



By choosing the international bilingual programme, families may considerably save their investment in education while still giving children the best educational quality

What To Ponder Before Putting Trust In An International School

As the outbreak of Covid-19 spread, thousands of Vietnamese students studying abroad hurriedly headed home before national borders were shut down. Until now, it is still not known when the pandemic will really end and international flights resume, and many of the returning students have chosen to study at home.

A hectic market of non-public schools

The epidemic outbreak has opened up more opportunities for high-quality educational institutions in Vietnam which may give a wide choice for parents wishing to pick a school in different segments whose output quality is comparable to overseas study. HCMC is home to more than 1,000 non-public schools, of which 22 international institutions are certified by the HCMC Department of Education and Training.

In Vietnam, international curricula can be classified into two categories: the wholly international programme and the international bilingual programme. Both are designed to center on standards adopted by developed countries worldwide, such as Britain, the United States and Australia.

Post-Covid-19 economic problem

Currently, when the whole world

is practicing thrift to hedge against adverse market swings, the wholly international programme or the international bilingual programme offers a choice whose affects will be lasting for parents to ponder over. A family's financial projection, expectations after graduation and the agreement with the school's educational goals are the three decisive factors. Of them, the first and foremost priority relates to tuition fees. An example can be considered in which two representatives of the above two international programmes in line with Cambridge general education standards.

One is a foreign-invested school in HCMC providing wholly international programme and an English-only speaking environment. Of course, it requires the highest school fees. Pre-school year tuition ranges between VND258-384 million per year; and elementary and high schools between VND495-730 million per year. And

yet this tuition excludes other fees, such as registration fees, school bus, learning tools, textbooks and school uniforms, among others.

Meanwhile, the Vietnam Australia International School (VAS) is a typical institution in the segment of international bilingual schools, which offers a wise choice to families mindful of their economic capabilities. VAS's tuition ranges between VND209-285 million for junior high school, and between VND287-477 million for senior high school. Meanwhile, the fees for pre-school pupils are between VND154-209 million per year. Giving the highest time of teaching periods with Cambridge programme among bilingual schools, the quality of VAS graduate students is equivalent to that of their peers at the best wholly international schools. The tuition of VAS's Cambridge international programme (from grade 10 to grade 12) is only a half or two-thirds of that required by other international schools. VAS graduates are awarded either IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) or A-Level by CAIE (Cambridge Assessment International Education).

The significance of the Vietnamese language and national culture

An overwhelming advantage of international bilingual schools parents should carefully scrutinize when choosing a school for their children is the supplement of Vietnamese command and knowledge of the nation's history, culture and national pride. When knowledge becomes universal, national identity contributes significantly to the development of personalities and the differences among individuals.

At VAS, the concerted combination of local competent teachers sharing the same culture with the students and mastering national education programmes, and leading foreign teachers fully capable of Cambridge international programme will enable students to conjure multiple visions which are both replete with national identity and receptive to Western cultures. This is the precondition for students to accept culture interchange and adapt themselves to the new lifestyle and learning methods when studying abroad.

VAS is a school system boasting a history of 16 years of teaching international bilingual programme in Vietnam. Currently, almost 9,500 students are studying at VAS's seven campuses, attending classes from kindergarten to grade 12. VAS is providing three Cambridge programmes which all meet individual demand, capabilities and their families' orientation.

More information on the three diverse programmes and free placement tests is available at <http://www.vas.edu.vn/> or hotline 0911267755.