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# TOGETHER for (a) LITTLE SMILE 1999 to 2013



## A LONG WAY TO A SMILE

More than a project report:

### 14 years of the “Little Smile Association” in Sri Lanka



### Children are the future

Every tree that we plant is an investment in the future, a gift for the generations that follow. Every tree that we fell without planting a new one is a criminal act against our children, as is the contamination of water, toxic exposure of food and the reckless exploitation of mineral and natural resources.

What we do or don't do today will impact the quality of life of our children – even those not yet born. That is why – for the Little Smile Association, which is especially committed to the interests of children – it is not enough to feed, clothe and protect them. The children's thinking and knowledge is what lays the groundwork for the future.

**Protection of the environment, organic cultivation, tolerance, social behavior, knowledge across the widest variety of fields and an understanding of one's own culture are the fundamental conditions for a real little smile from these children and for the future of the country.**

Through a number of projects and activities, the Little Smile Association is dedicated to helping make the children and grandchildren of Sri Lanka able to live in peace and harmony, with social commitment, in prosperity and in an intact nature.

## Our principles

**The following facts and conditions apply to all activities of the Little Smile Association:**

- **As long as we live, we must learn.**

The quality of education depends on the quality and the knowledge of our leading figures – from monks, priests and, above all, from teachers.

In order to reach as many children as possible, LSA focuses on the training of special teachers who can later provide training and further education for other teachers. It is often precisely the teachers in Sri Lanka who lack the necessary **general knowledge**.

Teaching and learning in one team without fear or coercion. To see learning as a great gift and teaching as a great responsibility – this must become the credo of the school system. In today's world, learning is a lifelong process. Those who stop asking questions will eventually get left behind.



- **We must respect the rights of others** if we want others to respect us. We are human beings, i.e. we have to live together and work together. We need to learn to speak with each other instead of about one another. The golden rule of living together is: do unto others as you would have them do unto you!

- It is good and necessary for the well-being of every person and the community that **we are different**. Only through different abilities can we grow both as individuals and as a nation. Accepting and respecting others, practicing tolerance, are the keys to a life in acceptance, respect and harmony.



Our relationship to nature, the land and our role in society – in short, our understanding of today's world – needs to change. For a Little Smile in the Sri Lanka of tomorrow, all of our projects must fulfill the following principles.

## 1. Relief and the right to a smile

The statutes of the Little Smile Association state that this organization provides aid to children in distress as well as to widows and abandoned women with children.



**Madushika, Malsha and Danuja during the interval of their first school day. But, because the public schools in rural areas are not able to teach things to the children, what they really need later on, the classes in the Children Home Little Smile Mahagedara or other projects of the organization are really important.**

Every child has the right to grow up without fear, hunger and violence.

Every child has the right to smile, play and learn. Unfortunately, in Sri Lanka, many fathers leave their families and the mothers are not able to manage their own lives, let alone carry responsibility for the needs of their children. So it is not surprising that most children receiving care and protection in the Little Smile children's village or at the organization's other facilities are orphans of society, i.e. these children have no one that can or will take care of them.

**Little Smile provides help and relief for children in distress through the following projects:**

LSA – Project	Details in
<b>Little Smile Children's Village Mahagedara</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Home for Boys „Hill Top” Poonagala</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>Home for Girls “ WANIBA” in PALUGAMAM</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>Trainingscentre “ SAHANA NIVASA” in Galle</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Tamil School Koslanda</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Child Development Center in Monoragala</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>St. Ursula in Badulla</b>	<b>H</b>

## 2. Health care and relief for children



Unlike in many other developing countries, hardship and misery is rarely seen publicly in Sri Lanka. Far from the paths of the tourists, and often hidden by the tropical greenery, many people - especially abandoned women and children in great distress - live without safety, love or education – and thus with no opportunity to live a humane life.

The number of illnesses, particularly in children and babies, grows steadily. Many of these diseases appear for the first time within the first two years of life. Instead of providing general protection and prevention of disease through cleanliness, better hygiene, better food, Ayurveda medicine and better care, people turn indiscriminately to pills that are distributed free of charge and in great quantities through hospitals and clinics. It is not unusual for strong antibiotics to be prescribed for the slightest symptom. It is therefore an important investment in the future of society and a gift for every individual to show children how disease can be prevented.

**The Little Smile Association provides medical education, advice, support and treatment through the following projects:**

LSA – Project	Details in
<b>Trainingcentre and Hospital for traditional medicine, Little Smile “Aloka” in Buttala</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Ashraff-Memorial-Hospital in Kalmunai</b>	<b>K</b>
<b>Ayurveda training center, Little Smile Koslanda</b>	<b>A</b>

### 3. Education: Learning and taking over responsibility



On paper, attending school is mandatory and every child has the right to an education. But of course, the reality is different. If they exist at all, qualified and motivated personnel teach only at private facilities, usually with expensive tuition. But at the Little Smile children's village, even the littlest ones can learn in a playful environment.

One big problem in the Sri Lanka of today concerns the "lose of face". For most people, what others think and say is more important than the truth and reality. Day-to-day life is characterized through reaction and not through action. When someone says, "no problem", you can be quite certain that there is a problem; but the first step toward solving it is the awareness that there is a problem. A mistake made once should be chalked up to experience and seen as a great opportunity to learn something from it. The real mistake lies in repeating the mistake, and thus learning nothing.

In order to avoid making any mistakes, many people don't want to accept responsibility. But only by doing nothing can you make no mistakes. So if no one does anything, how can society exist?

The main goal of any upbringing must therefore be to give young people strength, so that they can later accept responsibility and tackle challenges in various fields without fear.

#### Education for educators:

If we may learn from our experience and the experiences of others: Qualified teachers who themselves don't stop learning, who motivate and pass on their experiences with a love for their job and children are an important key to the future in all societies.

Teachers are not untouchable lords who earn a nice income for a few hours of work. Teachers need to see themselves as service providers. Children are not there for the teachers, but the teachers are there to serve the children! They need to remind themselves every minute: **Children are the future and will be making decisions – including for the well-being of the teachers – when they are older.**

Education and continuing education are the focus of the following projects:



LSA – Project	Details in
Training center and Int. Montessori, Galle	E
International Maria-Theresia-College, Kalmunai	D
Training center for herbal medicine, Buttala	I
Culture- and Peace center, Pilane	L
Training center for teachers and students, Koslanda	M
Preschool Sapoomalpedesa , Galle	N

#### 4. Culture: Two great traditions:



Sri Lanka is able to borrow and benefit from two great cultures: **From the Singhalese culture that originates from Buddhism, and from the Tamil culture that is influenced by Hinduism.**

Sri Lanka is a small country and must find a way to maintain its uniqueness based on these two main cultures and other factors as well as by using the knowledge of the modern world opposite its powerful neighbor, India.

By doing so, Sri Lanka will be able to develop its own potential and reduce its dependence on others.

Living together peacefully and learning from each other will be the key to a better future for all the people of Sri Lanka.

**Whether in a Buddhist prayer (above) or through a dance for a Tamil god, children and adults learn about the religions of others at Little Smile. In doing so, the objective is always mutual learning and tolerance, but never “converting”.**



**Care and teaching of the different religions and cultures of the country is a priority for the following projects:**

LSA – Project	Details in
Cultural center Heaven’s Door - Poonagala	O
Up Temple Land – Koslanda	O
Hindu Temple (Kovil) in Dikkipitya	O

## 5. With nature, not against it



**Only those who recognize beauty will grow to love and protect it! Only those who know the significance of nature – precisely for us humans – will regard and respect it! The conservation of nature is an important element of all Little Smile projects. A particular example of this is the over 30 hectare large nature reserve, Little Smile 2.**

It is high time that Sri Lanka acts to conserve its nature and resources. Today, a large part of the population already no longer has access to clean drinking water; forest fires and erosion are destroying the habitats of people and animals. How can we say that we love children if we destroy their future by critically harming and threatening the basis of their existence?

It is a big mistake to believe that protecting the environment means a loss of money. The economic damage that results from the destruction of nature is many times higher than the sum that would be needed for its protection. It doesn't take a fortune teller to recognize: Climate changes and the rise in oil and gas prices will lead to great difficulties worldwide in the future.

Sri Lanka has the unique opportunity to invest early in **alternative energies**, such as water, wind and solar power. There is a good deal of aid money available from industrial countries and the World Bank for such programs.

In addition: If the advancing environmental destruction is not stopped soon, there will be nothing left to offer the growing global influx of tourists, particularly in the field of eco-tourism. And it is precisely this branch of the economy that could have special significance for Sri Lanka, because: The more countries such as India or China sacrifice the beauty of their country to achieve rapid economic growth, the more the (now prosperous) citizens of those countries will later look for, and pay good money for, a place where they can relax in pristine nature. For this reason, **eco-tourism** in particular can play an important role in the future economic development of Sri Lanka, and only if nature conservation is implemented immediately and without compromise.

### **Little Smile nature projects:**

LSA – Project	Details in
<b>Nature reserve Little Smile 2</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Nature reserve Hill Top</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Nature reserve Dikkapitia</b>	<b>P</b>

## 6. Organic agriculture:



Michael Pickel, from a German environmental institute, examines the Little Smile plantations and gives the organization its certificate of environmentally compatible agriculture. But this is the exception for most of Sri Lanka. The majority of farmers in Sri Lanka use chemicals unscrupulously, thus contaminating the groundwater and food. In contrast, organic farming protects not only the environment and the health of consumers, but it is also economically profitable.

How can we maintain that we care for children if we poison their food, their air and their water? Organic farming means that we deal carefully with our health, the health of others and that of the environment. In protecting the environment, it is just as important to integrate the knowledge of past generations as the findings and possibilities offered by modern technologies.

At the same time, farmers can increase their income, since there is great international demand for organic food. It is also very important to enhance the status of agricultural work in society, because only then will enough young people work as farmers to provide the country with healthy food and successfully contribute to the country's exports.

**Little Smile operates the following projects for the organic cultivation of fruit and spices:**

LSA – Project	Details in
<b>Little Smile Children's Village, Koslanda</b>	<b>Q</b>
<b>Heaven's Door, Dome Land, Kotabakmana, Lemasthota</b>	<b>Q</b>
<b>Buttala</b>	<b>Q</b>
<b>Dikkapitya</b>	<b>Q</b>

## 7. General social welfare

The Little Smile Association uses both knowledge and financial means to support various campaigns in the social and cultural setting.

Depending on the different needs, we issue interest-free loans, help with renovation of temples and kovils, and aid hospitals, associations and individuals.



The Little Smile Association has developed special programs for the poor, elderly and handicapped, for widows, and especially for children in distress. The main objective of this aid is to give people strength, so that they can find their own way and not be permanently dependent on the help of others. In addition, many of the cases call for acute emergency care, especially with regard to the elderly and ill.

**A short selection of social projects of the Little Smile Association:**

LSA – Project	Details in
<i>Kovils in Poonagala and Koslanda</i>	<b>R</b>
<i>Buddhist temples in Wellawaya and Ella</i>	<b>R</b>
<i>Singhalese and Tamil schools in Koslanda</i>	<b>R</b>
<i>Hospitals in Koslanda, Monaragala, Kalmunai</i>	<b>R</b>
<i>And many acute emergency aid projects</i>	<b>R</b>