



[www.theabodetrust.com](http://www.theabodetrust.com)

The Abode Trust is a not-for-profit organisation based in Sri Lanka set up by Sid Elikewela and Susan Bennett which offers eco-tourism to fund its work with people who live traditional lives in remote villages. It is named after a simple village house, The Abode, which sits at the top of a remote valley in the Knuckles Mountains to the east of Kandy on the borders of a conservation area.



Its simplicity is symbolic of the work of The Abode Trust, rooted in the commitment to preserve the best of the traditional Sri Lankan village way of life whilst taking the advantages the west offers to improve health and sustainability in rural areas.

**We work with local people – learning about, enhancing and respecting each other’s way of life.**

Our website shows how we achieve our aims through:

- Working to improve health and resettle several displaced families
- Appeals - we are currently involved in two school projects and work to re-settle four families after an elephant attack
- Eco tourism - we offer tours to remote areas to introduce people to traditional life and culture.

On 6th October 2008, at the office of our lawyer, E.M.P.K. Abeyratne in Kandy, we signed the official Trust document. It sets out the aims and objectives of the Trust and its administrative and legal arrangements.

This means we can now forge ahead and bring together the energies of our supporters in both east and west!



From left to right, we are: Susan Bennett, (Founder Trustee), Mr.Palitha (Witness), Sid Elikewela (Founder Trustee), Ms. Kumari (Witness) and EMPK Abeyratne (Lawyer).

Sid has been taking visitors in small groups of up to four people to stay in this isolated village of four houses high in the mountains for several years. In that time he has developed a good relationship with the villagers, so much so he is now regarded as a valuable member of their community.

With a great interest in preserving the traditional ways of life, Sid is keen to make sure that visitors have as little an impact on the community as possible. Those who make the two and a half hour hike from the valley below, carrying their own kit, live with the villagers and enjoy a simple lifestyle without electricity, cars, telephones or modern facilities of any kind. Food is cooked over an open hearth, lighting is by oil lamp, sleeping arrangements are basic and washing and toilet facilities are al fresco. And it is amazing what you do not miss when you live so close to nature and in tune with its natural rhythms!



But Sid also sees his work as helping local people to improve their health and together with friends in the west several projects have been set up which mean that the best of both worlds, east and west, are open to visitors and local people alike. Sid manages the Sri Lankan side of the Trust: the tours, projects with local villagers and the management of the Trust.



Susan was one of the first visitors to The Abode in 2006 and says, 'I felt truly at home the first moment I arrived in the mountains, despite being bloody from leeches, soaked from the monsoon and filthy from the two hour hike over the pass... and the feeling has never gone away. There is something about the wide open warmth and honesty of the people, the sense of belonging, the pure quality of life that is refreshing, stimulating, as well as challenging to westerners.' Susan co ordinates support in the UK, manages the website and is learning Sinhalese from UK Sri Lankans.

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