

The Foundation of Goodness

Myles Bax (Ki 2000-2005) tells us of his first-hand experience working with the Foundation of Goodness in Sri Lanka

In 2011, following the completion of my undergraduate degree at the University of St Andrews, I was fortunate enough to gain employment teaching at a Junior College in Singapore on a 15-month contract. As employees at Fettes will undoubtedly recognise, one of the perks of the job was the excellent holidays that were on offer! This coupled with the fact that Singapore is an important transport hub for Asia, meant that I had an abundance of options to explore when the first set of school holidays came around. However, when I realised that I could fly to Sri Lanka cheaply, I formed a plan to see if I could join a Sri Lankan cricket club for a few weeks, and try to improve my cricketing ability...

After a little research, I contacted the Foundation of Goodness who were offering the chance to coach cricket voluntarily with their youth teams. However, I was informed that I could also play with their senior side should I wish to do some voluntary work. The decision was made: I booked my flights to Colombo that evening.

Kushil Gunasekera founded the Foundation of Goodness in response to the devastating tsunami that claimed many lives in Sri Lanka in 2004. The foundation aims to help the Seenigama community rebuild following the destructive event. In the years following the tsunami, Seenigama has flourished, with the foundation supporting a wide array of enterprise and social activities. Of course, a key component of the Seenigama mission is to ensure fantastic cricketing facilities for the local youth. The result of this is a club that brings the village together: Seenigama boasts successful Men's and Women's teams as well as impressive age-group sides. Indeed, whilst I spent time there the Sri Lankan Ladies International opening batsman was training with the Seenigama Ladies team. Numerous members of the Seenigama youth setup were involved with Sri Lankan Regional and International development squads.



The level of the Under-15 side that I was tasked with helping to coach was truly impressive. The truth was that I was made to look very amateurish in the

nets when faced with the array of spin-bowling talent that this junior side possessed! Nevertheless, although I perhaps learned more from the boys than they did from me, I was tasked with helping the team in numerous, perhaps surprising, ways during a special training camp designed to prepare the Seenigama side for an upcoming Sri Lankan national cup competition. It was a privilege to be involved in the camp, given that the head coach was none other than Ravindra Pushpakumara, a former Sri Lankan international fast bowler and member of the victorious Sri Lankan 1996 World Cup Squad. With long-distance running another of my sporting passions, I was asked to devise some fitness sessions for the squad. My other task was to teach dining etiquette (!) given that a number of these youngsters were due to represent Sri Lankan youth teams in matches abroad: the formal nature of cricket lunches during competition was very different to what many of the team would have been used to.



I left Seenigama with fantastic memories. My performances for the senior side perhaps did not threaten the record-books, although the novelty of a Scottish cricketer playing for the village ensured that I received countless invitations for lunches with locals involved with the cricket club. It was heartening to see a foundation being such a unifier and affording such excellent opportunities to the community given the devastation and tragedy wreaked upon the village previously. Keep an eye out for newcomers to the Sri Lankan national side – perhaps their cricketing journey started in a small village called Seenigama: a village that offers fantastic prospects to the locality thanks to the work of the Foundation of Goodness.

Myles Bax (Ki 2000-2005)