



reaching
higher
in 2012



LOOKING BACK WITH GRATITUDE ● LOOKING FORWARD WITH HOPE

We will look back on 2011 with great satisfaction and gratitude. It has been a good year for hundreds of children in Pakistan who have been helped with education. Our national partners have given the hope of a future to many who have been born in increasingly dark and difficult circumstances.

In 2011, together with a growing number of generous donors and the faithful perseverance of our Pakistani co-workers, these have been highlights:

- Financial support has been provided to 30 projects run by gifted Pakistani Christians with a passion to do something for their own neglected people.
- This support has been provided to 24 schools and six homes for the disabled and disadvantaged.
- More than 6,000 children are receiving an education from Nursery Class to the Matriculation exam. These children might otherwise have remained illiterate.
- Seventy-eight students passed their matriculation exam in 2011 and 40 scholarships were provided to young people to pursue further education.
- Seventeen of these schools are now registered with local Education Boards, with the accompanying requirements of libraries, staff qualifications and libraries.

2011 was Pakistan's 'Year of Education'. It was also the year that the Pakistan Government *reduced* its Education budget to 1.5% of GDP.

In March the semi-Government body, the Pakistan Education Task Force*, produced an excellent report, that affirmed:

"10% of the world's primary school-age children who do not attend school live in Pakistan. In the global ranking of out-of-school children, Pakistan is in second place.

"Pakistan is crippled by an education emergency that threatens tens of millions of children. The economic impact of the education emergency is as expensive as a flood every year."

For Pakistan's minority Christians, effectively excluded from the Government school system by discrimination and from private Church schools by poverty, the situation is far more serious.

* <http://educationemergency.com.pk>



Aiming higher in 2012

Our priority in 2012 will remain the same:

To provide quality education to the deprived minority communities in Pakistan, with clear biblical values and teaching for Christian students.

We receive a regular stream of requests for more help from schools that cannot cover the rising cost of teachers' salaries, rents, utilities, school books and other running expenses. Sadly the students we value most cannot afford to pay for their education which is why a Starfish Asia subsidy is so urgently needed.

Our goal in 2012 is to begin to support ten more schools, leading to another 3,000 children receiving a good education from teachers who are properly paid.

To cover these rising costs will require a monthly increase in funding of at least £5,000 / US\$7,500 / S\$10,000



New initiatives in 2012

Until now Starfish Asia has focused on providing resources to trusted partners to provide an education to the under-privileged.

This remains our great priority.

But we realise it is just a drop in the ocean and in 2012 we wish to broaden our scope.

We want to aim higher.

Restoring hope

The Christian minority in Pakistan is all too familiar with injustice and prejudice. Destined to be poor, ill-treated and exploited, many Christians are resigned to remaining on the margins of society.

Starfish Asia is working to access funding from a major Foundation to address the issue of restoring faith and hope to the 5 million-strong Pakistani Christian community. If the project is approved it will begin in 2012. It will encompass:

- ◆ Research into the roots of community despair. A Pakistani partner is eager to spearhead the project which will bring new dignity to Christians who for too long have been downtrodden.
- ◆ Preparation and dissemination of special faith-building materials aimed at restoring hope and reigniting the dreams of a people who have come to believe that change is impossible.
- ◆ Awakening the aspiration for a quality education for a people who have come to see school attendance as a privilege of the wealthy.
- ◆ Raising the expectations of the poor by providing incentives and awards for achievement.



We believe this three-year project has the potential to provide far-reaching change to the aspirations of a generation of Pakistani Christians. In the words of the Starfish Asia partner who will lead it:

The Project will change the worldview of the Christian community. An awakened people will regain an ambition for themselves and their country. The Project will give birth to a fresh hope for dignity and equality, as equal citizens of Pakistan.

Space prevents further detail but we value your prayers that the project will become reality. If the anticipated funding is not available, we will still hope to proceed with many of its goals, as we are convinced of their importance for Pakistan's Christians. We believe it will go a long way to free Pakistan's Christians to pursue respect and dignity.

A Bible curriculum for Christian students

For some time, together with our partners in Nirali Kitaben, a publishing house based in Lahore, we have been working to prepare a Bible curriculum in Urdu for Christian schools.

The project was more ambitious than we imagined. Now we expect publication to begin in 2012. The first 100-page Class 1 Teachers' Manual will be ready for printing and testing early in 2012. It will be followed by a text book for every Class 1 student. Other Teachers' Manuals and text books will appear throughout 2012.

We believe this will have a marked impact on the quality of Bible teaching for Christian children throughout Pakistan and will help a generation to develop a clear understanding of their faith.

B.D. Siddiqi, the artist at Nirali Kitaben



Aspiring to excellence

We have often had to face the question:
What is to be gained by providing schools to people who have no ambition to be educated?

National statistics are discouraging. Out of every 100 students entering school in class 1, only 30 reach their Matriculation exam in Class 10. In Government schools only 17 ever take their matric exam. In a 2010 survey* conducted in Karachi 100 school Principals were asked why children drop out of school:



Raising standards

In addition to the 25 schools currently supported through Starfish Asia, we know of many more schools serving the poor, whose standards are desperately inadequate due to insufficient funding. We have applied to the UK Department for International Development for funding to provide the following:

- ◆ School furniture, equipment, textbooks and material infrastructure to raise the quality of schooling in 100 independent schools affecting 25,000 children over the next three years.
- ◆ Teacher training for hundreds of teachers to raise their expectations and understanding of the vital role of inspired teaching.

If approved, the Project will start in 2012. If DFID funding is not available, we still hope to be able to provide greater help to increased numbers of schools — and to engage in more and regular inspirational teacher training.

Scholarships and incentives

We are currently providing scholarships to about 60 young men and women for studies up to graduate level. We are actively looking for funding so that we can provide scholarships for Masters and Doctorate degree level to enable Christians to take their role with academic distinction at every level of Pakistani society.



*http://pakistaneducationtaskforce.com/lowcost_private.html

We aspire to beat the national average and to keep Christian children in school all the way through to Class 10 — and then to inspire many to aim higher. To achieve this, we must work hard:

- ◆ To improve the facilities in schools: Well equipped science and computer labs, furniture, libraries and a good classroom environment.
- ◆ To improve teacher qualifications, motivation and inspiration (including better salaries).
- ◆ To provide access for gifted students from poor families to attain higher qualifications. Christians need to believe they can succeed at every level.

We are also working to prepare Pakistani leadership for Starfish Asia that can take responsibility for the projects that will benefit their country and their future.

Will you enable us to aim higher in 2012?

Help us prepare a generation of Pakistani Christians to be tomorrow's leaders in their nation.

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