



# THE RĀHULA TRUST

(Child Sponsorship Programme)

Registered Charity No. 1075742

## 2007 - 2008

### PROGRESS REPORT FOR 2008

Dear Supporters,

**T**his year marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Rahula Trust and it is a suitable time to review its work and outline its plans for the future.

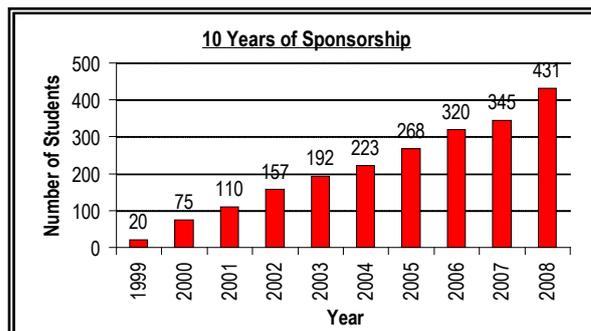
The Trust was originally conceived as way of helping poor but deserving children to receive a good education, which would benefit not only the children themselves but also the wider community of which they are a part. Unfortunately, there are many bright, able children who are forced to stop their education prematurely. Either their family cannot afford it, or the child may even be required to leave school in order to find a job to support other family members. Too many children are forced to abandon their studies due to poverty, and this is a waste of children's talents and potential. Education has a ripple effect, and the benefit of having well-educated citizens spreads out to all parts of society. Educated people can achieve great things, not only for themselves, but also for other people. In the developing world, in particular, there is a great need for well-educated people to help their country to develop to its full potential and lift themselves out of pov-

erty. The Buddha talked about various wonderful or miraculous powers that some people strive to develop, but he went on to say that the true wonder or miracle is the wonder of education.

According to a survey carried out in Sri Lanka by the Census and Statistics Department in 1999, 85,906 children were engaged in economic activity to supplement household income. A further 18,589 children were employed in housekeeping activities, and 53,330 dropped out of school due to financial or other difficulties. Although it is compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 17 to attend school, it was estimated that 431,668 (10% of the child population) were not receiving any education.

So it was decided to start a small-scale enterprise to provide assistance to children living in Sri Lanka. Although the Rahula Trust is an independent

and entirely separate entity from the London Buddhist Vihara, it was founded by Buddhists connected with the Vihara. Both monks and supporters of the Vihara are among the trustees. Sri Lanka was chosen as a suitable country because the trustees have excellent connections with that country and much of the support for the Trust was expected to come from the Sri Lankan community in the United Kingdom. Another factor was that by using the services of trusted volunteers, the administrative costs could be kept low. By registering the charity in the United Kingdom, it was possible to reclaim the income tax element of any donations received from taxpayers.



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### The BUPA Great South Runners donate valuable funds to the Rahula Trust.



*Vajira Jayasinghe and her son Shehan from New Malden took part in the BUPA Great South Run.*

*On the 26th of October 2008 in a wet and blustery Portsmouth, the BUPA Great South Run took place with nearly 12,000 runners descending on the city. Amongst them were Vajira and Shehan Jayasinghe who were running in aid of The Rahula Trust. After many months of training and preparation both competitors managed to negotiate the 10 mile course in an extremely respectable time.*

*Vajira and Shehan presented a cheque for £4,250.00 to Venerable Bandula, the secretary of the Rahula Trust. The Rahula Trust is extremely grateful to Jayasinghe family and all their supporters for their wonderful generosity.*

## Child Sponsorship

The initial plan was child sponsorship. This was not an entirely original idea. Other charities already used this successfully as a way of involving donors with recipients on a medium-to long-term basis. Donors are asked to commit themselves to making a regular donation (monthly, quarterly or annually). In return, the donor is allocated a specific child as the beneficiary of the donations. This allows the donor to take an ongoing interest in the development of the child and to follow the child's progress through regular receipt of school reports. If they wish, donors can correspond direct with the child and, in a few cases, they may also make a visit. We know that many children write letters of appreciation, either to the Trust or direct to their sponsor, to express their gratitude for the support they are receiving. The chart shows how the number of sponsored children has increased steadily, year by year for the last ten years. Some students have now entered university, and some have completed their studies at the university.

At the end of year 2004 Sri Lanka was devastated by the tsunami, which created almost endless needs for help. Many children and their parents were killed, others were made orphans or homeless. Schools were destroyed. From its general funds, the Trust made several donations. One was to the Peraliya Maha Vidyalaya for the purchase of replacement library books and cupboards. A longer-term commitment was made to the Sahanodaya Foundation to support 100 children affected by the tsunami. To do this, we were greatly helped by the fund-raising activities of one supporter.

While the child sponsorship scheme has continued to grow and remains at the centre of our activities, the Trust has also received donations which are not tied to a specific child. This has enabled us to sponsor children who would not otherwise receive support. However, there are always more children needing sponsors, and we should be delighted to receive any additional offers of sponsorship. The general funds allow the Trust to support educational projects of a more general nature, which would benefit an entire school or group of children. We summarise these below:-

### Pre-School

Money was given to develop a pre-school project in Tawalama for the development of their library and playground. There have also been projects in Ranchamadama, Sevana-gala Resource Centre, and Pepene Kekululu Lama Sanvidanaya in Embilipitiya.

### Library Supplies and Equipment

Donations were made to several institutions in Sri Lanka for purchases of library books, cupboards and computer equipment. These include Thambiyawa Dharmapala Vidyalaya, Siddhartha Maha Vidyalaya Pemaduwa, Kadigamuwa Maha Vidyalaya and Rajanganaya Maha Vidyalaya. Mr. Tom Kariyawasam was very helpful in identifying and supervising these projects, and the trustees wish to express their thanks to him for all his hard work.

### Additional Education

The Tantirimale area in Sri Lanka was identified as a suitable place to



lay on additional classes for a total of 23 children. The subjects covered were Sinhala, English, Mathematics, Science and General Knowledge. This project lasted for two years.

For the last four years we have supported the Viharamahadevi Girls' Orphanage in Biyagama with money to employ some additional teachers and to purchase computer equipment.

In 2006 we started to support the Pritipura Community in Wattala, where they are working to rehabilitate children who are physically and mentally handicapped. This is an ongoing project.

Recently we have started to support additional teaching in the village school in Ranchamadama, managed by the Siddhartha Child Development Foundation.

### Nepal

For five years we have supported children in Kathmandu through the Samyak Youth Group. Initially the number was 13 children but this has now increased to 33. Help is also being given to the Metta Centre, an orphanage in Kathmandu. Both of these projects are managed by Buddhist monks, living in Kathmandu.



*Pre-school in Ranchamadama was supported with books and cupboards.*

## Kenya

The Trust has been a regular donor of school equipment to the Nyumbani orphanage in Nairobi, where all the children are born HIV+. We have given an overhead projector, a radio and desks with chairs for their school. Two sisters have been sponsored for their secondary and college education.

## Sudan

In 2008 the Trust got involved in the Sudan, for the first time, by donating a brick-making machine to assist with the building of a school in the Ofiriha Community, a remote village in the south of the country.

## Fund-raising

The Trust is particularly grateful to a number of people who have made tremendous efforts to raise funds. Several people have raised funds by running. One young lady raised over £5,000 by running the London Marathon, a young man raised £1,400 running in the Edinburgh marathon and two other supporters raised £4,250 running in the BUPA Great South Run. A young banker organised two sponsored walks and "Farewell Summer" fundraising party raising a combined total of £6,000. Another supporter made a CD of monks from the London Buddhist Vihara chanting Buddhist texts. Proceeds of the sales exceeded £1,000. A supporter in Brussels organised two art exhibitions and auctions which raised £1,200. To them and to all the many other people who have contributed other amounts, we express our deep gratitude.

Throughout the last decade the Trust has been expanding slowly. The trustees have been careful not to donate to projects unless they are reasonably confident that the money will be well spent, preferring if possible to donate equipment, rather than money. It can be seen from the published



*Library books, cupboards and a computer was donated to Tantirimale Tambiyawa Maha Vidyalaya in Anuradhapura*

accounts that we have been successful in keeping the operating costs very low. Nothing is deducted from sponsors' donations to cover administration expenses, which are met from the Trust's general funds. This could not be done without the support of many volunteers who give their time so freely. Our secretary has been particularly energetic. Whenever he visits Sri Lanka, he takes it upon himself to visit many children all over the island to check on their progress. We are indeed grateful to all our volunteers. We are also grateful to our many supporters without whose generosity our activities would not be possible. We should like you to know that all donations, regardless of size, are significant. On behalf of all those children who benefit from your gifts, we should like to say a heartfelt "thank you".

## Looking to the future

At the end of the year 2006 we were saddened by the death of our Chairman, Most Ven. Dr. Vajiragnana, who had rendered great service to the Trust right from its inception. A new trustee has been appointed. She is Mrs. Pat Smith, a long-time and dedicated supporter of the London Buddhist Vihara, whose talents and wisdom will be of great value to the Trust.



*Some of the Sponsored children in Anuradhapura, Badulla, Galle and Kandy districts*

## The Rahula Trust Summarised Accounts Year ending 30th September 2008

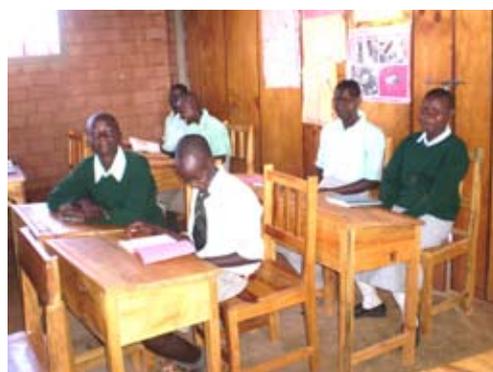
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2008 £	Total 2007 £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>				
Donations, Sponsorship, Gift aid	17,132	40,379	57,511	47,514
Investment income	2,882	557	3,439	4,135
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>20,014</b>	<b>40,936</b>	<b>60,950</b>	<b>51,649</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>				
Costs of generating funds	379	627	1,006	490
Charitable expenditure	22,201	42,315	64,516	49,247
Management and administration	289	-	289	289
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>22,869</b>	<b>42,942</b>	<b>65,811</b>	<b>50,026</b>
<b>Net incoming resources</b>	<b>(2,855)</b>	<b>(2,006)</b>	<b>(4,861)</b>	<b>1,623</b>

*The financial information has been extracted from the annual accounts. For further information please ask the Secretary for the full annual report and accounts and examiners report.*

We know that the present economic climate has brought financial problems for many people, including people who have supported the Trust so generously in the past. We hope that the present level of support can be maintained, and even expanded, but we do realise that household budgets are getting tighter and tighter. The Trustees have been careful not to over-commit the Trust, and have always adopted a conservative policy with regard to reserves. We believe that we have some margin of comfort which will allow us to maintain our

present level of expenditure even if there should be a reduction in revenue.

Who benefits from the Rahula Trust? The obvious answer is the children who receive its support. But there is another category of people who also benefit – the donors. They benefit from knowing that their generosity is making a real difference to the lives of many children, who – with their help - can look forward to enjoying the benefits of a good education. There are also donors who benefit in another, more subtle way. Whenever we receive a report from a sponsor who has visited a child, the sponsor comments on what a humbling experience it has been to meet people who are materially poor, but spiritually rich. They see how people who live at a standard far below that enjoyed in the West are full of kindness, goodwill and warm appreciation which no amount of material wealth can buy. So this giving is a two-way process. It enriches both parties.



#### Trustees of the Rahula Trust:

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Mr. Martin Evans  
Mr. Rohan Kariyawasam  
Dr. Robert Parsons, M. B. E.  
Mr. Richard Jones  
Mrs. Pat Smith

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