



The IB programme teaches its students to be creative and imaginative in dealing with everyday problems and dilemmas in both school and in life

The International School of Uganda (ISU) is a not-for-profit, parent-owned school, offering International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes for students three to 19 years old.

As the IB celebrates its 50th year, it is an opportunity to reflect on why parents choose the IB.

I have worked with the IB for 13 years, as a teacher, co-ordinator, college counsellor, principal and parent.

Holistic nature

To answer the question of why choose the IB, I could speak about the rigor and holistic nature of the programmes, or the fact that IB students can be accelerated to the second year of university.

Or that students join university better trained in academic research, writing and study.

However, the reason to choose the IB is more than the academic success its students are known for.

To understand why you should choose the IB, it would be helpful to start with the end in mind.

What do we hope for our children at the end of the educational journey? Is to get the highest grades possible, to get into the best universities or to get a great job? Herein lies the difference between the IB and other curricula.

The IB explicitly focuses on learning for life, not just success in the next hurdle.

Its aim is to develop inquiring,

Why choose IB?

IB IS NOT ONLY ABOUT PREPARING FOR THE NEXT STEP, IT IS ABOUT PREPARING FOR LIFE

knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world.

In fact, there isn't an end to the educational journey. Its focuses on who our children will become and not just what they can do.

Preparing for life

I was once asked by a prospective family why they should choose the IB over an alternative curriculum offered here in Kampala.

I explained that the alternative curriculum would likely enable their child to succeed in getting entry to a good university but the IB is not only about preparing for the next step, it is about preparing for life.

Our students illustrate this to us



IB develops individual talents of young people and teaches them to relate experience of the classroom to realities of the world

every day. Yesterday a nine-year-old girl asked my colleague and I if they could play after eating lunch.

My colleague responded: "Yes, it is fine even though it is not yet time."

The child turned, looked at her watch and replied: "It is ok, we still have five more minutes to eat, I'll wait."

This action illustrated one of those 10 IB goals of being principled.

Even though her teachers said it was fine, she felt she should honour the lunch agreement.

Children in the IB programmes are expected to live out their learning.

They are given freedom and encouragement to make choices for the betterment of their society, not because they have to, but because they want to.

The curriculum, the classroom

and the school day is driven by the children's ideas, needs and interests.

Education is not something that moulds the child, it is something that they can mould.

Empowering

Children's ideas and thoughts are regarded with high respect and consideration which empowers them to own their learning, make decisions and take responsibility for their actions.

Education has often been tasked with the challenge of creating law abiding, disciplined citizens who are trained for the workplace, however, these traditional structures can often create compliance.

That compliance creates individuals who are not trained to question, take risks or consider "what if?"

They are not encouraged to think creatively to solve today's complex problems, to take risks to challenge the status quo or to take action to speak up for injustices in society or the abuse of the environment.

If you want your child to succeed in education, choose a school that demonstrates successful admission to great universities.

If you want your child to succeed in life, choose the IB.

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