

## **ChairPerson's Review**

The Manitha Neyam Trust (the "Trust") has been in existence for over 15 years and with the help and support from donors and well-wishers, we have been able to sustain organisational development and provide financial assistance to alleviate the suffering of the disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our society in North-East Sri Lanka.

Although the civil strife is over, the political stalemate continues and the vulnerable members of our society, especially the youth continue to be neglected. The impact of three decades of strife has left the society with scars that are reflected in patterns of behaviors that are worryingly self-destructive. The Trust has therefore decided to refocus its initiatives to (i) promote self-sustainability (ii) help enrich moral and cultural values and (iii) support programs of work focused on education, employment and health. In pursuing its objectives, the Trust will continue to work with local organisations and charities involved in the above initiatives. In considering and determining initiatives, the Trust will continue to evaluate strategically the needs of the people of our communities, so as to formulate mid to long term sustainable solutions.

As ever, you the donors and supporters of the Trust retain a significant role in helping us in this endeavor. We have an opportunity to coordinate and energize initiatives to rebuild the social and economic infrastructure of the region. Such initiatives do not necessarily need scale, but merely effort to overcome the inertia that exists in segments of our society. We need to be careful not to be overcome by complacency as the needs of the people of the region remain as compelling as ever.

The Trustees thank you for your continued support and shall look forward to working with you in delivering the objectives of the Trust. We wish you, your family and friends a happy, healthy and successful year.

**Mrs. A. Kailasapillai**

**Chairperson**

## **Our Vision & Mission**

### **Our Vision**

Ignite universal passion and love for humanity that will steer current and future generations towards a world of peace, opportunity and happiness.

### **Our Mission**

Recreate a future of love, opportunity and happiness for all those who have suffered and continue to suffer, directly or indirectly, as a consequence of manmade and natural disasters. We plan to achieve this by:

Raising awareness of the hardships and suffering that is largely ignored, forgotten or unknown;

Helping to establish a framework of arrangements to promote self-sufficiency;

Focusing on educational, vocational and health-care programs aimed at promoting, re-orientation or re-positioning; and

To improve individual lives and allow them to better their community through positive contribution.

### **Objectives**

To render charitable and social service to the needy.

To render educational services and related assistance to needy students to fulfill their potential.

To provide focused and targeted educational, vocational and health-care programs based on situation specific analysis and available funding.

To help re-orient and re-position needy and disabled persons to lead normal lives as far as possible.

## **Our Manifesto**

The three pillars which continue to make up our manifesto are informed by three social realities; (i) the ongoing needs of Sri Lankans, (ii) an issue which is made more acute as a consequence of the denial amongst many of the continued need to provide and to support, and (iii) the continuing economic uncertainty and lack of focus and prioritization towards the needy.

Drawing from each of these realities, we have identified our core DNA, the two things which form the basis of every decision we make and every action we take.

## **Honesty**

At the heart of all our efforts is a deep respect, gratitude and admiration for our donors and supporters. In everything we do, we will exercise active transparency and exhibit unequivocal honesty throughout.

## **Impact**

We will maximise the impact of every iota of effort from our volunteers and every dollar from our donors. At every single juncture, the Trust will assess and reassess our process and progress to ensure that the Trust is achieving the greatest impact.

### **Sivapoomi School – Jaffna:**

Established in 2004, the Sivapoomi School (the “Jaffna School”) for differently abled children including those affected by autism and down-syndrome in the Jaffna district continues to provide admirable services in caring for these children.

The Jaffna School currently cares for 250 children; ages ranging from 4 to 25 years. During the last 9 months, Jaffna School has received a further 10 new students.

Admission practices continue to be based on a referral system either via a Medical Doctor from any of the Government hospital in the region or from the respective school principal in which the student was already pursuing his/her education. Disciplined and empowering services are delivered by 22 committed teachers.

The Trust as the main sponsor with LKR 0.2m per month, takes care of the daily lunch expenses and the cost of transport services for these children.

Continuous coaching from the teachers and the enthusiasm of these children have enabled 2 students to win Gold medals at the Northern Province Regional sports event organized by the Ministry of Social services. The real challenge for the teachers is the committed journey for the transformation of these students! Such a transformation requires much more than physical infrastructures; passion, devotion, social commitment and patience are the key prerequisites for the teachers who work tirelessly to overcome the challenges in creating a future for the children.

#### Highlights:

*During the early stage, students enter the Jaffna School weeping, remain isolated, hesitating for new connections, remain highly de-motivated, expressing no interests in any activities; however, within a short time span, commendable change in their attitude and behavior can be witnessed.*

*In an environment of individual attention and tailor-made activities, children are motivated to adapt to a new journey and become enthusiastic and independent in participating in daily tasks including morning prayers, meditation, physical exercises, teaching sessions and aesthetics / story telling sessions.*

In addition, a camphor machine was sponsored by the Trust in 2015 for the provision of vocational training in the production of camphor.

### **Sivapoomi School – Kilinochchi:**

Kilinochchi, is one of areas most affected during the last phase of the civil war, with large number of families under the poverty line and an equally large number of differently abled children. Sivapoomi School in Kilinochchi (the “Kilinochchi School”) for the differently abled children was established in 2016.

With 42 children currently, ages ranging from 4 to 20 years, the children are assisted by 4 teachers. In comparison to the Sivapoomi School in Jaffna, all the students admitted to the Kilinochchi School are from the families below the poverty line. Given its recent history and start-up, to date, the Kilinochchi School is equipped with a minimum of infrastructure facilities. Unlike the children in the Jaffna School, the severity of the needs among the children is high. The role of the 4 teachers remain extremely challenging in the handling the children due to the complexity of the needs and, in most cases, the lack of co-operation by the parents.

The Trust supports the school with LKR 50k per month contribution to ensure that all the children receive a healthy lunch.

Despite challenges with the severe needs of the children, infrastructure and funding, the commitment of both teachers and children is without question; as illustrated for instance by the child awarded with a Gold medal at the recently held Northern Province Regional sports event organized by the Ministry of Social services.

### **Sivapoomi Elders Home:**

For the past ten years this home for elders has been fulfilling the special needs and requirements that are unique to senior citizens. The Sivapoomi Elders Home (the “Home”) proudly celebrated 10 years of service to the elders who are in need of love and care. The Home currently shelters 71 elders; this includes 16 new admissions.

Decades of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka resulted in displacement, with many losing their family members, thereby resulting in elders being left alone in the absence of family caretakers. In total around 381 elders are being cared for in 5 elders’ homes in the Jaffna district. Sivapoomi home is highly regarded for its standards of maintenance and care.

The primary criteria for the admission to the Home is those who are left alone without any family members residing with them for care. The Home also takes care of the final rituals of any deceased elders, if no family members are available to support.

Currently the Trust supports these elders at the Home with LKR 200k per month for meals.

### **Ratmalana Hindu College and Sakthi Illam:**

The Ratmalana Hindu College Hostel for boys was established in 1999 and the Shakthi Illam, a home for girls was established in 2002. Children affected by the civil strife, tsunami, floods and poverty amongst other causes from all over Sri Lanka totaling 103 as at 31 March 2017, 122 as at 31 March 2016 in number enjoy a homely environment at these homes. These homes aim to promote a family environment, for example through celebration of the children's birthdays. The children at these homes also benefit from essential educational and sports facilities together with other recreational facilities including library, computer laboratory and indoor and outdoor play areas. Children are encouraged to attend seminars and are provided with extra coaching and additional top-up classes closer to their public exams as necessary. They also participate in competitions which instill and enhance their leadership skills.

The homes continue to celebrate a number of extraordinary successes particularly in relation to achieving educational excellence despite the children's challenges. Such achievements are a great credit to the individuals concerned, all supporting staff and caretakers and the Trust's donor base.

### **Shakthi Illam**

*Life with dignity is the RIGHT of every child, not a special privilege for the fortunate.*

Recognizing our inherent responsibility to provide adequate care for affected children, empathizing the grievances and struggle of children who are single parented or orphans, the Trust has continued to provide assistance to Shakthi Illam for more than a decade. The sole aim is to help children who lead a life of insecurity and guide them towards a protective future – ultimately to lead a life independently and with dignity.

Shakthi Illam, managed by the All Ceylon Hindu Congress, currently hosts approximately 100 children whose ages range between the age of 5 and 19. Shakthi Illam strongly believes that these children are of infinite value. Hence, the continued support of the Trust, amongst other things, provides essential needs including a protective shelter, healthy meal, clothing, quality education (both school and private coaching) and medication. Further such support also helps to address the children's 'sense of belonging' through counseling, mentoring and nurturing.

### **Sithy Vinayagar -Hindu College Hostel:**

This hostel looked after 50 children as at 31 March 2017 and 5454 children as at 31 March 2016 spanning from school grade 1 to advance level education. The majority of the children at the hostel has lost one or both of their parents or are under the poverty line. These children are paid LKR 2,000 per month to meet their cost of lodging, meals and tuition fee. In order to bring these children's educational and other basic needs to what may pass to be at least an acceptable level, the Trust through the support of its donors provides continuity of support by way of quarterly contributions.

### **SEED – Empowerment Campus: Supporting the education and development of children with special needs:**

Based on the principle of 'community based rehabilitation' through a 'rights based approach', SEED has been supporting the children with special learning needs and /or hearing and speech impairment since 2000. Presently the Empowerment Campus caters for 54. Majority of these children come from families living below the poverty line and are affected by autism, down-syndrome, cerebral palsy and/or hearing or speech Impairment. The age spread of these children ranges from 6 to 18.

Some of the attending children have extreme extraverted behavior and cannot be accommodated in mainstream schools. The objective of SEED is to establish a safe and supportive environment to build the children's confidence, to prepare them for mainstream school, to participate and engage in community activities and employment. Through a personalised training programme, including basic skills in reading, writing, arithmetic, sign language, life skills and physical rehabilitation therapy, these children are empowered to gain confidence, social recognition and to have equal opportunities within the family and society.

SEED practices an integration policy, valuing the national curriculum; the same teaching curriculum is followed in teaching these children. When a child reaches the stage to integrate with the government school system, such students are transferred to one of the mainstream schools under the special needs education curriculum.

Considering the current number of similar children in the Vavuniya district of circa 455, SEED continues to receive requests to serve more children. In order to maintain the national standards on teaching space, the current infrastructure/space would not facilitate the demand.

The empowerment campus is supported by the Trust with an annual funding of LKR 3m in support of the employment cost of 12 teachers and the transportation services for the students between their residence and the school. Such support is essential, especially considering the poor infrastructure in the remote villages where many of these children reside and the economic condition of their families. The committed and infatigable services provided by the 12 teachers remain the key and solid foundation upon which this Empowerment Campus provides such valuable and much needed service to the local society. The monetary support from the Trust is regarded as an essential contribution.

Highlights:

K.R.M. Rinaz who joined the empowerment campus in April 2016 at the age of 13, has progressed with the dedicated coaching provided by the teachers and is now ready to join a Public School.

Ranjithkumar Thakshilan joined in 2014 at the age of 9. At the time of joining the Empowerment Campus, due to the severe nerve disorder problems, he was unable to write. Today he is able to complete a sentence - a truly commendable achievement.

At the Sri Lanka festival of Music, Dance and Speech, organized by the British & international Federation of festivals for Music, Dance & Speech, Manoharan Mayuran was awarded the 'All Island Finalist' award for his participation in an individual western dancing competition. In addition, 6 students were awarded as winners of the 'All Island Finalists' for their group competition in western dancing. Further, at the District level, all these students were awarded with **LAURA SYMONDS TROPHY – UK**, which is regarded with pride - not just by all associated with these students but by the Vavuniya district.

### **Mahadeva Ashram, Kilinochchi (the “Ashram”):**

The Mahadeva Ashram, a long-standing home for children based in Kilinochchi, cares for 327 children (boys – 141 and girls – 186), ranging in age from 5 to 18. The majority of these children are orphans and typically come from desperately challenging and poor living conditions in the Northern Province. For most, receiving one meal a day was not usual previously.

The Ashram strives to address the ‘right to life with dignity’ by providing a protective environment and continues care for the children’s psychological wellbeing, physical needs, educational and cultural facilities alongside a well-balanced spiritual growth of the children.

Most of the children at the Ashram had previously been challenged with domestic violence, exploitation, fear and loss or a combination of some or most of these and more. It would not be untypical for these children to have lost their parents in the war years or to have been forced out from broken families.

In order to maintain credible and transparent process in admitting children, Ashram only accepts children through an official referral system (generally by the Juvenile court, District court or the Probation officials).

The Trust being the main donor for the Ashram, currently grants LKR 4m per annum by way of funding for regular day to day expense support. The assistance from the Trust, whilst by no means being unique, remains a core pillar to ensure maximum care for these children.

#### Highlights:

Jeyabalan Prabudeva, a long-term student of the Ashram obtained 3 A’s and secured the 2<sup>nd</sup> rank at the district level for the Advanced Level examinations held in August 2016. He has just commenced his new journey at the University of Peradeniya recently.

*“I had to discontinue my studies due to the health condition of my father. Thanks to many respected elders who guided me to join Mahadeva Ashram. Ever since I arrived here, I was fortunate to receive maximum support to continue my education. It was the constant guidance, encouragement and care of the Ashram staff which enabled me to obtain this good result” – J. Prabudeva*

Kaneshalingham Jeyavithushan, who has been residing in the Ashram since 2006 also gained good results at the Advanced Level examinations held in August 2016 and has commenced his undergraduate degree at the University of Jaffna.

More recently 7 children from Mahadeva Ashram who participated at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Sri Lanka National Karate Championship 2017, had won 7 medals including 4 gold medals and 3 silver medals.

The Ashram has made significant strides towards food self-sufficiency in the past five years. Around 500 acres of land is in use for food cultivation, including large fledgling coconut plantation which will begin to yield in coming years.

The Ashram is around 60 per cent self-sufficient in its total food requirements: it is completely self-sufficient in its rice, fruit and dairy needs; 60 per cent in vegetables; and 50 per cent in pulses and nuts. Seasonal surpluses in rice is sold to market, as will coconuts as yields increase in near future.

Although the Ashram can increase and diversify cultivation further, the most significant barrier is not a shortage of land but the suitability of specific crops to local growing conditions and a limited workforce. Some produce is also demanded year-round by the Ashram, even outside of the local growing season. This makes it difficult for the Ashram to become completely self-sufficient.

The Trust has continued to work with the Ashram in promoting its further self-sufficiency ambition. Following a review of a detailed proposal, the Trust contributed LKR 2.2m during the year to 31 March 2017 in respect of the Ashram's Cashew plantation and LKR 2.7m in respect of the Coconut plantation. The Trust's support of the Cow project remains strong with the Ashram boasting 56 yielding cows at present.

#### **Pre-School education, Thanneerootru, Mullaitheevu:**

Early childhood development education, commonly known as Pre-school education remains a core foundation for a strong lifelong learning process. This plays a vital role in engineering each child's sustainable growth and survival in the society. The prolonged war in the region has severely affected the education system including the Pre-school education system in the District.

In the post-war context, experiences of a lack of sufficient protection mechanism for children aged from 1 to 5, very low attention on health, nutrition, and mental development, high volume of traumatized / psychologically affected children and adults and lack of trained pre-school teachers are regularly evidenced. In addition, the district continues to be affected by high poverty levels. As per the latest statistics released by the Census and Statistics Department, the Mullaitheevu district has been identified with the highest poverty rate in the Island.

With all the above-mentioned challenges, the Trust has continued to work with the Sai Centre, Thanneerootru in undertaking a very important place in addressing the early childhood education in the district by running five Pre-Schools in different villages; mainly those villages with poor infrastructure conditions and with a high number of families below the poverty line. In total 167 children, aged from 3 to 5 are being served by these schools. Even though the admission process remains independent from

the Provincial authorities, all 5 pre-schools follow the standard curriculum and are monitored by the Provincial Department of Education.

The Trust supports all these pre-schools through the provision of uniform to the teachers and children, daily nutritional meal and educational items. In addition, it contributes LKR 5,500 per month for the salary of each teacher.

Each of the ten teachers at these Pre-Schools aim to take care of the health, nutrition, cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development of the attending children. Considering the extreme economical vulnerability and social conditions of the families and the low standard of salary scale maintained by the Education Ministry of the Province, the package of assistance offered by the Trust undoubtedly remains critical in ensuring the continued welfare of this society which is in much need of support. In addition, such assistance also eases the financial burden and emotional burden on parents of these children.

Through various activities aimed on spiritual enhancement, one of the underlying principles of all these five schools is a 'value based education' and 'equality'. This approach makes these Pre-Schools stand alone from the other pre-schools in the district. The devoted services rendered by all ten teachers remain highly commendable.

Children are provided with opportunities to present their aesthetic talents during different events organized by the Sai Centre. In addition, sports and cultural events are organized involving both the children and their parents, allowing space for the parents to be part of the community empowerment.

For the parents of the children attending the Pre-Schools, the services provided by the Trust remains an essential support mechanism since most of them are below the poverty line. A majority of these children are from single parent families and without sufficient support from the extended family. For many parents, it is a struggle to provide a meal a day to their children. As such it is considered to be a blessing to receive a healthy meal for the children on a consistent basis.

### **Annai Illam, Mannar:**

Annai Illam is another well-known home, taking care of 30 underprivileged female children in the Mannar district with children's ages ranging from 9 and 18. Apart from caring for these in-house children, with the sponsorship of the Trust, Annai Illam supports the education of children who are impacted by poverty and social disadvantage in the Mannar district. A number of children in Mannar and some in Jaffna have been assisted with a monthly sponsorship of LKR 2,000 for their education. These students are between the ages of 10 and 18. In addition, considering that most of these students attend the Siththy Vinayagar School, the Trust also supports the salary of 2 Volunteer teachers and 1 hostel warden with a monthly payment of LKR 8,000 per person.

The Trust also ensures that those selected to the University education continue their education; a total of 8 university students are being supported by the Trust via the Annai Illam with a monthly contribution ranging from LKR 5,000 to LKR 7,000. Beneficiaries include a student pursuing Management studies at the University of Jaffna and a student of the Medical faculty of the Jayawardenapura University.

### **Iniya Valvu Illam, Mullaitheevu (the “Illam”): (Home for Deaf and Blind children)**

*“Kindness is a language that the blind can see and the deaf can hear” - Mark Twain*

According to the Census of Population and Housing (2012), in Sri Lanka 87 per every 1,000 persons aged five and above have either partial or total difficulty in seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care or communication. Amongst the different types of difficulties, the most prevalent difficulty is in seeing. In Sri Lanka, for every 1,000 persons, 54 persons have difficulties in seeing.

Inniya Vazhvu Illam has been serving the children with visual and hearing impairment from Mullaitheevu district since 1997.

After the challenging task of re-constructing the home following the end of the war in the region, Inniya Vazhvu Illam currently shelters 52 children (27 deaf and 25 blind children) with the age range of 5 and 20, ensuring all necessary quality support mechanisms. The main focus of the Illam is on education. Children with visual impairment attend the mainstream school whilst children with hearing difficulties are provided education within the home premises.

The Trust continues to be the main regular donor, assists these children with LKR 0.2 m per month for meals. In addition, it also assists the students who have succeeded for University education. Currently, a student of the Colombo University is being assisted with LKR 4,000 per month.

#### Highlight:

Sinthuja Suntharalingham, who sat for the Advanced Level examination in 2016, has been selected for the University of Jaffna and is due to commence her undergraduate studies in January 2018.

### **Livelihood projects in Jaffna:**

Nearly three decades of violent conflict has led to an increased number of female-headed households mainly in the Northern and the Eastern provinces. As per the recent report of the United Nations, the number of female-headed households is approximately 58,000 in the Northern Province. In the war affected region, female-headed households continue to be identified as a 'disadvantaged group' due to various structural issues. Most commonly expressed need of these families is often linked to livelihood activities for income generation and any other mode of financial assistance.

In this context, an individual Trust donor has supported two female-headed households who are below the poverty line with LKR 74k per family. These two families are from Jaffna and Kilinochchi districts and the assistance was provided to set up a small-scale cattle and poultry farm.

### **Jaffna Jaipur Centre for Disability Rehabilitation:**

Jaffna Jaipur Centre, a long serving center since 1987 caters for those with a need for orthotic devices and who are economically vulnerable and from the Northern region. Typically amputees, the beneficiaries are survivors of the violent conflict in the region. Most of them come from rural areas, often being the main breadwinner. Hence, provision of either prostheses or orthoses is not just aiming to address the respective disability, but enabling them to lead a less dependent life and to give hope for their future.

### **Nurse Assistant Training program:**

The Trust has continued to fund the Nurse Assistant Training program at the Green Memorial Hospital in Manipay in association with the Institute of Medical Sciences for the fourth year since its inception. It has been satisfying to note the additional upgrading of the program to a 3-year Diploma in Nursing course and the increased interest of other local and overseas donors to provide additional funding to sustain the continued implementation of the program. Many of the graduates of the program continue to be employed both locally and nationally especially in the voluntary and private sectors

### **Maintenance of University and Higher Education Students: Jaffna and Batticaloa**

As noted previously, it continues to be the Trust's ambition to support the educational aspirations of enthusiastic youngsters with a desire to be educated to the extent possible. Arguably, such support is more important than ever in the current era. Such ambitions should not be thwarted through such petty reason as poverty or lack of means and awareness. It is more important than ever to ensure that future generations, particularly in the North and North East of Sri Lanka, are adequately educated and are provided with professional and vocational training in order to accelerate and reverse back the 30 or so year educational and developmental neglect suffered by the youngsters in the region.

With such a goal as an objective, the Trust has selected over 55 University and 5 Higher Education students in the reporting year to 31 March 2017, 62 and 21 University and Higher Education students during the years ended 31 March 2016, both from the University of Jaffna and the Eastern University. Each such student was provided with LKR 5,000 per month so as to facilitate their continued university educational needs. For instance, most of these students require a laptop for their education and assignment needs but do not have the means to buy even the most basic of laptops. Without this most basic of tools, they will undoubtedly face difficulties in studying effectively. Disciplines of the studies include Medicine, Engineering, Law, Management and Arts. Following the many requests forwarded to the Trust, a detailed screening is undertaken: which typically reveals the extreme economic, social and physical disadvantage of the applicants. Among the 55 students, a large number of students come from the former war zone areas in the Northern Province, including 7 students who lost their vision during the war era. Performance of these students is monitored annually by obtaining comprehensive information from the students and from the respective Faculty Dean.

As part of the larger support for education, the Trust also assists five boarding students of the Jaffna Hindu College by funding LKR 45k per student per annum. These students are currently pursuing their secondary education.

### **Vocational Training Center: Mannar**

This Vocational Training Center in Mannar (the "Center") seeks to provide the young people of the locality with specific skills so that they could start something on their own, be independent and look after their family. The Center provides training in, amongst other fields: animal husbandry, sewing, fabric painting, farming, and facial care. Every year 25 students are enrolled with the Center and the Trust boasts more than 250 graduates to date. It continues to be heartwarming to see the youngsters who trained at the Center subsequently go out into society and complement their family by contributing financially and enrich both the family unit and society.