



VOICES UNITE
MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY
SUMMARY REPORT:
Top Insights
May 2022



About this Report

This report summarises the Top Insights that have come out of Voices Unite's third report focusing on the use of media and technology and is underpinned by the large-scale ongoing youth research that is being conducted through the Voices Unite platform, launched by In On Africa (IOA) in 2020. The results contained within this report include detailed statistics, insights and direct quotations from the surveys and discussion forum conducted with members of the Voices Unite platform (all aged between 18-34).

The work being done by Voices Unite, including research through the Voices Unite platform (<https://app.voicesunite.co.za/>) and through the Voices Unite Foundation, is ongoing, and the results in this report therefore represent a snapshot of the perspectives and experience of Voices Unite members during the first year of the #VoicesUnite movement.

While IOA, the Voices Unite team and our partners believe that the information and insights contained herein are reliable, we do not make any warranties, express or implied, and assume no liability for reliance on or use of the information or opinions contained herein.

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INTRODUCTION

- Voices Unite was conceptualised by In On Africa (IOA) in 2017 and launched as a **game-changing digital youth research platform** in February 2020.
- Through this platform, Voices Unite conducts **ongoing youth-focused digital research as well as customised youth research for Voices Unite partners**, targeting youth in South Africa aged 18-34.
- Voices Unite has more than **6,000 youth members on the platform**, coupled with access to more than 50,000 youth through our consumer panel network for large-scale customised youth research.
- Since its launch, members of the Voices Unite platform have been completing a range of **detailed surveys, participating in online focus groups, and engaging through the Voices Unite online discussion forum**.



Voices Unite aims to inform data-driven decision-making at corporate, government, organisation and institutional levels through ongoing, meaningful youth research and engagement.

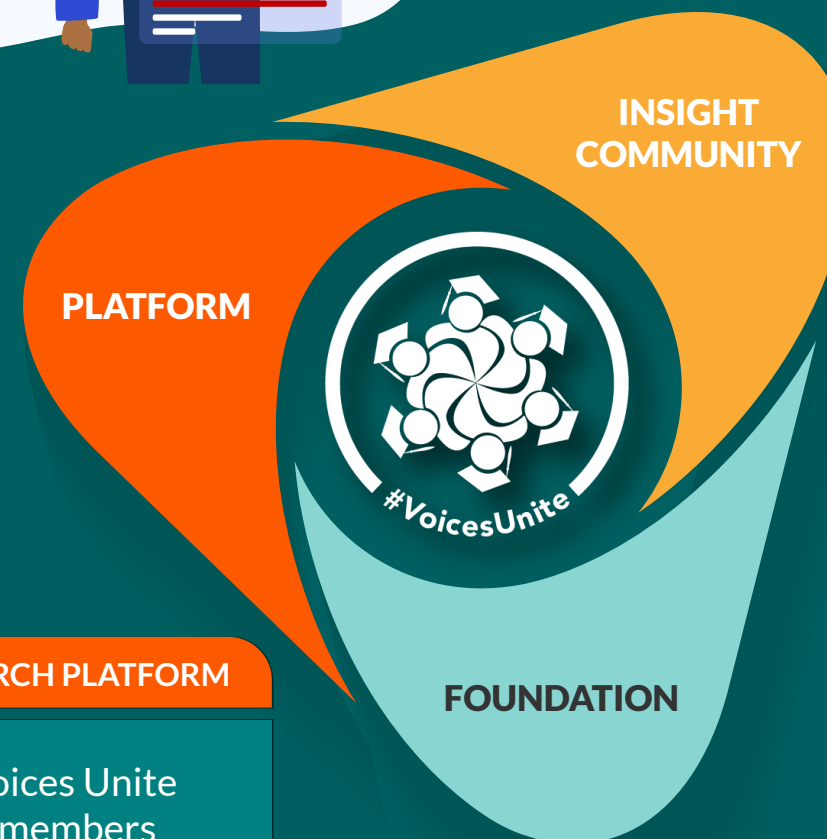
The Voices Unite ecosystem consists of:

- the **Research Platform** for ongoing research
- the **Insight Community** for custom research
- the **Non-Profit Foundation** for youth-focused impact projects



VOICES UNITE INSIGHT COMMUNITY

A wide range of customised digital research offerings for partners and clients to guide their decision-making. These include focus groups, discussion forums, web surveys, insight missions, quick polls and more.



VOICES UNITE RESEARCH PLATFORM

The heart of the Voices Unite ecosystem, where members aged 18-34 engage on important topics, such as education, employment, healthcare, technology, finances, lifestyle and infrastructure.

VOICES UNITE FOUNDATION

Where insights from the Voices Unite platform guide in-depth youth development research and projects with the aim of turning insights into action!



DATA COLLECTION

THREE STREAMS OF RESEARCH

The Voices Unite findings that are presented in this and other Voices Unite reports are drawn from data that is being collected across three research streams:



Data in the form of youth insights, experiences and perspectives are collected primarily via the **Voices Unite digital platform**, which houses seven purely quantitative research surveys of more than 500 questions in total.



In addition, Voices Unite members are encouraged to engage with each other on pertinent topics via the **Voices Unite discussion forum**, and the views of members through this forum offer important qualitative data to deepen the insights presented in the Voices Unite reports.



Voices Unite also conducts **online focus groups** with our student ambassadors, discussing and debating topics that are covered through the Voices Unite platform and guiding future areas of research.

INSTRUMENTATION

Detailed quantitative questionnaires have been implemented through the survey system on the Voices Unite platform. In addition to the demographics instrument, there are six topic-specific instruments disseminated through the platform. Each of the instruments have between 60 to 100 items (questions). These six instruments include:

- Education and Skills Development
- Employment, Entrepreneurship and Work Experience
- Finance
- Healthcare and Lifestyle
- Infrastructure
- Media and Technology

During the timeframe covered in this report, Voices Unite members participated in a total of 9,700 surveys. The Voices Unite digital platform is accessible to youth through digital devices such as smartphones and laptops. Members can complete the surveys over several months and respondents are incentivised via weekly competitions with rewards for lucky winners throughout the research process.

TOP INSIGHTS:

What we have learned from the experiences and perceptions that have been shared by our youth Voices on topics relating to their use of social media platforms, technological devices and skills, and internet access.



“

*Voices Unite is the conversation
many generations have been
dreaming of having in spaces and
with people where it has great
potential to materialise.*

Siphesihle Tlisane
Student Ambassador
Voices Unite

”



SOCIAL MEDIA OVERVIEW

1



WhatsApp is the most popular (96%) social media platform used by Voices Unite members, followed by Facebook (89%) and Instagram (76%).

3



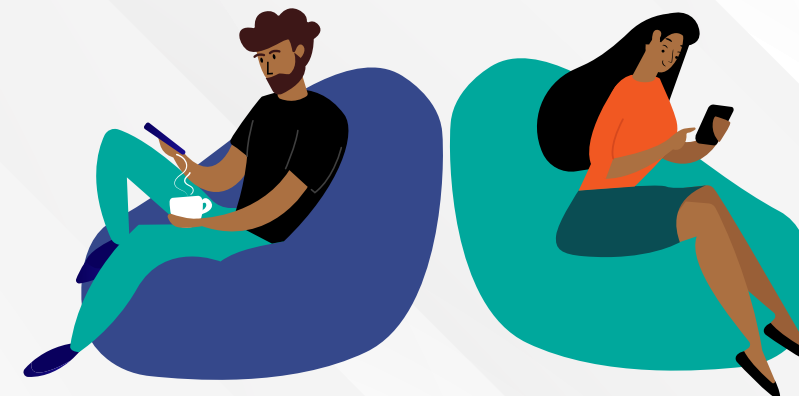
Nearly a fifth of Voices Unite (19%) members feel that social media has a negative impact on people's lives.

2



The biggest reasons for preferring different social media platforms are user-friendliness (85%) and the interactive nature of the platforms (72%).

4



Many Voices Unite members use social media daily, with 40% using it multiple times each day.



MEDIA USAGE OVERVIEW

1



Music (82%) and social media (81%) are the most used types of media by Voices Unite members.

2



Most time is spent on browsing social media (29%) and listening to music (25%), with members spending more than 5 hours per day on social media.

3



62% of members use online streaming services, with Netflix being the most popular (37%), followed by DSTV Now (22%) and Showmax (10%).

4



In terms of regular use, DStv is used mostly by Voices Unite members with 75% streaming either every day or a few times per week.



INTERNET USAGE OVERVIEW

1



A little over a fifth (22%) of Voices Unite members do not have access to steady and reliable internet.

2



Mobile data is the medium most members (87%) use to access the internet, especially in rural areas (93%).

3



Amid members who use mobile data to get online, all of them do so through their mobile phones (100%), with just over half using laptops (55%).

4

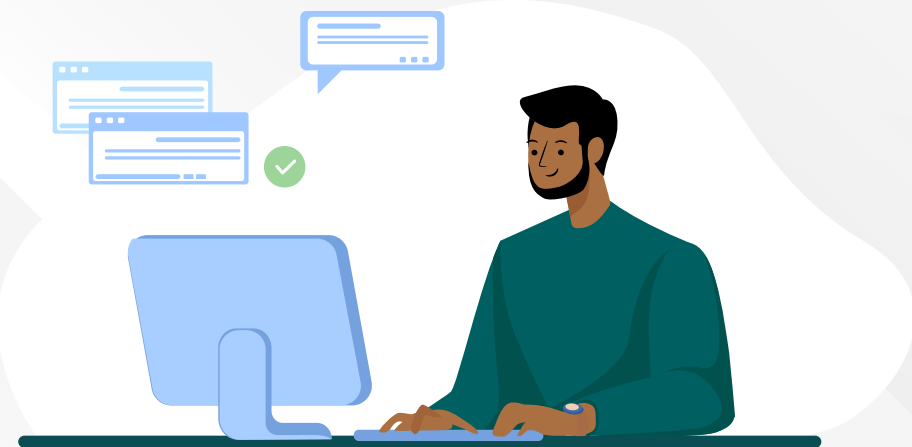


Academics is the primary reason (90%) most Voices Unite members use the internet, followed closely by entertainment (87%).



TECH DEVICES OVERVIEW

1



27% of Voices Unite members do not own a computer. Close to 60% of those who do not own a computer do not have access to one.

2



The majority of Voices Unite members knew how to use a computer when they started studying. Amid those who did not, rural-based members had the biggest challenge.

3



The least present skillsets was Microsoft Excel skills (44%), especially among members based in rural areas.

4

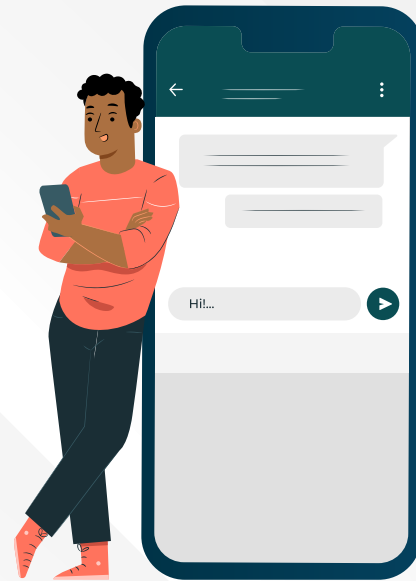


Out of the devices used for academic purposes, over half of our members use laptops (57%) followed by smartphones (32%).



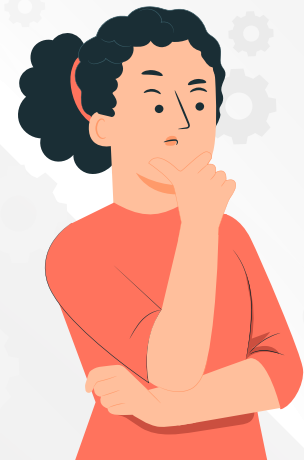
SMARTPHONE OVERVIEW

1



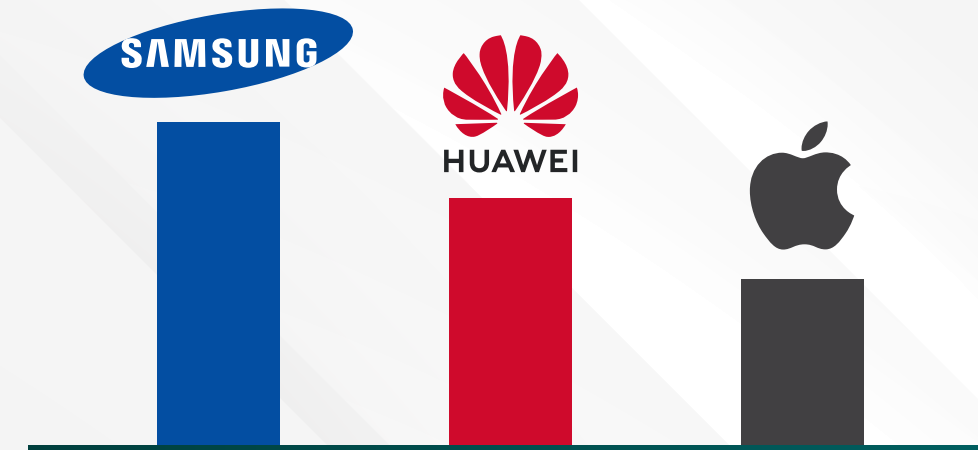
Almost all Voices Unite members have smartphones (98%).

3



Price (67%) and product features (58%) are the top reasons for choosing a phone brand.

2



Samsung is used by 40% of our members, followed by Huawei (31%) and Apple (12%).

4



Nearly all iPhone users prefer the Apple brand because of the product features.



MOBILE NETWORK OVERVIEW

1

Telkom

Telkom is the most popular mobile network among members, while Cell C (13%) and Rain (3%) are the least popular.

2



The top reasons for choosing their preferred mobile network providers are data prices, quality of internet access and availability of 4G/LTE.

3

vodacom

Vodacom is especially popular among members in rural areas, while the reverse is true for Telkom users.

4

CellC → Telkom

Cell C users are more likely to switch their mobile network providers in comparison, with most of these looking to Telkom as their new network provider.



CONCLUSION

Although we at Voices Unite have been working on the plans and implementation of our Voices Unite 'ecosystem' since early 2017, the platform has only been live for just over two years (since February 2020). Our growth plans have been negatively impacted by COVID-19, particularly in relation to promoting Voices Unite at universities and colleges across the country. However, the team has persevered and innovated brilliantly, and we are proud of what has been achieved thus far. As of May 2022, our youth membership is over 6,200 and growing steadily. And we're only just getting started.

Our plans for 2022 revolve around exploring new avenues to access growth funding and sponsorships to help scale the Voices Unite platform locally and across the African continent. The Voices Unite Foundation, which was registered as a Non-Profit Company (NPC) in mid-2020, is well-positioned to begin actively working towards specific action plans outlined in the Voices Unite reports, and this is another key priority as we move forward.

Ongoing research to better understand youth views, interests, perspectives and experiences will always be at the very core of Voices Unite's objectives, and we will be expanding on these efforts, not only through the Voices Unite platform, but also via topic- and partner-specific research to better inform the decision-making of our institutional, non-profit, corporate and government partners. In this regard, the Voices Unite team is working on a number of exciting plans to enable Voices Unite members to directly engage with decision-makers, bringing their voices more truly and meaningfully into decision-making processes – particularly those that have an impact on the lives of young people.

These and other exciting plans will define the future of Voices Unite, and we will continue to work towards our vision to become the leader in youth research, youth engagement and youth-driven impact on the African continent.

JONATHAN MUNDELL
FOUNDER, VOICES UNITE





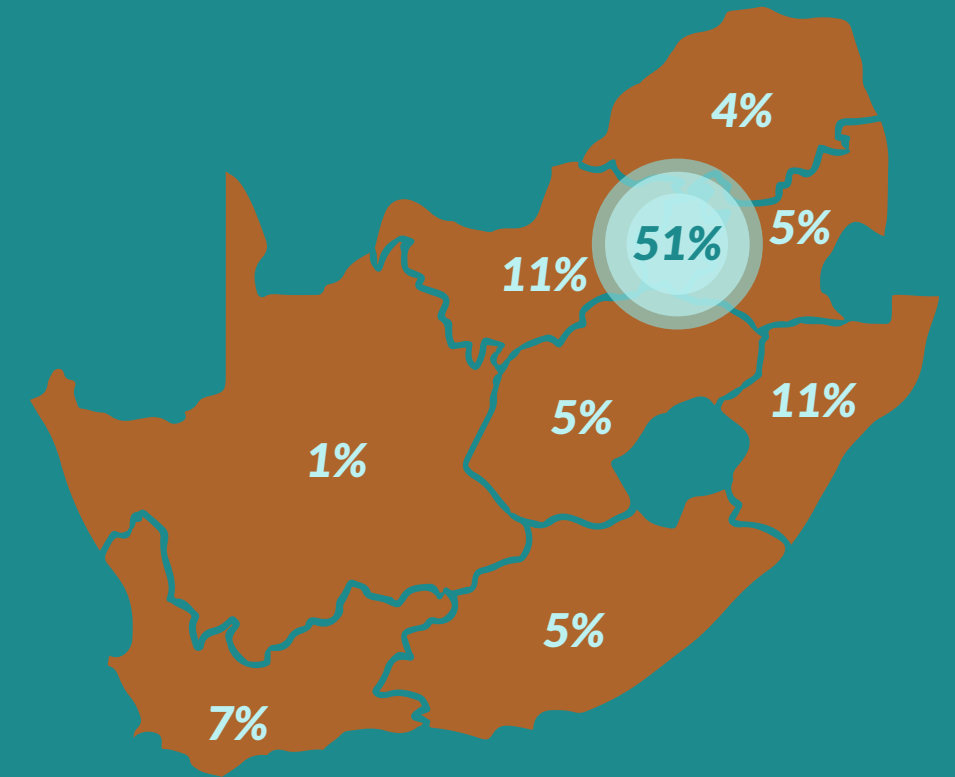
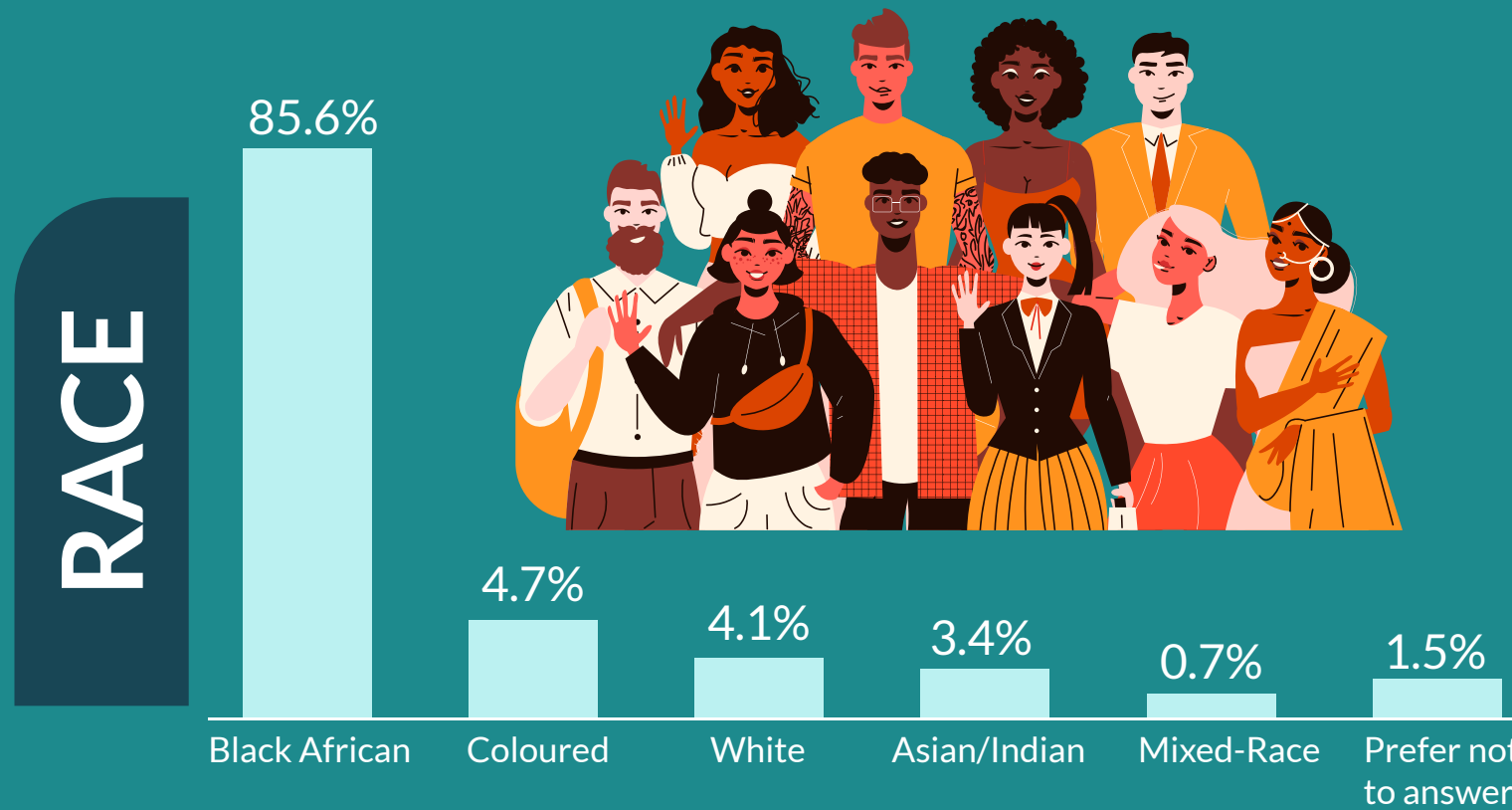
SAMPLE BREAKDOWN

3,233

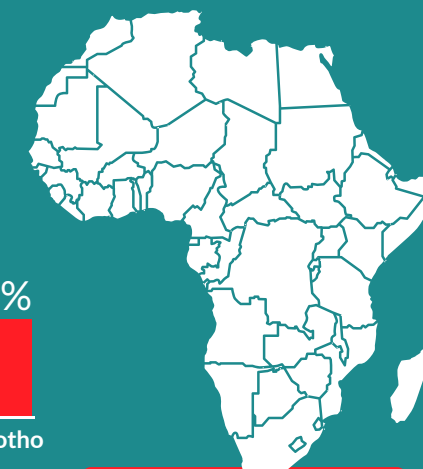
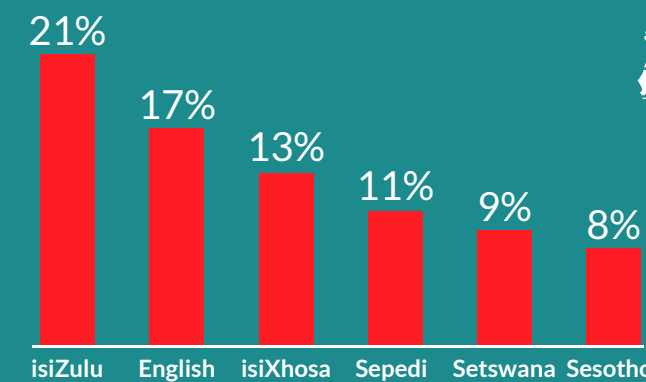
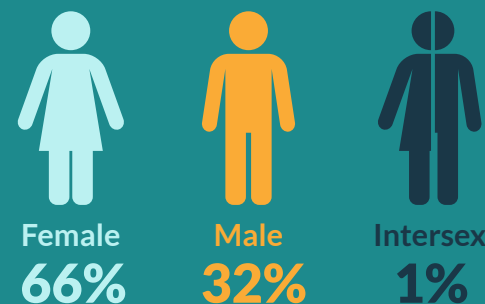
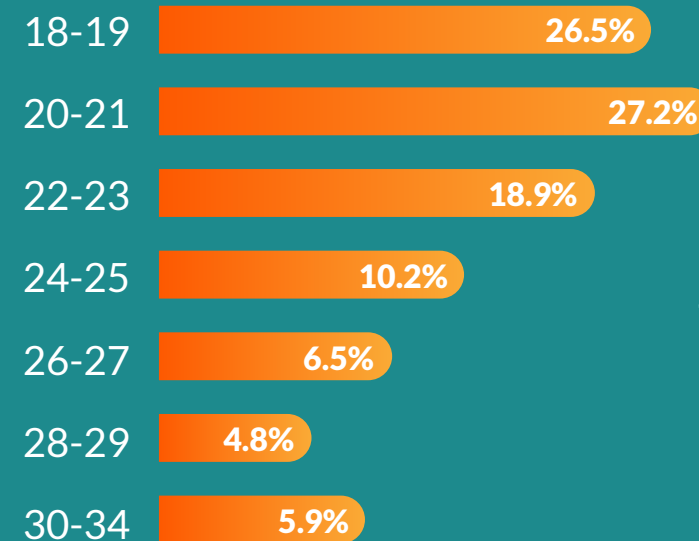
Voices Unite MEMBERS

More than 4,000 youth in South Africa signed-up to the Voices Unite platform in 2020 and around 80% of members completed surveys during the course of the year. This report presents the results from the 893 who completed the Media & Technology survey.

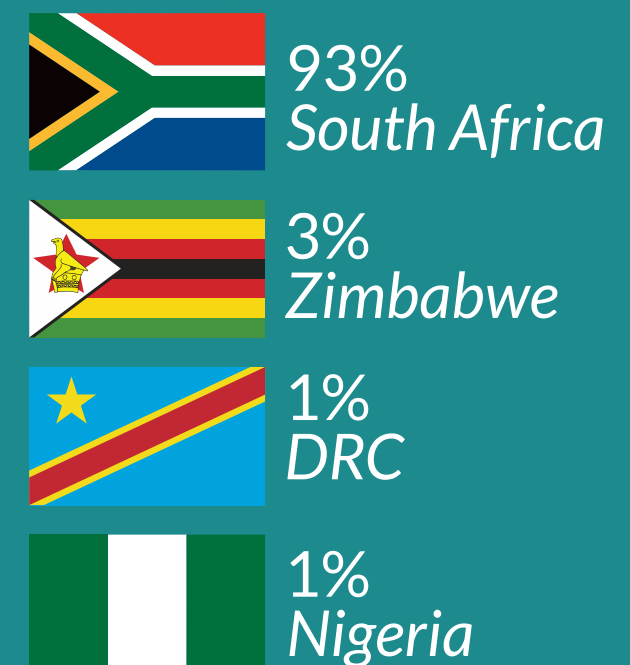
As of May 2022, Voices Unite's membership-base stands at over 6,200.



AGE



Country of Origin (Top 4)





NEXT STEPS

HOW WILL WE SCALE VOICES UNITE LOCALLY AND ACROSS AFRICA?

Voices Unite has major plans to scale locally and across the African continent, with the aim of being the leader in youth research, youth engagement and youth-driven impact in Africa.



Scale across Africa

Phase 1 of Voices Unite has been rolled out in South Africa, with the aim to scale into Southern Africa and then the rest of the continent. The proof of concept in South Africa sets the stage for rollout in various other markets.

Scale the functionality of the platform

The Voices Unite team and partners have already conceptualised several future functions and services of the platform, such as youth recruitment services, bursary/funding information access, online youth counselling services, and skills development.

Scale to other youth segments

Phase 1 of Voices Unite has been rolled out in South Africa, with the aim to scale into Southern Africa and then the rest of the continent. The proof of concept in South Africa sets the stage for rollout in various other markets.

Scale the foundation

The Voices Unite Foundation has huge potential to use the research from the platform and panel to work with partners on a wide range of youth development initiatives, while also creating work opportunities for Voices Unite members.