

# Transformed



No butterfly is born with wings — and few would guess that a caterpillar would one day be reborn as a beautiful creature with coloured wings proclaiming the glory of God.

None of our Starfish Asia schools looked very promising when we began to support them. In fact, some were failing and about to close. But they were led and run by men and women with a vision for change — and a passion to serve their own Christian community. In this issue we celebrate several whose projects started life looking like a hungry caterpillar — yet now are being transformed into something like a glorious butterfly. Many others are still in the chrysalis stage.



## The Inspiring Story of Agape Home

Farzana contacted us in 2013. She had been working with another centre for disabled children and she loved the work. When that closed, she asked us if we would support her to open her own home. We delayed and advised her to get further training.

Six months later, Agape Home was born. "We have found a building for Agape Home," she wrote in June 2014. She moved into one of the rooms, together with her husband Imran and their three children. They had no furniture for themselves, not even a bed.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2014, Farzana wrote: "We have started our school. From last week we are collecting students and their parents are visiting the school... Thirteen students and one female teacher are coming from Monday..."

Agape Home has gone from strength to strength, serving as a place of daily safety and love for young people with special needs. Farzana, Imran and a small staff have provided a haven of hope for many Christian families, sharing responsibility for some very special young lives.

In February, Agape Home moved into a new and larger building. *Read more on the next page.*



# Spotlight on Southern Punjab

Duncan spent most of February in Pakistan, visiting projects, assessing opportunities and talking through the future with Anser and Kashi. He reports:

Southern Punjab is a wide-open land of farms, river plains and deserts. The climate is harsh and exposed to the elements – the summer is hot, but the winter is much cooler with temperatures at night approaching freezing. We covered more than 1,000 miles and visited nine Starfish-supported schools.

## The House of Love

Agape Home is a centre of hope for many families struggling with the challenge of children with special needs. In addition to daily care and physiotherapy, Farzana and her small team of teachers work hard to draw out the skills and abilities of their students.



Each year they submit artwork to the national Toyota Dream Car Art Contest. In 2018 Azra won third prize. The competition takes place in April and Farzana is planning to submit paintings from several of her students.

2018 was a hard year for the Home, as their street was dug up for new sewage pipes and their house was flooded. *"In June the drain pipe was blocked... In July the house owner dug the ground floor for sewerage pipes..."*

**But now**, February 2020, Agape Home has moved to a new rented house. In the night of 17<sup>th</sup> February, Agape moved their Home across the road but in the same neighbourhood. The next morning the doors opened and excited students came into the new Home. The landlord arrived to distribute sweets to them all. *"It's a wonderful experience,"* wrote Farzana. *"Two classrooms, exercise room, office, computer room and kitchen. We are also working on a children's chapel!"*



## Our vision : Our Passion

For the past 17 years, Starfish Asia has worked alongside capable and trusted national partners like Imran and Farzana. We have seen projects like Agape Home transformed through faith, sacrifice and hard work — and sometimes through failure and disappointment — to maturity and beauty. Like the caterpillar transformed into a butterfly!

Thank you for celebrating with us!



### New Life School (Sahiwal)

Starfish started supporting this school in 2014. At the time most of the students were from Muslim families, but Starfish Asia provided fees to enable more Christians to study. We also helped to add additional classrooms, provide a van, furniture, and teacher training. I heard about a Christian family working on a nearby brick kiln. Their six girls and two boys did not go to school. Mehtab heard that they saw no value in education. He visited and now they attend the New Life School.

### Gordon School (Khanpur)

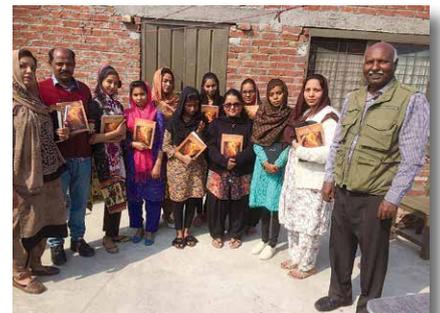
The Gordon School is a Christian school run in a predominately Christian village. Starfish has been providing books, Bible Curriculum and teacher training. Shama has been the principal since 2013. She was very proud of several of the school's graduates. One is studying microbiology in Quetta. Another is a Professor at the Agricultural University of Faisalabad.



## Bible studies for teachers

Walter Waheed oversees Bible Study groups for teachers in 26 schools. This is the group in Amazing Grace School. Walter has visited 15 of the groups in the past three months.

"These studies are very helpful for us. If the teacher understands her faith, then she is better able to teach the Bible to her students." (A teacher from Mission School).



# Teacher Training Day

13<sup>th</sup> February 2020



Dr Steve Curran has visited Pakistan many times over the past 13 years to teach, advise and support the work of Starfish Asia. Steve is Director of AE Tuition ([www.aetuition.co.uk](http://www.aetuition.co.uk)) providing tutoring services for about 3,000 children in Slough, UK.

Steve is a Board member of Starfish Asia UK. He visited Pakistan in February and led a one-day training event for teachers from Starfish Asia supported schools.



“It was exciting for me once again to see 70 teachers sitting quietly and waiting for the training day to begin. I felt quite daunted by such a responsibility.

We began with a fun warm-up game outside. Groups had to create frieze moments of dramatic situations such as ‘a motorbike accident’, a ‘goal in football’, or a ‘six in cricket’. This was a great icebreaker and the teachers started cooperating and working together, which is something they need to teach children to do.

We then looked at classroom management — how the teachers can utilise their skills to create an excellent space for children to learn in. The main point of this session — the teachers must prepare their lessons and make a detailed plan for each lesson.

We moved on to an area that teachers find difficult to teach, English comprehension. We read the story of David and Goliath and then explored the content and the meaning of the story through a variety of exercises. They then worked in groups.

Duncan led the next session, where groups of around 15 people linked hands with each other across a circle in a random manner. Then they had to untangle themselves without letting go of each others’ hands. This was great fun and reinforced the idea that cooperation and working together are at the heart of learning.

For Starfish Asia to adapt to the many new demands of involvement in 50 schools across Pakistan, things have to change. I am excited by the challenges and possibilities and I believe Starfish Asia can meet them.”



## The legacy of Dr and Mrs Stuntz



In about 1920 Methodist missionaries purchased land close to Khanewal in Punjab. Dr. and Mrs. Clyde Stuntz, American missionaries from Ohio, moved from Raiwind to establish a colony of Christians, who in gratitude named their village Stuntzabad. About 20,000 people now live in Stuntzabad, mostly Christian farm labourers.

In recent years the community has declined as many have moved away. St.Paul's School was founded in 1980 by the Gospel Baptist Church, a local denomination. It has its own compound and buildings, but they fell into disrepair due to a lack of funding.



A new Principal was appointed in 2008. He renewed the vision for the school and extended it to secondary level, but after ten years of struggle, it was again on the point of closure. This is where Starfish Asia stepped in, providing funds to repair the classrooms and toilets, paint the school and provide regular support for salaries.



Shamaum, the Principal, was both relieved and grateful.

*“Our school was always known as a good educator, but through these measures the school has improved and it is getting stronger.”*

School attendance has increased to 160 students, with a plan to increase intake up to 250, with some coming from nearby villages.



### “Why do you study at this school?”

Duncan visited Stuntzabad in February. He met some girls who were studying Physics using Edkasa, the online teaching solution adopted for science classes. He asked them: “Why do you come to this school instead of another?”

- ❖ “There is good education in this school.”
- ❖ “The online education system in this school is excellent. This is also why we come.”
- ❖ “We learn many things from this school which we would not get elsewhere.”
- ❖ “To give us a good future – and make us good parents!”

They had career aspirations ranging from teacher, army and doctor. It is good that we are helping them on the way!



# New life for Holy Field



This is Ashir in his crowded rooftop school, with some of the 340 students. Five classes all used to meet together in the over-crowded open space.

one toilet, with a rag for a door. But they had vision and faith for better things.

In 2014 Starfish Asia began to provide additional funding to increase the teachers' salaries. Results improved: 8 students passed their Matric exam in 2019. They dreamed and waited for something better.

**In February the school moved to a new building with space to breathe, develop and grow. The Holy Field butterfly began to spread its beautiful wings.**

Ten years ago, on the western outskirts of Lahore, Ashir Bashir opened the Holy Field School serving a community of low-income Christians.

He rented a building and the rooftop became his school. It grew to more than 300 students. Space was totally inadequate — several classes crowded together on the open roof. They had



## Majid & Sonia



Majid works in the Starfish Pakistan office in Lahore as administrator and now accountant. In December he was married to Sonia, a teacher. Duncan caught up with him on his recent visit and asked a few questions.

**D. What were you doing before you joined Starfish Pakistan?**

**M.** I worked in management at Nestlé and Mitchell's Fruit Farms. I also worked for two years as principal at the Kingdom of Heaven School, which is supported by Starfish.

**D. Why did you join Starfish Pakistan?**

**M.** I wanted to serve our community. I took time to think and pray and realised that God wanted me to be linked with this organisation. I began work here in January 2016.

I organised the Speech Competitions and Awards programmes. I also worked on the 2016 Survey. I also communicate with schools, collecting data and doing analysis. I now have responsibility for the accounts.

**D. In March you will attend a leadership course in Indonesia (wetrainleaders.org).**

**M.** Definitely this will be an opportunity to grow and learn. I hope to learn how to run the organisation in a better way.

**D. What do you like to do in your free time?**

**M.** I like working – and watching movies. I also enjoy reading good poetry. And drawing, I like making sketches of people. I used to be free — now I have to give time to my wife as well.

[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.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal code / Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

In UK, return the coupon to: Freepost RRAY-KKCU-SGZC  
**Starfish Asia**, 32 Beck Lane, Beckenham, Kent BR3 4RE (UK)

In USA, return to: **Starfish Asia**/Advancing Native Missions, P.O. Box 29, Afton, VA 22920, USA

In Singapore, contact: **Starfish Asia (Singapore) Ltd.**  
 887C Woodlands Dr. 50, #12-611, Singapore 733887

Starfish Asia will only use your personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018). Our Privacy Policy is available on our website.

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



#### UK donors only, Please Note:

While we guarantee that donations to specific projects will go in full to the nominated project, any tax recovered under the Gift Aid scheme will be used at the Trustees' discretion.

#### Starfish Asia (UK)

Registered UK Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO No.1181649)  
 32 Beck Lane, Beckenham, Kent BR3 4RE  
 Email: [mike@starfishasia.com](mailto:mike@starfishasia.com)

#### Starfish Asia (USA)

**Advancing Native Missions (code: 470SFA)**  
 P.O. Box 29, Afton, VA 22920  
tax exempt under section 501(c)(3)

#### Starfish Asia (Singapore) Ltd.

887C Woodlands Dr. 50, #12-611, Singapore 733887  
 Email: [geraldine@starfishasia.com](mailto:geraldine@starfishasia.com)