

Next Generation

Brazil

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The views expressed are those of the authors and contributors based on extensive research and review of relevant studies and literature, and do not necessarily reflect those of the British Council.

Contents

Forewords	8
Executive summary	11
Contextualising contemporary Brazil	15
One Brazil: many different realities	16
Comparing Brazil's regions	18
Methodology	19
Defining identity categories	22
Report Structure	24
Chapter 1: Youth resilience and identity	26
Plural identities	26
Daily violence	31
Gender (im)balance	33
A sexist culture	35
Resistance and resilience	36
Government initiatives towards racial equality	48
Youth identity and resilience: Key research takeaways	49
Chapter 2: Education, career and the digital divide	50
Contextualising Brazilian education	52
Education related initiatives	53
Education levels among Next Generation youth	54
Discontinued education	56
Youth appraisal of their education	59
Education inequality	62
Youth demands to improve the education system	63
The digital divide	65
Young apprentices	68
Skills for employability	69
Education, skills and the digital divide: Key research takeaways	72
Chapter 3: Employment, entrepreneurship and informality	74
Unemployment and the world of work	75
Teens in the labour market	76
Workplace appraisals	77
Dreams of enterprise	78
Autonomy at a price	81
Minority groups pushed into informality	86
Creative opportunities	90
Employment, entrepreneurship and informality: Key research takeaways	91

Chapter 4: Civic and political engagement	92
A question of trust	92
Youth engagement & digital activism	94
Reaching young people	98
Community engagement	100
Civic and political engagement: Key research takeaways	103
Chapter 5: Climate challenges	104
A changing climate	104
Worried youth	108
Youth demands for government action	111
Climate challenges: Key research takeaways	113
Chapter 6: Looking to the future	114
A sense of agency	115
Global concerns	117
Looking to the future: Key research takeaways	119
Conclusion	120
Policy recommendations	124
Transversal policy recommendations	124
Youth identity and resilience	124
Education, skills and the digital divide	125
Employment, entrepreneurship and informality	126
Civic and political engagement	126
Climate challenges	127
Specific policy recommendations for vulnerable populations	127
Annex 1: Next Generation Brazil Youth Task Force	130
Annex 2: Methodology	131
Annex 3: Glossary	134
Annex 4: References	140

List of graphics

Figure 1: Regional quotas

Figure 2: Age groups

Figure 3: LGBTQIAPN+ identification

Figure 4: People with a disability

Figure 5: Gender groups

Figure 6: Self-declared ethnicity

Figure 7: Average monthly income by ethnicity

Figure 8: Personal experiences of racial or ethnic discrimination among Black and mixed-race youth

Figure 9: Personal experiences of safety threats by ethnicity

Figure 10: Average monthly income by gender identity and ethnicity

Figure 11: What makes youth proud to be Brazilian?

Figure 12: Main challenges facing LGBTQIAPN+ communities in Brazil

Figure 13: Level of education by ethnicity and age

Figure 14: Average monthly income by university qualification, gender, and ethnicity

Figure 15: Youth that did not proceed to university by ethnicity

Figure 16: Principal reasons that Brazilian youth discontinue their education

Figure 17: Preparedness for work acquired through formal education

Figure 18: Youth appraisal of Brazilian education by age group

Figure 19: Youth appraisal of Brazilian education by territory

Figure 20: Youth demands to improve Brazil's education system

Figure 21: Youth appraisal of digital skills training in schools

Figure 22: Young apprentice training units in Brazil

Figure 23: Skills considered important for employment

Figure 24: Short courses to increase employability

Figure 25: Brazilian youth outside the labour market

Figure 26: Main workplace challenges faced by youth

Figure 27: Main barriers to young people starting a business in Brazil

Figure 28: Informal worker ethnic demographics

Figure 29: Informal workers - obstacles to continuing education

Figure 30: Income difference between informal and full-time employees

Figure 31: Youth trust in the political system

Figure 32: Political engagement in past 12 months

Figure 33: Important qualities when voting for a candidate

Figure 34: Motivators to engage with politics

Figure 35: Reliable sources of information

Figure 36: Social media trust levels

Figure 37: Sense of community belonging

Figure 38: Community engagement

Figure 39: Most pressing climate related challenges facing Brazil

Figure 40: Reasons some youth are not fighting climate challenges

Figure 41 Youth: Priorities for government climate investment

Figure 42: Future outlook for young Brazilians

Figure 43: Measures of personal happiness and achievability

Figure 44: Main challenges facing the world today

Figure 45: Youth demands for government investment

Foreword

The great Caetano Veloso sang of youth as akin to “walking against the wind” — a line that captures how many young Brazilians feel as part of a present they have inherited rather than designed for themselves. Whilst it evokes a vulnerability to being buffered by the major forces of the day, it speaks of a simultaneous defiance too. A defiance not to reject for its own sake, but a clear decision to challenge the headwinds of society, determined not to accept the world as it is, but to imagine what it could be.

Next Generation Brazil surveyed more than 3,000 young people aged 16–35 about the issues that matter to them. It shows a generation connected and committed to the planetary and global concerns that dominate — the climate emergency, the fragility of peace, the shifting nature of work — while also occupied by realities closer to home that impact their prospects. What is revealed from the research are the persistent and multiple inequalities shaping opportunities and outcomes for themselves, their peers, and their communities. The “many Brazils” commonly referenced in studies are not an abstraction here; they appear in uneven access to resources, services, and safety across neighbourhoods, cities, states, and regions.

Across the findings, one message is consistent: young people are ready to participate. They want to be brought centrally into the development of strategies and policies — not as a final stop for consultation, but as co-authors from the start. They recognise and value the instruments and forums that already exist to hear youth voices; they are asking for their insights to sit closer to the centre of decision-making, especially where policies must anticipate near-future requirements and skills — from digital and AI literacy to financial capability and creative problem-solving. This is not unique to Brazil. In the UK, for example, current preparations for a national youth strategy are drawing on widespread consultations with young people who have asked for a similar role in the development of policies for and about them.

The importance of this research lies in how it can inform those who share responsibility for Brazil’s next steps: policymakers across education, culture, labour and employment, entrepreneurship; educators and leaders; civil society and cultural institutions; employers and innovators. It offers evidence and direction for practical collaboration — including in arts and culture, education and skills development — so that opportunities can be designed and delivered in ways that address the inequalities many young people face. Above all, it reminds us that progress will require the same spirit we hear in Veloso’s lyric: the courage to walk into the wind — this time, together — and to let young Brazilians help set the course for what lies ahead.



Tom Birtwistle
Director British Council Brazil







Executive summary

Brazil is home to over 61 million young people aged 16–35 — the country's largest-ever youth population, representing nearly a third of the nation. As this proportion is projected to decline in the coming decades, there is an urgency to invest in youth now and break generational cycles of disadvantage. Despite economic, environmental, and political challenges, Brazilian youth demonstrate resilience, creativity, and a desire to lead change.

Next Generation Brazil, part of the British Council's global research series, brings the voices of young Brazilians to the forefront. Using a large-scale survey and in-depth qualitative research across all five macro-regions, the study captures a vivid portrait of Brazil's youth — their struggles, hopes, and aspirations for the future.

A mixed-method approach was used to develop a comprehensive and inclusive understanding of youth perceptions in Brazil today, focusing on those aged 16 to 35. The research prioritised representation and diversity, by including voices from marginalised groups. This report offers a youth-informed roadmap for governments, civil society, and international partners to reimagine Brazil's trajectory, placing young people not just at the centre of policy, but at the helm of national transformation.

A volunteer Youth Task Force comprising young leaders from all across Brazil provided crucial input to ensure the language, accessibility, and cultural relevance of the research. Exploratory interviews with community activists to identify key themes and policy gaps were followed by a large-scale survey with 3,248 young people aged 16–35 across all regions of Brazil, achieving a 95 per cent confidence level with a ± 2 per cent margin of error. A further qualitative phase, including in-depth interviews and focus groups with youth from marginalised groups, was conducted to deepen insights and capture the perspectives of youth often excluded from mainstream data collection.

Summary of key findings

This report analyses the plurality of Brazilian youth identity and uses both quantitative and qualitative data findings to illustrate a modern nation where certain groups face systemic exclusion. Many young Brazilians navigate precarity — poor access to education and health, limited job prospects, and persistent inequalities. Young people and stakeholders working with them expressed significant concerns about an education system that does not adequately meet the needs of youth or the demands of the labour market.

Youth identity and resilience

The data shows that Brazil remains a deeply unequal country, where the majority of Black and mixed-race youth have personally experienced discrimination based on their ethnicity; young Black women earn nearly three times less than white men; two-thirds of those who identify as part of LGBTQIAPN+ communities have been treated differently due to their sexual orientation; transgender youth cite constant prejudice and targeted violence; and Indigenous youth report widespread discrimination outside their communities.

Education, skills and digital divide

Many young Brazilians risk being left behind in an increasingly digital world without targeted investment in connectivity and digital skills, while unequal access to quality education limits social mobility, further perpetuating poverty and exclusion. The recent pandemic deepened existing inequalities, particularly for youth without adequate digital access.

Feedback gleaned throughout this study underscores an urgent need for Brazil to reform its curriculum and infrastructure, with effective pedagogical and diversity training, and technology integration to equip all young people with the skills needed for the modern job market.

Data showed white survey participants as more likely to hold higher education qualifications than mixed-race youth or Black Brazilians, while Indigenous youth often face linguistic and structural barriers when accessing education outside their communities. Financial constraints, family responsibilities, lack of local opportunities, commuting issues, and poor institutional support are key barriers to continued education, and territorial differences were noted — most youth responding from *favela* communities do not think Brazil offers quality education.

Affirmative policies have begun to show positive results, particularly in granting access to higher education to low-income Brazilians and those in marginalised groups. However, there was a consensus among young people that more needs to be done and that retention supports need improvement to help maintain these young people in university.

Employment, entrepreneurship and informality

Young Brazilians identified interpersonal skills; critical and analytical thinking skills as crucial to employability, and showed a keen interest in short courses to better their job prospects. Artificial intelligence skills were most in demand, followed by financial and business management courses.

A desire for entrepreneurship among young Brazilians is analysed in detail in the report, which distinguishes between a wish to innovate with a new business idea, and urgent financial necessity that maintains much of Brazil's youth in cycles of labour market informality, particularly those from marginalised communities. Lack of access to finance was the main barrier to entrepreneurship identified by Brazilian youth, as well as a skills and self-confidence deficit, amid cultural obstacles.

Half of the employed youth living in *favelas* occupy informal roles, while a third of informal workers surveyed self-declared as Black, a marginally larger share as mixed-race, and only a quarter were white. One in four self-declared informal workers were earning less than the minimum wage, while one in three struggles to make ends meet on a monthly basis.

Respondents consistently identified financial security as the main factor for current and future happiness. 'Worried' was the most frequent term used to describe what lies ahead, with many citing poverty as the main obstacle the world is facing today.

Civic and political engagement

Young Brazilians are disillusioned by the formal political system, but show considerable evidence of community-level organisation, often around shared disadvantage. While they protest and lead grassroots movements, young people identify barriers such as inaccessible political language, institutional racism, and lack of civic education. Despite compulsory voting from the age of 18, trust in political institutions is low. Yet youth turnout is rising — with more and more 16-18-year-olds registering to vote in each election cycle — signalling a renewed demand to be heard (TSE, 2022).

Climate challenges

Personal testimony relating to the impacts of climate change already being felt by young Brazilians, particularly those in Indigenous and Riverine communities, are examined in Next Generation Brazil. Meanwhile, survey results show that Brazilian youth considers *favela* residents, and Indigenous communities as among the most affected. Floods, fires, and droughts hit the poorest hardest, yet these communities are rarely adequately included in climate decision-making.

Policy Recommendations

Many existing governmental policies are identified throughout the report, some of which have been introduced very recently, making it too early to measure their impact. A strong message came from youth activists throughout the research process — policies are no good on paper — they need adequate budget allocations for training and full national penetration, along with regular monitoring and oversight.

The policy recommendations in this report were developed through a youth-led, participatory process, drawing on quantitative data and qualitative insights from community activists, youth leaders, and focus groups with marginalised groups.

The Youth Task Force was instrumental to ensure regional, social, and thematic representation from a youth-centred perspective throughout the development of recommendations. The issues raised by young people through the research process were wide-ranging, leading to two sets of recommendations: some designed to improve conditions for all young people in Brazil, and others tailored to the specific needs of groups who may face additional barriers and vulnerabilities.

These recommendations reflect the most practical and actionable priorities identified. Young participants consistently emphasised the need for meaningful youth involvement in policymaking, adequate funding, clear implementation metrics, and training. They also highlighted schools as key spaces to engage youth, given high national attendance rates.



Among the main policy recommendations:

- Mandate youth impact assessments for all new multi-sector policies affecting young people, with a focus on marginalised groups, ensuring that assessments are led by panels including young people and youth-focused stakeholders.
- Make civic youth councils mandatory at state and municipal levels, with dedicated budgets and clear accountability mechanisms. Embed youth in decision-making and seats on local councils. Ensure inclusive representation of Indigenous, Black, rural, LGBTQIAPN+, disabled, and *favela*-based youth, with gender and diversity quotas.
- Implement diversity and inclusion programmes across public services, with compulsory training on bias, safeguarding, and anti-discrimination. Ensure inclusive practices for marginalised groups — such as trans students — through social name use, accessible facilities, and clear reporting channels.
- Require all teacher education programmes to include mandatory training in anti-racist, decolonial, and inclusive pedagogy, with ongoing in-service training for current educators.
- Embed locally relevant climate education in school curricula, train teachers, and promote hands-on projects like climate monitoring. Use digital tools to engage youth and foster community-led climate action.
- Focus on retention, inclusion, and mentoring of young PwDs in education and employment, not just access. Embed inclusive practices and extend social welfare support during job transitions to ensure economic security and sustained engagement.
- Develop and scale short (affordable or free) courses in digital skills and artificial intelligence (AI), prioritising youth from low-income backgrounds, rural areas and *favelas* to reduce disparities in labour market access. Ensure the full implementation of *BNCC da Computação* (Brazil's National Common Curricular Base - Computing).
- Develop and promote inclusive formalisation pathways for young informal workers, recognising their role in urban economies. Measures should include simplified licensing, co-designed selling zones, and access to training, microcredit, and public services.
- Fund community-led arts and cultural initiatives in underserved areas, supporting diverse expressions from Indigenous, Afro-Brazilian, LGBTQIAPN+, and peripheral communities. Expand access to cultural spaces through subsidies and mobile or digital programmes, and integrate arts and cultural literacy into school curricula.
- Promote rural inclusion through targeted training, infrastructure, and improved logistics. Support Indigenous, *Quilombola*, and Riverine communities in developing culturally rooted businesses with co-financing, technical assistance, and respectful marketing.
- Support trans-led leadership programmes and visibility campaigns, especially in high-risk regions. Ensure trans participation in policymaking through LGBTQIAPN+ councils and policy reviews. Increase trans visibility across sectors and enforce anti-discrimination laws to ensure safe, equal access to public spaces.

Brazil's youth are not passive victims of inequality. They are active agents of transformation — leading change in education, politics, culture, and climate action, often without adequate public support. This report is a call to centre youth in national strategies and to equip them not just to participate in Brazil's future, but to lead it.





Contextualising contemporary Brazil

Brazil is a continental-sized nation of over 203 million people, characterised by vast ecological wealth and deep social inequalities, and consistent challenges to political stability. A country of immense historical, geographical, and cultural complexity, Brazil's present-day social fabric is deeply intertwined with legacies of colonisation, forced migration, and systemic inequality, that continue to shape the lives of its young people.

Following recent cycles of economic downturn and polarised leadership, the country now faces the urgent task of rebuilding trust in democratic institutions while addressing persistent disparities. An understanding of the nation's historical development of social change and persistent youth activism amid enduring structural inequalities is a vital backdrop to understanding contemporary Brazil.

Young Brazilians had an integral role in the shaping of modern-day Brazil, with youth activism playing a crucial part in restoring democracy following two decades of military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985. Major protests against the regime were held by the National Union of Students (UNE) (Gov.br (i), [2023](#)), whose premises in Rio de Janeiro suffered a fire attack in April 1964. Such was the fear of the power of youth mobilisation that military rulers passed a law (*Lei Suplicy de Lacerda*) rendering the student movement illegal (Chamber of Deputies (i), [1964](#)).

Student activism was a key force that drove national support for *Diretas Já* (a popular movement demanding democratic elections) and the establishment of institutions for Brazil's eventual transition to democracy in 1985 (Ubes, [2025](#)).

Youth activism shaped fundamental policies in the emerging democratic era. A transformative affirmative action law (*Lei de Cotas*) to democratise access to free university education, by reserving places for low-income students, prioritising Black, mixed-race and those from Indigenous communities, received full UNE backing (Une, [2012](#)). A decade later, students led campaigns to push for improvements to this policy designed to address structural racism, opposing political attempts to revoke or weaken the law. The development of effective student retention policies is a consistent demand, so that low-income students can be supported to remain in university.

The mobilisation of young people once again came to the fore in 2013, when Brazilian youth organised online and took to the streets in major cities to protest against public investment in massive sports events like the World Cup while hospitals and schools fell into disrepair. President Dilma Rousseff reacted with the announcement of a 'Five-Pact Plan' that included allocating oil royalties to fund education; and 'More Doctors' (*Mais Médicos*) — a plan that would bring foreign and Brazilian doctors to underserved regions, specifically rural and high-urban density areas. Massive political polarisation emerged in this period, and months later, President Dilma was impeached amid accusations of fiscal misconduct.



Growing polarisation led to the election of right-wing Jair Bolsonaro to the presidency in 2019, and an exacerbation of ideological rifts was apparent in the years that followed. Participatory councils were systematically dismantled, while budgets for public education and science were greatly reduced, amid inflammatory rhetoric targeting minority groups, environmental defenders, and students. Massive student protests erupted in more than 200 cities in 2019, in response to funding cuts to public education and research. Then-Minister for Education Abraham Weintraub accused students of promoting disorder, while the President called them '*idiotas úteis*' (useful idiots) (UNISINOS, [2019](#)).

Following the global pandemic, during which Brazil recorded one of the highest per-capita death rates, Brazilian youth mobilised around a '*Fora Bolsonaro*' (Out Bolsonaro) campaign. Record numbers of young people registered to vote in advance of Presidential elections in 2022, following concerted social media campaigns to encourage young Brazilians to vote (voting is obligatory from the age of 18 and voluntary from age 16). More than 2 million 16- and 17-year-olds did so, a 47 per cent increase in voter registration rates for this cohort compared to 2018.

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva came back into power in 2023 (for his third term), with the establishment of new ministries aimed at advancing human rights and social inclusion, such as the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples; the Ministry of Racial Equality; the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship; the Ministry of Management and Innovation in Public Services; and the Ministry of Entrepreneurship, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises — albeit without a majority in Congress. It was announced in May 2025 that Brazil had moved up five places on the Human Development Index, to 84th place out of 193 nations (UNDP, [2025](#)).

Brazil is a global commodity leader: dominating markets in soy, coffee, and sugar (Gov.br (ii), [2024](#)) and wielding significant geopolitical influence through BRICS, notably hosting the BRICS Summit and COP30 in [2025](#) (Gov.br (iii), 2025). Brazil's Next Generation navigates a dynamic macro-economic landscape where youth unemployment, although still a concern, sits at historically low levels, dropping to just over 14 per cent in late 2024 (Gov.br (iv), [2025](#)).

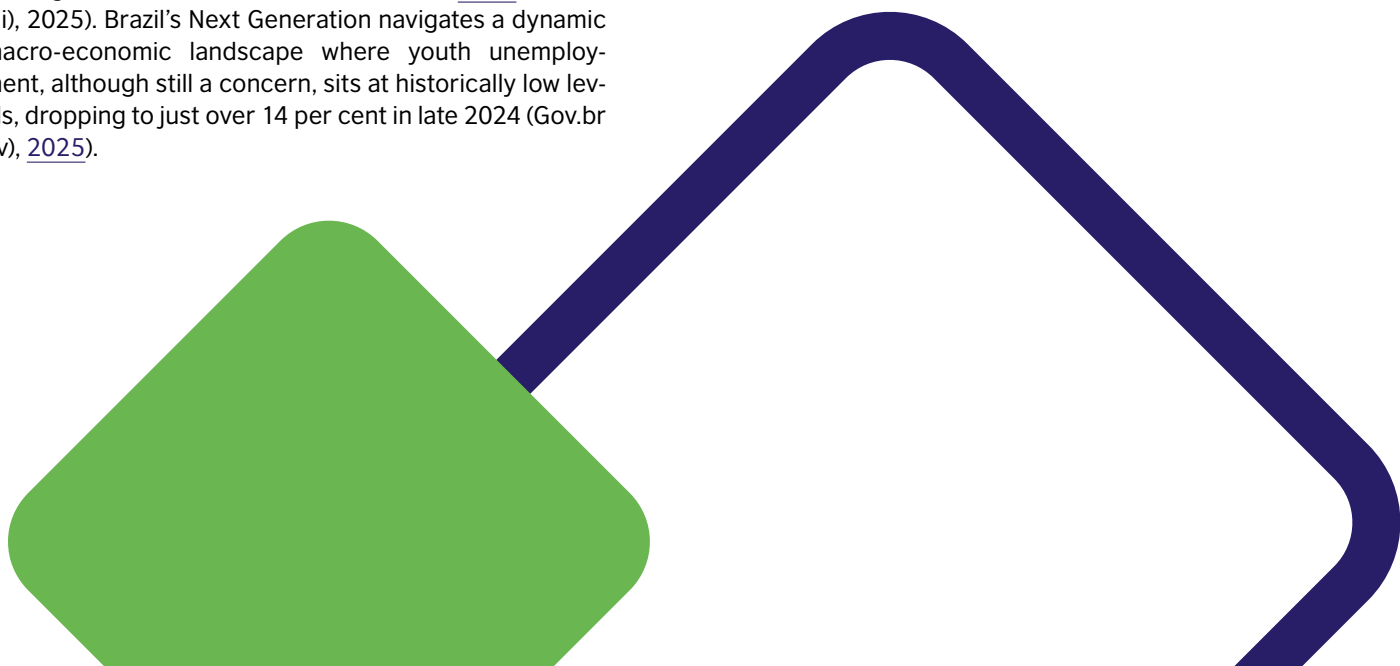
As Brazil approaches the 2026 presidential election, heightened polarisation places young voters at a pivotal crossroads. Indigenous youth are increasingly visible in political mobilisations and digital activism, championing issues such as land rights and climate justice, in alignment with newly formed ministries that may dissolve post-election. Similarly, the Ministry of Racial Equality has advanced transformative programmes, such as the Black Youth Alive initiative (Gov.br (v), [2023](#)), and in 2023 President Lula proposed to the United Nations to include an 18th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 18) focused on ethnic-racial equality (Gov.br (vi), [2024](#)).

Young Brazilians stand at the confluence of challenge and promise, positioned to shape, and be shaped by, a country that is both a powerhouse and a work in progress. Youth maintain their role as change agents through activism focused on climate justice; racial and gender equity; digital inclusion; and educational reform, in a backdrop of persistent inequalities.

One Brazil: many different realities

Young Brazilians were born during a period of profound political and cultural transformation. Any conversation about Brazilian youth requires an understanding of the multitude of experiences that comprise the lived reality of more than 61 million young people, many growing up in complex contexts that guarantee a lifetime of struggles just to enjoy their constitutional rights.

Brazil's 27 federative units (26 states and a Federal District) are marked by profound regional differences in income, education, employment, and access to infrastructure. Regional disparities reflect long-standing structural inequalities and underscore how geography remains a defining factor in opportunities available to Brazilian youth, contributing to a cycle where youth from less affluent regions encounter systemic barriers that hinder their social and economic mobility.



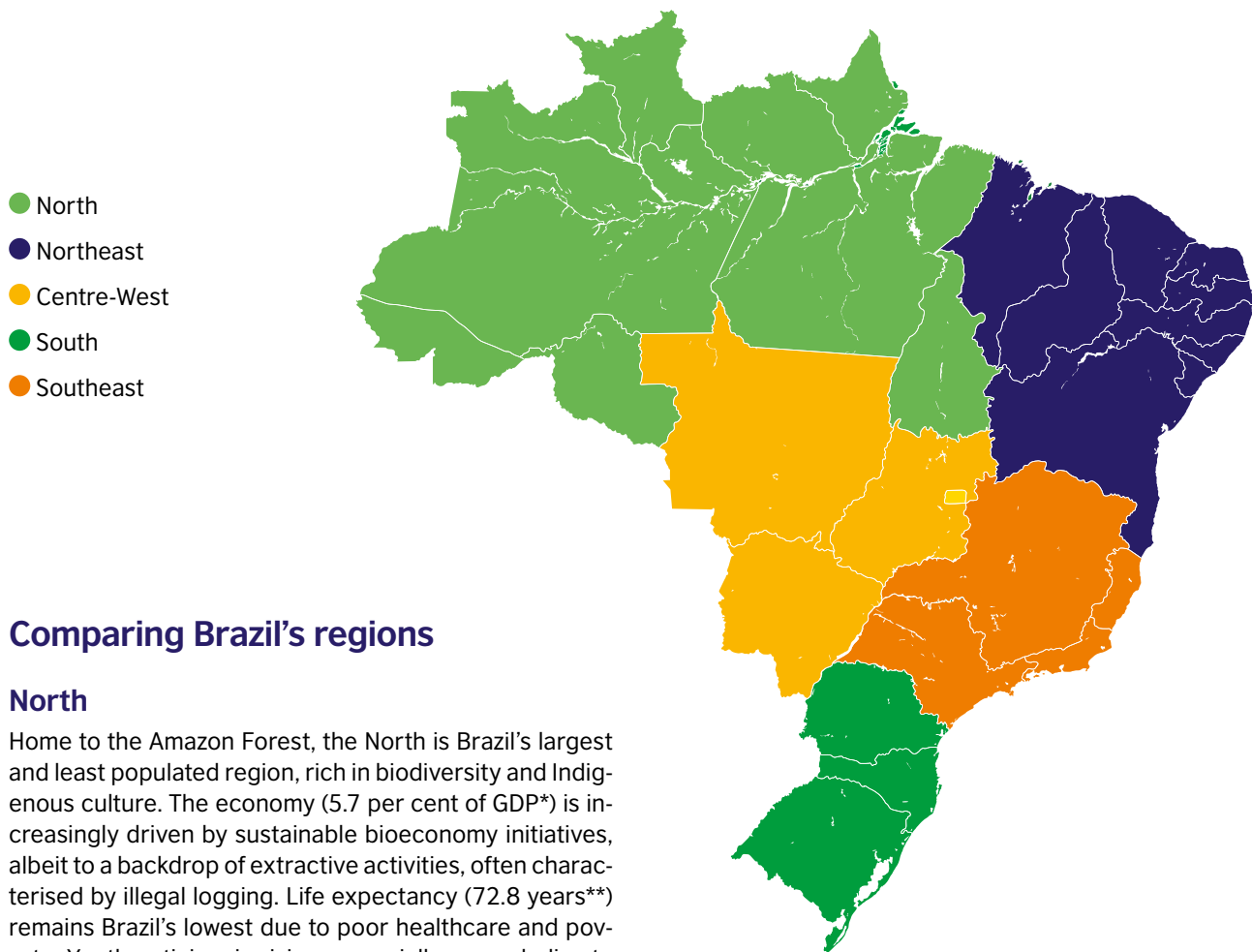


The North and Northeast are rich in biodiversity and cultural heritage, but poverty rates remain significantly above the national average — up to 60 per cent in some parts, compared to a national average of just over 27 per cent (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), (i) [2024](#)). These regions also face some of the country's lowest rates of employment — as low as 38 per cent in some parts, compared to the national rate of almost 58 per cent, and life expectancies are the lowest in the country (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), (ii) [2023](#)).

The South and Southeast typically offer better infrastructure and employment prospects. These regions serve as the primary hubs for economic activity and wealth generation, concentrating a significant share of the country's industrial production, financial services, and innovation ecosystems. More than half of Brazil's creative economy value is concentrated in the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, according to a 'Mapping of Brazil's Creative Industry' (Firjan, [2022](#)). Likewise, more than 90 per cent of AI startups are concentrated between the South and Southeast of the country (Statista, [2023](#)).

Such imbalance fuels internal migration and a rural exodus, as young people leave home in search of opportunity. Territorial inequalities intersect with other social markers such as race, class, and gender, often deepening social exclusion and reducing young people's sense of agency. While many show resilience, finding ways to pursue goals, structural geographical and historical barriers must be addressed through inclusive and localised public policies that promote equal access to resources, representation, and rights across all regions.

- **Favelas** are dense, informal high-density urban settlements with limited basic infrastructure. Residents often lack an official postal code, limiting access to jobs, banking, and government aid, and deepening economic exclusion. About eight per cent (16.6 million) of Brazilians live in *favelas* (data by age is not available), and over 67 per cent of residents are Black or mixed-race. Systemic disadvantage includes violence (*Observatório de favelas*, [2021](#)), barriers to education, and career opportunities, while lack of state presence often means control by drug factions or militia groups (DGABC, [2024](#)). However, *favela* culture thrives as a powerful expression of identity, creativity, and resistance (Correio Braziliense, [2019](#)).
- **Quilombola communities**, formed by descendants of escaped African slaves, are home to around 1.4 million youth (exact 16–35 age data is not available, but a quarter are aged 15–29, and nearly a quarter are aged 30–44). These communities preserve distinct cultural traditions, but face persistent struggles over land rights, access to healthcare and education, and infrastructure (IBGE (iii), [2023](#); Diário do Nordeste, [2022](#)).
- **Indigenous communities** are diverse, with distinct languages, customs, and social structures, preserving ancestral ways of life. More than 300 tribes speak 274 languages and young Indigenous Brazilians share challenges with *Quilombolas*, such as land demarcation and cultural rights, along with limited access to quality healthcare, education, and infrastructure (Cimi (i), [2023](#)). External pressures like illegal mining, deforestation, and agricultural encroachment further threaten their territories.
- Meanwhile, **youth in rural and Riverine communities** also struggle with limited access to adequate education, healthcare, and infrastructure, and youth often migrate to larger urban capitals seeking better opportunities. Many rural dwellers are nomadic, and informal work negates them the luxury of making long-term life plans.



Comparing Brazil's regions

North

Home to the Amazon Forest, the North is Brazil's largest and least populated region, rich in biodiversity and Indigenous culture. The economy (5.7 per cent of GDP*) is increasingly driven by sustainable bioeconomy initiatives, albeit to a backdrop of extractive activities, often characterised by illegal logging. Life expectancy (72.8 years**) remains Brazil's lowest due to poor healthcare and poverty. Youth activism is rising, especially around climate and sustainable development initiatives.

Northeast

Known for its Afro-Brazilian heritage, colonial cities, and rich musical traditions like *forró*, *axé*, and *piseiro*, the Northeast is Brazil's second most populous region, contributing 13.8 per cent of GDP*. Intense droughts and erratic flash flooding are among regional plights, while poverty and limited healthcare maintain regional life expectancy at 72.85 years**. Youth migration to the Southeast is commonplace (UFRN, [2024](#)).

Centre-West

Home to the Pantanal, one of the world's largest wetlands, the Centre-West hosts Brasília, the nation's capital, and is a major agribusiness hub. Dominated by the Cerrado biome, the region is responsible for 10.6 per cent of GDP*, but struggles with fires and ecosystem loss. Life expectancy is 73.53 years**, higher in urban areas than in rural zones. Youth engagement is growing around environmental issues, particularly in urban centres like Brasília and Goiânia (UNIFESP (i), [2024](#)).

South

The South has Brazil's highest life expectancy (73.87 years**) and a strong, diverse economy that drives 16.6 per cent of GDP*. Known for its quality of life and European influence, the region faces climate extremes, including devastating floods in 2024. With a strong tradition of education and civic participation, youth in the region are active in innovation, entrepreneurship, along with climate resilience efforts (Estado do Rio Grande do Sul, [2025](#)).

Southeast

The Southeast is Brazil's most industrialised and populous region, contributing 53.3 per cent of GDP*, and home to Brazil's financial hub São Paulo and tourism mecca Rio de Janeiro. With a life expectancy of 73.71 years**, the region struggles with urban violence, inequality, and intense temperatures and flooding. Brazil's cultural epicentre, the region produces cultural and political movements that shape national discourse. Young people drive Brazil's tech, creative, and startup scenes, though many still face barriers linked to social inequality (BBC, [2025](#)).

Methodology

Next Generation Brazil adopted a mixed-method approach to build a comprehensive and inclusive understanding of what it means to be young in Brazil today, considering the population aged 16–35. Extensive and deliberate efforts were made to ensure a representative and multidimensional portrait of young Brazilian's lives and reflect the complexity and diversity of lived experiences, incorporating the voices of youth in marginalised groups in society.

The research team took a five-step approach:

1. An extensive literature review synthesising existing studies and data on Brazilian youth supported the adaptation and localisation of survey questions to reflect the evolving realities and challenges faced by young Brazilians.

Researchers reached out to education and youth secretariats across Brazil, as well as to government ministries to seek data related to young people in their portfolio, as well as success metrics of policies, projects, and initiatives geared towards Brazilian youth;

2. A Youth Task Force was formed at the outset of the research process — a group of ten youth leaders from different regions in Brazil formed a voluntary consultative committee to ensure diverse regional, social, and thematic representation from a youth-centred perspective. Member insights were essential in reviewing language, accessibility, and cultural alignment of the survey tool with the contemporary youth context, as well as during subsequent analysis and development of policy recommendations;
3. A set of 18 exploratory interviews with youth leaders helped researchers better understand the youth landscape and policy gaps, refine the key themes, and inform analysis;
4. A large-scale online quantitative phase, via the Next Generation Brazil Survey, reached 3,248 young people aged 16–35 across all regions of Brazil with a 95 per cent confidence level and a ± 2 per cent margin of error.
5. A further qualitative phase involved in-depth interviews and focus groups with 105 young people to complement and deepen understanding of large data findings. Engagement focused on marginalised groups often excluded from mainstream data collection and whose voices were considered underrepresented in the quantitative survey data collection.

This phase allowed researchers to gather rich, comprehensive insight, uncovering the 'why' behind the 'what', and ensuring localised and diverse perspectives were included in study findings. This phase of the study allowed researchers to ensure that analysis was grounded in the lived experiences and perspectives of young people who are often underrepresented in national datasets.

Though Brazil's Youth Statute defines youth as those aged 15–29, a definition widely adopted in public policy and official statistics (Planalto (i), [2013](#)). Next Generation Brazil extended the age range slightly to include individuals aged 16–35, a decision informed by methodological and contextual considerations.

Survey questions, based on the British Council global Next Generation instrument, were adapted to reflect the specific realities and sociocultural context of Brazil. Inclusive and locally relevant categories for race, gender, and identity were developed in partnership with youth leaders to help create a respectful and representative tool aligned with the study's commitment to inclusion and authenticity. Language was carefully tailored to capture complexities in a respectful and meaningful manner.

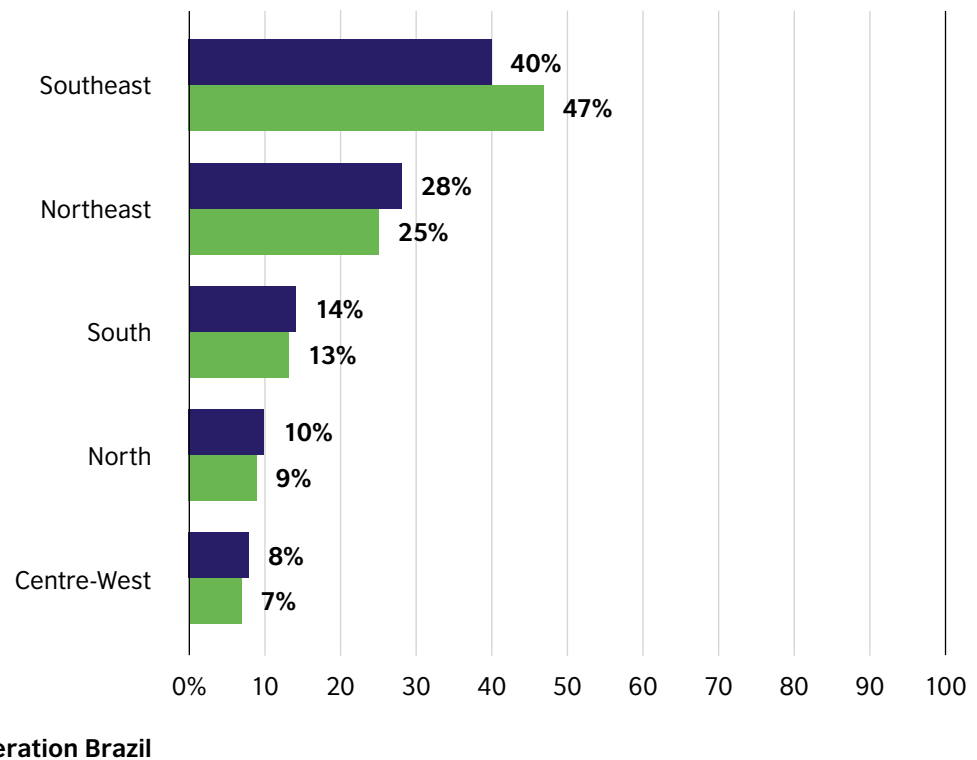
The questionnaire explored key areas including security and well-being; education, career, and the digital divide; civic and political engagement; and climate challenges. To ensure broad and inclusive representation, quota targets were implemented on age, gender, region, and disability status, while other demographics (e.g., religion, ethnicity, and education status) were allowed to fall out naturally. While no efforts were made to reach quotas for LGBT-QIAPN+ youth, 18 per cent of respondents said they belong to this community, higher than available statistics would suggest.

As part of the outreach and dissemination strategy for the quantitative phase, researchers contacted over 1,000 community-based organisations, NGOs, schools, universities, and representative associations across Brazil. Partnerships with Metro subsidiaries in four major cities further boosted survey visibility and reach, contributing to a broad and representative sample.

To include youth with limited or no internet access, the research team conducted in-person survey sessions in remote urban and rural areas across three states, working closely with community leaders. Laptops, tablets, and smartphones with data plans were provided to ensure access, and sessions included Libras (Brazilian sign language) interpreters in a school for the deaf.

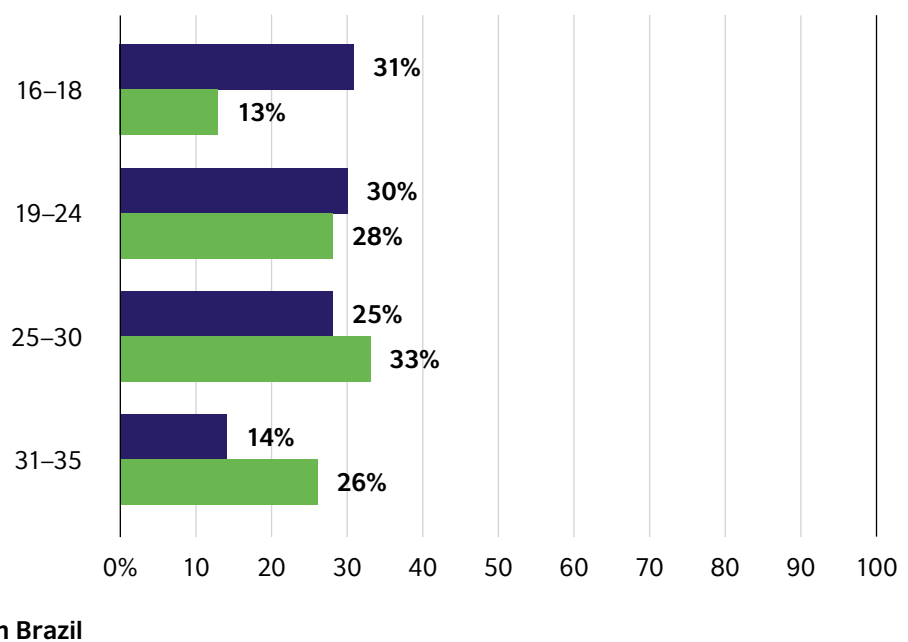
Some participants, particularly those with limited formal education or disabilities, struggled with the survey's length and complexity. Field teams noted resistance to certain questions in certain contexts, especially those addressing gender identity and LGBTQIAPN+ classification.

Figure 1: Regional Quotas

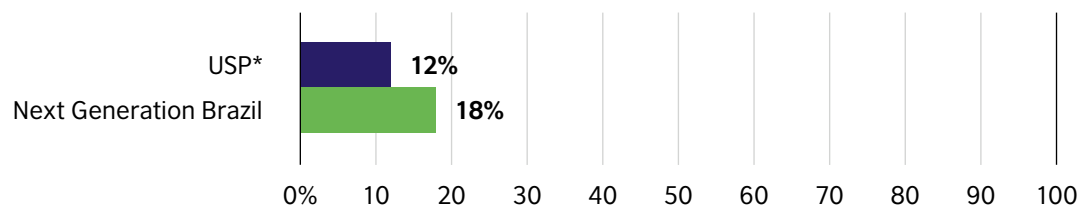


Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025 & IBGE Census 2022 (IBGE (iv), [2022](#))

Figure 2: Age groups



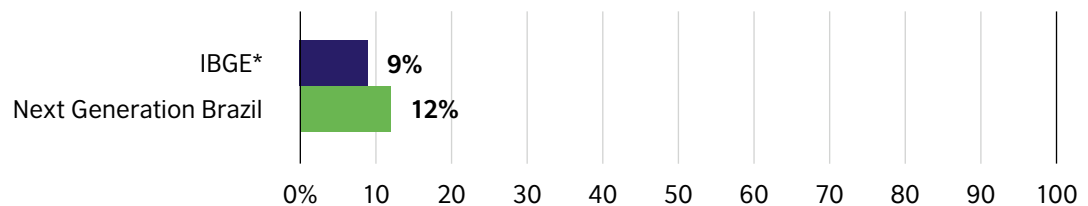
Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025 & IBGE Census 2022 (IBGE (iv) [2022](#))

Figure 3: Lgbtqiapn+ identification*

◆ USP ◆ Next Generation Brazil

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025 & USP 2022 (USP (i), [2022](#))

*A 2019 IBGE study found that just 1.8% of the Brazilian population identified as either homosexual or bisexual, but its scope was solely focused on sexuality and allowed one person to answer on behalf of the entire household (IBGE (v), [2022](#)). This likely excluded individuals not open about their identity. In contrast, a 2022 University of São Paulo (USP) study specifically asked about LGBTQIAPN+ identification, with individuals answering for themselves, offering a more comprehensive and self-reported perspective. USP's figure is representative of the entire Brazilian adult population.

Figure 4: people with a disability*

◆ USP ◆ Next Generation Brazil

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025 & IBGE 2023 (Gov.br (vii), [2023](#)). * This figure is representative of the entire Brazilian population, as age breakdowns are not available.

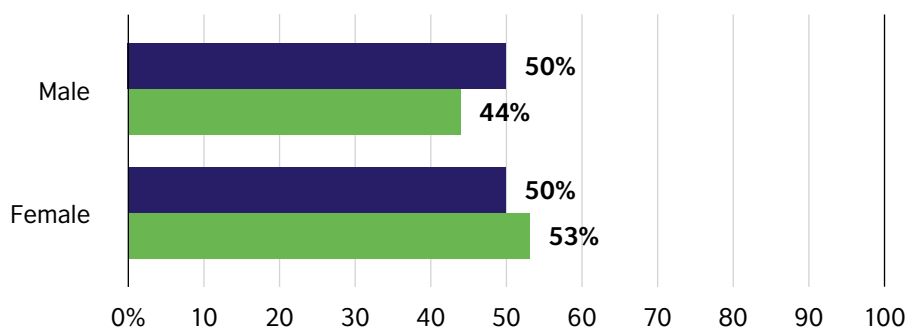


Defining identity categories

Particular care was given to categories used for race and gender that align with contemporary Brazilian social realities. Respondents were asked to self-declare their ethnicity using classifications adopted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE): White, Black, Pardo (mixed-race), Yellow (East Asian), and Indigenous. They also had the option to decline to disclose this information.

To capture the full spectrum of gender identity and expression, the research adopted a more inclusive set of gender categories than those typically used in official data collection. This allowed youth to fully express their identity and improved representativeness and sensitivity of data. In consultation with the Youth Task Force, survey tool gender options included: 'male (cis)', 'female (cis)', 'male (trans)', 'female (trans)', 'non-binary', 'gender-fluid', 'prefer not to disclose', and an open-ended 'self-definition' category. Short explanatory notes were used on the survey tool to include and inform youth not familiar with some contemporary terminology. [Cis – a person who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth. Trans – a person who does not identify with their birth-assigned gender].

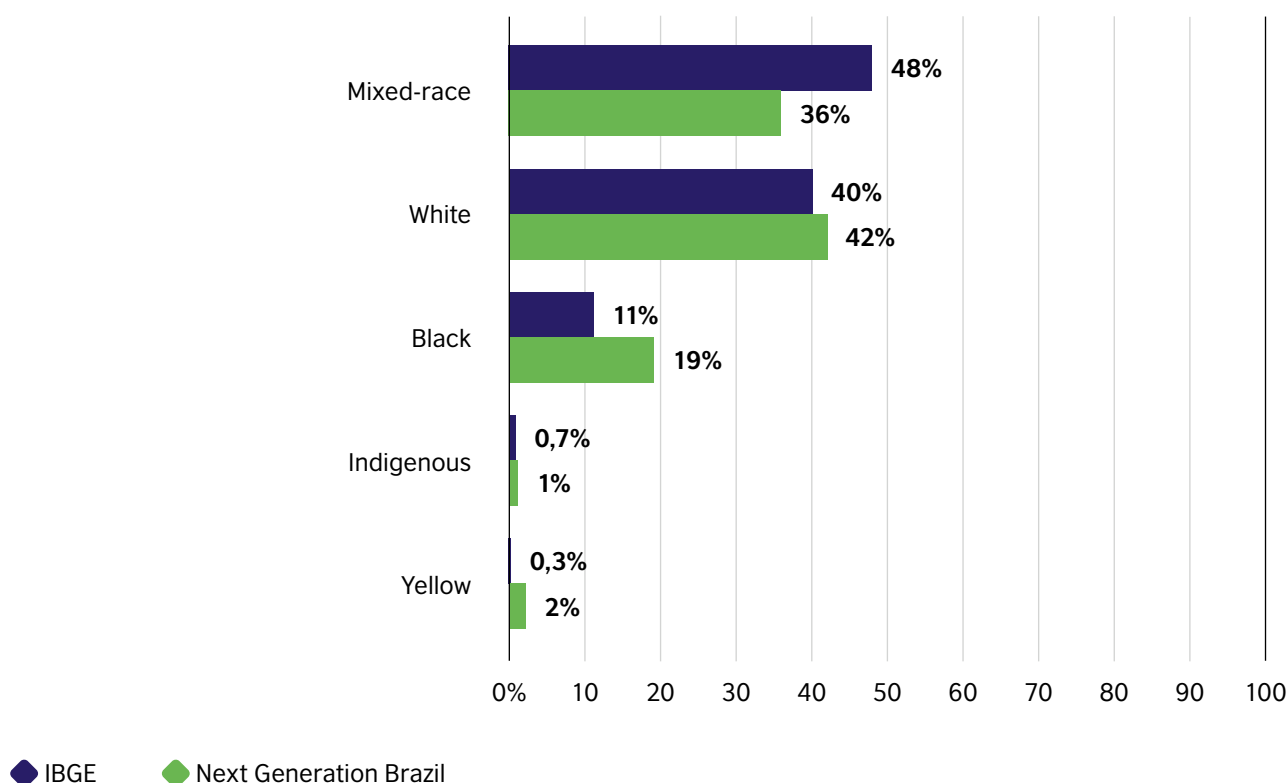
Figure 5: Gender groups



◆ IBGE*

◆ Next Generation Brazil**

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025 & IBGE Census 2022 (IBGE, (iv) [2022](#)). *The IBGE Census 2022 only presented respondents with the options 'male' and 'female'. **Categories combined for data presentation: female (cis 51% and trans 1%) & male (cis 43% and trans 1%). A further 1% of Next Generation Brazil youth self-declared as non-binary, and 1% said they were gender fluid.

Figure 6: Self-declared ethnicity

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025 & IBGE Census 2022 (IBGE, (iv) [2022](#))

Brazilian ethnic self-identification

Certain key terms must be understood when considering race and ethnicity in the Brazilian context. The following are the ethnic categories offered in the Census data collection, when Brazilians are invited to self-declare their race.

- *Amarela(o)* is the Portuguese word for Yellow and refers to Brazilians of Asian descent. São Paulo's Liberdade neighbourhood is the largest Japanese community outside of Japan.
- *Branca(o)* translates as white, and refers to Brazilians of European descent. The highest concentrations of white Brazilians are counted in the South and Southeast regions.
- *Índigena(o)* refers to native Brazilian people.
- *Preta(o)* translates literally as the colour black and refers to dark-skinned Brazilians of African phenotype. There is growing self-identification as Black following historical undercounting.
- *Pardo* includes those of mixed ancestry, often combining African, Indigenous, and European heritage, and is the most common ethnicity in Brazil.

Negro is a broader term officially used in Brazilian legal and policy documents to refer to people who self-declare as preto or pardo, per the Statute of Racial Equality 2010. Next Generation Brazil will explicitly nominate which populations are being referred to, using the terms Black (preto) and mixed-race (pardo) (Planalto (ii), [2010](#)).

Brazil received over 5 million European migrants and forcibly displaced an estimated 5 million Africans through the transatlantic slave trade, from the 15th to 20th century. These newcomer populations were layered over a territory originally inhabited by more than 10 million Indigenous peoples, whose numbers and cultures were devastated by colonisation — particularly along the Atlantic coast, where population declines reached 98 per cent (Science, [2025](#)).

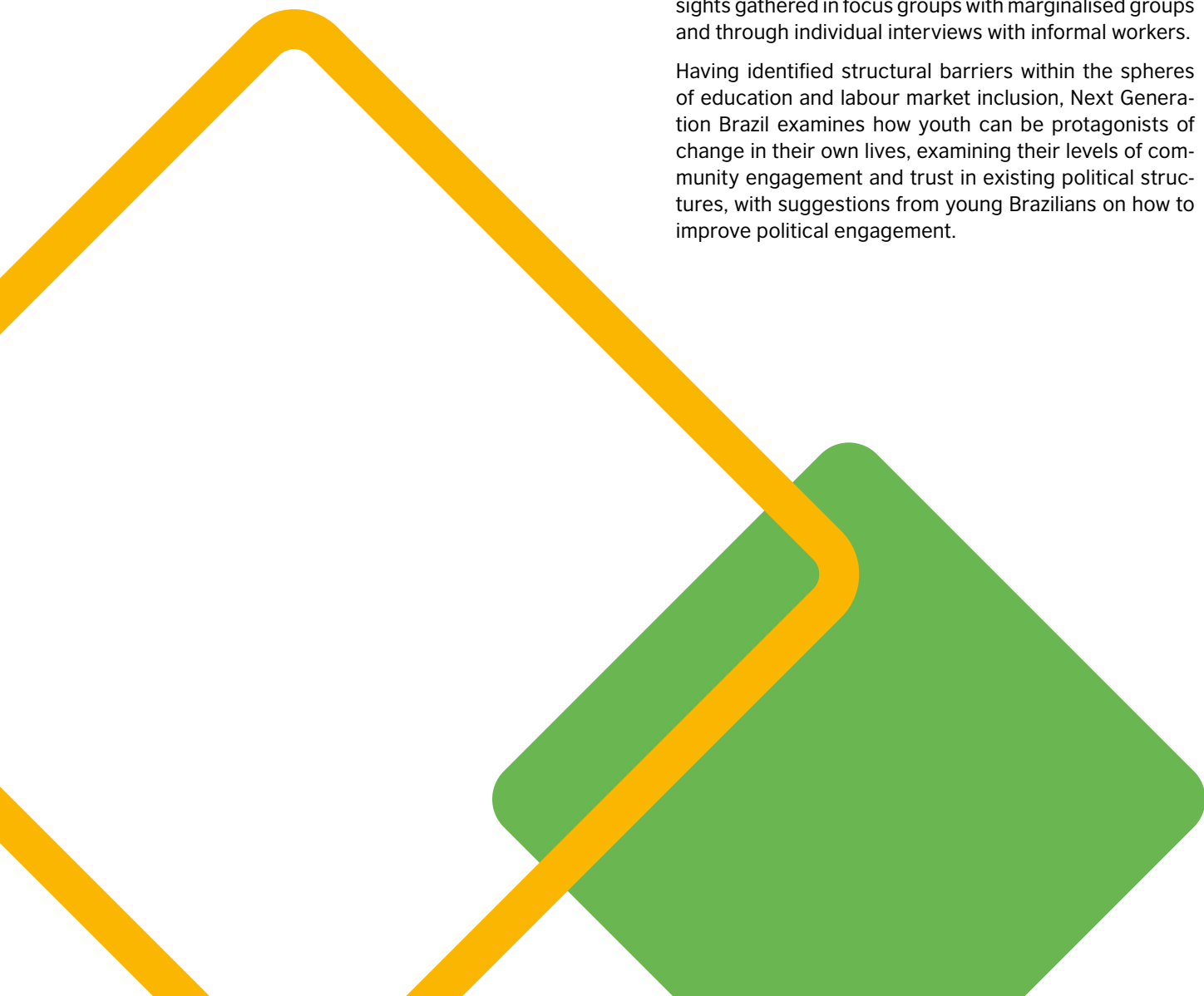
Report structure

The Next Generation Brazil research and analysis is presented across six distinct chapters, which build upon one another to develop a rounded vision of contemporary life for Brazilian youth. The report opens with an examination of youth identity and resilience, analysing how different social markers impact the lived experience of young people across Brazil. This chapter analyses how ethnicity, gender, disability, and community backgrounds impact access to opportunities and daily experiences of exclusion and discrimination. The chapter identifies resilience mechanisms used by young Brazilians, explored through quantitative and qualitative analysis.

This is followed by a close look at education levels among Brazilian youth surveyed, along with contextual information relating to historical access to higher education, and the views of young Brazilians relating to affirmative actions. The report reveals what barriers prevent young people from proceeding further in their personal education paths; what they think of the schooling they received; how it can improve; and what skills Brazilian youth consider important to improve their employability.

From here, the report examines levels of employment among Brazilian youth, including personal testimonies relating to labour market exclusion from youth in marginalised communities. Next Generation Brazil zooms in on entrepreneurship and barriers that prevent young Brazilians from opening their own business. This topic cannot be explored without a parallel look into growing levels of labour market informality among Brazilian youth, exploring data gleaned through the survey tool, along with insights gathered in focus groups with marginalised groups and through individual interviews with informal workers.

Having identified structural barriers within the spheres of education and labour market inclusion, Next Generation Brazil examines how youth can be protagonists of change in their own lives, examining their levels of community engagement and trust in existing political structures, with suggestions from young Brazilians on how to improve political engagement.



Qualitative interviews and literature research showed that young Brazilians are already bearing the brunt of climate change. The next chapter focuses on their concerns, bringing real life testimony on the effects of climate change already impacting the lives of young people. As Brazil prepares to host the COP30 meeting in Belém in 2025, young people identify their specific climate worries. They reveal whether they are already taking actions to fight climate challenges, in order to discover current levels of engagement and to plan how to better engage Brazilian youth in climate-related initiatives.

Before proceeding to policy recommendations, which were developed in close consultation with the Youth Task Force, Next Generation Brazil examines how young people see their immediate future and how achievable they consider their goals to be. Brazilian youth share their opinions on the main challenges facing the world, before honing in on where they would like their government to focus future investment.

Annexed to this report are further methodological discussions, including limitations and anomalies noted by the research team, and a full glossary of terms used and government and civil society organisations cited throughout the report. For clarity and ease of interpretation, decimal figures from quantitative data are rounded to their nearest whole number throughout this report. Currency conversions use an exchange rate of GBP £1 = BRL \$7.39 (calculated on 19.06.25).



Chapter 1

Youth identity and resilience

Next Generation Brazil explores how Brazilian youth experience identity through a combination of ethnicity, territorial background, gender, class, disability, and sexual orientation, and how resilience develops in the face of systemic discrimination and socio-spatial segregation. Understanding youth identity transcends simplistic categories or romanticised narratives of resilience. It demands an attentive, grounded view of how identity is lived, contested, and reimagined in everyday life, especially among those at the margins of society.

This chapter investigates how youth identity is negotiated in everyday life — analysed first through quantitative data and followed by personal testimonies from young Brazilians and stakeholder insights around discrimination and invisibility. Young people describe precarious work conditions, political disillusionment, and growing climate anxiety as they navigate between dreaming and surviving, belonging and resisting, being seen and being safe.

Significant gaps were noted in the effectiveness of current public policies focused on racial inclusion. Brazilian youth emphasised a lack of comprehensive support systems that address their specific needs and challenges. Existing initiatives often fail to adequately and universally meet the needs of Brazilian youth, highlighting an urgent need for policies that promote racial equity and break cycles of exclusion.

Often forged in response to systemic exclusion, Brazilian youth identity is shaped by creativity and a deep sense of belonging within peer communities, faith spaces, and cultural movements that offer refuge and affirmation, as informal support networks function both as coping mechanisms and as powerful tools for youth empowerment. Combined with excellence in sports, arts, and music, from football legends to Olympic surfers and world-famous musicians, these dimensions add to a unique and vibrant national identity.

Plural identities

Brazil's multi-ethnic population defies a 'typical' identity, and socioeconomic disparities are starkly linked to skin colour. Young Black and mixed-race Brazilians are statistically more likely to face poverty, unemployment, and barriers to higher education (IPEA, [2009](#)). The 17th Annual Report on Brazilian Public Security showed that 83 per cent of those killed by police in 2024 were Black or mixed-race (FBSP, [2024](#)).

Next Generation Brazil surveyed a multi-ethnic group of young people with white youth representing 42 per cent of the sample, followed by mixed-race at 36 per cent. Black individuals comprised nearly one-fifth (19 per cent) of the total, while two per cent self-declared as 'Yellow' (East Asian). Indigenous participants and those who preferred not to disclose their ethnicity each made up one per cent of the sample.

A vast majority (86 per cent) of those who self-declared as Black in Next Generation Brazil quantitative data collection reported personal experiences of racism, as did 71 per cent of mixed-race youth. One in four (28 per cent) among Black youth cited racism among the main challenges in the past five years that had a negative personal impact on them. A May 2025 'More Data, More Health' report (Mais Dados, Mais Saúde) showed similar findings, with 84 per cent of Black survey respondents stating they had suffered racial discrimination. However, only 11 per cent of mixed-race respondents answered similarly (Observatório da Saúde Pública, [2025](#)).

Persistent prejudice against minority populations is reflected in a lack of representation in public office and senior echelons of society. Racialised exclusion goes beyond economic inequality or social marginalisation — it is epistemic as the wisdom, histories, and worldviews of Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian populations are rendered invisible within educational institutions and public discourse. Despite such erasure, youth across these communities continue to affirm their unique identities; reclaim ancestral knowledge; and push for more inclusive and plural understandings of what it means to know, to teach, and to lead.

“

‘I see myself as a creator of culture. Through the teaching work that we do. I have more than 20 years of [experience as a] ‘coreiro’ [lead chanter in Afro-Brazilian religious ceremonies] and as a percussionist. Throughout the time that I have been involved in culture, I have already taught, I have already shown, and some people come here to learn.

And I also see myself, in part, not only as a teacher, but also as a way of furthering our culture of Freedom [reference to urban *quilombo*, called Liberdade / Freedom].’

Quilombola female, 34
Northeast of Brazil



“

‘It wasn’t just about leaving the village — it was about having more contact with people outside. I experienced so much racism and prejudice.

In the end, I left school without finishing my studies. I went through all of that. There were people who chased after me. I had to save myself when I needed to cross the river, right? With my clothes on, soaking all my notebooks. I lived through all of that.

And today, I’m a speaker. I talk about reality, I talk about culture, I talk about Indigenous survival — inside the village and beyond. And racism and prejudice are still very present in our country today. We could be doing more to reduce that.

That’s why we’re on the front line, alongside our leaders — because we want to bring these voices, this message, from the village to the world.’

Indigenous female, 23
Southeast of Brazil

Unequal economic trajectories among Black and mixed-race youth could be seen in quantitative data which showed pay gaps on racial lines. White survey respondents earned 19 per cent more than the overall weighted mean, with young Black Brazilians earning 31 per cent less. A much smaller salary discrepancy was noted by mixed-race youth (12 per cent less than the mean).

Over half of Black Brazilians surveyed earn less than 1.5 minimum per month, and although the majority (56 per cent) are the main source of income in their households, a significant proportion (39 per cent) are unable to cover basic monthly expenses. While nearly half (47 per cent) of white youth earn more than two minimum wages per month, the same can only be said for 22 per cent of Black youth and 35 per cent of mixed-race young Brazilians, illustrating enduring disparities in income distribution by race.

Evidence of structural racism permeated research findings. In a focus group with teenagers in the Southeast of Brazil, Black youth reported that while their school offers lectures and debates around racism and homophobia during class time, their complaints of discrimination are not taken seriously. A coordinator in the community centre where the focus group was held said: 'In practice, when an incident of discrimination occurs, the school does not take the initiative to confront the problem, effectively becoming complicit in acts of segregation and discrimination.' Young people queried how racial equality could be discussed in school when the institution itself is complicit in inequality and prejudice.

Systemic Racism

Systemic racism is not a new phenomenon in Brazil, the last country in the Western world to abolish slavery, in 1888. The end of slavery was not accompanied by reparative policies for the formerly enslaved population; instead, Afro-Brazilians were left without access to land, education, or employment, reinforcing cycles of poverty and exclusion.

In the years that followed, mass European immigration was encouraged as policy from 1895, in an official bid to 'whiten' the population by diluting Black and Indigenous populations. These foundations laid the groundwork for the systemic racial inequalities that persist in Brazilian society today.



'Brazil has reinforced many racial and gender stereotypes. And these aren't discussed in great depth by the state. So, for example, we have the consolidation of a race and gender stereotype that frames young Black men as the natural suspects — portraying them, in heavy quotation marks, as more dangerous, lazier, more suspicious by nature. At the same time, it reinforces stereotypes for young Black girls that place them in positions of hypersexualisation and dehumanisation, where they're seen as only good for work or for sexual purposes.'

Larissa Fontana

CONJUVÉ National Youth Council

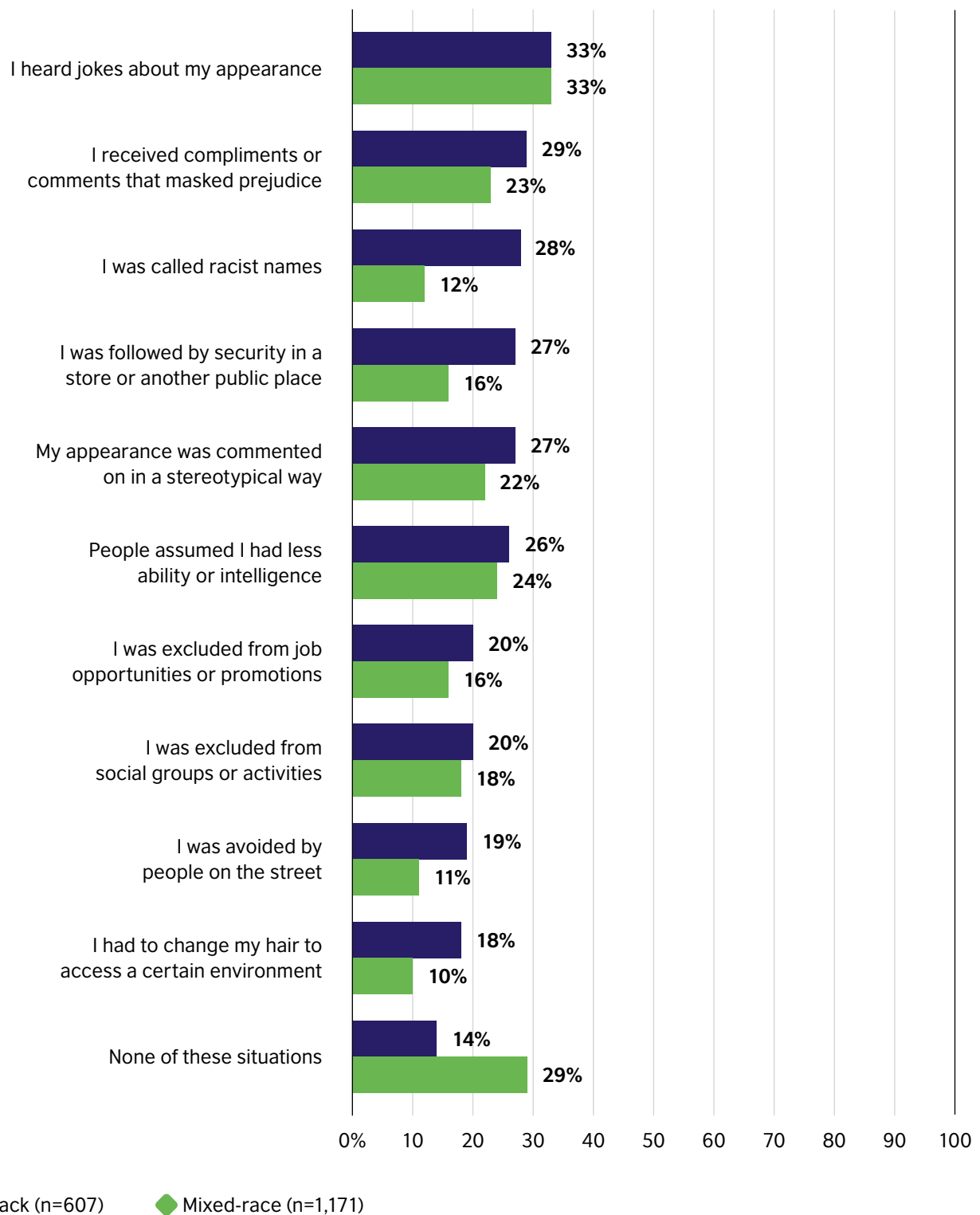
Figure 7: Average monthly income by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Average monthly income*	(GBP equivalent)**	% difference***
White (n=1,348)	BRL \$3,808	£515	19%
Mixed-race (n=1,171)	BRL \$2,813	£381	-12%
Black (n=607)	BRL \$2,222	£301	-31%

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Weighted mean of income bands. ** Exchange rate GBP £1 = BRL \$7.39 (calculated 19.06.25). *** % difference compared to average weighted mean of income bands for Next Generation Brazil youth BRL \$3,211 [~GBP £435]



Figure 8: Personal experiences of racial or ethnic discrimination among black and mixed-race youth*



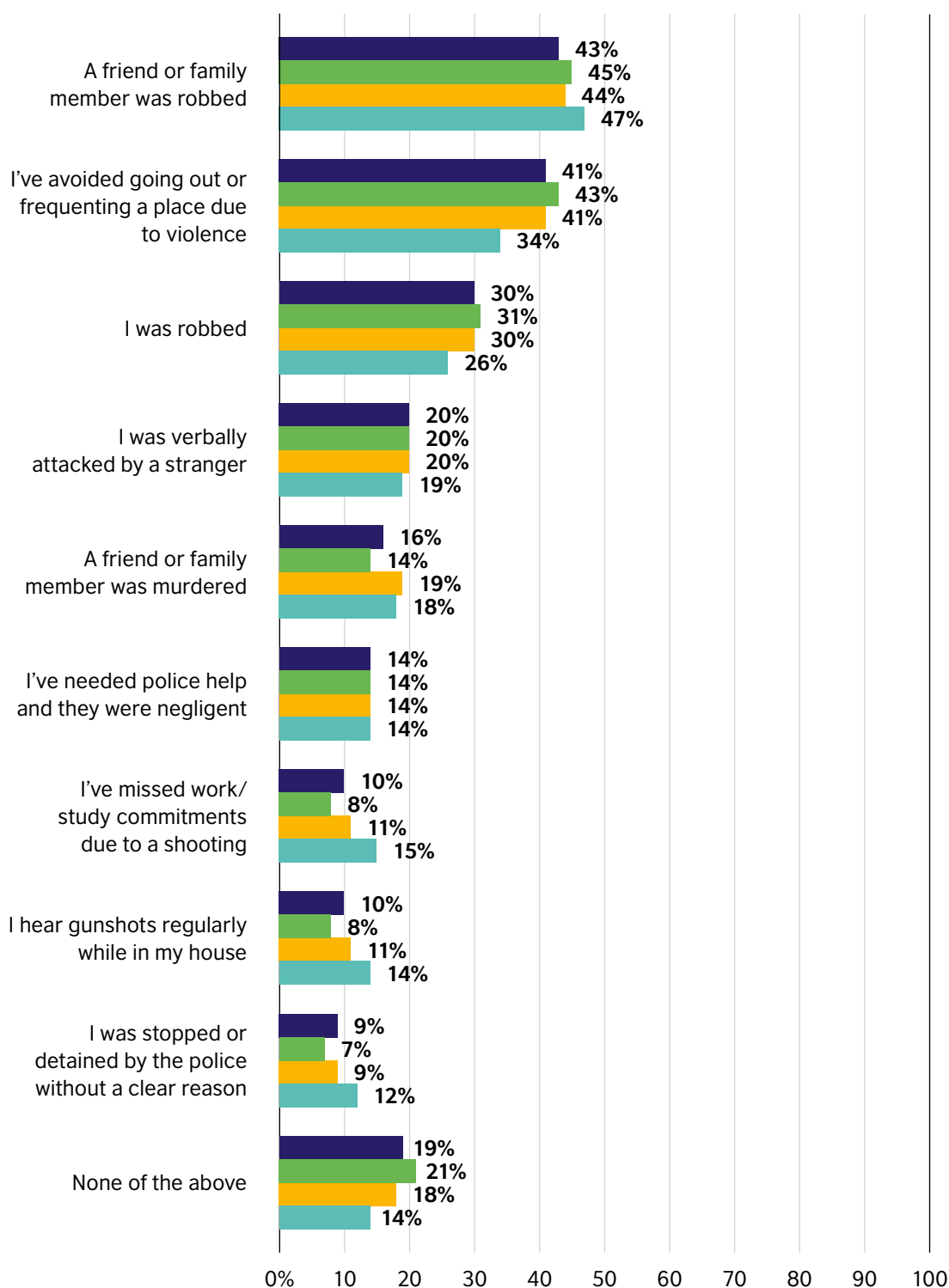
Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose as many options as they liked from a list of 16, or suggest their own.

Daily violence

Violence compounds material exclusions faced by many young Brazilians — creating layered barriers to participation, belonging, and self-actualisation. For many, violence is not an abstract risk but a daily presence, whether through personal experiences or a constant need to avoid unsafe areas.

Among the overall youth sample of this study, the most commonly reported experiences of violence include having a friend or family member robbed (43 per cent), avoiding going out or to certain places due to violence (41 per cent), and being robbed themselves (30 per cent). A majority (86 per cent) of Black Brazilians reported personal experiences of at least one form of violence, compared to 79 per cent of white survey respondents. Black youth were more likely to hear gunshots from their home (14 per cent), miss work or study commitment (15 per cent), and be detained by police without a clear reason (12 per cent) than white peers (eight per cent, eight per cent, and seven per cent, respectively). Similarly, while one in five (20 per cent) cisgender survey respondents experienced being verbally attacked by a stranger, this number grows to 34 per cent among non-cisgender participants.



Figure 9: Personal experiences of safety threats by ethnicity*

◆ Next Generation Brazil (n=3,248)

◆ Next Generation Brazil white youth (n=1,348)

◆ Next Generation Brazil mixed-race youth (n=1,171)

◆ Next Generation Brazil Black youth (n=607)

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents were asked 'Have you personally experienced any of the events described below?' and could choose as many options as they wished from a list of 13, or suggest their own.

Youth from low-income households and urban peripheries are disproportionately affected, facing heightened exposure to direct and indirect forms of violence. Marginalised communities encounter significant barriers to state protection and justice, often due to systemic inequality and institutional neglect. In 2022, Indigenous groups in Mato Grosso do Sul reported escalating police brutality, highlighting systemic issues and a need for comprehensive reform (Mongabay (i), [2023](#)). In 2023, 289 young people under the age of 19 were killed by police in the Northeastern state of Bahia (Unicef, [2023](#)). Meanwhile, nearly 1,000 rural conflicts (including land- and water-related disputes) were recorded in the first half of 2023 (*Agência Brasil* (i), [2023](#)).

Gender (im)balance

Gender also plays a critical role in shaping identity and opportunity, and inequalities intersect with other social markers, such as race, class, and geography. Women, particularly Black and Indigenous women, continue to face significant barriers in the job market and are over-represented in unpaid care work and informal employment statistics. Meanwhile, trans and non-binary youth similarly report discrimination, exclusion from public spaces and institutions, and violence.



‘I spend a lot of time out at night, and the places I go are relatively safe, but I still avoid areas that we know — or that are known — to be frequented mostly by straight people, because it’s very dangerous here. The rates of transfeminicide around here, they... they’re not low. These things are happening all the time — there’s constant aggression, real transfemicinides.

There’s still so much progress needed. I’m a trans man. And we know that when we talk about transmasculinity, there are, yes, certain privileges. I’m a trans man and I’m white. So in a way, I have that passability — I’m seen as someone who can “blend in”.’

Trans male, 33

Northeast of Brazil, focus group



Non-cis youth (transgender, gender-fluid, and non-binary) reported considerably more discrimination than their cisgender counterparts, with more than two-thirds (67 per cent) reporting being treated differently because of their gender, compared to 38 per cent of cisgender respondents. While 77 per cent of male transgender respondents said they had experienced gender-related discrimination, just one in four (26 per cent) cis men reported similar experiences, pointing to structural and cultural dynamics in which masculinity remains the normative standard, while those with other gender identities continue to face marginalisation. Verbal attacks from strangers were experienced by 34 per cent of this group, compared to only 20 per cent of cisgender participants.

Brazil holds the grim record for being the country with the highest number of murders of trans people in the world for the 16th consecutive year — a reflection of extremities faced by this community, who count workplace insecurity and discrimination in recruitment among their struggles for basic rights (RedeTrans, [2025](#)). During a focus group, trans youth from various parts of Brazil, highlighted daily personal safety concerns, particularly acute for trans women. While only one participant had a personal experience of violence, all group members know people who had suffered incidents ranging from forced haircuts, beatings, chest mutilation, even murder. Trans youth noted some improvement in recent years, as more and more trans people start to occupy public spaces.



‘The positive change we’ve been able to see over the past decade — and especially in the last five years — comes precisely from the fact that we’re starting to occupy more spaces. We’re inserting ourselves into real situations and, even if we’re just one trans person in the middle of a cisgender crowd, we’re asserting ourselves more and resisting more in order to open the way for other types of bodies too.

But even so, this sense of safety is also illusory. We remain at the mercy of various forms of violence — whether in the workplace, in healthcare settings, or in the broader social context.’

Trans male, 33

Southeast of Brazil, focus group



A sexist culture

A vast majority (78 per cent) in the general Next Generation Brazil population agreed that Brazil has a sexist culture and that women are objectified (69 per cent of cis men shared this view). Meanwhile, three out of four (73 per cent) agreed that women face discrimination in the Brazilian workplace, with 69 per cent of the opinion that women do not get promoted as frequently as men. A further 70 per cent thought women are overlooked for leadership positions, along with 70 per cent who believe that women get paid less than men for the same work (57 per cent of cis men agreed). Most (83 per cent) agreed that women have more domestic and childcare responsibilities than men.

IBGE data underscores gender inequality in the labour market: in the last quarter of 2024, the unemployment rate for men was more than five per cent, while for women it was 7.6 per cent. Brazilian men also earned an average of 27 per cent more than women in the last quarter of 2024 (IBGE (vi), [2025](#)).

Black women represent one of the most vulnerable groups in Brazilian society. Most (70 per cent) Black or mixed-race female-headed households are low-income homes (less than one minimum wage per capita) (Gov.br (viii), [2025](#)). Unemployment among young Black and mixed-race women (19–29) was three times higher than among white men in 2023 (*Agência Brasil* (ii), [2024](#)). This was also observed in this research: seven per cent of white cis male survey respondents were unemployed, against 19 per cent of cis Black women. While cis men and women in the Next Generation Brazil survey sample emerged with similar salaries, a clear discrepancy is noted on ethnicity lines. Young cis Black women emerged as earning 29 per cent less than the weighted mean among Next Generation Brazil youth and 32 per cent less than cis white men surveyed.

Figure 10: Average monthly income by gender identity and ethnicity

Ethnicity	Average monthly income*	(GBP equivalent)**	% difference***
Cis male (all)	BRL \$3,244	£439	1%
Cis male white	BRL \$3,348	£453	4%
Cis male mixed-race	BRL \$3,190	£432	-1%
Cis male Black	BRL \$2,771	£375	-14%
Cis female (all)	BRL \$3,239	£438	1%
Cis female white	BRL \$3,498	£473	9%
Cis female mixed-race	BRL \$2,992	£405	-7%
Cis female Black	BRL \$2,275	£308	-29%
Non-binary	BRL \$3,139	£425	-2%
Gender-fluid	BRL \$2,936	£397	-9%
Trans male	BRL \$2,832	£383	-12%
Trans female	BRL \$2,671	£361	-17%

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Weighted mean of income bands. ** Exchange rate GBP £1 = BRL \$7.39 (calculated 19.06.25). *** % difference compared to average weighted mean of income bands for Next Generation Brazil youth BRL \$3,211 [~GBP £435]

While some improvement can be seen in ‘Without Shortcuts’, a 2025 study which reports that the number of female CEOs in Brazil rose from three per cent to six per cent between 2019 and 2024, women still occupy only 34 per cent of high-level positions (Bain, [2024](#)). While there is a long way to go, there is evidence of steady progression on this front, considering there were 23 per cent in such positions five years earlier.

Meanwhile, a 2024 study showed that Black and mixed-race female entrepreneurs earn 60 per cent less than their white male counterparts (Sebrae, [2024](#)). While women are etching their corporate space, many are ditching their lab coats, with a recent Nexus study showing a 48 per cent post-pandemic drop in the percentage of Brazilian women finishing their degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields (FSB, [2023](#)). Research lead Marcelo Tokarski said the sharp decline in STEM completion programmes by women was likely reflective of ‘economic impacts, such as unemployment or the drop in income and issues involving family care tasks’.

The interviews highlighted complex intersections of gender, sexuality, territory, and race affecting young Brazilian women, especially Black and mixed-race women and single mothers, with significant employment barriers often pushing them into informal roles.

A Senate report (2024) showed links between economic vulnerability and violence, with two-thirds (66 per cent) of Black and mixed-race domestic abuse victims having no or low income and 85 per cent living with their aggressors (*Agência Brasil* (iii), [2024](#)). A 2023 bill offers access to credit to women, with particular emphasis on Black and mixed-race women, those on low income, and those with disabilities (Gov.br (ix), [2023](#)).

Many struggle with discriminatory hiring processes and are denied access to higher-paying positions. Some government initiatives have aimed to tackle inequality in recent years. For example, *Bolsa Família*, a cash transfer scheme that rewards school attendance, introduced new benefits in 2024 aimed at supporting single mothers.

Resistance and resilience

Collective resilience grows from shared histories, deep territorial ties, and a conviction that change is both necessary and possible. Resilience becomes a form of leadership, challenging a system that denies youth visibility to reveal possibilities for more inclusive futures. Brazilian youth resilience is profoundly social — rooted in shared histories, territorial belonging, and a refusal to be silenced in the struggle for rights and recognition. Music, dance, and visual expression are powerful forms of youth-led resistance. Against a backdrop of exclusion, young people in Brazil cultivate strategies of resistance, creativity, and solidarity that allow them to assert their identities and reimagine possible futures.

Many of Brazil’s current-day peripheral communities, like *favelas*, were founded by formerly enslaved people, rural migrants, and marginalised groups, in which culture has traditionally served as a form of identity and resilience. Many music and dance styles originated as forms of protest, with considerable artistic expression emanating from the peripheries — urban *favelas*, *quilombos*, *Riverine*, and Indigenous communities — and speak directly to the realities of racism, inequality, state violence, and youth exclusion (Open Editions Journal, [2021](#)). Genres such as hip-hop, funk, rap, and trap provide platforms for young marginalised Brazilians to articulate their experiences, confront systemic inequalities, and foster a sense of identity and community. Musical forms offer emotional relief and empower youth to challenge societal norms while advocating for change.

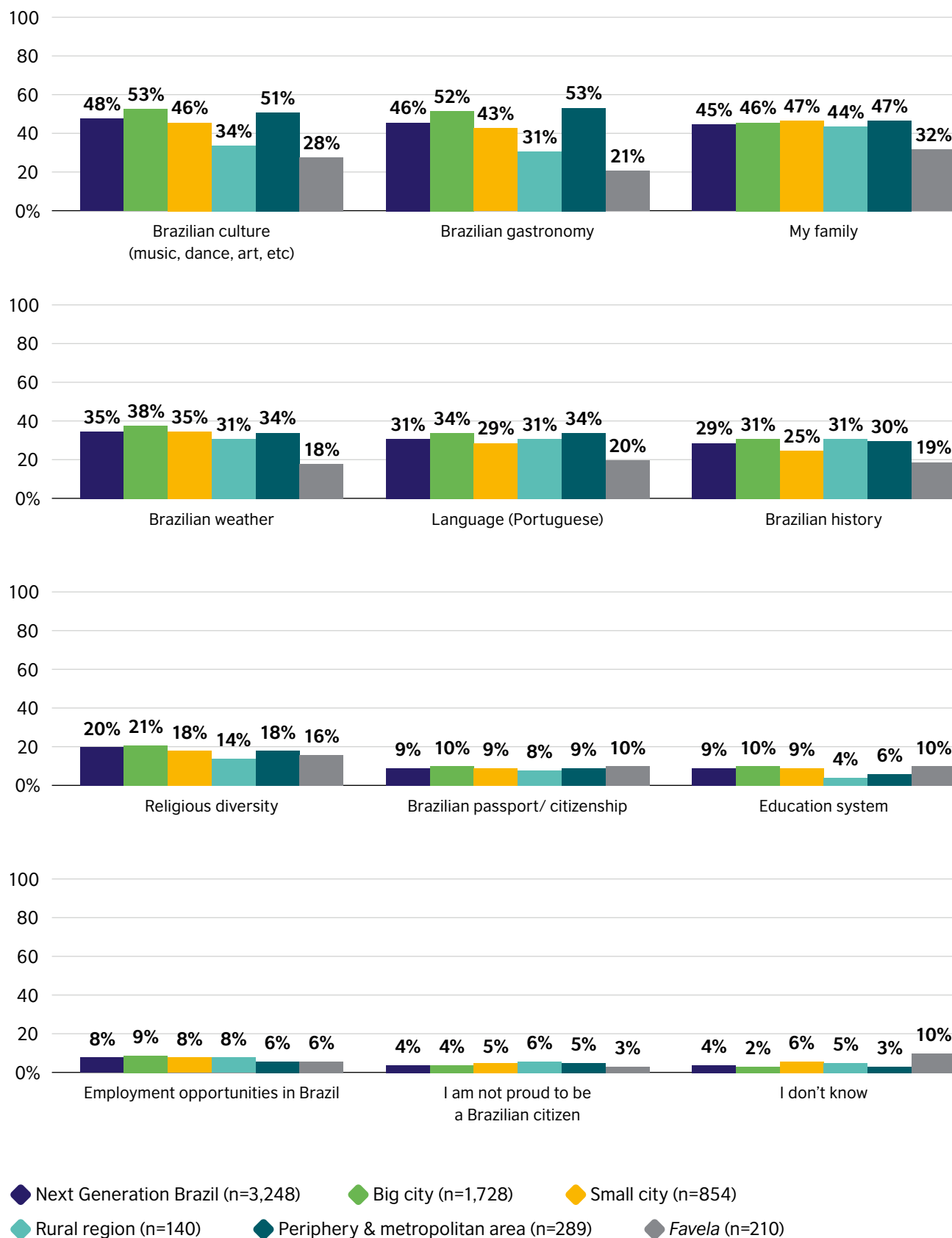
Cultural expression remains a vital force for reshaping public discourse. Rap and hip-hop lyrics typically decry social inequality and the battle against machismo, sexism, and homophobia, with artists using music as a form of resistance and to assert identity. For many youths, these practices are not extracurricular — they are central to survival, solidarity, and visibility in a society that often seeks to silence them. Graffiti also serves as a powerful medium for youth to express resilience, resistance, and cultural identity, addressing issues such as poverty, inequality, and social injustice, offering an alternative to violence and a means to reclaim urban spaces.

When asked what makes them proud to be Brazilian, nearly half (48 per cent) pointed to Brazilian culture (music, dance, and the arts), as well as the country's cuisine (46 per cent), and their families (45 per cent). Only four per cent were not proud to be Brazilian. This highlights the strength of cultural identity and affective ties among Brazilian youth. Despite economic, social, and political challenges, young people continue to draw pride and a sense of belonging from everyday cultural expressions and close personal relationships. Their connection to Brazil is rooted in shared traditions, creativity, and community. This cultural pride may serve as a source of resilience and could be a valuable foundation for initiatives that promote civic engagement, social cohesion, and inclusive national development.

Grassroots sports initiatives, particularly those led by local associations or NGOs, often act as entry points for broader social support systems, teaching collective responsibility, creating positive role models, and in some cases, helping open up educational or employment opportunities. However, access to quality sports facilities and programmes is uneven, especially in rural areas or in communities affected by environmental degradation or urban neglect. Despite these barriers, many young people persist — organising matches, building makeshift courts, and mentoring younger children. Sports are not just pastimes but platforms of informal education, peer leadership, and resilience.

Brazilian funk music, an offshoot of rap, is the most listened-to genre of music among Brazilian youth (*Movimento Econômico*, 2025), although critics point to misogynistic and over-sexualised language, while others suggest that lyrics glorify crime in marginalised communities. All-night funk parties in *favelas* are regular targets of police operations, and nine young people were killed by police at a funk party in São Paulo in December 2019, during a so-called 'Peace and Protection' operation (Unifesp (ii), 2024).



Figure 11: What makes youth proud to be Brazilian?*

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose as many options as they wanted from a list of 11, or suggest their own

Quilombola youth

In a focus group with *Quilombolas* from rural and urban backgrounds, young people defined identity as deeply rooted in ancestry, cultural memory, and a collective sense of guardianship over traditional ways of life. *Quilombola* culture was described as a lived, dynamic identity that grounds them in their communities and provides a framework of belonging, despite systemic marginalisation.

Identity is shaped through oral traditions, intergenerational learning, and a plurality of lived experiences. However, young *Quilombolas* revealed how historical violence and lack of representation make it difficult to affirm themselves as *Quilombolas*, especially in spaces where institutional racism or religious conservatism suppresses cultural expression.

Despite challenges, young people expressed a strong desire to reclaim protagonism, demanding greater inclusion in decision-making spaces; the integration of their culture into education systems; and the restructuring of the *Quilombola* movement to strengthen solidarity and political representation. Young people criticised the invisibility of *Quilombola* figures in politics and media, the absence of effective public policies, and the devaluation of traditional knowledge by academic and environmental institutions.

Racial pride and cultural resilience are evident among Afro-Brazilian youth and serve as protective factors against the impacts of systemic racism. *Quilombolas* show remarkable resilience, drawing strength from their cultural identity and a deep sense of belonging. Collective identity, rooted in African traditions, is a source of empowerment, and young *Quilombolas* express pride in their heritage, often leveraging cultural practices as tools for social struggle. This sense of belonging provides a foundation for community mobilisation, where knowledge transmission within families and communities plays a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage.



‘There’s still this policy of eugenics, of ethnic cleansing, you know? The idea that, if over time you keep mixing, your family will become lighter-skinned and, obviously, you’ll face less racism — because in Brazil it’s not like in the United States, where it’s based on blood or heredity.

But the thing is, just because we live in a *Quilombola* community doesn’t mean that everyone is Black, or that racism doesn’t exist there, right? Or that issues of race and racial identity simply don’t exist.’

***Quilombola* male, 25**

Northeast of Brazil, focus group

Indigenous youth

Indigenous and Riverine youth confront cultural invisibility and a constant threat of displacement due to extractive industries, climate challenges, and state neglect (Cimi (ii), 2023; ISA, 2025). In qualitative interviews, Indigenous youth unanimously reported experiences of discrimination, personal or witnessed, in education and urban settings. In individual interviews, women cited bullying and hypersexualisation in school, while one Indigenous man reported being physically attacked due to his ethnicity. Feelings of invisibility in cities were recurrent, which led to experiences of loneliness and not feeling a sense of belonging. The frequency of racism has led to its normalisation, beginning in childhood and continuing through adolescence into early adulthood.

Most Indigenous interviewees had to leave their communities to study, facing cultural, structural, and linguistic barriers. Those who moved to urban centres describe feelings of invisibility and alienation, social exclusion and communication difficulty, frequently encountering racism, bullying and hypersexualisation in education settings. A lack of Indigenous teachers, bilingual schools, and efficient transport were highlighted unanimously as critical issues. Indigenous youth reported direct and indirect prejudice in the labour market, often tied to the expectation that Indigenous people should occupy only basic roles, including traditional subsistence activities such as agriculture, fishing, hunting, and gathering, as well as the production of handicrafts such as ceramics, basketry, and feather art for sale, pushing many into informality.



“I suffer even more from this [discrimination], because people want to discredit me or think that I’m less indigenous because I know how to speak Portuguese well. Even though I know how to speak my mother tongue, or because I’m here in the city.”

Indigenous female, 23

Northeast of Brazil, individual interview



‘First of all, there’s the issue of the impact we feel after leaving our communities — especially for those who studied their whole lives near their village. It’s a completely different reality, because there we have a different kind of education.

Another important point is language. Sometimes people aren’t fully integrated, precisely because of this difference — and there should be more awareness of Indigenous culture and the understanding that we, too, have the right and the autonomy to use our own language and to learn more about it.

But here in the city, when we come, we’re expected to focus mainly on Portuguese, because other people don’t know our language. So that’s another kind of impact. And when you’ve spent most of your life speaking your Indigenous language or having strong contact with it, some Portuguese words don’t always come out quite right, let’s say.

And instead of trying to understand, people often look at you in a certain way — and that ends up creating discrimination, making you feel uncomfortable in that environment.’

Indigenous female, 22

North of Brazil, individual interview

Riverine youth

Regardless of legal recognition and socio-environmental importance, governmental actions for Riverine communities remain fragmented, reactive, and insufficient. The invisibility of Riverine community issues in political debates, especially during elections, reinforces institutional neglect (*Portal Amazonia*, 2022). The government's current challenge is to structure permanent public policies with active participation from these communities and respect for their ways of life — moving beyond broken promises and practices that, in many cases, lead to the expulsion of those who most preserve the forest (*Reporter Brasil*, 2015).

Despite transverse hardships, Riverine youth demonstrate a notable capacity for resilience. They express a strong will to organise, participate in civic life, and defend their territories and ways of living. There is significant mobilisation potential, especially among youth engaged in cultural and community leadership, that could be nurtured through the creation of dedicated support structures.

Building resilience in this group involves strengthening their access to context-sensitive education, supporting youth-led climate and bioeconomy initiatives, expanding preventive and decentralised health care, and institutionalising participation in local governance and territorial monitoring.



'I'm really proud to be a Ribeirinho [Riverine person], but today we're suffering a lot because of this development project that came in. We've been here in this neighbourhood for nine years now, constantly fighting for better conditions, and we live with the impacts every day. We've never stopped... We're still fighting, we're still trying to achieve improvements — and we will succeed. (...)

'I think it's been really hard. Really hard. The Riverine people didn't have — haven't had — any rights. And even now, they're still fighting for their rights.'

**Riverine female (functional illiterate), 35
North of Brazil, focus group**



Disabled youth

Young people with disabilities (PwDs) reported being viewed by society through the lens of their disability, leading to exclusion in social settings, bullying in schools, and difficulties in forming emotional and romantic relationships. Despite legislative progress, disabled youth described a lack of effective representation during a focus group, citing consistent prejudice and structural ableism. Discriminatory attitudes had a profound impact on their self-esteem and social experiences during childhood.

Continued underrepresentation in universities and leadership positions limits their ability to claim rights and influence systemic change, as institutional obstacles and a lack of preparedness persist, with accessibility and support often absent even in supposedly inclusive settings.

Participants in a focus group observed that media portrayals of PwDs were often based on stereotypes and unrealistic ideals, where characters only found fulfillment after ‘overcoming’ their disability. This narrative reinforced ableism and set unattainable expectations for PwDs. The group emphasised the need for more diverse, accurate portrayals that reflect the lived experiences of PwDs.

Despite significant barriers, PwD youth mentioned adopting strategies to cope with prejudice, including ignoring insults, embracing a strong sense of self-worth, and valuing personal accomplishments. The group acknowledged that well-implemented inclusion efforts could foster a sense of empowerment, providing meaningful learning and social opportunities.

Youth with disabilities identified sports as having played a transformative role in rebuilding self-esteem and fostering a sense of agency, empowerment and personal achievement. Strategies for overcoming barriers range from participating in sports to engaging in digital advocacy and reflect a strong sense of self-determination and agency. However, the need for systemic change is clear.



‘Today, 90 per cent of our population looks at us with pity, and in a way, this harms us a lot because it really does affect us — even if we try not to let it. It gets to us.

I believe we live in a society where, to some extent, 80 per cent of people are prejudiced. These are people who think that disabled individuals can’t live a normal life, that we can’t have independence or autonomy. That we have to live with our families, always being helped, directed, going out and coming back under their supervision — and that’s wrong.

A disabled person should have access to the right tools and support and live an independent life. Of course, we won’t always move at the same pace as someone without a disability, but we’re heading in the same direction — and there’s absolutely nothing wrong with that.’

Disabled male (visually impaired), 26
Northeast of Brazil, focus group

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‘In my first semester at university, I took an economics class. The professor would just come into the room, write everything on the board, and start teaching. I’d say, “Professor...” — no, he’d already be explaining the topic, hitting the board — “It’s about this here!” — then he’d tap on the board, pointing at what he was talking about.

I’d ask, “Professor, what are you talking about? What is this?” He’d try to explain it to me, over and over, and then go back to the board and start drawing things... (laughs). “Did you understand?” he’d ask. I said, “No, but that’s okay.”

Then I had a classmate who, so we wouldn’t waste too much time with him trying to explain what he was teaching, said she would make some slides with image descriptions.’

Disabled female (fully blind), 26
Northeast of Brazil, focus group



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‘I had psychological support, and it was my psychologist who helped me realise that using the cane would actually give me more freedom and independence — that I needed to embrace it to be able to fully live my life again. And that’s when I threw myself into the world of adapted sports for people with visual impairments.

I fell in love with swimming — and I’m now a two-time state champion.’

Disabled male (visually impaired), 26
Northeast of Brazil, focus group

Trans youth

Young trans people in Brazil, particularly transgender women and *travestis*¹, face systemic transphobia, a lack of legal protections, rejection by family and society, exclusion from formal education and the job market, and regular exposure to violence. A 2025 report ‘Tackling LGBTQIA-phobia in Brazil’ (*Enfrentamento à LGBTQIAfobia no Brasil*) noted that violence against these communities is ‘an epidemic in Brazil, considering its exponential increase in recent years, as well as the means and modes of operation that this violence uses to perpetuate itself. The diffuse and multifaceted occurrences of violence end up making it difficult to make a final diagnosis about it, which in turn makes it more complex to propose measures to solve the problem.’ (Gov.br (x), [2025](#)).

During a moderated focus group, transgender youth from different regions in Brazil described prejudice as a constant, particularly among trans women, who are often hypersexualised or presumed to be sex workers. Public harassment and subtle social exclusion are commonplace, especially in rural areas. While some note progress over the past decade, generational and regional differences persist. Many report being forced to leave home at a young age due to their gender identity, disrupting their education while increasing vulnerability to precarious informal roles.

Trans youth reported incidents of extreme physical aggression and a general feeling of insecurity in certain public spaces, compounded by intersections with race, class, and territory. Targeted assaults were noted, particularly around LGBTQIAPN+ nightlife venues around Brazil.

Despite transversal adversities, transgender youth expressed strong aspirations for autonomy and collective empowerment, advocating for a future in which their existence is not just tolerated but actively respected and protected. Young people emanate a strong sense of pride in their gender identity, community bonds, and personal resilience. Gender affirmation and mutual support among peers serve as critical coping mechanisms, while access to social media and trans-led initiatives emerged as valuable tools for identity affirmation, visibility, and mobilisation.

Trans youth pointed to education and stable employment as the most important alternatives for building long-term resilience, if supported by public policies specifically designed for trans youth, like quotas in universities and job training programmes. Public health policies that provide accessible hormone therapy and psychological support were emphasised as essential. Participants underscored the importance of visibility and representation not only in media but also within institutions, alongside broader cultural change to challenge cisnormative and binary standards.

Overall, the group underscored the need for stronger anti-discrimination policies, trans visibility in leadership, and greater structural support, providing them with acceptance, dignity, and the opportunity to live and work without fear.



‘Personally, for me, it was a feeling of revolt — yes, it was when I was confronted with my reality. I came face to face with the reality I had found and the people I had met, you know? And when I joined the [trans] movement, it was the place where I was welcomed. It was where I found an answer to the fear I had.

Because before, I thought I couldn’t live, you know? I thought I would never be able to leave the house. I... I was going to kill myself.

But then I just... I managed to have hope that I could live a dignified life — I think that’s the word. I want a future where I can have dignity.’

Trans male, 20

North of Brazil, focus group

¹ The term *Travesti* is retained in Portuguese throughout this report, as it carries a specific political, cultural, and social significance in Latin through direct translation to English.

“

‘Back in my day, we didn’t have trans students in primary or secondary school. But nowadays, as a teacher, I see these children in the classroom. Still, for example, their relationships with their families remain very problematic.

There are issues around the use of their chosen names — their social names. Schools have started to open up a bit more because of laws and pressure from federal government policies that we fought hard for — policies that established some important milestones, like access to bathrooms and the respect of social names.

But in practice, these things are still fragile — and easily reversed, especially by families. Sometimes, for instance, the school will follow the use of the child’s social name, but then the family comes in and causes a scene. Something happens, and the school tends to side with the family’s point of view — and ends up disregarding what is, in fact, protected by the Constitution.’

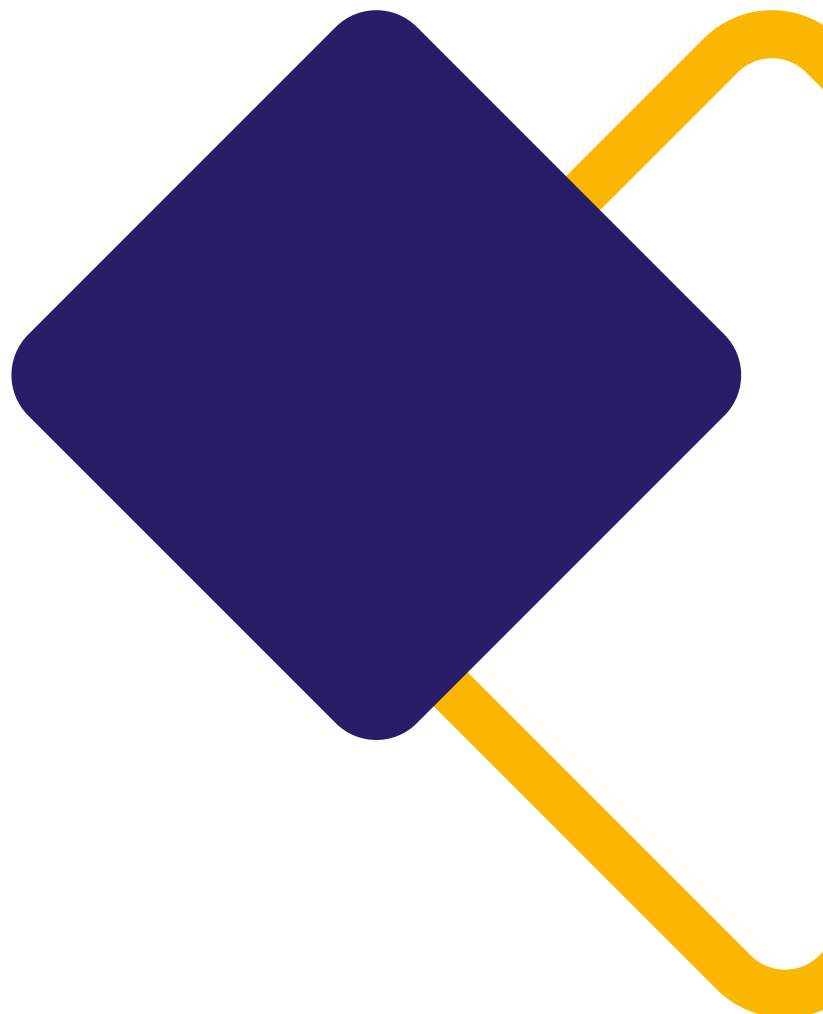
Trans female, 32
Northeast of Brazil, focus group

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‘Usually, when we, trans women, walk down the street, there’s a lot of harassment — lots of honking, men calling out for us to get in their cars. It’s that kind of objectification of our bodies.

They’re always trying to get our attention. Personally, when I walk down the street, I don’t look at anyone. I don’t make eye contact with any man because I don’t want to give them any encouragement. And they’ll do anything to get attention.’

Trans female, 26
Northeast of Brazil, focus group





‘This positive change that we’ve been able to see over the last decade — and especially in the past five years — is precisely because we’re starting to reach these spaces. We’re inserting ourselves into the conversation and, even if it’s just one trans person in the middle of a cisgender crowd, we’ve been asserting ourselves more and resisting more, to open the path for other bodies as well.

But that’s the thing — it’s also a kind of illusory safety. We’re still at the mercy of various forms of violence, whether in professional environments, in healthcare settings, or across the broader social context.’

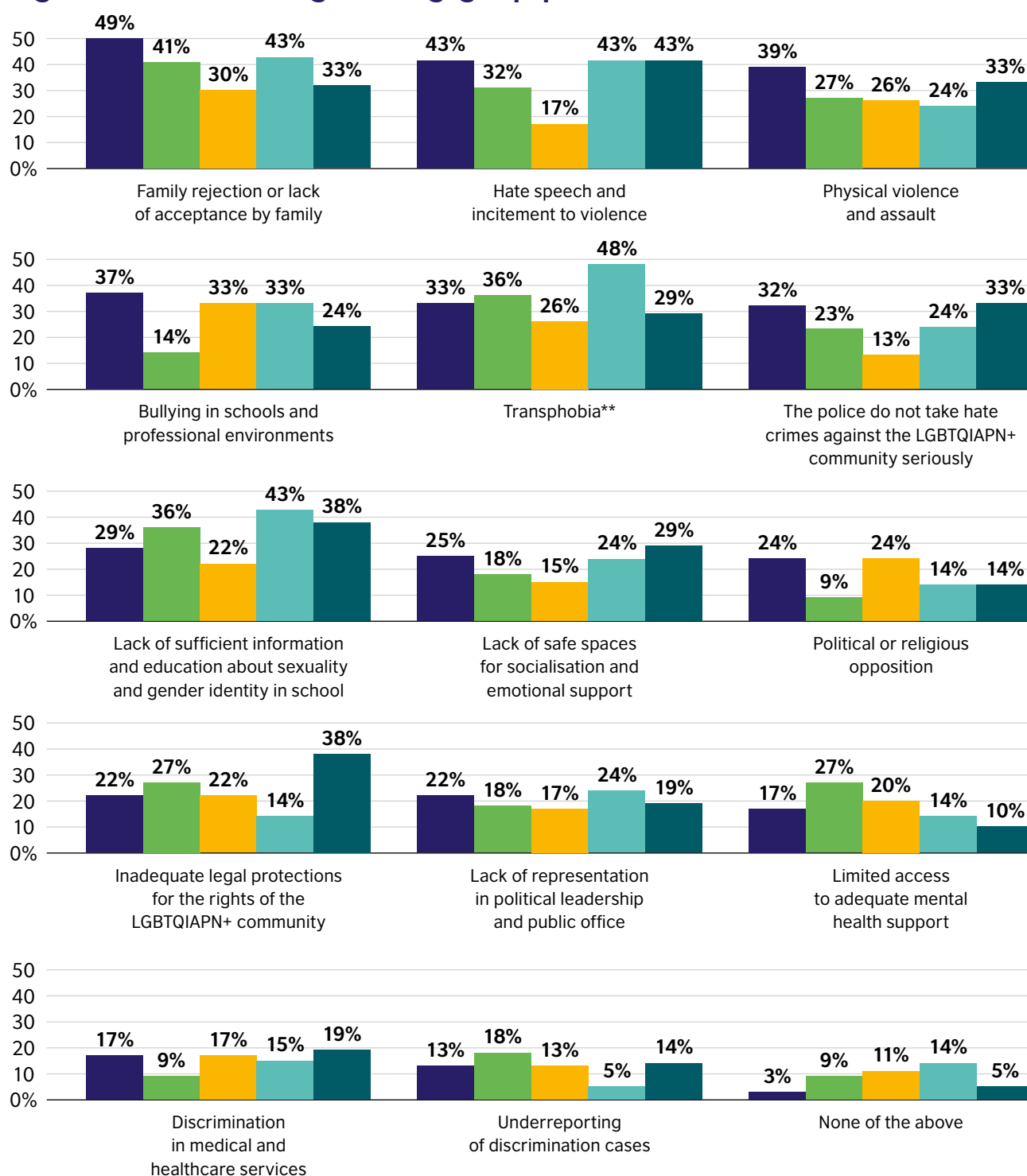
Trans male, 33

Southeast of Brazil, focus group

LGBTQIAPN+ youth

One in five (18 per cent) among the overall Next Generation Brazil group (n=3,248) identify as part of LGBTQIAPN+ communities, and of these, two-thirds (64 per cent) said they had been treated differently due to their sexual orientation. They reported family rejection, hate speech, and violence as the top challenges facing their community in Brazil. Recognition of these experiences is crucial for shaping inclusive policies and addressing unequal daily burdens. Although quantitative numbers were relatively low for trans, non-binary, and gender-fluid youth, it is important to view their opinions on these challenges too.



Figure 12: Main challenges facing lgbtqiapn+ communities in Brazil*

◆ Next Generation Brazil LGBTQIAPN+ community (n=595)

◆ Next Generation Brazil trans male (n=22)

◆ Next Generation Brazil trans female (n=46)

◆ Next Generation Brazil non-binary (n=21)

◆ Next Generation Brazil gender-fluid (n=21)

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents that identified as belonging to LGBTQIAPN+ communities (n=595) could choose up to 5 options from a list of 15, none of those or suggest their own.

** While many of the items listed may be considered transphobia, this was added as a distinct item on request from the Youth Task Force.

Government initiatives towards racial equality

- The creation of a Ministry of Racial Equality under the current administration is seen by many as a positive step forward, with the creation of programmes like '*Aquilombola Brasil*', which purports to promote the participation of *Quilombola* youth in decision-making processes and public policies.
- The Ministry of Education offers retention scholarships to *Quilombola* and Indigenous youth in Brazilian universities (Gov.br (xi), [2024](#)).
- The Ministry of Justice launched a public call in 2023 to fund cultural projects in areas with high levels of violence and social vulnerability, resulting in the creation of more than 40 partnerships with civil society organisations.
- PRONASCI 2, the National Public Security with Citizenship Programme, aims to coordinate public security actions for crime prevention and control. The programme aims to combat various forms of prejudice and establish social policies and protection actions for victims of crime. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security did not have data to show how many young people have been impacted by this programme, but confirmed that 138 civil society organisations had been selected to implement proposals.
- Young *Quilombola* Innovator Awards are promoted by the Ministry of Culture, rewarding practical solutions aimed at improving the lives of *Quilombolas*.
- A 2023 decree that stated that 30 per cent of federal positions 'of trust' must be filled by Black or mixed-race people is already showing positive results. Just two years later, 39 per cent of leadership roles in the federal civil service were occupied by Black, mixed-race, and Indigenous people (Agência Gov (i), [2025](#)).



Youth identity and resilience: Key research takeaways

- A vast majority of Black and mixed-race youth in Brazil have personally experienced discrimination based on their ethnicity, with over one-quarter of Black youth naming racism as one of their biggest challenges in recent years.
- Racial and gender inequality was evident in analysis of income and job opportunities, with white survey respondents earning 19 per cent more than the overall weighted mean and Black youth earning 31 per cent less. The number of young Black cis women declared as unemployed was almost three times the number of white cis men. In employment, young Black women earn close to half of the national average and nearly three times less than white men.
- Two-thirds of those who identify as part of LG-BTQIAPN+ communities have been treated differently due to their sexual orientation. Family rejection, hate speech, and violence were cited as the top challenges facing their community. Meanwhile, transgender youth cited constant prejudice and targeted violence, and trans women said they are often hypersexualised or stereotyped as sex workers. Some advancements were noted in recent years, but insecurity remains an issue in certain public places.
- In a focus group, young *Quilombolas* said their culture brings a sense of belonging despite systemic marginalisation. Oral traditions and intergenerational learning shape identity, but historical violence and low representation often make it difficult to affirm themselves, especially in contexts marked by institutional racism.
- Indigenous youth reported widespread discrimination in schools and cities. Most have to leave their communities to study, but struggle with cultural, linguistic, and structural barriers like the lack of Indigenous teachers, bilingual schools, and reliable transport.
- Young people with disabilities said society views them primarily through their disability, which results in social exclusion, school bullying, and relationship challenges that severely damage their self-esteem. Institutional obstacles and accessibility problems were noted in public spaces.



Chapter 2

Education, skills and the digital divide

This chapter looks at the education levels of Next Generation Brazil youth; how income levels vary according to education achievement in current-day Brazil; how young people appraise the education they received; and what they suggest should be done to improve things.

The research reveals deep social and territorial inequalities in Brazil's education system — from poor infrastructure and outdated curricula to economic and digital barriers that hinder access to quality learning and job opportunities. These challenges disproportionately affect marginalised groups, as shown through data and personal accounts, underscoring the need for urgent systemic reform to ensure equal career readiness.





‘There was a very intense process of massification [of the education system, in the 80s and 90s] — but with very little discussion about the curriculum. And that’s a crucial point we need to reflect on when thinking about the world of work. Why? Because the same curriculum structure from the 20th century — the entire 20th century — was simply carried over into the late 20th and even the 21st century. So what you have is a massification of education, but based on a model that was originally designed for a privileged few.

This creates a serious mismatch, because today in Brazil we are affirming that everyone has the right to access higher education. And that’s true — people do have that right. But in a society where everyone is expected to go to university, you inevitably end up with shortages in other sectors of the workforce.

That’s one of the consequences — a knock-on effect — of not rethinking the curriculum and the role of basic education, once it’s no longer aimed at a specific elite that would go on to govern and lead the country.

So, the challenges we face today are closely linked to this disjointed process of mass education — one that failed to take into account fundamental markers, such as: what is the place of Black youth in this country, especially since this youth had long been excluded from basic education? And what is the place of Black LGBTQIAPN+ youth, who have historically been marginalised from various structures of state power — from access to rights, to healthcare, education, and employment?

This has received very little attention, and to this day, it remains a major challenge to think about and discuss curriculum design. What we have is a deeply fragmented educational system.’

Cleber Ribeiro de Souza,
Southeast of Brazil, Uniperiferias / IMJA



Contextualising Brazilian education

A majority of Brazilian teenagers (87 per cent) attend public non-fee paying high schools (*Ensino Médio*) (INEP, 2023). State-managed schools vary significantly in quality, while fee-based private schools typically offer superior infrastructure and academic outcomes. Meanwhile, more than 79 per cent of Brazil's university students are enrolled in private universities. Critics point to quality issues relating to a rapid profit-based expansion of the sector (SSRN, 2023).

Brazil spends considerably less (68 per cent) per student at upper secondary level than the average across OECD countries and 21 per cent less at tertiary level, and national education and science budgets are frequently blocked during periods of austerity. Brazil ranks fifth globally in terms of the adult population share (aged 25–69) that have not completed secondary education, accounting for 27 per cent of Brazilians in this age cohort, as compared to an OECD average of 14 per cent and UK average of 12 per cent (OECD, 2024).

Teaching salaries can be up to 47 per cent less than the OECD mean, and it is not unusual for teachers to 'double job', teaching in one school in the morning and another in the afternoon. A national shortage of teachers is looming, with a projected dearth of around 235,000 teachers of basic education by 2040. Meanwhile, nearly 80 per cent of in-service teachers have considered leaving the profession, and 68 per cent feel insecure, discouraged, and frustrated about their professional future (SEMESP, 2022).

One in five (18 per cent) of Brazilian secondary-level students were over two years behind academically in 2024, an improvement from 31 per cent in 2018. Regional disparities remain stark: 27 per cent in the North are lagging behind academically, compared to 14 per cent in the Southeast (Gov.br (xii), 2024). Meanwhile, a March 2025 survey showed illiteracy among Black and mixed-race Brazilians as more than twice that of white Brazilians (IBGE (vii), 2025), who also earn over 60 per cent more per hour (IBGE (viii), 2023). Only 12 per cent of Black and mixed-race adults over 25 have completed university, compared to 26 per cent of white adults (IBGE (ix), 2025).

Historically, Brazil's elite accessed free, high-quality public universities, while poorer students paid for lower-quality private education. Despite expansions in the 1980s and 1990s and affirmative action policies that have granted unprecedented access to public universities for low-income students and those from marginalised groups, reforms have failed so far to keep pace with modern labour demands. Activists argue that education remains disconnected from young people's realities.

While more Brazilian women (28 per cent) than men (20 per cent) aged 25–34 attain university degrees, this advantage disappears in the labour market. OECD data shows 85 per cent of young female graduates are employed, compared to 92 per cent of men, with women earning just 75 per cent of male wages (OECD (i), 2024). Among private university graduates, women earn only 71 per cent of what their male peers make (ABMES, 2023).

While an almost six per cent growth in undergraduate enrolments was reported in 2023, the majority of this growth relates to online spots in private universities — three-quarters of new enrolments (more than 3 million students) were distance learners (Gov.br (xiii), 2024). Meanwhile, 87,000 students enrolled for online courses in public universities.

An opposite growth trend can be seen at postgraduate level, with a 13 per cent decrease in enrolments from 2019 to 2022, attributed to labour market changes, a perception that postgrad training takes too long, and an eagerness of young people to enter the labour market (FAPESP (i), 2024).



'The biggest problem is the devaluation of the teaching profession in Brazil, which, in practice, results in low pay. To give an idea, on average, teachers earn significantly less than other professionals with the same level of education. (...) We also need to consider the working conditions, both material and human, since very often these teachers have an enormous workload and lack support from school management.'

Sílvia Colello

Education Faculty, University of São Paulo (USP (ii), 2025)

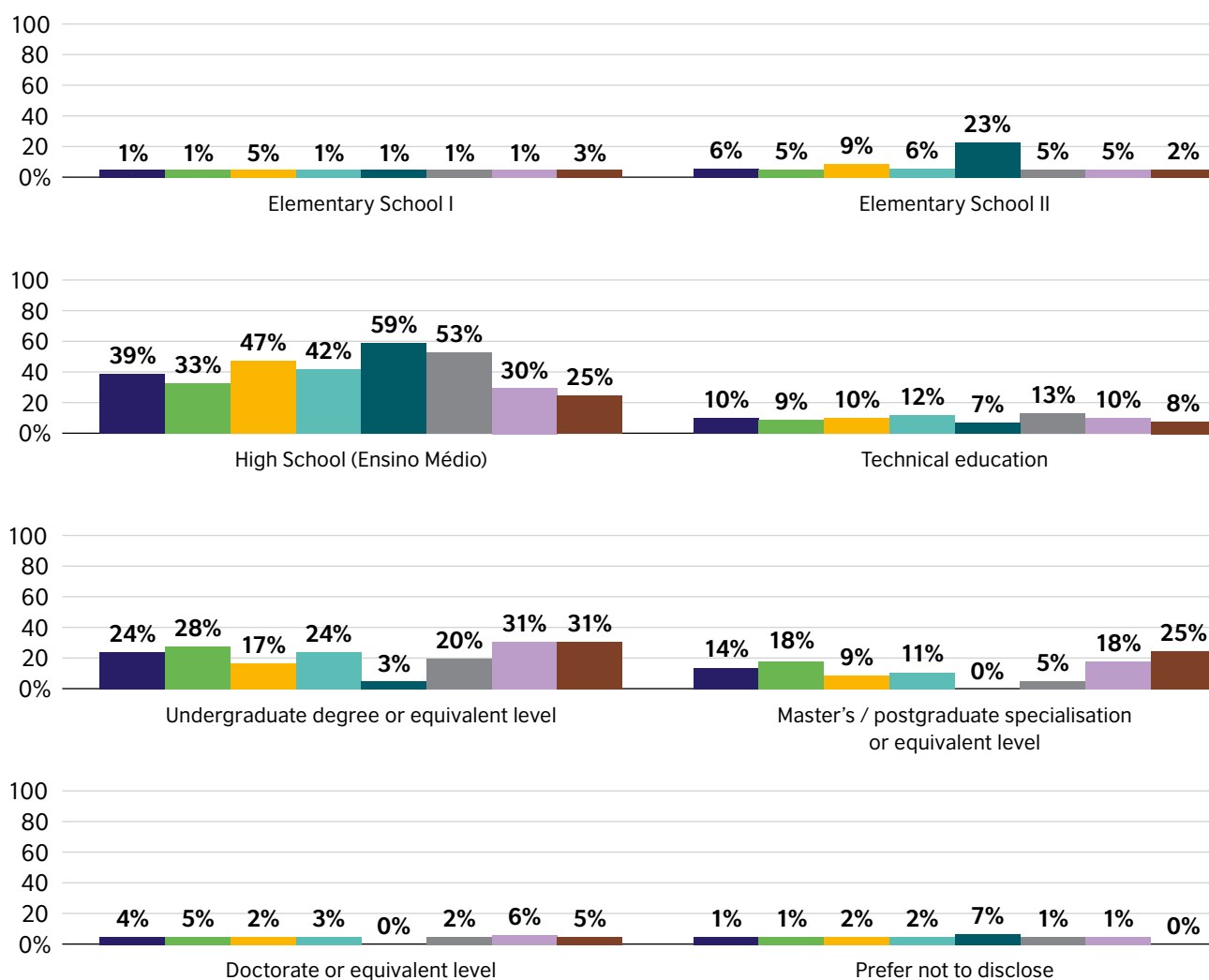
Education-related initiatives

- *Bolsa Família*, a cash transfer programme implemented in 2003, rewards low-income families that send their fully vaccinated children to school. This social welfare programme is credited with vastly improving school attendance, currently just under 92 per cent for ages 15–17 (up from 87 per cent in 2016), along with reducing extreme poverty (World Bank Group, [2025](#)) (IBGE (x), [2025](#)).
- *Pé-de-Meia*, launched in 2023, aims to incentivise school completion with the payment of a monthly allowance of BRL \$100 to BRL \$300 (~GBP £13 – GBP £40) to high school students on social welfare programmes, potentially totalling BRL \$9,200 (~GBP £1,200) over three years.
- *Pé-de-Meia Licenciaturas* was launched in January 2025, a financial grant to attract and maintain students in educator training programmes.
- A 2012 federal law (*Lei das Cotas*) decreed that half of all public university places be reserved for low-income public school students, allocated per racial demographic quotas (Black, mixed-race, Indigenous). Four years later, people with disabilities were included in quotas, and *Quilombola* communities were added in 2023. In nine years, more than one million young Brazilians accessed higher education through quota schemes (MEC) (Gov.br (xiv), [2023](#)). More than half (52 per cent) of students in federal universities self-declared as Black, mixed-race or Indigenous, as did 44 per cent in state universities (FAPESP, [2023](#)). While trans people aren't included in national quota laws, many universities have introduced their own policies, prompting backlash from far-right groups.
- Government student loan programmes, like FIES, have opened access to private higher education, but also led to a large accrual of debt. In 2024, some 876,000 students were in default situations on student loans received since 2017 — another 368,000 students had successfully renegotiated repayment terms under a government programme (*Agência Brasil* (iv), [2024](#)).
- The *Programa Mais Professores para o Brasil* (More Teachers for Brazil Programme) was launched in January 2025 to boost the value of teaching and attract more teachers to the profession. The programme includes financial benefits for teachers working in underserved regions and continual professional development for in-service teachers (Gov.br (xv), [2025](#)).

Education levels among Next Generation youth

Next Generation Brazil data shows disparities in educational attainment across different racial and age groups in Brazil. White youth reported higher levels of university level qualifications (51 per cent), considerably higher than that for mixed-race youth (38 per cent) and for Black respondents (28 per cent). Differentials are starker for post-graduate level qualifications, reported by 23 per cent of white Brazilians, 14 per cent of mixed-race youth, and just 11 per cent of Black youth, perhaps a reflection of the lack of affirmative action policies at postgraduate level.

Figure 13: Level of education by ethnicity and age*



◆ Next Generation Brazil (n=3,248) ◆ White (n=1,348) ◆ Black (n=607) ◆ Mixed-race (n=1,171)
 ◆ 16-18 years old (n=427) ◆ 19-24 years old (n=914) ◆ 25-30 years old (n=1,063) ◆ 31-35 years old (n=844)

* 'What is the highest level of education you have achieved?' Respondents could choose one response from the list above, or insert their own response.

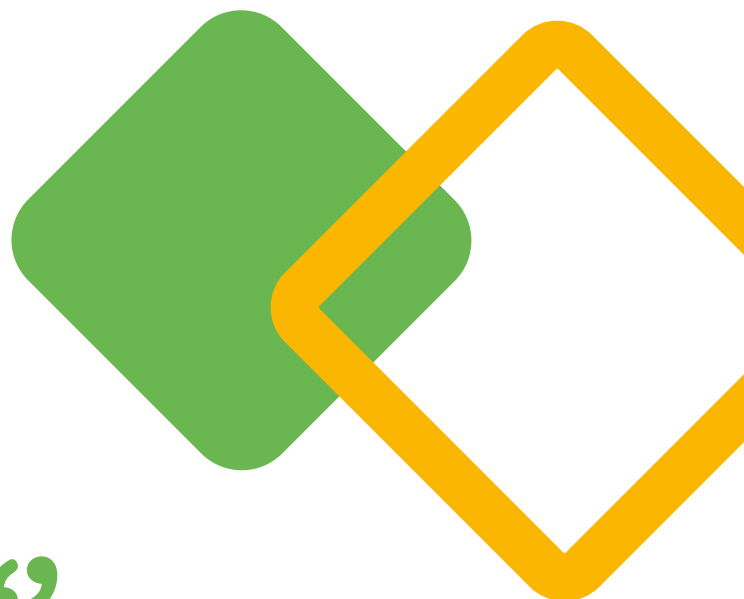
While existing quotas — granting access to undergraduate education to low income and marginalised groups — were unanimously seen as a positive measure by youth leaders and activists during this research, a consistent criticism was identified in the lack of effective permanence support, particularly in higher education settings.



‘I was the first blind person in that space [university], and they were completely in panic when I went to enrol, because they thought they would have to make huge, extraordinary changes to accommodate me. It hadn’t been long since I had lost my sight, and I had decided to study — but I didn’t know how it was going to work, and neither did they. (...)’

People talk about inclusion, but I was never really included, you know? Because it’s not enough to simply provide accessibility — you need to have proper support in place. There’s something called NAP (the Accessibility Support Centre), but it was very, how can I put it... superficial. The legislation requires that it exists, so it’s there just to tick the box, but I went through a lot of difficulties when I first started university, because of these issues.’

Disabled female (fully blind), mixed-race, 26
Northeast of Brazil, focus group



‘There’s a lot of talk — a lot of blah blah blah — about inclusion. “Let’s include children,” and all that, but no one actually gets their hands dirty or knows how to do it. I think that’s what’s missing.

I believe this should be addressed at university, when teachers are still in their teacher training courses. They should have a proper class, not just the theory of Libras or a general idea about inclusion, but real, practical lessons — like how a person with low vision sees the world, how a blind person manages to do things.

Because when teachers go into the classroom, often it’s not their fault — they simply don’t know how to deal with it, because they were never taught. They’re trained to know what content to deliver to students, but not how to work with students who have disabilities. So I don’t blame the teachers — it’s something that needs to be addressed during their training.’

Disabled female (visually impaired), Black, 21
Northeast of Brazil, focus group

Quantitative data shows income inequalities that correlate education levels with gender and ethnicity, using average mean salary to compare. Cis Black women with undergraduate degrees earned 70 per cent as much as cis white men with the same qualification, while those with a postgraduate diploma earned just 65 per cent of the salary demanded by white cis men. Somewhat unexpectedly, cis white women with a PhD emerged as earning more than cis white men with a doctorate.



‘Specific public policies to ensure that Indigenous people remain in universities, such as scholarships, housing, and psychosocial support, are essential. It is also necessary to invest in Indigenous schools with adequate structures, training of Indigenous teachers, and teaching materials produced by us.’

Indigenous male, 32

Southeast of Brazil, individual interview

Figure 14: Average monthly income by university qualification, gender, and ethnicity*

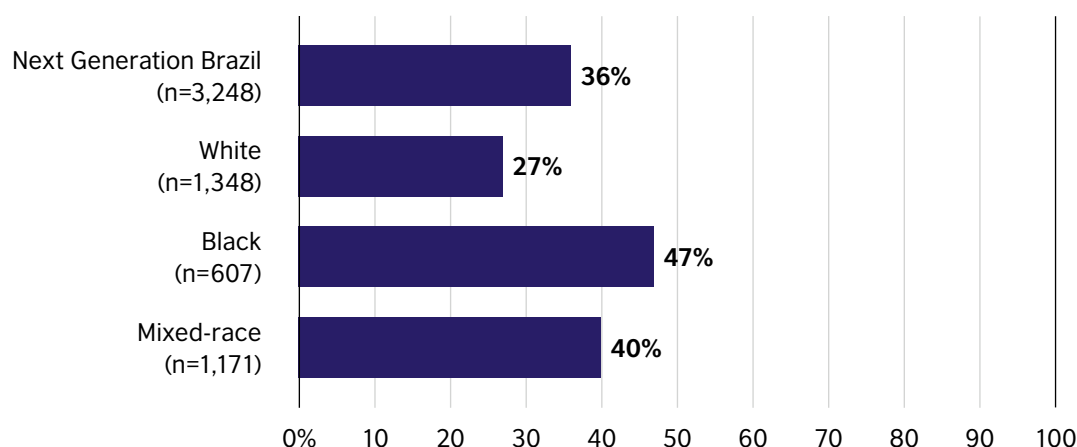
University qualification	Cis female white (n=687)	Cis female Black (n=298)	Cis female mixed-race (n=615)	Cis male white (n=605)	Cis male Black (n=298)	Cis male mixed-race (n=490)
Undergraduate or equivalent	BRL \$4,367 £591	BRL \$3,516 £476	BRL \$3,984 £539	BRL \$5,050 £683	BRL \$3,783 £512	BRL \$4,033 £546
Postgraduate, master's or equivalent	BRL \$6,306 £853	BRL \$4,242 £574	BRL \$5,445 £737	BRL \$6,507 £881	BRL \$- -	BRL \$5,350 £724
Doctorate	BRL \$8,195 £1,109	BRL \$5,795 £784	BRL \$6,760 £915	BRL \$7,593 £1,027	BRL \$4,677 £633	BRL \$6,543 £885

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Weighted mean of income bands. ** Exchange rate GBP £1 = BRL \$7.39 (calculated 19.06.25)

Discontinued education

Half (50 per cent) of the young people aged 19–24 surveyed had not acquired university level qualifications, nor were they currently studying. In fact, six per cent of those aged 19–24 surveyed never progressed to secondary level education. The rate of those without a university degree (and not currently studying) drops to 41 per cent for ages 25–30 and to 35 per cent for ages 31–35. This may suggest a tendency for younger people to drop out of the formal education system after completing basic education.

Three-quarters of those who were unemployed at the time of data collection did not have university qualifications. Meanwhile, almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of those that had not progressed past secondary level schooling were Black or mixed-race, compared to 33 per cent of white respondents. The result is a sharp racial divide in educational outcomes — while 51 per cent of white youth had completed higher education, only 38 per cent of mixed-race and 29 per cent of Black youth had reached the same level.

Figure 15: Youth that did not proceed to university by ethnicity*

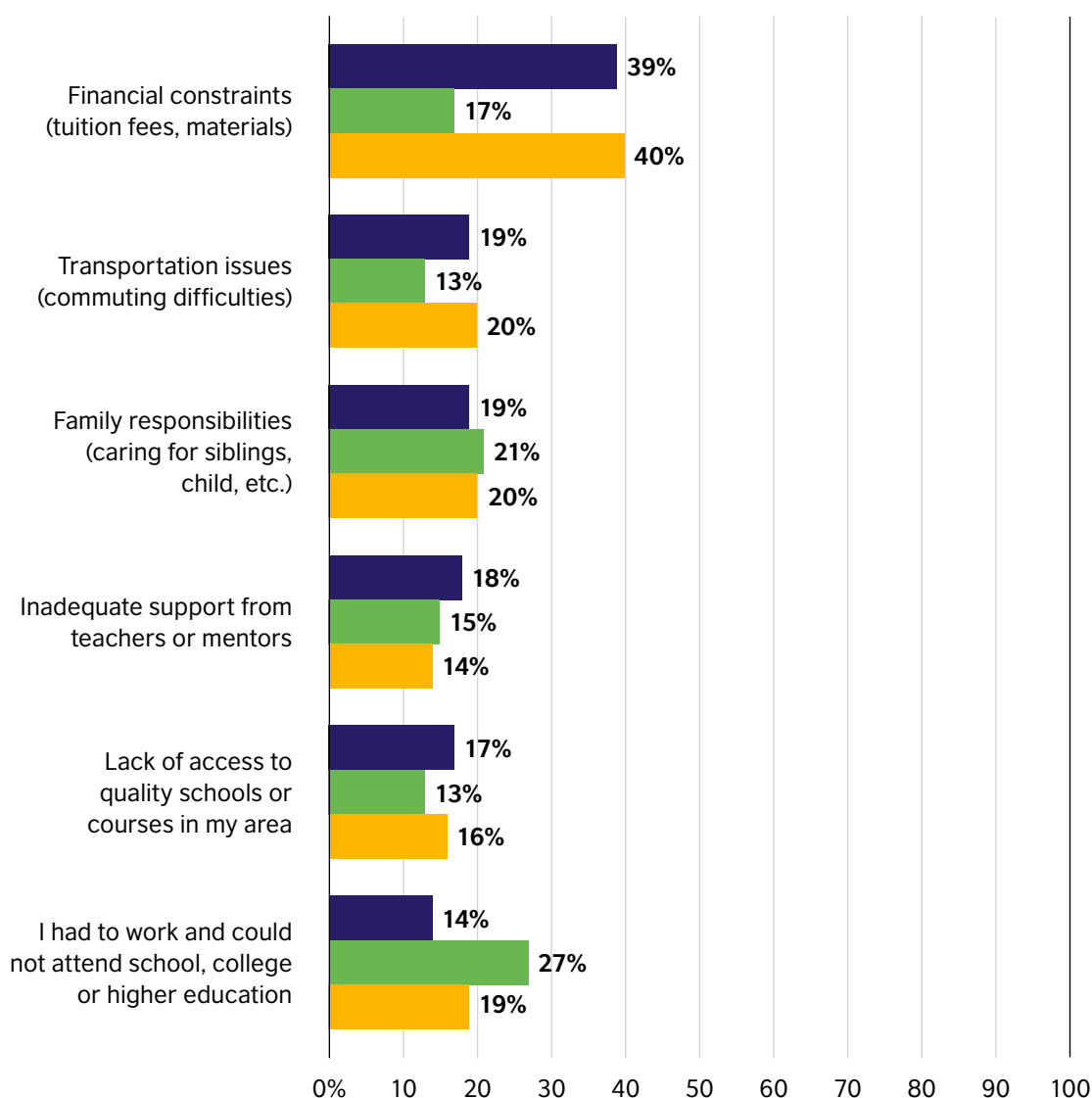
Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Brazilian youth, over the age of 18, whose highest education level was reported as Ensino Fundamental, Ensino Médio or Ensino Técnico, and are not currently studying.

In 2022, one in five Brazilians (20 per cent) aged 15–29 (nearly 10 million young people) hadn't finished basic education, according to the 'Youth Out of School Report' (Roberto Marinho Foundation, [2022](#)). Most came from low-income backgrounds, 84 per cent were aged 20–29, and 70 per cent identified as Black or mixed-race. A primary reason to leave schooling was financial — young people needed to work (32 per cent) or take care of their family (17 per cent).

Similarly, Next Generation Brazil youth reported financial constraints as the main reason for not continuing their education or gaining new skills, cited by 46 per cent of those aged 31–35, compared to 39 per cent of those aged 19–24. Family responsibilities were another reason why young Brazilians were unable to continue their education, cited by 19 per cent; while a similar proportion pointed to commuting difficulties (19 per cent), the lack of a quality institution or courses in their area (17 per cent), and inadequate support from teachers or mentors (18 per cent).

The need to work was a primary reason that young Brazilians gave for leaving schooling early, particularly for those who did not proceed to university level education. Among young Brazilians that did not progress beyond primary level education, 27 per cent cited a need to work, as did 19 per cent of those that did not progress past secondary education.



Figure 16: Principal reasons that Brazilian youth discontinue their education*

◆ Next Generation Brazil (n=3,248)

◆ Youth who did not continue past primary level basic schooling** (n=149)

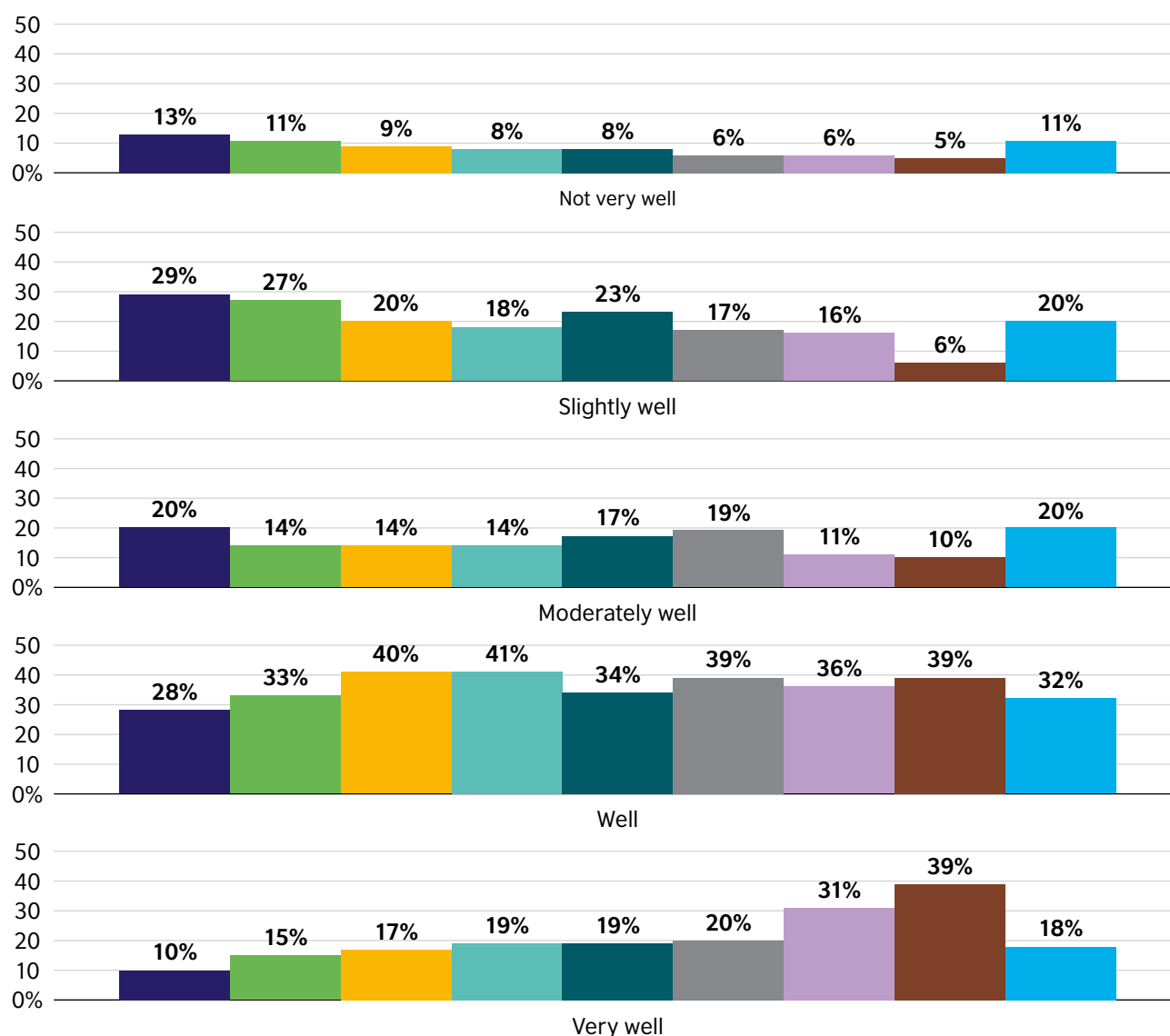
◆ Youth who did not continue past secondary level basic schooling*** (n=1,175)

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose up to three options from a list of 12, or suggest their own. ** Includes young Brazilians who have not proceeded past 'Ensino Fundamental I or II' or 'Ensino Técnico' (primary-level basic education) and are not currently studying. *** Includes young Brazilians who have not proceeded past 'Ensino Médio' or 'Ensino Técnico' (second-level education) and are not currently studying.

Youth appraisal of their education

While 56 per cent of the Next Generation Brazil sample felt their education prepared them well or very well for work, this varied significantly by income level. Among those earning BRL \$10,000 or more (~GBP £1,350), 78 per cent felt well-prepared — though the survey did not specify which level of education they referred to, and 58 per cent of this group held a postgraduate degree. In contrast, only 48 per cent of those earning the minimum wage (BRL \$1,412 / ~GBP £190) felt similarly prepared.

Figure 17: Preparedness for work acquired through formal education*

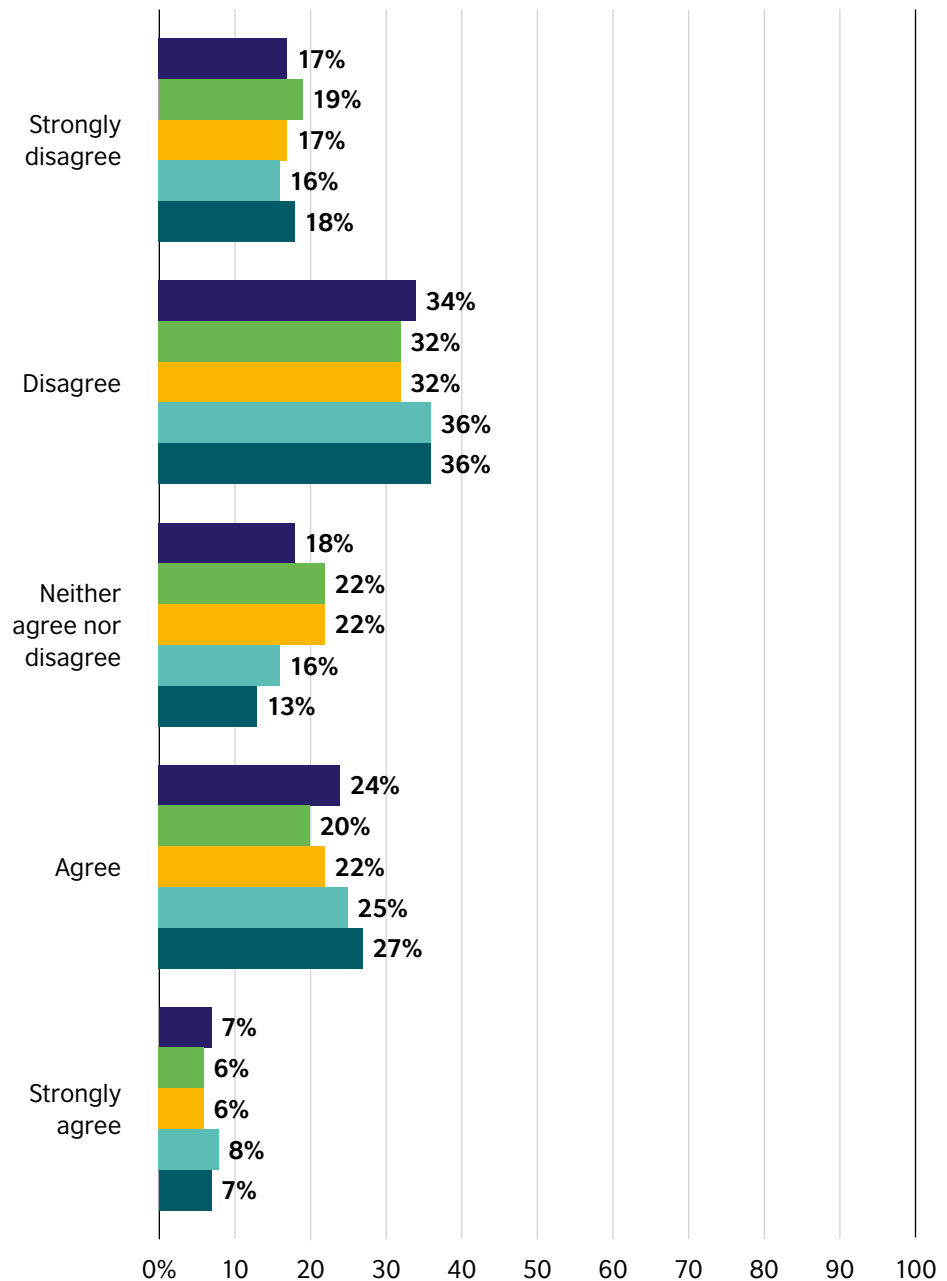


◆ No income ◆ Up to 1 minimum wage (~GBP £190) per month ◆ 1 – 1.5 minimum wages (~GBP £190 – £285) per month ◆ 1.5 – 2 minimum wages (~GBP £285 – £380) per month
 ◆ 2 – 3 minimum wages (~GBP £380 – £570) per month ◆ 3 – 4 minimum wages (~GBP £570 – £760) per month
 ◆ 4 – 7 minimum wages (~GBP £760 – £1,330) per month ◆ More than 7 minimum wages (~GBP £1,330+) per month
 ◆ Prefer not to disclose

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. *How well do you think your education prepared you for work? Survey respondents could choose one response from a Likert scale of five options. ** Exchange rate GBP £1 = BRL \$7.39 (calculated 19.06.25)

Just over half (51 per cent) of young people surveyed do not think education is of good quality in Brazil, with just 31 per cent stating the contrary, and one in five (18 per cent) sitting on the fence. Of those living in *favela* communities, 68 per cent do not think Brazil offers quality education, echoed by 58 per cent in metropolitan and peripheral areas, and 77 per cent of app workers interviewed in the quantitative phase.

Figure 18: Youth appraisal of Brazilian education by age group*



◆ Next Generation Brazil (n=3,248)

◆ 16–18 years old (n=427)

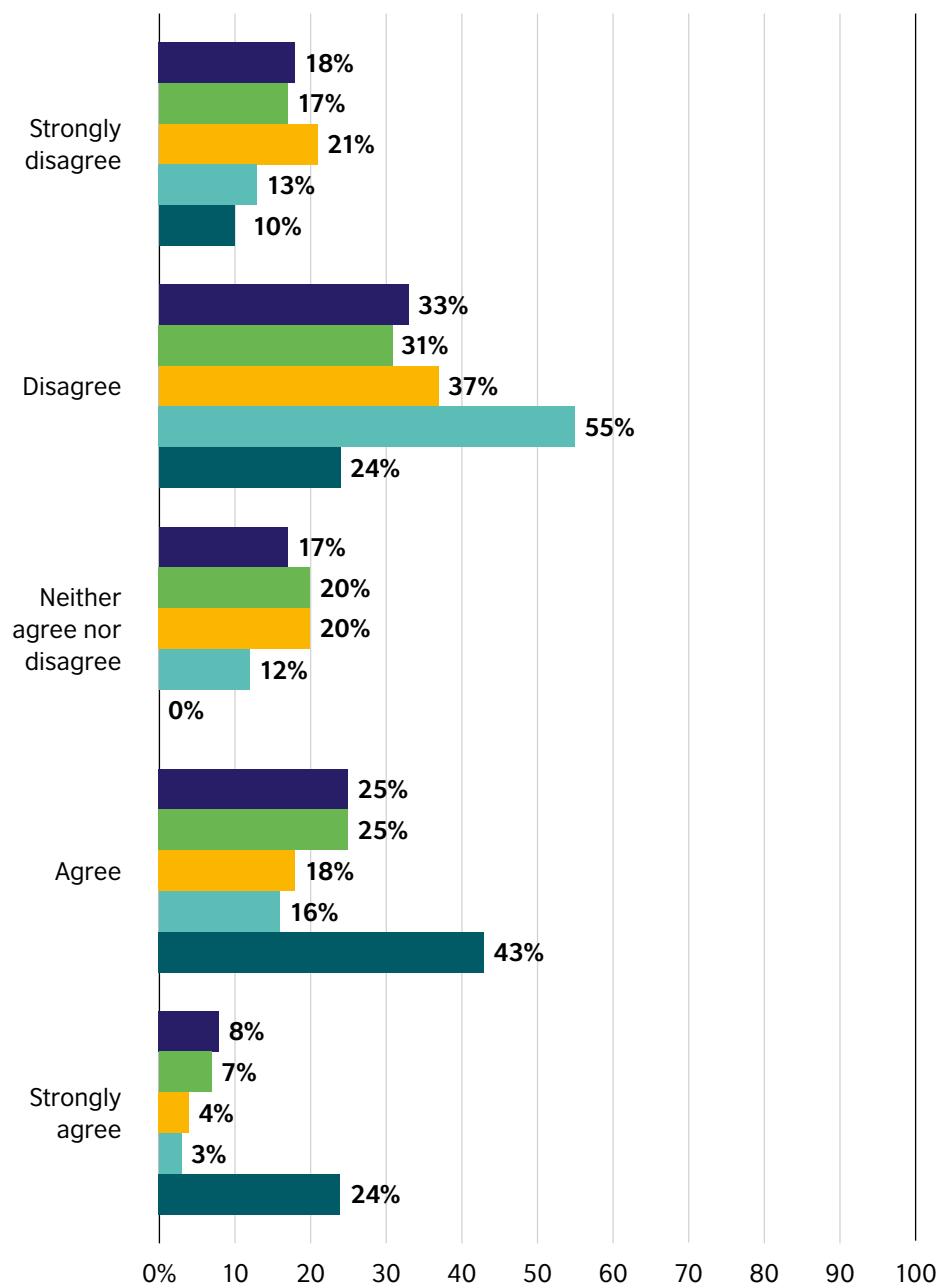
◆ 19–24 years old (n=914)

◆ 25–30 years old (n=1,063)

◆ 31–35 years old (n=844)

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * How much do you agree with this statement: 'The quality of education in Brazil is good.' Interviewees could choose one response from a Likert scale of five options.

Figure 19: Youth appraisal of Brazilian education by territory*



◆ Big city (capital & large urban centres) (n=1,728) ◆ Small city (n=854)

◆ Periphery & metropolitan region (n=289) ◆ Favela residents (n=210) ◆ Riverine community, Quilombola or Indigenous territory (n=21)

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * How much do you agree with this statement: 'The quality of education in Brazil is good.' Survey respondents could choose one response from a Likert scale of five options.

Education inequality

Research revealed a clear gap in access to education between urban and rural areas and traditional communities. While 55 per cent of survey respondents in big cities reported having university level qualifications, this was only true for 33 per cent in peripheries and metropolitan areas and 29 per cent in smaller cities, while just 14 per cent of respondents that lived in *favelas* reported university level education, and just ten per cent in rural communities.

In many rural regions, schools are often under-funded, and the long distances young people must travel make it difficult to attend regularly, increasing the number of dropouts. These challenges limit the ability of rural youth to receive a proper education and put them at a disadvantage when trying to enter the job market.

During a focus group, youth living in Riverine communities described significant barriers due to inadequate and costly river or overland transport to under-resourced schools. Primary level teachers did not have adequate training or knowledge of the peculiarities of the local context, while secondary and third level education options were limited. Curricular content did not fit their Amazonian reality, and young people felt their traditional knowledge was undervalued by the formal education system. An interest in entrepreneurship was evident, but young people highlighted a lack of technical, financial, or logistical support for community-based tourism or value-added farming.

Young Brazilians living in rural settings told of difficulties accessing schools, not just for logistics reasons but due to security risks from illegal miners or farmers. Lack of financial resources to sustain commutes or subsistence in far-away cities were reasons cited for drop-outs.

In individual interviews, Indigenous youth similarly reported territory as a defining factor for education outcomes: nearly all interviewees reported having to leave their communities to attend school, contending with cultural dislocation, linguistic obstacles, and unreliable transport, along with precarious digital access within their communities. Indigenous youth told researchers of bullying and exclusion in school settings.

Young disabled Brazilians also described their schooling as a time when they suffered a lot of bullying from colleagues. In a focus group, they pointed to a lack of preparedness among teaching staff in basic and university education, as well as physical and infrastructural impediments.



‘Literacy is a real challenge for us, because many of our fishermen can’t read or write. And without that, how can anyone get training? How can you become qualified if you can’t read, have no education, and don’t know how to write your own name?’

We need more opportunities to bring in teachers to work with our communities. There are classrooms here standing empty. At night, our local school doesn’t offer classes — lessons are only available during the day. And we really need those opportunities, especially for the older Riverine fishers who still have the desire to learn to read and write, but never had the chance. They’ve spent their whole lives on the rivers, and now they’re here — unemployed — precisely because of that.

Even those among us who can read, who have some education, are still struggling. They’re unemployed, hungry, in need — because their whole lives they worked in fishing, in planting, in river life. And today, they have no opportunities because they don’t have formal education.

Let’s be honest — even people who do have education are finding it hard to get a job. There’s a lot of unemployment.’

**Riverine female (functional illiterate), 35
North of Brazil, focus group**



‘What we have is a run-down education system, where if a student wants to go to university, they really have to push themselves, and it’s down to the teachers to give extra support — even when the school has no infrastructure, no materials to help that student keep up with the topics being taught outside our territory.’

Indigenous female, 23

Northeast of Brazil, individual interview

‘My literacy process was quite difficult because I always studied in public schools, and the teachers weren’t trained — they weren’t qualified. Many times, I was just left in a corner drawing because they didn’t know how to teach me how to read and write.’

Disabled female (visually impaired), Black, 21

Northeast of Brazil, focus group

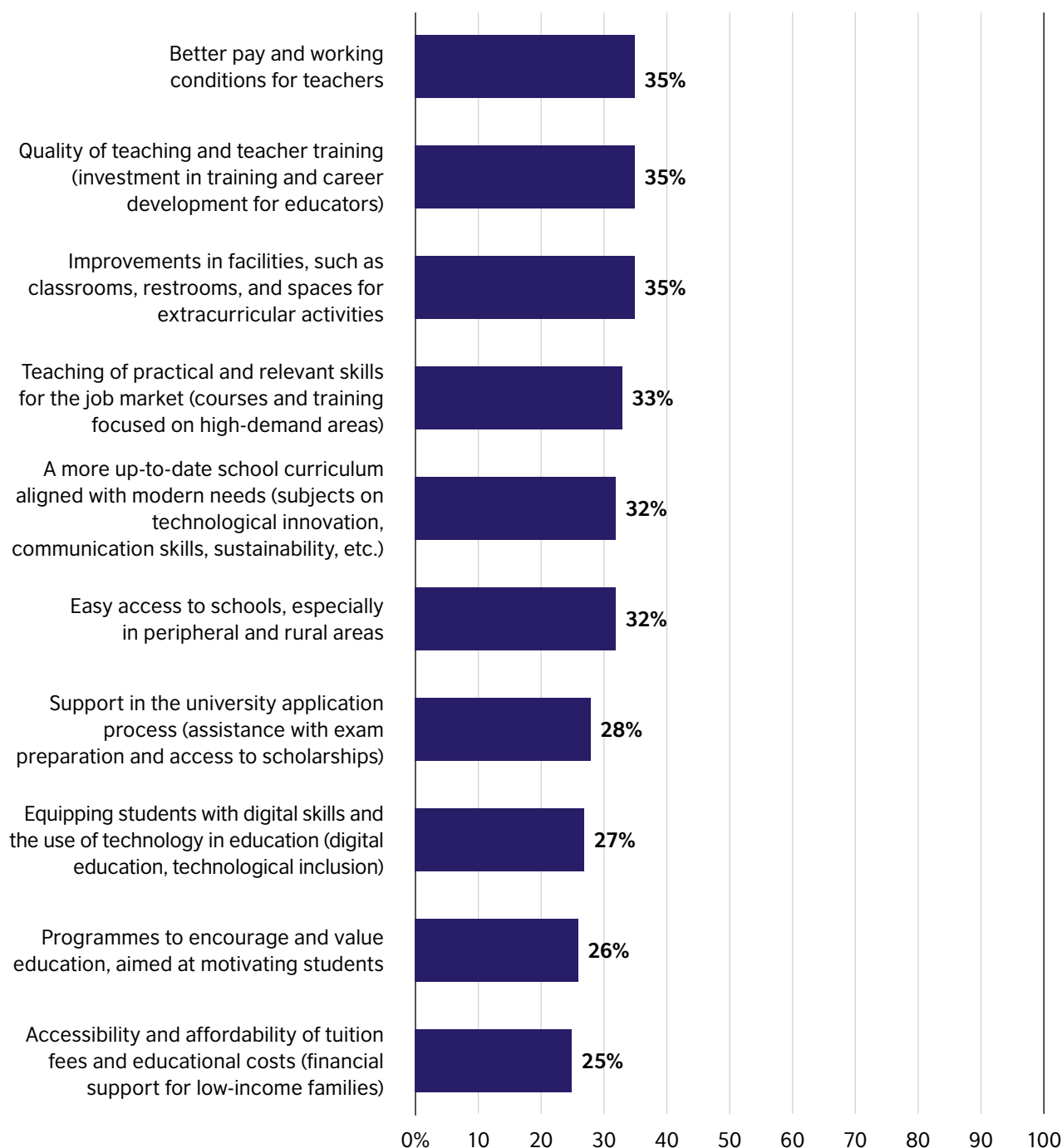


Youth demands to improve the education system

Brazilian youth want increased investment in education, with better pay and conditions for teachers, including training and career development, as well as infrastructural improvements in schools. Young people want modernised curricula with practical and relevant skills, like communication and sustainability, with a focus on high-demand career areas.

Young people’s views mirror reports from the labour market. A 2022 study of companies identified significant gaps in the vocational and technical training of young Brazilians (IET, [2025](#)). Most companies (82 per cent) struggle to find qualified young candidates; 76 per cent reported that young people were poorly informed about careers and the labour market; 68 per cent noted a lack of suitable courses; while 59 per cent believed that existing courses were not aligned with job market needs.

Next Generation Brazil youth aged 31–35 were more likely to call for improved conditions for teachers (42 per cent), while school facilities were the main concern shown by ages 16–18 (40 per cent). One in three (32 per cent) of those aged 16–24 identified a need for more support in university application processes, including help with exam preparation and access to scholarships, a demand echoed by 23 per cent of those aged 31–35. A quarter (26 per cent) of all young people interviewed said specific programmes were needed to motivate students and encourage them to value education.

Figure 20: Youth demands to improve Brazil's education system*

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose up to five options from a list of 14, or suggest their own

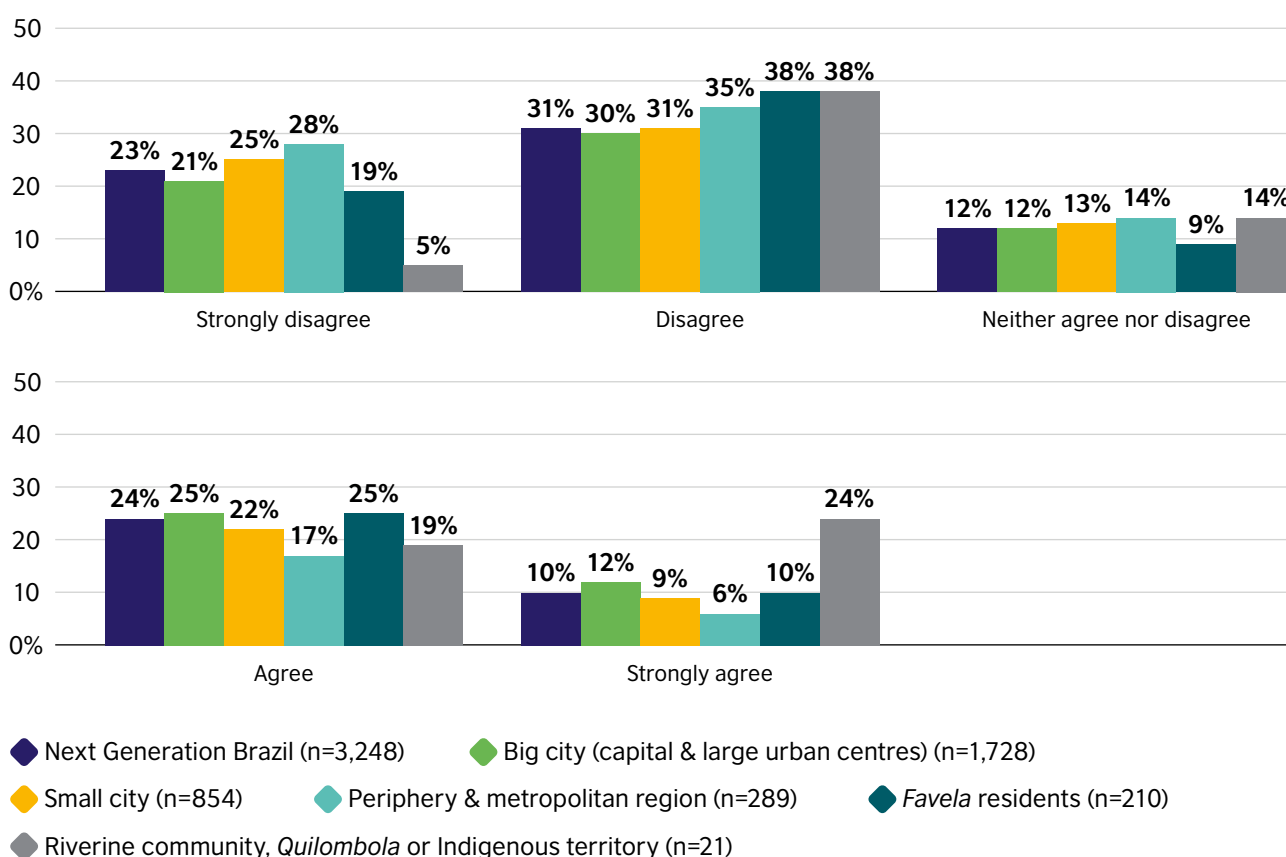
The digital divide

The Covid-19 pandemic inadvertently shone a light on Brazil's digital divide, as private institutions adapted fairly seamlessly to online classrooms without massive disruption. Many had already started to sample digital resources (despite a legal limit on the amount of content that can be taught online), and students had access to a phone or computer with stable internet access. In contrast, young people in peripheries and in high-urban-density or rural locations very often did not have trustworthy internet or data and/or a mobile device to join online classes, if offered. Many public school teachers faced similar internet precarity, along with a lack of pedagogical training or resources to suddenly become virtual instructors.

Youth leaders mentioned the transformative potential of distance education, especially for rural workers, who could now complete training courses and postgraduate studies despite nomadic lifestyles. However, poor connectivity in rural regions was cited as an ongoing issue, along with digital literacy issues and a need for data analysis and critical thinking skills. Considerable regional discrepancies in internet coverage severely limit many schools from teaching digital skills (if they have functioning equipment).

More than half (54 per cent) of Next Generation Brazil youth surveyed did not think their school provided sufficient training to improve their digital skills, with very little variation per age group (50 per cent of ages 16–18; 55 per cent among ages 19–30; 53 per cent of ages 31–35), perhaps suggesting that very little has changed in recent years. In metropolitan and peripheral regions, 63 per cent were not impressed with the digital preparedness they received at school, a view shared by 57 per cent in *favela* communities, down to 51 per cent in large cities.

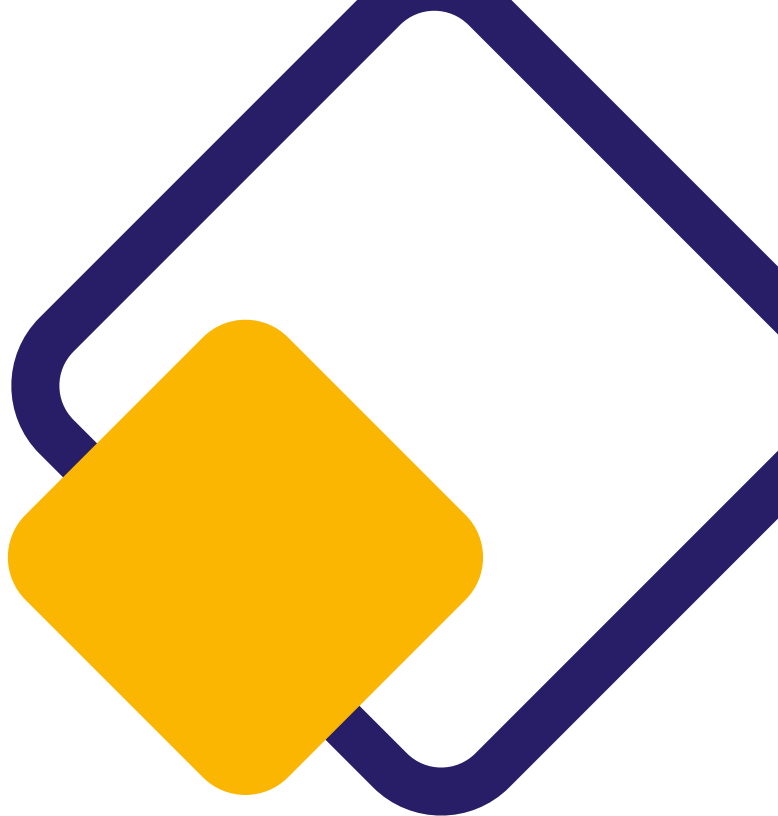
Figure 21: Youth appraisal of digital skills training in schools*



Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. *How much do you agree with this statement: 'My school offered sufficient training opportunities to enhance my digital skills.' Survey respondents could choose one response from a Likert scale of five options.

Lower earners expressed stronger negative sentiment in this regard, with 54 per cent of minimum wage workers disagreeing that their school offered sufficient digital skills training, as compared to 42 per cent of those earning more than ~GBP £1,350, potentially corresponding to attendance at public schools. However, this cannot be stated as fact, as survey participants were not asked whether they attended public or private schools. Among informal workers, 62 per cent of street vendors and 60 per cent of app workers did not think their schooling prepared them adequately with digital skills.

Brazilian youth were in agreement (83 per cent) that improving their digital skills would lead to better job opportunities, echoed by 86 per cent of street vendors and just 64 per cent of app workers. Most (92 per cent) of those earning more than ~GBP £1,350 agreed that such skills would boost employment chances, a sentiment shared by 78 per cent of those on a minimum monthly wage. Meanwhile, 71 per cent were self-taught, learning their digital skills informally through online tutorials. Those aged 19–30 were more likely to have learned by themselves (73 per cent) than their younger counterparts aged 16–18 (62 per cent).



‘When we think about the Basic Education System, we see that it is a system which, particularly over the past four years due to the pandemic, has recently undergone a process of integrating technology into the classroom to meet the specific needs of that period.

It is important to reconsider not only the use of technology in the teaching and learning process, but also how we can embrace the social changes affecting young people and the labour market, and how these young people want to see themselves represented within the school environment.

We can consider educational pathways that offer a contextualised curriculum, bringing the knowledge of the young person and the territory in which they live into the school setting, as well as supporting the implementation of Laws 10,639 and 11,645.’

Karolina Kass
SETA Project



‘Within our community, we have the internet, but it doesn’t even come close to the internet in the city. And that really makes access to the internet difficult, right? Sometimes people put out forms for Indigenous people to fill in. But how is an Indigenous person supposed to fill in a form if the internet in the community doesn’t work, there’s no signal, and the only option is Wi-Fi? So how is an Indigenous person meant to access a form when the Wi-Fi doesn’t even load properly? It’s complicated. The Wi-Fi in the community isn’t good at all. If you’re relying on it, you’re lost.’

Indigenous female, 20

North of Brazil, individual interview

The Ministry of Education highlighted the Connected Education Innovation Programme (PIEC, MEC, [2024](#)), enacted in 2021, which ‘encourages the training of teachers and school leaders in pedagogical practices that incorporate and make use of technology, as well as ensuring broad access to high-quality digital educational resources,’ adding that educators had autonomy to choose what technologies to use.

A post-graduate diploma ‘Digital Education and Pedagogical Innovation in Basic Education’ was launched in March 2025 as part of the ‘National Connected Schools Strategy’ (*Estratégia Nacional de Escolas Conectadas / Enec*), offering 5,000 places (Gov.br (xvi), [2025](#)). The overall strategy, launched in 2023, purports to coordinate various existing policies and actions towards ‘universal access to quality internet connectivity for both pedagogical and administrative use in public basic education schools across Brazil by 2026.’ A Digital Teaching Knowledge Framework was launched in August 2024 to lay out digital knowledge concepts and help teachers to plan classes (Gov.br (xvii), [2024](#)).

The Federal Government is aware of the need to close the digital divide and needs to ensure funding is available to the adequate roll out of programmes and the necessary dissemination in the different territories.



‘The Ministry of Education Secretariat for Basic Education (MEC/SEB) has already begun providing technical assistance to support state education departments (in 2024) and municipal departments (from 2025) in implementing pedagogical innovation plans involving the strategic use of digital technologies in teaching and learning, as well as integrating digital education into the curriculum.

The aim is to create collaborative spaces and support the continuous professional development of education professionals. These efforts focus on training school leaders, technical staff, and teachers for the pedagogical use of technology, while respecting the diversity of educational contexts and local realities. MEC is also working to make high-quality educational resources available to support technology-mediated teaching and learning, enabling students to develop their digital competencies.’

Ministry of Education and Culture

by email, May 2025



Young Apprentices

Nearly 650,000 young people (aged 14–24) were registered in a national Young Apprentice programme in March 2025 (Gov.br (xviii), [2025](#)). More than half (53 per cent) of the young people currently engaged in this temporary work programme, affiliated with programmes in more than 4,000 entities nationwide, are female, with 48 per cent aged 17 and under, while more than half (57 per cent) self-declare as Black or mixed-race.

However, despite legal quotas (5–15 per cent of workforce), many companies do not participate, or use the programme as a means to attract short-term cheap labour, offering little career progression or integration into full-time employment.

Youth leaders pointed to this programme as a valuable potential entry point into the labour market, but complained that opportunities are not evenly spread across Brazil. They said the programme's impact is also weakened when apprenticeships fail to provide real career progression or financial security, and identified an absence of targeted policies for older youth, who have finished school, but remain outside the formal job market with few pathways for inclusion.

Analysis of the location of training institutes affiliated with the programme on a national basis appears to show an over-concentration in the South of Brazil, for example, with the opposite apparent in the North and Northeast of the country.



‘We see that [Jovem Aprendiz / Young Apprentice Programme] doesn’t even reach three or four per cent of these young people. So the young person leaves, I would say, hopeless. If we can use that word, because they don’t believe in the system, that the system supports their future. So he goes out looking for secondary jobs, he goes out looking to earn money because he needs to earn money, but he ends up taking jobs that don’t represent professional advancement.’

‘When we look at the countryside, there are no young apprentices, right? So “Jovem Aprendiz” is a programme for the capitals of Brazil, you don’t have it in the countryside. When we look at the northern region, it’s almost like a pink macaw, it doesn’t exist.’

Vandré Brilhante

CIEDS, Southeast of Brazil

‘Productive inclusion represents a challenge for young people, especially women and young Black people. Furthermore, the group between 25 and 29 years of age is rarely covered by public policies, despite being crucial, since entry into the formal market after the age of 29 is significantly reduced.’

Natália Di Ciero Leme Quadros

Arymax Foundation

Figure 22: Young apprentice training units in Brazil

Region	Number of training units	Percentage of training units	Percentage of population aged 16–35
North	219	5%	9%
Northeast	772	19%	28%
Centre-West	377	9%	8%
South	915	23%	14%
Southeast	1756	43%	20%

Source: Ministry of Work and Jobs (Gov.br (xviii), [2025](#))

Skills for employability

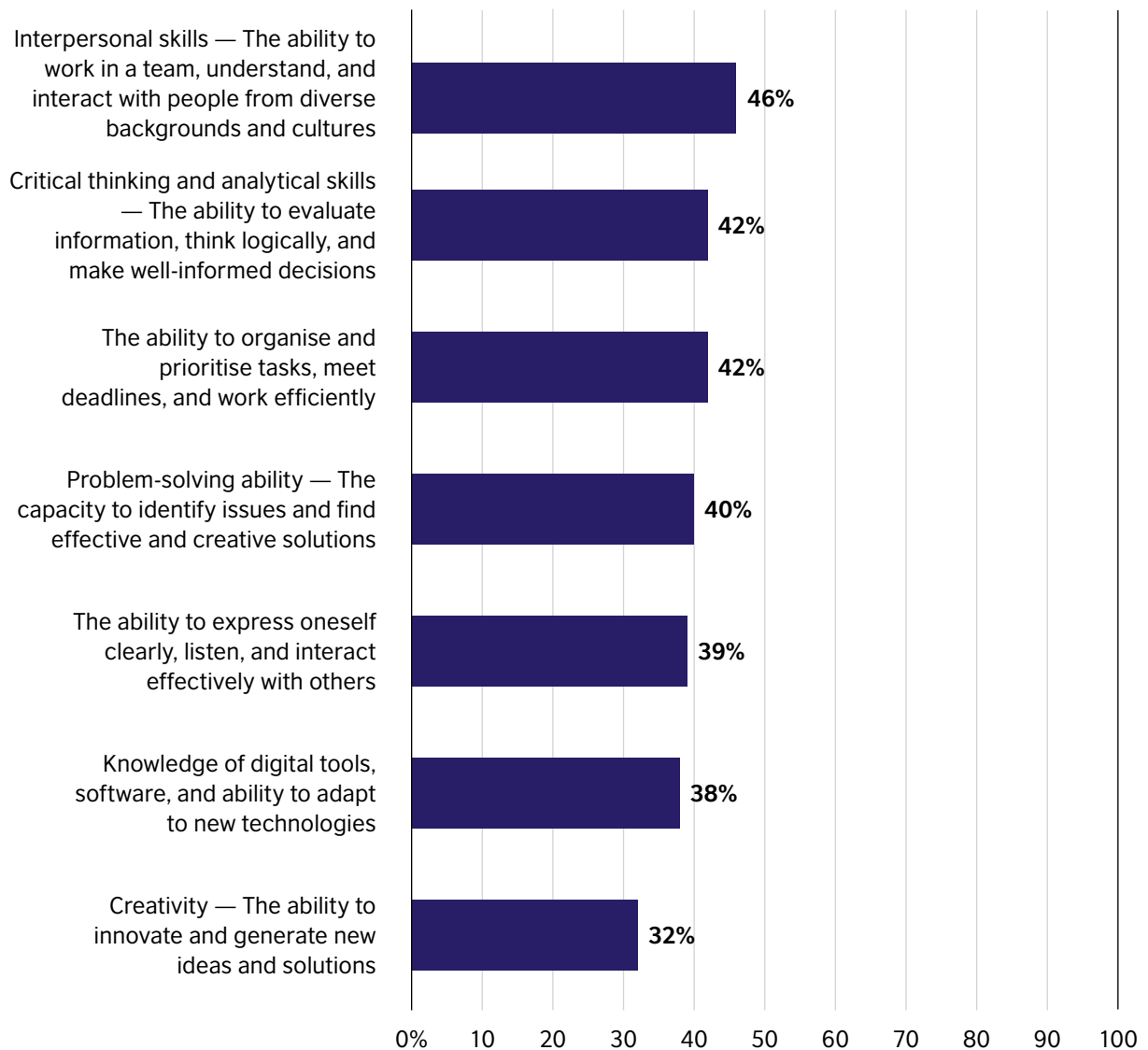
Nearly half (46 per cent) of all young people interviewed for Next Generation Brazil identified interpersonal skills as vital for employment, with those aged 31–35 valuing this aspect slightly higher (50 per cent) than their younger counterparts (38 per cent among ages 16–18). Women (cis and trans combined) valued interpersonal skills in the workplace more than men (52 per cent / 41 per cent). Interestingly, only 21 per cent of app workers selected this as a most-needed skill, compared to 41 per cent of informal vendors.

Critical and analytical thinking skills are considered important by young Brazilians, alongside organisational skills (general efficiency and ability to prioritise tasks and deadlines). Again, older youth give a higher value to such skill sets, presumably based on their own life and work experience to date, with 44 per cent of those aged 31–35 selecting critical and analytical thinking as most-needed at work, compared to 35 per cent of teenagers. Problem-solving, clear communication skills, and knowledge of digital tools were other top skills identified by young people across Brazil.

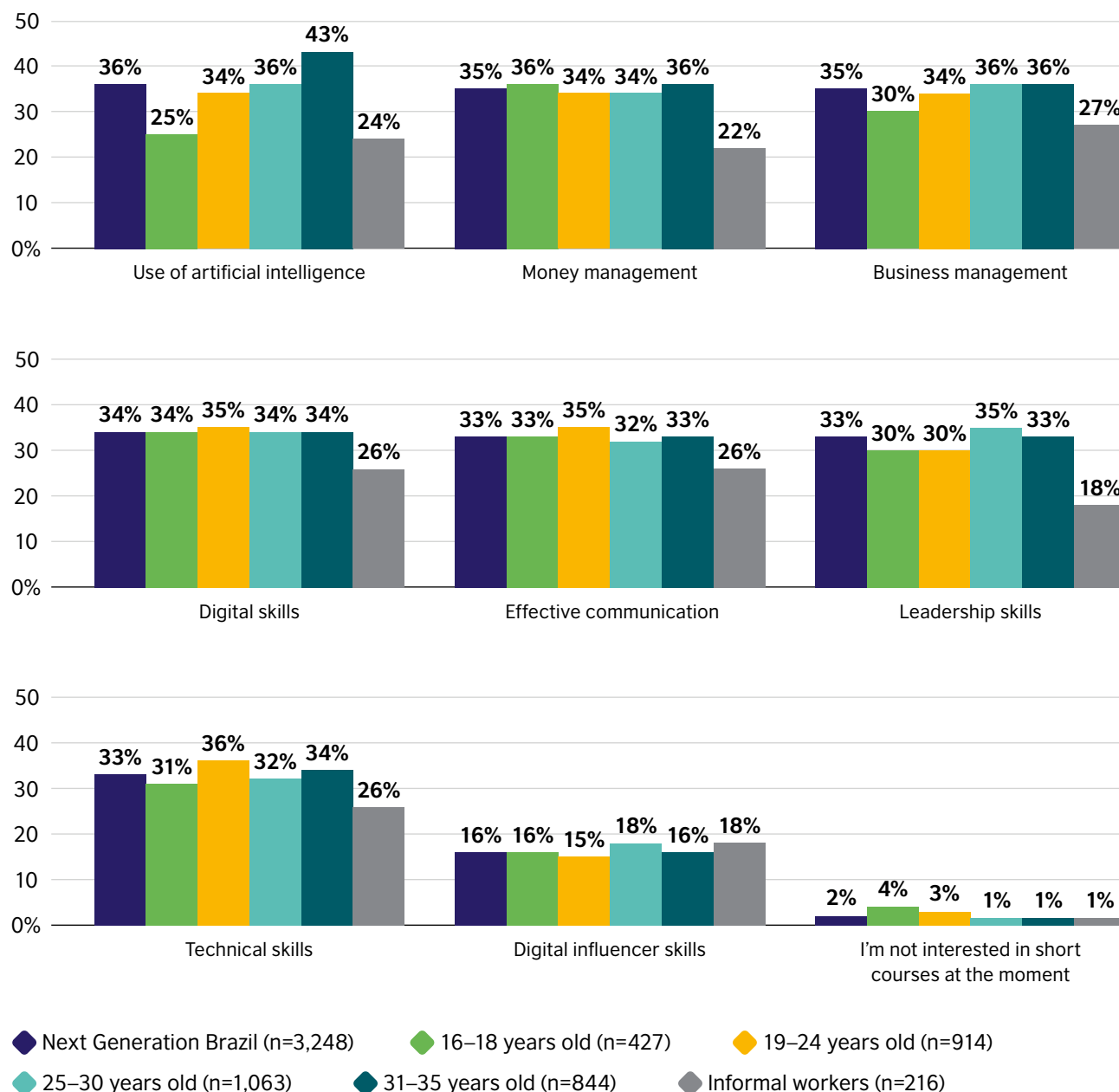
The acquisition of artificial intelligence (AI) skills is the area that most young Brazilians (36 per cent) prioritise in order to make themselves more employable. Interestingly, AI is of much more interest to the 31–35 age cohort (43 per cent) than to those aged 16–18 (25 per cent), who express a stronger interest in general digital skills (34 per cent). No palpable gender difference was noted, with AI chosen by 37 per cent of men (cis and trans) and 35 per cent of women (cis and trans).

Young people living in big cities (41 per cent) had more interest in learning about AI than those in smaller cities and metropolitan or peripheral areas (33 per cent / 32 per cent) or in rural areas (22 per cent), while only one in five (20 per cent) of those living in *favelas* expressed this interest. Those in the higher income bands, earning more than ~GBP £760 per month, had a stronger interest (52 per cent) than those on the minimum wage (31 per cent).

Brazilian youth also want financial and business management courses, while digital skills, effective communication, and leadership and technical skills were also identified as useful to increase levels of employability. Interestingly, money management was the top choice for Next Generation Brazil teenagers (aged 16–18), while the top in-demand short course for ages 19–24 related to technical skills. Among informal workers, the most desired areas of learning were in digital skills. Digital influencer skills ranked as least important along all age cohorts. Only two per cent of survey respondents said they were not interested in short courses to improve their employability at the time of data collection.

Figure 23: Skills considered important for employment*

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose up to five options from a list of 11, or suggest their own.

Figure 24: Short courses to increase employability*

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose as many options as they liked from a list of 13, or suggest their own

Education, skills and the digital divide: Key research takeaways

- One in four survey participants had an undergraduate degree, while one in five had postgraduate qualifications. Half of young people said their highest level of education was high school or technical school. Financial constraints, family responsibilities, lack of local opportunities, commuting issues, and poor institutional support are key barriers to continued education, while many Brazilians left school early to work. Half of the young people surveyed aged 19–24 have no university qualifications and are not currently studying. In fact, six per cent of this age group never progressed to secondary level education.
- Over half of the surveyed youth felt their education prepared them well or very well for work, with higher earners rating their education higher than lower earners. Territorial differences were noted — 68 per cent of those living in *favela* communities do not think Brazil offers quality education, echoed by 58 per cent of youth in metropolitan and peripheral areas and 77 per cent of app workers interviewed in the quantitative phase.
- Additionally, more than half of young survey respondents did not think their school provided sufficient training to improve their digital skills. Eight out of ten young participants agreed that improving digital skills would lead to better job opportunities.
- University level qualifications were more common among respondents living in big cities than in peripheries, small cities, *favelas*, and rural areas. White participants were more likely to hold higher education qualifications (51 per cent) than mixed-race youth (38 per cent) or Black Brazilians (28 per cent). Similar discrepancy was noted for masters' level qualifications (23, 14, and 11 per cent respectively).
- The top skills needed for employment were interpersonal skills; critical and analytical thinking skills; alongside organisational competencies. Problem-solving and clear communication abilities were other top skills identified by young people across Brazil, alongside knowledge of digital tools. Young Brazilians unanimously want short courses to boost employability, with AI skills most in demand, followed by financial and business management courses.
- Teachers and education quality: Over one-third of young Brazilians surveyed identified better pay and working conditions for teachers (35 per cent) and improved quality of teaching and teacher training (35 per cent) as top priorities for raising education standards. These findings highlight a strong demand for greater investment in teacher development and support across the country.
- Earning differences were noted depending on gender and ethnicity. Among those with undergraduate degrees, cis Black women earned 70 per cent less than cis white men with the same qualification, while cis Black women with masters' diplomas or equivalent reported earning 65 per cent less than cis white men with the same education level.



Chapter 3

Employment, entrepreneurship and informality

The chapter looks at the levels of unemployment among Next Generation Brazil youth and explores young Brazilians' opinions relating to the formal workplace. Low salaries that are below expectations and below basic living needs was the main complaint that emerged from quantitative data, while personal testimonies gleaned through focus groups and interviews illustrated the difficulties faced by many young Brazilians, increasing their social isolation.

Entrepreneurship is not a simple concept in Brazil, and lines can be blurred with the realities of labour market informality. This chapter examines the appetite for opening their own business among young Brazilians. It explores the intricate bond between entrepreneurship and informality in Brazil by showing self-employment as an economic necessity when formal employment opportunities remain unavailable. The research demonstrates how marginalised Brazilian youth — from *favelas*, rural areas, Indigenous, transgender, and disabled communities — choose informal entrepreneurship due to structural labour market barriers, operating without access to credit and with insufficient business training.

The research combines statistical data with personal stories from a range of informal workers to show how young Brazilians experience financial insecurity, excessive workloads, and administrative challenges while they pursue self-sufficiency. Research findings clearly show the requirement for policies that support sustainable and equitable entrepreneurial development.



'I really like a quote from Artemisia: "Between making money and changing the world, I choose both." Why can't we change the world and make money at the same time? The great question is how to make this fit.

How to intertwine the transformation of lives, not only our own, but also those of other people, with the possibility of living with dignity and financial stability. I often say that the difference between poverty and wealth is not money, but dignity. There are many financially rich people who live in poverty. Poverty of mind, poverty of purpose, poverty of dignity.'

Eraldo Noronha,
Northeast of Brazil, Associação VOAR



Unemployment and the world of work

Brazil recently boasted the lowest unemployment levels for a first-quarter period in 13 years, at seven per cent. Almost eight per cent of Brazilian women were unemployed at the start of 2025, compared to just under six per cent of men, while unemployment among white Brazilians was below the national average (5.6 per cent), and above for Black (8.4 per cent) and mixed-race (eight per cent) Brazilians (IBGE (xi), [2025](#)).

In Next Generation Brazil, one in ten (11 per cent) young people reported that they are currently unemployed — with 17 per cent of unemployed youth aged 16–18 and 35 per cent aged 19–24. A quarter (26 per cent) of the unemployed youth were aged 25–30 and 23 per cent aged 31–35. Seven per cent of youth in big cities are unemployed, as are 14 per cent in small cities; 13 per cent in peripheral and metropolitan regions; rising to 24 per cent for young people in rural communities. While seven per cent of white Brazilians surveyed are currently unemployed, this rises to 12 per cent among mixed-race youth and to 13 per cent with Black young people.

IBGE data shows that unemployment rates for those with incomplete high school education exceeded 11 per cent, closer to eight per cent for those with high school diplomas, and more than twice the unemployment rate of those with a university level qualification (under four per cent). Among the unemployed youth in Next Generation Brazil, ten per cent had not completed secondary level schooling, while one in four (22 per cent) had university qualifications, perhaps illustrating a mismatch between educational attainment and labour market absorption.

Official statistics suggest stark regional disparities, with an unemployment high of nearly 12 per cent in the Northeastern state of Pernambuco, compared to just three per cent in the Southern state of Santa Catarina (IBGE (xi), [2025](#)). Next Generation Brazil data showed distinct regional variation too. While just six per cent of survey respondents in the South of Brazil were unemployed, this rose to 14 per cent both in the North and Northeast

While national results seem positive, dropping unemployment levels may be linked to increased labour market informality, precarious working conditions, and subsequent exemptions from Brazil's labour laws and social security, an issue discussed later in this report.

'Nem-Nem' (neither-nor) is the colloquial term used in Brazil to describe young Brazilians who neither study nor work, amounting to more than 10 million young people (15–29) in 2023, nearly half of whom (45 per cent) were Black or mixed-race women (IBGE (xii), [2024](#)). While nem-nems account for one in five (21 per cent) of this age cohort, it is the lowest figure since records began in 2012.

Fourteen per cent of young people surveyed for this research were neither studying nor employed. One in five (21 per cent) of youth surveyed who did not proceed past primary level schooling were outside the labour market (unemployed or stay-at-home), as were 21 per cent of those that did not proceed past secondary level schooling.

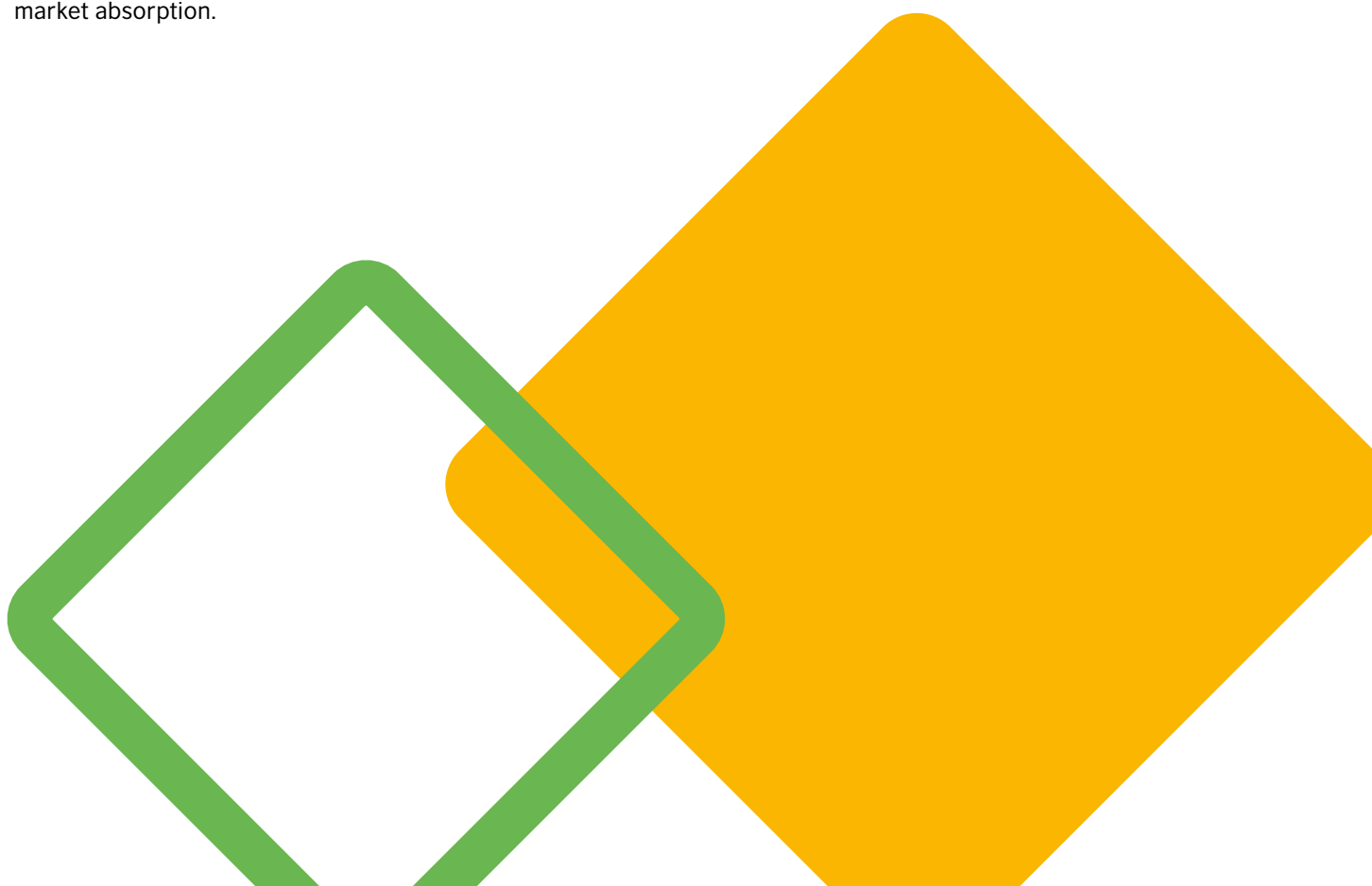
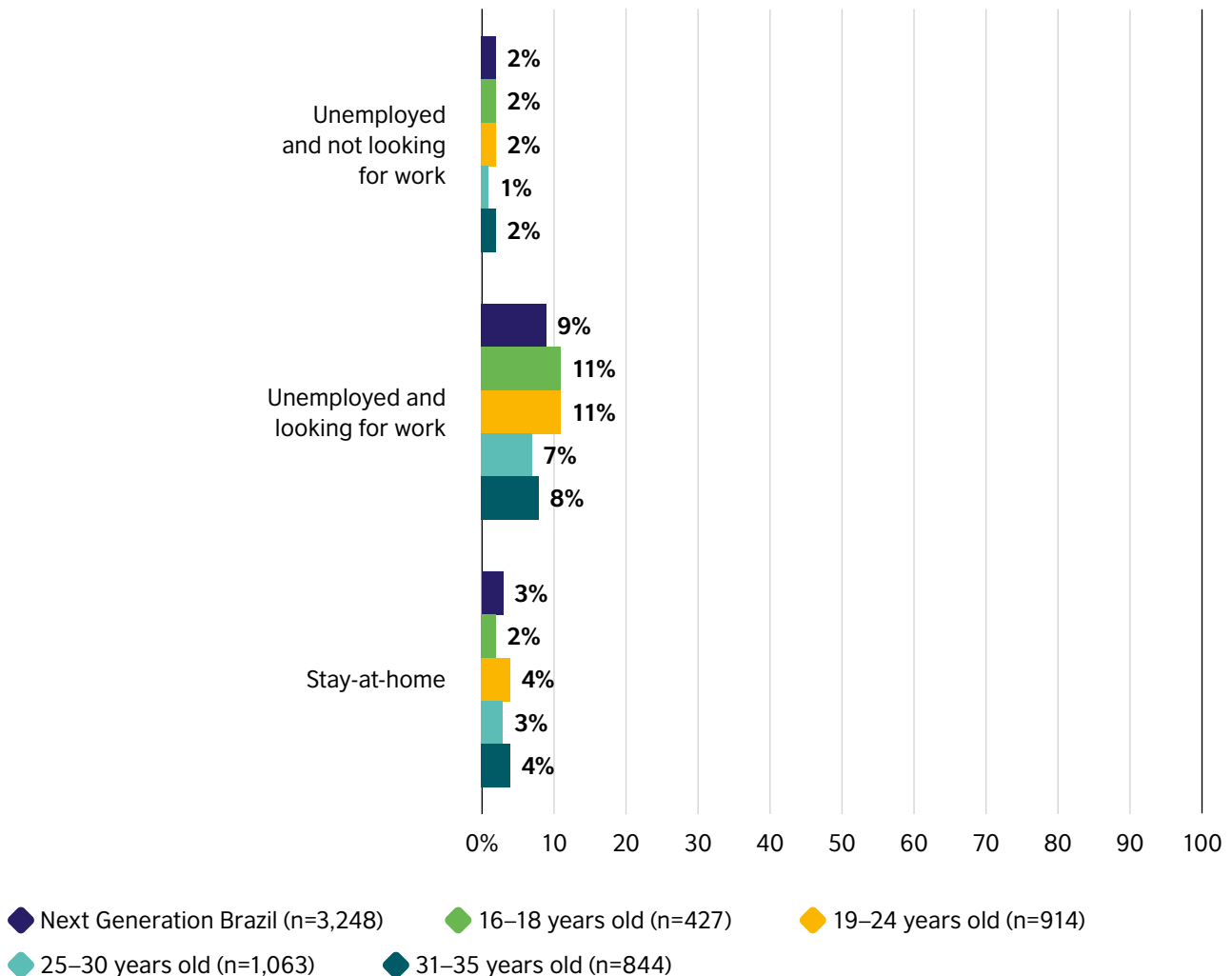


Figure 25: Brazilian youth outside the labour market

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025

Teens in the labour market

A 2023 study of youth in São Paulo peripheries found that more than 70 per cent of school-age youth worked while studying (42 per cent started work before the age of 16) (*Juventudes Potentes*, 2023). A *Juventudes Potentes* (Empowered Youth) report showed that young people who don't feel prepared for university entrance exams access a job market that offers unsustainable roles with no prospect of career progression (*Juventudes Potentes*, 2023).

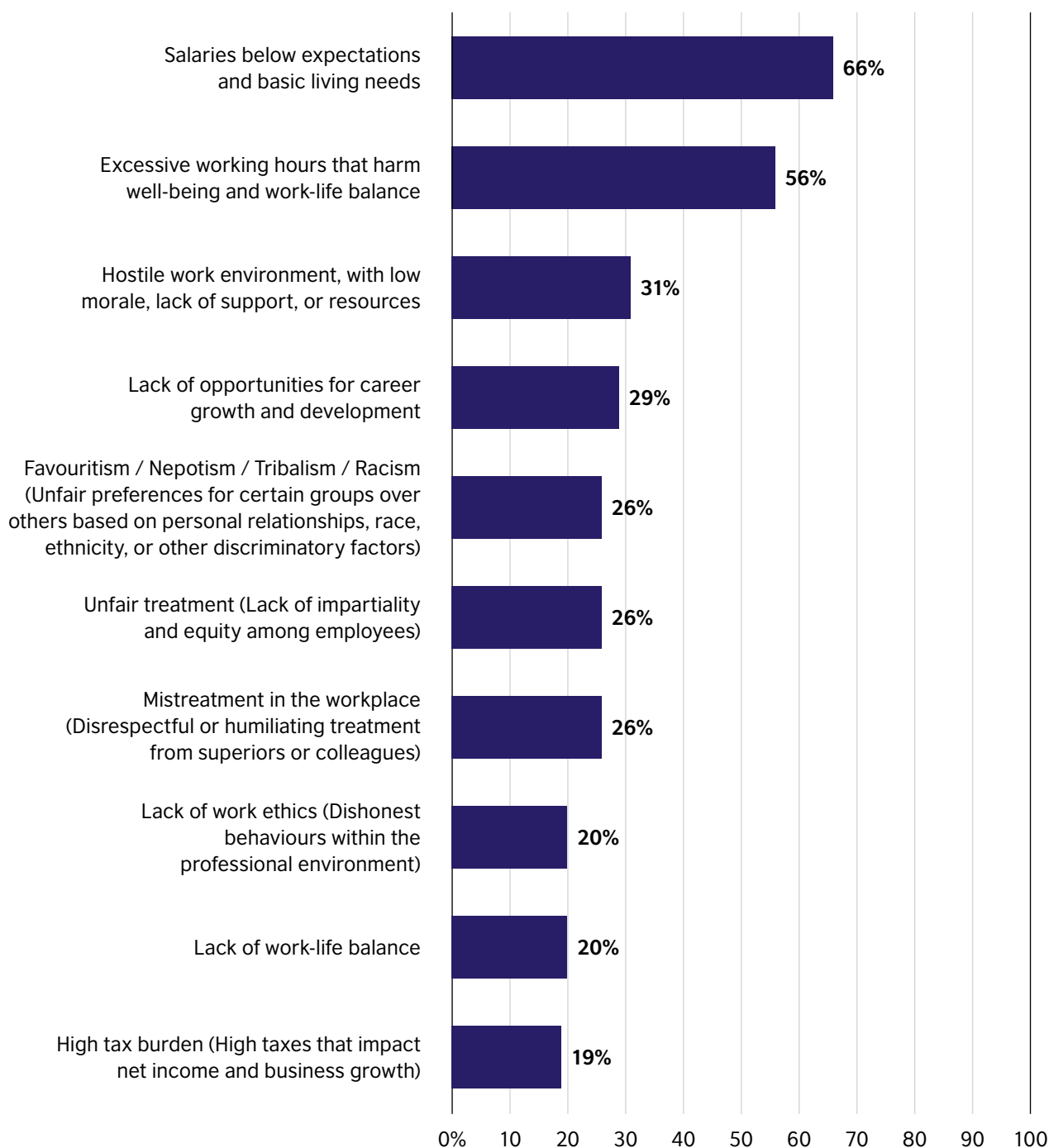
IBGE data shows that 15 per cent of Brazilian 16- and 17-year-olds are already working, with over 73 per cent in informal roles (IBGE (xiii), 2024). A third (34 per cent) work in activities classified as 'hazardous' — it is expressly prohibited for under 18-year-olds to work in activities that may negatively impact their health, security, or morality (Diário Fiscal, 2008) — while a similar proportion (31 per cent) work more than 40 hours per week. This is in stark contrast to the lives of other Brazilian youth born into wealthy families, with a range of household staff to tend to their daily needs and take care of all household chores.

Mirroring national statistics, 17 per cent of Next Generation Brazil interviewees aged 16–18 reported that they were working, with 13 per cent of those reporting that they are either selling goods on the street or working for an app, while 15 per cent were neither working nor studying. Four out of ten working teens had permanent full-time jobs (CLT).

Workplace appraisals

Brazil's job market emerged with a scathing report card, ranging from complaints of low salaries to extensive work hours, along with a collection of unsavoury practices. There is great variation in Brazil between the salaries of those with and without third level qualifications, although even that is often not enough to secure a decent job with acceptable conditions — two-thirds (66 per cent) of survey respondents complained that salaries are below their expectations and basic living needs, while more than half (56 per cent) felt that excessive working hours were harmful to wellbeing and to work-life balance.

Figure 26: Main workplace challenges faced by youth*



Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose up to five options from a list of 14, or suggest their own.



‘Our access to employment is already extremely difficult — extremely. Around 90 per cent of our population is still in sex work, and not by choice, but out of compulsion.

And even in the workplaces and spaces we do manage to access, there’s a constant sense of fear — fear of being sabotaged and especially of being persecuted.’

Trans female, Black, 32
Southeast of Brazil, focus group

‘It is essential to implement actions that promote the qualification and insertion of these young people into the job market, preventing them from reaching 30 or 35 years of age without opportunities for insertion and professional advancement.’

Natália Di Ciero Leme Quadros
Arymax Foundation

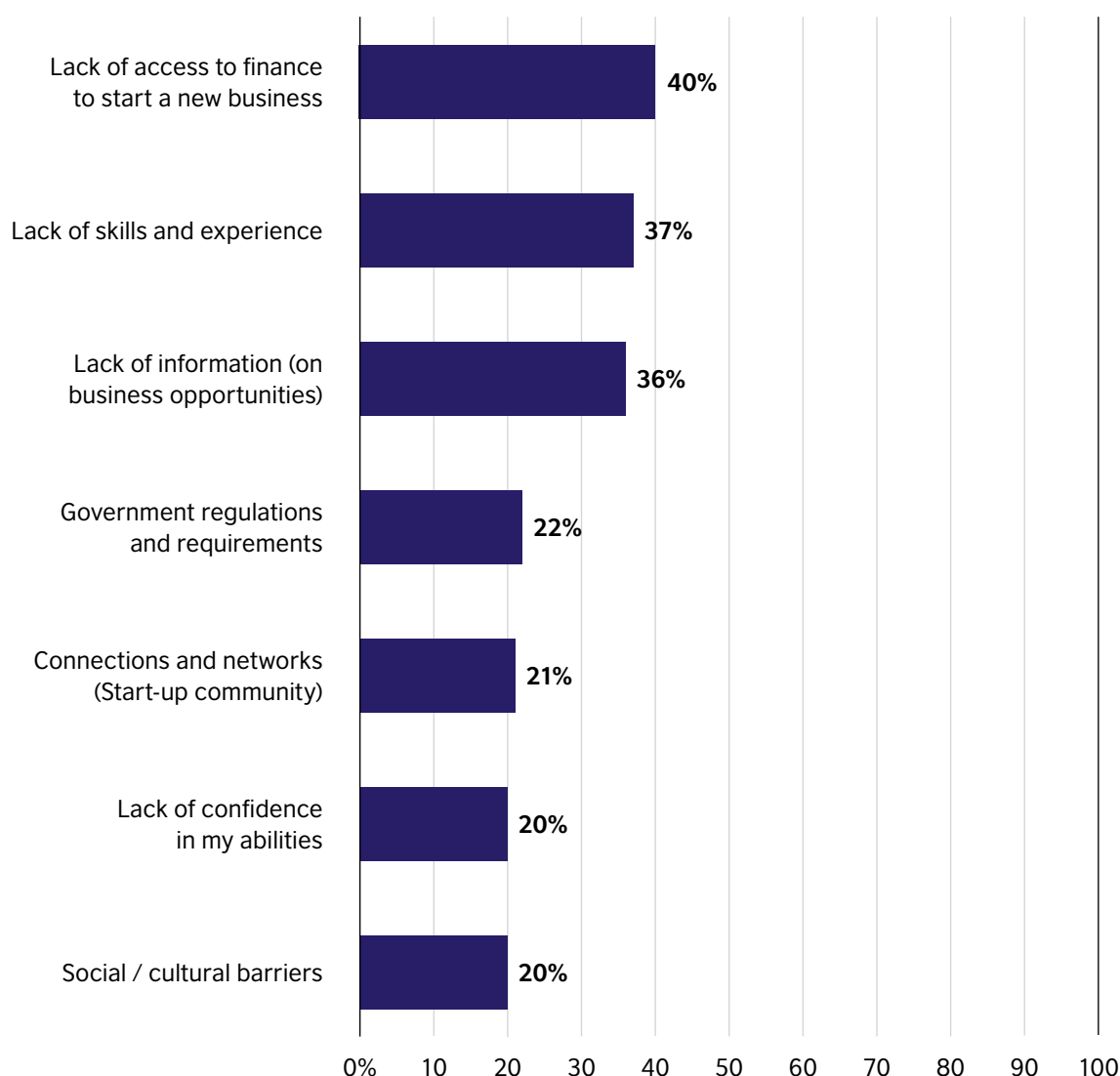
Dreams of enterprise

Seven out of ten (70 per cent) of young Brazilians interviewed at quantitative stage stated a desire (interested or very interested) to start their own business in the next five years, with over 25-year-olds showing the keenest interest (74 per cent), compared to 60 per cent of those aged 16–18. Entrepreneurial interest remained static across most demographic markers, including gender and territory (72 per cent in big cities; 70 per cent in *favelas*; 71 per cent in small cities; and 69 per cent in rural regions).

However, despite such strong interest in entrepreneurship, only five per cent of young people surveyed reported already running a business, with a further nine per cent registered as MEIs (Individual Microentrepreneur). The main barriers to entrepreneurship cited by young Brazilians were a lack of finance (40 per cent) and a skill set deficit (37 per cent), while one in five (20 per cent) cited a lack of confidence in their ability to run a business, and the same proportion reported cultural barriers. A further 11 per cent of youth reported that they are working in informal and non-regulated roles, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Around one-third of Brazilians (33 per cent) were engaged in some form of entrepreneurial activity in 2024, whether formal or informal (GEM, [2024](#)). A 2024 study by Sebrae Rio suggests that two-thirds (66 per cent) of entrepreneurs in Brazil remain informal (ASN, [2024](#)). Meanwhile, a study by think tank FGV suggests that more than half (53 per cent) of MEIs (Individual Microentrepreneur) are actually working as contractors for companies (FGV (i), [2023](#)).



Figure 27: Main barriers to young people starting a business in Brazil*

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose up to three options from a list of 11, or suggest their own.

Community activists corroborated data findings and identified credit barriers as one of the main difficulties for young people starting a business. They advocate for the development of qualified entrepreneurship, facilitating youth access to credit and microcredit and supporting innovative initiatives with technical support.

While entrepreneurship seems to present an alternative in the face of limited access to quality education and scarcity of decent jobs, young people encounter considerable daily challenges in maintaining their small businesses. For example, distance and a lack of training hinder entrepreneurship in rural areas, where youth complain of logistics issues with transporting and selling goods they produce.



‘To advance in this field, it is necessary to promote significant development of entrepreneurial education in the country, with attention to the entrepreneur’s entire journey. It is essential to encourage the training of entrepreneurs who undertake business out of opportunity, rather than entrepreneurs out of necessity, which are predominant in the outskirts and vulnerable territories.

Entrepreneurship must be structured, with access to credit, acceleration, and adequate training, moving away from the concept of informal work or sporadic survival activities. Full monitoring of the entrepreneur’s journey is essential for the success and sustainability of businesses, especially when we are talking about entrepreneurs from the outskirts.’

Natália Di Ciero Leme Quadros

Arymax Foundation

‘Opportunities exist, but they are often not accessed. There are young people who are unable to reach them, and others for whom they simply do not make sense for the moment they are living. The problem is not only the lack of opportunities, but the lack of opportunities connected to the reality of these young people.

I always say that entrepreneurship already exists in the outskirts, in the *favelas*. There are no more entrepreneurial people than those who live in these areas. Because there you are constantly creating ways to survive. That, for me, is entrepreneurship.’

Eraldo Noronha

Associação VOAR, Northeast Brazil

The Ministry of Entrepreneurship, Microenterprises, and Small Businesses acknowledges that young entrepreneurs are blocked by a lack of consistent business planning, limited access to higher education and vocational training, and insufficient knowledge in areas such as financial management and business administration, culminating in difficulties accessing credit. In a note, the Ministry acknowledged a need for specific initiatives for young entrepreneurs, outlining a digital inclusion initiative being planned for small cities (less than 20,000 inhabitants), prioritising youth, women, and socially vulnerable populations.

A National Policy for Micro and Small Enterprises (MPEs) (2024) purports to promote entrepreneurial freedom by providing training to enhance environmentally sustainable productivity and competitiveness, with improved access to credit and technological innovation and support towards the formalisation of businesses (Gov.br (xix), [2024](#)). Meanwhile, the release of credit specifically to Brazilian youth is outlined in a 2019 bill that has yet to be ratified (Chamber of Deputies (ii), [2019](#)), along with a 2023 bill that recommends specific entrepreneurship training for young apprentices, which still awaits (July 2025) the designation of a rapporteur in the Labour Committee (Chamber of Deputies (iii), [2023](#)).



‘Technical and professional training is the main challenge faced by this age group of entrepreneurs. This is reflected in the short lifespan of many businesses, which often close due to technical and financial difficulties — highlighting the state’s failure to provide adequate entrepreneurial training.

There is also a clear demand for qualified labour across various sectors, further reinforcing the argument for greater investment in technical training and skills development for young Brazilians, whether they are entrepreneurs or not.’

**Ministry of Entrepreneurship,
Microenterprises, and Small Businesses**
by email, December 2024

Autonomy at a price

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, some suggest that Brazil’s falling unemployment rates may be linked to higher levels of labour market informality. Official IBGE data showed more than 40 million informal workers in Brazil at the end of 2024, representing nearly 39 per cent of the employed population (IBGE (xiv), [2025](#)). Data from CEBRAP (Brazilian Centre for Analysis and Planning) suggests around 1.7 million people work for apps in Brazil (CEBRAP, [2023](#)). It is estimated that one in four (23 per cent) contribute to INSS, Brazil’s social security system (RPS, [2023](#)).

Meanwhile, one in ten (11 per cent) of Next Generation Brazil youth that reported to be working during quantitative data collection said they were working either in an ‘informal and non-regulated’ role, such as street vendors, or that they were app-based workers. Survey data was collected from 128 young people in the former group and from 85 in the latter cohort. Next Generation Brazil will refer jointly to these two groups as ‘informal workers’, considering the precarity of their roles, exclusion from labour rights, etc. IBGE defines informality similarly as employment relationships that lack formal legal protections, such as a work contract or social security contributions.

‘Brazilianisation’

This term encapsulates a socioeconomic model characterised by a small wealthy elite, with a shrinking middle class, buoyed by a large and precarious working class that does not have access to social protections, where social inequality is the norm (American Affairs Journal, 2021). While labour rights are strong in Brazil, most informal workers are exempt from social protections, and the gig economy continues unregulated, with big tech companies netting billions in profits.

Official statistics from the first quarter of 2025 show that Black people represent 42 per cent of informal workers in Brazil, more than 43 per cent are mixed-race, while less than 33 per cent are self-declared white Brazilians (*Agência Brasil* (v), [2025](#)). Next Generation Brazil demographics are similar, showing 35 per cent of those that indicated informal work as their occupation were Black, while 37 per cent self-declared as mixed-race, along with 25 per cent who were white. More than half (54 per cent) were cis male, three out of four (74 per cent) were over the age of 25 (25–35), while 62 per cent were single.

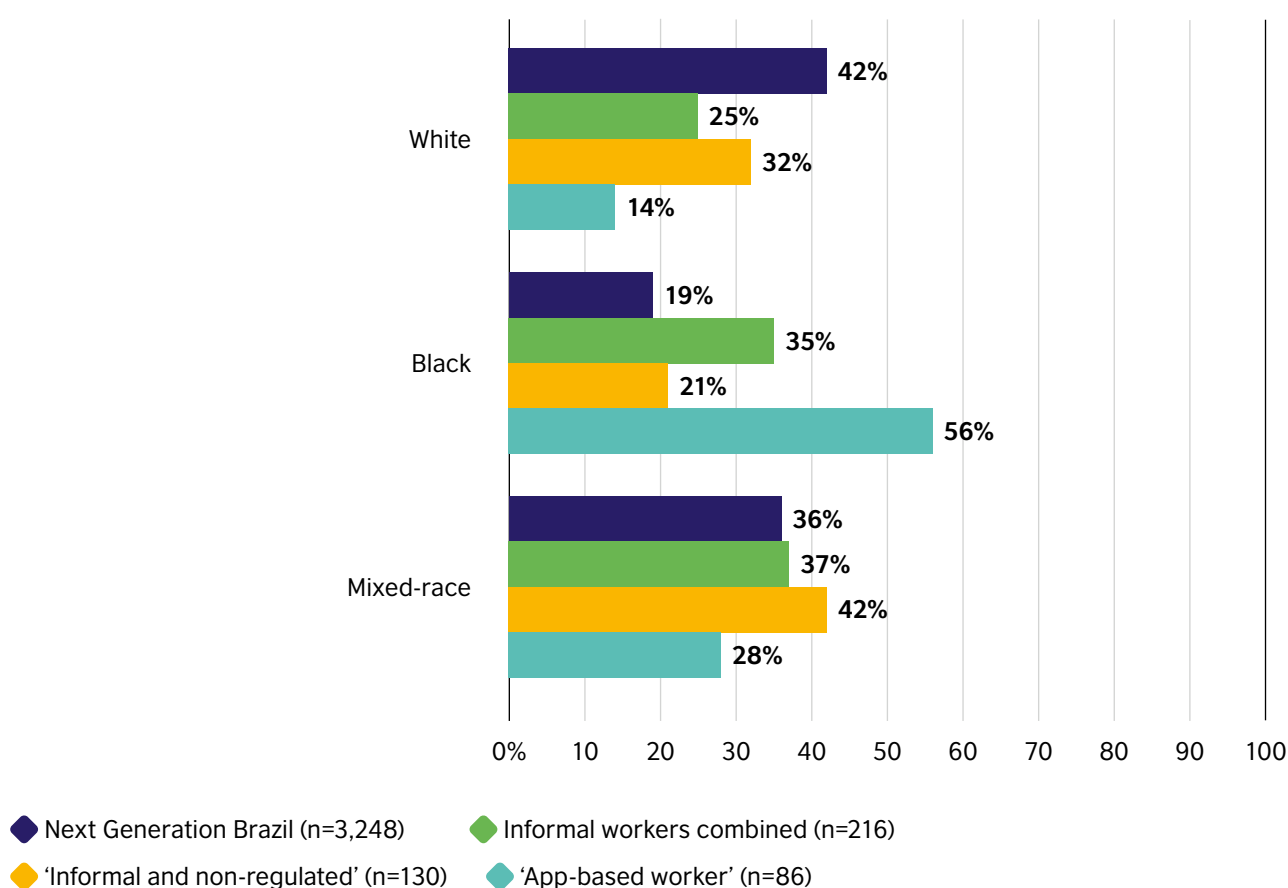
Reports of prejudice and poor treatment highlight the precarious and often violent backdrop for informal work for young Brazilians. Three out of four (77 per cent) informal workers surveyed reported having experienced some form of racial prejudice, while more than half (54 per cent) said they had been treated differently due to their income or economic status.

While 40 per cent of informal workers surveyed live in big cities, one in four (25 per cent) reported living in *favela* communities. Viewed on another axis, almost half (48 per cent) of those with jobs that reported living in the *favelas* worked in informal roles, compared to 11 per cent of the overall youth population, while eight per cent of employed youth in big cities occupied informal roles.

One in four (24 per cent) self-declared informal workers were earning less than the minimum wage, while nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) of informal workers were the main earner in their family or home, with one in three (36 per cent) reporting difficulties making ends meet on the monthly basis, along with a further 31 per cent that generally manage to pay monthly bills but not in any consistent manner. Three-quarters (74 per cent) of those that worked in informal roles did not hold a university qualification, while eight per cent held at least a postgraduate qualification. Financial difficulties and family responsibilities were the main obstacles cited to continuing their education or learning new skills.

While 27 per cent expressed interest in business management, one in four (26 per cent) selected effective communication, digital and technical skills as desirable skills, followed closely by artificial intelligence (24 per cent), financial management (22 per cent), and interpersonal skills (21 per cent). Only one per cent of informal workers reported no interest in short courses, and five per cent were unsure which course would be most useful.

Figure 28: Informal worker ethnic demographics



Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025

In qualitative interviews, app-based workers described initial optimism entering this work modality due to the prospects of flexibility and immediate income, and subsequent challenges including burnout with algorithmic management of work flows, a lack of benefits, and financial instability. With this so-called *uberisation* of work, the worker bears all risk, assumes extensive work hours and often risky situations, with stark realities only hitting home in moments of sickness or injury, when income streams dry up. More than a third of Brazil's passenger transport and goods delivery workforce used motorcycles for work in 2022 (*Agência Brasil* (vi), 2022), a high-risk operation with an average of 13,500 monthly motorcyclist hospitalisations due to road accidents in 2024 and more than 1,200 deaths per month in Brazil in 2023 (ABRAMET, [2025](#)).



‘The digitalisation of the economy and the flexibilisation of labour relations are emerging trends that have increasingly intertwined, resulting in phenomena such as the platformisation of work. Given that a large proportion of those engaged in micro-work through digital platforms are young people, these trends have contributed to rising levels of informality.

Furthermore, the flexibilisation of labour laws has led to reduced earnings and the loss of protective labour rights. In this context, it becomes essential to create conditions that allow young people to build more promising and secure futures.’

The Future of Work for Brazilian Youth,
Arymax Foundation (i), [2023](#)

App workers have started to organise in recent years, advocating for better working conditions and minimum pay rates, with young drivers (more than 48 per cent of app-workers are aged 25–39) holding national strikes across hundreds of Brazilian cities in 2025 (*Guardian* (i), [2025](#); IBGE (xv), [2023](#)). While their demands have been brought to the government and legislative projects are under discussion, tech companies have joined forces to collectively negotiate with the government (Chamber of Deputies (iv), [2025](#); Amobitec, [2019](#)). Unions have dismissed as insufficient their suggestion to create a new category extending certain rights to workers, who remain autonomous, not categorised as employees.

During in-depth interviews, young informal workers expressed a desire for recognition, voice, and fair inclusion in public policy. While autonomy and flexibility were often cited as benefits, these are typically outweighed by systemic precarity, unpredictable income, and exclusion from fundamental rights. A desire for formalisation was evident, but only if it respects their realities — such as the need for flexibility — reduces bureaucracy, and ensures dignity.

The primary motivations for engaging in informal work modalities were a need to supplement income (29 per cent); a desire for greater autonomy and flexibility with work hours (25 per cent); along with a lack of success acquiring a formal job (18 per cent). More nuanced insights were gleaned during qualitative interviews, as street vendors expressed pride in their autonomy and entrepreneurial skills.

Street and beach vendors, embedded in local communities and cultural traditions, rely on interpersonal networks, seasonal commerce, and good weather to survive. Frequent harassment from public authorities was reported, including the confiscation of their goods and tools, causing additional financial pressure and often forcing them into personal debt to replace confiscated materials. Many worked in informality from an early age and saw their trade as part of their identity, but wished for more respectful and inclusive public regulation that acknowledges their role in the urban economy.

Many informal workers clocked 10–12-hour work days, some even more, with young app drivers reporting working for 14–18 hours per day on occasion, which is above the legal daily limit for drivers (*Planalto* (iv), [2015](#)). App-based workers, including ride-hailing drivers and delivery workers, operate in a digital ecosystem where algorithmic control lacks human oversight. While some appreciate the flexibility of choosing their own hours, most feel entrapped by exploitative dynamics of platforms. A strong sense of frustration was witnessed over the disconnect between the promise of digital entrepreneurship and the reality of overwork, debt, and instability.

“

‘I work double shifts every day — it’s like slavery. Twelve, 13 hours a day — some days even 14, when they make me work until one in the morning.

The advantage is that I earn well. The downside is that I’m exposed to risks, like having an accident. And since I don’t have a formal contract, I have to sort things out on my own — if I crash the bike or get hurt, it’s all on me. Another downside is that I spend a lot of time away from home. I can only enjoy myself on my days off. I work long hours — 12, 13 hours a day — so I get home, eat something, sleep, and then it’s straight back to work the next day. I only really get to enjoy life on my days off.’

Male informal worker
(app driver, MEI registered), 19
Southeast of Brazil, individual interview

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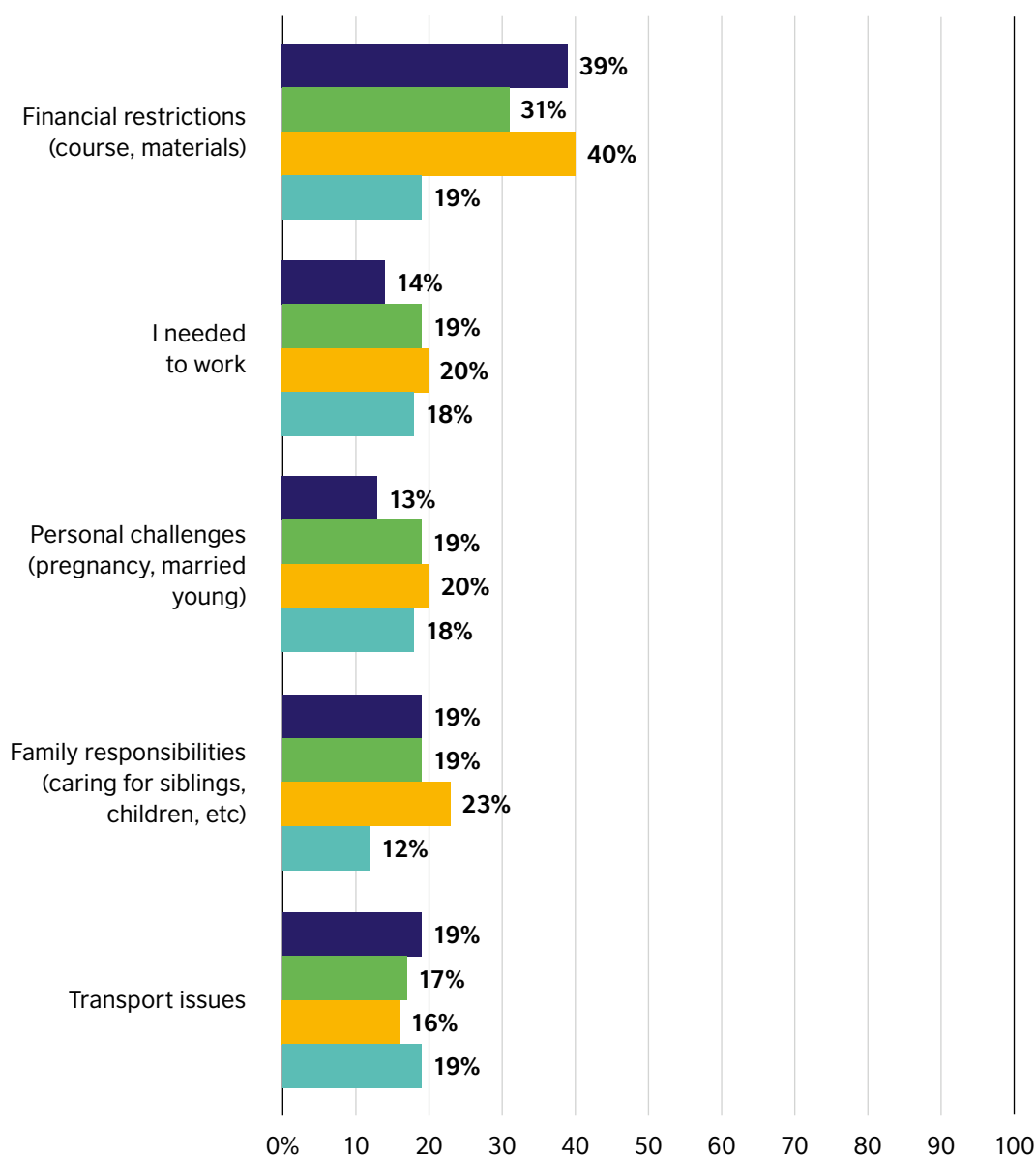
‘The city council takes away people’s tools, seizes barbecue equipment, arrests workers — it’s cowardly. They go after the worker, not the criminal. Sometimes a person loses everything and has to borrow money just to get back to work, ending up in debt just to buy their tools again. Or they have to work for someone else — and it’s really tough having to work for someone else.’

Male informal worker (beach vendor), 29
Southeast of Brazil, individual interview

‘The biggest advantage is that I set my own schedule, so I have time to study and things like that. The downside is that the car can break down and leave you stranded, right? If your car breaks down, you might lose days of work. And there’s also the health issue — if you get injured or something like that, there’s no one to work for you. You have to work for yourself. So you’ll always have to deal with those uncertainties hanging over you like ghosts.’

Male informal worker (app driver),
mixed-race, 23
Southeast of Brazil, individual interview



Figure 29: Informal workers - obstacles to continuing education

◆ Next Generation Brazil (n=3,248)

◆ Informal workers combined (n=216)

◆ 'Informal and non-regulated' workers (n=130)

◆ 'App-based workers' (n=86)

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025

The data reveals a persistent income difference between workers in informal employment and those in full-time (CLT) positions through all age groups. The average monthly earnings of informal workers that were surveyed amounts to ~GBP £380 while full-time employees receive 36 per cent more (~GBP £519). The income difference between formal and informal workers remains constant at 31 per cent across both the 16–18 age group and the 19–24 age group. The largest disparities appear between formal and informal workers in the age groups 25–30 and 31–35, where formal workers earn 118 and 103 per cent more than informal workers, respectively.

Figure 30: Income difference between informal and full-time employees

Age group	Informal workers average monthly income* (n=216)	Informal workers (GBP equivalent)** (n=216)	Full-time (CLT) workers average monthly income* (n=894)	Full-time (CLT) workers (GBP equivalent)** (n=894)
All youth 16–35	BRL \$2,810	£380	BRL \$3,832	£519
16–18	BRL \$1,530	£207	BRL \$2,004	£271
19–24	BRL \$2,209	£299	BRL \$2,899	£392
25–30	BRL \$2,018	£274	BRL \$4,392	£594
31–35	BRL \$2,460	£333	BRL \$4,985	£675

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Weighted mean of income bands. ** Exchange rate GBP £1 = BRL \$7.39 (calculated 19.06.25)

Minority groups pushed into informality

Next Generation Brazil qualitative analysis reveals that young people living in *favelas*, those in rural or Indigenous communities, along with transsexual and transgender youth and young people with disabilities, are pushed into informal roles by a labour market that does not absorb their skills or accept their identity and an education system that does not respond to real industry necessity, along with other challenges.

Focus group participants reported significant difficulties in entering and remaining in the formal job market, entering self-employment as a stopgap means of income generation. A lack of entrepreneurship tools and resources, such as access to credit and financial education, as shown earlier in this chapter, fosters informality and deepens social exclusion.

People with disabilities

Socially excluded young people face further marginalisation within the workforce. A Youth Task Force member from the North of Brazil reported the case of a PwD being allocated the role of removing staples from documents, as though this were all they were capable of. People with disabilities also reported a recurring tension over seeking employment or starting a business due to a fear of losing the BPC (Continuous Cash Benefit / *Benefício de Prestação Continuada*) or other aids. Private sector employment was seen as risky, as salaries may not compensate for the loss of social benefits. In this context, public service exams were cited as a more viable and stable alternative, with PwDs occupying informal roles in the meantime.

Qualitative data showed that 59 per cent of PwDs were working, 21 per cent were students, and 15 per cent neither worked nor studied. Of those that reported they were working, 14 per cent were in informal roles, while 34 per cent had full-time formal employment.

“

‘I recently went through a really frustrating experience related to the job market. I was going to start a teaching placement at [a university] — my degree is in education. I’d passed the selection process at my university with no issues.

But when it got to the interview stage, I was interviewed by three of my professors, and they asked me questions they didn’t ask my other classmates — things like, “Do you really write your own essays?” or “Are you prepared to teach a class of 40 students?”

And I answered, “Yes,” because this is something I’ve always wanted — it’s what I’ve been preparing for. But I didn’t get the placement. I appealed the decision, and the response I got was that I hadn’t been approved because I lacked knowledge of IT — technology.

But what does that even mean? What level of technological knowledge does someone need to teach a class? It just felt like a poor excuse.’

Disabled female (visually impaired), Black, 21
Northeast of Brazil, focus group

Trans youth

Transgender women pointed to the formal labour market as a primary source of pain and exclusion, reporting incidents of prejudice ranging from dismissals after the beginning of the gender transition to the elimination of job applications when their trans identity became evident to employers. Call centres were reported as an exception, due to a lack of direct contact with the public, while informal job roles focused in sectors like beauty, performing arts, and prostitution. Public service competitions were mentioned as one of the only ways to enter the formal job market, due to anonymous hiring processes. A 2022 study showed that less than 17 per cent of transgender people in São Paulo had formal employment (FAPESP (iii), [2020](#)).

“

‘We are capable. We have so much to show. We have so much to offer. When we’re in a job, often we find ourselves in situations where we can’t access better opportunities or better positions — but even so, we push through. We give ourselves strength. I used to work without a contract, without a proper lunch break, from Monday to Saturday.’

Trans female, mixed-race, 21
Northeast of Brazil, focus group



Indigenous youth

Elevated informality (more than 48 per cent) in Indigenous communities is linked to low levels of formal education (Amatra, [2024](#)), and Indigenous youth reported direct and indirect prejudice in the labour market, often tied to a perception that Indigenous people should occupy only basic and stereotyped roles.



‘In the job market, prejudice also exists. It’s as if we only have a place in roles related to our stereotype. To change this, we need policies of inclusion, visibility, and respect for our identity in all spaces.’

Indigenous male, 32
Individual interview



‘We need to work hard to give these young people a chance — because we’re talking about a generation that has no perspective. These days, when I look at most of the young people in my territory, I see a group with no hope for the future, and that makes me really sad.

There are one or two who look at me, see that I’m in university and say, “I want to study too, I want to go to university like you.” But there’s a whole other group that simply can’t leave the territory — not because they don’t want to, but because they don’t have the means. It’s already difficult for those of us who do have a bit of support — so imagine what it’s like when you don’t have any way to support yourself.’

Indigenous female
Northeast of Brazil, individual interview

Riverine communities

Meanwhile, Riverine youth in the North of Brazil struggle to find work outside the community due to a lack of formal qualifications, prejudice, and limited job availability in surrounding cities. There is interest in local entrepreneurship (community-based tourism, value-added forest products), but a lack of technical, financial, and logistical support.



‘Even companies themselves — when a young person goes for a job interview, and they ask where the person lives, and the young person gives their address, they just file the CV away and say, “We’ll be in touch later.” But that “later” never comes. It’s because of the distance — I’m saying this because I’ve heard company managers say it outright. One of them even said it to me.

When I was trying to help my daughter get a job, I practically had to beg — I had to humiliate myself, honestly — to a manager at a certain company just so she could get a chance. Thankfully, she’s employed now.’

Riverine female, (functional illiterate), 35
North of Brazil, focus group

Women in informality

Official data suggests that Brazilian women with children are more inclined to work informally than men with children or childless women (FGV (ii), [2024](#)). Meanwhile, single mothers (it is estimated that there are more than 11 million single mothers in Brazil, who earn 32 per cent less than other women, often triple jobbing, with professional lives, domestic, and child care tasks) face significant barriers, exacerbated by a lack of specific public policies and limited access to credit (Globo, [2023](#); Carta Capital, [2025](#)). Many are driven into informality out of necessity, especially in sectors like beauty and services, which allow them to balance work with family responsibilities.

Women in informal occupations — spanning cleaning services, beauty work, and domestic trades — face additional burdens due to gendered expectations of caregiving and household management. Many are single mothers or caregivers, forced into the informal economy by labour market exclusion. Their work is often invisible, poorly remunerated, and undervalued, yet it is critical for the survival and upkeep of their families. Black and mixed-race women are disproportionately represented in national data, with 47 per cent working informally in 2022, compared to just over 34 per cent of the white female workforce and 41 per cent of the general employed population (IBGE (viii), [2023](#)).

In qualitative interviews, women in informal work described having to maintain two or three different income sources to meet their basic needs — a reality that reflects not only financial pressure but also the absence of adequate public support. For these women, informality is less a choice than a strategy of survival within a system that fails to accommodate their roles as both caregivers and workers.



‘So, I work for myself now. Because... well, I lost my job. Then I started taking courses, improving my skills, and I realised that working independently was actually much better for me than being employed under a formal contract.’

‘It fluctuates, you know? I manage. But since I’m self-employed, some months are really good, others are really bad. There are times when business is booming, and others when I don’t earn what I expected.’

Female informal worker, 34
Southeast of Brazil, individual interview

Creative opportunities

'The Future of Work for Brazilian Youth' report published by the Arymax Foundation suggests five labour market areas (creative, care, green, silver, and digital economies) that show promise for Brazilian youth and suggests a proactive stance to prepare young people for future needs (Arymax Foundation (ii), [2023](#)). Many young Brazilians already work informally in these areas, whether out of necessity or personal interest. A youth leader points to challenges showing young people that they are already part of the creative economy, for example, and that there are real employment opportunities in this area.

While social media careers, particularly in marketing and advertising, offer inclusive opportunities for youth, only 16 per cent of Next Generation Brazil youth identified digital influencer skills as a priority for employment. Those living in the Centre-West of Brazil were marginally more interested in such skills (20 per cent) compared to their counterparts in the North of Brazil (14 per cent). Meanwhile, the digital economy spans all sectors and shows strong potential, though it depends on investment in infrastructure and digital literacy. Arymax advocates for better school-to-work alignment, with companies contributing to training in high-demand digital skills.

The National Pact for the Productive Inclusion of Youth, an initiative of the youth front of the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MTE), UNICEF, and the International Labour Organization (ILO), highlights specific measures to address employment challenges faced by vulnerable youth (*Pacto Pela Juventude*, [2025](#)). The pact views youth as agents of their own inclusion and urges governments, companies, and institutions to work strategically to expand access to quality jobs, training, and inclusive, discrimination-free workplaces.

Meanwhile, the Youth Labour Inclusion Lab, launched in 2023 by UNICEF in partnership with FGV university and two Brazilian banks, aims for youth inclusion on a national level by coordinating public and private efforts (*Observatório de EPT*, [2023](#)). Actions focus on six pillars: technical support, leadership training, best practice mapping, indicator monitoring, knowledge production, and policy recognition. Another UNICEF branded project, One Million Opportunities, provides training and internships to youth aged 14–29, mobilising companies, civic society organisations, and local authorities. Nearly 700,000 opportunities have already been created for Brazilian youth, according to the site (1mio, [2025](#)).



Employment, entrepreneurship and informality: Key research takeaways

- Seven out of ten of young Brazilians surveyed stated a desire to start their own business in the next five years, with over 25-year-olds showing the keenest interest. But only five per cent of survey participants reported already running a business, while a further nine per cent are formally registered as microentrepreneurs (MEIs). The main barriers to entrepreneurship were identified by Brazilian youth as lack of finance, skills, and self-confidence, as well as cultural obstacles.
- Among Brazilian youth surveyed for this research, 11 per cent were unemployed. Of those that reported to be working, one in ten were in informal roles. 14 per cent of young people were neither studying nor employed. Two-thirds of survey respondents complained that salaries are below their basic needs and expectations, and more than half think long working hours are harmful to wellbeing.
- Half of the employed youth living in *favelas* occupy informal roles, while 35 per cent of informal workers surveyed self-declared as Black, 37 per cent as mixed-race, and only 25 per cent were white. The primary motivations cited for engaging in informal work were a need to supplement income; a desire for autonomy and flexibility; along with a lack of success acquiring a formal job.
- One in four self-declared informal workers were earning less than the minimum wage, and nearly two-thirds are the main earners, while one in three struggles to make ends meet on a monthly basis. Three out of four informal workers reported having experienced some form of racial prejudice, while more than half said they had been treated differently due to their income or economic status.
- Indigenous youth reported direct and indirect prejudice in the labour market, often tied to a perception that Indigenous people should occupy only basic roles. Meanwhile, Riverine youth struggle to find work outside the community due to a lack of formal qualifications, prejudice, and limited job availability in surrounding cities.
- Likewise, trans youth pointed to the formal labour market as a primary source of pain and exclusion during a focus group, reporting incidents of prejudice, ranging from dismissals after the beginning of the gender transition to the elimination of job applications when their trans identity became evident to employers.
- Mirroring national statistics, 17 per cent of Next Generation Brazil interviewees aged 16–18 reported that they were working, with 13 per cent of those reporting that they are either selling goods on the street or working for an app. Fifteen per cent of this age cohort were neither working nor studying.

Chapter 4

Civic and political engagement

This chapter explores how Brazilian youth remain civically and politically engaged despite widespread disillusionment with formal institutions. Set against a backdrop of political polarisation and structural inequality, the research combines survey data and interviews to show that many young people — though distrustful of traditional politics — are active in digital activism, community initiatives, and youth-led movements. Obstacles such as inaccessible political language, institutional racism, and lack of civic education limit participation, yet young people continue to demand space, recognition, and accountability.

The absence of formal support structures and efficient policies exacerbates strain, limiting sustained participation. Many youth report feeling unheard and excluded from decision-making, and young people voiced frustration with inactive youth councils, public consultations that yielded no results, and discontinued programmes. They described the feeling of speaking without being heard, or worse, being heard but effectively ignored.

Strong opinions emerged from qualitative interviews, although it is important to blend findings with quantitative data, considering that many of the young people who participated in focus groups are community activists and may slightly skew impressions of general political engagement.

When formal education fails to address political issues, youth learn through peers and digital networks. Their demands are clear: more accessible, transparent, and responsive political platforms, direct engagement with elected officials, and prioritisation of social and environmental issues. A consensus emerged on the need for more inclusive communication, especially through digital channels. While some note declining interest in politics due to misinformation and institutional failure, others see renewed activism driven by urgent social issues and identity. Ultimately, Brazil's next generation is not waiting for ideal conditions — they are improvising, resisting, and rebuilding civic life on their own terms, calling not for attention, but for transformation.

A question of trust

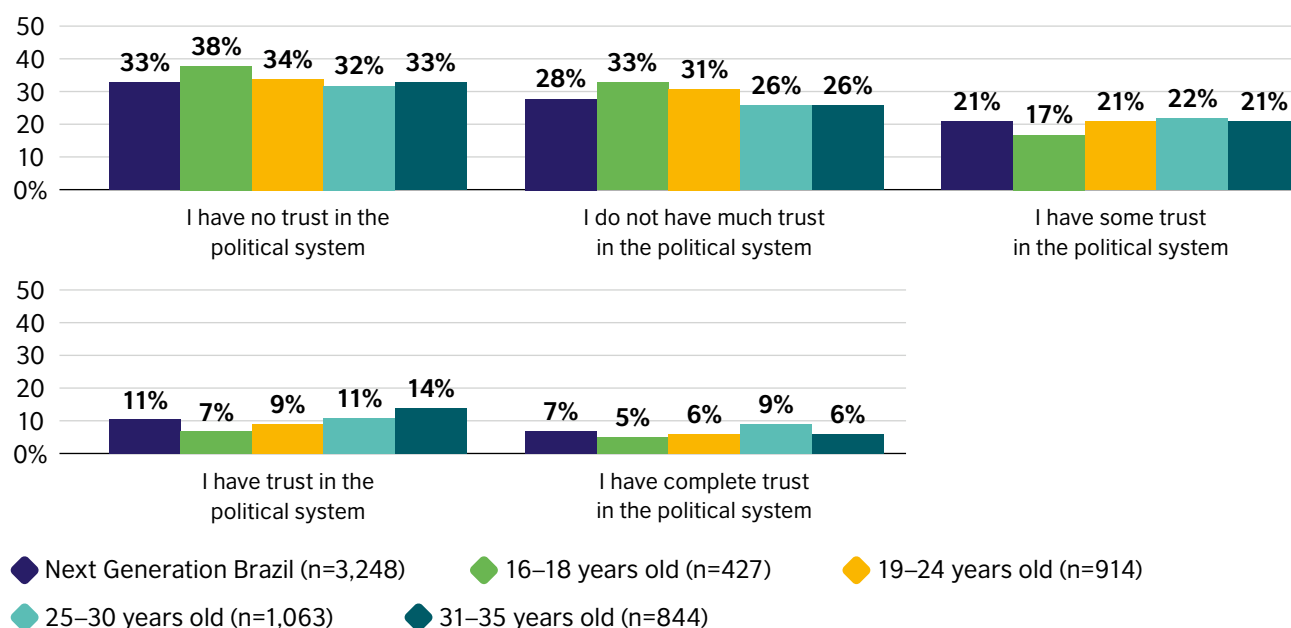
A third of young respondents (33 per cent) report having no trust at all in Brazil's political system, while only a small minority (7 per cent) express full confidence. Only five per cent considered that the voices of young people are heard on national issues in Brazil, with meaningful action based on their opinions. Older youth (31–35) report higher levels of concern with national politics, with 70 per cent citing that they were concerned or extremely concerned, against just 52 per cent of those aged 16–18 and a 66 per cent general population response. More than half (55 per cent) believe youth voices are either ignored or only superficially considered.

Mistrust in Brazilian democratic institutions is reflected in national statistics, with media reports in February 2025 suggesting that 82 per cent of the population distrusts Congress (CNN, [2025](#)). Such figures reflect a crisis of legitimacy and representation, a concerning trend when youth engagement is key to the future of this young democracy.

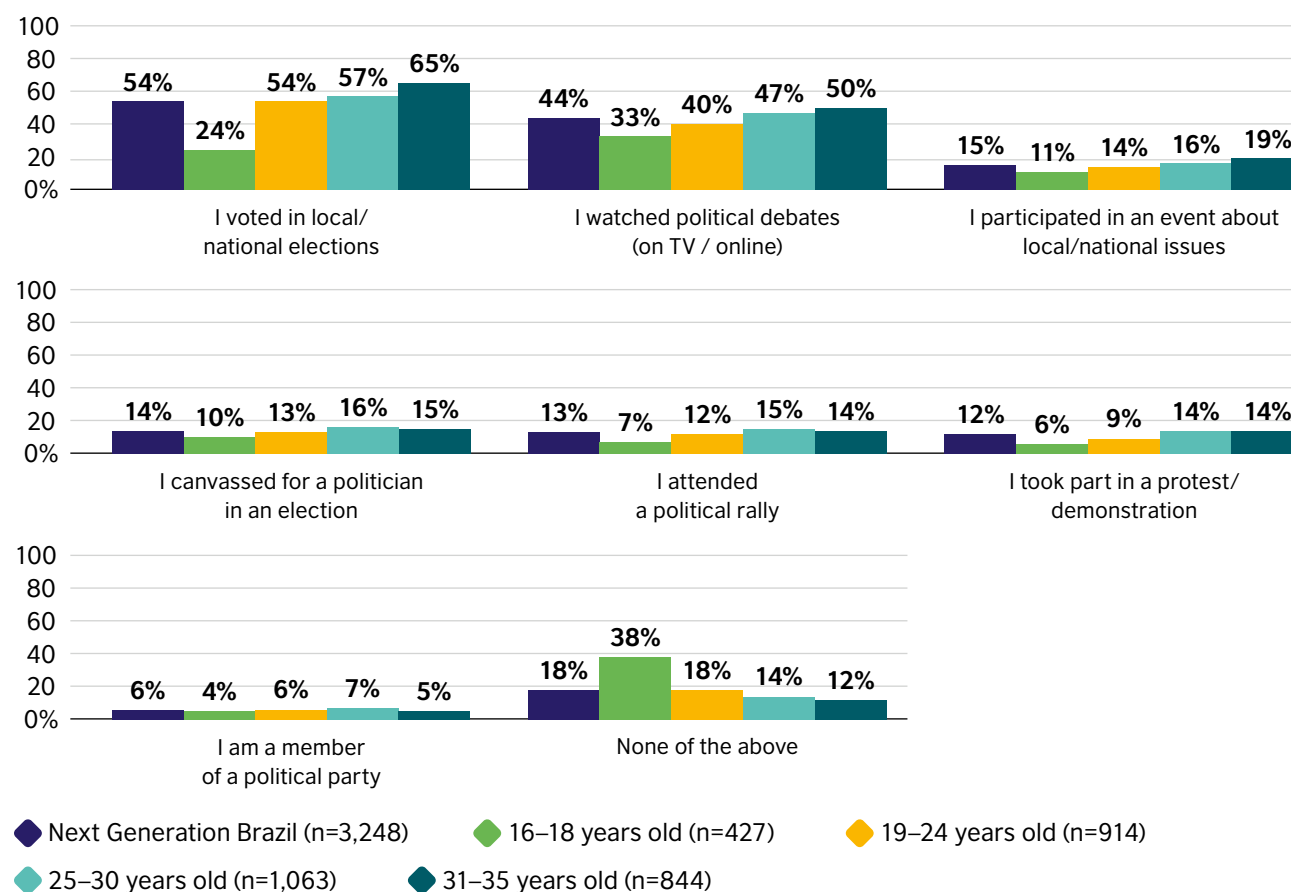
Meanwhile, just over half of those interviewed (54 per cent) said they voted in local or national elections in the past year, with older youth showing greater participation (65 per cent) compared to 24 per cent of those aged 16–18 and 54 per cent aged 19–24. This perhaps suggests a higher level of political engagement among older groups, further proven with 50 per cent of those aged 31–35 saying they have watched political debates on TV or online in the past 12 months, compared to just 33 per cent of those aged 16–18.

Interestingly, one in five (18 per cent) said they did not engage in any of the political activities listed in the past 12 months, suggesting a definite disconnect among some. It is not clear what exactly caused this, but polarisation and political violence may contribute to youth disengagement from institutional politics. One in four (24 per cent) said they would engage more in politics if this was actively encouraged at school.

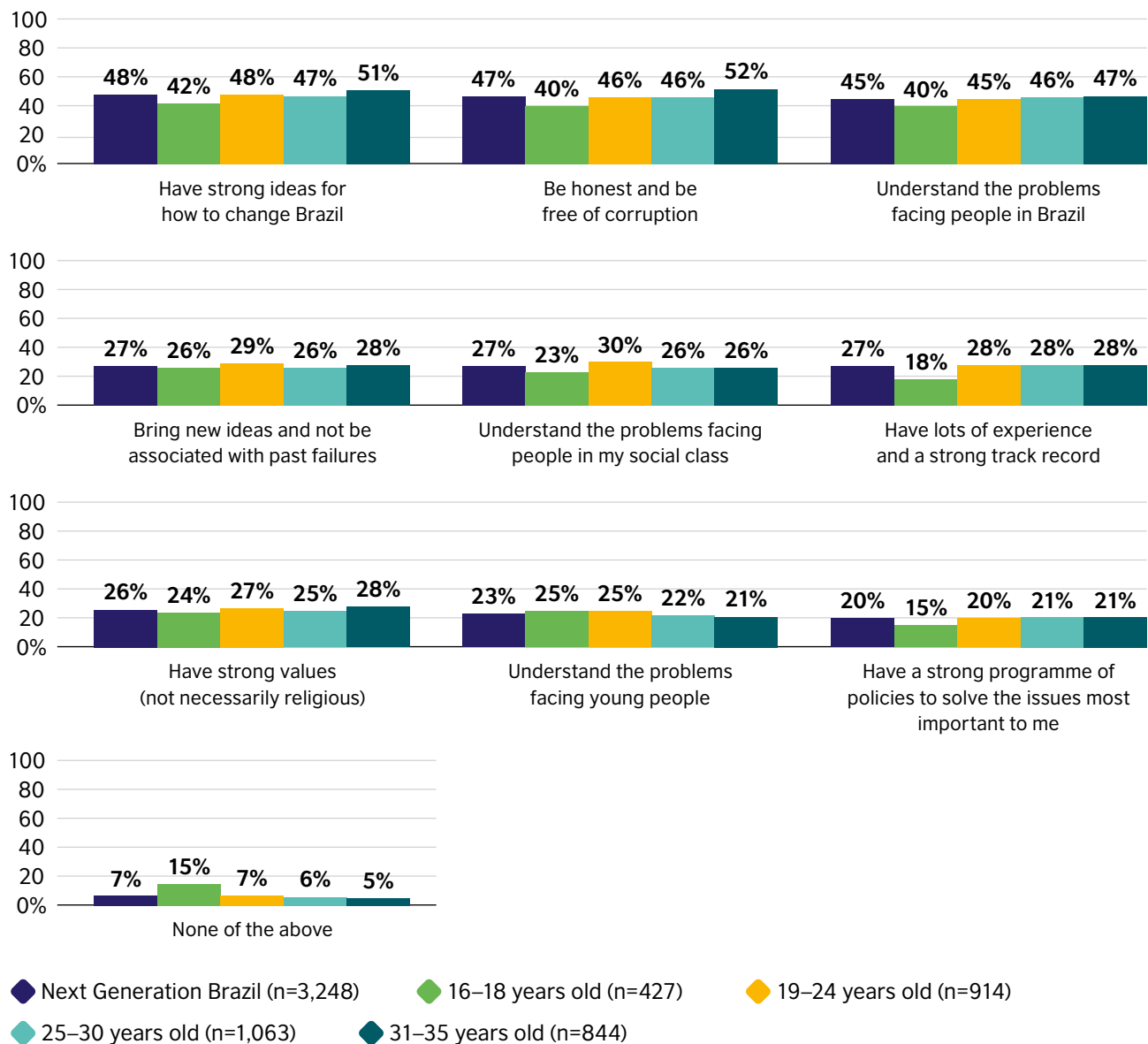
Young people articulated a clear vision of the kind of political leadership they expect — a political leadership that rejects traditional, personalistic, and ideologically stagnant politics. They desire leaders who understand their realities and propose coherent, relevant political programmes aligned with real youth priorities.

Figure 31: Youth trust in the political system*

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose one response from a Likert scale of five options.

Figure 32: Political engagement in past 12 months*

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose one response from a Likert scale of five options.

Figure 33: Important qualities when voting for a candidate

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose up to five options from a list of 14, or suggest an alternative.

Youth engagement & digital activism

'Ambivalent citizenship,' a report from the North of Brazil, suggested political cynicism among youth, who feel disconnected from formal political structures (Mandache, 2024). However, it notes youth engagement in alternative forms of civic participation, such as community activism and collective action, reflecting a nuanced relationship with politics. While traditional political institutions may not fully resonate with young people, there is a strong inclination towards active involvement in societal issues.



‘[Young people] care about a range of issues that affect their lives — and these are political issues. Rather than a lack of interest, it’s more that young people feel distanced from the traditional language of politics, from conventional political spaces.

That’s because these spaces and languages are often inaccessible to them. Not just anyone can navigate those spaces — not every young person feels at ease in a city council chamber, for instance. A young Black person, for example, might walk into a council chamber and be followed or harassed, simply for looking “out of place” or “suspicious” in that environment.’

Larissa Fontana

CONJUVE National Youth Council

Qualitative interviews with young student leaders and activists revealed journeys shaped by systemic limitations and powerful community-driven motivation stemming from a sense of responsibility toward their peers or from recognising social injustices in daily life. However, sustaining long-term involvement remains challenging due to a lack of funding and institutional continuity, combined with experiences of discrimination, particularly among marginalised youth.

The legacy of student movements remains strong: many young leaders remembered their political awakening during school occupations or protests like those in 2023, when thousands took to the streets to demand better and equitable education. Student movements were described as important spaces for learning, and many sought knowledge through community workshops, independent study, and peer dialogue. Activism enabled young people to develop leadership skills, along with conflict mediation, institutional articulation, and critical thinking capacities.

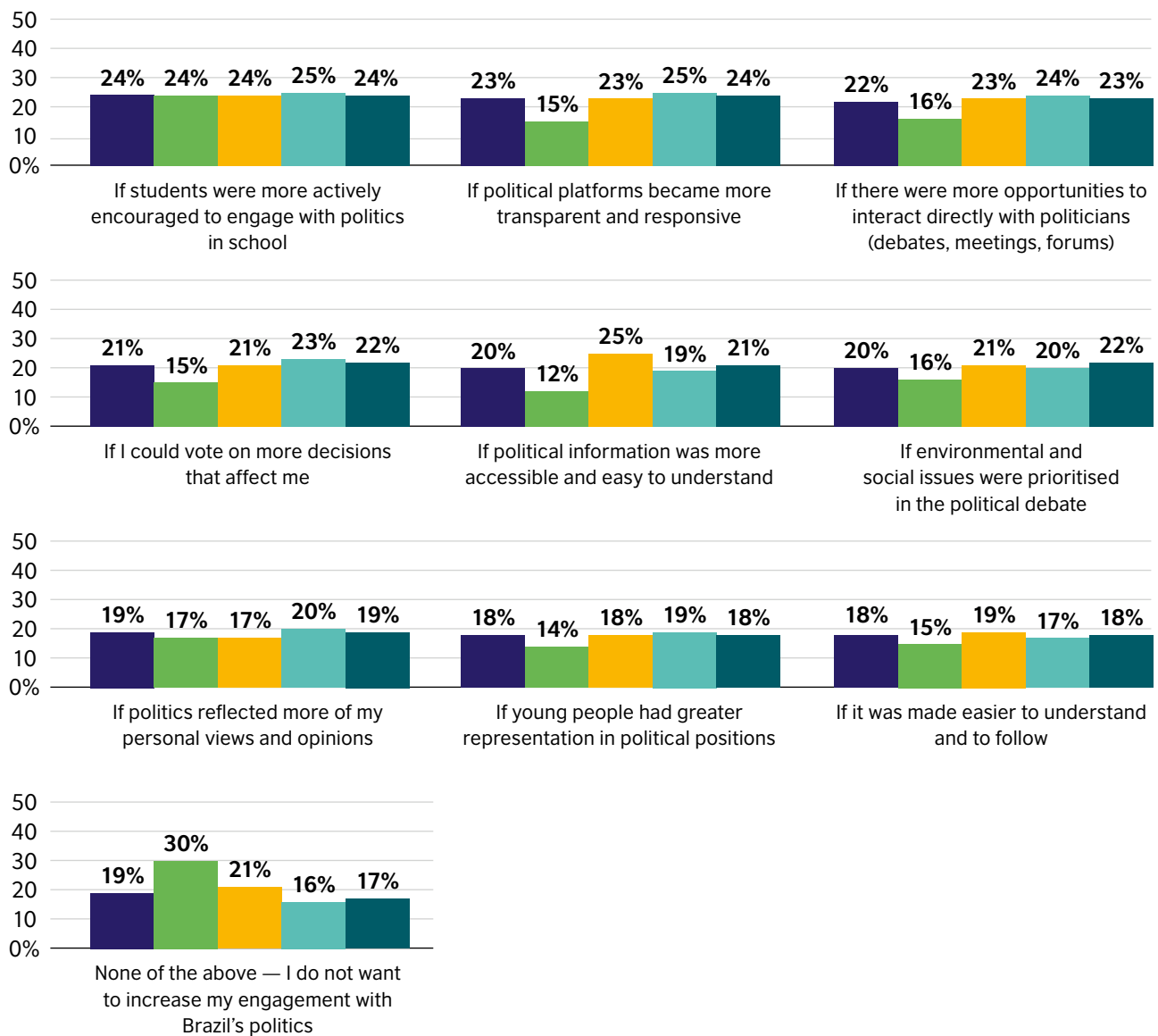
Frustration was evident, but interviewees conveyed resilience and pride in past victories, such as the defence of affirmative action policies and resistance to budget cuts. Young people view such achievements as evidence of their capacity for impact and as part of a collective historical struggle. A key theme was the desire not only to participate in politics, but to be recognised as legitimate political actors. For youth from marginalised backgrounds, this means real and meaningful access to political spaces.

A lack of real political participation opportunities and a dearth of reliable information and political education were among the top frustrations. Institutional racism was cited frequently, along with intersectionalities like gender, marginalisation, and growing climate challenges. The main demand was for space in which they can be heard, with genuine feedback and concrete government action. The mismatch between the energy of this youth and the rigid or dismissive response from political structures was a palpable source of frustration.

The National Youth Council (Conjuve) was established in 2005 as a federal consultative body to represent youth interests and foster dialogue between young people and the government, influencing national youth policy (Gov. br (xx), [2023](#)). In 2023, its remit was expanded to include thematic presidencies and state-level youth councils. Most Brazilian states — except six — have created youth councils to address local priorities; however, activists mentioned sporadic levels of real engagement.

Beyond Conjuve, various ministries host commissions and multi-sectoral working groups where young activists collaborate with civil society and government to develop targeted policies on employment, education, health, and the environment. In 2024, the National Youth Secretariat (SNJ) launched working groups to revise the National Youth and Environment Plan and to support rural and traditional youth (Gov.br (xxi), [2024](#)). These groups aim to ensure young people’s perspectives are integrated into policy and that youth participation is meaningful, though challenges like limited outreach and transparency remain.

Rather than being apathetic, young people are selectively engaged — seeking authentic leaders, coherent programmes, and alternative spaces where their realities are central. Plain-speaking candidates on relatable digital platforms, without personalistic politics, tend to gain more traction among younger voters, who spend significant time online but express mistrust in digital information (Publika, [2022](#); Exame, [2015](#)).

Figure 34: Motivators to engage with politics*

◆ Next Generation Brazil (n=3,248)

◆ 16–18 years old (n=427)

◆ 19–24 years old (n=914)

◆ 25–30 years old (n=1,063)

◆ 31–35 years old (n=844)

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose as many options as they liked from a list of 13 options, or suggest an alternative.

Brazilian youth in rural areas and from Indigenous communities said they use social media platforms to connect and to raise awareness about specific issues, when they feel officialdom has turned its back. Meanwhile, student activists pointed to the internet as a valuable space for political education, as well as a potentially dangerous source of misinformation, violent content, and hate speech. While recognising opportunities for mobilisation through technology and connectivity, young people noted a need to use tools critically and strategically. With an abundance of fake news in Brazil, a number of sites offering fact-checking services formed a collaboration to integrate sources, in advance of the 2024 elections (Meedan, 2024). However, those involved were surprised by lower-than-expected demand, which was seen as a sign of voter apathy (IPEC, 2024).



‘I think that after the pandemic, it really hit us hard, and we’re still trying to reorganise ourselves. But, you know, it’s not easy. It’s not easy. Especially in this age of social media, right? Where so much is done online. So, meeting up to organise a protest and things like that seems harder, in a way.

But at the same time, sometimes people protest online, with a lot of complaints and criticism online, right? And they kind of get heard even before there’s any need to take to the streets, for example. A video, or even an online report, you know?

Of course, there’s a lot of fake news. So it’s not all positive. But having the online space does help, in a way, to put pressure.’

Female student activist, 32
Southeast of Brazil, individual interview



‘I usually follow people who have pretty much the same condition as mine and I make simple comparisons. I follow Pedro Pimenta — he also had meningitis. Today, he owns his own prosthetics company. He uses it to help other people with disabilities. The thing is, the system and society aren’t open to the possibilities that may come in the future. Who ever imagined that one day I’d be in a wheelchair? No one did!’

Disabled male (wheelchair user), 26
Northeast of Brazil, focus group

‘It is essential to invest in the training of young leaders, guarantee participation in decision-making spaces, and respect our rights guaranteed in the Constitution and international conventions.’

Indigenous male, 32
Southeast of Brazil, individual interview

‘When I’m heading into an election, I know I can’t just think about myself, I can’t just think about what’s good for me, but also what’s good for everyone, for the collective. So it makes me more aware and helps me to look beyond my own needs and consider the people around me when making a decision.’

Female student activist
Northeast of Brazil, individual interview

Reaching young people

Civic expression takes a unique cultural form in Brazil, and comedy has long been considered part of political commentary, from carnival costumes parodying politicians to viral memes and satirical content on TikTok. Humour is a survival mechanism and a tool of resistance, especially for those in historically excluded communities. Political critique is carried through funk lyrics, mural art, and humour as much as it is through protests.

Nearly half of youth surveyed (44 per cent) reported watching political debates on TV or online, highlighting the importance of audiovisual media as an entry point to civic engagement. Although only six per cent are involved with political parties, a relatively high consumption of televised political content indicates that youth follow and reflect on political issues, even if not through formal structures.

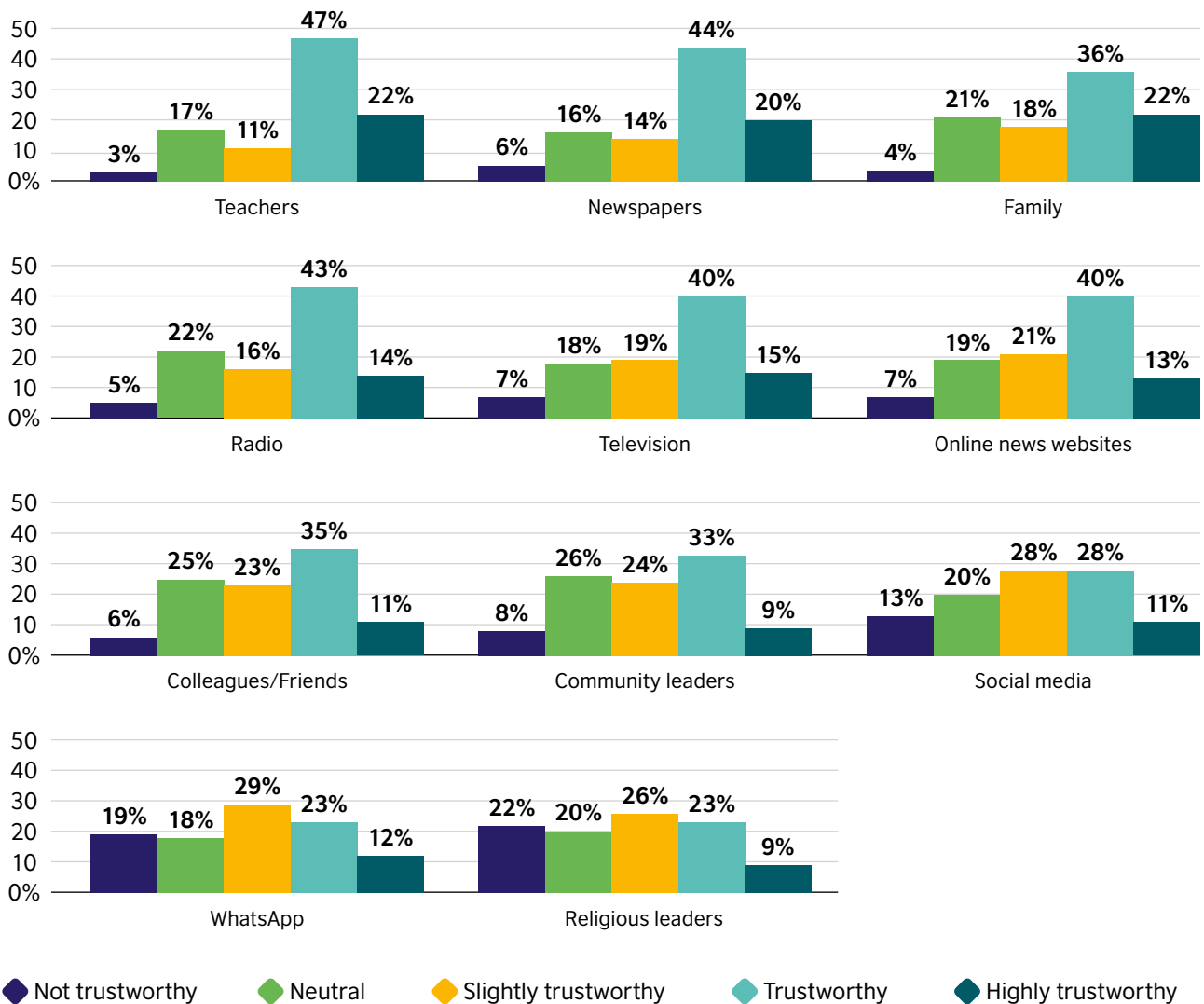
The ‘Use of Apps in Brazil’ study suggests that 92 per cent of Brazil’s youth (16–29) with smartphones had Instagram installed (Panorama Mobile Time / Opinion Box, 2024), while 74 per cent have Facebook and just over half (52 per cent) have TikTok. Young Brazilians are increasingly using social media platforms as tools for civic engagement and activism. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and X serve not only as spaces for self-expression but also as arenas for political dialogue, mobilisation, and advocacy. Influencer-activists are particularly effective in fostering ‘connective engagement’ — blending personal narratives with social and political messaging in ways that resonate deeply with their audiences.

Although not identified as the most trustworthy source of information, 39 per cent of Next Generation Brazil youth said they consider social media as a reliable information source (‘trustworthy’ or ‘highly trustworthy’). Instagram was seen as the most trustworthy social media platform for accurate news, according to 43 per cent of respondents. Widely used across Brazil for daily communications and business, 35 per cent said WhatsApp could be trusted — the least trusted from a list, apart from religious leaders. This could perhaps be a legacy of the use of the app in the spread of disinformation during electoral cycles in 2018 and 2022 (Guardian (ii), 2019; Time, 2023). The platform’s end-to-end encryption and group messaging features make it a prime channel for rapid circulation of false narratives.

Of the young people surveyed, 69 per cent rated their teachers as trustworthy or highly trustworthy, far surpassing social media as a reliable source of information, and even ranking above family members (58 per cent) and television (55 per cent). This trust positions educators as not only pedagogical figures but also critical mediators of civic values and information in an era marked by disinformation and polarised narratives. Input from youth from marginalised communities reinforced, during focus groups and individual interviews, that education settings are the best place to plant seeds of change.

Yet, as noted in the education section of this report, Brazil’s teaching workforce faces systemic challenges — including limited training, poor working conditions, and insufficient institutional support — which risk undermining their potential to guide students through an increasingly complex media and civic environment. This contradiction highlights an important opportunity: reinforcing teacher training and civic education curricula could significantly amplify youth media literacy and democratic engagement.

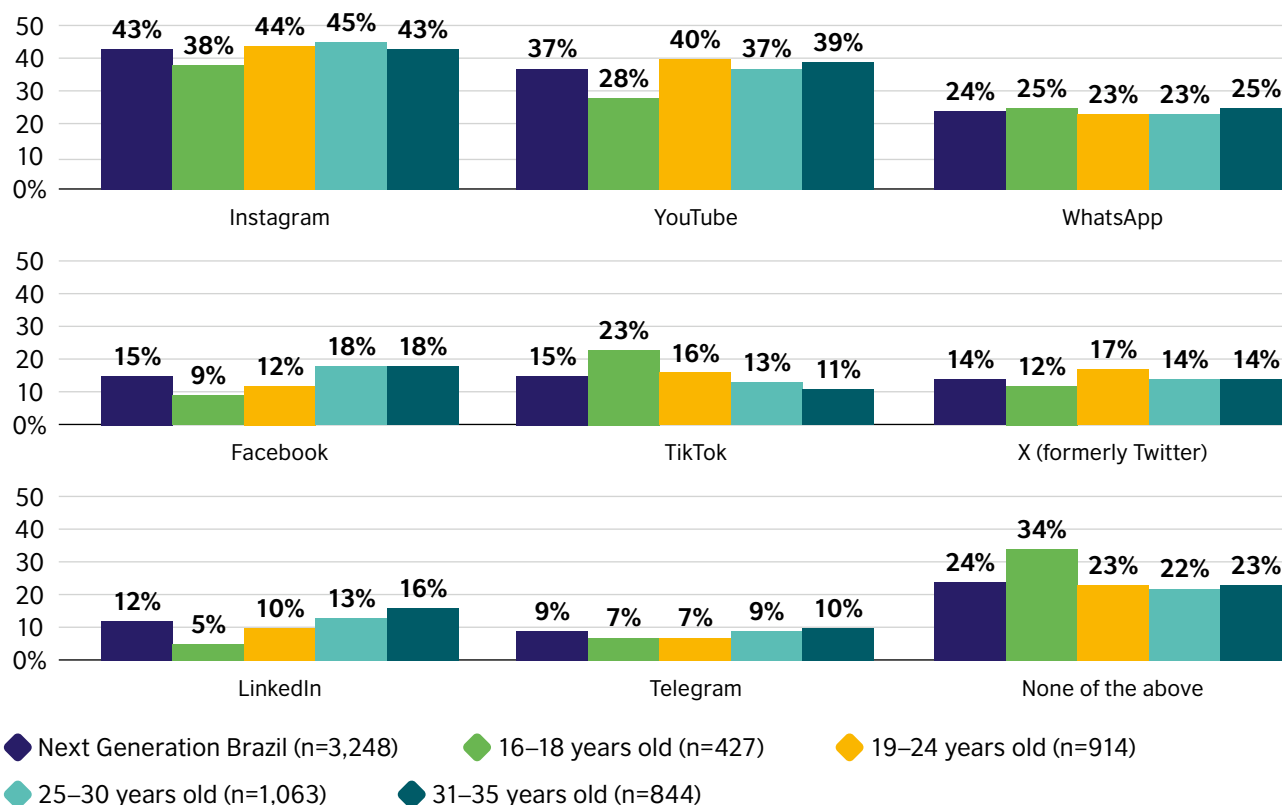


Figure 35: Reliable sources of information*

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents were invited to rate their level of trust on a Likert scale, with 5 options running from Not trustworthy to Highly trustworthy



Figure 36: Social media trust levels*



Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. *Survey respondents were invited to select social media platforms they trusted from a list of eight platforms or offer their own response.

These findings suggest that strengthening civic participation among young Brazilians requires action on multiple fronts. On one hand, educators — highly trusted and well-placed to influence civic values — need the tools, training, and institutional support to foster critical thinking and media literacy. On the other, digital platforms like Brasil Participativo, a participatory planning and digital consultation tool launched by the Federal Government in 2023 that already garnered more than 8,000 citizen proposals, voted on by over 1.5 million participants — proving the power of inclusive, tech-enabled civic processes (Agência Brasil (vii), 2024), demonstrate the potential of inclusive, tech-enabled engagement, yet also reveal structural and demographic gaps that risk leaving certain groups behind.

Despite possibly being one of the largest-scale participatory democracy platforms in the world, critics say infrastructural shortcomings cause a limited reach to Brasil Participativo, especially for those in marginalised communities. Data suggests that women were more active voters, while men were more likely to suggest policy (People Powered, 2025). Likewise, younger platform users vote on issues, leaving policy formation to older users. Addressing both the capacity of educators and the accessibility of participatory platforms could significantly broaden and deepen democratic involvement among the country's youth.

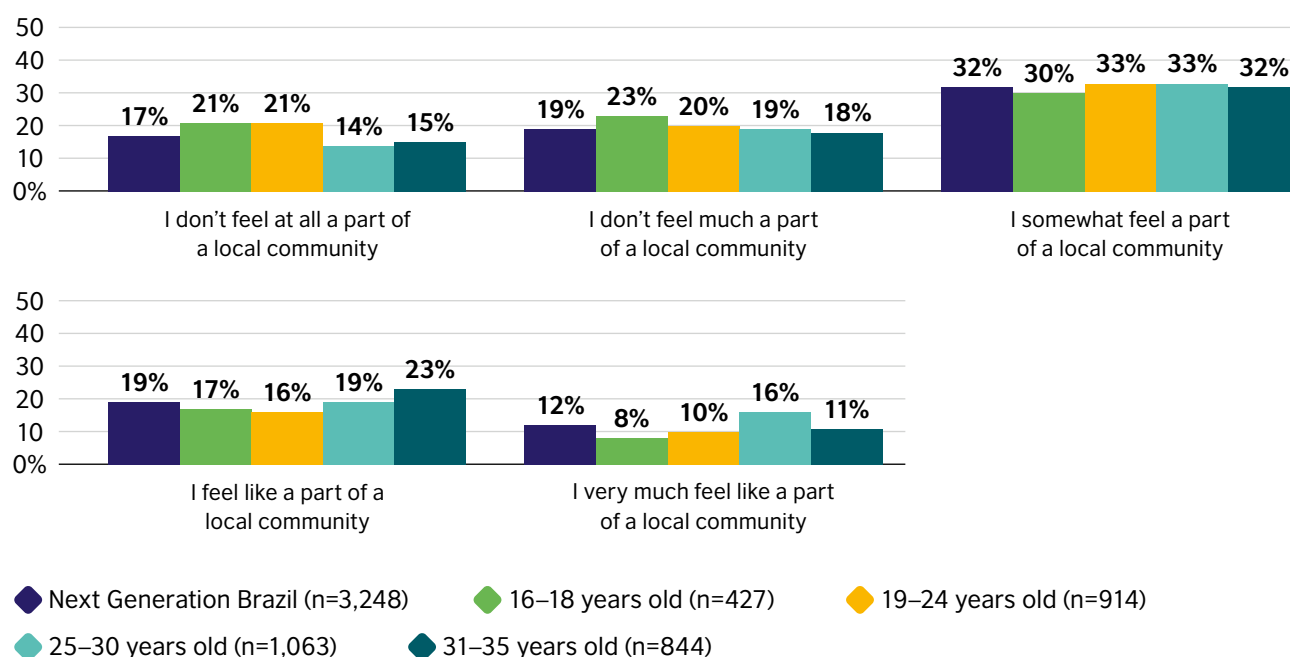
Community engagement

More than one-third of young Brazilians surveyed (36 per cent) reported they feel little or no connection to their local community. This number rises to 44 per cent among ages 16–18 and to 47 per cent among youth living in metropolitan and peripheral areas, where only six per cent said they feel strongly connected to their community.

In contrast, more than half (51 per cent) of youth in *favelas* reported feeling 'part of' or 'strongly connected to' their locality, suggesting the existence of strong neighbourhood kinship connections and informal support networks. This may be reflective of a strong cultural expression that is common in peripheral communities, as discussed in an earlier chapter of this report.

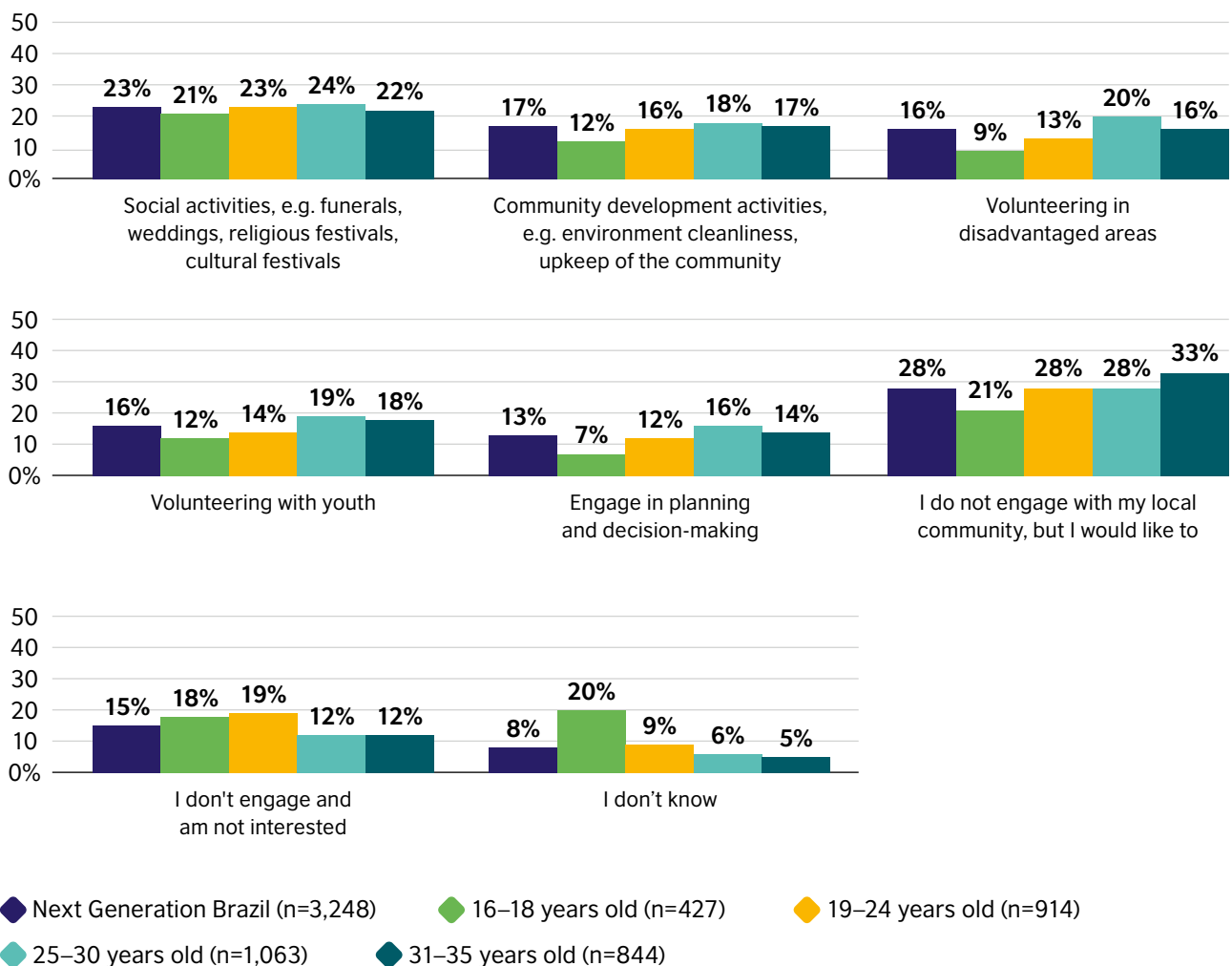
The quantitative data, in combination with qualitative accounts, shows readiness among participants to participate in civic and community initiatives. Three out of ten (28 per cent) reported that although they do not engage with their local community, they would like to, an interest that was higher among ages 31–35 (33 per cent) than among ages 16–18 (21 per cent). This perhaps suggests a sense of disconnection that grows as young people navigate the world of bills and family commitments. It is important that this desire is taken on board by policymakers and community groups — young people want to feel more part of their local community, with spaces for genuine participation. The challenge is finding ways that motivate their full involvement.

Figure 37: Sense of community belonging*



Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose one option from a list of five to rate their sense of community belonging. (Bar graph showing combined levels of belonging).

Figure 38: Community engagement*



Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents were invited to select ways they engage with their local community from a list of 6 options, or suggest their own option.

Civic and political engagement: Key research takeaways

- Brazilian youth showed a lack of confidence in Brazil's political system. Only five per cent believe that their voices are heard with meaningful action taken, while more than half felt they are either ignored or only superficially considered. Concern about politics is higher among older youth (70 per cent of those aged 31–35 are worried) than with younger generations (just 52 per cent of those aged 16–18) and a 66 per cent general population response.
- More than one-third of young people reported that they do not feel part of their local community, a number even higher among teenage survey respondents (ages 16–18) and those living in metropolitan and peripheral areas. By contrast, more than half in *favelas* feel strongly connected to their community, suggesting the existence of robust local support networks.
- Three out of ten of young people that don't currently engage with their local community said they would like to, with greater interest evident among older youth (33 per cent of those aged 31–35) compared to younger respondents (21 per cent of those aged 16–18).
- Young student leaders shared their experiences of political awakening through student protests and in individual interviews demonstrated a sense of community responsibility as their main motivator, despite experiences of discrimination and a lack of formal support.
- Social media was identified as a way to connect and raise awareness on political issues by Riverine youth during a focus group and in individual interviews with youth from Indigenous communities. While seen as a space for political education, online platforms are recognised as a source of misinformation, violence, and hate.
- Teachers were identified as the most trustworthy sources of information by young Brazilians, while one in four said they would be more involved in politics if this was actively encouraged in school. Youth from marginalised communities also identified education settings as prime locations to plant seeds of change. This highlights an important opportunity: reinforcing teacher training and civic education curricula could significantly amplify youth civic and political engagement.
- Social media is considered a trustworthy information source by 39 per cent, compared to 64 per cent citing newspapers as trustworthy.



Chapter 5

Climate challenges

Brazil is one of the world's most biodiverse countries — and also one of the most vulnerable to climate change. While it leads globally in renewable energy production, the country is already facing the worsening impacts of climate disasters such as floods, wildfires, and droughts, which primarily affect low-income and marginalised communities.

The chapter uses both youth testimonies and extensive data to study the real-life perspectives of Brazilian youth on climate change together with their comprehension and responses to the crisis in Brazil, especially the struggles of Indigenous, Riverine, and *favela* youth who are exposed to environmental degradation and climate injustice. The research examines how environmental racism, insufficient infrastructure, and political exclusion exacerbate climate challenges, and highlights climate activism through digital campaigns and grassroots movements. Rural activists describe a collapse of family farming due to extreme and often unpredictable climate events like drought and wildfires, forcing the migration of rural youth to urban centres in search of a better life.

Brazilian youth show strong awareness of climate change and how it disproportionately affects certain groups in society, while youth leaders highlighted that vulnerable communities are already suffering the impacts. Next Generation Brazil surfaced consistent criticism from young people relating to the underrepresentation of youth in climate adaptation policymaking and what they consider to be the insufficient role of the state, often counterproductive in efforts.

A changing climate

In August 2024, 2,000 young Brazilians joined 145 international delegates from over 40 countries at the Y20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro — the official youth engagement platform of the G20. Climate change emerged as the top priority for discussion. Together, participants developed a communiqué for G20 leaders with policy recommendations focused on financing and fiscal policy, intellectual property and technology transfer, data transparency and environmental labelling, and nature restoration and land use (Y20 Summit, [2024](#)). The communiqué served as a call to action, urging G20 leaders to address the worsening climate crisis — with Brazilian youth bringing unique perspectives shaped by their firsthand experience of living in a country already experiencing its devastating effects.



The impact of climate change, caused by human action and by global warming, is already evident in Brazil, with multiple severe climate-related events throughout recent years. According to '2024: The Hottest Year in History', a study prepared by the Brazilian Alliance for Ocean Culture and UNESCO, Brazil experienced a 250 per cent surge in climate disasters since the 1990s, with more than 16,000 events recorded between 2020 and 2023, averaging more than 4,000 per year. By contrast, there were only 725 events annually recorded in the 1990s (UNIFESP, [2025](#)). A combination of floods, droughts, and storms has resulted in major human and economic losses across the vast nation.

A record-breaking heatwave in November 2023 affected thousands of municipalities, with temperatures in Rio de Janeiro exceeding 42 °C (*Agência Brasil* (viii), [2023](#)), while landslides are an annual lethal consequence of Brazil's increasingly intense rainy seasons, causing more than 130 deaths during 2023 (Gov.br (xxii), [2024](#)). In 2024, floods in Rio Grande do Sul, in the South of Brazil, impacted more than 90 per cent of municipalities in the state, killed more than 180 people, and forced 2.3 million people to evacuate their homes. Climate change and the El Niño phenomenon were blamed for the intensity and duration of the rainfall that caused flooding.

Pantanal wildfires in June 2024 burned more than 600,000 hectares of land because of extreme heat, dryness, and strong winds. The region faces environmental pressure from combined land-use changes, habitat fragmentation, and unsustainable resource exploitation, while climate change acts as an intensifying factor that triggers more frequent and intense wildfire events (Gov.br (xxiii), [2024](#)). Meanwhile, the Amazon basin experienced its worst drought in more than 120 years during September 2024, when the Rio Negro in Manaus reached its lowest recorded level, affecting more than 500,000 residents (*Agência Gov* (ii), [2024](#)). Indigenous leaders in all of Brazil's five regions say climate change (and invading miners and prospectors) shakes communities and disrupts subsistence traditions, causing an exodus of young people from their homelands (*Agência Brasil*, (ix) [2024](#)).

The construction of the Belo Monte Hydroelectric Power Plant in Pará — which required the inundation of an area exceeding 500 km² — has caused severe seasonal floods due to urban relocations linked to the hydroelectric project (Mongabay (ii), [2018](#)). Young people living in the area consider that the relocations were poorly thought out and increase the vulnerability of communities now positioned away from the rivers. Many streams in the region have been contaminated, making water unsuitable for use.

Environmental agency IBAMA was largely dismantled between 2019 and 2022, with enforcement capabilities stifled by significant budget cuts and staff reductions. By August 2020, the Ministry of Environment had allocated less than half a per cent of authorised budgets for federal environmental policies that included actions to combat climate change (*Observatório do Clima*, [2020](#)). Diluted environmental oversight and relaxed regulations reportedly enabled a range of activities to expand, damaging biodiversity conservation and ecological integrity (Reuters, [2020](#)).

Indigenous youth

During individual interviews, Indigenous youth said the environment is unbalanced, citing atypical weather patterns and phenomena that endanger traditional practices. As well as functional purposes, water sources hold significant cultural and spiritual value for Indigenous communities, who report that the irregular flow of rivers has disrupted fishing, hunting, and agriculture. This disruption of natural cycles causes food shortages and endangers the self-sufficiency of many villages and communities.

Young Indigenous Brazilians pointed to a lack of respect shown to the land, with exploitation of natural resources without restraint, while traditional intergenerational knowledge is disregarded. They equate the protection of Indigenous territories with overall ecological stability and conversation and demonstrate a robust commitment to environmental advocacy, using social media platforms to engage with community groups.

One hundred young activists from more than 20 ethnic groups gathered in October 2024 in the Rio Negro region in the northwest Brazilian Amazon to demand action and discuss the real impacts of the climate crisis and environmental racism in one of the most preserved parts of Brazil. The 5th General Elective Assembly of the Department of Indigenous Adolescents and Youth of the Rio Negro (DAJIRN) heard that raising temperatures are impacting farm work, causing food insecurity, as well as having a direct impact on sanitation and access to clean water in the region (FOIRN, [2025](#)). Around 100 youth delegates represented 24 ethnic groups from five regional Indigenous collectives (CAIMBRN; COIDI; CAI-BARNX; DIA WI'I; NADZOERI).

Young delegates drafted the 'Climate Rights Charter of the Indigenous Youth of the Rio Negro', to be submitted at COP30 (United Nations Climate Change Conference) in Belém, Brazil, in November 2025. Youth want environmental policy central to state and municipal government policies, to include provision for waste management, food security, and health and safety measures for environmental defenders, while preserving local culture through intergenerational dialogue and the application of Indigenous knowledge and wisdom with scientific methods.

“

'It's extremely painful to see our culture being so negatively affected by these environmental impacts, which are criminal in nature. And even though we're reporting them — both to the relevant authorities and on social media — nothing is being done.'

Everyone's talking about the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) now and about the importance of preserving Indigenous territories, but this recognition needs to extend across all territories in our state — not just to one, simply because someone important comes from there.

If we don't pay attention to this warning, we're going to lose our two rivers — and in fact, that's already happening. The rivers are well-preserved within Indigenous territories, but once they leave these areas, their banks are practically dry. This affects the food supply of the Guajajara and Guajá peoples, and this growing scarcity makes us fear the complete loss of our cultural practices.'

Indigenous female, 23

Northeast of Brazil, individual interview



Riverine youth

Riverine communities, home to millions along river banks throughout the North of Brazil, are at high risk of losing their traditional livelihoods and their homes (MDPI, [2022](#)). Extreme droughts and devastating floods have increased in intensity for the past 40 years, as local farmers try to adapt by planting at higher altitudes, further from the river banks. This creates an economic impact, as basic activities such as fishing and agriculture now require additional transport. Riverbank erosion and sedimentation processes destabilise the soil and housing, affecting around half (45 per cent) of river communities. A 2025 study identified specific communities at very high risk and others at high-to-moderate risk (Nature, [2025](#)).

In a focus group discussion, young Brazilians living in Riverine communities in the Northern state of Pará express particular concern about a lasting drought that is directly impacting fishing, a huge part of their way of life and heritage. With water levels decreasing, many familiar fishing spots have vanished, while transit is expensive to areas with better fishing conditions. Riverine youth told of families experiencing hunger, many of them dependent on social welfare payments like *Bolsa Família* for survival. Consistent smoke from wildfires was also cited as a health concern.



‘Yes, and many times people even go hungry, especially families with lots of children and no work for the mother, the woman. Generally, both the man and the woman used to fish. And when neither of them can fish any more — what can they buy? You have to pay for everything. When you go to the supermarket, everything costs money. (...) And with prices going up, people are going hungry.

Since the fish are gone, since there’s no more fishing, some people have been going hungry. There are families who can’t afford to buy anything, who are really struggling.’ (...)

‘Usually, national media just relays what it receives from local outlets — and often, those local reports are distorted. We know that, in many cases, local media is influenced or even bought by powerful politicians and businesspeople. So by the time the story reaches national coverage, it’s completely altered.’

Riverine female (functional illiterate), 35
North of Brazil, focus group

‘Because nowadays we see more drought, especially in our region. In Belo Monte, there’s a percentage that relates to that, but the local population also bears responsibility, especially when it comes to deforestation.

But the thing is, most of the people who end up working in deforestation are those who have nothing to eat. They need another source of income — they don’t want to starve. So it’s a complex issue with many social layers, and we don’t really know how to solve it. I think we need a broad, in-depth study on this, but one that doesn’t overlook the communities most affected, especially those who have been displaced.’

Riverine female, 24
North of Brazil, focus group



‘We identify ourselves through our culture — what we inherit from our parents is what shapes who we are today. I believe that this is a sign of resistance. Without our culture, we wouldn’t still be here resisting. We wouldn’t even be identifying ourselves today as *Quilombolas*, as culture-makers, or as anything at all. It’s our culture that keeps this struggle and resistance alive. (...)

So I believe that this culture marks us as true guardians of Mother Earth, of Mother Nature. It comes from what we carry in our culture, as she said — from African traditions of living in harmony with nature. And that’s what allows us to see ourselves and be recognised as guardians of the planet we live on.’

***Quilombola* male, 31**

Northeast of Brazil, focus group

Worried youth

Three out of five (59 per cent) Brazilians surveyed for Next Generation Brazil said they were very worried about the environmental impact that climate change has in Brazil, with a further 21 per cent registering mild concern. Only three per cent reported that they are not concerned at all, with a further six per cent expressing ambivalence to the issue. Older youth showed the greatest concern, with two-thirds (66 per cent) saying they were very worried, against just 41 per cent of those aged 16–18, up to 57 per cent among those aged 19–24, and 62 per cent among those aged 25–30, suggesting that climate concerns garner more youth attention after their schooling is complete.

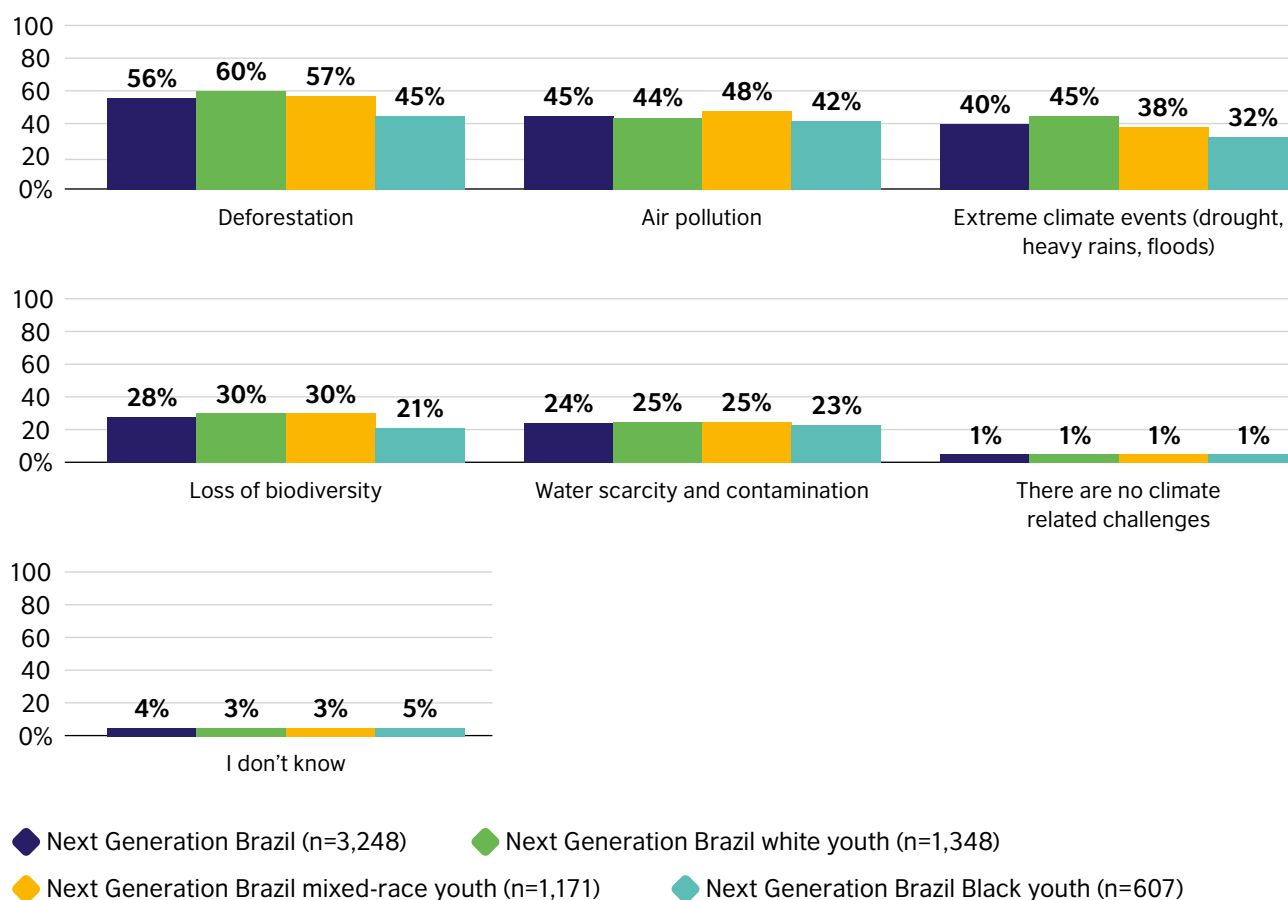
Three out of five (62 per cent) identified low-income families as facing the greatest impact from climate change, while half of Brazilian youth (45 per cent) identified *favela* residents; Indigenous communities were cited by 39 per cent; while one in three (28 per cent) said people with disabilities were acutely vulnerable to impacts. While 86 per cent of those living in big cities said they were concerned (a little or a lot), this dropped to 52 per cent among those living in *favelas*, despite these communities being particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, due to their geographical characteristics and architectural chasms.

It could be argued that youth in Brazil’s *favelas* are too busy navigating inequalities and questions of safety and survival to give time to concepts of environmental racism. A link could be seen between salary scales and levels of concern with the impacts of climate change in Brazil: 77 per cent of those on the highest earning bands (BRL \$10,000 / ~GBP £1,350) expressed extreme concern with climate change, as compared to 57 per cent of those on minimum wage. While more than half (54 per cent) of street vendors were very worried, only 22 per cent of app workers shared this sentiment in quantitative data findings.

An overwhelming majority (93 per cent) of respondents cited climate-related challenges facing Brazil currently, suggesting at least some level of awareness across the board of Brazilian youth. Deforestation emerged as the top scourge among more than half (56 per cent) of youth surveyed. While this is noted as a top concern by 60 per cent of young people living in big cities, only 35 per cent of *favela* residents cited this, still their top response. Meanwhile, 60 per cent of white youth pointed to deforestation as a top concern for Brazil, compared to 45 per cent in the Black youth community and 57 per cent among mixed-race young people.

Youth from urban peripheries and traditional and rural communities are identified as the most affected by the consequences of the climate crisis, especially due to the lack of infrastructure, sanitation, and shelter. The crisis is intertwined with environmental racism, gender inequality, and territorial exclusion.

Interestingly, despite the fact that many app workers face extreme temperatures and heavy rains in their daily activities, only nine per cent cited extreme climate events as a pressing concern in quantitative data, while one in five (22 per cent) cited air pollution. That said, most street vendors that were interviewed noted that their monthly earnings are wholly dependent on agreeable weather conditions.

Figure 39: Most pressing climate related challenges facing Brazil

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose three options from a list of 8, or suggest their own.

A majority (65 per cent) of youth declare themselves as willing to fight or are already fighting against climate-related challenges, although the survey tool did not elicit details of what this meant to them. Therefore, it is understood that this data does not necessarily refer to a majority of youth being climate activists, as the use of biodegradable straws and recycling of household waste would generate a positive response to this question, as much as greater active involvement would.

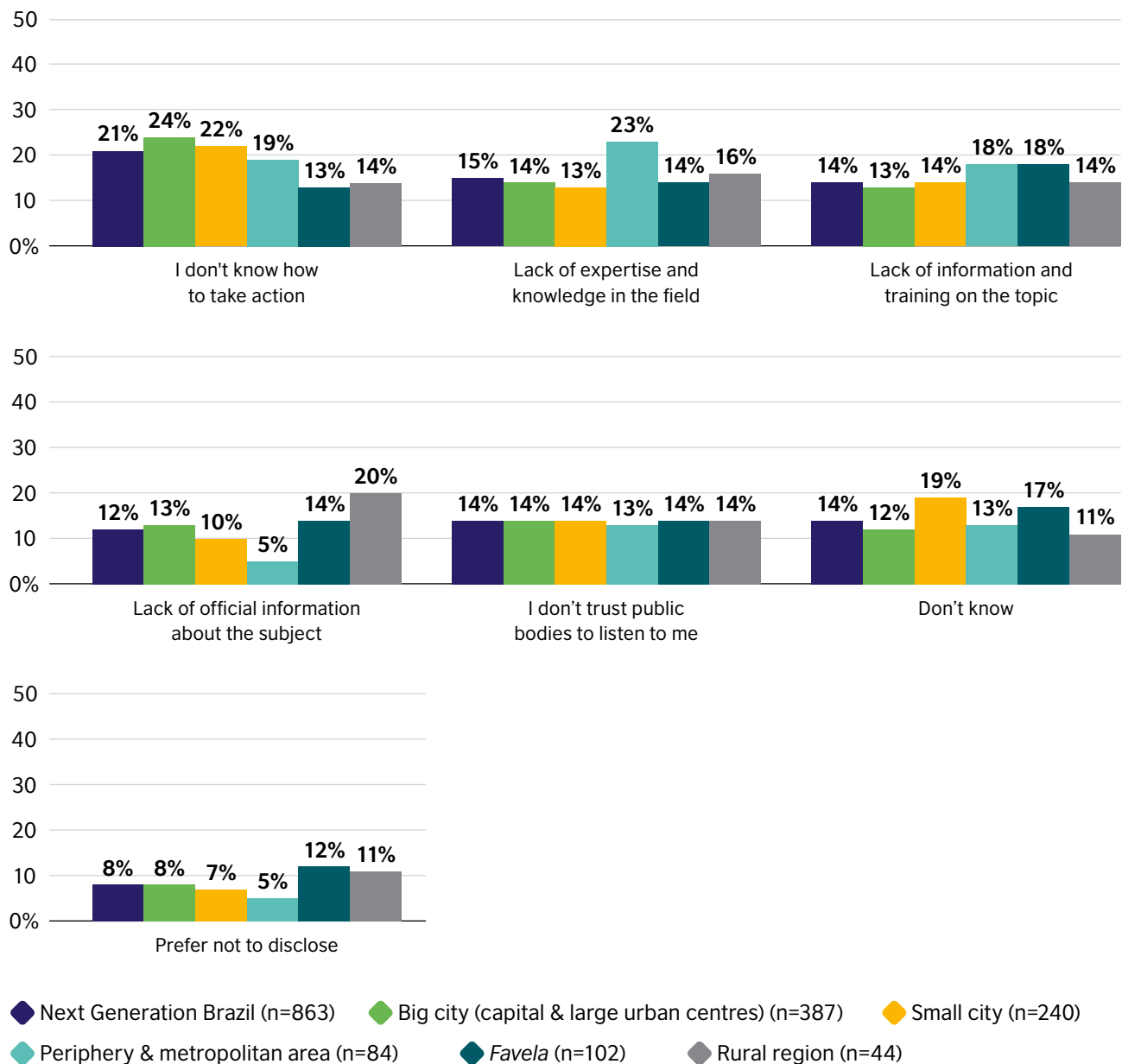
Data suggest greater involvement among older youth, with 73 per cent of participants aged 30–35 willing to or already engaged in the fight against climate changes, against just 48 per cent from the 16–18 age cohort, with one in five (18 per cent) teenagers who were not already active or willing saying they don't know how to take action.

Residents of Brazilian *favelas* bear disproportionate effects from climate change, yet tend to be excluded from environmental discussions. The rapid (and often vertical) expansion of informal communities, often in high-risk locations, leads to disastrous consequences, with flooding and landslides an annual occurrence for low-income families in precarious housing and inadequate infrastructure (Map Biomas, 2022). The combination of warmer temperatures with the absence of green spaces worsens health impacts and environmental degradation.

Interestingly, one-third (33 per cent) of self-declared *favela* residents said they did not know whether they were already taking action to combat the issue, suggesting a lack of awareness of the issue. In fact, one in five (18 per cent) *favela* residents who are not taking action cited a lack of information and training on the issue. None of the residents of Indigenous communities and only four young Brazilians from Riverine and *Quilombola* communities combined said they were not fighting climate-change challenges.

An absence of local or community initiatives encouraging people to engage with environmental issues was cited by 39 per cent of young Brazilians that reported that they were not already fighting climate challenges. A lack of opportunities promoted by the government was also cited by 39 per cent, while a lack of access to information and educational resources about fighting climate challenges was identified by 38 per cent.

Figure 40: Reasons some youth are not fighting climate challenges*



Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents who said they were not already fighting climate challenges in a previous question, or did not know if they were, could choose one option from a list of six options, or suggest their own response.

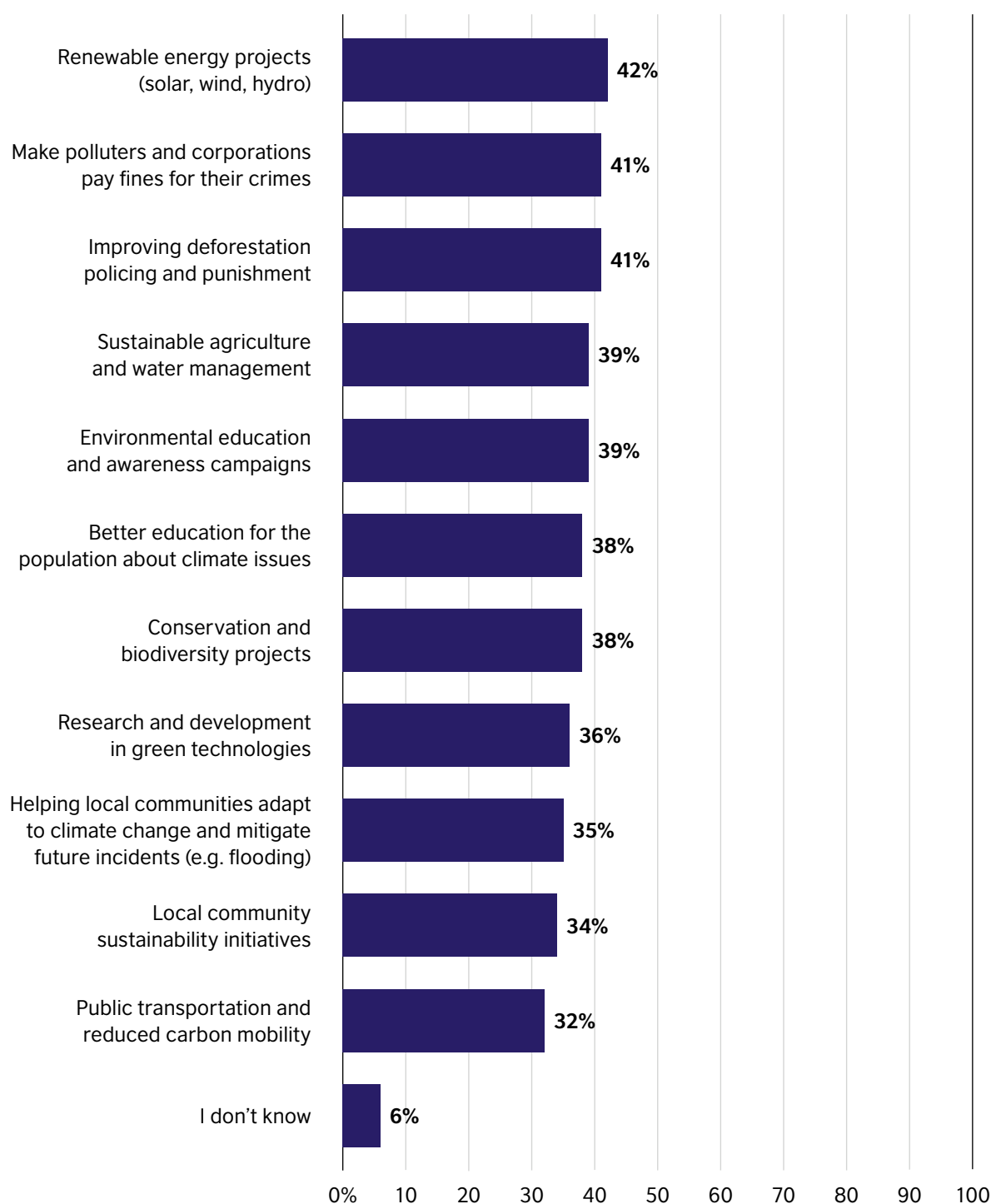
Youth demands for government action

While young Brazilians would like the government to prioritise investment in renewable energies (cited by 42 per cent), there was strong sentiment that better policing and punishment was needed so that large-scale polluters are punished for their actions, also cited by 41 per cent. Conversely, only 16 per cent of app workers supported either demand, which points to individualist tendencies among informal workers who are more focused on day-to-day survival than broader environmental issues.

Young people want more sustainable policies, whether in public transport, farming, or in community initiatives, along with awareness campaigns and more research into green technologies.



Figure 41: Youth priorities for government climate investment*



Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents could choose as many items as they liked from a list of 11, none of those, or suggest their own.

Climate challenges: Key research takeaways

- More than half of survey participants are worried about the impacts that climate change has in Brazil, with older youth showing higher levels of concern compared to younger survey participants, suggesting that climate awareness may mature with age.
- Six out of ten survey respondents declare themselves as willing to fight or are already fighting against climate-related challenges. Young people not already doing so cited a lack of local initiatives and a lack of government action, along with a dearth of access to information and educational resources.
- Low-income families, *favela* residents, and Indigenous communities were identified as most impacted by climate challenges. However, despite being considered one of the most vulnerable groups to the impacts of climate change, only half of *favela* residents showed concern. One-third did not know if they are acting to address climate challenges, showing gaps in awareness.
- Interviews with Indigenous youth and a focus group with young people from Riverine communities revealed that climate change and resource exploitation already pose serious threats to their traditional practices and food security. Young people emphasised that protecting their territories is essential not only for preserving their way of life but also for broader environmental stability, and they actively advocate for conservation through community mobilisation and social media.
- Deforestation was identified as the top climate-rate challenge facing Brazil today, followed by air pollution and extreme climate events, including droughts and floods. A loss of biodiversity and the risk of water scarcity and contamination were also identified as top youth concerns.



Chapter 6

Looking to the future

The section examines how Brazilian youth envision their future and how much they feel in control of their own destiny. Young Brazilians face multiple global and national crises which include climate change, rising automation, economic insecurity, and persistent racism, while they navigate their complex present to create transformative futures. Analysis of survey data, qualitative interviews, and focus groups demonstrates how different territorial youth groups experience and react to local and global challenges.

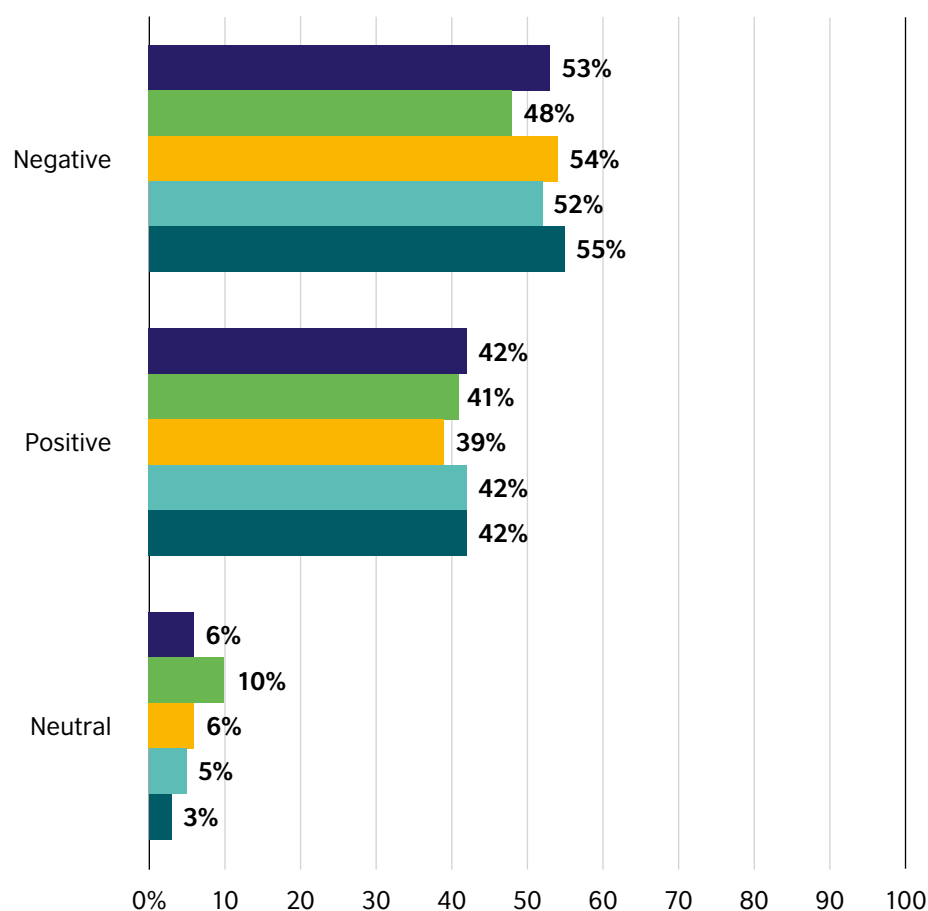
Young people demonstrate both concern and dedication, showing an understanding of global issues including poverty, environmental damage and misinformation. Brazilian youth maintain their ability to envision better futures through their pursuit of education, entrepreneurship, environmental leadership, and collective action, despite their widespread frustration and fatigue. Redefining the future is not just a policy task — it is a symbolic and emotional project. It requires shifting narratives, amplifying youth voices, and building pathways that combine dignity with opportunity.

Yet Brazilian youth continue to dream, adapt, and demand change — insisting on a future in which they can thrive on their own terms. Brazilian delegates at a Y20 Interagency meeting in June 2024 suggested policy proposals on issues ranging from hunger and inequality to innovation and climate resilience — underscoring the role of youth as critical voices in national and global governance (UNESCO, [2024](#)).

When asked how they felt about the next ten years, more than half (52 per cent) of survey respondents expressed negative feelings — with *'worried'* being the most frequently cited word (21 per cent) and the top response for each of the age groupings. Meanwhile, *'hopeful'* was the word chosen by 11 per cent of Brazilian youth. Overall, 42 per cent expressed positive feelings about the next ten years. Three per cent of the sample described themselves as *'indifferent'*.

Young Brazilians aged 19–24 and those aged 31–35 displayed the most negative sentiment about the decade ahead (54 per cent in both cases), while one in ten (10 per cent) of those aged 16–18 were ambivalent or neutral, responding *'indifferent'*, *'none of the above'*, or *'other'* to the list offered in the survey tool.



Figure 42: Future outlook for young Brazilians*

◆ Next Generation Brazil ◆ 16–18 years old ◆ 19–24 years old ◆ 25–30 years old ◆ 31–35 years old

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. *Survey respondents could choose from a list of 12 emotions to describe how they felt about the next ten years. These emotions were categorised into negative, neutral, and positive.

A sense of agency

Survey data shows that a majority of young people (69 per cent) feel they have at least some control over their future. Those aged 25+ were more likely to say they felt somewhat or very much able to control their futures (71 per cent), against 61 per cent of those aged 16–18. This sense of agency, however, is not experienced equally, and while 73 per cent of those living in big cities cited a feeling of control over their future, only 55 per cent said the same in rural areas, mirroring qualitative findings. Many young people from marginalised backgrounds expressed a strong desire for independence, but highlighted systemic barriers that inhibit this — from limited access to credit and networks to the absence of inclusive educational and economic systems.

Interviewees from excluded communities said autonomy was difficult to attain, often linked to entrepreneurial strategies and digital tools. Some pointed to digital technology as a potential equaliser, allowing them to be their own boss. However, perceptions of autonomy were often tempered by frustrations over inequality of access and a lack of structural support. While individual effort and resilience are important and necessary, they are insufficient without broader reforms to create an enabling environment for all Brazilian youth, regardless of their skin colour or postcode.



‘Many of the difficulties and problems we face in our youth come from childhood. Sometimes we don’t realise this, because we are so focused on today or tomorrow that we forget that much of what we experience now is a reflection of what we experienced in the past. And this past was often not built by our choices, but by the choices or limitations of other people.

This impacts us, and it is undeniable. The main impacts continue to be social and economic, but today, increasingly, they are also environmental. We have faced major environmental crises that reinforce this scenario.’

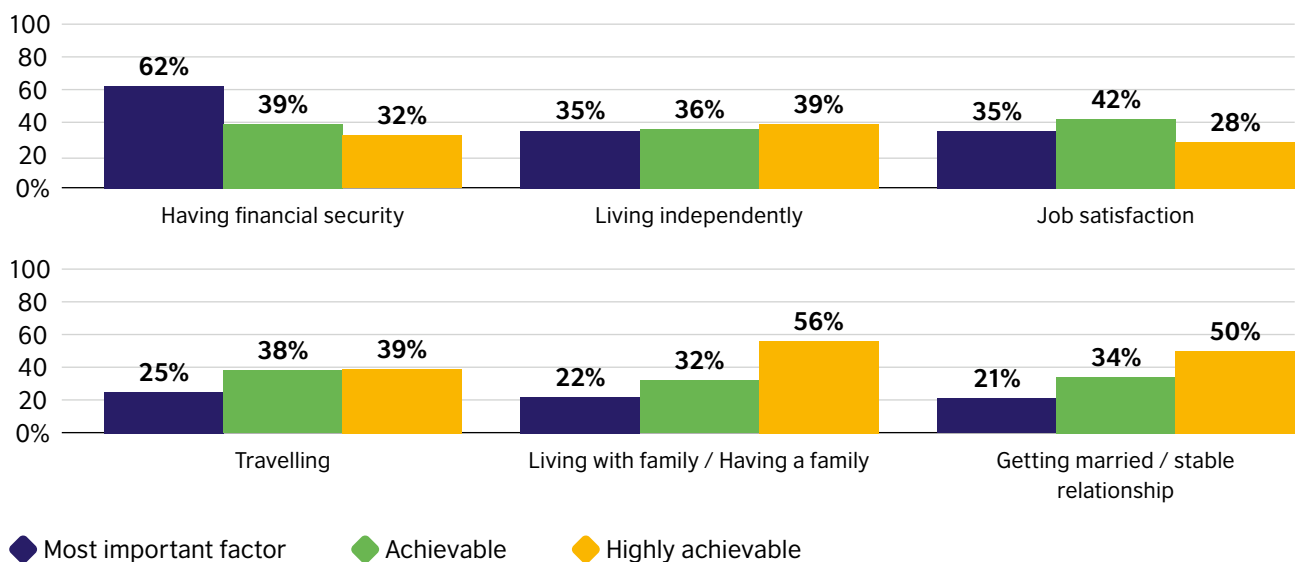
Eraldo Noronha,

Northeast of Brazil, Associação VOAR

Having financial security was the most important factor for the current and future happiness of youth interviewees (62 per cent), and while 71 per cent said this was ‘achievable’ or ‘highly achievable’, 27 per cent said that they ‘sometimes’ or ‘always’ struggle to cover their basic living expenses.

Support systems that promote autonomy were identified by young people as essential. Financial education, inclusive policies, and mentorship were seen as key tools for navigating economic uncertainty, emphasising the role of collective spaces — such as community-led initiatives — in fostering confidence, creativity, and a sense of belonging.

Figure 43: Measures of personal happiness and achievability*



Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents were invited to choose the top three factors that were important for their personal happiness from a list of 10 options, or chose their own response. In a separate question, they were invited to rate how achievable these were on a Likert scale of five options.

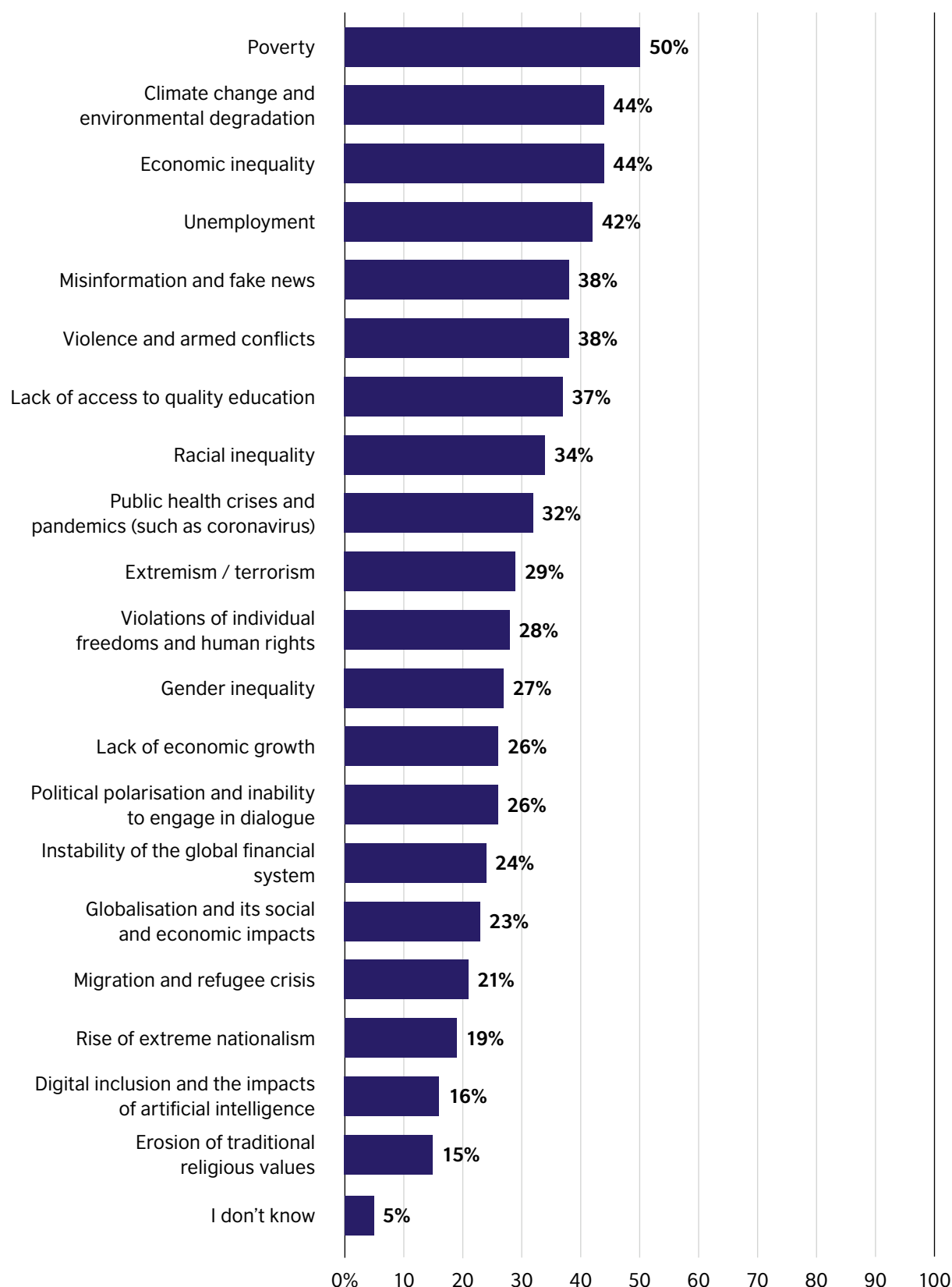
Global concerns

Poverty, economic inequality, and climate change and environmental degradation were the main concerns identified by young Brazilians when they were asked about the main problems facing the world today. Survey respondents also cited unemployment, misinformation and fake news as top concerns, along with lack of access to quality education and racial inequality. Brazilian youth showed high levels of global awareness, with only five per cent opting out and saying they did not know.

Some evidence of increased ambivalence was witnessed among those aged 16–18, with 12 per cent opting for 'I don't know' against just two per cent of those aged 31–35 doing the same. Interestingly, one in ten (10 per cent) of those living in *favelas* didn't know, compared to three per cent in big cities and two per cent in peripheral areas. The same was noted among 15 per cent of Indigenous respondents, perhaps suggesting that global issues are less relevant to young people with more pressing concerns related to basic subsistence.



Figure 44: Main challenges facing the world today*



Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents were invited to choose as many options as they wished from a list of 20.

Looking to the future: Key research takeaways

- The majority of young people surveyed (69 per cent) feel they have some control over their future, especially those aged 25+ and those living in big cities, while the younger group and those from rural areas feel less in control in comparison.
- In qualitative exploration, many young people from marginalised backgrounds expressed a strong desire for independence, but highlighted systemic barriers that inhibit this — from limited access to credit and networks to the absence of inclusive educational and economic systems.
- Financial security was identified as the main factor for current and future happiness, with 71 per cent of the participants who selected that considering it to be achievable.
- Ultimately, when asked to consider their future, negative feelings were more predominant, and 'worried' was the most frequent word cited. One in ten were 'hopeful' about the next decade.
- Poverty was identified by young Brazilians as the top challenge the world is facing today, followed by climate change and environmental degradation, and economic inequality.



Conclusion

The demands and desires of Brazilian youth offer more than a wishlist — they form a practical and principled roadmap for the country's future. These aspirations emerged consistently across data, interviews, and focus groups throughout this study, especially among those who have long been excluded from meaningful access to education, work, and active citizenship.

Youth across the country want a transformed education system — one that delivers relevant, high-quality, and culturally representative learning. Whether in the classroom, through vocational training, or via digital platforms, young people want to develop skills that match the realities of their lives, ambitions, and market demands. Many see education as more than a gateway to employment, but as a way of reclaiming control over their trajectories.

Economic inclusion and financial education were recurring themes. Young people want real opportunities — formal jobs with rights and protections, access to credit, and support for small-scale entrepreneurship — and technical training to help manage their businesses and personal finances. Financial security, in particular, emerged as a top priority: 62 per cent of respondents identified it as the most important factor for personal success and happiness, and 71 per cent believe it is achievable. Notably, 35 per cent said they would choose a short course in money management if given the opportunity — one of the highest-ranking options — indicating both the urgency and the gap in financial literacy support.

Environmental leadership featured strongly, particularly among Indigenous, Riverine, and rural youth, but also among urban activists. The call was not only for action on climate change, but for a shift in how environmental justice is understood — as connected to land rights, food sovereignty, housing, and racial equity. Young people see themselves as stewards of Brazil's biodiversity, but want structural and political support.

Social justice remains an urgent demand, and youth from marginalised communities demand systemic change to confront racism, sexism, transphobia, and ableism. They want laws enforced and institutions held accountable for meaningful representation. Many acknowledged progress in public discourse — but argued that this must translate into visible change in education, employment, healthcare, and safety.

The top demand for government prioritisation from young people across Brazil was for increased employment and internship opportunities for young people in the formal market (29 per cent) and teaching practical skills aligned with industry needs in education settings (26 per cent), echoing what stakeholders and activists highlighted throughout this study.

Brazil's youth also wants the government to give special attention to combating social inequalities and discrimination, such as racism and homophobia (28 per cent). One in four (23 per cent) said the government should install psychological and therapeutic support programmes in schools, while a similar proportion (22 per cent) said youth need access to mental health and wellness services.

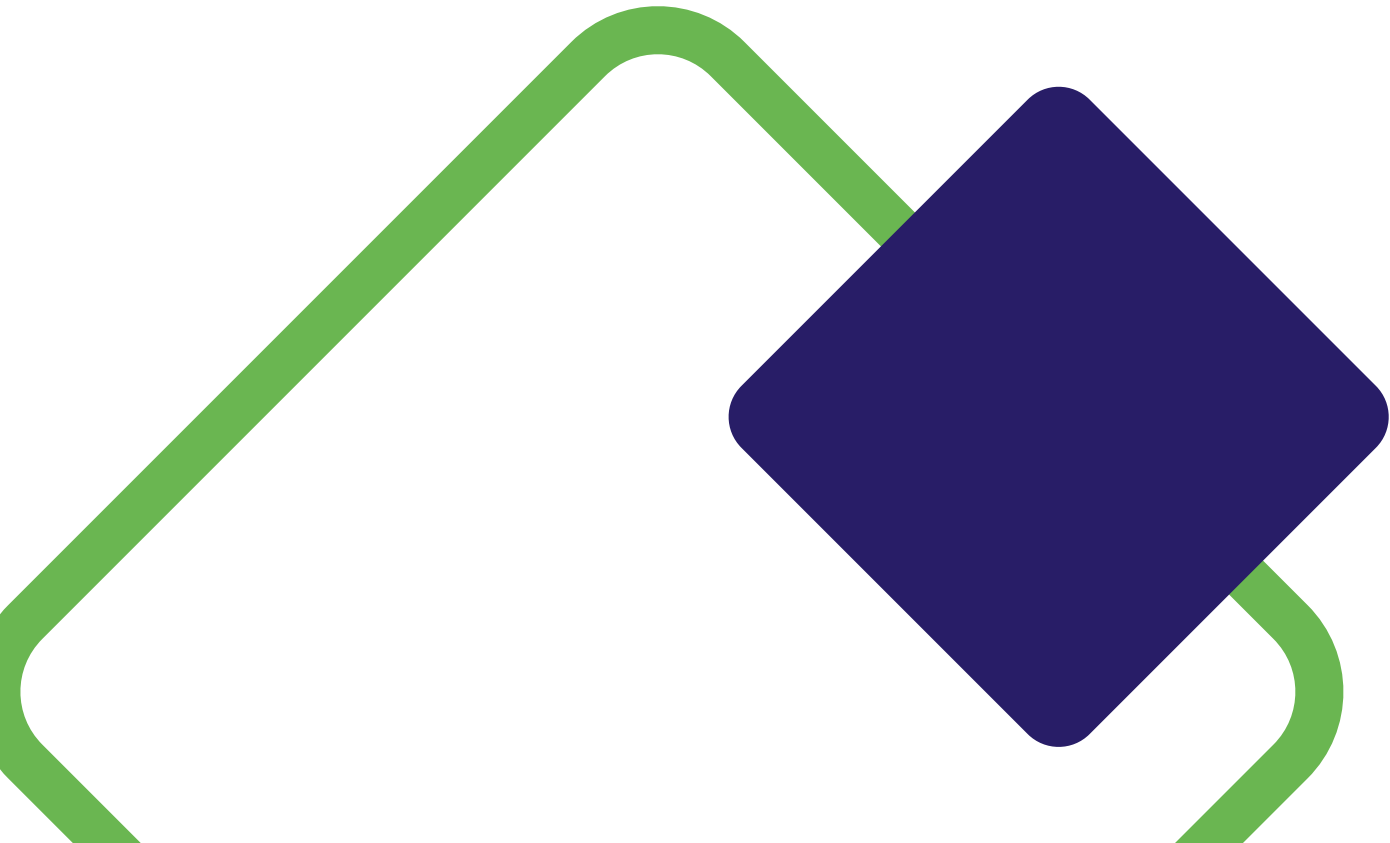
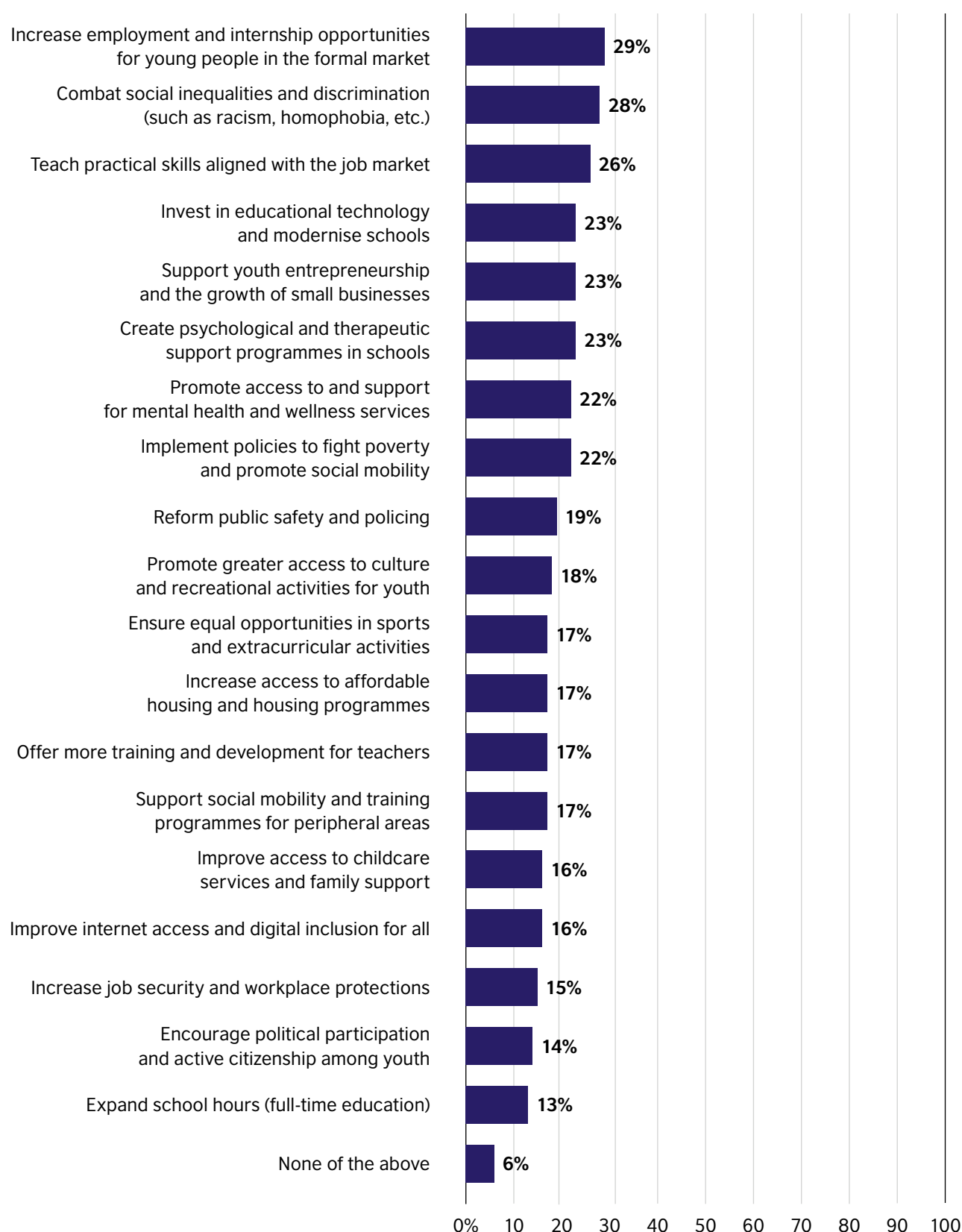


Figure 45: Youth demands for government investment*

Source: Next Generation Brazil, British Council 2025. * Survey respondents were invited to choose the top five areas the government should invest in to improve opportunities and quality of life for young people from a list of 19 options, or suggest their own.

Brazilian youth have dreams, but society needs to allow them to turn these dreams into reality with appropriate political mechanisms and public policies. They want a future that is different from the past. One marked by autonomy, equity, and hope. Despite facing significant barriers, this generation is not defeated; they demand a reconfiguration of opportunity, recognition, and power. They want policies designed with them in mind, systems that include, and institutions that trust in their potential.

Their vision of the future is grounded in lived experience, sharpened by inequality and sustained by collective imagination. By investing in young lives, Brazil has a chance not just to overcome its challenges, but to reimagine itself through the strength, creativity, and resilience of its young people.



‘How can I dream of being an astronaut if I don’t even know the profession exists, for example? In the same way, how can I dream of leaving the *favela* if I’ve never met anyone who did so through education? How can I dream of escaping the world of drugs if the only examples I know are of people who left it through death, the end of their lives?’

Not everyone gives a chance to a child born in the *favela*. We can see that they have to go completely above and beyond — they have to be exceptional, extremely driven, they need strong role models and good encouragement to break away from that reality. So no, it’s not for everyone, it’s not easy, it’s not simple — and it should be for everyone, but today we know it isn’t.’

Ester Farias

Northeast of Brazil, Youth for Difference



Policy recommendations

The development of policy recommendations ran through the entire research process, to identify overarching needs of Brazilian youth across a range of themes, and to further identify actions by government or civic society that may lead to further inclusion for marginalised youth.

Next Generation Brazil policy recommendations were drafted via a youth-led participatory process after extensive analysis of youth opinion and demands that came through quantitative data. Recommendations were further informed through in-depth interviews with community activists, youth leaders, and focus groups with members of several marginalised groups across the country.

Issues identified by young people throughout this research process are wide-ranging, from skills development for employability to better inclusive policies and infrastructural modifications. This report presents specific recommendations that emerged strongest from the process, and that are considered most practical, meaningful, and actionable.

Next generation Brazil policy recommendations are presented in two groups:

- **Recommendations for all young people**, reflecting broad, cross-cutting needs identified during analysis of a nationally representative sample of Brazilian youth;
- **Recommendations for vulnerable youth**, addressing specific challenges faced by marginalised groups in Brazilian society - such as Indigenous, Riverine, Black and mixed-race youth, young people with disabilities, LGBTQIAPN+ youth, and informal workers.

Through the research process, young Brazilians cited a range of programmes they considered effective, some of which are listed in this report. Overall, the feedback from young people was for a more participative process for policy design, with young people engaged in a meaningful way throughout. To support policy success in all cases, funding must be sustained and allocated for both implementation and training, and accompanied by systems to monitor progress using clear, pre-defined metrics.

Young people were unanimous, through quantitative and qualitative data, that education settings are prime locations to reach young people and address their needs, considering high levels of school attendance rates on a national level, and high levels of trust in teachers.

Transversal policy recommendations

- **Through the National Youth Secretariat, strengthen the National Youth Plan to ensure it incorporates cross-ministerial initiatives in climate, human rights, education, and employment**, with coherent planning, budgeting and monitoring. Ensure robust planning for the implementation and local delivery of the National Youth Plan with specific delivery plans for territories and mechanisms for cascading initiatives across ministries and government levels.
- **Mandate youth impact assessments for all new multi-sectoral policies affecting youth, particularly those from vulnerable or marginalised groups.** Assessments should be conducted at national, state, and municipal levels by panels that include young people and youth-focused stakeholders, with data aggregated at national level by Conjuve and the National Youth Secretariat.
- **Promote equitable cultural access by funding community-led arts and heritage initiatives, especially in underserved areas.** Support diverse cultural expressions—including Indigenous, Afro-Brazilian, LGBTQIAPN+, and peripheral communities—through inclusive public funding. Expand youth access to cultural spaces via subsidies, mobile programmes, and digital platforms. Integrate arts and cultural literacy into school curricula.

Youth identity and resilience

- **Mandate comprehensive Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) programmes across public services, education systems, and private companies**, including compulsory training for all staff on unconscious bias, safeguarding, media campaigns and the prevention of workplace and institutional discrimination, promoting a culture of inclusion and accountability.
- **Develop structured, recurring competition and recognition programmes**, at all federation levels, to identify, fund, and amplify the work of grassroots youth leaders and youth-led community initiatives advancing equity and social justice across Brazil. The recognition programmes would go beyond the calls the National Youth Secretariat launches occasionally to support youth-led projects relating to racial justice, such as Young Black Alive Call (*Plano Juventude Negra Viva*), in a regular structure that allows sufficient funding and localised reach.

Education, skills and the digital divide

- **Introduce anti-racist, decolonized, and inclusive pedagogical training in all teacher education programmes** (*licenciaturas*) and include continuous in-service training for existing teachers.
- **Strengthen mechanisms to ensure that existing equity policies and funding mechanisms are implemented in all territories**, such as Direct Money to School Equity Programme (PDDE Equidade), National Indigenous School Education Plan (PNEEI), National Policy on Equity, Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations and *Quilombola* School Education (PNEERQ), and Laws 10,639/03 and 11,645/08, to promote inclusive, community-based, and culturally representative education.
- **Include panels with representatives from specific communities** (Black, Indigenous, *Quilombola*, LGBT-QIAPN+, and disability-rights) into curriculum reviews, such as the upcoming BNCC (National Common Curricular Base) review, to ensure cultural narratives are embedded accurately across all disciplines. Suggest a conditional funding or performance-based transfers to subnational governments that meet defined equity and inclusion targets.
- **Ensure that school hubs are created in rural areas, through *Mais Professores* (More Teachers), addressing shortages of specialist teachers**. Prioritise the provision of in-person basic education, avoiding online teaching in basic education.
- **Ensure all schools have adequately trained career resources** to provide young people with information on further education opportunities (whether university or vocational level), financial support, and how to navigate application systems.

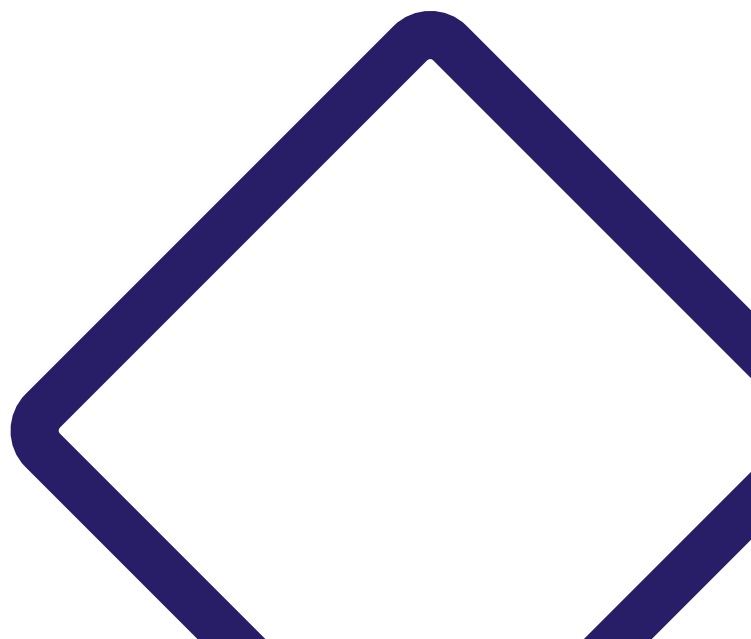
- **Ensure an adequate supply of remote learning centres for further education, technical training, higher education in rural areas**, in partnership with local businesses or public offices, so that young people completing distance learning university programmes can access computers and the internet when necessary.

Digital Inclusion

- **Ensure the full implementation of *BNCC da Computação*** (Brazil's National Common Curricular Base Computing), providing knowledge on digital skills, such as coding, AI and data literacy, identified as a major gap by Brazilian youth, going beyond what is already provided by *BNCC da Computação*.
- **Develop and/or scale short (affordable or free) courses in digital skills and artificial intelligence (AI)**, prioritising youth from low-income backgrounds, rural areas, and favelas, to address unequal access to emerging labour market competencies and improve employability.

Industry-related skills

- **Implement a national framework for future-ready skills development, ensuring that all young people in Brazil**, whether in formal education, vocational training, or non-formal settings, have access to practical, digital, entrepreneurial, and interpersonal competencies essential for success in the 21st century, a demand from young Brazilians in this research.
- **Insert transversal skills like leadership, creativity, and digital fluency into existing programmes like *Qualifica Brasil*** (Qualify Brazil). This offer would build up on the existing entrepreneurship and communication skills, such as the ones offered by 'S System' parastatal organisations (SESI, SENAI, SENAC, but at national scale.



Employment, entrepreneurship and informality

Entrepreneurship

- **Improve access to finance for young entrepreneurs, linking funding to training, mentoring, including community mentoring sessions, and business support to formalise youth-led ventures.** Develop step-by-step plans to promote those opportunities and engage young people, particularly those from vulnerable groups, including through public awareness campaigns as well as the education system.
- **Adapt existing public microcredit programmes** such as the National Programme to Strengthen Family Farming (Pronaf) to include specific actions for young Brazilians in growing sectors of the economy. Replicate initiatives such as Banco Palmas, a community bank in Fortaleza city that integrates vocational training with microcredit to foster youth entrepreneurship.
- **Establish a national network of municipal resources centres and incubators for informal entrepreneurs and small-scale workers.** Offer free training in digital literacy, financial planning, and co-operative management.

Apprenticeships

- **Expand the remit of the Young Apprentice (*Jovem Aprendiz*) programme to include over-25s that are not in the formal labour market,** and ensure the programme is widely available outside of capital cities, reaching remote territories.
- **Incentivise companies in smaller and rural areas to participate in the Young Apprentice programme,** by improving the programme's attractiveness to employers — simplifying administrative processes, communicating tax incentives, or recognising participating companies through public visibility and social responsibility credentials.

Informality

- **Develop and promote inclusive formalisation pathways for young informal workers, recognising their role in urban economies, with minimal bureaucratic barriers.** This may include simplified licensing processes, designated selling zones co-designed with vendor input, and access to training, microcredit, and public services. Informality

Civic and political engagement

- **Ensure that youth councils are operating at state and municipal levels to promote youth participation in the development of public policies and engagement with different government levels.** Ensure localised budgets for training and implementation are available, with pre-defined reporting and monitoring mechanisms. Guarantee representativeness of gender, ethnic, and socio-economic groups, as well as youth at risk of marginalisation as outlined in this report.
- **Develop outreach plans through schools or education facilities so that all young people are aware of youth councils and their role.** Ensure that young people have the option to participate online, if they are unable to attend in-person meetings due to logistics or financial reasons.
- **Develop leadership programmes to mentor young people in policy, advocacy, public communication and public service, with a focus on underrepresented groups.** Run local awareness campaigns in schools, health centres, and public spaces to raise awareness of youth participation rights.

Climate action

- **Integrate climate literacy into school curricula using age-appropriate, locally relevant content that reflects Brazil's environmental challenges.** Launch national campaigns that spotlight the environmental contributions and challenges of Indigenous, *Quilombola*, and Riverine youth, raising awareness of their role in conservation and sustainable development.
- **Provide specific training for in-service teachers to promote hands-on climate projects** — such as local climate monitoring — to connect global issues to students' realities.
- **Develop youth-friendly digital tools on climate change,** empowering young people to become agents of change in their communities.
- **Fund and mentor youth-led climate action in communities through training, and partnerships with civil society organisations** — especially in low-income areas, where young people show low levels of awareness of ways to tackle climate challenges. Promote practical initiatives such as youth-run recycling co-ops, urban greening projects, climate storytelling through art and media, or local climate education campaigns.

- **Promote accessible platforms for youth participation in policy spaces, including through simulations and participation** in Youth Conferences, or regional climate and international forums, bringing climate debate into their daily lives, with intentional outreach to marginalised communities.

Specific policy recommendations for vulnerable populations

Additional focused policies that benefit certain marginalised groups were suggested during the process of this research.

Indigenous, *Quilombola*, and Riverine communities

- **Engage Indigenous, *Quilombola*, and Riverine communities in the co-development of responsible tourism, cultural production, and locally owned businesses**, backed by co-financing, technical assistance, and culturally respectful marketing.
- **Promote national and regional campaigns to highlight the contributions of Indigenous, *Quilombola*, and Riverine youth to biodiversity conservation, cultural preservation, and sustainable development.** These campaigns should also shed light on the barriers faced by young people in these communities, such as territorial exclusion, limited access to services, and the impacts of climate change and infrastructure projects.
- **Support a just transition for rural youth by combining vocational training** in renewable energy, green agriculture, and ecosystem restoration with traditional knowledge and cultural practices. Provide mentoring and culturally relevant apprenticeships that open pathways to dignified work in areas like sustainable tourism, gastronomy, environmental education, and the creative industries.
- **Ensure rural inclusion in national entrepreneurship and sustainable development initiatives** through targeted support, context specific training, and infrastructure. Incentivise state and municipal governments to create mechanisms that improve logistics for rural entrepreneurs, including transportation and market access for local produce.

Youth with disabilities

- **Promote knowledge and understanding of ‘ableism’ within educational setting**, representing a commitment to confront daily experiences of discrimination, whether deliberate or accidental, suffered by PwDs.
- **Reinforce existing public policies that ensure full accessibility and meaningful participation of young people with disabilities in public life and policymaking**, such as New Plan Live Without Limits (Novo Plano Viver Sem Limite / Decree nº 11.793/ 2023).
- **Expand retention, inclusion efforts, and ongoing mentoring of PwDs in education and employment**, ensuring PwDs youth are supported to thrive in all environments.
- **Extend transitional support from the Continuous Cash Benefit (BPC) into employment**, ensuring young PwDs maintain economic security while building autonomy and adapting to new routines.
- **Expand access to disability sports** through initiatives like the National Secretariat of Parasports (SN-PAR), and the Paralympic Programme (SP), recognising the role of sport in fostering self-confidence, resilience, and social inclusion for young people with disabilities.

Trans youth

- **Amplify programmes that promote transgender leadership, safety, and representation** through sustained investment in political education, public campaigns, and inclusive policymaking, such as the Transcitizenship Programme (*Programa Transcidadania*), a municipal programme in São Paulo, to increase visibility of trans realities.
- **Promote leadership programmes and awareness initiatives led by trans people**, with special attention to regions with high incidence of trans violence.
- **Expand existing quota policies for university access to include transgender youth** and mandate the creation of effective support programmes to improve trans student experience and retention, such as Trans Permanence Incentive Programmes (PPIs).

Best practice examples

Some examples of services and initiatives were positively highlighted by stakeholder youth during the course of this project.

- *Usina da Paz* (São Paulo, Salvador, Pará). Intersectoral centres to integrate healthcare, education, social assistance, and employment services in one institution (SEAC Pará, [2021](#)).
- Community-led transgender reference centres, such as the *Centro Municipal de Referência LGBT+* (Salvador) and *Centro de Referência da Cidadania LGBTI+* (Reparação, [2022](#); Prefeitura SP, [2025](#)).
- Microcredit and vocational training. *Ceará Sem Fome + Qualificação e Renda, Acredita no Primeiro Passo*, Ceará Cred (Gov.br (xxx), [2024](#); Rede Nacional, [2024](#); (Governo do Ceará, [2024](#)).
- Centro de Convivência (RJ), which provided safe childcare and support spaces for informal workers during large-scale festivities (*Carioca Digital*, [2025](#)).
- Support groups such as CONAQ, Malungu, and *Instituto Odara* enhance advocacy and visibility to *Quilombola* groups (CONAQ, [2024](#); Malungu, [2013](#); Instituto Odara, [2025](#)).



Annex 1:

Next Generation Brazil

Youth Task Force

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Northeast

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Southeast

Social entrepreneur and CEO of Barkus. Works with financial education and inclusion for marginalised groups, especially women, Black people, and those from social classes C, D, and E.

Dandara Rudsan

North

Political articulator, human rights researcher, and member of RENFA (National Network of Anti-Prohibitionist Feminists). Focus on race, gender, environment, LGBT-QIAPN+, and legal studies. Founder of NEPAZ and awarded for her work in the Amazon.

Fransuyle Farias

Northeast

Ambassador and leader in the *Jovens do Brasil* association, working with youth engagement and protagonism through education and productive inclusion.

Gabriel Adami

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Socio-environmental activist and Public Policy Assistant at the SOS Pantanal Institute.

Gabriel Morais

Southeast

Director of Institutional Relations at RenovaBR, training future political leaders to strengthen Brazilian democracy. Career dedicated to the social impact sector, developing socioeconomic programmes for social organisations and the private sector.

Larissa da Silva Fontana

South

Researcher and National Youth Council (CONJUVÉ) representative. Specialist in gender, race, and social movements. Active member of various youth and racial equality councils. Executive Secretary of *Em Movimento* and Executive Coordinator of the Centre for Youth Studies and Memory.

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Southeast

Educator and Education Analyst for the SETA Project.

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Southeast

Programme and Partnership Manager at Arymax Foundation. Natália has worked for more than 15 years in the social impact sector and for the last six years has dedicated herself to the cause of productive inclusion of economically vulnerable people in the world of work.

Vic Argôlo

North

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Annex 2:

Methodology

Next Generation Brazil required young people to complete an online questionnaire of more than 60 questions, which were hosted on global market research platform Toluna. Multiple-choice questions were presented in a randomised order to minimise bias and ensure more reliable responses. This methodological choice reflects broader efforts to improve data quality and reduce priming effects in data collection.

Completion took a minimum of 30–40 minutes, and no compensation was offered to young Brazilians. Survey length, as well as a wide range of themes in the study, caused great difficulty in data collection. Some youth may have not given sufficient time to fully consider each question, due to boredom, tiredness, or cognitive difficulties, which may somewhat impact quantitative data, highlighting the need for qualitative initiatives to qualify some research findings.

Anomalies and limitations

Data results showed an anomaly with race quotas, potentially explained by recent social advances. Census data (2022) relating to youth aged 16–35 showed a population of 48 per cent *Pardo* (mixed-race) and 11 per cent Black (two categories that are blended in policy documents, giving an overall '*Negro*' population of 59 per cent), with Indigenous and Yellow populations combined representing less than one per cent. In contrast, the Next Generation Brazil sample recorded a higher proportion of Black-identifying youth (19 per cent) and a lower proportion of mixed-race respondents (36 per cent), which combined represent 55 per cent, close to the official data.

One hypothesis is that youth may feel more empowered to identify as Black, potentially influenced by affirmative action policies and changing discourses around ethnicity and race or increased social visibility. Another plausible explanation is that targeted outreach to underrepresented communities during data collection — through local networks, and grassroots organisations — may have led to greater participation from youth who more readily identify as Black. Such nuance reinforces the importance of reading racial data not only statistically, but also socioculturally.

Quantitative data quota targets for youth aged 16–18 were not fully met, as it proved difficult to apply the survey to young Brazilians under the age of 18. Partnership discussions reached an advanced stage with education secretariats in at least three states, but did not advance to permission being granted to apply the survey in schools during the required timeline. While not fully representative of the national quota, 427 survey responses were received from those aged 16–18, considered sufficient for quantitative analysis.

The research team recognises further demographic limitations during data collection. For instance, while survey tools included questions on housing and urban vulnerability, the use of '*favela*' as a response category may not adequately capture the diversity of peripheral or informal living conditions across Brazil. Survey moderators noted that some young people in areas known as *favelas* did not always choose this option to describe their territory. Similarly, blending metropolitan areas and peripheral zones may have skewed accurate territorial reading.

Researchers acknowledge that information on whether respondents attended public or private schools — a key marker of inequality in Brazil — was not included in the survey tool and should be considered in future iterations. Questions relating to current occupation failed to allow young people to select more than one option, perhaps impacting those working and studying, for example.

Meanwhile, when asking youth whether they were engaged in climate activism, a follow-up question should have been posed to allow youth to define the type of activity they referred to. This would have allowed for greater insight into the scope and nature of youth involvement in environmental issues.

For future efforts and ensuring additional integration of Indigenous people in the research, it is important to consider the creation of versions in Indigenous languages as a means of including this population, who often do not speak fluent Portuguese. Similarly, making it accessible to deaf Brazilians through Libras, Brazil's sign language, and easier language supports their additional understanding of concepts within the survey questions and participation. The research team contracted Libras interpreters to join moderators with groups of deaf youth and employed qualitative methods with these demographics to support data collection. For future exercises, it is relevant to consider the number of questions, as the volume of multiple choice answers can present challenges to this group.

Qualitative methods

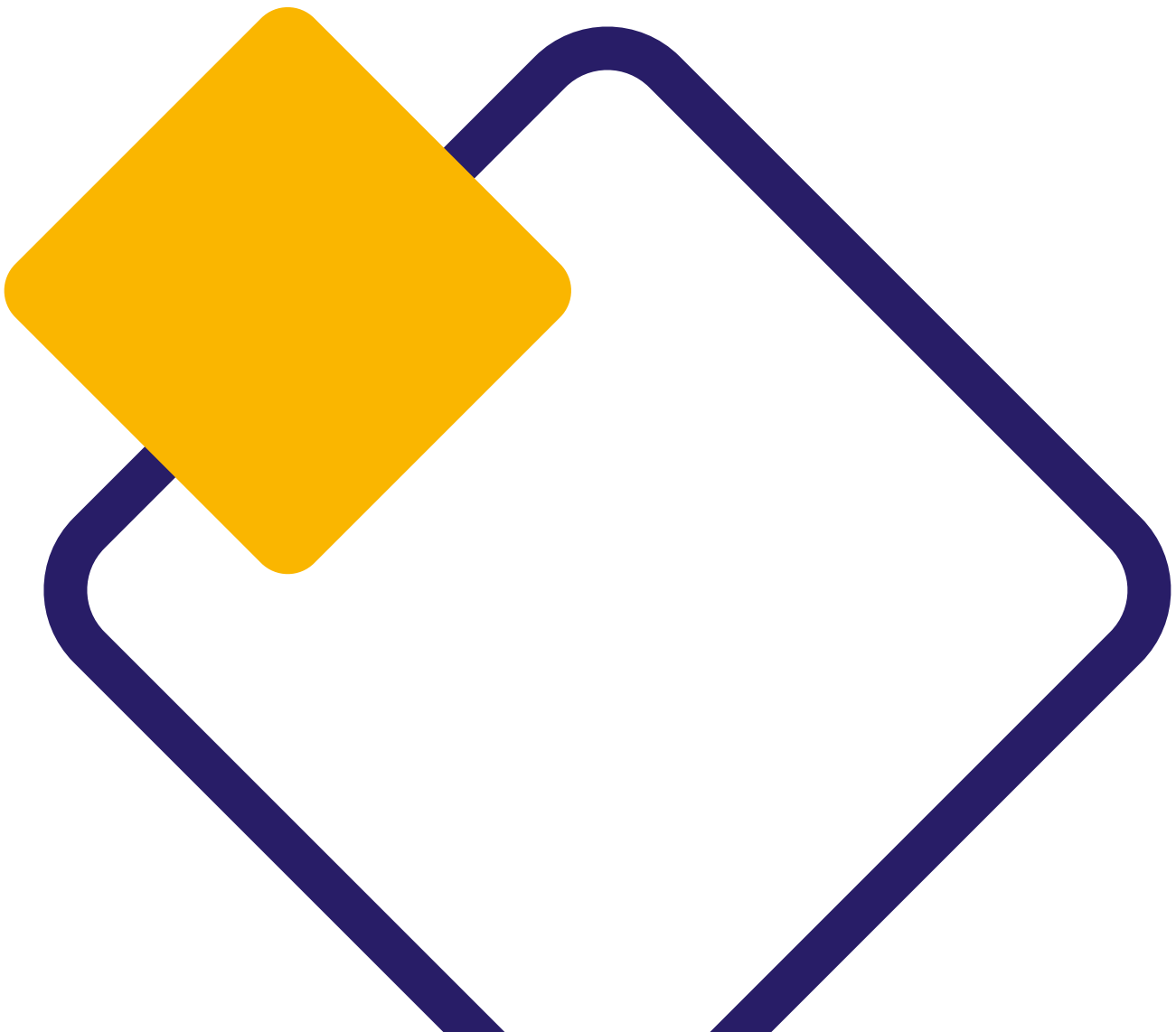
Qualitative methods were engaged at two separate intervals during the course of this study. Eighteen (18) in-depth interviews were initially conducted with a range of community leaders and stakeholders, all of whom work with or lead youth-focused organisations operating in *favelas*, rural areas, Riverine, or other marginalised communities.

These included representatives from ASID Brasil; Associação Voar; CIEDS; CONJUVE National Youth Council; Rural Municipal School Bonifácio Gomes; Arymax Foundation; Grupo AdoleScER; *Iniciativa Negra*; Instituto Mara Gabrilli; Instituto Salto; Jovens Pela Diferença; Junior Achievement Brasil; Juventude Potentes; *Ozipa Criativa*; SETA Project; SOS Pantanal; *UniFavela*; and *Uniperiferias/IMJA*.

In-depth discussions addressed core themes such as employment, education, entrepreneurship, gender, race, environmental concerns, and LGBTQIAPN+ issues. These engagements contributed to a broad and grounded understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by young people in Brazil, particularly those living in situations of social vulnerability.

Following quantitative data collection to identify national and regional trends and attitudes at scale, researchers employed strategies to hear directly from young people whose perspectives may not be adequately represented in larger data findings.

A series of focus groups and interviews were conducted with 105 young people who were selected based on memberships in specific groups that tend to be marginalised in Brazilian society, as identified through desk research and consultation with stakeholders.



Focus Groups

<i>Quilombola</i> youth	8 participants, aged 21–34, from both urban and rural areas in the Northeastern state of Maranhão.
People with disabilities	7 participants, aged 18–33, Black, mixed-race, and white, in Salvador, Bahia (Northeast).
Riverine youth	13 participants, aged 16–35, from Pará (North), ranging from two university graduates to one illiterate 35-year-old.
Black teenagers	10 participants, aged 15–18, from low-income backgrounds in the Southeast.
Transgender youth	10 participants, aged 18–33, from seven different locations across three states, including Black, mixed-race, white, and Indigenous participants. This focus group was conducted online.

Qualitative individual interviews

Youth leaders	18 in-depth pre-survey interviews with a range of community leaders that work with or lead youth-focused organisations operating in <i>favelas</i> , rural areas, Riverine, or other marginalised communities.
Indigenous youth	11 interviews: male and female participants, aged 19–35, from at least five different states.
App-based workers	9 interviews: delivery and transport workers aged 19–33 (mostly male; Black, mixed-race, and white), interviewed in person in the Southeast.
Street and beach vendors	11 interviews: male and female workers aged 17–34 (Black and mixed-race), also interviewed in person in the Southeast.
Women in informal work	14 interviews: women aged 19–34 (white, Black, and mixed-race) working across various informal occupations, interviewed via phone or in person.
Politically engaged youth	12 interviews: aged 22–30, from three regions of Brazil.

Annex 3:

Glossary

ABMES – Associação Brasileira de Mantenedoras de Ensino Superior (Brazilian Association of Private Higher Education Institutions). Representative association of private universities. www.abmes.org.br

Aquilombola Brasil. Launched in 2023, this federal programme aims to support the *Quilombola* population towards land and territorial access; infrastructure and quality of life; productive inclusion and ethno-development; and rights and citizenship. https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/d11447.htm

Arymax Foundation (Fundação Arymax). A philanthropic foundation founded in 1990 that supports social projects related to education and financial inclusion in Brazil. <https://arymax.org.br/>

ASID Brasil – Aliada Social pela Inclusão e Diversidade Brasil (Social Inclusion and Development Association Brazil). An organisation that promotes social and digital inclusion for people with disabilities in Brazil. <https://asidbrasil.org.br/>

Associação Voar. A Brazilian non-profit organisation dedicated to supporting social inclusion, especially for people with disabilities, through education and empowerment programmes. <https://www.associacaovoar.com.br>

Banco Palmas (Palmas Bank) - Brazil's first community bank, the initiative aims to democratise access to financial and banking services for the population living in the outskirts of Fortaleza, with broad social participation and oversight, mobilizing local associations, and fostering the socioeconomic development of neighborhoods and *favelas*. <https://bancopalmas.com/>

Barkus. A Brazilian edtech company whose aim is to democratise access to financial education through technology for young people and adults who are socially vulnerable. www.barkus.com.br

BNCC - Base Nacional Comum Curricular (National Common Curricular Base). The National Common Curricular Base is a normative document that defines the organic and progressive set of essential learning that all students must develop throughout the stages and modalities of Basic Education. <https://basenacionalcomum.mec.gov.br/>

BNCC da Computação - Base Nacional Comum Curricular da Computação (National Common Curricular Base - Computing). Official guidelines for including computing in the national curriculum. <https://www.gov.br/mec/pt-br/escolas-conectadas/BNCCComputaoC-ompletodiagramado.pdf>

Black Youth Alive Initiative (Plano Juventude Negra Viva). Federal inter-ministerial initiative focused on reducing violence and promoting rights, access, and opportunities for Black youth in Brazil. www.gov.br/igualdaderacial/pt-br/assuntos/plano-juventude-negra-viva

BPC – Benefício de Prestação Continuada (Continuous Cash Benefit). A social cash transfer benefit granted to elderly people (65+) and persons with disabilities unable to support themselves or be supported by their family. Recipients are paid the equivalent of a monthly minimum wage. <https://www.gov.br/mds/pt-br/acoes-e-programas/suas/beneficios-assistenciais/beneficio-assistencial-ao-idoso-e-a-pessoa-com-deficiencia-bpc>

BRICS. An intergovernmental organisation comprising developing nations (Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, United Arab Emirates, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia & South Africa) focused on cooperation in economics, politics, and development. <https://www.gov.br/planalto/pt-br/agenda-internacional/missoes-internacionais/cupulas-do-brics/reuniao-do-brics-2023/historia-do-brics>

CAIBARNX – Coordenadoria das Associações Indígenas do Balaio, Alto Rio Negro e Xié (Coordination of the Indigenous Associations of Balaio, Alto Rio Negro and Xié). A regional Indigenous coordination structure affiliated with the Federation of Indigenous Organisations of the Rio Negro (FOIRN).

CAIMBRN – Coordenadoria das Associações Indígenas do Médio e Baixo Rio Negro (Coordination of Indigenous Associations of the Middle and Lower Rio Negro). Established in 2004, CAIMBRN represents and coordinates Indigenous associations in the Middle and Lower Rio Negro region.

CEBRAP – Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento (Brazilian Centre for Analysis and Planning). A multidisciplinary research centre and think tank dedicated to critically analysing Brazilian society and informing progressive public policy. www.cebrap.org.br/

CEDENPA – Centro de Estudos e Defesa do Negro do Pará (Centre for Studies and Defence of the Black People of Pará). A non-profit organisation in Pará, North of Brazil, that works to combat racism, prejudice and discrimination in Brazilian society since 1980. www.cedenpa.org.br

Cerrado Biome. A tropical savanna biome located in central Brazil, known for its exceptional biodiversity and water resources. Covering over 2 million km², the biome contains a mix of grasslands, shrublands, and forests. Despite its ecological importance, the biome faces threats from agricultural expansion and habitat loss.

CIEDS – Centro Integrado de Estudos e Programas de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (Centre for Integrated Studies and Sustainable Development). An organisation focused on promoting sustainable development through integrated social, economic, and environmental programmes in Brazil. <https://www.cieds.org.br/>

CIMI – Conselho Indigenista Missionário (Indigenous Missionary Council). A Catholic-affiliated organisation advocating for Indigenous rights, linked to the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB). www.cimi.org.br/o-cimi/

CLT - Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho (Consolidation of Labour Laws). The principal legal framework regulating labour relations in Brazil, covering both individual and collective rights. CLT workers refers to people in full-time and permanent employment.

COIDI – Coordenadoria das Organizações Indígenas do Distrito de Iauaretê (Coordination of Indigenous Organisations of the District of Iauaretê). A regional Indigenous body representing organisations in Iauaretê in their dealings with government and institutions.

CONAQ – Coordenação Nacional de Articulação das Comunidades Negras Rurais Quilombolas (National Coordination of Articulation of Quilombola Communities). Entity that works with more than 3,500 Quilombola communities throughout the country. <https://conaq.org.br/>

CONJUBE – Conselho Nacional de Juventude (National Youth Council). A consultative body linked to the National Youth Secretariat, comprising representatives from Government Ministries, members of civil society organisations that work with young people, and youth leaders.

COP30 – 30th UN Climate Change Conference (2025). United Nations conference focusing on global efforts to address climate change, Belém, North Brazil, 2025.

DAJIRN – Departamento de Adolescentes e Jovens Indígenas do Rio Negro (Department of Indigenous Adolescents and Youth of the Rio Negro). Monitors and influences public policies concerning Indigenous youth and adolescents in the Rio Negro region. <https://foirn.org.br/jovens/>

DIA WII – Coordenadoria das Associações Indígenas do Baixo Uaupés, Rio Tiquié e Afluentes (Coordination of Indigenous Organisations of Tiquié, Uaupés and Tributaries). Part of FOIRN, operating in the Tiquié and Uaupés river regions.

Diretas Já (Direct Elections Now). A popular civic movement in the 1980s demanding direct presidential elections, instrumental in Brazil's return to democracy.

EAD - Educação a Distância (Distance Education). A learning modality involves taking a course remotely, via internet access, without the need to go to the educational institution.

ELAFAV - The ELAFAV Collective is a Hip Hop Culture organization that acts as an ecosystem of volunteering, collaborations, donations, art, education and professionalization in the outskirts of Brasília.

National Connected Schools Strategy (*Estratégia Nacional de Escolas Conectadas - Enec*). A National Strategy which aims to guarantee internet connectivity in all public basic education schools in the country and to support the acquisition and improvement of necessary equipment.

Favelas. Urban informal settlements in Brazil, often lacking infrastructure and public services, yet rich in culture and community organisation.

FAPESP - Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (São Paulo State Research Support Foundation). A São Paulo state foundation that funds research and innovation in science and technology, through allocations from the state's tax income. <https://fapesp.br/>

FBSP – Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública (Brazilian Forum on Public Safety). An independent civil society organisation producing data and research on public safety and violence in Brazil. www.forumseguranca.org.br

FGV – Fundação Getúlio Vargas (Getulio Vargas Foundation). One of Brazil's top think tank institutions for research and education in public policy, economics, law, and business. www.portal.fgv.br/en

FIES – Fundo de Financiamento Estudantil (Student Financing Fund). Federal student loan programme for private higher education tuition.

Firjan – Federação das Indústrias do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro). Represents industrial sectors in Rio de Janeiro, offering services in innovation, infrastructure, and workforce development. www.firjan.com.br

Five-Pact Plan. A federal government proposal under President Dilma Rousseff in 2013, focusing on political reform, public transport, health, education, and economic responsibility.

Grupo AdoleScER. A civil society organisation dedicated to the human development of youth people in vulnerable communities in the Northeast of Brazil. <https://adolescer.org.br/>

IBAMA – Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis (Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources). Federal environmental enforcement and conservation agency. www.gov.br/ibama

IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics). National agency for statistics, including demographic, social, and economic data. www.ibge.gov.br/en/

INEP – Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira (National Institute for Educational Studies and Research). Autonomous agency linked to the Ministry for Education that produces educational indicators and assessments. www.gov.br/inep

Iniciativa Negra (Black Initiative). A movement that promotes Afro-Brazilian culture and combats racial discrimination in Brazil. <https://iniciativanegra.org.br/>

INSS – Instituto Nacional do Seguro Social (National Social Security Institute). Federal agency under the Ministry of Social Security that manages social security benefits in Brazil. www.gov.br/inss

Instituto Odara (Odara Institute). A Black feminist organisation, centred on African heritage and based in Salvador, Bahia. <https://institutoodara.org.br/>

Instituto Salto (Salto Institute). An organisation that develops educational and social projects for marginalised communities. <https://institutosalto.org.br/>

Jovens do Brasil (Youth of Brazil). An independent, apolitical movement that supports projects that aim Brazilian youth issues through education and productive inclusion. www.jovensdobrasil.org

Jovens Pela Diferença (Youth for Difference). A youth-led movement advocating for the inclusion and rights of young people with disabilities.

Junior Achievement Brasil. A programme that supports the development of entrepreneurship and leadership skills among young students. <https://jabrasil.org.br/>

Juventudes Potentes (Empowering Youth). A youth collective focused on empowerment, cultural expression and social rights. <https://juventudespotentes.org.br/>

Lei de Cotas (Quotas law). Federal law that requires public universities to reserve places for students from low-income backgrounds, with places reserved for demographic quotas of Black, Indigenous, and disabled youth.

Lei Suplicy de Lacerda (Law No. 4,464/1964). A law enacted in 1964 that essentially dismantled independent student movements during the military dictatorship.

Libras (Brazilian Sign Language). The official sign language of the Brazilian deaf community used for communication.

LGBTQIAPN+. Inclusive acronym for diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. L – Lesbian, G – Gay, B – Bisexual, T – Transgender, Q – Queer or Questioning, I – Intersex, A – Asexual or Agender (or Ally), P – Pansexual, N – Non-binary, + – other identities and orientations.

Malungu. An organisation of *Quilombola* communities in the state of Pará. <https://malungupara.wordpress.com/quemsomos-2/>

Mara Gabrilli Institute. A non-profit organisation committed to the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities. <https://img.org.br/>

More Doctors Programme (Programa Mais Médicos). A public health programme addressing the shortage of medical professionals in underserved regions.

More Teachers Programme (Programa Mais Professores). A 2025 programme addressing the shortage of teachers in Brazil, with particular emphasis on underserved regions.

MEC – Ministério da Educação (Ministry of Education). Federal body for national education policy. www.gov.br/mec

MEI – Microempreendedor individual (Individual Micro-entrepreneur). Legal status for self-employed workers to access tax and social security benefits. www.gov.br/mei

NADZOERI – Coordenação da Organização Baniwa e Koripaco (Coordination of the Baniwa and Koripaco Organisation). Represents Baniwa and Koripaco peoples; supports territorial and environmental management plans (PGTA).

NGOs – Organizações Não Governamentais (Non-Governmental Organisations). Independent, non-profit organisations working in areas like education, human rights, and sustainable development.

Novo Plano Viver Sem Limite (New Plan Live Without Limits) - The National Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (New Living Without Limits) was established by Decree No. 11.793/2023, with the objective of guaranteeing greater dignity for people with disabilities, their families, and communities in Brazil. <https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/navegue-por-temas/pes-soa-com-deficiencia/acoes-e-programas/plano-novo-viver-sem-limite>

NUPDEC - Núcleo de Proteção e Defesa Civil (Civil Defense and Protection Center). Volunteer community civil defense groups. <https://carioca.rio/servicos/proje-to-nupdec-nucleo-de-protecao-e-defesa-civil/>

OECD – Organização para a Cooperação e Desenvolvimento Econômico (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). An international organisation with 38 member countries. A forum and knowledge hub for data, analysis and best practices in public policy. www.oecd.org/

Ozipa Criativa. A social project focusing on art and cultural inclusion for vulnerable communities. <https://co-laboragpa.com.br/ong/ozipa-criativa>

Pantanal. One of the world's largest tropical wetlands, located in Brazil, Paraguay, and Bolivia, threatened by fires and agricultural expansion.

Paralympic Programme (Programa PARALÍMPICO). The Paralympic Programme is the structural basis for paraspports, extending throughout the State of São Paulo, together with athletes, teachers and organizers united for development.

PDDE Equidade - Programa Dinheiro Direto na Escola Equidade (Direct Cash to School Equity Program). This programme allocates supplementary financial resources to public Basic Education schools that serve historically excluded populations. <https://www.gov.br/mec/pt-br/pdde/pdde-equidade>

Pé-de-Meia – A government initiative that offers financial incentives for high school (ensino médio) attendance to low-income students. www.gov.br/mec/pt-br/pe-de-meia

PIEC – Política de Inovação Educação Conectada (Connected Education Innovation Programme). A Ministry of Education programme to promote universal internet access and encourage the use of digital technology in public schools. <https://educacaoconectada.mec.gov.br/>

Plano Juventude Negra Viva (Young Black Alive Call).

The initiative seeks to reduce the vulnerabilities that affect Brazilian black youth and the lethal violence based on structural racism. <https://www.gov.br/igualdadacial/pt-br/assuntos/plano-juventude-negra-viva>

PNEEI - Plano Nacional de Educação Escolar Indígena (National Plan for Indigenous School Education).

It is an intergovernmental plan for Indigenous School Education (EEI) and aims to implement the proposals deliberated at the II National Conference on Indigenous School Education (CONEEI); strengthen the collaboration regime among federated entities, social participation, transparency of actions and management by results, constituting an instrument for monitoring, evaluation and social control of EEI. <https://www.gov.br/mec/pt-br/educacao-escolar-indigena>

PNEERQ - Política Nacional de Equidade, Educação para as Relações Étnico-Raciais e Educação Escolar Quilombola (National Policy on Equity, Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations and Quilombola School Education). It is an educational programme aimed at overcoming racial and ethnic inequalities and racism in educational settings, as well as promoting educational policies for the *Quilombola* population. The target audience encompasses the entire school community. <https://www.gov.br/mec/pt-br/pneerq>

Pronaf - Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar (National Programme to Strengthen Family Farming). The programme promotes the sustainable development of rural areas through actions aimed at increasing production capacity, generating jobs, and raising income, to improve the quality of life and exercise citizenship among family farmers. <https://www.gov.br/pt-br/servicos/acessar-o-programa-nacional-de-fortalecimento-da-agricultura-familiar-pronaf>

PwD – Persons with Disabilities. People with long-term impairments facing barriers to full participation in society.

Qualifica Brasil (Qualify Brazil). It is an action by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the Ministry of Economy, and aims to offer, free of charge, places on professional qualification courses, aiming to meet the demand of the productive sector and enhance the employability and productive inclusion of graduate students. <https://qualifica-brasil.com/>

Quilombola. Afro-Brazilian communities descended from escaped slaves, recognised as traditional peoples with territorial rights.

RENFA - Rede Nacional de Feministas Antiproibicionistas (National Network of Anti-Prohibitionist Feminists). A feminist, anti-racist, supra-partisan and anti-capitalist political organisation that fights for human rights and the political empowerment of women and trans people. www.renfa.org

RenovaBR. The largest political training school in Brazil. A multi-party, non-profit school that trains political and public leaders. www.renovabr.org

S System. A system of parastatal institutions (Senai, Sesi, Senac, Sesc, Sebrae, Senar, Sest, Senat and SESCOOP) that offer services such as professional education, social assistance, consultancy, research and leisure.

Salto Institute. An organisation that develops educational and social projects for marginalised communities. <https://institutosalto.org.br/>

SDG 18 – Sustainable Development Goal 18 (proposed). A non-official extension to the UN SDGs, proposed by President Lula to include protection of Indigenous rights and traditional knowledge.

SEBRAE – Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas (Brazilian Service of Support for Micro and Small Enterprises). Non-profit autonomous institution, created in 1972. Offers training, consultancy, and credit access for entrepreneurs.

SENAC - Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial (National Commercial Apprenticeship Service). The main professional education institution aimed at the Goods, Services and Tourism sector.

SENAI - Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial (National Industrial Training Service). It is a public service that trains professionals and offers technological services to Brazilian and foreign industries.

SESI – Serviço Social da Indústria (Industry Social Service). Private, non-profit organisation created in 1946 by Brazil's National Confederation of Industry with a focus on quality of life for Brazilian workers and communities.

SETA Project – Solidarity, Education, Transformation, and Action. A social initiative working in education and community development in Brazil. <https://projetoSETA.org.br/en/>

SNPAR - Secretaria Nacional do Paradesporto (National Secretariat of Parasports). The National Secretariat of Parasports promotes and coordinates Para-sports actions to provide access for people with disabilities to sports practice in all its manifestations. <https://www.gov.br/esporte/pt-br/composicao/orgaos-especificos/esporte/paradesporto>

SOS Pantanal. An environmental organisation focused on protecting and restoring the Pantanal biome in Brazil. <https://sospantanal.org.br/>

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. An acronym for academic and professional fields related to innovation and technology.

Transcidadania - Transcitizenship. The Transcidadania Programme is an initiative of the City of São Paulo, which aims to strengthen activities of professional inclusion, social reintegration and restoration of citizenship for the population of transvestites, transsexual women and trans men in vulnerable situations. <https://prefeitura.sp.gov.br/w/noticia/transcidadania-entenda-como-funciona>

Travesti – a person assigned male at birth who adopts a feminine gender expression, but does not necessarily identify as a woman or as a transgender woman. Travestis identify as a distinct gender identity, not simply as men or women, and the term carries important political, cultural, and social meaning in Latin America.

UNDP – Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento (United Nations Development Programme). UN agency promoting sustainable and inclusive development in partnership with governments and civil society. www.undp.org/brazil

UNE – União Nacional dos Estudantes (National Union of Students). Main national student organisation in Brazil, representing university students and advocating for educational rights. www.une.org.br

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund. An international organisation that works to protect the rights and well-being of children worldwide. <https://www.unicef.org/>

Uneafro – União de Núcleos de Educação Popular para Negras, Negros e Classe Trabalhadora (Union of Popular Education Centres for Black People and the Working Class). Entity that promotes racial equity through grassroots education. <https://uneafrobrasil.org>

UniFavela. An organisation promoting education, culture, and social development in Brazilian *favelas*. <https://unifavela.com.br/>

Uniperiferias. An international network that connects initiatives in Brazilian urban peripheries to strengthen community actions. <https://imja.org.br/uniperiferias>

USP – Universidade de São Paulo (University of São Paulo). One of the most prestigious and influential universities in Brazil and Latin America.

Young Apprentice (Jovem Aprendiz). An internship programme for young people aged 14 to 24. The Apprenticeship Law requires medium and large companies in Brazil to reserve 5–15 per cent of positions for apprentices, who must be enrolled in a recognised educational course (such as technical or university studies) and attend vocational training courses provided by authorised institutions. Companies that take part in the programme receive certain benefits and tax incentives.

Young Quilombola Innovator Awards. Promoted by the Ministry of Culture, rewarding practical solutions aimed at improving the lives of *Quilombolas*.

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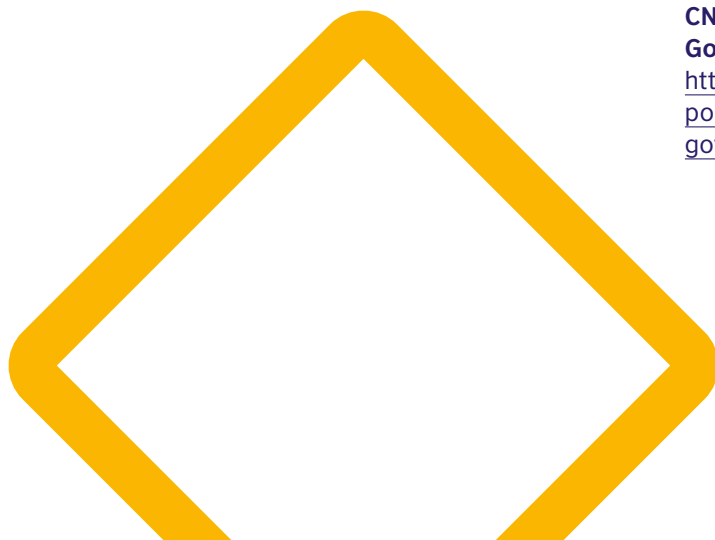
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