



Heal me O Lord and Make me Complete

# TAUS 2022 Retreat Opinion Poll

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## Introduction

TAUS held its annual 2022 retreat at [Ridgecrest Conference Center](#) in Black Mountain, North Carolina. A total 375 people attended the first in-person retreat since the onset of the covid-19 pandemic. A total of 55 kids aged 0-12 years also attended. This is by far the largest retreat attendance TAUS has seen since it convened its first retreat in 2007, in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. An online opinion survey was conducted using [SurveyMonkey](#) tool. The survey was deployed on August 08, 2022, and a total of 54 participants completed the 10-question survey. The response rate was only 14% of the 375 retreat adult participants. An [online response rate that is representative of the population is 44%](#) – meaning that the results below are not representative of the population (all 375 adult retreat participants). Thus, the results presented below should be used bearing in mind that they do not represent the population. One of the reasons for the low response rate was the late deployment of the survey. The best strategy for getting high response rate is to deploy the survey on the last Friday of the retreat and ask participants to respond in real time.

The 10 questions sought to understand the gender, age group of the respondents and their opinion on the location and catering services of future retreats. The survey also sought to understand the perceptions of retreat participants on time management, how the retreat affected their understanding and commitment to TAUS mission as well as the topics and highlights presented during the retreat. Additionally, the survey sought suggestions of topics for the next retreat and speakers.

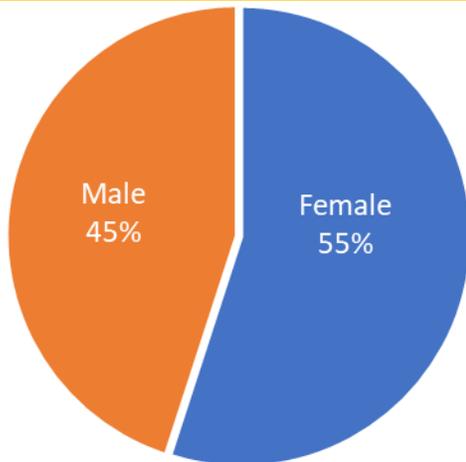
## Demographics of the 2022 retreat participants

Females accounted 55% of the participants – a 10 percentage point higher than male participants. The gender composition of the 2022 retreat is comparable to the US Black Protestant churches, in which about [60% of members are women](#).



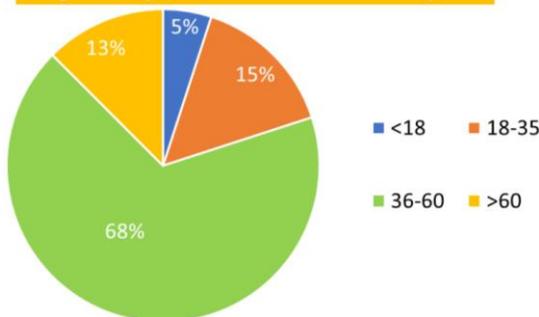
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## 1. Gender of 2022 Retreat



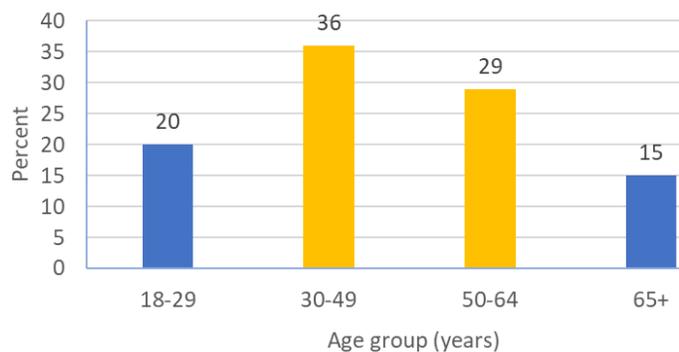
Two thirds of 2022 retreat participants were middle-aged, 36-60 years. Again, the age distribution of the 2022 retreat participants is comparable with the US protestant church black age group distribution. A Pew Research Center study in 2014 showed that 65% of US Black protestant church members were aged 30-64 (see graph below).

## 2. Age Groups of 2022 Retreat Participants



TAUS opinion online poll, 2022

## Age distribution of US Black church members



Source: [Pew Research, 2014](#)

Even though the results are not representative of the population, the small percent of participants below 18 years is worrisome as the report misses the ideas of the young people. The 55 children between 0-12 years did not qualify to respond the survey. Attendance of the youth (18-35 years) was also small, and this is worrisome given that TAUS' future is in the hands of the youth.

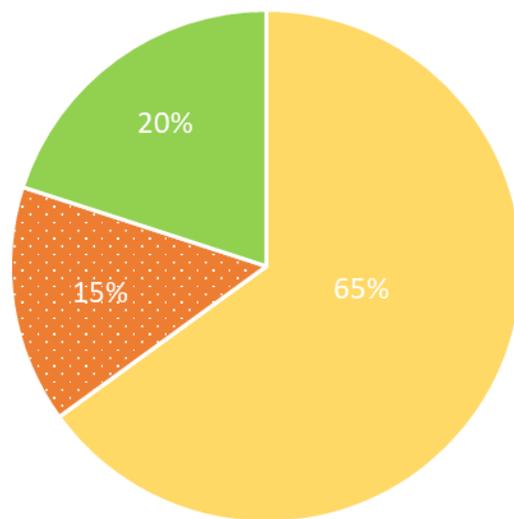


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### Location of the next TAUS Retreat

On location of the next retreat, two third of the respondents would like to be in a serene place, far from the hustle and bustle of major cities but with internet connectivity and in proximity to major airport. Only 20% of respondents – largely adults and senior citizens preferred the location to be in a remote area to help participants focus on retreat and avoid distraction from shopping and other activities. The least preferred location is a major city with excellent accessibility and hotel accommodation other than the retreat center – a choice made mainly by young adults.

### 3.What is opinion on location of the retreat?



- Should be in serene place - far from the bustle and hustle of major cities, but with internet connectivity & in proximity to major airport
- Should be in a major city with excellent accessibility and hotel accomodation other than the retreat center
- Should be in a remote area to help participants focus on retreat and avoid distraction from shopping and other activities

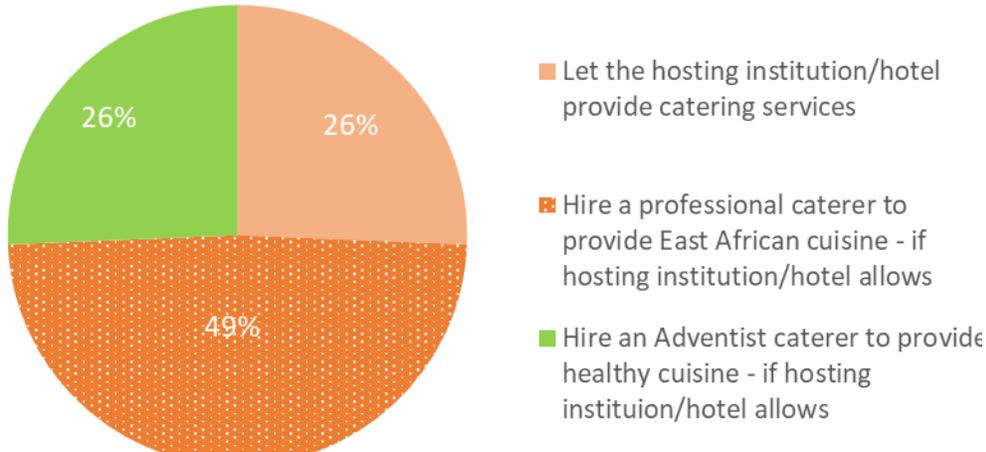
### Catering Services for the Next Retreat

A half of the respondents would prefer to hire a professional caterer to provide East African cuisine - if hosting institution/hotel allows. A quarter would prefer the hosting institution/hotel to provide catering services while the other quarter would prefer to hire an Adventist caterer to provide healthy cuisine - if hosting institution/hotel allows. This means, hiring a caterer who could cater for East African cuisine is the most preferred option.



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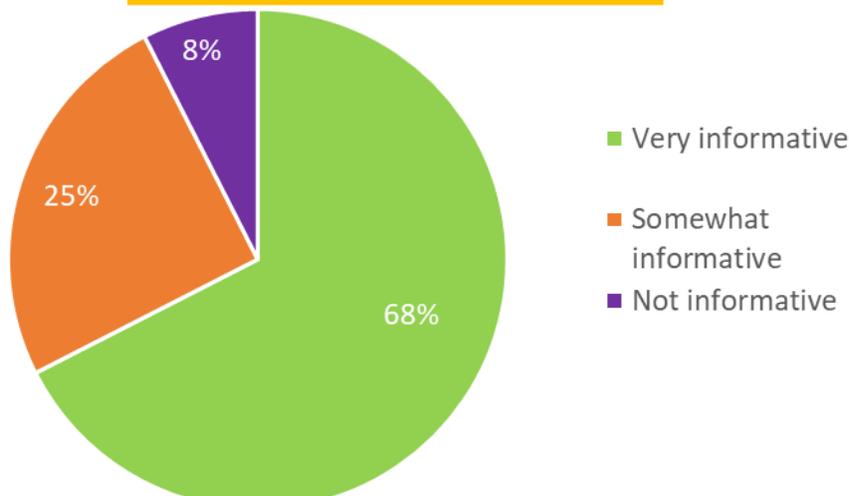
4. If you were in the retreat committee, what would be your recommendation for catering services?



## Perception on topics presented and of the 2022 retreat on member knowledge of TAUS mission

Two thirds of the respondents felt that TAUS highlights were very informative while a quarter felt that the highlights were somewhat informative. Only 8% felt that the key highlights were not informative. This means, the highlight presentation was generally very informative to participants, but there is room for improvement.

5. Rate the TAUS highlight sessions

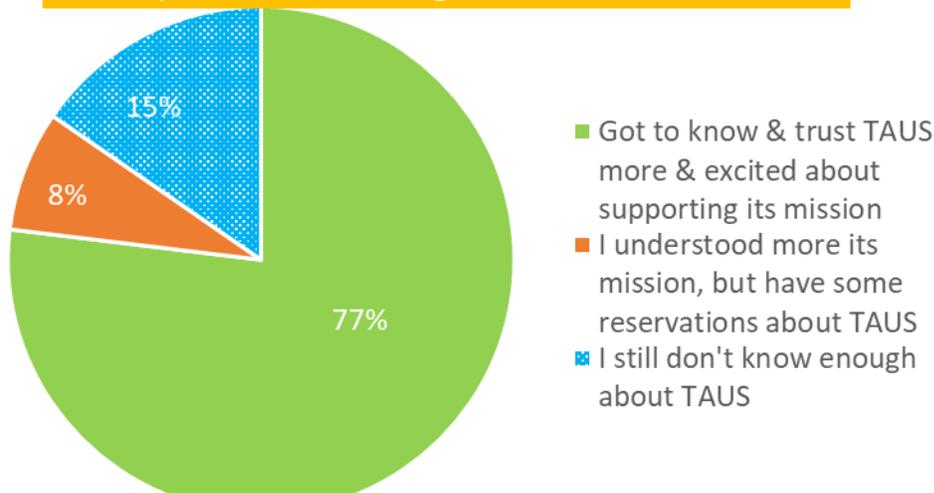




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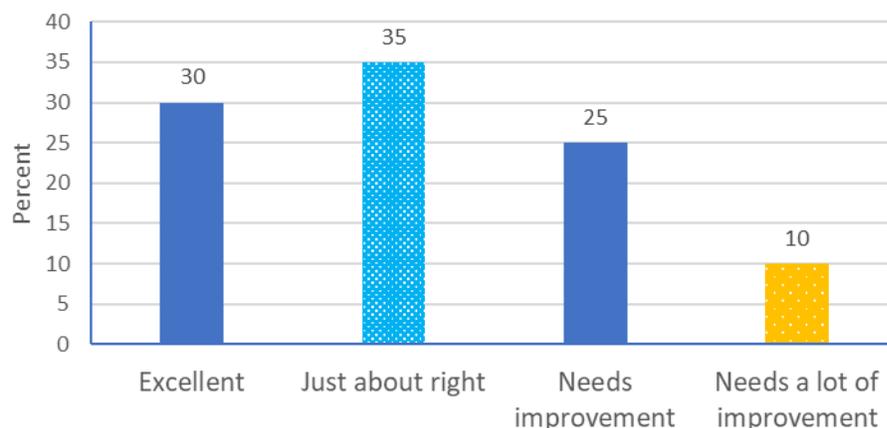
Accordingly, 77% of the participants reported that the retreat helped them to get to know and trust TAUS and are excited about supporting its mission. About 8% said that they know TAUS but still have some reservation about its mission. Only 15% reported that they don't know enough about TAUS. This is a challenge which requires TAUS leadership to provide more information to help those who still don't know about its mission.

## 6. Rate your understanding and trust of TAUS mission



On time management, 65% of respondents either reported time management was excellent or just about right. A quarter reported that time management needs improvement and 10% reported that it is needs a lot of improvement. Even though time management has improved over time, the results indicate that there is still room improvement.

## 7. In your opinion, how was time management at our 2022 retreat?

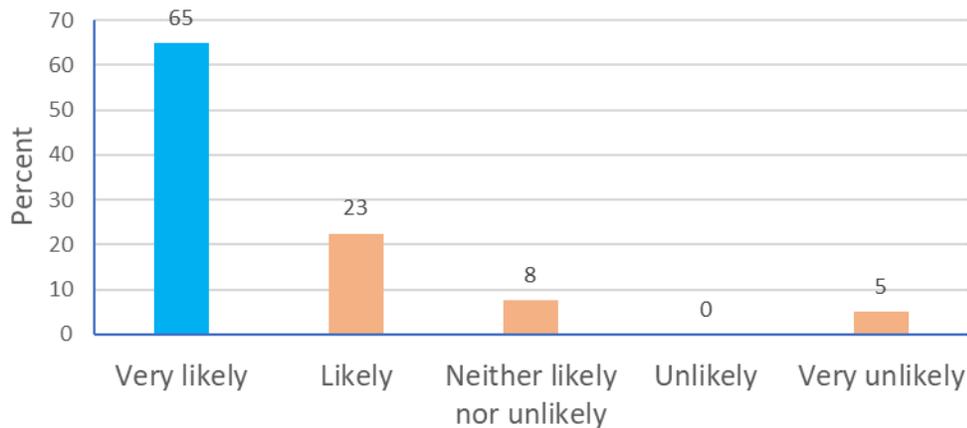




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About two thirds of participants reported that they are very likely to attend the next retreat while 23% reported that they are likely to attend. Only 5% reported that they will not attend the next retreat. Overall, the results suggest that the retreats are popular and attendance is likely to be as good or better than it was in the 2022.

## 8. How likely are you to attend the next TAUS retreat?

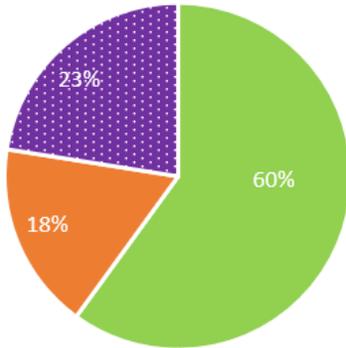


On speakers, about 60% of the participants said that TAUS should keep its tradition of inviting speakers from Tanzania. About a quarter of respondents suggested that speakers come countries other than Tanzania and US but of African descent. And 18% - mainly young adults – suggest that speakers should come from US but be of African descent.



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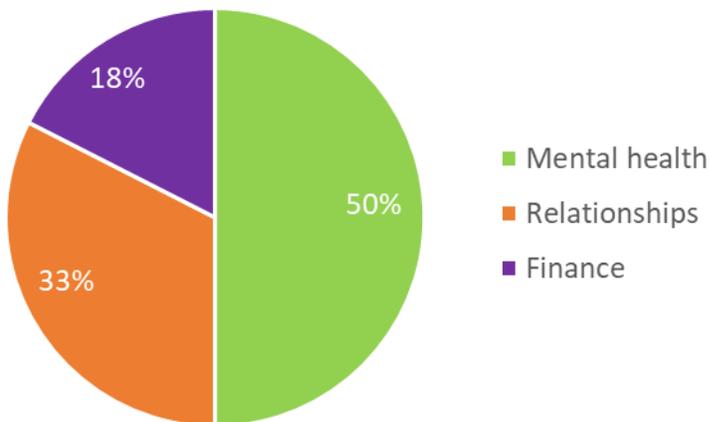
## 9. Where should our next main speaker come from?



- Keep our tradition of inviting Tanzanian speakers
- US speaker of African origin
- Countries other than Tanzania and US, but of African origin

On topics for the next retreat, half of the respondents suggested mental health and a third suggested relationship while only 18% would like finance to be the topic.

## 10. What topics do you suggest for the next retreat? Choose ONE most preferred topic



## Conclusions and TAUS retreat planning implications

Majority of the retreat participants were middle-aged adults (36-60 years) – a pattern that reveals limited TAUS appeal to the youth (18-35 years) – who accounted for only 15% of the participants who



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completed the online survey. This is a challenge that TAUS needs to face head on by designing strategies for attracting greater youth participation to secure a vibrant future.

On the retreat location, two thirds of the respondents would like it to be in a serene place, far from the hustle and bustle of major cities but, with internet connectivity and in proximity to a major airport. Only 20% of respondents – largely adults and senior citizens preferred the location to be in a remote area. This perception is consistent with other studies which have shown that [serene retreat locations lead to more productive and effective meetings](#). As a reflection of the retreat participant majority – who were middle-aged – and most likely migrants from East Africa – a half of the participants prefer the catering services to be offered by an East African caterer – if the retreat hosting center allows external caterers. This means future retreat planning committees need to negotiate with the hosting institution to allow external caterers.

Overall, majority of participants felt that the retreat presentations were very informative and helped them to know the TAUS mission and are excited about supporting it. However, there were a small percent of participants who felt that the presentations were less informative and would like to see some improvement done. Two thirds of participants also felt time management was excellent or just about right. Majority of the participants also plan to attend the next retreat and they would like TAUS to keep its tradition of inviting speakers from Tanzania. The most preferred main topic for the next retreat was mental health, followed by relationship and then finance.

Even though response rate of this survey was only 14% and thus not representative of the of the 375 adult TAUS retreat participants, the results have important implications of the planning future retreat. TAUS leadership needs to consider these results and plan accordingly.