

NEW HORIZONS FOR THE UNDERPRIVILEGED

A SCHOOL THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Submitted by
Stephen Charitable Trust
Muttom, Kanyakumari District

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ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT

1.	Title of the Project	:	New Horizons for the Underprivileged – A School with a Difference
2.	Objectives	:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To promote awareness on the need and importance of education among the fishermen, dalit and other underprivileged sections of the society. 2 To prepare the children to access quality education and qualify them for better employment opportunities. 3 As a strategic means to establish a standard English Medium Matriculation School. 4 To establish support systems to subsidize higher/professional education of the promising students. 5 To provide career guidance and like them with the resource systems for prospective employment opportunities. 6 To support the sustainable management of other charitable institutions such as St. Joseph's Boys' Home, St. Mary's Girls' Home and Free Hospital. 7 To facilitate integrated development of the surrounding communities.
3.	Major Activities	:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Awareness programmes in the community ➤ Orientation programmes to the parents ➤ Preparatory courses for the students ➤ Landscaping ➤ Construction of main structure ➤ Interior furnishing ➤ Scholarship for higher education ➤ Career guidance ➤ Management of charitable institutions ➤ Community Organisation ➤ Community development activities
4.	Duration of the Project	:	One and a half years
5.	Cost of the project	:	\$ 416,666.
6.	Local Contribution	:	\$ 16,666.
7.	Grant requested for	:	\$. 400,000.

3. ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATION

Stephen Charitable Trust is a registered voluntary service organization working for the development of the poor since 1994.

The **Vision** of Stephen Charitable Trust is “**Self Reliant Coastal and Rural Communities**”.

The Objectives of Stephen Charitable Trust are:

- 1 To enable the widows, handicapped, elderly, orphans and poor children of the society to march towards new life
- 2 To impart education to the poor and deserving students
- 3 To alleviate the suffering of the downtrodden, oppressed and the less privileged
- 4 To undertake relief activities for the people affected by flood, fire and other natural calamities
- 5 To create awareness on environment and take steps to ameliorate the poor living conditions

The main Activities of Stephen Charitable Trust are:

- Education to the Children
- Reenrollment of school dropouts
- Home for the children
- Community Organisation
- Women Development
- Micro finance activities
- Income generation programmes
- Promotion of life skills
- Promotion of community health

4. TARGET AREA AND TARGET PEOPLE

Kanyakumari District is the southernmost part of Indian Sub continent. It is surrounded by majestic hills and the plains bordered by sea-shores and fringed with coconut trees and paddy fields. It is basically a **coastal district with 68 km coast line**. The South Eastern boundary is the Gulf of Mannar. On the South and the South West, the boundaries are the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea.

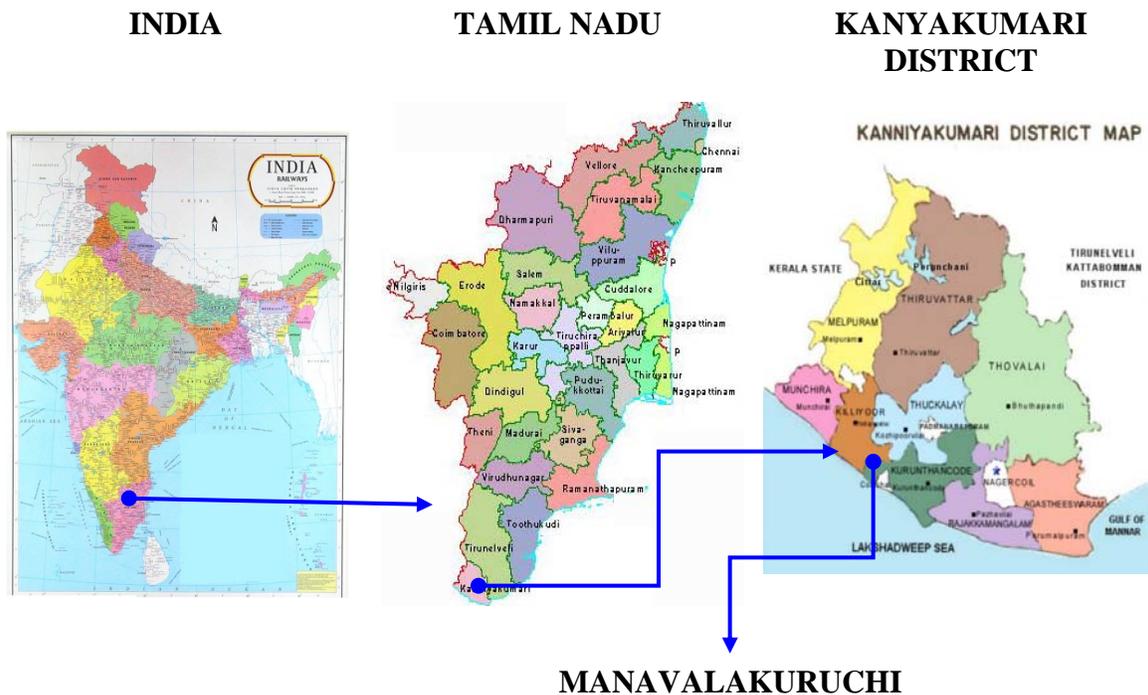
Kanyakumari district has a **population of nearly 18,00,000** (As per census 2001 it was 16,69,763) among them nearly 3,50,000 people live in the coastal region. The main occupation of the people is fishing and majority of them use traditional fishing crafts and gears. Not only their income low but also seasonal. This results in the vicious circle of poverty.

Nearly **65% of the population of the district lives in rural areas** and their major source of livelihood was agriculture. With in the rural community the living standard and livelihood options of the dalits are very limited. The **dalits constitute nearly 5% of the population** of the district. Having treated as outcaste and suppressed for centuries together, their socio economic and educational standards are very poor compared to the rest of the people of the district.

The **December 26, 2004 tsunami** hit had devastating impact on the life and the livelihood of the coastal people, who depend heavily on marine resource for their livelihood. In addition to the irrecoverable lose of nearly 1000 lives, they also lost their boats and nets which were the intermediary tools of livelihood. The chain effect of the tsunami also affected the adjoining rural communities who depend more on the coastal economy for their business linkages. Though five years have gone by, people have not really come out of the crisis that the tsunami created. One positive side effects of tsunami was that there was an increased awareness towards education. Unfortunately there are no standard schools providing good education to the coastal and rural poor at an affordable cost in an accessible place.

As such this project targets the coastal and rural dalits of **Rajakkamankalam and Kurunthancode blocks of Kanyakumari District**. These blocks were chosen basically because they have the highest concentration of poor coastal people and rural dalits. Though

the coastal population is spread over in 44 villages, the poorest of them are living in the middle part of the coastal line like Muttom, Azhikkal, Pillaitoopu, Kadiapattinam. Similarly the rural poor are also seen more in Kurunthancode block.



Topographically, Manavallakuruchi is strategically located connecting the targeted coastal villages and rural areas. It is inter linked by roads and accessible to the secluded and under developed communities. Establishment of a matriculation school could benefit the people from nearly about 40 villages in and around Manavallakuruchi.

5. RATIONALE FOR THE PROPOSAL

Once St. Stephen Charitable Trust made a **preferential option for the coastal poor and the rural dalits**, it had a series of in house exercises to evolve its priorities and strategies that would more appropriately respond to the needs of the community. The committee constituted by St. Stephen's Charitable Trust consisted of professionals, educationalists, social scientists and socially conscious people. Being professionals and experts they could adopt scientific techniques and systematic approach towards the community assessment. The **focus of the assessment was one of qualitative information in nature** rather than quantitative information. As the required quantitative information was available as secondary

sources such as the government website, publications, libraries and with the local church, collection of primary data from the community centred around qualitative data. As such the methodology and tools adopted were one of qualitative ones that projected the intensity of the issues or problems rather than the magnitude of the issue. Cross sections of the community were taken into confidence through:

- ➔ In Depth Interviews with selected community representatives
- ➔ Key Informant Interviews with eminent persons such as experts in the field, political leaders and religious heads
- ➔ Focused Group Discussions with women self help groups and their leaders.

Stephen Charitable Trust consolidated their views and reviewed them in the light of the secondary data collected from the district administration, books and websites. Consolidating them a few needs were prioritized and among them education of the children topped.

A few justifying reasons for this decision were: According to Census 2001, the density of population in Kanyakumari district was 992 and the literacy rate was 88.11%. It looks reasonably good. When one analyses the variations within the district, the coastal areas has a density of more than 2100 per sq. km (It should be noted that the national average density is 324 per sq.km and the state average is 478 per sq. km) and a literacy rate of less than 70%. These two indicators speak for the relative backwardness of the coastal people. The reasons attributed for the low status was lack of awareness, limited facilities for education particularly higher education, low income of the parents - many parents are unable to send their children to schools -. The lack of education is identified, by many social analysts, as the root cause of underdevelopment in these fishermen villages.

Similarly the socio economic status of the dalits is very poor. As the dalits are spread across the district, it is very difficult to arrive at consolidated indicators. However our interaction with the dalits of the locality shows they need support particularly education to come up in life and enjoy a reasonable standard of life.

The two deprived sections of the Kanyakumari district are the fishermen and the dalits. Only education could trigger their development. To go for higher education the students need a solid primary and secondary education. In order to ensure access to higher and technical education to the underprivileged fishermen and dalits, it is proposed to establish an English Medium School in the targeted area.

6. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSAL

The overall objective of the proposal is **Enhancement of the Quality of Life of the Fishermen and Dalits by Facilitating Access to Quality Education**

To be more specific:

- 1 To promote awareness on the need and importance of education among the fishermen, dalit and other underprivileged sections of the society.
- 2 To prepare the children to access quality education and qualify them for better employment opportunities.
- 3 As a strategic means to establish a standard English Medium Matriculation School.
- 4 To establish support systems to subsidize higher/professional education of the promising students.
- 5 To provide career guidance and like them with the resource systems for prospective employment opportunities.
- 6 To support the sustainable management of other charitable institutions such as St. Joseph's Boys' Home, St. Mary's Girls' Home and Free Hospital.
- 7 To facilitate integrated development of the surrounding communities.

7. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- Awareness programmes in the community
- Orientation programmes to the parents
- Preparatory courses for the students
- Landscaping
- Construction of main structure
- Interior furnishing
- Scholarship for higher education
- Career guidance
- Management of charitable institutions
- Community Organisation
- Community development activities.

7.1. Awareness programmes in the community

As stated earlier, the coastal community has relatively low level of awareness on issues related to education. Not only they do not realize the importance of education for the integrated development of the individuals and the community but also the facilities available for standard education are limited. Against this background there is a need to promote awareness on the importance of quality education among the coastal people. Stephen Charitable Trust will undertake regular programmes in the coastal villages that would create and strengthen the need and importance of education.

7.2. Orientation programmes to the parents

In addition to promoting awareness in the community as a whole specific orientation and motivation programmes will be conducted to the parents with small children. Stephen Charitable Trust wants the parents to take an informed decision. They should develop the skills to analyse the different options available for the education of their children and choose that fits most to their family, socio-economic conditions. Once they make a decision, they should have the will power to meet the challenges and support the education of their children. Thus the orientation programmes prepare the parents to support their children and facilitate not only their intellectual but also their integrated personality development.

7.3. Preparatory courses for the students

The preparatory courses that Stephen Charitable Trust proposes are not to attract students to our school, rather it aims at preparing the students to explore their potentials and opt for appropriate education in consultation with their parents. Hence preparatory courses will be conducted to students of different ages like pre school students, high school students and higher secondary school students. These preparatory courses will help the students to plan their future and take the preparatory steps to face the reality.

7.4. Landscaping

In addition to preparing the community, parents and students, the project would focus on establishing the required infrastructure to impart quality education to the really deserving students. To start with Stephen Charitable Trust would prepare the existing land for construction. Landscaping would give a face lift to the entire campus and facilitate better planning and implementation of the project.

7.5. Construction of main structure

In line with the landscaping and the master plan developed by the architect, the main structure of the school will be established. It will adhere to the technical requirements of the engineers, safety and regulatory requirements from the government. It will also pay attention to provide a better learning and training atmosphere.

7.6. Interior furnishing

Once the main structure of the school building is completed, attention will be paid for interior furnishing. The basic requirements of a class room will be provided. The interior furnishing will also take into account, the requirements of the library and laboratory. The main objective of interior furnishing is to provide a comfortable study condition to the students.

7.7. Scholarship for higher education

Once the infrastructure is established and the school started functioning regularly, efforts will be taken to establish scholarships to support the children for higher education. In supporting the higher education, SCT will include all the deserving students whether they studied in St. Joseph's School or elsewhere. For this purpose a corpus fund will be set aside and the interest generated from the fund will be used to provide scholarships.

7.8. Career guidance

As part of its responsibility towards the upliftment of the coastal and dalit communities, SCT will manage a career guidance centre. The career guidance centre will render its services to the students of St. Joseph's School and also the students studying in other schools. Even the draft outs and youth aspiring to take up new ventures in life.

7.9. Management of charitable institutions

Stephen Charitable Trust has been managing charitable institutions like St. Joseph's Boys home and St. Mary's Girls home. More than 220 poor and marginalized children have been helped to have access to good education and formation in these two children's Homes. As of today they heavily depend on external resources. Once the school is completed and generates regular income, part of the revenue will be used to manage the charitable institutions and sustain them.

7.10. Community organisation

Community organization is felt to be a major need of the coastal communities to facilitate development. It has become a greater need in the post tsunami era, as most of the established community based forums were disturbed by the aftermath of tsunami. SCT has

already initiated the process of community organization and formed 742 women groups and 320 men Groups. They will be consolidated and new groups will be formed. They will be co-ordinated into cluster level co-ordination and federated at the project area level.

7.11. Community development activities

In addition to the community organization, with the active involvement of the community based forums and the people at large, a few need based developmental activities will be undertaken in the coastal and dalit villages.

8. DURATION OF THE PROJECT

Though this specific project is visualized for one and a half years, except construction of the building, all the activities will continue. The time scale for the activities covered under this project is given below:

NO	ACTIVITY	MONTHS																	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1.	Awareness programmes in the community	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2.	Orientation programmes to the parents	*	*	*													*	*	*
3.	Preparatory courses for the students	*	*	*													*	*	*
4.	Landscaping and laying foundation		*																
5.	Construction of main structure			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*						
6.	Interior furnishing													*	*				
7.	Scholarship for higher education																*	*	*
8.	Career guidance																*	*	*
9.	Management of charitable institutions																*	*	*
10.	Community Organisation																*	*	*
11.	Community development activities																*	*	*

9. EXPECTED RESULTS

Implementation of this project with its sustainable impact is more likely to bring about the following results and more.

- ➔ The most important result of this project would be availability, accessibility and affordability of quality education to the children from the coastal and underprivileged communities in Kanyakumari District.
- ➔ As a pre requisite, the coastal and underprivileged community will realize the relevance of education for the development of their children and will be motivated to educate their children.
- ➔ The integrated personality of the children will be developed and they will be prepared to face the society with more confidence and competence.
- ➔ The deserving students will be motivated, guided and supported to undertake higher, technical and professional education.
- ➔ Learning other foreign languages like German, French, Spanish and Italian will enable them to have access to international communities.
- ➔ As a result the students will find better placement at national and international levels.
- ➔ The development of the individuals will reflect in their family and the society at large.
- ➔ From the revenue generated from the school, the charitable institutions of Stephen Charitable Trust will be managed.
- ➔ The felt developmental needs of the community will be fulfilled through the extension programmes of the school.
- ➔ The school will certainly contribute to developing good, learned and disciplined citizens by catering to the needs of the youth and molding them to withstand the challenges of the day to day life.

10. FINANCING THE PROJECT

The project aims at providing a conducive educational infrastructure and atmosphere for the children from the poor vulnerable families. Materialization of the aim calls for pooling of resources of different types from different quarters. Local community resources are identified and consolidated.

A few resources augmented are:

Five acres of land with good landscape

A good play ground

A good library

A team of committed educationalist

An army of volunteers

Support of the community leaders and district administration

A Primary school has been constructed with the support of many Rotarians and benefactors.

There is a good strength of 1700 children presently studying in the school. **Now, a Middle and High School need to be built with the amount of \$ 400,000. There will be more than 3000 children in the school when we complete the Middle and High school within ONE YEAR.**

To meet out the additional resources required, there is a need for \$ 416,666 of which Stephen Charitable Trust will be able to mobilize resources to the tune of \$ 16,666 and seek your support worth approximately **\$ 400,000.**

A detailed budget is annexed

Cost of the project	:	\$ 416,666.
Local Contribution	:	\$. 16,666..
Grant requested for	:	\$ 400,000.

11. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The legal holder of the project is Stephen Charitable Trust. On behalf of the trust, the board of trustees is responsible for the effective implementation of the project. Besides, the Rotary Club of Kanyakumari has a great deal to co-operate with the Stephen Charitable Trust to implement the school project. Periodical visits from the Primary Club as well as from any Rotary clubs would be always welcome and it will be highly appreciated.

The present board of trustees are mostly **Catholic clergies** with explicitly known commitment for the poor and underprivileged. They are also well educated and have a great vision for social change and development. With their experience and expertise they could identify and place competent people at different responsibilities and manage the project effectively and efficiently.

Majority of the trustees and administrators of Stephen Charitable Trust are from the coastal and rural communities. As such they share the visions, aspirations and difficulties of the communities and fully aware of the factors contributing to the status quo. As such the management decisions will adequately reflect the needs of the community.

To ensure effective and timely implementation, the trustees will constitute a committee of **technical experts including some Rotary members from the Kanyakumari District Club(3212)** who would work out the time scale and monitor the timeliness and quality of the progress of work.

A well qualified and **competent teaching faculty** will be appointed to impart education understanding socio, economic and cultural background of the children.

For the technical management of the school, **an academic council** headed by a Rotarian, will be formed consisting of the experts and community representatives. This forum will be the highest decision making body on academic matters of the school. As such the involvement of the beneficiary community will be visible.

Promotion of **Parent Teachers Association** will be an integral agenda of the school. The PTA will regularly meet and review the progress of the school and suggest ways and means for development. Needless to say, that the PTA will consist of only the benefiting community

The board of trustees will submit **progress report** of the activities and keep the donors informed of the developments. At the completion of the project, a detailed completion reports along with the required photos and other evidences will be submitted to the donors. The trustees will also submit a corresponding **audited statement** for the money-received from the donors with supporting evidences and documents.

12. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT

This project is essentially a one-time support in nature. Once the building is constructed, it will provide a safe and healthy atmosphere to the students. After the establishment, what was required is the maintenance. The maintenance expenses could be met from the nominal income generated by the school.

Socio cultural feasibility: The establishment of a matriculation school has high socio cultural viability as there is an awakening towards education in the coastal communities in the post tsunami era. The elders and parents have to a large extent realized the importance of education. The direct beneficiaries of the school will be the poorest of the poor from the coastal and dalit communities and the establishment of the school will provide a culturally acceptable standard of studying and learning atmosphere. They are geographically dear to the school. Implementation of this project will contribute towards the raise of the educational standard of these children, who otherwise are likely to be academically low performing or become dropouts. With improved education and integrated personality development, the future of the children will be better with this improved environment.

Economic and financial feasibility: Considering the cost of establishing a matriculation school and the impact it is likely to create on the education, safety and health of the students, it is definitely worth spending the money. This project is basically one time investment in nature. Once the initial investment is done and the gestation period is over, the institution should yield adequate returns to meet out the cost of investment and yield regular returns. The cost benefit analysis undertaken showed that at the fifth year, the school will reach the breakeven point and yield regular income, which will be higher than the expenses. In fact Stephen Charitable Trust plans to spend the income gained from the management of the school for the community development initiatives of the community in the vicinity of the school and support the higher education of deserving children.

Technical Viability: Technically it is feasible to construct a building as per the plan and as per the estimate given for construction.

Environmental impact: Implementation of this project will not have any serious negative impact on the environment.

ROTARIAN'S INVOLVEMENT:

The Rotary Club of Kanyakumari will be 100% available physically and morally to implement the school project. Already the Rotary Club of Kanyakumari is very much interested and involved with the 4 Matching Grants received so far. The Rotary Club of La Valette, Malta is an ever supporting Club which is always at our side to get things done. Any visits from any Rotary Club will be very welcome.