

**Next Generation**

# Kazakhstan

July 2025





# Foreword

The British Council's Next Generation research series provides a platform for young people's voices around the world to be heard, offering insights into their aspirations, challenges, and role in shaping their societies. As Kazakhstan now moves beyond its first generation of independence, Next Generation Kazakhstan arrives at a pivotal moment, capturing the perspectives of those who have grown up in a sovereign nation. It presents a detailed picture of the concerns, values, and aspirations of young people in Kazakhstan, a generation that is both ambitious yet pragmatic.

The findings of Next Generation Kazakhstan paint a picture of a generation that is deeply connected to its cultural heritage and impressively forward-looking in its aspirations. Young people in Kazakhstan are optimistic about their future, with a strong belief in the transformative power of education and the opportunities it provides. They value community, family, and national identity, while also demonstrating an openness to global perspectives and a strong interest in engaging with the wider world.

Despite this optimism, young Kazakhstanis also perceive challenges. Concerns about employment, access to opportunities, and economic stability are at the forefront of their minds. They recognise the importance of modern skills, entrepreneurship, and language proficiency in shaping their futures, while noting the challenge of some inequalities in areas such as education, employment, or civic participation. At the same time, they show impressive resilience and determination to overcome these challenges, seeking out innovative ways to navigate a fast-evolving context.

Kazakhstan's youth also display a growing civic awareness, with a real desire to contribute to national development and engage in social and political life. While some feel distant from formal political structures, many are finding alternative ways to make their voices heard, particularly through digital platforms and community-based initiatives. Young people express a clear desire to engage and to shape their country's future.

We are proud to present Next Generation Kazakhstan and hope that it offers a valuable snapshot of a moment in time, a record of young people's voices as they chart the beginning of their adult lives. We also hope that it provides helpful insights for policymakers, educators, and business leaders. By listening to and acting on the aspirations and concerns of young people, we can work together to build towards a future that reflects their hopes and ambitions and empowers them to thrive both at home and on the global stage.

Working on this report has been a fascinating process. We would like to give special thanks to the teams at LSE Consulting and Central Asia Barometer for their research and analysis, to His Majesty's Ambassador to Kazakhstan Kathy Leach and the British Embassy team for their invaluable advice and support, and to the Next Generation Project Advisory Board for their expertise and unique insights. Most importantly, we are grateful to the young people who contributed to this research, sharing their experiences and perspectives. Their voices offer not only a detailed snapshot of the present but also a vision of the future, a future that with the right support and opportunities, they will undoubtedly shape for the better.



**Robert Taylor**  
Country Director,  
British Council Kazakhstan

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# Executive summary

## Background to Next Generation Kazakhstan research

This report presents findings from a comprehensive mixed-methods study examining the experiences, perceptions and attitudes of young citizens of Kazakhstan, aged 18-35, as part of the British Council's global Next Generation research programme. The research engaged 1,270 young Kazakhstanis (1,202 through a representative survey and 68 through interviews and focus groups) to provide a holistic and rich picture of their experiences and hopes for the future.

The research comprised five complementary tools: a literature review; a representative survey exploring outlooks, priorities, aspirations for education, employment, political participation (among others) and global perspectives; qualitative interviews with 20 young leaders; focus groups with young Kazakhstanis; and a series of Stop and Think workshops with 10 youth experts, activists and practitioners from Kazakhstan (the Project Advisory Board).

The research comes at a significant moment, as Kazakhstan moves beyond its first generation of independence. This timing provides a unique opportunity to hear from young people who have grown up entirely in an independent Kazakhstan and gain insights into their views and vision for the future.



## Summary of findings

### Young Kazakhstanis' realities: values, attitudes and influences

The Next Generation survey and qualitative discussions identify two pivotal influences shaping young Kazakhstanis' values and worldviews: 1) family, identified by 66 per cent of respondents as their primary source of guidance; and 2) peers and friends, who provide important social reference points.

Young Kazakhstanis are highly aware of the challenges that their society faces and yet are strongly optimistic about their future. Over 80 per cent are optimistic about their country's trajectory and their personal prospects, with that positive outlook somewhat tempered by practical concerns about housing costs and economic stability. This generation shows particular resilience in facing challenges, often seeing obstacles as opportunities for growth and development.

The research reveals an interesting balance between collective and individual values. While young people maintain strong connections to traditional family structures and cultural heritage, they increasingly prioritise personal growth and professional development. This shift reflects broader changes in Kazakhstani society, as young people navigate a balance between cultural traditions and new opportunities.

### Embracing the transformative power of education

Kazakhstan's education sector is undergoing significant transformation, with young people's experiences reflecting both progress and persistent challenges. According to 57 per cent of survey respondents, quality of education is improving, amid a complex landscape of opportunities and obstacles.

Young people's assessments of Kazakhstan's education system reveal complex views on its quality. The notion of 'change' in the education system, at all levels, weighs heavily on their experiences. Gender differences emerge, with young women more critical than young men of education quality and teacher knowledge. Notwithstanding these differences, most young Kazakhstanis believe strongly in education's transformative power, with over 70 per cent viewing it as a driver of societal change and a tool for better understanding the world.

The research identifies several challenges for the education system, notably government funding, integrity and fairness in educational institutions, and teacher training and professional development. Across age, gender and location, quality of teaching is consistently identified as the most necessary improvement, with young Kazakhstanis highlighting teachers' poor working conditions, excessive workload, and inadequate training.

The curriculum also faces scrutiny. Young people noted a disconnect between education content and market demands. They advocated for more practical skills development, particularly in higher education, to address their concerns about their preparedness for employment.

Notable trends in young people's approach to education include increased openness to studying abroad, growing westernisation of education (for example, through initiatives such as the Bologna Process) and increased digitalisation of educational processes. There is also a growing interest in lifelong learning, with almost half of those without tertiary education willing to pursue additional qualifications.

## Navigating employment opportunities and challenges

The employment landscape for young Kazakhstanis contains both promising developments and persistent challenges. The research provides insights into young people's current occupational status, skills development, employment aspirations, and obstacles in the labour market.

Of the survey respondents, 43 per cent are in full-time employment, with significant variations by age and gender. While 59 per cent of those aged 30-35 are employed full-time, this falls to 21 per cent among 18-24 year-olds, many of whom are still studying. A notable gender difference appears in unpaid work, where only young women report homemaking/parenting as their main occupation.

Most young Kazakhstanis believe their education has prepared them well for employment, with leadership, problem-solving, and communication skills identified as central to workplace success. Language knowledge, particularly Kazakh and English, is valued for enhancing employability.

Employment aspirations and perceived opportunities reveal interesting patterns. The education and training sector emerges as the preferred field of employment (19 per cent), followed by entertainment (13 per cent) and manufacturing (12 per cent). There are notable gender differences: 26 per cent of young women prefer the education sector, compared to just 10 per cent of young men, while manufacturing appeals to 18 per cent of young men, compared to just 6 per cent of women. Tourism and hospitality are identified as one of the most promising sectors for future job opportunities, alongside education and training.

Young Kazakhstanis face several challenges in employment. Low wages are their primary concern (68 per cent), followed by long working hours (38 per cent) and workplace corruption (37 per cent). Gender-based income disparities persist, with women disproportionately represented in lower income brackets. Unequal access to employment opportunities remains a significant barrier, particularly for people with disabilities, people from rural areas or working-class backgrounds, and people lacking Kazakh language skills.

Despite these challenges, the entrepreneurial spirit is strong among young Kazakhstanis, with 10 per cent currently self-employed and 44 per cent expressing their intention to start a business within five years. Access to funding (50 per cent) and lack of skills/experience (32 per cent) are cited as the main barriers to entrepreneurship.

## Evolving youth voice and civic participation

Political and civic engagement among young Kazakhstanis shows notable variations between demographic groups. This research explores forms of political participation, activism, the role of social media, and factors influencing engagement.

Political engagement levels are relatively low, with only 13-24 per cent of respondents describing themselves as engaged and these levels decreasing with age. Although less than 30 per cent voted in recent elections, voting intentions for future elections are significantly higher across all groups. Ethnicity emerges as the strongest predictor of voting intention, with young ethnic Kazakh people 12.3 per cent more likely than other ethnic groups to intend to vote.

Top motivations for voting include a desire to bring change to the country and a sense of civic duty. Conversely, the main reason for not voting is a lack of faith in the impact of an individual vote. Young Kazakhstanis indicate they would participate more if politics was easier to understand and information was more accessible.

The research reveals a clear distinction between political and social activism. There is strong involvement in community activities, with three-quarters of young Kazakhstanis reporting a sense of belonging to their local community. The most common forms of community engagement include participation in rituals (weddings, funerals, religious celebrations) (27 per cent) and volunteering (25 per cent).

Social media plays a central role in young people's civic expression, with platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and Telegram used by at least 75 per cent of respondents. Despite being the most widely used information source (69 per cent), social media is also considered the least trustworthy, highlighting young people's nuanced understanding of its limitations. They expressed concern about fake news, transient attention spans, echo chambers, and the illusion of impact without real change.

## Kazakhstan's place in the world

Young Kazakhstanis have a sophisticated understanding of their country's international position and a genuine interest in the wider world. This research explores their visions of the world and Kazakhstan's role in it.

Young people's interest in other countries is significant, with 33 per cent willing to consider emigration, particularly among the youngest cohort (48 per cent of 18-24 year-olds). Turkey is the most attractive foreign destination, followed by the United States of America (USA), with Japan and South Korea also ranking highly.

Quality of life is the primary consideration (94 per cent), followed by educational opportunities (89 per cent) and human rights protections (88 per cent).

Interest in foreign languages is nearly universal, with 97 per cent of young Kazakhstanis believing in the importance of learning a foreign language. English is overwhelmingly viewed as the most important language to learn, followed by Turkish. Language learning is seen as necessary for employment opportunities and travel, as well as for education and expanded social networks.

Young people have a clear vision of their country as a multidimensional bridge. They perceive Kazakhstan as geographically significant in connecting major powers, diplomatically significant as a regional mediator, and culturally relevant in linking Western nations with Central Asia. They express pride in Kazakhstan's position as Central Asia's largest economy and its progressive status compared to its regional neighbours.

### **High aspirations for Kazakhstan's national development**

Young Kazakhstanis have clear aspirations for their country's future development, balancing optimism with practical concerns. The survey reveals that 83 per cent are optimistic about their country's future, with history (53 per cent), culture (50 per cent), and language (45 per cent) the primary sources of national pride.

Their vision encompasses several key dimensions: more opportunities for professional and personal growth within Kazakhstan to reduce the need for emigration; greater social equality to address disparities in education and employment; enhanced political freedoms and reduced restrictions; stronger democratic institutions, with balanced state powers and effective checks and balances; greater transparency and reduced corruption; improved access to quality education; and greater environmental responsibility.

Environmental concerns are gaining prominence, with approximately 60 per cent concerned about climate change impacts in their country. Air pollution is the most pressing environmental issue (67 per cent), followed by waste management (37 per cent) and water scarcity (35 per cent). These concerns reflect both awareness of global climate change and recognition of Kazakhstan's tourism potential through natural landscape preservation.



# Introduction

## Kazakhstan in context



### Geography

Located in the centre of Eurasia, Kazakhstan covers 2.75 million square kilometres and is the ninth largest country in the world. Kazakhstan borders Russia in the north and northwest, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in the south, and China in the east. Topographically, Kazakhstan is surrounded by the Caspian Sea in the west, by the Alati Mountains in the east, and by the Northern Tien Shan Mountain range in the south. Historically, Kazakhstan was part of the Silk Road connecting Europe and Asia. Today, it forms an international corridor between Europe and Asia.



### Education

At the beginning of the 2023-2024 academic year, 568,562 students were enrolled in higher education institutions and 516,533 were studying at technical, vocational, and post-secondary education organisations. That year, 14,342 master's students were accepted and 21,436 graduated, while for doctoral students, 1,686 were accepted and 1,854 graduated (Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023).

The share of students studying at state higher education institutions was 45.1 per cent, with 54.1 per cent at private institutions and 0.7 per cent at foreign institutions. The distribution of students by speciality was: 28.1 per cent in pedagogical sciences, 16.5 per cent in engineering, manufacturing and construction industries, 14.0 per cent in business, management and law, 9.9 per cent in healthcare and social security, and 9.5 per cent in information and communication technologies (ICT).

When comparing 2023-2024 to the 2018-2019 academic year, the number of students had increased by 9.3 per cent. Conversely, looking at key indicators in higher education, the number of institutions offering higher education programmes decreased by 9.6 per cent in the five years to 2022 (Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023).



## Demography

In 2024, there were 5,759,781 young people aged 14-34, comprising 28 per cent of the total population. Of these, 3,591,627 resided in urban areas and 2,168,154 in rural areas (Scientific Research Centre (SRC) Youth, 2023a).

The age distribution among the 14-34 age group was:

- **14-19: 1,616,599**
- **20-23: 1,202,012**
- **24-29: 1,450,865**
- **30-34: 1,490,305**

In 2023, 422,886 young people migrated to Kazakhstan, while 415,592 left the country. Of those who left, 249,510 were from urban areas and 166,082 were from rural areas (SRC Youth, 2023a).



## Employment

In 2023, young people in Kazakhstan aged 14-35 made up approximately 26 per cent of the country's labour force. Young people in the labour market were characterised by high mobility (both internal and external migration) and an imbalance between the supply and demand for skilled labour (SRC Youth, 2023b).

Of the 3,555,800 young, employed people (15-35) in 2023, 2,784,400 were employees and 771,400 were self-employed. Of the self-employed, 44,200 were employers and 716,800 were independent workers. Some 129,900 young people were unemployed, with the youth unemployment rate at 3.5 per cent in 2023, down from 3.8 per cent in 2022.

The largest numbers of employed young people were in wholesale and retail trade and auto repair, with 599,100 individuals. This was followed by education, which employed 449,000 people, industry, with 404,900, and agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, with 381,400 (Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023).



# Methodology

The Next Generation Kazakhstan methodological approach combined desk research, quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve breadth and depth of analysis. These methods were implemented across the following phases: desk research, a national representative survey, interviews with young leaders, focus groups, and Stop and Think workshops with a group of youth experts from Kazakhstan (Project Advisory Board).

## Desk research

The first phase of the project consisted of an extensive literature and secondary data review. We focused on gathering information on the general socio-political and demographic context of Kazakhstan, the values, attitudes and identities of young Kazakhstani people, their views on education, employment and migration, their attitudes towards politics and civic engagement, their concerns about global challenges, and their expectations for the future.

This exercise identified several gaps or areas for further research that shaped the design of the data collection tools, including youth activism, nation-building and youth identity, corruption in the education system, new forms of employment, housing, geopolitics, attitudes towards foreigners, and political and civic engagement at local level.

## National survey of young Kazakhstanis

The second phase of the research was to design and implement a nationally representative survey of the young adult population of Kazakhstan, aged 18-35 (see Sampling in the Appendices). The survey explored young people's attitudes to social and cultural values, social media use, perceptions of the education system and its importance, and views on environmental issues, among others. We used the same Next Generation survey questions as for other countries to allow for horizontal and longitudinal comparisons, as well as stakeholders to tailor the survey to the specific context of Kazakhstan.

Fieldwork took place from 21 August to 20 October 2024. The average survey completion time was 29 minutes. The final sample included 1,201 participants from all over Kazakhstan.

## Interviews with young Kazakhstani leaders

The study interviewed 20 young emerging leaders from Kazakhstan to explore their perspectives on key

social, economic and political issues. By addressing education, employment, youth voice, digital media, and Kazakhstan's global role, the questions sought to uncover the challenges and opportunities shaping young people's experiences.

Overall, the interviews gained a comprehensive understanding of the aspirations, challenges, and contributions of young leaders in Kazakhstan. They also provided a platform to discuss how their generation can shape the nation's future in an increasingly interconnected world.

## Creative focus groups with young Kazakhstani people

We developed the qualitative data collection tools through a rigorous, iterative process informed by multiple sources. This included identifying gaps in the existing literature, analysing intriguing or unexplained findings from the survey data. The transition from quantitative to qualitative research was strengthened by the contextual knowledge of local researchers, ensuring that the study remained relevant and culturally grounded.

While the quantitative survey provided broad patterns and measurable insights, the qualitative approach allowed a deeper exploration of underlying trends, motivations and contextual factors. Together, they enabled a richer, nuanced understanding of participants' perspectives and experiences.

We established three key thematic areas:

- Education and employment: concerns about the quality of education and trajectories towards satisfying jobs.
- Youth voice, digital media and news: young people's views on the influence of their families, political participation, and how they get information.
- Global outlook: young people's perspectives on Kazakhstan's role in the world and their views of other countries.

Six focus groups were held in Almaty, Astana and Atyrau. Two focus groups took place in each city, one with 18-24 year-olds and another with 25-34 year-olds. The first part of each focus group discussed prompts introduced by the facilitator, with participants then engaging in a collective activity that used arts-based, participatory, visual and narrative methods to trigger further thinking and discussion.

### **Stop and Think workshops with the Project Advisory Board**

The involvement of a Project Advisory Board comprising Kazakhstani experts and practitioners was central to the research. We organised two Stop and Think workshops (one in person and another online) to gather feedback on how best to adapt the research instruments to close potential research gaps, and, later, how to interpret the data during the analysis phase.



## Chapter 1

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# Young Kazakhstanis' realities: values, attitudes and influences

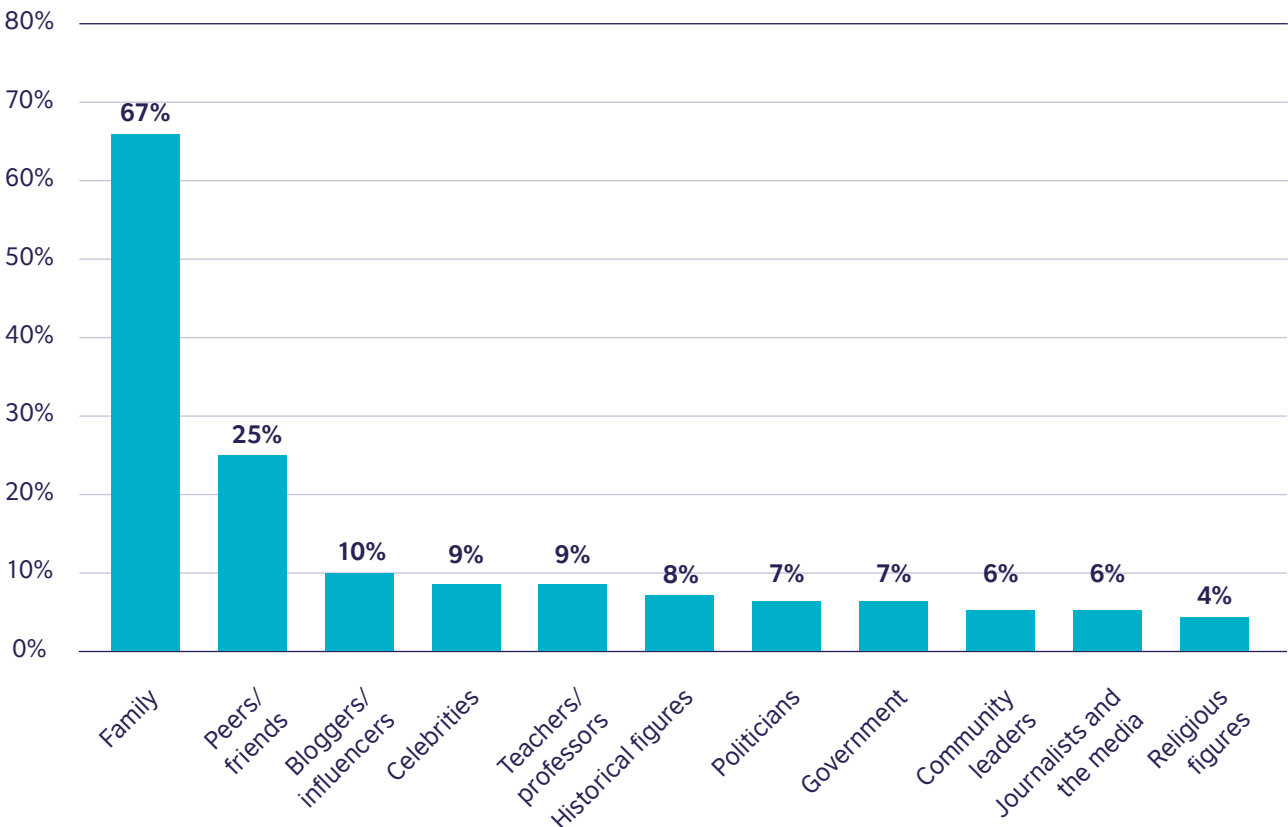


**The overall picture emerging from the Next Generation research is that of a young generation very connected to – and fond of – their community, culture and country. They are highly aware of the realities of their country and community, conscious of challenges and issues in their daily lives, and both resilient and optimistic about their future.**

### Main influences

Young Kazakhstanis are very family-oriented and proud of their origins, irrespective of their background (see Figure 1). They identify family as their main influence, followed by friends/peers.

**Figure 1.** Figures influencing young people's views

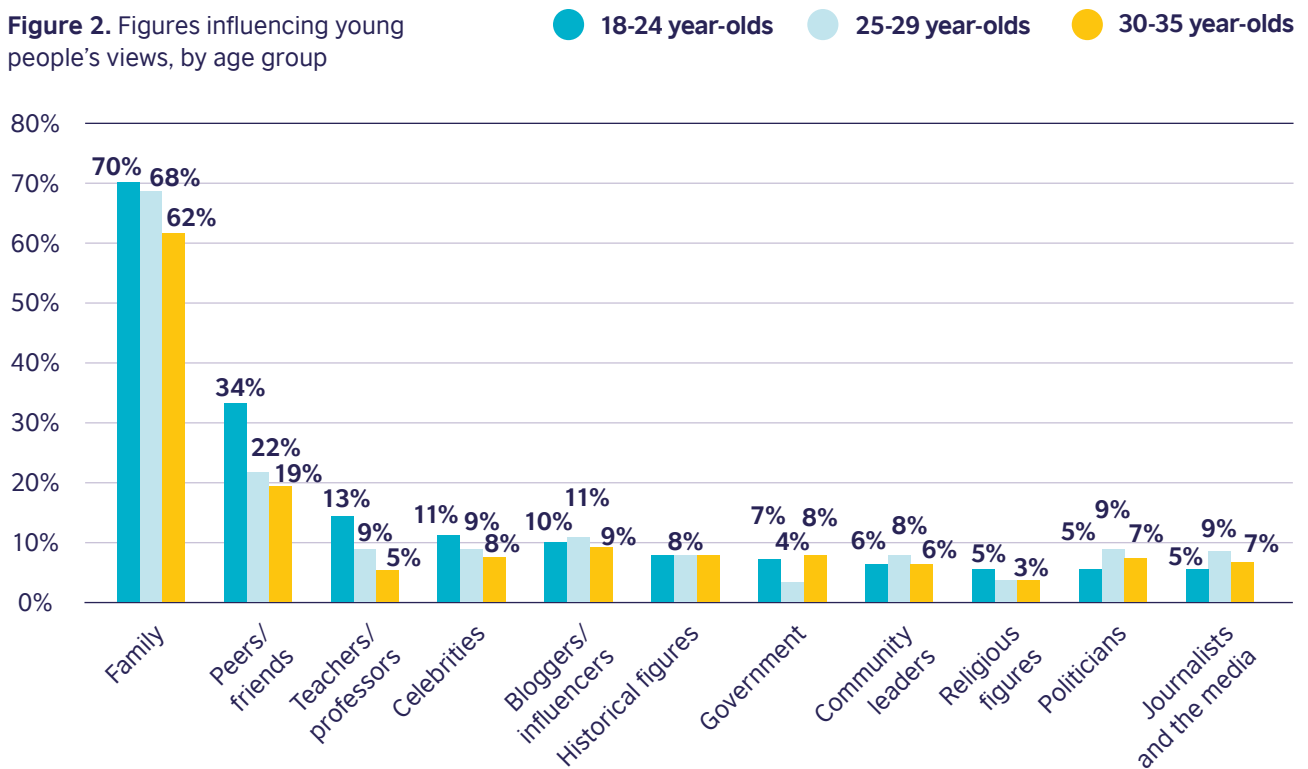


This is consistent with other recent studies on young Kazakhstani people. According to various surveys, family ranks first in the list of values and is important to more than 80 per cent of young people (Iskakova and Kalashnikova, 2023). The influence of family on both the value scale and on practical behaviour is confirmed by the seventh wave of the World Value Survey (Haerpfer et al., 2020). In 2020, 62 per cent of young people in

Kazakhstan shared the view that in most cases it is the family that teaches young people the rules of society and how to behave (Sharipova and Beimenbetov, 2021).

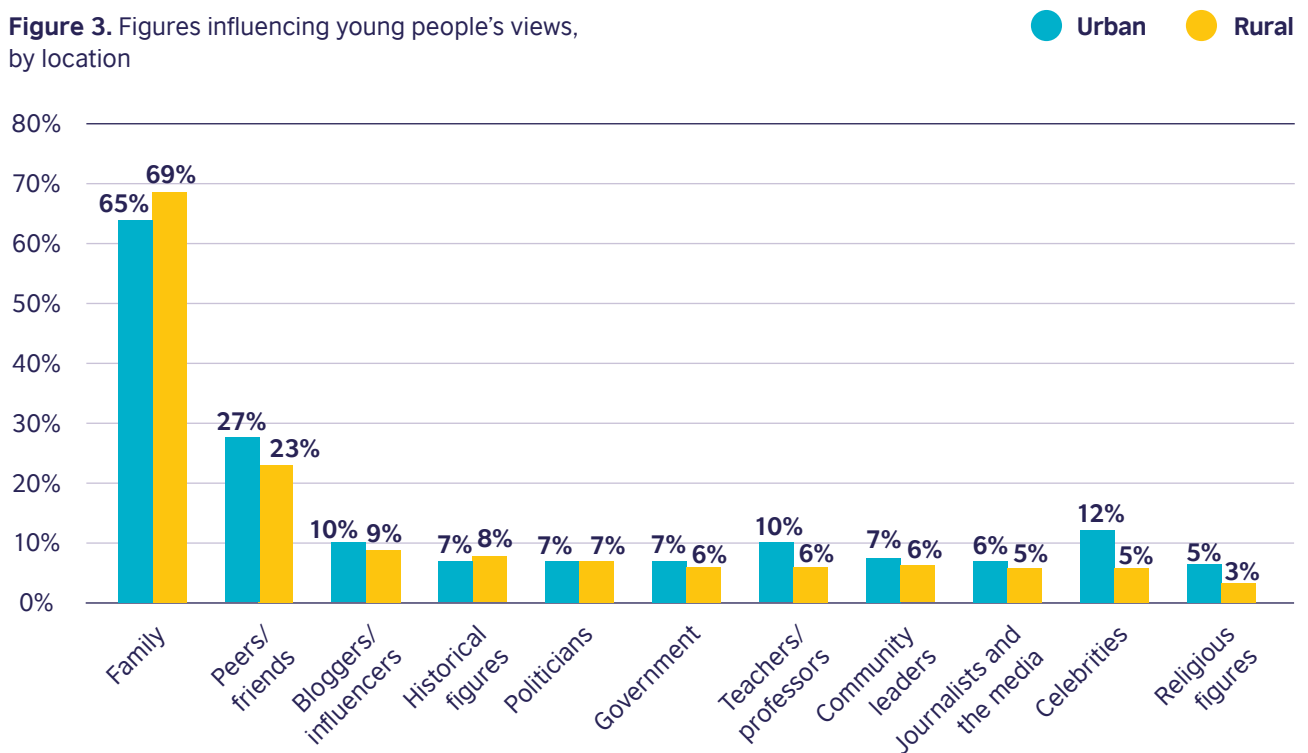
Although consistently topped by family and friends, the influences identified by young Kazakhstanis vary by age group, gender, and location (see Figure 2). The older the cohort, the fewer influences they identify.

**Figure 2.** Figures influencing young people's views, by age group

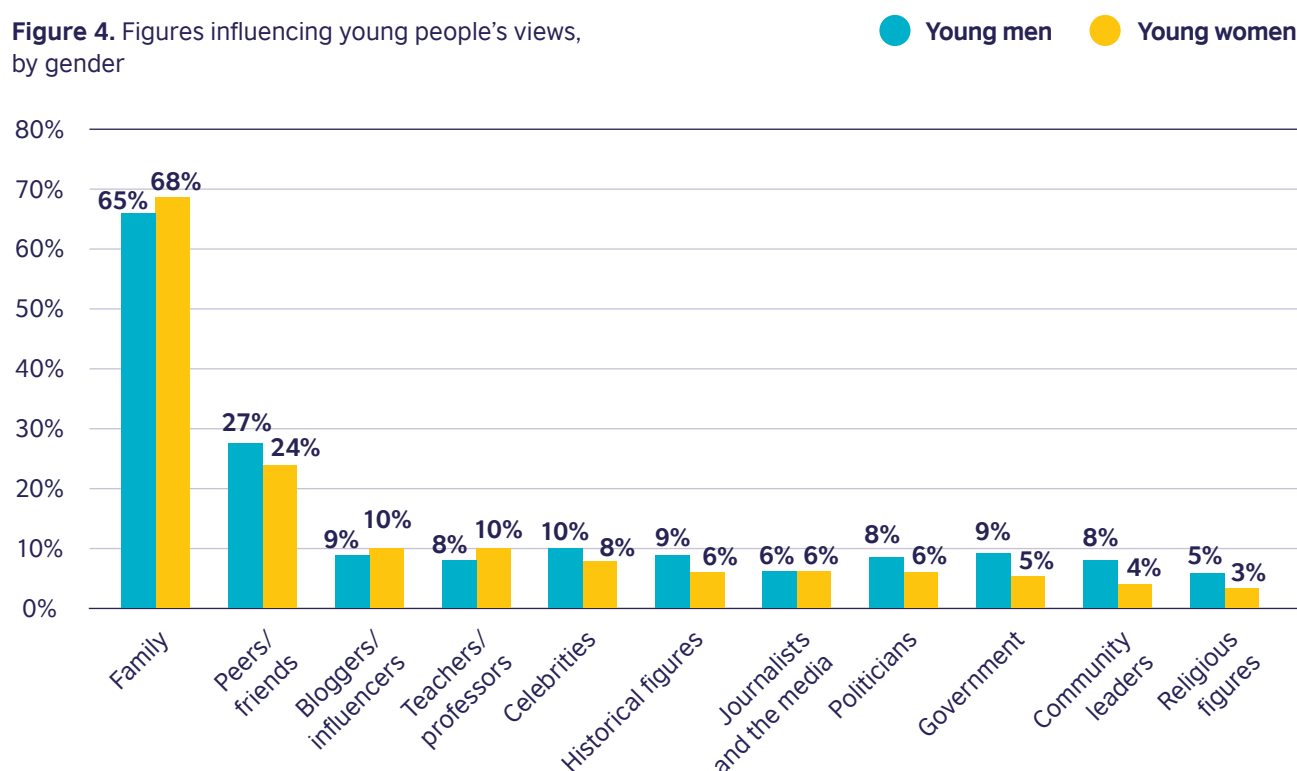


People living in rural and peri-urban locations report fewer influences than people living in urban areas, with the exception of family and friends. The influence of friends is more important in urban settings (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** Figures influencing young people's views, by location



**Figure 4.** Figures influencing young people's views, by gender



Overall, young women report fewer influences than young men, except for family, online influencers, and teachers/professors (see Figure 4). More young men consider the influence of friends important in their lives.



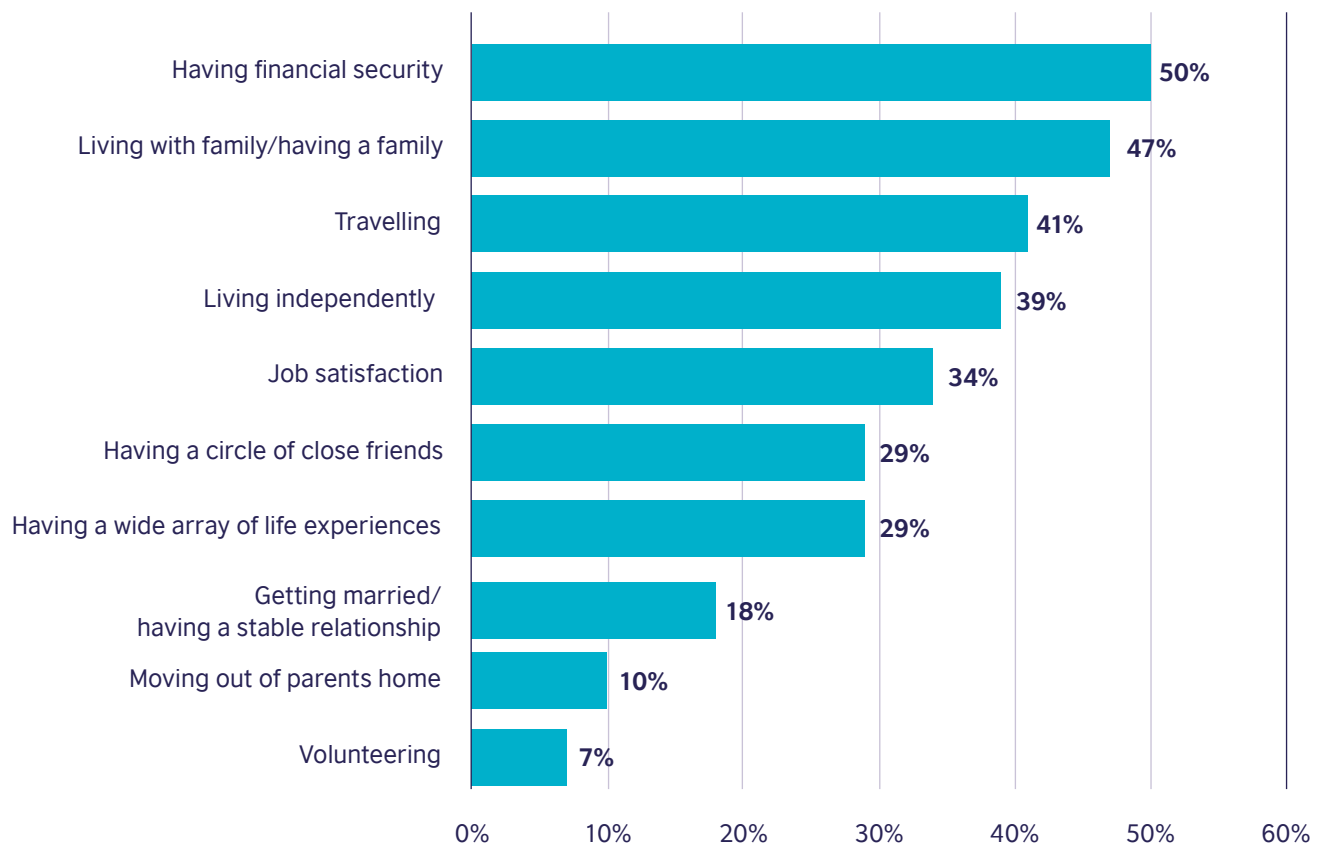
### Defining success close to home

Young Kazakhstanis look to family, friends and their immediate peers to define their own success and happiness in life.

When asked about the factors that contribute to their success and happiness, survey respondents most

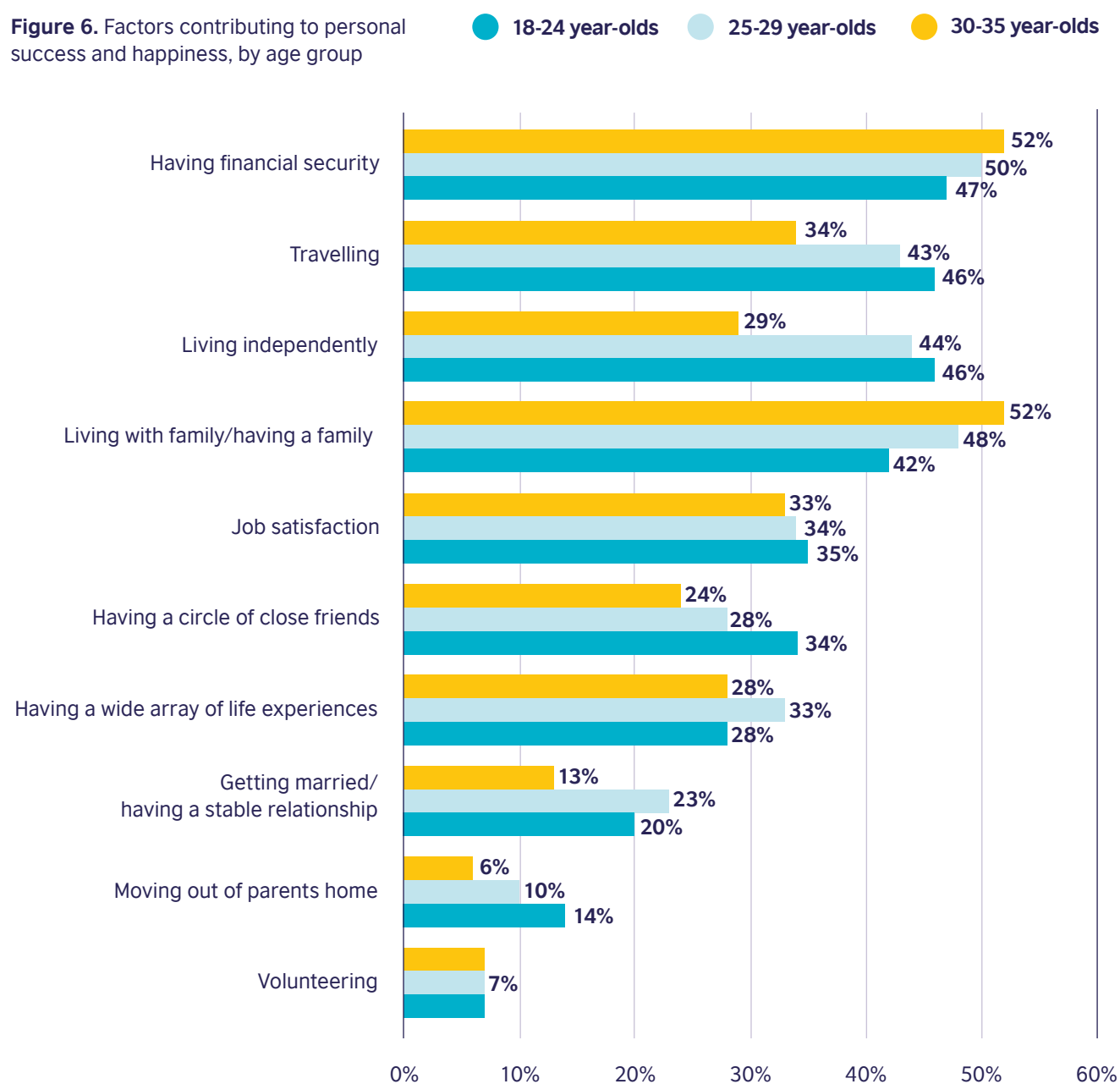
commonly choose having a family and financial security (see Figure 5). However, the youngest cohort also frequently mention living independently and travelling (see Figure 6).

**Figure 5.** Factors contributing to personal success and happiness





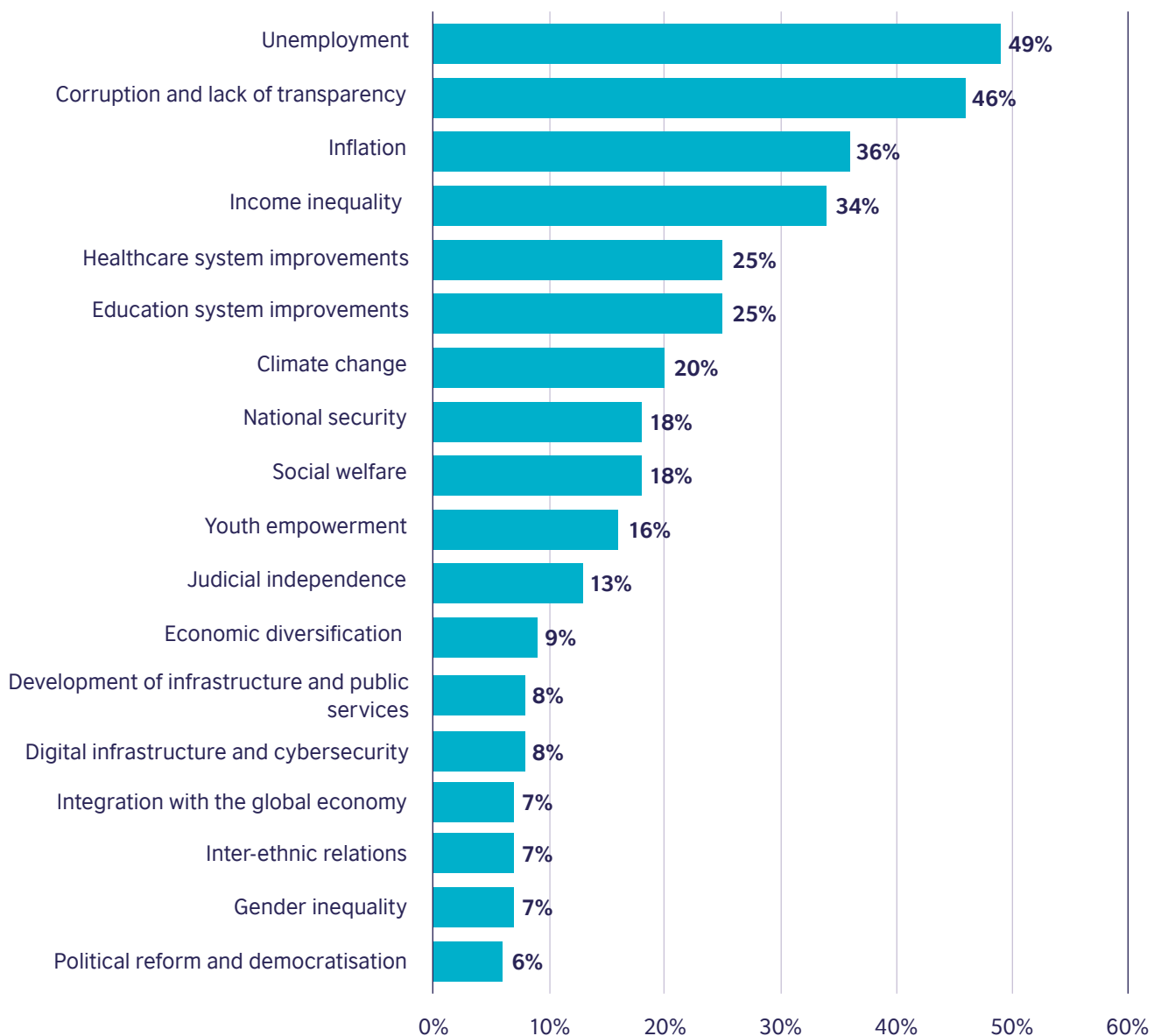
**Figure 6.** Factors contributing to personal success and happiness, by age group



### Clear-eyed about life's challenges

Young Kazakhstanis have a clear understanding of success and influence within their immediate circles. Their perspective broadens when considering the challenges affecting them and their communities: when asked about the most pressing issues facing Kazakhstan today, young people consistently highlight unemployment and corruption as the most significant concerns, with inflation and income inequality also frequently mentioned (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7.** Main problems facing Kazakhstan today



Previous research has shown that youth unemployment is low in Kazakhstan (3.5 per cent in 2023, according to the Agency for Statistics). Nevertheless, unemployment is a persistent fear for young people, especially those not in education, employment or training (NEET). According to a 2022 survey, young NEETs in Kazakhstan were concerned about high food prices (49.9 per cent), unemployment (38.9 per cent), low levels of income (38.7 per cent), high costs of education (34.4 per cent), and lack of own housing (20.3 per cent) (SRC Youth, 2022a).

Inflation in Kazakhstan reached an annual rate of 7.2 per cent in 2024, significantly lower than the average for Central Asia and the Caucasus, which stood at 22.7 per cent (International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2024). Similarly, unemployment in Kazakhstan was 4.8 per cent in 2024, lower than in many countries of the global north, such as France (7.4 per cent), and not much higher than the United Kingdom (UK), at 4.3 per cent in the same period (IMF, 2024).

Despite the situation being better in Kazakhstan than in neighbouring countries and other global comparators, there are clearly still anxieties.

This disconnection could reflect several social phenomena, such as heightened public sensitivity to economic issues, the perceived impact of inflation and unemployment on daily life, or a broader sense of economic insecurity despite relatively favourable macroeconomic indicators. One would also expect young NEETs to be more impacted by these issues than those in work or education. It may also suggest that young Kazakhstanis compare their situation not only to regional averages but to global standards, particularly those of more developed economies.

The top concerns expressed by the Next Generation Kazakhstan sample are consistent with previous research. This study is not the first to highlight corruption as a source of concern for young Kazakhstanis, as it was previously identified as one of the top three barriers to upward social mobility for young people, alongside lack of access to education and a lack of social connections (Qalam Foundation, 2023). Other studies have identified corruption as an important push factor for migration among young people (SRC Youth, 2022b).

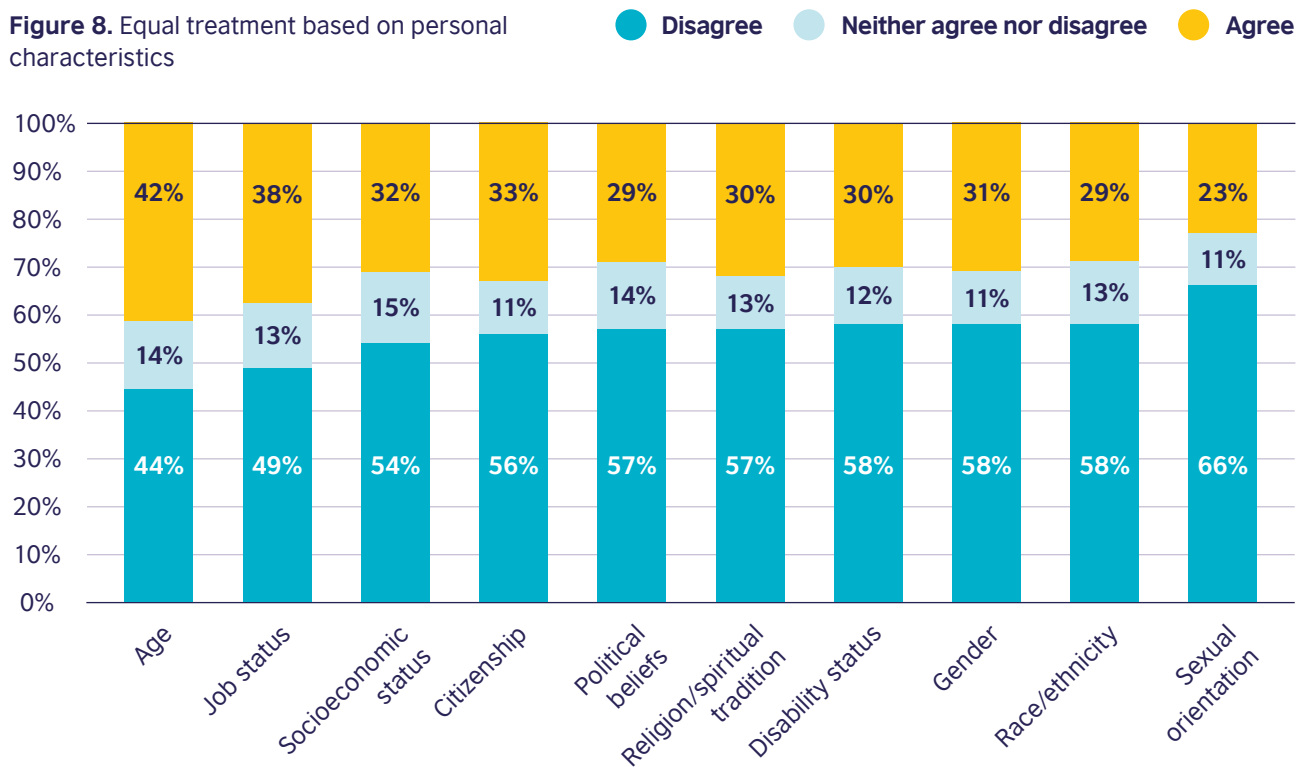


## Awareness of inequalities

Young people in Kazakhstan are aware of the challenges around them, shaped not only by external factors but also by identity and belonging. They recognise that societal acceptance and equal treatment vary depending on characteristics such as ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability status, and gender.

The survey asked respondents whether people are treated equally regardless of their age, job status, socioeconomic background, political beliefs, and citizenship. The most commonly cited factors contributing to unequal treatment are sexual orientation, gender, and race/ethnicity (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8.** Equal treatment based on personal characteristics



The proportions of people disagreeing with the statements, 'In Kazakhstan, people are treated equally regardless of their ethnicity', 'In Kazakhstan, people are treated equally regardless of their gender' and 'In Kazakhstan, people are treated equally regardless of their religion' reveal some interesting differences in perceptions.

Approximately 25 per cent of ethnic Kazakhs agree with the statement 'In Kazakhstan, people are treated equally regardless of their ethnicity', increasing to 42.6 per cent for young ethnic Russians. This feeling of greater acceptance amongst ethnic Russians aligns with data showing that Russian is the most widely known language and that most survey responses are in that language.

One-third of young men agree with the statement 'In Kazakhstan, people are treated equally regardless of their gender', compared to only 27.9 per cent of young women. This reflects the findings on young women's experiences of gender gaps in education and wages. Similarly, in previous research, women reported higher rates of discrimination than men (Sharipova and Beimenbetov, 2021), which aligns with fewer women believing that treatment is not impacted by gender.

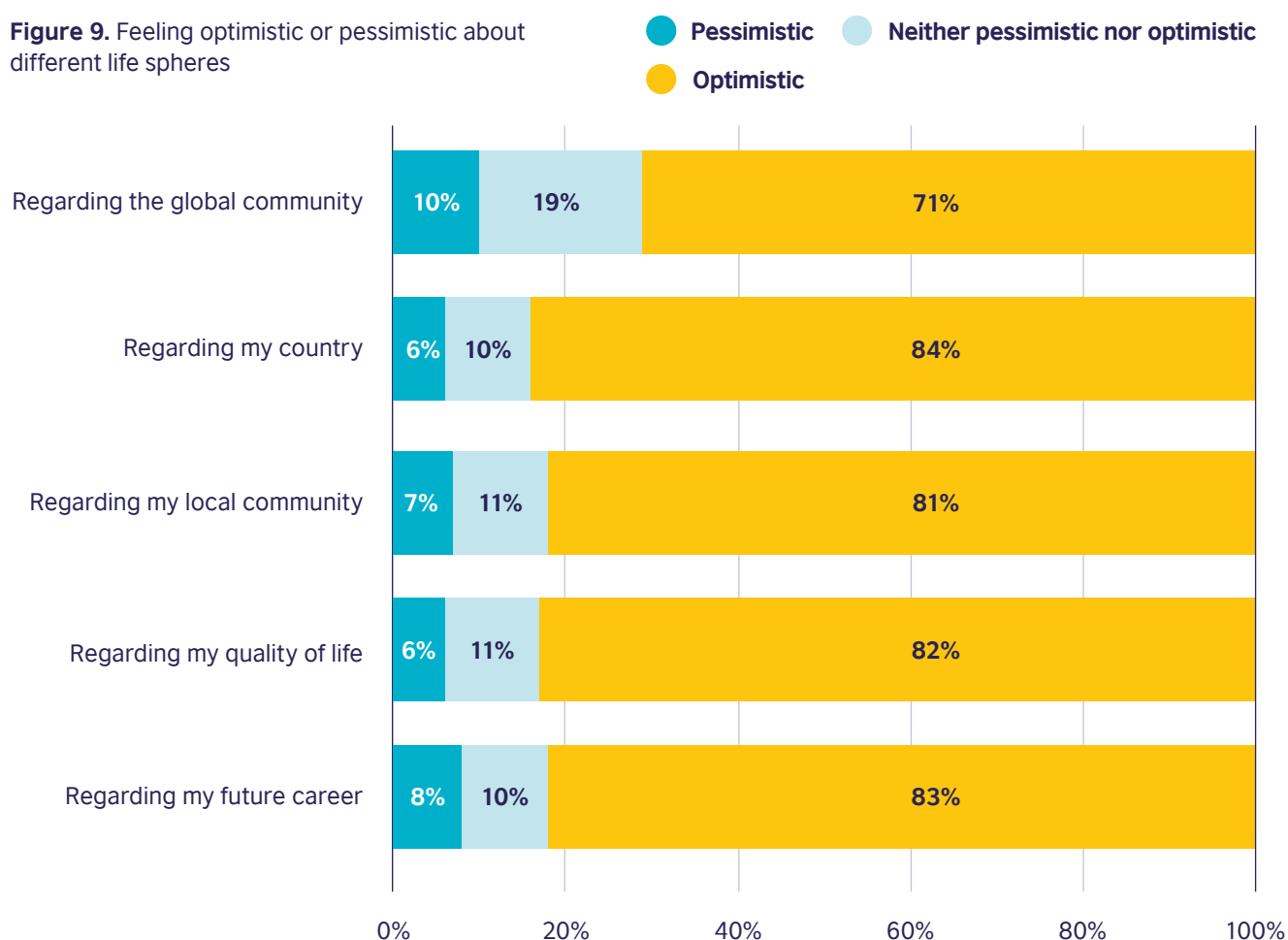
Contrary to what would be expected from young people practising the largest religion in the country, only 26 per cent of young Muslims agree that 'In Kazakhstan, people are treated equally regardless of their religion', compared to 41.5 per cent of young Orthodox Christians<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Russian Orthodox Christians are the second largest religious group in Kazakhstan, after Muslims (US Department of State, 2022).

## Optimism and resilience

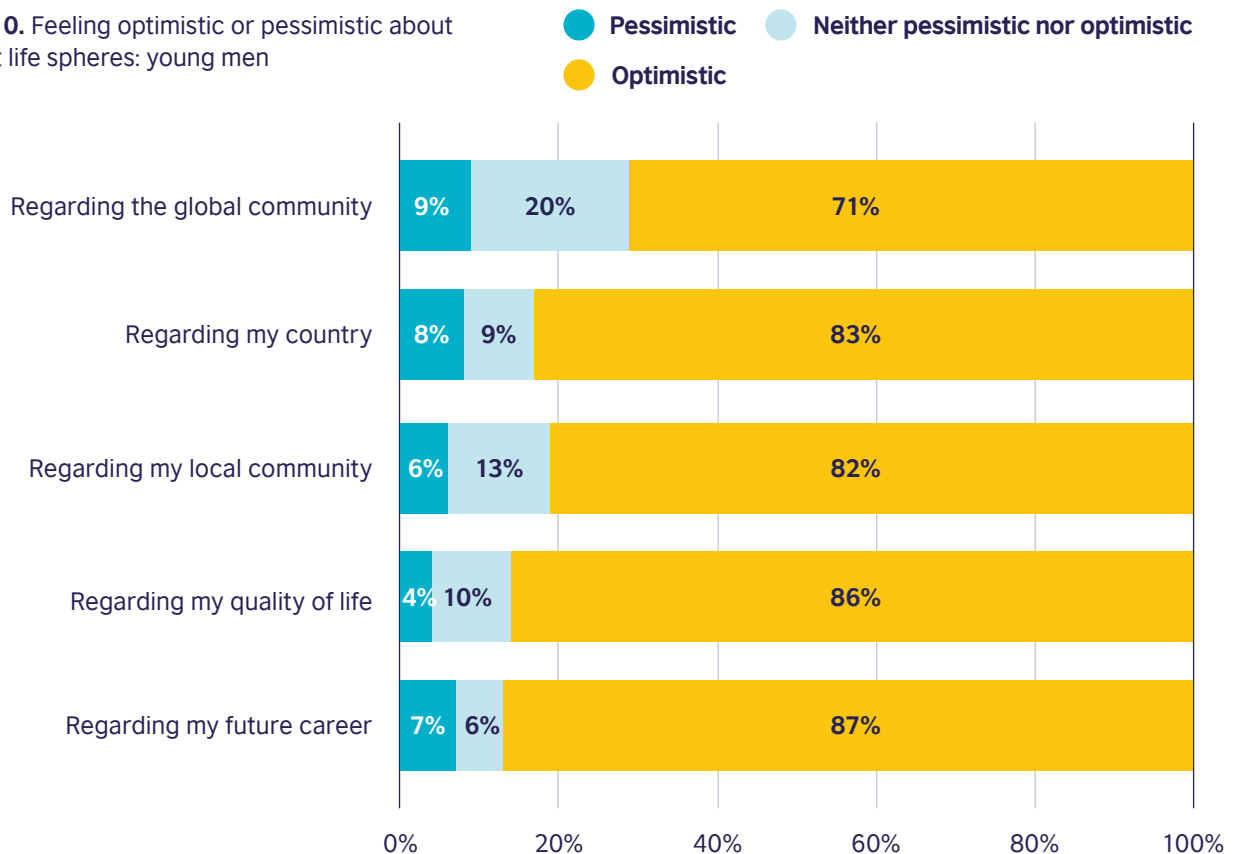
Notwithstanding the issues they face in their lives and communities, young Kazakhstanis are consistently optimistic about the future and resilient in meeting challenges. An overwhelming majority (83 per cent of young men and 85 per cent of young women) feel optimistic or very optimistic about their country, reaching 82 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively, for their local community (see Figure 9). The low levels of pessimism are also robust. Outside of their feelings about the global community, less than 10 per cent of young people in Kazakhstan are pessimistic about any other aspect of their personal life or community. They are somewhat unsure how to feel about the future of the world, with almost one in five being neither pessimistic nor optimistic about the global community.

**Figure 9.** Feeling optimistic or pessimistic about different life spheres

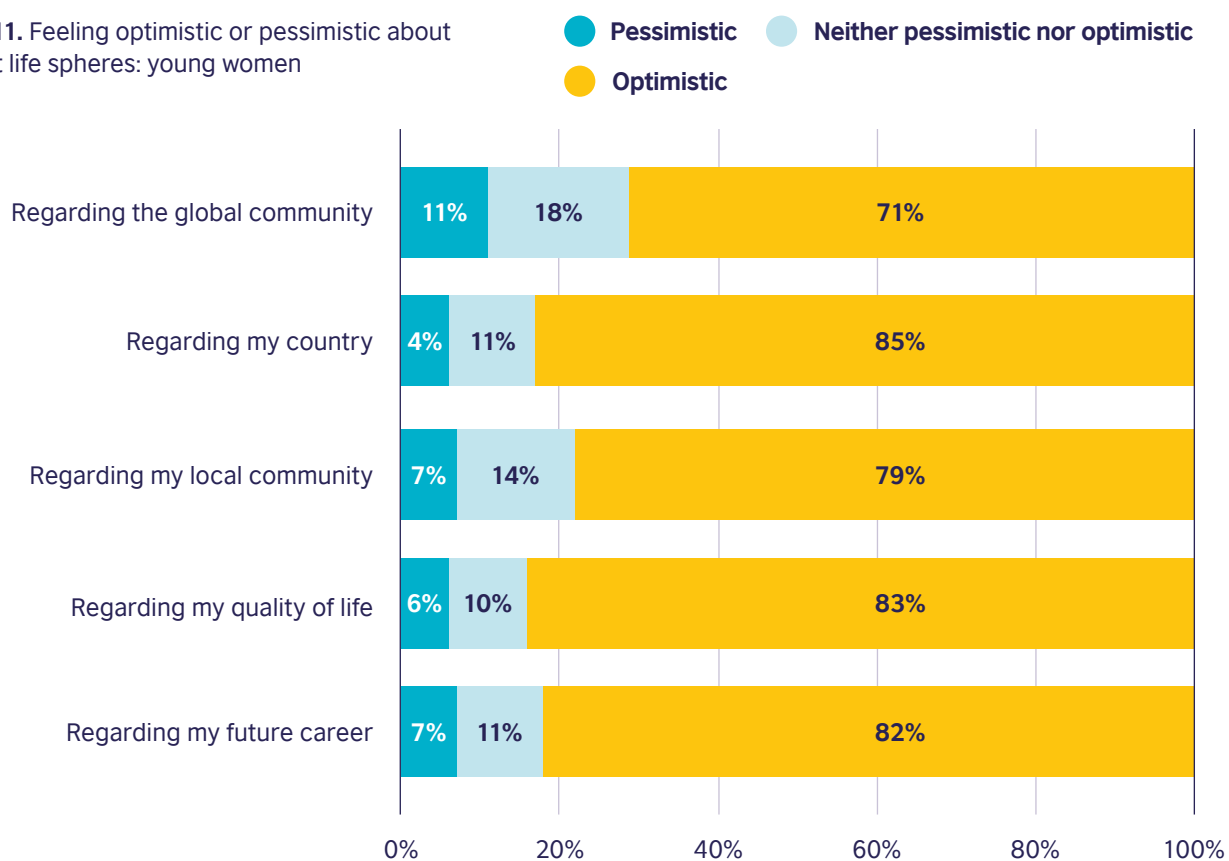


Both young women and young men are optimistic about their lives and careers, although young women are slightly less so. Some 86 per cent of young men and 83 per cent of young women feel optimistic or very optimistic about their quality of life, while 87 per cent of young men and 82 per cent of young women feel optimistic about their future career (see Figure 10 and Figure 11).

**Figure 10.** Feeling optimistic or pessimistic about different life spheres: young men



**Figure 11.** Feeling optimistic or pessimistic about different life spheres: young women



These results hold across location (urban vs rural) and age range, showing that young Kazakhstanis look towards the future with hope, both from a personal and a community point of view.



## Chapter 2

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# Embracing the transformative power of education



# Introduction

Education is a central part of a young person's life, irrespective of their personal circumstances and location. In addition to being crucial for youth socialisation and development, many studies have shown that education attainment levels are robust predictors of employment status, income, consumption of media, political participation levels, and even ideology. This Next Generation research provides a useful opportunity to explore young people's views of Kazakhstan's education system.

The education system in Kazakhstan comprises several levels:

- Preschool education and training
- Primary education
- Basic secondary education
- Secondary education (general secondary education, technical and vocational education)
- Post-secondary education
- Graduate education
- Postgraduate education

The education system is supervised by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. According to the Constitution and the Law on Education, preschool, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education are compulsory and provided free of charge (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2014). People who are 18 years or older move to post-compulsory education levels, including technical and vocational education, and higher education.

Technical and vocational education is delivered by 772 technical and vocational education organisations, of which 446 are public and 326 are private. In 2023, there were approximately 517,000 students in technical and vocational education organisations (Government of Kazakhstan, 2023).

Higher education in Kazakhstan has been part of the Bologna Process since 2010. There are 120 universities – 11 national universities, 29 state universities, one international university, 16 corporate universities, 48 private universities, one autonomous university (Nazarbayev University), and 14 non-civilian universities (Government of Kazakhstan, 2023). According to the Bureau of National Statistics, almost 600,000 people were studying in Kazakhstani universities as of December 2023, 53 per cent of whom were women. Almaty has both the highest number of higher education institutions (37) and students (186,600) (Bureau of National Statistics, 2023).

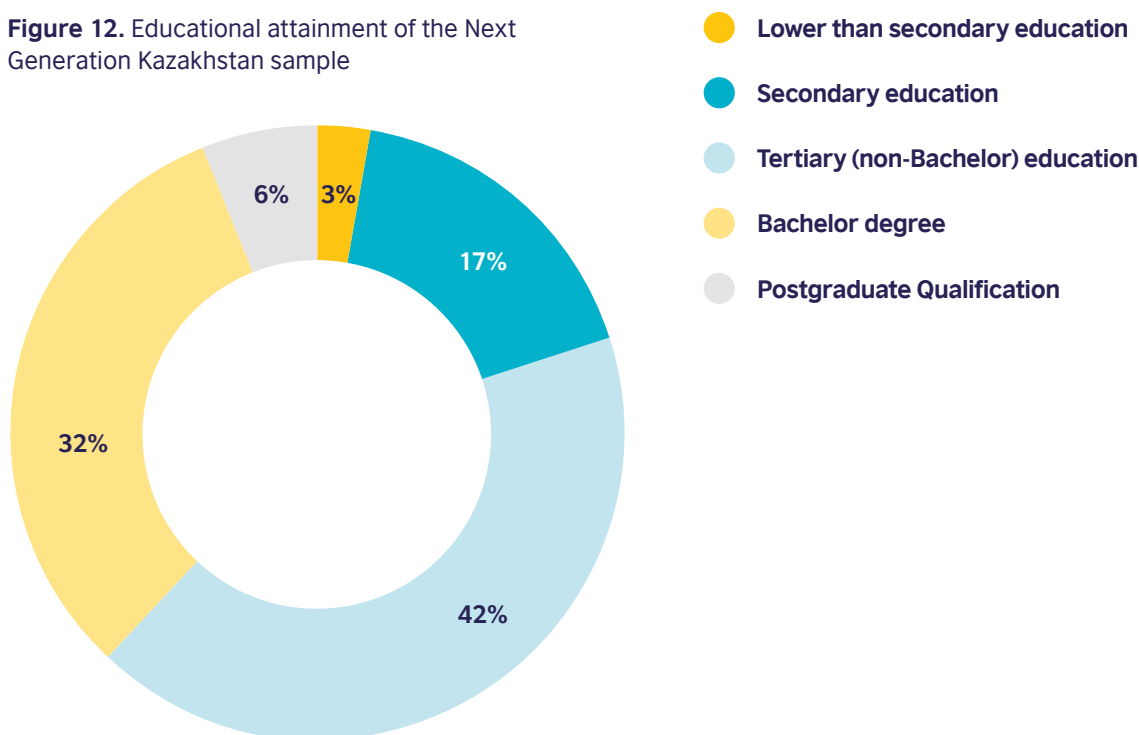
This chapter presents how young Kazakhstanis perceive their country's education system. It describes their views on the current situation, the value and usefulness of education, and identifiable trends in Kazakhstan's education system and environment.

<sup>2</sup> The Bologna Process is an intergovernmental initiative to improve the quality of higher education, setting up a shared European Higher Education Area, and making Europe a world leader in higher education: <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education/bologna-process>

# Young people's assessment of Kazakhstan's education system

The Next Generation sample mainly comprises young people who have completed secondary education and have different levels of attainment in tertiary education (see Figure 12).

**Figure 12.** Educational attainment of the Next Generation Kazakhstan sample



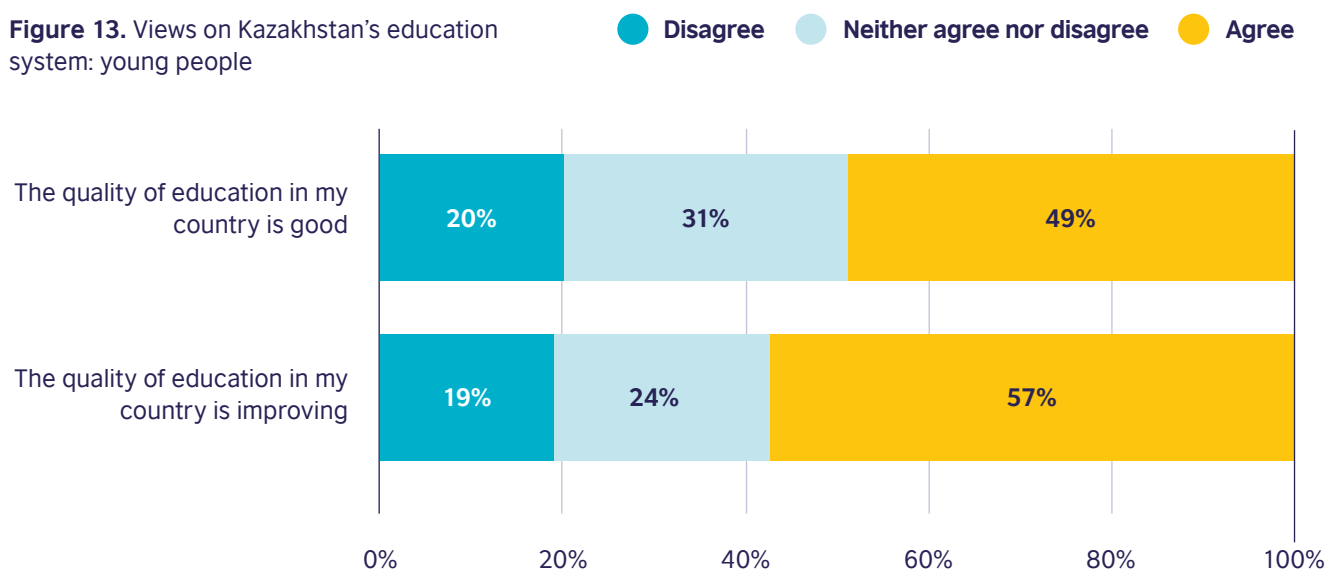
The younger cohort (18-24 age group) is less likely to have a non-bachelor tertiary education degree, but more likely to have a higher education degree, compared to the older generation (30-35 age group).

### Quality of education

Young Kazakhstanis' views on education usefully illustrate the features, values and attitudes identified in Chapter 1 – Young Kazakhstanis' realities: values, attitudes and influences. On the one hand, young people remain acutely aware of the limitations of a developing education system experiencing some pressure. They believe their educational experiences and realities often do not meet their needs and are generally challenging. On the other hand, they have a broadly positive outlook on the future and believe the country's education system is improving.

Both quantitative and qualitative results show that young Kazakhstanis have, on average, either a neutral or good opinion about the overall quality of education and its future. In a characteristically optimistic approach, over half of the country's young people (57 per cent) agree that education in the country is improving (see Figure 13).

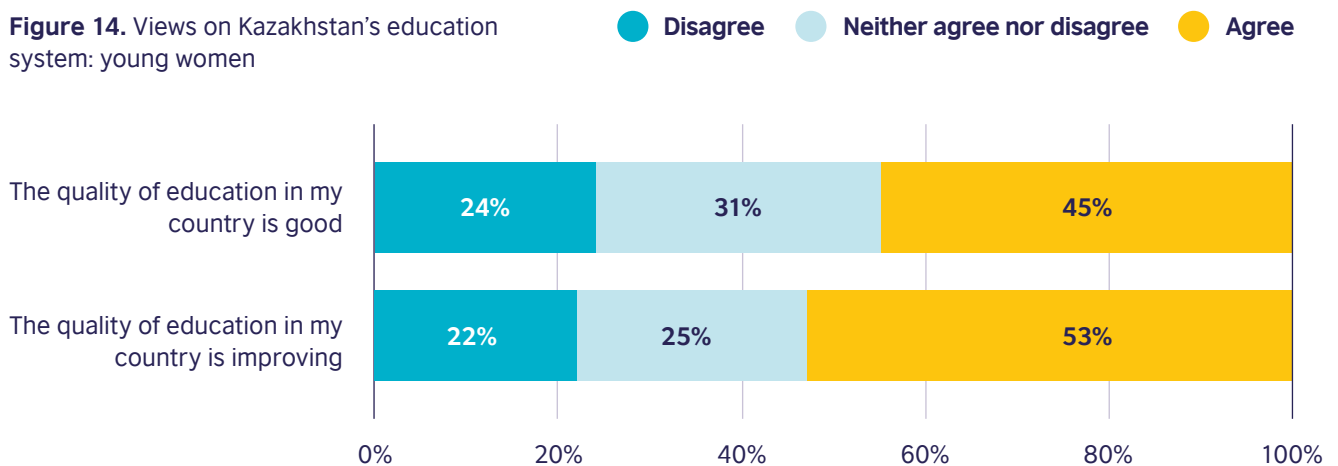
**Figure 13.** Views on Kazakhstan's education system: young people



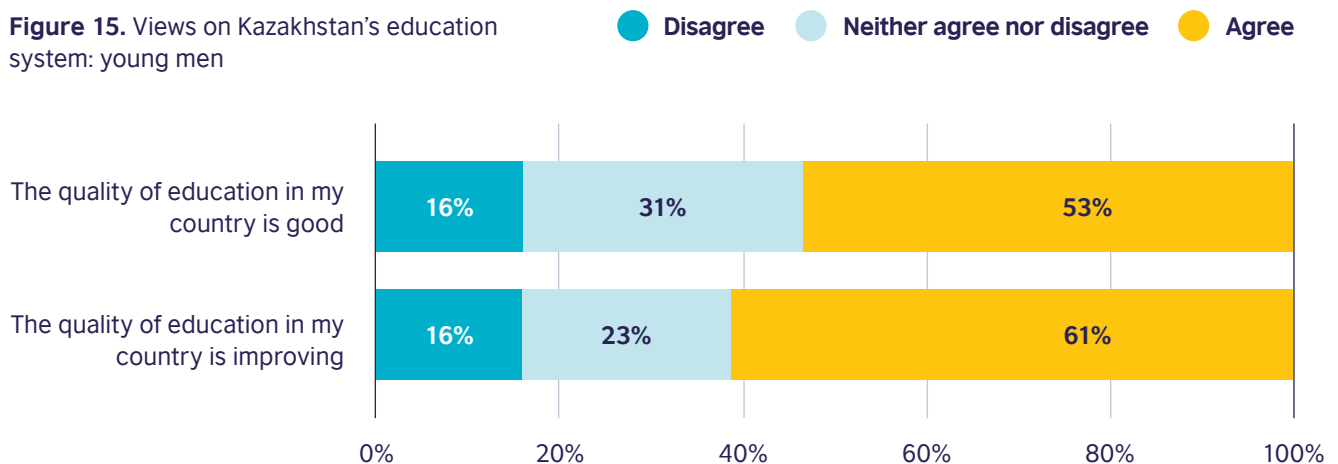
Interesting differences emerge between the opinions of young women and young men. For example, just 45 per cent of young women agree that 'The quality of education in my country is good', compared to 53 per cent of young men. Young women also seem more critical of the quality of teachers, with only 47.5 per cent of young women agreeing that 'Teachers in Kazakhstan are knowledgeable about their subjects' and 27 per cent disagreeing, compared to 58 per cent of young men agreeing and only 18 per cent disagreeing. Finally, young men seem more positive than young women about the future of education, with 61 per cent and 53 per cent, respectively, agreeing that the quality of education in Kazakhstan is improving (see Figure 14 and Figure 15).

These differences could reflect the gaps in education and wages: if young women believe they have less access to quality education and the labour market pays them considerably less than men, they may value education less than their male peers. Facing further discrimination in the education system would only exacerbate that view.

**Figure 14.** Views on Kazakhstan's education system: young women



**Figure 15.** Views on Kazakhstan's education system: young men

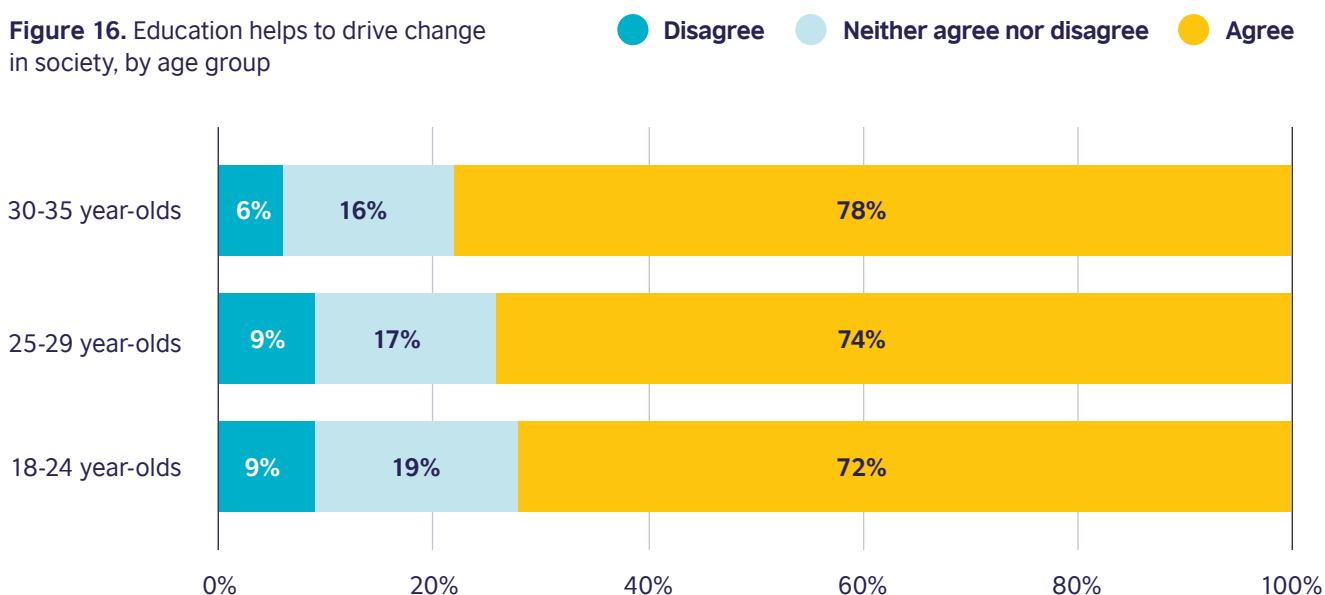


## Purpose and usefulness of education

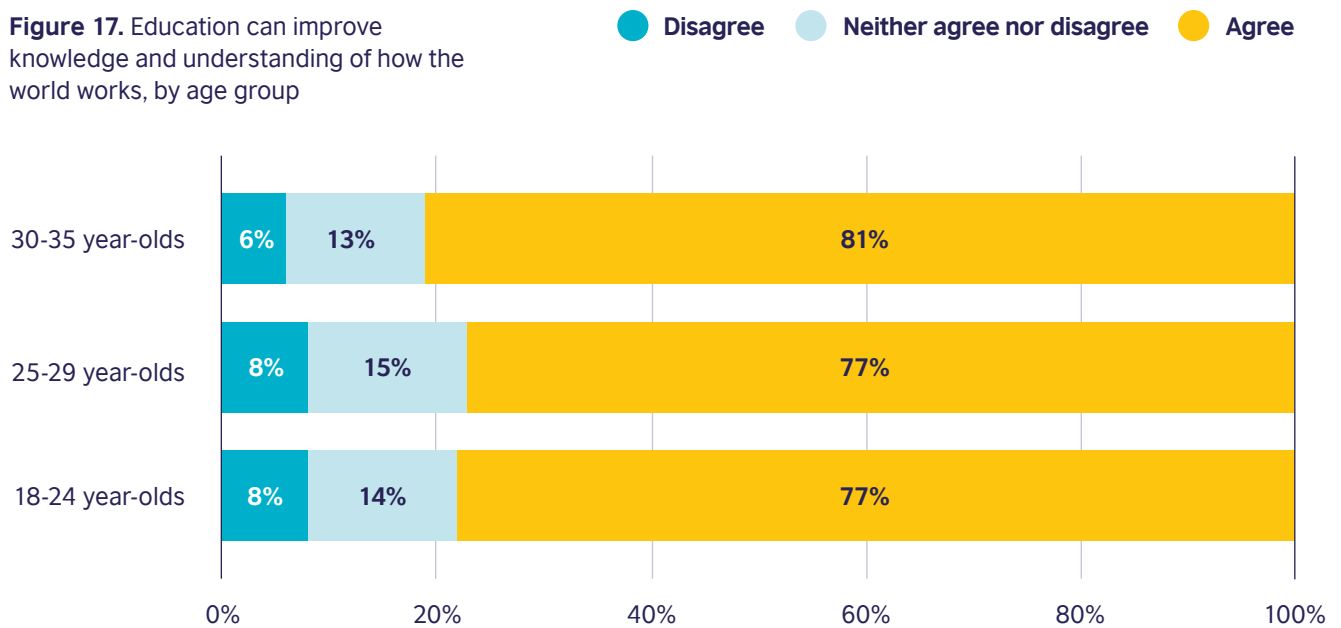
Overall, education is considered valuable on many levels, including socially (enabling positive change in society) and personally (providing knowledge and confidence).

Positive views are predominant across all age groups, but the older cohorts are the most positive. For example, 78 per cent of 30-35 year-olds believe that education helps to drive change in society (see Figure 18, compared to 72 per cent of 18-24 year-olds. In addition, 81 per cent of 30-35 year-olds believe that education allows for a better understanding of how the world works, compared to 77 per cent of 18-24 year-olds (see Figure 17). These differences all but disappear when considering education's role in personal confidence: around 70 per cent of respondents across all age groups believe that education instils the confidence to face challenging situations (see Figure 18).

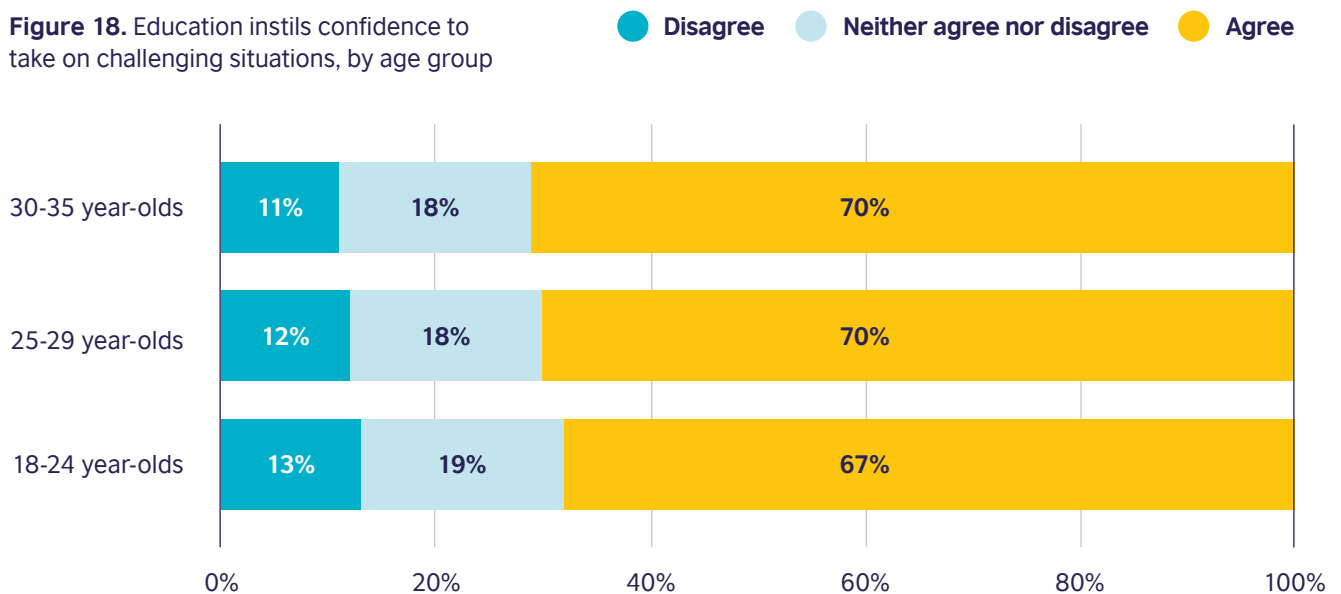
**Figure 16.** Education helps to drive change in society, by age group



**Figure 17.** Education can improve knowledge and understanding of how the world works, by age group



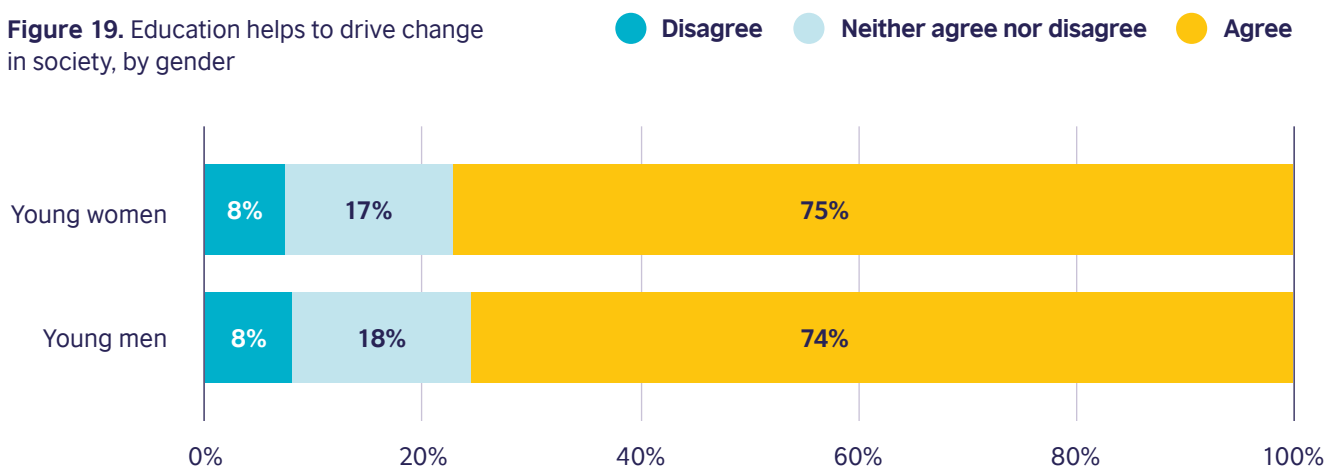
**Figure 18.** Education instils confidence to take on challenging situations, by age group



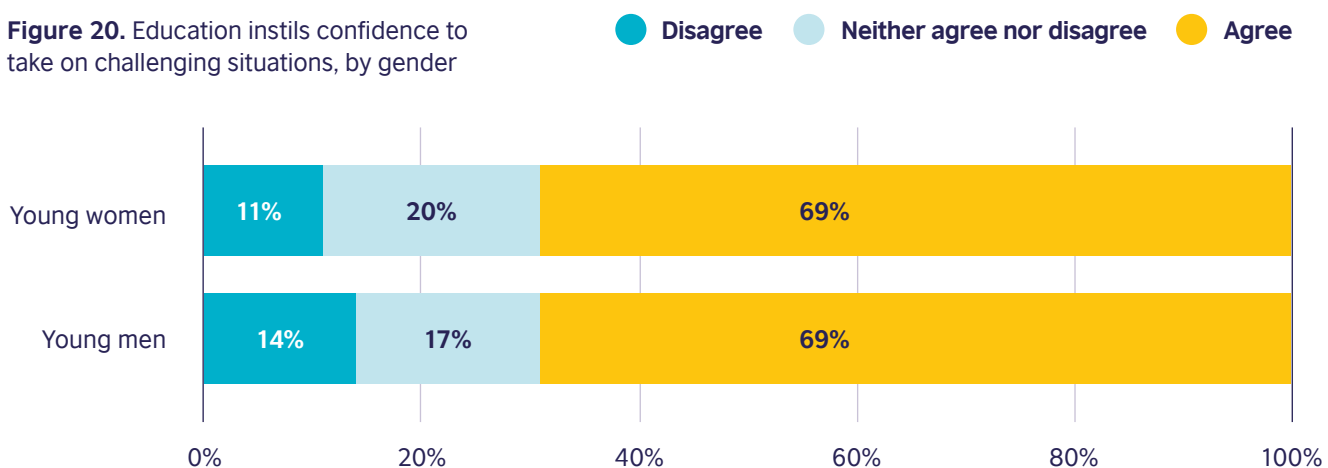
Gender differences are minimal when young people consider the value of education. Three-quarters of young women and men believe that education drives change in society (see Figure 19) and 69 per cent think that education enhances confidence, albeit with slightly more young men disagreeing (see Figure 20). Young women are somewhat less sure than young men about education's ability to provide knowledge and an understanding of how the world works (see Figure 21).



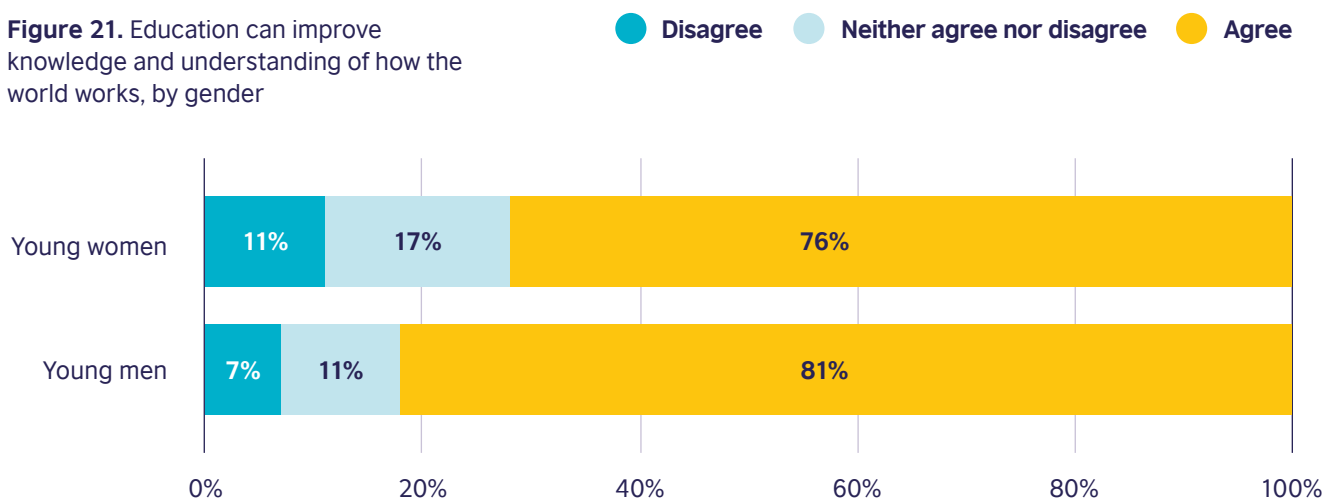
**Figure 19.** Education helps to drive change in society, by gender



**Figure 20.** Education instils confidence to take on challenging situations, by gender

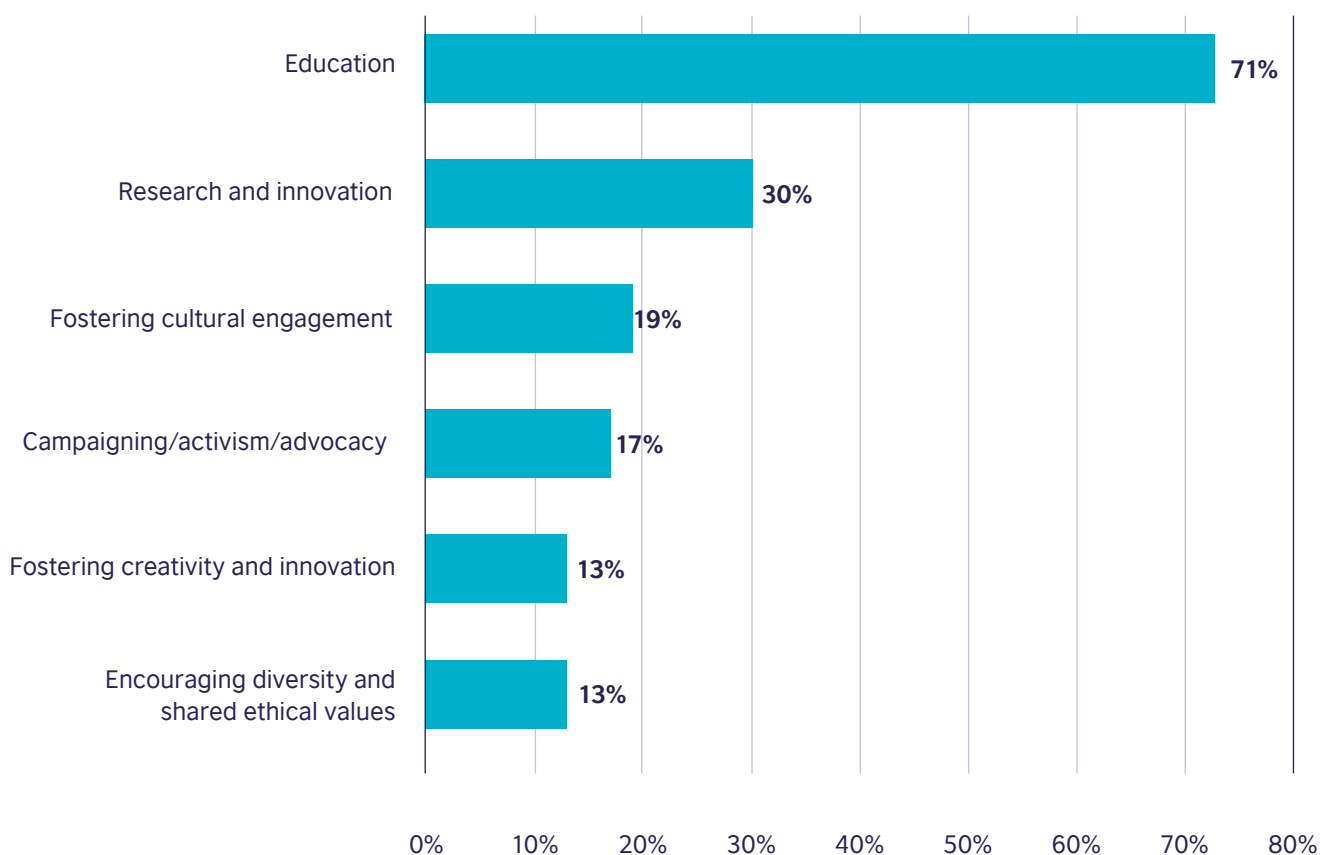


**Figure 21.** Education can improve knowledge and understanding of how the world works, by gender



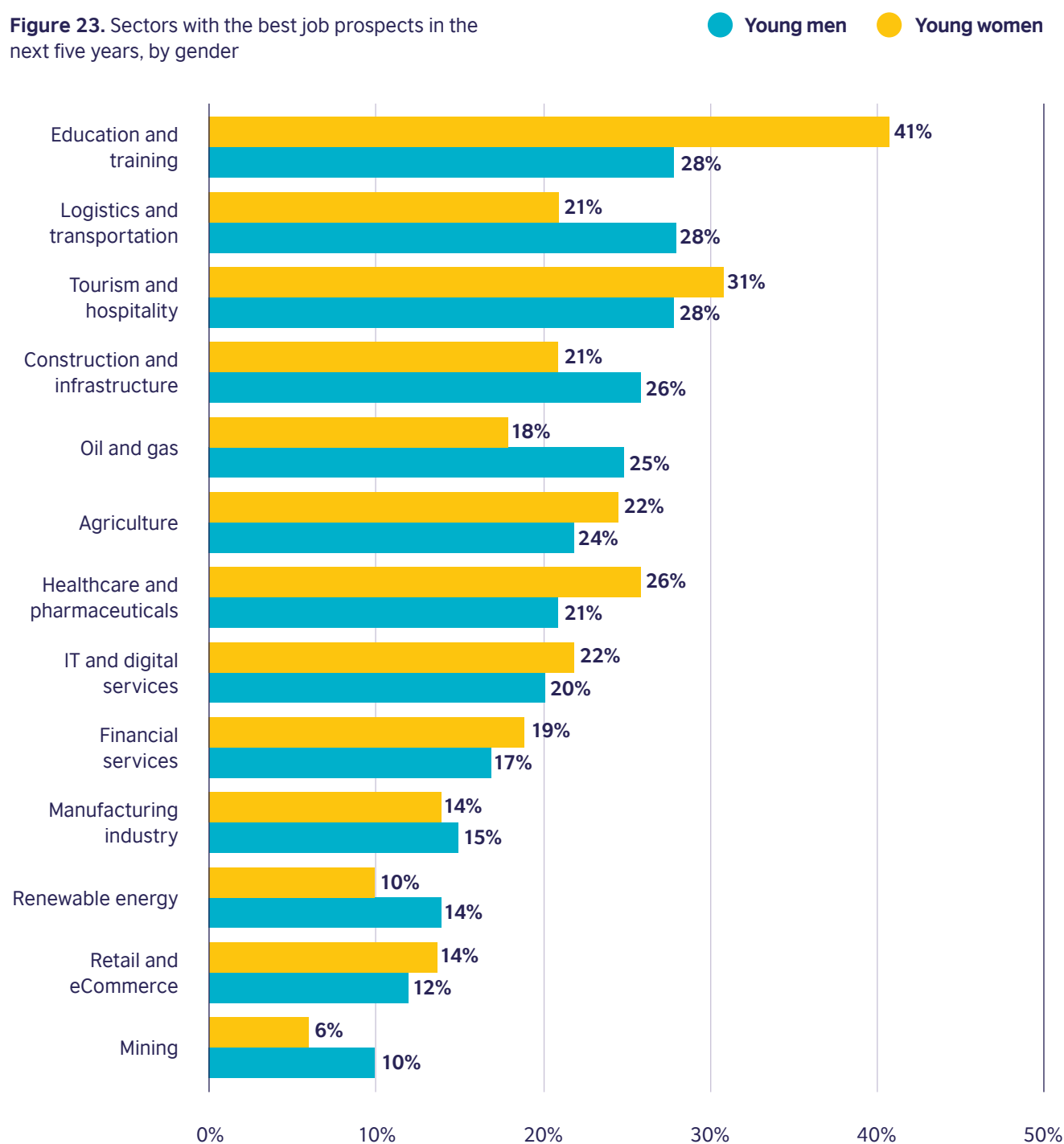
Young Kazakhstanis have a strong conviction about the transformative power of education to improve society, with over 70 per cent believing that education is the best tool to address global challenges, more than double the support for any other social improvement mechanism (see Figure 22). This points to their deep-seated belief that knowledge and learning play a crucial role in driving societal progress.

**Figure 22.** Solutions to global challenges



Finally, education is not only seen as enabling positive social change and personal psychological benefits, but also as an attractive employment sector. A large proportion of young people, especially young women (41 per cent) see the education and training sector as offering the best job prospects in the next five years (see Figure 23). Education and training is also cited as a promising professional area for young men, rated equally with logistics and transportation, and tourism and hospitality.

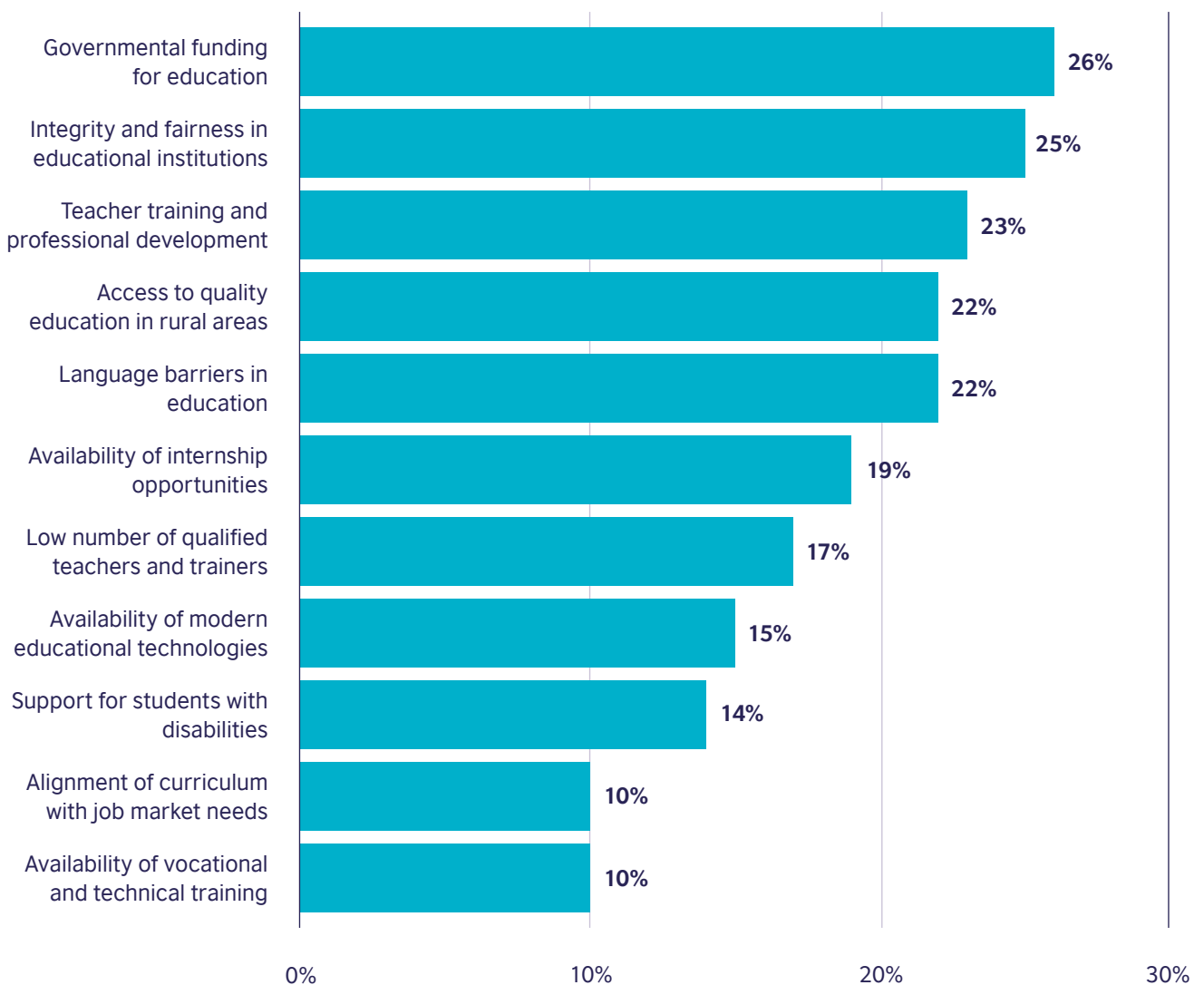
**Figure 23.** Sectors with the best job prospects in the next five years, by gender



### Challenges and changes

According to young people, the three key challenges in the country's education system are government funding, integrity and fairness in educational institutions, and teacher training and professional development (see Figure 24). Access to quality education in rural areas and language barriers are also seen as significant problems by more than 20 per cent of respondents.

**Figure 24.** Key challenges in the education system

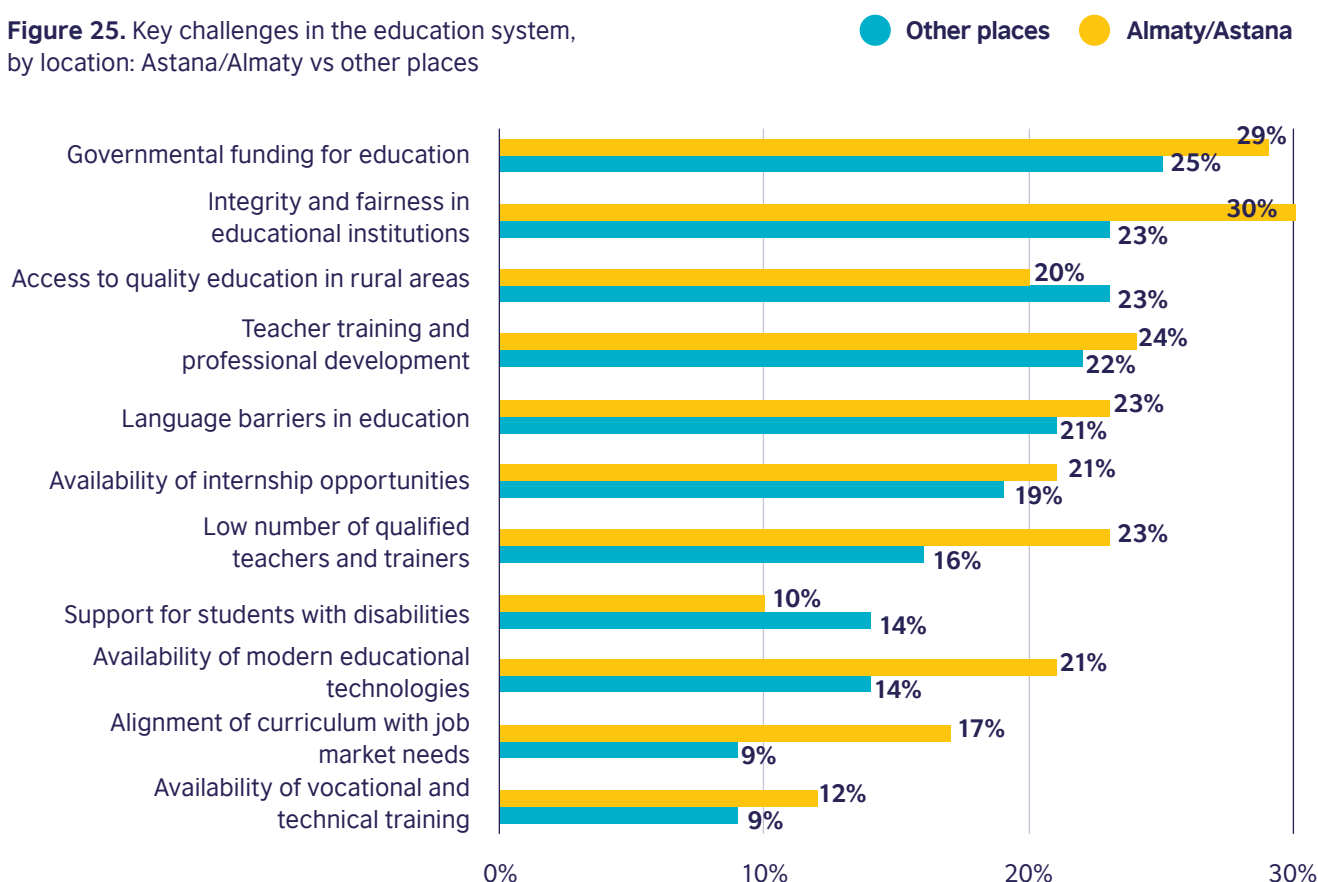


Young people's perceptions of Kazakhstan's education system and its challenges vary considerably by location, notably urban vs rural, and Almaty/Astana (as the country's largest cities) vs the rest of the country.

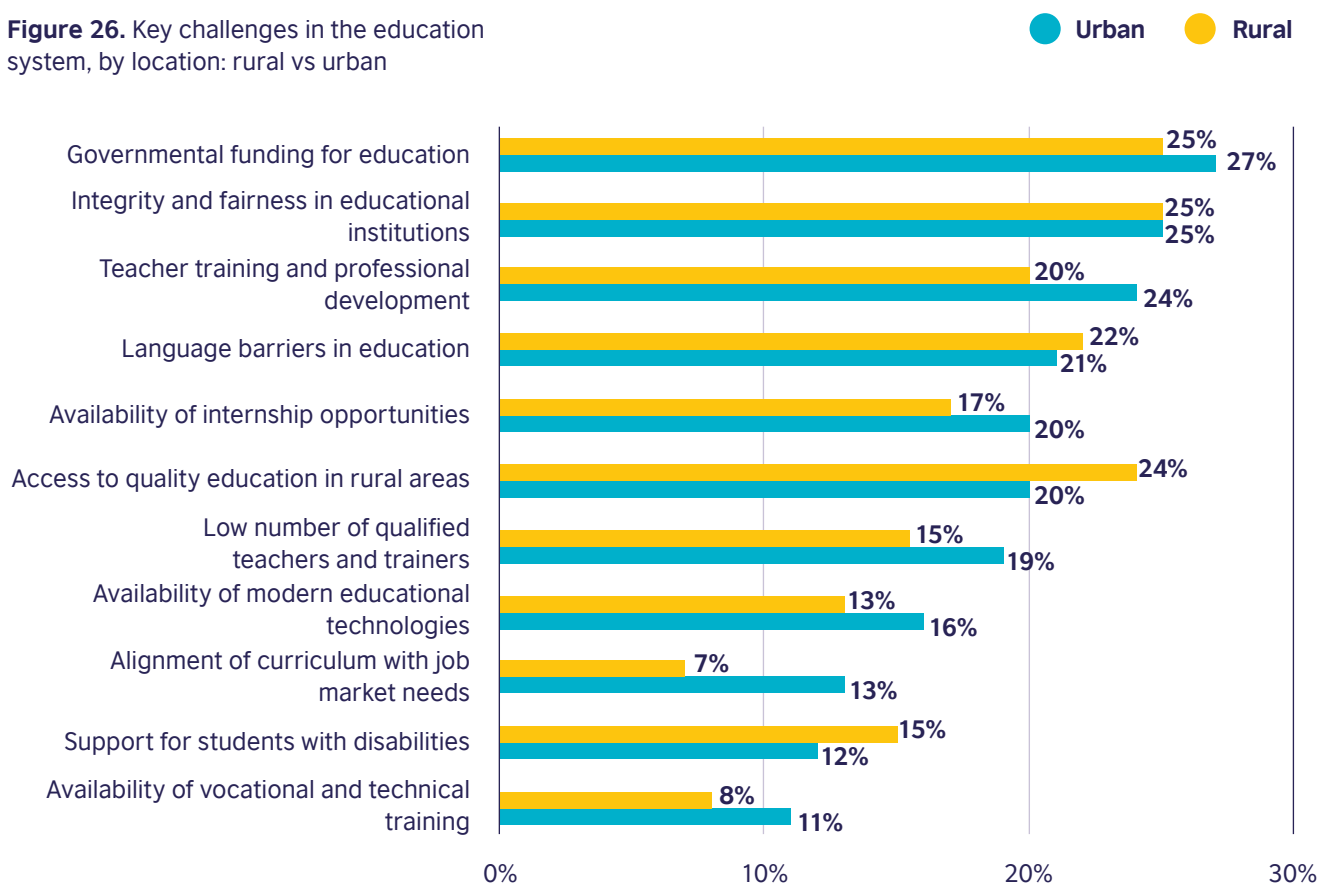
Young people in Almaty and Astana demand more of the education system. They consider many of these issues problematic, particularly the integrity and fairness of educational institutions (see Figure 25).

Respondents in rural locations have fewer concerns than their urban counterparts, with the exception of access to quality education in rural areas, language barriers in education, and support for students with disabilities (see Figure 26).

**Figure 25.** Key challenges in the education system, by location: Astana/Almaty vs other places



**Figure 26.** Key challenges in the education system, by location: rural vs urban



There is widespread agreement across age, gender and location that quality of teaching is the improvement most needed in the education system (see Figure 27, Figure 28 and Figure 29). The interviews with young leaders highlight that teachers face particularly demanding challenges and that more support is needed. Next Generation participants, some of whom have first-hand experience of teaching, identify poor working conditions for teachers as a key challenge. They point to low salaries (especially for young teachers) and excessive workload (for example, digital paperwork is now required for every class), which risk burnout and low motivation for teachers to improve their practice.

Interviewees express a desire for stronger improvements in teacher training in Kazakhstan. While younger teachers are widely regarded as highly engaged with their students and proactive in their teaching approaches, some interviewees feel that a rethink of in-service training is needed.

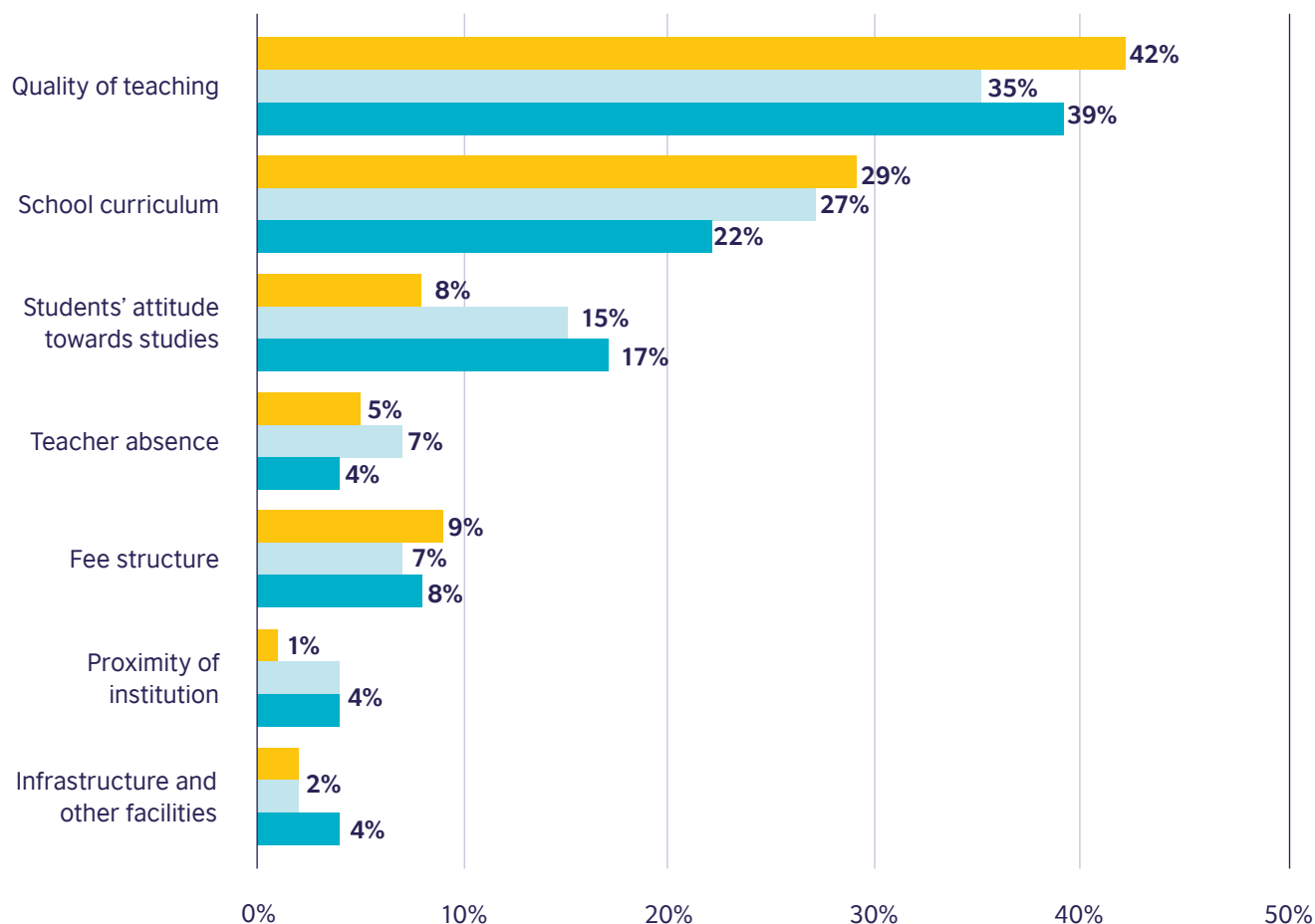


**We have a lot of work to do. There is paperwork, reports and so on, and work with parents. So, the teacher doesn't have enough time to get up and prepare for class. If he wants to get ready for the lesson, he doesn't have enough energy, he is tired, he doesn't have time.**

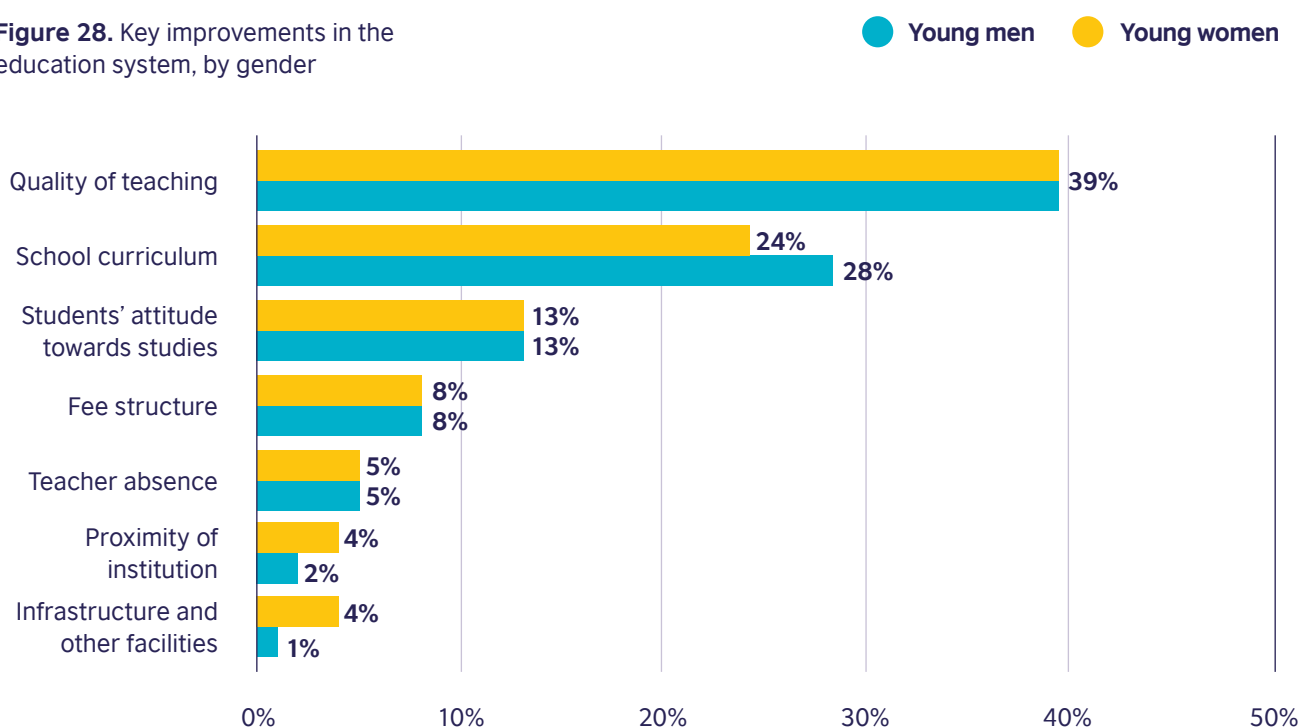
Male, 21 years old.

**Figure 27.** Key improvements in the education system, by age group

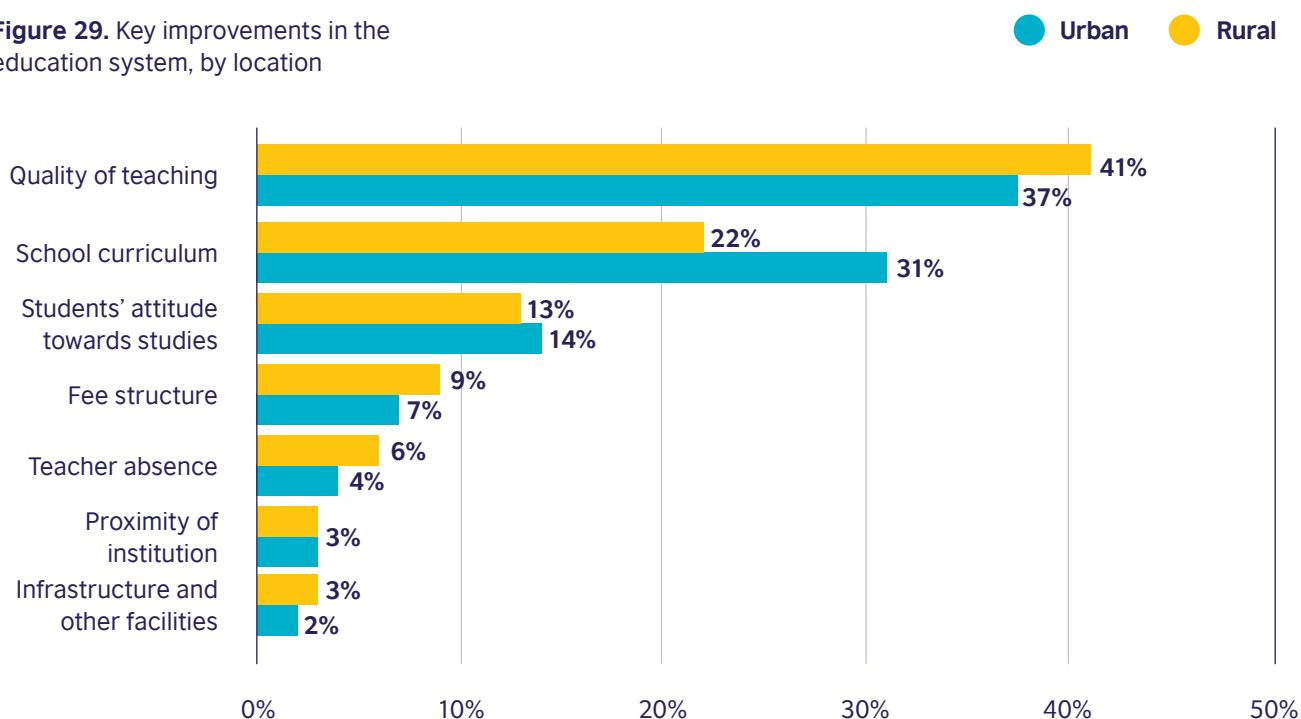
18-24 year-olds 25-29 year-olds 30-35 year-olds



**Figure 28.** Key improvements in the education system, by gender



**Figure 29.** Key improvements in the education system, by location



Young Kazakhstani highlight the school curriculum as a challenge. During the interviews and focus groups, they also described their concerns about the perceived lack of practical knowledge provided by higher education institutions. A large proportion of interviewees believe that this approach negatively impacts their access to the labour market and makes them more difficult to hire.

This situation has created a general practice of unpaid internships across the labour market. Research participants criticise this approach as a kind of free labour that also increases inequality, as only those with means can afford to spend time in unpaid work as an investment towards a better job in the future. Those who cannot afford to work for free are relegated to unattractive, low-paying positions for longer.

A final challenge relates to access to educational opportunities. Survey data reveals that 33 percent of the young people sampled left education before progressing on to higher education in order to work. Some reasons put forward for this included personal challenges or not seeing clear added value in pursuit of higher education. (see Figure 30).

Interviewees described how ableism, geographical location (notably, Astana and Almaty vs the rest of the country), and social class impact the ability to pursue tertiary or higher education.

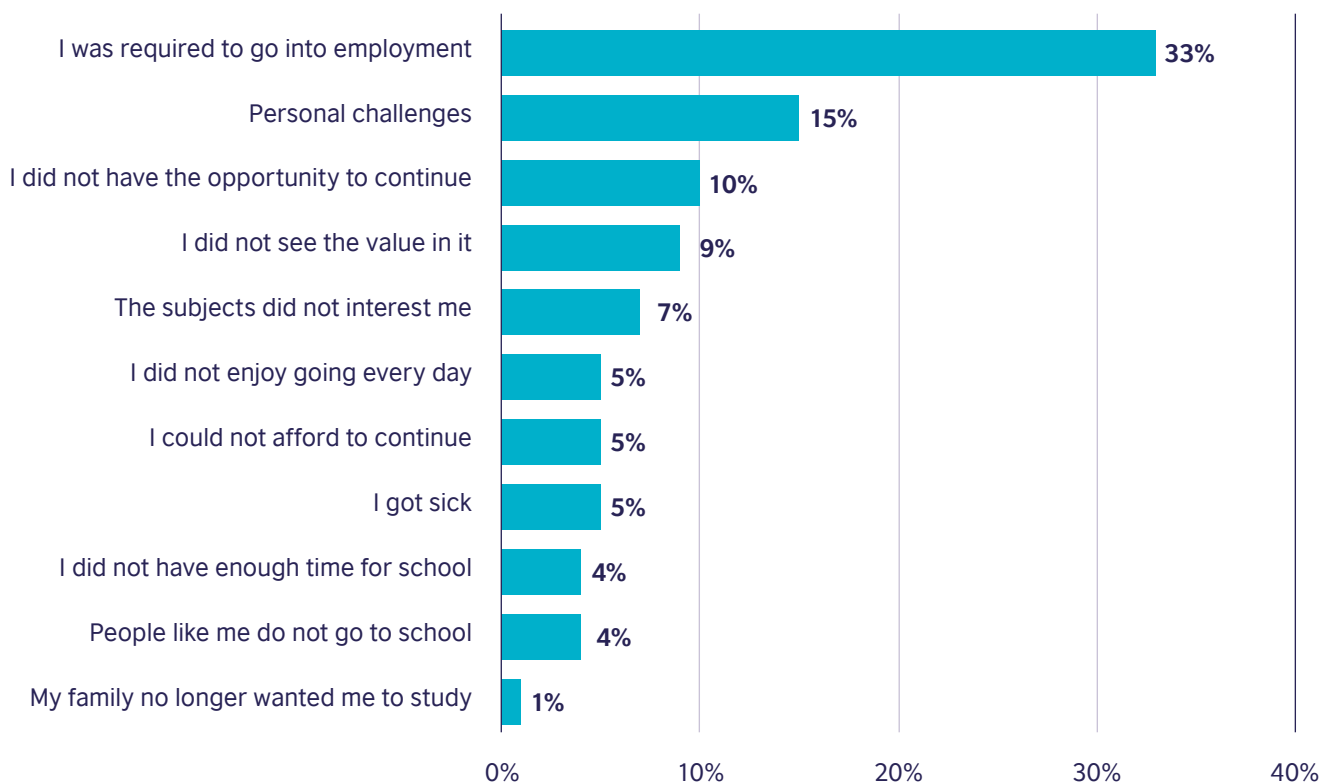
Interviewees recognise that students from disadvantaged backgrounds have a much more difficult time in education. They are aware that many have to work throughout their studies, taking time and energy away from their education, often in jobs that are disconnected from their degrees.



**For example, after I graduated from college, I could not go to university, so to speak. I was left with only secondary education, and then in order to continue my profession, for example, to continue my development, I had to go to other cities. It was not possible in my own city. If I had been in my own city, I would have continued and graduated. It was only in Almaty, Astana. That is why there were no favourable conditions for me there. That is the obstacle.**

Male, 30 years old

**Figure 30.** Reasons for leaving education after secondary school



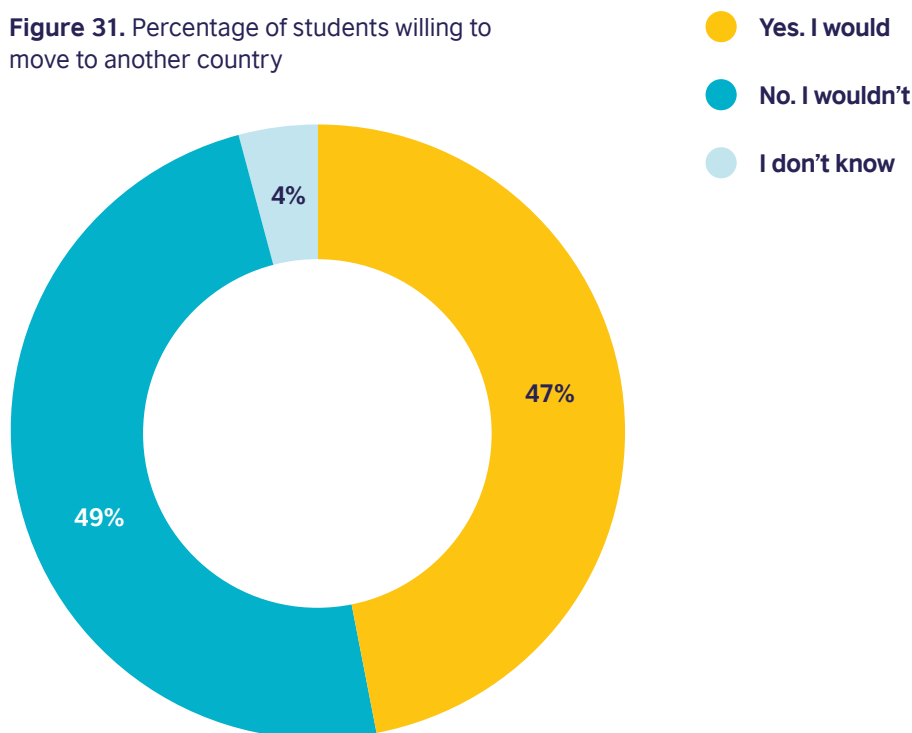


# Trends in young people's approach to education in Kazakhstan

Young Kazakhstanis are very focused on change, whether within the education system, in what education is required to provide, or in the various pressures they experience during their education. The quantitative and qualitative data suggest four main shifts underway in Kazakhstan's education system.

Firstly, the system is pivoting towards greater openness to other countries, with almost half of students surveyed willing to move abroad (see Figure 31).

**Figure 31.** Percentage of students willing to move to another country



Similarly, interviewees report their generation's significant interest in studying abroad. Several of the young leaders have already studied at foreign universities and believe it provided them with an interesting experience, as well as considerably enriching their capacity and influence in their chosen field of work. State-sponsored or private grants play an important role in financing these experiences, with studying abroad increasingly seen as a viable goal. In addition to considering formal education courses outside Kazakhstan, interviewees are interested in learning from other countries' experiences, particularly well-developed Asian countries (Japan, South Korea) and the USA (see Chapter 5 - Understanding Kazakhstan as part of a busy international arena).

Secondly, young Kazakhstanis note a recent sense of education being influenced by Western countries. They highlight Kazakhstan's adoption of the Bologna Process in 2010 and new or growing importance of international universities in the country. Most interviewees feel positively about this change, with some emphasising the need to tailor programmes to Kazakhstan's cultural sensitivities.



**Certain things don't align with our Kazakh mentality (...). For example, subjects like sexual education might not be as relevant here. In Europe, they develop programmes that suit their needs, and we just adopt them without filtering or adapting them to what Kazakhstan specifically needs. Instead, we should research and create programmes based on our requirements rather than taking ready-made ones from abroad.**



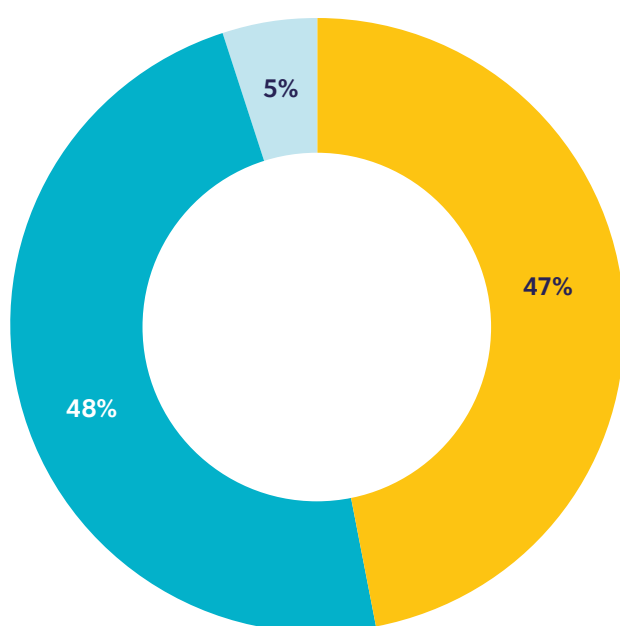
Thirdly, the digitalisation of bureaucratic processes is seen as an indicator of progress and modernity. This policy shift aligns well with the increased importance of the information technology (IT) sector and the move towards more e-governance initiatives. Similarly, digitalisation is increasingly observed in various educational processes, from class planning to delivery. Interviewees emphasise that online learning increases young people's access to high-quality education and has the potential to facilitate broader community participation in teaching and learning.

Finally, almost half of young people who did not continue on to tertiary or higher education are interested in pursuing a lifelong learning programme (see Figure 32). Adult education is essential to develop new skills and can give a second chance to people forced to leave their studies earlier than they themselves would have chosen.



**Online education has become more accessible. And a fair number of people are changing or supplementing their professions with some courses and additional education. Which used to be less accessible.**

**Figure 32.** Young people with less than tertiary/higher education willing to pursue lifelong learning



- Yes
- No
- I don't know

## Chapter 3

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# Navigating employment opportunities and challenges



# Introduction

The labour market in Kazakhstan has changed significantly since the country gained independence in 1991. Demographic shifts and population growth from 15 million to almost 20 million have altered the structure and composition of the labour market, with the numbers of employed people increasing from 6.2 to 9 million. Economic growth due to the oil export boom has also contributed to employment growth. In 2023, youth unemployment in the country was 3.5 per cent (Bureau of National Statistics, 2024). The highest unemployment rate was in Almaty and Astana, while the lowest was in the North Kazakhstan and Atyrau regions. In 2022, 78 per cent of young people were employed by someone else and 22 per cent were self-employed (SRC Youth, 2022b). Looking at economic sectors, there is a surfeit of employable young people in the service and trade sectors, and low youth employment in industry and agriculture.

Young people living in rural areas experience more difficulties finding work than their urban counterparts, with that shortage of jobs a major factor in unemployment. As employment is closely linked to education and qualification levels, limited access to quality education for young people in rural areas is a barrier to finding stable, highly paid jobs (Sharipova and Beimenbetov, 2021).

Regional employment disparities have been addressed through specific government programmes. For example, the Serpin programme was launched in 2014 to compensate for the workforce shortage in the northern regions of Kazakhstan. The programme provided grants to young people from the southern regions to study at universities located in the north: 5,205 grants were allocated for vocational education and 23,000 grants for university studies. However, the programme had only limited success. In 2018, for example, only 25 per cent of programme participants were employed in the northern regions after graduation (Centre for Applied Research (TALAP), 2021). Another programme, With Diploma to Village, was launched for young graduates in 2009 to provide financial assistance for young people to work in rural areas. The government also supported young entrepreneurs through the Zhas Kasipker (young entrepreneur)

programme, which implemented 6,090 projects in 2019 (Centre for Applied Research (TALAP), 2021).

Researchers and policymakers have also focused on employment in the informal sector, which employed 13 per cent of the working population in 2022 (Bureau of National Statistics, 2022a). That proportion is likely higher in practice, as some informal trade and markets are not taken into account. In 2022, 24 per cent of the total workforce in Kazakhstan was self-employed (Bureau of National Statistics, 2022b). Self-employment is widespread among young people in Kazakhstan, ranging from selling goods and services, to driving taxis, babysitting, etc.

Driven by technological development, the emergence of the gig economy has changed the structure of the job market. Nine out of 10 digital platform workers are men aged 25-44. For example, 98 per cent of taxi workers on platforms are men and only 2 per cent are women. Young people are attracted to work in the digital economy due to relatively good incomes, flexibility and independence (Insebayeva and Beissembayev, 2023). However, gig workers also experience vulnerabilities, such as job insecurity, poor working conditions, and lack of career advancement opportunities. In addition, they are not eligible to receive social benefits, create/join trade unions, or defend their labour rights (Zhussupova and Erken, 2022).

Employment and access to the labour market are fundamental aspects of young people's lives globally and Kazakhstanis are no exception. The literature review identified several challenges faced by young people in their job searches and work, some of which are closely linked to education. As yet, there is little research on new forms of work, such as the gig economy, which tends to attract young people due to its flexibility.

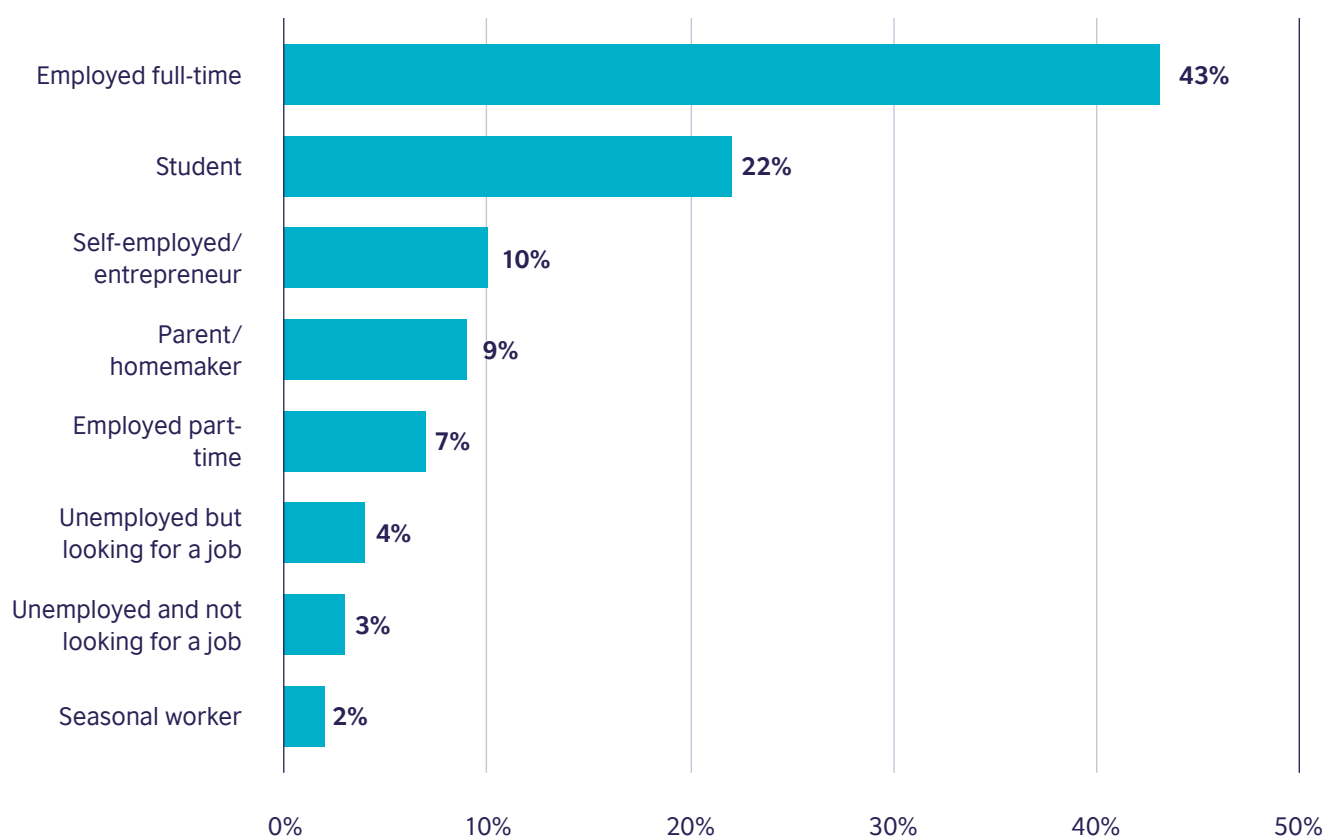
The survey results confirm the desk research conclusion that unemployment is the top concern for all age groups (see Figure 3). Despite a relatively low youth unemployment rate, this concern underlines the importance of a job for financial stability, personal sense of purpose, social relationships, and a vision for the future.

# Young Kazakhstanis in the labour market

## Occupational status

The Next Generation research looks at the current occupational status of young people in Kazakhstan. Those in full-time employment account for 43 per cent of the sample, followed by students at 22 per cent, self-employed people and entrepreneurs at 10 per cent, and parents and homemakers at 9 per cent (see Figure 33).

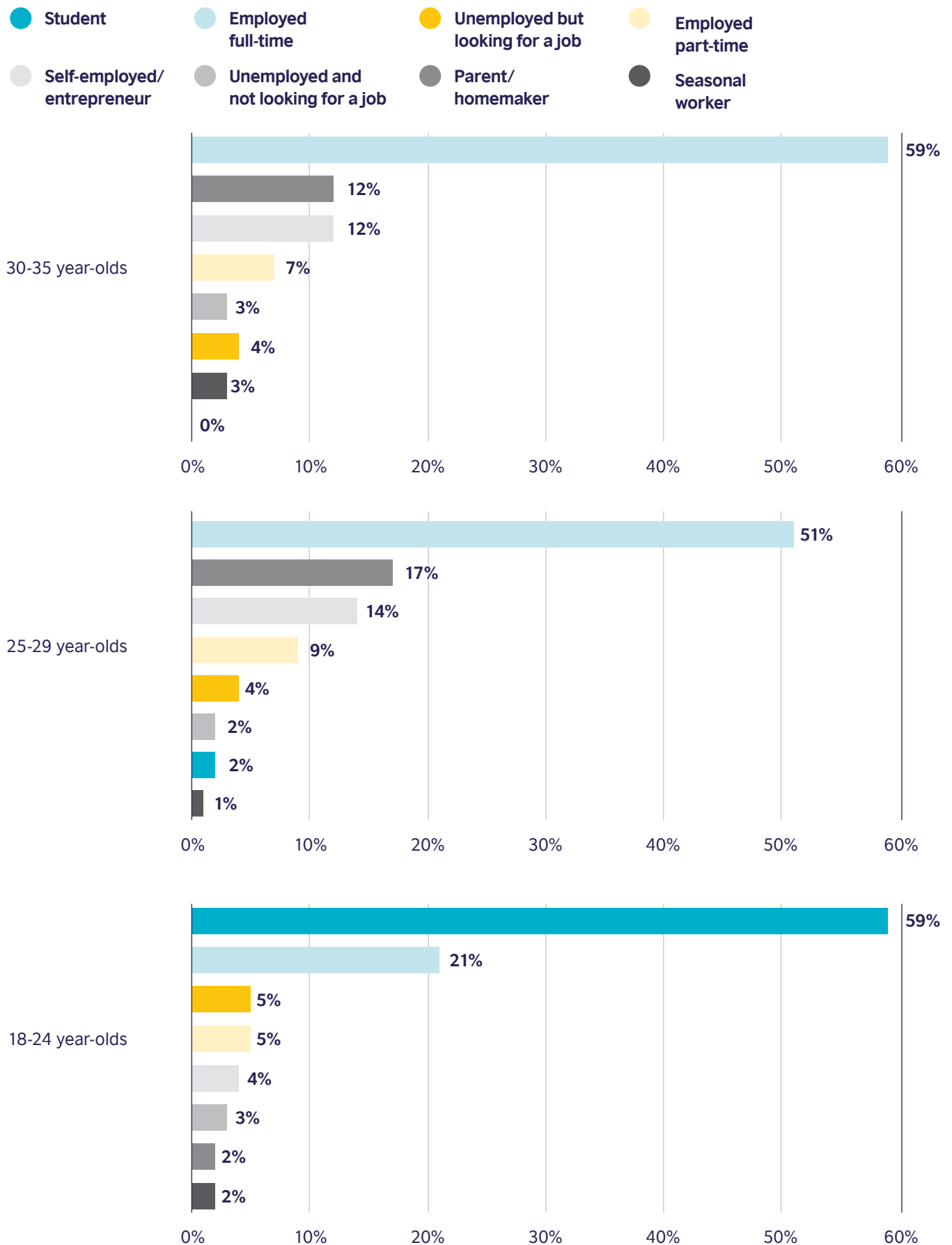
**Figure 33.** Occupational status of Next Generation Kazakhstan sample



As expected, the occupational status of young people in Kazakhstan varies significantly by age. Some 59 per cent of people in the 18-24 age group report studying as their main activity, with only 21 per cent employed full-time (see Figure 34). The rest of this group is divided between those who are unemployed but looking for a job (5 per cent), those working part-time (5 per cent), self-employed or entrepreneurs (4 per cent), unemployed and not looking for a job (2 per cent),

homemakers (2 per cent) and seasonal workers (2 per cent). By contrast, 59 per cent of respondents in the 30-35 age group are employed full-time, followed by those who are self-employed or entrepreneurs (12 per cent), homemakers (12 per cent), those who are employed part-time (7 per cent), unemployed but looking for a job (4 per cent), not looking for a job (3 per cent), and seasonal workers (3 per cent).

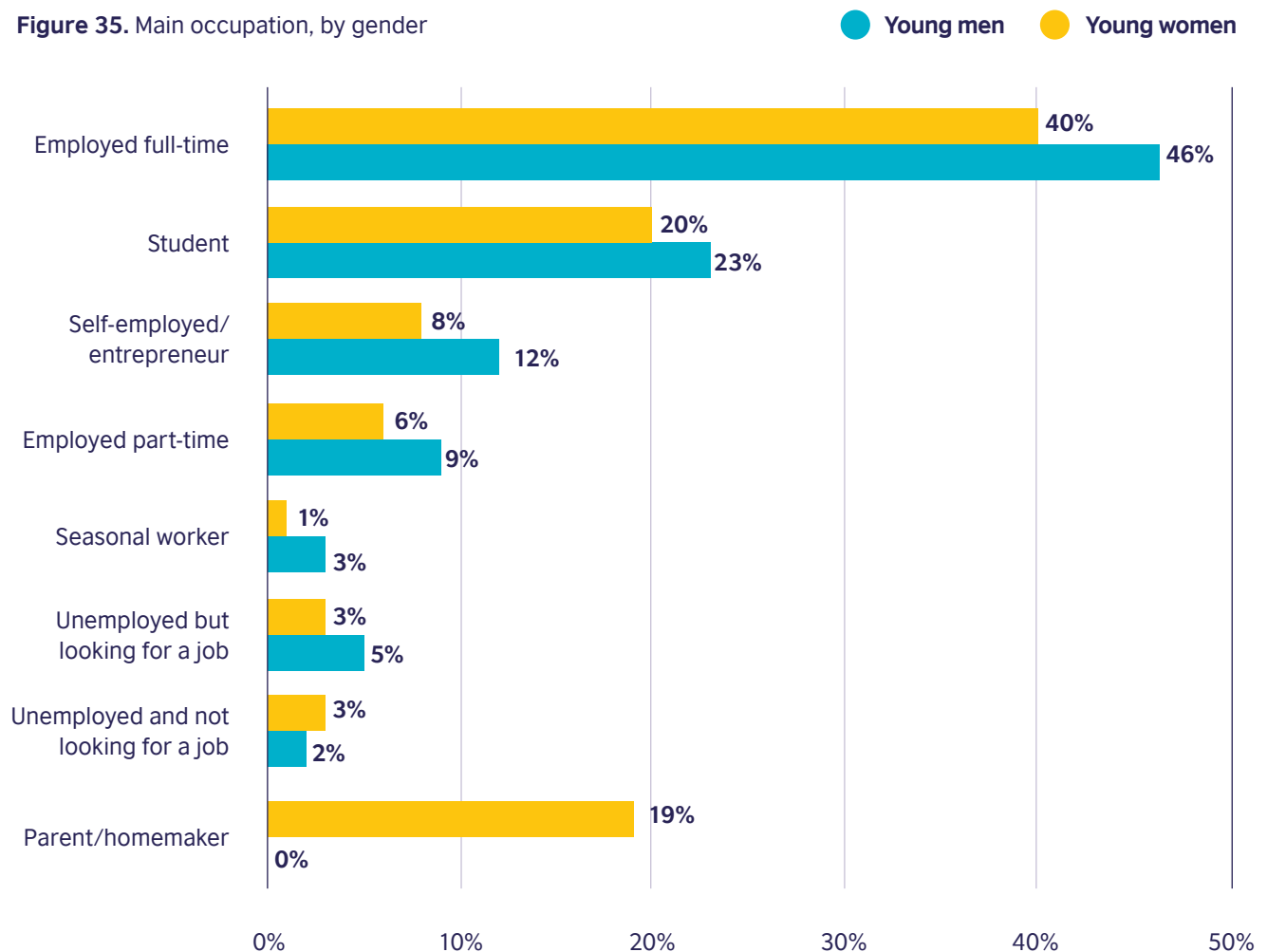
**Figure 34.** Main occupation, by age group



There is a strongly gendered division of labour in unpaid work, with only young women – and no young men – reporting their main occupation as parent/homemaker. However, the data show that 46 per cent of young women work either full-time or part-time, compared to 54 per cent of young men, indicating high participation in the labour market for young women in Kazakhstan (see Figure 35).

Additional gender differences emerge in self-employment/entrepreneurship, with 12 per cent of young men declaring it their main activity, compared to 8 per cent of young women. Fewer young women report being unemployed and looking for a job, at just 3 per cent, compared to 5 per cent of young men.

**Figure 35.** Main occupation, by gender





## Skills

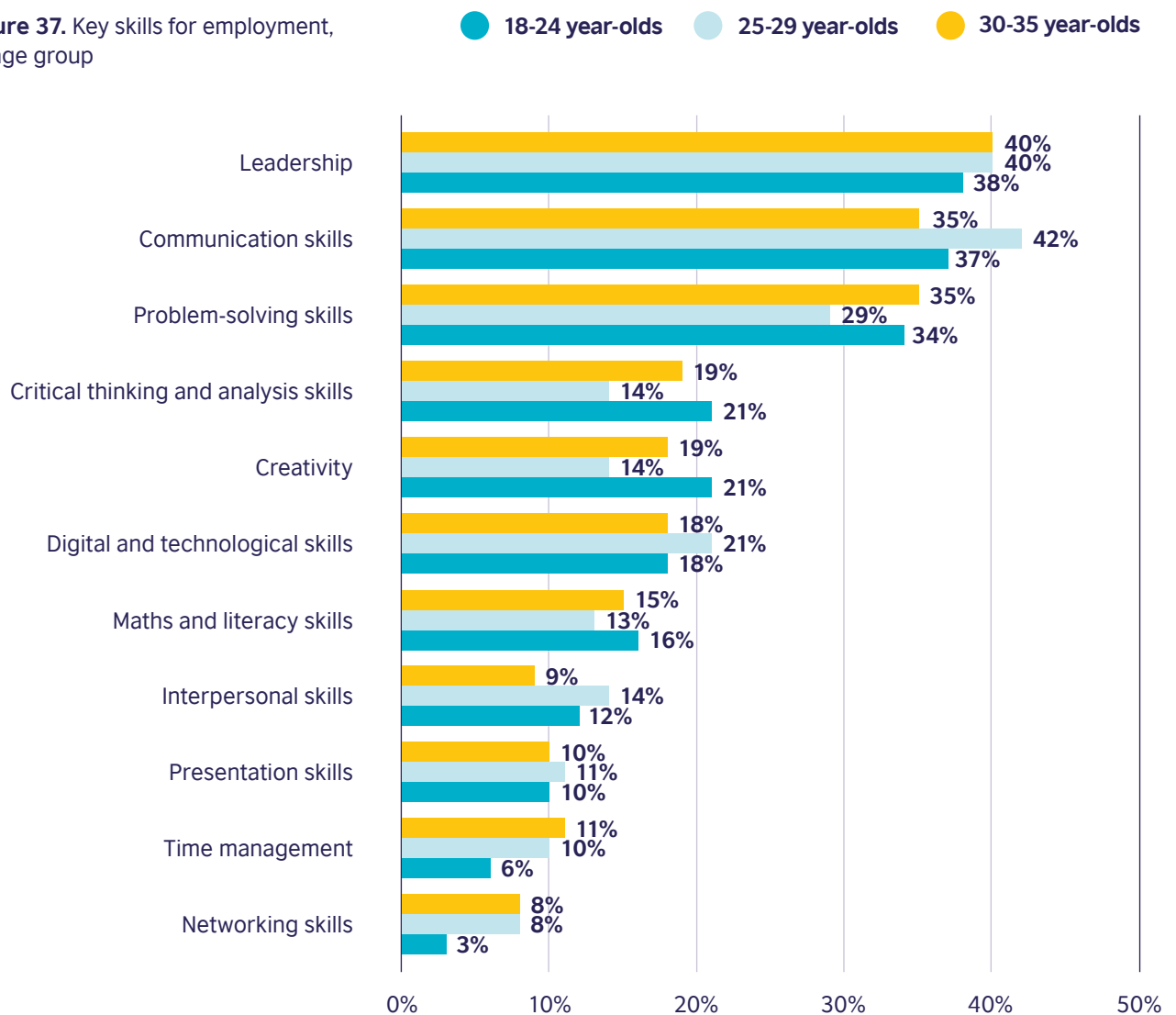
According to the survey, most young people in Kazakhstan feel that their education prepared them for the labour market. This holds across all education attainment levels, although 15 per cent of people with secondary education are less confident about their employment readiness, compared to 8-10 per cent of young people with tertiary and higher education degrees (see Figure 36).

**Figure 36.** Adequacy of preparedness for work, by level of education



In addition to formal education, young people in Kazakhstan are aware that soft skills are fundamental to succeed in the labour market. There is a consensus across different age ranges that leadership, problem-solving, and communication skills are the most relevant for the world of work. The youngest cohort, in particular, also believe that creativity is important (see Figure 37).

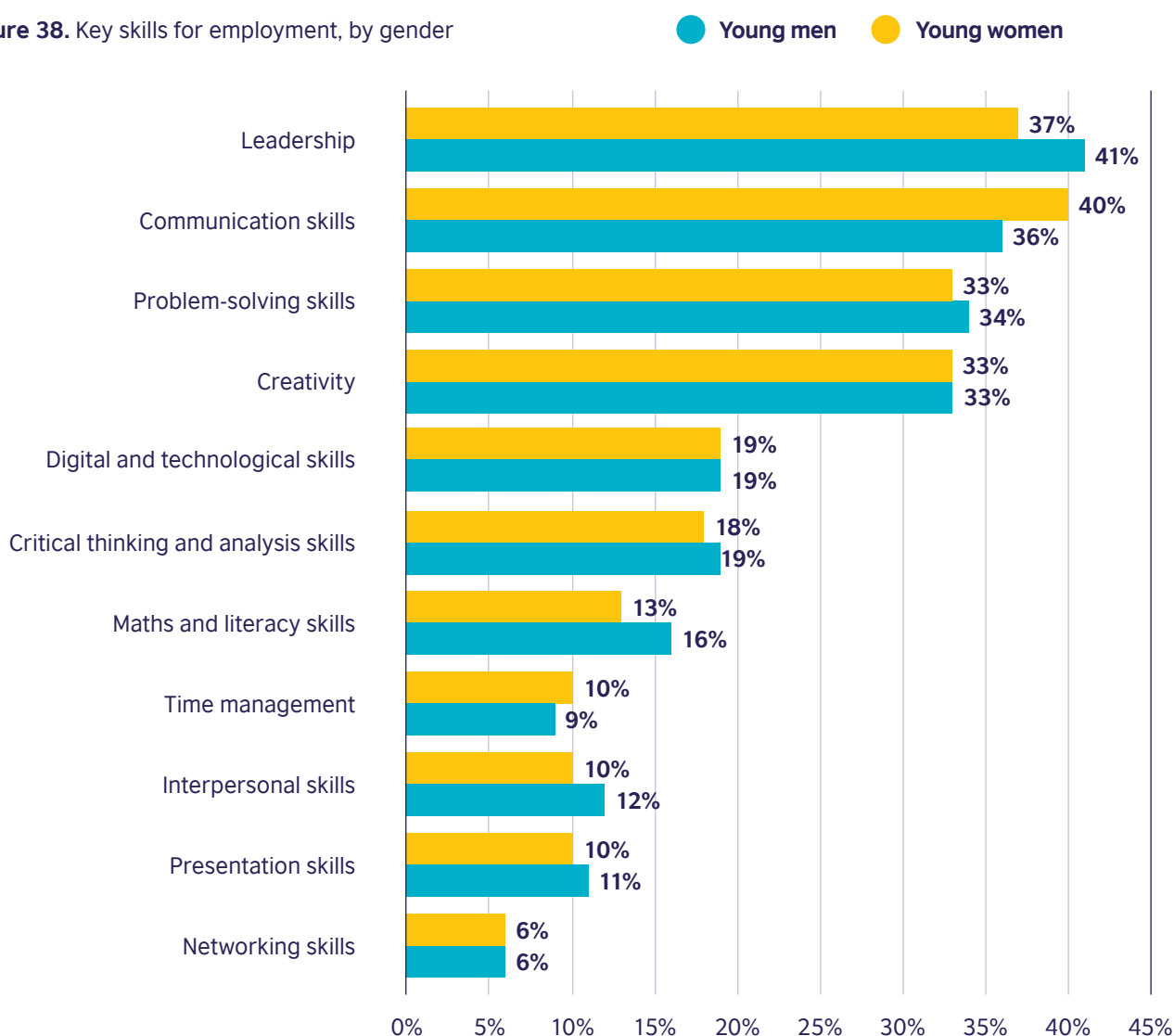
**Figure 37.** Key skills for employment, by age group



Language knowledge is considered important (likely included within communication skills). Interviewees note that Kazakh has gained considerable importance for local jobs, while English is regarded as crucial for communication with Western Europe and the USA. Knowledge of a language is seen to enhance employability, as well as enabling opportunities for international learning (e.g. student exchange, scholarships) and working abroad.

Although young men and women have similar perceptions of the most important skills for the labour market, young men are somewhat more likely than young women to see leadership as essential, at 41 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively (see Figure 38). Young women are more likely to see communication skills as relevant, at 40 per cent, compared to 36 per cent of young men.

**Figure 38.** Key skills for employment, by gender



Young people in Kazakhstan are working to gain skills in communication, leadership, creativity and problem-solving, already reflecting on their aspirations and labour market opportunities.

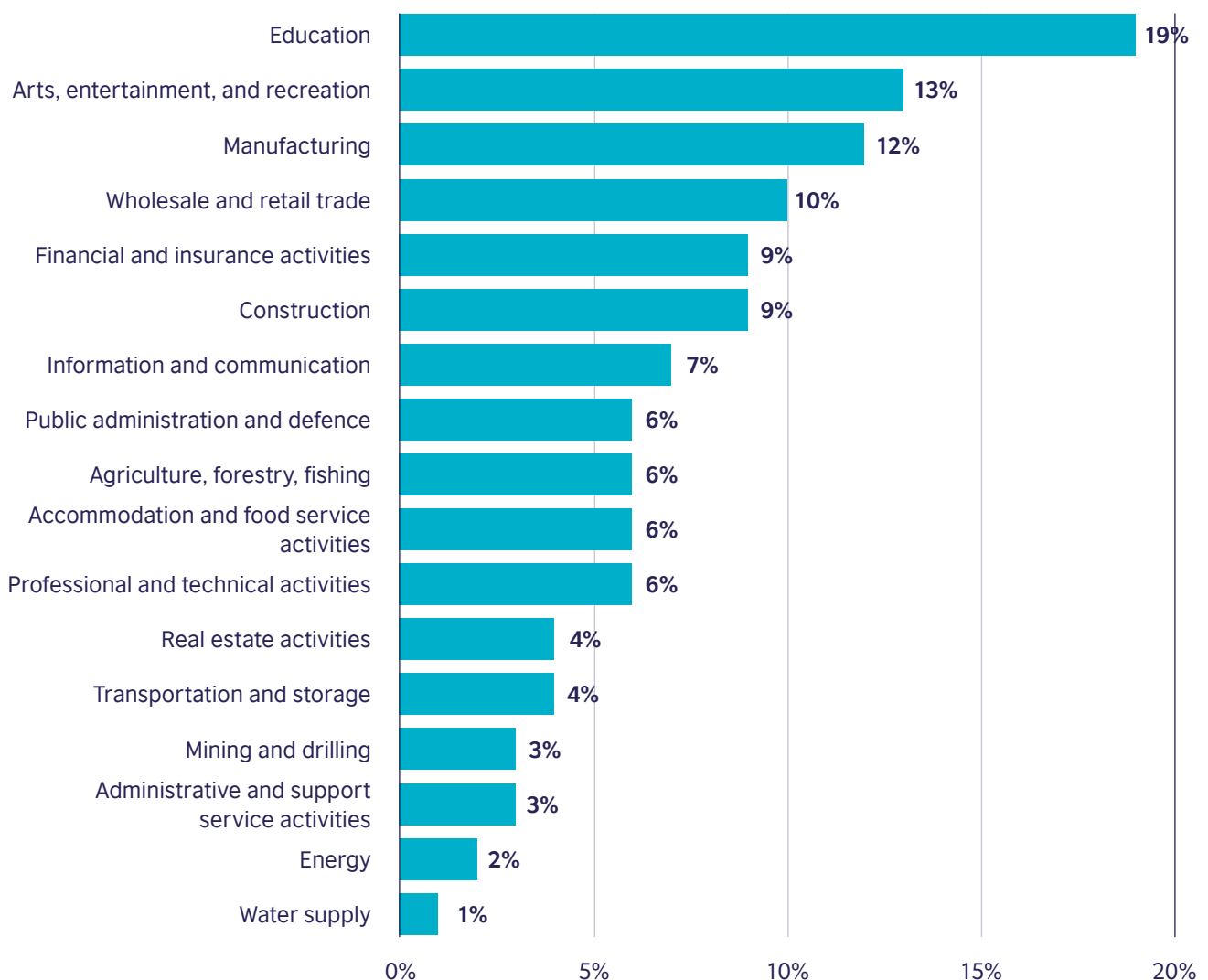
# Employment aspirations and perceived opportunities

**Irrespective of their current labour market situation, young Kazakhstanis have clear ideas about areas of opportunity in employment. As in many other areas of life, they are optimistic about their own and the country's prospects.**

## Preferred sectors

'What would you like to be when you grow up?' is a question most children are commonly asked as they are growing up. Young Kazakhstanis have reflected on the various areas in which they would like to work. Survey respondents have a strong preference for the education sector (19 per cent), followed by the entertainment sector (13 per cent), and the manufacturing sector (12 per cent) (see Figure 39).

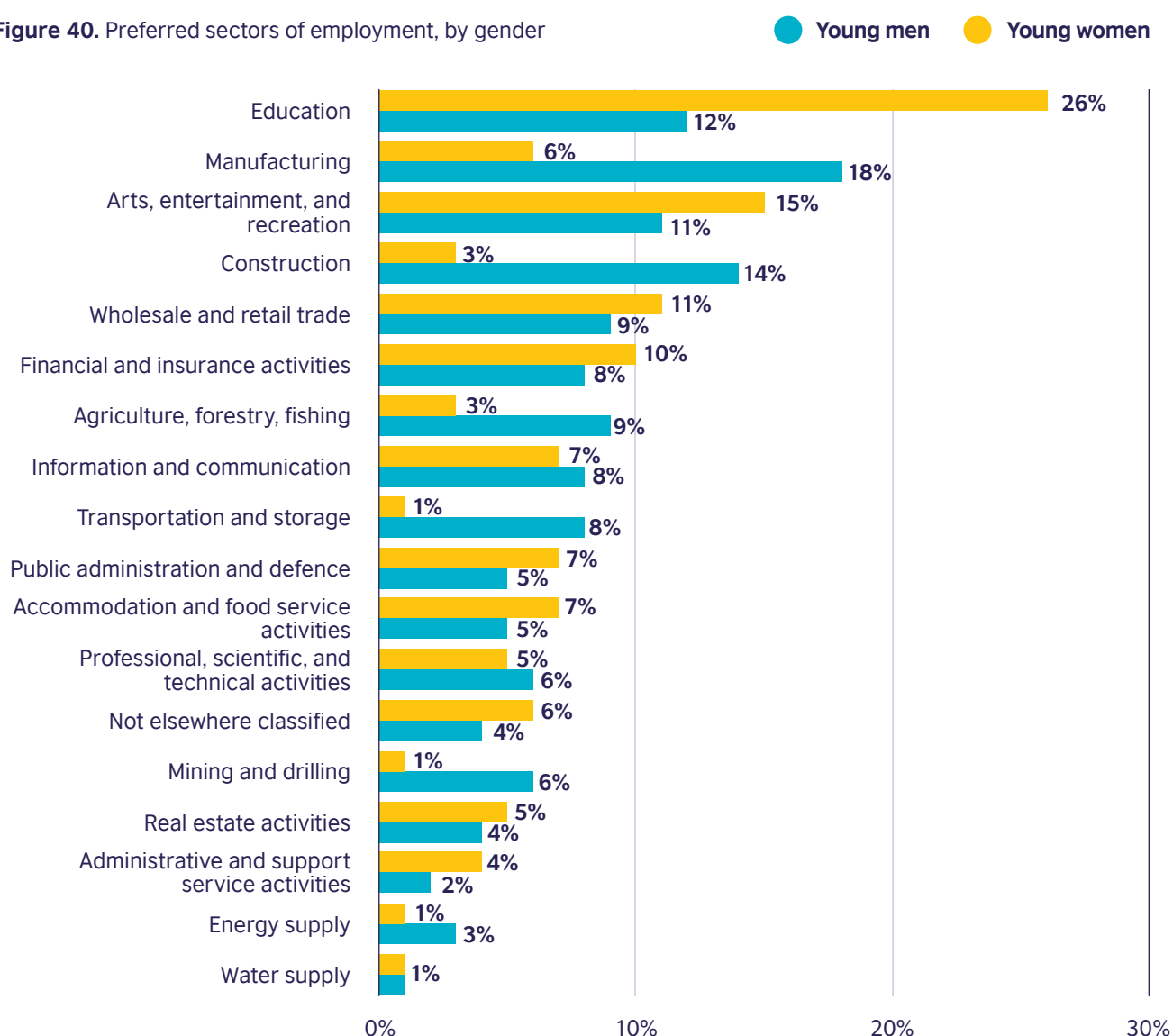
**Figure 39.** Preferred sectors of employment



Notable gender differences emerge in employment preferences. While the education sector is the most attractive field for young people overall, that preference is largely driven by young women, with more than one in four preferring education, compared to just one in ten young men (see Figure 40). Similarly, the second most preferred industry, entertainment, is favoured more by women, although the gap is smaller, at 15 per

cent of women and 11 per cent of men, respectively. The manufacturing sector also reveals a strong gender divide, being preferred by 18 per cent of young men, compared to just 6 per cent of women. A similar divide is observed in the construction sector, which, again, is preferred by 14 per cent of young men vs 3 per cent of young women.

**Figure 40.** Preferred sectors of employment, by gender

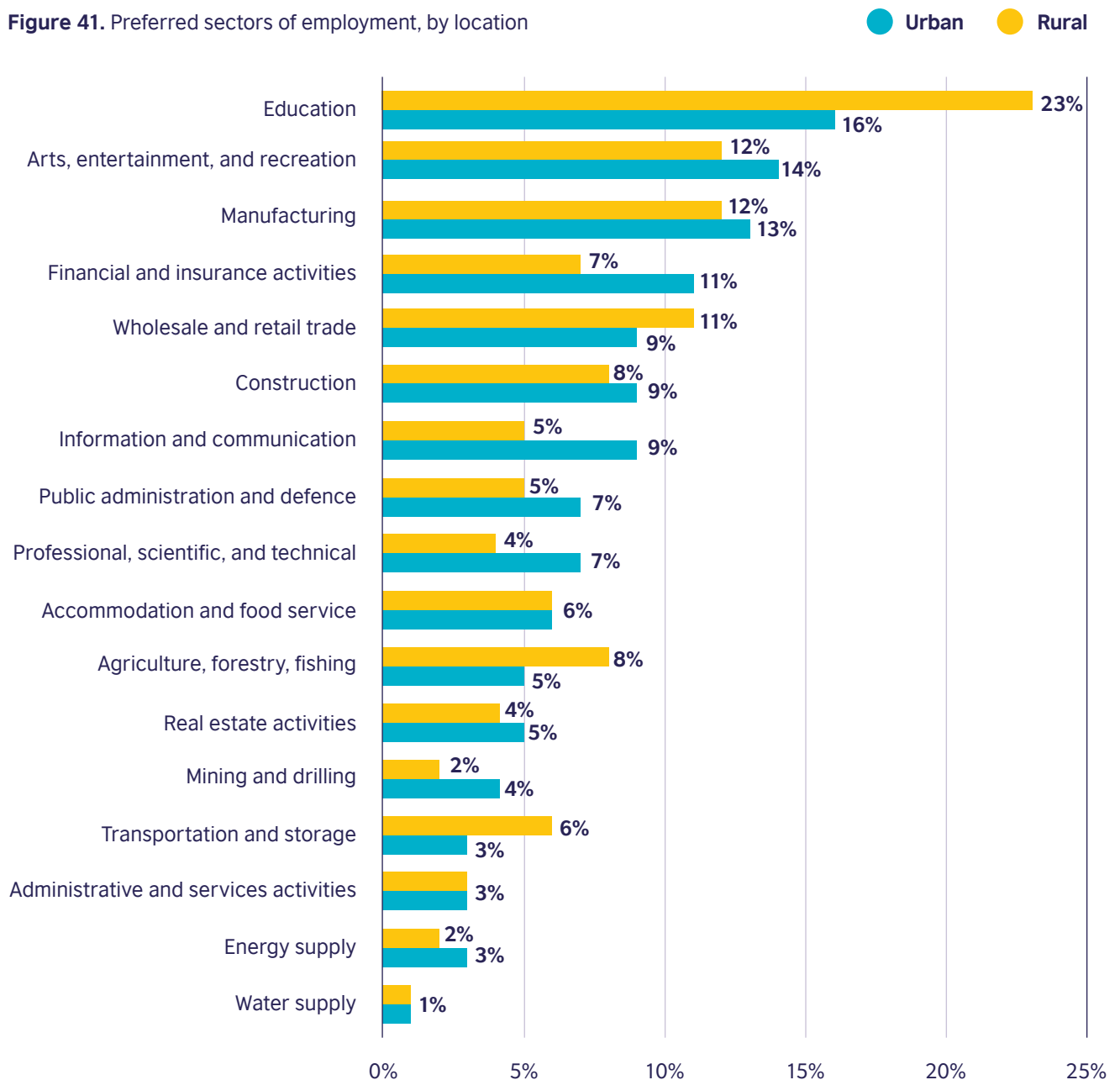


There are significant variations in the sectors preferred by young people in urban vs rural areas (see Figure 41). The education sector is considerably more popular in rural areas, preferred by nearly one in four young people, compared to fewer than one in six in urban areas.

Preferences for the manufacturing and entertainment sectors show only minor differences by location. However, young people in urban areas are more likely than those in rural areas to aspire to careers in the financial sector (11 per cent vs 7 per cent, respectively),

information and communication (9 per cent vs 5 per cent, respectively), and professional and scientific activities (7 per cent vs 4 per cent, respectively). As expected, young people in rural areas are more likely to want to work in agriculture, forestry, and fishing (8 per cent, compared to 5 per cent for young people in urban areas).

**Figure 41.** Preferred sectors of employment, by location



In addition to their personal preferences, participants reflected on the sectors they believe hold most promise for the coming years. Again, education and training ranks first, with that belief perhaps driving the personal preferences of the young Kazakhstanis wishing to work in the sector.

Survey participants rank tourism and hospitality as the second most promising sector, a finding supported by official data. According to the Ministry of Tourism and Sport, Kazakhstan welcomed nearly 60 per cent more international tourists in 2024 compared to the previous year, with domestic tourists also increasing steadily to over 10 million. Focus group discussions on the potential of the tourism sector in Kazakhstan reflect the survey findings, with young people describing the aesthetic value of their natural areas (e.g. mountains and lakes), as well as the attractiveness and modernity of Kazakhstan's cities. They see the tourism sector as having considerable development potential, similar to neighbouring Uzbekistan, which is a well-established tourist destination.

One focus group participant explained:



**Kazakhstan can be a place to invest in the field of tourism. We have a lot to do to develop many tourism destinations.**

Male, 18-23 years old

The IT and digital services sector ranks eighth on the list of promising sectors overall (21 per cent) but is the third most promising sector for young people in urban areas (see Figure 42). The potential of the IT sector and its opportunities for young people were a key discussion point for the focus groups and interviews in the biggest cities. IT jobs are seen as particularly attractive to young professionals, not only for their flexibility but because they often involve working with foreign companies, which offer more competitive salaries and benefits. Beyond personal economics, the IT sector has become a source of national pride for young people, with many seeing it as a testament to Kazakhstan's progressive, forward-looking character. This optimistic outlook was captured by one interviewee from a large city:

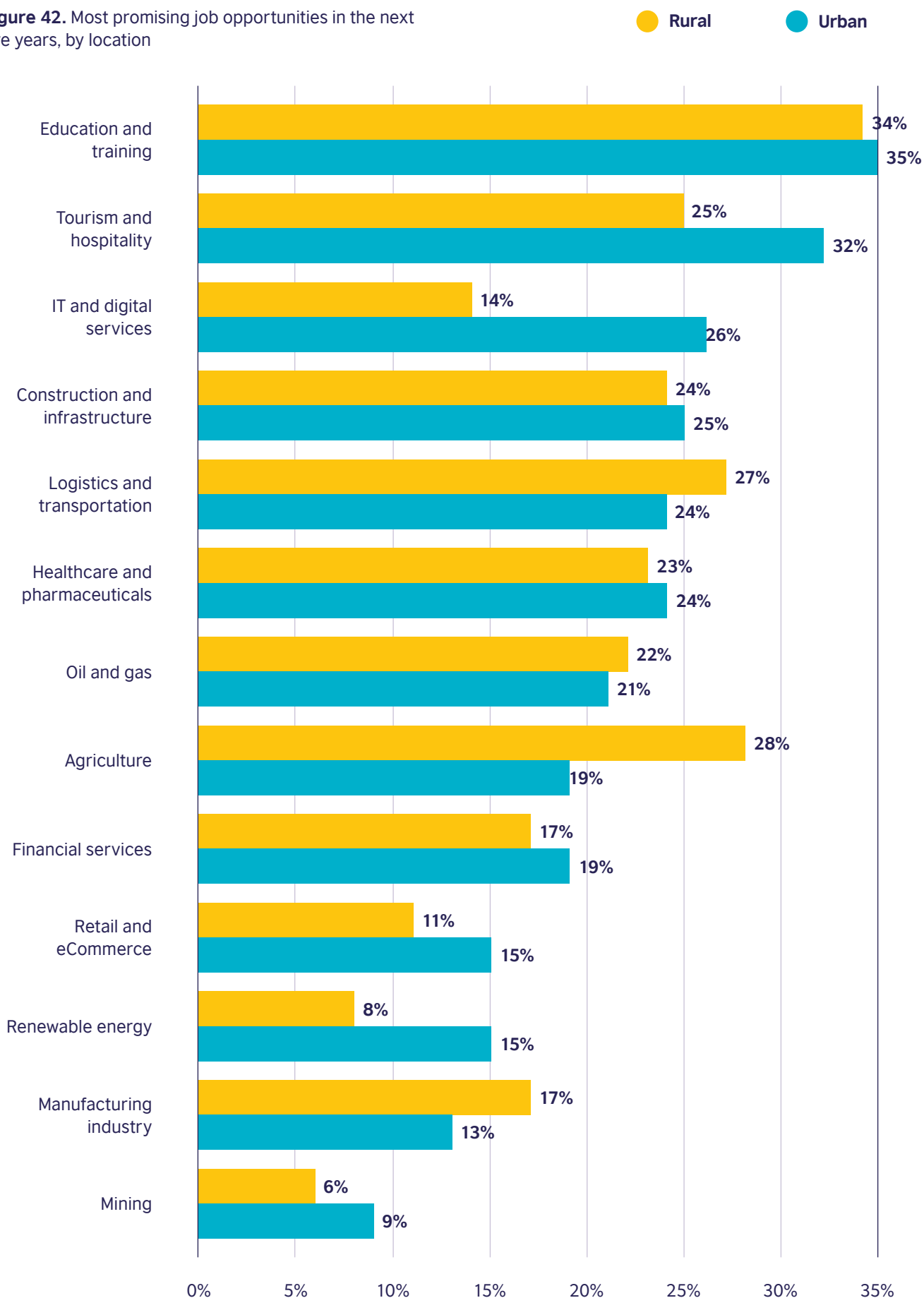


**In the near future I think there will be more and more companies in IT, because we will have a huge number of quality specialists. Our IT community is developing itself. These students who are studying now, will graduate, and international IT companies will also see that there is strong human capital.**

Male, 22 years old



**Figure 42.** Most promising job opportunities in the next five years, by location





### Job opportunities abroad

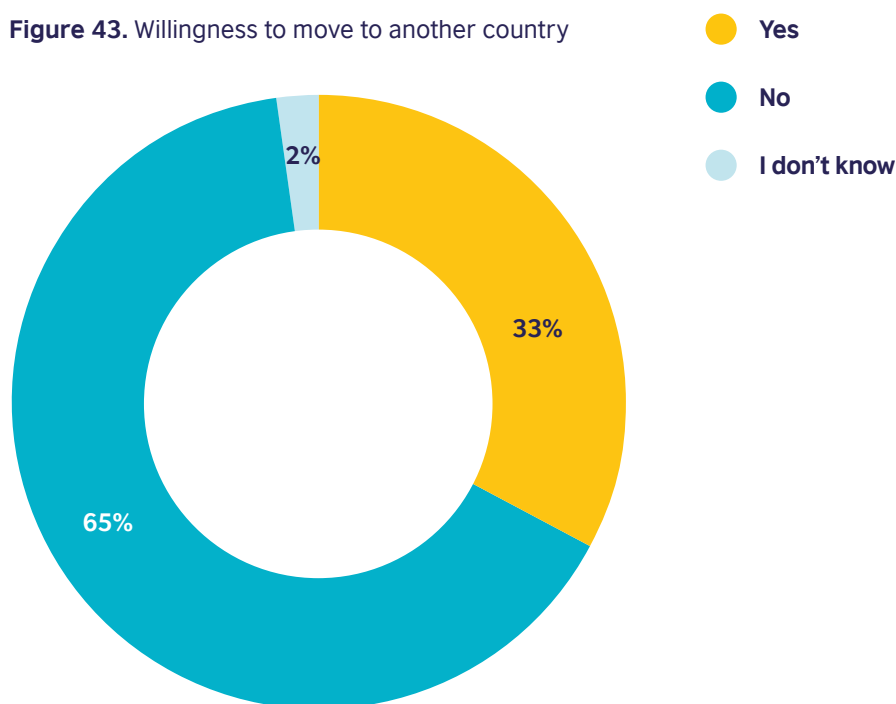
As an upper-middle-income country, Kazakhstan is most likely to generate emigrants (de Haas, 2024). As more people are lifted out of poverty and young people gain greater access to mass media and the internet, the possibility of emigrating for work and/or study becomes increasingly attractive and feasible.

According to research on young people in Kazakhstan by the Frederick Ebert Foundation in 2021, 28 per cent of respondents intended to live and study abroad, rising

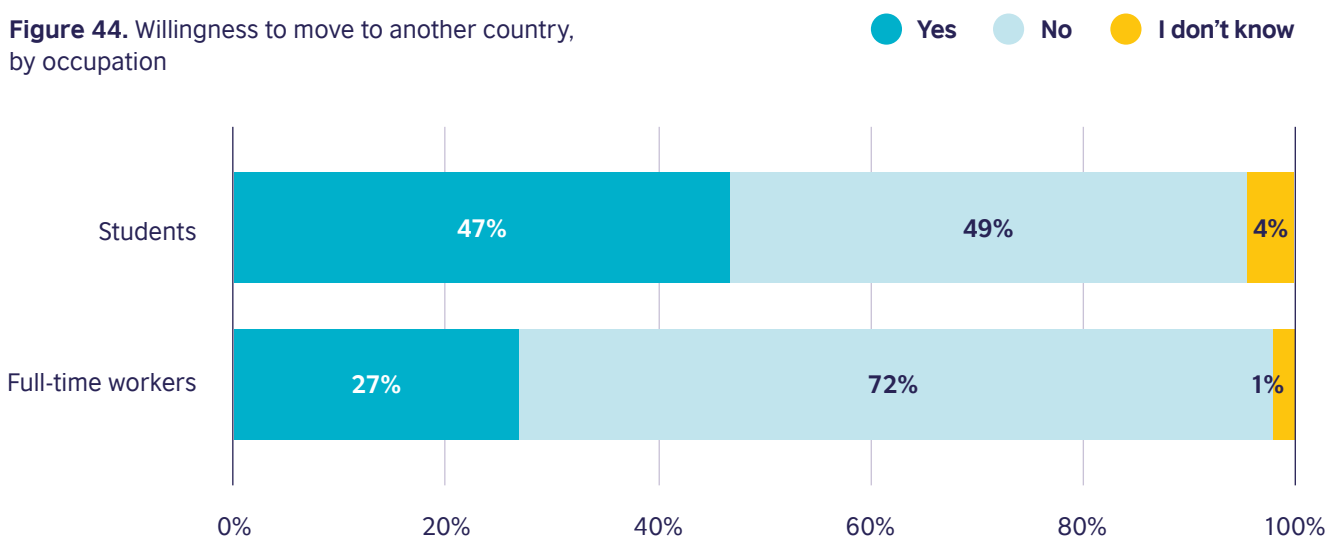
to 33 per cent among the youngest cohort (14–19 year-olds) (Lipina, 2021). Similarly, our survey shows that 33 per cent of young Kazakhstanis are willing to move to another country (see Figure 43).

The data show that nearly half of the students surveyed (47 per cent) aspire to move abroad (see Figure 44). This figure drops to 27 per cent among full-time workers, most of whom prefer to stay in Kazakhstan.

**Figure 43.** Willingness to move to another country



**Figure 44.** Willingness to move to another country, by occupation



The focus groups explored young people's views, intentions and perceptions of migration more closely. Participants' motivations to emigrate tend to cluster around three main factors. Firstly, there is a widespread belief that working conditions elsewhere offer superior compensation, benefits and work-life balance. Secondly, international experience is viewed as a valuable career development tool, with time abroad seen as an opportunity to gain diverse work experience, enhance marketability and establish valuable connections for future business or employment opportunities. Thirdly, somewhat distinct from employment considerations, there is a genuine curiosity about other cultures and a desire for direct exposure to different ways of life.

The qualitative data provide a rich picture of young Kazakhstanis' migration dreams. Remote work is seen as an opportunity to live in places with a (perceived) better quality of life. According to one participant:

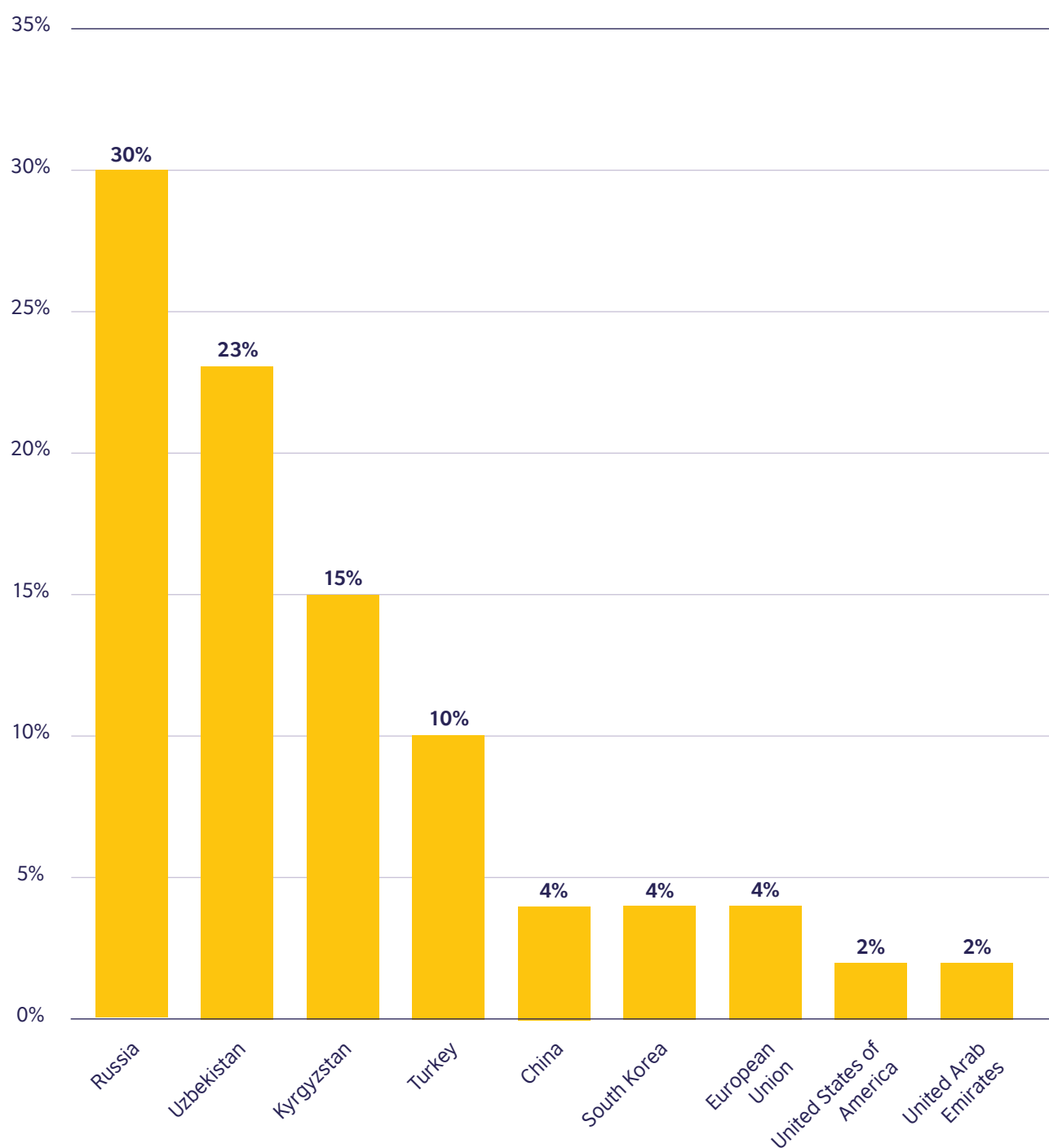


**I notice such a trend among educated young people. They ask themselves the question why they need to live in Almaty, renting for 300,000-400,000, when they could live much better with this amount in Bali or Bangkok, in such interesting, developed, good countries. Because we have high prices for housing, for living in big cities and megacities and comparing with other Asian countries. I also have acquaintances, classmates, friends who move there to live. It greatly influences our choice.**

Male, 22 years old

Japan, South Korea, Turkey, and the USA are particularly attractive destinations. However, the survey data show that young people who have previously lived abroad mostly did so in neighbouring countries: 30 per cent in Russia, 23 per cent in Uzbekistan, and 15 per cent in Kyrgyzstan (see Figure 45).

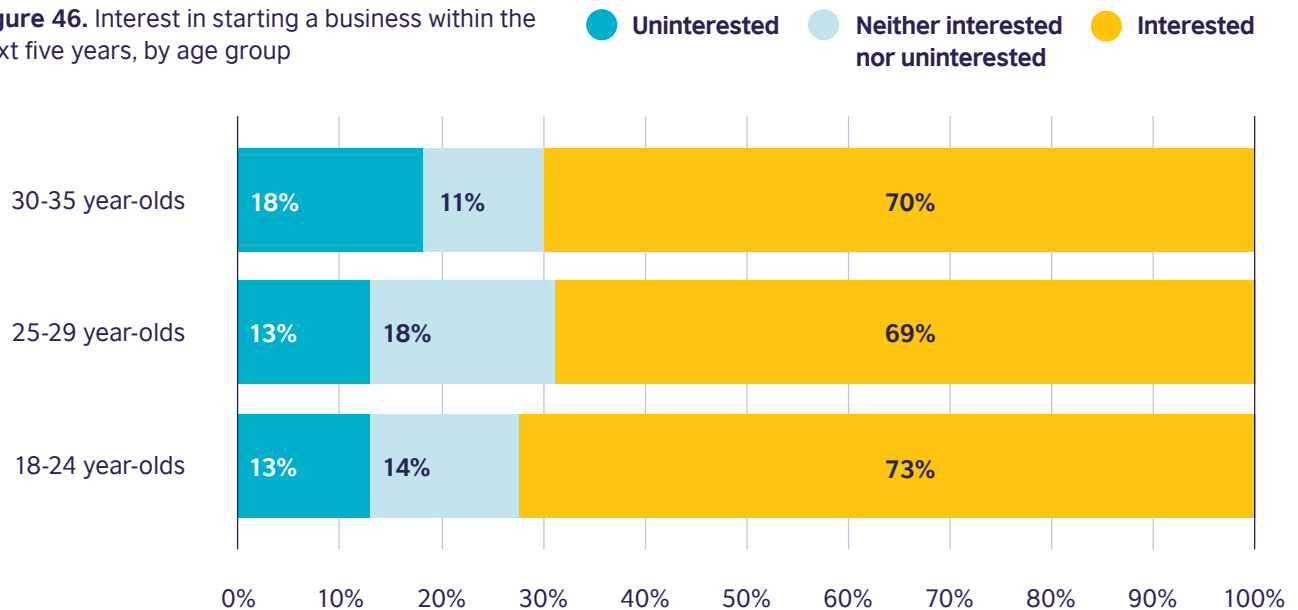
**Figure 45.** Country of previous residence



### Entrepreneurship and individual effort

Entrepreneurship is an area of significant interest for young Kazakhstanis. Across all age groups, more than two-thirds of survey participants are interested in starting their own business within the next five years, compared to only 10 per cent currently self-employed (see Figure 46).

**Figure 46.** Interest in starting a business within the next five years, by age group



The qualitative data provide further insights into this strong trend. According to interviewees and focus group participants, this entrepreneurial spirit gained momentum in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, with self-employment promising greater independence, flexibility and control. The prospect of higher earnings compared to traditional employment is an additional motivator (this reflects young people's concerns about low wages, see next section). Government initiatives have been developed to support entrepreneurship, including programmes such as Enbek, which seeks to engage citizens in entrepreneurship, and Zhas Kasipker, targeting young entrepreneurs.

Next Generation participants suggest that this trend toward entrepreneurship is part of a broader shift toward self-reliance among young people. Whether this desire for independence and autonomy is a driver or a consequence of the surge in entrepreneurship remains unclear, but many view it as a defining characteristic of this generation.

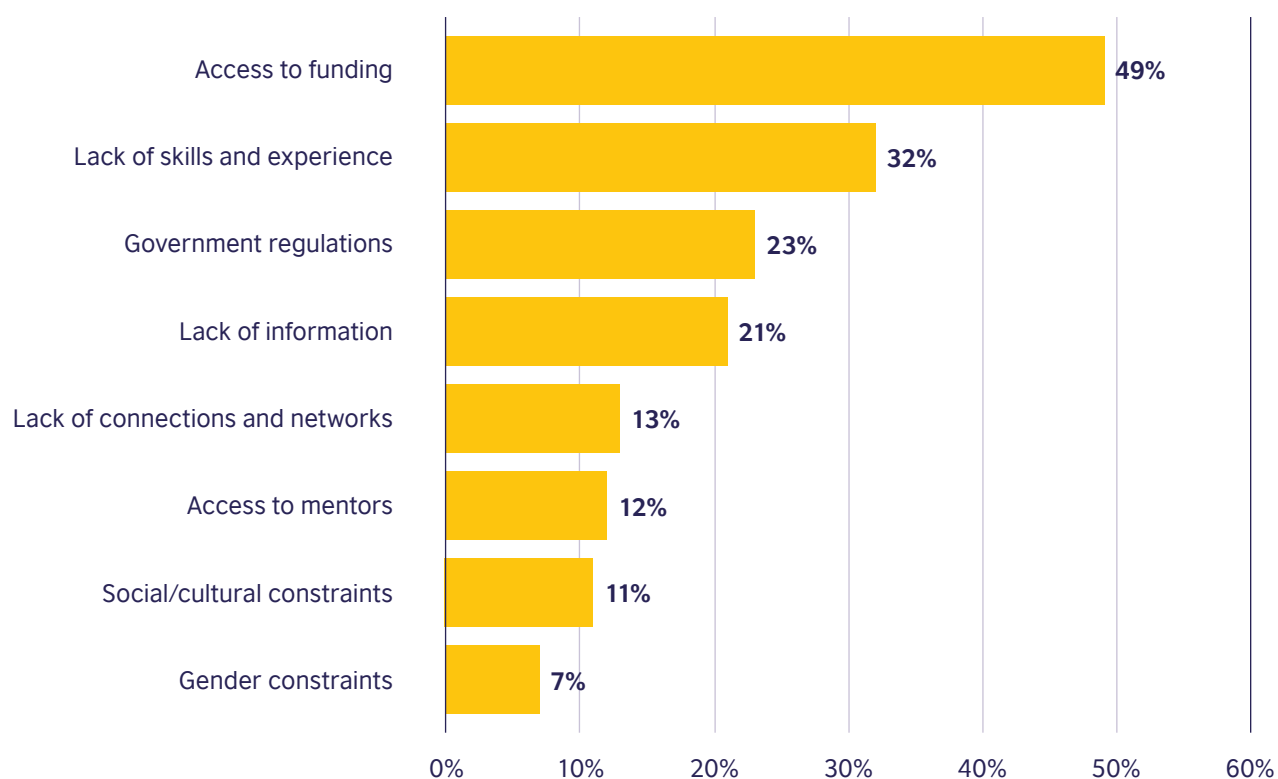


**I notice among my acquaintances, who are a little younger than me, that it is common for them to change their place of work frequently. That is, there is no such thing as a principle to stay together, to be loyal to some company, firm, or something else compared to the previous generation. It is as if people rely more on themselves, on their own strength and how comfortable they are in a certain workplace.**

Female, 29 years old

The gap between survey respondents interested in entrepreneurship and the actual number of self-employed participants may be partly explained by barriers to starting a business. According to respondents, the most significant challenge is access to funding (50 per cent), followed by a lack of skills and experience (32 per cent) (see Figure 47).

**Figure 47.** Main barriers to starting a business

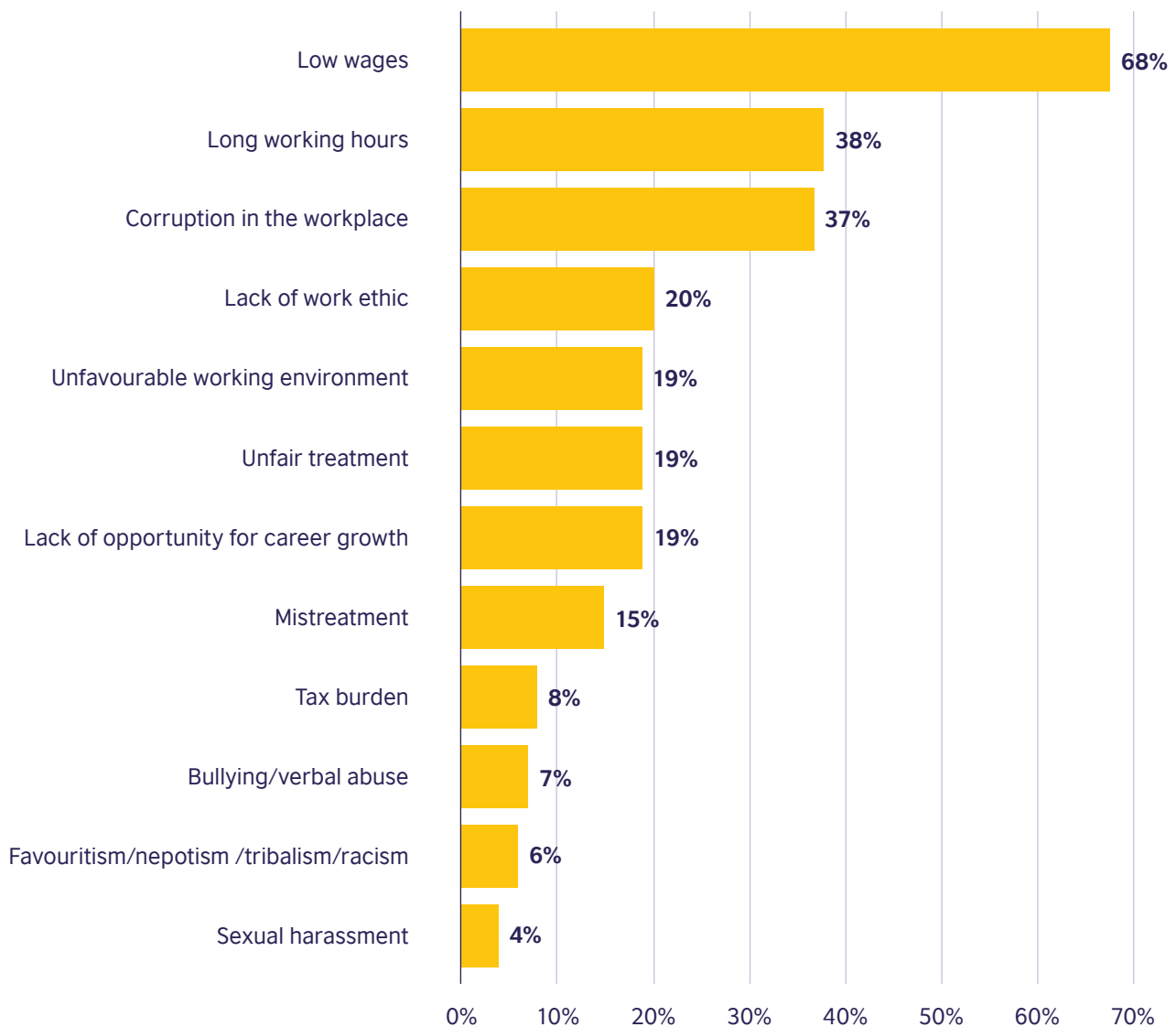


# Employment challenges for young people

This research offers insights into the challenges young people experience when trying to enter the labour market and work within it. Most of the respondents highlight low wages (68 per cent), followed by long working hours (38 per cent) and corruption in the workplace (37 per cent) as key

challenges (see Figure 48). One-fifth of respondents noted other challenges, such as lack of work ethic, unfair treatment, unfavourable working environments, and lack of opportunities for career growth.

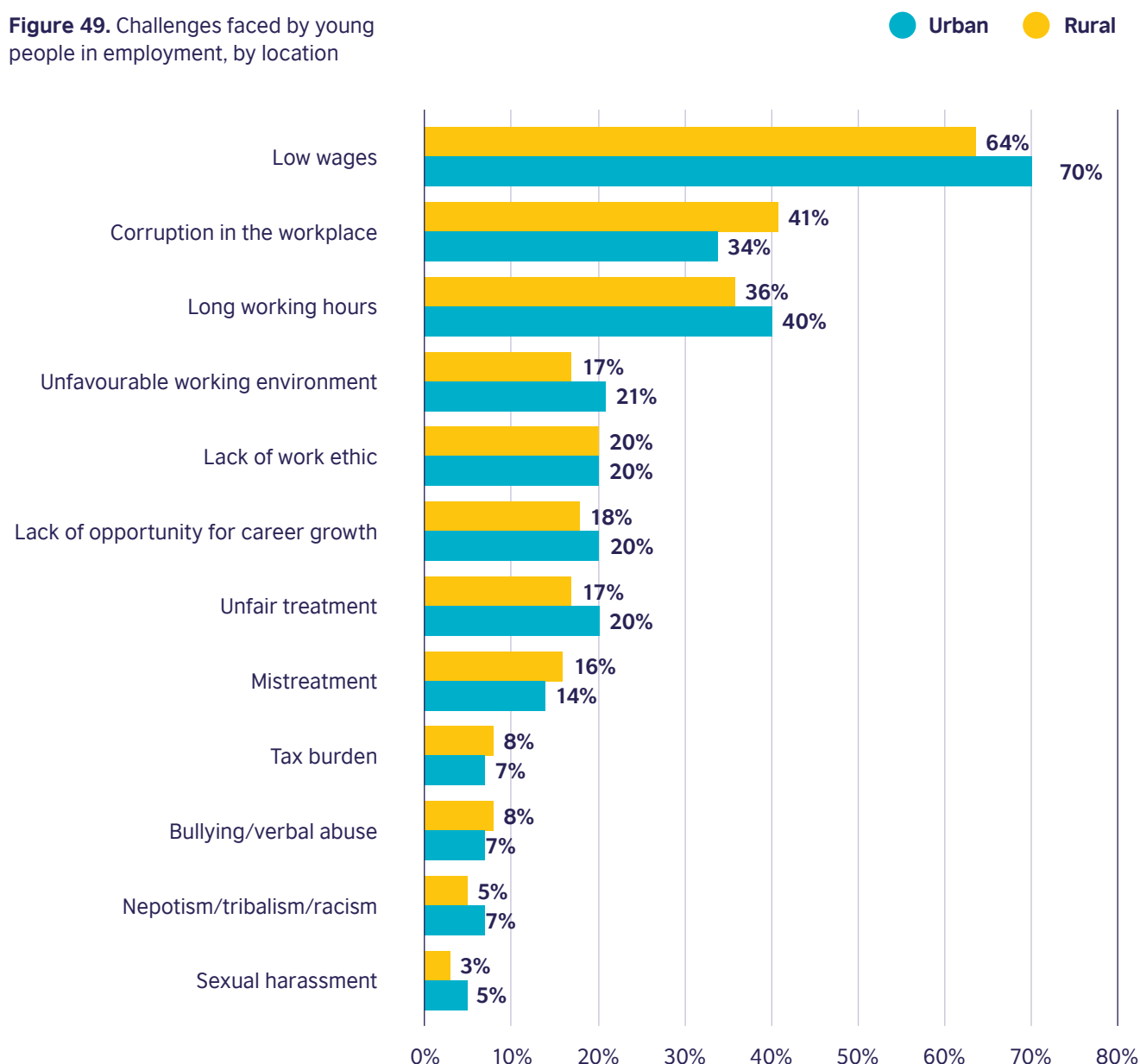
**Figure 48.** Challenges faced by young people in employment



### Low wages

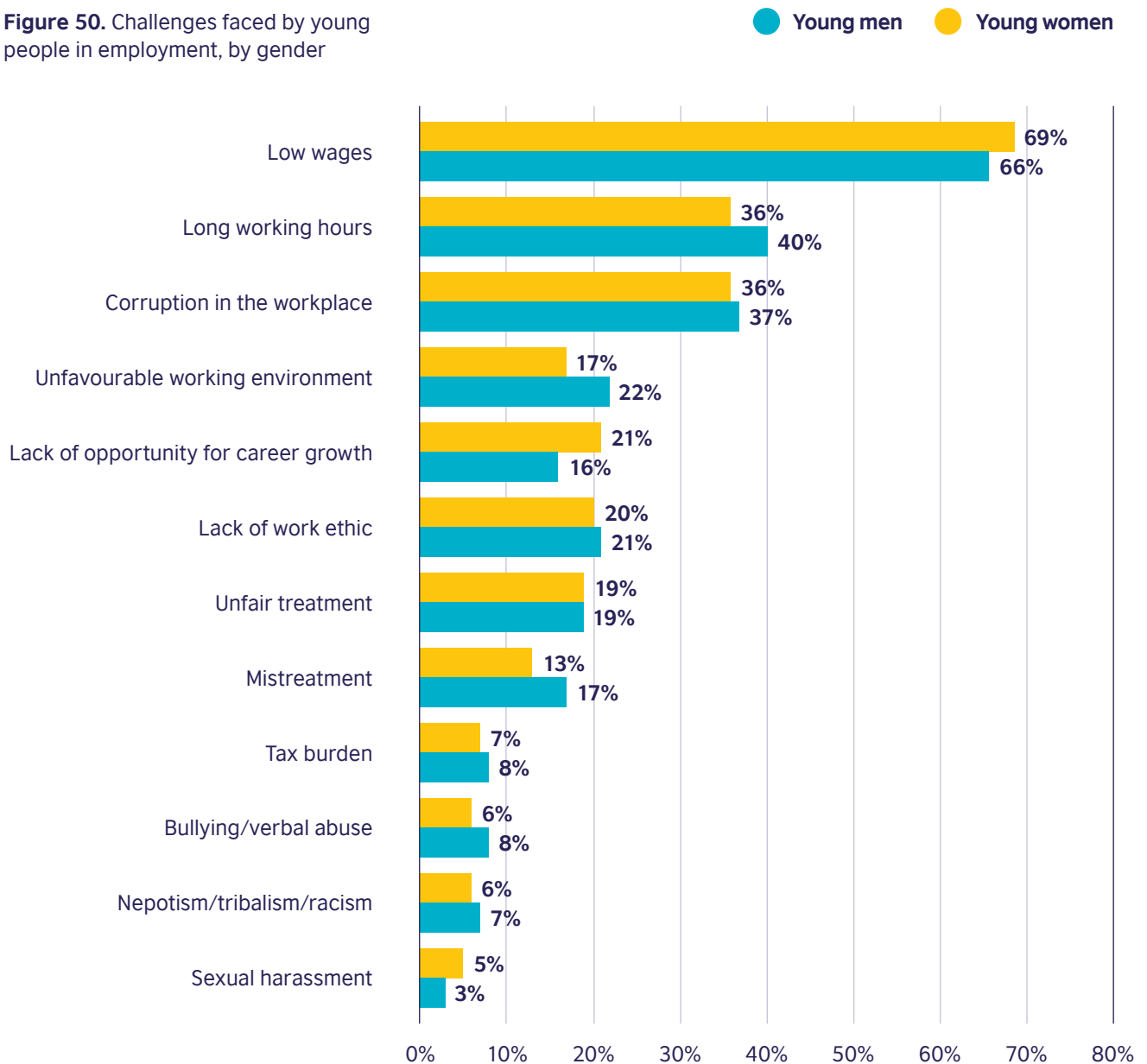
Low wages remain the primary issue for young people living in both rural and urban areas, marginally more so for those in urban areas, at 70 per cent, compared to 64 per cent in rural areas (see Figure 49). More young people living in rural areas see corruption in the workplace as an issue (41 per cent), compared to 34 per cent of those in urban areas, making it the second biggest issue for rural young people, ahead of working long hours.

**Figure 49.** Challenges faced by young people in employment, by location



Young women and young men are broadly aligned on the most relevant challenges (see Figure 50). Young women are slightly more concerned about low wages (69 per cent, compared to 66 per cent of young men), while more young men identify long working hours as a challenge (40 per cent, compared to 36 per cent of young women).

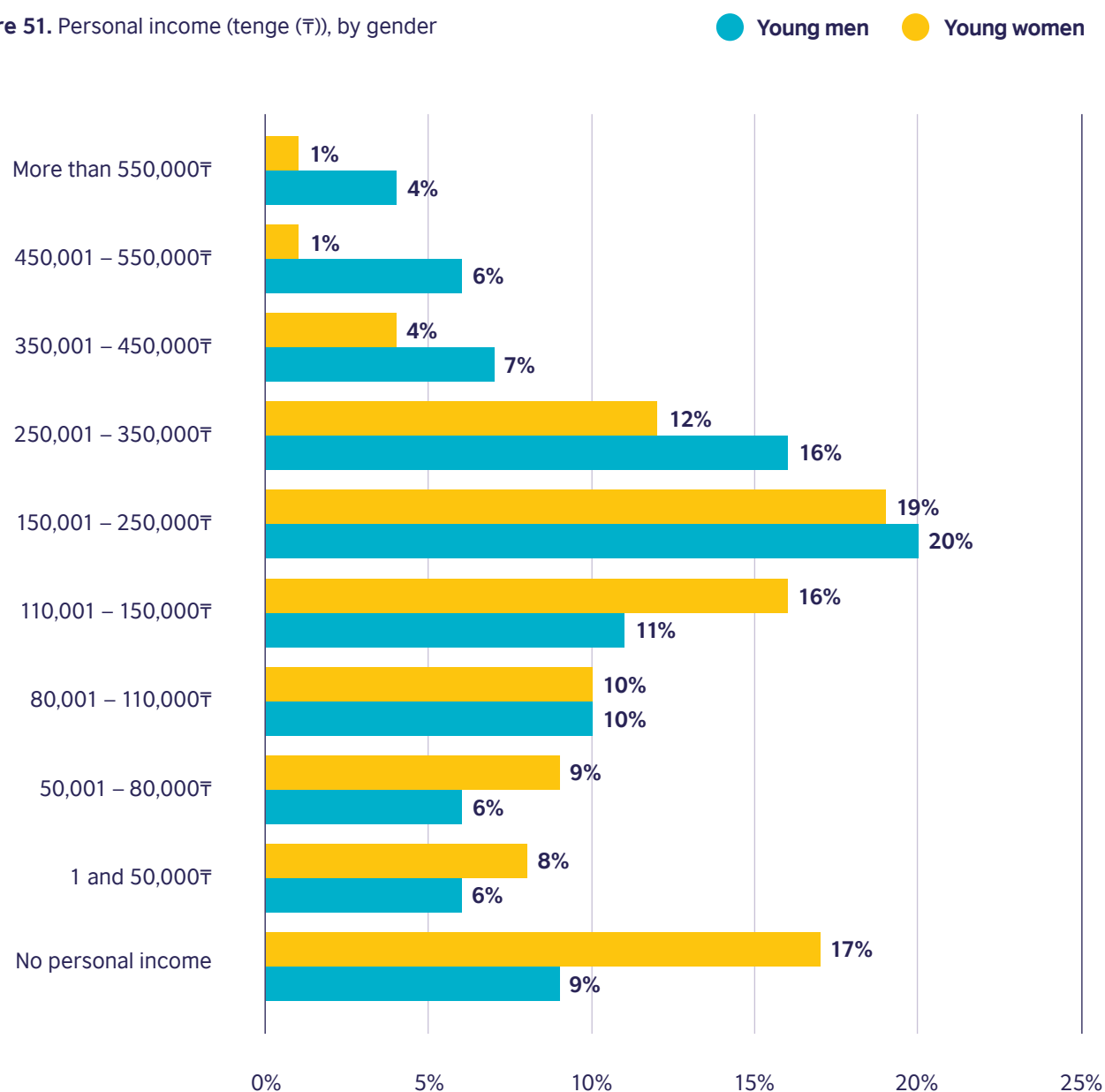
**Figure 50.** Challenges faced by young people in employment, by gender





Data on survey respondents' incomes reflect a similar gender variation. While inadequate compensation affects workers across all sectors, young women bear a disproportionate burden of this economic pressure (see Figure 51).

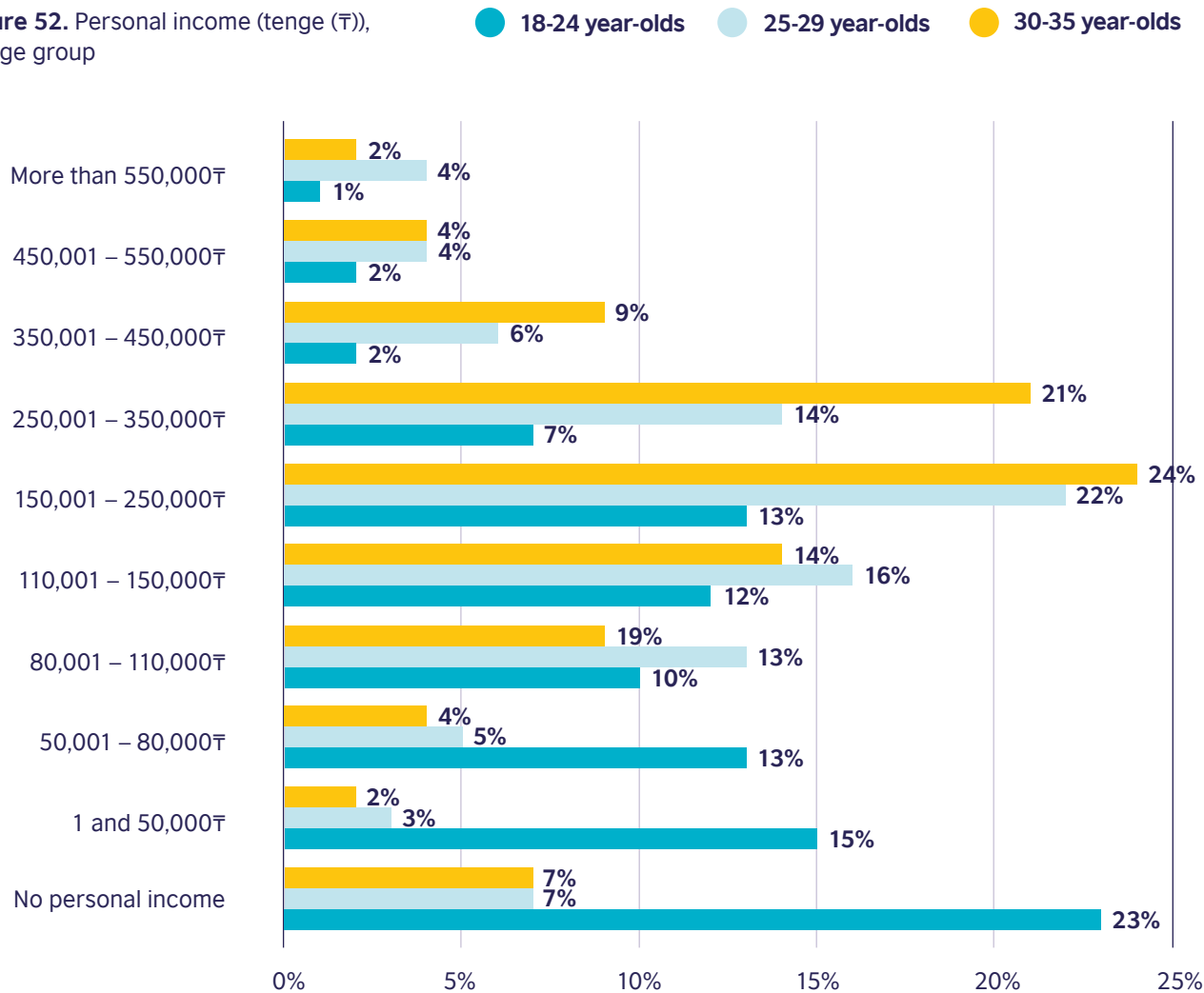
**Figure 51.** Personal income (tenge (₸)), by gender



**Note:** KZT 100,000 = GBP 160 (as of 12 February 2025).

An age-based income analysis reveals predictable patterns, with some exceptions. Younger cohorts generally earn the lowest average income, while those earning around the middle-to-upper end (KZT 150,001-555,000) are most commonly found in the oldest age group. However, the 25-29 age bracket has the highest percentage of individuals in the top income range (see Figure 52).

**Figure 52.** Personal income (tenge (₸)), by age group



Note: KZT 100,000 = GBP 160 (as of 12 February 2025).

### Unequal access to employment opportunities

The issue of low wages is exacerbated by what many young Kazakhstanis perceive as excessive entry requirements for employment. Jobseekers reported demanding prerequisites, particularly work experience and language skills, with a new emphasis on Kazakh language proficiency. This combination of high demands and low compensation has created a widespread belief that employers are asking for too much and offering too little in return.

The qualitative research sheds light on other significant factors that create unequal access to employment. These include disability status, geographical location, social class, and language abilities. Young people with disabilities, those from rural areas or smaller cities, individuals from working-class backgrounds, and those who do not speak Kazakh report facing particularly strong barriers to accessing high-quality jobs.

Focus group participants have varying perspectives on how these inequalities manifest and perpetuate. Some emphasise the disparities in access to basic and higher education, while others point to differential networking opportunities based on social circles. The role of geographical proximity to major employment hubs is also a crucial factor. However, there is broad consensus that these disadvantages begin early in life and have cumulative, long-term impacts on young people's well-being.

The challenges faced by young people with disabilities illustrate the compounding nature of these barriers. As one participant explained:



**Young people with disabilities have a much harder time because their problem is that they don't have any experience at all; they don't even have part-time jobs.**

Female, 34 years old

While qualitative data are not intended to be representative, they signal how limited early opportunities for professional development can restrict future career prospects, creating cycles of disadvantage that affect long-term economic mobility and well-being.

### Unfair treatment and corruption

Corruption in the workplace is identified as a challenge by more than one-third of survey respondents overall, and over 40 per cent of young people in rural areas.

Focus group participants and interviewees are concerned about this issue, particularly unfair practices in both hiring and promotion. While various external factors can influence workplace competition, political affiliation and family connections are consistently highlighted as the most prevalent. Some interviewees perceive that alignment with prevailing political structures is advantageous for career progression in government offices and public universities.

According to participants, the prevalence of nepotism and familial influence in the job market is one of the primary mechanisms reinforcing existing social disparities. Children from influential families benefit from established networks, which significantly ease both their initial entry into the job market and subsequent career progression.

Interviewees recount personal encounters related to corruption and transparency in certain sectors, including education institutions and interactions with local supervisory authorities. Many emphasise the importance of integrity in professional environments and express a strong preference for working in sectors where merit-based progression and ethical standards are consistently upheld. They emphasise that corruption undermines workplace merit, creating an environment where advancement depends more on financial means and willingness to consider bribes than on professional capability.

# Strategies to improve youth employment

**This section presents the solutions suggested by young leaders to enhance their professional potential and improve Kazakhstan's labour market.**

Unlike other areas, the responses here are more varied, perhaps reflecting that they work in diverse sectors and regions, and likely proposed solutions based on the specific needs and resources available.

Young Kazakhstanis are optimistic about their personal success and future in the labour market. They are eager to share their ideas of possible changes to improve youth employment. Increased governmental support for young people was mentioned frequently, particularly the provision of affordable housing. Housing is the most significant expense for young people and, without support, can have considerable impacts on their well-being. Young people report that more support would enable them to focus on strengthening their skills, obtaining more experience, and searching for better, more fulfilling jobs. This applies to both young people in training and those in early employment.

Young Kazakhstanis are interested in fostering civil society participation in employment. For example, they highlight the importance of trade unions in promoting better salaries and the importance of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or local movements in strengthening policy elements inadequately addressed by state-led programmes, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT+) rights and financial education.

Finally, young people in Kazakhstan believe that employers have a prominent role in the status of young people's employment and should offer opportunities to further develop their skills through mentoring programmes or other (paid) training opportunities. Employers could also offer more flexible arrangements to those working throughout their training, or where tasks allow for hybrid or remote work.

In general, participants believe that improving working conditions in the country is not a single-entity effort, but, rather, a responsibility shared between different members of society.



## Chapter 4

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# Evolving youth voice and civic participation



# Introduction

This chapter examines patterns of political engagement among young people in Kazakhstan, exploring both traditional and emerging forms of political participation. Notwithstanding significant variations in political engagement across demographic groups, some general trends also emerge. The data show that, on average, young people in older age brackets demonstrate higher levels of political engagement than their younger counterparts (especially voting), while younger people have higher levels of trust and willingness to engage in politics. Gender and geographical disparities are evident, with men reporting higher levels of engagement than women, and young people in urban areas more politically involved than their rural peers.

Data from various studies present young citizens of Kazakhstan as apolitical, uninterested in politics, and reluctant to get involved (Sharipova and Beimenbetov, 2021). This disengagement seems to follow an upward trend. Some researchers have pointed to a set of factors, including young people's own concerns, the continuing influence of Soviet-era political culture, and young people's disbelief in the possibility of social mobility (Sharipova and Beimenbetov, 2021). Political disaffection might also be driven by increasing levels of dissatisfaction, as the number of young people dissatisfied with politics and the state of democracy in Kazakhstan increased fivefold between 2017 and 2022 (Paperlab, 2022).

It is both useful and necessary to disentangle whether higher dissatisfaction and less formal engagement means less interest in socio-political affairs or highlights a lack of appropriate avenues for participation and/or a rejection of formal politics. In recent years, various grassroots social movements and groups have emerged, including Oyan Kazakhstan, one cannot run away from the truth, SOS Taldykol, and the Feminista marches (Beissembayev et al., 2020). People self-organise into initiative groups to address specific social issues, such as urban infrastructure (for example, the protests against illegal infill construction in Astana and Almaty) or to provide help to people with disabilities.

In addition to grassroots activism, a new type of digital activism has emerged, where people use social media to discuss political, social and economic issues. It takes different shapes and forms, such as internet activism, art performances, blogging, caricatures, comics, music, and eco-activism. Activists communicate via online messaging platforms and use social media for crowdfunding or crowdsourcing. The distinguishing feature of this type of activism is that groups are not hierarchical, but, rather, based on horizontal links that allow members of the groups to be more flexible (Beissembayev et al., 2020).

This chapter explores several key aspects of young people's political participation in Kazakhstan, from the traditional (e.g. voting behaviour) to the growing role of e-government initiatives and online participation.



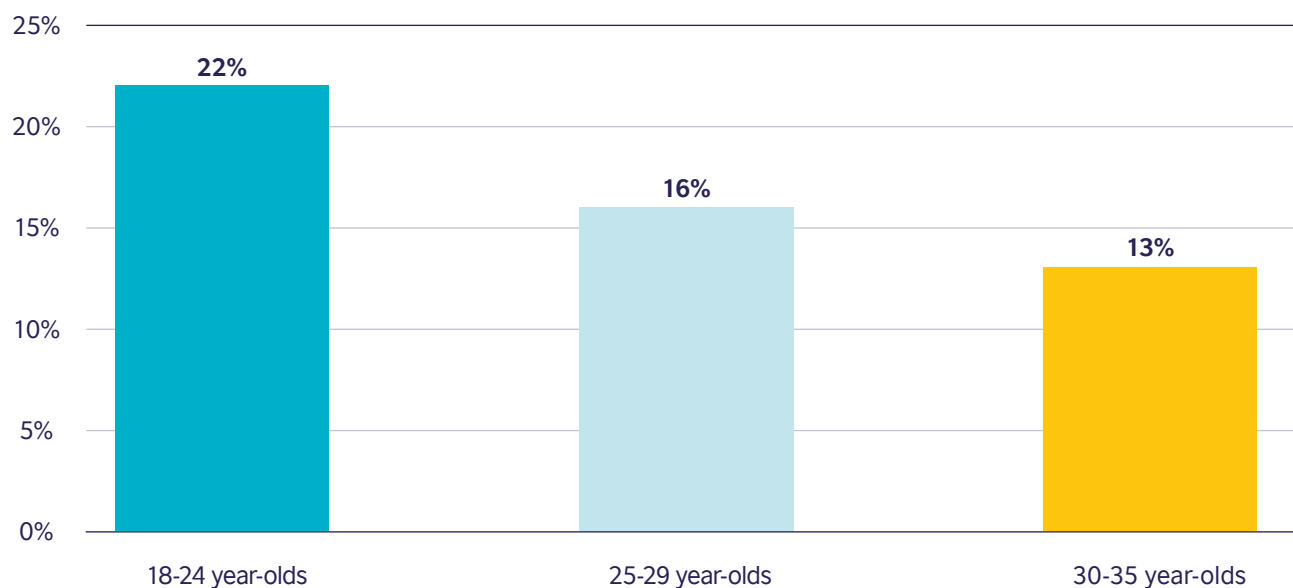


# Forms of political participation

## Political engagement

This research offers new data on the level of political engagement reported by young Kazakhstanis. When asked how engaged in politics they consider themselves to be, only a minority answered either 'somewhat engaged' or 'very engaged'. The data show substantial differences depending on age group, gender and location. Almost one-quarter of 18-24 year-olds consider themselves engaged, compared to only 13 per cent of 30-35 year-olds, with a descending trend in self-reported (not actual) political engagement across age groups (see Figure 53).

**Figure 53.** Self-reported personal engagement in politics, by age group

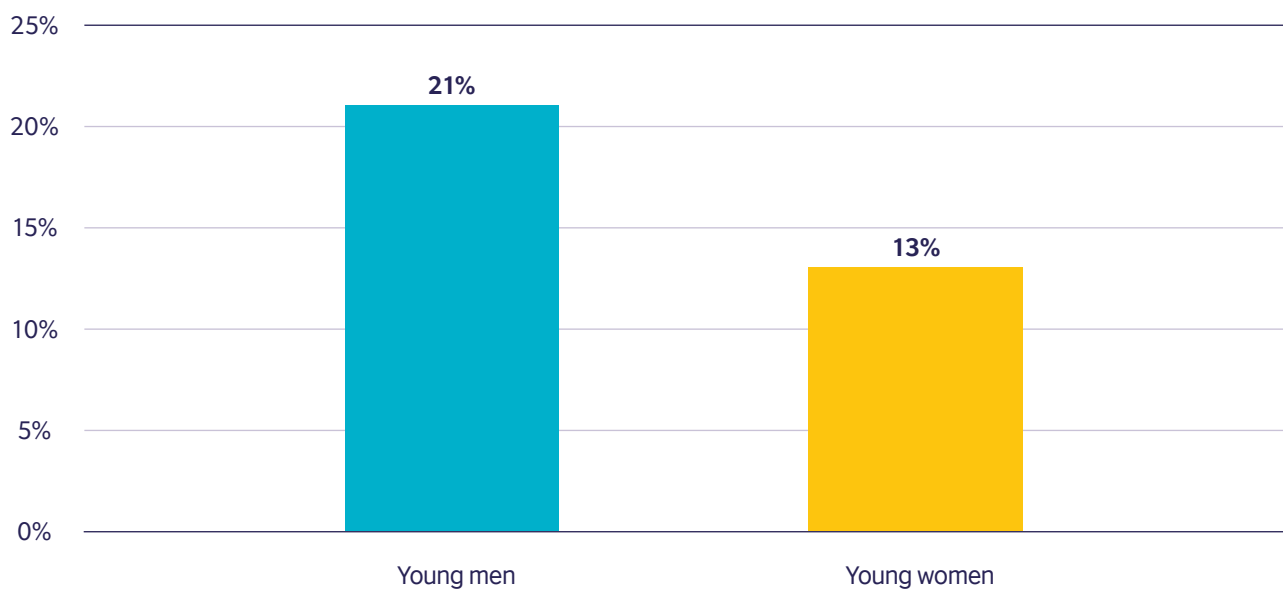


**Note:** The figure shows the share of participants who reported to be engaged in politics.

The differences between young men's and young women's political engagement are significant. While 21 per cent of young men define themselves as engaged or very engaged, only 13 per cent of women do (see Figure 54). This gender gap is in addition to low levels of reported political engagement across genders.



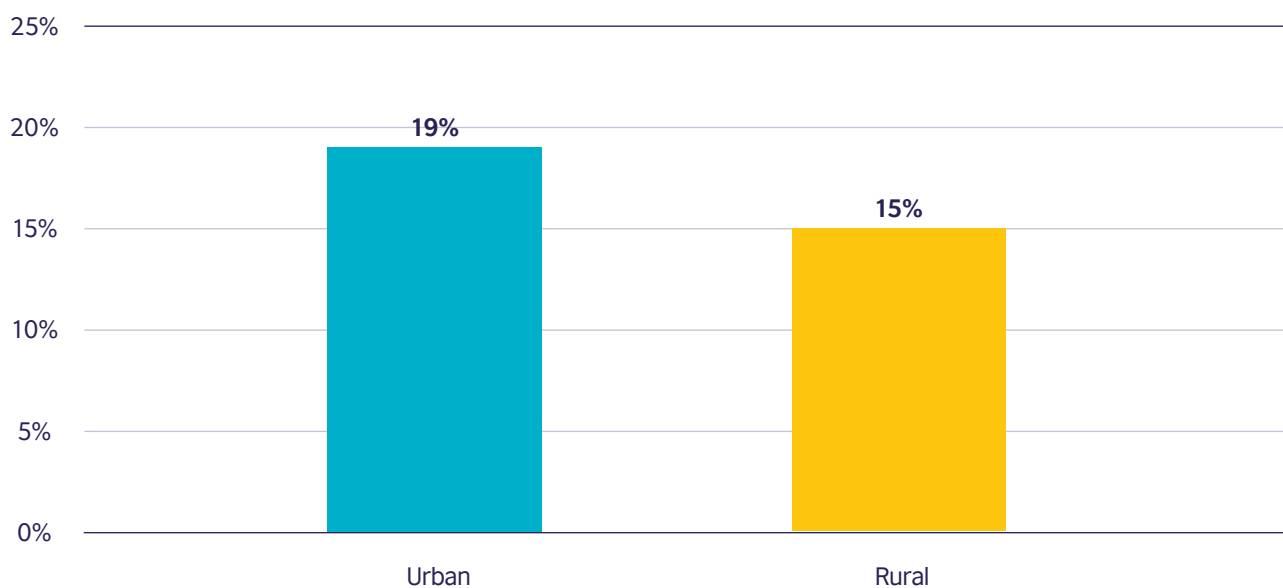
**Figure 54.** Self-reported personal engagement in politics, by gender



**Note:** The figure shows the share of participants who reported to be engaged in politics.

Finally, differences emerge depending on the location of respondents, with young people in urban areas reporting slightly higher levels of political engagement than their rural peers (see Figure 55). This difference is smaller than for genders and age groups.

**Figure 55.** Self-reported personal engagement in politics, by location

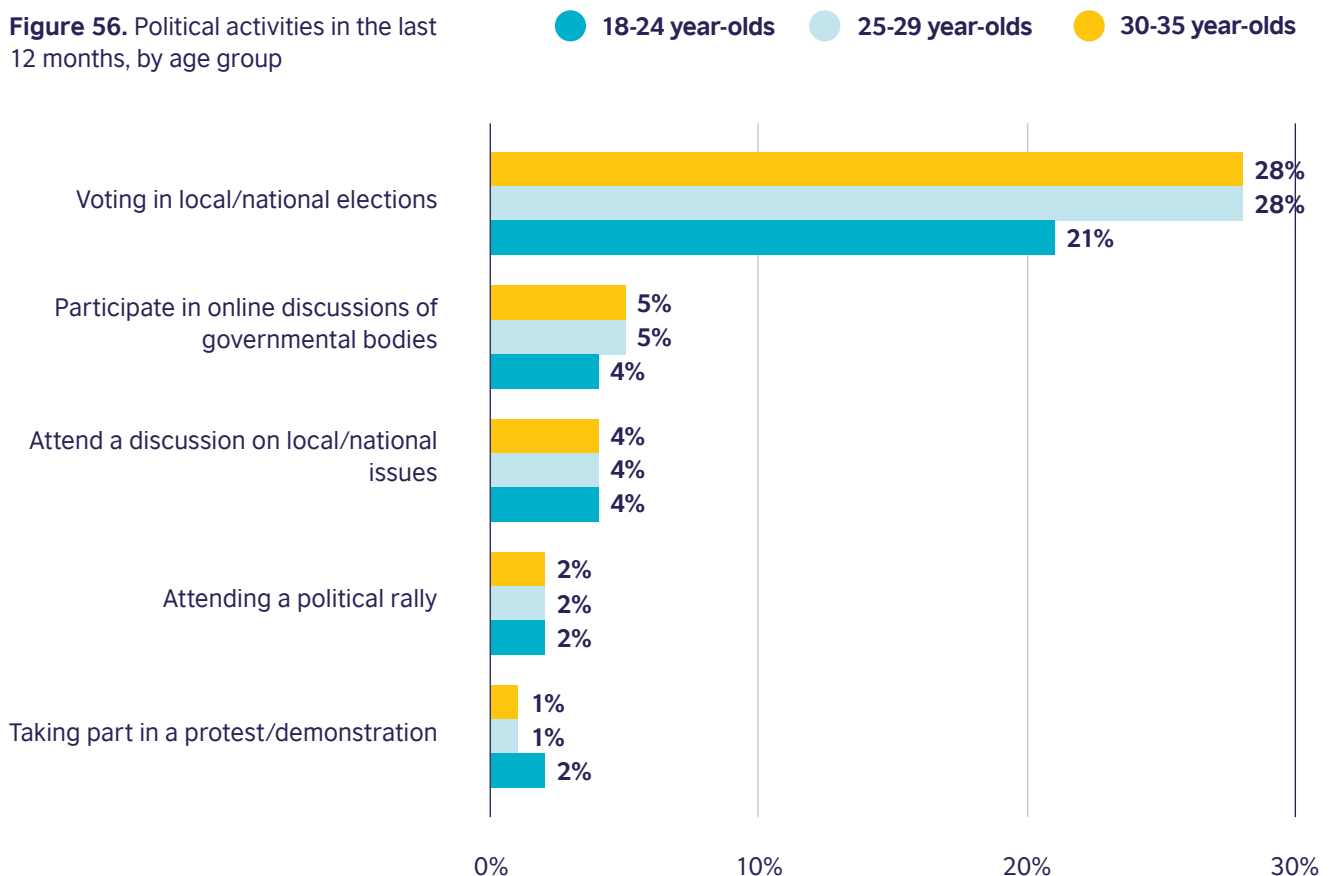


**Note:** The figure shows the share of participants who reported to be engaged in politics.

Political participation among young people in Kazakhstan is expressed in various forms, with the research showing relatively low engagement across most available channels. This is consistent with the overall levels of political engagement. Voting emerges as the most common form of political participation, although this, too, shows limited uptake: less than 30 per cent of young people in Kazakhstan reported voting in the most recent elections (see Figure 56). This modest participation in voting, traditionally considered the most basic form of political engagement, suggests a broader pattern of limited political involvement among the country's young people. Despite reporting higher

levels of political engagement overall, the youngest group simultaneously votes least and participates no more than other age groups in other political activities. This mismatch in the data may have several explanations. Firstly, the voting age in Kazakhstan is 18 years old, thus some participants in the 18-24 age group may not have had the chance to vote in an election yet. Secondly, young people's understanding of the meaning of political engagement may not have been fully encapsulated by the survey's more traditional response options.

**Figure 56.** Political activities in the last 12 months, by age group



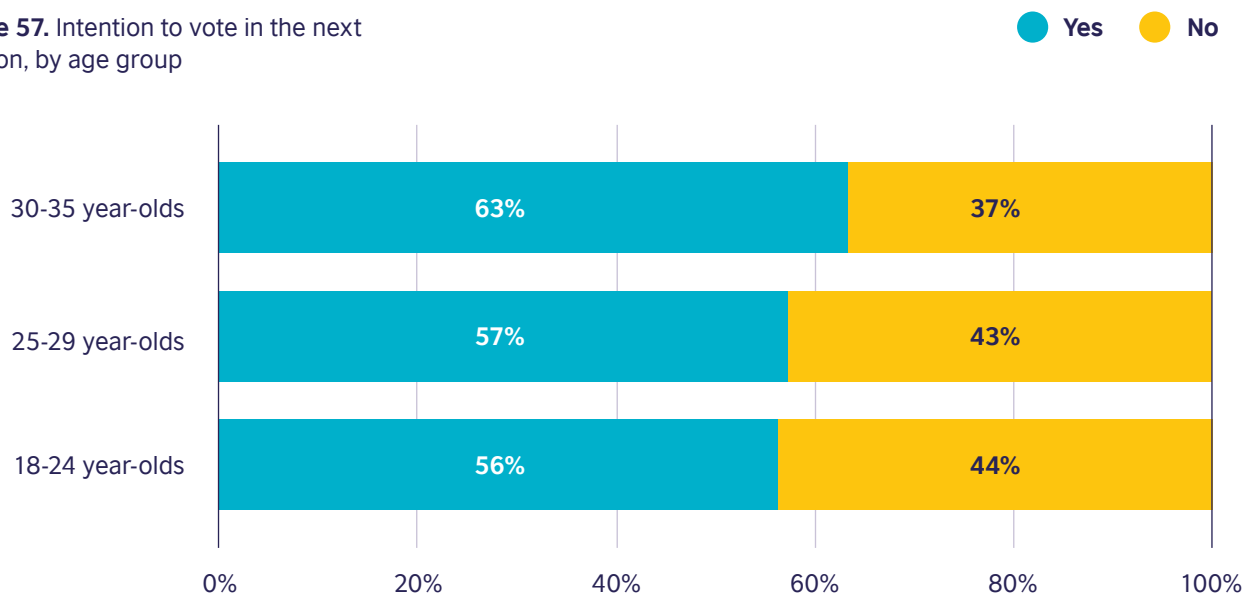
While overall engagement remains modest, and voting is by far the most common political activity among those who are engaged, e-government initiatives are gaining traction. The number of 25-35 year-olds who participated in online discussions of governmental bodies in the last year is five times that of young people who took part in a protest or demonstration. This modest-but-growing trend is echoed by the qualitative data, with interviewees reporting increased use of digital platforms for civic engagement, particularly petitions.

## Future participation

An analysis of future voting intentions reveals that young people are willing to engage more in politics through voting. Across all age groups, the intention to vote in the next election is more than double the number of people who actually voted in the last election.

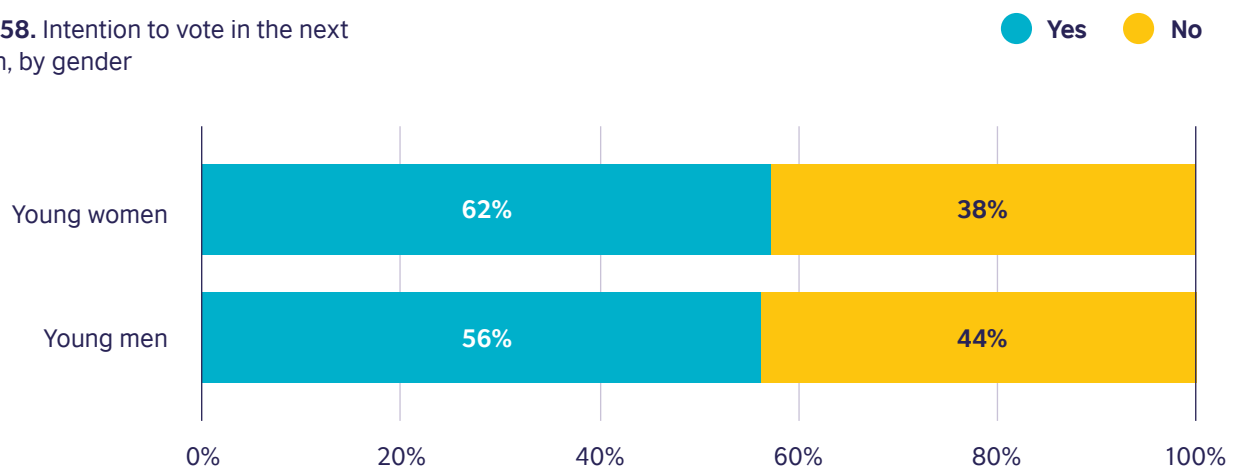
Again, an engagement paradox is evident among the youngest cohort. Despite reporting higher levels of general political engagement, 18-24 year-olds have the lowest intention to vote in upcoming elections, at only 56 per cent, compared to 63 per cent of 30-35 year-olds (see Figure 57).

**Figure 57.** Intention to vote in the next election, by age group



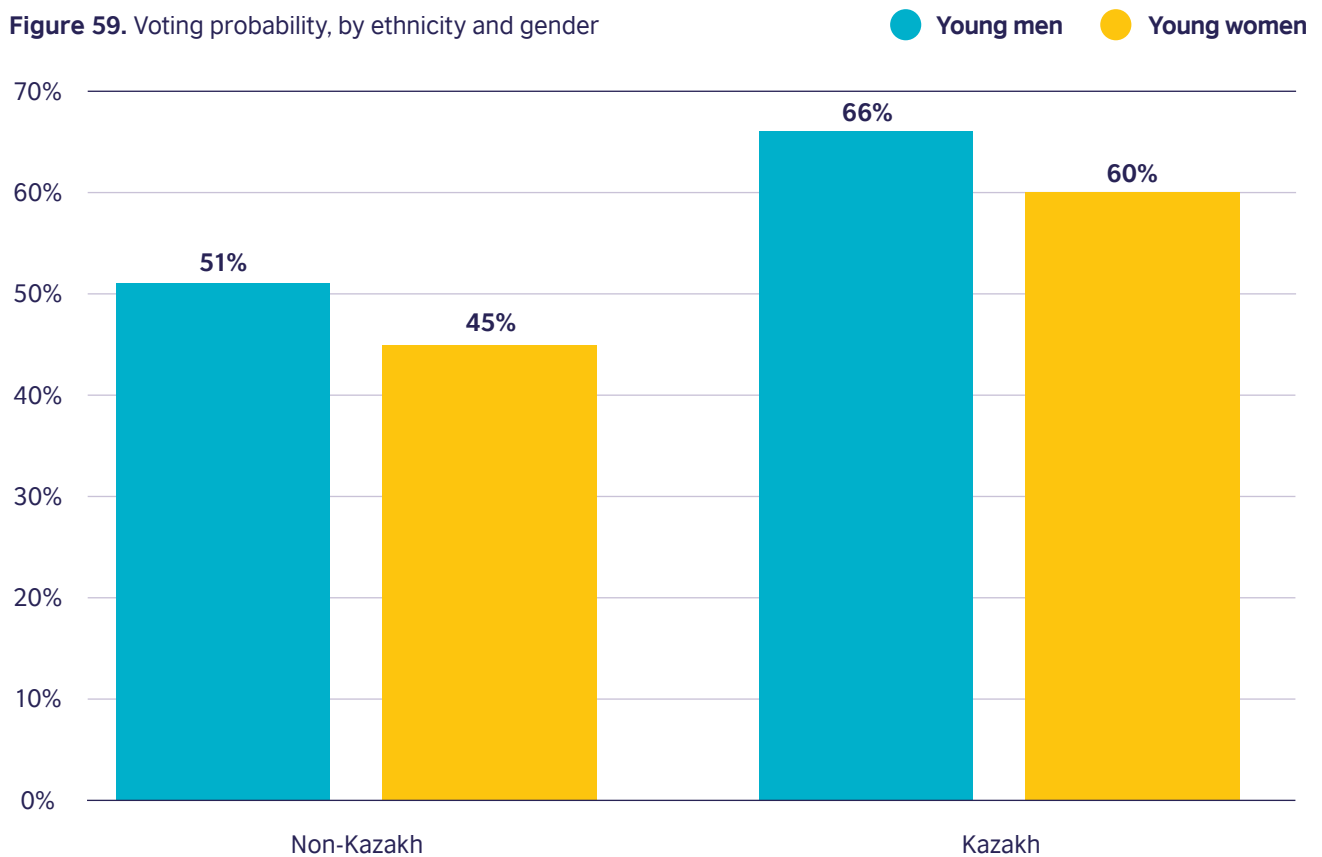
A similar contradiction appears in gender-based analysis. Young women report lower levels of general political engagement than young men but also express a stronger intention to vote in future general/national elections (see Figure 58).

**Figure 58.** Intention to vote in the next election, by gender



Statistical analysis of these voting intentions yields additional insights. When controlling for multiple variables, including sex, ethnic group, age group, religion, and income, ethnicity emerges as the only statistically significant predictor of voting intention. More specifically, after controlling for the rest of the variables, only being ethnic Kazakh is linked to a statistically significant increase (12.3 per cent) in the likelihood of a respondent saying they will vote, compared to belonging to any other ethnic group (see Figure 59).

**Figure 59.** Voting probability, by ethnicity and gender



## Activism

In line with previous research (see for instance Beissembayev et al., 2020), the qualitative research shows that young people in Kazakhstan draw a clear distinction between political and social activism. Focus groups and interviews revealed limited engagement with formal political activism, but significantly higher involvement in social causes.

As one participant put it:

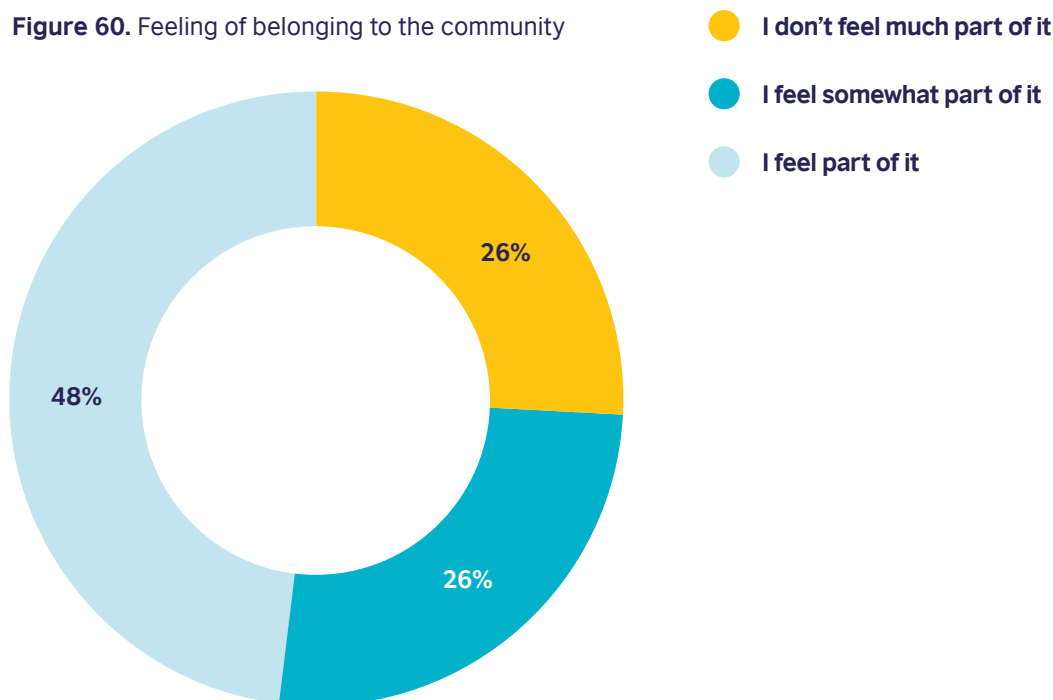
“

**I'm not a member of political organisations, but I work, yes, in civil organisations, in civil society.**

Male, 25 years old

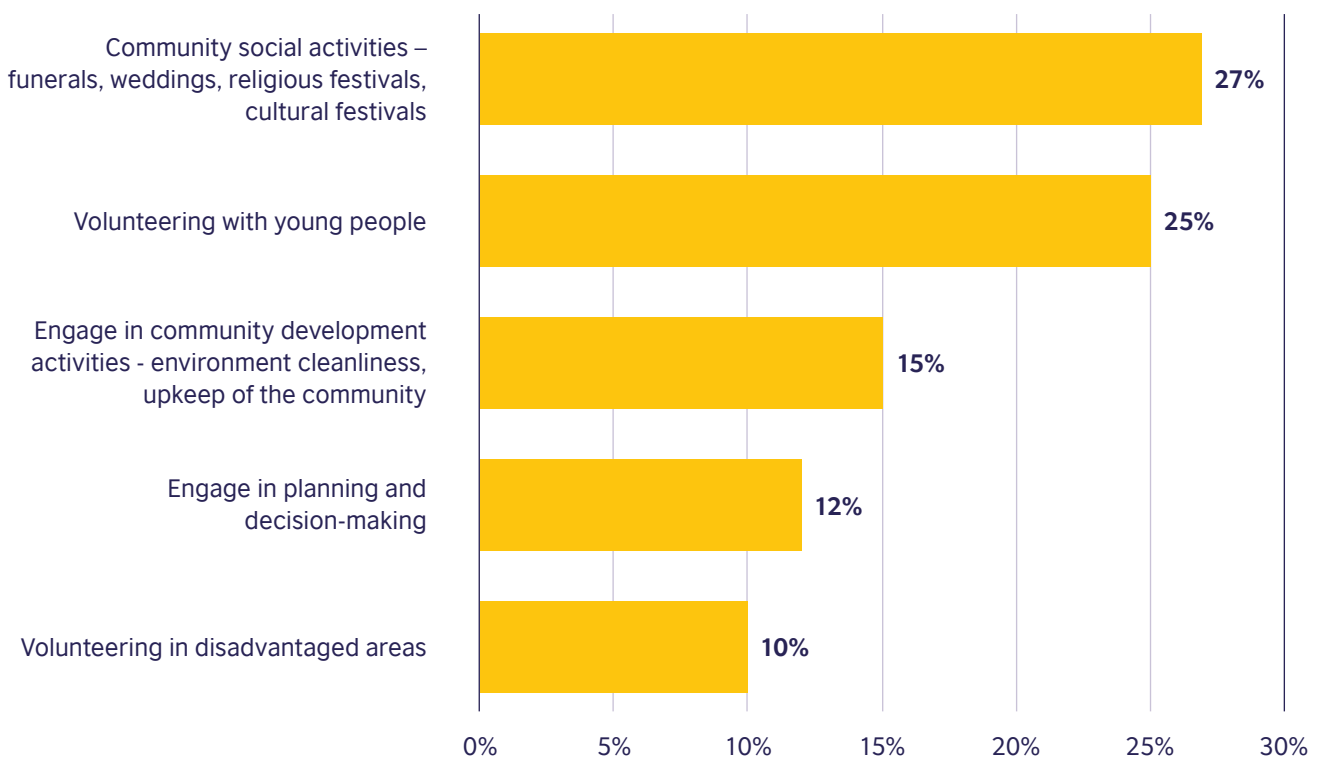
Various studies have highlighted the relationship between a sense of belonging to a community and willingness to actively participate in that community (Haim-Litevsky et al., 2023). Similarly, our survey shows that three-quarters of young Kazakhstanis feel part of their local community, which translates into various forms of community engagement (see Figure 60).

**Figure 60.** Feeling of belonging to the community



The most reported form of community engagement could be termed ritual-based, and includes religious and cultural festivities, weddings and funerals, which underpin the sense of community felt by most participants (27 per cent). This is followed by engagement through youth volunteering (25 per cent), demonstrating that young people are willing to dedicate their free time to causes they consider worthwhile (see Figure 61). The qualitative data provide additional insights, with interviewees describing their active participation in local and international organisations, working across domains such as human rights advocacy, environmental protection, and educational initiatives, such as improving Kazakh language skills and raising awareness of civil rights.

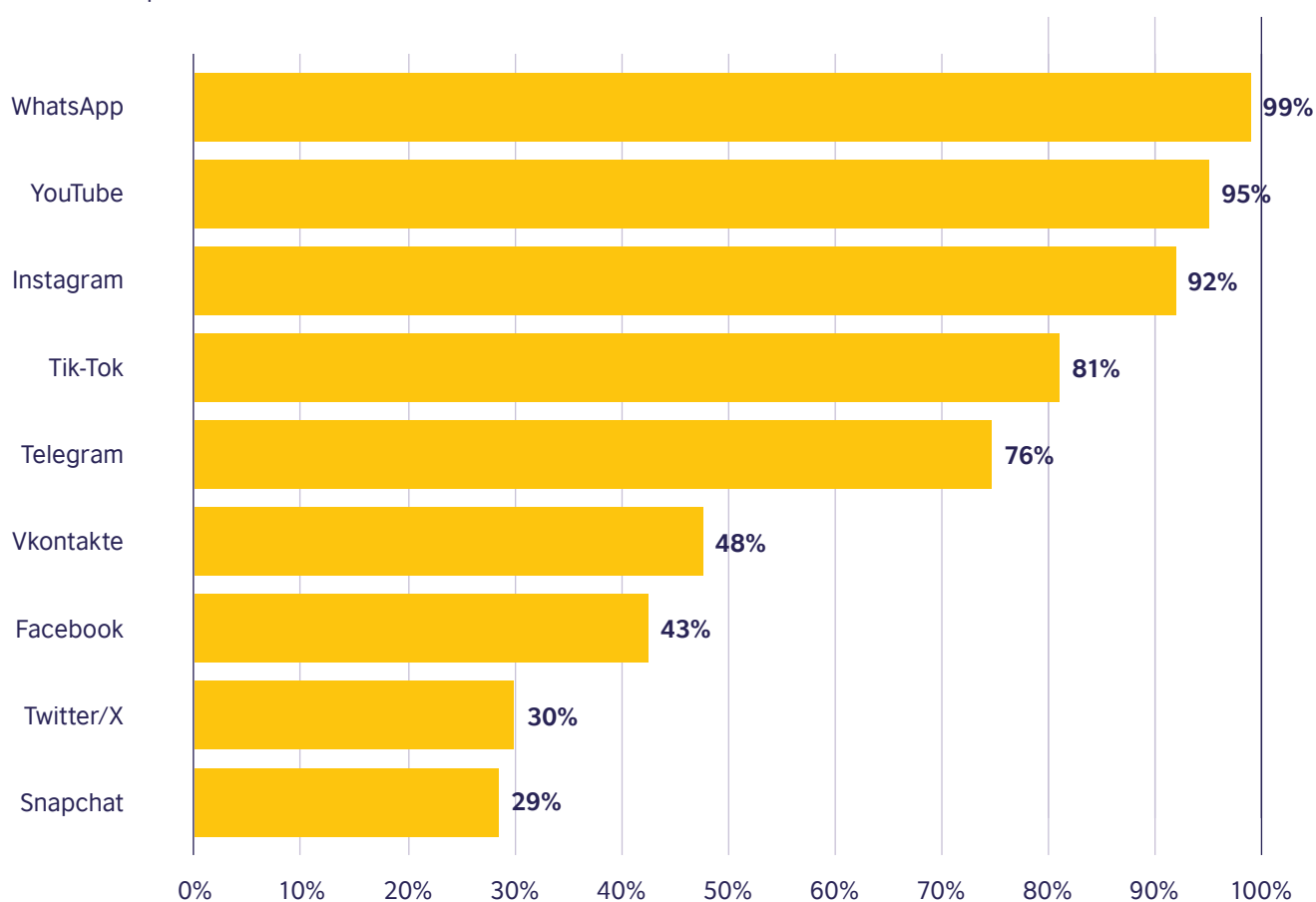
**Figure 61.** Forms of community engagement



## Role of social media

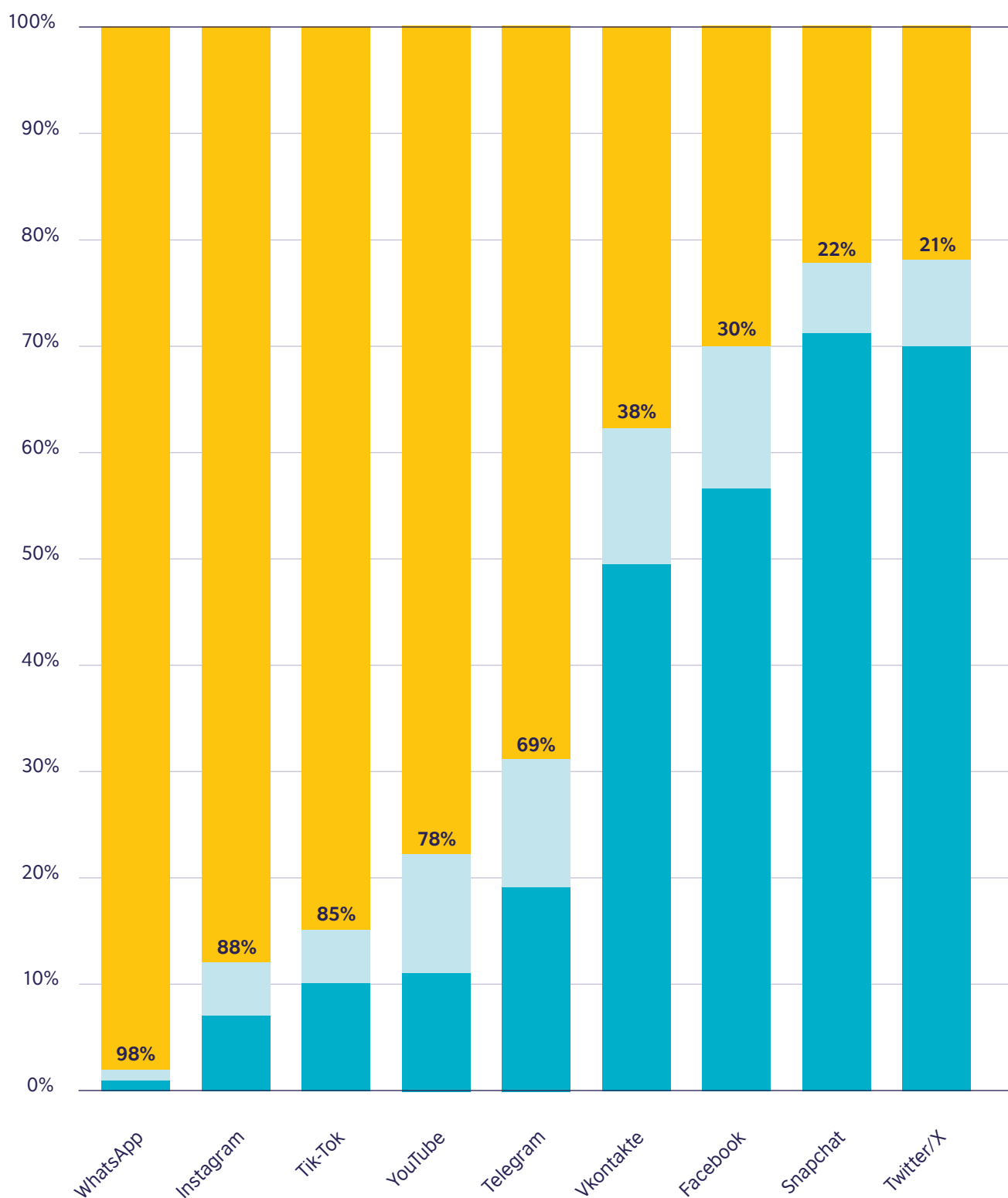
Social media use is widespread among young people in Kazakhstan. Two groups of social media platforms can be identified by the number of users and frequency. The first group is used by at least 75 per cent of survey respondents, more than 70 per cent of whom use it at least once a day, and includes WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Tik-Tok and Telegram. The second group has fewer users (less than 50 per cent), is used less frequently (under once a week), and includes V Kontakte, Facebook, Twitter/X, and Snapchat (see Figure 62 and Figure 63).

**Figure 62.** Number of users (share of sample) of various social media platforms



**Figure 63.** Frequency of social media use, by social media platform

● At least once a month    ● At least once a week  
● At least once a day

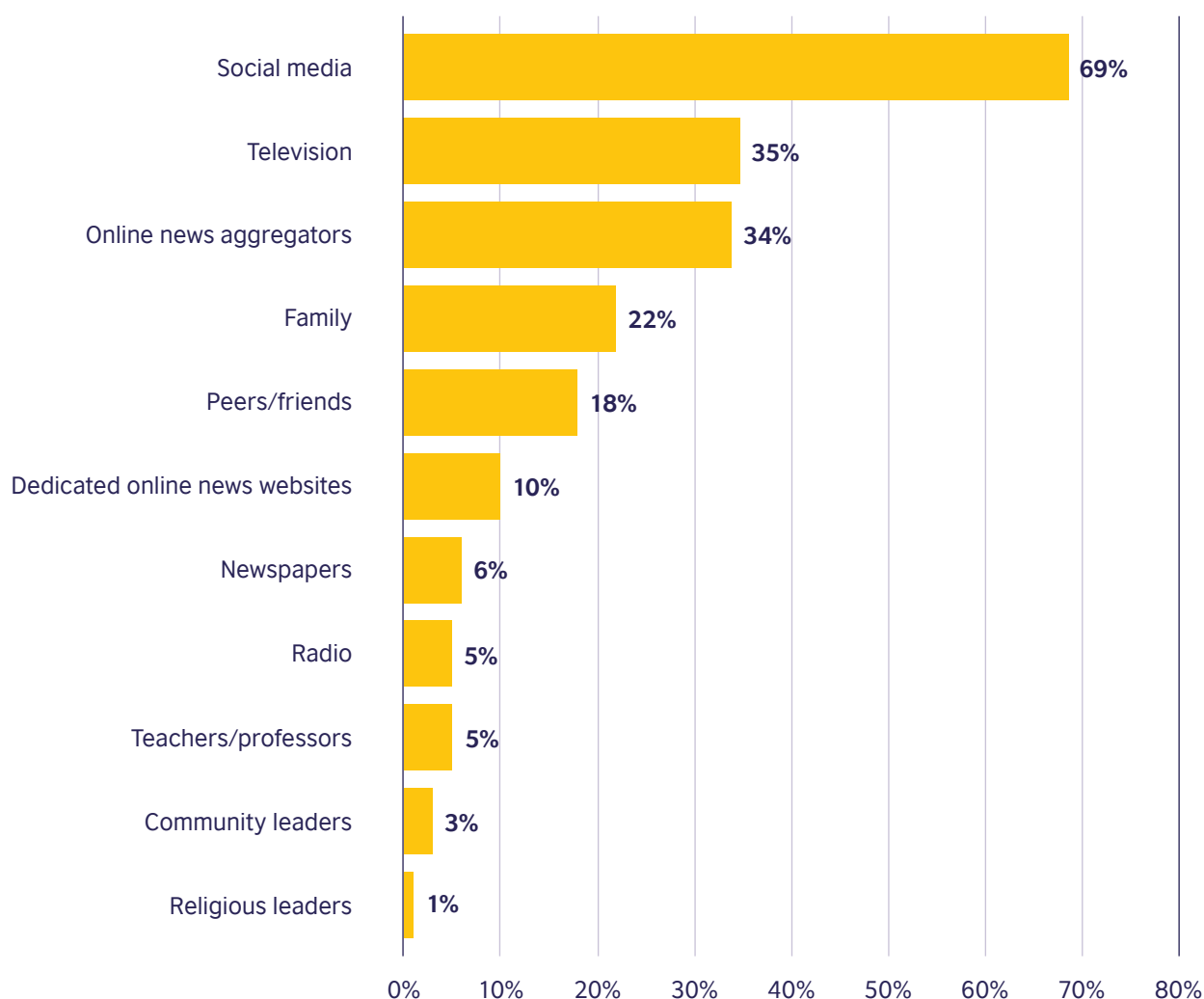




Young people in Kazakhstan are thus fully connected to social media platforms and spend a considerable amount of time every week on them. During the focus groups, young people explained that they use these platforms for political discussions, to share opinions through posts and reposts, demonstrate support for causes, and organise events through direct messages.

Another important function of these platforms is as sources of information, with 69 per cent of survey respondents using social media to obtain news and information on current events (see Figure 64). The second source of information, television, is used by over a third of respondents, making social media the single most common information source for young Kazakhstanis.

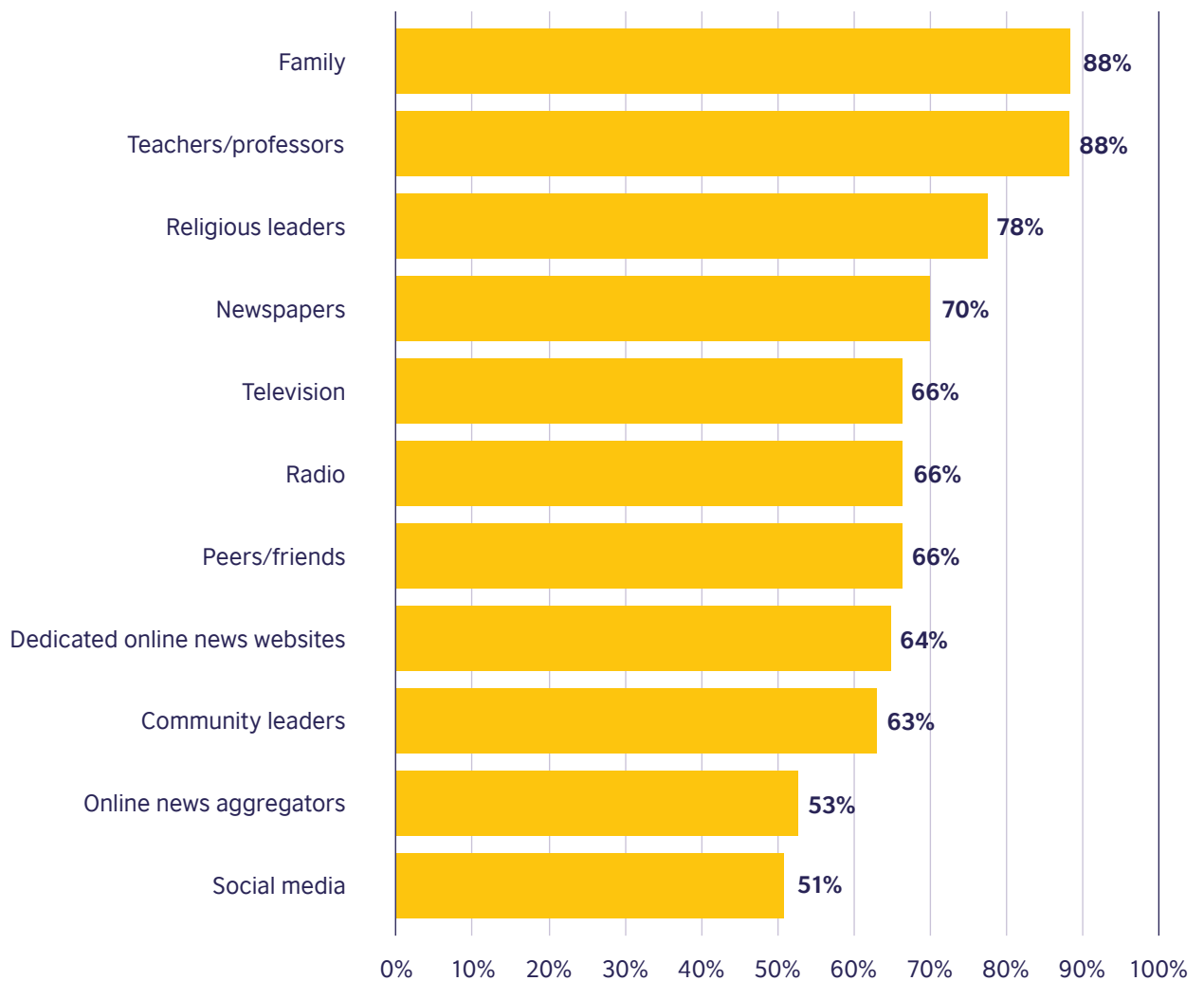
**Figure 64.** Information sources on news and current affairs



At the same time, young Kazakhstanis are aware of the limitations of social media as a reliable source of information. Only half of the survey respondents consider social media trustworthy, compared to 90 per cent trusting family as a source of information (see Figure 65). This suggests that social media is the information source considered least trustworthy by participants, despite being the most used.

Figure 65. Trustworthiness of information sources (share of sample that considers each source trustworthy or very trustworthy)

**Figure 65.** Trustworthiness of information sources (share of sample that considers each source trustworthy or very trustworthy)



The focus groups and interviews shed some light on this paradox. On the one hand, social media has clear advantages over other information sources: it is cost-effective, available immediately, accessible, and presented in easily digestible formats. It also provides exposure to diverse opinions and, in some cases, has a demonstrable ability to catalyse real change through public attention.

At the same time, however, many young people in Kazakhstan are concerned about social media and have a nuanced understanding of its dangers and limitations as information sources and a means of delivering positive impact. They worry about the overwhelming presence of fake news, the lack of corroboration, and the difficulties of fact-checking. The fleeting nature of social media, where users constantly switch from one post to another, further complicates meaningful engagement. Algorithm-driven content curation fosters echo chambers, pairing like-minded individuals and reinforcing existing beliefs while limiting exposure to diverse perspectives. Many criticise the illusion of impact, where social media provides a sense of accomplishment even when no real change occurs. Additionally, the presence of private funders behind posts and influencers creates concerns about authenticity and transparency. Alleged government restrictions on expression, along with the cultish, parasocial relationships between some content creators and their audiences, further fuel scepticism about social media's role in society.

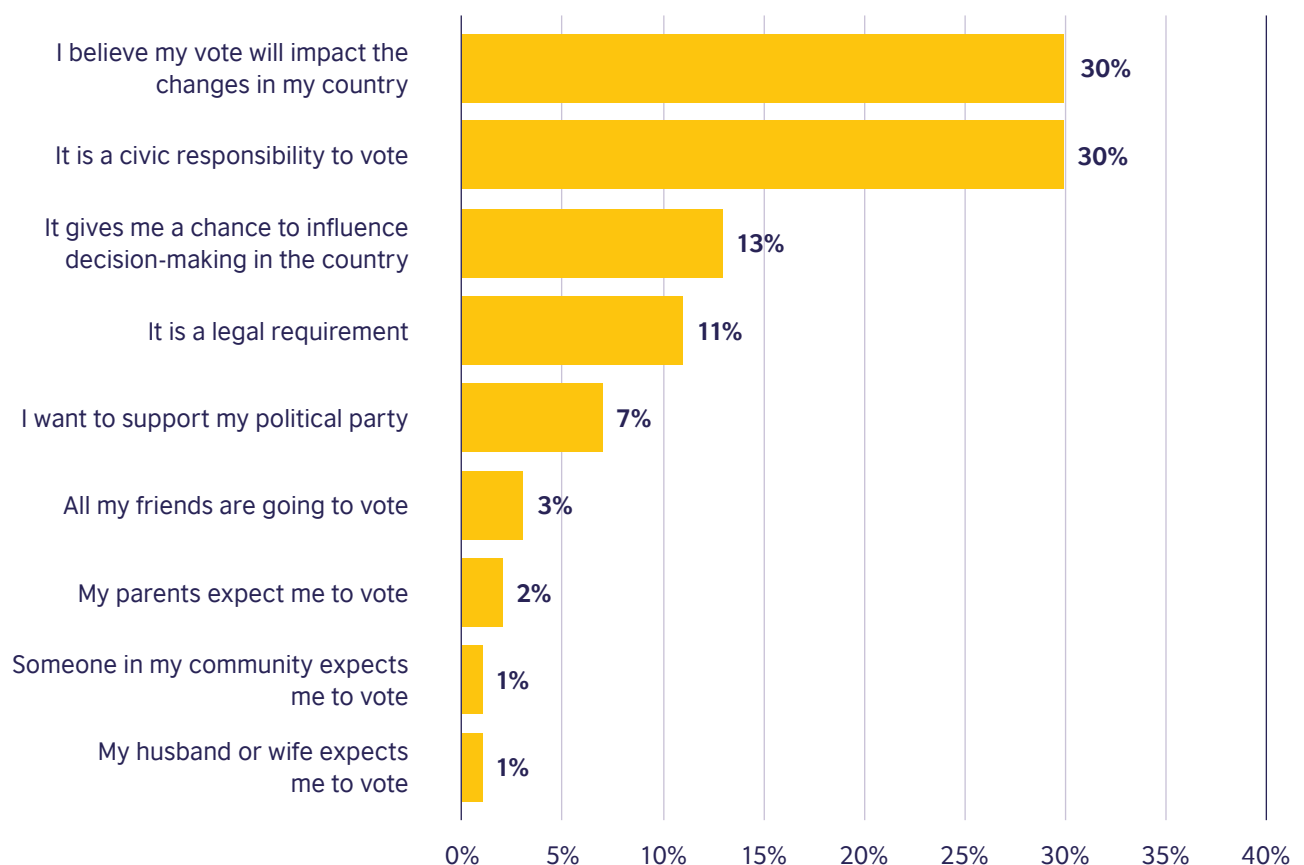


# Forms of political participation

## Reasons for participating in politics

Although political engagement is low for young people in Kazakhstan, they considered the factors that would motivate them to take a more active part in politics, particularly voting. The most frequent responses were the expected impact of their vote to bring about change in their country and a civic responsibility to vote, at 30 per cent each (see Figure 66).

**Figure 66.** Reasons for voting



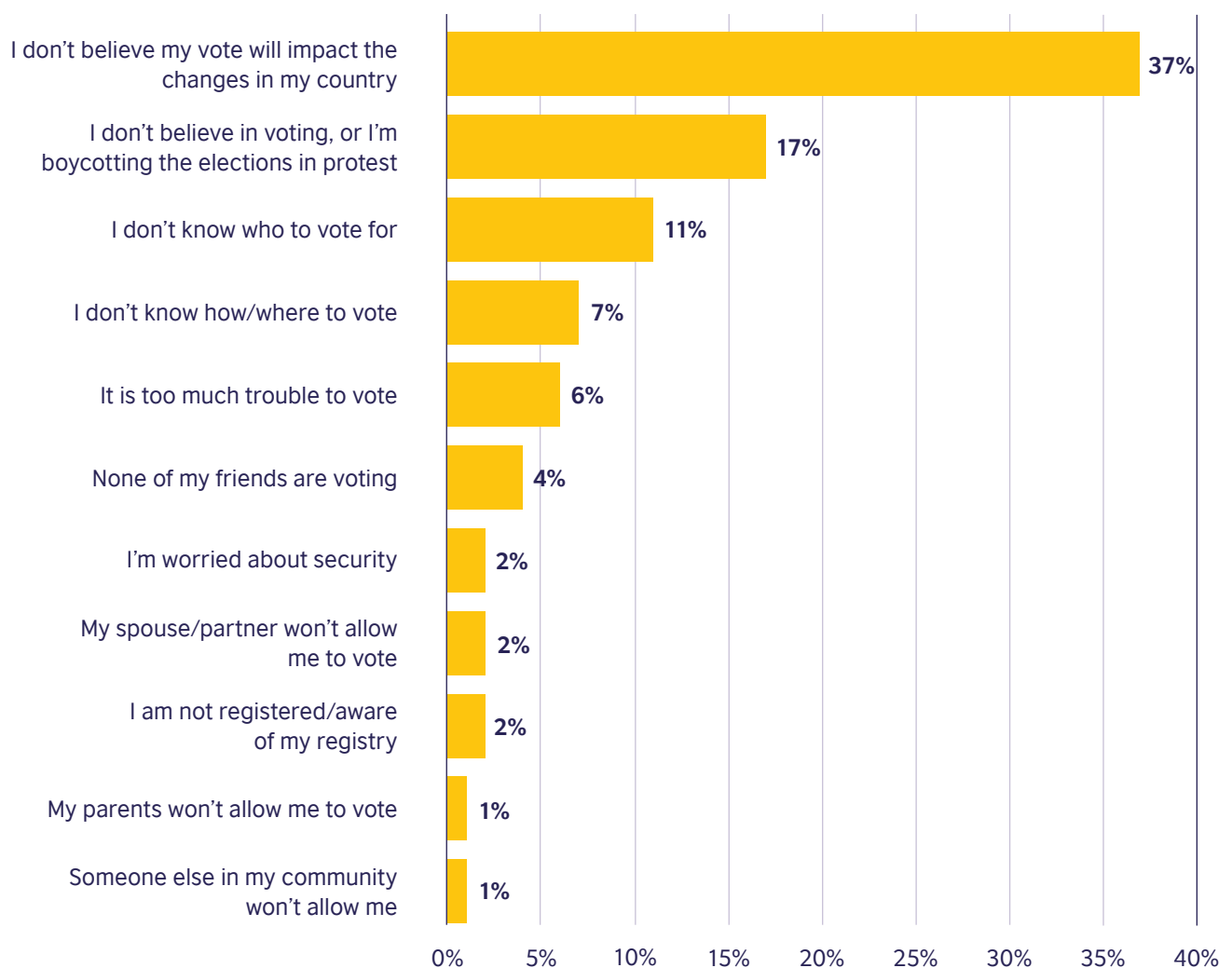
The qualitative discussions characterised the most frequently cited motivation as ‘the seal of youth’, or a passionate desire to affect change in the world. This idealistic drive is complemented by a fundamental need for belonging, with young people seeking to join communities sharing common interests and goals. Voting is seen as a way of enhancing the sense of belonging to their community, which is central to their approach to life. A third motivation stems from civic education, with some young people highly aware of their role in maintaining democratic governance.

## Reasons for not participating in politics

The lack of faith that an individual vote can have an impact is the main reason young people do not vote (37 per cent), followed by their lack of belief in voting or the boycotting of elections in protest (17 per cent) (see Figure 67). These two reasons for not participating in elections appear to be the exact opposite of the top

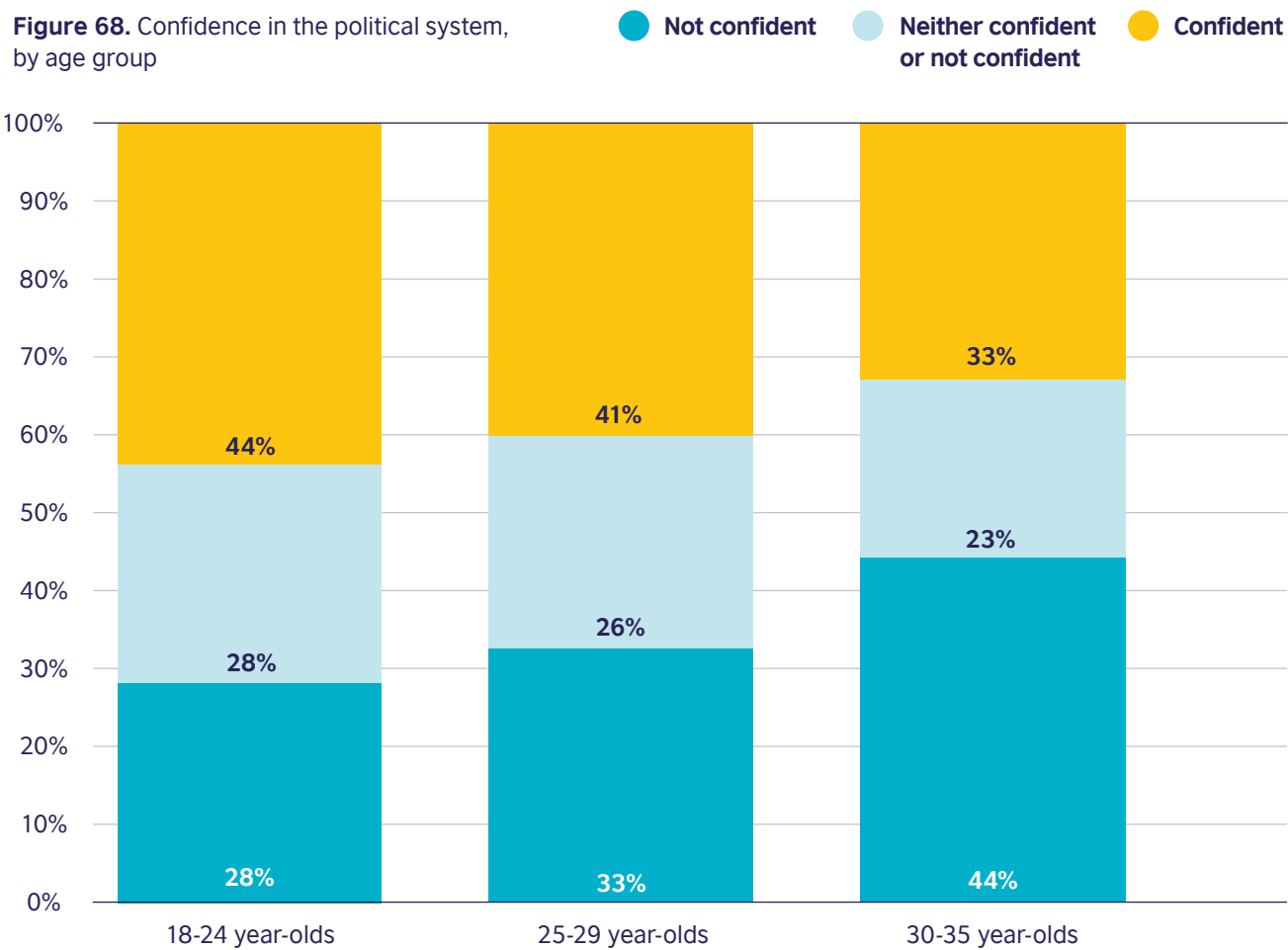
two reasons for voting. Young people in Kazakhstan seem polarised in respect of the extent to which they believe their political actions can produce real change and of their sense of voting as a civic duty. Different positions along the spectrum of each of these reasons then drives electoral participation or abstention.

**Figure 67.** Reasons for not voting



Confidence in the political system has been shown to be an important factor in understanding participation patterns in other countries. In Kazakhstan, a decline in confidence is evident moving up through age groups, with 30-35 year-olds having the least confidence in the system (see Figure 68). This is also the age group with the highest number of voters, but the lowest levels of self-reported political engagement in general. The youngest participants, by contrast, have most confidence in the political system, perhaps explaining their higher willingness to engage in politics.

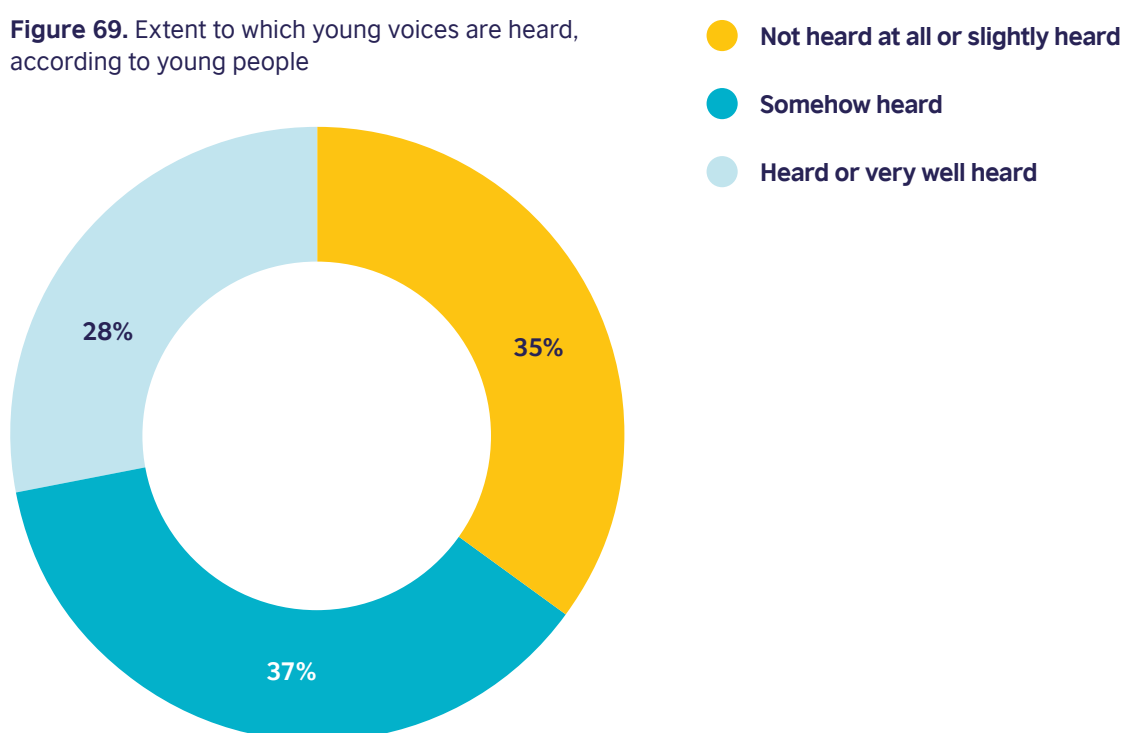
**Figure 68.** Confidence in the political system, by age group



The results on the extent to which people feel heard are similar: 35 per cent of young Kazakhstanis feel slightly heard or not heard, i.e. they believe that no attention is paid to the voices of young people on national issues and that no significant action is taken based on their views (see Figure 69). On a positive note, more than 50 per cent of respondents report feeling that young voices are heard somewhat or very well.

Overall, the reasons that young Kazakhstanis give for voting or not voting do not indicate an indifference towards politics or apathy about the political affairs of their country, but, rather, suggest an appetite for greater involvement.

**Figure 69.** Extent to which young voices are heard, according to young people



## Participation needs

Next Generation research participants were asked about the interventions that would foster higher political and civic engagement. Interviewees commented that participating in politics takes time and energy they need to devote to other areas of their life. However, young people believe they would participate more in politics if it was easier to understand and if information was more accessible (see Figure 70).

According to one interviewee:

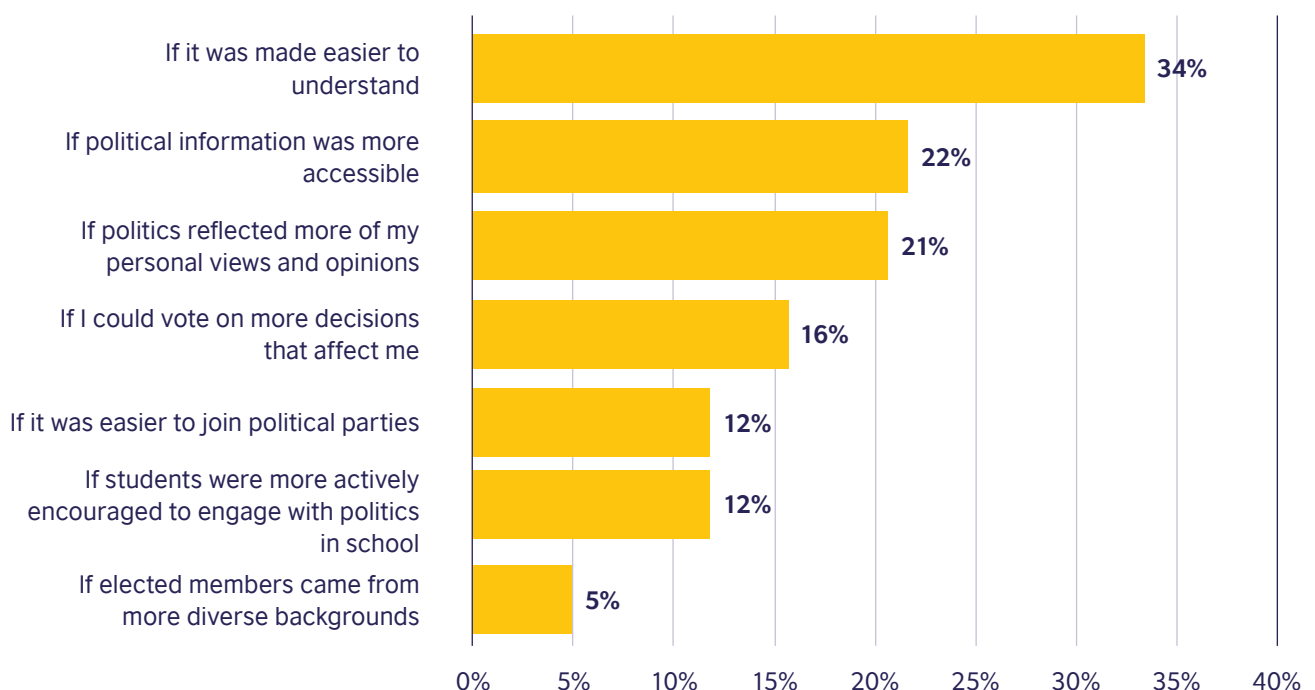
“

**Now, somehow, everyone is too busy surviving. And if you go deeper into politics, you'll go crazy... because people are too busy staying alive.**

Female, 29 years old

This suggests that devoting resources to making politics more accessible for young people would increase the likelihood of their involvement. Paired with innovative approaches, this political goal could bring about positive impacts on multiple fronts. For instance, democratic technology organisations are currently exploring the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to simplify political texts and make it easier for participants to understand policy debates. This could be applied in Kazakhstan, where young people are highly digitally literate and have expressed a willingness to play a more active role in their communities and in the political system.

**Figure 70.** Interventions that would increase young people's engagement in politics







## Chapter 5

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# Kazakhstan's place in the world





# Introduction

The Next Generation research examined young Kazakhstanis' perspectives on international relations and their country's position in the global arena. The findings reveal a genuine interest in the rest of the world, paired with a sophisticated understanding of Kazakhstan's geopolitical role, particularly its position as a bridge between major powers and its status within Central Asia.

The research shows that young people in Kazakhstan are interested in migrating and learning new languages. Turkey is the country that attracts the most interest, while English is the language considered most valuable to learn. Previous research has shown that, since independence, the English language has become very popular among young people, who understand its importance in gaining a quality education and a competitive edge in the jobs market. The percentage of those with English remains quite low, with only 10 per cent of young people able to speak, read and write in English fluently. One-fifth of young Kazakhstanis do not have any English at all (SRC Youth, 2023a), but the number of young people learning English is growing year on year.

In parallel with their vision of the world, participants discussed the role of Kazakhstan on the global stage. They see their country as a regional connector and leader. Young Kazakhstanis demonstrate a nuanced awareness of their country's strategic position, viewing it simultaneously as a geographical bridge, an economic leader, and a relatively progressive force in Central Asia. The research identifies significant generational patterns in how young people perceive various nations, particularly economic opportunities, cultural influences, and potential migration destinations. Their views reflect both pragmatic considerations about international relations and aspirational thinking about future opportunities.

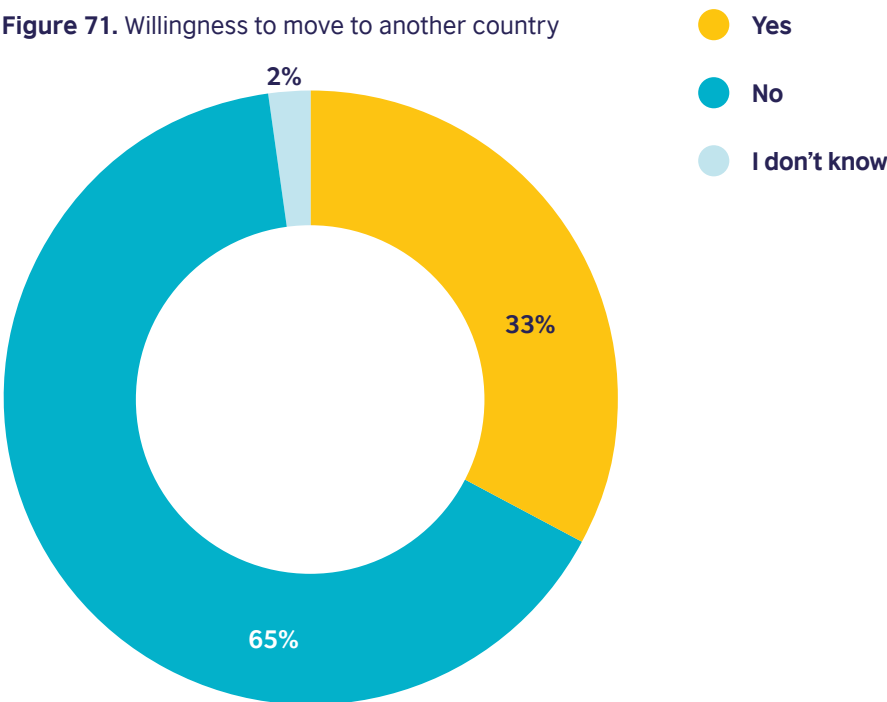
# Visions of the world

## Young people’s interest in other countries

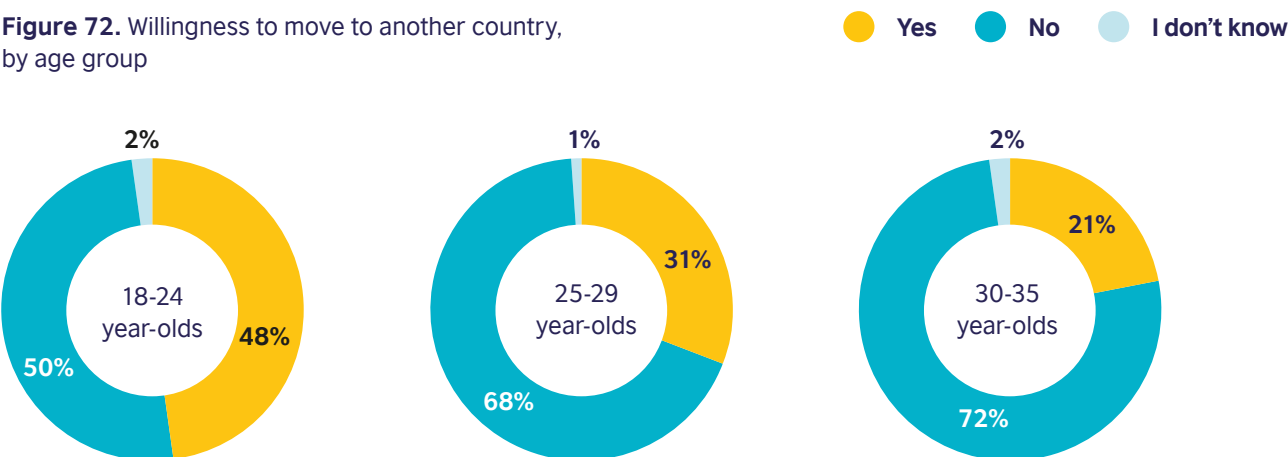
A significant proportion of Kazakhstan’s young population (33 per cent) is considering emigrating to another country (see Chapter 3 – Navigating employment opportunities and challenges (see Figure 71).

Unsurprisingly, the youngest cohort (18-24) is the most willing to move (48 per cent), compared to only 21 per cent of the oldest cohort (30-35) (see Figure 72). Younger people may find migration more attractive because of their life stage: many are students and studying abroad is a promising opportunity. People under 25 also tend to have fewer responsibilities (family, job), making it easier for them to make a fresh start in a new country.

**Figure 71.** Willingness to move to another country

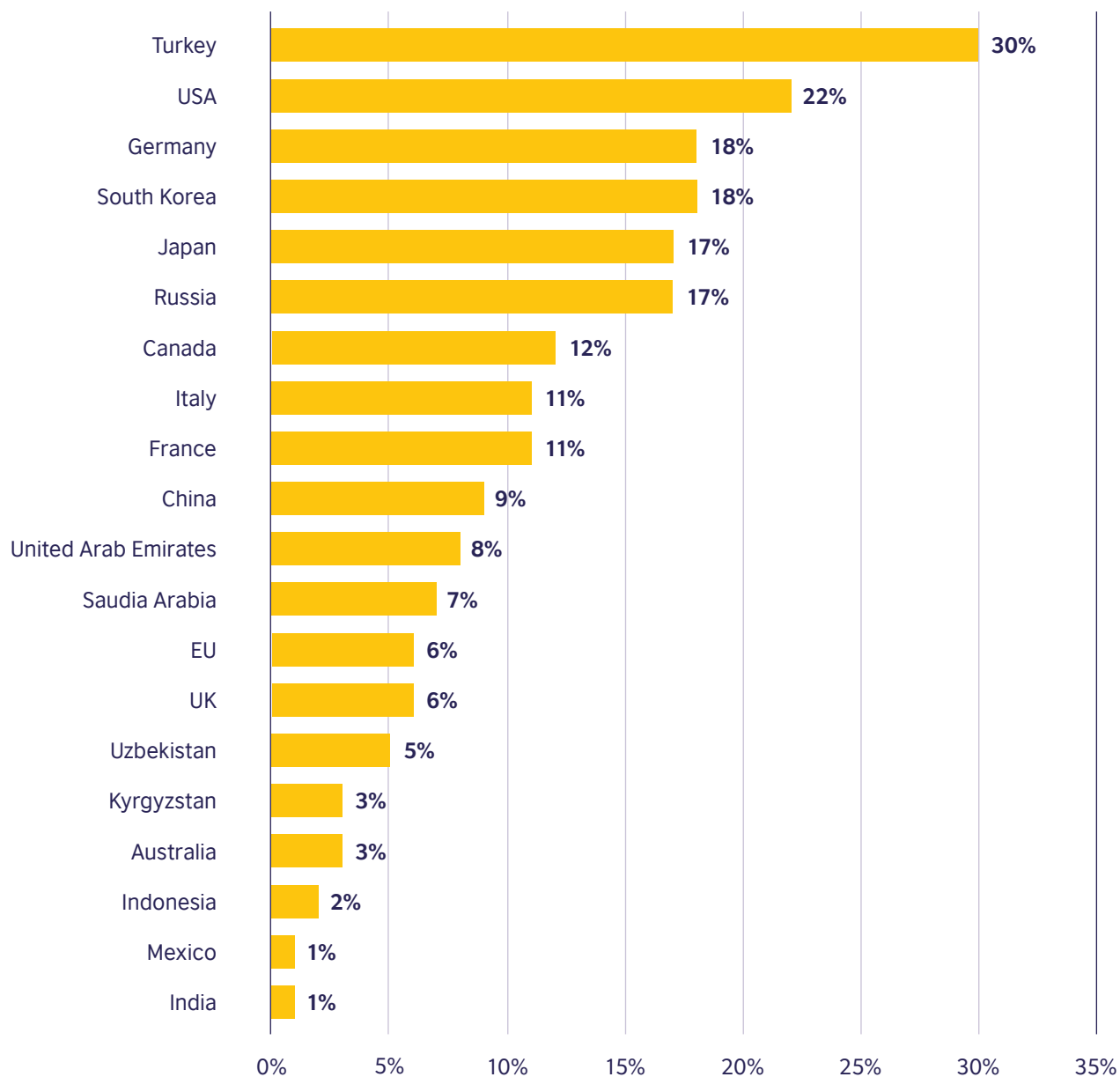


**Figure 72.** Willingness to move to another country, by age group



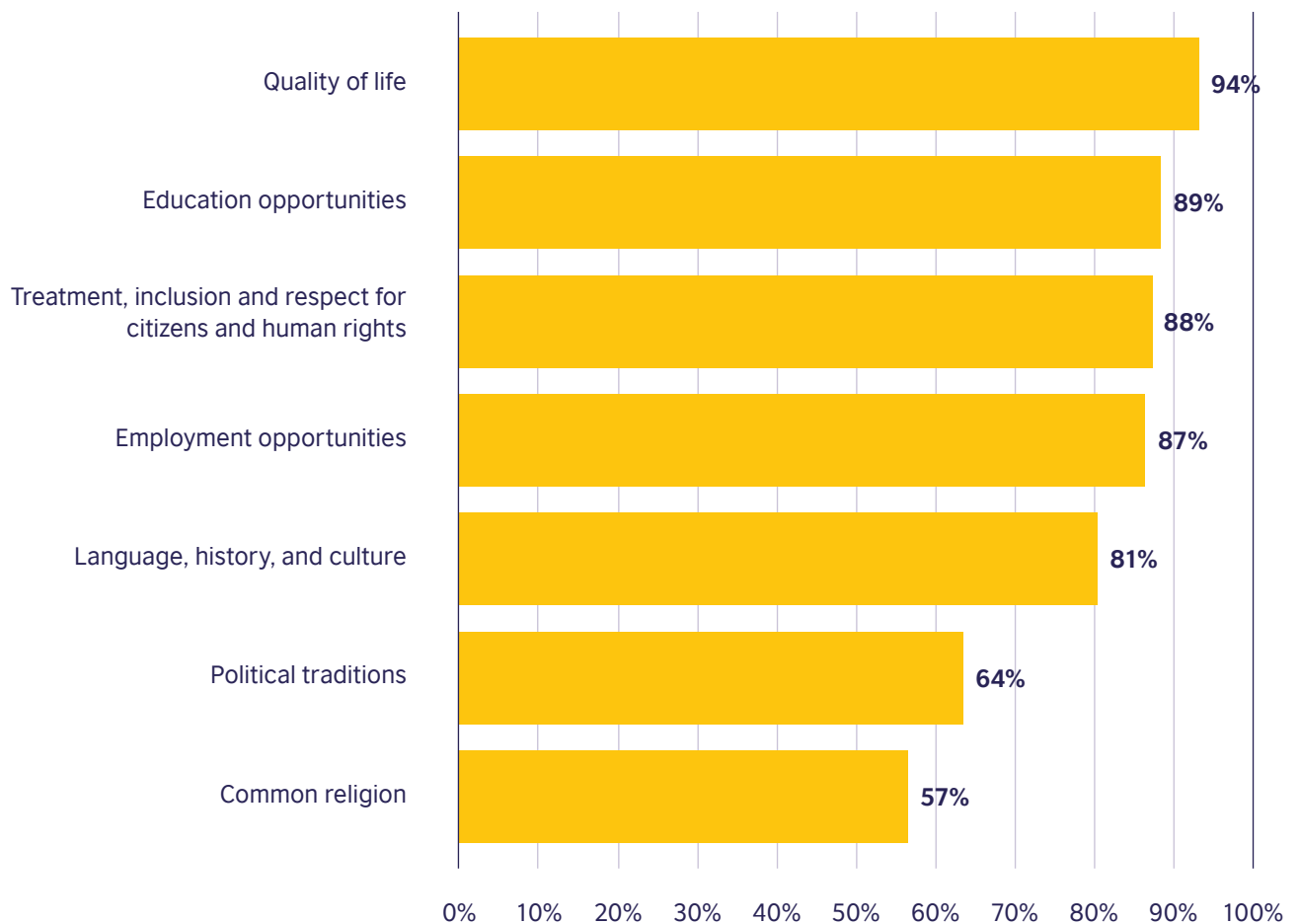
When asked about the most attractive countries, young people show a clear preference for Turkey (30 per cent), followed by the USA (22 per cent), Germany and South Korea (18 per cent), and Japan and Russia (17 per cent) (see Figure 73).

**Figure 73.** Most attractive countries for young people in Kazakhstan



Their reasons for finding these countries particularly attractive are primarily related to the quality of life they expect to find there (94 per cent), followed by education opportunities (89 per cent), respectful treatment in line with human rights (88 per cent), employment opportunities (87 per cent), and language, history and culture (81 per cent) (see Figure 74).

**Figure 74.** Reasons for finding a country attractive



## What do young leaders in Kazakhstan think about the preferred countries of young Kazakhstanis?

We presented the survey results to a group of young leaders from Kazakhstan and asked them to provide further insights into the countries preferred by young people.

### Turkey

Turkey holds significant appeal, largely through the influence of Turkish television shows. Like South Korean media, Turkish shows have cultivated an interest in the country's actors, locations, and narratives. Beyond media influence, respondents noted Turkey's historical significance and natural beauty. Some highlighted the linguistic connections between the Turkish and Kazakh languages, allowing for easy uptake of Turkish. Turkey also emerges as an important potential and actual education destination, particularly for those interested in Turkish history or language studies.

### USA

Young Kazakhstanis often referred to the role of the USA in global politics. It is also seen as a potential destination for migration, especially for educational opportunities. Some respondents expressed a desire for greater recognition of Kazakhstan by the USA, believing that increased American awareness and familiarity could enhance their country's global visibility and profile on the world stage.

### South Korea

Like Japan, South Korea's attractiveness to young Kazakhstanis stems primarily from its cultural influence through entertainment media. The Korean music and television industries have created particular appeal among young women, who comprise the primary consumers of such content. Beyond its cultural appeal, South Korea is identified as a destination for high-quality medical care, including cosmetic surgery.

### Japan

For young Kazakhstanis, Japan is one of the most attractive international destinations, driven by two distinct factors. Firstly, Japan is a significant cultural referent through its media. Respondents expressed an interest in

experiencing first-hand the culture, cuisine, and landscapes they encounter through Japanese television and films. Secondly, participants highlighted Japan's post-war development as an inspirational model, particularly its capacity for reconstruction and progress despite historical challenges.

### Russia

Russia was much referenced in young Kazakhstanis' discussions of international relations. Their comments reflect a multifaceted relationship encompassing economic ties, shared language, and cultural connections. There is a perceived Russian influence inherited from their parents' and grandparents' generation, who were educated when Kazakhstan was still part of the Soviet Union. Russia is the country where the highest number of respondents previously lived (see Chapter 3) and the Russian language is widely known and spoken in Kazakhstan. It is logical that their northern neighbour is one of the most attractive global destinations for young Kazakhstanis.

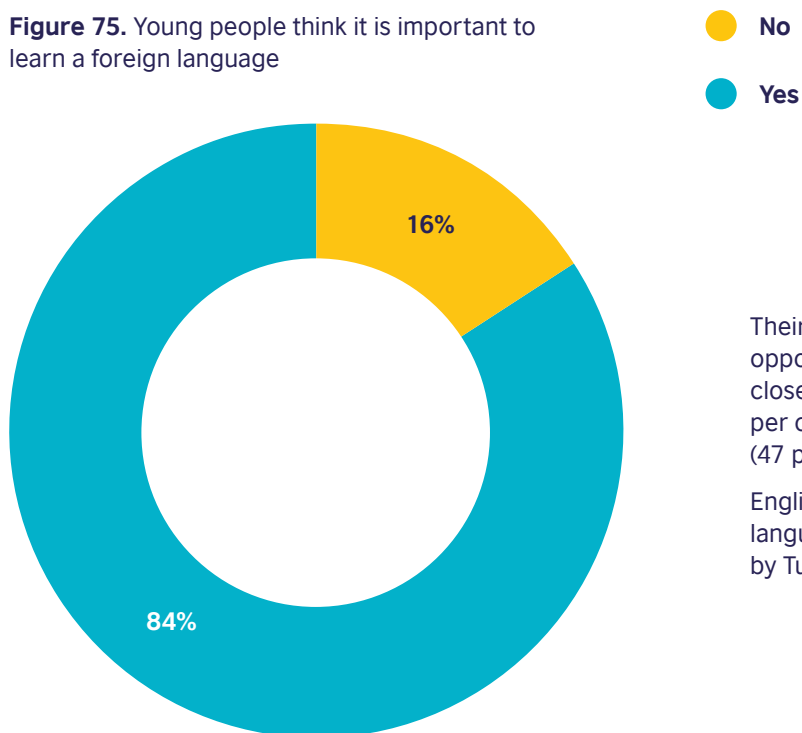
### European Union (EU)

Despite making it into the top five most attractive countries, Germany, and the EU more generally, received limited attention from respondents, with discussions focusing primarily on educational policy, particularly the Bologna Process. This series of agreements enabling comparison of higher-education qualifications was adopted by Kazakhstan in 2010 and represents a significant step towards Western educational standards. Respondents noted that this alignment with European standards is not limited to education, but, rather, signals the adoption of Europe as a reference point in quality standards in goods and services, including employment and quality of life in general.

## Young people's interest in other languages

The interest of young Kazakhstanis in the world beyond their country's borders is also illustrated by their almost unanimous agreement that learning a foreign language is important (see Figure 75).

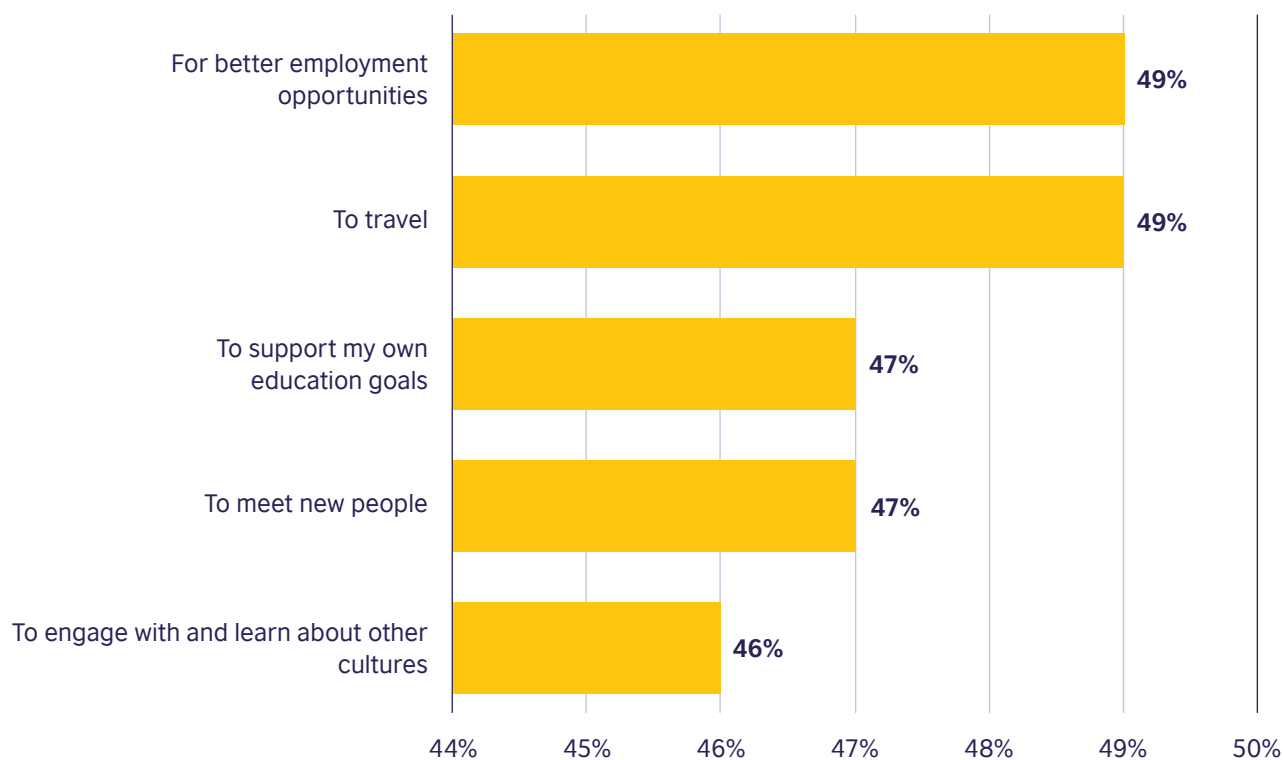
**Figure 75.** Young people think it is important to learn a foreign language



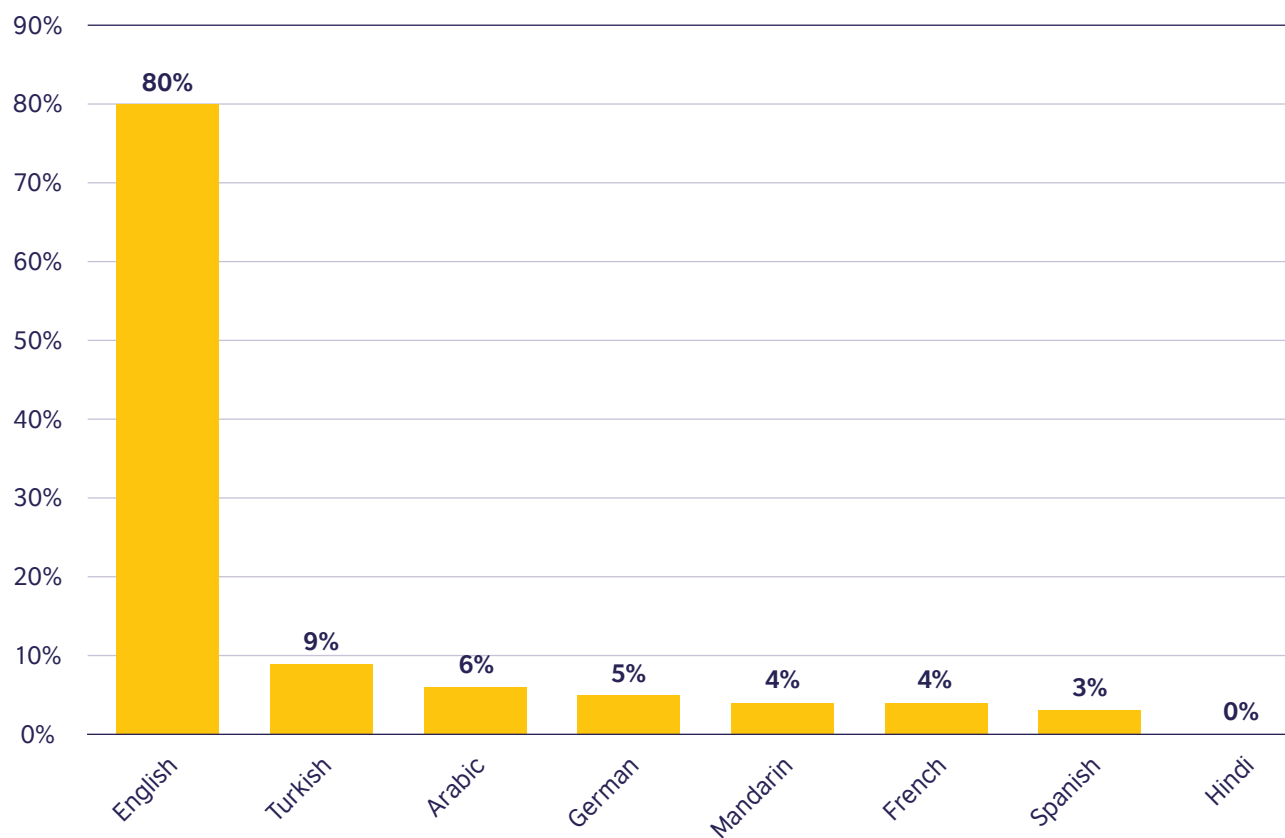
Their reasons include employment opportunities and travel (49 per cent each), closely followed by education opportunities (47 per cent), and the expansion of social networks (47 per cent) (see Figure 76).

English is considered the most important language to learn, followed at some distance by Turkish (see Figure 77).

**Figure 76.** Reasons for learning a foreign language

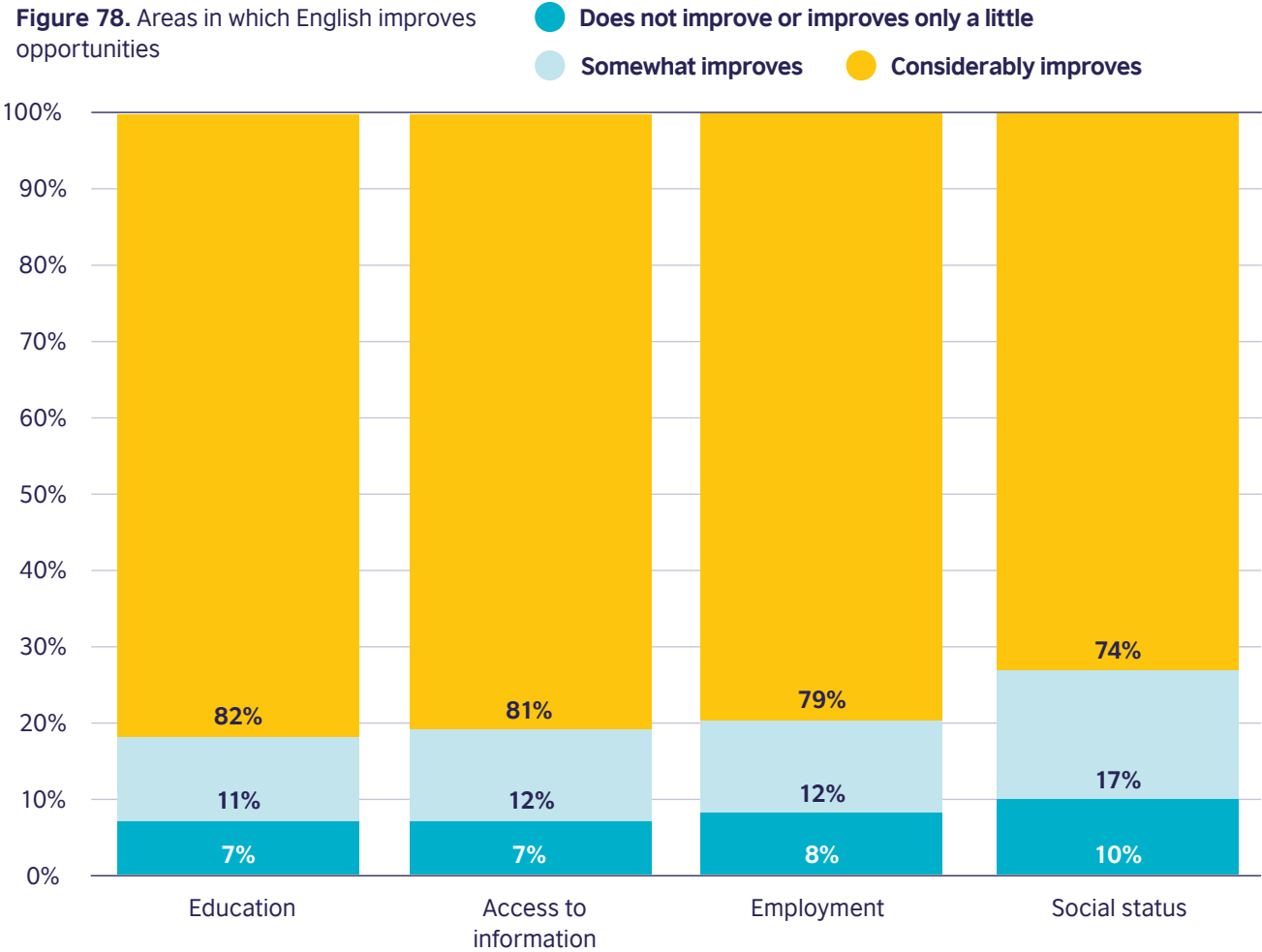




**Figure 77.** Most important languages to learn

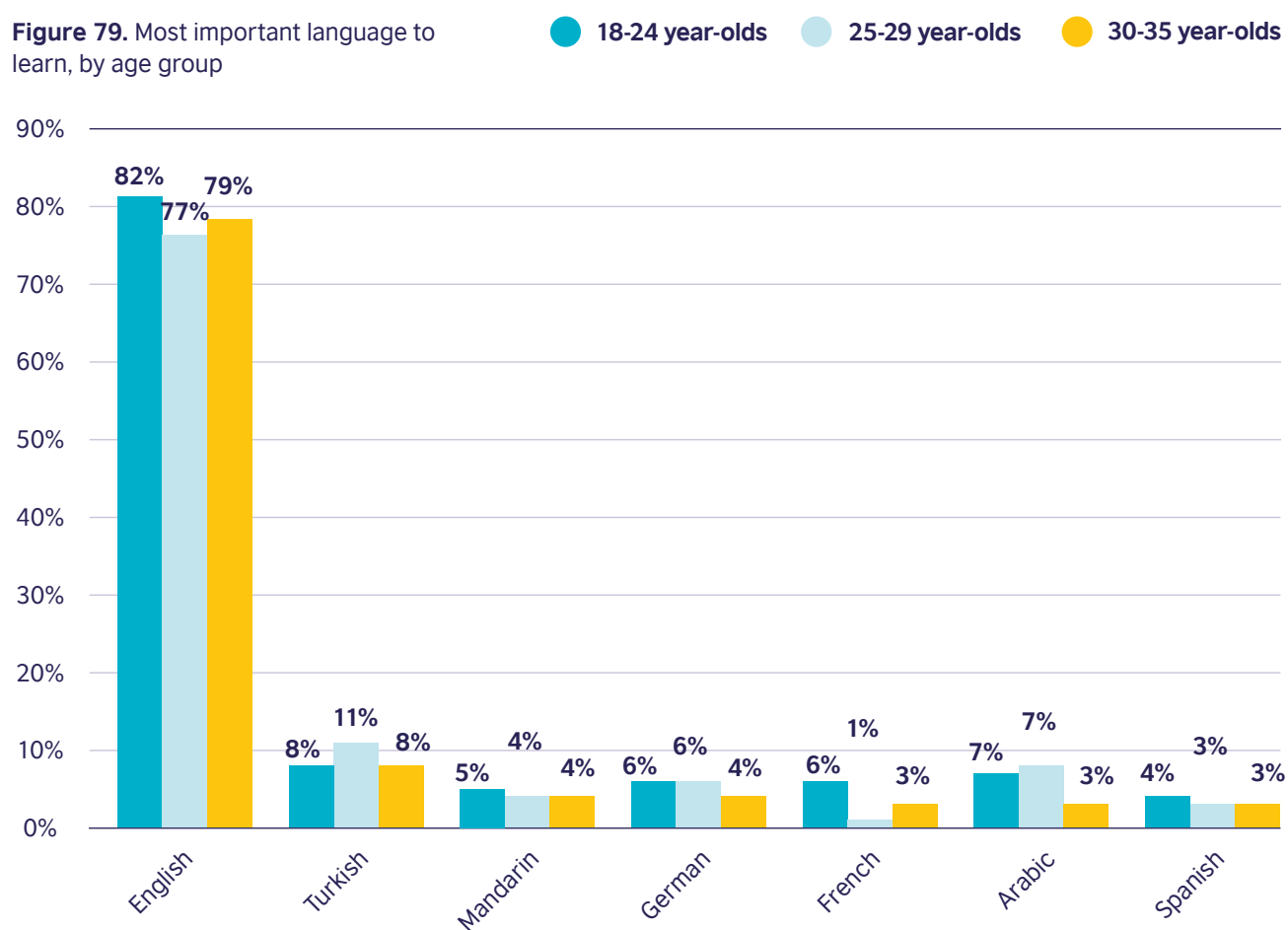
Young people in Kazakhstan consider English highly valuable due to its usefulness in various arenas. It is seen as essential for education, reflecting young leaders' views that the USA and Europe are key academic destinations (see Figure 78). English also provides access to a wider range of information and employment opportunities. Three-quarters of respondents believe proficiency in English enhances social status, reinforcing its importance in both personal and professional development.

**Figure 78.** Areas in which English improves opportunities



The importance of English for education is consistent with data showing that 18-24 year-olds are most interested in learning English (see Figure 79), as well as the most willing to move abroad. These numbers highlight young Kazakhstanis' growing interest in living more international lives. The popularity of English among this group is linked to a process of globalisation and internationalisation of education and media consumption in Kazakhstan.

**Figure 79.** Most important language to learn, by age group



# The role of Kazakhstan

**This Next Generation research shows that young Kazakhstanis have clear views about their country's geopolitical role in Central Asia and the world, informed by a sense of pride in their country's history and a strong belief in Kazakhstan's potential.**



## Kazakhstan as a bridge

Young people in Kazakhstan have a clear vision of their country as a multidimensional bridge. This belief operates on three distinct levels. Geographically, they recognise Kazakhstan's strategic position as Central Asia's largest country, sharing borders with major global powers including Russia and China, while connected to other Central Asian nations. They also identify Kazakhstan's role as a regional mediator, highlighting its neutrality in diplomatic relations and ability to facilitate regional dialogue. Finally, they position Kazakhstan as a crucial link between Western nations and Central Asia.



## Kazakhstan as the leader of Central Asia

Young Kazakhstanis have a strong awareness of their country's position as Central Asia's largest economy. Survey respondents express pride in their nation's development and its attractiveness to international investors. They acknowledge Kazakhstan's overall economic leadership in the region, which they see as translating into political leadership to strengthen cohesion among Central Asian countries. Similarly, they demonstrate awareness of other countries' particular strengths, noting Uzbekistan's advances in tourism and Kyrgyzstan's growth in the IT sector, while recognising the leadership position of Kazakhstan.



## Kazakhstan as a progressive example for the region

Young people often see Kazakhstan as a comparatively more progressive country than its Central Asian or Middle Eastern neighbours, especially in gender equality and inclusion of minorities. For example, they believe that LGBTQ+ rights are respected more in Kazakhstan than in other countries, although some young leaders note that more advances are needed.



## Chapter 6

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# Next Generation Kazakhstan



# Introduction

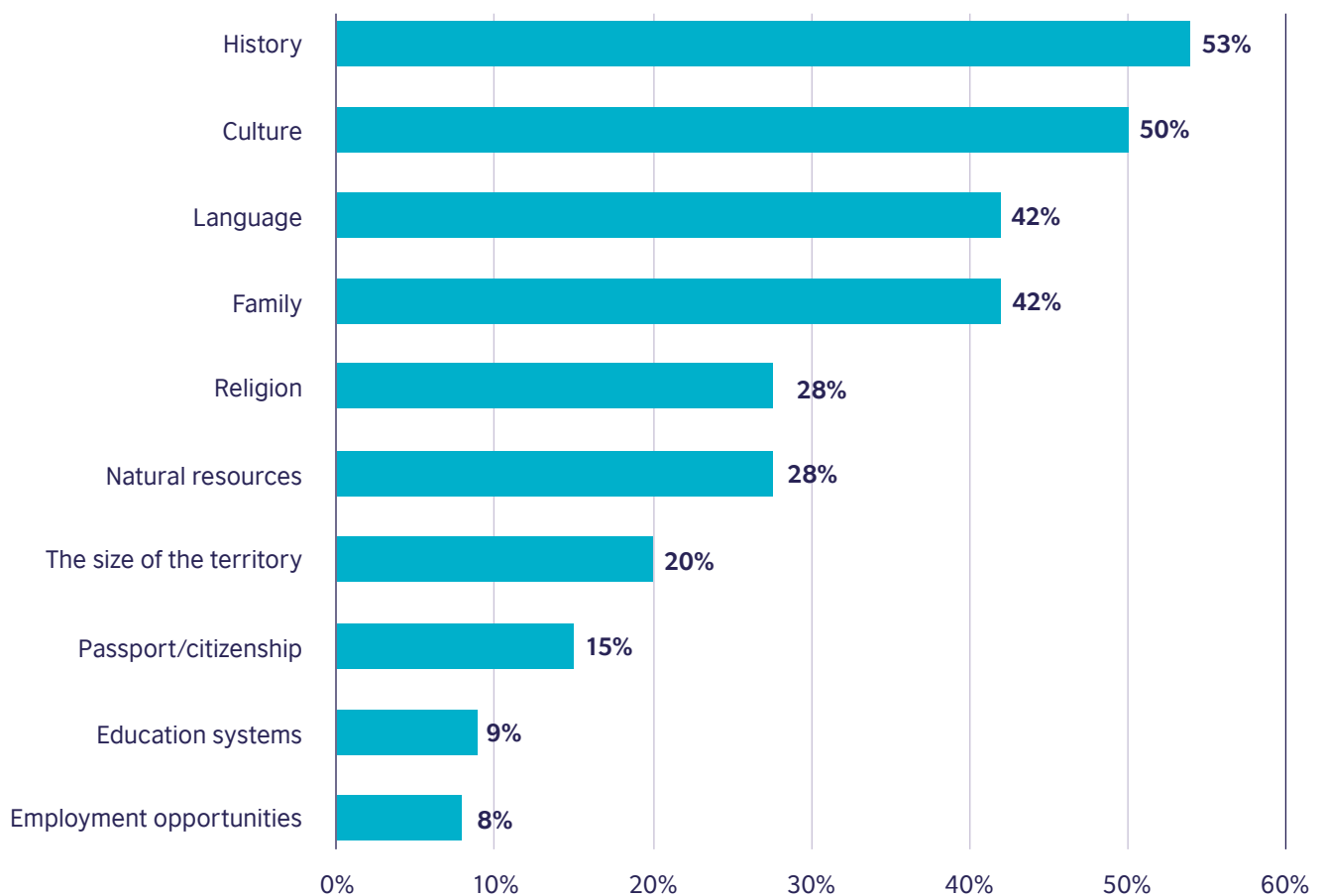
This final chapter explores young Kazakhstanis' aspirations and vision for their country's future. The survey and qualitative data show that young people are proud of their country and strongly identify with their nation's history (53 per cent), culture (50 per cent), language (45 per cent), and family values (42 per cent) (see Figure 80).

Their vision for Kazakhstan's future encompasses several key dimensions: improved economic opportunities that encourage talent retention,

greater social equality, enhanced political freedoms, stronger democratic institutions, reduced corruption, better access to education, international economic competitiveness, and environmental sustainability. They express strong patriotic sentiment, paired with pragmatic concerns about their future prospects.

Participants prioritise different aspects when describing their vision for the future, but there are some common threads.

**Figure 80.** Factors that make young people proud to be citizens of Kazakhstan



## More opportunities

Participants prioritise the development of their country into a place that offers genuine opportunities for professional and personal growth. They hope to gain experience and advance in their chosen professions, while maintaining the ability to establish families. Financial stability remains a crucial concern, with housing costs representing the most significant financial burden, particularly for those studying and living in major urban centres.

The research reveals a complex relationship between patriotic attachment and migration considerations. Many interviewees feel a deep connection to their homeland, but must also weigh the possibility of seeking a more secure future abroad. Temporary migration is common among young Kazakhstanis, with some ultimately choosing to settle abroad permanently (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3).

One participant described this tension:



**So that our young people do not go to other countries to get an education or work in South Korea to earn money. So that they can find their place in their native country (...). I have a son. I want for my family to develop a comfortable life here.**

Female, 32 years old

Participants want enhanced economic strength, recognising its correlation with improved living standards. They propose several pathways to economic development, ranging from technological advancement to improved government efficiency. Although their perspectives vary depending on their individual backgrounds, most agree that progress depends on quality education and domestic talent retention.

One participant outlined their vision:



**I would like us to be among the top 50 economies in the world. Through decarbonisation, through economic diversification, through tourism, through developed science.**

Female, 32 years old



## More equality

Participants note disparities in access to education and employment across the country. They recognise these inequalities' enduring impact on individual behaviour and well-being. Their vision encompasses a Kazakhstan where gender, geographical location, and social class no longer determine life outcomes. While acknowledging significant generational progress, particularly on gender equality, current advances fall short of their aspirations.

As one respondent observed:

“

**I would like to see the economic situation in the country equalised. That there would be prospects here. That people would not want to leave the country. That the country would meet the expectations of the younger generations.**

Female, 23 years old

## More freedom

Participants' vision for greater freedom addresses two primary constraints: conservative values, particularly patriarchal traditions, as restrictive forces; and restrictions that limit the ability to freely critique state policies without fear of repercussions.

One participant emphasised:

“

**I would like there to be no bills violating human rights and freedoms. I would like there to be no laws or strange initiatives that have a detrimental effect on the life of the entire population.**

Female, 25 years old

## More democracy

Participants envision democratic governance extending beyond periodic elections. They advocate for a political system characterised by balanced state powers and effective checks and balances. Their conception of democracy encompasses robust civil society organisations and an independent media capable of informing public discourse. They also aspire to a citizenry empowered to influence governmental decisions.

One respondent explained:

“

**I would like to see a more democratic Kazakhstan. A Kazakhstan that wants to develop institutions, to strengthen institutions, to reduce the roles of personalities. So that some decisions, policies, directions, development of the state depend less on personalities, more on collaboration of institutions.**

Male, 22 years old

## More transparency

Corruption emerges as a concern, with participants noting its influence across regions, governance levels, and organisations (see Chapter 1). Some participants view corruption as embedded in the country's historical fabric, while others consider it an inevitable societal feature. Nevertheless, they are hopeful that corruption's impact on daily life will lessen.

One interviewee reflected:

“

**Certainly, the main problem of our country, I think, is corruption. Of course, it can't be avoided. But at least something has started to move to reduce corruption'.**

Female, 18 years old

Proposed anti-corruption strategies vary but generally complement one another. Suggestions include early ethical education, emphasis on personal responsibility, enhanced government transparency, and stricter punishments for corrupt officials. Some participants referenced Singapore's experience under Lee Kuan Yew, advocating for severe penalties regardless of official rank, with some supporting capital punishment for corruption offences.

## More education

Young Kazakhstanis see education as one of the main driving forces for the continuous development of their country. As a consequence, they are critical of perceived inequalities in the education sector.

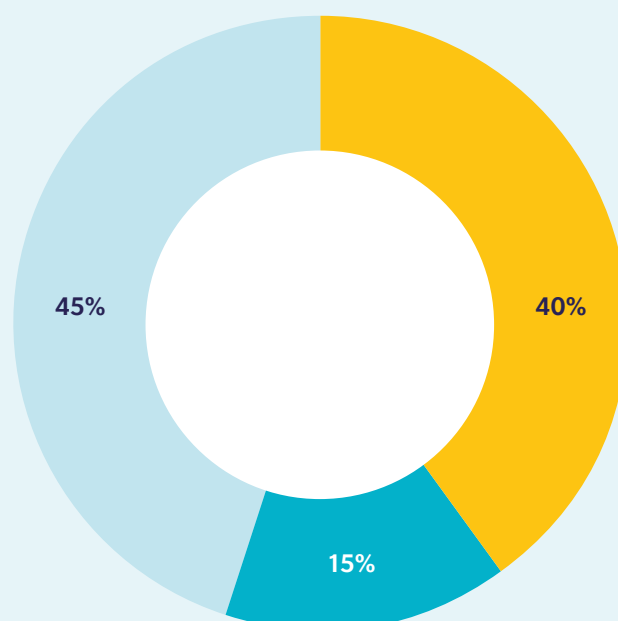
Education features prominently in their vision for national development. They are concerned about growing educational disparities, particularly the expanding gap between public and private institutions, urban concentration of universities, and prohibitive costs affecting students and families. Their aspirations include universal access to quality education and a reduced need to study abroad.

## More environmental care

Environmental responsibility, while less frequently mentioned, is a concern, with 60 per cent of survey respondents concerned or somewhat concerned about the impact of climate change (see Figure 81). Qualitative data reveal two primary motivations: global climate change mitigation, and recognition of Kazakhstan's tourism potential through natural landscape preservation.

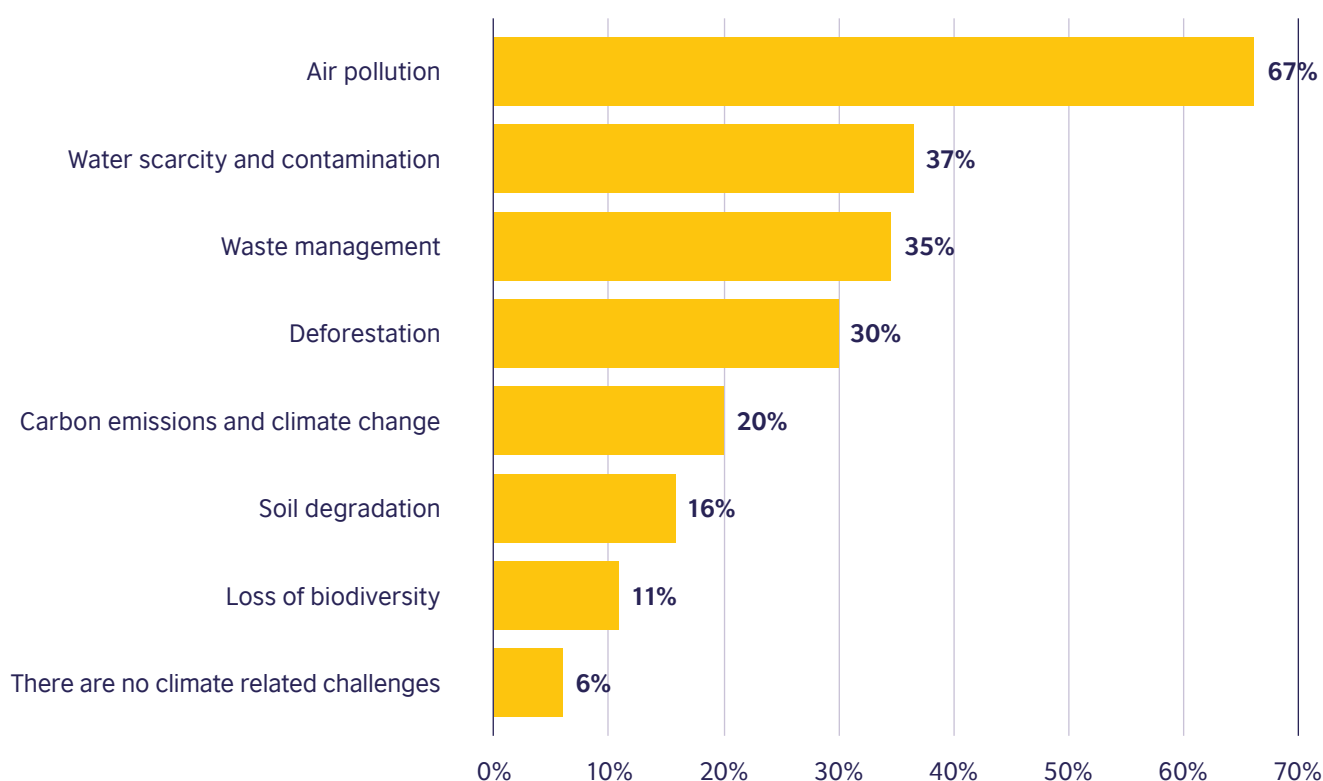
**Figure 81.** Concern about the environmental impact of climate change on Kazakhstan

- Not concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Concerned or very concerned



The survey asked about the most pressing climate-related problems in Kazakhstan today. Respondents across all age groups are most concerned about air pollution, waste management and water scarcity. However, a particularly high proportion mentioned air pollution (67 per cent) (see Figure 82).

**Figure 82.** Most pressing climate-related problems facing Kazakhstan



This is aligned with evidence that air pollution in Kazakhstan is a serious and very harmful reality, with air pollution exceeding the permissible levels in 13 major cities, including Astana and Almaty (Kenessary et al., 2019). In 2023, the average air contamination in Kazakhstan was more than four times the World Health Organization (WHO) guideline value (IQAir, 2025). Air pollution is also very costly, with the World Bank assessing that it cost Kazakhstan USD 10.5 billion dollars in 2019, approximately 5.8 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) (Awe et al., 2022).

Young Kazakhstanis understand precisely the environmental challenges facing their country and, with their characteristic optimistic and positive approach to the future, show a clear willingness to find solutions.

# Recommendations

This Next Generation research presents a comprehensive picture of the experiences, aspirations and challenges for young people in contemporary Kazakhstan. Young people aged 18-35 demonstrate remarkable resilience and optimism about their future, despite facing some structural barriers in education, employment, and civic participation. The research reveals both opportunities and obstacles in Kazakhstan's ongoing development, with young people poised to play a key role in shaping the nation's future.

The following recommendations have been proposed to reflect the key trends and insights emerging from the data and analysis. They are structured around four key areas that emerged as priorities through the research: education, employment, youth voice, and young people's vision for Kazakhstan's future. Each section introduces some context from the research findings before presenting specific, actionable suggestions for relevant stakeholders to consider.



## Education

**Kazakhstan's education sector is undergoing significant transformation, with young people's experiences reflecting both progress and challenges. While 57 per cent of survey respondents believe that education quality is improving, they also point to challenges in quality, access, and relevance of education to future employment opportunities.**

National institutions responsible for education policy could consider some of the following:

- Enhancing teachers' employment conditions by improving salaries and reducing administrative workload, building on positive reforms already in place, such as the New School Curriculum 2021.
- Strengthening professional development opportunities, particularly for younger teachers, to complement ongoing training initiatives implemented through the Bologna Process.
- Connecting curriculum development more strongly to market demands, potentially by enhancing the National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework to bridge theoretical knowledge and practical skills.
- Reinforcing existing quality assurance mechanisms for public and private university sectors.
- Addressing practical skills development through the existing network of technical and vocational education organisations.
- Promoting education digitalisation initiatives, building on successful elements of current digital platforms while ensuring equitable access across rural and urban areas, including for young people with disabilities or additional needs.
- Continuing to address young people's strong interest in pursuing additional qualifications through additional educational funding, expanded opportunities for international education exchange, and support for lifelong learning initiatives.

Institutions working at regional level could consider:

- Expanding successful elements of programmes, such as With Diploma to Village, bringing qualified teachers to rural areas.
- Enhancing the relevance of education for regional labour markets by strengthening local educational institutions' connections with employers through regional education centres.
- Developing programmes to support student transition from education to employment, incorporating practical workplace preparation.
- Building on the trilingual education policy by supporting language learning, particularly Kazakh and English, which young people view as important for employment opportunities.

## Employment

**Young Kazakhstanis identify numerous opportunities in sectors such as education, tourism and hospitality, as well as some areas where their employment prospects could be improved. The research highlights variations in employment experiences, based on age, gender, and location, that could be addressed by local and targeted policy measures.**

National institutions involved in employment policy could consider:

- Developing approaches to address long working hours, for example through labour inspection and employer incentives.
- Strengthening transparency initiatives, particularly in rural workplaces.
- Expanding teacher training and professional development to build on the opportunities for education and training as a strongly preferred employer for young people.
- Developing the attractive tourism and hospitality sector, perhaps modelling IT sector initiatives in respect of opportunities for young women, and enabling labour market participation of young people with disabilities or additional needs.
- Building on successful entrepreneurship support programmes, such as Zhas Kasipker and Enbek, particularly focusing on access to funding, as a key barrier.
- Addressing gender-based employment differences through components within the successful Roadmap Employment programme (which has already helped to employ 42,000 young people) to further enhance participation of young women in the labour force.
- Integrating support for self-employment and gig economy workers into the Digital Kazakhstan programme, recognising the changing nature of work and the appeal of flexibility.

Institutions at regional level could consider:

- Supporting local employment centres and development initiatives in rural areas, which significantly influence young people's career prospects and migration decisions.
- Adapting successful national programmes to provide regional employment support addressing young women's needs, particularly in rural areas where gender disparities are more pronounced.
- Enhancing local entrepreneurship ecosystems through business incubators and mentorship programmes at a regional level, addressing variations in business support and access to capital.
- Addressing experience gaps through mentorship and skills development programmes for young entrepreneurs through local employment centres and educational institutions.



## Youth voice

**Political and civic engagement among young Kazakhstanis are nuanced, with traditional participation relatively modest, but emerging forms of digital and community engagement showing promise. The research reveals interesting variations in engagement based on age, gender, ethnicity, and location.**

National institutions working on youth policy could consider:

- Developing approaches to address changing patterns of political engagement across age groups, building on the National Youth Policy Concept 2023-2029 and potentially emphasising engagement beyond early adulthood.
- Enhancing existing youth engagement initiatives through programmes addressing gender differences in political participation.
- Emphasising the impact of voting in civic education initiatives to address young people's concerns about the effectiveness and impact of their participation, building on the National Youth Congress model.
- Increasing use of platforms that make politics more accessible and understandable to young Kazakhstanis, growing their interest in e-government initiatives and digital engagement tools, and building on the success of civic expression initiatives such as E-Otinish.
- Building on the strong sense of community and belonging through support for youth community engagement beyond formal politics, for example through youth resource centres.
- Addressing concerns of young people globally about fake news and misinformation through media literacy programmes.

Institutions at regional level could consider:

- Building on existing participation in cultural events and volunteering by supporting local community activities through youth resource centres.
- Addressing young people's desire for impact by growing the meaningful input of local youth councils and advisory boards, building on examples from Almaty, while reflecting the need for gender-equal representation and participation of young women in community life.
- Creating spaces for young people to discuss local issues and develop solutions, using existing engaging digital platforms to localise national participation initiatives.
- Building on existing significant levels of volunteer engagement by supporting volunteer opportunities that connect young people with their communities, for example through partnerships with civil society organisations.



## Future of Kazakhstan

**Young Kazakhstanis have clear aspirations for their country's development, balancing optimism with practical concerns. Their vision encompasses opportunities for professional growth, social equality, political freedoms, democratic institutions, education, and environmental responsibility.**

National institutions responsible for youth development could consider:

- Strengthening the comprehensive youth policy framework through inclusive consultation (notably with the participation of young people with disabilities and additional needs, and with a gender equality focus).
- Enhancing the National Youth Policy Concept 2023-2029 to incorporate young people's vision for greater equality and opportunity.
- Building on programmes that tackle housing affordability to enhance the focus on young people.
- Responding to young people's interest in institutional development across sectors through transparency initiatives.
- Enhancing environmental regulation and green economy initiatives, particularly tackling air pollution, as the top environmental concern for young Kazakhstanis.

Institutions at regional level could consider:

- Strengthening strategies and regional development programmes to drive local economic opportunities and employment prospects, which influence young people's decisions about where to live and work.
- Supporting young people's aspirations for civic development through local initiatives promoting civic education and participation, potentially through youth resource centres and community engagement platforms.
- Increasing the focus on local pollution and waste management concerns through regional environmental programmes, with a particular focus on major cities, where air quality issues are most pronounced.
- Building on young people's recognition of Kazakhstan's attractiveness and tourism potential through regional tourism initiatives and natural landscape preservation.

International partners could be encouraged to broaden their support for exchange programmes that build on young Kazakhstanis' strong interest in other countries, particularly Turkey, the USA, Japan and South Korea, through enhanced educational and cultural exchange initiatives. There could also be continued investment and focus on English language learning, responding to young people's identification of English as the most important foreign language for professional opportunities.

Investment in tackling environmental challenges such as air pollution presents an opportunity for enhanced international cooperation, harnessing young people's appetite for active involvement. Also, knowledge exchange on youth development initiatives and participation could support young Kazakhstanis' vision for civic development, drawing on knowledge of international practices and policy approaches.

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# Appendices

## Sampling

### Poll technical overview

Poll quick facts	Data
Name of fieldwork firm	CAB team
Fieldwork dates	21 August 2024 – 20 October 2024
Sampling frame data	<a href="https://stat.gov.kz/api/iblock/element/6582/file/ru/">https://stat.gov.kz/api/iblock/element/6582/file/ru/</a>
Sample size	n=1,200
Target population	Citizens of Kazakhstan, aged 18-35
Total target population	4,743,742
Survey type	National tablet-assisted personal interviewing (TAPI)
Sampling method	Stratified multi-stage random sampling
Margin of error	+/- 2.8 for the full sample
# of interviews per sampling point	8
Exclusions, if any	
Total covered population	
Oversamples, if any	N/A
Interview method (mode)	TAPI
Response Rate	14.8%
Interview language(s)	Russian and Kazakh
Weight factors	Gender, age group, type of settlement

# Sampling plan

## Sample allocation

The target population for the study consists of 4,743,742 Kazakhstan nationals aged 18-35, of whom 2,331,644 are women and 2,412,098 are men.

Total population (18-35)	Urban population (18-35)	Rural population (18-35)
4,743,742	3,045,080	1,698,662

Stratified multi-stage random sampling was applied to obtain a nationally representative sample of Kazakhstan.

**Step 1:** The initial stratification was based on region and urbanity, incorporating cities that form their administrative units. The sample was divided into 17 oblasts and the three cities with republican status – Astana, Almaty, Shymkent – further stratified by urban and rural area.

**Step 2:** The election precinct served as the primary sampling unit (PSU), as there was no publicly available comprehensive list of households or individuals for simpler random sampling. Each cluster comprised eight interviews. The proportional allocation of interviews to urban and rural strata within each region was divided by eight and rounded to the nearest whole number, determining the proportional-to-size allocation of clusters for each stratum. In certain cases, sampling points were replaced due to factors such as size constraints, natural conditions (e.g. floods), or external interference from authorities.

### Selection of PSUs

The number of PSUs in each stratum was determined using 2023 data from the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan. A total of 150 PSUs were established.

Nº	Region	Urban 18-35	Rural 18-35	Total residents 18-35	Total population distribution (%) Urban	Total population distribution (%) Rural	Total % of residents 18 and older	Sample 1,200	Urban	Rural	Urban PSU	Rural PSU	Total PSU
1	Abay	77,924	42,754	120,678	65%	35%	3%	32	24	8	3	1	4
2	Akmola	100,472	74,416	174,888	57%	43%	4%	40	24	16	3	2	5
3	Aktobe	166,753	54,129	220,882	75%	25%	5%	56	40	16	5	2	7
4	Almaty region	54,331	287,743	342,074	16%	84%	7%	88	16	72	2	9	11
5	Almaty city	611,998		611,998	100%		13%	144	144	0	18	0	18
6	Astana	405,261		405,261	100%		9%	104	104	0	13	0	13
7	Atyrau	93,445	76,382	169,827	55%	45%	4%	40	24	16	3	2	5
8	Karaganda	212,835	45,614	258,449	82%	18%	5%	72	56	16	7	2	9
9	East Kazakhstan	99,908	46,540	146,448	68%	32%	3%	40	24	16	3	2	5
10	North Kazakhstan	57,719	53,204	110,923	52%	48%	2%	32	16	16	2	2	4
11	West Kazakhstan	89,233	66,989	156,222	57%	43%	3%	40	24	16	3	2	5
12	Kostanay	117,561	68,156	185,717	63%	37%	4%	48	32	16	4	2	6
13	Kyzylorda	89,257	104,288	193,545	46%	54%	4%	48	16	32	2	4	6
14	Mangystau	85,846	104,694	190,540	45%	55%	4%	48	16	32	2	4	6
15	Pavlodar	115,797	45,494	161,291	72%	28%	3%	40	32	8	4	1	5
16	Shymkent	319,286		319,286	100%		7%	80	80	0	10	0	10
17	Turkestan	123,275	379,053	502,328	25%	75%	11%	112	32	80	4	10	14
18	Ulytau	39,674	10,028	49,702	80%	20%	1%	24	16	8	2	1	3
19	Zhambyl	117,917	158,327	276,244	43%	57%	6%	72	32	40	4	5	9
20	Zhetisu	66,588	80,851	147,439	45%	55%	3%	40	16	24	2	3	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,045,080</b>	<b>1,698,662</b>	<b>4,743,742</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>150</b>

**Step 3:** Electoral precincts functioned as starting points within the PSUs and interviewers were given the corresponding addresses.

Region	District, city	Locality	Polling station number	Starting point	Sample	Sample
Zhetysu	Panfilovskiy district	Yntymak village	274	Building of Nizhne Pidzhimskaya secondary school	8	40
Zhetysu	Karatal district	Kokdala	151	Building of the Kokdala Secondary School	8	
Zhetysu	Karatal district	Oyan Village	148	Building of the Oyan Secondary school	8	
Zhetysu	city Taldykorgan	city Taldykorgan	425	Building of military unit 5514		
Zhetysu	Alakol district	Usharal city	49	Secondary school named after S.Imanasov		
Zhambylskaya	Zhambylsky district	village Jalpaktobe	153	Building of the Secondary school named after Valery Chkalov	8	72
Zhambylskaya	Zhambylsky district	village Grodekovo	150	Building of the Secondary school named after Grodikov	8	
Zhambylskaya	Zhambylsky district	Asa village	166	Youth Resource Center	8	
Zhambylskaya	Zhambylsky district	village Togyztarau	179	Village club building	8	
Zhambylskaya	Zhambylsky district	village Shaikoryk	163	Building of the Secondary school Shaykoryk	8	
Zhambylskaya	Talas district	Karatau city	413	Building of the Gymnasium named after A. Baitursynuly	8	
Zhambylskaya	Sarisu district	Zhanatas	363	Sports Complex Building	8	
Zhambylskaya	city Taraz	city Taraz	33	Secondary school №4, education department of Taraz city	8	
Zhambylskaya	city Taraz	city Taraz	26	Municipal State Institution (MSI) "Gymnasium №24, education department of Taraz city"	8	

Region	District, city	Locality	Polling station number	Starting point	Sample	Sample
West-Kazakhstan	Bayterek district	village Michurinskoye	№206	Village club building	8	40
West-Kazakhstan	Terekty district	Pokatilovka village	№386	Rural House of Culture	8	
West-Kazakhstan	Burlin district	city Aksai	82	District clinic	8	
West-Kazakhstan	city Uralsk	city Uralsk	488	MSI "General Secondary School №33"	8	
West-Kazakhstan	city Uralsk	city Uralsk	401	MSI "General Secondary School №25"	8	
Ulytau	Bayterek district	village Michurinskoye	№206	Village club building	8	24
Ulytau	city Jezkazgan	city Jezkazgan	216	Primary school № 133 (gym)	8	
Ulytau	city Satpayev	city Satpayev	285	MSI "Satpayev city General Secondary School №3" (canteen)	8	
Turkestan	Ordabasy district	village Tortkul	№ 468	Secondary School of Tortkul village	8	112
Turkestan	Sauran district	village Babaykorgan	№82	Building of the General Secondary school named after Babai-Korgan	8	
Turkestan	Suzak district	village Shaga	№711	MSI "General Secondary School named after S.Bakbergenov", Suzak district educational department	8	
Turkestan	Sauran district	village Sauran	№86	Building of the Secondary school named after Sauran	8	
Turkestan	Otyrar district	Otyrar	№509	Village club	8	
Turkestan	Baydibek district	Shayan	№188	Secondary school-lyceum, Shayan village	8	
Turkestan	Sauran district	village Ikan	№97	Building of secondary school №25	8	
Turkestan	Sauran district	village Karashyk	№74	Building of General Secondary school named after Karashyk	8	
Turkestan	city Kentau	city Kentau	№59	Building of General Secondary school named after Shashtobe	8	



Region	District, city	Locality	Polling station number	Starting point	Sample	Sample
Turkestan	Sauran district	village Shornak	№67	Building of General Secondary school named after Kyzyl Asker	8	112
Turkestan	city Turkestan	city Turkestan	881	School named after Khamza	8	
Turkestan	city Turkestan	city Turkestan	107	School №3 named after Amir Temir	8	
Turkestan	city Kentau	city Kentau	650	Building of school-gymnasium №14 named after Al-Farabi	8	
Turkestan	Sarygash district	city Sarygash		General Secondary school №61	8	
Shymkent	city Shymkent	Al-Farabi district	104	Gymnasium School №20 named after G. Titov	8	64
Shymkent	city Shymkent	Al-Farabi district	176	Center for Hyperbaric Oxygenation named after T.O. Orynbayev	8	
Shymkent	city Shymkent	Al-Farabi district	150	General Secondary School № 28	8	
Shymkent	city Shymkent	Turan district	89	Military unit 6506	8	
Shymkent	city Shymkent	Turan district	7	Cental Lyceum School №23	8	
Shymkent	city Shymkent	Turan district	80	Training center of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan named after B. Momyshtuly	8	
Shymkent	city Shymkent	Abay district	36	LLP "125 High School"	8	
Shymkent	city Shymkent	Abay district	216	MSI "General Secondary School №88"	8	
Pavlodar	Pavlodar district	Zangar village	388	State municipal state enterprise "Zangar village club"	8	40
Pavlodar	city Pavlodar	city Pavlodar	76	Municipal State Institution "Secondary School №39 of an innovative type with gymnasium classes of Pavlodar city"	8	
Pavlodar	city Pavlodar	city Pavlodar	95	Municipal State Institution "Secondary School №24 of Pavlodar" (extension building, entrance from Amangeldy Street)	8	

Region	District, city	Locality	Polling station number	Starting point	Sample	Sample
Pavlodar	city Ekibastuz	city Ekibastuz	568	MSI "School-Gymnasium №26" of the Department of Education of the city Ekibastuz, Pavlodar region	8	40
Pavlodar	city Aksu	city Aksu	511	Building of the Kazakh secondary school №1	8	
North Kazakhstan	Kyzylzhar district	Olshanka village	№319	Mini-center	8	
North Kazakhstan	Kyzylzhar district	Yakor village	№318	MSI "Yakor Secondary School"	8	40
North Kazakhstan	city Petropavlovsk	city Petropavlovsk	№ 606	MSI "Secondary School №42"	8	
North Kazakhstan	Taiinshinsky district	Tayinsha	№ 415	MSI "Taiynsha Secondary School №1"	8	
Akmola	Tselinograd district	Saryadyr village	647	LLP "Nura"	8	40
Akmola	Tselinograd district	Araily village	665	Secondary School	8	
Akmola	city Kokshetau	city Kokshetau	№ 23	Building of the LLP "Istoki Kokshetau"	8	
Akmola	Burabay district	city Shchuchinsk	№ 315	Department of Employment, Social Programs and Civil Registry Office	8	40
Akmola	city Stepnogorsk	city Stepnogorsk	№ 91	Building of Stepnogorsk multidisciplinary city hospital	8	
Aktobe	Alginsky district	Bestamak village	№ 173	Building of MSI "Bestamak Secondary School"	8	
Aktobe	Alginsky district	Marzhanbulak village	№ 190	Building of the Marzhanbulak rural cultural center"	8	56
Aktobe	city Aktobe	city Aktobe	№ 548	MSI "Kyzylzhar Secondary School"	8	
Aktobe	city Aktobe	city Aktobe	№ 12	MSI "Secondary School №42"	8	
Aktobe	city Aktobe	city Aktobe	№ 89	Building of the RSU "Institution №70"	8	

Region	District, city	Locality	Polling station number	Starting point	Sample	Sample
Aktobe	Mugalzhar district	city Kandyagash	№ 312	Building of the State Communal Institution "Mugalzhar District House of Culture"	8	56
Aktobe	Alginsky district	Alga	№ 157	building of MSI "Alga school-garden№1"	8	
Almaty region	Talgarskiy district	village Janalyk	984	Building of Secondary School №37	8	11
Almaty region	Talgarskiy district	Kyzyl-Kairat	843	Building "Multi-disciplinary gymnasium-school №19"	8	
Almaty region	Talgarskiy district	village Ryskulova	848	Building of Secondary School №16	8	
Almaty region	Talgarskiy district	village Almalyk	846	Building of Secondary School №18	8	
Almaty region	Talgarskiy district	village Tuzdybastau	859	Building of Secondary School № 13	8	
Almaty region	Talgarskiy district	village Tonqueris	882	Building of Secondary School №23	8	
Almaty region	Talgarskiy district	village Birlik	853	Building of Secondary School №34	8	
Almaty region	Talgarskiy district	village Besagash	865	Building of Secondary School № 28	8	
Almaty region	Talgarskiy district	village Panfilovo	878	Building of Secondary School №33	8	
Almaty region	Enbekshikazakh district	city Esik	№ 122	Building of Secondary School named after R. Tokataev	8	
Almaty region	Karasai district	city Kaskelen	№ 420	Building kindergarten "Sandugash"	8	
Almaty city	Bostandyk district	Bostandyk district	№ 283	Building of Military unit 5571 of the National Guard of the Republic of Kazakhstan	8	144
Almaty city	Bostandyk district	Bostandyk district	№ 310	Building of Private Clinic Almaty	8	

Region	District, city	Locality	Polling station number	Starting point	Sample	Sample
Almaty city	Bostandyk district	Bostandyk district	№ 609	Building of the Special (correctional) boarding school №7 for children with intellectual disabilities	8	144
Almaty city	Bostandyk district	Bostandyk district	№ 237	Building of General school №45	8	
Almaty city	Auezov district	Auezov district	№ 197	Building of the Lyceum-School №126	8	
Almaty city	Auezov district	Auezov district	№ 139	Building of Almaty Multidisciplinary College	8	
Almaty city	Auezov district	Auezov district	№ 178	Building of General school №122	8	
Almaty city	Almaly district	Almaly district	№ 61	Building of MSI “Gymnasium №79”	8	
Almaty city	Almaly district	Almaly district	№ 120	Building of JSC “Institute KazNIPiEnergoprom”	8	
Almaty city	Almaly district	Almaly district	№ 55	Building Dormitory №3 of JSC “The Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages”	8	
Almaty city	Alatau district	Alatau district	26	Building of the municipal vehicle depot № 3	8	
Almaty city	Alatau district	Alatau district	№ 4	Building of General school № 91	8	
Almaty city	Medeu district	Medeu district	395	Building of the city clinical hospital №5	8	
Almaty city	Medeu district	Medeu district	414	Building of General school №7	8	
Almaty city	Turksib district	Turksib district	427	MSI “General school №115”	8	
Almaty city	Turksib district	Turksib district	464	State Enterprise on the Right of Economic Management “City Polyclinic №19”	8	

Region	District, city	Locality	Polling station number	Starting point	Sample	Sample
Almaty city	Jetysu district	Jetysu district	349	Building of General school № 129	8	144
Almaty city	Nauryzbay district	Nauryzbay district	512	Building of the LLP ““Baiterek” International Lyceum-School”	8	
Astana	Almaty district	Almaty district	17	Gymnasium-school № 32	8	
Astana	Almaty district	Almaty district	48	Centralized library system of the Akimat of Astana	8	104
Astana	Almaty district	Almaty district	89	Eurasian National University named after L.N. Gumilyov	8	
Astana	Almaty district	Almaty district	49	Gymnasium-school №63	8	
Astana	Yesil district	Yesil district	132	Lyceum-School №89	8	
Astana	Yesil district	Yesil district	345	“Binom school” Lyceum-School	8	
Astana	Yesil district	Yesil district	372	National Centre for Manuscripts and Rare Books	8	
Astana	Yesil district	Yesil district	400	JSC ““Baiterek” National Managing Holding”	8	
Astana	Saryarka district	Saryarka district	237	Branch of the LLP “Kazakh Order of the Badge of Honor Research Institute of Eye Diseases in Astana		
Astana	Saryarka district	Saryarka district	60	Gymnasium-school №14		
Astana	Saryarka district	Saryarka district	176	Theatre “Zhastar”		
Astana	Baikonyr district	Baikonyr district	216	RGU “Institution №64” of the Committee of the penal system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan	8	

Region	District, city	Locality	Polling station number	Starting point	Sample	Sample
Astana	Baikonyr district	Baikonyr district	88	Esil university	8	104
Atyrau	Atyrau city	village Damby	68	Building of the Amangeldy Secondary School	8	
Atyrau	Makhambet district	Taldykol	226	Building of the secondary school of the village Taldykol	8	
Atyrau	city Atyrau	city Atyrau	1	Building of school №4 named after Y.A. Gagarin	8	40
Atyrau	city Atyrau	city Atyrau	17	Building of school №28	8	
Atyrau	Zhlylyoi district	city Kulsary	102	The building of secondary school №18 named after M. Satybaldiev	8	
East Kazakhstan	Ulanskiy district	Besterek village	№ 959	Service apartment of the State Institution “Apparatus of the Ablaketsky Rural District Akim”	8	
East Kazakhstan	Ulanskiy district	Ukrainka village	№ 1001	MSI “Secondary school named after Mukhtar Auezov” of the education department for the Ulan district	8	40
East Kazakhstan	City of Ust-Kamenogorsk	city Ust-Kamenogorsk	1	MSI “Secondary school №224”	8	
East Kazakhstan	City Rider	city Rider	№ 122	MSI “Main Secondary school № 9”	8	
East Kazakhstan	City of Ust-Kamenogorsk	city Ust-Kamenogorsk	103	MSI “Regional Specialized IT Lyceum-School” of the Education Department	8	
Karaganda	Abay district	Karabas village	№ 425	House of Culture	8	
Karaganda	Bukhar-Zhyrau	village Baimyrza	№518	Building of the House of Culture	8	
Karaganda	city Karaganda	city Karaganda	455	MSI “Comprehensive School № 61”	8	72
Karaganda	city Karaganda	city Karaganda	97	Special detention facility for administratively arrested persons	8	

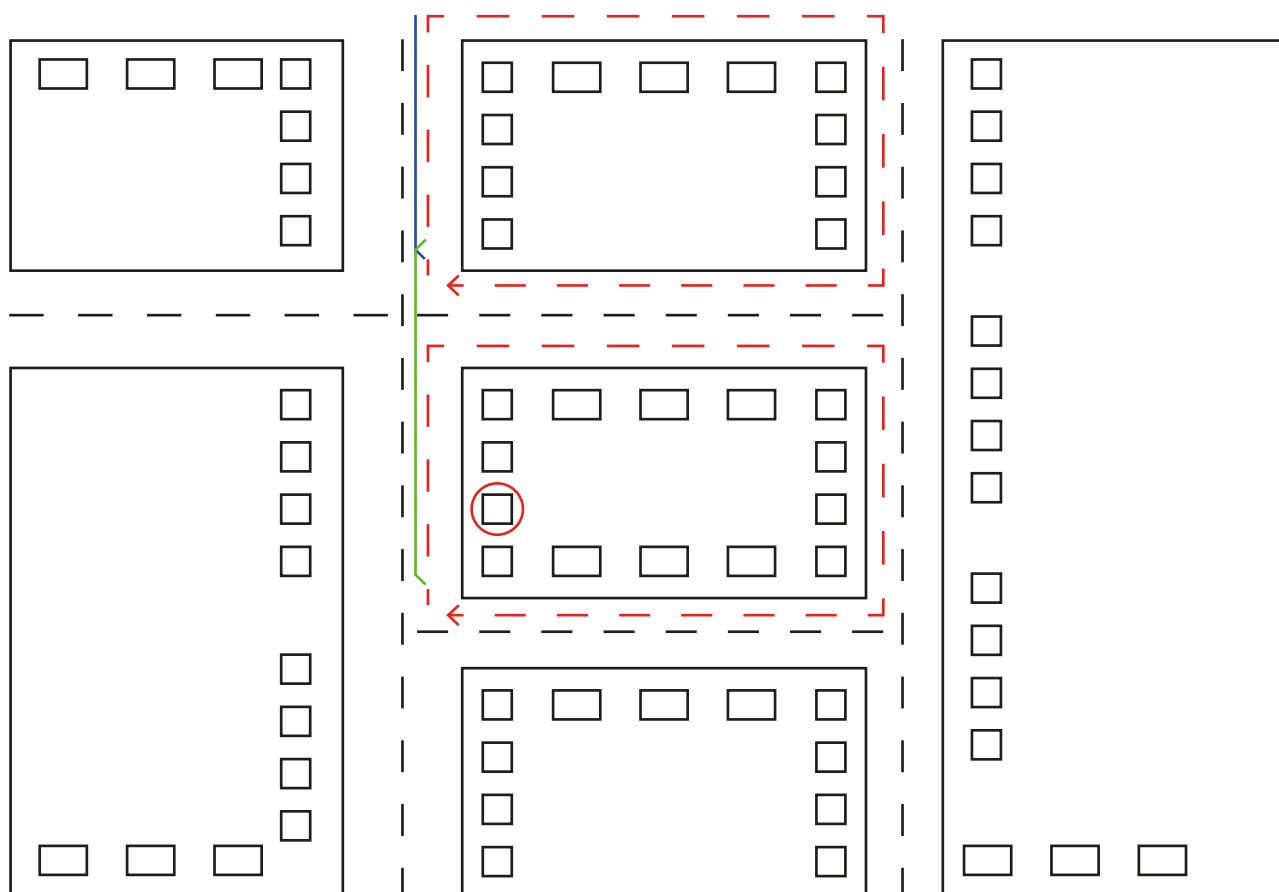
Region	District, city	Locality	Polling station number	Starting point	Sample	Sample
Karaganda	city Karaganda	city Karaganda	145	MSI "School-Gymnasium №95"	8	72
Karaganda	city Priozersk	city Priozersk	259	Municipal state-owned enterprise nursery kindergarten "Balakai", city Priozersk	8	
Karaganda	city Priozersk	city Priozersk	798	MSI "Priozersk Secondary School №2"	8	
Karaganda	Abay district	city Abay	462	State Enterprise "Central Hospital of Abay"	8	
Karaganda	Abay district	city Abay	421	General School № 8	8	
Kostanay	Kostanayskiy district	village Molokanovka	580	Building of Molokanovka General Secondary school	8	48
Kostanay	Kostanayskiy district	Ulyanovsk village	590	Building of Ulyanovsk village General Secondary school	8	
Kostanay	city Kostanay	city Kostanay	51	Building of Kostanay city oncology multidisciplinary hospital	8	
Kostanay	city Kostanay	city Kostanay	39	Building of Polyclinic №2	8	
Kostanay	Kostanayskiy district	city Tobyl	563	Building of General school № 1 of the city of Tobyl	8	
Kostanay	City of Kostanay	city Rudny	155	Building of Primary school № 9	8	48
Kyzylorda	Syrdarya district	Shagan village	№163	Building of rural community center	8	
Kyzylorda	Syrdarya district	Terenozek village	№158	Building of the Secondary school №131	8	
Kyzylorda	Shieli district	village Y. Zhakhayev	278	Building of the Secondary school №149	8	
Kyzylorda	Shieli district	village M.Shokay	267	Building of the Secondary school №41	8	

Region	District, city	Locality	Polling station number	Starting point	Sample	Sample
Kyzylorda	city Kyzylorda			Secondary school №8 named after P.D. Osipenko	8	48
Kyzylorda	Aral district	city Aralsk	53	Building of kindergarten “Karlygash”	8	
Mangistau	Munaily district	village Mangystau	№224	The building of the state municipal state enterprise “District Central House of Culture named after Fariza Ongarsynova” of the Munayly District Department of Culture, Physical Culture and Sports	8	48
Mangistau	Karakiya district	Karakiya railway station № 147 of Kuryk village		MSI “General School №6” of the Education Department of the Karakiya District of the Education Department of the Mangistau Region	8	
Mangistau	Karakiya district	village Zhetybai	№ 153	State Enterprise on the right of operational management of the “Zhetybay Children’s Art School named after Oskembay Kalmanbetuly” of the Education Department for the Karakiya District of the Education Department of the Mangistau Region	8	
Mangistau	Munaily district	Baskudyk Rural District №261		Building of the MSI “Children’s and youth sports school of the rural area of Baskudyk Munaylinsky district” of the Physical Culture and Sports Department of the Mangistau region	8	



Region	District, city	Locality	Polling station number	Starting point	Sample	Sample
Mangistau	city Aktau	city Aktau		Republican State Institution "Military Unit 25744"		
Mangistau	city Zhanaozen	city Zhanaozen	98	State Enterprise "Children's and Youth Sports School № 2" of the Zhanaozen City Physical Culture and Sports Department	8	48
Abay	Borodulikha district	village Dmitriyevka	292	MSI "Secondary School named after Y. Altynsarin"	8	
Abay	city Semey	Semey	131	"Semey City Hospital №1"	8	
Abay	Ayagoz district	city Ayagoz	211	MSI "Mixed General Secondary school № 4", the education department of the Ayagoz district, Abay region	8	32
Abay	city Kurchatov	city Kurchatov	151	State Institution "Kurchatov City Police Department of the Abay Oblast Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan", Kurchatov City Police Department	8	

**Step 4:** Random route sampling was used to select households. To choose the first house, interviewers moved right from the starting point and continue following a right-hand rule (i.e. turning right when they approach an equivalent crossroads).



In neighbourhoods consisting of private houses (one- and two-storey), the skip pattern was every third house. In apartment buildings, the skip pattern was every third flat. No more than three interviews were permitted in any single apartment building. For very large apartment buildings, the maximum limit for the number of interviews was set at three interviews per 100 apartments. Interviewers typically conducted their work during daytime hours; however, they also arranged early morning or late evening appointments for interviews. When transportation to remote villages was necessary, interviewers coordinated their schedules with public transport, which usually operated at 9am and 10am (outbound) and between 4pm and 6pm (return).

**Step 5:** Interviewers used the last birthday method (LBM) to select individual respondents within eligible households. If the selected person was unavailable, the interviewer was instructed to return to the household up to two additional times (for a total of three visits). If contact with the household or the selected respondent was not achieved after two total visits, the interviewer proceeded to the next household along the route. Second contact attempts were to occur at least two hours after the first contact.

## Household selection

Households were sampled using a random walk protocol that involved a predefined starting point, walking directions, and step size. Initially, interviewers selected a household as the starting point and then entered each household according to the specified step size. Commercial establishments, schools, hospitals, and closed houses were not counted in the step size.

If interviewers encountered a dead-end, they turned around and kept turning to the right. Every instance in which interviewers could not continue walking was considered a dead-end (e.g. collapsed road, no more paths, end of the village, border of the district).

When entering an apartment building, interviewers faced the building and selected the farthest right entrance. They ascended to the top floor, positioned themselves with their backs to the staircase, and counted households starting from the right. Interviewers recorded their count at every building entrance and continued from where they left off without restarting the count when entering new apartment buildings or entrances.

In the case of communal yards, interviewers commenced their count from the right of the entrance. If the communal yard house had multiple stories, the random walk principle for multi-story apartment buildings was applied.

## Identification of the route

The following rules were established for interviewers to follow during the fieldwork data collection:

**Rule 1:** Locate the address of the starting point within the district. If the designated house is multi-storey, the interviewer must select a starting apartment.

**Rule 2:** After identifying the starting point, the interviewer descends to the first floor. Upon completing this entrance, the interviewer moves to the next entrance, starting again from the top floor. This process ensures that movement occurs from the upper to the lower floors.

**Rule 3:** To create a sample of households participating in the survey, after each interview, the step size will be set to three (i.e. entering every fourth apartment or house). If an interview was not conducted due to the respondent's absence, no one answering the door, or if the respondent requested a later visit, a note was made on the route sheet and the interviewer returned later. When returning, they would also implement a +3 step (i.e. after the approached apartment, they would count three doors and knock on the fourth).

If an interview did not take place, the step would revert to one (i.e. the interviewer would enter the next door). If a refusal occurred, or if the respondent was not within the appropriate age range (i.e. all residents under 18), or if the respondent could not engage in conversation with the interviewer, they would not take a step but instead proceed to the next apartment on the right.

**Rule 4:** When moving between entrances or from one multi-story building to another, interviewers would continue counting apartments. For example, if the last apartment visited in the first entrance was number three, and an interview took place, the next step would involve entering three additional apartments. If there were only apartments two and one in the new entrance, the third apartment would be skipped in the subsequent entrance or house.

**Rule 5:** The route sheet contained three columns labelled '1 visit' and '2 visit', where the results for each selected address were recorded. If the interviewer knocked on the door but the interview was not conducted (e.g. no one was home, respondent was unavailable), they were required to return to this address later (e.g. after two hours), making a related note on the route sheet. The result of the second visit would be marked in the '2 visit' column. If the interview was again not conducted, the interviewer would return the following day. All attempts to contact household members were documented on the route sheet. If an interview was not held at a particular address due to refusal from a family member or selected respondent, there was no need to return.

**Rule 6:** Interviewers were to adhere to the right-hand rule when navigating the route. If they completed the entire house but had not reached the required number of questionnaires, they would proceed to the next house, selecting it based on the right-hand rule again. They would stand with their backs to the house where they completed their work, and the house to the right would be next. The same approach applied in the private sector – after leaving a house, they would stand with their backs to it and continue right from that house.

**Rule 7:** Following the right-hand rule, the outcome should be that the interviewer navigates around the square without crossing streets or roads.

## Respondent selection

Households were sampled using a random walk. Several steps were followed to identify the selected respondent: once the interviewer located someone aged 18 or older who agreed to answer questions, they asked the individual to identify whose birthday was the most recent among those aged 18 and older who lived in the household permanently (i.e. residing in that household for at least six months of the year). The person who had the most recent birthday became the selected respondent. If the selected respondent was unavailable, the interviewer was required to return to the household twice. The selected respondent completed the screening section of the questionnaire to verify eligibility criteria: age (18-35) and citizenship (Kazakhstan).

# Weighting

The data were weighted to correct for statistical imbalances. The weighting variables included gender, age group, type of settlement (rural/urban). Although recommended, the weighting factor was anticipated to have minimal impact on the results. Education was excluded as a weighting variable, as the last publicly available education data were outdated.

The weighting targets for the Kazakhstan National Public Opinion Survey 2024 derived from the most recent population statistics. The weighting process aimed to ensure that the sample accurately represented the country's population aged 18-35, using parameters such as region, size, gender, age, and ethnicity

	Achieved (unweighted) Sample in %	National statistics	Weighted	Weighting
<b>Gender</b>				
Man	44.5	50.8	50.3	1.146
Woman	55.5	49.2	49.7	0.882
<b>Age groups</b>				
18-24	45.7	35.8	36.5	0.787
25-29	17.3	26	25.9	1.502
30-35	37	38.2	37.6	1.027
<b>Settlement type</b>				
Urban + peri-urban	60.2+ 5.3	58.9+5.3	58.3+5.4	0.977
Rural	34.5	35.8	36.3	1.027

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