



Kushil is a man determined to make a difference and the ending of the 26 year civil war between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government in May 2009 has provided an opportunity to replicate the success of Seenigama in post-war Northern Sri Lanka. Although in their infancy, Kushil has already spearheaded programmes at a community level through a series of essential monthly relief programmes.

The North Empowerment Project provides an even bigger challenge than the South, working in areas of high security with community members who have known nothing but distrust, conflict and gun-fire for their entire lives. Despite these obstacles, Kushil's resolute leadership skills are contributing to unifying a country, ensuring those living in poverty throughout Sri Lanka lead a better life.

Born in the rural village of Seenigama, Southern Sri Lanka, Kushil found himself surrounded by youth living in poverty, unable to fulfill their potential. Determined to make a difference Kushil founded the Foundation of Goodness in 1999 - a small grass-roots charity providing livelihood support from the grounds of his ancestral home. Here a tennis court, computer room, English lessons and infrastructure projects were established. Kushil's hard work enjoyed five years of success, his home becoming the heartbeat of the village; however on Boxing Day 2004 a tsunami struck the coastline of Sri Lanka. Over 40,000 people lost their lives that day and destroyed all that Kushil had created.

Having run to higher ground as the waves crashed in Kushil returned to the village to find devastation. Undeterred he used his house which was in a state of ruin as the base for the area's relief work, organised clearing of rubble, provided a maternity clinic and starting the rebuilding. Hundreds of volunteers and organisations flocked from around the world to Seenigama, finding a man leading the initiative to make a difference. It was during the rebuilding work that Kushil saw the potential to recreate his project albeit on a larger scale using international funding; to provide a centre which would significantly improve the lives of people living in poverty in southern Sri Lanka, bridging the gap between the urban and rural communities.

KUSHIL GUNASEKERA

In 2005 Kushil gifted his ancestral home and its grounds to the cause and by 2008 left his lucrative sugar business and dedicated his resources to leading the Foundation of Goodness full time on a purely voluntary basis.

Seven years on from the tsunami, the work that Kushil has carried out is unprecedented, taking a village from near annihilation to vibrant regeneration. Countless donors have put their faith in Kushil and have not been disappointed. The Foundation of Goodness now offers 30 empowerment sectors to 25,000 people from 45 villages, annually, free of charge. These sectors have been specifically designed to help villagers fight poverty through productive activities, including education, children's development, women's empowerment, healthcare, business skills, employment opportunities, environmental management and sports - a sector which has recently produced a female cricketer, a netballer and a swimmer in the National squads.

There have also been countless success stories across all activities the Foundation of Goodness provides. On top of this, Kushil's inspirational leadership with the help of cricketing legend, Muthiah Muralidaran has also instigated the building of 1000 new homes for those affected by the events of 2004.