Spiritual State of the World's Children

Swaziland

OneHope

GOD'S WORD. EVERY CHILD.

Spiritual State of the World's Children
A Qualitative Study

Swaziland

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ONEHOPE

OneHope is a non-profit organization with a mission to *affect destiny by providing God's eternal Word to all the children and youth of the world.* With programs in over 125 nations OneHope has reached over 500 million children and young people with a special presentation of the life of Jesus. Committed to presenting God's Word in a format that is relevant and dynamic, research is a critical step in the development of Swaziland and age specific products and programs.

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Section I: Executive Summary

Focus Groups

From 10th to 12th June, 27 focus groups were convened in Swaziland. This included groups from the urban areas of Mbabane and semi urban and rural areas of Big Bend (eastern Swaziland) and Sihhoye (north-western Swaziland). This involved four groups of government or NGO participants, six groups of religious clerics or youth workers, five groups of teachers and twelve students (6 male and 6 female).

Key Issues

Strengths & Opportunities: Relative to Youth Services
- Teachers, religious clerics, NGO, government, and students have a consensus view on the problems facing youth
- Children from Christian homes behave better than others
- There is a common desire for assistance in improving the appeal and effectiveness of youth programming
- Youth have a desire for adult role models and express an interest in more meaningful relationships with adult leaders
- There is a high percentage of youth attending church
- There is an appreciation for the benefit and worth of Christian values and character
- Youth express a desire for stronger father and father figure relationships
- There is a willingness to network for more effective youth appeal and programs
- Religious clerics desire and will promote programs to equip and empower parents

Weaknesses & Threats: Relative to Church & Youth Ministry
- Adults perceive youth trends as an opposing culture not an opportunity to make culture relevant for youth
- Parents are generally not involved in moral, character and education formation of their children
- Parents are not physically present in children's lives due to conflicting priorities and fears
- Lack of parental opportunity for better involvement in education programs
- Youth do not have positive moral role models
- Youth find TV series and sports figures appealing
- Poverty and living conditions are incentives to sexual impropriety for financial gain
- Physical, mental and sexual abuse is common in the home and extended family
- Abuse creates an impression that youth are without value, resulting in low self esteem, possibly leading to depression or suicide
- Church programs available for youth are not usually relevant and do not attract un-churched youth
- Immoral behavior: drugs, alcohol and sexual conquest fulfill the need for instant gratification and short term goals, all of these increase the risk of HIV and STD infections
- Youth feel that HIV infection is almost inevitable and are skeptical of the prevention programs
- There is inadequate provision for girl children to be protected from predatory advances and to value chastity and self worth
- Girls who become pregnant are ostracized and treated differently than males who have made them pregnant
- Adult leaders and authority figures, including churches, are perceived as more judgmental and critical of youth issues than supportive of youth attempting to deal with new influences and information

Recommendations

Strengthen Youth Programs
- Design programs to encourage peer to peer influence and engagement in effective outreach to other youth.
- Design relevant and appealing youth programs targeted to preparation for future success
- Churches should be prepared to open frank discussions and dialogue with youth and parents on sexuality
- Traditional Swazi values should be used to design programs for the support and protection of young women

Strengthen Swazi Families
- Equip leaders to understand the necessity of listening to youth opinions and perspectives without judgment to gain a better perspective of emerging challenges for youth
- Prepare workshops to help adults understand youth trends as opportunities rather than threats
- Churches should offer Biblical principles and programs to strengthen marriages and families
- Help youth understand the changing structures and social system for family in Swaziland
- Pre-Marriage workshops to prepare youth to be excellent spouses and parents

Program and agency partnerships and networking
- Encourage networks of youth ministry to provide best practices and to make these available in every community, especially the neglected rural areas

Responses to Research Questions/Areas

1. **What influence do parents have on their children? Is there a difference between Christian and non-Christian parents/families?**

    Across groups, participants agree that parents have the ability to greatly influence their children; however, the current reality in Swaziland is that parents are mostly a negative influence on their children. It is reported that parents are poor role models as many parents are absent from the home or uninvolved in their children's lives.   Government and NGO groups were emphatic that parents allow or participate in physical, sexual and mental abuse of their children causing long-term problems. Boys report that one factor for drug use among their peers is parental alcohol and drug use. Students report that many homes are characterized by parental fighting, neglect, and prolonged parental absences, especially fathers. Young people are exposed to harsh criticism and inappropriate discipline. Boys state that they desire greater openness in their relationship with their fathers, indicating that boys are open to the influence of their parents which is currently lacking.

    Regarding youth sexual practices, young people report that they are unable to speak with their parents about sex and so are most often influenced by their peers in their decisions to have sex. Girls did report being able to speak to their mothers about this; however, television tends to be their primary resource and influence on decisions they make regarding their sexual practices.

    While some students indicate that parents are supportive in their child's preparation for their futures, it was generally indicated that, as a rule, parents do not perceive child-rearing as one of their primary responsibilities and are poorly prepared to engage in contemporary youth culture.

    Teachers report that children, particularly in rural areas, are regularly pulled out of school to assist with family chores and responsibilities, such as dipping the cattle. Teachers indicate that parents are not supportive of their attempts to help the educational and behavioral formation of children and in fact, parents even oppose teachers' efforts in these areas. Parents are often unable to attend school meetings due to their work responsibilities, which results in a breakdown in teacher-parents communication.

    Students implied while teachers and religious clerics reported that Christian home-life is different than non-Christian homes; this is seen in the much better behavior of children from Christian homes.

2. **How can relationships in families and parental influence on children be improved?**

    Across religious clerics and teachers group, there is a belief that parents desire to improve their ability to reach and influence their children to make positive life decisions. Religious clerics report that there is a desire from some parents to be positive role models for their children.

    Teachers and religious clerics said that parents need to open up to their children; parents need to spend quality time with their children and listen to them without being critical or harsh. Across groups, there was a consensus that parents do not spend enough time with their children. While this is due to a variety of reasons (parents' jobs, etc.), religious clerics agree that programs that train and equip parents to address their children's needs within the scope of their reality will bridge the gap between parents and children. As boys state that they want their parents to be role models indicating that they are open to the influence of their parents, such programs could guide boys in making better decisions.

    Parents' inability to effectively address their marital problems sometimes results in child neglect or abuse. As multiple groups report such behavior is prevalent throughout Swaziland, programs that empower and train parents on 1) effective problem-solving techniques in addressing their marital issues and 2) recognizing that child abuse is not an appropriate response to marital strife, are needed.   Parents need to actively demonstrate to their children that they care about them through active involvement in their children's lives, quality family time, uncritical listening, and good examples.

3. How can parents become more involved in teaching their children to make responsible decisions regarding sexuality and abuse?

Religious clerics note that family structure has changed significantly; discussions that were taboo or had to wait until marriage, particularly regarding sex, must now be addressed openly with children in early adolescence by parents as the traditional support system has erode. Young people are exposed to significant negative influences, such as "sugar daddies/mommies" and poorly informed peers. Additionally, pornography and media promote unhealthy western cultural values and international youth trends. All of these influence, challenge and supplant traditional values that support a healthy understanding of adulthood.

Parents need to realize that family structures have changed greatly. Traditional cultural structures in which children were supported by their grandparents no longer exist. If parents do not take responsibility to educate their children on sexuality, children will continue to get information from other, not necessarily authentic, sources resulting in negative consequences for children, family and society.

Religious clerics suggest that churches provide training to equip parents to cover these issues. In addition, children need to know that they can speak to their families about abuse, without fear of criticism or punishment. Government and NGO participants indicate that current outreach programs address cases of family poverty or open doors for access to education; however, they state that such programs are inadequate to fully address the needs of Swazi families. As such, religious clerics, teachers and government/NGO leaders concur that current programs that address health and social needs have to expand their scope to provide more holistic family care.

4. What are youths' attitudes toward marriage, family and divorce?

Boys and girls have distinctive views on relationships, marriage, and family. Young women value marriage for its ability to provide them with financial security. For this reason, it is not uncommon for girls, particularly in rural areas, to desire relationships with financially stable men. In most cases, this results in sexual relationships between young girls and older men. Unlike girls, across groups, boys indicate an interest in casual sexual encounters. Most groups of boys report that there is little purpose in waiting to have sex until marriage. Additionally, most boys report a greater interest in completing their education and establishing their careers than in marriage. This may be because Swazi culture dictates that men negotiate or present the women's family with a dowry as a prerequisite for the marriage.

Girls prefer stable families be devoid of constant quarrels and fights. Religious clerics report that most families are broken and neglected. There is an urgent need to address the healing of the family structure. Boys report that most families are not close as parents do not spend time with their children. In some cases, parents do not provide for the physical needs of their children and young people are forced into situations where they must provide for themselves and/or their siblings.

In Swazi culture, marriage is precipitated by the giving of a dowry. As such, formal divorce is rare as it would require the return of the dowry; rather, married couples separate from each other and remain legally married. These separations, thus, affect not just the nuclear family, but the extended family as well. Girls, for this reason, report finding divorce detestable.   Regardless, young girls view it as a source of pain for all members of a family (i.e. parents and children).   In Swaziland, divorce results in the breakdown of relationships, stigma, and financial hardships.

5. Why do children spend little time with their parents?

Teachers, religious clerics, and government/NGO leaders state that parents are absent from their children's lives. Across groups, there is a consensus opinion that children do not spend enough time with their parents. This occurs for a myriad of reasons, including but not limited to, 1) parents living apart from each other and

their children (in some cases, for employment purposes), 2) children living outside the family home for schooling purposes, and 3) parental use of drugs or alcohol. In some cases, men engage in polygamy and so do not spend time with their children. In addition, fathers may not be involved in their children's daily lives or struggles because of cultural norms that dictate that fathers are responsible for providing for their families needs and other members of the families are responsible for child-rearing. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS has also impacted the family as many children live without their fathers.

Boys also report being fearful of talking to their fathers. Similarly, girls report that fathers are unnecessarily harsh to them. This may also contribute to the lack of time they spend with their fathers.

Lastly, AIDS deaths have resulted in many families with one or more parent missing. Teachers report that up to 50% of children have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS.

6. Why do some youth feel they lack safety or security in the home or homestead?

Youth report that cases of abuse, most especially physical violence, tend to be most prevalent within the extended family and/or homestead.   Across all focus groups, participants report that family members are most often the instigators of children's physical and emotional abuse. In addition, both girls and boys report being fearful of their parents' verbal abuse.

Teachers report that in some of these cases where homesteads brew alcohol, girls are made to have sex with men that come to the homestead for additional family income which can make the home an unsafe environment for girls.

7. Why are parents stricter with girls than boys?

Traditionally, girls have more responsibility to support their families than young men. As females leave the home in marriage, they are considered to be a reflection on the quality of their parents' home. As such, family honor or status is much more typed to females than males.

Girls indicate that their fathers are particularly harsh upon them. This may be due to the potential for girls to get pregnant and again, embarrass their family name.

8. How does peer pressure influence youth's decision making and can we counteract it?

Due to the absence of strong parental influence, both girls and boys report that their peers have a great deal of influence on their thoughts and actions. Boys report that peer pressure can contribute to their decision to have sex for the first time or to take part in unprotected sex. Additionally, peers can contribute to youth's decisions to view pornography or try drugs and alcohol which can result in a decision to drop out of school. Peer influence and the desire to be trendy are also reported as a cause for girls dropping out of school. Cross-gender peer pressure is also a factor in youth culture. Girls report that boys influence girls to use drugs or alcohol, in some cases to take sexual advantage of them while they are vulnerable. Teachers report that students in rural areas sometimes live independently of their parents (that is, without adult supervision) which allows young people to take part in inappropriate activities.

All peer influence is not negative. Boys state that setting a positive example by their own lives is a primary means of encouraging their friends to go to church and stay in school. Religious clerics also believe peer influence can impact children as some churches have incorporated peer outreach to reach un-churched children. Additionally, religious clerics state that activities that are geared towards youth culture can also serve as positive influences on young people.

Additionally, both boys and girls are aware of the negative influence their peers can have on them. In fact, teachers claim that a lack of parental influence oftentimes causes young people to turn to their peers for affirmation and advice. Yet young people desire ways in which they can combat peer pressure. Clearly young people are open to the idea of removing themselves from the negative influence of their peers. While churches have youth activities that address making good friendships, these events need to be less theoretical and more practical in nature to be effective with young people. Additionally, girls report that some mothers

do discourage their daughters from negative relationships. This, along with fathers becoming more proactive in nurturing their son's moral and emotional development, will better equip young people to effectively manage negative peer influence.

9. What attracts youth to drugs, alcohol, and crime? Does this influence suicide?

Marijuana and traditionally brewed alcohol are prevalent in Swaziland. In rural areas, both marijuana and locally brewed alcohol are virtually free for most young people as they are grown or brewed in the homestead. As such, poverty has little influence in keeping young people away from drugs in these areas. In urban areas, drugs or alcohol are sometimes used as a way for boys to gain peer recognition by demonstrating their access to disposable income for these items. Religious clerics, girls and boys report that parents often drink heavily and/or use drugs in the presence of their children. This often influences children to also drink or try drugs.

Most boys state that the majority of their friends have tried or regularly use drugs. While peer approval, the desire to be seen as stylish, curiosity, and the ability to escape one's problems are motivating factors for drug or alcohol use, surprisingly, many boys also state a belief that drugs and/or alcohol can help a person do well in school or become more intelligent. In addition, drugs or alcohol are also used by young men to seduce girls, or to deliberately misbehave.

In some urban cases, after children become addicted to drugs, in an attempt to meet their habit, they may resort to crime to pay for drugs. Religious clerics express concern that youth turn to crime because of a lack of identity, peer pressure, purpose, self-esteem and easy access to drugs and alcohol. Hopelessness and poverty can fuel in young people the need for acceptance from peer groups or use of drugs or alcoholic substances, which can contribute to young people engaging in criminal behavior.

NGOs and government participants believe the use of drugs or alcohol contributes to youth suicide rates. In addition, emotional, sexual, physical abuses are also causes for youth suicides.

10. How does pornography affect young people?

In urban areas, teachers report that students are exposed to pornography through the internet. The internet also introduces young people to sex and sexuality before parents even address this topic with their children. While none of the groups spoke into how pornography directly impacts young people, it is considered to be a factor in the negative behavior patterns of some youth.

11. What are youth's attitudes and practices towards sexuality?

While Swazi tradition values female virginity, youth culture, particularly among boys, does not seem to prize virginity prior to marriage. While girls and boys report that some of their peers abstain from sex, the majority of young people engage in sex prior to marriage. For girls and boys, peer pressure, media exposure, and poverty ("sugar daddies/mommies") contributes to their decision to have sex. Boys report a fear of being ridiculed if they remain virgins. Lastly, curiosity and/or a desire to experiment can also contribute to boys' decisions to have sex. For girls, sexual abuse may also be a reason they have sex outside of marriage.

Boys report that unsafe sex is widely practiced in their peer group. Boys claim a disinterest in using condoms as 1) friends tell them sex is better without it, 2) some believe they can recognize which girls do or do not have HIV/AIDS (and thus do not need condoms), or 3) embarrassment in taking proffered free condoms.

Across most groups, participants' state that pregnancy is a primary factor in female drop-out rates. For girls, getting pregnant outside of marriage is seen as an embarrassment to the family as such most girls desire to avoid getting pregnant prior to marriage.

Homosexuality continues to be a taboo among young men in Swaziland. While one group of boys did admit that some boys do have homosexual encounter(s); across groups, young men state abhorrence for such practices.

12. Is Christianity attractive to youth?

Both girls and boys state that the products of Christian faith are attractive and desirable, but most feel that the current practice of Christianity, as viewed through their local churches, are not necessarily attractive or relevant to them.

13. How do young people relate to churches and what makes them stop going to church or not go to church?

Religious clerics and teachers report that by and large the church does have something to offer young people. Government and NGOs believe that churches are effective in addressing community needs. It is formational for young people when they are involved in helping in community outreach ministries

When young people are fully engaged in the church, their lives are changed. This is demonstrated through changed behavior (noted by teachers), Christian characteristics, and better relationships; however, many churches do not offer programs that attract and hold youth.   Therefore these programs are not transformational.   Religious clerics state that churches need to be more relevant to youth and incorporate music, specific outreach groups, like sports, social or discussion groups for young people. To do this, churches need to be better equipped to understand youth and develop programs that have appeal and the power to hold youth until their character can be formed.

Peer pressure, a lack of relevance in church activities, and hostility by the church in addressing topics, like sexuality, can keep young people away from the church. Some youth report that churches tailor their programs or services for older people and do not try to speak to them in a manner that young people find interesting.

14. How do young people view their future as Christians?

Young people do view Christianity as a factor in increasing the likelihood that they will have successful futures. Youth do believe that following Christian principles and having Christian friends will assist a person in meeting their future goals. Girls wish to marry men who exemplify Christian principles. In spite of this, while many young people admire these qualities, they may not necessarily practice such behaviors.

15. How do local religious clerics relate to young people and how do youth view religious clerics?

Religious clerics find that young people are unlikely to come to them or their wives with their concerns as youth fear being condemned or criticized for their behaviors. Additionally, girls fear confessing to religious clerics believing that religious clerics will make a public example of their behavior. Many young people view religious clerics as adults that they cannot approach because they are too high in authority. As such, many religious clerics recognize that they have to train and equip youth to reach their peers.

Religious clerics want to reach out to young people and boys report that in some cases, they have been successful. Some religious clerics have introduced small group discussions into their church programming to address topics that are of interest to youth. Additionally, many religious clerics have programming that is specifically tailored to youth (including youth services, music, etc.); however, youth report that not all these programs are relevant, helpful or appealing. Religious clerics and youth both indicate that religious clerics are oftentimes not relevant in their approach to youth nor are they sensitive to the challenges faced by young people. Teachers state that church programs can have a positive impact on youth but these programs need to be less theoretical and more practical so that youth are well-equipped to handle negative social and peer influences.

Generally, boys do have a favorable opinion of how religious clerics live out what they preach; yet, one group of boys stated that religious clerics need to be role models in the community. In addition, youth desire religious clerics to address topics such as HIV/AIDS frankly and opening with them.

16. How can we help youth get answers from church to their life problems?

The church and religious cleric must begin by listening to youth, understanding and recognizing that youth are better able to identify their problems than adults. When the church can demonstrate a desire to actively listen to youth, young people will seek out the church. Youth want church programs that speak into their lives and will become more involved in the church when this happens. As such, the church needs to address the real issues of youth honoring Swazi values, without allowing taboo subjects to impede the process of equipping children with an adequate Christian foundation for making life decisions. As the breakdown in families is a concern, churches also need to empower families to communicate effectively with one another.

<u>**Section II: Project Overview**</u>

Rationale for Project

In order to design the most effective programs to reach children and youth, it is important to capture pertinent information prior to commencing a program or designing a new product. Research, gathered through focus groups[1], will provide information on the possibility of improving OneHope's distribution ministry in Swaziland. Unlike surveys, where respondents are oftentimes limited in their answer choices, focus groups allow for any idea to be introduced through the discussion of real life, relevant topics. When seeking to understand the nature and needs of a population, this type of research is best employed by including those deemed most informed.

In this project focus groups were conducted among informed demographic groups; religious clerics, youth workers, teachers, and students in rural and urban areas of Swaziland to describe youth of the region.

1) The biggest challenges young people face
2) To identify barriers to and opportunities for programs and organizations
3) The current environmental realities of young people in Swaziland.

The information gathered can help organizations, OneHope and other project partners, effectively plan outreach strategies and life improvement programs for children and young people that will be relevant and appealing based on their heartfelt needs.

Convened Groups

Focus groups are convened to provide information on the social, economic, and program dynamics of the targeted region. Following a multiple-category design, the following focus groups demographic populations were convened in Mbabane, Big Bend, and Sihhoye:

- Government
- NGO Agencies
- Religious Clerics / Religious clerics
- Youth Workers
- School Administrators & Teachers
- Male and Female Students

Regions for Focus Groups

Along with multiple demographic categories of participants, the Metadigm Group utilized a double-layer approach in conducting this project by including diverse geographic zones within the region. The geographic areas identified for inclusion in this study are as follows:

- Mbabane
- Big Bend
- Sihhoye

Leadership and Facilitators

OneHope contracted The Metadigm Group to conduct this research project. Dr. Allen Reesor (Executive Director, The Metadigm Group), and Reni John (Research Director, The Metadigm Group) facilitated the project in conjugation with Rev. Kevin Ward (National Director, Teen Challenge Swaziland), Magugu Mncina (National Coordinator, OneHope Swaziland), and Dr. Peterson Wang'ombe (Director, Metadigm East Africa).

Allen Reesor and Reni John conducted the focus group training on June 9th and 10th, 2009 at the Emafini Christian Conference Centre at Emafini, Swaziland. Seventeen people were trained as focus group facilitators (hereafter referred to as facilitators).

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[1] 5-8 people who have something in common and are called together to speak on how they feel or think about an issue or idea

Focus Group Composition

Focus groups were comprised of persons of similar demographic and social status. Normally, groups included no more than eight persons and efforts were taken to minimize social and economic disparities among participants. As some participant groups were deemed to be especially information rich, multiple groups were conducted for some demographic profiles (i.e. students).

In this report, findings from multiple groups of a single demographic profile are consolidated to provide a consensus account for that group. However, in cases where there are differences between the reported realities of urban and rural areas this is noted. Additionally, the names, identities, and opinions of all participants are protected so no identifying information of the participants is included in this report.

Format

Each focus group session was approximately 50-75 minutes in length. After a brief welcome and overview of the topic areas[2], focus group participants were encouraged to share their personal experiences and knowledge of the subject matter.   Each focus group had approximately 3-6 topic areas that were included for discussion. Facilitators were asked to facilitate discussions within the group to identify commonalities and areas of difference between participants.

Upon completion of a session, each focus group leader and transcriber completed a focus group report. These reports, in turn, were reviewed by the Metadigm research team for common, reoccurring, and distinctive themes within and across groups.

The findings from all focus groups and interviews are included in this report.

Schedule for Data Collection

In February 2009 meetings were convened in various regions to present the proposed research project and invite organizations to participate. The topics for focus group discussion were set by the facilitators during the training and the research questions reviewed and modified.

Focus groups were organized under the supervision of Magugu Mncina with assistance from Nomfanelo Msibi and Bongani Langa. The organizations involved in Teen Challenge Swaziland, Child Evangelism Fellowship, YWAM, Scripture Union, Children's Cup, Church Forum, Assemblies of God, and Samaritan's Purse.

The following people served as focus group facilitators and transcribers: Agrineth Masuku, Bongani Langa, Emelda Dlamini, Gcina Gumedze, Lungile Methula, Magugu Mncina, Manqoba Magagula, Manqoba Mahhomane, Matthew Nushaba, Mongie Simelane, Nomfanelo Msibi, Sabelo Mkhaliphi, Senzo Sacolo, Simon Mpofu, Welile Langa, and Wilson Vilakati.

The draft report was completed on June 16, 2009. The draft version was reviewed by key personnel knowledgeable of and/or working with children and youth in Swaziland. This included John Hlophe (Ministry of Education, HIV/AIDS Education Coordinator), Mrs. Futhi Langa (NERCHA, Behavioral Change Coordinator),Dr. Derrick Van Wissel (NERCHA, Executive Director), Mrs. T. Nkambule (SWANNEPHA), Mr. Ben Rodgers (Children's Cup, Director), Dr. Mazibuka (Conference of Churches, President), Rev. Samuel Dlamini (IMAG Superintendant), and Rev. Stanley Drew (IMAG, MF Director).   Any comments and corrections from these experts are incorporated into the final report.

Data Analysis and Reporting

A transcriber took notes to record the information shared in each focus group. Information from the groups was consolidated into a focus group report which was forwarded to Metadigm for analysis. Information from these reports were compiled and evaluated for the draft report by Allen Reesor, Reni John, Peterson Wang'ombe, Kevin Ward, Magugu Mncina, Bongani Langa, Nomfanelo Msibi, and Welile Langa. Ministry leadership in the region: John Hlophe (Ministry of Education, HIV/AIDS Education Coordinator), Mrs. Futhi Langa (NERCHA, Behavioral

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[2] See pages 4-5 for topic areas per demographic groups

Change Coordinator), Dr. Derrick Van Wissel (NERCHA, Executive Director), Mrs. T. Nkambule (SWANNEPHA), Mr. Ben Rodgers (Children's Cup, Director), Dr. Mazibuka (Conference of Churches, President), Rev. Samuel Dlamini (IMAG Superintendant), and Rev. Stanley Drew (IMAG, MF Director) reviewed this document prior to publication.

This report addresses the questions and topic areas identified by OneHope and project partners as essential for decision-making, distribution planning, and outcome design for youth programs in the region. Common and/or recurring themes from focus groups are identified and compared across demographic profiles. Additionally, when possible, information from secondary sources is included to provide greater clarity for future planning.

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Focus Group Research Questions

Family

1. What influence do parents have on their children? Is there a difference between Christian and non-Christian parents/families?

2. How can relationships in families and parental influence on children be improved?

3. How can parents become more involved in teaching their children to make responsible decisions regarding sexuality and abuse?

4. What are youths' attitudes toward marriage, family and divorce?

5. Why do children spend little time with their parents?

6. Why do some youth feel they lack safety or security in the home or homestead?

7. Why are parents stricter with girls than boys?

Youth Culture

8. How does peer pressure influence youth's decision making and can we counteract it?

9. What attracts youth to drugs, alcohol and crime? Does this influence suicide?

10. How does pornography affect young people?

11. What are youth's attitudes and practices towards sexuality?

Youth Attitudes to Christianity & Christian Life

12. Is Christianity attractive to youth?

13. How do young people relate to churches and what makes them stop going to church or not go to church?

14. How do young people view their future as Christians?

15. How do local religious clerics relate to young people and how do youth view religious clerics?

16. How can we help youth get answers from church to their life problems?

Focus Group Themes

Government and NGOs

1. What do you think the government/NGOs do to help young people?
2. How do churches benefit young people and what is young people's attitude to the church?
3. How does the government help educate young people about drugs, crime, or sexual activity?
4. What problems do young people encounter in their families and homesteads and how does the government help families raise their children?
5. How does the government and church leaders work together to influence children to be involved in their churches and communities?
6. What is one important thing that you want to make sure is included in our report?

Religious Clerics and Youth Workers

1. Are adults in the church good role models for young people? Do adults take an interest in young people and mentor them?
2. What problem do you think young people are dealing with? Are they comfortable coming to religious clerics to get help and information.
3. Do young people receive support from their families when they deal with problems? Does the church equip Christian parents to be more effective than non-Christian parents?
4. How do you know that youth are growing spiritually? Do you think most youth in Swaziland get help from churches to grow spiritually?
5. What plans does your church have for ministry this year? How important are these plans to your overall ministry?

Teachers

1. When young people have a good time or are celebrating, what are some of the problems that can happen?
2. What kind of difficulties do you have with students? Are parents supportive in addressing these concerns?
3. What are the situations in your students' lives that if they make the wrong decision it will destroy their lives? Who do they go to when they have a problem?
4. Does regular involvement in church or religious programs have a significant impact on young people's behavior and moral formation?
5. What do you think are the most positive and negative influences on youth in Swaziland right now?

Male Students

1. Do young people talk to parents about sex and are peers a source of information about sexuality? What are your friends' attitudes toward homosexuality, HIV/AIDS, safe sex and virginity?
2. Are teenage boys involved in drugs and alcohol, do parents play a role in their attitudes and behaviors?
3. Does the church have much influence, what programs do boys like and how much do the church programs help?
4. What do your friends look for when they think about a positive future?

Female Students

1. What TV shows do you enjoy and how do they influence you?
2. How important is it for girls to finish school? Why do you think many are unable to do so?
3. What are some of the important things that girls consider when entering a relationship?
4. How good is your parents' relationship? Are parents helping children make good decisions for life?
5. Do you feel that the church handles problems faced by girls in a supportive way?

Section III: Synopsis of Data and Findings

Synopsis of Government and NGO Focus Groups

Government and NGO agencies indicate that Swazi youth face a combination of stressful factors in their lives. These include hunger, poverty, lack of shelter and various forms of abuse. Government and NGO organizations are aware of these needs and have various programs to address them.

Some youth, having lost their parents, if there is no extended family to care for them, they either attempt to take responsibilities for their siblings or in urban areas they live on the streets. Youth in this situation are often unable to adequately provide food, shelter and clothing for themselves and are unable to afford schooling. Youth on the streets sometimes end up in jail. Unfortunately it is only at this point that they are able to enter programs to support their life skills deficits and begin to receive the help needed. Sometimes children who are not in a family situation are taken to orphanages or other youth service programs where they are able to receive help. There seems to be no systematic approach to dealing with this population.

It is commonly reported by government and NGO agencies involved in this study that many children are abused physically, mentally and sexually by their own family members. This subsequently results in youth running away from home, dealing with residual mental health and behavioral issues and in some cases committing suicide. Although programs are available to subsidize education fees and to provide food and shelter for families, the solution to these problems is often no more than efforts to raise awareness.

Some of the mistreatment of children may be caused by situations of poverty experienced by the families. Added to this struggle for family economic stability is the expense of education and the inadequate provision for health and social needs. Families in this plight receive some government assistance and there are NGO agencies that address these concerns. However, overall there are too few resources.

Coordination of efforts to serve youth is undertaken by several agencies. Those specifically noted include: Nercha, the Council of Churches, the Association of Youth in Swaziland, Swaziland National Youth Council and ACASWA. However, it is also mentioned that services are unevenly available, with rural areas more neglected than the urban centers.

Services provided by the government and NGO agencies include: subsidies for education expenses, scholarships for higher education, nutrition programs, health services and education and provision for shelter and clothing. It is noted that the government does work with churches, coordinated by the Council of Churches, and that NGO agencies often use churches to coordinate the local distribution of resources and to facilitate programs.

There are also efforts by government and NGO agencies to educate youth concerning the problems they face in the future. The use of media, school curriculum, special presentations and church programs are intended to help educate and change attitudes toward the challenges faced by youth. These programs target problems of HIV/AIDS, health, drugs, crime and abuse. It is not yet clear how effective these programs will be since there are too few resources and it is reported that youth do not always participate in programs or accept the information given.

Government and NGO agencies indicate that the churches are able to provide moral formation, spiritual support, HIV/AIDS information and marriage preparation for youth. Some youth are positive about the church but others participate for social reasons or reject the programs offered by churches.

It was noted that lack of seamless coordination and insufficient resources are major barriers to meeting the need. Additionally these programs struggle to appeal to youth and gain their full participation in bringing about the intended goals.

Synopsis of Religious Cleric and Youth Worker Focus Groups

Across all three religious clerics' groups, participants agreed that the lack of time parents spend with their children and parental indifference to their children's needs are some of the biggest concerns facing young people in Swaziland. Many parents do not live in the same homestead as their children. In addition, some parents too busy to mentor the children directly. Religious clerics believe that young people are raised in relatively indifferent homes where they do not receive adequate support in handling their problems. In many cases, youth are more likely to receive harsh criticism than encouragement in their homes. Many of the youth are disciplined strictly and consequently, young people often become angry with adults and do not trust them or to seek their guidance. Youth would prefer to ask questions anonymously (i.e. in writing) and receive information from neutral sources by discussing sensitive topics with sympathetic adults. Young people find it difficult to talk to any adult, including religious clerics and religious cleric's wives about their problems.

Families generally do not assist young men and woman with teaching and accepting responsibility as they transition from childhood to adults until they are married. Religious clerics indicate since some Christian families attempt to speak to their children about their concerns, Christian households are more likely to emotionally support, counsel and teach their children than non-Christian households. However, adults in general are often critical of things that youth find relevant to their lives. Religious clerics fear that youth do not have an identity and this exacerbates young people engaging in deviant behavior, like premarital sex and drug abuse.

Religious clerics feel that the church does try to reach young people, including preparing youth to reach their peers; however, religious clerics overwhelmingly indicate that young people view religious clerics and the church as irrelevant and ineffective in addressing their concerns. This is due in part to 1) religious clerics who are not sensitive in addressing the needs of young people and 2) religious clerics who do not think it is necessary to do outreach to youth within the scope of youth culture. Some religious clerics even criticize church programs which address youth within their own culture. Across groups, while religious clerics feel the church does try to equip parents in raising their children, their efforts are not adequate and the church needs assistance in doing this effectively. Religious clerics believe that they are stymied in their attempts to assist youth as addressing real issues as Swazi culture makes the discussion of things such as sex taboo. In addition, the community generally does not support such discussions, seeing it as "spoiling the children" rather than helping, cautioning, or training the youth. Religious clerics feel that culturally it is thought that such topics should not be addressed with young people until after they are married. In some cases, youth are beaten if it is known that they were discussing things like sex.

Commitment to the church is a prominent way in which religious clerics believe spiritual growth can be measured in teenagers. Unsurprisingly, manifestations of the fruits and gifts of the Spirit are also seen as indicators of spiritual growth as is the ways in which young people relate to others. Across groups, religious clerics do see that young people are active in church activities however they see only a small percentage of youth that display growth in the fruits of the Spirit.

The religious clerics all agree that youth are the nation's hope and as such believe in the need to invest substantially into them. This has been done traditionally through camps, trips and Sunday schools. It is universally agreed by the religious clerics that the church has to be far more proactive and more relevant to the youth culture through sports meetings, active clothing and food distribution ministry to the elderly, creating open dialogues on topics that the youth have identified through anonymous ways. Religious clerics all agree that youth seem to be passionate about music and recognize it as a tool to draw youth together. However, the church needs to reach out further continuing to disciple the youth in their personal identity and encouraging the use of their gifting.

In closing, the religious clerics all agreed to the need for the church to become relevant to youth, that the church itself needed greater help in being equipped to be more relevant and effective in the youth culture, to be able to positively affect the destiny of the individual. The religious clerics also all felt strongly that they needed to be equipped to train up parents to be able to speak into the lives of their children, to be empowered to counsel and direct their own children, to encourage in non-threatening, proactive yet honorable discussions within cultural

contexts, which lead to greater transparency from the youth; as well as being able to develop parents into being better role models to their children. It was universally agreed that most parents are actually not good role models to their own children and the greatest damage done to youth is in fact, the fact that the parents are not able to be role models – by being indifferent, too harsh - or are simply not available due to work demands, the broken family or broken relationships.

It was agreed and recognized that God is doing great things in Swaziland and that the church has a potentially significant voice into the youth culture and into their parents. However, the churches will need to work together and be helped to reach a point of sufficient capacity and to be empowered to address the needs of Swazi youth.

Synopsis of Teacher Focus Groups

Teachers in Swaziland pointed out that their students face a lot of similar problems in all the regions of Swaziland and these problems include peer pressure, substance abuse, pre-marital sex, rape, poverty and disrespect. Teachers are sensitive to these issues and show great concern for their students.

In the urban areas students face more sophisticated problems like being exposed to pornography through the use of the internet and music. The students in the urban areas tend to leave home with or without permission to go to night clubs. On the other hand in the rural areas students absent themselves from school weekly because they have to take the cattle to the dip tank. Some families are headed by children who have to provide food for their siblings due to the loss of their parents.

Underlying reasons for the problems encountered by students is that they do not get enough attention at home and so they turn to their peers for advice which leads to wrong decision making. In addition, those that are poor envy the lives of those who are well off. When there are celebrations going on in the schools and during weekends, students have a tendency to use drugs and alcohol. Usually the boys introduce the girls to the drugs and they end up addicted.

Pregnancy is a big problem in schools. This is because students have sex in exchange for food and money due to the fact that they are affected by poverty. Some students engage in sexual activities at an early age. While others are vulnerable to rape because their parents either work late or they are not there at all, some also end up living in an extended family where the male family members sexually abuse the girls and, although not reported, perhaps boys as well. HIV/AIDS has infected or affected many, up to half of the class, of the students. Their parents die, leaving them orphaned or the students are HIV positive. Teachers noted that children lack discipline and resent being corrected by either their parents or teachers. In other areas they experience a great lack of motivation to learn as a result they perform poorly at school. In the rural areas, children have low self esteem because they are not familiar with western youth culture and they are intimidated by better informed children who are from the urban areas. A lot of the youth are unemployed and they stay at home after completing school and this elevates the crime and the poverty rate. They are bored and have nothing to do and so they tend to engage in immoral activities.

Parents do not seem to be interested in getting involved in their children's issues. Teachers complain that parents leave everything to them and blame teachers for poor performance of their children. The parents are not working jointly with the teachers and do not attend school meetings. Parents may interfere when teachers punish the students and parents develop negative attitudes toward teachers. However, overall the majority of the parents try to be supportive.

The church has contributed a lot by giving solutions to the issues that are faced by the youth. They teach respect and how to handle themselves in such a way that you can easily see the difference between Christian and non-Christian students by the way they behave. On weekends, usually some churches provide youth programs like music, games and lessons. There are youth empowerment clubs that are established to address issues like self employment, safe sex and many more, but unfortunately, they are more theoretical than practical and they exist only in some areas of the country. As a result, they are not effective enough. Government has also introduced subsidies education for orphaned children; however, other children still find it difficult to pay their school fees.

Government has introduced subsidies education for orphaned children; however, other children still find it difficult to pay their school fees. During meal times at school, the Government started a program of providing meals for children at school but it is not enough as some of the children eat only when they are at school. This has proved to be helpful but is insufficient to address the nutritional needs of all students.

Teachers feel that parents should take more responsibility in attending to their children's needs. Parents should encourage their children to be serious about their school work and mentor them by being good examples to their kids. Parents should not take issue when it is necessary for teachers to punish the students, instead they should work hand in hand with teachers to bring the best out of the children. To make children open up, parents should establish a good relationship with them by spending quality time and attending to their problems without being judgmental.

The government should provide more resources for the youth in terms of a completely free education system to make sure that every child benefits from formal education. They should also provide more free food and create more jobs for Swazis.

Synopsis of Male Student Focus Groups

Young men want to be kept busy and become strong and healthy since their role models are often athletes who succeed through sports. However, they also want the adults in their lives (parents, religious clerics) to be role models. They are willing to learn from their parents and do believe that parents, not peers, should be their primary influence on many issues.   However, they also feel that that the majority of young men do not have the necessary relationships with the adults in their lives to allow for this. In fact, across groups, young men state that relationships with their fathers are not always close and that they fear speaking with their parents on important matters such as sex. As such, peers tend to be the group that they share things with although young men also state that they will only talk to their friends about certain things as they do not trust their friends not to gossip or ridicule them if they share intimate personal concerns with them. Regardless, peers are a major influence for this group and on occasion influence them towards deviant behavior. Young men do believe that good friendships are important in making good life decisions and recognize that friendships can result in bad life choices. As such boys are looking for effective means of combating peer pressure.

While sexuality is not often a topic that young men discuss seriously with their friends, the majority of boys across groups indicate that, while some of their peers may abstain from sex, most boys have sex before they are married. A myriad of factors were identified as reasons for this, including peer pressure, fear of ridicule if they remain virgins, curiosity, and/or a desire to experiment. As boys indicated an inability to talk to their parents about sex (although one group did state they were more likely to speak to their fathers than their mothers on this), peer groups were identified as a source of information on sex. This is of particular concern as boys indicate a lack of clear and truthful information about sexual practices. Boys claim a disinterest in using condoms as 1) friends tell them sex is better without it, 2) some believe they can recognize which girls do or do not have HIV/AIDS (and thus do not need condoms), or 3) embarrassment in taking free condoms. Of concern was one group's claim that boys may have sex early as poverty can lead to them allowing older women to buy them things in exchange for sex. While HIV/AIDS has raised some concern around practicing safe sex, most boys acknowledge that the majority of their peers do not practice safe sex. Additionally, boys are rather fatalistic in their belief on HIV/AIDS; some expressed a belief that AIDS is so rampant that there is no purpose in waiting until marriage to have their first sexual encounter and in fact, HIV/AIDS can also be contracted in marriage. Homosexuality continues to be a taboo among young men in Swaziland. While one group of boys did admit that some boys do have homosexual encounter(s), across groups, young men state abhorrence for such practices.

Like sexual intercourse, drugs are common in youth Swazi culture. Most boys state that the majority of their friends have tried or regularly use drugs. While peer approval, the desire to be seen as stylish, curiosity, and the ability to escape one's problems are motivating factors for drug or alcohol use, surprisingly, many boys also state a belief that drugs and/or alcohol can help a person do well in school or become more intelligent. In addition, drugs or alcohol are also used by young men to seduce girls, to deliberately misbehave, or as a means of demonstrating their ability to spend money on these luxury items. While some boys say that parents care and

warn their children away from abusing drugs, across groups, boys also indicate that peer drug use is sometimes just a mimicry of parental behavior and it is not an uncommon reality for parents to be indifferent to their children's drug or alcohol abuse. Young men did express an awareness of the dangers of drugs stating that such behavior can become addictive and lead to dropping out of school which many believe is a major deterrent to young men having successful futures. As boys are unable to talk to their parents or adults about such issues, they often speak with their peers and thus receive inaccurate information.

 When asked about what would help them and their friends to have hope for their futures, the two most common responses were 1) completing their education and 2) a Christian lifestyle (repentance & a real relationship with Christ, attending church, etc.). While boys did express trying to set an example for their peers and even interest them in church events, many also believe that good role models and investing and encouraging young men's dreams, and encouraging them to persevere, is also necessary. Most boys across groups state good choices in friendships as a common theme that is addressed by the church for their age group. Similarly, across groups, boys express that there are churches that have programs (i.e. drama, music, sports, picnics, special youth services) that interest them, especially those that offer social components to be with or meet other young people; however, in almost all of the groups, young men also state that some churches do not have activities that involve them or address their needs or interests.   Overall, boys believe that churches and religious clerics do speak about life outside the church, their current realities and their futures; however, one group stated that churches do not address practical issues, such as HIV/AIDS.

Synopsis of Female Student Focus Groups

Girls seek independence and consider education as means to that end. They feel that finishing school is important so they can secure a better future, be positioned to get good jobs and help to support their parents. They also consider education important because they can take care of their siblings and further look after themselves. However, many girls drop out of school because they become pregnant while still in school and are forced to discontinue their education. Other girls are unable to finish school because they lack school fees and some are taken for marriage by men while still in school so they are unable to finish school. Poverty and low self esteem are underlying reasons they drop out of school and look for financial resources through unhealthy sexual relationships, as to support their parents, because they want a good life or to be trendy and due to pressure from their peers.

Girls in the groups observe that the relationship of their parents varies from good to bad. In some instances, when the relationship is bad the parents shout at each other and fight. In worst cases, parents do not provide for their families but instead spend most of the money drinking. Sometimes parents do not communicate with one another. Some indicate that their parents take out their marital problems on the entire family and when they are angry with each other they beat the children and they do not feed them.

On the other hand girls also say that their parents have good relationships and they spend time together, they have good communication and resolve their problems in a peaceful manner. Their parents help them to make decisions; teaching them how to deal with issues that may arise and prepare them in advance for life. Some of the girls single out their mothers to be the most helpful in terms of guiding them towards decision making.

When girls enter into a relationship, they consider the opportunity for marriage, in the future, as being key to their decision. Some of the girls enter into relationships to escape the abuse they face in their homes. They consider financial security in the process of making a decision about entering a relationship. Another concern they have is the trustworthiness of the partner; they prefer a partner who takes good care of himself, stays away from alcohol and smoking and is well educated. Girls added they want a relationship with a partner who follows Christian principles, admits when he is wrong and is willing to help others.

Girls detest divorce after marriage, because it is not God's will and because of the pain it causes to the partners and the children. So as they go into marriage they want it to be for the long term, but some of them also accept divorce as a last resort in an unhappy marriage, yet stating that it is not a blessing to divorce.

Girls feel that the church generally addresses their problems well. In some churches there is time for small group discussions among the youth where relevant issues are discussed. It is good when the church encourages openness and freedom to share, they are taught to make good decisions, resolve conflicts and be careful about irresponsible relationships. In some cases the church helps with school fees. In some instances where girls become pregnant or fall away into sin, there is room for rehabilitation and support in times of sorrow. However, there are also instances when the church acts in a hostile manner especially where sexual issues are concerned. In such cases, girls feel uneasy to share their problems with the church leaders for fear of lack of confidentiality and particularly when church leaders spread the information resulting in hurting the girls even more.

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Section IV: Raw Data from Focus Groups

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Government and NGO

What do you think the government/NGOs do to help young people?
- Decentralization program of the government helps youth, however, more resources to urban areas than the rural areas (2)
- Government offers scholarships to those going for higher education
- There are Youth Centers
- An Association of Youth in Swaziland caters for young people's needs
- There is a Swaziland National Youth Council that deals with youth issues
- NGOs encourage youth initiatives with small grants
- Educate about disease (SNAP)
- Some youth are more willing to be helped than others

How do churches benefit young people and what is young people's attitude to the church?
- The church teaches spiritual truths that empower youth to act morally (3)
- The church helps them know how to think about their norms and values (2)
- The church informs about HIV/AIDS issues
- The church prepares youth for marriage and raising their families
- Youth are positive about the church (3)
- Encourages youth to express their opinions
- Young people are negative about church but attend to meet other youth and socialize (2)
- Many youth attending church are not Christian
- Youth do not attend programs started by churches

How does the government help educate young people about drugs, crime, or sexual activity (Why)?
- The government has modified school curriculum to include health awareness and crime prevention (2)
- The government and NGOs have used performances to help youth understand health and crime issues (4)
- Nercha has introduces programs for youth through the cultural and chief directed local programs to help with economic future (2)
- They chose youth who then train their peers "Lihombelkukalela"
- The government is trying to reduce the use of drugs, crime and sexual abuse (2)
- NGOs help with their programs to inform about solutions or responses to these issues (3)
- Media is used to help inform youth

What problems do young people encounter in their families and homesteads and how does the government help families raise their children?
- Youth are responsible to head families (2)
- Close relatives abuse youth sexually, emotionally and physically (5) sometimes resulting in suicide, mental depression or running away from home
- Parents sometimes abuse their own children (2)
- They suffer from poverty and hunger (3)
- Some kids end up on the streets then in jail
- Lack clothing and shelter for some families (2)
- For poor families the government is providing free education and school supplies (4)
- Kids without families are taken to SOS by the government workers
- Government and agencies provide some nutritional resources and food for poor families (3)
- Incarceration of youth gives a better opportunity to train for future

How does the government and church leaders work together to influence children to be involved in their churches and communities?

- The Council of Churches has been able to work closely with the government
- NGOs and churches work together. Church is the local agent of an NGO that brings in resources of clothing and food
- ACASWA is an organization helping young people
- Churches help provide school fees in cooperation with NGOs
- Churches help youth with preparing them for the future
- Churches should prepare people to deal with the problems and concerns of youth
- Not aware of any

CLOSING QUESTION: What is one important thing that you want to make sure is included in our report?

- Government should use the Constitution to address some of these issues
- The schooling should be provided for free
- Provide funds to help disabled and Orphaned Vulnerable Children (OVC)
- NGOs might be better at using the government money to provide school fees
- More resources are needed so more NGOs might help
- Although government is trying to help youth, the programs seem not to bring youth involvement or interest in many cases

Religious clerics and Youth Workers

Are adults in the church good role models for young people? Do they take an interest in young people's lives or mentor them in the faith?

- Very Few - dependent upon background (those that do, are not interested in them/their youth needs) (5)
- No   (5)
- Yes   (1)
- Media opposes adults encouraging youth to attend church
- The church is trying to raise up parents to attend and train youth

What problems do you think young people are dealing with? How comfortable are they going to religious clerics with their problems?

- Youth are not being raised right, often abused physically and verbally. They are angry, disappointed with adults. (3)
- The transition from boyhood to manhood is especially poorly handled (3)
- The youth do not have an identity (4)
- The real issues of sex, drugs are serious (4)
- Parents do not spend time with the youth (6)
- Parents do not care (6)
- Adults are very critical of new and relevant things to youth (2)
- The youth then find it hard to speak to adults, even to religious clerics (6)
- Religious clerics are often not relevant to the youth in their approach and in being sensitive (6)
- Some families try, but those are the Christian families through the churches (6)

Do young people receive support from their families when they deal with problems? Does the church equip Christian parents to help their children more effectively than non-church parents?
- Families do try to support (2)
- Most children do not get adequate support from their families in the basics - actually more likely criticism (5)
- Non-Christian families spend more time drinking brew than thinking for their family (1)
- Most adults are too busy (5)
- Discussing real issues is taboo and considered spoiling the youth (4)
- If the taboo topics like sex are covered, from cultural view, the youth are then severely punished (3)
- Most people believe youth should only be discussing important issues when they are married and not before then (4)
- The church does try to equip parents and the church to help and it is better than not having help (5)
- But much help is still required (5)
- There is a big difference in support based on Christian/non-Christian families (3)

How do you know that spiritual growth is occurring in the life of a young person? Do you think most young people in Swaziland get help from churches to grow spiritually?
- A small percentage display growth in the form of fruit of the spirit (5)
- Growth can be measured in the manifestation of gifts of the spirit (3)
- In the way they relate to others (4)
- They are active in church activities (5)
- Commitment to the church is a tool to use to measure growth (5)
- The church tries hard to reach most young people   (3)
- The church uses peers to reach youth (2)

What plans does your church have for youth ministry this year? And how important are these plans for your overall ministry program?
- Provide uniform for youth (2)
- Use their gifts in gospel songs (6)
- Create youth groups (6)
- Have trips (6)
- Have outreaches for youth (4)
- School open dialogues with questions that are relevant (3)
- School bible clubs, etc (2)
- Have sports trips (2)
- Encourage an identity in Christ (2)
- Create a ministry distributing clothes and food to old people (3)

What is one important thing that you want to make sure is included in our report?
- Change must be accepted as a fact (culture) (2)
- The church must be more relevant (6)
- The church needs more training and help (5)
- The church needs to go out more (5)
- Youth need to open up more (2)
- Needs to be more transparent about their life (2)
- The church needs to work together more (2)
- Parents need to be trained to be better role models (4)

Teachers

When young people have a good time or are celebrating, what are some of the problems that can happen?
- (MB) Escalating rate of rape
- Theft (2)
- Alcohol (5)
- Substance abuse (2)
- Love relationships which lead to pregnancy (4)
- Fighting (3)
- (MB) Peer pressure
- Disrespect because they have rights and they can sue teachers through the family lawyers

What kind of difficulties do you have with students? Are parents supportive in addressing these concerns?
- (MB) Death of parents prematurely
- (MB) Technology as children have to have access to things like computers and most parents cannot afford
- (MB) The environment they live in corrupts them especially in the urban areas
- Some are sick and most of them are HIV positive(3)
- Lots of orphans(4)
- (BB) Some children are bread winners
- Most are poverty stricken and they cannot afford things like uniforms(2)
- Discipline- the students don't want to be punished(4)
- Food-(MB) They are in great need of food and when they line up for the food which is provided in the school they scramble to be the first so that they repeat.(SH)They only come during meal times and then they leave school and go back home.
- Some absent themselves because they have to take cattle to the dip tank once every week(2)
- Teenage pregnancy(4)
- (MB) Love relationships from as little as 10 years of age
- No motivation to be educated(2)
- (BB) Some children have a very low self esteem
    - (MB) Parents involvement is not strong as evidenced by the fact that no one help the kids with their homework
    - (MB) Some students stay with single parents who work for long hours
    - (MB) Most parents are not educated and hence they cannot be good role models for their kids
    - (SH) Parents don't attend school meetings
    - (BB) Some parents, when told about their children's behavior they just say "beat them"
    - (SH) They do not report students when absent , in short they do not cooperate with the teachers
    - (MB) Majority of the parents try to be supportive
    - (SH) Parents blame teachers for poor performance of their children
    - (SH) When teachers discipline the students the parents intervene and they end up hating the teachers

What are the situations in your students' lives that if they make the wrong decision it will destroy their lives? Who do they go to when they have a problem?
- Peer pressure –e.g. If they are from poor families they just escape from home and migrate to urban areas and they get the influence from friends(3)
- Poverty (Lack of money)- She/He might see things that belong to friends and wish to have them, this can lead to stealing or having boyfriends/girlfriends who have money and this also can lead to having sex which can also lead to either pregnancy or HIV/AIDS(3)
- (SH) The students are not satisfied and this destroys their future

- (MB) Most students want to have a disposable income to enjoy with friends. They go to night clubs and parties
- A few children do come to their teachers when they have a problem especially girls(2)
- Most students depend on their peers for solution to solve problems(5)
- (MB)However they are most likely to go to their teachers than parents

Does regular involvement in church or religious programs have a significant impact on young people's behavior and moral formation?
- Yes, because they are taught respect(2)
- Yes, because you can easily tell the difference between Christian and non-Christian students. Christian students are well behaved and they perform well in class. They are hardly late and their assignments are submitted on time. Even if the Christian students misbehave they are much better than those who do not go to church.(2)
- (SH) Churches with Sunday school motivate children and they teach them to sing, play musical instruments and have confidence

What do you think are the most positive and negative influences on youth in Swaziland right now?
Positive
- Free education for young students (5)
- (SH) They form associations and they know their rights which prevents sexual abuse
- (SH) Youth clubs are being established in Swaziland where they teach self employment, safe sex, motivated to go to school
Negative
- Not enough schools to accommodate all students (5)
- Teachers teach a huge number of children e.g. 75 in one class room (5)
- (MB) The teachers in grade 1 face a problem, as a lot of children do not attend kindergarten
- (BB) Youth empowerment is theoretical not practical
- No job opportunities (5)
- (SH) Swazi's are very lazy, they want to be fed
- (SH) They are lazy to think on how they can start small businesses
- (MB) Offensive language through music
- (MB) Media (T.V.) and the internet promote pornography. Pornographic material is easily passed between students through cell phones.
- (MB) The students want fast money

What is one important thing that you want to make sure is included in our report?
- (SH) Parents must know what their children are doing either at church or at school
- (SH) Students must be motivated to be serious with their school work and future
- (MB) Try and find ways to solve the problems that kids have. Kids need someone to encourage or mentor them.
- (MB)Parents are too relaxed, they do not talk to their children about their future and they leave it for teachers
- (MB) We must work together to bring out the best in our kids
- (MB) There is a need for prayer and God's intervention because other taught that there are spirits behind these form of behavior
- (MB) Find activities to occupy them with
- (MB) As parents we must instill discipline in children from a very tender age
- (BB) The youth should be taught through what they enjoy doing and there should be incentives to encourage them

IMPORTANT CONCERNS/GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:
- Parents are not supportive to their youth (2)
- Students are not serious about their school work (2)
- (SH) Students seek advice from wrong people like friends
- (MB) Children are affected and infected by poverty and later HIV/AIDS
- (MB) Emphasized on the need for prayer and God's intervention

Young People/Students

MALE STUDENTS GROUP REPORT
Why do Boys like Sports?
- Because we are good at many of them
- Enjoy them
- It keeps us from being bored
- Have the energy to do the sports
- Playing sports is when we hang out with our friends
- It exercises their bodies/keeps us healthy (3)
- Want to be doing something all the time
- It keeps us busy (3)
- Because we love some of the players and see them as role models
- Want to be famous/stars (3)
- They want to refresh their minds when doing sports
- Because of the rules

Why is easier for boys to talk about sports than relationships?
- We talk about sports because it is a shared experience/interest (2)
- Because sports are good and nice
- Sports are something that everyone likes to watch & talk about
- Relationships & secrets are not easy/comfortable to talk about (2)
- There is a gap between boys and their fathers
- Don't talk about it and/or go to friends, because they are scared of talking to their parents (3)
- Because kids do not go to their parents, they may wind up getting bad information and wind up misbehaving
- Friends might laugh at them & make fun of them to others (2)
- Don't trust friends, so can't talk to them (2)
- If you tell someone something about a relationship problem, he will tell someone else and it will keep going until everyone knows your secret and you will be embarrassed (4)
- It can be shameful to tell your friends about your crisis
- We joke around and don't care at times because that is how we are and we do not feel offended

Students view of sexuality
- Sex as rape
- Sex is sleeping with your girlfriend
- Are afraid to talk to their parents about it because they might get beaten
- At times, we open up to our fathers but not our mothers
- Do not speak about it amongst ourselves because we are still young
- It is true that some boys our age have started having sex because of peer pressure (2)
- Friends who have already had sex will laugh at them if they do not (2)
- Have sex to experiment as their friends tell them it is nice
- Friends tell them that sex is nicer without a condom so they see using a condom as a waste of time

- Some believe in abstaining or practicing safe sex
- Safe sex is mostly not practiced
- You are a fool if you say you will be a virgin until marriage because when you are married there is no time to learn
- Reluctant to use condoms
- While condoms might be used in one's first sexual encounter, they get lax in later casual sexual encounters
- Some do practice unsafe sex because it is an embarrassment to be seen taking a condom (even when it is free)
- Some have sex because of poverty. "Sugar Mamas" will give them money to buy what they need
- Do not believe in homosexuality; it is a story because we have never seen it practiced
- Some boys do fall to homosexuality but they don't tell anyone because it is an embarrassment
- Do not like/revolted by homosexuality (2)
- It is a taboo to talk about homosexuality
- As AIDS is all over the place, young boys and girls have sex and don't see the importance of taking care of themselves
- AIDS/HIV can be easily recognized in someone so boys can avoid girls that have it. Because of this, they don't need to use condoms
- HIV/AIDS has bought some discomfort to their sexual pleasure
- Most girls have lost their virginity at a young age as many teenagers get pregnant and have sex
- HIV/AIDS is believed to have disturbed marriages
- Discouraged as they believe marriage also spreads AIDS so why would they wait until marriage to have sex?

Drugs & Alcohol
- Some of our friends have started doing drugs, like glue
- Some boys take drugs like dagga (marijuana) and cocaine
- Some carry alcohol and hide it in bushes outside the school
- Some boys because addicted and drop out of school.
- Some boys do not even have the money to buy drugs/alcohol and depend on the people who give it to them. These people are not in school so they influence the boy to abandon school also
- Some think that if you take drugs you become smart(in mind)/ do well in school (4)
- Some want to be seen as clever (2)
- Take drugs because it will make you brave & stand up in front of an audience
- Some want to taste drugs
- Some want to please their friends and/or are influenced by their friends (2)
- Some do drugs and/or alcohol to show that they can spend money on these things (spend recklessly)
- Doing drugs make you be in style (2)
- Will make you a hero to your friends (2)
- Use alcohol to seduce girls
- Enjoy the drugs
- Do drugs to deliberately misbehave
- Drugs are a way to solve their problems
- Do drugs to forget their problems (2)
- Adults are not easier to talk to about these things
- Some copy what their parents' behaviors (2)
- Because kids do not go to their parents, they may wind up getting bad information and wind up misbehaving
- Parents warn them not to take drugs (2) or have sex so they do not go to hell
- Some parents do not care (2)
- Some parents do care

- Parents tell them that it is their lives and they (boys) have to take care of themselves

Role of Church in the life of students
- Like to go to church
- Church is nice
- Church teaches them about life and the future (2)
- Church teaches about life within and outside the church
- Sometimes the religious cleric will speak about things that relate to your problems and you are able to get a solution
- Religious clerics teach them to do what is right all the time
- Some religious clerics invite popular people to come to church and talk to the boys & serve as a good influence on the boys
- In church, they are taught not to have bad friends
- Sunday Schools teaches them not to do evil things and to choose their friends well
- Sometimes the church helps them choose good friends who will not have a bad influence on them
- Churches do not address HIV/AIDS
- Churches only address spirituality
- Some churches train boys in playing musical instruments which makes them like going to church (3)
- Some churches have youth clubs where they can discuss the challenges of being boys as they grow up
- Some are in drama groups where they create & perform sketches based on the Bible (3)
- Some are in Praise Teams in churches
- Have boys' choir in church
- Have picnics (2)
- Have Saturday youth services
- Have sports (3), some that motivate them about freedom
- Some serve as ushers
- Some churches do not have activities/programs that involve them and/or address youth issues (3)
- Some churches only have programs that suit the old people (singing old-fashioned music, music that bores them or makes them fall asleep)
- Church all-night prayers are believed to lead to bad practices by youth (as ancestor worship also has similar practices)
- Fewer people go to church
- Most believe in God

View of the Future
- Dream of a good future
- Wish my friends would come to church with me
- Discourage/tell friends to stop their bad habits (2)
- Helping them find their talents and encouraging them in it
- When we have Bible studies and Christmas parties, I invite my best friends to come with me
- I make sure to do good things all the time so my friends copy my lifestyle
- If non-Christian friends would repent and stop their bad behavior, then they would live better (finish school, and get a good profession)
- Endurance is the key to success
- If there is encouragement to go to school & learn, they will have good futures (2)

FEMALE STUDENTS GROUP REPORT

What are your favorite TV shows? What do you think about the people on those shows?
- "Generations" (soapies). They wish to be like the soapie stars and appear on screen (6)
- I wonder what their real lives are like and wish to meet them to see if what they are on T.V. is anywhere close to what they are on a daily basis
- I feel that they over-expose their bodies on T.V.
- Cartoons, they make us laugh
- The family bonds
- They show us the current trends in the fashion world and from the Bold and The Beautiful we learn that one can be a prostitute and still be accepted normally

When girls have serious problems who do they talk to? Why?
- They tell their mothers, teachers, friends and their neighbors. They said they tell these people because they believe that they will get assistance and they will be comforted. (6)
- Some keep their problems to themselves and others discuss them with their close friends
- Some said that they pray when they are faced with obstacles
- They said they do the above because they feel comfortable and free when talking to the people mentioned above.
- Sisters because they will not tell anyone else about my issues (2)
- Most of them say that they cannot trust friends as they feel there are things that you just can't share with your friends. They say that the measurement for trust among friends would be the period of time you have known them.
- Girls tend find that their moms are accommodating and have a soft spot towards them thus they know that their issues will be resolved through them

How important is it for girls to finish school? Why do you think many do not?
- It is important for girls to finish school so they can be educated. Education positions them to be independent, earn a living and further support their parents. They get a brighter future through education. (2)
- Most girls drop out of school because they get pregnant whilst at school (5)
- Other girls do not finish because they do not have money to pay school fees (2)
- Other girls drop out of school because a man takes them as wives whilst they are students
- Other girls just like money and can do anything to get it from a man who promises to give them
- Education is important because nowadays you cannot survive without education
- If a girl is not married it is difficult to get a job or to get married (2)
- Poverty contributes to girls not finishing school and getting involved in pre-marital sex (2)
- Physical and spiritual abuse can lead girls to not finishing school (2)
- It's important to finish school
    - so that we can buy ourselves nice things (3)
    - so that we get a good job (3)
    - to take care of our sick parents and have a good future (3)
    - so we can take care of our siblings because we are orphans (2)
    - so that they can have their own money
    - so that they can have a brighter future
    - so that they can cope with being a single parent should that end up happening
- Some don't finish school because they are from abusive families and then tend not to like learning
- Girls drop out of school because of peer pressure and T.V.
- Girls tend to get involved with relationships that will cost them their virginity or where they just cannot help but give in to having sex

- They have these relationships because they are looking for resources – financial as they have lost their parents or maybe their parents are sick and they need to look after them
- Some girls just don't have self esteem
- Seeking high class or modern day looks, being trendy, and the likes forces girls into having sex in exchange for money
- To have a sexual partner or boyfriend actually feels great

What are some of the most important things that girls think about when they consider entering a relationship?
- When girls get into a relationship they think that they will get money and live luxurious life with that particular person
- They think that without the relationship (man or boy) they are incomplete or will never make it
- They think that they are ready to get into a relationship; they feel that they are mature enough to handle a relationship
- They think that once they are in love with someone they will eventually get married to them
- They said that divorce is not good because it is not easy to get married again, they said that it must go down as the law that once you get married you are not allowed to divorce
- Nothing except being happy with the one I love
- Some say they enter a relationship just for fun and not to get married
- Others say they enter a relationship in order to get married without any intentions of divorcing
- Others say divorce is the answer or solution in an unhappy marriage
- Some are in relationships because of peer pressure
- Some girls enter a relationship to get married in order to escape the abuse they face at home
- Girls want your characters to be alike as you get into a relationship
- The boy or man must be educated as you get into a relationship (2)
- The boy should be trustworthy as you get into a relationship
- The boy should not be a smoker or alcoholic as you get into a relationship (2)
- The boy must take good care of himself as you get into a relationship
- Divorce is bad because it ill treats mom
- Dad beats mom and we are separated as a family because of that
- My neighbors fight almost every day
- The wife shouts at the husband
- Others have problems but they are able to maintain good relationships
- I would consider personality
- I would consider appearance
- Behavior especially towards other people
- The kind of friends he spends time with
- Marriage is a blessing and divorce is not a good thing
- Divorce is a bad thing in that it brings pain to the children to see their parents go separate ways and brings the assumption that as they are apart now they will not take care of us (children)
- Divorce is bad because God said whatever he has put together let no man put asunder
- Consider that we stick to Christian Principles
- Must be respectable
- Must admit when he is wrong
- Must be able to help others
- Must be known for good things
- Girls think that man will always love, care and understand them for life
- The guys cool actions will always draw girls closer to them and thereafter nothing else will happen
- They also consider the age gap, saying that the older the man the higher the potential there is for a good marriage and one that will be well secured financially
- It is better to go for a married man than a single one, as chances are high to be wife no #2

- If you meet his needs well and then he always thinks of you when he is not with his wife and eventually wants to keep you in his for life through marriage

How well do you think your parents' relationship is doing? How well do parents help children make decisions about life?
- They said that they get along well with their mothers because they are willing to be casual with them and they laugh together, yet it's the direct opposite with their fathers as their fathers always punish them if they have done wrong without any warning.
- But some said that they do not have good relationships with their mothers as they scold them too much and their relationship with their fathers is also not good because their fathers are always serious.
- They said that their parents help them make decisions about life by encouraging them to do good things and they tell them about God.
- I think my parents are in a happy relationship
- I don't think they are happy because they always shout at each other
- My parents are on and off today, things are fine one day and the other day they are at it again
- My parents are helping too much especially my mother she helps a lot
- Some say it is a blessing to have such parents
- Some parents beat their children and starve them when they have marital problems (2)
- Parents raise children in the exact same way they too were raised
- Parents help their children make good relationships and decisions
- There are those that are good, where you can actually see that they enjoy life and they love God
- There are also relationships that are very bad where you find that the head of the family does not provide for the family and spends all his money on alcohol
- Parents' advise us, we then tend to want to make our own choices and the consequences of our own choices are bad at times and we go back to them for advice
- Our parents want the best for us and they don't want us to experience what they experienced
- Sometimes I feel like our parents force us into doing what they want us to do and this is not good, like my dad wants me to be a nurse yet I have my preferences
- They have a good relationship
- Some parents usually have conflicts
- Some parents speak harshly to each other
- They take days without communicating with each other
- They encourage young people to have good relationships when they grow old
- They encourage us to marry good man and be good to them
- They teach us to ignore the bad things that happen in people's marriages and rather seek to do what is right in our relationships
- They teach us that every bad thing passes it doesn't stay the same, thus we must not be afraid of getting married just because we see the problems other people face
- Their relationships are ok and they do not show whether they have problems or not
- They (parents) do talk to us (girls) and give us advice about the future but most f the time they tell us not to be involved in love relationships

Do you feel that the church handles problems faced by girls in a supportive way? Why?
- Some said that they feel that the church handles problems faced by girls in a supportive way; this is because if they tell the church their problems they help them to come out of the problem.
- Some say churches help them in times of sorrow and they comfort them
- Others say that they are not free to tell the church leaders their problems as they turn to make fun of them further spreading their problems across to others and this brings a lot a pain than support to them. They feel this is Spiritual abuse.
- Others said that it depends with the type of church you are addressing your problem in

- The church teaches us to make good decisions
- The church pays school fees for others
- The church helps us resolve conflicts
- The church advises us
- In some churches the youth comes together and talk about issues, that they as the young people face
- Even the people with problems come to church and they are not asked to leave
- There are cases where you have the girls who are active members of the church they get pregnant and they are not chased from church, they are accepted and later allowed to continue serving or being active.
- Some people feel though that these people should be punished and not allowed to continue to serve or participate in the activities they were a part of for some time
- The church encourages us about school work
- The church is always encouraging us to come out and be open. They want us to be free with them about issues or problems we face
- The church is reliable in terms of giving support to us
- The church is open to praying for us when we face situations whereby we have challenges and bad times
- The church is continuously giving life lessons so that we can be prepared for any challenges that we come across
- At church we do get advice through lessons that are being taught with biblical references
- In church they don't say things as they are, so we feel that we are being left out
- Religious cleric's wife always stress the point that sex should be reserved for marriage
- Some religious clerics advice us through their experiences

What is one important thing that you want to make sure is included in our report?

- They said that they can be glad if the relationship of parents can be included
- They will be glad if everything must be included while others said their relationship with their parents must be included
- Children should listen to adults
- Children should take care of themselves
- Friends can lead you astray
- The church can be helpful
- Listen to parents
- Girls talk
- Marriage
- Behavior
- Life in general
- Have more schools
- Have more churches
- Places for making future choices
- Sponsors to help the needy
- We need to have centers where we can reach out to so that we can get some information that we need without being hooked onto problem
- Emphasis on the importance of education of girls