



mastercard  
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Scholars Program



The  
Imprint of  
Education



Progress and Pitfalls

23 to 29 July, 2023

Diamonds Leisure Beach & Golf Resort  
Diani Beach, Kenya

# NETWORKS FOR WELLBEING: SELF-CARE WHILE CHANGING THE WORLD

Angelina Wilson Fadiji and Emma Arogundade



# THE KEY ISSUES

Economic disadvantage, personal and structural challenges

Minimal social safety nets

Racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination

COVID-19 related challenges

First Generation university students

# WHAT DO ALUMNI NEED FOR WELLBEING?



## Material

- Shelter
- Money
- Food
- Transport
- School fees



## Psycho-social

- Emotional support
- Mentorship
- Job opportunities
- Advice
- Professional help
- Academic support

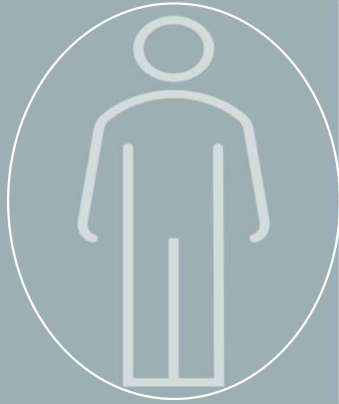


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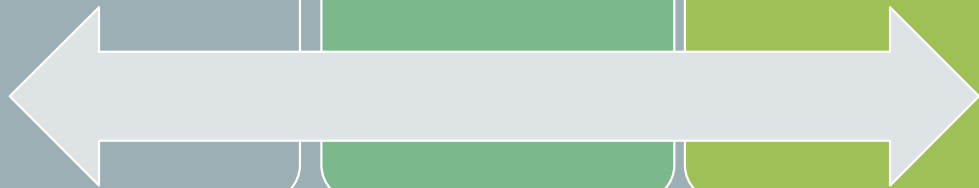
Doing it myself



Family,  
Friends and  
Alumni  
Cohorts



Schools,  
Churches  
Universities  
and The  
Mastercard  
Foundation



**WHERE DO  
ALUMNI GO  
FOR SUPPORT?**



# DOING IT MYSELF



Draw on  
inner  
resources

Exercise

Faith

Distraction

Professional  
services



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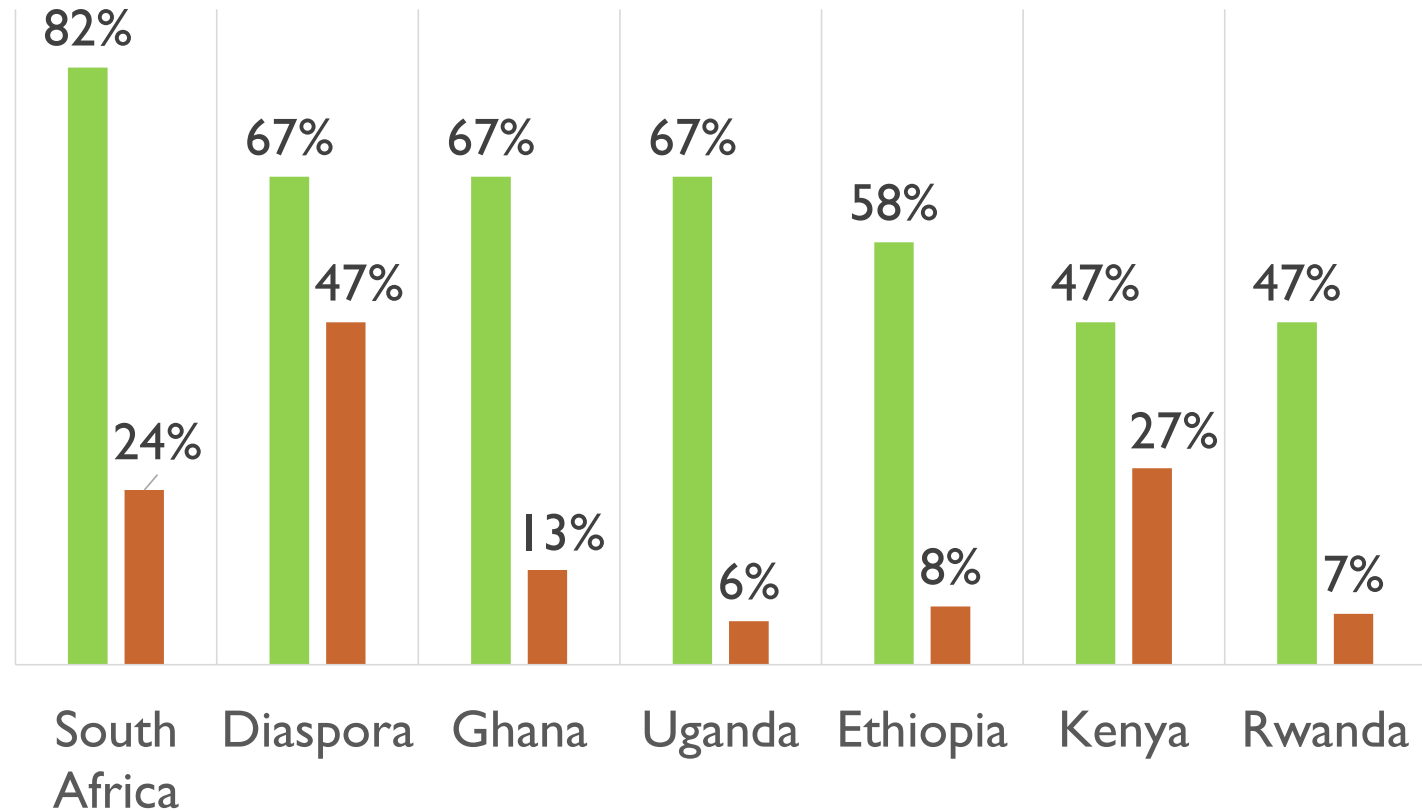
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# PROFESSIONAL HELP SEEKING IS LOW

More Alumni in the  
Diaspora seek help

Biggest gaps in  
Ethiopia and Uganda



- Have you ever struggled with mental health?
- Did you seek professional help?

# MALES ARE LESS LIKELY TO ADMIT TO MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES AND SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP



**37%** mention mental health challenges

**12%** seek professional help



**20%** mention mental health challenges

**6%** seek professional help

## LACK OF AWARENESS AND LACK OF ACCESSIBLE CARE BOTH HELP SEEKING BARRIERS

“The **first time** I heard about **mental health** was in **Canada**. I didn't even know what mental health was”

(Joseph/DiasporaGC\_2019\_M27\_2021\_III)

“I **reached out** to some people...cause they were offering those services due to the...stress that haunted people during the Covid situation...but unfortunately... **nobody got back to me**”

(Judith/Uganda\_2018\_F27\_ParII\_2021\_III)



# FAMILY ARE THE FIRST SUPPORT

“I guess the **first** support structure is my **family**...and they have always been supportive through progress. ...That includes that includes **financially, psychologically** and the day-to-day encouragements”

(Habtamu/Ethiopia[USA]\_2019\_M26\_2020\_III)



# FAMILY CAN BE COMPLICATED

Relationship  
Challenges



Financial  
Burdens



# NETWORKS ARE IMPORTANT

**Networks and connections** rated **highest** after education and money as the thing that will improve your life

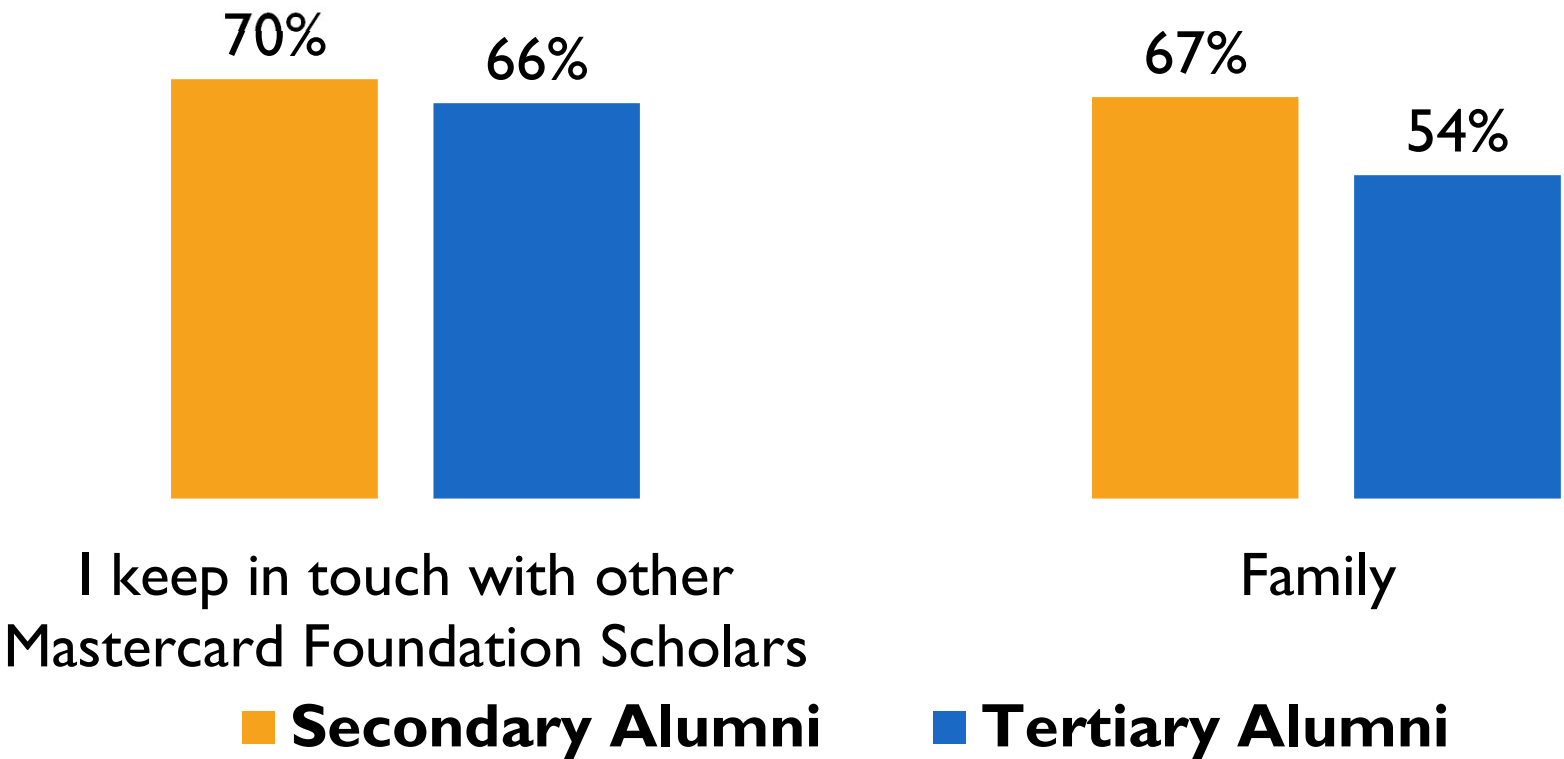
**41%** Tertiary Alumni

**23%** Secondary Alumni




# OTHER SCHOLARS ALUMNI USED FOR SUPPORT A BIT MORE THAN FAMILY

Which networks Alumni use for support



# ALUMNI HELP WITH PRACTICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT



“After school I had opportunity to **stay with an alumnus**. She offered me a place...she was supportive in **applying for jobs**, getting **training** as well... [when] life is ... challenging, you can call on them and **they will help**”

(Catherine/Ghana\_2018\_F28\_2020\_III)





# SUPPORTIVE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS WITH EDUCATORS ARE VITAL

Academic Support

Encouragement

Opportunities

Monitoring grades

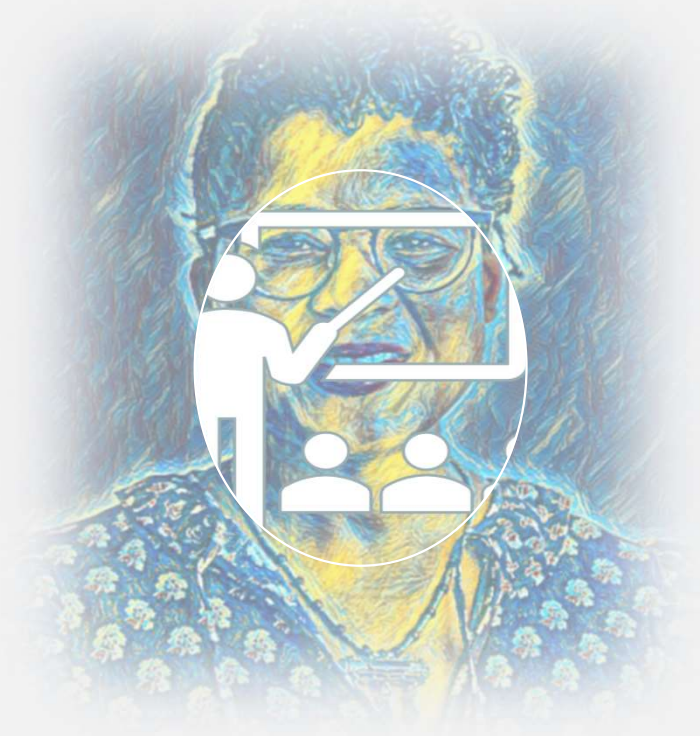
Inspiration



# PROFESSORS PROVIDE MOTIVATION AND OPPORTUNITIES

“The professor...she also helped me a lot, **because she was a woman**, she always talked to me about how women are being suppressed there...so she always advised me to **move forward irrespective of the challenges** I am going through...she **pushed me** to do the application and I got it and now I am here”

(Gladys/GhanaR\_2018\_F27\_2020\_III)



# FAITH BASED INSTITUTIONS ARE A SECOND FAMILY

Comfort  
and  
Security

Spiritual  
and  
Emotional

Practical  
Support

Online and  
In Person



# CHURCH SUPPORTS PRACTICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY

“In Toronto I actually have **friends from my church**...The **older people** - they are who I take as **uncles and aunties** - sometimes they cook for you to eat and they will **advise you on what to do** in Canada... They kind **of ease the pressure** and the tension on me, because moving from Africa to a new city, there’s so many things you have to get used to”

(Joseph/DiasporaGC\_2019\_M26\_Par9\_2020\_III)



# ALUMNI SAY THEY ARE SATISFIED WITH THE MASTERCARD FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

**96%**

Alumni are satisfied with their Mastercard Foundation Scholarship

**34%**

Secondary Alumni say the Mastercard Foundation Scholarship is responsible for their future success





# SCHOLARSHIP OFFERS COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT



stipends



medical aid



wellness  
programmes



counselling



peer  
support



academic  
support



career and personal  
development planning



# COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT

“It was **smooth** for me. Mastercard made it possible. The **accommodation** is available for you...thinking about what to **eat**, or my **school fees**...it was out of the picture. I just have to study...We **didn't have to worry** much about home and all of that, we had everything. When it's winter they give us winter stuff, if you have any issue you can just go straight to a **psychologist** ... Back home I didn't have a **psychologist**”

(Felix/South Africa\_M34\_2020\_III)



# NORMALISING MENTAL HEALTHCARE SEEKING IS AN IMPORTANT INTERVENTION THAT MASTERCARD FOUNDATION CAN MAKE

“This is very recent ...organizations that I've had the chance to interact with ... they **encourage talking about mental health**. They **also provide resources** for people to take advantage of... recently people are very comfortable saying there's **no shame** in admitting that you need help...A lot more people feel comfortable and the mainstream media is also helping in a way in terms of **normalizing the conversation around Mental Health**”

(Bathsheba/Ethiopia [SA]\_2019\_F28\_2021\_III)

# PARTNERS ENCOURAGE AND ADDRESS DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Support settling into a new culture

Racism & sexual harassment training for staff and students

Occasional entitlement or dependency

Occasional fear of leaving the support of the program



# ALUMNI DIDN'T ALWAYS FIND THE SCHOLARS PROGRAM SERVICES TRUSTWORTHY

“I lost trust in them as a student. A student shared something at school about a relationship that didn't work out, and then it was communicated and used as an example in one of the sessions for old scholars ... when that happened, I couldn't really go ahead and disclose stuff like that”

(Rashad/Uganda\_2020\_M26\_2020\_III)





# THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SECONDARY AND TERTIARY ALUMNI IN THEIR USE AND VALUE OF SERVICES

## Secondary Alumni

**94%** participated most in Career Guidance

**21%** Appreciated mentorship most

## Tertiary Alumni

**90%** participated most in Networking Opportunities

**13%** appreciated Leadership training most

# MASTERCARD FOUNDATION OFFERS VALUED SUPPORT FOR TRANSITION TO WORK

“The **internship opportunities** they're giving, I think that's what **helped** me actually get a job”  
(Henry/GhanaKG\_M34\_2022\_III)

“I would say **Africa Careers Network** was the **biggest support** in terms of career transition”  
(Hellen/Uganda\_2019\_F27\_2022\_III)



# LEADERSHIP TRAINING IS AN APPRECIATED INPUT

## Secondary Alumni

Mentorship (21%)  
**Leadership training** (20%)  
Career guidance (18%)

## Tertiary Alumni

**Leadership training** (13%)  
Give-back activities (13%)  
Being part of a community of scholars (13%)



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# PERSONAL NETWORKS ARE STILL THE MOST CRUCIAL WHEN LOOKING FOR WORK

Around **90%** still rely on personal networks (e.g. friends, relatives)

70% Secondary Alumni and 95% Tertiary Alumni use direct applications to employers

Africa Careers Network more valuable to Tertiary than Secondary Alumni



# WHAT MUST CHANGE



Encourage Scholars to take **responsibility** and necessary actions that will enable them benefit from **resources** around them.



Strengthen Alumni **networks**



Advocacy for strengthening access to **contextual mental healthcare** on the continent



Trusting and **caring** relationship with the Alumni in the higher education space



Mental health education and **normalizing seeking help**



# A TWEET TO SUMMARISE



Discover the role of family, social networks, and institutional backing. Unlock the value of the Scholars Program in fostering a network of support. #Scholarships #Wellbeing #SupportNetwork





## WHAT WE STILL WANT TO KNOW

1. What struck you about the presentation you have just heard on “Networks for wellbeing: Self-care while changing the world”?
2. What would a more Afrocentric mental health and wellbeing practice look like for students? What would make people want to use it?
3. In this study young men were less likely to disclose struggles, ask for help, or seek professional help. How could this be changed?
4. “Church” and “Prayer” came up a lot in this study as a coping mechanism. How do we use spirituality for good in student support? How do we sensitively alert people to the dangers of “praying it away”?