

Youth Survey

Skill Gaps of African Youth in Renewable Energy

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RES4AFRICA FOUNDATION

pwc



Who responded to the survey

The survey involved a group of *206 young respondents* who demonstrate a strong interest and desire to actively participate in the renewable energy sector. These young people are motivated by the willingness to make tangible contributions to the progress and promotion of sustainable energy sources. Almost 70% of the respondents are aged between *24 and 30 years.*The survey received responses from young people coming from 36 African countries, compared to the 18 in last year's survey. Half of the participants come from four specific countries: *Kenya (27%) , Nigeria (12%), Ethiopia (9%), and Ghana (5%)*. These countries serve both as the place of origin and current residence for these young individuals, thereby representing the context in which they are immersed.

What is your country of origin?



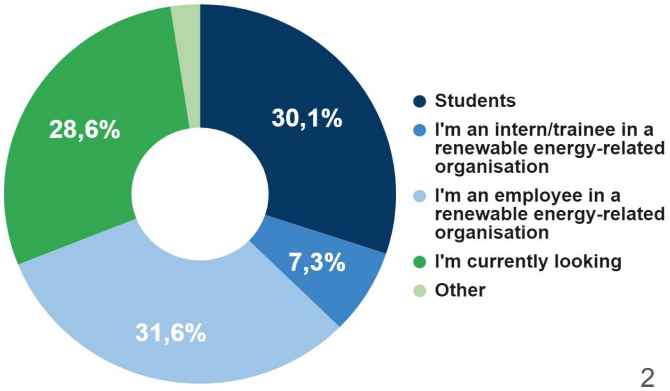
206 *Respondents*

36 *Countries*

24-30 *Average age*

Of those who answered the survey, 39% are currently employed or doing an internship in a renewable energy-related organization, 30% are students interested in pursuing a career in the renewable energy sector, while 29% are neither studying nor employed and are currently looking for opportunities in the renewable energy sector.

What is your current status?



Delivering a clean energy transition requires a workforce with a mix of skills, including technical, financial, economic and social. Indeed, young people who responded to the survey come from many different educational backgrounds. Almost 80% of respondents have backgrounds mainly in Energy, Engineering, and STEM, but there is no shortage of young people with backgrounds in Economics, Management and Finance, Social Sciences and Humanities, and Natural Sciences.



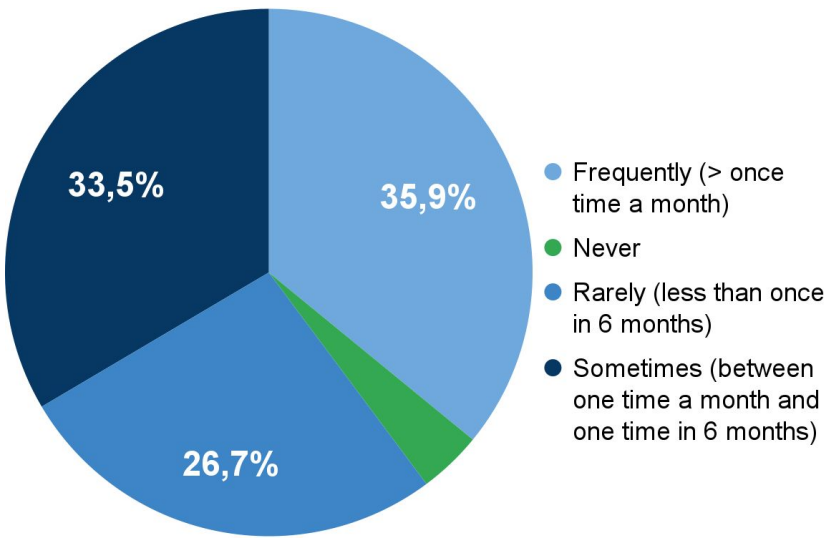
Training and capacity buildings

In an effort to gather information and fill the gap in capacity building, respondents were asked for their input about the segments of the energy market most interesting from their perspective and their opinion about the nature of workshops/training or any barriers to their participation. As evidence that young people are well aware of the direction that new energy systems need to take, most of them are equally interested in distributed energy, residential solar systems, and micro/mini grids, while showing a little less interest in large scale grid-connected systems. The survey also asked respondents about the frequency with which they come across information regarding available workshops and trainings on renewable energy.

The results indicates that a significant percentage of youth (36%) frequently encounter information on workshops and trainings related to renewable energy.
This suggests that there is an existing effort to disseminate information about such opportunities. However, it is concerning that almost a third of the respondents rarely come across such information, and an additional 5% never do. To bridge the gap and reach a broader audience, it is crucial to enhance the visibility and accessibility of these workshops and trainings through various communication channels, such as social media, educational institutions, and community organizations.

"Regarding social media, Facebook and Twitter are the most used by African youth, according to the results of this survey".

How often do you see information on available possibilities to participate in workshops or training on renewable energy?

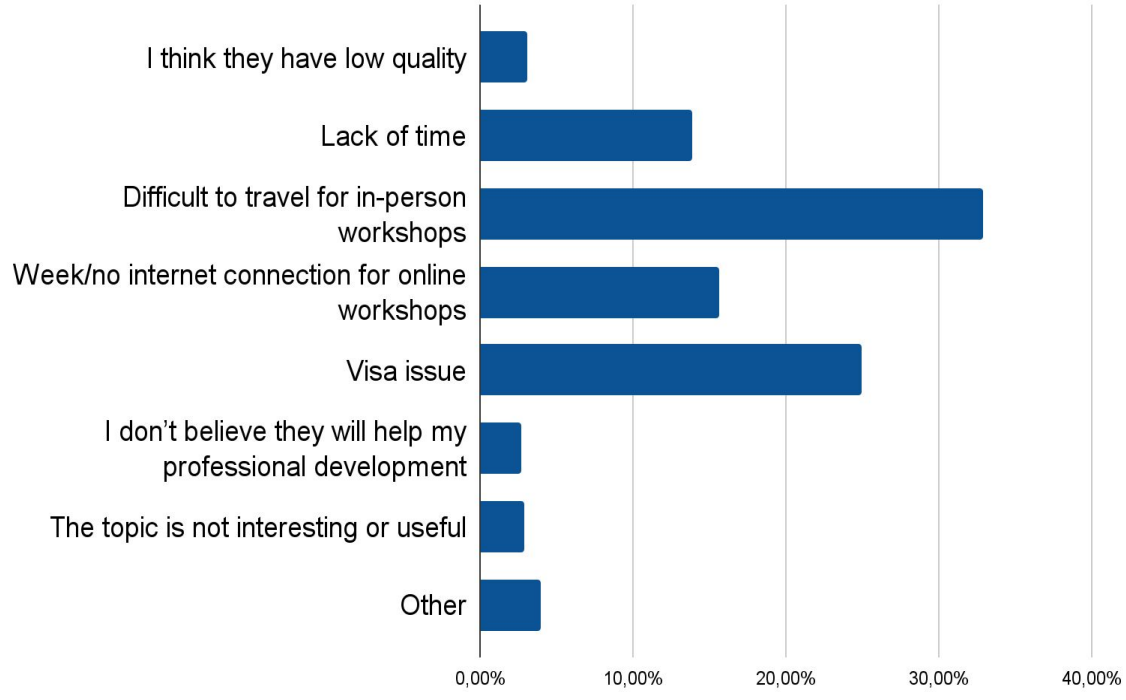




The survey findings reveal some of the primary challenges faced by youth when it comes to participating in renewable energy workshops and trainings free of charge. Respondents could indicate all the alternatives applicable to their case.

Difficulties in traveling for in-person workshops collected **more than 30% ot total responses,** highlighting that geographical constraints and associated costs play a significant role in limiting participation. Consequently, visa issues collected 25% of total responses, suggesting that international workshops and training programs might be inaccessible to a considerable portion of the surveyed youth due to immigration regulations and related bureaucracy. Organizers should consider offering more localized events and online alternatives to cater to a more diverse and inclusive audience, while policies should address the digital divide to ensure that young individuals from all backgrounds can benefit from capacity-building opportunities in renewable energy.

If you decide not to participate in offered workshops/training that are free of charge, what are the main reasons?



The survey shows a diverse range of responses regarding the willingness to pay for a one-week workshop/training. A significant portion (around 40%) of the youth respondents indicated that they are not willing to pay or cannot afford to pay due to **financial constraints.** This highlights a considerable **barrier that prevents some individuals from accessing capacity building opportunities.**
However, it is encouraging to note that nearly half of the respondents (49%) are open to paying for the training, albeit not more than 100 USD. This suggests that there is a potential market for reasonably priced capacity building programs. **To make these opportunities more inclusive, organizers should explore options for financial assistance, scholarships, or subsidized fees for those with limited financial means.**

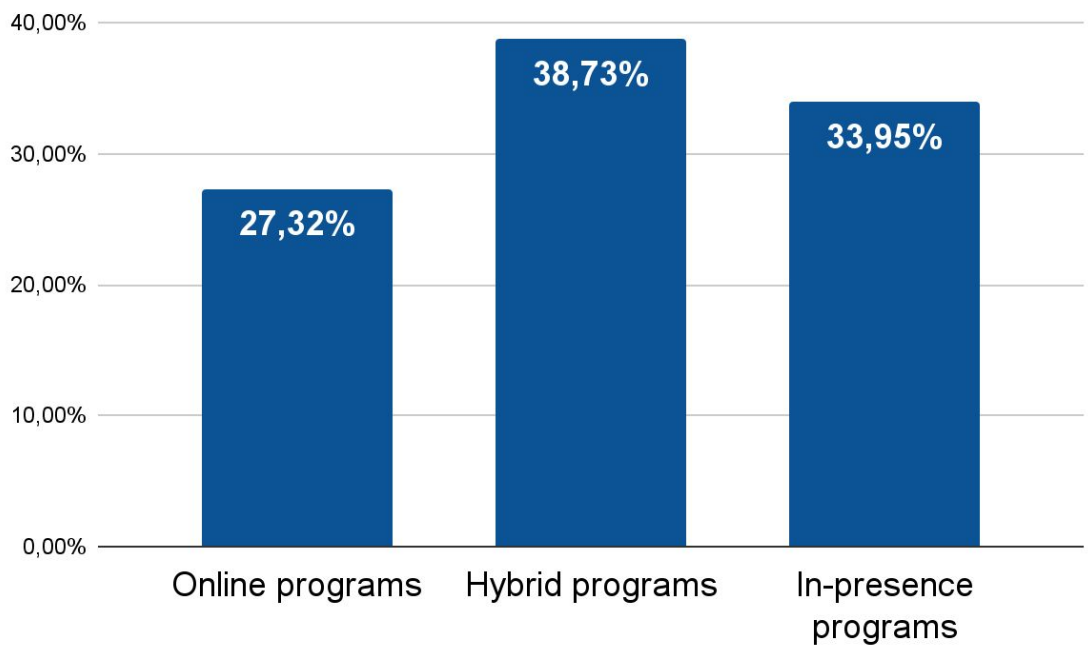
The survey inquired about the specific programs that youth respondents are interested in. The results are as follows:

- Young respondents are interested in **both executive and technical trainings.**
- They prefer **short training sessions** (less than a month) rather than long ones.

This suggests that a comprehensive approach to capacity building, offering a mix of managerial and technical skill development, would be well-received.
Furthermore, the preference for short trainings, which last less than a month, aligns with the fast-paced and dynamic nature of the youth demographic. Short-duration workshops are likely to be more appealing, as they are less time-consuming and provide targeted knowledge and skills without disrupting other commitments.

When youth are asked what type of program they prefer for trainings, **hybrid programs** are the most successful, followed by in-person programs that would be attended with interest if youth could overcome the logistical barriers related to visa and financial difficulties related to travel.

What form of programs would you prefer?



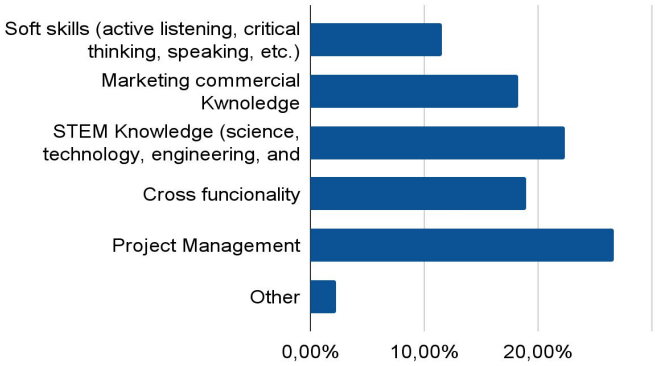


Skills and professional development

The survey asked respondents about the skills they believe they lack for progressing in the renewable energy industry. The survey responses indicate a diverse range of skills that young individuals perceive as missing for their career development in renewable energy.

Notably, the most successful response is the one regarding project management, suggesting that there is a demand for training programs that focus on enhancing project management capabilities, followed by STEM skills which reflects the technical nature of the renewable energy industry and emphasizes the importance of promoting and providing STEM education and training opportunities to equip youth with the necessary expertise to contribute meaningfully to the sector's growth.

What skills are you missing to develop your career in renewable?



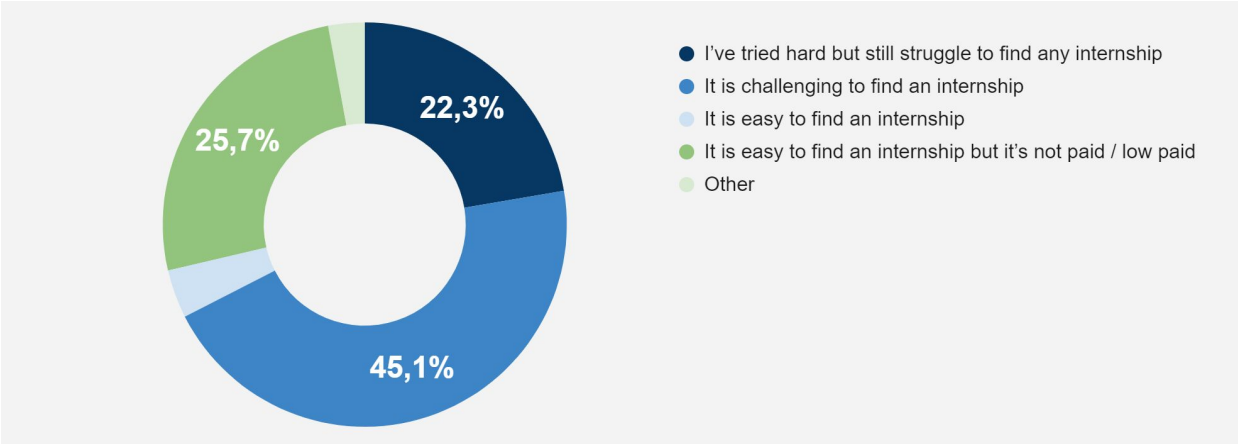
Generally speaking the preference of African young people is to **work in Africa**, either for an international or an African company.

The survey also explored the barriers faced by young individuals while developing their careers in renewable energy. The results show that **financial barriers are a prominent obstacle faced by youth in their career development** within the renewable energy sector. In fact, 50% of the total responses received indicate financial barriers as the main or one of the main obstacles. The high costs associated with obtaining higher education or acquiring specific certifications can deter young individuals from pursuing opportunities in the field. Additionally, poorly paid entry-level jobs can pose a challenge for those seeking to enter the industry or progress in their careers.

Addressing financial barriers requires a multi-faceted approach. Offering scholarships, grants, or financial assistance for education and training programs can help make them more accessible to a broader range of youth.

Almost **70% of respondents say that it is challenging to find an internship** and that they have tried but are still struggling to find one. More than **80% of respondents, in fact, believe that there are not enough internship or fellowship opportunities for them.**

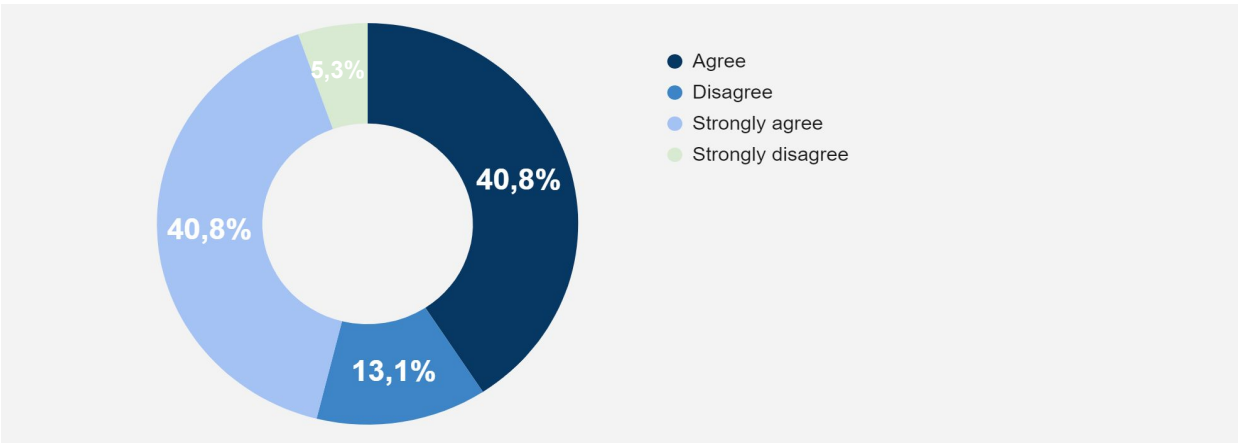
What is your experience with finding an internship?



More broadly, the respondents have expressed various opinions and suggestions regarding training, internship, job search, and employment opportunities in the renewable energy sector. Some common themes include the need for **more practical hands-on training, internships, and professional development programs.**
They also mention the importance of **offering opportunities to women and youth in the field,** as well as the need for **financial support for training and certifications**. Some respondents highlight challenges in finding entry-level opportunities and suggest that companies should provide internships and training for individuals with different academic backgrounds.

Overall, the responses show a strong interest in developing skills and gaining experience in the renewable energy industry. By leveraging the insights gained from the survey, the renewable energy industry can foster an inclusive and skilled workforce that propels Africa towards a greener, sustainable, and prosperous future.

I believe that there are not enough internship/fellowship programs





What Companies do

Two large-scale companies were interviewed, one involved in the manufacturing sector (solar panels, etc.), and the other in the sales and marketing sector. The objective was to understand the company's' strategic direction and how they address challenges related to the recruitment of young talents interested in the renewable energy field.

Manufacturing sector

Sales and marketing sectors

From their responses, it emerged that both companies encounter several challenges when it comes to recruiting and selecting new talent. These challenges arise not only from the difficulty of finding candidates with backgrounds and skills in fields such as Energy, Engineering, STEM, Economics, Management, and Finance but also due to the lack of experience typically found in young talents. Additionally, when hiring from outside of Africa, issues related to visas and work permits frequently come into play.

Recruitment of young talent occurs through various channels, primarily through:

LinkedIn

Agreements with universities

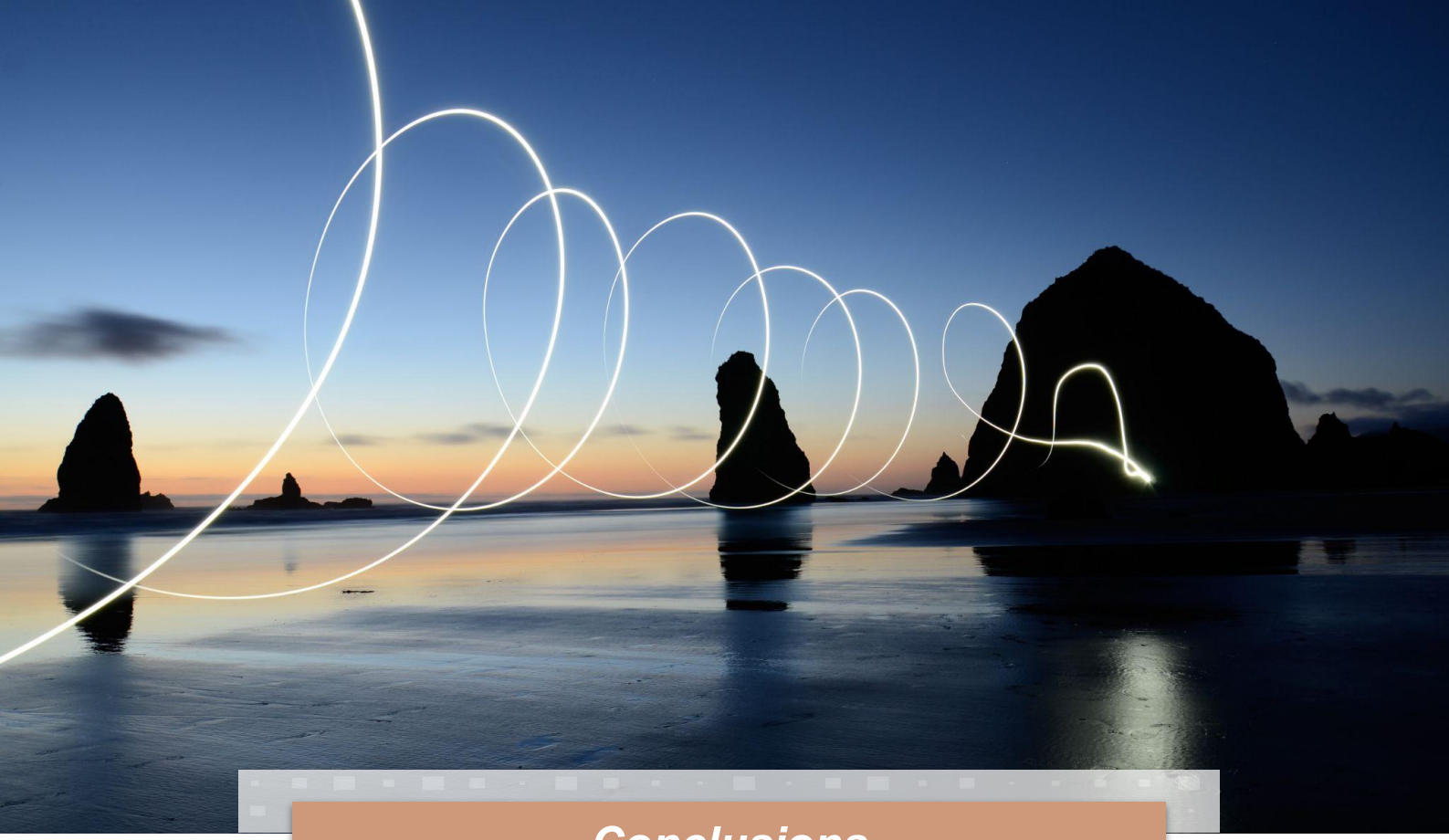
Recruitment via the company website

Internships have been identified as a valuable tool to provide opportunities for young people in the workforce. It's interesting to note that internship programs exceeding one year in duration are also offered, with the goal of confirming interns based on a set of criteria, including proactivity, interpersonal skills, effective communication, initiative, and the ability to take responsibility. Additionally, integration into the team and alignment with the company culture are evaluated, which are crucial in guiding hiring decisions.

The most sought-after skills by companies for hiring young talents include **soft skills** such as active listening, critical thinking, communication, etc., knowledge in the marketing and sales sector, STEM skills (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), the ability to work cross-functionally, project management, and problem-solving.



Both companies believe that **technical training**s play a **crucial role in preparing young individuals for a successful career** in the renewable energy sector. In particular, they offer training opportunities to their young individuals through development programs such as the Graduate Program and Sell it. This training covers various aspects, including system requirements definition, complaint management, cost control of complaints, understanding quality and associated costs, and the concept of total cost of ownership. Project management is another critical element of this training, preparing young individuals to effectively manage the complex challenges of the renewable energy sector.



Conclusions

In conclusion, this year's edition of the Youth Survey represents a significant step towards understanding the challenges and opportunities associated with developing skills for the transition towards sustainable energy. Thanks to the active participation of young individuals, we have obtained valuable insights into the barriers they face, the key competencies required for a career in the renewable energy sector, and the perspectives of companies operating in this field.

The primary objective of the survey remains bridging the gap between the demand and supply of jobs in the sustainable energy sector. Through this survey, we are laying the foundation for a greener and more sustainable future in which young people can contribute significantly to the advancement of renewable energy sources.

The responses from young individuals indicate a strong demand for training that covers both technical and managerial skills, aligning with the dynamic nature of the youth demographic and the need for targeted practical knowledge.

Young people have also expressed the need for more internship and scholarship opportunities in the renewable energy sector, emphasizing the importance of practical experience and professional development programs. In this regard, companies in the sector play a crucial role, recognizing the value of internships as a recruitment channel.

The challenges and opportunities outlined in this survey are essential for informing policies, training programs, and corporate strategies, with the aim of supporting a young and competent workforce capable of being at the forefront and actively engaged in driving the transition towards a more sustainable and prosperous energy future.



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