



# THE VILLAGE HEARTBEAT



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**“ With your help we can make this happen. Thank you for making a difference. ”**



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## THE VILLAGE HEARTBEAT



### THE HEART OF THE VILLAGE....

In August 2007 the first **Village Heartbeat** was opened in Udumulla, a small and very poor rural village near Hikkaduwa, Sri Lanka. At the heart of this education and empowerment centre is a library, a computer training centre equipped with desks and ten computers, and a schoolroom to teach English and women's sewing skills. When the classes are over, the centre is used for village clubs and public meetings. Qualified teachers share the passion for learning; overseas volunteers work with them to develop new classes and skills. Programmes are run free of charge and open to all that wish to attend from the village and the immediate surrounding area. The **Village Heartbeat** is providing skill learning opportunities to all who want to participate - and classes are full!



“ Most of the community here live below the poverty line and face a lot of economic problems. In rural areas children have no chance to improve their English and computer skills. The free of charge classes provide a great opportunity for the children and serve our needy community. ”

**Nihal Singappuli**  
English Teacher

### FOUNDATION OF GOODNESS

The **Village Heartbeat** was set up in collaboration with the village and with support and funding from the **Foundation of Goodness**. This charity was established in nearby Seenigama in 1999 to create a sustainable rural community model designed to inspire other regions and empower disadvantaged communities throughout the globe. It strives to empower the less privileged rural communities so that they may have equal opportunities to excel in life.

The work of the **Foundation of Goodness** has already impacted many thousands, giving hope to enrich the future of remote, impoverished communities. It has provided homes, water, electricity and sanitation facilities, pre-school for the under 5s, access to technology and educational opportunities, healthcare, sports facilities and training, women's enterprise and business skills classes and many other individual and community development programs. Like the **Village Heartbeat**, access is to all that want to participate and free of charge to everyone.

As the nerve centre of the village, the **Village Heartbeat** concept works to give members of under privileged rural communities access to skills that will enable them to develop to their full potential. One rural youth from a very remote background, who dreamed of learning about computers, attended and graduated from the computer training classes. He is now working as a computer lecturer at the training centre. This is an excellent example of providing the opportunity that would not otherwise have been available due to lack of proper resources and education.

The activity and community centre provides a wide variety of programmes and facilities to harness skills, talent and abilities, all of which are free of charge.

- English teaching
- Computer training
- Youth and Women's empowerment
- A library
- Children and youth skills development work
- Organised children's activities through a Children's Goodness Club
- Village/environment improvement plans
- Spiritual training to enrich the quality of life
- Volunteer expertise oriented programmes and a volunteer accommodation cottage for local and foreign volunteers



## ENGLISH TEACHING

Many schools in rural Sri Lanka provide only very basic English teaching and most of the children in the Udumulla region were not able to speak or understand English. Despite their enormous potential, this excluded young people from developing the language skills they need to gain fruitful employment in the capital city of Colombo, which conducts most of its business in English. The **Village Heartbeat** English classes supplement the teaching in schools and have enabled the students to make rapid progress.



The classes have been an astonishing success, and are full with almost 150 children as well as some adults attending these lessons each week, and in their own time.

*"The Udumulla Village Heartbeat Centre is an important place for us youngsters. It gives us the opportunities not only to learn new things, but also to expand our knowledge further from the little understanding we have of the English language. We are so happy to have a centre like this".* **Nileesha Dilshadi** (13 years old)



## COMPUTER AND IT TRAINING FACILITY WITH INTERNET ACCESS



With the increasing importance of computer literacy, training is now offered for the community members in this rural area where previously there were no computers. Over 130 children and adults are attending computer lessons on a weekly basis with the opportunity to gain a formal qualification. The computers are also available for individual use when there are no classes.

*"The Heartbeat Centre has had a positive impact on the lives of the villagers here in Udumulla and its surrounding regions. The computer centre in particular is a great place of learning for young and old. It gives us the opportunity to learn vital skills".* **AD Sanjala Saadini**

*"The service offered to us through the English teaching classes and computer training classes is of great benefit for our future. It is a great opportunity and I hope such projects will continue in the future".* **Nethmi Nimasha** (14 years old)



## LIBRARY

There is a library facility in the centre with English and Sinhalese books; daily newspapers are also available. In order to encourage reading and English practice, membership is free and members can borrow books for a week at a time. There are almost 200 members enjoying this facility.

*"The Village Heartbeat Centre is essential to the village community. Not only does it offer English teaching and computer training classes but it also has a library which we can use anytime. What is really great is that we are allowed to borrow books and read them leisurely at home. I hope there will be more learning centres such as these in our country".* **W Ravina Tharangani** (11 years old)

*"In addition to the other classes, there is also a library set up for us which allows us to enhance our reading skills and expand our knowledge. I hope this learning centre will prosper".* **AP Lakshi Prabha** (11 years old)



## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

Women are often the nerve centre of their families and can play a major role in providing sustenance and creating more positive futures for their children and the community. Sewing training provides women with an opportunity to build their confidence whilst expanding their skills and abilities. Classes are full with 50 women attending on a weekly basis.



*"The sewing course offered through the Udumulla Village Heartbeat project is very special and has helped improve the skills of the village women. I hope such work and projects will continue to be introduced in the future".* **MAWA Prasadi**

*"This free of cost class provided for the disadvantaged local community such as us is a blessing and we as a community greatly value it. The fact that you do not need sewing skills in order to participate is an advantage and it gives us the opportunity to learn a new skill so we can make our own clothes".* **T Dilrukshika and R Sirimanna**



**CHILDREN'S GOODNESS CLUBS**

The clubs are designed to promote the art of good citizenship. By participating in a variety of activities, the children learn a range of skills and behaviours such as teamworking and tolerance. The clubs have been received with a great deal of enthusiasm from the members and the children have enjoyed beach cleaning projects, temple cleaning campaigns and an art competition and exhibition.

"The teachers are very good and kind. They teach us how we should live when we grow up and they always say we should think about others and be kind to others. I would like there to be more centres like this". **DLP Wickramartha** (11 years old)



*Nymphaea Stelleta, the national flower of Sri Lanka; The 'Nil Mahanel' flower is considered to be the symbol of truth, purity and discipline.*

....And just one more story. When the **Foundation of Goodness** purchased the land for the first **Village Heartbeat**, the seller used the proceeds to fund the education of two medical students who otherwise could not have gone to college.

With successes like these, the **Foundation of Goodness** plans to replicate the **'heartbeat of a village'** concept - initially to other rural villages in Sri Lanka and then beyond this to other developing nations. Extending the **Village Heartbeat** network will unlock the current restricted potential faced by so many brilliant, talented students and community members in poor regions. Dedicated to continuing to help others to develop to their full potential, despite their less privileged backgrounds, the **Foundation of Goodness** is committed to improving the lives of people in the rural community.

**AND THIS IS WHERE WE NEED YOUR HELP...**

The **Heart of the Village** facility is a simple concept that is quick and easy to replicate in other disadvantaged areas. It costs approximately US\$ 75,000 to set up one **Village Heartbeat** and US\$ 15,000 each year to run it. With your most generous support, together we can ensure a better future for the underprivileged rural communities. We would welcome donations of any size and invite you to be part of this unique rural community model.

**YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE,  
GIVE A RURAL VILLAGE A NEW HEART**

