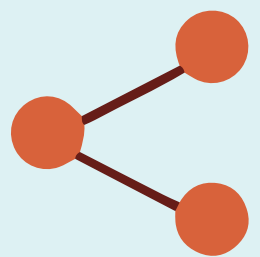
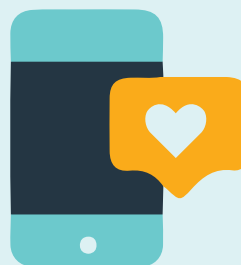


# GLOBAL YOUTH CULTURE

*Papua New Guinea Report*



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*Thank You*

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A special thank you to Planetshakers, our partner on this project who shared the vision and made this research possible.

# INTRODUCTION

Each new generation is unique in its own way, and research can help us understand how the world looks through different eyes. The world's current generation of teens and young adults is sometimes called Generation Z.

This research reveals the habits, struggles, beliefs and influences of teens in Papua New Guinea. It also reveals teens' views of God, Jesus, the Bible, and the church. This research project is a follow-up from a larger global study that surveyed thousands of teens across more than 20 countries.

Data was collected in Papua New Guinea in November and December of 2023.



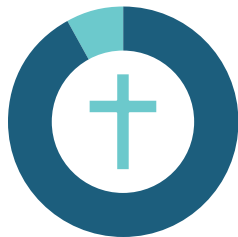
We hope you not only learn something new, but that your mind and heart are moved to action on behalf of this generation who so need the hope of the Gospel in their lives.

Every statistic in this study represents individual teens with their own sets of hopes, fears, and daily challenges. Each of those teens has a name, a story, and an eternal destiny. OneHope is dedicated to affecting those destinies by reaching every young person in every country with God's Word.

# ABOUT THE TEENS



## RELIGION<sup>1</sup>



**CHRISTIAN: 92%**  
 (CATHOLIC: 19%  
 PROTESTANT: 73%)

**OTHER: 8%**



**507 TEENS SURVEYED**

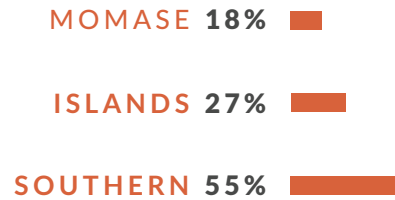
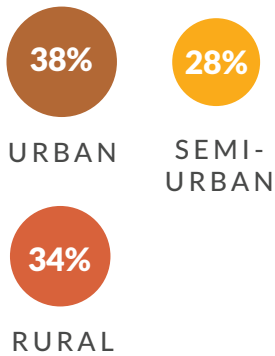


## LOCATION

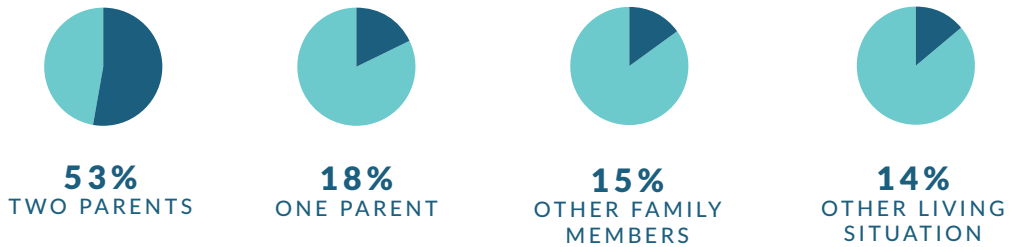
## REGION



**TEENS SURVEYED**



## HOUSEHOLD



<sup>1</sup> These results reflect the viewpoint of teens in Papua New Guinea to the best of our ability. Unfortunately we were not able to collect a large enough sample in the Highlands region to accurately represent teens there. For this reason, the Highlands region was excluded from this report.

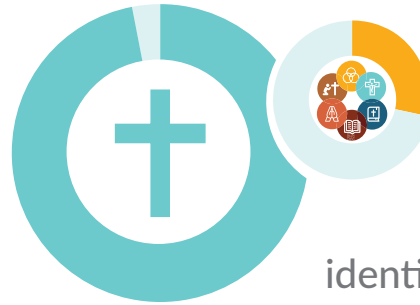
# RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

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PAPUA NEW GUINEA REPORT

# What We Discovered

**97%** of teens say their faith beliefs or spiritual journey are an important part of their identity.

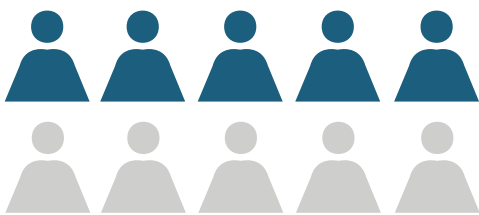


**92%** of teens identify as **Christian**, but only **37%** display the beliefs and behaviors of **Committed Christians**.

**94%** believe they have a responsibility to **share their faith with others**.



**49%** of Christian teens say they talk about **life issues** with a spiritual leader at their church.



**Half** of Christian teens also incorporate **animist beliefs or practices** into their faith.



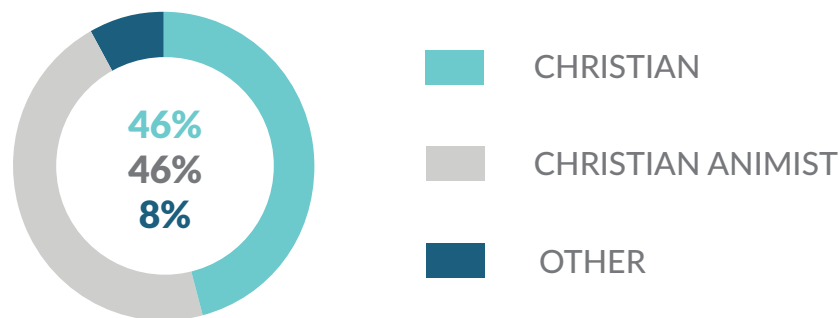
Teens understand what the bible is, but **many are not reading it for themselves**.

# Religious Attitudes and Behaviors

This research study was uniquely comprehensive in examining the role faith and religion play in the lives of the next generation. How important do they say a spiritual journey is to them? How are they putting their beliefs into practice? We knew we wanted to explore the religious attitudes and behaviors of today's teens and the impact of those on other areas of their lives.

Across Papua New Guinea, most teens (92%) identified as Christian. This is the highest number in any country that has participated in the Global Youth Culture survey to date. However, our research revealed that many Christian teens in Papua New Guinea also identify with and practice Animist teachings from within their culture. Nearly half of those who claim Christianity also identify with and practice some form of Animism, a category we are calling Christian Animist.

## RELIGIOUS IDENTITY



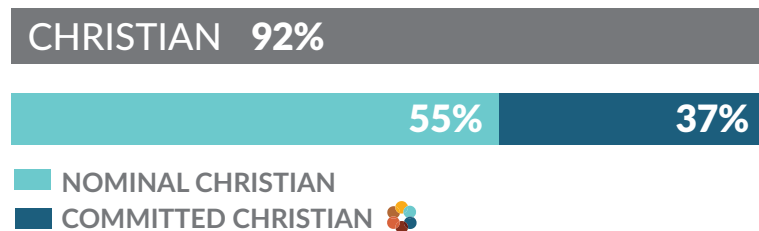
But what does it truly mean to be a Christian? We looked at the core beliefs and key spiritual disciplines that would reveal a teen is a Committed Christian.

**HALF OF CHRISTIAN TEENS ALSO INCORPORATE ANIMISM INTO THEIR BELIEFS**

## 6 TRAITS OF COMMITTED CHRISTIAN TEENS



When we re-examined teens according to this definition of committed faith, we immediately saw a big difference. Just 37% of teens were discovered to be Committed Christians. Any Christian teen who did not meet one or more of the criteria for committedness was considered to be a “Nominal Christian” in this study.



While this might seem discouraging, it is important to note that committedness is much higher in Papua New Guinea than most other countries surveyed. Globally, a mere 7% of teens surveyed were found to be Committed Christians.<sup>1</sup>

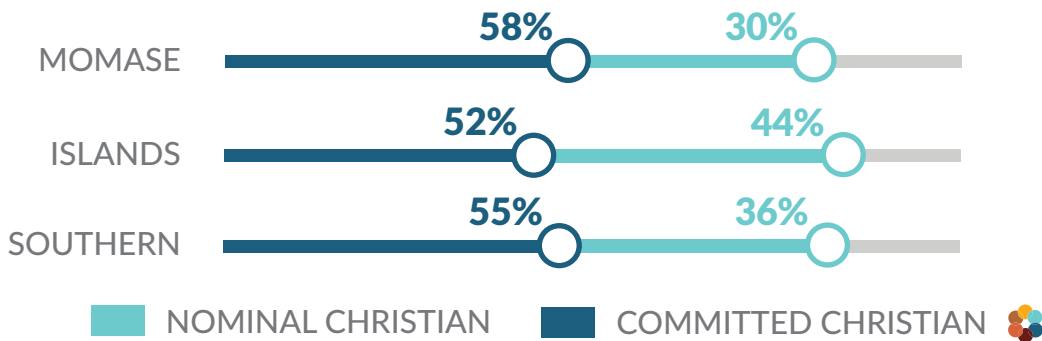
This is still a concerning gap, however, that shows there is work to be done in discipling Christians into the foundational beliefs and behaviors of their faith. This gap between Committeds and Nominals was seen in every area of the country, with the Momase region having the fewest Committed Christians.

**37%** OF TEENS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA ARE COMMITTED CHRISTIANS

<sup>1</sup> OneHope. (August 2020) Global Youth Culture, Global Report. [www.globalyouthculture.net](http://www.globalyouthculture.net)



## CHRISTIANS BY LOCATION

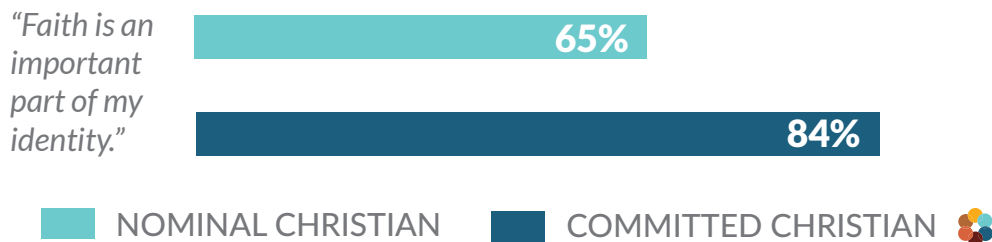


Slightly more Protestants than Catholic teens were discovered to be Committed (43% vs 30%). But it is encouraging to see that teens in both faith traditions are choosing to pursue and deepen their commitment to Christ. It was also encouraging to see this happening among teens of all ages. Equal percentages within each age group surveyed were discovered to be Committed Christians.

## COMMITTED CHRISTIANS BY AGE



Committed Christians are far more likely than Nominal Christians to say that their faith beliefs are an important part of their identity.



# How Teens Practice Their Faith

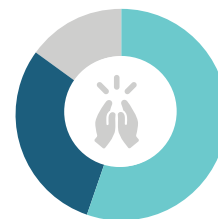
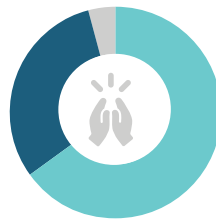
Engaging in spiritual disciplines is how we grow our faith. We were encouraged to see that most Christian teens in Papua New Guinea are making religious practices a priority in their weekly schedule. We also saw that nearly all teens surveyed have scriptural views of God, Jesus, and the Bible, regardless of whether they identify as Christian or not.

## FAITH PRACTICES OF CHRISTIAN TEENS

### PAPUA NEW GUINEA

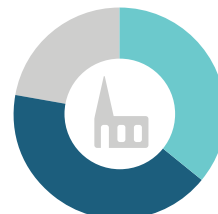
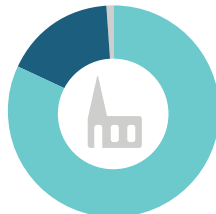
### GLOBAL<sup>1</sup>

**PRAYING**  
82% 17% 1%



**PRAYING**  
56% 30% 15%

**ATTENDING RELIGIOUS SERVICES**  
65% 31% 4%



**ATTENDING RELIGIOUS SERVICES**  
36% 42% 22%

**READING RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES ON THEIR OWN**  
54% 43% 4%

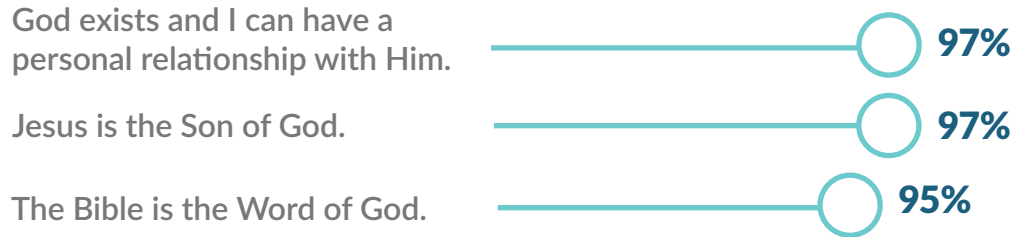


**READING RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES ON THEIR OWN**  
22% 35% 40%

- WEEKLY OR MORE OFTEN
- MONTHLY OR SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR
- NEVER

<sup>1</sup> Total adds to more than 100% due to decimal rounding.

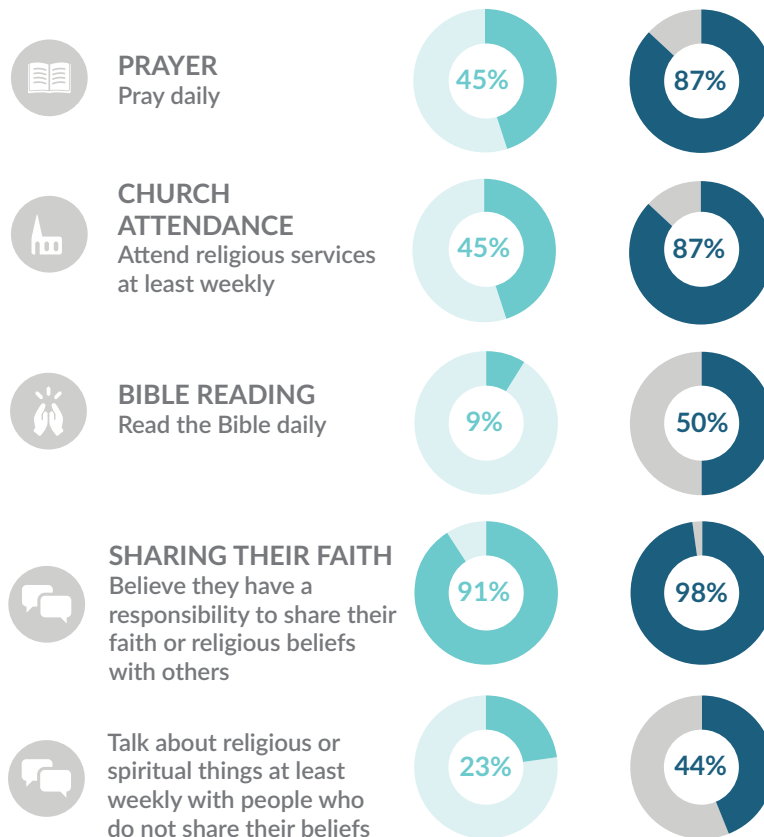
## SPIRITUAL VIEWPOINTS



Committedness to faith makes a big difference in teens' lives and how they choose to spend their time. Committed Christians are much more likely than Nominal Christians to be praying, going to church, reading their Bibles, and sharing their faith.

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

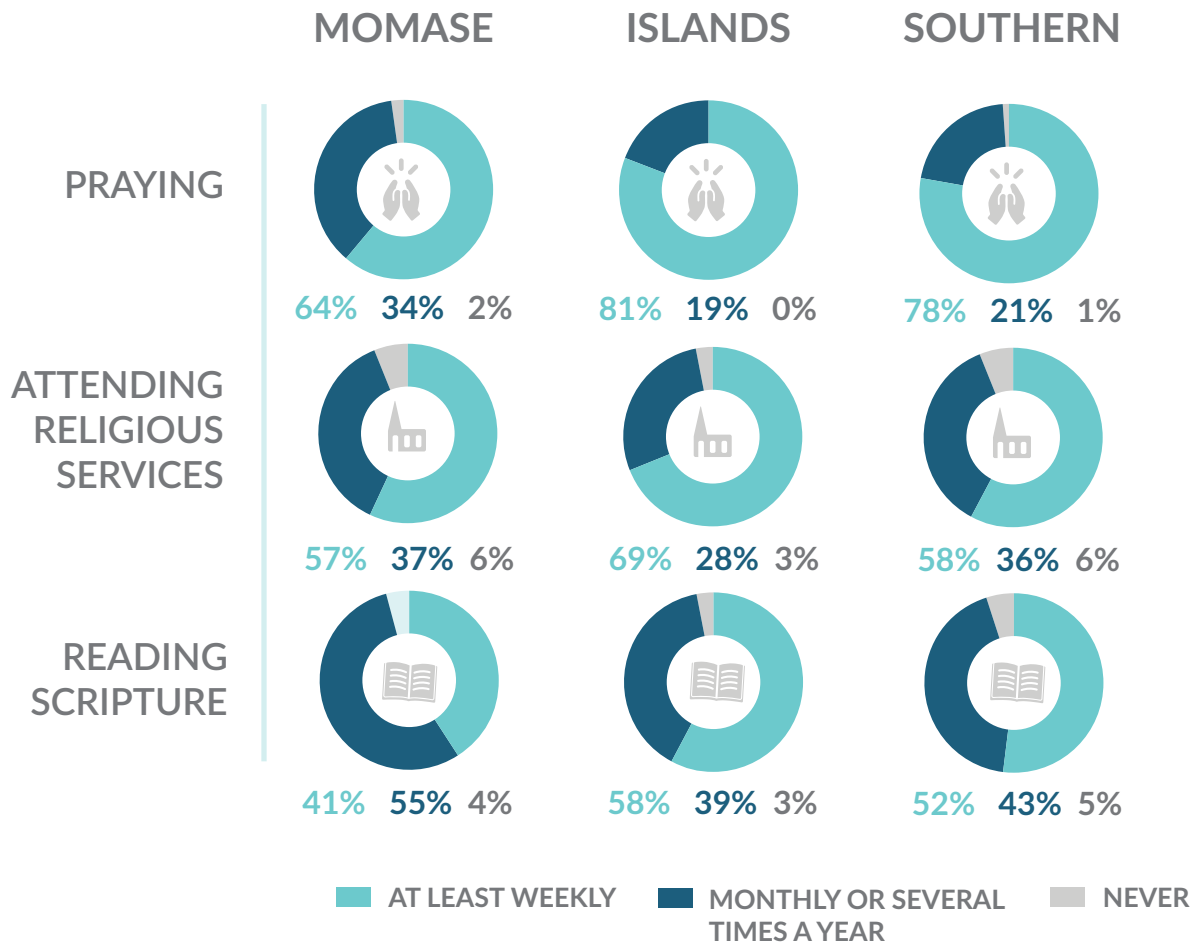
■ NOMINAL CHRISTIANS ■ COMMITTED CHRISTIANS



**JUST 9% OF NOMINAL CHRISTIANS SAY THEY READ THE BIBLE DAILY**

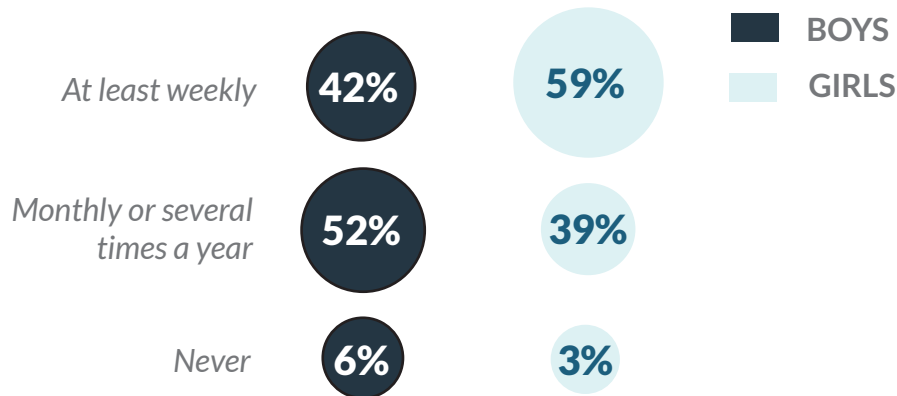
# Religious Habits by Location

We were curious to explore how teens might be different in the three regions we were able to survey. Encouragingly, teens in every area are reporting high rates of prayer, religious service attendance, and Scripture reading. The Islands was notably the highest for all three of these religious habits.



While both boys and girls are engaged in religious habits, girls were noticeably more likely than boys to be regularly reading their Bible.

## SCRIPTURE READING BY GENDER

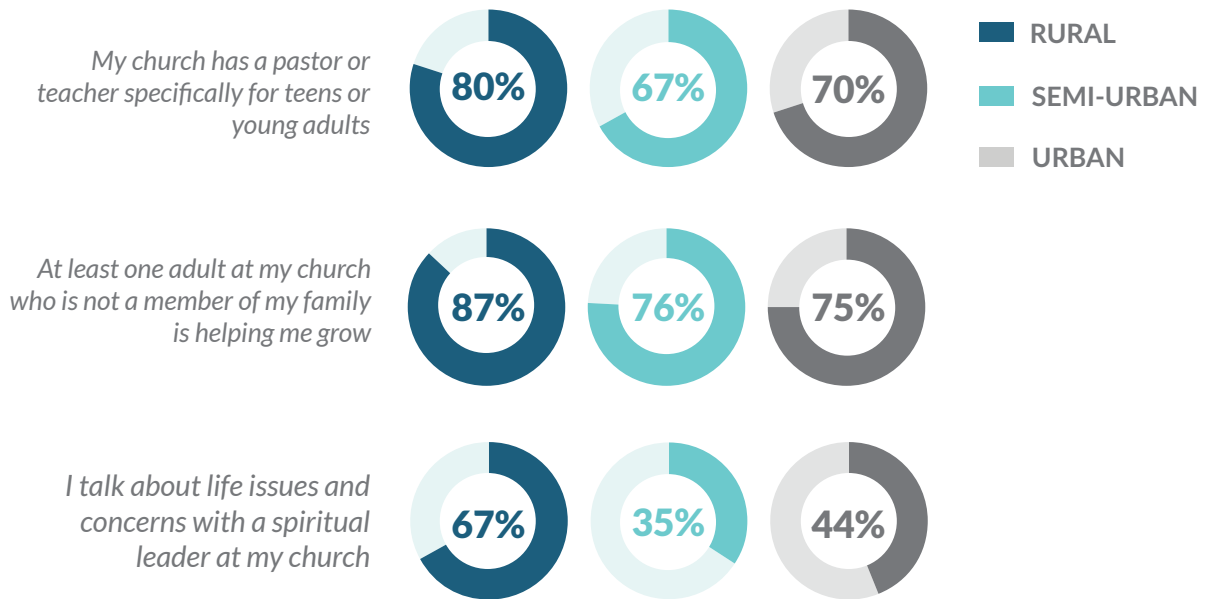


## Teens and the Church

Most Christian teens in Papua New Guinea (65%) said they attend religious services at least weekly. Overall, teens gave positive feedback about the impact of children's ministry in their lives, and most say they are being spiritually mentored by an adult at their church.

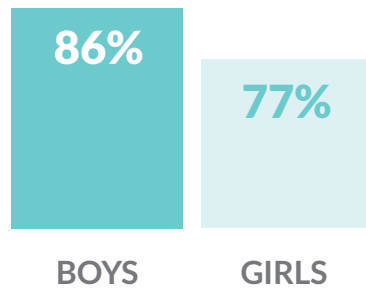


Churches in rural areas were found to be especially supportive of their young people. Compared to teens in other areas, rural teens were much more likely to report that their church has a youth pastor and that they talk about real life issues with them. Rural teens were also much more likely to have adult mentors at church – a role that can be critical to growing in faith at this age.



We were also curious about the perspective of teens outside the walls of the church. Encouragingly, 89% of non-Christian teens said the Christians they know are kind and caring. Boys were much more likely to say this than girls.

Most Christians I know are kind and caring



**9 IN 10**  
NON-CHRISTIANS SAY THE CHRISTIANS THEY KNOW ARE KIND AND CARING

Overall, teens in Papua New Guinea have an impressive desire to share the faith they have with others. Ninety-four percent of teens believe they have a responsibility to share their faith with others.

# Conclusion

This data shows where teens are in their spiritual journey and helps us understand their religious identity, habits, and viewpoints. It also points us towards practical action as we seek to share the Gospel with non-believers and disciple Christian teens to maturity in faith.

- **HELP TEENS EMBRACE CHRISTIANITY FULLY.**

Young people in Papua New Guinea identify as Christian. However, our research revealed that many Christian teens are mixing their faith with cultural beliefs and practices from Animism. This points to the need for continued discipleship. How can we help teens fully embrace the gospel and everything it means for their life, even when that requires leaving other beliefs behind?

- **DISCIPLE CHRISTIANS INTO DEEPER FAITH.**

The overwhelming majority of teens surveyed in Papua New Guinea say their Christian faith is an important part of their identity. But many are not putting those beliefs into action in their daily lives. There is a large gap between the number of Christians and the number of Committed Christians – teens who have both scriptural beliefs and are regularly praying and reading the Bible. How can we help young people develop the spiritual disciplines that will root them deeply in Christ and mature them as believers?

- **JOURNEY TOGETHER.**

It is encouraging to see that most churches have dedicated youth pastors and adults who are investing in the spiritual growth of the next generation. However, just half of Christian teens say they are actually talking about real life concerns with these spiritual leaders. Mentors are critical, especially in the teen years when questions, doubts, and struggles often arise. How can we ensure every teen has someone they are journeying with and who they feel safe to share their challenges with?

- **EQUIP TEENS TO SHARE.**

Nearly all teens surveyed believe they have a responsibility to share their faith with others. It was encouraging to see their great desire to do this. However, most Christians are not actually having spiritual conversations with others who do not share their beliefs. How can we equip teens to joyfully and courageously share the hope they have in Christ with their peers and others who need to hear?

# PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND STRUGGLES

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PAPUA NEW GUINEA REPORT



# What We Discovered



**Half of teens** report loneliness and depression.

**Many** are also dealing with high **anxiety**.

**Suicide risk** is closely connected to other struggles including **drug usage, drinking, and issues of sexuality**.

Boys are **more than three times as likely as girls** to report recently looking at **pornography or being sexually active**.



**Committed Christians** are just as likely as other teens to be experiencing **mental health struggles**.



**Girls** are struggling much more than boys with their mental health and are **twice as likely to have recently had suicidal thoughts**.

**21% of teens** have had **suicidal thoughts** within the past three months. **6%** report having made a recent **suicide attempt**.

# Mental Health

We asked teens to tell us about their personal experiences and struggles within the past three months of their lives. More than half of teens report loneliness and depression. Many are also dealing with high anxiety.

## MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES

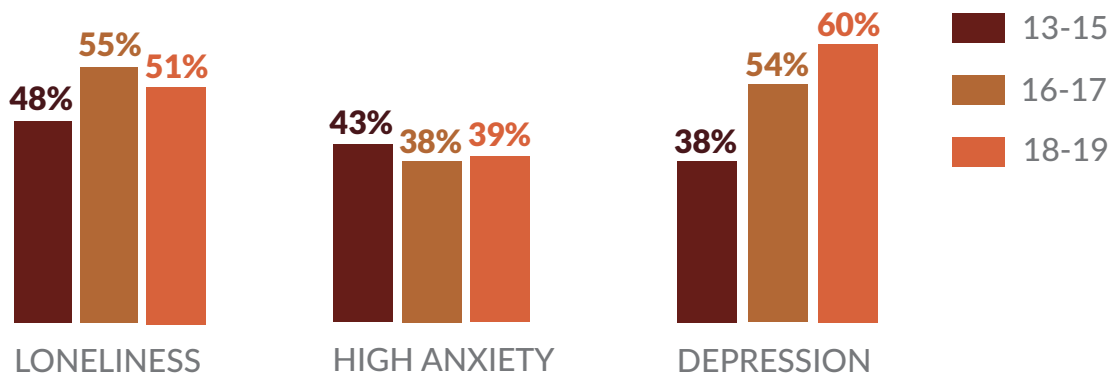
*Within the past three months I have experienced:*



Mental health struggles affect teens of every age, with depression being notably higher for older teens. The data also showed that girls are struggling much more with their mental health than boys.

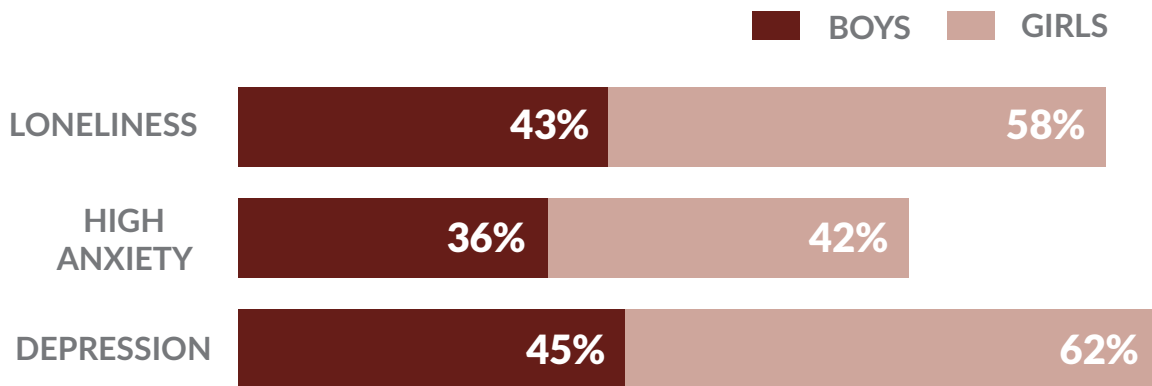
## MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES BY AGE

*Within the past three months I have experienced:*



## MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES BY GENDER

*Within the past three months I have experienced:*

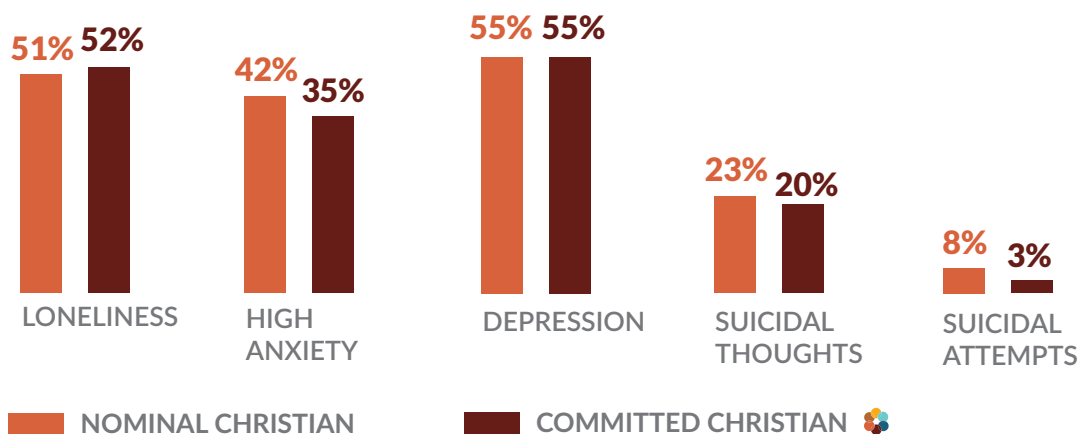


We were curious if a teen's commitment to their Christian faith would make a difference in their lived experiences. The data did reveal that Committed Christian teens struggle less with high anxiety than Nominal Christian teens. However, no differences were found for either loneliness or depression.

Both Committed and Nominal teens reported similar rates of suicidal thoughts, but suicide attempts were significantly noticeably fewer for Committed Christians.

## CHRISTIAN TEENS RESPOND

*Within the past three months I have experienced:*

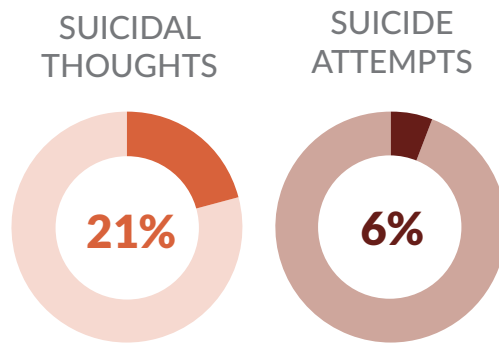


# Suicide

We asked teens to self-report if they had, within the last three months, experienced suicidal thoughts or made a suicide attempt. Sadly, some teens told us they had these experiences. Girls were more than twice as likely as boys to report suicidal thoughts. Younger teens were also seen to be at greater risk. Suicidal thinking was twice as high for teens ages 13-15 as compared to teens ages 18-19.

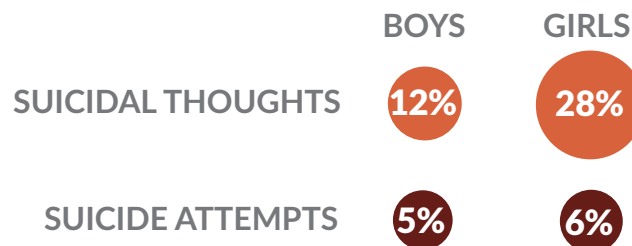
## SUICIDE RISK

*Within the past three months I have experienced:*

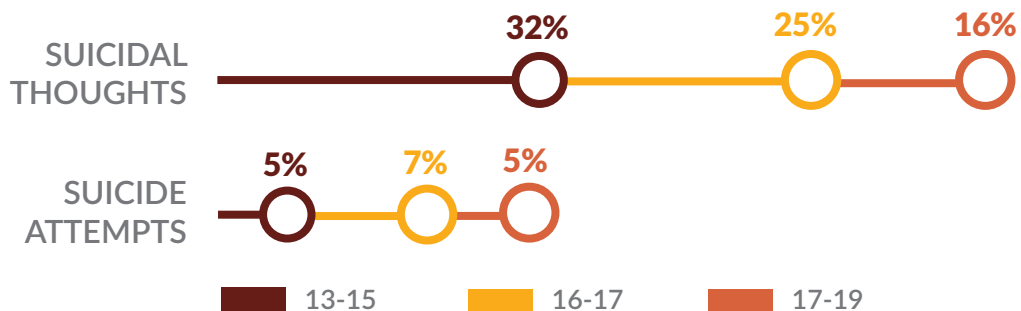


**1 IN 5**  
TEENS  
HAVE  
RECENTLY  
HAD  
**SUICIDAL**  
**THOUGHTS**

## SUICIDE RISK BY GENDER

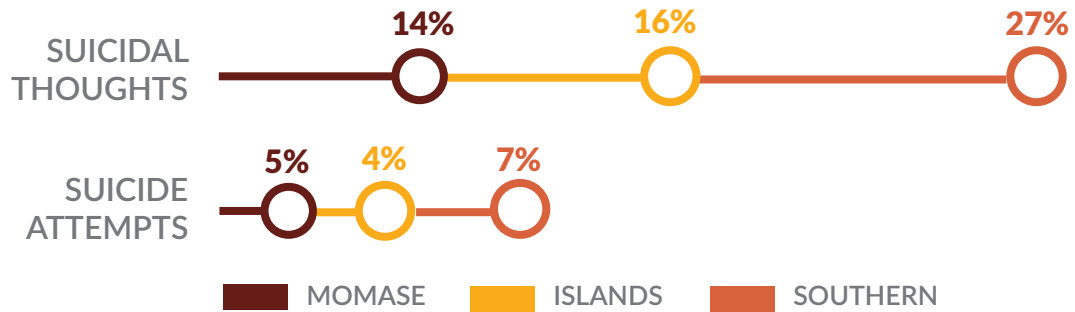


## SUICIDE RISK BY AGE



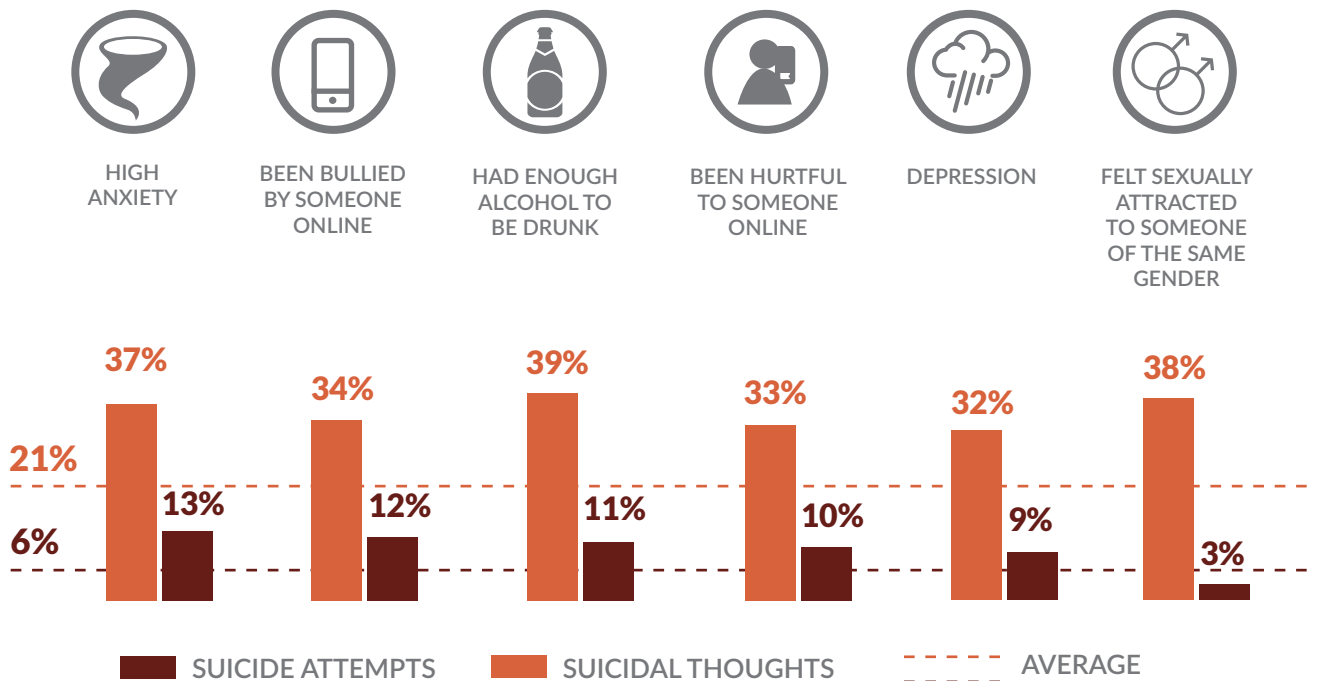
Teens in the Southern region were at the highest suicide risk as compared to the other regions surveyed.

## SUICIDE RISK BY LOCATION



Suicide risk is closely connected with other struggles teens are facing. In particular, the data showed strong connections to mental health struggles including high anxiety and depression. It also revealed connections to struggles with same-sex attraction, drinking alcohol, and bullying.

## 6 CONNECTIONS WITH SUICIDE RISK



Suicide risk is a concern for teens of this generation worldwide. It is not necessarily one event or experience that triggers teens to try to take their life, but could be a series of small steps and thoughts that each build on the other. Regardless of the specific circumstances, this data shows that some teens are in seriously dark places that are driving them towards desperate action.

We should be heartbroken for young people who are hurting so deeply they want to end their lives. When it comes to suicide, we are not looking at numbers on a page—but at real people’s lives. Any number is too many and any percentage too high.

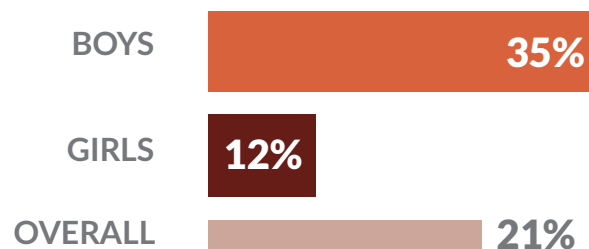
## Sexuality

The teenage years can be a time when young people experiment with their sexuality. This was a topic we specifically asked teens to share about. In answering this question teens defined for themselves what it means to be sexually active.<sup>1</sup>

Boys were three times more likely than girls to have recently been sexually active. We were surprised to see that rates were similar across age groups, with younger teens being as likely as older teens to report sexual activity. No significant differences were seen by religion or region, although Committed Christians were slightly less likely than Nominal Christians to be sexually active.

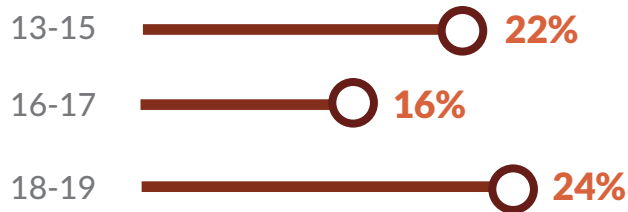
### SEXUALLY ACTIVE

*Within the past three months:*



<sup>1</sup> Any teens who also reported being married were excluded to ensure this data represents only sex outside the context of marriage.

## SEXUALLY ACTIVE BY AGE



## CHRISTIAN TEENS RESPOND

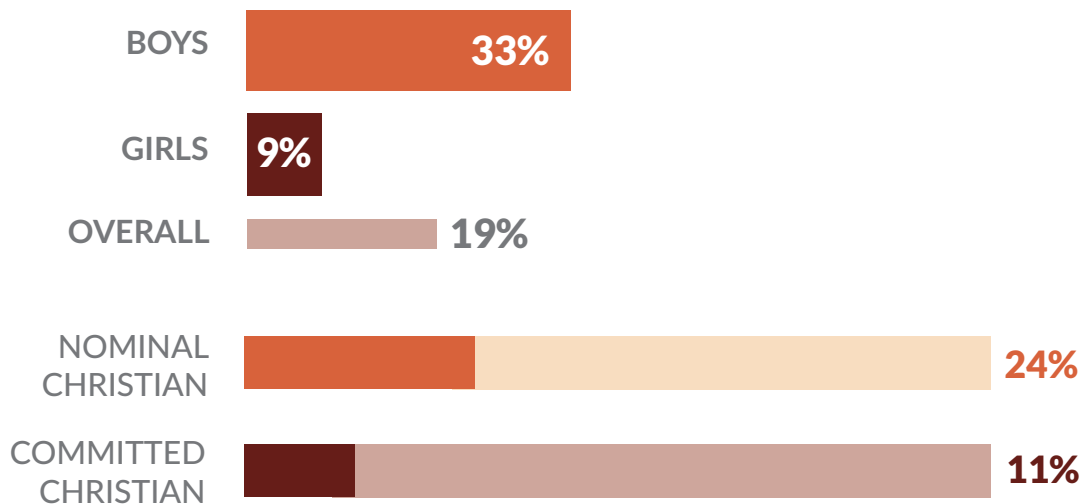
*Sexually active within the past three months:*



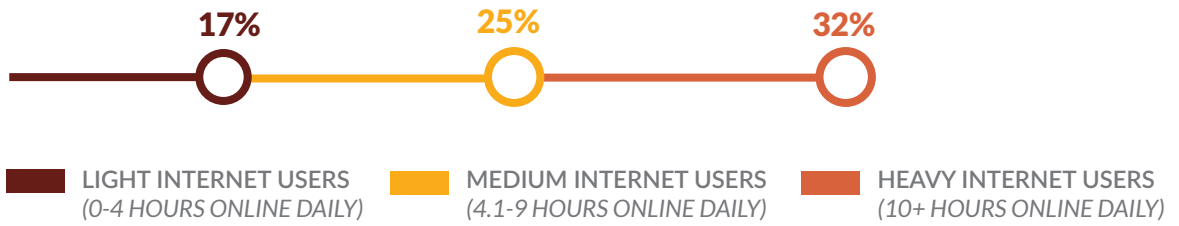
Pornography is another sexual issue that highly affects teens. *Global Youth Culture* research has revealed that pornography is a hidden struggle for this generation worldwide. In Papua New Guinea, the data showed similar trends. One in five teens reported recently looking at pornography, with a clear connection between time spent online and viewing porn. Boys were also three times as likely as girls to be using it. Encouragingly, Committed Christians were half as likely as Nominal Christians to have recently looked at pornographic material.

## PORNOGRAPHY USAGE

*Within the past three months:*



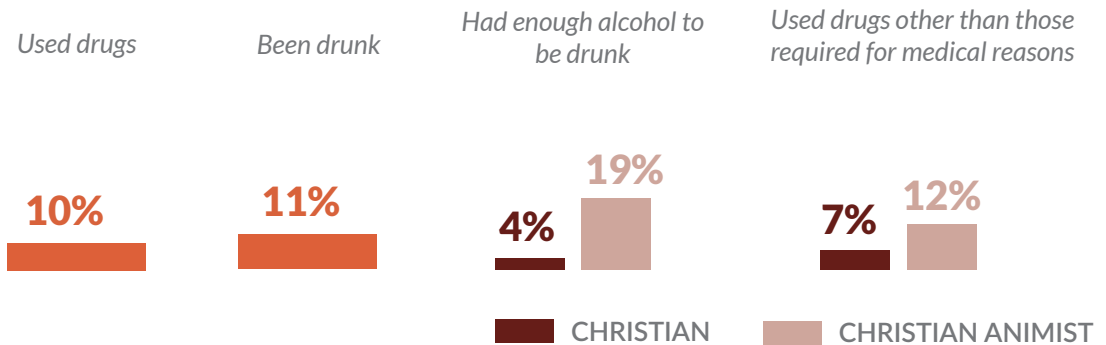
# PORNOGRAPHY USAGE BY TIME ONLINE



## Other Struggles

The challenges teens face are not always visible from the outside. But they can have external expressions. Some teens reported recent drunkenness and drug usage. Alcohol and drug usage was seen to be more common among teens who mix their Christian faith with elements of animism.

*Within the last three months, I have:*





# Conclusion

This data can be a sad picture of how life looks when seeing from the eyes of young people. The daily experiences and struggles teens face can seem overwhelming, but it is important to start by listening and understanding before we turn to action. Here are some things to consider:

- **MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS.**

This research should be a wake-up call about the struggles teens are facing and how those work together to bring them down. While most teens in Papua New Guinea know Jesus, this doesn't guarantee them protection from life's challenges. How can we help young people feel seen, supported, and encouraged with the hope the Gospel holds for their lives?

- **SUICIDE RISK IS SERIOUS.**

Some teens are feeling very hopeless and even thinking about ending their lives. While it is encouraging that few have actually acted on these thoughts, the temptation is still there for many. The data shows that suicide risk is not simple to understand—many factors contribute to creating a negative outlook for young people. How can we be alert to these concerns and ensure the teens we know are being deeply cared for?

- **STRUGGLES ARE CONNECTED.**

This data shows that teens are likely to be struggling in multiple areas of their lives. Poor mental health can connect to physical choices such as drug and alcohol usage, as well as relate to issues of sexuality. Even having a Committed faith is not necessarily protecting teens from life's struggles. Many Committed Christian teens report loneliness and depression. How can we encourage young people to seek help, rather than hide their challenges, and ensure they feel supported and not shamed for their thoughts and actions?

- **BOYS AND GIRLS STRUGGLE DIFFERENTLY.**

One of the clearest trends in the data was the difference between the experiences of boys and girls. Girls report struggling much more than boys with their mental health including feelings of loneliness, high anxiety, and depression. Suicidal thinking was also alarmingly high. Boys are struggling much more with sexual behaviors, taking advantage of easy access to pornography and even being sexually active at a relatively young age. It is critical to be aware of the individual struggles different genders are facing as we seek to support young people in their areas of challenge.

# IDENTITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

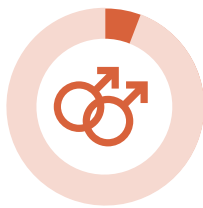
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PAPUA NEW GUINEA REPORT

# What We Discovered



Most teens believe **gender** is based on **sex at birth**, however some teens report experiencing personal **confusion** around their **gender identity**.



**6%** of teens in Papua New Guinea report recently experiencing **same-sex attraction**.

**Same-sex attraction** is **higher** among **girls** than boys.



**Both boys and girls** are struggling with gender identity **confusion**.



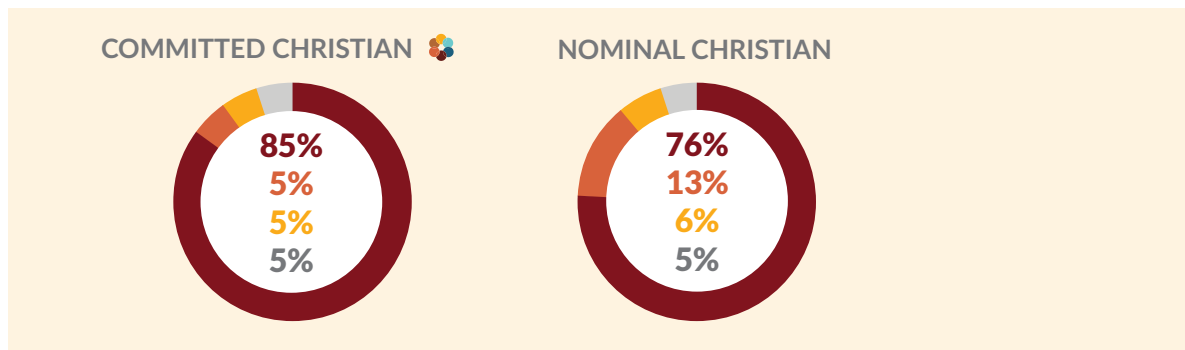
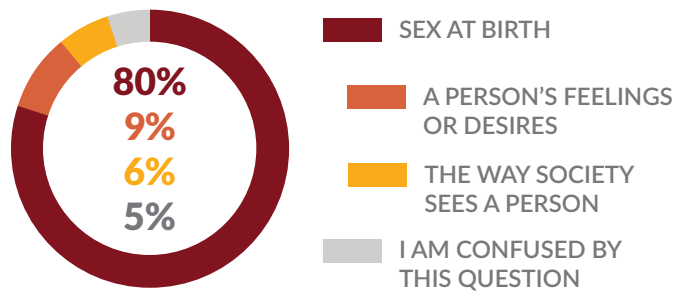
Overall, teens express **Scriptural viewpoints** of **sex and marriage**, but their actions don't always match their beliefs.

# Gender Identity

Conversations around gender identity and sexuality are becoming more common for this generation. We wanted to find out the viewpoints of teens in Papua New Guinea. The vast majority of teens (80%) said they believe gender is primarily based on a person's sex at birth. But some believe it is based on a person's feelings or desires. Nominal Christians were more likely than Committed Christians to say this.

## VIEW OF GENDER

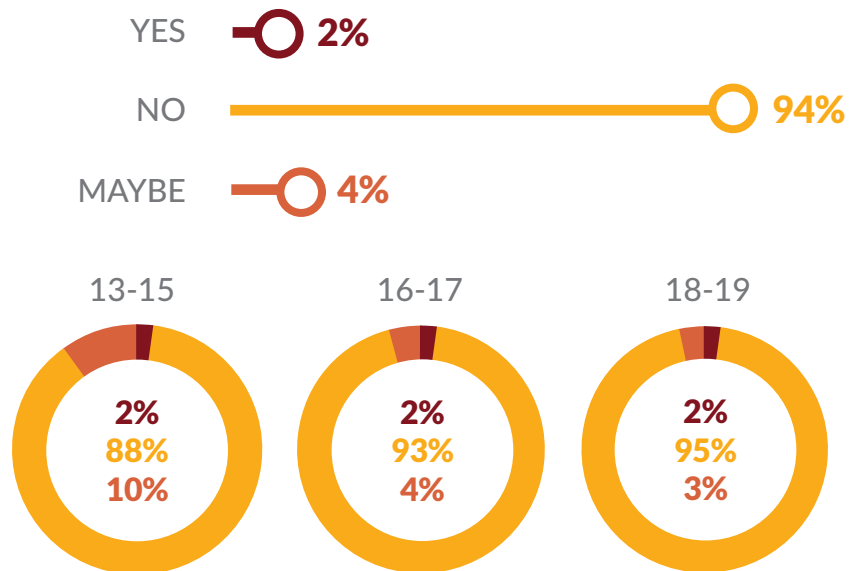
Gender is primarily based on:



Teens were vocal in saying that it would not be acceptable for someone to change their body to become a different gender. However, younger teens were more likely to demonstrate uncertainty about this question.

## VIEW OF GENDER CHANGE

Is it ok for someone to change their body to become a different gender?

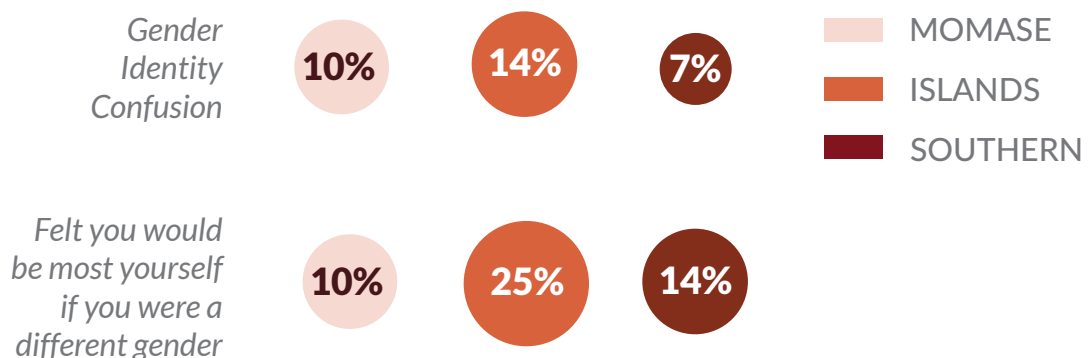
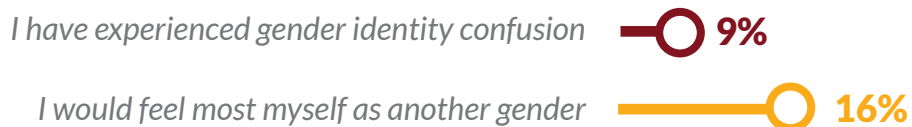


We also asked teens about their personal experience of gender identity. Some teens report recently experiencing gender identity confusion or even say they would feel most themselves as a different gender.

Although rates varied across regions of the country, the survey showed that this is an issue teens are facing everywhere. In particular, teens in the Islands seem to be wrestling with questions of gender identity.

## GENDER STRUGGLES

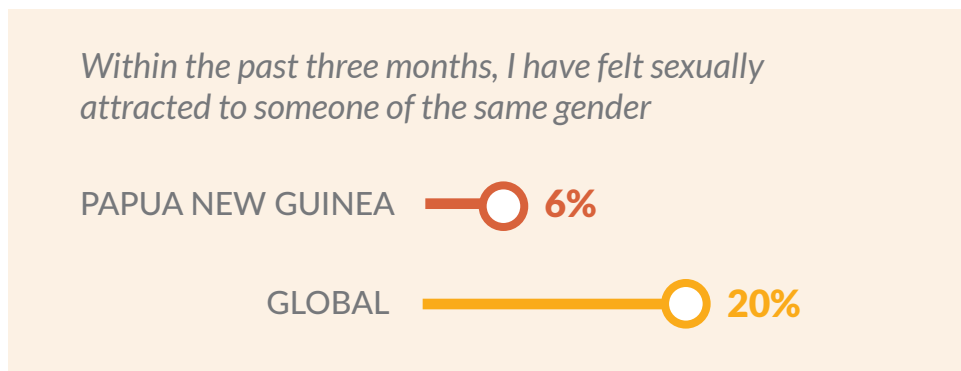
Within the past three months:



# Same Sex Attraction

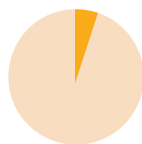
Same-sex attraction is no longer a hidden or taboo topic, but is increasingly becoming an open conversation for this global generation. We saw this with teens in Papua New Guinea as well, though to a lesser extent. Just six percent say they have recently experienced same-sex attraction which is considerably lower than the global average (20%).

Girls were slightly more likely than boys to report same-sex attraction. Rates were similar across religions and regions. Being Committed to their Christian faith only made a slight difference in these experiences.

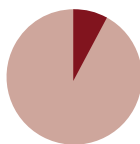


## BY GENDER

## BY RELIGION



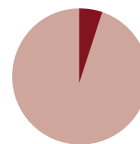
BOYS  
5%



GIRLS  
8%



NOMINAL  
CHRISTIANS  
7%

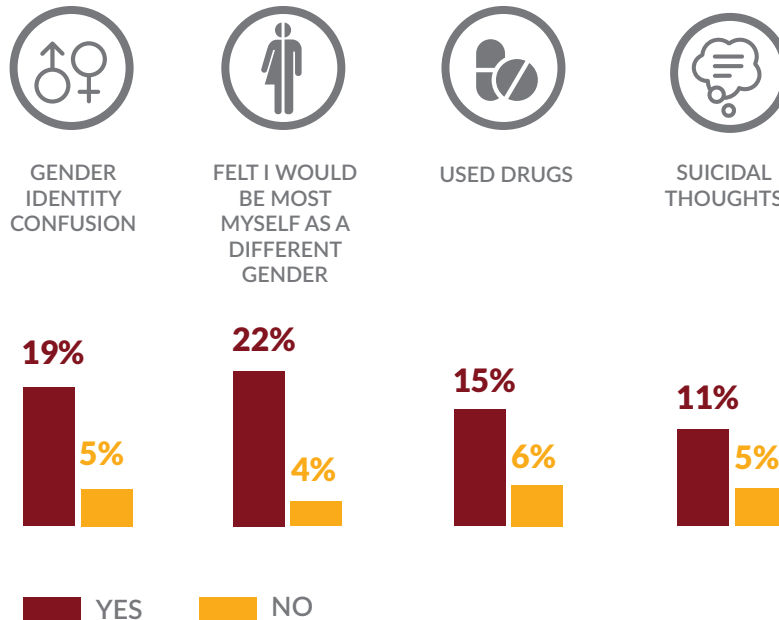


COMMITTED  
CHRISTIANS  
5%

There is no straightforward answer for why teens may feel same-sex attracted. But the data does show that this struggle connects with other challenges teens are experiencing. Teens report higher rates of same-sex attraction when other factors are present in their lives such as gender identity confusion, drug usage, or suicidal thoughts.

## SAME SEX ATTRACTION RISK FACTORS

*Of teens who report recently experiencing same-sex attraction:*



## Marriage Viewpoints

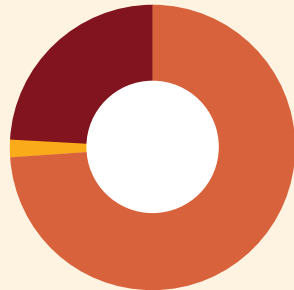
We also investigated teens' beliefs about marriage, a relationship they may be heading towards in their future.

The majority of teens in Papua New Guinea (74%) said marriage should be a lifelong commitment. However, a notable number were unsure of their opinion.

Most teens also said they believe marriage should be exclusively between a man and a woman. Attitudes vary by location, with rural teens being less certain than others about these traditional views of marriage.

Teens in Papua New Guinea largely say it is not ok to have sex before marriage. But boys were much more likely than girls to support premarital sex and the data showed they are much more likely to be engaging in sexual behavior.

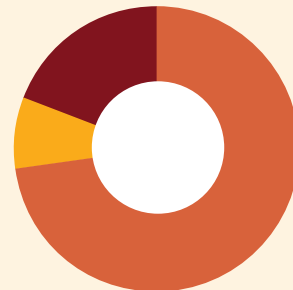
Should marriage be a lifelong commitment?



- YES
- NO
- MAYBE

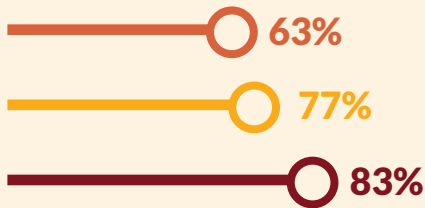
74% 2% 24%

Should marriage be exclusively between a man and a woman?



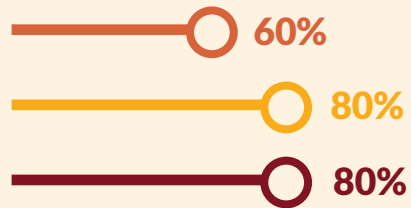
73% 8% 19%

Marriage should be a lifelong commitment.

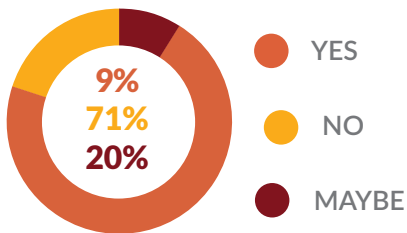


- RURAL
- SEMI-URBAN
- URBAN

Marriage should be exclusively between a man and a woman.

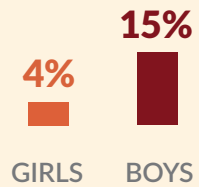


Do you believe it is ok to have sex before marriage?



- YES
- NO
- MAYBE

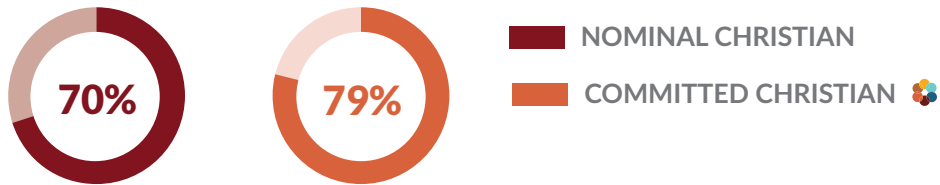
Yes:





Overall, there was not a lot of difference between Committed Christians and Nominals when it came to views on marriage. However, Committed Christians were more certain than nominals that sex should be saved for marriage.

**Marriage should be a lifelong commitment.**



**Marriage should be exclusively between a man and a woman.**



**Sex should be saved for marriage.**



# Conclusion

Teens' opinions may change as they mature, but for now we have a good view of what they believe on the important topics of gender identity, sexuality, and marriage.

- **STRENGTHEN SCRIPTURAL VIEWPOINTS.**

It is reassuring to see that teens in Papua New Guinea mostly have scriptural viewpoints on topics such as gender identity, sexuality, and marriage. But these topics continue to need cultivating as teens mature and begin to hear other opinions and voices. How can we help teens understand the plan God has for their sexuality and relationships and embrace that design in order to flourish?

- **PREPARE FOR CONFUSING CONVERSATIONS.**

The voice of culture speaks loudly to youth through music, media, and digital platforms. But culture will always continue to fall away from God's values. We need to prepare ourselves and this generation for honest conversations on topics like gender identity, same-sex attraction, and sex outside of marriage. We need to be ready not only to speak God's truth but to be good listeners for teens who may feel confused or doubtful on these topics.

- **RAISE THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH.**

Pastors and church leaders are recognized authorities for topics like right and wrong and the meaning of life, but have become less relevant in other cultural conversations. Teens live in a world that is growing more complicated and confusing every day, but they need to know that the truth of God's Word does not change. Scripture speaks to every aspect of our lives. How can we communicate that to this generation and make the church a trusted voice and safe space for teens to navigate questions on gender and sexuality?

- **DISCIPLE THE FAMILY.**

Teens are looking to the adults in their life for guidance on these topics, and family members are an important guide. Teens often follow after their parents in their beliefs and attitudes. How can we disciple the entire family to understand God-given identity, which includes gender and sexuality?

# INFLUENCES AND GUIDING VOICES

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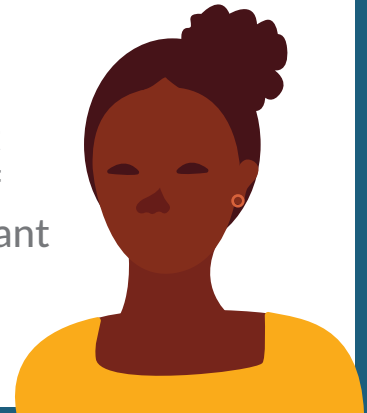
PAPUA NEW GUINEA REPORT

# What We Discovered



**Most teens** say their **family experience** has been **good**.

**Teens identify parents** as their **most important influence** when it comes to some of life's most important questions.



**Boys** are more likely than girls to say they would do their **own investigation** into what to believe, while **girls** are more likely to **favor having a personal experience**.



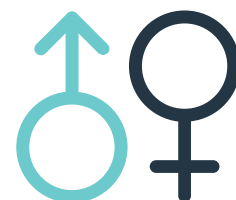
**90%** of teens have **close friends who know them well**.



Teens are more likely to say a **personal experience** such as an answer to prayer would **change their mind about a religious belief** versus teachings from religious leaders.



When it comes to talking about **gender and sexuality**, there are **many voices teens are listening to** besides their parents.

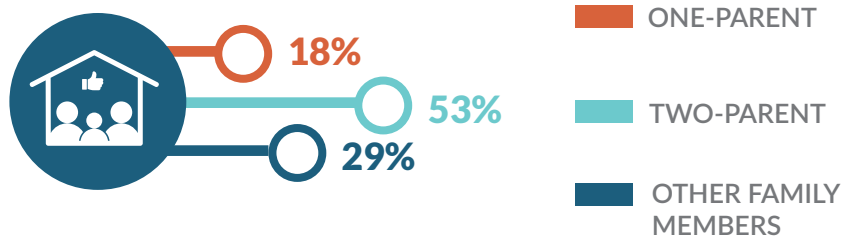


# Friend and Family Relationships

We wanted to know about teens' family relationships and how they are going. Only half of teens surveyed in Papua New Guinea live with both parents, and family satisfaction is highest among those teens. However, the majority of teens (84%) still say their family experience has been positive overall, regardless of living situation. Rates were similar across gender, age, and location.

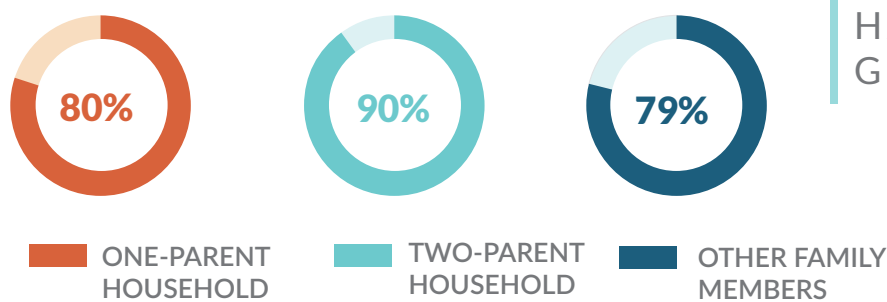
## HOUSEHOLD

*I live with:*



## FAMILY SATISFACTION

*My family experience has been good overall:*

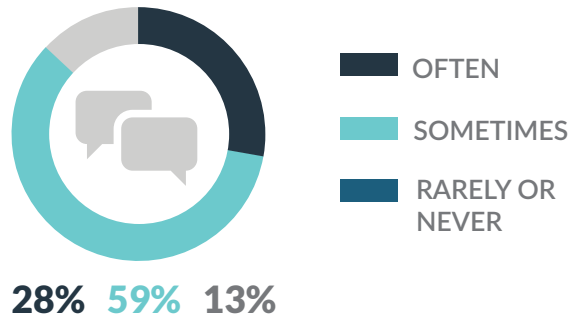


**84% OF TEENS SAY THEIR FAMILY EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN GOOD**

Family conversations can be an indication of closeness and connection. Most teens say they talk to their parents at least sometimes about issues that really matter to them.

## PARENT CONVERSATIONS

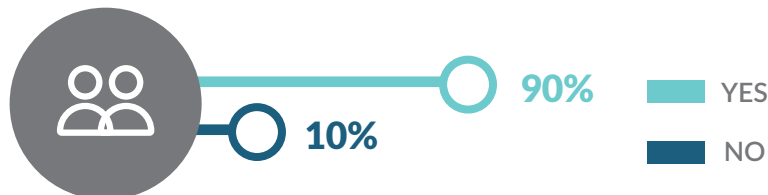
*I talk to my parents/guardians about issues that really matter to me:*



Encouragingly, the vast majority of teens in Papua New Guinea indicated they have strong friendships in their lives, and this was consistent across regions, genders, and age groups.

## FRIENDSHIP SATISFACTION

*I have close friends who know me well:*



# Who Teens Listen To

Teens tell us they turn to family more often than any other source for guidance on some of life's most important topics such as what is right and wrong. Family also remains the primary source of guidance for teens when they wonder about the meaning of life. Religious leaders or texts ranked as the second most popular influence on these topics.

## RIGHT AND WRONG CONVERSATIONS

*Where I go most often for information or guidance about right and wrong*

- 1 PARENTS 65%
- 2 RELIGIOUS LEADERS / TEXTS 14%
- 3 TEACHERS / COUNSELORS 8%
- 4 FRIENDS / PEERS 5%
- 5 SIBLINGS 4%
- 6 ONLINE / SOCIAL MEDIA 3%
- 7 OFFLINE MEDIA<sup>1</sup> 1%

## MEANING OF LIFE CONVERSATIONS

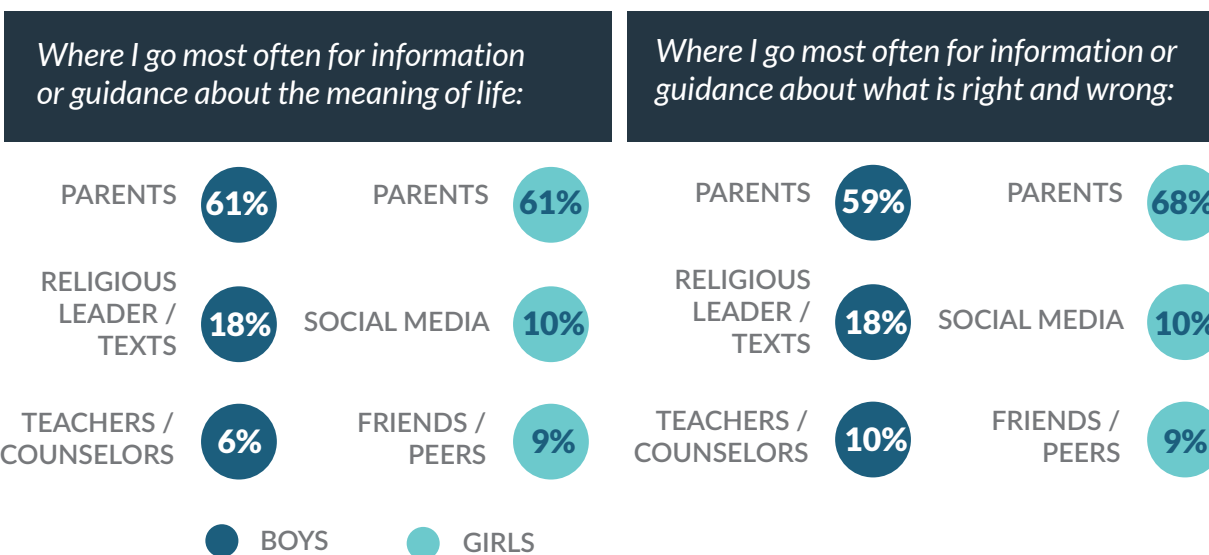
*Where I go most often for information or guidance about the meaning of life*

- 1 PARENTS 61%
- 2 RELIGIOUS LEADERS / TEXTS 12%
- 3 ONLINE / SOCIAL MEDIA 8%
- 4 FRIENDS / PEERS 7%
- 5 SIBLINGS 4%
- 6 TEACHERS / COUNSELORS 4%
- 7 OFFLINE MEDIA 3%

<sup>1</sup> Includes books, magazines, radios, and newspaper

Parents are the strong first choice for teens when they need information or guidance. But it was interesting to see that boys and girls had different secondary influences. Girls were more likely to say they look to social media and friends for advice, while boys turn to authority figures including religious leaders and teachers / counselors.

## INFLUENCES BY GENDER

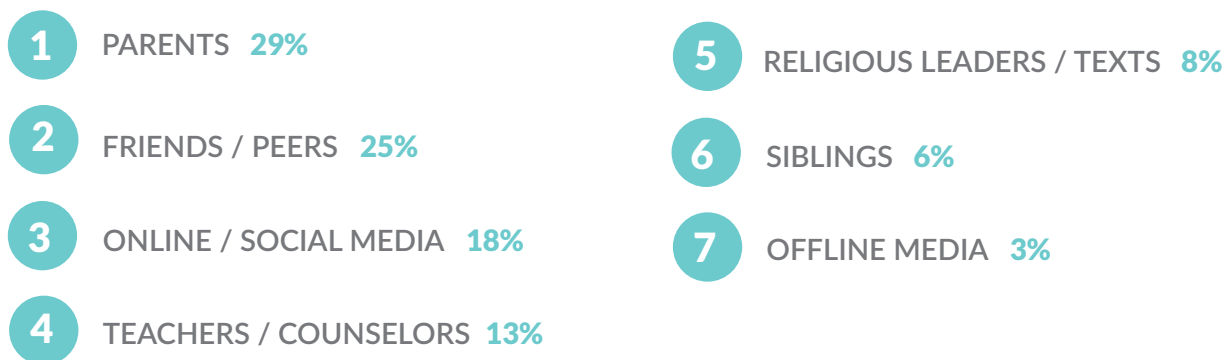


We also asked teens to share with us where they go for guidance about the complex topics of gender and sexuality. Here, the influence of parents notably drops. Friends and peers are nearly tied with parents as the first place teens say they would look for guidance. The internet and social media is not far behind.

The data showed that teens definitely rely on in-person relationships for guidance more so than looking online. However, it was interesting to see how the influence of religious leaders decreased, as compared to the authority they carried on other topics.

## INFLUENCES ON GENDER VIEWS

*Where I go most often for information or guidance about gender, sexuality, and sexual issues*





Although they had the same priority order of influences, boys were almost twice as likely as girls to report they would turn to teachers / counselors for advice about gender and sexuality (18% vs 10%). When looking at this data by region, it was stark how much the influence of teachers and counselors declined in the Southern region as compared to other areas of the country.

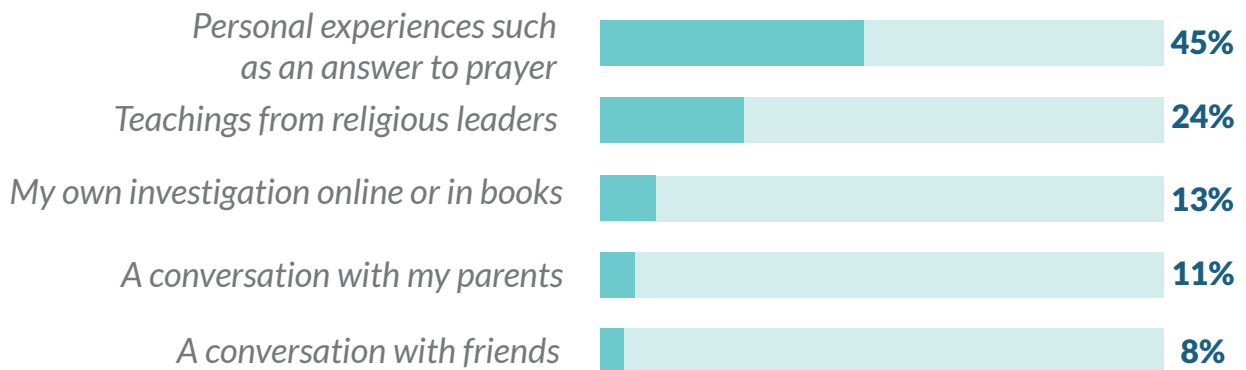
*I go most often to teachers / counselors for guidance about gender and sexuality.*



## What Changes their Mind

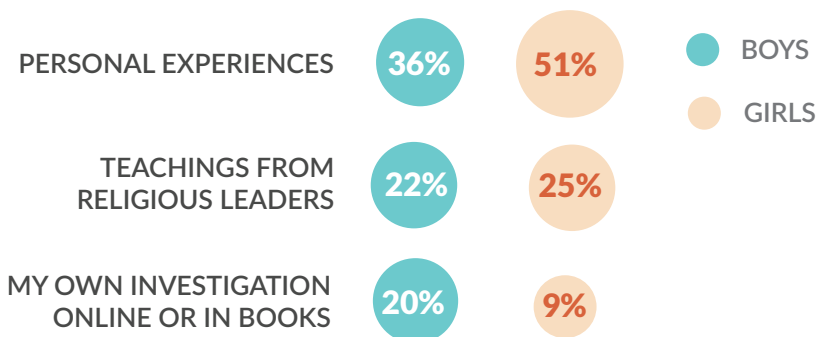
We wanted to discover what would make teens change their mind about a religious belief they already hold. The most popular answer was personal experiences, such as an answer to prayer, with teachings from religious leaders being second. However, girls were far more likely than boys to say they value personal experiences, while boys prioritized their own investigation.

*What would be most likely to change your mind about a religious belief?*



## FAITH INFLUENCES BY GENDER

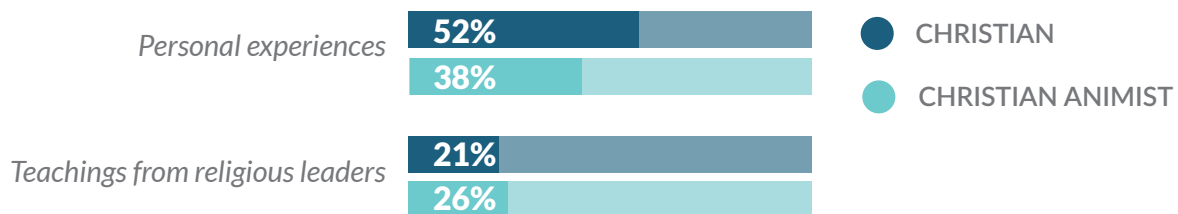
*What would be most likely to change my mind about a religious belief:*



Influences were also seen to change based on a teen's location and religion. Christian animist teens were notably less likely than other religions to say they would value a personal experience such as an answer to prayer. Teens in the Southern region were far more likely to value personal experiences and less likely to be swayed by teachings from religious leaders as compared to other regions.

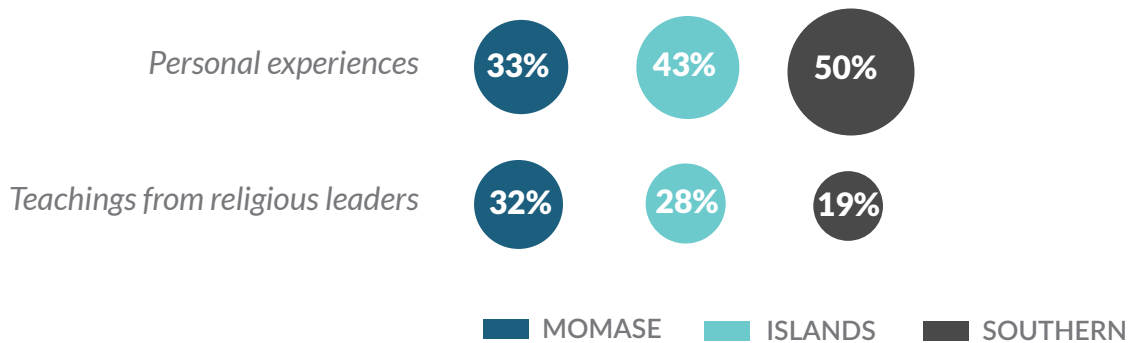
## RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES

*What would be most likely to change my mind about a religious belief:*



## RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE BY REGION

*What would be most likely to change my mind about a religious belief:*



# Conclusion

As today's teens navigate life's complex issues and questions, the voices they are listening to are critical. The sources teens trust and turn to shed insight on what they will believe. And what you believe has profound implications for how you will behave.

- **PARENTS HAVE A PRIMARY ROLE.**

Encouragingly, teens report parents are a primary influence on their lives and young people trust their family members as guides for life's most important questions. Parents should not take lightly the privilege they have of speaking into their child's life, especially while they are young and most ready to listen. How can we equip families to step into this important role of discipling their children and teens within the home?

- **PEER VOICES ARE PRESENT.**

It is encouraging to see that most teens say they have close friends in addition to positive family relationships. Friends and peers are particularly apparent as influences in teens' lives on topics they feel less comfortable discussing with their parents or other adults. Girls also seem to value the opinion of their friends more than boys, who tend to turn to authority figures for advice. Teens need both peers and mentors in their lives. How can we ensure they have healthy support and wise counsel no matter where they turn?

- **AFFIRM SCRIPTURE AS A GUIDE.**

Few teens say they are turning first to religious leaders and texts for answers to life's most important questions. While we are glad to see that parents have the primary role in influencing their children's lives, it is so important for young people to have God's truth as they navigate an increasingly confusing world. How can we help young believers set Scripture as their guide and understand how to apply God's Word to their lives in practical and transformative ways?

- **HELP TEENS ENCOUNTER JESUS.**

The data is clear that teens value personal spiritual experiences far more than teachings from religious leaders. Nothing could be more powerful than seeing God answer their prayers. How can we come alongside young people and challenge them to act in faith and see what God can do in their lives?

# DIGITAL CONNECTEDNESS AND IMPACT

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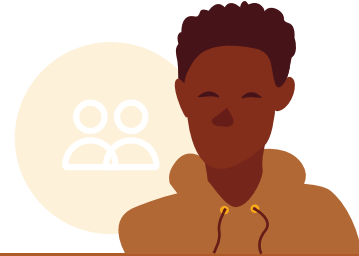
PAPUA NEW GUINEA REPORT

# What We Discovered

Teens in Papua New Guinea are spending about 3.5 hours online daily.



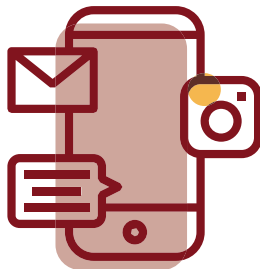
Teens **primarily** use social media to **connect with family and friends**.



**64%** of teens report that **social media** can make them feel **sad, anxious, or depressed**.



Teens who spend **more time online** report **struggling** more with their **mental health** and are at higher risk for **suicide**.



**Girls** are more likely than boys to be **negatively affected by social media**.

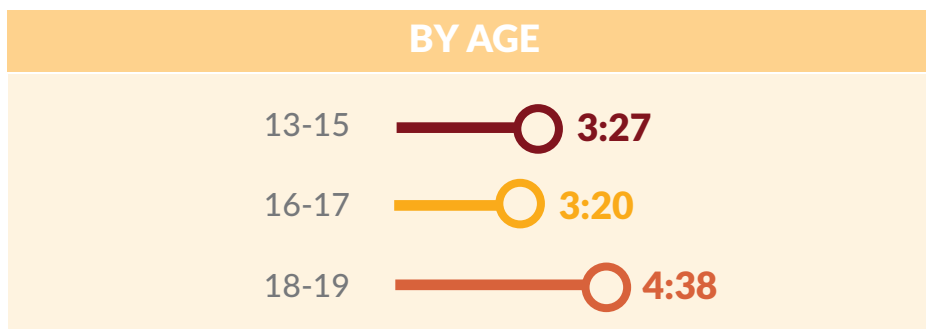
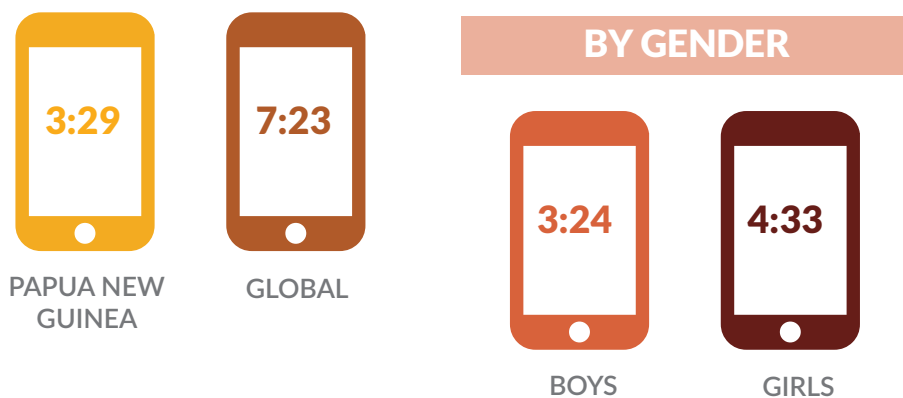


# Teens and Technology

The Internet is something that is shaping this generation. Teens have access to information, opinions, and influences at their fingertips. But how much is this affecting teens in Papua New Guinea?

We wanted to find out how much time they are spending online and how they are using social media. Teens in Papua New Guinea are spending less time on their screens than their global peers. Overall, teens report an average of 3.5 hours online daily which is less than half of the global average. Girls report spending more time connected than boys, and time online was also higher for older teens as compared to younger teens.

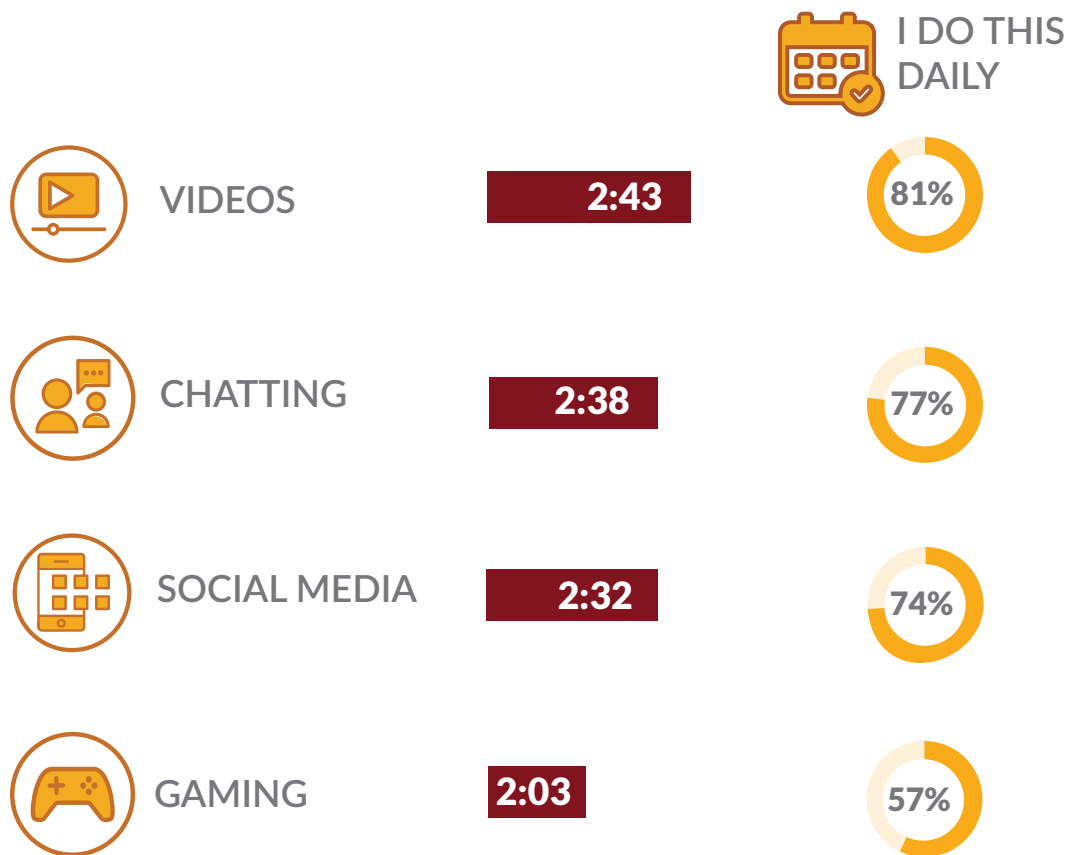
## TOTAL TIME ONLINE DAILY



We were also curious what teens are doing while connected. Teens surveyed in Papua New Guinea report spending time online each day watching videos, chatting, and using social media. Fewer teens reported gaming daily, but reported they might spend a few hours on this when they do.

## ONLINE ACTIVITIES

*During a typical day, how much time do you spend on each activity?*

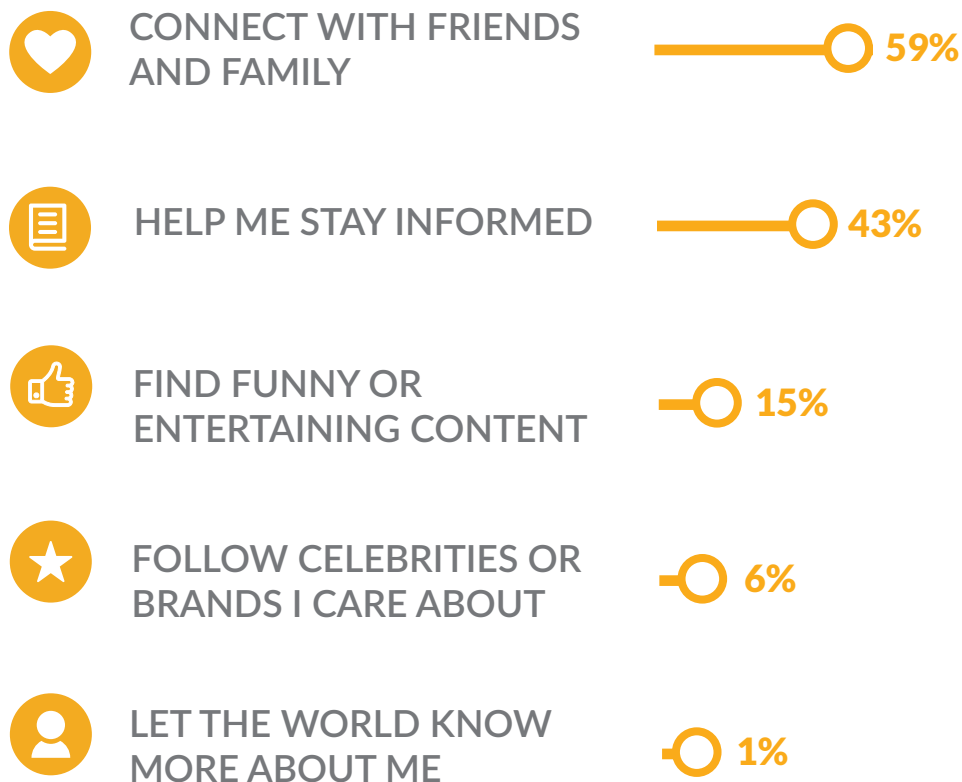


# Teens and Social Media

When it comes to social media, the vast majority of teens (74%) say they use these platforms daily. Teens reported they primarily use it as a tool to connect with friends and family. But they were somewhat divided about its effects on their lives. About half said it helps them feel satisfied with their lives, but almost two-thirds also acknowledged that it can make them feel sad, anxious, or depressed.

Girls were particularly likely to recognize social media's harmful effects in their lives as compared to boys. Rural teens were also more likely than urban teens to say their digital usage can make them feel negatively.

## I USE SOCIAL MEDIA PRIMARILY TO<sup>1</sup>

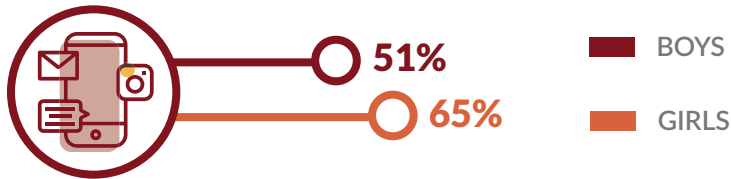


<sup>1</sup> Note that respondents could choose up to two answers for this question, meaning percentages do not add to 100%



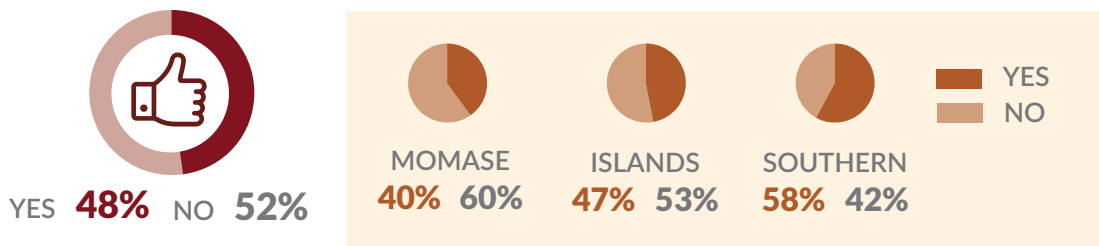
## SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTIONS

*I use social media primarily to connect with friends and family*



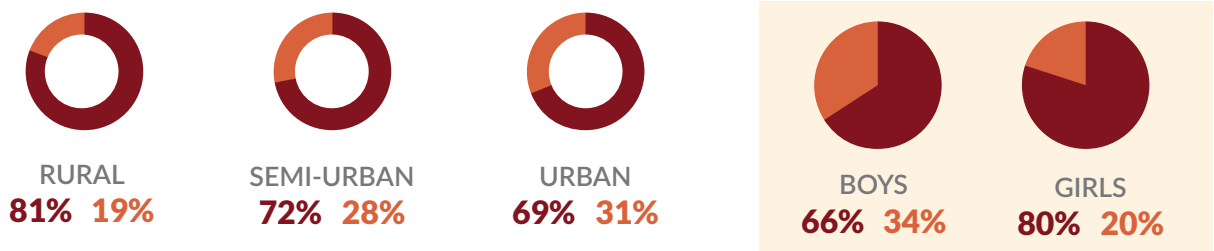
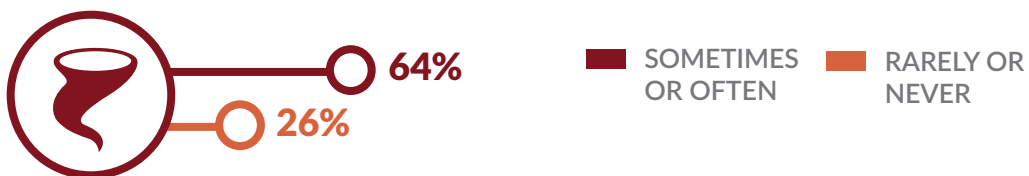
## SOCIAL MEDIA SATISFACTION

*Social media helps me feel satisfied with my life*



## SOCIAL MEDIA DISSATISFACTION

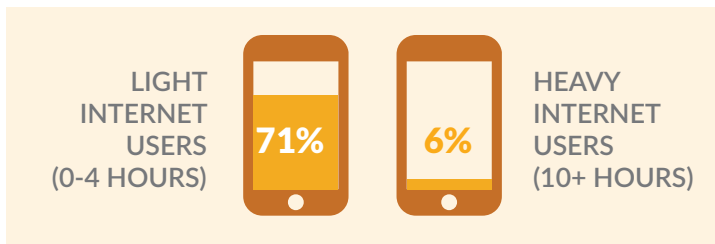
*Social media makes me feel sad, anxious, or depressed*



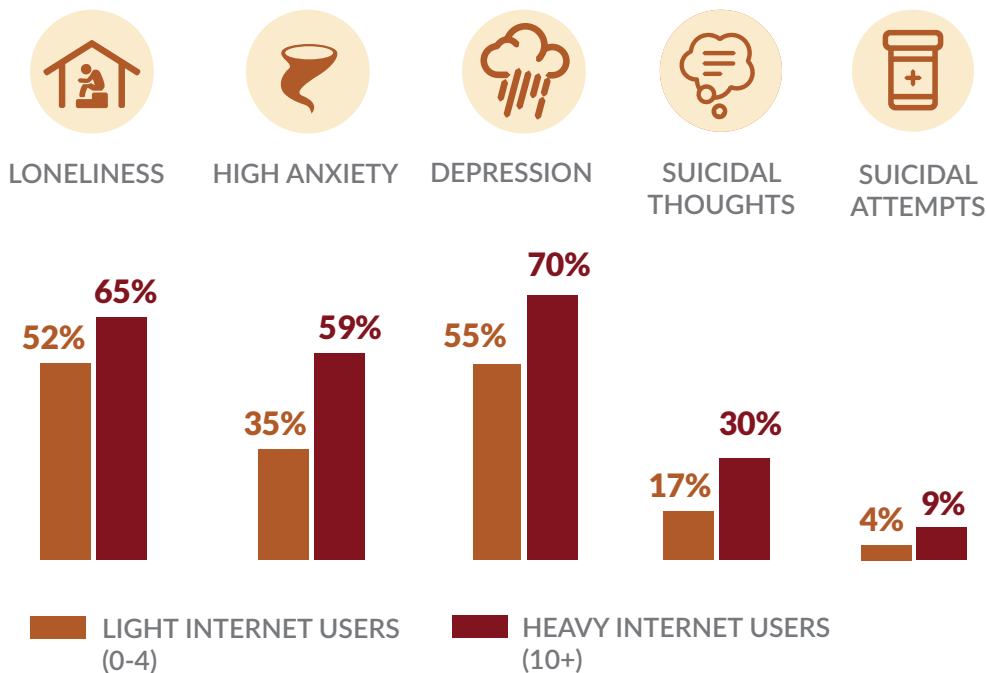
# The Digital Effect

It is interesting to see that this generation is recognizing the sometimes negative effects of their digital habits. The data shows a clear trend between time spent online and mental health concerns. Heavy Internet users reported higher rates for every mental health item measured in this survey. Alarmingly, they were also twice as likely to be at risk of suicide as compared to light Internet users. It should be noted that the number of heavy internet users in this study was small, with the majority of teens reporting that they spend only a few hours online daily.

## TIME SPENT CONNECTED



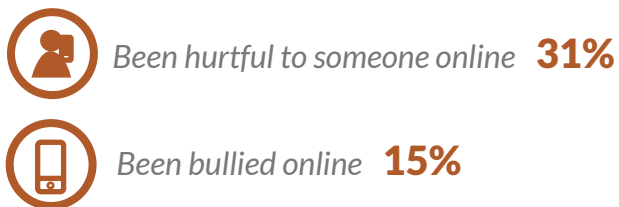
## MENTAL HEALTH BY TIME ONLINE



There is a very real connection between the lived experiences of teens and their digital habits and choices. However, we are not suggesting that Internet usage is the cause of these negative experiences. Teens who are struggling may be turning to digital as a distraction or escape, which may end up creating additional negativity that reinforces their original challenges. The relationship is complex and nuanced, and is doubtless different in each situation. But this data does reveal a pattern which should not be overlooked.

## BULLYING

*Within the last three months, I have:*



We also found that the Internet can be a place where teens experience harm or inflict it on others. Three in ten teens admitted that they have been harmful to others online, with around half that reporting they have been personally bullied by others.

# Conclusion

Constant connectedness to digital platforms is becoming a way of life for today's young people. More and more teens own phones and have ready access to the Internet. How will we help them navigate this new reality and engage them effectively with the Gospel message on these digital platforms?

- **LEVERAGE DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES.**

Technology can be a powerful tool to reach this generation. Teens in both cities and rural areas are getting online and taking advantage of the apps, websites, and social media platforms available. They are online connecting with others and interacting with content daily. How can we ensure there is Gospel content for them to find and life-giving online communities they can be a part of?

- **NAVIGATE THE TENSION.**

While this generation appears to be embracing digital, many teens recognize the tensions that devices are bringing to their lives. Girls as well as teens in rural areas of the country are particularly feeling these negative effects more and may need help sorting through the confusion online interactions introduce to their lives. How can we be mindful of the changes digital is bringing and help teens navigate their engagement in a healthy way?

- **POSITION FOR THE FUTURE.**

Digital connectedness is the future we are all headed towards, and youth are leading the way in this. We can't stop that, but we can take the journey with them rather than losing them to a digital world we are not part of and don't understand. As families, church leaders, and ministry workers we need to be aware of how the world is changing and how we may need to change with it. How can we embrace digital alongside this generation and bring both wisdom and innovation to this space?

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

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PAPUA NEW GUINEA REPORT

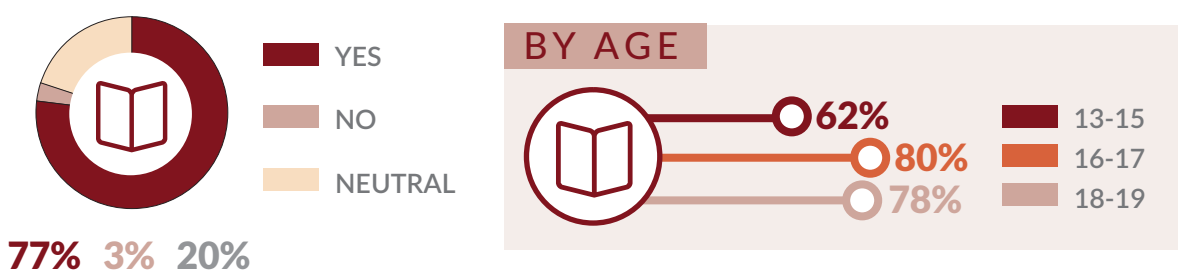
# Education

Most teens in Papua New Guinea see education as key to their future success. Three in four say education is the primary thing that will guarantee them a better future. But more than a third of teens say cost would be a barrier to being able to attend university.

Boys are less likely to say they are planning on attending university, and are twice as likely than girls to say they have career plans that do not require a university degree.

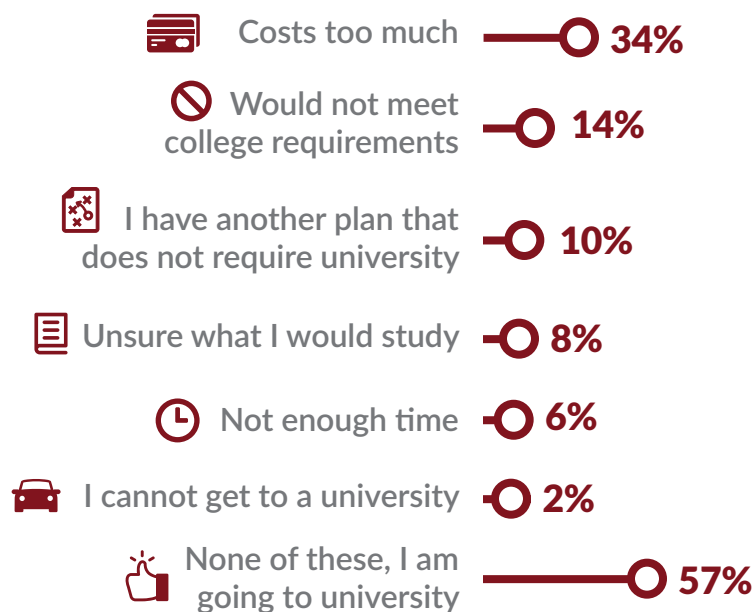
## VIEWS ON EDUCATION

Education is the primary thing that will guarantee me a better future



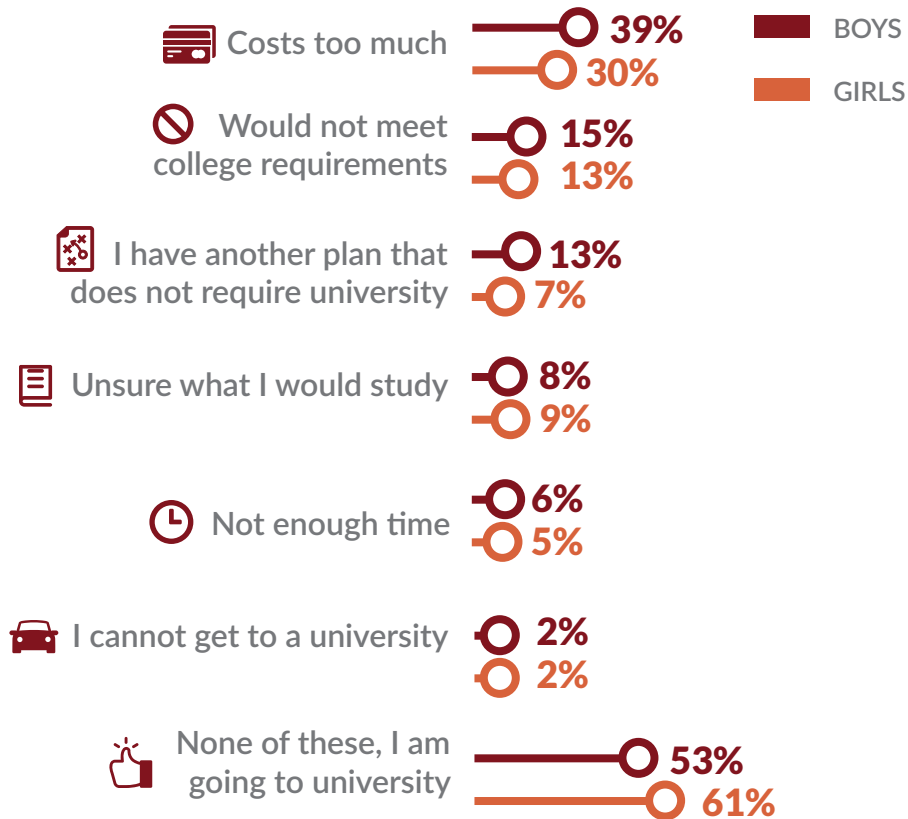
## EDUCATION BARRIERS

What would stop you from going to university? (Choose up to two answers)



## EDUCATION BARRIERS BY GENDER

What would stop you from going to university? (Choose up to two answers)

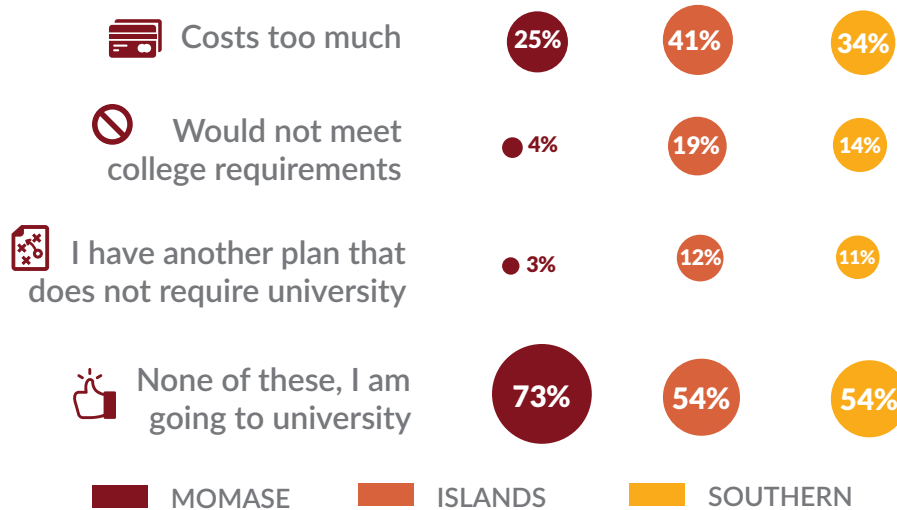


Concerns about educational barriers differed by region. Teens in the Islands and Southern areas were more concerned about the cost of university and not meeting the requirements, while teens in Momase reported being more certain that they would be able to attend.

**77% OF TEENS AGREE THAT EDUCATION WILL GUARANTEE THEM A BETTER FUTURE**

## EDUCATION BARRIERS BY REGION

What would stop you from going to university? (Choose up to two answers)



## Career

Although they might not know what is ahead, teens do have an idea of what they want from their future career. Their top priority is that they would be helping others, followed by a desire to enjoy what they do for work. Whether or not a job is respected and how much it pays were lesser concerns. It was interesting to see that younger teens were much more concerned about their future earning potential than older teens.

## CAREER PRIORITIES

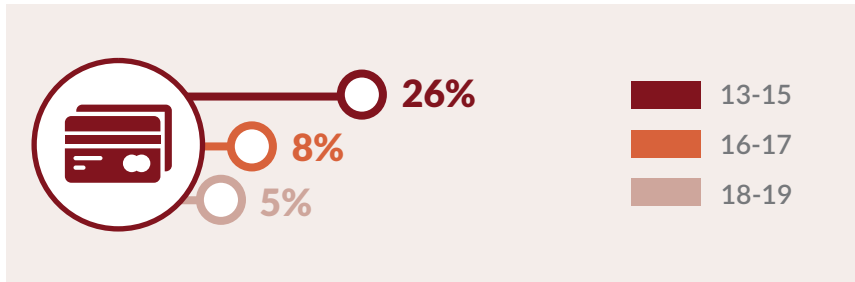
The most important thing in my future career is:





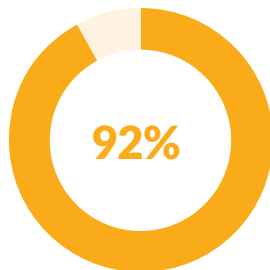
## FINANCIAL PRIORITIES BY AGE

*The most important thing in my future career is how much it pays*



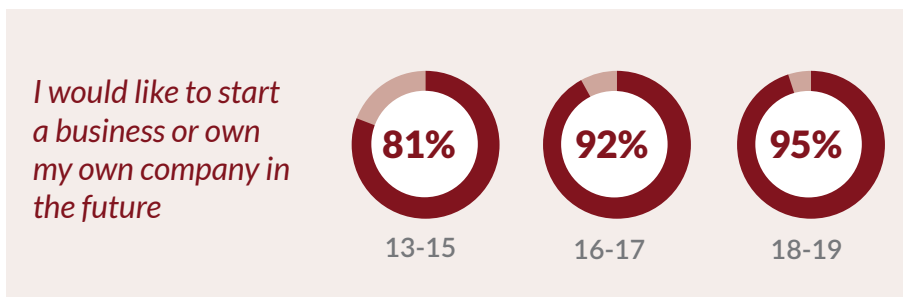
## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

*I would like to start a business or own my own company in the future*



**92%** OF TEENS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA HAVE ENTREPRENEURIAL GOALS

Teens in Papua New Guinea appear to be ambitious with a strong desire to be entrepreneurs. Nearly all teens surveyed said they would like to start a business or own their own company in the future. Entrepreneurial aspirations trended up with age, with both boys and girls saying they would like to be business owners.



# About OneHope

In partnership with local churches, ministries, and governments around the world, OneHope has reached more than 2 billion children and youth with God's Word. Based on in-country research OneHope conducts, Scripture programs are designed to be age and culturally relevant. Since 1987, OneHope has helped kids experience God's Story, sharing the life-changing message of hope with children and youth in every country. [onehope.net](https://onehope.net)

# About the Research

This project was an extension of a global research initiative that surveyed 8,394 teens ages 13-19 in more than 20 countries. The global study was conducted online in February-March of 2020. Research was conducted for this project in Papua New Guinea in November-December of 2023.

The data represents a variety of locations and regions throughout Papua New Guinea and questions were customized to fit the national context. Teens were surveyed in-person at schools and submitted their answers on paper. Teens were not required to answer every question, however, sample sizes were sufficient for every question included in this report.

## CHRISTIAN

Teens who self-identified as Christian, but not as Jehovah's Witness or Mormon.

## CHRISTIAN ANIMIST

Teens who self-identify as Christians but who also report cultural practices of animistic beliefs, such as praying or speaking to one's deceased ancestors.

## COMMITTED CHRISTIAN

Teens who self-identified as Christian, but not as Jehovah's Witness or Mormon, and who met the following criteria:

- Believe God exists and they can have a personal relationship with Him.
- Believe Jesus is the Son of God.
- Believe that forgiveness of sins is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Believe the Bible is the Word of God.
- Read Scripture on their own daily or weekly.
- Pray daily or weekly.

## NOMINAL CHRISTIANS

Teens who self-identified as Christian, but not as Jehovah's Witness or Mormon, and who did not meet the criteria of core beliefs or habits established for Committed Christians.

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OneHope. (March 2024). *Global Youth Culture, Papua New Guinea Report.*

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# GLOBAL YOUTH CULTURE