

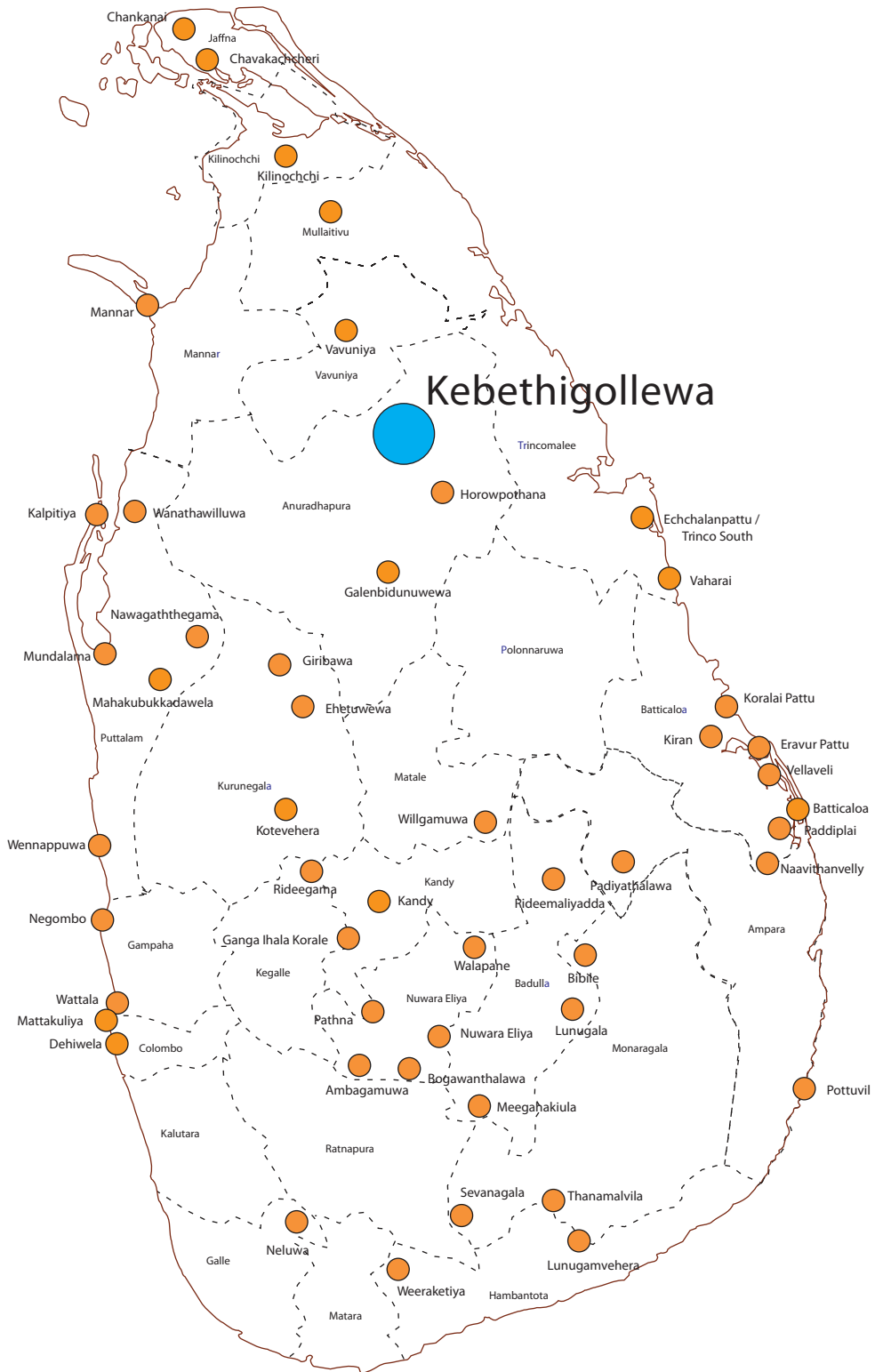


World Vision®

Kebithigollewa

Winning together...





Kebithigollewa

Kebithigollewa is situated in the Anuradhapura District in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka. Located on the border of the conflict zone, the area experienced more than its share of violence from the 27-year-long war with the LTTE which ended only in 2009.

Although Kebithigollewa depended on agriculture for a living, maintaining a stable livelihood was difficult with the terrorist attacks and the unpredictable rainfall patterns. Additionally, most of its community was recruited into the Civil Security Forces during the height of the conflict.


World Vision first entered Kebithigollewa in 1999, working with the Sri Lankan Government authorities to provide humanitarian assistance to the population affected by displacement and an outbreak of the malaria epidemic. The programme then gradually transformed itself into a development initiative as World Vision's Kebithigollewa Area Development Programme (ADP).

The Programme commenced with 10 Grama Niladari Divisions (GNDs) and extended to 13 with a total beneficiary population of around 10,950. The development work was channeled through the main components of livelihoods, health, education, water and sanitation, disaster management, infrastructure, economic development, value promotion and capacity building and environmental protection.

The Programme was adversely affected by the raging war next door and was forced to switch many times between development and emergency response modes according to the needs of the community. Through all these challenges World Vision stayed close to the people of Kebithigollewa, helping them rebuild their broken lives many times over.

Rebuilding was perhaps the biggest need in Kebithigollewa. Families had lost members and livelihoods; Children their education and dreams and communities lived in fear and despair. Today, their livelihoods are restored; children finish school and enter the university and the communities are thriving again - their lives healed through many counseling and capacity building initiatives.

The war left them broken, discouraged and hopeless. World Vision leaves them with their lives rebuilt, strength renewed, and hope restored. The journey is slow but Kebithigollewa is well on the way to recovery.



Message from the **National Director**



Suresh Bartlett
National Director
World Vision Lanka

Today is a special day for both World Vision and the people of Kebithigollewa as it marks the closure of our Area Development Programme (ADP) and the end of a long and enriching journey together.

This long term (12 years) development programme is unique to World Vision, whereby the poorest and the most disadvantaged communities are empowered and transformed.

Children are always at the heart of our work - we focus on children because they are the best indicator of a community's social health. When children are fed, sheltered, schooled, protected, valued, and loved, a community thrives.

We have reached the end of a successful journey of transformation and development over the last 12 years. Since 1999, in partnership with the community, World Vision has conducted a range of initiatives in the key sectors of Education, Health & Nutrition, Water & Sanitation, and Economic Development in Kebithigollewa.

Today, as we prepare to leave Kebithigollewa, we do so with the satisfaction that we leave behind an empowered community with enhanced capacities. Most families now have access to clean drinking water, children are now back in school and enjoying better health and nutrition. Children have a space for their talents and voice and families have better housing and sustainable livelihoods.

These achievements are significant because they have been achieved despite the fact that the project areas were adversely affected by the 27 year long war with the LTTE which ended only in 2009. Many civilians were killed and the conflict disrupted the lives of the people who were at times displaced from their homes and compelled to abandon their cultivations and their jobs.



The achievements in the education, health and nutrition and economic development have been most encouraging. The school drop-out rate has reduced from 4% in 2001 to just 0.5% in 2011 and the number of children with no schooling has reduced from 7% to 0.3 %. These improvements are attributed to the increased awareness of the value of education through awareness programmes conducted specially for parents. Another pleasing aspect is that the quality of learning has increased and the number of students passing their Ordinary level examination has risen from 25% to 63%.

The community benefited from diversification of their produce and the cultivation of alternate food crops to complement their paddy cultivation. Home gardens are now increasingly popular throughout the communities and provide a ready supply of vegetables for consumption and an added income too. Families have also benefited from initiatives in animal husbandry and now have their own cattle, goats or chickens which provide nutritious milk and eggs for the children and an increased income.

It is our fervent hope that the empowered communities in Kebithigollewa will take ownership for their continued development and be able to sustain the progress made to date. The success of our programme in Kebithigollewa was due to the support we received from all our stakeholders including Government Ministries Local Provincial Government, Divisional Secretaries, Government Agents, our sponsors, donors from Japan, our partners and the communities themselves. Our sincere thanks go out to all of them.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the dedicated efforts of our staff that have faithfully served the communities in Kebithigollewa over the years and helped to bring about the significant transformation we see today.

Suresh Bartlett

National Director
World Vision Lanka



Message from the **Group Director - Operations**



Jude Perera
Acting Group Director
Operations

I am pleased to send this message on the occasion of the closure of our Area Development Programme (ADP) in Kebithigollewa.

Kebithigollewa was identified as one of the poorest and least developed areas in Sri Lanka and it was due to this reason that World Vision decided to work in the region.

World Vision began its work in Kebithigollewa in 1999 and over the last 12 years we have had the privilege to partner with the communities to pursue a shared goal of better livelihood, health and education for the men, women and children of the Kebithigollewa ADP.

Together with the communities we have engaged in projects focusing on education, health and nutrition, economic development and water and sanitation – sectors identified by the community as priority areas for improvement.

We believe it is the community that provides leadership and is the ultimate driving force behind sustainable development and it is World Vision's role to work alongside them in partnership to help these communities realize their shared dreams.

The overall student attendance at school has increased appreciably and the creation of 18 child societies and a child federation had presented children the opportunity to learn about self governance, leadership and the power of their unified voice in addressing social issues.

In the health sector World Vision partnered with the Ministry of Health to provide health awareness on water borne diseases, dengue and general awareness of good health and hygiene practices and community access to government facilities.

On behalf of World Vision Lanka, I wish to express our sincere thanks to Divisional Secretary and staff, MOH and staff, Director of Education, School Principals and their staff and all our many stakeholders whose support has helped improve the lives of the children and their communities in Kebithigollewa.



Message from the ADP Manager



Viraj Abeysekera
ADP Manager
Kebithigollewa

I am privileged to be a part of the journey with the children and their families of Kebithigollewa Area Development Programme towards transformation.

The values, smiles and hope World Vision could add to their lives are our testimonies. With much pleasure, I bring good wishes to children and their families of Kebithigollewa in this occasion of ADP closure.

WV entered in to the journey with the Kebithigollewa communities in 1999 with the assistance to prevention of Malaria epidemic in the area. Kebithigollewa is one of the unique areas where the children and lives of people were adversely affected by the armed conflict for many years.

Completing a 13-year long journey, the Area Development Programme has now come to its close. Our journey was colored with transformation stories, challenges, shared values and lessons learned throughout. Programme coverage was on economic, health, education, institutional development and environment sectors which was achieved through child and community focused strategies adhered to by World Vision Lanka and by involving community members, local partners and stakeholders during and throughout the programme cycle.

The interventions in the health sector have been successful in increasing people's awareness on healthy diets, personal hygiene and preventing communicable diseases. One of the main achievements has been to have children and parents realized the importance of education, 97 percent of children aged between 5 and 10 are enrolled in primary schools as a result.

We acknowledge the generosity of our dear sponsors who extended their helping hands unconditionally to the children and their families of Kebithigollewa. All partners –government and non-government- who collaborated with World Vision's development efforts are highly recognized.

It is our wish for children of Kebithigollewa, 'a life in all its fullness!'





A ray of hope in a tiny school

Since passing the scholarship exam for grade 5 students Sachini (10) is a celebrity in her school and her village. A picture of her in her school uniform, smiling proudly after scoring high in the exam, is put up in the principal's office, inspiring the other students.

"My favourite subject is English," says Sachini who excels in all her subjects.

Yakawewa Primary School in Kebithigollewa has only 26 students through grade 1 to grade 5. Only the poorest of the poor children - those who could afford only one uniform, few books, no shoes and no bus fare came to study here. Situated in a village that bordered the once war-zone, it was a struggle to keep the Primary School functioning. Many times it had to be closed during the war and was also on the verge of being shut-down completely.

"This is the first time in this primary school's history that a student has passed the exam," says Ranjith Kumara the principal, "Even the other four students who were in Grade 5 obtained marks very close to the pass mark this time. That is a record itself!"

"Nobody – not the community, not even the parents of the children who came to this school. World Vision provided study assistance material especially for the grade 5 students who were facing the exam and with a most dedicated teacher, the students found a steady improvement in their studies.

"These children never went for tuition classes and they could never afford it," says the Principal, "With the study assistance they could really come up and I wanted to prove to the parents that they don't need to send their children to tuition classes to make them smart."

World Vision sponsorship has also provided Sachini and other children in her school with sufficient school books and other educational material that would help them continue school.

Sachini wants to be a doctor when she grows up and look after old people and small children. "My daughter is always alert and asks things she doesn't know. She is also very creative, neat in all her work and loves to read," says Niluka her mother.

The little girl also won the second place in an open competition (age 6 to 18) on general knowledge conducted by the Child Societies on World Children's Day with the participation of 360 children.

Meanwhile Sachini's little school is looking forward to more victories to come. Principal Ranjith plans to create a wall full of pictures of children who strive to do their best in studies and help every student strive their best.



Winning together...

Although it has been three years since the war has ended and a peaceful life has replaced the violence, bloodshed and displacement that was almost routine, economic development is still slow in Kebithigollewa and restoring livelihoods was a crucial part for the community.

"My husband and I used to run a small boutique but it was hard to continue during the time of the war. Most of the community also left the village," Ranhami (55) says, "Although my husband is not there anymore, I still wanted to restart the boutique after the war."

Ranhami is one of the 872 single parents living in Kebithigollewa, most of who have been widowed by the war. They have never had a stable livelihood, but today, they are supported through the network initiatives of World Vision.

She built a small hut on a clearing by the road to start a boutique but had to abandon it due to the opposition of some people. In her helplessness, Dayawathie, another war widow who lived by the road offered her a space in her garden for Ranhami to put up a shop.

Ranhami obtained a Rs. 20,000/- loan and built a little shop. With the income she received she managed to repay the loan and take another one to improve the shop and to buy more goods to sell.

Most of the villagers buy goods from Ranhami now. She has a variety of products from food items to toiletries and things for daily needs and sweets for children.

"I get a good income and I am happy," Ranhami smiles, "Dayawathie and her daughters have become like my own family now and even on the days I am unable to come to the shop, they take care of it for me."

The two friends also do cultivation together.

"We received seeds from World Vision and we have cultivated 1 ½ acres with cashew nut, coconut, several varieties of vegetables and fruits," Dayawathie says, "We would soon be able to get a good income from that too."

As World Vision prepares to leave Kebithigollewa, it has networked the community not only to the government authorities and services but also to both local and international organisations that work in the area. This initiative will help the community to obtain the sustainable development that it needs.

"World Vision was there to support us all through," Ranhami smiles, "Even the years we spent in a displacement camp, World Vision assisted us and visited us."



A life of hope...

"World Vision came to our village during a time when we lived with a lot of hardships. On one side there was the war and the eternal fear for our lives and then there were so many setbacks. Education was the worst affected," says Charuka (20).

"There were a lot of hiccups in our education during the war. We didn't have much time to study - we lived in fear often hiding in the forest. We missed a lot of school too. Education wasn't a priority – survival was."

"Without education there is no future for children from this area. In the bigger towns there are more employment opportunities - but not here. Education is the only way out of poverty for us."

"Because of the war we didn't have teachers. No one wants to come and teach in areas like this with so much uncertainty and threat to life. Our parents didn't have a stable income either to afford additional classes for us.

But World Vision stood in the gap by supporting teachers with transport and providing them safe facilities to come and teach us. We also received many study assistance classes. One of my favourites is the English class we had. Learning English was a dream for me and whatever the English I know now is what I learnt from the classes that World Vision held for us."

"World Vision not only provided us with books and pens and other materials we needed for school, but they also held leadership trainings and positive thinking workshops for us children. It really helped me get focused and taught me good and methodical study habits. World Vision programmes laid the foundation for my education. I learnt to plan and discipline my studying to a timetable.

I have no words to explain how grateful I am to World Vision, especially to my sponsor mother for giving me hope for a good future. That's much more than the materials I've received.

I spend a lot of time in the library reading and gaining knowledge. Even the state-of-the-art library we have is something World Vision helped us achieve.

World Vision came to our assistance during a time when everyone else was giving up and leaving. Their care made a big difference not only in my life and in my family but in my village and in many other villages too.

In a few months time, I enter the university to study Psychology and Sociology. I want to thank my sponsor mother who still writes to me and encourages me. I want to thank her for being there for me and my family through the most difficult times and giving me a life of hope."



A bountiful harvest...

Wahalkade D 05 is one of the paddy farmer resettlement divisions around the Wahalkade reservoir and is home to 300 paddy farmer families. Every year the area produces over five million kilos of rice during the main season.

Through the Partner Organisation, World Vision established a rice mill in the D 05 zone training a 60-member women's group in rice processing who get to use the mill at a subsidised price. They can also run the mill on rent paying Rs 10,000/- per month to the Partner Organisation.

"This rice mill is the only rice mill to the 300 paddy farmer families living in Wahalkade-5 and the closest to over 100 families living in the neighbouring villages," says Kusumawathie who currently runs the rice mill.

The few mills in the neighbourhood take two days to process paddy for the farmers, Kusumawathie works hard staying till later to deliver polished and cleaned rice in just one day.

"When I arrive at the mill in the morning people have already come and left their sacks of paddy outside the door with a small name tag and I process it and keep it ready for them by evening.

I process at least 30,000 kg a month and more during harvest times. We farmers eat rice for all three meals and sometimes when there's no rice to cook for dinner the mothers hurry with a little paddy to me for processing and I would help them," she says.

Some even come and buy the already cleaned rice from the mill because it is cheaper than buying from the town.

"The mill gives me a good income and I also get an additional income by selling the leftover husks to companies that make chicken feed," she says.



A place of safety...

Navodya (8) and her sister Shamika (12) live with their grandmother since they were abandoned by their parents. Sumanawathie (55) goes for daily labour work to provide for her two grand-daughters but always comes home before the girls return from school.

"I feared for them all the time," she says, "especially because the little mud hut we lived in didn't provide them enough security. I could never leave them alone. I was scared that someone would harm them because they don't have their parents. I can't throw them away like their parents. I have to take care of them."

But the little shelter they had fell apart during the heavy rains. "When a part of the wall fell, I was scared that the house would collapse on the children so I took them both under a tree and covered them with a polythene to protect them from the pouring rain, until we could go to a relative's house nearby," she recalls.

"World Vision built a new brick-house for us which is very safe," she says, "Once the doors and the windows complete, the children can stay safe in the house even if I have to go for work. It is also just opposite our relative's home and they can look out for the children," she says.

Navodya likes the new house and has already chosen the room she would share with her sister. But Shamika says she likes the old mud house too because that's where they lived first.

World Vision has completed over 50 houses for vulnerable families in Kebithigollewa who lived in unsafe houses.



Supporting teachers to serve better...

Lahiru Preschool is the only preschool for its surrounding three villages and the second mother to at least 30 children every year, who grow in her care.

“We began this preschool here in the small community hall without much knowledge on how to support their crucial years of growth.” says R. A Sriyani, Teacher in charge of the Preschool. “Children had no toys, no proper playground and parents couldn’t afford the necessary stationery for their work.”

“After World Vision began to work with us, we received everything – furniture, educational toys and equipment, a playground and all the necessary stationery for the children so that the parents didn’t have to worry,” she says.

“More than any of these material gifts, what is most important for us teachers is the Diploma training we received in preschool teaching and early childhood care and development. Without that we wouldn’t know how to support them in their early growing years.”

Now the preschool is conducted at two levels with a baby class for the new comers and the upper class for the children in the second year of the preschool preparing to enter the first grade at school.

“If not for World Vision, we could never have become qualified and trained preschool teachers. It has helped us understand the children who come under our care and to impact their growth positively. I can’t explain in words the satisfaction it brings to us year after year.”

The walls of the Lahiru Preschool are decorated with collages, drawings and other hand-work of children. Teachers also follow a theme every month introducing the children to important cultural and religious events and other significant days.

“We receive very positive feedback from the first grade teachers in schools saying that the children who enter school from our preschool are more advanced compared to other children,” Sriyani smiles proudly.

Today as World Vision prepares to leave Kebithigollewa all 18 preschools are well networked with the Government Education Office that supports further training of the teachers and the Civil Security Services that has taken the responsibility of the maintenance of the preschools.

Lahiru preschool is now getting ready to move into a more spacious school building provided by the government.





Children call for peace through drama

Little feet danced their way to the front of the stage in a row dressed as Veyo (white ants). "Unity is our strength and peace is our fortress," they sing. The drama wasn't ordinary and neither were its cast.

'Veyo' (termites) a musical stage drama that took the local theatre world by storm called for peace, reconciliation and unity during the time of war. Every child on stage had seen more than their share of brutality and had been affected by the conflict that raged next door.

"I don't know who's war this is but none of us children need it," said Nimesha (13) who was at that time living in a displaced camp with her mother and two sisters after losing her father and her brother in the war.

"The most hurtful part for us was the way people reacted when they found out that we were from a border village. They never saw us as victims but as terrorists," she says, "Once when we went to perform in a school in the town, the security didn't allow our buses to be taken into the school premises saying we might be carrying bombs. We were very hurt and discouraged, but World Vision staff spoke up on behalf of us giving us value. It gave us strength to perform."

Veyo was a production of Ulpatha (spring) – a World Vision initiated talent pool that helped children affected by the war to find healing through aesthetic expression.

It helped them to regain a sense of normalcy and brought them out of their fears. It also helped them to carry the healing to other children and adults in their own communities while calling out to all peoples to work towards peace.

Performing one year after the massive bus bomb tragedy that took place in Kebithigollewa, the children believed they could be the channel through which peace would flow to their village and the drama moved to different areas making special performances in schools calling for children to unite for peace.

At their first city performance which was held in a state-of-the-art theatre in Colombo, the drama was open to the public free of charge and invited its audience to support them in building a fully-fledged library for the children in their community.

The library became a reality and while Veyo changed many hearts towards peace, it also became a healing balm for the children who performed.

Dreaming beyond the sunrise...

One of the saddest impacts the war had on children in Kebithigollewa was that it crushed their ability to have hopes and dreams beyond their boundaries. Every boy – even those as young as 5 years - wanted to be nothing more than a civil security person with a weapon for protection. Survival was everything and their dreams sometimes were as short and simple as a hope to see the next sunrise. But it was a big hope for someone who was hiding in the dark in fear not knowing when death would grab them.

Girls hardly hoped; Anuruddika (22) was one of them. "It seemed too impossible," she says, "As a child, there was nothing I could think of that I could become when I grew up. I was always afraid that with the situations that surrounded us I wouldn't be able to complete my studies. I was almost certain that I wouldn't."

World Vision's programmes on character development changed all that. Sessions on positive thinking, art and drama and other workshops caused a change in their attitudes and gave them renewed hope for the future.

"World Vision was the invisible force behind every programme we had. If not for them, none of those professionals would have visited our areas," says Anuruddika, "My favourite workshops were through Ulpotha (the aesthetic talent pool). It moulded our lives, disciplined us and strengthened our character.

I even learnt to explore my creativity and to stay calm during chaos."

"The workshops taught me to dream, set goals and work towards them. It was a great strength for my education as well as my personal life," she says, "And for the first time I had a dream. I wanted to enter university someday."

The eldest in the family, Anuruddika was only 12 when her father passed away and she lived with her mother and younger brother and sister.

"Children – especially girls – from this area were always considered shy, ugly and backward. They lacked character and feared to talk to anyone. We were like that when we were growing up and my daughters were like that too," says Anuruddika's mother.

"But World Vision took my children under their protective care," she says, "I watched my previously shy daughters grow in confidence which I thought was never possible. Because of their care my children have grown to be strong and beautiful. I have faith in their future now."

Today, Anuruddika is in University, pursuing her dream and following a degree in environment management – a passion that was hidden within her from childhood.





When a disaster strikes...

Disaster and displacement were a way of life for communities in Kebithigollewa, and the families followed their own instincts for survival.

Being situated on the border of the conflict area presented daily challenges to the communities; during the day they stayed home and at night they would hide in the jungle without a light and with no thought for other dangers they may face such as snakes and wild elephants. They waited till something worse happened to decide their next steps.

"We had no idea about responding to disasters or being prepared," says Thilaka a volunteer, "I didn't even know what to do for my own personal safety and cared even less about another person's."

World Vision's Community Based Disaster Management Programme trained 13 volunteers representing every area within the Kebithigollewa Area Development Programme. The training covered a range of activities including identification of disasters, vulnerabilities, hazards, preparedness, response and mitigation.

"After the training when we had another terrorist attack the knowledge we received was a great strength. I was amazed how the training helped me be more sensitive to others in my community during a disaster," says Thilaka.

"It was good to have that clear knowledge in responding to a disaster because it helps you be calm and act wisely. From evacuating the community and responding to their immediate needs of food, water and protection everything worked smoothly. I visited them all in different camps inquiring after their needs," she says.

"We had a lot of support from the staff of World Vision in every response. Not just for one day but everyday they were there. That was our biggest strength."

The flash floods in 2011 – a rare occurrence in the Dry Zone – was another opportunity to test their preparedness and Thilaka's leadership.

"It challenged us to respond immediately and support not just our own villages but other villages too in evacuation to safety. Even the local government authorities were amazed at how quickly we responded and commended both us and World Vision," says Thilaka.

"Child protection is also a priority for us during any disaster and we stay alert for unaccompanied children and for children in the camps."

"One of the biggest learnings for me was staying calm during a disaster. I think it helps us in our own personal lives in situations we face day-to-day," smiles Thilaka.



Child Societies help little flowers bloom

“World Vision started our very first child society at a time when we were living in fear and isolation,” says Iresha (now 20) one of the very first child society members in Kebithigollewa.

With frequent terrorist attacks in her village, families lived in fear. Children were not even allowed into the garden or to play with friends in the neighbourhood.

“The Child Society gave us an opportunity and a reason to come together. The World Vision Volunteer in charge of the child society was my neighbour and my siblings and I and her four children were its first members. Soon almost every child in our village was a part of it,” says Iresha.

“We did little things like quizzes and sharing ideas on general topics to improve our knowledge. It was a great help as we did not have a library,” she says, “Suddenly there was a united group of young children who supported each other. We showed up and helped each other when there was need. I can never forget how my child society friends came to help when we were building a part of our broken house. Everyone helped in carrying bricks and the work became so much fun.”

“World Vision’s leadership programmes brought us also together with children from other villages and there was a strong network of friends created.

We learnt to support each other during the most traumatic situations. When someone lost a family member we were there to comfort them. Children who were not part of the child society began to join it after traumatic experiences.

We lost many friends in the tragic bus bomb and our whole village was one big funeral house. Families abandoned the village and went to live in the displacement camp. Even in the camp the child society came together. We did little activities to keep our surroundings clean and the adults helped us create awareness around good hygienic practices.

“In the camp we didn’t have a playground, but we created our own space for children in a corner and all the children gathered there to play, chat, sing and feel normal again.

“World Vision also held aesthetic workshops and created a talent pool called Ulpotha (a spring). Ulpotha gave us a lot in life. It brought unity and healing as we learnt many things we never knew about drama – positioning on stage, types of stage, voice control, why children’s dramas should have happy endings. We created skits to talk to communities about big issues like peace or small issues like health and hygiene.

Healthy Kitchen, the heart of the home...

In rural Sri Lanka, the kitchen is a place only for the mother. Only slightly taller than a playhouse and built separately from the house with walls of mud and thatched leaves for the roof, the kitchen was located at the back of the house.

"Everything was on the floor. The pots and pans, the bottles of spice, the firewood and the stove built with 3 rocks," says Siriyawathi (45), "All the washing, cutting, chopping, cooking was done squatting on the floor."

"I could multi-task – squatting there," she says, "Check the food on the stove, add more firewood and prepare the next vegetable for cooking. But the smoke was always inside the kitchen and I smelt of smoke by the time I finished cooking."

When the mother cooked and served everyone ate but no one knew if there was enough food for her. If the mother was not home, no one could cook because no one knew where everything was. That was the main reason fathers avoided the kitchen. The other reason was because they found it hard to operate squatting on the floor in one place and trying to multi task.

World Vision's Healthy Kitchen Programme not only aimed at giving them healthy meals, but also a healthy family. The programme began by modifying their kitchen to have more space and order. The stove was built higher and a kitchen counter built into the wall would help them do their chopping and cutting while standing.

The smoke too had a passage to get out.

"The programme taught me how to keep a clean and a tidy kitchen," says Siriyawathi, "I also learnt many healthy and hygienic practices such as washing hands properly before preparing food. It is no use having a clean water source if we don't clean our hands before we start cooking. We also changed from our fascination for metal utensils and began using clay pots and pans which has no reactions to foods,"

"I have labelled all the bottles of spices and my husband enjoys cooking when I'm away," she says, "My whole family participates in cooking now and it gives us a chance to spend time together."

The programme also integrates home-gardening, waste management and compost production into it.

"Healthy Kitchen has also reduced what we usually spend on health every year. My family hardly falls sick now. Kitchen is the heart of our home. Even the visitors come straight to our kitchen," says Siriyawathie.

With the whole family participating in preparation and sharing of meals, the healthy kitchen has helped in reducing domestic violence. The Programme that benefited over 1700 families has spread to almost every family with daughters taking after their mothers and carrying the healthy kitchen values to new families they build.



Cattle rearing brings new stability in Wimalawathie's life

Wimalawathie's (47) only dream was to ensure a good education for her two sons. But with a husband who spent even the little he earned doing daily-labour on alcohol and with no permanent work for herself, Wimalawathie's dream remained only a dream.

"Almost everyday I went looking for labour work to at least provide for their day-to-day basic needs. Without that I was not even able to give them their meals," she says.

"World Vision then took my children under their sponsorship and everything changed," she beams a smile, "My two sons received everything they needed to stay in school. A big burden was lifted off my shoulders. I no longer had to struggle to buy books and other school supplies. World Vision took care of it."

Not only did World Vision support her to keep her children in school but also introduced her to new economic activities so that she could earn a stable income.

"Through the economic development programme I received a milk cow and training and knowledge in rearing it. Since our first cow, I have had a good and a stable income from milk production. World Vision also networked us with MILCO (a State-owned dairy firm) and the milk truck comes to collect the milk from our homes," says Wimalawathie.

"My two sons (ages 17 and 18) are studying in the Advanced Level class now, in the Arts and Commerce streams. Their tuition fees and other school expenses are high now, but I am able to meet their expenses completely with the money I earn selling milk. I am very confidence that I can support them right through," she says.

The first cow she received has given birth three times already to two female calves and a male calf and has helped Wimalawathie raise some additional income.

"I sold a female calf to a dairy farm and managed to build the roof of our house with part of the money I received. The other female calf has grown now and is already pregnant while the older calf is pregnant for the fourth time," she says.

"I don't know how to thank World Vision for the gifts given to me. We also received coconut plants and fruit plants and we get an income from these too. But I do want to improve and expand my dairy farm. It gives me a stable income right here at home. I don't have to go begging for work anymore to look after my family.

"I don't worry about the future anymore especially with regard to my two sons.

I am planning to build two more rooms in my house once the children have completed schooling."



New well - a boon to families...

The Anuradhapura District where Kebithigollewa is located has a high rate of renal failure.

According to Anuradhapura Regional Health Services around 150-160 persons succumbed to this disease every year because of the lack of clean drinking water.

"We didn't have many drinking water wells in my village and none of them had clean water. Our family and around ten other neighbouring families used to fetch water from a tube well, but even that, the Government Health Office had tested the water and said it was not suitable for drinking. But we had no choice," says Sujeewani (38).

"Water was a big problem for us. There were times when the tube well was broken and we would have to travel far to fetch water until the tube well was fixed," she says, "But the well we received from World Vision has water that was tested and approved by the Health Department. The well is also protected and has water even during the driest of seasons."

Sujeewani herself is under medication for a kidney ailment and believes now that she has access to clean water her condition would improve.

"Most of the families in my neighbourhood have wells now but they come to our well to fetch water for drinking and cooking because they know that our well has clean water."

"Having the well has helped me do a bit of cultivation in my own garden so that we don't have to buy vegetables and my children can have chemical free vegetables for their meals," says Sujeewani.

"I have also started cultivating pineapples with a hope to get an extra income. Before this, we had to depend on the rains to do cultivation. When there was no rain there was no cultivation and then I had to go in search of daily labour to support my family.

"More than anything, there's enough water for all four of us to bathe to drink to cook to wash anytime of the day, any day now," she smiles.

According to research conducted by the Regional Health Department in Anuradhapura, nearly 50 percent of the underground drinking water sources in the district contain more than the approved fluoride content (0.7 milligrammes of fluoride per litre) with some areas reporting dangerous levels of 10 milligrammes or more per litre.





3000 papaya trees grow from innovative loan scheme

Jayaratne and his wife pack the back of his tractor with the papaya harvest of the day. Boxes and boxes of papaya lay ready to be taken to the town for selling. "I sell around 300 kg of papaya every week to Vavuniya and the rest in the town," he says.

Jayaratne and his family used to live on their seasonal cultivation of vegetables and banana but the harvest was unpredictable and their income was unstable. Through the loan scheme for agriculture farmers by World Vision Partner Organisation in Kebithigollewa he requested for papaya seeds for an acre of trial-cultivation.

Kebithigollewa Integrated Rural Development Organisation (KIRDO) provides a special loan scheme for the agriculture farmers. Through the small groups, the organisation obtains details of the types of seeds needed by farmers for their cultivation and purchases for them high quality seeds from outside. The seeds are loaned at a 12% interest to the farmers who are given a grace period to pay for them after they reap the harvest.

"Almost everyone does agriculture for a living here and we get requests for all kinds of seeds from fruit and vegetable seeds to cash crops. Some pay the full amount for their seeds soon after they reap the harvest and others pay it in instalments," says Anoja from KIRDO, "Jayaratne had requested for the 'Red Lady' variety of papaya seeds and it

was not available here. We got them from Kandy (200 km away)."

"This loan programme is a great relief to people like us," says Jayaratne, "It is hard for us to get bank loans because they ask for so many documents and a permanent job but we farmers don't have that luxury. It takes months to get a loan from a bank and by that time our cultivation season is over. But under this loan scheme we receive our seeds ahead of time. The interest rate is also low even a very poor farmer can afford it."

Jayaratne has over 3000 papaya plants now and a harvest every two days. Jayaratne's son too has taken after him and is cultivating an acre of papaya now. The farmer and his wife still cultivate vegetables, but only for home consumption.

KIRDO has several different loan programmes for the community providing them assistance in livelihood needs. There is also a loan programme for animal husbandry and a special micro credit programme for widows.

The community no longer has to borrow money on high interest from private loaners or go through a long process to receive a loan. Also, payments can be made on any day of the month and when someone faces a difficulty in paying; they can approach the Organisation and agree on a new time period to settle the amount.

A new heart and a new life...

Madushanka's heart beat differently from a very small age. His mother always used to put her hand on his little chest and feel the abnormal noise it made and hoped it would go away as he grew. When he began schooling he complained about chest pains and grew tired easily. He loved to play with his friends but couldn't. He couldn't take part in the usual childhood games but had to sit and watch his friends as they enjoyed themselves in active games.

"During a health camp the doctors said there was a noise in my son's heart and asked me to take him to Anuradhapura (50 km away) for the check up. The doctors there confirmed that he had a hole in his heart and would need to undergo surgery," says his mother.

"The doctor asked me if I wanted to see my son live or die. He said surgery was the only way he could live," says Madushanka's father his eyes still filling with tears. The family not only feared the surgery but also couldn't afford it.

"During that time World Vision held a clinic in our village. I already had heard about their work and how they care for the poor. The staff was so caring - they listened to me, encouraged me and asked where we lived. Within two days a doctor visited us with the staff. The doctor checked my son and explained everything to us, encouraged us and directed us to a specialist," says the mother.

"From there on World Vision was with us. World Vision not only supported us for the surgery, but accompanied us on the visits to the doctor and the clinics in Colombo even taking care of our meals and travels through his operation, until his recovery," she smiles.

"I was 12 when I went in for surgery," recalls Madushanka, "My parents could never have been able to find the money to save my life without World Vision's assistance. Now I have completely recovered and even the scar on my chest has begun to disappear."

The boy excelled in his studies and is now waiting to enter university. He also plays cricket with friends now.

"I now see how the terrorist problem became a blessing in disguise for us," says the mother. The family had travelled from Vavuniya looking for safety away from the war. "If it was not for that, we wouldn't have come to Kebithigollewa and if we didn't, we wouldn't have met World Vision and would have never been able save our son's life."

Kebithigollewa ADP has supported 13 heart surgeries among many other medical assistance given to a number of children within the programme. World Vision clinics helped identify children with special medical assistance and obtain treatment for them.



The journey ahead...

World Vision's initial work involves helping the community to organize into self-help groups that are collections of households who get together in dealing with day to day economic, social and other problems they may face.

Self-help groups are affiliated into Rural Development Societies (RDSs) that form an Integrated Rural Development Society (IRDO) – the partner organisation through which all World Vision programmes are implemented. It is also empowered to take up the development work after World Vision and continue a sustainable development programme.

"Initially we didn't see the need for such a Society," says Basnayake, the present leader in charge of the Kebithigollewa Integrated Rural Development Society, "We were just happy with the self-help groups and there was lot of challenge in building this society."

"We first began to work with World Vision as its mobilisers (volunteers). We received a lot of leadership training and many workshops that helped our personal lives as well. There were times we clashed with the organisation, but it helped us grow and build ourselves," he says.

As group of leaders in the Society grew into their roles, they stopped their work as volunteers and committed totally in establishing the Society.

"Although our funding is low due to many setbacks we've had because of the war, Kebithigollewa Integrated Rural Development Society have very stable programmes to benefit the community," says Basnayake, "The agriculture loan programme for farmers and the micro credit programme for the widows are the most popular. The Society also has education assistance and child society programmes for children."

The empowered body of leaders is also well networked with the local government authorities and other agencies working in the area. In partnership with the UNDP, the Society continues development work and conducts special skills development trainings for the youth. Mothers' Credit Netherlands supports the livelihood programme for the widows and a loan programme with the National Development Trust Fund (NDF) provides assistance to other livelihoods initiatives. In partnership with Healthy Lanka – the Kebithigollewa Integrated Rural Development Society continues to work on drugs prevention campaigns while A Child Rights Advocacy Network comprising of World Vision, Forut, Save the Children and Plan, support all child protection initiatives.

"We are hopeful of continuing the work that World Vision began in this area," says Basnayake, "We are taking strong and steady steps and I am positive we would be able to develop a good fund so that we can support the community at a larger scale."

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Key Statistics

Description	Then (1999)	Now (2012)
Education:		
- School Enrolment - Primary	95 %	99 %
- No Schooling	7 %	0.5 %
- Overall School Drop Out Rate	4 %	0.5 %
- Students passing GCE O'Level	25 %	63 %
- Pre-school Attendance	60 %	85 %
- Number of Child Societies	0	18
- Children involved in Child Societies	0	550
Health & Nutrition:		
- Access to safe drinking water	42.0 %	80.0 %
- Usage of water sealed toilets	68.0 %	85.0 %
- Nutrition - under weight	49.4 %	29.2 % *
- Stunted	33.0 %	25.0 % *
- Wasted	33.0 %	12.5 % *
- % of Children immunised	95 %	99 %
- Avg time spent by nursing mothers to visit the nearest health facility	2-3 hours	30 mins
Economic Development:		
- HH monthly income below Rs 3,000	53.0 %	36.3 %
- HH monthly income above Rs 10,000	9.0 %	15.1 %

* 2009 data

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