

06 October, 2016: Press Release

BRIDGE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIES DISPUTES ALLEGATIONS BY EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL.

Despite claims made to the contrary, the High Court of Uganda recently ruled (for the third time) that Bridge International Academies will remain open. That means over 12,000 Ugandan children will remain in class, learning from qualified teachers trained to deliver lesson plans that adhere to the Ugandan national curriculum.

Support from parents and other community members has been overwhelmingly strong. Mrs. Gertrude Kizza, a Bridge grandparent, is delighted with the Court's ruling. "Bridge has been a blessing to our community," she says. "As a Ugandan citizen, I should have the right to give my grandchildren a better future." Thousands of other parents agree, parents like Ochwo Joy Rose who explains that before enrolling at Bridge, "My child was in the local government school for 3 years and still could not read. I am thankful Bridge created a school in our community that in just 4 months enabled my child to read to me." At Bridge, we believe a high-quality education is priceless, but shouldn't cost a fortune. We are firm in our dedication to providing children everywhere with the chance to reach their greatest potential and achieve their dreams.

The Ugandan High Court's ruling also means that 500 dedicated teachers are still employed, still making a difference in the classroom and in their communities. One of these teachers, Patrick Mutegeki, shared his story. "I joined Bridge right after teacher training college," he explains. "Working at Bridge has made me excited for the future of Ugandan children." At Bridge, we are proud of the work we're doing not only in Uganda, but across Kenya, Nigeria, Liberia, and India. Like Teacher Patrick, everyone at Bridge is excited for the futures of our children, families, and communities.

We welcome engagement and conversation on how to keep improving our work. However, it's a shame when facts are discarded in favor of politically motivated agendas. The allegations published in the report have been shown, time and again, to be false. Education International and its ally organizations believe that if they repeat the same false claims loud enough and long enough, they will become true. But, they won't. Facts are facts.

Here are the facts:

- Bridge International Academies exists to provide children everywhere access to affordable, high-quality education so they can achieve their dreams.
- Bridge advocates for publicly financed education being accessible to every child. However, until that is a reality, Bridge works with communities in need to create schools that parents want and can afford.
- Bridge employs rigorously trained teachers. All lessons adhere to each operating country's national curriculum. In Uganda, we teach the Ugandan curriculum. Our pupils will sit for the Primary Leavers Examination (PLE), just as our pupils in Kenya excelled at the Kenya Primary Leavers Exam (KCPE)—772 pupils scored above 300; over 80 pupils received secondary school scholarships, including 4 to schools in the United States.
- Bridge learning outcomes are consistently better than other schools in the same neighborhoods.
- Bridge academies in Uganda remain open, by order of the High Court of Uganda.
- We are working closely with the Ugandan Government to resolve any confusion and address any issues.
- After seeing how Bridge created high-performing schools in rural Uganda, the Liberian Government invited us to be part of their groundbreaking Partnership Schools program. Bridge manages 24 public nursery and primary schools. These schools are free to attend and are serving thousands of Liberian children.

At Bridge, we take great pride in our teachers and are saddened that the aforementioned report was (purposefully, it seems) released on World Teachers' Day. Regardless, let's not lose sight of the amazing things teachers accomplish. Bridge is treating all of October as World Teachers' Month. We won't allow malicious motives to darken our celebration or obscure the recognition that teachers deserve.