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## **WHAT DO DHAHRAN AHLIYYA SCHOOLS (DAS) DO TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?**

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Dhahran Ahliyya Schools is a not-for-profit cluster of schools that was founded in 1977. They are approved by the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia and accredited by AdvancED through the North Central Association Council for Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI). Striving to become a single IB World School, DAS is now authorized for the Primary Years Program (PYP) and is a candidate school for the Middle Years Program (MYP) with the expectation that it will be authorized by the end of 2019. At the secondary level, it offers both the American High School program with Advanced Placement courses and also the advanced Saudi government secondary program (Muqararat).

## WHAT IS THE VISION OF DHAHRAN AHLIYYA SCHOOLS (DAS)?

Dhahran Ahliyya Schools were founded in 1977 for the purpose of providing excellence in education. In 2016, its Advisory Board led a study of the school's vision and concluded with the following statement:

### DAS VISION

**Our vision is to provide a world class education with an Arab and Islamic identity through a pioneering learning community that is sustainable and socially responsible.**

Each part of this vision is a key driver in the strategic plan of the school to fulfill its Mission, which was also revised by a series of committees which engaged the participation of representatives of all members of the faculty, staff, and leadership as well as the Advisory Board and members of the broader community.

### DAS MISSION

**Inspired by the principles of Islam, the mission of Dhahran Ahliyya Schools is to empower each student to be a compassionate, thinking, lifelong bi-lingual learner who makes a positive difference, locally and globally.**

The culture of DAS is formulated around the school's commitment to continuous progress toward fulfilling its Vision and Mission, as stated in its Motto.

**Each year, DAS will be better than it was the year before.**

DAS describes itself as **a community, a family, and as a laboratory** for the enhancement of education for its own students and for the Arab world, generally.

Our targets for our students were clarified in the year 2001 as a statement of our Targeted Characteristics which showed that the character and personality of the child is fully as important as his academic achievement. Now, as we have moved into the IB, our statement of those Targeted Characteristics has been further focused and refined as follows in the **IB Learner Profile**:

# IB LEARNER PROFILE

DAS students will learn to become:

## **Inquirers:**

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

## **Open-minded:**

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

## **Knowledgeable:**

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

## **Thinkers:**

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

## **Communicators:**

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

## **Caring:**

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

## **Risk-takers:**

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

## **Balanced:**

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

## **Reflective:**

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

## **Principled:**

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

## WHAT IS THE DAS STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?

It is clear to us that everything we do at DAS must be focused on student learning, particularly in two areas: the IB-driven, standards-based curriculum that we have promised to offer to each child and the personal characteristics outlined in the Learner Profile. We believe that we can best achieve that learning by strengthening our organizational culture as a pioneering professional learning community that fosters collaboration, provides support based on current research and technology, and persists in continuous inquiry into the results of our work to ensure to student learning. This requires focus in the areas described in the three pillars which underpin our school culture as shown in the graph on the following page. These pillars have been adapted from those defined through the grounded research of TAMAM, the movement for school-based reform in Arab countries, led by the American University of Beirut and supported by the Arab Thought Foundation.

The first pillar represents one of the strongest characteristics of Dhahran Ahliyya Schools – professional collaboration. All faculty and staff are grouped into teams with shared responsibilities. We believe that our culture of collaboration within and between teams is the means by which we can ensure continuous learning – of the teams, of the individuals in them, of the organization as a whole and, ultimately, of our students. This requires that there be an atmosphere of respect and personal responsibility within and between teams. It also requires that we are open and transparent with each other, “de-privatising practice” so each can learn and help others learn for the benefit of the learning of the students. Also important is the systematic documentation of practice so it can be studied and used to help guide future development. The main responsibility of those assigned leadership roles is to ensure the maintenance of this culture of professional collaboration in order to ensure continuous improvement.

The third pillar is our results orientation. We know that progress always takes place in a spiral that is based on continuous collaborative inquiry and action. Our teams meet for several periods each week to conduct reflective dialogue around their study of the results of student learning and to plan for improvements. Designs for teaching, policies and practices evolve through these repeated cycles of inquiry and we take action based on what we discover.

The middle pillar is support. Neither the first nor the third pillar will be strong without mentoring that leads to continuous, job-embedded learning. We provide training, assistance, and incentives for continuous professional development. We undertake these processes with the use of international research-based resources; when these are not available in the appropriate language, we translate them and provide what is needed. In all our work, we seek to increase efficiency and effectiveness through the support of current technologies to support both management and learning at all levels.

# تَعَلُّمُ الطَّلَابِ Student Learning

of Guaranteed Curriculum & IB-DAS Learner Profile

للمنهج المضمون و للملاح متعلم الظهران الأهلية في البكالوريا الدولية

through

بِخِلَالِ

## التأزر المهني

- ✦ الاحترام
- ✦ المسؤولية الشخصية
- ✦ القيادة من أجل التطوير المستمر
- ✦ البعد عن الشخصية
- ✦ الممارسة المنفتحة
- ✦ التوثيق المنتظم للممارسة.

### Professional Collaboration

- ✦ Respect
- ✦ Personal Responsibility
- ✦ Leadership for Continuous Improvement
- ✦ De-privatization of Practice
- ✦ Systematic Documented Practice

## المساندة

- ✦ منحى الرعاية المهنية
- ✦ التعلم بالتجريب من خلال العمل
- ✦ التقنية الحديثة
- ✦ مصادر مبنية على البحوث

### Support

- ✦ Mentoring Approach
- ✦ Experiential Job-embedded Learning
- ✦ Utilizing current, technology
- ✦ Research - based resources

## التوجه بالنتائج

- ✦ التقصي
- ✦ القرارات المستندة إلى الأدلة
- ✦ الحوار والممارسة التأمليّة
- ✦ القرارات والأفعال المبنية على الحاجات
- ✦ التخطيط المعدل أثناء التطبيق وبناء على المتابعة

### Results Orientation

- ✦ Inquiry Based Decisions
- ✦ Reflective Dialogue and Practice
- ✦ Actions Driven by Needs
- ✦ Evolving Design Planning

رِجَائِزُ مَدَارِسِ الظَّهْرَانِ الْأَهْلِيَّةِ

PILLARS of DHAHRAN AHLIYYA SCHOOLS

A TAMAM Professional Learning Community

مشروع تمام في المجتمعات المهنية التعليمية

Since the establishment of DAS in 1977, we have learned a lot about the processes involved in enhancing student learning and ensuring progress in our school, as a whole. Our observations about the process are parallel to the international literature on school reform. Researchers tell us that improvement requires change and change requires learning and learning is a constructivist process that takes place in iterative cycles, much like a spiral. They remind us that there is no magic wand by which schools can make improvements happen quickly, or by which they can simply move directly from where they are to where they want to be. The spiral of progress requires that the learners deal with similar issues multiple times. As they reflect on each experience, they gain deeper understanding and are gradually able to deal with the issue with greater skill and effectiveness. We have seen this spiral clearly in the learning of our students, our teachers, our administrators, and ourselves as a whole school. Our progress, therefore, has been gradual but consistent, sustained by our development of these pillars as keys to our growing capacity for collaborative cycles of inquiry and action as a professional learning community.

Although they might have been stated or represented in other ways in earlier years of the school, these pillars represent the basic strategy that has been guiding DAS right from its first year. They are key to understanding the answer to the question, “What does DAS do to ensure continuous progress?” In the pages below, there are more detailed answers to this question.

## **WHAT ELSE DOES DAS DO TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?**

- 1. At the end of each academic year, involves all members of faculty and staff in analyzing the achievements and challenges of that year and writing new SMART goals and action plans for the following year.**

After the students have left at the end of each year, all members of faculty and staff stay on duty for a week or two to collaborate in teams to study results of their work – results of various kinds of assessment of learning, including standardized tests; results of surveys of parents, students, faculty and staff; feedback received from various sides; and many other kinds of results that have been documented, particularly in light of the SMART goals agreed upon for that year. Together, they analyze the positive and negative influencing factors for the areas going well and also for the areas that need improvement. On the basis of their analysis, they agree on SMART goals and an action plan for improvement in the following year. When they leave for summer vacation, they already have a clear plan for the changes to be made upon their return to start the new academic year.

- 2. Conducts frequent surveys of stakeholders in order to design improvements.**

For many years, DAS has been conducting surveys of parents about the school, students about their teachers, teachers about the administration and about school climate factors generally.

The surveys are conducted by the DAS Research Unit which is separate and independent from all groups of stakeholders. They are the only ones who see the answers on the questionnaires, whether they have been implemented on paper or by internet. They collate the results and present them to appropriate groups, guiding them through specific protocols for collaborative survey analysis. After study of the results, the appropriate group agrees on a plan to share the results in the planning period at the end of the year and develop action plans for individuals, teams, and/or committees.

### **3. Makes careful selection of faculty and staff**

New members of faculty and staff are usually selected for work at DAS by a committee formed of educational leaders according to a certain approach that aims at identifying the personal qualities, attitudes, views, and educational competency of the applicant. The final approval of an applicant for a position is made in light of the committee's evaluation of the interview, performance on written test in the subject matter or area of work and, whenever possible in case of the teachers, classroom demonstration.

### **4. Continuously undertakes new efforts to maintain a positive climate and environment**

A school must be a peaceful place where children and adults are happy to spend their time – a place where they feel accepted, respected, and supported no matter who they are. Without this positive climate in which there is a balance between satisfaction and productivity, no other efforts will be successful.

#### **A. Celebrates progress!**

Progress comes in many little steps, many of which may only become visible after a period of time. DAS faculty and staff watch carefully to catch those little steps and identify them, "That's progress!" Teams also look for signs, even when small, and celebrate in their weekly meetings.

In the second semester of each year, the school as a whole, has a major school-wide event called the "Celebration of Progress." Organized by the Positive Climate Committee, the event is an opportunity for every team – academic and administrative – to demonstrate what they have been working on all year and the progress that has taken place. The students are dismissed early, invitations are sent to members of the Advisory Board and Alumni + Board, volunteer parents, representatives of the District Educational Office and others in the community. Members of the academic teams will have worked carefully with the Consultants for Academic and Professional Development on how best to show their progress, especially in relation to the SMART goals they set at the end of the previous year. Similarly, administrative teams will have conferred with their heads to find ways to communicate the progress they have made, especially in relation to their team SMART goals. A gala dinner is held and opportunity is taken also to honor the colleagues who have been in the school for a multiple of 5 years –

5,10,15,20,25,30,35, 40 and, soon, 45. The event is a very happy one with lots of sharing and the words “Congratulations for your hard work and progress!” can be heard reverberating from the walls.

### **B. Cares for faculty and staff**

Realizing the importance of providing the psychological and physical comfort for its employees, DAS has provided them with the following:

- Competitive salaries and benefits, reduced fees for the children in the school, and interest-free loans
- Opportunities for professional growth
- Important role in decision making for own area of work ( PLC team, Positive Climate Committee, committees for self-studies, regular surveys, personal goal setting, other)

### **C. Elects Positive Climate Committee**

There is a Positive Climate Committee on each side (boys and girls) made up of representatives chosen by each team. It meets every 1-2 weeks with the principals in order to identify needs and undertake projects to maintain and/or improve school climate.

### **D. Strives to be clear about policies, and implements them consistently**

The Leadership Committee (Principals, Consultants for Academic and Professional Development, Consultant for Innovative and Informational Technologies, and Director of Business Affairs, General Directors, Deputy President, and Sr Vice President) meets each week to coordinate progress and activities, identify the need for policies and collaborate to write them. After completion, these policies are signed and placed on the DAS intranet where they are available for all to see and follow.

### **E. Strives to maintain good relations between children and adults, among the students, and among the faculty and staff members**

DAS helps teachers learn how to create a positive and productive climate in school and classroom through using strategies that reinforce student self-esteem and treat both student and teacher with dignity.

Regarding the students, the Student Council has an important role to play in fostering, strengthening and enhancing the positive relations amongst students and also between students and the school administration. The program for social and emotional learning offers further opportunities for helping students learn how to be responsible and to deal effectively with other people, large and small.



Regarding faculty and staff, the Positive Climate Committee (PCC) works at maintaining a positive climate by identifying areas for improvement and by organizing events meant to bring members of all the teams together. The PCC is formed of representatives of all teams and meets weekly with the principals of the schools. At the team level, each team has a coach responsible to help it find ways to maintain a productive working relationship internally and with other teams.

**F. Provides opportunities, encouragement, and support to each child, regardless of national, regional, tribal or religious origins, and regardless of the child's academic record, appearance, or individual strengths or weaknesses**

Discrimination against any social, ethnic, or national groupings is not permitted in the school and, when identified, is addressed. Further, all students are given opportunities and encouraged to try themselves in new situations, whether or not they seem to be naturally talented or ready for the challenge.

**G. Strives to engage parents in the lives of the students and the school**

There are many strategies used by the school to engage the parents. In addition to the normal meetings between parents and teachers, and information provided through a bi-weekly newsletter, website, and annual report, communication is enhanced through class websites, meetings, and school events. Also, parents are invited to participate as volunteers in many different ways including working with students or committees or events. At the current time, there are more than two hundred parent volunteers working with the school in one way or the other.

**H. Engages alumni**

DAS seeks to strengthen the relations among graduates in order to help them develop a supportive network for themselves. It also works to maintain the graduates' ties with the School in order to use their strengths to inspire our current students and also to gain from their suggestions regarding DAS improvement. For this purpose, we have supported the establishment of an organization for alumni plus those who attended even though they did not actually graduate from DAS. This organization is led by an Executive Board which is working hard to strengthen the organization for the benefit of its members, current DAS students, and also for the future of the school.

**I. Works to ensure sustainability of the organization and its continuous progress**

In 2013, DAS established an official, voluntary Advisory Board and tasked it with overseeing the stability, sustainability, and continuous improvement of the School. The Board includes

representatives from Aramco and from the broader community, DAS graduates and non-graduates, males and females, educators and lay-persons, DAS parents and others. It meets four times each year as a Board, in addition to other meetings of its six committees; Governance, Finance, Talent/HR, Facilities, Advancement, and External Educational Services.

#### **5. Strives to be a standards-based school**

DAS has adopted or adapted standards for five different areas of work:

- a. Student learning (**DAS Content Standards**, available on the DAS Intranet),
- b. Teaching (**Standards for Good Teaching at DAS**, available on the DAS Intranet)
- c. Support/administration (**Standards for Good Work at DAS**, available on the DAS internet),
- d. Program (**Four Criteria**, below),
- e. In-Service training. (We strive to ensure that all our in-service professional development should meet these criteria which have been identified by Learning Forward, a major US organization for educational professional development: Sustained, Intense, Active, Coherent, Constructivist, Collaborative, and Job-embedded)

These standards give clarity to all about our aims and also give ourselves a means to evaluate our own progress. We evaluate ourselves through a variety of means each year and then use the resulting data for reflection and improvement.

An example is the program standards reflected in the “Four Criteria.” While we use many means to evaluate our programs, one important means is through a survey given each year to all students. The questionnaire was designed and is updated periodically, collaboratively by teachers and administration, based on the following four criteria:

1. **STUDENTS FEEL safe in the school, confident that they will be respected and not exposed to any kind of bullying - physical or emotional, from adults or fellow students.**
2. **STUDENTS FEEL that what they are studying is useful to them all the time and interesting to them at least 65% of the time.**
3. **STUDENTS FEEL that they are being asked to apply higher level thinking skills to their learning and that they are not being asked simply to memorize except in those few instances when it is absolutely necessary.**
4. **STUDENTS FEEL that they are able to succeed in doing the work assigned and are confident that if they have trouble they will be able to find assistance from teachers who will help them LEARN, not simply help them get good grades.**

The Research Unit (RU) implements the survey each year with students at all grade levels. Then after preparation of the results, it guides the process of analysis which leads to the preparation of an action plan at levels of individual, team, and school as a whole.

## **6. Designs and implements a system for continuous professional development which is embedded in the classroom**

DAS is now preparing to make its fifth revision (1985, 1989, 2007, 2014, and one to be completed in 2020) of its Plan for Continuous Progress in Learning (PCPL) which links its plans for professional development, employee performance management, and compensation. Committees including all employment groups have been involved in the process of revising the plans based on their evaluation of its effectiveness. Originally, there was only a PCPL for teachers. Now, with the most recent version, we also have a PCPL for support staff.

### **A. Professional Development**

Ever since it was founded in 1977, DAS has had an annual summer period of training and preparation in which all employees are present for four weeks before students return to start the new academic year. Starting in 2016, additional time was added for this purpose through rescheduling the working week to provide one day per week of early dismissal of students so teachers and support staff, all, have time to focus on development. During this period, employees participate in a variety of courses, workshops, committees, and team projects designed to improve both the skills of the individuals and quality of the School's programs.

All employees are required to go through certain developmental phases, well defined in the PCPL, to acquire basic and then advanced skills of work. As the employee is evaluated as having achieved the appropriate use of particular skills, he/she moves on to another phase to work on others. In addition to these standard skills, all employees are required to learn to be successful in fulfilling the specific requirements of the IB program.

In addition to the training offered throughout the year by our own staff, DAS has been able to provide IB and related training to all its teachers and administrators by bringing in official trainers during summer training periods. DAS also sends directors, educational coaches, teachers, and others to external IB training or to other international conferences and courses. Nearly 10% of the School's budget goes to salaries and expenses that are involved with professional development activities.

### **B. Educational supervision and coaching**

An essential part of the professional development program is the coaching, mentoring, and support provided by our own coaches, and facilitators. DAS has appointed distinguished teachers to leadership roles within their teams, some as permanent coaches and others who work as facilitators for a period of two years and then go back to the classroom as full time teachers. The purpose of these positions is to ensure adequate support for teachers who are

working to develop their skills as well as their curricula and instructional materials. A variety of models of coaching are used, according to the requirements of the particular situation. These coaches are led and supported by our Academic Consultants in each school.

### **C. Performance Evaluation**

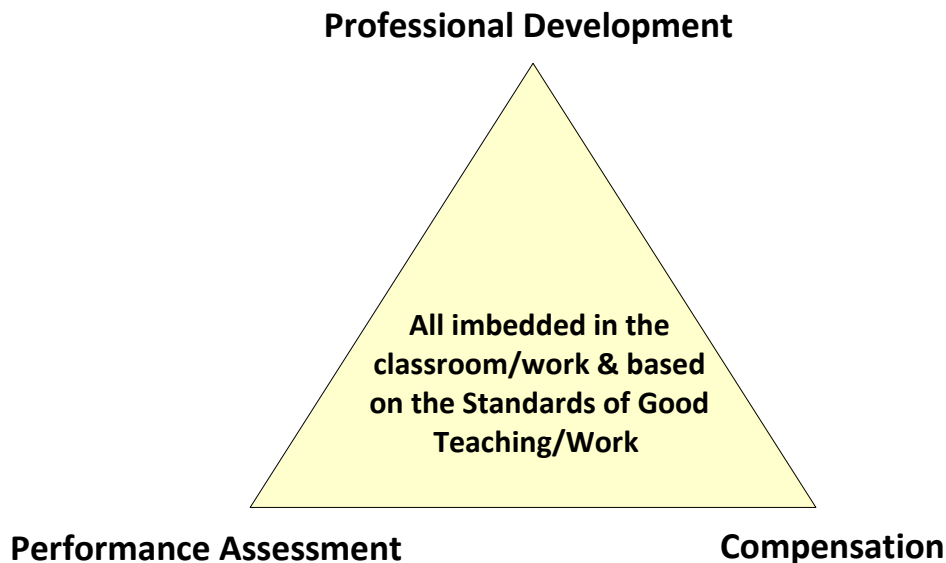
Performance is evaluated according to published criteria (for teachers, the Standards of Good Teaching at DAS; for support staff, the Standards of Good Work at DAS) and procedures that are based on current educational research. The focus of the process for the teacher is on his ability to identify and respond to the real needs of his students within the IB program as well as his contribution to the development and success of his team. The focus of the process for support staff is on maintaining a customer orientation while meeting the unique requirements of each job.

The performance evaluation process requires the person to provide a portfolio of a variety of kinds of evidence that he/she is using the target skills and knowledge in an appropriate way on a consistent basis in the normal process of work. Advancement at DAS is not determined on the basis of training taken but rather on the basis of training applied. Decisions are taken according to clear processes described in the PCPL. They are taken by a committee, all of whom have visited the person in class or at work and have seen the evidence of achievement and seen the person's presentation on his/her work and progress. The committee can then decide to move the individual to the next phase or rather to take other steps, including taking additional time in the same phase or leaving the school.

### **D. Compensation**

As employees are evaluated as having completed a developmental phase as defined in the PCPL, they receive salary increases. These "developmental increases" are in addition to the normal service increases they receive each new year as long as their work meets the normal expected levels for a person in their phase of development. In the current plan, there are two other ways an employee can increase his salary: through demonstrating on official examinations that he has reached a particular level of English or technology use; and through earning a higher degree in education which is related to his field of work at the school.

## PLAN for CONTINUOUS PROGRESS in LEARNING (PCPL)



### WHAT DOES DAS DO TO ENRICH ITS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS?

#### DAS VISION

**Our vision is to provide a world class education with an Arab and Islamic identity through a pioneering learning community that is sustainable and socially responsible.**

A key part of the 2016 vision statement is contained in the words, “a world class school with an Islamic and Arab identity.” It was soon decided that the International Baccalaureate (IB) offers the best means for achieving this vision. It offers the balance of international mindedness and focus on identity; it requires dual-language education; it includes a strong emphasis on social responsibility and personal action for making a difference; its approach to teaching and learning is appropriate for the requirements of the 21st century and matches what DAS has been striving for throughout its history; it requires the school to act as a professional learning community focused on continuous development of individuals, teams and the school as a whole; and it requires accountability for implementation of the full program. Since the time of that decision, the focus of the DAS leadership has been to ensure that all persons at all levels of the school receive the training and support needed to be able to achieve authorization and continuous improvement within the IB structures.

Therefore, the best answer to the question above is to read deeply about the IB programs. Information on the IB program is provided in other locations.

Another important support for enrichment of our educational programs has come through our growing understanding of the power of technology. We have learned to apply the SAMR model of development: Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition. Different teachers and programs are at different stages in this continuum. However, one of the most exciting examples of redefinition is seen in our courses in Virtual Reality, Maker Spaces and their connection with our new IB courses in design. While these are exciting places for students to collaborate in designing, making, and discovering future technologies, their influence is greater than that. They are also influencing our understanding of the learning process for other subjects and the development of creativity and problem solving.

## WHAT DOES DAS DO TO ENRICH ITS CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS?

DAS has always considered its co-curricular programs to be equally as important as its academic program. It was a pioneer in having what have been called “club programs” and on inculcation of a love for community service.

### **1. Instills a sense of responsibility, compassion and love for community service.**

From the beginning, DAS has worked to instill a sense of responsibility, compassion and love for community service in students, starting as early as pre-school, through involvement in planning and implementing projects of community service. Every child from grade 3 elementary and above has been involved in at least one project each year to serve the community. The program has provided students with an awareness of the needs that exist in the world around them, the skills required to collaborate with others in service of a common goal, the sense of confidence that they can actually make a positive difference in the lives of other people. They have this confidence that they can help make the world a better place because they have done so multiple times over their years at DAS.

Over the years, DAS students have worked with many community groups, including but not limited to such groups as the following:

- A. The handicapped in cooperation with several different centers for physically handicapped, autism and Downs Syndrome. Have built three “sensory classrooms” in autism centers and organized athletic and recreational activities to further partnerships between people from various handicapped centers and DAS students
- B. Orphans through cooperation in several orphanages and groups working with them

- C. The aged in cooperation with the Home for the Aged in Dammam
- D. Local hospitals through the foundation and operation of lending libraries for patients (Al-Mana Hospital and King Fahad University Hospital)
- E. The environment through planting trees, helping clean up beach areas, recycling paper, glass, and aluminum, and many other projects in cooperation with the appropriate local authorities
- F. Needy families through local charity associations in the area and also through renovating homes, offering scholarships for IT training, or through other projects it has initiated in the school or in the community
- G. Mosques to assist in renovating, cleaning, beautifying or other activities
- H. Local government schools through construction of libraries and assisting in supplying and organizing books, supplying school bags and supplies, volunteering to teach English and other projects

These experiences in community service are intensified at the 11<sup>th</sup> grade when all students participate in our program for Week Without Walls. The students spend the first semester choosing and learning about the community service project in which they will collaborate to make a positive difference. They also participate in activities to raise the money they will need to be effective. In the spring, teams of students with their teachers spend a week in the location, away from home, carrying out the service that they have planned. Some of the projects have been carried out in Saudi Arabia and others in India or Jordan; all require that the student be in a context that is quite new to him – “outside his comfort zone”. At the present time, the Week Without Walls program is only for the boys at DAS.

One of the greatest attractions to DAS about the IB has been the focus of its program on community service. The IB program requires this from students starting from pre-school, integrates community service into the normal instructional units, and requires service-as-action on the part of students at MYP levels and beyond. The DAS program therefore is now in transition between what was done traditionally and what will now be done within the IB framework.

## **2. Offers opportunities for students to try a wide range of kinds of activities and skills**

The clubs program, offered during school time from elementary through secondary school, has provided a variety of kinds of challenges and broadening experiences. Students are encouraged to take a different club each semester, especially in the years before secondary in order to discover new interests or develop new skills.

### **3. Requires students to make presentations and speak publicly**

DAS requires that all students speak publicly several times each year, starting with the first grade and earlier. They give presentations in their classrooms as a normal part of their instructional units, and also in assemblies, contests, shows, for visitors to the school, and a variety of other settings with small and large groups. As a result, most are comfortable giving speeches in English at Model United Nations, in Arabic at Model Arab League, and at other international events. All students must make public presentations of personal projects of some sort in grades 6, 8, and 10 and then in the last year of secondary school when they present their Senior Projects in front of a panel of judges, as well as parents and other students.

### **4. Challenges students to work at world class levels through participation in international competitions**

Participation in science fairs, robotics, science fairs, Makers' Space, Model United Nations, Model Arab League, Global Issues Network, and other international competitions gives DAS students an opportunity to interact with students from other countries. Through these contacts, they are able to gauge the level of their skills and understandings against world class standards. Both our students and our school have gained confidence as a result of the achievements of DAS students in these activities. Our students have regularly won at the provincial, national, and international levels.

### **5. Develops physical, social, and emotional skills as well as cognitive skills**

The range of our activities includes an active sports program, both internal leagues and external. DAS personnel established and continue to lead the Dammam Private School League (DPSL) of eighteen schools including both international and national program schools. This league is active throughout the year with a variety of sports as well as chess and other activities. Whereas it began as a league for boys, girls are now beginning to become active in having their own competitions. The League is focused on developing the child from all angles – physical, social, and emotional.

### **6. Increases awareness of global issues**

Awareness of global issues among DAS students has increased as a result of several efforts: community service projects at both local, national and international levels, the formulation of 10<sup>th</sup> grade social studies into a simulation of the Arab League (Model Arab League), 11<sup>th</sup> grade participation in a local Model United Nations, provision of a one-semester course in global issues, voluntary participation in the Global Issues Network, and voluntary participation in external conferences for Model United Nations.

### **7. Provides opportunities for experimentation with new skills being targeted in the 2030 Vision: creativity, new technologies and entrepreneurship.**

Every year, new skills are being introduced, either as part of traditional courses, or as club activities, or as full elective courses. Examples are the courses and club activities in STEAM, Virtual Reality,



Makers Space, entrepreneurship (at all age levels), short film production, and others. The list changes each year as our faculty respond both to the interests of the students and to changes taking place in the world around them.

### **8. Develops Student Leadership**

Students leadership is developed in many ways. One of these is through participation in the Student Council, which is currently being re-organized to provide even greater experience of leadership. Other ways include courses in leadership given from time to time, their role in relation to their various clubs and activities, and the opportunity to lead in the establishment of new clubs and activities. A recent example of this is the foundation of activities related to virtual reality which was initiated by a student. Secondary students are also involved in leading the establishment of projects or initiatives for community service, either in relation to the IB requirements or as part of their senior projects.

## **WHAT DOES DAS DO TO FULFILL ITS COMMITMENT TO BE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE? – TRANSLATION, PUBLISHING AND TRAINING**

DAS has long stated its aim to contribute to the development of education in the Arab world. For this purpose, DAS welcomes educators from other schools, especially from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, to visit and discuss various school issues. Further, various members of school leadership have participated in committees and made presentations or contributed in other ways to school reform, especially in Saudi Arabia.

DAS has also searched for other ways in which it can use its strengths to be of service to other schools. As part of this effort, the School has established a not-for-profit publishing project called the Educational Book House for Publishing and Distributing ( دار الكتاب التربوي للنشر والطوزيع ) The Book House prepares books or translates them from English into Arabic to be used in training teachers, supervisors, other school leaders and also parents. It has now published almost one hundred and fifty such books and others are being prepared for publishing so that other Arabic-speaking educators may benefit from them. (See the brochure or website of the Educational Book House for Publishing & Distributing). These books are very important to the development of DAS; they are also used both for in-service and pre-service teacher preparation at many schools and universities around the Arab world.

In addition, the Book House has become a distributor for children's books that are urgently needed for the effective teaching of Arabic literacy. It holds an annual celebration of reading (accompanied

by a book fair) and also sells to individual schools. The Book House has developed kits of leveled books which are essential for schools that wish to upgrade their Arabic instruction.

Further, DAS personnel have accepted invitations to offer training in schools and Ministry of Education departments in many parts of Saudi Arabia and also in other countries – Bahrain, U.A.E., Oman, and Lebanon. More than 5000 educators have participated in the various workshops which are designed to help them apply the ideas in our books to the real world of the schools in which they work. More plans are being made for offering training to persons or organizations. The role of The Educational Book House and the now-being-founded Arab Academy for Educational Services will be of great importance in making these plans a reality.

In addition, the DAS Founders and many members of DAS faculty have been closely involved in two projects of the Arab Thought Foundation (ATF). The first of these, TAMAM, led by the American University of Beirut, is focused on developing theory and practice for school-based school reform in the Arab context. It is currently working in more than a hundred schools in eight different Arab countries and making rapid progress in developing training for leaders of local and district-wide school improvement processes.

The second ATF project in which DAS personnel are deeply involved is called Arabi21. Its purpose is to help improve methods of teaching Arabic to Arab children, especially those whose schools are teaching most subjects through the medium of Arabic. DAS faculty are both learning and teaching to support the efforts of this project in its essential mission to improve the ability of Arab children to use their own language to learn and produce at a level which is appropriate for the 21st century.

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