

Emerging African Leaders Programme Alumni Survey Results

Connected and wanting to stay in touch! These are the findings from the first EALP Alumni Survey.

In September 2018 we invited the 103 alumni from our Emerging African Leaders Programme to respond to a tracer survey. By 5th October 2018 when the survey closed, 64 of the 103 alumni had responded, a response rate of 62%.

Unsurprisingly the most likely to respond to the survey were those who had attended the programme most recently with 23 of the 30 attendees of the 2018 programme answering the survey. There were 9 respondents who had attended the EALP as speakers between 2016-2018, and over the years of the programme, 8 respondents indicated they had nominated potential participants for the programme.

Location and Employment Profile

Over 75% (76,6%) of respondents are based in their African country of origin, whilst the remainder of respondents are based in another African country (10,9%) or living, possibly studying, outside of Africa in Germany, India, France, Norway, USA or Canada.

Almost 85% of alumni respondents are either employed (68,8%) and/or studying (15,6%). 42,6% of respondents were currently working in the private sector. Of those working in civil society, the majority work for international or local NGOs followed by Academic/Research organizations. Current fields of work include Development, followed by Advocacy, Law, Politics and Education, Research. Leadership Development and other areas of work such as Social Services, Arts, Culture and Media. Of respondents working in the public sector, central government is the main employer.

Connecting and Communicating

Almost 100% (98,4%) of the respondents have stayed in contact with other participants from the programme with the majority (49,7%) connected with 1-5 people from their cohort and others, 33,3% with 6-10 people, and 22,2% with more than 10 people from their cohort and others.

Whatsapp wins as the prime medium of communication (98,4%) followed by Facebook (65,1%), Email (55,6%) and face to face meetings (38,1%). Other platforms include Twitter (28,6%), LinkedIn (27%) and Telephone (27%).

96,8% of respondents would be interested in being part of a LinkedIn Mandela School Alumni page, which has recently been set up.

All respondents would be interested in receiving a newsletter. There is a preference for a monthly (60,9%) as opposed to a quarterly (39,1%) newsletter.

"It should showcase the work of alumni on the website to increase publicity and make introductions to resources that helps to scale their work towards creating impact"

Using the Professional Network

When asked to expand on how their professional networks had grown thanks to participants met on the programme, there were multiple responses. These included very practical examples such as: sharing consulting opportunities; referrals, introductions and connections to other networks and professionals who in turn recommend them for programmes; participating in each other's events and activities as knowledge resources; forming collaborative coalitions for funding opportunities; better links with the African Union.

"My network has grown in that anytime I am visiting a country where a fellow alumni lives, it's easy to navigate and understand the political economic and social dynamics of that country as well as when I read or hear about events in that country, I am able to verify or get more info from my fellow alumni."

"The networks I built from the program has allowed more individuals to be aware of my work and expertise which has resulted in them sharing information, including, research findings, articles, job adverts and at times, sharing of viewpoints on innovation, technology and financial inclusion."

"Through the Alumni group, I have been exposed to information about opportunities, fellowships, scholarships etc. and this is very valuable for me"

Leadership Skills

Reflecting on their journey as a leader thus far, the vast majority of respondents confirmed that skills they had learned on the programme (93,8%) and people they had met (48,4%), have assisted them in overcoming challenges.

"The knowledge, skills and attitudes I have been gaining is priceless. By the same token, this Programme is initiated, run and led by Africans and takes into account the reality of Africa and its challenges. I love the intellectual debates that it encourages between fellows and with facilitators."

When asked what areas they would like additional support/skills/training the following four areas emerged in order of interest: fundraising; strategic planning; coaching; stress management. Other areas of support included conflict resolution; facilitation skills; team-building; goal-setting and problem solving.

Regional Alumni Conventions and Programme Sustainability

A key reason for conducting the survey was to assess whether alumni would be interested in attending a Regional Alumni Convention (RAC) in one of three locations in 2019. 92,2% expressed interest with the locations spread between Victoria Falls (42,2%), Addis Ababa (32,8%) and Dakar (25%). We did not ask them about Nairobi as a location, although this is a distinct possibility for the RACs.

Whilst 70,3% of respondents indicated that their organization would not be able to contribute to travel costs to the location, 7,8% Yes, they could contribute and 21,9% partially. This is very encouraging for making the RACs a reality, knowing that up to 30% of interested participants would be able to partially offset the travel costs, often the

most expensive part of such meetings.

“While my organization may not be able to contribute to my budget. I am willing to save and put some money aside if I knew early enough when the alumni meeting is happening”.

62,5% would be interested in taking part in an alumni funding circle to help make the EALP alumni network more sustainable, with a further 29,7% saying maybe. How they might participate included offering time (86,4%), expertise, networking opportunities, fundraising/crowdsourcing and donations (23,7%) in that order.

Further Feedback

Other feedback on the Emerging African Leaders Programme was very positive, captured in some of the quotes:

It was a life changing experience and I am keen on remaining an active alumnus in every way possible.

It is a great platform for building and maintaining networks and one of the few that actually keeps constant track of the alumni.

It has been very key in developing me as a person and as an emerging leader.

It's a powerful program that provides a robust learning process as well as network of individuals to lift Africa to its full potential

It was an excellent program and networking opportunity with young leaders in Africa. I also benefited greatly from the coaching part of the training.

The EALP programme fills an important gap in building relevant skills among young leaders

That was by far the most practical, timely and applicable engagement I have done.

And there were some practical suggestions:

There is a lot of potential in this network and we need to develop projects that alumni can work on together -- with support from the school/center. This will keep alumni engaged and also create greater impact for the programme.

We can organise around local/in-country chapters.

We need a reconnect!