

Minister asks international schools to blend local, global curricula

BY KARIM MUYOBO

KAMPALA. The government has urged international schools operating in Uganda to integrate the national curriculum with global education programmes such as the Cambridge curriculum to ensure learners remain grounded in Ugandan values while acquiring internationally competitive skills.

The call was made last Friday during the official opening of Acorn International School, where education officials, parents, and stakeholders gathered to celebrate the launch of a purpose-built international campus in Kajjansi, in Wakiso District. The stakeholders said the move aims at delivering world-class education in East Africa.

Speaking at the event, the State minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr John Mulimba, said the establishment of interna-

tional schools presents an opportunity to bridge Uganda's education system with global learning frameworks without losing national identity.

"By establishing an institution that offers an international curriculum, you are not only providing access to quality education, but also bridging the gap between global and local standards," Mr Mulimba said.

He added: "However, it is important that international schools take into account Uganda's curriculum context while embracing global best practices."

Parents were also urged to embrace international curricula and standards, noting that they help raise the country's education system to globally competitive levels.

Uganda's new national curriculum, designed by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), emphasises competence-based learning, patri-

otism, values, and practical skills aimed at national development.

The curriculum that was rolled out by the Ministry of Education and Sports in February 2020 is aimed at meeting the learners' needs in regard to skills training and enhancement.



Justification.

It is important that international schools take into account Uganda's curriculum context while embracing global best practices. I urge schools to blend global curricula like Cambridge with

local content that reflects the rich heritage and values of our nation. This fusion will allow students to uphold their roots while becoming global citizens." - **John Mulimba, State minister for Foreign Affairs**

Under this curriculum, subjects for Senior One and Senior Two were reduced from 43 to 21. Schools are now teaching 12 subjects at Senior One and

Senior Two, out of which 11 are compulsory, while one is an elective.

The first batch of the new curriculum sat for the Uganda Certificate of Education national examination last year, where officials say it improved the education standards and learners' general understanding of issues.

In contrast, international programmes such as the Cambridge curriculum focus on inquiry-based learning, critical thinking, and global perspectives. Mr Mulimba said blending the two approaches would allow learners to remain rooted in Uganda's cultural values as they gain skills to compete internationally.

"I urge schools to blend global curricula like Cambridge with local content that reflects the rich heritage and values of our nation. This fusion will allow students to uphold their roots while becoming global citizens," he said.

In her address, Ms Ameena Lalani, the chief executive officer of Acorn International School, said the opening of the Kajjansi campus in Wakiso marked a significant milestone in the school's journey and commitment to excellence

in education.

Ms Lalani said: "In January last year, we stood here for the groundbreaking ceremony. Today, less than 24 months later, we stand before this marvellous, purpose-built school, ready to serve our students, families, and dreams."

She added that building a campus of such scale within a short time required vision, trust, and unwavering support from the school's board and leadership.

Tracing the school's origins, Ms Lalani said Acorn International School began in 1996 as a small preschool in Nakaseero, Kampala City and was later expanded into primary education in 2012 with only four learners at its Bukoto campus, in Kampala City.

"Today, that small acorn has grown into a strong and flourishing tree, with four international schools across Uganda and Rwanda, each nurturing generations of leaders," she said, adding that the school's mission is to build a community of global citizens that pursues academic excellence through a holistic, inquiry-based environment, while maintaining a strong focus on child protection and wellbeing.