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THE HUMANITARIAN

Join hands for HUMANITY

NETWORKING FOR A BETTER OUTREACH



Women are often affected by the alcohol and drug related behaviour of men, both within their families and communities. In addition, they are compelled to face many a hardship since they are economically dependent on their husbands, who spend their earnings on alcohol consumption. The behaviour of their male counterparts often drive women to seek

employment in order to keep the home fires burning. The hard earned monthly income, which is just sufficient to make ends meet, is swiftly channelled in to address the growing day to day needs within the household, while the males continue to spend all they earn to satisfy their thirst for alcohol. As alcohol takes over, women

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once again become the victims of the abusive behaviour of their male counterparts. Their wellbeing is affected and the 'happy family unit' simply falls apart, yet, men are often excused by both women and society for their behaviour, due to the direct link that has been created between the use of alcohol and violence.

Although a majority of women themselves are non-users, yet, they are not free from alcohol and drugs since they play a major role as promoters of alcohol and drug use. Often we see women engaged in the production and sale of alcohol and tobacco, while some others support the husbands or family run alcohol business. Yet another segment of women support and encourage male drinking within the household or at social gatherings. They permit or pardon misbehaviour unintentionally and propagate myths that encourage alcohol use or its behavioural after effects.

With its long-term experience in working with alcohol and drug issues, FORUT believes that women could be positive preventers, since they are the most affected by the alcohol induced behaviour of their spouses. In addition, the average consumption

among women is very low with a large proportion of women not consuming any alcohol at all. Women can also play a role in educating their children, thereby, preventing them from being caught up in the myths of glamour that relates alcohol and drugs to happiness, masculinity, youthfulness, and smartness. Educating and mobilising women to take up this role can definitely lead to a positive outcome, both, for women and the society as a whole. However, implementing a plan that can reach a large scale audience, and ensuring quality and closely monitored input could be challenging for a single organisation. Therefore, working with a network of organisations that have a similar goal and an interest is less time consuming and more cost effective and also result oriented.

FORUT Sri Lanka established a network of well recognised organisations that work towards women's development as a part of the organisation's Gender and Development Programme for the year 2008. The membership of the network currently exceeds twenty at national level, and also has outstanding representation at district level, covering more than ten districts. The network is called 'The National Network for

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Interview

World University Service of Canada (WUSC), Sri Lanka

is a Canadian development agency contributing to the alleviation of poverty and enhancing the socio-economic conditions of targeted communities in Sri Lanka through various projects. Presently there are three projects operating across 23 districts — i.e. the Project for Rehabilitation through Education and Training (PRET), Plantations Communities Project (PCP) and Women Defining Peace (WDP).

The Project for Rehabilitation through Education and Training (PRET) completes its 20th year of contributing to the economic development of Sri Lanka, in 2009. Commencing in 1989 with a project area of two districts, PRET provides for a segment of the population that had limited

access to livelihood alternatives — i.e. marginalised women and

throughout its 20 years by the Canadian International

N. Mangajakarasy from Ampara, a single parent who found a means of having a sustained income so that she could provide for herself and her five children. She not only gained a skill from AWF but also confidence to face the challenges of providing for the family in the absence of a husband. Today she is a role model for the community.

Development Agency (CIDA), Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE) and

youth living below the poverty line. The project completes its Fourth Phase in March, 2009 having impacted on 14 districts (Southern, Eastern, and Northern Provinces) across the country.

the Government of Sri Lanka. Additional support from Canadian Red Cross and various other donors has helped to enhance the project outreach, for instance following the 2004 tsunami.

Proactive in terms of promoting non-traditional vocational training opportunities for women, this project has actively worked to address the gender imbalance in technical training as well as providing sustainable and alternative livelihoods to all three communities. The project has been consistently financed

Currently the employment results indicate 73% male employment and 46% female employment in technical trades (2008).

The purpose of PRET is to enhance the standard of living of the poor, under and unemployed women and youth

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Photo: Providing camp management training for IDPs

(including those with special needs). The target beneficiaries include those who have been directly affected by conflict and after 2004, those affected by the tsunami as well. During

Thirteen young men in Jaffna, originally engaged in fishing prior to the tsunami were displaced and unable to earn an income due to location and security restrictions that limited the number of hours allowed for fishing. Vocational training provided by NVDAG provided them with a skill to find alternative employment opportunities. The community has seen the improvement in their quality of life and has come to realise that a change from traditional livelihoods can be positive. Community perception towards vocational training has also change and now viewed as an alternative livelihood to sustain their families.

the last five years the project focused on strengthening partner institutions to deliver quality vocational training. PRET is known for its holistic approach that increases

employability of trainees, meaning that not only does it cover the technical areas of study but also includes courses on English, health and safety, entrepreneurship development, first aid and gender and development. The project also creates a change in the attitudes of the wider community.

Given that PRET works across the island, a significant portion of the programming extends to areas that are

affected by conflict. Delivering a vocational training programme under such conditions requires that the project be flexible. PRET's vocational training cycle —

which includes planning, preparation, implementation, follow-up assistance, and research — has been successful with only minor changes to enhance its impact over time. Today, partner organisations are adapting the training cycle and continue to deliver vocational training to communities, island wide.

Looking back at the 20-year contribution PRET has made, it is evident that WUSC—Sri Lanka is committed to the long-term development of this country. With the continued support of the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training (MVTT), PRET will continue for a further five years to strengthen the implementation of vocational training reforms across the country.

ADRA
Sri Lanka

Project LIFE closes successfully

Colombo, Sri Lanka — With a beautiful ceremony, on the 23rd of March, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Sri Lanka celebrated the closing of the Livelihood and Infrastructure for Family Empowerment (LIFE) project in Tangalle, Hambantota District, and southeastern region of Sri Lanka.

LIFE project began on the 01st of October, 2006 and ended on the 31st of March, 2009. The project was funded by Swiss Solidarity, ADRA Switzerland, and ADRA Czech Republic and successfully achieved its purpose of helping 200 tsunami affected families in the Hambantota District to restore their lives in permanent housing schemes with satisfactory housing conditions, increased incomes. It also enabled them to peacefully co-exist with each other and neighbouring communities.

Present at the ceremony were Mr. Alex Gasser, Country Director for ADRA Switzerland, Edgar Castillo, Country Director for ADRA Sri Lanka, Government representatives from the three target villages of the project, Malgampura, Kelanigama, Marakolliya, and the elected District Representative.

Mrs. Priyanga Handunhewa, Divisional Secretary of Tangalle, thanked ADRA Sri Lanka for its presence in the region.

“Many NGOs came to us after the tsunami and vanished just as well, but ADRA remained in the region working with the people and touching their

hearts,” she said.

“I have seen many closing ceremonies and saw only the administration, but today I have seen the faces of the beneficiaries and how their lives have improved.”

Before the ceremony, a representation of the beneficiaries had an exhibition with some of their products, result of the projects’ livelihood intervention, which includes savings, vocational and skill training, business counselling and the Use-to-Own Programme (UTOP) where beneficiaries receive the necessary items to start a business.

For almost two hours, visitors admired the baskets, garden pots, wooden utensils and clothes, products out of recycled plastic bags, dried food, and spices prepared by beneficiaries, who had the chance to thank ADRA and the donors for making this particular programme possible.

“I have opened two bank accounts for my children thanks to the money I am making by selling food,” said Mrs. Mallika who was given a stove with a gas cylinder, a little display stand and some pans from UTOP.

One of the innovative techniques of the project is its Community Strategic Plan projected for the years 2009 through 2011. The community underwent planning sessions, discussions and decision making which led them to establish their vision, goals and

objectives, design an action plan with monitoring and evaluation, and create a budget and a timeframe.

“This is the first time an NGO is doing this here,” said Olive Orate, Project Manager for LIFE.

“It gives the beneficiaries a sense of continuity.”

LIFE project has successfully completed its objectives of building 225 kitchens, 201 rainwater harvesting tanks, conducting 315 health trainings and 7, 200 house visits, 36 peacebuilding and 19 capacity building activities. The implementation of the livelihood component, created 11 savings groups among the beneficiaries, conducted 54 vocational trainings, and 140 of the beneficiaries received UTOP assistance and consultation.

ADRA has been working for the people of Sri Lanka since 1989 in the areas of economic development, emergency management, primary health and food security.

ADRA is present in 125 countries around the globe and provides relief without regard to gender, age, ethnicity, and political or religious association.

For more information about ADRA Sri Lanka and LIFE project, please contact us at: www.adrasrilankga.org

— END —

Women in Alcohol and Drug Prevention'. The network has been actively engaged in analysing the role of women in the prevention of alcohol and drugs, at both family and community level. Gemisarana Kendraya, Hangu/Rural Supportive Programme, Rural Women's Foundation, Sakriya Kantha Organisation, Sarvodaya Kulangana Sansadaya and the Ruhunu Gemi Kantha Organisation are some of the prominent women's organisations attached to the network.

Each of these organisations has a wide community outreach and works with hundreds of smaller women's groups. Women empowerment through access to knowledge and assets has been the main goal of most of the

network members. The need for technically sound intervention on alcohol prevention has been much welcome by these groups. Meanwhile, the members of the network and women leaders of the village level groups were also trained on handling alcohol related issues.

Taking it a step further, some members of the network have developed working committees at village level, in selected villages, and with the support of volunteers, discussions on alcohol and its related issues are taken up at household level. Youth are also mobilised to support these initiatives, and small scale prevention campaigns are carried out by the youngsters, using stickers and posters to communicate the message.

The network members often meet with FORUT representatives. "Sharing their successes and failures provides a good learning opportunity for all the participating members. It provides the team's new direction, encouragement in developing their capacities, and community education plans for the empowerment of women and their communities," says Samitha Sugathimala, Gender Advisor of FORUT Sri Lanka.

Apart from interventions in alcohol and drug prevention, the network is now developing their own plans on launching pilot programmes on gender based violence. The network will be further expanded at the district level in order to become a more strengthened force that advocates for issues directly linked to

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- [OCHA Sri Lanka Statement of the Secretary General on Sri Lanka 12 April 2009](http://www.ckc.lk/Best_of_ckc/OCHA%20Sri%20Lanka%20Statement%20of%20the%20Secretary%20General%20on%20Sri%20Lanka%2012%20April%202009.pdf)

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- [OCHA Sri Lanka Sri Lanka North East Joint Humanitarian Update 13th to 27 March 2009.](http://www.ckc.lk/Best_of_ckc/OCHA%20Sri%20Lanka%20Sri%20Lanka%20North%20East%20Joint%20Humanitarian%20Update%2013th%20to%2027%20March%202009.pdf)

[http://www.ckc.lk/Best_of_ckc/OCHA Sri Lanka Sri Lanka North East Joint Humanitarian Update 13th to 27 March 2009.pdf](http://www.ckc.lk/Best_of_ckc/OCHA%20Sri%20Lanka%20Sri%20Lanka%20North%20East%20Joint%20Humanitarian%20Update%2013th%20to%2027%20March%202009.pdf)

- [NPC Media Statement International Support Cannot be Obtained for Keeping Civilians Trapped.doc](http://www.ckc.lk/Best_of_ckc/NPC%20Media%20Statement%20International%20Support%20Cannot%20be%20Obtained%20for%20Keeping%20Civilians%20Trapped.doc)

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