

Model Schools in Kabul – Pointing the Way to a Digital Future

Model schools serve as examples for other schools, set standards and demonstrate good teaching and good school management.

Kabul has three such model schools for particularly high-performing students: the Amani High School for Boys, the Ayesha-e-Durani High School for Girls, and the Lycée Jamhuriat, a secondary-level business school for girls. In 2014, the German Government commissioned the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH to support the development of these three schools into model schools in Afghanistan.

The schools' management teams began by embracing a wide range of changes. From the introduction of new staffing structures to efficient financial and payroll administration and premises management, the new tasks facing the management teams posed considerable challenges. However, through training courses and coaching from international experts, they have been equipped to tackle these challenges. And the changes have really paid off: the schools are now structured more efficiently, enabling them to deliver high-quality teaching that prepares students for a digital future.

Good teaching underpins any model school but requires well-trained teachers. Teachers at the three schools have therefore gone back to the classroom themselves. The curriculum now includes modern teaching methods and non-violent education as well as mathematics and science subjects, while German is embedded in the curriculum as the first foreign language that students learn. The committed teachers have absorbed new knowledge and are now passing it on to their students. There are also plans to develop and introduce modern methods of teaching to further improve the quality of teaching at the schools. English shall also be taught more widely in future as a foreign language.

It is not just about the quality of teaching though. Surroundings are also an important factor in successful learning, so new gyms, canteens and heating systems along with regular school cleaning are creating a pleasant learning environment in which children and young people can feel comfortable throughout the academic year. The schools have also been appropriately equipped, with new laboratories and up-to-date textbooks, along with art and music groups to ensure that the student experience goes beyond 'just' school. Since the end of 2018, the Amani and Aisha-e-Durani schools have also benefited from new computers with appropriate software and an internet connection – something that is rare in Afghan schools.



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The computer room at the Ayesha-e-Durani School now has 25 workstations for students, with five more computers available in the school's library. School principal Shabnam Mahmudi is enthusiastic: 'We're living in the 21st century. We can't manage without computers any more. Now the girls have an opportunity to learn how to use modern computer software. That will hugely increase their future opportunities on the labour market.' Around 100 girls in classes 10, 11 and 12 now have lessons in information technology (IT). Their teachers have completed four days' initial training on computers, which attracted a lot of interest. Mahmudi adds: 'Our teachers want to undergo more in-service training to widen their computer skills further so that they can teach more effectively.'

A total of 36 computer workstations have also been installed at the Amani School for boys. As Principal Mohammad Alim Omid explains, 'We started with a six-day IT course for our teachers. We're living in the digital age. Computer skills are now a must.' Both schools are therefore now planning further courses to broaden the teachers' skills.

The Afghan Ministry of Education has also responded to current trends and has embedded IT skills in its curriculums. The Ministry is also providing IT textbooks for classes 10, 11 and 12. Everything is therefore in place to make IT skills an established part of the teaching in Afghan schools.

The model schools are demonstrating how schools can improve the quality of their teaching. Afghanistan's National Education Strategic Plan specifies that experiences gained with the model schools will be rolled out in other schools across the country. This will ensure that all Afghan children and young people will in future benefit from this forward-looking strategy.

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