

Corporate Social Responsibility

“Nations Trust Bank believes that as a bank and as individuals we have a duty to be responsible citizens: to make an appropriate return to the community that sustains us”

Corporate-citizenship projects undertaken by the Bank are designed to maximise staff involvement, providing an interactive and personal experience for individual staff while ensuring that such initiatives arise naturally out of the corporate culture, a part of whom we are as a bank and what we represent.

The Sri Lankan corporate sector has always responded swiftly and appropriately in times of national and local disaster. However, the prevailing trend towards greater corporate accountability and responsibility has seen a shift of emphasis to sustainable long-term projects. One result has been a diminution in funds and effort readily available for disaster relief.

While increased efforts are being made in the field of disaster preparedness at national and policy level, this does not necessarily meet the immediate needs of

individuals affected by a disaster. With this fact in mind, Nations Trust Bank has always acted promptly to provide immediate relief to victims in times of disaster.

This commitment to disaster response is an essential element of the Bank's CSR policy. However, Nations Trust Bank, like other responsible companies, supports long-term projects that benefit communities and other groups in need. The following is a brief description of CSR projects undertaken by the Bank and its staff in the year under review.

PRESERVING RAINFOREST BIODIVERSITY IN HIYARE

The Bank, in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society of Galle and the Galle Municipal Council, embarked on a biodiversity conservation project in the Hiyare Rainforest, a lush tract of first-growth rainforest near Galle. The project seeks to expand awareness of the

importance and rich diversity of the forest ecology and works actively to protect it.



Hiyare is a 600-acre rainforest within half an hour's drive from the Bank's Galle branch and incorporating a lake of 55 acres in extent. Though it is surrounded by tea plantations and other habitations in an area where human impact is very high, a study carried out by the Wildlife Conservation Society in 2007 revealed a comparatively high level of biodiversity in Hiyare compared with other low-country rainforests. According to the

study, the area supports 103 bird species, including twelve endemic species. Insect life also shows high diversity, particularly in the case of dragon-flies and damsel-flies, of which 39 species, eight of which are endemic to the area, were observed and recorded. Hiyare also boasts 51 different species of butterflies. Of the 68 freshwater fish species known to exist in Sri Lanka, 31 species were observed in Hiyare Lake and other habitats in the area; the number includes 14 endemic species and a few very rare ones.



Scope of the project

The Bank supports and funds the Wildlife Conservation Society of Galle in its research and conservation efforts. The Society aims at conserving the biodiversity of Hiyare rainforest through a programme to increase public understanding of the need for conservation and of measures that need to be taken to achieve it. The society undertakes a variety of such activities, including:

- intensive full-day and two-day residential programmes for schoolchildren in higher grades and university students, incorporating both theory and practice and featuring visits to Hiyare;

- educational programmes for visitors to Hiyare, schoolchildren and undergraduates; and
- a rescue programme for injured animals, in which the society accepts wildlife from the area for veterinary and surgical treatment followed by post-operative care, rehabilitation and release into the wild. Since Nations Trust Bank became involved in the project, animals such as rare hog deer, pythons, a pangolian and whistling geese have been treated.

OTHER CSR INITIATIVES IN 2008

In addition to the above long-term programme, Nations Trust Bank and its staff also engaged in the following activities:

- Cleaning and repainting Ward 19 at the Maharagama Cancer Hospital. This has now become a fixture on the Bank's social calendar. This year, the renovation programme was accompanied by a sizeable donation of medicines required by patients in the ward. Nations Trust Bank staff also raised funds among themselves to provide food packs to all patients at the hospital at a total cost of Rs. 800,000.



- When heavy floods rendered thousands of people homeless in June 2008, Nations Trust Bank responded to a request from the National Disaster Management Centre by donating 15,000 bottles of water for distribution among residents of Kalutara District, which was one of the worst affected. The Bank also conducted a medical camp at Thebuwana Vidyalaya, a school in the district, where a team of ten volunteer doctors treated a total of 548 people. Most of these doctors who are spouses of Bank staff provided their services gratis.

- The Bank secured a grant of Rs. 2.4 mn from its partner American Express for use on a project to benefit victims of the 2004 tsunami. The funds were used to build two pre-schools in Hambantota District. On this project, Nations Trust Bank and the John Keells Social Responsibility Foundation have entered into a partnership with the Janasuwaya Foundation to ensure that the schools are properly maintained in the future.
- A blood donation campaign organised by the Bank's Welfare and Sports Club in May saw donations from more than a hundred of our staff members.