

Udumulla Activity and Learning Centre

“The heartbeat of a village”

From a very young age I imagined the restricted prospects faced by brilliant, talented and skillful students purely because they originate from disadvantaged communities which lack facilities and resources, things their privileged counterparts enjoy that have a direct impact on their potential for successful careers.

With that in mind, it was my desire to implement at least the basic facilities required as a good platform to build on for village children and youth to prosper.

Well before the tsunami, the Foundation of Goodness began to meet this need by introducing free English and computer training for children in the village of Seenigama, complimenting other skills development programmes already in place. These programs continued until the fateful day of the tragic tsunami, which destroyed everything we had established.

However, with the waves of worldwide compassion that overpowered the waves of destruction, we were able to not only establish a Centre of Excellence in Seenigama but also introduce an all important *heartbeat project* to create a ‘model rural village’, which augers well for those who originate from poverty-stricken backgrounds.

The heartbeat project is a symbol of hope for Udumulla, an extremely poor village inland from Seenigama. As the first village in the project, it will have an activity and learning centre focused on empowerment designed to become the nerve centre of the village, building the lives of those less privileged, children in particular, and harnessing their skills, talent and abilities.

The community centre includes computer and English training, skills development, organised children’s activities through a Children’s Goodness Club, a library to gain in-depth knowledge, and a basic volunteer cottage for local and foreign volunteers who are willing to help the village community through sharing their expertise.

This ‘heartbeat of a village’ concept could spread to other villages in Sri Lanka to assist in redeveloping rural communities throughout the country. If successful, it could be replicated in other developing nations, thus eradicating global poverty by providing better educational opportunities to improve future well-being and success.

The Foundation of Goodness is very pleased to have facilitated the initial stage of this project to ensure that children and youth can make the most of their inborn talent, despite their less privileged backgrounds.

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