



# UIAA Tracer Study Report

July 24, 2025

The Ireland Fellows Program (IFP)-  
Uganda Irish Alumni Association  
(UIAA) Tracer and Engagement Study  
1994-2024

*"We are not just alumni. We're  
changemakers in Policy, Systems Reform &  
Governance." – Lady Justice Jane Frances  
Abodo, Director of Public Prosecutions,  
Republic of Uganda (IFP Fellow 2015–2016)*



Embassy of Ireland,  
Kampala | Uganda





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## Acronyms

|                 |                                                           |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>AIDS</b>     | Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome                        |
| <b>COVID-19</b> | Coronavirus Disease                                       |
| <b>DHO</b>      | District Education Officer                                |
| <b>DHO</b>      | District Health Officer                                   |
| <b>DPP</b>      | Director of Public Prosecutions                           |
| <b>ESAMI</b>    | The Eastern and Southern African Management Institute     |
| <b>FDG</b>      | Focus Group Discussions                                   |
| <b>HIV</b>      | Human immunodeficiency virus                              |
| <b>ICOS</b>     | Irish Council for Overseas Students                       |
| <b>ICT</b>      | Information and Communication Technology                  |
| <b>IFP</b>      | Ireland Fellows Programme                                 |
| <b>JJ/WBGSP</b> | The Joint Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program   |
| <b>KII</b>      | Key Informant Interviews                                  |
| <b>KRA</b>      | Key Research Areas                                        |
| <b>MOD</b>      | MOD Public Health Consultants                             |
| <b>MODPHF</b>   | MOD Public Health Foundation                              |
| <b>MOH</b>      | Ministry of Health                                        |
| <b>NDPIV</b>    | Uganda's Fourth National Development Plan 2025/26-2029/30 |
| <b>NGO</b>      | None Government Organization                              |
| <b>NICU</b>     | Neonatal Intensive Care Unit                              |
| <b>NSSF</b>     | National Social Security Fund                             |
| <b>ODPP</b>     | Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions             |
| <b>PhD</b>      | Doctor of Philosophy                                      |
| <b>SDGs</b>     | Sustainable Development Goals                             |
| <b>SMEs</b>     | Small Medium Enterprises                                  |
| <b>TCD</b>      | Trinity College Dublin                                    |
| <b>TOR</b>      | UIAA Tracer Study Terms of Reference                      |
| <b>TS</b>       | Tracer Study                                              |
| <b>UCC</b>      | University College Cork                                   |
| <b>UCD</b>      | University College Dublin                                 |
| <b>UIAA</b>     | Uganda Irish Alumni Association                           |
| <b>UNICEF</b>   | The United Nations Children's Fund                        |
| <b>UNRA</b>     | Uganda National Roads Authority                           |
| <b>WFP</b>      | World Food Programme                                      |





# Acknowledgment

This Tracer Study Report was prepared by Samuel Waliggo Ssegawa (Lead Consultant and IFP Fellow, 2011–2012, University College Cork) for the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA). I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the UIAA Executive Committee for the opportunity to contribute to this important initiative and to lead the first tracer study, which highlights the achievements and impact of the Irish Fellowship Programme (IFP) over the past 20 years since 1994.

I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Embassy of Ireland in Uganda, Irish Aid, and the Irish Council for Overseas Students (ICOS) for their extraordinary and unwavering commitment to the IFP in Uganda and Rwanda. It is my hope that the success stories and findings of this study—along with the newly developed web-based alumni database and engagement strategy—will serve as a foundation for ongoing alumni mapping, career tracking, and development impact monitoring. I also envision this initiative contributing to more effective engagement and strengthened participation within the UIAA.

***"When alumni remain connected, their legacy transcends history—it becomes a living force for social transformation."***

**Disclaimer:** This report was produced for the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA) with financial support from the Embassy of Ireland in Uganda. The contents (any findings, interpretations, opinions, or recommendations) in the report are solely those of the consultant and should not be assumed to represent the official positions or views of either UIAA or its funding partners

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# Let's Hear From the Leaders

## Message From the UIAA President-Ssanyu Rebecca, PhD

*“Leadership isn’t just  
about holding office—  
it’s about holding space.  
It’s about listening,  
learning, and lifting  
others as we climb”*



At UIAA, we believe in a style of leadership rooted in accountability, inclusion, and purpose. Coordinating this Tracer Study has reminded me that visionary leadership means stepping forward not just with ideas, but with the courage to ask tough questions, to embrace evidence, and to build systems that outlive individuals. It is with great pride and a deep sense of accomplishment that I present the first-ever Tracer Study of the Ireland Fellows Programme (IFP) in Uganda that has traced 201 fellows out of 380 alumni between 1994-2024, a milestone achievement made possible through the collective commitment of the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA), the unwavering support of our Executive Committee, and the generous funding from the Embassy of Ireland. This study is more than a report. It is a mirror and a roadmap. It challenges us to lead with humility, to mentor with intention, and to govern with knowledge. And it affirms what we already know: that when talent meets opportunity and vision is matched with integrity, transformation is inevitable.

Since the inception of the IFP in 1994, Uganda has witnessed the transformative impact of this fellowship on early and mid-career professionals, across sectors and regions. I commend the UIAA Executive for drafting the original concept and laying the foundation for a rigorous and meaningful process of inquiry. This study does more than capture career progression metrics—it tells the story of a vibrant alumni community, highlights the untapped potential of strategic mentorship, and reveals gaps we must address to ensure no fellow is left behind. We believe these findings will not only inform alumni engagement and networking strategies but also inspire a structured mentorship model that supports fellows continued professional growth.

Moreover, by distilling lessons from alumni experiences, this report offers evidence to inform policy development, stimulate advocacy, and foster ongoing collaboration with government institutions. In doing so, we aim to amplify the fellow’s contributions toward Uganda’s Vision 2040 and the broader National Development Plan.

On behalf of the UIAA, I thank all who participated in this study. We also sincerely thank the Embassy of Ireland in Uganda for its financial and technical support, which made this Tracer Study possible. You have nurtured us and your partnership reflects a shared commitment to the prestigious education, alumni engagement, and sustainable development through meaningful collaboration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Ssanyu', positioned above a horizontal line.





## Message from the Ambassador Kevin Corrigan.

Ambassador of Ireland to Uganda and Rwanda,  
Head of Mission,  
Embassy of Ireland – Kampala.

*“Since 1974, the IFP has stood as cornerstone of our foreign policy and international development programme”*

It’s a real honour for me to share a few reflections in this UIAA Tracer Study Report, which celebrates the enduring impact of the Ireland Fellowship Programme (IFP) in Uganda and Rwanda. As Ambassador, I’ve had the privilege of witnessing first-hand the transformative power of the Programme—a *cornerstone of Ireland’s foreign policy development cooperation since 1974, and active in Uganda since 1994*. Over the past 30 years, we’ve supported more than 380 fellows in Uganda, and I’m constantly inspired by the depth and diversity of their contributions. These are individuals who’ve studied in areas such as climate change, agriculture, engineering, ICT, public sector management, education, pharmaceuticals, medicine and public health and etc. One region I’d like to especially highlight is Karamoja. We’ve seen a marked increase in fellows from Karamoja, and I’m proud that the Programme has significantly expanded access to postgraduate education in that region. That kind of transformation matters deeply—to me, to Ireland, and to Uganda’s future.

As Ireland aligns its cooperation with Uganda’s National Development Plan IV, we continue to invest in human capital—building capacity and skills across key sectors. The Irish Fellowship Programme, in its mission and outcomes, is strongly aligned with these priorities. A defining innovation in recent years has been the growth of the Ugandan Irish Alumni Association (UIAA). Independent yet closely linked to the Embassy, the UIAA has become a powerful network for professional support and exchange. *It serves not only as a sounding board for development cooperation, but also as a living legacy of Ireland’s partnership with Uganda and Rwanda.*

Therefore, the insights from this first Tracer Study give us a clearer picture of where our fellows have ended up and how they’re shaping Uganda and Rwanda. It affirms that Irish Fellows have gone on to occupy senior leadership positions across government, civil society organizations, private sector and academia. More importantly, it enables us to explore how alumni can further shape national development—and inform Ireland’s own cooperation priorities. *I frequently meet senior leaders who say, “I studied in Ireland.” That connection matters. We’re not just investing in individuals—we’re investing in shared values and lifelong partnerships.* As we look ahead, we remain committed to strengthening the Programme. We aim to deepen our collaboration with nominating institutions and ensure that our application process is both accessible and strategic. We want to see even greater alignment between fellowship placements and development priorities.

I extend my warmest wishes to all Irish Fellows—past, present, and future. My advice is simple: study hard, build connections, and enjoy every moment. We’re proud to be part of your journey. May your time in Ireland be enriching, your networks enduring, and your contributions transformative.

**Go n-éirí an t-ádh libh** – May success be with you.





## Message From IFP Programmes Manager, Josephine Abalo

### **Empowering Excellence: Facilitating Educational Opportunities and Fostering Lasting Impact through the Ireland Fellowship Programme.**

*“Having personally benefited from a scholarship programme, I understand the profound impact such opportunities can have on individuals, communities, and society. That experience continues to shape my commitment to the transformative mission of the Ireland Fellows Programme (IFP). My name is Josephine Abalo, and I lead the IFP at the Embassy of Ireland in Kampala, supporting fellows from both Uganda and Rwanda. I also contribute to broader Embassy initiatives, particularly in the economic and governance portfolios. Working with passionate, talented individuals through the IFP has reinforced my belief in the power of education as a tool for empowerment and long-term change. Through this programme, we aim to nurture professionals, leaders, and changemakers—equipping them with the skills and global exposure to make lasting contributions to their societies.*

As we launch this inaugural UIAA Tracer Study, I’m particularly pleased to reflect on the IFP’s journey, including how we can improve support systems for our fellows. This study comes at a timely moment—not only to document impact, but to understand the lived experiences of our alumni and strengthen the fellowship’s relevance in a changing world. It also offers insight for stakeholders and development partners interested in the ripple effects of global education.

The IFP application process is rigorous and inclusive. Each year, from early July, applicants are nominated by partner organizations, ministries, and departments. The process involves three competitive stages, with a strong emphasis on merit, clarity, and fairness. English proficiency is a key requirement, verified through the Duolingo test to ensure readiness for academic engagement. Each application undergoes thorough review by our mission team, with oversight and transparency at every stage.

That said, we also recognize some challenges—both in the selection process and upon arrival in Ireland. From repetitive application questions to language testing hurdles, and from adapting to a new

culture to navigating different academic expectations, our fellows face real, personal transitions. Yet with thoughtful preparation and peer support, many of these challenges are not only overcome but transformed into sources of resilience and growth.

The role of returnee fellows in mentoring new participants is a vital part of this support ecosystem. Their tips—from travel logistics to self-care—make a significant difference. The Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA) is at the heart of this connection. I have witnessed its members cultivate strong bonds through annual meetings, and I look forward to seeing this network expand into regional chapters and possibly a Rwandan association. Looking ahead, we also hope to include alumni more actively in the application process itself, infusing it with real-world insights and empathy.

I am deeply grateful to the Embassy of Ireland for championing this opportunity, and to the UIAA for leading this important tracer study. The impact of the IFP reaches far beyond academia—it is about fostering intercultural understanding, unlocking leadership potential, and shaping development outcomes. I trust this study will serve as both a source of learning and a spark of inspiration for future fellows.

Together, let's continue building a legacy of excellence, equity, and enduring partnership between Ireland, Uganda, and Rwanda.





# Executive Summary

## Background

Since 1994, the Ireland Fellows Programme (IFP) has provided fully funded Master's degrees to early and mid-career professionals in Uganda and, since 2016, Rwanda—developing a network of 380 (207 Males-54.5%, 173 Females-45.5%) fellows equipped to drive transformative change across sectors. Recognizing the need to assess the long-term impact of this investment, the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA), with support from the Embassy of Ireland, coordinated the first-ever IFP Tracer Study inaugurated in January 2025.

## Methodology

This Tracer Study employed a collaborative and mixed-methods approach (Section 2) to assess the long-term outcomes and impact of the IFP alumni from Uganda and Rwanda (1994–2024). Quantitatively, a census targeted all 380 registered alumni drawn from the Embassy of Ireland Uganda registry, including active fellows. A semi-structured, eight-section online questionnaire—hosted on Kobo Collect—was disseminated via email. Despite outdated contacts (130 bounces), the study achieved a strong 53% response rate (201 fellows), with responses confirmed through phone, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn. This rate outperformed global tracer study benchmarks. Qualitatively, 10 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted across Uganda's regions, capturing rich narratives of alumni career development and contributions to national priorities. In addition, three online cohort-based Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held via Zoom—grouped into early (1994–2003), middle careers (2004–2013), and recent (2014–2024) cohorts. This structure ensured representative reflections, enabled gathering of intergenerational insights, and allowed for in-depth exploration of professional journeys, evolving alumni support needs, and the broader development impact of the IFP. **Study Limitation:** While the 53% response rate provides a strong foundation for analysis, limited access to updated contact information—particularly among earlier cohorts—may have constrained full representativeness. Additionally, self-selection bias may have influenced the qualitative data, with highly engaged alumni more likely to participate in interviews and focus groups.

## Key Findings and Insights

The following summary highlights core insights drawn from the Ireland Fellows Programme Tracer Study, offering a snapshot of graduate trajectories, development contributions, and emerging priorities for alumni engagement. These findings reflect both the measurable impact of the fellowship and the voices behind the data, painting a comprehensive picture of the programme's legacy and evolving relevance (*For detailed findings and analysis, see Section 3*).

- **Gender Distribution:** Of the 201 IFP respondents, gender representation was nearly balanced, with **51.2% (103 Fellows)** identifying as male and 48.3% (97 Fellows) as female. A minimal proportion (0.5%) opted not to disclose their gender. This distribution indicates a strong degree of gender inclusivity within the fellowship, reflecting intentional efforts to promote diversity and equal participation across the program.
- **Career Progression:** 97.9% of IFP participants successfully completed the program and earned their Master's Degrees.
- **Skills Development & Application (3.2.1):** Over 90% of fellows rated the usefulness of acquired skills in their work as 'Very High' or 'High,' highlighting the program's profound impact on their career development and Effectiveness. Findings indicated that it is becoming increasingly easier for fellows to translate the



knowledge and skills acquired through the Ireland Fellowship Program into their employment, with recent cohorts (2014-2024 experiencing smoother integration into the workforce compared to earlier cohorts (2004-2013, 2014-2024).

- **Development Contribution** outcomes-The impact of the program (IFP) on the **development environment** was assessed on three key outcome indicators i.e.
- **Employment Status:** 95% of fellows reported improved professional effectiveness post-IFP, with 78.7% of fellows are formally employed in key sectors primarily public service (54.5%), NGOs (15.9%), Private Sector (13.6%), international organizations (8.5%), academia (6.3%), and Financial Institutions and others (1.2%) demonstrating strong career integration and program effectiveness
- **Perceived Link to Development:** 73.4% reported that their work contributes significantly (75–100%) to national development outcomes, including governance reforms, education equity, and health systems strengthening.
- **Residence Status:** 86% of program alumni chose to stay and work in their home countries, showcasing effective talent retention, whereas 14% explored international opportunities.
- **Gender and Regional Dynamics:** Male fellows exhibited higher program awareness, while some regions, notably Karamoja, experienced lower post-fellowship follow-up—highlighting the need for inclusive, region-specific strategies.
- **UIAA Fellows’ Engagement:** While 72.1% of fellows were aware of UIAA, only 52.4% were active members. Perceptions of relevance were split, with 41.3% affirming value and 30.8% expressing strong dissatisfaction—particularly among recent and female cohorts.
- **Insights from Alumni Voices:** KIIs and FGDs illuminated critical experiences beyond the numbers. Fellows described the IFP as a “catalyst” for strategic thinking, leadership growth, and policy influence. However, gaps emerged in post-study transition support, mental well-being, and alumni coordination. Alumni advocated for formal mentorship networks, a UIAA digital platform, regional chapters, and stronger policy engagement mechanisms.

## Conclusion

The Ireland Fellows Programme (IFP) has not only shaped the academic and professional journeys of its participants—it has contributed meaningfully to the broader development aspirations of Uganda and lately in Rwanda. Graduates are leading change across sectors, from governance and education to health and civil society, turning individual advancement into collective impact. Their stories (**Section 2**) reveal a programme that has become a springboard for policy influence, institutional reform, and community transformation. To sustain this momentum, calls for a deliberate shift from episodic engagement to a structured alumni ecosystem—anchored in digital innovation, inclusive programming, strategic mentorship, regional representation, and inclusive programming for relevancy. With the tracer study insights and recommendation, the UIAA, working closely with Irish Aid, now stands at a potential opportunity—to elevate alumni engagement into a dynamic force and a strategic partner for national development, regional cooperation, and global knowledge exchange



## Recommendations to Key Stakeholders, with Consultants Insights.

These evidence-based recommendations will ensure the IFP continues producing influential leaders across Uganda and Rwanda. Structured mentorship, digital innovation, targeted inclusion, and policy leadership will strengthen alumni networks and maximize program impact.

For the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA)

### 1. Institutionalizing Mentorship & Career Transition Support

- Evidence: Alumni engagement data shows 52.4% active participation, but qualitative findings indicate gaps in structured career guidance.

*Consultant Insight: Establishing formal mentorship frameworks will ensure continuity beyond informal networks, strengthening alumni career mobility and knowledge transfer.*

### 2. Digital Infrastructure for Professional Networking

- Evidence: Fellows cite WhatsApp engagement as insufficient, calling for structured web-based platforms.

*Consultant Insight: A self-service alumni database enables career tracking, stakeholder collaboration, and knowledge-sharing to ensure sustained engagement.*

### 3. Regional & Cohort-Based Alumni Models

- Evidence: Disparities in UIAA awareness between early (100%) vs. recent cohorts (66.9%) show engagement gaps.

*Consultant Insight: Implementing regional chapters can improve accessibility and targeted participation, ensuring alignment with local development needs.*

### 4. Policy Integration & Advocacy Leadership

- Evidence: 73.4% of fellows contribute to national development, yet UIAA lacks formal policy representation.

*Consultant Insight: Institutionalizing UIAA participation in policy dialogue with Uganda's ministries will elevate fellows as governance thought leaders*

## For Irish Aid & the Embassy of Ireland

### • Strengthening Post-Fellowship Alumni Investment

Evidence: Recent cohort retention (2014–2024) shows smooth workforce integration, yet post-study transition remains a key challenge.

*Consultant Insight: Enhanced funding for leadership training and post-fellowship research grants can bridge alumni career development gaps.*

### • Institutionalizing Tracer Studies for Continuous Learning

• Evidence: The first Tracer Study findings indicate evolving skills acquisition trends, warranting periodic data collection to adapt program offerings.

*Consultant Insight: A 3–5-year tracer cycle ensures real-time assessment, allowing Irish Aid to tailor future fellowship priorities effectively.*



### • • Gender & Regional Inclusion Enhancements

- Evidence: Male awareness (77.7%) exceeds female awareness (67%), while Karamoja fellows report lower UIAA integration.

*Consultant Insight: Focused female leadership pathways and Karamoja-tailored outreach can improve equitable representation and program utilization*

## For the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS)

### 1. Mental Health & Adaptation Support Pre-Departure

- Evidence: Fellows struggle with Ireland's self-study model, leading to adaptation stress and early academic disengagement.

*Consultant Insight: Pre-departure orientation webinars with previous fellows can provide coping mechanisms and structured guidance.*

### 2. Strengthening University-Based Support Networks

- Evidence: KIIs highlight limited institutional mentorship, leaving fellows without integration frameworks.

*Consultant Insight: ICOS should collaborate with Irish universities to ensure tailored academic counseling, peer-to-peer mentorship, and structured transition mechanisms.*

## For the Government of Uganda

### 1. Leveraging IFP Alumni for National Development Policy

- Evidence: Fellows are embedded across governance, health, and education sectors, but national recognition of their expertise remains informal.

*Consultant Insight: Codifying alumni contributions into NDP III/IV and Uganda's policy frameworks will maximize expertise utilization.*

### 2. Fellowship Leadership Integration in Public Institutions

- Evidence: Public sector employment among fellows (54.5%) is strong, yet re-entry pathways remain inconsistent.

*Consultant Insight: Developing formal re-entry absorption mechanisms ensures strategic placement in advisory roles, enhancing institutional transformation.*

## Key research areas (KRA) and learning avenues.

Building on the tracer study's findings and alumni reflections, several thematic areas have emerged as critical KRA to strengthening both the IFP and the UIAA. These insights offer a roadmap for continuous learning, targeted research, and strategic adaptation—ensuring the programme evolves with alumni needs, national development priorities, & global best practices.

### *1. Periodic Tracer Studies and Long-Term Alumni Impact Evaluation.*

In light of the significant 20-year interval since IFP in Uganda in 1994, to this first tracer study, it is recommended that future studies adopt a phased approach to better capture alumni trajectories and program impact in real time for instance.

- ***A short-term follow-up*** at 3 years post-fellowship would assess early career reintegration, sector alignment, and the initial application of acquired skills.
- ***A mid-term study*** at 5-7 years would provide insights into career progression, leadership emergence, and policy engagement and finally,
- ***A long-term trajectory study*** conducted after 10 years would offer a comprehensive view of sustained alumni influence, institutional reforms, and contributions to national development.

This phased approach not only supports adaptive learning and alumni engagement strategies but also ensures that data collected over time informs program evolution and strategic decision-making.

By embedding cross-cohort career mapping exercises throughout, programs can continuously analyze how alumni shape policy influence and contribute to national and sectoral transformation.

- ***Learning Avenue:*** Introduce a robust, data-driven alumni tracking system that enables periodic career mapping, providing actionable insights for evidence-based adjustments to selection criteria, program focus, and policy engagement priorities.

### *2. Gender & Equity in Fellowship Participation*

·Survey Topic: Examine gender representation, challenges, and barriers for female fellows in leadership and research.

- ***Learning Avenue:*** Establish mentorship forums focused on women in academia, governance, and science, strengthening equity interventions.

### *3. Regional Alumni Engagement & Effectiveness*

·Survey Topic: Explore how regional representation affects fellows' engagement with UIAA and Irish Aid, particularly in underrepresented areas like Karamoja.

- ***Learning Avenue:*** Pilot localized alumni engagement models that enhance post-fellowship collaboration at district and sector levels.

### *4. Post-Fellowship Mental Health & Adaptation*

·Survey Topic: Assess the impact of Ireland's self-study model and adaptation stress on fellows' academic experience.

- ***Learning Avenue:*** Strengthen pre-departure orientation, partnering with Irish universities and ICOS to provide structured mental health support



## Completion of Tracer Study Deliverables

| Deliverable                                                  | Status                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Date of Final Deliverable  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b><u>Comprehensive Tracer Study Report</u></b>              | One (1) detailed reviewed and approved report presenting the complete findings, thematic insights, and evidence-based recommendations of the alumni tracer study was formally submitted to the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA) by Consultant Samuel Waliggo on June 24, 2025. This final report is expected to inform alumni engagement, IFP refinement, and strategic planning.                                           | Completed<br>June 27, 2025 |
| <b><u>Executive Summary Report to Embassy of Ireland</u></b> | One (1) concise Executive summary of the alumni tracer study, highlighting key findings, fellows' success stories, and actionable recommendations was compiled by Consultant Samuel Waliggo. This report was formally submitted to the Embassy of Ireland as part of the broader effort to document programme impact and inform future strategic engagement.                                                                      | Completed<br>June 27, 2025 |
| <b><u>Documentation of Alumni Success Stories</u></b>        | Eleven (11) carefully selected success stories representing early (1994–2003), middle (2004–2013), and recent (2014–2024) IFP alumni cohorts documented as part of the report by Consultant Samuel Waliggo. These profiles highlight diverse career trajectories, leadership milestones, and sectoral contributions, showcasing the long-term impact of the programme across generations. Submitted as part of the draft reports. | Completed<br>June 27, 2025 |
| <b><u>Video Documentary</u></b>                              | One (1) video documentary featuring 14 alumni from diverse sectors and geographic regions, showcasing their journeys, contributions, and reflections on the Ireland Fellows Programme experience. The documentary was developed by Bivayn Multimedia (Solomon Kitembo) and has been successfully uploaded to the UIAA website. (Link to be added once available.)                                                                 | Completed<br>June 27, 2025 |
| <b><u>Alumni Contact Profile Database</u></b>                | Updated contact information—including email addresses, phone numbers, and profile data—was compiled for 201 alumni who responded to the tracer study (Excel & CSV File). This dataset was prepared for integration into the UIAA's online alumni database. The data collection and database preparation were carried out by Consultant Samuel Waliggo as part of the Tracer Report research process.                              | Completed<br>June 27, 2025 |

|                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <u>Web-Based Alumni Database and UIAA Website</u>        | <p>A functional and user-friendly UIAA website has been developed by Bivayn Multimedia (Solomon Kisembo) to support ongoing alumni engagement. The site features an integrated, searchable database of alumni profiles—organized by name, university, graduation year, workplace, and photo—for easy access and networking. The homepage design and site architecture are complete, and the database framework (Jet Engine plugin) has been successfully implemented to ensure secure, categorized data management. <a href="https://www.uiaanetwork.org/">https://www.uiaanetwork.org/</a></p> | <p>Completed<br/>June 27, 2025</p> |
| <u>Comprehensive Alumni Engagement Strategy Document</u> | <p>A practical and actionable strategy document developed by Consultant Miir Michael, drawing on insights from the Tracer Study report. The strategy outlines mechanisms for alumni involvement, communication channels, stakeholder coordination, and sustainability planning. It features clear frameworks for regional engagement, mentorship initiatives, and alumni participation in programme feedback loops—ensuring enduring connections between fellows, the UIAA, and the Embassy of</p>                                                                                              | <p>Completed<br/>June 27, 2025</p> |





# Section 1: Context and Background

## 1.0 Introduction

This report begins with preliminary sections featuring an executive summary that presents key findings, conclusions, and actionable recommendations aimed at enhancing alumni engagement, amplifying programme impact, and informing future research. **Section 1** provides context on the International Fellowship Programme (IFP) and Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA), outlining the study's objectives and intended outcomes. **Section 2** details the collaborative methodology used to achieve the tracer study deliverables, emphasizing the participatory approaches employed. **Section 3** presents comprehensive findings from both quantitative and qualitative data, offering rich analysis and interpretation. **Section 4** brings these insights to life with fellows' success stories—real-world examples that highlight both achievements and persistent challenges, which inform the recommendations. Lastly, **Annex 1** includes the data collection tools used.

## 1.1 Tracer Studies

Tracer studies are a valuable tool for evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs, training initiatives, and scholarship schemes<sup>2,3</sup>. These studies involve tracking and monitoring the career paths, professional contributions, and outcomes of individuals who have participated in specific programs or interventions<sup>4</sup>. Tracer studies can provide insights into the long-term impact of these programs on participants' careers, personal development, and contributions to their fields<sup>5</sup>. In the context of alumni studies, tracer studies can help institutions and organizations understand the career trajectories and professional achievements of their graduates<sup>6</sup>. This information can be used to improve program design, enhance alumni engagement, and inform fundraising efforts<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, tracer studies can also provide insights into the broader social and economic impacts of educational programs, such as contributions to economic development, social mobility, and community engagements<sup>8</sup>.

## 1.2 Assignment Objectives and Scope of Report

This report summarizes progress and findings related to the Tracer Study supported by the Embassy of Ireland, with implementation led by the Uganda Ireland Alumni Association (UIAA). The assignment was structured around three core objectives. This Executive Summary places particular emphasis on Objective 1: locating IFP alumni and assessing their current locations, career paths, and continued interest in Ireland and engagement in UIAA.

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<sup>2</sup> Brewer, D. J., & Clayton, S. (1999). *The impact of public and private funding on educational outcomes*. *Journal of Public Economics*, 73(1), 41-57. doi: 10.1016/S0047-2727(98)00114-4

<sup>3</sup> World Bank. (2018). *Tracer studies: A guide for practitioners*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi: 10.1596/978-1-4648-1084-8

<sup>4</sup> Japan International Cooperation Agency. (2017). *Tracer study of JICA alumni*. Tokyo: JICA.

<sup>5</sup> Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How college affects students: A third decade of research*. Jossey-Bass.

<sup>6</sup> Astinchap, A. (2017). *Tracer studies: A tool for evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs*. *Journal of Educational Research*, 110(4), 419-428. doi: 10.1080/00220671.2016.1265104

<sup>7</sup> Gaier, R. L. (2005). *The role of tracer studies in evaluating educational programs*. *Journal of Educational Evaluation*, 26(2), 131-144.

<sup>8</sup> Mason, G., Williams, G., & Cranmer, S. (2017). *The impact of university education on graduate employability*. *Journal of Education and Work*, 30(5), 475-491. doi: 10.1080/13639080.2015.1051526



While Objectives 2 and 3—concerning the development of a secure alumni database and informing an engagement strategy—were led by separate consultants, this report provides a brief update on progress under each, offering a comprehensive overview of deliverables and emerging insights.

### 1.3 The Ireland Fellows Programme (IFP)

The Ireland Fellows Programme (IFP) has been a cornerstone of Ireland's foreign policy and international development efforts in Uganda since 1994<sup>9</sup>, encouraging strong diplomatic relations and mutual interests<sup>10</sup>. Through the Irish Embassy's development cooperation programme, the IFP has provided fully funded, one-year master's degrees to 354 (191 Males-53.1%, 163 Females-46.0%) early and mid-career professionals from Uganda and extending the programme to 26 (16 Males, 10 Females) fellows from Rwanda since 2016, enabling them to pursue higher education in Ireland and selected East African universities. Therefore, Over the past 20 years to-date, the program has supported 380 fellows from diverse academic backgrounds, including education, public health, social protection, governance, technology, and innovation, creating a network of skilled professionals equipped to drive meaningful, positive change in both the public and private sectors. The IFP represents a win-win initiative for Ireland, Uganda, and Rwanda, contributing to national development priorities while enriching the education system with highly talented individuals<sup>11</sup>. Beyond academic training, the IFP strengthens cross-cultural exchange, allowing fellows to gain a deeper understanding of Irish culture and values, while enhancing their skills and knowledge<sup>12</sup>. Through this initiative, Irish Aid plays a pivotal role in advancing international collaboration, fostering talent, and supporting sustainable development efforts across partner countries.

### 1.4 The Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA)

Established in 2012, the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA) is a dynamic network comprising over 300 Ireland Fellowship Programme (IFP) beneficiaries, including those who studied in Ireland, East African universities, and Ugandans who have lived or studied in Ireland. With the support of the Embassy of Ireland, the UIAA conducted this comprehensive tracer study to gather valuable insights into the impact of the IFP on the personal and professional contributions of its beneficiaries. The study provides valuable insights into development outcomes, informs engagement strategies, and identifies the current locations of fellows to enhance their involvement in the association. By examining the experiences and achievements of IFP alumni, the study provided a rich understanding of the program's effectiveness in promoting capacity building, mentorship, and engagement in association, while continuing to support Uganda's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>13</sup> and the contributing to country's development priorities outlined in the National Development Plan III<sup>14</sup>.

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9 Government of Ireland (2023). *Government of Ireland Official Development Assistance Annual Report 2023*.

10 Government of Ireland. (2020). *Ireland's International Development Policy: A Better World*.

<https://www.ireland.ie/14/A-Better-World-Irelands-Policy-for-International-Development.pdf>

11 Embassy of Ireland, (February 2016). *Uganda Country Strategy Paper 2016-2020*. Irish Aid, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

12 Irish Aid, (2024). *Ireland Fellows Programme 1974-2024-50 Years*

13 United Nations. (2020). *Sustainable Development Goals*.

14 National Planning Authority. (2020). *Third National Development Plan (NDPIII) 2020/21 – 2024/25, Vision Uganda 2040*



## 1.5 Purpose and Outcomes of the Tracer Study

The Tracer Study aimed to assess the post-graduation experiences of 380 Ireland Fellows Programme (IFP) alumni from 1994 to 2024, with a focus on career transitions, contributions to national development, and opportunities for deepening alumni engagement through the Uganda Ireland Alumni Association (UIAA).

*Key outcomes included understanding of key thematic areas and Insights into:*

- 1. Alumni Career Trajectories and Professional Development** – *Examining fellows’ career progression, sectoral engagement, and leadership roles.*
- 2. Impact of the IFP on Fellows Career** – *Assessing how the program shaped professional growth, skill acquisition, Application and career opportunities.*
- 3. Fellows’ Contributions to Development Impact and Influence** – *Evaluating alumni contributions to national development i.e. policy, governance, research, and societal impact etc.*
- 4. UIAA Community Relevance, Effectiveness, and Engagement** – *Analyzing the association’s role in fostering alumni connectivity, mentorship, and collaboration.*
- 5. Challenges Limiting member Engagement** – *Identifying barriers to active participation, including professional constraints, institutional challenges, and accessibility issues.*
- 6. Provide Recommendations to stakeholders** — *strategic recommendations to strengthen alumni engagement, networking of fellows and delivery of IFP.*
7. Additional deliverables included ***development of a video documentary, web-based alumni database, and an Alumni Engagement Strategy*** to guide future initiatives (2.3).



# Section 2: Methodology of The Tracer Study



## 2.0 Introduction

The consultant conducted a careful analysis of the tracer study needs articulated by UIAA terms of reference (TOR) and developed a highly participatory approach, collaborative by design—ensuring inclusive participation, shared ownership, and the successful delivery of all specified survey outputs. This approach enabled both UIAA to derive maximum value from the tracer study process as it served as a critical foundation for advancing other key UIAA deliverables, including the development of a website and alumni database, the documentation of significant change stories, and the formulation of an alumni engagement strategy.

## 2.1 Study Design and Population

A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection to identify trends in alumni career trajectories and professional contributions while capturing individual experiences and engagement factors. The quantitative component analyzed broad patterns, including current locations and contacts, while qualitative methods provided deeper insights. A census approach was employed to reach all 380 registered UIAA alumni (1994–2024, including active 2024 fellows) from the Embassy of Ireland Uganda registry, ensuring representativeness across cohorts, career stages, and sectors.

## 2.2 Sampling Strategy and Data Collection

### 2.2.1 Quantitative Data Collection

A semi-structured online questionnaire, hosted on Kobo Collect, was disseminated via email to the 380 registered fellows minimizing bias; however, 130 messages bounced due to outdated contacts. The eight-section tool covered topics including demographics, career impact, development contributions, and stakeholder recommendations. The study achieved a 53% response rate (201 alumni)—with confirmations via phone (125), WhatsApp (45), and LinkedIn (30)—surpassing benchmarks such as JJ/WBGSP (27.5% in 2007; 28% in 2019) and Kenya Coast Polytechnic (50.6% in 2022/2023).



### **2.2.2 Qualitative Data Collection**

A purposive and snowball sampling approach was employed to conduct 10 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and three cohort-based Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). KIIs, carried out across Uganda's regions, captured in-depth narratives on alumni career trajectories and sectoral contributions, resulting in 10 documented success stories. Originally intended as regional dialogues, the FGDs were reframed into cohort-based groups—1994–2003 (15 fellows), 2004–2013 (29 fellows), and 2014–2024 (31 fellows)—and conducted via Zoom. This approach enabled rich reflections on evolving experiences and highlighted shifting mentorship and professional support needs over time.

### **2.2.3 Data Quality Control**

To ensure data accuracy, reliability, and ethical compliance, the study implemented several quality control measures. These included the use of validated tools adapted from the JJ/WBGSP framework, pre-testing of instruments, comprehensive enumerator training, and real-time data validation through the Kobo Collect platform. Active oversight by the study lead throughout data collection further reinforced methodological rigor and adherence to ethical standards.

## **2.3 Data Analysis and Reporting**

### **2.3.1 Quantitative Analysis**

Data cleaning was performed using Python, followed by descriptive and inferential analysis in Excel. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) highlighted alumni demographics and career trajectories, while inferential measures (means and standard deviations) examined relationships across variables—yielding robust, actionable insights into alumni outcomes.

### **2.3.2 Qualitative Analysis**

Thematic and content analysis, conducted using NVivo, synthesized narratives from KIIs and FGDs. This approach revealed patterns in alumni experiences, development contributions, and ongoing engagement challenges, effectively complementing the quantitative findings.

## **2.4: Observed Limitations**

While the achieved 53% response rate offers a solid foundation for analysis, the study faced several limitations. Notably, limited access to up-to-date contact information—particularly for earlier cohorts—constrained overall representativeness. For example, 130 out of 380 email addresses in the alumni database were undeliverable. This may have introduced non-response bias, as well as potential recall bias when engaging alumni across the 1994–2024 timeframe, especially those from earlier cohorts. Furthermore, the qualitative component may have been affected by self-selection bias, with more highly engaged alumni being more inclined to participate in key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The use of purposive and snowball sampling methods also may have introduced selection bias, primarily by overrepresenting active alumni. Additionally, qualitative responses may have been influenced by social desirability bias and limitations in memory recall.

To strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of alumni tracking, it is recommended that future tracer studies be conducted on a 3–5-year cycle. This interval offers an optimal balance—facilitating robust longitudinal impact assessments while enhancing traceability and broadening alumni participation. Longer intervals, such as the 20-year gap observed in the IFP under the Embassy of Ireland, pose significant challenges. These include difficulties in locating respondents, diminished recall accuracy, and limitations in attributing outcomes directly to the program. On the other hand, conducting annual tracer studies—as exemplified by the Joint Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program (JJ/WBGSP)—has been associated with declining response rates, suggesting that such short intervals may be inadequate for capturing meaningful changes in career trajectories and development impact.



Alumni during St. Patrick's day celebration, 2023



# Section 3: Tracer Study—Full Findings & Discussion

### 3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The tracer survey recorded responses from **201 respondents out of a total 380 alumni**, yielding an overall **response rate of 53% (Table 1)**. A closer look reveals notable differences across cohorts. The most recent cohort (2014–2024) had the highest number of respondents, with 133 respondents and a strong response rate of 66.5%, followed by the 2024+ active cohort, which recorded the highest response rate (72.2%). This trend suggests that enhanced digital communication tools, improved alumni tracking systems, and stronger program follow-up mechanisms may have contributed to increased participation in recent years. In contrast, earlier cohorts (1994–2003) exhibited significantly lower response rates (16.7%), likely due to factors such as outdated contact information, career transitions, retirement, or limited alumni engagement frameworks at the time. The steady rise in response rates across cohorts reflects a growing institutional maturity, stronger alumni networks, and engagement strategies over time.

*Table 1: Respondents to Tracer Survey per Cohort*

| Cohort                                                 | Cohort Population | Respondents | Response Rate (%) |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 1994-2003: Early Years of The Program                  | 24                | 4           | 16.7              |
| 2004-2013 Middle Years of Program Expansion And Growth | 138               | 51          | 37                |
| 2014-2024: Recent Years of The Program.                | 200               | 133         | 66.5              |
| 2024: Active Cohort                                    | 18                | 13          | 72.2              |
| <b>Graduated 1994-2024</b>                             | <b>380</b>        | <b>201</b>  | <b>53</b>         |



### 3.1.1 Cohort Profile of Respondents

**Gender Distribution:** Of the 201 respondents, **51.2% were male (103 fellows)**, **48.3% were female (97 fellows)**, and **0.5% (1 respondent) preferred not to disclose their gender (Table 2)**. This near-equal gender representation highlights the program’s strong commitment to gender inclusivity. However, earlier cohorts, particularly 1994–2003, had no female respondents, suggesting historical gender disparities in access to such academic opportunities. In contrast, the more recent cohorts (2014–2024) displayed nearly equal male (53.4%) and female (46.6%) participation, reinforcing the positive shift toward gender balance over time.

**Age and Graduation Trends:** The average age across all respondents was **44.2 years**, reflecting a mix of seasoned alumni and newer graduates. Age varied by cohort, with the 1994–2003 fellows having the highest average age of 55.8 years due to their early participation in the program.

Meanwhile, the active 2025+ cohort had the youngest average age of 35.4 years, aligning with their ongoing academic journey. The average number of years since graduation across all respondents was 7.9 years, ranging from 25 years for the earliest cohort (1994–2003) to 0 years for the active 2024 fellows. This trend aligns with the highlights the continued intake of new fellows alongside with the natural aging of earlier cohorts, ensuring sustained program engagement over time.

**Table 2: Cohort Profile of Respondents<sup>t</sup>**

| Cohort                                                             | No. of Respondents |            |            |            | Average Values |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|--------------------|
|                                                                    | Male               | Female     | PNS        | Total      | Age            | No. of Years After |
| 1994-2003:<br>Early Years of<br>The Program                        | 4 (100%)           | 0 (0.0%)   | 0 (0.0%)   | 4 (100%)   | 55.8           | 25                 |
| 2004-2013<br>Middle Years<br>of Program<br>Expansion<br>And Growth | 23 (45.1%)         | 27 (52.9%) | 1(2.0%)    | 51 (100%)  | 49.4           | 15.2               |
| 2014-2024:<br>Recent Years<br>of The<br>Program.                   | 71 (53.4%)         | 62 (46.6%) | 0 (0.0%)   | 133(100%)  | 42.7           | 5.4                |
| 2024: Active<br>Cohort                                             | 5 (38.5%)          | 8 (61.5%)  | 0 (0.0%)   | 13 (100%)  | 35.4           | 0                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                                       | <b>103(51.2% )</b> | <b>7.9</b> | <b>7.9</b> | <b>7.9</b> | <b>7.9</b>     | <b>7.9</b>         |

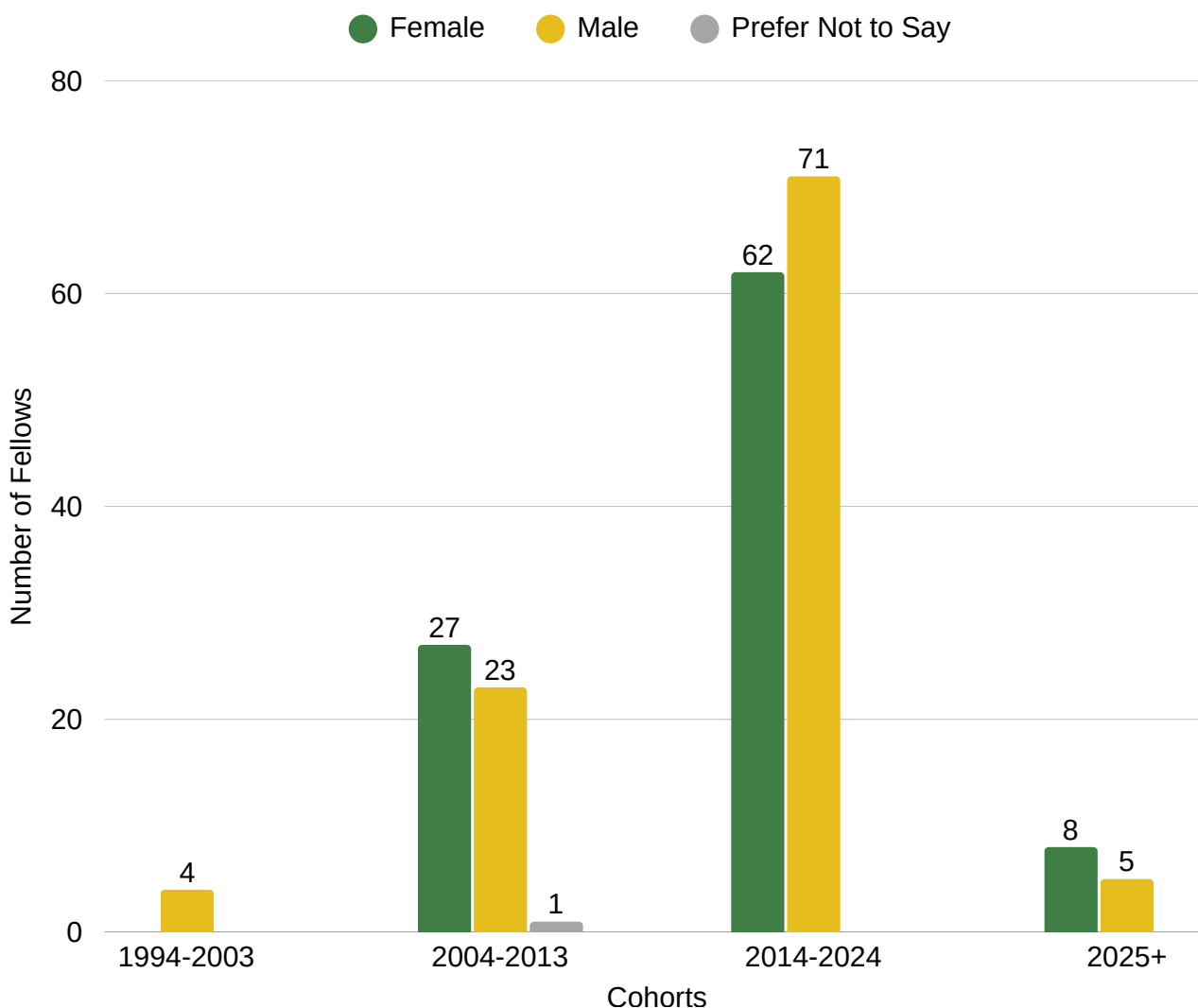


### 3.1.2 Fellows' Countries and Region

Ugandan alumni overwhelmingly dominated the survey (**Table 3**), with **156 respondents (77.6%)**, highlighting the country's strong representation in the program. Within Uganda, 34 fellows (16.9%) were from the Karamoja region, a historically marginalized area. While smaller in absolute numbers, Karamoja's inclusion marks a significant milestone in the program's outreach to underserved communities, reinforcing its commitment to equity and regional diversity. Beyond Uganda, **11 fellows (5.5%) were from Rwanda**, all of whom belonged to the 2014–2024 cohort. This trend aligns with Irish Aid's extension of the program in Rwanda in 2016, which facilitated increased participation from the country in later years. The expansion highlights the program's growing international reach, supporting broader educational access and strengthening regional collaborations.

**Table 3: Respondents by Country and Region**

| Cohort                                                              | No. of Respondents |                   |                  | Total Respondents |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                                                                     | Uganda             |                   | Rwanda           |                   |
|                                                                     | (Other Regions)    | Karamoja Region   |                  |                   |
| 1994-2003:<br>Early Years of<br>The Program                         | 4 (100%)           | 0 (0%)            | 0 (0%)           | 4 (100%)          |
| 2004-2013:<br>Middle Years<br>of Program<br>Expansion and<br>Growth | 45 (88.2%)         | 6 (11.8%)         | 0 (0%)           | 51 (100%)         |
| 2014-2024:<br>Recent Years of<br>The Program                        | 97 (72.9%)         | 25 (18.8%)        | 11 (8.3%)        | 133 (100%)        |
| 2024: Active<br>Cohort                                              | 10 (76.9%)         | 3 (23.1%)         | 0 (0%)           | 13 (100%)         |
| <b>Total</b>                                                        | <b>156(77.6%)</b>  | <b>34 (16.9%)</b> | <b>11 (5.5%)</b> | <b>201 (100%)</b> |

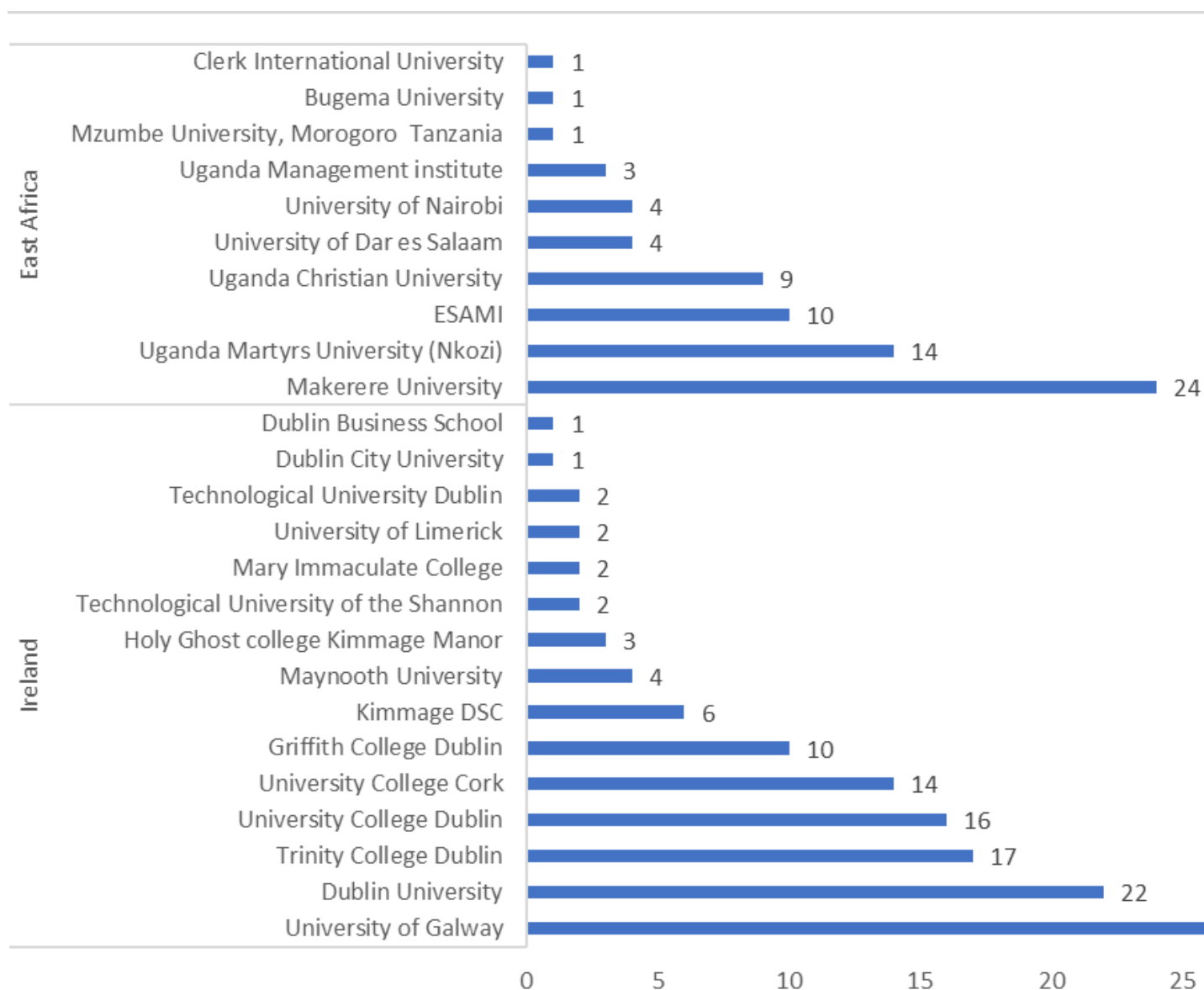


**Figure 1: IFP Fellows Across Cohorts by Gender.**

### 3.1.3 Prestigious Universities Attended by Fellows-20 Years of Academic Excellence

Between 1994 and 2024, a total of **201 IFP fellows** attended universities in **Ireland and East Africa**, with notable variations in institutional representation (Figure 2). **Ireland hosted 117 fellows (58.2%)**, reflecting strong academic partnerships and international study opportunities, while **East Africa accounted for 84 fellows (41.8%)**, demonstrating significant regional engagement influenced by accessibility, affordability, and localized program relevance. Within **Ireland**, three universities hosted the largest share of fellows: University of Galway (28 fellows), Dublin University (22 fellows), and Trinity College Dublin (17 fellows). These institutions likely offered programs strongly aligned with fellows’ academic and professional aspirations, reinforcing Ireland’s status as a key destination for IFP scholars. In East Africa, Uganda hosted substantial share of fellows at institutions such as Makerere University (24 fellows), Uganda Martyrs University (14 fellows), and ESAMI (10 fellows).

The strong presence of Ugandan universities indicates a preference for established regional academic hubs offering relevant programs tailored to the fellows' career trajectories. The dominance of Irish universities suggests an emphasis on international academic exposure, whereas Uganda's notable representation underscores the importance of domestic and regional education pathways. The diverse distribution of university attendance highlights fellows' academic choices, balancing international opportunities with strong local institutional networks. These trends provide meaningful insights into fellows' study trajectories and institutional preferences over time.



**Figure 2: Universities/Institutions attended by Fellows.**

### 3.2 Impact of IFP on Career and Professional Development

**#Output indicator: 97.9% of our Ireland Fellowship Program participants have successfully completed the program and earned their Master's Degree!**

**Table 4: Output Indicators: Completion and Skills Enhancement**

|                                                | <i>Completion Status</i> |                          |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Variable</i>                                | <b>Completed (%)</b>     | <b>Not Completed (%)</b> |
| <b>Overall</b>                                 | 182 (96.8%)              | 6 (3.2%)                 |
| <b>By Cohort</b>                               |                          |                          |
| <i>1994-2003: Early Years of The Program</i>   | 4 (100.0%)               | 0 (0.0%)                 |
| <i>2004-2013 Middle Years of Program</i>       | 0 (98.0%)                | 1 (2.0%)                 |
| <i>2014-2024: Recent Years of The Program.</i> | 128 (97.0%)              | 3 (3.0%)                 |
| <b>By Gender</b>                               |                          |                          |
| <i>Male</i>                                    | 87 (96.7%)               | 3 (3.3%)                 |
| <i>Female</i>                                  | 94 (96.9%)               | 3 (3.1%)                 |
| <i>Prefer Not to Say</i>                       | 1 (100.0%)               | 0 (0%)                   |
| <b>By Region/County</b>                        |                          |                          |
| <i>Uganda (Karamoja)</i>                       | 28 (90.3%)               | 3 (9.7%)                 |
| <i>Uganda (Other Regions)</i>                  | 143 (97.9%)              | 3 (2.1%)                 |
| <i>Rwanda</i>                                  | 11 (100.0%)              | 0 (0%)                   |

The completion rate analysis reveals that of the IFP fellows expected to complete their studies between 1994 and 2024, **188** respondents (after excluding the 13 active fellows) successfully participated in the study (**Table 4**). Among them, **182 completed their academic programs**, resulting in an impressive **97.9% completion rate**, while only 4 respondents (2.1%) did not finish. Across cohorts' completion remained consistently high across the years, with 1994-2003 achieving 100%, 2004-2013 at 98%, and 2014-2024 at 97%, indicating sustained program effectiveness. Gender-wise, completion rates were nearly identical across male (97.8%) and female (97.9%) respondents, showing no significant disparities in gender-based retention. However, Country differences were notable: Uganda (93.5%) showed slightly lower completion rates compared to Rwanda (100%), suggesting potential socio-economic or logistical challenges affecting retention in Uganda, particularly within the Karamoja region. While the overall completion rate is remarkably high, the slight dropout rate (2.1%) underscores the need to explore the barriers faced by non-completers, including financial constraints, academic difficulties, or institutional support gaps.

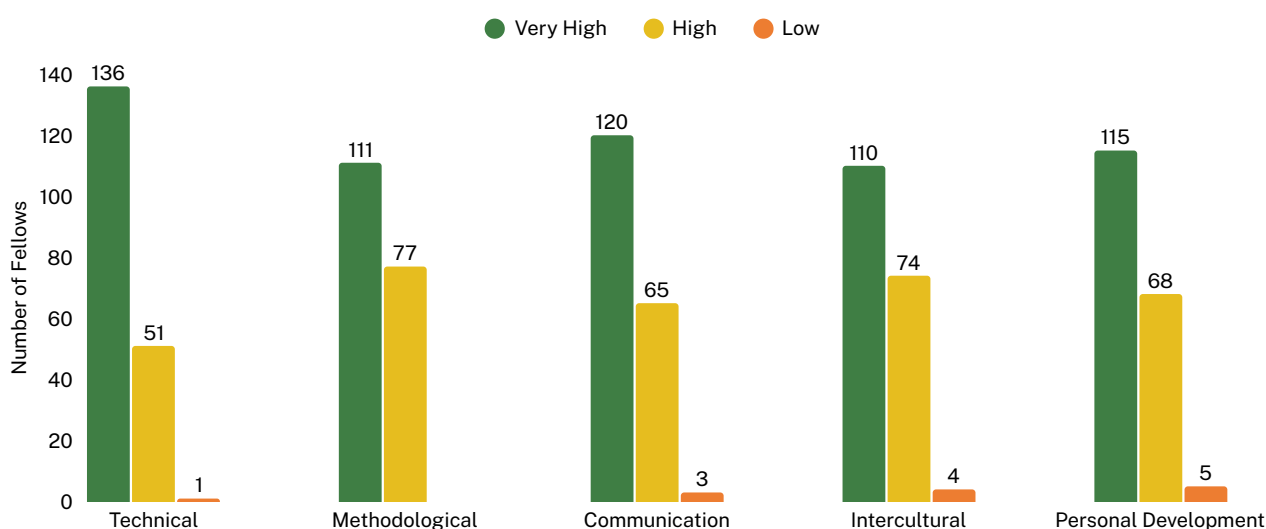
### 3.2.1 Skills Development, Confidence, and Practical Application Attained from the Ireland Fellowship Program

**#Outcome Indicator:** *Over 90% of IFP fellows rated the usefulness of acquired skills in their work as 'Very High' or 'High,' highlighting the program's profound impact on their career development and Effectiveness."*

The bar chart titled **"Rating of Core Skills Gained"** presents fellows' self-evaluation of key competencies acquired through the IFP program. Across all categories, the majority of fellows **rated their skill development as "Very High" or "High,"** demonstrating the program's **strong impact on career and professional growth**. Technical skills emerged as the **highest-rated category**, with **77.1% of fellows rating it "Very High" and 29.3% as "High,"** reflecting **strong competency development and applied expertise**. Methodological skills also received high ratings, with **60.6% marking them as "Very High" and 46.3% as "High,"** showcasing **enhanced analytical thinking, research capabilities, and problem-solving approaches**.

Similarly, Communication skills were highly rated by 67.0% of fellows as "Very High" and 38.3% as "High," highlighting major improvements in interpersonal effectiveness, and professional articulation. Intercultural skills received strong endorsements, with 61.2% rating them "Very High" and 43.1% as "High," demonstrating cross-cultural engagement, global collaboration, and inclusive teamwork. Personal development, encompassing leadership, networking, confidence, adaptability, and self-efficacy, was notably strong, with 66.0% rating it "Very High" and 37.8% as "High," affirming enhanced leadership qualities, networking abilities, and strategic decision-making. While the majority of ratings fell within "Very High" and "High," a few fellows reported lower scores in certain areas, suggesting potential gaps in skill retention or application. These findings indicate that while the program has been highly effective in strengthening technical expertise, methodological proficiency, communication, intercultural engagement, and personal development, there may be opportunities for targeted capacity-building efforts in specialized skill areas. Fellows have successfully applied these competencies across policy-making, governance, education, social development, and research sectors, reinforcing the program's long-term impact on professional growth and institutional contributions.

*"One of the most significant impacts of the IFP training was the confidence it gave me to take on leadership roles throughout my career. I'm now the Executive Director of WaterAid Uganda."* – Mpalanyi Joyce Magala, 2001 IFP Fellow 1999-2000



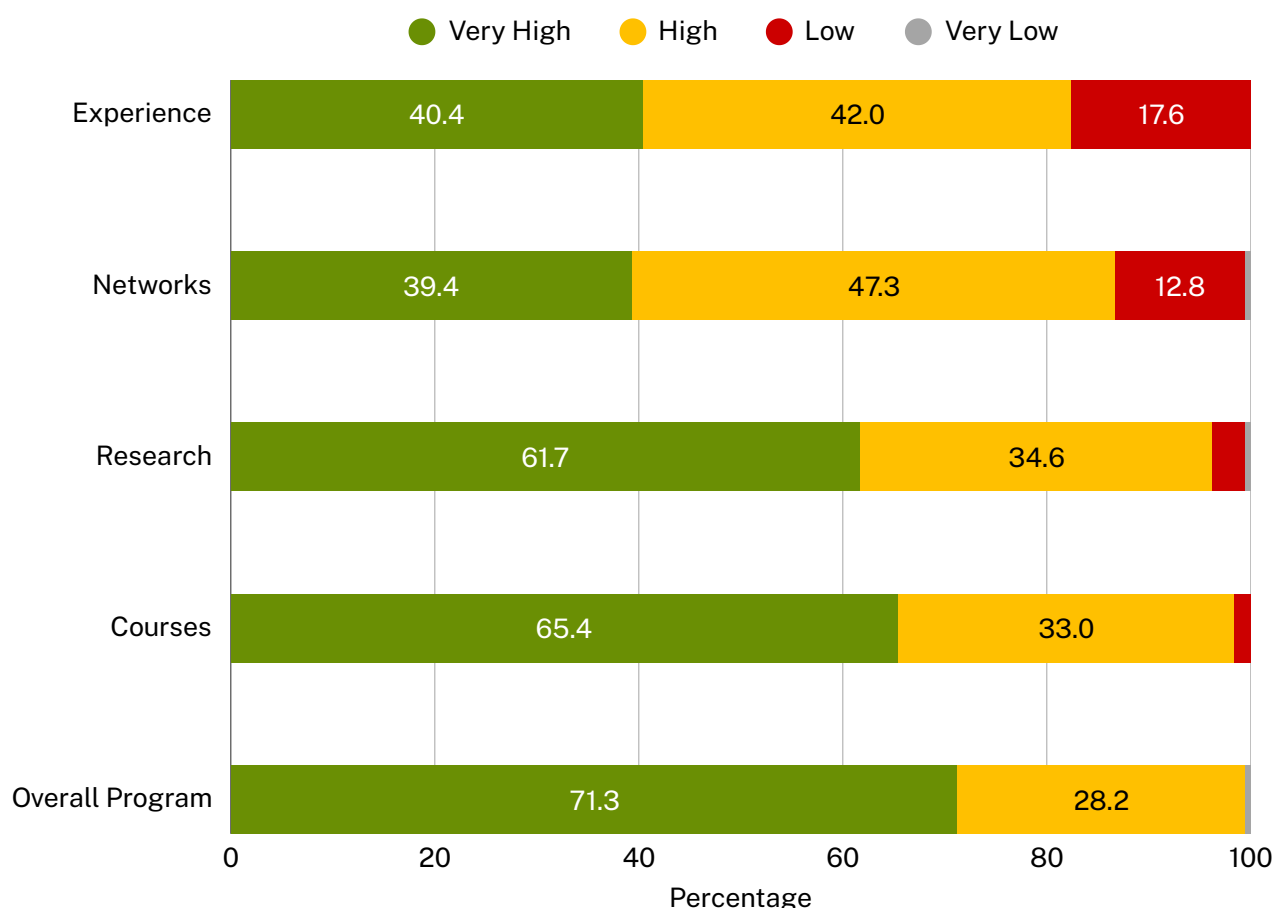
*Figure 3: Fellows Rating of Core Skills Gained from IFP*

### 3.2.2 Usefulness of Acquired Skills in Fellows' Work

**Figure 4:** Titled "IFP Fellows Rating of Usefulness of Acquired Skills at Work" illustrates fellows' self-evaluation of how the knowledge and skills obtained through the program relate to their occupations. The majority of fellows rated their skills usefulness as "Very High" or "High" across all categories, highlighting the program's strong impact on career progression and practical application.

#### Key Findings

- **Overall Program Impact:** A strong majority of fellows (71.3%) rated the overall program as "Very High" in usefulness, with an additional 28.2% marking it as "High." This underscores the program's clear role in equipping participants with relevant skills and competencies for their careers.
- **Courses:** About 65.4% of fellows rated the courses as "Very High," and 33.0% as "High," confirming that course content was directly applicable to their professional environments. Only 1.6% rated it as "Low."
- **Research:** A total of 61.7% rated research-related skills as "Very High," and 34.6% as "High." These findings highlight the program's contribution to developing fellows' analytical and evidence-based thinking.
- **Networks and Connections:** While 39.4% rated networks as "Very High" and 47.3% as "High," a notable 12.8% rated it as "Low." This suggests that although many fellows found networking beneficial, there is room to enhance connections, collaborations, and mentorship opportunities within the program.
- **Experience Sharing:** Experience-sharing activities were rated "Very High" by 40.4% and "High" by 42.0% of fellows. However, 17.6% marked this area as "Low," pointing to potential gaps in real-world exposure, peer learning, or structured reflection sessions during the program.



**Figure 4: Rating of Usefulness of acquired skills in Fellows' Work.**

While most ratings are overwhelmingly positive, the relatively higher proportion of fellows who rated **Experience Sharing** as Low (17.6%, 33 out of 188) and **Networks and Connections** as Low (12.8%, 24 out of 188) highlights areas for strategic improvement. These findings suggest a need to expand mentorship opportunities, enhance internship placements, and foster more consistent alumni engagement to support fellows in building meaningful professional relationships and practical exposure. This resonated with the FGD qualitative analysis across the three cohorts (1994-2003, 2004-2013, and 2014-2024), where fellows enhanced their technical expertise, adapted to Uganda's professional landscape, and applied their skills in diverse sectors. The analysis highlighted the evolving nature of skills development, confidence levels, and application strategies across cohorts, reinforcing the need for targeted mentorship, career transition support, and institutional collaboration to maximize alumni contributions as demonstrated below.

**Table 5: Skills Application and Development Across Cohorts**

| Cohort           | Technical Skills                                                                 | Soft Skills                                                                  | Problem-Solving Skills                                       |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1994-2003</b> | Policy analysis, diplomacy, governance advisory                                  | Strategic leadership, negotiation, cross-cultural communication              | Bureaucratic navigation, policy implementation challenges    |
| <b>2004-2013</b> | Legal framework analysis, health systems policy, environmental impact evaluation | Stakeholder collaboration, institutional networking, corporate governance    | Research-driven advocacy, overcoming bureaucratic resistance |
| <b>2014-2024</b> | Entrepreneurship, digital innovation, sustainability strategies                  | Adaptive leadership, business communication, interdisciplinary collaboration | Career transition strategies, industry adaptation            |

## Trends:

- **Early cohorts (1994-2003)** focused on public policy, diplomacy and governance expertise, while
- **Mid-cohorts (2004-2013)** expanded into health, legal reform and environmental policy with improved adaptation and policy influence.
- **Recent cohorts (2014-2024)** diversified into entrepreneurship, private-sector leadership, digital innovation, and sustainability, integrating data-driven approaches and interdisciplinary solutions.

“Overall, the findings indicate that it is becoming increasingly easier for fellows to translate the knowledge and skills acquired through the Ireland Fellowship Program into their employment, with recent cohorts (2014-2024) experiencing smoother integration into the workforce compared to earlier cohorts (2004-2013, 2014-2024). This shift may reflect improved alignment between fellowship training and evolving industry demands, as well as greater opportunities for direct application of acquired expertise in diverse sectors

*A practical example of this was derived during the key informant interviews (KII) where fellows consistently emphasized that the IFP broadened their expertise, refined their leadership approach, and equipped them with sector-specific skills (Table 6).*

**Table 6: Practical Utilization of Skills Across Cohorts**

| Core Skills                                                                                       | Key Fellows                                                                                                   | Application in Uganda                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Strategic Leadership &amp; Policy Influence</b>                                                | Jane Abodo, IFP Fellow 2015-2016<br>David Bakibinga, Fellow 2011-2012<br>Rosemary Nakijoba, Fellow 2010-2012. | Strengthened anti-corruption laws, justice sector governance, and academic institutional policies.           |
| <b>Analytical &amp; Research Proficiency</b>                                                      | Pamela Kampire, Fellow, 2009-2011<br>Timothy Teko, Fellow 2015-2018                                           | Led health and gender research, driving policy frameworks in maternal health and social inclusion.           |
| <b>Communication &amp; Advocacy</b>                                                               | Rebecca Sanyu, Fellow 2013-2014<br>Joyce Mpalanyi-Magala-Fellow 1999-2000                                     | Championed public outreach campaigns, ensuring stakeholder mobilization and inclusive development practices. |
| <b>Strategic Networking, Community engagement, Business Development &amp; Economic Resilience</b> | Joan Lorak, Fellow 2007-2008<br>Henry Tumwebaze, Fellow 2011-2012                                             | Established entrepreneurial mentorship programs, creating youth-led SMEs and educational infrastructure.     |

**Table 7: Confidence in Applying Skills Across Cohorts.**

| Cohort           | Confidence Level | Key Challenges                                            |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1994-2003</b> | Moderate         | Institutional resistance, slow policy adoption            |
| <b>2004-2013</b> | High             | Convincing policymakers to act on evidence-based research |
| <b>2014-2024</b> | Strong           | Career transition barriers, lack of structured mentorship |

## Key Observation:

- Confidence in skill application increased over time, but early cohorts faced bureaucratic resistance and systemic barriers in applying knowledge within government.
- Mid-cohorts developing institutional influence, and recent cohorts leveraging private-sector flexibility demonstrated higher confidence, though employment structures remain misaligned with acquired skills.
- Entrepreneurial fellows displayed higher confidence, while policy-driven alumni struggled with institutional barriers.

*"Being in Ireland, surrounded by people from different nationalities and backgrounds, was a transformative experience. I was no longer just a prosecutor from Uganda; I was part of a global community of thinkers and doers...When I came back, I learned to Work Faster —Lady Jane Frances Abodo, Fellow 2015-2016-DPP"*

### 3.2.3 Challenges in Applying Fellowship-Acquired Knowledge.

- Although a majority reported skill enhancement through IFP; however, qualitative feedback emphasized difficulty applying skills in rigid institutional systems. Alumni proposed continuous learning, communities of practice, and post-graduate action plans aligned to national development sectors.

*"In Uganda, doing the right thing feels wrong. The system is so bureaucratic that efficiency becomes a challenge. Sometimes it feels like you are isolated for trying to do the right thing or work ethically."* – Gerald Mugabe, IFP Fellow 2001-2002

#### i. Institutional Barriers & Bureaucracy

- Many alumni struggled to implement international best practices in Uganda's bureaucratic work environments.
- Slow institutional processes and corruption hinder professional progress.

*"When we return, we don't have access to the advanced technology we learned in Ireland. Adapting to outdated systems becomes a challenge. Additionally, our education system lacks applied research methodologies. Can we, as an alumni association, push for policy recommendations to bridge this gap?"* – Simone Okello, IFP Fellow 2024

#### ii. Resistance to Change & Mindset Shifts

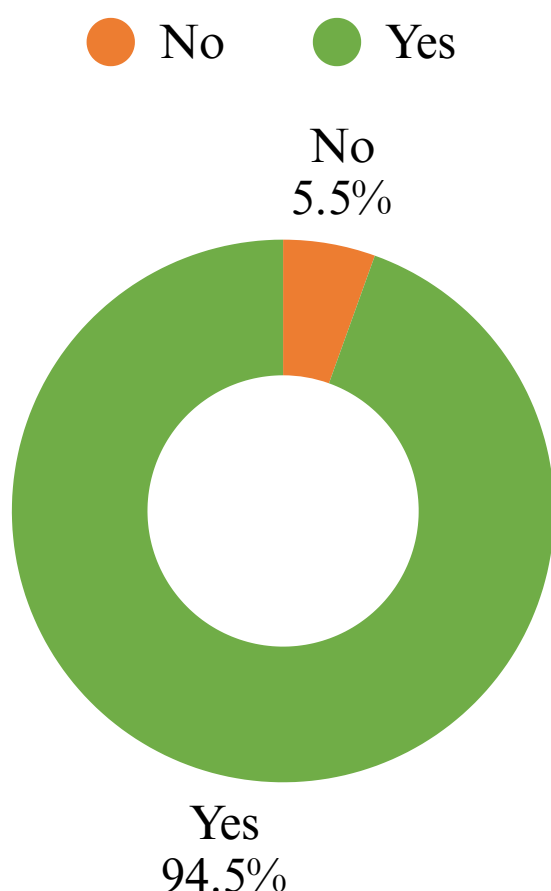
- Alumni report difficulty in advocating for evidence-based policies, as government decisions often lack research backing.

“.... for instance, many Government Programs like Operational wealth creation, Emyogga, are failing because they are not backed by scientific evidence or data. People draft policies based on personal gain rather than national impact. There’s a huge gap between policy makers and the communities they intend to serve. You bring transformative ideas, but communities stick to traditions

rejecting new approaches. **The wrong voices are the loudest.**” – Gerald Mugabe, IFP Fellow 2002

### 3.2.4 The Impact of IFP Master’s Degree on Fellows Work Performance

**#Outcome Indicator:** Transformative Impact- 95% of fellows experienced significant improvement in professional effectiveness and enhanced daily performance after completing their Master's degree



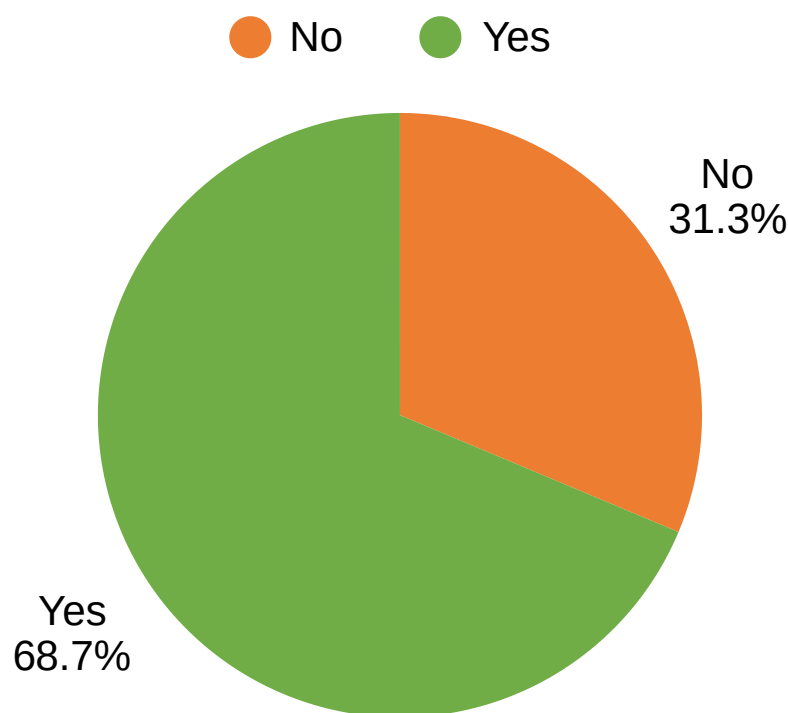
The pie chart highlights the substantial impact of the IFP Master’s Degree on work performance, with **95% of fellows (172 individuals) reporting significant improvement in their professional effectiveness and daily responsibilities**. This widespread enhancement underscores the program’s success in equipping graduates with technical expertise, policy knowledge, and leadership capabilities that directly influence their roles in governance, institutional strengthening, and policy-making. While a **small fraction (5%)** of fellows did not experience notable improvements, this may be attributed to sectoral limitations, misalignment of roles, or prior expertise reducing additional learning benefits. Overall, the data reaffirms that higher education plays a crucial role in advancing career competencies and fostering meaningful contributions to organizational growth and policy development.

**Figure 5: Impact of IFP Master’s Degree on Fellows' Work Performance**

### 3.2.5 Perceived Promotion status at Work After IFP

**Career Advancement:** 69% of fellows secured promotions across various sectors following program completion

The pie chart (Figure 6) illustrates the impact of the IFP Master's Degree on career progression, with 69% of fellows reporting promotions after completing the program. A sector-based breakdown reveals that most promotions occurred in the Public Sector (Government) at 55.5%, followed by NGOs (26.2%), International Organizations (13.5%), Private Sector (3.8%), and Others (1%).



**Figure 6: Perceived Promotion status at Work After IFP**

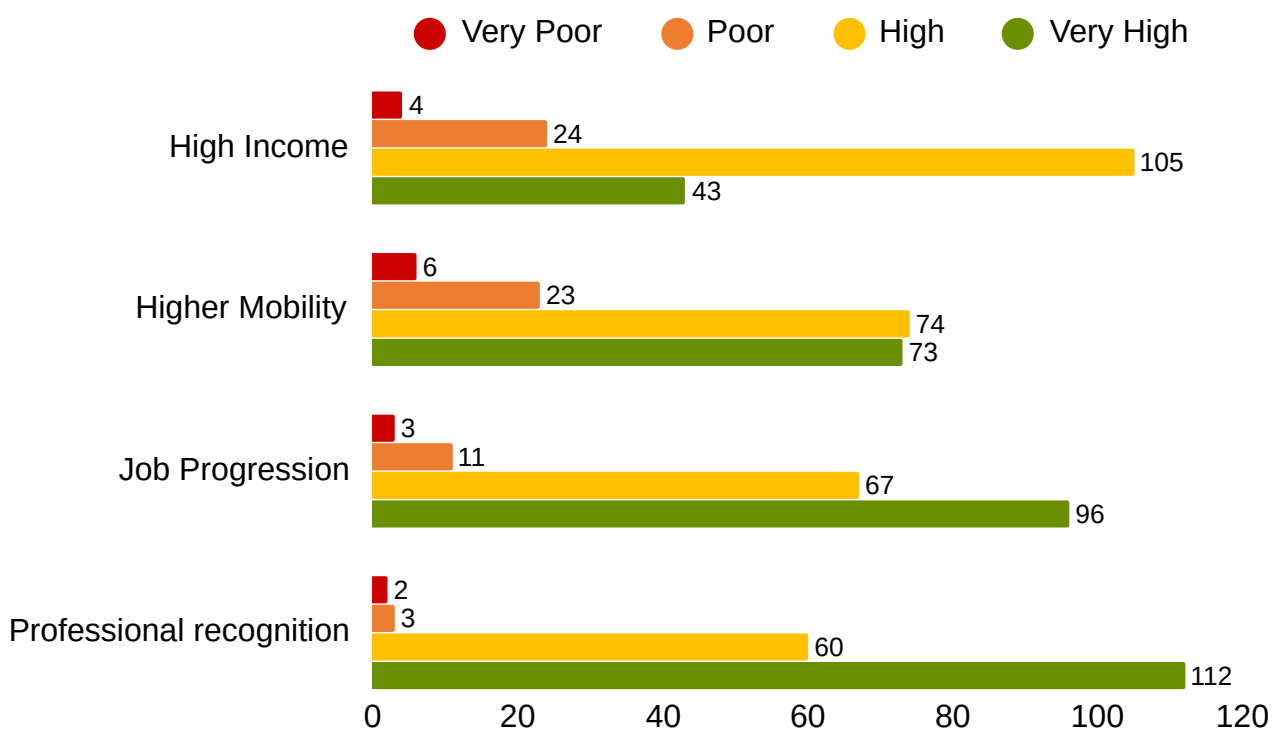
### Key Findings from the Data:

- **Public Sector Dominance (55.5%)** – The majority of promotions occurred within government institutions, reflecting the program's emphasis on policy-making, governance, and institutional strengthening.
- **Strong Representation in NGOs (26.2%)** – A significant portion of fellows advanced within civil society organizations, indicating their role in social impact, advocacy, and community development.
- **International Organizations (13.5%)** – Fellows gained upward mobility in global agencies, demonstrating their ability to influence international development policies.
- **Private Sector Promotions (3.8%)** – Fewer fellows reported promotions in private enterprises, potentially due to sector-specific constraints or the program's alignment with public service and governance-oriented careers.
- **Other Sectors (1%)** – This category represents fellows who experienced career advancement in non-traditional or mixed employment settings, suggesting diverse trajectories beyond the standard classifications.

**Implications for Career Development:** The high promotion rate across multiple sectors confirms the IFP's effectiveness in equipping fellows with technical, analytical, and leadership skills that drive career progression and institutional impact. However, the lower promotion rates in private sector roles highlight the need for expanded engagement with corporate institutions to ensure that fellows can translate their expertise into business and industry leadership.

### 3.2.6 Fellows perceived professional benefit

The bar chart (Figure 7) illustrates fellows' perceptions of four key professional benefits after completing the IFP program: **High Income**, **Higher Mobility**, **Job Progression**, and **Professional Recognition**. Each category is evaluated across four levels: **Very Poor**, **Poor**, **High**, and **Very High**. The figure 7 highlights key aspects of fellows perceived professional benefits after the IFP program. Income levels show a strong positive trend, with 52.2% (105 fellows) rating their earnings as high and 21.4% (43 fellows) as very high, while 13.9% (28 fellows) report minimal financial benefits, exposing sectoral disparities. Career mobility is notably strong, with 36.7% (74 fellows) rating it high and 36.2% (73 fellows) as very high, indicating flexibility and diverse job opportunities, though 14.4% (29 fellows) face mobility challenges, likely due to industry-specific constraints. Job progression remains a significant benefit, as 47.7% (96 fellows) recognize very high career growth and 33.3% (67 fellows) rate it as high, affirming the program's ability to accelerate professional advancement, while 7.0% (14 fellows) experience stagnation, suggesting the need for targeted career interventions.



**Figure 7: Fellows perceived professional benefits**

Professional recognition emerges as the most positively rated category, with 55.6% (112 fellows) reporting very high institutional validation, reinforcing the program's role in enhancing credibility, visibility, and sectoral impact.

**Implications for Career Development:** The data confirms that IFP fellows experience substantial career benefits, particularly in job progression and professional recognition. However, income disparities and mobility challenges among certain fellows indicate gaps in sectoral opportunities, salary growth, and career flexibility that may require targeted support.

Qualitative narratives echoed this impact with remarkable consistency. Many fellows described the IFP as a “catalyst” for career acceleration, citing how the master's degree enhanced their leadership capacity, analytical skills, and ability to influence institutional reform. A key informant shared: *“Before the fellowship, I was operational—afterwards, I became strategic. I now lead programs that shape national policy- Joyce Mpalanyi-Magala-Fellow 1999-2000”* FGDs across cohorts revealed that the program fostered a mindset shift—from technical execution to systems-level problem-solving. Fellows recounted applying research, planning, and innovation skills in real-time, improving service delivery in sectors such as public health, justice, and governance. The synthesis of both data streams underscores the IFP’s role in **empowering** fellows to become changemakers within their institutions—turning academic achievement into actionable, high-impact leadership.

### 3.3 Fellows' Impact, Contribution to Development, and Influence

Similar to the **JJ/WBGSP Tracer Survey (2007)**, the impact of the program on the **development environment** is assessed through three key indicators:

**1. Residence Status:** Alumni who return to their home countries ensure that the human capital accumulated through the program directly contributes to their nation’s development. Additionally, alumni residing in other developing countries are regarded as strengthening human capital across the global development landscape, further enhancing expertise and knowledge exchange.

**2. Employment Status:** Fellows' employment indicators—including their status, employer type, and professional position—reflect their contribution to development. Their placement in government agencies, NGOs, academia, and international institutions demonstrates how acquired skills and expertise translate into workforce impact and institutional growth.

**3. Link to Development:** Alumni perceptions of how their work connects to development issues serve as a crucial measure of the program’s focused positive impact. Whether engaging in policy-making, governance, education, or social development, fellows actively apply their knowledge to address challenges and drive sustainable change.

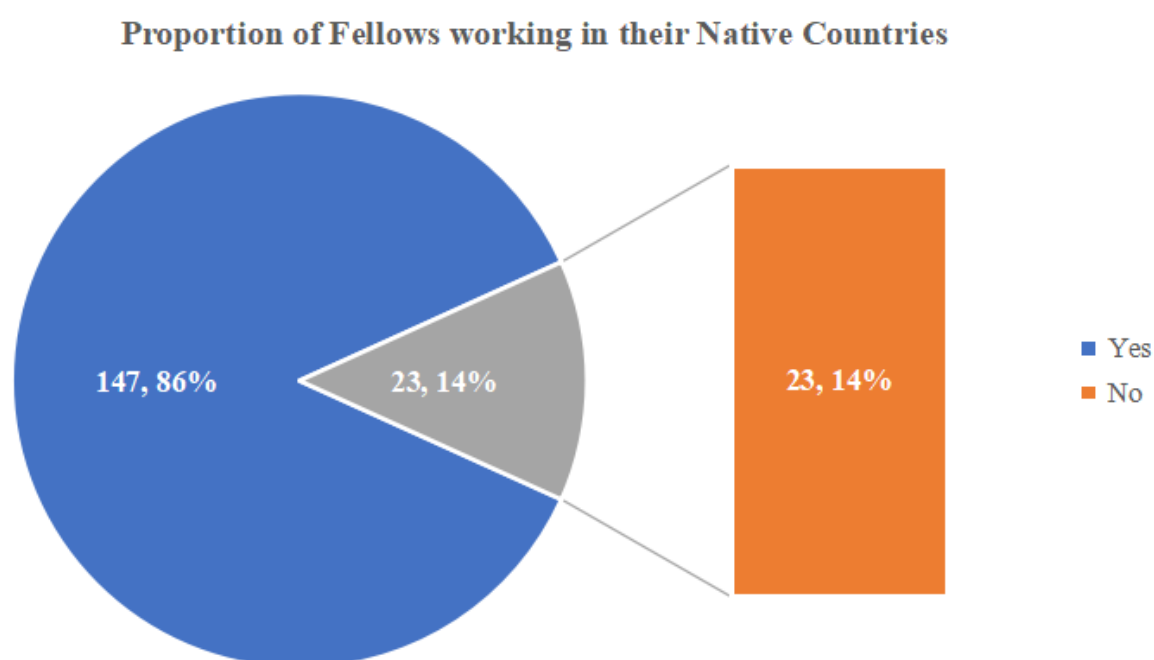
Together, these indicators illustrate the program’s **significant role in advancing global development by empowering alumni to leverage their expertise within key sectors.**

### 3.3.1 Fellow Residence Status after completion of the Irish Fellowship Program

**#Outcome indicator: 86% of program alumni chose to stay and work in their home countries, showcasing effective talent retention, whereas 14% explored international opportunities”**

The pie chart (**Figure 8**) highlights the proportion of fellows working in their native countries after completing the Irish Fellowship Program (IFP). The findings show:

- 86% (147 fellows) have remained in their home countries, applying their expertise to strengthen local institutions and contribute to national development.
- 14% (23 fellows) pursued opportunities abroad, leveraging their skills in global policy-making, research, and international collaborations.



**Figure 8: Fellows' Residence Status after the Ireland Fellowship Program**

This highlights the program’s effectiveness in equipping professionals to create meaningful local impact. Meanwhile, 14% of fellows who pursued international opportunities serve as bridge-builders, fostering knowledge-sharing and cross-border collaborations that benefit both their home countries and global institutions. To strengthen alumni engagement, the UIAA can enhance career mentorship, professional development, and sector-based networking, ensuring fellows remain connected and supported. Additionally, leveraging international alumni to create partnerships and knowledge-sharing platforms with UIAA members can enrich collaborative efforts. Establishing career placement programs and professional skill-building initiatives can further empower IFP fellows, helping them navigate evolving career landscapes and maximize their contributions.

**Table 8: Residence Status of Respondents after the Ireland Fellowship Program**

| Cohort                                  | Resident Status of Respondents |                  |                |                                         |                 |                   | Average Years of Working Native Country |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|                                         | Working in Native Country      |                  |                | Working Outside Native Country (Abroad) |                 | Total             |                                         |
|                                         | 147 (86.5%)                    |                  |                | 23 (13.5%)                              |                 | 170 (100.0%)      |                                         |
|                                         | Male                           | Female           | PNS            | Male                                    | Female          | Total             |                                         |
| 1994-2003: Early Years of The Program   | 2 (66.7%)                      | (0.0%)           | 0(0.0%)        | (33.3%)                                 | 0 (0.0%)        | 3 (100%)          | 17 Years                                |
| 2004-2013 Middle Years of Program       | 9 (47.5%)                      | 7 (42.5%)        | 1(2.5%)        | 0 (0.0%)                                | 3 (7.5%)        | 40 (100%)         | 13 Years                                |
| 2014-2024: Recent Years of The Program. | 1 (48.8%)                      | 5 (36.0%)        | 0 (0.0%)       | 7 (5.6%)                                | 2 (9.6%)        | 125 (100%)        | 6 Years                                 |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>2 (48.8%)</b>               | <b>2 (36.9%)</b> | <b>1(0.6%)</b> | <b>8 (4.8%)</b>                         | <b>5 (8.9%)</b> | <b>168 (100%)</b> | 12 years                                |
| <b>By Country</b>                       |                                |                  |                |                                         |                 |                   |                                         |
| Uganda                                  | 76 (47.8%)                     | 63 (39.6%)       | 1 (0.6%)       | 6 (3.8%)                                | 13 (8.2%)       | 159 (100%)        |                                         |
| Rwanda                                  | 6 (54.5%)                      | 1 (9.1%)         | 0 (0.0%)       | 2 (18.2%)                               | 2 (18.2%)       | 11 (100%)         |                                         |

The resident status of respondents shows a strong trend of fellows continuing to work within their home countries, with **86.5% (147 out of 170)** working locally after completing the program (**Table 8**). This suggests the program's meaningful contribution to national workforce development. On the other hand, **13.5% (23 fellows)** are currently working abroad, indicating modest but notable global mobility.

## Key Trends

- **1994–2003 (*Early Years of the Program*):** A total of 3 fellows participated from this period, and 100% remained in their native country, showing high long-term retention. These fellows have an average of 17 years of post-IFP local work experience.
- **2004–2013 (*Middle Years of the Program*):** Among 40 fellows, **95%** remained in their native country, while **7.5%** pursued work opportunities abroad. These fellows reported an average of **13** years working locally, showing a steady but emerging trend toward international mobility.
- **2014–2024 (*Recent Years of the Program*):** This larger cohort of **125** fellows shows **94.4%** working locally and **9.6%** abroad. With an average of **6** years of local experience, this reflects shorter retention periods and increased openness to global career options compared to earlier cohorts.
- **Country-Specific Insights:**
  - **Uganda:** Out of 159 fellows, **91.8%** continue to work locally, while **8.2%** are working abroad — reflecting strong retention and local contribution.
  - **Rwanda:** Of the **11** fellows, **63.6%** are working locally, while **36.4%** work abroad. Many of those abroad transitioned internationally after earning first-class master's degrees, particularly moving to **Ireland**, pointing to education-driven career mobility.

### 3.3.1 Reasons for Not Working in Native Countries

Among the small percentage of fellows who reported not working in their native countries, a few key reasons were shared. Some are currently pursuing further studies, while others mentioned working with international or regional organizations, including roles where they represent public or private institutions from their home countries. A few respondents cited that they did not find suitable employment opportunities locally after completion of their program.

While these cases are few, they reflect individual career choices influenced by academic goals, professional alignment with international roles, or limited job availability at home. Overall, the vast majority of fellows continue to contribute within their native countries, affirming the program's strong local impact.

### 3.3.3 Fellows' Current Employment/Occupation Status

**#Outcome Indicator:** 78.7% of IFP fellows are formally employed in key sectors (public service, NGOs, academia, and international organizations), demonstrating strong career integration and program effectiveness.

**Table 9: Fellows' Current Employment/Occupation Status**

| Variable                   | Formally employed | Self-employed | Unemployed | Still Studying | Retired  | Volunteer | Informally employed | Total Respondents (%) |
|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Overall</b>             | 48 (78.7%)        | 17 (9.0%)     | 15 (8.0%)  | 3 (1.6%)       | 2(1.1%)  | 2 (1.1%)  | 1 (0.5%)            | 188(100.0%)           |
| <b>By Cohort</b>           |                   |               |            |                |          |           |                     |                       |
| 1994-2003:<br>Early Years  | 1 (25.0%)         | 2 (50.0%)     | 1 (25.0%)  | 0 (0.0%)       | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%)  | 0 (0.0%)            | 4 (100.0%)            |
| 2004-2013:<br>Middle Years | 35 (68.6%)        | 4 (7.8%)      | 10 (19.6%) | 1 (2.0%)       | 1(2.0%)  | 0 (0.0%)  | 0 (0.0%)            | 51 (100.0%)           |
| 2014-2024:<br>Recent Years | 112(84.2%)        | 11 (8.3%)     | 4 (3.0%)   | 2 (1.5%)       | 1(0.8%)  | 2 (1.5%)  | 1 (0.8%)            | 133(100.0%)           |
| <b>By Gender</b>           |                   |               |            |                |          |           |                     |                       |
| Female                     | 58 (76.4%)        | 7 (7.9%)      | 11 (12.4%) | 0 (0.0%)       | 1(1.1%)  | 2 (2.2%)  | 0 (0.0%)            | 76 (100.0%)           |
| Male                       | 79 (80.6%)        | 10 (10.2%)    | 4 (4.1%)   | 3 (3.1%)       | 1 (1.0%) | 0 (0.0%)  | 1 (1.0%)            | 98                    |
| Prefer Not to Say          | 1 (100.0%)        | 0 (0.0%)      | 0 (0.0%)   | 0 (0.0%)       | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%)  | 0 (0.0%)            | 1 (100.0%)            |
| <b>By Region/Country</b>   |                   |               |            |                |          |           |                     |                       |
| Uganda<br>(Karamoja)       | 25 (80.6%)        | 2 (6.5%)      | 2 (6.5%)   | 1 (3.2%)       | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (3.2%)  | 0 (0.0%)            | 31 (100.0%)           |
| Uganda<br>(Other Regions)  | 13 (77.4%)        | 14 (9.6%)     | 13 (8.9%)  | 2 (1.4%)       | 2 (1.4%) | 1 (0.7%)  | 1 (0.7%)            | 56 (100.0%)           |
| Rwanda                     | 10 (90.9%)        | 1 (9.1%)      | 0 (0.0%)   | 0 (0.0%)       | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%)  | 0 (0.0%)            | 11 (100.0%)           |



### 3.3.3.1 Fellows' Employment Status Analysis

**Table 9** illustrates the employment outcomes of IFP fellows, reveals encouraging trends in career integration and highlight areas for further programmatic support. The majority of respondents **78.7% (148/188)** are formally employed, indicating strong access to structured career paths. Other categories include self-employment at **9.0% (17/188)**, unemployment at **8.0% (15/188)**, and smaller proportions for those still studying **1.6% (3/188)**, retired **1.1% (2/188)**, volunteering **1.1% (2/188)**, and informally employed **0.5% (1/188)**.

**High Formal Employment Representation:** The dominant share of fellows **78.7% (148/188)** are in formal employment, affirming the program's effectiveness in facilitating career entry into stable roles across sectors such as public service, NGOs, academia, and international organizations.

**Moderate Self-Employment Engagement:** **9.0% (17/188)** of fellows are self-employed, representing involvement in entrepreneurship, consulting, and small business ventures. While less than formal employment, this group could benefit from targeted support such as access to capital, business mentorship, and professional development training.

**Unemployment Trends and Academic Continuation:** A total of **8.0% (15/188)** of respondents are unemployed, and **1.6% (3/188)** are still studying. Notably, fellows from the 2014–2024 cohort reported only **3.0% (4/133)** unemployment, pointing to stronger career readiness among recent graduates, possibly due to improved networks and placement strategies.

**Gender-Based Employment Distribution:** Among female fellows, **76.4% (68/89)** are formally employed compared to **80.6% (79/98)** of male fellows. However, female unemployment stands at **12.4% (11/89)** — significantly higher than males at **4.1% (4/98)**. This suggests ongoing gender disparities in workforce access. Self-employment rates remain comparable: **7.9% (7/89)** for females and **10.2% (10/98)** for males.

#### **Regional Employment Trends:**

- **Karamoja (Uganda):** Fellow's report **80.6% (25/31)** formal employment and **6.5% (2/31)** unemployment.
- **Other Ugandan Regions:** **77.4% (113/146)** are formally employed, with **8.9% (13/146)** unemployed.
- **Rwanda:** All fellows show excellent integration, with **90.9% (10/11)** formally employed and no unemployment reported.

**Limited Engagement in Voluntary & Informal Employment:** Alumni show strong integration into formal employment (**78.7%**), while engagement in voluntary (**1.1%**) and informal (**0.5%**) roles remains minimal. This highlights an opportunity to encourage greater participation in community initiatives and mentorship. To promote inclusive and sustainable career outcomes, targeted efforts are needed to support self-employment, close gender gaps, and expand opportunities for underrepresented regions such as Karamoja.

### 3.3.3.2 Organization type and Current work institution

#### a) Employment by Sector

IFP fellows demonstrate a diverse spread across multiple employment sectors (Table 7), reflecting the program's broad relevance and adaptability to various professional environments.

Among the 176 employed respondents:

- **54.5% (96/176)** are working in the **public sector (government)**, underscoring the program's alignment with policy-driven careers, public service, and national development.
- **15.9% (28/176)** are employed in **not-for-profit or NGO** settings, contributing to community development, advocacy, and humanitarian work.
- **13.6% (24/176)** work in the **private sector**, covering a range of roles in business, consulting, and industry-related functions.
- **8.5% (15/176)** hold positions in **international or regional organizations**, showing active engagement in global development and cross-border cooperation.
- **6.3% (11/176)** are part of **academic or research institutions**, contributing to knowledge creation, teaching, and evidence-based policy analysis.
- Only **0.6% (1/176)** are employed in financial institutions, and another 0.6% (1/176) in other sectors not specified, indicating limited involvement in finance-related fields or areas outside the mainstream categories.



*Senior Fellows (1994-2004) enjoying the Chicken Dance during the UIAA Tracer Study dissemination at Hotel Africana, Uganda.*

**Table 10: Employment by Sector after IFP**

| Variable                                                    | Frequency  | Percentage     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| <b>Employment by Sector</b>                                 |            |                |
| Public Sector (Government)                                  | 96         | 54.50%         |
| Not for Profit or Non-Government Organization (NGO)         | 28         | 15.90%         |
| Private Sector                                              | 24         | 13.60%         |
| International or Regional Organization                      | 15         | 8.50%          |
| Academia or Research Institution                            | 11         | 6.30%          |
| Financial Institution (Banks, Insurance, Micro Credit etc.) | 1          | 0.60%          |
| Other (please specify)                                      | 1          | 0.60%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                                | <b>176</b> | <b>100.00%</b> |
| <b>Area of Expertise</b>                                    |            |                |
| Social Development, Gender, and Human Rights                | 50         | 30.70%         |
| Public Sector Administration and Governance                 | 34         | 20.90%         |
| Health, Nutrition, and Public Health                        | 20         | 12.30%         |
| Education and Training                                      | 17         | 10.40%         |
| Environment and Natural Resources                           | 10         | 6.10%          |
| Economic Policy and Planning                                | 10         | 6.10%          |
| Financial Sector and Taxation                               | 5          | 3.10%          |
| Information, Communication and Technology                   | 5          | 3.10%          |
| Agriculture and Rural Development                           | 4          | 2.50%          |
| Water Resources Management                                  | 3          | 1.80%          |
| Industry & Private Sector Development                       | 3          | 1.80%          |
| Infrastructure, Transport and Urban Development             | 2          | 1.20%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                                | <b>163</b> | <b>100.00%</b> |

## b) Fellows' Areas of Expertise

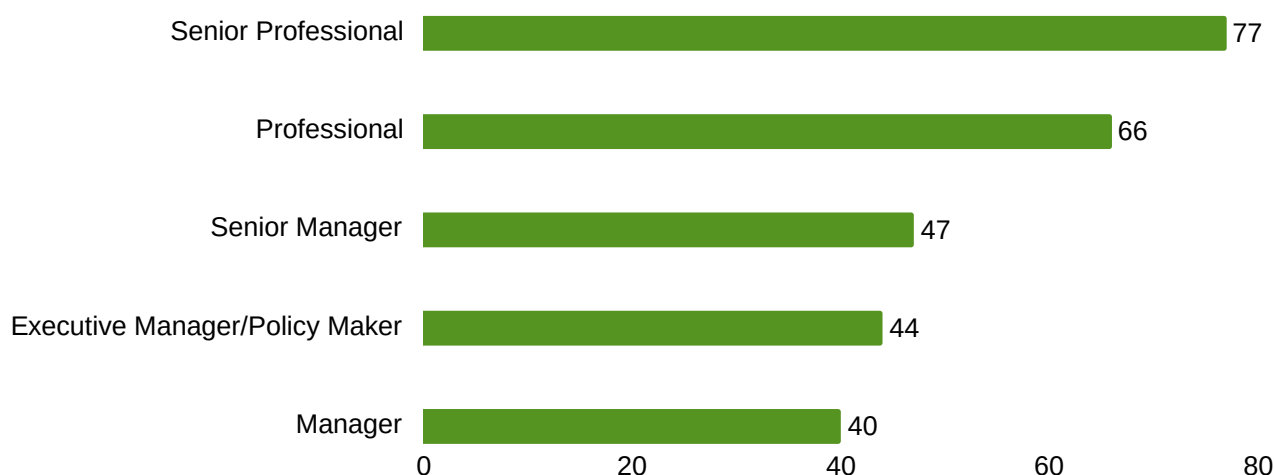
**Table 10** exhibit Fellow's expertise across a diverse range of fields, with nearly **30.7%** specializing in Social Development, Gender, and Human Rights, **20.9%** in Public Sector Administration and Governance, and **12.3%** in Health, Nutrition, and Public Health. This trend highlights fellows' active engagement and contribution to institutional leadership, policy formulation, governance reforms while reinforcing their commitment to social justice, policy advocacy, and community empowerment to drive positive societal change. Additionally, **10.4%** of respondents work in sectors such as Education and Training, demonstrating significant expertise in capacity-building, knowledge translation and health systems strengthening further supporting community transformation.

Economic development-related fields, such as Economic Policy and Planning (**6.1%**) and Environment and Natural Resources (**6.1%**), indicate fellows' involvement and contribution to sustainable resource management, economic strategy, and policy-driven planning. While specialized sectors such as Finance (**3.1%**) and ICT (**3.1%**) exhibit lower representation, they highlight emerging areas where fellows contribute to economic systems, digital transformation, and modernization efforts. Similarly, Water Resource Management (**1.8%**), Agriculture and Rural Development (**2.5%**), Industry and Private Sector Development (**1.8%**), and Infrastructure, Transport, and Urban Development (**1.2%**) represent niche expertise, suggesting opportunities for expanded Ireland Fellowship Program support and targeted capacity-building initiatives. The "Other" category (**0.0%** in this case) signifies cross-sector expertise, illustrating fellows' diverse influence across disciplines and institutional transformation.

Overall, these trends affirm the program's strong alignment with governance, social impact, and sustainable development, while emerging sectors present opportunities for continued expansion and expertise development for future program alignment and targeted capacity-building initiatives.

## c) Fellows' Managerial Positions

Many fellows reported holding multiple roles throughout their careers, reflecting diverse and evolving professional trajectories (Figure 9). The most common designation was Senior Professional, cited by **77 fellows (41.0%)**, followed by Professional roles held by 66 fellows (**35.1%**). At higher leadership levels, **47 fellows (25.0%)** served as Senior Managers, and 44 fellows (**23.4%**) reported experience as Executive Managers or Policy Makers. Interestingly, the Manager role was noted by **40 fellows (21.3%)**, the lowest among reported categories. This distribution underscores strong progression into senior technical and advisory roles, though mid-level managerial representation appears lower—an insight that may guide future support for leadership pipeline development.



**Figure 9: Fellows' Managerial Positions**

#### d) Career Levels of Fellows

Career progression among IFP fellows reflects a strong upward trajectory, with the majority currently occupying senior-level positions. Of the 170 respondents, 111 (65.3%) reported serving in senior roles, while 49 (28.8%) held mid-level positions, and only 10 (5.9%) identified as being at entry level. **By Cohort:** Career advancement correlates closely with time since graduation. All fellows from the earliest cohort (1994–2003) reported senior-level roles. Among those from 2004–2013, 67.5% had reached senior positions, with fewer at mid- and entry-level. The 2014–2024 cohort, though still early in their professional journeys, shows promising upward mobility, with 63.8% in senior roles and a notable proportion occupying mid- and entry-level positions. **By Gender:** Both male and female fellows are well represented at senior levels. Among women, 67.9% are in senior roles, 25.6% at mid-level, and 6.4% at entry-level. Male fellows display a similar trend, with 62.6% in senior positions, 31.9% at mid-level, and only 5.5% at entry level.

**Table 11: Career Levels of Fellows**

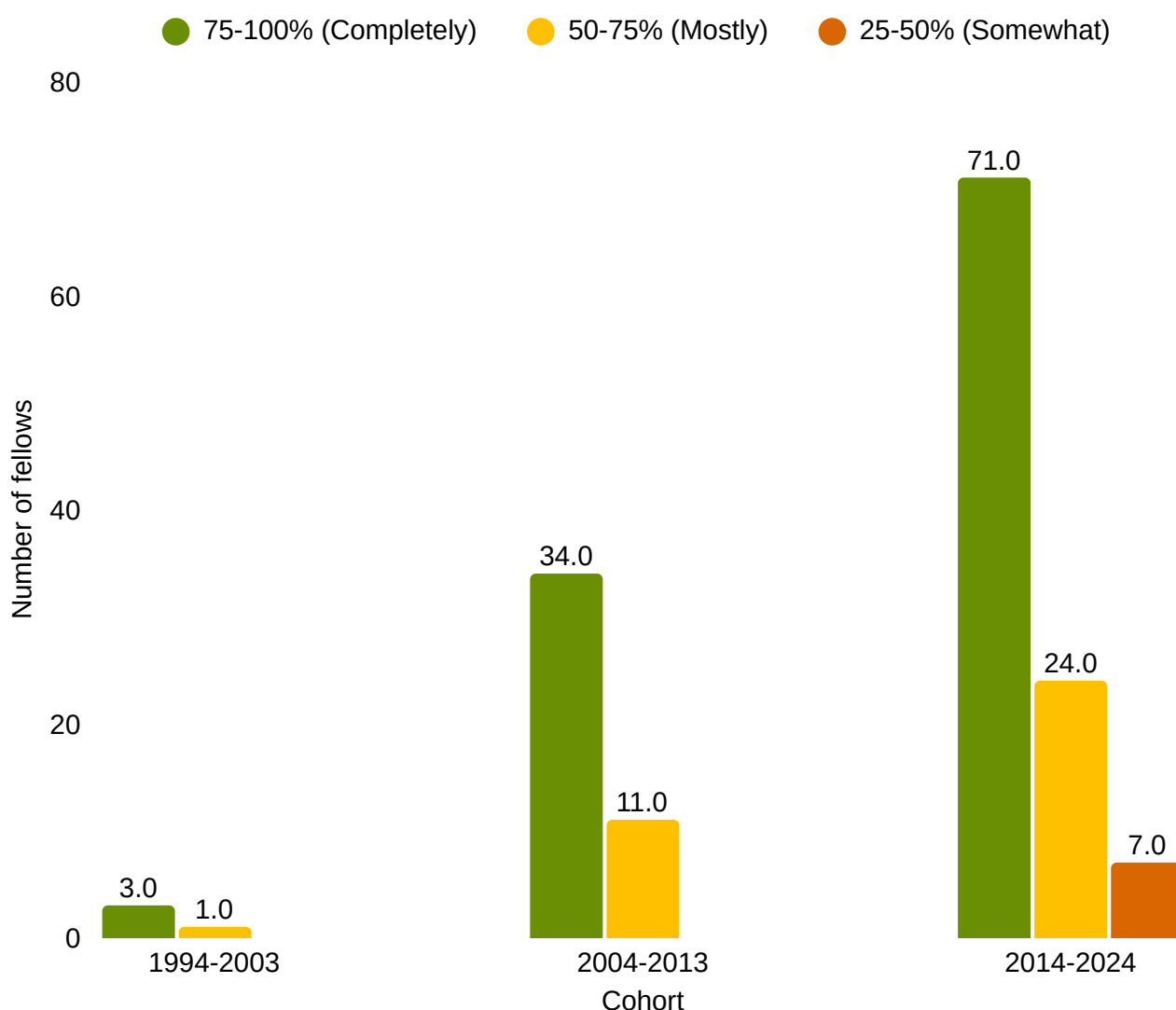
| Variable                | Entry-level | Mid-level  | Senior-level | Total Respondents (%) |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Overall</b>          | 10 (5.9%)   | 49 (28.8%) | 111 (65.3%)  | 170 (100.0%)          |
| <b>By Cohort</b>        |             |            |              |                       |
| 1994-2003: Early Years  | 0 (0.0%)    | 0 (0.0%)   | 3 (100.0%)   | 3 (100.0%)            |
| 2004-2013: Middle Years | 2 (5.0%)    | 11 (27.5%) | 27 (67.5%)   | 40 (100.0%)           |
| 2014-2024: Recent Years | 8 (6.3%)    | 38 (29.9%) | 81 (63.8%)   | 127 (100.0%)          |
| <b>By Gender</b>        |             |            |              |                       |
| Female                  | 5 (6.4%)    | 20 (25.6%) | 53 (67.9%)   | 78 (100.0%)           |
| Male                    | 5 (5.5%)    | 29 (31.9%) | 57 (62.6%)   | 91 (100.0%)           |
| Prefer Not to Say       | 0 (0.0%)    | 0 (0.0%)   | 1 (100.0%)   | 1 (100.0%)            |

### 3.3.4 Link to Development

Upon completing their fellowship and returning to their home country, most IFP respondents have focused on policy input, knowledge dissemination, management, and service delivery. These proxy impact indicators confirm that fellows hold influential positions capable of shaping policy and driving developmental programs, aligning with the program's core objectives. Furthermore, fellows often take on multifaceted roles, applying their expertise across a diverse range of developmentally significant responsibilities, amplifying their impact on national progress.

#### 3.3.4.1 Fellows' Perceived Impact on National Development

**#Outcome Indicator:** *Nearly three-quarters (73.4%) of fellows reported a high level of contribution (75-100%) of their work to development outcomes, with consistent trends across cohorts: 75% (Early Cohort), 75.6% (Mid Cohort), and 69.6% (Recent Cohort).*



**Figure 10: Alumni Activities and Development**

The **Figure 8** represents fellows' **self-reported contributions to development**, categorized into three levels:

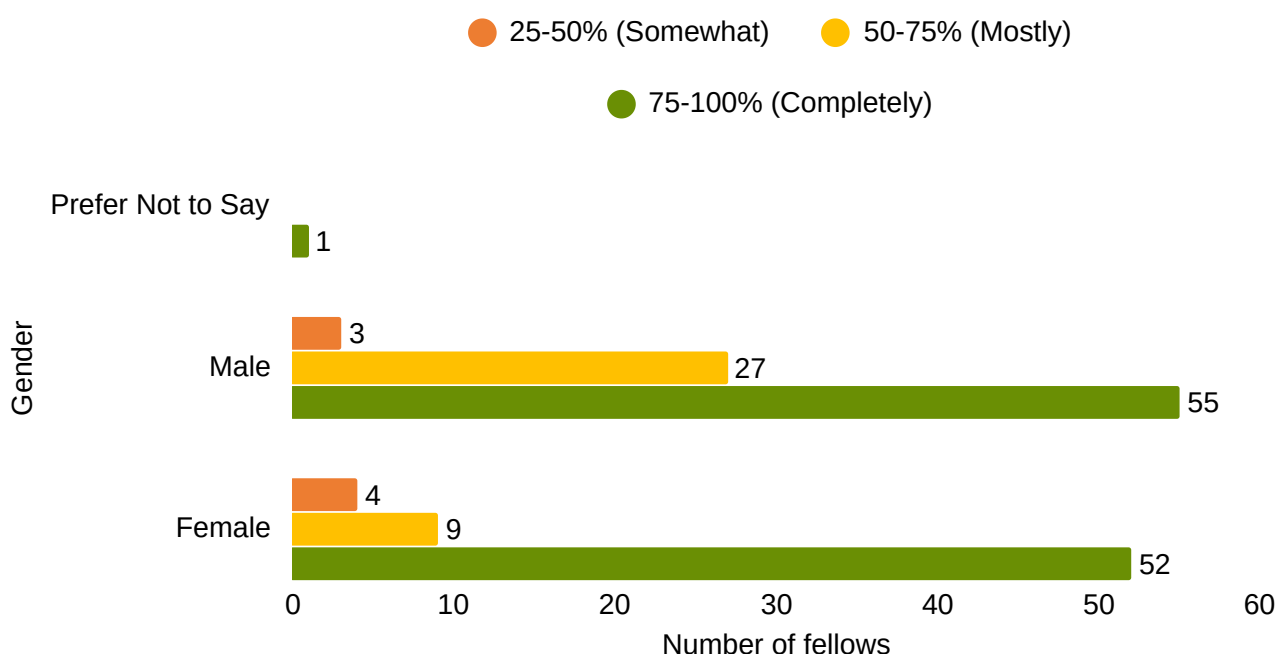
- **75-100% Contribution** (*Complete Impact*) – Fellows who believe their work has fully contributed to development.
- **50-75% Contribution** (*Mostly Relevant Impact*) – Fellows whose work has had a meaningful, but somewhat limited impact.
- **25-50% Contribution** (*Somewhat Limited Impact*) – Fellows who perceive a lower direct influence in development efforts.

The analysis of fellows' perceived contributions to development after the Ireland Fellowship Program (IFP) reveals a strong trend of impactful engagement across various cohorts. A significant majority of fellows consistently reported high levels of contribution (75-100%) to development outcomes, particularly in **governance, policy-making, and institutional strengthening**. This is evident across all three cohorts (1994-2003 Early Cohort, **2004-2013 Mid Cohort**, and **2014-2024 Recent Cohort**), with **75%, 75.6%, and 69.6% of fellows**, respectively, attributing substantial impact to their work. These fellows have been actively involved in shaping institutional frameworks, policy reforms, public service, and capacity-building initiatives, underscoring the program's effectiveness in nurturing leaders who drive meaningful change.

However, a notable trend is the gradual increase in fellows reporting "**mostly relevant**" (50-75%) or "**somewhat limited**" (25-50%) contributions, particularly in the most recent cohort (2014-2024). This shift suggests that while fellows remain deeply engaged in development efforts, external factors such as policy barriers, sectoral constraints such as corruption and bureaucracy, and evolving career trajectories may be influencing their ability to achieve direct impact. For instance, 23.5% of fellows in the 2014-2024 cohort reported "mostly relevant" contributions, citing engagement in management and knowledge dissemination but facing institutional or structural barriers. To address this, strategic initiatives such as policy mentorship, capacity-building networks, and enhanced institutional collaboration could be instrumental in ensuring that fellows' skills and expertise translate into sustained, long-term impact in governance, education, and public service sectors.

A detailed analysis of perceived contribution to development across gender (**Figure 5**), revealed that across all fellows' perceived ratings, male respondents generally report higher engagement in policy influence and governance,

while female respondents demonstrate strong contributions to community engagement and capacity-building, reflecting distinct gender-based variations in developmental roles and impact. One fellow in the Prefer Not to Say category perceived their contribution at 75-100%, highlighting that development impact is inclusive across all demographics.



**Figure 11: Alumni Activities and Development Across Gender**

These above figures and illustrations are strongly supported and contextualized by qualitative findings from FGDs and KIIs:

- **Grounded Public Sector Engagement:** Alumni narratives confirmed deep integration into government systems. Fellows described shaping national strategies, reforming service delivery, and leading inter-agency collaborations. As one KII respondent from the Ministry of Gender stated,

*"Following the IFP fellowship, I have worked and supported the Ministry for Gender, Labor and Social Development. In collaboration with Development Partners such as WFP, UNICEF, we've made significant strides in strengthening our systems, resulting in the development and government approval of key strategies and policies, including the National Social Protection Strategy, National Shock Responsive Social Protection Framework, and others, marking a major milestone in our journey towards a more resilient and responsive social protection system."* - Paul Onapa, IFP Fellow 2012

- **Sectoral Diversity with Targeted Impact:** FGDs confirmed the quantitative spread across sectors, with growing movement into consultancy and social enterprise (24.1% per KII data). Recent fellows articulated a desire to apply skills in flexible, mission-oriented roles, mirroring trends seen in the cohort analysis.
- **Development Contribution Rooted in Experience:** The 73.4% who rated their work as highly impactful were not just reporting perceptions—FGD participants articulated how they influence change: from piloting inclusive education models in rural districts to introducing digital platforms for justice sector efficiency.

*"...Studying in Ireland exposed me to international education standards, which reshaped my career trajectory."*

*When I pursued my Master's in Development Studies, it improved my abilities and opened doors to new opportunities and Connections. I worked with UNRA, the Ministry of Finance, and NSSF. Now, I'm managing my own business. I have transitioning into private sector ventures in tourism and agriculture.*" – Gerald Mugabe, IFP Fellow 2002.

- **Community engagement and Systems Influence:** Across interviews, fellows demonstrated a multi-level impact—from national policy to grassroots innovation. Fellow's spoke of mentoring youth, supporting vulnerable groups, and building partnerships with CBOs to translate top-down policy into bottom-up results. "If you want to impact a woman's life, educate her and give her the best education." — Pamela Kampire, Fellow Pamela Kampire, Fellow, 2009-2011

**Table 12: Alignment Aspects of Fellows' Impact, Contribution to Development, and Influence**

| Quantitative Indicator                                                       | Supporting Qualitative Insight                                                                                                                                   | Representative Quote                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>86% of alumni reside and work in their home country</b>                   | Strong sense of patriotism and return-driven purpose was expressed in FGDs. Many saw local reintegration as a moral and professional obligation.                 | <i>"The skills I gained weren't just for me—they were for the communities I serve." – KII respondent</i>                                     |
| <b>78.7% formally employed in public, NGO, academia &amp; intl. orgs</b>     | Fellows consistently described upward career mobility and sectoral influence, particularly in policy, education, and development sectors.                        | <i>"My return from Ireland marked a shift—people started seeing me not just as a doer, but a strategist." – Mid cohort alumnus</i>           |
| <b>54.5% employed in the public sector</b>                                   | Alumni led or supported national strategies, notably in gender, health, and education reforms. Their IFP degrees enhanced credibility within state institutions. | <i>"We moved from technical contribution to shaping frameworks—now, I'm designing national tools, not just using them." – KII respondent</i> |
| <b>24.1% moved into entrepreneurship &amp; consultancy</b>                   | KIIs show that fellows pursued mission-driven businesses and advisory roles, applying IFP-acquired leadership and innovation skills.                             | <i>"I built my consultancy to fill the systems gap I witnessed before the fellowship." – 2016 Fellow</i>                                     |
| <b>73.4% perceive their work contributes 75–100% to development outcomes</b> | Fellows linked their roles directly to Uganda's Vision 2040, citing health systems strengthening, justice reforms, and inclusive education.                      | <i>"I don't just work in development—I shape how it's policy is delivered." – David Bakibinga, Fellow 2011-2012 (FGD participant)</i>        |



## 3.4 UIAA Community Relevance, Effectiveness, and Engagement

**#Outcome Indicator: 52.4%) of IFP alumni were active members of the esteemed Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA)**

### 3.4.1 UIAA Awareness and Membership

72.1% (145) respondents were aware of UIAA, while 76 (52.4%) of those aware were active members. Gender-wise, 65 of 97 females (67%) and 80 of 103 males (77.7%) were aware, showing slightly higher awareness among males. By cohort, awareness was strongest in 2014–2024 (89 out of 133, 66.9%), but active membership was still split.

**Table 13: UIAA Awareness and Membership for Improved Effectiveness, Networking, and Engagement**

| Variable                    | Yes         | No         | Total      |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Aware of UIAA               | 145 (72.1%) | 56 (27.9%) | 201 (100%) |
| Awareness by Gender         |             |            |            |
| Female                      | 65 (67.0%)  | 32 (33.0%) | 97 (100%)  |
| Male                        | 80 (77.7%)  | 23 (22.3%) | 103 (100%) |
| Prefer Not to Say           | 0 (0.0%)    | 1 (100%)   | 1 (100%)   |
| Awareness by Cohort         |             |            |            |
| 1994-2003: Early Years      | 4 (100.0%)  | 0 (0.0%)   | 4 (100%)   |
| 2004-2013: Middle Years     | 47 (92.2%)  | 4 (7.8%)   | 51(100%)   |
| 2014-2024: Recent Years     | 89 (66.9%)  | 44 (33.1%) | 133(100%)  |
| 2025: Active Cohort         | 5 (38.5%)   | 8 (61.5%)  | 13(100%)   |
| Active Membership in UIAA   | 76 (52.4%)  | 69 (47.6%) | 145(100%)  |
| Active Membership by Gender |             |            |            |
| Female                      | 33 (50.8%)  | 32 (49.2%) | 65(100%)   |

|                                    |                    |                   |           |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| <b>Male</b>                        | 43 (53.2%)         | 37 (46.8%)        | 80(100%)  |
| <b>Active Membership by Cohort</b> | <b>103 (59.9%)</b> | <b>69 (40.1%)</b> | 172(100%) |
| 1994-2003: Early Years             | 2 (50.0%)          | 2 (50.0%)         | 4(100%)   |
| 2004-2013: Middle Years            | 25 (53.2%)         | 22 (46.8%)        | 47(100%)  |
| 2014-2024: Recent Years            | 46 (51.7%)         | 43 (48.3%)        | 89(100%)  |
| <b>2025: Active Cohort</b>         | 3 (60.0%)          | 2 (40.0%)         | 5(100%)   |

### 3.4.2 UIAA Awareness Trends

UIAA awareness remains relatively strong among fellows, with **72.1% reporting familiarity with the association**. However, **gender disparities** are evident, as **male fellows (77.7%) demonstrate higher awareness compared to female fellows (67.0%), highlighting a need for more targeted outreach to female alumni (Table 13)**. Cohort-based trends indicate a decline in awareness over time, with early cohorts (1994-2003) showing full awareness (100%), mid cohorts (2004-2013) maintaining strong connectivity (92.2%), and recent cohorts (2014-2024) dropping to 66.9%, reflecting the need for structured engagement programs for newer fellows. The 2025 active cohort presents the lowest awareness (38.5%), signaling an urgent priority to enhance outreach, onboarding efforts, and communication strategies to ensure newer fellows fully understand UIAA's role and opportunities for engagement.

### 3.4.3 UIAA Active Membership Trends

UIAA active membership stands at 52.4%, indicating that nearly half of alumni are not **fully engaged**, presenting an opportunity to **enhance networking and participation efforts**. Membership is slightly higher among male fellows (53.2%) compared to female fellows (50.8%), suggesting a need for more inclusive engagement strategies. Cohort trends reveal balanced retention in the early years (50.0%), steady engagement in the mid-years (53.2%), and a slight decline in the recent cohort (51.7%), highlighting the importance of sustaining connections with newer fellows. Notably, 2025's active cohort shows the highest membership rate (60.0%), surpassing awareness levels but still requiring structured onboarding and integration efforts to ensure long-term engagement.

## .4.4 Fellows' perceived relevance of UIAA

Feedback on the relevance of the Uganda Ireland Alumni Association (UIAA) reflects a diverse range of alumni perspectives (**Table 14**). Among the 201 respondents, **22.9% (46) strongly agreed and 18.4% (37) somewhat agreed** that the UIAA is relevant, **while 18.9% (38) remained neutral**. Notably, **30.8% (62) strongly disagreed** and **9.0% (18) somewhat disagreed**, signaling a mix of affirmation and concern.

- **By Cohort:** Recent cohorts (2014–2024) showed the most polarized views, with 50 fellows strongly disagreeing and 29 strongly agreeing—indicating divided experiences. In contrast, earlier cohorts expressed generally more favorable perspectives.
- **By Gender:** Gender analysis reveals that 33.0% of female fellows (32/97) strongly disagreed with UIAA’s relevance—higher than male fellows (28.2%, or 29/103). However, men reported a slightly higher rate of strong agreement (25 vs. 21), suggesting gendered nuances in alumni experiences.
- **Key Insight:** While many alumni affirm the UIAA’s mission, the prominence of critical feedback—especially from recent cohorts and female fellows—points to the need for improved engagement strategies. Strengthening communication, enhancing post-fellowship support, and ensuring responsiveness to evolving professional contexts will be vital to reaffirming the UIAA’s value and fostering a more inclusive alumni network.

**Table 14: Fellows' perceived relevance of UIAA**

| Variable          | Neutral     | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Disagree | Grand Total |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall</b>    | 18.91% (38) | 18.41% (37)    | 8.96% (18)        | 22.89% (46)    | 30.85% (62)       | 201         |
| <b>Cohort</b>     |             |                |                   |                |                   |             |
| 1994-2003         | 0.00% (0)   | 50.00% (2)     | 0.00% (0)         | 50.00% (2)     | 0.00% (0)         | 4           |
| 2004-2013         | 15.69% (8)  | 29.41% (15)    | 11.76% (6)        | 23.53% (12)    | 19.61% (10)       | 51          |
| 2014-2024         | 18.80%(25)  | 13.53% (18)    | 8.27% (11)        | 21.80% (29)    | 37.59% (50)       | 133         |
| 2024 Active       | 38.46% (5)  | 15.38% (2)     | 7.69% (1)         | 23.08% (3)     | 15.38% (2)        | 13          |
| <b>Gender</b>     |             |                |                   |                |                   |             |
| Female            | 18.56%(18)  | 15.46% (15)    | 11.34% (11)       | 21.65% (21)    | 32.99% (32)       | 97          |
| Male              | 19.42%(20)  | 21.36% (22)    | 6.80% (7)         | 24.27% (25)    | 28.16% (29)       | 103         |
| Prefer Not to Say | 0.00% (0)   | 0.00% (0)      | 0.00% (0)         | 0.00% (0)      | 100.00% (1)       | 1           |

### 3.4.5 Qualitative Perspective: Alumni Perceptions of UIAA's Community Role and Value

The qualitative data from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) added critical context to the quantitative findings. While survey results show moderate awareness (72.1%) and limited active membership (52.4%), alumni narratives surface why these patterns exist—and what can be done to improve them.

#### i. Structural Gaps Undermining Engagement

Fellows across cohorts cited a lack of formal onboarding, unclear communication structures, and absent professional incentives as key barriers to meaningful involvement in UIAA. While earlier cohorts experienced minimal post-fellowship support, more recent fellows reported difficulty re-integrating and aligning UIAA offerings with their evolving professional needs.

*“We heard about UIAA late—by the time I wanted to join, I didn’t even know how.” – 2024 Fellows.*

*“The network exists, but the threads are loose—we need to weave them tighter.” – FGD participant.*

#### ii. Engagement Channels Evolving but Fragmented

Though WhatsApp groups were widely acknowledged as helpful for basic communication, alumni across cohorts emphasized the need for structured digital platforms, such as interactive websites and professional networking forums. Many proposed regional chapters and thematic events to foster relevance and accessibility. *“We need platforms that go beyond WhatsApp... We’re professionals with evolving needs can we create a linked in to advice our career opportunities.” – Female alumna, Fellow 2017*

#### iii. Cohort Fragmentation and Institutional Identity

KIIs highlighted a growing disconnect between individual university affiliations and the collective identity of UIAA. Alumni expressed that while their academic institutions were memorable, UIAA struggled to unify members across disciplines and years. *“This emphasis on individual universities can create a silo mentality... We should look at ourselves as one UIAA family.” – David Bakibinga, IFP Fellow 2011-2012 & UIAA Legal Advisor.*

#### iv. Gendered and Generational Experiences

Female alumni expressed lower awareness and engagement, often citing underrepresentation in UIAA activities and leadership. Recent cohorts, despite having higher educational exposure, felt under-supported during post-study transitions—particularly around employment and mental well-being. *“Our voices are missing in alumni programming—it doesn’t always reflect our journey and Needs.” – Female KII respondent*

*“UIAA needs to evolve if it wants to stay relevant—fellowship has moved on, but the association hasn’t.” – Mid-career fellow, 2004-2013*



## v. Opportunities for Impactful Reform

Qualitative insights offered concrete ideas: mentorship networks, mental health support, regional coordination, and sector-based engagement (**Table 15**). Alumni called for UIAA to serve as a strategic platform—not only for networking, but for **policy influence, career development, and community-led innovation**.

*“As President of UIAA, I’m committed to leveraging the collective expertise of our members to drive positive change in Uganda.” – Rebecca Ssanyu, IFP Fellow 2013-2014*

*“We should empower individuals to think independently, develop themselves, and make informed decisions and UIAA can do that role.” – Dr. Chleophus Mugenyi, Fellow 2000-2001.*

**Table 15: Role-Evolution of UIAA Networking from Focus Group Discussions.**

| Engagement Channel          | 1994-2003   | 2004-2013                                 | 2014-2024                                           |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Formal Alumni Events</b> | Minimal     | Moderate                                  | Stronger, but inconsistent                          |
| <b>Online Networking</b>    | Nonexistent | WhatsApp Groups, no professional LinkedIn | WhatsApp Groups no professional LinkedIn            |
| <b>Alumni-Led Projects</b>  | None        | Few                                       | Growing desire for community engagement initiatives |

## 3.5 Other Barriers /Challenges Limiting Member Engagement

Despite the achievements of the Uganda Ireland Alumni Association (UIAA), several barriers continue were mentioned to limit full alumni participation in networking, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing initiatives:

- **Limited Awareness and Communication Gaps** – While 72.1% of fellows are aware of UIAA, a substantial proportion—particularly from recent cohorts (2014–2025)—lack sufficient information about its mission, benefits, and available opportunities.
- **Time and Professional Commitments** – Many fellows occupy demanding professional and academic roles, leaving limited availability for engagement in mentorship, networking events, or capacity-building sessions.
- **Geographic and Accessibility Constraints** – Alumni are dispersed across various regions and sectors, making physical participation in events challenging. Expanded digital engagement platforms could help bridge these gaps.
- **Lack of Targeted Engagement Strategies** – Gender-based differences in engagement, with male fellows slightly more active than female counterparts, highlight the need for inclusive and tailored outreach approaches.

- **Unclear Membership Benefits and Incentives** – With only 52.4% of fellows actively participating, many may perceive limited value in UIAA membership. Enhanced benefits such as leadership training, career development pathways, and exclusive policy dialogue forums could improve engagement.
- **Limited Cross-Cohort Interaction** – Minimal interaction across early, mid, and recent cohorts reduces opportunities for peer learning and mentorship, resulting in fragmented rather than cohesive alumni engagement.
- **Resource and Funding Constraints** – Sustained engagement requires financial support for event logistics, digital platforms, mentorship programs, and administrative functions—areas often limited by budget constraints.
- **Cohort-Specific Challenges and Opportunities**

*i.* 1994–2003: Limited structured support post-scholarship; opportunity to engage senior fellows in mentorship initiatives.

*ii.* 2004–2013: Informal networks constrained collaboration and reform; potential exists to formalize networking structures.

*iii.* 2014–2024: Fellows faced re-employment challenges and mental health adaptation issues in Ireland, which affected post-return engagement; improving mental health support and structured career transition programs could address these gaps.

### 3.6 Conclusion of Findings and Discussion

The findings of the tracer study reaffirm the Ireland Fellows Programme (IFP) as a transformative force—shaping academic growth, professional advancement, and national development across Uganda and, more recently, Rwanda. Graduates are not only thriving in senior roles across governance, education, health, and civil society, but are also catalyzing institutional reform, policy development, and community-level change. Their reflections and trajectories reveal that the IFP is more than a scholarship; it is a launchpad for collective impact. Yet, alongside these achievements, critical insights have emerged. Variability in alumni engagement—particularly among recent cohorts, female fellows, and underserved regions—points to the need for a more structured and inclusive alumni ecosystem. Persistent gender gaps, underutilized informal and mentorship roles, and uneven regional participation underscore the importance of sustained, adaptable support. To maintain and build on the programme’s momentum, the transition from episodic alumni contact to a robust, digitally enabled engagement strategy is imperative. Anchored in inclusive programming, strategic mentorship, and regional representation, such an approach will not only strengthen professional networks but elevate the UIAA into a strategic ally for Irish Aid—advancing national development, regional cooperation, and global knowledge exchange.





# Fellows' Stories of Impact



**Alumni building bridges by nurturing and enhancing the education of young talents in Uganda. Vashon Day and Boarding Nursery and Primary Schools, Kampala, Uganda - founded by Henry Tumwebaze, an IFP Fellow (2011-2012) - serves over 1,000 vulnerable children and creates more than 500 jobs annually, making a profound impact in the community."**



## Dr. Chleophus Mugenyi (Fellow 2000–2001)

Commissioner for Basic  
Education, Ministry of  
Education and Sports,  
Uganda.

*“The Ireland Fellowship Programme is like a master key—once you obtain it, it opens doors to endless opportunities, from Teacher to Commissioner for Basic Education!”*

My name is Dr. Chleophus Mugenyi, and I serve as Commissioner for Basic Education in the Ministry of Education and Sports. I began my career as a teacher at Namiriango College after graduating from Makerere University in 1993. In 1996, I was appointed District Education Officer (DEO) for Kibaale, thanks in part to support from Irish Aid’s Key Valley District Development Programme. Together,

we focused on improving access, equity, and the quality of primary education. I saw meaningful changes: increased enrolment and retention, better gender equity, and stronger Primary Leaving Exam results.

In 1999, the Embassy of Ireland gave me the chance to visit Dublin. That trip sparked a turning point. I applied for the Ireland Fellowship Programme and joined Trinity College Dublin in 2000 for a Master’s in Educational Management.

When I returned in 2002, I was promoted, and I remained committed to serving education at both district and national levels. My Master’s also paved the way for my selection into a highly competitive Ford Foundation PhD programme at the University of Manchester, where I earned my doctorate in Education Policy in 2011.

Since 2012, I’ve served as Commissioner—first for Teacher Education Standards, and now for Basic Education. My work has focused on reform, equity, and access. I’ve led initiatives to improve education in underserved regions like Karamoja, founded community schools, and even ventured into local politics to better support education and youth. I’m proud that Kibaale Parents Primary School, which I established, now has over 800 learners and performs competitively with urban schools.

As a proud member of the UIAA, I value the professional family we’ve built. Through it, I’ve found mentors, collaborators, and lifelong friends. I believe we can do more—by using digital platforms, hosting seminars, and championing projects in our communities. Imagine if we adopted one district a year to address issues like child abuse and youth unemployment. Senior alumni have a responsibility to mentor and inspire the next generation.

I remain deeply grateful to the Embassy of Ireland. The IFP opened doors for me—and it’s my duty to keep those doors open for others. This fellowship didn’t just transform my career—it shaped my life’s mission.



## Dr. Joyce Mpalanyi-Magala (Fellow 1999–2000)

Country Director, WaterAid  
Uganda



*“Empowering women, transforming lives—the Irish Fellowship Programme enabled me to become a voice for vulnerable women in Uganda.”*

As I reflect on my journey, I see how profoundly the Irish Aid Fellowship Programme shaped my personal growth, professional path, and the communities I’ve served. In 1999, I received a scholarship to pursue my Master’s in Development Studies at the Kimmage Development Studies Centre in Dublin. That opportunity came at a pivotal moment—and I have never looked back.

I returned to WaterAid Uganda with a renewed sense of purpose. My early work as a Project Officer took me across 11 districts in Eastern and Southwestern Uganda, mobilizing communities and developing sustainable water and sanitation solutions. I soon moved into leadership as District Support Manager, building partnerships with local governments and driving transformative community-led interventions.

My connection to Ireland deepened in 2016, when I returned as a dual IFP beneficiary to pursue a PhD—first at Dundalk Institute of Technology and later at Dublin City University. My research focused on women, water management, and health. That academic journey sharpened my vision for people-centered development, especially for women and girls who often carry the heaviest burdens in accessing basic services. Today, as Country Director for WaterAid Uganda, I lead a passionate team working to ensure water is not a privilege, but a right. I’ve had the honour of building systems that are inclusive, sustainable, and community-owned. *Water is life, and I’m committed to ensuring that no one is left behind.* The skills, networks, and confidence I gained through the Fellowship are central to this mission.

I’m also proud to be part of the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA)—a vibrant network of change-makers bound by shared values and transformative experiences. Through the UIAA, I’ve found a space to exchange ideas, celebrate progress, and stay grounded in the journey we started in Ireland. To new and future fellows: connect with this network. It’s a source of strength, knowledge, and opportunity.

My deepest gratitude goes to Irish Aid for investing in me—and in many others. The IFP was not just a scholarship; it was an invitation to lead boldly and serve with compassion. It helped me become the voice I am today—one that speaks for vulnerable women, for development grounded in dignity, and for a future that includes us all. By staying connected and engaged, we can leverage our collective expertise and experiences to drive positive m<sup>2</sup>

Values, mentorship crucial for success, says Dr Magala - Empower Her





## Ssanyu Rebecca (Fellow 2013–2014)

### President, Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA)

*“My experiences in Ireland—particularly of visiting prisons and studying correctional rehabilitation—opened my eyes to the possibilities of community transformation in Uganda.”*

My name is Ssanyu Rebecca, and I currently serve as President of the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA). I’m a social protection specialist with experience in policy development, research, and community-driven initiatives. But my journey as a leader and changemaker took on new depth during my time as a Fellow at University College Cork, where I pursued a Master’s in Social Policy from 2013 to 2014.

That experience in Ireland exposed me to transformative models of rehabilitation and community reintegration—particularly during field visits to prisons. I returned home determined to apply those lessons. Together with like-minded colleagues, I co-founded the Parchem Havens Foundation, an initiative supporting ex-prisoners and at-risk youth to reintegrate meaningfully into their communities. We work to shift stigma, restore dignity, and strengthen social inclusion. This is deeply personal work—and it began with the new lens that the Fellowship offered me.

Professionally, I’ve worked across sectors—from research and programming roles to leadership positions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I supported the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development as an ageing and disability advisor on the national social protection programme. More recently, I’ve embraced farming—raising goats, dairy cattle, and growing bananas—while continuing consultancy work in social policy. This blend of hands-on community engagement and national advocacy grounds me in the realities of Ugandans’ lives.

As President of the UIAA, my mission is to unite and mobilize our vibrant network of alumni to drive meaningful change. I’m passionate about creating space for knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and sectoral engagement. Whether in public health, education, or social protection, our shared experiences in Ireland connect us—and our collective expertise positions us as powerful agents of transformation. I’ve seen the impact alumni can make when we support one another and act intentionally.

I’m especially proud to have led the UIAA’s inaugural Tracer Study—a milestone in documenting the influence of the Ireland Fellows Programme and understanding how fellows are shaping communities. It’s not just a report; it’s a roadmap for deeper engagement and sustained impact.

I’m deeply grateful to the Irish Embassy for its unwavering support—not only of my own journey, but for its commitment to building and nurturing our alumni network. Through events like St. Patrick’s Day and beyond, we’ve grown as a community. I look forward to continuing this work—driving change, cultivating solidarity, and bringing the IFP legacy to life in every district and sector we serve.



## Timothy Teko (Fellow 2015–2018)

### Acting District Health Officer, Napak District, Karamoja Region

*“One key lesson I have learned is that humility and empathy in leadership—listening to the needs of our communities, learning, and adapting—are essential to creating meaningful impact”*



My name is Timothy Teko, and I currently serve as Acting District Health Officer for Napak District, located in Uganda’s Karamoja Region. It’s a region with rich culture and resilience—but also profound public health challenges. My role involves coordinating healthcare services across 18 health centers and 14 sub-counties, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and our development stakeholders.

In 2015, I received the Ireland Fellows Programme award through the Embassy of Ireland, which enabled me to pursue a Master’s in Public Health at Makerere University. That opportunity shaped the trajectory of my professional life. Since then, I’ve grown steadily in public health leadership—from Environmental Health Officer to Senior Officer, then Assistant DHO, and now Acting DHO. The analytical, research, and management skills gained through the fellowship have equipped me to lead with strategy and compassion.

Working in Karamoja, I’ve seen firsthand the barriers people face—especially mothers and children—in accessing quality healthcare.

With support from Irish Aid, we’ve achieved meaningful milestones: reducing teenage pregnancy rates from 26% to 12%, enhancing maternal delivery services, and receiving recognition from Arise for our results. The Embassy’s investment in infrastructure, including a blood bank and neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Matanyi Hospital, has been transformative for our district.

We’ve also tackled disease outbreaks with urgency and coordination. During a severe Jigger infestation across three sub-counties, we reduced prevalence from 27% to 6.7% through health promotion campaigns. But impact isn’t just in numbers—it’s about people. To ensure no one is left behind,

we’ve adopted community-led outreach, working closely with local leaders to raise awareness and connect the most vulnerable to life-saving services.

I’ve also introduced systems for better stakeholder alignment—allowing us to avoid duplication and track progress toward district goals. These practices are a reflection of what I learned through the IFP: that good leadership is rooted in humility, active listening, and evidence-based collaboration.

I’m proud to be a member of the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA), a network grounded in service and solidarity. It’s a space for sharing lessons, building partnerships, and staying inspired. I believe in regular, meaningful engagements to sustain our community and scale our collective influence.





## Joan Lorak (Fellow 2007–2008) Team Leader, Majeste Training Associates

*“The Irish fellowship was a turning point, broadening my perspective and equipping me with valuable skills in business research, writing, leadership, and networking.”*

I’m Joan Lorak, and I lead Majeste Training Associates—a consultancy focused on equipping individuals, organizations, and SMEs with the tools to grow resilient businesses and unlock personal potential. With a background in accounting, and credentials from Makerere University and the ACCA in the UK, I always sought to blend technical expertise with purpose. But it was the Ireland Fellowship Programme (IFP) that truly transformed the way I saw my career—and my contribution to society.

Through the IFP, I earned a Master’s in Development Economics from Uganda Martyrs University in 2008. That experience was a defining pivot. I didn’t just gain academic knowledge—I gained confidence, vision, and the ability to think more innovatively about how business skills could foster social transformation. It strengthened my leadership, expanded my networks, and helped me reimagine what it means to grow people alongside enterprises.

Before the fellowship, I worked in accounting and grant management. Afterward, I moved into senior leadership, eventually establishing Majeste Training Associates. Our mission is to empower people and institutions to thrive. I’ve had the opportunity to train and mentor hundreds of entrepreneurs and youth-led SMEs—supporting personal growth, organizational excellence, and business sustainability. One of our proudest partnerships has been with the Private Sector Foundation Uganda, delivering skills training for women entrepreneurs in the Kampala Metropolitan Area.

Of course, entrepreneurship comes with challenges—especially when trying to serve vulnerable populations with limited access to opportunity. We’ve responded with a client-centric approach, continuously improving through feedback and creating tailored solutions that meet people where they are. That responsiveness has helped us stay relevant and impactful in a fast-evolving economy.

I’m also deeply proud of my involvement in the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA). As part of the founding team in 2013, I helped mobilize members and shape the early vision for what’s now a vibrant community of alumni committed to shared growth and national development. I believe the UIAA has great potential to foster mentorship across generations of fellows—transforming fellowship connections into real-world impact.

The IFP was more than a scholarship—it was a catalyst. It helped me develop the confidence, skills, and networks to lead boldly and serve effectively. I remain committed to building a Uganda where entrepreneurs flourish, women lead, and development is inclusive and sustainable. I Thank Irish Aid and the Embassy of Ireland in Uganda for giving me the education I needed most.



## Henry Tumwebaze (Fellow 2011–2012)

*Founder, Vashon Day and Boarding Nursery and Primary Schools; Founding President, UIAA*

*“For me, the true value of the IFP lies in the power of networking and maintaining lasting connections. It’s not just about opportunities—it’s about building relationships that inspire collaboration, growth, and impact.”*



I’m Henry Tumwebaze, a proud IFP Fellow and the founder of Vashon Day and Boarding Nursery and Primary Schools in Kampala. My journey as an education entrepreneur has always been driven by a passion to empower young minds with the skills and confidence to thrive. But it was the Ireland Fellowship Programme that truly transformed that passion into impactful action.

In 2011, I joined Trinity College Dublin for a Master’s in Global Health. The experience sharpened my communication, deepened my networks, and taught me the importance of building relationships rooted in mutual growth. When I returned to Uganda in 2012, I was determined to translate that knowledge into something meaningful.

Vashon Primary School was born in 2014, just two years after my return. Today, it serves over 1,000 children—many of whom come from underprivileged backgrounds—and creates more than 500 jobs annually. We focus on making high-quality education accessible, especially for those who cannot afford Kampala’s elite schools. We also sponsor bright, needy students who would otherwise be left behind.

The IFP taught me that connection can be catalytic. With support from friends in Vashon Island, Seattle, USA, and through local partnerships, we’ve built a school that is more than a learning institution—it’s a hub for community growth. These alliances didn’t happen by accident; they were made possible by the networking and leadership skills I gained in Ireland.

That same spirit of connection led me to co-found the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA) in 2013. As its first president, I helped bring together a community of professionals eager to give back. Fourteen years later, I’m proud to see the UIAA thriving and contributing through initiatives like the 2025 Tracer Study. It’s a tool not just for reflection, but for shaping alumni contributions with intention and purpose.

To the next generation of Ugandans, I say: take the leap. The IFP isn’t just a scholarship—it’s a gateway to global thinking, meaningful partnerships, and life-altering opportunities. Uganda needs bold minds willing to lead from the frontlines of education, health, business, and beyond. To the Embassy of Ireland, thank you. Your belief in our potential continues to echo in classrooms, boardrooms, and communities across this country.





## Dr. Rosemary Nakijoba (Fellow 2010–2012)

Associate Professor and Dean,  
Faculty of Social Sciences, Arts,  
and Humanities, Muteesa I  
Royal University.

*“Research is more than data—it's a catalyst for change. By focusing on Climate Justice, Disability Rights, and Sustainable Development, my work enhances climate-resilient, equitable, and inclusive societies.”*

I'm Dr. Rosemary Nakijoba, and my journey has been one of purpose, driven by a deep commitment to empowering vulnerable communities and advancing inclusive development. My career began in the NGO sector, where I worked as a social worker with Kitovu Mobile AIDS Organization during the early years of Uganda's HIV epidemic. We offered psychosocial support and helped pioneer the rollout of Antiretroviral Therapy, restoring hope to households devastated by what many then called “Slim Disease.”

It was during this period that the Catholic Church of Masaka Diocese recommended me for the Ireland Fellowship Programme. I was honored to pursue a Master's in Development Studies at the Kimmage Development Studies Centre in Dublin—a turning point that opened new pathways in my academic and professional life. The fellowship not only sharpened my research skills but also gave me a global lens through which to understand and respond to development challenges.

Upon my return, I joined Muteesa I Royal University as a lecturer and gradually rose to become Associate Professor and Dean. Through international collaborations rooted in my IFP experience, I went on to pursue a PhD and now serve as a Lucas-Lahri Virtual Visiting Fellow at the University of Leeds. My current research examines climate justice, gender, and natural resource management in post-war Northern Uganda—work that is grounded in the belief that research should generate not just insight, but action.

Beyond academia, I founded the Good Samaritan Women's Group in Kalungu District to promote financial literacy and smart agriculture. Through these initiatives, women have launched businesses, embraced savings, and strengthened their household resilience. I've also contributed to national dialogue through the State of Uganda's Population Reports, advocating for policy interventions that prioritize equity and sustainability.

As a member of the UIAA Executive, I'm committed to harnessing our alumni network to foster meaningful partnerships and evidence-driven change. Our fellowship has not only shaped us—it obliges us to give back. We must continue strengthening ties with the Embassy of Ireland and leveraging our collective expertise for broader national impact.

To the people of Ireland, I offer my heartfelt thanks. The opportunity you extended to me was more than a scholarship—it was a springboard into a life of impact. The work continues, and I remain grateful for the chance to do it.



## David Baxter Bakibinga (Fellow 2011–2012)

*Regional Officer, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP); Legal Executive, UIAA*

*“I think we should try to look at ourselves as one UIAA family—not as separate cohorts or universities—because pulling back into silos kills the spirit of the association.”*



I’m David Baxter Bakibinga, a Ugandan lawyer and advocate of the High Court, currently serving as a Regional Officer in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) for the Mubende region. My journey in law has been marked by service, collaboration, and an unwavering belief in justice as a vehicle for national transformation.

Before joining the Ireland Fellows Programme (IFP), I spent over a decade as a prosecutor. In 2011, I was honored to study International Criminal Law at the University of Galway. That year was pivotal—broadening my understanding of transnational justice and sharpening my legal reasoning. Upon returning to Uganda, I was promoted to Senior State Attorney and later joined the UN Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia as a visiting professional. I also had the privilege of working in The Bahamas as Assistant Director of Public Prosecutions and Head of the Criminal Division, helping establish an independent Office of the DPP.

Throughout my career, I’ve focused on advancing Uganda’s justice systems. I’ve contributed to national frameworks on witness protection and mutual legal assistance, both essential for combating organized and cross-border crime. I’ve also led community sensitization campaigns through radio and public barazas—because justice must be accessible, not abstract.

What drives me most is seeing justice empower communities, not just serve systems. And that belief is at the heart of my involvement with the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA). As a Legal Executive, I helped establish the association’s legal framework and have worked closely with our leadership to strengthen operations. Our members are professionals at the heart of government, civil society, and the private sector—we are a powerful collective when united.

But unity takes intention. I’ve observed how alumni sometimes retreat into university-based identities—“I went to Galway,” “I went to Cork”—but I believe this fragments our potential. The true strength of the UIAA lies in seeing ourselves as one family, committed to shared goals that rise above institutions.

The upcoming tracer study offers a valuable opportunity to reflect on our collective impact and realign our vision. I encourage every alumnus to remain engaged. Let’s use our skills, experiences, and networks to shape systems that serve people—because that’s the essence of the IFP legacy.

I’m deeply grateful to the Government and people of Ireland for supporting my academic and professional journey. The doors you opened continue to serve countless others in return.





**Pamela Kampire  
(Fellow 2009–2011)**

*Gender Equity &  
Social Inclusion  
Strategy Leader*

*“If you want to impact a woman's life, educate her and give her the best education. That's what the Irish people do for us.”*

I'm Pamela Kampire, a development practitioner and gender equity strategist with deep roots in Uganda's NGO sector. My career has been shaped by a commitment to improving the lives of women and marginalized communities. From an early age, I knew education was my path—and I've used it to help uplift others. Before the Ireland Fellowship Programme, I served with Hoima Caritas and later Self-Help Africa, coordinating gender and credit programs in rural Uganda. Working on Irish Aid's Food Security Programme in Karamoja, I led initiatives that empowered women-headed households to take charge of their lives through livelihood support and access to financial services. That experience deepened my resolve and, through a nomination by Self Help Africa, I earned a place in the Ireland Fellows Programme—joining Kimmage Development Studies Centre in Dublin for my second Master's in Development Studies.

Although I already held a Master's in Gender Studies from Makerere University, my time at Kimmage marked a clear shift in how I approached learning and leadership. The Irish education system challenged me to think critically and apply theory to real-world change. It sharpened my skills in adult education, facilitation, communication, and program design—tools that I still use to this day in consulting and training across Uganda.

Since then, I've completed my PhD in Development Studies and worked with global NGOs to design inclusive, community-led programs. I specialize in gender integration, feminist development policy, and disability-inclusive practices. At the core of my work is a belief that true development must center the voices and agency of women. I've seen firsthand how access to education for girls ripples into stronger families, healthier communities, and resilient economies.

As an IFP alumna, I'm proud to be part of a fellowship that prioritizes equity and transformation. But I also see room for growth within the UIAA. Some alumni have lost touch, or are navigating employment uncertainty—especially with the recent suspension of key donor projects. We need stronger structures to support one another, encourage innovation, and create new professional pathways for our members.

Still, I remain hopeful—and committed. I thank the Embassy of Ireland for their enduring investment in people like me, and for continuing to open doors through education. I am proof that when women are empowered, whole communities rise. And I'll keep working to make sure that vision becomes a reality for generations to come.



**Lady Justice Jane  
Frances Abodo (Fellow  
2015–2016)**

*Director of Public  
Prosecutions, Republic of  
Uganda.*

*“We are not just alumni. We’re  
changemakers in Policy, systems  
reform, governance”*



I’m Lady Jane Frances Abodo, and my journey from the plains of Karamoja to Uganda’s highest prosecutorial office has been shaped by resilience, determination, and the incredible support of many—including the Irish people. My early years were marked by hardship and limited access to quality education. I studied under sponsorship from Primary 1 through 7, then pieced together additional support to pursue secondary education. Through government sponsorship, I joined Makerere University to study law, where my passion for justice took root.

In 1999, I began my career in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP). Over 19 years, I moved steadily through the ranks, eventually heading the Anti-Corruption Department. I first applied for the Ireland Fellows Programme in 2011 and wasn’t selected—but I didn’t give up. I reapplied while leading Anti-Corruption in 2015 and was thrilled to be accepted. In 2015–2016, I earned my Master’s in Law from Trinity College Dublin, completing the program in nine months and graduating with a renewed sense of purpose.

Ireland changed me. It wasn’t just the academics—it was the experience of being part of a global community of thinkers, the value placed on inclusion, communication, and shared leadership. I returned home transformed. Even my colleagues noticed I was more energized, focused, and ready to pursue new opportunities. Soon after, I was appointed as a Judge. Within two years, I was recommended for the DPP post. The process moved quickly—and in April 2020, I officially assumed the role. This month marks five years of leading Uganda’s prosecutorial system, and I’m proud to contribute to strengthening the rule of law, good governance, and access to justice. “Growing up in Karamoja, Uganda, I never imagined that I would one day become the Director of Public Prosecutions. I’m grateful to the support from the Irish people.”

The Ireland Fellowship gave me more than a credential—it gave me a global mindset and the tools to lead with clarity and compassion. Today, as Uganda implements its National Development Plan under Vision 2040, I remain committed to ensuring our justice systems support inclusive, accountable progress for all. To aspiring fellows, I urge you to embrace opportunity with courage. Say yes to growth. Say yes to service. To the Embassy of Ireland and the people of Ireland—thank you. Your investment in Karamoja, and in me, has reshaped the path for many. I am living proof of what’s possible.





**“In partnership with MOD Public Health Foundation—founded by IFP Fellows Samuel Waliggo—Dr. Katwire Ambrose honors a shared vision and partnership that advanced medical diagnostics and access to quality maternal health care services at Kyotera Medical Center, Rakai District.”**



**Samuel Waliggo Ssegawa,  
MPH (Fellow 2011–2012)**

**Founder & Executive  
Director, MOD Public  
Health Foundation**

*“The IFP helped me to think globally and act locally to champion Community-Led Health Solutions Across Uganda”*

My name is Samuel Waliggo Ssegawa, a public health specialist, nurse, and narrative therapy practitioner. I am a proud beneficiary of the Ireland Fellows Programme, through which I earned a Master’s degree in Public Health from University College Cork (UCC), Ireland, in 2011–2012.

For over 19 years, my journey has centered around frontline health work, senior management, and influencing policy, especially in the fight against HIV and AIDS and tracking the vulnerable who are left behind.

Returning from Ireland equipped with exposure, research acumen, proposal writing, and public health leadership skills, I resumed work at Kitovu Mobile AIDS Organization—where I had served for more than eight years. As a pioneer in community-based HIV care, Kitovu Mobile reached over 10,000 people on Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) through community outreaches. Upon my return, I spearheaded organizational systems strengthening and forged sustainable partnerships with both government and private health facilities.

I remember, Shortly after completing my studies, I presented an abstract from my Master’s thesis at the 2012 AIDS Conference in Melbourne, Australia. There, I became acutely aware of shifting donor priorities and the dwindling support for traditional community-based HIV models like ours. Around the same time, a task-shifting study we conducted with Population Council confirmed the high cost of antiretroviral therapy (ART) delivery in civil society organizations such as TASO, Kitovu Mobile, and Uganda Cares. These findings validated our need to transition patients from home-based care to government facilities—a shift I led hand-in-hand with my dedicated team. With my strengthened leadership skills, I quickly mobilized boards and senior management, collaborated with the Catholic Diocese of Masaka and the Ministry of Health, and facilitated the successful transfer of all patients on ART from 111 community outreaches to government and church supported facilities ensuring sustained HIV care. This was a paradigm shift, and I saw the power of networking with local communities to ensure strong client linkage and retention in care—a skill I gained from my IFP fellowship.”



That pivotal moment pushed me to establish two organizations: Men of Destiny (MOD) Public Health Consultants and MOD Public Health Foundation. Both entities now drive public health outcomes across the Greater Masaka Region. For instance, In partnership with institutions like Mildmay Uganda, Rakai Health Sciences Program, and the Infectious Diseases Institute, Makerere University, we have implemented nationwide initiatives—such as the PEPFAR-DREAMS programme—reaching over 50,000 adolescent girls, young women, and key populations with HIV prevention and behavior change interventions in Masaka and Mubende regions. This work has safeguarded thousands from HIV and gender-based violence, enhanced access to treatment, and expanded uptake of services like voluntary medical male circumcision—we’ve provided over 20,000 procedures as part of combination prevention.

Driven by the power of communities, I’ve supported the formation of local networks—from Village Health Teams to Male Champions and Girl Empowerment Forums—to amplify demand for quality services. The fellowship also sharpened my skills in partnership building, enabling collaborations like the one with Kyotera Medical Centre and Dr. Katwire Ambroze. Together, we’ve advanced healthcare delivery in Rakai District, including the establishment of a modern maternity center and theatre funded by the Embassy of Japan, and the acquisition of a digital X-ray system through collaboration with Philips. We have also expanded access to clean water and implemented climate-smart action plans in collaboration with over 250 households across our catchment area.

The IFP was a turning point in my research career. I’m honored to have contributed to this tracer study as a lead Consultant, offering insights and recommendations to strengthen alumni engagement and UIAA’s impact. *“Being part of the alumni network has been a gateway to meaningful connections that continue to shape my journey.”* “Simply identifying as a “Fellow” opens doors to connection and collaboration—something I came to truly appreciate while working on this assignment and engaging with alumni across various development sectors.

I encourage all alumni to actively engage. The value of being part of this larger network cannot be overstated—from career advancement to deep partnerships and community transformation. I extend my deepest gratitude to Irish Aid, ICOS, and the Embassy of Ireland–Kampala. Thank you for your unwavering support. I hope this study will serve as a valuable guide for strengthening our future alumni engagement and collective growth. Lastly, I call upon the Uganda Irish Alumni Association (UIAA) to work closely with the Embassy of Ireland to catalyse meaningful engagement and support alumni initiatives globally. These fellowships empower remarkable individuals with the potential to drive lasting change—both in their communities and on the world stage. *As we return from our studies, let us link arms, shape policies, and transform our communities—together.* Thank you”

<sup>18</sup> Vu. L. et al. (2016). Annual cost of antiretroviral therapy among three service delivery models in Uganda. *JIAS-Journal of the International AIDS Society*, 19((Suppl 4):20840). doi: <https://doi.org/10.7448/IAS.19.5.20840>

<sup>19</sup> Kalibala Sam, Jerry Okal, Lung Vu, Samuel Waliggo, 2016. "Retrospective review of task-shifting community-based programs supporting ARV treatment and retention in Uganda," HIV Core Final Report. Washington, DC: USAID | Project Search: HIV Core: [https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments\\_sbsr-hiv/186/](https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-hiv/186/)



## *Annex 1: Tracer Study Data Collection Tools*



IFP003-Focus group  
Discussions (FGDs)



IFP001-Tracer Study  
Semi Structured Ques



20250428 Key Informant  
Interview



20250422 Interview  
Guide Tracer\_study fo



1-IFP003 Focus Group  
Discussions



Irish Fellows Program  
Documentary



# THANK YOU!



## Our Website

 [www.uiaanetwork.org](http://www.uiaanetwork.org)

## Our Address

 Kampala Uganda

