

THE POWER OF THE PAST



A little imagination can make yesterday seem less distant – and engage your history students more deeply

Knowing the facts about era-defining events is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to getting the most out of studying history.

To help understand historical concepts and explore different perspectives, IB Diploma Programme (DP) teachers are getting creative – *Horrible Histories*-style – and moving away from teaching ‘traditional’ Western history to include more diverse and locally relevant topics.

This can help students develop deeper connections with their country’s past, and broaden their understanding of historical events from other geographical contexts, encouraging true global citizenship, and respect and appreciation of different viewpoints.

The result? Exciting and creative lessons, increased student engagement and authentic learning experiences, as *IB World* magazine investigates...

1 Bring historical events to life

After starting to teach students about the history of Rwanda, Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa, Kenya, opted to push students’ learning experience even further by giving them the chance to witness it for themselves.

Students travelled to Rwanda to learn about the 1994 genocide, during which, according to the UN, an estimated 800,000 to one million Tutsi (and moderate Hutu) people were murdered in a 100-day period.

“The trip really brought the events home,” says History Teacher Bulemi Mulama. “Students were able to interact with people who remembered the genocide and were willing to share their stories.

“The emphasis created by seeing the past as something real, rather than an abstract story from a history book, has touched the way our students view events.”

Aga Khan Academy also covers local

history in its curriculum to make sure its students graduate with a deep understanding of the history of the region they live in, and that they are able to compare and contrast this to developments elsewhere in the world.

Alexandra Holland, Curriculum Development Manager at Aga Khan Academies, says: “It can be challenging for teachers who want to move away from typical European and US history topics, as there is a lack of ‘classroom ready’ resources. However, we’ve made sure that our history course balances the need to understand the local context and culture of our students, with opportunities to engage with the history of other parts of the world, too.”

History Teacher Cynthia Okoth agrees: “If our students are to be truly internationally minded they need to study the history of diverse people.”

