



## *Remote Area Student Support*

On the north western corner of Sri Lanka, almost as far north as India, we find Kalpitya which is on the end of what is really a large sand peninsula about four hours north of Colombo. If you look across from the end of the peninsular you see the mainland and a national park which is a hideout for the L.T.T.E (Tamil Tigers).

There are two schools at Kalpitya, one a Muslim school and one a Government school, which was previously a Catholic School before 1966. Many of the teachers at this school are young graduates who must complete several years of "Remote Area Service". These young teachers are required to leave the school at Friday lunchtime and do not return until lunchtime Monday. They head for the bright lights of Colombo. The kids sit in the classrooms for nearly two days each week without a teacher.

This leaves the students with a poor deal, so three Sri Lankan Brothers have decided to live at Kalpitya and help at the school as volunteers (they have been given a full teaching load). Added to this they also run after school activities, a study and homework centre.

The students go there mainly between 5pm and 10pm to study and be tutored. The girls cannot go because they are not allowed to walk the streets at night for fear they will be 'picked-up'. If the girls are to have any equity in the arrangement, transport will have to be provided to the Activity Centre.

### *What is NEEDED...*

- Lorry transport to the study centre each night to overcome the cultural difficulty of girls being allowed out at night.
- A sound system for the choir. The choir is a great morale boosting activity which binds the community together.

### *What you can DO...*

A lorry can be hired 100 times to transport the girls, costing Rs 400 (Rupees) per trip for 100 trips (Rs 40,000 or \$500 AUD). This will make a HUGE difference to the potential of all students, boys and girls. The students are good studiers when provided with the resources. They don't see a future in catching fish for a living as it is a poor existence.

Another activity that binds them together and gives them a tremendous amount of pride is their newly formed choir. A volunteer music teacher travels from Colombo every weekend, training them and they give concerts. They have a keyboard and local instruments and, in 2006, Australian support provided them a sound amplifier. We hope to provide more musical instruments in 2007.

