BRITISH COUNCIL

FUTURE LEADERS CONNECT

The policy priorities of young people in 2018
#FutureLeadersConnect

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

Future Leaders Connect is the British Council's global network of emerging policy leaders.

We identify exceptional young leaders from around the world through a rigorous application process, where they demonstrate their potential to make substantial change in their countries and beyond. Future Leaders Connect members come together in the UK for an advanced policy and leadership development programme in Cambridge, a two-day forum in the UK Houses of Parliament and visits to 10 Downing Street and major policy institutions, as well as opportunities to discuss their policy visions with inspirational world leaders. We are working with them for the long term to support their ongoing development and ability to make change through shaping policy.

In 2018, almost 16,000 people from around the world applied to join Future Leaders Connect. As part of the application process, the young leaders were asked to identify the policy issues they most care about and existing global leaders that they most admired. This short report summarises their responses.

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POLICY PRIORITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Respondents were asked the following question: *Which of the following major global issues is of biggest concern to you?* They were asked to pick three from a pre-existing list. The list was compiled from the most popular policy priorities identified by the almost 11,000 applicants to the programme in 2017.

The policy issues they were asked to choose from

- Access to education
- Youth issues, youth opportunities
- Sustainability/climate change/environment
- Economic inequality and poverty
- Skills and education for entrepreneurship
- Gender equality, women and girls
- Education for women and girls
- Human rights
- Health
- Corruption
- Peace, conflict and security
- Political leadership
- Economic growth
- Technology
- Food and water
- Child development, children's rights
- Terrorism
- International development
- Migration, borders and refugees
- Cross-sector collaboration
- Rural issues and agriculture
- Corporate responsibility
- Crime
- Disability rights
- Transnational co-operation
- Transport and/or infrastructure
- Urbanisation
- Housing and homelessness
- Faith, interfaith dialogue and engagement
- Demography and population change
- Tolerance, cohesion and diversity
- Literacy
- Justice and the law
- Language education
- Other

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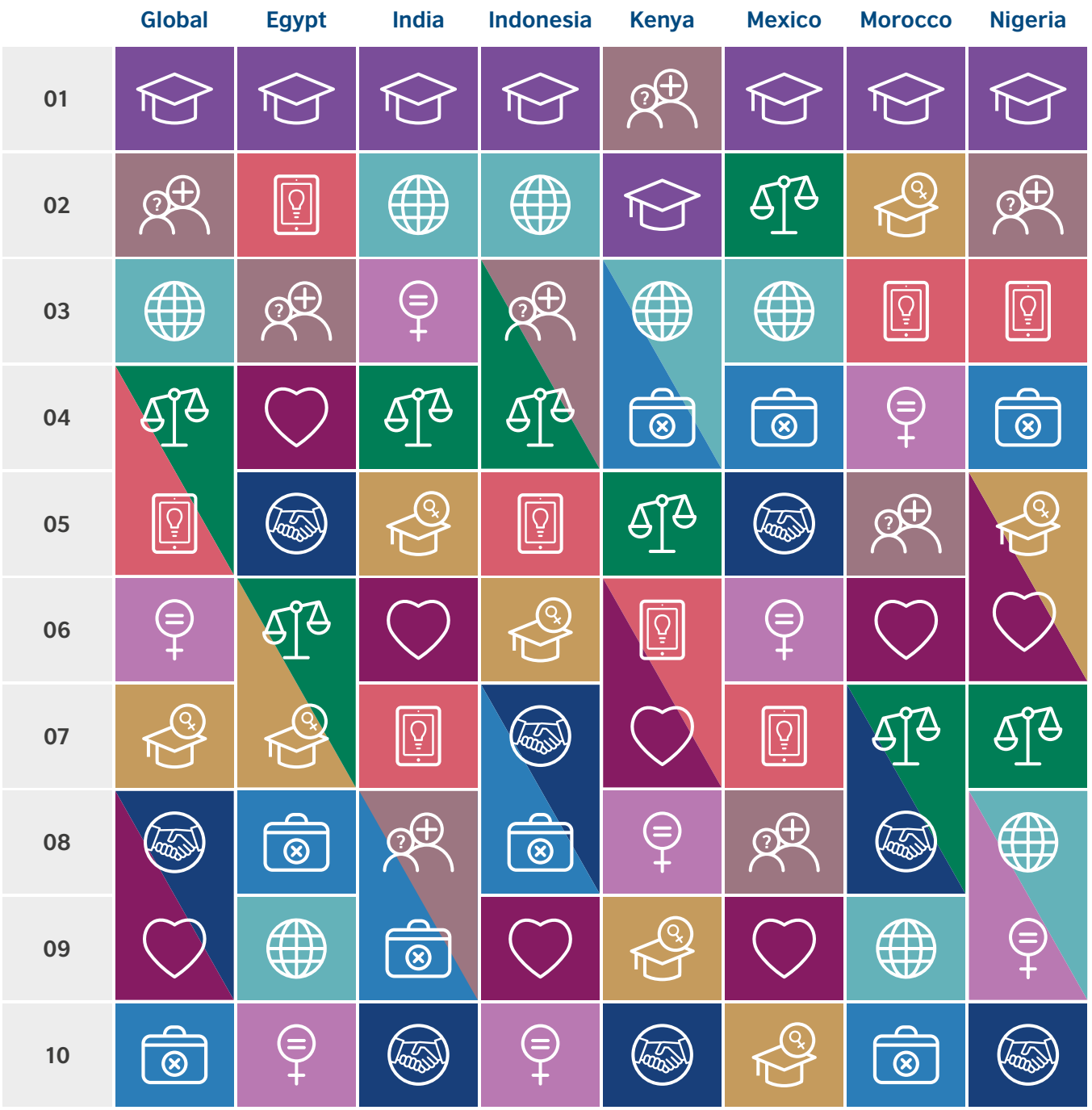
THE ISSUES YOUNG PEOPLE CARE ABOUT



Sustainability, climate change and the environment

Skills and education for entrepreneurship

Which major global issue is of biggest concern to you?

2018 top ten global results

Access to education	**31%**
Youth issues, youth opportunities	**20%**
Sustainability, climate change and the environment	**18%**
Poverty and economic inequality	**17%**
Skills and education for entrepreneurship	**17%**
Gender equality	**16%**
Education for women and girls	**15%**
Human rights	**14%**
Health	**14%**
Corruption	**13%**

The 2017 results were markedly similar. Education, sustainability, climate change and the environment, issues affecting young people, gender equality and economic development all featured highly on the list of issues selected by young people.

2017 top ten global results

Education	**18%**
Sustainability, climate change and the environment	**16%**
Youth opportunities	**10%**
Security	**10%**
Economic development	**8%**
Inequality and poverty	**8%**
Gender equality	**7%**
Tolerance and diversity	**7%**
Health	**7%**
Political leadership	**6%**

ALL EYES ON EDUCATION POLICY

Education was the most popular policy area by far as shown over two years of the research. This is especially clear when the various policy areas linked to education are combined.

Access to education

Thirty-one per cent of respondents globally selected access to education. This was most popular in every country except Kenya, Tunisia and the UK. In 2017, 72 per cent of the young people who selected education as the most significant policy issue selected some form of 'education provision'.
The 2018 responses show that access to education is particularly important to young people aged 18–21, the age group most likely to be attending, or not accessing, higher education.

Skills and education for entrepreneurship

Seventeen per cent of respondents selected skills and education for entrepreneurship, the sixth most popular policy area. This was particularly popular across North Africa and Nigeria. Those aged 26–35 are most likely to value this area, perhaps corresponding to the age young people leave higher education and join, or struggle to join, the workforce.

Priorities compared by age and gender

Which of the following major global issue is of biggest concern to you? Compared by gender of respondent.

		Gender	
	Overall	**Male**	**Female**
Skills and education for entrepreneurship	17%	20%	14%
Education for women and girls	15%	10%	21%
Gender equality, women and girls	16%	7%	26%

Which of the following major global issue is of biggest concern to you? Compared by age of respondent.

		Age	
	Overall	**22–25**	**26–30**
Access to education	31%	33%	27%
Education for women and girls	15%	15%	15%
Gender equality, women and girls	16%	17%	15%
Skills and education for entrepreneurship	17%	15%	20%
Economic inequality and poverty	17%	16%	20%

Education for women and girls

Fifteen per cent of respondents selected education for women and girls, the seventh most popular policy area. However, there were significant differences between the countries where this was very popular, such as Morocco and Pakistan, and the places where this was not seen as such a priority, such as Mexico and Indonesia. There was a significant difference in the views of male and female respondents, with women globally twice as likely to select this as a priority issue when compared to men.

Other education policy areas

Literacy was selected by six per cent and language education by five per cent of respondents.

COUNTRY BY COUNTRY TOP POLICY AREAS

	Most popular	Interesting findings
Egypt	32% – Access to education 23% – Skills and education for entrepreneurship 21% – Youth issues, youth opportunities	Entrepreneurship education, health and human rights were significantly more popular in Egypt than the global average while climate change and gender equality were substantially less popular.
India	33% – Access to education 32% – Sustainability/climate change/ environment 21% – Gender equality, women and girls	In India climate change was seen as a particularly important issue, selected by 32 per cent compared to the 18 per cent global average. Youth issues, however, were chosen less frequently by our respondents from India.
Indonesia	38% – Access to education 18% – Sustainability/climate change/ environment 17% – Youth issues, youth opportunities 17% – Economic inequality and poverty	Indonesian respondents selected gender equality much less frequently than the global average, with their other responses following the pattern of global averages more closely.
Kenya	34% – Youth issues, youth opportunities 25% – Access to education 22% – Sustainability/climate change/ environment 22% – Corruption	In Kenya youth issues were dramatically more significant, and were the most popular selection in Kenya. Corruption was also selected much more frequently than the global average.
Mexico	32% – Access to education 29% – Economic inequality and poverty 24% – Sustainability/climate change/ environment	In Mexico, youth issues, health and education for women and girls were all chosen less frequently than the global average. Climate change, corruption and economic inequality were seen as much more important than the average.
Morocco	45% – Access to education 27% – Education for women and girls 23% – Skills and education for entrepreneurship	Access to education, gender equality and education for women and girls were chosen significantly more frequently in Morocco than the global average. Corruption and climate change were seen as much less important.

	Most popular	Interesting findings
Nigeria	32% – Access to education 28% – Youth issues, youth opportunities 25% – Skills and education for entrepreneurship	Education for entrepreneurship, youth issues and corruption were more significant to respondents from Nigeria than the global average.
North America	29% – Access to education 24% – Economic inequality and poverty 19% – Sustainability/climate change/ environment 19% – Gender equality, women and girls	Economic inequality was selected more frequently in North America than the average, with corruption and youth issues less frequent than the average.
Pakistan	36% – Access to education 24% – Education for women and girls 19% – Human rights	Education for women and girls was seen as more important than the global average, but gender equality followed the global pattern more closely. Youth issues were selected much less frequently than the average.
Tunisia	26% – Youth issues, youth opportunities 25% – Access to education 23% – Skills and education for entrepreneurship 23% – Human rights	Youth issues were the most frequently chosen issue in Tunisia. Human rights were also more frequently selected than the global average with economic inequality and health significantly less popular than the global average.
UK	26% – Gender equality, women and girls 25% – Access to education 21% – Economic inequality and poverty	In the UK gender equality was the most popular issue, with corruption much less popular than the global average.

INSPIRING GLOBAL LEADERS

	Canada	Egypt	India	Indonesia	Kenya	Mexico	Morocco	Nigeria
01	Barack Obama 15%	Nelson Mandela 9%	Barack Obama 16%	Barack Obama 16%	Barack Obama 35%	Malala Yousafzai 10%	Barack Obama 13%	Barack Obama 22%
02	Angela Merkel 10%	Barack Obama 4%	Mahatma Gandhi 11%	Soekarno 8%	Nelson Mandela 12%	Nelson Mandela 10%	Nelson Mandela 10%	Nelson Mandela 15%
03	Nelson Mandela 8%	Mahatma Gandhi 4%	Nelson Mandela 10%	Nelson Mandela 7%	Michelle Obama 5%	Barack Obama 10%	Justin Trudeau 5%	Donald Trump 5%
04	Malala Yousafzai 6%	Angela Merkel 4%	Narendra Modi 9%	Prophet Muhammad 5%	Kofi Annan 3%	Angela Merkel 7%	Steve Jobs 4%	Queen Elizabeth II 5%
05	Justin Trudeau 6%	Justin Trudeau 3%	Elon Musk 4%	Joko Widodo 5%	Queen Elizabeth II 2%	Justin Trudeau 6%	Oprah Winfrey 4%	Bill Gates 4%
06	Michelle Obama 4%	Steve Jobs 3%	Abdul Kalan 4%	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan 4%	Angela Merkel 2%	Mahatma Gandhi 6%	Malala Yousafzai 4%	Angela Merkel 3%
07	Bill Gates 3%	Martin Luther King 2%	Angela Merkel 3%	Mahatma Gandhi 4%	Jack Ma 2%	Martin Luther King 5%	Martin Luther King 3%	Martin Luther King 2%
08	Kofi Annan 3%	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan 2%	Bill Gates 3%	Justin Trudeau 4%	Theresa May 2%	Elon Musk 5%	Angela Merkel 3%	Theresa May 2%
09	Pope Francis 2%	Elon Musk 2%	Justin Trudeau 2%	BJ Habibie 2%	Martin Luther King 2%	Dalai Lama 2%	Mahatma Gandhi 3%	Emmanuel Macron 2%
10	Elon Musk 2%	Queen Elizabeth II 2%	Martin Luther King 2%	Elon Musk 2%	Bill Gates 2%	Michelle Obama 2%	Elon Musk 3%	Abraham Lincoln 1%

Base: all valid applicants (15,938)
Data is unweighted

Pakistan	Tunisia	UK	USA
Nelson Mandela 18%	Nelson Mandela 16%	Barack Obama 13%	Barack Obama 14%
Justin Trudeau 10%	Justin Trudeau 7%	Angela Merkel 8%	Nelson Mandela 12%
Barack Obama 5%	Martin Luther King 7%	Nelson Mandela 7%	Angela Merkel 8%
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan 4%	Barack Obama 5%	Justin Trudeau 4%	Malala Yousafzai 4%
Prophet Muhammad 4%	Mahatma Gandhi 5%	Malala Yousafzai 4%	Franklin Roosevelt 4%
Imran Khan 4%	Oprah Winfrey 5%	Michelle Obama 4%	Mahatma Gandhi 3%
Muhammad Ali Jinnah 4%	Malala Yousafzai 3%	Emmanuel Macron 4%	Bill Gates 3%
Angela Merkel 3%	Elon Musk 2%	Jacinda Ardern 2%	Pope Francis 3%
Malala Yousafzai 3%	Angela Merkel 2%	Kofi Annan 2%	Desmond Tutu 3%
Abdul Sattar Edhi 2%	Margaret Thatcher 2%	Winston Churchill 2%	Ronald Reagan 3%

Respondents were also asked to name the global leader they most admired. Barack Obama and Nelson Mandela were clear winners globally selected by 14 per cent and 11 per cent respectively, with one or other rated top in every country except Mexico. The remaining leaders named in the top five globally were: Justin Trudeau (four per cent), Angela Merkel (four per cent) and Mahatma Ghandi (three per cent). Interestingly, many of the top ten people named were not governmental leaders. For example, Elon Musk and Bill Gates (both two per cent).

CONCLUSION

The main focus of approximately 27,000 young leaders applying in both 2017 and 2018 to the British Council's Future Leaders Connect network has been education, youth opportunities and sustainability, climate change and environment, showing a clear set of priorities for the policy agenda of this generation. Policy leaders seeking to engage young people may want to prioritise these areas. Young leaders may find opportunities in the fact that these priorities are widely shared amongst their peers across 12 different countries.

Methodology

Respondents were self-identified future policy leaders. Applications in 2018 came largely from the 12 countries where the programme was actively promoted – Canada (278 applications), Egypt (307), India (466), Indonesia (768), Kenya (1,358), Mexico (450), Morocco (194), Nigeria (9,666), Pakistan (1,534), Tunisia (201), UK (312) and USA (78) – providing a good global spread of viewpoints and perspectives.

Applications were promoted through websites, social media, through youth networks, and the profile of the programme has been raised through events and through some press, radio and television. In two countries (Egypt and USA) applications were promoted through particular networks, and applicants had to be nominated, after which they would apply through the competitive process.

Nigeria accounted for the largest number of all applications, suggesting there is huge demand among young people for leadership development opportunities and interest in policy issues.

To allow for the different number of applications by country, the data in this report has been weighted to provide a representative global picture of views when quoting results aggregated across countries. The weighting gives equal importance (weight) to responses from each of the countries with significant numbers of applications. Given the relatively fewer number of applications from the USA and Canada, these results have been combined regionally in the totals regarding the policy priorities.

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Data analysis by In2Impact

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