



## The T.E.A. Project – Annual Report 2021



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## **A message from the CEO**

The year 2021 was once again dominated by Covid-19 restrictions and lockdowns. We are incredibly grateful to our TEAm, donors, partners and supporters for everything they have done to help the children we work for. This moment has proven that we can make a difference when we work together.

Unfortunately, tea plantation communiTEAs we work with still are at the bottom of the Sri Lankan society. Many of them continue to work in harsh conditions for a meagre income. With the continued pandemic restrictions, these communiTEAs continuously face difficulties and barriers in accessing nutritious food, healthcare and education. Children living in the tea plantations are the most vulnerable group.

However, I am inspired by all the stakeholders who have risen to this past year's unprecedented challenges. They have demonstrated the ability to recover, adapt to the volatile environment, and be dedicated to the children and communiTEA we serve. Despite the uncertainty of the pandemic, our TEAm continued to provide educational services to the children and urgent support to families in crisis – virtually and physically. The report shows their dedication, hard work and resilience.

We also had a change in leadership: Our founders moved back to the UK after staying in Sri Lanka for more than eight years and handed over the charity's operations to a young and dynamic TEAm in Sri Lanka. Thank you, Carl and Racheal, for this fantastic charity and your continued unwavering support.

Furthermore, there were significant structural changes, and some TEAm members were promoted in 2021. This year also brought a change in my life. I took over the position of Executive Director, and I am proud to say that our TEAm has emerged stronger and remains committed. Together we have accomplished many goals and supported the communiTEA in a time when they needed us the most.

We are very grateful to all our supporters for being with us on our journey – our work wouldn't exist without you. We know there will be challenging times ahead, but we remain confident and dedicated in our commitment to help children. We know that together we can help realize their aspirations.

Thank you for inspiring us and joining The TEA Project.

Arun JP  
CEO

## 1. Our Beneficiaries

In the last years the T.E.A. (*training, empowerment and awareness*) Project has worked with thousands of vulnerable children and families as well as government schools, orphanages and non-profit organisations island-wide, delivering its TTT (training the trainers) programmes to teachers and empowerment programmes to schools and orphanages. Since 2019 T.E.A. has begun to concentrate its work in the tea estate region of Hanthana, centralizing its support by establishing a dedicated Centre to run education and empowerment programmes to rural communities.

The project gives young people a voice – a voice which develops ambition, skills, knowledge and opportunities for underprivileged children, unlocking a child’s hidden potential. We believe passionately that developing skills, aspirations and confidence in young people is key to securing a positive and sustainable future for the next generation.

The T.E.A. Project has a **school network** which includes **nine schools** situated in the rural region of Hanthana, Central Province. Our school partners vary greatly in size but they share common challenges such as extreme under-funding, high levels of pupil poverty, absenteeism and lone parenting due to parents working abroad. The population of our nine partner schools is 500+ teachers and 2,500+ school children aged from 5–17 years who represent Muslim, Buddhist, Christian and Hindu faiths.

Also we support three local communiTEAs close to The Centre site which enables us to support children not only in school but in their communiTEA and extend services to their parents and adults. More than 90% of

parents residing in our target area work on tea estates as daily paid labourers and tea pickers. Families are exposed to multiple socio-economic factors that create disadvantage, poor cognitive development of children and entrap children and families in the cycle of poverty.

International volunteers and local volunteers support our school-based outreach programmes and communiTEA events with their commitment and enthusiasm. We run a profile on the platform **Workaway** that lists NGOs and other providers of volunteer work. Due to the pandemic that also affected tourism, therefore, in 2021, we were not able to recruit a large number of international volunteers to support our vision by offering their skills to our partner schools. We did establish a partnership with **AIESEC**, a global organisation that promotes our volunTEAing opportunities as well as the **travel agency Atypique Lanka** that offers a package to travelers interested in volunTEAing.

**End of September 2020** we completed the construction works of **our Centre for Children's Empowerment – The Cloud**. The vision has been that the full development of The Centre would bring immediate benefit to people working within the tea industry and enable deprived families to access free education, daily nutritional meals, career guidance, employment opportunities and communiTEA development support. However, due to the pandemic we could not run services immediately after opening since schools had to stop operating again at the beginning of October following government regulations to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This did not allow a full service to start until the beginning of 2021.

## 2. Our Aims and Priorities

### 2.1 What does The T.E.A. Project do?

In September 2015 The T.E.A. Project became a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) UK Charity no: 1163485. **In 2018 The T.E.A. Project was granted permission by the District Secretariat Kandy to work in the Central Province** and in 2019 an application was submitted for INGO (international non-governmental organisation) registration in Sri Lanka which finally was achieved in September 2019. We are governed by the jurisdiction of the Charity Commission, UK, and the NGO Secretariat of Sri Lanka. T.E.A. is an acronym meaning **training, empowerment and awareness:**

#### **T** is for **training**

Our bespoke training makes T.E.A. unique! Programmes in English, Sinhala and Tamil promote health, safety, well-being and empowerment of children. We train professionals to develop best practice methods and uphold children's rights. Children develop leadership qualities, life skills and aspiration. Training provides children and their communities with practical tools to make sustainable change at grassroots level.

#### **E** is for **empowerment**

We believe the empowerment of children is central to poverty alleviation. The project supports child care services at local and national level to improve standards and provision; encouraging service providers to value the contribution made by children. We create learning opportunities that develop ambition, increase resilience and unlock the hidden potential in every child.

## **A is for awareness**

The T.E.A. Project is a children's rights-led organisation. We believe in **provision, prevention, protection and participation** rights of children. We promote the voice of every child and actively engage with children to make positive change. We advocate for children and run education programmes to increase practical awareness of the universal rights and principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## **The aims of The T.E.A. Project**

1. Advance personal skills and abilities of vulnerable children by providing training and workshops
2. Advance practical knowledge of children's rights principles and practices by providing education, advice and advocacy
3. Alleviate poverty by providing sustainable projects, training and workshop provision designed to raise aspirations and increase opportunities and capabilities of vulnerable children

## **Core VALUES of The T.E.A. Project**

- Help to give vulnerable children and young people a strong voice and be their champion
- Always listen, respect and value children and young people and treat all children and young people as individuals
- Work to protect children and young people from harm, suffering and maltreatment
- Work to fight the harmful effects of poverty upon children, young people and their families
- Empower children to make good choices
- Aspiration building
- Developing resilience, soft skills and self-confidence in children



## 2.2 Centre for Children's Empowerment

Beginning of 2019 T.E.A. signed an agreement that secured a Centre for Children's Empowerment for the next 30 years initially to ensure the best chance of realizing the long-term success of the project and of sustaining our vision. To set up The Centre according to the needs of the surrounding communities we conducted a high number of consultation activities with communiTEA members, teaching staff and children. In addition, we held many networking and information sharing meetings with local government officers and local service providers. Finally after starting in March 2020, in August 2020 building works were completed and we held our opening event end of September 2020.

The Centre provides quality English-medium Early Childhood Education (ECE) provision for local children aged 3 years to 5 years so that children will be safe and equipped with the skills to enter formal school ready to learn. The selection criteria, enrolment, curriculum, policies and procedures for the **Tiny T.E.A. pre-school** have been developed and over 20 families have been interviewed to assess if they meet the criteria for a free English-medium pre-school placement. One parent (ParentTEAr) of each child is required to work 5 hours per month on a voluntary basis assisting with kitchen duties, Centre maintenance and cleaning. **21 pre-school children were registered by end of 2021.** Each child receives three sets of uniforms consisting of T-shirts and shorts provided by our sponsor Hirdaramani.

Our **F.O.O.D.** (Fueling Opportunities, Outcomes and Diet) **Programme** is supporting two of our services. It provides a nutritious, healthy, balanced breakfast snack for the children who attend our pre-school (Tiny T.E.A.s). And it provides a nutritious lunch for up to 30 school children five days per week who arrive from school, eat and then join our after-school programme. The funding of the F.O.O.D. programme by The Neelam

Trust (NTT) will continue until August 2022. The Food Project Coordinator is a local village resident. We believe in recruiting locally and creating opportunities in the communities where we work.

Our **after-school programme (Y.E.S. = Youth Empowerment Service)** is delivered in three languages. To this end we have been developing important registration documents and H&S guidelines. After-school activities include empowerment programmes such as healthy relationship training, suicide prevention, language programmes (Sinhala and English) and arTEA sessions. In 2022 we plan to introduce Tuition Classes to improve attainment in important subjects such as math and science, this will help to unlock potential and increase life chances for local school children.

As CODID-19 restricted many fields of life in Sri Lanka, we saw the need to adapt our Y.E.S. programme to these new challenges. Since then we successfully run workshops and sessions virtually in addition to our physical classes. Furthermore, we have developed an outreach programme which has enabled the service to work with more children that live far from The Centre and struggle to travel the distance. A virtual information sharing session was conducted initially with the school Principals to discuss how our services could best support local schools. The Principals were happy to support T.E.A. programmes at their schools, suggestions from schools included; programmes for TEACHERS on stress management and ICT. They stated that they want to speak to the staff and make a menu of services that they would like us to run at their schools. The Principals of the following partner schools agreed to work in partnership with The T.E.A. Project for improving the education of children: Shivashakthi School, Upper Galaha Primary School, Dunali Primary School, Shrivani School, Kalaivani School, Karagaskada Central College, Badhrawwathi School, Ramakrishna National School, Thiruwalluwar School

Empowerment training, educational workshops and vocational training activities enhance the education, skill base and individual performance of children. Counselling and therapeutic interventions decrease vulnerability levels and help to build resilience. Furthermore, students benefit from international volunteers delivering a broad range of programmes. By end of 2021 **147 children were registered** for the after-school programme.

Additionally, empowering girls and women will remain a key priority for the project. The Centre develops skills/knowledge, increases support networks, improves well-being and promotes the voice and local participation of women and girls.

### **Objectives of The Centre**

1. To equip 25–30 disadvantaged pre-school children and their families with information, guidance and practical support to increase education outcomes, health and social development of children through the provision of an excellent early-years education.
2. To provide a diverse after-school programme of education, vocation and empowerment opportunities to educate enskill and increase the capacity of youth to actively participate in society.
3. To provide a holistic service to adult communiTEA members to access training, vocation and advice/information from key health- and social care services.

### 3. Overview of Our Work

#### **3.1 Priority One: Education and skill development of children/teachers/communiTEA/parents in the estate region. To reach potential, increase outcomes and develop teaching and parenting skills.**

The project has finalized its **Suicide Prevention** training programme in 2019, which has targeted adolescents, teachers and communiTEA members. We have worked closely with multi-agency service providers in Sri Lanka and have conducted significant research locally, regionally and internationally. Our aim is to deliver a training programme focusing on mental health and suicide prevention that will equip children and adults with the tools and information they need. In 2021 the training was held with different groups of children from grades 6 to 11 at our Centre. Due to the success of this programme, partnering schools requested it also for children attending their schools. Thus, in 2021, T.E.A. delivered one programme to Kalaivani School. 29 children attended the training.

Schools and institutions working with children in Sri Lanka do not have safer recruitment procedures or policies in place to protect children from abuse. A number of domestic laws do exist to protect children from harm however enforcement of laws and legislation is weak. Child abuse is a global problem that is deeply rooted in cultural, economic and social practices. There is an increase in economic migration from Sri Lanka of mothers and parents who travel overseas to work as domestic helpers. The children they leave behind are often defenceless against abuse from predatory family relatives and neighbours.

Recently, we have observed that there is an improvement in the parents' commitments to safeguard children. Parents are actively taking part in parents meetings and they see a value and positive change in children when they attend activities and programmes at our Centre.

In 2021 T.E.A. has not delivered any **SAFE-TEA training** but will be continuing to do so to educate professionals about **the different forms of child abuse, signs of abuse**, how to **respond to disclosures** and **how to reduce harm and keep children safe from abuse**.

### **Train the Trainers**

Teachers are essential to happy, healthy and empowered children. We focus on giving teachers and our own staff the skills to be able to deliver our programmes as well as improve the level of teaching.

An **English development programme** for communiTEA volunTEARs and local school children is successfully running. It is set out for three levels. In 2021 we conducted level one. Children are keen to learn languages and develop their basic knowledge further. Also we witnessed that children overcome their fear of speaking and use English more confidently.

**World of Work** (W.O.W.) is a work experience programme we developed specifically for children aged between 12–18 years. It was rolled out in 2021 and helps children to gain work experience in the NGO sector in our office, pre-school, kitchen and handling outdoor projects. The goal of this project is to increase practical knowledge, work ethics and skills in a safe and nurturing work environment. Children are required to work 100 hours over a three-month period (Level 1), 200 hours in six months (Level 2), 300 hours in nine months (Level 3) and 400 hours in one year (Level 4). A work experience certificate is offered to each child who completes

any of the levels. Weekly mentoring and supervision meetings are provided. In the beginning of 2021, 12 children successfully registered for the programme. During COVID-19 T.E.A. children supported with tasks such as, helping to prepare and distribute study packs.

T.E.A. introduced a **CommuniTEA Steering Group (STEArS)** that offers their experience, local and technical sector knowledge to ensure The Cloud fully implements its vision and objectives. It increases the use of The Cloud, helps to promote services and increases communiTEA participation of local stakeholders in strategic Centre planning. Quarterly meetings are held to discuss the development of the Centre and to suggest workshops, training and information sessions to address local needs in our **Saturday Service**. This service addresses parents, communiTEA members and unemployed youth. 31 members (for example, school principals, one assistant superintendent and one field officer, local business owners, community and youth leaders such as representatives of CBOs, development officers, as well as T.E.A. officer and manager) from the estate sector are part of the steering group.

TEA is developing an IT programme for children visiting the after-school programme, which will start in 2022- There we gratefully received a donation of two laptops from the French Woman Group. These laptops will enable us to provide resources for our future IT programme and help children to acquire needed skills for future education, training and employment. Knowledge in the field of information technology will be a valuable asset for children when they begin to apply for employment.



## What next?

1. We will run further suicide prevention trainings.
2. We will run Training the Trainers programmes to train teachers and local volunteers to deliver T.E.A. Project programmes within schools at grassroots level.
3. We will work with partner NGOs to develop commissioning opportunities which will enable our training to reach more children island-wide and raise revenue for the T.E.A. Project.
4. We will start a project to develop the Tiny T.E.A. pre-school curriculum and teaching standards.
5. We will develop an IT programme and secure IT equipment for children and young people to access at The Centre.
6. We will run Employment Skills Programmes through our Outreach Programme.

### **3.2 Priority Two: Promoting health and well-being among vulnerable children and adults in the estate area, addressing to risks and hazards in the changing environment. Learning to address the mental, physical well-being and safety of the children and youth**

Evaluating the capacity to achieve can take decades and may depend on one key decision made during childhood. This section will outline some projects and programmes that we believe have the potential to transform lives, create peace and promote positive outcomes especially for vulnerable children.

In 2021 we started to develop a **listening service** to “listen” to Youth Empowerment Service Users with empathy and provide a safe space to unfold their thoughts, emotions and any conflicts. Most of the children seek a comfortable and non-judgmental place to open up. It’s also a chance for them to understand themselves better.

The **Single Mother Empowering Project by Women in Management (WIM)** reaches out to support households with single mothers. The T.E.A. Project selected five young people between 14 and 18 years of age. Selection was based on recommendations by school Principals and key stakeholders in the communiTEA. In addition, interviews were conducted. The progress of the children will be monitored and reported to WIM by The T.E.A. Project. In 2021, the first edition of the programme was successfully completed.

We began a **scholarship for an estate sector child, this enabled a graduate from Tiny T.E.A.** to attend an international/semi-government school and be provided with a scholarship payment to support their education.

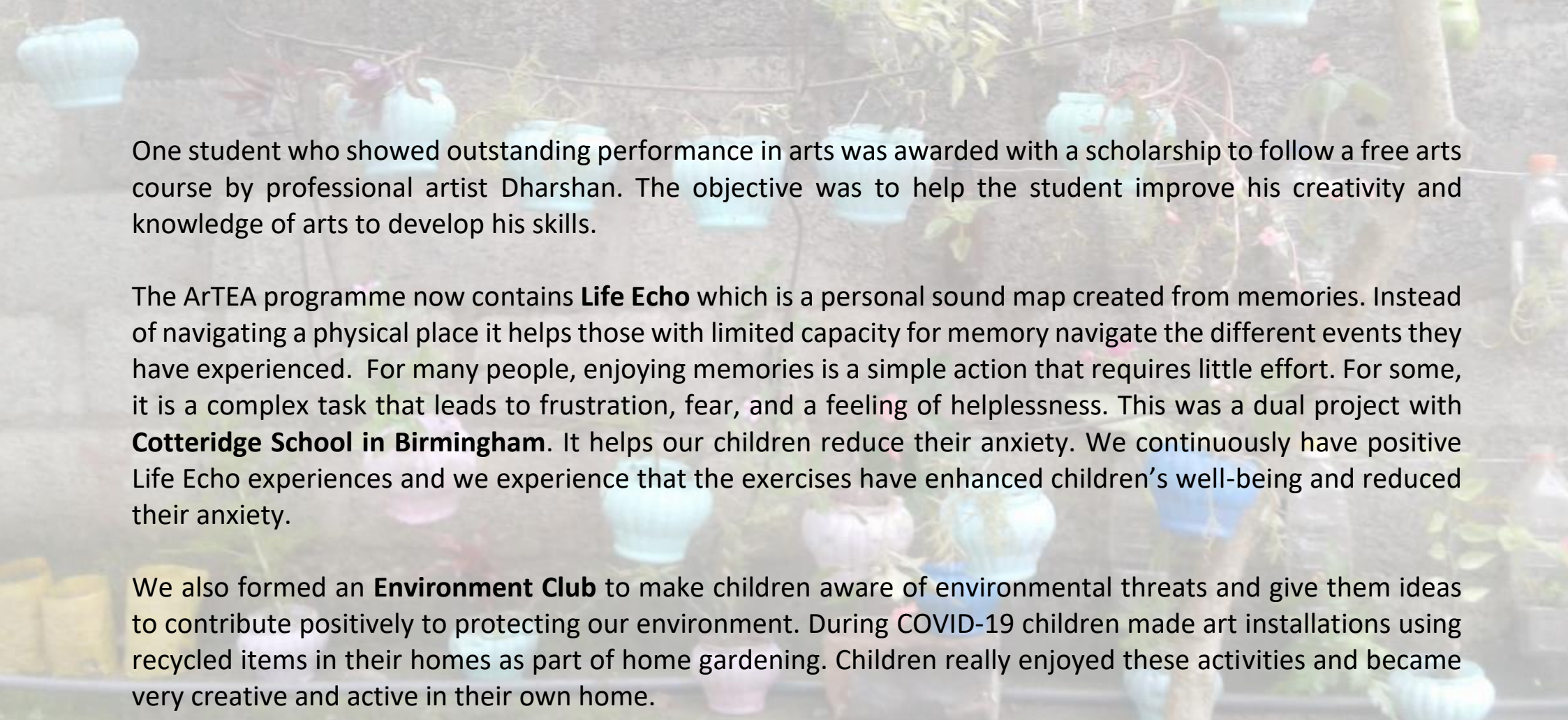


Objectives for this scholarship programme were to improve the education level of estate sector children and to give an opportunity to estate sector children to benefit from high-quality education from an international/semi-government school. This is an exciting pilot project and we hope to provide further Tiny T.E.A. gradates funded opportunities to complete their primary education in English medium at an International School.

T.E.A. developed its first public **Webinar** to provide our young experts a voice to share their advice regarding the pandemic for children around the world. Three panelists who attend Y.E.S. and are members of our Youth Board were selected based on their performance and interest. The COVID-19 impact and information on how children spend their time during that period along with the available resources were shared as recommendations. This was a new experience for The T.E.A. Project and it was a huge success.

### **Arts programmes and Environment Club**

Art-based work assists children to explore the world without boundaries, working with junk material, drawing cracks in the wall, mosaic painting and making art installations are some activities children enjoy. Therapeutic art workshops encourage students to express their feelings using art and creativity. Developing communication skills and using different tools in this way helps students to relax, have fun, **share their emotions and unleash their hidden talents** and creative abilities. All students have personal folders and they are encouraged to develop individual portfolios of their work. This programme is hugely successful with children of all ages. In 2021, it was conducted with children of grades 6 to 8. During C-19 children completed home projects. TEACHERS received feedback and pictures of the children's work via WhatsApp groups, which showed that they happily engaged in being active during times of lockdown.



One student who showed outstanding performance in arts was awarded with a scholarship to follow a free arts course by professional artist Dharshan. The objective was to help the student improve his creativity and knowledge of arts to develop his skills.

The ArTEA programme now contains **Life Echo** which is a personal sound map created from memories. Instead of navigating a physical place it helps those with limited capacity for memory navigate the different events they have experienced. For many people, enjoying memories is a simple action that requires little effort. For some, it is a complex task that leads to frustration, fear, and a feeling of helplessness. This was a dual project with **Cotteridge School in Birmingham**. It helps our children reduce their anxiety. We continuously have positive Life Echo experiences and we experience that the exercises have enhanced children's well-being and reduced their anxiety.

We also formed an **Environment Club** to make children aware of environmental threats and give them ideas to contribute positively to protecting our environment. During COVID-19 children made art installations using recycled items in their homes as part of home gardening. Children really enjoyed these activities and became very creative and active in their own home.

### **Celebrating youth events**

The T.E.A. Project invests a lot of resources into enabling children to organise small events. This is not because we are crazy about planning (which we are). Providing children with small budgets and guidance to develop child-led ideas into events and activities is not only great fun but it provides a vital learning experience. These events enable **children to celebrate how special they are** and for adults to realise the incredible potential of

children when they are given the power to make their own decisions. We frequently hear how surprised teachers are by their students' abilities – this not only **raises children's aspirations but it increases teacher's expectations of children.**

**Thai Pongal** was celebrated on 18 and 19 January at The Cloud. Three events with games were organised by the Youth Board for the Tiny T.E.A. and Y.E.S. users following COVID-19 guidelines. More than 60 children attended this cultural event, traditional rituals were held and everyone was offered delicious traditional food and refreshments made by our skilled TEAm and children and young people.

The Cloud celebrated **International Women's Day** on 8 March 2021 with 60 children. The Tiny T.E.A. preschoolers created a Women's Day poster. A creative writing and an art competition was launched and EVERY-Body, The T.E.A. Project's healthy relationship training, was conducted with girls and boys of grades 9, 10 and 11 over two full days. The Women's Day celebration event focused on gender equality, past and present stories of successful women, awareness about the significance and purpose of women, issues faced by women and how youth could support women, as well as women's career objectives. Children were actively contributing their ideas and opinions on Women's Day and they were keen to engage in interactive group work sessions organised by the TEAm.

Usually in April we would hold a **New Year's celebration.** The event was planned to include traditional games. However, the event in this year was disrupted due to COVID-19 restrictions. Also **Children's Day** in October had to be cancelled due to the pandemic.

For Christmas 2021 the T.E.A. Project ran its annual Wish Tree event, this time for children aged 11 and above. Our local hotel supporters The Theva Residency ran a Christmas appeal and collected dozens of **Christmas gift boxes** from generous individual Sri Lankan donors so that we could surprise children from the communiTEAs around our Centre with magical Christmas gift boxes. The kindness and generosity demonstrated was truly inspiring.

In addition, TEA organized a **Reverse Advent Calendar** with the help of The Theva Residency. We received 100 gifts boxes and gave one box to each family. These boxes included essential food items, clothes, toys stationery enabling the children to have a wonderful season and continue their education.

## What next?

1. The Centre will develop its calendar of cultural and important events to provide lots of memorable opportunities for children to showcase their talents. Events will be planned and facilitated by service users including creative art exhibitions, writing and dance competitions.
2. We will create more programmes that help to address the mental and physical well-being as well as the safety of the children and youth.
3. We continue to develop virtual seminars and webinars to engage children from across the Island in fun and engaging learning.

### **3.3 Priority Three: Promotion of child rights, empowerment and awareness**

Children are key actors within community development. Participation in learning should be active and promote meaningful engagement in society. We train children to understand their rights as enshrined in the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**. Sri Lanka signed up to the Convention in 1991, however knowledge of children's rights continues to be limited among teachers, parents and children. Cultural norms can often deny children and girls to make informed choices, fully exercise their rights and actively participate in society.

**LIFE** (Leadership, Independence, Futures & Empowerment) **training** is a 12-hour leadership programme. Since launching the programme 4-years ago we have trained over 1,000 children throughout the Island. The training is facilitated in three languages; **Sinhala, Tamil and English** by a team of local trainers. LIFE Training promotes **the Voice of the Child** and encourages active participation. Children learn leadership skills, how to keep safe, about children's rights and how to develop a personal SMART goal. They also develop a range of soft skills including listening, communication and presentation skills. In the reporting period 2021 we ran several LIFE training programmes with children from grades 6 to 11.

Our **Youth Board**, are a group of local children representing a diverse mix of cultural and religious backgrounds. Our Youth Board have supported various programmes and events with special performances and planning. Furthermore, in 2021 the Youth Board worked with **university students from Hong Kong** on a project focusing on supporting vulnerable communiTEAs in the fields of environment and health. The Youth Board received training and participated in the recruitment process of staff during 2021. For this, they formed an interview panel and took part in the collective decision-making process.

## **Empowering Girls to Be Healthy, Happy and Resilient**

Developing emotional intelligence and robust mental health of youth, especially girls is a key focus of our work. Women face lower literacy rates and are more often unemployed than men. The labour force participation of women as of 2021 is 33.6 % of the total population (UNDP). Still women face limited opportunities to fully integrate into the workforce.

Over **one million Sri Lankans are employed in the tea industry**, a large proportion of this workforce are young women. Millions of women are engaged in low skill, low income economic activities in the large informal sector and are also concentrated as unpaid family labour in agricultural communities. Their assets are limited by discriminatory laws and by social practices.

**EVERY-Body** is a training programme conducted by The T.E.A. Project to enhance the knowledge of sexual and reproductive health. The programme helps adolescents understand emotional and physical changes during puberty and it helps adolescents to stay safe and overcome challenges faced in the society. It also includes breaking down male and female stereotypes and promotes respect of girls and partners. A key focus of this training is to educate adolescents on different forms of harassment, Internet safety and how to increase personal safety. In 2021 we continued to deliver training. We ran a full-day workshop on International Women's Day and activities to promote awareness of sexual reproductive rights.



## What next?

1. We will continue to train and educate adults on children's rights issues.
2. We will run further LIFE training programmes with new and existing school partners.
3. The frequent analysis of all training feedback will guide and influence development of training programmes.
4. Our Youth Board will be further involved in strategic decision-making and recruitment.
5. We will register as a youth club of national level.
6. We will continue to run healthy relationship training through our EVERY-Body training.
7. We continue to deliver our Suicide Prevention training.
8. We will establish projects to empower girls, share experiences and develop capacity of girls to make informed life choices.



### 3.4 Priority Four: VolunTEAr Mobilization

In 2020 we revised our key priorities and volunTEAr mobilization became one of our **new focus areas**. VolunTEArS are a very important asset in the day-to-day activities of The T.E.A. Project and ultimately essential to realize our vision. We encourage international and local volunTEAring.

One great example of volunTEAr mobilization is our **Youth Board** founded in 2019 where young people donate their time to support our organisation, gain knowledge and become involved in decision-making. The Youth Board frequently recruit new members and expand their knowledge and skills.

Another important pillar in the field of volunTEAring are our **ParentTEArS** who donate five hours per month to give something back for the free education of their children in our Tiny T.E.A. pre-school. Work of ParentTEArS significantly contributes to the day-to-day operation of the project, it helps to establish a sense of ownership that increases the strength of and commitment for the project.

To recognize outstanding volunTEArS and to motivate them in their work for The T.E.A. Project, we created the **VolunTEAr Achievement Award**, a reward system for local volunteers. Every three months one local volunTEAr who shows extra-ordinary performance is awarded a trophy, a certificate and a voucher as an incentive. Every volunTEAr is monitored and assessed according to the following four criteria: *shows initiative, hard-working, high impact, best support*.

Due to the CODID-19 pandemic affecting every aspect of life, in 2021 T.E.A. was not able to recruit many new **international volunTEArS** as the government did not allow foreigners to enter the country. Thus, the focus in

2021 was on recruiting **local volunTEArs**. Nonetheless, T.E.A. is continuing its international outreach and also planning on activities in the field of voluntourism to make effective use of it once travelling will be safe again. This includes developing commercial opportunities and collaborations with travel agencies, platforms and NGOs that help place volunteers. We recruited a range of highly skilled local volunteers which added enormous value to the work of The T.E.A. Project.

To this end, in 2020 T.E.A. developed a three-day paid package for tourists together with the Sri Lanka-based French **travel agency Atypique Lanka** to give travelers the opportunity to visit the Centre and volunteer for three days, raising awareness for marginalized communities in the tea plantations and bringing in funding. The travel agency actively promotes this package alongside their other offers. All of our volunteering activities put child protection at their core, we have rigorous policies in place to safeguard children and communities that we serve.

Furthermore, The T.E.A. Project started a partnership with the international organisation **AIESEC** that provides global volunteer exchange experiences. We signed the contract in December 2020, however didn't receive any international volunteers in 2021 through AIESEC.

## What next?

1. We develop and en-skill our volunteer network of young people.
2. We develop an intercultural training for staff and volunteers.
3. We attract more volunTEARs and expand our network, especially in the field of marketing.
4. We build partnerships with universities, schools and other organisations to attract volunTEARs.
5. We develop our volunteer accommodation and facilities.

### **3.5 Priority Five: Organisational Development**

As part of our **revision of priorities** in the reporting period we have identified organisational development as a further key priority from 2020. We see this area as essential for providing high-quality and high standard services to children and the communiTEA. This includes resource mobilization, partnership and outreach, service delivery, accountability and reputation as well as improving monitoring and evaluation.

Due to the pandemic and ongoing restrictions The T.E.A. Project developed a COVID-19 procedure that required all visitors to wear face masks and wash hands when they enter. All areas, furniture and equipment are to be disinfected at the beginning and the end of each day, and each learning space will be cleaned after every meeting / group activity. This procedure is essential in maintaining health and safety and ensuring highest standards at the Centre.

T.E.A. conducted a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis to improve attendance of the service users and to identify potential threats and solutions. Consequently, a timetable with measures was introduced that were followed and implemented throughout 2021. T.E.A. identified that an outreach programme was key to countering poor attendance. In 2021 development began with the aim to start the programme in 2022.


Based on a decision of the senior management in 2020, as of January 2021 the Director of Sri Lankan Operations took over the role of Chief Executive of The T.E.A. Project. T.E.A. also recruited a new Director of Centre Operations on 1 March 2021. Founder Carl returned to the UK in January and Founder Racheal returned in the

middle of March 2021. The TEAm are sad to say goodbye to Carl and Racheal however they will both join the Board of TrusTEAs and keep in regular contact with the project.

A new assistant pre-school TEAcher has been selected due to Keerthika leaving her role. The new TEAcher began working in August 2021. T.E.A. also hired a MarkeTEAR Fundraiser in the middle of October. It is a new role and he will be responsible for fundraising and marketing. Furthermore, a new F.O.O.D. Programme Coordinator was recruited at the end of 2021. She will join beginning of 2022.

The staff and/or new **TEAm members received the following trainings in 2021:** *Leadership Training to develop leadership skills and a positive attitudes towards work; a Plastic-Free Workshop to make them aware of the harmful effects of using plastics, Introduction to Listening Service, the webinar “Charities and Safeguarding in an International Context to give supportive instructions for the Child Safeguarding Officer to develop T.E.A. safeguarding measures, guidance on safeguarding and protecting people who come into contact with our organization.*

One of our volunteers also conducted a workshop called **“Who am I?”** to learn how to understand ourselves better and what makes us special as individuals.

A photograph showing two individuals, a woman on the left and a man on the right, both wearing blue uniforms and face masks. They are kneeling in a field, focused on planting a young tree sapling into a hole in the soil. The woman is on the left, and the man is on the right. The background is filled with green vegetation and a building with a red roof is visible in the distance. The image has a semi-transparent overlay with text.

## What next?

1. We will continue to train staff and create opportunities for personal and organisational development.
2. New partnerships with organisations in the same field will be established to secure funding as well as knowledge transfer and existing partnerships will be strengthened.
3. We will continually revise our standards to maintain highest quality in our services.
4. An overall monitoring and evaluation system will be introduced.
5. We will review and improve financial planning and monitoring.

### **3.6 Other major achievements/events**

Since funding is an important pillar of our work we frequently organise fundraising events. However, due to COVID-19 in 2020 events where people gather physically were not allowed. As a consequence, T.E.A. held its second **virtual CommuniTEA event** over ten days in December before Christmas. Many local supporters, partners and VolunTEARs performed virtually and helped to raise funds for our free services for disadvantaged children at The Cloud. Contents included concerts, yoga and meditation sessions, a cooking class, an art workshop and more.

Thank you to all local and international artists and partners who donated their skills and services for our annual virtual Christmas fundraiser.

## 4. Summary and Outlook

### 4.1 Summary

Firstly, we would like to thank all of our corporate and individual donors who have supported the work of The T.E.A. Project in 2021. We are extremely thankful to the generosity of local and international volunteers who donated their time and skills to empower children. The continued success and growth of the project is due to our valued donors and individuals who give regular donations, organised local fundraising events and supported various funding campaigns. We are furthermore thankful to our dedicated Board of Trustees and corporate sponsors **Hirdaramani and ASICS** for their incredible commitment and support of The T.E.A. Project. And last but not least, our patron, Dr Sulochana.

In 2021 COVID-19 was still present as in the previous year and affected Sri Lankan life severely. Nonetheless, we managed to start all services by the beginning of 2021. New programmes such as **W.o.W., the Saturday Service**, an **arts programme** and the **Environment Club** were introduced, as well as the **Listening Service**. To improve our approach T.E.A. conducted a S.W.O.T. analysis. Its main outcome was establishing an outreach programme with partner schools. We successfully developed a plan to start the programme in early 2022.

At the end of 2020, T.E.A. faced fundamental structural changes with the founders Carl and Racheal leaving their positions in 2021. However, they handed their life work over to a dynamic team. Those changes also entailed the recruitment of new employees who will be working together to realize our vision in the future.

Thank you to all of our supporters for your countless effort and commitment.



## 4.2 Outlook

With regard to the pandemic we hope that the situation improves further and restrictions are reduced so that our Centre can be used to its full potential in empowering children.

As part of our restructuring we are welcoming our new F.O.O.D. Programme Coordinator from January 2022. We are also looking forward to seeing our co-founders Racheal and Carl visit us in summer 2022.

We are hoping to grow our network of supporters further to be able to expand our services to more children and communiTEAs in other areas. With our work we want to help to develop aspirations in young people, providing them with the practical skills and knowledge to positively improve their futures and implement sustainable change. They will get the opportunity to build skills and the confidence needed to make good choices for a healthy participation in society.

We will develop a robust fundraising strategy to support our future needs, the Board of Trustees have begun a programme to re-define the priorities, ambitious and outcome indicators of The T.E.A. Project.

# Audit Report 2021





**The T.E.A. Project  
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