

TRUTH EVERY DAY

Daily Monitor

JOBS AND CAREER

Aga Khan Academy nurturing students beyond classrooms



The Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa. Inset, Serunjogi, an old student of the academy, has helped to initiate a mobile phone app that allows users to send encrypted ephemeral voice messages. COURTESY PHOTO

IN SUMMARY

Holistic. The academy aims to develop future leaders who will be able to think creatively about problems and offer solutions for them. Ham has certainly fulfilled the expectations of the Academy in this area.

Ham Serunjogi reported to The Aga Khan Academy, in Mombasa, Kenya in September 2010, a week after representing Uganda at the Youth Olympic Games – the first swimmer from Uganda to do so- in Singapore. He immediately fit into his new community thanks to his strong yet humble character, quickly becoming an ambassador of the Academy’s Learner Profile for his ability to achieve excellence in curricular and co-curricular activities.

In addition, he balanced his academic and community service commitments as well as swimming.

His constant quest ‘to be the best he can possibly be’ kept him going through challenges and setbacks such as breaking his collarbone and missing a gala in Malawi.

Serunjogi was a pillar of strength in the Aga Khan Academy community embodying the spirit of resilience and determination.

The academy is a non-profit making school that provides education to talented students from all sections of society with the aim of generating leaders of the future.

The school not only aims to provide an excellent education but also to nurture children who see their interactions with others in the school and outside community as more than mere networking opportunities.

The students are encouraged to live with a sense of purpose and to relish the opportunity to exhibit leadership characteristics. One of the admissions assessment that is used to test the students’ leadership ability requires them to offer solution pathways on real world problems such as poverty, climate change, disease and environmental challenges facing society today.

The desire to generate leadership of a different kind lies at the heart of the vision of His Highness the Aga Khan to generate a network of academies that are being established in countries across Africa, the Middle East, as well as South and Central Asia.

The Academy in Mombasa, now celebrating the 10th year since its inception, is a day and residential school for boys and girls from ages six to 19.

Student selection is based solely on merit and judged on demonstrated academic performance and overall potential. The school provides students with an all-round education of the highest international standards to prepare them for lives characterised by leadership and service. A substantial number of students are on full and partial bursaries.

Parents of students of the academy tend to see their children develop as all-rounded students with an improved sense of work ethic and civic responsibility. The Academy also aims to instill in its students attributes and values such as being principled, well balanced, stewards as well as other personal characteristics that comprise the Academy’s Graduate Profile.

Serunjogi’s father highlights the emphasis on this.

“Ham’s time at the academy had molded him into a fuller more holistic individual, a quality highly sought after by the world’s top universities. Today he is a proud student at Grinnell College in Iowa, one of the top liberal arts colleges in the USA after graduating from the Academy in 2012,” Serunjogi Snr says.

Excellence

Many of the academy’s graduates are admitted to respected universities in UK, Canada, USA and throughout the world with many gaining scholarships that reflect their leadership capacities.

The Academy focuses on excellence within all aspects of school-life, but central to this is to provide exceptional education to all students through a world class curriculum based on the International Baccalaureate Programmes, an activity-based and inquiry-driven learning approach.

As well as looking for students who have the ability and motivation to shine academically, the school aims to nurture students who will excel beyond the classroom to all aspects of student life.

Leadership development is an integral part of the Academy’s programme and makes up one of the four core values of the school, as well as excellence.

Leadership activities take on many different forms, including involvement in academic and co-curricular activities as well as elected leadership roles. These

activities give students hands-on leadership experience as well as a strong sense of community and civic responsibility.

The international curriculum is strengthened by additional areas of study, known as the curricular strands that were developed specifically for the Academy. These address areas that are not covered by the IB curriculum, but deemed to be essential to develop good leadership by the Academy.

The strands include ethics, pluralism, cultures economics and development and good governance. Teachers plan in advance to ensure that these unique additions to the curricular are woven into every aspect of the curricula, at all levels.

Future leaders

The Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa's continuous motivation to strive for excellence is what sets this school apart from other institutions. The programmes ensure that all students receive the best education to unlock their leadership potential and carry forward the lessons they learn both in and out of the classroom towards the betterment of their environments.

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