

ISU reflects diversity

International Baccalaureate Organisation (IB) and in 1996, Lincoln International School awarded the first cohort of students IB diplomas and high school diplomas.

At this time, the board of directors also had a vision of the need for more space.

"They had the vision that Kampala was going to grow, so they purchased land in Lubowa off Entebbe Road," Jacoby says.

Lincoln International School's growth over the years culminated in the purchase of a 50-acre site in Lubowa and this time round, the entire school was relocated to a purpose-built campus in 2001.

"For someone who lived in Bukoto, a Kampala suburb, I could not fathom coming to work in Lubowa daily, but then the move happened and now we are comfortable working here," Florence Achiro, who has worked as the school's registrar for 26 years, says.

In 2002, President Yoweri Museveni officially opened the campus. "This is my most memorable event, I recall him saying this is a first-world school in a third world country," Achiro says.

Diversity

Two years later, Lincoln International School changed



Children playing at the early childhood centre

its name to the International School of Uganda (ISU) for several reasons, of which the first was to reflect on its international population, which mainly comprises Americans and Ugandans.

The student body is made up of over 60 nationalities and the two largest groups are Ugandan and American, each making up about 20% of the student body.

"This was to give the sense that the school is international

and not just American," Jacoby explains.

This aspect is also emphasised by the international curriculum (IB Diploma Programme), which the school offers.

"We are not an American school, but an international one, so we offer an international curriculum," Jacoby notes.

Simply put, if the students leave Uganda and go to a country such as Cambodia, they can easily enroll in a school

that is offering the IB Diploma Programme. Ugandan parents also opt for the curriculum because they want their children to be exposed to different cultures.

Challenges

Besides the challenges of space in Buganda and Kira road and the instability during Idi Amin's era, ISU faces the challenge of appealing to the Ugandan community and dispelling certain beliefs.

"For instance, since we do not have a uniform, some people assume that we do not have discipline. There are also perceptions that ISU is an elite school and we are trying to get the message out that we are part of the Ugandan community," Jacoby says.

Another perception is that Lubowa is far away and some people choose schools according to location, so they will opt not to take their children to ISU.

"The high tax rate in Uganda makes it difficult to offer competitive salaries to teachers," Jacoby adds.

Getting people to get familiar with the name change is also still a problem.

As told to
Jacquiline Emodek

ALUMNI ATTRIBUTE SUCCESS TO SCHOOL

ABIGAIL KAJUMBA, 1986 TO 1994

I was at ISU for eight years and my time there was rewarding and fun. It was enlightened, blissful and gave me a strong academic base. I got an international mindset and appreciation of culture and travel.

I developed a sense of social responsibility and care for the less fortunate through charity work at ISU. I currently work as the Africa development manager at Alpha.



OLUKAYODE OSUNSAN, 1992-1999

Moving from a regular Nigerian school, which lacked many facilities and with a large teacher-student ratio to ISU; with a wealth of facilities and a small teacher-student ratio, was memorable. It is like moving from a backpacker dormitory to a five-star hotel. The educational format built my confidence. I was able to navigate the 'real world' in a friendly and familiar environment.



JENNY FARMER, 2000-2002

I attended ISU for my last two years of high school, from 2000 to 2002 and I did the IB diploma programme. I was part of the move from Kira road to Lubowa; it was a good change from a small campus to a beautiful, spacious campus here.

Besides nurturing my love for environmental science, ISU made me realise how fortunate I was through community visits and now I help with a small library through book donations and the resources that I have in Jinja district.

I obtained a PhD from the University of Aberdeen and returned to Uganda to undertake research into Uganda's wetlands.

