



STARFISH
A S I A

Giving hope to the children of Pakistan

89 ♦ September 2026

NEWS

Training to Transform

"Christians in Pakistan have a rich legacy of serving their country through education and healthcare, yet many Christian children today are falling behind or missing out on school altogether. Having admired Starfish Asia from the beginning, I've watched it grow far beyond helping the odd child here or there. It is now a major player in transforming whole schools and raising educational standards for the neediest communities. **Education is the key to employment, dignity, and wider integration.** By strengthening schools, providing essential resources and nurturing spiritual growth, Starfish is raising up a new cohort of skilled, faithful young leaders."

- Msgr. Michael Nazir-Ali

"My dream had come true!"

One such leader is **Miss Vida** (left), an inspiring young teacher whose journey into teaching began entirely by chance. **Turn to page 2** to see how Starfish has helped Miss Vida turn pure passion into a classroom transformation...

You're Invited!

Starfish Asia Presentation Evening

Wednesday 9th September 2026

6pm at Christ Church Beckenham

Guest Speaker - Msgr. Michael Nazir-Ali
(former Bishop of Rochester)

Please rsvp to:
liz@starfishasia.com



"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." - Romans 12:2

Inside you'll find...



Summer Teacher Training inspires over 320 Starfish educators.



Biblical teaching transforming the lives of teachers and students.



Matriculation students celebrate high achievement and progress.



The Great Starfish Trail raises over £5000 for schools in need.



'A Dream Come True'

....Continued from page 1

Miss Vida was still in Class 9, working towards her matriculation when her older sisters decided to open **Radiant Way School**. When 40 children unexpectedly arrived at the doorstep—on a day when her sisters were away at university—she welcomed them in and began teaching with zero experience. Balancing her own high school studies, she continued helping at the school and after a short break to complete an apprenticeship as a beautician, she realised her true passion was in education and returned full-time to lead the Pre-Primary class.

Determined to give her students the best despite having no formal qualifications, Miss Vida began teaching herself phonics via YouTube. The results were immediate, but her breakthrough came at Starfish Pakistan's Lahore teacher training in the summer of 2025: **"I had wanted to learn how to teach phonics properly for so long—through Starfish, my dream was fulfilled."** Systematic phonics transformed her teaching; by the time her Prep pupils reached Class 1, they were reading and writing independently, prompting the Class 1 teacher to say "You have made my life so easy—the students from your class already know how to read and write. Thank you!"



Miss Vida teaching in 2026

Miss Vida constantly sought creative ways to engage her students, making flashcards and posters to brighten the classroom. Recognising that children learn best through play, she wished for more interactive resources, but the school was lacking in extra funds. Earlier this year, Radiant Way was invited to trial the 'First Educational Bag' to improve teaching and learning in early years classrooms. Although she missed the introductory training due to illness, other teachers passed on what they had learned. When she saw the resource kit with flash cards, jigsaw puzzles and other educational games, she exclaimed, **"God knew the desires I had for the students. He knew what I was thinking and then the resource kit arrived!"**

Returning to teacher training this year, she was particularly moved by the sessions on child protection, learning about the difference a good teacher can make by showing love to each child, and raising awareness to keep them safe. Through Starfish Pakistan's continuous professional development, passionate educators like Miss Vida are equipped to deliver quality learning and lasting change.



DAWN

"Most people would agree that for a building to be strong, the foundations have to be strong. It is no different in education. Foundational literacy and numeracy have to be strong for a child to experience a good educational outcome. The foundation is set at the primary level of schooling. Should we not have our best teachers at the primary school level? This is where we make or break our students."

- Published in Dawn Newspaper, April 2026



Lahore

Targeted Training

This summer Starfish Pakistan delivered 2-day training sessions across six locations for 320 teachers and project leaders. They explored practical tools to help connect with and teach today's 21st-century students more effectively, even with limited resources. One of the greatest blessings of this year was that, for the first time, all the facilitators were from the Starfish Pakistan office and teachers representing every school (except one) attended. This is testimony of God working to bring change.



Karachi

"I had a wonderful experience attending the Principals' Training. The sessions were informative and inspiring, especially on the use of technology in education and biblical leadership. The training encouraged me to continue learning and growing as an educator".

Mr Asher - Holy Field School

Congratulations

Special mention to the following students who who scored an impressive A+ grade:

- Shaleem** (Waheedabad) - 1104
- Jessica** (Mission School) - 1082
- Liza** (Solomon Convent) - 1065
- Inderyas** (Gordon School) - 1054
- Aliza** (Holy Field) - 1018

Hard Work Rewarded

In August, students in class 10 received matriculation results. We're delighted to report that 172 students sat the exams (compared to just 76 last year) with an overall pass rate of 65%. Of these, 85% passed with grade B or higher! This is testament to the hard work of students, teachers and the wider team. Many have overcome hardship and discrimination to remain in education to this point - we rejoice in these achievements.



Rooted in Faith

How Biblical training is transforming teachers



For approximately 237 teachers across 24 Starfish-supported schools, education goes far beyond standard academic subjects. Through our partnership with the Open Theological Seminary (OTS)—accredited by the Asia Theological Association (ATA)—teachers participate in structured, accessible Bible study, tailored to their schedules. To ensure educators do not have to travel, tutors visit school sites directly, usually on Fridays or Saturdays.

Rafaqat (above right) who leads spiritual development at Starfish Pakistan, believes this focus is essential: *“Trained and changed teachers train and change students. We want our children to enter society not only well-qualified academically, but grounded as strong, faithful Christians.”*

Teaching to Transform

This summer, Rafaqat led specialized teacher training sessions themed **“Teaching not just to inform, but to transform: Teaching Bible Curriculum for life transformation.”** To reach the youngest learners, Rafaqat introduced interactive teaching methods—such as action songs, visual aids, and drama—specifically for pre-primary educators who lack formal textbooks.

“We are blessed to have bible class as part of our routine. Each lesson helps us learn important truths and builds our understanding of good character.”

- Ceclilia, Ghouri Wisdom



Deepening Faith & Restoring Homes

The impact of OTS also extends beyond the classroom walls. Teachers report that the courses—covering church history, biblical context, and theology—have helped provide clarity against confusing online teachings and deepen their personal prayer lives. One teacher from Dean Public School shared how the Christian Family Life module helped to heal her struggling marriage, bringing daily prayer routines and peace back into her household. Furthermore, because many Starfish teachers also serve in local Sunday schools and youth groups, these skills ripple throughout the wider community. Following a recent training module, one leader applied the new interactive story-telling techniques at a local youth meeting; six young people gave their lives to Christ that evening! As the new term begins, Rafaqat is enjoying his new role and remains dedicated to developing a true biblical culture within schools - equipping teachers to lead with servant hearts and guiding the next generation with faith, dignity, and hope.

Back to School with Purpose

Jasmine Wasti - Head of Academics

“Schools re-open on 24th August and our priority is settling students back into routines, reviewing summer progress and completing the curriculum ahead of first-term exams from 16th–26th September. These will identify key learning gaps and guide the next phase of teaching. Term 2 brings practical science to life with an inter-school live science exhibition planned for 2nd November, encouraging hands-on discovery and teamwork. In mid-November, we will run subject-specific workshops for Matric teachers, ensuring senior pupils receive targeted, high-quality preparation for their final exams. I’m also excited to be planning a dedicated Bible Promotion Day, featuring age-tailored activities for Classes 1–10 to spark a genuine love for God’s Word and encourage spiritual conversations at home.

The months ahead are full of important academic responsibilities, yet behind every date in our calendar is a larger purpose: to help each child make meaningful progress and to ensure that our schools continue to become places of learning, safety, discovery and faith.”



Due to the delayed term start, most schools were not open on 14th August to celebrate Pakistan’s Independence Day as usual.

However, Danishmand and Jasmine were welcomed by staff and residents of the **CGA Home**, enjoying a day full of joy, love and togetherness. Children were blessed with fresh fruits, and they prayed for Pakistan to grow in prosperity, unity, freedom and dignity.





The Great Starfish Trail - Every Step Counts

From the heat of Lahore to the footpaths of the UK

Total Raised
£5,785.40

Your generous support across the month of June raised a fantastic £5,785.40 to upgrade classrooms in desperate need of practical TLC. From installing solar power to replacing broken desks, here is the impact this years' trail will have:



★ **Liz Ellis** ran 40km over 2 weeks to provide 100 new chairs for the **Ambrose Foundation**, replacing their damaged wooden seats so that students no longer have to sit on the floor.



★ **Rob Bavington** walked 50km solid from Scarborough to Whitby for **Marjorie School**, to supply essential student seating, teacher desks, and sturdy classroom cupboards.



★ **Ruth and Andy Coleman** walked 20 miles along the River Wey Navigation for the **Starshine School**, to deliver new furniture and a water cooler for instant relief in the heat.



★ The **Starfish Pakistan Team** braved the blistering heat to walk a combined 50km in Model Town Park, Lahore, raising funds for solar power, fans, and teaching supplies across our network schools.

THANK YOU!

Where Extra Funds Go: Every extra pound raised beyond these four targets will be used to meet additional requests from other schools—ensuring every child has a cool, comfortable seat in the classroom!

No Donation Is Ever Too Small

Echoing the true value of the Widow's Mite parable (Luke 21:1-4), Starfish Asia was delighted to receive a donation via a Scottish Prison Service cheque. Although the sum was modest, it was the cash prize won by a long-term inmate at HMP Perth whom our former Chairman, Devin Scobie, knows and visits regularly. David has maintained his innocence throughout 14 years of imprisonment and has used his time well. He is now an accomplished artist. No wonder we consider this a very special donation.



Christmas Challenge

Big Give

1st - 8th December

SAVE THE DATE

Following the success of last years' campaign, we have once again applied to take part in **The Big Give Christmas Challenge** this December. If accepted, we will use the opportunity to **DOUBLE** all donations towards the Scholarship fund, giving deserving students the chance to access higher education. Keep an eye out for more information in the coming weeks!

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 to: Freepost RUGY-ERZK-UUZZ

Starfish Asia, c/o Field Sullivan, 9 Hare & Billet Rd, London, SE3 0RB (UK)

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

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In Canada, contact: **Starfish Asia (Canada)** info@starfishasia.ca

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www.starfishasia.com



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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.

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