

News from the Field

September 2010



Jane Slocombe, outgoing field director

I've now been in Sri Lanka for a whole year and my time with Shining Life Children's Trust has come to an end. This year has been both greatly challenging and immensely rewarding. I've learnt a lot but also hopefully imparted what I could to our partners.

In considering the achievements of SLCT in the past year, I feel that we've come a long way. Unfortunately, I have spent a lot of time (and effort!) bogged down in administrative affairs as the legal restrictions on international NGOs operating in Sri Lanka are becoming ever more tight from the government. However, whilst overcoming these difficulties, I have also managed to fit in the necessary time for the more purposeful and enjoyable work with our partners and beneficiaries.

In Galewala, I have seen a great change in the capacity of the Human Development Foundation as they have not only improved their reporting and administrative skills (essential in the successful implementation of a project) but I've also witnessed the growing relationship between them and the villages in which we're working. Here, the women are developing confidence in their own capabilities and vocalising these successfully, the children's library building is nearly finished (work we've undertaken in collaboration with the local monks) and the preschools are all being refitted to improve facilities for the village infants and toddlers.

Similarly, I consider myself extremely lucky to have worked with the dedicated and magnanimous Hanguranketha Children's Care Women's Foundation on the Rahatungoda Estate Development Project. I recently finished a mid-term report on this project, as it is due to finish in July 2011, and am very happy to see the huge improvements they have made in health awareness, sanitation, children's welfare and women's empowerment in the vulnerable Tamil communities on the estate.

I have also seen the end of one project in Kalpitiya and the beginning of another in partnership with the Women's Development Foundation in Kandy. To oversee the completion of a successful project was very rewarding and inspiring for me and I am very excited to see the evolution of the new project in the next few years.

Finally, all I can say is thank you to all our supporters who have made all this possible. I have much faith in the value of the projects being implemented in Sri Lanka, and having heard so many of the people who are affected by SLCT's projects vouch for the positive change it has made to their lives, can truly pass on their thanks.

Lastly I would like to welcome John Dean, the new Field Director, who I recently handed over to in Colombo and wish him well in his new position.

Jane

John Dean, incoming field director



Dear Friend of Shining Life Children's Trust,

First I feel that I should introduce myself, I will try to not sound like I am listing my CV! I am from the Isle of Man where I was born and raised. I graduated from the University of Sheffield in 2007 in International History and International Politics and completed my MSc at London School of Oriental and African Studies in Development Studies in 2009.

In between, during and after, I have volunteered in Darjeeling District of India, with the VSO in Egypt and with the Rotary Club in Sri Lanka. I also wrote an in-depth report into the Isle of Man's Overseas Aid Committee in 2007, interned at Inter-Cultural Youth Exchange in London during my Masters and volunteered with the Northern Refugee Centre on their befriending scheme in Sheffield.

I arrived in Colombo on the 12th of August and have now been here for over a month, although it feels as if I arrived yesterday as the time has flown by. Jane conducted a comprehensively thorough handover of Shining Life's projects in Sri Lanka and a 'how to' guide to living and socialising in Colombo which made settling into life in Sri Lanka that little bit easier. I have already established relations with all of our partners, begun researching and developing new projects and been given an in-depth lesson on the Sinhala name for colours by children from the Thalakiriyagama Children's Club.

I have been thoroughly impressed by the past and current work that SLCT does and is doing in Sri Lanka and feel that our community based and often innovative projects make a significant and sustainable impact to children and the wider community. I hope that while I am here I can uphold the high standards that Jane and our local partners have set and perhaps (hopefully!) leave my own mark on SLCT's work in Sri Lanka.

Thank you for your continuing support of SLCT and I hope to see you in Sri Lanka at some point!

John