

SIPNARA

Handicrafts Development Project

GALLE, SRI LANKA



The 'Sipnara' Handicrafts Centre is implemented and managed by the National Crafts Council (NCC) with the financial assistance of the Association of Independent Tour Operators, AITO (UK). Using funds raised at AITO's conference in Sri Lanka in November 2003, Sri Lanka Tourist Board's original concept of a shelter in Galle for women street-sellers was developed by the NCC and AITO into the current project.

Its purpose is to improve the living conditions of women and their families from the poorer sectors of the Galle communities by providing them with the means to learn a craft, and an outlet through which they can sell their handicrafts directly to tourists, both local and foreign.

SIPNARA is located in the former harbour store of a bygone era, strategically placed by the historic Old Entrance to the Galle Fort. Following tsunami damage, this grand old building was renovated with the financial assistance and support of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Galle Heritage Foundation and Secretariat of the Galle Administrative District have provided the building and continue to extend their full patronage and support.

Sri Lanka has a deep and varied heritage in traditional crafts and the Galle district enjoys a rich tradition in the art of jewellery and lace-making, reed, rush and bamboo craft, woodcarving and mask-making in particular. Unemployed women and men are being trained by experts at the Sipnara centre in these skills, with the aim of providing them with a sustainable income for years to come.



Visitors will have the opportunity to see these age-old crafts being given a new lease of life and observe the trainers passing on their skills to the trainees. Handicrafts produced by the local community are also on display and for sale.

A local association is running a traditional kitchen here too – the ideal setting for a welcoming cup of tea and a taste of the local specialities.

'Sip' means crafts and 'Nara' means improving. So, come and enjoy the 'Sipnara' experience. Your visit will encourage the participating artisans and improve livelihoods in the local community.



SIPNARA
Galle Handicrafts Development Project
National Crafts Council
Baladaksha Mawatha
Galle, Sri Lanka

(By the Old Entrance Gate to Galle Fort)
Open 8.30 – 16.00 Monday to Friday

