

Children thrive in families, not orphanages



TransFormaTion of Little Lives

Annual Report 2019



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# A message from our CEO & Founder

Ayubowan!

We hope you and your families are keeping well during these turbulent times. Despite the current challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, we are working harder than ever to ensure all of the children and families which you help us to support are staying safe and healthy.

We are aware that during these desperate times of extreme hardship, loving parents will be forced into making heartbreaking decisions and vulnerable children are at high risk of abandonment into harmful orphanages, where all sense of love and belonging is lost.

In immediate response to the crisis we launched an emergency appeal to help poor families who are unable to work because of the strict curfews, and are trapped between hunger, and the threat of the virus. Children are now at serious risk of malnutrition. To date we have donated over 1000 food parcels which will support families of six for around seven days to ensure they can stay at home together.

Looking back, 2018-19 was a significant stage in our journey to really influence change. We proudly supported over 3000 children and families to enhance health, education and wellbeing, to uplift and empower families, and enabled them to succeed together to achieve sustainable livelihoods, and keep children out of orphanages. This was made possible thanks to the belief and trust of our first major grant funding from The Peter Cundill Foundation , as well as other trusts, foundations, corporate and major donors, and supported by a strong advisory board.

At our launch of the 'Hearts Beat Together' campaign at the House of Commons, we engaged with valuable new partners and donors, and advocated that children belong in families, not orphanages. Since then, in collaboration with a network of global partners we have scaled up alternative family and foster care training in several regions. We are gradually building capacity and support nationwide, which will be taken forward in our strategy over the next few years.

We are very grateful to our staff in Sri Lanka, our dynamic new board of trustees, patrons, advisers, partners, volunteers, ambassadors, fundraisers and our extensive global family of supporters, who make our story possible.

Together we are creating successful solutions for sustainable and positive change and making the lives of vulnerable children in Sri Lanka better, forever.

Loving-kindness



Lynn Stanier MBE FRSA

# Overview of Programmes

In the past year, our programmes have benefitted 3000 institutionalised and disadvantaged children in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka which is 500 more than last year, and we **holistically served disadvantaged communities** in the following ways:

TFT provides school packs annually to **enable education** for institutionalised and poor rural children to **create opportunities and sustainable lives, and reduce child abandonment** for future generations.

TFT International Preschool teaches English and offers Grade B education of excellence at low cost for up to 100 children - bursary places and scholarships are available. **Families are learning from their children** and the preschool offers a safe place for children to learn and play while parents work, which helps **alleviate abandonment**.

TFT works with global organisations to develop relationships and build trust with people of all faiths to create an **inclusive environment and equal opportunity**. We encourage diversity and **promote human rights and dignity for children** in orphanages, especially those differently abled, and advocate for social and cultural change to keep families together.

TFT provides **Alternative Family and Foster Care training** to government childcare services, the national judiciary, Women's Development Centres, faith groups, NGO's and the wider community, to **promote family strengthening, kinship care, and adoption** to **reduce institutionalisation**.

TFT is creating the **first Centre of Excellence** with new minimum standards in a state orphanage for under 5's. We are introducing new systems of family care and routines to provide babies with an early learning development Preschool, as well as resources and teachers to **advance cognitive development** and bring forth successful **reintegration into families and society** in the future.

TFT provides **resources and employment of housemothers, therapists and teachers** and **raises standards of health, wellbeing, care and conditions** in an institution for staff and children under five years, through professional specialist training. This employment has **enabled poor uneducated women to support their own children** through school which helps them to pass exams.

For older children, TFT **provides libraries, classrooms, resources, essential vocational skills training, and empowerment classes** for abused and disadvantaged institutionalised girls, to build confidence and provide life skills for them to thrive independently in the future and lead successful lives.

To belong is a basic human need, and we have continued to advocate and work towards the unknown concept of **Alternative Family and Foster Care** in Sri Lanka since 2010, when our first TFT 'orphan' was reunited with her family.

We were delighted to hear the UN General Assembly and EU Member States selected **'children without parental care'** as the theme for the 'Rights of the Child' resolution for 2019.

The statement from the UK Secretary of State clearly recognised the harm inflicted by orphanages and the importance of ensuring that **all children have the right to grow up with the love and protection of a family.**

Through **education, empowerment, and training**, we are building evidence and capacity to dramatically change lives, in order to end the cruel cycle of poverty for many families and **reduce child abandonment.**

This year, with our first major grant from the Peter Cundill Foundation, and part-funded by trusts, foundations, corporate donors and loyal supporters, we have scaled up our operations to a national level and are **building greater awareness and support** of our work both in the UK and in Sri Lanka, **to ensure the rights of children in institutions, and those disadvantaged through poverty** are met.

We have raised the profile of this little known but vital cause, affecting more than 8m children globally -of which **8 out of 10 have families who are too poor to support them.**

Through the power of knowledge and advocacy, we are breaking down age-old social barriers, and cultural stigmas, to **create new understanding and awareness**, that every child deserves the right to **grow up with an identity, flourish happily in a loving family, and the life-changing opportunity to be able to go to school.**

In the meantime, **we are committed to raising awareness and standards of care to help forgotten children suffering** without love, education or hope behind closed doors.

**" We are eternally grateful for the hard work and dedication of our two TFT staff in the UK and thirty six in Sri Lanka, as well as the continued support of our patrons, advisers, professional volunteers, ambassadors, fundraisers, cyclists, donors, and our loyal supporters." - Simon Jackman (Chair of Trustees)**

**Our work supports the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.**



# Providing education

Thousands of children end up in orphanages as a result of family poverty, most often due to lack of education.

Enabling education helps children to reach their full potential and in the longer term lifts future generations out of poverty, which subsequently reduces child abandonment.



## In the community

2640

Children received school books at TFT Annual Bookgiving Ceremony to enable their education, including 100 children from the Deaf School in Galle.

5000

Children have completed their education with provision of school books received from TFT since 2009 and can now work to support their families which is changing the cruel cycle of poverty.

65

Under-fives benefitted from early learning development, English lessons and musical equipment at TFT International Preschool which celebrated its fourth successful year.

10

Preschool children received free schooling to ensure parents on a low income can work to support their children. We are extremely grateful to Mercury Holidays who are our corporate sponsor for the fourth year.



## Providing education in orphanages

**50** Children under 5 years benefitted from the opening of TFT Ruhunu Orphanage Preschool which provides structure, routine and early development skills training.

**22** TFT Infant Caregivers and Preschool teachers received training in an accredited childcare development programme to improve care, conditions, health and wellbeing for 50 infants. Their employment supported the education of their own children.

**3** Vocational training teachers were employed to teach English, IT, sewing and embroidery to provide skills for 100 disadvantaged Senehasa Girls aged from 8 to 18 years old.

**162** Girls and boys received accreditations in computer skills, art, sewing and embroidery classes in two orphanages.

**9** **Wimbledon High School** pupils volunteered and shared cultural exchange through music, dancing, poetry, confidence building and friendship.

# Transforming the lives of children in orphanages

TFT does not support orphanages but until they are closed for good, we must acknowledge their existence and the need to provide skilled childcare for babies and children to ensure better care and successful reunification and reintegration into society.

By providing vocational skills training to older children in orphanages including abused and disadvantaged girls, we can help build their confidence for more hopeful and successful futures.



**20** Housemothers were expertly trained in 'Raising Standards of Care' to improve quality of care for 80 children and babies. The training focused on the importance of attachment, interaction, stimulation and play.

**29** Caregivers and volunteers from Wimbledon High School were taught baby massage **techniques**. They learnt the importance of massage in healthy child development.

**2** Preschool teachers were employed and **trained** at the new Ruhunu Orphanage Preschool to provide daily quality education.

**50** **Children under five** now have comprehensive care plans, daily routines and benefit from early learning and cognitive development skills in our well-resourced classrooms to enable more successful reintegration into families.

**100** Disadvantaged girls, who are denied education rejected by their families and institutionalised for 'protection', received prayer saris, school uniforms, bags and sanitary aids, as well as music, art and drama classes.

**2** Talented girls received commercial sewing machines and advice to help set up sewing businesses when leaving the institution.



**12** Special needs and differently-abled children benefitted from our physio and speech therapist, who continues to create miracles. They are now running around unaided and fully integrated with the other children.

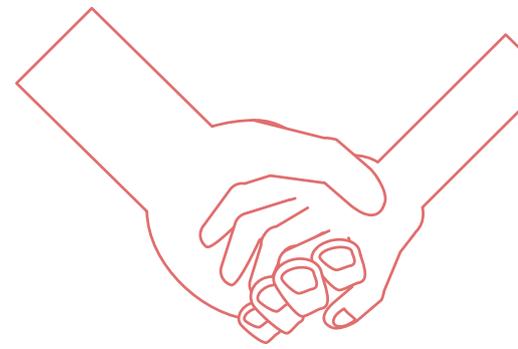
**50** Institutionalised children attended an activity day in Galle with St John's School, Leatherhead who kindly **donated bags of cricket equipment and clothing.**

**100** Disadvantaged and abandoned girls received commercial bakery equipment and resources, donated by Wimbledon High School volunteers who raised funds to provide life skills and vocational training for the girls.

**80** Children in the orphanage next door, benefitted from chewing bread and cake made from the bakery. Chewing helps to develop mouth muscles and improve speech, which is one of the biggest issues we see amongst infants.



# Bringing & keeping families together



TFT is committed to reuniting children who have been abandoned through poverty with their families, and we are working with National Childcare services to identify children in the institution with potential family relationships, then seek out the parent or relative to assess their needs. Where safe and possible we assist with re-adoption through the courts, establish the children in local schools, and provide housing and support until the reunited family can reach self-sufficiency and independence through income generation training. TFT supported and strengthened 25 children in families to prevent abandonment, 13 children have been reunited from orphanages. 100% of our resettled families are still safe at home.



## 24

Mothers of children in orphanages and vulnerable children attended Income generation, financial management and mindfulness training workshops to empower them to learn parenting skills, financial management, positive thinking and other skills like sewing, smocking and embroidery to produce goods which can then be sold.

## 2

Wheelchairs were donated. One to a disabled father in Kandy to enable him to sell lottery tickets at the roadside and keep his family together, and Amari aged 9, who was born with a disease which left her unable to walk. The family is now able to take her outside and to medical appointments which was previously impossible.





2

Alternative Family and Foster Care Heartbeat Centres were opened, one in Colombo and the other in Pinkanda (near Galle). The centres raise awareness, provide support, counselling, information, resources and pro-bono lawyering in Colombo office for women suffering domestic abuse, reunite children in orphanages with their families and help prevent abandonment.

The Centres also provide a base for rehearsals for our Street Drama groups who travel around the country to campaign and engage support and understanding for the new concept of 'Alternative Family and Foster Care'.

10

Women with pending court cases who are escaping abusive relationships, were provided safe temporary mother and baby shelter at The Heartbeat Centre Colombo.



1

Mother Diani and her daughter Halpeni aged ten, are now safely reunited after two long years of agonising separation due to homelessness and poverty. Halpeni was allegedly suffering abuse in the orphanage. The long court case was fought and won by our pro-bono lawyer. TFT have provided housing, employment, and arranged a school place.

3

Mothers were supported through the long court process to enable them to take their child home and were given the tools and skills training to help them to thrive.

# Alternative Family and Foster Care



Belonging is a basic need, and in order to change lives for the many and not just the few, we are committed to providing global alternative family and foster care knowledge and training from grassroots to national level to plant the seeds of cultural and social change.

In June 2018 we launched our “Hearts Beat Together” Campaign at the House of Commons to raise awareness that every child according to the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child, has the right to grow up in a family with love and protection, and not in institutions which are known to be harmful.

## 27

Students from different Law institutes were introduced to "Alternative Family & Foster Care" during our Law Student's Training Workshops, as part of our "Children Belong in Families, not Orphanages" campaign. All unanimously agreed that family care was best.



## Our first landmark Foster care success story

Our pro-bono lawyer Marini De Livera and founder of Sisters at Law was successful in the first landmark foster care court case which was supported and funded by TFT. A baby was abandoned on the doorstep of a family in Colombo. The family cared for the child as if she was their own and gave her a happy and carefree life. After 3 ½ years, the biological mother returned and complained to the police that the Foster Mother had kidnapped her child. The biological mother had no means to support the child, and as the foster family was unrelated, the judge automatically admitted the child to an orphanage. For seven days the child hardly ate or drank and couldn't stop crying and asking for the Foster Mother. The case was challenged under the United Nations Conventions of The Rights of the Child, which enabled the Judge to overturn his decision and place the child with 'Fit Persons' which was the 'foster' family. The child is now safe and happy at home.

**Marini De Livera, former Chairperson of NCPA, and International Woman of Courage award winner, advocates in collaboration with TFT and is developing Alternative Family & Foster Care campaign awareness through street drama, developing foster care focus groups and providing pro-bono lawyering services and support for child abuse victims.**



**60**

Members of the local Pinkanda community, including TFT International Preschool parents, attended the first Alternative Family and Foster Care awareness talk, given by our partner Vasundhra Om Prem, MD from Centre of Excellence Alternative Care India. Members of the audience were asked to raise their hands if they had heard of foster care and not one person did. Vasundhra described how children feel when they are deserted in orphanages and all agreed that every child should be entitled to grow up feeling safe, loved and protected in a family.

**One father asked to give his thanks and gratitude on behalf of all the attendees. He said, 'Thank you for providing us not only with this interesting workshop but a wonderful local international preschool where parents also have the opportunity to learn.'**

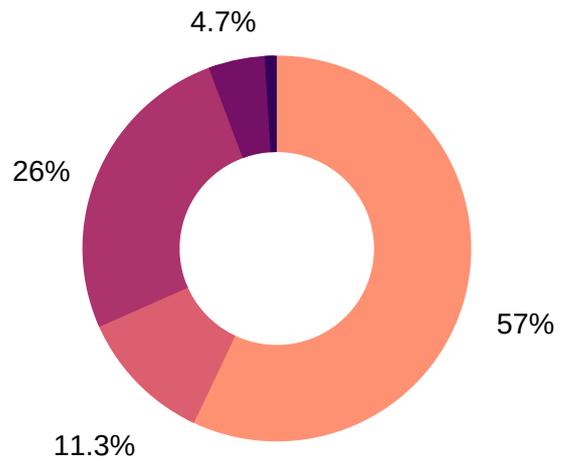


# How we spent our funds

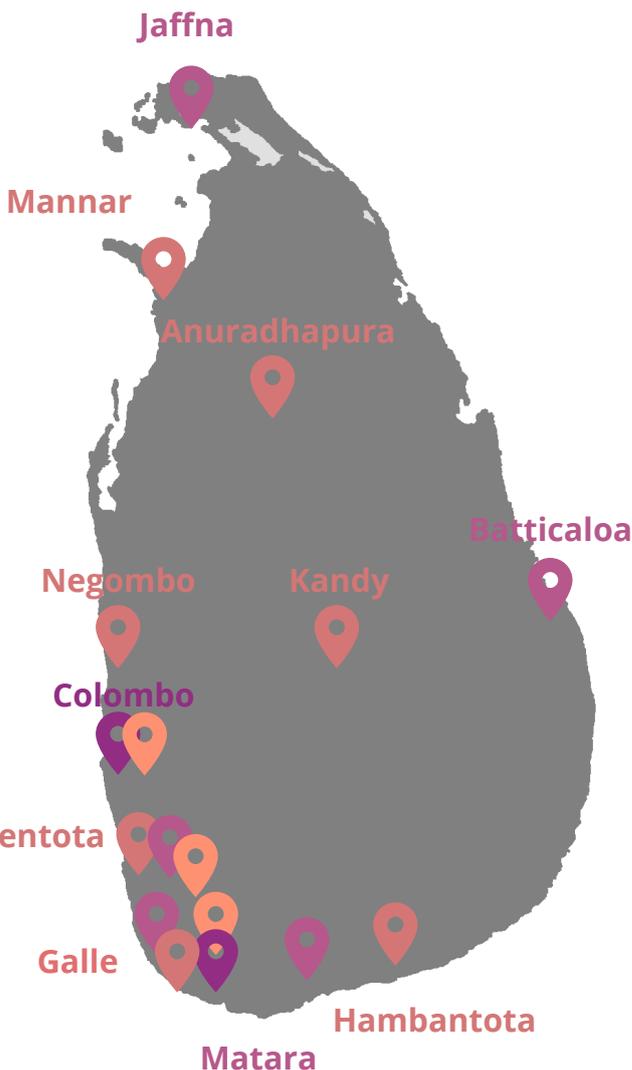
Our impact is only possible due to the generous and committed support of our donors, fundraisers, volunteers, charitable trusts, partners and corporate partners.

This year, we spent £147,041 supporting children and families across Sri Lanka. Being clear and transparent about where our supporters' money goes is important to us. Here's a breakdown of what we spent to support our beneficiaries.

An additional £27,969 was raised in this financial year, and meant 500 more disadvantaged children received schoolbook packs to enable their education, and benefitted from our support.



## Where we work



- Family Support/Community Awareness £16,653/11.3%
- Education & Training £38,180/26.8%
- Keeping children safe £83,834/57%
- Resource Centres £6,891/3.4%
- Other £1,483/1%

Income	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2018/19 £
Donations	120,128	97,494	217,622
Gifts in kind	-	16,576	16,576
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>120,128</b>	<b>114,070</b>	

Expenditure	
Fundraising and events, governance & future planning.	56,472
Charitable activities	147,041
<b>Total</b>	<b>203,513</b>

# Our response to COVID19

The health and safety of our staff, children, and families in Sri Lanka has been our priority, and every day we are reviewing how to deliver our services safely and rapidly while doing our best to respond to huge extra demand.

it doesn't bear thinking about if the virus was to spread into orphanages or the poorest villages where multigenerational families live in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions and the virus could spread very quickly.

These people are trapped between the risk of coronavirus and hunger, as the impacts of lockdown for poor daily wage earners without work or income to provide food for their families is catastrophic.



The situation is worsening every day, putting vulnerable children at risk of malnutrition, family breakdown, and abandonment into harmful orphanages. We want to be there to ensure this doesn't happen.

**In an immediate response we launched an ambitious emergency appeal to raise £25,000 to provide needy families with sustenance during this crisis. So far we have raised £14,053.**

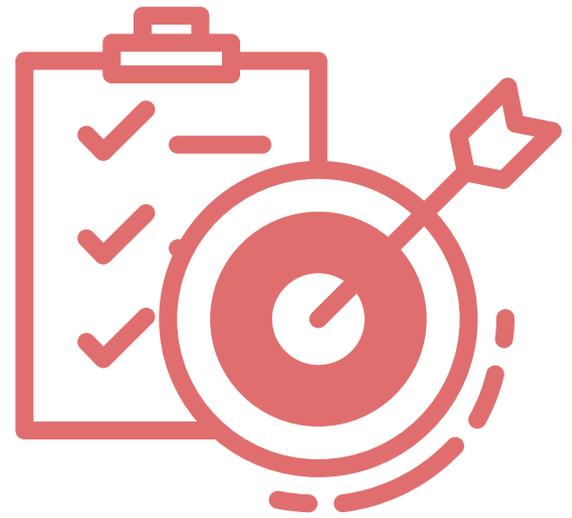
All schools were closed without warning, and TFT International Preschool has been converted into a temporary Food Bank. So far we have provided **1050 essential food parcels to last families of six for a week, comprising of rice, dhal, vegetables, flour, milk powder, and sugar as well as soap bars to improve hygiene.** We are prioritising pregnant mothers, and those with infants and disability in the areas of Pinkanda, Mannar District and Kandy.

This is making a significant difference to these peoples lives but demand is far outweighing the amount of supplies we can distribute at any one time and it is heartbreaking to turn so many desperate people away.

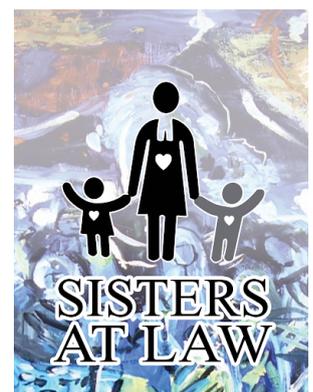
Sri Lanka, which has one of the largest disparities between rich and poor in the world, was only just beginning to recover from the Easter Sunday atrocity in 2019. Now economically the future is looking very uncertain, and the survival of many families, particularly children suffering malnutrition is seriously in the balance.

# 2020 Goals

- Develop operational plan and organisational profile to strengthen infrastructure in the UK and Sri Lanka to ensure efficiency and effectiveness for cohesive delivery of programmes and objectives.
- Review governance with specific focus on internal policies and staffing requirements.
- Strengthen our communications plan to raise awareness.
- Maintain strong financial and operational management.
- Identify gaps in funding and fundraising goals.
- Grow networks and develop partnerships with government and likeminded partners to provide robust Alternative Family and Foster Care Awareness training and together influence change.
- Develop income generation initiatives to empower women and girls to prevent child abandonment.
- Provide safety and shelter for teenage mothers and babies and work with childcare services to fastrack legal adoption processes.
- Help children including those with disability to thrive in orphanages by expanding better care and education, which will enable more successful transition into family life and society.
- Cascade housemother training, and minimum standard of care to other government orphanages countrywide while working towards ending institutionalisation.



# Thank you for your invaluable support





England & Wales Charity No: 1136807