

# Youth participation in organized crime prevention in the Southern African Development Community

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## *Abstract*

Transnational organized crime (TOC) rates have recently increased in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), despite combined efforts with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to combat it. Youth are the primary target demographic for TOC recruiters, but they can also play a crucial role in resilience efforts. We gathered the opinions of young people from four SADC countries (Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe) through an online questionnaire. The aim was to understand the structural factors that lead youth to engage in TOC and how to strengthen resilience at the community level. All respondents unanimously defined TOC as primarily an economic phenomenon. Other structural factors that influence youth engagement include the lack of political structures and corruption among elites. The survey also revealed that youth are constantly exposed to misleading information and TOC-related content on the Internet and social media. However, they tend to downplay its sig-

nificance and fail to report such content to the authorities.

**Keywords**— Organized crime, SADC, youth resilience, prevention.

## **Introduction**

Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) refers to the phenomenon involving the flow and diversification of illicit activities, ranging from drug and human trafficking to drug smuggling, piracy, and money laundering (Miraglia, Ochoa, & Briscoe, 2012). Although it affects all countries, conflict-affected and fragile states are more vulnerable to TOC and provide more favorable conditions for its expansion. These conditions may include institutional fragmentation, impoverished standards of living, and the presence of existing criminal networks in local communities (Morselli, Turcotte, & Tenti, 2011; Varese, 2011). Moreover, the geographical proximity of these countries, along with the lack of effective political institutions and the absence of a maritime governance policy for their extensive coastlines, creates a breeding ground for organized crime groups in the Southern African Development Community

(SADC) <sup>1</sup>.

In locations where disparities and weak governance foster a climate in which criminal groups thrive, younger generations are more vulnerable to the effects of crime (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2022). With a population of over 400 million between the ages of 15 and 35, Africa's youngest generations are increasingly exposed to drug use and trafficking, which undermines economic growth and reduces their chances of attaining better living conditions (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2022). This underscores the importance of considering youth as the "torchbearers" of the 2030 Agenda. Various reports from international bodies highlight that youth should be viewed as active participants in the design and implementation of policies, plans, and actions that will lead to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Agovic & Kemp, 2022; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018).

The focus on the SADC region, particularly Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, is justified by the increase in organized crime rates in these countries over the past five years <sup>2</sup>. According to the Africa organized

crime index, the overall score for criminality on the continent is 5.17 points. Out of the thirteen countries in the southern region, South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Madagascar have the highest crime rates, in descending order of incidence <sup>3</sup> (ENACT Africa, 2021).



Figure 1: Map showing the Member States of the Southeastern African Development Community (SADC) region. Source: (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d.)

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature on youth resilience to transnational organized crime (TOC) by recognizing their crucial participation in the fight against it. With a particular focus on the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, this research explores the social, economic, and political factors that render young people vulnerable to TOC.

perceived a worsened score of 0.67 points and is in second place. Zimbabwe ranks third with a score of 5.56, showing an improvement of 0.25 points. Madagascar follows in fourth place with a score of 5.59, increasing by 0.21 points from 2020.

<sup>3</sup>It is worth noting that South Africa is the nation most significantly impacted by organized crime overall. However, when comparing rates to the previous year, Mozambique has experienced a higher increase.

<sup>1</sup>The acronym refers to the Regional Economic Community comprising 16 member states: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Swaziland, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. We decided to use this reference because the theme of the paper is in line with the main objectives for which the economic community was established, which promotes "economic growth and socioeconomic development through efficient, productive systems, deeper cooperation and integration, good governance and durable peace and security" (Southern African Development Community, n.d.).

<sup>2</sup>According to the latest available data from 2021, South Africa ranks at the top of the list with a score of 6.63, marking an increase of 0.47 compared to the previous year. Mozambique, with a score of 6.53, ex-

The specific objectives of our research, pertaining to this question, are as follows:

- To comprehend the structural factors that drive youth involvement in transnational organized crime (TOC). Analyzing the underlying factors that push young individuals towards the path of TOC is crucial. This analysis not only helps in understanding the specific context of each country but also lays the foundation for formulating more effective policy recommendations with a lasting long-term impact.
- To explore how to strengthen resilience at the community level. We understand that the community is the main bastion, albeit supported by the institutional level, where efforts are needed to combat organized crime.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that this analysis does not delve into the intricate details of the various subtypes of transnational organized crime (TOC). Instead, it examines TOC as a heterogeneous entity with similar operational dynamics. It is presumed that the prevalence of specific types of organized crime may differ across countries due to variations in available resources which influence the focus of criminal activities, as well as the flexibility that different legal frameworks offer to transnational organizations.

## 1 Theoretical framework

### 1.1 Transnational organized crime (TOC) and its impact in Southeast Africa

Transnational organized crime (TOC) refers to a range of criminal activities that were officially recognized and distinguished from other types of crimes in the mid-1970s. The United Nations

(UN) played a significant role in this regard, as it made efforts, from a criminological perspective, to differentiate crimes that surpass national jurisdictions. As early as 1995, the UN identified up to 18 categories of transnational criminal activities, primarily of an organized nature (United Nations Secretariat, 1995). At that time, TOC was defined as “offences whose inception, prevention and/or direct or indirect effects involved more than one country” (United Nations Secretariat, 1995).

The list of crimes identified during the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1995 included “sea piracy, illicit drug trafficking, money laundering, terrorist activities, theft of art and cultural objects, theft of intellectual property, illicit arms trafficking, aircraft hijacking, insurance fraud, computed crime, environmental crime, trafficking in persons, trade in human body parts, fraudulent bankruptcy, infiltration of legal business, corruption, and bribery of public or party officials” (United Nations Secretariat, 1995). Regarding the African continent, the most prevalent transnational organized crime activities include drug trafficking, piracy, poaching, and the trafficking and exploitation of human beings (EN-ACT Africa, 2021).

### 1.2 Theory of relative deprivation and communities’ resilience

Researchers argue that there is no single formula or set of factors that exclusively drive young people to participate in transnational organized crime (TOC). Instead, it is a combination of various factors, often of a structural nature, such as economic deprivation, territorial inequalities, digital socialization, and more, that contribute to this phenomenon. In this regard, we challenge the notion that the economic factor alone serves as the primary catalyst for youth engagement in TOC, as suggested by Thomas Schelling in recent decades (Allum & Sands, 2004). Building upon Gurr’s

studies on radicalization and violent extremism, as well as the conclusions drawn by Allum & Sands on the inadequacy of the monopoly enterprise approach to describe TOC in Europe, we assert the significance of considering other variables in understanding and addressing this issue (Allum & Sands, 2004; Gurr, 2015).

Our theoretical framework is aligned with Gurr's theory of relative deprivation, which suggests that engagement in criminal behavior arises from the disparity between social expectations and the actual opportunities to fulfill them. When individuals fail to meet these expectations, it can result in frustration, anxiety, and anger that may ultimately manifest as criminal behavior once a certain threshold of stress is reached (Gurr, 2015). Under this premise, young people's motivations to engage in TOC might not only be based on economic and material (lack of) conditions, but rather on a gap between their education level and their expectations in terms of socioeconomic status, on the one hand, and their objective situation in terms of job opportunities, on the other (Bonelli, Bigo, Guittet, & Ragazzi, 2014; Bosi & Della Porta, 2012; Torreken & De le Vingne, 2020). These cumulative experiences of deprivation create a general perception that others are better off, which can fuel aggressive tendencies (Smith, Pettigrew, Pippin, & Bialosiewicz, 2012). Consequently, youth involvement in criminal organizations can be seen as a multifaceted process influenced by various individual, contextual, and societal factors, whose importance depends on each personal trajectory (Torreken & De le Vingne, 2020).

Additionally, young people's involvement in organized criminal groups can be attributed to the historical legacies of past conflicts and a lack of trust in the police and public authorities, particularly in the absence of political opportunity structures (Torreken & De le Vingne, 2020). Consequently, the outlook in the region is characterized by significant instability, with the potential

for transnational organized crime to exert influence and undermine the role of the State.

Political opportunity structures pertain to a regime's capacity to address the grievances arising from social discontent. Torreken & de le Vingne propose that when the population is unable to channel their demands through institutional means, they are more prone to resort to violence (Torreken & De le Vingne, 2020). Drawing upon insights from the study of violent extremism, we contend that similar frustrations can influence young individuals in their choice to engage in transnational organized crime (TOC) activities.

There are long-term problems that require determined and sustained investment, given their deep-rooted nature over the years. One pressing concern is the high consumption of drugs, which is intrinsically linked to the proliferation of transnational organized crime (TOC) in the SADC region. Immediate intervention is required to address this issue. While initiatives such as the implementation of the Drug National Master Plan in South Africa focus on assisting the affected population, they do not fully tackle the supply problem. In response, governments have started implementing policy changes, including "programmes to better control the importation and manufacture of precursor chemicals, the simplification of banking procedures to make money laundering more difficult, and the more vigorous prosecution of those involved in organized crime through the use of asset forfeiture provisions" (Parry, 2005). However, much remains to be done. As stated by Parry (2005), a major objective is to combat the infiltration of drug traffickers into public institutions and the corruption of the political and economic elites.

Recognizing the significant variations in root causes and challenges among the four countries, it is crucial to prioritize community resilience as a comprehensive and cross-cutting strategy. The United Nations' General Assembly resolu-

tion 66/290 calls for “people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people” (United Nations General Assembly, 2012). Thus, it is crucial to direct solutions towards empowering local communities to build resilience and implementing initiatives that enhance social cohesion, all while upholding human rights and preserving human dignity.

In discussing the importance of the community dimension as a source of resilience, it is essential to highlight the distinction between two complementary but sometimes confusing concepts: “prevention” and “social resilience”. By preventive measures, we are discussing strategies that go beyond those implemented by police authorities to prevent crime from occurring in the first place. Actors in the fields of education, health, and civil society all contribute to taking action on the ‘soft’ side to prevent young people from getting involved in organized crime. It is a term that has evolved from its original use in terrorism studies, where it specifically referred to police-military counteractions (Jore, 2023; Weine, Henderson, Shanfield, Legha, & Post, 2013). In the context of preventing organized crime, it involves anticipating the motivations that could lead young people to perceive it as the solution to their problems (Torrekens & De le Vingne, 2020).

Conversely, resilience conveys a sense of strength and resistance that places the primary responsibility on potential victims. It is often associated with disengagement strategies and refers to the community’s capacity to withstand and recover from a disruptive event. Stressing the role of the community, Nünlist & Frazer posit it as the “meso-level” where society responds with positive existing tools and generates counter-narratives (Frazer & Nünlist, 2015). In the realm of TOC prevention, resilience pertains to the notion of a shared space; the community dimension, which possesses the ability to develop resilience mechanisms.

However, some authors refer to this concept to be paradoxical. Lurdes Vidal (personal communication, June 2021) argues that the overuse of the term can have a dual effect, as it places the entire responsibility on the community while downplaying the importance of institutional support. While communities should be resilient, institutions also assist them in achieving resilience through a combination of institutional and community-level efforts (Vidal, personal communication, June 2021).

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Study area

Most of the academic literature has predominantly focused on the sub-regions of Central and West Africa, with only recent attention being given to the cases of Eastern and Southeastern Africa. With 60% of Africa’s population under 25 years old, and over a third between 15-34, TOC recruitment efforts tend to target young individuals (Rocca & Schultes, 2020).

In response to the challenges posed by transnational organized crime (TOC), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have been collaborating for over a decade. Prevention is a key pillar of this partnership. Through initiatives such as the Memorandum of Understanding (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011) and the joint SADC-UNODC Regional Programme on Promoting the Rule of Law and Security in Southern Africa (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013), both entities have actively involved in enhancing national capacities and fostering regional cooperation, aligning their efforts with the priorities and needs of the concerned countries.

## 2.2 Selection of participants

Identifying NGOs working with young people in each of the four countries was the next step after reviewing the existing academic and official literature on TOC in the region. Our goal was to contact NGOs and use them as channels for reaching young people who would be the target of our questionnaire.

The process of identifying them differed in each country. In South Africa, we looked up a directory of all officially recognized NGOs working on TOC prevention. Filters on the website enabled us to identify NGOs whose names contained the word “youth”. This was an efficient tool to select and organize potential entities to be contacted in the country. For the remaining three, the a more intricate approach was required. We employed research engine platforms, primarily Google and its extensions, professional social networks, and NGO websites to confirm the main activities of the identified NGOs. Locating NGOs in Zimbabwe posed a particular challenge due to their limited capabilities and minimal presence on social media.

The initial plan entailed compiling a list of 10-15 NGOs from each of the four countries under study, with the aim of engaging with young individuals through at least three different NGOs in each country. We considered that this target was both realistic and would allow us to get enough heterogeneity and representativeness of the sample. The criteria for selecting NGOs were as follows:

- i young people were part of NGO’s actions themes;
- ii young people were between 16-30 years old;
- iii they had previously agreed to answer the survey and signed the consent form.

In terms of the number of participants, our initial goal was to reach a minimum of 20 individuals

per NGO, resulting in a total of 60-100 people per country. We reached out to a total of 85 NGOs across the four countries, but only received positive feedback from 9 organizations, and partial answers from 22 participants. As partially completed questionnaires were not admitted, only 5 surveys were valid. Because of the low response rate, a second reminder of the project was sent to those NGOs who confirmed their participation in the study.

Since we faced significant challenges in getting NGOs to participate and complete the questionnaire through the aforementioned method (see section 3.4 for more details), we decided to change our approach and broaden the profile of the participants. In a second attempt to reach young individuals in the targeted countries, we chose to distribute the questionnaire through social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. This allowed us to involve young people who wanted to express their opinions on the issue directly, without the need for intermediaries. We released the project’s main purpose and the survey in closed groups of African NGOs on Facebook and LinkedIn. Additionally, we issued an open call using the following hashtags on Twitter: #tocprevention #Africa #youth #ngos #zimbabwe #southafrica #madagascar #mozambique. Through this method, we obtained the complete responses of one additional participant, bringing the total sample to 6 individuals.



English was selected as the language for the questionnaire. However, we acknowledge that there are other official and more widely spoken languages in the four chosen countries (such as Portuguese, French, Zulu, or Shona). This is a significant limitation as it means we could only reach young people who were proficient in English, excluding other populations. Unfortunately, due to resource and time limitations, we were unable to conduct or translate the survey into other languages.

- On the NGOs

We faced several challenges and limitations throughout the research process. One limitation was the reliance on NGOs as intermediaries to reach our target respondents. While we provided the NGOs with the questionnaire link and asked them to explain the project to the young people they worked with, we had limited control over the implementation process. This introduced the potential for irregularities and inconsistencies beyond our control.

Out of the 85 NGOs contacted, the response rate and participation commitment were low. Ultimately, we received positive responses from 9 NGOs representing the four countries under study. However, neither the goal of 20 participants per NGO nor the number of 60-100 participants per country was achieved, despite constant reminders sent to the organizations.

Even after changing our strategy to disseminate the survey through social networks, the participation rate remained low, with only 17 participants and 5 completed surveys. The reasons behind the low participation rate are complex and partly unknown, but it is important to note that limited internet access in certain areas, such as Zimbabwe, may have contributed to the challenges.

Some NGOs declined to participate in the project due to the lack of financial support for its implementation. Their limited budgets and the short

timeline of the project posed obstacles to their involvement. We chose to proceed with an online survey to minimize the financial burden on the NGOs.

## 2.6 Data analysis

Data analysis and visualization were conducted using the statistical software R. Given the small sample size, the analysis focused on cross-referencing the responses with the background information provided by the participants, including gender, age, educational level, and civil status. This additional information complemented the basic descriptive analysis of each question. In cases where applicable, numerical questions also included measures such as the arithmetic mean and median.

## 3 Results

To review the results section, please refer to Appendix A.

## 4 Discussion

Following the statistical analysis, the first thing that needs to be highlighted relates to the level of participation and country of origin of the participants. The involvement of the organizations in a region that was selected for their work related to our theme was minimal from the early promotional phase of the project. This indicates the presence of unidentified factors that consistently hindered our communication with NGOs and raised questions about the spirit of cooperation within society organizations. Reflecting on the receptivity of NGOs and comparing our experience with another group of the RAUN school of internationalists, we found that the initial communication using certain jargon and terminol-



ogy affected the responses. Specifically, using words like "corruption," "organized crime," and "drugs" to describe the project resulted in fewer responses. However, when presenting the same subject using euphemistic terms related to reducing corruption, such as "resilience," "prevention," or "democratic consolidation," there was a more positive effect. Unfortunately, at a later stage, it was not feasible for us to alter the initial approach to potential collaborating organizations. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge this reality for any comparable situations in the future.

A total of 85 NGOs were contacted; 9 were registered in Madagascar, 9 in Mozambique, 30 in South Africa, 21 in Zimbabwe, and 16 had offices in the four countries. Among them, nine organizations expressed interest and provided positive feedback about joining the project. However, the level of youth participation fell significantly below expectations. When we followed up with our partners, some did not respond, while others indicated that they would share the questionnaire with their contacts in the field.

One NGO drew attention to issues with Zimbabwe's cybernetic infrastructure. Although most individuals between the ages of 16 and 30 owned mobile phones, access to Internet was limited. This information is particularly striking since the majority of responses, all but one of which were untraceable, originated from Zimbabwe.

Financial considerations also emerged as a significant factor. Initially, our partners expressed willingness to collaborate but later declined when it became clear that they would not receive financial support. This posed challenges to effective collaboration as we relied on NGOs to mobilize young people for the questionnaire without the option of hiring fieldwork personnel. Despite this, many individuals demonstrated genuine interest in the study. Therefore, we invite other researchers to leverage the potential of this study while considering the constraints we encountered. Lastly, it is noteworthy that South Africa had

notably low participation. Despite contacting a larger number of NGOs in a country with a larger population compared to the other three, only two organizations responded positively, neither of which facilitated survey participation.

## 4.1 Demographic data

We collected the perspectives of six young individuals across the four countries. Overall, 60% of them fell within the 16-19 age range, indicating a potential increase in youth engagement in political processes. Working with minors can present ethical challenges, and to address this, we obtained parental permission at the beginning of the questionnaire. However, it should be noted that there were ways to bypass this requirement when completing the online questionnaire without supervision. In this regard, we recommend that future questionnaires be administered *in situ* to mitigate this issue.

Most of the survey respondents, primarily between the ages of 16 and 19, lived with their parents, which aligns with their young age demographic. While there were some variations in terms of educational attainment, the results were relatively consistent for those in the 16-19 age group. The 40% of participants who had only completed high school comprised individuals who were too young to have achieved a higher level of education, regardless of their decision to pursue further studies. Similarly, the remaining 40% of respondents who had attended university but did not complete their studies consisted of individuals who had enrolled in college but were not yet old enough to graduate. This suggests that the respondents had reached the highest educational level appropriate for their age. However, it is important to note that drawing such a generalization would require a more representative sample. It would be interesting to examine whether the same respondents demonstrate this coherence in a longitudinal study with a larger sample size.

## 4.2 Economic deprivation and grassroots issues

The young individuals who participated in the survey expressed significant concerns regarding economic issues. Without exception, all respondents agreed that the economic factor plays a substantial role in the high level of engagement in TOC. Interestingly, while older individuals tended to associate TOC with the family environment, younger people predominantly connected it to the economic situation. This stark difference in perception highlights how different generations perceive societal realities from distinct perspectives. It is noteworthy that younger generations, in particular, are becoming increasingly frustrated by the socioeconomic circumstances that pose a threat to their aspirations for the future. This observation serves as a compelling example of the generational disparities in understanding and experiencing societal challenges.

Numerous researchers have characterized TOC as primarily an economic phenomenon. For example, Schelling argued that criminal organizations emerge from the pursuit of economic gains through the control of illicit activities (Schelling, 1967). This economic perspective is further reinforced by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the Palermo Convention, which defines TOC as structured groups "acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offenses established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit" (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004). Yet, attributing TOC's engagement solely to the economic component oversimplifies the equation and overlooks other potential "push factors" (Torrekens & De le Vingne, 2020). In fact, it is logical to assume that it is a combination of various elements that accounts for young people's involvement in TOC. Structural causes and limited opportunities within specific contexts

play a significant role in shaping the motivations of young individuals to participate in organized criminal networks. Therefore, regarding TOC as an economic phenomenon without exploring the influence of structural factors provides a partial explanation of its multifaceted nature. To a lesser extent, but also stated as potential drivers of TOC's engagement are the political situation of the country, its legal framework, and educational opportunities.

When questioned about other structural aspects such as the level of public investment, we once again encounter a prevailing negative sentiment: 80% of the respondents believe that the government's allocation towards public expenditure is insufficient, and even less so in their specific region. It is also worth noting that older participants tend to exhibit a more measured approach when expressing their critiques of economic policy.

## 4.3 Social environment

No definitive conclusions can be drawn from the range of responses regarding how family and the individual's environment impact engagement in TOC. However, we can report that those who acknowledged a connection between the social environment and TOC claimed to personally know someone involved in illicit activities of this nature. Despite this, there is insufficient evidence to dismiss the social environment as a potential contributing factor to TOC. The potential bias of young people who were primarily from urban areas and who have never interacted with members belonging to an illegal network only negates the notion of the social environment as a driving force in an urban setting. It would be prudent to explore if the same holds true for peripheral communities. Furthermore, there is a striking disparity between what respondents identified as the most pressing concerns affecting their generation (such as drugs, alcoholism, and unemployment) and their recognition of these issues as structural factors

influencing young people's involvement in TOC. We assume that this perception stems from a deeply entrenched social vulnerability that has come to accept an illegal economy as a way of life, further perpetuating the belief that the government is incapable of taking action. Dismantling an economy reliant on TOC's illicit activities is a challenging task for any government, but their lack of intervention leaves vulnerable communities more susceptible to the effects of TOC (Caparini, 2022).

#### 4.4 Gender

Although not statistically significant, there is a trend for women to rate the political situation worse than men. The findings indicate dissatisfaction with policies that fail to consider the gender perspective. Likewise, compared to males, women have less confidence in the electoral process.

Male respondents strongly believe that gender plays a role in TOC engagement, a viewpoint not shared by female respondents, which can be seen as a form of positive discrimination. The culture of toxic masculinity immediately associates TOC with activities created by and geared toward men. We posit that men's challenges in providing security for their families often lead them to perceive TOC as a means to express their frustrations and assert their manhood (Anzil, Monserrate, Olivé, & Rubio-Rico, 2022).

#### 4.5 Internet & Social networks

The section of the survey focusing on the internet and social networks reveals significant findings. 60% of respondents acknowledge a correlation between the internet, social networks, and TOC, with 20% considering it highly significant. On average, respondents spend 3-5 hours per day online, making them vulnerable to TOC-related content, fake news, and misinformation. Teenagers

between the ages of 16 and 19, who spend the most time online, are particularly susceptible to these risks.

The ease of encountering illicit content online is evident, as at least two out of the six participants admitted to consuming TOC material. However, only one of them reported it to the authorities. This leads us to infer that young people often fail to fully comprehend the implications of such content. This phenomenon aligns with what psychology literature terms the desensitization effect, wherein repeated exposure leads to normalization (Krahé et al., 2011). Due to their constant exposure to a barrage of information and their difficulty in distinguishing between true content and fake news, respondents choose not to report these incidents to the authorities.

#### 4.6 Cultural agenda

Among the participants in our survey, there is a prevalent belief that culture serves as a resilience factor rather than a driving force for TOC. 60% of the participants pursue hobbies or frequently engage in activities such as going to the movies. However, the absence of other options, such as visiting a museum or attending a concert, in the participants' responses suggests a lack of diversity in their cultural experiences.

#### 4.7 Legislation

Regarding legislation, there is a debate about the government's role in prevention. Only 40% of respondents believe that the State should have primary jurisdiction over TOC prevention.

Another interesting finding reveals that when asked about the primary agents for TOC prevention, respondents advocate for shared competencies between the State and the international community. However, we find a slight contradiction when asking about their beliefs regarding the relationships their government should have with

nearby countries in a joint effort to combat TOC. The majority of respondents are unaware of how relationships between states in the region are impacted by the same issue, and they do not have a position on the type of foreign policy their governments should adopt regarding this matter.

Countries severely affected by TOC, such as South Africa, have collaborated with international organizations like Interpol for decades to reshape domestic politics in line with the international political framework. This demonstrates the significance of global politics and networking with external bodies in the collective struggle against a transnational phenomenon (Ratcliffe, 2003).

Moreover, it is important to note that some respondents believe that drafting new legislation is unnecessary. Instead, they argue that the ineffective implementation of existing laws renders efforts to neutralize TOC useless. The South African model provides a perfect illustration of this case. The establishment of provincial units highlights the importance of implementing strategies at both the national and provincial levels. However, the implementation of these units led to the absorption of competencies previously delegated to local anti-organized crime squads established in 1995 by the South African Police Service (SAPS) (Govender, 2015). This neglects the importance of the local level, leaving South Africa's local police stations without sufficient personnel or equipment to connect smaller-scale offenses with the activities of larger organized networks.

## 5 Conclusion

The transnational nature of organized crime calls for the joint action of different actors in the fight against a phenomenon that transcends the borders of a specific State. In this battle, countries affected by political instability or conflict present ideal scenarios for the proliferation of criminal

groups. Institutional fragmentation, lack of political structures, or differences in the legal frameworks of each country are exploited by TOC networks to carry out their commercial transactions. Combined with an extensive coastline, and without a maritime governance policy, SADC countries have seen their TOC rates increase in recent years. The most prevalent type of TOC in the region includes drug trafficking, particularly problematic in the South Africa, piracy, poaching, and trafficking and exploitation of human beings.

The overarching objectives of this study were to delve into the structural factors that drive youth engagement in TOC and contribute to the development of strategies to enhance resilience at the community level. Therefore, our primary research question led us to examine the social, political, and economic challenges faced by young people in these four countries.

The conclusion drawn from the examination of these structural factors, as collected in the various sections of the questionnaire, is that there is no singular set of factors that solely drives young people to participate in TOC. Instead, organized crime emerges as a complex phenomenon influenced by a variety of individual, contextual, and societal elements, with the significance of each factor shaped by the individual's personal trajectory.

Firstly, we highlight the importance of economic issues. While not being the sole factor, financial difficulties significantly contribute to the explanation of why young people resort to engaging in TOC as a means of escape.

Corruption within the elite and political discontent are also highly significant in this context. Younger generations become increasingly frustrated and lose trust in government institutions due to the absence of effective political mechanisms to address social grievances. Compounding the issue, efforts to combat organized crime are rendered ineffective due to the extensive infiltration of TOC agents within the very same author-

ities and institutions. This reality raises doubts about the effectiveness of programs aimed at dismantling TOC networks.

Social media platforms also play a crucial role. With young people spending an average of 3 to 5 hours online each day, they become highly susceptible to TOC-related content. In fact, a majority of the respondents acknowledged encountering such content on the internet. However, they struggle to differentiate between legitimate information and fake news, especially when the latter promotes or involves illegal activities. As these dynamics become normalized online, participants often choose not to report these incidents to the authorities. Furthermore, the lack of proper mechanisms and the authorities' inability to provide accessible channels for reporting further contribute to the impunity surrounding these crimes.

Gender offers intriguing perspectives. Male and female participants hold different views on politics, and this extends to how they perceive the relationship between gender and TOC engagement. Male respondents tend to believe that gender plays a significant role, viewing organized crime as an activity primarily associated with men. On the other hand, women do not see gender as a defining factor in TOC involvement.

All of these factors, which are linked to the challenges and frustrations identified by the respondents, need to be taken into consideration when addressing the development of resilience among young people. We emphasize that structural factors strongly influence the decision of young individuals to engage in TOC, and therefore any response to combat it should involve collaboration between the government, civil society organizations, and local stakeholders. For more detailed recommendations and policy insights on enhancing the resilience of young people against TOC, please refer to the attached policy brief published on the RAUN website.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the

region, we urge fellow researchers to address the methodological limitations of our study and delve further into the examination of structural factors influencing young people's involvement in TOC networks. Unfortunately, a larger sample size was not feasible due to resource constraints, both in terms of finances and personnel. As a suggestion, and reflecting on our own critique during the preparation of this paper, we recommend considering the inclusion of responses from incomplete questionnaires if the sample size is insufficient.

The concept of resilience has demonstrated the remarkable ability of communities to safeguard themselves against TOC. However, this can lead to neglect from governmental entities, as they rely on community resilience without providing necessary support. To ensure the success of a community resilience approach, it is crucial to equip communities with the skills and resources to develop resilience. In these endeavors, it is imperative to empower younger generations as key stakeholders in TOC prevention.

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# A Results

## A.1 Origin (country, NGO)

All six respondents were from Zimbabwe, despite efforts to diversify the sample. However, these numbers indicate a higher initial inclination among young people to engage in discussions on this topic. It is worth noting that Zimbabwe is the only country examined in this study that does not have a coastline, despite its proximity to the shore.

Among the NGOs that contacted the participants, three cases were linked to Zimbabwe United Nations Association-ZUNA, while two participants were connected to the Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drugs Network. Both organizations focus on combating various aspects of TOC in the African country. In one instance, a participant from Zimbabwe reached out to us through the social media campaign. On average, respondents took approximately 14 minutes and 46 seconds to complete the questionnaire, with a median time of 18 minutes and 47 seconds.

## A.2 Background data (gender, age, residential area, civil status, household composition, level of education)

There is gender parity among the six survey participants: three are men, and three are women (fig. 4).

50% of the participants (three participants) are between 16 and 19 years old, while the remaining three range from 20-22, 23-26, and 27-30 (fig. 5). As for their place of residence (fig. 6), three of them live in urban areas. There is one case that claims to be from an urban setting even though the person lives in the suburbs of a large city. Another one lives in a residential district. The remaining case comes from a rural area.

Gender:

Answer	Count	Percentage
Male (PB1C1)	3	50.00%
Female (PB1C2)	3	50.00%
Other (PB1C3)	0	0.00%
No answer	0	0.00%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

Figure 4: Count and percentages corresponding to the initial question on gender.

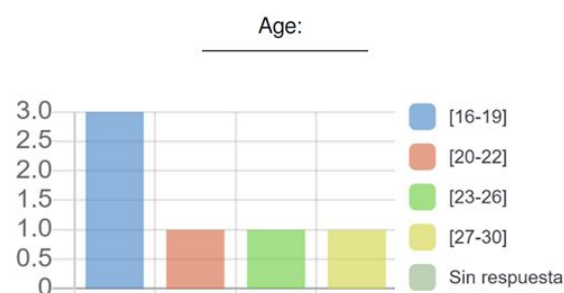


Figure 5: Results of the age question.



Figure 6: Results of the question on place of residence.

Regarding their civil status (fig. 7), three of them define themselves as single. There is also one case of a married person, as well as another two participants who preferred not to answer this question. In addition, only one participant out of the six is emancipated: four of them still live with their parents, and the remaining preferred not to answer the question (fig. 8).

The educational level varies substantially (fig. 9). Two respondents stated they had only completed elementary school (40%), while two others said





Figure 7: Results of the question on participants' civil status.

Answer	Count	Percentage
Emancipated (PB5C1)	1	16.67%
Live with my parents (PB5C2)	4	66.67%
Live with other relatives (PB5C3)	0	0.00%
Live with friends (PB5C4)	0	0.00%
Under guardianship (PB5C5)	0	0.00%
No answer	1	16.67%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

Figure 8: Count and percentages on household composition.

they had enrolled in college and begun a degree program despite not having finished their studies (40%). In one instance (20%), the participant preferred not to respond.

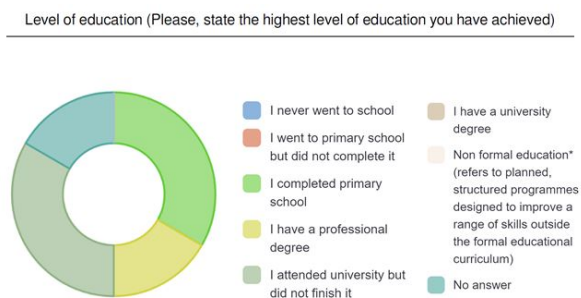


Figure 9: Results of the question on participants' level of education.

### A.3 Economic deprivation

The questionnaire's economic section began with two inquiries on the root causes of TOC. All five

respondents unanimously recognise the economy as a key factor in TOC, while only one person cites the familiar and social environment as influential. The political situation, legislation, and educational opportunities are also described by three respondents as potential causes of TOC (fig. 10).

Summary for CPQ01

Do you see a relationship between 'transnational organised crime' and the following terms? If you do, please select which ones (multiple choice)

Answer	Count	Percentage
Economic deprivation (CP1C1)	5	83.33%
Social environment inheritance (CP1C2)	1	16.67%
Political conjuncture (CP1C3)	3	50.00%
Education opportunities (CP1C4)	3	50.00%
Cultural agenda and infrastructure (CP1C5)	2	33.33%
Politics and legislation (CP1C6)	3	50.00%
Internet and social networks (CP1C7)	2	33.33%
Gender (CP1C8)	1	16.67%
I do not see any relation between transnational organised crime and these terms (CP1C9)	0	0.00%

Figure 10: Count and percentages on question CPQ01.

Four young people identify the economy as an important factor leading to TOC (figure 11). In fact, the only person who disagrees with this statement is precisely the oldest respondent and the only one who is actually married (figs. 12-13). One respondent argues that young people join TOC so they can earn a living, while the other respondent points out how a possible economic downturn in one country can indirectly impact others.

Summary for EDQ01

Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Economic deprivation is an important factor influencing youth in my community/country to engage with TOC. In case of agreement, please add in the box below why you think this is important

Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree (ED1C1)	4	66.67%
Agree (ED1C2)	0	0.00%
Neither agree nor disagree (ED1C3)	0	0.00%
Disagree (ED1C4)	1	16.67%
Strongly disagree (ED1C5)	0	0.00%
Comments	2	33.33%
No answer	1	16.67%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

ID	Response
9	Because of the economic status youngsters are now engaging in crimes to earn a living
16	because a decline in the economy sector of a country affects also the other countries interms of foreign trade and tourism

Figure 11: Counts, percentages, and comments on question EDQ01.

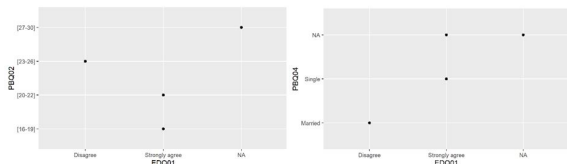


Figure 12: Graphics with the results of question EDQ01 according to the age and the civil status of the respondents.

According to respondents, drug trafficking, human organ trafficking, and corruption are the most prevalent TOC crimes in Zimbabwe (fig. 13).

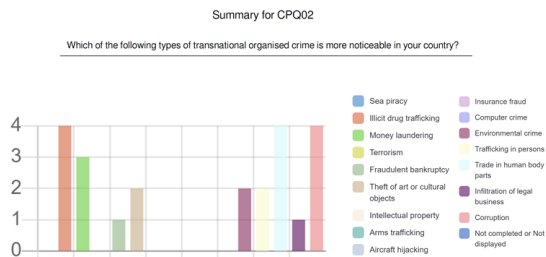


Figure 13: Results of the question CPQ02.

Respondents gave an average score of 2.67 for local government performance on the TOC, with one responding "very unsatisfied" and five responding "very satisfied" (fig. 14). As a result, even though three of them rather preferred not to respond to this question, respondents grant their respective administrations more passes (2) than failures (1). The youngest respondents are the ones giving the highest ratings (fig. 15).

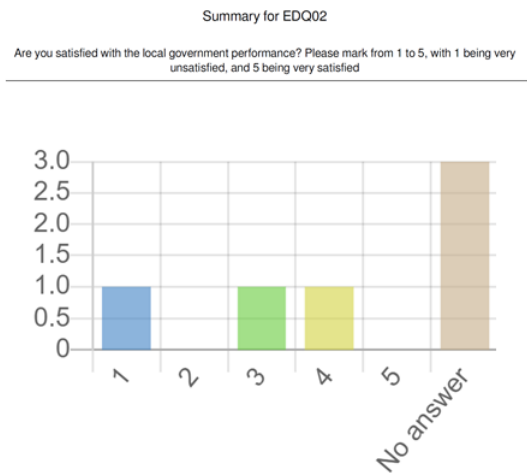


Figure 14: Results of the question EDQ02.

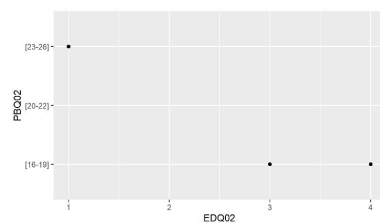


Figure 15: Results of the question EDQ02 depending on age.

Young people also identify unemployment (66.67%) and little public investment (50%) as the two main economic problems in the country (fig. 16). The response to this question is amplified in four cases: participants refer to Zimbabwe's runaway inflation in two cases, whereas one participant emphasizes investors' apprehension. One of them also points to unemployment being an endemic problem in every country and the difficulty of eradicating it.

Summary for EDQ03

Point out the most relevant problems that affect the economy of your country. In case you want to add others, please specify

Inflation	5	83.33%
Unemployment	4	66.67%
Insufficient minimum wage	1	16.67%
High taxes	1	16.67%
Little public investment	3	50.00%
Little diversification of labour supply	1	16.67%
Clientelism	0	0.00%
Racism	1	16.67%
Others	0	0.00%

ID	Response
8	Inflation in Zimbabwe was high as the world interprete however, it has reached its PEAK POINT and has a stable money rate for the past 3 months.
9	There is no stabilisation between the Zimbabwe dollar and the American dollar.
8	Every country has unemployed civilians. Even developed countries like Canada. Unemployment is a problem we can never fix but rather reduce its rate.
8	Even with my ruling party's development motto, "Zimbabwe is Open For Business", one can argue investors are hesitant to invest in developing projects.

Figure 16: Count, percentages and comments on question EDQ03.

Different viewpoints exist on the distribution of investment across the country. 50% think that investment is badly distributed, while other 33.33% remain neutral. Only one person preferred not to answer this question (fig.17). The younger the age of the respondents, the more they are in favour of this statement (fig.17). However, when asked about public funding in their region (fig.18), 33.33% strongly agree, another 16.67% agree, and another 16.67% take a neutral position. Only one respondent (16.67%) strongly disagrees with the investment in his/her region.

Summary for EDQ04

Please, specify your level of agreement with the following statement: The country's economic investment is distributed equally among all regions

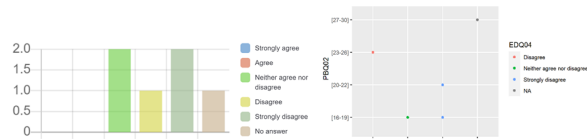


Figure 17: Results of the question EDQ04, and according to participants' ages.

Summary for EDQ05

Please, specify your level of agreement with the following statement: Public economic investment in my region is appropriate

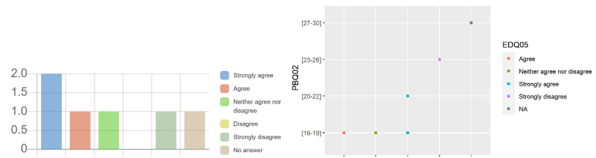


Figure 18: Results of the question EDQ05, and depending on age.

In response to further in-depth inquiries, out of six respondents, four said they were still in school and so unable to work (fig. 19), while another identified himself as unemployed and actively seeking employment (fig. 20). These findings are consistent with age logic: the unemployed participant is older (22-26 years) than the students, who are all under 22 years of age (fig. 19). When asked if there was any differences between their job expectations and the last offer they accepted, 50% preferred not to answer. Among the people who answered, 33.33% did affirmatively (fig. 21) and clarified that their job expectations were fulfilled, but the conditions were precarious or exploitative (fig. 22).

Summary for EDQ06

What is your current employment situation?

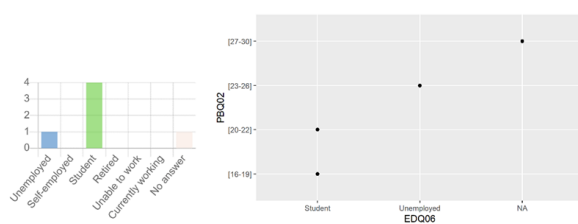


Figure 19: Results of the question EDQ06, and depending on age.

Summary for EDQ07

If unemployed: I am...

Answer	Count	Percentage
Looking for work (ED7C1)	1	16.67%
Not looking for work (ED7C2) (ED7C4)	0	0.00%
No answer	0	0.00%
Not displayed	5	83.33%

Figure 20: Count and percentages on question EDQ07.

Summary for EDQ09



Figure 21: Results of the question EDQ09.

Summary for EDQ10

If yes, which of the following statements best fits your case?

Answer	Count	Percentage
My expectations are not met at all (E10C1)	0	0.00%
It is not exactly the role described in the offer (E10C2)	0	0.00%
They are fulfilled but the working conditions are precarious/exploitative (E10C3)	2	33.33%
No answer	0	0.00%
Not displayed	4	66.67%

Figure 22: Count and percentages on question EDQ10.

## A.4 Social environment inheritance

The opening question of this section focuses on whether respondents identify the social context as a determining factor in TOC's engagement (fig. 23). Respondents' answers show a wide range of opinions; from highly in favor, in favor, neutral, against, and strongly against this statement. This variation doesn't adhere to any educational or age trends (fig. 24). One respondent justifies his answer by arguing that its impact is only local and does not affect other countries.

Summary for SEIQ01

Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Social environment is an important factor influencing youth in my community/country to engage with TOC. In case of agreement, please add in the box below why you think this is important

Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree (SE1C1)	1	16.67%
Agree (SE1C2)	1	16.67%
Neither agree nor disagree (SE1C3)	1	16.67%
Disagree (SE1C4)	1	16.67%
Strongly disagree (SE1C5)	1	16.67%
Comments	1	16.67%
No answer	1	16.67%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

ID	Response
16	because its effect does not have impact on other countries

Figure 23: Count, percentages and comments on question SEIQ01.

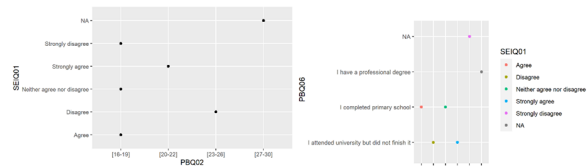


Figure 24: Results of the question SEIQ01 according to participants' ages and education level.

Further, 66.67% of respondents declared they were unaware of anyone they know who is associated with organized crime (fig. 25). One participant between 20-22 years of age and that attended college is acquainted with someone connected to TOC; however, he or she declined to elaborate on the nature of their relationship (fig. 26).

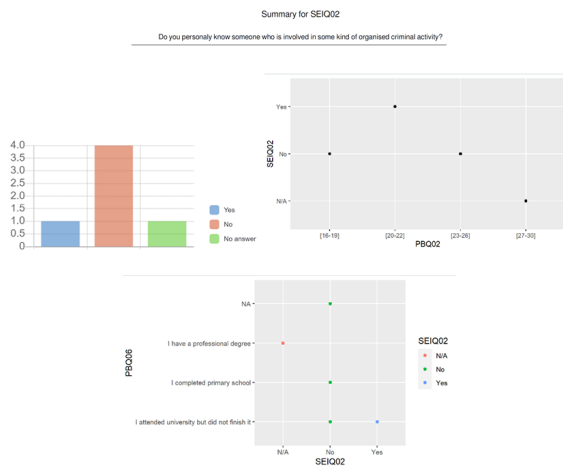


Figure 25: Results of the question SEIQ02, also according to participants' ages and education level.

Summary for SEIQ03

In case affirmative: what is the level of closeness you have with that person?

Answer	Count	Percentage
He/she is a family member (SE3C1)	0	0.00%
He/she is a friend (SE3C2)	0	0.00%
He/she is a member of my neighbourhood (SE3C3)	0	0.00%
He/she is an acquaintance (SE3C4)	0	0.00%
He/she is someone I know through other people (SE3C5)	0	0.00%
Others (SE3C6)	0	0.00%
No answer	1	16.67%
Not displayed	5	83.33%

Figure 26: Count and percentages on question SEIQ03.

Drugs, alcoholism, and unemployment are virtually universally cited as the three biggest issues young people face in their country (66.67%). Other youth issues include racism, which only received one vote (16.67%), poverty (50%), criminality and organized crime (33.33%). However, there seems to be different opinions when asked whether there are structural causes behind the standardised profile of young people enrolling in TOC (fig. 28). Instead of taking a neutral position, each respondent chose one of the following: strongly agree (16.67%), agree (16.67%), disagree (16.67%), or strongly disagree (16.67%). There is also one individual (33.33%) who would rather not voice their views on the subject.

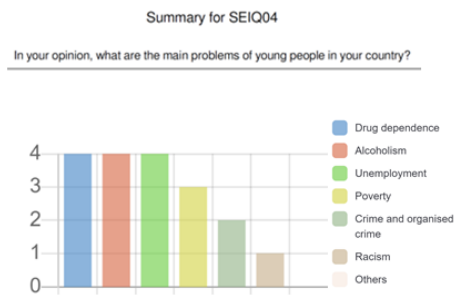


Figure 27: Results of the questions SEIQ04.

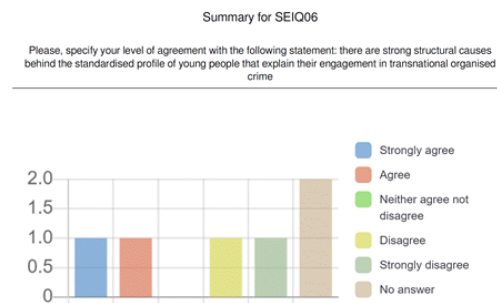


Figure 28: Results of the questions SEIQ06.

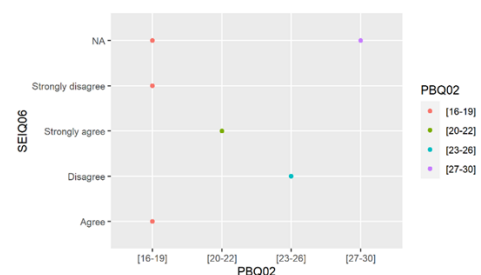


Figure 29: Results of the question SEIQ06 depending on respondents' age.

Despite not being the only factor contributing to their vulnerability, 33.33% reported that the state marginalizes their community based on their ethnicity or social group (fig. 30). In contrast, 16.67% of respondents believe that the government treats all communities equally. Three respondents preferred not to answer this question (40%).

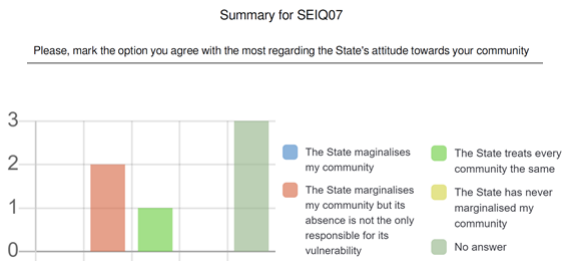


Figure 30: Results of the question SEIQ07.

### A.5 Engagement in TOC

The most delicate and private inquiries are included in this portion of the survey. Figure 31 shows that 20% of respondents admitted to being drawn to take part in a TOC activity (fig. 31). This individual, a single male who lives with his parents, is considerably young; between 16–19 according to figures 32 and 33. Additionally, he declined to reveal their level of schooling (fig. 31). 50% of the respondents answered negatively, and two preferred not to respond (33,33%).

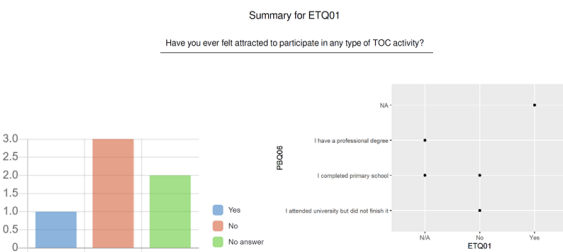


Figure 31: Results of the question ETQ01, and depending on participants' educational level.



Figure 32: Results of the question ETQ01 depending on participants' gender and civil status.

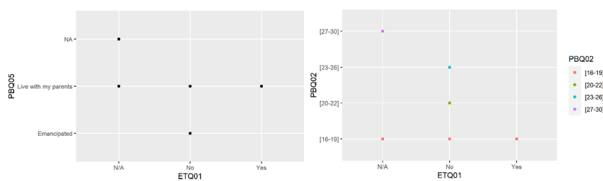


Figure 33: Results of the question ETQ01 depending on participants' household composition and age.

The next figure (fig. 34) shows that the majority of respondents (66.67%) denied taking part in TOC, while the remaining two respondents (33.33%) selected the "no answer" option. As there were no affirmative responses to this question, respondents were not required to answer the following question, which focused on prior connections to TOC groups.

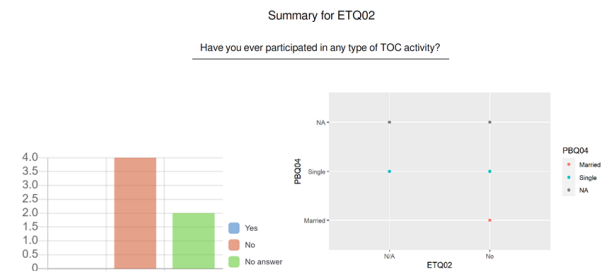


Figure 34: Results of the question ETQ02, including participants' civil status.

## A.6 Political conjuncture

In the opening question of the block on politics, participants were asked to indicate their degree of satisfaction with the political situation in their country on a scale from 1 to 5 (fig. 35). The results are very polarized, with 33.33% clearly dissatisfied with the current state of affairs by scoring 1, while another 33.33% agree with it by scoring 3 (16.67%) and 4 (16.67%). 33.33% declined to respond to this question. Women score their country's political situation worse than men, who appear to be rather satisfied with it. If we break these results down by age and educational level, younger and less educated respondents are the most satisfied with their respective governments (fig. 36).

Similar responses were given when asked to rate their level of confidence in electoral processes (fig. 35). 60% give it the lowest rating, while 30% narrowly trust electoral processes. In comparison to male participants, women show lower levels of confidence, particularly among the youngest respondents who provided the highest scores (fig. 37).

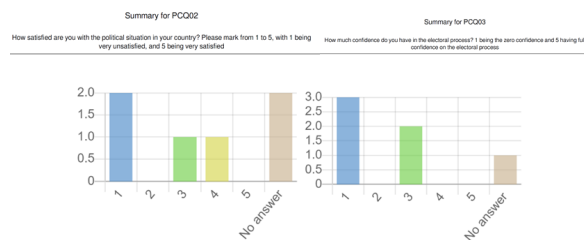


Figure 35: Results of the questions PCQ02 and PCQ03.



Figure 36: Results of the question PCQ02, including participants' gender and age.



Figure 37: Results of the question PCQ03, including participants' gender and age.

When asked specifically about the actions or practices carried out by their respective governments in preventing TOC (fig. 38), 66.67% said they fall short of expectations. 50% of people believe that governments could do more to prevent TOC, while 16.67% said they take no action to curb it. Results for government initiatives to discourage young people from enrolling in TOC are also comparable (fig. 38): 16.67% think they are doing their best, 33.33% believe they could do better, and another 33.33% think they are not doing enough. 50% of respondents preferred not to answer this question.

Summary for PCQ04

Do you consider that your government promotes actions or practices to prevent TOC?		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Their management is ideal (PC4C1)	0	0.00%
They do a lot (PC4C2)	0	0.00%
Not enough, they could do more (PC4C3)	3	50.00%
No, they do nothing (PC4C4)	1	16.67%
No answer	2	33.33%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

Summary for PCQ05

Do you consider that your government promotes actions or practices to prevent young people enrolment in TOC?		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Their management is ideal (PC5C1)	0	0.00%
They do a lot (PC5C2)	0	0.00%
They do their best taking into account the situation (PC5C3)	1	16.67%
Not enough, They could do more (PC5C4)	1	16.67%
No, they do nothing (PC5C5)	1	16.67%
No answer	3	50.00%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

Figure 38: Counts and percentages on question PCQ04 and PCQ05.

## A.7 Education opportunities

50% of respondents indicated that education could have some influence on TOC (fig. 39): 33.33% agreed; 16.67% strongly agreed. In support of this stance, one respondent cited the educational and financial disadvantages and the ability to study abroad. Despite this, another 33.33% reject the notion that education affects TOC.

Summary for EOQ01

Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Educational level is an important factor influencing youth in my community/country to engage with TOC. In case of agreement, please add in the box below why you think this is important

Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree (PC1C1)	1	16.67%
Agree (PC1C2)	2	33.33%
Neither agree nor disagree (PC1C3)	0	0.00%
Disagree (PC1C4)	1	16.67%
Strongly disagree (PC1C5)	1	16.67%
Comments	1	16.67%
No answer	1	16.67%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

ID	Response
16	because they are being deprived from opportunities of going to study abroad

Figure 39: Count, percentages, and comments on the question EOQ01.

The satisfaction level with their country's education system varied, but none received the minimum score (fig. 40). The arithmetic mean is 3.5, with only one person considering that the education system is failing. Respondents, therefore,

have high regard for the educational system they attended. Young people aged 16 to 19 gave the two highest scores (fig. 40).

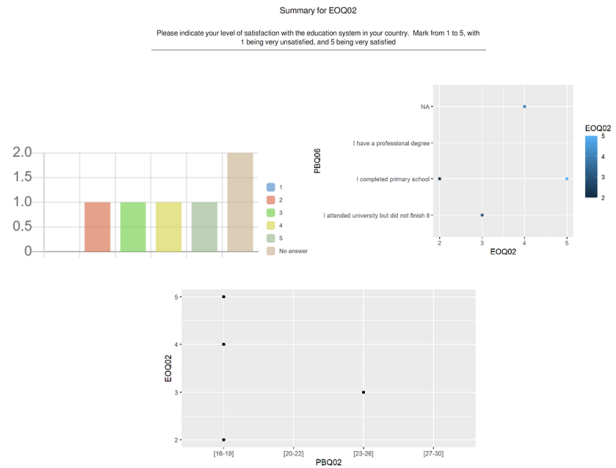


Figure 40: Results of the questions EOQ02, taking also into account participants' educational level and age.

This trend is broken when they are questioned about their own experiences (fig. 41). We can see two distinct positions: those who believe they had a good education (33.33%), and those who think they wished for better opportunities (16.67%) or did not have proper schooling (16.67%). Among those who are dissatisfied, we found one person who decided not to disclose their level of education, and one case who attended university (fig. 41). The age difference between these two individuals is considerable; one falls into the 16–19 age range, while the other falls into the 23–26 age range (fig. 41).



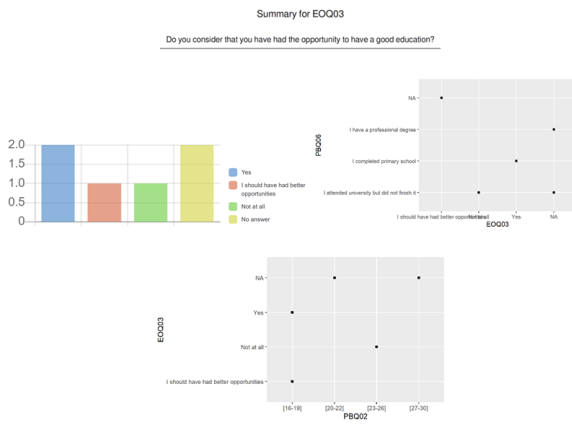


Figure 41: Results of the question EOQ03.

Regarding parental and environmental support when studying (fig. 42), 66.67% said that they felt supported to varying degrees. We also found that the two participants who preferred not to answer this question belong to the age groups of 20-22 and 27-30 (fig. 43).

Summary for EOQ04

Indicate the level of support from your family and environment during your education

Answer	Count	Percentage
They totally supported me (EO4C1)	3	50.00%
They supported me (EO4C3)	1	16.67%
I did not have their support (EO4C5)	0	0.00%
No answer	2	33.33%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

Figure 42: Count and percentages of the question EOQ04.

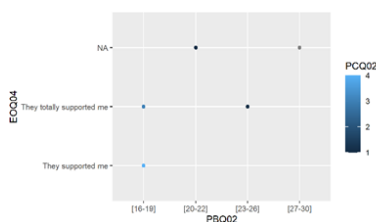


Figure 43: Results of the question EOQ04, considering also age.

On the other hand, 50% of respondents from all age groups (fig. 44) think that schools should or-

ganize more activities related to TOC prevention (fig. 45). The results on this point show no correlation with the age or the educational attainment of the participants (fig. 44).

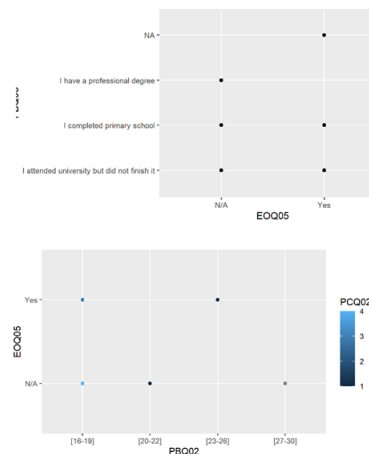


Figure 44: Results of the questions EOQ05, taking also into account participants' educational level and age.

Summary for EOQ05

Should schools organise more TOC prevention activities?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Y)	3	50.00%
No (N)	0	0.00%
No answer	3	50.00%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

Figure 45: Count and percentages on the question EOQ05.

## A.8 Cultural agenda & infrastructure

According to the responses, only 16.67% of young people in all four countries believe that culture is a driving force behind TOC (fig. 46).

Summary for CAIQ01

Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Cultural & infrastructure opportunities are important factors preventing youth engagement with TOC in my community/country. In case of agreement, please add in the box below why you think this is important

Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree (CA1C1)	0	0.00%
Agree (CA1C2)	1	16.67%
Neither agree nor disagree (CA1C3)	1	16.67%
Disagree (CA1C4)	2	33.33%
Strongly disagree (CA1C5)	0	0.00%
Comments	1	16.67%
No answer	2	33.33%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

ID	Response
16	because its effect does not affect other countries

Figure 46: Counts, percentages, and comments on the question CAIQ01.

The following five questions (fig. 47) focused on how frequently respondents participate in different cultural and sporting activities. The least commonly practiced activities—none of the six respondents perform them, not even annually—include going to a museum and participating in group sports. On the other hand, practicing a hobby (16.67%) or going to the cinema (16.67%) are activities that participants do more often, in some cases even on a weekly basis. However, working with an organization is the activity in which young people are most invested: 50% do this, sometimes collaborating with them on a monthly (16.67%) or annual (33.33%) basis.

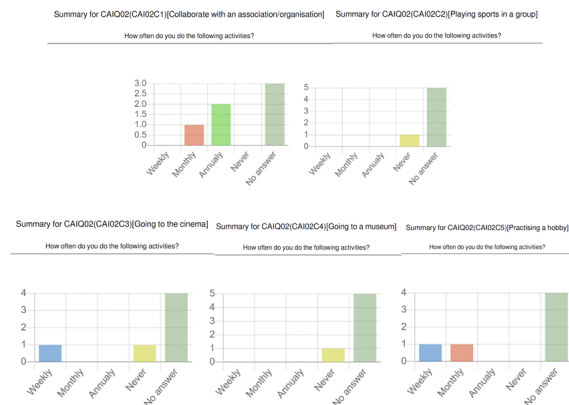


Figure 47: Results of the question CAIQ02.

This set of inquiries was the prelude to two questions that dealt with the connection between TOC,

culture, and sport. In the first one (fig. 48), 66.67% of the survey respondents expressed varying levels of satisfaction with the cultural offerings in their local communities. 40% consider the cultural offer to be "sufficient", and another 33.33% defines it as "varied". In the same vein, 66.67% of respondents who were asked whether there was a connection between joining a sports club and preventing TOC agreed (fig. 48).

Summary for CAIQ03

Does the cultural offer in your environment meet your expectations?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Not at all (CA3C1)	0	0.00%
It could be better (CA3C2)	0	0.00%
I think it is good enough (CA3C3)	2	33.33%
Yes, there is a varied cultural offer (CA3C4)	2	33.33%
No answer	2	33.33%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

Summary for CAIQ04

Do you believe that being part of a sports club can prevent a person from engaging with TOC activities?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Y)	4	66.67%
No (N)	1	16.67%
No answer	1	16.67%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

Figure 48: Counts and comments of the questions CAIQ03 and CAIQ04.

## A.9 Legislation

Regarding the significance of legislation as a determining factor in the prevention of TOC, there are two distinct and well-defined viewpoints (fig. 49). 33.3% of respondents support its preventive capacity, while 33.33% believe it does not play such a role. Two respondents would rather not respond. The answer to this question is unaffected by the individual's educational background (fig. 50).

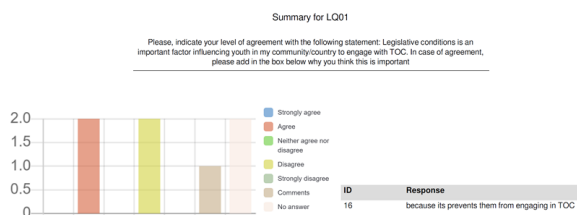


Figure 49: Results and comments of the question LQ01.

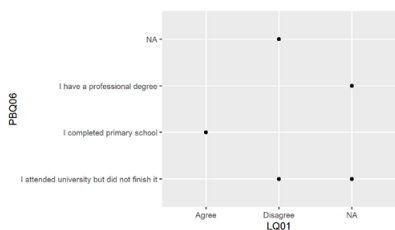


Figure 50: Results of the question LQ01 regarding participants' educational level.

When it comes to whether TOC neutralization should be a State or inter-state competence (fig. 51), the majority of respondents (33.33%) preferred that the State should share these competencies with the international community. Regarding the opinion of respondents with varying levels of education (fig. 52), 50% believed that the current legislation is sufficient, with the main issue being its ineffective implementation (fig. 53).

Summary for LQ02

Do you think that the neutralisation of TOC should be a State competence or should it be shared with other states in the region, international actors, etc.?

Answer	Count	Percentage
It should remain a competence of the State (L2C1)	1	16.67%
The State should share competences with countries from the same region (L2C2)	0	0.00%
Competences should be shared within the international community (L2C3)	2	33.33%
No answer	3	50.00%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

Figure 51: Count and percentages on the question LQ02.

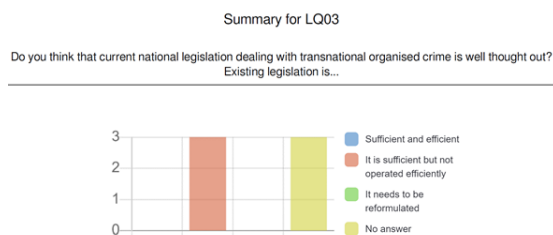


Figure 52: Results of the question LQ03.



Figure 53: Results of the question LQ03 regarding participants' educational level.

With respect to relations between neighboring states and the possible impact on their respective countries (fig. 54), the majority of those surveyed chose not to answer this question (66.67%), and another person indicated that they did not know how to answer (16.67%). One respondent, though (16.67%), did claim that interstate cooperation benefits their nation and strengthens control over TOC.

Summary for LQ04

Please, indicate how relations with neighbouring countries affect the incidence of TOC in your country

Answer	Count	Percentage
It influences positively by reinforcing control over organised crime (L4C1)	1	16.67%
It influences negatively by widening its market niche (L4C2)	0	0.00%
It has no major noticeable effect on decreasing crime rates (L4C3)	0	0.00%
I would not know how to answer (L4C4)	1	16.67%
No answer	4	66.67%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

Figure 54: Count and percentages on the question LQ04.

The final inquiry in the legislation section concerned whether the State ought to invest more money in bolstering the ports and the marine industry in order to stop unlawful trafficking

through these channels. Three respondents expressed varying degrees of agreement with this statement, while the remaining 50% preferred not to answer (fig. 53). Responses to this question are not influenced by educational level (fig. 55).

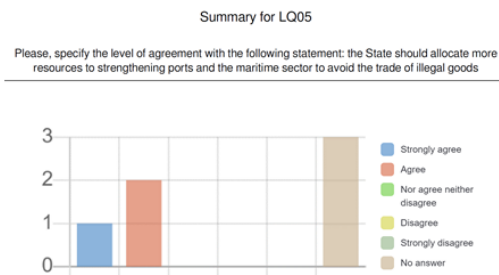


Figure 55: Results of the question LQ05.

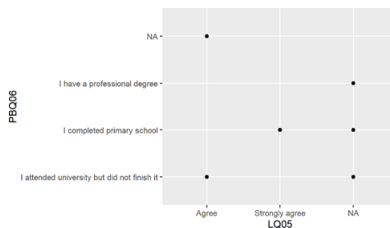


Figure 56: Results of the question LQ05 regarding participants' educational level.

## A.10 Internet & social networks

66, 67% of the participants believe that the internet and social media influence young people to engage in TOC (fig. 57).

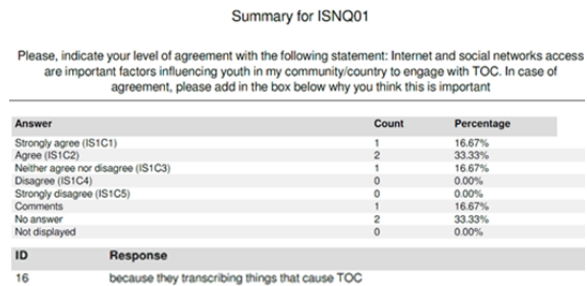


Figure 57: Counts, percentages, and comments on the question ISNQ01.

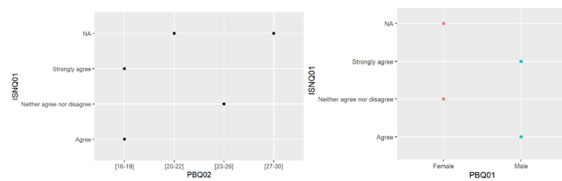


Figure 58: Results of the questions ISNQ01 regarding participants' age and gender.

66.67% of respondents confirm that they spend more than one hour a day online, with the most repeated value being 1-3 hours (fig. 59). There are instances where people spend between 3-5 (1 person) and even more than 5 hours a day online (one person). The participants who spend the most time online are the youngest; those between the ages of 16 and 19 (fig. 60). The time spent online declines as people get older. Likewise, the graphic resulting from cross-referencing these responses with gender reveals that men use the Internet more hours than women (fig. 60). When asked how much time they spend on social networks every day, the results are comparable (fig. 59). 50% of users claim to spend more than an hour online, with 1-3 hours being the most frequent value. Responses to this question exhibit the same age and gender dynamics as in the prior instance (fig. 61).

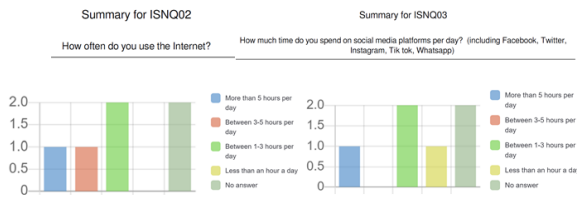


Figure 59: Results of the questions ISNQ02 and ISNQ03.

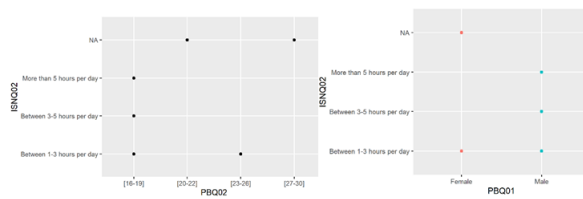


Figure 60: Results of the questions ISNQ02 regarding participants' age and gender.

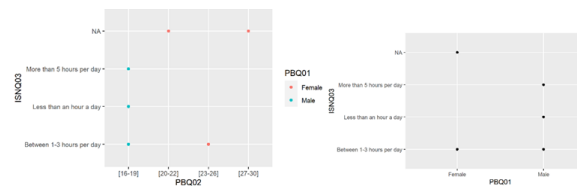


Figure 61: Results of the questions ISNQ03 regarding participants' age and gender.

Regarding the connection between the Internet, social media, and TOC (fig. 62), only one male respondent (16.67%) acknowledged coming across TOC content online. Another respondent (16.67%) suspected encountering TOC content but could not confirm it. The participant who responded positively belongs to the youngest age range, from 16 to 19 years old (fig. 63). Two respondents (33.33%) selected "no answer," which is a relatively high percentage considering the size of the sample.

Regarding the two individuals who either suspected that they had viewed TOC-related content online, one of them reported the incident to the police, while the other did not (fig. 62). When

asked if they had shared such content online, 50% of the respondents responded with a resounding "no," while 50% declined to respond (fig. 64).

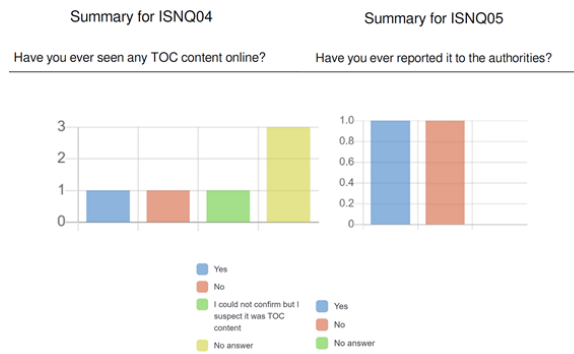


Figure 62: Results of the questions ISNQ04 and ISNQ05.

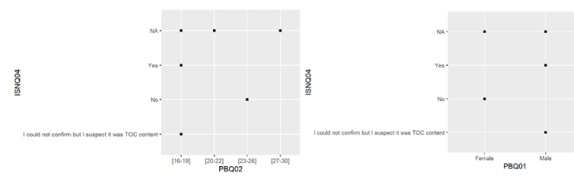


Figure 63: Results of the questions ISNQ04 regarding participants' age and gender.

Summary for ISNQ06

Have you shared TOC content yourself online?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Y)	0	0.00%
No (N)	3	50.00%
No answer	3	50.00%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

Figure 64: Count and percentages on the question ISNQ06.

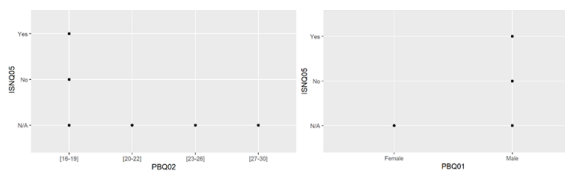


Figure 65: Results of the questions ISNQ05 regarding participants' age and gender.

## A.11 Gender

The final section of the questionnaire contained three questions focusing on the relationship between gender and TOC. To varying degrees, 33.33% of participants feel that gender is a significant factor encouraging young people in their community to become involved in TOC. It's important to emphasize that men make up the majority of participants who hold this viewpoint (fig. 66). Among female participants, 16.67% strongly disagreed with this assertion, while 50% preferred not to respond (fig. 67).

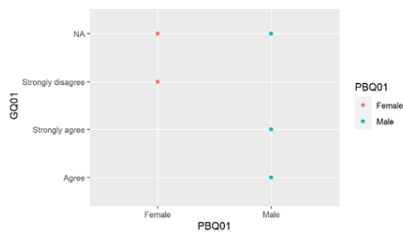


Figure 66: Results of the question GQ01 regarding participants' gender.

Summary for GQ01

Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Gender is an important factor influencing youth in my community/country to engage with TOC. In case of agreement, please add in the box below why you think this is important

Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree (G1C1)	1	16.67%
Agree (G1C2)	1	16.67%
Neither agree nor disagree (G1C3)	0	0.00%
Disagree (G1C4)	0	0.00%
Strongly disagree (G1C5)	1	16.67%
Comments	0	0.00%
No answer	3	50.00%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

Figure 67: Count and percentages of the question GQ01.

Concerning gender inequality, 50% of respondents (three males) believe that women do not experience more gender inequalities than men, whereas 33.33% (two women) disagree (fig. 69). Another 50% of respondents declined to give their opinions, which indicates a high non-response rate. On the other hand, when asked whether women are less respected than men (fig. 68), there is a tie between two positions: 33.33% say yes, but another 33.33% say that women and men are treated equally (fig. 70).



Figure 68: Results of the questions GQ02 and GQ03.



Figure 69: Results of the question GQ02 regarding participants' gender.

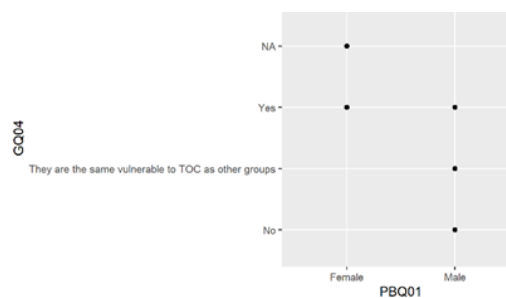


Figure 72: Results of the question GQ04 regarding participants' gender.



Figure 70: Results of the question GQ03 regarding participants' gender.

This pattern is repeated when asked whether they consider women to be more vulnerable to the consequences of TOC (fig. 71): 33.33% say yes (fig. 72), while another 33.33% (two males) say no (16.67%) or that they are just as vulnerable as other groups (16.67%). Accordingly, women are more likely than men to report vulnerabilities or inequalities based on their gender.



Figure 71: Results of the question GQ04.

Further, one male respondent (16.67%) reported detecting women involved in TOC in his country (fig. 73).

Summary for GQ05

Have you noticed women perpetrators of TOC activities in your country?		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Y)	1	16.67%
No (N)	1	16.67%
No answer	4	66.67%
Not displayed	0	0.00%

Summary for GQ06

In case affirmative, what kind of illicit activities are they most likely to involved in?		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Sea piracy (G6C1)	0	0.00%
Illicit drug trafficking (G6C2)	1	16.67%
Money laundering (G6C3)	1	16.67%
Terrorism (G6C4)	0	0.00%
Fraudulent bankruptcy (G6C5)	0	0.00%
Intellectual property (G6C6)	0	0.00%
Arms trafficking (G6C7)	0	0.00%
Aircraft hijacking (G6C8)	0	0.00%
Insurance fraud (G6C9)	0	0.00%
Computer crime (G6C10)	0	0.00%
Environmental crime (G6C11)	1	16.67%
Trafficking in persons (G6C12)	1	16.67%
Trade in human body parts (G6C13)	1	16.67%
Infiltration in legal business (G6C14)	1	16.67%
Corruption (G6C15)	1	16.67%
Not displayed	5	83.33%

Figure 73: Counts and percentages on the questions GQ05 and GQ06.

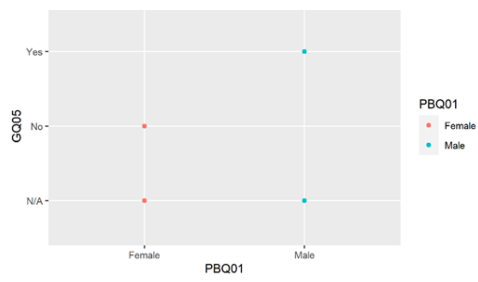


Figure 74: Results of the question GQ05 regarding participants' gender.



**ANNEX 1. Table of questionnaire sections together with the 59 questions, their variables, and typologies.**

Section	Question code	Question	Variable type
Survey Information	SIQ01	Please, write the name of the NGO that contacted you	Categorical
Participants' background	PBQ01	Gender	Categorical
	PBQ03	Residential area	Categorical
	PBQ04	Civil status	Categorical
	PBQ05	Household composition	Categorical
	PBQ06	Level of education (Please, state the highest level of education you have achieved)	Ordinal
	Concepts	CPQ01	Do you see a relationship between 'transnational organised crime' and the following terms? If you do, please select which ones
CPQ02		Which of the following types of transnational organised crime is more noticeable in your country?	Categorical

Section	Question code	Question	Variable type
Economic deprivation	EDQ01	Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Economic deprivation is an important factor influencing youth in my community/country to engage with TOC. In case of agreement, please add in the box below why you think this is important	Ordinal
	EDQ02	Are you satisfied with the local government performance? Please mark from 1 to 5, with 1 being very unsatisfied, and 5 being very satisfied	Ordinal
	EDQ03	Point out the most relevant problems that affect the economy of your country. In case you want to add others, please specify	Categorical
	EDQ04	Please, specify your level of agreement with the following statement: The country's economic investment is distributed equally among all regions	Ordinal
	EDQ05	Please, specify your level of agreement with the following statement: Public economic investment in my region is appropriate	Ordinal
	EDQ06	What is your current employment situation?	Categorical
	EDQ07	If unemployed: I am...	Categorical
	EDQ08	If currently working...	Categorical
	EDQ09	Is there a gap between your job expectations and your last job?	Binary
	EDQ10	If yes, which of the following statements best fits your case?	Categorical

Section	Question code	Question	Variable type
Social environment inheritance	SEIQ01	Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Social environment is an important factor influencing youth in my community / country to engage with TOC. In case of agreement, please add in the box below why you think this is important	Ordinal
	SEIQ02	Do you personally know someone who is involved in some kind of organised criminal activity?	Binary
	SEIQ03	In case affirmative: what is the level of closeness you have with that person?	Ordinal
	SEIQ04	In your opinion, what are the main problems of young people in your country?	Categorical
	SEIQ05	In case you answered "others", please specify	Categorical
	SEIQ06	Please, specify your level of agreement with the following statement: there are strong structural causes behind the standardized profile of young people that explain their engagement in TOC	Ordinal
	SEIQ07	Please, mark the option you agree with the most regarding the State's attitude towards your community	Ordinal

Section	Question code	Question	Variable type
Engagement in TOC	ETQ01	Have you ever felt attracted to participate in any type of TOC activity?	Binary
	ETQ02	Have you ever participated in any type of TOC activity?	Binary
	ETQ03	In case affirmative, did you know anyone else from the group?	Categorical
Political conjuncture	PCQ02	How satisfied are you with the political situation in your country? Please mark from 1 to 5, with 1 being very unsatisfied, and 5 being very satisfied	Ordinal
	PCQ03	How much confidence do you have in the electoral process? 1 being the zero confidence and 5 having full confidence on the electoral process	Ordinal
	PCQ04	Do you consider that your government promotes actions or practices to prevent TOC?	Ordinal
	PCQ05	Do you consider that your government promotes actions or practices to prevent young people enrolment in TOC?	Ordinal

Section	Question code	Question	Variable type
Education opportunities	EOQ01	Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Educational level is an important factor influencing youth in my community/country to engage with TOC. In case of agreement, please add in the box below why you think this is important	Ordinal
	EOQ02	Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the education system in your country. Mark from 1 to 5, with 1 being very unsatisfied, and 5 being very satisfied	Ordinal
	EOQ03	Do you consider that you have had the opportunity to have a good education?	Categorical
	EOQ04	Indicate the level of support from your family and environment during your education	Ordinal
	EOQ05	Should schools organise more TOC prevention activities?	Binary
Cultural agenda & infrastructure	CAIQ01	Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Cultural & infrastructure opportunities are important factors preventing youth engagement with TOC in my community/country. In case of agreement, please add in the box below why you think this is important	Ordinal
	CAIQ02	How often do you do the following activities?	Ordinal
	CAIQ03	Does the cultural offer in your environment meet your expectations?	Ordinal
	CAIQ04	Do you believe that being part of a sports club can prevent a person from engaging with TOC activities?	Binary

Section	Question code	Question	Variable type
Legislation	LQ01	Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Legislative conditions is an important factor influencing youth in my community/country to engage with TOC. In case of agreement, please add in the box below why you think this is important	Ordinal
	LQ02	Do you think that the neutralization of TOC should be a State competence or should it be shared with other states in the region, international actors, etc.?	Categorical
	LQ03	Do you think that current national legislation dealing with transnational organised crime is well thought out? Existing legislation is...	Ordinal
	LQ04	Please, indicate how relations with neighbouring countries affect the incidence of TOC in your country	Ordinal
	LQ05	Please, specify the level of agreement with the following statement: the State should allocate more resources to strengthening ports and the maritime sector to avoid the trade of illegal goods	Ordinal

Section	Question code	Question	Variable type
Internet & social networks	ISNQ01	Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Internet and social networks access are important factors influencing youth in my community/country to engage with TOC. In case of agreement, please add in the box below why you think this is important	Ordinal
	ISNQ02	How often do you use the Internet?	Ordinal
	ISNQ03	How much time do you spend on social media platforms per day? (including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, WhatsApp)	Ordinal
	ISNQ04	Have you ever seen any TOC content online?	Categorical
	ISNQ05	Have you ever reported it to the authorities?	Binary
	ISNQ06	Have you shared TOC content yourself online?	Binary

Section	Question code	Question	Variable type
Gender	GQ01	Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Gender is an important factor influencing youth in my community / country to engage with TOC. In case of agreement, please add in the box below why you think this is important	Ordinal
	GQ02	How do you feel on inequalities and gender regarding your region?	Categorical
	GQ03	Do you think women are less respected than men?	Ordinal
	GQ04	Do you think women may be more vulnerable to the consequences of transnational organised crime?	Categorical
	GQ05	Have you noticed women perpetrators of TOC activities in your country?	Binary
	GQ06	In case affirmative, what kind of illicit activities are they most likely to involved in?	Categorical

# Youth participation in transnational organized crime prevention in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

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## Key facts

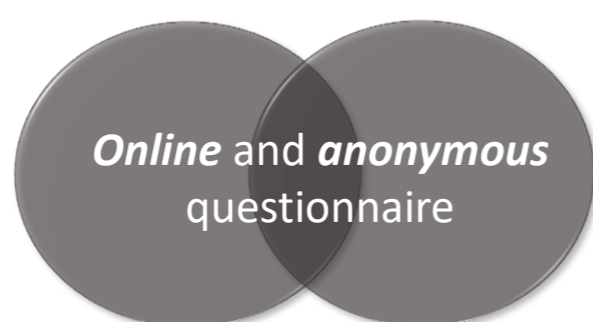
1. TOC rates on this region have increased lately due to the pandemic, according to the Africa organised crime index. Out of the 13 countries of the southern region, South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Madagascar rank in the top 4 of the list with higher crime rates (ENACT Africa, 2021).
2. Youth are the main target of TOC recruiters, but they can also be one of the pillars of resilience policies.
3. TOC is a crosscutting issue affecting the 16 other Sustainable Development Goals (Reitano *et al.* 2015).



## Objectives

1. Research on the structural and push factors leading youth to engage in TOC
2. Contribute to the design of strategies to strengthen resilience at the community level

## Methods & findings



### Target:



Young people (16-30 years old)

From 4 SADC countries

## Economic deprivation

-All respondents agreed that the economy explains why TOC participation is so high. Other push factors were noted depending on the age of the respondents.  
 -Respondents think that the government invests in public expenditures insufficiently, and even less in their area.  
 -Older participants have a propensity to be more measured in their criticism of economic policy.

## Social environment

-Knowing someone directly involved in TOC activities makes it easier to enroll groups.  
 -There is a startling disconnection between what young people believe to be the most pressing concerns affecting their generation (drugs, alcoholism, unemployment, etc.) and the recognition of these as structural factors that influence youth to join TOC.

## Gender

-Women show dissatisfaction with policies that do not consider the gender perspective.  
 -Toxic masculinity culture transforms TOC into an activity created by and geared toward men.  
 -Men strongly believe that gender influences TOC involvement, a belief that women do not share and which represents a form of positive discrimination against them.

## Internet & social networks

-Youth are exposed to a constant flow of misleading and TOC information on internet and social media.  
 -However, they do not understand its significance and normalize it to the point of not reporting this content to the authorities

## Legislation

-There is debate over the government's involvement in prevention.

## Education & culture

-Young people state that schools should organize more activities to prevent TOC  
 -Culture is a resilience element.

## Policy recommendations

- Combating TOC should include different levels (international / national / community) of actions by different stakeholders.
- All levels are important and need to go hand in hand. The community level is often underestimated and is vital to build resilience in the population.

### International / SADC region

1. Strengthening independent regional mechanisms or bodies to guarantee the democratic quality of the states. The aim is to prevent the infiltration of criminal networks and their replacement by the state, as in South Africa's political transition in the early 1990s.
2. Fostering international relations, networks and information exchange mechanisms among States, National Agencies and International Agencies, Example: Interpol, which makes its databases available to governments.
3. Harmonisation of current laws to combat TOC crime groups .
4. Development of regional anti-corruption policies and institutionalisation of a common maritime policy against the illegal entry and exit of arms, drugs, etc.
5. Creation of an annual dialogue forum on the state of TOC, involving young people from different SADC countries and government representatives.

### National

1. Put youth at the centre of public policies, especially those related to the economy.
2. Developing transparency laws and policies of state agencies to prevent corruption offences.
3. Promoting intercommunication between agencies and anti-organised crime bodies.
4. Making national legal frameworks more flexible, allowing countries to operate more quickly and with fewer obstacles in the pursuit of TOC networks.
5. Strengthening port infrastructure and increasing controls to make it more difficult to market illegal goods, while generating more employment.
6. Drafting of a report/list of the most incipient and operational criminal organisations in each country, following the South African OCRA model: a meeting point for the different actors combating TOC and a useful tool for different government agencies.
7. Organising national 'non-executive forums' that include NGOs, youth movements and victims to learn from different experiences to combat TOC.
8. Increasing budget of private and public entities on cyber-security,

### Community

1. Incentivising the hiring of young people through tax benefits for companies.
2. Promoting social housing and rentals for youth,
3. Providing specialised training (in TOC activities and networks) and technology to law enforcement agencies to deal with this phenomenon.
4. Development of protocols that require verification of whether there is a connection between petty crime and larger networks.
5. Implementation of follow-up and support programmes for young people who have just been released from prison for TOC offences.
6. Promoting more TOC prevention programmes and support actions for families at risk of social exclusion at schools.
7. As a complement to the previous measure, promoting healthy environments and activities (such as football or basketball clubs), which will keep young people away from TOC networks.
8. Inclusion in educational programmes of activities that encourage the responsible use of the Internet and social networks, especially focused on teenagers.