



2026

ADVOCACY BASELINE SURVEY REPORT



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Executive Summary

The ONE Campaign conducted a baseline survey among 482 young people aged 14-35 across Senegal, Kenya, Togo, Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia to inform the design of ONE Academy: a flagship e-learning platform designed to empower one million young Africans by 2030 with the knowledge, skills, pathways, and confidence to influence policy and drive change in their communities and beyond.

The survey benchmarked young people's understanding of advocacy, learning preferences, and engagement drivers to provide an evidence base for the curriculum and platform design.

At a glance, the data reveals four trends:

1	83%	<i>Want to learn how to create change.</i>
2	88%	<i>Feel confident speaking up.</i>
3	64%	<i>Understand advocacy.</i>
4	53%	<i>Have participated in advocacy.</i>

The findings reveal a highly motivated generation that is eager to drive change but lacks clear pathways to translate that motivation into meaningful civic action. **Over 4-in-5** young people expressed strong interest in learning how to address issues affecting their communities, and **nearly 9-in-10** reported feeling confident speaking up about issues they care about. Yet only around half had participated in advocacy activities, highlighting a clear gap between motivation, confidence, and action.

The survey also identifies how ONE Academy can help close this gap. While respondents demonstrated a solid understanding of advocacy, they were less familiar with the range of approaches through which advocacy creates change. Interest was strongest in practical, action-oriented learning, while more technical or policy-focused topics were less appealing unless connected to real-world issues. These findings point to a learning experience that prioritizes applied skills while grounding policy concepts in issues young people already care about.

Taken together, the findings reinforce ONE Academy's core value proposition. The opportunity is not to convince young people that advocacy matters, but to equip an already motivated generation with the practical skills, accessible learning experiences, and real-world opportunities needed to turn their commitment into sustained action. By combining applied advocacy learning with mobile-first delivery, recognized credentials, and clear pathways to leadership and civic engagement, ONE Academy is well positioned to cultivate a new generation of effective advocates across Africa.

Methodology

Data Collection

The ONE Academy Baseline Survey was administered through ONE's ActionKit platform between March - June 2026 with a total of 488 survey responses received. During data cleaning, 6 duplicate records were identified and removed resulting in a final analytical sample of 482 valid responses.

Sample

The survey targeted young people aged 14-35 years across Senegal, Kenya, Togo, Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia. Survey administration was conducted directly by partner organizations through their existing school networks. Additional responses were collected through [ONE Africa Champions](#) and partner organizations supporting foundational learning (FLN) initiatives in Kenya and Senegal.

The survey was completed anonymously and did not collect personally identifiable information. Consequently, findings are presented at the aggregate level and do not include disaggregation by individual characteristics such as gender or country. For respondents under the age of 18 in Kenya, parental consent was obtained by the participating organizations in accordance with their safeguarding procedures prior to survey administration.

Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings.

- Convenience sampling was used, so the findings primarily reflect the perspectives of young people engaged in formal education. The results are also representative of the targeted learner population rather than all young people across surveyed countries.
- Participation required access to an internet-enabled device and connectivity, which may have excluded less-connected or digitally marginalized groups.
- Findings cannot be disaggregated by demographic characteristics which limits comparative analysis across subgroups.
- Because respondents were provided with a definition of advocacy early in the survey, measures of advocacy awareness may reflect informed understanding rather than entirely unaided knowledge.

Unless otherwise stated, all percentages presented in this report are based on the final analytical sample of 482 respondents.

The Baseline Breakdown: What the Data Tells Us

Advocacy Knowledge & Understanding

Advocacy understanding is relatively strong. Nearly two-thirds of young people surveyed correctly identify advocacy as "speaking up to influence decisions, policies, or systems." However, close to 1-in-5 young people associated advocacy primarily with helping people individually, potentially suggesting that some young people may not fully distinguish between service delivery and efforts aimed at influencing broader systems, policies, or institutions.

Despite this, understanding of practical advocacy approaches proved moderate.

Respondents were asked to identify which activities they believed counted as advocacy by selecting all applicable options from a list of common advocacy actions. On average, young people correctly identified 50.2% of the advocacy activities presented, equivalent to 2.5 correct responses out of 5. Table 1 below shows the proportion of young people who identified each advocacy activity:

Table 1: Recognition of Different Forms of Advocacy	
Advocacy Activity	% Selecting
Starting campaigns or organizations	72%
Talking to friends about issues	60%
Participating in community meetings	48%
Writing decision-makers	40%
Sharing information and data	30%

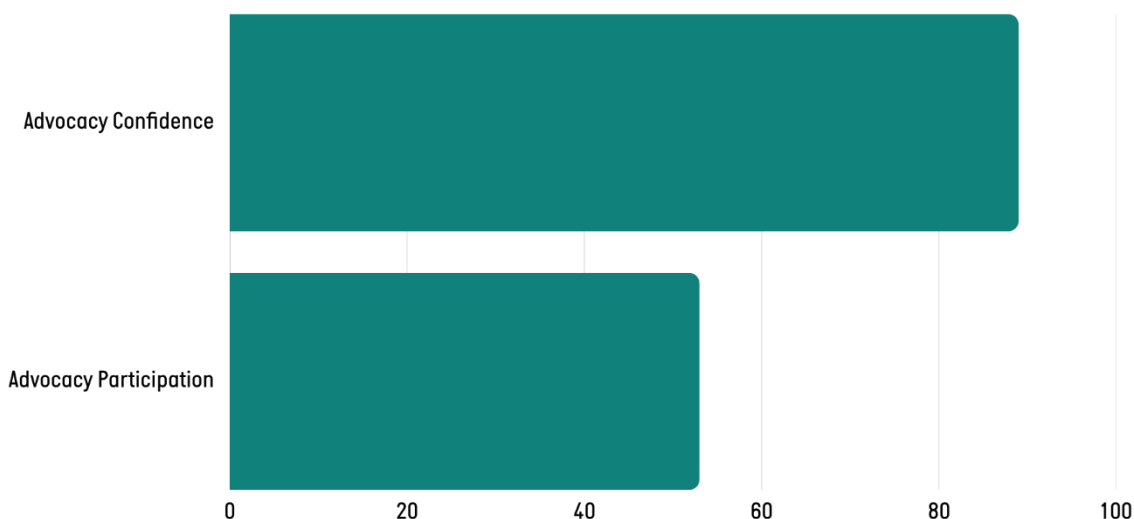
Source: The ONE Campaign

These findings suggest that young people are more likely to associate advocacy with visible and community-facing activities than with evidence-based, policy-oriented, or decision-maker engagement approaches. ONE Academy has the opportunity to broaden learners' understanding of the different pathways through which advocacy can influence change.

Advocacy Confidence and Participation

Although young people generally understand the concept of advocacy (see previous section), confidence in speaking up has not translated into widespread participation. 89% of young people reported feeling either somewhat confident or very confident speaking up about issues they care about. Yet only 53% of young people reported having previously participated in advocacy activities.

Figure 1. Young People Report High Confidence in Advocacy, but Participation Remains Lower



Source: The ONE Campaign

Note: Advocacy confidence results were aggregated into higher confidence (very confident and somewhat confident) and lower confidence (not very confident, not confident at all, and never tried).

This gap suggests that confidence and awareness alone may be insufficient to drive advocacy participation. While the survey did not explore the specific barriers preventing participation, the findings indicate an opportunity for ONE Academy to focus not only on building knowledge but also on helping learners apply that knowledge through practical experiences and supported pathways to action – such as mentorship, peer networks, practical advocacy challenges, and community-based projects or competitions.

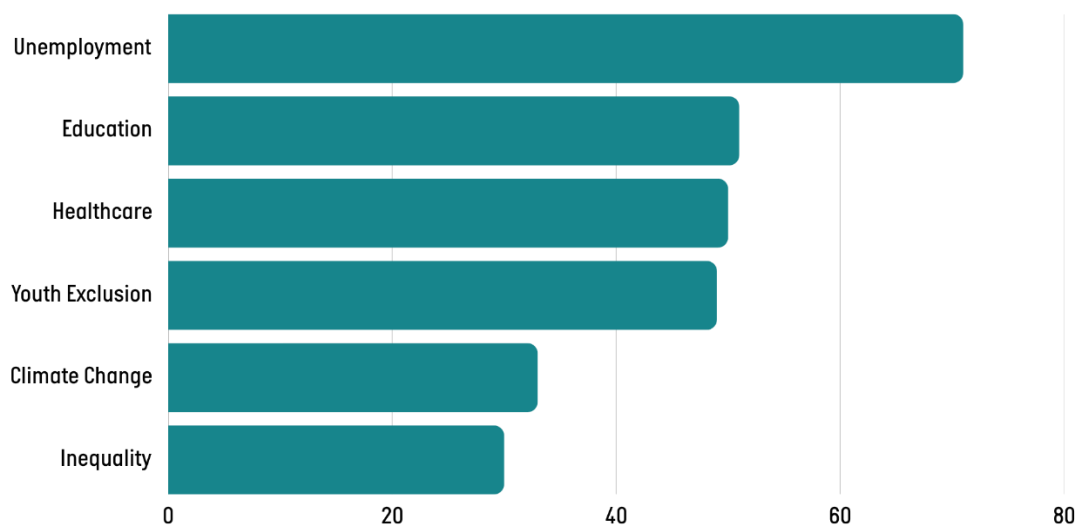


Key Insight: Young people are ready to advocate. While nearly 9-in-10 feel confident speaking up about issues they care about, only about half have participated in advocacy activities, indicating that young people need practical pathways to convert their confidence into action.

Issues That Matter Most to Learners

Young people appear to engage with advocacy through issues that directly affect their daily lives rather than abstract governance concepts. Specifically, young people identified immediate socioeconomic and opportunity-related challenges – such as economic opportunity, access to services, and youth inclusion in decision-making – as their most pressing concerns. This highlights a strong focus on issues that directly affect their future prospects and quality of life.

Figure 2. Issues Identified as Most Important by Respondents



Source: The ONE Campaign

Taken together, Figure 2 above indicates that advocacy modules are likely to resonate most strongly when learning content and practical exercises are connected to issues that learners perceive as having a direct impact on their lives and future opportunities. While young people understand the issues they care about, the next questions is what they want to learn.

Learning Demand & Curriculum Priorities

Demand for advocacy learning is extremely high. More than 4-in-5 young people reported being very interested in learning how to address the issues they care about, which demonstrates a strong level of readiness to engage with ONE Academy.

Learners showed the strongest interest in content that emphasizes practical action, personal agency, and real-world application. The highest-ranked topics focused on using one's voice to drive change and identifying tangible ways to make a difference, while more technical or policy-oriented topics generated comparatively lower levels of interest.

Table 2: Learner Interest in Proposed ONE Academy Topics		
Rank	Proposed ONE Academy Module	% Interested
1	Your Voice, Your Power: How to use your voice to shape narratives and drive change	60%
2	Simple Ways to Make a Difference: Everyday actions that can create real change	58%
3	Poverty and Inequality: Why these issues exist and why they matter	54%
4	Advocacy 101: What advocacy is and how change happens	53%
5	Driving Foundational Learning Reform: Why education matters and how to translate research into persuasive campaigns	46%
6	Pathways to Equity: Understanding inequality and how it affects everyday life	42%
7	Climate Change: What you should know and why it matters to you	33%

Source: The ONE Campaign

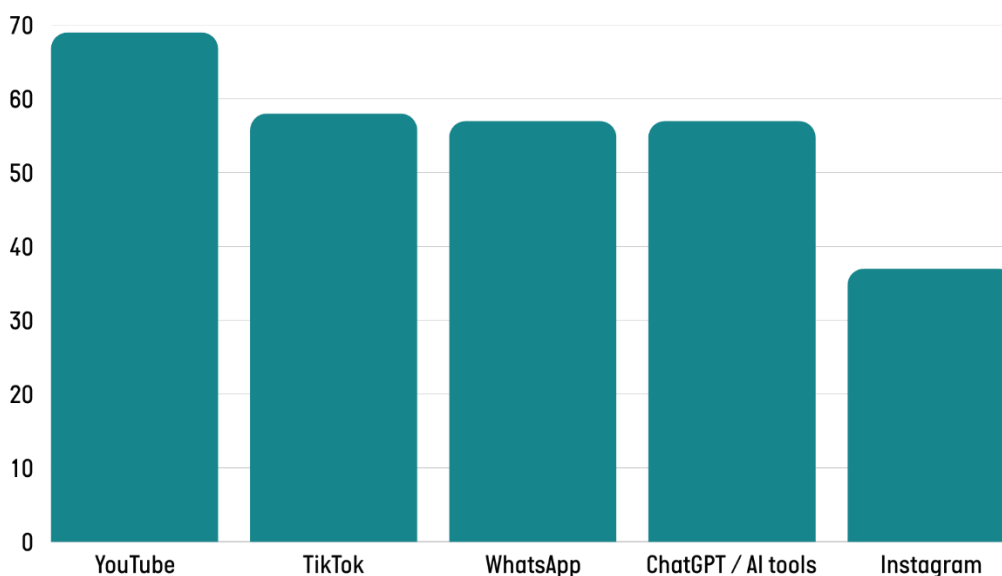
Although education was identified as the second most important issue for surveyed young people, the Foundational Learning (FLN) module generated comparatively lower interest, ranking fifth among proposed topics. This gap suggests that young people may not immediately perceive foundational learning as directly connected to the education priorities they care about.

Moreover, outside the above topics, some young people expressed interest in having an AI/tech focused module related to using these tools to drive change.

Digital Learning Behaviors

Online learning is already an established part of youth's learning habits. On average, young people reported using online learning platforms multiple times per week (4.2 on a 5-point scale, where 1 represents "never" and 5 represents "daily"), with the largest share indicating daily use.

Figure 3: Platforms Used for Learning



Source: The ONE Campaign

Figure 3 illustrates that young people primarily rely on video-based and social platforms to support their learning. To align with these habits, ONE Academy adopts a blended digital learning experience that combines short instructional videos with interactive activities.

Notably, more than half of the surveyed young people reported using ChatGPT or similar AI tools for learning, suggesting that AI-assisted learning has already become part of many learners' study practices.

Preferred Learning Formats

Youth identified a clear preference for interactive and visually engaging learning experiences. Short videos emerged as the most preferred learning format (61.2%), followed by stories from real people (52.9%). Interactive quizzes (38.6%) and games or challenges (35.5%) were also commonly selected, indicating interest in action-oriented learning experiences.

Table 3: Design Implications	
Survey Finding	Design Implication
69% use YouTube	Prioritize high-quality instructional video
58% use TikTok	Develop short recap content
57% use WhatsApp	Enable discussion forums, peer learning, and an alumni network
57% use AI tools	Integrate AI-supported learning assistance
61% prefer short videos	Keep core lessons concise
53% prefer real stories	Use youth case studies throughout modules where feasible

Source: The ONE Campaign

Taken together, it is clear that young people value concise, engaging, and applied content that combines storytelling with opportunities for interaction. Short videos are likely to increase initial engagement and accessibility. Nevertheless, interactive features (e.g. quizzes and challenges) and opportunities for practice play a key role in reinforcing knowledge and sustaining engagement throughout the learning journey.



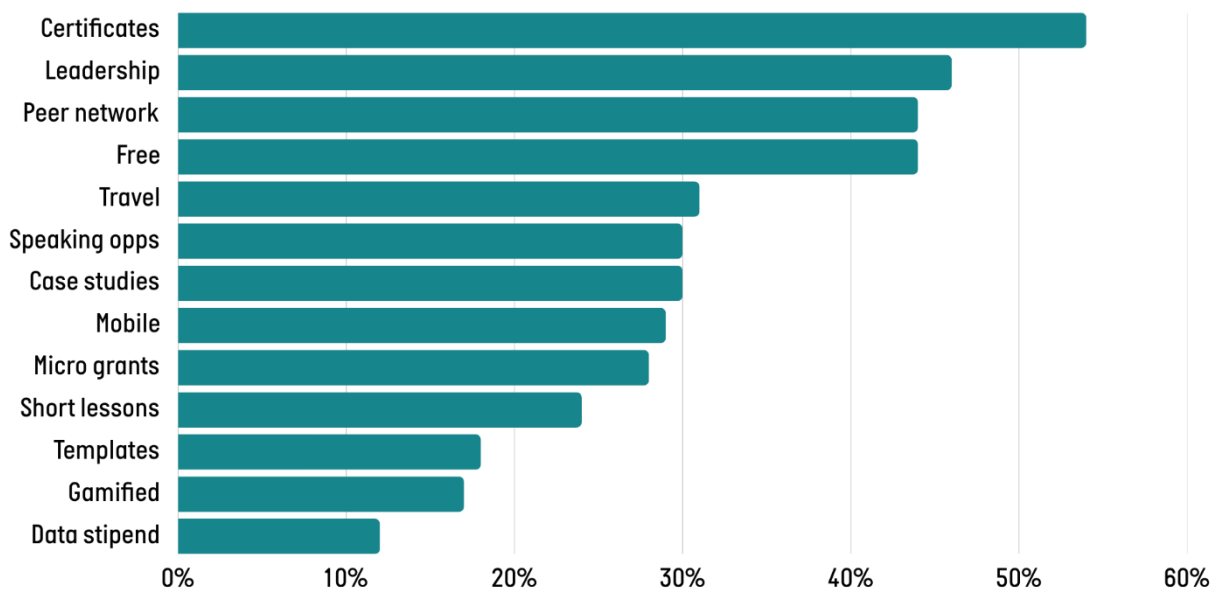
Key Insight: Young people are already building skills through digital platforms, with nearly 7-in-10 turning to YouTube and more than half using TikTok, WhatsApp, and AI tools for learning. ONE Academy is designed to meet learners where they are by delivering mobile-first, multimedia experiences that naturally complement the digital habits and platforms learners already use to build skills.

Learner Retention

Young people value opportunities to apply what they learn as much as the learning itself.

Recognition, opportunities, and community emerged as stronger motivators for returning to ONE Academy than gamification alone. Other drivers included:

Figure 4. Top Motivators for Returning to ONE Academy



Source: The ONE Campaign

The above results indicate that integrating certificates, leadership opportunities, and collaborative peer learning into ONE Academy will strengthen learner retention and module completion by allowing learners to apply their knowledge, gain recognition, and connect with peers.

Equally important to learner retention is understanding barriers to participation. 61% of young people identified internet connectivity as the most common challenge when using online learning platforms, followed by a lack of relevant content (19.9%). Interestingly, mobile data stipends ranked among the least selected motivators for returning to ONE Academy suggesting that while reliable internet access remains an important consideration for platform design, some young people place greater value on the quality and relevance of the learning experience than on financial incentives to access it.

Ensuring that content remains relevant and responsive to learners' needs, through ongoing feedback mechanisms such as user testing, learner surveys, and youth focus groups, will therefore be as important for retention as addressing technical barriers.

The Road Ahead

This baseline provides a clear picture of the opportunity that lies ahead. Young people are motivated to create change and are already engaging with digital platforms to learn new skills, yet many have not translated that motivation into meaningful advocacy action. The greatest opportunity is not to generate interest in advocacy, but to provide the practical skills, relevant content, and practical pathways to participation that enable young people to act on the issues they care about. As ONE Academy continues to develop, these insights will inform decisions on curriculum design, platform development, learner engagement, and future monitoring. They also establish an important baseline against which learner outcomes and program impact can be measured over time.

**To learn more about ONE Academy and follow
its development, visit oneacademy.org.**

