



Kurugammana Causeway - "a model project worthy of emulation"

The Kurugammana Causeway - a community participatory project implemented by World Vision through its Bibile programme was commended as a project worthy of emulation at the recent opening of the new bridge.

"The present government has been doing so much infrastructure development during these years and we have undertaken many in Bibile as well. But it should be noted that this initiative of World Vision is an extraordinary effort. I will definitely suggest to the Chief Minister that our development approach should align with this," said Gayan Kapilasooriya - Coordinating Secretary to the Chief Minister Shasheendra Rajapaksa.

"It is amazing how people are being awakened and this is much more sustainable as people will stand for what they have built. I think if we can carry out such initiatives with World Vision we can build two bridges with the amount we spend on one," he added.

The lack of a bridge or causeway hampered the daily activities of the people especially during the rainy season, which prevailed for upto five months a year.

The river running across the village overflowed, separating the village from the road and isolating the Kurugammana community. School children and villagers crossed the river on a tight rope-wire attached to trees across the river, risking their lives.

World Vision organized the community in a collaboration that made it possible to complete the building of the causeway within a short period of four months. World Vision contributed technical knowledge, hardware, and skilled labor charges for the construction while the community contributed sand and unskilled labor throughout the process. World Vision invested Rs. 3 million and the community contribution was approximately Rs. 2 million towards the project.

Commenting on the achievement, WVL National Director Suresh Bartlett said, "The Bibile team has done a tremendous job here by fulfilling an elementary need. I hope it will enhance the quality of life and help protect the children and enable them to attend school and their parents to continue their livelihood without interruption."

EDITORIAL

Bridge building for vulnerable communities

Our cover story focuses on a very simple yet innovative project that took place in Kuragamanna in Bibile a rural village in Sri Lanka.

World Vision was able to mobilise the village community and together with the participation of the community the construction of a bridge was completed in record time and with huge cost savings.

On this page we feature the publication of a book on the challenges faced by the plantation communities which was compiled as part of our efforts to change some unjust policies which hindered the progress of these vulnerable communities.

The story of little Rukshani and her choice of a pen over more attractive goodies is a touching reminder of how much we can learn from children and their approach to life.

World Vision continues to reach out to other willing partners to join in our efforts to support vulnerable communities and we have recorded the views of two of our long standing suppliers who have been transformed after a recent visit to one of our projects in the field.

The stories of Arasaratnam the woodcutter who turned dairy farmer and Manjula the day-labourer who became a grower of agricultural food crops and the changes in their family fortunes as a result of World Vision's interventions are most heartening.

The Editorial Team

Dion Schoorman
Hasanthi Jayamaha
Jayaweera Kohombange
Nadeesha Rajakaruna
Neomal Weerakoon
Niroshini Fernando

comments: editor_kathika@wvi.org

Publication of handbook for Plantation Communities



A book titled '**Service Delivery of Local Government Authorities for the Plantation Community in Sri Lanka: A Rights based approach**' was launched in Hatton at a special ceremony on 23rd November.

The publication was initiated and supported by World Vision in collaboration with the Estate Community Solidarity (ECS) – a group that works to support the plantation communities. It is hoped that the publication would be used by the government agencies and local stakeholders as the standard reference document for issues involving the plantation communities in the country.

Public service delivery is one of the key components in the development of the plantation communities. The book is the outcome of discussions between the ECS members to forge greater collaboration and capacity building in addressing the issues of the plantation community.

The initial publication was in the Tamil language and translation of the book into the English and Sinhala languages is already underway and these will be released shortly.



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At World Vision we are passionate about the well being of children and ensuring them life in all its fullness.

If you are interested in learning more about our work or would like to join us in partnership in any of our programmes please email,

dion_schoorman@wvi.org

Rukshani's choice of pen inspires gift of 150,000 more...



A gift of 150,000 pens arrived from Taiwan recently all because of a little girl who made an impression with a simple choice she made. Rukshani, 12 was among the children who were inquisitively watching the group of visitors from World Vision Taiwan who were observing World Vision's development work in their community.

During their interaction with the children the World Vision Taiwan Marketing Director extended her pen to Rukshani as a gift. But another child was quick to take the extended pen. Rukshani started to cry and no matter how many sweets were offered to console her, she could not be consoled until she was given a pen.

"It really surprised and impressed me," said Hsiu-Ling Kuo, The Marketing Director, "I have travelled to many countries and usually the children would always choose sweets over anything else. Children cry over sweets never over pens. This is the first time I've seen a child crying over a pen and would not accept sweets in place of it."

Inspired by this incident, World Vision Taiwan included pens as a gift choice for the donors and sponsors for Sri Lanka. Some schools in Taiwan too mobilized the campaign to share a pen with a student in Sri Lanka. The response flooded World Vision Taiwan office with pens and they were all sent to Sri Lanka to be distributed among school children.

The pens were distributed among all World Vision Programmes across the country to be presented to school children.

Transforming suppliers into enlightened partners



A special kind of gift distribution took place in two of World Vision Area Development Programmes (ADPs) recently with three World Vision Lanka (WVL) suppliers Nipuna Lanka, NSB Enterprise and Tech Tools Integrated (Pvt) Ltd, taking an initiative to give their products as gifts to the children in our communities.

Nipuna Lanka owner M.H.M. Rizwi and NSB enterprise owner Bandara travelled to the Giribawa ADP carrying school bags and educational material and books for preschool children of the 35 preschools, for 95 children who had passed the scholarship exam and for children of the special education unit in Giribawa.

“My company has supplied stationery to WVL for 6 years. I knew about their work but I didn’t really know about the tremendous impact it made on the children. I saw that WVL serves everyone, without discrimination and that it is an organization that truly addresses the needs of the people,” said Rizwi. “I was so happy to meet these children in Giribawa and see how well they were doing in their studies. Without hesitation, I would participate in such a project again and would certainly urge other suppliers to do the same,” he continued.

“This was a unique experience for me. I got the opportunity to personally meet some of the recipients of our products and witness how it made a difference in their lives,” said Bandara, whose company NSB Enterprise has been supplying stationery to WVL for six years. “I hope we can collaborate on more good work such as this.”

In another such event, the computer center of Mandalapura College, Neluwa, was equipped with six more computers with the support of ‘Tech Tools Integrated (Pvt) Ltd – a long term supplier of WVL.

“We have been providing computer equipment to WVL for about 12 years but we didn’t have an idea of how its work impacts the community. We are working with many large organizations but have never been invited to be involved in their work. We really appreciate that WVL focuses not only on sponsoring a child but also the development of the whole child including their families, economic condition and the community they live in,” Ms. Nilusha Thalagala, Sales Manager of Tech Tools Integrated said sharing her thoughts of the programme.



“After seeing the presentations and learning more about the work of World Vision, I was moved to support children who have limited opportunities to see the world beyond their little community and pledged to donate two computers to a project,” she continued.

World Vision conducted an Orientation Programme for its partners recently to help them get a deeper insight to the work of World Vision in the rural areas and the children and the communities we serve. The programme has given these suppliers the opportunity to increase their engagement in caring for those in need and partner with rural communities in their journey towards sustainability.

A gift of a garden

Life was hard for Manjula Priyantha, his wife Thusharika and their two young children. As a day labourer from Ganga Ihala Korale in the Kandy district, Manjula could barely make ends meet. Thusharika tried her best to supplement their meagre income by plucking tea.

The little family resigned themselves to the reality that they would probably face even more hardships as the educational needs of their children increased. When World Vision commenced its permaculture project in Ganga Ihala Korale, Manjula was overjoyed to find out he was identified as a beneficiary. He made up his mind to do the best he can with this opportunity.

Soon, he was equipped with several training programmes and became a leader farmer in the project. Manjula then began cultivating a vegetable garden in an unused plot of land he owned. "Earlier, I was not aware of farming methods and techniques. After completing the trainings on organic farming methods and pest management, I felt that I obtained all the tools to face the difficulties of farming," said Manjula.

Manjula was determined to be the best farmer in this project. He was supported with seeds, home gardening equipment and bee keeping boxes. Through this assistance he was able to grow chemical free vegetables, fruits and medicinal plants.



"I am so happy that now our family has nutritious food and my children are safe from diseases and infections due to this healthy diet. Now, instead of buying fruits and vegetables from the market, I am able to use that money for my children's education," says Manjula, beaming.



Farmers were also provided with skills in money and time management through leadership and entrepreneurship training.

Manjula's determination has been rewarded; he was selected as the best farmer in the Permaculture project. "I am very thankful to the World Vision Permaculture project for encouraging me to be a successful farmer. What I was able to achieve in a relatively short period of time was a real strength for the development of my family," says a grateful Manjula, with tears in his eyes.

Child protection awareness programmes for safer communities



Following the end of the war, families returning to their place of origin face many issues in the process of resuming their lives. In this context, child protection is one of the major issues which World Vision Lanka (WVL) seeks to address under its Humanitarian Emergency Affairs (HEA) programme in the North. WVL's child protection/education program includes a mass awareness and training campaign to increase the knowledge of communities concerning the protection of their children.

The villages of Ilangopuram, Theravil and Valluvarpuram in the Puthukudiiruppu (PTK) DS Division, have been selected for the implementation of this campaign. The Village Child Rights Vigilant Committees (VCRVC) and community mobilisers have found several cases of child abuse in these areas. In many households, both parents are involved in labour work leaving their children vulnerable to abuse. WVL therefore collaborated with the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) and Child Protection Officers to conduct training programmes on child rights and prevention of abuse.

Following this intervention, a strong VCRVC volunteer body has been formed to prevent cases of abuse and also to provide support to children and continued awareness for parents.

Vaithilingam Rajanikanth, District Child Protection Officer for PTK, commented, "WVL continuously assists the community with a special focus on schools. While children are the most vulnerable victims in any kind of situation, they also should be given an equal opportunity to learn about their rights and to act against any kind of abuse. By providing training and awareness programmes on child and women protection, sexual and gender based violence, disaster risk reduction, child rights and hygiene, WVL gave them an opportunity to learn about their rights and also about disaster risk reduction."

Village Child Rights Committees have also been formed and many men from the community are actively involved in these committees. WVL has also established children's clubs in these areas so that children can increase their skills and confidence.

"World Vision increased the capacity of government officials including me, in the area of child case management and even brought officials for an exposure visit to other parts of the country so we can learn about how such cases are handled. Undoubtedly, we learnt a lot and it was a good experience for us. Thank you World Vision and I hope you continue your unending support towards our communities", continues Rajanikanth.

Woodcutter turned dairy farmer savours change in fortunes



Life was a daily challenge for woodcutter Arasaratnam and his wife Damayanthi as they struggled to earn enough income to feed their four children. Things got so bad that Damayanthi had to leave their home in the remote village of Kayankuda, Eravur Pattu to seek employment overseas as a domestic worker to make ends meet.

The two youngest girls Atchana (15) and Dilukshana (13) were left in the care of their two elder sisters who had to sadly drop out of school to look after their younger sisters. "We were unhappy those days because some days we would come from school hungry and we didn't have enough to eat. We hardly had fish with rice," says Atchana.

Arasaratnam feared that if their plight continued his younger daughters too would have to drop out of school as the household demands were increasing month by month.

It was at this time that World Vision began a development programme in their village and the family's fortunes took a turn for the better. Atchana and Dilukshana were included in the sponsorship programme and the family received livelihood support of a cow, a few goats and poultry.

"I didn't know much about rearing cows but we were provided with training and I learnt a lot. They taught us how to care for the animals. They also gave us advice on how to treat them and keep them healthy," says Arasaratnam.

"We couldn't afford to give milk to our children but now we get 12-15 litres of milk per day for six months after a calf is born. We keep some of it to give our children and sell the balance for LKR 50/= (US 40 cents) per litre at the milk board and get a very good income. Apart from this we sell the eggs from the poultry and earn an extra income as well," Damayanthi adds with a smile.

Their lifestyle has undergone a complete change. The income has increased and each day looked brighter than the last. One of the greatest joys for the family was the return of Damayanthi from Saudi Arabia and the children were delighted to have their mother's arms around them once again.

The children are healthy and now enjoy fresh milk and three nutritious meals a day complete with fish or egg regularly on their plate. They have also received school stationery and other assistance and are encouraged to continue going to school.



"We are very happy now because we have enough food to fill our stomachs. We are very grateful to our sponsors and enjoy keeping in touch with them and look forward to their letters and cards," Atchana and her sister says with thankful hearts.

"I do not have to go chop wood anymore. We now have a stable income and also have enough to save. No other organization has helped us like this," said Arasaratnam.



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