

ISA School History

The International School of Africa (ISA) was established in 2015 with the desire to become the international school of choice for East Africa. ISA was founded by Sahara Global Education to meet a growing demand for an international English-curriculum education in Djibouti. With a 5% growth rate for the last two decades, Djibouti has attracted investors, companies, non-governmental organizations and military bases. Unfortunately, during the early days of growth, there was no accredited English-curriculum school with a high quality program available to families moving to Djibouti. As a result, Sahara Global Education purchased extensive property around Djibouti and launched a building project for ISA facilities in 2016; this project helped to fulfil the Djiboutian authorities' *2035 Vision*. In addition, it has facilitated the settlement of English speaking families in Djibouti.

The ISA building project was launched by H.E. president Ismail Omar Guelleh, who laid the school's first stone on March 6th, 2016. Owners, officials, diplomats and many parents took part in this event, eager to see the school open as soon as possible. In fact, the school opened its doors on September 25th, 2016 with 46 students in Kindergarten through Grade Four. The facilities offered three buildings containing an administration area, innovative classrooms, indoor playgrounds, a football field, a canteen and a nurse's office. Ms. Noha Saba was hired as the school's first principal to help lead and guide the opening of ISA and Mr. Ayman Loufti was appointed the Djibouti Project Manager and contact for Sahara Global Education. A few months after opening, the total number of learners increased and by the end of the 2016-2017 academic year, enrolment was 56 learners. This number almost doubled during the 2017-2018 academic year, with 90 learners from 17 different countries. In the 2018-2019 school year, ISA enrolment is hovering around 115 students. Its nurturing and interactive approach, friendly community and academic excellence support parents and learners who benefit from a personalized educational program. Because "we measure success one happy learner at a time," we encourage each of our outstanding learners to turn his/her challenges into learning opportunities.

As part of the international community, we have successfully developed a strong network with local and international educational organizations and companies during the past two years. Locally, we continue to work closely with the Djibouti Ministry of Education with whom we are accredited. ISA also partners with local companies by inviting them to share their professional experiences with our learners and through visiting their Djibouti projects to learn about their work in our community. Additionally, the ISA family takes part in local projects that benefit social needs in our community such as funding local schools, training teachers and gathering food and clothing for orphanages and families in need.

At the international level, we are in the process of school accreditation with two international accrediting agencies. This will help families that may be moving between countries, as international accreditations position our programs for acceptance at a wider range of

institutions around the world. It will also provide our graduates with credentials that are widely accepted at Western universities around the world.

At the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year, ISA added a Head of School, a Curriculum Director and a Board of Advisors (BOA) consisting of international educators from around the world. The BOA serves as advisors to the leadership team at ISA and engages in strategic planning for the school. These additions were made at a critical point in the growth of the school, to further build a strong international program at ISA as it began to plan for high school and its first graduating class.

ISA's *Strategic Plan* for the future includes construction of a High School building with state-of-the-art science labs and makerspace facilities. Work on this phase of the school began in the fall of 2018. The school will add one grade each year, with the culmination of grade twelve in the 2024 school year; this will be the first graduating class at ISA. In addition to high school classrooms, areas for sports, fine arts and a library will be added. It is an exciting time of growth and change at ISA, always working to make learning meaningful in the ways that we choose to educate our students and partner with our parents and the community.

ISA's mission is to promote academic excellence with an international focus. We are a culturally based partnership of students, parents, staff and community that strive to inspire students to become lifelong learners and critical thinkers engaged in an ever-changing society. Our vision views us as a pioneering educational community committed to academic excellence, innovative practice, community service and global citizenship for Africa. As ISA successfully progresses through the phases of the Strategic Plan, our vision is becoming reality.