

EDUCATION

“Nine-tenths of education is encouragement.” *Anatole France*





English Language Scholarship Programme

The flagship project in this area is the English Language Scholarship Programme of John Keells Social Responsibility Foundation. Launched in 2004 in collaboration with Gateway Language Centre, this long-term project is aimed at enhancing English language skills of schoolchildren and youth across the island towards improving their opportunities for higher learning and sustainable employment in the modern age. Over the years, the Programme has sponsored a range of scholarships, from the internationally-recognised two-year Edexcel Diploma Programme to a shorter course with a 4-month curriculum, for schoolchildren, school-leavers, undergraduates and trackers at the Yala National Park, thereby empowering the lives of over 1,500 individuals. An English Day to celebrate the scholars from the latest batch was held on Friday, 19 June, 2009 at the Bishop's College Auditorium, Colombo 3, at a concert graced by Mr. Lalith Weeratunge, Secretary to H. E. The President as Chief Guest.

In 2008, it was decided to specifically target school-leavers and young people to enhance their employability. Entitled 'English for Life', this customised course teaches Business English together with basic IT and soft skills to the 17-25 age group over a period of 4 months during weekends for the convenience of the youth. 'English for Life' was initially launched in 12 locations – Anuradhapura, Colombo (02 centres), Galle, Gampaha, Kalutara, Kandy, Kurunegala, Nawala, Negombo, Panadura, Trincomalee and Wattala. The initial advertisements calling for applications drew over 3,000 applicants, out of whom 1,000 were awarded scholarships after a placement test set by Gateway. The scholarships cover course fees, examination fees, text books and other course material.

Programmes for University Undergraduates

Another employment-driven educational initiative of the Foundation is *The Final Step*, a five-day series of soft skills workshops conducted for the benefit of university undergraduates. Involving two panel discussions and three interactive workshops conducted with the patronage of leading personalities and professional trainers of the corporate world, the programme deals with such varied subjects as Employer Expectations, Team Building and Leadership Skills, Adapting to the Corporate Environment, Personality Development and Confidence Building, Personal Grooming and Corporate Hospitality. Held this year at the University of Moratuwa in collaboration with the Career Guidance Unit (CGU) of the University, it was the first such programme of its kind at this University and was completed successfully, with each day of the workshop attracting over two hundred final year undergraduates.

A strategic CSR project engaged in by the Transportation Group of John Keells Holdings PLC is the support of students reading for an Honours degree of Bachelor of Science in Transport and Logistics Management (BSc (T&LM) Hons.) at the University of Moratuwa. The 4-year programme, which commenced in 2006, is designed to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to equip the undergraduates to face the modern day challenges in the fields of Aviation, Shipping, Logistics and Supply Chain Management or

Public Transport. Admission to the degree programme is based on the selection criteria of the University Grants Commission and the intake is limited to 50 students. The scholarship programme consists of an aggregate of 26 scholarships awarded on a both need- and merit-based scheme. The first year students are given access to a need-based scholarship while the second, third and fourth year students benefit from a merit-based scholarship. In 2008/09, a total of 17 first and second year students were granted scholarships. Meanwhile, as all lectures are conducted entirely in English, the first-year students (numbering 48) were also provided English Language training. Students were also provided mentoring facilities. The recipients of the scholarships can opt for an industrial placement period at JKH which also annually offers employment within the John Keells Group to at least 5 students who graduate from the BSc T&LM degree. Whilst the scholarship programme is a great boon to the undergraduates, not only supporting their tertiary studies but also facilitating a host of attractive career choices, it also helps develop a much needed resource base of professionals for the country's growing transportation industry.

Neighbourhood Schools Development Project

Under the Neighbourhood Schools Development Project, the Foundation continues to support the development and maintenance of infrastructure and facilities of five disadvantaged Government schools in Colombo 2 (the location of the Head Office and several offices of the John Keells Group), towards creating an environment more conducive for learning. The project is implemented through the CSR teams of Cinnamon Grand and Trans Asia Hotel.

Focus Area	Project	Overall Objective	Project Location/s in 2008/09	Focus Area in 2008/09	Direct Impact	JKH Volunteers
Education	Neighbourhood Schools Development Project	Improving the overall educational facilities of 5 disadvantaged government schools located near John Keells Head Office in Colombo 2	Holy Rosary Sinhala Vidyalaya	Construction of a water sump	250 students 12 teachers	5
			Holy Rosary Tamil Vidyalaya	Roof repairs	220 students 16 teachers	
			Al Iqbal Muslim Balika Vidyalaya	Painting of school wall exterior, ceiling fan and books for library, garden landscaping, IT training for teacher	456 students 28 teachers	10
			Siri Sariputta Maha Vidyalaya	Wash basins for Junior classrooms, iron fence for stage, garden landscaping, colourwashing of school building (exterior and interior), internet and networking facilities for computer room	320 students 19 teachers	
			T. B. Jayah Maha Vidyalaya	Construction of computer room, concrete base and landscaping of school garden	450 students 25 teachers	