

CASE STUDY: BENEFITS OF THE iPQ AT THE BANDA SCHOOL IN KENYA

The Banda School introduced the ISEB Project Qualification during the first lockdown of the global pandemic, as a way to embrace independent learning. What they saw was an increase in pupil wellbeing, motivation, and confidence, and as a result, the iPQ has now become a key part of the schools' Year 7 curriculum.

WHAT IS THE iPQ?

The iPQ is a research-based project qualification that is carefully constructed to teach and assess essential independent learning skills for Years 5-8. It is divided into five sections: **Define, Research and Review, Discuss and Develop, Reflect and Present.**

HOW IS THE iPQ USED AT BANDA SCHOOL?

The Banda School's Director of Teaching and Learning (and now iPQ lead) Will Shuttleworth discovered ISEB's iPQ in a search for a recognised and structured way to embrace independent learning during the first Coronavirus lockdown. As the scope of iPQ is so broad, pupils were able to independently devise and complete successful projects at home, so much so that by the end of the first year, all of Years 5, 6, 7 and 8 presented their projects. The return to the classroom allowed the school to evaluate the impact of the iPQ. The results were so positive that it became a key part of the curriculum for Year 7, with preparation for the iPQ taking place in Years 5 and 6 through project work in other subjects.

WHY CHOOSE THE iPQ?

For teachers who are looking to develop the independent learning skills of their pupils, the iPQ provides an elegant solution. At The Banda School, the iPQ has improved pupil motivation and wellbeing and provided teachers with the opportunity to guide individual learning journeys. The wider community has also benefitted from several philanthropic projects devised and implemented by pupils.



Year 8 pupil Isla Crawford's lending library

iPQ AND THE PUPIL

Through the iPQ, pupils are equipped with a springboard of skills to boost them into their critical final years of prep school and into academic life at secondary school. In The Banda School's experience, senior schools have shown great interest in the qualification and many pupils have presented their iPQ projects at interview.

Pupils at The Banda School are encouraged to produce a final product in a format of their choosing, giving them creative flexibility and ownership of their learning. Given the stimulus of the iPQ, the pupils at the school have explored endless possibilities including technical presentations, constructions, videos, websites, books, and video games.

Link: [A Thief's Nightmare \(stop motion animation\) by Alex Dimas, Year 7](#)

The Define aspect of the iPQ emphasises the importance of constructing a precise research question. At The Banda School, whilst most children choose their topic due to existing skills or interests, they are encouraged to establish well-defined goals to promote the most effective research and successful outcome, with no such thing as right or wrong answers.

'The iPQ has enabled pupils to shine due to their ability to select their own personal area of expertise to explore. The projects have been extremely varied'
Lucy Haywood, Deputy Head and English Teacher

The clear link between pupil wellbeing and academic development is recognised and supported by the iPQ. At The Banda School, 90% of Year 7 students found the iPQ to be a positive learning experience. The Reflect component of the iPQ promotes confidence in learning, as the children are encouraged to use any setbacks as a tool for future improvement. The qualification also develops vital soft skills such as teamwork and public speaking.

'The iPQ has boosted my confidence because it helped me overcome the challenge of public speaking.'
Adrienne Wittermans, Year 7 pupil



iPQ AND THE SCHOOL

The iPQ has the potential to unite the school from the top down, maintaining a strong connection between senior leaders and pupils. Ali Francombe, Head of The Banda School, is passionate about the qualification, ensuring a constructive trickledown effect through staff to pupils and parents. Within the student body at the school, the Develop and Discuss component has been achieved through group discussions and presentations throughout the process, or 'cross pollination' as Will Shuttleworth describes it. Besides teamwork, this motivates pupils through seeing others' progress. The school has created a display of outstanding projects to promote future excellence.

'I enjoyed the variety of subjects areas being covered and my involvement in guiding and nurturing. Pupils being inspired by their topic is central to this.'
George Radcliffe, Year 7 Form Tutor and Science Teacher

Pupils may also choose projects that benefit younger pupils at the school, such as teaching Year 2 about the solar system.

IMPACT AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

At the school, many students have chosen projects that benefit the wider community and beyond, often concentrating on environmental issues such as climate change or wildlife protection. Year 6 pupil Sabrina Kazziha focused on single use plastic and arranged a litter collection in her area.

Link: [Less Plastic is Fantastic by Sabrina Kazziha, then Year 6](#)

'Children have asked interesting questions this year, tapping into the expertise of many businesses and initiatives in our wider community. The iPQ projects extend well beyond the classroom.'
Katie Thwaites, Head of English



The iPQ has continued past the original project too. Some pupils have followed their project through to the next year, both within and outside of the classroom. In Year 7, pupil Evan Williams wrote a 45-page adventure novel as his original iPQ, and successfully marketed it as his project the following year, donating the proceeds to Usikimye, a charity working against gender-based violence. Another Year 8 pupil, Isla Crawford, built a lending library for her local area, based on her belief that 'everyone should have the chance to read'. It remains in use a year after its creation.

'I think it's wonderful that the children [in The Banda School] are able to pursue their greatest passions and receive a grade for that' Christine Odhiambo, CEO, African Fund for Endangered Wildlife.

For information on how to get started, visit:
www.iseb.co.uk/iPQ

To read about the success of the iPQ at The Banda School, Kenya visit: [iPQ Banda](#)