

Colombo
December 2009



Dear Friends,

Firstly I would like to thank you all for your continued support of SLCT here in Sri Lanka. I am fortunate enough to see the results of your kind donations first hand and would like to pass on the thanks from our beneficiaries directly.

I arrived in Sri Lanka only three months ago now, and although it's only been a short time I really do feel quite at home here. Sri Lanka is such a fantastic place to be, it's a beautiful island where people have been nothing but welcoming and hospitable and although I was somewhat plunged into my work with SLCT, it's been tremendously rewarding already.

So far I've been heavily involved in developing our new project in Galewala. This has been tough, discerning exactly what is within our capacity and what is right for the community has been a lengthy process and is not over yet. Nevertheless I am confident that by the new year we will have an excellent project running smoothly.

I've also spent some time with our project in Kalpitiya, whilst it is always an effort to drag myself up country on some rather rural and rickety buses, I'm always glad when I get there. The landscape in Kalpitiya is strikingly different to the rest of the country; flat and dry, littered with kadjun huts and palm trees, quiet and desolate, and the communities there also rather distinct, being muslim and often conservative. The project here is coming to an end, so I've had the great fortune to see the good results of a well-planned and implemented SLCT project. Here we've been working with women and microfinance, and not only have the loans been successful, but the women have grown in confidence and independence. They've really taken on the challenge to impact change in their community, just yesterday we were discussing the new preschool teacher they found to restart a preschool which had been obsolete for months. Furthermore they have great aspirations for the future, including plans to invite the president's wife to a local forum.

I have also been fortunate to visit the tea plantations in Rikillagaskada. This is undoubtedly one of our most challenging projects; not only are operations difficult due to the unique plantation communities, laws and attitudes but it is also challenging for me because of the lack of English spoken here and the seven hour journey it takes to get there! Still, it is already one of my favourite projects, there is an amazing community atmosphere both within HWF, our partner organisation, and on the estate. I always feel welcome up there, and my Sinhala has improved no end.

So, all in all, I feel incredibly lucky to have had this opportunity to work for SLCT; the work is both inspiring and rewarding. Again I would like to thank all of our supporters for their continued help. If you would like any more information from the field, or would even like to visit us here, please do contact me, I'd be glad to help.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Jane