

Alcoa Foundation's Global Internship Program for Unemployed Youth

Midterm Evaluation

Prepared by:
Mirka Martel
Zehra Mirza
Andrea Brown Murga

IIE Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact
Institute of International Education
April 15, 2015

Table of Contents

Figures and Tables	iii
Abbreviations and Acronyms	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology	1
The Alcoa Global Internship Program for Unemployed Youth	1
Evaluation Methodology	2
Chapter 2: Demographics	5
Intern Participants	5
Business Participants	6
Chapter 3: Program Outcomes	7
Program Satisfaction	7
Workforce Readiness and Counseling	8
Paid Internship	10
Career Planning and Placement	13
Employment Outcomes	15
Chapter 4: Program Impacts	17
Impacts on Interns	17
Impacts on Businesses	20
Impacts on Nonprofit Partners	23
Chapter 5: Best Practices and Recommendations	25
Best Practices	25
Challenges	26
Recommendations	26
Conclusion	27

Figures and Tables

Figures

Figure 1.	Intern participant demographics.....	5
Figure 2.	Business demographics	6
Figure 3.	Intern satisfaction with business and nonprofit partner	7
Figure 4.	Business satisfaction with program implementation and caliber of interns	7
Figure 5.	Workforce skills: Communication and interpersonal.....	8
Figure 6.	Workforce skills: Technical	9
Figure 7.	Professional growth: Workplace competencies.....	9
Figure 8.	Professional growth: Skill development.....	10
Figure 9.	Level of preparation at the beginning of internship	11
Figure 10.	Training received in career planning skills	13
Figure 11.	Intern employment status and location	15
Figure 12.	Job applications by employment status.....	16
Figure 13.	Job interviews by employment status	16
Figure 14.	Intern improvement in communication and interpersonal skills	17
Figure 15.	Intern improvement in technical skills.....	18
Figure 16.	Gains in intern confidence	18
Figure 17.	Business advantages for hosting interns	20
Figure 18.	Important considerations for hosting interns in the future	22

Tables

Table A.	Nonprofit partners and locations.....	1
Table B.	Data collection methods	3
Table C.	Internship activities.....	11
Table D.	Mentorship arrangement.....	12

Abbreviations and Acronyms

IIE	Institute of International Education
ELI/SC	Euvaldo Lodi Institute of Santa Catarina, Santa Catarina, Brazil
FEUGA	Fundación Empresa Universidad Gallega, Galicia, Spain
BTC	Bellingham Technical College, Washington, United States
NF	Northern Futures, Geelong, Australia

Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology

This midterm report presents findings for the Alcoa Global Internship Program for Unemployed Youth (hereafter the Alcoa Program), a program funded by Alcoa Foundation, Inc., and implemented by the Institute of International Education (IIE). Launched in October 2013, the main purpose of the Alcoa Program is to provide workforce development opportunities to unemployed youth worldwide with the goal of increasing their employability in the manufacturing sector. The findings and results of the midterm evaluation are intended to capture the outcomes and impacts of the program thus far and provide recommendations for future program implementation.

The Alcoa Global Internship Program for Unemployed Youth

Youth unemployment is a problem that has serious consequences worldwide, not only for millions of individuals and their families, but for the global economy as well. Among countries that are members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the number of 19 to 24-year-olds who are Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET) had risen to nearly 1 in 5 by 2013¹. Worldwide, the International Labor Organization (ILO) placed the number of unemployed youth at 73 million², and these numbers are expected to continue to rise.

In an effort to address this global problem, the Alcoa Foundation has invested \$1.25 million to launch the Global Internship Program for Unemployed Youth. Over the course of two years, the Alcoa Program seeks to provide over 400 participants from around the world with the counseling, training, and hands-on work experience needed to begin successful careers in the manufacturing industry. The program accomplishes this through an innovative structure that relies on public-private partnerships between workforce development organizations (usually local nonprofits or charities) and local manufacturing companies and other businesses. Eleven nonprofit partners in eight countries implement the program (Table A).

Table A. Nonprofit partners and locations³

Country	Location	Nonprofit Partner
Australia	Geelong	Northern Futures (NF)
Brazil	Santa Catarina	Euvaldo Lodi Institute of Santa Catarina (ELI/SC)
Canada	Quebec	Academos Cybermentorat
France	Pays de la Loire	Mission Locale Sarthe Nord
Russia	Samara Province	Fund for Sustainable Development
Russia	Belaya Kalitya	Agency for the Unemployed and Samarskaia Gubernia
Spain	Galicia	Fundación Empresa Universidad Gallega (FEUGA)
United Kingdom	Birmingham	The Pump
United States	Pennsylvania	Catalyst Connection
United States	Tennessee	Blount Chamber Foundation & Blount County Adult Education Foundation
United States	Washington	Bellingham Technical College (BTC)

¹ <http://www.oecd.org/participants.htm>

² http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_212899.pdf

³ Initially, there were 10 nonprofit partners. However, in March 2014, United Way of Jamaica was removed from the program and replaced by two Russian nonprofits.

Across all locations, **three components** comprise the program: (1) workforce readiness training and career counseling; (2) paid internship with a local business or manufacturing company; and (3) assistance with career planning and placement. Specific activities and goals associated with each of these program components are as follows:

1. **Workforce Readiness and Counseling.** The program seeks to enable youth participants to acquire the soft skills necessary for success in the workplace. Soft skills are generally recognized as interpersonal and communications skills important for professional success. Examples of such soft skills include time management, working as a member of a team, and the ability to receive constructive feedback.
2. **Paid Internship.** The program seeks to provide participants the opportunity to acquire hands-on training at small and medium-sized manufacturing companies. The internship experience may also entail safety training, job shadowing, and learning how to perform basic tasks using a specific type of manufacturing equipment.
3. **Career Planning and Placement.** The program seeks to help participants think strategically about their career options and develop career goals. The career planning and placement component may also include career fairs to provide program participants with the opportunity to network with prospective employers.

It is important to note that the three program components are not necessarily implemented sequentially, and activities that fall under each component may take place at any point within the program period, depending on the specific program design used by each nonprofit, as well as the needs of individual participants. For example, participants may begin to learn about the local labor market and specific career opportunities that are available to them at the start of the program. Similarly, participants may begin learning about time management skills at the start of the program offered by the nonprofit, after which they put what they have learned into practice during their internship. Additional information about variations in program implementation is included throughout the report.

In accordance with the program components articulated above, the program has also identified the following program objectives:

- By the end of the program, 90 percent of participants (400-500 participants) will have completed their internships and will have indicated an increase in knowledge related to post-secondary career and training/education options.
- Within 6 months after the completion of the program, 60 percent of participants will have found employment and/or will have begun a workforce training or education program.
- By September 2015, 75 percent of program participants will be employed or be engaged in training/education opportunities.

Evaluation Methodology

This midterm report captures aggregate results of the Alcoa Program for all eleven nonprofit partners in eight countries. While each nonprofit partner has their own monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system in place to capture program progress and reports regularly to IIE on their status, this report includes findings that are comparable *across* the program.

Broadly speaking, the goals of the midterm evaluation are two-fold:

1. Measure the outputs, outcomes, and potential impacts of the Alcoa Program thus far on its beneficiaries:
 - The **program participants**, who are the primary beneficiaries of the program. Our findings include two types of participants: 1) current interns who have begun their internship component and 2) participants who have completed the program.
 - The **nonprofit partners** implementing the program in each location.
 - The **businesses** where interns conduct their internships.
2. Identify best practices and offer recommendations that can be used to inform future program implementation.

The study team used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to gather information from these three groups of stakeholders. Table B outlines the data collection methods used for the midterm evaluation.

Table B. Data collection methods

Program Data	Review of existing program data, including reports submitted by nonprofit partners to IIE as part of previous M&E efforts.		
Program Participants <i>Intern Survey</i>	Web-based and paper surveys of program participants who had begun their internship or completed the program, administered in the following languages:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • French 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish • Portuguese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian
Nonprofit Partners <i>Interviews</i>	Five in-depth interviews with nonprofit partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bellingham Technical College (BTC), United States • Fundación Empresa Universidad Gallega (FEUGA), Spain • Mission Locale Sarthe Nord, France • Northern Futures, Australia • The Pump, United Kingdom 		
Businesses <i>Business Survey</i>	Web-based and paper surveys of businesses where program participants conduct their internships, administered in the following languages:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • French 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish • Portuguese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian

Two surveys were developed to gather information from program participants and participating businesses. Each survey was administered online over approximately six weeks in five languages: English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian. The intern survey was administered January 2 – February 12, 2015, whereas the business survey was administered December 12 – January 28, 2015. Interviews with nonprofit partners took place during the first two weeks of March 2015.

Survey data was gathered from program participants and the businesses where they interned for two reasons: while the interns are the primary beneficiaries of the program, the businesses can be seen as beneficiaries as well, given their hiring needs. As the implementers who are in a position to potentially hire those who are interning with them, their feedback is especially important. In addition, by asking

both groups of stakeholders similar questions about program activities, outcomes and impacts, the study team was able to corroborate the results of one survey with that of the other.

Following the administration of the surveys to interns and businesses and a preliminary review of the survey data, the study team conducted interviews with representatives of five nonprofit partners identified by IIE program staff. The interviews with the nonprofit partners provided the study team with more detailed information about variations in program design, implementation, and short-term outcomes, as well as reflections on program successes and challenges. Interviews were also highly valuable for providing a more in-depth look at the ways the program was carried out in accordance with the socioeconomic and labor market characteristics of each of the five local contexts.

Limitations

As one might expect of a program operating across eight countries, the study team found that the particulars of the Alcoa Global Internship Program in each local context vary considerably. While the qualitative data collected from interviews with the nonprofit partners provided some in-depth, location-specific information, a majority of the information included in this report is for the program as a whole, and is not broken down by country, location, or nonprofit partner. Care should be taken in drawing conclusions from aggregated results given the diversity of the contexts in which the program operates.

Outline of the Report

The second chapter of the report provides basic demographic data on the two groups of stakeholders surveyed in the evaluation, the participants of the program and the businesses where participants conducted their internships. The third chapter of the report looks at program activities and outcomes thus far as they relate to the three components of the program: workforce readiness and counseling, the internship, and career planning and placement. This chapter also looks at outcomes of particular interest for the program: employment, but also the number of jobs program participants have applied to as well as the number of times they have been interviewed.

The fourth chapter looks at broader impacts of the Alcoa Program thus far on the interns as well as the businesses that host them and the nonprofit partners that are implementing the program. The fifth and final chapter provides some of the best practices that have emerged from the midterm evaluation, as well as recommendations for future program implementation.

Chapter 2: Demographics

The following chapter presents basic demographic information for the intern participants and businesses surveyed for the midterm evaluation. The majority of the information in this chapter is drawn from the 64 intern respondents (program participants who had begun their internship and had been working there for at least 2 weeks or had completed the program) and 49 responses to the business survey. Qualitative data about the communities served by the program, gleaned from interviews with nonprofit partners, is also included to provide further context.

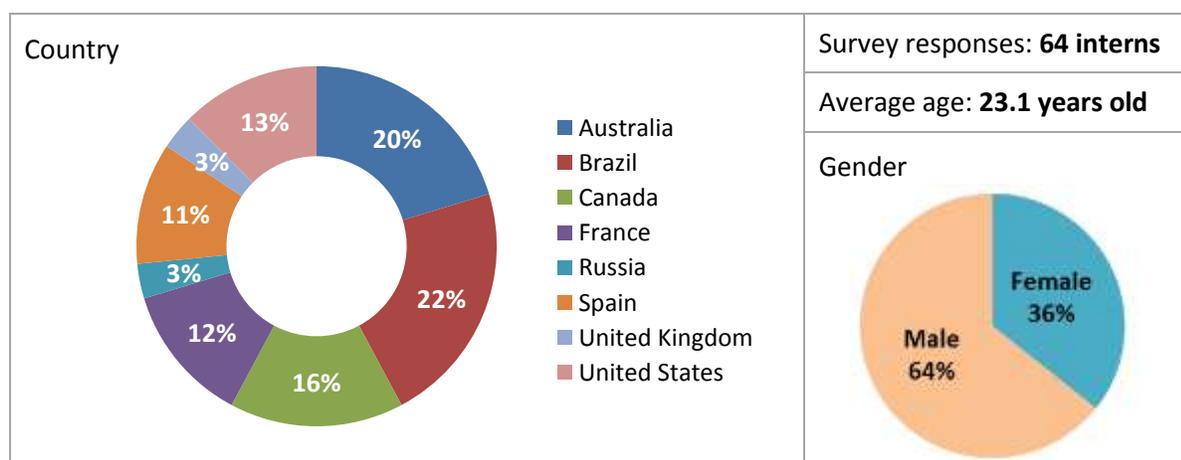
Intern Participants

The survey population initially included participants who *completed* the program only. In further discussions with IIE program staff, it was decided that the survey would be extended to participants who had begun their internship as part of the program in order to survey a wider pool of program youth.

As of January 2015, 380 youth had begun the program, but not necessarily their internship (according to IIE program data). The intern survey was sent to all 380 youth and was completed by 70, an 18.4 percent response rate. Of the 70 youth who responded, 64 had begun their internship and had been working there for at least two weeks. This report only analyzes the responses of those 64 intern participants; of these, 41 (64.1%) had finished the Alcoa Program at the time of survey completion.

Figure 1 lists key demographic information for the survey population. The intern participants represented eight countries and eight nonprofit partners. Three nonprofit partners were not represented in the survey (Blount Chamber Foundation & Blount County Adult Education Foundation – USA, Catalyst Connection – USA, and Agency for the Unemployed and Samarskaia Gubernia – Russia). The average age of the participants was about 23 years old, but as many as eight of the 64 were 30 years or older (and two of these older participants were in their early forties).

Figure 1. Intern participant demographics



As might be expected from a program with such a wide-ranging, global reach, interviews with nonprofit partners suggest that individuals participating in the program are a highly diverse group in ways that go beyond their countries of origin. They come from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, from rural areas and small towns (in the case of Geelong, Australia and Sarthe Nord, France) to deprived

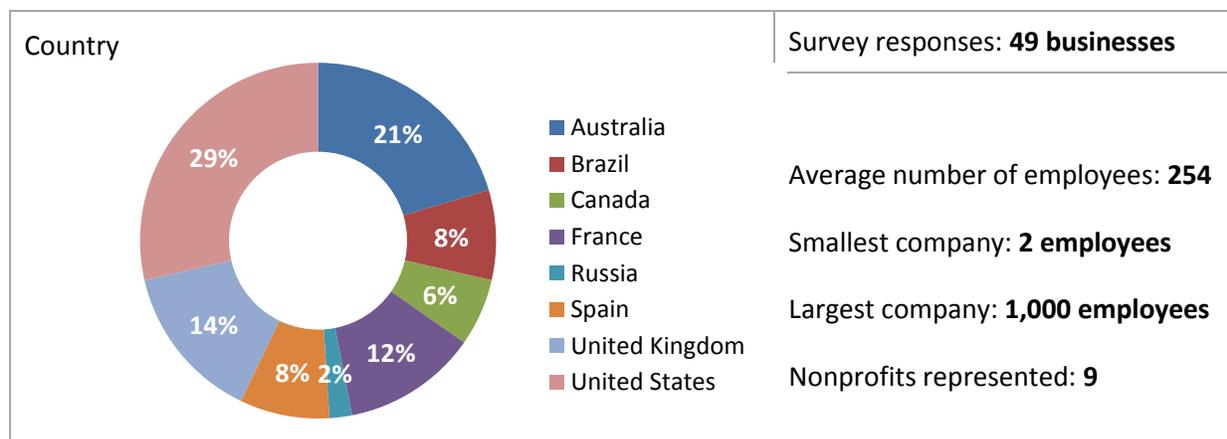
neighborhoods in large cities (in the case of Birmingham, United Kingdom). Similarly, the educational attainment of participants served by the program includes those who failed to complete secondary school, to those who have completed vocationally oriented secondary school, to college graduates (particularly, it seems, in the case of participants at FEUGA in Galicia, Spain).

It is important to note that some of the participants served by the program face serious challenges in their efforts to find employment and increase their career prospects. Nonprofit staff spoke of participants who were homeless, who struggled with substance abuse, who had been in and out of jail, or who struggled to find childcare. One nonprofit also mentioned working with participants that had disabilities. Both nonprofit partners and businesses reported instances where participants in the program had to be let go as a result of these difficulties. These types of challenges are discussed in greater detail in the final chapter of the report.

Business Participants

The business survey was sent to 87 participating companies; 49 responded to the business survey, a 56.3 percent response rate. The businesses represent all eight countries where the program is being implemented and nine of the eleven Alcoa nonprofit partners (Figure 2). Two nonprofits were not represented in this survey (Catalyst Connection – USA and Fund for Sustainable Development – Russia). The businesses have hosted a total of 146 interns since the beginning of the program. Each business hosted a variety of interns, from 1 to 35; however, most respondents (75.5%) hosted 1 to 4 interns. Fifty-nine of these interns have completed their internship.

Figure 2. Business demographics



Ten respondents had interns withdraw before completing their internship: six businesses had one intern withdraw, three businesses had two interns withdraw, and one business had three interns withdraw. The most commonly cited reason was that the business had to dismiss the intern, or “other” reasons usually linked to poor performance: attendance issues, intern’s lack of motivation, or the intern being unsuitable for the position.

Chapter 3: Program Outcomes

This chapter focuses on the key outcomes of the Alcoa Global Internship Program thus far, drawing largely on survey data from interns and businesses, but also interviews with nonprofit partners. The chapter begins with a look at program satisfaction among interns and businesses. We then present findings that relate to the three components of the Alcoa Program: (1) workforce readiness and counseling, (2) paid internship, and (3) career planning and placement. These findings illustrate the extent to which interns have gained job readiness skills, on-the-job training, and guidance on entering the workforce. The chapter concludes with data on employment outcomes for intern participants who have completed the program.

Program Satisfaction

Data from the intern survey and the business survey indicate that satisfaction with program implementation is high. For example, 84.1 percent of interns are satisfied with the business company where they have been placed. Conversely, 83.7 percent of businesses are satisfied with the caliber of interns they have received as a result of the Alcoa Program.

Figure 3. Intern satisfaction with business and nonprofit partner

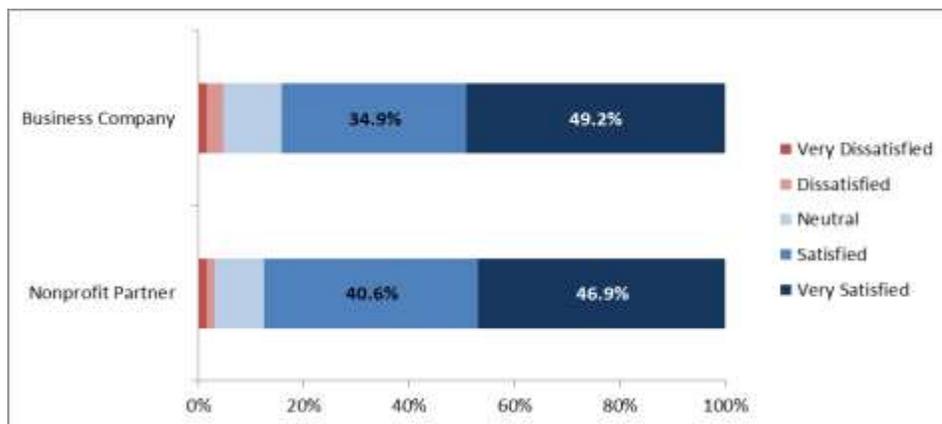
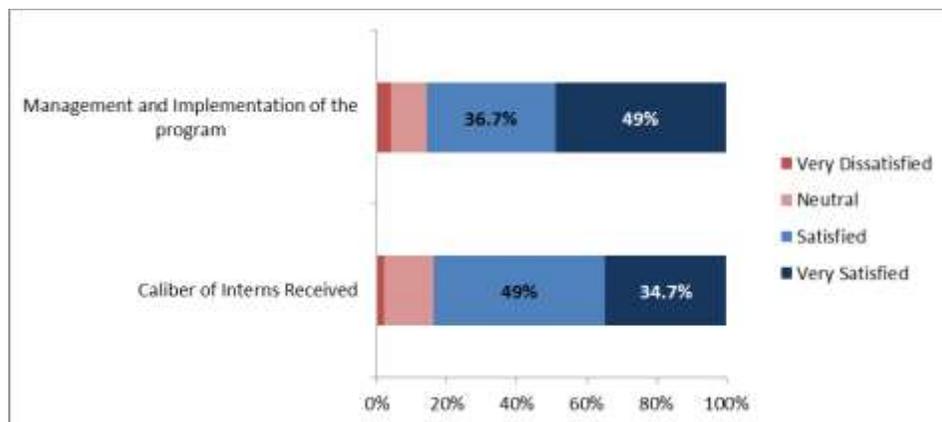


Figure 4. Business satisfaction with program implementation and caliber of interns



Workforce Readiness and Counseling

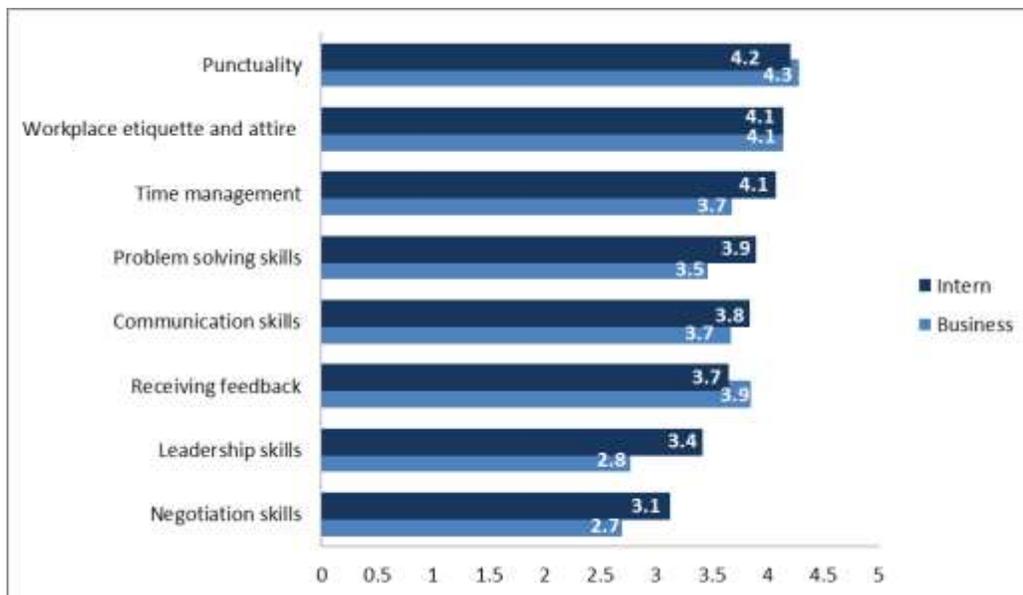
The Alcoa Program aims to help youth participants acquire necessary job readiness skills for success in the workplace. Program activities that fall under this component emphasize training in a variety of soft skills, particularly interpersonal and communications skills that are important for workplace etiquette. This component of the program can also include training in other workforce readiness skills that are of a more academic or technical nature, such as basic writing, mathematics skills, or computer skills. In addition, training specific to the manufacturing industry (such as learning how to drive a fork lift) falls under this portion of the program.

Overall, participants report that they are receiving training and guidance in a range of valuable workforce readiness skills. Furthermore, the businesses surveyed report that the interns are demonstrating these skills during their internships.

Communication and interpersonal skills

Intern participants were asked to rate the level of guidance or training they received on their communication and interpersonal skills. Similarly, businesses were asked to rate the extent to which the interns exhibit these skills. Both interns and businesses responded using a scale of 1 (“Very little”) to 5 (“A lot”). **Intern and business respondents reported relatively comparable scores, with punctuality being the highest interpersonal skill (see Figure 5).** Approximately 80 percent of interns (79.4%) and businesses (80.9%) indicated a “4” or “5” on receiving training in punctuality and exhibiting punctuality during the internship, respectively.

Figure 5. Workforce skills: Communication and interpersonal

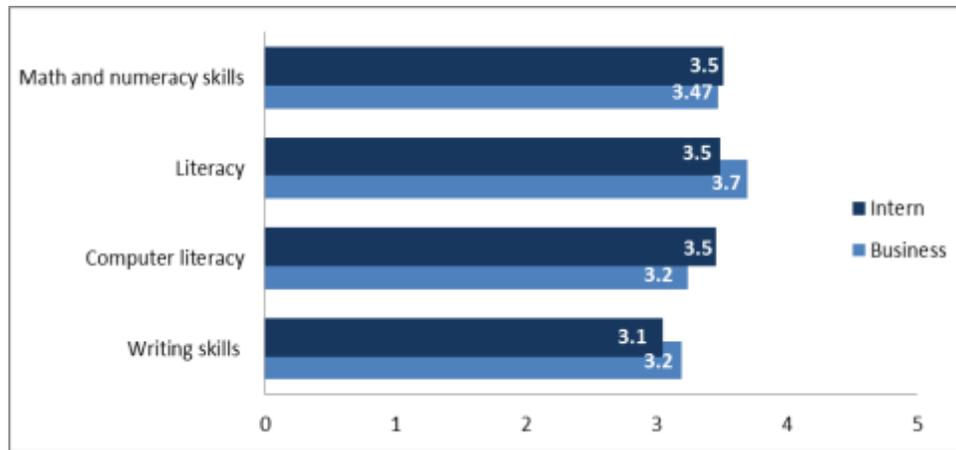


Technical and academic skills

Intern participants and businesses reported similar scores on skills of a more technical or academic nature, with literacy being the highest skill reported by the businesses (see Figure 6). Training in writing skills received the lowest score from interns with less than half (38.6%) indicating a “4” or “5” on

receiving guidance or training in that skill. This may be due to the fact that advancing writing skills was not a necessary component of the program. In fact, six respondents indicated that this component was not relevant to their internship.

Figure 6. Workforce skills: Technical

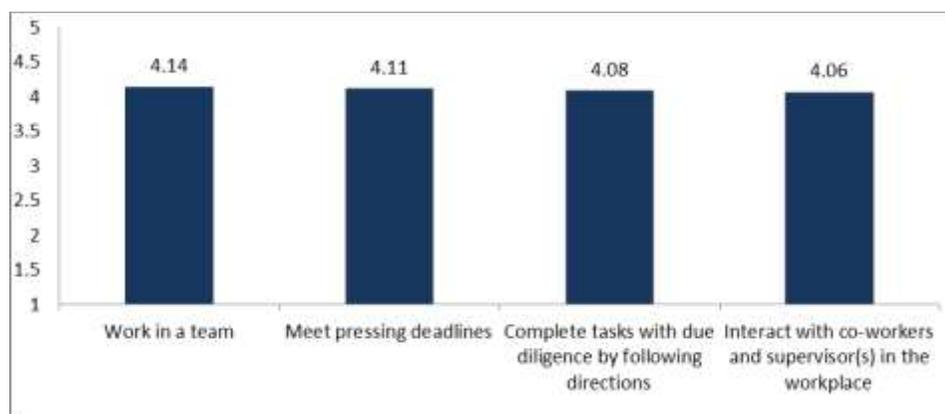


Development of professional competencies

Interns were asked to report on the degree to which they had increased their knowledge or abilities in a variety of professional competency areas. For example, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they had increased their workplace competencies using a scale of 1 (“Very little”) to 5 (“A lot”). All scores for these competencies received a 4 or above indicating positive development (Figure 7). **Eighty-one percent of interns rated “working in a team” with a “4” or “5” illustrating high knowledge increase in that area of professional growth.**

Figure 7. Professional growth: Workplace competencies

I have increased my knowledge or ability to...

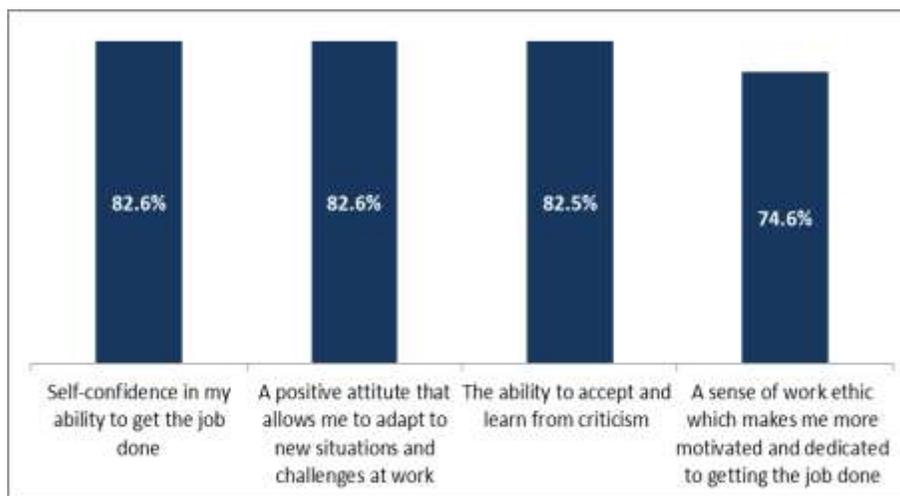


Interns were also asked to reflect on their overall skill development as a result of their internship experience. They were asked to rate their agreement from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”) for a series of statements presented in Figure 8.

82.6 percent of interns agreed or strongly agreed that the Alcoa Program had helped them develop self-confidence in getting the job done as well as a positive attitude that allows them to adapt to new situations and challenges at work. Increased confidence was a recurring theme throughout the midterm evaluation and is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.

Figure 8. Professional growth: Skill development

The Alcoa Program has helped me develop...



Paid Internship

A key feature of the Alcoa Program is the paid internship component. For this phase of the program, the nonprofit partners secure internships with small and medium-sized businesses in the local community. While the majority of interns reported hands-on manufacturing work, some interns did work that was administrative or clerical in nature. Additional internship activities may include safety trainings or job shadowing. In addition, some businesses also designated staff to provide formal mentorship to interns.

The majority of interns (81.0%) had been interning anywhere from two to nine weeks and all interns work, on average, 31.3 hours per week. The number of hours that interns work per week, however, varies by nonprofit. Some intern respondents reported working as many as 50 hours or more per week.

Internship Activities

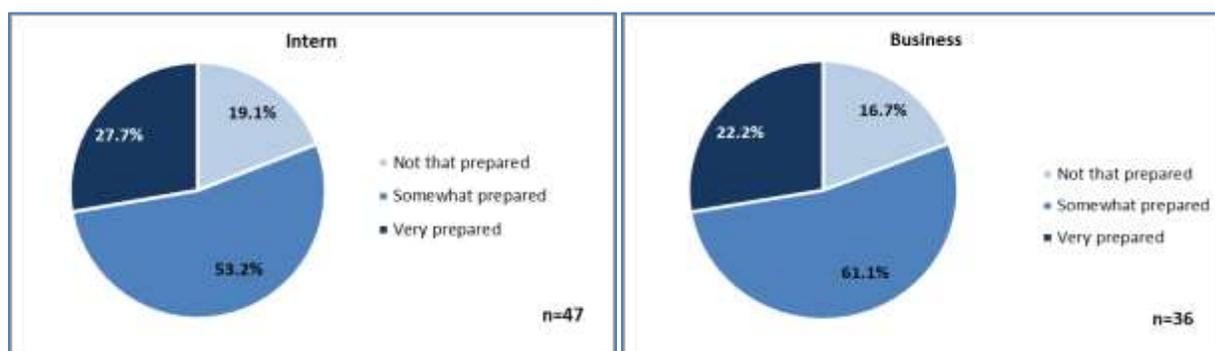
Both interns and businesses were asked to indicate specific activities that had taken place during the internship (Table C). Far less interns (29.7%) mentioned safety trainings as part of their internship than business respondents (42.9%). This may be due to varying perceptions on what defines safety training. As shown in Table C, the most commonly undertaken activity was hands-on manufacturing work. Internship activities included under the “other” category included warehouse duties, engineering and logistics tasks.

Table C. Internship activities

Intern	Percentage (%)	Business	Percentage (%)
Manufacturing work	67.2	Manufacturing work	57.1
Job Shadowing	53.1	Job Shadowing	51.0
Safety Training	29.7	Safety Training	42.9
Other	7.8	Other	16.3
Administrative work	18.8	Administrative work	16.3
Mentoring/Advising	14.1	Mentoring/Advising	14.3
Exit Interviews	6.3	Exit Interviews	8.2

Feelings of preparation at start of internship

Interns who reported participating in manufacturing or administrative work as part of their internship were asked how prepared they felt to perform these tasks at the beginning of their internship. Likewise, business respondents were asked how prepared the interns were based on their observations. **The majority of both intern (80.9%) and business (83.3%) respondents reported that interns were somewhat prepared or very prepared to perform the tasks related to manufacturing or administrative work.** It is interesting to note however, that a larger portion of intern respondents (19.1%) thought that they were not that prepared in comparison to the hosting businesses (16.7%). This could be indicative of an initial lack of confidence among the interns in their abilities, confidence that, as aforementioned, was eventually increased as a result of the program according to both the participants themselves and the nonprofit partners.

Figure 9. Level of preparation at the beginning of internship

Job-Specific Skills Acquisition

Participants who engaged in manufacturing and/or administrative work during their internship were also asked to indicate the extent to which they felt that they had gained the job-specific skills necessary to succeed in the workplace as a result of their internship experience. Similarly, business respondents were asked if the interns gained job-specific skills. **The majority of both intern (84.8%) and business (80.6%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that these job-specific skills were gained.** Three business respondents, however, strongly disagreed and indicated that these skills were not gained.

Mentoring During the Internship

Table D illustrates how mentorship during the internship was arranged. Only six interns and seven businesses indicated mentorship taking place.

Table D. Mentorship arrangement

Intern	Percentage (%)	Business	Percentage (%)
The company decided who my mentor/advisor would be.	3	Our company decided who my mentor/advisor would be.	7
I decided who my mentor/advisor would be	1	The interns decided who my mentor/advisor would be.	0
The company and I decided together	2	Our company and the intern decided together.	0
N=6		N=7	

In conducting further analysis with Alcoa program staff and nonprofits, the concept of mentorships may have been interpreted in various ways. For instance, interviews with nonprofit partners indicate that all interns engaged in some level of mentoring during the workforce and readiness phase of the program (though not necessarily the internship). More often than not, the role that company employees played was not that of a “mentor” per se, but rather that of a project coordinator or manager. This aligns to the findings presented in Table D where most respondents indicated that the company had decided who the mentor/advisor would be.

The interns and businesses who indicated mentorship taking place did not come from the same manufacturing company, nonprofit partner, or location. While the interns who responded to the questions regarding mentorship worked at Accredited Distributors (Australia), Barriar Group (Australia), Camilo Olives (Australia), Cotton On (Australia), Dienamex (Canada) and Alcoa Saint-Cosme-en-Vairais (France), the businesses who responded include Alcoa Howmet Laval (Canada), Alcoa Tennessee Operations (U.S), Trident Seafoods (U.S), and Koide (U.S). This again speaks to a varied interpretation of the mentorship component.

Among the six intern respondents who indicated participating in a mentorship, one of them reported meeting every day with their mentor, two reported meeting every week, one reported meeting every month, and two reported meeting a couple of times during the internship. Moreover, the respondents mentioned that they discussed the following topics with their mentor: resume/curriculum vitae (1 respondent), career goals (3 respondents), career research (4 respondents), interviewing skills (1 respondent), and professional development opportunities (1 respondent).

Job Shadowing During the Internship

As part of the internship component, 53.1 percent of interns participated in a job shadow. This allows the intern to accompany an employee within the business and experience first-hand what their job responsibilities entail. Activities that intern respondents indicated participating in during their job shadow include: following the employee during the regular work day (82.4%), meeting staff and colleagues of the employee (58.8%), discussing job requirements and everyday tasks (50.0%), and participating in staff meetings (38.2%).

Twenty-five businesses (51.0%) indicated that their interns participated in job shadowing. Activities reported by businesses matched intern data: discussing job requirements and everyday tasks (88.0%), following the employee during the regular work day (80.0%), meeting staff and colleagues of the employee (80.0%), and participating in staff meetings (60.0%). More than half of the businesses (60.0%) indicated that their company had intern job shadowing in place prior to the Alcoa Program.

Career Planning and Placement

The career planning and placement component of the program is focused on providing program participants with the skills, guidance and resources they need to secure long-term employment. Activities that fall under this component include providing participants with information about the local job market, (which can include, for example, tours of local companies) as well as the basic steps involved in the job search. Other activities include helping participants improve their resumes, practicing interviewing skills, and networking skills.

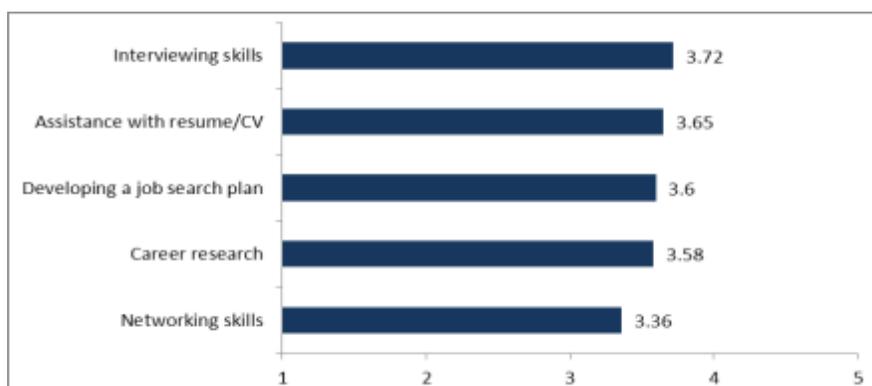
While the nonprofit partners provide participants with job placement assistance (potentially in the form of a career fair or expo), this program component is also focused on giving program participants the training and tools they need in order to think strategically about their own career goals and effectively formulate and execute their own job search. Effective career planning and placement requires a partnership between the participants and the nonprofit partner: guidance, coaching, and referral on the part of the nonprofit, and application and action on the part of the participant.

Sources of Career Guidance

While a majority of interns (57.1%) reported receiving assistance with career planning from the nonprofit partner alone, just over a third of interns (38.1%) received career planning assistance from both the nonprofit and the business where they interned. A small number of interns (4.8%) reported receiving career planning assistance from the business alone.

Interns were asked to indicate the amount of training or guidance they received in various areas of career planning (Figure 10) using a scale of 1 (“Very little”) to 5 (“A lot”). **Approximately two-thirds of intern respondents (63.3%) reported a “4” or “5” on receiving training or guidance in interviewing skills.** The least amount of guidance was given on learning networking skills with 16 interns reporting a “1” or “2.” Approximately half of the interns (57.1%) had the opportunity to meet with a career advisor.

Figure 10. Training received in career planning skills



Career Planning Activities

Nonprofit activities that comprise this component ranged from the rudimentary (helping interns obtain their first email account) to the more sophisticated (using social media to network search for jobs). According to some nonprofits interviewed, in many cases program participants had little knowledge of what kinds of job opportunities are available in their communities, what kinds of skills are necessary for these jobs, or how to apply for them.

The Pump – United Kingdom, for example, spoke of participants who did not possess email addresses, usually a necessity in order to apply for jobs. At the other end of the spectrum was FEUGA – Spain, which works with an outside company to train participants on how to develop their personal brand. It is worth noting that at FEUGA a majority of internships—while at manufacturing companies—involves work that is more administrative or clerical as opposed to, say, operating manufacturing equipment. As such, differences in career planning activities among the nonprofits might depend on the characteristics of the local labor market.

In other cases participants may possess considerable skills, but they may not know where they can apply them. The job of the nonprofit partners in these cases is to help participants assess their skills and competencies and determine which types of work might be best suited to them.

Career Fairs

Thirty percent of the program participants reported attending a career fair or career expo. With regard to the utility of the career fairs, responses from program participants were mixed. Of those respondents that had attended career fairs, 3 indicated that they were definitely helpful while 8 said they were somewhat helpful. Another 3 respondents said the fairs were not that helpful. Five of the respondents who indicated attending a career fair or expo did not answer how helpful the career fairs were for securing employment. Further research is needed to understand why the utility of the career fairs varied to this extent.

Company Tours

Some nonprofits reported taking youth on company tours, often towards the start of the program. In contrast with career fairs, company tours or site visits seems to be highly valuable for a variety of reasons. In addition to providing program participants with exposure to different work environments, in many cases tours give participants opportunity to meet with staff and hear directly from them the types of qualifications they seek in prospective employees. Getting a first-hand look at the work environment can be an important source of motivation, and can make the prospect of obtaining an internship or job more tangible.

It's a very critical piece for our students to also be involved with the company tours to get a feel for what it's like out there in the real world with employers... Getting students excited, enthused, interested in completing an internship has been really a key part of the process and an important part of the program. – Bellingham Technical College, United States.

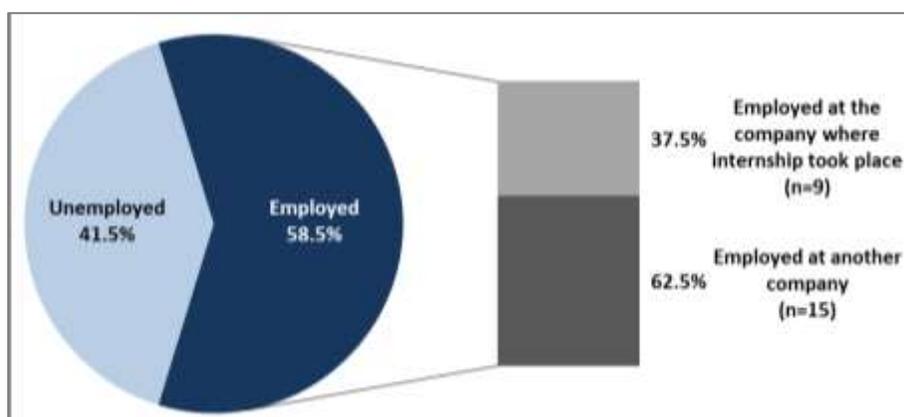
When we go on the site visit, they're looking behind the scenes at the company. They've often got the CEO or the manager talking to them about their career pathway and how they ended up where they were. And they're doing a tour of the premises. So they're getting a real visual look at what really goes on in that workplace, what does it look like, and we're spending quite a few hours there. – Northern Futures, Australia.

Employment Outcomes

The three components of the Alcoa Global Internship Program are intended to culminate in long-term, sustained employment for participants. The following section presents findings from 41 intern participants, or 64.1 percent, that had completed the Alcoa Program at the time of the survey.

Nearly sixty percent (58.5%) of interns who have completed the program were employed (Figure 11). Thirty-eight percent of the employed respondents indicated that they are employed at the company where they interned as part of the program and have been working anywhere from one week to a few months. In addition, of those respondents who are employed, 87.5 percent said that they felt fully or somewhat prepared when they began working in their current position; 12.5 percent said they were not prepared at all.

Figure 11. Intern employment status and location



Over half of the business respondents (57.1%) indicated that former interns had applied for jobs within their company following completion of their internship. **Of these, 24 respondents (87.5%) indicated that the interns have been hired by their company.** Nine business respondents stated that former interns had found employment elsewhere.

Applications and Interviews

Of the 41 respondents who have finished the Alcoa Program, 23 (or 53.7%) have applied to at least one job, and 16 have attended job interviews. Figures 12 and 13 provide insight into the application and interview statistics for the interns.

From the 9 interns who are now employed at the company where their internship took place (see Figure 11 above), 7 were hired without formally applying. Based on Figure 12 we can also conclude that an additional five interns were hired by companies other than their internship posts without formally applying. A smaller percentage of those who are currently hired applied to one or more jobs. Three interns applied to five or more jobs before being successful in attaining employment. Among interns who are still unemployed, six have not applied to any jobs.

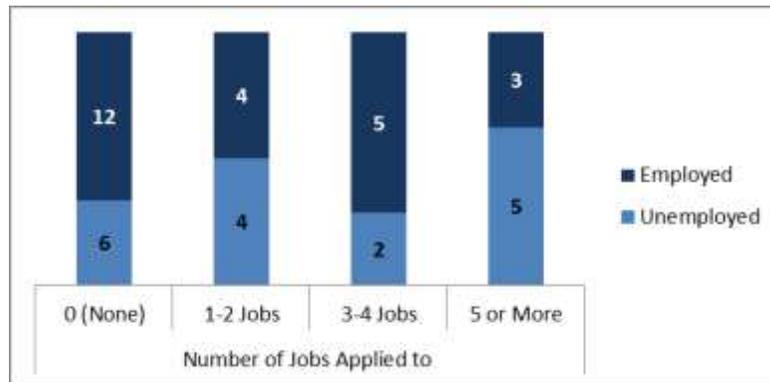
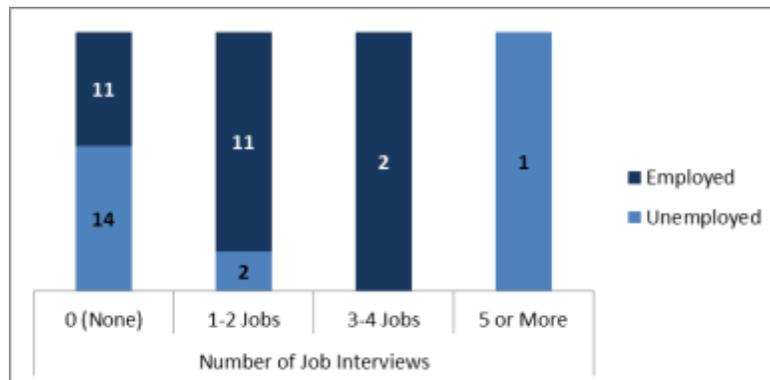
Figure 12. Job applications by employment status

Figure 13 indicates that 11 interns who are employed were hired without attending a job interview. Again, this indicates that some interns who received a job from their internship location were hired automatically without going through the application and interview process. In other cases, employed interns did have to interview 1-4 times prior to securing their work positions. Fourteen interns who are currently unemployed have not gone on any job interviews.

Figure 13. Job interviews by employment status

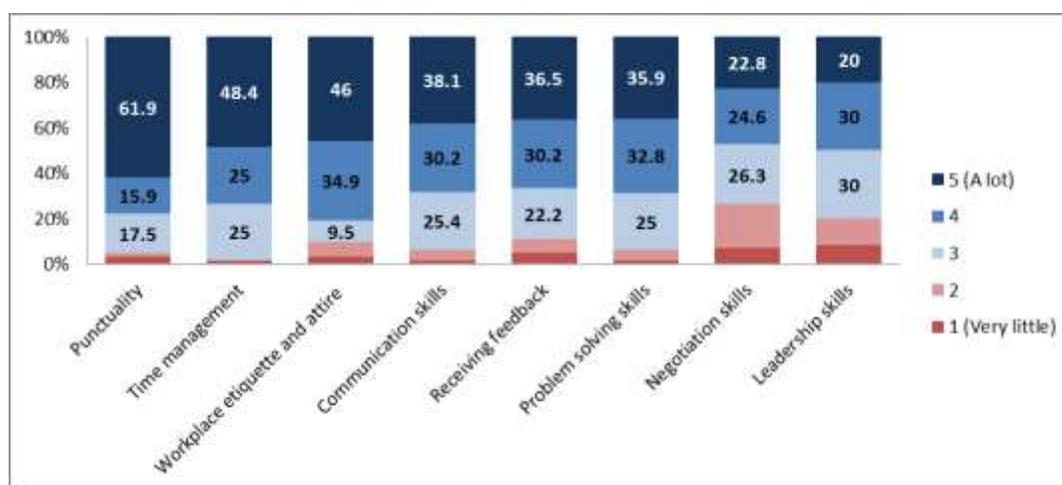
Chapter 4: Program Impacts

This chapter presents findings on the larger impacts of the Alcoa Program on current and former interns, the businesses that host them, and the nonprofit partners. In addition to discussing the degree of improvement interns have experienced in a variety of skill areas, this chapter also notes some of higher-level personal and material impacts on youth that have resulted from the program. In addition, the chapter focuses on some of the key impacts of the program on businesses (the other key group of program beneficiaries) and nonprofit partners.

Impacts on Interns

Interns were asked to report on their level of improvement in various communication and interpersonal skills on a scale of 1 (“Very little”) to 5 (“A lot”). Figure 14 indicates that a **majority of the intern respondents reported improvement in punctuality and time management**. Least improvement was made in negotiation skills and leadership skills.

Figure 14. Intern improvement in communication and interpersonal skills



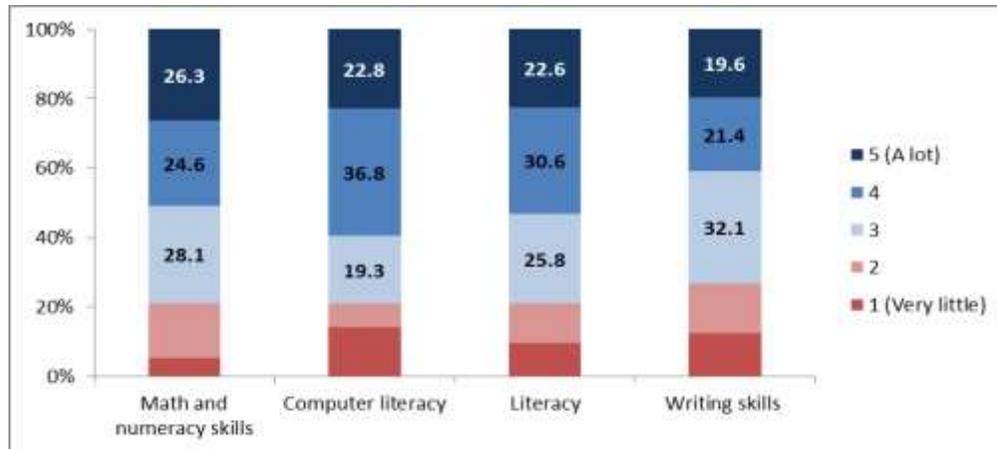
Although the number of participants who have obtained employment as a result of the program cannot be underestimated, even those participants who do not become employed right away are developing practical skills that are highly relevant in the workplace and can help them secure future employment, promotions or salary increases. Many of the interpersonal and communications skills described in Chapter 3 are as transferrable as they are valuable to employers, and having cultivated these skills as a result of the program makes them more competitive candidates for future jobs.

The students are really building those skills that employers view as critical in terms of how to work collaboratively with a team, lead up a bunch of different people, how to interact with customers, crucial skills like that. —Bellingham Technical College, United States.

Even skills that are more specialized or that might be seen as having narrower applications—such as operating a specific piece of manufacturing equipment—can be a great benefit to program participants, particularly if they involve training that would be difficult for participants to obtain on their own. Figure

15 indicated intern improvements in technical skills, such as math and numeracy skills, computer literacy, and writing skills.

Figure 15. Intern improvement in technical skills

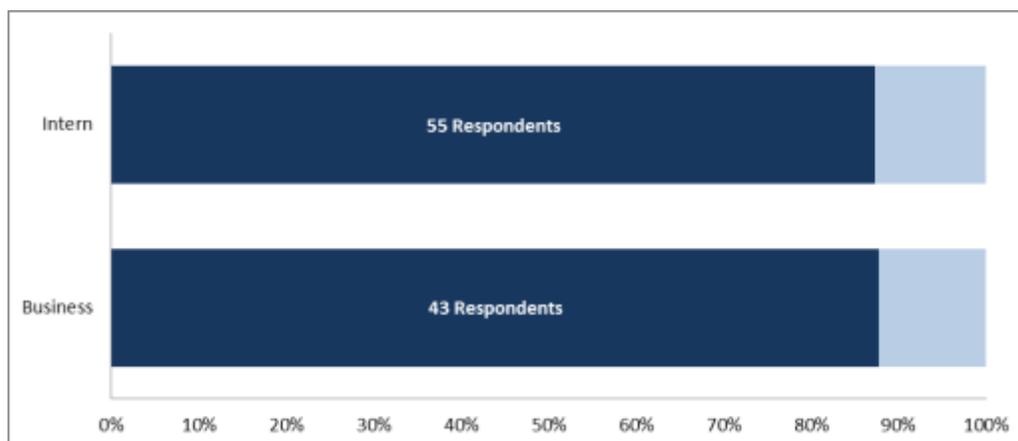


The majority of the interns agreed or strongly agreed that they feel prepared to enter the workforce (87.3%). Similarly, 74.0 percent of the businesses agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of their training the interns at their company exhibited the necessary skills to succeed in the workplace and are well prepared to enter the workforce (81.6%). Seventy-one percent of the business respondents indicate maintaining contact with their former interns from the program.

Self-confidence

The importance of building intern confidence was mentioned repeatedly throughout the evaluation. The interns have gained confidence in their abilities as a result of their program participation (87.3%); moreover, the majority of business respondents agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of the internship experience, their interns have gained confidence in their abilities (87.8%). Only two business respondents disagreed that these abilities were not gained.

Figure 16. Gains in intern confidence



When asked to describe the impacts of the Alcoa Program in their own words, several participants spoke specifically of the newfound confidence they felt as a result of having learned skills and facing challenges

they had initially felt apprehensive about. Other participants described how the program had helped them to realize that they were more capable than they thought, or helped them discover talents or aptitudes that they did not realize they had.

I am more confident and willing to try and learn new things. – Intern Respondent, Australia.

The course proved to me that I have all the qualities and skills to do my job. — Intern Respondent, Canada.

Many nonprofits spoke of the importance of the Alcoa Program for boosting confidence, particularly given that many of the participants have faced repeated setbacks trying to find work or overcoming personal struggles. The Pump described how a lack of confidence can hinder young people in complex ways that might be manifested as a lack of drive or ambition.

There's a strong confidence component to this. I've had students come back and tell me they're over the moon about the experience they've had and they feel much more confident in the skills that they had prior to the internship. [...] to be able to apply their skills in the workforce is very, very critical and important. It's a huge confidence builder [...].—Bellingham Technical College, United States.

We look at aspiration and motivation because without [...] motivation, it's difficult really for us to find them the job that they want if they're not motivated. [...] some people, they might have low confidence. So that could be affecting the motivation. — The Pump, United Kingdom.

Being 'paid to learn'

The fact that participants are being paid to participate in the internship is a central and key impact of the program. In addition to providing unemployed participants with a source of income, some nonprofit partners noted that the program's funding for the internship has allowed participants to be less concerned about their financial circumstances and focus more of their attention to their training.

[...] The fact is that they're there to learn so it takes the pressure off just trying [to get the job done]. And even though we tried building support, I think there's a whole different protection barrier which is around, "You're here to train, you're here to learn, you're here to build relationships, you're here to learn what the industry's like and we're gonna pay you for that." — Northern Futures, Australia.

Credentials or certifications

In the case of at least one nonprofit partner, participants have the opportunity to further formalize their skills acquisition by receiving an accreditation, license, or other credential. Many hiring managers in the manufacturing sector may prefer or even require a license or certification in order to drive a forklift, for example. Being able to list a credential on their resume allows participants to overcome yet another barrier to employment.

A lot of them – well, I think there's over 30 – have actually got an accreditation in employability. So they've actually got a qualification, an EDI in employability skills. They've got

a license to drive a forklift. And that's enabled some of them to get jobs in companies where driving a forklift is desirable.—The Pump, United Kingdom.

Impacts on Businesses

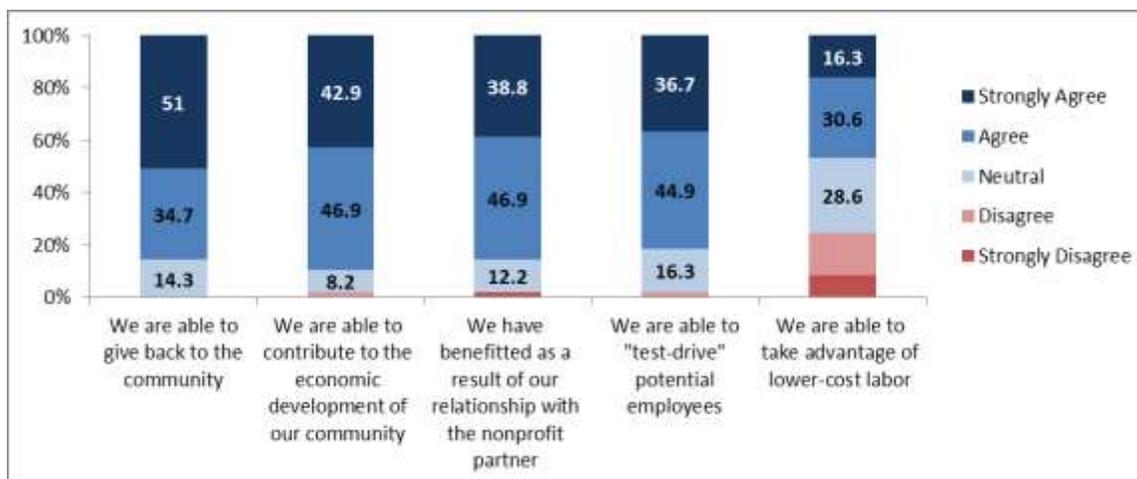
Survey responses from the participating businesses, as well as feedback from the nonprofits, indicate that local businesses are benefitting from the Alcoa Program in a variety of significant ways. A testament to the value that they derive from the program is the fact that **the vast majority of businesses agreed or strongly agreed (89.8%) that their company would host interns from this program in the future.**

Nearly a third of the business respondents (30.6%) indicated that their company had an internship program in place before hosting the interns, whereas **nearly two thirds of businesses (65%) had to cater or create an internship program in order to host the interns.** The significance of the fact that the majority of businesses developed an internship specifically for Alcoa interns speaks to their strong program commitment.

Contributions to Community Development

As small or medium-sized businesses or manufacturing companies, one might expect that the biggest advantages for businesses having access to paid interns would be related to their “bottom line.” In fact, the benefits cited most by businesses were related to community development. For example, **89.9 percent of business respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to contribute to the economic development of their community as a result of the Alcoa Program** (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Business advantages for hosting interns



As one of the businesses noted, these contributions to local economic development occur not only when interns are brought on for longer term positions. Even when an intern does not end up with a job offer from the company, they have gained skills as a result of their internship experience that they can apply elsewhere.

We were able to trial an intern with the possibility of future employment. If after the 6 weeks we didn't notice improvement we are able to let them go, knowing that we have passed on skills that they have never had before. —Business Respondent, Australia.

Other businesses spoke specifically about the rewards of mentoring interns, and how hosting young interns can infuse “renewed energy” into the company. In addition, the opportunity to mentor “the next generation” through the internship program provides valuable learning opportunities for employees as well as interns.

Employees [...] have gained insight into the difficulties of young people who have little or no support and who are trying to make their way in the world. They have a better understanding of issues they previously have not been exposed to. They enjoyed working with [the intern] and 'mothered' him. —Business Respondent, Australia.

Relationships with Nonprofit Partners

The relationships that businesses develop with the nonprofit partners are an important impact of the Alcoa Program; the potential benefits that result from these relationships cannot be understated. Businesses are able to work closely with the nonprofit partners to fill positions more effectively. The businesses can communicate their needs to the partners, and the partners can respond by recommending participants for specific positions. One nonprofit noted that even in cases where their participants lack the qualifications that employers seek, simply by knowing about the company’s needs, as a career development organization they can provide this training.

I guess that’s the biggest thing for the local businesses: helping them to get jobs filled and also listening to employers and finding out what kind of skills they want the workforce to have. So I spoke to a couple of manufacturing companies who said, “Well, if you can provide training to a young person to get the FLT license so they can operate the fork lift, then we’d be more likely to consider them.”— The Pump, United Kingdom.

Some companies find it challenging to identify experienced locals who wish to work for them if they are located in a remote and small area. The program has enabled them to locate young adults who are trained, have a desire to work for their company and will stay with them even after their internship. Other companies or nonprofit partners described the benefits of being able to rely on support, training and coaching from the nonprofits in the event challenges arose with the participants during their internship.

Very pleasing to be in a position to trial a perspective employee and have the support of the NF program to assist with any issue that had arisen.—Business Respondent, Australia.

The company around here, they are very pleased to work with us because they knew that we could follow the participants and if there are problem with participants in their own company, behavior problem for example, then they could call us and we could do some intervention.— Mission Locale, France.

Publicity and recognition

In the case of at least one business, involvement with the Alcoa Program has resulted in media coverage that has led to prospects for increased government funding.

[...] They've been able to bring the state government to come and meet them and talk about their proposal whereas in the past, their proposal had been knocked back to state funding. So, now they're being relooked at so it's been a real plus for them to be able to put their needs on the political agenda due to the fact that we've been doing this Alcoa internship. —Northern Futures, Australia.

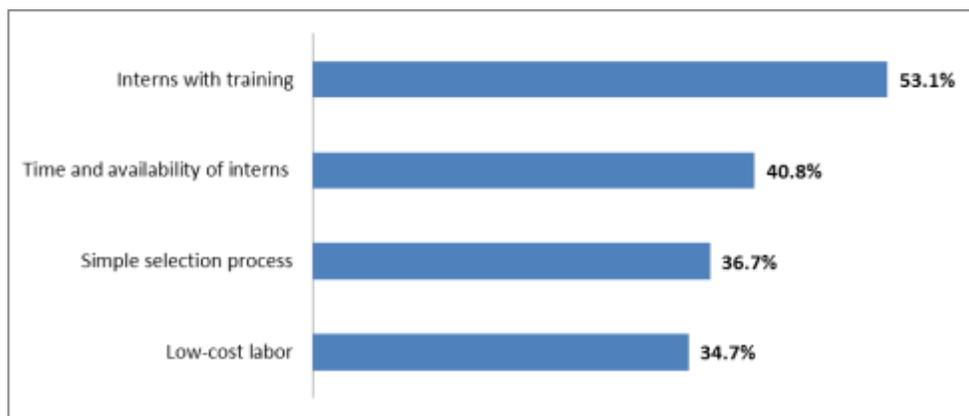
Other businesses noted that while hosting interns was ultimately a worthwhile undertaking in and of itself, the potential for positive recognition for the business was an added advantage.

We benefited in developing a network for young people to learn skills and foster confidence, and that reflects well on our company and its presence in the local community.—Business Respondent, Australia.

“Bottom-Line” Benefits

While the cost savings that result from having paid interns are certainly a benefit for the businesses, in many cases it seems that businesses placed a higher value on other aspects of the program which still ultimately had implications for the bottom-line. When asked what the most important consideration is for their company to host interns in the future, the majority of the business respondents mentioned interns with training (53.1%).

Figure 18. Important considerations for hosting interns in the future



At no real expense to the company, we were given these interns who possessed little or no experience in our operations and provide them with the basic skill sets to succeed in the job at hand. This program allows companies like ourselves some time to work with and possibly unlock skills these interns didn't know they had within themselves. —Business Respondent, United States.

Even though businesses placed the highest value on receiving interns who already had training, the fact that nearly two thirds of businesses (65%) catered or created new internship programs shows that they saw the time and resources spent to host interns as a worthwhile, longer-term investment that would ultimately pay dividends.

In addition to the personal rewards of hosting and mentoring interns, when asked to describe in their own words how they had benefitted from their involvement in the program, a number of businesses spoke of the opportunity to “test-drive” potential employees and assess whether they meet the company’s needs. Given the losses in productivity that can result from having an employee who turns out to be ill-suited to the position, the ability to effectively bring an intern on for a “trial” period has the potential for significant business benefits.

Impacts on Nonprofit Partners

Interviews with nonprofit partners helped to shed light on how the program is impacting their organization and what benefits they derive from implementing the program on behalf of IIE.

Program Expansion

The ability to expand upon or scale up existing programming was a benefit of the program cited by many nonprofit partners. All the nonprofit partners interviewed appeared to have some version of their workforce training programs in place prior to their involvement with the Alcoa Program, but in some cases nonprofits made significant adjustments or additions to their programming following consultation with IIE staff. FEUGA, for example, brought in an outside company to provide additional training in career skills, which has turned out to be a valuable compliment to their existence training modules. Because of the funding, nonprofit partners are also able to scale up their efforts and provide opportunities to the communities they serve that they were unable to offer before.

Our program has even boosted our outcomes [...] in the participants. When you look in the past at our success at getting participants stabilized after the job ready training and employed, you actually can see the stabilization [now] where before we had this opportunity of paid internships, they were going to work, they would bounce out again, it would take about three attempts to get them into long-term employment.—Northern Futures, Australia.

Relationship with Local Businesses

Similar to the benefits experienced by the businesses as a result of their collaborative relationships with the nonprofits, the creation of new or deepening of existing relationships with local businesses was also cited by nonprofit partners as an important benefit of the program. The program is allowing business companies to learn more about the nonprofits.

We, the business company, the business partners, they discover us in another way, not only with young people with difficulty but also with participants people who want to work in the industry and who could adapt themselves in the company. In terms of dynamics inside the association, it's something more; it's a new way of working. It's quite – innovation and the people working on the program were very pleased to do it and just give us another dynamic inside the association. – Mission Locale, France.

Cultivating these relationships is beneficial not just for the shorter-term implementation of the program, but has the potential to result in fruitful, longer term collaborations as well.

Publicity and Recognition

A few of the nonprofits noted that their organizations had received positive publicity as a result of their work with the Alcoa Program. The Pump, for example, noted that there was a greater sense of awareness within the local community of their organization and the kind of work that they do. Similarly, FEUGA noted that while their organization was already well-known within the region of Spain where they operate, their involvement with a program that is internationally known was a source of pride.

Chapter 5: Best Practices and Recommendations

The second goal of the midterm evaluation is to identify best practices and offer recommendations that can be used to inform future program implementation. The study team asked all three groups of stakeholders—program participants, nonprofit partners, and businesses—to reflect on the most effective and impactful aspects of the program, as well as challenges they had encountered. In addition, businesses and, in particular, nonprofit partners were asked to provide suggestions for improvements in program implementation moving forward. The best practices, challenges and recommendations outlined in this chapter are the result of these collective reflections.

Best Practices

Although program implementation is still underway, the study team identified two best practices exemplified by the Alcoa Global Internship Program.

Program design that is attuned to the local context

The specific nature of youth unemployment can vary considerably, not just at the national level, but at the regional or community level. As the findings of the midterm evaluation show, providing effective career training and counseling is a complex undertaking, and often requires a deep understanding of the local community. By enlisting local organizations that were already involved with local workforce development and allowing them to use existing or modified versions of their programming, the Alcoa Program is ensuring a program design that is attuned and also responsive to the unique needs of each community where it operates, both with regard to the program participants as well as the local labor market.

We have adapted somewhat in terms of the details how students get paid and things like that. The focus of the original designs. We have focused a lot on company recruitment and marketing. We're thinking about a little bit more adaptation. Moving forward, we're talking with Alcoa Foundation and program officers about being able to do some internship experiences on the BTC Campus as part of the lead project. I think, too, trying to structure some of the internships so they're more of a partnership or group setting, that's one of the things – it's very time consuming just to set up one internship and what I've realized is that I've had a couple of students go to a few places so I'm really kind of pushing more for employers to take on groups or a couple of students and work in a team environment and that's been really helpful. —Bellingham Technical College, United States.

Comprehensive approaches to workforce training and development

As aforementioned, providing workforce development training and guidance to unemployed youth is a complicated, labor-intensive commitment that requires working closely with the participants themselves as well as prospective employers and internship providers to determine each stakeholder's needs. As the findings of the midterm evaluation aim to show, the nonprofit partners have been effective in managing the wide-ranging demands placed on them by both the participants and the labor market, and

have demonstrated flexibility in their work with program beneficiaries as well as in their design and implementation of the program.

An excellent example of this comprehensive approach is the referral The Pump provides program participants to other local resources. Some of the participants they serve are struggling with issues such as homelessness or substance abuse that can severely threaten their stability. As part of their intake and assessment of program participants, The Pump refers youth confronting such issues to government agencies that can provide them necessary support.

...We've had people that have been homeless on the program, haven't got a steady sort of family background.If there's issues around stability, they might need help; might need to refer them on to different agencies that can help them with those sort of aspects.—The Pump, United Kingdom.

Challenges

The greatest challenges faced in the Alcoa Global Internship Program as described by both the businesses and the nonprofit partners involved an investment of time and resources that failed to result in the employment of intern participants. As has been mentioned, providing program participants with workforce development training is an inherently labor-intensive endeavor. Particularly given some of the stability issues faced by participants served by the program, there is always the possibility that, despite the best efforts of both the nonprofits and the businesses, some participants will withdraw from the program or that personnel issues will arise.

[Our intern] had a lot of personal issues and we all tried to assist with his personal issues. It wasn't the right time for him. —Business Respondent, Australia.

We did have one young person that completed the 100 hours internship but decided to leave, it was a pity as we were hoping he would become an employee. —Business Respondent, United Kingdom.

When businesses were asked what challenges they had faced in hosting interns, the two most often cited involved poor intern performance and the investment of time and resources required to host interns and bring them up to speed. As the quote below illustrates, particularly in the case of small or even mid-sized manufacturing companies, an investment of time, energy, and resources that does not result in quality labor or a longer-term employee can be a significant loss.

Our intern had many difficulties and unfortunately they overcame him [in] the end. He did return to work but was unreliable because of family problems. Unreliability is an issue for a small company because orders need to be fulfilled and if one of the workers doesn't arrive it does impact on others working here.—Business Respondent, Australia.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on feedback from the program participants, businesses, and nonprofit partners, as well as the study team's reflections on the midterm evaluation findings.

Consider increasing the length of paid internships

While the actual length of the paid internship component varies, one nonprofit partner as well as several businesses indicated that they would prefer longer internship periods. One nonprofit partner, FEUGA, indicated that this desire for a longer internship period had already been discussed with IIE program staff and some amendments to the internship period were made as a result. Despite this adjustment, however, FEUGA noted that in the Spanish context a 1-2 month internship is sometimes still seen as too brief.

The following quote from a respondent to the business survey also illustrates this desire for longer internship periods, in this case to help the business make a more informed decision about whether to commit to hiring the intern for a permanent position.

I believe the biggest challenge was the 100 hours of time in which we were able to 'test drive' these individuals. In instances, I wish we would have had more time to make a determination or further their training to see their real potential before we made the decision to take them on as one of our own.—Business Respondent, United States.

Offer Company Tours

The results of the midterm evaluation suggest that instead of requiring career fairs, all three groups of program stakeholders may be better served by conducting tours or site visits with local companies. While further analysis will be needed for the final evaluation, it may be that company tours offer a simpler, more cost-effective means of providing participants with an informative, motivating introduction to possible career paths. Company tours have the added benefit of providing nonprofit partners and businesses the opportunity to connect face-to-face in a manner that may be more conducive to relationship building.

Leverage the international Alcoa Global Internship Program network

As an international initiative involving nearly 400 participants in eight different countries, the Alcoa Global Internship Program is uniquely positioned to take advantage of its global reach and facilitate networking and collaboration among program stakeholders. Interviews with the nonprofit partners suggest that contact between members of different program sites is minimal. There may be low-cost, technology assisted ways to encourage communication between nonprofit partners as well as program staff in an effort to promote knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Conclusion

As the results of this midterm evaluation show, the Alcoa Global Internship Program for Unemployed Youth has made great strides toward its goal of providing young people with the training and support necessary to foster professional growth and embark upon successful careers in the manufacturing sector. By continuing to leverage the resources and expertise of an international network of nonprofits partners and local businesses, the program has the potential to demonstrate a successful response to the problem of youth unemployment worldwide.