



ikamvaYouth's after-school peer-to-peer learning and support

A tried, tested and proven model scaling with phenomenal results

Joy Olivier joy@ikamvayouth.org and Zamo Shongwe zamo@ikamvayouth.org



Introduction

Of the 2.8 million South Africans between the ages of 18 and 24 who were not in education, employment or training in 2007, 2 million had not matriculated (SNRI, 2009).

IkamvaYouth (IY) drives social change in South Africa by enabling disadvantaged learners to lift each other out of poverty and into tertiary education and/or employment. Volunteer tutors (many previously beneficiaries of the programme themselves) provide after-school supplementary tutoring, career guidance, mentoring and computer literacy training free of charge to learners from township schools in grades 8 to 12. Established in Khayelitsha in 2003, the low-cost, high-impact model has been implemented with remarkable results in seven townships in three provinces.

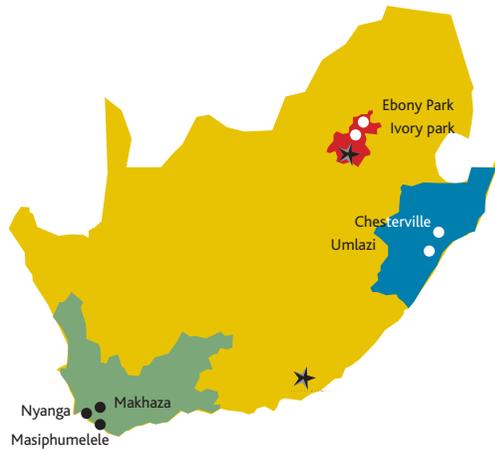


Figure 1. IkamvaYouth branches. ★ Stars show new branches – 2013

Programme

IkamvaYouth provides after-school support to learners in grades 8 to 12 three times a week, as well as intensive two-week holiday programmes. Learners self-select and enroll in grades 8 to 11. There are no academic requirements for entry, but learners need to meet a minimum 75% attendance in order to keep their place in the programme.

Learners drive the learning agenda by bringing questions and problems for small group discussion (tutor: learner ratio is 1:5). The pedagogical approach aims to instill a culture of hard work, peer-learning and responsibility.

IkamvaYouth has a democratic youth-led structure. Each branch's management committee (branchcom) is voted annually and everyone (including parents, partner organisations, learners, community leaders) is welcome to participate in biweekly meetings where decision-making is transparent and inclusive.

This has led to community ownership and support of the project, and enabled the beneficiaries of the project to become its leaders. This youth-centred decision-making model builds participants' leadership capacity and work experience.

Results

Matric results have consistently far-exceeded national averages annually since 2005 (figure 3). The academic achievement is particularly significant given that learners attend generally poor-performing township schools and make more difficult subject choices. Learners are almost twice as likely to select Maths and Physics than the national averages (see figure 4) and yet 44% achieve Bachelor passes. Data from the National Assembly (2006) and Snyman (2011) show that between 2005 and 2008, an average of 11.95% of black matriculants achieved exemption or bachelor passes.

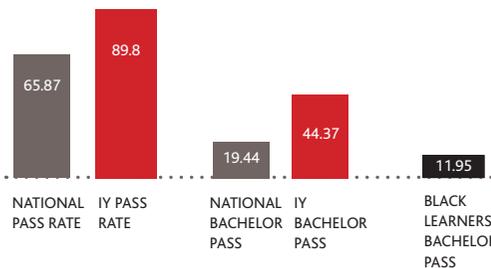


Figure 3. Average Matric results: % (DoE, 2005 – 2011); (IkamvaYouth, 2005 – 2011); Bachelor passes for black matriculants (Snyman, 2011).

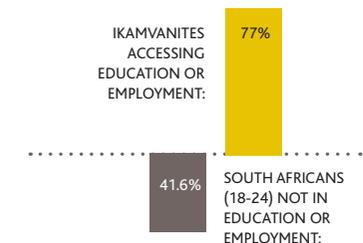


Figure 2. 77% of IY learners enrol in education or employment. 41.6% of 18-24 year-old South Africans are not in education or employment (StatsSA, 2007).

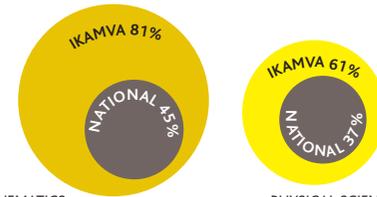


Figure 4. Subject selection (Van der Berg, forthcoming)

Academic achievement is the key objective of the tutoring programme. However, career guidance and mentoring are essential for ensuring access to tertiary education and/or employment.

The General Household Survey (STATS SA, 2011) found that only 4.2% of South Africans aged 18 to 29 were enrolled at higher education institutions. Whereas 17.4% of white youth were enrolled at university, this was true for only 3.1% of black Africans and 3.5% of coloured persons.

IkamvaYouth supports learners as they learn about, apply to, secure financial aid for, and enrol in universities, universities of technology, learnerships, internships and jobs. Between 2005 and 2011, 66% of the programme's 403 matriculants have enrolled in tertiary institutions. Overall, 77% of IkamvaYouth's matriculants since 2005 have enrolled in education, a learnership or a job 2.5 months following matriculation.

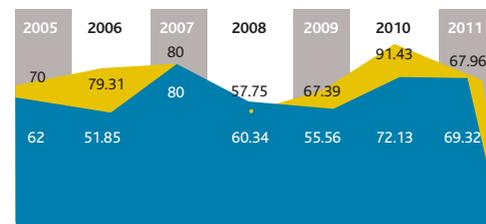


Figure 5. % IY matrics (passed), who accessed tertiary education; % IY matrics (all) who accessed tertiary education, learnerships or employment

Research has shown (Branson et al, 2009) that with a matric pass, 25-year-old South African youths are less likely to be unemployed. The higher their post-matric qualification, the better their average monthly income. Those with incomplete schooling who are employed earn an average of R1000. With a matric they earn R1600, but with a tertiary certificate or diploma this jumps up to R3200. Armed with a degree, young South Africans earn an average of R5 500 per month; over three times the average township household monthly income in Khayelitsha (URDR, date unknown).

IkamvaYouth's programmes enable its learners to achieve opportunities that will significantly increase their earning potential. This is achieved at a very low cost by leveraging strategic partnerships and volunteerism. With public libraries, tertiary institutions and community centres providing free access to venues and infrastructure, and volunteers responsible for all programme delivery, the overall expenditure per IkamvaYouth learner per year between 2004 and 2011 has been R4422.00. The programme's sustainability is ensured by the 50% of matrics who become volunteers, transforming from beneficiaries into benefactors. In 2012, volunteers will provide over 3 million rands' worth of tutoring, career guidance mentoring, computer literacy training and workshop facilitation to over 700 learners.

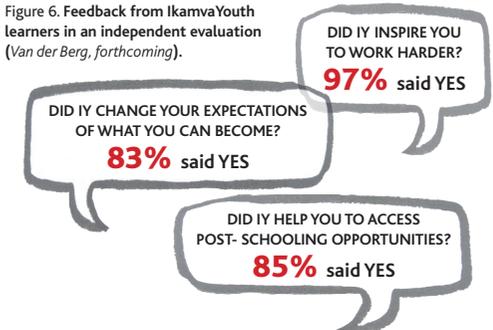
Implications

Follow-up research is needed in the next few years, once more IY learners have progressed in their post-school careers. It is only by measuring retention and throughput at tertiary institutions and income levels following employment that the programme's success in enabling disadvantaged youth to escape poverty can be assessed.

Given the programme's low cost, high impact and replication in seven townships, it's likely that with continued support from partners and donors, more branches will be established and larger numbers of learners reached.

It is clear that the initiative is making significant inroads in addressing key problems that young South Africans face as they stand at the important crossroads between secondary and tertiary study, navigating their way through an education system in crisis.

Figure 6. Feedback from IkamvaYouth learners in an independent evaluation (Van der Berg, forthcoming).



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