

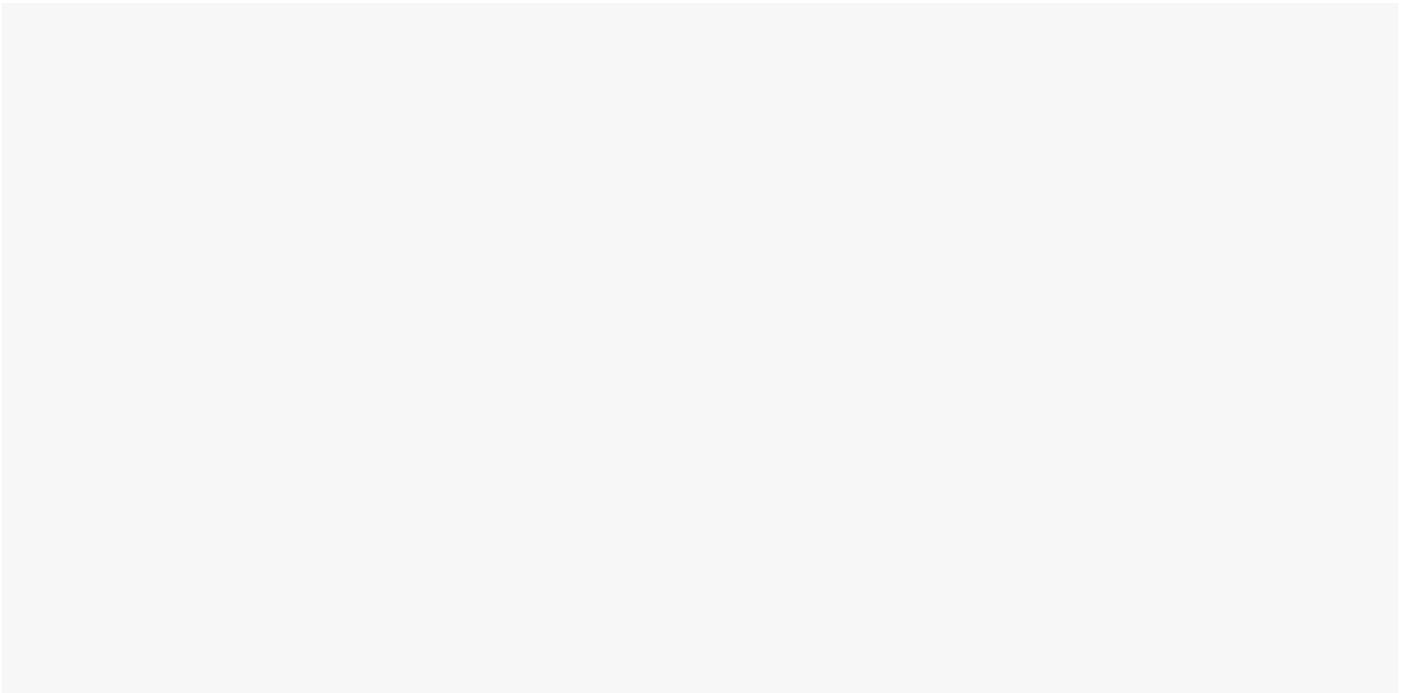
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Aga Khan

The entire Aga Khan network mainly through the Aga Khan Education Services has been instrumental in promoting education in the region. This includes the Aga Khan Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary schools in all East African countries, Aga Khan University which is hosted by the Aga Khan Hospital as well as the Aga Khan Academies.

by **Kimani Chege** — July 8, 2018



His Highness the Aga Khan meets with primary school students at the Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa. The school is the first of a planned network of Aga Khan Academies dedicated to expanding access to education of an international standard of excellence in Asia and Africa. Photo : 13 November 2006. - Photo credit: AKDN / Gary Otte



Josephine Awino was born in Mombasa, Kenya when at tender age of three, her photographer father died due to a tetanus infection. With no support from anyone in Mombasa, her mother was forced to move back home in Kisumu with Awino where the extended family lived. It was a life of despair for Awino in the formative years of her life with lack of basic needs despite her

academic prowess rising each day.

“Despite my mum farming food crops we still ended up having no food many times. I found myself home due to lack of fees. At that time, my mother wasn’t even able to pay for exam fees and went home without doing exams for the next grade.

In grade 6, as one of the top 3 students, she was selected by the school for an interview for the Aga Khan Academy Mombasa where, if successful, she would get a full scholarship. Luckily, she easily passed the interview and joined Aga Khan Academy Mombasa in January 2012 pursuing world class education in an environment that allowed her to focus on education while also taking part in extracurricular activities.

Awino is now about to join Wellesley College in Boston, USA- a premier university for women development with star alumni including Hilary Clinton and Madeline Albright- where she plans to venture into environmental science.

The Aga Khan Academies are a network of schools being established by His Highness the Aga Khan in countries across South and Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East. These unique academies have been bestowed with extraordinary vision for the Academies as a global learning community, where young people like Awino develop the capacity to become future leaders of civil society.

While launching the academies in 2006, Aga Khan, the leader of Ismailia Muslims noted the significance of providing education across racial, social and cultural backgrounds. “Our goal, then, is not to provide special education for privileged elite – but to provide an exceptional education for the truly exceptional.”

Eastern Africa has had tremendous achievement through the academies with both students benefiting from the learning as well the whole education ecosystem benefiting from a high level of learning.

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The academies are located in Hyderabad India, Maputo Mozambique and Mombasa Kenya. Each academy reaches out to students of all backgrounds, regardless of culture, race, religion or financial circumstance. The Academies follow the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, ensuring a global standard of educational excellence and external validation through the annual IB Diploma exams.

The education system at the Mombasa and Maputo academies has equipped many students drawn from Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique and Tanzania a chance to interact with a career changing system that is keen on character, performance and potential growth as leaders in the society.

Those who graduate from the academies have gone ahead to be responsible citizens across the globe. The students undergo incomparable preparation that leads to placement in topmost universities and colleges such as Stanford University, Yale University, University College London, Columbia University and University of British Columbia, among many others.

One of such students is Muriuki Njonjo is a former student of University of Waterloo in Canada and a graduate of the famed Aga Khan Academies. During his time in the Mombasa Aga Khan Academy, he was introduced to intensive and specialized education system that has since catapulted him to the global arena as he undertook an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. After initiating several projects for the community around Mombasa, Njonjo was lucky to be enrolled to the Canadian University where during the stint was able to initiate a Mombasa version of TEDx talk show known as TEDxYouth event.

“Since joining Waterloo, I have been involved in the organization of the annual TEDx event, I have delivered a start-up pitch for funding at Velocity, the world’s largest free business incubator, and I have been privileged to join the first incorporated blockchain community management firm in North America as the Head of Public Relations,” notes Njonjo.

The Dean of admissions at the Aga Khan Academy Mombasa Paul Davies notes that the institution is aiming to have brilliant students regardless of their background. He says the availability of “one of the best education system in the world is giving students a chance to showcase their potential in leadership as well as solving societal issues.”

The manager of Curriculum Development at the Aga Khan Academies Alexandra Holland notes the development of the

learning curriculum is guided by ethics, culture, pluralism, leadership in civil societies and economic for development. “What we are trying to achieve in those core guides is to use them as a lens in which we achieve the curriculum and teach them to be leaders.”

Each Academy includes a Professional Development Centre (PDC) that both prepares high quality teachers for the Academy and also develops educators in the government system through an explicit focus on outreach education. The Academy itself also plays a catalytic role as an exemplar of the best teaching practices.

The PDCs within the three operating Aga Khan Academies in Mombasa, Hyderabad and Maputo have all been active in providing a range of programmes to support schools and communities as part of their outreach work – this work is customized to each cultural context and the unique governmental system of schooling.

A Microsoft Showcase and Mentor School, AKA Mombasa has initiated the Talent Identification Programme to actively search for students with strong academic and leadership potential, including, in particular, students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and who otherwise would not have access to high-quality education.

In conjunction with the Aga Khan Foundation—which has been implementing innovative, community-driven solutions to development challenges for more than 50 years—the Academy identifies educationally and economically marginalized areas to conduct Talent Identification.

The Academy pioneered the world’s first ever Swahili-English bilingual IB programme and has consistently outperformed the global average in exams.

Through service and internship opportunities with local AKDN agencies—including the Aga Khan Foundation and companies within the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development—students gain real-world development and work experience, and unique exposure to issues faced by their own communities.

At present, about 23% of AKA Mombasa students receive some sort of financial aid, and plans are towards expanding financial support to account for 50% of the student body.

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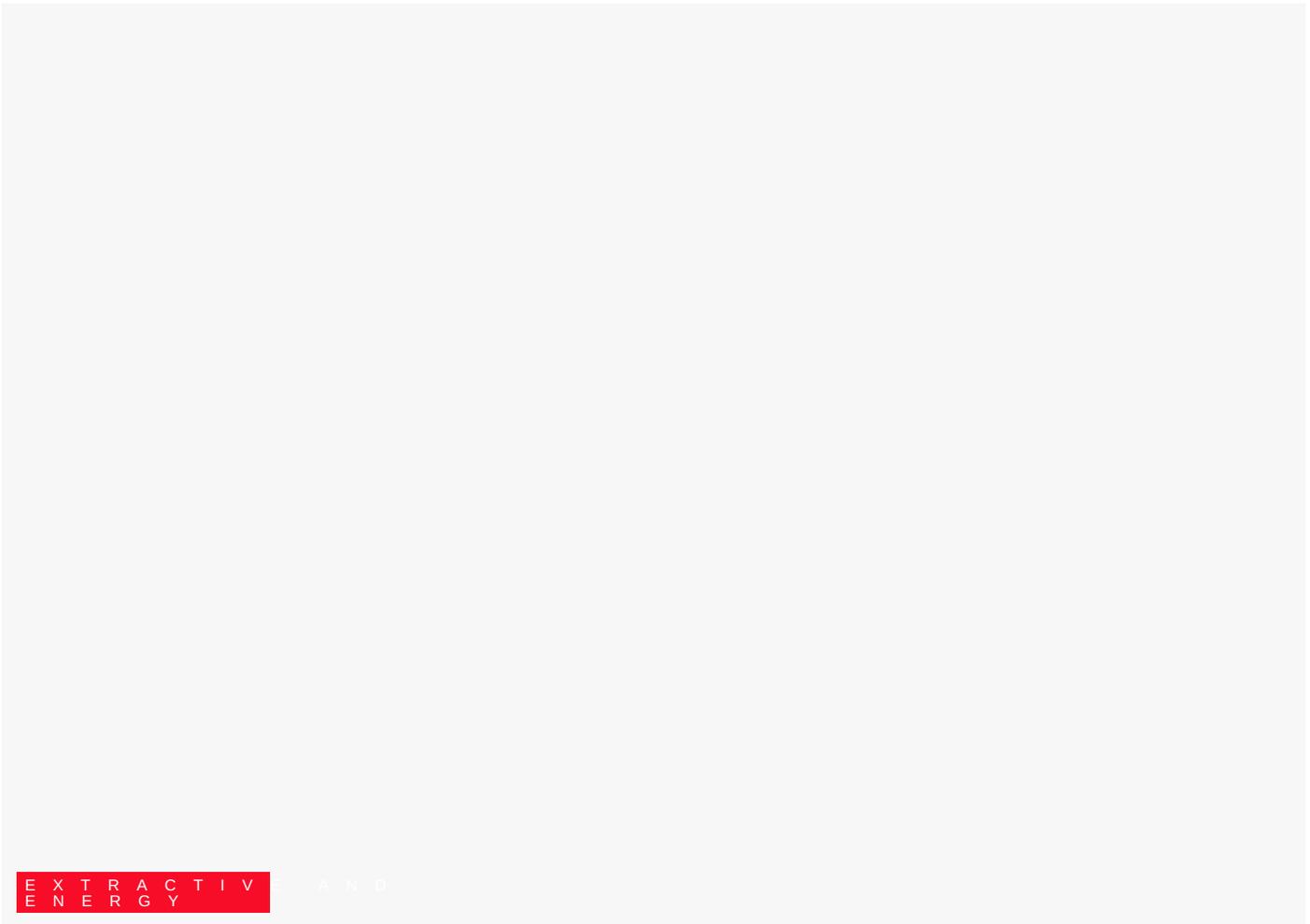
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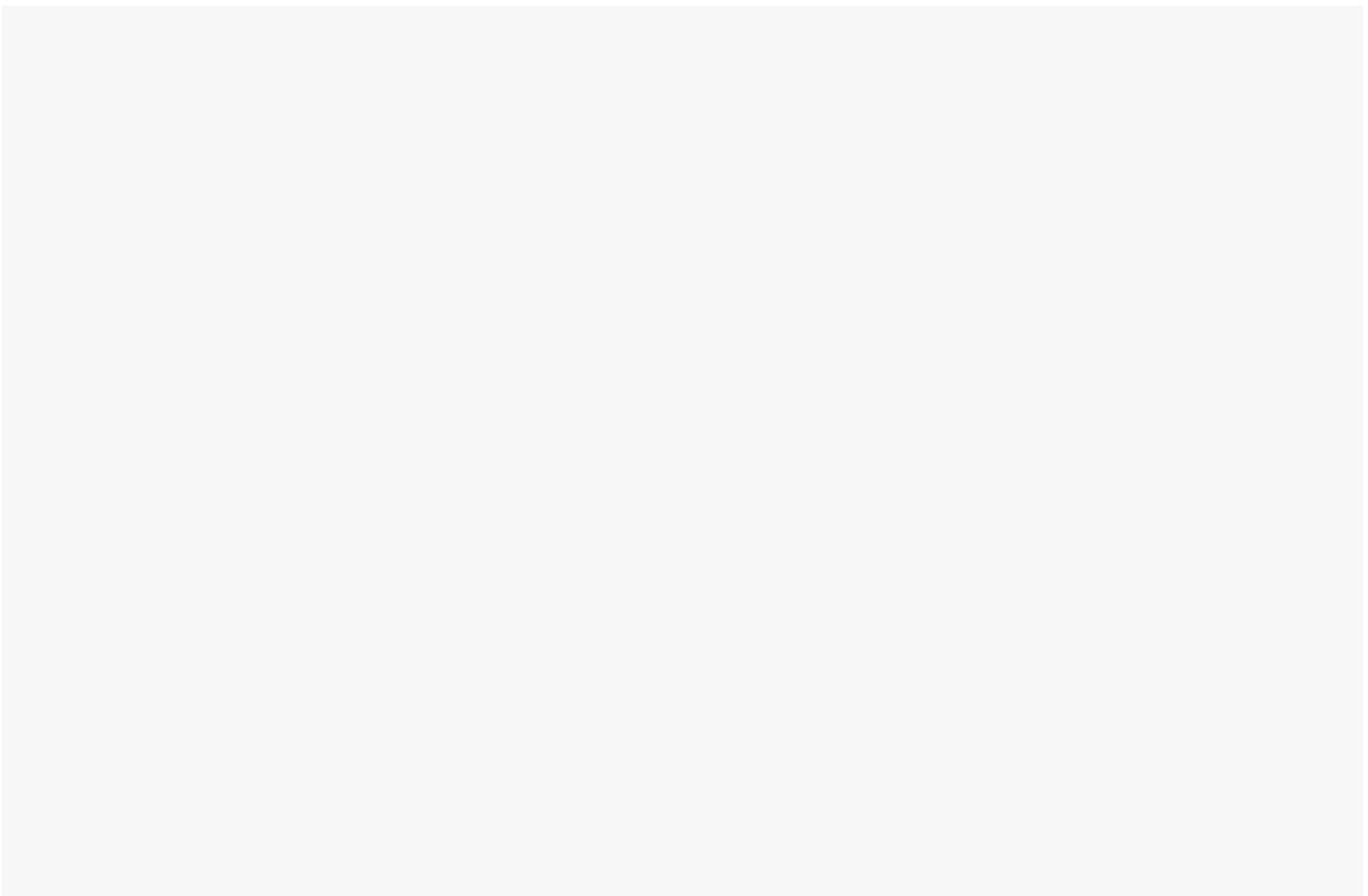
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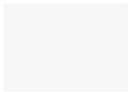
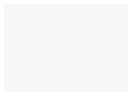
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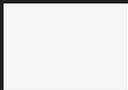
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