

SIPNARA

Handicrafts Development Project

GALLE, SRI LANKA



The 'Sipnara' Handicrafts Centre is implemented and managed by the National Crafts Council (NCC). 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 centre.

'Sip' means crafts and 'Nara' means improving.

The purpose of 'Sipnara' is to improve the living conditions of men and 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 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 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 trained by experts at the NCC Sipnara Handicrafts centre in these skills, with the aim of providing them with a sustainable income for years to come. Following several years of successful training programmes, the courses now only run when there are sufficient funds from handicrafts sales.

Visitors are welcome to visit the centre and, although you will not be guaranteed to see the trainers in action passing on their age-old crafts, it is still an interesting focal point for handicrafts in Galle. Local craftsmen and craftswomen drop in frequently, there are handicrafts on display and for sale, and enthusiastic National Crafts Council staff will be pleased to give information and advice about handicrafts in the Galle area. Your visit will encourage the National Crafts Council and participating artisans and improve livelihoods in the local community.



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Galle Handicrafts Development Project
National Crafts Council
Baladaksha Mawatha
Galle, Sri Lanka
(By the Old Entrance Gate to Galle Fort)



Open for visitors on weekdays