

Life Lines

Autumn 2023



Looking to the future – a new way of working for Shining Life

We want to share some exciting news with you about how Shining Life Children's Trust is continuing to evolve to ensure we are always promoting sustainability within our communities.

Before the pandemic Sri Lanka was becoming an increasingly prosperous country. Whilst there was still a big divide between rich and poor, Colombo, in particular, was becoming more affluent. We therefore focussed on developing our partner organisations' skills to raise support and funding from within Sri Lanka. We began to hope that soon the international support of Shining Life may not be needed.

The success of this approach was demonstrated through the pandemic and the turbulent times that have followed. We are extremely proud that the women in Telwatte, when faced with a ban on international tourists travelling to Sri Lanka, took from the training we had given them and gained additional contracts for their batik and tote bags with internal companies. And all our communities have been relatively stable in comparison to other areas, as a result of their focus on diversifying their income and networking with other agencies.

However, sadly Sri Lanka is still struggling to recover from the pandemic, and the international support of Shining Life Children's Trust is still very much needed. But we definitely don't want to lose the progress we had made in supporting our partners to become more independent.

So, aided by technology, we have decided to work more at arms length. We no longer have a Field Director in Sri Lanka, handholding our partners. Instead, we regularly catch up with our partners by phone to agree priorities, problem solve and learn of their progress. We have even visited the communities on Microsoft Teams!



Thank you

Thank you very much for your ongoing support of Shining Life Children's Trust. The great stories we are able to share with you in this newsletter, have happened because of your donations. We especially want to say thank you to our anonymous donors, who regularly give very generously. Sadly we are not able to thank you personally, but your donations really are transforming lives. Thank you very, very much.

Christmas cards

Our Christmas cards will be available to buy from 1 November. Please do take a look at these, either on our website, or through the leaflet we will send out. At £4 a pack, we have kept the price the same as we have had for the last 10 years! Over 50% of this goes directly to our communities—a far higher percentage than any charity cards you buy in the shops.



Spotlight on Medawichchiya



The first weekend in September was one to be celebrated in Medawichchiya.

With schools closed for over a year during the pandemic, the education of the village's children really suffered. A lack of internet and mobile phones meant they could not access on-line learning. Supporting the children has therefore been a key focus of Shining Life's work (with our partner HDF) in this area.

The tutors we were able to provide were a lifeline for them and all classes are always well attended. There is a definite thirst for knowledge. With the return



of normal schooling, new challenges have arisen – petrol prices have led to increased bus fares, schools require pupils to buy their own stationery and textbooks, school meals need to be provided.

The community's commitment to education shines through, but the increased cost burden is causing difficulties. So, in addition to the local tutoring sessions, Shining Life has provided each student with the books and stationery they need. We are also working with the women's societies we established and the Temple to make sure the children regularly have subsidised nutritious meals.

This is all going to make such a difference to the young people.

So why was the first weekend of September one to be celebrated? This was book distribution day. We had planned for 275 children to receive the parcels—in the end we distributed 320. The school teachers are already reporting the difference it has made to motivation and attendance.

The faces of the children in these photos say it all.

Thank you for facilitating this.



How to donate to Shining Life Children's Trust

Regular donations

Regular donations help us to plan our work in Sri Lanka better. If you would like to donate regularly, please set up a standing order. You will need to give your bank these details:

Account name: Shining Life Children's Trust, Sort Code: 40-52-40 (CAF Bank), Account Number: 00016399.

If you set up a standing order, please tell us through admin@shininglife.org or write to us.

By credit card

You can donate by credit card through the Charities Trust website. Please go to our website (www.shininglife.org/support.html) for links.

By cheque

Please send your donation to Shining Life Children's Trust at:
1 Chestnut Lane, Amersham, Bucks HP6 6EN.

