



## **Field Director Recruitment Pack**

April 2010

UK registered charity no.: 1068123  
Sri Lanka registered charity no.: FL1 4011  
UK company registered no.: 3459486

[www.shininglife.org](http://www.shininglife.org)



## What is Shining Life Children's Trust?

Shining Life Children's Trust is a small charity registered both in the UK and in Sri Lanka. We do not work elsewhere. Private donations from the UK fund small community based projects in Sri Lanka for the direct benefit of disadvantaged children. To deliver such projects SLCT partners with local, grassroots NGOs who carry out implementation. There is one field director, who supports the projects in Sri Lanka, and there are six trustees in the UK, who raise funds and direct the charity.

The aim of Shining Life Children's Trust is to work with disadvantaged children in Sri Lanka. In doing this we hold the following principles central to our work.

### The importance of the community and family

However impoverished that family or community is they are the main support for the child and so we work to improve the situation for the whole community and thereby benefit the children.

### Community participation

all our projects are carefully planned by the communities themselves. We do not have a 'one formula fits all' or an approach that we know best. Instead, our field director will work with all the community – children, mothers, fathers, elderly etc. to help them articulate exactly what they need. In this way we can assure that our resources are being used to their full potential.

### Successful community development requires a multifaceted approach

Helping the community to improve their future is not a simple process. Their evaluation of the problem will always indicate that a wide variety of issues needs to be tackled. Our projects may cover all of the following: nutrition training, pre-school provision, home-based child care service, youth clubs, micro-credit training and schemes, small business skills etc.

### Sustainability

We do not want to create dependence on foreign aid. Therefore we work with each community for a period of approximately 3 years. At the end of the partnership we ensure that they have the skills and have made the necessary local connections to continue on the project's principal components. Also to ensure sustainability we will help the community access local provision of a service if available rather than provide them with the service ourselves. For example, we will help them lobby the local MP for access to proper drainage, medical provision etc.

We are currently working with two projects in Sri Lanka

- the three villages of Meewalapataha, Thalakiriyagama and Ibbankatuwa near Galewala in north central Sri Lanka
- Rahuntagoda tea plantation near Rikillagaskada in the hill country

We aim to start a new project in summer 2010.

It is because of our small size that we are able to adopt the above approach. We feel this is what makes us different from some of the larger charities and so we will ensure that we always maintain this uniqueness. All our Trustees and Field Director in Sri Lanka are volunteers and so we ensure that over 98% of our funds go directly to Sri Lanka. Due to the approach we take the cost of our work is minimal. On average each project costs us just £10,000 a year benefiting a community of between 200 and 400 people.

## Objectives of Shining Life Children's Trust



- To work with local communities in Sri Lanka to help children disadvantaged by war and poverty.
- To provide support to children in a family-centred environment through:
  - supporting mothers' organisations
  - supporting children's clubs for children of school age
  - supporting creches for pre-school children
  - vocational training for mothers
- To support and develop projects that build on the strengths of Shining Life Children's Trust by
  - supporting small, unique and new projects.
  - working across cultures and religions.
  - ensuring that the work we undertake facilitates sustainable development.
  - working in partnership with local organisations by facilitating and coaching local field staff in NGOs.
  - promoting understanding and knowledge of Sri Lanka amongst supporters in the UK.



## A short history of Shining Life Children's Trust

In 1997, Juliet Brown travelled to Sri Lanka to establish a new charity working with the children of Sri Lanka, utilising her community-based experience in the country. The vision was to establish a charity that would be different from the large aid organisations, where the aim was to reach children, families and communities that would otherwise be unable to gain assistance.

Having developed the concept and gained support from the authorities and other aid agencies working in Sri Lanka, Juliet returned to the UK to register a charity and begin building the UK organisation. She set up a board of Trustees and in February 1998 the charity was officially registered as Shining Life Children's Trust.

To oversee Shining Life Children's Trust's work in Sri Lanka we employ a volunteer Field Director. Our first Field Director travelled to Sri Lanka in August 1998. For this position we chose someone who had already worked as a volunteer in Sri Lanka. His knowledge of Sri Lanka soon earned him the respect of others working in the field and he quickly built a network of high-level contacts within government organisations and other aid agencies. Juliet travelled again to Sri Lanka and together they developed a full proposal for how the newly formed charity should work.

### First proposal

In April 1999 the Trustees agreed this proposal. The central concept to the proposal was that Shining Life Children's Trust should always be working to ensure sustainability rather than dependency. To this end it was planned that we should work on a series of projects, each project would be run in partnership with a local Sri Lankan organisation for a three-year period. The three-year time period would enable us to provide funding and professional input to help the local organisation and the community develop skills and carry on the project work without international support after three years. Also crucial to ensuring sustainability would be the involvement of community members in all aspects of the project from planning what would most benefit them in their everyday lives to evaluating the success of the project. Poverty has multiple causes and results in a wide range of problems; to this end each project would be multifaceted, working to tackle all areas identified as needing support by the community. Finally the strengths of Shining Life Children's Trust lay in the newness of the organisation and succinctly defined aims. It was therefore agreed that the projects we would support should be new, small and self-contained projects that would not attract funding from larger organisations. These five aspects continue to direct and define the work of Shining Life Children's Trust:

- Partnership working
- Defined period of support
- Community involvement at all stages
- Multifaceted approach
- Small communities

### Past projects

Shining Life Children's Trust has now worked with eight different communities facilitating a wide range of projects. Our first two projects began in 2000.

The first was in Matale, central Sri Lanka, providing home-based child care and nursery education to the pre-school children of a scattered rural community. The partner NGO, Sithuwama, was well established and so we were able to learn from them as well as them from us. The second project was in Moratuwa, a coastal shantytown. Here, the local community wanted to work with teenage mothers and equip them with skills, education and support to build a brighter future.



Following the completion of these projects Shining Life Children's Trust moved on to identify two more communities that we could assist. Our third project was again in Moratuwa working with a shantytown community to improve child nutrition, living conditions and earning potential of the community members. The fourth was in Kalpityia, North West Sri Lanka, working with several, mainly Muslim, villages to provide pre- school education and micro-lending schemes.

Shining Life Children's Trust's then Field Director, Raja Dasgupta, was working well with our partners in assisting these communities to improve their lives when disaster struck on December 26th 2004. The Tsunami, as has been well documented, had a devastating impact on many communities within Sri Lanka and as a result created even more need for the type of work Shining Life Children's Trust undertakes. Raja fulfilled a very valuable role immediately after the Tsunami in facilitating aid distribution and then identified a particular fishing community in Telwatta that really needed our help. For the first time Shining Life Children's Trust grew to support three communities simultaneously.

Telewatta was unique because it involved direct aid to the community (in the form of furniture, school equipment etc. to help with their immediate needs post- tsunami) as well as longer term development to ensure they fully build a new future. This approach appears to be unique amongst aid agencies working with Tsunami devastated communities.

We worked with another community in the central highlands area home to many tea plantations. Working with a team of teachers from the local school we helped them to construct a community play area.

### **Current projects**

We currently have two projects, both of which are in their main phases – one working with the Hanguranketha Women's Foundation in Rikillagaskada on the Rahuntagoda tea plantation and the other in three villages of Meewalapataha, Thalakiriyagama and Ibbankatuwa near Galewala in north central Sri Lanka. Both projects have been tailor made to meet the needs of each community. The Rahuntagoda project is complex as there are many different stakeholders on the tea plantation.

### **How the Trust operates**

Over the 12 years that Shining Life Children's Trust has been operating, seven Field Directors have worked for the Trust, each bringing their unique skills to the organisation and helping to develop and nurture our projects with a diverse range of Sri Lankan communities. Statistical evidence demonstrates the extent of the difference the Trust has made.

As is evident Shining Life Children's Trust is continually developing. Back in the UK, the Trust is run by a dedicated group of six Trustees. The purpose of the Trustees is to ensure good financial management and legal governance; raise funds; communicate with donors; monitor the projects; and support the Field Director. The small size and uniqueness of the Trust means that those who support our work feel personally involved.

### **Looking to the future**

Looking to the future we will continue to identify and partner with vulnerable communities with whom Shining Life Children's Trust can undertake valuable work. However, we do not want to lose sight of the many benefits of being a small organisation; our intention is therefore to continue to undertake comprehensive projects with just a few communities at any one time.

2010/11 is an exciting time for the Trust as we aim to start working on a new project in Kandy. The new Field Director will have a pivotal role in establishing this new project as well as ensuring the continued success of our existing projects..



## Working for a small charity

Shining Life Children's Trust is a small charity. Working for a small organisation provides a Field Director with an exciting opportunity and unique professional development. It brings many advantages over working for a larger organisation but we also recognise that the role of Field Director presents professional and personal challenges. We hope that this is a challenge you will feel able to accept; however it is important to consider the following points.

### The advantages

- *Focused* – The Trust works solely for children in Sri Lanka.
- *Influential position* – The Field Director has a great deal of influence on how the Trust develops.
- *Unique holistic opportunity* – A rare opportunity to be responsible for every part of the organisation's field work, from project initiation, financial management, running community workshops, working with government officials etc.
- *Learning organisation* – Shining Life Children's Trust is now 12 years old but we continue to evolve and learn from the communities and partners with whom we work and our Field Directors who are leading the work.
- *Flexibility* – The Trust can respond to challenges identified during the course of a project and adapt to new ideas very quickly.
- *Personal achievement* – Being solely responsible for the development of the Trust in Sri Lanka gives a strong sense of achievement.
- *Very small administrative overheads* – UK management is run on an entirely voluntary basis enabling almost all of the money earned to go directly to helping develop the projects in Sri Lanka.
- *Dedicated supporters* – Our donors feel personally committed and involved with the Trust's work.

### The challenges

- *Independence* – The Field Director works independently and needs to be a self-starter and self-motivated. We do not have a large network of employees; you will need to form networks in Sri Lanka for social support.
- *Hard work* – this is not a 9–5 job; overseeing all the activities of the projects mean unpredictable working hours.
- *Limited resources* – The Trust has an annual turnover of about £25 000. This goes a long way in Sri Lanka and will support several robust projects; however, we do not have the assets at our disposal of the larger organisations.
- *Personal reputation* – We do not have the instant name recognition of larger organisations such as Oxfam, but we are recognised locally where we are working or have worked. Our reputation is built by the hard work and knowledge of our Field Directors.
- *Bureaucracy* – resilience, patience and resourcefulness are needed when dealing with bureaucracy.



## Field Director – Job Description

### Project development and management

- Work with existing partner organisations in the development of their projects to ensure maximum achievement.
- Maintain the relationship and regular communication with partner organisations, visit regularly and hold monthly monitoring meetings to assess progress.
- Work with partner organisations to ascertain their training requirements and additional support needed from Shining Life Children's Trust. To provide, or facilitate the provision, of this support.
- Identify opportunities for working with other organisations in order to develop partner organisations' skills.
- Ensure that partner organisations' aims and work stay in agreement with the objectives of Shining Life Children's Trust.
- Work with the partner organisations to ensure the views and wishes of all community members are paramount at all times from the formulation of ideas through delivery and evaluation.
- Ensure that monitoring reports are submitted and hence that project objectives are delivered.
- Ensure that the projects are well managed financially, e.g. full management of budgets, tracking and project returns.
- Guide partner organisations to ensure that their projects and the benefits are sustainable once the term of the partnership with Shining Life Children's Trust is completed.
- Identify potential future partner organisations that meet the objectives of Shining Life Children's Trust and assess applications from potential partner organisations and make recommendations to the Trustees.
- Nurture and build new partnerships to develop robust project proposals.
- Work with new partner organisations to ensure that objectives of proposals are met.
- Develop the work of Shining Life Children's Trust to ensure resources are best employed to meet the needs of children in Sri Lanka disadvantaged by war and poverty.

### Development of the Sri Lankan office

- Manage the office and apartment so that it is adequately furnished and equipped.
- Link with the landlord to ensure his obligations are met and our rent is paid on time.
- Ensure that the official documentation that the Trust and the Field Director requires to operate in Sri Lanka is kept up to date, including ensuring that adequate back-ups are made of data.
- Exploit potential Sri Lankan funding sources e.g. British High Commission in Sri Lanka.
- Manage and build knowledge base of other organisations working in Sri Lanka.

### Liaison with Sri Lankan Government organisations

- Ensure that all documentation that is required by organisations such as the NGO Secretariat are submitted in a timely manner.
- Assist in acquiring the visa for the following Field Director.



## Networking

- Develop and maintain appropriate contacts with aid agencies, government departments and other organisations.
- Represent the Trust on inter-organisation committees as invited.
- Promote the work of the Trust in Sri Lanka.

## Communication with the UK

- Communicate regularly with the Trustees in the UK by e-mail and telephone.
- Produce field reports for the Trustees' meetings, which are held every six weeks.
- Send copies of documentation that is submitted to organisations such as the NGO Secretariat to the UK
- Keep up-to-date accounts of expenditure and submit monthly to the Trust's Treasurer in the UK.
- Contribute to the Friends' newsletter and provide financial analysis, photographs and other information to facilitate fundraising in the UK.
- Host Trustees and other Trust visitors to Sri Lanka.
- Keep a record of meetings held and contacts made to ensure a smooth transition to the following Field Director.
- Contribute to the Shining Life website.

## Additional Duties

- Undertake any further duties in line with the role and responsibilities of Field Director.

## Personal Specification



	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
<b>Personal Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-starter, an ability to work independently</li> <li>• Self motivated</li> <li>• Self confident</li> <li>• Innovative and resourceful</li> <li>• Enthusiastic</li> <li>• Organised</li> <li>• Articulate</li> <li>• Culturally sensitive</li> </ul>	
<b>Skills and Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem solving skills</li> <li>• Decision making skills</li> <li>• Financial awareness and budget management experience</li> <li>• High Level interpersonal skills – ability to communicate with people of all levels and backgrounds</li> <li>• Business planning skills</li> <li>• Well versed in techniques of participatory decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aptitude for languages</li> <li>• Knowledge of Sri Lanka</li> </ul>
<b>Qualifications and Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educated to degree level or equivalent</li> <li>• Qualification in International Development or similar</li> <li>• Previous overseas experience</li> <li>• Awareness of current issues in International Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous management experience</li> </ul>



## Benefits

### Accommodation

A two-bedroom flat is provided that serves as both accommodation and an office.

### Living Allowance

All living and work-related expenses i.e. accommodation, food, travel are met by the Trust. This is organised by paying a living allowance to the Field Director who keeps accurate expenses and the allowance is adjusted as appropriate.

### Personal Allowance

A personal allowance of £100 per month is paid. This is more than the average Sri Lankan salary. It does not allow for an opulent ex-pat life style but should cover all holidays etc.

### Flight

A return flight to Sri Lanka is provided for each 12-month period of the posting. This allows the Field Director to return to the UK for a break at the end of the first 12 months.<sup>9</sup>

### Insurance

Comprehensive travel and medical insurance is provided.

### Holiday

The Field Director receives 20 days paid holiday each year and other leave eg sick leave, compassionate leave, in discussion with the UK Trustees. In addition to this, Sri Lanka has a large amount of public holidays each year.