

In a rapidly developing country, good corporate citizenship is a matter of urgent relevance for any organisation. Economic mobility often creates unavoidable gaps between haves and have-nots, which must be addressed so as to reduce social tensions arising among those who feel passed over by development. Another frequent victim of economic growth is the environment: its protection becomes a matter of urgency if future generations are not to be deprived of their natural rights to clean air, clean water and a functionally diverse natural environment. Whilst the Government carry the principal responsibility of public welfare and environmental stewardship, such matters are everybody's responsibility, and it is fitting that we, as beneficiaries of economic growth and development, should take a hand. Good corporate citizenship also has strong positive effects on how we are perceived by our customers, as well as by policymakers and the public. Employees, too, find great satisfaction in these activities, which help bind them together and bond them to the organisation. Finally, the welfare of the environment and our fellow-citizens are matters very close to our hearts; in pursuing activities that support it, we are following our own very strong inclinations.

In the year under review, a number of CSR initiatives were undertaken. Given below are the most important of these:



Our staff engaged in conserving the biodiversity of Hiyare.

HIYARE BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION PROJECT: WILD ANIMAL RESCUE PROGRAMME

In 2008, the Galle Wildlife Conservation Society and Nations Trust Bank initiated a coordinated effort to rescue and release of wild animals captured by humans, injured or endangered due to human-influenced changes in their habitat. This was the first such partnership between a volunteer conservation group and a private sector firm, since ordinarily only the Department of Wildlife Conservation and National Zoological Gardens are authorised to undertake animal-rescue operations; in this initiative, the Department was an active collaborator, while the Bank provided funding support. Thus equipped with suitable equipment expertise, the society has rescued and successfully released many endangered animals.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Assistance from our Bank has enabled the Galle Wildlife Conservation Society to conduct a series of education programmes and workshops for schoolchildren, university students and the general public. The programmes include slide shows, practical lessons in conservation, nature walks, exposure to captive breeding programmes, etc. The programme covered the areas of:

- The biodiversity of Sri Lanka and its conservation
- Snakes of Sri Lanka
- Birds of Sri Lanka
- Butterflies of Sri Lanka
- Fresh water fish of Sri Lanka



Beneficiaries of our literacy project.

Workshops conducted covered the areas of:

- Ecology of the lowland rainforest
- Snakes of Sri Lanka: identification, snakebite prevention and first aid
- The captive breeding of rare animals
- Plant identification and forest restoration
- Identifying the ecology of Sri Lankan butterflies

A total of 70 environmental education programmes for children has been conducted during the year.

LITERACY PROJECT IN RURAL SCHOOLS

We undertook a project aimed at improving literacy levels amongst schools attended by underprivileged children in impoverished rural districts during the year. This was a CSR initiative in partnership with CandleAid Lanka (formerly AFLAC International). The commitment of our Bank was to improve twelve school libraries. The beneficiaries were:

- Seewali Vidyalaya, Rupawatta
- Udahena Kanishta Vidyalaya, Udahena
- Galabadawatta Kanishta Vidyalaya, Rangala
- Habarakada Dharmapala Primary, Tawalama
- Millawa Kanishta Vidyalaya, Morawaka
- Manampita Ratnasara Vidyalaya, Mattaka
- Nitalawa Kanishta Vidyalaya, Makulawa, Galgamuwa
- Kimbissa Kanishta Vidyalaya, Sigiriya
- Navuntuduwa Navodya Vidyalaya, Matugama
- Amunutenna Kanishta Dwithika Vidyalaya, Ratnapura

Each of these libraries received a donation of books selected by the school's academic staff. Additionally, a second-hand book collection was held with staff in all branches and departments participating. The Bank also pledged support for two more schools in the North and the East of the country, thus making this initiative an island-wide project.

GOING PAPERLESS

As part of our commitment to preserving the environment, we stepped up our campaign to 'go paperless' by requesting customers to switch to electronic statements.

In keeping with the spirit of this effort, the Bank will donate Rs. 100/- to the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society for every customer who chooses to go green. This society is, incidentally, one of the oldest environmental NGOs in Sri Lanka. It will use the proceeds from our initiative to help finance a tree-planting campaign.

CAREER GUIDANCE IN VAVUNIYA

Staff from our HR division held a pioneering career-guidance workshop in Vavuniya for the benefit of young job seekers and school leavers in the district. The workshop was conducted in Tamil and English and entrance was free of charge.