

News from the field
May, 2008



Our work in Sri Lanka continues to develop at a good pace. Currently, we have projects where our involvement is coming to an end, and I am supporting the communities in ensuring the sustainability of the work completed so far, and I am also working on the development of two new projects.

In **Samarakoon Watta**, the community building, which was opened with a large celebration involving many members of the community, is being utilized well by the community. Many activities for children are being held there and it is also being used by the Mother's Society for their regular meetings. The community are managing it well and are generating an income by hiring the building to other organizations who are providing much needed services to the local community, including health and nutrition sessions for local women and children. The income generated means a salary can be paid to a local woman for managing the building, an important part of the sustainability process, and the community are also pursuing other ways to make use of this community asset.

In **Kalpitiya**, the final building works on the preschool were completed satisfactorily and this preschool is now functioning well with high attendance levels. Many children who attend the preschool and Children's Clubs put on a variety of wonderful performances for the opening ceremony, which was organized very well by the Mother's Society. I am currently working with our partner organisation to gain valuable feedback from the communities here about the project, as well as supporting the moves to sustainability for all aspects of the project.

In **Telwatte**, we have recently completed a full evaluation of the project, which has highlighted the development of the community's capacity over the last three years as well as provided valuable lessons which will inform our future work, as well as the work of our partner NGO and the community as a whole. I recently attended the Sinhalese New Year celebrations which involved games and activities for all members of the community. I participated in a variation of the egg and spoon race by balancing a lime on a spoon held in my mouth, and was quite pleased to come in second place!

I have been spending an increasing amount of time in **Rikillagaskada**, where we are developing a project on the nearby Rahatungoda tea estate. The area is very remote and the communities have already raised many issues that are important to them through various participatory processes. I am working closely with our partner organisation and the communities to look at ways in which we can address these issues and am enjoying spending more time here.

We are also in the early stages of developing a project in **Galewala**. I have visited the area and met with some community members and other local stakeholders. There is a good commitment from all sides to develop a suitable project in this area. There is a large need for additional income generating activities in the area, and there are also issues with health and nutrition which we may be able to help address. Another significant problem in this area are meandering elephants which regularly destroy crops. Various measures have already been put in place to deal with this issue but have not been wholly effective so we will be working closely with the communities and government officials to try to find a way to address this problem successfully.

The next few months look to be an exciting time for SLCT as we continue to see projects move towards a sustainable future, and continue to build relationships with new communities as we develop new projects

Thank you for your continuing support.

Beth Rattigan
SLCT Field Director
May, 2008