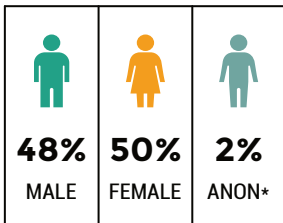# THE STUDENT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS (2020)

FACT SHEET

In 2020, the Student Academic Freedom Regional Advocacy Program (SAFRAP) carried out a Student Situational Analysis (SSA) whose overall objective was to provide information that empowers higher and tertiary education students and stakeholders to drive change, strengthen student activism, advocacy and oversight at multiple levels, and to empower student led and focused organizations to advance student rights.
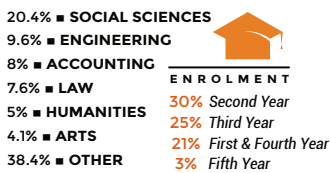
DEMOGRAPHICS

respondents
457

48% MALE	**50%** FEMALE	**2%** ANON*

* ANONYMOUS | Chose not to say

AGE RANGE
- **1%** Under 18 yrs
- **74%** 18-24 yrs
- **25%** 25-40 yrs

- 20.4% ■ SOCIAL SCIENCES
- 9.6% ■ ENGINEERING
- 8% ■ ACCOUNTING
- 7.6% ■ LAW
- 5% ■ HUMANITIES
- 4.1% ■ ARTS
- 38.4% ■ OTHER

ENROLMENT
- **30%** Second Year
- **25%** Third Year
- **21%** First & Fourth Year
- **3%** Fifth Year

DEMOGRAPHICS BY TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

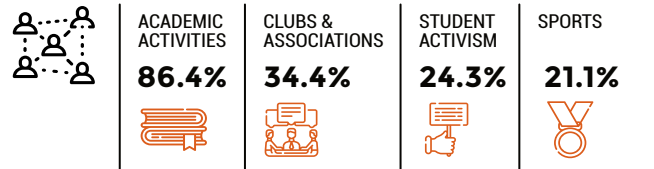| **84%** UNIVERSITIES	**7%** POLYTECHNICAL COLLEGES	**4%** TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES	**5%** OTHER

17.6% STUDENTS WHO BELONG TO A STUDENT COUNCIL OR REPRESENTATIVE BODY

FOCUS COUNTRIES

STUDENTS SURVEYED FROM
Eswatini | Zambia | Zimbabwe

KEY INFLUENCES ON STUDENTS IN THE THREE COUNTRIES

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES	CLUBS & ASSOCIATIONS	STUDENT ACTIVISM	SPORTS
86.4%	**34.4%**	**24.3%**	**21.1%**

65% of respondents named these **root causes** of **dissatisfaction** as students:

- **LIVING CONDITIONS**
- **FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS**
- **LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE**
- **EFFECTS OF COVID-19**

STUDENT Aspirations

- **To complete** their Higher/Tertiary Education
- **Affordable** accommodation
- **Tuition support** Mechanisms & better infrastructure
- **Better opportunities** for employment & entrepreneurship
- **Modern learning** spaces & tools

Challenges to these aspirations

66.3%	HIGH COSTS OF BASIC NEEDS
62.1%	HIGH TUITION FEES
51.2%	LIMITED ACCESS TO ACCOMMODATION
33.5%	POOR QUALITY EDUCATION

NO SPECIFIC OR DEDICATED POLICIES THAT REGULATE TERTIARY EDUCATION IN ANY OF THE **THREE COUNTRIES**

2 in 10 STUDENTS feel there is **no academic freedom** in their institutions.

STUDENT ROLES
in voicing their needs and desire for Academic Freedom

58.4% of students prefer *engagement*	**56.9%** of students prefer *petitioning*
48.4% of students prefer *peaceful demonstration*	**39.2%** of students prefer *other*

STUDENT ROLES
in student civic engagement and awareness of engagement platforms available

% *NOT AWARE* OF PLATFORMS TO ENGAGE WITH **DECISION MAKERS** **57.8%**	% *AWARE* OF ENGAGEMENT PLATFORMS ON **NATIONAL LEVELS** **11.2%**
% *AWARE* OF ENGAGEMENT PLATFORMS ON **INSTITUTIONAL LEVELS** **36.3%**	% *AWARE* OF ENGAGEMENT PLATFORMS ON **REGIONAL LEVELS** **5.3%**

KEY CONCLUSIONS

- Students' state of academic and social welfare remains dire
- Academic Freedom and other freedoms of students remain constrained
- COVID 19 ushered in new challenges and few opportunities
- There is need for robust policies that address the students' issues

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

POLICY
- Introduction of a holistic national student focused policy that will ensure that the challenges that confront students in institutions are given adequate focus and priority
- Encourage the effective participation of students in governance issues and decision-making processes
- Enact legislation that facilitates the establishment of a Students' Council and a National Students' Policy that speaks to respective national development plans
- Support new demands for online learning
- The government should develop a comprehensive policy that allows for institutional specific strategies to manage and contain COVID-19 and, lead in promoting uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine

PROGRAMS
- Tertiary institutions should introduce comprehensive programs on leadership, career building and activism
- CSOs should develop and support capacity building programs that seek to ensure SRCs deliver effectively on their mandate and create strategic convening for advocacy and lobbying
- CSOs should strengthen the role of student unions to ensure that there are alternative platforms for students' issues to be represented
- CSOs should continue to petition Parliament to bring issues to the attention of policy makers
- Institutions should invest in recreational facilities that ensure that students have activities that allows them to spend their free time in colleges meaningfully

PARTNERSHIPS
- Regional partnerships, lobbying and advocacy remain critical in building momentum on the issue of academic freedom
- Civil society should continue to provide strategic convening space to ensure that there is engagement between students and education stakeholders
- Seek strategic Public Private Sector Partnerships designed to mobilise for resources to support quality education