

Are you listening?

Voices of change:
Young professionals
powering energy's future



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Now in its seventh edition, the WPC Energy Global Youth Survey provides young people across the energy sector with a platform to share their perspectives and have their voices heard

This year's findings are drawn from more than 1,200 young professionals and students across 62 countries.

They go beyond views on the energy transition to explore how young professionals and students around the world understand the wider transformation underway: what success looks like to them, what trade-offs they recognise, and how they believe the future energy system should evolve.

The future of energy will certainly not be defined by a single transition or delivered by technology alone. It will be shaped by a deeper transformation of systems, markets, mindsets, and above all, by people. Increasingly, that responsibility sits with this upcoming generation, one that brings fresh perspectives, high expectations, and a direct stake in the outcomes of today's decisions.

The results are both encouraging and instructive. This is a generation that is engaged, pragmatic and acutely aware of complexity. They are not calling for simple answers or perfect solutions. They are asking for honesty about constraints, long-term thinking in decision-making and a genuine opportunity to help shape an energy future that is secure, affordable and sustainable.

I would like to thank the WPC Energy Young Professionals Committee, Accenture, and all 1,200 participants whose insights and perspectives helped shape this work

I hope it challenges assumptions, broadens perspectives, and encourages greater inclusion of this next generation of energy leaders in the decisions that will shape the future of our industry.



Pedro Miras
President WPC Energy

Foreword by WPC Energy Young Professionals Committee

On behalf of the WPC Energy Young Professionals Committee (YPC) and our collaborative partners at Accenture, we are pleased to introduce the 2026 Global Youth Survey, which brings together the perspectives of more than 1,200 students and young professionals from 62 countries. What stands out in this year's results is a generation that is engaged, pragmatic and realistic about the challenges ahead.

Young professionals understand that the future of energy will require balancing affordability, reliability, security, economic development and sustainability. We are optimistic about the opportunities ahead, particularly when they are matched by credible leadership, practical progress and a meaningful impact to contribute to the decisions shaping the global energy industry.

This survey matters because it gives young professionals a platform to share not only how we see the future of energy, but also the actions we want to see from today's leaders and the role we hope to play. We encourage leaders to actively engage with diverse perspectives, challenge their assumptions and include young professionals in shaping the decisions that will define our energy future.

We sincerely thank everyone who participated in this year's survey. Your perspectives have helped provide a valuable global view of how the next generation sees both the challenges and opportunities facing the energy sector. The future of energy is not something this generation is waiting to inherit. It is something we are preparing to help build, together with the leaders and institutions shaping the industry today.



Shamus Hardie
Chair, WPC Energy Young
Professionals Committee



Laura Keeling
Member, WPC Energy Young
Professionals Committee
Team Lead, Youth Survey

Not waiting for permission: How young professionals are redefining energy's future

The energy sector is undergoing generational change. Leaders are making consequential choices about technology, talent and transition pathways. The generation now entering the workforce will inherit and execute those choices.

But this generation's confidence in leaders to deliver is conditional, not guaranteed, and the gap between what leaders promise and what they deliver is where trust is being won or lost. Trust is on loan, not freely given.

**The question facing the industry:
What will it take to convert this
generation's conditional optimism
into committed contribution?**

Young professionals and students are optimistic about the industry's future and vocal about what it will take to move it forward. Their views are shaped by a deep sense of purpose, a strong commitment to innovation and a belief that the energy transformation ahead can be both ambitious and achievable.

The data makes clear that global disruption is sharpening, not dampening, their resolve. Nearly two in five say recent geopolitical and economic shocks have made working in energy feel more urgent, while far fewer feel deterred by them. This is a generation leaning in when others might step back.

What draws this generation to energy in the first place also challenges easy assumptions. For more than a third of respondents, innovation and technology are the primary career motivators for entry into the sector, followed far behind by climate passion.

They are attracted by what the sector is becoming, not only what it stands for, a more durable foundation for attracting talent than purpose alone

Underlying all of this is an ask that is concrete and, notably, reasonable. Across regions and roles, young professionals' message to industry and government leaders converges on four things: long-term thinking, credible delivery, pragmatic transition

choices and a genuine role in shaping decisions that will define their futures.

Four pillars form the foundation of this report and reflect the values and ambitions of a workforce that is already engaged, already contributing and already watching closely to see whether leaders will meet them where they stand.

The findings also show a more positive story than a focus on delivery gaps alone would suggest. Young professionals see the sector as innovative and evolving, are drawn to energy by technology and innovation, and many expect AI to create meaningful new career opportunities. That optimism is strongest when leaders connect transition ambition with visible progress, practical career pathways and regional realities.

The data is specific. Sixty-five percent of young professionals support a balanced energy strategy that maintains conventional resources while growing clean energy, a pragmatic position that defies easy assumptions. And while most feel welcomed into their organisations, fewer than half say they have a meaningful say in decisions that will define their future. Being in the room is not the same as being heard

Meaningful progress will require active support from today's industry leaders and stakeholders, those with the influence to create space for new ideas, share responsibility and empower emerging voices.

This report has been produced in collaboration with Accenture and the WPC Energy Young Professionals Committee survey team.

Four interconnected pillars

The survey explores these findings through four interconnected pillars that together capture how young professionals understand the transition today and what they believe must change to sustain momentum tomorrow.

Pillar 1:	Confidence and beliefs in the global energy transition
Pillar 2:	Global solidarity and the uneven transition
Pillar 3:	Corporate strategy, energy mix and future technologies
Pillar 4:	Careers, growth and inclusion

Research snapshot

More than
1,200

young professionals and students from 62 countries across six continents participated in the WPC Energy Global Youth Survey 2026 between October 2025 and February 2026.

Nearly
8/10

respondents were under 35

More than
2/3

were working in the energy industry at the time of participation

69%

have a STEM background

Women accounted for 37% of respondents, notably higher than the approximately one in five women currently employed across the broader energy industry. To ensure regional findings reflect real-world proportions, responses were normalised against IEA global energy employment data. Full methodology is included at the end of this report.

Pillar 1

Confidence and beliefs in the global energy transition

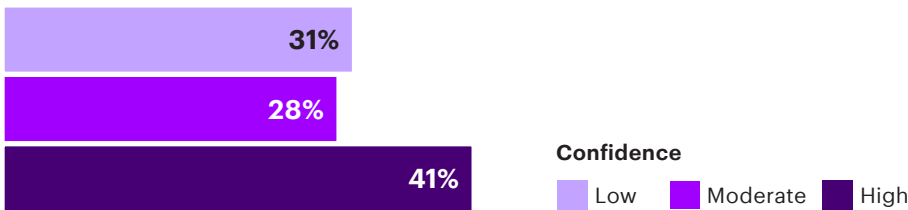
Young professionals believe the transition is coming. They are just not convinced leaders are ready to deliver it

Global disruption has not broken this generation's faith in the energy transition. If anything, it has sharpened it. Despite conflict, economic pressure and resource constraints, more young professionals say they are confident the world will achieve a clean and just transition. That is not a soft signal. It is a generation leaning forward when the headlines give them every reason not to.



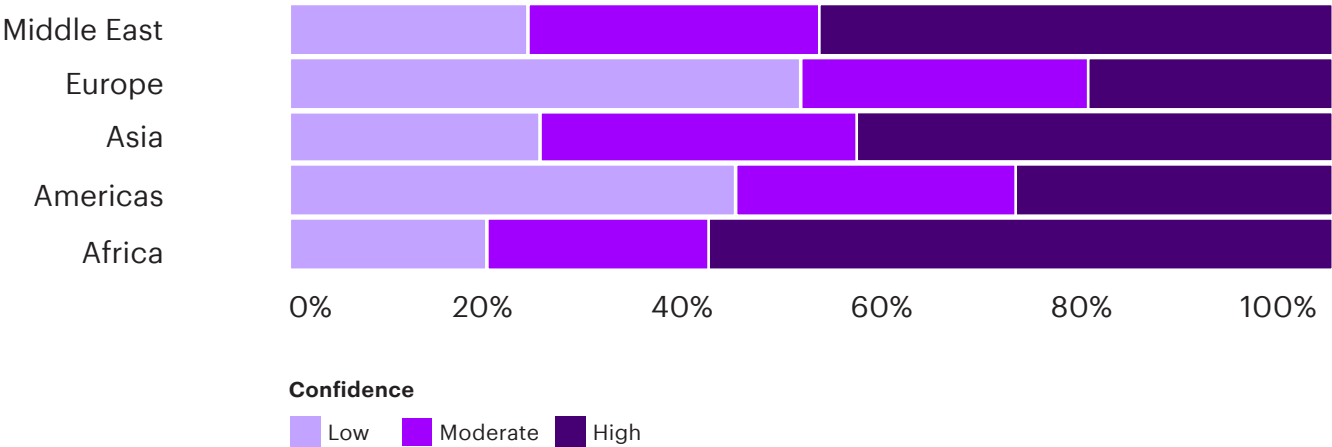
But confidence is not the same as certainty and the data makes that distinction clear. The most telling finding is not the share who believe; it is the share who are waiting. Nearly a third of respondents are neither dismissing the transition nor are fully committed to it. What they see from industry and government over the next few years will decide whether that cautious optimism hardens into conviction.

Figure 1: The global energy transition confidence split



The regional picture is telling. Africa and the Middle East lead on confidence, where the transition is seen less as a cost and more as an economic opening. Europe and the Americas are the sceptics, weighed down by execution complexity and political uncertainty. Asia sits in between, broadly believing in the direction but wanting proof on pace. Regions where respondents perceive greater economic opportunity tend to report higher confidence, while regions facing greater delivery challenges report lower confidence.

Figure 2: The regional confidence divide: where optimism meets doubt



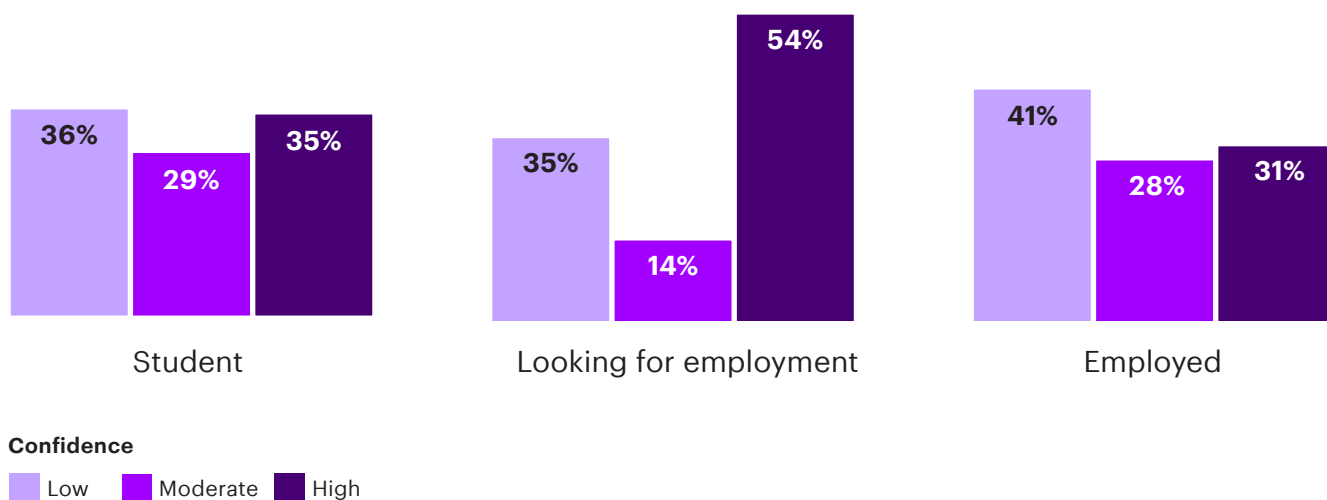
Students are optimistic. The employed are the sceptics

Here the data surprises. Students are the more optimistic cohort, while employed respondents are the sceptics, with 41% expressing low confidence compared to 36% of students. Working inside the system does that. It brings proximity to delivery challenges, to timelines that slip and commitments that prove harder to keep. Experience introduces doubt as readily as it builds conviction.

The most striking finding, though, is that those actively seeking employment are the most optimistic group in the entire survey, with 54% having high confidence. They also have the lowest moderate sentiment of any group.

This is a generation walking towards the sector with their eyes open and their conviction intact, having chosen energy knowing what it is and betting on it anyway. Employers should not take this confidence for granted. The question is whether the industry they walk into preserves that conviction or erodes it.

Figure 3: The energy transition confidence gap: students, job seekers and employed professionals

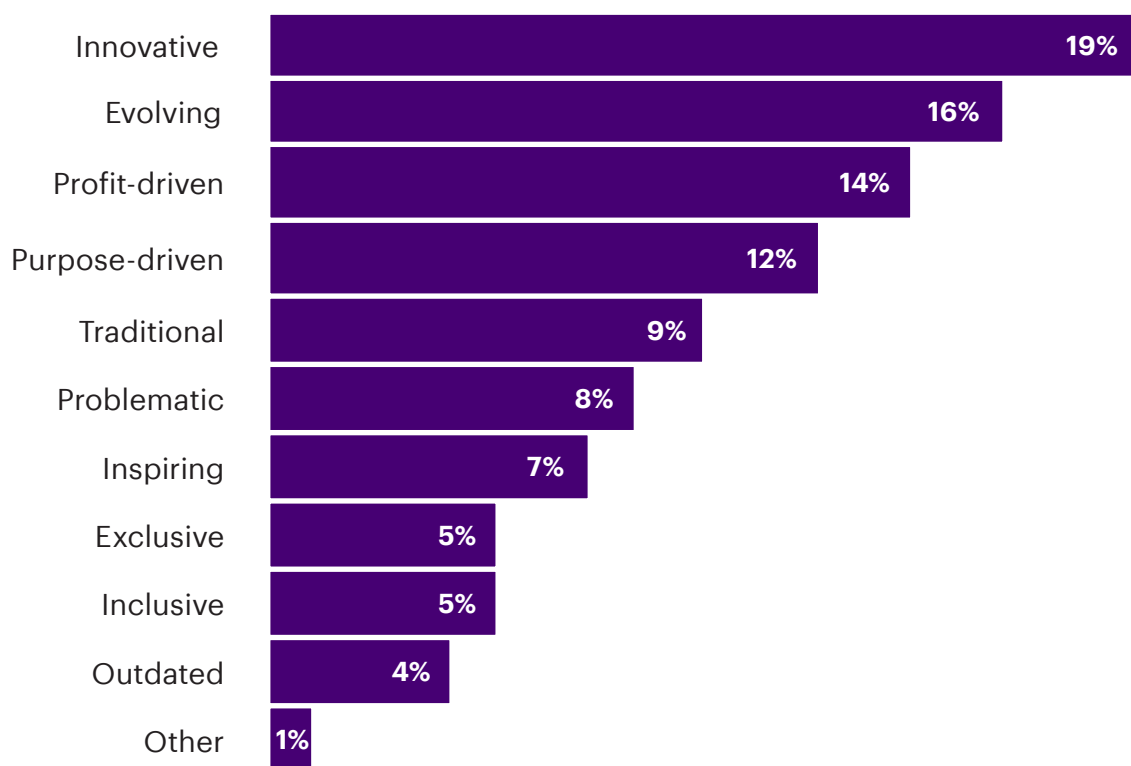


Innovative, yes. But profit still outranks purpose and the sector knows it

Ask young professionals to describe the energy sector today and the answers that come back most often are encouraging: innovative and evolving, a meaningful shift from the traditional and outdated image the industry once carried.

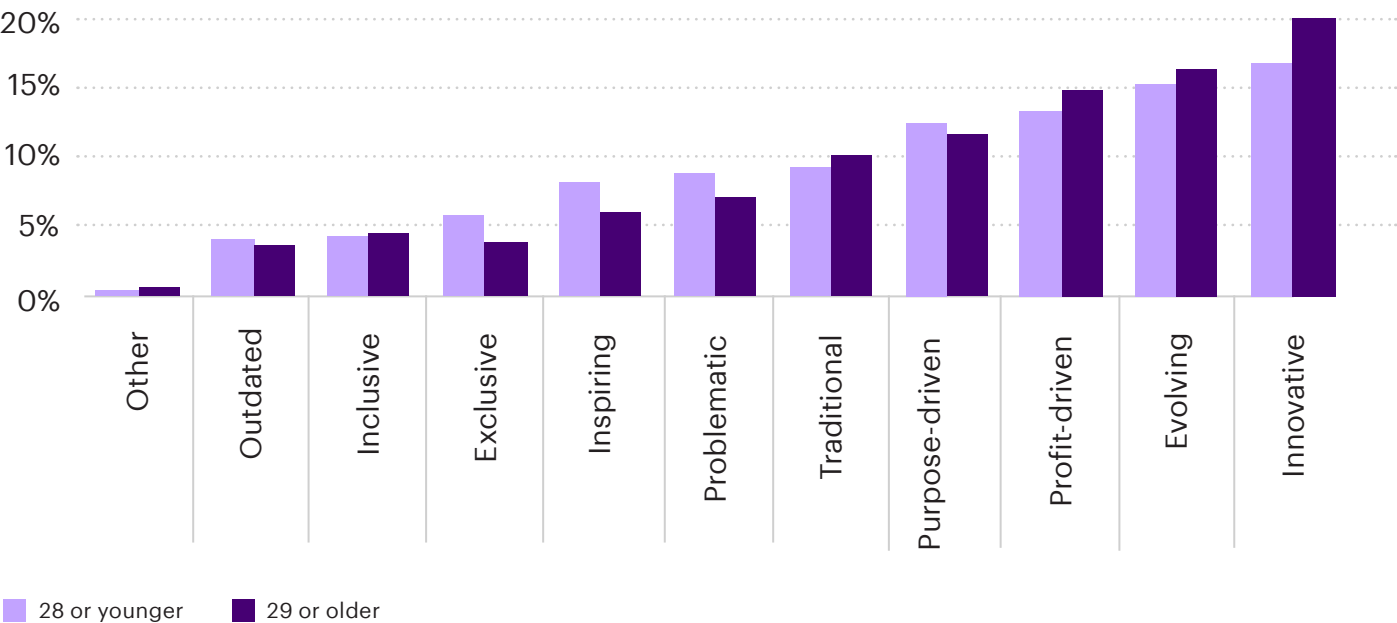
But there is friction. Profit-driven outranks purpose-driven. Problematic outranks inspiring. The margins are narrow, but for a generation that chose this sector partly on the basis of mission, they carry real weight. Yet young professionals are clear-eyed about economic reality. They understand that without a viable business case, transition efforts cannot scale or sustain, and where private economics fall short, the expectation shifts to government to bridge the gap.

Figure 4: Young professionals' top words to describe the energy sector



Progress is visible and that counts for something. But the sector has yet to prove its intent, and the difference between a sector that is changing and one that has changed is not lost on them. Building genuine credibility means closing that gap through demonstrated impact and honest accountability, not through better messaging.

Figure 5: How perceptions of the energy sector shift with age



**Building genuine credibility
means closing the gap through
demonstrated impact and honest
accountability**

Pillar 1 Key takeaways

Confidence is highest where the transition is linked to opportunity, not only obligation

Youth confidence in the energy transition is real, but it is not uniform. Leaders who treat it as a single global average will misread both the opportunity and the risk.

- 1. Opportunity** — Africa and the Middle East show a more opportunity-led confidence profile, where the transition is seen as an economic opening rather than a cost. That optimism is a strategic asset worth protecting.
- 2. Proof** — Europe and the Americas are the sceptics. Confidence here depends on a stronger proof-of-delivery story: visible progress against commitments, not just stated ambition.
- 3. Proximity** — Confidence also differs by proximity to the sector. Students are more optimistic; employed respondents are more sceptical; and those seeking employment show the strongest conviction of all — they have chosen energy knowing what it is and are betting on it anyway.
- 4. Action** — Leaders should not treat youth confidence as a single global average. To sustain it, they need to address the local and professional reasons behind optimism or doubt, show visible progress against commitments, and prove that an innovative and evolving sector is also one with credible intent, measurable impact and long-term public value.

The core ask:

Show visible progress. Prove impact.
Make the value of the transition tangible.

Pillar 2

Global solidarity and the uneven transition

**Progress is real.
But don't mistake
momentum for fairness**

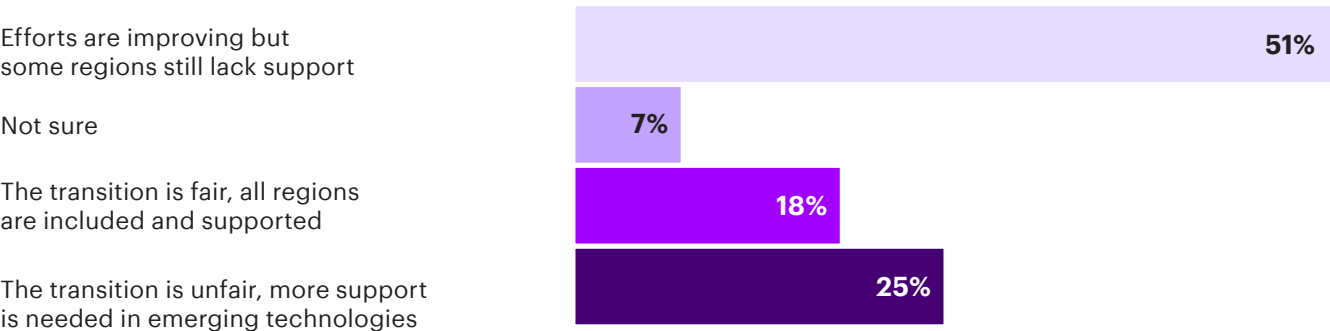
Young professionals see the transition moving and they are willing to say so. But on the question of fairness, the verdict is already in, and more call the transition outrightly unfair than fair.

The 51% who land in the middle acknowledge progress but flag that too many regions are being left behind. That gap is not noise; it is a deliberate judgement.



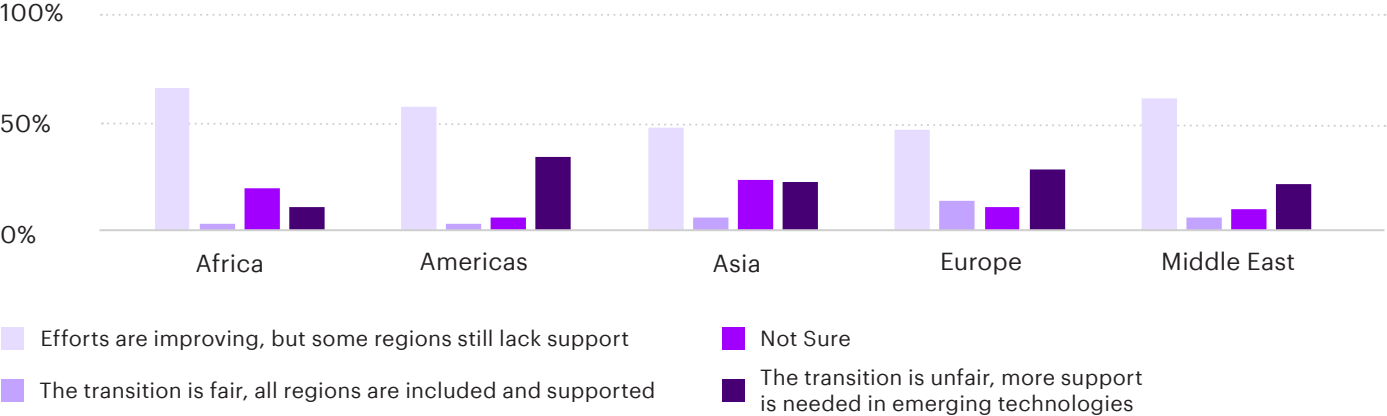
Views on fairness are largely formed and deliberate, with very few respondents sitting on the fence. This generation has weighed who is benefiting from the transition and who is being asked to keep pace without the resources to do so. The answer they have arrived at is not a comfortable one for the institutions running the process and they are watching closely to see whether it changes.

Figure 6: Global view of energy transition fairness



The regional picture deepens the argument. In Africa, the Americas and the Middle East, the majority acknowledge progress but consistently flag support gaps. Europe shows a more distributed view, with a higher share expressing fairness concerns relative to other regions. Across every region without exception, optimism about direction sits alongside frustration about execution.

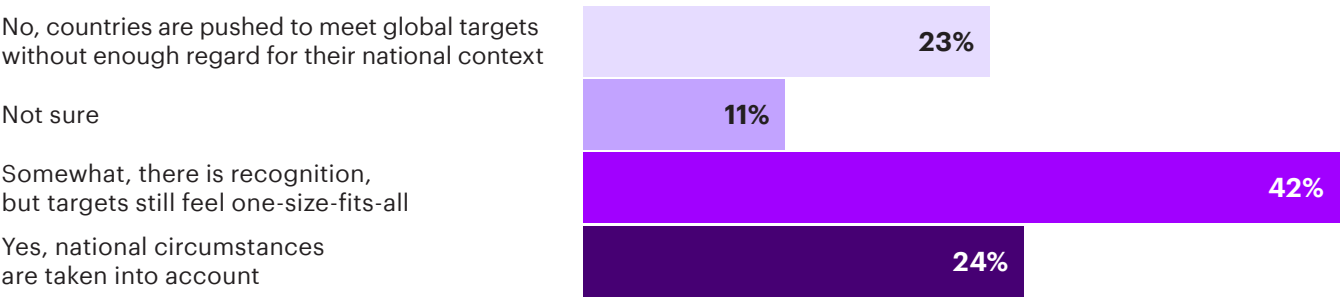
Figure 7: Regional view of energy transition fairness



Net zero cannot be one-size-fits-all. Young professionals already know this

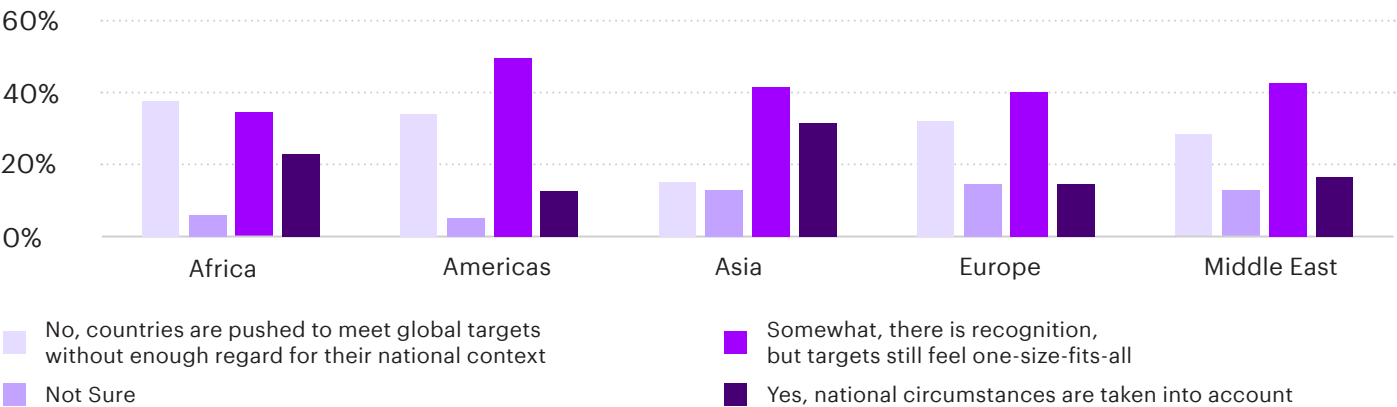
When asked whether international climate frameworks like COP judge countries fairly, nearly two-thirds say no, or only partially. Most acknowledge some recognition of national context, but targets still feel uniform regardless of where a country is starting from. Only one in four believes circumstances are genuinely taken into account.

Figure 8: Young professionals' global verdict on climate framework fairness



Regionally, Asia is the most positive, reflecting a belief that the framework is at least trying to differentiate. Africa is the most sceptical, questioning whether the rules account for development realities at all. The Americas sit somewhere in between, acknowledging that differences exist but doubtful the system acts on them consistently.

Figure 9: Regional fault lines: how views on climate framework fairness differ



Lead, follow, or innovate. Just don't pretend there is one right answer for every country

When it comes to what role their own country should play in the global climate effort, young professionals do not rally around a single prescription. The two leading responses globally are about developing innovative technologies and balancing emissions reduction with economic development, a pairing that signals pragmatism over ideology.

Notably, only very few prioritise economic growth over emissions reduction outright, and the instinct across regions is not to abandon the transition but to find a path through it that genuinely reflects local realities.

How young professionals want their countries to act on climate

29%

of respondents look to balance emissions reduction and economic development

30%

of respondents seek the development of innovative technologies to support emissions reduction

15%

of respondents prefer their countries to follow the lead of more developed nations

8%

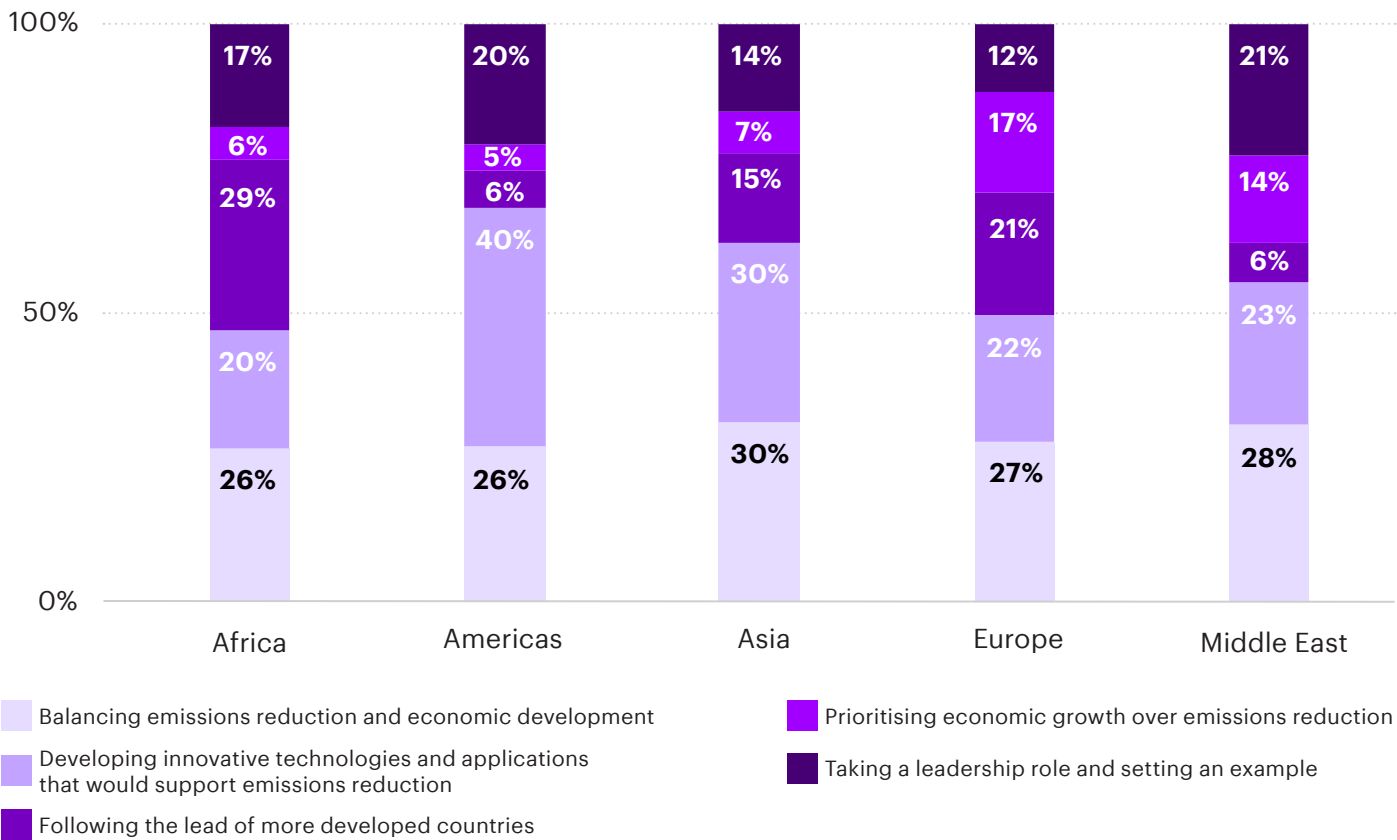
of respondents prioritise economic growth over emissions reduction

16%

of respondents want their nations to take the leadership role and set an example regarding the transition

The regional divergence is where the real story lives. The Americas frame the transition primarily as an innovation challenge. Europe is the only region where economic growth consistently outranks emissions reduction, reflecting cost and competitiveness pressures felt more acutely there than elsewhere. But support for balancing the two is strikingly consistent across all five regions, suggesting a shared conviction that development and decarbonisation are not a choice between one or the other.

Figure 10: One transition, five different visions: regional views on the country's climate role



For institutions running the global climate process, the implication is sharper than it sounds. Legitimacy now depends on visible differentiation, not declared ambition. A framework that treats every country's starting point the same will be judged unfair by the cohort that has done the work to read it carefully—and that judgement will harden, not soften, with time.

Pillar 2 Key takeaways

Young professionals are not rejecting the transition, but they are judging whether it is fair, realistic and locally relevant

This generation has done the work to read the global transition carefully. Their verdict is deliberate: progress is real, but the transition is moving unevenly, and more young professionals call it outrightly unfair than fair. Leaders who miss that distinction risk losing the trust of the cohort that will deliver the transition they are promising.

- 1. Global fairness** — Young professionals recognise progress, yet continue to see support gaps across regions. They question whether global climate frameworks properly account for different national starting points, resources and capabilities. Leaders should move beyond one-size-fits-all transition narratives and avoid treating localisation as a light adaptation of a global message.
- 2. Americas** — Innovation is the strongest transition frame in this region.
- 3. Europe** — Cost, competitiveness and economic growth pressures need to be acknowledged directly.
- 4. Africa, Asia and the Middle East** — The transition story must connect decarbonisation with development, access and national capability.

The core ask:

Develop a transition approach that is globally ambitious, but regionally differentiated, practical and fair.

Pillar 3

Corporate strategy, energy mix, and future technologies

**Don't pick a side.
Pick a strategy that
holds under pressure**

Young professionals have watched major energy companies pivot back towards oil and gas in recent years. Their response is neither applause nor outrage. It is a clear-eyed demand for balance.

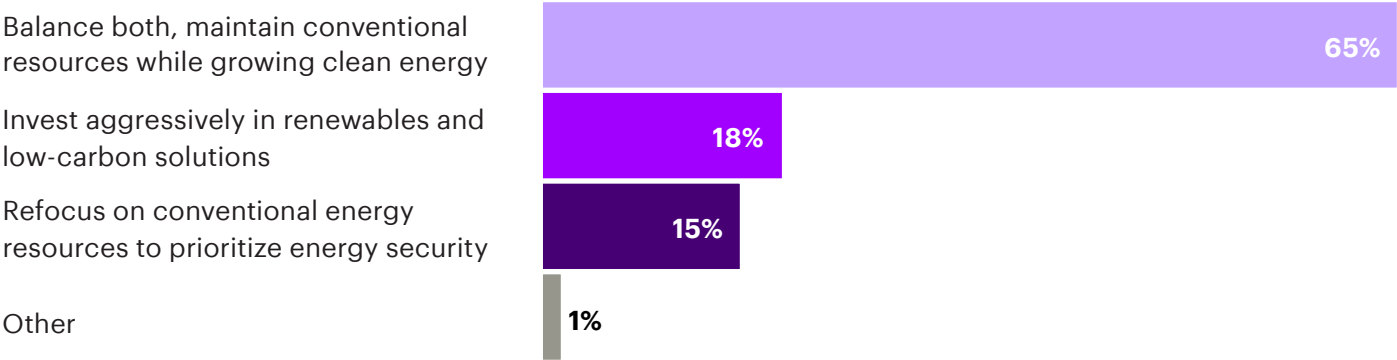
Nearly two-thirds say energy companies should maintain conventional resources while growing clean energy over the next decade. Support for the balanced path exceeds backing for solely the renewables camp and the conventional energy camp combined.



Notably, only 18% support abundant renewables investment, directly challenging the assumption that young professionals want the fastest possible shift away from fossil fuels.

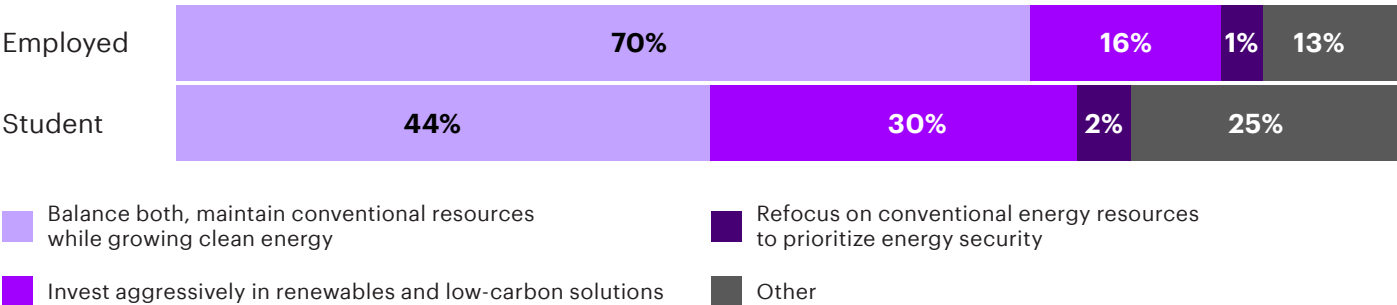
This is not fence-sitting. It is a sophisticated read of the real world. Grid stability, capital intensity, geopolitical supply risks and the pace of infrastructure build-out are not abstract concerns for this generation. They are the conditions inside which any credible transition must be delivered.

Figure 11: Young professionals' global verdict on the ideal energy investment strategy



The student-versus-employed split adds useful dimension. Employed respondents favour balance far more heavily, grounded by daily exposure to operational realities. Students lean more towards robust renewables investment, reflecting higher ambition and lower tolerance for gradualism.

Figure 12: The student-employee divide on energy investment strategy



Net zero demands coordination across energy companies, industries and policymakers

When asked how confident they are that major energy companies will meet their net-zero targets, young professionals are cautiously positive but far from certain. Based on Figure 13, the largest group is highly confident, a prove-it posture that mirrors the conditional optimism running through the entire survey. Strong conviction in corporate delivery remains a minority position and it will stay that way until tangible progress becomes visible and verifiable.

Figure 13: Young professionals' confidence in energy companies meeting their net-zero targets



Remove policy support from the equation and confidence drops sharply. When asked whether industries adjacent to energy can meet their climate pledges without government backing, low confidence is the dominant response.

Figure 14: Without policy backing, confidence collapses: what young professionals' think

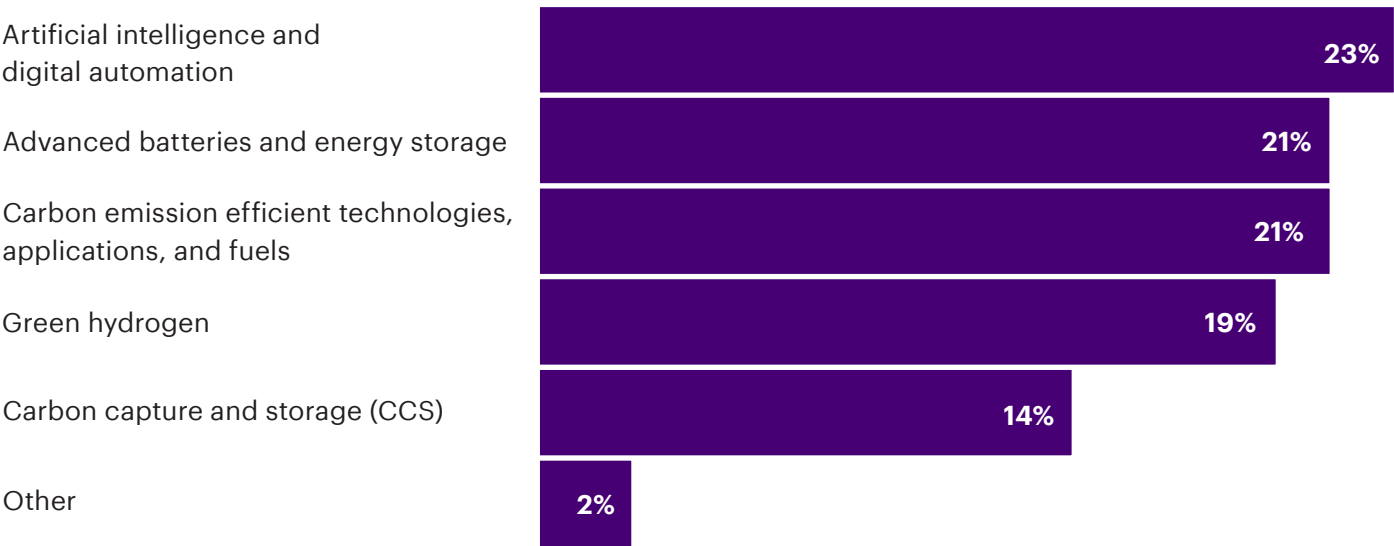


The future of energy runs on AI, batteries and a diversified portfolio, not a single breakthrough

Young professionals are not waiting for a silver bullet, and they are not expecting one. When asked which emerging technologies will shape the future of energy, the answers spread across a broad portfolio. Artificial intelligence is the clear leader at 23%, ranking ahead of advanced batteries, carbon-efficient technologies and green hydrogen. The spread itself is the signal that this generation understands the energy future as a systems challenge and they are not prepared to bet everything on one solution.

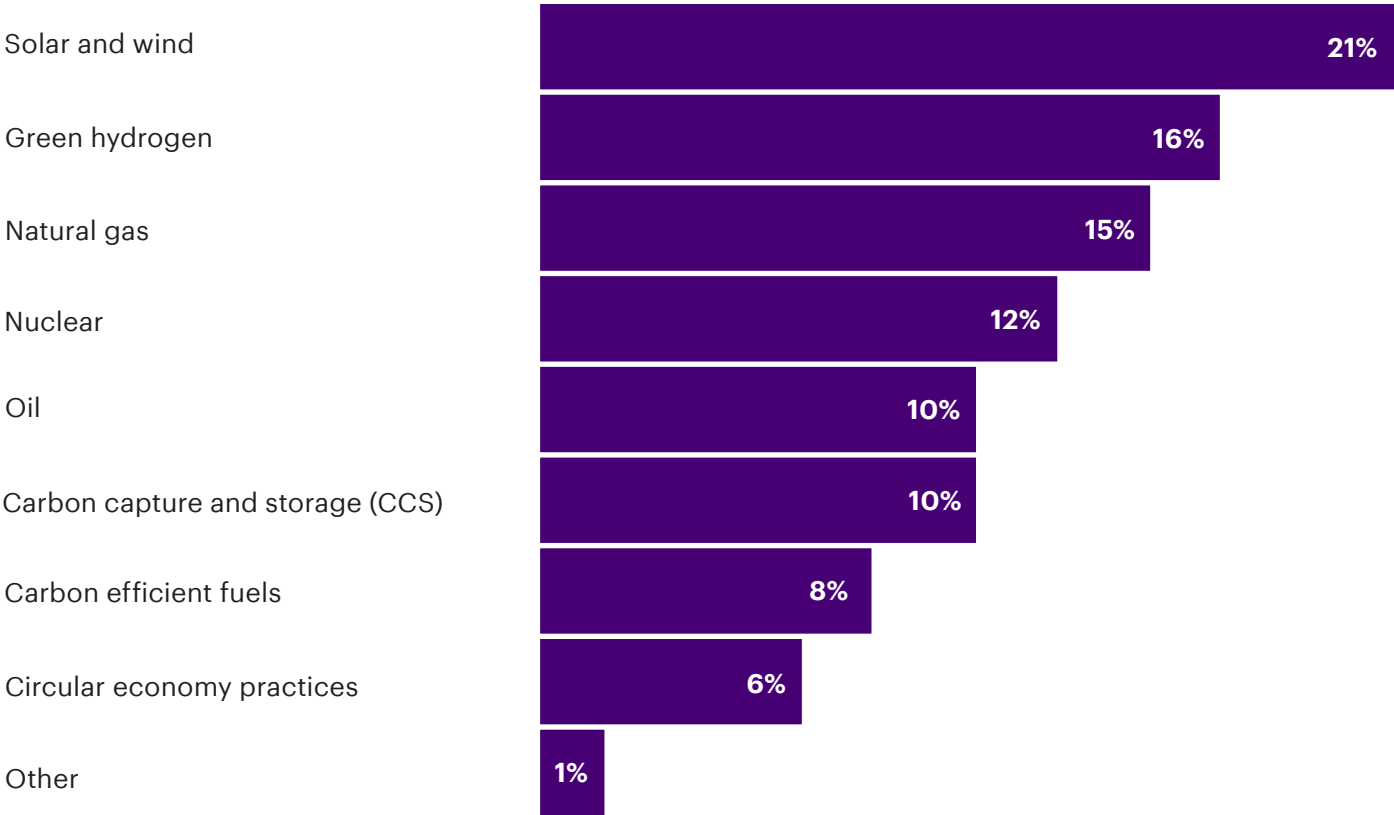
The prominence of AI is worth pausing on. System intelligence, efficiency optimisation and demand management are just as critical as renewable energy generation capacity.

Figure 15: AI leads the pack: young professionals' top emerging energy technologies



On investment priorities through 2035, solar and wind lead, confirming renewables are the backbone for a just transition. But natural gas and oil both appear in the top priorities alongside green hydrogen and nuclear. Their inclusion is not a contradiction; it is pragmatism in action. Young professionals are not calling for a single-speed transition. They expect decarbonisation to be balanced with reliability and energy security, and they expect the companies leading it to have the discipline to hold that balance under pressure.

Figure 16: From solar to oil: young professionals' energy investment priorities through 2035



When it comes to what matters most in the transition as well, maintaining energy security and reliability and investing in innovation rank as the top two priorities for the surveyed generation. Expanding energy access to underserved regions follows close behind, indicating that equity is not a secondary consideration for this generation; it is part of what makes a transition legitimate in the first place.

For executives setting strategy, the message is sharper than it first appears. This generation is not asking for a faster pivot. They are asking for a more honest one—one where balance is presented as the strategy, not as a compromise on the way to a single-speed transition.

**Maintaining energy security and reliability
and investing in innovation, rank as the top
two priorities for the surveyed generation**

Pillar 3 Key takeaways

Young professionals understand complexity and support balanced, investable transition strategies

This generation is not asking for a faster pivot. They are asking for a more honest one, where balance is presented as the strategy.

- 1. What they want** — Clean energy growth, but not at the expense of reliability, affordability, security or energy access.
- 2. How to frame it** — Position balance as a credible transition strategy, not a retreat from ambition.
- 3. What fits together** — Show how conventional resources, renewables, AI, storage, hydrogen, CCS and policy support fit together in a practical pathway.
- 4. The strategy** — This is not a single technology bet or a faster pivot at any cost, but a disciplined strategy that can hold under real-world pressure.

The core ask:

Present balance as a practical pathway to an investable transition, not a fallback position.

Pillar 4

Careers, growth and inclusion

Crisis did not push this generation away. It pulled them in

When the world gets more complex, most industries lose talent to uncertainty. Energy is doing something different. More young professionals say that recent global events, from geopolitical conflict to climate disasters to economic shocks, have made working in energy feel more urgent. Specifically, 38% feel this urgency to participate in the sector, compared with only 23% who feel deterred by instability. Urgency outweighs instability by a ratio of nearly two to one; an asset in the moments of genuine global turbulence.



This is a generation that responds to volatility with engagement rather than withdrawal. The Americas and Middle East show the strongest urgency signals, with roughly half of respondents in both regions reporting heightened motivation. Africa and Asia lean in the same direction, if somewhat more evenly distributed. Across every region, disruption is pulling people towards the sector, not pushing them away.

Figure 17: Urgency outweighs instability: how global events are affecting energy participation

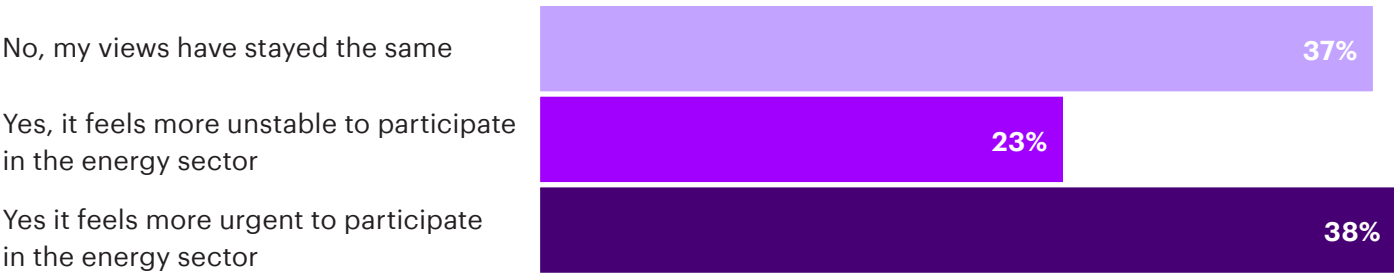
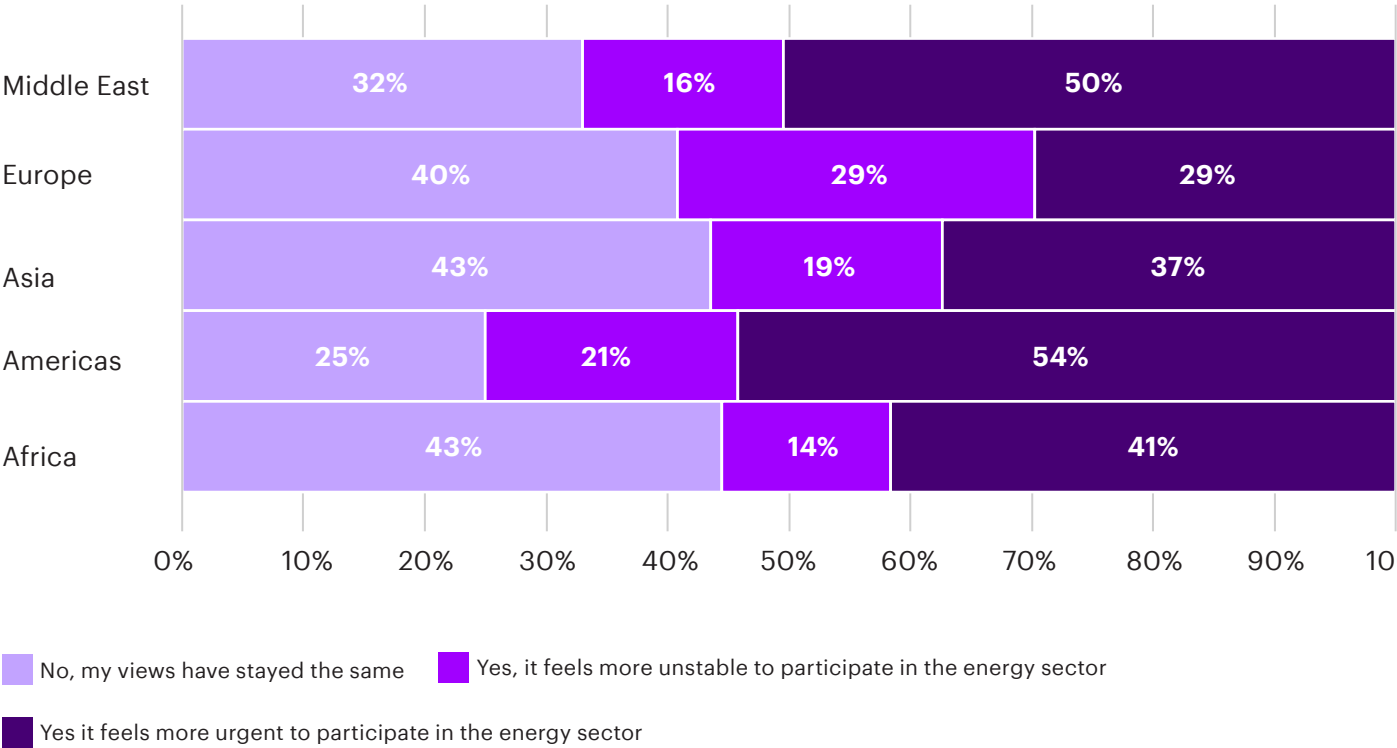
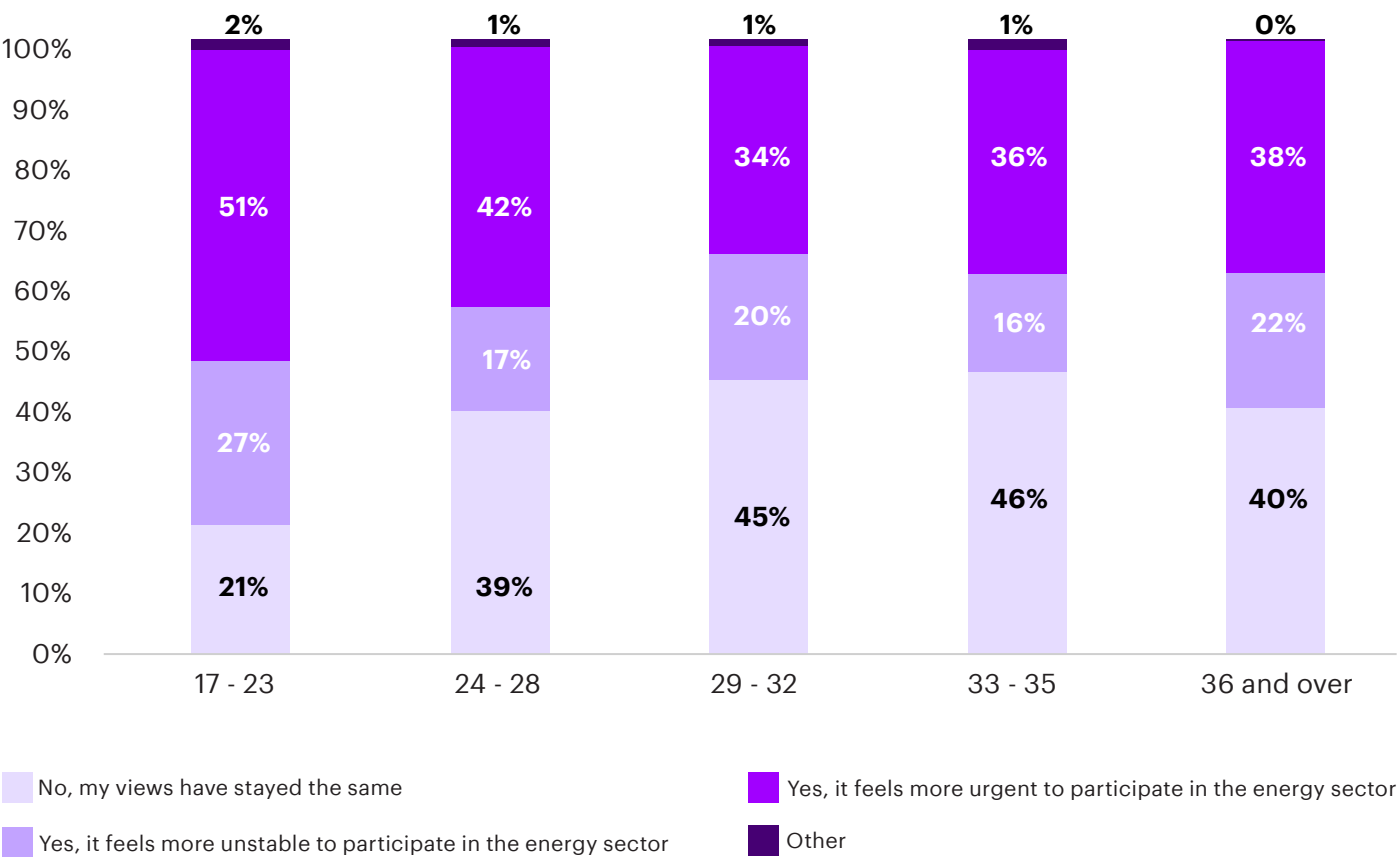


Figure 18: How global disruption is shaping energy career motivation across five regions



The age-wise breakdown adds another layer. The youngest cohort, those between 17 and 23, reports the highest urgency of any age group. Urgency levels moderate as respondents get older and accumulate experience. The newest entrants to the sector feel the moment most acutely and they are leaning in the hardest.

Figure 19: Age and urgency: how motivation to work in energy shifts with experience

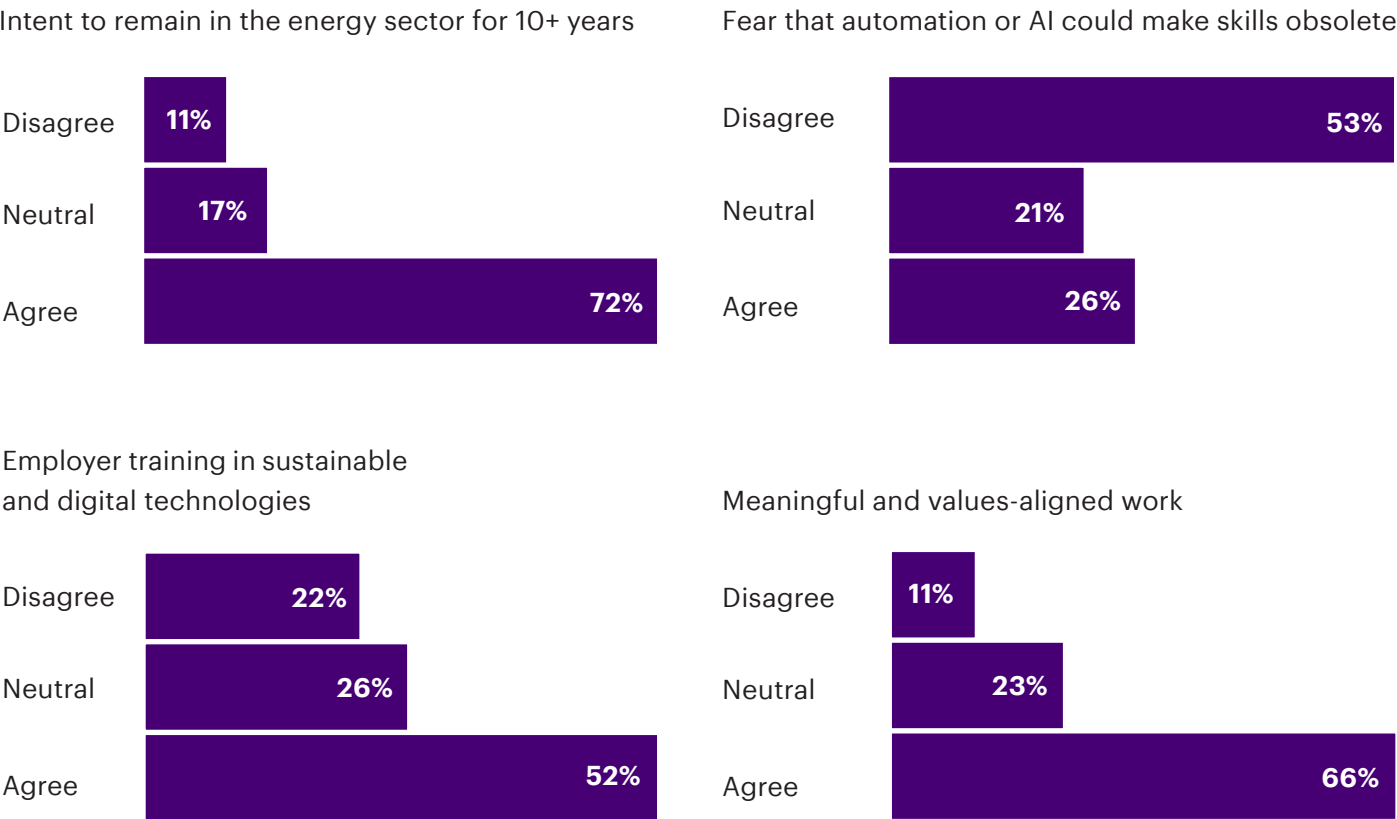


The youngest cohort, those between 17 and 23, reports the highest urgency of any age group

**Innovation brought this generation here.
Purpose is what keeps them**

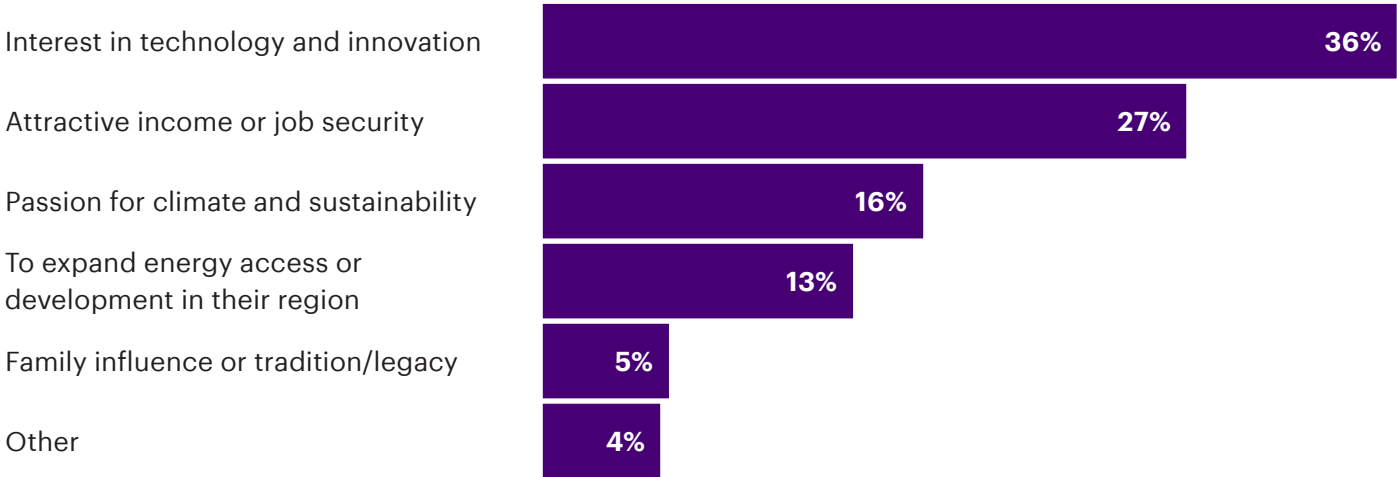
Once in the sector, this generation intends to stay. A striking 72% plan to remain for at least the next decade. Their work feels meaningful and aligned with their values, and most say their employer is providing training in new sustainable or digital technologies.

Figure 20: The young professional scorecard: career, AI, training and purpose



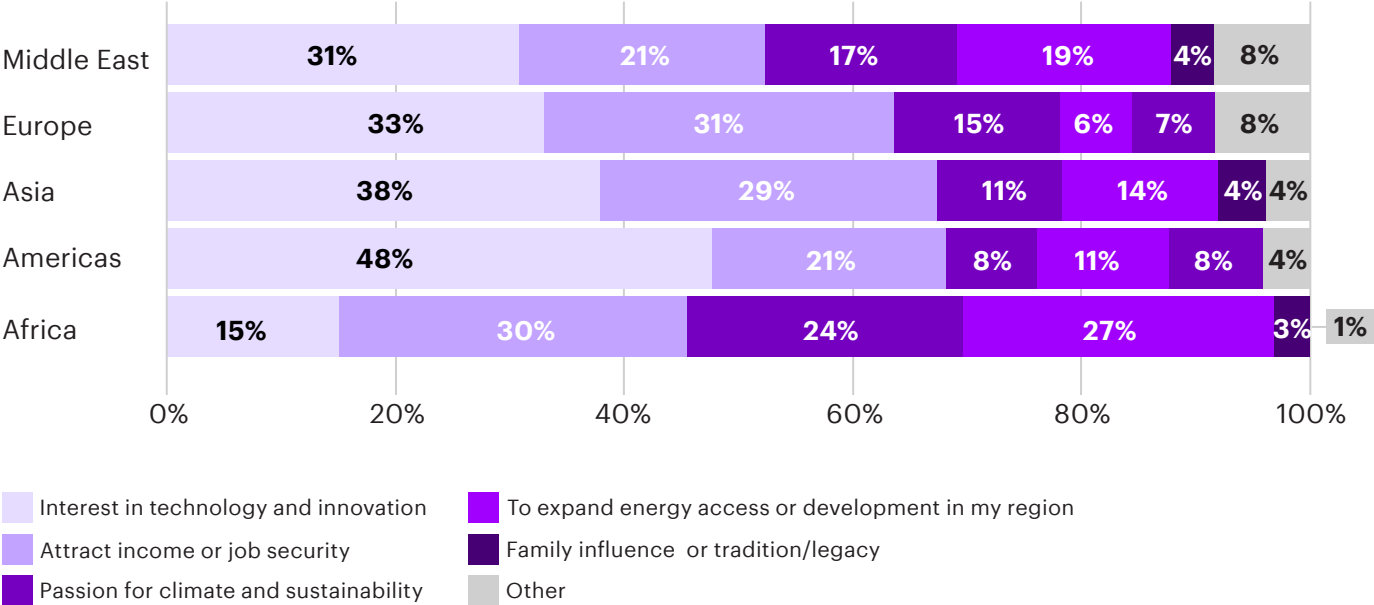
What drew young professionals to the energy sector in the first place also challenges some easy assumptions. The top entry driver is not passion for the climate or a sense of environmental duty. It is interest in technology and innovation. Job security and attractive income rank second. Climate and sustainability passion comes third. The sector is winning talent because of what it is becoming, not only because of what it stands for, and that turns out to be a more durable foundation for attracting talent than purpose alone.

Figure 21: What drew young professionals to the energy sector?



The regional variation adds useful richness. The Americas place the strongest emphasis on technology and innovation, consistent with the current AI momentum in the region. Asia and the Middle East show relatively higher weight on climate and development motivations, reflecting a mission-oriented framing tied to energy access and transition impact. Africa stands out with income and job security as the dominant driver; a pragmatic and entirely understandable reflection of where economic development sits in the hierarchy of regional priorities.

Figure 22: Career motivators by region: a global picture with local nuance



This generation sees AI as an opportunity. Now they need the roadmap

Young professionals hold a largely open and optimistic view of artificial intelligence in the energy sector. More than half believe AI will create new career opportunities, and an even larger share agree that AI will transform the types of skills and roles most in demand.

Figure 23: Young professionals believe AI will create new career opportunities

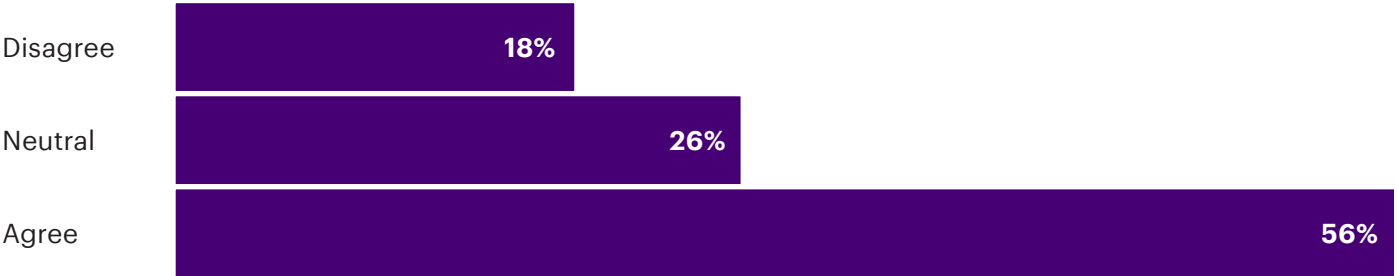
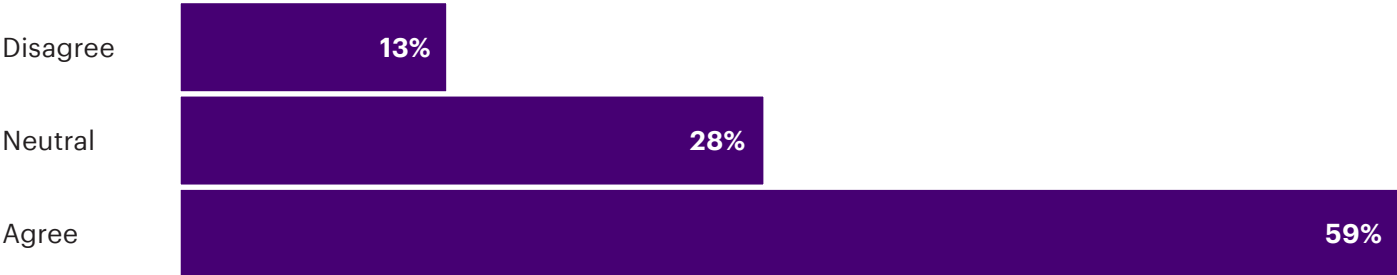


Figure 24: Young professionals expect AI to transform the skills and roles most in demand



The challenge is no longer whether this generation is open to AI, but whether organisations are moving quickly enough to translate that openness into capability.

Fewer than half say their organisation has access to quality data and tools to apply AI to real energy challenges. Workforce preparation for AI-driven change is similarly uneven. The ask from young professionals is not scepticism toward AI. It is impatience. They can see where this is going and they want their organisations moving at the same speed they are.

Give this generation a seat at the table,
not a seat at the side table

Young professionals feel broadly supported and included in their organisations, and that is genuinely worth acknowledging. Most report access to good mentorship, many see clear leadership pathways, and a majority believe the sector offers equal opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or background. These are meaningful positives that the sector has earned and should continue to build on.

Figure 25: The AI readiness gap: access to quality data and tools

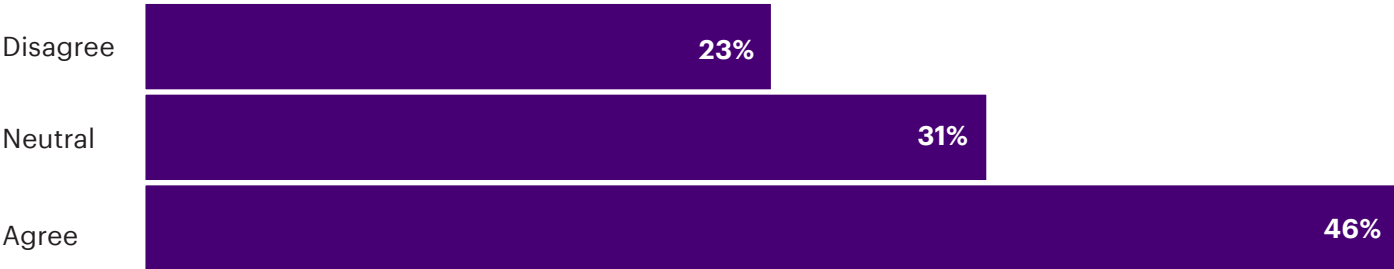
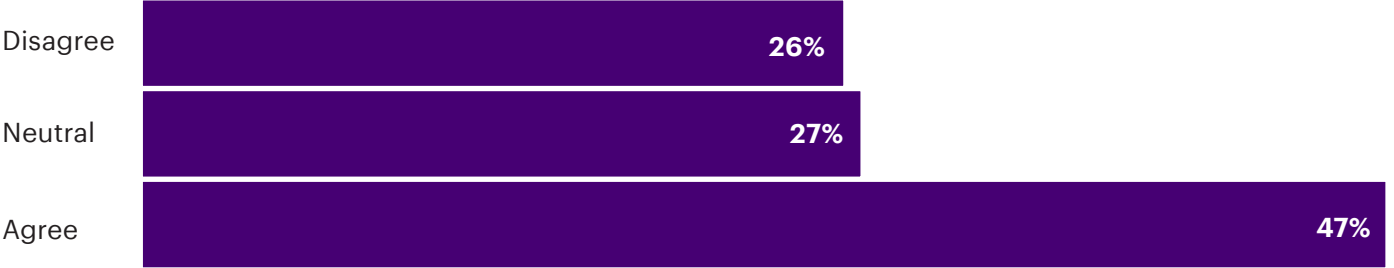


Figure 26: Young professionals' assessment of their organisation's AI workforce readiness



The ask from young professionals
is not scepticism toward AI.
It is impatience

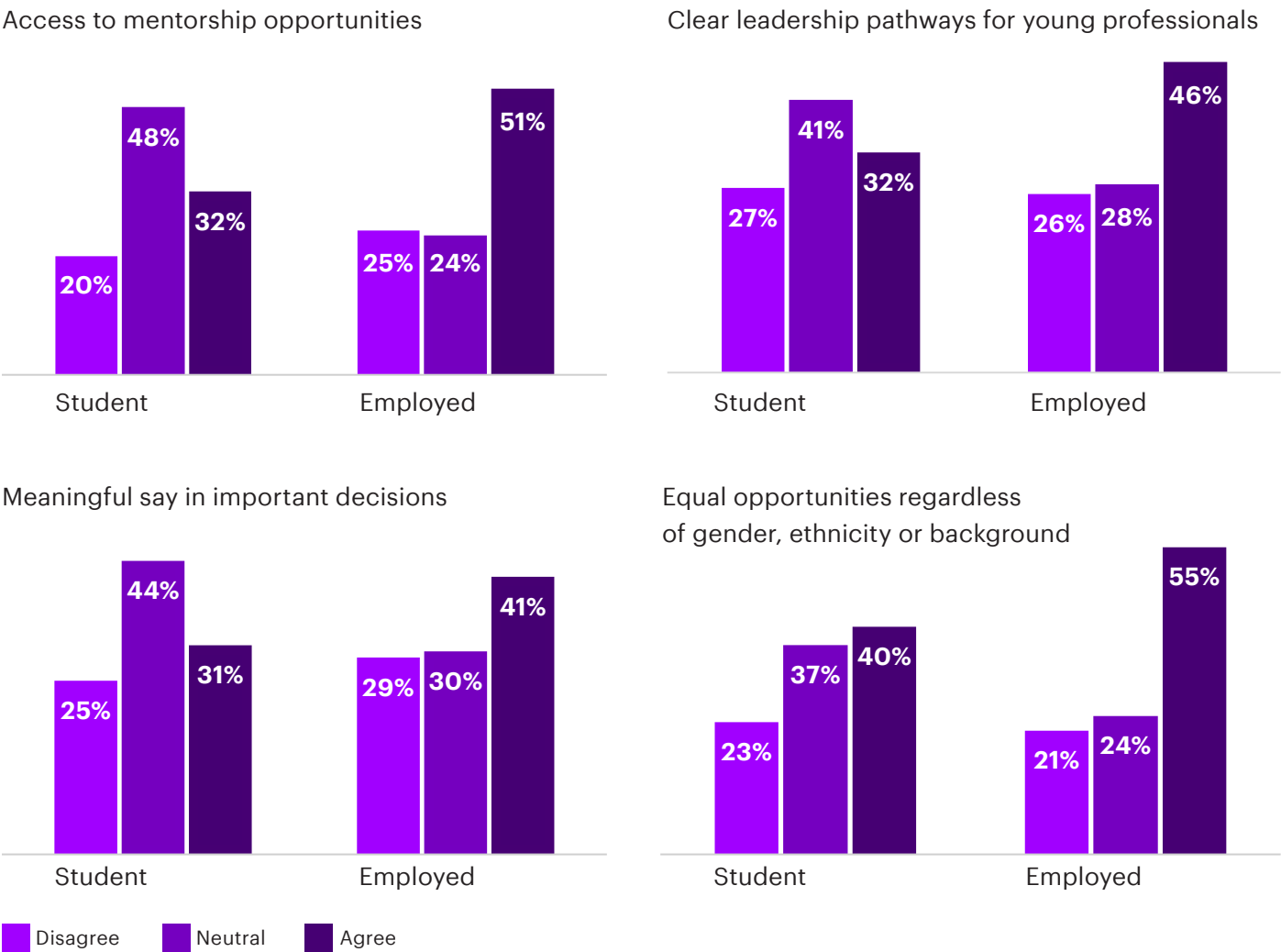
But one finding cuts against that positive picture. When asked whether young professionals have a meaningful say in important decisions, the result is the weakest of the four inclusion indicators, with nearly one in four disagreeing. Among students the gap is wider still, and employed respondents are only modestly better positioned. The sector is doing well at welcoming this generation into the room, but being in the room is not the same as being heard.

Figure 27: In the room, but are they being heard?



For boards and HR leaders, this is the inclusion gap that matters. Mentorship, pathways and equal opportunity programmes have done their work. The next move is structural — giving young professionals a vote, not just a voice, on the decisions that shape the strategy they are being asked to deliver.

Figure 28: The inclusion gap: how student and employed perspectives compare



Pillar 4 Key takeaways

The workforce story is not one of disengagement

This generation entered energy because of what the sector is becoming, not only what it stands for. Crisis has sharpened their resolve rather than dampened it. The risk now is not that they walk away; it's that the sector fails to meet the commitment level they are already bringing.

- 1. What draws them in** — Young professionals see urgency, meaning, technology-led opportunity and long-term potential in energy.
- 2. What keeps them** — They are drawn by innovation and stay when the work feels purposeful. A striking 72% plan to remain in the sector for at least the next decade — but that loyalty is conditional on the sector continuing to earn it through meaningful work, clear pathways and honest leadership.
- 3. Where AI fits** — Young professionals increasingly see AI as a source of career growth, not a threat to it.
- 4. Leadership challenge** — Convert positive intent into sustained commitment through visible career pathways, stronger AI readiness, mentorship and real influence in decisions. Being in the room is not the same as being heard.

The core ask:

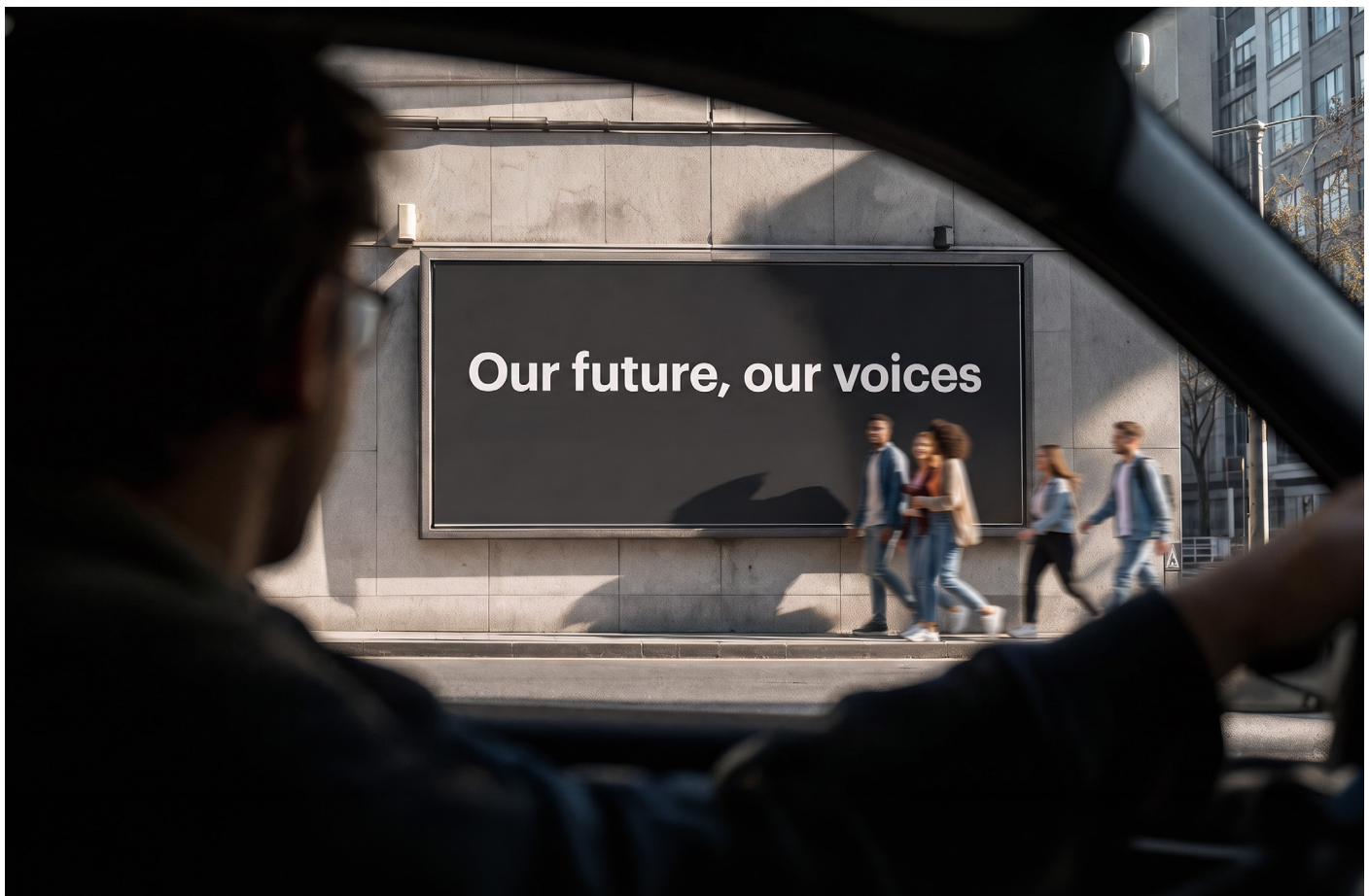
Give young professionals a vote in the future they are being asked to deliver.

Message to leaders

Just four clear calls to action

Our survey closed with an open question: if you had an audience of senior leaders from the energy industry and government, what one message would you give them on behalf of your generation?

The answers came from across every region and every role, and they converged with striking consistency on four clear calls to action. They are not radical demands. They are not unreasonable expectations. They are direct, and they deserve to be taken seriously.



Four clear calls to action:

1. Lead for the long term

Make decisions that protect future generations, not just near-term outcomes. Plan beyond the next few years. Invest in modern technology, strong infrastructure and honest policies that people can trust.

2. Earn trust through delivery

Trust in this sector is on loan, and the next 24 to 36 months of visible progress will determine whether it converts to commitment or quietly fades. Support targets with clear, measurable progress, and communicate honestly about setbacks.

3. Keep the transition pragmatic

Balance decarbonisation with affordability, reliability and energy security. Treat the path between renewable and conventional energy sources as a deliberate strategy, not a compromise.

4. Bring youth into the process

Listen, invest in skills and involve young professionals in real decision-making. Give this generation a vote, not just a seat. The choices made today will shape the opportunities and risks they will live with tomorrow.

Are you listening?

The findings in this report tell a consistent story. Young professionals are not waiting to be convinced. They are already here, already watching and already deciding whether the industry deserves their trust and their talent. That is not a given. It has to be earned.

Earning it means closing the gap between what leaders say and what they deliver. It means involving this generation in real decisions. It means recognising that the transformation of the global energy system will not be delivered by technology or capital alone. It will be delivered by people, and increasingly by the generation that is ready, willing and frankly impatient to get on with it. They are not waiting for permission. The question now is whether leaders are ready to move forward.

Survey methodology

Between October 2025 and February 2026, WPC Energy conducted an annual survey focused on reaching students and young professionals within the energy industry. The effort was supported by WPC Energy members (both companies and industry organisations).

The Survey attracted over 1,200 respondents from 62 countries across 6 continents.

Industry of employment: Of those respondents, 68% of those surveyed were working in the energy industry, when they participated in the survey.

Age: 78% of the respondents were under 35 and thus fit the qualifying definition of students and young professionals. Responses from survey participants over the age of 35 were used to compare generational perspectives. Survey respondents were relatively evenly distributed across the age categories used for analysis.

Education: In terms of education, 69% of survey participants had a STEM background. The majority held a master's degree or equivalent (37%), followed closely by those holding a bachelor's degree or equivalent (29%).

Gender: While industry data indicates that women represent roughly a fifth of employees in the energy industry, the participation of young women in the WPC Energy Global Youth Surveys has consistently been higher. Women accounted for 37% of this year's respondents.

To mitigate regional biases represented in the data, researchers used a normalisation approach when conducting the data analysis. The **IEA's World Energy Employment report** was used to calibrate over/under-represented regions compared to actual global employment statistics and we regrouped some geographic areas (North America and Central & South America) to have statistically significant sample size when representing the data at the geographic level.

After normalisation, the highest level of survey participation is observed from Europe (55%), followed by Asia (25%) and the Middle East (11%). Americas (6%) and Africa (3%) had modest participation. Regional findings should be read with this weighting in mind.

Given the voluntary nature of the survey and the channels used for dissemination (e.g., word of mouth, associations and social media channels focused on the energy industry), a certain degree of self-selection and confirmation bias should be considered when interpreting the results.

We use generative AI in our research production process. Our research experts review and validate the generative AI outputs with traditional research methods where possible, applying Accenture's Responsible AI standards.

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About WPC Energy

WPC Energy is a non-advocacy, non-political organisation with charitable status in the UK and accreditation as a Non-Governmental Organisation from the United Nations. Formed in 1933 and comprising 60 National Committees, it brings together individuals from across every tier of the industry from producing and consuming countries within a global platform to discuss the status and the future of the energy industry for the benefit of all.

WPC Energy's prime value is to facilitate dialogue amongst all stakeholders to find answers to key technical, social, environmental and management issues facing the industry and to promote the development and utilisation of the world's energy resources in an efficient and sustainable way, for the benefit of current and future generations.

WPC Energy organises the WPC Energy Congress which, with a typical attendance of over 25,000, provides a neutral and inclusive platform to debate and define realistic, workable paths to a net zero future. The event brings together thought leaders from across the global energy industry including Heads of State, Ministers, CEOs, Presidents and Heads of International Organisations, as well as engineers, academics and the NGO community. [Visit us at wpcenergy.org](https://wpcenergy.org)

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