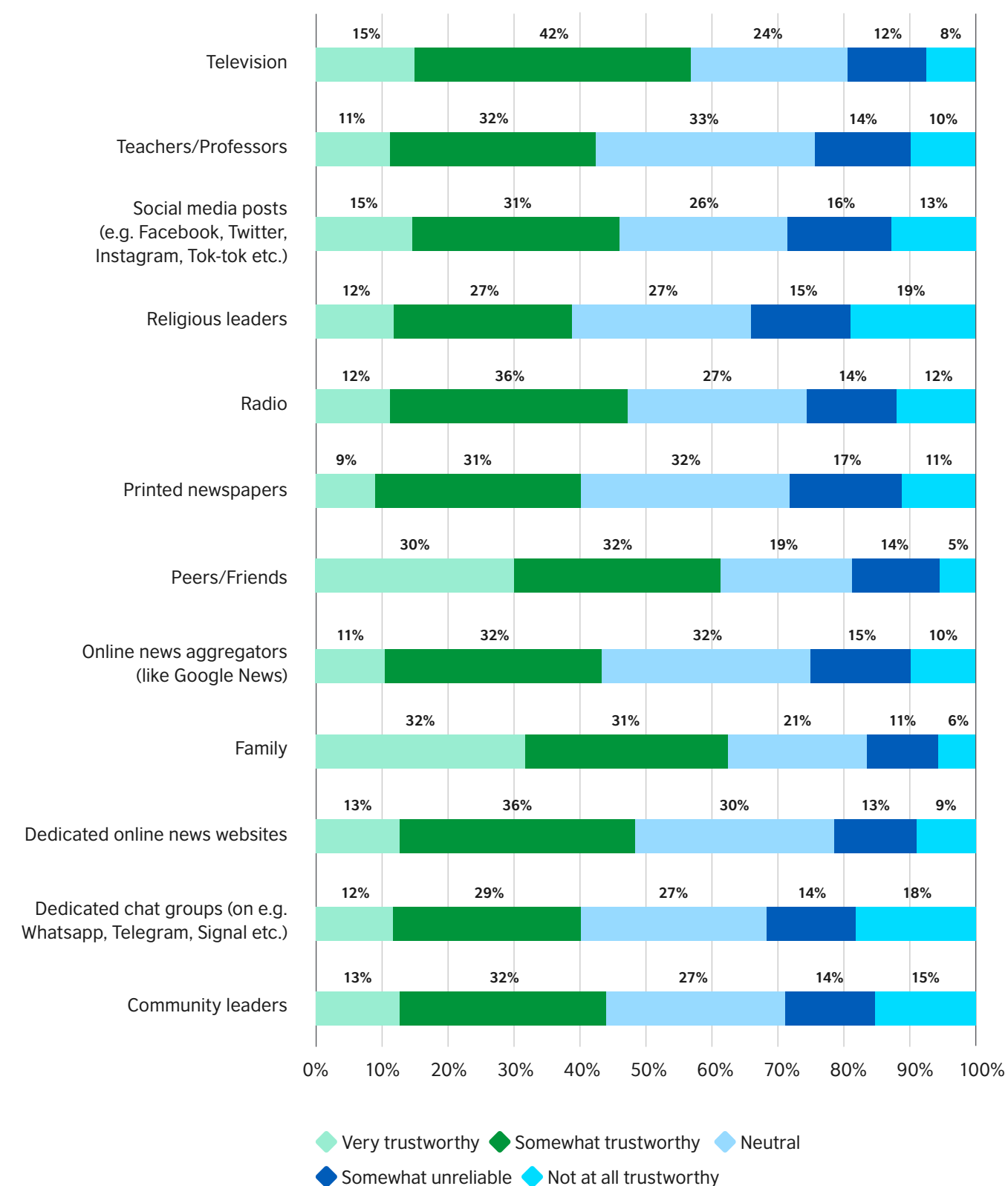
Figure 36. When looking at news and current events, where do you get your information? (Total sample base n=1611, multiple choice)



"The main media in the Blue Nile State is the radio, but in the cities of Damazin and Al-Roseiris, the most used media source among young people is Facebook, which plays a major role in shaping young people's viewpoints."
Female, age 29.

In terms of trustworthiness, peers/friends rank high, with 31.6 per cent finding them somewhat trustworthy and 30.2 per cent considering them very trustworthy. Along with family members these are regarded as the most trustworthy sources of information indicating a strong reliance on personal networks for reliable information (Figure 327).

Figure 37. How trustworthy do you find these sources of information? (Total sample base n=1611)



Community leaders, dedicated online news websites and traditional newspapers are also notable sources of information for Sudanese youth. While community leaders are seen as trustworthy by 44.6 per cent of respondents, traditional news only receive a trustworthy rating from 40.2 per cent of respondents. Religious leaders and dedicated chat groups (e.g. WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal) are seen as the least trustworthy sources of information with respectively 39.1 per cent and 40.6 per cent of respondents rating them trustworthy. This suggests a reliance on community-based and personal communication channels for trustworthy information gathering (Figure 327).

“Media platforms are able to form your opinion on issues, especially if someone is not even aware of the issues.”
Female, age 23.

“The media in the region has a great influence. It works to create the collective mind of societies and also works to show aspects as needed.”
Male, age 26.

“Youth are fully aware of the biases and limitations of the media in Sudan.”
Male, age 36.

Participants from various FGDs expressed concerns about the potential biases and limitations of media sources. Many young people seem to be aware of these biases, especially in the context of national versus alternative media. However, awareness levels varied, indicating a need for increased media literacy among youth, particularly in understanding the agendas and potential misinformation spread by different media outlets.

Printed newspapers, radio and television are viewed with moderate trust, but there is a notable portion of respondents who view them neutrally or with some level of unreliability. Some youth feel that both national and alternative media have not provided constructive ideas for building a stable country, suggesting a critical view of the media landscape in Sudan.

Youth appear to be variably aware of potential biases or limitations in media sources. Some respondents believe that a significant portion of the youth is aware of these biases, while others think that awareness is lacking, especially among youth in marginalised areas. This varied awareness underscores the importance of media literacy among the youth in Sudan.

“The media is mostly untruthful and has both positive and negative influence.”
Male, age 26.

“The media does not cover youth participation in all issues.”
Male, age 28.

“The media is the weapon of those who have a strong influence.”
Male, age 29.

“I think media plays a major role in determining the aspirations of young people towards the future.”
Female, age 23.

The insights from surveys and FGDs underscore the complex role of media in shaping the perspectives and engagement of Sudanese youth. With the growing influence of digital platforms, there is an increasing need for media education and critical thinking skills to navigate the diverse and often polarised media landscape effectively.

“Social media gathers the Sudanese in one place and has a negative and positive impact.”
Female, age 27.

“The social media greatly affects the political and social participation of young people, as an example of what happened in the December Revolution, the revolution relied entirely on the social media.”
Male, age 26.

“Social media played a role in uniting young people during the revolution.”
Female, age 31.

“The social media plays a major role because young people have more access to this and it influences the direction of the youth's voice.”
Male, age 28.

“Social media has a big role in shaping the perspectives and aspirations of the youth in Sudan.”
Female, age 27.

Social media platforms have a substantial impact on Sudanese youth engagement in civic and political issues. Participants from Kulna Ahl Media platform in Damazin and Hay Al-Zohour Youth Center in Damazin observed that social media plays a major role in shaping young people's views and even determining their future aspirations. There was also a consensus that one of the reasons for youth to use social media is that national media tends to overlook youth participation, leading youth to rely more on social media and alternative platforms for information and engagement.

The coverage of youth participation in social issues by the media is perceived as inadequate, especially by national media outlets. Young people are expressing that they find a gap between official media coverage and the realities and interests they find important, highlighting the importance of alternative media platforms.

“The national media is far from reality and young people do not listen to it. Alternative media, like social media, has shaped and contributed to building the views and aspirations of young people, but not all of them are real media.”
Male, age 21.

The intricate tapestry of information sources shaping the perspectives of Sudanese youth highlights the evolving nature of media consumption and its impact on youth engagement. The findings reveal a nuanced understanding among youth about the potential biases and limitations inherent in various media sources. This awareness is pivotal as it shapes their engagement with media content and their ability to discern credible information.

The insights gathered point to a critical view of national media and a leaning towards alternative media platforms, particularly for political and social information. This preference for alternative media indicates a search for more diverse and independent perspectives, aligning with the youth's desire for unbiased and comprehensive coverage of events and issues.

Before transitioning to the next chapter, focussing specifically on social media, it becomes important to explore how these platforms are not just sources of information but also arenas for civic and political engagement. The interaction between the widespread use of social media and its perceived reliability will be examined in greater depth, considering the nuances of digital communication in a politically and socially dynamic environment like Sudan.

Navigating digitalization: The Influence of social media on Sudanese youth

In the ever-evolving digital age, social media, especially Facebook and WhatsApp (figure 338), has emerged as a pivotal influencer in shaping the perspectives, aspirations, and civic engagement of Sudanese youth. This section delves into how digital platforms are moulding the youth's viewpoints, their trust in various media sources, and the implications of media literacy in a socio-politically charged environment.

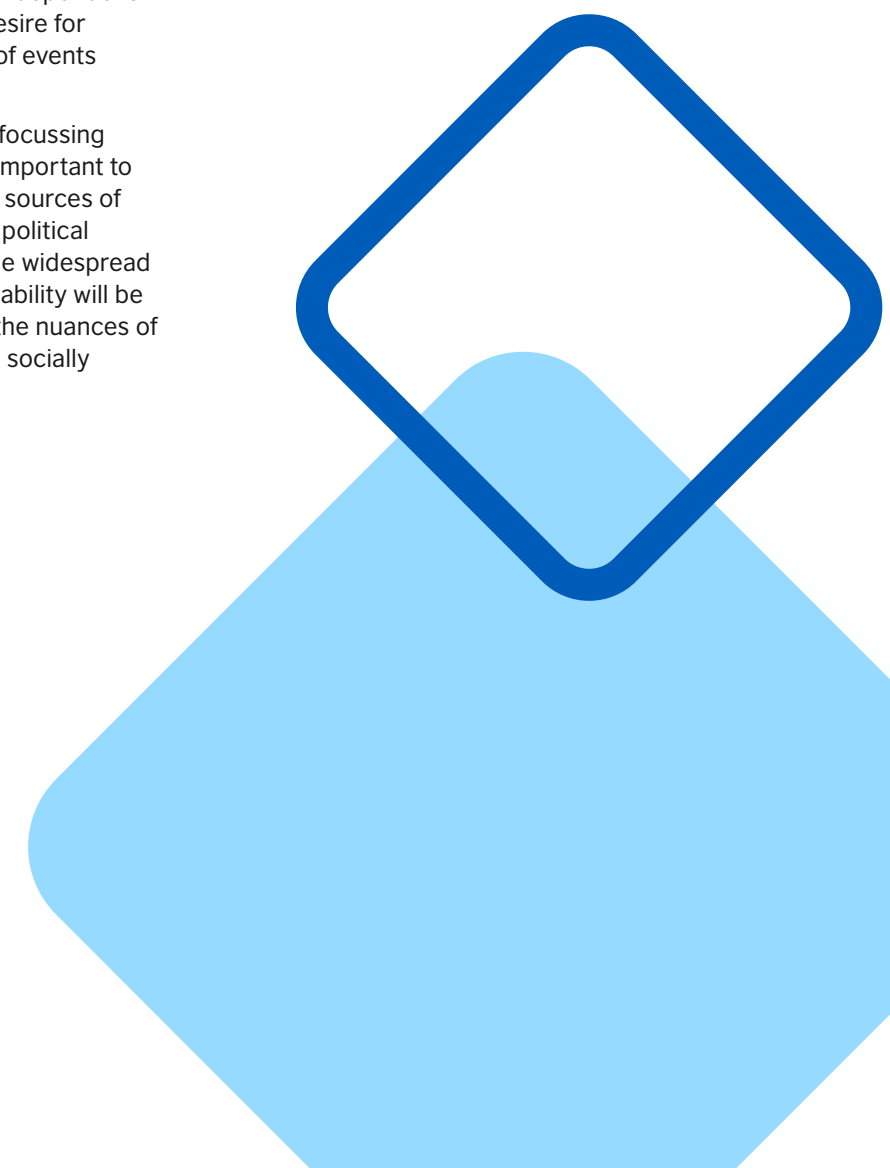
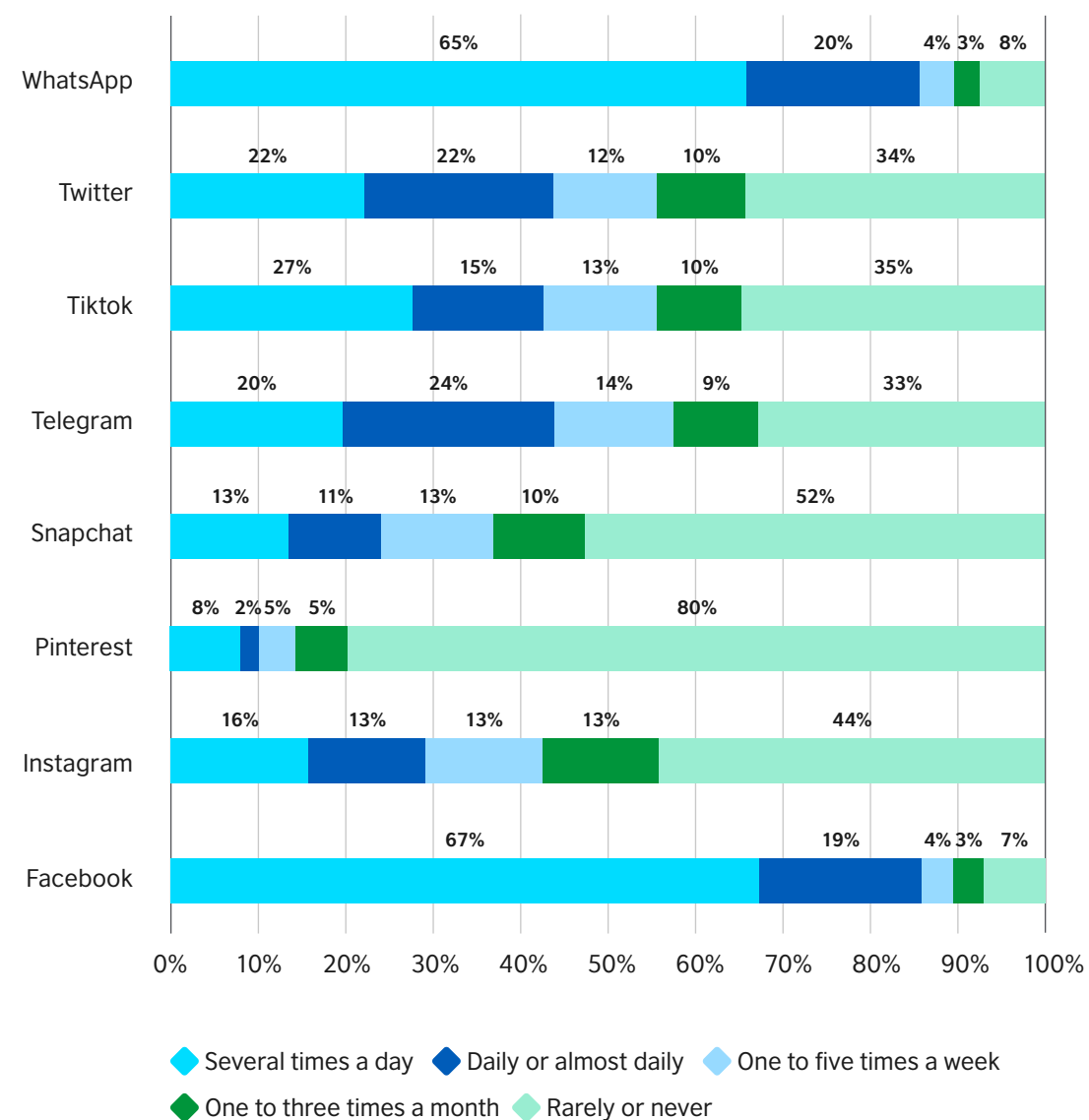
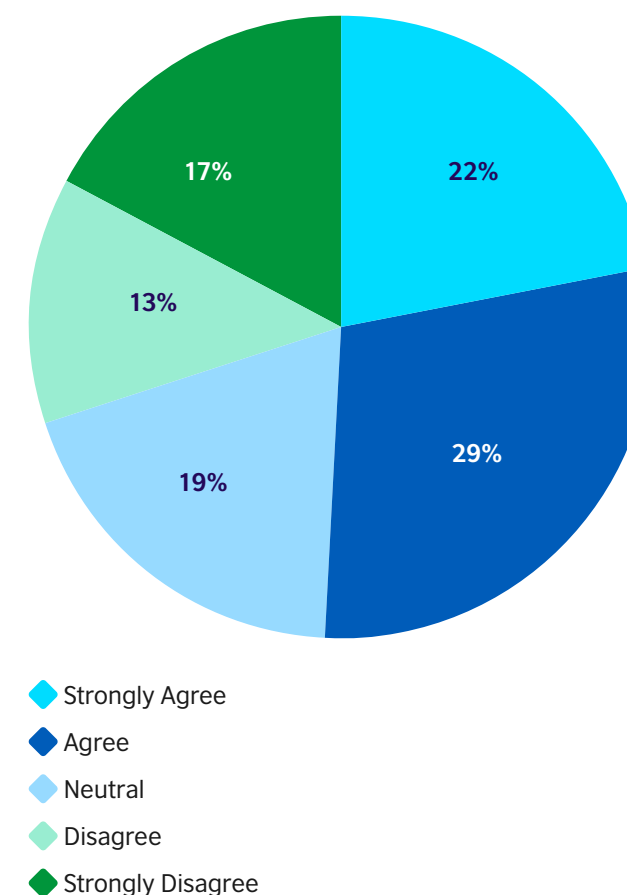


Figure 38. How often do you use these sources ? (Total sample base n=1611)



A notable percentage of Sudanese youth, specifically 28.6 per cent agreeing and 22.1 per cent strongly agreeing, have used digital technology to actively participate in political activities and discussions (Figure 3249). This indicates that young people in Sudan leverage digital platforms to engage in the political sphere and channels that offer an accessible and dynamic avenue for political expression and debate, enabling youth to contribute to political dialogues and engage in civic issues.

Figure 39. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social media use? I have used digital technology to engage in political activities, participate in a political discussion or debate online.



The use of digital technology for political purposes represents a shift in the way young Sudanese are engaging with politics. Rather than being passive consumers of political content, many are actively using digital tools to express opinions, organise activities, and connect with like-minded individuals. Platforms like

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, along with messaging apps such as WhatsApp and Telegram, have become integral in facilitating political discussions and mobilising collective actions among the youth.

Social media's role in political mobilisation was particularly evident during key events such as the December Revolution, where young people extensively used these platforms for organising protests, sharing information, and fostering solidarity. The ability to rapidly disseminate information and mobilise support through these platforms has significantly enhanced the political agency of Sudanese youth, allowing them to participate in political processes and advocate for change more effectively.

"National media was ignoring the youth's participations, while the unofficial media was following the youth's participations and was a pressure tool on the government." **Male, age 27.**

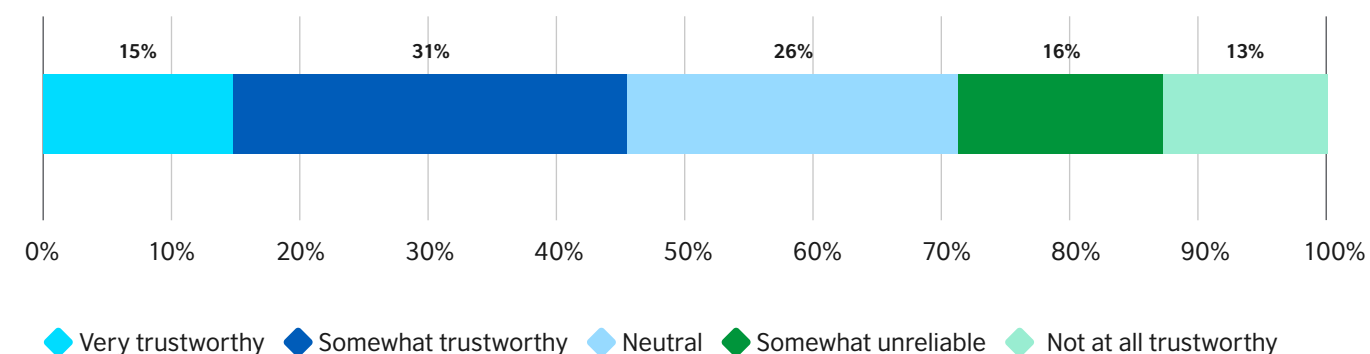
"The national media did not contribute significantly to building the aspirations of young people, but the alternative media is the main leader in shaping the views of young people." **Female, age 27.**

"All the national media is directed and reflect the government's trends, and it perpetuates the unreal ideas but can change the viewpoints of people. Every media platform has the ability to shape individuals' views, and the danger lies in if young people are not aware of these biases." **Female, age 20S.**

"National media did not affect the aspirations of young people, but social media and alternative media played a major role." **Male, age 27.**

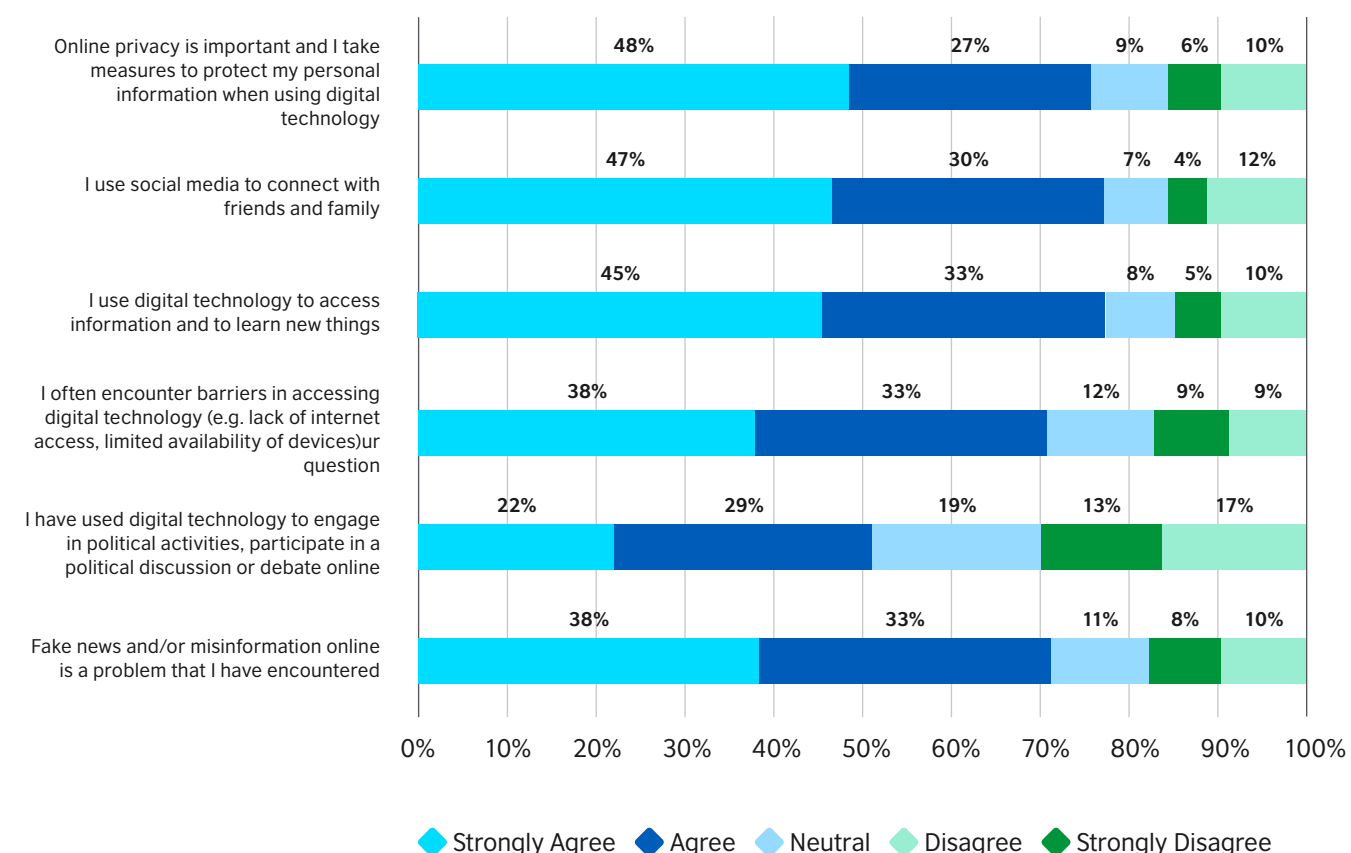
Despite the advantages, the use of digital technology for political engagement is not without its challenges. Concerns over misinformation, online harassment, and digital surveillance have emerged, posing risks to the safety and effectiveness of political activism online. Social media, being the most used source of information gathering, shows a mixed trust profile with a significant 45.9 per cent of respondents find it very or somewhat trustworthy, and only 28.4 per cent finding it unreliable or not trusting it at all (see Figure 33540). Though this does not directly point to a concern about how youth use social media, it does raise the question of awareness about the high risk of misinformation and fake news when using social media as an information source.

Figure 40. How trustworthy do you find these Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok etc.) as sources of information? (Total sample base n=1495)



A significant concern among the youth is the widespread prevalence of misinformation on digital platforms. With 38.3 per cent strongly agreeing and 33,0 per cent agreeing that encountering fake news online is a prevalent problem, there is a clear indication of the struggle to find reliable and accurate information (figure 41). This issue underscores the need for enhanced media literacy among young Sudanese. Educating them on how to critically evaluate sources and discern trustworthy information is crucial in empowering them to navigate the digital landscape effectively (figure 36).

Figure 41. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social media use? (Total sample base n=1611)



Access to technology also remains a significant barrier, as evidenced by 37.6 per cent of respondents strongly agreeing and 32.6 per cent agreeing that they face challenges like limited internet access or the availability of devices (see Figure 32641). This challenge is particularly acute in regions where infrastructure is lacking. Addressing these access barriers is essential for ensuring that all youth, regardless of their geographic or socio-economic background, can participate in the digital realm. This includes investing in infrastructure, providing affordable internet services, and ensuring the availability of digital devices.

Additionally, Sudanese youth, while actively engaging with digital media, face significant challenges concerning online privacy and the associated risks of being targeted by military and security forces. This complex landscape requires a nuanced understanding of the interplay between digital engagement and personal safety.

The concern for online privacy is not only about data protection but also closely tied to potential security risks. A substantial 47.9 per cent of respondents strongly agree that online privacy is crucial, reflecting an acute awareness of the risks associated with digital exposure.

In Sudan's context, where political tensions and military presence are prominent, young people's online activities could potentially make them targets for surveillance and repression by security forces. This adds a layer of complexity to their digital engagement, as they must navigate the delicate balance between expressing themselves and ensuring their safety.

The threat of being monitored or targeted by military or security forces necessitates a heightened sense of caution among young digital users. This calls for strategies that prioritise both privacy and safety. Awareness and training on secure digital practices become essential. This includes using encrypted communication channels, understanding digital footprints, and being aware of the potential consequences of online activities. Advocacy for digital rights and a safe online environment is also crucial. Creating a broader awareness about the importance of digital privacy and security, especially in politically sensitive contexts, is key to protecting the rights and safety of young internet users.

Youth acknowledge that the social media has both positive and negative impacts. For instance, several interviewees noted the national media's negative role

versus the unofficial media's positive role in advocacy. Others also mentioned the significant influence of young influencers through social media, contrasting it with the less effective or negative impact of national media.

“Yes, informal media has a major role in shaping the views and aspirations of young people.” **Female, age 30.**

“The media is largely influenced by specific opinions, especially social media, more than local media. And this affects young people's views on global issues as well local ones.” **Male, age 26.**

The youth's awareness of these challenges, coupled with their innovative use of digital platforms, points to the need for supportive policies and educational initiatives that promote safe, responsible, and impactful online political engagement.

The challenges faced by Sudanese youth in the digital realm highlight the need for comprehensive strategies that address misinformation, access barriers, and privacy concerns. As they continue to engage with digital technology and social media, support in the form of education, infrastructure development, and privacy protection measures is key. By navigating these challenges effectively, Sudanese youth can fully realise the potential of digital platforms as tools for learning, connection, and civic engagement.

Case study: Voices of tomorrow - Sudanese youth on the path to peace and sustainable development

In a nation grappling with complex socio-political challenges, the voices of its youth emerge as beacons of hope and harbingers of change. Sudan, a country with a rich tapestry of cultural diversity and historical significance, stands at a critical juncture. It is a nation where the aspirations of its youth are intricately tied to the prospects of peace, stability, and sustainable development. This section aims to amplify the perspectives of Sudanese youth, as they articulate their visions for a peaceful and prosperous future.

Sudan's journey over recent years has been fraught with challenges. The country has witnessed significant political upheaval, civil unrest, and a complex humanitarian crisis. In such a tumultuous environment, the role of the youth becomes not just significant, but essential for charting a path forward. This section delves into the depths of young Sudanese minds,

exploring their thoughts, priorities, and aspirations in the context of peace and security, and offer a grounded understanding of what peace and stability mean to Sudan's youth and how they envision their role in the sustainable development of their country.

The narratives and insights presented here are reflective of a demographic that forms the backbone of Sudan's future. As the country stands at the crossroads of conflict and peace, the perspectives of its youth offer invaluable insights into the pathways that can lead to reconciliation, healing, and growth. By focussing on the priorities identified by the youth, including addressing the root causes of conflict, promoting dialogue, and strengthening institutions, this section seeks to shed light on the potential strategies and actions that can guide Sudan towards a more peaceful and sustainable future.

Youth perspectives on peace and stability

In the quest for peace and stability in Sudan, the perspectives of the nation's youth offer a poignant and insightful view into the future they envision. This section delves into the sentiments and aspirations of Sudanese youth to understand their views on the steps necessary for fostering peace and ensuring sustainable development.

"Youth play a major role in making, preserving, and building peace. They are the driving force behind war and peace." **Female, age 23.**

"Youth's role is very significant in stopping war crimes in Darfur and building peace in the region." **Male, age 25.**

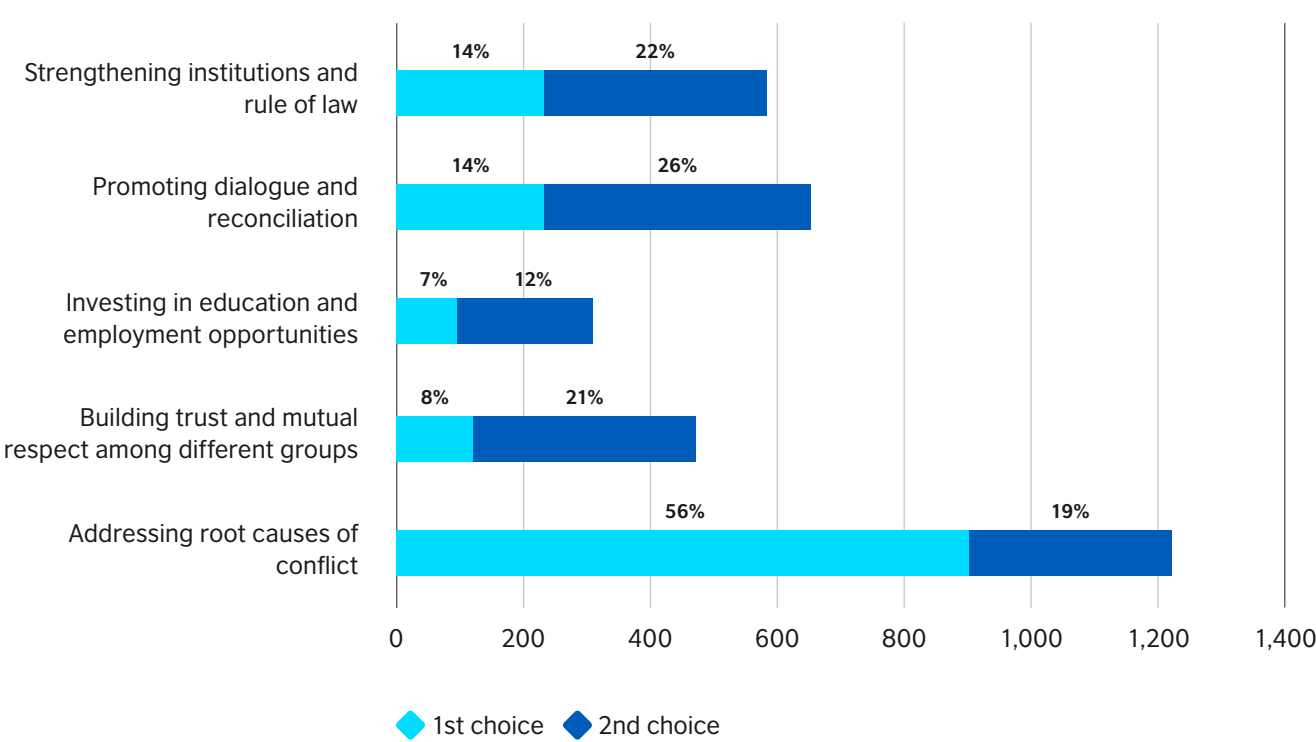
"By creating moderation in Darfuri societies and supporting peace through dialogue, youth are vital for peacebuilding." **Female, age 33.**

"Youth raise public awareness of peacekeeping and unity. They play a major role in the community." **Female, age 30.**

"Young people must spread awareness about acceptance, reject tribalism, and strengthen the national spirit." **Male, age 34.**

The youth of Sudan, living through times of significant political and social upheaval, have demonstrated a deep understanding of the complexities surrounding the issues of peace and stability. Their responses highlight a mature and nuanced grasp of the underlying factors that contribute to conflict and instability. A significant majority, 56.2 per cent, identify "addressing root causes of conflict" as the most crucial step towards achieving peace (Figure 42) choosing it as their first choice when asked 'What do you think are the most important steps that Sudan can take to promote peace and stability?'. Another 19.3 per cent has it as their second choice. This response reflects a keen awareness that lasting peace cannot be achieved without tackling the fundamental issues that fuel conflict, such as inequality, marginalisation, and historical grievances.

Figure 42. What do you think are the most important steps that Sudan can take to promote peace and stability? (Total sample base n=1609)



A considerable number of respondents also emphasise the importance of “promoting dialogue and reconciliation” with 14.4 per cent having it as first choice and 21.7 per cent as their second choice. This choice underscores the youth’s belief in the power of communication and understanding as tools for healing and building bridges across divided communities. The importance of dialogue is seen as a vital step in creating an inclusive environment where diverse perspectives are respected and integrated into the peacebuilding process.

In discussions with young people, examples can be found of youth as agents of peace and reconciliation. Across various regions, including Darfur, Blue Nile State, and Port Sudan, youth have been active in initiating peacebuilding efforts. Their involvement ranges from resolving local conflicts, as seen in the Al Gezira Agricultural Project, to leading initiatives that promote dialogue and understanding among different community groups. These actions demonstrate the youth’s commitment to not only preserving peace but also actively working towards achieving it.

“The role of youth is very big. We made reconciliations between conflict parties within Al Gezira Agricultural Project.” **Male, age 23.**

“The role of youth in peacekeeping lies in their work to maintain the cohesion of the social fabric. Creating a cohesive social fabric is essential for peace and stability.” **Female, age 20.**

“The role of youth is important in achieving transitional justice. Giving youth initiatives legitimacy is key to solving community problems effectively. Therefore also activating the role of youth and cultural centres is crucial for strengthening our local communities.” **Female, age 22.**

“In the Blue Nile, youth are actively spreading peace culture and leading initiatives against causes of war, despite recent polarisation.” **Female, age 22.**

The discussions also revealed that Sudanese youth view their role as crucial in strengthening the social fabric of their communities. Their efforts in community-building are multifaceted, involving awareness-raising, educational activities, and cultural programmes. These initiatives are not only aimed at resolving current conflicts but also at preventing future disputes by fostering a culture of tolerance and mutual respect.

Furthermore, strengthening institutions and the rule of law is also identified by the youth as a key step in

promoting peace and stability. This perspective indicates an understanding of the critical role of strong, transparent, and accountable institutions in creating a stable and just society. By advocating for robust legal and institutional frameworks, the youth are voicing their desire for a system that upholds the rights and dignities of all citizens.

“Youth in Blue Nile are the most working groups towards building peace and support the peaceful coexistence.” **Female, age 26, Blue Nile State.**

“Major roles in peace-making include combating hate speech and building peace clubs in neighbourhoods.” **Male, age 32, Blue Nile State.**

“Contributing to transitional justice and holding violators accountable is vital for our community’s healing.” **Male, age 29, Blue Nile State.**

The youth in regions like the Blue Nile acknowledge the challenges posed by the ongoing conflict, including polarisation and mobilisation among young people. The survey data also reveals the need for ‘building trust and mutual respect among different groups’, with 20.9 per cent of respondents highlighting this as important as their second choice (8.2 per cent as their first choice). This response points to the youth’s recognition of the need of social cohesion and inter-communal harmony in the pursuit of peace. Several youth-led initiatives also aim to bridge regional divides and foster national unity. These initiatives, varying from political to cultural, are instrumental in building a sense of shared national identity and purpose among the youth, which is critical for the long-term stability and unity of Sudan. By promoting mutual understanding and respect, Sudanese youth see an opportunity to overcome divisions and build a unified national identity.

Investing in education and employment opportunities is the least critical area identified by the youth, though 9.6 per cent still see it as a vital step towards peace. While not the most pressing issue, economic stability and access to education are essential components in creating a peaceful and prosperous society. The youth further articulate the link when discussing sustainable development that transcends traditional economic growth models, emphasising a holistic approach encompassing social justice, equitable resource management, and environmental protection.

“It is a sustainable economy that we eat from what we grow and wear from what we make. It is an old Sudanese proverb. Certainly, sustainable development is very important for Sudan.” **Male, age 28.**

Youth perspectives reveal a keen awareness of the challenges impeding sustainable development and, by extension, peace in Sudan. They identify issues such as the lingering effects of the former regime, the absence of clear governmental plans, and the ongoing conflict as significant obstacles which reflects a proactive approach among the youth, acknowledging the complexities of their socio-political environment while actively seeking solutions.

“The situation we live in is the biggest challenge, but currently, the youth are creating movements to improve these conditions.” **Female, age 27.**

Sudanese youth view themselves as crucial agents in promoting sustainable development and peace. They understand their role as extending beyond mere participants to being initiators of change and drivers of sustainable practices. This sense of agency is evident in their involvement in various initiatives and their desire to influence policy and societal norms.

“Sustainable development for me means to ensure economic, political, and social stability. It is very important for Sudan.” **Male, age 31.**

The perspectives of Sudanese youth on peace and stability, shaped by their understanding of sustainable development and the challenges therein, offer invaluable insights for policymakers and stakeholders. Their views highlight the need for a multi-dimensional approach to peacebuilding, one that addresses the root causes of conflict, promotes dialogue and reconciliation, and strengthens institutions and the rule of law. Moreover, the youth’s sense of responsibility and agency in this process is a powerful reminder of the critical role they play in steering Sudan towards a more peaceful, just, and sustainable future. Engaging with and empowering these young voices is not just beneficial but essential for the nation’s path forward.

Theme III: Education, work and entrepreneurship

Current state of education in Sudan

The landscape of education in Sudan is at a critical juncture, shaped by a myriad of challenges and aspirations. This chapter delves into the current state of education in Sudan, drawing insights from key informant interviews (KIIs) and survey data. It aims to present a comprehensive picture of the education system’s

accessibility, quality, relevance to the job market, and the perspectives of Sudanese youth.

“The cessation of education is the biggest disaster produced by the war.” **Female, age 25.**

“Our dream is to build an intellectually developed society above all else.” **Female, age 24.**

“Sudan has a very weak system that needs to be reviewed.” **Female, age 27.**

“The main obstacles are the war and conflicts in Sudan, even the institutions responsible for education do not pay attention to it well.” **Male, age 27.**

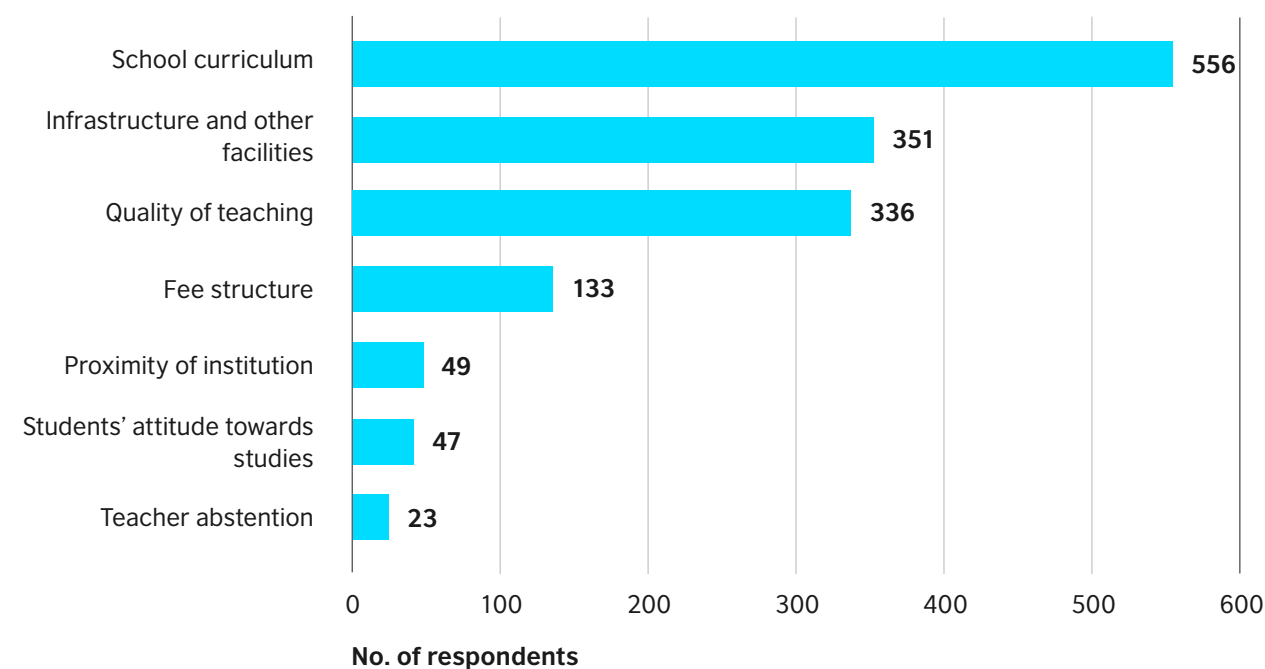
“To some extent it helps, but it does not help in creating greater job opportunities except through personal effort to develop capabilities after graduation.” **Male, age 21.**

Prior to the outbreak of war, the educational landscape in Sudan was set to undergo a transformative journey, as outlined in the General Education Sector Strategic Plan (2018/19-2022/23). Rooted in the Interim Constitution of 2005, the Sudanese government, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education, committed to deliver a new education system, emphasising values and science. This plan was an embodiment of the government’s recognition of education as a vital force for alleviating illiteracy, poverty, and fostering a cohesive nation, as well as addressing the systemic challenges and capitalising on the potential of education. It emphasised increasing access to pre-school education, enhancing the quality of pre-school programmes, improving retention and quality in basic education, and ensuring equitable access to education across all levels.

The KIIs reveal a stark picture of the Sudanese education system. Described as “deteriorating” and “below average”, it is evident that the current system is struggling to meet the needs of its youth. A significant number of respondents express dissatisfaction with the educational structure, highlighting issues like outdated curriculums, lack of adequate resources, and insufficient teacher training.

The survey data echoes these concerns, with a majority indicating strong disagreement with the statement that the quality of education is improving. This sentiment underlines a deep-seated dissatisfaction with the state of education and a call for needed reforms.

Figure 43. Which of the following requires the greatest improvement in Sudans education system? (Total sample base n=1495) How much or how little do you agree with each of these statements?



The pursuit of quality education in Sudan is hindered by a range of complex and interrelated barriers, significantly impacting the ability of the youth to receive an education that prepares them for the future. These challenges range from political instability and outdated curriculums to economic constraints and infrastructural deficiencies.

One of the most significant barriers is the ongoing political instability and conflict within the country. These factors not only disrupt the regular functioning of educational institutions but also divert attention and resources away from the education sector.

The profound impact of national instability on the education system has shifted the focus from educational development to immediate conflict resolution, leaving the educational needs of the youth unaddressed.

The curriculum in many Sudanese educational institutions is often cited as being outdated, not aligned with the current demands of the job market, and failing to equip students with the necessary skills for the future. Additionally, the shortage of qualified educational staff exacerbates the quality of education, with many teachers being undertrained or overburdened.

"There is no educational system, in my view, and there is no real educational plan by the state." **Male, age 26.**

"The quality of education in the states is worse than in Khartoum because they do not have good private schools like those in Khartoum." **Male, age 34.**

"A deteriorating education system that does not help developing leaders and prepared youth for the future. I think the educational ladder must be changed." **Male, age 28.**

"The current learning system is not preparing youth for the future." **Male, age 25.**

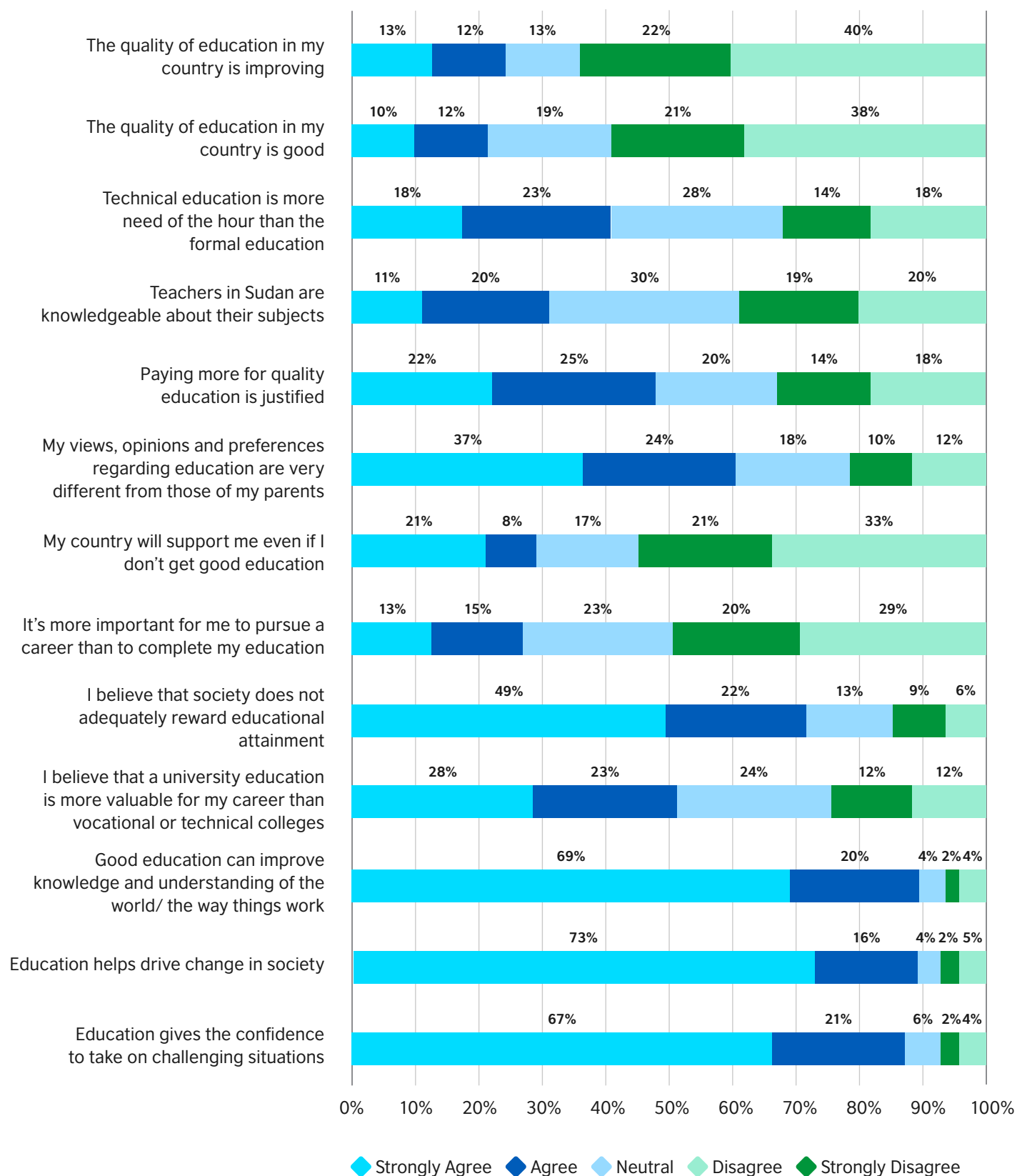
"I do not see that our education has anything to do with preparing young people for the future." **Male, age 27.**

A notable trend emerging from the survey data is the willingness of Sudanese youth to invest more in quality education. This willingness reflects a recognition among the youth of the importance of education in shaping their future and the development of the country.

The survey indicates that a significant percentage of respondents agree (25.2 per cent) and strongly agree (22.2 per cent), that paying more for quality education is justified (see Figure 44). This response suggests that Sudanese youth are not only aware of the shortcomings in their current education system but are also ready to contribute more, financially, towards enhancing the quality of their education. This willingness can be seen as a proactive stance by the youth to seek better educational opportunities, even if it comes at a higher cost.



Figure 44 . How much or how little do you agree with each of these statements? (Total sample base n=1611)



The readiness to invest more in education also brings into focus the debate between quality and accessibility. While it is encouraging that many are willing to pay more for quality education, this willingness must be balanced against the need to ensure that education remains accessible to all, regardless of economic status. This is particularly crucial in a country like Sudan, where economic disparities can be a significant barrier to accessing education.

Economic challenges also play a crucial role in hindering access to quality education. Many families in Sudan face financial difficulties, making it challenging to afford education-related expenses. This situation is further exacerbated in areas where educational resources are scarce, and schools are overcrowded. The General Education Sector Strategic Plan (2018/19-2022/23) by the Federal Ministry of Education recognises these economic barriers and emphasises enhancing both access and quality of education across all levels. However, the outbreak of war in April 2023 has further impeded the progress and fulfilment of strategic initiatives such as the General Education Sector Strategic Plan (2018/19-2022/23) by the Federal Ministry of Education.

In this context, addressing the barriers to quality education in Sudan requires adapting the multi-pronged approach initially outlined in the plan to the current realities. This includes stabilising the political landscape, which is now more crucial than ever, modernising the curriculum to suit the disrupted educational journey of students, improving economic access to education amidst heightened financial challenges, and investing in educational infrastructure and staff in a landscape altered by the conflict. Overcoming these exacerbated challenges is essential for empowering Sudanese youth and preparing them for a successful future in an environment that has become increasingly complex due to the ongoing conflict and globalisation.

Digital literacy and online learning in Sudan

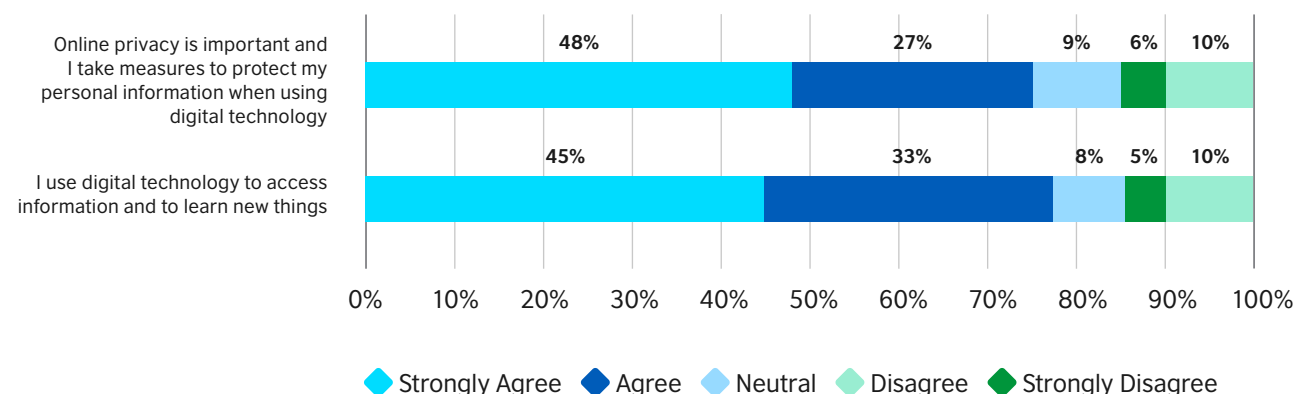
Sudan's education system and its youth face significant challenges in adopting digital technology. There is a clear divide: while the infrastructure for digital education is lacking, many youths are independently turning to online platforms for learning.

Sudan's digital education landscape is primarily constrained by infrastructural limitations and varying levels of digital literacy. Many areas, especially rural ones, struggle with poor internet connectivity, limiting access to digital educational resources. This gap not only hinders the potential for online education but also deepens educational disparities.

Moreover, the competency of the youth in digital skills is a recurring concern. While some youth in urban areas might possess adequate digital skills, this is not reflective of the broader population. The variation in digital literacy levels across different regions suggests a need for a more structured approach in integrating digital skills into the educational curriculum.

Despite these issues, many Sudanese youth (77.5 per cent) are actively using online resources for self-education (figure 45). The high percentage of youth engaging with digital technology for learning indicates a shift towards more self-directed and technology-enabled education. This trend is promising, as it reflects the youth's adaptability and eagerness to embrace new ways of learning, which can be particularly beneficial in areas where traditional educational resources are limited.

Figure 45. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Total sample base n=1611)



“Sudan is not ready for digital education in terms of infrastructure and economic capacity, and most young people are digitally illiterate.” Male, age 32.

“It is very difficult to happen in Sudan, and young people are not qualified for using digital tools.” Male, age 21.

“No, Sudan is not ready yet for digital education, and the infrastructure must be improved, especially the internet connection.” Male, age 25.

“Not all of Sudan is ready for digitalisation. I think cities are more capable than the countryside.” Male, age 38.

This enthusiasm towards using digital technology to learn new things coexists with significant challenges in digital literacy and the risk of misinformation, especially when social media is a primary source of information. Many youths may not have been formally educated on how to critically evaluate the information they find online. This gap in digital literacy is concerning, especially considering the proliferation of misinformation and biased content on the internet. When learners are not equipped to distinguish credible sources from unreliable ones, they risk internalising inaccurate information, which can influence their worldviews and decisions.

The reliance on social media for information (as seen earlier in this report) exacerbates this risk. Social media platforms, while valuable for information dissemination and community building, are also rife with misinformation. In the absence of robust media literacy, young people are particularly susceptible to the influence of misleading content. This susceptibility is heightened in a context like Sudan’s, where official media sources are often distrusted, and alternative media sources, including social media, become primary

information outlets.

To counter the risks of misinformation, it is crucial to incorporate digital literacy into the education curriculum. Young people need to be taught how to critically assess the reliability of online information, understand the biases of different media outlets, and recognise the signs of misinformation. While the interest in self-learning demonstrates the youth’s resilience and highlights the importance of online platforms in education, there also needs to be an emphasis on providing accessible and reliable educational resources online and developing local content that meets the specific needs of Sudanese students.

While Sudanese youth are proactively using digital technology for learning, there is an urgent need to develop their digital literacy skills. This development is crucial to ensure that they can safely navigate the digital landscape, differentiate between credible and non-credible information, and use digital platforms in a way that enriches their learning experience without exposing them to the risks of misinformation.

Addressing unemployment: Youth aspirations versus market realities

Unemployment remains a critical issue for Sudanese youth, profoundly impacting their life trajectories and overall societal contribution. The root causes of this widespread unemployment can be traced back to various factors including of course the country’s challenging socio-political situation. The ongoing conflicts and political upheavals have led to a stagnation in economic growth, reducing job

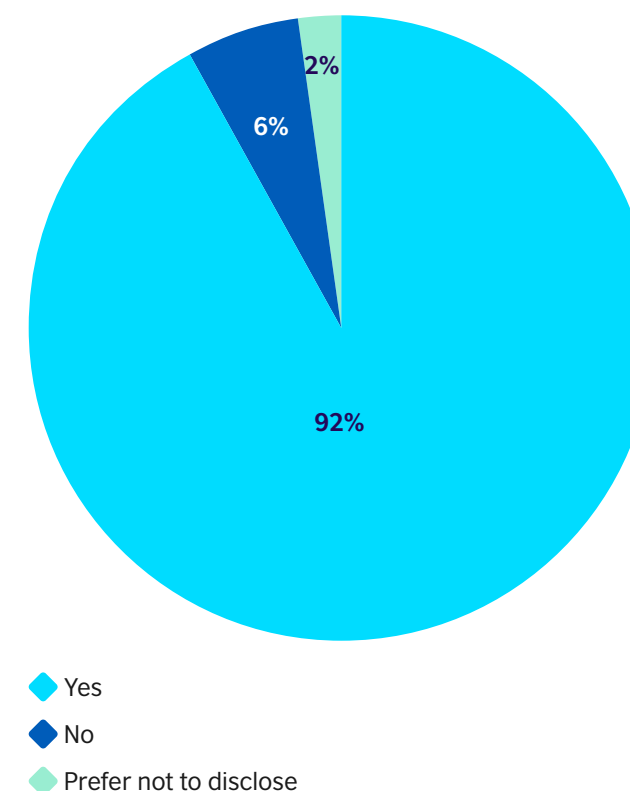
opportunities across various sectors.

“Unemployment is increased due to war and lack of job vacancies and opportunities.” Female, age 27.

“Demanding young people to have long years of work experience is the biggest cause of unemployment.” Female, age 30.

A significant majority of Sudanese youth report that the ongoing crisis has directly affected their ability to work or find jobs. According to survey data (see Figure 3846), 91.7 per cent of respondents state that their work situation has been adversely affected. This high percentage underscores the profound impact of the current socio-political and economic instability on job opportunities and the overall employment landscape.

Figure 46. Has the ongoing crisis directly impacted your business or/and ability to work or find work? (Total sample base n=1600)



This direct impact reflects the fragility of the job market in times of crisis and highlights the urgent need for resilience and stability in creating and maintaining employment opportunities.

Interviewees also point to the role of corruption in exacerbating unemployment. In many instances, the allocation of jobs is influenced more by nepotism and favouritism rather than merit and qualification. This systemic corruption demoralises qualified young job seekers and skews the employment landscape.

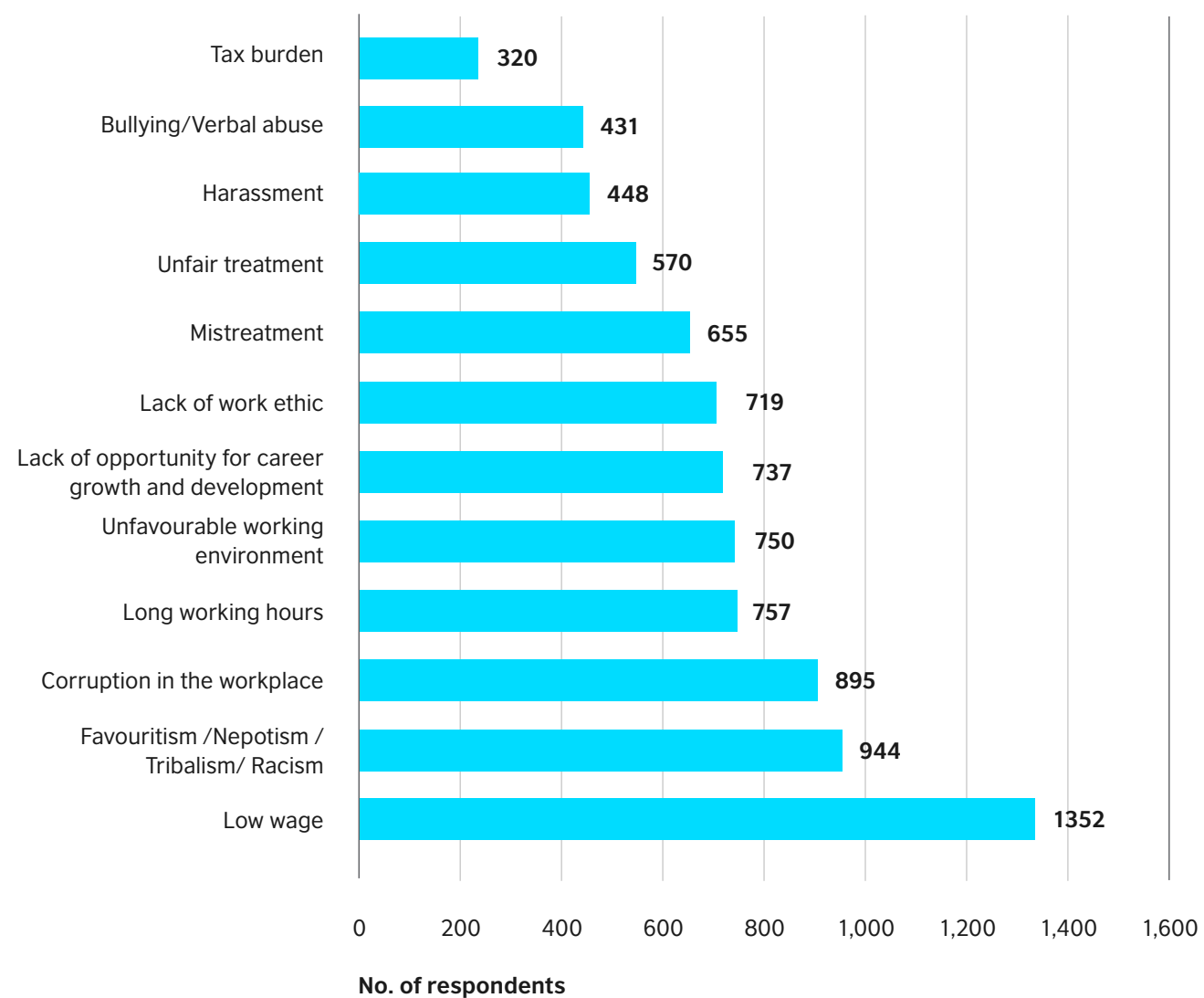
Discrimination against young people in the job market is another significant concern, with instances of preferential treatment of certain groups over others being mentioned in KIs.

“There is a lack of sufficient job opportunities and corruption in the employment policy.” Male, age 21.

“Yes, for example, there is tribal employment as soon as a tribe member comes to a powerful position, he works to employ members of his tribe.” Male, age 27.

This discrimination underlines the need for fair and transparent employment practices.⁴² What would you say are challenges faced by youth in employment?

Figure 47. What would you say are challenges faced by youth in employment?
(Total sample base n=1611, multiple choice)



But the path to employment in Sudan is also riddled with other challenges. These include education that does not meet employer demands, a work environment stifled by economic inflation and limited opportunities, and systemic issues such as the favouritism and lack of opportunity described above.

These challenges paint a picture of a job market that is not only limited in scope but also in its accessibility and fairness. Suggestions for improving the job market centre on better aligning education with market needs, opening areas for entrepreneurship, and creating policies that actively support youth employment.

“The problems are the work environment, inflation of the economy, lack of opportunities in the first place, and lack of desire and loss of hope for young people.”

Male, age 27.

“Linking job market requirements with the educational system and creating a partnership between educational institutions, practical institutions, and microfinance institutions.” **Male, age 26.**

“Creating employment strategies and policies to improve the labour market.” **Gender unspecified, age 32.**

To enhance youth employment, participants recommend policies that reconsider investment laws, focus on building institutions that employ youth, and ensure government institutions are obligated to employ and train young people.

“Sudan needs to reconsider the investment law in Sudan, specifically regarding start-ups.” **Male, age 28.**

“We need a policy obligating governmental institutions to employ young people and train, develop, and qualify them.” **Female, age 27.**

of these policies would be to create a more inclusive and supportive employment ecosystem for the youth.

Misalignment between education and the job market

Many young Sudanese express aspirations that often do not align with the available job opportunities in the country. This misalignment is attributed to the limited job market, which is not only constrained in terms of the number of opportunities but also in its scope and diversity.

“Achieving career ambition here is very difficult compared to the opportunities available in the country.” **Male, age 25.**

“Youth in Sudan don’t have the luxury of choosing what they want to do.” **Female, age 27.**

Another significant factor contributing to unemployment is the disconnection between the education system and the practical requirements of the job market. Many young Sudanese find that their educational qualifications do not equip them with the skills or knowledge needed by employers. This gap between academic learning and practical application leaves many graduates unprepared for the workforce.

The education system’s relevance to the job market in Sudan reveals a striking divide in perceptions between respondents of different educational levels. This disparity is particularly evident when comparing views on whether education effectively prepares youth for future careers.

Survey data indicates a noticeable difference in how education’s effectiveness is perceived, depending on the respondent’s education level (see Figures 48 to 51). Those with lower educational qualifications tend to view the education system as less relevant to the job market. In contrast, respondents with higher education levels generally see the system as having prepared them adequately for their careers.

Figure 48. How well do you think your education has prepared you for... (Partial sample of respondents whose highest educational attainment is Post Secondary, n=271)

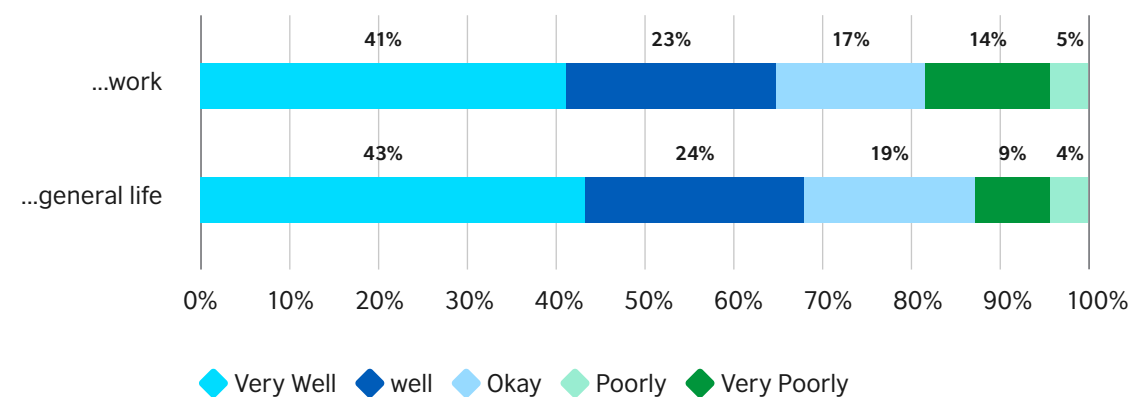


Figure 49. How relevant do you feel your education is to your current job? (Partial sample of respondents whose highest educational attainment is Post Secondary, n=271)

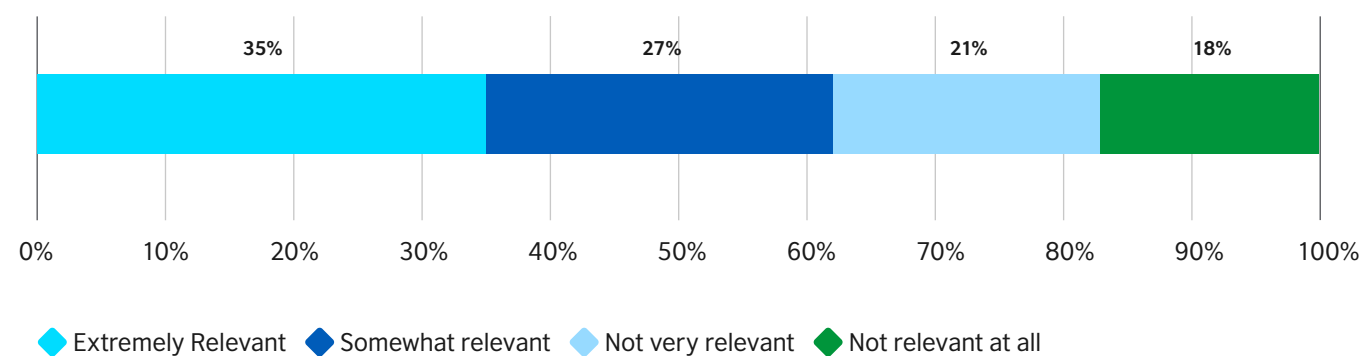


Figure 50. How well do you think your education has prepared you for... (Partial sample of respondents whose highest educational attainment is Upper Secondary and above, n=1320)

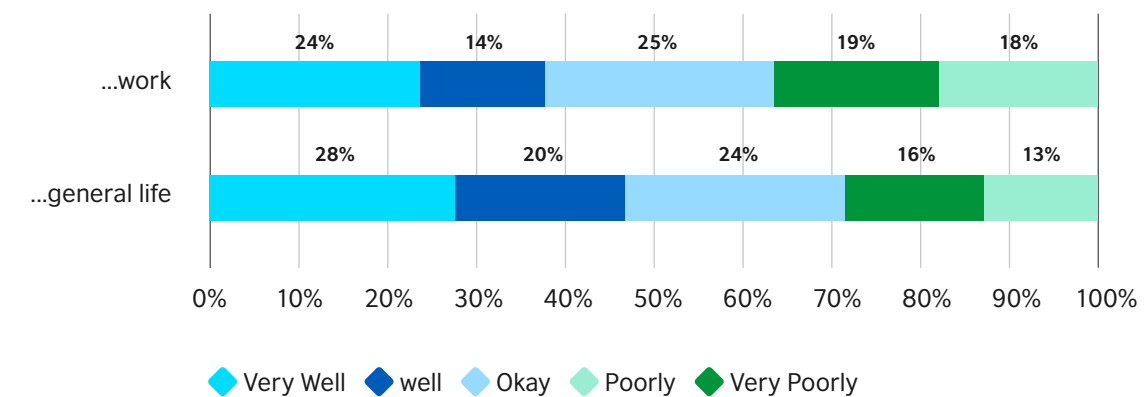
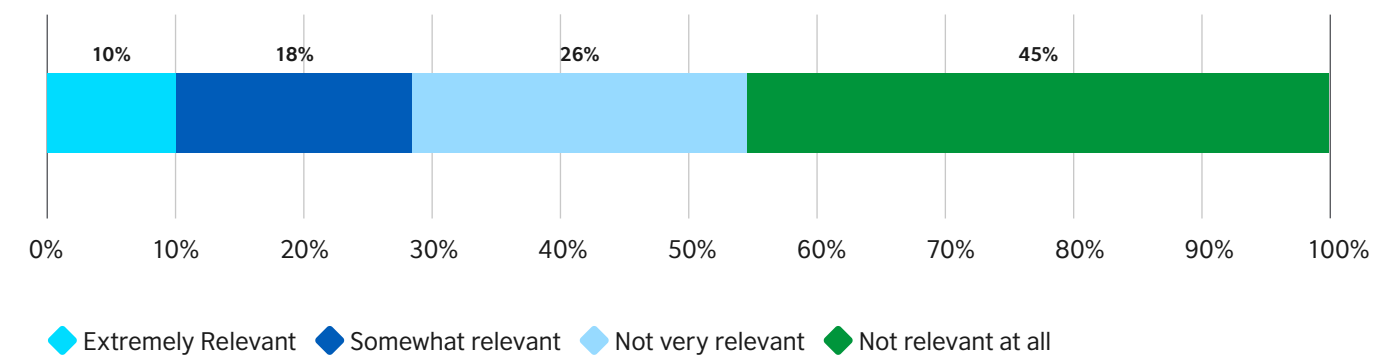


Figure 51. How relevant do you feel your education is to your current job? (Partial sample of respondents whose highest educational attainment is upper secondary and above, n=1320)



This variation in perception could be attributed to several factors. Firstly, higher education often provides more opportunities for practical skills development and exposure to real-world scenarios, which can lead to a more favourable view of education's relevance to employment. Secondly, the curriculum in higher education institutions may be more aligned with current job market demands, especially in specialised fields, compared to the more generalised curriculum of lower educational levels. And, thirdly, higher education typically offers better networking opportunities and access to resources that can aid in job placement, creating a more positive perception of education's utility.

"The educational curriculum is completely collapsed and outdated. The system is bad and does not help young people to prepare for the future due to the change in the educational ladder after the 1989 'The Bashir coup'" **Male, age 32.**

"The educational system does not keep pace with the current century, it's an old system." **Female, age 31.**

"The educational system does not motivate young people and prepare them for the future." **Male, age 26.**

"Education in Sudan is not keeping pace with current and professional life." **Female, age 30.**

"It's a bad system that does not prepare young people for the future, especially the educational system for primary and secondary schools." **Female, age 36.**

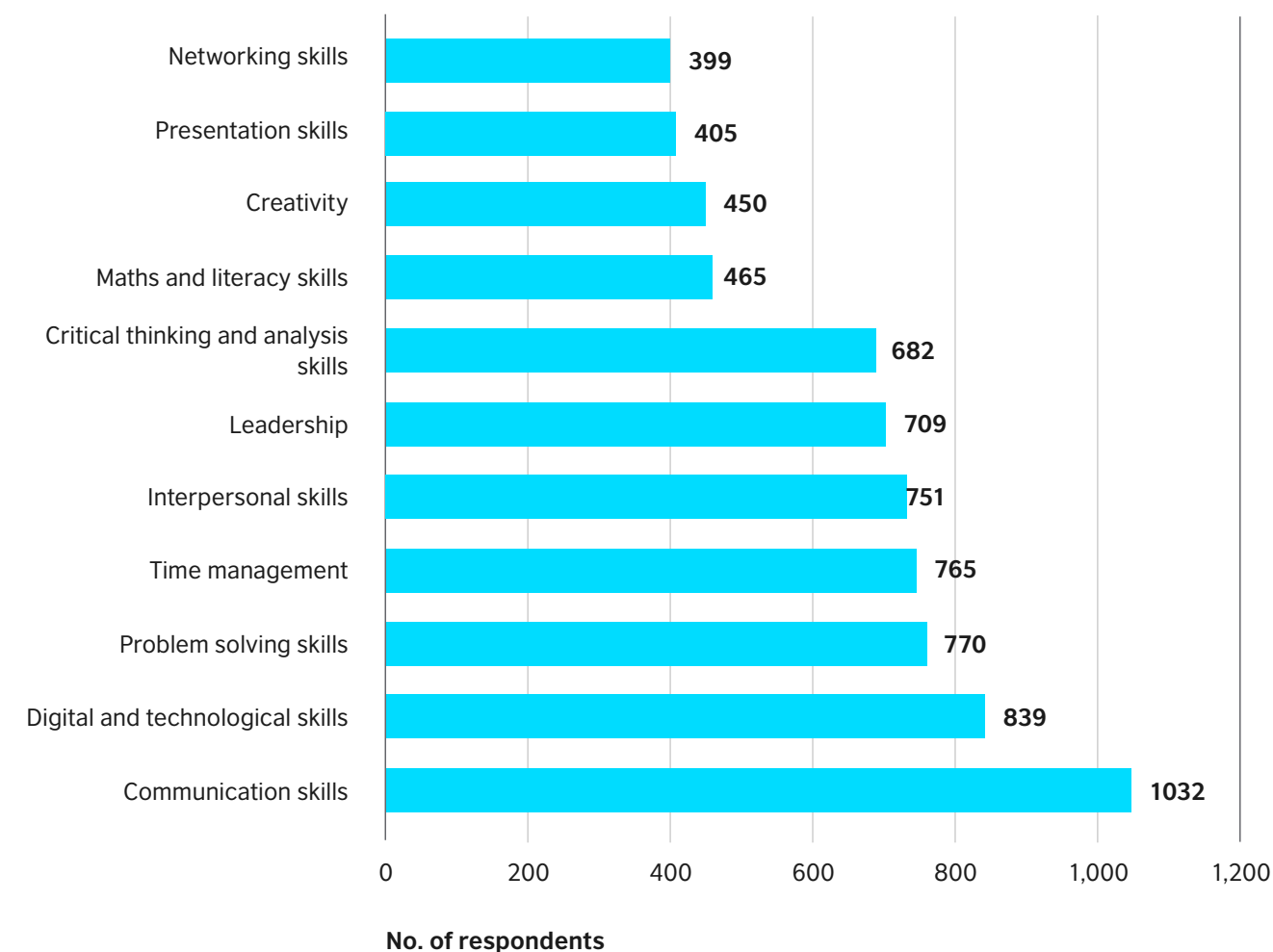
"Education does not prepare young people for the labour market, and it is far away from that." **Male, age 32.**

The contrasting perceptions of education's relevance to the job market between different educational levels in Sudan highlight a significant challenge. It is imperative to bridge this gap by tailoring educational programmes to be more inclusive, practical, and market-relevant, especially for those at lower educational levels. Such reforms are not just about enhancing educational outcomes but are crucial for the broader economic development of Sudan, ensuring a workforce that is well-prepared to meet the evolving demands of the job market.

One of the critical aspects of education is its relevance to the job market. Here, the gap between education and employment is glaringly apparent. Interviewees consistently remark that the current education system is not effectively preparing youth for future careers. This is further validated by survey respondents, a significant portion of whom disagree that education adequately prepares them for the job market. This disconnects points to an urgent need to align educational curriculums more closely with market demands and skills requirements.

The survey data offer insights into the skills that Sudanese youth perceive as valuable for employment. Communication skills, digital and technological proficiency, problem-solving, and time management are among the top skills valued by young people (see Figure 4252). 45. Skills: What general skills do you think are most important when it comes to employment?

Figure 52. What general skills do you think are most important when it comes to employment? (Total sample base n=1611, multiple choice)



These perceptions indicate an awareness of the changing demands of the modern job market and the skills necessary to navigate it successfully.

Tackling unemployment among Sudanese youth requires a multifaceted approach. Education system reforms to align with market needs, economic stabilisation for job creation, and anti-corruption measures in employment systems are critical steps that need to be taken. Addressing these areas will not only reduce unemployment rates but also enable Sudanese youth to fully participate in and contribute to the nation's growth and development.

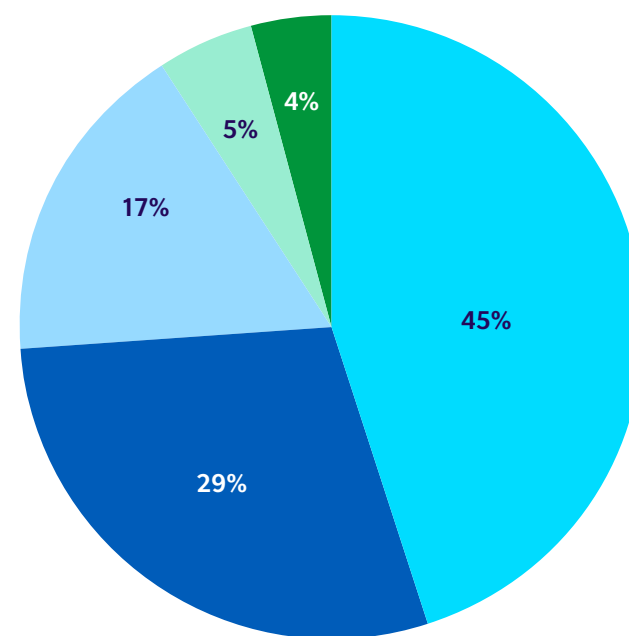
The landscape of entrepreneurship

The concept of entrepreneurship in Sudan carries a beacon of hope for the youth, especially against the backdrop of limited traditional employment opportunities. It stands not just as a channel for individual ambition and creativity but also as a potential cornerstone for addressing the nation's unemployment crisis. For many young Sudanese, entrepreneurship is not merely a career choice but a bold statement of self-sufficiency and an innovative contribution to the nation's economy.

"I worked as an employee for a period, but now I am a business owner and see that I have achieved a large part of what I sought." Male, age 26.

In navigating the terrain of self-employment and business creation, young entrepreneurs who transition from being employees to owning a business illustrate the aspirations and potential of many Sudanese youth. This narrative resonates with the 8.2 per cent of the respondents in the survey that are already self-employed or entrepreneurs, and a substantial 73.4 per cent that are very or somewhat interested in becoming entrepreneurs or starting a business (Figure 53). Such data underscores the entrepreneurial spirit that simmers among Sudanese youth, poised to transform the economic landscape.

Figure 53. How interested are you in starting your own business within the next 5 years? (Partial sample of respondents whose current status is not "self-employed / Entrepreneur", n=1434)



- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Don't know
- Uninterested
- Not at all interested

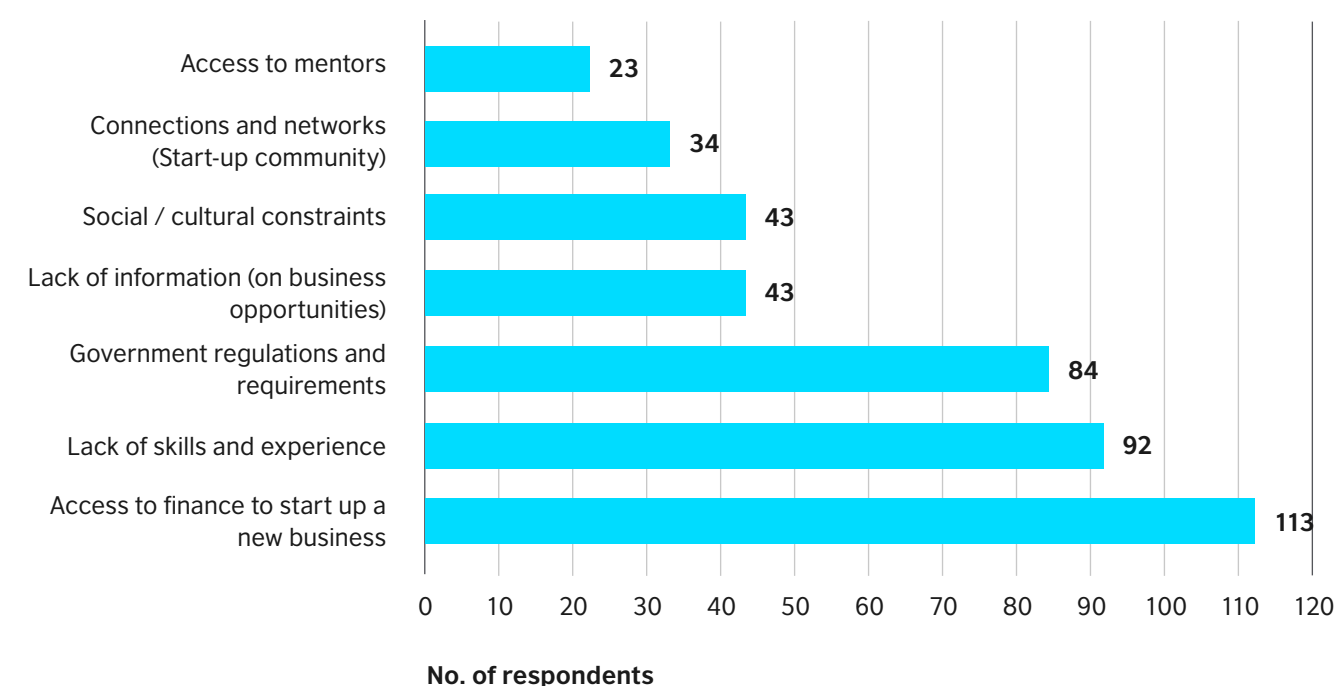
The crux of entrepreneurship's allure lies in its promise as a remedy to the job scarcity that plagues young professionals in Sudan. One 29-year-old male respondent remarks that supporting the youth through small business financing could well be the breakthrough needed to alleviate unemployment. Similarly, a 32-year-old female respondent suggests that strategic employment policies could revitalise the labour market. These insights point towards a larger narrative where entrepreneurship is not just a path but a pivotal force for economic revival.

However, the enthusiasm for entrepreneurship must be cautiously balanced with the recognition of the hurdles that young business aspirants face. The journey to becoming an entrepreneur in Sudan is rife with obstacles, from securing initial capital to navigating complex bureaucratic landscapes. The high interest in entrepreneurship among youth is a positive indicator,

but it also calls for a closer examination of the support systems that can convert this interest into sustainable business ventures.

The economic backdrop against which aspiring entrepreneurs operate is one marked by conflict and state instability, which inherently affects job availability and business opportunities, particularly in specific regions. This not only disrupts the market dynamics but also puts a strain on the resources and support systems that are essential for entrepreneurial success.

Figure 54. Which of the following do you think is the main barrier encountered in starting a business? (Partial sample of respondents whose current status is "self-employed / Entrepreneur", n=177, multiple choice)



One of the most salient obstacles is also the lack of supportive policies that underpin the entrepreneurial ecosystem (see Figure 54). As one 28-year-old male entrepreneur points out, the absence of conducive policies coupled with societal reluctance to embrace the entrepreneurial model hampers the ambitions of many budding business owners. This points to a critical gap between the entrepreneurial spirit of the youth and the structural frameworks needed to sustain it.

Financial backing also remains a hurdle, with many noting the struggle to secure the capital necessary to launch and sustain their ventures. A 27-year-old female entrepreneur cites capital as a primary hurdle, underscoring the financial tightrope that young business aspirants must walk. The challenges are compounded by the economic instability and precarious labour market conditions, as noted by a 25-year-old male respondent. These factors collectively paint a picture of a financial landscape that is not yet fully hospitable to the seeds of entrepreneurship.

“The lack of policies that help young entrepreneurs to work well, as well as societal acceptance of the idea of entrepreneurship.” **Male, age 28.**

“The main challenge for entrepreneurship is financing and capital.” **Female, age 27.**

“The instability of the labour market and political conditions of the country is the main barrier for starting a business at the moment.” **Male, age 25.**

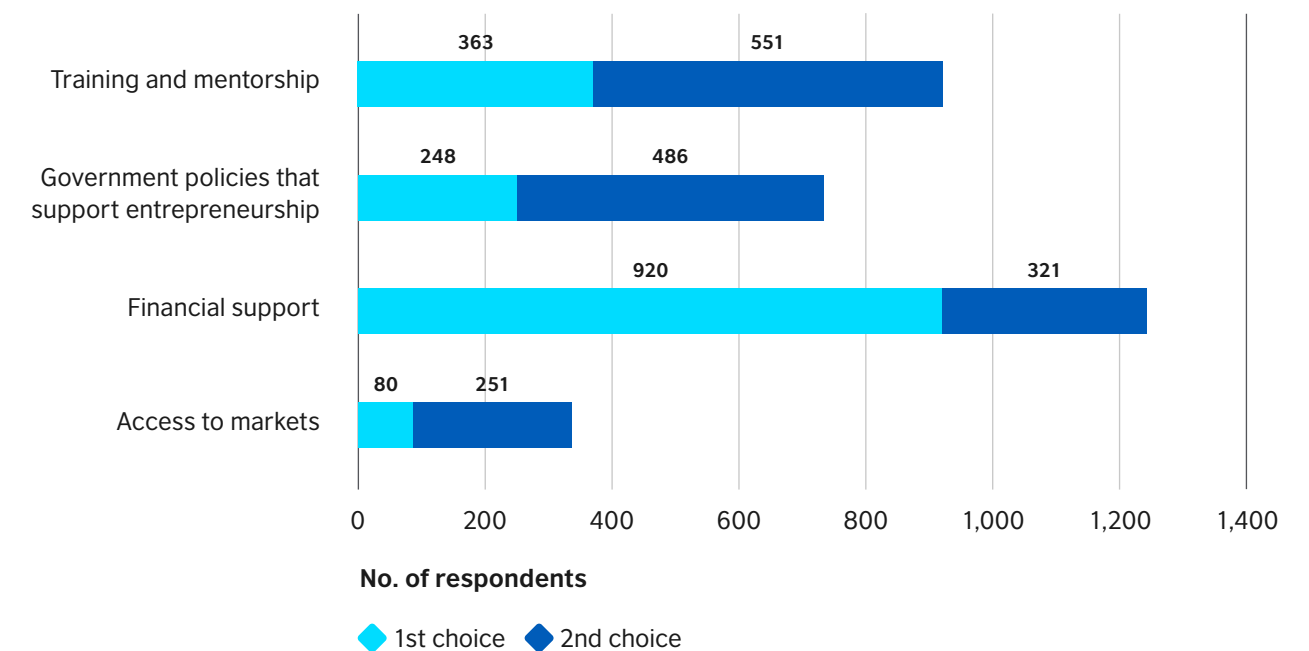
Other stakeholders interviewed, who work with youth employment and entrepreneurship, also emphasise that financing remains a monumental challenge, reflecting a broader issue of access to start-up capital that plagues many young entrepreneurs. This financial constraint is not just a hurdle but a blockade that prevents the realisation of innovative ideas and business growth.

The aspiration to forge an entrepreneurial path in Sudan is palpable among its youth. This burgeoning desire, however, calls for a scaffold of support that is currently missing, which young Sudanese are vociferously advocating for. The support they seek is multifaceted, encompassing community awareness, educational reform, and financial support, all of which are pivotal to nurturing the seeds of entrepreneurship.

Support is a cornerstone for budding entrepreneurs. It is evident from the youth’s perspective that entrepreneurship requires not just an idea but an ecosystem that encourages and sustains innovation. The need for community awareness is vital – understanding entrepreneurship’s value and its potential impact on society could foster a culture where such endeavours are more widely accepted and supported.

Moreover, educational alignment is vital. The infusion of entrepreneurial education into the curriculum can cultivate a generation of business-savvy leaders ready to innovate and drive economic growth. This educational pivot is more than a curriculum change – it is a vision for a future where education and business creation are inextricably linked.

Figure 55. What kind of support do you think is mostly needed to encourage more young people to start their own businesses in Sudan? (Total sample base n=1611)



Interviewed youth call for community awareness and education on entrepreneurship. A 28-year-old male entrepreneur suggests that fostering a societal understanding of entrepreneurship is crucial. This is a clarion call for initiatives that can bridge the awareness gap and foster a culture that not only understands but also values and supports entrepreneurial ventures.

Providing accessible financial support and technical resources is the linchpin in this entrepreneurial machine. For the dreams of Sudan’s youth to materialise into successful enterprises, they need not only the vision and the tenacity but also the means to execute their ideas.

The integration of technology in business cannot be overstated, as echoed by interviewed stakeholders from the field, who acknowledge the instrumental role of technology in marketing and communication, that entrepreneurs are eager to exploit. Yet, despite the importance of technology as a business enabler, the education system in Sudan has not yet aligned with the imperatives of entrepreneurship. The disconnect between the curriculum and entrepreneurial requirements suggests a pressing need to reform educational content and delivery to foster entrepreneurial competencies.

“What could really help is more community awareness policies regarding entrepreneurship.” **Male, age 28.**

“I hope to localise the idea of entrepreneurship in Sudan and introduce it into every Sudanese household.” **Male, age 28.**

“I see an interest among young people in entrepreneurship and I think it will have a great future in Sudan.” **Female, age 27.**



As Sudanese youth gaze at the horizon, their aspirations filled with entrepreneurial dreams, there is a palpable sense of potential. Yet, the path to transforming these dreams into tangible enterprises is strewn with obstacles. Overcoming these requires concerted efforts across various spectrums of society and governance.

The future of entrepreneurship in Sudan does indeed hold promise, but it is contingent upon creating an environment that supports and values the entrepreneurial spirit. It requires a shift in societal attitudes, where entrepreneurship is recognised as a driver of change and economic development. Public-private partnerships, alongside community initiatives, can provide a support network for young entrepreneurs.

The journey of entrepreneurship in Sudan is one of resilience and hope. With the right support and reforms, the nation's youth can channel their passion and creativity into successful businesses. This will not only bring about individual success stories but also contribute to the broader narrative of Sudan's economic rejuvenation. The entrepreneurial spirit, if nurtured and supported, has the potential to be a significant catalyst for change, propelling Sudan into a new era of economic prosperity and innovation.



The way forward

In response to the ongoing conflict and its profound impact on Sudanese society, the British Council's Next Generation programme sought to amplify the voices of Sudanese youth, exploring their aspirations and perspectives. The Action Workshops, conducted in two of Sudan's states (Dongola in Northern State and Port Sudan in Red Sea State), brought together youth representatives to discuss key findings from the Next Generation research and develop policy recommendations. The workshops aimed to:

- Facilitate direct input from youth to enhance the report's relevance and impact.
- Boost young people's confidence in articulating their concerns and insights at various levels, including policy discussions.
- Add a reflective layer to the research findings, enriching the final report with diverse youth perspectives.

The Dongola and Port Sudan Action Workshops offer profound insights into the aspirations, challenges, and recommendations of Sudanese youth. These workshops served as a platform for youth representatives to reflect on research findings, share their experiences, and contribute to an Outcome Declaration with policy recommendations. This document integrates insights from these workshops, proposing actionable strategies to empower Sudanese youth, address their aspirations, and tackle the multifaceted challenges they face.

Key findings and insights

Challenges and aspirations:

Youth participants from diverse backgrounds shared their journeys, affected by the conflict, and discussed the challenges impacting their lives, including economic instability, educational disruptions, and political exclusion. They expressed aspirations for a more inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous Sudan, emphasising the need for systemic reforms to unlock their potential.

Policy dialogue and Outcome Declarations:

Facilitated discussions led to the formulation of Outcome Declarations, encapsulating the youth's recommendations for policymakers. These declarations highlighted the urgency of addressing economic challenges, ensuring inclusive governance, and investing in youth empowerment as critical pathways to achieving the SDGs in Sudan.

Policy recommendations

1. Inclusive governance and youth participation:

Central to the recommendations is the call for inclusive governance and youth participation. Recognising the invaluable insights and experiences of young people, there is a pressing need to institutionalise mechanisms that ensure their active engagement in governance. This entails not only securing their representation in policy formulation and decision-making processes but also enhancing channels through which youth can contribute to public discourse and policy advocacy. The aim is to foster a culture of inclusivity that respects and integrates diverse perspectives.

2. Education and employment reforms:

A significant overhaul is advocated for education and employment. The youth underscore the importance of reforming the education system to better align with the evolving demands of the job market, emphasising the integration of technology, entrepreneurship, and skills development into curriculums. Coupled with this is the call for targeted employment programmes designed to bridge the educational output with the job market's needs, placing a premium on innovation and sustainability.

3. Digital infrastructure and access:

Digital infrastructure and access emerge as pivotal areas for development, with an emphasis on extending digital connectivity to rural and underserved areas to promote equitable access to technology and the internet. National digital literacy campaigns are proposed to arm the youth with the skills necessary for thriving in the digital age, thereby encouraging innovation and digital entrepreneurship.

4. Gender equality and social inclusion:

Addressing gender equality and social inclusion is another cornerstone of the recommendations. Policies and programmes aimed at eliminating gender disparities and dismantling social barriers are deemed essential for empowering youth, especially young women, to achieve their full potential. The adoption of gender-sensitive approaches in all youth-oriented policies is advocated to ensure equal opportunities for participation and empowerment.

5. Economic empowerment and entrepreneurship:

Economic empowerment and entrepreneurship are identified as key drivers for Sudan's future. The recommendations call for creating a supportive ecosystem for youth entrepreneurship, including access to finance, mentorship, and markets. Investing in sectors with high potential for youth employment and entrepreneurship, such as renewable energy, agriculture, and technology, is prioritised.

6. Peacebuilding and community engagement:

Peacebuilding and community engagement are highlighted as critical for fostering social cohesion. Integrating peacebuilding initiatives into youth programmes, emphasising conflict resolution, and supporting initiatives that encourage collaboration across diverse backgrounds aim to promote unity and reconciliation.

7. Global support and solidarity:

Lastly, the role of the global community in supporting Sudan is underscored as both crucial and mutually beneficial. International support through humanitarian aid, economic partnerships, and diplomatic engagement is crucial for Sudan's stabilisation and growth. A stable Sudan, by contributing to regional security and countering the risks of religious radicalisation, plays a vital role in global peace, security, and prosperity. The international community's investment in Sudan is framed not just as aid, but as a strategic investment in a stable, secure, and prosperous global future.

The Next Generation Sudan 2024 Report not only presents a nuanced understanding of the lives, aspirations, and challenges of Sudanese youth but also serves as a testament to their role as architects of a new era. As Sudan stands at a crossroads, the collective resolve, resilience, and vision of its youth promise a future of renewal and growth. It is a future that cherishes diversity, fosters innovation, and upholds the principles of peace and inclusive development.

By adopting and implementing these comprehensive policy recommendations, stakeholders can significantly contribute to empowering Sudanese youth, addressing their needs and aspirations, and harnessing their potential as drivers of positive change in Sudan. A collaborative approach, involving government, civil



society, international partners, and youth representatives, will be crucial for the successful implementation of these recommendations. A robust monitoring and evaluation framework should be established to assess progress, incorporating feedback mechanisms to adapt strategies in response to emerging challenges and opportunities.

The Action Workshops in Dongola and Port Sudan vividly illustrated the dynamic interplay of challenges and aspirations among Sudanese youth. The insights and recommendations derived from these discussions underscore the imperative for a multi-faceted approach to policymaking and programme design. Addressing the systemic barriers to youth empowerment, ensuring inclusive governance, and investing in the potential of Sudanese youth are crucial steps towards fostering an environment where youth aspirations can flourish. This case study, rooted in participatory research and dialogue, highlights the path forward in harnessing the resilience and innovation of Sudan's youth to shape a more prosperous, stable, and inclusive Sudan.

Conclusion

As the Next Generation Sudan 2024 Report concludes, it becomes increasingly apparent that Sudanese youth navigate through an intricate landscape marked by resilience, hope, and persistent aspiration against a backdrop of extensive challenges. This report sheds light on the rich, diverse experiences, identities, and ambitions of a demographic that not only seeks survival but actively endeavours to mould Sudan's future toward greater inclusivity and diversity. Nonetheless, the looming threats of tribalism and the politicisation of native administration pose substantial risks, potentially veering these democratic aspirations off course.¹⁹

The report vividly portrays the indomitable spirit of Sudanese youth, who, amidst significant socio-political upheavals, economic adversities, and global phenomena like climate change, have showcased an exceptional capacity for adaptation and perseverance. Their significant involvement in key national milestones, notably the December Revolution of 2018, and their sustained engagement through periods of transition and recent conflicts, underscore a generation deeply invested in democracy, peace, and social justice.

As pillars of the nation, Sudanese youth represent the beacon of hope and determination for a more inclusive, democratic, and prosperous Sudan. Their participation in socio-political movements, entrepreneurial endeavours, and educational pursuits highlights their vital role in propelling Sudan forward. Yet, their path is strewn with hurdles such as systemic discrimination, unemployment, and educational obstacles, accentuating the critical need for comprehensive policy action. Moreover, a generation finds itself at a pivotal juncture, wrestling with the potential disillusionment in the face of stagnant democratic transition. The concern that democracy might seem an elusive ideal rather than an attainable goal raises fears that in their quest for basic security and safety, young people might lean toward autocratic regimes if they promise stability – posing a significant challenge to balancing the immediate need for security with the long-term aim of democratic governance.

To leverage the immense potential of Sudanese youth, it is paramount for policymakers and stakeholders to focus on inclusive governance, invest in education, and initiate economic reforms tailored to the needs of the youth. Combatting discrimination, boosting digital literacy, and creating an environment that nurtures entrepreneurship and political engagement are crucial steps toward empowerment. Additionally, recognising and addressing the challenges posed by regional disparities and advocating for equal opportunities are essential for forging a united and progressive Sudan.

The aspirations revealed through the study are vast and significant, spanning educational achievements, economic stability, and a society that values human rights and diversity. The youth's drive toward entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and global mobility highlights their eagerness to seize the opportunities and navigate the challenges of a swiftly changing world. Yet, these ambitions often lie in the shadow of systemic issues like discrimination, political instability, and economic difficulty, complicating the journey towards their achievement.

¹⁹ The concept of "Sudanese native administration" refers to a traditional system of local governance that operates alongside the formal state apparatus in Sudan. It is based on customary laws and practices and is led by tribal chiefs and local leaders who have authority over certain regions and communities. Historically, the native administration has played a significant role in maintaining social order and resolving disputes within communities. However, the politicization of this system can lead to increased tribalism and division, affecting the country's progress towards unity and democratic governance.



References

Abazeed, A. (2021). Is it one Nile? Civic engagement and hydropolitics in the Eastern Nile Basin: the case of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. Leiden University Scholarly Publications.

Africanews. (2022). Growing number of African youth want to move abroad – Survey. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from <https://www.africanews.com/2022/06/13/growing-number-of-african-youth-want-to-move-abroad-survey/>

Alcaide, J. C. N. Meyer, J. Greco, S. & Ahmed, S. A. A. M. (2023). Youth, Training and Labor Insertion in Sudan: Lessons from the INSO Project Introduction. Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education.

Avdeenko, A. & Gilligan, M. (2014). International Interventions to Build Social Capital: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Sudan. American Political Science Review, 109, 427-449.

Awad, R. (2022). The power of non-violence: Silmiya & the Sudanese Revolution. Conflict, Security & Development, 1-21.

Bashri, M. (2021). Networked movements and the circle of trust: civil society groups as agents of change in Sudan. Information, Communication & Society, 470-489.

Bates, L. Luster, T. Johnson, D. J. Qin, D. & Rana, M. (2013). Sudanese Refugee Youth: Resilience Among Undefended Children. IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM), 167-183.

Belayachi, D. (2023). 'Addicted after taking it once': How meth is devastating Sudanese youth. Observers – France 24. Retrieved February 8, 2023, from <https://observers.france24.com/en/africa/20230127-sudan-drug-addiction-meth-ice-rehab-centres>

Bernal, V. (1999). Migration, Modernity and Islam in Rural Sudan. Retrieved from <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer211/migration-modernity-islam-rural-sudan>

British Council. (2020). The state of social enterprise in Sudan. Retrieved from <https://www.britishcouncil.org/society/social-enterprise/reports/state-social-enterprise>

CFYE (Challenge Fund for Youth Employment). (2021). Scoping Report Sudan 2021. Retrieved from <https://fundforyouthemployment.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Scoping-Report-Sudan-2021-Challenge-Fund-for-Youth-Employment.pdf>

Davis, A. & Gibson-Light, M. (2020). Difference and punishment: Ethno-political exclusion, colonial institutional legacies, and incarceration. Punishment & Society, 22, 27-3. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/>

Ekman, M. (2019). Anti-immigration and racist discourse in social media. European Journal of Communication, 34, 606-618. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/5f868a92201288552c766afddaf8d348a6fc6dd0>

El-Battahani, A. (2022, December). Youth in Sudan: FES MENA Youth Study: Results Analysis. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/sudan/20120.pdf>

el-Battahani, A. H. (2023). The Dilemma of Political Transition in Sudan: An Analytical Approach. Retrieved from: <https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/dilemma-political-transition-sudan-analytical-approach>

El-Sadig, S. Mohamed, N. Ahmed, E. Alayeb, M. A. Tahir, L. H. Edris, A. Ali, Y. Siddig, E. & Ahmed, A. (2021). Obstacles faced by healthcare providers during COVID-19 pandemic in Sudan. Journal of Infection in Developing Countries.

ElTayib, A. (2017). Changing Customs of the Sudan. Sudan: New Life Printing Press.

Farag, A. I. (2020). Reflections on challenges related to youth, education and work in Sudan. In J. van der Linden, A. Rodrigues-Vasse, M. Kopp, B. Abraham, & F. Dier (Eds.), Youth, education and work in (post)-conflict areas (pp. 155-170). Groningen: Globalisation Studies Groningen, University of Groningen.

Fadul, N. et al. (2021). Re-opening Sudan: The Balance Between Maintaining Daily Living and Avoiding the Next Peak of COVID-19. Current Tropical Medicine Reports, Topical Collection on Tropical Diseases in Conflict Regions, 231-237.

Hamada. (2019). Blog from Sudan: The Sudanese Revolution: A fight for LGBTIQ+ Rights? CHR Michelsen Institute (CMI). Retrieved February 10, from <https://www.cmi.no/publications/7200-blog-from-sudan-the-sudanese-revolution-a-fight-for-lgbtqi-rights>

Khalifa, A. (2021). Sudan's Transition: Challenges and Opportunities. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pdf/view/1154/en>

Lindsay, Sally & Fuentes, Kristina & Tomas, Vanessa & Hsu, Shaelynn. (2022). Ableism and Workplace Discrimination Among Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362749445_Ableism_and_Workplace_Discrimination_Among_Youth_and_Young_Adults_with_Disabilities_A_Systematic_Review

Mahdi, M. (2022). Including young people in formal transitional processes is necessary to bring long-term peace to Sudan. Institute For Security Studies. Retrieved February 8, 2023, from <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/youth-are-vital-for-sudans-post-coup-stability>

Mbah, P., Nwangwu, C., & Ugwu, S. (2019). Contentious elections, political exclusion, and challenges of national integration in Nigeria. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311886.2019.1565615>

Malik, S. I. (2022). Sudan's December revolution of 2018: the ecology of Youth Connective and Collective Activism. *Information, Communication & Society*, 1495-1510.

Mansour, I. F. & Omer, A. (2019). The antecedents of entrepreneurial intention among Sudanese University Students. *The 2nd African Scientific, Research & Innovation Council Congress (ASRIC)*, (p.14). Abuja.

Mohamud, M. & Verhoeven, H. (2016). Re-engineering the state, awakening the nation: Dams, Islamist modernity and nationalist politics in Sudan. *Water alternatives*, 9, 182-202.

Mosab, A. O. Diya, A. & Omran, M. A. (2022). Sudan's Youth Bulge: Challenges, Opportunities, and Aspirations. *ERF Working Paper Series*.

Muller, B. Munslow, B. & O'dempsey, T. [2017]. When community reintegration is not the best option: interethnic violence and the trauma of parental loss in South Sudan. *The International Journal of Health Planning and Management*, 32(1), 91-109. [online] Available at: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/a15b7b6bcf2cd010094d1e68e74db9a11caab131> [Accessed 18 January 2024]

Mustafa, O. (2023). The Economic Impact of the Coronavirus [COVID-19] Pandemic on Sudan's Foreign Trade. *Journal of World Economy*.

Ndiloseh, M. & Benaglia, M. (2022). The 2020 Juba Peace Agreement: A Critical Analysis of the Building Blocks for Democratic Elections in Sudan. *African Conflict & Peacebuilding Review*, 12, 195-215.

Nur, B. M. (2023). Religion, Politics, and Society: The Role of Political Islam in the Sudanese Revolution of December 2018 and Its Aftermath. *Modern Africa: Politics, History and Society*.

OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs). (2024). Sudan. Retrieved February 9, 2024, from <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/sudan/>

One Earth. (2022, February 2). Q&A with Nisreen Elsaïm. Retrieved from [https://www.cell.com/one-earth/pdf/S2590-3322\(22\)00279-2.pdf](https://www.cell.com/one-earth/pdf/S2590-3322(22)00279-2.pdf)

Oxford Analytica (2021), "Africa may experience a new wave of coups", *Expert Briefings*. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1108/OXAN-DB264945>

PeaceTech Lab, 2020. Social Media and Conflict in Sudan: A Lexicon of Hate Speech Terms. [online] Available at: https://44f19619-9596-42c0-857e-238ff26bc650.filesusr.com/ugd/b476a0_2448475087824cbe8f355836421d89bf.pdf [Accessed 18 January 2024]

Republic of the Sudan, Federal Ministry of Education. (2019). General Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018/19 – 2022/23. Retrieved from <https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2019-01-sudan-general-education-sector-strategic-plan-2018-2023.pdf>.

Rights for Peace, (2021). Discrimination and Hate Speech Fuel Violence in Sudan: Report and UPR Submission. [online] Available at: <https://www.rightsforpeace.org/post/rights-for-peace-submits-a-universal-periodic-review-report-on-sudan> [Accessed 18 January 2024]

Reuters. (2021, November 22). Explainer: Sudan's political transition in the balance. Reuters. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/sudans-political-transition-balance-2021-11-22/>

Seregichev, S. Yu. (2023). SUDANESE TRANSIT 2019-2022. FROM AL-BASHIR'S DICTATORSHIP TO AL-BURHAN'S DICTATORSHIP? RSUH/RGGU Bulletin. *Series Political Sciences. History. International Relations*.

Shaaeldin, E. (2022). Security Sector Reform SSR: an Approach for Sustainable Peace and Restore Security in Transitional-Democratizing Sudan. *International Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ijrssi.org/index.php/ijrssi/article/view/167/131>

Sudan's Youth and the Transition: Priorities, Perceptions and Attitudes. (2021). The Carter Center.

Sutton, J. (2018). Hun Sen's Consolidation of Personal Rule and the Closure of Political Space in Cambodia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs*, 40, 173-195. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/0a923523f25c0cbbf521ae4ab52618641aa8574d>

Thiong'o, M. N. & Baba, S. (2019). Access to Land and Youths Participation in Agribusiness in Africa: a case of Sudan. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*, 9-18.

World Bank. (2019). The Labor Market and Poverty in Sudan.

World Bank. (2021). Towards a more Inclusive Economy: Understanding the Barriers Sudanese Women and Youth Face in Accessing Employment Opportunities.

World Bank. (2022). Socio-Emotional Drivers of Youth Unemployment: The Case of Higher Educated Youth in Sudan.

World Bank Group. (2020). Women Empowerment for Poverty and Inequality Reduction in Sudan. *Poverty and Equity Global Practice*.

WPP. (2022). United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. *World Population Prospects 2022*. Retrieved February 9, 2024, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/727308/average-age-of-the-population-in-sudan/>

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund). (2023). Education in Crisis Following Sudan Conflict 2023. Retrieved from <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/13a65d0eb5af45d7b3b25da25cfe0d59/print>

Zere, A. T. (2020). *Social Media in Exile: Disruptors and Challengers from Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan*. Ohio University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

The Next Generation series is part of the British Council's commitment to exploring youth voice and choice. It aims to understand youth attitudes and aspirations, amplify youth voice and support better youth policymaking. The reports focus on young people in countries experiencing a period of significant change, to ensure that young people's voices are heard and their interests represented in decisions that will have lasting implications for their lives.

www.britishcouncil.org/research-insight

Conflict Management Consulting (CMC), established in 2014, specializes in monitoring, evaluation, and research services in fragile, conflict, and post-conflict settings. With headquarters in Brussels and a staff presence in Washington DC, Istanbul, Abuja, Kigali, Berlin and Vienna, the organization has a global team and network of senior consultants spread across operational regions in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Africa, and South Asia. Among the key services CMC provides are project evaluations, impact assessments, MEL frameworks and research services, conflict analysis, advice in conflict sensitivity and large-scale quantitative surveys all aimed at creating sustainable solutions in challenging environments. The organization also offers high-level advisory services, utilizing data-driven strategies and innovative tools in peacebuilding, stabilization, CVE (Countering Violent Extremism), and migration. CMC is dedicated to enhancing local capabilities and conflict sensitivity in the regions where we work by mentoring community partners, ensuring interventions are effective and locally relevant. Additionally, CMC strengthens these efforts by incorporating advanced data analytics, interactive dashboards, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) into their service offerings. This combination of local knowledge and technological tools enables CMC to deliver more impactful interventions tailored to the specific needs of conflict-affected areas. For more details, visit their website: **www.cmc-consulting.org**