



On 14th August, Pakistan celebrated Independence Day. At midnight on that day in 1947 Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared: *"It will be our constant effort to work for the welfare and well-being of all the communities in Pakistan..."*



Samuel George opened Zeenat School in Lahore in 2013



Starfish Asia began to provide support to the school in 2018. In May 2021, the landlord asked Sam to leave the rented building. He found a dirty buffalo shed.



In July the workmen arrived.



Within a month it was transformed into painted classrooms and the school moved in.



Transformed!

From a buffalo shed to classrooms in a month

Zeenat School on the eastern edge of Lahore was opened in 2013 by Samuel George, a young man with a passion to serve the low-income Christians in his area.

He rented a small building and the school grew to about 250 students. However, it struggled to survive with little fee income and poor salaries for the teachers, but he persevered.

Sam met Starfish Pakistan through the 2016 Survey and attended some teacher training classes. In 2018 we began to help with the salaries of their teachers, provided furniture and a toilet — and improved the décor of the small classrooms. School results improved.

Then in the middle of May, just as schools were beginning to re-open after weeks of lockdown, the landlord told Sam that he must vacate the building by the end of June. It was a bombshell for Sam and his school.

"I am so worried about the building because we have 300 children," he wrote at the end of May. "Their future is in my hand..." He was desperate, as he began the search for another place to rent.

And this was what he found – a large, suitable building – but the ground floor was just a vacant buffalo shed. The landlord agreed to take no rent for one year, and Sam set to work. A month later, the students moved in!



“Education is for improving the lives of others — and leaving your community and world better than when you found it.”

Quotes from Marian Wright Edelman (activist for children’s rights)



Rob Bavington comments:

This quote sums up so well what Starfish is striving to do. We’re so amazed and thankful that you have chosen to be partners with us to this end.

We don’t simply want to “provide child care with books”, but to see real learning and development taking place. While ensuring good buildings, textbooks, fans and toilets, Danishmand and Jasmine are working on making sure that teachers receive fair pay and are encouraged to improve their qualifications, while they provide in-house teacher training.

We want to see good well equipped buildings filled with competent and well trained teachers giving every pupil the best chance for their future.

“You really can change the world if you care enough.”

Danishmand & Jasmine visit the Green Field School in Multan

Danishmand and Jasmine visited Multan for a meeting with six Starfish project leaders. While there, they visited the Green Field School, spent time with the Principal, Carol Fayyaz, and assessed the needs of the school. As every need is an opportunity, Jasmine’s report forms the basis for further improvement.



“The school is in a mixed community and most of the people are poor. The school is Christian but a third of the students are from Muslim homes. The Principal knows how to run a school and all the important information was available. The students’ and teachers’ attendance registers were well prepared. All the classrooms are well decorated. Most of the teachers are not qualified, but are well trained by the Principal. The school needs painting, and the furniture also needs paint and polish.”



Cool water and fans “to fight the heat...”

When Jasmine visited the School of Hope in Lahore, she had mixed impressions. This is part of her report:

“The Principal, Pastor Imran, is overflowing with the vision that we must educate the future generation for their better future.”

Then she noted the need for more training for the teachers and school management administration.

She added: *“They need sufficient furniture for pupils and teachers, an urgent need of electric fans to fight the heat in Lahore, and an urgent need of an electric water cooler for cool and clean water.”*



Cool and clean water for the students at the School of Hope

Every need is an opportunity

Starfish has since provided furniture, fans and an electric water cooler to the **School of Hope**. Teacher training, monitoring and improvement will follow.

Farzana from **Agape Home** wrote: *“We are thankful to Starfish for donating funds to buy two sewing machines for special girls learning stitching at school.”*

In the past two months, 16 schools have been given essential equipment to improve their infrastructure. This includes 17 fans, 4 water coolers and 4 washrooms. Three schools have received new furniture.



New classroom furniture was provided to the **Morning Star Primary School** in Karachi. Funds have also been given for painting and other improvements.

Transformed classrooms: transformed lives!

“Now no class is without a classroom”



“Now students are studying in beautiful new classrooms. They are really happy and thankful.”



Dean Public School, with 300 students, was over-crowded. Several classes met in the large open roof space. The building also faced some serious structural faults. In the past 6 months it has undergone major renovation. The staff and students are delighted!



"Starfish Asia has come to the stage where we need to focus on the quality of education each school offers. We need to be intentional about the Evaluation of each school and the Development of teachers..."

So wrote a UK Board member in a recent memo. Danishmand and Jasmine are setting their sights on this goal.

A Day to Remember

12th August: A consultation for Starfish Pakistan teachers

On 12th August Danishmand and Jasmine invited 32 leaders of school projects within reasonable distance from Lahore to a day-conference. They met to plan for the new academic year, and also to enable project leaders to meet each other, many for the first time, build closer positive relationships, and exchange ideas.



Jasmine's passion

"I will take the challenge. I decided to take the nursery, reception and prep class teachers. If the basic concepts of writing and listening skills are not clear, how will they read and learn in higher classes?" (*age 3-5)*

"This is my passion, to teach and train these nursery and prep teachers how to speak to their children, how to show them how to dress, to check their mannerisms."

"I want to go daily to the schools. I don't want to sit in my house. I want to go out into my schools to see how they are teaching, how they are doing."

"They should all learn two or three Bible verses..."

"We will check up on their registers. Every principal should bring their registers to the office every two months, and I will see if their registers and lesson plans are up to the mark. It is my responsibility to go and check them. I hope we will see good results."

"Danishmand can do the Admin work and I will go on the road."



Thank God, almost all who were invited were there. It was a wonderful time, meeting with some of the leaders who came from 6 or 7 other cities. The room was filled.

Our agenda was to plan for the 2021-22 academic session:

- ❶ First of all, the new national Government Curriculum, **One Nation – One Curriculum**. This is being implemented for the first time in all primary classes in the current new school session from August to April.
- ❷ Secondly, we addressed the issues of Administration, Accounting and Communication.
- ❸ Finally, two days early, we celebrated Pakistan's Independence Day.



Under the Government rules, we have divided the new **One Nation – One Curriculum** into two terms. In the first term (August to December) we will cover 60% of the curriculum, and 40% in the second term (January – April).

We will then take a final exam. The schools with the highest score will receive some "Appreciation".

In the Government primary schools, the study of Islam is compulsory. But in the Starfish schools we will only have the Bible syllabus.

They were very attentive. I told them they should only give very simple tasks as homework, because many parents are not educated. Teachers must make the concepts simple. The response from everyone was very positive. I gave them the challenge to provide quality education to the students from poor families.

For the school management and administration, I have given them three tasks:

1. The teachers' attendance register,
2. The students' attendance register, and
3. Every teacher should have a lesson planner. We will come and check to be sure they are teaching according to the syllabus.



"Proud of my team. They made this happen."



Education: turmoil and progress

Schools across Punjab opened again in August, but the situation is still very uncertain. The schools in Karachi remained closed but re-opened at the end of August. The Sindh Education Minister announced that “schools would be opened with 50 per cent attendance. Only schools that could assure 100% vaccination of their teachers would be allowed to open.”

Meanwhile, Class 10 Matric exams began in late July, with results to be announced within a few weeks. This is causing considerable confusion regarding applications for College admission — and our Scholarship Awards programme.



Books for 17,000 students



Delayed like everything else due to COVID-19, the new Single National Curriculum was introduced to be implemented from the beginning of August. Starfish Asia has provided sets of textbooks to 17,041 students, plus 8,808 Bible Curriculum books, to a total of 108 schools. This has been a huge operation made harder by the uncertainties of these difficult times.

From student to teacher

On his visit to the Kingdom of Heaven School, Danishmand met Roma Irshad. She shared her story:

“I work as a teacher in the school, and I was also a student here. Thanks to support from Starfish Pakistan, I studied for my Masters degree in Urdu.”

She has now taken her CSS exams and her ambition is to enter the Civil Service.



Pakistanis celebrate

Pakistanis are loyal to their country and proud to be Pakistani. Many of the schools supported by Starfish Asia held special events on 14th August to celebrate Independence.



Introducing the world of Starfish Asia

Giving hope

Do you know anyone who could help us give hope to Pakistan's Christian children?

This 8-page illustrated introduction to Starfish Asia is designed for YOU to give to your friends, put in your church, or give to your mission committee or youth group.

We will gladly send you as many as you think you can use. At least ask for one, so that you can see what it is — and then ask for 100 more. *Thank you!*

Write to info@starfishasia.com



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Starfish Asia (UK)

Registered UK Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO No.1181649)
32 Beck Lane, Beckenham, Kent BR3 4RE
Email: info@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