

A Barna Report Produced in Partnership with
Biblica, World Vision and Alpha

Barna



The Open Generation

A Global Teens Study

Kenya

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A Preface from the Partners

Listening is a posture that is deeply embedded in the Christian tradition and originally modelled for us by Jesus himself. When we dig deep into the communication style of Jesus in the gospels, we find that he listened more than he talked. Jesus was interested to know what people thought and how they felt. He listened to people who agreed with him, and people who didn't. He listened to people who seemed to have things together, and to people whose lives were in pieces.

In your work with teenagers and young people today, how are you following Jesus' lead?

In 2021, Alpha, Biblica and World Vision came alongside Barna Group—as well as a collective of other organizational partners including the Association of Christian Schools International, Bible Study Fellowship, Christ In Youth and Christian Vision—to *listen* to the perspectives of young people in the emerging generation. Our desire is to help local churches, schools and youth ministries around the world love and lead young people well. Specifically, in a digital, questioning, experiential age, we want to hear how teens perceive Jesus, the Bible and social action.

This global research on teenagers shows that, overall, this generation is open and inclusive, seeking truth, authenticity and change. Interconnected and optimistic, today's teens represent and welcome different perspectives, different faiths and different cultures. They are deeply passionate about addressing injustice in our world. Given all of this,

there is a current of curiosity about both Jesus and the Bible, and how they connect to the purpose and pain of everyday people.

What does this mean for the Church, youth groups and Christian leaders?

What does this mean for *your* work?

As you know well, there are local nuances to the contexts, cultures, opportunities and obstacles that surround today's teens. Our organizations work all over the world, and we are grateful that this research is able to reach into 26 countries. This allows the voice of the open generation to be heard on a national level. We hope reports like this one, focused on the findings specific to Kenya, produce personal and practical next steps for you and your ministry.

Together, we have contributed to this study in order to serve teens and love them well. We hope *The Open Generation* equips and empowers Christian leaders to better understand teens and to facilitate deeper connections with young people. The study supports leaders across the world who want to create something not just *for* teenagers but *with* teenagers: to come alongside this generation, collaborate with them, guide and learn from them.



World Vision®



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Meet the Open Generation

An Introduction to Barna's Global Study of Teenagers

Thanks to two major global studies in recent years, Barna Group has a compelling impression of the trajectory of young people today. We'll open this report about *The Open Generation* in Kenya with a quick overview.

In 2018 and 2019, in partnership with World Vision, we worked on a study of young adults (ages 18 to 35) in 25 countries. At the time, it was Barna's largest study and a unique international effort to understand emerging adults. It revealed that young adults in this age range (which our U.S. research typically refers to as Millennials and the leading edge of Gen Z) contend with strong currents of anxiety, loneliness and skepticism. We highlighted areas of need and opportunities for churches to better lead and support young adults.

Fast-forward to 2021 and 2022. Amid a pandemic and with the partnership of a collective of organizations including Alpha, Biblica and World Vision (as well as the support of partners at the Association of Christian Schools International, Bible Study Fellowship, Christ In Youth and Christian Vision), we have broadened the scope of our research again, this time to 25,000+ interviews, 26 countries and a slightly younger cohort: teenagers ages 13 to 17. This report presents a

summary of the findings specific to Kenya. The goal is to advance the understanding of teens globally—their identity, values and views—and to offer a picture of the global Church's relationship to a rising generation.

Along the way, we have ended up observing some remarkable differences between teenagers today and the young adults we heard from just a few years ago. Chief among these differences is teens' openness. As we have explored the profile that emerges from the aggregated data, we have used words like "optimistic," "engaged," "malleable," "curious," "authentic," "inclusive" and "collaborative." From a global vantage point, there is a lightness of being among today's teens that is less common among young adults even just a few years ahead of them. This is just one reason we're referring to them as "the open generation."

Granted, no matter what context a teen lives in, they are still in early stages of the development of their ideas and character. Their appealing openness is, on some level, a reflection of youth. But that fact does not diminish the reality of their overall optimism, and these qualities emerge despite this study having been conducted during a time when teens were living through a global pandemic.

What might come of their hope, their desire to make a difference and their leaning into goodness?

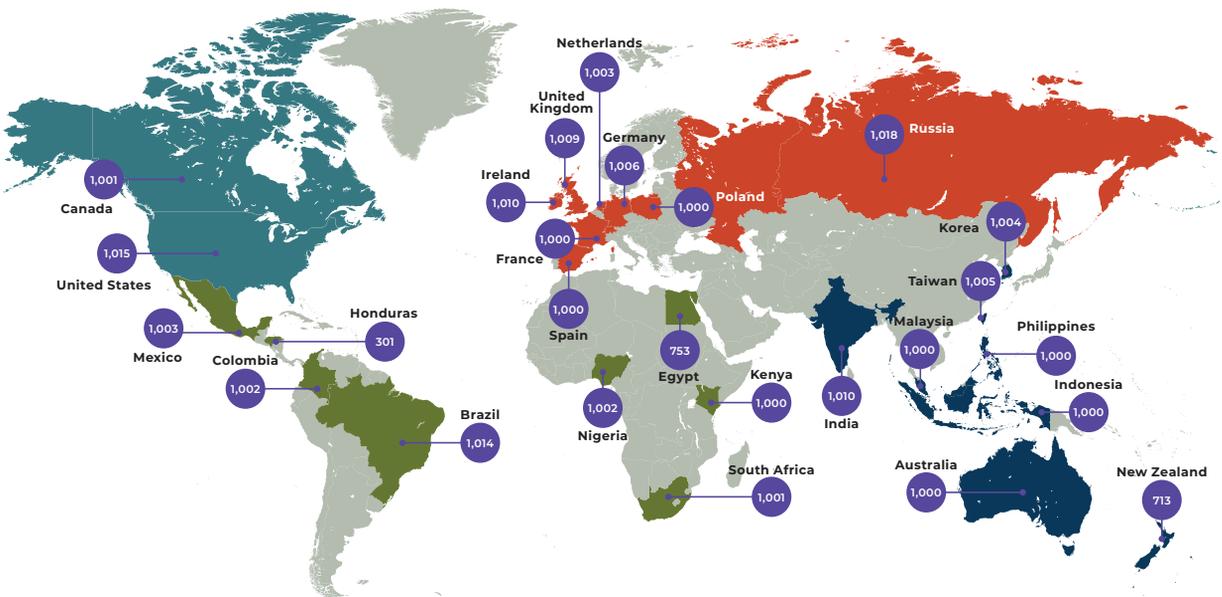
Will certain milestones, influences or experiences soon dampen their enthusiasm—presenting some of the challenges that face their not-so-much older peers?

This research offers an emotional portrait of a connected, digitally enabled generation—especially as it relates to the sacred text, central character and expression of the Christian faith. We see that teens are open to **Jesus**, the **Bible**

and **justice**. Further, their commitments to these three things are interwoven and increase together. Regardless of how “churched” a nation or region may be, there is much to learn from these key elements of the Christian faith.

In more ways than one, teenagers are on the cusp. *The Open Generation* project urges that Christians around the world come alongside teenagers to help them make the most of these formative years.

This report represents a summary of the findings specific to Kenya



Sample sizes for each country included in the study.

Teens in Kenya: A Local Snapshot

Many young people now have the shared experience of a fast-paced, more-connected-than-ever, always-changing world. Despite these common threads, teens around the world also face issues that are unique to their place and position in the world.

Though *The Open Generation* does not offer a comprehensive view of teenage life in any one country—including Kenya—it points to local forces and cultural climates that influence how teens identify and interact.

Faith

As Barna Group is experienced in studying the intersection of faith and culture, and as this project aims to help leaders and educators understand the faith of teens in their context, we'll often look at the data through the lens of faith affiliation or practice.

Kenya is primarily a Christian country. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 86 percent of the nation is Christian.¹ This aligns with Barna data, which also show that the majority of Kenyan teens (91%) is Christian; of those, one

Faith Profile of Teens in Kenya

● Christian ● Other faith ● No faith



n=1,000 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

in three is Catholic (32%). Just three percent of Kenyan teens is atheist, agnostic or of no faith. And, as you'll see in the following pages, among Christian teens in Kenya, those who are committed to their faith is double the proportion of teens who are only culturally or nominally engaged.

Emotions

The emotional profile of teens in Kenya is amplified in comparison to the global average, in both positive and negative respects. They report far more security in their identity and optimism about the future and reaching their goals. At the same time, they experience far greater fear of failure, anxiety about decisions and pressure to be successful or perfect.

Community

Similarly, on matters of their relationship to their communities, teens in Kenya respond more strongly than global teens, reporting higher degrees of community satisfaction. More than half of teens in Kenya say being part of their community is important to them and they expect to be a community member for a long time. Kenyan teens are more likely than their global peers to feel connected and confident that their presence and influence matters.

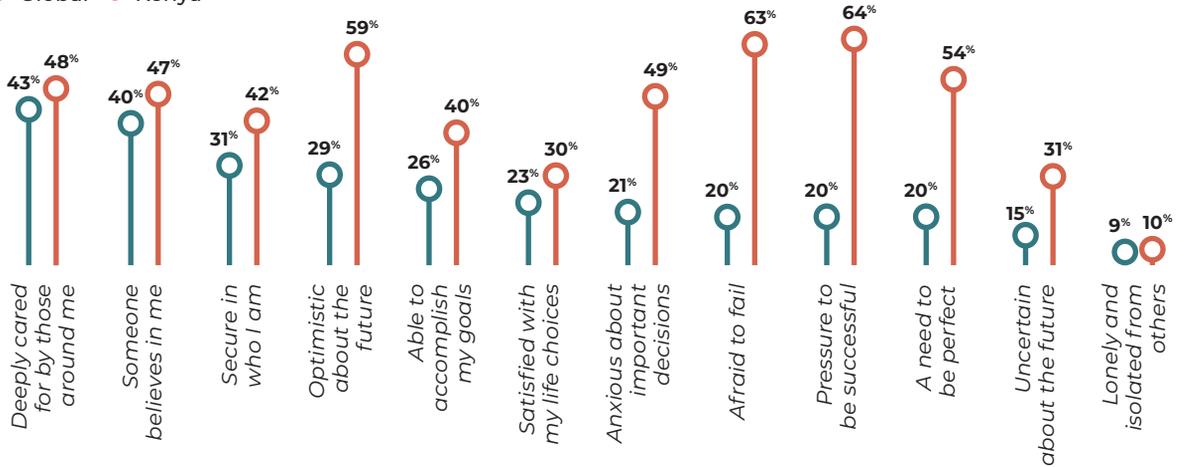
1. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, *2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, vol. IV, Distribution of Population by Socio-Economic Characteristics*, <https://housingfinanceafrica.org/app/uploads/VOLUME-IV-KPHC-2019.pdf>.

The Emotional Climate of Teens in Kenya

How often do you feel each of the following?

% “always”

● Global ● Kenya



n=1,000 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021; n=24,870 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

Community Among Teens in Kenya

Thinking about your community, how true are the following statements?

Base: teens who are part of a community; % “very true”

● Global ● Kenya



n=996 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021; n=24,449 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

1. How Teens in Kenya Relate to Jesus

“Who Do Teens Say That I Am?”

Beliefs about Jesus vary among teens, on a global scale and at the national level.

Globally, teens believe Christ represents love, hope, care, generosity and trustworthiness. Among teens in Kenya, these positive associations are even more pronounced. Just over two-thirds of Kenyan Christian teens attribute hope (68%), care (68%) and trustworthiness (68%) to him. More than half find him generous (57%) and believe a personal relationship with Jesus is possible (52%). Though less inclined to hold negative ideas about Jesus, Kenyan teens are, interestingly, slightly more likely than global teens to say that he is known for the things he is against (12% vs. 10%).

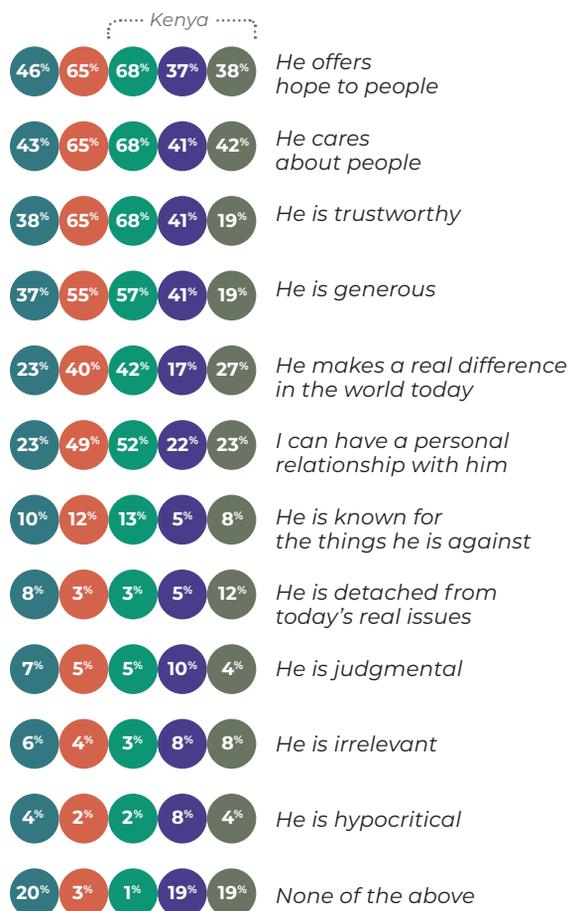
Even more so than their Christian peers world wide, Christian teens in Kenya are overwhelmingly sure of Jesus’ divinity, crucifixion and resurrection, and believe he will return one day.

Though subdued in comparison to Kenyan Christian teens, the views of Kenyan teens of other faiths or of no faith tend to align with the generally positive views of global teens. Skepticism sometimes surfaces, such as the eight percent of teens of other faiths who see Jesus as hypocritical, or the eight percent of teens of no faith who find him irrelevant. Still, these negative ideas about Jesus are rare, and he emerges as a positive figure among teens of all faiths in Kenya.

Which of the following do you, personally, believe about Jesus?

Select all that apply.

● Global ● Kenya ● Christian
● Other faith ● No faith



n=1,000 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021;

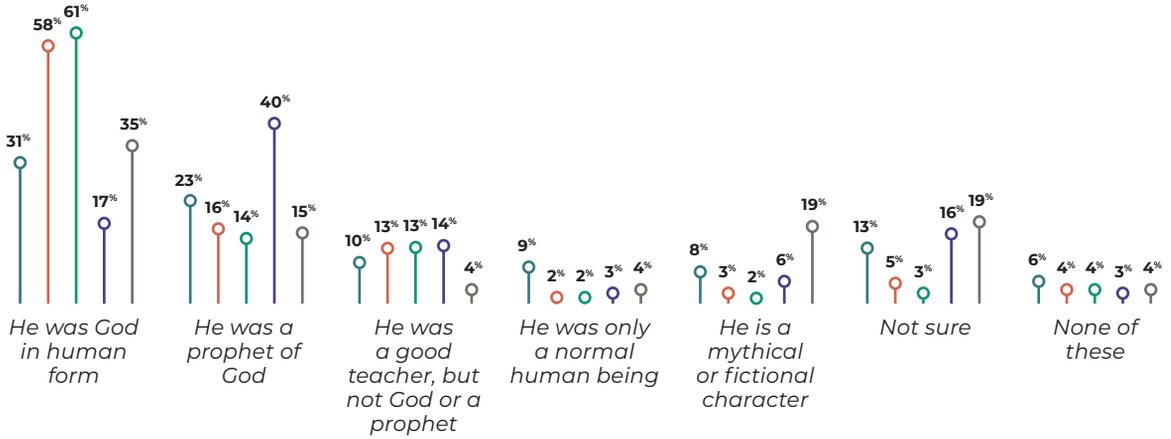
n=24,870 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

Which of the following best describes your understanding of who Jesus Christ is?

Select one.

- Global
- Kenya
- Christian
- Other faith
- No faith

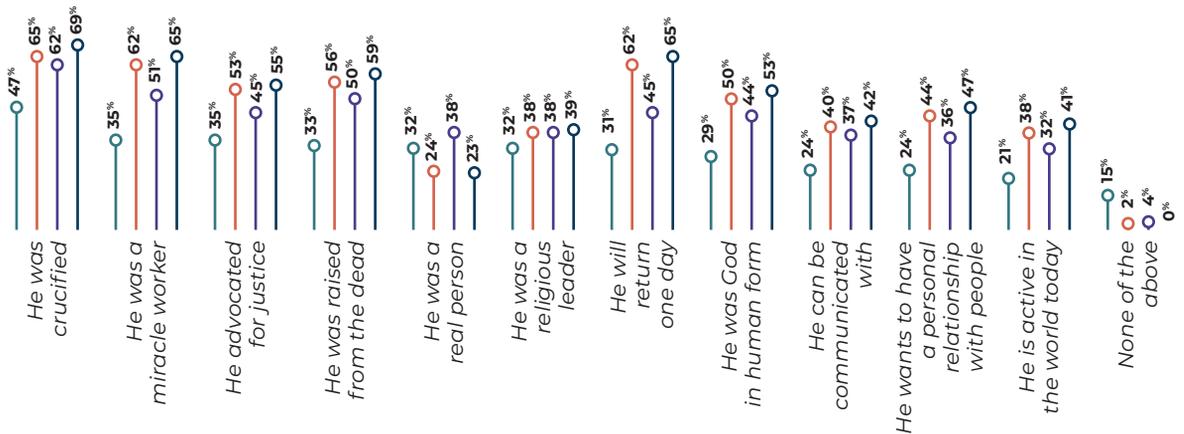
..... Kenya



Thinking about Jesus Christ, which of the following are true?

Select the statements you believe are true.

- Global
- Kenya
- Global Christians
- Kenyan Christians



n=1,000 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021; n=24,870 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

Knowing & Growing with Jesus

Having looked at teens' perceptions of Jesus, we'll now focus on their connections to him.

When teens identify as a Christian, that doesn't mean they have made a personal commitment to follow Jesus. Barna has long made the distinction between nominal Christians and practicing Christians in its research, which is especially important in areas that may be culturally Christian. We can also assume that some teens are young enough that they identify with the religion of their community or upbringing without having yet made deeply personal decisions around that faith.

To sharpen our analysis of Christianity among teens, Barna developed a segmentation based on a personal commitment to follow Jesus.

Commitment to Jesus

- Committed Christians
- Nominal Christians
- All others

Global Teens



Kenyan Teens



n=1,000 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021;

n=24,870 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

- **COMMITTED CHRISTIAN** teens self-identify as Christian and say they have made a personal commitment to follow Jesus Christ
- **NOMINAL CHRISTIAN** teens self-identify as Christian but have not made a personal commitment to follow Jesus Christ
- **ALL OTHER** teens do not identify as Christian and / or are unsure about who Jesus is

By this definition, just shy of one in four teens (22%) worldwide is a committed Christian. In Kenya, this number nearly triples (64%), with a little under three in 10 being nominal Christians (28%), on par with the global proportion (30%). Broken down by denomination, 69 percent of Catholic teens in Kenya and 71 percent of Protestant teens are categorized as committed Christians.

Committed Christian teens are a minority who often have meaningful experiences of faith. In Kenya, however, not only are committed Christian teens the majority, the reported benefits of this relationship with Jesus are more pronounced.

Globally, three-quarters of committed Christian teens strongly agree their connection to Jesus brings them joy and satisfaction. This experience of joy is heightened among the same group in Kenya. Even more striking, nominal Christian teens in Kenya are more than twice as likely than nominal Christian teens globally to agree strongly that the relationship they have with Jesus is satisfying (60% vs. 28%).

This disparity emerges again among the committed Christian teens who find relevance in what

Jesus has to say, with a 14-point gap between the percentage of global and Kenyan teens who strongly agree. Nominal Christian teens in Kenya, likewise, are more than twice as likely as their global counterparts to agree strongly that Jesus speaks to them in a way that is relevant to their life.

Some discipleship opportunities present themselves in this data. With a generally positive view of Jesus and his personal relevance, Kenyan teens who are not currently committed Christians are likely still open to learning more about following Jesus—and have plenty of faithful peers to join them.

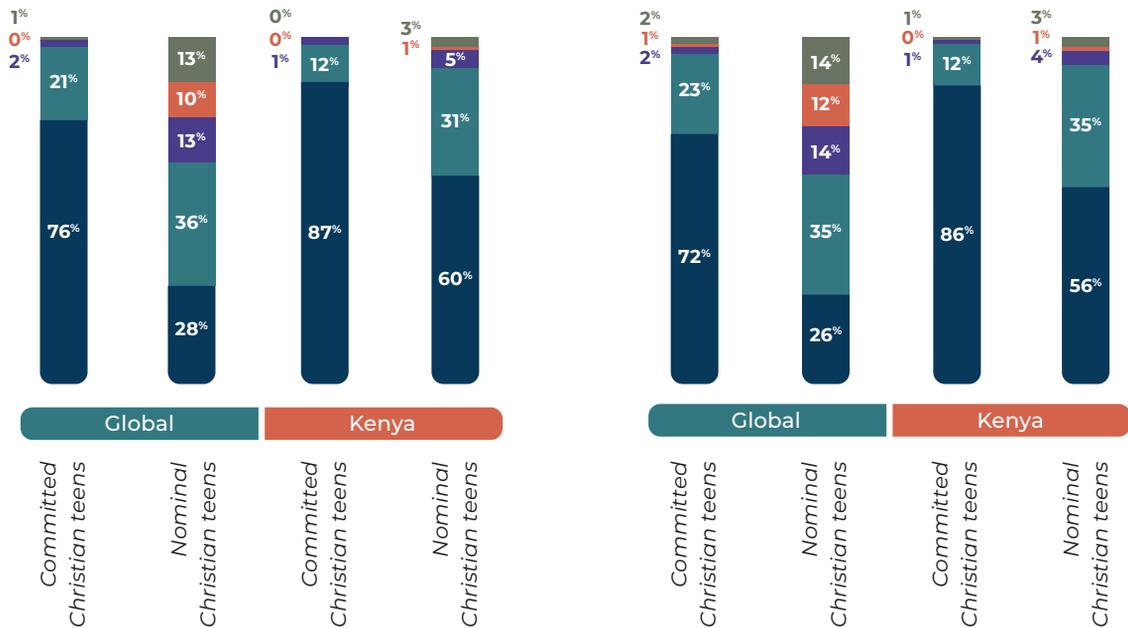
To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Base: Christians

“My relationship with Jesus brings me deep joy and satisfaction”

“Jesus speaks to me in a way that is relevant to my life”

● Agree strongly ● Agree somewhat ● Disagree somewhat ● Disagree strongly ● Not sure



n=911 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021; n=13,184 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

A Learning Journey with Jesus

Curiosity about Jesus is widespread in the open generation. Teens in Kenya outpace their global peers, with 86 percent being very motivated and another 11 percent being somewhat motivated to keep learning about Jesus throughout their lives.

Teens' personal commitment to follow Jesus goes hand in hand with their motivation to study him. Globally, 85 percent of committed Christian teens are very motivated to continue learning about him, compared to about one-third of nominal Christian teens. In Kenya, while a gap persists between committed and nominal Christian teens, it narrows, and the majority remains very motivated to keep learning about Jesus.

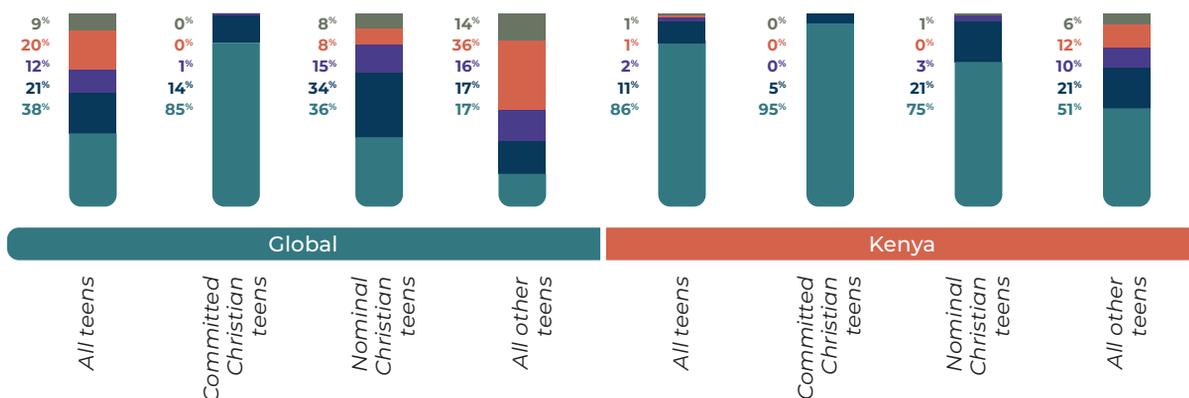
Kenyan teens may place a significant amount of trust in religious texts, community and their

households to teach them about Jesus. Teens are more likely to report looking to these sources than to social media, the Internet, their friends or influencers.

Beyond the Bible, committed Christian teens in Kenya turn to a church leader, family member or other clergy with their curiosity about Jesus. Nominal Christian teens are most likely to turn to a family member first, to the Bible next, then to clergy. Youth leaders seem to be only moderately helpful to either group of Christian teens in Kenya when it comes to learning about Jesus. In fact, Christian teens without a personal commitment to follow Jesus look to themselves before they go to a youth leader to learn about Jesus.

Throughout the rest of your life, how motivated are you to continue learning more about Jesus Christ?

● Very motivated
 ● Somewhat motivated
 ● Somewhat unmotivated
● Not at all motivated
 ● Not sure



n=1,000 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021; n=24,870 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

Open-Ended: Takeaways & Questions to Help You Think Through the Research

Christianity and deep commitment to Jesus is more common among teens in Kenya than in many other countries, and these teens see multiple benefits from this relationship with Christ. *How do you nurture or celebrate this in your context? What steps are you taking to help teens share and carry this enthusiasm into adulthood?*

BISHOP OGINDE: A majority of teens [in Kenya] find themselves in boarding schools or colleges. These institutions have Christian Unions that have a special focus on peer growth and discipleship. [In Kenya,] this has been very instrumental in helping teens share and carry this enthusiasm into adulthood.

While teens in Kenya are far more likely than their global peers to feel optimistic about the future, they also rank significantly higher in feeling afraid to fail, pressure to be successful and a need to be perfect. *How are you encouraging teens' optimism for the future while also helping alleviate some of the anxiety and pressures they feel in their lives?*

BISHOP OGINDE: For every believer and especially for teens, the greatest anchor for faith is the Word of God. Teens should be trained and encouraged to read and study the word of God for themselves. Psalms 119:9 says, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word."

What sort of Christian community do teens desire? How can churches and those who work with teens expand and strengthen their networks?

DAVID EWAGATA: If you're not with teens, somebody else is. If you're not talking to them on a Wednesday afternoon, somebody else is talking to them. They're with people who are occupying their space and their time. When they're not in that two-hour session that your church has created for them, who is their community?

Faith happens in community. Don't let your church be a place that can only work for a young person on Sunday morning.

This report features insights from:



Bp. David Oginde, PhD

Presiding Bishop of
Christ Is the Answer
Ministries (CITAM)



Joe Bonga

CEO of Africa for
SDGs (Sustainable
Development Goals)



David Ewagata

Director of YHub,
NetworX, pastor

2. How Teens in Kenya View the Bible

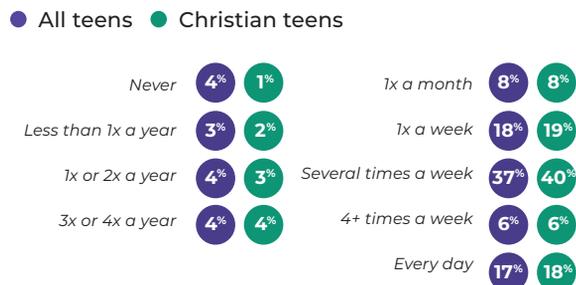
The Presence of the Bible

Overall, 94 percent of teens in Kenya say their household owns a Christian Bible. Over three-quarters of all teens in Kenya (78%) use a Bible (which the survey defined as reading, listening, watching, praying with or using Bible text or content in any form) at least once a week, and four-fifths of Christian teens (83%) interact with scripture weekly.

Many Bible users and Christian teens in Kenya tend to use the Bible by reading it in print (60% in the past year). They also often hear the Bible during a worship service (46%) and at a small group or Bible study (43%). Digital platforms are also popular, with 59 percent saying they've read Bible content on the Internet and 54 percent having used a Bible app on a smartphone or tablet.

Kenya's "digital natives" are clearly accessing the Bible in both traditional and modern formats, with only a slight preference for print over smartphones.

Bible Use Among Teens in Kenya



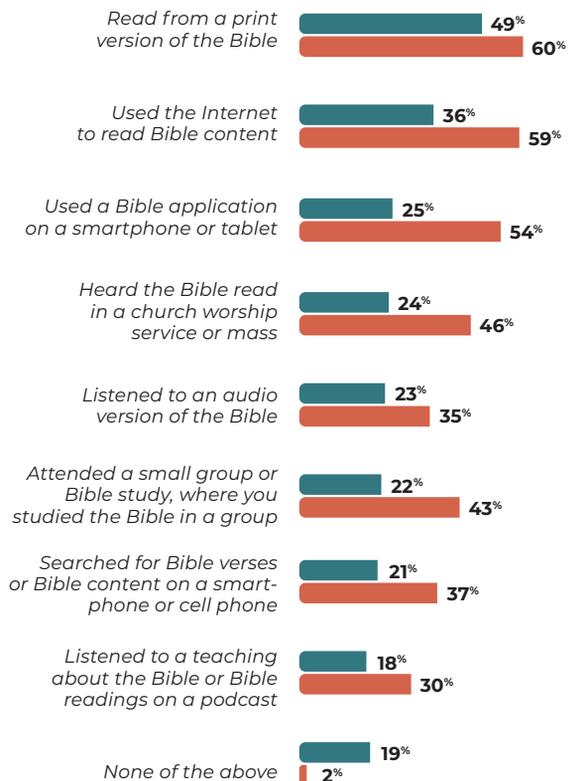
n=1,000 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

These days, the Christian Bible is available and used in different formats. Have you used any of these versions in the past year?

Select all that apply.

Base: Bible users / owners or Christians.

● Global ● Kenya



n=979 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021;

n=18,118 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

What Is the Bible?

The Bible is seen as significant and sacred to the majority of Kenyan teens. This is typical of majority-Christian countries and reflects a fundamental understanding of the Bible.

Teens in Kenya, however, express more conviction toward the Bible than do teens globally; they are 19 percentage points more likely than teens worldwide to say the Bible is the word of God. Similarly, Kenyan Christian teens are more likely than Christian teens worldwide to affirm this view of the

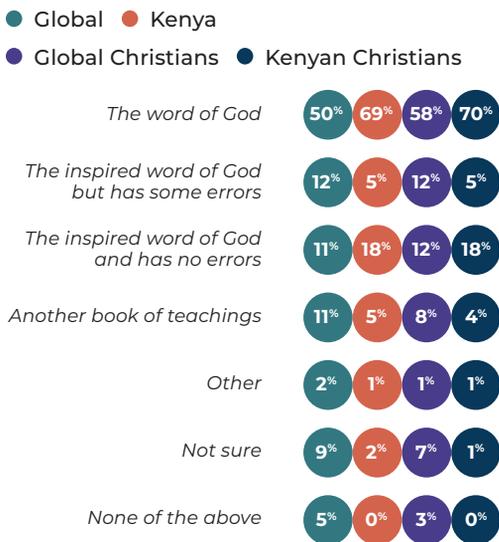
Bible. Kenyan teens are also less likely than their global peers to say Christian scripture contains errors or is “just another book of teachings.” Their approach to interpreting the text suggests nuance, strongly affirming both literal and symbolic views.

Kenyan teens are also more confident about what exactly the Bible is—a pattern of certainty that emerges in several other areas of this report and diverges from the ambiguity experienced by teens elsewhere.

“The Christian Bible is ...”

Which of the following statements comes closest to describing what you believe about the Christian Bible?

Base: Bible users / owners or Christians

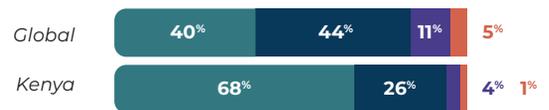


To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Base: Bible users / owners or Christians

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

“The Christian Bible should be understood symbolically, interpreting the text when needed”



“The Christian Bible should be understood literally, word for word”



n=979 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021; n=18,118 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

Bible Engagement Among Teens

To better gauge the relationship today's teens have with the Bible, we categorized their thoughts and behaviors surrounding the Bible into three categories of engagement:

- **BIBLE-ENGAGED** teens hold a “high” view of the Bible and read the Bible several times a week
 - * *A high view of the Bible refers to believing the Bible is “the word of God,” “the inspired word of God with no errors” or “the inspired word of God but with some errors.”*
- **BIBLE-OPEN** teens either (1) hold a high view of the Bible and read the Bible less often than Bible-engaged teens (but more than three or four times a year) or (2) have a neutral view toward the Bible, meaning they don't have a high or negative view of the Bible
- **BIBLE UNENGAGED**—All other teens

Across religious and demographic spectrums, teens are largely open to Christian scripture, with over half of all respondents, globally and in Kenya, falling into this category of engagement. Kenyan teens, however, exhibit more frequent Bible reading and greater openness toward the Bible. Kenyan teens of other faiths are more likely to be Bible open than even Christian teens globally, and more than half of Kenyan teens of no faith falls into this category. Further, while Bible-unengaged teens outnumber Bible-engaged teens globally, the pattern

is reversed in Kenya; there are twice as many Bible-engaged teens (21%) as Bible-unengaged teens (9%).

Teens' Engagement with the Bible

- Bible engaged
- Bible open
- Bible unengaged

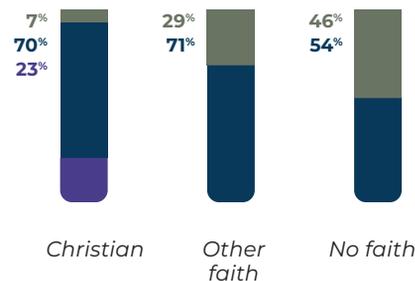
Global



Kenya



Teens' Bible Engagement Across Faith Groups in Kenya



n=1,000 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021;

n=24,870 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

How Teens Read the Bible

In much of the world, teens' Bible-reading is an individualised experience. When reading the Bible, teens who are Bible users and Christians report that they most enjoy reading alone and reflecting on what they've read.

In Kenya, however, not only do teens experience greater enjoyment reading the Bible, they're also more inclined toward communal practices as well. "Reading alone" is the only Bible-reading practice less embraced by Kenyan teens who are Bible users and Christians. In contrast, there is a marked rise in the percentage of teens in Kenya who report enjoying reading and discussing the Bible with others, as well as receiving interpretive help from others. This bent toward practices that involve community is especially pronounced among the Bible-engaged teens of Kenya.

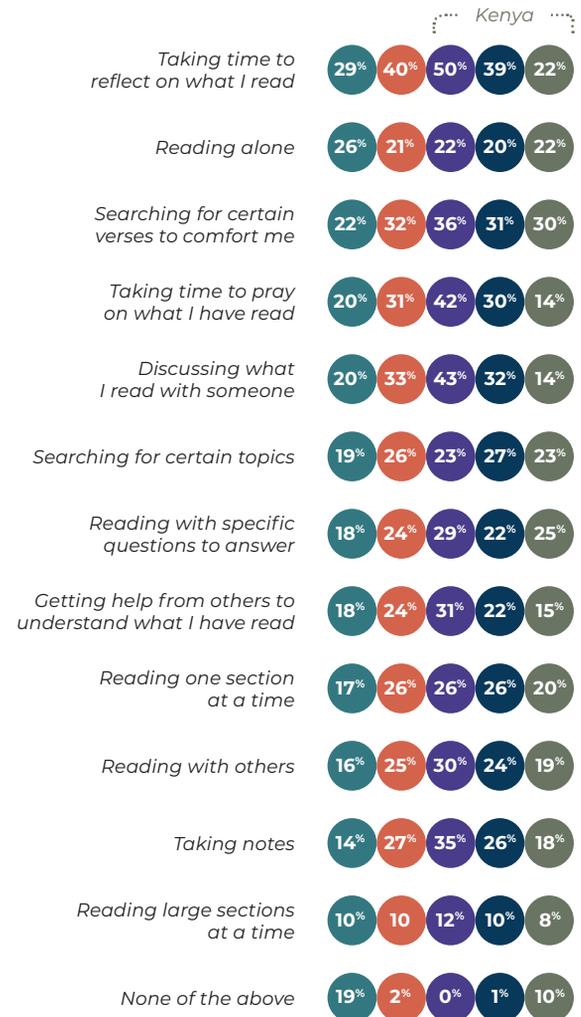
Teens are usually reluctant to precisely name barriers to their Bible-reading (the plurality selects none), but Bible users and Christians in Kenya point to some barriers shared by teens around the world, such as lacking understanding and focus. More than their global peers, they report pressure to read the Bible and a lack of time to do so.

Overall, there is a strong sense of community among teens in Kenya, and their responses speak to the impact of having others to share in the joy, relevance and practice of engaging the Bible.

When you read the Bible, which of the following do you enjoy? Select all that apply.

Base: Bible users / owners or Christians

● Global ● Kenya ● Bible engaged
● Bible open ● Bible unengaged



n=979 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021;

n=18,118 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

Mentoring Teens in Bible Engagement

When it comes to learning more about the Bible throughout their lives, nearly all Christian teens in Kenya (89%) report feeling very motivated to do so. This sets them apart from their peers of other faith identities, though nearly two-thirds of Kenyan teens of non-Christian religions (64%), report some level of motivation to learn more about Christian scripture.

Where might this instruction come from? Typically, the home. In Kenya, 55 percent of teens who are Bible users or Christians report having been taught to study the Bible by a parent or guardian. Teens worldwide offer the same top selection (36%).

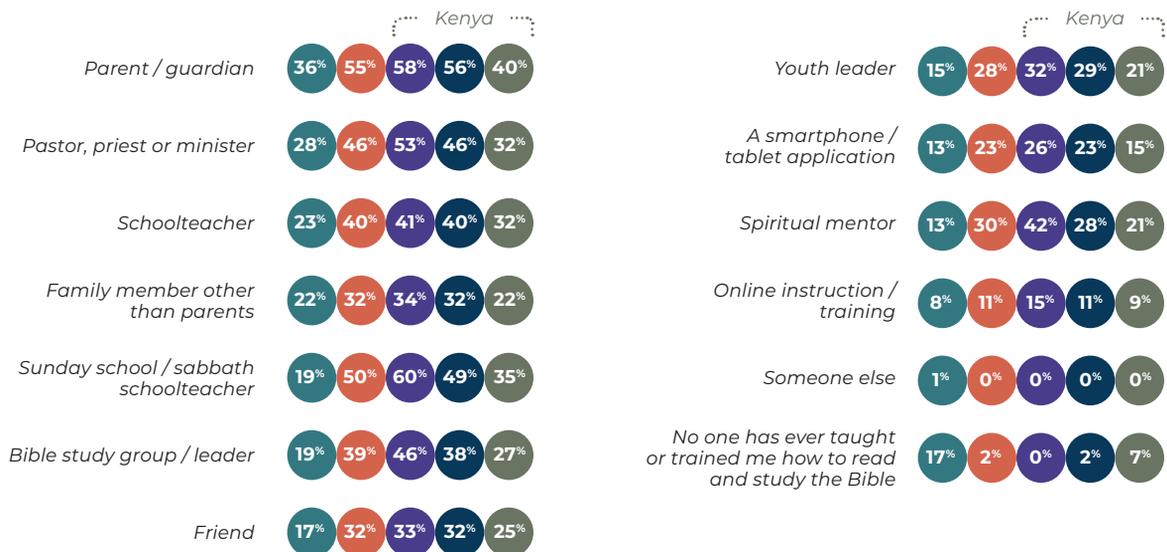
Ministry is, naturally, another source of instruction. Half of Kenyan teens who are Christian or use a Bible say they were taught in a Bible study group,

Have any of the following ever taught or trained you how to read and study the Christian Bible?

Select all that apply.

Base: Bible users / owners or Christians

● Global ● Kenya ● Bible engaged ● Bible open ● Bible unengaged



with nearly as many receiving teaching from clergy. With a strong Christian presence in Kenya, community members such as school teachers, other family members and friends are looked to equally as a source of Bible instruction.

Kenyan teens use online training far more than their global peers. However, virtual instruction has not replaced in-person, community-centered instruction. Even for Bible-unengaged teens, group Bible study emerges as a top source of training—for Bible-engaged teens, group Bible study is more

common than even parental instruction. This dramatically underscores the role of community in nurturing Bible reading.

Globally and in Kenya, available sources of Bible mentorship are similar—but the outcomes in Kenya are exceptional. Kenyan Christian teens are far more likely than their Christian peers around the world to report that in their church they regularly receive wisdom for how the Bible applies to their lives (72% vs. 42%, respectively).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

“In my church I regularly receive wisdom for how the Bible applies to my life”

Base: Christians

● Agree strongly ● Agree somewhat ● Disagree somewhat ● Disagree strongly ● Not sure



n=911 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021; n=13,282 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

Open-Ended: Takeaways & Questions to Help You Think Through the Research

Kenyan teens in our survey describe a very holistic approach to Bible engagement, more so than many of their peers. They reflect on and pray through scripture, processing it alone and with others. *Is this true in your experience with teens? Where do teens need more help in Bible instruction?*

BISHOP OGINDE: Many families take their children to Sunday school where they are taught the basics of the word of God. This gives many young people a strong foundation of faith, especially if it is reinforced in school and at home. Teens, however, need [more] help on how to apply the truths of scripture that they have learned into [their] everyday life experiences.

Christian teens in Kenya are more likely than their global peers to receive relevant biblical instruction through their churches (from pastors, Bible studies, etc.) and from parents / guardians, yet there is still ample room for growth in this area. *What are the hallmarks of Bible teaching in churches or Christian institutions in Kenya? What's working? What isn't?*

BISHOP OGINDE: For many children [in Kenya], Sunday school provides the foundational basics of their faith. Many schools also provide times for Bible instruction and prayer. Several families read the Bible regularly. But the greatest input for teens may be found in Christian Unions in high schools. [Teens] who come to faith at this stage of life often carry it with them into adulthood.

How does Bible engagement help teens find their place in the world and develop a sense of purpose? What are some ways to support this?

DAVID EWAGATA: [Older generations] are often focused on making sure we will not just sit there and be irrelevant to the young person. God doesn't have to be made cool. He is cool. He is good. It's up to us to dig into the flavor and the joy of being impressed [by the gospel] and showing it to a young person, then letting them experience God for themselves.

3. How Teens in Kenya Can Make an Impact

Teens' Global Concerns & Convictions

Barna asked teens which global problems are of greatest concern to them and received a broad distribution of responses. Cultural, political, economic and even geographical differences cause distinct sets of concerns to rise to the top, depending on where teens live.

Globally, extreme poverty (38%), global climate change (35%), sexual abuse (33%), unemployment (33%) and political corruption (31%) are front of mind for the majority of teens. In Kenya, that list looks slightly different, as teens feel that unemployment is of greatest concern (55%), followed by sexual abuse (41%), political corruption (38%), extreme poverty (38%) and mental health issues (34%).

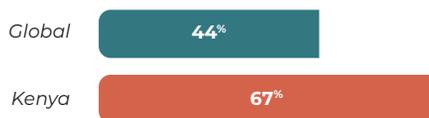
Whatever issues they are concerned about, Kenyan teens show conviction that they should

personally take some kind of action. Kenyan teens, including Christians, trend ahead of their global peers in their reported motivation to address injustices in society. This pattern varies somewhat by faith group. Kenyan teens who are Christian and who have no faith actually fall in line with each other in largely being “very motivated” to address injustice.

It's important for adults and mentors who work with teens to recognize and help to deepen the desire of teens in Kenya to act against injustice. Teens need context and information to harness and direct the energy of their efforts to make a positive impact in the world—which two-thirds of Kenyan teens believe their generation can accomplish.

“My generation has the ability to make a positive and meaningful impact on the world.”

% agree strongly



n=1,000 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021;

n=24,870 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

5 Greatest Concerns of Teens in Kenya



Teens' Motivation Toward Justice

Teens may often lack agency or ability to take personal action against injustices on their own or without the involvement, resources and leadership of a parent or guardian. However, the research does allow us to distinguish them by their motivation or potential for promoting justice. The resulting spectrum of justice motivation is based on a combination of teens' Conviction + Confidence + Commitment (see chart for definitions).

Unlike their peers worldwide, teens in Kenya pair their conviction to address injustice with a commitment to action, and their confidence in their ability to make a positive impact on others' lives runs high.

- **JUSTICE-MOTIVATED** teens meet all three categories (Conviction + Confidence + Commitment)
- **JUSTICE-ORIENTED** teens meet one or two of the three categories
- **JUSTICE-NEUTRAL** teens meet none of the three categories

Teens in Kenya, both in aggregate and Christian teens specifically, are more likely to be categorized as justice motivated compared to their peers worldwide. We see a dip in confidence that may reflect skepticism regarding the reach of their individual influence, but this does not seem to dampen Kenyan teens' intentions to participate in justice work.

n=1,000 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021;

n=24,870 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.



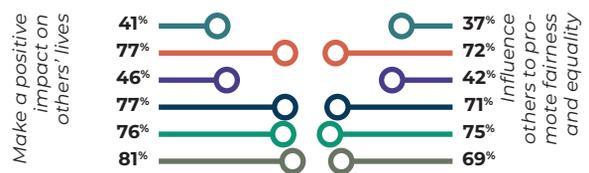
Conviction: "I believe it is important to ..."

% agree strongly



Confidence: "I am confident that I can ..."

% agree strongly



Commitment: "In the future, I will ..."

% agree strongly



Teens' Motivation Toward Justice

● Motivated ● Oriented ● Neutral



Looking for Leaders

Who do teens feel should play a role in addressing injustices? Generally, everyone, teens worldwide and in Kenya tell Barna.

The majority of teens, especially those who are justice motivated, has high expectations across society, major institutions and themselves, believing all should play a major role in addressing injustice. Across the board, teens in Kenya respond more strongly than their global peers when it comes to who should be involved.

Globally, the government, schools and educational institutions come out at the top of teens' responses. In Kenya, expectations to play a major role also extend to community groups, religious leaders, the Christian Church and Christian leaders. This may reflect teens' personal experiences, with school and church being central in Kenyan community life.

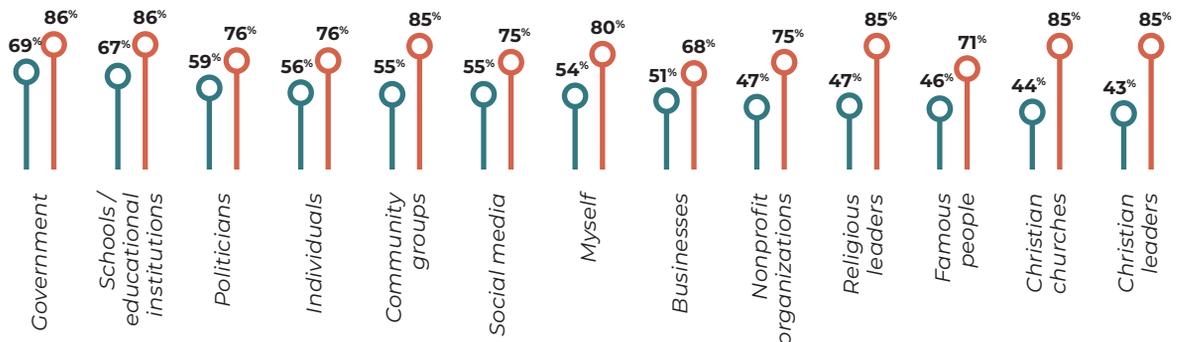
Compared to teens in most countries in this study, Kenyan teens are outliers in their belief that Christian churches and leaders have major roles to play in justice. Even justice-neutral teens in Kenya, who don't assign as much responsibility to any of the options Barna asked about, tend to see churches as being at the helm. In Kenya, teens uniquely look to Christians to champion justice.

Teens' high and wide expectations may reflect their deep concern about injustice, not their confidence in these groups; as it stands, the majority of teens in Kenya is either neutral (38%) about or mistrustful (37%) of today's leaders, rather than trusting (26%). Communities that lean into this generational longing to address injustice may in the process gain greater trust from today's teens.

How much of a role, if any, do you think each of the following should play in addressing injustices?

% "major role"

● Global ● Kenya



n=1,000 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021; n=24,870 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

The Role of the Church

Teens globally and teens in Kenya diverge when it comes to whether or not the Christian Church is making an impact on issues of poverty and injustice. While one-quarter worldwide says this is “definitely” the case, the proportion of teens in Kenya with the same response jumps to 41 percent. Christian teens in Kenya have an even stronger positive perception of the Church’s impact. Even teens of other faiths or no faith in Kenya are more likely than their global peers to at least “probably” recognize the Church’s impact.

As justice motivation increases, so does the certainty that Christian churches are making a difference. What might that impact look like? Justice-motivated and justice-oriented Kenyan teens who

feel churches and church leaders should play a role in addressing injustice agree on a critical, if broad activity that is most important: advocating for meaningful change. Justice-oriented teens stand out in hoping the Church teaches about how the Bible encourages special kindness to those experiencing injustice.

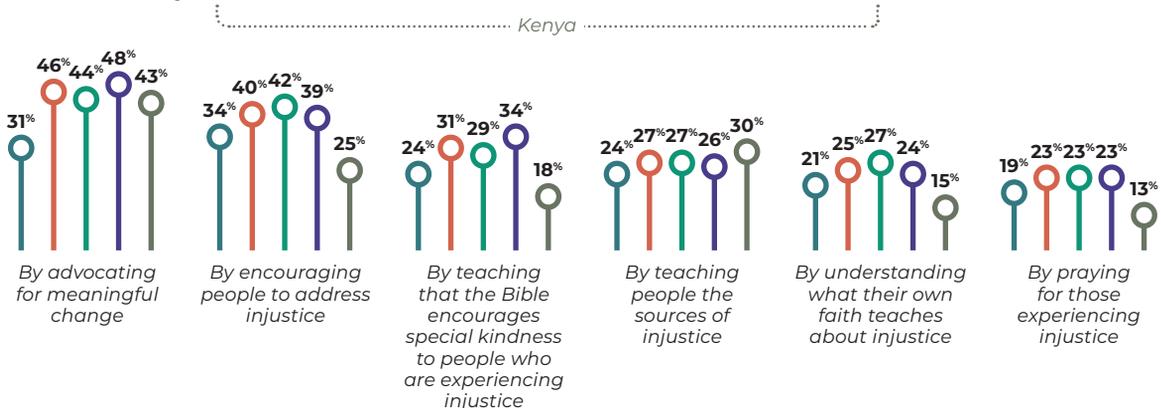
Regardless of justice motivation level, teens in Kenya want to attend churches that support positive mental health, which is one of their top global concerns. They also want to see churches help to end sexual abuse and create gender equality, though justice-neutral teens are less emphatic about these issues.

Top Ways the Church Can Address Injustice

Which of the following are ways that Christian churches or leaders can address injustice in the world? Select your three most important.

Base: said Christian churches / leaders should play a role in addressing injustice

● Global ● Kenya ● Justice motivated ● Justice oriented ● Justice neutral



n=989 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021; n=19,135 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

Supporting Teens to Make an Impact

What can one person do to address injustice?

Among teens who say individuals should play a role in addressing injustice, the plurality points to some general categories of possible participation. Justice-motivated, justice-oriented and justice-neutral teens in Kenya agree that individuals should be advocating meaningful change and educating themselves about the sources of injustice.

An interesting standout among the possible roles that individuals can play: Justice-oriented teens, even more so than justice-motivated teens, gravitate toward “encouraging others to address injustice,” while justice-neutral teens show skepticism regarding its importance. This may underscore the critical role that listening and learning play in growing in awareness and the desire and confidence to take action.

When asked what they need in order to be a part of global change themselves, teens have high expectations for their peers. Worldwide, the average teen most needs encouragement from family and friends. Kenyan teens, however, especially those who are justice motivated, most want their generation to step up as leaders. Importantly, though, justice-oriented teens in Kenya most want the guidance of older leaders, while justice-neutral teens are in need of someone to teach them how to make an impact.

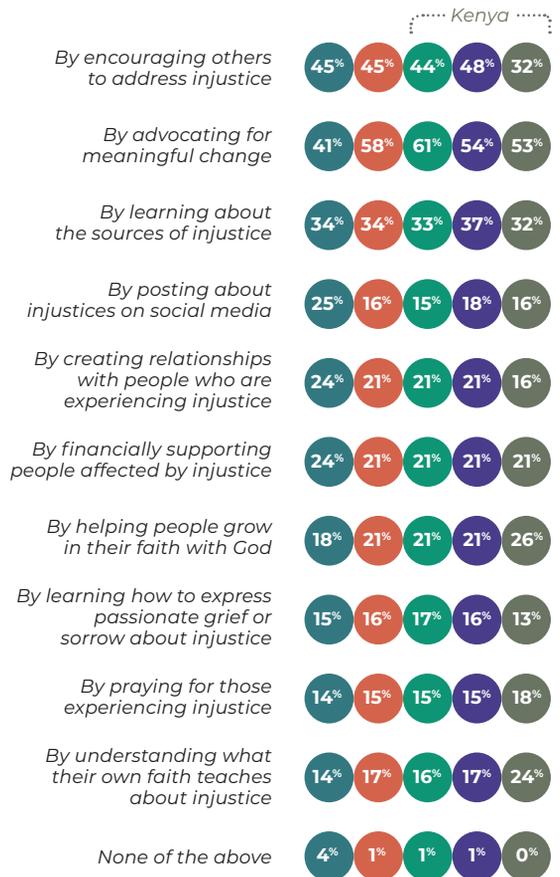
Authentic investment of peers, family members, leaders and the other members of a teens’ circle may be a catalyst to empower teens to realise their hopes of making change in society.

Which of the following are ways that individuals can address injustice in the world?

Select your three most important.

Base: said individuals should play a role in addressing injustice

- Global ● Kenya ● Justice motivated
- Justice oriented ● Justice neutral



n=992 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021;
n=23,488 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

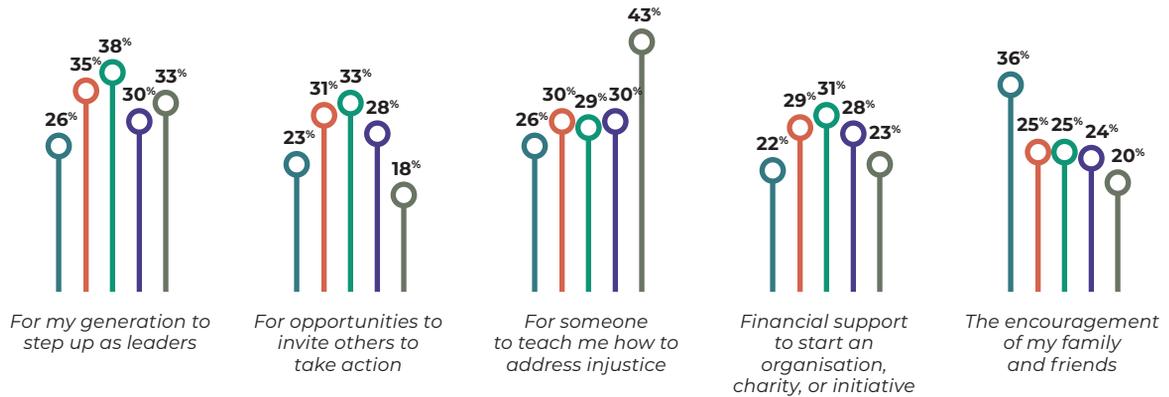
Top Things Teens Need to Make an Impact

As an individual, would any of the following be helpful to you in addressing injustice?

Select your three most important.

● Global ● Kenya ● Justice motivated ● Justice oriented ● Justice neutral

..... Kenya



n=1,000 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021. n=24,870 teens ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

Open-Ended: Takeaways & Questions to Help You Think Through the Research

In your context, how are you seeing teens getting involved in matters of injustice? What's being done well? Where is there opportunity?

JOE BONGA: One of the characteristics of life in Africa is not only disease, poverty and hunger, but also injustice. Some of the [poverty and other issues] have come because of injustice; poor, marginalized groups have not found the right voice [to speak up] where decisions are made. But this is changing because engagement is changing. There is a great shift in demographics in Africa today. Out of the 1.3 billion people in Africa, 41 percent are under age 15. So we are talking about a very youthful continent.

As the demographics shift, there is also a shift in participation and in issues. The things that affect young people, the issues they see as challenges, are mostly their driving factor. They take participation in [opposing] injustice very personally.

How ready do you feel teens in Kenya truly are to address injustice? What obstacles still exist? What support do they need from the church?

BISHOP OGINDE: A majority of young people [in Kenya] come from very poor families. This means that their attention and that of parents is focused on sheer survival. This makes it difficult for many to conceptualize the broader issues of injustice in society. However, with good sensitization, they can be made

aware of various forms of injustices around them such as gender-based violence, sexual harassment by adults and more.

BONGA: There are things that have inhibited young people from participating [in justice matters]. One of them is inertia. They don't have that motivation. They don't have the momentum. [But] this is changing as more young people start to see the urgency. They're feeling like, "We are surrounded by our fellow teens, by our fellow youth. And if we do not pave the kind of life we want to live and the kind of life we want our children to live, then it's going to be total obscurity."

How do biblical principles like compassion, mercy and empathy show up in addressing injustices? Why is this important for the Church?

BONGA: The Church, through coaching mechanisms, enables young people to feel empathetic, to feel the gift of mercy, to be involved in stretching their hands toward those who need it most. When you are coaching them, you're also helping them dig deep into their thinking, into their surroundings, to look for solutions [to matters of justice].

This is very important, especially when you talk about the role of the Church. ... It moves young people from just reading about mercy and empathy to a point where they're able to ask the right questions and get the right solutions.

The Way, the Truth, the Life

As Barna Group and our partners have set out to learn about how teens view Jesus, the Bible and justice, the data has consistently shown that these aspects of the Christian faith are interwoven and increase together. Using the custom categories introduced through this study, **here's how teens in Kenya experience an overlap in their commitment to follow Jesus, their engagement with scripture and their motivation to make an impact.**

In Kenya



of committed Christian teens are Bible engaged



of committed Christian teens are justice motivated



of Bible-engaged teens are committed Christians



of Bible-engaged teens are justice motivated



of justice-motivated teens are committed Christians

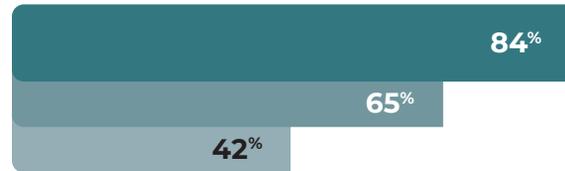


of justice-motivated teens are Bible engaged

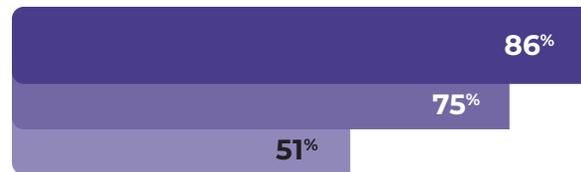
The Bible draws teens to Jesus ...

"I believe that the Christian Bible provides a way for people to know Jesus personally"
% "very true"

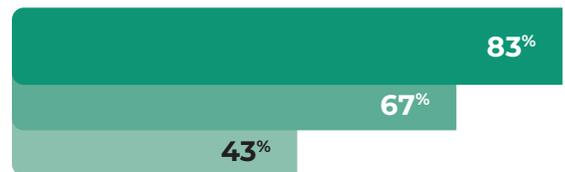
● Committed Christians ● Nominal Christians ● All others



● Bible engaged ● Bible open ● Bible unengaged



● Justice motivated ● Justice oriented ● Justice neutral



Jesus offers a model for justice ...

“Jesus advocated for justice”

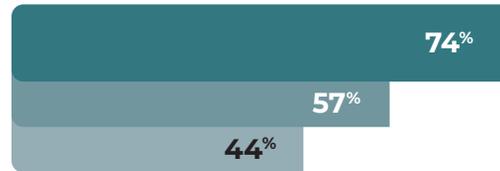
● Committed Christians ● Nominal Christians ● All others



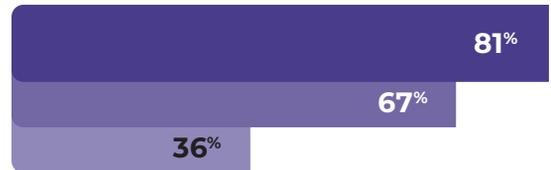
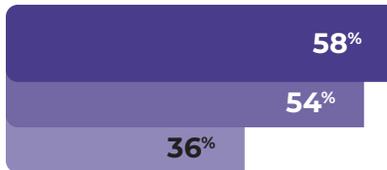
Justice is a biblical matter ...

“I believe that the Christian Bible addresses injustice”

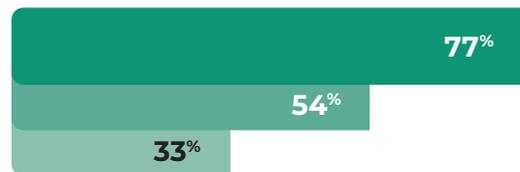
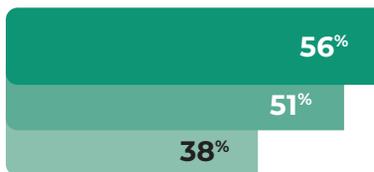
% “very true”



● Bible engaged ● Bible open ● Bible unengaged

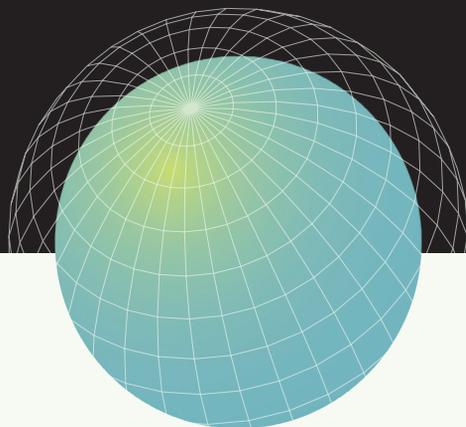


● Justice motivated ● Justice oriented ● Justice neutral



n=1,000 teens in Kenya ages 13 to 17, July 21–August 24, 2021.

An Open Door to *The Open Generation*



There is more to learn about teens around the world—and more insights and tools to help you make use of this research in your context.

Find information about resources, get content from the research partners and sign up for updates at barna.com/the-open-generation.

- Vol. 1—*How Teens Around the World Relate to Jesus*
- Vol. 2—*How Teens Around the World View the Bible*
- Vol. 3—*How Teens Around the World Can Make an Impact*
- Regional & Country Reports Featuring Local Data
- Webcasts & Interviews
- E-course

The Open Generation *project continues through 2022 and 2023.*

Methodology

This study is based on online, representative public opinion surveys conducted by Barna Group. Teens were recruited to participate in the quantitative survey through their parents. Parents answered seven screening questions about their teens, which included demographics such as age, gender and ethnicity. A total of 24,557 respondents ages 13 to 17 across 26 countries were surveyed between July 21, 2021, and August 24, 2021. An additional 313 responses were collected in February of 2022 in New Zealand. (See page 7 for sample distribution by country.) The margin of error for each individual country is assumed to be +/- 2.1%.

Acknowledgments

Barna Group is incredibly grateful to the all-star collective of partners who have made this project possible.

Our findings about the open generation have been strengthened by the grounded recommendations of ministers, activists, scholars and other experts spanning the globe. For this volume, we want to especially thank: Joe Bonga, David Ewagata and Bishop David Oginde PhD.

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About the Partners



Barna

Barna Group is a research firm helping Christian leaders understand the times and know what to do. In its 38-year history, Barna Group has conducted more than two million interviews over the course of thousands of studies.



Biblica

Biblica produces relevant and reliable scripture translations and innovative resources that power the Bible ministry of hundreds of global mission organizations and invite millions to discover the love of Jesus Christ.



World Vision

World Vision is an international partnership of Christians whose mission is to follow our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.



Alpha

Alpha supports the Church with resources and tools that help create a space where people are excited to bring their friends for a conversation about Jesus.



Christian Vision

Christian Vision works in partnership with local churches across the globe to introduce people to Jesus, mobilize Christians to evangelize and resource the Church with free digital content and knowledge.



Bible Study Fellowship

Bible Study Fellowship provides global, in-depth Bible studies producing passionate commitment to Christ, his word and his Church, magnifying God and maturing his people.



ACSI
STRONGER TOGETHER

The Association of Christian Schools International is an international organization that promotes Christian education and provides training and resources to Christian schools and Christian educators.



Christ In Youth

Christ In Youth partners with the local church to create moments and conversations that call young people to follow Jesus and into lives of Kingdom work.