



# SEWALANKA FOUNDATION

## One year on...

**“I want to go back home. I’m not a beggar. I don’t want to sit here in this camp and wait for people to come and donate to me. Let me go back to my own piece of land. I’ll take my kids, and I’ll start my life. All I need is some cadjan and a few poles to put up a shelter and I will restart my life.”**

Ten days after the Tsunami hit, this is what Arum, a widow with three children, told me when I visited her camp in Trincomalee. Two months ago, I visited her again. She is back on her own land living in a semi-temporary shelter with a cement floor, timber walls and a tin roof. She has started growing vegetables and onions with seeds she received from Sewalanka and German Agro Action’s joint program in the area. Her children are back in school.

There are thousands of stories around the country of survivors like Arum. As we commemorate the one year anniversary of the Tsunami disaster, we not only remember those who lost their lives, but also the strength and courage of the survivors who have picked up the pieces and moved forward. It is particularly important that those of us who offer our support—international NGOs, local organisations, government agencies, private companies, concerned citizens—see this strength and remember that we are providing assistance to survivors, not victims.

In the urgency of a disaster situation, it seems that this is often forgotten. Most relief and rehabilitation programs focus on providing for and planning for the affected people. Often families are kept in camps while resettlement plans are made, housing schemes are built, and infrastructure is restored. Sewalanka has been working in the conflict-affected areas of the north and east for the past 12

years, and we have seen the impact of this approach to relief and rehabilitation.

In our experience, relief and rehabilitation need to be seen as part of a longer process of development. The main actors in this process are the affected people themselves. Rather than giving hand outs and making plans on their behalf, we need to focus on their strength, their capacity, and most importantly, their desire to restart their lives with dignity.

Harsha Kumara Navaratne  
Chairman, Sewalanka Foundation  
December 2005

Sewalanka Foundation and its partners continue to work with Tsunami-affected communities across the country, as they move from relief into rehabilitation and begin the long task of rebuilding livelihoods. For a comprehensive list of Tsunami-specific projects undertaken by Sewalanka Foundation and partners in 2005, log onto the website at [www.sewalanka.org](http://www.sewalanka.org)

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## Restoring livelihoods

**Prior to the Tsunami, Mr K. T. Kapila was the proud owner of a coir mill based in Galle. With a staff of 15; quality facilities; an average daily production of 130 kilograms of rope; and two reliable buyers, business was thriving for the sole proprietor.**

When the Tsunami hit the area on 26 December 2004, Mr Kapila and his family managed to flee with only the clothes they were wearing at the time. Located on the coast in a heavily hit area, Mr Kapila and his family returned to find their home and the family's only means of livelihood - the coir mill - destroyed.



>>Mr.Kapila working with new equipment

The Kapila's story is one of thousands of tragedies that have emerged as a result of the Tsunami. With construction of emergency shelters and the distribution of basic provisions complete, Sewalanka Foundation, in partnership with a number of donor organisations, is now focusing on the complex task of regenerating livelihoods for the thousands of individuals like Mr Kapila, across the country.

Committed to planned and sustainable livelihood intervention, Sewalanka has initiated a large number of specified projects that are currently underway in each district affected by the Tsunami.

Seeking to ensure communities regain and maintain long-term control over their own futures, the livelihood recovery projects focus heavily upon community input. The projects involve individual participatory assessments, the facilitation of group discussions within affected communities and the strengthening of and reliance upon community-based organisations (CBOs) in determining needs and future directions.

A key element of the livelihood recovery projects is the preparation of simple action plans determined by individuals and families. These plans are then assessed by Sewalanka field officers and representatives of CBOs and measures of assistance are determined. In some cases, immediate assistance is provided to individuals who are able to resume livelihood activities straight away, however lack of space; disruption of input supply and market networks; and the non-availability of skill labour means delays for many.

In the case of Mr Kapila, unable to access the remnants of his home and mill due to their location within the 100-metre buffer zone, and without the means to purchase new machinery, an immediate return to work was impossible. Already 15 staff members had lost their jobs, one buyer his business and Mr Kapila's family was left without a home or salary.

Working closely with the Galle community, Sewalanka staff identified coir production as a key livelihood activity within the region, and determined the need to provide substantial support to larger enterprises to ensure the sustainability of the sector.

Establishing contact with Sewalanka's field officers, Mr Kapila was provided with a Rs.250,000 grant, as well as skills training in accounting and management. Using the funds to purchase basic equipment and lease a temporary residence, Mr Kapila is slowly re-building his business. The enterprise now employs seven staff and is based at a temporary site in Talpe. With three machines producing 100 kilograms of rope per day, the operation is currently making a profit of over Rs.25,000 per month.

Mr Kapila hopes to move his business back to its original site once the 100-metre rule is removed. Although currently producing good quality rope, his next challenge will be to secure the required credit to replace the decorticating and teasing machines that were destroyed in the Tsunami.

Unfortunately for Mr Kapila, his current profit levels deem him unacceptable for the provision of credit. To overcome this, Sewalanka will provide Mr Kapila with business development training to enable him to diversify his activities now that his core business (rope) is functional. Once credit worthy, Sewalanka Foundation will then provide him with the necessary credit through a micro-finance scheme.

With a considerable amount of donor aid funding flowing into Tsunami-affected communities, Sewalanka has developed micro-finance schemes to ensure the long-term stability of rural finance markets and future loan financing. Sewalanka expects to convert approximately 25% of funds allocated to livelihood recovery projects into loans through its newly established Micro-Finance Institution (MFI).

In the meantime, Sewalanka staff will continue to monitor Mr Kapila's progress as he re-establishes his livelihood activities.

**Some livelihood projects currently underway**

Project Details	Funder	Districts
Coir project providing coir, machines, pits and coconut husks to aid redevelopment.	USAID-REVIVE	Galle and Matara
Handloom project providing handloom machines, huts, yarns and other raw material	USAID-REVIVE	Batticaloa Ampara
Sale workforce development program providing training and employment opportunities	USAID-REVIVE	Matara
Livelihood recovery in temporary shelter locations.	Concern Worldwide, Ireland	Kalutara, Galle, Matara and Hambantota
Livelihood recovery in temporary shelter locations and coastal village communities.	Danish Church Aid, Save the Children	Batticaloa, Ampara Trincomalee
Livelihood recovery project in temporary shelter locations and village communities.	German Agro Action / BMZ	Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu Jaffna
Livelihood recovery project implemented through a network of existing CBOs (Fisheries Cooperatives, Farmer Organizations and Rural Development Societies).	Novib (Oxfam Netherlands)	Jaffna, Kilinochchi Mullaitivu Trincomalee Batticaloa Ampara & Hambantota

> For more information, contact Mr Mahinda de Silva, Consultant - Development and Planning on 011 254 5362-5 or at [sewhq@sri.lanka.net](mailto:sewhq@sri.lanka.net)

**SLF wins Presidential Award**

Sewalanka Foundation received an award from the President of Sri Lanka for its contribution to the national Tsunami response. Having completed construction of 23% (10,797) of the island's total transitional shelter requirement (50,000), Sewalanka was presented with the award during a ceremony held at the President's house in August.

Sewalanka Chairman Harsha Kumara Navaratne congratulated dedicated staff and volunteers for their award winning contributions.

"This is an amazing effort for which each staff member should be proud," Mr Navaratne said.

"I know that every staff member is committed to helping those affected by the Tsunami in addition to our pre-Tsunami workload. I urge all staff to continue their excellent work with communities as they move into livelihood development."

Representing Sewalanka at the ceremony, Director of Social Development Mr Tapan Barman presented an overview of the work completed by Sewalanka.

"I am very proud that Sewalanka Foundation has received this award from the State in recognition of our efforts," Mr Barman said.

"Sewalanka Foundation has worked hard in all 11 Tsunami-affected districts and our achievements would not have been possible without the cooperation from the Government at every level.

"This award also represents the commitment of Sewalanka's partners, staff and field-level volunteers to provide transitional shelters and hence bring some normality into the live of those affected by this disaster," he said.

Sewalanka Foundation began its transitional shelter program in mid-January. The quick response would not have been possible without the support of international partners; German Agro Action, Concern Worldwide, DanChurchAid, People in Need and the Japan Centre for Conflict Prevention.

**Distribution of transitional shelters**



## Recognition for Tsunami relief

**Sewalanka Foundation has received an award from a US-based research organisation in recognition of its outstanding commitment to humanitarian excellence in the provision of relief and rehabilitation post-Tsunami.**

Mr Lynn Fritz, Managing Director of the Fritz Institute, presented the award for 'Excellence in Service Delivery and Best Practices' to Sewalanka's Director of Special Projects, Ms Lakshi Abeysekera, at a ceremony in Chennai, India.

The award is a result of an extensive study conducted by the Fritz Institute and global science research organisation, TNS. Over 4000 surveys were conducted involving Tsunami-affected families, as well as relief managers from 150 local and international NGOs. Researchers travelled into affected areas across Sri Lanka, Indonesia and India to conduct the surveys in two stages; 60 days after the disaster and nine months later, in October.

The main theme of the study was to listen to the views of affected people and to determine how effectively and efficiently their emergency needs were addressed. Personal surveys were conducted in 98 villages across the districts of Colombo, Kalutara, Matara, Hambantota, Ampara, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Jaffna.

The study took into consideration perceived response times, respect for dignity, fairness and equity in the allocation of aid and solicitation of community input throughout the period.

Sewalanka was one of six organisations awarded for its performance. Awards were also presented to the Government of Tamil Nadu, World Vision, India, SNEHA India, World Vision, Indonesia, and Habitat for Humanity, Sri Lanka; an NGO addressing permanent housing in Batticaloa.

"We are pleased to accept this award from the Fritz Institute, which has internationally recognised the performance of our organisation, particularly since it is based on the responses provided by the very individuals we are assisting – affected families," Ms Abeysekera said.

"This award is dedicated to all of our staff and volunteers who have worked relentlessly, day and night, with an

unmatchable commitment to the urgent needs of the situation.

"The fact that the selection was done independently by international institutes and was based on the voices of beneficiaries, gives our organisation the confidence and encouragement to face the challenging situations ahead."

> For more information, contact Ms Lakshi Abeysekera on 024 2224469 or at [sewavav@slt.net.lk](mailto:sewavav@slt.net.lk)

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### DEC assesses recovery in south

**Sewalanka Foundation, in partnership with Concern Worldwide, is successfully coordinating its post-Tsunami recovery programs with stakeholders at district and divisional levels, according to an assessment made by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) during a recent visit to the country's southern districts.**

Established to assess post-Tsunami relief, rehabilitation and recovery processes, as well as to determine emerging issues related to ongoing livelihood development, members of the committee visited a number of Sewalanka/Concern projects in the districts of Galle, Matara and Hambantota.

The DEC assessment identified the following key issues facing Tsunami recovery in the south:

The need for permanent housing programs to cater for the remaining demand.

Ensuring permanent shelter is supported by a coordinated, long-term approach which considers social, economic and environmental factors.

A lack of support programs for marginalized villagers neighbouring newly settled Tsunami victims.

Sewalanka staff in the southern region continue to work closely with affected communities to provide resettlement, rehabilitation and livelihood opportunities through projects funded by Concern Worldwide.

> For more information, contact Southern Region Director Mr Ajith Tennakoon on 091 223 3441 or email [sfsgalle@slt.net.lk](mailto:sfsgalle@slt.net.lk)

# IDPs not forgotten

**Carefully balancing Tsunami relief and continued commitment to conflict-affected communities remains a priority for Sewalanka Foundation.**

Despite an altered focus for national and international NGOs as a result of the 2004 Tsunami, Sewalanka Foundation staff in the north region remain committed to ensuring continued support for the resettlement of conflict-affected internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Working closely with long-time partner Deutsche Welthungerhilfe/German Agro Action (GAA) and with funding from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) and German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Sewalanka Foundation staff have been responding to the needs of returned IDPs since 2002.

With support to date in the form of temporary shelter, Sewalanka Foundation and GAA have now secured additional funding from ECHO, BMZ and new donor, the European Union (EU). The funding will support projects designed to build on from previous resettlement work and improve the facilities and opportunities available to IDPs across the northern region.

To date, four new projects have been established throughout the north.

**>Support of the resettlement of IDPs and refugees in the north of Sri Lanka:** 2028 returning families in the districts of Vavuniya and Mannar. EURO 900,000 funded by ECHO.

Upgrades to 523 shelters provided as part of the 2002 and 2003 Returnee Support Projects; improvements to roofing on 486 homes; construction of semi-permanent shelters for 1019 families; and rehabilitation programs involving agriculture, water sanitation and irrigation facilities. An integral part of the project will be a special training program for 150 ex-combatants, aimed at providing a smooth re-introduction back into the community.

**>Rehabilitation and resettlement of displaced persons in Tsunami-affected areas in the north of Sri Lanka:** 841 returning families, as well as the existing resettled community in the district of Kilinochchi. EURO 400,000 funded by ECHO.

Building materials for 471 families to aid the construction of housing; 370 families to receive materials for upgrades to existing homes; and improvements to 40 homes occupied by families with women at the head of the household. These families will also receive economic assistance for agricultural livelihood activities.

Food security will also be an important part of this particular program with the provision of agro inputs aimed at cultivating paddy, perennial and other field crops. Clean drinking water and water for irrigation and household purposes will also be provided.

**>Resettlement of IDPs in the north of Sri Lanka:** 1412 families. EURO 400,000 funded by BMZ.

Basic housing; the establishment of livelihood programs including assistance with agriculture cultivation and water sanitation; and the construction of a new school for the children of 650 beneficiaries relocated to Manik Farm.



>>BMZ School construction in Manik Farm

**>Aid for Uprooted Project:** 2809 families in the districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya and Mannar. EURO 1M funded by EU.

A first for Sewalanka Foundation and GAA, the EU funded Aid for Uprooted Project works to provide socio and economic rehabilitation in order to stabilise and strengthen post-conflict communities and ensure longer term sustainable development. The focus of this program is to mobilise community groups through skills training and activities..

> For more information, contact Ms Lakshi Abeysekara, Director Special Projects, on 024 458 8254 or email [sewavav@slt.net.lk](mailto:sewavav@slt.net.lk)

# Foundations laid for education

Having completed construction of 23% of the island's total requirement for transitional shelter following the Tsunami, Sewalanka Foundation's technical division has now started work on the reconstruction of school buildings.

As part of the Schools Project under GAA/Stern, construction is well underway on six schools in the country's south, with work on an additional two schools to begin soon.

Prioritised from a list of 16 schools put forward by the Department of Education, six schools in the Galle area and two schools in Batticaloa will be rebuilt by January 2007.

Selection of the eight schools was based on data collected by Sewalanka Foundation, taking into consideration the extent of damage and the projected increase in the number of children in particular areas.



>>Florian Landorft from GAA assists Sewalanka staff as the first stone is layed at one of the schools

Schools lost during the Tsunami will be rebuilt, while those used for emergency housing immediately post-Tsunami will be restored.

> For more information, contact Mr Lal Fernando, Director Sustainable Technologies, on 077 757 6160 or email fernandolal@yahoo.co.in

## Calendar to celebrate women of Sri Lanka

Following on from the success of Sewalanka Foundation's Women of Sri Lanka 2005 fundraising calendar, the impressive 2006 edition is now available.

Featuring stunning photography, Women of Sri Lanka 2006 presents a snapshot of the lives of Sri Lankan women and highlights the diverse roles played by women as the country moves towards peace, as well as social and economic development.

First produced in 2005, proceeds from the calendars support Sewalanka projects that are dedicated to the empowerment of women. Working to assist Sri Lankan women and girls in improving their social and economic status, Sewalanka Foundation continues to identify and implement targeted programs throughout the country.

2005's calendar raised over Rs.250,000 which was committed to the Sewalanka Plantation Workers

Development Centre in Hatton. The centre, started in 1994, is run by a small dedicated team of women whose mission is to improve the lives of estate workers.

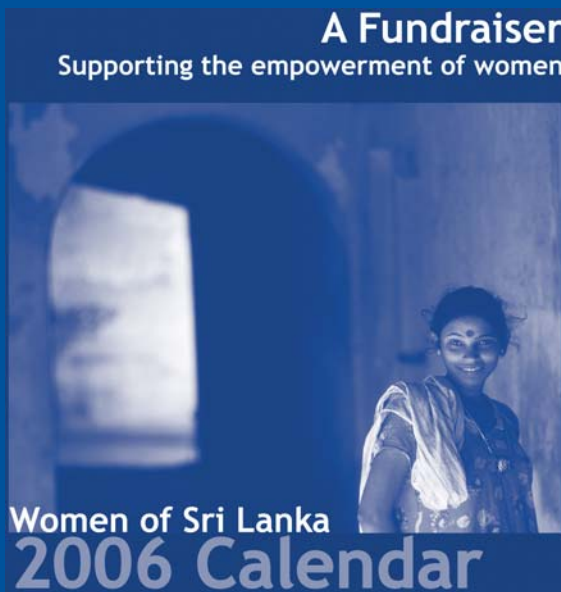
The centre facilitates self-sustaining savings and credit programs on a shoestring budget in eight plantations; working with more than 281 families.

The centre also manages a small computer centre for estate youth and runs a water supply and sanitation program.

The calendar funds will improve existing programs.

Funding for the production of Women of Sri Lanka 2006 was

provided by partners German Agro Action, Concern Worldwide and DanChurchAid.



The calendar is now available for purchase by calling Ms. Kaushalya Nawaratne, Director, Women's Empowerment Unit, on 011 2545 362-5 or email sewahq@sri.lanka.net

## Observing tourism in Thailand

Palace visits, snorkeling, hiking and shopping were all in a week's work for 29 individuals on a recent study trip to Asia's tourist mecca, Southern Thailand.

Developed and funded by Sewalanka Foundation and partner, Thai NGO; Responsible Social and Ecological Tours (REST) program, the trip was designed to provide participants with an insight into community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives and mass tourism areas in the country.

The group was made up of representatives from fishing societies, women's empowerment groups, tourism associations and related businesses, as well as Sewalanka staff members and volunteers from a number of Sri Lankan regions popular to tourists; Galle, Ampara, Kandy and Sinharaja.

The participants were given the opportunity to examine examples of mass tourism in Bangkok, Koh Samui and Krabi, as well as CBT initiatives such as community-led mangrove tours, nature and history hikes and homestays with local families, in the Surat Thani and Phuket provinces.

The group also visited Kiriwong, a community renowned as the best practice example of CBT tourism. Although only a small village of 4,000, the Kiriwong community has built a strong CBT environment catering to 4,000 tourists per month, with established homestays, textile and soap production and trekking tours led by experienced local guides.

"This trip provided us with a great opportunity to observe both positive and negative practices for tourism development," said Sewalanka Foundation's Tourism Development Advisor Thomas Ramsson.

"While mass tourism has successfully attracted foreign



>>Unawatuna CBO leaders and REST staff experience a mangrove tour in Lei-Led, Surat Thani province



>>'Mass tourism' at the Grand Palace in Bangkok

currency to Sri Lanka, there have been many associated negative impacts, including the inability to cope with the demand on shared natural resources and profits benefiting international sources rather than the communities in which they are located.

"As such, it is important that communities are given the resources and training to establish and strengthen sustainable CBT initiatives that respect both the culture and environment of the area, whilst at the same time directly benefit the local economy," he said.

Participants have already begun presenting their findings from the trip to their own local communities and to fellow Sewalanka staff. Local CBOs have shown interest in implementing CBT projects in their own communities to provide income generation activities. Sewalanka officers are helping local communities with CBT feasibility studies, action plans and funding.

Sewalanka is also planning a sustainable tourism workshop where Thai representatives will be invited to discuss the dangers of mass tourism with Sri Lankan stakeholders. The aim of the workshop is to establish a tourism network at the community level and to generate input for the development of a sustainable tourism certification program. A sustainable tourism development guide will be produced following the workshop.

> For more information, contact Thomas Ramsson on 011 254 5362 or at [sewahq@sri.lanka.net](mailto:sewahq@sri.lanka.net)

# Sewalanka establishes MFI

Sewalanka Foundation has formally registered its own micro-finance institution - Sewa Lanka Community Financial Services Ltd, or 'Sewa Finance' - as a public limited liability company.

In doing so Sewalanka fulfils a long-awaited goal in setting up a self-sustainable financing mechanism to meet the investment needs of micro-entrepreneurs in the low-income sector throughout the country.

Sewa Finance will come into operation from January 2006 and will initially focus on wholesale debt financing to a number of larger community based organizations (CBOs) to on-lend to their members; farmers, the fishing community, micro-entrepreneurs etc.

At a later stage, Sewa Finance will provide retail financing to graduated CBO members, who have established a good track record and who require relatively larger investments for small and medium enterprises.

Sewa Finance will support the Foundation's long-term approach; working in partnership with rural CBOs across the country to implement community development and poverty alleviation projects.

"Sewalanka has been working alongside rural CBOs throughout the country for 12 years," Sewalanka Foundation Chairman Harsha Kumara Navaratne said.

"The relationships we have established and the understanding that we have gained from our experience has confirmed the need to provide specialised micro-finance services that will provide sustainable economical growth and assist in strengthening the communities these organisations represent," he said.

In the immediate short-term, Sewa Finance will work closely with Sewalanka Foundation to assist its loan financing activities in ongoing post-Tsunami livelihood recovery projects.

Sewa Finance will not only adopt best micro-finance industry practices in managing its loan portfolio, but will also ensure that participating CBOs comply with effective rules and regulations and adhere to high quality accounting standards for their own lending.

To assist at the primary stages of development, micro-finance expert, Mr. Masurul Islam, will join Sewalanka from renowned Asian MFI, Proshika. Mr Islam will travel from Bangladesh to work as a full-time consultant for six months from January 2006.

> For more information, contact Mr Mahinda de Silva, Consultant - Development and Planning on 011 254 5362 or at [sewhq@sri.lanka.net](mailto:sewhq@sri.lanka.net)

## Micro-finance training

### Bangladesh

Preparing to incorporate Sewalanka's micro-finance institution, 20 senior Sewalanka staff travelled to Bangladesh to study the successful micro-finance program, BRAC.

The 14-day trip was designed to provide Sewalanka staff with an insight into the practical application of the organisation's principle micro-finance products and in doing so, provided them with a stronger understanding of both the processes involved and outcomes achieved.

### India

Sewalanka program managers and officers recently participated in a micro-finance training program undertaken by the Development of Humane Action (DHAN) Foundation in Madurai, India.

The five-day training program gave 30 staff the opportunity to observe the successful activities of the DHAN Foundation; an organization working toward improving livelihood opportunities for the poor.



**SEWALANKA FOUNDATION**  
Post Box No. 03 , Boralesgamuwa  
Ph: +94 (0)11 2545 362-5  
Fax: +94 (0)11 2545 166  
Email: [sewahq@sri.lanka.net](mailto:sewahq@sri.lanka.net)  
Website: [www.sewalanka.org](http://www.sewalanka.org)

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