

Sheeba and the Private Detectives: The Case of The Guardian School in Karachi

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SHEEBA
AND THE
PRIVATE DETECTIVES



“Someone famous said, ‘A book is a dream that you hold in your hand’” says Qulsoom to Sheeba when they first meet and their adventure starts. Sheeba is an unconventional 13-year old. She likes sports and boxing. Qulsoom is a studious 12-year old and she loves science books. Accompanied by their friends Reemi, Majid, Sheru (a dog of mixed origins) and Tufaan (a temperamental donkey), Sheeba and Qulsoom travel around Pakistan in search of mysteries and problems to solve using their knowledge of science and maths. Their adventures are captured in a series of comic books developed by AZCorp titled ‘Sheeba and the Private Detectives’.

One of the first schools to start using Sheeba and the Private Detectives was The Guardian School in Shireen Jinnah Colony in Karachi. With more than 16 million people, Karachi is Pakistan’s largest city and a global hub for trade. Cargo arrives from all over the world at its bustling port, ready to be transported throughout the country and beyond. Shireen Jinnah Colony is a densely populated neighbourhood close to the port. The Guardian School is a small low fee private school offering primary education to around 70 children from families living nearby.

After a short training programme designed and delivered by the AZCorp team, teachers at the school have made Sheeba’s adventures part of regular instruction. The exciting storylines, humour and colourful illustrations have had an immediate impact on the students and their learning. Abdul in grade 5 reports that his classes are more fun and his teachers have observed that when they use Sheeba and the Private Detectives, children are much more lively and talkative.

Children from The Guardian School have their favourite stories. ‘I liked the part where Majid learns from Qulsoom how to make a butterfly knot’ says Aqib, referring to ‘The Case of the Lost Calf’ – the first story in the series. Warda from grade 4 reports that she enjoyed issue 2, ‘The Case of the Not Missing Coins’, because she learnt about mineralogy and various kinds of rocks and gems. Parents and relatives seemed to also enjoy reading the AZCorp comic series. ‘My cousin really likes Sheru because it looks exactly like our dog’, says Jawaria from grade 4.

Both girls and boys identify with the characters in Sheeba and the Private Detectives and they usually have a favourite. Laiba, a girl in grade 4 says that ‘I like Reemi because she likes maths and I like maths too. And I like how she dresses’. Fazan, a boy in grade 5 says ‘I like Sheeba because she does boxing’, echoed by a few other peers. Tufaan, the donkey, seems to be the least popular. ‘He is lazy and always complains about being tired’, says Ikram from grade 5, smiling timidly.

All of the children at The Guardian School enjoy the way that the characters work cleverly together as a team to help their local community. When Amber, one of the AZCorp team members, walks through the corridors of the school, children call her: ‘Sheeba! Sheeba!’ because of her short black hair and her resemblance to Sheeba. Then children gather around her to ask about the next delivery of comic books from AZCorp so that they can find out what Sheeba and the Private Detectives get up to next.

More about Sheeba and the Private Detectives

AZCorp created Sheeba and the Private Detectives to help fill a gap in the market in Pakistan for engaging educational reading materials for children in Urdu and English. Sheeba and the Private Detectives is designed to promote children's interest in reading and to promote children's understanding of math and science. In each issue, Sheeba and her friends solve a mystery. The storyline is used to explain curriculum related concepts in math and science and is supplemented with extra information, puzzles and other activities related to the story. To date, AZCorp's Sheeba and the Private Detectives is reaching more than 30,000 children.

Future plans include a mobile app with games and extra content and a radio broadcast of Sheeba and the Private Detectives.

World Learning Inc is AZCorp's content partner for Sheeba and the Private Detectives. World Learning prepares the storylines and scripts, ensuring that the reading level is appropriate for children in higher primary grades and that content is closely related to the curriculum in Pakistan. They also conduct audience research with children and other readers to inform the development of new content.



General information:

Geographical coverage

All districts in Pakistan

Objective

Stimulate interest in reading and increase knowledge of maths and science

Target group

All children aged 5 to 12 years

Subjects

Literacy, Mathematics, Science

Channel

Series of comic books with educational content

Number of children to be reached

47,000 by 2019

Grant received from Ilm Ideas 2:

£700,000 between April 2017 and December 2018



Find out more:

-  www.azcorpentertainment.com
-  [SheebaAndThePrivateDetectives](https://www.facebook.com/SheebaAndThePrivateDetectives)
-  [@azcorpcomics](https://www.instagram.com/azcorpcomics)
-  [@azcorpcomins](https://www.twitter.com/azcorpcomins)



Sheeba and the Private Detectives is just one of the education innovations in Pakistan being supported by UK aid through their Ilm Ideas 2 programme. Ilm Ideas 2 is managed by Cambridge Education, a member of the Mott MacDonald Group. Read more about Ilm Ideas 2 at www.ilmideas2.pk.