

Gen Z: The generation that is crafting a better Africa

 By [Ndeye Diagne](#), issued by [Kantar](#)

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Listen. Understand. Involve. And repeat. Know Africa's youth and win your next target.



We all feel by now that we will get to the end of 2020 different than who we were at its beginning, transformed in some way or another. There will be a pre- and post-2020 in most aspects of our lives. Guaranteed. And the change is likely to go beyond sanitising, social distancing and other practical safety measures against our new global enemy. Take the US for example: this year, the fight for social justice through the [#BlackLivesMatter](#) movement reached record levels, providing genuine hope for a better, fairer world. On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, in another big country, massive [protests against police brutality](#), led mostly by Gen Z, provide equal hope for a better Nigeria.

The protests in Nigeria and the resulting unrest in the country are set to be a decisive moment for the 'giant of Africa'. With levels of mobilisation previously unseen and maintained pressure on government for change, Nigerian Gen Zers are reshuffling the cards of the power game, reshaping the future of their country and, in doing so, standing as the new strategic stakeholders for the government, society and businesses.

What happened in Nigeria in October 2020 provides precious insights into the Nigerian youth, and more broadly, into African Gen Z: who they are, what they believe in and what they want. The [#ENDSARS movement](#) strongly signals that it's time to start paying closer attention to this 'great generation', to their needs, core values and ambitions. Currently, understanding this post-millennial generation seems crucial across all fields and areas. From a marketing perspective, it is this very generation who will build or break your brand, fuel or deplete your brand equity, accelerate or stand in the way of your growth.

Here are three insights that can help your brand better understand and meaningfully inspire African Gen Zers:

#PurposelsMojo

More than generations before them, the young people of sub-Saharan Africa live purpose as a core value. Standing for something is essential and they want to stand for something bigger than themselves. It's a whopping 93% of Gen Zers across sub-Saharan Africa asserting the belief that societies need a common purpose, which we should all truly devote ourselves to.

What's further fascinating is that young Africans now embrace activism in areas that are not commonly associated with Africa, i.e.: environment or climate change. They speak up to share their beliefs and positions, and they are ready to turn more vocal when they do not seem to be heard. One of the best illustrations to come from this year may be from young climate activist Vanessa Nakate, who called out an international newspaper for 'cropping' her out of a photo at Davos. Just ['Like I wasn't there'](#). A true activist for climate change and for equality!

#EqualityMatters

Clearly, this generation refuses to remain silent in the face of inequalities and abuses. The African youth is determined to combat these, and this is exactly what Nigerian Gen Zers are fighting for around the country right now. They are blowing the winds of change in strong ways for the end of police brutality and more justice altogether. Young Africans believe that equality is non-negotiable and the fight for it, imperative. Their actions sound like sharp wake-up calls and sheer inspiration for older generations, celebrities, brands, businesses and society at large.

As consumers, they are and will continue to be inspired by brands that authentically stand for equality and show up in line with their convictions. Retail store Spar's response will go a long way in the hearts of young Nigerian consumers (and older ones, too).

“ Our Lekki store has been vandalized and looted. But, we acknowledge that this is only a setback compared to the larger issues we are all facing as a nation, and our thoughts and prayers remain with Nigerians everywhere, and for a peaceful resolution to various issues at hand.— SPAR Nigeria (@SPARNigeria) [October 21, 2020](#) ”

“ Rebuilding a supermarket is hard. Rebuilding a nation is even harder. We stand with you Nigeria.

Stay focused. Be the solution. [#spamnigeria](#) [#staystrong](#) [#sparstrong](#) [pic.twitter.com/jNRDg1HgPk](#)— SPAR Nigeria (@SPARNigeria) [October 22, 2020](#) ”

#OpenAndGrounded

Citizens of a boundless world, Africa's youth have their hearts open to the world yet remain culturally grounded and proud of their African cultures. [Africanity](#), the unique set of features about being African, is something cherished, promoted and celebrated, a powerful tool to stand out and build unexpected narratives about their identities. The internet gives them unique opportunities to take the best of all worlds and build their own: 75% feel deeply grounded in their African cultures and a similar proportion report being attracted to Western influences. They mix their local heritage and cultures with Western trends, bringing Africa to the world and the world to Africa. Living with increasingly hybrid identities, they expect similarly disruptive creativity from brands.

There's a lot more about Africa Gen Z than just these three key traits. They are an intriguing and evolving target group, expected to continue to challenge society, businesses and brands in the future. They want to be heard and to contribute, and we can expect limited growth without them in the coming years.

Now, the question is: How do we win them? The answer is simple: Listen. Understand. Involve. And repeat.

There's no easy formula to follow, but nothing beats understanding and insight. Be open, accept the challenge and collaborate.

Are you ready for African Gen Z?

Data from [Africa Life Study](#) – 5,000 interviews across six countries in sub-Saharan markets.

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Ndeye Diagne is MD of Nigeria and Ghana for Kantar's Insights Division. An Afro-centrist, Afro-enthusiast and Afro-disruptor at heart, she is a passionate researcher and a close insights partner to Kantar's clients both locally and globally, working hard to co-create winning brand strategies to help them better understand our extraordinary and fast-changing

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