



The face of the future and six thousand stories





Our first decade

It is ten years ago this month that Starfish Asia became a registered charity in the UK. We have much cause to give thanks to God for all the lives that have been given new hope over the past decade.

The face of the future and 6,000 stories

What is it that has driven us to keep going for these past ten years? What is it that motivates people to join us in generosity and prayer? Is it the big picture of poverty and statistics?

- ❖ Over one in three young people in Pakistan have not completed primary school.
- ❖ Poorest girls are most disadvantaged in all four provinces, with over half never having been to school.
- ❖ 49.5 million adults are illiterate, two-thirds are women.

That comes from a 2012 UNESCO report. But statistics don't usually motivate people. Much more, it is the stories of sadness and pain, of success and achievement, that make it all worthwhile and keep us going.

The big picture is made up of many pieces. In our corner it is the 6,500 stories of children and their families; their tragedies and triumphs, the exhilaration of passing exams and the determination to do better next time. That is what our Newsletter is about this month.

We hope their stories will move you to gratitude and prayer.

Tahir Memorial School

In memory of a brother

Tahir Asif was murdered in a bungled robbery in 2011. His sister, Mumtaz, determined to open a school in his memory to serve the children of deprived Christian brick kiln workers outside Sheikhpura.



The Tahir Memorial School will soon have 100 children. They are all Christian and come from families working on the brick kilns. Starfish Asia provided funds to purchase books and furniture. Mumtaz is one of those special people who are changing the world for 100 families.

We are not at present able to provide regular support to this school. Mumtaz pays her three teachers about £10 / \$15 a month. We have contact with at least 10 schools for which £200 / \$300 a month would enable teachers to be given a proper salary and Christian children to receive a good foundation for life.

The bigger picture

three steps forward and two steps back

St. James School

Deadline

We met the deadline for the purchase of a building for St. James School, and on 15 July we handed over the full payment. Thank God and thank you for making this possible for Salomi and her school.



We wish we had a photo of happy children filling bright classrooms, but building work is still going on, delayed by heavy rain in August. When the children return in September they will be excited to study in new school classrooms.

Ghuri Wisdom High School

Catastrophic rainfall

Heavy rain in August caused extensive damage to several schools. In the Ghuri Wisdom School in Lahore rainwater poured in from the street and damaged a lot of classroom furniture.



"Constant rain became a flood for our school because our school is below the street level. The school office floor, carpet, furniture and paintwork were badly damaged and the library cupboards, books, electric water cooler and class furniture are in a bad condition. We could not open the school in time."

Friends Primary School, Su-e-Asal

Construction delayed

This is another school under construction. The building used for the past several years was too small and the owner demanded a long-term lease. Ashraf determined to look for something better.

Ashraf found a good property for rent. Six rooms need extensive repair; new washrooms and two classrooms need to be built. After a delay of several weeks because of the rain, the work is now going on.

Amazing Grace School

All changed!

Do you remember the sight of children scattered across the hard floor of an empty church, making up some pattern of classes? It has all changed!



The children were welcomed by Zafar and Amna to their new school, with separate classrooms and new furniture. A proper school fit for the Christian children of Johore Town.

A thousand stories

Successes, struggles and scholarships

In August, Matric exam results were published. There was a mixture of excitement and disappointment. From Starfish Asia schools there were 72 successful passes ... and 19 disappointments, which means that a subject needs to be taken again — success deferred.

Then comes the big question: What next?

Starfish Asia has provided 39 new scholarships to young people, most of whom have just passed their Matric exam.

- ❖ Most are small awards to enable them to attend colleges to study for Intermediate exams.
- ❖ Two students are going to a Christian Technical Training College to train in electronics and mechanics.
- ❖ Other scholarships have been given to students taking higher studies in Pharmacy, Law and other degrees.

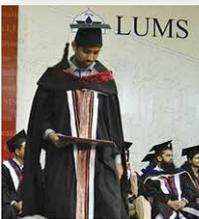
Starfish Asia is now providing scholarships to 60 young men and women to enable them to fulfil their dreams. We have no special funding for scholarships. Any gifts designated to 'SCHOLARSHIPS' will be greatly appreciated.



Dennis studied at the Lahore Christian High School, graduated in 2007 and received a Starfish Asia scholarship for his Intermediate studies. He is now studying for an ACCA (UK) qualification in accounting, supported by Starfish Asia.



Anser calls **Asher Akram** "a hero among Christian students, having secured 999/1050 in his Matriculation exam." He was accepted in Government College Lahore, but could not pay the admission fee. Starfish Pakistan helped with admission and local friends have guaranteed his fees.



Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) is one of Pakistan's most prestigious educational institutions. **Solomon D'Souza**, one of very few Christians in LUMS, was awarded a BSc Hons. degree in Accounts & Finance in June. Starfish Asia provided a scholarship to enable him to graduate.



The trauma of a little girl

In the evening of 12th August, Elishba Dilawar was playing in the yard of her home in New Mianwali Colony, Karachi. Elishba is a student in Class 2 at the Holy Shepherd Grammar School.

A large truck passed her home, carrying cement for a nearby construction. As the truck passed Elishba's house, its brakes failed on the slope and it slid back into the wall, which then collapsed on top of the little girl. Elishba's left arm was crushed completely beneath the wheels and she suffered severe bruising with internal bleeding.

Her left arm was amputated and her right arm needed 60 stitches. For several days she hovered between life and death while many prayed. Generous gifts were received through Starfish Asia to cover all the costs, which could not possibly have been paid by the family.

Beverly, a member of the Holy Shepherd School board, has gone the extra mile to help Elishba and her family. She writes:

"It is just so wonderful to see her progress... Her grandmother did not go home throughout Elishba's stay in hospital. Elishba is now back home. Even though she is still sore, can not sit up and needs frequent assistance, yet she is glad to be back in the surrounding she loves - her home! Please continue to pray for her."

Three of Elishba's siblings also study at the Holy Shepherd School.

"It is just so wonderful to see Elishba's progress."



Where there is no school

We have known 12 year-old Komal for several years. Komal's family is very poor, all the children are illiterate. Komal is severely disabled. She was accepted into a Home, where she would have got excellent care and teaching, but her mother could not bear the separation.

Their neighbours (*above, right*) however have been to school. Tabitha (*top, right*) has passed her Matric and her sister, Rakhil, has passed Intermediate. Anser is arranging for them to start literacy classes for Komal and her siblings, while providing scholarships for the two girls to study further.





Holy Shepherd Grammar School, Karachi

“An Oasis of Hope”

Ms. Zareen Rahman is a US-based Pakistani, studying for a doctorate in Maths Education. On a visit to her family in Karachi, she was eager to visit the Holy Shepherd Grammar School. Here are her reflections:

“ The first thing that caught my attention was the cleanliness of the facilities. Despite the simplicity, a huge emphasis was placed on making sure that everything was well organized and clean. As we entered the building we were welcomed by students who showered us with flower petals and garlands and also sang a beautiful song for us.

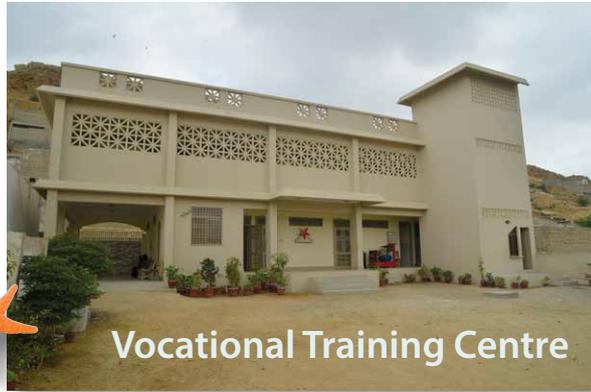
Ms. Beverly introduced me to the staff and took me on a tour of the school. The students were all dressed in clean uniforms and were on their best behaviour. The classrooms had student work displayed on the walls and students appeared motivated to

succeed. I found it very difficult to convey to these motivated students the great importance of hard work and persistence because they already value these traits.

We also visited the newly inaugurated Vocational Training Center, a place for young people to learn skills like sewing, mechanics, computer software, etc. It was clear that the Center provides more than just instruction to its pupils. It offers hope.

The work that you are doing for the Mianwali community is commendable. You have succeeded in giving them a little oasis of hope and are giving them guidance and support so that they can build their future.

Best regards, ”
Zareen



Vocational Training Centre

The Starfish Karachi VTC opened its doors to students in May and already has welcomed 110 students (and a further 100 joining soon) to courses ranging from sewing to beauty training, computing to electrical work. It is the fulfilment of a dream for the Christians of Karachi — and especially of Mianwali Colony. The building was funded by the Japanese Embassy. The Vocational Training Centre is supported by Starfish Asia.



Beverly D’Souza

Beverly is Vice-chair of the Starfish Karachi Board and is acting Administrator of the Holy Shepherd School and the VTC. She writes: “We are in the process of getting the Centre registered with the Trade Testing Board, Sindh. No simple procedure. We value your prayers that this may be sorted out soon.”



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