

Spiritual State of the World's Children

Costa Rica





Spiritual State of the World's Children A Quantitative Study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR MINISTRY

Costa Rica

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ONEHOPE

OneHope was founded in 1987 by missionary Bob Hoskins and is reaching the world's children and youth with Scripture that speaks directly to their lives and culture. In collaboration with churches and ministries — and working with local governments, schools and non-governmental organizations — through OneHope a message of hope has been given personally to a half billion children and young people in 125 countries through its *Book of Hope* publications and *The GodMan* animated film. Using outcome-based research, OneHope continues to innovate its ministry model and offers its expertise and resources to other child-focused organizations.



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Section I: Key Issues Analysis

Key Issues

- Family composition
 - 71 % - two parent family (includes 11% living in a two parent household where one is a step parent)
 - 3 % - one parent has died
 - 24 % - parents are divorced or separated
 - 1 % - both of their parents have died
 - 4 % - live with a grandparent
 - 1 % - do not live with an adult
- Perception of Family
 - Definition of family
 - 44 % define family as those related by birth, adoption or marriage
 - 5 % define family as any group of people who live together
 - 22 % define family as any group of people who share the same set of values and goals in life
 - 29 % define family as any person or group whom you love or care about deeply
 - Function of family
 - Place for children –
 - 81 % consider an unmarried man and woman with children a family
 - 86 % consider a single woman with children a family
 - Relationship –
 - 33 % consider an unmarried man and woman a family
 - 18 % consider homosexual men a family
 - 20 % consider homosexual women a family
- Relationship with parents
 - 9 % spend less than 15 minutes a week talking with their father about things that really matter
 - 58 % spend more than 60 minutes a week talking with their father about things that really matter
 - 6 % spend less than 15 minutes a week talking with their mother about things that really matter
 - 83 % spend more than 60 minutes a week talking with their mothers about things that really matter
- Safety and Security of home
 - 48 % feel their home is a place where they feel safe and loved
 - 9 % are uncomfortable and would rather be elsewhere
- Marriage
 - 85 % feel that they will be happy in their marriage
 - 92 % believe God intended marriage to last a lifetime
 - 72 % feel the traditional family does not play a significant role in the stability of society
 - 31 % report there is too much pressure to get married, would rather live together
 - 33 % admire single life
 - 52 % approve of divorce even when children are involved
 - 25 % indicate that anyone who gets married should anticipate divorce

- Sexuality
 - 24 % have had sexual intercourse
 - Most likely to learn about sex from classmates/friends, movies/TV, and parents
 - They are least likely to learn about sex from textbooks/magazines followed by the internet
- Satisfaction with life
 - 53 % of respondents indicate they are very satisfied and 31 % somewhat satisfied with their lives
 - 17 % are somewhat or very dissatisfied with their lives
 - Over the past three months –
 - 85 % admit having lied to their peers and 90 % indicate they have lied to an adult
 - 90 % report watching MTV
 - 40 % admit to reading a pornographic magazine or watching a pornographic movie
 - 26 % have had suicidal thoughts and 15 % attempted suicide
- Influences (cited as having *a lot* of influence over thoughts and actions)
 - 45 % Bible
 - 58 % Parents
 - 11 % Teachers
 - 46 % Friends
- Moral behavior
 - 63 % feel bending the rules is okay
 - 86 % feel lying is sometimes a necessity
 - 37 % are pragmatic indicating in several ways that moral behavior is relative and justified by whether or not it “works”
 - 57 % feel that breaking the law is okay if it does not hurt anyone
- Factors providing future satisfaction (cited as having *a lot* of importance)
 - 77 % relationship with God
 - 90 % having a degree
 - 88 % good physical health
 - 68 % having one marriage partner for life
- Religious Practice
 - 92 % religion is somewhat or very important to them
 - 55 % report weekly or daily prayer
 - 11 % report weekly or daily scripture reading, including the Bible or Koran
 - 23 % participate in weekly or daily religious services
 - 13 % participate in weekly or daily youth or scripture study group
- Christian Theology
 - 90 % have heard about Jesus and the Bible from family or relatives
 - 89 % the Christian faith is the way I live
 - 49 % if a person is generally good, or does enough good things for others during their life, they will earn a place in Heaven
 - 56 % People who do not accept Jesus Christ as their savior can still go to heaven
 - 86 % the Holy Spirit is a symbol of God’s presence or power, but not a living entity

Strengths & Opportunities

- 71 % are in a two parent family home
- 58 % spend over 60 minutes a week talking to their father about things that really matter
- 83 % spend over 60 minutes a week talking to their mother about things that really matter
- 85 % believe they will be happy in their marriage
- 92 % believe that God intended marriage to last a lifetime
- 53 % of respondents indicated that they are very satisfied with their life
- 58 % of respondents indicate that their parents influence their thoughts a lot
- 45 % of respondents indicate that the Bible influences their thoughts a lot
- 77 % indicate that a relationship with God will provide future satisfaction
- 92% indicate that religion is somewhat or very important to them
- 55 % report daily prayer
- 90 % have heard about Jesus and the Bible from family or relative
- 89 % the Christian faith is the way I live

Weaknesses & Threats

- 81 % consider an unmarried man and woman with children a family
- 72 % feel that traditional family does not play a significant role in the stability of society
- 52 % approve of divorce even when children are involved
- 85 % admit lying to a peer and 90 % admit lying to an adult
- 40 % admit to engaging in pornographic material
- 57 % feel that breaking the law is okay if it doesn't hurt anyone
- 48 % feel that with good deeds they can earn a place in heaven
- 86 % feel that the Holy Spirit is not a living entity
- 62 % state that their school performance is average to very poor
- 55 % almost never talk to their fathers about personal concerns
- 40 % of respondents claim that the adults in their life almost never admit when they are wrong
- 64 % of males and 65 % of females admit that they do not want a marriage like their parents

Recommendations

- Forthcoming after OneHope Global Ministry's Latin America strategic planning meetings.

Section II: Project Description

Acknowledgments

This project was made possible in part by funding from the Maclellan Foundation and Global Ministries - OneHope.

We acknowledge the cooperation of the Ministry of Education of Costa Rica, the headmasters and staff of the schools included in the sample, the cooperation of students, and volunteers.

The instrument administered in this study was made available by Josh McDowell Ministries.

Overview

One Hope seeks to understand what children and youth deal with in their day-to-day realities. We know that children and youth face a variety of social challenges and experience psycho-social needs to which they are often left without effective responses. We do know that the needs of children vary from country to country and even regionally within countries. However, without reliable information we are unable to tailor our products and distribution programs to address needs specific to particular contexts.

While the issues and challenges facing children and youth in developed countries are researched and documented, those in developing countries are not. Without an accurate analysis of their contexts these populations are treated as though they share a common reality. An awareness of the immediate reality of children is often discovered only after ministry has begun and resources have been committed to a project.

The Spiritual State of the World's Children (SSWC) project will capture the following information about children in Costa Rica:

- Typical family situations, relationships and parental contact
- Behaviors and moral values guiding relationships with peers of the opposite sex
- Daily occupations and pastimes
- Worldviews, influences, beliefs, future goals, and religious affiliation
- Theological perspectives and commitment

Research Methodology

The SSWC survey is a stratified random survey of secondary school children. The survey was stratified by degree of urbanization and gender for Costa Rica. Additional strata that permit analysis are: family composition, ethnicity, and religious affiliation.

The core survey was constructed using the Survey of Juveniles designed by Chris Sleath of Josh McDowell Ministries. The survey was administered in secondary schools in Spanish. Surveys were administered in randomly selected accessible¹ schools segregated by population density (proportional to national population distribution of urban-rural residents) to students in the schools randomized by gender (proportional to the national ratio of male-female).

Project Overview

The time frame for data collection was October 2008 through December 2008. Camilo Rodriguez served as the local Research Coordinator for the Costa Rica research project. Oversight was provided by Andrea Barquero and Dr. Allen Reesor of Pompano Beach, Florida. The research followed project design instructions (see below under Logistics).

Data was entered into a web-based database, which was hosted by Philip Issa of Elite Research. The final report includes Metadigm's analysis of the data, which has been reviewed by Rene Paulson, PhD. Secondary data is provided when applicable. This report is available for use by partners supporting the utilization of collaborative research in conducting ministry to children and youth.

The final report will be made available to ministry partners who promote ministry to children and youth through collaborative research.

Logistics

Review

National leaders reviewed the survey and recommended minor edits.

Randomization

Reliability of the survey results depend upon consistent randomization of the participants. Two strata of randomization that govern participant selection employed in this project were gender and population density distributions.

The Ministry of Education of Costa Rica provided a list of schools segregated by population density.

Population density was interpreted as either urban or rural. Additionally, the study population was further segregated into one of two classes: less than one hundred thousand or between one hundred thousand and one million. This list was used to select randomly identified schools at Metadigm Group Headquarters. The list of randomized schools was returned to the local Research Coordinator for review. Schools that were inaccessible (see footnote on inaccessibility above) were replaced by following randomization procedures.

To ensure that gender participation reflects the male/female ratio of the national population, randomization by gender was finalized when students were selected for participation.

Verifying Access

Research Assistants met with the administration of each school to explain the survey and obtain school consent for participation.

Survey Printing

A master copy of the survey response form was forwarded electronically to the local Research Coordinator who received bids for the printing of 4,000 collated and stapled copies.

Quality Control

Hard copies of the survey response form were randomly assessed to evaluate survey validity. Hard copy survey response forms will be retained by the research coordinator for one year to verify the accuracy of data entry if needed and as a back up to electronic data files. The surveys are kept confidential and will be turned over to a designated OneHope Headquarters representative on or about 12 months following the close of data collection. After 12 months, a OneHope representative will oversee the destruction of all hard copy surveys.

¹ Schools considered inaccessible are those that are in conflict zones, areas of extremely low population or that cannot be reached by public transportation.

Implementation & Survey Administration

Data Collection

The survey was administered in the schools identified by randomization and previously contacted. The research agent will identify the number of classes in session on the day of the survey.

- If the average class size at a school was less than 30 students, 15 classes were randomly selected for inclusion in the study. 15 students from each class were randomly selected proportional to the male/female ratio for Costa Rica.
- If the average class size at a school was than 30 students, 10 classes were randomly selected for inclusion in the study. 22 students from each class were randomly selected proportional to the male/female ratio for Costa Rica.

Students were asked to voluntarily participate. Participants were administered the survey in groups that could be accommodated in a classroom. Approximately 200 students were surveyed at each school.

The surveys were conducted by two people. A brief scripted introduction was read aloud and students were given the opportunity to ask questions. Administrators took turns reading each question aloud to students.

Data Entry

The local Research Coordinator was responsible for accurate input of the data into the web-based survey database. The following assisted with data collection: Jose Chaverri. The following assisted with data entry: Jose Chaverri & Carlos Calderon.

Section III: Profile of Youth in Costa Rica

Demographic Profile

60% of the surveys completed were urban and 40% were rural. The distribution of the subjects was balanced for male and female across all sub-demographics of population density and age.

61% of the subjects were aged 14-16 years. Students are evenly distributed across 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grades with a very slight weighting toward the lower of these. The rural population is more likely to be represented by the lower grades indicating that students are more likely to be older in a grade than their urban counterparts. Students are most likely to report they are doing average in school with 30% reporting good and about 8% excellent. Urban students are more likely to report average school performance and rural students good or excellent school performance.

Subjects indicate that the agriculture, professional and service industries are the most likely professions of the subjects' fathers and more than half of the subjects report that their mothers are employed in the service industry. 21% identify the father's and 15% the mother's profession as "other"; possibly referring to a stay at home parent, self or unemployed status. Rural subjects' fathers are 7% more likely than the overall average to be employed in agriculture and urban by 5% in professional work while mothers in rural areas are 10% more likely to be "other" employed than in the urban areas.

Slightly more than half of the parents are married with little variance. About 25% have been married and are currently divorced or separated with an additional 6% remarried. About 60% of the subjects in this survey live with two parents and an additional one in four in a female headed home. Rural subjects are 7% more likely to report living in a two-parent home while urban students are 5% more likely to live in a single parent home.

Family Relationships

92% believe that God intends marriage to last a lifetime and 85% that they will be happy in their own marriage. Overall about 70% are positive about their own family experience and feel that most marriages are healthy; yet 80% feel it is hard to have a successful marriage, and about 30% admire the single life and would rather live together than get married, yet only 36% want a marriage like their parents'. Half accept divorce even when children are involved and about half value virginity at marriage. Nearly 29% agree that traditional family supports society. Males are more likely to think well of their own family experience but less likely to value virginity and their own future marriages than females. Rural students are more likely to expect and approve of divorce while valuing virginity and marriage more highly than their urban counterparts. Younger students agree that they would like a marriage like their parents by 7% more than older students; yet, only 39% feel that this is what they want.

The subjects generally (44%) identify a family as those related by blood marriage or adoption, males being 10% more likely than females to select this definition. However, 29% feel that family is defined as those who care for each other, females more likely by 7% to feel this is true, and 22% that a family is comprised of those who share values and goals for life.

Of the alternate family arrangements such as: unmarried or homosexual couples or single parents with children, 86% agree that an unmarried woman with children constitutes a family and 81% that unmarried couples with children constitute a family. One third identifies unmarried couples without children as family and less than 20% accept homosexual couples as meeting the requirements for family. Older subjects are 8% more likely to identify unmarried couples without children as family.

They are most likely to report that adults set good examples, are interested in the children in the home, and spend time with the children. At the same time they are as likely to report that adults expect more than is fair. Female and rural subjects are more likely to report that adults are too strict. Younger students seem to report closer relationships while expressing a greater sense of restriction. Although students are least likely to report that the adults in their home fight with each other nearly 15% did not respond to this question. This may indicate that there is a hesitancy to report negative behavior.

75% indicate that they are either very or fairly close to their fathers. About 10% indicate that their father is dead or that they do not know him. Older students are 7% less likely to report a very close relationship fathers than their young counterparts. Consistent across all demographics over 85% feel close or very close to their mothers.

Half of those responding indicate that home is a place where they are safe and loved and another 23% that they sometimes feel loved and not at other times. About 10% report that home is a place they would rather not be. Males are slightly more likely to feel safe and loved and females significantly that they feel sometimes loved and at other times not loved. Rural and younger children tend to be more certain of the safety of their homes.

Subjects are most likely to feel proud of their fathers, show love for their fathers or do something special with their fathers. They are least likely to talk with their fathers about things that are important to them, 72% almost never or not frequently talk to their fathers. Younger students are more likely to report that they engage with their fathers at all levels than those older than 16. Subjects are most likely to feel proud of their mothers, feel that their mothers demonstrate love to the children and to a lesser degree do something special or show love for their mothers. Females are more likely to report engaging with their mothers at all levels than males.

Although about one in three spend less than 15 minutes a week talking about things that really matter with their fathers, almost half spends more than four hours a week in conversation. Female and younger subjects are more likely to spend significant time with their fathers than male and older subjects. Over three quarters report that they spend more than 4 hours a week talking with their mothers about things that really matter to them. Again females are somewhat more likely to report this amount of conversation than males. By age and population density there is no statistically significant difference.

Relationships with People of the Opposite Sex

Subjects are the most likely to have learned about sex from classmates/friends or TV/movies and least likely to have learned from the Internet or sex magazine or books. About one third indicate that they have learned some or a lot from their parents. Females are more likely than males to have learned about sex from their parents and textbooks than males although they still learn more from friends. Older students are more likely to have learned from friends than younger students.

Sexual attitudes are revealed by the indication that 45% feel it is sometimes or always permissible to engage in sexual intercourse when a couple is in love and if there is no coercion. However, 56% of females and 51% of younger subjects feel it is never permissible to engage in sexual intercourse even when in love. Otherwise there is little disagreement that more innocent expressions of sexuality are permissible (78%) and that more intense sexual activities are not.

Overall, 24% indicate that they have had sexual intercourse with slightly more than 80% indicating they have held hands, kissed or embraced a member of the opposite sex. Males and urban students are more sexually active with regard to sexual intercourse but otherwise quite similar in their sexual behaviors compared to female or rural subjects. By age, 15% of subjects younger than 16 and 38% of those older than 15 years of age report having engaged in sexual intercourse. Older subjects are generally more likely to engage in all sexual behaviors.

Subjects are most likely to respond to the opportunity of sexual intercourse if they were certain that there would be no pregnancy and secondly if they were in love, with over 50% indicating that these conditions would make it more or very likely. Least influential in making such a decision is the encouragement of friends or the permission of parents. Males are significantly more likely than females to respond positively except in the area of intent to marry. There is some indication that urban students were more likely than rural and older students than younger students to agree.

Beliefs and Perspectives on Daily Life

Overall 53% are very satisfied with life and 31% somewhat satisfied. Only 4% indicate they are not at all satisfied. Females are less likely to be satisfied with life. The highest value in future happiness is ascribed to education, health and purpose for life. This is followed by high pay, friendships, God and a fulfilling marriage in descending order. When analyzed by gender, females value church and integrity more highly and males comfortable lifestyle and fame. By population density, urban subjects identify influence as more important and by age, younger students' value church attendance more highly.

Subjects report that parents and Christian faith are the strongest influences in their lives followed closely by friends, the Bible and music. TV, teachers, Internet, religious leaders and textbooks are also, in descending order, influential. Religions other than Christianity and political leaders are least influential. Females are more influenced by the Bible and friends than are male subjects. Rural subjects are more likely to be influenced by siblings and younger subjects by the media (TV, movies and Internet) than their peers. The Internet and cell phone use is an occupation of nearly half on a daily basis. Younger students are more likely to find appeal in all of these but greater for blogging and Internet than older students.

Subjects are most likely to watch TV (90% report that they watch MTV weekly), listen to music or sleep during their free time with 43% reporting that they spend more than 8 hours a week in these free time occupations. They are least likely to read a book or the Bible with over 70% reporting less than 1 hour a week reading books or the Bible. Generally urban and younger subjects are more likely to sleep, spend time on the Internet or SMS/text than their rural or older peers.

Over 80% indicate that they lied to adults and peers and have cheated on an exam in the past 90 days. Approximately 3 out of 4 have attempted to hurt someone else emotionally or physically and about half have watched pornography and 31% read pornographic magazines. Nearly half have drunk enough alcohol to be intoxicated. 1 in 4 has had suicidal thoughts and 15% have attempted suicide in the past 3 months.

Males are twice as likely as females to have viewed pornography or gambled. They are 13% more likely to have stolen, 10% more likely to have smoked or used a tobacco product and 7% more likely to lie to a friend than females. Females are 7% more likely to have suicidal thoughts and 6% more likely to have attempted suicide than males. Urban students are 9% more likely to have drunk to intoxication and 7% more likely to watch a pornographic movie or use tobacco than rural counterparts. Otherwise there are no statistically significant differences. Older subjects are more likely to use alcohol (16%), drugs (11%) and tobacco (9%) than younger subjects. Younger subjects are more likely to be violent by about 10%. Otherwise there are no statistically significant differences.

Religious Background and Practice

Of the students participating in this sample 63% were Roman Catholic, 27% Protestant and 4% indicating they practice no religion. Islam, Buddhism and Judaism are respectively represented by 3%, 2% and 1%. Female subjects are slightly more likely to be Protestant, younger subjects are 13% more likely to be Roman Catholic and older subjects 9% more likely Protestant.

They have a consistent overall theological perspective and there is high consensus with more than 80% in agreement that Jesus was virgin born, miracles in the Bible occurred, Christian faith is relevant, angels exist, Jesus was a real person, prayer changes life, people will be judged by God and that people are not reincarnated. They also identify the Holy Spirit and the Devil as symbols of God's power and evil, respectively, not living beings.

Overall subjects agree by over 90% that faith is important and that God is the creator, 88% believe God to be the all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect creator of the universe who rules the world today, 86% are certain that God exists and 63% that heaven and hell are real places. They also value religion, scripture and church, 82% indicate that their religion is very important to them and an additional 9% somewhat important.

Slightly more than two thirds agree that the Bible is completely accurate, Jesus rose from the dead, sin is a relevant concept, Christianity is not like other religions, forgiveness of sin is only possible through faith in Jesus and there is a responsibility to tell others about your faith. However, they also indicate that what one does for others is more important than what one believes about Jesus and nearly one third feel all religions pray to the same god using different names.

However, they are postmodern and also believe that truth is defined in different ways yet is still correct and about two thirds defined morality pragmatically as being what helps you get by without hurting others. Eighty-five percent discount any value in religious practices other than Christianity. Younger subjects are more likely to be pluralistic regarding other religions than older subjects. Male subjects are more likely to be pragmatic and to doubt God's continued interest in human life and urban subjects are more likely to believe that you can live a fulfilled life without spiritual development.

About half indicate that they do not believe you can know what will happen to you after you die. Totaled, 23% believe being good or keeping the rules will get you to heaven and another 12% believe everyone goes to heaven because of God's love. Female and older subjects are somewhat more likely to accept that you do not know what will happen after death than their counterparts.

Subjects are most likely to have heard about the Bible or Jesus from churches (92%) and family (89%). More than half have also heard about the Bible or Jesus from other sources which may be radio, TV, or film media. However, 50% rarely or seldom attend church services, although 33% say they attend weekly. Fathers are significantly less likely to attend church services than mothers or the subjects themselves. Female, rural, and younger subjects are more likely to attend church services than their counterparts. 47% indicate they are very likely to attend church services after leaving home and 21% somewhat likely.

Overall, 83% rarely or seldom read scriptures and with the exception of prayer, over 50% practice prayer daily or weekly; other religious practices are also infrequent. Female subjects are more likely to report praying and younger subjects attending a religious training class. With about 60% responding to the question of religious youth meetings, over half attend groups of between 10 and 19 other young people. Another 20% attend groups smaller than 10.

Nearly 87% indicate that they have made a personal commitment to Jesus that is still important to them. Female subjects are 6% more likely to indicate this than males. However only 25% responded to the question of when this decision was made and of these, 68% had made this decision under the age of 5 years and 22% between the ages of 5 and 8 years of age.

Section IV: Costa Rica Secondary Data

Secondary Research Profile

COSTA RICA



DEMOGRAPHICS & POPULATION	
Population	4,549,903
Population (under 15 yrs)	28.9%
Life Expectancy	77.4 yrs
Birth Rate (per 1,000 people)	16.5
Infant Mortality (per 1,000 live births)	9.95
Estimated Urban / Rural Population	2,670,000.00 / 1,657,000.00
Largest City / Population	San Jose / 343,481
EDUCATION & LITERACY	
Literacy Rate (over 15 yrs)	96%
Primary Completion rate % of relevant age group	91.99%
Literacy Rate – Males	95.9%
Literacy Rate – Females	96.1%
ECONOMICS	
GDP (PPP)	\$ 49.73 billion (2008 est.)
GDP – per capita (PPP)	\$11,900 (2008 est.)
Poverty Rate (% below poverty line)	22%

SOCIAL			
Human Development Index ² (out of 177)	50	Prisoners (per capita)	229/100,000
Divorce Rate <i>per 1,000 marriages</i>	3.58	HIV AIDS/People living with per capita	2.873/1,000
Unemployment Rate	5.6%	All registered NGOs	Not Available
Murder Rate (per capita)	0.061006/1,000	Homelessness	Not Available
Rape Rate (per capita)	0.118277/1,000	Births by Teens (15-10) %	20%
Theft Rate (per capita)	4.79109/1,000	Child Prostitution	Not Available
Children Orphaned <i>due to all causes (aged 0-17), estimated (thousands)</i>	44	Child/Teen Soldiers	Not Available
ETHNIC GROUPS & RELIGIONS			
European descent (including mestizo)	94%	Roman Catholic	76%
African	3%	Evangelical	14%
Amerindian	1%	Other	5%
Chinese	1%	None	3%
Other	1%	Jehovah's Witnesses	1%
		Other Protestant	1%
LANGUAGES			
Spanish, English			

² Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index that measures the level of well-being in 177 nations in the world. It uses factors such as poverty, literacy, life expectancy, education, gross domestic product, and purchasing power parity to assess the average achievements in each nation. It has been used in the UN's Human Development Report since 1993.