

# Duke and Duchess of Cambridge begin Pakistan tour in Islamabad

To begin the day TRH visited the local, government-run Islamabad Model College for Girls school to champion the importance of quality education, particularly for girls. The school educates students between the ages of 4 and 18.

TRH met pupils from kindergarten to sixth form and heard about how the students are benefiting from Teach for Pakistan, a fast-track teacher training programme modelled on the UK's successful 'Teach First' scheme. Like Teach First, Teach for Pakistan is focused on improving the quality of teaching in schools which serve families from disadvantaged backgrounds through a rigorous teacher selection and training programme.

Continuing the education theme, TRH then visited the Margalla Hills to take part in a number of activities which highlighted Pakistan's work to meet several of the Sustainable Development Goals. Their Royal Highnesses joined children from four local schools to set up a leopard camera trap. Environmental change and its impact is an increasingly serious issue in Pakistan, a country especially vulnerable to climate change. The Margalla Hills in particular face threats of encroachment, poaching, wildfires, invasive species and littering.

The Duke and Duchess then held official meetings with the President of Pakistan Mr Arif Alvi, followed by an official meeting and lunch with the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr Imran Khan.

## **Notes to Editors**

### **Education**

The UK is investing in education in Pakistan to unlock its potential. The DFID education programme in Pakistan is the UK's largest bilateral development programme. UK aid has helped more than 5.5 million girls like those in the Islamabad College since 2011 get a quality education. UK aid has also focused on girls who are out of school to make sure they get education to improve literacy and numeracy, as well as training in skills for work. For example, thousands of teenage girls in the lowest performing districts of South Punjab will learn the skills they need to reach their full potential. With a growing population in Pakistan, where two-thirds of adult women cannot read or write, it is essential we make sure girls get the education they deserve.

All evidence confirms that wherever women are empowered and educated there are immediate improvements in the prosperity of that society. Helping women and girls to gain access to the same opportunities as their male peers is in everyone's interests. An equal role for women in the economy is essential to sustained growth and will help lift millions out of poverty, with experts

predicting that advancing economic equality globally could add \$12 trillion to the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Pakistan is making progress on education, but challenges remain. The number of out-of-school children has declined, but 22.8 million children remain out of school (aged 6-16 years), with 11.4 million in primary and lower secondary school (aged 6-12 years). Spending has increased, but despite its young population, Pakistan spends only just over 3% of its GDP on education.

The Islamabad Model College for Girls (IMCG) is a government-run school with students from kindergarten (aged 3-5 years) to 'intermediate' (aged 17-18 years). The kindergarten and primary sections are co-educational, while the high school is girls only. For its 1,200 students the school has 28 teachers. The school has benefitted from UK aid from DFID as it runs the "Learn Smart Classroom". It provides interactive lessons to help children learn in a digital and interactive way. The "Learn Smart Classroom" has been used in more than 300 schools across Pakistan and has helped more than 80,000 children learn since it was created.

## **Environment**

Environmental change and its impact is an increasingly serious issue in Pakistan, a country especially vulnerable to climate change. The Margalla Hills face threats of encroachment, poaching, wildfires, invasive species and littering.

The environment engagement involves children from four local schools participating in the WWF's Green School Programme. The Green School Programme contributes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 (health and wellbeing), SDG 4 (education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles), as well as the aforementioned SDGs. The campground used during this engagement is newly built and this autumn is the first opportunity the school children have had to use it.

## **For further information**

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