

Democracy, Dancing and Billionaires: The EIA Senate Elections

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If anyone thought school senate elections were boring affairs involving neat speeches and polite applause, then they clearly missed this year's EIA campaigns because what unfolded was less "student leadership selection" and more like a crossover between a political rally, a church crusade and a talent show.

The journey started last term when the "Electoral Commission" headed by Mr. Atamba summoned aspiring leaders to prepare them for the road ahead. Calling it an Electoral Commission may sound like an overstatement but after leadership conferences, application forms, open campaigns, debates, digital voting and dramatic result announcements, perhaps it deserves the title after all.

At the beginning of this term, all aspiring leaders attended a full-day conference. Foes were picked as ambitions were declared. Friendships became strategic alliances, suddenly everyone seemed interested in greeting everyone. Naturally, the presidential race stole the spotlight.

On one side stood David. Six years in the school, same class as his rival, famous for his amapiano 'addiction' and bulky body. A man physically incapable of hearing a beat without responding to it. Students nicknamed him **kameat**. His Slogan? *Vote a Dancing President*.

On the other side stood Amos a.k.a Amos Luweero. Five months! That was how long Amos had been in the school. Just five months. Most new students spend their first term figuring out where the toilets are. Amos apparently decided, "You know what? Let me challenge one of the school's personalities for presidency."

During one dinner, he stepped onto a table and delivered what instantly kicked off campaigns: "I come as a billionaire..." And just like that, the election had its defining battle; Katie vs Kameat, money versus vibes.

The Battles for the Lower Houses

Campaign day itself was pure entertainment. The homeroom secretary contestants opened the show. Year 8's Okuku Evans, armed with what suspiciously sounded like an American accent, seemed capable of collecting votes. Judging from audience reactions, he was clearly one of the people's favorites. Standing opposite him was Margaret, 'Maggie', who spoke with confidence and earned a fair response from the crowd.

Year Nine brought us another showdown: Joel Walakira vs Micah Coggin. Micah needed no introduction. Last election season, he had contested and suffered a terrible defeat against McDonald, the IT geek and public speaking genius. Back then, Micah promised students "things you have never seen before." Unfortunately, nobody ever discovered exactly what those things were. This year, however, he returned older, more mature and more focused.

Joel, meanwhile, provided comic relief. Slightly on the healthier side and energetic, he entered the race as the funny guy everyone knew.

David versus Goliath: *Except that Goliath occasionally struggled with fluent English. Joel's speech was loud and vibrant but his eyes remained glued to his paper. Every now and then, he would throw in an enthusiastic "Hallelujah!" At one point, I heard someone whisper to his friend, "Is this dude contesting for pastor or for homeroom secretary?" It took every ounce of maturity in me not to laugh. No, I'm kidding. I laughed. I definitely laughed. Who wouldn't?*

Unexpected Turns & Bold Promises

Then came one of the most unexpected stories of the entire election: **Messi Elisha!** Previously known more for entertainment than seriousness, Messi's decision to contest for Chapel Minister had sparked criticism. People questioned whether someone playful could lead spiritually. Immediately whispers began because there is nothing that travels faster than gossip and criticisms: "That guy is playful," "He isn't serious."

Despite everything said about him, Messi never backed down. When he stepped forward speaking with the confidence of an evangelist, the hall erupted. "I am not afraid of anyone," he declared. He warned voters not to let "the devil deceive you" while voting, adding, "Look for my name." For two minutes, Messi preached as people screamed, cheered and went absolutely berserk!

Other candidates also found their moments. Martin, a lone contestant for Interior Minister, addressed us as future billionaires: "The boys should have nice haircuts so they can look like millionaires." And honestly, who among us plans to remain poor voluntarily? The crowd cheered in agreement.

Xavier, contesting for Sanitation Minister, delivered perhaps the most practical campaign promise of all: "If you are not fine, that's why I'm here. If your toothbrush gets lost, come to me. I'm willing to invest in it." Forget the rules, don't even pull up the policy, this guy was prepared to enter the toothbrush replacement business.

The Entertainment Minister girls brought another fierce contestant. Robinah promised mash-up parties and theme days like pajama days. The boys immediately burst into laughter and the gossip box revealed why the boys were laughing and the girls were cheering. The MC read, "Does Robinah want to see the boys' backs or what? Tell us." Apparently, many boys had concerns about

the pajama policy of the speech. At some point, someone demanded a backflip in exchange for votes. She delivered a cartwheel instead and nearly sacrificed an article for democracy.

The Showdown and Dance Offs

Vice presidential candidates then took centre stage. Three contestants entered the fray: Year 12's Danniellah, Year 10's Christine, and Sylvester. Danniellah was modest and simple. Sylvester spoke like an actual politician. Christine possessed one unforgettable habit as every "better" became "baygytteerr".

Then the campaigns took another unexpected turn because the candidates had to dance. Amos Luweero went first, pulling a few moves from his magic hat. The vice presidency followed and Danniellah surprised everyone and easily outshone her political speaker counterparts. Christine also shocked students with dance moves many never knew she possessed. Sylvester looked ready to sprint off stage and disappear forever. Sadly for him, there was no escape route. He had to surrender his childhood dance routines.

David stepped up, closing the session. The Dancing President himself showcasing pure amapiano mastery. No notes needed to be taken. However, before we went for lunch, the head of the electoral commission refused to leave without making the headlines. Mr. Atamba amused everyone with an old school shuffle, showing the gen-Zs how they used to do it back in the '90s.

The Digital Verdict

Voting took place after lunch using **Vetrix**, a digital voting system developed by former EIA student Patrick Ssendegeya through Eatrack Computer Solutions. Gone are the days of ticking papers and spending hours counting votes until sunset. Students voted online and within the hour graphs appeared with ready results.

The hall waited. Hearts pounded. All contestants found their 'safe' people for comfort. Mr. Atamba flew through the results of the unopposed contestants while pausing dramatically on competitive results. Clearly, he enjoyed suspense and tension. My guess is that if there was tons of time, he'd have sent everyone for water breaks before every undeclared competitive post.

There were definitely shocks. People have a tendency of getting surprised despite the fact that they are the ones that voted. Micah defeated Joel just like David beat Goliath. The hall erupted. Tracy, ex-senator, narrowly defeated Natasha by fewer than twenty votes in one of the tightest races of the day: Interior minister girls.

Messi, God's chosen one according to his own campaign, crushed his opponent by an incredible margin. Wide eyes followed by screams and bottled by disbelief. "Free at last!" he shouted. Jennifer aka "Jingen wa Mummy" defeated Robinah for Entertainment minister girls. Apparently, no one was looking for gymnastic lessons after all, and the boys were definitely not ready to strip down for a pajama day.

The Crown Jewels

Then everything became quiet. Vice President... President... The crown jewels of the election. Christine emerged victorious, defeating both a male contestant and an A-level student for Vice President.

Finally, the Presidency. By now, many acknowledged that Katie (Amos) had delivered the stronger debate performance. He had outsmarted his six-year veteran opponent. People had noticed and by the end opinions had shifted. Even the MC commented, "Eh! Amos mmmm, I see people are changing their minds."

Yet when the final results appeared on the screen, reality arrived. David defeated Amos by approximately thirty votes. Whether EIA students simply value vibes over words, whether Amos' short stay in the school worked against him, or whether David's dancing had already secured hearts long before campaign season began, nobody can say for certain.

Reflections on the Race: What cannot be denied, however, is this; For a student barely five months into school life to challenge one of EIA's most established personalities and secure over sixty votes is remarkable. This is way better than one previous presidential duel we all witnessed when the losing contestant received roughly 10% votes. David may have won the presidency but Amos earned something almost as valuable: **Respect and experience.**

Not every election gives you billionaires, pastors, gymnasts, toothbrush investors and amapiano presidents. At EIA, apparently, that's just another school term.