

She shares Keshav's desire to help the poor and disadvantaged in Kathmandu and their home villages.

Following up our chat he has written, "Given such a difficult time, I think distributing food and clothes to the daily wage workers who are affected by the lockdown restrictions will be a good idea. There are thirty or more families who live in huts very close to where I live on the bank of the Bagmati river. As long travels are restricted, helping those families with some food, sanitation items and clothes would be ideal. Nepal's lockdown has exceeded 70 days now and these people are struggling to make ends meet." So, we are hoping to send Keshav money to give the needy help here.



Hamida and Fred who look after our projects in Africa have told us that the lockdown continues in Ghana, and the school established in our Community Centre just outside Asiakwa has been closed but will re-open in September.



Observing a lesson

The Headmaster is very grateful for Star Action's support, and has sent a detailed report, extracts from which will be in our full Newsletter. He is very much hoping we can continue our sponsorship of the ten very poor children in the school, and he would love us to help more!

He writes: "I want to express gratitude on behalf of their parents. Most are single who have lost their partner and things are very hard for them. By the help of Star Action these children are in school. It is my fervent prayer that Star Action will be able to assist us with the fees of other children who cannot pay." While the school has been closed, he has been using our land to grow maize ready to help with the school lunches.



Maize growing in the Asiakwa school grounds

So, our dear friends - we do thank you for all your support. If you feel moved to send a little something extra at this Corona time, it will be most welcome and be put to good use for our vital work.

With my love,

(with my fellow trustees,  
Joan, Kate and Stuart)



Dear Friends of Star Action,

We are writing this special letter to you now, (in appreciation of your much-valued regular support), to tell you about our Star Action work at this time of the pandemic Coronavirus. We will be writing a fuller Newsletter later on when things return to a more normal situation and travel becomes easier again!



## SRI LANKA

2020 year started off in an unexpected way, because even before the virus spread around the world, I (Jenny) took so long to recover from the chest infection which struck me down at the beginning of December, that I was unable to travel to Sri Lanka as planned in late January/February.

However, this led to something really good unfolding. We had the idea to ask Richard and Sasees, the house-parents of our South India Brighter Life Childrens' home if they would like to go in my place. Two years previously they had joined us in Sri Lanka for a holiday and had visited all our projects.

## LOCKDOWN NEWS-FLASH

June 2020

[www.staraction.org](http://www.staraction.org)

UK Registered Charity No. 1111137



Richard & Sasees talk with Rakshana, Kangani and Kanthi

The Tamil language which they speak in Tamil Nadu turned out to be almost the same as that spoken in the Eastern province where our projects are currently centred. This meant that they could speak directly with our teachers and the individuals we are helping, without the need of translation.



So when they were there this February, with Rohan as their guide, communication was easier and they established a really good connection with everyone, which has continued in regular WhatsApp phone calls and messages.



During the lockdown time, the schools have been closed, but since our Sinhala teachers rely on their Star Action salary, we have continued to pay fifty per cent. The desperately poor (whom we have met personally on previous trips) are all receiving their usual monthly payment. We have not started any new project at this present time, but we are undertaking the repair of the tumbledown home of an elderly couple whom Richard and Sasees felt were truly worthy of assistance.

## LAL

There is sad news, not connected with the virus; our dear Lal passed away from cancer at the beginning of May. We knew he was very ill, and it is good that Richard and Sasees were able to talk with him on their visit. Our next full Newsletter will include a tribute to him.



Happily, his work of being our Eastern Province Tamil-speaking liaison person (Rohan speaks Sinhala, so there was often a three way translation on our visits!) is being continued by a very competent lady, our principal teacher at the Star Action Sinhala classes held in a Buddhist School .



Sisiliya

Sisiliya is being assisted by a young man, Kamal, who travels around on his motor-bike, visiting everyone receiving a Star Action payment, and sending us WhatsApp videos of the transactions, so we know all is as it should be!

Kamal is younger brother of Thiso, our university student, sponsored by a couple of our valued long-term supporters. Thiso has done outstandingly well and has now secured a really good job at the Bank of Ceylon. They come from a very poor family in Lal's village, with a fisherman father and no prospects at all until Star Action came along. We are continuing to focus our efforts now on education and feel very happy with what has been achieved so far. (We will write more about our other senior education sponsorships in the following newsletter).



## INDIA

Richard and Sasees are indeed a remarkable couple! As well as continuing to help us in Sri Lanka, with regular Tamil phone calls to our key people there, they are absolutely first-class house parents for our Brighter Life family. Every one of our visitors to the home says the same and our most recent,

Alison and Phoebe who were in India last August, will contribute something about their happy time there as soon as they can. Phoebe is currently helping with Corona virus care in Southampton hospital and Alison has had no let up in her teaching assistant post, caring for the children of key workers!



Shonali with Phoebe

India is currently in lockdown and all our children are well, but it is a big task for Richard and Sasees to keep them fully occupied while the schools are all closed! They also have to keep a special eye on Rani and Abi (who cook, clean, wash and do so many domestic things) as they have recovered from illnesses which make them especially vulnerable.

Obviously, there is no reduction in the expenses for our home - a total of 30 children/adults - in our care, so your continued support is much needed and deeply appreciated. We are trying to make as many econo-



Rani and Abi with Phoebe and Alison, 2019

mies as possible and will not be taking on more children this year. Richard and Sasees' daughter, Shonali, has now completed her English degree and has volunteered to work in the home, helping with the 'home education' and English teaching without any salary at all. Kirthik, their son, is studying law, (privately sponsored by two well-wishers), and will in future be giving all legal advice needed.



## NEPAL

Just before writing to you, I had a WhatsApp 'catch up' video call with Keshav who looks after all our Star Action work in Nepal. There is really happy news to share as last year, before the lockdown,

Keshav married a delightful young lady, Sujata, who is also a high school teacher.



Keshav and Sujata