



Annual Report 2022



Children need families not orphanages



Their Future Today (TFT), a UK and Sri Lankan registered charity working in Sri Lanka since 2005, seeks to transform and strengthen families and empower poor communities in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka and further afield.

Our vision is to end the institutionalisation of children by preventing child abandonment through poverty and by introducing a foster care system. Since 2005 has employed 38 Sri Lankan staff and helped over 16,000 children.



dear friends,

As we reflect on the year 2021-2022, we are reminded of the challenging times Sri Lanka faced during its worst economic crisis in decades.

Amidst these hardships, Their Future Today stood strong, committed to making a positive impact on the lives of the most vulnerable.

Through your generous contributions, we were able to provide school books, ensuring education remained accessible for countless children, nurturing their dreams and potential for a brighter future.

The pandemic closely followed by the economic crisis posed unique challenges in Sri Lanka, but we adapted and Mercury Holidays - TFT International preschool, provided quality education online, reaching children in remote areas and underserved communities.

In Ruhunu orphanage, the compassionate care of Their Future Today housemothers brought hope to 65 babies, offering them love and a nurturing environment to thrive despite the adversity they faced. The TFT Ruhunu preschool remained open throughout thanks to our dedicated teachers.

Additionally, our livelihood programs empowered single mothers, enabling them to provide for their children at home and build a sustainable future for their families.

But our efforts did not stop there. We extended our shelter, education, and empowerment initiatives to support victims of gender-based violence and abuse, ensuring they found solace and strength to rebuild their lives with their children, and provided legal support to reunite mothers of children in orphanages.



None of this would have been possible without our committed Sri Lanka team and your unwavering support. Together, we are making a lasting impact, touching the lives of those who need it the most.

The main aim of our 3 year strategy is to continue to strive to give every child love, belonging, protection and education which is fundamental for a healthy human existence, and cannot ever be achieved through separation and institutionalisation.

As an organisation, we are steadfast in our mission to advocate for alternative family and foster care, with the ultimate goal of helping to alleviate poverty through equal opportunity, and end the era of orphanages once and for all.

Every child deserves the chance to grow up in a loving family environment, and we are determined to make this dream a reality.

Thank you for being part of our journey, and we look forward to continuing this vital work with you by our side.

With your continued belief and support, we can go forward with a renewed sense of hope, determination, clarity and purpose.

Huge thanks again, and loving kindness.

Lynn

**Lynn Stanier MBE FRSA
CEO, Their Future Today**

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2021/22



300,000+

meals were provided
to vulnerable families
across Sri Lanka



2,850

children received
school book packs



10

single mother
entrepreneurs were
supported with employment



In January Their Future
Today was nominated and
then become a finalist for
Google's Charity of the
Year



73

Women, girls and mothers
of children in orphanages
were given support
through HBC helpline



50

hearing impaired
members of the Sri Lanka
Deaf Sports Federation
in Galle were given
emergency dry food
parcels.

OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

100+

dry food parcels (including soap and sanitiser) were delivered to patients and the most vulnerable in the Southern Province.



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10,000+

people in Sri Lanka were reached about the power of immunisation. Information from the WHO was translated and given to those in rural areas so they could have a clearer understanding on how to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic themselves.

TFT teachers and staff created a fun new syllabus and home workbooks so children could continue working during the pandemic. No school fees were charged and all families suffering hardship received emergency food parcels.

New desks were purchased following government guidelines, hand wash stations were installed in the garden, and training was given to staff, parents, and children about the importance of hygiene at Mercury Holidays TFT International Preschool.

Thanks to our generous supporters, our appeals provided 300 emergency food parcels (an equivalent of 37,800 essential and nutritious meals) to be provided to families in extreme poverty for six months of the year.

To help families become more sustainable, TFT organised Thilini's parents to receive poultry farming training. Mr Percy, our Country Director also provided Thilini's family with a new chicken house which has helped them greatly increase their income.



Our response to the economic crisis

Many families cannot afford to eat three meals a day due to the lack of income and high inflation which has resulted from the pandemic. Our new livelihood programme aims to help 10 families become more sustainable while providing some immediate support, in the form of food parcels and school resources to ease their financial burden, and keep families together.



CASE STUDY

Chandrika* has not been able to work for a few years due to a bone disorder. Her daughter is in Grade 12. Occasionally, she saves enough money to sew and sell clothes which is her only income. Most of their earning always go to their day-to-day expenses, food and her

daughter's education. In February 2022 we gave a one-off donation of materials and a commercial sewing machine. Since then Chandrika has been able to support her family again for the first time in years.

*Name changed

Our programme has successfully helped 5 mothers in pineapple planting, sewing and agriculture to generate enough income to support their families with enough food and money to ensure their child's education and help bring them out of poverty. In the coming months, we plan to do more training and support more families to give financial security.

CASE STUDY

Padma* spent most of her day sewing carpets. Her husband is in prison for life due to a murder charge. She has a seven-year-old daughter. She has not been able to find other work because she needs to care for her young daughter. Her parents died a few years ago. They live in the husband's house and that house is extremely dilapidated.

*Name changed

TFT has since provided a commercial sewing machine, training and introduced her to a local seller to help Kalyani generate increased income during the current economic crisis. In a few months she has already doubled her income and this is expected to grow in the coming year.



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.



2,801

School book packs were distributed to six remote schools in the Galle area whilst all COVID-19 health and safety issues were addressed.

46

TFT International Preschool children were given vital homeschooling via our dedicated and hardworking teachers (sponsorship was received from Mercury Holidays)

3

Computers, as well as WiFi, was provided to TFT International Preschool Teachers thanks to a partnership with Hampton Court House. This enabled a cultural exchange programme to enhance preschool education. Vocational training was also provided e.g. online teacher training and English classes.



Mercury Holidays - TFT International Preschool (opened its doors to offer childcare to poor working parents to prevent abandonment and introduce an early learning development programme in a poor rural community.

TFT reunited Amisha with his mother and supported her to self-sufficiency, whilst Amisha was given schoolbooks and the resources needed to go to school.

Amisha was unable to continue his education online due to the digital divide, so TFT supporters donated a new smartphone which means Amisha was able to communicate with his school again.

100

Rupees were given to each child at TFT International Preschool to save in bank accounts opened by the local HNB Bank. They learned about Sinhala New Year Rituals and the importance of values such as sharing, kindness, and giving on Good Friday.



Transforming the lives of children in orphanages

While we do not support the orphanage system, it is imperative to improve the health, education and well-being of abandoned babies and children who are languishing inside. They are surviving without love, dignity or even the most basic care. So we advocate that their voices must be heard, and continue to advocate and work towards ending institutionalisation, through our alternative family and foster care programme.

The TFT HEARTS 18 month childcare training programme for housemothers was completed in July 2019. This gave us some reassurance that the care provided during this year was much improved for the 61 babies and children under 5 years old at Ruhunu orphanage, and TFT Ruhunu Preschool stayed open throughout.

84

Infants have stayed loved and cared for thanks to 20 devoted TFT Housemothers who were given food parcels and a reward of 3000Rs as a token of appreciation.

72

Children were kept hydrated and clean after TFT installed a new electric water pump at Ruhunu Orphanage. This installation meant children can enjoy warm water, and housemothers no longer have to carry water in buckets for a long distance.





Specially childcare trained housemothers now take responsibility for individual children to make them feel safe and to provide the love they need until they can live in a family.

TFT was also able to influence the Southern Province orphanage system not to separate siblings as research suggests that doing so may make it difficult for children to heal and develop as an individual.

103

Girls are now able to connect with online schools and study for their O Levels. TFT-provided wifi and technology and volunteers were able to provide English and Art classes to Heartbeat Centre girls and 98 girls in a state remand home.



Bringing & keeping families together

In our ongoing drive to prevent children from being abandoned in institutions, we identify families at risk in the community and work closely to support them with medical care; provision of required therapies for either parents or children; provision of education and tools. More importantly, following the assessment, we look to implement an income generation project or provide a job opportunity in order that the family can become self-sufficient and independent in the long term.

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.

5 Parents were supported to self-sufficiency and financial independence despite these unprecedented circumstances.

50 Tuk Tuk drivers received emergency food parcels to feed their multi generation families.

2 Mums and their babes were given a safe transition home and vocational and life skills training to avoid separation and institutionalisation.



Hiruni, a single mother who was widowed during the Easter Sunday atrocity contacted us as she was desperately struggling to support her three children and wanted to work from home. She said that her dream job would be to sell plants. Our team helped her start her own home garden nursery which has enabled Geetha to not only feed and clothe her ambitious children, but to also pay for the tuition needed to pass scholarship exams.

*Name changed

Indika and his children were deeply traumatised when they were separated. As a single father he was unable to work and care for his children, so they were placed in Ruhunu orphanage. He regularly visited the children but every goodbye became more emotionally traumatic than the last. Funds were raised to reunite the family. The broken shed which they called home was knocked down and rebuilt with water and electricity supplies installed for the first time.

TFT employed a childminder to look after Saluni until she was old enough to go to school and gave Nirmali (12) and Senaka (5) the resources they needed to go to school.

Indika received mentoring to become a tuk-tuk driver and now he works in the fishing industry to remain self-sufficient.



Kalu couldn't afford to repair his broken bicycle which prevented him from going to work. With help and some new bicycle parts he can now continue to sell lottery tickets and support his wife and 2 children.



Rashmi* has struggled to feed her grandchildren due to high inflation and rising prices. TFT provided the family with emergency food supplies, and made it possible for her grandson to go to TFT International Preschool, and for school backpacks to be given to both children. This has enabled her granddaughter to go through school and recently pass her GCE Ordinary Levels.

*Name changed



Heartbeat Resource Centre & Shelter

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, and give children back their human rights.

In order to continue momentum of this project during the pandemic we appointed and trained a National Advocacy Manager for Alternative Family and Foster Care, with the support of our partners Professor Myrna McNitt, International Foster Care Organisation , IFCO, and Vasundhra Om Prem, Centre of Excellence Alternative Care, CEAC, India. Zoom meetings were held with 9 Sri Lankan NGO's to raise awareness and discuss the new concept of alternative family and foster care.

5,470+

Helpline calls were received at the Heartbeat Centre this year from desperate mothers of children in orphanages who were suffering abuse, and abused women and young girls who needed advice, support and protection. Approximately 10 calls per day reported cases of domestic violence, sexual abuse, selling of child brides, child trafficking, child sex slavery, and prostitution of children in orphanages.

Within all communities, there were many reports of sexual abuse and domestic violence, with numbers of cases increasing by 100% during the pandemic.

TFT provides advocacy and vital support to signpost these women and girls to a place of safety - an important job completed; preservation of life. But what kind of life does anybody have if they remain in a cycle of poverty?

Saving someone from a situation is simply the start of the journey. Empowering them to stand on their own two feet is critical for continued sustainability and success.

Samadhi* (ages 14) is new to the Heartbeat Centre and loves to dance as movement helps her to overcome her anger issues after years of mistreatment. TFT arranged for Vishani to receive dance lessons from a Dance and Theatre Foundation in Colombo. They are helping and guiding Vishani towards her dream of a career in Dance Therapy.

*Name changed



The TFT Heartbeat Centre, run and managed by Sisters at Law, provides safe shelter in a comfortable home, pro-bono legal services by an all-female group of lawyers, and education to help these marginalised victims fulfil their potential and rebuild their lives. This year we increased capacity to provide safe shelter for 12 abused women and girls, and 2 mothers and babies to keep them together and out of abusive institutions.



12

Girls, and two babies escaping abuse have received shelter, protection and tutoring to achieve their dreams of becoming lawyers, teachers, and a hairdresser. Victims need love and care, not institutions.



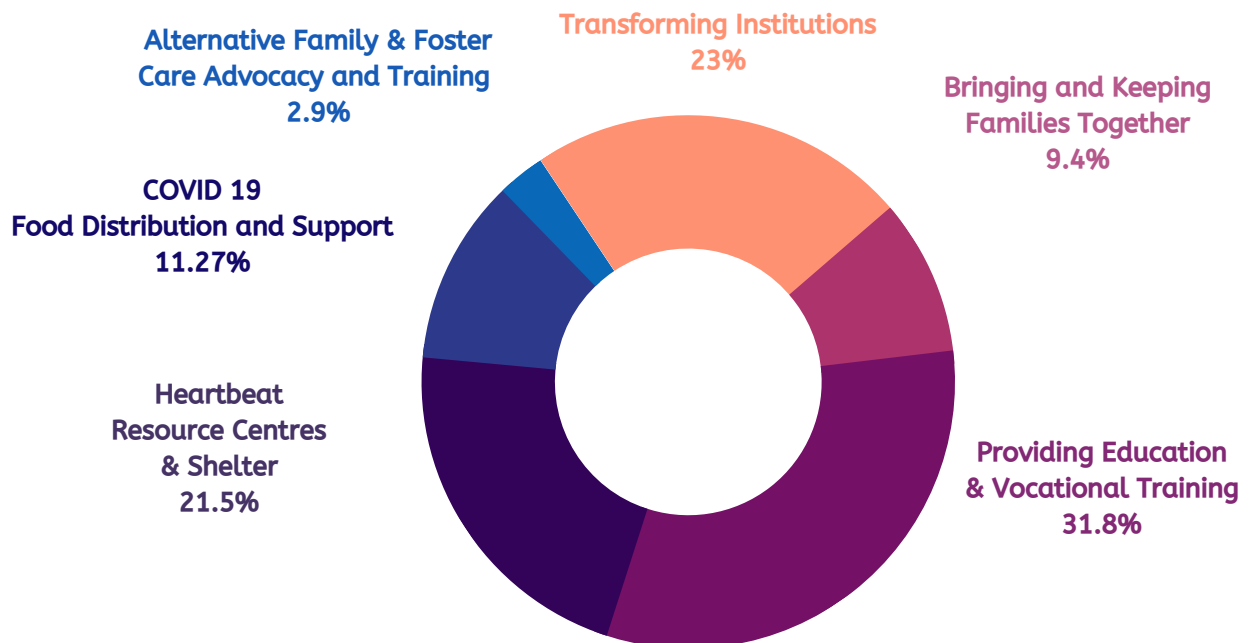
1

A larger house has been rented to give a home and vital education and emotional support to ensure abused young women and girls have a safe and loving space to rebuild their lives.

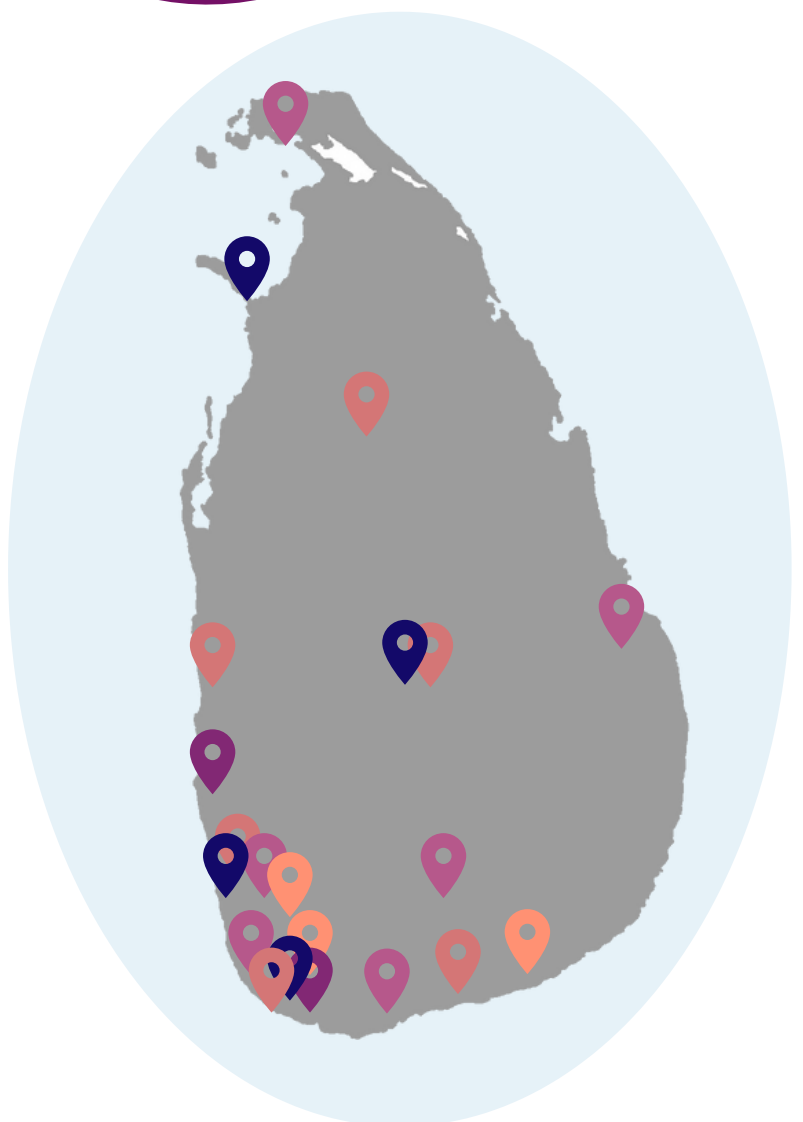


Our impact is only possible due to the generous and committed support of our donors, fundraisers, volunteers, charitable trusts, partners and corporate partners.

This year, we spent £151,318 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.



-  **Where Their Future Today supports and strengthens families**
Negombo, Bentota, Galle, Anuradhapura, and Kandy
-  **Where Their Future Today works to improve the care and conditions for children in orphanages**
Baddegama, Kithulampitiya and Hambantotha
-  **Where Their Future Today has directly or actively enabled education**
Galle, Jaffna, Pinkanda, Tangalle, Batticaloa, Udawalawe and Colombo
-  **Where Their Future Today provides shelter and support through Resource Centres**
Pinkanda and Colombo
-  **Where Their Future Today provides COVID-19 support**
Pinkanda, Bentota, Kandy and Mannar



" They say that challenges can make you stronger, which has certainly been the case for Their Future Today in the past twelve months. A remarkable renaissance of our work and influence on the future lives of children facing the potential of placement in institutions. It is nothing short of a triumph to have been at the centre of the Alternative Family Care Act passed by the Sri Lanka Government, which will provide alternatives and better outcomes. This follows our work in 2018 by delivering training in alternative care for the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs. Our Amazing CEO, Lynn dedicatedly assisted by Joel her son, has been at the forefront of this policy. I want to pay tribute to our amazing team in Sri Lanka who have continued to work tirelessly even during desperate times to deliver life-saving and life-changing work. It has been outstanding."

Simon Jackman, Chair of Trustees of Their Future Today

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Their Future Today would like to give special thanks to the following organisations for their generous donations in 2021/22:

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Their Future Today is also grateful for the support and expertise generously provided by:

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Centre of Excellence in Alternative Care, India
Foundation of Goodness
International Foster Care Organisation
Lumos

Hope and Homes for Children
Sisters at Law
UK Fostering
UNICEF

Our work would not be possible without the generosity of others, and we are eternally grateful to all of our Trusts, Foundations and supporters for their contributions in 2021/22.



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