

#GenZ

Impact of Pandemic on

Outlook on Life and Study

INTO University Partnerships | August 2021



What impact has a year and a half lived during a pandemic, a period interposed with mass civil strife, social divisions, severe climate events, and rampant disinformation had on our youngest study abroad generation - **GENERATION Z** - those born between January 1995 and December 2003?

How are these international students' feeling about their future? Are they feeling cautious and concerned or optimistic and hopeful?

This series **#GenZ** kicks off with a survey that delves deeply into how the pandemic has affected our current and prospective students' attitudes to their education and future employment.

We gathered views from over 1,200 Gen Zers who are either currently studying abroad in their first year or planning to start this year from 93 countries across Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific. The survey was conducted using an online, self-completion questionnaire over the course of July and August 2021.

In this report we present the global results. Where sub-sample sizes have allowed for country specific breakdowns, these have also been included. Results are available for China, India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Kenya.



Executive Summary: no generation is homogeneous and cultural differences still play an important role in defining attitudes and outlook to life, but our study finds some strong commonalities across this generation of international students, possibly bolstered by the common experience of this pandemic.



The devastating impact of the global pandemic curtailed many activities for Gen Z international students, but not their drive or their desire to get on with their lives. They can broadly be divided into two camps; those feeling hopeful but somewhat anxious about their future and those feeling optimistic and excited.

This desire to move forward in such testing times is testimony of the resilience of this generation. This is an ambitious and bold generation looking to make it to the top of their profession one day. But they are measuring success differently; its less about impressing others, and more about being the best version of themselves.

This generation believes in the power of individuals to create change. The pandemic, extreme climate events, and a charged sociopolitical atmosphere of the past year have heightened concerns with social issues. Even though they want governments to take responsibility and do more, they embrace personal responsibility too.

The disruption to education as a result of the pandemic hasn't dented the passion for learning among international Gen Z students. Whilst they look to education as a path to future career success – learning is much more than this. Its also about preparing them for the skills they need to be successful in life in general.

For many Gen Z international students, a degree from a prestigious university is no longer a ticket to success and happiness, (if, indeed, it ever was). They are more discerning and recognize that less vaunted establishments can prepare them just as well for their careers and lives.

One of the lasting impacts of the pandemic is going to be on the future of work. The experience of lockdown has made this generation re-evaluate what really matters, and they want a career that offers better work/life balance. The pandemic has also unleashed an entrepreneurial spirit among Gen Zers, with many aspiring to start their own business once they graduate.



#GenZ

How has the pandemic shaped the outlook to life among Gen Z international students?



Given recent events we might expect this generation to be feeling more worried about their future but this far from being so. International students are showing great resilience with the proportion feeling hopeful but sometimes anxious, matched by those feeling optimistic and excited about their future.

How are Gen Z international students feeling about their future?

43%

Feeling optimistic
and excited

48%

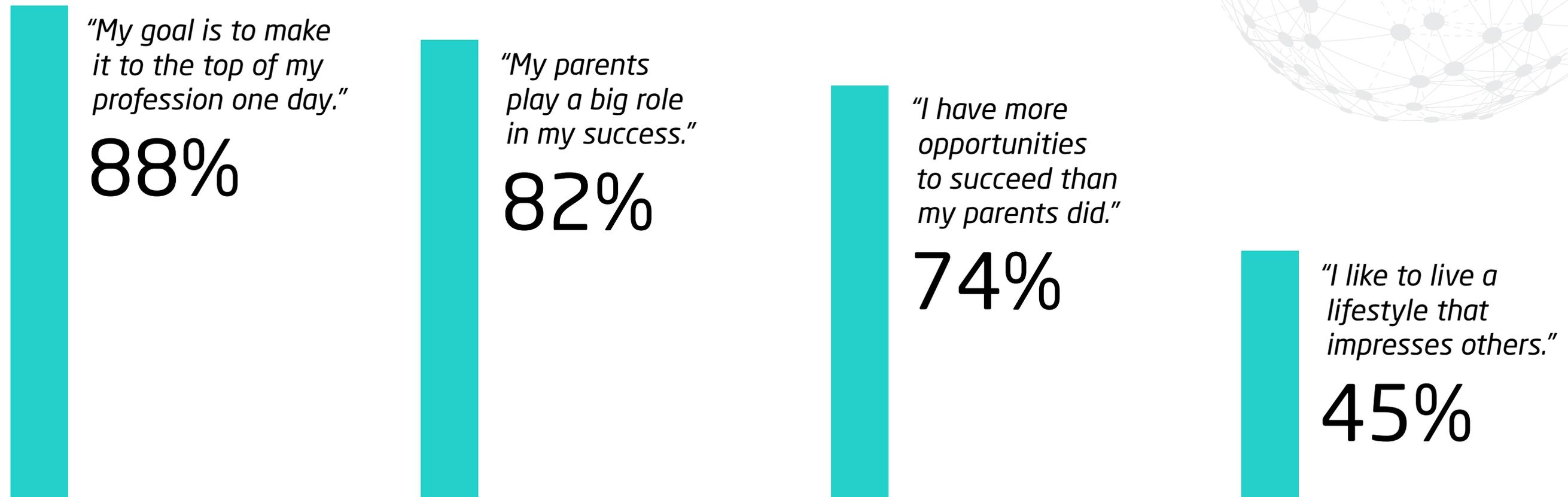
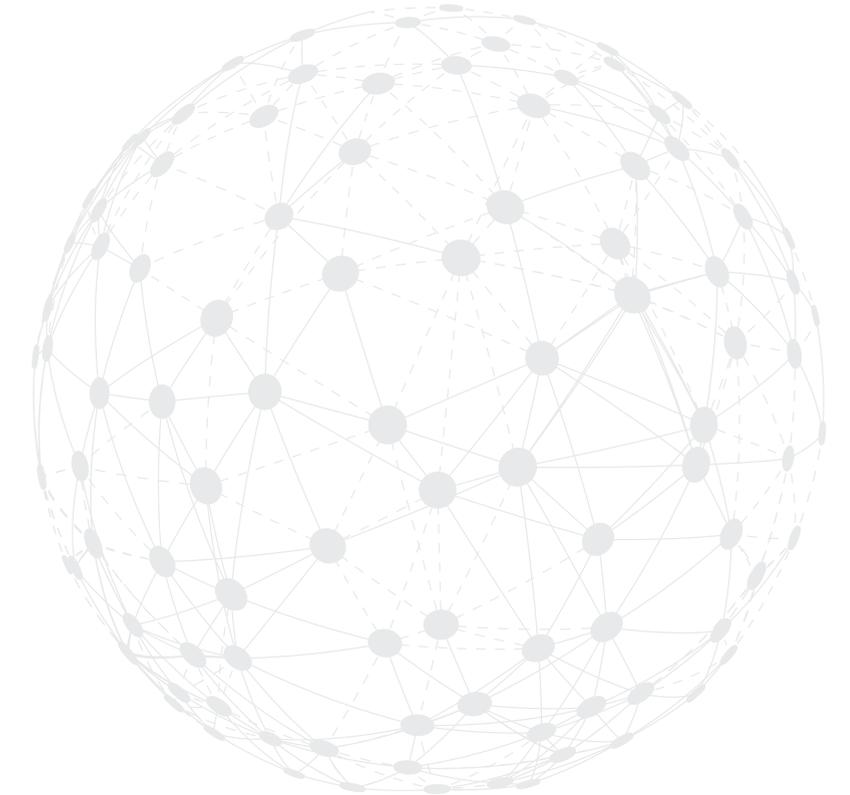
Feeling hopeful,
but sometimes
anxious

7%

Feeling stressed
and worried

As with generations before, Gen Z international students are highly outcome focused, looking to excel in their career. But this generation cares much less about impressing others, though they see their parents as having a key role in helping them be successful in life

Are Gen Z international students looking overseas for future career success?



Being so hyperconnected means Gen Zers are more exposed to global social issues than previous generations, and they are taking an active interest and concern for society and the world around them

How much do Gen Z international students care about social issues?

Unemployment	52%	Business/political corruption	30%
Educational opportunities	41%	Economic inequality	29%
Disease prevention	39%	Crime/Personal Safety	21%
Climate change	38%	Sexual Harassment	19%
Discrimination	31%	Cybersecurity/digital safety	16%

The pandemic has heightened interest and concern for a number of topics that become increasingly salient. Across the globe, many Gen Zers are now more concerned about the unemployment, unequal healthcare and educational opportunities.

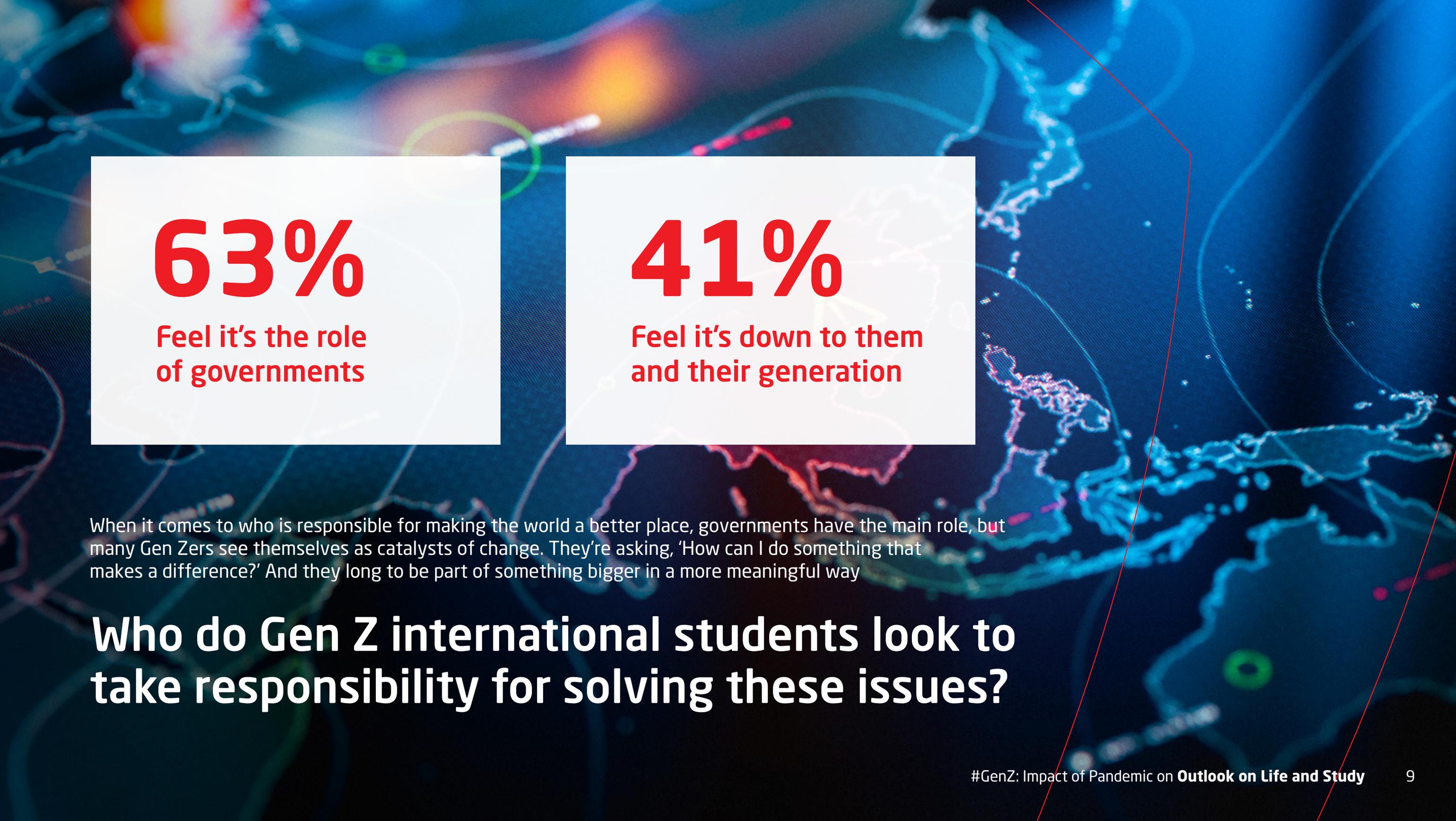
How much have the social issues Gen Z international students care about the most changed as a result of the pandemic?

Given the impact of the pandemic on the job market, Gen Zers are now more concerned about unemployment and the job market, no doubt thinking ahead about their job prospects after graduating.

News reports of the disproportionate volume of deaths among the poorer sections of our societies, exposed acute health inequalities and left an indelible mark on your young people. Gen Zers are now more concerned about disease prevention.

The disruption to education and the 'digital divide' which emerged from some students struggling to access online learning during school closure.



The infographic features a dark blue background with a glowing world map and abstract light trails. Two white rectangular boxes are positioned in the upper half, each containing a large red percentage and a corresponding statement. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

63%

Feel it's the role
of governments

41%

Feel it's down to them
and their generation

When it comes to who is responsible for making the world a better place, governments have the main role, but many Gen Zers see themselves as catalysts of change. They're asking, 'How can I do something that makes a difference?' And they long to be part of something bigger in a more meaningful way

**Who do Gen Z international students look to
take responsibility for solving these issues?**



Gen Z see themselves as CHANGE AGENTS

More than generations before them, Gen Zers live purpose as a core value. It's a defining feature of this generation and transcends cultural differences. We see this in their shared belief in the power of individuals to create change

Gen Z students studying abroad this year...

"No one person can make a change but united we can." (India)

"I believe that as individuals, we have our own role to play in reducing the economic inequality." (Indonesia)

"Everyone's actions are connected and if we all work together with small actions it can make a big change." (Japan)

"Positive change starts with you and me, and by so doing that ourselves, we are one step ahead everyday making the world a better place for us and the upcoming generations to come." (Nigeria)

GenZ students planning on studying abroad...

"It's everyone's responsibility to do their bit. If people start playing their role in this world most of the big problems will be resolved automatically and all people could live better lives." (Pakistan)

"It's the duty of every citizen to give back to their country. Helen Keller said, 'alone we do so little, together we do so much' this means we can reach greater heights when we all come together to achieve a common goal." (Ghana)

How has the pandemic shaped attitudes to learning and graduate outcomes among Gen Z international students?

#GenZ



As observed with previous generations, young learners across Asia and the rapidly developing emerging economies, place a much higher value on education which is outcome focussed on future career success

How much do Gen Z international students care about learning?

91%

Care passionately about learning



Whilst they look to education as a path to future career success – learning is much more than this. Gen Z see their overseas university education is key to preparing them with the skills and knowledge to become the best version of themselves, and to one day “make the world a better place”.

Why do Gen Z international students seek a study abroad university education?

To prepare myself for life in general with the knowledge and skills I need	90%	To get training for a specific career	84%
To learn more about things that interest me	86%	To make me a more cultured and well-rounded person	82%
So I can one day make the world a better place	86%	To be able to get a better job	81%
To increase the possibility to work/live overseas	86%	To be able to make more money	67%

It's often believed that international students place a premium on the status of universities. Whilst we find that more Chinese students place importance on this, this is untrue for many other countries. Most Gen Zers are judging universities on providing them with the quality education they need to be successful.

How much do Gen Z international students care about the prestige of a university?

72%

I want to study at a university that gives me the skills I need for my future; the ranking is far less important to me

17%

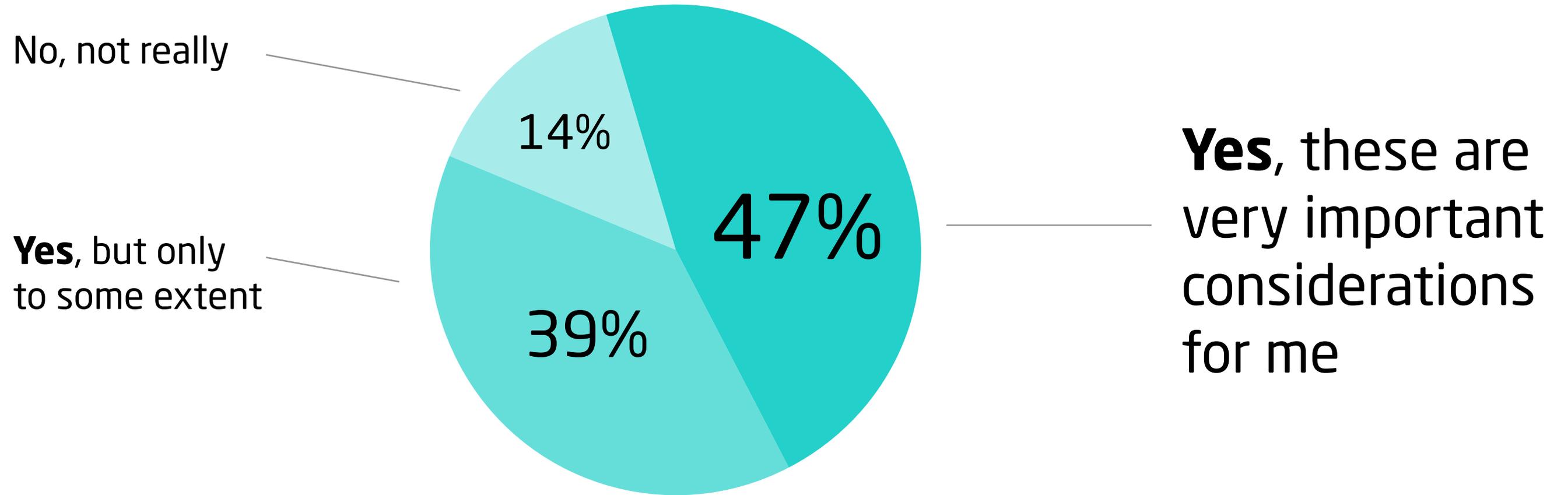
It's important to go to an elite, highly ranked university, even if it is more expensive

11%

I'm happy to go to a middle-tier university, if the price is right

As Gen Z are very purpose-led, many also consider a university's reputation and position on social issues too.

When applying to university, do Gen Z international students think about the track record of the institution on social issues such as environment, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights and anti-racism?



For half of Gen Z international students, their future career aspirations have changed a little to a lot as a result of the pandemic

Has the COVID-19 pandemic had any impact on changing the type of career Gen Z international students are aspiring to?

Yes, a little	46%
No, not really	28%
Yes, a lot	21%

(If yes) In what ways?

I'll be looking for a career that offers better work/life balance	49%
I'm thinking of being my own boss and starting my own business one day	45%
I'll be looking for a career where I can work entirely flexibly/including remotely	36%
When applying for jobs, I will consider the companies' social ethics and environmental impact	30%
I am thinking of pursuing a different type of job role	25%
I am thinking of working in a different sector/industry	23%

They tend to have a more global outlook too – expressing a strong desire to study and work abroad rapidly one day

Are Gen Z international students looking overseas for future career success?

83%

Going overseas for university gives people a competitive advantage towards a career

76%

I want to work overseas one day

66%

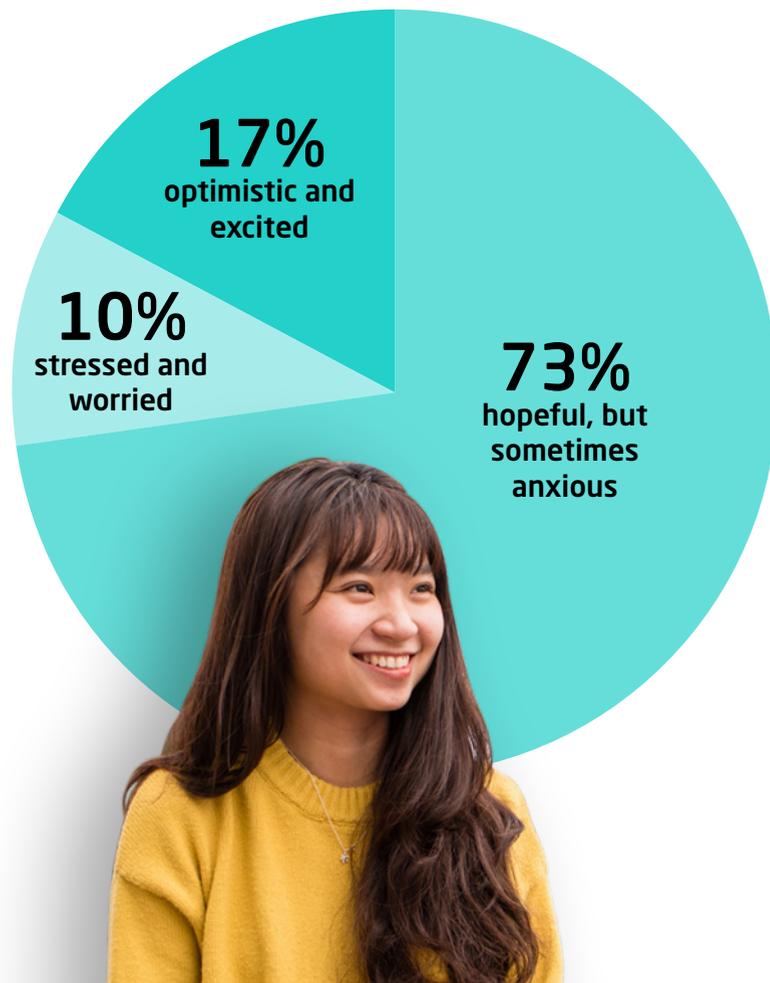
I think I can be more successful in my home country with an overseas education

Country Specific Outlook



Gen Z Outlook: China

How are they feeling about their future?



How much are they influenced by the following?

72% - My goal is to make it to the top of my profession one day
59% - I have more opportunities to succeed than my parents did

71% - My parents play a big role in my success
51% - I like to live a lifestyle that impresses others

How much do they care about social issues?

Disease prevention	39%
Crime/Personal Safety	37%
Discrimination	36%
Educational opportunities	34%
Business/political corruption	31%
Climate change	27%
Economic inequality	27%
Unemployment	26%
Cybersecurity/digital safety	16%
Sexual Harassment	12%

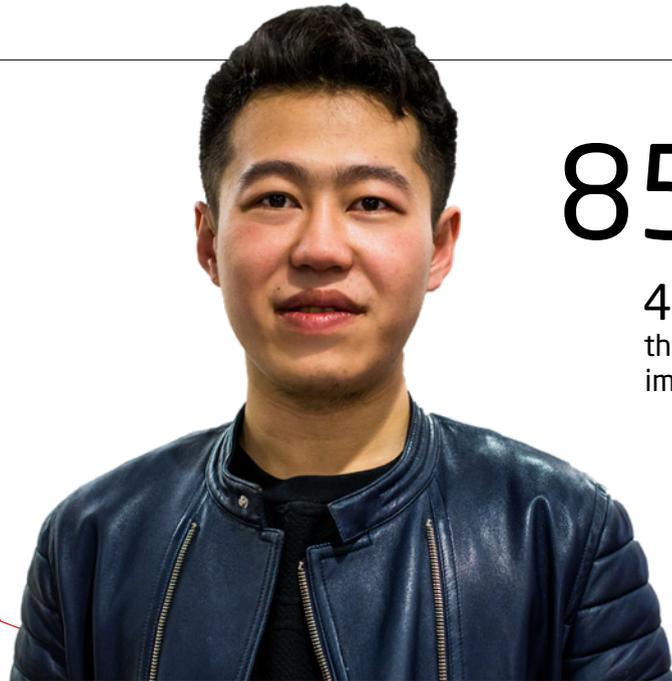
When applying to university, do they consider the track record of the institution on social issues such as environment, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights and anti-racism?

Yes, but only to some extent **48%** Yes, these are very important **31%**
 No, not really **21%**

Who do they look to take responsibility for solving these issues?

Governments	70%
Myself and others in my generation	25%
Think Tanks and Research Institutes, including universities	24%
Civic social movements (movements made up of citizens, e.g. GreenPeace, Black Lives Matter)	15%
Non-Governmental Organisations (e.g. World Economic Forum, World Health Organisation (WHO))	11%
Businesses / employers	10%
Its everyones responsibility to do their bit	1%

Gen Z Outlook: **China**



85% Care passionately about learning

43% want to study for a degree that gives me the skills I need for my future; the ranking is far less important to me

42% believe it's important to go to an elite, highly ranked university, even if it is more expensive

15% are happy to go to a middle-tier university, if the price is right

Why do they seek a study abroad university education?

- To prepare myself for life in general with the knowledge and skills I need **87%**
- To make me a more cultured and well-rounded person **86%**
- To be able to get a better job **84%**
- To learn more about things that interest me **78%**
- To be able to make more money **77%**
- To get training for a specific career **70%**
- So I can one day make the world a better place **64%**
- To increase the possibility to work/live overseas **63%**

Has the COVID-19 pandemic had any impact on changing the type of career they are aspiring to?

- Yes, a little **46%**
- No, not really **28%**
- Yes, a lot **21%**

(If yes) In what ways?

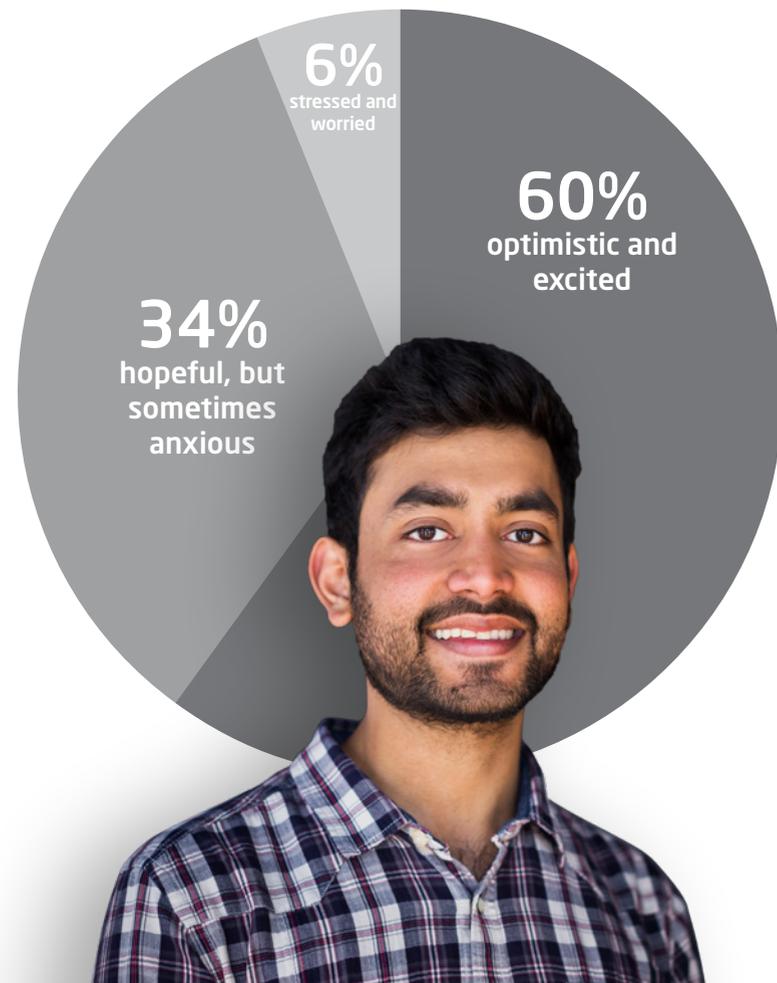
- I'll be looking for a career that offers better work/life balance **63%**
- When applying for jobs, I will consider the companies' social ethics and environmental impact **36%**
- I'm thinking of being my own boss and starting my own business one day **32%**
- I am thinking of pursuing a different type of job role **27%**
- I'll be looking for a career where I can work entirely flexibly/including remotely **23%**
- I am thinking of working in a different sector/industry **18%**
- Other **4%**

ARE THEY LOOKING OVERSEAS FOR FUTURE CAREER SUCCESS?

- Going overseas for university gives people a competitive advantage towards a career **72%**
- I think I can be more successful in my home country with an overseas education **64%**
- I want to work overseas one day **58%**

Gen Z Outlook: India

How are they feeling about their future?



How much are they influenced by the following?

89% - My goal is to make it to the top of my profession one day
69% - I have more opportunities to succeed than my parents did

88% - My parents play a big role in my success
39% - I like to live a lifestyle that impresses others

How much do they care about social issues?

Climate change	49%
Unemployment	40%
Discrimination	36%
Disease prevention	31%
Sexual Harassment	31%
Cybersecurity/digital safety	28%
Business/political corruption	24%
Educational opportunities	22%
Crime/Personal Safety	21%
Economic inequality	19%

When applying to university, do they consider the track record of the institution on social issues such as environment, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights and anti-racism?

Yes, these are very important **52%** Yes, but only to some extent **37%**
 No, not really **11%**

Who do they look to take responsibility for solving these issues?

Governments	52%
Myself and others in my generation	39%
Its everyones responsibility to do their bit	18%
Businesses / employers	16%
Non-Governmental Organisations (e.g. World Economic Forum, World Health Organisation (WHO))	15%
Think Tanks and Research Institutes, including universities	15%
Civic social movements (movements made up of citizens, e.g. GreenPeace, Black Lives Matter)	4%

Gen Z Outlook: India



87% Care passionately about learning

67% want to study for a degree that gives me the skills I need for my future; the ranking is far less important to me

19% believe it's important to go to an elite, highly ranked university, even if it is more expensive

14% are happy to go to a middle-tier university, if the price is right

Why do they seek a study abroad university education?

To learn more about things that interest me	94%
So I can one day make the world a better place	88%
To be able to get a better job	88%
To prepare myself for life in general with the knowledge and skills I need	88%
To get training for a specific career	86%
To make me a more cultured and well-rounded person	82%
To increase the possibility to work/live overseas	70%
To be able to make more money	60%

Has the COVID-19 pandemic had any impact on changing the type of career they are aspiring to?			
Yes, a little	42%		
No, not really	37%		
Yes, a lot	15%		
		(If yes) In what ways?	
		I'll be looking for a career that offers better work/life balance	47%
		I'm thinking of being my own boss and starting my own business one day	45%
		I'll be looking for a career where I can work entirely flexibly/including remotely	24%
		When applying for jobs, I will consider the companies' social ethics and environmental impact	24%
		I am thinking of pursuing a different type of job role	21%
		Other	16%
		I am thinking of working in a different sector/industry	11%

ARE THEY LOOKING OVERSEAS FOR FUTURE CAREER SUCCESS?

Going overseas for university gives people a competitive advantage towards a career	85%
I want to work overseas one day	64%
I think I can be more successful in my home country with an overseas education	60%

Gen Z Outlook: Kenya

How are they feeling about their future?



How much are they influenced by the following?

99% - My goal is to make it to the top of my profession one day
88% - I have more opportunities to succeed than my parents did

87% - My parents play a big role in my success
32% - I like to live a lifestyle that impresses others

How much do they care about social issues?

Unemployment	64%
Discrimination	42%
Educational opportunities	41%
Disease prevention	40%
Climate change	37%
Economic inequality	25%
Business/political corruption	24%
Sexual Harassment	13%
Crime/Personal Safety	12%
Cybersecurity/digital safety	9%

When applying to university, do they consider the track record of the institution on social issues such as environment, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights and anti-racism?

Yes, these are very important **59%** Yes, but only to some extent **34%**
 No, not really **7%**

Who do they look to take responsibility for solving these issues?

Myself and others in my generation	55%
Governments	47%
Non-Governmental Organisations (e.g. World Economic Forum, World Health Organisation (WHO))	24%
Its everyones responsibility to do their bit	22%
Think Tanks and Research Institutes, including universities	9%
Businesses / employers	7%
Civic social movements (movements made up of citizens, e.g. GreenPeace, Black Lives Matter)	6%

Gen Z Outlook: Kenya



96% Care passionately about learning

86% want to study for a degree that gives me the skills I need for my future; the ranking is far less important to me

8% are happy to go to a middle-tier university, if the price is right

6% believe it's important to go to an elite, highly ranked university, even if it is more expensive

Why do they seek a study abroad university education?

- To prepare myself for life in general with the knowledge and skills I need **97%**
- So I can one day make the world a better place **94%**
- To make me a more cultured and well-rounded person **87%**
- To get training for a specific career **86%**
- To learn more about things that interest me **86%**
- To be able to get a better job **71%**
- To increase the possibility to work/live overseas **64%**
- To be able to make more money **52%**

Has the COVID-19 pandemic had any impact on changing the type of career they are aspiring to?

No, not really	36%
Yes, a lot	34%
Yes, a little	30%

(If yes) In what ways?

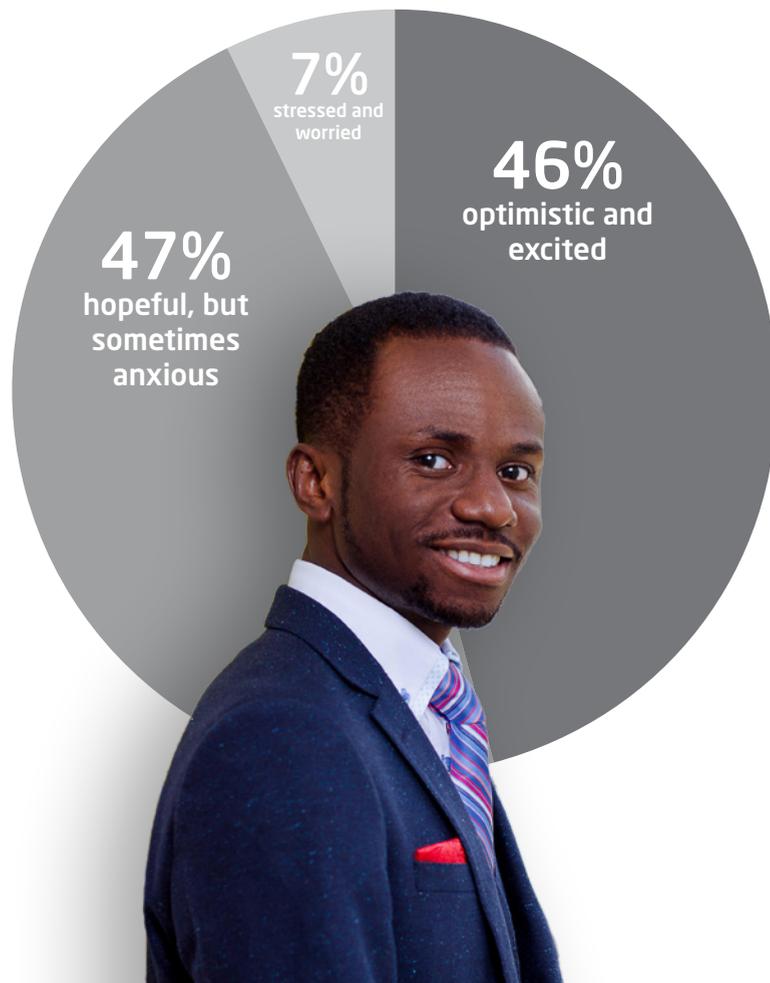
I'll be looking for a career that offers better work/life balance	61%
I'm thinking of being my own boss and starting my own business one day	61%
I'll be looking for a career where I can work entirely flexibly/including remotely	48%
When applying for jobs, I will consider the companies' social ethics and environmental impact	32%
I am thinking of working in a different sector/industry	25%
I am thinking of pursuing a different type of job role	20%
Other	5%

ARE THEY LOOKING OVERSEAS FOR FUTURE CAREER SUCCESS?

Going overseas for university gives people a competitive advantage towards a career	84%
I want to work overseas one day	84%
I think I can be more successful in my home country with an overseas education	69%

Gen Z Outlook: Nigeria

How are they feeling about their future?



How much are they influenced by the following?

94% - My goal is to make it to the top of my profession one day
85% - I have more opportunities to succeed than my parents did

78% - My parents play a big role in my success
41% - I like to live a lifestyle that impresses others

How much do they care about social issues?

Unemployment	64%
Educational opportunities	42%
Disease prevention	40%
Business/political corruption	31%
Climate change	29%
Discrimination	26%
Economic inequality	24%
Crime/Personal Safety	22%
Sexual Harassment	19%
Cybersecurity/digital safety	17%

When applying to university, do they consider the track record of the institution on social issues such as environment, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights and anti-racism?

Yes, these are very important **55%** Yes, but only to some extent **35%**
 No, not really **10%**

Who do they look to take responsibility for solving these issues?

Governments	64%
Myself and others in my generation	46%
Its everyones responsibility to do their bit	22%
Non-Governmental Organisations (e.g. World Economic Forum, World Health Organisation (WHO))	19%
Think Tanks and Research Institutes, including universities	9%
Businesses / employers	9%
Civic social movements (movements made up of citizens, e.g. GreenPeace, Black Lives Matter)	7%

Gen Z Outlook: Nigeria



95% Care passionately about learning

81% want to study for a degree that gives me the skills I need for my future; the ranking is far less important to me

9% believe it's important to go to an elite, highly ranked university, even if it is more expensive

9% are happy to go to a middle-tier university, if the price is right

Why do they seek a study abroad university education?

So I can one day make the world a better place	93%
To prepare myself for life in general with the knowledge and skills I need	92%
To learn more about things that interest me	88%
To get training for a specific career	88%
To make me a more cultured and well-rounded person	83%
To be able to get a better job	81%
To increase the possibility to work/live overseas	76%
To be able to make more money	71%

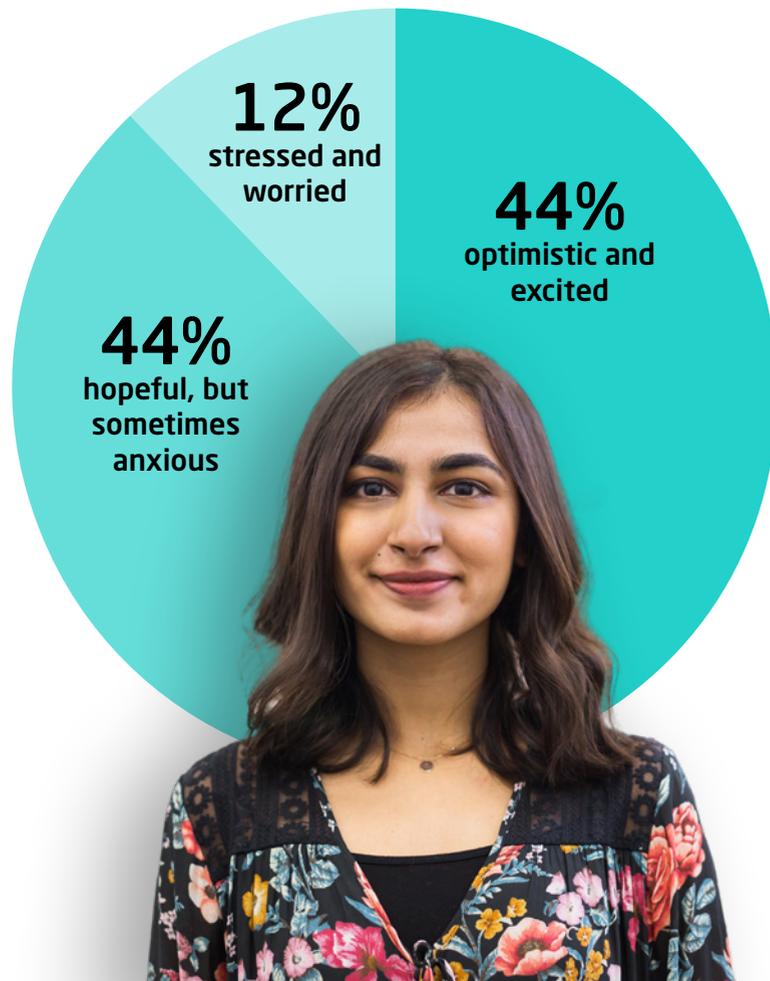
Has the COVID-19 pandemic had any impact on changing the type of career they are aspiring to?		
No, not really	47%	
Yes, a lot	28%	
Yes, a little	23%	
		(If yes) In what ways?
		I'll be looking for a career that offers better work/life balance
		42%
		When applying for jobs, I will consider the companies' social ethics and environmental impact
		32%
		I'm thinking of being my own boss and starting my own business one day
		56%
		I'll be looking for a career where I can work entirely flexibly/including remotely
		35%
		I am thinking of pursuing a different type of job role
		29%
		I am thinking of working in a different sector/industry
		25%
		Other
		9%

ARE THEY LOOKING OVERSEAS FOR FUTURE CAREER SUCCESS?

Going overseas for university gives people a competitive advantage towards a career	84%
I want to work overseas one day	83%
I think I can be more successful in my home country with an overseas education	66%

Gen Z Outlook: Pakistan

How are they feeling about their future?



How much are they influenced by the following?

82% - My goal is to make it to the top of my profession one day
67% - I have more opportunities to succeed than my parents did

88% - My parents play a big role in my success
61% - I like to live a lifestyle that impresses others

How much do they care about social issues?

Unemployment	55%
Climate change	36%
Educational opportunities	36%
Disease prevention	33%
Business/political corruption	29%
Economic inequality	27%
Sexual Harassment	20%
Crime/Personal Safety	15%
Cybersecurity/digital safety	13%
Discrimination	11%

When applying to university, do they consider the track record of the institution on social issues such as environment, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights and anti-racism?

Yes, these are very important **54%** Yes, but only to some extent **34%**
 No, not really **12%**

Who do they look to take responsibility for solving these issues?

Governments	60%
Myself and others in my generation	31%
Think Tanks and Research Institutes, including universities	16%
Businesses / employers	14%
Non-Governmental Organisations (e.g. World Economic Forum, World Health Organisation (WHO))	13%
Civic social movements (movements made up of citizens, e.g. GreenPeace, Black Lives Matter)	9%
Its everyones responsibility to do their bit	9%

Gen Z Outlook: Pakistan



85% Care passionately about learning

72% want to study for a degree that gives me the skills I need for my future; the ranking is far less important to me

14% believe it's important to go to an elite, highly ranked university, even if it is more expensive

14% are happy to go to a middle-tier university, if the price is right

Why do they seek a study abroad university education?

- To learn more about things that interest me **88%**
- So I can one day make the world a better place **87%**
- To prepare myself for life in general with the knowledge and skills I need **85%**
- To make me a more cultured and well-rounded person **79%**
- To get training for a specific career **78%**
- To be able to get a better job **73%**
- To increase the possibility to work/live overseas **63%**
- To be able to make more money **62%**

Has the COVID-19 pandemic had any impact on changing the type of career they are aspiring to?

Yes, a little	42%
Yes, a lot	28%
No, not really	27%

(If yes) In what ways?

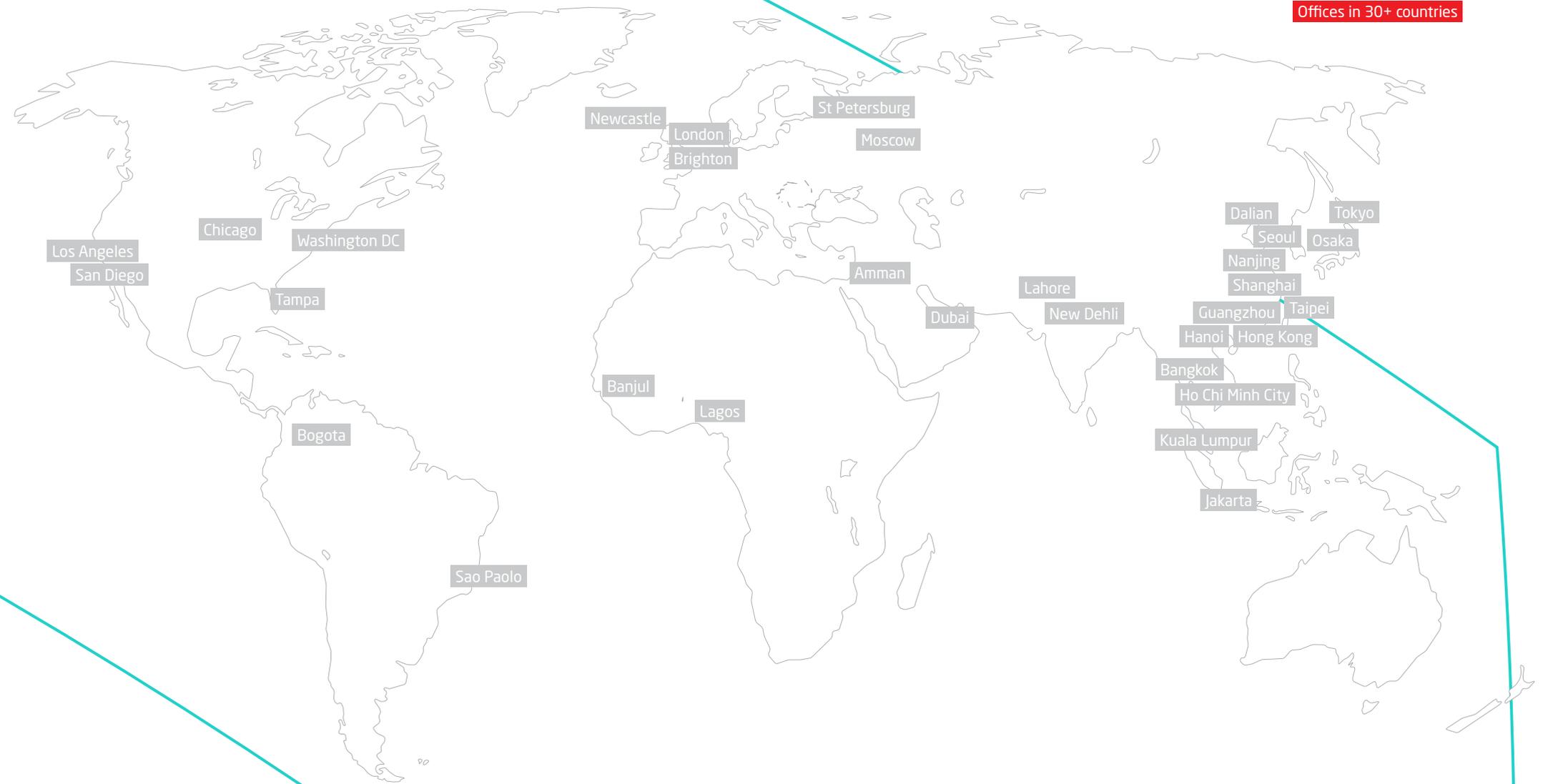
I'll be looking for a career that offers better work/life balance	47%
I'm thinking of being my own boss and starting my own business one day	36%
I'll be looking for a career where I can work entirely flexibly/including remotely	21%
I am thinking of pursuing a different type of job role	18%
When applying for jobs, I will consider the companies' social ethics and environmental impact	18%
I am thinking of working in a different sector/industry	17%
Other	12%

ARE THEY LOOKING OVERSEAS FOR FUTURE CAREER SUCCESS?

- Going overseas for university gives people a competitive advantage towards a career **85%**
- I think I can be more successful in my home country with an overseas education **68%**
- I want to work overseas one day **65%**



Offices in 30+ countries



INTO University Partnerships
8910 University Center Lane
Suite 400
San Diego, CA 92122 USA
T: +1 858 356 4400

INTO University Partnerships
One Gloucester Place
Brighton
BN1 4AA
United Kingdom
T: +44 1273 665200

INTO University Partnerships
Unit 1007, 10/F
Wing On Kowloon Centre
345 Nathan Road
Jordan, Hong Kong
T: +852 2105 6800