



HOLISTIC  
LEARNING  
INNOVATIONS

# ACTIVE LEARNING CLASSROOM

---

Country: Afghanistan

Target Age: 6-12 Years

Learning Areas: Literacy | Numeracy | Science

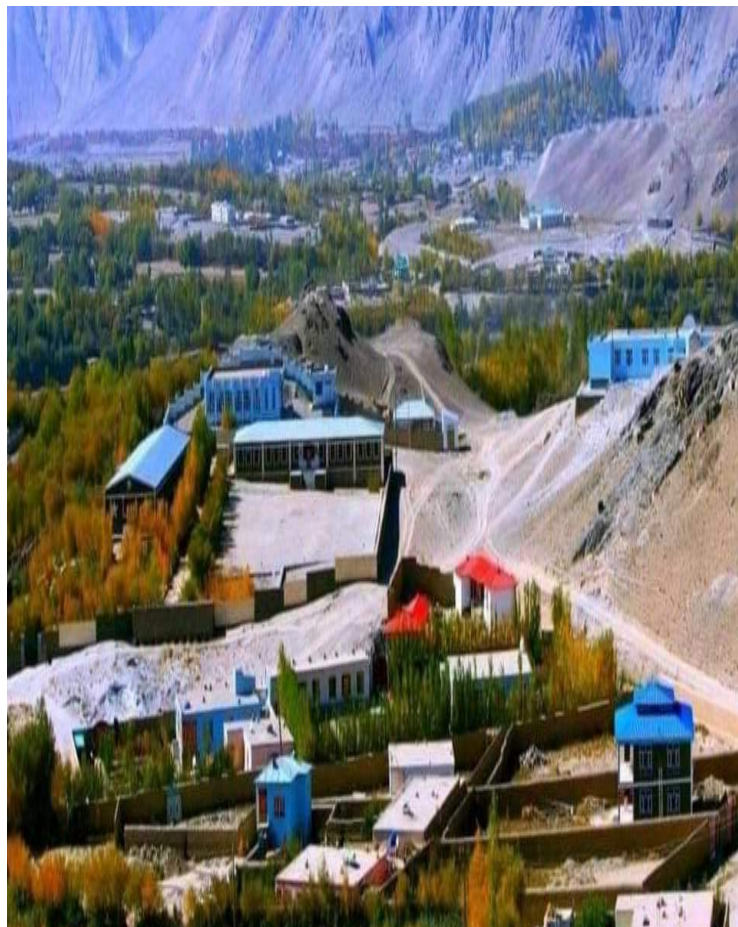
Critical Thinking | Problem-Solving | Parental

Engagement

## THE CONTEXT

Qazida village lies in the centre of Ishkashim district, Badakhshan province, home to an estimated 4,730 people. Set in a mountainous area with roads that can be difficult to travel in some seasons, most residents make their living through animal husbandry, small-scale farming, and small businesses — much like other Pamiri-Wakhi communities across Ishkashim and Wakhan.

Ishkashim Girls' High School is one of the most important schools in the area, opened in 1962 and serving 305 girl students with 39 staff. Its long history has earned it the respect of families and the community, who see it as central to their daughters' future. In this context, programmes such as Active Learning can help teachers build their skills and encourage students, girls in particular, to take a fuller part in class — making learning more effective and classrooms more engaged.



## THE CHALLENGE

### How might we make classrooms more active and engaging so that every student can participate fully?

Students at the school have been struggling across a range of academic areas: reading and writing texts, understanding number sequences, performing the four basic maths operations, and finding the perimeter of shapes, as well as with non-academic tasks. These weaknesses have affected overall learning outcomes. Assessment results and interviews with four teachers, five students, and three parents identified a set of interconnected causes: traditional teaching methods with limited use of materials, teachers being assigned subjects outside their specialism and frequently transferred, a shortage of primary-level textbooks, and students simply not being involved in daily classroom activities.

Beyond the classroom, students have been carrying the weight of heavy household and field responsibilities, while high levels of poverty and overcrowded classrooms have compounded an already difficult picture. Low motivation for reading and learning has been both a symptom and a cause – students who have not been engaged by their lessons have disengaged further, and without creative or innovative teaching methods to draw them back in, that cycle has been hard to break. For girls in Ishkashim, where access to education is already constrained and community expectations around girls' roles at home remain strong, the stakes of getting classroom practice right are particularly high.

## THE INNOVATION



## ACTIVE LEARNING CLASSROOM

Halima Khushhal developed an Active Learning Classroom approach, replacing traditional transmission-style teaching with a rich range of creative, hands-on methods. Teaching approaches include:

- Creative and innovative methods such as dictation and text practice, sentence-completion games, number-and-word games, and outdoor scientific learning
- Hands-on activities where students make things themselves, including model-making in science and mathematics
- Group work and project-based activities, including scientific and practical experiments in science class
- A record of experiments completed by the class and by individual students
- A weekly activity where students share their creative work with their parents
- "Our Green School Garden" — a community-facing initiative to encourage parental motivation and involvement

This approach targets a wide range of learning outcomes: language skills, mathematical and scientific problem-solving, responsibility, self-confidence, independence, critical thinking, and cultural values — all understood as essential parts of whole-student development.



## THE IMPACT

### Improved participation, literacy, numeracy, and self-confidence

Teachers have reported a clear set of positive changes since implementing the Active Learning Classroom: increased student participation and interest in lessons, improved reading skills and mathematical problem-solving, better class management, growth in creativity and project work, reduced absenteeism, and greater trust and cooperation from parents. Students themselves report more participation, stronger motivation and curiosity, greater responsibility, and better self-confidence.

The innovation has spread beyond Halima's classroom to all classes in the school, creating a shared centre for students' creativity and positive activities. Students are not only benefiting from the approach themselves — they are actively encouraging other classes to adopt it.

*"Observations show that students' expectations, motivation, and needs have increased — evidence that they are becoming more engaged, more curious, and are aiming for higher levels of learning."*

Teacher observation, Ishkashim Girls' High School



**Follow our story:**

Website: [schools2030.org](https://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)