

THE FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE:

# BUILDING HUMAN CHANGE CAPABILITY IN TIMES OF *DISRUPTION*

JUNE 2026



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While most companies look to AI adoption and digital transformation to anticipate and prepare for the future, they neglect a dormant asset much closer to home. The motivation and purpose of their own people. Ashoka and GlobeScan's global opinion survey found that 82% of employees feel they can help their companies drive change that positively impacts communities and the planet. When employees have the chance to do so, 87% feel increased motivation and loyalty at work.

Despite the overwhelming business case, most company-led change efforts do not usually tap into the personal agency and self-belief of workforces. This is a missed opportunity, because it is the personal commitment (the "why") that often motivates people to get involved in actions and drive new ideas.

There is an overwhelming business case for companies to focus on the **human and behavioral motivation for change.**

Human-centric change requires investing in change leadership (skills like agency, adaptability, creativity, empathy, and critical thinking.) The pay-off is improved retention, attraction, and business innovation.

The value extends beyond company walls. Tapping into the desire of employees to participate in change has a powerful multiplier effect: it unleashes behaviors and actions that ignite lasting impact across supply chains and communities.



# INTRODUCTION

## READY FOR CHANGE?

These days, it can feel like the world is moving faster than we can fully grasp. Shifting markets, new technologies, climate threats, and uncertainty at every turn. While resilience awareness is growing, 84% of companies report feeling underprepared for current and future disruptions. [\(WEF & McKinsey, 2025\)](#) Only 30% of CEOs worldwide are confident about revenue growth in the next 12 months, the lowest in five years. [\(PWC, 2026\)](#)

You can probably relate to this: rushing to process new information, update technologies, and execute decisions. But teams are resistant to change and hesitant to act. Leaders are unprepared for shocks and apprehensive about maintaining sustainable revenues.

**Future readiness is not luck.** It requires nurturing an organizational heartbeat that supports people and teams to solve real-world challenges, spark fresh ideas, and create value for communities and our planet.

Equipping organizations and workers to participate in change, especially in the face of global technological and climate-related disruptions, presents a business opportunity. It also presents a collective opportunity: to redesign our workplace systems and cultures so that they work better, for everyone.



## WHAT DOES FUTURE READINESS LOOK LIKE?

A 'future ready' workforce looks quite different than what was needed in yesterday's predictable business environment. These are just some of the global companies making resilience part of their daily work by encouraging employees, no matter where they sit, to anticipate and lead positive change.

- At **Kersia**, a global leader in food safety, employees across functions and levels are trained in problem-solving, agility, adaptability, and systems thinking to drive change and new business ideas that they create and lead.
- At **Boehringer Ingelheim**, employees are encouraged to contribute to sustainable impact by collaborating with social entrepreneurs to solve real-world problems.
- At **IKEA**, co-workers join an 18-month accelerator program where they partner with social entrepreneurs to address the root causes of social and environmental issues.

- At **Lenovo**, employees and channel partners pair leadership development with innovation training and tools to develop breakthrough ideas for more responsible consumption and buying.

## WHY THIS GUIDE?

GlobeScan and Ashoka have looked at workforce 'future readiness' through the voices of everyday employees – those who are often closest to the work and most aware of its real-world impact.

This guide pulls from a global survey of 8,865 corporate employees in 33 countries, along with the first-hand experience of dozens of companies investing in employee participation as a resilience strategy. It is informed by the insights of Ashoka's network of 4,000 social entrepreneurs – people driving social and environmental change at scale in communities around the world.

Our conclusion is that employee participation is a key strategy for future readiness, one with undeniable business value. Moreover, employee participation increases the chances that today's transition is equitable, collaborative, and truly works for people and communities.



What you'll find:

**Part I:** Employee participation, a core strategy for future readiness

**Part II:** Tying employee participation to business value and strategic action

**Part III:** The key conditions for successful employee participation

**Part IV:** Findings related to worker demographics (age and gender)

**Part V:** Recommendations on how to embed employee participation, from the lens of Talent, Sustainability, and C-Suite

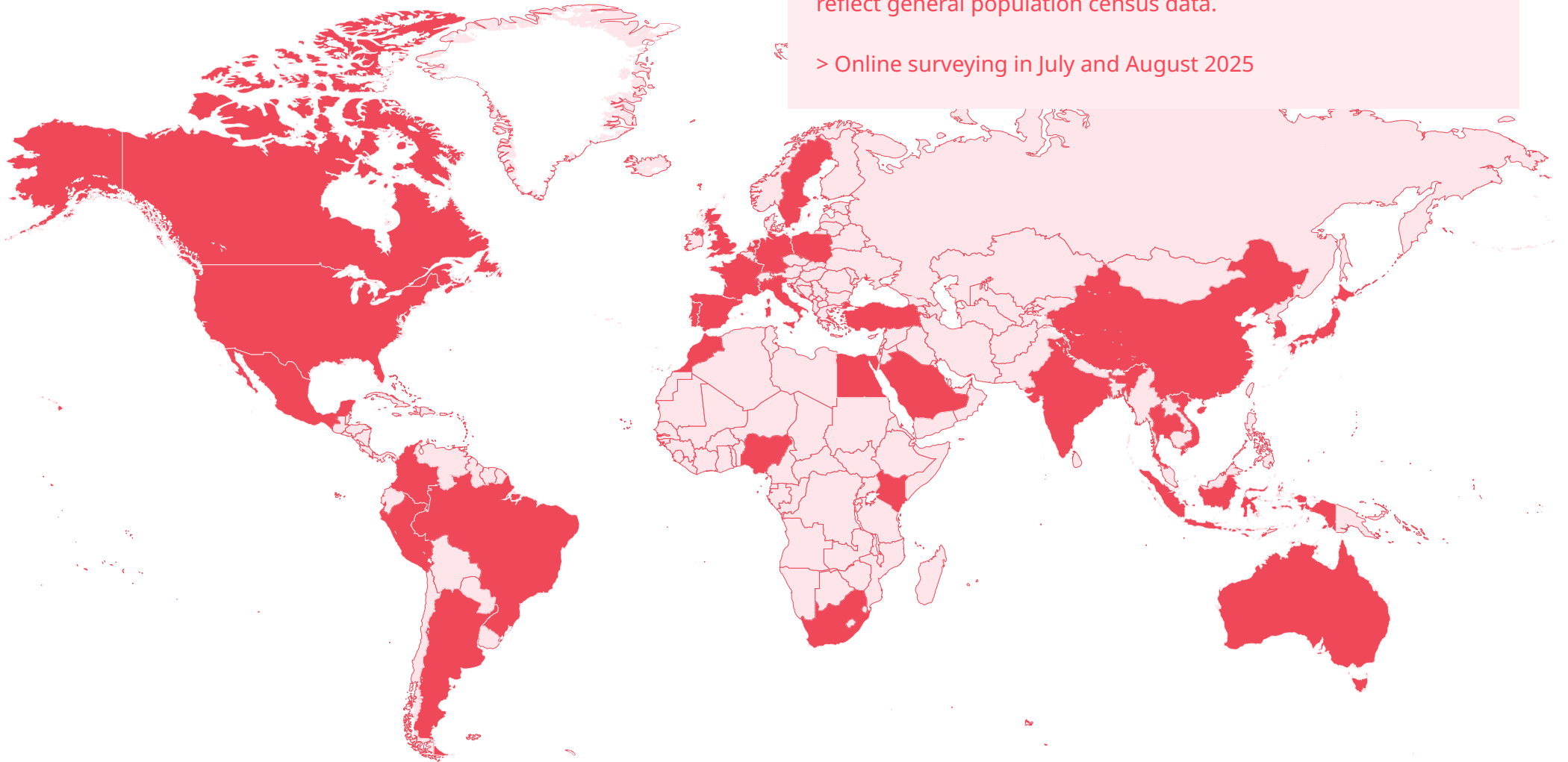
# METHODOLOGY

Analysis focused on 8,865 employees working in for-profit companies with over 1,000 employees across 33 countries and territories.

> This analysis was part of a larger global survey conducted by GlobeScan, which polled the general public on attitudes toward societal change ( $n=31,960$ ).

> Samples are representative of online population, weighted to reflect general population census data.

> Online surveying in July and August 2025



# PART I. EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION, A CORE STRATEGY FOR FUTURE READINESS

## WHEN PEOPLE BELIEVE IN THEIR ABILITY TO AFFECT CHANGE, BUSINESS VALUE FOLLOWS

A remarkable 82% of employees globally agree with the statement that, “I can personally help my company improve its impact on society and the environment.” This is a promising foundation since any meaningful change begins with self-belief. This sentiment cuts across age, education, gender, and income levels.

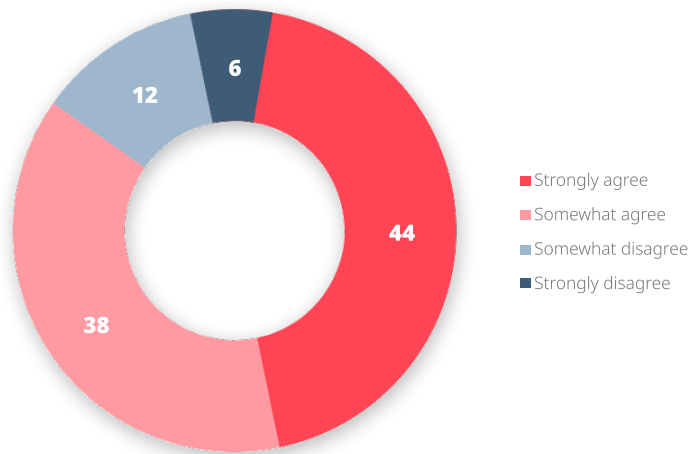


Figure 1. Global employee sentiments (“I can personally help my company improve its impact on society and the environment”)

## THE OVERWHELMING BUSINESS CASE

Many employees around the world have a strong self-belief in their ability to participate in change. They also have a deep drive to contribute to the social and ecological footprints of their companies. When they participate, 87% of employees feel increased motivation and loyalty at work and more purpose and meaning in their lives. Nearly half “strongly agree” that they feel these improvements.

The more I can personally help my company improve its impact on society and the environment, the more motivated and loyal I become as an employee



Participating in helping my company improve its impact on society and the environment gives my life more purpose and meaning



Strongly agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

Figure 2. Global employee sentiments on impact on motivation, loyalty, purpose, and meaning

We cannot ignore the fact that people care about changing and improving their workplaces and society more broadly. The desire to contribute paired with self-efficacy (the belief in one’s ability to successfully perform tasks and achieve goals) turns into a powerful asset for organizational transformation.

## THE COST OF IGNORING EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

Ignoring the desire of employees to participate in change affects the bottom line. When disengaged employees leave, research from Gallup and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) puts the cost of replacing an employee at 50% to 200% of their annual salary depending on their role and seniority. Assuming an average salary of \$50,000, that replacement cost translates to between \$25,000 and \$100,000 per employee.

On the other hand, investing in employee participation creates positive returns, especially when employees engage in positive impact actions that are relevant to core business. These include:

- Stronger employee engagement, wellbeing and career mobility
- Company-wide innovation capabilities
- Stronger innovation pipeline
- Improved customer-centricity
- Enhanced reputation & brand loyalty
- Authentic impact in communities

### GALLUP

#### The 'Great Resignation' Is Really the 'Great Discontent'

A new Gallup analysis finds that 48% of America's working population is actively job searching or watching for opportunities.



#### Workers Are Historically Stressed Out And Disengaged

Survey results revealed that 59% of workers are "quiet quitting," i.e. are not engaged; and 18% are "loud quitting," which is the act of being actively disengaged (but still employed).



#### From Obligation To Motivation: Why Employee Engagement Is The Key To Esg Success

Nearly half of the participating companies (over 200 respondents) cite a lack of employee engagement as their primary obstacle to achieving sustainability goals.

## CASE STUDY: ENABLING DECENTRALIZED, EMPLOYEE-LED BUSINESS INNOVATION AT KERSIA

This is how Kersia, a global leader in food safety, is leveraging employee participation as a resilience strategy.

### THE CHALLENGE

Kersia, a global food safety leader, saw that climate change would bring new and unpredictable risks to its industry. To stay ahead, the company needed to build a workforce capable of navigating uncertainty, driving innovation, and leading transformation—not just at the top, but across all levels.

### THE IMPACT

### THE JOURNEY

To meet this need, Kersia partnered with Ashoka's Changemaker Companies to embed change leadership capabilities throughout the organization, assessed through manager feedback and reviews. The global program includes training a network of 170+ employee ambassadors and launching a "sandbox" process that allows staff to pitch and test ideas such as improving water safety and optimizing containers. By empowering employees to initiate and drive change, Kersia strengthens its ability to innovate, adapt faster, and create a lasting competitive advantage.



#### INCREASED RETENTION

With its ambassador program, Kersia saw a decrease in people turnover (5% vs 15% company average turnover).



#### INNOVATION PIPELINE

Employee-led ideas link people, planet, and profit. One project cut wastewater by 40% and scaled from Spain to Brazil.



#### SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The company tracks skills that are critical for driving change: 92% improved leadership, 88% empathy, and 84% teamwork.



#### EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

92% of employees said the program helped them connect with their personal purpose at work.



#### COMMON CULTURE

94% of employees consider that the program creates and fosters a common culture within Kersia.

“



*“I realized that our industry’s exposure to climate change – risks and opportunities – made it essential to rethink how we adapt and transform for the future. Through the Committed & Different program, we chose to equip our people to lead systemic change – empowering employees across Kersia to develop new ways of thinking and acting that strengthen both our resilience and our long-term sustainability.”*

---

SÉBASTIEN BOSSARD, CEO, KERSIA

“



*“Test-and-learn is a concept that already existed inside the company, but we didn’t officially encourage it. That – and creating safe spaces for learning and collaboration – are now favored tools to accompany Kersia’s transformation.”*

---

ISABELLE DEMOMENT, HEAD OF CSR AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS, KERSIA

## PART II. LINKING EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION TO BUSINESS VALUE & STRATEGIC ACTION

### MOVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT BEYOND “NICE TO HAVE”

Across the globe, corporate employees are participating in positive impact actions inside their companies. Based on the 11 actions (Figure 3), most employees who say they can help their company improve its impact on society and the environment follow environmentally friendly practices at work (44%) or encourage colleagues to act in environmentally friendly ways (39%). Just under a third of employees are volunteering with their companies.

Without the chance to do so, employees are less likely to participate in actions that are relevant to core business. Globally, only 23% of empowered employees report having sustainability as part of their core job, and only 17% are part of a formal sustainability-related committee. Less than one-quarter is engaged in business-critical impact activities.



*Figure 3. Global employee sentiments (“Do you participate in any of the following to help the company where you work improve its impact on society and the environment?”) Subsample: Employees who say they can help their company improve its impact on society and the environment*

One hopeful trend comes from [LinkedIn reporting](#) that, for the first time, workers with green skills in ‘non-green roles’ now make up the majority of hires. Green skills are increasingly diffusing across the workforce and increasingly important across a wide array of job titles. Given the magnitude of environmental and social problems, are we doing enough to create spaces for employees to genuinely participate in change and bring their voices and capabilities to the table?

## HOW BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM BOOSTS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH HEALTHCARE INNOVATION

Since 2010, Boehringer Ingelheim and Ashoka have offered a suite of opportunities to employees to actively participate in social innovation in the healthcare space, including talent development programs with social entrepreneurs, embedding employees in problem-solving initiatives to scale sustainable impact, training employees in social innovation, and offering skills-based volunteering through digital platforms. As a result, thousands of employees globally have engaged in a range of sustainability and impact actions.

Executive in Residence is an individually tailored leadership development opportunity where selected social entrepreneurs welcome Boehringer Ingelheim executives in intensive two-week to six-month placements. The program fosters high-impact collaborations between Boehringer Ingelheim leaders and social entrepreneurs with the potential to change the dynamics of traditional markets and create systemic social impact. Most recently, the Social Innovation Hubs program provides a platform for social entrepreneurs and employees to co-create value for underserved communities in healthcare.



*“Through the partnership with Ashoka, employees get inspired by social entrepreneurs and, in close collaboration with these enterprises, Boehringer Ingelheim can find solutions for societal and healthcare challenges in underserved communities.”*

TANJA VERMEER, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, MAKING MORE HEALTH, SUSTAINABILITY, BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM

## PART III. THE KEY CONDITIONS TO SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

### WHAT MAKES IT EASIER FOR EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE?

We asked employees what is enabling them or preventing them from participating in their company's social and ecological impact. We asked them to choose among a list of nine conditions that are critical to participation in meaningful change at work.

#### Individual Conditions

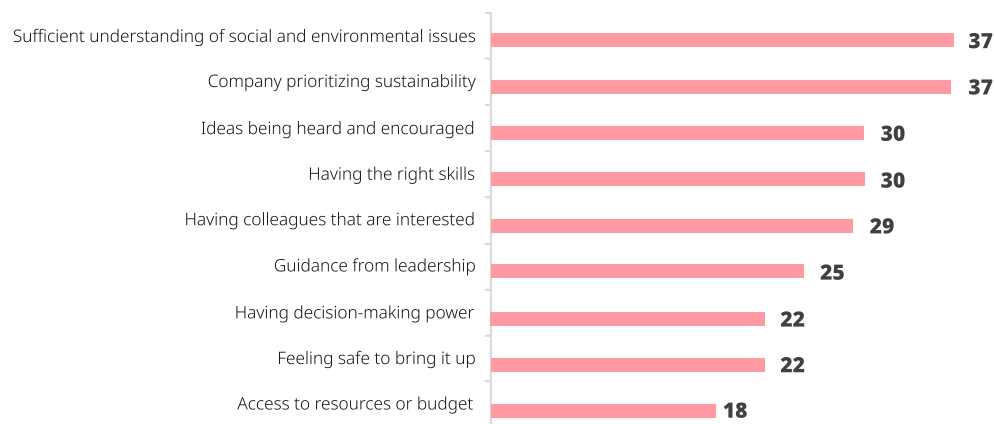
- I have the right skills.
- I have an understanding of social and environmental issues.
- My ideas are heard or encouraged.
- I have decision-making power.
- I feel safe to bring it up.

#### Workplace Conditions

- My company is prioritizing sustainability.
- There are existing resources or budget.
- I have guidance from leadership.
- I have colleagues that are interested.

For the 82% of employees with a strong sense of self-belief, two conditions make it easier for them to participate in meaningful change: having sufficient understanding of social and environmental issues (37%) and their company prioritizing sustainability (37%). These conditions were followed by three others: my ideas are heard and encouraged (30%); I have the right skills (30%); and I have colleagues that are interested (29%).

Although employees may feel a strong sense of personal agency and self-belief, this does not necessarily translate into feeling equipped with the right skills and knowledge nor does it remove the need for clear top-down support from the company.



*Figure 4. Global employee sentiments (“Which of the following makes it easier for you to personally help your company improve its impact on society and the environment? Please select up to three main reasons.”) Subsample: Employees who say they can help their company improve its impact on society and the environment*

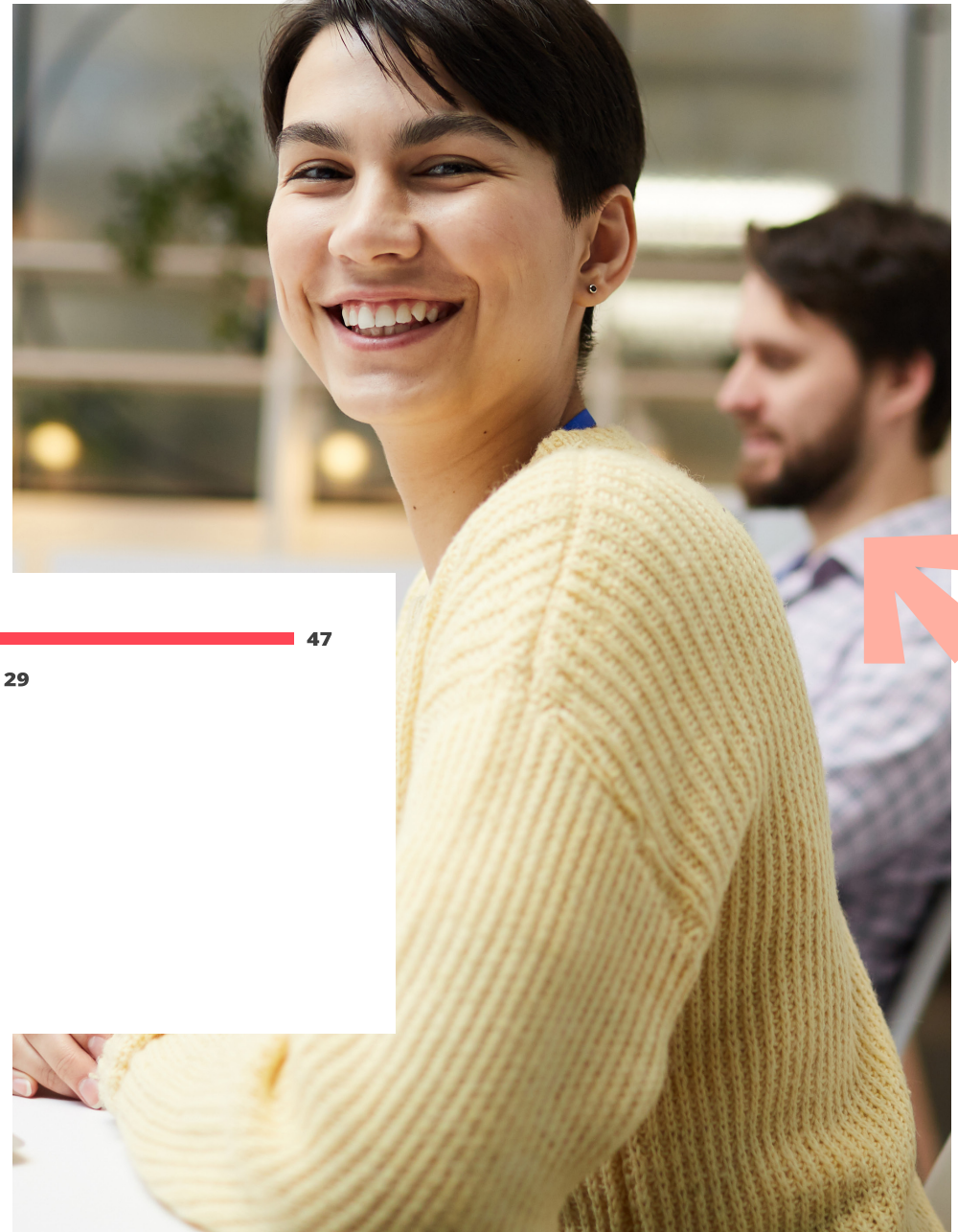
## WHAT MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR EMPLOYEES TO CONTRIBUTE?

For the 18% of employees with weak self-belief, the number one condition that makes it most difficult to participate in meaningful change at work is lack of decision-making power (47%). This was followed by not having adequate resources or budget (29%).

When people feel a low level of self-belief, a powerful booster may be giving them a clear mandate. This does not necessarily require big, strategic, company-wide decision-making power, but rather the feeling that you can effectively influence the conditions around you, in your sphere of influence. This could be your relationships, your teams, or your projects.



*Figure 5. Global employee sentiments (“Which of the following makes it more difficult for you to personally help your company improve its impact on society and the environment? Please select up to three main reasons.”)  
Subsample: Employees who say they cannot help their company improve its impact on society and the environment*



## GETTING EMPLOYEES TO ACTION

Based on an individual's own sense of self-belief (high or low), employees may require different types of support to get into action. This points to a continuum of interventions that employers can offer to create the right conditions for participation, from empowerment up to execution.



### POSITIVE CULTURE AND EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

A positive culture that fosters idea-sharing and creative thinking enables stronger employee contributions to sustainability. Employees value opportunities to lead initiatives and participate in decision-making and they feel more engaged when their efforts are recognized—through both appreciation and tangible rewards.



### AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILL-BUILDING

Employees consistently express the need for ongoing training, awareness campaigns, and collaborative learning to strengthen change leadership knowledge and skills. Access to clear information and guidelines supports them to contribute more effectively to sustainability efforts and take meaningful action.



### TOOLS AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Employees emphasize that access to essential and tangible resources—such as tools, equipment, materials, and budget—is critical for enabling meaningful change and action. Without these supports, even highly motivated individuals face significant barriers to implementing sustainable practices in their daily work.



### ACCESSIBLE SUSTAINABILITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND INITIATIVES

Employees highlight the importance of visible, accessible sustainability infrastructure and facilities, such as recycling bins, eco-friendly workspaces, and energy-efficient systems. They also value opportunities to engage in volunteer programs, company-led initiatives, and business innovation that promotes environmental and social impact.

**EMPOWER**

**EXECUTE**

## HOW **KERSIA** HELPS EMPLOYEES EXECUTE BOLD IDEAS

Through Kersia's Committed & Different sandbox model, employees can quickly test sustainable impact ideas with a clear mandate and a business sponsor. This safe testing space allows teams to explore new ways to improve food safety, reduce environmental footprints, or strengthen inclusion. When a pilot shows promise, the business sponsor integrates it into the wider innovation pipeline, turning individual initiative into group-level transformation.

## HOW **LENOVO** SUPPORTS CHANGE THROUGH COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

The Lenovo 360 Circle is a channel-led sustainability community, built by partners, for partners, bringing together organisations in more than 68 countries committed to accelerating more responsible consumption and buying. Its flagship Guided Leadership Journey cultivates collective leadership, giving sustainability champions the tools, networks, and confidence to act as changemakers within their organisations and markets. Through deep collaboration, shared learning, and hands-on innovation, the Circle strengthens future resilience by connecting companies and their leaders committed to accelerating climate action, circularity, and social impact across the industry.



*“The Lenovo 360 Circle Leadership Journey proves that resilience is not built alone. When leaders come together across markets, cultures, and companies, they unlock the collective intelligence needed to drive meaningful and lasting sustainability impact.”*

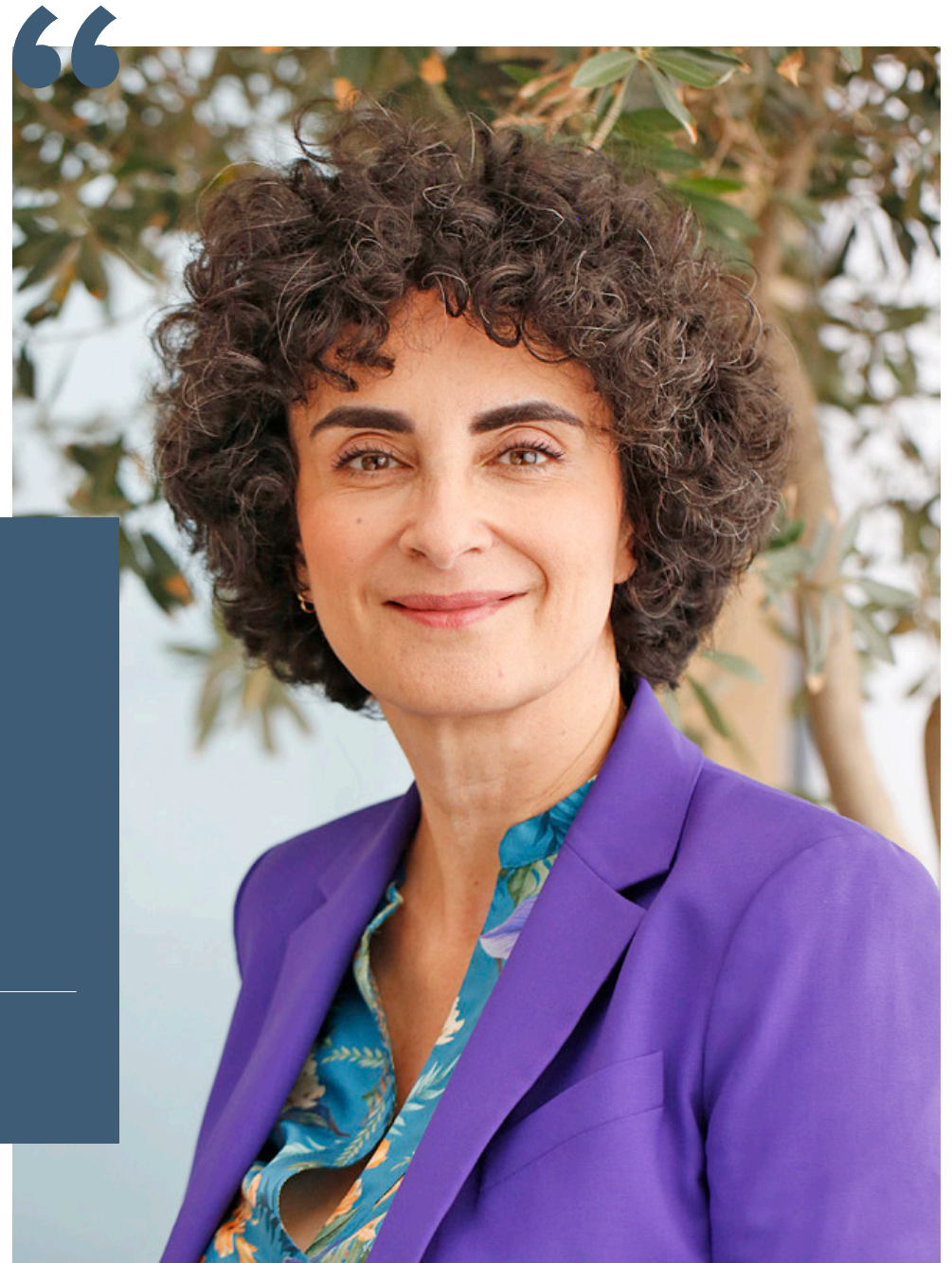
VIRGINIE LE BARBU, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY, INTERNATIONAL MARKETS, LENOVO

## A KEY DIFFERENTIATOR: WORKING WITH IMPACT NATIVES

Companies investing in employee participation are finding success in an unusual strategy: engaging with social entrepreneurs. These are individuals leading innovation in their sectors and fields, but their goal is not profit; rather, they ensure products, services, and solutions meet the needs of more people while protecting our planet. As such, they focus on “social” innovation and are a key partner for strengthening change leadership skills and for navigating the future.

*“By engaging with social entrepreneurs, we’re capturing their way of seeing the world: their ability to see opportunities when society sees problems, and to be creative and solution-oriented. In today’s environment, this mindset is invaluable, and it’s one we want to nurture across the organization.”*

SOPHIE FLAK, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER AND MANAGING PARTNER,  
EURAZEO



## HOW **IKEA** IS BUILDING A MORE RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

Since 2019, IKEA Social Entrepreneurship and Ashoka have partnered with the joint vision of supporting social entrepreneurs who build a more resilient and sustainable society. Through Dela, an 18-month accelerator, IKEA co-workers partner with social entrepreneurs tackling big challenges, like inequalities and climate change. In each Dela round, 60+ co-workers collaborate with 12+ social entrepreneurs. The result is a win-win. Co-workers gain insights into systems thinking, while learning about new markets and business models. Social entrepreneurs receive hands-on support to deepen their impact. Communities around the world gain access to fairer social and environmental systems.

One social entrepreneur supported by Dela is Wietse van der Werf, founder of the Sea Ranger Service, the world's first maritime ranger service. Sea Ranger Service is a social enterprise that recruits and trains young people as full-time Sea Rangers to assist governments and industry with the management, conservation, and restoration of oceans.

“

*“IKEA has played a really crucial role in a very specific growth moment to bring in their expertise and the guidance, especially on supporting us on planning international replication through a franchise model.”*

WIETSE VAN DER WERF, FOUNDER AND CEO, SEA RANGER SERVICE

Christina Enocson, Retail Equipment Manager at IKEA, worked with Rafael Rincon Magro, President of the Social Gastronomy Foundation that is leveraging technology to enhance entrepreneurship and employment in good gastronomy:



“

*“Right from the start, it was clear that sitting on the side wasn't an option. It was all about rolling up my sleeves, diving in, staying open-minded, and really embracing the new challenges that come your way. If you're ready to do that, you'll definitely contribute to achieving great things together with the team and the social entrepreneurs you work with.”*

CHRISTINA ENOCSON, RETAIL EQUIPMENT MANAGER AT IKEA

## PART IV. FINDINGS RELATED TO WORKER DEMOGRAPHICS

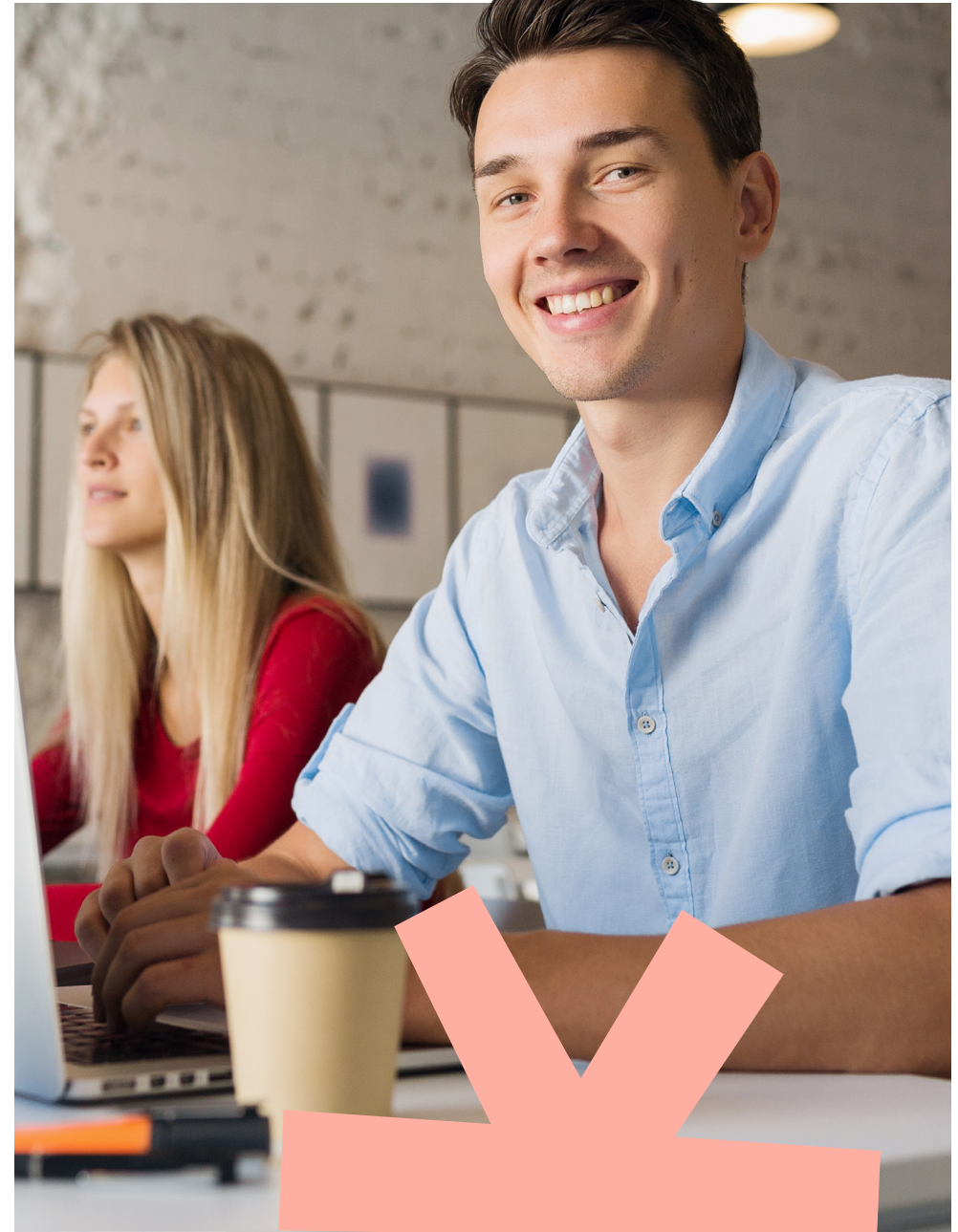
Employee participation has important nuances across age and geography, underscoring that there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

### INTERGENERATIONAL STRATEGIES

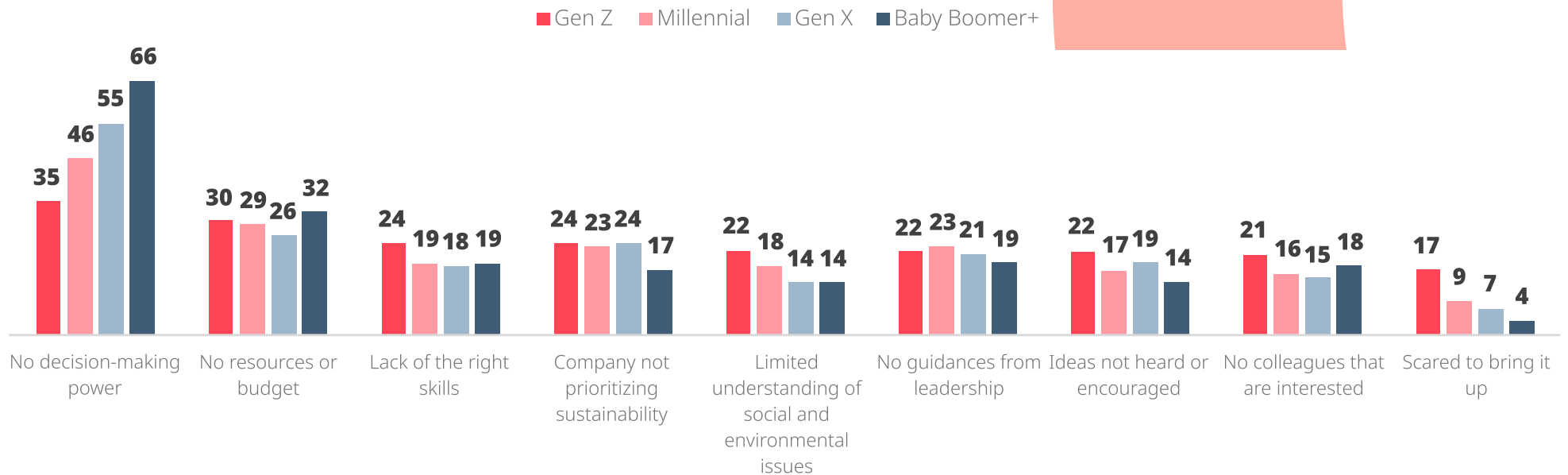
Employee participation is a relevant strategy for companies struggling to engage an aging workforce. Over 80% of Baby Boomers “agree” or “strongly agree” that making a difference inside their organization fuels motivation, loyalty, purpose, and meaning. They showed consistently strong engagement across the 11 impact actions (Figure 3). In fact, McKinsey Health Institute and the FII Institute have found that [volunteering is an age inclusivity strategy with one of the strongest ROIs for companies.](#)

Gen Z employees are more likely than their Baby Boomer counterparts to say that participating in meaningful change at work gives them a stronger sense of loyalty and motivation (50% of Gen Z vs 39% of Baby Boomers). Both generations equally feel the benefits on personal purpose and meaning.

Different age groups also have different perceptions of barriers to participation. Older employees are the more likely to perceive their lack of decision-making power as a barrier to participation (66% for Baby Boomers vs 35% for Gen Z). However, they were four times less “scared” to bring up social and environmental topics than their Gen Z counterparts (4% vs 17%).



**Recognizing different drivers for participation and perceptions of barriers can be a good starting point for intergenerational collaboration inside workplaces.** How might older employees and their Gen Z or Millennial counterparts engage in reverse mentorship to explore together what it means to influence decisions or to create psychological safety?



*Figure 6: Global employee sentiments by age group (“Which of the following makes it more difficult for you to personally help your company improve its impact on society and the environment? Please select up to three main reasons.”) Subsample: Employees who say they cannot help their company improve its impact on society and the environment*

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Regional data also exposes differences in approaches to employee participation.

### Strength of Sentiments

In Africa and Middle East, 59% of employees strongly believe they can personally influence their company’s social and ecological impact versus only 25% in Europe. Reported sentiments toward motivation, loyalty, purpose, and meaning follow a similar trend. When they engage in positive impact at work, employees in Africa, Middle East, and Latin America feel stronger motivation, loyalty, purpose, and meaning than their counterparts in North America and Asia-Pacific.

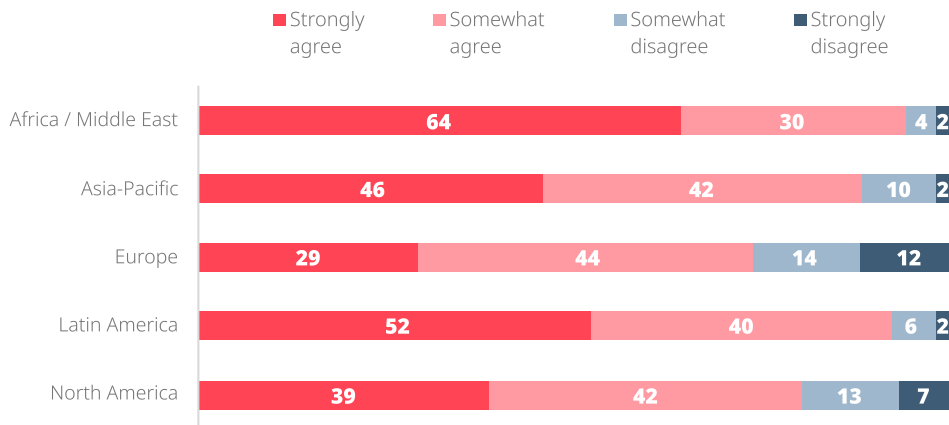


Figure 7. Regional sentiments (“The more I can personally help my company improve its impact on society and the environment, the more motivated and loyal I become as an employee.”)

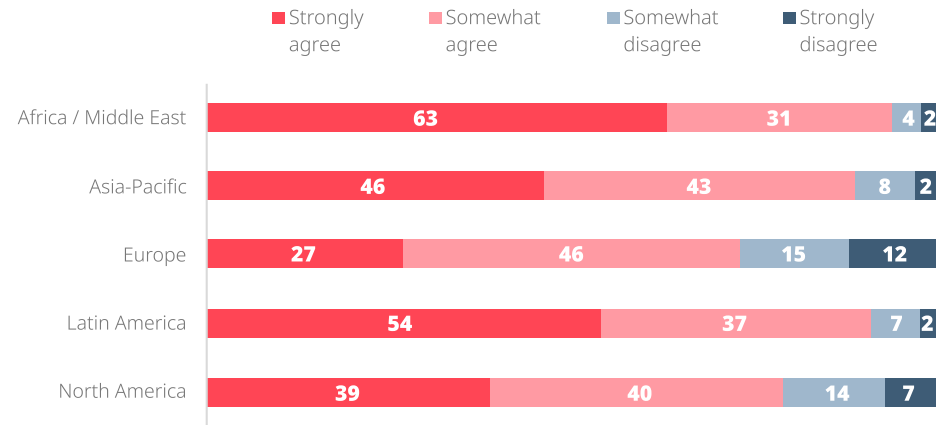


Figure 8. Regional sentiments (“Participating in helping my company improve its impact on society and the environment gives my life more purpose and meaning.”)

## Types of Actions

There are also clear regional differences in the types of engagement actions taken:

- Latin America and Asia-Pacific stand out for following environmentally friendly practices in daily work.
- Africa / Middle East and Asia-Pacific lead on many engagement actions, such as participating in employee-led sustainability actions, using professional skills to help NGOs, and participating in corporate advocacy or activism.
- North America sits at the median for many activities and shows high participation in employee donations and employee volunteering in the community.
- Europe lags behind on most actions and has the highest share of employees reporting “no specific actions.”

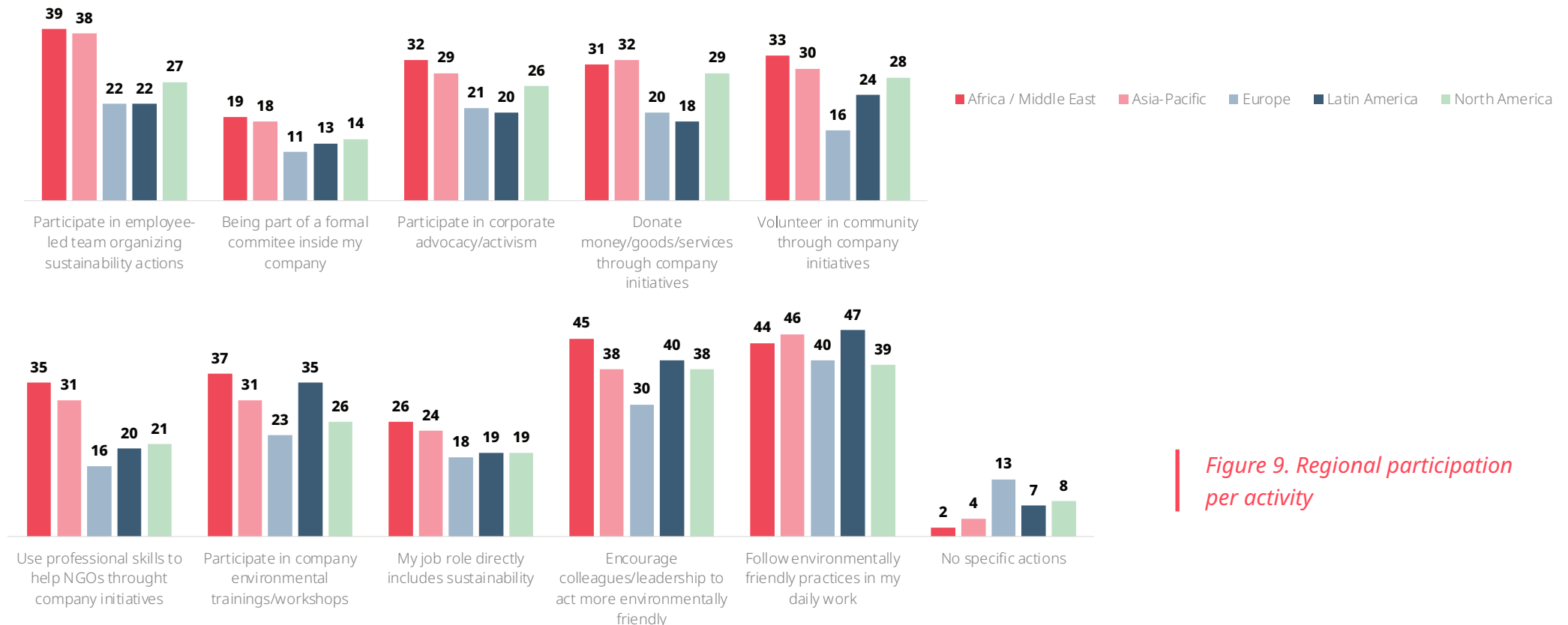


Figure 9. Regional participation per activity

# PART V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMBEDDING EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

Tapping into employee participation to improve organizational resilience requires working across three strategies:



## FUTURE READY PERSPECTIVES

- Spark imagination and curiosity by exposing employees to different ways of thinking about the world, particularly concepts and ideas that they might not face in a traditional business context.
- Offer programs that engage employees with social entrepreneurs to spark inspiration and see new possibilities for bold change.



## FUTURE READY PEOPLE

- Embed these skills into talent development programs and company-wide performance cycles.
- Develop and practice change leadership skills through experiential, hands-on learning in surrounding and affected communities.



## FUTURE READY PATHWAYS

- Develop and offer clear programs and mandates for employees to initiate new ideas for sustainable impact, with different KPIs from the mainstream business.

Concretely, what does this mean for different business functions and types of leadership?

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR HR?

In a future-ready organization, HR isn't sidelined as a support function. Rather, it's a strategic collaborator for recruiting and developing employees prepared to lead and drive change versus react to change. A key differentiator is investing in the capabilities and skills that allow workforces to proactively lead change rather than respond to change. These are capabilities like adaptability, creativity, empathy, critical thinking, systems thinking, and collaborative teamwork.

Ashoka has designed an online self-assessment that allows employees to assess competencies like these and others. Individuals respond to a series of statements and access a dashboard of their strengths and improvement areas, along with tools and courses to continue strengthening their change capabilities. Tools like these can be integrated into employee reviews and learning & development programming to support feedback, growth, and reflection. Access the Changemaker Index™ here: <https://cmi.ashoka.org/en/ForEmployers>

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR CSR AND SUSTAINABILITY?

A future-ready organization uses its employee volunteering and engagement strategies to support workforces to drive positive change. A key differentiator is when volunteering activities align with and support core business priorities. This gives employees a window into the real-life challenges and customer needs shaping future industries. Building volunteering programs with social entrepreneurs can be a sure way to expose workforces to new ideas and novel ways of thinking about impact.

A future-ready organization treats sustainability as a mindset rather than a role. There's a recognition that new ideas can come from anywhere in the organization, no matter someone's level, seniority, geography, or function. A key differentiator is encouraging, sponsoring, and celebrating employee-led ideas, and providing the right container for intrapreneurial spirit and action.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR C-SUITE?

Future-ready organizations see employee participation as a business advantage. When workforces anticipate change versus react to change, this leads to improved resilience, innovation, and foresight.

A key differentiator is leaders recognizing that they sit on a latent asset to drive change: the agency and self-belief of their people. This is a very different leadership calling from the old command and control. It requires activating networks, distributing leadership, and building a culture of ownership and agency.



## PART VI. CONCLUSION

With more disruption on the horizon, a key resilience strategy is employee participation. Companies can ignite a dormant but powerful asset: a sense of self-belief, motivation, and purpose among their workforces. Doing so contributes to employee retention, attraction, and business innovation. It also increases the chance that companies are solving real-world problems in ways that benefit workers and communities.

Future-ready organizations are distinct from their peers in three ways. First, they have an acute appreciation for the competencies required to initiate and lead change. They take a holistic perspective on workforce development by upskilling people on critical change leadership skills, such as self-efficacy, empathy, creativity, adaptability, critical thinking, and collaboration.

Second, they do not do this in isolation, but rather with 'impact natives'. For example, with social entrepreneurs on the frontlines of social and environmental issues and with deep understanding of community needs.

The solutions of social entrepreneurs become an R&D engine for future innovation and possibilities.

Third, future-ready organizations invest in creating enabling conditions for workforces to initiate and lead positive change at work. They offer talent development, training, and employee engagement programs that strengthen people's self-belief and agency to drive change. They create clear pathways for employees to contribute new ideas and perspectives and influence decisions that combine social and business value.

One thing that unites us as humanity is our desire to contribute. Employee participation is a strategy to bring that uniting factor into our workplaces, especially when today's problems are too big and too complex to limit problem-solving in the hands of just a few.



*"Every voice matters. And every person, no matter their role, can lead change."*

SARA BLANCO RODRIGUEZ, CHEMICAL ENGINEER, KERSIA, UK

# ABOUT US

**GlobeScan** is an insights and advisory firm specializing in trust, sustainability, and engagement.

We equip clients with insights to navigate shifting societal and stakeholder expectations, crafting evidence-based strategies that reduce risks and create value for their organizations and society.

Established in 1987, we have offices in Cape Town, Dubai, Hong Kong, Hyderabad, London, Paris, San Francisco, São Paulo, Singapore, Tokyo, and Toronto.

GlobeScan is a participant of the UN Global Compact and a Certified B Corporation.

Learn more: [www.globescan.com](http://www.globescan.com)

## **Tove Malmqvist**

Principal, GlobeScan

[tove.malmqvist@globescan.com](mailto:tove.malmqvist@globescan.com)

## **Natalie Cheung**

Associate, GlobeScan

[natalie.cheung@globescan.com](mailto:natalie.cheung@globescan.com)

**Ashoka Changemaker Companies** helps organizations build future ready leaders and teams, learning directly from social entrepreneurs who navigate complexity every day.

In doing so, companies strengthen resilience, unlock innovation, and create lasting value for business, people, and planet.

Learn more: [www.cmc.ashoka.org](http://www.cmc.ashoka.org)

## **Sarah Jefferson**

Senior Director, Ashoka

[sjefferson@ashoka.org](mailto:sjefferson@ashoka.org)

