

NEW SURVEY FINDS THREE IN FIVE YOUNG AFRICANS NOW OPTIMISTIC TRUMP WILL DELIVER THEM A BETTER FUTURE DESPITE USAID CUTS

African Youth Survey 2026 finds Youth Africans warm to Trump-era dealmaking as USA's perceived power overtakes China - though China is trusted more than the US

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, July 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Around three in five young Africans are optimistic that Donald Trump's second administration will deliver a better future for their countries in areas including youth empowerment, military support, security cooperation and counterterrorism, despite having preferred Joe Biden before the 2024 US election and despite concern over the dismantling of USAID and American access to African resources.

The last edition of the [African Youth Survey](#) found young Africans expected a Biden administration to be better for their countries than a Trump administration by 42% to 23% across the areas evaluated, from foreign investment and trade relations to youth empowerment and military support.



Ivor Ichikowitz, Founder and Commissioner of the African Youth Survey



An African Youth Survey researcher working in Nairobi, Kenya, for the 2026 survey

Yet the 2026 edition finds young Africans are very or somewhat optimistic that President Trump's

second administration will bring about a better future in key areas: youth empowerment and security cooperation and counterterrorism both at 60%, democracy support and trade relations both at 59%, with military support, development aid and assistance, and political support and relations all at 58%.

Overall US influence has risen from 74% in 2024 to 81%, edging ahead of China at 79%, and the survey reveals a generation of young Africans that is increasingly pragmatic, impatient with dependency, and judging foreign powers less by rhetoric or ideology than by whether they can deliver jobs, investment, technology and security.



The biennial African Youth Survey was launched in 2020 by the Ichikowitz Family Foundation and is conducted by PSB Insights to give governments, business, civil society and the media a rigorous understanding of the views of Africa's rising generation. In the largest survey yet, it has interviewed almost 5,000 young Africans across 16 countries.

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*Ivor Ichikowitz, Founder and
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The findings are striking given past criticism of African countries by President Trump, the closure of USAID and concern that Washington may use its power to secure access to Africa's natural resources and the results did not show uncritical support of President Trump and the United States.

Some 58% worry that the United States will disregard international law and norms to gain access to natural

resources in their country, rising to 70% in both South Africa and Liberia. Some 46% say USAID ceasing to operate as an independent foreign assistance agency will have a negative impact on their country, with healthcare services and disease prevention seen as the area most affected.

Nevertheless 52% still say their leaders should find a way to work with President Trump regardless of differences as young Africans separate rhetoric from results and diplomatic niceties from tangible national gain. Further to this, 26% of those surveyed say the USAID

dismantling could have a positive impact by forcing leaders to confront domestic challenges directly, rising to 41% in Ghana and 40% in Nigeria, while 16% say it will have little or no impact and 11% do not know.

Ivor Ichikowitz, Founder and Commissioner of the African Youth Survey, said: “Many in the West still do not understand why Trump appeals to young Africans. It is because he speaks the language the world actually runs on: power, interest, leverage and deals. Africa’s youth are tired of polite speeches that produce nothing. They want jobs, investment, infrastructure, security and respect. Trump does not pretend foreign policy is charity, and young Africans recognise the honesty of that.

“For them, his transactional style is not a problem. It is the point. They know every serious country fights for its own advantage, and they are asking why Africa should be the only continent expected to be grateful for lectures. This generation is not asking to be rescued. It is asking to be taken seriously. It wants African leaders who walk into every room, whether in Washington, Beijing, Brussels or Moscow, with their eyes open and their price clearly understood. In that sense, they understand Trump perfectly.”

Perceived US influence has risen during President Trump’s second administration, by 11% since 2024, but it is not uncontested. China’s influence is viewed more positively among those who say it has influence, with 95% rating China's influence as positive compared with 85% for the United States. In comparison with 2024, China’s positive influence has increased by 13% - a significant rise. It is evident that although the Trump administration has bolstered the US’ perceived influence, it still risks losing out to China, now also viewed as the most preferred international ally by young Africans.

Overall, the 2026 survey found young Africans becoming more optimistic about the future. Across the eight countries tracked in every edition of the survey since 2020, 47% of young Africans say their own country is moving in the right direction, up from 30% in 2024. Some 45% say their national economy is moving in the right direction, up from 26% in 2024. Across the same tracked markets, 43% now say Africa is moving in the right direction, up from 37% in 2024.

The rising cost of living is named as the single event or development that has had the biggest impact on Africa over the past five years, selected by 27% of respondents. When asked what Africa most needs to progress, young Africans put creating new, well-paying jobs first at 27%, followed closely by reducing government corruption at 25%. Making it easier to start a business is now selected by 16%, up from 10% in 2020.

Interviews were conducted in March 2026. The countries surveyed were Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

A full copy of the report can be downloaded here: <https://zbek.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/Zebek/IgAGw0W646VJTop1jRPUKCjxAeT5Z4RPUIhkf9nuwBLupII?e=eiPAwY>

African Youth Survey 2026 photographs, videos and animations can be downloaded here: <https://zbek.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/Zebek/IgA6W18vccCOS4r8wgFu2GiVATyg3EG31bB6TpR2jZ1-3CA?e=6hNwlH>

Joy Wambura
Zebek International
+254 751 117676

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