

Dear Friend of Shining Life Children's Trust,

I have been here for 10 months already – the time has flown by! It has been a fantastic experience working in Sri Lanka with the communities involved in Shining Life Children's Trust's projects. For this Christmas message to Friends, I have asked community- members in each of the Trust's four projects what they would like to say to you. Here are their words:

Samarakoon Watta

Two mothers tell how this project had helped their children and their families.

'The project has helped to give us knowledge of early childhood development, nutrition and health and since then our families' health and education has improved.'

'The loans have increased self employment activities for my daughter and because of this, their family income has increased too.'

Kalpitiya

A 14-year old member of the Children's Club in Kalpitiya says that,

'In my school I have never participated in any cultural programme but in Shining Life's Children's Club I have been given this opportunity. I have also been able to enjoy reading books borrowed from the Children's Club library and use the sports equipment. The Children's Club in my village has a mixture of Tamil Muslim and Sinhala children which is good for peace in our country.'

Whilst a mother shares the benefits of small-loan schemes,

'Before we could only get loans with a high interest to pay each month but now with Shining Life Children's Trust's micro-credit scheme I have been able to save some money and use the loan for some self-employment. The different health training given has been useful so that my family will have a better future.'

Telwatta

Members of the Women's Society tell us that,

'The project has been a great help in improving and strengthening our household incomes and our children's education. It has given us knowledge that has helped to empower us and with this we feel so much more positive about the future.'

Uplands School

Two female students from this school are excited about having their playground!

'In the past we did not have a playground but soon we will have a playground... I'd like to play netball, volleyball and badminton there.'

'Earlier there was no place for us to play. Now we will have a playground of our own...I look forward to playing netball and elle' (a traditional Sri Lankan game)

The New Year promises to be both busy and exciting, since Shining Life Children's Trust's support of some projects comes to an end, whilst new projects will be taking their first steps. It will be sad to stand back from supporting these projects but in many ways it is just the beginning – Shining Life Children's Trust can be proud that sustainability has been achieved and these projects will continue into the future with full community ownership.

On behalf of the people and communities I work with through Shining Life Children's Trust I would like to thank you very much indeed for all your support over the year, and to wish you a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Helen
Field Director, Shining Life Children's Trust