



*"It is 10 a.m. on the second day of the Teacher Training Course, Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2004, roughly two years since the peace process was brokered. The conflict that has lasted for twenty years has impacted on the lives of people all over Sri Lanka.*

*One of the teachers is talking to her conversation partner in English telling her experience during this time. Each of the fifteen days of the ESL teacher-training course started like this - with the students talking in pairs on a topic prepared the night before. Each morning the twenty-four participants from remote villages told their stories and expressed themselves, hesitantly at first, on a range of topics from the role of women in Sri Lanka to the role of computers in the classroom.*

*Sharing and talking amid lots of laughter helped the group to have a sense of cohesion that is so important for maximizing adult learning.*

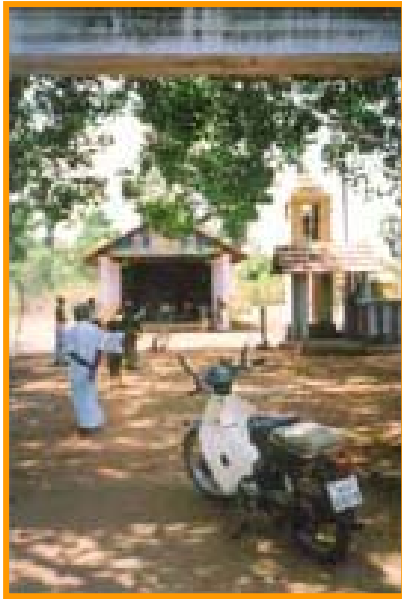
Partners in Micro-development Inc., a volunteer based non-government organisation (NGO), incorporated in Australia and registered in Sri Lanka, focuses on micro, village level programs which enhance sustainability of these communities.

Our current and flagship project is a pilot program for remote village primary schools in Sri Lanka to introduce English as a second language and Computer Literacy for grade 1 and 2 children. We work with the teachers in these schools to enhance their skills so that they are more confident and better equipped in the classroom.

### Our achievements to date include:

- Development of a tailored curriculum for English and Computer Literacy for grade 1 and 2 children which integrates with the Government curriculum (from grade 3).
- Delivery of two teacher training courses in Sri Lanka for the pilot schools – teaching English as a second language using oral/aural techniques (January 2004), and using computers and educational software in the classroom (October 2004).
- Sourcing donated educational software from Microsoft Sri Lanka, IBM Australia, Vivendi Universal, Eurotalk Interactive (UK), Riverdeep (USA), and Advanced Software Australia.
- Purchasing refurbished computers from World Computer Exchange in the US for the pilot schools ( 1-2 per school)
- Our success with the initial group of schools and primary teachers generated a request from the Provincial Department of Education in North-east Sri Lanka to extend the program to a further thirty schools (a mix of Tamil, Sinhalese, and Muslim) in the Trincomalee area. Accordingly we delivered the ESL teacher training course to this group also in October 2004.

Other programs in this field are focused on improving English in the higher grades and access to computers is very limited, even for higher grades. These programs are addressing the immediate vocational needs of older children. PIMD's program is unique. We believe that it is essential to start embedding the core skills of English and Computer Literacy at as young an age as possible to avoid the high cost of addressing skill gaps in later years.



We hope to extend the program to other provinces and to develop a Community ICT project using the school computers for the purpose of improving broader health and education development outcomes for the children. As a starting point, local village members will be trained to manage the computer resources, and to build a database of information on students' health (such as inoculation history, nutritional needs, etc.), identify and access available health services, and update the computer records. This can then be expanded to address the social (health and education) needs of the wider community and eventually economic development needs.

The village can use this information to develop plans in line with their needs and priorities and draw down on public services and aid programs as required.

## Sustainability

Our ultimate goal is sustainable communities. To achieve that end the program itself must be able to be sustained. The school component of the program will be sustained by the more experienced teachers training new teachers as they come on board. In addition, the training curriculum has been handed over to the Department of Education. The Computer Literacy part of the curriculum will require

continued investment in infrastructure by the Government of Sri Lanka with the assistance of the aid community. The community development component of the program can be sustained by communities training and providing leadership to other communities based on the pilot model. Infrastructure such as computers can be shared across multiple villages. Micro-enterprises based on the facilities will also assist.

*"Sri Lanka ..holds a unique position in South Asia. It was one of the first developing countries to provide universal health and education coverage... As a result, Sri Lanka achieved human development outcomes comparable to those of high income countries.."* World Bank Country Assistance Strategy for Sri Lanka, April, 2003, pp. 13

Sri Lanka is widely recognised for its achievements in human development. Education is therefore seen as being a fundamental lever in protecting and strengthening the commitment to peace, and in recovering the ground lost, in terms of human development, as a result of the war.

## Contact us

Contact us if you wish to help eradicate poverty in developing countries by:

- becoming a member or volunteer with Partners in Micro-development Inc (PIMD);
- making a donation; or
- using our skills and expertise in your project.

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