



# This Generation

*The impact of the pandemic on the South Africa  
ministry landscape*



## What is currently being done to reach this generation with the Gospel?

Through this research we hope to gain a better understanding of the state of ministry to children and youth across South Africa. Your participation will help us explore current ministry activities along with the capacities, gaps, and opportunities that exist for churches, ministries, and parachurch organizations across the nation.

This research will reveal the bigger picture of the ministry that is happening across our nation. It will share actionable insights to position the South African Church for even greater ministry impact. We can do more for God's kingdom together than we could ever do alone. But first we need to start by understanding our strengths as well as our needs. Will you join us?



"Thanks to OneHope for being front runners in South Africa in research. We are excited to see how this research will benefit children and youth ministry in a strategic way and take it forward into a new era."

► - Dr. Viola Fransman, Petra Institute



"If we want to truly advance the Kingdom of God in the world, then we need to ensure that we build an effective ecosystem of kingdom entities that can work together towards the same end. We believe OneHope's research is an important tool for this."

► - Pastor Peter Watt, Movement Day Africa



"I would hereby like to encourage church leaders and anyone working with and alongside children and youth in your local church to participate in this survey. It is timely and needed for the necessary resources to be developed from and for our continent."

► - Dr. Shantelle Weber, TEASA



"I would like to appeal to all churches and NGOs to please get behind this research so that we can get a broad picture of the state of our nation's youth and children's work. Research like this could help us innovate strategy, resource development and resource procurement going forward."

► - Kay Lorentz, Director, Resilient Kids SA



"This research will enable the strategic planning of Kingdom resources to be leveraged so that our collective efforts might be efficiently and effectively used to advance the Gospel in our country and region. It is a great opportunity for ministry organizations from across South Africa to come together and place their cards on the table."

► - Michael du Toit, Baptist Theological College

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ABOUT | 4

- 4 | Background & Methodology
- 5 | Participants

## MINISTRY | 6

- 6 | Ministry Programs
- 7 | Church Attendance
- 7 | NGO Reach
- 8 | Leadership

## COVID-19 IMPACT | 9

- 12 | Church Priorities
- 13 | NGO Priorities

## NEEDS, PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES | 13

- 18 | Reach
- 19 | Rescue
- 20 | Root
- 21 | Curriculum
- 21 | Research

## DIGITAL | 22

## ABUSE | 28



OneHopeSA



infosar@onehope.net



OneHopeSA

# ABOUT



81

## CHURCHES

81 local congregations surveyed.



64

## NGOS

64 Christian non-governmental, para-church, or non-profit organisations participated.



17

## DENOMINATIONS

As well as inter- and non-denominational and independent churches and NGOs represented.



9

## PROVINCES

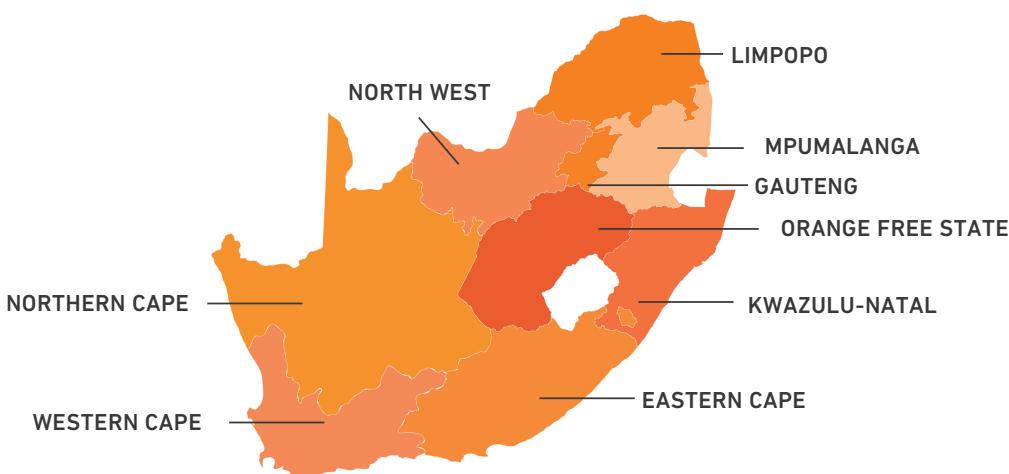
Participants were located across the 9 provinces in South Africa.

# Background

The South Africa asset map sought to better understand the churches and ministry organizations that minister to children and youth in the region. The assessment focused on ministry activities and programs, digital engagement with children and youth, needs regarding programs, resources, or training. OneHope will use the findings to identify gaps for ministry opportunities, to better serve partners by responding to their needs, and to guide strategic decisions. Research findings are also being leveraged by partners as a planning tool to understand the opportunities and gaps in children and youth ministry.

# Methodology

Separate survey tools were developed for churches and for non-church ministry organizations (NGOs). The surveys were adapted from previous OneHope asset mapping projects, with new questions added to assess the impact of COVID-19 and to explore the topic of abuse. The survey was distributed to partner churches and ministries. Participants were also asked to share the link to the survey with other churches and organisations. Participants had the option of completing the survey online, on paper, or by phone. Surveys were completed between January and April 2022 across the nine provinces in South Africa.

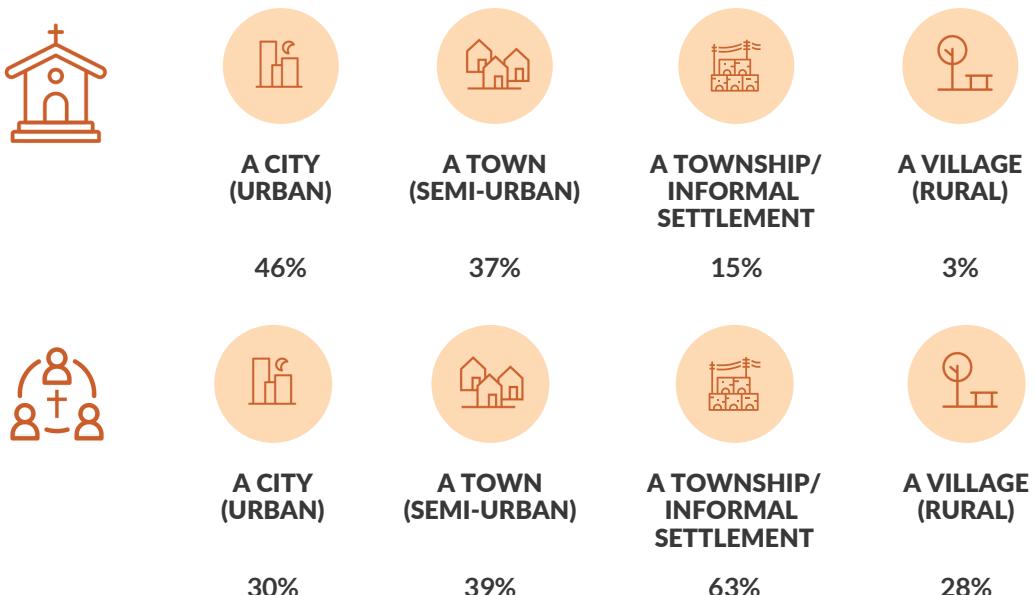


# ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

**ROLE:** Survey respondents from churches included lead pastors, children's/youth pastors, children's and youth workers, Sunday school teachers, and ministry coordinators. Survey respondents from NGOs included founders, directors, chairpersons, principals, managers, administrators, and other leaders.

**LOCATION:** The majority of churches were located in urban and semi-urban areas. NGOs were asked where the majority of their work takes place and were allowed to select multiple locations. Most NGOs minister in townships/informal settlements.

**LANGUAGE:** Churches and NGOs minister in a variety of languages including Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga.



## DENOMINATIONS

- Anglican
- Apostolic Faith Mission
- Assemblies of God
- Baptist
- Catholic
- Docks Mission
- Dutch Reformed Church (NGK / NHK)
- Evangelical Protestant Church
- Every Nation
- Full Gospel Church of God
- Independent / Non-denominational
- Inter-denominational
- Lutheran
- Methodist
- Pentecostal / Charismatic
- Presbyterian
- Reformed church of South Africa

# ABOUT THEIR MINISTRY

Over half of NGOs reported that they most often carry out direct ministry, but some provide resources or support for other organisations and churches. One-quarter of NGOs said their work is split equally between direct ministry and supporting ministry.

We also wanted to find out how NGOs divided their ministry focus between children and youth. Encouragingly, the majority of NGOs say they focus equally on children and youth and nearly all had both girls and boys equally participating in their programs. The average number of volunteers within a typical organisation each year was 54 volunteers.

*Our organisation most often...*



Does direct ministry  
Provides resources or support to other organisations / churches  
Both equally

*Our organisation focuses on...*

Mostly or all children (ages 5 – 11)	Mostly or all youth (ages 12 – 19)	Children and youth equally
--------------------------------------	------------------------------------	----------------------------



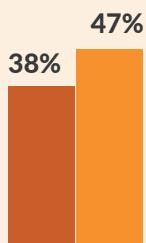
## MINISTRY PROGRAMS

We were also curious what programs NGOs and churches are focusing on with children and youth. Discipleship was the most important activity among churches while evangelism was the most important among NGOs. Aid and relief was also observed to be much more important to NGOs as compared to churches.

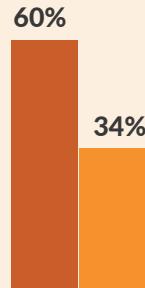
*Which program or activity type is most important to your ministry to children/youth?*



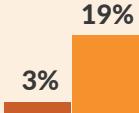
EVANGELISM



DISCIPLESHIP



AID & RELIEF

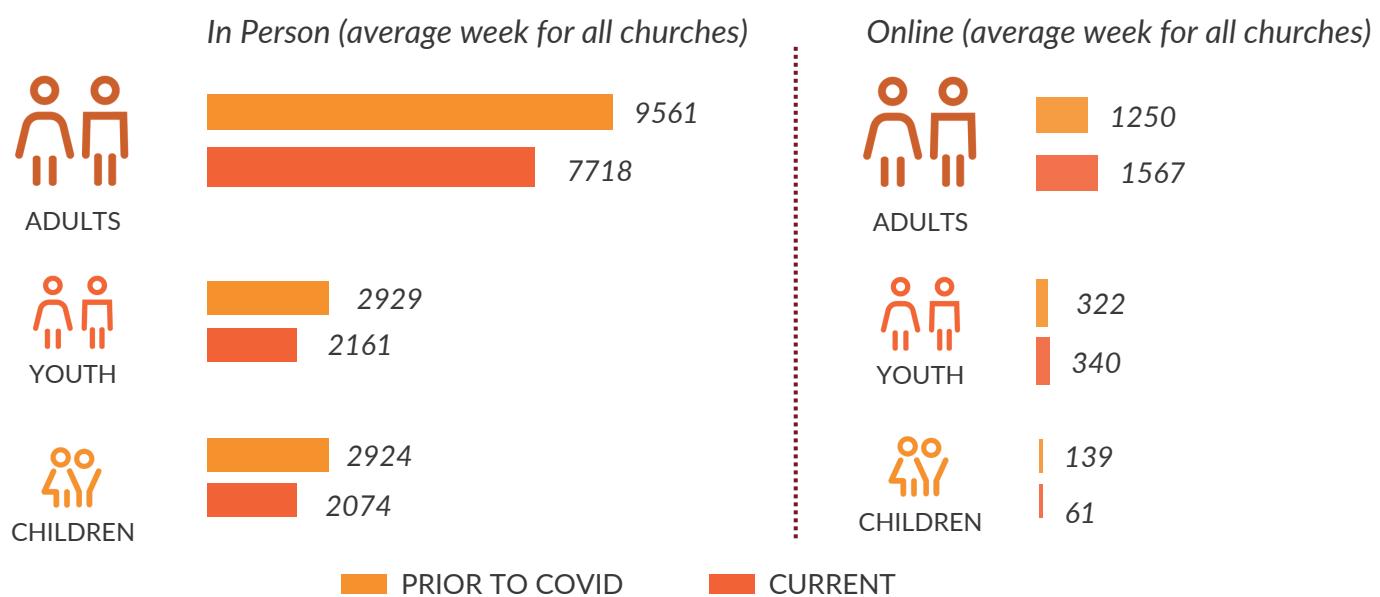


CHURCH      NGO



## CHURCH ATTENDANCE

COVID-19 was a significant disruption to churches and ministry organisations. This was clearly seen in church attendance numbers, which have dropped across all age groups as compared to before the pandemic. While adult attendance online has slightly increased, children and youth participation in digital spaces has not kept pace. Online children's ministry numbers have decreased by more than half and in-person numbers have yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels. Totals presented below represent cumulative attendance numbers across all churches surveyed.



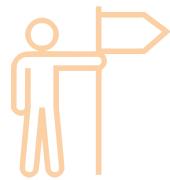
## NGO REACH

To measure the impact of NGOs, we asked organisations how many children and youth they present the Gospel to each month. Unsurprisingly, these numbers have dropped dramatically across both age groups. However, it was encouraging to see the collective impact of the ministries surveyed and their faithful evangelism efforts. Approximately 6 797 children and 5 800 youth were reached with the Gospel for the first time by these NGOs in the 12 months prior to the survey.

*Approximately how many children and youth did your organisation present the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ, in person, in your country during an average month?*

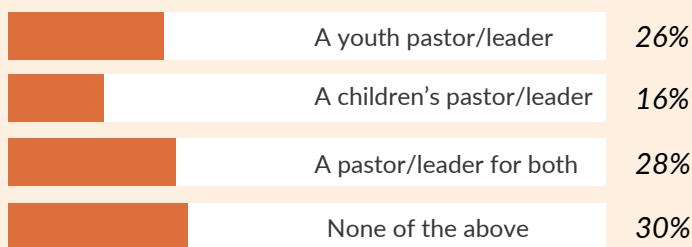


# LEADERSHIP

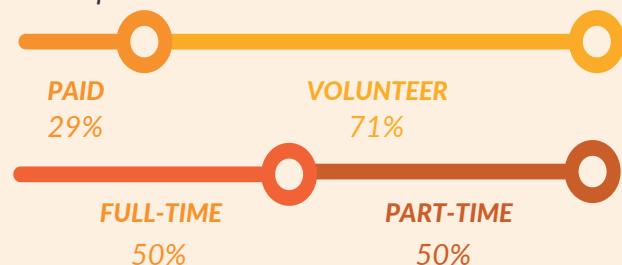


The majority (70%) of churches surveyed reported they have a pastor or leader for children, youth, or both in their church. However, 30% of churches had neither. Most children's or youth leaders are unpaid volunteers. Half of churches reported the position is full-time, and half said it is part-time.

*Does your church have:*



*Is this position:*



A CITY  
(URBAN)



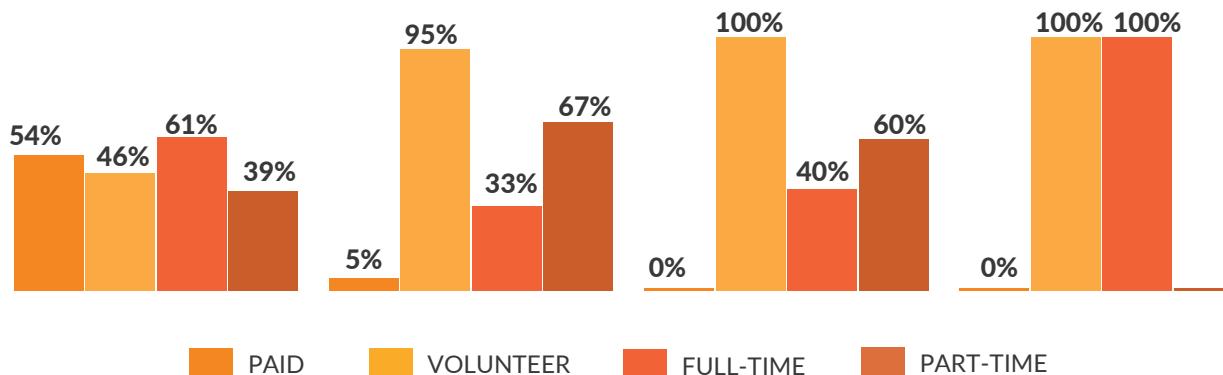
A TOWN  
(SEMI-URBAN)



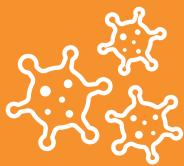
A TOWNSHIP /  
INFORMAL  
SETTLEMENT



A VILLAGE  
(RURAL)



Ministry roles and compensation differed widely by location. Churches in rural villages reported all full-time volunteers. Informal settlements and towns also had mostly unpaid volunteers, but many were only part-time. Ratios were reversed in cities, where around half of churches reported paid positions for children's or youth leaders. On average, churches had 4 youth leaders and 28% of those leaders were under 25 years old.



## COVID-19 IMPACT

COVID-19 had an undeniable impact on ministry, with 93% of churches surveyed saying they were affected in some way by closure, limited access, and lockdowns. Churches had to pivot from physical services to online spaces when doors had to be closed in compliance with government regulations across the country. Many churches had to restrict their numbers and reduce services due to the need to social distance. Some churches noted that they were not properly equipped for live-streaming services.

Opportunities for outreach such as visiting and caring for congregants decreased due to the pandemic. Church leaders also mentioned the negative psychological effects on their members including trauma, loss, fear, and spiritual decline.

The pandemic also had a financial impact on churches with congregants losing their jobs and giving declining. A loss of volunteers was also noted. Children's church and youth services were negatively impacted as attendance decreased and small groups struggled to adapt to meeting online.

“

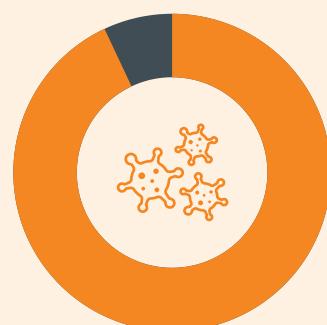
*Our youth [services] were closed down completely. We had no life groups. From two services, we went to only one, and no more connect time. We also lost a lot of volunteers."*

*The inability to meet with the youth in person restricted my ability to form meaningful relationships with them so as to be able to engage with them and their needs better."*

”

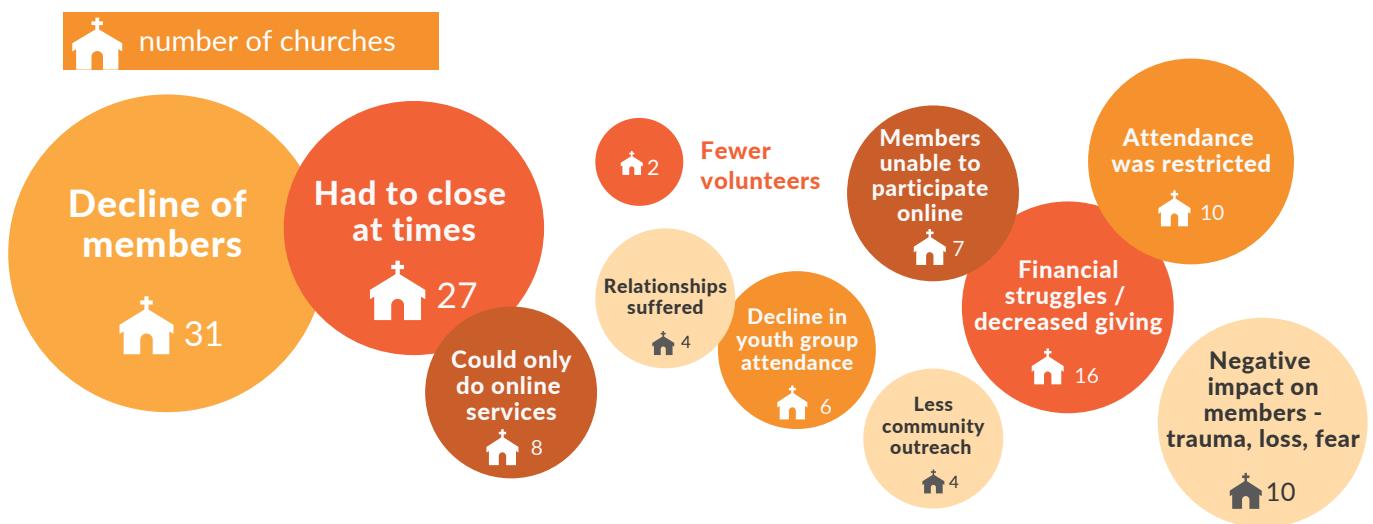
“

*"Post-covid Sunday attendance is only at 50% of what we had. Children's church in terms of connectedness was negatively impacted. Small groups battled to adapt to online meetings.*



**93%** of churches were **impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic** in terms of closure, limited access, or lockdowns.

# COVID'S IMPACT ON CHURCHES



## CHANGE IN PRIORITIES

for churches

### POSITIVE

creating safer environments  
reaching youth digitally  
more personal visits  
hoping to grow youth ministry  
**little to no changes**  
more outreach  
being intentional in teaching  
more discipleship teaching



### NEGATIVE

more fear & anxiety  
no youth/children's activities  
**lower attendance**  
no longer doing much outreach  
less funding



for NGOs's

### POSITIVE

more partnering with other orgs  
smaller groups and more connection  
**have created new projects**  
more in-home visits  
smaller groups for ministry  
**little to no change**



### NEGATIVE

more people in need of help  
higher crime among youth  
**no large gatherings**  
**decreased donations**  
**decreased youth involvement**  
overall much worse  
cancel meetings



## CHURCH PRIORITIES

Nearly half of churches said they feel their church is prioritising children's and youth ministry through the current use of their resources and capacities. More than half of churches also reported a change in prioritisation as a result of COVID-19. The pandemic clarified many needed areas of focus including designing safer ministry environments, tailoring online programs specifically for children's church, making more use of social media, and incorporating children and youth more in Sunday morning services with adults

*I feel my church is prioritising children/youth ministry enough through the use of its resources and capacities.*

47%

*There been a change in my church's prioritisation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

54%

“ Children's ministry has been on the lips of many but not many resources are allocated to this ministry. The church understands the importance of this ministry, however the ministry still needs to raise its own support for most of the projects and intended ministry. ”

One church participant shared that many children have not returned to church after lockdowns and another attributed this to the fear and anxiety of parents. Respondents also highlighted the need to engage children and youth digitally and do more outreach to young people in the community. Some churches were able to prioritize deeper discipleship and digital ministry during the pandemic, while others say they still do not have any activities or programs for their children's ministry to date.



### CHALLENGES

"The **fear and anxiety** by parents causes kids to slack in attendance. Parents are not able to stand firm in bringing kids to church."



### OPPORTUNITIES

"Serving youth in **smaller groups** and equipping them to lead and serve in those groups. Deeper discipleship. Making better use of **digital ministry**."



## — NGO PRIORITIES

The majority of NGOs said that they feel their organisation is prioritising children's and youth ministry through the current use of their resources and capacities. When asked if there has been a change in their organisation's prioritisation as a result of COVID-19, about half of the NGOs said that there has been a difference.

*I feel my organisation is prioritising children/youth ministry enough through the use of its resources and capacities.*

62%

*There been a change in my organisation's prioritisation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

51%

“

*At the start of the first lockdown measures we divided all our adults and youth into smaller groups and ministered to them in smaller groups. However, despite the lack of larger gatherings **we saw more spiritual growth in these smaller groups** than in the larger group gatherings we had before the restrictions. So for youth and most of our adults the restrictions forced us into changes that were for the better.*

”

Representatives from NGOs acknowledged that business could no longer operate as usual. The number of children being ministered to decreased dramatically and resources were more limited. However, many mentioned that the pandemic led to new opportunities such as developing resources to help families as they spent more time at home. Others mentioned partnership opportunities and a more intentional and personal ministry focus.



## OPPORTUNITIES

*"We have had to adjust our afternoon programs due to social distancing and numbers. It has allowed our staff to become **more intentional** getting to know the kids and teens who come."*

*"We have become more focused to **partner with organizations** that could bring needed resources."*

*"There is now more focused interaction on a **personal level**."*



# NEEDS, PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

## WHAT WE DISCOVERED

### GREATEST CURRENT NEEDS IN CHILDREN/YOUTH MINISTRY



Training for volunteers and/or staff



Materials/curriculum with better content



More volunteers



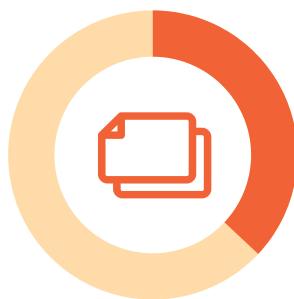
Training for volunteers and/or staff



Materials/curriculum with better content



Using digital programs



**37%** of churches and NGOs **do not use any particular curriculum** in their children/youth ministry



**59%** of churches and **52%** of NGOs said **training to teach/engage with children** was their **top training need** for their children's workers, youth workers, and teachers/volunteers



PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES THAT INCREASED THROUGH THE PANDEMIC



- Peer evangelism,
- Media or technology ministry
- Health or medical programs

- Media or technology ministry
- Literacy programs
- Abuse/trauma programs
- Orphaned children/youth care
- Entrepreneurship
- Bible clubs or Bible study



## NEEDS

### CHURCHES

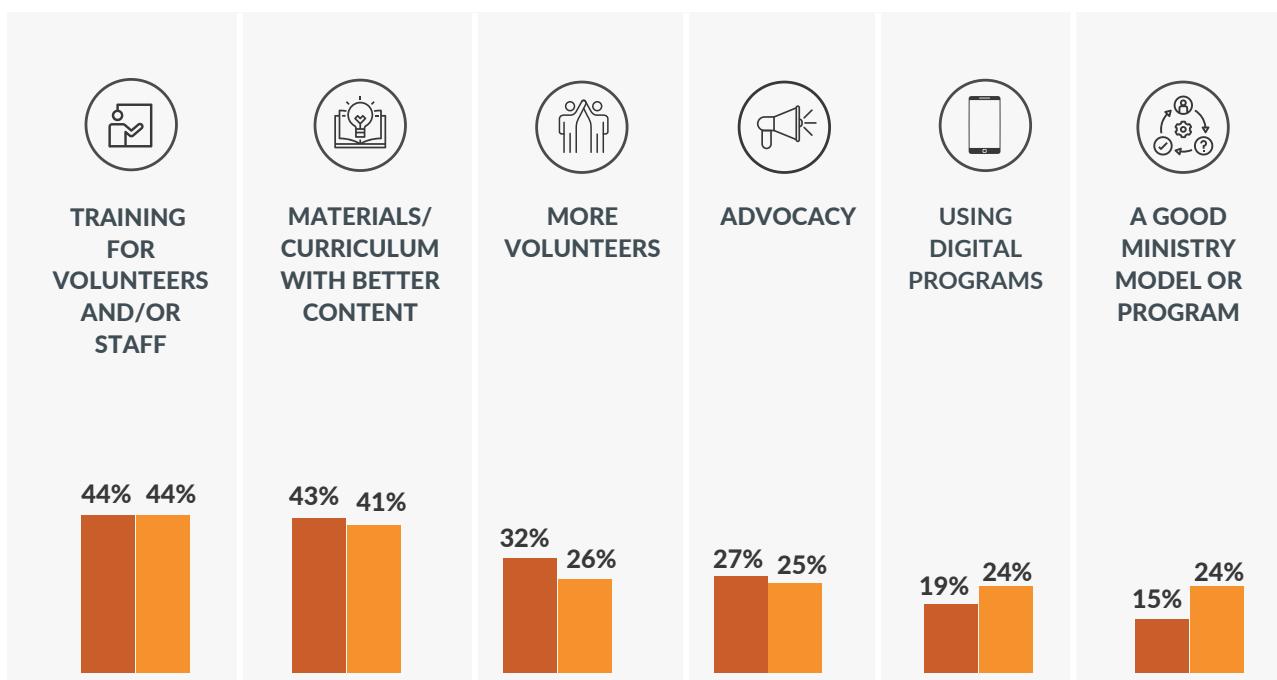


We asked churches about their greatest needs with regards to their children's and youth ministries and asked them to share what those were prior to the pandemic as well as their current needs today. Interestingly, the picture was not that different. Churches said that training for their volunteers and/or staff remains their greatest need followed by a need for materials or curriculum with better content.

There has been an increase in the need for a good ministry model or program as well as using digital platforms to reach and teach children and youth. But the felt need for volunteers decreased and advocacy remained about the same. Other needs mentioned by churches included funding, resources, and equipment.

*Greatest needs in children/youth ministry:*

■ PRIOR TO COVID ■ CURRENT



*Respondents could choose up to two options*

## NGO NEEDS



The picture among NGOs is remarkably similar to that of churches. Organisations reported the same top two needs of training and materials/curriculum. Although the felt need for curriculum has dropped as compared to before the pandemic, it still remains strong.

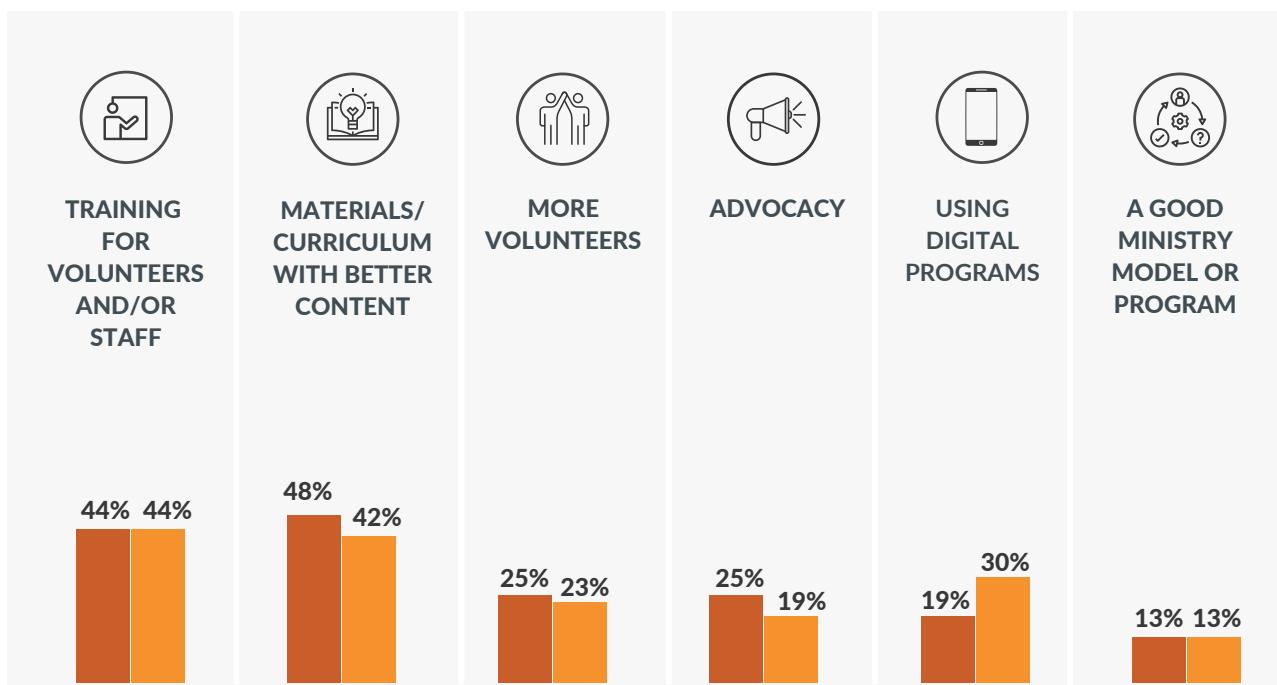
NGOs are reporting a significant increase in the need to use digital programs with children and youth. The need for advocacy dropped, which may be a positive signal that children and youth are being considered ministry priorities.

A slight decrease was observed in the need for volunteers, though not as much as churches experienced. Few NGOs indicated that they most need a good ministry model or program. Other needs mentioned included physical infrastructure and computers,

Greatest needs in children/youth ministry:

PRIOR TO COVID

CURRENT



Respondents could choose up to two options

# TRAINING NEEDS



Given the importance of training as a need for both churches and NGOs, we wanted to find out more specifically what topics ministries feel are current gaps.

Training to teach/engage with children was the number one topic requested. Working with or counselling children and youth who have experienced abuse or trauma was also in the top three for both churches and NGOs. Churches feel the need for training in the area of Bible or theology and evangelism more so than NGOs, but both also requested youth-specific training. Working and partnering with parents was also mentioned as an additional training need.

*What are the top three training needs of your children's workers, youth workers, and teachers/volunteers?*



CHURCHES

- 1 Training to teach/engage with children 59%
- 2 Bible or theology 40%
- 3 Working with or counselling children/youth with abuse/trauma 37%
- 4 Evangelism training 35%
- 5 Training to teach/engage with youth 33%



NGOS

- 1 Training to teach/engage with children 52%
- 2 Working with or counselling children/youth with abuse/trauma 47%
- 3 Training to teach/engage with youth 39%
- 4 Games/Sports/Activities 38%
- 5 Bible or theology 30%

We also asked churches and NGOs if they have conducted additional training of their staff or volunteers as a result of COVID-19. NGOs were twice as likely as churches to have done so. Some of these training topics included leadership and small group training, resilience training, self development, and COVID-19 compliance training.

*We conducted additional training specifically as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic:*



CHURCHES



NGOS





## PROGRAMS/ ACTIVITIES

We wanted to find out what programs and activities ministries are doing with children and youth. The number one program for churches and NGOs are conducting those that reach young people with the gospel. But from there, priorities diverge slightly. Churches are focusing on teaching children and youth to share their faith and preparing young people for leadership roles. NGOS are more focused on addressing the physical needs of children and youth (for example, poverty alleviation, abuse, psychological trauma, food, water, clothing, etc).

Does your church/organisation do any of the following activities?

■ CHURCH ■ NGO



We also wanted to explore the ministry picture prior to the pandemic compared to today. To help us better examine, we divided the long list of ministry programs and activities into the broader categories of: reach, rescue, and root.<sup>1</sup>

### REACH

- Peer evangelism
- Scripture/Literature distribution
- Large evangelistic/outreach events
- Outreach programs in schools
- Camps or retreats
- Literacy programs
- Sports ministry
- Music or drama ministry
- Media or technology ministry

### RESCUE

- Mental health and addiction programs
- Abuse/Trauma programs
- Ministry to youth in jail or prison
- Orphaned children/youth care
- Food or water programs
- Health or medical programs
- Entrepreneurship programs

### ROOT

- Sunday school / Children's church
- Bible clubs or Bible study
- Leadership training/development/mentoring

1. Reach, rescue, root and release are guiding values of the 4/14 Window Movement

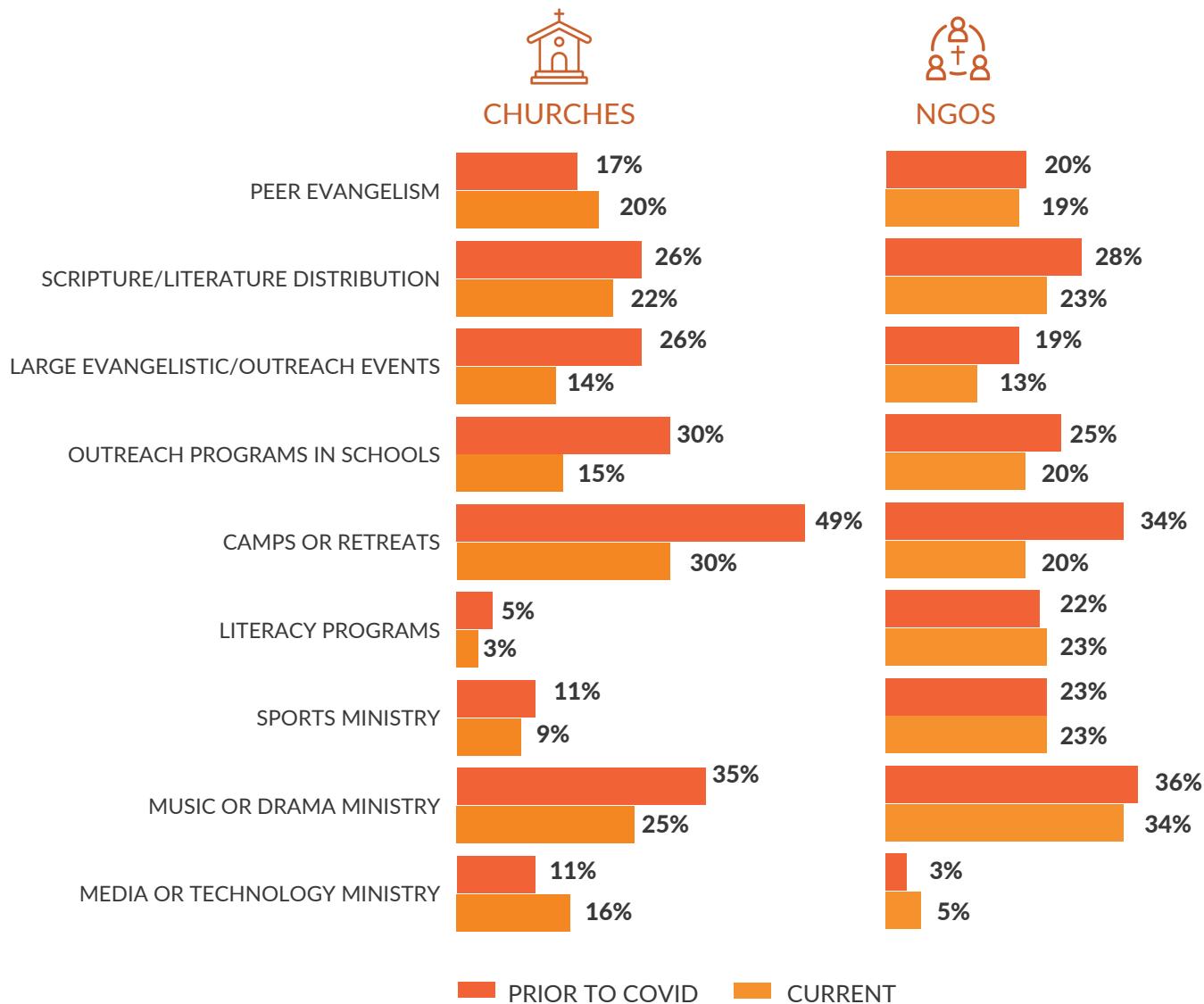
## REACH

The list of programs categorized as reach was the longest, which aligns with the focus churches and NGOs have on this. Ministries shared whether they had conducted any of these activities prior to the pandemic, and which they are doing today.

Ministries reported decreases in most reach programs, with significant drops observed in camps, school outreach programs, and large evangelistic events. This is unsurprising considering the in-person aspect of these types of programs and the impact COVID-19 has had on gathering.

Media or technology ministry increased for both churches and NGOs, but still remains a lesser focus compared to other programs.

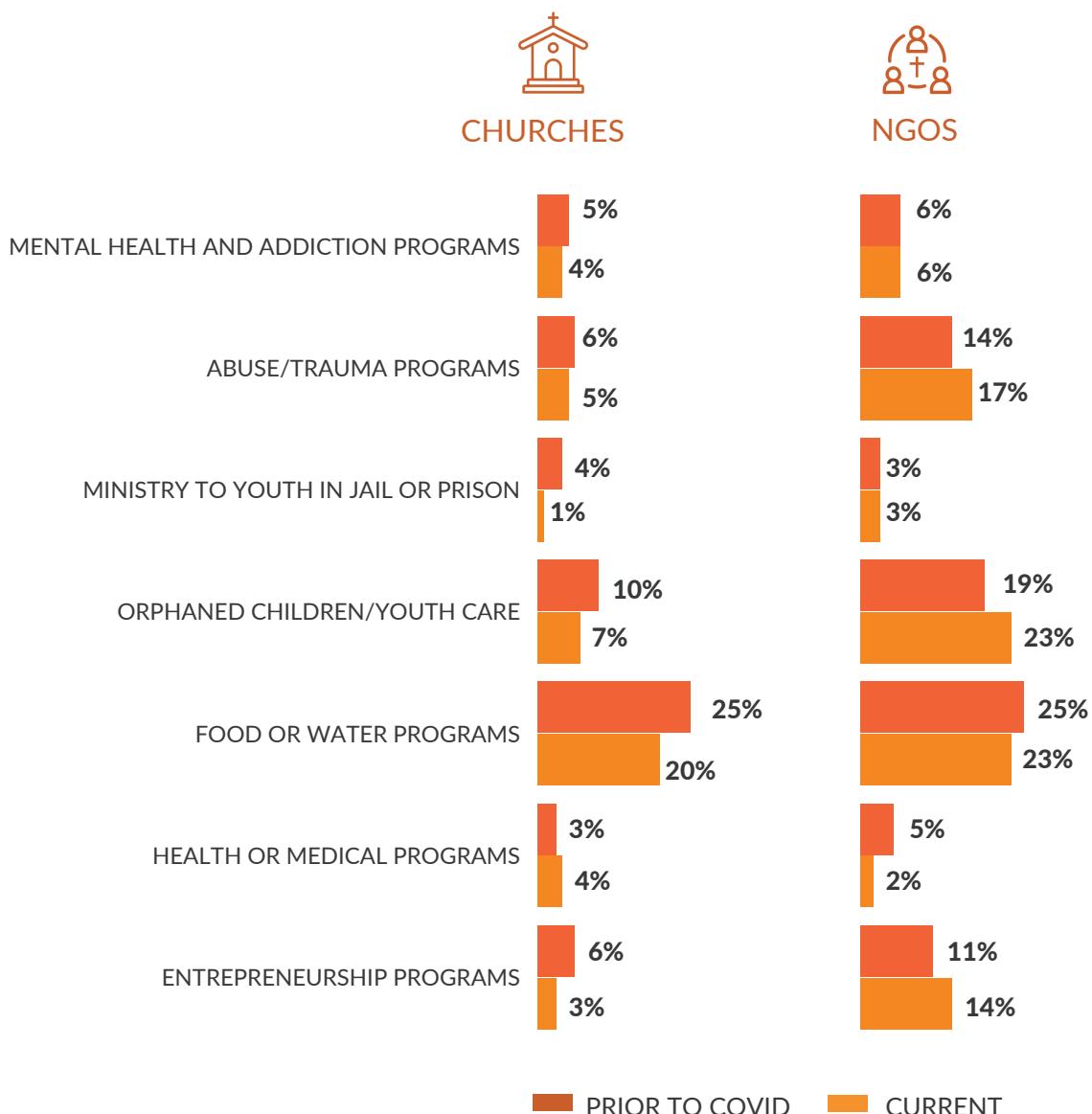
*What ministry programs or activities do you do with children/youth?*



## RESCUE

The majority of programs or activities classified under the rescue category remained the same or decreased slightly since the pandemic began. Nearly all church programs decreased. A few NGO programs increased slightly such as orphan care, abuse/trauma programs, and entrepreneurship programs. This topics seem to point to new ministry opportunities some organisations are responding to as a result of the pandemic.

*What ministry programs or activities do you do with children/youth?*



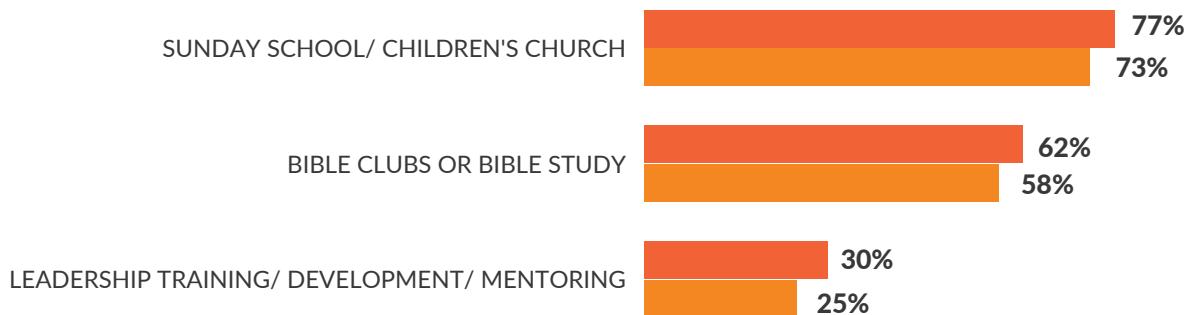
## ROOT

Root refers to ministry activities that deepen children or youth in their faith or grow them within community. Unfortunately, all root programs saw a decrease as compared to before the pandemic, with the slight exception of Bible clubs among NGOs. However, numbers still remain high overall, showing that ministries are prioritizing the spiritual care of children and youth.



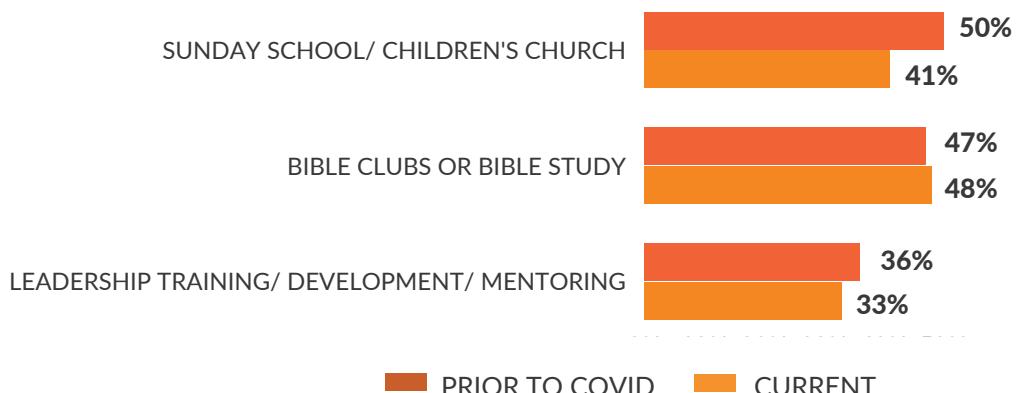
### *What ministry programs or activities do you do with children/youth?*

#### CHURCHES



### *What ministry programs or activities do you do with children/youth?*

#### NGOS



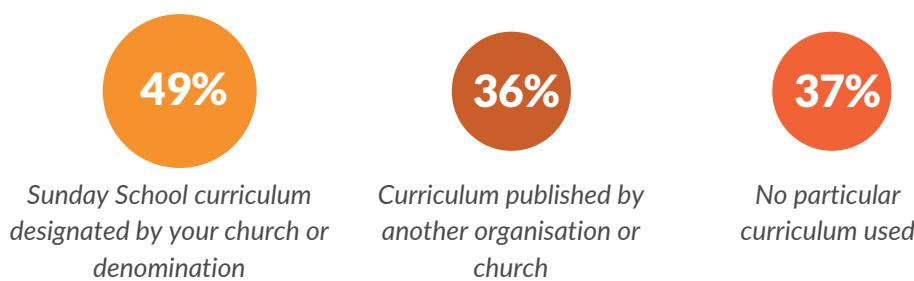
■ PRIOR TO COVID ■ CURRENT

## CURRICULUM



Materials and curriculum were identified as a primary need by many churches and NGOs. So we were curious what is currently being used with children and youth. Half (49%) of churches said that they use a Sunday School curriculum designated by their church or denomination. Fewer use curriculum published by another organisation or church and the same number say they do not use any particular curriculum.

*What curriculum do you use in your children/youth ministry?  
(Select all that apply)*

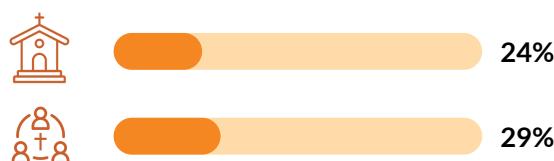


## RESEARCH

Research can lead to discovery and those insights can turn into strategic action. We were curious if ministries are doing their own research to understand the children and youth in their local communities. Relatively few churches or NGOs are conducting research, but a high number said they would be interested in being involved in the future.

The main way that churches said they use the research findings is to better equip or train their leaders. NGOs are more interested in improving the content of their programs or curriculum and being able to better allocate resources or set ministry priorities.

*Do you carry out surveys or research to better understand children/youth in your local area?*



*Would you be interested in being involved in research?*



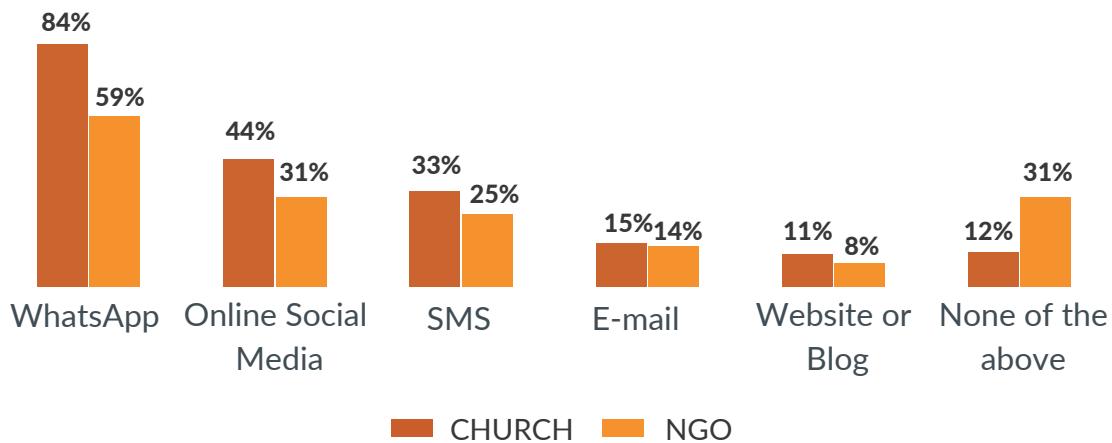
*How do you use survey/research findings? (Select all that apply)*





# DIGITAL WHAT WE DISCOVERED

## DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES REGULARLY USED TO REACH OR COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN/YOUTH



The **most popularly used** social media platforms used by churches and organisations to reach children/youth were **Facebook, YouTube and Instagram**.



The top reasons that currently limit churches and NGOs from using digital platforms more are:  
Data is **expensive** (57%)  
Limited **internet access** (51%)  
Limited **smartphones** (46%)



**28% of churches** and **50% of NGOs** reported **not using any social media** platforms to reach children/youth.



**Two-thirds** of ministries agreed that **at least half of youth have a cell phone**. Fewer youth have smartphones, but ownership was still high overall.

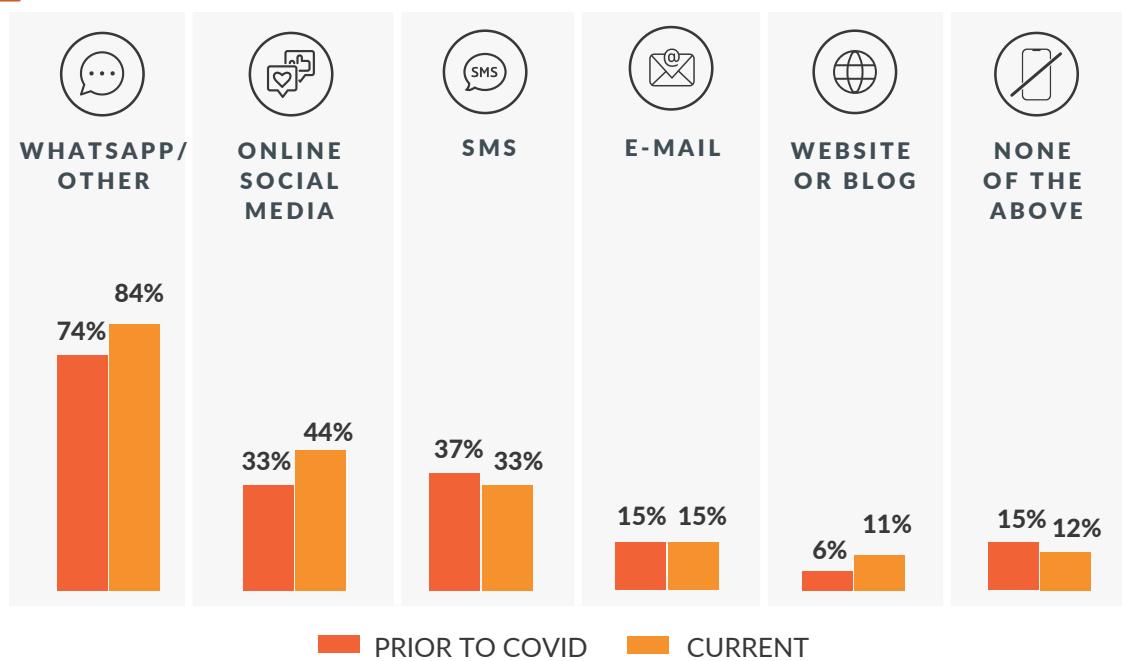


## DIGITAL

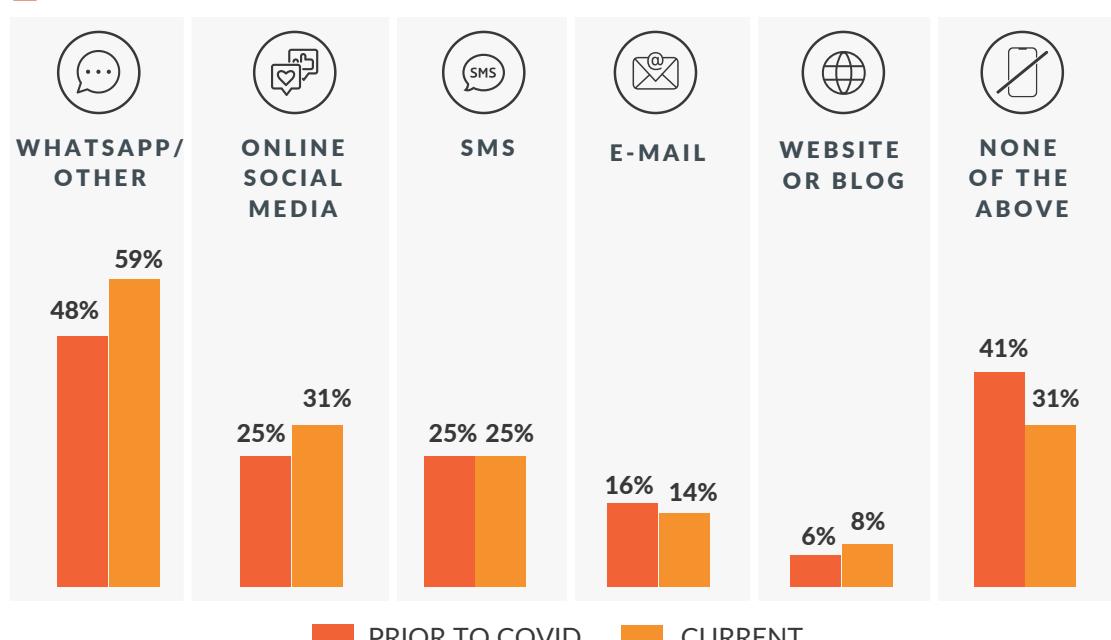
The pandemic pivoted ministries towards using more digital platforms, so we wanted to find out what churches and NGOs are using to reach children and youth. Use of WhatsApp and social media dramatically increased as compared to before the pandemic. Only a few churches say they are not using digital technologies today.

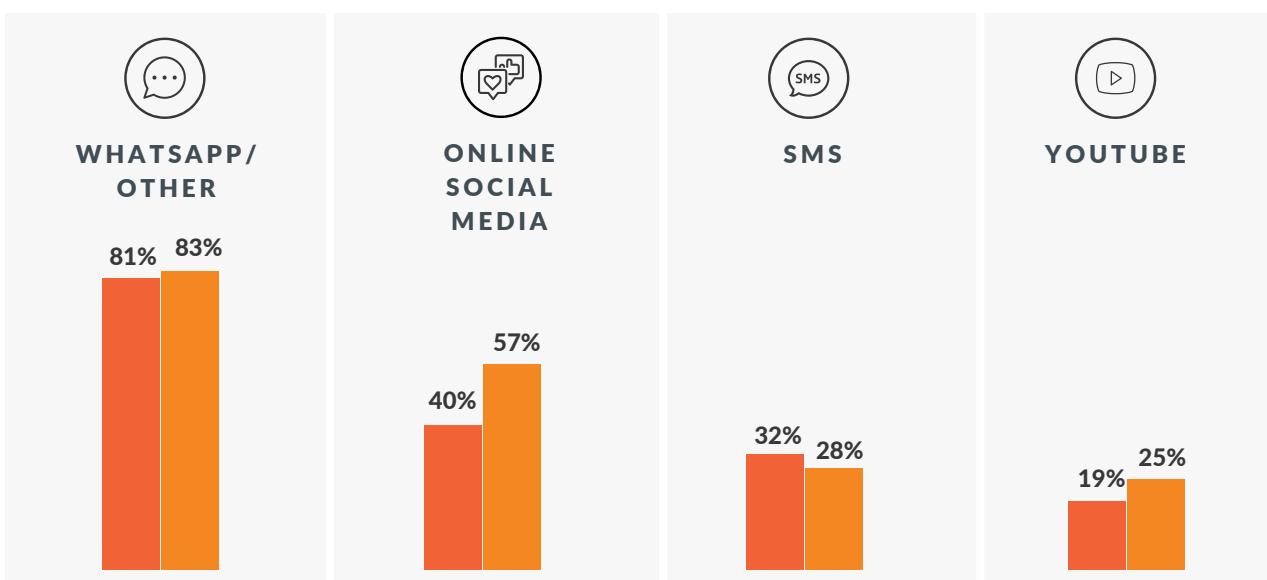
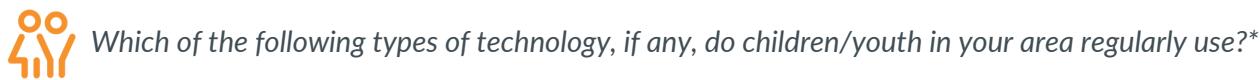


*Digital technologies our church regularly uses to reach or communicate with children/youth:*



*Digital technologies our organisation regularly uses to reach or communicate with children/youth:*





\*Data combines responses from both churches and NGOs

■ PRIOR TO COVID    ■ CURRENT

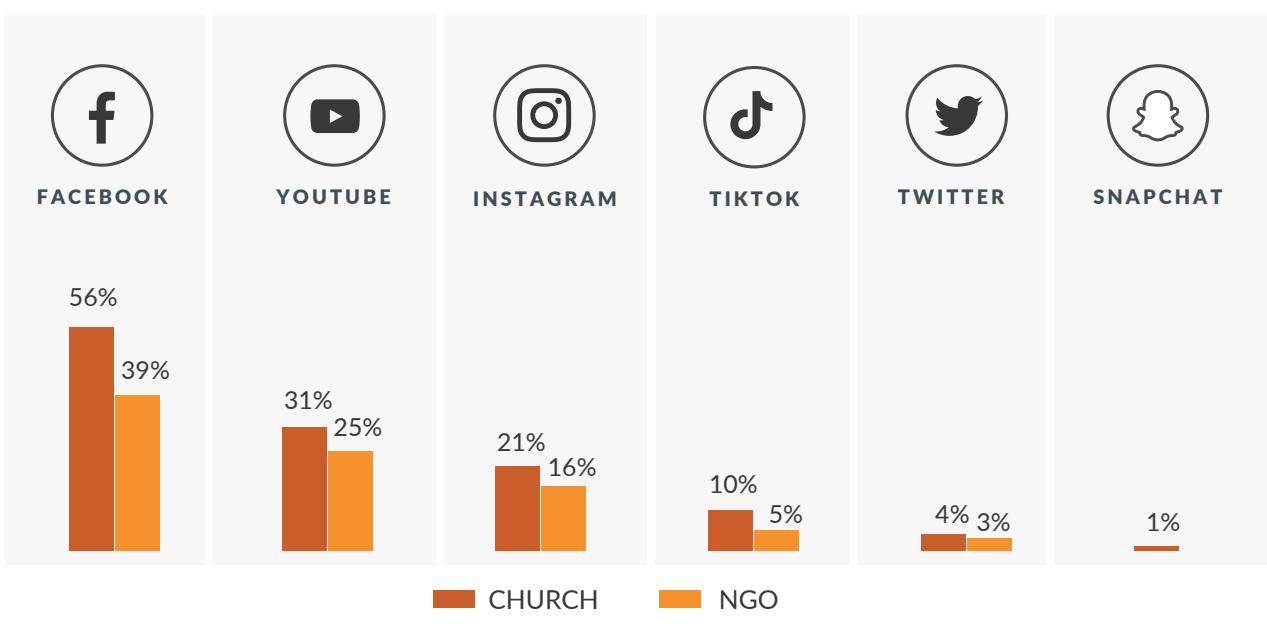
We also wanted to find out what types of technologies children and youth are regularly using. Church and NGO leaders responded to the best of their knowledge about what is popular among young people in their local areas.

## — SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

Given the popularity of social media, we asked ministries which platforms they are using to reach children and youth. Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram were the big three. But half of NGOs reported they do not use any social media to reach children and youth..

28% OF CHURCHES AND 50% OF NGOS REPORTED NOT USING ANY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS TO REACH CHILDREN/YOUTH.

Currently, what social media platforms does your church/organisation use to reach children/youth, if any?



## ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY

Digital methods of reaching children and youth are only as effective as the level of access young people have to these technologies. We asked churches and NGOs to estimate how many youth (ages 13-19) have access to devices such as cell phones and smartphones, as well as whether they have easy Internet access.

Overall, two-thirds of ministries agreed that at least half of youth have a cell phone. Fewer youth have smartphones, but ownership was still high overall.

Eighty percent of ministries said the youth in their area have some Internet access.

There was an observed gap between the social media usage of children and youth and the presence of churches and NGOs on these online platforms. Though many churches and NGOs recognized that young people in their area regularly use online social media, fewer churches and NGOs said that they use these platforms to reach the children and youth.

**57%** of churches and NGOs said that children/youth in their area **regularly use online social media**

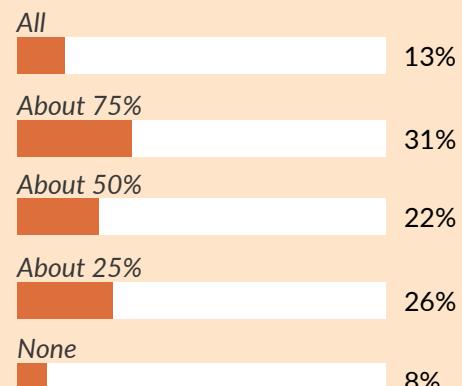


**39%** of churches and NGOs said that they **regularly use online social media** to reach children/youth

How many youth (13-19) in your area have...



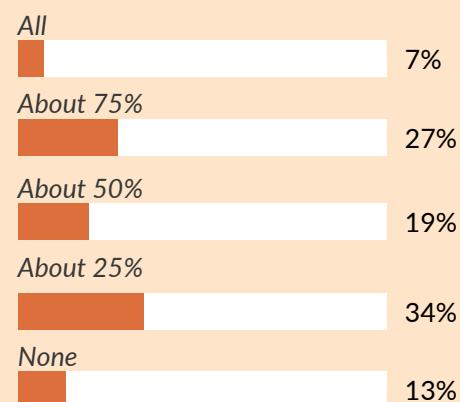
A Cell Phone



How many youth (13-19) in your area have...



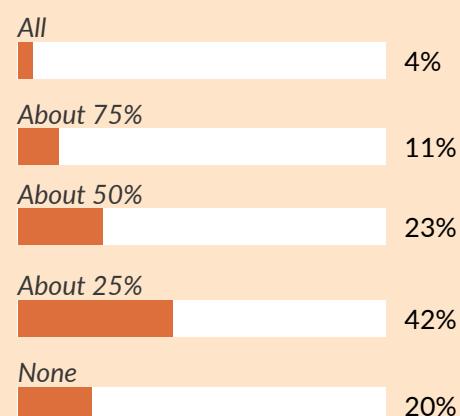
A Smart Phone



How many youth (13-19) in your area have...



Easy Internet Access



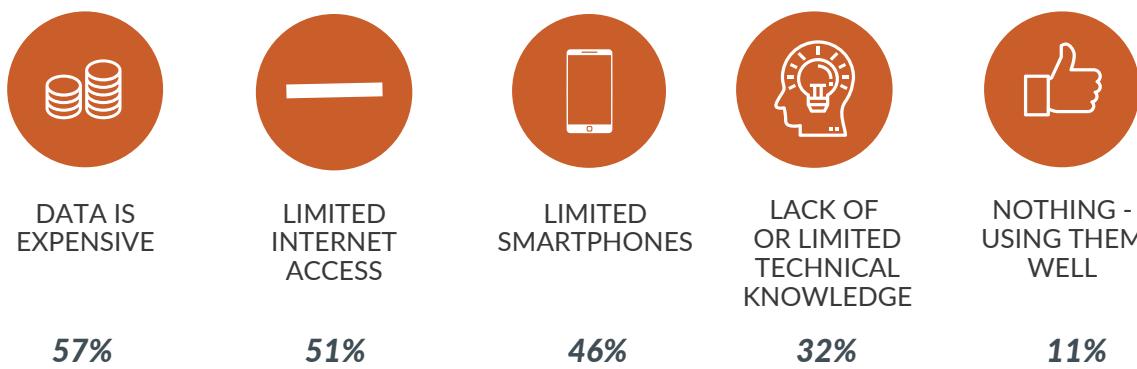
Data combines responses from both churches and NGOs

## LIMITATIONS ON TECHNOLOGY USAGE

The greatest limitation to using digital platforms for both churches and NGOs is the cost of data in South Africa. Limited internet access and limited smartphone ownership were also barriers ministries face to increasing their digital platform usage.

Other challenges mentioned included electricity, time, volunteers, equipment, and keeping children's attention in digital spaces. However, one in ten respondents said they are not facing any limitations and believe they are using digital platforms well in their ministries. The majority of churches and NGOs said that they would be interested in learning more about using digital technology to reach or communicate with children and youth.

*What is currently limiting you from using digital platforms more? \**



### Other limitations:

- "Access to electricity for our children, some live in informal settlements."
- "Communities have limited resources to use such people."
- "Keeping children's attention."
- "Lack of resources of the children to receive digital material."
- "People to oversee it."
- "The church need computers, projectors and better sound equipment."
- "Time and volunteers."
- "Volunteers to help carry the load of producing content."

*Are you interested in learning more about using digital technology to reach or communicate with children/youth?*



\*Data combines responses from both churches and NGOs





# ABUSE

WHAT WE DISCOVERED

## COMMON TYPES OF ABUSE TOWARDS CHILDREN/YOUTH

*Based on the experiences and observations of churches and NGOs*



Emotional /  
Psychological

86%



Verbal

76%



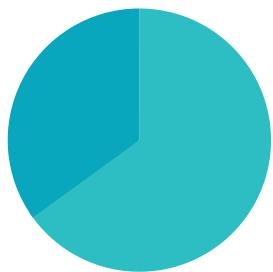
Neglect

69%



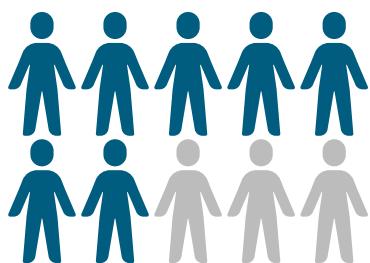
Physical

58%



65%

of churches and NGOs **do not use any resources** adapted for reaching abused children/youth with God's Word.



**7 in 10** churches and NGOs feel like they lack a **clear understanding** of how many children/youth are being abused in their community



**61%** of churches and NGOs saw an **increase in the abuse** of children/youth as a **result of the pandemic**.



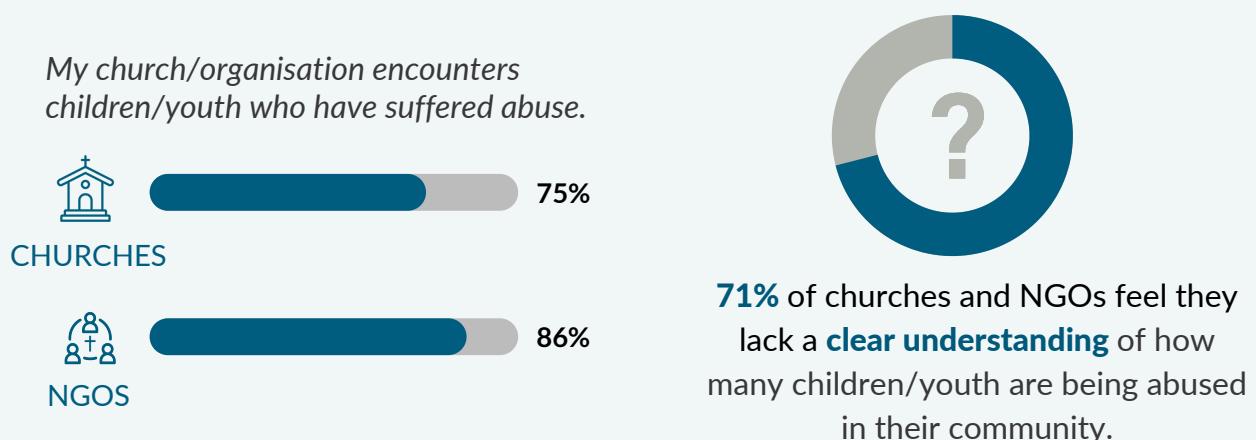
**89%** of churches and NGOs would be **interested in being empowered** to minister God's Word to abused children/youth.



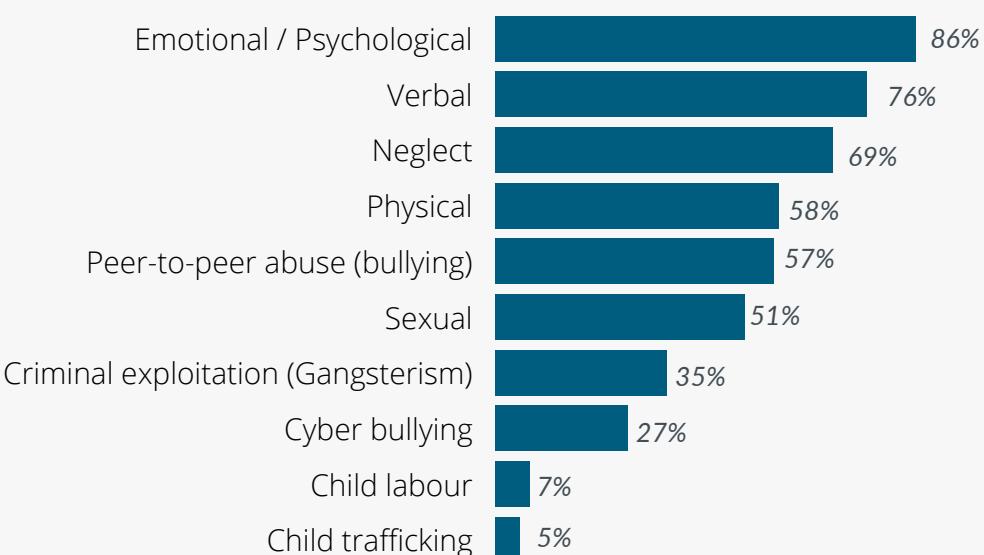
## ABUSE

Children and youth can be some of the most vulnerable in our communities. The pandemic also highlighted the sad and often hidden reality of abuse happening within families. This was a topic we were interested in exploring further to better understand and advocate for the safety of children.

This topic continues to be largely unseen. Seventy-one percent of churches and NGOs surveyed said they lack a clear understanding of how many children and youth are being abused in their community. However, the vast majority of ministries have encountered children and youth who have suffered abuse. The most common types of abuse encountered were emotional/psychological, verbal, and neglect. Sadly, more than half of ministries also said they have encountered physical abuse and peer-to-peer bullying.



*What types of abuse have you encountered among children/youth? \**



\*Data combines responses from both churches and NGOs

## INCREASE IN ABUSE

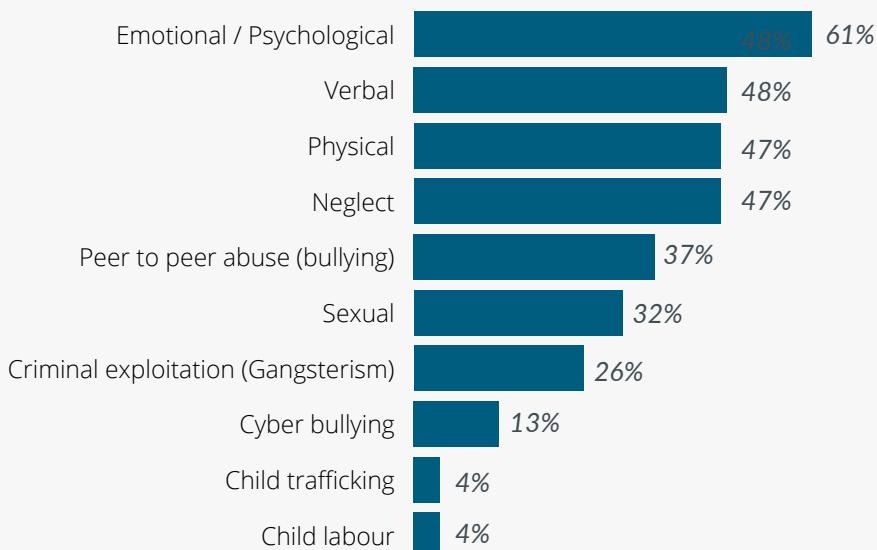
One of the sad realities from the pandemic lockdown was an increase in abuse at home. Ministries confirmed that they have seen an increase in the abuse of children and youth as a result of COVID-19 and its complex effects on families. Most churches and NGOs said emotional/psychological abuse has increased and nearly half of ministries said verbal abuse, physical abuse, and neglect have also risen.



*My church/organisation has seen an increase in the abuse of children/youth as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

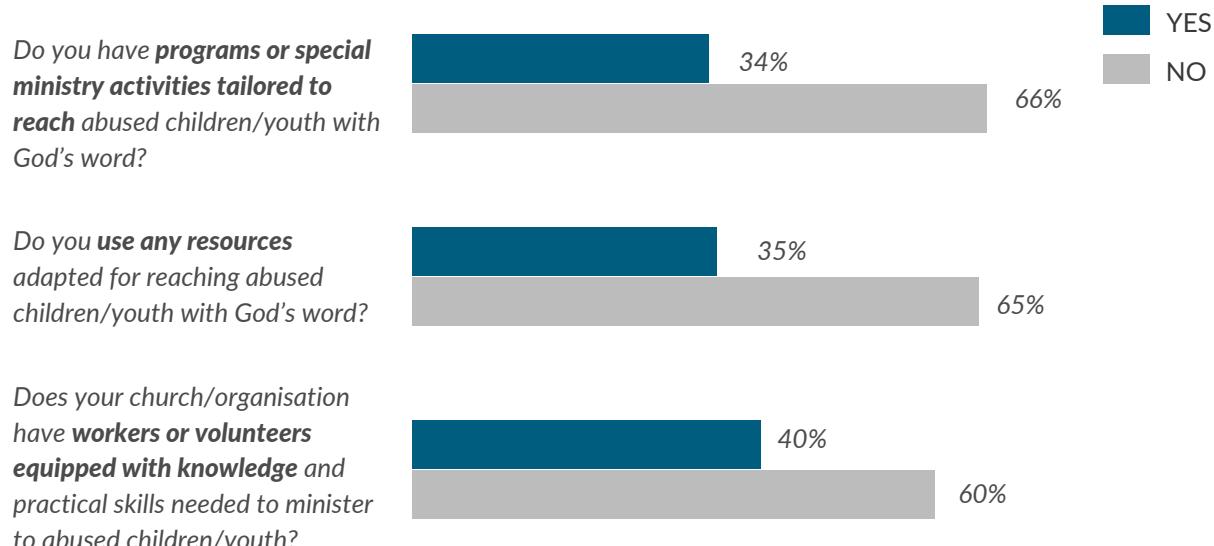


*What types of abuse have increased? Select all that apply*



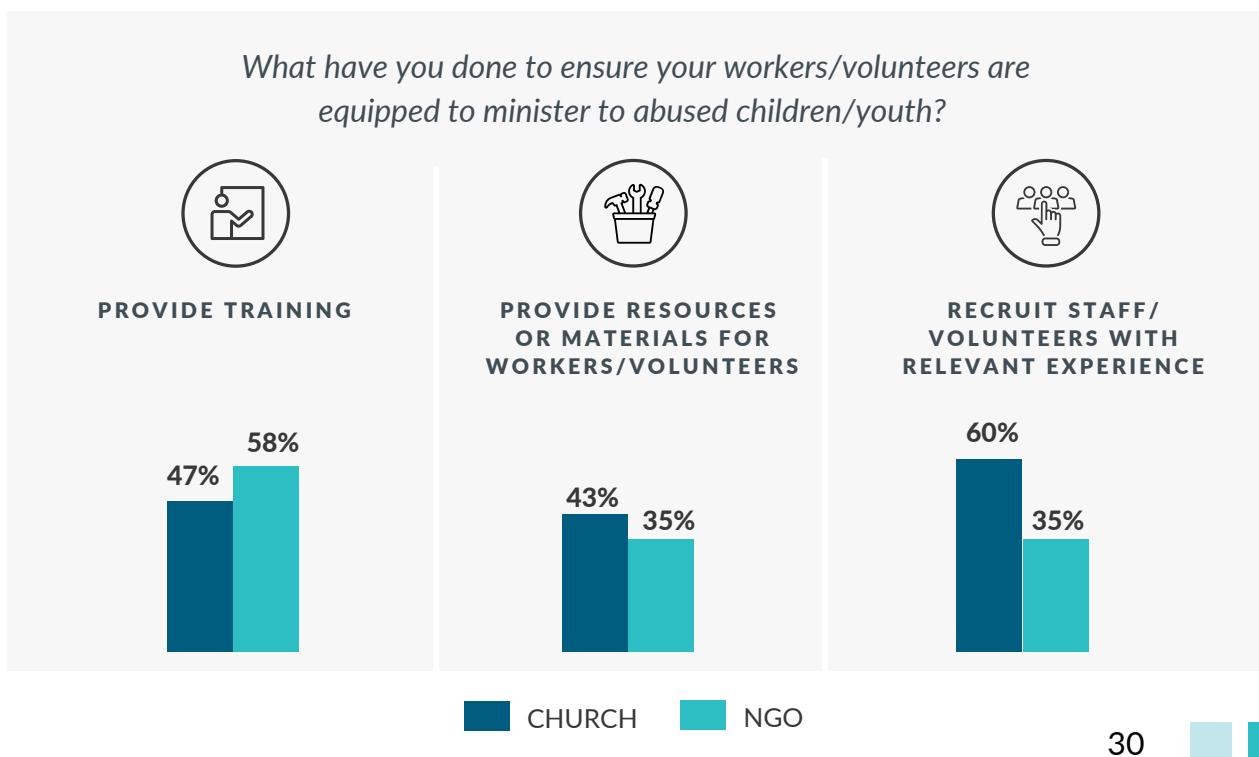
## MINISTERING TO THE ABUSED

We wanted to find out how ministries are responding to the realities of abuse and what resourcing they may need. The research showed many opportunities. The majority of churches and NGOs do not have any programs or special ministry activities tailored to reach abused children and youth with God's Word nor do they use any resources adapted for this. Most churches and NGOs surveyed also did not have workers or volunteers equipped with knowledge and practical skills needed for this type of ministry.



*Data combines responses from both churches and NGOs*

However, ministries have taken steps in this area that show they care. Both churches and NGOs said that they have provided training, resources, or material for their workers and volunteers on the topic of ministering to the abused. NGOs focused primarily on providing training, while most churches said they intentionally recruit staff and volunteers with relevant experience in this ministry area.

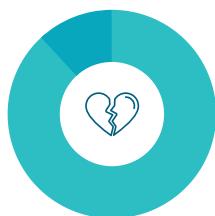
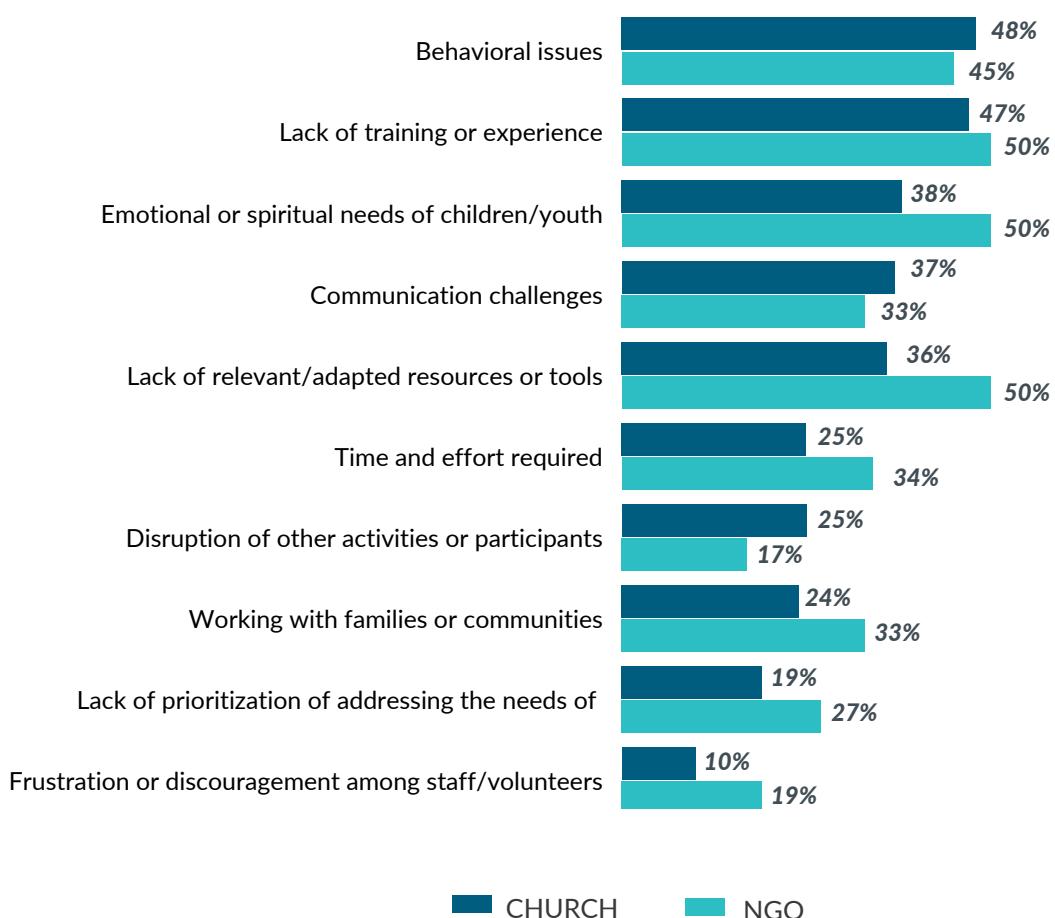


## CHALLENGES FOR MINISTERING TO THE ABUSED

Churches and NGOs shared a wide variety of challenges they have encountered when seeking to minister to abused children and youth. Topping the list was lack of training or experience, children's behavioral issues, their emotional or spiritual needs, and a lack of relevant resources or tools.

Communication with abused children and youth can be a challenge, as well as working with their families or communities. Time and effort is required, and ministry can be disrupting to other activities or participants and lead to frustration or discouragement among staff and volunteers. But overall, ministries agreed this is an important area and they would be interested in being empowered to minister God's Word to abused children and youth.

*What challenges have you encountered while ministering to abused children/youth?*



**89%** of churches and NGOs would be interested in being empowered to minister God's Word to abused children/youth.



OneHopeSA



infosar@onehope.net



OneHopeSA