



## Transformed

The hopes and dreams of the New Life School

Adil is 4 years old. He is the little boy in the photo. His mother died and his father does not have much time for him. So his grandmother sends him to school, sometimes with no shoes, sometimes without his school bag.

But he has no fear. When asked to stand in front of the class of equally poor children in the New Life School, he sang a song at the top of his little voice — "Tarif ho khuda ke barre ki!" (Praise be to the Lamb of God!)

Adil is one of the 92 children who study at the school started by a Pastor in a village outside Lahore. It is one of hundreds of schools contacted through our Christian Schools Survey. Thanks to one generous donor, we are now able to support the school and are working closely with the Principal and staff to raise their standards and improve their facilities.



To learn more about the transformation of the New Life School, turn to the next page.

To watch Adil singing his song to the glory of God, go to [www.facebook.com/StarfishAsia/](http://www.facebook.com/StarfishAsia/)

working together to restore hope



# Transformed...

*the hopes and dreams of the New Life School*



This is the New Life School which we visited in September 2017 — 92 children sitting on the floor in three small rooms. They had no uniforms, but they had some books and three dedicated teachers receiving about £15 a month each for their service. Then a special friend said she would like to support the school.



The school has moved to a new rented building.

A truck arrived loaded with school furniture.



The school re-opened with fresh hope for their future — the children excited, the teachers grateful for improved salaries and the promise of new school books and books for regular Bible study in class.



## Following up the Survey

In the past three months, we have been re-visiting the schools contacted through our 2016 Christian Schools Survey. We have the data — now we are looking for the true picture. So far we have visited

# 70 schools

We found that some no longer exist, others are already well supported by other organisations and some have no special focus to serve the Christian community. Many however welcomed us, thanked us for the *Uraan* magazine and Bible books, and asked us for more help with furniture and teachers' salaries.

# Model Schools

*(Is our plan working?)*

## Transforming five schools and the lives of 650 children

In December, with support from a special donor, we launched a plan to raise the standards of five chosen Christian schools. They were all contacted through our Schools Survey, and all were struggling to provide education to Christian children. All were paying small salaries to their teachers and operating from run-down or inadequate facilities. We offered them help to change.



♦ **The Zeenat School:** Two teachers from the school attended the teacher training in June. Anser visited the school and was impressed by their ambition to raise their standards and to see the students succeed. They have 130 students and 8 teachers. We provided funds to repair the roof over the courtyard.

What do we ask them to do if we provide regular support?

- ♦ they must register a legal Trust and open a bank account
- ♦ they must work on strong support from their community
- ♦ they must ensure regular fee collection

**We will provide funds to improve their infrastructure, provide classroom furniture, Bible curriculum and text books, and involve their teachers in regular training workshops.**

Four other schools have been accepted to work with us to enable them to become Model Schools.

- ♦ **The Right Way School** (highlighted in our March 2017 newsletter) has already received furniture, electricity connection and fans. They are preparing to move to a new building.
- ♦ **St. Pauls** in Stuntzabad is repairing two classrooms with new roofs and we are providing furniture, blackboards and toilets.
- ♦ **The New Life School** (Bahawalpur) and **Dawood Grammar School** (Mian Channu) are repairing classrooms and toilets, painting and requesting furniture.

**Our ambition: That these schools will develop into Model Schools — by faith, commitment and hard work.**



Construction of two new classrooms in progress at Zeenat School. They have also received desks and chairs.



# A week in the life of Anser and Kashi

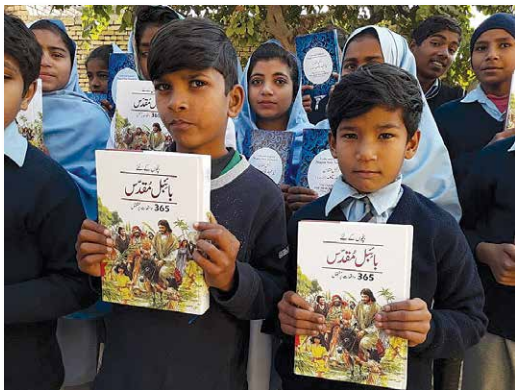
On a cold and foggy day in mid-January Anser and Kashi left Lahore and headed north towards Gujranwala and Narowal to spend a few days visiting schools. Their aim was to call on several that we have come to know about as a result of the Christian Schools Survey. We asked them to summarise where they went and what they achieved.

“ On the way we stopped at Sheikhpura where we met James (who runs the **Light School** for brick kiln workers' children). He needed advice on updating his Trust Deed and we discussed the possibility of shifting his school to a new location. From there we went on to the Rising Star School.

## Rising Star School

**Rising Star** is a village school that we have supported since 2016. Opened by Aasia Arshad as a tuition centre for local Christian children, it now serves more than 100 students in a rented building.

Kashi sat for a while with their teachers. Some of them had been in her teacher training workshops in Gujranwala and in Murree. She was especially interested to know whether they had found the training helpful. She also shared a few more ideas about better teaching practice and encouraged them in their work. Then we distributed Bibles to the students and staff.

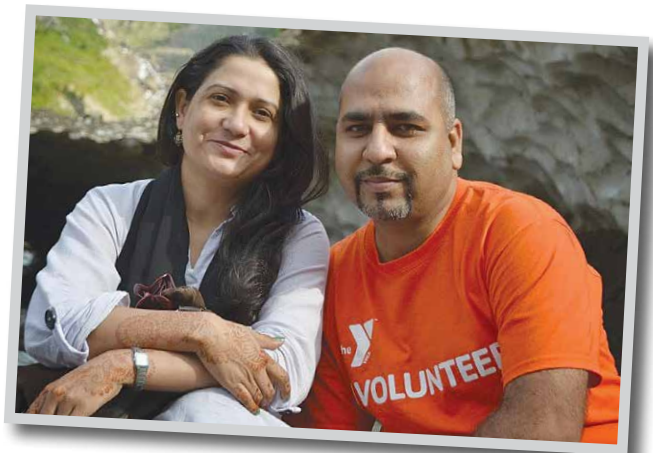


We gave the children in classes 3 to 5 a coloured book of daily Bible readings. We gave New Testaments with both English and Urdu text to students in classes 6 to 8. To the teachers we gave a full Bible. We gave away about 200 Bibles to several schools.

## St. Mary's School, Kanjrur, Narowal

What a contrast it was to come to St. Mary's School ! On a cold day, without proper uniforms, sweaters or shoes, but with bright eyes and faces, the children of St. Mary's gave us a warm welcome. The Principal, Miss Bachani, and her three teachers said they had been waiting for us for the last two years. It was a place with vision, love and care for the Christian children.

The students were sitting in the veranda because the classroom roof was in danger of collapsing. The toilet had no door. They sang Christian songs for us and we played games with them. The teachers are paid about £13 (2,000 rupees) a month. The parents are mostly poor workers on the brick kilns and are not able to pay the £1 a month school fee. Miss Bachani said to us: "Now I am tired of serving this community alone. I need someone to stand beside me to lift this community up."



## Disappointments and Encouragements

We visited six 'Survey Schools'. Sadly we were disappointed by some of them. We have their basic data but only a visit could tell us the real situation, so our visit was significant to build relationships and find out where and whether we can help.

One school we visited was clearly well funded from another donor. Another school had a majority of Muslim students and teachers and appeared to have no special concern for poor Christians. We may be able to provide incentives to bring more Christian children to their school.

## Uraan and the Bible Curriculum

We made sure that all schools know of our offer to give the Class 1-5 Bible Curriculum to them free of cost for the new school year. We also made sure they were receiving **Uraan**, the Christian teachers' magazine (*photo: Issue 5*).

I asked one school principal if he received our **Uraan** magazine for Christian teachers. "Oh, yes," he said. "It is wonderful. I get a lot of benefit from it." I asked, "What about your teachers? Are they also learning something from it?" "To be very frank with you," he replied, "I don't give it to my teachers. I just read it for myself." This was very disappointing for us.



**Kashi Javed:** "On the road again visiting survey schools. We visited one school in Khanqa Dogran. We distributed Bibles to the 40 Christian students and the teachers' magazine in the Pak-Swedish School. We also promised the Bible Curriculum. The Principal's son said that they had arranged teachers' training in July and he prepared his lectures from **Uraan** magazine — *encouraging!* We are now going to Sheikhpura to visit two more survey schools."

We were very impressed and will count it a privilege to help her and to provide a better future for her community. We have already sent a truck load of chairs, promised her school books, a new toilet and repair of the collapsing roof — and we plan further help for her school.





## "Nothing can stop us — even if we are Christians!"

Shelly Samuel is finalising her PhD in zoology, partly thanks to a scholarship from Starfish Asia. She is now helping to prepare the Starfish career advice booklet for High School students. Her husband, a veterinary doctor, is studying on a Fulbright scholarship in the USA.

### Q. We asked Shelly why she thought there were so few high achievers among Christians in Pakistan.

We see it in our own family. Being a Christian in Pakistan means believing that "we cannot succeed. We are Christians. It is not possible." We need to take that out of their minds.

### Q. Why is it so important that we help young Christians with their future?

With the background that we come from, our parents don't allow us to study. They want us to work instead, because they cannot afford to pay for us. Our Muslim neighbours assume that a Christian must be a sweeper or a driver — nothing higher. Even in my office, people don't understand how I came to be at the level I am. I had to compete with 200 other applicants. I stood first and it was very difficult for them to understand that. Sometimes they ask me, "Are you really a Christian?"

The help that Starfish Asia is giving young people to study is invaluable to enable them to come up to a level where we Christians can compete with the majority.

### Q. What is your advice for young Christians in Pakistan?

We must guide young people to a better future. My mum wanted me to be a doctor. Maybe I would not have been a good doctor — I am doing what I am good at! The value of the Starfish Asia scholarship programme is that we are in a position to direct them to a better place. If they are not getting good grades, they should do technical training. Nursing is a better option than doing a Master's degree and then not getting a job. If we do well, nothing can stop us, even if we are Christians.

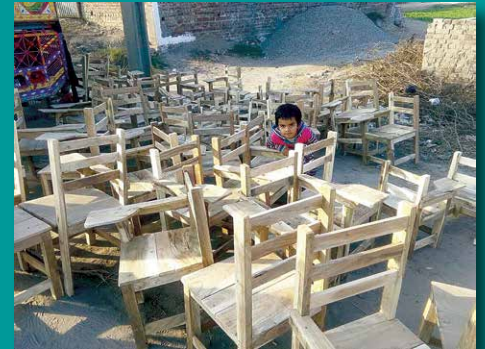
## Joining hands 5 churches 7 schools



In May 2017 five churches in Somerset set out together to raise £1,500 to equip three poor Christian schools in Pakistan. With great initiative and hard work they raised more than £3,000 — enough to help seven schools.

- ♦ A pancake party (£324)
- ♦ Concert with piano, organ and more (£478)
- ♦ Smarties tubes (£370)
- ♦ Sponsored walk (£709)
- ♦ A Barbeque (£458) ... *and much more*

**Well done!** We visited the churches to express our thanks. The funds have all gone to Pakistan and have provided furniture, electricity backup, windows and doors to raise the standards for grateful children in seven low-income schools.



### £200 / US\$300

That is what it costs to buy 50 wooden chairs (with attached desk) — plus transport to deliver them to a school. Value for money!

## Scholarship fund appeal

We provide approximately £2,000 / US\$3,000 each month to support 168 young people in higher studies (16 doing vocational courses). A gift to our Scholarship Fund will give a future to these young people.

[www.facebook.com/starfishasia](http://www.facebook.com/starfishasia)

### Tell us you care!

- Yes, tell me more about schools and communities that need my help. Send me more information.
- I enclose a gift of £ / \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for Starfish Asia.



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