

NEW HORIZONS

Khaemba to take final bow at Alliance

Principal's sterling performance as a manager lands him on a lofty perch

By ANTHONY NJAGI

Alliance High School Principal Christopher Khaemba is leaving for South Africa to be the pioneer head of the continent's unique institution — the African Leadership Academy.

Mr Khaemba had emerged the best among top scholars after seven months of head-hunting, short-listing and interviewing candidates for the prestigious job.

The Johannesburg-based academy opens its door next February.

"The academy's aims to develop the next generation of African leaders. Its mission is to educate and develop outstanding students," Mr Khaemba told the *Nation* at Alliance High, where he was overseeing his final Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination candidates.

He is also supervising his last Alliance High school project — a three-hostel complex — at a cost of Sh45.7 million.

Modern hostels

The hostel will accommodate 400 boys, who will be moved from the schools old and dilapidated dormitories. The other 450 are already in fairly modern hostels that were built between 2002 and 2004.

The South African academy will admit the best high school students from Africa and the rest of the world.

"At the end of the year I'm expected to leave Alliance High School and relocate to South Africa" he said.

"The academy will have assembled its first class of about 100 students selected from across the world," he said.

For the past 81 years, Alliance High School has produced the leading crop of students and is the most successful school in Kenya in terms of performance.

The school has consistently performed well in national examinations, being among the top three schools.



Many of the current leaders in politics, business, the civil service and other sectors were nurtured at Alliance.

It is the dream of many pupils to join this prestigious institution, which over the years has gone from strength to strength.

However, the school does not lack problems.

Many of the structures built when the school was started are now dilapidated and require replacement.

The school has over the past 37 years grown from a population of 520 boys to 850.

"There has not been a commensurate expansion in facilities," says Mr Khaemba.

Funds are needed to renovate dormitories, laboratories and libraries.

Mr Khaemba says that the school also needs funds to educate boys from poor homes.

The school, unlike Starehe Boys' Centre in Nairobi, has no programme for catering for needy students.

Mr Khaemba says he will not throw a boy out of the school for because his

parents cannot afford school fees.

"Out of the total student population of 850 students, 300 cannot afford school fees," says Mr Khaemba.

To offset the cost of expansion and to put in place a needy students' endowment fund, old boys has organised a major harambee for October 13 at the school.

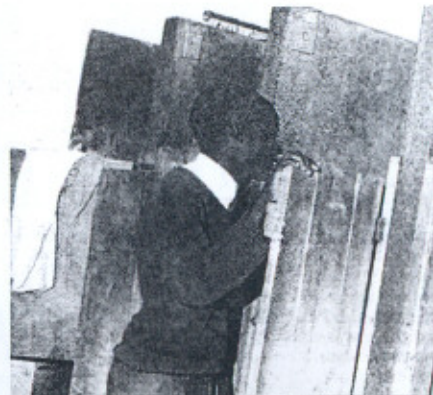
The fund-raising committee has organised a series of events to achieve its goal.

There will be the Alliance Royale Car Raffle, in which a Hummer 3 vehicle worth Sh6 million will be up for grabs.

Vice-President Moody Awori is expected to launch the raffle this Thursday at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre, Nairobi.

The committee has also organised dinners for old boys in Nairobi, Eldoret and Mombasa.

There will be a marathon, which will be open to the public. The committee is



Alliance High School students in the ablation block of their dilapidated hostels, which will be replaced by a new Sh45 million complex, the last project for Principal Christopher Khaemba (inset) before he leaves for South Africa. Photos/ANTHONY NJAGI

headed by Mr Mugo Kibati, the chairman of the Old Boys Club and the guest of honour at the fund-raiser.

The ambitious project is the last in the school calendar for Mr Khaemba, before his departure in February.

The African Leadership Academy was set up with the intention of "developing the next generation of African leaders" and it will open its doors to 250 students aged 15 to 18 years next year.

Mr Khaemba says that he will tackle the challenge of heading it in the same way he has done in Alliance and previously, Friends School Kamusinga.

While at Kamusinga, he oversaw the rehabilitation of the school's administration block, staff room and classrooms. He also introduced Information Technology at Kamusinga.

Use abilities

Mr Khaemba's life revolves around education. He says he believes in teamwork and giving everybody a chance to use their abilities to the full.

Education is a primary need that should not be denied anyone, he says, full of praise for the Government for introducing free primary education in 2003.

Last April, Mr Khaemba travelled to the US to seek chances for his students at prestigious universities and to source financial support for his school.

He visited Harvard University, where he consulted with the institution's officials on creating chances for Alliance students there.

Mr Khaemba says that the money raised in the planned fund raiser will give poor pupils a chance to join Alliance.

His parting wish is to leave the school a better place than he found it.

"Through these efforts I hope to leave behind a school with a sound financial base when I move to South Africa," he says.

Education is a primary need that should not be denied anyone, says outgoing principal