



**KANTAR**

## The Great Generation

Gen Z shaping the new continent

Insights from Africa Life  
Pan-African Study

### **IAB SA / Kantar's Insights in Action, Session 9** **The Great Generation: How Gen Z is shaping the new continent**

**Millennials, the core research focus of the past two decades, no doubt feel a sense of relief as the conversation moves forward, with brands now focusing on Gen Z as next-generation consumers of the future. Coming into adulthood now and entering the workforce in a world that's very different to what it was just six months ago, many of their dreams and ambitions have been thrown up in the air but they realise that the current crisis is not here to stay. This is the generation that will build or break your brand as they develop into your next consumers, employees and even business partners based on their entrepreneurial strengths.**

Known as everything from Post-Millennials to centennials, the selfie generation, iGen, and the DIY or YouTube generation, they offer a fascinating autonomy and desire for expression. That sense of expression is rooted in the idea-sharing nature of the internet and social media, as the grounds from which everything else happens for them, from accessing political views to health and consumer information, job searching and discovering successful initiatives they want to get behind – so much so that this generation over-indexes on connectedness across all countries.

So, technology is the lens through which to best view this generation as that's what sets them apart, enabling and empowering them to believe in their capabilities and be part of the transformation. As digital natives, Gen Z truly have no memory as the world before smartphones and most see the world as full of possibilities and opportunities. Self-confident and undeterred by fear or failure, they're bold achievers who strive to achieve great things, based on the following key traits:

#### **1. Open and grounded**

They want the best of both worlds as they feel they are citizens of a boundless world. 75% of Africa's Gen Z feel deeply rooted in African culture and want to adopt Western influences and blend them with their local heritage, adding a strong sense of Africanness as they create a narrative around their identity and background. Tradition is the new modernity as the fresh energy across the continent infuses everything that already exists with Africa-inspired innovation gaining global recognition. We see traditional local symbols, designs, patterns, flavours and colours across the evolving realms of fashion, music and more.

#### **2. Freedom and leadership**

A key identifier of this generation is their strong belief that there should be a leader who gets things done in any group. That freedom to contribute is beyond a right – it's a responsibility, as they see

themselves as citizens of a better and more fulfilling world, where Africa is a renewed continent. Africa's Gen Z expect this in return from brands in showcasing true leadership in society at large.

Activists from an early age, they celebrate new heroes as inspiration to actualise their dreams – everyone from [Fred Swaniker](#) and his drive to provide a better education to Emma Theofilus, appointed as one of Africa's youngest ministers this March, now leading public communication on preventative steps against COVID-19 in Namibia.

### 3. Purpose is their mojo

Africa's Gen Z is devoted to purpose, in showing up based on your convictions, as standing for something is essential, and they watch how businesses do so. As citizens, they want to stand for something bigger than their selves and invest new territories like environment activism and get vocal about their beliefs, commitments and actions.

#### “Like I wasn't there”

Activism at its highest level

As much as this incident has hurt me personally, I'm glad because it has brought more attention to activists in Africa,” she said. “Maybe media will start paying attention to us not just when we're the victims of climate tragedies.”



Ugandan activist Vanessa Nakate made so much noise on being cropped out of an image taken at Davos, [saying it felt 'like I wasn't even there'](#) and that I was erased from the movement that international newspapers apologised. This generation speaks up to their values and won't let inequalities lie.

### 4. Inequality

It's a rallying cry that links to strongly equality, as Africa's Gen Z are increasingly moving away from traditional archetypes and guided by Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie's assertion that we should all be feminists. Women deserve a better place in society and should be able to both pursue a career and be good mothers.

Strong female-led communities like She Leads Africa are driving change in the African woman narrative across the continent to support their dreams and drives. Formed by millennials, these now have huge Gen Z participation for providing the skills and coaching many seek, as well as a safe space – female voices have long been silent but now feel support in discussing their stories and struggles about life, love, family and career.

### 5. Curiosity is currency

Living in the digital age, Africa's Gen Z is curious about the unknown and sees the world as infinite, with ample opportunities for self-development, self-care and growth as citizens of the boundless world. All about experiences, they want to discover more about the world outside their own and to see, hear and learn more from the outside.

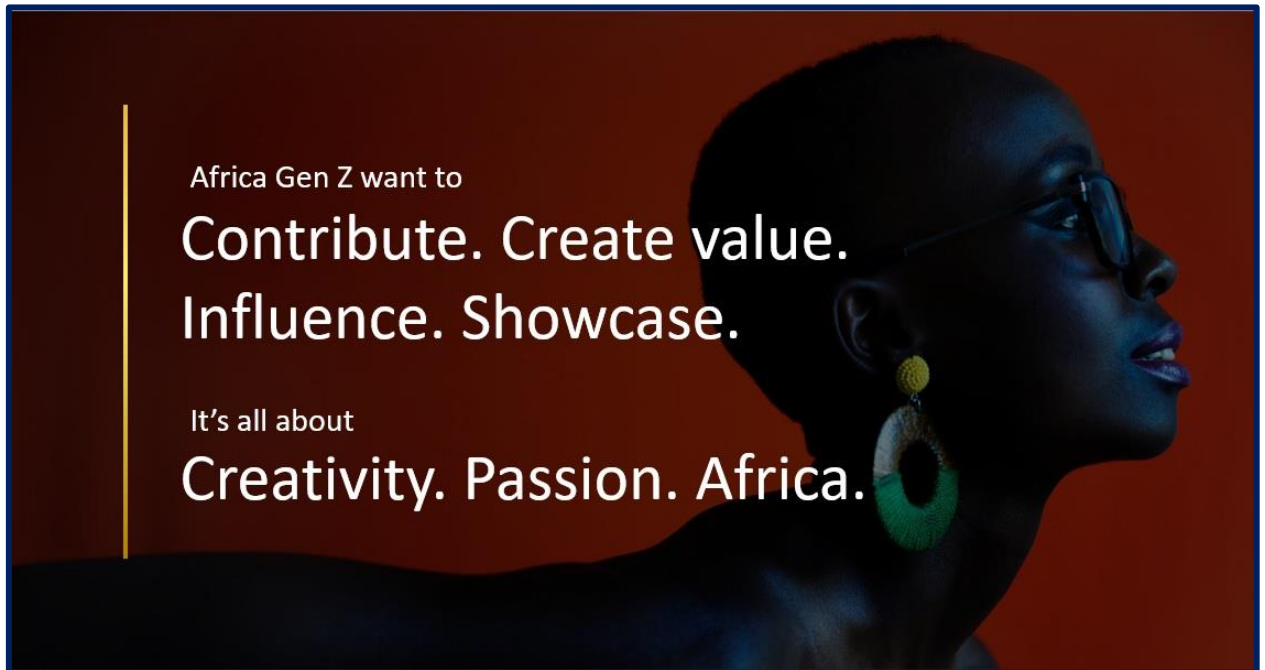
Businesses like the Naija Nomads travel group support this sentiment in opening a world of travel possibilities to get people out of their comfort zone in exploring beyond the typical destinations. It's about true Gen Z creativity in getting things done, even gaining global recognition for doing so.

### 6. Me, my crew and home

Effortlessly shifting among safe spaces with known family friends and broader online communities, African Gen Z is big on bonding. Home is still where the heart is, but they like to balance and swing between the joys of home and the joys of outside moments with friends.

## 7. Money is de-tabooed

With their purpose-driven aim to achieve financial success, status is important to them as it drives the 'make it happen' mentality. As a result, we're seeing a rise of innovative entrepreneurs, fuelled by passion and experience to improve their own expertise and empower others around them.



This generation is all about action, as well as experimenting, experiences and excellence. To reach them, brands need to tap into their curiosity and realise Africa's Gen Z is constantly evolving, fluid and moving forward faster than we think. Brands need to reflect this as follows:

- Offer a bold vision of Africa and bring them closer to their hopes and dreams
- Do everything to enable them by authentically building a better society
- Invite them to co-create with you. Champion their beliefs and leverage their creativity as you sponsor or partner their ventures

It's about being visible as a brand, contributing what you can, being open to being challenged and leveraging their talent to build a better future with them. These are some of the currents we need to navigate to reach our growth destination in Africa. Let's look at Africa with the same eyes as Africans look at the continent: a high-potential ecosystem on the move.

Thinking practically, it's obvious that funds are tight across most of Africa. Savvy brands have realised this and are releasing cheaper handsets and data packages, with zero-data initiatives on the rise. That's the best way to win African Gen Z's share of wallet and share of heart, in working together to pull down barriers and empower this first truly digital generation to shape the next era for Africa.

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