



IKAMVAYOUTH

THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS

IkamvaYouth Alumni Survey 2019

Report

September 2019

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List of Acronyms

- CI: Confidence Interval
- IT: Information Technology
- KZN: KwaZulu-Natal
- NEET: Not in Education, Employment, or Training

Executive Summary

Between May and July 2019, all 1915 alumni of the IkamvaYouth programme who matriculated between 2005 and 2017 were invited to participate in a phone and online survey to track their progress in education and employment since they matriculated. A total of 632 alumni participated in the survey. The results provide strong indicators of progress in terms of the organisation's mission of *"...enabling disadvantaged youth to pull themselves and each other out of poverty and into tertiary education and/or employment."*

- Access to tertiary education: Seventy percent of alumni who matriculated between 2015 and 2017 are currently in tertiary education and 5% already obtained a degree. Fifty-three percent of alumni who matriculated between 2005 and 2008 have obtained a degree and 24% are still in tertiary education. In comparison, not more than 12% of their parent generation obtained a degree in tertiary education. Only 6% of those who are not in employment or education say it is because of their bad grades.
- Academic performance: Based on self-reported information, which needs to be treated cautiously, 95% of alumni in tertiary education are passing their classes.
- Employment: As alumni become older, the more likely they are to be in formal employment as they finish their tertiary education. In the 2009-2011 cohort, 56% of alumni are in formal employment, in the 2005-2008 cohort this figure is at 73%.
- NEET: About 20% of alumni who matriculated between 2009 and 2017 are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET). For older alumni (2005-2008) the figure drops to 9%. In comparison, 28% of the working age population and 55% of youth in South Africa are unemployed today. At least 23% of the alumni's parents (counting only the breadwinner in their family) were unemployed at the time the alumni matriculated.
- Income: While the average monthly salary of a young matriculant (2015-2017) is a modest R4,240, this figure increases four-fold to R17,111 among the oldest cohort (2005-2008).

Despite these positive findings, there are also some results that point to challenges in the alumni's journey from matriculation to tertiary education and the workplace:

- Time spent in tertiary education: Multiple indicators suggest that alumni in tertiary education need more years than planned to obtain their first degree; 27% of alumni who matriculated between 2005 and 2009 are still in tertiary education and 80% of alumni who have completed a Bachelor degree said it took them four years or longer to obtain that degree.
- Few postgraduates: The data shows that only a relatively small minority of alumni in tertiary progress beyond an undergraduate degree. Only 12% of alumni who matriculated between 2005 and 2011 have a postgraduate degree.
- Lack of resources and family needs: "Insufficient funds" and "Trying to get into university" are among the top reasons provided by alumni who are NEET. Another 6% maintain that they have to take care of their family. In fact, between 42% (2015-2017) and 87% (2005-2008) contribute to their family's expenses on a regular basis.

Introduction

ikapadata was commissioned by IkamvaYouth to conduct the 2019 Alumni Survey in order to measure the progress made by the IkamvaYouth programme in their mission of “...enabling disadvantaged youth to pull themselves and each other out of poverty and into tertiary education and/or employment.” The results of this survey help to understand whether or not the programme has succeeded in helping youth achieve matric and gain access to tertiary education and employment. All IkamvaYouth alumni from the first cohort from 2005 up to 2017 were invited to participate in the survey. The survey was primarily conducted via phone calls and supported by an online survey following multiple rounds of email invitations to the alumni from 9th of May until the 22nd of July 2019.

This report summarises the findings of the survey.

Methodology

Sample & Data Collection

The survey population consists of 1915 alumni who matriculated between 2005 and 2017. A list provided by IkamvaYouth had a phone number for 1821 alumni, and an email address for 1311 alumni. ikapadata listed all alumni with contact details in random order and instructed the call agents to call alumni in that order for up to three attempts, at different times, before an interview took place or a contact was flagged as permanently unavailable. This was to ensure that the sample would be randomly selected. In total, 632 alumni participated in the survey; 569 by phone, 63 online. This is lower than the desired sample size of 765 individuals across all cohorts.

It turned out that most contact details, especially for the older cohorts, were unreliable, so the sample inevitably became a selection of all alumni who could actually be reached via phone or who responded to the email invitation to participate in the survey, and randomization became unnecessary. Assuming that there is no systemic bias in terms of who has changed their phone number and who hasn't since matriculating, or who responded to the email invitation and who did not, this sample is representative of all alumni within the margins of error provided below. As it was determined that age, or rather years since matriculation is an important factor for many of the variables covered by the survey, the sample was stratified into cohorts defined by years and many of the findings in this report are presented accordingly.

Table 1: Sample

Cohort	Sample n	Population N	Response Rate	CI 95%
2005-2008	55	174	32%	11.0
2009-2011	70	235	30%	9.8
2012-2014	172	502	25%	6.1
2015-2017	335	1004	33%	4.4
Total	632	1915	33%	3.2

Table 1 above shows the sample distribution and response rate per cohort. We achieved a response rate of 33% across cohorts and 632 out of 1915 alumni participated in the survey. The confidence interval is also called “margin of error”; a confidence interval is the probability that a value will fall between an upper and lower bound of a probability distribution. In other words, using values from the table above, if the finding is that 42% of respondents in cohort 2015-2017 prefer Green over Blue, then we can be 95% certain that the true percentage is somewhere between $42\% - 4.4\% = 37.6\%$ and $42\% + 4.4\% = 46.4\%$.

Aside from the limitations to sampling, it is worth mentioning that this study is primarily a snapshot of the status quo. In the absence of a control group of comparable peers who did not benefit from IkamvaYouth, findings with regards to differences between alumni and the general population suggest that the programme is effective, but the extent to which such differences can be attributed to IkamvaYouth cannot be precisely measured given the study design.

Results

Demographics

Sixty-five percent of alumni are female, 35% male. Generally, older cohorts tend to be more balanced (55% female in 2005-2008) compared to the younger cohorts (67% female in 2015-2017). Alumni today are between the ages of 18 and 35 years old¹, with the average being 23 years. Half of them are younger than 22 years.

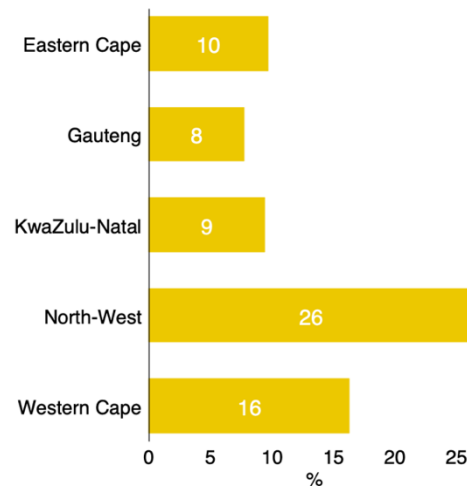
About 50% of the alumni are from the Western Cape, about 25% from Gauteng and 17% from KZN. Only 8% come from the newer branches in the North West as well as the Eastern Cape branch, which is to be expected as the branches in these provinces have been established much more recently. Interestingly, alumni who matriculated in the Western Cape or North West province are more likely to move to another province after matriculation. Almost half (42%) of those who moved from the Western Cape now live in the Eastern Cape², and about 23% in Gauteng. The sub-sample of alumni from North West Province is small but the majority of those who moved to another province moved to Gauteng which is

¹ One respondent claimed to be 41 years old.

² Twenty-three percent of the respondents who moved from Cape Town to the Eastern Cape are now in full-time employment, 55% are currently studying/in education and 23% are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET).

generally the preferred destination for anyone moving province, except for alumni from the Western Cape.

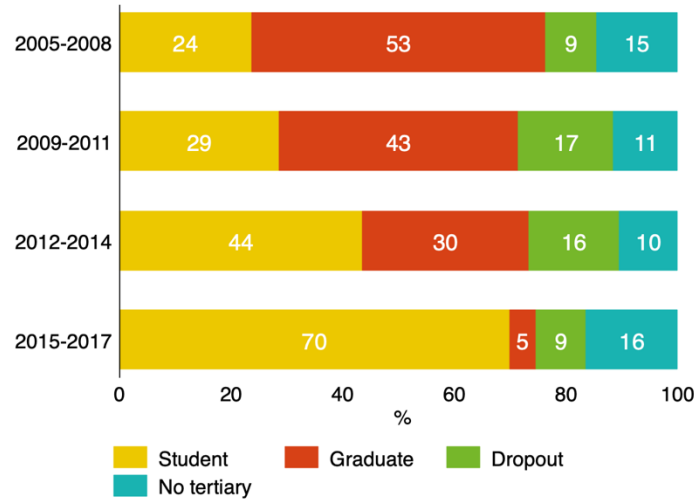
Figure 1: Percentage of alumni who moved to another province



Education

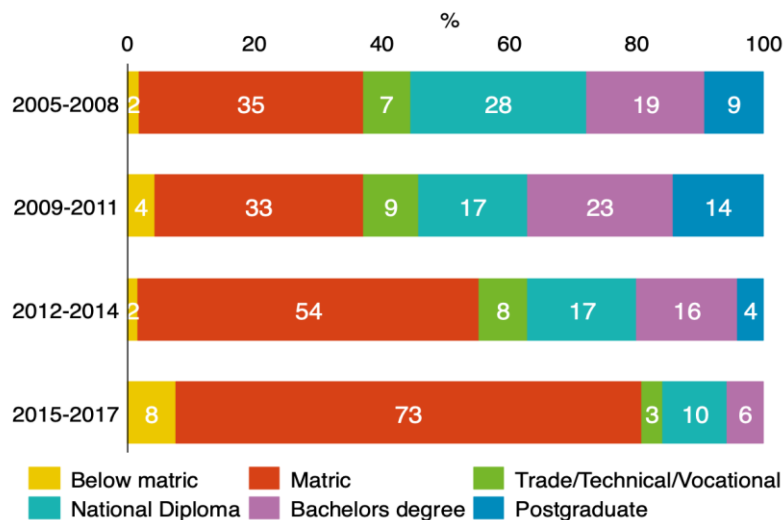
In order to evaluate the impact of IkamvaYouth on the educational itinerary of alumni it is necessary to look at the earliest cohorts, the ones who matriculated between 2005 and 2011 as they can be expected to have largely completed their educational journey already. One out of four of them are still in tertiary education, arguably illustrating the fact that a) education is increasingly becoming a life-long journey with individuals furthering their education throughout their professional careers, and b) that financial constraints often mean that individuals have to take breaks from studying or work on the side in order to finance their studies. About half of the older alumni have already completed some form of tertiary education though. About 15% are currently not studying at the moment but have pursued some form of tertiary education in the past, albeit without gaining a degree. A similar proportion never pursued any tertiary education. These figures shift as one moves towards the more recent cohorts as most of those alumni are still in education. Across all alumni, 54% are currently students, 20% have completed their tertiary education, 12% dropped out of tertiary education, and 14% never pursued any form of tertiary education.

Figure 2: Tertiary Education



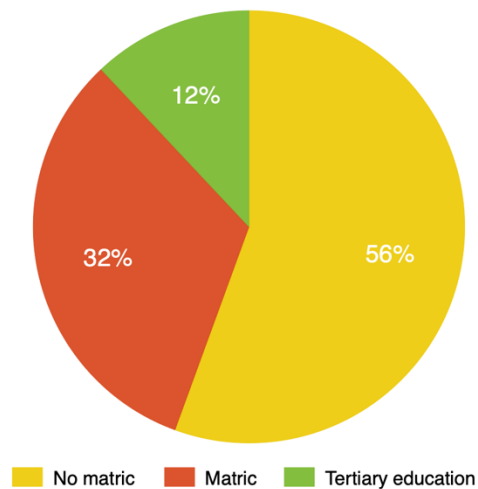
Looking at the highest degrees obtained by alumni to date, it is encouraging to see that roughly six out of ten alumni in those cohorts have completed some form of tertiary education, and around one third have a university education. It must be noted that a similar proportion have not progressed beyond matric, but these include also current students who are still busy obtaining their first degree. Roughly another third of them have technical/vocational degrees or diplomas. Following the ladder up to the more recent graduates the proportion of those who have not progressed beyond matric increases, which is not surprising as this includes those who are currently still busy with their education. For example, the matriculants of 2017 are going to fall in the Bachelor's degree category when the survey is repeated two years from now. Those in the 2015 cohort will be at postgraduate level by then.

Figure 3: Highest Completed Degree by Cohort



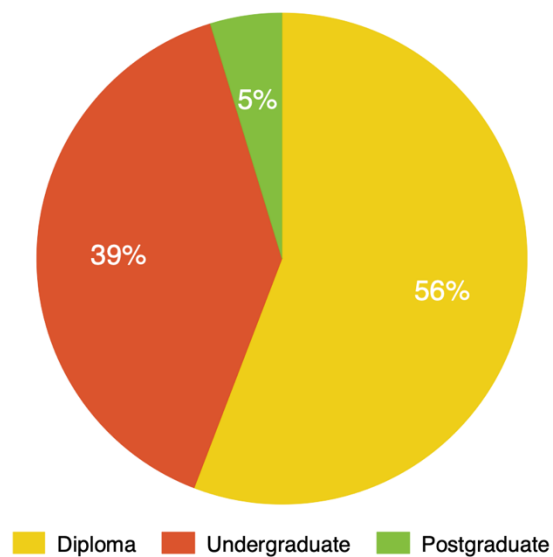
The significance of these figures become clearer if one contrasts them with education levels of the alumni's parents: Over half did not finish secondary education (compared to 3% of the two oldest cohorts of alumni; 2005-2001) and only 12% obtained some form of tertiary education (compared to 63% of the oldest cohorts of alumni). And we only counted the higher education level between two parents, so the actual education levels of all parents would be even lower.

Figure 4: Parents' education



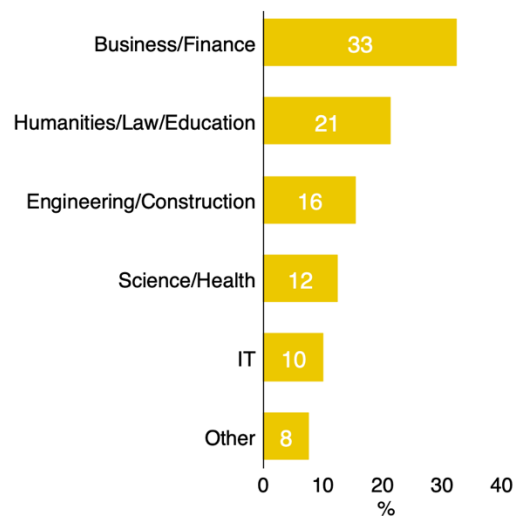
Just over half (54%) of the alumni are currently studying, most of them (56%) for a Diploma or vocational degree. Almost 40% are pursuing a Bachelor's degree. Only 5% are enrolled in any sort of postgraduate studies.

Figure 5: Current Degree



Of all alumni who either pursued tertiary education in the past or are doing so now, one third did it or is doing it in a business/management/finance-related field. Other popular choices of study subjects are people-centered (including humanities in general, education, arts/design and law; 21%), have a focus on the built environment (engineering/building; 16%), are science/health science-related (12%) or in IT (10%). Other subjects, including tourism/hospitality (4%), are pursued by 8% of the respondents.

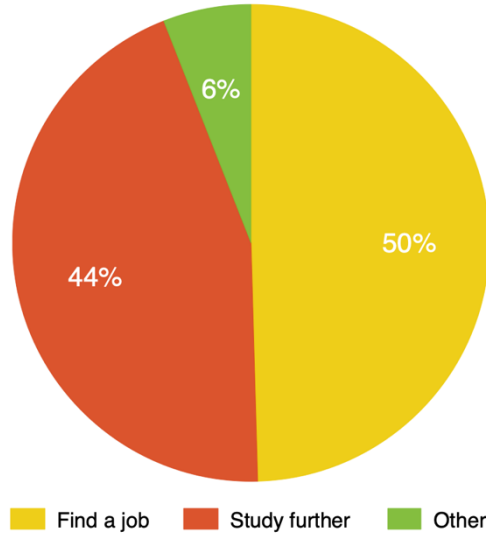
Figure 6: Fields of Study³



After graduation, half of the alumni in tertiary education plan on looking for formal employment, while 44% intend to further their studies. More specifically, 39% of those who have Bachelor's degrees and 33% of those who have Honors degrees intend to further their studies. Approximately five percent of the alumni who are still in tertiary education said that they would start their own businesses after graduation; a small number said they plan to go travelling or volunteering.

³ Humanities/Law/Education is made up of Arts & Design (2%), Education (6%) Humanities/ Social Sciences (8%) Journalism & Media studies (2%) and Law (4%)

Figure 7: Plans for after graduation

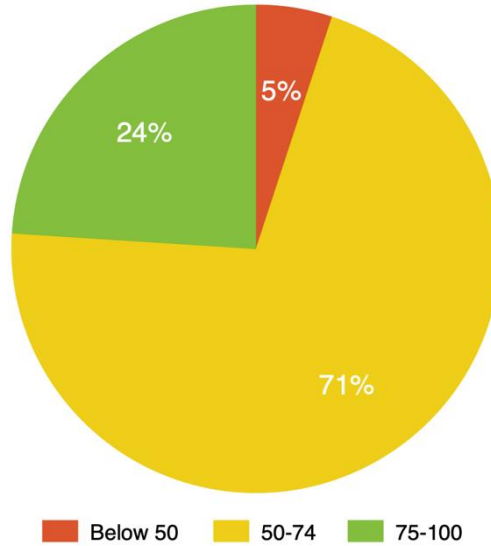


The survey also looked at the number of years people say it took them to obtain their degree as well as what year those who are still studying are currently in. A lot of this data seems unreliable – either respondents were not clear how to count years of study, for example if they took breaks in between, or recall bias played a role. But one finding from these questions is worth mentioning: 80% of alumni who have completed a Bachelor’s degree said it took them four years or longer to obtain that degree, hinting at the possibility that many alumni need more years than the curriculum provides to finish their degree.

A separate question, added as a fallback option as problems with the number of years question had been expected, asked directly if they expect their degree to take longer than expected (if they are still studying), or if it took longer than expected (if they have completed their studies). In both cases, including the 80% who did take long to finish their undergraduate studies, less than a third (30% for graduates, 26% for students) answered affirmatively. While we cannot be certain about the reasons for the discrepancy behind the perceived and actual length of studies, it seems that many alumni actually expect to take more years than what their degrees require.

An attempt was made to capture academic performance by asking respondents about their last (students)/final (graduates) year’s overall grade. Most (71%) reported medium grades between 50 and 74, about a quarter very good to excellent grades (75+) and only 5% said that they had below 50 (suggesting that they had failed). Accordingly, 90% of current students expect to pass all required current subjects this year. These self-reported figures must be taken with a grain of salt though as response and recall bias will interfere with the true results.

Figure 8: Last/Final Year's Grades

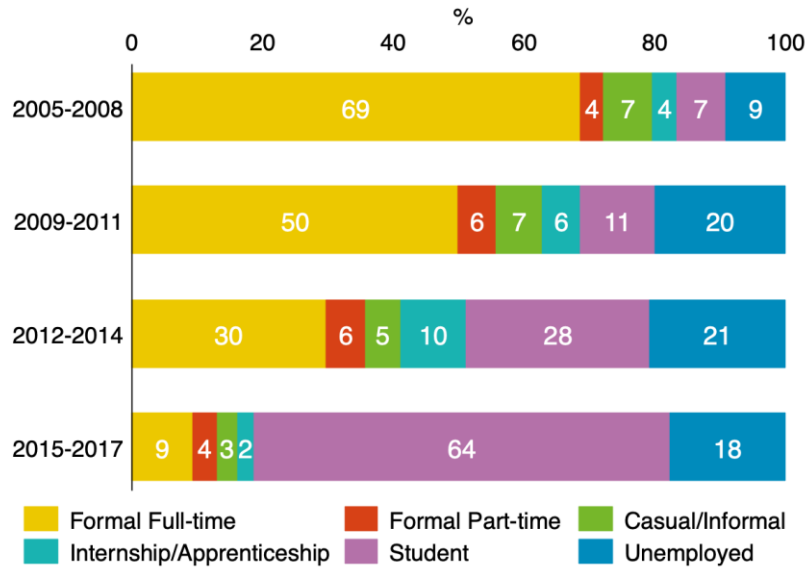


Employment

At this juncture, it is important to note that the survey purposefully did not separate students from the working population; one can be a student while being employed. Thus, each employment category depicted below also includes students, with the exception of the Unemployed category. Students who are not in any form of employment are categorised as Student.

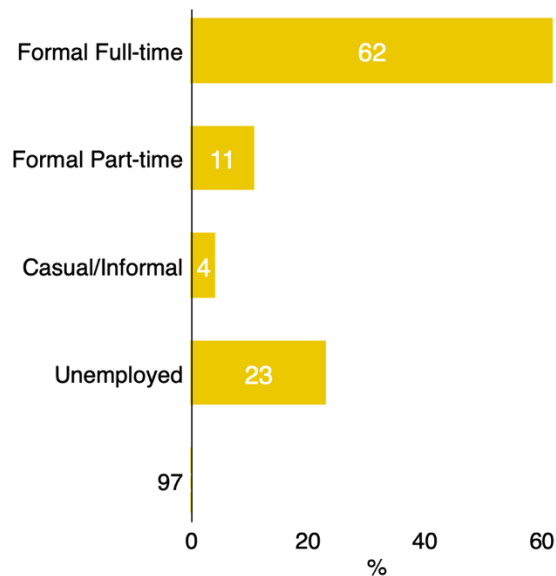
It is encouraging to see that three out of four alumni in the oldest cohort are in formal employment, less than ten percent are unemployed and most others are on a path to employment (studies/internship). This is in stark contrast to national employment figures from STATS SA (2019) which show that 29% of the working population and between 56.4% (15-24 years) and 35.6% (25-35 years) of youth are unemployed. It is worth mentioning though women in the two oldest cohorts are less likely to be in formal employment compared to men (61% vs 67%) and more likely to be unemployed (18% vs 11%).

Figure 9: Employment Status by Cohort



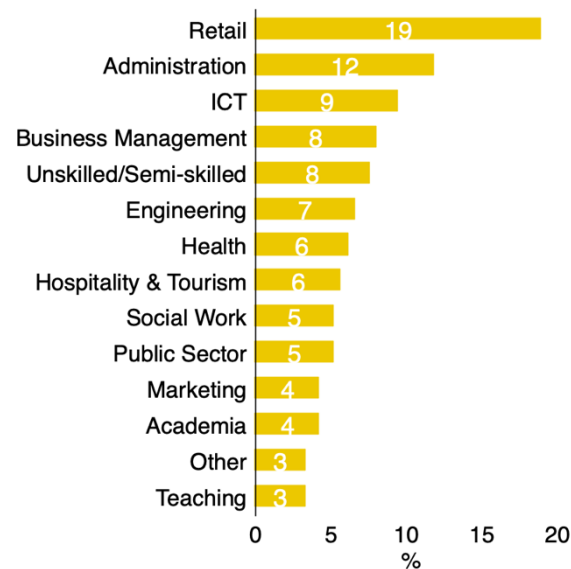
As with education, the significance of the employment figures of the alumni become more pronounced when compared to the employment status of their parents – 23% of the parents were unemployed at the time the Ikamvanites left school, compared to 9% of the oldest cohort of alumni who are NEET. The graph below shows the employment status of the breadwinner in the household, therefore unemployment figures for all adult household members would be even higher.

Figure 10: Employment Status of Parents (Breadwinner)



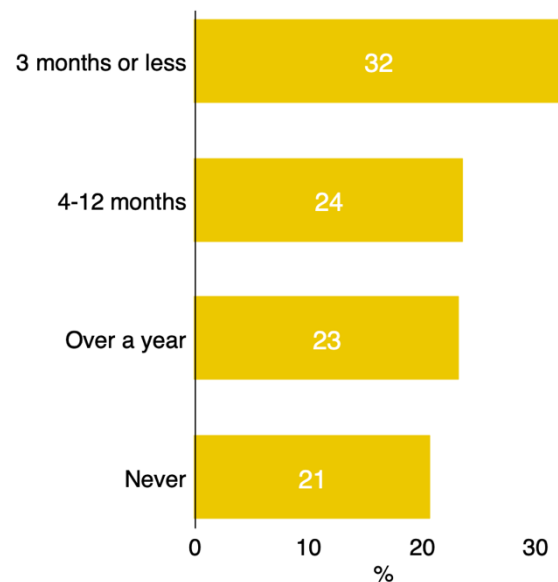
Retail (19%) and Administration (12%) are the two largest job categories for alumni in any sort of employment, interestingly followed by Information and Communication Technology (ICT; 9%) and Business Management (8%). Only eight percent are doing manual labour.

Figure 11: Occupation



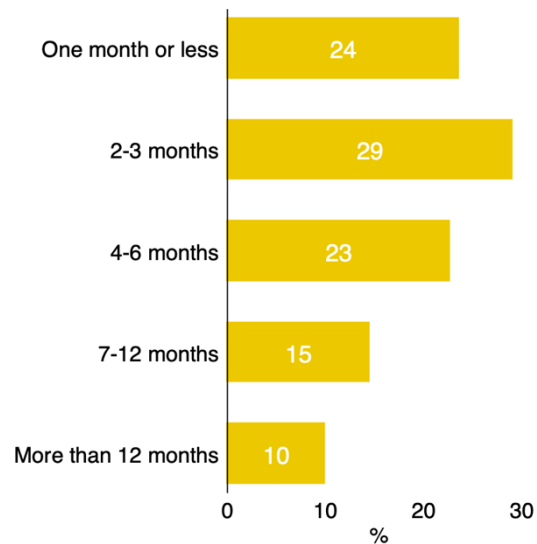
Asking those who are no longer in education how long it took them to find their first job, a third said it took them 3 months or less. Half of the respondents searched for at least 4 months – half of those even for more than a year. One out of five never managed to find employment.

Figure 12: Time Spent Looking for First Job



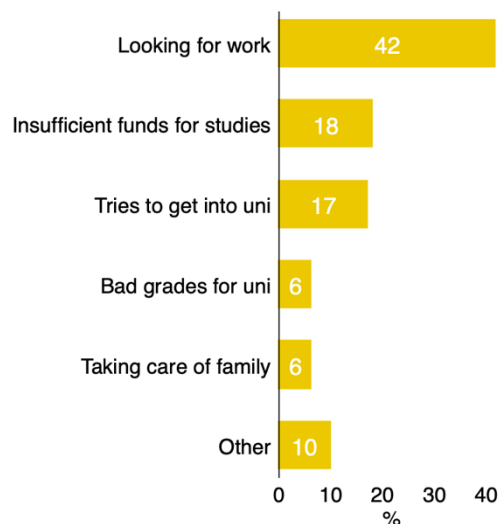
A closer look was taken at the 110 alumni who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET). On average, these alumni have been in NEET for the past 7 months; some only became unemployed very recently and a couple of extreme cases have been in NEET the past six years. About half have been in this situation for only the past 3 months or less though.

Figure 13: Time Spent in NEET



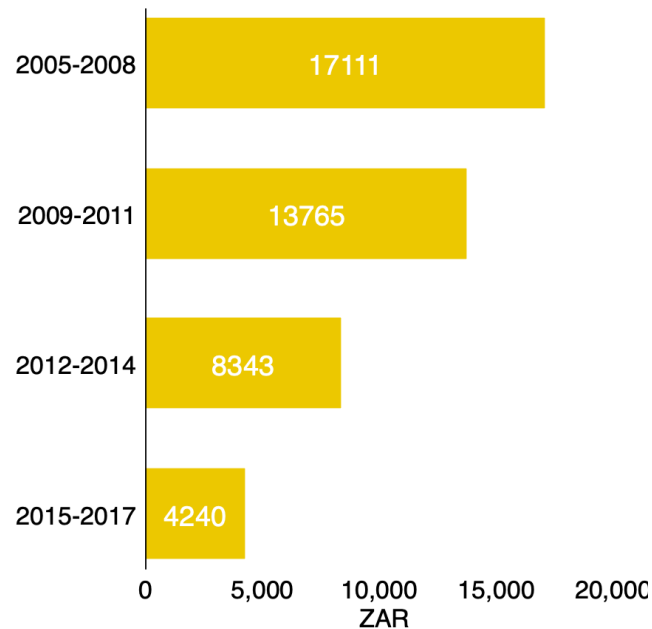
The primary reason for NEET is quite simply unemployment – 42% are individuals who are looking for a job. But of significance for the purposes of this study is the finding that 18% struggle to find the financial means to enter tertiary education, a further 17% simply struggle to get into tertiary education and 6% say that their grades are too bad to access tertiary education. As these make up of 41% of alumni in NEET, the challenge to get people into education is equally urgent as getting people into employment.

Figure 14: Reasons for NEET



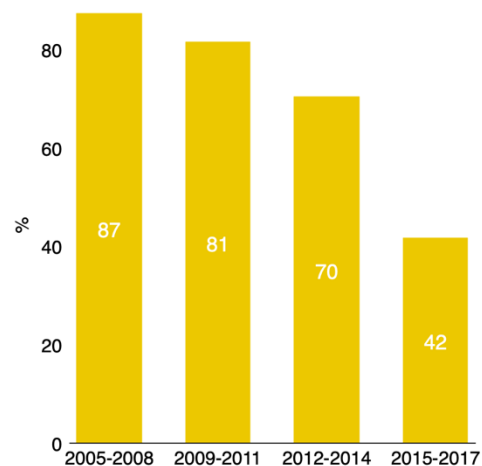
The average monthly salary of employed alumni is almost exactly R10k (R9988). However, income is strongly correlated with age (experience, time spent in job etc): on average, employed alumni in the oldest cohort earn more than four times higher salaries than their peers in the youngest cohort. In fact, 78% of the youngest alumni in employment earn R5k or less and only 5% earn more than R10k.

Figure 15: Average monthly salary (employed)



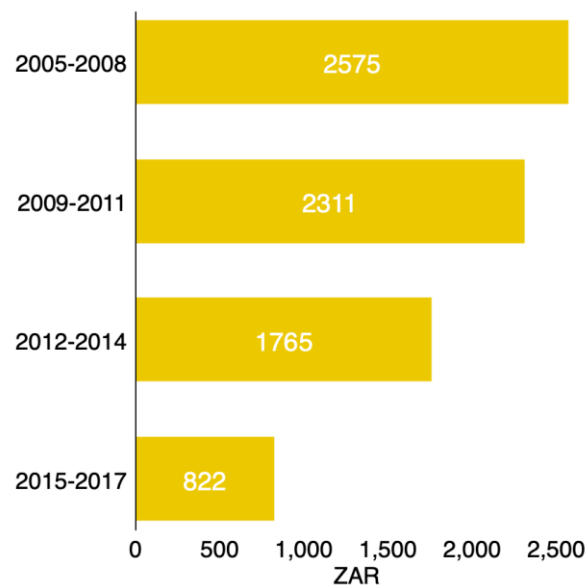
More than half (58%) of alumni regularly help their family financially; among the older cohorts more than 80%.

Figure 16: Percentage of alumni helping family financially



Those who do help their families, on average spend R1,608 per month on remittances, but this amount also correlates with cohorts, or rather the increase in spending power as older cohorts have higher salaries.

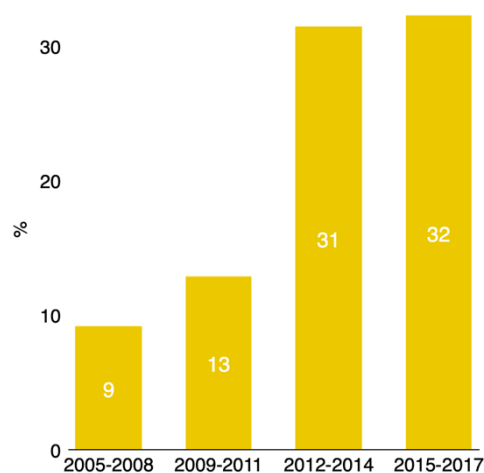
Figure 17: Monthly financial assistance to families



Volunteering

More than a quarter of all alumni are volunteers, but after eight years after matriculation the proportion of volunteers drops significantly. Only about one in ten of alumni who matriculated before 2012 is a volunteer today. Most (61%) of those who do volunteer are with IkamavaYouth.

Figure 18: Volunteering



Those who do still volunteer were asked why they do this. Here are some of the reasons given by the respondents:

I am tutoring at IkamvaYouth to give back the time and knowledge that was invested in me when i was at Ikamva as a learner. (Male, 23)

Because I want to see some young sisters and brothers progress with their studies. I would like to help them because I am where I am now because I was helped by other people. (Male, 20)

I believe in making a change in my community and to share my knowledge, especially in the disadvantaged communities. (Male, 20)

It's my way of giving back to the community. Since I am not financial rich I believe it's the only way that I can share powerful information with others. I believe you rise by lifting others. I volunteer at IkamvaYouth because it's the only way that I can change someone's life for the better and to make them believe that someone cares even though I am sharing something not tangible but it's helpful and positive. (Female, 22)

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the IkamvaYouth Alumni Survey 2019 presented in this report provide strong indicators of progress in terms of the organisation's mission of "...enabling disadvantaged youth to pull themselves and each other out of poverty and into tertiary education and/or employment."

- *Access to tertiary education:* Seventy percent of alumni who matriculated between 2015 and 2017 are currently in tertiary education and 5% already obtained a degree. Fifty-three percent of alumni who matriculated between 2005 and 2008 have obtained a degree and 24% are still in tertiary education. In comparison, not more than 12% of their parent generation obtained a degree in tertiary education. Only 6% of those who are not in employment or education say it is because of their bad grades.
- *Academic performance:* Based on self-reported information, which needs to be treated cautiously, 95% of alumni in tertiary education are passing their classes.
- *Employment:* As alumni become older, the more likely they are to be in formal employment as they finish their tertiary education. In the 2009-2011 cohort, 56% of alumni are in formal employment, in the 2005-2008 cohort this figure is at 73%.
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- *Income:* While the average monthly salary of a young matriculant (2015-2017) is a modest R4,240, this figure increases four-fold to R17,111 among the oldest cohort (2005-2008).

Despite these positive findings, there are also some results that point to challenges in the alumni's journey from matriculation to tertiary education and the workplace:

- *Time spent in tertiary education*: Multiple indicators suggest that alumni in tertiary education need more years than planned to obtain their first degree; 27% of alumni who matriculated between 2005 and 2009 are still in tertiary education and 80% of alumni who have completed a Bachelor degree said it took them four years or longer to obtain that degree.
- *Few postgraduates*: The data shows that only a relatively small minority of alumni in tertiary progress beyond an undergraduate degree. Only 12% of alumni who matriculated between 2005 and 2011 have a postgraduate degree.
- *Lack of resources and family needs*: "Insufficient funds" and "Trying to get into university" are among the top reasons provided by alumni who are NEET. Another 6% maintain that they have to take care of their family. In fact, between 42% (2015-2017) and 87% (2005-2008) contribute to their family's expenses on a regular basis.
- *Drop in volunteering*: While 32% of the younger alumni (2012-2017) are volunteering, only 11% of the older cohorts (2005-2011) continue to do so.

In summary: while the programme shows promising results for getting youth through matric, into education and into a job in the long term, additional financial support is needed for those who are unable to access tertiary education due to a lack of resources and commitment to support their families. Those who do make it into tertiary education would also benefit from financial support so they can finish their tertiary education faster and with higher degrees.

References

- STATS SA 2019. *Quarterly Labour Force Survey: Quarter 1*. Pretoria: STATS SA.
<http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02111stQuarter2019.pdf>