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www.tealeaftrust.com
info@tealeaftrust.com
charity registration no: 1123427
FOREWORD:

Despite arriving in Sri Lanka over 160 years ago, fleeing famine in South India, little has changed for the Indian-Tamil communities who pick the world’s tea. They remain excluded in isolated communities, living in rural slums and enduring a deliberate system that enforces their second-class status (Peiris et al. 2015; Ilyas 2016; ISI, VR 2019; Yiannopoulos 2019). Education in the tea estates is chronically under-funded and under-resourced, based on a curriculum lacking relevance to the modernising labour market (Peiris et al. 2015; World Bank 2015; Dunder et al. 2017). The vast majority of young people from these communities live below the poverty line, and most are exposed to the high rates of alcoholism and domestic violence that are endemic within the tea estates, and faced with a lack of career prospects outside of them (Ilyas 2016; ISI, VR 2019; Yiannopoulos 2019).

With a vision to address and resolve these issues, Tea Leaf Trust (TLT) - established as a UK charity with the primary objective of relieving poverty, hardship and suffering in the tea plantations through education and training - founded the Tea Leaf Vision (TLV) Centres for Professional Development and Vocational Training in the tea picking, hill country regions of Sri Lanka. TLV are youth-led educational centres that engage disadvantaged young people aged 18 to 26 from in and around the tea estates, not only providing education in the English language, but in employability and emotional health. The Centres are concerned with personal, professional and community development, supporting young people to prepare for the working world, to become active agents of positive change in their communities, and to develop the skills to cope positively with the socio-economic challenges they face daily.

This strategic plan is a road map for TLT from 2021 to 2023, outlining the ways in which it will continue to support the TLV model of youth engagement and development to be replicable, replicated, and sustainable.

Section 1 of the Strategic Plan 2021 - 2023 details the background of both the Tea Leaf Trust in the UK and the Tea Leaf Vision Centres for Professional Development and Vocational Training in Sri Lanka. It gives an overview of the organisational structure and the approach adopted by the TLV Centres in supporting personal, professional and community development.

Section 2 briefly reviews the strengths of both Tea Leaf Trust and Tea Leaf Vision, reflecting on the achievements we have made and redefining our strategic goals in relation to the journey so far, as to achieve our mission.
SECTION 1: Background

Who We Are

Tea Leaf Trust was established in 2008 with the principal objective of relieving poverty, hardship and suffering in the tea plantation areas of Sri Lanka by supporting young people to obtain and retain employment through training, education and creating opportunities in employment. TLT achieves these objectives primarily by providing strategic guidance, mentoring and financial and fundraising support to Tea Leaf Vision Centres for Professional Development and Vocational Training, the projects founded by the Trust in Sri Lanka. A registered UK charity, TLT is a trust, which is governed by a Board of Trustees (‘the trustees’) based in the UK, Ireland, France, Australia and Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Tea Leaf Trust is registered in Sri Lanka as Tea Leaf Vision, a national NGO (L-169504) and operates under a Board of Directors providing in-country oversight. The Board is composed of experienced and values-driven individuals bringing experience in accountancy, corporate sector and the retired Country Director of the Ethical Tea Partnership. Tim Pare, co-founder of Tea Leaf Trust sits on both boards.

Soon after the founders - also board members - formed the organisation following their honeymoon in 2007, they moved to the country, spending one-year volunteering at Beacon Hill Academy in Nuwara Eliya. This not only provided the blueprint for the TLV curriculum, but also allowed them the time to raise funds and research a location where an educational centre would most benefit underprivileged tea estate communities. After consulting with tea companies, government officials, civil society organisations and the tea estates communities themselves, they established Tea Leaf Vision Centre for Professional Development and Vocational Training in Maskeliya in 2010. Currently, we have three centres operating in Sri Lanka, a prospering partnership with Sri Lanka Unites, a new teacher training programme being delivered to public school teachers and a new partnership with Kinder Not Hilfe.
Our Values

During the formulation of the Strategic Goals of 2021 – 2023, the trustees identified five core principles – integrity, empathy, trust, respect and empowerment – with which to guide every action and decision in the coming years. We ensure our decision-making processes are informed by the expertise of the Central Team in Sri Lanka, and by the needs of the communities we serve. In addition, we recognise and honour the founding values of the first TLV Centre established in Maskeliya in 2010 by the original staff team. These values, which are outlined below, have created an ethos and school environment of inclusiveness and unity that have facilitated both students and staff to grow and flourish:

1. Every individual will be treated equally and with respect
2. We will work together with synergy
3. We will work hard to ensure the mission is met and the school is sustainable
4. We will raise awareness of the opportunities available to the target groups
5. We will motivate target groups to achieve their aspirations
6. All students will have the opportunity to develop skills in order to create their own destiny
7. We will strive to find the best solutions to support all stakeholders and the local community
8. We will never give up on the tea estates communities
Why We Do It

Following the civil war that spanned nearly three decades, Sri Lanka is rapidly developing into a hub of tourism and commerce in South Asia (World Bank 2015). However, there are communities left out of this development; in a country rebuilding itself following sustained ethnic conflict, it is the Indian Tamils that continue to suffer (Peiris et al. 2015; ISI,VR 2019; Yiannopoulos 2019). They are often seen as inferior in Sri Lankan society and historically bound to work in poverty stricken and exploitative conditions on Sri Lanka’s tea estates (Ilyas 2016; ISI,VR. 2019).

At this point in time, with a government who are felt to perhaps favour the Sinhalese Buddhist majority, we need to recognise that minority communities need additional support. (Ilyas 2016; Yiannopoulos 2019). The founders of Tea Leaf Trust first witnessed the challenging lives of tea picking communities in 2007 during a visit to the country. Astounded at the poverty and inequality they witnessed amongst communities who contributed to the production of the most commonly consumed drink in the world, they left fifteen hours later having decided to do something about it.
Education on the estates is characterised by low resource allocation, a lack of qualified teachers and poor, under-resourced facilities (Dundar et al. 2016; Ilyas 2016; ISI,VR 2019; Yiannopoulos 2019). The subjects crucial for employment in a nation developing as rapidly as Sri Lanka – English and IT – are taught by teachers without the relevant expertise or qualifications, leaving youth on the estates entirely unprepared for the professional labour market (Dundar et al, 2016; Peiris et al. 2016). In addition to this, the scale of poverty leads to high dropout rates; in a region where over 80% of TLV’s students live on less than 1 USD per day, many must trade in their education to support their families. Young adults therefore remain trapped within the tea estate system, or without the tools to develop professionally, take exploitative and dangerous work as domestic servants or laborers in the Middle East as well as in cities such as Colombo and Kandy.

By observing the many crosscutting issues affecting the development of the estates and the people who live on them, it became apparent to the TLT that the focus of this work had to be on more than just formal education. Although the Centres would work to enhance the future prospects of youth through a focus on employability skills and English, the goal of the project developed to also focus on the bottom-up transformation of these exploited communities through engaging their young people, who represent a key generation following the end of the 25-year civil war.

It also became apparent that the raft of social issues on the tea estates impacts on mental health and would be a major factor determining student success, not only from graduating the programme but also reducing our students’ ability to both secure and remain in salaried paid employment. Holistically, the ability to engage in healthy, nurturing behaviours and relationships would also be severely limited if mental health was left unaddressed. To that end, we realised that every aspect of our programme would need to be designed to improve mental health, to enable these young people to feel confident in their abilities and value, to be able to demand their rightful place as equals in Sri Lankan society.

Through TLV, TLT had to develop methods of empowerment, mental wellbeing and a desire for growth amongst these young people to become positive engaged change agents within their communities. Through TLV, TLT had to develop methods of empowerment and a desire for growth amongst these young people to become positive engaged change agents within their communities.
Our Mission

TLV engages disadvantaged Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim youth aged between 18 to 26 and children living in around the tea estates, with the aim of facilitating the development of tea estate communities through holistic, practical and relevant education. Through the engagement of an annual cohort of young people, the provision of free, quality education and facilitating an increase in access to employment opportunities, TLV aims to reduce poverty, promote ethnic cohesion and improve the quality of life within these communities.

The aims of both TLT and TLV are to enable young people to expand their career prospects beyond the tea estates and realise their untapped potential. Our shared vision is to support vulnerable youth to develop as educated, professional and empowered young people able to lead social transformation within tea plantation communities.

Our Aims

- To deliver high quality, accessible educational programmes, both full time and part-time, to young people and children from the tea estates in the hill country of Sri Lanka;
- To effect social transformation in tea estate communities by highlighting the importance of community service, and instilling it as a core value in the youth through a series of practical programmes that develop their skills to give back to their communities;
- To improve youth employability and increase employment options outside the tea estates by facilitating the development of high-standard English language skills and professional skills;
- To facilitate the development of the emotional health of young people, enabling them to strengthen their positive coping strategies in order to deal with the complex societal issues that exist in their communities.
- To build a self-sustaining programme of activity that is locally owned and led.
“There was a boy in front of me on the 17th January 2016. He looked grumpy and irritated. He was questioned about the new place Tea Leaf Vision. Days were passed. I saw him again after 10 months. I could not believe my eyes. He looked so bright and confident. He was smiling and enjoying himself. I asked him how it happened. Then he smiled at me and said ‘One year at Tea Leaf Vision can make a big difference to a person’s life’, and his name is Ansana Diwanga.”

Ansana Diwanga – Tea Leaf Vision Student, 2016

**How we do it**

Tea Leaf Vision is run by young people for young people. We work to provide opportunities for the youth of the tea estates to progress and fulfil their potential, and we believe this should be realised at every level of the organisation. Our three centres are all staffed and managed on a day-to-day basis solely by graduates of our programme. All the staff are from tea plantation areas, with the majority of teaching staff being from the local tea estates. As such, not only do they have the potential to be role models for the students, but also have a more in-depth insight into their lives. The fact that the staff teams are themselves young people from the tea estates brings a dynamism and collaborative energy.

This staffing model also applies to leadership; TLV has a Central Management Team that leads on teaching and learning, quality assurance, diversifying funding streams and expanding the organisation with an ambitious goal of ten centres by 2025, seven more than we currently have. This team is led and staffed by original graduates of the programme, who previously taught and managed TLV’s original centre in Maskeliya.

There are several levels of education and community service programmes that all students participate in. All of our programmes are free and offered to 18 to 26-year-olds who are unemployed.
Some of these programmes are aimed at supporting vulnerable children and families in their communities. All of our programmes are described in detail below, with the quantitative impact highlighted.

A key role in the success of the TLV model is that it offers young people a learning environment they have never experienced before. These differences include:

- It is the first-time students learn through the English medium and integrate with youth of other ethnicities (young people attending the centres are Tamil, Muslim and Sinhalese, which is unusual as government schools are segregated)
- The nature of the curriculum allows for creative practical learning in a relaxed yet focused environment
- Teacher-student relations honor our core values, holding principles such as empathy and respect at the heart of relationships
- Teachers act as role models for the youth attending the Centres as they are alumni and come from the tea estates themselves
- Attention is paid to the environment of the classroom as students are constantly encouraged to actively participate
- All students are treated equally regardless of their ethnicity, class or gender
Tea Leaf Vision Programmes

Main Diploma: This is the main programme at TLV and it is taught entirely in English. It consists of lessons in English Grammar, Speech and Advocacy, Business and Social Enterprise, I.T., Emotional Health and, Success and Ethics (which focuses on life skills development). It is participatory, process-orientated and based on the needs of the students. A total of 1,981 young people have graduated from the Main Diploma since 2010 (as of the end of 2020). The average rate of students to secure employment, further training or attend university one year after graduation is over 82%.

Community English Programme (CEP): The Main Diploma students are trained to be Student Teachers and to run free basic English classes for children between the ages of 9 and 11. The programme runs throughout the year with Term One being for training, and Terms Two and Three given to teaching through strategic partnerships with the zonal education authority and local government schools. Since 2010, 15,551 school children have completed the Community English Programme delivered by TLV students.

Mobile Library Project: Established through our partnership with the Rotary Clubs of Margate and Colombo (and their partner clubs), the mobile library bus makes basic English reading and comprehension accessible to remote tea plantation schools and communities.

Rotary Teacher Training Programme: This programme is delivered in partnership with the Rotary Clubs of Bathavon and Colombo West (and their partner clubs). In 2020, it was piloted with 19 secondary school teachers and aimed to improve their skills to speak English better; to teach English better; and be better equipped to plan interactive engaging English lessons. The programme was impacted by Covid-19 and so was extended to August 2021.

Self-Help Group Programme (Kinder Not Hilfe): A new partnership to capacity build the most disempowered and stigmatised women within tea estate communities. The project will establish 80 self-help groups in its first phase with the aim of collective learning and increasing political, social and economic capital with a long-term benefit in improved children’s rights within the plantation sector.

Community Service Projects: Throughout the year, TLV Centres teach the principle of service. Each term - gradually increasing in time commitment, leadership skills and responsibility - our students carry out service projects for their communities as part of their Main Diploma requirements. Since 2010, these projects have impacted 335,737 community members both directly and indirectly.
**Term One:** Shramadana - this is a group service activity, carried out by all students at multiple locations that they have advocated for having a need. It may be that a group fix the water tank at a local school or that they cut back and repair one of the key pathways for elders to get into town safely - it takes some class time to plan and then one day to deliver.

**Term Two:** Individual Service Projects - planned by each and every individual over a 6-week period, students are tasked with identifying a person or group within their community worse off than them and in need of support. Over the course of 6 weeks, each student plans and delivers their act of service. They cannot borrow or be given money from their family, but can give their own, raise money or do something that does not cost them financially.

**Term Three:** Advocacy and Awareness Projects: planned as diverse groups to encourage working with and navigating different perspectives and working styles, this project is done in small groups but to one common theme chosen by the students - past issues have been domestic violence, alcoholism and social enterprise. Through street dramas, posters and other approaches, students target ‘at-risk’ communities over a weekend to raise awareness and educate around social issues affecting their communities.

**Children’s Activity Programme (CAP):** This outreach programme has enabled TLV to increase its impact in the community. Main Diploma students are trained to run basic English classes for children between the ages of 7 and 12 attending government schools. These schools are located in the most remote tea estates where teaching staff have no, or a very low level of English. The programme offers the Student-Teachers an opportunity to gain valuable skills through management of and teaching of the programme. Since 2010, a total of 19,172 children have participated in the CAP.

**Volunteer Programme:** This initiative enables people from diverse backgrounds with varying levels of expertise to share their skills for the betterment of the TLV Centres for Professional Development. It enables continuous opportunities for professional development amongst the staff, it helps to ensure high quality education and governance within the centres, it provides an independent funding stream and it helps TLT to raise awareness of the marginalisation and impoverishment common for tea estate communities.
Programme Sustainability:

In 2020, TLT implemented a new sustainability model that will reduce running costs by about 40% to enable a more proactive approach to sustainability and expansion. It will also: ensure the quality of outcomes for our students; provide improved pathways for our graduates to receive quality teacher training; it will enable us to increase the number of Teacher Knowledge Training (TKT)-qualified English teachers within tea estate communities; it will support us to establish a mechanism for TLT to be a first employer for students, acting as a springboard for many rather than a long-term employment option for a few; and it will help to make us more resilient during turbulent times. We should also note that due to a new partnership with Kinder Not Hilfe, we have been able to implement this new model without any redundancies across our three centres and other projects. The new sustainability model replaces the Advanced Diploma programme with a Teacher Springboard model. It works as follows:

- TLV Centres will have a set number of Senior Teachers who are tasked with mentoring and supporting the Principal to effectively manage the educational quality of our centres
- Each year TLV centres will recruit between 5 and 10 Trainee Teachers from our alumni
- These Trainee Teachers will be recent graduates who wish to pursue teaching, have shown a passion and talent through our Community English Programme and do not have the A-level grades to attend government teacher training college
- Trainee Teachers will have a one-year, fixed term contract
- The Principal and Senior Teachers will train them, including supporting them to prepare for their TKT Module, an exam held by The British Council - this is the minimum required qualification to teach in private International schools or attract fee-paying students to private classes
- Trainee Teachers - who otherwise would work without pay for one-year at an International school AND pay for their tuition and TKT exam fees - will be paid a stipend to cover all their expenses, and have their training and exam fees covered by TLT
- The Trainee Teachers will become part of our staff team for the duration of the year and receive specific support from our Employment Centre to support them with next steps once their contract finishes with TLV
“Our approach is very different. We train our teachers and ensure they know that they need to help students learn coping skills to deal with their emotional struggles in order to achieve positive mental health and wellbeing. Emotional health issues make it hard to be confident and to focus, but addressing this will give these students a chance to aspire to and achieve more. We hope to set an example to other schools and to show the government what can be achieved”.

Ms. Yadharshini Selvaraj – Country Director, Tea Leaf Vision
Story of Change

Lakmi – Main Diploma Student in 2016 / Advanced Diploma Student in 2017

“Even though humans are different to each other, problems face all of us. I am a girl who has a lot of problems. Before I came to Tea Leaf Vision (TLV) my problems covered me, trapped me and I felt as though I couldn’t go anywhere. I was always frustrated about my life and sometimes I asked “Why am I here?” I was stressed and depressed all the time and I hated myself for being a girl. At one point I felt as though there was no way out and I considered ending my life.

When I came to TLV I felt different, I began to feel calmer and my problems began to lift from where they were crushing me. I still came to the class with many problems in my mind but I soon forgot them as I found myself in the care of TLV. It was as though she was my mother, giving her hands to help me overcome my difficulties. As a Main Diploma student my life was always filled with happiness and joy. Before I was a girl who was lost and alone on a road called “life”. Yet TLV was like my accommodation and my guide on that road, and I am so grateful to TLV for changing my path.

My aim is to find a job as soon as I can so that I can support and provide for my family. I am the next responsible person after my father and since my childhood I have seen how many difficulties he has faced to look after us. Now he is getting old and I can’t spend his money on unimportant things. This is why I chose to come to TLV for the Advanced Diploma and the opportunities, experiences and skills this course will provide me.

Thanks to TLV I am more responsible than last year and I am ready to accept new challenges. I am familiar with my barriers and will face them whether I will win or not. I am ready to work with new friends and the sharing, arguing, caring and fighting that comes with relationships.

These days I feel like a lotus flower which is blooming out of the mud. I am a girl who is rising through her problems and barriers and now I will be a shining star which lights up the world. Like my shadow TLV is always with me, supporting me and standing with me.

“I will win, not immediately but definitely!”
“The teachers were also an inspiration, not only supporting their students through education but also helping them to cope with their social and economic problems. All the teachers have been students at TLV and many have faced or are facing similar challenges to those of the students, which is a huge asset as they work to support them. We feel privileged and humbled to have been part of and supported the amazing work for six months”

Beth, a volunteer with TLV Maskeliya

Section 2: The Next Three Years

Since January 2010, the TLV Centres for Professional Development have directly impacted 388,742 people in and around the communities in which we are based. Our Centres have delivered the only programmes to meet crucial educational demands by providing free quality English language and I.T. education - key skills for gaining employment in Sri Lanka - to the marginalised tea estate communities. TLV’s educational model was recognised by World Vision International in 2012 as one of its top three development programmes in Sri Lanka; and in 2016, 2018 and 2019, TLV Maskeliya was ranked number one of the LBR Foundation’s thirteen Sri Lankan programmes. Its programme effectiveness, beneficiary satisfaction and administrative efficiency were highlighted by the LBR Foundation through an independent evaluation, alongside its capacity for youth empowerment, the effectiveness of its many value-added services and its robust student selection process.

As we move forward into this next stage of TLV’s development, the trustees of both TLT (UK) and TLV (SL), have defined the central goals by which to inform and drive our strategy over the next three years. These strategic goals have been formed with reference to the development of TLV since its inception, building on the organisation's successes and with recognition of lessons learned. These goals - informed by the evolving needs of the demographic served by TLV- and the potential for the organisation’s growth, have been designed to positively impact the lives of as many tea estate youths as possible.
Strategic Goals and Outcomes

Goal 1: Expansion
Increased access for tea estate youth to Tea Leaf Vision’s work through expansion of programmes within and outside Sri Lanka.

In reviewing the success of TLV over the last ten years, it became apparent that the approach of a peer-education model, a curriculum that meets the varied needs of students - economic, emotional and social - and a focus on community service has proven to be highly effective. This is partly evidenced by feedback from students and their parents, the results of our emotional health surveys year-on-year, the rate of alumni in employment or further education within six months of graduation and, the increase in demand for the programmes on a yearly basis. However, with over one million people living on tea plantations in Sri Lanka, TLT aims to adapt this approach and widen our impact in other areas through the provision of teacher training courses, specifically targeting government school English and I.T. teachers.

The three outcomes TLT will work toward under our goal of expansion are:

1. Three new TLV satellite centres established in the most isolated tea communities in the next three years
2. Assess the feasibility to open a TLV Centre in another tea producing country
3. Implement a second teacher training programme at other school locations

Goal 2: Alumni Success
TLV alumni are in employment and/or further training within six months of graduation, with increased rates of ongoing alumni engagement and contributions to TLV

As our network of centres and alumni grow, and the rates of unemployment affecting young people remain high, we are aware that we need to keep innovating and expanding our support systems for our alumni network. At the time of writing, the need for this has drastically increased due to Covid-19 ravaging the tourism industry, which is one of the main sectors of employment.
The three outcomes TLT will work toward under our goal of Alumni Success are:

1. Established partnerships with targeted employers at local and national level offering alumni employment pathways

2. Well-maintained alumni database developed that facilitates ongoing relationships, employment opportunities and skills matching

3. Updated curriculum that includes lessons focused on developing practical employability skills relevant to the market needed to succeed long term in employment

**Goal 3: Emotional Health**

**Improved pastoral support systems in integrated into TLV HR management, curriculum and programming**

In a nation that has a high rate of suicide, the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the isolation of tea estate communities, damaged the livelihoods of tea pickers and pushed families further into poverty. It has also had a significant impact on their physical, emotional and mental health. As such, it is more important than ever for us to focus on improving the support we provide to the wellbeing of our students at TLV and our staff teams. We understand that mental health is vital for helping students and staff feel empowered and confident in their abilities, which is just one reason why this is one of our key goals over the next 3 years.

The three outcomes TLT will work toward under our goal of Emotional Health are:

1. Alumni have structured support from TLV up to a year post graduation through both being able to access our centres and alumni events, and being able to access a counsellor, should the need arise (this is always available and is not timebound)

2. Improved pastoral support within each centre and across all programming through listening to what our young people need and value, and ensuring we respond in a timely and effective way

3. Emotional health education further integrated into TLV programming for children, young people and government teachers
# Goal 4: Fundraising

Core funding for all existing centres, Central Team and for organisational expansion secured by 2023

TLT has funding in place to meet the costs of our projects for 2021. In 2020, our partnership with our primary funder, LBR Foundation, was paused for 12 months due to the impact of the pandemic. This has necessitated an increased effort in fundraising for 2022 and beyond, especially as one of our strategic goals is to continue with the expansion of our programmes and Centres. We aim to diversify our funding and income streams and to work toward more Sri Lankan-based funding streams whilst continuing to support families and communities being disproportionately affected by the pandemic and the lockdowns.

The three outcomes TLT will work toward under our goal of Emotional Health are:

1. At least 3 HNWI are engaged and supporting TLV programme
2. At least 3 corporate sponsors secured for programmatic support
3. Multi-year funding secured for 3 existing centres
4. Increase the percentage of total income generated in-country in Sri Lanka
5. Grow our revenue through private English classes and our Volunteer Programme (should the Covid 19 situation allow)
**Building Resilience**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Mitigation Measures</th>
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| 1. Lose key members of TLT or TLV                                   | 1. Ensure all staff members are trained in differing aspects of TLT and TLV  
2. Broaden our network so that it covers a wide variety of people, resources and skills |
| 2. Political climate causes programme to collapse                   | 1. Community driven decision-making structures to ensure the voices of the tea estate population are heard and changes reflect the needs of everyone.  
2. Continue to identify local government officials to build relationships within existing and potential areas for school expansion.  
3. International presence of TLT to boost recognition of the programmes  
4. Engage with Sinhalese community members to gain legitimacy from an increasingly powerful Nationalist government. |
| 3. Lose financial support                                           | 1. Find international and local sponsors to ensure we have a wide fundraising network  
2. Identify expat Tamil HNWIs who might be interested in regular donations  
3. Build on our social media presence to gain more regular donations |
| 4. Staffing issues ruin credibility of TLT                          | 1. Only hiring TLV students to ensure our values remain at the core of each programme  
2. Set regular performance objectives for staff and provide regular training so that these are met at a high standard  
3. Mentors for new staff members via volunteer programme and experienced teachers and centre management |
Responding to COVID-19

In our current times of uncertainty, it is important that we take extra precautions when working to achieve our key objectives over the next 3 years. Going forward, it is necessary that we ensure there are strong remote support systems for both staff and students in place to mitigate the possibility of future loss of learning to students. This may be challenging as only 21% of households with children under 18 have access to Wi-Fi within the poorest socio-economic group in Sri Lanka (LIRNEasia, 2020). However we will apply our learnings from previous lockdown safety measures to strengthen our existing support systems.

Furthermore, it is necessary to address the possibility that there will be limited funding opportunities available to us in the coming years. This may hinder our short-term progress in reaching our desired goals, such as establishing new centres, however we will continue to build strong relationships with a variety of organisations and continue to deliver high quality education to all of our students. We are already responding to this potential concern with an emerging fundraising strategy both within Sri Lanka and in the UK and through virtual crowdfunding platforms.

Conclusion

Despite the current challenges, which threaten the livelihoods and emotional health of our staff and students, we remain optimistic about the road ahead. We understand our services and support are more vital than ever. We have a staff team of 44 all under the age of 32. They are resilient, talented and committed to the tea estate communities that we serve together. They lead us in our strategic planning and we are proud to follow.
REFERENCES


