

KUSHIL GUNASEKERA

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Kushil Gunasekera, a results-driven visionary, through pioneering initiatives effects sustainable development in rural Sri Lanka. His integrity, dependability and generosity create hope and trust in both individuals and teams alike. Financially transparent, he relies on his proven entrepreneurial instincts, is persistent, extremely organised and pays meticulous attention to detail in both planning and implementation; he is accommodating and remains flexible in complex situations, keeping the welfare of the humanitarian cause foremost.

Kushil Gunasekera established the Foundation of Goodness in 1999. As a young boy Kushil felt compassion for the people of his ancestral village in Seenigama, who lacked the facilities to realise their potential despite innate talent and ability. Having become a successful businessman, he faithfully returned to his hometown and with true altruism donated his family property in Seenigama to the establishment of the Foundation of Goodness. The Foundation is based on providing a holistic response to a community's needs and works to uplift the lives of rural communities through learning and Empowerment. In May 2008, being the philanthropist he is, he decided to dispose of his lucrative business and dedicate his resources and time to the organisation. He currently donates his time full-time to its furtherance on a purely voluntary basis.

In 2004, the aftermath of the Tsunami provided a forum for Gunasekera's integrity and managerial expertise to be fully utilised. Kushil, who witnessed the devastating event whilst giving scholarships at a ceremony in the village, barely making it to safety himself at the time, mobilized a team to reconstruct and rejuvenate Seenigama. With the tenacity that distinguishes true leaders, he galvanized a community of villagers, volunteers and donors committed to social service. Within a short span of three years Kushil's commitment took a village from near annihilation to vibrant regeneration. Medical, educational, vocational and recreational facilities were provided to over 20,000 inhabitants across 25 villages via 30 sectors, free of cost. The Foundation, whose seeds were sown long before the tsunami, is now expanding its widely extolled holistic model for rural empowerment to other parts of the country.

Kushil has demonstrated selfless service for 25 years and continues to push boundaries systematically, for enriching rural communities. He and the Foundation have received many a tribute and accolade. His success comes from his commitment to the Foundation and never losing sight of its core values—compassion, integrity and goodness. A well-known figure in Sri Lanka he is modest in his claims to personal achievement and is ever grateful for the generosity and compassion shown by donors, volunteers, supporters, businesses and governments across the world. He is respected and trusted by his donors for consistently surpassing their expectations.

Together with friends, volunteers and the villagers themselves the Foundation has grown and just celebrated a decade of successful partnerships and ventures. Through a sequence of extraordinary events and Kushil's foresight, he has expanded the Foundation's mission beyond the boundaries of the Seenigama model. In February 2010 Kushil launched an initiative for a Learning and Empowerment Institute in the war ravaged north of Sri Lanka in a compassionate response to reconcile the differences between the prevalent ethnic groups (details of which can be ascertained at www.unconditionalcompassion.org).

Successful entrepreneur, compassionate relief worker and ambassador for peace and reconciliation, Kushil is dedicated to the humanitarian cause. Inculcating the spirit of goodness in each person or project, he impacts our world by making it a better environment for all.

Key Achievements

- Developed the best holistic rural empowerment model in Sri Lanka to bridge the gap between village and urban life by providing the best services and opportunities for disadvantaged communities.
- Managed the investment of over US\$10 million into rural Sri Lanka
- Established the Foundation of Goodness, a Sri Lankan NGO, in 1999.
- Constructed the MCC Centre of Excellence and associated Sports Academy which started with the donation of the remains of his villa which was used as a Relief Coordinating Secretariat after the Tsunami.
- Established and continued to establish partnerships with internationally acclaimed philanthropic bodies and individuals e.g. USAID, AusAID, KPMG, MCC and Surrey County Cricket Clubs and the Victorian State Government.
- Trustee, **One Laptop per Child - Sri Lanka**
- One of the three Rotarians who toured Jaffna during the time of LTTE control in 1995 at the invitation of the Jaffna Rotary Club.
- Trustee, **Sri Lanka Unites - Sri Lanka**
- Set-up a well-established and rewarding international volunteer program which maximises the participation of participants of all ages, interests and backgrounds.
- Facilitating the construction of over 1,000 homes for Tsunami affected families including 4 housing complexes containing essential modern amenities.
- Masterminding the utilisation of the USAid grant for the reconstruction and upgrading of several remote schools across the Southern Province, Sri Lanka.
- The realisation of numerous entrepreneurial ventures such as a Diving School, Brush Factory, Women's Enterprise and International Sports Academy.
- Mentor of the visionary Children's Goodness Club initiative.
- Arranging the sponsorship for 1000 poverty struck children, mediated through the Rotary in support of the "Sevana Sarana, Foster Parents Programme"- an initiative of former President HE. R. Premadasa.
- President of a scholarship fund for 500 children of diseased soldiers.
- Manager, for almost a decade, of World-Record holding cricketer Muttiah Muralidaran.
- Tournament Secretary for inaugural under-19 Cricket World Cup in Sri Lanka (2000). International Cricket Council (ICC) acknowledged his event management as "outstanding. . . surpassing all expectations. . . and a showcase to the world".
- Secretary of the Governing Body for Cricket in Sri Lanka & Chairman of the Sri Lanka Cricket Board Tour Organising Committee for several years.
- Outstanding professional record in leadership; no. 1 market leader for Nissan vehicle sales in Sri Lanka and the attainment of no.1 supplier of Rice & Sugar.

Principal Awards & Felicitations

- 2009** Discovery Chanel Asia features the Foundation of Goodness as a story of success in a documentary to mark the 5-year anniversary of the tsunami.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzgck7R9ffw
- 2009** [Surviving the Tsunami: Stories of Hope](http://tsunami.trust.org) (<http://tsunami.trust.org>) Red Cross/ Reuters film and associated website documents Kushil's story as part of a 5-year tsunami anniversary feature that charts five people's work to rebuild their communities
- 2009** RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia highlights the Foundation of Goodness as the best post-tsunami developmental project examined to date.
- 2009** Anthony Bourdain's US show applauds the Foundation of Goodness for its unparalleled achievements regarding Tsunami relief, urban empowerment and infra-structure development.
- 2008** Robert Blake (former US Ambassador to Sri Lanka & Maldives and currently the Assistant Secretary for South-East Asia) proudly highlights the Foundation's exemplary management and operation of a rural community model in collaboration with USAID.
- 2008** Mike Brearley (Marylebone Cricket Club President) applauds the sterling work of the MCC Centre of Excellence- and associated sports complex- in rebuilding people's lives.
- 2005** Invited to Buckingham Palace to both advise on emergency relief work and receive a post-tsunami donation from The Royal Household.
- 1993** Received "Ten Outstanding Young Persons (TOYP) Award" from Jaycees International Award for Voluntary Humanitarian Service.

Rotary International Awards (District 3220):

- 2005** The Rotary Centennial Service Award for Professional Excellence.
1991-1993 Best Director, Community Service Award.
1990, 1991 Best Club President Award.

Conferences Attended and Publications

- 2009** Pathways to Reconciliation Summit, Key Note speaker, (Jordan).
Session speaker at the Sri Lanka Unites' "Reconciliation Conference".
- 2008** International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability, Key Note Speaker (Chennai).
- 2006** Commonwealth Games Sports Federation, Session Speaker, (Scotland).
- 2006** USAid, US State Department Visitor Leadership Programme on Disaster Management (Pentagon, USA).

Is invited to be the Guest of Honour at many fund raising charity events overseas.

Gunasekera K & Tennekoon D, et al (2009) Lahiru Guna Ras, (Rays of Goodness)(Sinhala), FoG, Colombo.

Gunasekara K et al (2008) Work Done with the Waves of Compassion, FoG, Colombo.

Gunasekera K, Lowey G et al (2008) The Village Heartbeat, FoG, Colombo.

Gunasekera K (2008) Village in the Wake of a Wave, International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability (IJECESS).

Chaves WV & Gunasekera K (2008) Fostering Compassionate Alliances for the Betterment of Humanity, IJECESS.

Gunasekera K & Patmore L (2007) The Foundation of Goodness, FoG, Colombo.

Broader Concerns and Interests

- ❖ **Devout Buddhist committed to compassion & the art of living demonstrating goodness.**
- ❖ **Accomplished sportsman: 1st Class cricketer & Captain of Hockey at a Premier school.**
- ❖ **Be Good and do good with a heart full of compassion.**