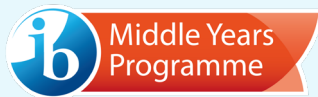
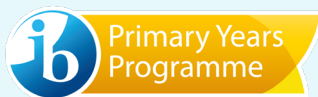




Association  
International School



IB WORLD SCHOOL SINCE  
2017

NUMBER OF STUDENTS  
400

COUNTRY  
Ghana

## How one school in Ghana is creating the next generation of changemakers

Association International School is a coeducational pre-K to Grade 12 day and boarding school located in Accra, Ghana. Established in 1963 to offer an academically rigorous, international education to its students, the school's mission has always been to nurture the next generation of critical thinkers and peacemakers. To help it achieve its mission, the school decided to pursue authorization to become an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School. It was authorized to offer the Diploma Programme (DP) in 2017 and, after seeing the positive impact on student outcomes, the school leadership team decided to offer a full continuum of IB programmes to its students. It was authorized to offer the Middle Years Programme (MYP) in 2022 and the Primary Years Programme (PYP) in 2023.

Since introducing the IB programmes, the school has seen marked improvements in student agency, critical thinking and international mindedness, all of which are highly valued by universities and employers. Today, alumni of the Association

International School go on to study at leading universities across the world including Cornell, John Hopkins, the University of Manchester and Toronto University.

### Connecting learning to real-world issues

Real-world learning begins in the early years and, from their first day at Association International School, students learn to apply their knowledge to real-world situations. Teaching and learning at the school are delivered using the PYP framework, an inquiry-based curriculum framework designed specifically for the education of students aged three to 12 years old, based on their unique developmental needs. Guided by six transdisciplinary themes of global significance, students broaden their learning by developing their conceptual understanding and strengthening their knowledge and skills across, between, and beyond subject areas. Doing so encourages the development of problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity. While subjects play an important role in students'

learning, they are encouraged to explore real-world problems and take meaningful action in their community and the wider world. Through facilitation and coaching, teaching staff engage students as active participants in their education by following their interests to form inquiries that are used as the vehicle for students' learning.

Students' PYP journeys at the Association International School culminate in Grade 5 with the PYP exhibition, an in-depth inquiry into a real-life issue pertinent to them and the local or global community. Through interviews, research, visits and guest speakers, students build their understanding of the issue, which is then presented during the exhibition event through the medium of their choice. As an example, Grade 5 students at the school recently collaborated on an exploration of child marriage and its impact on the community. They used the visual arts to raise awareness of the issue and planned fundraising initiatives such as selling lemonade and ice cream to generate donations for the Gifty Anti Foundation, which supports child marriage victims.

## From the classroom to the community

Service, or community engagement, as a teaching method is fundamental to all of the IB's programmes. The MYP builds on the approach in the PYP by introducing the personal project. Over an extended period, students will complete an inquiry into a topic of their choosing and demonstrate responsible action. Not only does the project foster valuable skills and attributes including leadership, reflection and problem-solving, it also helps students understand abstract concepts by relating them

to issues in their community. For instance, MYP students learnt about the human body; the timing of the unit coincided with Breast Cancer Awareness Month and students identified their local hospital's need for additional funds to support its oncology unit. With guidance from their teacher, students planned and collaborated on fundraising activities including selling snacks and stationery. When faced with a funding shortfall, students were encouraged to reflect on their efforts and decided to host a dress down day to raise further funds for the hospital.

## Engaging students in their learning

Student agency is cultivated throughout their time as an IB student at Association International School. Instead of a teacher-led learning experience, IB students learn through activities that are meaningful to them, building their initiative and encouraging them to take ownership of their learning. Teachers listen to students' opinions and perspectives to extend student thinking, provide open-ended tasks to explore their interests and reflect on students' capabilities and needs to personalize their learning. Reflecting on student agency in the classroom, one MYP student shares that their maths teacher would invite them to share their solutions to a problem and encourage them to follow their line of thinking and reflect on the outcome, rather than presenting a specific approach.

## Preserving local cultures and heritages

As a flexible system of education, the IB facilitates schools to contextualize students' learning to encompass the local culture and heritage of the community.

Ghanaian culture is embedded into students' learning from their primary years at Association International School. To explore the six transdisciplinary themes of the PYP – Who We Are, Where We Are In Place and Time, How We Express Ourselves, How the World Works, How We Organize Ourselves and Sharing the Planet – teachers use traditional Ghanaian materials. Sandeepa Chavan, Head of Primary at the school, confirms that “the traditional songs and plays promote the local language and give the students a strong sense of identity”. Building on the transdisciplinary framework of the PYP, the MYP uses global concepts to contextualize student learning by connecting it to their lives through explorations of: identities and relationships, personal and cultural expression, orientations in space and time, scientific and technical innovation, fairness and development, and globalization and sustainability.

## Looking ahead

The school is excited about the future for its IB students:



“What I love about the IB is that our students have agency, they take charge of their own lives, and they have a perspective of the world in mind. These children are going to make the world a better place”.

**Audrey Doryumu**  
Principal

Read more: [www.ibo.org/africa](http://www.ibo.org/africa)