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Musical youth

A project that uses music to rehabilitate war affected and vulnerable children in Sri Lanka has been made possible thanks to the generosity of our alumni.



Twice a year students and staff at the University are given the opportunity to apply for a grant of up to £5000 to support projects and research.

Funded solely and entirely by alumni who donate to the Edinburgh Fund; these grants promote new initiatives in teaching, research and student support, providing start-up funds for projects which, in many cases, become self-funding, or receive support from other sources. These grants are known as Innovation Initiative Grants (IIGs) and one of the most rewarding roles in the Development and Alumni office is when we receive reports and feedback from completed projects.

Music therapy

A recent example of [IIG \(Innovation Initiative Grant\)](#) success is a scheme founded by English Language alumna, Dr Tanya Ekanayaka in 2012.

The music composition project aimed to benefit war affected, impoverished school children and young adults in Sri Lanka. It achieved this by allowing them to articulate their thoughts and experiences creatively through musical invention and performance. The series of full-day music composition workshops in 2014 included 800 students from schools located in Jaffna, Killinochchi, Negombo, Puttalam, Chillaw and Hambantota.

Five students from five schools in Sri Lanka's northern districts of Jaffna and Killinochchi were also awarded scholarships enabling them to study music composition for a year.

“ This year, thanks to an Innovation Initiative Grant from the University of Edinburgh, I returned to conduct further workshops... It is deeply encouraging and wonderful to see how the project has grown exponentially since it began in 2012 ”

— Dr Tanya Ekanayaka

Instruments of success

Tanya recounts a particularly touching moment when she presented a school band from one of the poorest schools in southern Sri Lanka with a set of musical instruments. The children had never seen some of the instruments before, but have since gone on to win national level competitions.

The future



The plan for the future is to continue conducting workshops whilst incorporating further regions with a view to larger, longer term cross-ethnic musical collaborations. Tanya would also like to involve other specialists in the fields of linguistics and music but, at the moment, her biggest challenge is securing funding to support future sessions.

If you would like to find out more about the music composition project please visit Dr Tanya Ekanayaka's website at the address below.

Dr Tanya Ekanayaka's website (<http://www.tanyaekanayaka.com>)

Supporting students

The Edinburgh Fund supports projects and areas that most directly affect student life at the University. The fund supports talented students with scholarships and bursaries, helps build and enhance student facilities, and enables research initiatives and community projects, like that of Dr Tanya Ekanayaka, through Innovation Initiative Grants.

You can find out more by visiting the relevant section of the Alumni Services website.

The Edinburgh Fund

Innovation Initiative Grants

Encouraging Sri Lankan music (<http://www.ed.ac.uk/about/edinburgh-global/news-events/news/tanya-200613>)

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