



HOLISTIC
LEARNING
INNOVATIONS

DEAR – Drop Everything and Read

Country: Pakistan

Target Age: 15 Years

Learning Areas: Literacy | Leadership | Critical

Thinking | Communication | Creativity

THE CONTEXT

Government High School Parabeg is located in the scenic yet remote Parabeg Valley, surrounded by hilly terrain and positioned near key local institutions, including the Aga Khan Health Centre, the Ismaili Local Council, and the Parabeg Hydel Power Station. The area lies close to the Pak–Afghan border, shaping a diverse community context for learning. With 13 years of teaching experience, English teacher Haji Muhammad plays a central role in supporting students’ academic and personal development at the school.





THE CHALLENGE

How might we build a school-wide reading culture that strengthens fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary through simple daily routines?

Through classroom observations, assessments, and interviews supported by the Schools2030 programme, Haji Muhammad identified a significant barrier to learning: many Grade 10 students could not read English texts fluently or comprehend what they were reading. This gap affected their academic confidence, performance across subjects, and participation in class. The challenge required a solution that could strengthen foundational literacy while motivating students to engage with English regularly and with confidence.



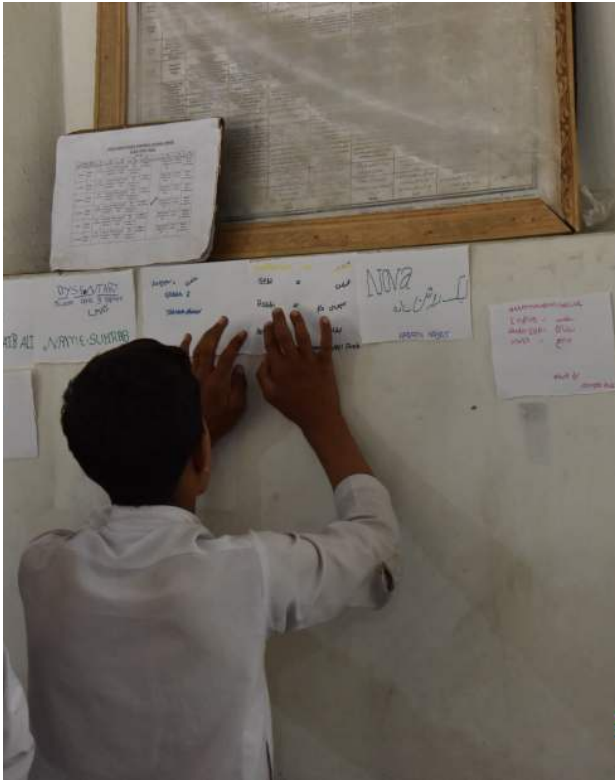
THE INNOVATION

DEAR – Drop Everything and Read

Haji Muhammad introduced a daily literacy intervention called DEAR – Drop Everything and Read. For 20 minutes each day, all students and teachers paused their work to read an English text of their choice. After reading, each student selected a new word, wrote it with its meaning on a card, and posted it on a shared vocabulary board. A student voting process generated a “Word of the Day”, and weekly recognition was given to learners who contributed the most selected words.

As the intervention progressed, Haji identified pronunciation and sound-recognition challenges and responded by creating a Phonics Booklet—a simple, school-designed guide to English phonics now used during annual student orientation for all grades. The combined approach created a structured, engaging, and school-wide culture of reading.





THE IMPACT

Improved students' reading fluency, comprehension, and confidence.

The DEAR initiative and Phonics Booklet led to measurable improvements in students' reading confidence and comprehension, with teachers observing a 10–15% gain in understanding within weeks. Students became more motivated, actively engaged with English vocabulary, and enthusiastic about reading. Beyond literacy, teachers noted broader benefits: improved communication, stronger teamwork, increased use of ICT tools, and greater leadership in class discussions. Classroom behaviour also improved as students felt more supported, included, and empowered.

The intervention has now become part of the school's routine, contributing to a strengthened literacy culture and creating entry points for holistic skill development. GHS Parabaig has grown into a more vibrant learning environment—demonstrating how small, student-centred innovations can produce sustained change when guided by human-centred design.





Follow our story:

Website: schools2030.org

Twitter/X: [@schools2030](https://twitter.com/schools2030)

LinkedIn: [@schools2030](https://www.linkedin.com/company/schools2030)

Facebook: [@schools2030](https://www.facebook.com/schools2030)

Instagram: [@_schools2030](https://www.instagram.com/_schools2030)