



# 2025 YOUTH WORKFORCE SURVEY:

A REVIEW OF HOW YOUNG  
PROFESSIONALS PERCEIVE WORK TODAY

ENTREPRENEURS EDITION



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# Preface



Bongani Kumar  
**MD Top Floor Limited**

## **2025 Youth Workforce Survey: A Review of How Young Professionals Perceive Work Today**

Having led TopFloor Limited since 2014, I have witnessed firsthand how rapidly our world continues to evolve. Through this journey, one truth has remained clear: sustainable progress is only possible when people are given the voice and space not just to reflect change, but to drive it. Today, people are no longer seen as resources to be managed. They are forces to be nurtured, guided with empathy, and led with insight and heart.

This study is rooted in that belief. It explores the shifting perceptions, aspirations, and challenges of a generation that is redefining what work means. More than a collection of data, this study and report are a mirror held up to the future, shaped by the lived experiences of young professionals aged 18 to 35, drawn from diverse sectors and cultures across all ten provinces of Zambia.

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Their insights reveal a workforce that values empathy as much as efficiency, purpose alongside productivity, and collaboration over competition. It is a clear call to reimagine organisational development, not as a linear path focused solely on shareholder interest, but as a dynamic ecosystem. One where psychological safety, cultural intelligence and inclusive leadership are essential motivators to achieving both business outcomes and the sustainable growth of people who deliver them.

As we work toward a progressive, sustainable economy for Zambia and beyond, this study and report reaffirm our belief that development must be both strategic and human centered. It reflects TopFloor Limited's enduring commitment to listening attentively, learning collectively, and leading with purpose.

We invite leaders, educators and policymakers to co-create environments where young professionals can thrive, contribute meaningfully and shape the future with confidence. May this report spark dialogue, inspire innovation and strengthen our shared commitment to building workplaces that reflect the values of a progressive generation.

# Contributors Profile



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**Research Lead**  
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Wandera Zahura is a visionary HR Professional, with over a decade of experience shaping workforce strategies. As the research lead and author for the groundbreaking 2025 Youth Workforce Survey, he is driven by the conviction that strategic investment in young people is a cornerstone for Zambia's growth.

## Acknowledgements: Collaborative Partners

This research was made possible through the invaluable support of key institutions and networks that facilitated data collection. We extend our gratitude to professional bodies such as the **Zambia Institute of Human Resource Management (ZIHRM)** and its Student Chapters, the **Zambia Institute of Marketing**, the **Zambia Institute of Public Relations and Communication** the **Zambia Institute of Banking and Finance** and the **Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TEVETA)**, whose platforms amplified our reach. Special recognition goes to **DALP Consultancy Limited**, **GS Cash Advance Limited**, and **Power Kwacha**, who played a pivotal role in disseminating the survey across their extensive youthful staff complements. Additionally, **BongoHive**—Zambia's premier innovation hub—connected us with forward-thinking entrepreneurs, while faith-based organizations like **Mount Zion Centre**, **Kings Arena Church**, and select **Seventh-Day Adventist** congregations engaged their youth networks. Further support came from the vibrant leadership of notable student unions, and we thank the leadership representatives from the **University of Zambia**, **Mulungushi University**, **Kwame Nkrumah University**, the **National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA)**, **Copperbelt University**, **Rusangu University**, **Lusaka Apex Medical University**, and **ZCAS University**. We also acknowledge numerous individual entrepreneurs and entities whose contributions, though not all listed here, were instrumental to this project's success.

# /List of Acronyms

AI - Artificial Intelligence

NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations

ROI - Return on Investment

PhD - Doctor of Philosophy (though often used as an acronym, here it appears as part of degree listings)

Note: Proprietary platform names (e.g., LinkedIn, Zoom, Google Meet, WhatsApp, Slack) are excluded as they are brand names rather than acronyms. Thus, only standardized acronyms with clear definitions are included in this list.

# 1.0 Introduction

The future of work is changing faster than ever—and today's youth are at the forefront of this revolution. From the rise of Artificial Intelligence and the gig economy to shifting workplace expectations, young professionals, graduates and job seekers are navigating a job market unlike any before. This survey dives deep into the aspirations, challenges and digital habits of Zambia's current and near-future youth workforce to uncover what truly matters to them—and how businesses, educators and policymakers can better support their success.

The insights we uncover here should serve as a powerful call to action for every leader. Many young people highlight key areas for improvement—such as the need for more accessible entry-level opportunities, stronger mental health support and better financial literacy training. These are not just isolated concerns but interconnected opportunities to strengthen Zambia's human capital development.

Clearly, this data presents both our greatest challenge and our most urgent opportunity as policies that thrive in Zambia's economy will be those that seek to address these insights head-on. The question isn't whether change is coming – it's whether we will lead it or be overwhelmed by it. By addressing these challenges proactively, we can build a more inclusive, supportive, and empowered workforce for the future.



*"Zambian entrepreneurs are surgical about tech—they ditch trends for tools that deliver. WhatsApp runs operations, LinkedIn builds empires, and YouTube replaces MBAs. Meanwhile, other fancy' platforms collect digital dust."*

## 2.0 Methodology

From hustling students, job seekers grinding and entrepreneurs building empires—every voice counted!

### Sample Details

Total Collected: 1,203 responses

Analysed: 1,007 complete responses

Age Range: 18-35 years

Timeframe: (4 months)

### Methodology Rigor

Platform: SurveyMonkey

Structured closed-ended questions

Pilot-tested instrument

Full anonymity guaranteed

### Geographic Coverage

10 provinces covered

Urban & rural representation

Random sampling

### Participant Diversity

1. Students
2. Job seekers
3. Employed professionals
4. Entrepreneurs



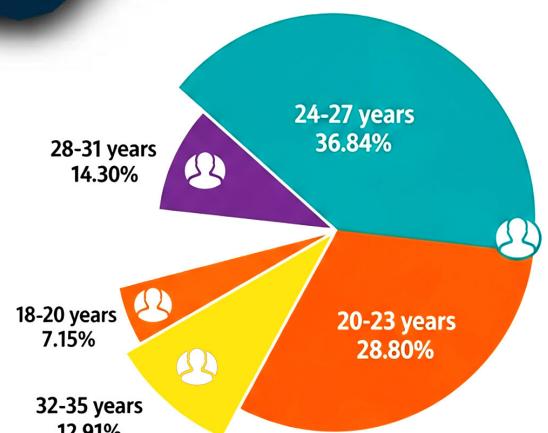
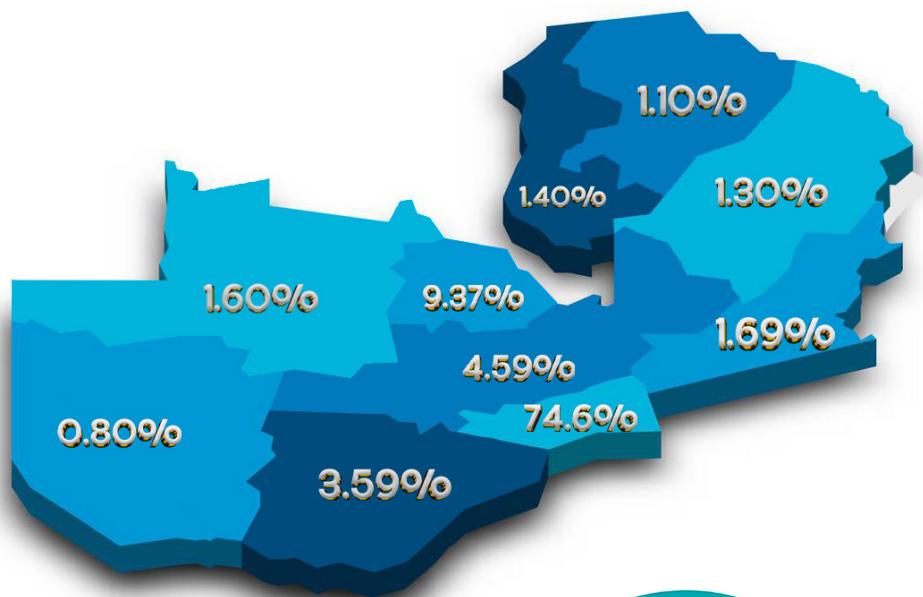
# 3.0 Presentation of Findings

## 3.1 Respondent Demographics

### Regional Reach:

#### Nationwide coverage (10 provinces)

Lusaka	-	74.6%
Copperbelt	-	9.37%
Central	-	4.59%
Southern	-	3.59%
Eastern	-	1.69%
North-Western	-	1.60%
Luapula	-	1.40%
Western	-	1.30%
Northern	-	1.10%
Muchinga	-	0.80%



### Age & Gender: Age Distribution (%)

24-27 years: 36.84% (Largest group)  
20-23 years: 28.80%  
28-31 years: 14.30%  
32-35 years: 12.91%  
18-20 years: 7.15%

**Gender Split (%)**  
Female: 59.09%  
Male: 40.91%

The survey reflects Zambian urban-youth dominance: 74.6% of responses came from Lusaka, while 65.6% of participants were under 27, with women (59.1%) outnumbering men. This highlights a highly urbanized, young, and female-leaning perspective in the data. Indeed, 2 in 3 respondents were under 27, signalling Zambia's urgent need to prioritize youth-centric policies.

### Education & Employment Snapshot of Respondents

#### Highest Education Level (%)

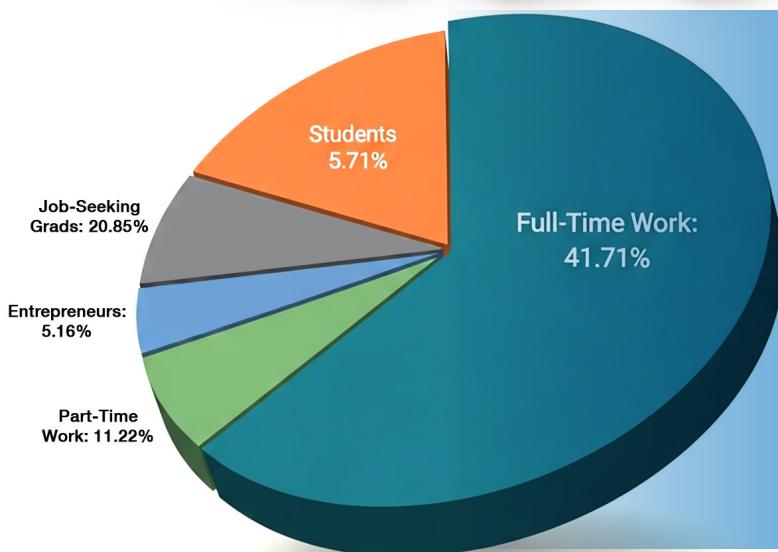
Bachelor's Degree: 38.13%

Grade 12 Certificate: 28.90%

Diploma: 21.25%

Master's: 4.47%

PhD: 0.10%



#### Employment Status (%)

Full-Time Work: 41.71%

Students: 21.05%

Job-Seeking Grads: 20.85%

Part-Time Work: 11.22%

Entrepreneurs: 5.16%

Despite a workforce dominated by full-time employment (41.7%) and students/job seekers (combined 41.9%), only 5.2% of respondents are entrepreneurs—highlighting a gap in self-employment and startup activity.

**Why It Matters:**

- Low entrepreneurship rates suggest untapped potential for development programs that focus on building sustainable businesses.
- With 65.6% of respondents under 27, fostering youth entrepreneurship could drive innovation.
- Encouraging entrepreneurship may reduce reliance on formal employment.

### **3.2 Sectoral Distribution and Workforce Dynamics Zambian Youth Employment Sectors Breakdown**

**Dominant Sectors**

Banking/Finance - 21.95%  
Healthcare/Pharma - 6.65%

**Traditional & Emerging Sectors**

Agriculture - 3.77%  
Telecoms - 3.48%  
Education - 3.48%  
Technology - 2.28%

**Other Key Industries**

Government - 2.48%  
Hospitality - 1.99%  
Construction - 1.79%  
Manufacturing - 1.59%



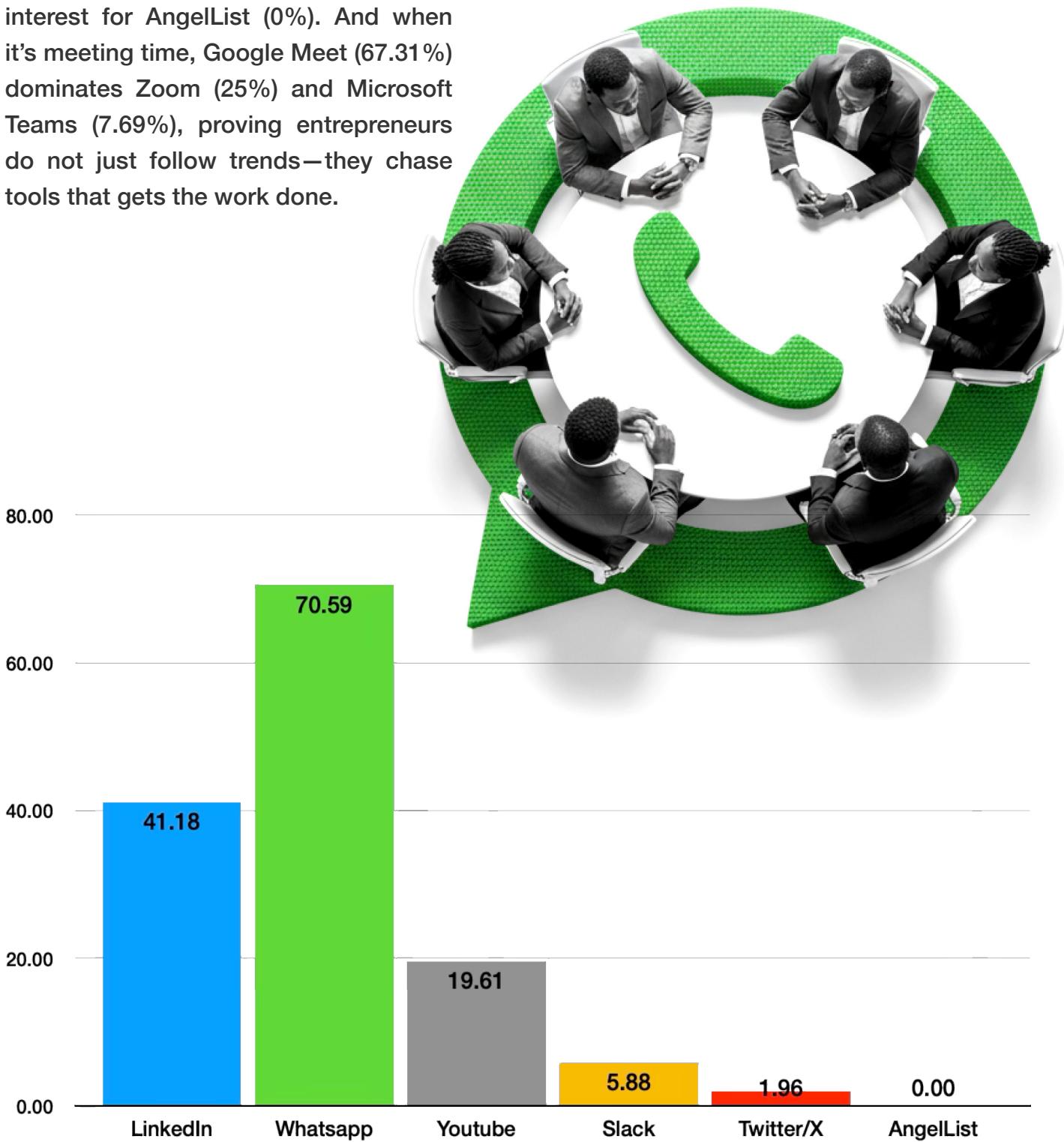
The bulk of Zambian youth are mostly employed in the banking and finance industries, with healthcare/pharma also playing a major role. While traditional sectors like agriculture, telecoms, and education maintain steady relevance, emerging industries such as technology show promising growth potential as employers. Other key sectors—including government, hospitality, construction, and manufacturing—contribute to economic diversity but remain smaller in scale. This structure underscores the dominance of finance and healthcare while signaling opportunities for expansion in innovation-driven fields.

### 3.3 Entrepreneurs' Digital Habits and Business Practices

#### 3.3.1 Digital Updates & Networking Preferences

From the data surveyed, it turns out entrepreneurs are increasingly efficient when it comes to tech! A staggering 70.59% run their daily operations through WhatsApp Groups. Meanwhile, LinkedIn remains the undisputed networking heavyweight, with 41.18% leveraging it for professional connections. Interestingly, 19.61% of Entrepreneurs treat YouTube like their personal business school where they gain industry insights and essential know hows'.

Surprisingly, Slack Communities (5.88%) & X/Twitter (1.96%) barely register, with no Entrepreneur respondents showing interest for AngelList (0%). And when it's meeting time, Google Meet (67.31%) dominates Zoom (25%) and Microsoft Teams (7.69%), proving entrepreneurs do not just follow trends—they chase tools that gets the work done.



### 3.3.2 Preferred Sources of Business Insights Among Entrepreneurs

Young Entrepreneurs are voting with their screens—65.38% rely on social media as their go-to for business trends, crushing old-school methods like Networking events (46.15%) and email newsletters (36.54%).

Why? Could be because they want real-time updates instead of waiting for a newsletter to hit their inbox. And with 70.59% already glued to WhatsApp for daily operations, it's clear: speed and simplicity win.

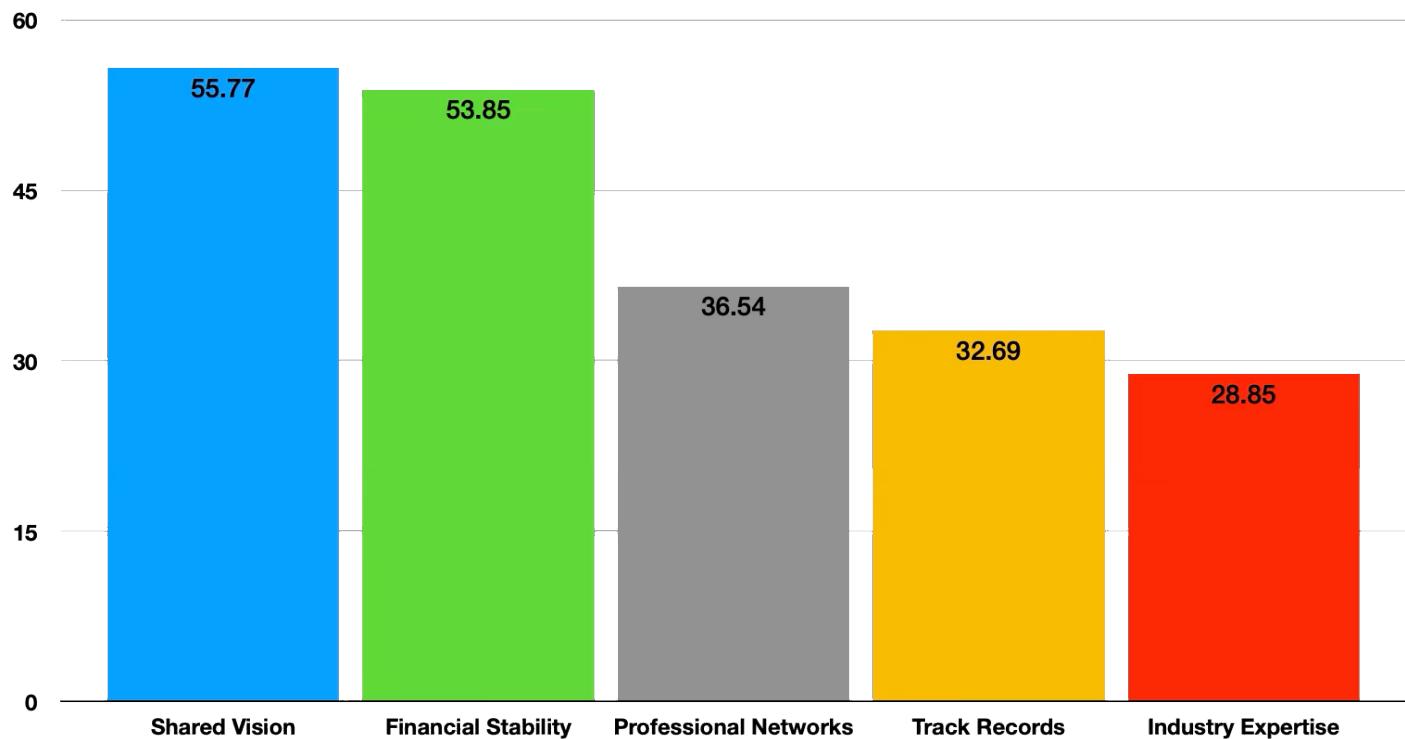
But here's the twist: 46.15% still swear by networking events, proving even digital-first founders crave face-to-face connections. Meanwhile, webinars/podcasts (19.23%) and online communities (21.15%) lag—turns out, entrepreneurs would rather scroll a tweet thread than sit through a 60-minute webinar. The verdict? Young Entrepreneurs want insights fast or interactions real—no in-between.



### 3.3.3 Developmental Priorities in Partnership Selection Among Entrepreneurs

Modern entrepreneurs prioritize shared vision (55.8%) and financial stability (53.9%) above all else when forming partnerships. Growth focus (50%) and transparency (48.1%) rank as secondary essentials, while traditional factors like professional networks (36.5%) and industry expertise (28.9%) take a backseat - revealing a clear shift toward value-aligned, sustainable collaborations over credential-based partnerships."





## Key Insight

Young Zambian Entrepreneurs entrepreneurs prioritize shared vision and financial stability over traditional markers like credentials or networks. The focus on growth and transparency—ahead of profits—reveals a strategic shift toward long-term capability-building over short-term gains. Recognition is now table stakes; trust + aligned goals are the new currency.

### Why This Matters:

1. Partnerships thrive on values, not just metrics
2. Financial health enables risk-taking for growth
3. Transparency is non-negotiable

### 3.3.4 Work Structure Preferences

#### WORK STRUCTURE PREFERENCES

- Hybrid Model Dominates (44.23%)
- Remote Work comes second (17.31%)
- Co-working Spaces Lag Behind (7.69%)

#### TOTAL FLEXIBILITY DEMAND

61.54% Prefer Non-Traditional Arrangements



"The data reveals young Zambian entrepreneurs overwhelmingly prioritize flexibility (61.54% combined) with hybrid work nearly 6X more popular than coworking spaces. This strong preference for autonomy suggests modern ventures thrive when founders control their work environment, while traditional shared spaces struggle to meet entrepreneur needs."

## Why This Matters

1. Productivity Revolution - Hybrid models balance focus and collaboration
2. Cost Efficiency - Remote work reduces overhead costs

### 3.3.5 Operational Challenges

#### TOP ENTREPRENEUR CHALLENGES

- Unreliable Teams - 46.15%
- Market Uncertainty - 36.54%
- Cash Flow Issues - 28.85%
- Burnout Risk - 24.04%



#### CURRENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

- Mental Health Resources - 27.45%
- Financial Management Tools - 23.08%
- Team Training - 18.27%

A brain-shaped graphic filled with various mental health terms in different colors: POSITIVE THINKING, STRESS, SELF-AWARENESS, MENTAL, MENTAL HEALTH, MINDFULNESS, RELAXATION, POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS, MENTAL WELLNESS, THERAPY, EXERCISE, STRESS, PATIENCE, POSITIVE EMOTIONS, SELF-AWARENESS, EMOTIONAL BALANCE.

The data reveals a critical misalignment between entrepreneurial challenges and existing support systems. Young entrepreneurs face their most significant operational hurdles-team unreliability (46%) and market uncertainty (37%)-with the least adequate support, as only 18% receive team training and 23% feel equipped by financial management tools. This systemic support gap forces personal resilience to compensate for structural failures, creating a cycle where business challenges inevitably escalate into personal burnout.

## CRITICAL INSIGHTS

1. Team Crisis 2.5X more common than available training
2. Mental Health 1 in 4 get adequate support
3. Financial Tools Fail 77% of entrepreneurs

### 3.3.6 Business Opportunity Discovery and Growth Needs

#### WHERE THEY FIND OPPORTUNITIES

- Referrals (52.94%) – "Your network is your net worth!"
- LinkedIn (37.25%) – were professional leveraging meets opportunity!
- Trade Shows – Old-school but still clutch.
- Industry Platforms – In-person networking maintains competitive edge



#### BIGGEST CHALLENGES

- Aligning opportunities with goals (48%)
- Slow processes (40%)



#### HOW THEY LEVEL UP

- Hands-on Training (52.94%) – "Show me, don't tell me!"
- Mentorship (47.06%) – "Game recognizes game."
- Workshops (49.02%) – Skills on speed dial.
- Leadership Programs (41.18%) – Future bosses in the making.



Zambian entrepreneurs trust PEOPLE over platforms—referrals & mentorship win! But slow systems? Still a buzzkill...



### 3.3.7 Technology Adoption Trends

#### 1. AI ADOPTION AMONG ENTREPRENEURS: THE GREAT DIVIDE

76.47% of entrepreneurs are either underutilizing or not using AI at all!



#### 2. ADOPTION BREAKDOWN

##### ACTIVE USERS (53.94%)

- Marketing Automation: 39.22%
- Strategic Planning: 37.25%

##### EXPLORATORY (47.06%)

- Testing limited applications
- Running pilot projects

##### NON-ADOPTERS (29.41%)

- Yet to implement any AI
- Missing competitive edge



#### 3. KEY INSIGHTS

- Dual reality: Early adopters vs laggards
- 47% in testing phase massive growth potential
- 29% gap = untapped market opportunity

The clustering around marketing and strategy applications indicates these are perceived as "safe" use cases, while the 29.41% non-adoption rate hints at accessibility barriers or unclear ROI.



# Support / Resource Partners



## Business, Management and People Consulting Support

TopFloor Limited

Address: Villa 50, Millennium Village Complex, Longacres, Lusaka

Phone: + 260 955 219 333 | +260 211 259 101

Email: [info@topfloor.co.zm](mailto:info@topfloor.co.zm)

Website: [www.topfloor.co.zm](http://www.topfloor.co.zm)



## People Consulting Support

Zambia Institute of Human Resource Management (ZIHRM)

Address: Buchi Road Plot 1780 Off Lubambe Road Northmead, P.O Box 51038, Ridgeway. Lusaka Zambia

Phone: 260 211 234 537 | 260 211 234 536 | 260 955 404 075

Email: [info@zihrm.org.zm](mailto:info@zihrm.org.zm)

Website: <https://zihrm.org.zm/>



## Technology / AI Support

BongoHive

Address: Physical Address: 6th Floor, ZEP-RE Business Park, Alick Nkhata Rd, Lusaka, Zambia.

Phone: + 260 953 017 526

Email: [contactus@bongohive.co.zm](mailto:contactus@bongohive.co.zm)

Website: <https://bongohive.co.zm/>



## ProBase Solutions Beyond Technology

Address: Plot 2374 Kelvin Siwale Road, Lusaka Zambia.

Phone: +260 976 360 360

Email: [info@probasegroup.com](mailto:info@probasegroup.com)

Website: <https://probasegroup.com/>

## Financial Management Consulting Support

Zambia Institute of Chartered Accountants (ZICA)

Address: Accountants Park, Plot No. 2374/a, Thabo Mbeki Road, Lusaka

Phone: +260 211 374 551-9 | +260 212 222 002

Email: [membership@zica.co.zm](mailto:membership@zica.co.zm) / [education@zica.co.zm](mailto:education@zica.co.zm)

Website: <https://www.zica.co.zm/>



## Non-Audit/Financial Management Firms Registered with ZICA

Website: <https://www.zica.co.zm/non-audit-practice/>

## Mental Health Support



Psychology Association of Zambia  
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Email: psychologyassociation.z@gmail.com  
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Silver Lining Healthcare  
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Email: ravi.paul@silverliningcare.com/ravipaul35@gmail.com



Great North Rehab Centre  
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Phone: +260 968 503 538  
Email: rehab@greatnorthandacademy.net





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