

"GEN-Z-AMIGAS"

Disrupting Millennials Peace & Quiet...



MAHA HANA EVERS

*"GEN-Z-AMIGAS" Podcast Host
Season One Top 10 Takeaways*



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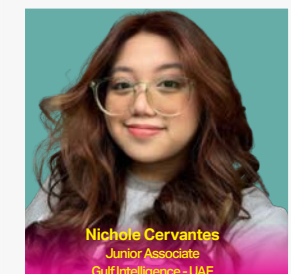
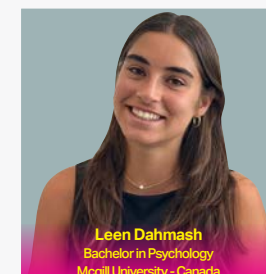
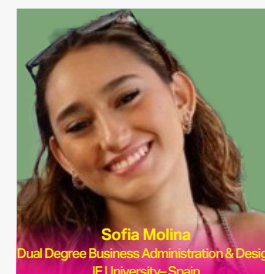
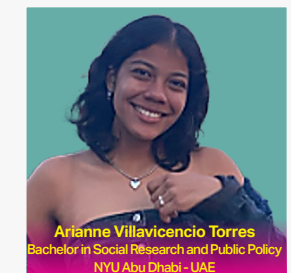
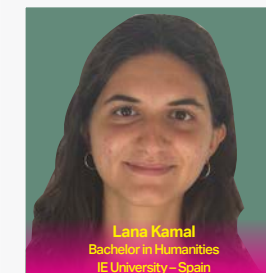
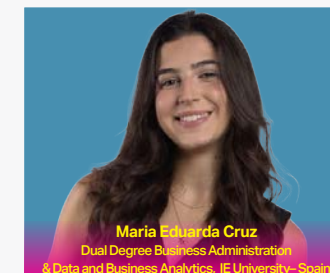
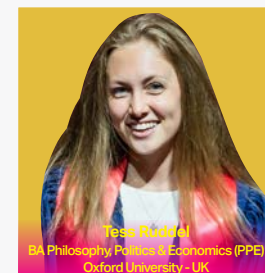
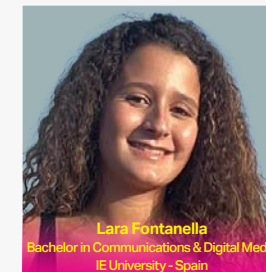
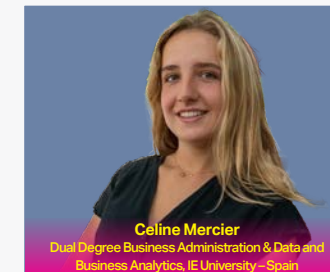
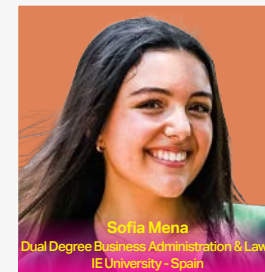
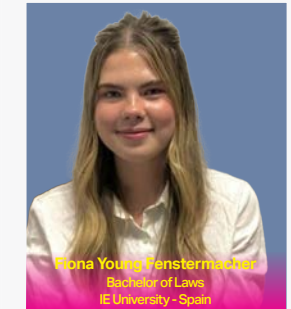
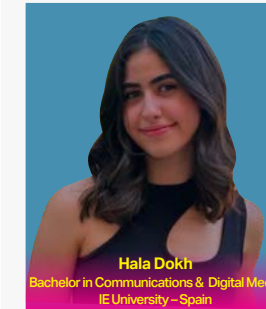
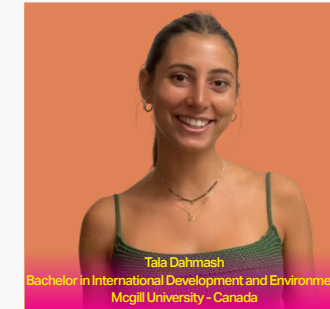
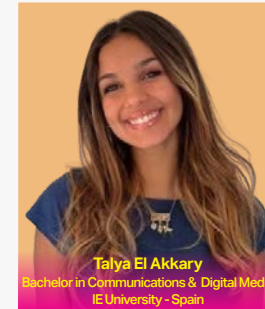


Maha Hana Evers

IE University Student Government, Founder of CP Media

Maha Hana Evers is an honors-level student midway through her degree in Digital Media & Communications at IE University, Spain, where she founded CP Media, a Gen Z-focused publishing platform. She is passionate about the global evolution of the sports industry, particularly the rise of women’s professional sports and the growing importance of personal branding for young female athletes. In 2025, Maha completed a Summer Internship at Teneo, a global CEO advisory firm, supporting strategic communications and investor relations for multinational clients and gaining insight into corporate reputation and crisis management. In 2024, she interned with SUMMA, an award-winning branding agency in Barcelona, contributing to brand strategy for clients including FC Barcelona and Sevilla FC. Maha has served on IE University’s Student Government and competed as a varsity football player. Previously, she was elected Student Body President at JESS Dubai, where she led well-being and sustainability initiatives, including founding www.ClimatePenpal.org, which continues to inspire global student engagement today.

PODCAST SEASON ONE CONTRIBUTORS



FOREWORD



Maha Hana Evers
IE University Student Government, Founder of CP Media

Gen Z Women Are Rewriting the Rulebook — And We’re Not Asking for Permission

By any measure, our generation is coming of age in one of the most dynamic, demanding, and digitally-driven periods in history. But far from being overwhelmed, we are stepping up to meet the moment—questioning outdated systems, redefining success, and pushing for more authenticity in every aspect of life, from the workplace to social media. If you want a glimpse into the future of work, education, and identity, look no further than our evolving priorities and values.

We Want Systems That Serve Us, Not Shape Us

We’re no longer willing to settle for outdated models that don’t reflect the world we live in. Whether it’s education, work, or financial independence, we want systems that actually prepare us for reality. One of our biggest frustrations is the lack of real-world financial education. We’ve been taught how to analyze poetry, but not how to file taxes or build credit. So we’ve taken matters into our own hands—turning to TikTok, YouTube, and peer-led communities to learn what school never taught us. But we also know that the internet is full of misinformation, and that’s why we’re demanding curriculum reform that equips future generations with life skills, not just test scores.

We bring the same clarity to the workplace. While we appreciate the flexibility of remote work, we also recognize what’s missing—mentorship, spontaneous creativity, informal learning. We’re not anti-office—we’re anti-obligation. We want the freedom to design work lives that prioritize both productivity and human connection. A hybrid model, done right, is not just a compromise—it’s an ideal.

Our expectations extend to how we define success. For us, it’s no longer about the corner office or a lifelong job at a single company. We measure success in personal fulfillment, mental wellbeing, and the ability to stay adaptable in uncertain times. We’re reimagining ambition in a way that blends purpose with flexibility—and we don’t see that as a compromise, but as progress.

We’re Digital Natives, But We’re Not Blind

We’ve grown up online, but we’re not passive consumers of digital culture—we’re critics and creators. We know how social media distorts reality, pushing unrealistic beauty standards, glamorized freelance lifestyles, and a nonstop pressure to perform. And while we still use these platforms, we use them differently. More of us are choosing to show up authentically—sharing struggles, setting boundaries, and calling out curated perfection when we see it.

This digital awareness extends to mental health. We know the toll that endless scrolling can take on self-esteem and attention spans. That’s why we’re advocating for healthier habits, more transparency from influencers, and even regulation to hold platforms accountable. We don’t want to cancel digital life—we want to make it sustainable.

At the same time, many of us are embracing global mobility as a defining feature of adulthood. Whether studying abroad or working internationally, we see movement not as disruption, but as opportunity. It’s how we build resilience, expand our worldviews, and discover where we truly belong. We’re not in a rush to settle down. We’re focused on growing—creatively, professionally, and emotionally—wherever that path may take us.

The Bottom Line

We’re not just reacting to change—we’re shaping it. With boldness, empathy, and a deep sense of purpose, we’re building a future that reflects who we are, not who we were told to be. The rules are shifting—and we’re leading the rewrite.

The world should pay attention. Better yet, join us.



Lost in Translation: The International Student Dilemma?

In an age where planes fly faster than policies change, Gen Z women are taking off—literally. With over 6.5 million students enrolled in higher education outside their home countries and women now making up the majority of that number, a quiet revolution is underway. These young women are not only crossing borders but also challenging the boundaries of gender norms, identity, and global opportunity.

But behind every bold leap lies a terrain strewn with hidden costs—emotional, financial, and bureaucratic. These costs aren't just incidental—they shape the entire international student journey. For Gen Z female international students, studying abroad is not simply about earning a degree. It's about survival, transformation, and redefining success on their own terms. They are building a new model of global citizenship—one that is brave, adaptive, and long overdue for recognition and structural support.

The Emotional Tax of a Global Dream

Studying abroad begins with courage but continues with compromise. For many young women, packing up their lives into two suitcases is a declaration of independence—and a deep emotional gamble. While the brochures paint a picture of cobblestoned campuses and lifelong friendships, the lived experience is far more nuanced. These students are suspended between identities, living in limbo where “home” is both everywhere and nowhere.

Homesickness isn't just nostalgia—it's the guilt of choosing ambition over proximity to family. It's the daily ache of being far away during birthdays, crises, and the small

comforts of home. Language barriers, even for the multilingual, can strip confidence and amplify isolation. Constantly being “the foreigner” is mentally exhausting, a reminder that belonging is often conditional. Culture shock doesn't fade in a week; it lingers in every missed joke, misunderstood gesture, or sidelong glance in classrooms or cafés.

And then there's the unspoken tax on safety. Female international students are statistically twice as likely to feel unsafe on campus as their male counterparts. This sense of unease leads to avoiding certain neighborhoods, skipping late-night study groups, and navigating unfamiliar cities with vigilance. The mental burden of always being on alert adds to an already heavy emotional load.

In many cultures, mental health remains stigmatized, leaving these young women without a safe outlet to share their fears and frustrations. The result? A generation that is globally minded yet emotionally taxed—facing invisible pressures that rarely make it into course curricula or career prep workshops.

Yet, amid the emotional upheaval, Gen Z women exhibit extraordinary resilience. They build “chosen families” out of roommates, classmates, and fellow wanderers. They learn to adapt without erasing who they are. In doing so, they not only survive but evolve—turning vulnerability into strength and discomfort into self-discovery. Their stories are not just about persistence, but about profound transformation.

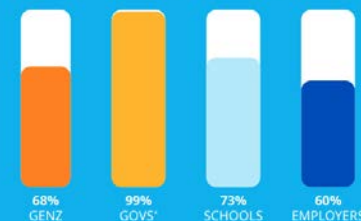
Bureaucracy and the High Price of Potential

If education is an investment, then international women are paying triple. They shoulder financial burdens that are often

THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP

Gen Z believe they play a key role in helping themselves and other young people manage the impact exposure to global challenges has on mental health—but want major institutions to join them in shouldering the responsibility.

Who does Gen Z believe should be held accountable?



Source: Mental Health Under Pressure (UNICEF)

underestimated, if not entirely overlooked. In most host countries, international students are excluded from government financial aid, local scholarships, or subsidized healthcare. This forces many to work long hours in part-time jobs while maintaining full academic loads—an unsustainable balancing act that risks both GPA and health.

For women from the Global South or countries with limited visa power, the challenge doesn't end at graduation. In fact, that's often where the true struggle begins. Immigration policies dictate not just where they can live, but whether they can even pursue the careers they've trained for. Many are forced to accept jobs far below their qualifications just to remain in the

country. The result? Careers shaped more by bureaucracy than by talent or passion.

This squanders global talent at a time when the world needs it most. Data shows that women with international degrees are 20–30% more likely to secure leadership roles in multinational corporations. Bilingual employees can earn up to 20% more in certain industries. And with remote work projected to grow by nearly 90% by 2030, these women should be thriving in an increasingly borderless labor market.

But instead, they're often stuck in administrative purgatory—undervalued, underpaid, and overqualified. The irony is stark. While governments and corporations publicly celebrate diversity and global fluency, they frequently fail to support the very women who embody those values. Immigration policies remain outdated. Career services rarely offer culturally competent support. And employers often overlook “soft” skills like cross-cultural communication, adaptability, and resilience—skills these students sharpen daily through lived experience.

If left unaddressed, this talent drain isn't just a loss for individuals—it's a loss for global progress, innovation, and equity.

Redefining Success in a World That Won't Sit Still

What happens when a generation grows up amid economic crises, political instability, and a global pandemic? They get real. Gen Z women are rewriting the script on what success looks like—and it no longer revolves around corner offices or paychecks with too many zeros. While financial independence still matters, so does balance, purpose, and peace of mind.

Increasingly, these students are choosing careers that reflect their values, not just their degrees. They're embracing flexibility, remote work, and multi-country living. Many are drawn to impact-driven fields—



education, sustainability, technology, the arts—where they can be both financially secure and emotionally fulfilled. The old model of graduate, land a job, buy a house, settle down is giving way to something more flexible, more personal, and, ultimately, more sustainable.

This isn't a rejection of ambition; it's a recalibration of it. These women are multilingual, multicultural, and digitally native—perfectly equipped to lead in a fractured world. But they measure success differently. A good job must also be a healthy one. A high salary shouldn't require sacrificing identity or mental well-being. They are not escaping responsibility—they are demanding a more humane framework for growth.

Even the concept of “home” is evolving. For some, it's still where they were born. For others, it's wherever they feel safe and empowered. Whether they return, remain, or rotate between locations, one thing is certain: these women are not lost in translation. They

are becoming fluent in change—and they're fluent in ways of leading, connecting, and solving that the world urgently needs.

A Global Wake-Up Call

The international student experience is not just an academic chapter—it's a formative, often life-defining journey. If we genuinely value the contributions of globally educated women, we must meet them halfway.

Governments should reform immigration policies to support—not hinder—talented graduates. Universities must expand mental health resources and cultural support systems. Employers need to look beyond passport stamps and recognize the immense value in resilience, language fluency, and intercultural intelligence.

These Gen Z women are not just students. They are pioneers of a new kind of leadership—empathetic, adaptive, and future-focused. They've already crossed oceans. The least we can do is remove the barriers that stand in their way. ■

Figuring Out Our 20s: Are We Supposed to Be Building a Life or Just Living It?

In an era defined by uncertainty and overwhelming options, Gen Z stands at a crossroads unlike any generation before. Torn between societal expectations, relentless digital comparisons, and the innate desire for meaningful self-discovery, today's young adults face unprecedented pressures to define their paths early. Yet, perhaps their greatest challenge—and opportunity—is embracing the freedom and unpredictability of living life without a predetermined roadmap.

This generation's story is not one of failure or confusion—it is one of evolution. Gen Z is not lost; it is actively rewriting the script of adulthood in real time, amidst global instability, digital overload, and shifting social dynamics.

Breaking Free from the Timeline Trap

From an early age, society implants an invisible clock within us—a rigid timeline dictating life's milestones: graduation, career establishment, marriage, children—all neatly completed before turning 30. Yet, for Gen Z, these traditional markers feel increasingly unrealistic, even irrelevant. Why? Because life's complexity rarely aligns with predefined benchmarks. The anxiety of being “behind” peers or parental expectations is amplified by social media platforms, presenting curated snapshots of apparent success and productivity, further compounding the pressure to keep up.

Instagram feeds show 22-year-olds with luxury apartments, thriving businesses, and seemingly perfect relationships—portraits often filtered and staged. The result? A distorted perception of time and progress. Young people begin to question their worth

not based on personal growth, but on how quickly they're ticking boxes on an outdated timeline.

However, acknowledging the artificial nature of these timelines allows room for genuine growth. The illusion of perfection can stifle authenticity, trapping young adults in lives that feel more like performances than genuine self-expression. Rejecting these arbitrary timelines opens space for authentic experiences and the freedom to evolve at one's pace, appreciating that life's milestones are individual journeys, not universal deadlines.

In fact, many Gen Z individuals are already taking the road less traveled—delaying higher education, taking gap years, experimenting with freelancing or entrepreneurship, or moving to cities that align with their lifestyle rather than career ambition. This deviation isn't failure—it's flexibility.

Hustle vs. Healing: The New Balancing Act

Complicating the timeline tension is the contemporary clash between hustle culture and the pursuit of mental wellness. Today's world glorifies productivity and relentless ambition, presenting success as synonymous with exhaustion and burnout. Conversely, a rising healing culture emphasizes rest, wellness, and self-care as integral elements of true success. Gen Z finds itself caught between these two extremes, striving to balance ambitious goals with the preservation of mental health.

The truth is neither extreme alone holds all the answers. Choosing rest is not indicative of failure, but rather resilience. This balance requires consciously redefining ambition—understanding that sustained productivity comes not from constant exertion but from



strategic moments of pause. Mental health must become as significant a measure of success as professional achievements, acknowledging that true productivity includes preserving one's emotional and psychological well-being.

Gen Z is driving the narrative toward sustainable ambition. Conversations about burnout, therapy, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance are no longer taboo—they're essential. The shift is palpable in the workplace, too: more young professionals are asking for flexible hours, mental health days, and values-aligned projects.

Furthermore, the drive for instant success or visible results, often amplified by social media validation, risks overshadowing meaningful personal growth. Authentic success often

unfolds gradually, quietly, and rarely translates neatly onto an Instagram feed. Gen Z's real challenge, therefore, is resisting the temptation to measure life's worth by digital validation, instead cultivating lives driven by values, fulfillment, and internal peace.

Embracing Identity Fluidity and the Power to Pivot

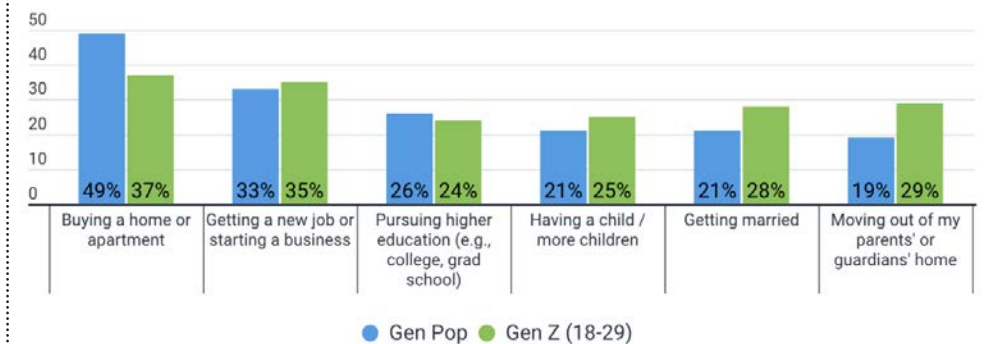
Gen Z is uniquely positioned to redefine societal standards precisely because it understands identity and career paths as fluid and ever-changing rather than fixed. Traditionally, careers and identities were perceived as lifelong commitments. Today, young people increasingly recognize their identities as evolving entities—constantly exploring, adjusting, and growing. Accepting identity fluidity not as uncertainty but as a strength can empower them to navigate life's uncertainties with flexibility and resilience.

This adaptability shows in education and employment trends: Gen Zs are switching majors, leaving careers that don't align with their values, starting passion projects, and creating hybrid professional paths that blend income and impact. They embrace nonlinear growth, prioritizing curiosity over conformity.

Moreover, this generation's willingness to pivot is perhaps its most profound strength. While older generations viewed changing directions as instability or failure, Gen Z embraces pivots as courageous acts of self-awareness. Whether it's transitioning careers, leaving unhealthy relationships, or redefining personal ambitions, the ability to pivot is an acknowledgment that change is essential for genuine growth.

Pivoting involves risk, but it also represents freedom—the liberty to realign one's life continually with evolving values and passions. By embracing pivots as proactive decisions rather than reactive failures, Gen Z can redefine personal and professional success in ways that resonate deeply with individual

The percentage of Americans delaying or planning to delay a major life event this year due to financial reasons (Select all that apply).
Excluding 'not applicable'



Source: CivicScience

values rather than external expectations.

Defining Success on Personal Terms

Ultimately, the greatest opportunity for Gen Z lies in crafting personalized definitions of success—breaking away from outdated models that no longer reflect their realities. Success today can mean financial independence, creative freedom, deep emotional connections, or a purposeful life that contributes positively to society. It is inherently subjective and should align with personal joy and fulfillment rather than traditional societal benchmarks.

Unlike previous generations, Gen Z doesn't measure a meaningful life solely by salary, title, or tenure. A fulfilling day might include deep work, quality rest, acts of service, creative flow, or spiritual grounding. This broader view of success demands a culture that respects and nurtures individual journeys.

The journey through one's twenties, therefore, should be viewed less as a frantic race to achieve prescribed goals and more as an exploration of possibilities. True success, Gen Z is discovering, emerges from self-awareness, resilience, authenticity, and the courage to continually adapt.

A Call for Empathy, Not Judgment

In the face of constant digital comparison and societal expectations, Gen Z's challenge is not merely navigating life's complexities but redefining the very terms by which life is measured. They stand at the threshold of profound societal change, equipped to rewrite the script entirely—one that values individual journeys over collective expectations, genuine fulfillment over curated perfection, and holistic wellness over relentless productivity.

As Gen Z continues this critical journey, society must provide support rather than judgment, encouragement rather than rigid expectations. After all, the road ahead is unwritten, and it is precisely this uncertainty that offers boundless opportunities for genuine growth, meaningful exploration, and authentic living.

Let us stop asking Gen Z to “figure it all out” by a certain age. Instead, let's honor their bold willingness to evolve, rest, pivot, and define life on their own terms. Because in the ambiguity, they are crafting a new blueprint—one built not on inherited expectations, but on intention, integrity, and deep inner truth. ■



TikTok & Influencers: Shaping Gen Z's Reality or Just Selling a Dream?

For Generation Z, creativity has never been more accessible—or more endangered. Born into a world of smartphones, editing apps, and AI co-creators, this generation can compose music, generate images, and publish videos in minutes. Yet as digital convenience becomes the norm, the depth of originality may be the hidden casualty.

What once took hours—writing a poem, designing a logo, editing a video—now takes seconds thanks to platforms like Canva, CapCut, and ChatGPT. These tools have democratized content creation, opening doors for young creatives who would have previously needed professional software, expensive gear, or studio access. Now, anyone can create—but not everyone is creating something new.

This ease is a double-edged sword. The same platforms that democratize art and amplify marginalized voices can also flatten creative diversity. When content becomes a remix of the latest viral sound or a “day in the life” cut from a trending template,

creativity starts to resemble automation. The output looks impressive, but the soul may be missing.

This is the paradox Gen Z finds itself navigating: empowered by tools, but trapped by templates. As one podcast guest put it, “If you ask ChatGPT to answer for you, you’ll all have the same answer.” What began as a revolution in self-expression now threatens to produce a generation fluent in aesthetics, yet impoverished in originality. And as the aesthetics sharpen, the ideas may thin.

What’s more, the very act of creating something messy, flawed, and unfinished—hallmarks of authentic art—is falling out of favor in an online world that rewards polish over process. Imperfect drafts rarely go viral. But real creativity often lives in those imperfect drafts.

From Influencers to Imitators: The Burden of Performance

The rise of micro- and nano-influencers has blurred the line between creator and consumer. On platforms like TikTok and

Instagram, performance is no longer limited to celebrities or creators with massive followings. Every user, knowingly or not, becomes their own PR manager—curating a public-facing life designed to attract likes, comments, and approval. This digital self-staging isn’t just a byproduct of social media—it’s the fuel that powers it.

Even casual users feel the pressure. A dinner becomes a photo op. A quiet moment becomes content. A personal milestone becomes a post optimized for engagement. The performance doesn’t end when the camera stops—it becomes embedded in how young people see themselves. Even those who claim not to care about likes often admit to pausing before posting: “Will this be liked? Will it be perceived the way I want?”

This performative culture carries weight. Instead of crafting art that reflects personal truth, creators chase algorithms. Instead of documenting reality, they produce it for an audience. And in doing so, the platform often becomes the artist.

Worse, the influence of algorithmic trends seeps into creative intention. Originality is sacrificed for reach. Subtlety is lost in favor of immediacy. Art becomes less about what we want to say and more about what the feed might reward.

While many Gen Z users are aware of this and resist it, many more find it difficult to separate authentic expression from strategic content creation. The result? A subtle erosion of creative confidence—and a gnawing question that haunts modern creators: Are we expressing ourselves, or performing for approval?

The line between authenticity and artifice becomes blurry, especially when sponsored content mimics lifestyle vlogs or personal stories. A “day in the life” video might actually be a brand campaign. And while transparency is improving, the audience doesn’t always know what’s real.

Human Imagination in the Age of AI: A Critical Crossroads

The rise of AI has added a powerful new layer to this creative tension. Tools like DALL-E, GPT-4, and Adobe’s Firefly have turned artificial intelligence into a co-creator—able to sketch, write, animate, or ideate at lightning speed. Used thoughtfully, these tools can spark creativity, push boundaries, and unlock new modes of artistic expression.

But the darker flipside is equally true. AI doesn’t just enhance creativity—it can replace the very process of creation. Many Gen Z students admit to using AI for essays, outlines, business ideas, even poetry. Some use it as a starting point. Others use it to finish the work entirely. The risk isn’t that AI generates bad art—it’s that humans stop trying.

When AI becomes a default tool, creativity may shift from imaginative thinking to prompt engineering. And while prompt design is a skill in itself, it cannot substitute for lived experience, emotional nuance, or personal voice.

Education systems are struggling to keep

pace. While students are taught how to use AI tools, they’re rarely taught when not to. Most curriculums focus on utility, not ethics. They teach functionality, but not discernment. This gap risks producing a generation of creators who are fluent in output but lack depth in originality, context, or accountability.

Moreover, the ethical terrain is fraught. Deepfakes, uncredited AI art, mass plagiarism—these are no longer theoretical risks. Without better digital ethics training, Gen Z could unwittingly normalize practices that weaken creative integrity. The danger is not that we rely on machines, but that we forget what it means to be human in the process.

Yet there’s hope. Many young creatives are not passive consumers of tech—they are mindful architects of its future. They use AI to assist, not replace. They advocate for algorithm transparency, fair crediting, and more diverse creative voices. Gen Z is not asleep at the wheel. But they are moving at high speed through an evolving cultural terrain that demands new rules, and fast.

Redefining Creative Success on Our Terms

What Gen Z must now confront isn’t just how to create—but why. The tools

are powerful. The platforms are vast. The possibilities are endless. But without conscious effort, all this convenience can lead to conformity.

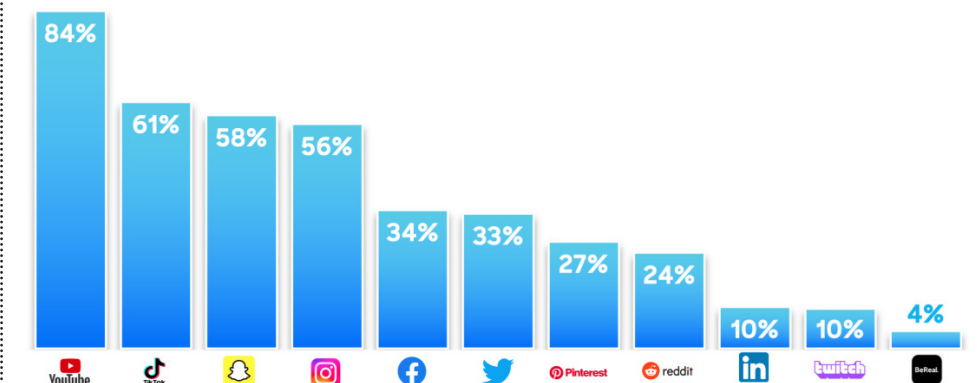
The soul of creativity—the unpredictable, the messy, the deeply personal—is not algorithm-friendly. It demands discomfort, deep thinking, and the courage to create something that may not trend. This kind of creativity can’t be outsourced, templated, or fully optimized.

What’s truly at stake is not just a generation’s artistic output, but its ability to imagine differently, to speak uniquely, and to shape culture on its own terms. Gen Z stands at a critical crossroads: will they let algorithms define their voice, or will they reclaim creativity as something rooted in thought, tension, risk, and bold expression?

The digital age is here. AI is evolving. Social platforms are expanding. The tools aren’t the problem—it’s how we use them that matters. If Gen Z can balance innovation with intentionality, speed with depth, and reach with truth, then they won’t just be creators in the algorithmic age. They’ll be its conscience. ■

Social Media Reach Among Gen Z

Percentage of mobile internet users aged 18–24 who visited each social media app



Source: Comscore



Trump 2.0: What's Next for Mexico & President Sheinbaum?

As Donald Trump was sworn in for a second term, a profound sense of déjà vu hangs over Mexico. The same rhetoric about walls and tariffs is back—this time under a cloud of global economic uncertainty and regional political shifts. But Mexico is not the same country it was four years ago. With its first female president, Claudia Sheinbaum, taking office amid this renewed U.S. turbulence, the stakes are higher than ever. For Mexico, this moment is more than just surviving Trump's policies—it's a litmus test of resilience, leadership, and its place in a rapidly changing world.

Trump's Second Term: Old Threats, New Stakes

When Trump rattles off threats of mass deportations and punitive tariffs, the immediate casualty is trust. Mexico's economic lifeblood—its vast exports of produce, auto parts, and

manufactured goods—flows directly to its powerful northern neighbour. A 25% tariff, if enacted, would devastate countless Mexican businesses and the millions who rely on them.

Yet, this threat is not entirely new. Trump's signature political weapon has always been provocative promises—some of which fade once headlines move on. However, the danger lies in complacency. Mexico must plan for the possibility that this time, those tariffs may stick. If that happens, the ripple effects won't stop at the border: U.S. consumers would feel the pinch of higher grocery bills and more expensive goods, while Mexico would face inflation, job losses, and a surge in poverty.

But perhaps the more volatile front is immigration. Trump's vow to ramp up deportations echoes a promise that once made the news cycle, but never quite matched reality. Yet in communities across Mexico and Central

America, fear of mass removals is real. It fuels humanitarian crises at border towns and strains Mexico's limited capacity to shelter, feed, and process vulnerable families in transit.

In this turbulent picture, President Sheinbaum's government faces a pivotal choice: will Mexico continue its historically reactive stance—meeting insult with counter-insult—or will it pivot to a proactive diplomatic posture, setting the agenda and shaping bilateral negotiations before they escalate?

Sheinbaum's Tightrope: Strength at Home, Respect Abroad

Claudia Sheinbaum's presidency is historic not only for her gender but for what it symbolizes: continuity with AMLO's legacy, yet with expectations of modernising Mexico's international image. As a leader, she must project both calm authority and strategic toughness.

Her immediate challenge is to remind both Trump and domestic critics that Mexico is not the junior partner in North America's economic equation. The United States and Canada benefit as much from Mexico's trade, cheap skilled labour, and logistical integration as Mexico benefits from their demand. Renegotiating NAFTA—or the current USMCA—would be a high-stakes gamble for all sides. Sheinbaum must ensure that any revisions preserve Mexico's core advantages while addressing genuine trade imbalances responsibly.

This calls for more than symbolic pushback. Sheinbaum should rally domestic support to present a unified front, while broadening Mexico's global partnerships. Increasing trade with the EU, deepening ties with China, and exploring new markets in Asia could signal to Washington that Mexico has alternatives—and leverage.

But Sheinbaum must do this while navigating delicate political terrain at home. She inherits a system riddled with inefficiencies, corruption, and fragile institutions. Failing to deliver economic stability could alienate the very citizens who elected her to stand up to foreign pressure. For a nation with so many internal inequalities, maintaining popular trust while fending off external threats will test the depth of her leadership.

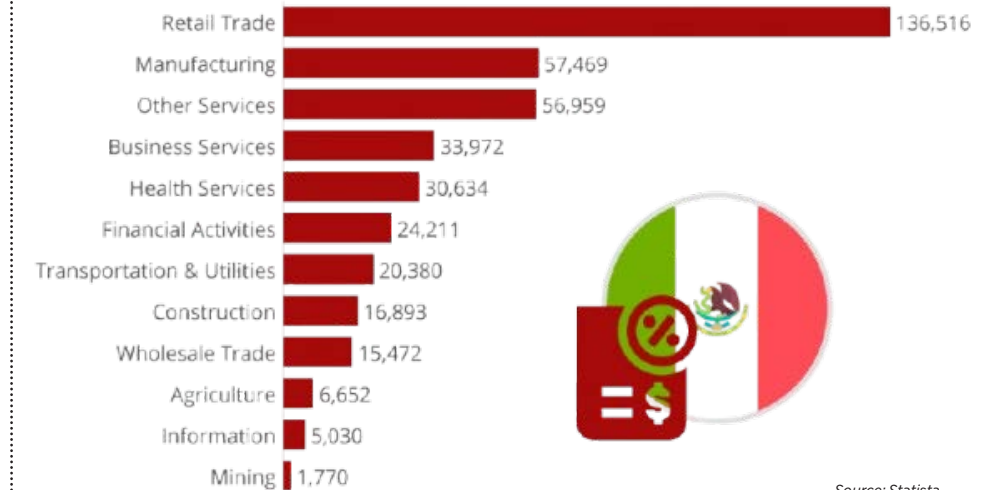
A New Vision for Migration and Opportunity

Beyond trade and diplomacy, the greatest stakes lie in how Mexico addresses migration. Trump's blunt narrative paints every migrant crossing the U.S. border as a Mexican problem, ignoring that many are fleeing violence or poverty in Central America. Past Mexican administrations have agreed to dubious deals, effectively turning Mexico into an unpaid buffer zone for U.S. border policy—warehousing tens of thousands in makeshift camps with limited rights or support.

Sheinbaum has an opportunity to break this cycle. Instead of viewing migration solely as a

Tariffs On Mexico Could Cost 400,000 U.S. Jobs

Estimated job losses due to a 5% tariff on Mexican goods by sector



Source: Statista

problem to manage, Mexico can reframe it as a catalyst for national renewal. By improving job creation, reforming education, and tackling corruption, Mexico can offer its citizens and refugees a reason to build futures within its borders—diminishing the desperate push northward.

This is not naive idealism; it's economic pragmatism. The same youthful workforce that seeks better wages in Texas fields or New York kitchens could power a domestic boom—if given a chance. Mexico has the natural resources, the cultural vibrancy, and the human capital to craft its own version of the “American Dream”—one rooted in security and dignity at home.

Meanwhile, Sheinbaum's administration must continue advocating for humane, realistic immigration policies in Washington. It should push back against sweeping deportations that ignore the complexities of regional displacement and contribute little to actual border security. Instead, binational cooperation on development and security in migrant-sending regions could

yield longer-term stability.

A Test Mexico Cannot Afford to Fail

At this moment, what's at stake for Mexico is not just a balance sheet of tariffs and trade flows. It is the credibility of its institutions, the strength of its social fabric, and the viability of its economic future. It is a test of whether its first female president can lead boldly enough to command respect abroad without fracturing support at home.

Trump's second term may indeed be as turbulent as his first. But for Mexico, the greatest opportunity lies in turning external threats into internal transformation—modernizing its economy, diversifying its global alliances, and ensuring that its people, whether they choose to stay or migrate, do so out of hope, not desperation.

As the world watches North America's new political chess match unfold, one truth stands firm: Mexico has more cards to play than it often realises. Now is the time to play them wisely. ■

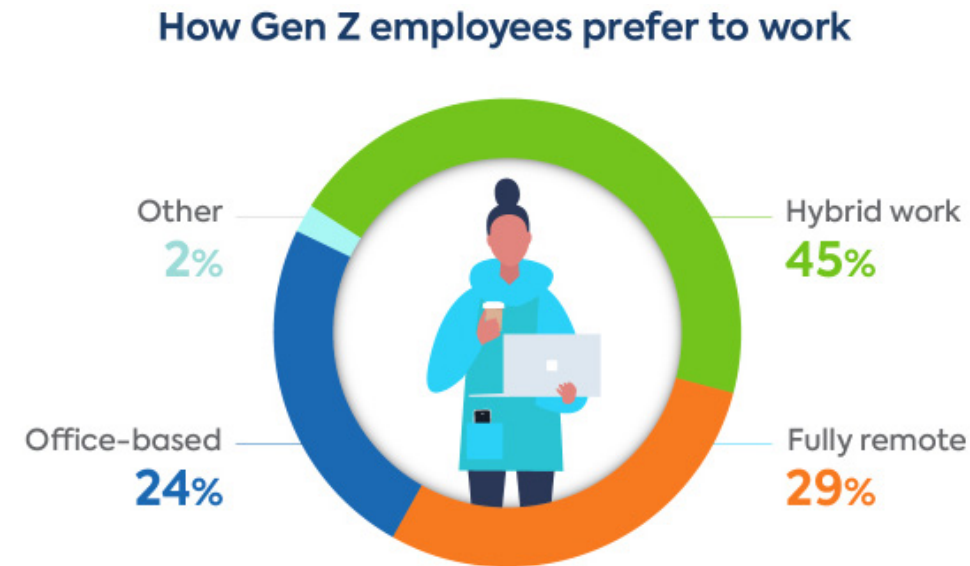
Future of Work: Should Gen Z Embrace or Reject Remote Working?

The rapid digital transformation of workplaces, intensified by the remote work revolution, has placed Generation Z at a critical crossroads. Unlike Millennials who fought for remote work as an earned benefit after years of in-office experience, Gen Z faces a scenario where remote employment is often the default, potentially creating more challenges than opportunities. What exactly is at stake for Gen Z as they enter a professional landscape where digital fluency might simultaneously be their greatest asset and most significant obstacle?

The Mentorship and Networking Gap

A major risk facing Gen Z in the era of widespread remote work is the significant loss of informal yet essential mentorship opportunities. Traditional workplaces have historically provided invaluable learning experiences through spontaneous interactions, mentorship by observation, and real-time feedback—opportunities typically inaccessible via digital platforms. Without these organic mentorship moments, young professionals risk underdeveloped soft skills and diminished leadership potential. This mentorship vacuum not only affects immediate job performance but may also have lasting implications for Gen Z's long-term career trajectory and professional confidence.

Similarly concerning is the erosion of effective professional networking. While platforms like LinkedIn facilitate initial connections, they struggle to replicate the depth, authenticity, and memorable



Source: TalentLMS 2022 Gen Z Workplace Survey Report

interactions of in-person networking. Face-to-face meetings and casual interactions significantly impact hiring, promotion decisions, and professional growth. The shift to remote work confines these interactions to Zoom calls and emails, severely limiting Gen Z's ability to form the deep professional relationships critical for career advancement. Without robust networking opportunities, young professionals risk being sidelined in favor of colleagues who have established stronger interpersonal connections through physical presence in offices.

The stakes here are particularly high: failing to establish solid professional networks early can lead to weaker career prospects, fewer advancement opportunities, and potentially a

less fulfilling professional journey.

The Remote Internship Paradox

The pivot towards remote internships, while offering flexibility and global accessibility, raises critical concerns about the value and efficacy of these formative professional experiences. Traditionally, internships bridge academic learning and professional application, offering young professionals hands-on experience, direct mentorship, and a deep dive into workplace culture and dynamics. However, remote internships tend to diminish these opportunities, frequently relegating interns to isolated, task-based roles with minimal direct engagement from mentors or senior staff.

This reduction in experiential learning has

severe consequences. Internships are often gateways to full-time positions, providing platforms for students to demonstrate capabilities and form meaningful relationships with employers. Remote settings inhibit this essential dynamic, placing Gen Z interns at a disadvantage when competing with peers who have had robust, in-person internship experiences. Consequently, young professionals might find themselves ill-equipped for the realities of professional roles that demand nuanced interpersonal skills, office etiquette, and seamless integration into workplace hierarchies.

Furthermore, remote internships limit Gen Z's exposure to professional socialization, essential for developing confidence, communication skills, and an understanding of workplace politics. Without these foundational experiences, Gen Z may enter the full-time workforce lacking critical soft skills, risking long-term career stagnation and impaired professional growth.

Hybrid Models and Freelancing: Opportunity or Trap?

While remote and hybrid models offer attractive flexibility, allowing Gen Z to manage their schedules around productivity peaks, these arrangements might inadvertently weaken professional discipline, accountability, and structured career development. Industries such as finance and law already show tendencies toward reverting to traditional office environments, emphasizing physical presence to ensure productivity, skill-building, and mentorship. A potential mismatch between Gen Z's expectations of flexible work arrangements and employers' requirements for office presence could lead to tension and career dissatisfaction among younger workers.

Moreover, the glamorized image of



freelancing and entrepreneurship prevalent on social media might mislead Gen Z into prematurely rejecting structured professional environments. While freelancing offers autonomy and flexibility, it requires considerable professional experience, resilience, and a well-established skill set, none of which are guaranteed without structured training. Pursuing freelancing without foundational experience can lead to unstable career paths and unfulfilled professional aspirations, ultimately hindering long-term career stability.

On the positive side, Gen Z's inherent digital fluency and adaptability to remote collaboration present significant competitive advantages. Their ability to navigate digital platforms effortlessly positions them uniquely in a globalized, interconnected work environment, potentially expanding their employment opportunities beyond geographic constraints. Additionally, reduced commuting and living costs associated with remote work appeal to financially pragmatic young professionals, enabling them to optimize their economic opportunities.

What's Ultimately at Stake?

Gen Z's integration into the professional landscape is happening during a pivotal

moment of digital and workplace transformation. While their digital expertise equips them to excel in remote environments, their lack of direct workplace exposure could severely hamper essential professional skills development, networking capabilities, and long-term career advancement.

The ultimate challenge facing Gen Z is to strike a delicate balance between embracing digital work models and ensuring they do not lose out on vital in-person experiences and mentorship that underpin career success. Companies and educational institutions alike must recognize these challenges and proactively design blended environments—incorporating the flexibility of remote work with structured in-person interactions—to support the professional growth and integration of Gen Z into the workplace effectively.

As Gen Z stands at this critical juncture, their success will hinge upon how effectively they navigate the complexities of hybrid work models, leverage their digital skills, and proactively seek opportunities for meaningful professional growth. Ensuring this balance could define the long-term sustainability of their careers and shape the future of work for generations to come. ■

Rethinking the Digital Toolkit: How Gen Z Can Transform Technology into a Catalyst for Creativity?

In bedrooms and co-working cafes across the globe, Generation Z is busy churning out dance challenges, AI-generated art, and bite-sized wisdom for TikTok and Instagram reels. On paper, this looks like a revolution: never before has it been so easy for so many people to create and share ideas. But scratch the surface and a more complicated truth emerges — one that young creatives themselves admit in candid conversations. Are we truly breaking molds, or simply reshaping yesterday's trends with shinier tools?

As digital natives armed with AI and endless apps, Gen Z stands at a historic fork in the road: use technology to liberate human imagination, or outsource originality altogether. The stakes are higher than a viral hashtag — what's at risk is the soul of creativity itself.

The Double-Edged Toolkit: Disrupt or Dilute

Generation Z's biggest asset — effortless fluency with digital platforms — is also its

biggest risk. This generation doesn't need to “learn” technology; they were practically born with it in hand. From TikTok filters to AI art generators, they wield tools that can remix a song, edit a video, and design a poster faster than previous generations could buy a brush or a blank tape.

Yet the very ease that democratizes creation also threatens to flatten it. In the recent GEN-Z AMIGAS podcast, young creators wrestled with this paradox: yes, everyone can publish, but if everyone copies the same template, is it still art or just algorithmic noise? Easy access means more voices but also more mimicry. The flood of content risks drowning out the truly original work that requires slow thinking and a tolerance for boredom — luxuries rare in an always-on, swipe-right culture.

It's not that Gen Z lacks ideas. They brim with them. The tension lies in resisting the trap of quick likes and fleeting trends. When creativity is reduced to chasing viral sounds

and recycling memes, innovation becomes window dressing on old ideas. The question that haunts this generation is simple: Are we disrupting, or just decorating yesterday's culture with filters?

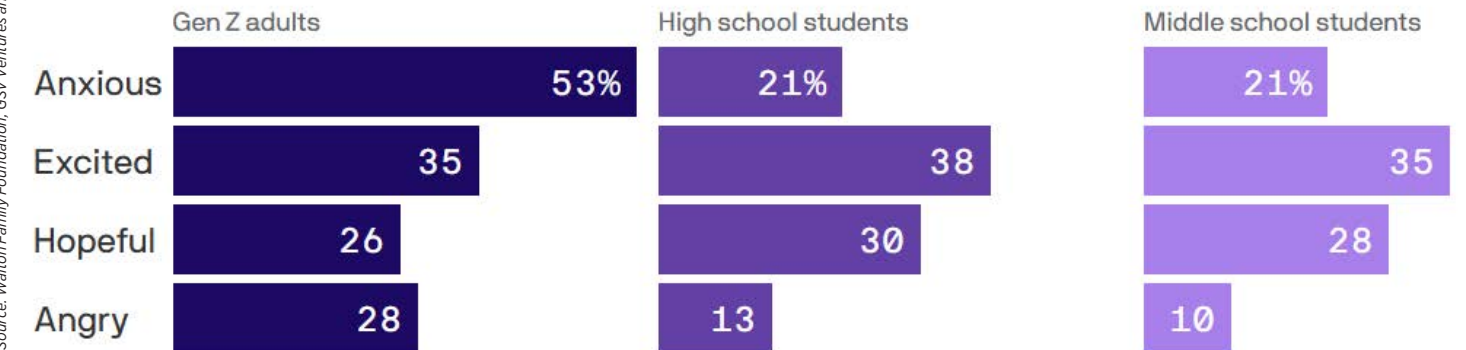
AI: Our Co-Creator or Our Replacement?

Nothing sharpens this dilemma more than the rise of AI. In the podcast's debates, students sounded both pragmatic and deeply anxious. On one hand, AI is a miraculous assistant: it drafts essays, outlines business pitches, and suggests recipes. It can tutor you through difficult math problems or brainstorm a photoshoot concept when you hit a creative block. Used wisely, AI is the ultimate creative collaborator.

But here's the catch: over-reliance breeds complacency. The worry is not that AI writes a poem; it's that the human stops trying to write it in the first place. One student confessed she's terrified of a future where people “stop using their minds” because a chatbot will do the

How young Americans say AI makes them feel

Share who agree or strongly agree; Survey of 3,465 people ages 13 to 28 conducted March 6-13, 2025



work faster. Another admitted she uses AI as a foundation — to spark ideas, not to finish them — but worries many peers don't draw that line.

Worse, ethical pitfalls lurk in the shadows. Deepfakes, plagiarism, and cookie-cutter AI outputs blur originality and trust. If everyone turns to the same bot for inspiration, we risk a cultural echo chamber: new forms, same ideas, mass-produced and soulless. In the words of one guest, “If you ask ChatGPT to answer for you, you'll all have the same answer.” A generation defined by digital literacy must now master digital discernment too.

And yet, rejecting AI altogether is not an option. As one panelist wisely noted, avoidance means falling behind. The smarter path is mindful integration: learning how to use AI to amplify human ingenuity, not erase it. It's a delicate dance, and this generation must learn the steps fast.

The Education Wake-Up Call: Skills That Can't Be Automated

So, if AI threatens to do so much for us, what remains uniquely human? The answer pulses throughout both podcasts: soft skills, strategic thinking, emotional intelligence — the messy,

improvisational traits that algorithms can mimic but not replicate.

Students argue, convincingly, that schools and universities must pivot urgently. Memorizing facts for exams is outdated when a chatbot can spit them out in seconds. Instead, education must teach young people how to ask better questions, challenge assumptions, and blend disparate ideas into new connections — the true heart of creativity.

Likewise, there's a strong case for instilling ethical and practical AI literacy early on. Teenagers should be taught not just how to use ChatGPT, but when not to. Courses should cover the ethics of AI art, the politics of deepfakes, and the business realities of a digital-first job market. Otherwise, we risk producing graduates fluent in prompts but unable to think critically about the implications.

Even with AI lurking in every industry, human adaptability remains a moat no machine can cross. Empathy-driven storytelling, nuanced negotiation, cross-cultural collaboration — these are skills that will keep Gen Z relevant long after automation transforms routine tasks.

There is urgency here: as the podcast guests

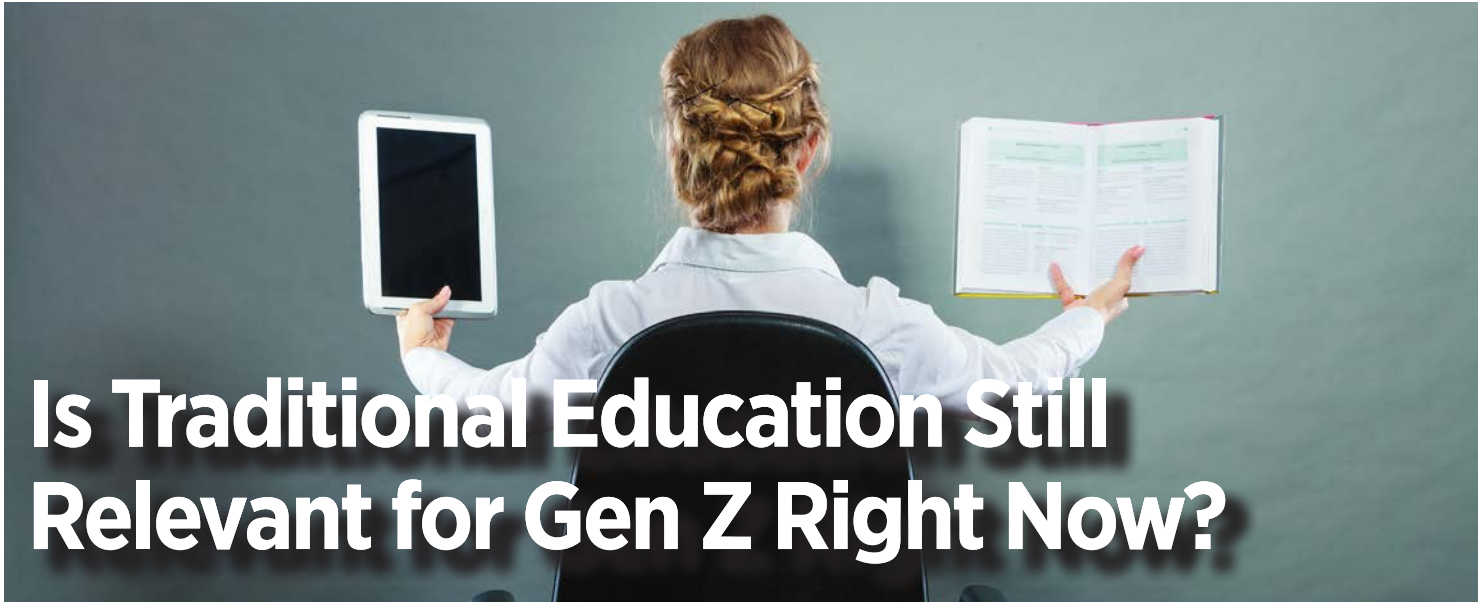
stressed, creativity itself is changing form. It's faster, more collaborative, more reliant on tech than ever. But the bedrock remains unchanged: originality, vision, and integrity. Tools will evolve. Algorithms will learn. But imagination — real, uncomfortable, thrilling imagination — cannot be outsourced.

What's at Stake: A Generation's Creative Soul

Zoom out, and the big picture comes into focus. What's at stake for Gen Z is not just their jobs, but their ability to shape culture on their own terms. Will they be a generation that lets AI and algorithms mold their taste, or one that uses these tools to amplify the stubbornly human spark no machine can replicate?

One student put it perfectly: this is a new type of creativity, not better or worse — just different. That can be liberating if we lean into the hard questions, the ethical guardrails, and the courage to push beyond the comfort of convenience.

Gen Z has the chance to prove that while anyone can remix the past, it takes bold, critical, and ethically grounded minds to invent a future worth living in. The tools are here. The choice is theirs. And the world is watching. ■



Is Traditional Education Still Relevant for Gen Z Right Now?

As graduation season 2025 unfolds, millions of Gen Z students are pausing—not merely to celebrate their academic achievements—but to question the very foundations of their education. This generation is uniquely positioned, digitally fluent, and critically aware, prompting a seismic reconsideration of whether traditional education still makes sense. Amid growing economic anxieties, technological revolutions, and an expanding global skills gap, the time is ripe to challenge, reimagine, and revolutionize education.

Traditional Classrooms: A System Past Its Prime

For decades, education promised a linear route: school, university, job, success. Yet today, that formula appears inadequate. Traditional educational methods emphasize memorization and standardized tests but often neglect the development of essential, practical skills needed for today's dynamic workplaces. Increasingly, Gen Z sees the conventional

classroom as disconnected from real-world applicability. Students like Jude from the Gen Z Amigas podcast reveal frustration, noting their school experiences rarely prepared them effectively for university or careers. The standardized curricula, rigidly defined by outdated national systems, frequently ignore critical, contemporary demands like digital literacy, emotional intelligence, or sustainable practices.

Furthermore, the traditional model often fails to accommodate diverse learning styles. Gen Z students—who grew up surrounded by interactive screens and real-time information—find little engagement in static lecture-based environments. Many struggle with the one-size-fits-all approach that leaves little room for creativity, inquiry-based learning, or adaptive feedback. As a result, these students feel under-challenged, uninspired, and underprepared for the volatile, fast-paced world they are inheriting.

Moreover, economic pressures exacerbate

this crisis. College tuition has reached staggering heights, often described by students as “highway robbery.” With rising inflation and shrinking job markets, students are rightly questioning if the diploma—once a golden ticket—is now merely an expensive keepsake. Employers echo this concern, reporting that graduates frequently lack practical skills, particularly in critical sectors such as technology and sustainability. Traditional degrees, once paramount, now jostle against stacks of micro-credentials and practical experience on applicants' resumes. Clearly, the education system needs urgent recalibration to ensure relevance and accessibility.

The Digital Shift: Gen Z's Learning Revolution

In contrast, digital platforms offer precisely what traditional education struggles to deliver: speed, accessibility, personalization, and relevance. Online learning platforms such as Coursera, edX, Skillshare, and even YouTube University have surged in popularity,

highlighting a shift towards microlearning and skill-based credentials. This trend isn't mere convenience; it reflects Gen Z's intrinsic adaptability and digital intuition. Rather than passive absorption in lengthy lectures, young learners prefer the immediacy and practicality offered by digital tutorials, AI-enhanced learning aids like ChatGPT, and dynamic content delivered through platforms like TikTok, Discord, and Reddit.

Arriane, another insightful voice from the Gen Z Amigas podcast, emphasizes the power of these platforms. When classroom lectures fall short, students turn to digital resources, gaining more profound, tailored understanding. Arriane's perspective underscores a broader trend: Gen Z learners harness technology not simply as supplementary tools but as primary educational channels. They thrive in environments that encourage exploration, creativity, and self-paced learning—qualities that traditional classrooms often stifle.

Moreover, technology allows for democratized access to knowledge. A teenager in Nairobi, a stay-at-home parent in Manila, or a young gig worker in Berlin can all access world-class educational content. This global reach signals a potential revolution in equity and inclusion, where learning isn't confined to a campus but available to anyone with an internet connection and the will to grow.

However, digital education also demands scrutiny. Online learning, though powerful, risks becoming fragmented without credibility or structure. There's a rising concern over the saturation of unvetted content, misleading information, and superficial understanding from surface-level consumption. Gen Z's challenge will be balancing digital fluency with discernment, identifying reliable resources amidst the sea of online content. Nevertheless, the potential remains vast. Digital education isn't just complementary—it's essential for adapting education to the realities of the 21st century.

YouTube is Gen Z's top preferred learning method.

(59% Gen Z/55% millennials)



Good old-fashioned books still top millennial preferences.

(60% millennials/46% Gen Z)

Gen Z spends a significant amount of time on YouTube, leaving millennials in the (digital) dust.



47% of Gen Z

spend 3 or more hours per day on YouTube.
(22% of millennials)

Source: Tech Integration in Higher Education

Redefining Success: Skills, Impact, and Well-being

Perhaps most compelling is how Gen Z fundamentally redefines success. Moving beyond grades and traditional academic validation, this generation emphasizes tangible skills, societal impact, mental health, and personal fulfillment. The old paradigm, measuring intelligence primarily through GPA and degrees, appears increasingly irrelevant. Instead, employers and students alike prioritize demonstrable competencies, adaptability, and resilience.

This cultural reset is pushing universities and schools to rethink their metrics for achievement. Institutions are now experimenting with skills portfolios, competency-based grading, and collaborative assessments that better reflect real-world problem solving. These changes echo what Gen Z values: outcomes that prove usefulness, not just compliance.

This shift demands broader institutional accountability. Across campuses globally, student protests are erupting, demanding significant reform in curricula, mental health support, and financial accessibility. These movements highlight critical gaps in traditional educational structures: a lack of real-world

Unsurprisingly, YouTube plays an outsized role in Gen Z learning, though millennials also see its value.

55% of Gen Z

say YouTube has contributed to their education, learning, and/or personal development in the past 12 months.
(40% of millennials)

preparation and inadequate support for students' emotional and psychological well-being. Gen Z's activism underscores the urgency for schools and universities to evolve quickly or risk obsolescence.

Moreover, education must address systemic inequalities. Not every student has equal access to innovative digital resources or alternative credentials. Factors like internet availability, economic constraints, and language barriers still create uneven playing fields. Ensuring equitable access to these learning opportunities is critical for fostering a more inclusive educational landscape. Institutions that remain tied to tradition and tuition revenue risk marginalizing students unable to pivot to flexible educational models. Consequently, Gen Z advocates for expansive, equitable access to education reform, driven by a belief that true success is rooted in collective progress rather than individual credentials.

Even more telling is Gen Z's ability to advocate for mental health as a cornerstone of success. Students now expect universities to provide not just academic resources, but emotional support networks, peer counseling, and stress-management tools. They no longer accept burnout as a badge of honor—instead, they demand balance, humanity, and compassion in the learning journey. ■

Does Gen Z Have the Financial Literacy to Navigate Adulthood?

Generation Z knows how to create viral content, launch TikTok businesses overnight, and decode the latest AI trends faster than their teachers. But when it comes to handling a paycheck, filing taxes, or planning for retirement, this same generation is often left in the dark — forced to teach themselves critical life skills in a world that has grown more expensive and unforgiving by the year.

Today's young adults are not just living in a hyper-digital world — they're surviving it with a patchwork of DIY advice, outdated school lessons, and a healthy dose of anxiety. What's at stake isn't just their personal finances. It's their mental well-being, their future security, and the economic stability of communities that depend on an informed, resilient workforce.

Schools Taught Algebra — But Not How to Pay Rent

When the students on the Gen Z Amigas podcast asked each other, “Why weren't we taught this stuff?” they echoed a universal

frustration: schools drilled them on advanced math but skipped over basics like budgeting, taxes, debt, and savings. Instead, they learned about the Pythagorean theorem — handy for passing tests but useless when calculating an emergency fund.

This blind spot isn't an accident; it's a systemic oversight that persists worldwide. While some schools in places like the UK are tentatively adding personal finance modules, there is no consistent, universal curriculum. One student pointed out that teachers themselves often don't know what to cover. Meanwhile, generations of young people graduate knowing how to solve quadratic equations but clueless about credit scores.

The cost of this knowledge gap shows up quickly in university life. Many students receive a monthly allowance or small income and blow through it in the first two weeks, only to spend the final week living on toast and cheap pasta. As Fiona put it in the podcast, “Budgeting is harder than you'd expect.” Without structured

guidance, the simplest financial habits — setting spending priorities, making use of student discounts, or building a savings buffer — remain elusive.

Worse, young people feel embarrassed to admit they don't know how money works. Asking parents for help can feel awkward, and relying on peers means recycling the same half-formed advice. So Gen Z does what it does best: they turn to Google, YouTube, and TikTok for hacks — and risk falling for misinformation or shady “get rich quick” schemes.

Financial Stress Is the New Normal — And Gen Z Knows It

If older generations think young people spend recklessly, they miss the bigger truth: many Gen Zers are simply overwhelmed. Rising living costs, record student debt, and precarious job markets mean the stakes of getting it wrong are sky-high. A misstep today can snowball into years of financial hardship.

Both the podcast and the March briefing note make this clear. Gen Z is a generation wired for

knowledge — but not for patience. They are used to instant answers and rapid trends. When it comes to money, however, speed kills. Smart money habits require discipline, foresight, and comfort with boring repetition — all traits that traditional schooling could nurture, but often doesn't.

Left to their own devices, young adults patch together advice from TikTok influencers, budgeting apps, and online forums. Sometimes it works — many students shared how auto-saving small amounts, tracking expenses, or using reward programs have helped them stay afloat. But this DIY hustle doesn't erase the stress.

A telling insight came from Lara, who said Gen Z makes a mistake by treating financial management like a trend. “You can make anything else a trend, but not financial literacy,” she warned. When money advice goes viral — think “buy this crypto now!” — thousands can follow bad counsel at once. The risk is amplified by an environment where social media normalizes spending to keep up appearances.

And so, anxiety becomes part of adulthood. Many avoid even thinking about taxes or retirement until they must — often when the damage is already done. This stress can leak into mental health, relationships, and academic performance. For a generation praised for its creativity and activism, this hidden burden is an unacceptable trade-off.

Fix It Now — Or Pay the Price Later

Here's the hopeful twist: Gen Z knows there's a problem, and they're not waiting for permission to fix it. Many are teaching themselves through free online courses, personal finance TikToks, and shared budgeting templates. They swap saving hacks and push each other to open savings accounts, automate deposits, and use budgeting apps that would baffle their parents.

Yet this resilience highlights the failure of formal education more than it solves it. Why should young people cobble together survival

Financial literacy tends to be lowest among the youngest (Gen Z).*



17
PERCENTAGE
POINTS



A gap to bridge

Financial literacy tends to be lower among women compared to men.*



Source: TIAA Institute–GFLEC Personal Finance Index (P-Fin Index) 2025

tips in an age of information abundance? Why is financial literacy treated as a luxury skill, instead of a fundamental one, like reading or math?

If left unaddressed, this gap won't just harm individual students. A generation unable to save, budget, or plan for retirement strains welfare systems, depresses long-term economic growth, and perpetuates cycles of debt. Low savings rates ripple out to affect investment levels, home ownership, and local businesses. Financial stress also eats away at productivity and well-being — a cost that employers and governments eventually bear.

So what needs to happen? First, policymakers must embed practical money management into school curricula early — as early as primary school, and revisited regularly through to graduation. Lessons must be relevant: real-world examples, case studies, practice with online banking, and tax simulations. Financial literacy should not be an optional “nice to have” unit tucked into the last week of a math class — it should be woven through the fabric of education.

Second, families must feel empowered, not

embarrassed, to talk about money at the dinner table. For too long, financial struggles have been hidden in shame. Open conversations make it normal to ask for help, compare strategies, and learn from mistakes before they become crises.

Finally, Gen Z itself must keep doing what it does best: questioning the status quo and pushing institutions to modernize. In this sense, the DIY generation is already leading the charge — proving that a generation raised on the internet won't wait for permission to get smarter about money.

A Generation Ready to Get It Right

Gen Z may be learning the hard way now, but they are also laying the groundwork for something better. They want the next wave of students to skip the trial and error. They want money lessons in the classroom, honesty at home, and tools that build security instead of anxiety.

Too smart to be broke? Not yet — but they're getting there, one budget, one savings goal, and one shared TikTok tip at a time. It's time for the world to catch up. ■

What if History is Just a Story we Agreed on?

We often accept history as a factual recounting of past events—neatly archived, reliably sourced, and universally agreed upon. But as Gen Z increasingly questions these narratives, it's becoming clear how fragile the so-called “truth” truly is. History, far from being a neutral catalog of facts, is often an intricate tapestry woven from power, privilege, erasure, and bias.

With unprecedented access to global voices and digital archives, Gen Z stands at a critical crossroads: will they reinforce the narratives inherited from past generations, or rewrite them to include the perspectives that were long silenced? More importantly, will they build a more inclusive, equitable historical consciousness—or replicate the same cycles of exclusion in digital form?

Who Holds the Pen: Power, Bias, and Erasure

History has never been merely a reflection of what happened—it's a mirror of who got to tell the story. For centuries, the dominant version of events has been shaped by those in power: monarchs, colonizers, political elites, and privileged historians. Their accounts often omitted the voices of women, Indigenous communities, the enslaved, LGBTQ+ people, and other marginalized groups whose experiences did not align with dominant ideologies.

This isn't just an issue of past omission. These curated narratives continue to define cultural memory, national identity, and social norms. From school textbooks that gloss over colonization to public statues honoring controversial figures, we see history wielded as a tool of control.

The erasure of minority perspectives has

profound effects. It fosters alienation, distorts collective memory, and limits cultural empathy. Gen Z, raised in a hyper-connected world, is more attuned to these omissions than previous generations. They are exposed to competing versions of history from across the globe—stories that don't align with what they were taught in school.

Whether it's discovering Indigenous resistance to colonial rule, learning about African contributions to world science, or uncovering the histories of queer activism suppressed for decades, Gen Z has the ability to confront these blind spots. But access to knowledge is only the first step. What matters is the active decision to elevate it, to archive it anew, and to make room for complexity in our understanding of the past.

The Danger of Blind Trust: Conspiracies, Misinformation, and Ethical Boundaries

From an early age, most of us internalize historical “truths” without much scrutiny. School curriculums often present history in neat, linear narratives—good versus evil, progress over time. But this passive consumption of facts can leave young people vulnerable to manipulation, misinformation, and even radicalization.

Events like 9/11, the moon landing, or the assassination of historical figures like JFK and Martin Luther King Jr. have all become hotbeds for conspiracy theories. And while some skepticism can be intellectually healthy, unfounded claims—especially those that deny genocides, human rights abuses, or climate science—are dangerous and disrespectful.

Digital media has amplified this risk. Platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Reddit can be powerful spaces for alternative history, but they're also fertile ground for misinformation.



Baseless narratives can go viral faster than peer-reviewed truth. For a generation that consumes most of its content through short-form video and curated feeds, distinguishing credible information from manipulative content becomes a constant challenge.

That's why media literacy and critical thinking aren't optional—they're survival skills. Gen Z must ask not just “What happened?” but “Who's telling this, and why?” Sources should be triangulated, motives questioned, and context always considered.

At the same time, ethical boundaries matter. Questioning narratives is essential to historical integrity, but it should never come at the expense of dignity or compassion. Conspiracy theories surrounding tragedies like the Holocaust, school shootings, or genocides not

only spread misinformation—they cause real harm to survivors and their families.

Skepticism should be matched with empathy. Gen Z must resist the urge to sensationalize suffering for likes or contrarianism. Historical truth isn't just academic—it's deeply human. [Rewriting the Future: Gen Z's Responsibility to Inclusive History](#)

Gen Z has tools their predecessors never had: access to digitized archives, AI-powered research, crowdsourced histories, and global communities. They also inherit a fractured world still healing from the historical wounds of colonization, slavery, war, and systemic oppression.

With that inheritance comes an opportunity—and a responsibility.

Unlike previous generations, Gen Z is not a passive audience to history. They are curators, archivists, and activists. They create educational content on social media, organize movements for curriculum reform, and challenge public commemorations that glorify colonial legacies. From decolonizing syllabi to producing mini-documentaries on marginalized histories, Gen Z is already reshaping how history is taught and understood.

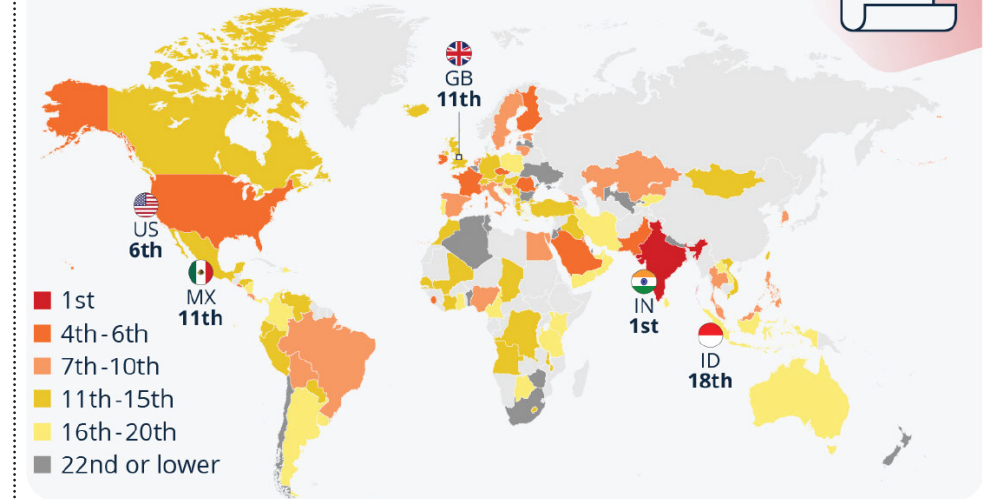
But access to tools doesn't guarantee justice. If Gen Z fails to apply rigorous thinking, empathy, and ethical storytelling, the cycle of bias and exclusion may repeat itself—this time in a faster, algorithm-driven format.

Reclaiming historical truth also means platforming those who have long been left out. It means consulting Indigenous elders, immigrant parents, community archives, oral traditions, and local histories—not just Wikipedia or AI-generated summaries. It means recognizing that historical “objectivity” has often been a cover for dominant bias.

The goal is not to achieve a single “correct” narrative but to acknowledge multiple truths. A history that embraces contradiction and diversity is more accurate—and more

Where False Information Is Posing the Biggest Threat

Rank of “misinformation/disinformation” among 34 risks for the following countries



Source: Statista

powerful—than a sanitized one.

The impact of inclusive history is far-reaching. It has the power to heal generational trauma, foster cross-cultural solidarity, and inspire collective progress. When people see themselves reflected in the past, they are more empowered to shape the future.

The Pen Is in Their Hands

In a world overwhelmed by content, it's tempting to treat history as just another scrollable category. But what Gen Z chooses to believe, share, amplify, or challenge will shape how future generations understand this moment.

They must not only ask “What story do we tell?” but “Whose voices are missing—and how do we restore them?”

They are the first generation to hold the past, present, and future in the palm of their hands—literally, through their phones, their platforms, and their digital pens. They have the tools to archive resistance, celebrate resilience, and correct injustice—not as passive students of history, but as its new authors.

The question isn't just whether history is a shared story we agree upon, but how Gen Z chooses to tell and retell that story. Their collective decisions about truth, inclusion, skepticism, and storytelling will determine whether the history they write fosters unity and understanding—or deepens division and misinformation.

Because in the end, history is not just about what we remember. It's about what we choose to pass on. ■



What's at Stake for Gen Z in the Middle East: Jobs, Stability, and the Fight for a Future?

A generational crossroads is looming in the Middle East and North Africa. Nearly 300 million young people are projected to enter the region's labor market over the next 25 years, yet current economic policies and structural weaknesses indicate that the region is woefully unprepared. Without urgent reform, the economic aspirations of Gen Z risk being crushed by a lack of opportunity, poor job quality, and persistent political instability.

For a region that has seen dramatic demographic expansion and resource wealth, the failure to convert these advantages into meaningful employment is not just an economic

concern—it is a geopolitical risk. Rising frustration among educated youth, combined with stagnant wages and weak governance, could deepen cycles of instability and erode the social contract further.

A Region at Risk of Wasting Its Demographic Dividend

Despite an average annual GDP growth rate of 3.3% since 2000, MENA's per capita income remains flat relative to global benchmarks. The region's GDP per capita stands at just 26% of the world's leading economies—a figure that has not improved in decades. Economists typically expect poorer countries to catch up over time, but MENA is

an outlier. It is not converging—it is falling further behind.

This is especially dangerous in light of demographic pressure. With working-age populations rising, the region must grow faster, and in smarter ways, to absorb this youth surge. The World Bank estimates that MENA must grow at 4.9% annually to reach even half of the global productivity frontier by 2050—a rate 1.5 times higher than its historical performance. However, under current trends, only 1.1 percentage points of this growth will come from demographic shifts. The rest must come from improved labor force participation and a dramatic boost in

productivity.

The Gender Gap: A Critical Barrier and an Untapped Solution

Nowhere is the economic inefficiency more pronounced than in the region's underutilization of women. Female labor force participation in MENA stands at just 16%—the lowest globally. Closing this gap is not only a matter of equity; it is an economic imperative. If the region's female labor participation were to match that of men by 2050, the employment-to-population ratio would rise by 2 percentage points annually, significantly easing the burden on productivity-driven growth.

Countries like Egypt could see transformative results. With population growth projected at 1.3% per year, a modest increase in female workforce participation would mean that Egypt could meet its growth targets with only a 1.7% annual productivity increase—far more achievable than the 3.8% needed in a “business as usual” scenario. Similarly, in the Gulf, where large migrant labor forces dominate, the path forward lies in improving job quality and boosting productivity, while closing gender gaps could still contribute an additional 0.6% annually.

The stakes are clear: failing to integrate women into the workforce risks locking in another generation of underperformance.

Between Conflict and Opportunity: A Generation Under Pressure

Gen Z in the Middle East is uniquely positioned at the intersection of global exposure and regional instability. While some areas, such as the Gulf, are positioning themselves as economic hubs with ambitious reforms—particularly around women's workforce inclusion—other parts of the region remain weighed down by fragile ceasefires, political distrust, and economic collapse.

In countries like Lebanon, economic recovery has been stalled by years of corruption, a collapsed banking system, and political paralysis. The gap between rhetoric and reality is pushing many young people to seek opportunity abroad. Yet even among the diaspora, there remains a deep emotional connection to home—and a desire to return if conditions improve.

But returning is not a given. For this generation, it will depend on evidence of real reform: functioning institutions, access to decent work, and a sense that their efforts will be met with reward, not regression.

What Must Be Done Now

The choices made today will shape whether MENA becomes a region of innovation and inclusion—or one marked by disillusionment and departure. A credible jobs agenda must go beyond growth for growth's sake. It must prioritize dignity, inclusion, and mobility—economic, social, and geographic.

This means investing in education that aligns with future labor market needs. It means dismantling barriers to female participation. It means transforming political promises into concrete policy actions—especially in post-conflict economies. Above all, it requires recognizing that the region's youth are not a burden to manage—they are the greatest asset to invest in.

The future of the Middle East hinges on whether its youngest citizens are given a fair chance. What's at stake is not just a generation—it's the stability and prosperity of the region for decades to come. ■

Source: The World Bank Group “Scorecard”

Working age women across Arab States have less access to formal social security than men (9% of women vs 36% of men).



Adult women are almost twice as likely as men to be unemployed, even though women are more likely to be highly educated than men.

Source: ISSPF MENA

TOP 10 PERSPECTIVES ON CURRENT ISSUES FACING GENZ AMIGAS:

1. Strategic Adoption of Technology and AI

Gen Z women strongly advocate for the strategic use of technology and artificial intelligence, seeing these tools not as replacements but as enhancements for their creativity, productivity, and educational experiences. Rather than fearing technological change, they actively seek to incorporate AI in ways that amplify human ingenuity and help manage academic and professional tasks efficiently. However, they also stress the importance of maintaining balance and originality, cautioning against over-reliance on AI, which risks diminishing creativity and critical thinking. Embracing technology with thoughtful integration positions Gen Z to lead creatively and professionally, ensuring they remain competitive and adaptable in rapidly evolving fields.

2. Necessity of Real-world Financial Education

Gen Z women highlight a critical gap in traditional schooling regarding essential financial literacy skills like budgeting, investing, and managing taxes. Recognizing this deficiency, they proactively pursue self-education through online resources, social media, and personal networks. Despite these efforts, they encounter challenges differentiating credible information from misinformation. Consequently, they advocate strongly for curricular reforms that integrate financial education early in schooling, ensuring future generations possess foundational financial skills. Prioritizing practical tools such as automated savings strategies and expense prioritization reflects their commitment to developing robust financial habits that promote long-term economic stability and resilience against financial uncertainty.

3. Importance of In-person Networking and Mentorship

While Gen Z appreciates remote flexibility, they express significant concerns over the lack of in-person professional mentorship and informal learning opportunities essential for career growth. They believe face-to-face interactions provide crucial interpersonal and soft skills that remote work settings cannot replicate effectively. This deficit presents particular challenges in industries where relationship-building and mentorship are vital for advancement. Recognizing the limitations of purely digital interactions, Gen Z women advocate for balanced, hybrid work environments that maintain meaningful human connections and traditional workplace culture, positioning themselves strategically to benefit from both digital flexibility and essential personal interactions.

4. Adaptability to Cultural and Professional Mobility

Gen Z international women value adaptability and openness, recognizing that studying abroad and working internationally significantly enhance personal growth and career prospects. Navigating cultural adjustments, language barriers, and the emotional challenges of leaving home fosters resilience and independence. Rather than rigidly planning their futures, they embrace uncertainty and the flexibility to seize global opportunities as they arise, seeing international experience as a valuable asset. This global mindset encourages them to pursue careers where opportunities align best with personal fulfillment, skill development, and professional growth, reflecting a flexible approach that prioritizes meaningful experiences over geographic or cultural comfort.

5. Challenging Unrealistic Digital Standards

Gen Z women critically examine social media platforms like TikTok, recognizing their influential role in shaping perceptions of beauty, success, and lifestyle choices. They advocate for greater transparency from influencers regarding commercial intent and highlight the psychological risks posed by continuously consuming highly idealized and curated content. Gen Z urges a shift towards promoting inclusive, realistic standards that celebrate diverse appearances and paths to success, rather than perpetuating unrealistic ideals driven by viral fame or commercialization. By calling for accountability and regulation on digital platforms, they aim to protect their generation's mental health and foster a healthier digital environment.

6. Redefining Career Success and Stability

Rejecting traditional definitions of career success that focus primarily on financial incentives, Gen Z women emphasize personal fulfillment, mental health, and meaningful work. They acknowledge the pressure to follow conventional paths but increasingly prioritize careers offering flexibility, passion-driven purpose, and balanced lifestyles. Understanding that the global job market is unpredictable, they avoid rigid long-term plans, focusing instead on building adaptable skills and leveraging opportunities as they arise. This evolving view of success reflects their belief in sustainable professional happiness, combining economic stability with emotional well-being, setting a new standard for what it means to thrive in today's competitive workforce.

7. Preserving and Enhancing Creativity

Gen Z women view their creative processes as dynamic, continuous, and highly responsive to rapid digital changes, distinct from previous generations' slower, more methodical approaches. They leverage platforms like TikTok not merely as trend-followers, but as spaces for original storytelling and authentic self-expression. However, they remain mindful of the balance between innovation and inspiration, recognizing the thin line between creativity and imitation. Advocating for original thought, Gen Z emphasizes preserving creative authenticity amid digital saturation, actively exploring how emerging technologies, including AI, can stimulate rather than suppress their imagination, ensuring creativity remains a central, valued skill in their evolving world.

8. Navigating Remote Work and Freelancing Realities

Gen Z women critically evaluate the realities behind remote work and freelancing trends popularized on social media. While recognizing digital networking's value and remote work's flexibility, they acknowledge the misconceptions perpetuated by idealized portrayals of freelancing. Highlighting the necessity of discipline, structured skills, and meaningful workplace experiences, they caution peers against viewing entrepreneurship or freelancing as easy alternatives to traditional employment. Gen Z women advocate a balanced perspective, recommending a blend of digital tools and traditional workplace experiences. This pragmatic approach prepares them for varied professional landscapes, enabling informed career decisions rather than chasing unsustainable, glamorized digital narratives.

9. Mental Health and Digital Awareness

Gen Z women demonstrate heightened awareness of the psychological impacts associated with continuous exposure to digital content, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding mental health. Recognizing the pressures exerted by highly curated social media environments, they advocate for authenticity, transparency, and mental health awareness in online spaces. They call for responsible content creation and increased digital literacy education, empowering users to critically assess the content consumed daily. By promoting healthy digital habits and advocating for systemic regulation and accountability, Gen Z women actively address mental health challenges exacerbated by unrealistic standards perpetuated online, striving to create a safer, more balanced digital landscape.

10. Embracing Global Citizenship and Opportunities

Gen Z international students perceive global mobility as integral to their personal and professional development, actively pursuing experiences that transcend traditional geographical boundaries. They embrace the complexities and challenges associated with studying and working abroad, viewing these experiences as critical to building resilience, cultural intelligence, and adaptability. Rejecting pressures to immediately return home post-graduation, they remain open to global opportunities, emphasizing the benefits of international exposure in an increasingly interconnected world. This mindset positions Gen Z women as proactive global citizens who navigate the uncertainties of international life with optimism and curiosity, seeking meaningful careers wherever opportunities align with their personal and professional aspirations.

“GEN-Z-AMIGAS”

