

**"All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along."**

The Bible: Galatians 2:10

We know we cannot do everything. We cannot help everyone. But it makes a huge difference for every one we CAN help - we must do more.

#### **The Mission School, Lahore**

This is what we found when we first visited the Mission School in a suburb of Lahore city in 2012. This is taken from our visit report: *"70 children. One classroom and a space under a tarpaulin for KG to class 2. Ventilation is very poor. There is one blackboard."*



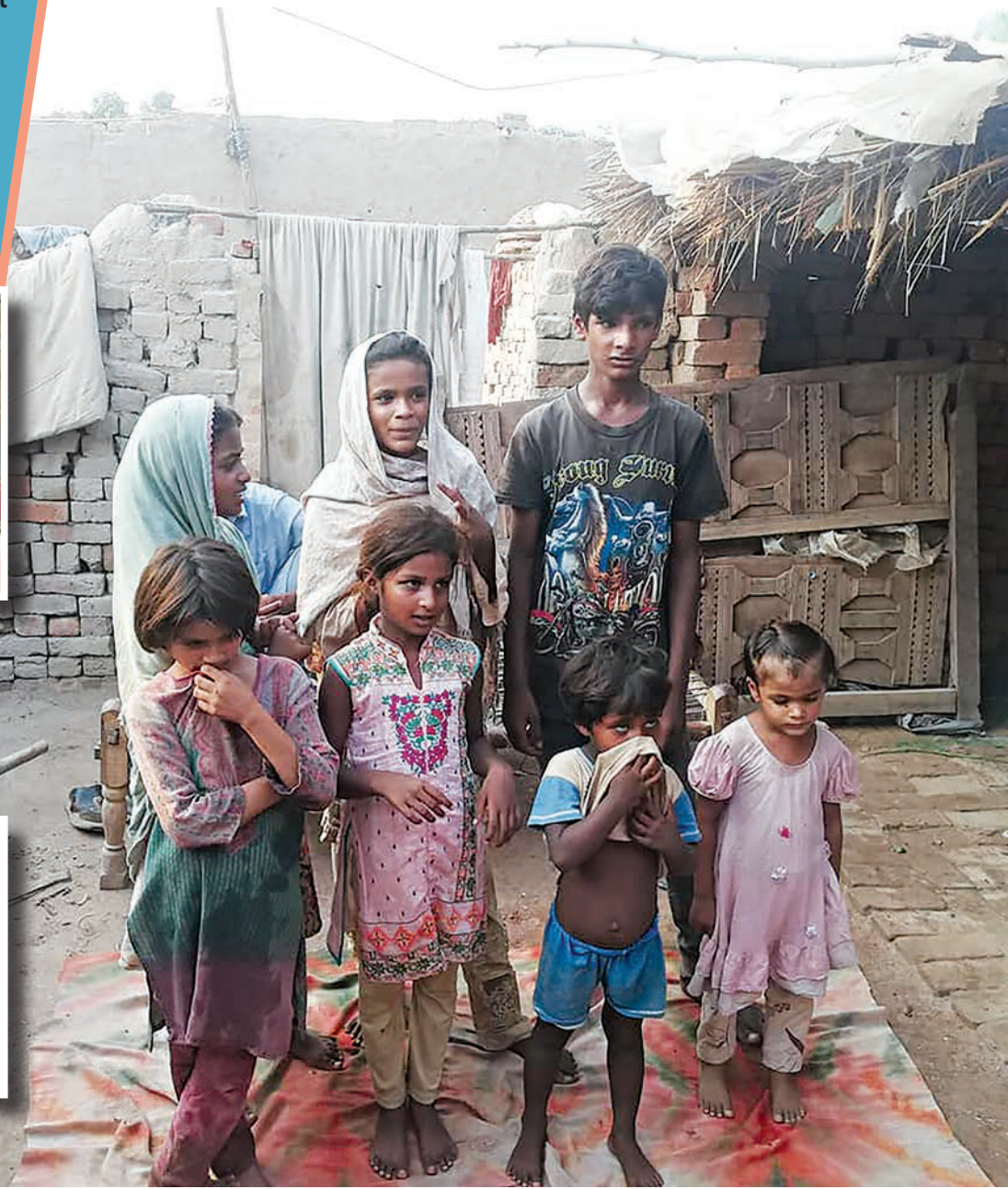
We began to provide some support for teachers' salaries and better facilities. This is the school today:



## ***Lest We Forget "Please do Something"***

We recently received this appeal from a small Christian school in Pakistan that we are not able to help at present:

**"The situation in Pakistan is more than bad. In our slum areas parents cannot afford educational expenses, even many children do not have lunch. Many times children come without breakfast. There are many many more children and orphans in the streets. We are hopeful for a positive response. Please do something..."**







# The State of the Nation: Pakistan in Crisis

On 14th August Pakistan celebrated 75 years of Independence. As is traditional, there were many ecstatic displays of patriotism, both from the Government and the general public - and also in most of the Christian schools we support. Such events are an important affirmation of the hopes and dreams of Pakistan's founder:

*"You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the State."*

## The challenges ahead

Alongside the celebrations of national pride and patriotism however, Pakistan is currently facing many challenges. Pakistanis are used to a change of government, fluctuating prices and unstable supplies, but rarely has it seemed as critical as it is today. *"Pakistan is in political and economic chaos,"* said the Financial Times in May. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics announced in August\*:

*"The annual inflation rate in Pakistan increased to 24.9% in July 2022 amid a slide in the Rupee to fresh record lows. Transport prices recorded the biggest increase (64.7%), namely motor fuels (94.4%); followed by food and drink (28.8%), mainly vegetables (40.5%), pulses (92.4%), cooking oil (72.6%), wheat (45%) and milk (24.8%); and housing and utilities (21.8%), namely electricity charges (86.7%)."*

This is a catastrophe by any standards, but even more so for Pakistan's poor, many of whom are the Christians that Starfish Asia exists to support.

\* <https://tradingeconomics.com/pakistan/inflation-cpi>



## How can we help?

All of this tells us that we must surely do more to support those who are doing so much for their Christian community. It is a challenge – and an opportunity. We are in the process of increasing what we provide for teachers' stipends. It is still too little, but our resources are stretched.

**If ten more people signed up to send £100 a month by Standing Order, we could support five schools with essential funds: teachers' salaries and school rent.**



## Coming down the mountain.. Back to Reality

- Rob Bavington, CEO

Do you remember that feeling of having been to a significant event – a conference, a youth summer camp, Spring Harvest or New Wine? You've spent a number of days being inspired, challenged, maybe had a new spiritual experience but then it's time to go **"back to reality"**! Back to living with all the same struggles, problems and issues. At the end of such positive experiences my heart almost always sank with the feeling that, despite the amazing time, all the learning would probably be eradicated within the first few weeks back and I'd be desperately hanging on again until next year's "top-up"!

I'm guessing, but it's likely to be a similar situation for all the teachers who have taken part in the teacher training programme this summer. They have been inspired, taught and encouraged but with schools having just started up after the summer break they now face the daunting task of putting it all into practice.

The challenges that our brothers and sisters in Pakistan face are considerable (as you will have already read). For Danishmand, Jasmine and the team, their challenge is to find ways of supporting the community so that these burdens don't become paralysing. Fortunately for them, they are not left completely on their own. It means so much to all our associated partners to know that they have brothers and sisters around the world who support their efforts through prayer and giving. The tasks they face are huge; with God's help let US make sure that the support they receive on the coal-face is enough to see them overcome their challenges.

## Challenges ahead for Danishmand and Jasmine.

### ► Training Implementation

Receiving training is a good start but putting it into practice is what gives results. Visiting schools in Lahore takes time, but it's a 700-mile round trip by road to reach the school in Khanpur with 7 others to visit on the way. Travelling to follow-up with teachers is vital, yet tiring and also fraught with traffic dangers.

### ► Scholarships

52 scholarship students from Starfish schools have now completed their final exams. 80 who received awards last year will move on to their second year. We anticipate a flood of new applications as Matric results are published. Pray for Jasmine and the committee that will be making decisions regarding new awards.

**We urgently need funding for scholarships that require about £2,000 a month. Can you help?**



# Investing in our Teachers

Over the summer, Jasmine and Danishmand have been based at a conference centre in Abbotabad, in the Himalayan foothills north of Islamabad. With gifted access to fully-equipped facilities for up to 60 residents, they have delivered an ambitious training programme for 226 teachers from Starfish-supported schools.

It began on 9<sup>th</sup> June when the first group of pre-Primary class teachers arrived for 4 days of intensive training in teaching skills, together with spiritual fellowship. The teaching was shared with professional trainers from Gohar Publishers, whose textbooks are used in many Starfish schools. A team of qualified trainers from CASTT (Centre of Academic Solutions & Teacher Training) also led the last two groups of Secondary School teachers. Danishmand and Jasmine reflected on the seven weeks of training:

**Jasmine:** *The pre-nursery and primary class teachers were the most responsive. I asked them about their hopes for this course. Many said: "Today's children want something different from the way we learned in school, but we have no training..." After the sessions I spent time with each teacher to learn how their training will help. Out of the 379 who were invited, 226 attended, but we will not forsake the 153 who could not come! By the end of August we plan to visit all the Lahore schools to follow up and assess how they are using the new materials we have given them.*

*"I told them -  
You teachers are  
like the WiFi, and  
the students are the  
devices. When the  
WiFi doesn't work,  
the devices won't  
connect"*

“All the sessions are very good and important for improving my teaching methods such as child psychology, effective lesson planning, classroom management and multiple intelligence. Thank you Starfish Pakistan”



Mishal - St. James School, Lahore



## A relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ

**Danishmand:** *In the first devotion with each group I challenged them whether they have given their life to the Lord Jesus Christ. More than 70% testified that they are the children of God. Many of them thanked us at the graduation ceremony for helping them grow spiritually.*

*"How can they teach the Bible to the children if they are not strong in the faith?"*



## ► Science and Maths teaching

Since we stopped using the online teaching from EDKASA, Danishmand needs wisdom and imagination as we consider the challenge of providing good quality Maths and Science education in Starfish schools, together with suitable equipment and lab space.

## ► Accounting and Accountability

Ensuring better book-keeping practices and budgeting in all Starfish projects is high on Danishmand's agenda. Johnson Anthony is in the forefront of this - as is our launch of a project to fund desktop computers for every project office.

## ► Progress and Responsibility

Amongst everything, Danishmand and Jasmine, with their faithful office staff, need to help arrange annual audits, oversee the increase in teacher stipends, respond to daily requests for help as well as planning strategically for growth and improvement in the future.

## "I am Johnson Anthony"

Johnson joined the staff of Starfish Pakistan in May, with the important task of working with Project leaders to improve their book-keeping and accounting skills.



Johnson Anthony (far right) with his family.

*"I am a graduate in commerce. I was doing an accountancy job in a private school, but due to COVID-19 I lost my job in November 2020. I am married and we have three children. My wife Joyce is a cancer patient and her treatment is ongoing from Shoukat Khanum hospital, Lahore. I am so grateful to Starfish Pakistan who gave me this job now. My family always remembers the Starfish team and Director in our prayers."*



## Our dilemma and our dreams

We face many dilemmas in our work in Pakistan, but none greater than this: Should we go **deeper**, raising the standards, aiming for better results and greater quality in the 50 projects we are currently supporting? Danishmand makes it clear that our core value is Professionalism. Our teachers must be trained. Our schools must all be Star schools.

Or do we go **wider**? As you see from our cover page, there are hundreds of fine people trying to provide hope and education to Pakistan's poorest Christians but with no access to help for salaries, training or suitable facilities. How should we respond? We could provide support to another 50 schools and 500 teachers if we had admin infrastructure and resources.

We have no easy answers to this, so aim to do both to the best of our abilities and resources. But it requires change in the way we operate.

① We must increase our office administrative space in Pakistan. In 2023 we face the need to buy, or build, our own office and training centre.

② We must increase staff (and costs) at every level - this requires increased income.

*"My dream is to make a Starfish Teacher Training Centre to train our teachers. One day you will see the difference the training has made. We will have fruit"*  
- Jasmine

We need your prayers and we need your support. What more can we say? Watch this space.



## Taking on a new challenge...



On Sunday 30th October our administrator, Liz, will be taking part in the **Bedgebury Forest Half Marathon**. As a keen runner, this is the furthest distance she has ever attempted. Liz will be raising money for our Scholarships Fund, to help young students pursue a higher education, and you can sponsor her via the link below. Good luck!

<https://starfishasia.enthuse.com/pf/liz-ellis-5a780>

## The Greatest Provider

We received a surprise message from a friend in Canada who is the leader of an exciting mission venture. He gave us 9 days to raise £6,300 (10,000 Canadian dollars) and he would add a further 25%. How do you raise that kind of money in such a short time? We prayed and chose a project – the **Dean Public School** in Lahore that desperately needed a construction renovation completed. We launched a Facebook fundraiser, wrote some appeals and (Praise the Lord) 20 people responded and the funds came in.



Work has begun on the roof (above).  
Naeem Dean (left)

We were able to write back to our friend that the goal was achieved. Naeem Dean responded: *"Hallelujah, hallelujah, Praise the Lord Jesus Christ! No doubt He is good all the time and He is the greatest Provider. Amen. Thank you Jehovah Jireh. May God bless Starfish abundantly always..."*

## New Website Launch

We're excited to announce that we have a new Website! Our old site was getting tired, and with very little 'traffic' we felt there was a need to freshen the look and, in turn, attract some more visitors. By increasing our online presence, we hope to spread the message of Starfish Asia further afield and gain new supporters. If you haven't seen our website for a while, do visit [www.starfishasia.com](http://www.starfishasia.com). Better still, send the link to friends and encourage them to look too!



[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.**  
8156B Stirling Road, Singapore 148947

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



**STARFISH ASIA**  
giving hope to the children of Pakistan

### 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: [info@starfishasia.com](mailto: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.

**8156B Stirling Road, Singapore 148947**

Email: [info\\_singapore@starfishasia.com](mailto:info_singapore@starfishasia.com)