

Survey Briefing

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Common Futures Conversations | July 2019

Common Futures Conversations Youth Survey 2019



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Introduction

The world is experiencing an acute period of change and contestation. A backlash against the perceived uneven benefits of globalization has fundamentally reshaped national politics across the world, from the UK's vote to leave the European Union to the election of President Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil. Major global challenges such as climate change, intercontinental migration, demographic shifts and the transformation of work by new technologies require global responses. However, these are increasingly obstructed by the reassertion of domestic political priorities and a subsequent weakening of multilateral cooperation.

In many of the electoral events punctuating this moment, the voices of young people have been either absent or overlooked. In Africa there is now a gap of 40 years between the average age of the continent's population (25 years old) and the average age of the heads of state (65 years old).¹ Meanwhile Europe contends with the effects of an ageing population that numerically marginalizes the concerns of younger voters.² Politicians often point to the low turnout at elections by younger voters as a sign that the youth population is apathetic about politics or policy. The Common Futures Conversations Youth Survey 2019, carried out by Chatham House as part of the scoping process for the Common Futures Conversations project, tells a different story.

Common Futures Conversations is a collaboration between Chatham House and the Robert Bosch Stiftung which aims to facilitate political dialogue among young people from Africa and Europe. The main output of the project will be a digital platform which will address the disconnect between young people and traditional policymaking processes at both a national and international level. Through online exchanges, young people will have the opportunity to enhance their understanding of major policy challenges, connect with peers, and develop their own ideas on how to solve these challenges in an international space. The platform will give young people a 'seat at the table' in discussions on these major international policy challenges where their voices are presently overlooked or absent.

To ensure that the platform development process reflected the opinions and preferences of the intended users, Chatham House canvassed the opinions of young people from across Africa and Europe. The consultation gathered the respondents' views on which political issues mattered to them, as well as data on their social media preferences and political engagement. This Survey Briefing provides an overview of the data collected.

¹ Kiwuwa, D. E. (2015), 'Africa's old men's club out of touch with continent's suave, burgeoning youth', *The Conversation*, 8 October 2015, <http://theconversation.com/africas-old-mens-club-out-of-touch-with-continent-suave-burgeoning-youth-48618> (accessed 4 June 2019).

² Runciman, D. (2018), 'Democracy For Young People', *Talking Politics* podcast, 5 December 2018, <https://www.talkingpoliticspodcast.com/blog/2018/129-democracy-for-young-people?rq=young> (accessed 4 June 2019).

Methodology

This unique consultation was largely conducted in the 13 countries involved in the pilot stage of the project. These countries were selected to provide a diverse geographical, linguistic and cultural spread across both continents:

- Côte d'Ivoire
- Estonia
- Ethiopia
- Germany
- Italy
- Kenya
- Mozambique
- Nigeria
- Norway
- Romania
- Tunisia
- United Kingdom
- Zambia

The consultation was conducted from 21 January 2019 to 17 February 2019 largely via an online survey platform embedded in the Chatham House website. In addition, in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Tunisia a substantial number of responses were collected in person, using the same questions and multiple-choice answers. Common Futures Conversations Representatives in each country led the local dissemination efforts using a large variety of outreach methods including connecting to existing networks, organizing local events, working with local media, and social media marketing campaigns. The Representatives were also encouraged to share their successful outreach methods with their peers to improve the overall reach of the consultation. The combination of Chatham House and local outreach initiatives is what dictated the sample, which is thus not wholly representative of the 13 countries.

Consultation questions were designed in English by researchers at Chatham House with input from the Common Futures Conversations Representatives. The consultation was split into three sections. First, respondents were asked some basic demographic questions. Second, respondents were shown a list of political issues and asked to prioritize them through a number of different scenarios. Third, respondents were asked about their social media preferences and political engagement.

To aid accessibility, the consultation was translated into nine additional languages:

- Amharic
- Arabic
- Estonian
- French
- German
- Italian
- Norwegian
- Portuguese
- Romanian

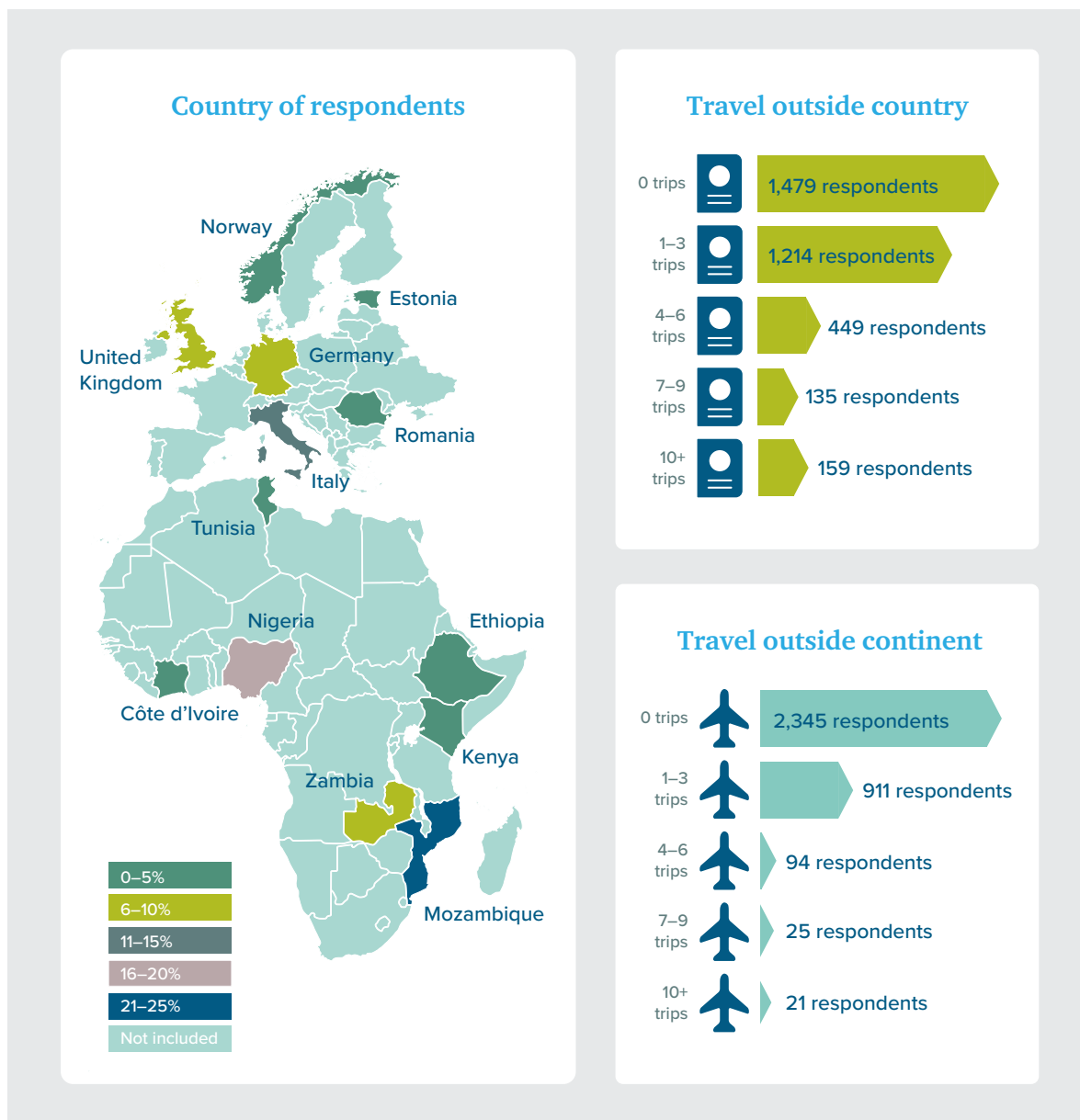
In total, the consultation engaged with 4,208 people from 89 countries. Initially a number of responses were removed due to explicit content, incomprehensible answers and if respondents did not follow the structure of the questions enough to draw meaning from the answers. The project team refined the dataset to include only responses from adults aged 18–35 who were either born or reside in one of 13 countries across Africa and Europe involved in the pilot stage of the project. This was done to ensure that only the countries of which there was a reasonable sample were included. Due to the relevant data protection laws, we have not been able to engage anyone under the age of 18. The total dataset from the 13 countries comprised of 3,487 responses on which the following statistical analyses were performed, either based on the total dataset, hereafter referred to as 'CFC13', or based on the total dataset split by continent, hereafter referred to as 'CFC13, Africa–Europe Comparison'. The geographical spread of responses is uneven and range from 94 responses to 765 responses per country, with 2,286 responses coming from Africa and 1,251 responses coming from Europe.

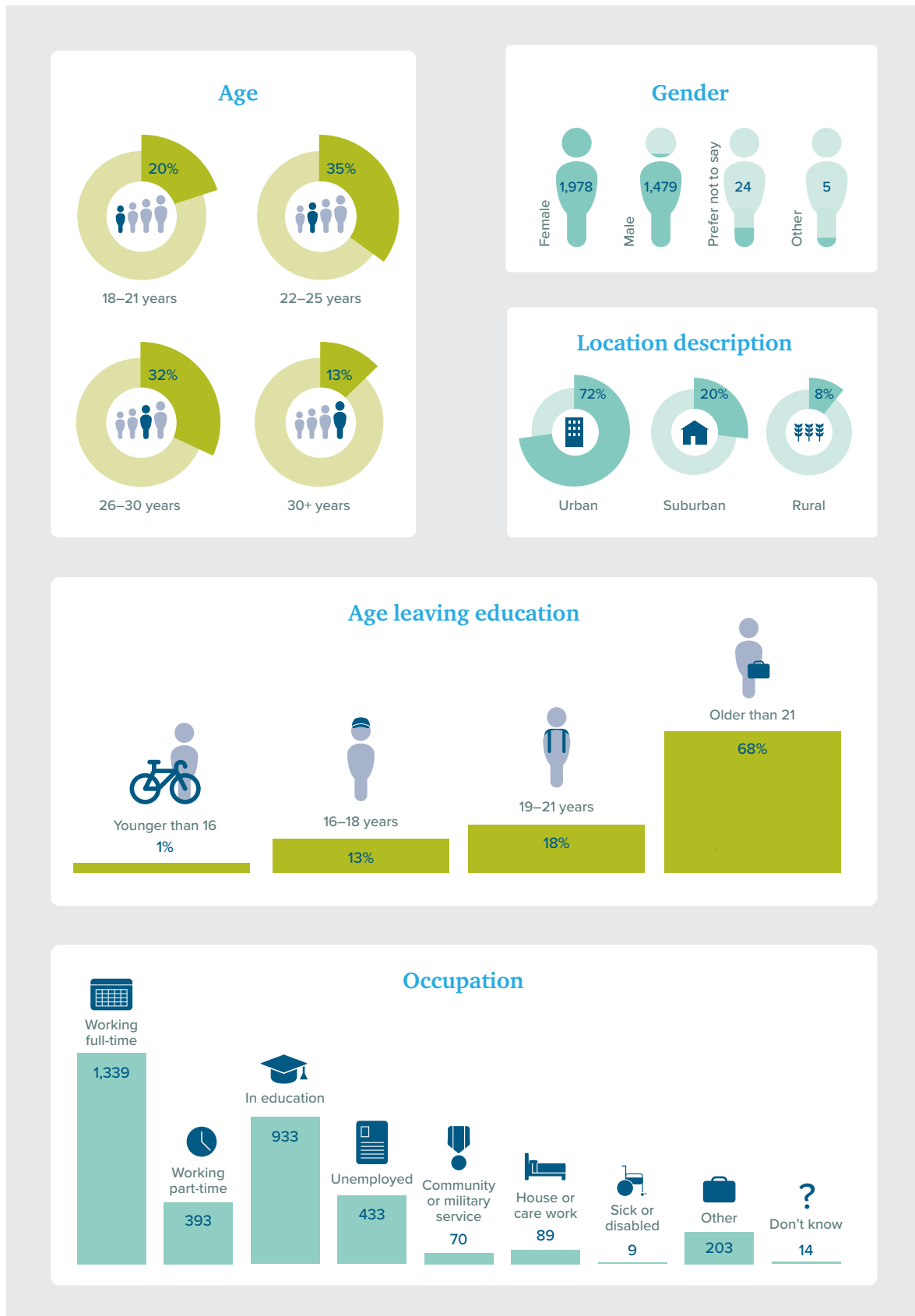
In the dataset, each response includes both a country of residence and country of birth. A response is counted towards a certain country/continent if the respondent was born and/or resides in that country/continent. If a respondent was born in one of the 13 countries and resides in another of the 13 countries, their response will be taken into account for both countries as well as, when applicable, for both continents.

What follows is an overview of the responses to each question. In most cases the graphs present the overall spectrum of responses, alongside responses by continent. The continental comparison is shown due to the uneven split between responses from Africa and Europe. Data on responses from specific countries can be provided upon request by contacting the authors of this Survey Briefing.

Demographics

The first section of the consultation was designed to provide a sense of the backgrounds of respondents; in terms of age, gender, location, education, occupation and travel habits. The latter three elements were seen as important to understanding the extent to which respondents might be seen as belonging to ‘elites’ within their respective countries. For instance, regular intercontinental travel might be seen as an indicator of wealth or social status. The following infographic outlines the results.





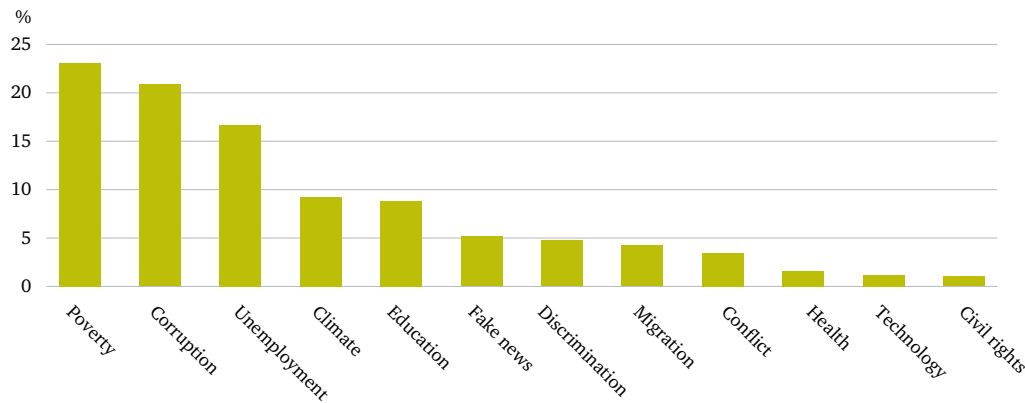
Political Concerns

In this section of the consultation, the respondents were asked to prioritize a selection of political ‘issues’. The list of issues was developed by the Common Futures Conversations Representatives and included:

- Civil rights
- Climate change and the environment
- Conflict and violence
- Corruption
- Discrimination based, for example, on gender, race, sexuality, age or religion
- Education
- Fake news and disinformation
- Physical and mental health
- Migration
- Poverty and economic inequality
- Technological change
- Unemployment

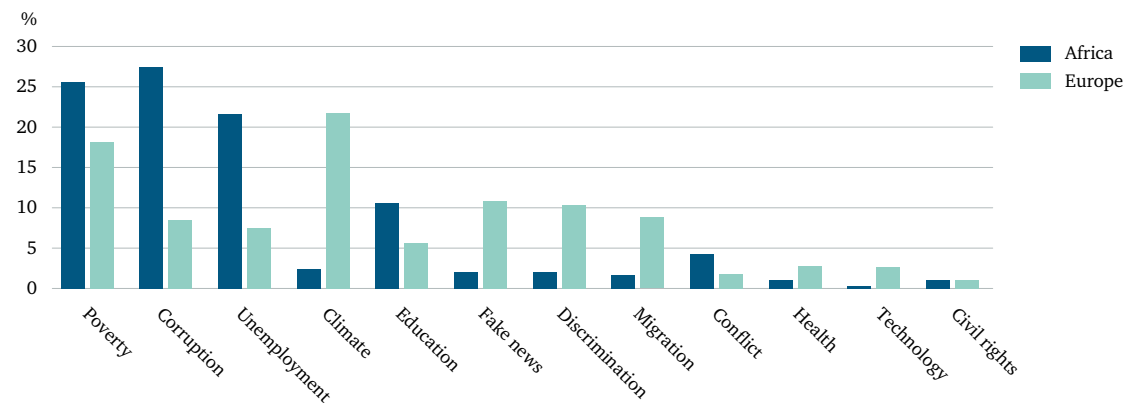
Respondents were shown this list of issues and asked to select those most important to them based on a range of scenarios. These included: which issue most affected their own country; which most affected the world; which they would like to discuss most with their peers; and which they would most like to spend \$1 billion addressing. The following graphs outline the responses of the dataset as a whole as well as the choices made on a continental level.

Figure 1: What do you see as the most important issue facing your country?



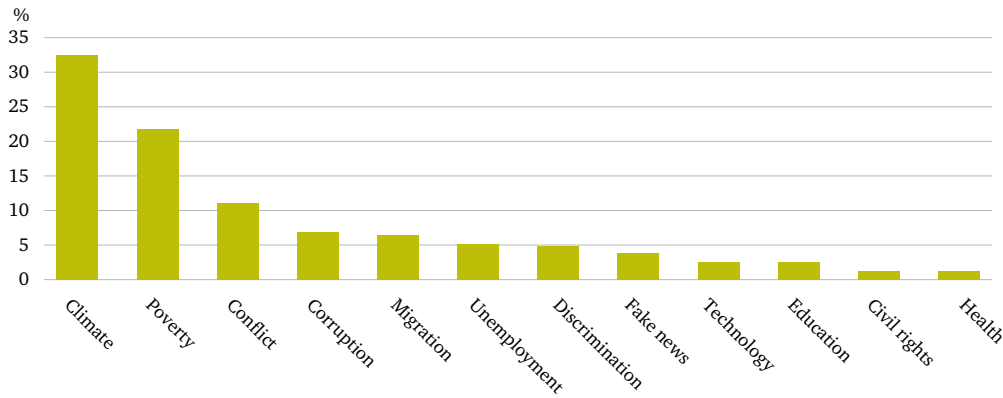
Dataset: CFC13.

Figure 2: What do you see as the most important issue facing your country?



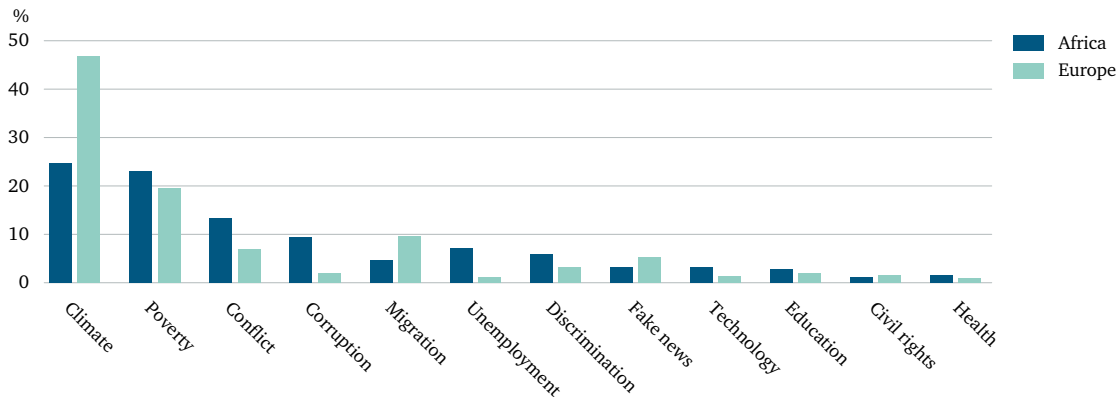
Dataset: CFC13, Africa–Europe Comparison.

Figure 3: What do you see as the most important issue facing the world in 2019?



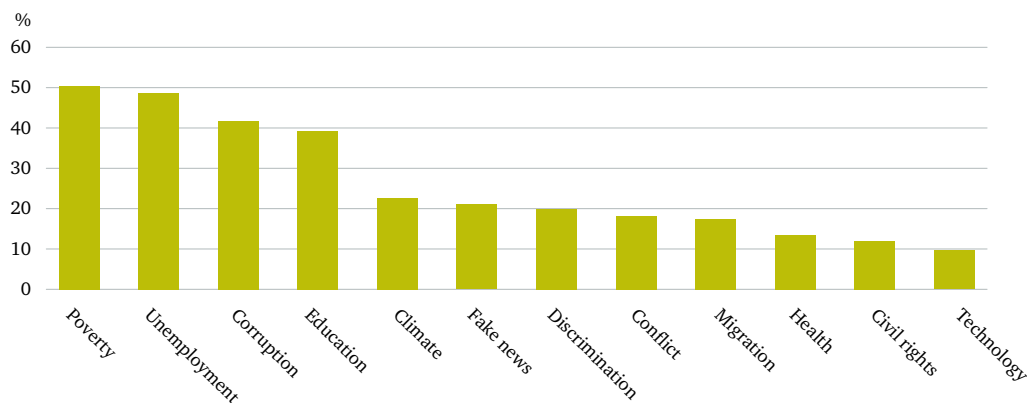
Dataset: CFC13.

Figure 4: What do you see as the most important issue facing the world in 2019?



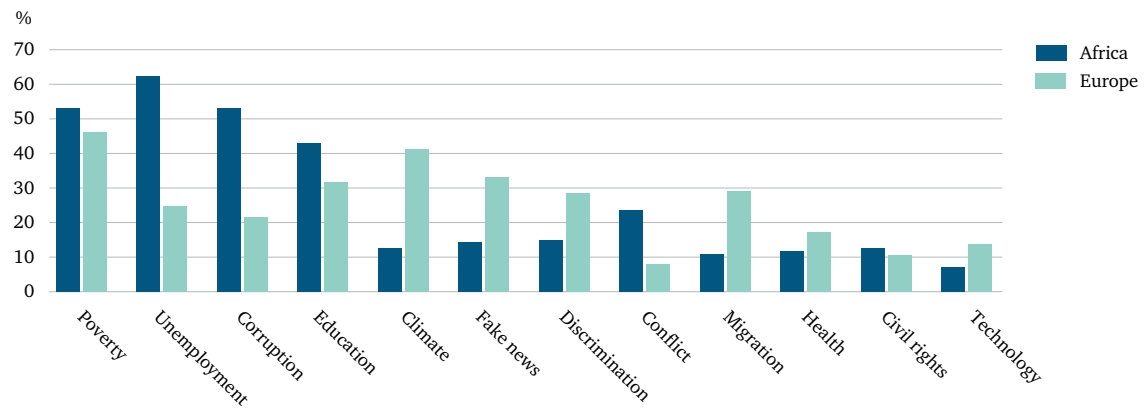
Dataset: CFC13, Africa–Europe Comparison.

Figure 5: What do you see as the other important issues facing your country in 2019? Please select up to three.



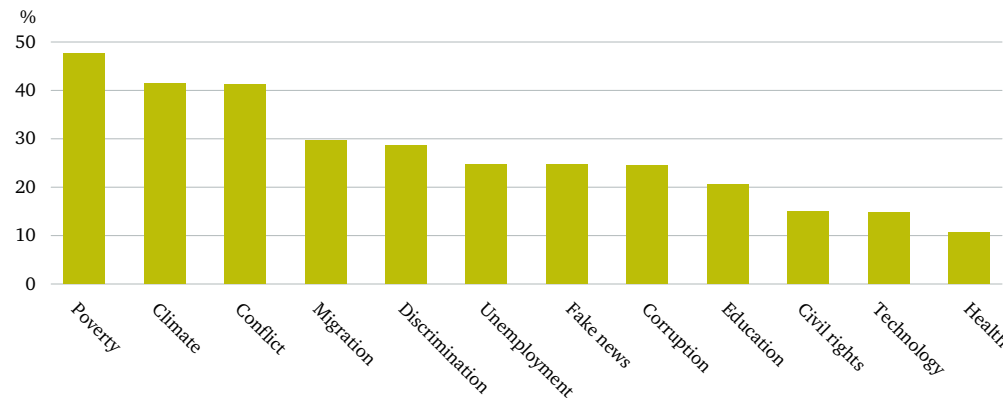
Dataset: CFC13.

Figure 6: What do you see as the other important issues facing your country in 2019?
Please select up to three.



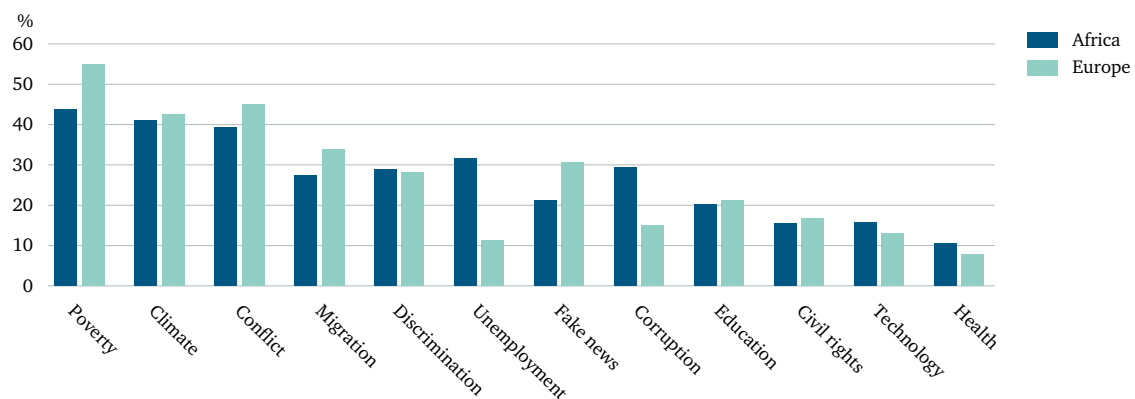
Dataset: CFC13, Africa–Europe Comparison.

Figure 7: What do you see as the other important issues facing the world in 2019?
Please select up to three.



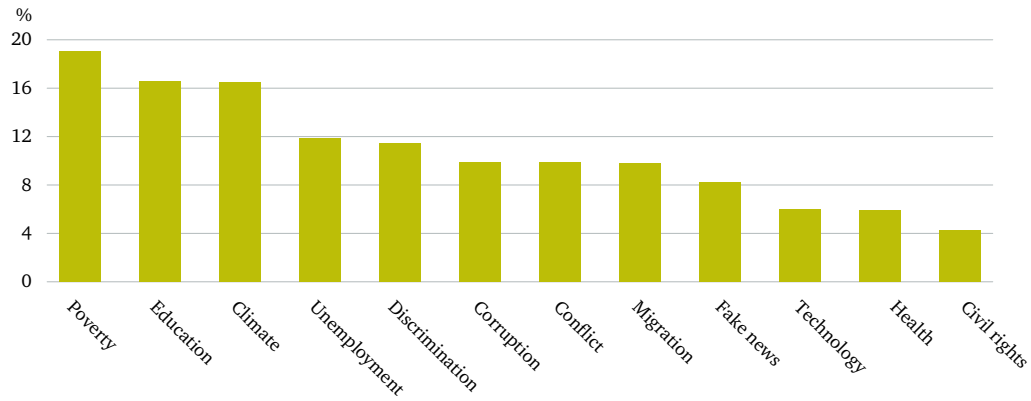
Dataset: CFC13.

Figure 8: What do you see as the other important issues facing the world in 2019?
Please select up to three.



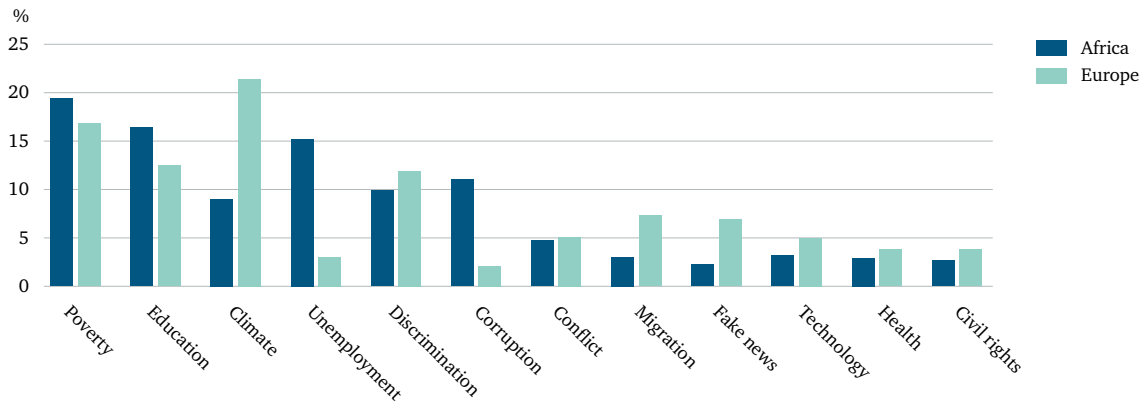
Dataset: CFC13, Africa–Europe Comparison.

Figure 9: If you could discuss these topics with people of your age group from a country different to your own, which issue would you most like to discuss?



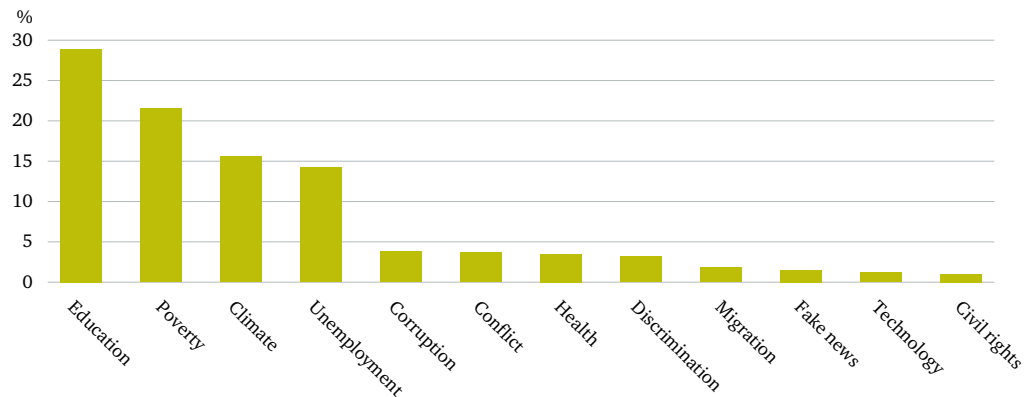
Dataset: CFC13.

Figure 10: If you could discuss these topics with people of your age group from a country different to your own, which issue would you most like to discuss?



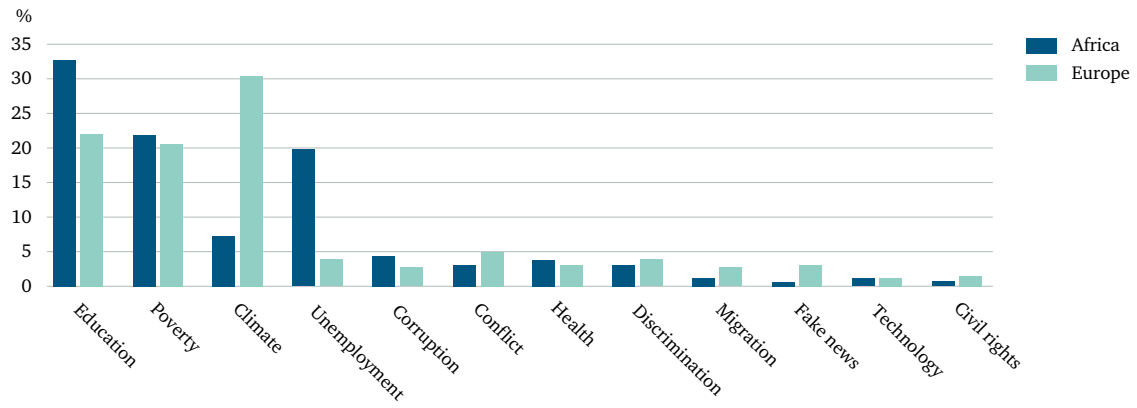
Dataset: CFC13, Africa–Europe Comparison.

Figure 11: Imagine you were given \$1 billion to try to solve one of these issues. Which would you choose?



Dataset: CFC13.

Figure 12: Imagine you were given \$1 billion to try to solve one of these issues. Which would you choose?

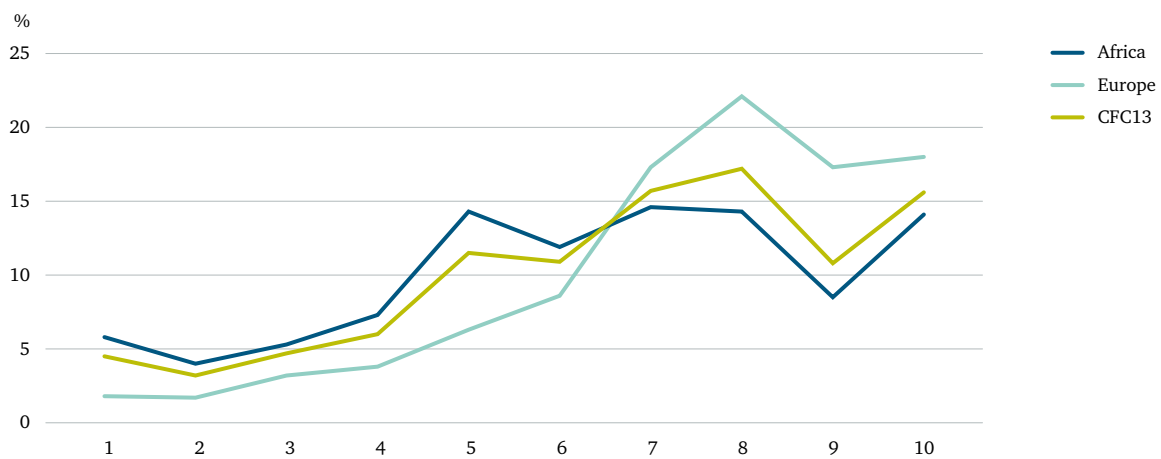


Dataset: CFC13, Africa–Europe Comparison.

Political Engagement

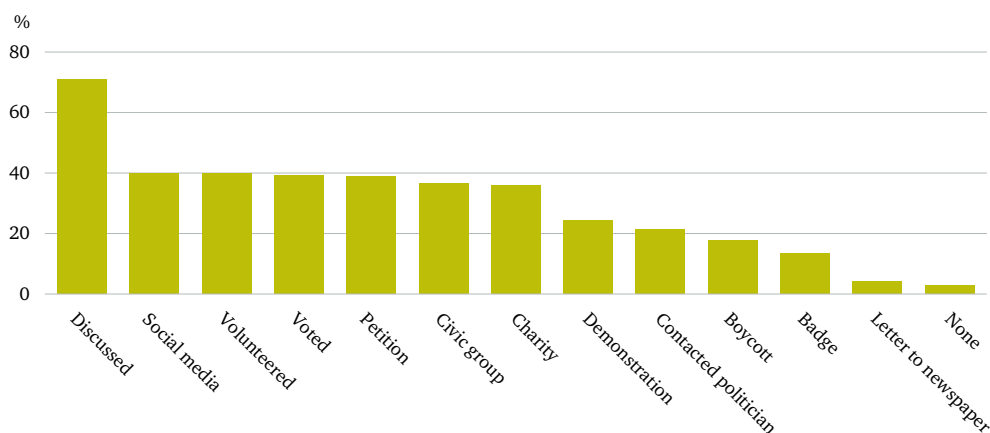
In the final section of the consultation the respondents were asked a range of questions about the level of their political engagement, as well as how they engage with news and political discussion online. These questions were primarily intended to assist with the technical design of the Common Futures Conversations digital platform, but they also reveal the generally high level of political engagement of the respondents.

Figure 13: How much attention do you generally pay to politics?



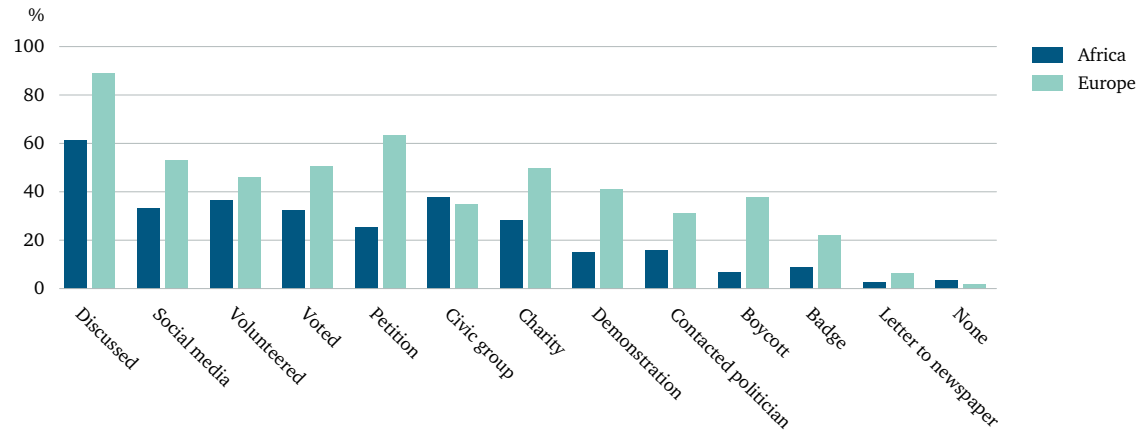
0=You do not pay attention; 10=You think about politics all the time.
Dataset: CFC13 and CFC13, Africa–Europe Comparison.

Figure 14: In the past 12 months, have you done any of the following?



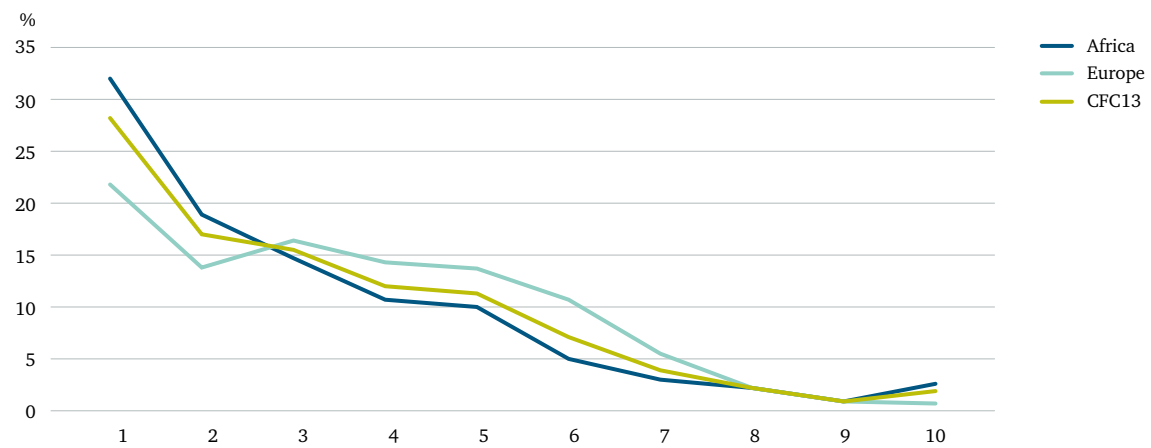
Dataset: CFC13.

Figure 15: In the past 12 months, have you done any of the following?



Dataset: CFC13, Africa–Europe Comparison.

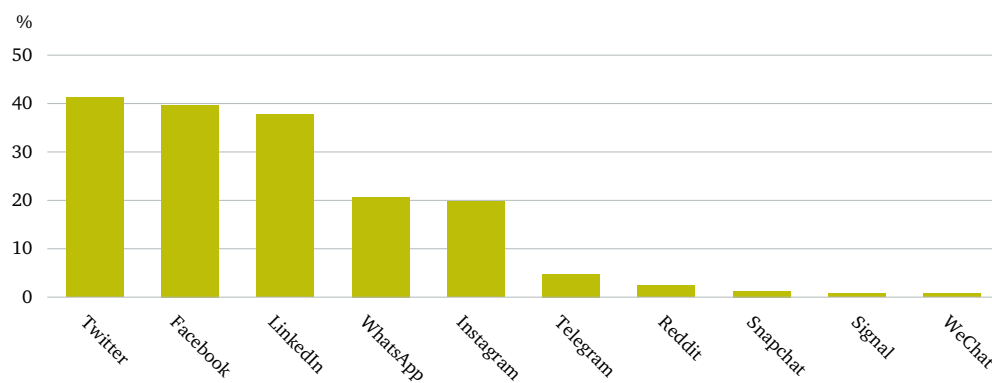
Figure 16: Do you feel politicians in your country listen to people of your age group?



0=Not at all; 10=Always.

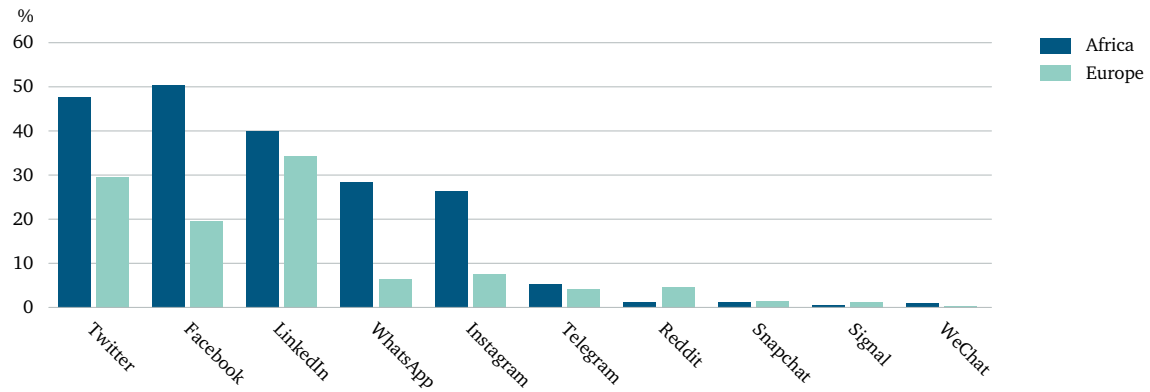
Dataset: CFC13 and CFC13, Africa–Europe Comparison.

Figure 17: Which of these channels do you see as being a reliable source of information and news? Please select all that apply.



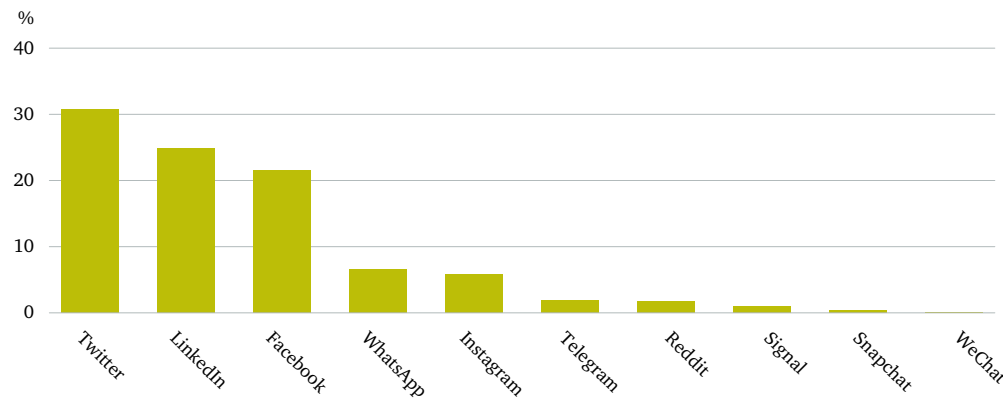
Dataset: CFC13.

Figure 18: Which of these channels do you see as being a reliable source of information and news? Please select all that apply.



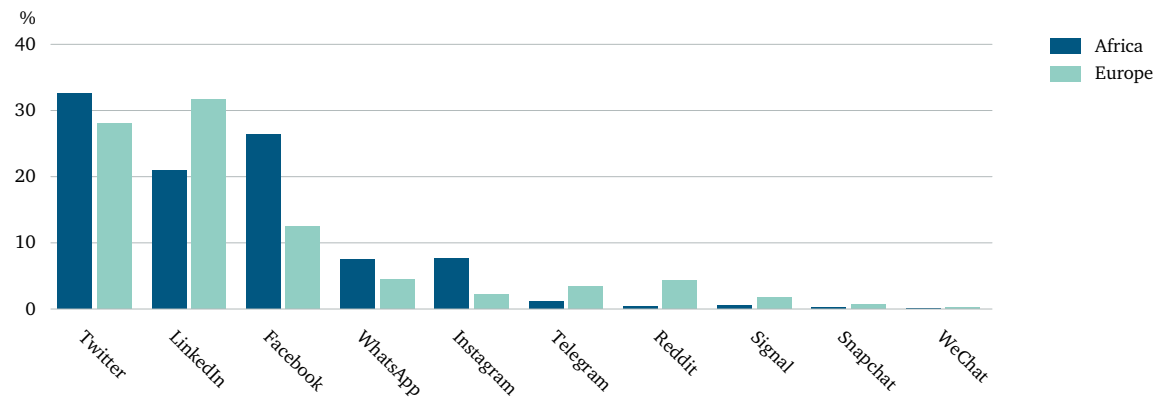
Dataset: CFC13, Africa–Europe Comparison.

Figure 19: Which of these channels do you see as being the most reliable source of information and news?



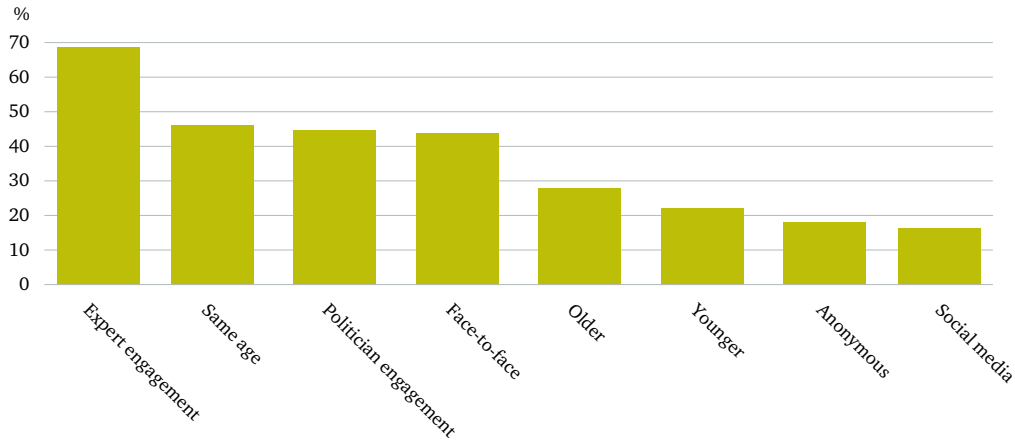
Dataset: CFC13.

Figure 20: Which of these channels do you see as being the most reliable source of information and news?



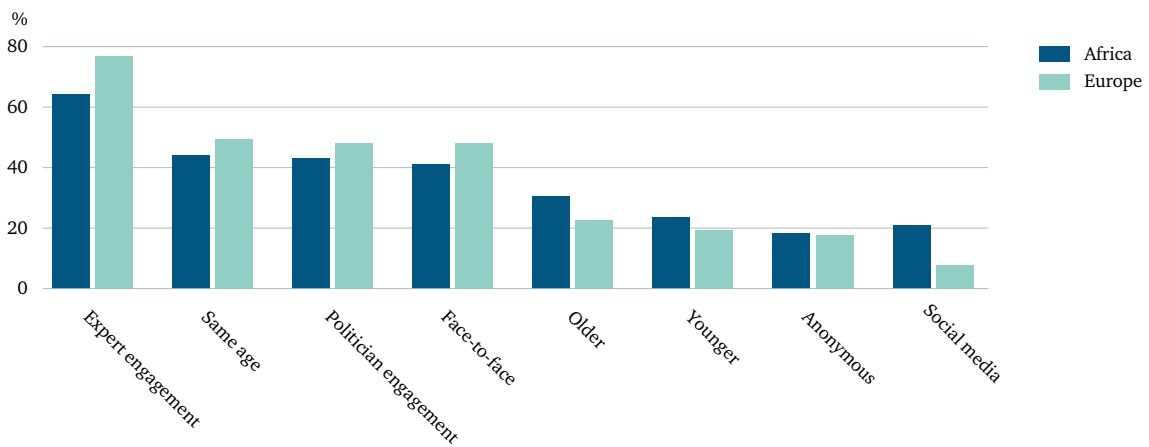
Dataset: CFC13, Africa–Europe Comparison.

Figure 21: Imagine you were invited to participate in a political debate. What factors would make you more likely to participate?



Dataset: CFC13.

Figure 22: Imagine you were invited to participate in a political debate. What factors would make you more likely to participate?



Dataset: CFC13, Africa–Europe Comparison.

About the Authors

Benjamin Horton is a Communications Manager at Chatham House, where he leads the Common Futures Conversations project.

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This Briefing is not intended to provide commentary on the results. Such analysis will be presented in other formats via the Chatham House website. Any questions about the data should be addressed to the authors of this paper.

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Cover image: Young woman at the March for Europe in May 2018.

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