

IFES STUDENT SURVEY REPORT

2020



“ Our vision is to see students built into communities of disciples, transformed by the gospel, impacting the university, the church, and society for the glory of Christ.”

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	02
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	03
IFES AS STUDENT-LED MINISTRY	05
STUDENTS' FAITH EXPERIENCE	06
BIG QUESTIONS IN STUDENTS' CONTEXT	08
SUPPORT AND INFLUENCE IN STUDENTS' SPIRITUAL GROWTH	11
NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN LIGHT OF COVID-19	15
DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY	17
METHODOLOGY	17
APPENDICES	18



INTRODUCTION

The IFES Strategy Working Group looked at the findings from the Barna report “The Connected Generation”¹ which focusses on the experiences of 18-35 year olds around the world, particularly their perceptions and experiences with faith. Some key questions that surfaced for IFES were, “How do we nurture a generation of resilient disciples in this age of digital Babylon?”² and “Are IFES students resilient disciples?”.

We wanted to understand the faith experience of IFES students, how student groups and national movement shape them, as well as opportunities to further support the next generation of students.

This report presents the findings from 948 students and graduates who have taken this IFES online survey from 5 June to 14 July 2020. The respondents were asked to refer to their time as students when answering the survey.

¹ <https://theconnectedgeneration.com/key-findings/>

² Digital Babylon: From Barna report, Christians are exiles in this virtual space where the pagan values of Babylon – power, pleasure, prestige – are disciplined right into our hearts, minds, and souls through the screens

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Students are empowered to take initiative.

Student-led ministry is the very nature of how IFES works globally. From the survey, we can see that majority of the respondents (93%) said that students in their groups are somewhat or fully empowered to take initiative. They lead Bible studies, share the gospel, make decisions, plan and organise events and reach out to their community. Staff workers, graduates and the church community come alongside them to encourage, guide and provide training.



Students have a strong personal commitment to their Christian faith, yet it remains a challenge to live it out with the same conviction.

The majority of respondents attend church weekly (89%), are committed to Jesus personally (77%), trust firmly in the supreme authority of the Bible (73%), and desire their Christian faith to impact their thoughts, words, and actions (80%). We can see that more than two in five respondents (42%) show the marks of resilient disciples according to definitions by Barna group³.

In comparison, only half the respondents find opportunities to share the gospel

with others (51%), engage Christians outside regular meetings (50%), and are equipped to deal with issues or circumstances in life from a biblical perspective (50%). 36% engage and serve their non-Christian community, and 20% find ways to engage with injustice on campus. Perhaps the question we can ask is, how does the biblical conviction lead to gospel proclamation and demonstration in the lives of the students?



Suffering and hypocrisy are questions frequently brought up in students' context, and students hope to be better equipped to respond biblically on human sexuality among other questions.

The top two questions that are most frequently brought up in students' context relate to suffering (52%) and Christians being perceived as hypocrites (51%). The findings from the Barna report also show that hypocrisy of religious people, suffering, wars, and science are key sources of doubt for many young people in spirituality.

Although the majority of respondents (91%) are moderately to highly confident in

engaging others on these frequently brought up questions, they hope to be further equipped to respond biblically on questions related to human sexuality, the authority and reliability of the Bible, and suffering, among many other questions on theology, Christian living, and worldviews/culture such as other religions and social justice.

³ <https://theconnectedgeneration.com/key-findings/>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Bible reading and time with God came first when students struggle with difficult topics / issues, while church, family, and student groups / national movements play crucial role in shaping their spiritual growth.

More than six out of 10 respondents (67%) see their primary support when they struggle with difficult topics coming from their Bible reading and their time with God. This is followed by family or friends (36%), online Christian resources (35%), and someone they trust in student group (34%) and church (32%).

The top three groups that have had the greatest influence in the spiritual growth of the respondents are church, family, and student groups / national movements. 105 respondents mentioned staff workers.



Student groups and national movements have strengthened students' faith through Scripture engagement, leadership formación and supportive community.

Students are equipped through Bible studies and leadership training where they develop a greater understanding of God's Word, learn to look to God in every situation, and are challenged to live Christ-centered lives on campus and beyond.

They hope the student groups can better equip them to follow Jesus faithfully through addressing current topics biblically, building genuine relationships and supporting holistic engagement in the university and society.



COVID-19 brought about new opportunities to reach out to more people, but there is a pressing need for resilience through this challenging time.

Seven out of ten respondents (69%) agreed that new opportunities have emerged for their student groups from the pandemic. Many found creative ways to reach out to those around them, sharing the gospel and distributing food to students in need. 26% mentioned there are no new opportunities, with some finding it hard to adjust and their groups have seen participation drop. It is therefore a pressing need to rethink how we can journey alongside students toward resilient discipleship through this challenging time.

The summary infographics are available at the Appendix.

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:23-25)

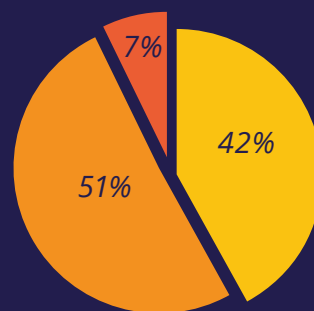


IFES AS STUDENT-LED MINISTRY

Overall, most of the students (93%) believe that students in their group are empowered to take initiative, with more than two in five (42%) said that they are fully empowered.

For those who don't feel the students in their group are empowered (7%), they mentioned reasons such as students are busy with their study, a sense of passiveness, lack of capacity or coaching.

How empowered are students in your group to take initiative?



- We are fully empowered (401)
- We are somewhat empowered (480)
- I don't feel we are empowered (67)

Total No. of Respondents: **948**

“As students, we often arrange and make our own programs during specific student conferences, with little help from our coordinators and leaders.”

STUDENT FROM EPSA

“The group leaders encourage people to try things and there is place for making mistakes and learning from them.”

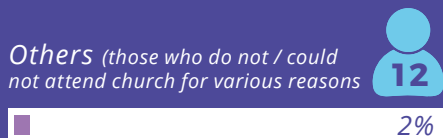
POSTGRADUATE FROM EUROPE

“We're given training by staff to understand a passage, but student leaders take the initiative to write and lead the Bible study. Students are also encouraged to think of creative ideas for evangelising to their friends and some groups hold small scale evangelistic events.”

GRADUATE FROM SOUTH PACIFIC

STUDENTS' FAITH EXPERIENCE

How would you describe your church attendance?



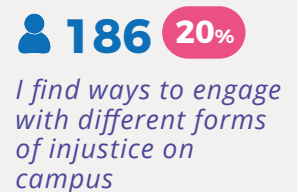
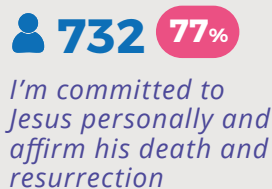
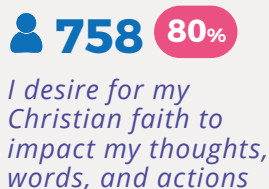
Total No. of Respondents: **948**

About nine in 10 respondents attend church weekly, and there is a strong personal commitment toward their Christian faith. Eighty percent desire it to impact their thoughts, words, and actions, and more than seven out of 10 respondents are committed to Jesus, affirming his death and resurrection, and trusting firmly in the supreme authority of the Bible.

When it comes to the working out of their faith to serve the Christian communities and non-Christian communities, one in two respondents engages other Christians outside regular meetings and finds opportunities to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Thirty-six percent of respondents engage and serve the non-Christian community, with two out of 10 respondents engaging with injustice on campuses. One in two respondents is equipped to deal with issues in life from a biblical perspective.

Which statements below best describe you?

Please select all that apply. **Total Respondents**



STUDENTS' FAITH EXPERIENCE



REFLECTION:

University life presents the unique opportunity for students to engage with their peers, to have meaningful dialogue around key issues, and to be salt and light for the glory of Christ. It is a place where they not only grow in their Christian faith and learn to think biblically in all aspects of their studies and lives, but also become strong witnesses to Christ through the faithful proclamation of the gospel message and the genuine love and service to others.

As we reflect on the findings, is there a tendency for some students to remain safe and warm within their Christian groups and hardly move outside of their comfort zone? How does the strong personal commitment to their faith work out in their practical day-to-day living and service to others? How do students follow Christ and live on mission through both gospel proclamation and demonstration?



RESILIENT DISCIPLES

In a 2019 survey⁴ conducted by the Barna Group on the Connected Generation, one out of seven Christians between age 18 and 35 years old (13% of 9,766 respondents) has the marks of a resilient disciple. The Barna survey defines resilient disciples as Christians who (1) attend a local church at least once a month and engage with their faith community above and beyond worship services, (2) trust firmly in the authority of the Bible, (3) are committed to Jesus personally and affirm his death and resurrection and (4) express a desire for their faith to impact their words and actions.

We have incorporated Barna's criteria in our survey and the results show that more than two in five respondents (42%) have the marks of a resilient disciple.

⁴ <https://theconnectedgeneration.com/key-findings/>

BIG QUESTIONS IN STUDENTS' CONTEXT

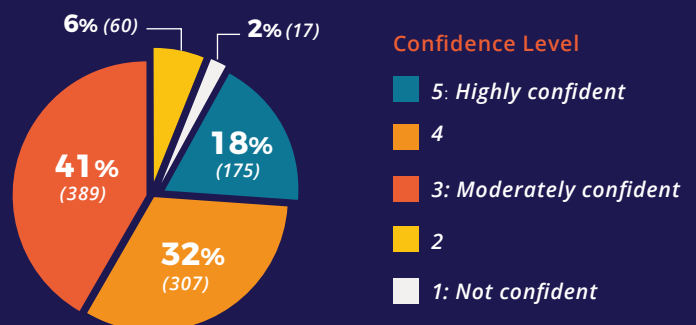
The top two questions that are most frequently brought up in student's context are related to suffering (52%) and Christians perceived as hypocrites (51%). Findings from the Barna report also show that hypocrisy of religious people, suffering, wars, and science are key sources of doubt for many young people in spirituality.

What questions below are most frequently brought up in your context? You can choose up to five.



CONFIDENCE IN ENGAGING OTHERS FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

About nine in 10 respondents (91%) are moderately to highly confident in engaging others on the questions frequently brought up in their context from a biblical perspective.





“**Knowing that God exists and that everything He says is true (Job 42:2). The Bible is the main source of authority in issues related to right living and social justice (2 Tm 3:16,17).”**

GRADUATE FROM EPSA

“**Encountering Jesus, reading the Bible, learning from mature Christians, listening and reading relevant literature/speakers.”**

POSTGRADUATE FROM EUROPE

“**The Bible is inerrant and consistent.”**

STUDENT FROM EPSA

WHAT HAS HELPED YOU FEEL CONFIDENT IN ANSWERING FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE?

Many responded that their confidence came from studying the Bible and believing in the inerrancy of the Word of God. Many of these studies happened in their personal time as well as in Bible study groups. They also spent time listening to sermons from different preachers and apologists, as well as researching on these topics.

Many also mentioned the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering them. Christian friends, mentors and the community also played an important part in shaping their minds and helping them gain confidence when wrestling and answering these questions. Another important aspect mentioned is belonging to a church with sound doctrine that forms the right theology and understanding of these issues through a biblical perspective.

“**To belong to a church of sound doctrine and the resources God provides to study his Word.”**

STUDENT FROM LATIN AMERICA

“**Being taught these things in my family and church, as well as thinking and finding answers in my own personal time.”**

STUDENT FROM EAST ASIA

“**To know how the Bible is one story about God's mission of redeeming his people and how God chose to reveal his mission in the Bible - this gives [me] confidence because the Bible says the truth.”**

STUDENT FROM FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

“**Belonging to Christ and being led by the Holy Ghost. [Also] my knowledge of the Scriptures.”**

POSTGRADUATE FROM MENA

“A Christ-centered rigorous study of the Scriptures and being equipped to apply it to any given situation; training in apologetics.”

STUDENT FROM SOUTH ASIA



WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU MORE CONFIDENT IN ANSWERING FROM A

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE?

Most response from students includes personal convictions and life experiences to help them gain confidence in responding to the above topics/ issues biblically. In addition to that, students seek to be more equipped in God’s Word, increasing knowledge and understanding of the issues through seminars and training. They seek to study God’s Word and to be theologically equipped to better respond to life issues.

“Having more discussions about such topics with others, and perhaps becoming more educated about such issues myself and spending the time to ponder over these questions. It would also help to know where the other person is coming from when they ask these questions.”

STUDENT FROM EAST ASIA

“I guess talking with my Christian co-students or listening to someone who has been in high school and how they dealt with it. Also reading my Bible more and learning along the way. Sometimes I feel like I am just lost for words when I am asked any of these questions.”

STUDENT FROM EUROPE

BIG QUESTIONS

FOR WHICH STUDENTS HOPE TO BE BETTER EQUIPPED BIBLICALLY

The top five questions/topics which respondents hope to be better equipped to respond biblically are related to **human sexuality, authority and reliability of the Bible, suffering, existence of God, and other religions/worldviews.** A further breakdown of questions according to each category can be found under the section of Appendix.

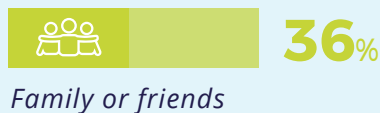
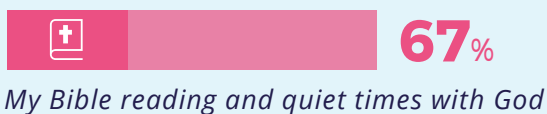
SUPPORT AND INFLUENCE IN STUDENTS' SPIRITUAL GROWTH

This section provided some insights to the source of support for students when faced with challenges and issues related to faith, as well as those who have had the greatest influence in their spiritual growth.

Two in three respondents (67%) indicated their dependency on God through Bible reading and spending quiet times with God when they struggle with topics/issues related to their faith. Some turn to family members and friends (36%), online Christian resources (35%), someone they trust in their student group (34%) and in church (32%).



When I struggle with difficult topics or issues related to my faith, my support mainly comes from... (You can choose up to three)



THE GREATEST INFLUENCE IN MY SPIRITUAL GROWTH COMES FROM...

“ My parents, because they're Christians and presented the gospel to me since I was born, and my local ABUB group, which made me really feel part of Christ's body in a very difficult moment of my life adapting to university in a new city.”

STUDENT FROM LATIN AMERICA

The top three groups that have had the greatest influence in the spiritual growth of the respondents are



Church



Family



Student groups / national movements

Who has had the greatest influence in your spiritual growth? (Include up to three people or groups)

Church



539

- 252 respondents mentioned pastors
- 177 respondents mentioned church gatherings, community, friends, and small groups
- 110 respondents mentioned church leaders, youth group/youth leaders, Sunday School teachers

Family



533

- 339 respondents mentioned parents
- 112 respondents mentioned family, siblings
- 62 respondents mentioned grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins
- 20 respondents mentioned loved ones / spouse

Student Groups / National Movements / IFES



470

- This includes Bible study groups, student leaders, community of student groups and IFES national movements
- 105 respondents mentioned staff workers

Others



411

This includes time with God, Bible, mentors, recognised Christian figures, Christian leaders/teachers, spiritual parents, online resources, other Christian organisations, books

Friends



311

This includes school/university friends

Apart from the key roles of parents and pastors in the spiritual growth of the students, they are also being built up by the church community and leaders, family members and relatives, student group community, as well as staff workers (some mentioned general secretary and movement/IFES leaders).



“*Encouraging personal relationships and time spent with God. Leading by example of solid Christian living.*”

STUDENT FROM EUROPE

“*Reminding us that Christ died on the cross so that we may have eternal life.*”

STUDENT FROM MENA

IN WHAT WAYS DOES YOUR STUDENT GROUP OR NATIONAL MOVEMENT SUPPORT YOU TOWARDS YOUR MATURITY IN CHRIST?

This open-ended question garnered a lot of different responses from the students. Amongst some of the most common responses were being equipped through Bible studies, training, camps and conferences. Student groups have also provided a community of believers where they can receive encouragement, space to learn, to lead and to take responsibilities. Many have shared that their student groups and movements journeyed with them as they went through challenges and personal issues. The journey with their student groups has strengthened their faith and increased their confidence in sharing the gospel.

“*Through encouraging me to take Bible studies, where during the process I learn a lot and rely more on God; through helping me out in difficult situations and helping me to look up to God; through teaching they help me a lot in understanding Scripture better.*”

STUDENT FROM SOUTH ASIA

“*Helps me in understanding and knowing the importance of serving; helps me to remain equipped with the Word of God and prayer.*”

STUDENT FROM EPSA

“*Regular Bible studies which help me to apply doctrine to living on campus, conversations with seniors who challenge me to live more Christ-like, and leadership opportunities in planning events & initiatives.*”

STUDENT FROM EAST ASIA

HOW COULD YOUR STUDENT GROUP BETTER EQUIP YOU TO FOLLOW JESUS FAITHFULLY?

Apart from Bible studies, trainings, and camps, students have raised the need to be equipped in evangelistic skills and to have the opportunity to serve the community (such as orphanages and missions) and to undergo internships in national movements. Students also suggested providing more space to discuss and debate about theological issues that impact life, as well as support in the areas of personal needs and spiritual journeys.

Also important to them is developing a closer community where they can have genuine and vulnerable conversations and are cared for and supported. Many students have also raised the aspect of accountability in their walk with God to one another and to the church.



“By answering and positioning themselves to the issues that make international news. Also answering common questions for young people such as celibacy, marriage, divorce.”

STUDENT FROM NORTH AMERICA

“Being authentic about personal struggles.”

STUDENT FROM SOUTH ASIA

“To engage with the world and the university coherently and effectively, showing who Christ is.”

STUDENT FROM LATIN AMERICA

“More teaching on the Word of God and addressing current topics related to the Christian faith.”

POSTGRADUATE FROM FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

“More practical examples in their lives, which I can apply to mine.”

STUDENT FROM EURASIA

“Continue the interactive sessions and encourage mentorship with older students.”

STUDENT FROM CARIBBEAN

“Persevere in the study of the Word and encourage one another to follow Jesus every day.”

STUDENT FROM EUROPE

NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

Seven out of ten respondents (69%) agreed that the pandemic has created new opportunities for their student groups. Many mentioned the increase of attendance in online meetings, especially for non-regular members and non-believers due to the convenience and non-threatening manner of such meetings.

Students found ways to reach out to those around them, bearing witness to Christ in the midst of a hopeless situation. Students from Latin America managed to distribute food packages to students in need. Students in some regions found that relationships had deepened because they made more effort to connect with one another in times of physical isolation.

“Throughout these difficult times we are living, we have been encouraging people who are bombarded with fear and giving hope to non-believers. We are going to start new groups after lockdown.”

STUDENT FROM EPSA

“An enlarged scope of people tuning in and deeper personal connections as people need to find meaningful ways to stay connected for the sake of good mental health.”

STUDENT FROM NORTH AMERICA

“We have started an initiative called 'Sprinkle Hope' for encouraging people during this period of lockdown. As individuals, we also have more opportunities for sharing the gospel with our friends which we should make use of as God guides us.”

STUDENT FROM SOUTH ASIA

“Meeting on Zoom has made meeting up more convenient. We cut down on travel time and can spend more time together.”

STUDENT FROM EAST ASIA

“We have started online sharing of the gospel.”

STUDENT FROM EURASIA



“ I was talking to someone yesterday who said that she preferred to meet like this, because the speaking time was better distributed virtually than in real life. In real meetings, shy/reserved people don't speak as much, whereas on Zoom, the floor is really organised so that everyone can express themselves.”

STUDENT FROM EUROPE

“ We have connected virtually every week at the national level, and we are given opportunity to discuss issues of national interest and invite non-Christians to participate.”

GRADUATE FROM LATIN AMERICA

“ We are distributing staple food packages for the students in need.”

STUDENT FROM LATIN AMERICA

However, around 26% did not think there is any new opportunity, with some finding it hard to adjust and reporting a drop in participation. Five percent didn't indicate any response (a few of them have graduated). One student said, "I didn't like the online opportunities. I want to get together with my friends as soon as possible. This long distancing is making me sick.". Another mentioned that "We have certainly been able to do online meetings [that are] accessible to all but

there are no new people who have come. On the contrary [there are] fewer people".

Even with the new opportunities present in the online sphere, we know that building relationships and strengthening discipleship do become harder when students are unable to meet face-to-face for a long period of time. It is therefore a pressing need to rethink how we can journey with students toward resilient discipleship through this challenging time.

“ We have older members attending our sessions. Their input made the sessions more spiritually rich.”

GRADUATE FROM CARIBBEAN

“ The ability to do Bible studies without suffering the difficulties of displacement (time and cost).”

STUDENT FROM MENA

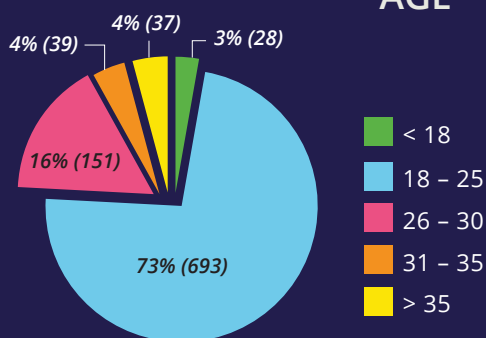
“ We understood the importance of being present on social networks.”

STUDENT FROM FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

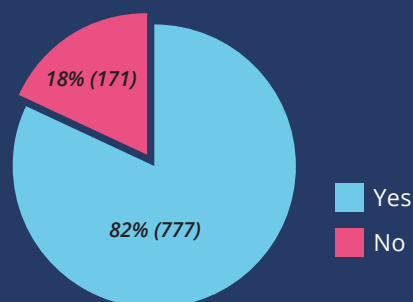
DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Total respondents = 948
Percentage (number of respondents)

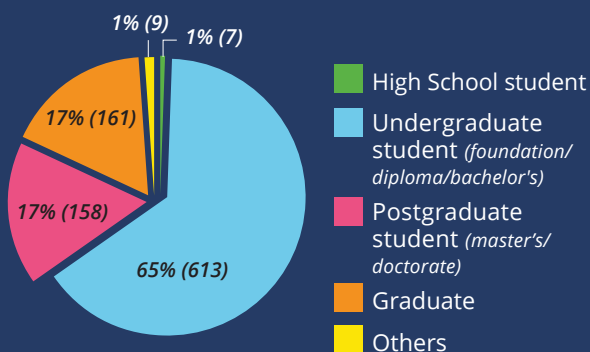
AGE



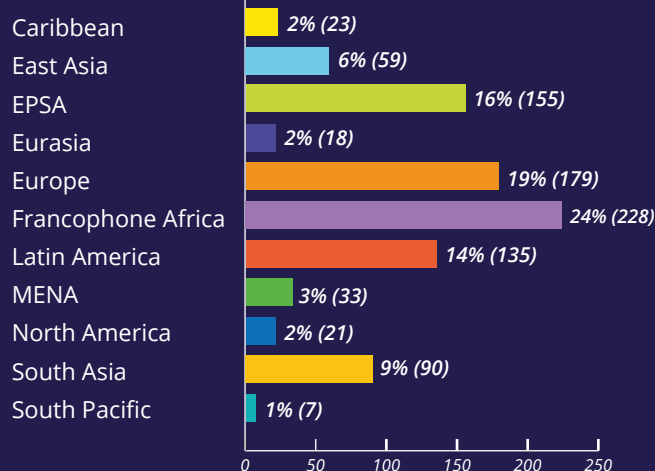
STUDENT LEADER



EDUCATION STATUS



REGIONS



METHODOLOGY

The online survey was shared with students who attended World Assembly 2019 through email and World Assembly Facebook group in June 2020. National movements were also encouraged through June Fellowship Together to share it with their students. It was also promoted in IFES Prayerline and through IFES strategy working group to the students and national movements. The survey was conducted from 5 June 2020 to 14 July 2020 and was available in English, French, and Spanish. The Eurasia regional team has also translated it to Russian language and shared it with national movements in Eurasia region.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY BROUGHT UP IN STUDENTS' CONTEXT

The table below shows the questions most frequently brought up in each of the 11 regions across IFES. It is important to note that this offers a general view (rather than a conclusive view) as the number of respondents varies across the regions. From a data perspective, higher numbers of respondents and a significant difference among the selection provide a better indication than those with lower respondents and a smaller difference among the different questions.

What questions below are most frequently brought up in your context?	Caribbean		East Asia		EPSA		Eurasia	
	% by region	Count	% by region	Count	% by region	Count	% by region	Count
If God exists, why is there suffering?	65%	15	46%	27	51%	79	61%	11
Why are Christians such hypocrites?	61%	14	64%	38	65%	100	17%	3
Aren't all religions basically the same?	35%	8	49%	29	25%	39	28%	5
How can I trust what the Bible says is true?	48%	11	44%	26	27%	42	56%	10
How could a loving God send anyone to hell?	43%	10	36%	21	37%	58	50%	9
What does the Bible say about human sexuality?	39%	9	22%	13	27%	42	28%	5
Doesn't science explain everything?	9%	2	22%	13	15%	23	33%	6
Isn't the chaos in the world a sign of God's absence?	17%	4	29%	17	19%	29	17%	3
Does my life really matter to God?	22%	5	24%	14	18%	28	33%	6
Why would a decent person like me need forgiveness?	9%	2	10%	6	12%	19	33%	6

What questions below are most frequently brought up in your context?	Europe		Francophone Africa		Latin America		MENA	
	% by region	Count	% by region	Count	% by region	Count	% by region	Count
If God exists, why is there suffering?	65%	116	37%	85	63%	85	30%	10
Why are Christians such hypocrites?	32%	58	52%	118	61%	83	39%	13
Aren't all religions basically the same?	62%	111	36%	83	35%	47	52%	17
How can I trust what the Bible says is true?	45%	81	28%	64	48%	65	33%	11
How could a loving God send anyone to hell?	40%	71	30%	68	39%	52	27%	9
What does the Bible say about human sexuality?	46%	82	30%	69	36%	49	36%	12
Doesn't science explain everything?	32%	58	14%	31	24%	32	18%	6
Isn't the chaos in the world a sign of God's absence?	23%	41	14%	32	22%	30	9%	3
Does my life really matter to God?	11%	19	18%	41	17%	23	12%	4
Why would a decent person like me need forgiveness?	26%	47	9%	20	12%	16	6%	2

What questions below are most frequently brought up in your context?	North America		South Asia		South Pacific	
	% by region	Count	% by region	Count	% by region	Count
If God exists, why is there suffering?	67%	14	52%	47	57%	4
Why are Christians such hypocrites?	52%	11	44%	40	71%	5
Aren't all religions basically the same?	43%	9	52%	47	57%	4
How can I trust what the Bible says is true?	48%	10	36%	32	86%	6
How could a loving God send anyone to hell?	33%	7	24%	22	29%	2
What does the Bible say about human sexuality?	52%	11	19%	17	43%	3
Doesn't science explain everything?	43%	9	33%	30	29%	2
Isn't the chaos in the world a sign of God's absence?	14%	3	28%	25	14%	1
Does my life really matter to God?	29%	6	18%	16	29%	2
Why would a decent person like me need forgiveness?	10%	2	10%	9		

APPENDICES

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS WHICH STUDENTS HOPE TO BE BETTER EQUIPPED BIBLICALLY

As this is an open-ended question, we have categorised all the questions/topics into four key categories in the table below: frequently asked questions, theology, Christian living, and worldview and culture.

The aim is to provide an overview of the questions respondents hope to be better equipped to respond to from a biblical perspective, both for themselves and for other Christians and non-Christians alike.

No.	Category	Count*	Key questions/topics respondents hope to be better equipped biblically
1	FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	362	
	a. What does the Bible say about human sexuality?	115	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How should I respond in controversial conversations, eg. discussions of homosexuality? How does the Bible respond to the LGBTQ+ questions?
	b. If God exists, why is there suffering?	84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If God is a loving God, why does he allow suffering? Why does God allow His children to suffer?
	c. Doesn't science explain everything?	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science and the Bible Can science prove the existence of God?
	d. How can I trust what the Bible says is true?	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reliability and inerrancy of the Bible How to answer questions from someone who does not trust the content of the Bible?
	e. Aren't all religions basically the same?	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why should I trust God in his message - there are also other possible beliefs? Why do we say that only Jesus saves?
	f. Why are Christians such hypocrites?	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why are Christians more hypocritical and less loving than non-believers?
	g. Others	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How could a loving God send anyone to hell? Isn't the chaos in the world a sign of God's absence? Why would a decent person like me need forgiveness? Does my life really matter to God?
2	THEOLOGY	308	
	God	76	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you know that God is real (<i>the existence of God</i>)? God's goodness and justice If God is love, why so much violence on his part?
	Christian Doctrines	52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctrines of trinity, creation, end times Doctrinal differences among Christians
	Bible	41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The authority, sufficiency, coherency, and divine inspiration of the Scripture How can we reconcile the things in the Bible that seem contradictory while still looking to the Bible as the supreme authority?

* The count for each categorisation serves as an estimate rather than an absolute result, as we are aware that some questions may span across a few categories

No.	Category	Count*	Key questions/topics respondents hope to be better equipped biblically
	Salvation	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assurance of salvation Can a Christian lose his or her salvation?
	Jesus Christ	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deity of Christ
	Others	82	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topics include faith, sin, Holy Spirit, predestination, heaven and hell, evil, free will, law, judgement, etc.
3	CHRISTIAN LIVING	249	
	Relationships & marriage	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can one mend a broken relationship with a parent? How do I treat friends who are backstabbing? What does the Bible say about sex before marriage?
	Evangelism	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can I evangelise to this generation? How can I present the gospel with confidence?
	Godliness / sanctification	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> God says be holy as I am holy... As a young person who is growing up and learning, how do you keep up with your holiness? How can I live a life that pleases God? Sanctification and abstaining from sexual immorality
	Discipleship, leadership formación, prayer	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discipling the next generation How can I draw life application for me as a leader and for my fellow members from a Bible study? Does God value a more righteous person than me when it comes to prayer?
	Knowing God's will, Listening to him	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can I be sure that I'm doing God's will? How to listen to God's voice?
	Church	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why are there so many denominations? The role of the church in the face of injustice that prevails in the world Internal problems in the church (<i>sexual violations etc</i>)
	Others	64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topics include love for one another, forgiveness, mental health, money, practical application of biblical principles, etc
4	WORLDVIEW AND CULTURE	241	
	a. Other religions / worldviews, Apologetics	74	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other religions/worldviews and the Bible How do we handle issues of relativism and postmodernism? Ministering to those of other faiths How to present our faith in Christ as something not crazy to the world or science and start a dialogue about it?
	b. Gender, feminism	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does it mean to be a woman or a man? Women's role in household, church, and society
	c. Social issues / social justice	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we respond to injustices on campus? How can I be an agent of change for my society? What is the biblical view towards social injustice and appropriate political involvement of (i) the believers and (ii) the church?
	d. Life and Death, purpose	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why am I here on earth? What happens when we die?
	e. Politics	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christian engagement in nation building
	f. Other topics	70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topics include Christianity and culture, race/racism, environment and ecology, abortion, lifestyle, conflicts/war, current issues, marketplace, etc
5	OTHERS	76	
6	N/A	125	

* The count for each categorisation serves as an estimate rather than an absolute result, as we are aware that some questions may span across a few categories

IFES STUDENT SURVEY 2020

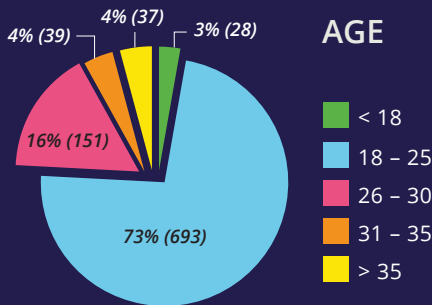


As students' voices are key to discerning the future of IFES, this online survey was carried out from 5 June to 14 July 2020 with a total of 948 respondents* as part of the IFES listening and discerning process beyond Living Stones vision.

*The respondents were asked to refer to their time as students when answering the survey

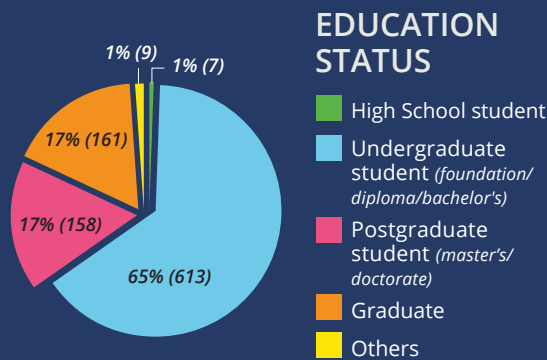
DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Percentage (Total Respondents)



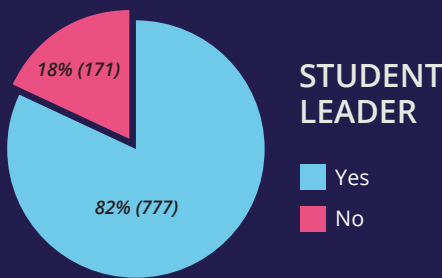
AGE

- < 18
- 18 – 25
- 26 – 30
- 31 – 35
- > 35



EDUCATION STATUS

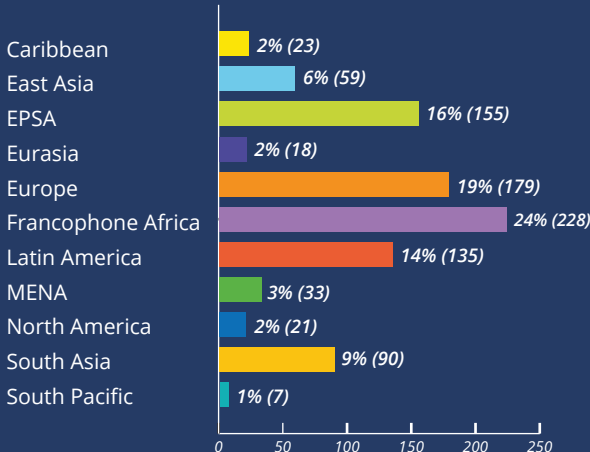
- High School student
- Undergraduate student (foundation/ diploma/bachelor's)
- Postgraduate student (master's/ doctorate)
- Graduate
- Others



STUDENT LEADER

- Yes
- No

REGIONS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Students are empowered to take initiative

93%

said that students in their groups are somewhat or fully empowered to take initiative.



2.

Students have a strong personal commitment to their Christian faith, yet it remains a challenge to live it out with the same conviction

89%
attend church weekly

80%
desire their Christian faith to impact their thoughts, words, and actions

77%
are committed to Jesus personally and affirm his death and resurrection

73%
trust firmly in the supreme authority of the Bible

51%
find opportunities to share the gospel with others

50%
engage and serve their Christian community outside regular meetings

50%
equipped to deal with issues or circumstances in life from a biblical perspective

36%
engage and serve their non-Christian community

20% ..
find ways to engage with injustice on campus



Questions for reflection:

Is there a tendency for some students to remain safe and warm within their Christian groups and hardly move outside of their comfort zone? How does the strong personal commitment to their faith work out in their practical day-to-day living and service to others?



3. Suffering and hypocrisy are questions frequently brought up in students' context, and students hope to be better equipped to respond biblically on human sexuality among other questions

Top 2 questions

that are most frequently brought up:



Suffering

52%



Christians being perceived as hypocrites

51%

92%

are moderately to highly confident in engaging others on these questions

Top 5 questions*

students hope to be further equipped to respond biblically:



Human sexuality



Existence of God



Authority & reliability of the Bible



Other religions / worldviews



Suffering

*This is an open ended question. The full list is available in the full report under Appendix



4.

Bible reading and time with God came first when students struggle with difficult topics / issues, while church, family, and student groups / national movements play crucial role in shaping their spiritual growth

Primary support



67%

Bible reading & time with God

Other sources of support



36%

Family or friends



35%

Online Christian resources



34%

Student group



32%

Church

Top 3 groups

that have had the greatest influence in the spiritual growth of the students:



Church



Family



Student groups / national movements

105 respondents mentioned staff workers



5.

Student groups and national movements have strengthened students' faith through Scripture engagement, leadership formation and supportive community

Students are equipped through Bible studies and leadership training where they:

- Develop a greater understanding of God's Word
- Learn to look to God in every situation
- Are challenged to live Christ-centered lives on campus and beyond

They hope the student groups can better equip them to follow Jesus faithfully through:

- Addressing current topics biblically
- Building genuine relationships
- Supporting holistic / integral engagement in the university and society



6.

COVID-19 brought about new opportunities to reach out to more people, but there is a pressing need for resilience through this challenging time

69%

agreed that **NEW OPPORTUNITIES** have emerged

- ✓ Creative ways to reach out
- ✓ Sharing the gospel
- ✓ Distributing food

26%

mentioned there are **NO NEW OPPORTUNITIES**

- ✗ Hard to adjust
- ✗ Participation drop

*5% did not indicate any response

“ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. ”

(Hebrews 10:23-25)



INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF EVANGELICAL STUDENTS

ifesworld.org



@IFESWORLD

#IFESWORLD #WEAREIFES

We are a movement of students sharing and
living out the good news of Jesus Christ.
Locally. Nationally. Globally.

© 2020 IFES, une organisation déclarée à Lausanne, Suisse.
IFES is a registered charity in England and Wales (247919), and a limited company (876229).
IFES/USA is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in the USA.