

Pakistan's literacy rate ranks 113th among 120 countries — projected to reach 60% by 2015 from the present 55% (UNESCO)

**You cannot open a book without learning something**

Confucius  
Chinese Philosopher (551–479 BC)

**When I get a little money, I buy books. If any is left, I buy food and clothes**

Erasmus  
Christian scholar (1466 – 1536)

## Preparing a generation of readers

Half of Pakistan's people cannot read and have never had access to the privileges that come with literacy.

The DAWN newspaper in Pakistan recently called this "an international embarrassment". It may better be termed an international tragedy.

In April a new school year begins. Hundreds of students will expect to receive new school books to help them with their studies. We will ensure that all students in the 30 schools that we support have the books they need for the coming year.

This year for the first time we have printed our own exercise books, which we will make available to all schools free of cost. Bulk printing will save at least one third of the cost.

We will then provide money to each school to purchase books for their students, sufficient to cover at least 50% (in the case of the poorest areas 100%) of a good set of textbooks for the coming school year.

We are still in need of full funding to cover the expected cost of books needed for the new school year.

**Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free**

The Bible, John 8:32

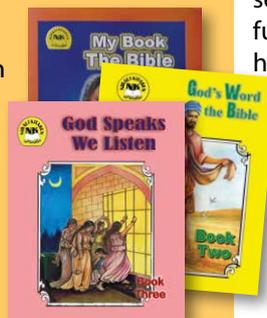


## Books to build faith

Starfish Asia's primary concern is to equip underprivileged Christian children with an education based on faith and truth. Their leaders also need to be inspired and encouraged. Starfish Pakistan has a publishing programme to help build those strong foundations.

### The Scripture curriculum

Twelve books will be ready for use in Christian schools in the new academic year that starts in April. Five Teacher's Manuals and three textbooks are at the printers now. They will be available (free for all Starfish Asia schools) in English and Urdu for Classes 1 to 3, with Manuals to guide the teachers in how to teach these basic Bible lessons.

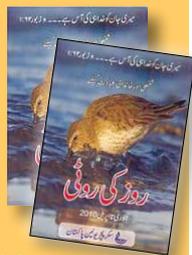


### Free Bibles for Classes 5 to 10

In the past year 1400 colourful Children's Bibles were given to all the children in Classes 5 to 7 and 850 full Urdu Bibles to those in Classes 8 to 10.

### Spiritual help for teachers

As we are so aware that school teachers are the role models for their class children, we purchased 300 annual subscriptions of Scripture Union daily Bible reading notes (*Daily Bread*), enough for every teacher in schools that we support.



### Bible study materials for Pastors and college students

Starfish Pakistan has also published and printed Bible study books for Christian leaders. A thousand copies of the Urdu **Applied New Testament Commentary**, together with the 400-page **Foundations of Christian Doctrine** by Kevin Conner (Sovereign World) were printed and given to Pastors and Bible College students in the past year.



Anser presents a Bible Commentary to staff at the Salvation Army Training Centre in Lahore

Naeem Dean and family own and run Dean Public School in Lahore.

All their students are from Christian families.



## The greatest Christmas gift

“It was the greatest Christmas gift to know that you have taken a step of faith and sent me money for each month to increase the salaries of Dean School staff... Truly speaking my heart was bubbling with joy and I ran to my wife to tell her about this great blessing. Tears of joy were in our eyes and we were saying thank you Jesus, thank you Jesus...”

We have known and admired Naeem Dean and his school for several years. We have given some funding to improve the condition of his building, which was in a dangerous state of disrepair. Naeem has run the school for eight years with no outside help, but the meagre fee income has only provided for staff salaries of £15 / \$23 each month.

Naeem, a qualified science and maths teacher, is proud to have some of the best Matric results in the area. Out of a student body of 200, this year 18 students will take their final exam in March.

Since January we have provided a small monthly grant that has enabled him to more than double the salaries — still not enough, but yet his **greatest Christmas gift**.

## Exams: The final Test

The Class 10 Matric exam is of course not the final test, but it is the first great hurdle for many students. It is the goal towards which they have aimed since they joined school in KG or Nursery ten years ago. Sadly many drop out and few run the course through to their Matric exam — or beyond.



Each year the number of students increases in the schools supported by Starfish Asia — more than 150 young people this year, including:

- ☆ 38 from the Holy Shepherd Grammar School in Karachi
- ☆ 20 from Ghouri Wisdom High School
- ☆ 18 from Dean Public School, Lahore
- ☆ 15 from the Kingdom of Heaven School
- ☆ 12 from Calvary Model Model School, Karachi



2014 Matric class in the Kingdom of Heaven School

# an interview with Anser and Kashi

Anser, Kashi and family have been in Lahore for more than 18 months — certainly time enough to have a firm grasp of the joys and pains of directing Starfish Pakistan.

We continually thank God for their willingness to take the responsibility. It has not always been easy for them, though the trials are more than compensated for by the blessings. We asked them to share their thoughts.

## Anser, you told me in November that you enjoy your job with Starfish Pakistan. Why?

Yes, of course I am enjoying my job — especially touching the lives of really poor children in the villages. It is a blessing to us also when people come to us to request scholarships for further study. I am blessed by those who come to me and say: “We are learning from you.” I enjoy helping their schools to develop. This is very satisfying.

## What are the challenges and disappointments? Is it always encouraging?

No. It is a challenge to work with project leaders to help them to get things right — to improve their teaching practices and administrative skills. I am disappointed that we are not always appreciated when we try to help.

## Can you tell one or two stories of people whose lives have been blessed or changed by your work?

Samreen and Ilyas live in a village. They started a small school for village children on their own initiative. There was no way they could do it on their own and no one helped them. In trying to save a few starfish, they were not even close to the water’s edge! Now when I visit them I see a huge change. Thanks to some generous donors they were able to rebuild their collapsed boundary wall. The place is transformed. Starfish Asia also helped Samreen’s sister to study nursing in Sahiwal — and pay off her father’s debt. Now they will be able to build three new rooms for their school classes.



## Are there other special blessings to share?

Suleman is a young man whom we helped to pass his Masters in Education. He used to work at the fruit market and he had no money for study. Now he is working in Dar-ul-Hikmat College earning a good salary as a teacher. I love going to Dar-ul-Hikmat to see him teaching there.



## A question for Kashi. How involved are you in the work of Starfish Pakistan?

I was very happy to get involved in some teacher training sessions with six of our schools. I was able to share my experiences in teaching. They all said this was helpful. They were happy that Starfish Pakistan is not just giving money but also helping with training. We want to offer this kind of training to all our schools. I was specially happy, when we visited St. Peter’s in Burj Klan, that Ruth had already implemented some of these things in her school.



## How big is the mountain you are trying to climb?

It is huge. There is no doubt that for Christians in Pakistan education is the only way to bring about real change. It must be coupled with biblical values. Only then will Christians be able to escape from the captivity of poverty and hopelessness.

## Burned out

Naveed is a maths teacher in The Amazing Grace School. He lives close to the school. In mid-January his home caught fire and two rooms were burned out. His small baby was sleeping in one room but miraculously was rescued unharmed. Anser was able to provide immediate help and, thanks to a generous gift, all his burned items have been replaced.



## Open heart

Elishba is a teacher in the Light School in Sheikhpura. She suffered increasing pains in her heart and the doctors advised an urgent heart bypass operation. Her family was unable to meet the considerable costs, so Starfish Asia provided — thank God for all who made this possible. Elishba was operated on at the Punjab Institute of Cardiology on 15 February. She is now back home recovering.



## In honour of a courageous young man

I first met Shahbaz on 5 April 2008. He was about 12 years old, living with his large family in a simple Christian home on the western edge of Lahore.

I was taken to his home by Shamshad who pastored a church in the area and ran the Gospel School. Starfish Asia had begun to support his school.

Shahbaz was severely disabled, his legs and arms twisted and deformed. He was born with no bones in his upper arms and could not walk. Shamshad asked us to provide him with a wheelchair. Though his body was grotesquely mis-shapen, his face beamed with hope. "I want to go to school," he said.

With his new wheelchair he began to attend the Gospel School. He had the courage, as a 12 year-old, to attend the junior classes, because he wanted to learn. In September 2010, partly in response to Shahbaz's insistence, Shamshad opened the Gospel Care Centre for 10 boys with special needs. Shahbaz was the undisputed leader of the Home. He loved the company and commanded their respect. "We need a television," he said — and he got it. "We also need a DVD player."

Shahbaz displayed no self-pity. He was never ashamed of his severe disabilities. He was sometimes emotional and shed a tear or two but he had a determination to succeed. He had a great sense of humour — and the heart of a champion.

On 27<sup>th</sup> February Shahbaz was riding on the back of a motorcycle and met with an accident. He fell and hit his head on the road. He died in hospital on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

His loss is deeply felt by all his friends in the Care Home and the Gospel School, as well as by his family. **All who knew him have been made richer by his courage and example.**



## The Gospel School

The Gospel School, ably led by Shamshad and his wife Rubina, now provides an excellent education to 400 Christian children. Shamshad also pastors the church that meets in their purpose-built building.

Starfish Asia has supported this school since it opened in 2007. This is the first year they have students sitting for the Matric exam. Five Class 10 students will graduate.



### Please help us meet the growing challenge

Tell your friends about our website and Facebook page

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## 13 July 2014

We need 6 runners to raise funds for Starfish Asia.

Will you either run or support our runners?

Contact us for details: [kerstin@starfishasia.com](mailto:kerstin@starfishasia.com)



### Remember us in your Will

Leaving a legacy to Starfish Asia is an enduring gift and will provide hope to a whole new generation of Pakistan's Christian children. For more details see:

<http://starfishasia.com/donate/remember-us-in-your-will/>

By making a gift to Starfish Asia in your Will you will be giving dignity and hope from one generation to the next.

## Tell us you care!

Starfish Asia is a member of the Fundraising Standards Board



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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giving hope to the children of Pakistan

### UK donors only, Please Note:

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