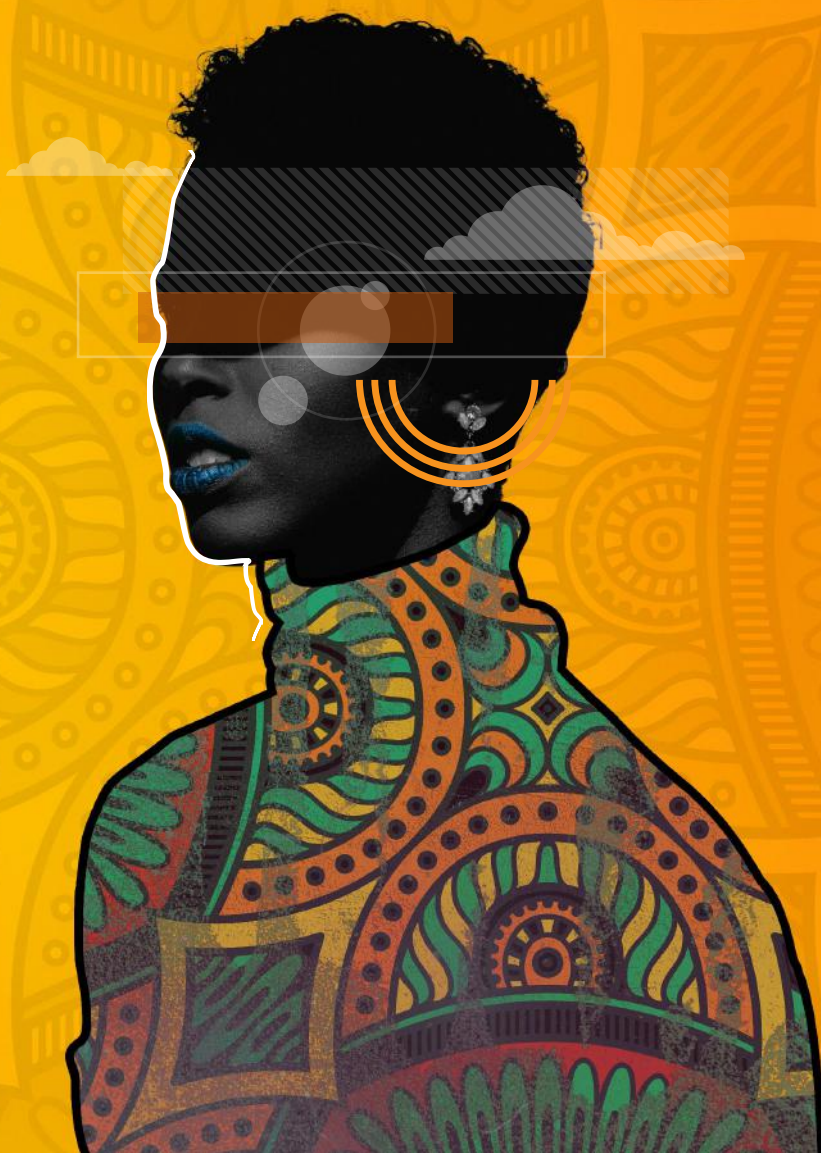


REPORT 2022



2x

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# STATE OF *USER* RESEARCH IN AFRICA



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS



## MEDIA PARTNERS



# MURAKAZA NEZA\*

\*Welcome in Kinyarwanda



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# ABOUT

# US



We are now the largest African design company, with a team of 45 full-time Yuxies between Dakar, Nairobi, Abidjan, Accra, Lagos, Cotonou and Kigali.

We partner with international organizations, large tech companies and amazing local startups to help them build digital products adapted to the continent.



# WHY THIS STUDY

Last year, we published the first *State of UX in Africa*, the first of its kind. We are excited to be publishing the 2022 report.

The field of user experience (UX) research and design is booming in Africa, pulled by the rapid digital transformation of companies and the digitization of international development or humanitarian programs, both targeting a fast-growing and now connected population.

**As UX continues to grow and more people join the movement, we decided to get data on;**

- **Are companies maturing in their approach to design? How do they conduct research? Which tools do they use?**
- **How can researchers convince stakeholders to buy in?**
- **Where and how do designers and researchers grow in their careers? Plus, their salaries!**

Like most of the work we do at YUX, we focused in this study on user research because we think it's crucial and often overlooked when we talk about building services adapted to specific populations and needs.

We want to help researchers, product managers, and designers learn from their peers, improve their practices, and tell their bosses: "let's go talk to some users"!

Limitations: most of the respondents to this study are practicing or interested in user research, so these data are naturally not representative of all African organizations.

Enjoy!

# METHODOLOGY

QUALITATIVE

22 

## IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

We conducted semi-directive interviews with UX researchers, product designers and managers, UX design and research leads, CTO's and design VPs from startups and large companies in our network and from our community partners. They live or work in South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya, Egypt, Senegal, Rwanda, United Kingdom.

We had 1 facilitator and 1 note taker for each 30 to 45 min interview. All notes were taken on Notion and then analyzed using Miro.

We analyzed these insights using thematic analysis and mapping out archetypes for the designers and researchers we interviewed, adding some quotes from our interview participants.

QUANTITATIVE

164 

## SURVEY RESPONSES

Thanks to our community partners across the continent, we reached out to design practitioners in various organizations via social media, emails, Slack and WhatsApp groups.

We got 164 responses from 23 countries with 140 valid responses after screening.

This report highlights the primary insights from the survey responses, but we also added the most relevant comparisons we could find for some of the questions.

Data collection, analysis and correlations were done using our research platform [LOOKA](#) (hé hé go check it out now!)

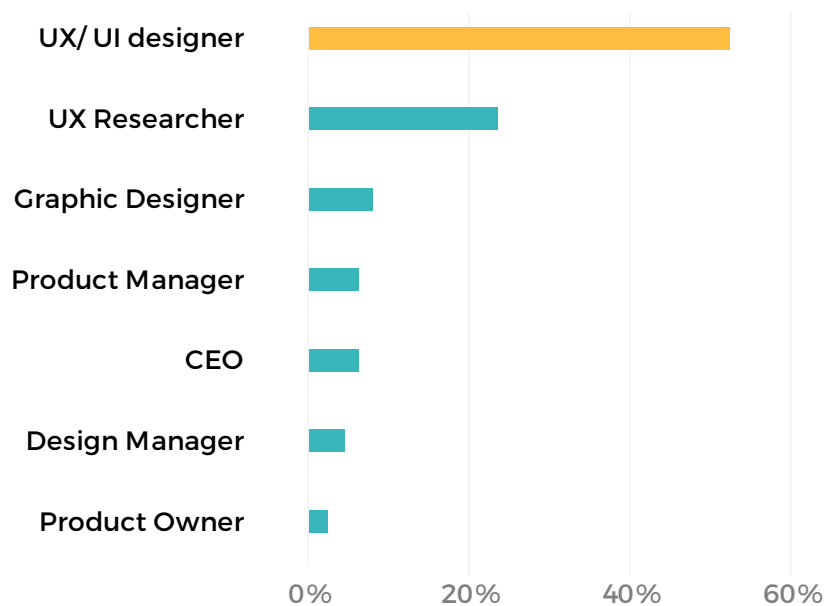


# WHO PARTICIPATED

## WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

From 140 responses

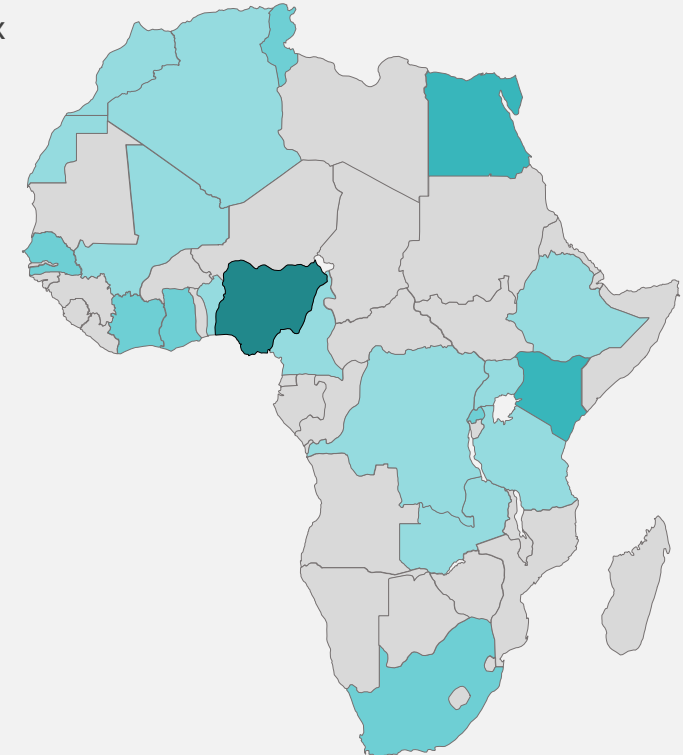
Most of our respondents were UX/UI designers and/or UX researchers...of course! Big up to the few CEOs who are doing user research themselves, you're the future!



## WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

From 140 responses

Good news! User research is now a pan-African phenomenon and there are people doing UX research almost all over the continent now



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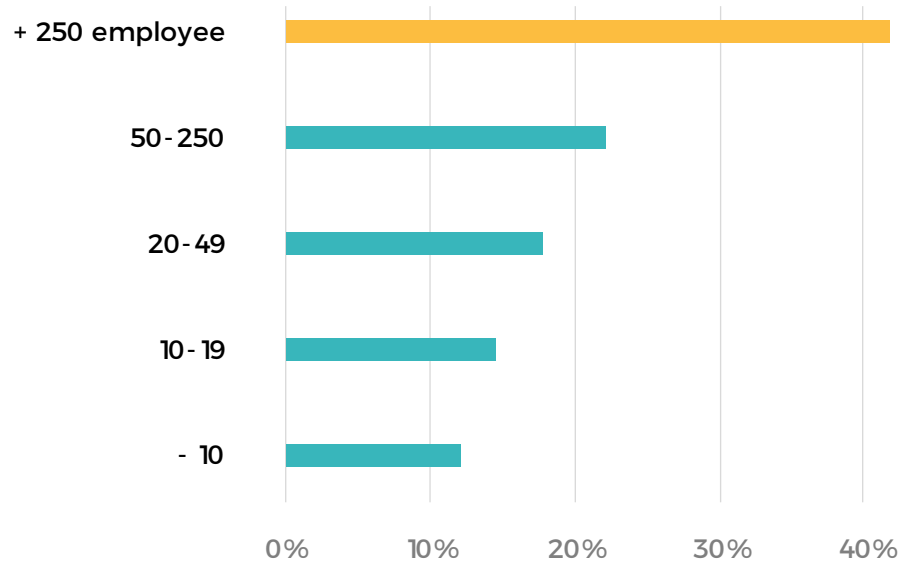
## ORGANIZATIONS/SECTORS

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### WHAT'S THE SIZE OF THE ORGANIZATION YOU WORK IN?

From 140 responses

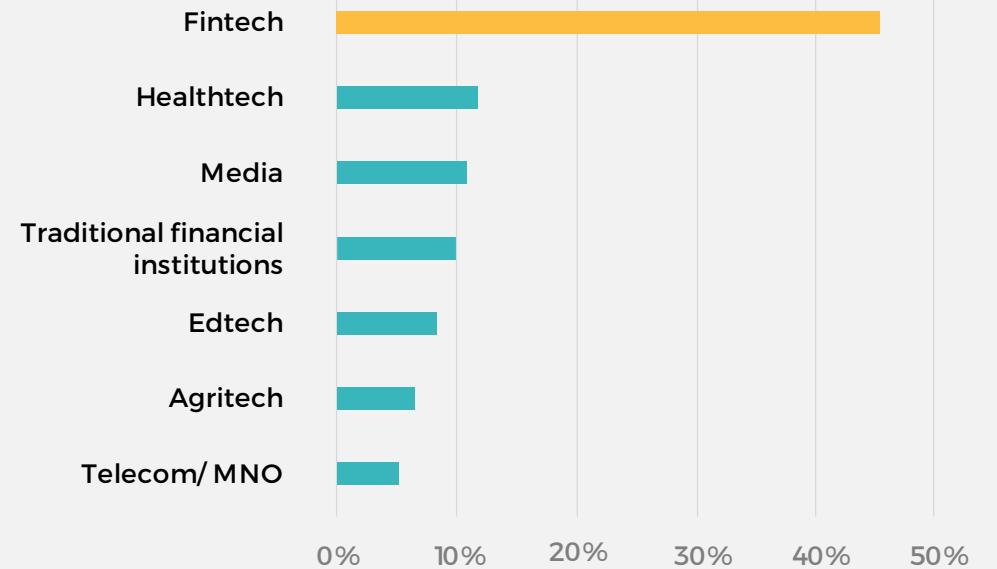
Most respondents seem to come from large organizations with more than 250 employees.



### WHAT SECTOR BEST DESCRIBES WHERE YOU WORK?

From 140 responses

We received responses from a broad range of sectors including eCommerce, Media and Communication, and telecoms. Like last year's report, however, most of our responses came from the Fintech sector. We believe there is a direct link between the competitiveness of a market and the need to differentiate through excellent UX.



# HOW IS *RESEARCH* CONDUCTED IN AFRICA?

Methods, tools and barriers of research have not changed significantly since last year.





# WHO HANDLES RESEARCH

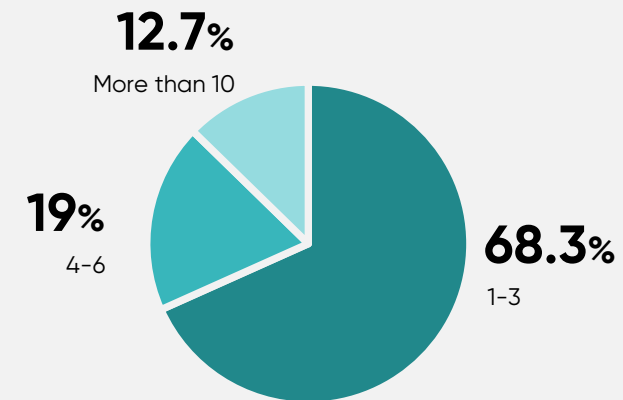
## DO YOU HAVE A DEDICATED RESEARCHER IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

From 64 respondents with researchers on their team and 76 without.



## HOW MANY RESEARCHERS DO YOU HAVE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

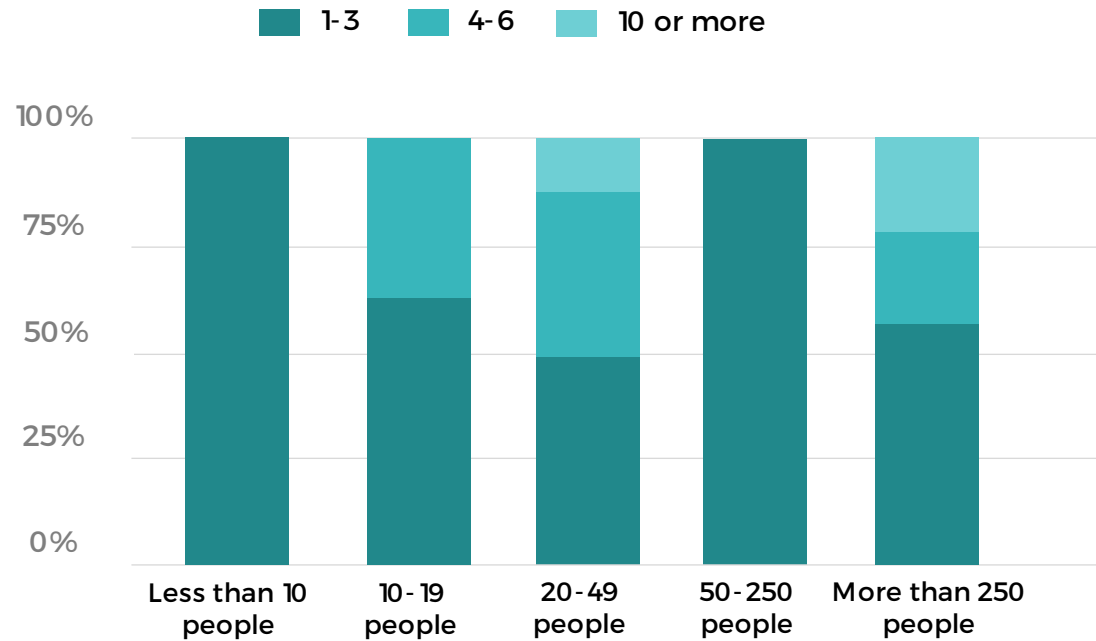
For organizations that do have researchers, it looks like the teams tend to be generally smaller with 1-3 researchers. Very similar to the results from last year as well.



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COMPARISON

## ORGANIZATION SIZE VERSUS NUMBER OF RESEARCHERS

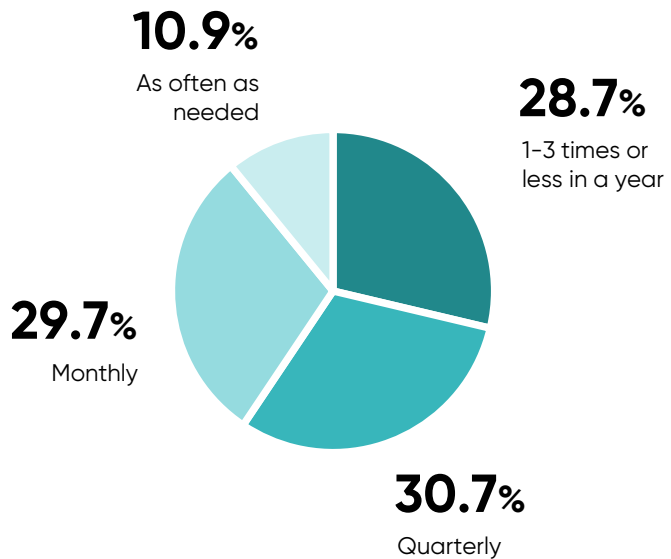


As expected, smaller organizations had less UX researchers compared to larger organizations. This difference could be attributed to maturity level and hiring capacity- larger organizations have greater needs for UX researchers compared to smaller organizations. This was the same trend seen last year.

However, we had some strange insight here from organizations with 50 to 250 people. Maybe a lack of sizable data or maybe a real challenge for mid-size companies growing fast to grow the research team.

# HOW RESEARCH IS DONE

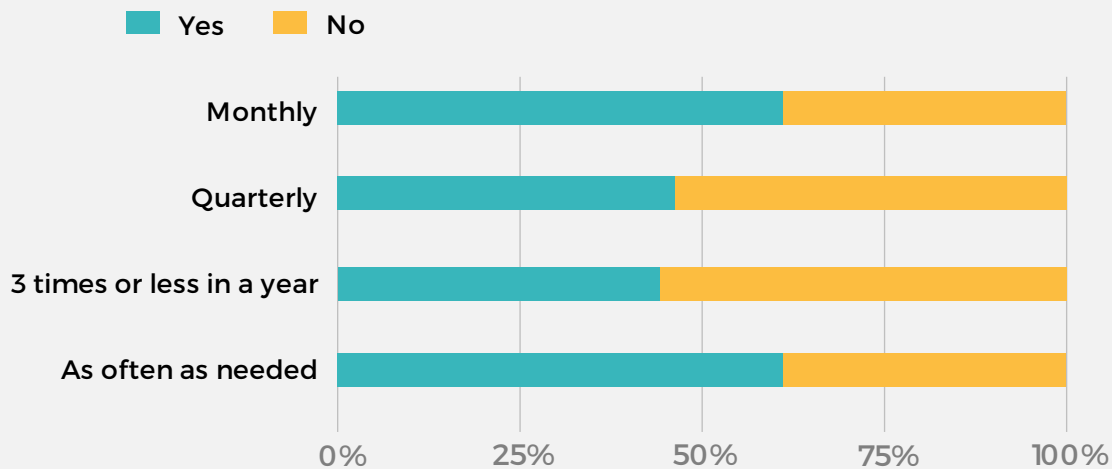
## HOW OFTEN IS RESEARCH CONDUCTED?



### COMPARISON

## HOW OFTEN IS RESEARCH CONDUCTED VERSUS DO YOU HAVE A UX RESEARCHER ON YOUR TEAM?

Companies with dedicated UX researchers tend to conduct research on a more regular basis compared to companies without. This makes a case for hiring UX researchers!



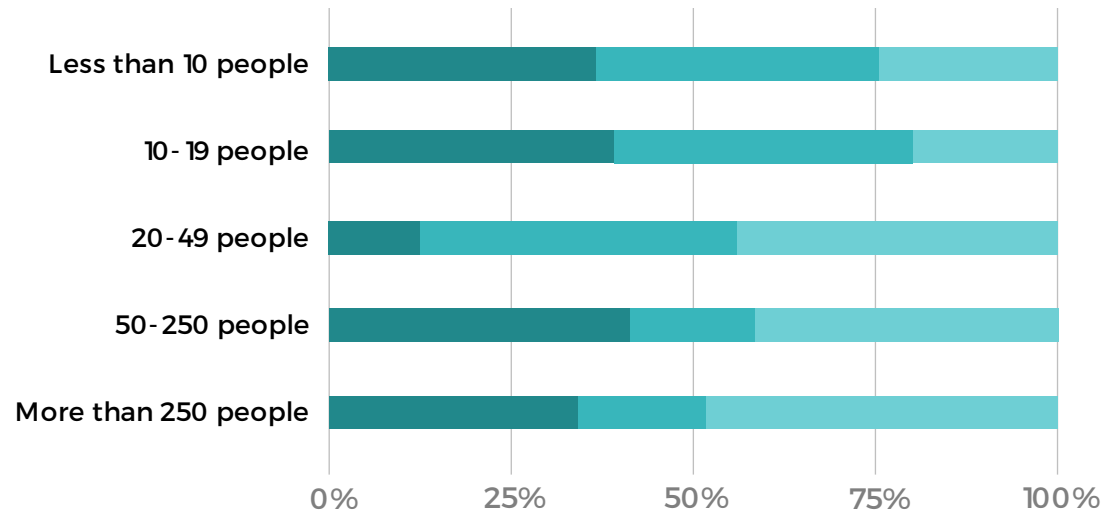
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COMPARISON

## HOW OFTEN IS RESEARCH CONDUCTED? SIZE VERSUS NUMBER OF RESEARCHERS

From 64 respondents with researchers on their team and 76 without.

3 times or less in a year    Quarterly    Monthly



The bigger the organization, the more the researchers available and the more the researchers available, the more the research conducted.

Also, the organizations with 20-49 people seem more "research-oriented" than the ones with 50-250 staff. Quite interesting!

# HOW RESEARCH IS CONDUCTED

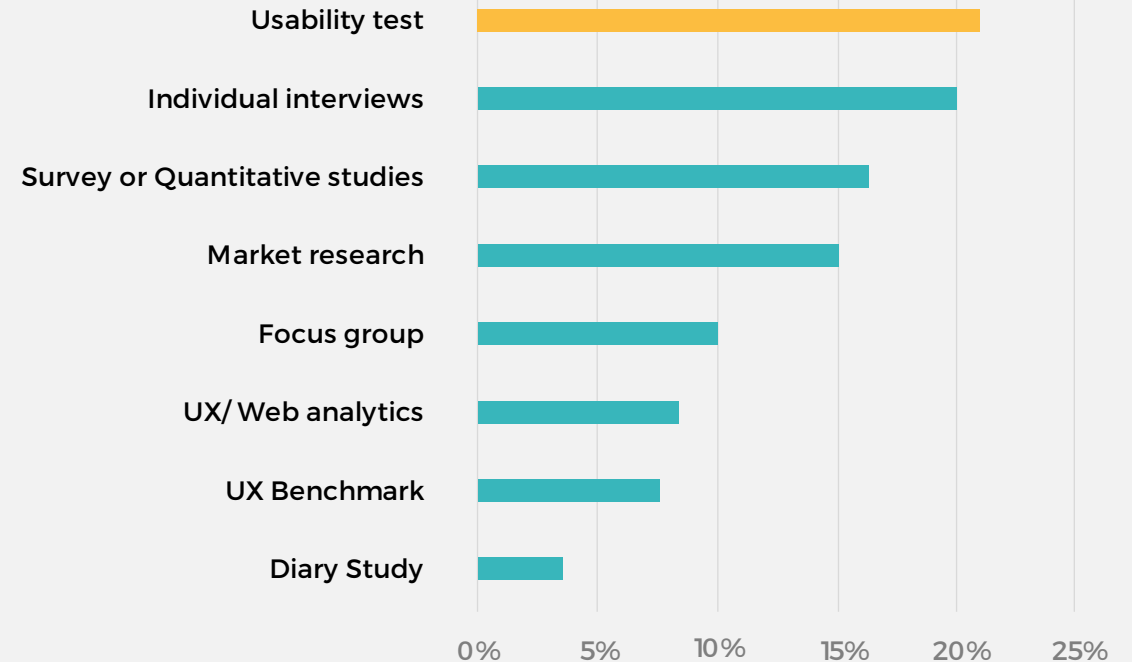
## WHICH OF THESE RESEARCH METHODS HAVE YOU/YOUR ORGANIZATION USED IN CONDUCTING USER RESEARCH IN THE LAST YEAR?

From 140 responses



In last year's report, we found that usability tests and individual interviews were the top 2 research methods used. Similarly, this year, we see that most researchers use a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods for research. However, there seems to be a slight preference for qualitative methods such as usability tests and individual interviews.

Interestingly, diary studies are not conducted often. From our experience, it's usually because it's hard to find a panel of relevant and engaged participants for this type of research.



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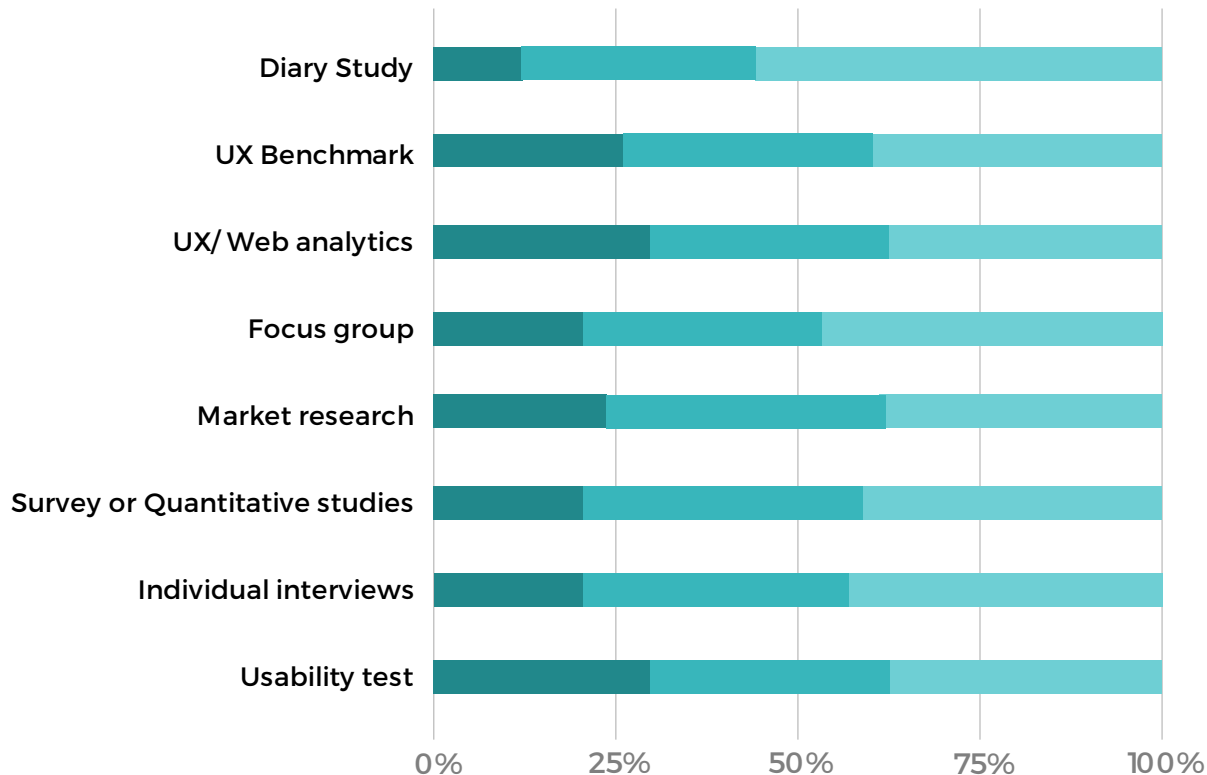
COMPARISON

2x

# FREQUENCY OF RESEARCH VERSUS TYPE OF RESEARCH CONDUCTED

From 140 responses

3 times or less in a year    Quarterly    Monthly



For organizations that conduct research less frequently (3 times or less in a year), when they do conduct research, it's mostly usability tests and UX/ web analytics.

Surprisingly, diary studies may be the least used method but, it's the one used by companies doing the most continuous / frequent research... maybe a lesson for all of us out there!



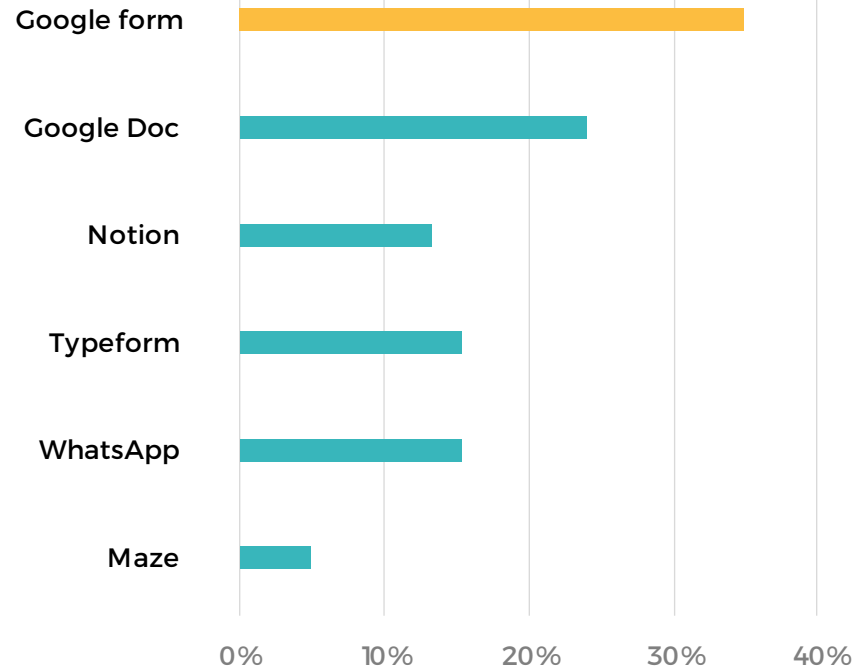
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## WHAT TOOLS DO YOU/YOUR ORGANIZATION USE FOR USER RESEARCH?

From 140 responses



Just like in the previous year, Google forms takes the lead once again as the most frequently used tool for research!



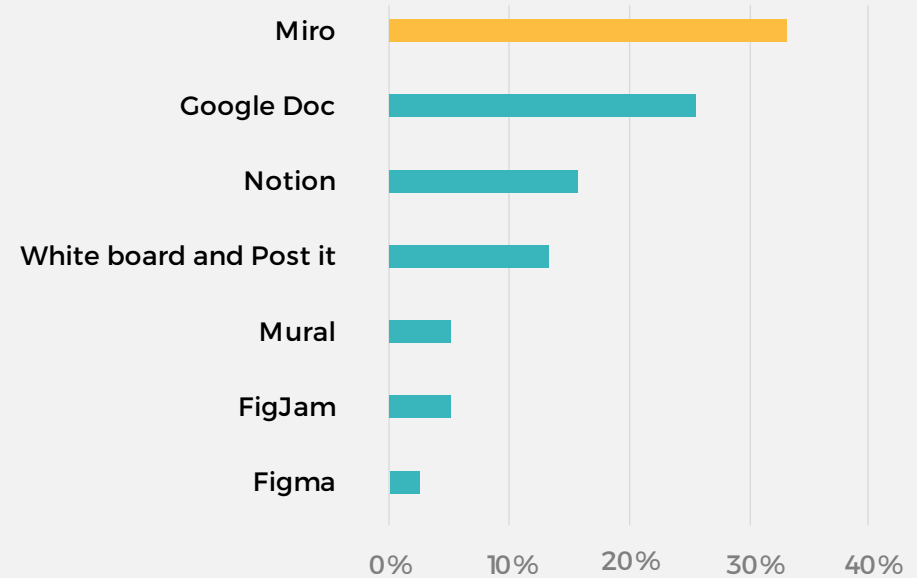
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## WHAT TOOLS DO YOU/YOUR ORGANIZATIONS USE FOR SYNTHESIZING RESEARCH FINDINGS?

From 140 responses

Miro seems to be the go-to tool for research synthesis as it provides an opportunity to not only organize research insights in colorful and interactive ways, but also collaborate with teammates during the synthesis phase!



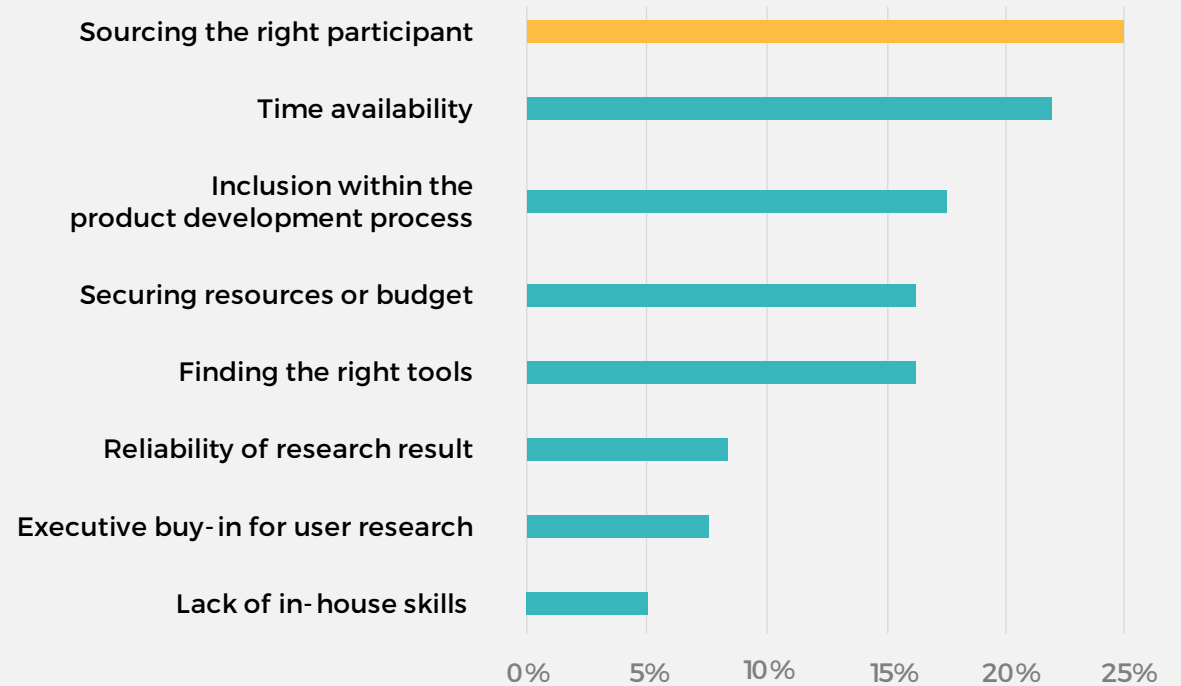
# PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO CONDUCTING RESEARCH

## WHAT ARE THE COMMON BARRIERS YOU FACE WHEN CONDUCTING UX RESEARCH?

From 140 responses



Looks like the barriers from last year remain the same. Finding research participants and ensuring they fit into the right profile being recruited is a lingering challenge in conducting UX research. Time availability, both on the participant's side and the researcher's side is also a barrier.





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# PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO CONDUCTING RESEARCH

*From 22 in-depth interviews*

Like last year, finding the right participants for user research is the major issue for researchers and companies even when users are offered incentives. Plus finding the right availability for researcher and participants.

Researchers need better tools and processes to recruit the most optimal users for their research. Tools like [LOOKA Panel](#) allows you to source the right participants from all over Africa using different criteria and send them the incentives!

2x

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It is always a challenge to find users that meet the criteria. Especially during covid times, there was no means to meet target users who were, for example; low-income earners to test them remotely.



UX Researcher, South Africa

# CAREERS, SALARIES AND FINDING JOBS



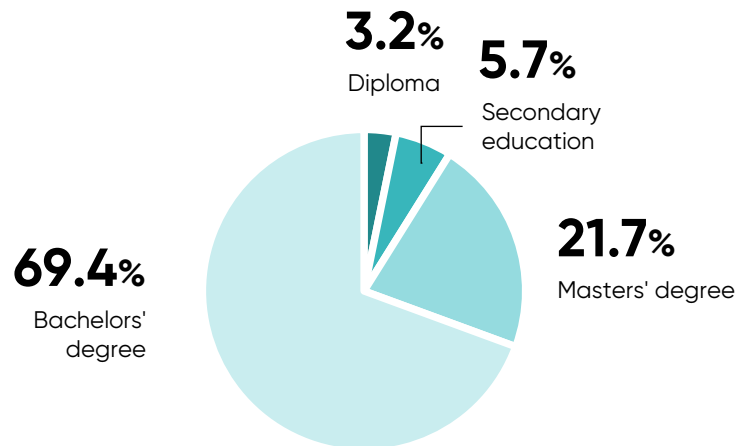
Still a lot to consider



# EDUCATION

## WHAT IS YOUR HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION?

From 140 responses

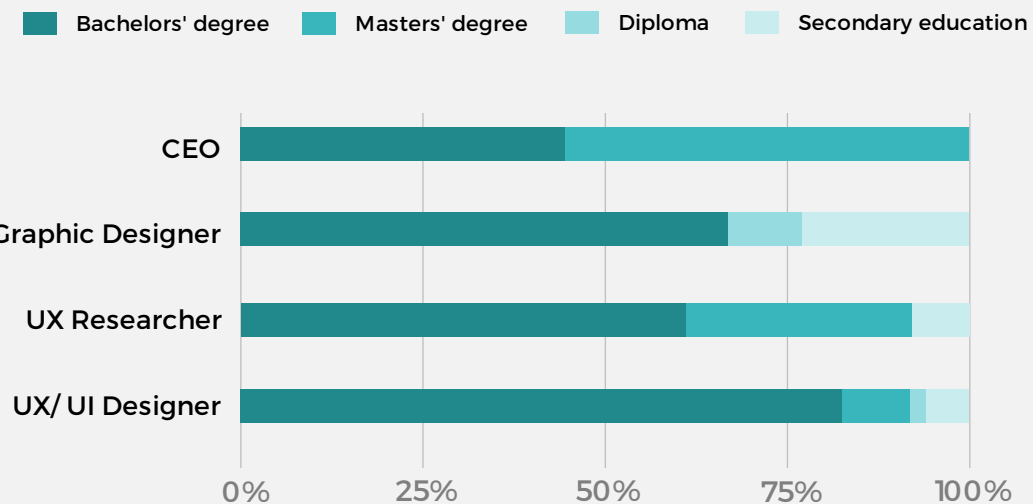


## COMPARISON

## HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION VERSUS ROLE

From 140 responses

Most of the respondents with masters' degrees were either UX researchers or CEO's. It's interesting because it's the 2 jobs for which you can't get a formal degree for! We can guess that education and critical / creative thinking are important in these roles.

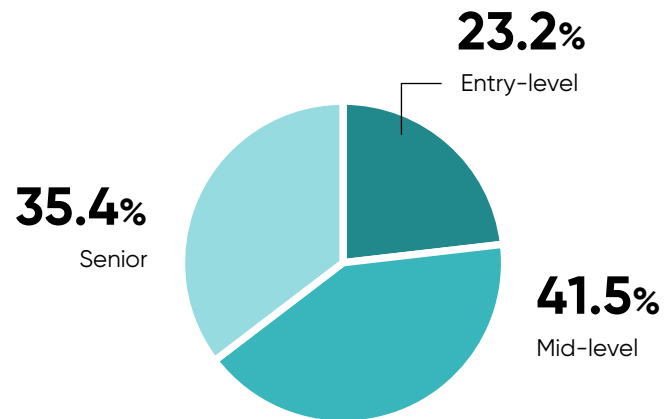


# EXPERIENCE AND TYPE OF CONTRACT

## HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE?

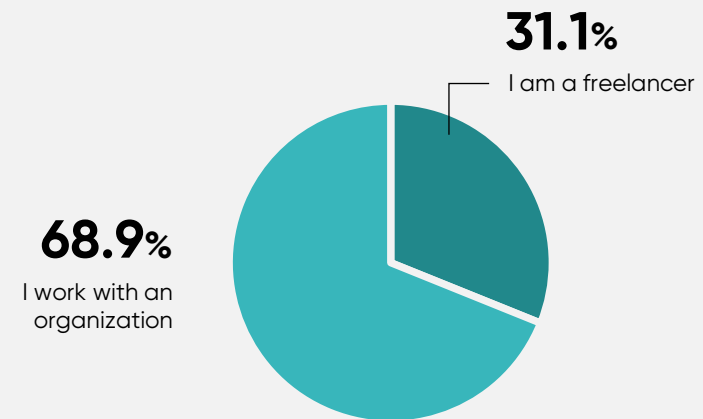
From 140 responses

Like last year, most of our respondents fell under the mid-level category in terms of experience level.



## DO YOU WORK IN-HOUSE OR AS A FREELANCER?

From 140 responses

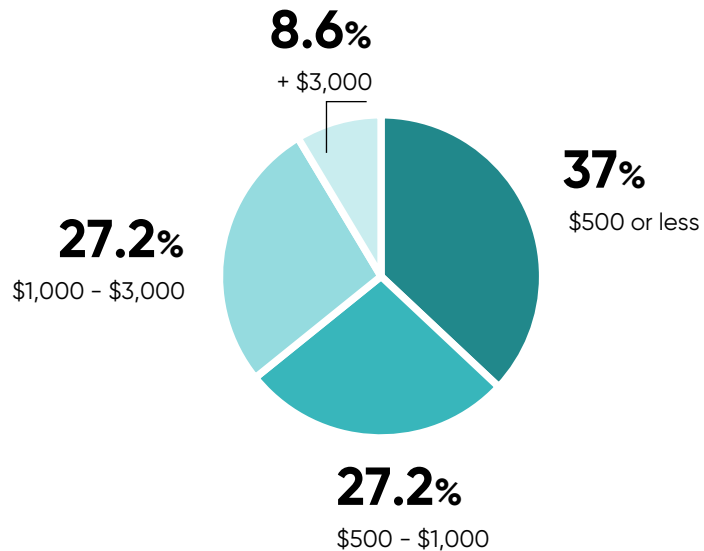


# UX CAREERS

## APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH DO YOU EARN IN YOUR CURRENT JOB?

From 81 responses

Understandably, some people were not comfortable sharing their salary range which is why this question was made optional in the survey. However, we found that a majority of those who did respond earn about 500 USD or less.

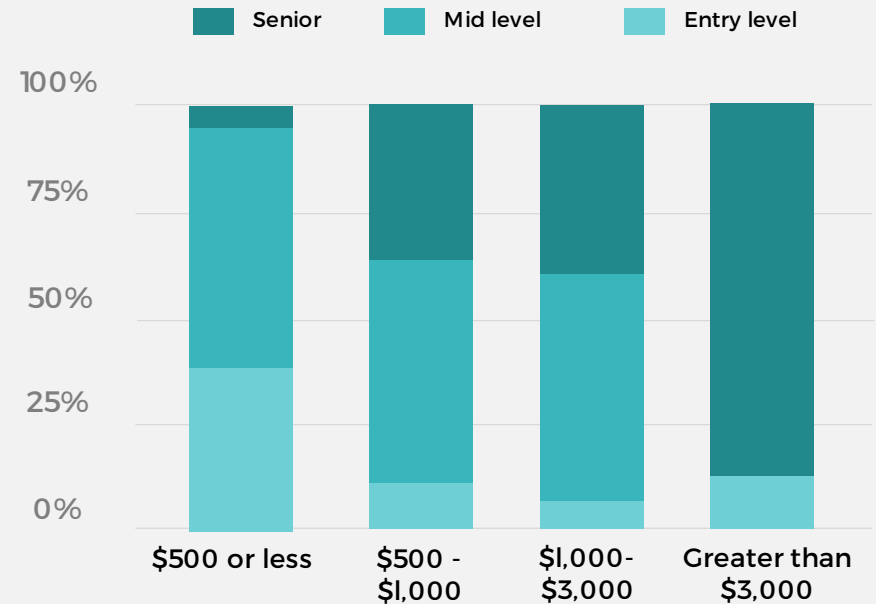


### COMPARISON

## MONTHLY SALARY VERSUS EXPERIENCE LEVEL

From 81 responses

Salary range was strongly correlated to experience. The more experience you have, the higher you earn. However, there seems to be little difference in terms of education between the ones earning from \$500 to \$3,000. Also, it's interesting that we see some entry levels at \$3,000, we could theorize that companies are ready to invest big bucks to enter new markets!



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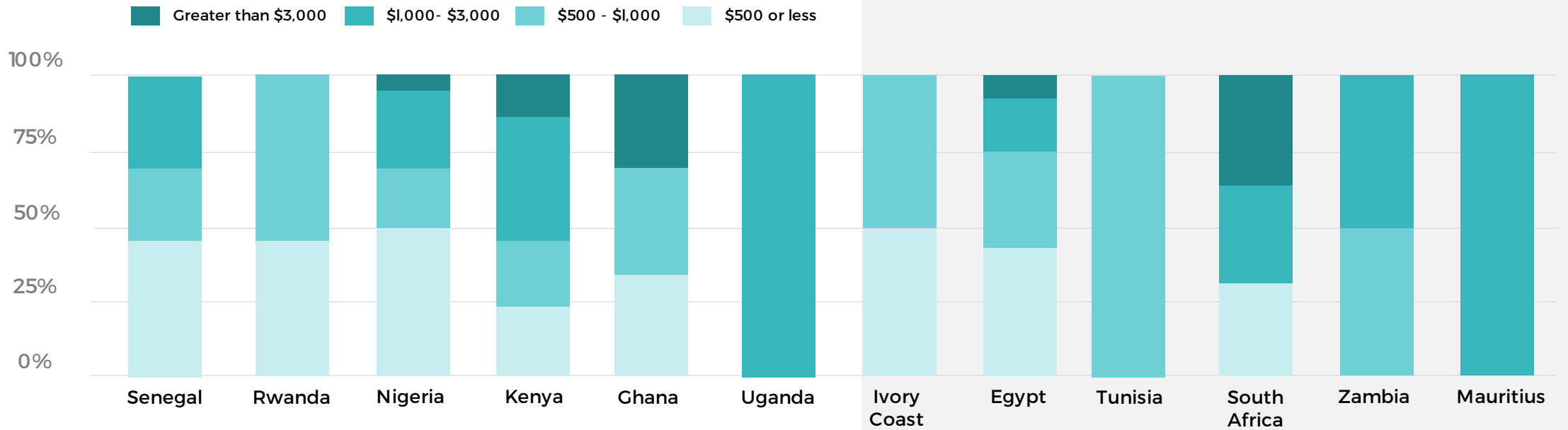
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COMPARISON

# SALARY RANGE VERSUS COUNTRY

From 81 responses

It looks like the UX researchers and designers working in Ghana, Kenya and South Africa are being paid the big bucks!



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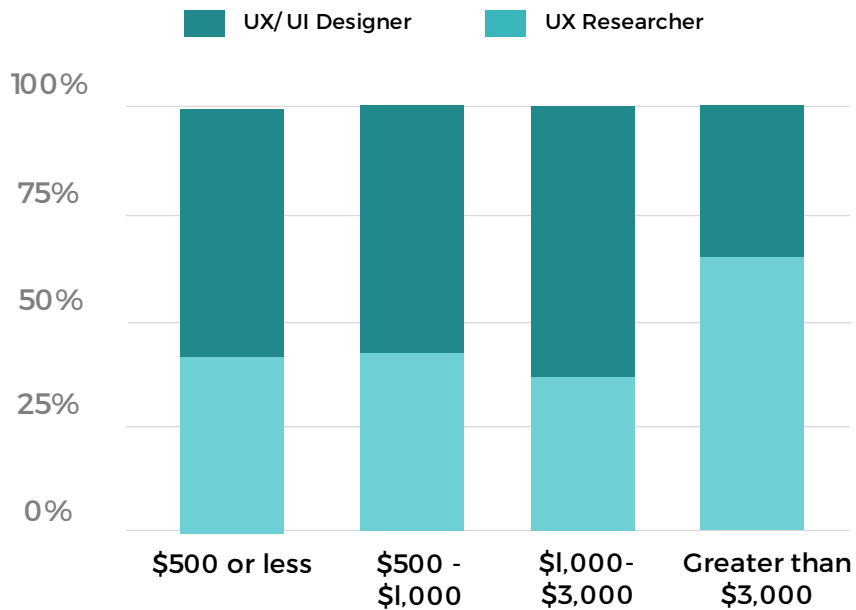
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### COMPARISON

## SALARY RANGE VERSUS ROLE

From 81 responses

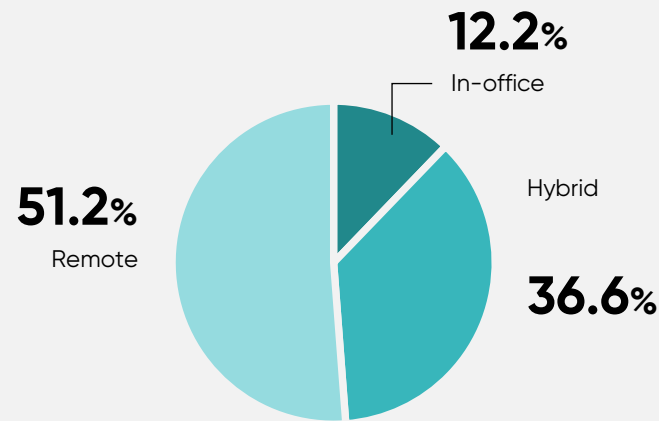
The earning difference between UX researchers and designers is not a wide gap. However, the data does show that UX researchers earn slightly more than UX designers on the continent.



## WHERE DO YOU WORK FROM?

From 140 responses

We also found that most of our respondents work remotely which is understandable given the times we are in. Furthermore, the field of user research and design can be flexible and when possible, easier to connect with your users from anywhere in the world!



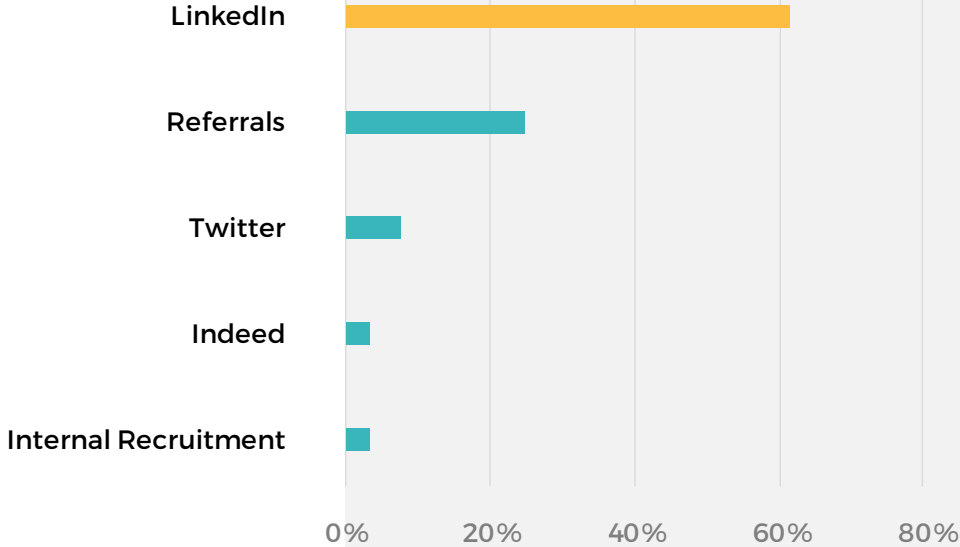


# HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT YOUR CURRENT UX JOB?

From 62 responses (question mainly answered by UX researchers and designers)



In terms of finding a job, looks like LinkedIn is the place to be!





# GETTING INTO UX *RESEARCH*



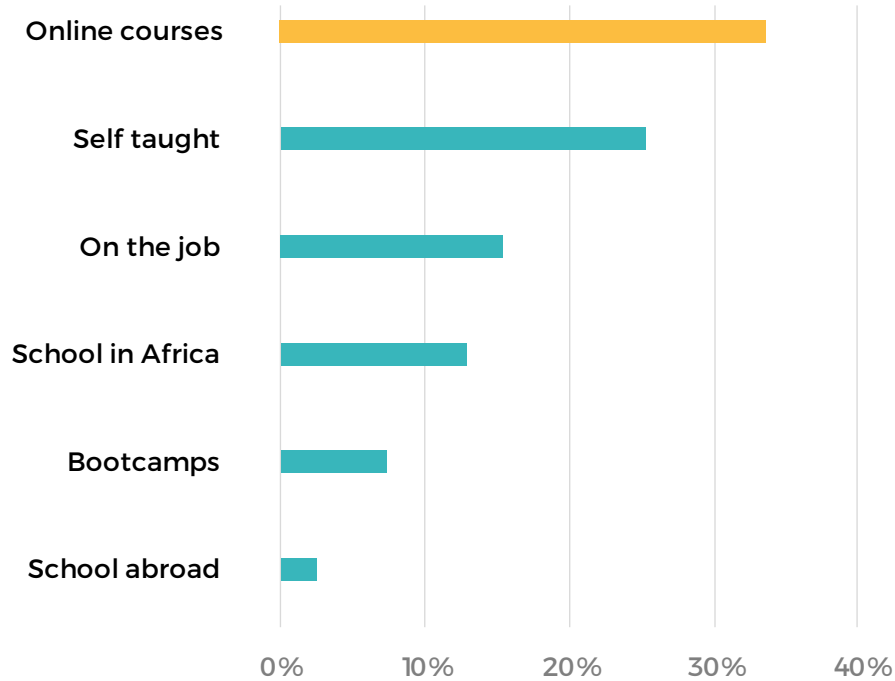
Strong Demand for Practical  
Design Research Education





## HOW DID YOU GET TRAINED?

From 140 responses



Self motivation seems to be a trend as a majority of respondents were self taught researchers and gained training via online courses.

Also, echoed in our interviews was the need for practical design research education. For a new user researcher looking for ways to find structure to your learnings and experience, here are a few resources:

- [The Research Skills Framework by the ResearchOps Community](#)
- Our very own [YUX Academy](#) practical and engaging courses drawing from experience building products for the continent.

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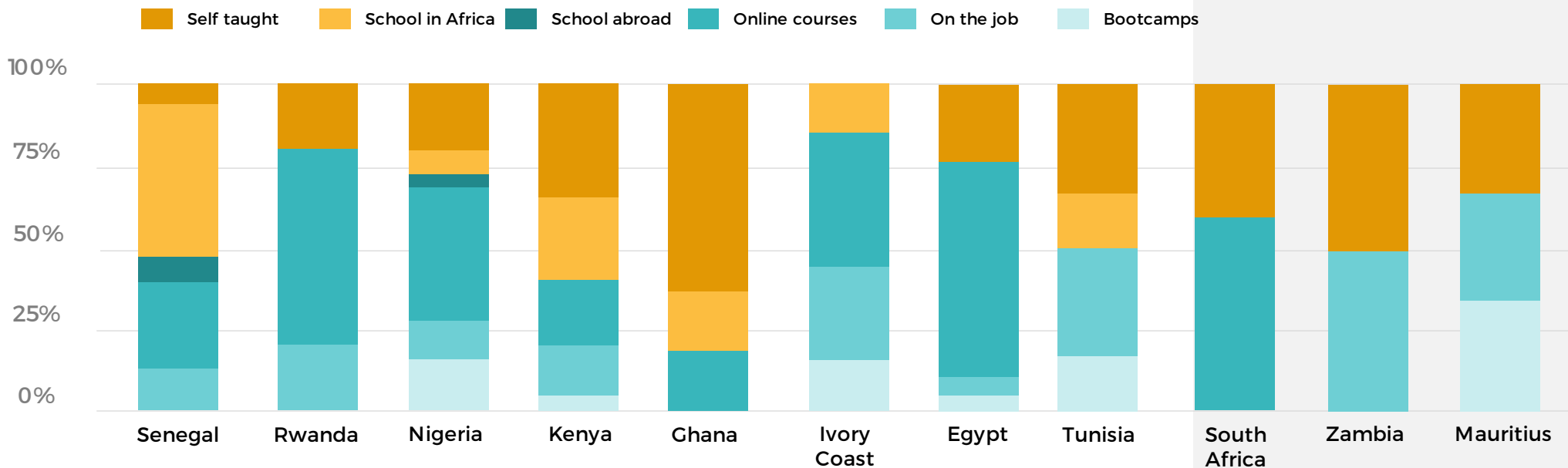
COMPARISON

# TRAINING VERSUS COUNTRY

From 140 responses



Taking a deeper look at the data, we found that most respondents who indicated that they gained training from schools in Africa came from Senegal (46.7%) and South Africa (40%) followed then by Kenya, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Nigeria.



# JOURNEY TO USER RESEARCH



## SELF-TAUGHT



**I found out about UX after university and buried myself in learning it through YouTube, then reached out to learn from others”**

### JOURNEY TO DESIGN

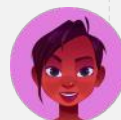
- Started off as a graphic designer and moved to being a product designer
- Prides in being self-taught

### HOW THEY LEARN?

- Learns from more experienced people/ mentors in the field
- Other learning sources: youtube, medium, books, online courses

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE

- There is a gap for practical user research education
  - Online courses are expensive



## ACADEMIA TO DESIGN



**As a result of the pandemic, I have invested in (paid) online and hybrid conferences. They provide value in terms of new things to think of and people to connect with.”**

### JOURNEY TO DESIGN

- Background in STEM (e.g., Computer Science) or Social Sciences
- Transitioned from academia to working in tech

### HOW THEY LEARN?

- Learning by doing; reading articles
- Investing in online and hybrid design conferences

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE

- There is a gap for practical user research education
  - Opts for (paid) online and hybrid conferences to close this gap
  - Reads Medium articles with practical examples and screenshots

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# THE USER RESEARCH EDUCATION GAP

Invest in research education

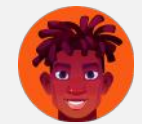
*From 22 in-depth interviews*

There is a gap in the understanding of design and the role of user research. For design leaders, this gap is not only present when they're hiring talent, but also when trying to influence decision makers in their respective companies; there is a lot of education they do as they make the case for design to upper management. Some ways they currently approach addressing these knowledge gaps are:

- Hiring and training based on business needs and knowledge gaps,
- Leveraging organization-wide peer-to-peer review and mentorship to upskill team members,
- Working with design research agencies to introduce research to their team and build competency on these skills,
- Advocating for including design thinking processes early on in the value chain.



**Design is strategy not pixels. A couple of years ago, we focused on service management and enrolled people in courses on service blueprints.**



Group Head of Experience Design, South Africa.

# IMPACT OF DESIGN *COMMUNITIES*

The key to growth



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# COMMUNITIES

## AS...

Spaces to gain confidence in skills and grow!

*From 22 in-depth interviews*

Designers and researchers shared how there is not a specific system to track their growth, but over the years and projects handled, their knowledge and confidence has grown.

The one specific medium that seems to accelerate growth is being a part of a community. Different communities across Africa such as UX Ghana, She Can Do in South Africa and Asa Coterie in Lagos have helped researchers and designers broaden their design perception, taught them skills through different programs e.g. mentorship programs and even as far as helping them find UXR jobs.

Some other communities working to support designers and/or researchers in Africa are: UX Kitchen in Kenya, DearDesigner in Nigeria, UX Salon in Egypt, Friends of Figma (FOF) and She Code in different countries.

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**Being part of a community has helped me see design in a more diverse way, it helps me widen my knowledge on what design culture looks like in other companies.**



Product Designer, Nigeria.

# OUTCOME EXPECTED

Researchers seek impact,  
ownership and responsibility!



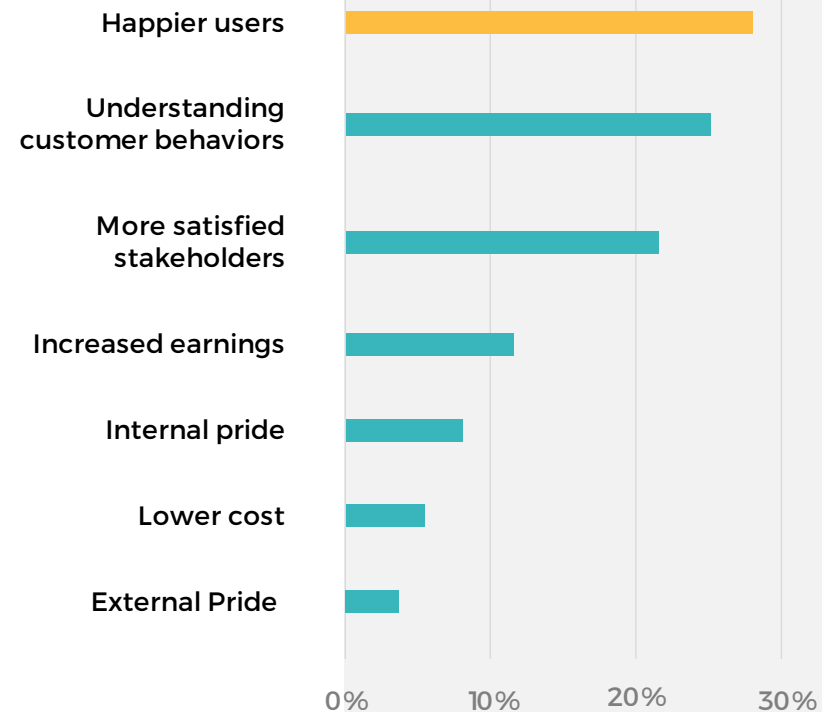


# RESEARCH IMPACT

## WHAT MEASURABLE OUTCOME RESULTING FROM USER EXPERIENCE RESEARCH AND DESIGN ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?



When asked about research outcomes they are most proud of, the respondents pointed out the most significant thing: **Happier users!**



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**IMPACT**

# MATTERS!

Perception of job fulfillment.

*From 22 in-depth interviews*

Across different experience levels, the researchers, designers and design leads we spoke to find fulfillment in their jobs from the impact and influence of design research and strategy in their organizations.

Designers and researchers early-on in their career shared that they find the responsibility and ownership (seeing their products used by people in their daily lives) that comes with their roles very rewarding. The design decision-makers on the other hand loved the ability to give their products/ teams a sense of direction.

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**I enjoy the sense of ownership [in my job]. I get to understand the goals of the product. I also understand the implication of my output and how it impacts the user experience.**



Product Designer, Nigeria.

# ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Different people define and practice ethics differently.



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# DEFINING RESEARCH ETHICS...

Not so different strokes for different folks?

*From 22 in-depth interviews*

Speaking to researchers, designers and stakeholders during the interviews, we observed that there is a slight variation in their understanding or expectation of what research ethics is. Stakeholders perceive research ethics as making sure the integrity of the research is kept. For instance, following data protection laws. UX researchers, on the other hand, mostly, perceive ethics as making sure the user feels as comfortable and safe as possible providing their opinions, thoughts and personal information for instance, iterating to users how their data will be used and protected.

An interesting point of view from the researchers was also the question of **what research ethics looks like in the African context**. For instance, in cultures where people are very communal, giving an incentive for participation may not sit well with them.

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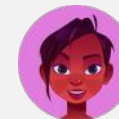


**The methodology needs to be on point and transparent. You need to explain clearly why you are making specific assumptions.**



Chief Platform Officer, Senegal.

**Ethics is making participants safe enough to share as much as possible in terms of consent, location, transparency with data use and privacy.**



Design Lead, Tanzania.

## HOW DO YOU OBTAIN CONSENT FROM EACH PARTICIPANT?

From 140 responses

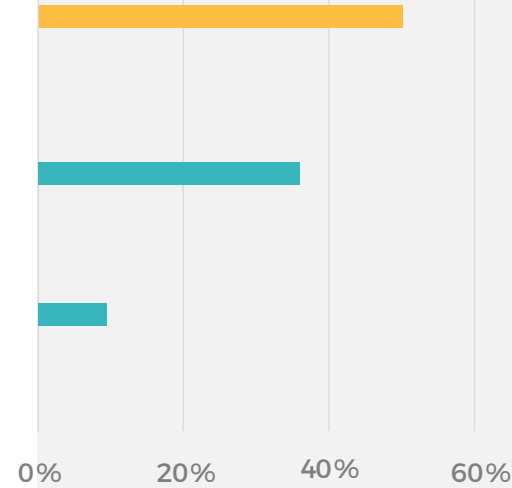
Verbal and signed consent were the main methods with which UX practitioners within the continent obtain consent and permission from research participants. Interestingly, most of the respondents who indicated that they do not get consent at all were UX designers and product managers who rarely/never conduct UX research within their organizations.

Verbal consent

Signed consent

Do not get consent at all

0% 20% 40% 60%



# DESIGN ADVOCACY

Get champions, involve stakeholders and speak numbers!



# GET RESEARCH CHAMPIONS!

Being strategic does help.

*From 22 in-depth interviews*

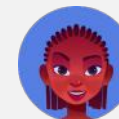
Research needs people to lead to action! Identifying advocates from other teams and in higher positions in your organisation who can speak for the importance of research and your findings in rooms where you're not seated definitely helps.

Having research champions can look a bit different in big organisation versus smaller organisations.

- In larger organisations, it looks like:
  - *partnering with bigger and stronger teams, and*
  - *leveraging the use of newsletter and social media to document research impact.*
- Regardless of organisation size, research advocacy looks like:
  - *having the ears of someone who is a key decision-maker,*
  - *Investing your time in research education for important stakeholders.*



**Having someone in a management role, in between design team and business team; it's important to have someone higher up help you fight that fight with the business side**



UX Researcher, South Africa.

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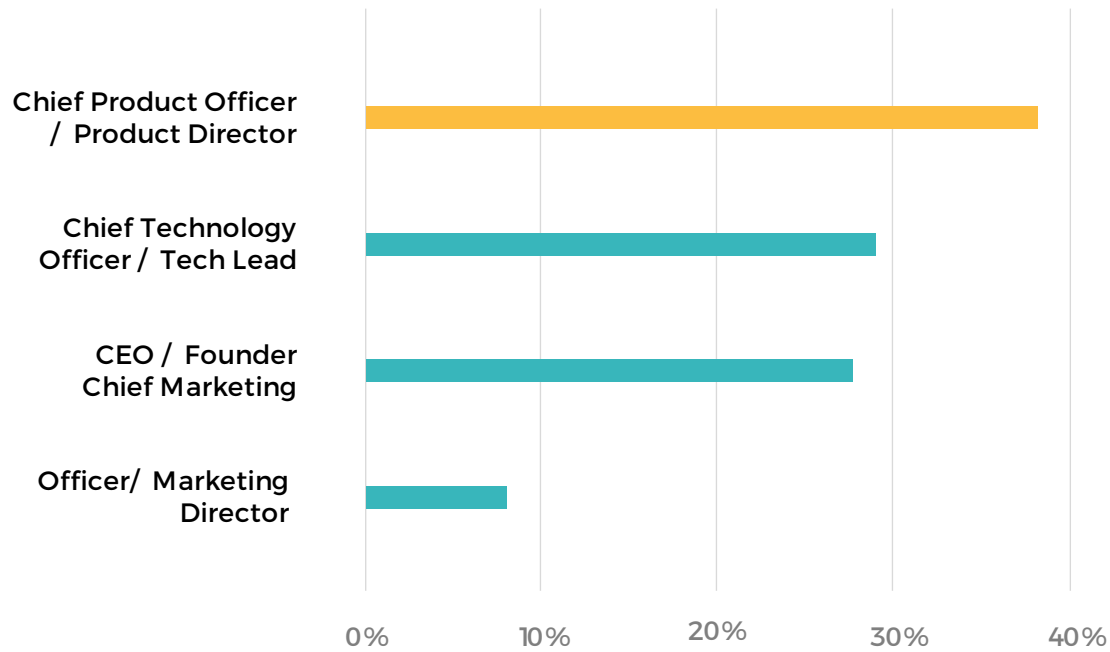
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## WHO DO DESIGN LEADS REPORT TO WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS?

From 130 responses



Speaking of research champions, most of our respondents did mention that their design leads typically report to people in managerial positions.

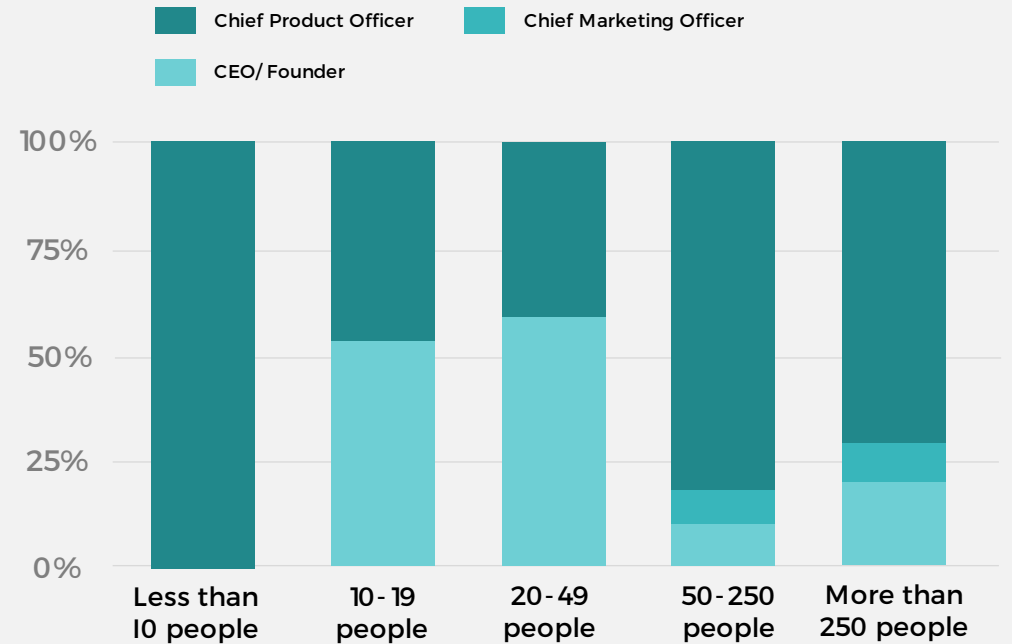


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## ORGANIZATION SIZE PLAYS A ROLE IN WHO THE DESIGN LEAD REPORTS TO

From 140 responses

For bigger organizations, there is often a designated Chief product director or product officer to whom the design lead reports. Whereas within smaller organizations, the design leads typically report directly to the CEO's and Founders. Once again, this speaks to the maturity level and hiring capacity of smaller companies.





# BRING **STAKEHOLDERS** INTO THE ACTION!

Involving stakeholders in research activities..

*From 22 in-depth interviews*

The product of research is the research itself. That may sound a little confusing however, we can explain. The research findings we gather from for instance, listening to our users, immersing ourselves in the problem space and making observations, etc is the product of our research.

Unlike a product designer or engineer who can produce a prototype or an MVP respectively, our research is the product of our work. Involving the stakeholders in the research process can lead to a change of perspective and better understanding of the impact of our work as researchers.

As a team at YUX, here are a few ways we've involved stakeholders in our research:

- Involving them in 1:1 interviews; having them join in to listen and ask questions,
- Having them lead research with your guidance as and,
- Being creative in writing research reports - writing reports that speak to the pulse of the findings. A good way to do this is think "what's the best and most interactive way to communicate a finding?"

Research brings the outside perspective; **It helps us have a bird eye view because sometimes you can be stuck in your business and research does that for me.**



Chief Platform Officer, Senegal.

# SPEAK NUMBERS!

Measure the impact of your research and tie it to the bottom-line.

*From 22 in-depth interviews*

The goal of research findings is to lead to change in organizations and to achieve this, you need decision-makers on your side.

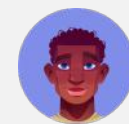
A recurring point from the more experienced researchers and design leaders we spoke to is that speaking the language of the bottom-line worked.

Some of the ways you can speak the number of the bottom-line aka numbers are:

- Exploring translating qualitative insights to quantitative data, for instance, running a survey to validate your findings,
- Projecting how research recommendations can improve the revenue based on observations from past research and,
- In low design maturity context (especially when there is no experience with research), contextualizing case studies from secondary sources and projecting the research ROI.



**Data and numbers work. To make a case for the research, you must predict the impact of research, e.g., if we fix these problems, we will increase our revenue by XYZ**



UX Manager, South Africa

# CONCLUSIONS & LOOKING FORWARD



2x

# USER RESEARCH CONTINUES TO **GROW** **STEADILY...**

User research in Africa continues to steadily grow with South Africa leading the market. Researchers and designers still face the same challenges as last year such as: participant recruitment, time availability and finding the right time to include research in the product process. Stakeholder buy-in is also still a problem, however UX researchers and UX leads have found creative strategies within their respective companies to convince them.

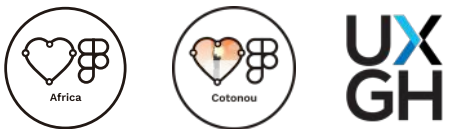
Although these challenges continue to persist, this report shows that there has indeed been some growth within the UX research and design field since last year such as new and cool tools to use.

As the user research market is maturing, more and more researchers are speaking about the broad topic of ethics and ethical considerations throughout the research process from consent, incentives, to use of data and the best practices!

**But don't worry, you're not alone! The entire team at YUX, our community partners, and more local design agencies are here to support you wherever you are on this continent!**

# THANK YOU TO...

## OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Dear Designer



- Fof Africa
- Fof Cotonou
- UX Ghana
- UX Kitchen Nairobi
- ASA Coterie
- She Code Africa
- Dear Designer
- UX Salon
- UX Joburg
- UX South-Africa

## OUR MEDIA PARTNERS



- Built in Africa
- Design Whine
- UX Tweak
- TechCabal Insights

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- Gabriel Escalante - Wikimedia, Mexico
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- Mandé Mory Bah - Dalberg Design, Senegal
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- Richard Rusa - Irembo, Rwanda
- Karen Onigbinde - Piggyvest, Nigeria
- Ted Oladele - Flutterwave, Nigeria
- Amy Robinson- myAgro, Senegal
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- Ariyike Adetimehin - Mono, Nigeria
- Debbie Adejumo - Ramani, Tanzania
- Uchechukwu Onyeka - Meta, United Kingdom
- Muhammad Elsayed - Matjrah, Egypt
- John Ohio - SeamlessHR, Nigeria
- Edem Fiadjoe - Maono, Togo

# BIG UP TO OUR TEAM!

From community outreach to engagement, speaking to design leaders, analyzing the survey and putting this report together, this amazing team at YUX made this year's report a success.



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# African Digital Experiences, Created Together

YUX.DESIGN

## UPCOMING REPORTS

- Managing creatives in African organizations - March 2023
- Teenagers' digital behaviors in Africa - May 2023

# LET'S TALK



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