

8 October 2018

Report on the 2018 SAIIA Interschool Quiz on International Affairs

Dear Quiz Partners,

The 26th Annual SAIIA Western Cape Interschool Quiz on International Affairs was held on Thursday, 16 August, at Bishops (Diocesan School for Boys), and featured Mr Solly Moeng of Brand SA fame as keynote speaker and Africa Melane of Cape Talk Radio as Quiz MC. The winning team was from the Oracle Academy of Ottery, with Reddam High Atlantic Seaboard taking second place and St Cyprian's taking third. The Cape Academy for Maths, Science and Technology garnered the Cape Times trophy for 'Most Improved'.

On behalf of the Quiz Committee, we again thank the Abe Bailey Trust, our major funder for the 2018 quiz, as well as the many other donors listed in the attached program who made the quiz possible. A heartfelt thanks goes again to Bishops for the provision of venues and technical support, for both the quiz and pre-quiz workshop.

A full report on the 2018 quiz follows.

Best wishes,

Martha Bridgman
Quiz Committee Chair

Pippa Segall
Quiz Coordinator
SAIIA Western Cape

2018 SAIIA Interschool Quiz on International Affairs

Since 1993, the SAIIA Western Cape Branch has offered an opportunity to high school learners in the Cape Town area to learn about international affairs through the annual interschool quiz. Specifically designed to draw learners of all backgrounds from among the schools in the Western Cape, and to encourage them to read world news – especially news and analysis about South Africa's international affairs – the quiz has had an impact on several generations of high school learners.

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Invitations go out annually to a wide range of schools and, except for several reserved spots for new or developing schools, respondents are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. The quiz manual is distributed to all schools in the weeks prior to the quiz. In addition, a pre-quiz workshop in June provided new or developing schools, and especially schools who did not fare well in the previous year, an opportunity to receive coaching. Jude Wells, a previous quiz winner, and Sara Pienaar, a foreign affairs specialist and previously the director of SAIIA, introduced the learners to the field of international affairs and offered advice on preparing for the quiz. Quiz Chair Martha Bridgman, with the support of Pippa Segall and quiz committee members and volunteers, ran a mini-quiz for the participants. Fifteen school teams took part in the event.

Feedback: What did you enjoy about the quiz?

- The thrill of learning about international news which was of relevance to the learners. Discussions which ensued and the competition itself. Learnings meeting and exchanging ideas.
- The buzz inside the venue, the fact that the participants spent their time reading on international affairs.
- Reading the newspaper with purpose, and being able to bring the news into the classroom.

The 2018 quiz took place on Thursday, 16 August 2018. A total of 43 schools were signed up, however due to some very rainy winter weather and transport and other challenges, several dropped out at the last minute. Thirty-eight schools took part in the end. One team, from Hector Peterson High School of Wallace Dene, was caught in a traffic snarl on the highway for over an hour but persevered and arrived more than half way through the question time. They opted to participate, and did remarkably well on the few questions they fielded. On receiving commendation for their persistence, they promised to be back next year! Hot soup and sandwiches were provided for the learners and teachers, along with snack packs at the tables.

The participants were tested on their reading of nine days of the Cape Times plus two articles produced by SAIIA researchers for the Institute's website (saiia.org.za). There were 20 questions, several of which included two or three parts, for 67 points total, set by international affairs specialists in the fields of academia, policy research and the diplomatic corps. The spirited responses from the audience as the Quiz Master called for answers to the questions, once all answer sheets were in, testified to the strong teacher and parental involvement in the preparation for the quiz.

In the end, the ten top-scoring schools were as follows: (Prize money goes to the school represented.)

The Oracle Academy	56 points (1st prize, R7500, tog bags for the learners and a guillotine for the school)
Reddam High Atlantic Seaboard	52 points (2nd prize, R5000)
St Cyprians High School	51 points (3rd prize, R3000)
La Rochelle Girls High	50 points
Rhenish Girls High	50 points
Sea Point High	48 points
Herzlia High	47 points
Milnerton High	47 points
Spine Road High	47 points
Good Hope Seminary High	46 points
Rhodes Secondary	46 points

The prized SAIIA Trophy was awarded to the Oracle Academy for the year, while the Cape Academy of Maths, Science and Technology took home the Cape Times trophy for 'Most Improved'. The winners are invited to participate in the Young Leaders' Conference at SAIIA HQ in Johannesburg, date still to be confirmed. Remaining funds in the quiz budget are reserved to support airfare and accommodation for this four-day conference.

Africa Melane of Cape Talk Radio did an excellent job for his seventh year as Master of Ceremonies, providing spot questions during breaks, as well as his famed 'dance breaks'. Advocate Murray Bridgman returned with his clear delivery for another excellent performance as Quiz Master. Solly Moeng, previously with Brand SA and now a journalist and private consultant, delivered an engaging keynote address on social media as a space where reputations are built – and destroyed. He had the learners' attention as he made them aware of how their responses on Twitter and Facebook and Instagram may influence a future job interview. His advice: Never tweet in anger.

The winners were announced to great acclamation, with photo opportunities for each. After the quiz, every participating received a set of books for the school library, and each learner also took home a SAIIA branded water bottle.

Feedback received noted several of the challenges for the learners. One teacher noted that 'Learners had domestic situations which prevented my best team participating... Violence in the area and the fear of travelling home at night during the gang shooting.' Another suggested a switch to online news, noting '... perhaps an electronic version of the newspapers may be better, if only to reduce the waste of paper. Also, for learners to carry around full newspapers in their already packed bags is perhaps unnecessary.' With these points in mind, the Quiz Committee will be considering some new options for both the timing of the quiz and the materials used as the basis for the questions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Quiz Committee is deeply grateful to the Abe Bailey Trust for its grant of R160,000 which provided the majority of funding for the 2018 quiz. Several smaller donations were received, both in cash and in kind, including from Bishops which continues to provide the venue and technical support without charge. All donors are noted in the quiz programme.

A special thanks must go to Phil Court of Bishops who organised the venue and related logistics, both for the quiz and the pre-quiz workshop. Thanks are due as well as to the audio team and the staff at Bishops who assist with set up, catering, security and clean up, as well as the volunteers who served as runners, technical support and general liaisons.

Thanks are due to the many other volunteers who assist each year, whether in drafting the questions, setting up the hall the day before the quiz, collating the books for donation, or marking and scoring the answer sheets on the night of the quiz. SAIIA WC committee members also lent their support on the night. The steadfast work of the Hall family in running their bespoke SAIIA Quiz computer scoring programme was again invaluable.

Special thanks again to Quiz Coordinator Pippa Segall, who pulled things together. Feedback noted the superb organisation of the quiz, with one survey respondent commenting that 'We were well supported by Pippa and the learners relished the competition.'

And as with every such event, it is to the learners and their teachers that we must express the greatest admiration. Their enthusiasm and hard work in preparing for the quiz make it all worthwhile.

Martha Bridgman | Quiz Committee Chair| SAIIA Western Cape Branch, Cape Town

Pippa Segall | Quiz Coordinator| SAIIA Western Cape Branch, Cape Town