



**Equality-based Community
Support And Training**



ANNUAL REPORT

2019 - 2020



A YEAR OF MEETING CHALLENGES

89

Therapeutic Support

51

One-to-one support for autistic and hyperactive children

72

After School Class for underachievers

42

School Preparation for children who have never been to school

10

Pre-school children

28

Outreach

We are supporting increasing numbers of children and young adults.

83

Vocational Training for young adults



** 2019 - 2020 figures*



*It's been a year
of challenges*

DEAR SUPPORTERS,

I would like to thank all the staff and supporters for working hard during a challenging year for ECSAT. The year started with the terrible Easter bombings in Colombo which shocked and saddened the whole country. For the safety of our beneficiaries, ECSAT closed its services for two weeks and used the time to increase the capacity of staff with training sessions and a review of our safety procedures.

In June, we welcomed David Kimber and Fran Siemensma for a year placement through the Australian Volunteer programme.

In October, I was granted a scholarship to study for an MA in Disability Policy and Practice at Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia. I look forward to returning to ECSAT in 2022 with new skills to take ECSAT forward as a leader in the field of disability in Sri Lanka.

The year ended with the challenge of coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff and beneficiaries stayed at home, and staff continued to support families by phone with therapeutic exercises, homework for education classes and vocational training skills. While in Australia, I continue to work for ECSAT through email, Skype and phone calls.

I would like to thank all the sponsors and supporters who continue to support me remotely while I am in Australia. All ECSAT's services continue under the leadership of Lakshika De Silva as Operations Officer with staff accepting the challenge of new ways of working in their key roles.

Thank you.

Roshan Samarawickrama
Programme Director

*ECSAT has three
centres with one
aim: to provide
support for children
with disabilities
through education,
vocational training
and therapy.*



Matara Centre



Galle Centre



Hikkaduwa Centre

KEY STAFF ROLES FROM OCTOBER 2019



"I'm Lakshika De Silva, Operations Officer of ECSAT since October 2019. Earlier I worked at an outsourced accountant position in ECSAT. It is a new challenge for me working in another role. It is a great pleasure for me working at ECSAT. All the directors and staff members support me to continue my duties."



"I'm Ayesha Ponnampuruma and I have been working at ECSAT since 2013 as an Administrator. I am doing a very challenging duty. I am so lucky to work with the ECSAT team. I try my best do my duties professionally."



"My name is Gayani Sugandika and I've been working at the ECSAT Education Section as a Project Coordinator since 2006. I like to give my support to build children's education, social and life skills."



"I'm Piyumi Perera, Project Coordinator of the Vocational Project at ECSAT. I am supporting to develop the vocational training for vocational age trainees. I am so happy to give my ultimate support for these children."



"I'm Kumari Kariyawasam, Project Coordinator of the Therapy project. I give my therapeutic and sensory support for the cerebral palsy children in Galle and Matara Centres."



"I'm Eshani Muditha, Assistant Administrator. I'm so proud to join ECSAT. This is the first job of my life and I'm working here very happily. I'd like to convey my gratitude to ECSAT for giving me an opportunity to work here."

INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES

Eshani, a wheelchair user, and Thusharika, with hearing impairment, are two members of staff who have overcome many challenges in their lives. Now, they are great role models and are women leaders with disabilities. Regardless of the difficulties, they travelled to Bangkok as Women's Institute on Leadership and Disability (WILD) delegates at a strategic

planning meeting from November 23rd-26th. The forum provided the opportunity to discuss strategies for deepening engagement of women with disabilities with broader women's and other social justice movements. Returning to Sri Lanka, they collaborated with other Sri Lankan delegates and produced a 'Be Safe' mobile app.



EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES

ECSAT works hard to increase support among organisations and businesses in the wider community for employment opportunities for young adults with disabilities.



SADEEPA

Sadeepa is 23 years old, has Downs syndrome and only attended primary education. He cannot read or write and came to Matara Centre for vocational training in November 2016. At first he was very shy and liked to be alone. ECSAT conducted programmes and activities to help him become more sociable. Sadeepa learnt gardening, cooking and sewing and showed a special ability for cooking. He is a very careful, neat young man and always well

presented. ECSAT referred Sadeepa to Hangtime Hostel in Weligama on the southern coast of Sri Lanka for a job opportunity. Recently he started working two days a week as a waiter serving food to customers and studies at ECSAT three days a week. ECSAT follows his progress and hotel staff are happy with his work and give him good support. ECSAT would like to express their thanks and gratitude to the team Hangtime Hostel.



SANDAMINI

Sandamini is 23 years old. Before she joined the Education unit at ECSAT, she received her primary education from a government school in Galle. She had the basic knowledge of literacy, mathematics and other subjects. We provided speech therapy because she stammered. Sandamini was the best student in her exams and joined the vocational training unit. She learnt beauty culture, gardening, sewing, handicraft and cooking and was particularly interested in beauty culture. She practised the beauty techniques of cleaning and facials

on the staff. ECSAT discussed her future with her parents and referred her to a well-known salon in Galle. She works there two days a week receiving training. We follow up her progress and know that some staff and customers ignored her and rejected her services, but others praised her. Sandamini wears a salon uniform and is an attractive girl. She is very happy with her job opportunity and her parents are pleased with her progress. Sandamini continues her skill training at ECSAT for three days a week.

LIFESTYLE CHALLENGES

ECSAT is proud of the huge lifestyle changes that are made to the lives of children who attend physiotherapy and speech and language sessions.

AMADI

Amadi is a 10-year old girl with cerebral palsy. When she first came to Galle Centre five years ago, she could not sit without support, had no hand eye coordination and her hands and legs were floppy. Now, after physiotherapy support,

Amadi can sit without support, eat by herself, walk with the aid of a therapy ball and take a few steps by herself. She is able to join with the pre-school classes. Her parents are very proud of her and have made a video of her walking.



KAVEEN

Kaveen is a 9-year old boy with Down's syndrome. When he joined the Matara Centre he had not been to a government school and cried a great deal. He paid no attention to the teachers or the other children and liked to be alone. Now he responds to his teachers, sits in one place,

practices his vocal exercises and is learning to pronounce sentences. He focuses on his pre-writing exercises. His parents are very grateful to ECSAT for his progress and hope he can join the vocational unit when he is older.

THE CHALLENGE OF BEING INDEPENDENT

ECSAT carries out many programmes to develop the independence of the children and young adults. They are given every opportunity to demonstrate their life and social skills.



1. HOSTING SPONSORS FROM GERMANY

In January, beneficiaries at Galle and Matara welcomed 12 members of the Lemonaid & ChariTea organisation from Germany who fund the 'Transforming Livelihoods and Lives of People with Disabilities' project. They performed a welcome dance and served refreshments they had prepared. ECSAT gave a presentation about the project which highlighted the challenges, progress and future plans. During the presentation, the Programme Director also joined in the discussion through Skype from Australia.

The young adults joined with the sponsors to plant three trees as a symbol of their commitment to the project. At Matara Centre, they joined face to face with their parents and the sponsors for an open discussion about all aspects of the project and for the sponsors to hear from the grass roots and not just the staff. The sponsors said they had a clear understanding about the project and were aware of the challenges faced by beneficiaries and staff to achieve the objectives.



2. TRAVEL BY TRAIN

As part of the summer holiday programme, children at Hikkaduwa Centre hosted a visit from the education classes at Galle. Children journeyed by train from Galle to Hikkaduwa, a learning experience because it was the first time many of them had traveled by train. The children had to learn appropriate behaviour about travelling in public with other passengers. This achievement improved their self-confidence.

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3. VISIT THE POST OFFICE

Students learnt about the postal service and 30 beneficiaries and 05 staff visited Matara post office and posted a letter to their parents. As a life and social skill activity, the children learnt about public places and how to behave in a public place with other customers.



4. HOME CULTIVATION

In January, 20 trainees, 18 parents and 03 staff received instruction from the agriculture consultant of Labuduwa Agriculture Department, Mrs Nayanathara, about how to use a small space at home for cultivation and different gardening techniques. This was a good experience for our vocational trainees who were highly motivated and very sociable working with other people as well as ECSAT staff.

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5. PREPARE AND COOK THEIR MEALS

ECSAT provided practical training for students to travel by public transport on their own to a supermarket and buy the ingredients for a rice and curry meal. They learnt about planning, organising and making choices and decisions on their own. This was carried out once a week

and, initially, students and staff found this challenging. Now the ECSAT team is proud with the confidence shown by the students who have the potential to be independent. They cook the meals at home and their parents are proud of their achievements.

THE CHALLENGE OF EARNING AN INCOME

Through the vocational training programme, young adults learn handicraft, cookery, gardening and basic business skills. ECSAT supports them to set up a business and find a market for their items.

There are 10 trainees who have set up their own businesses. One cultivates spinach, four sew pillow cases,

nightdresses, bedsheets and serviettes, three make paper bags for the shops and one does the facials for her family members. If they are unable to earn a big income for the month, they can give their support for their family cost of living. Also their parents can keep hope about their future.





EDUCATION CHALLENGES

cont./

ECSAT took up the challenge of introducing a new concept to government schools. We decided our 14 years of experience with children with disabilities enabled us to serve another group of children.

Children with disabilities have very limited opportunities to attend government schools. There are a few schools with special education units but some are staffed by teachers with no training in special education. ECSAT offers an Education Framework Programme to local schools in the Galle area. This has been well received by local government officers, zonal education officers, school principals and teachers.

ECSAT provided education support for 30 children at Olcott School who had low marks for mathematics and literacy. ECSAT has provided two activity syllabus packs for two children as a guidance. ECSAT had 12 new assessments with Olcott school children and identified two children with disabilities. We referred them to ECSAT Galle Centre for physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and some one-to-one support.

Due to government rules, ECSAT had to have 10 more meetings with the

Provincial Director, Director of Zonal Education and other relevant officials to get permission to start working with a new school. As a result of those meetings, we were referred to All Saints School. After home visits to 40 children, we selected 20 children for the Education Framework.

In addition ECSAT organised an **awareness programme** about our Education Framework system for a total of 175 government and non-

government officers including the Social Service Officers, Child Rights Protection Officer and Early Intervention Officer.

ECSAT is able to meet all these Education challenges due to continuous support from **Kindermissionwerk**. We express our gratitude to them on behalf of our children and staff.



THE CHALLENGE OF REFERRALS

ECSAT is always very proud when a child makes good progress with his education and can be referred to a government school. Without this referral, the child would not be able to attend. Raweesha is an autistic boy who attended Hikkaduwa Centre and was transferred to a government school in January 2020.





THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINABILITY

ECSAT builds sustainability into its projects with the aim of handing over to the community while maintaining follow up support.

After training the staff at Dorape, a rural school, ECSAT handed over the Education Framework as a guidance for their classes and continues to follow up the childrens' progress.



THE CHALLENGE OF REDUCING WAITING LISTS

ECSAT's services are in demand from parents of children with disabilities and all projects have a waiting list.

Souter Charitable Trust sponsored the project Teach Me to reduce the waiting list for 30 children to attend school preparation and after school classes at Matara Centre.



PARENTS ARE CHALLENGED TO GAIN NEW SKILLS

ECSAT started a parents training project at Galle and Matara Centres as family support for parents, especially mothers, who are not working. There were eight mothers in Galle and eighteen mothers and one father in Matara who participated for these training sessions. Travelteer foreign volunteers and special sewing instructors supported these sessions. Altogether there were 10 sessions in Galle and 14 in Matara.

Some had the basic sewing skills and some of them had none. They received training about sewing laptop bags, purses, cushion covers, school uniform, wall hangers, brazilian embroidery, applique, machine embroidery, bags, shirt blouses, lunch bags and A-line skirts. Also they trained about special cookery items such as chocolate biscuit, cake, pudding, vegetable rotti and wade which they can do as self employment.

MEET NADEEKA

Nadeeka had no basic skills about sewing at the beginning, not even about stitching. After joining for the training she started making purses. She has no sewing machine at her home so she used the cloth pieces and trained to sew purses by hand. Now she does the sewing very well and sells the purses among the parents and neighbours.





THE CHALLENGE OF MARKETING HANDICRAFTS

The aftermath of the Easter bombings drastically reduced the number of tourists coming to Sri Lanka which affected sales of handicrafts at popular tourist outlets. ECSAT continuously seeks new markets, locally, nationally and internationally for our handicrafts. We rely on the positive feedback we receive to promote our products.

We had a bulk of handicraft Christmas orders from America. Mr. Chandra Josuha is one of our supporters who greatly helped

the ECSAT Handicraft project by selling many handicraft items including Christmas items, batiks and other products. Also, we made greeting cards samples for Mr. Chandra and he ordered cards. We would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Chandra for supporting our handicraft sales.

We had excellent feedback from a customer in Germany who ordered many items including cushion covers and a sari (pictured right overleaf)



"I am so happy! The saree is very nice, Thank you for all. Have a nice day. Greetings Waltraud"

VOLUNTEERS

With Travelteer, groups of volunteers from the UK supported Galle and Matara centres from February to April 2019. The majority contributed to handicraft training with the parents and some taught English to vocational training students.

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“During our week’s orientation in Galle Fort as new Australian Volunteers in June 2019, we saw the impact of the Easter bombings on tourist numbers and business morale. Yet, when we came to ECSAT, the story was completely different. We were welcomed like royalty, with dance, music, flowers and food. Then we were warmly inducted into ECSAT’s ways of treating its beneficiaries and staff with care, compassion and patience. We learnt the difference between providing disability services, and educating, caring for and empowering those who are ‘differently abled’. We hope we can contribute to ECSAT’s fundraising, management and its ongoing vitality. Unfortunately, due to the covid-19 pandemic, we had to return to Australia in March before we had finished our placement. Our time here has given us new friendships, new insights and wonderful experiences.”

-Fran Siemensma and David Kimber (pictured right)





HOW YOU CAN HELP

Donations make a huge difference to the lives of poor and vulnerable people in Sri Lanka. Please support our work by making a one-off or regular donation. Visit www.ecsatlanka.org/donate.

Our amazing volunteers bring their passion and energy to our work. Find out more at www.ecsatlanka.org/get_involved.

Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ecsat

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THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Our support group in the UK, Friends of ECSAT, funds the satellite centre at Hikkaduwa which is open four days a week and supports 22 individuals with disabilities.

We said farewell to trustees Helen and Daisy, who have other commitments, and thanked them for their support over the years. But we welcome Charlotte Lewell as a trustee. Charlotte was a Travelteer volunteer with ECSAT in 2019. She has a degree in Special Needs and an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language.

Charlotte will be in charge of promoting ECSAT and FOE on social media and through her contacts with Bishop Grosseteste University. Also, she will work with the students union to recruit volunteers.



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