

# **DARCA GRADUATES: SOCIAL MOBILITY STUDY**

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

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February 2025



# ERI Institute – About Us



ERI conducts cutting edge research for social impact. Working with government, philanthropy, businesses and investors - harnessing the power of data science, system analysis and strategy.

ERI's mission is to ensure that change-makers get the most impact per \$ invested.

## Clients include:



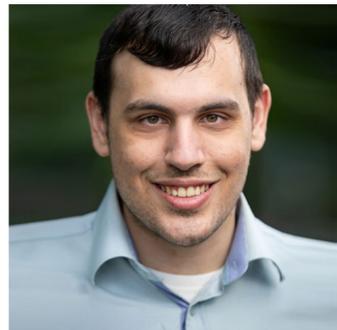
# ERI Institute – Researchers



**Anat Penso, CEO** - Anat holds an MA from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in sociology, specializing in sociological-educational research on young at-risk women. Before joining ERI she served as deputy to the CEO of JDC-Ashalim where she led strategic planning and implementation of projects on a national scale. Anat has developed and managed a great many national programs addressing the areas of at-risk youth, education, equal opportunity for minorities, welfare and health.



**Dr. Maya Dank, Partner and Chief Science Officer** - An expert in advanced quantitative research methods. She earned her PhD in Cognitive Science at the Hebrew University and did her post-doctorate jointly at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the Hebrew University. She is the recipient of many academic awards, including the Marie Curie Fellowship for outstanding researchers.



**Shay Ohayon, Data Analyst** - Shay is a psychologist by training, with a specialty in the study of cognition and experience in data science. He has a BA in psychology from the Open University and an MA in cognitive psychology from Bar-Ilan University. In the past, he engaged in statistical analysis in a variety of positions for which he employed a wide range of advanced research methodologies.

# Research Question



**Do Darca graduates demonstrate substantial evidence of socio-economic mobility?**

Do Darca graduates succeed in breaking the equation:

"Address = Future"

Areas examined:

**Meaningful  
service**

**Academic  
studies**

**Employment**

**Future  
vision**

**Self-efficacy  
and control**

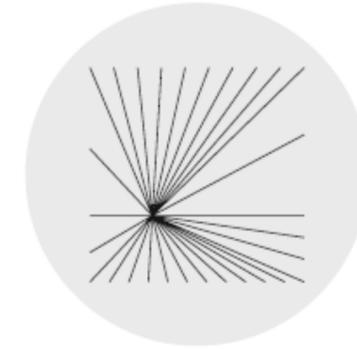
# Sources, Data & Methodology



## Primary Data Source on the General Population

The principal source of data regarding the general population is the 2022 Israel Social Survey, conducted by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). This dataset facilitates a comparative analysis between Darca graduates and two key reference groups:

- a. The national average.
- b. A peer group, defined based on key demographic and socio-economic variables, including gender, age, region of residence, and education level.



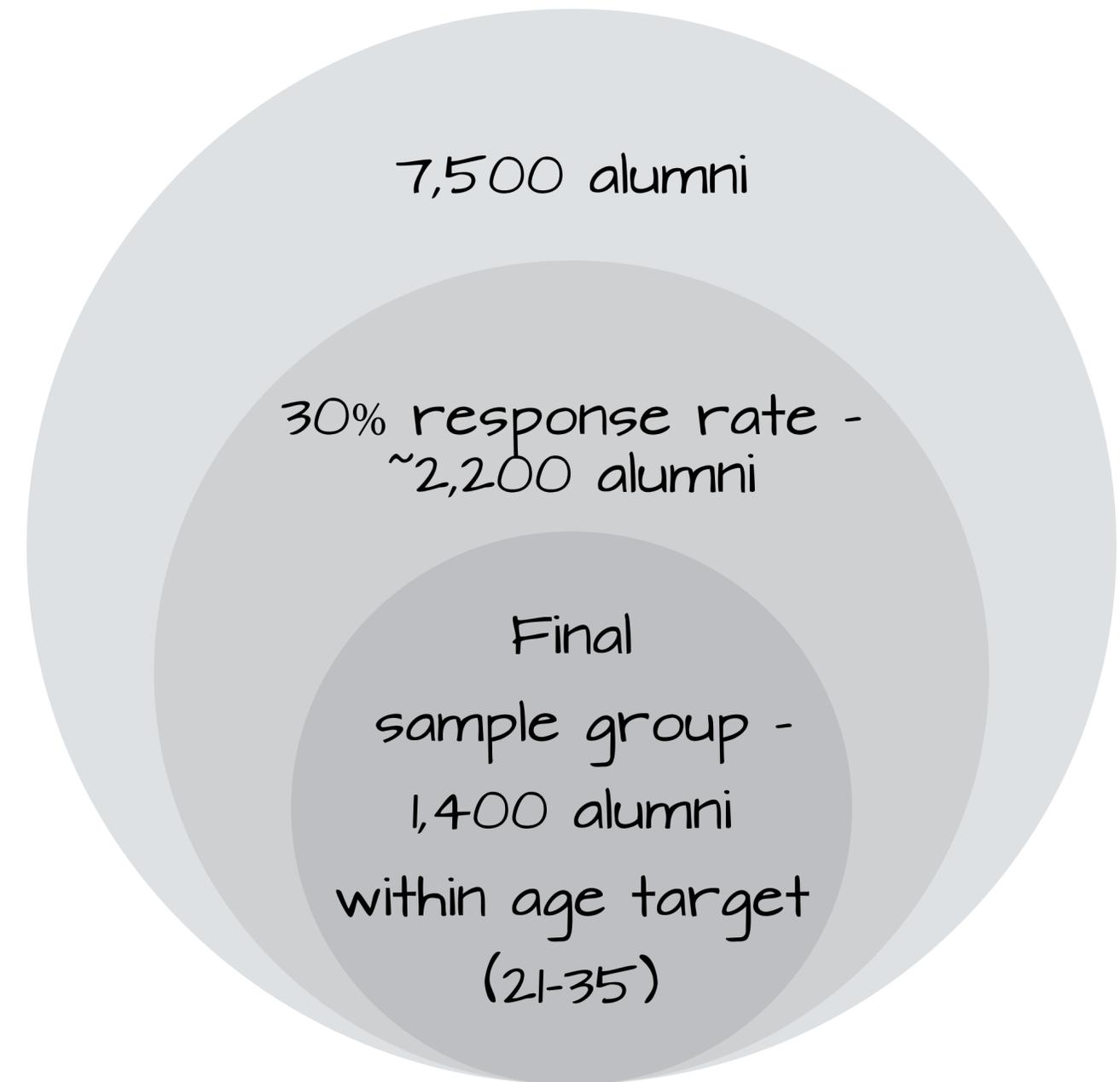
## Methodology – Establishing a Statistically Valid Comparison

To ensure methodological rigor, a structured Darca Graduate Survey was developed, incorporating questions closely aligned with those included in the CBS Social Survey. This approach enables a direct comparison between the findings of the graduate survey and a relevant reference group derived from CBS data. Additionally, the graduate survey includes supplementary, tailored questions designed to examine specific aspects of Darca alumni experiences and socio-economic trajectories.

# Sources, Data & Methodology

## Collecting the Data

1. Schools that have been part of the Darca network for at least ten years were selected to create a representative sample group of Darca graduates.
2. A questionnaire was sent via SMS to all graduates of the ten selected schools (approximately 7,500 graduates). To encourage participation, the Darca network promised to raffle three iPads among those who completed the questionnaire.
3. The questionnaire was open for responses for approximately two and a half weeks. During this period, two additional reminders were sent to participants to complete the questionnaire via SMS.
4. The survey achieved an impressive response rate of approximately 30% (2,200 respondents).
5. **From this group, approximately 1,400 participants fell within the relevant age range (21-35), forming the final Darca alumni sample group.**



# Findings Summary



## Meaningful service

- Darca graduates **enlistment average significantly higher** than national average



## Education

- Higher percentage of Darca graduates **continue to academic studies in STEM and medicine** when compared to peer group



## Employment

- **Low NEET percentage** (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) in Darca graduates when compared to peer group
- High percentage of Darca graduates in **management positions** when compared to peer group
- Darca graduates have a **clear future employment plan**



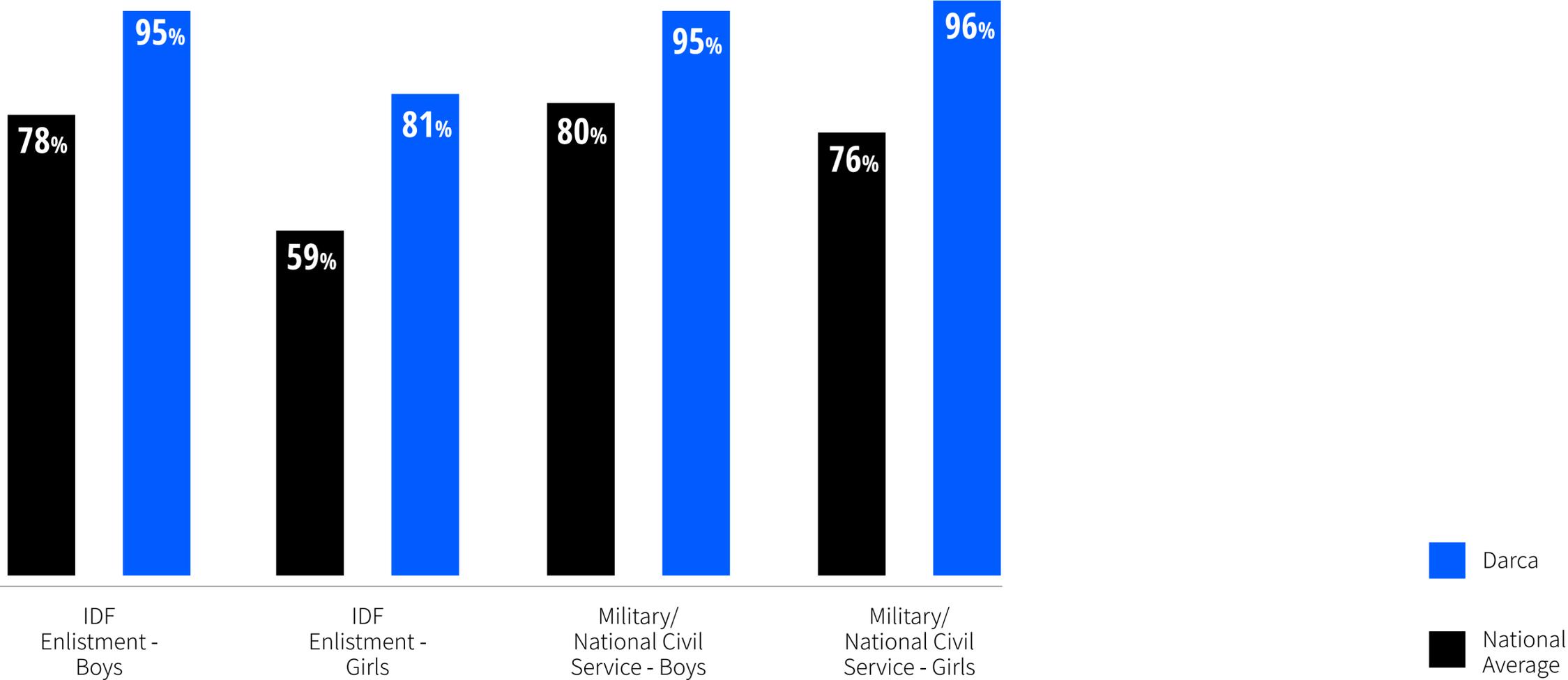
## Competencies

- Darca graduates proclaim **high self-efficacy and sense of control**

# Meaningful Service

## Enlistment data – Comparison to national average

Enlistment among Darca school graduates is significantly higher than the national average

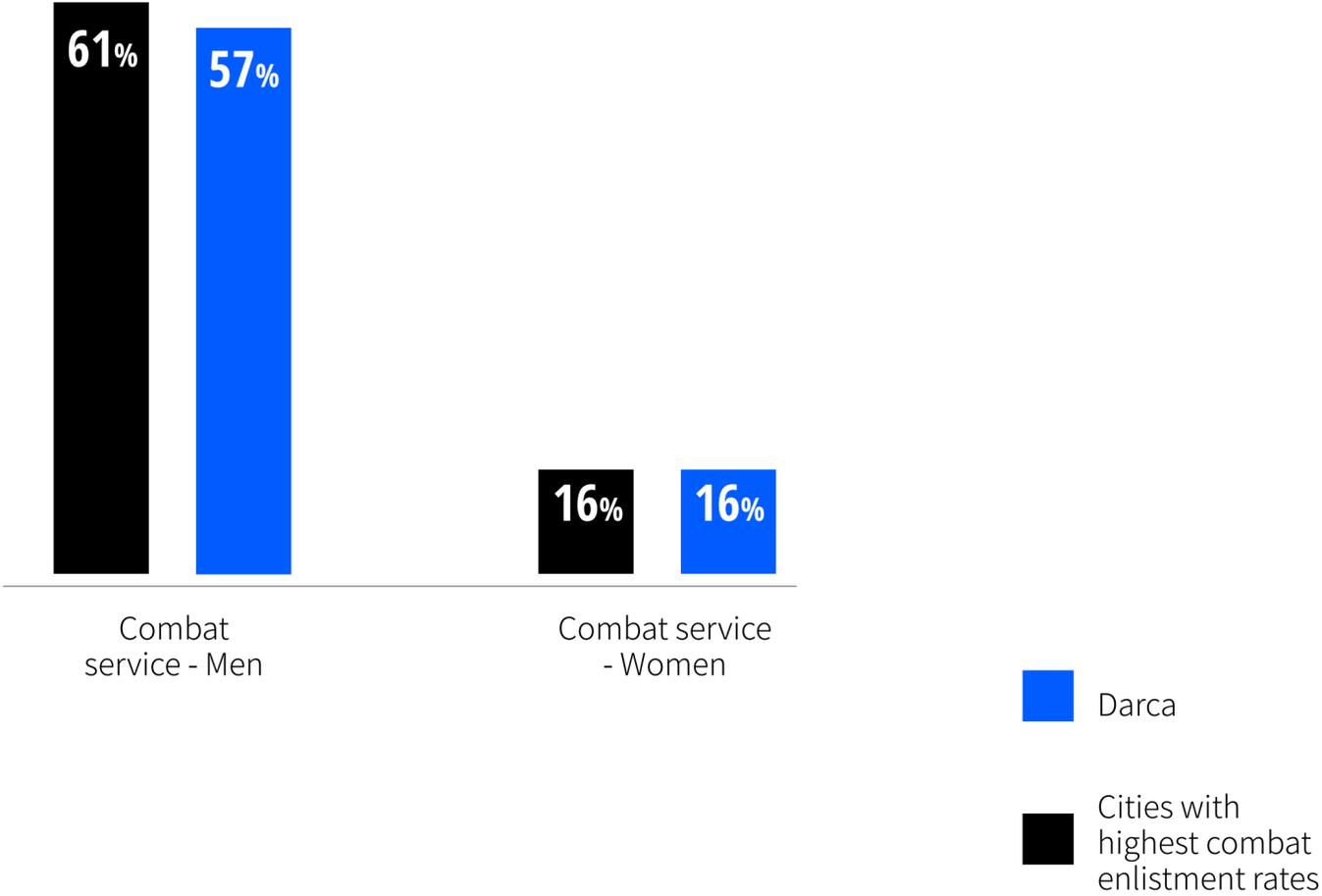


# Meaningful Service

## Meaningful service in combat roles

Significantly high percentage of graduates in combat service

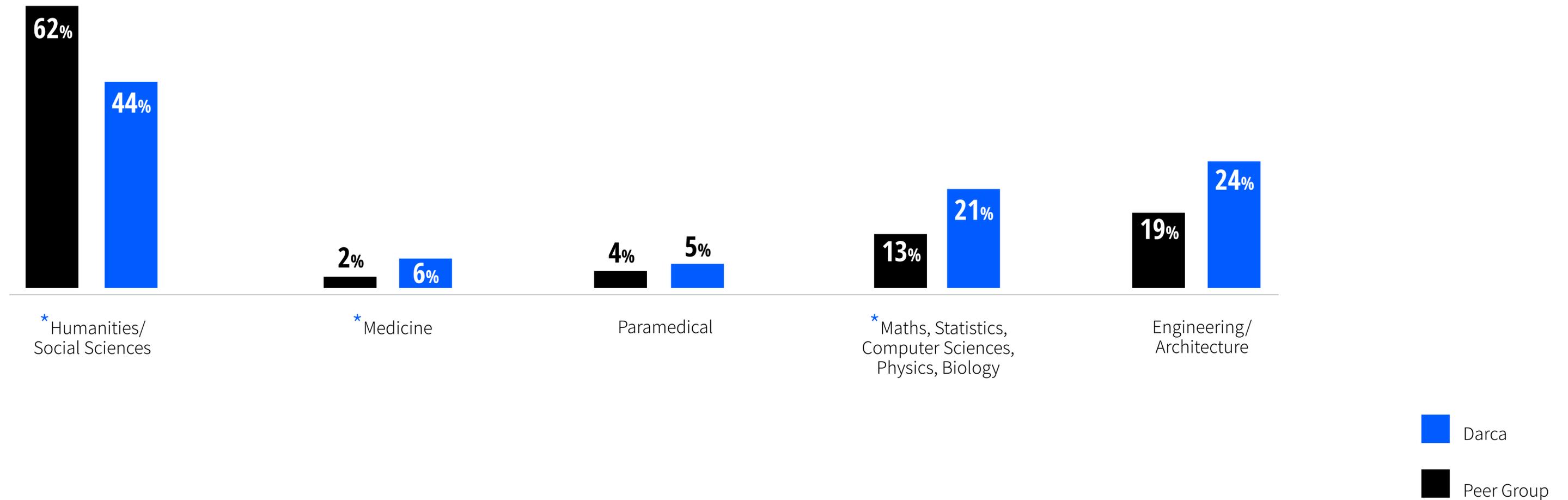
Percentage of Darca graduates in combat service (male and female) comparable to the cities with highest combat enlistment rates in Israel.



# Academic Studies

## Academic studies / Choice of profession

Rate of **STEM** and medical students among graduates is **significantly higher** than CBS peer group



\* A statistically significant difference

# Education and Employment

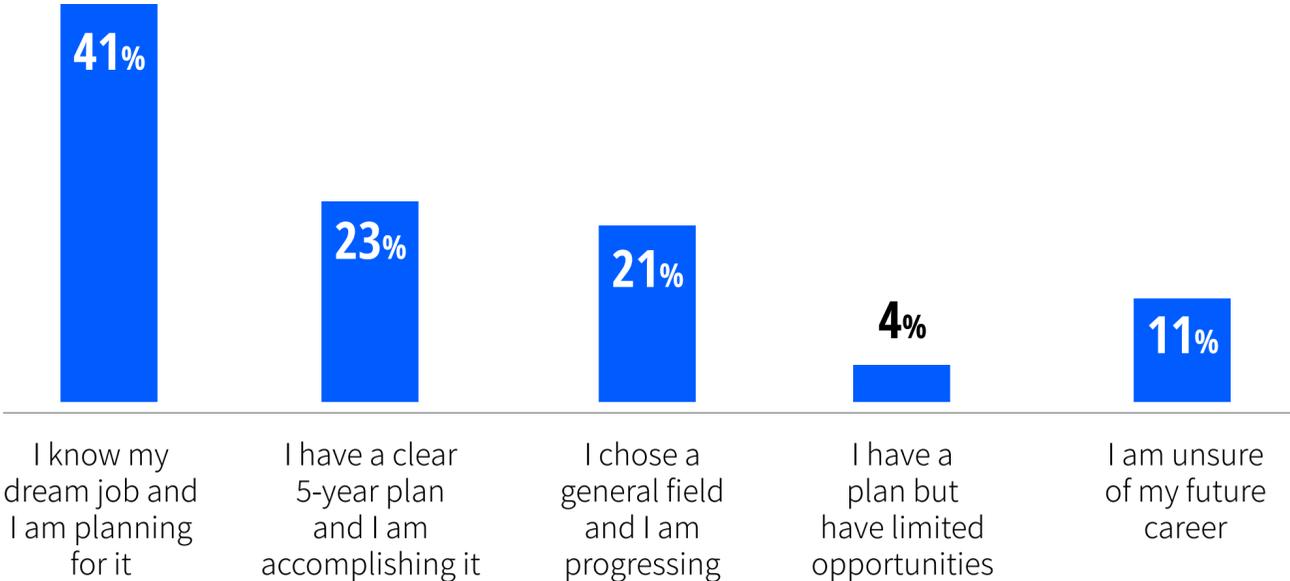
## Academic - Employment future vision

Almost 90% of Darca graduates have chosen their future employment path. This includes:

**64%** of respondents have specific employment plans and are actively pursuing their goals.

**25%** of respondents have general employment plans and are progressing towards their goals, subject to opportunity and circumstances.

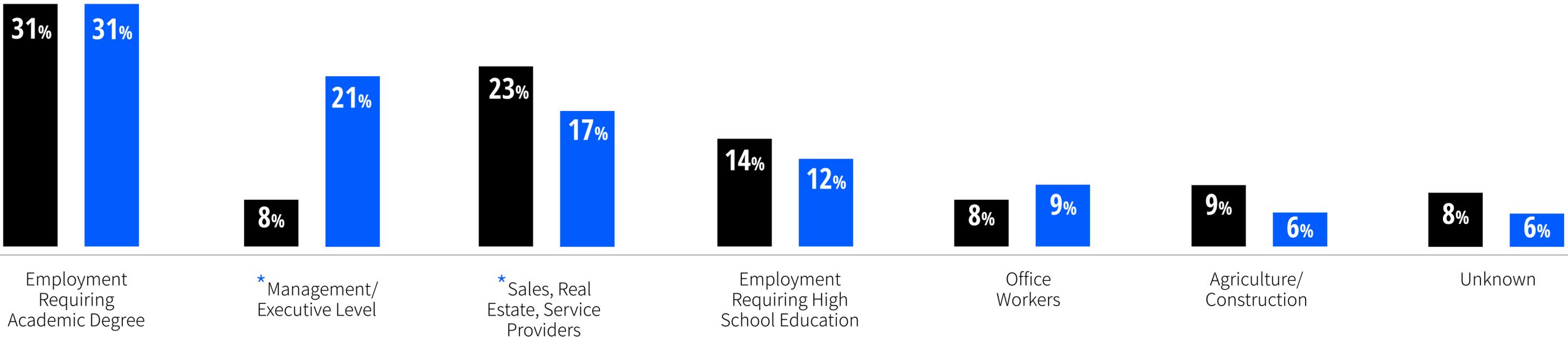
### Future Plan:



# Employment

## Employment profile

Percentage of Darca graduates who are employed in management positions is **significantly higher** than compared peer group

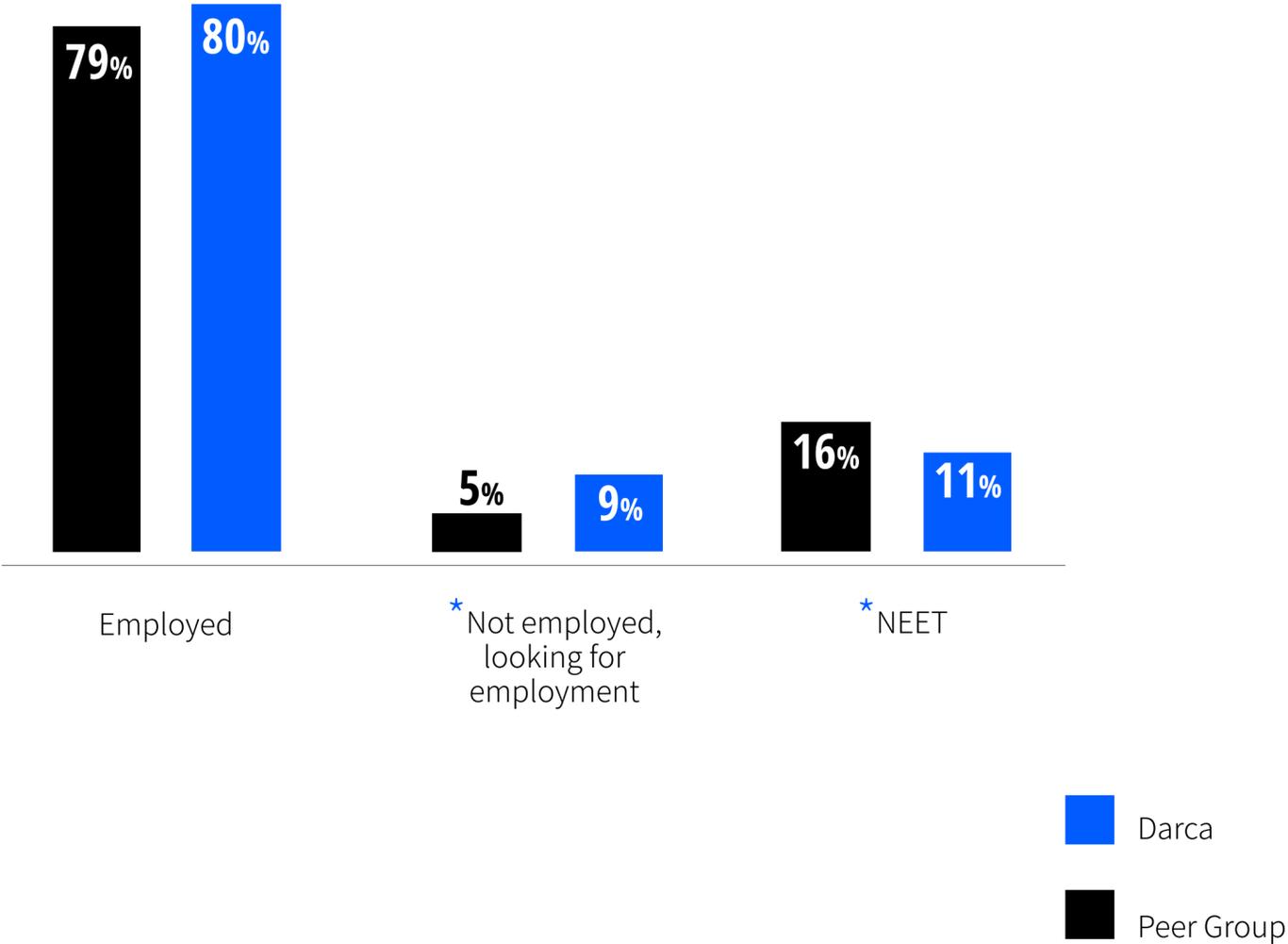


# Employment

**Low NEET percentage | "Not in Education, Employment, or Training"**

A significantly lower percentage of Darca graduates identified as NEET compared to CBS groups

A significantly higher percentage of Darca Graduates who reported being unemployed also reported that they are actively looking for employment



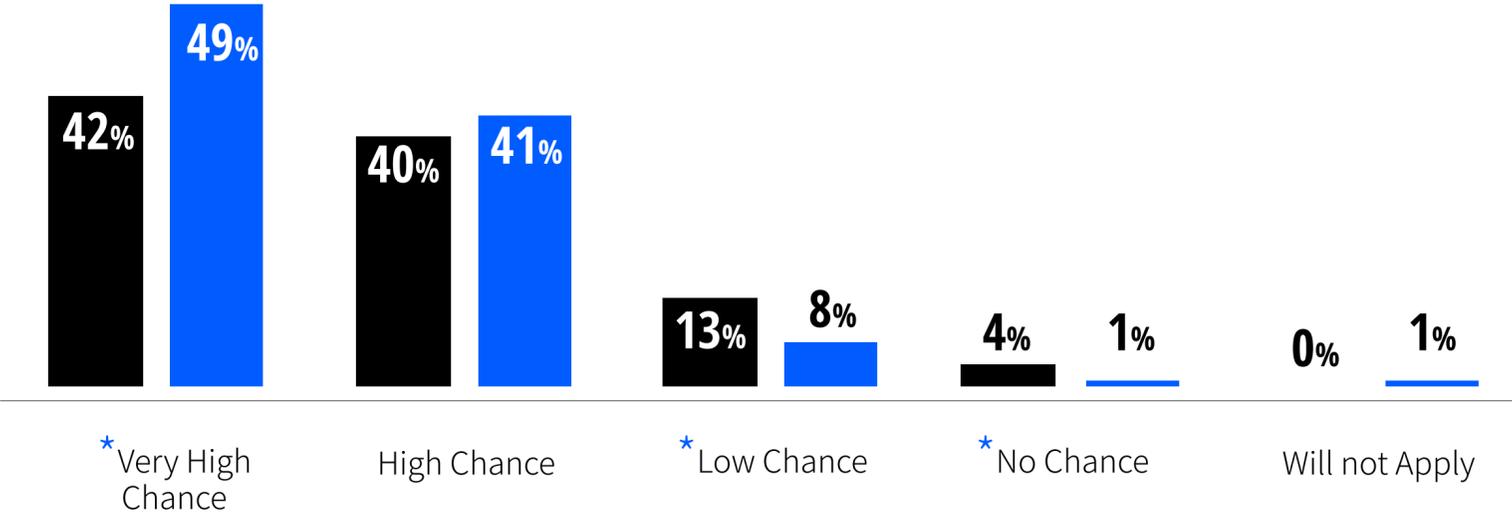
# Employment

## Self-efficacy and control

A **significantly higher** percentage of Darca graduates responded that they have a very high chance of finding other employment if they lose their job

A **significantly lower** percentage of Darca graduates stated they have a very low or no possibility of employment if they lose their job when compared to CBS peer groups

Chance of finding other employment



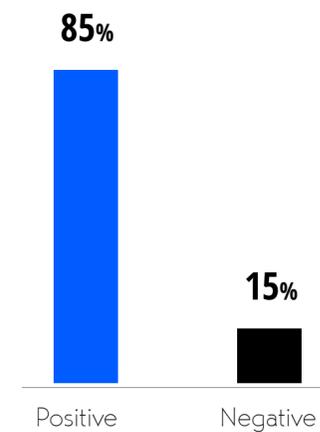
■ Darca  
■ Peer Group

# Darca Schools – Alumni Sentiment

## What do graduates think about school?

Quantitative analysis of sentiment

High positive sentiment over the years: **85%** of respondents expressed a positive stance towards school



## In what areas do graduates feel their school benefited them? (thematic analysis)

### Student-teacher relations (25%)

"I felt that the teachers always cared about the success of each student, those who struggled and those who excelled. I felt I was in a supportive environment and all the teachers wanted me to fulfil my potential...and make every effort to help me"

### Values (26%)

"Darca school helped improve my leadership and decision making in life...I know this will also help my progress in the future"

### Quality matriculation (31%)

"Academically, school undoubtedly contributed to my achievements and enabled my acceptance to the faculty I wanted"

### Soft skills (43%)

"The support I received made me understand I can achieve whatever I want and the strength to persevere and attain my goal"

# Darca Schools – Summary

Darca Schools' comprehensive research study of its network alumni indicates a statistically significant improvement in the social mobility of its graduates – with high rates enlisting in the IDF and into combat units and high rates going on to university studies, particularly in the fields of STEM and medicine.

Among Darca Network alumni, a very low rate of NEET – Not in education, employment or training – was recorded, while a very high rate of Darca's graduates reach managerial professional positions, expressing high self-efficacy and a clear career plan.

85% of graduates expressed a positive stance regarding their Darca Schools education, specifically regarding student-teacher relations, the quality of their education, and values as well as soft skills development.

# Long-Term Evaluations and Further Study Recommendations

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the long-term impact of the Darca Network on its graduates, it is advisable to conduct a follow-up study on the same cohort of alumni in five years. Such longitudinal research would allow for an in-depth examination of whether the trends identified in this study persist over time or undergo unforeseen shifts.

Furthermore, an extension of the research to include graduates from schools that integrated into the Darca Network in subsequent years is highly recommended. The current study exclusively examined alumni from schools that have been part of the Network since its inception, as institutions that joined at a later stage do not yet have age-appropriate graduates for evaluation. Incorporating these later-joining schools into future studies would enable a broader validation of the findings and ascertain whether the trends observed in this research are consistently reflected across all institutions within the Network.