



**IKAMVAYOUTH**  
THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS



# **IKAMVAYOUTH ALUMNI 2016 SURVEY REPORT**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



First and foremost, IkamvaYouth would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to all the alumni who took time to respond to our very lengthy survey!

Thank you to Kasia Stochniol from Acumen as well as Dr Nic Spaull for their invaluable advice during the development of the survey, as well as Sipho Ngqayimbana and Kezia Lilenstein, who assisted with the cleaning and analysis of the data.

IkamvaYouth would also like to thank RLabs, for their generous donation of Zltos, which we were able to use as an incentive for completing the survey.

Thanks also goes out to all the alumni and IkamvaYouth staff who assisted in getting hold of our alumni's contact details, so that we could ask them to complete the survey.



**"I would like to thank everyone who makes sure that IkamvaYouth is funded for it to be able to help others. As our slogan says: The Future Is In Our Hands."**

-Thokozani Sithole, Ivory Park (2015)



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Here at IkamvaYouth our mission is to enable disadvantaged youth to pull themselves and each other out of poverty and into tertiary education and/or employment. For us, this means ensuring success in high school and then tertiary studies, learnerships or jobs that will lead to careers that will ensure they earn more than the R3,000 median monthly income earned by black South Africans ([Isaacs, 2016](#)).

One of the first steps we took towards assessing our progress in achieving our mission, was to reach out to all our alumni (those who were IkamvaYouth learners in their matric year) from as far back as 2005 (through the [first Alumni survey](#), conducted in 2013), to find out where they were and what they were doing with their lives. This first survey yielded impressive results, but the most encouraging finding was that Ikamvanites are three times less likely to be “not in education, employment, or training” (NEETs), than their counterparts nationally (only 10.4% in 2013, compared to the national 33.5% - this was the statistic at the time the survey was done).



Since 2013, the number of alumni has grown from 500 to 1,127 (matric 2005 – 2015). Towards the end of 2016, we launched a similar survey. This survey reached a total of 548 (46%) of our alumni. Some of the key findings are:

- Only 13% of respondents were NEETs, compared to the national figures provided by the [Department of Higher Education and Training](#). The national NEET rate was 31.2% and 46% for young people aged between 15-24 years and 25-34 years respectively in 2016. 51% of our alumni are currently studying, 25% are employed, and 11% are both studying and employed.
- Of those Ikamvanites who are studying, the large majority are considered to be “on track” to complete their respective qualifications within the required time.
- Ikamvanites’ dropout rates are lower than the national average for black university entrants. Only 18% of Ikamvanites indicated that they had ever enrolled in a tertiary qualification and not completed it, most of these dropping out in their first year of studies. According to [Van Broekhuizen, et al \(2016\)](#), dropout rates for black entrants is 32%.
- 36% of Ikamvanites are currently employed in various positions (64% full-time, 19% part-time, 13% internships, 4% self-employed). Of the 106 Ikamvanites that are employed full time, 57% earn more than R5000 per month.
- The 196 survey respondents currently employed are financially supporting over 550 extended family members.
- It was really encouraging to find that 50% of our alumni who had completed the survey have chosen to live out IkamvaYouth’s value of *Paying it Forward* by volunteering. 82% of those volunteering are volunteering at IkamvaYouth while others are volunteering elsewhere.

## INTRODUCTION

### **IkamvaYouth Background**

IkamvaYouth aims to redress inequality and eradicate poverty through education. It was established in 2003, by two young researchers at the HRSC, who decided to do something about the poor matric results of black South Africans, which they realised played a major role in the growth of the South African economy but more importantly in black South Africans' ability to access quality post-school opportunities and earn a dignified living.

IkamvaYouth works in townships in five provinces across South Africa, and primarily offers supplementary tutoring to high school learners. Other programmes offered by the organisation include computer literacy, health and life skills, career guidance and mentoring, and media, image and expression programmes. These programmes are offered free of charge, with the condition that learners maintain a 75% attendance requirement, with sessions offered three times per week during the term and for ten full days of the winter holidays. Learners enrol from grades 8 to 11.

According to Heerden (2017, p.2), "white people are at least four times less likely to be unemployed than Africans". IkamvaYouth programmes are aimed at supporting youth during one of the most crucial stages of their lives: adolescence, when they are required to navigate their transition from school to tertiary and ultimately, to employment. In the South African Child Gauge, De Lannoy, Leibbrandt and Frame (2015) recognise interventions such as IkamvaYouth, as key to the future wellbeing of the youth, as they have the potential to deliver long-lasting change.



## Survey Background

IkamvaYouth's impact over the years has been measured through the quality of matric passes, as well as the number of learners that have accessed post-school opportunities. In 2012, IkamvaYouth came up with a bold, audacious vision that has pushed the organisation to begin looking beyond such measurements for success: Vision 2030. IkamvaYouth's Vision 2030 is inspired by the National Development Plan, and the Department of Basic Education's plans for 2030, and articulates a vision for cross-sectorial collaboration and collective impact to ensure that:

- ALL learners who begin grade 1 in 2018 will reach matric or the equivalent
- ALL learners will pass
- ALL learners who matriculate in 2030 will access post-school opportunities that put them on the path to earning a dignified living within four years of matriculating

Not only does IkamvaYouth want to ensure that learners reach and pass matric, and access tertiary, it also seeks to ensure that they access opportunities that lead to their earning a dignified living wage. That means ensuring success in tertiary; and access to job opportunities that will allow them to earn more than the R3000 median monthly income for black South Africans (Isaacs, 2016).

One of the first steps IkamvaYouth took towards achieving this vision was to reach out to all our alumni from as far back as 2005, and find out where they were and what they were doing with their lives. A total of 350 out of 500 alumni were tracked down and surveyed in 2013. The results of the first Alumni survey (Mash, 2013) were extremely encouraging; some highlights include:

- Ikamvanites are almost half as likely to drop out of their first year of tertiary studies (17% drop-out rate, compared to the national rate of 30%)
- 60% of Ikamvanites graduate/pass their courses in a given year
- The median income of Ikamvanites is R9000pm, closer to the median income for white South Africans (R10 000). The median income for black South Africans is below R3000pm.
- Ikamvanites are three times less likely to be NEETs (not in education, employment, or training), than their counterparts nationally (only 10.4% in 2013, compared to the national 33.5%).

Since 2013, the number of alumni has grown from 500 to 1,127 up to the end of 2015. In 2016, IkamvaYouth launched a similar survey, this survey continued into 2017 as we attempted to track down as many of our alumni as we could. This report presents the findings of this survey.

## METHODOLOGY

The key questions that this survey sought to answer are:

- How many alumni are NEET?
- What post-school education have our alumni accessed/completed, including:
  - What progress have they made in their tertiary education?



- What challenges they have they faced in their tertiary education?
  - What is the throughput at tertiary?
  - What employment opportunities have they managed to access since leaving the programme, including:
    - Job-seeking practices
    - Types of employment opportunities (skilled/unskilled labour, full/part time, contract/permanent, etc.)
    - Income levels
    - And when they are working, how many people are they supporting other than themselves?
- As well as what are the volunteering patterns of our alumni, and motivations for volunteering (or not volunteering)? Further, would they be willing to donate financially to ensure IkamvaYouth's sustainability?

An electronic (Surveygizmo) survey was distributed to all Ikamvanites who had email addresses. As an incentive to encourage alumni to complete the survey, all alumni who completed the survey received 250 Zlto (a virtual currency that they could use to redeem for various items including airtime, movie tickets and toiletries).

IkamvaYouth has a total of 1,127 alumni, from 2005 to 2015. We discussed our plans for carrying out this survey with Acumen, a partner organisation with survey design and implementation expertise, and they suggested that a target reach of about 400 should be a fairly acceptable response rate to aim for. However, as Ikamvanites are known for setting quite high targets for themselves, we aimed to reach at least 70% (788) of our alumni. A total of 541 alumni completed the survey. 7 incomplete/partial responses were also included in the analysis. This brings the total number of responses to 548, giving us an overall response rate of 49%. The data was cleaned and analysed using a combination of Surveygizmo, Excel and Stata.

Several attempts were made to reach all our alumni, and encourage them to complete it with us over the phone or electronically in their own time in order to increase response rates. The following measures were also implemented:

- SMS reminders were sent to all those who had not completed the survey, urging them to check their emails and complete it.
- Facebook messages were sent to encourage alumni to complete the survey and to prompt their friends to do so as well.
- An extra question was added to the survey, to allow alumni to indicate who had encouraged them to complete the survey. The person whose name appeared the most received a cash prize of R500.
- Alumni who had still not completed the survey by October 2016 were phoned, and those who were willing completed the survey telephonically.
- In May 2017, as a final incentive, all alumni were informed that that everyone who completed the survey would be entered into a lucky draw to win a trip to Cape Town.

The incentives became somewhat of a challenge, as some respondents attempted to complete the survey multiple times, in an attempt to receive the incentives multiple times. This problem was addressed however, by the fact that each respondent's survey was linked to their Salesforce (the database used to keep track of and maintain contact with alumni) ID. It was therefore possible to identify and delete the repeated responses.

Similarly to the last survey, one-on-one phone calls proved to be the most efficient way to reach the alumni, rather than emails or SMSs. Unfortunately, the extra incentives did not result in a significant increase in completion rates. Some of the challenges faced with reaching more alumni than we managed to reach included:

- o Wrong numbers;
- o Constant voicemail;
- o No numbers (and other alumni unable to assist);
- o Sadly, a few of our alumni had passed away;



- o Asked not to be contacted again;
- o Not interested/said they would rather do the survey online but never did.

## CHALLENGES AND DATA LIMITATIONS



This section of the report will discuss how we tried to mitigate the challenges we encountered, and ensure the integrity of the data as far as possible to ensure that the results of this survey are as representative as possible.

### Challenges gathering the data

- One of our key considerations was to ensure that the survey was accessible on mobile phones and tablets, and not just on computers, as we recognised that many of our alumni may not have access to computers. However, because of the length of the survey, some alumni would run out of data while doing the survey, which discouraged them from attempting to complete it. To mitigate this challenge, we attempted to call the alumni who had partially completed it to do the remainder of the survey with them over the telephone.
- In an effort to reduce the length of the survey, and to avoid the issue of survey fatigue, the survey was designed in such a way that respondents were only exposed to essential questions, based on their previous responses (through setting validation rules on SurveyGizmo). We also made efforts to pre-populate each respondent's survey where we already had the information (e.g. contact details and last known study/employment details). Respondents were also able to save their responses and continue later, and did not need to redo the questions they'd already responded to. Survey fatigue, however, still proved to be a challenge, as some alumni felt the survey took them too long and did not complete it. In total, the survey took on average of 20-30 minutes to complete.
- The major challenge was getting hold of all our alumni to complete the survey, as we found that a lot of our alumni tend to change their phone numbers often, and we therefore simply could not reach them. In many cases, we tried to get hold of alumni through family members or other alumni who we thought they may still be in contact with. Quite a few alumni's phone numbers we had on record were constantly on voicemail, which meant we were therefore unable to reach them to encourage them to do the survey.

### Limitations of the data

The challenge of low response rate as well as the fact that IkamvaYouth alumni are not a homogenous group (there is a 10 year gap between the first cohort of alumni and the 2015 alumni) needs to be borne in mind when interpreting the data from this survey. Furthermore, considering that IkamvaYouth only has about 1,000 alumni, it is not possible to generalise the results of this survey to the South African Population. So while a significant number of Ikamvanites did respond to the survey, and the data gathered on these respondents was as complete and thorough as possible, the small sample size needs to be borne in mind wherever this report compares their achievements to national averages.

Another limitation of the data is that it is largely based on self-reported information that we have not been in a position to verify. While we do not believe that many respondents would have provided false information, the possibility does need to be considered. We have tried to manage this risk by including the option for responses not to provide any information, in questions that may be more sensitive. For example, where we asked alumni to indicate their salary range, they had the option of selecting “I’d rather not say”. It is believed therefore, that where actual responses are given, these reflect the actual situation.

## RESULTS

### Demographics

We were able to pull out demographic details from only 526 responses (out of 541), as some did not provide enough information in their responses. Figure 1 shows the ages of the alumni. As to be expected, the majority of our alumni are between the ages of 19 and 23 (i.e. they would have matriculated between 2011 and 2015, as per the third graph). This distribution of respondents by matric year is shown in Figure 2.

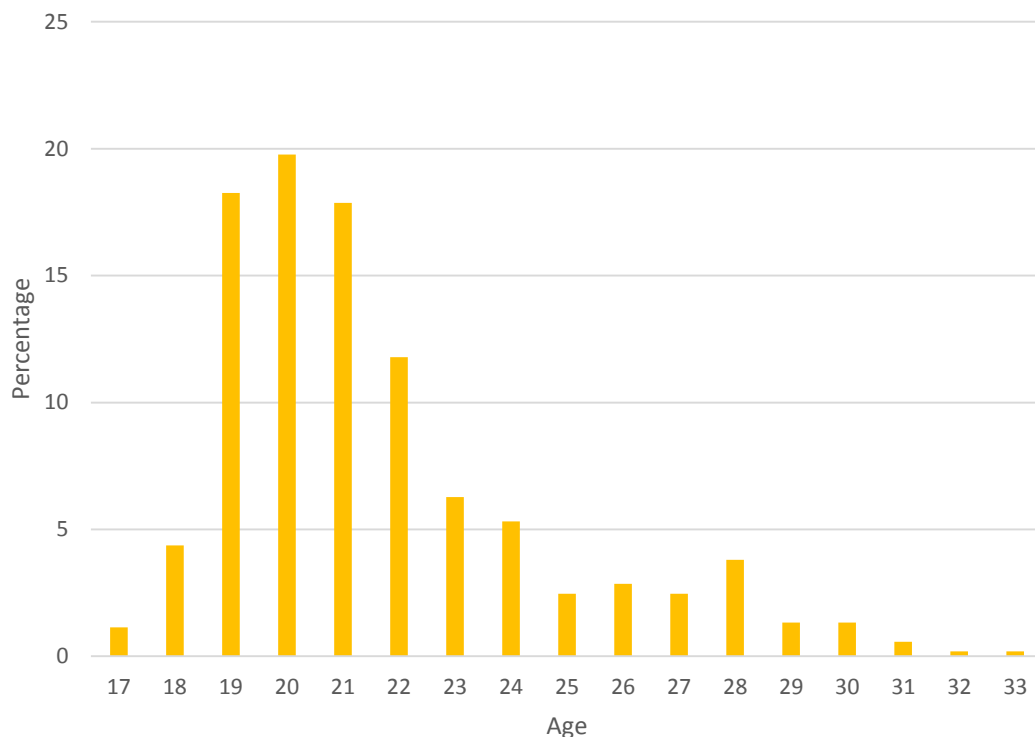


Figure 1: Number of responses by Age

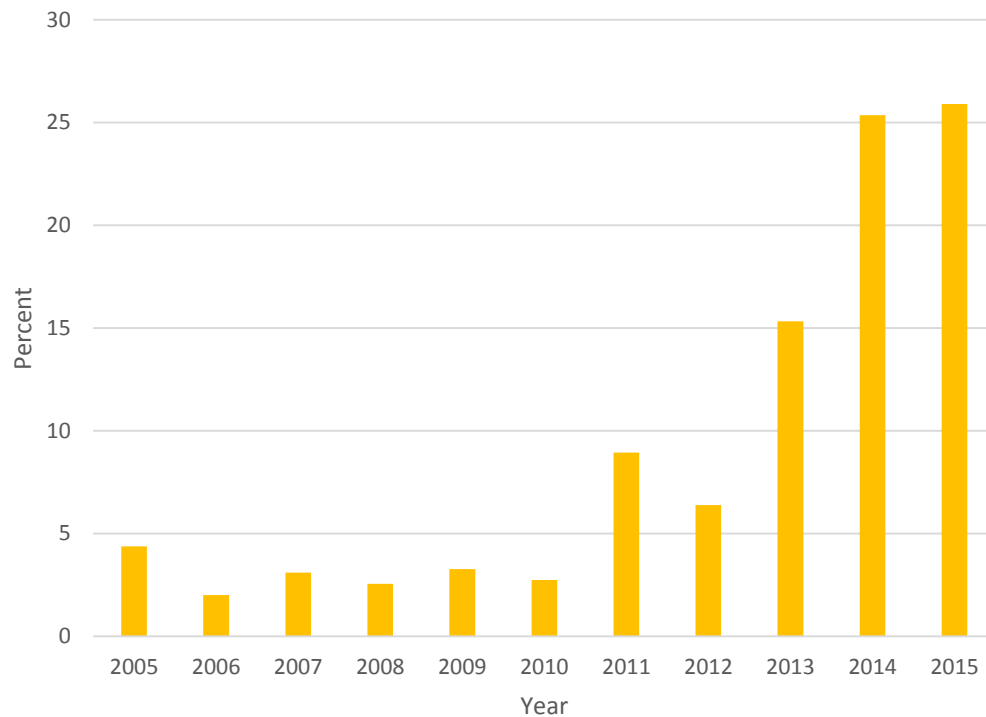


Figure 2: Number of Responses by Matric Year

### Highest completed qualification

20% of Ikamvanites have completed some form of post-school qualification, while 73% have completed matric and only 7% have a grade 11. The graph below shows Ikamvanite's highest completed levels of education, per matric cohort. Not surprisingly, the majority of our alumni have only completed their matric, and are currently studying full-time. This is because most of our alumni are from more recent matric cohorts, and it therefore makes sense that they would not yet have entered into the job market. Those from earlier cohorts are more likely to have completed a post-matric qualification.

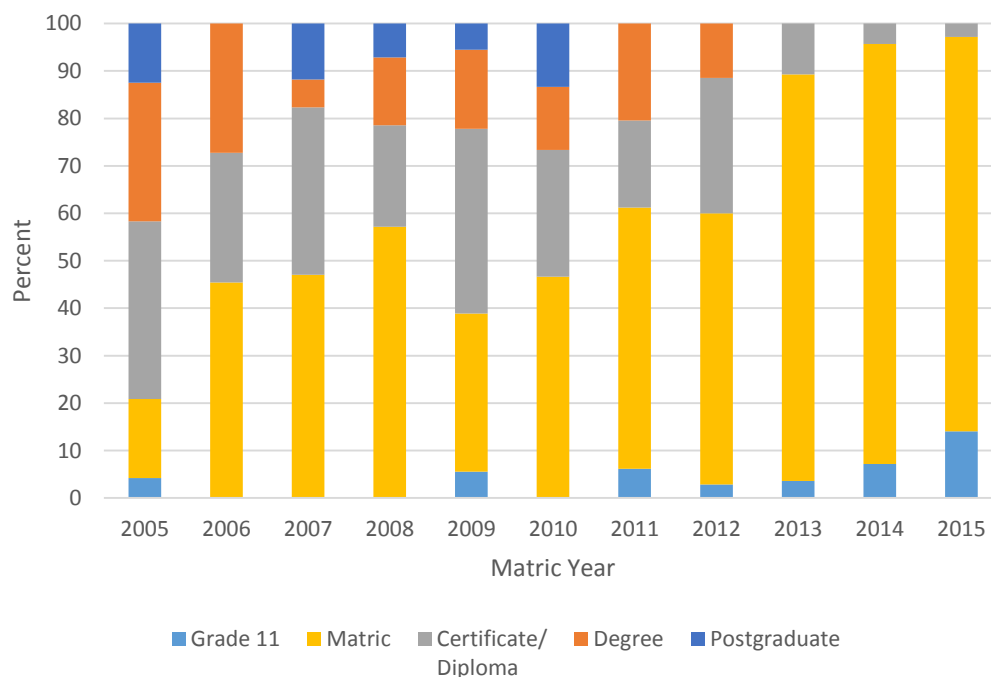
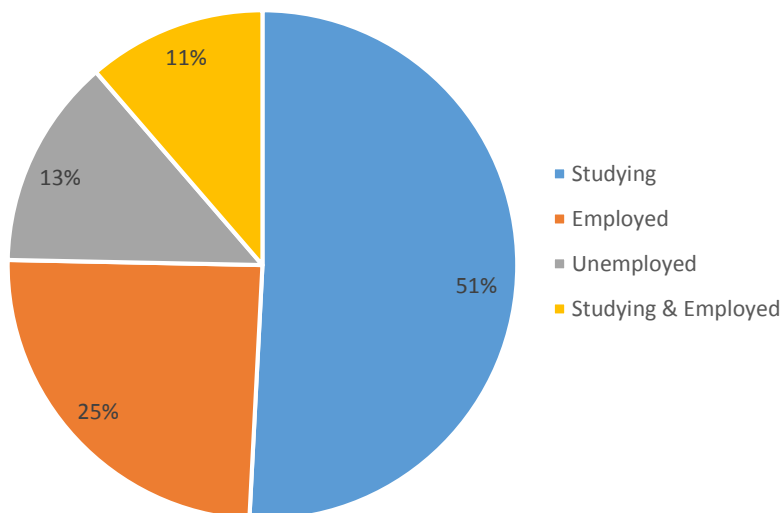


Figure 3: Highest completed education by Matric Year



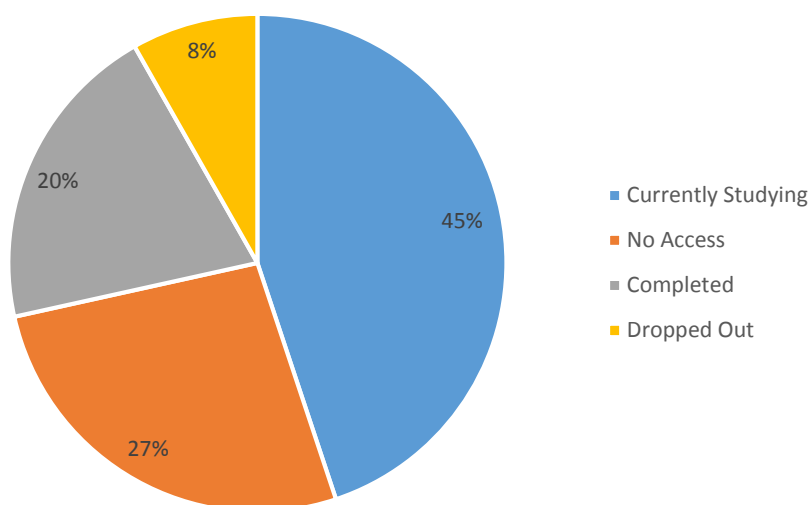
## **Ikamvanites' Study/Employment activities**

The pie chart below (Figure 4) provides a representation of the study/employment activities of IkamvaYouth's alumni. 51% of our alumni are currently studying, 25% are employed, and 11% are studying and employed. Only 13% of Ikamvanites are NEET, a figure far below the national rate, which was 31.2% and 46% for young people aged between 15-24 years and 25-34 years respectively in 2016 (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017).



*Figure 4: Ikamvanites' study/education activities*

The pie chart below (Figure 5) shows that 45% of Ikamvanites are currently studying, and 20% have completed some form of post-school qualification. The 27% that have never accessed any tertiary education, as well as the 8% who dropped out, is concerning. It is clear that IkamvaYouth's alumni relations department needs to pay particular attention to these Ikamvanites, as we are aware that tertiary education plays a crucial role in improving employment and earning potential.



*Figure 5: Ikamvanites' access to tertiary education*

As outlined in Figure 6 below, Ikamvanites who matriculated between 2011 and 2015 are more likely to be studying, while those who matriculated between 2005 and 2010 are more likely to be employed.

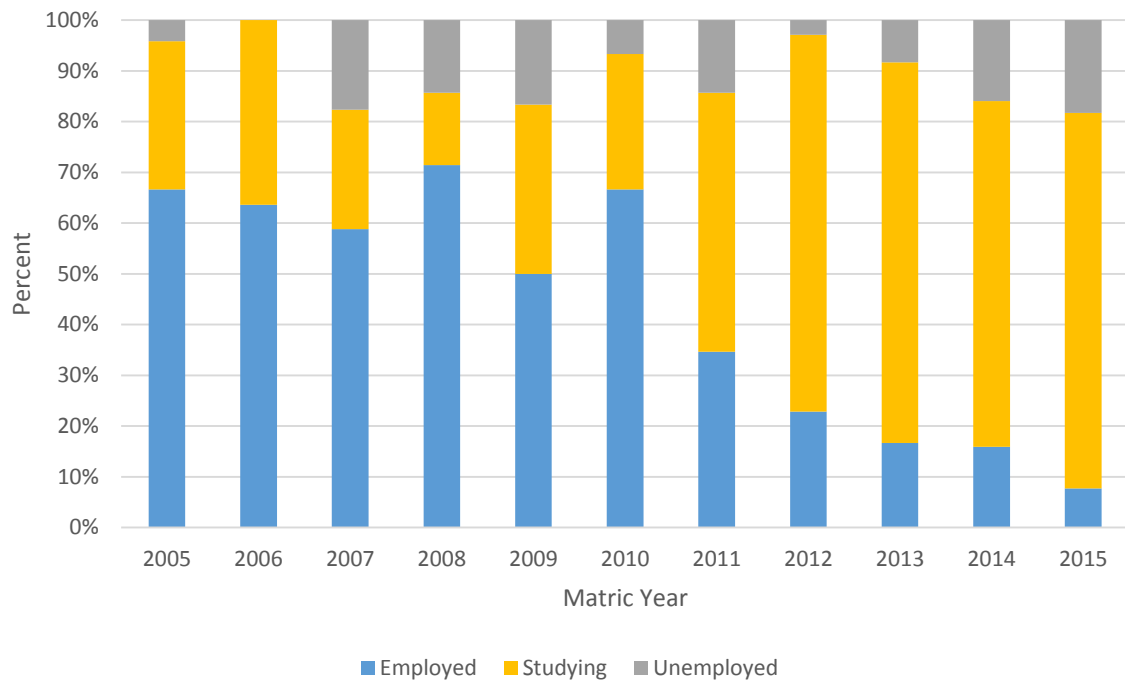


Figure 6: Ikamvanites' "Current Activity" by Matric Year

We are pleased to see that the majority of the fairly recent alumni are studying whereas the older cohorts of alumni are mostly working. Across the years, the NEET figure doesn't vary too significantly - although we are concerned about the number of alumni who are NEET from the 2007, 2009, 2014 and 2015. We will continue to share opportunities with these learners through our database in an effort to reduce the number of alumni who are NEET and we will also explore other ways to support these learners.

## Ikamvanites in Employment

A total of 196 (36%) of Ikamvanites are employed. It is encouraging to note that the majority of those who are employed are employed in full-time rather than part-time positions. Figure 7 shows that of those who are employed, 43% (85 alumni) are employed in full-time, permanent positions, while 21% (41 alumni) are employed in full-time contract positions, 19% (37 alumni) are employed part-time, 13% (25 alumni) are enrolled in internship programmes, and 4% are self-employed.

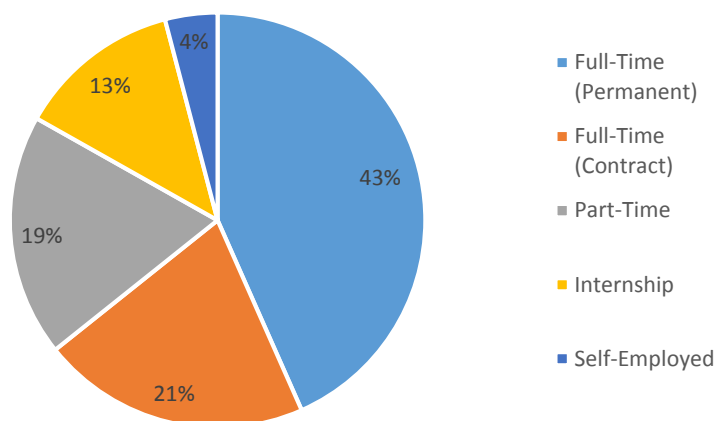


Figure 7: Ikamvanites' type of employment

In order to increase the likelihood of respondents providing us with their salary information (many respondents did not provide this sensitive information in the 2013 survey), we decided to give them an opportunity to select the range within which their salaries fell, rather than the exact amount. While this strategy was successful in getting many respondents to respond to the question, these ranges unfortunately do not provide us with an opportunity to find out the mean and median income of Ikamvanites.

Figure 8 shows that the majority of those who are employed earn R5000pm or less. This result is not surprising however, as the majority of Ikamvanites would have matriculated in more recent years, and therefore would be more likely to earn less than those who matriculated in earlier years. Figure 9, demonstrates this: the graph shows that the more recently matriculated alumni are likely to earn less, while those that matriculated earlier are more likely to earn more.

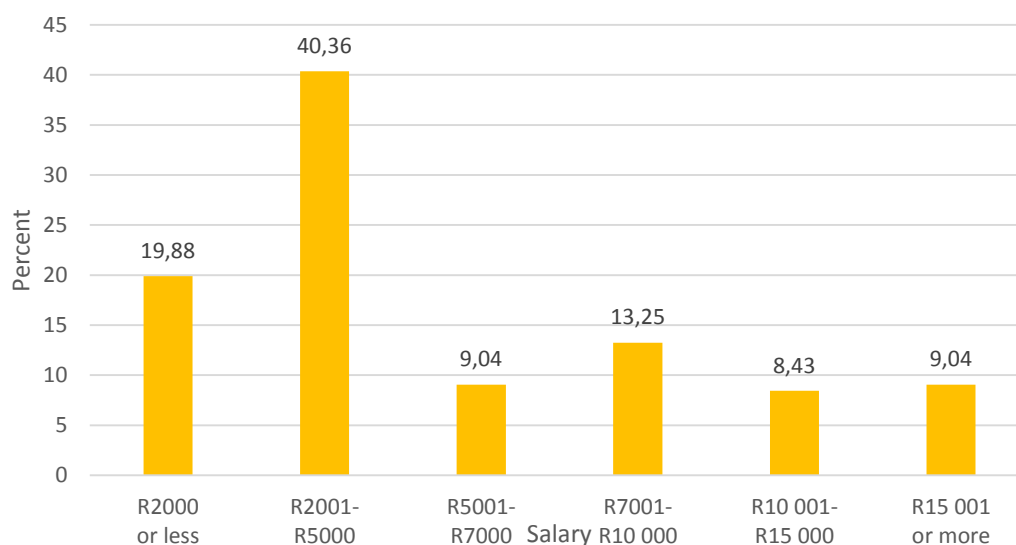


Figure 8: Monthly salary ranges of employed Ikamvanites



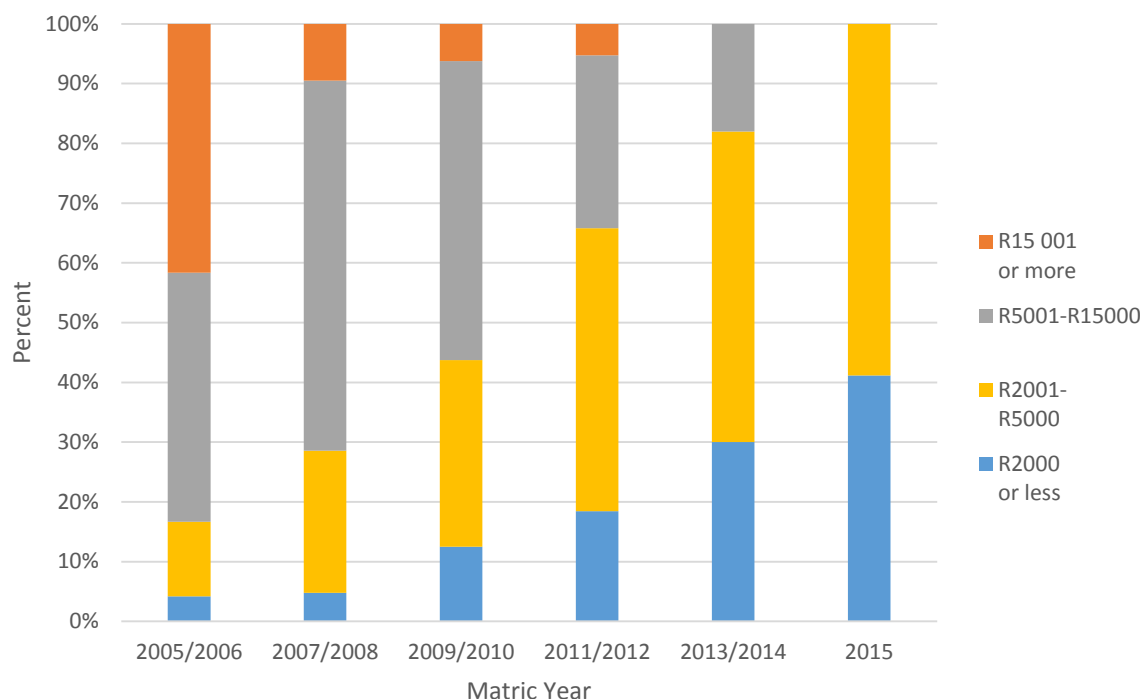


Figure 9: Salary ranges of employed Ikamvanites by Matric Year

The graph below (figure 10) shows the salary ranges of the Ikamvanites who are employed full time, grouped by their completed level of education. Those who have only completed grade 11 (incomplete Secondary) are more likely to earn less than R5000 per month than those with a matric or tertiary qualification.

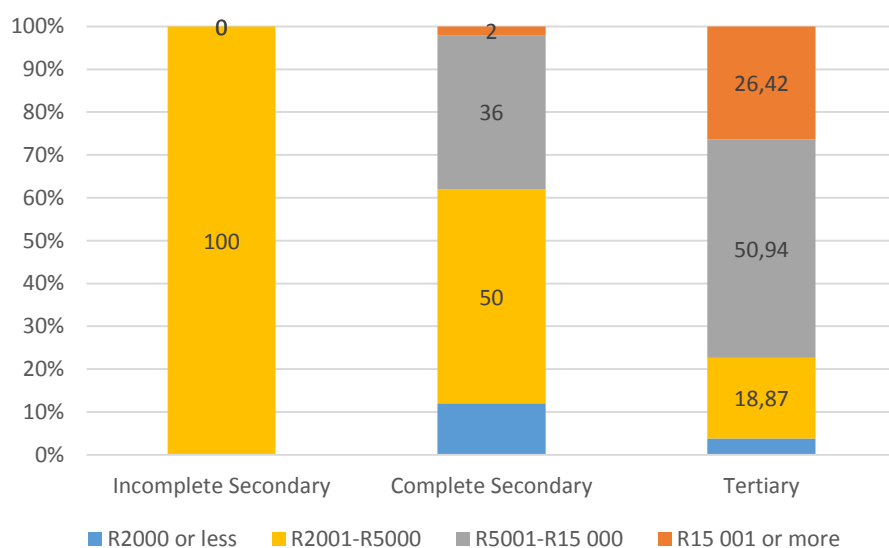


Figure 10: Salary ranges of Full-time employed Ikamvanites, by education level

96% of employed Ikamvanites indicated that they regularly contribute towards their family's expenses (most are financially supporting 3 or more people). Figure 11 below shows the percentage of Ikamvanites who indicated that they regularly contribute towards their family's expenses.

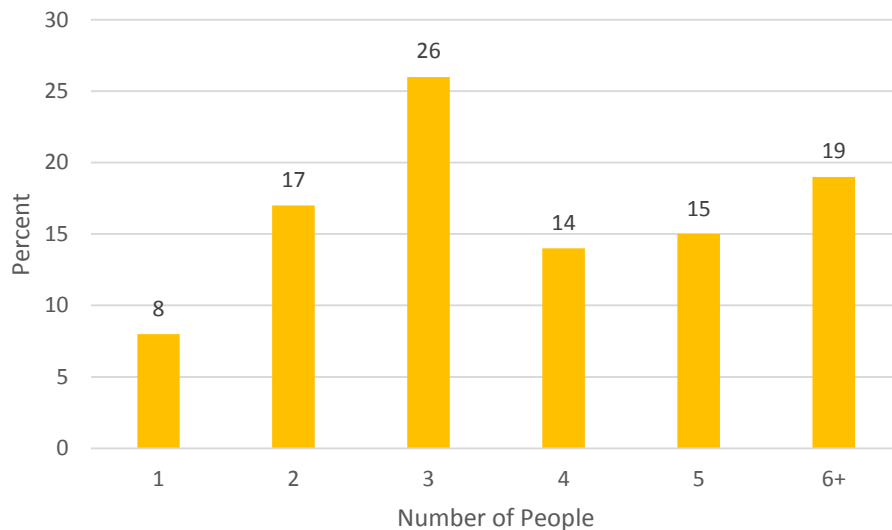


Figure 11: Percentage of Ikamvanites who contribute financially towards families

We asked employed respondents to indicate, on a scale of 0 to 10, the likelihood that they would make a financial contribution to IkamvaYouth. Those who gave a score of 7-10 were categorised as likely to contribute, those who gave a score of 4-6 were categorised as neutral, and those who gave a score of 0-3 were categorised as unlikely to contribute. As per the pie chart below, 61% of respondents are likely to contribute financially, while 14% are unlikely, and 25% were neutral. These results have implications for how IkamvaYouth could seek to raise funds from its alumni in the future, or indeed, if it's feasible to do so, considering that many Ikamvanites already have financial obligations towards their families.

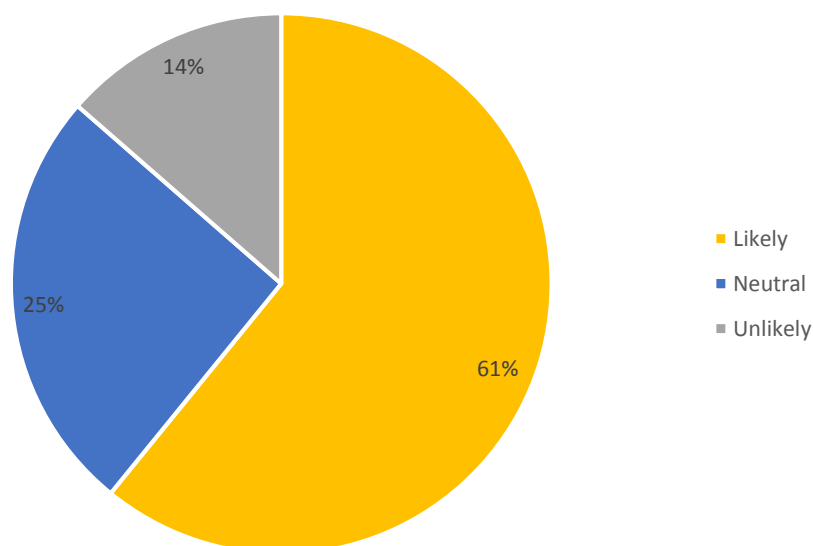


Figure 12: Likelihood of contributing financially to IkamvaYouth

We are inspired by the number of learners that are financially contributing to their families. Given this, we are unlikely to start an alumni giving programme in the near future, as our alumni are already giving back to their communities by volunteering and contributing to their families.

## Ikamvanites in Tertiary

Figure 13 shows that most (351 out of 548 respondents) of the studying Ikamvanites are enrolled in full time (72%) or part time (12%) tertiary studies and 16% indicated that they were improving their matric (supp/upgrading).

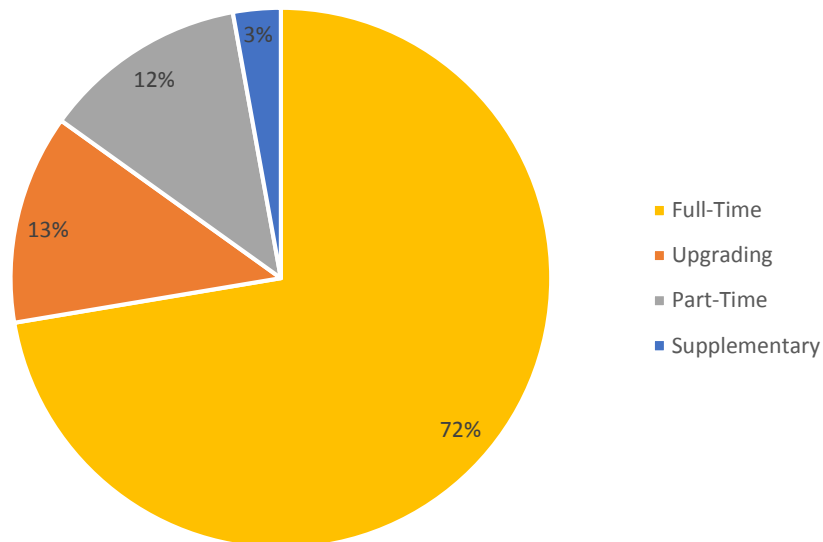


Figure 13: Ikamvanites' Study Status

Of those Ikamvanites who are studying full time or part-time, the majority are pursuing diploma (39%) and bachelor degree (38%) studies.

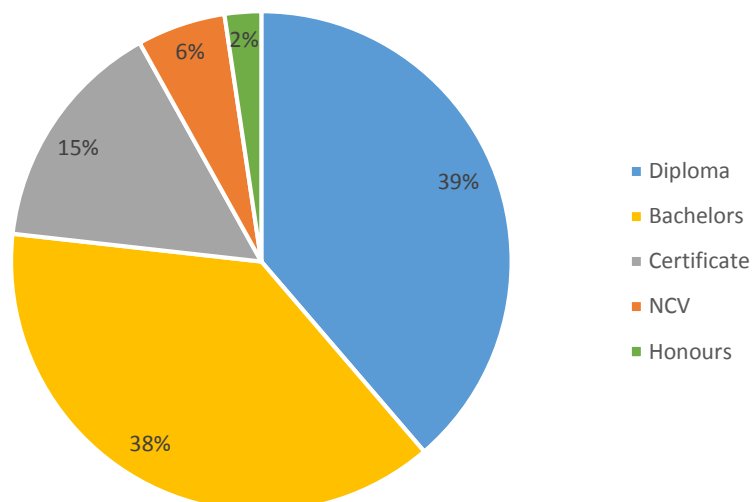


Figure 14: Current Study level of Ikamvanites

Finance, Management, and Entrepreneurship studies as well as Science/Engineering studies seem to be the most popular tertiary studies that are being pursued by Ikamvanites. It is really encouraging to note that these are also the categories most Ikamvanites reported to have completed, which suggests that IkamvaYouth's tertiary throughput in these studies is good.



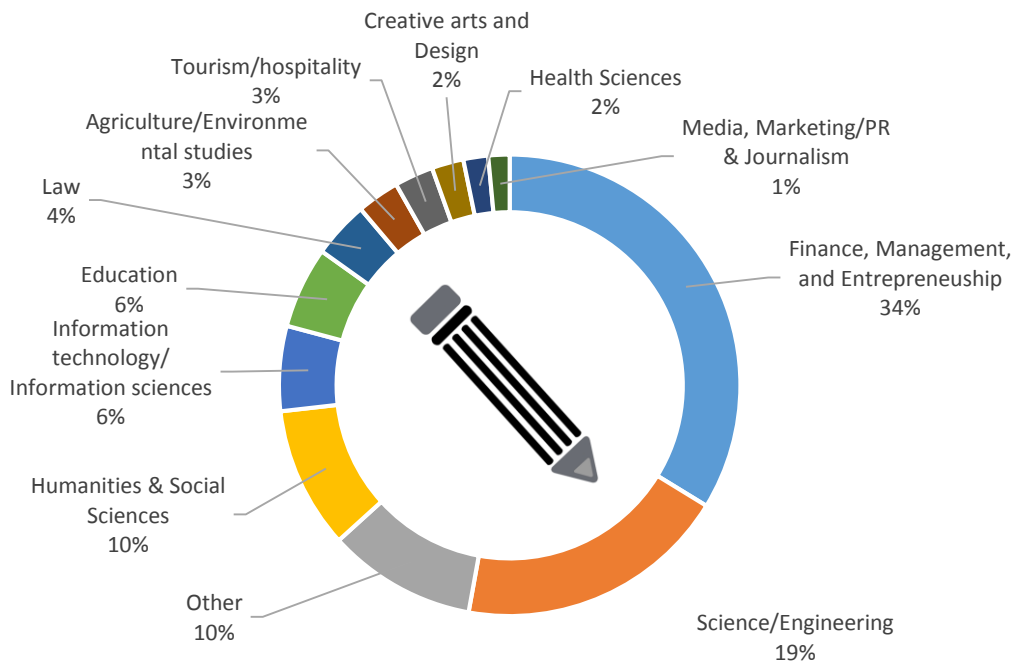


Figure 15: Ikamvanites' current study categories

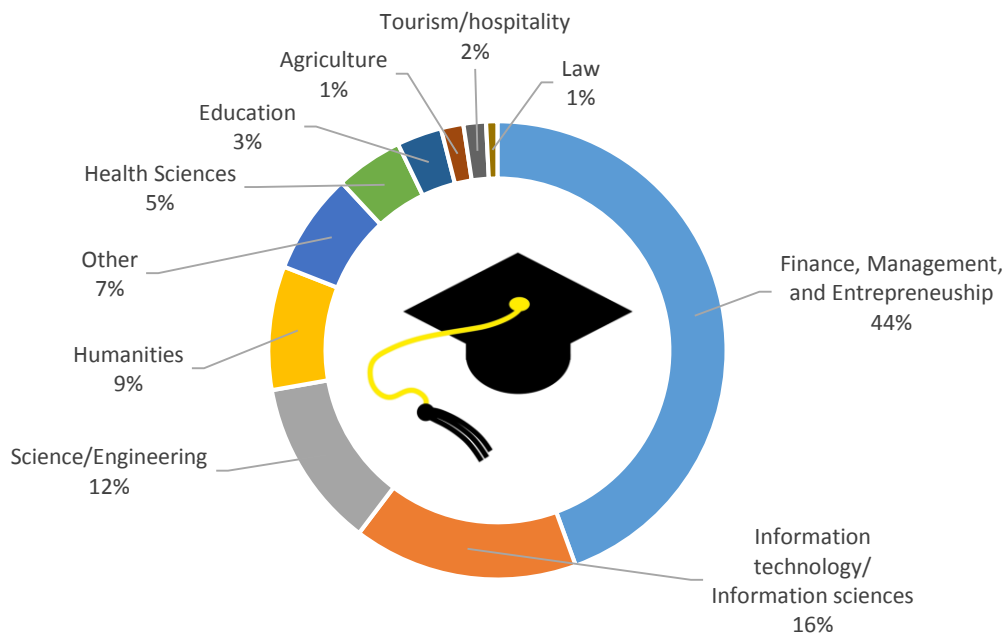


Figure 16: Ikamvanites' completed tertiary studies categories

Figure 17 shows that most studying Ikamvanites are funded by NSFAS (48%), while quite a large percentage (33%) are reportedly self-funded, and 17% have bursaries. In addition to supporting learners to access tertiary, IkamvaYouth also seeks to ensure that these learners access various forms of funding (such as NSFAS and bursaries) which will enable them to actually attend their chosen tertiary institutions. While it is encouraging to see that the majority of Ikamvanites have indeed secured funding for their

studies (48% are funded by NSFAS), the fact that about a third of the Ikamvanites in tertiary are reportedly self-funded is concerning, as most come from families that cannot afford the cost of tertiary studies. Furthermore, half those Ikamvanites who indicated they had never studied since leaving IkamvaYouth indicated a lack of financial resources as the reason for never studying.

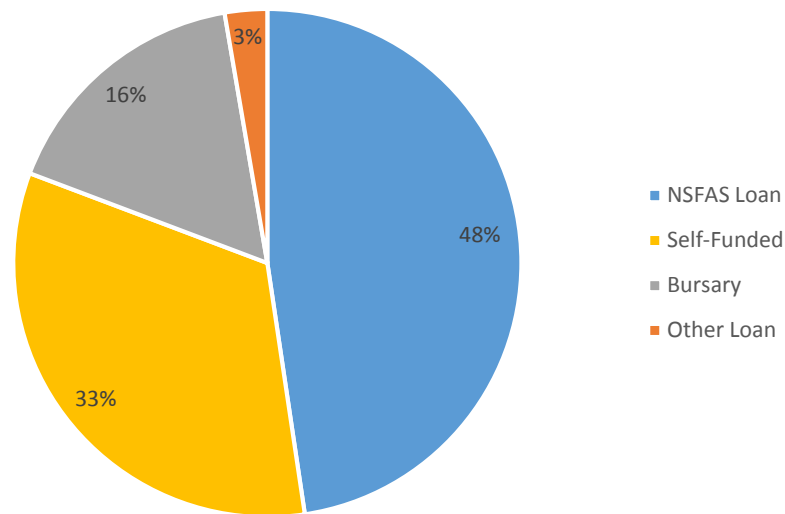


Figure 17: Studying Ikamvanites' funding

Figure 18 shows that when asked to indicate their academic progress, the majority of studying Ikamvanites reported that they were passing all required subjects. This suggests that most Ikamvanites who are enrolled in tertiary studies are on track to complete their studies within the required timeframes. The few who reported poor/slow academic progress gave various reasons; financial/resource constraints the most common.

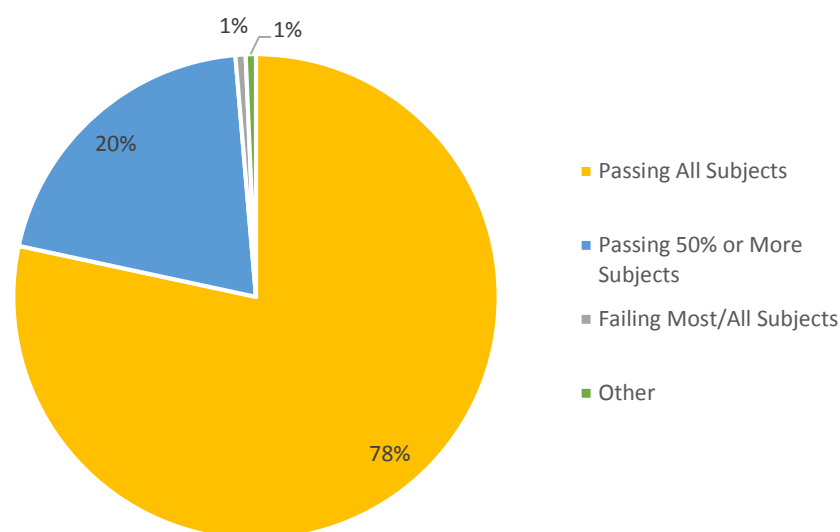


Figure 18: Ikamvanites' academic progress in tertiary

Figure 19 shows the reasons for poor academic performance and from this we can conclude that IkamvaYouth needs to improve the number of learners who access funding to support their studies as it is not just enough to get the marks required to enter tertiary.

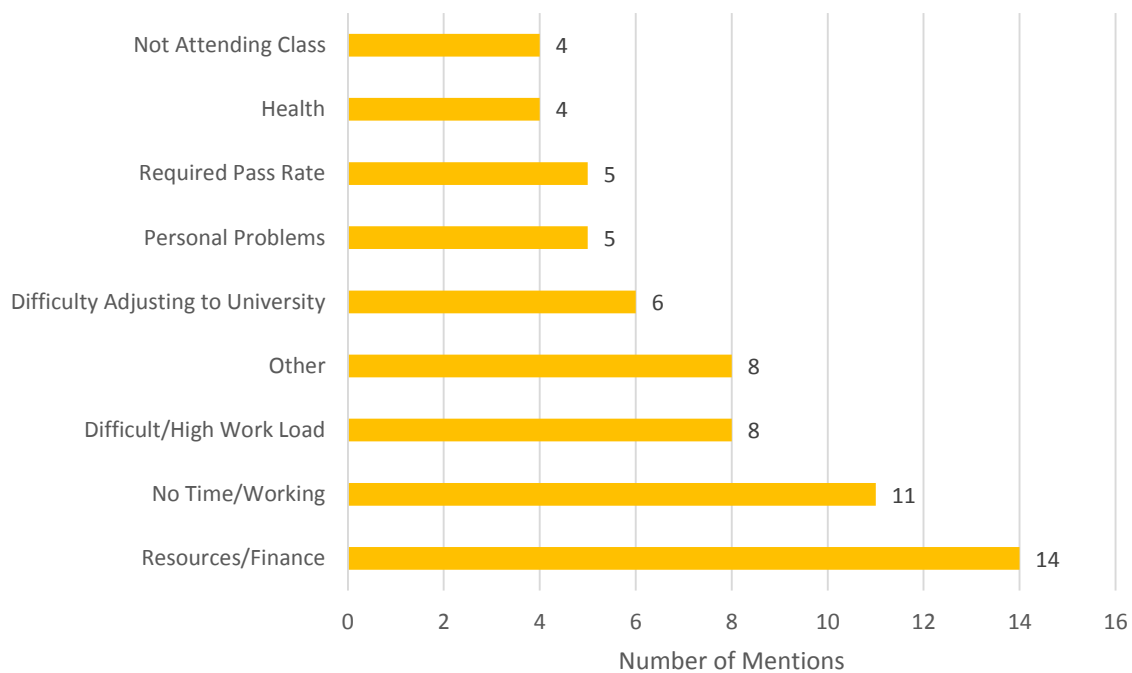


Figure 19: Reasons for poor academic performance

## Job Readiness

The respondents who indicated they were “currently unemployed” were further asked if they had ever worked before. The responses were separated into “studying” and “unemployed” (because it is more understandable if someone who is still studying has never had a job). 80% (out of 243 respondents) of those who are currently studying had never worked before while 63% (out of 65 respondents) of those who are currently unemployed had never worked before.

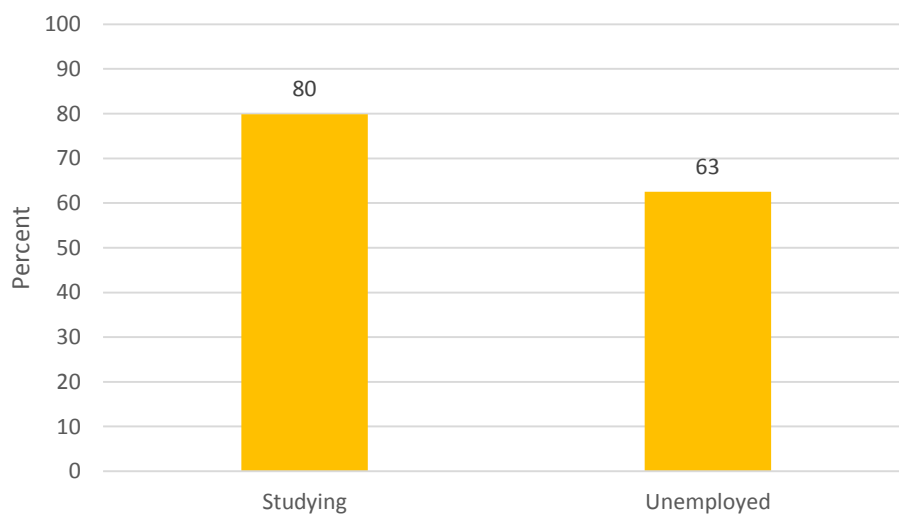


Figure 20: Ikamvanites who have never had a job before

53.63% of all respondents indicated that they were looking for work or looking to change jobs, and 78.13% of those who are unemployed were looking for work. This means over 20% of unemployed Ikamvanites aren't even looking for employment. It is worth exploring some of the reasons that may be contributing to this (loss of hope, taking care of family, etc.), in order to ensure adequate support is provided to this "At-Risk" group of Ikamvanites.

Ikamvanites are more likely to search for jobs through online platforms, asking family and friends, as well as personally visiting businesses to enquire about vacancies. This suggests then, that it is worth continuing sharing various work opportunities with Ikamvanites using IkamvaYouth's existing online platforms such as the Zone, Facebook, and through emails.

## Volunteer activities



"Giving back to the community has always been one of my passions in life. I understand the importance of helping as I believe that we are where we are today because of people who gave their time to help us get close to our dreams."

Noluthando Nkebetwana, Nyanga (2014)

50% of all respondents are living out the value of Paying it Forward by volunteering; most (82%) are volunteering at IkamvaYouth branches. While IkamvaYouth tends to enrol more female learners than males (ratio of about 60/40), the reverse is true for volunteers: males are more likely to volunteer than females.

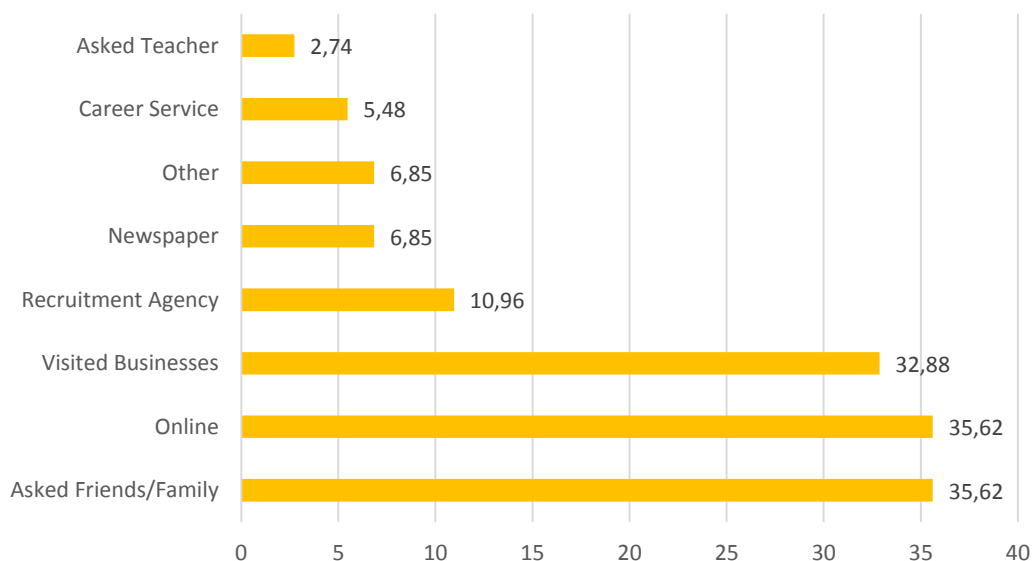


Figure 21: Job search methods of unemployed Ikamvanites

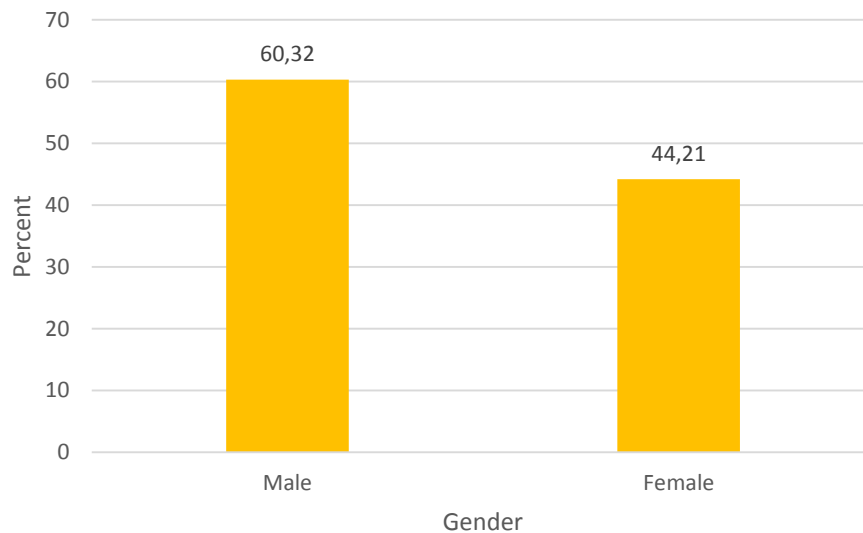


Figure 22: Volunteer work by gender

Those who are not currently volunteering gave varying reasons for not volunteering, as outlined in the graph below: most indicated that they do not have time because of study/work commitments.

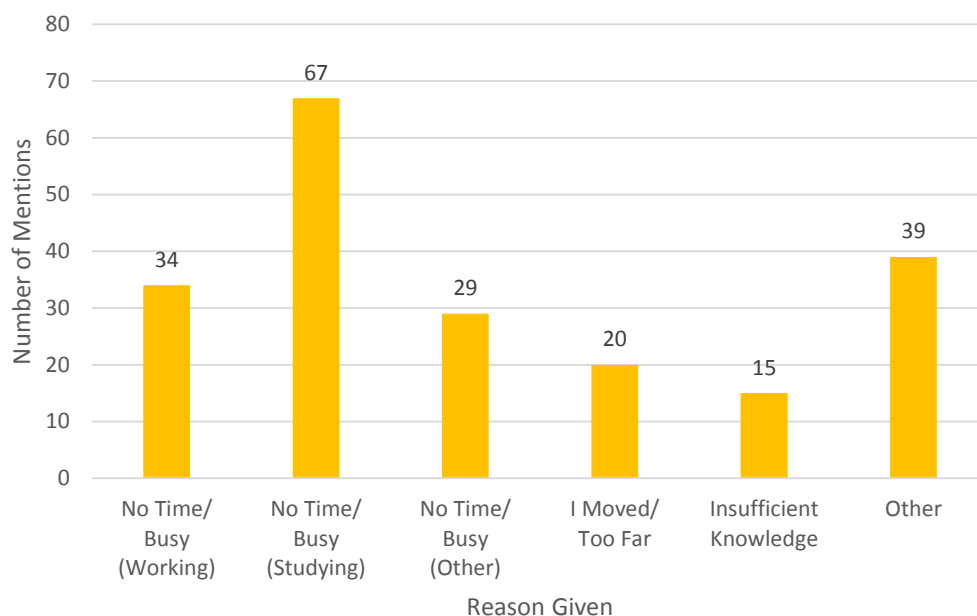


Figure 23: Reasons for not volunteering

It is important to begin exploring measures that could enable these Ikamvanites to volunteer in some way, should they be interested to volunteer. For example, weekday afternoons may not be convenient for those who are employed or who have to attend classes at the same time as IkamvaYouth tutoring sessions. These alumni could instead be encouraged to volunteer as mentors, as the time commitment is more flexible. More than half of those labelled “other” did not provide a reason, which could suggest that they are simply not interested in volunteering and perhaps did not feel comfortable to share this. IkamvaYouth’s Alumni Relations department needs to ensure that those who move away from their branches or do not have sufficient knowledge about how they could volunteer, are better enabled to volunteer by introducing them to other branches/partner organisations (even before they complete their matric).



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Extensive effort went into attempting to reach the internal target of 70% response rate for this survey. The efforts of all those involved in tracking down the 548 alumni that eventually responded to the survey cannot go unnoticed. Nonetheless, it is worth considering ways to improve on the achieved response rate for the next survey. One of the key measures that will assist in these efforts is to ensure that IkamvaYouth maintains regular contact with its alumni, and ensures that the database is consistently updated with any changes in alumni's contact details going forward.

In order to be able to better compare Ikamvanites' earnings with those of the national figures, it is advised that the survey require respondents to provide their actual salaries, rather than make selections from ranges. We would need to carefully consider measures which could be employed, in order to increase the chances that respondents will be willing to provide true information about their salaries. For example, we could potentially ensure respondents' confidentiality by making the survey anonymous.

While we are pleased that the majority of our alumni are not NEET, IkamvaYouth is committed to supporting those who are struggling to access tertiary and employment opportunities. We will continue to share various training and employment opportunities with all our alumni, as well as build and strengthen relationships with partner organisations that can provide support and placement opportunities to those who need it.



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