

IOB

# ALUMNI SURVEY REPORT IOB 2014



**Brokers for Development**

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## REPORT ALUMNI SURVEY IOB

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## I. SUMMARY

IOB has a unique student population, with a mix of professionals in all key sectors of development , from diverging disciplinary backgrounds and working all over the world. Hence, investing in sustaining relations between IOB and its alumni and amongst alumni themselves, is a win-win situation.

First of all, alumni are a valuable source of information for evaluating the relevance of IOB programmes for the students' professional challenges. Beyond the individual careers, networking among graduates in various professional settings in their countries of origin and beyond can contribute to building much-needed relationships among different sectors of the development arena (within the same country) and as such become 'brokers of development'. Moreover, alumni from different countries exchanging information, knowledge, and best practices are ways of stimulating much needed south-south cooperation among developing countries.

Finally, for IOB itself, having good relations with its alumni has added value in research (joint research projects, joint publications, knowledge of local situations and context, PhD students, research networks ...) and in education (promotion of IOB programmes, field work dissertation with help of contacts from former students, alumni as guest speaker for training programme, etc.).

Given the importance of facilitating alumni networks, IOB invests in its alumni relations. This survey is the second alumni survey organized by IOB (first one in 2010). It is designed to update and complement information on who IOB alumni are, what academic and professional paths they follow and most importantly what their preferences are in terms of alumni activities.

Since 2000 in total 1034 students enrolled at IOB, of whom 802 in IOB Master Programmes ( first enrollment) and 232 in short term training programmes. IOB alumni come from 92 different countries, among which Ethiopia, Cameroon, Belgium, Vietnam and Uganda appear to the top five nationalities among IOB alumni. The oldest IOB alumnus is 58 years old and the youngest is 24.

The educational path of IOB alumni shows that most alumni have a four year bachelor degree or master diploma before studying at IOB and the most popular studies are Economics, Social Science and Politics. Since their graduation from IOB, 43 percent pursued another study. Development studies, Economics, Business and related fields, Public policy/public administration, Law and Political science are among the favorites.

With regard to the appreciation of IOB education by the alumni, the survey shows very positive results. An overwhelming majority of the alumni (92 percent) are satisfied with their education at IOB, of which half of the alumni are actually very satisfied. 82 percent of alumni would definitely encourage someone to study at IOB.

Most IOB students find their way (back) to the labour market after graduating. The most important sectors are the government sector, international organisations and higher education and research, with most alumni working at mid-level or senior level. Studying at IOB has enabled most students to improve themselves jobwise and overall students were satisfied with the way in which IOB education had prepared themselves for their subsequent career. A number of skills and topics should however be taken up in the IOB curriculum to be fully comprehensive in the preparation for the professional field. Apart from the improvement for their own career, most students also felt they had been able to have contributed (up to a certain extent) to introducing innovative practices in the organization where they work based on what they learned at IOB. Even in the broader society, former students perceive themselves as being able to contribute on various levels, both project level, policy influencing and wider socio-economic level and scientifically.

Overall, we can conclude that the interest in almost all proposed alumni activities is very outspoken. Both learning and networking activities are appealing organized both as in- country (meeting IOB staff, a conference, a refresher course, social event, face-to face meetings with alumni) or as Antwerp based events. The top five of alumni activities (*very interested*) consist of meeting IOB staff and IOB alumni locally (networking activities), attending conferences both in Antwerp and locally and participating in refresher courses in Antwerp (learning activities).

Even though already quite some alumni facilities exist, focusing both on networking and learning activities (*e.g. IOB alumni seminars, social events, meet and greet sessions, ...*), several challenges still remain. IOB alumni policy will need to focus on even further increasing alumni input into alumni activities and expanding the offer of alumni services by providing -as indicated by the results of the survey- follow-up trainings or refresher courses.

## **II. SURVEY METHODOLOGY:**

To solicit information from the IOB alumni an online survey was organized. The survey was drawn up by a team of IOB staff and aimed to gather information in four domains: 1) biographical data 2) education profile 3) employment profile and 4) last but not least preferences in terms of future alumni services. This report will present some of the most interesting results of the survey. A database of the IOB alumni, starting from 2000 onwards, was constructed on the basis of the records kept at the IOB student secretariat. The alumni before 2000 were not included, as there were limited records with email addresses to contact. However, if alumni from before 2000 got word from the survey through other alumni or through the website they were given an access code to participate in the survey. The database contains 1034 IOB alumni, both former master students (first enrollment) as well as former students from IOB training programmes.

The survey was launched online on May 5<sup>th</sup> 2014 and was available in French and English. A number of reminders were sent to the alumni to fill in the questionnaire. Moreover an announcement on the website, in the alumni publication Exchange to Change and additional personal emails were sent to ask people to participate in the survey. In total 288 alumni filled in the questionnaire, of in total 1034 alumni resulting in a response rate of only 28 percent (of all alumni). However, given that 215 email addresses bounced, taking only into account those alumni that have received an invitation yields a response rate is 35 percent.

### III. SURVEY RESULTS

The results for the French and the English survey are taken together as they are both considered as the group of IOB alumni. Where relevant we will split up the results into the two groups. Additional distinctions are made between students of the master programmes and training programmes, as well as between students before and after the change in Master Programme curriculum (2006-07).

#### A. Who are the IOB alumni?

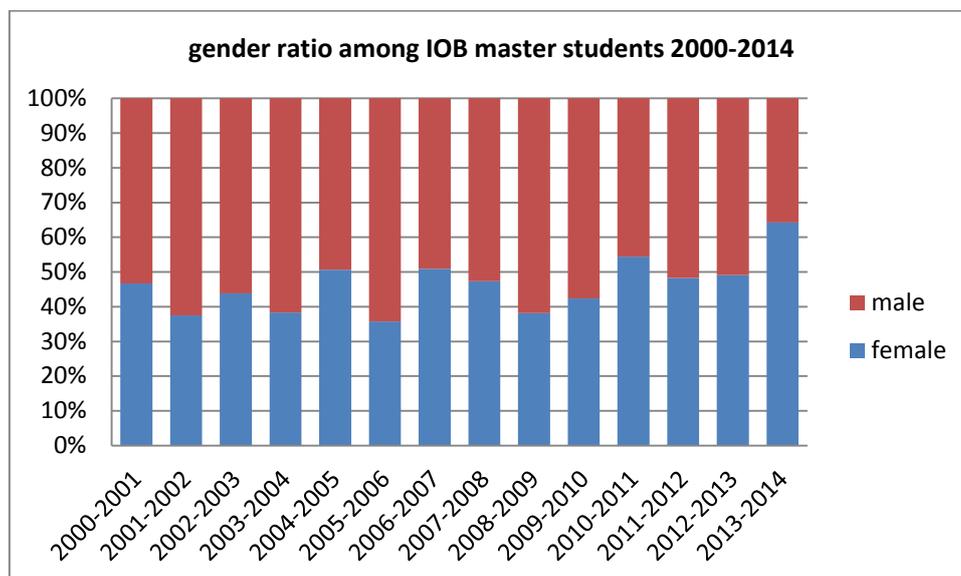
In this first section we will sketch a general picture of who the IOB alumni are. If available we present the data of the full students population (IOB student database), otherwise the results are based on the findings of the alumni survey.

Since 2000, 802 students have enrolled at IOB (first enrollment) as master students, while 232 students have participated in a short term training programme.

#### 1. Gender

47.5 percent of the survey respondents are women. Comparing this figure to the 46.8 percent for the entire female IOB alumni population (data from student records at the IOB secretariat), there does not seem to be a gender bias in the survey. The gender ratio of the IOB alumni correctly reflects the female/male equilibrium among students, hovering around fifty percent, to a large extent due to the VLIR-UOS requirements of having at least 50 percent female students among the scholarship awardees (Figure 1).

Figure 1: IOB alumni and gender distribution

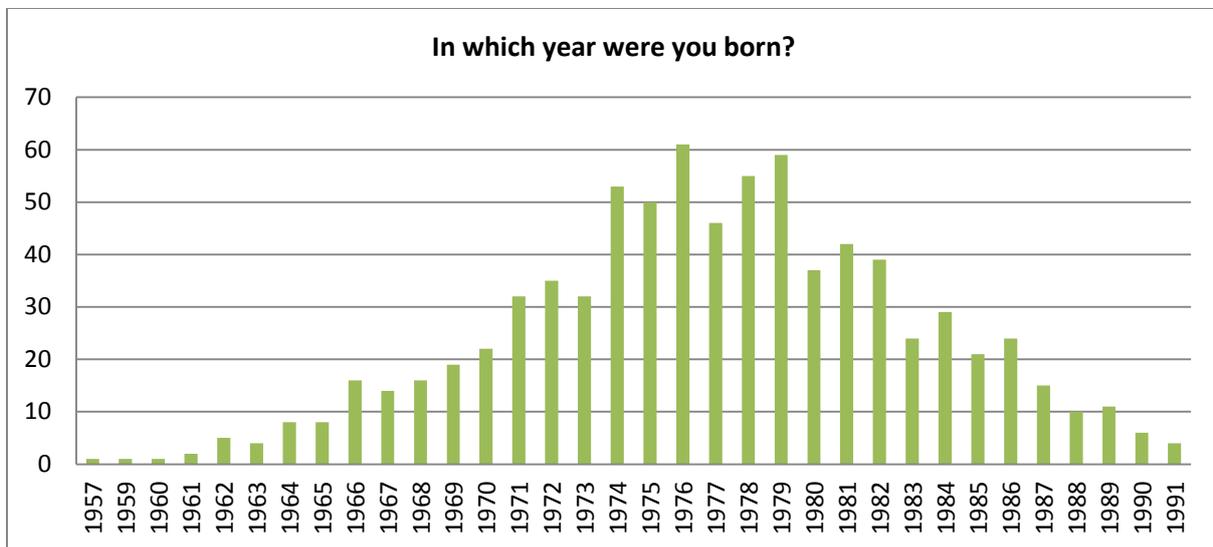


## 2. Age

The average age of the IOB master student at the start of the master programme is 30 years old (the youngest was 20 years, the oldest 47), and there has not been much evolution in the age of the IOB student over the years.

With regard to the current age of the IOB alumni, we find that the youngest alumnus is 24 years old, the oldest one is 58<sup>1</sup> (Figure 2). The median age of the IOB alumni is 39 (born in 1976). The average age of the alumnus/a that attended the IOB short term training programmes, tends to be somewhat older (42 years) which is consistent with the age limit for VLIR-UOS scholarships being higher (45 years) for participating in VLIR-UOS funded training programmes.

**Figure 2: Age of IOB alumni (only former master students included)**



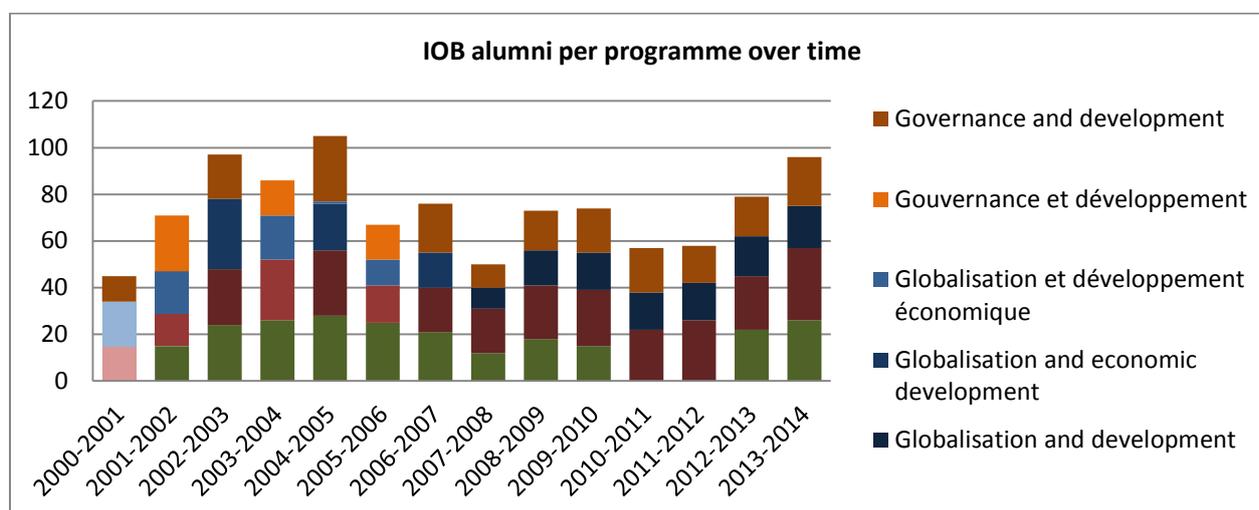
<sup>1</sup> Here too the sample has no significant age bias as the youngest alumnus in the survey was 25, the oldest 55 years old and an average age of 38 years. Moreover, the age composition of the training programme alumni also has similar traits.

### 3. IOB Programmes:

Graph 3 gives an overview of the programmes IOB Alumni attended at IOB. We find that about 78 percent of IOB alumni are former students from the master programs (respectively 32 percent DEM, 22 percent Globalisation and 24 percent Governance) while 22 percent are participants of IOB training programmes.

From 2000 until 2006, IOB master programmes were organized alternatingly in French (2001-02; 2003-04; 2005-06) and in English (2000-01; 2002-03; 2004-05). Since the academic year 2006-07, the master programmes are only organized in English, even though language facilities exist for French speaking or non-native English speakers. Moreover, IOB Master programmes have also been adapted to ongoing evolutions within the field, hence the different names of the programmes. In 2006-07, a curriculum change was introduced. Since then the names of the master programmes have remained the same, namely Master in Governance and Development, in Globalization and Development and in Development Evaluation and Management.

Figure 3: Distribution of IOB alumni according to IOB programmes

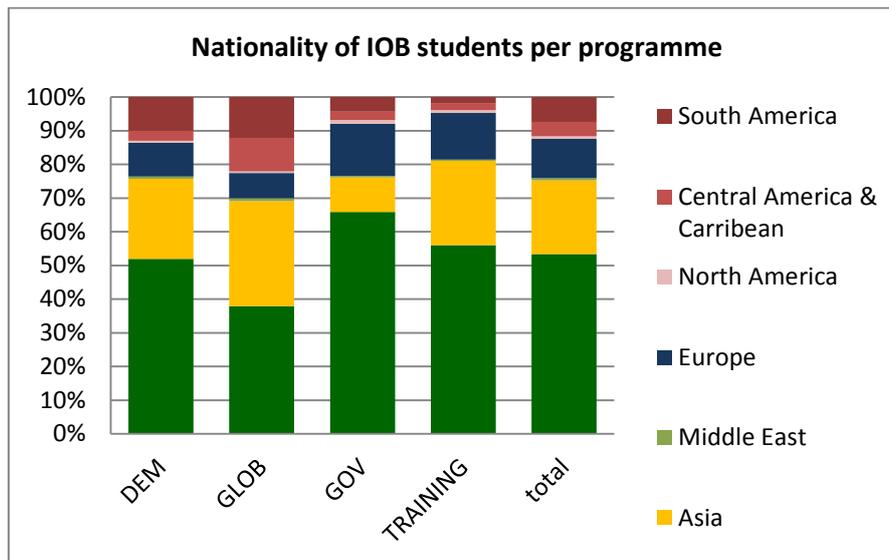


Additionally, over the years several different training programmes have been organized. Some of the training programmes were VLIR-UOS funded international training programmes, namely 'Engendering Development Policy, Projects and Organizations' (2002-2007), 'Governing for development: Evolving Opportunities and Challenges for Development Actors under the Paris Declaration (2004-2010)'; 'Management and Evaluation of Participatory Projects' (2003) and 'Political Economy of the Great Lakes Region: Towards inclusive development' (2009). Moreover, two editions of the Erasmus Intensive Programme 'The Politics and Economics of Aid' were organized by IOB (2013 & 2014).

## 4. Nationality

The results from the student database show that most IOB programmes have about half or more of the student population from Africa (Figure 4). Clearly, this is related to the requirement of the VLIR scholarship system to have at least half of the student population from sub-Saharan Africa. Nevertheless, important differences between the programmes can be observed, such as an important presence of Asia-based alumni from the Master programme of Globalisation and Development and a more substantive share of European residents alumni in the Master of Governance and Development.

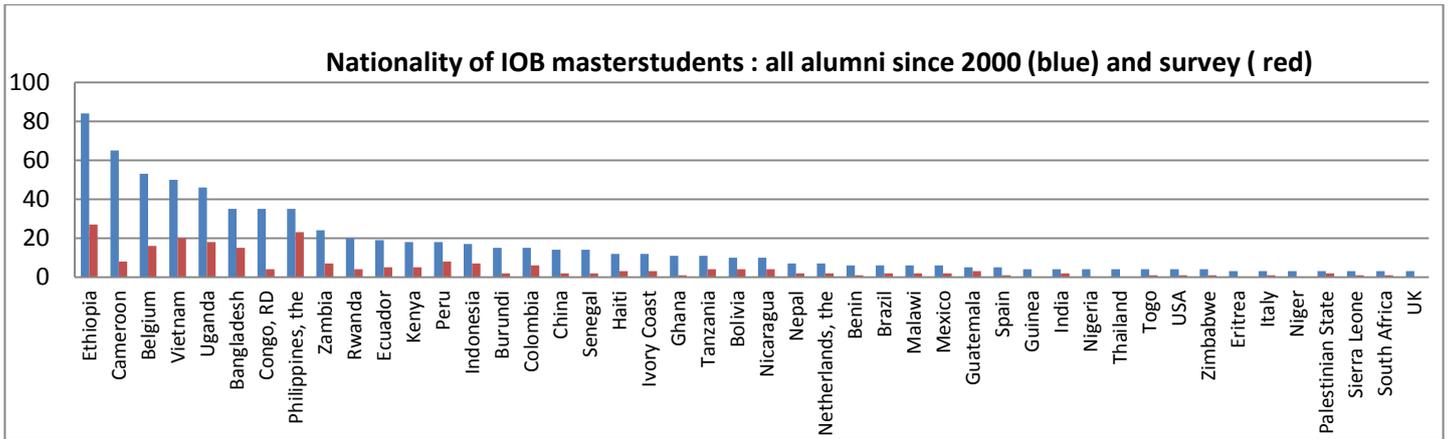
Figure 4: Origin of IOB alumni per continent, disaggregated per programme



Differentiating further between different nationalities (Figure 5) shows there is immense diversity in terms of the countries where IOB alumni come from. In total, IOB alumni (master students) originate from 92 different nationalities from all over the world (annex world map alumni IOB), of whom 56 nationalities participated in the alumni survey. This diversity is a much cherished characteristic of the IOB classroom, appreciated by both students, alumni and staff. Figure 5 only shows the nationalities of which at least two alumni studied at IOB. Another 30 nationalities, with only one alumni representative were not represented (World map in Annex).

The top five nationalities among IOB alumni are Ethiopia (84), Cameroun (65), Belgium (53), Vietnam (50) and Uganda (46). Given the differences in participation rates in the survey, the top five of the alumni survey looks slightly different, namely Ethiopia (27), The Philippines (23), Vietnam (20), Uganda (18) and Belgium (16). Ecuador is the first ranked Latin-American country in the full population ( 19 alumni) and Peru in the survey (8).

Figure 5: Nationalities among IOB alumni

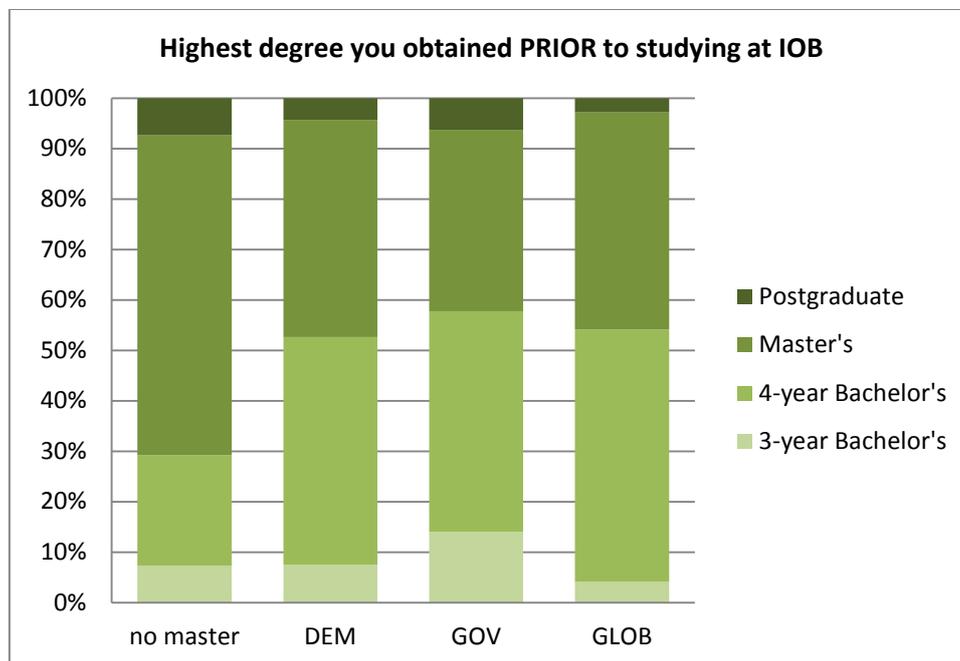


There are therefore important variations in response rate among different nationalities, which could lead to biased answers (Table of response rate in annex). With sixty-six percent (23/35) of alumni from the Philippines responding to the survey, the Filipino alumni are the most responsive group. These high response rates potentially indicate a high degree of ‘affinity’ to IOB. On the other hand, from the Congolese and Cameroonian alumni respectively only eleven and twelve percent responded to our survey. However, we must bear in mind that there probably also is a relation between the alumni’s nationality (some of the French speaking countries especially), the number of years ago that alumni have studied at IOB and the availability of up to date correct email addresses. Many of the former Cameroonian or Congolese students from IOB studied in French. Given the recent shift to English-only training programmes, this means there are relatively more alumni from before 2006 among these nationalities, which reduces the reliability of the email addresses available. This in turn may well have negatively affected the response rate. Nevertheless, in the interpretation of our results, we must bear in mind that some nationalities (e.g. the Philippines) are over represented, while others ( e.g. Congolese and Cameroonians) are underrepresented.

## 5. Education prior to IOB

With regard to the educational background of IOB alumni, the overall results show that about 8 percent of respondents have a three year Bachelor, some 43 percent a four year bachelor, 44 percent a Master's degree and 5 percent holds a postgraduate diploma before coming to IOB<sup>2</sup> (Figure 6). Applicants with a 3 year Bachelor degree no longer qualify for the Master programmes, hence the share of this category among IOB alumni declines over time. Comparing among the various programmes, we find similar distributions among the three master programmes, even though Governance has more 3 year Bachelor (14 percent) alumni among the survey respondents than Globalization (4 percent).

Figure 6: Highest degree prior to studying at IOB disaggregated into the various IOB programmes



Apart from knowing the highest degree the alumni obtained before coming to IOB, it is also useful to know what they studied before coming to Antwerp (Figure x.1 in Annex). Among the top five diplomas, we find Economics (35 percent), Social Science (15 percent), Political sciences (7 percent), International relations (6 percent) and Agriculture(6 percent).

<sup>2</sup> This distribution of diploma's prior to studying at IOB is roughly in line with the data on the full population of students ( only master programmes) where we find that 56 percent have a Bachelor degree, 39 percent a Master's degree and 4 percent Postgraduate or PhD. The difference is made up by a category of fraud cases (2 percent)

## B. Appreciation of IOB Education <sup>3</sup>

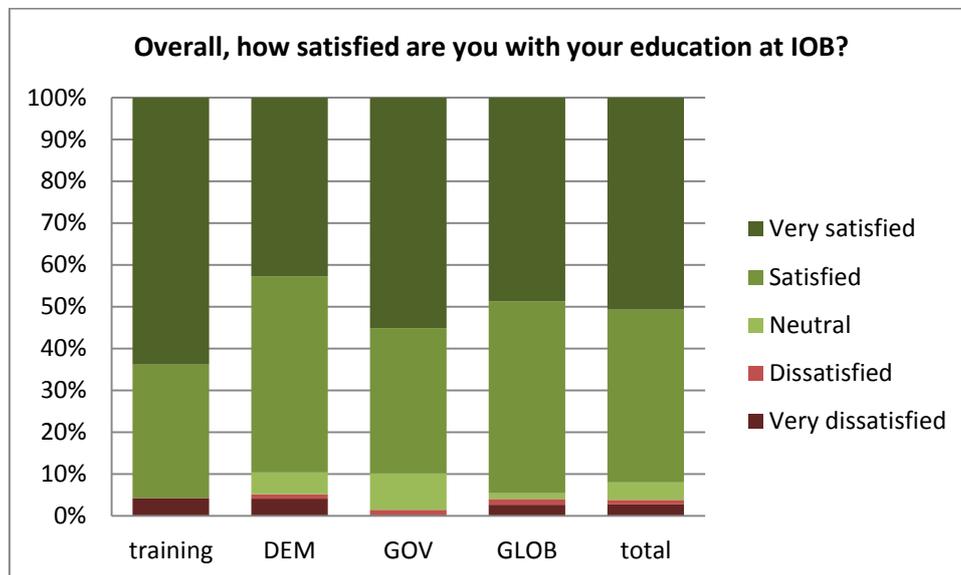
Alumni are a very valuable source of information for the evaluation of programmes offered at IOB. Alumni having completed the programmes a while ago, can reflect on the merits and shortcomings of IOB educational products with some distance and hindsight, drawing on their professional experience since. So, what do the alumni think of IOB education programmes?

### 1. Overall satisfaction

A first question asked how satisfied they were with their education at IOB (Figure 7). In a similar vein the alumni were also asked whether they would encourage someone else to study at IOB. Overall the results are very encouraging: An overwhelming majority of the IOB alumni (92 percent) are satisfied with their education at IOB, while 50 percent are even very satisfied. In total, only eight students (3 percent) are very dissatisfied. However, given that seven of those eight respondent definitely would recommend IOB we suspect there might be an error in the way they have answered. One alumna/us has consistently responded negatively.

Disaggregating, we find that training programme alumni are most satisfied (96 percent), followed by former Globalization students (95 percent) and DEM and Governance both having 90 percent of their former students being satisfied (*very satisfied + satisfied*) with their education. The graph shows the master programme 'Governance' to have most very satisfied students (55 percent), followed by Globalization (49 percent) and Dem alumni (43 percent).

Figure 7: Alumni satisfaction with IOB education

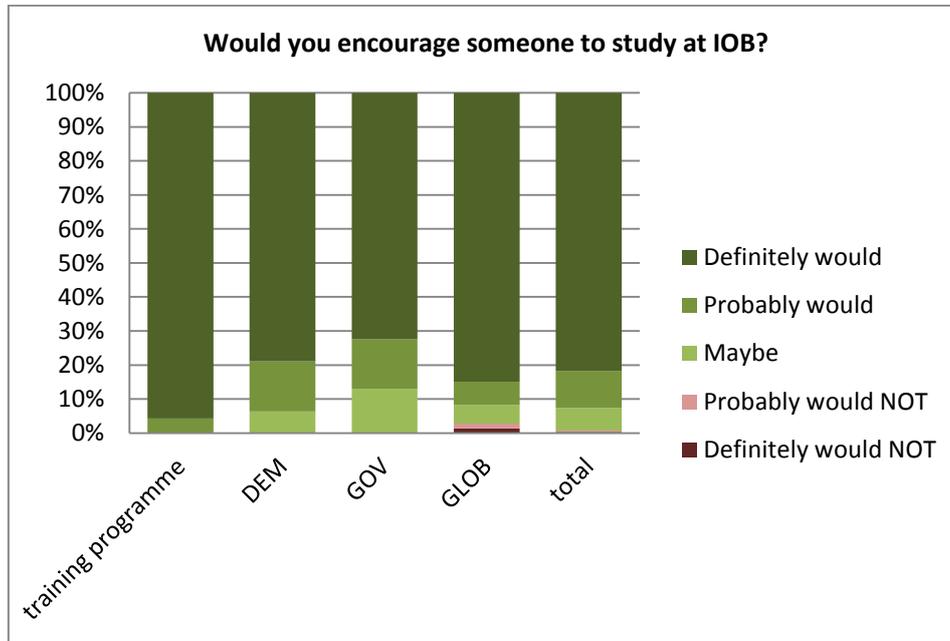


The results of the recommendation question are even more impressive (Figure 8). 82 percent of IOB alumni would definitely encourage others to study at IOB. Hardly any students are dissatisfied or

<sup>3</sup> From here onward all data are based on the 2014 survey rather than the full population of IOB alumni.

would not recommend IOB. Both measures of satisfaction are positively correlated to each other (Pearson correlation coeff= 0.475 p= 0.00). In interpreting these results, it must be taken into consideration that alumni who are very dissatisfied with their studies at IOB are less likely to have stayed in touch, and even if they did, to have answered the questionnaire. Therefore, this is probably a too rosy picture of the appreciation of the total population of alumni.

Figure 8: IOB alumni recommending IOB to someone



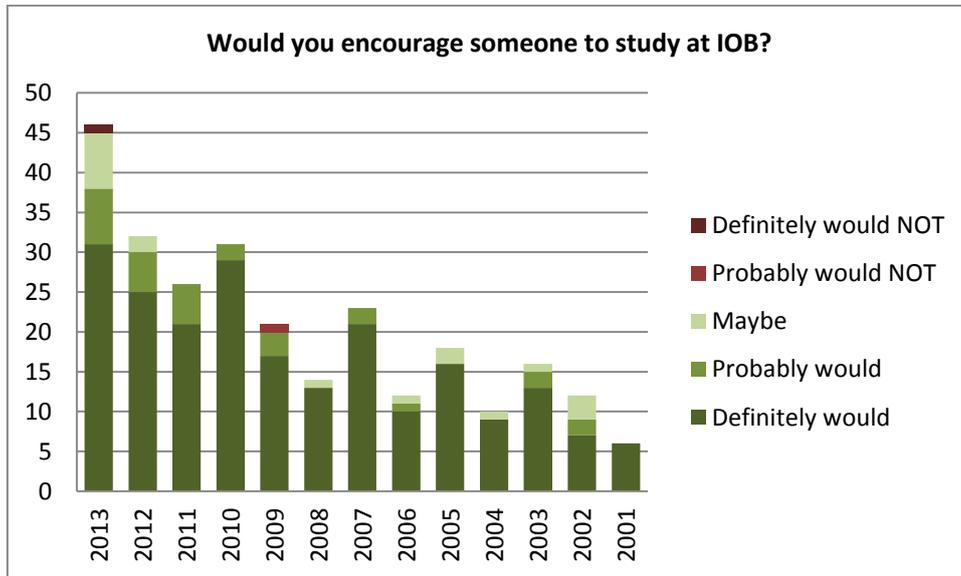
Disaggregating the appreciation of the alumni according to the different programmes shows that all programmes are in fact positively evaluated.

The training programmes participants are most enthusiastic about IOB, with 96 percent definitely recommending IOB. All three master programmes overall have similar positive results, with respectively 94 percent (DEM), 87 percent (GOV) and 92 percent (GLOB) definitely or probably recommending IOB. Globalization has the most outspoken positive responses (with 85 percent of alumni definitely would recommend IOB) while also two percent probably/ definitely would not recommend IOB. Governance on the other hand has fewer outspoken positive students, with 72 percent of students definitely recommending IOB. DEM students are somewhat in-between ( 79 percent definitely). Two former Globalization students would (definitely/ probably) not recommend IOB.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In comparison, alumni of the University of Antwerp are said to have high a 'recommendation score' of the University (68 percent), with the faculties scoring highest being TEW (74 percent) and Law (72) ( Ontwerpnota, een nieuwe strategische aanpak voor alumniwerking, UAntwerpen,2013). Compared to these scores, IOB alumni are very enthusiastic, even though this question measured recommending IOB, not the University of Antwerp

Moreover, the appreciation of IOB alumni for their education at IOB also seems to be relatively consistent over the different years. Figure 9 shows the approval rates of IOB alumni distinguishing between the different academic years they have studied. Since the curriculum change in 2006, at least ninety percent of alumni would (probably) recommend IOB, except for 2013 (87 %) and 2008 (86 %).

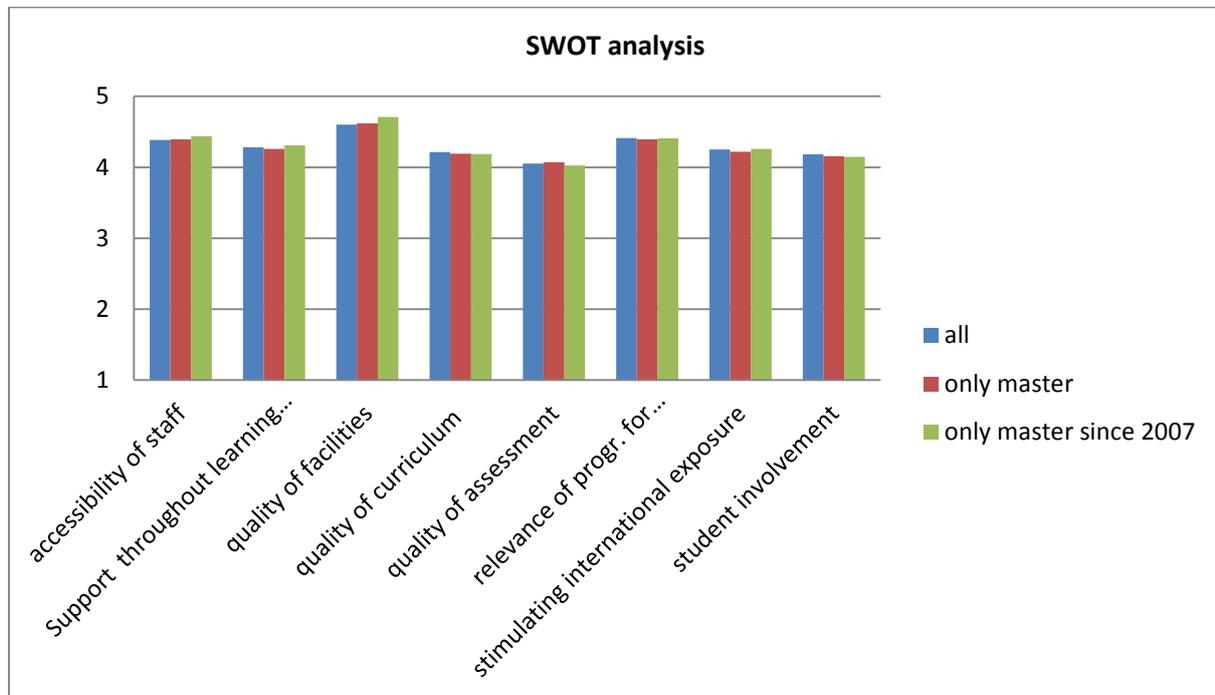
Figure 9: Satisfaction with IOB over time



## 2. SWOT analysis

Overall, alumni are satisfied with studying at IOB. The SWOT analysis (Figure 12) however further maps the strengths and weaknesses of IOB education according to our alumni. The chart shows that IOB alumni overall consider the quality of the facilities, the relevance of the programme and the accessibility of IOB staff to be the strengths of IOB (average score). However, none of the dimensions is rated under 4 on a five item scale, indicating that IOB scores very well on all items. The lowest score is on quality of assessment (4.05). Moreover, the scores for all IOB alumni survey (master and training programme) respondents or only those graduated from the new master programmes, do not differ much, meaning that IOB scores consistently strong on all these dimensions.

Figure 10: IOB SWOT analysis



## 3. Achievement of Learning outcomes

The SWOT analysis highlighted the relevance of the programme for development as one of IOB 's strengths. But what are IOB students expected to learn?

Figure 10 and 11 specify what students should learn and which skills they should acquire during their stay at IOB (i.e. learning outcomes) and whether alumni feel they have indeed acquired these skills and competences. Eight learning outcomes are in common for all three master programmes, while each master programme also has two specific learning outcomes. But do students also really learn

these skills? Alumni (only master students since curriculum change in 2007 are included) rate the acquirement of the competences on a five point scale with five being the most positive score .

**Figure 11: Joint learning outcomes of IOB master programmes**

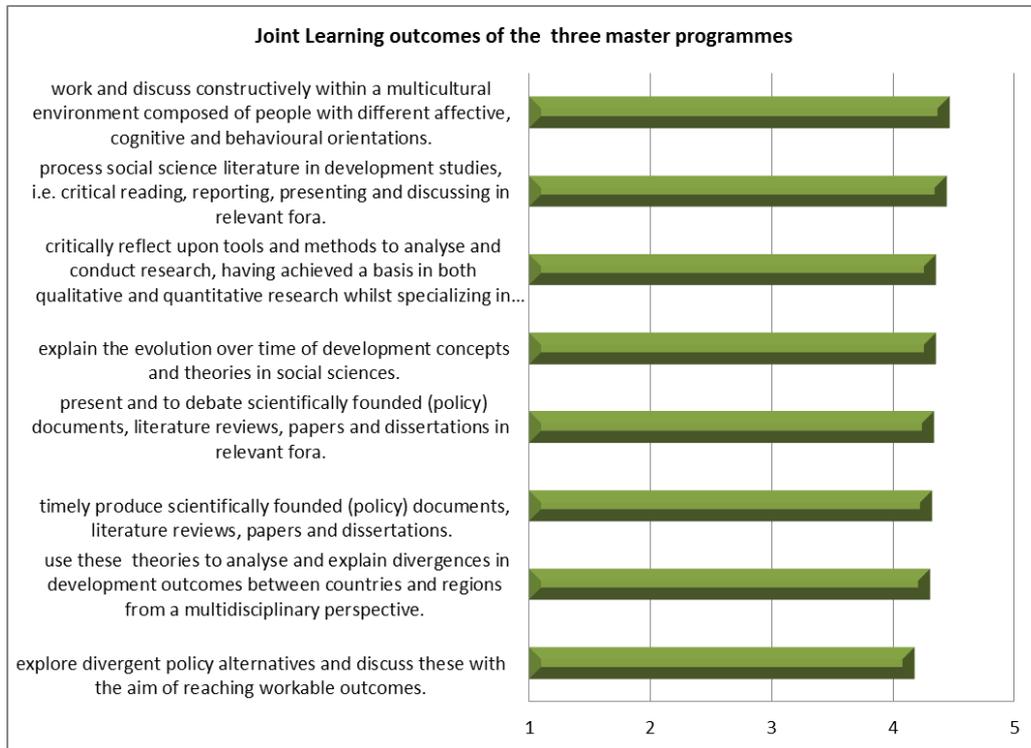
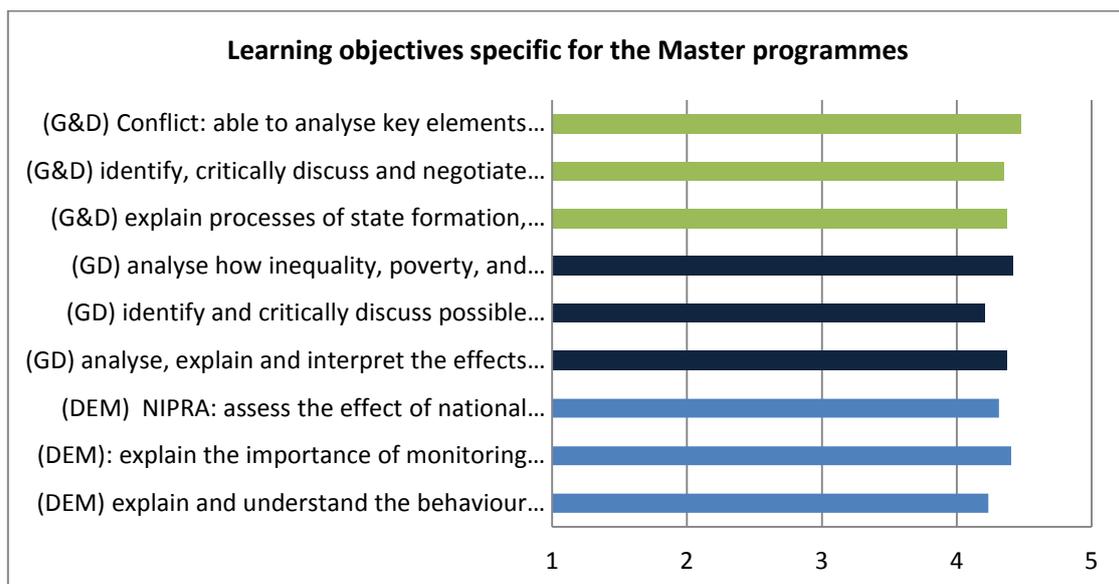


Figure 10 and 11 show that all learning outcomes are rated positively, between 4,18 and 4,48 on a five point scale. Among the joint learning outcomes, learning outcome 8 on the ability to work and discuss constructively within a multicultural environment scores the highest. For learning outcome 7 on the ability to explore and discuss policy alternatives there is the most room for improvement.

**Figure 12: Specific learning outcomes of three IOB master programmes**



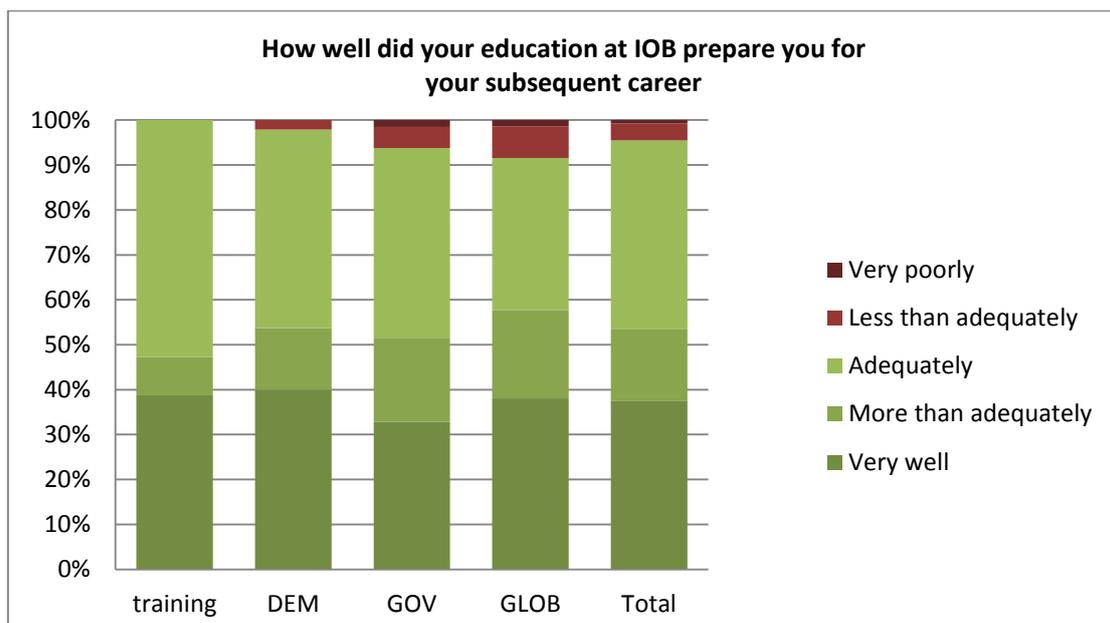
#### 4. Preparation for Professional Career

The appreciation of the learning objectives in the previous section showed that students indeed do learn what is specified in the programmes as learning objectives. Now the question becomes whether these skills and competencies are well suited to prepare alumni for their subsequent professional career?

The next two questions therefore probe into the quality of IOB education in relation to the alumnus/a's career. The first question measures how well IOB education prepared the alumnus/a for his/her subsequent career, whereas the second question maps out whether IOB alumni were able to improve themselves job wise as a results of the education received at IOB.

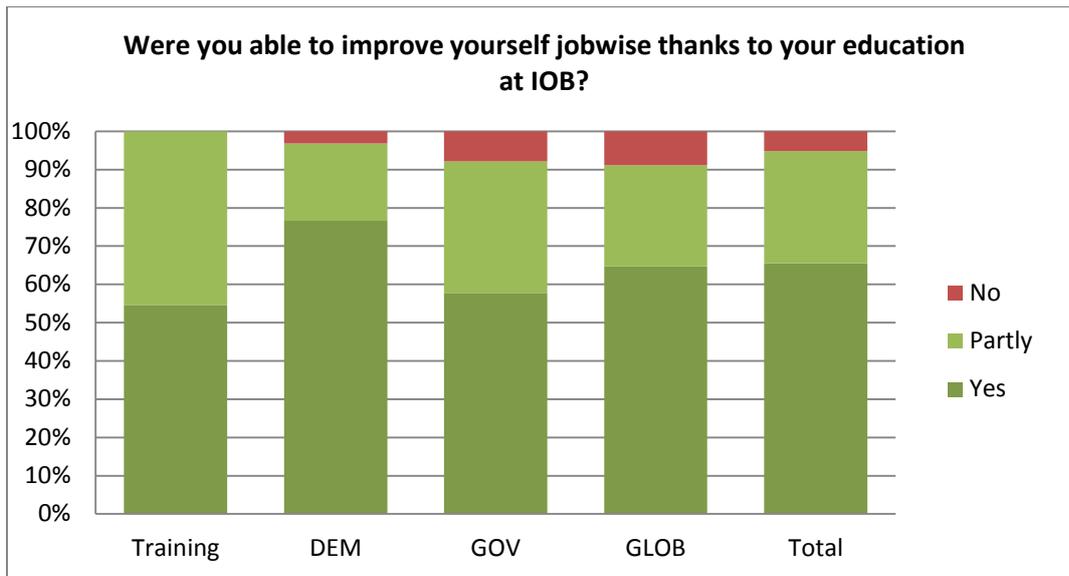
Some ninety-five percent of IOB alumni found that IOB education prepared them at least adequately for their subsequent career (Figure 13). Almost forty percent of them found themselves to be very well prepared after IOB education. Training programmes scored best in terms of preparing for subsequent careers, whereas among former master students, DEM alumni are most frequently stating to have been very well prepared and least often been poorly prepared.

Figure 13: IOB education as preparation for subsequent career



In a similar vein, 96 percent of alumni state that they were able to improve themselves at least partly job wise thanks to IOB education (Figure 14). Again, training programmes and DEM master programme seem to be best suited to improve alumni's careers. Both indicators (preparing for subsequent careers and improving jobwise) are positively correlated (Pearson correlation coefficient= 0.442 p = 0.00).

Figure 14: IOB education as a means to improve professional position



### C. After IOB ...

What happens after IOB? Most students return home ... or pursue further education or return to (or start) their professional career in another country.

#### 1. Country of Residence

The top five countries where alumni are currently living is slightly different top five most frequent nationalities (Figure 15a). The first place of country of current residence (only survey respondents!) is occupied by Belgium (27 alumni), indicating that probably some of the alumni stay on in Belgium after their study at IOB, followed by Ethiopia (23 alumni), the Philippines (22) Uganda (21). The difference between the distribution of the nationality and of the place of residence is partly determined by further studies and employment.

Figure 15a and 15b: Current country of residence of IOB alumni

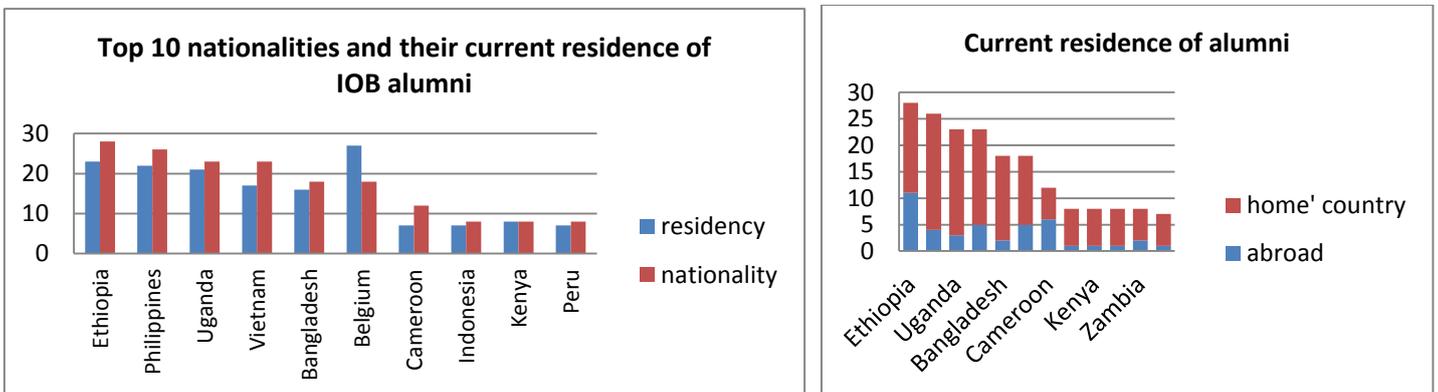


Figure 15 b shows whether alumni ( measured on the basis of the individual) are currently living in their 'home country' ( i.e. based on their nationality). There a sizeable differences between the ratio of alumni that is currently residing in their 'home' country, ranging from only 50 percent of the Cameroonian alumni, to Ethiopians (61 %), Vietnamese (78), Filipino's (85), Ugandans (87) and Bangladeshi (89 percent). Clearly, some alumni have been living in their new 'home country' for several years.

#### 2. Further Education

Since graduation at IOB, 43 percent of the alumni pursued another study. What did those alumni study? The highest education the alumni obtained after their graduation at IOB was a Master for almost half of the further studies, 22 percent was a shorter term course, about 10 percent a PhD and 17 percent of the further studies was labelled as an 'other' type of education. However, these figures

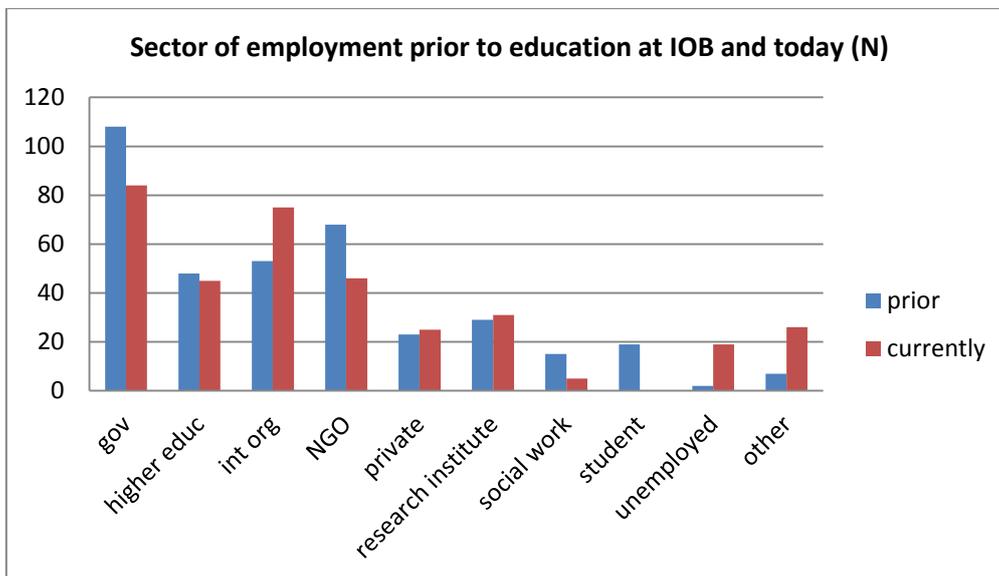
need to be interpreted with caution as multiple answers per alumni were provided and apparently<sup>5</sup> many alumni have misinterpreted the question by taking their master degree at IOB as an additional further study diploma, thereby inflating the number of additional master studies being pursued after graduation at IOB.

Content-wise the choices of the alumni once again do not hold many surprises: The most frequent choices of further education were in Development studies (29 alumni), Economics (16), Business and related fields (13), Public policy/public administration (16), Law (5) and Political science (5).

### 3. Employment Profile of IOB Alumni

After graduation (or upon completion of further studies), students return to (or start) their professional career. Let us first look at the sectors alumni work in. The graph below depicts the sector where alumni were working before their study at IOB and the sector where they are currently working in.

Figure 16: Sector of employment prior to and after education at IOB



From the graph it becomes clear that the most important sectors of employment for IOB alumni currently are government (24 percent), international organisations (21 percent), NGOs (13 percent) and higher education (13 percent). These sectors do not really come as a surprise. However, it is remarkable that the number of alumni working in the government sector, for NGOs actually slightly declines after having studied at IOB.

<sup>5</sup> The number of respondents indicating that they have pursued further studies (all types of studies: master, short training, ...) was lower than those indicating to have obtained a master diploma as a result of further studies.

The sectors that attract more alumni after their study are international organisations, research institutes and the category unemployed and ‘other’. The latter category encompasses alumni working as consultants, Phd students, for bilateral donor organisations as well as students or unemployed alumni. Moreover, the total number of sectors listed by the alumni declines from 372 (prior to IOB education) to 356 (current sectors of employment), indicating that probably less alumni combined several jobs (in different sectors) at a time.

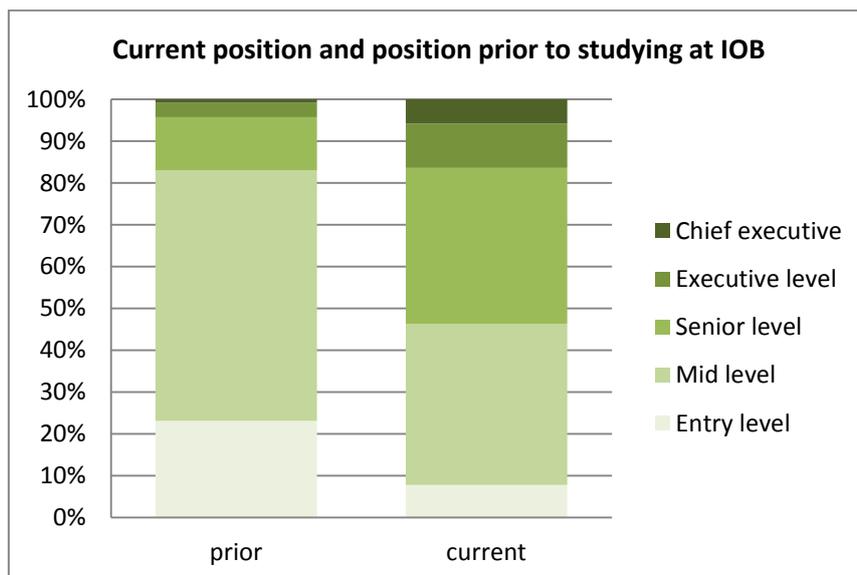
Roughly speaking, we could state that the main sectors of employment are government, international organisations, NGOs and higher education/research, but that after education at IOB some alumni tend to shift somewhat from the first three sectors towards international organisations, research institutes and other sectors.

What is somewhat alarming is that the unemployment rate is higher after studying at IOB than before. However, since one of the selection criteria is work experience there is a positive bias in the category before studying at IOB. Out of the 19 students that were unemployed at the time of the survey, 13 were living in Europe, 58% were female and at least 5 of them are currently working ( 4 PhD students and 1 in NGO).

Apart from the sector where the alumni work in, it is also interesting to know at which level the alumni work and whether they have been promoted after their studies.

Figure 17 below shows the position the alumni held before coming to study at IOB. Just over half of the alumni (55 percent) had a midlevel position when coming to IOB, with 21 percent having an entry and 12 percent a senior level position. After having studied at IOB, the current position of the alumni has shifted upwards. The number of senior level positions has tripled (37 percent) and both executive and chief executive level positions have also risen substantially (to respectively 10 and 6 percent).

**Figure 17: Current job position and position prior to studying at IOB**

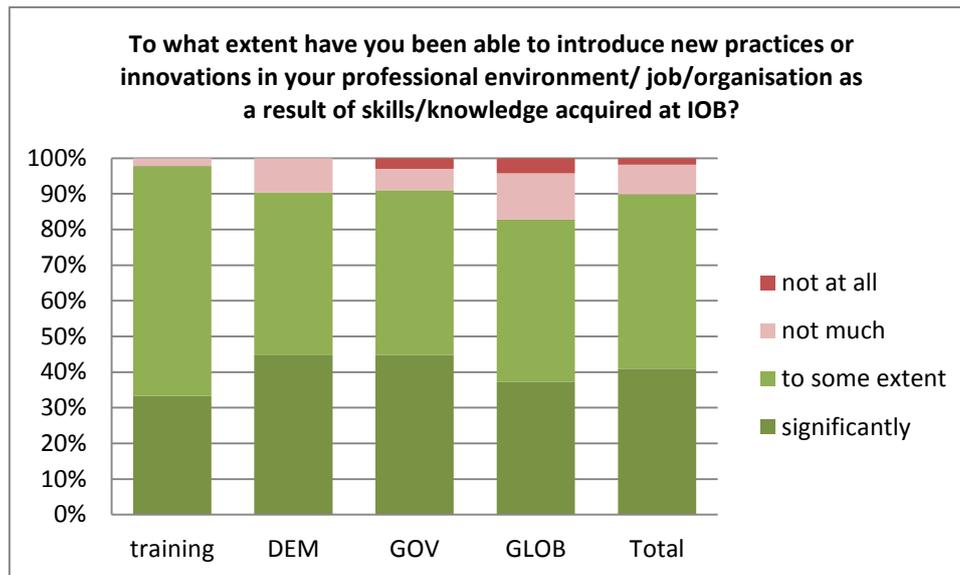


## 4. Impact on Development

Besides having a positive impact on their career, IOB aspires to capacitate its students so they can contribute to stimulating development in the broader society. Measuring the impact of studying at IOB on 'development' is not feasible, however we have asked our former students how they themselves perceive their contribution to both the organization where they work (organizational contribution) as well as the broader field/ thematic sector they aim to contribute to (societal contribution).

With regard to the organization they work in, 90% state (41 % significantly & 49 % to some extent) to have been able to introduce new practices or innovations in their professional environment as a result of skills/knowledge acquired at IOB (Figure 18). Unsurprisingly perhaps, short term training programmes more easily lead to the introduction of new practices or innovations ( though less significant changes) than master programmes.

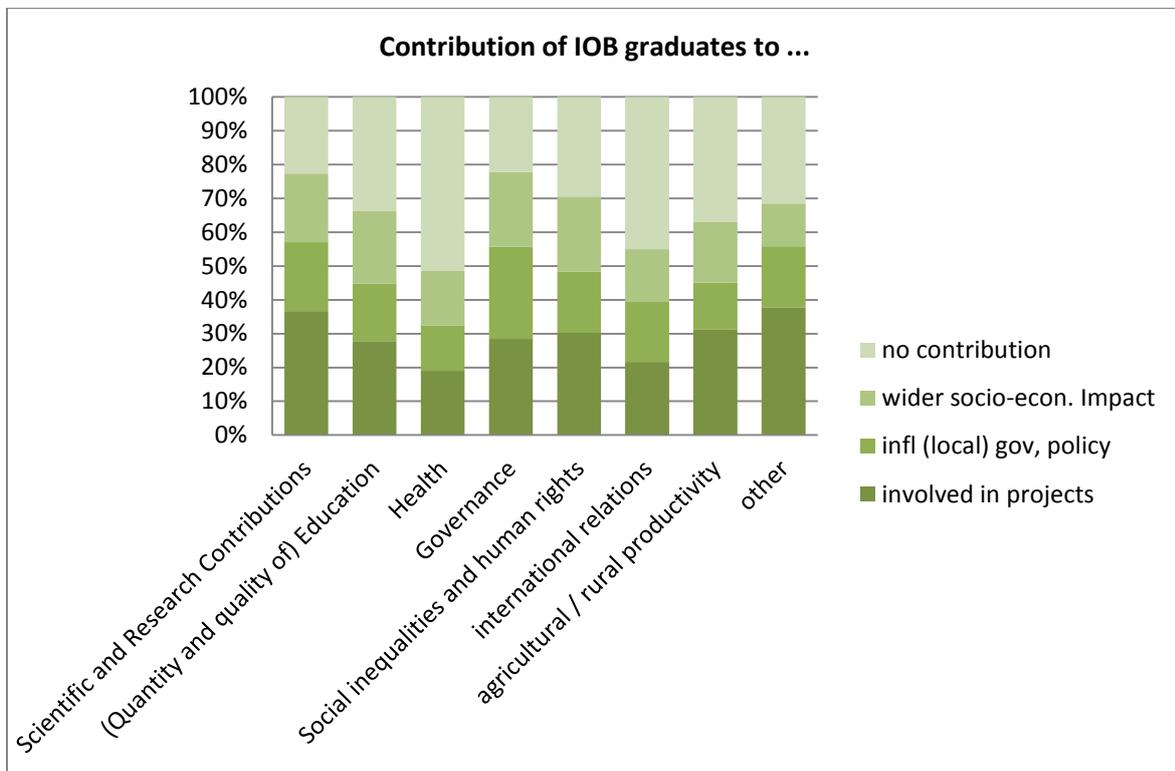
Figure 18: IOB Alumni as source of innovation



Alumni that participated in the survey were most active in contributing in scientific contributions, governance, and social inequalities & human rights, which is to a large extent in line with the content of IOB master programmes (see Figure 19).

Additionally, IOB's former students are not only involved in one (or more) projects but also clearly are involved in influencing (local) government policy. Depending on which sector, the share of policy work becomes larger and the project level involvement smaller, e.g. governance versus agricultural sector. These results confirm the position of the IOB master programmes within the overall development-studies landscape of not focusing on project-level development management, but rather capacitating development professionals to take on the broader positions of detective, translator and diplomat.

Figure 19: Perceived societal contributions of IOB graduates



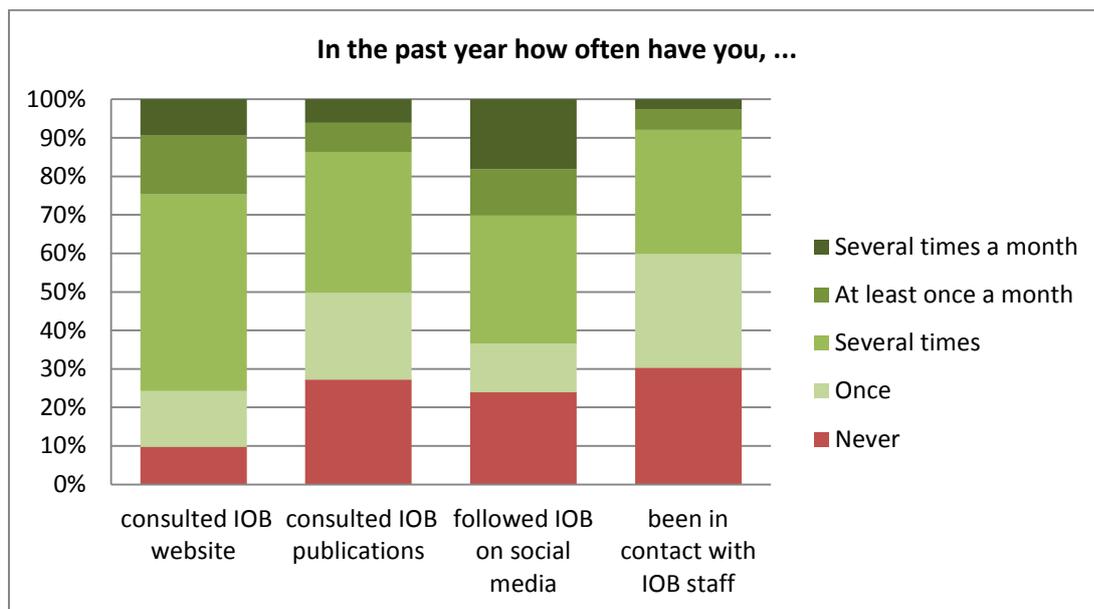
## D. Alumni relations

The 2010 survey already revealed some of the desiderata of the alumni. Based on the results of this survey a number of alumni activities and services have been organized. However, four years later it is time to many new alumni have joined the alumni community and preferences might have changed. Therefore, the survey asked alumni about possible alumni activities and services with a view of overhauling where necessary existing policies, and better tailoring future policies to the expectations and interests of the IOB alumni. A first section of this paragraph will review the existing instruments of alumni policy. In a second section we will review how alumni stay in contact with each other and a third part reviews the interest expressed by alumni in proposed future activities.

### 1. Alumni -IOB contact :

Figure 20 shows whether, and if so, how often alumni have been in contact with IOB in the last year through consultation of the IOB website, consultation of publications by IOB based staff, following IOB through social media or through contact with IOB staff.

Figure 20: Interaction between Alumni and IOB/other alumni



Important differences exist between the various types of contact between the alumni and IOB. The consultation of the website is clearly the most widely used contact channels. About ninety percent of the responding alumni have consulted the IOB website at least once in the last year. Following IOB on social media is also quite popular, with one in five alumni following up on IOB frequently (several times a month), although another twenty percent of alumni does not follow IOB on social media at all. Of the latter, the majority either does not have a Facebook account (26%) or hardly uses it (43%).

Even less obvious forms of contact, such as consulting publications and being in contact with IOB staff, are still used on a regular basis with respectively half of alumni consulting IOB publication and 40 percent having contact with IOB staff several times a year. Even though the use of different

communication channels are positively correlated, it is important to use all communication channels, as some alumni only use one type of communication channel. For example, of the 24 percent of alumni that never follow IOB on social media, half of them does however consult IOB publications.

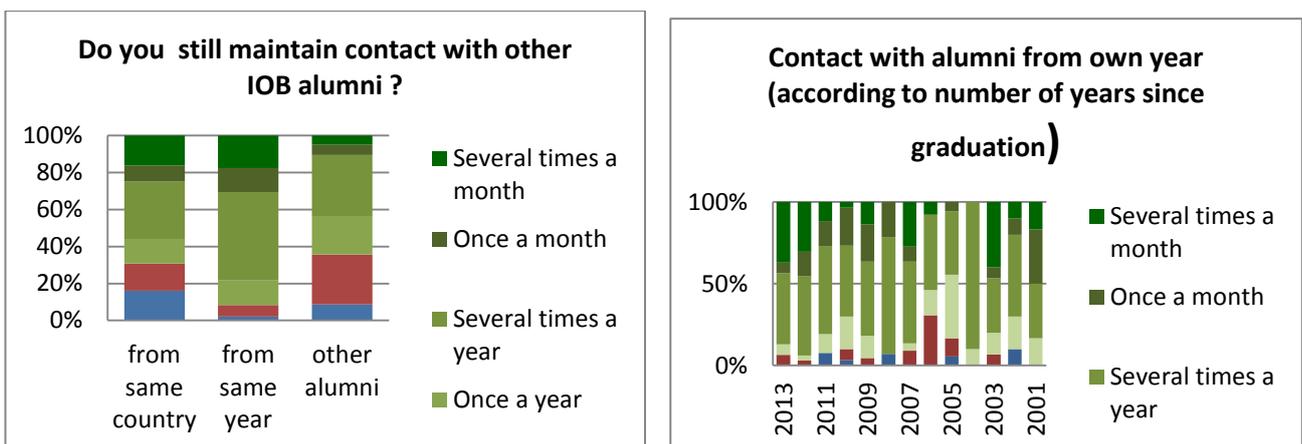
In addition to the communication channels mentioned above, IOB also invests in an alumni magazine. 'Exchange to Change' is the tri-annual IOB publication targeted specifically at the alumni, and this since March 2002. 96 percent of alumni would like to (continue to) receive the alumni magazine, either electronically (79 percent) or by mail (17 percent).

## 2. Inter-Alumni contact

With regard to the contact alumni maintain among themselves, it is interesting to know with whom they are in contact and through what means of communication. Therefore a number of survey questions probed the communication among alumni themselves.

Ninety three percent of all alumni state to keep in contact with other IOB alumni. However, we wanted to know with whom exactly the alumnus stays in touch? The graph below (21a) shows that having been classmates is a more important for alumni contact than being from the same country, even though the contact among fellow country (wo)men is also quite intense. The former means that studying at IOB indeed equips you with international networks of fellow students and that these relations stay active even after graduation. Graph 21b shows that the intensity of alumni contact does not sharply decline over time. Moreover, IOB alumni networks even extend beyond their own batch of students, though in less intense forms.

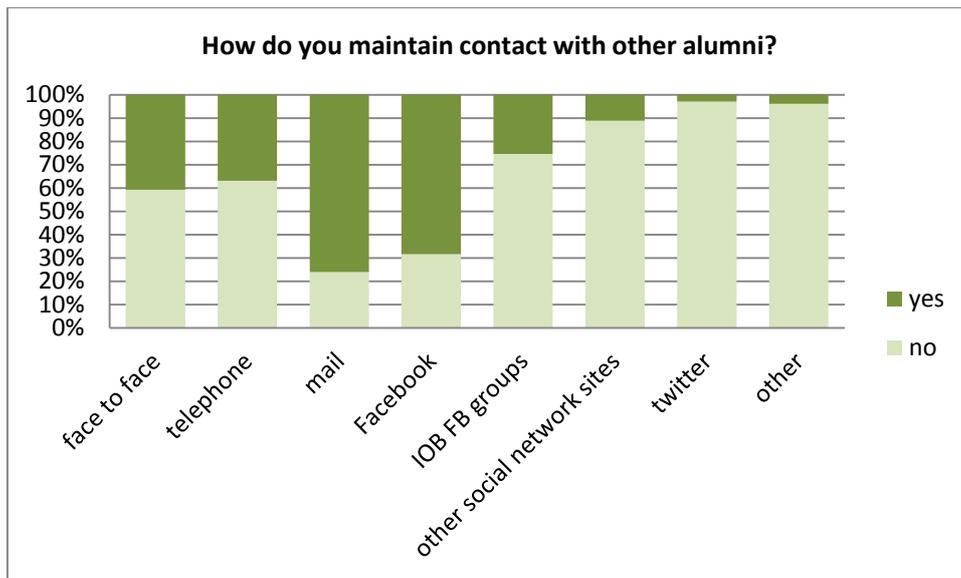
Figure 21a & 21b: Inter-alumni contact



All in all, the most important factor in who contacts whom is whether they have studied in the same year at IOB. 92 percent of the alumni indicate to have maintained contact with an alumnus from the same year at least once in the previous year, compared to 63 percent having contact with other alumni. These figures also point toward a possible opportunity for IOB in facilitating inter-graduation-year contacts among alumni, rather than only intra-graduation-year contacts.

Now that we know with whom alumni are in contact, we also wish to know through which media these contacts are maintained. Figure 22 below provides us with the answer. Email and Facebook are the two most important media for alumni to keep in touch with each other. Whereas in the 2010 survey, email (92 percent) is by far the most frequently used means of communicating with other alumni in comparison with a distant second place is for the social network sites (43 percent), Facebook (68 percent) has caught up with email (76 percent). Face to face contacts are only used to contact other alumni by slightly less than thirty percent of the alumni.

**Figure 22: Means of communication for inter-alumni contact**



Summarizing we find that there is quite some contact among alumni, mostly of alumni of the same graduation year. The alumni networks endure even long after graduation. Email and Facebook are crucial instruments for inter-alumni contact.

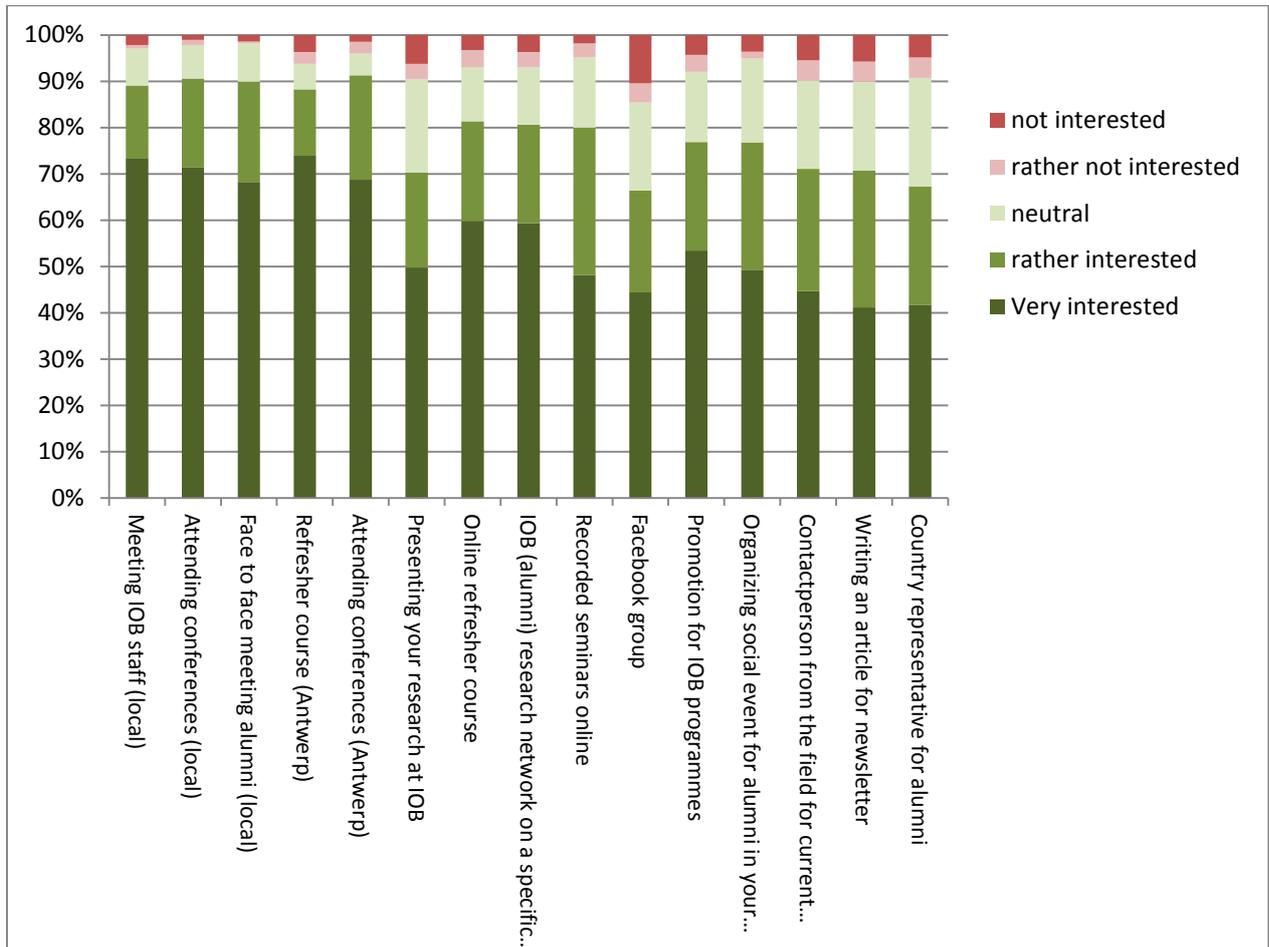
### 3. Future alumni activities

Alumni expect different types of activities based on four basic motivations to be involved in alumni activities, 1) personal intellectual development 2) staying in touch with alumni (friendship networks) 3) professional development (being updated on new developments in the sector, ...) and 4) networking (professional: both to other alumni with interesting professional profiles as with the academic world) (Uantwerpen, 2013). Ideally a variety of activities should thus be organized to fulfill both needs for social interaction (friendship) and professional development (networking and learning). Added to this, for a development institute with alumni all over the world, the location (in-country or in Antwerp) and linked to it the modalities (online or face to face) of activities, make it even more difficult to organize all types of activities accessible to all alumni.

Therefore a number of different activities were presented in the survey and the alumnus/a was asked to indicate his/her wish to be involved in such activities in the future. Overall an overwhelming 96 percent of the alumni indicated that they would like to be involved in alumni activities of IOB. The next question is which activities are the most interesting from the alumni point of view.

IOB alumni are very interested in participating in many of the proposed alumni activities. On average we find that 74 percent of the alumni are interested (very interested + rather interested) to participate in the activities, and 53 percent very interested in participating. These averages however do disguise some important differences (Figure 23). For the most popular activity, meeting IOB staff when on mission in their country, 90 percent of the alumni are interested in participating, while becoming an active member of a Facebook group 'only' interests 66 percent of the alumni. Overall however, we find that there is considerable enthusiasm for participating in almost all the proposed alumni activities.

Figure 23: Alumni's interest in participating in the proposed future alumni activities



In terms of location/ modalities, three groups of alumni activities can be discerned: online-activities, Antwerp-based activities and in-country activities. Overall we find that there is much enthusiasm for face to face activities, be it in country or in Antwerp and to a lesser extent also for online activities.

The first group of **online-activities** comprises of participating in an alumni facebook group, watching online seminars, participating in online refresher courses. Of this group, participating in online refresher courses is by far the most popular option for most alumni. The social network communities in comparison generate less enthusiasm. Being part of an IOB alumni research network, will probably entail both online and face to face interaction. This possible future activity also generates quite a lot of enthusiasm.

A second group consists of activities **in Antwerp**, namely participating in a refresher course, attending a conference in Antwerp or giving a guest lecture for the IOB students. Except for the latter, the prospect of coming to IOB for refresher courses/conferences seems to be very appealing for most alumni.

A third category, grouping the **in-country** activities, is actually the most appealing option for the overwhelming majority of the alumni. This group is made up out of three different activities within the alumnus' own country, and even though the activities are quite different, they are all four rated

very positively. The three activities are: attending a conference in the country, meeting IOB staff on a mission, attending a face-to-face meeting with other alumni. In all three activities about ninety percent of the alumni are interested in participating.

Evaluating the interest in activities through a **social activities vs. learning activities** perspective, we find that there is certainly high interest in learning activities (e.g. attending conferences, refresher courses, ...) and professional networking (e.g. meeting IOB staff, alumni research networks, ...). Social activities (e.g. social in country event for alumni) are however also appreciated.

Alumni activities were said to be a win-win situation, thus IOB also stands to gain from interaction. Indeed, another group of activities demands **an active input of the alumnus for the benefit of IOB**: being a country representative of the alumni for your country, being a contact person for IOB students in relation to their field work, being a contact person for promotion of IOB programmes and writing an article for the newsletter. Although this group of activities is somewhat less appealing to the alumni, the interest in these more 'duty'-based activities is still very sizeable, ranging between 77 and 67 percent of IOB alumni. This is substantially higher than on average 50 percent of University of Antwerp alumni being willing to invest time in such activities! IOB can thus really count on many helpful hands among its alumni all over the world. These have not turned out to be idle words, as many alumni have already helped in promotion activities all over the world (Philippines, Indonesia, Ecuador, Ghana, Belgium, ...), the organisation of alumni seminars, contributing to the IOB alumni magazine, ...

Overall, we can conclude that the interest in almost all proposed alumni activities is very outspoken. Both learning and networking activities are appealing, and both in- country (meeting IOB staff, a conference, a refresher course, social event, face-to face meetings with alumni) as well as Antwerp based events. The locus of activities therefore does not have to be Antwerp alone! This result coincides with the evolution towards more institutionalised ways of internationalization and organising more education/ research activities in the South. The top five of alumni activities (*very interested*) consist of meeting IOB staff and IOB alumni locally (networking activities), attending conferences both in Antwerp and locally and participating in refresher courses in Antwerp (learning activities).

Several activities are already organized, both locally (e.g. meet and greet and in-country seminars) and in Antwerp ( meet and greet and IOB alumni seminar). 'Meet and- greet' sessions <sup>6</sup> are held when an IOB professor or postdoctoral researcher is on field-visit in a country where several IOB alumni live, allowing for informal meetings between IOB alumni and visiting IOB professors. Additionally, IOB alumni seminars have been organized, alternating in Antwerp (2011,-12,-13) and in the South (since 2014). For the Antwerp-based alumni seminar, a call for papers was launched among alumni to come to Antwerp and present their ongoing research. So far three alumni have been invited ( from Ghana, Ethiopia and Vietnam) and their presentations were streamed live via the website so that other alumni could tune in. In-country seminar was organized in the South (the Philippines, 2014) and invites alumni from within the country to present their own research and keep in touch with each other's work. Additionally, a networking seminar was organized in Uganda (2014)

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<sup>6</sup> There have been meet and greet sessions in Benin, Burundi, Cameroun, DRC, Ecuador, Kenya, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

to inform the Ugandan alumni of the ongoing IOB research projects in Uganda ( 6, one of which is a joint project with an alumnus) and see what synergies are possible, as well as discussing the possibility of setting up a Ugandan alumni chapter.

Even though already quite some alumni facilities exist, focusing both on networking and learning activities, several challenges still remain. IOB alumni policy will need to focus on even further increasing alumni input into alumni activities and expanding the offer of alumni services by providing -as indicated by the results of the survey- follow-up trainings or refresher courses. To this end, external funding sources will need to be solicited in order to fully exploit the potential peer-to-peer learning among IOB alumni themselves as well as IOB alumni and staff.

ANNEXES:

**Table 1: Response rate per nationality**

	Population (master students)	survey	response rate
Ethiopia	84	27	32%
Cameroon	65	8	12%
Belgium	53	16	30%
Vietnam	50	20	40%
Uganda	46	18	39%
Bangladesh	35	15	43%
Congo, RD	35	4	11%
Philippines, the	35	23	66%
Zambia	24	7	29%
Rwanda	20	4	20%
Ecuador	19	5	26%
Kenya	18	5	28%
Peru	18	8	44%
Indonesia	17	7	41%
Burundi	15	2	13%
Colombia	15	6	40%
China	14	2	14%
Senegal	14	2	14%
Haiti	12	3	25%
Ivory Coast	12	3	25%
Ghana	11	1	9%
Tanzania	11	4	36%
Bolivia	10	4	40%
Nicaragua	10	4	40%

**Graph 1: Diploma of alumni prior to studying at IOB**

