Salima Begum was born in a remote village in Pakistan. Conditions in her own education were cramped and she was fortunate to complete higher secondary level. She believes strongly in students ‘constructing’ meaning for themselves through the information they receive, and holds that classroom activities should correspond closely to real-life situations. She has helped create awareness amongst parents regarding girls’ education and its benefits, pioneered a strategy of mentoring in the community and encouraged aspiration in the feeder schools that send pupils to her.

Throughout her career, Salima has contributed to teacher training, instructing more than 7,000 teachers across her province, and 8,000 more throughout Pakistan through the education reform programme. The United States Agency for International Development has acknowledged her contribution to their Teacher Education project, and she has also published a number of research articles. Her leadership has resulted in her being made Headteacher of her school, and under her guidance students have performed exceptionally well in official examinations, resulting in an increase in enrolment in her school.

During her teaching and learning process, Salima always tries to develop students’ local wisdom and at the same time question them on how they are going to contribute to that knowledge, connect with people around world and encourage people to work together for the betterment of humanity. Developing ethical, moral and social values in her students has been top of her priority list. For example, she designed and implemented an environmental project with her children and the local community, to produce organic fertilizers which was a great success.