

# The Humanitarian

Bi - monthly newsletter focusing on development issues in the humanitarian sector of Sri Lanka

## In this issue

Supports Pre-schools  
in the Plantation Sector  
Page 2

Promoting  
National  
Volunteerism  
Page 3

**Passion does it all...**  
Page 4



# Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation Support for Pre-schools in the Plantation Sector



New building at Morar

It is a sad reality that not even 15% of children in the Plantation Sector receive a proper pre-school education. A majority of the currently available pre-schools are located in temporary sheds or buildings borrowed from other benefactors in the plantations. With the aim of creating space for little children to begin their education, SDC has funded fourteen pre-school buildings in the Plantation Sector since June 2007.

SDCs Partner in this project

The Plantation Rural Education Development Organization (PREDO)

is an organization registered with the Social Service Department and working towards the betterment of the living conditions of the plantation workers and rural folk. It has been awarded by the Central Provincial Council as a "Best Performing NGO" in the Plantation Sector, for its work with children, early child development, gender

promotion, conflict transformation and peace building. A member of many networks in the sector and at the national level, PREDO has been in partnership with SDC since June 2007. Currently PREDO runs 139 pre-schools in the plantation area with a student population of about 3,450. Their work in the last 18 years has resulted in 30,268 pre-schoolers gaining admission to



Old building at Cleverton

government schools. A large number of children have gone on to pass the G.C.E(OL) and A.L examinations and a recent report showed that a few have even entered the National Universities.

When they began this programme considering the plight of these less privileged children, their only

objective was to ensure the right of pre-school education to the children. Thus the majority of the pre-schools run by PREDO are housed either in temporary buildings, sheds or buildings borrowed from other benefactors in the plantations. The borrowed buildings are at a risk of being taken back at any time or being used for other purposes too, thus disturbing the smooth running of the pre-schools.

## SDC Intervention

In June 2007 PREDO approached SDC for funds to build some pre-schools. Following the success of the pilot project, SDC has extended the partnership with PREDO and in the last 3 years through 3 project phases, SDC has now funded 14 pre-school buildings inclusive of two toys library in the Nuwara Eliya District.

PREDO's policy is to ensure maximum participation and



New building at Cleverton

contribution from the beneficiaries and the civil society and therefore projects are planned in such a way that 25% to 30% of the contribution towards the building cost comes from the people themselves. The community does all the unskilled work and as an end result the original investment is always dou-

(Continued on page 8)

www.charityapple.org

# Promoting National Volunteerism in Sri Lanka



Sri Lanka has a long-established culture of volunteerism. The urge to help a person in distress or lend a hand to a worthy cause is a cultural norm. Donating time, effort and materials to personal and community needs is embedded in our culture.

However, volunteerism has mostly been an informal process and therefore a gap between the supply of volunteers and demand for volunteer services prevails. Despite the immense needs in communities and organizations for volunteer services, people willing to volunteer lack sufficient information on how and where they could provide their services.

Our intention is to bridge this gap by using an online platform as a tool. www.charityapple.org was originally initiated by the Rotaract Club of Colombo and currently the initiative is partnered by the Rotaract Club of Colombo, Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA) and Volunteerism Information and Coordination Centre (VOICE) which is a programme initiated by The Ministry of Social Services and Social Welfare and supported by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the "UNV/UNDP Support to VOICE. VSO (Voluntary Services Overseas), the international development agency that promotes

volunteering to fight poverty and disadvantage, is also supporting the initiative.

The updated charityapple website has the mechanism which enables organizations to register online and post their volunteer vacancies. This enables organizations and communities to voice their need for volunteer support. Currently there are almost 40 organizations which have registered with charityapple and four volunteer opportunity posts. The charityapple team continues to create awareness on the benefits of volunteerism among organizations and individuals.

Charityapple also acts as a resource centre where individuals and organizations can gain useful insights and knowledge pertaining to volunteerism and the related situation in Sri Lanka. There is a dearth of information on volunteer management in Sri Lanka and charityapple offers tips on volunteer management. In addition the site features volunteer stories, photographs and also a 'News and Events' link which enables organizations to highlight current issues and events.

Most importantly, charityapple acts as an information centre where individuals interested in volunteering can seek opportunities in Sri Lanka. Many individuals living in Sri Lanka as well as abroad seek opportunities to volunteer: to give their time and effort to a worthy cause. More often than not these individuals do not have access to a platform where they can obtain information effectively and efficiently. Charityapple fills this gap by providing information for individuals to directly approach their preferred organization, the type of volunteer work and the geographical location as all these information is available on the site when a volunteer vacancy is posted.

We strongly believe that volunteerism can contribute national peace, equity and development. Our vision is for charityapple to function as the most sought out and well known volunteer facilitating web platform in Sri Lanka

# Passion does it all...



The Enterprise Resource Centre (ERC) was launched by Muslim Aid Sri Lanka (MASL) field office in collaboration with Amerciaries in 2007 April to rebuild the socio economic conditions of conflict effected Mutur.

The philosophy behind ERC was to focus on economic development through entrepreneurship training, provision of microfinance and creation of market linkages to bring about a long lasting change in the society while addressing other emerging issues in a post war scenario. In December 2008 at the wrap up of the ERC project, community members along with the beneficiaries of the project took over the ownership of ERC, thus registering themselves as a local entity to continue community service.

Food for the Year (FFY) is one of the initiatives of MASL which commenced with a campaign to create awareness on food security and to raise funds to support the poorest of poor families. With the support of local donors 80 families received assistance of a year around receipt of safety net pack worth Rs. 1500 per

month. Beneficiaries of FFY was encouraged to make available plots of land to cultivate possible vegetables or fruits.

Necessary seeds and seedlings were also provided to the beneficiaries along with guidance to cultivate. The aftermath of Tsunami and the ban on fishing till 2008, dead heated the lives of more than 2000 families in Mutur. Till this initiative communities in the costal area never had an interest in cultivation as their livelihood was fishing.



*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

### FFY – changing people's attitude:

A.J. Ameen (42) cultivates on behalf of a war victim. Ameen is a fisherman by profession and father of 5. He spends time cultivating in the mornings and evenings. *"I feel it interesting. Now the neighbors also have started cultivating after seeing what I have done"* said Ameen.



The beneficiary Sahurwan Sulthan (40) who is the owner of the plot of land Ameen is cultivating on has no one to look after her except the Ameen family. She is happy that her little plot of land is being used for cultivation while the Ameen family also enjoys its produce. *"Apart from the yields they harvest some of it is used for their daily needs while the excess is sold. "I buy my medicines with the money I earn selling these vegetables."* said Sahurwan in a pleased tone.

Prolonged poverty



M. Irsamohammed is at his 65<sup>th</sup> year of the journey of life. He is a father of 2 daughters and 3 sons. A bullock

cart was his source of income in the past. He also did various daily paid odd jobs to run the family, but was not able to own a plot of land. Though Irsamohammed is suffering from age related illnesses, unsympathetic nature of the rural economic conditions did not stop him from doing something to run the family still as a breadwinner. He produces spoons out of coconut shells and has his own home garden.

*"This is a relief to me. I have extended my cultivation; I am earning a reasonable amount of money from home gardening and while getting a pack of food stuff every month"* said Irsamohammed sharing his experience.

Change makes change!

Single change makes a series of changes. The success of change starts with a win or loss at the beginning.

Sihana (20) a young lady married a shop assistant a year ago. She did not think a tiny plot of land could bring so much of happiness in her life.



*"May be our grandparents have done cultivation, but not the generation of my age". When my neighbor started cultivating, I thought why cant I"* Sihana expressed. Adding to her cheerful experience Sihana said *"It may be a small plot of land, but I am happy attending to them and watering them every morning and evening. I have no hope of stopping it"*. She's interested in learning new methods to utilize the vertically available space sky high.

Like Sihana many others in the area are motivated by the FFY project. As Mahatma Gandhi said *"India lives on its villages"*, the question is then why aren't we doing the same?

(Continued on page 8)

# North East Coastal Community Development Project (NECCDEP)

Implemented by Project Consultancy Unit of Sarvodaya Economic Enterprise Development Services (Gte) Ltd (SEEDS) in Trincomalee District



Beneficiary who got Garment Manufacturing Training

The Eastern province of Sri Lanka has suffered a civil war that severely changed the livelihood system which in turn causes a higher poverty level prevailing in this area.



Beneficiary who received Training on Food Processing

The coastal communities living in this area have to face a lot of hardship in meeting their basic

needs. The use of natural resources is severely constrained due to denial of access, security risk and loss of property.

Livelihood and enterprise development under the North East Coastal Community Development

project is an important intervention for reducing poverty and meet

development service provider in Sri Lanka, acts as an enterprise development service provider for the project and strengthens the livelihood component by delivering entrepreneurship training and a modern set of business development packages with technical skills development.

Finally the project consultancy Unit designed market linkage development methodologies to incorporate enterprise holders to local level market to establish sustainability of the businesses.

Under this project SEEDS has been able to develop more than 250 beneficiary micro enterprises in Trincomalee district. All

SEEDS has conducted training programs and field level practical sessions including followings;

- Positive Thinking Training program
- Entrepreneurship Development Training program
- Food processing training workshop
- House wiring training workshop
- Garments manufacturing training workshop
- Crop cultivation training workshop
- Marketing management training program
- Quality management training program
- Financial management training program
- Managing business turbulence training program

basic needs via socio-economic development of Trincomalee district.

Sarvodaya Economic Enterprise Development Services (SEEDS) (Gte) Ltd, the leading enterprise

beneficiaries have gained practice, learning and knowledge in the trainings to run their enterprise in a sustainable way. They have improved their business ventures

*(Continued on page 8)*

# Facilitating Community Participation an essential skill for the Humanitarian & Development Sector in the North.

The change in context has resulted in the humanitarian sector in Sri Lanka having to shift its focus onto rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in the North. As a result new learning are being identified that must be addressed in order to provide professional and skilled humanitarian staff capable of delivering their programme goals.

With the aim of addressing these emerging learning needs, the RedR UK/CHA Learning Support and Capacity Building (LSCB) programme has scheduled a series of learning events in the North in the Tamil medium. A particular learning that has been identified and is being delivered is the modular courses in Community Participatory Approaches.

The workshop on Community Participatory Assessment- Tools & Techniques aims to develop practical skills among participants on the applications of participatory tools and techniques in order to carry out community based assessment.

Including identification & analysis of community assets/resources, community capabilities and their priority development needs. The workshop provides an introduction

to community participation, participatory approaches and applications as well as tools & techniques for data collection.

Course Title	Date	Language	Location
Community Participatory Approaches	24 – 27 March	Tamil	Jaffna
Managing Community Based Projects (CPP)	28 April – 1 May	Tamil	Vavuniya
Introduction to Project Planning and Management	29 – 30 April	Tamil	Members of NGO Consortium – Vavuniya
Project Proposal & Report Writing	14 – 15 May	Tamil	Members of NGO Consortium - Vavuniya

CPA is designed for field level programme managers, programme development officers, community facilitators, local government officers, and community. Practitioners of community based disaster risk management, post conflict/ post disaster humanitarian relief, reconstruction and development sector are also likely to benefit.

The programme also plans to focus efforts on developing the skills of its Associate Trainers. One such initiative is the Refining Trainer Skills Forum; a three day engagement (19 – 21 March) organised specifically to provide our Assessed Trainers an opportunity to hone and develop their training techniques and add to their knowledge areas, fully funded by RedR LSCB Programme and 20 assessed trainers are expected in this event.

The following workshops have been scheduled in March & April 2010 in Vavuniya and Jaffna.

RedR UK Learning Support and Capacity Building programme in Sri Lanka is conducted in affiliation with the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (GTE) Ltd.

The programme objectives are to address the learning and capacity building needs of the humanitarian relief & development sector in Sri Lanka.

To learn more about our programme and training events, visit: [www.redr.org.uk](http://www.redr.org.uk) or contact Fathema at [commsmktgsl@redrsl.org](mailto:commsmktgsl@redrsl.org) / 011 4938896.

(Continued from page 5)

ERC as a catalyst in the process

Rasool, a young and dynamic member of the ERC committee and a government school teacher has a different story. "Our cultivations are all organic. People are using cow dung and all the houses in these areas have their own wells, so there is no problem for water. It is interesting that people in the surroundings are asking me whether I can get seeds for their cultivations. I am so delighted that the Food for the Year campaign by Muslim Aid has changed the attitude of my community"

added Rassol.

Crosscutting feature



FFY beneficiaries get seeds and seedlings from Mubarak, one of the beneficiaries of the Muslim Aids Shree'a compliant microfinance project. He also provides advices to the Food for the Year beneficiaries free of charge. In another way

the FFY creates a new market for him as many people in Neithal Nagar and Kernikkadu village are interested in starting a home garden now. Though Mr. Mubarak's nursery is 7 km away from Netithal Nagar, people yet go in search of his organically bred seedlings.

Development work needs not only innovations, but also people with passion. Sri Lanka as a country with a culture for agriculture can go a long journey.

by Ismail A Azeez,  
Manager – Food Security Programs

(Continued from page 6)

and hope to expand the link with nearby cities. In the garment industry, beneficiaries were exposed to new types of designing and modern knitting technology to improve the quality aspects of the products.

They knit not only garments, but also hand bags, school bags, pencil covers, wall deco, pillows and deco door mats. People need improvement in their lives. But social environment restricts them in to a mirror box reflecting their con-

ceptualism. Our responsibility is to make their minds strong in having a better perception beyond the mirror box.

By Dilshan Fernando  
Project Consultancy Unit SEEDS (Gte) Ltd

(Continued from page 2)

ble. For example SDC allocated Rs. 0.5 million for the Morar Pre-school and the value after completion is well over Rs. 1 million. It is noteworthy to mention that every worker in both plantations, irrespective of whether he or she is a parent or not, contributed one day's wages towards the building cost of the Bogawantalawa pre-school which was designed as a pre-school with a toys library; while SDC allocated Rs. 1 million for the project, at completion it is valued at more than Rs. 3 million.

The Pre-school Development Society negotiated with the planta-

tion management for free labour from the estate for the construction and also to secure the land for the buildings; furthermore a maintenance committee assures the proper care of the buildings. This combined effort of the Partner agency and the community has thus ensured the ownership of the programme being transferred to the community.

Just a tiny step in helping this forgotten community, these pre-schools will also be places for children to commune; with books and toy libraries being put in place, they will eventually become a haven for children to enjoy their childhood

even under the harsh conditions that they live in, to see some hope in life! The pre-schools will also stand as a centre to build friendship and brotherhood among the children of all communities. Though mostly used by the Tamil children from the plantation community, Sinhala children from the surrounding villages I also have the opportunity to use and benefit from the

Taking into consideration the active participation of the people in this project, the contribution made by them and the sense of ownership they have developed, it is with much pride that they can rightfully claim "we have done it ourselves"!