

Township youth get education support

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“In Khayelitsha this year we have a 90% pass rate, 38 out of our 42 students passed, and the other four have qualified for supplementary exams,” said Ikamva’s Western Cape director, Luyanda Kota.



The provisional 2008 national matric pass rate is now 62.5%. With a large number of students still awaiting their results, the final pass rate will be released later this month.

Ikamva Youth has grown over the last five years from their start in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, to include another programme in the Western Cape, in Langa, a programme in Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal, and a new programme launching in Gauteng’s Ebony Park and Ivory Park this year.

Each of the programmes tutor 120 students a year, ranging from Grade 10 to Grade 12.

What makes Ikamva’s pass rate an accomplishment is that they do not pick their pupils on merit, but on a first come, first serve basis; as a result they often take pupils whose marks are very low. “Registration day is chaotic,” says Kota. “Often we have to turn learners away, which we don’t want to do.”

Ikamva Youth was started in Khayelitsha in 2003. The NGO began when two young Human Sciences Research Council researchers - Joy Olivier and Makhosi Gogwana - decided over lunch to help struggling matriculants, particularly to help increase the pass rate of mathematics and science.

“It started as a hobby, they got friends to come help on a Saturday, and it grew until today,” says Kota.

In 2004 Kota was recruited to give Ikamva’s pupils lessons in computer literacy.

“In the last five years we have seen massive growth, way beyond expectations. This is due to the commitment and the passion of both the tutors and the students,” said Kota.

Up until this point the programme has relied on word-of-mouth for both advertising and recruitment. “This will be the first year that we start advertising,” said Kota, “We hope to recruit more volunteers from companies, who can offer something more to students.”

The programmes around the country play host to a number of tutors, 120 in Khayelitsha alone, with an average of 25 – 30 tutors helping out in each of the centres around the country on any given Saturday. The tutor pool is made up of high school graduates, university graduates and young

professionals, all playing to their particular strengths.

Besides academic tutoring the pupils are offered career guidance talks and practical coaching in other skills, such as photography lessons for those who wish to become photo-journalists. Ikamva seeks to educate their learners on the options available to them after matric, as few receive any substantial guidance at home or at school.

Those who pass matric with the option of attending a tertiary education facility are encouraged to do so, and given help in applying for courses and securing finance. The NGO helps some of its students with admission fees.

“We are constantly looking for more support, so that we can increase our student numbers and services,” said Kota.

“We now have a proven programme that works,” said Kota. “In 2007 it was the teachers’ strike, last year it was the new curriculum, but we managed to see our students through matric and onto greater things.”

For more information please visit: www.ikamvayouth.org