

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

New Vision ADVERTISER SUPPLEMENT

Students display different innovations during the International Technology and Robots competition at Galaxy International School Uganda in 2016



Give your child a global mindset with an international curriculum

The growing number of international schools can only imply one thing. There is a growing demand for the international curriculum-based education as a number of Ugandans shun the local curriculum on grounds of inefficiency. **PRISCA BAIKE** talked to parents and experts about the two curricula.

Tyrone Tusubira, 14, is unlike most of his peers. His confidence, and focus make him come off older and wiser. From as early as the fifth grade, he knew that he wanted to be a computer scientist and five years on, he is still committed to his dream. His mother, Flavia Tusubira, says his teachers have been very supportive in keeping her son's dream alive.

"They always ensure that he is doing well in the relevant subjects," says the proud mother, adding that he has started interfacing with some age-appropriate computer science practical projects to prepare him for his future course and career.

The well-equipped computer laboratory and well-stocked library at the international school he attends makes it easy for him to research and learn as much as he needs about his dream career. "This is exactly why I chose an international school for my son," says Tusubira.

He explains that what used to be a reserve for expatriates and the affluent is now fast becoming a viable option for quite a number of middle class parents, who wish for

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS ARE POPULAR FOR THEIR HANDS-ON APPROACH TO LEARNING

their children to receive international education. "Parents are embracing the international curriculum because of what it offers," says Mawanda.

The international curriculum, according to Mawanda, is based on the premise of a global mindset. He says children who go through this kind of curriculum are innovative, dynamic and easily adapt to multi-cultural settings.

In resonance with Mawanda, Paul Mwiwa, whose two children attend an international school, says he chose the international curriculum because of the weaknesses in the local

curriculum. "The current Ugandan curriculum encourages children to cram and reproduce what they are taught simply to pass exams," Mwiwa says.

This, he says, is not the case with the international curriculum, which is more practical. He says the international curriculum emphasises the applicability of knowledge, which is the true essence of learning.

"Children in international schools are given projects to work on, which sharpens their minds and prepares them for the field when they are finally out of school," Mwiwa says.

Mawanda elucidates that the international curriculum

fosters critical thinking and problem solving.

He says since international schools have modern facilities, their students are exposed to practical lessons, which promote hands-on and experiential learning.

Mwiwa explains that since the children are fewer in number, there is lower student-teacher ratio, which in-turn improves learning outcomes.

"A teacher can easily identify a child's weaknesses and address them early enough, so every child has an opportunity to learn," he says Mwiwa. He says the few numbers enable teachers to also identify the strengths of various students and nurture them.

Although her children are doing the local curriculum, Barbara Nankinga also finds the international curriculum much better than the local one. "If it wasn't for the high tuition fees, my children would be doing the international curriculum," says Nankinga.

The local curriculum, according to Nankinga, overloads children with subjects and topics that may not really be necessary for their dream career.

Retired former Mengo SS headteacher George William Semivule, also shares Nankinga's sentiments.

"The local curriculum is okay, but wasteful," he says.

Semivule wonders why a student should do around 20 subjects in Senior One only to drop them to only eight in two years. For a poor country like Uganda, he says, it is a wastage of resources to teach a student so many subjects, yet they will only sit for eight subjects in their final exams.

However, apart from its wasteful nature, Semivule maintains that there is nothing wrong with the local curriculum. The problem, he says, lies in its implementation. "Due to the commercialisation of

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Cost of international education

By Prisca Baike

This year, Paul Musumba spent around sh49.5m on school fees for his three children at Aga Khan Primary School.

As the international school year closes, he is aware that his budget will only increase as his children progress to higher grades.

Although he admits that such fees are too high for an average Ugandan, he is quick to note: "The money is worth it, considering the facilities that the children are availed with," he explains.

Speaking under condition of anonymity, an administrator at GEMS Cambridge international school, Butabika, says parents pay \$500 (about sh1.8m) to kick start their children's enrollment process. Upon enrollment, an extra \$100 (about sh360,000) is paid to have a child registered. For pre-kindergarten, parents pay \$6,800 (about sh29.6m) annually, although termly payments are also allowed. Students in higher grades pay more.

For the International School of Uganda, new students are registered for a one-time fee of \$250 (about sh900,000) in

addition to a one-time capital levy fee of \$6000 (about sh21.6m).

Annual junior school fees range from \$4,950 to \$18,500 (about sh17.82m-sh66.6m), while high school students pay between \$21,500-26,300 (about sh77.4m-sh94.68m) every year.

Another popular school in the international category is Rainbow International School. Its fees range between \$5,030 (about sh18.108m) and \$14,555 (about sh52.398m) annually, excluding lunch and transport, which are paid for separately on a termly basis.

New students, according to their fees structure, pay \$500 (about sh1.8m) to be admitted. Another \$500 (about sh1.8m) capital levy fee is charged for new students as they join the school. Boarding fees are \$3,300 (about sh11.88m) per term.

Acorns International School, located on the Northern By-pass in Kisaasi, charges between \$786- \$2,200 (about sh2.83m-sh7.92m) per term. Registration fees stand at \$400 (about sh1.44m) while capital levy fees are \$200 (about sh720,000).

With a branch in Lubowa and boarding campus in Jinja, Galaxy International School charges between \$3,700- \$12,100 (about sh13.32m-

sh43.56m) per annum. Parents who wish their children to stay in the boarding section have to part with an extra \$1,800 (about sh6.48m).

The British school of Kampala, based in Muyenga, offers a cheaper alternative.

Fees at this school range between 1,550,000 plus an extra \$200 (about sh720,000) to 2,700,000 plus \$720 (about sh2.592m).

Heritage International School charges between \$5,507 and \$11,663 (about sh19.83m-sh41.99) annually.

Acacia International School is ideal for parents looking for a Christian-based international education. The annual fees range from \$4,550-\$8,400 (about sh16.38m-sh30.24m) for the ordinary students.

For Ambrosoli International school, parents have to part with between \$6,140- \$9,939 (about sh22.1m-35.79m).

The Kampala Diplomatic International School in Naguru offers an all-round curriculum, designed for both the Christian and Islamic religion with emphasis on teaching international languages such as German, Arabic and French.

The school charges an annual fee of between \$1,400 (about sh5m) and \$1,800 (about sh6.5m), in addition to a registration fee of \$100 (about sh360,000).



International school fees

GEMS CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

\$500 (About sh1.8m) to kick start their children's enrolment process
Registration \$100 (About sh360,000)
Pre-Kindergarten: \$6,800 (About sh2.448m) annually
First and second grade: \$12,975 (About sh46.71m) annually.
Third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade: \$15,350 (About sh55.26m) annually.
Seventh to eleventh grade: \$17,725 (About sh63.81m) annually
Twelfth to thirteenth grade: \$18,912.50 (About sh68.085m) per year.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF UGANDA

One time registration for new students: \$250 (About sh900,000)
One-time capital levy: \$6,000 (About sh21.6m).
Annual junior school fees: \$4,950 to \$18,500 (sh17.82m-sh66.6m)
Annual high school fees: \$21,500-26,300 (sh77.4m-sh94.68m)

RAINBOW INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

\$5,030 (sh18.108m) to \$14,555 (sh52.398m) annually, excluding lunch and transport.
Admission fee: \$500 (sh1.8m).
Capital levy: \$500 (About sh1.8m)
Boarding fees: \$3,300 (sh11.88m) per term.

ACORNS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

\$786- \$2,200 (sh2.83m- sh7.92m) per term (exclusive of meals).
Registration fees: \$400 (sh1.44m)
Capital levy fees: \$200 (sh720,000).
Membership per club: \$100 (sh360,000).

JINJA GALAXY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

\$3,700-\$12,100 (sh13.32m- sh43.56m) per annum.
One-time caution fee: \$300 (sh1.08m) is charged initially.
Boarding fee: \$1,800 (sh6.48m).

THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF KAMPALA

1,350,000 plus an extra \$200 (About sh720,000) - sh2,700,000 plus \$720 (about sh2.592m).
An initial \$50 (About sh180,000) registration fee and \$100 (About sh360,000) caution fee. Uniforms and meals are paid for separately.

HERITAGE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

\$5,507-\$11,663 (sh19.83m-sh41.99) annually.
Registration: \$400 (sh1.44m)
Development fees \$1,000 (sh3.6m) per family or \$500 (about sh1.8m) if one only has a single child in the school.

ACACIA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Annual fee range: \$4,550-\$8,400 (sh16.38m-sh30.24m)

AMBROSOLI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

All-inclusive annual fee: \$9,653 (sh34.75m) to \$12,080 (sh46m)

THE KAMPALA DIPLOMATIC INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Annual fee: \$1400 (sh5m) to \$1,800 (sh6.5m)
Registration fee: \$100 (sh360,000). Fees for lunch, uniform, swimming and other activities are paid for separately.

Under 12 boys dive in during the National Swimming trials at GEMS Cambridge International School, Butabika in 2015. International students have to pay more for such activities



The international curriculum is centred on innovation

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education, many teachers are teaching students to pass exams, rather than to understand, thus the cramming and exam malpractices," Semivule notes.

Grace Baguma, the executive director of the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), agrees that the curriculum is just wrongly delivered to the learners.

She notes that the international and local curriculum cannot be measured against each other, since they are both

EXPERTS SAY PEOPLE WHO ATTEND INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS ARE MORE MARKETABLE IN THE FIELD

designed with different goals and targets.

"Our curriculum is okay since it meets our immediate needs as a country," says Baguma, highlighting that the curriculum conforms to the country's Vision 2040 and National Development Plan II.

She points out that curricula are not static and are continuously revised to

keep them relevant. And it is against this background that the Ugandan curriculum is being revised.

"Some issues were raised regarding the curriculum and we are working on it to address those issues," she says, noting that the new curriculum will be more practical and centered on innovation, critical thinking

and problem solving.

Semivule encourages parents not to shun the local curriculum. He says just because some parents are opting for the international curriculum, does not mean that the local curriculum is bad.

Although more parents are increasingly opting for the international curriculum, Semivule advises parents to ensure that their children do not lose their traditional ties and true identity, which most often gets lost amid the multi-cultural international school set up.

Mawanda, however, says international schools

encourage students to respect each other's cultures, which makes them global citizens.

Mawanda also explains that the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) awarded by international schools, is the most popular secondary school qualification and is internationally trusted.

"This makes our students marketable," he says, adding that the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma programme that they take their students through in their final high school years (grade 12 and 13) vigorously prepares them for university. He explains that under the

programme, their students are introduced to research and report writing, which adequately prepares them for university way ahead of their peers who are pursuing the local curriculum.

Although the local curriculum has no problem and is undertaken by the majority of Ugandans due to its affordability, some experts maintain that the international curriculum gives value for money as students gain global exposure, have access to modern equipment and exchange programmes, which prepare them for the dynamic global village that the world has become today.