



### **EduQuality Awards Overview**

The EduQuality Awards, an initiative of Opportunity International EduFinance, recognizes schools that have made meaningful and innovative improvements in the conditions for learning within their school. The annual EduQuality awards were launched in 2018 to provide a platform for schools to share best practices from their school development plan implementation, incentivise continued quality improvements, and encourage schools across the program to continue learning from the innovations of their peers. The inaugural awards were also one of the first opportunities for the EduQuality program to collect and verify evidence of school quality improvements informed by the *Pathways to Excellence* self-assessment tool, which defines levels of 'quality' across 42 education related domains.

Education Specialists were asked to submit up to three nominations of schools they serve to be considered for the awards. Education Specialists were encouraged to recognize schools that had made verifiable, meaningful progress in implementing their school development plans resulting in an aspect of improved school quality.

Nominated schools were then contacted and given the opportunity to submit applications identifying their implemented school development activities and outcomes. Submitted applications were reviewed by a panel of judges and shortlisted. Schools on the short list were visited to capture and verify evidence of the reported quality improvements. After final review of the nominees, the panel selected two winners and three honourable mentions. Winners were selected based on evidence of implemented changes, engaged leadership and teaching staff, and a demonstrated commitment to delivering quality education to students.

Winners received a cash prize contribution towards a school development fund in recognition of their efforts. Prizes were presented during local award ceremonies hosted at each school, with community members, parents, EduQuality staff and members of the local press in attendance to recognize and celebrate the school's achievements.

### **Opportunity International EduFinance**

EduFinance works to increase access to education through finance and supports schools to improve education quality. To date, EduFinance has worked with 38 financial institution partners in 20 low- and middle-income countries to benefit an estimated 3.4 million children with improved access to quality education. The EduQuality programme supports over 1,600 affordable private schools across 7 countries to improve conditions for learning through a mix of training, resources, and local expertise.

**FIRST PRIZE**  
**Busy Bees Foundation School, Rwanda**



**School Overview**

Ms. Furaha Berthe started Busy Bees Foundation School in 2013. The school now educates 341 pre-primary and primary school students in Gasabo District, Rwanda.

**EduQuality Program**

Busy Bees Foundation School has been a member of the **Source of Knowledge Cluster** since August 2016.

**Pathways to Excellence for School Development Planning**

Busy Bees Foundation School chose to focus their school development plan on improvement in three key areas:

1. **Strengthened financial and business management**, in order to improve the ways in which the school uses its financial resources, tracks payments, and creates budgets.
2. **Improved School culture**, by devoting time and resources to the creation of an engaged and participatory teaching and learning atmosphere.
3. **Enhanced child protection measures**, to ensure that pupils had a safe environment in which to learn.

**Achievements**

School leaders worked to make Busy Bees a safer place for students to play and learn by setting up a multi-stakeholder advisory team focused on child protection. Team consultation resulted in a child protection referral form, a new Child Protection Policy for the school, and the purchase of a school van for student transportation. These steps were accompanied by training and community engagement on child safeguarding, which raised parent, teacher and student awareness of child protection matters.

Child safety and health go hand-in-hand, and Busy Bees also took great strides towards protecting student health by focusing on clean water. Students now have access to handwashing stations to ensure sanitation and hygiene, while parent contributions have enabled the school to provide safe, clean drinking water.

Busy Bees has also made an outstanding effort to effectively engage with the parents, and to innovate in envisioning the school's future. They have introduced a parent meetings program to encourage parental engagement, while school leadership organized a group self-assessment for the multi-stakeholder team to implement an evidence-based approach to school planning. These changes have increased the parents' and community's trust in the school and increased student attendance.

According to EduSpecialist Sande Robert, "the key to the success of this school lies in their leader. She is not only a successful leader of her school, but she is also an influential cluster leader and is passionate about collaboration. She has helped other schools in her cluster by mobilizing participation, and her school and teachers have benefited a lot."

## SECOND PRIZE

### Ikiki High School, Uganda



#### **School Overview**

School leader Mugombe Yusuf opened Ikiki High School in 2008. The mixed day school now educates 1,197 secondary school students.

#### **EduQuality Program**

Ikiki school joined the **Budaka-Iganga Secondary Cluster** in May 2017.

#### **Pathways to Excellence for School Development Planning**

Ikiki High School chose to focus their school development plan on improvement in three key areas:

1. **Child-centred teaching and learning strategies**, to ensure that diverse approaches are taken towards meeting the individual learning needs of students.
2. **Increased parental engagement**, to encourage parent participation in supporting learning and the effective running of the school.
3. **Improved lesson planning and delivery**, to develop interesting and informative lessons which result in high quality teaching.

#### **Achievements**

Ikiki High implemented an ambitious agenda with the goal of advancing child-centred teaching and learning. To motivate all learners and encourage a productive, happy learning atmosphere, the school set fair classroom rules, encouraged students to set personal goals, offered counselling to learners, built a sick bay, and introduced project-based learning. In parallel, videos on pedagogical content, training in learner-centred methods, and Education Specialists training of teaching staff, helped the school achieve its goal of improving teaching standards and moving teachers “from the talk and chalk method to learner involvement.” This included a focus on lesson planning, with the school ensuring teachers were trained in effective questioning and fostering collaboration. This has resulted in improved performance in the school, with the self-reported pass rate increasing to 60%.

The school has also welcomed parents into their children’s classrooms. Ikiki High School has set up a PTA, created parent committees at class levels, and has introduced a class days program, where parents are invited to visit their children at school on specific days to discuss learning.

School leadership has been described as vigilant, with their keen interest in learning shining through in their classrooms. EduSpecialist Williams Oguttu praised Ikiki High School, describing its leader Mr. Yusuf as “very good at ICT, which has made him swim into the resources of Pathways to Education, and he has put them to good use.”

**HONOURABLE MENTION**  
**Golden Bell Kindergarten and Junior School, Uganda**



**Achievements**

To foster connections between the school and the community, Golden Bell shared learning materials with students at local struggling schools, invited Education Specialists to host community-focused sessions on parenting, and invited in experts to talk to parents about reducing environmental degradation in the community.

Relationship building between the school and pupils' parents was also encouraged through a parent engagement day, and additional communications to increase parent awareness about the academic and social progress of their children. This plan also sought to reduce behavioural challenges, increase student self-esteem, and encourage parent participation through sharing of materials and a school-hosted family team talent show.

The school has also worked to improve learning materials and resources. Development of class-based plans brought subject targets and lessons on ethics, self-reflection and STEM into the classroom; targeted psycho-social skills, literacy, and numeracy; and has resulted in projects like classroom dream zones and a home-school library project.

Golden Bell's efforts through school development planning have translated into successes. The school has seen increased enrolment, better staff appraisals, and improved student discipline and performance. In 2017, Golden Bell was the top performing school in the district in the Primary Leaving Exams.

**School Overview**

School leader Mr. Serwanga Moses opened Golden Bell Kindergarten and Junior School in 2000 in Mukono District, Uganda. The school now educates 120 primary school students.

**EduQuality Program**

Golden Bell Nursery and Junior School joined the **Visa Free Cluster** in February 2016.

**Pathways to Excellence for School Development Planning**

Golden Bell Nursery and Junior School selected the following three focus areas for their school development plan:

1. **Improved community engagement**, fostering connections which support the role of the school in the community, recognizing that schools and communities share goals for students' bright futures.
2. **Increased parent engagement**, to help parents support their children's learning and literacy.
3. **Improved teaching & learning resources**, to increase academic achievement while investing in smart, sustainable resources.

## HONOURABLE MENTION

### Kumasi Best Brain Academy, Ghana



#### School Overview

Kumasi Best Brain Academy was opened by Kwasi Okyere in 2009. The school, under the guidance of head teacher Frank Atta- Poku, now educates 2,420 pre-primary and primary school students in Kronom Abuohia, Ghana.

#### EduQuality Program

Kumasi Best Brain Academy joined the **Suame Area Cluster** in November 2017.

#### Pathways to Excellence for School Development Planning

Kumasi Best Brain Academy selected the following focus areas for their school development plan:

1. **Create a clean and safe environment** conducive to learning by making investments and changing necessary practices, recognizing that learners need to be physically and emotionally secure if learning is to thrive.
2. **Improve school culture**, recognizing that students learn best – and teachers feel most supported – in an environment which is positive, caring, and supports development.

#### Achievements

The school invested in infrastructure, including constructing assembly and dining halls; installed doors and windows to turn a previously unfinished structure into safe, working classrooms; purchased first aid boxes for classrooms; and adopted a proactive approach to school property maintenance by keeping walls freshly painted, hiring cleaners, and inspecting electrical fittings. Physical changes to the school structure have been accompanied by an improvement in the school's approach to creating a clean, positive learning environment. The school successfully tackled a littering problem and added grass to a previously dusty playground. Classroom walls are now filled with children's artwork.

The school has also changed its approach to discipline and teaching. School leadership encouraged the adoption of new pupil behaviour management strategies, banned caning, and introduced a growth mindset approach through in-service training which has ended verbal abuse and created a safer learning environment. The school leader now actively seeks and values involvement of staff in assessing the school's shortcomings, motivating teachers to perform better. Reading clubs, a language policy, and educator time management policies have been introduced to facilitate learning.

EduSpecialist Samuel Opoku praised the school's progress. "I can confidently say that teachers at Best Brain are now relating very well, they feel very confident and much more ready to contribute to the development of the school."

## HONOURABLE MENTION

### Victory Land Academy, Ghana



#### **School Overview**

Victory Land Academy was opened by school leaders Huletay Selasi and Gideon Ayivo in 2011. The school now educates 525 pre-primary, primary, and junior high school students in Koforidua, Juaben District, Ghana.

#### **EduQuality Program**

Victory Land Academy joined the **Pipeline Cluster** in March 2017.

#### **Pathways to Excellence for School Development Planning**

Victory Land Academy chose the following three focus areas for their school development plan:

1. **Energizing students** through focus on pupil engagement.
2. **Create a clean and safe environment conducive to learning**, to create classrooms where students feel secure and where learning occurs in the context of mutual trust and respect.
3. **Encourage community engagement**, recognizing that strong support networks are important for fostering positive learning environments.

#### **Achievements**

Before joining the EduQuality Program, Victory Land Academy had struggled to acquire teaching and learning resources beyond textbooks and whiteboards. With the support of an Education Specialist, however, Victory Land has now taken steps towards education innovations and has invested time and effort into improving teaching materials.

These improvements were guided by the leadership of kindergarten and first grade teacher Hagar Frimpomaa, who visited another school to learn from their successes and attended SLPD training in Accra. Ms. Frimpomaa and three inspired colleagues also went above and beyond to learn about quality teaching materials from videos. Their efforts have resulted in the creation of new teacher and learning resources, developed with the support of the School Director who provided materials.

These steps to improve teaching tools have translated into noticeable improvements in students' academic success. The school has seen improved attendance and significant progress in student results.

Ms. Frimpomaa has continued to show leadership by sharing Victory Land's approach to creating teaching and learning resources with other schools in the Pipeline Cluster. Victory Land's School Development Plan is now centred on developing a variety of teaching approaches, increasing student participation while decreasing teacher reliance on 'chalk and talk' teaching methods, and challenging teachers to make personal resolutions which address their strengths and weaknesses.