

Dear Friends,

I can't quite believe a whole year has passed, but what a year it has been. I have been very lucky to join Shining Life Children's Trust at such an exciting time, as it enters its 20<sup>th</sup> year. Operating since 1997, November marked our 20<sup>th</sup> year in Sri Lanka, celebrating the delivery of 13 major projects to over 4000 families in 50 villages in Sri Lanka helping to improve the lives of children disadvantaged by poverty.

As part of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations I have been fortunate enough to travel around Sri Lanka collecting stories from our partners and communities that we have worked with over the past 20 years, to see how they have been getting on. I have been overwhelmed by their strength and commitment to build a better future. Their gratitude and positive response to the work of our projects has been amazing. It has been great to see the positive impact our projects have had on not just individuals but on several generations.

Check out our new SLCT2020 blog that showcases some of the stories I have been collecting at <https://slct2020.wordpress.com/> Over the next few months we will continue to release a selection of 20 stories so make sure you sign up to follow our blog to receive notifications of new stories by email.

It has certainly been a busy year, with the successful implementation of our 30-month project in Kirimetiya and completion of our pilot project in Angunochchiya. I have seen first-hand the real impact the work of our projects are bringing to communities. I have seen the communities grow in confidence and capability and it has been amazing.

At the end of February 2017, Shining Life Children's Trust (SLCT) started a new pilot project in partnership with the Human Development Foundation (HDF). The project worked with 403 families in three villages in the Angunochchiya Gram Sevaka Division (AGSD). The pilot project was designed to inform and strengthen the viability of a longer 30-month project for the area, due to start in 2018.

The project concluded at the end of September 2017. It successfully addressed challenges in areas of child development, access to safe drinking water, health and well-being and mobilization of the community. This has been achieved through the establishment of Children's Clubs, Village Welfare Societies and a series of training and awareness programmes. The project has also worked with various government agencies and the community to deliver a series of CKD clinics and start discussions regarding the provision of safe drinking water for the community.

Key highlights from the Angunochchiya project include the establishment of 2 Children's Clubs with attendance averaging between 20-30 members per month. The Clubs organized a programme of over 18 activities for the community to celebrate New Year in April 2017, and a series of performances for Posa Poya. Children told us that the Children's Clubs had helped to improve their confidence. 100% of members said they were happy with the running of the Children's Clubs, that they felt listened to and were able to contribute their ideas and suggestions.





Our 30-month project in Kirimetiyyawatte is now approaching its half-way milestone. Over the past 12 months I have seen the community grow in confidence and ability to work together cohesively to drive needed improvements in their village. Speaking directly with members of the community I have heard how families have been empowered to improve health, social, economic and environmental outcomes in the village through various trainings, counselling, meetings and workshops facilitated by our partners the Women's Development Centre (WDC).

A key issue identified by the community was the limited access and opportunity to education for the children. WDC have worked with the community to establish structures such as the Children's Club, Reading Clubs and the development of a new pre-school – the super kid's nursery. The project is supporting two inspirational young women from the village Subadhini and Sugnya, who are completing their teacher training studies and teaching at the new super kid's nursery. I have seen first-hand how WDC have worked to empower and support Subadhini and Sugnya, to become respected and successful development champions in the community. To find out more about the great work these women are doing please visit our website <http://shininglife.org/news.html>



To keep up to date with the work of our projects please follow our [Facebook](#) page

I am very excited for what 2018 will bring, with the launch of our 30-month project in Angunochchiya and continuation of our work in Kirimetiyyawatte.

May I also take this opportunity to thank you for your on-going support that enables our work to continue in Sri Lanka.

Wishing you a very happy Christmas and a healthy & prosperous 2018.

Thank you and best wishes,

Sally

Sally Chandler

Field Director, Shining Life Children's Trust