



SEWALANKA FOUNDATION

UNIQUE PARTICIPATORY EXPERIENCE OF NORTH EAST AGRICULTURAL PROJECT

Potkerny is an agricultural village situated in the Thampalagamam Division of Trincomalee District. The village was self reliant and content prior to the ethnic conflict that severely affected the village in 1990. At this time, people were displaced from the village, lives and assets were destroyed: normal life came to a standstill. The people of Potkerny, like most of the people in this area, underwent immense suffering, their economic and their social lives completely destroyed.

In 1996, the condition around Potkerny began to return to normalcy and people started to resettle in the village. However, they had to start to rebuild their economic and social lives completely as everything in the village, including their households, was partly or completely destroyed. K. Vijayaluxumy is one returnee who was able to grapple with this situation with determination. She is running her household of four children and was supported under the livelihood support scheme of the North East Agricultural Project (NEIAP). Qualifying for a loan of Rs9,000 under this scheme, Ms Vijayaluxumy began a rice flour making business using this investment. She also makes some value added products such as string hoppers and hoppers which she sells locally. From this investment she is able to earn a profit of around Rs1,200 per month. In this way, NEAIP has created some hope and opportunity among other returnees.

NEAIP was inaugurated in 2000 in the North Eastern and adjacent districts. The project is funded by a World Bank loan of US\$37 million. The project is unique because it is implemented in both cleared and uncleared areas of the North and East and adjacent areas. The main aim of the project is to rehabilitate damaged tanks and other infrastructure in conflict affected villages so that resettled people could benefit from jump starting agricultural production. Four hundred villag-

es have been assisted with development under this project. Another important aspect of this project is that both the government and NGO's are partners in implementing the project activities. Among the NGO's, Sewalanka Foundation is a major partner, having secured 70% of focal villages for social mobilisation.

Some positive experiences of the NEIAP program in Potkerny focal village:

1. Villagers collected all information for the formulation of a village development plan.
2. The village tank and its irrigation system was completely rehabilitated and all work related to this task was undertaken by the village farmer organisation through a system of community contracting.
3. All the village roads and drinking wells were rehabilitated using the same methodology by the Rural Development Society.
4. All village Community Based Organisations were empowered through a process of social mobilisation.

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Assisting Displaced Families in the Wannai

In Mannar, for the past 12 months, Sewalanka has been working in partnership with UNHCR to provide much needed basic assistance to families living in the three welfare centers at Pesalai, Kazhimoddai and Jeevodayam. There are 4612 persons living in these camps: 2671 at Pesalai, 653 at Kalimoddai and 2671 at Jeevodayam.

On average, these families have been living in these welfare centers for 9 years having been displaced from their homes in the North and East due to the conflict. Plans are now underway by the government to resettle these families in their original communities. Until this time, Sewalanka, through its partnership with UNHCR, has provided assistance of shelter materials including cadjan, ekil and coir.

In the Kalimoddai Welfare Center, Sewalanka has coordinated efforts with the only other NGO's providing assistance, Valvuthayam. In the Jeevodayam Welfare Center, Sewalanka and ZOA have been the only NGO's providing assistance and



Temporary shelter provided with a UNHCR & Sewalanka partnership

World Vision.

Royce Kabilston, acting District Director for the Sewalanka Mannar Office, says that the people living in welfare centers have suffered greatly due to a lack of services and privacy. "With so little privacy and space for

in communal huts".

Mr Royce echoes the concern of many when he contemplated the long term social damage these camps are having on family structures and, particularly on children. "There are many crime issues including rape and murder in the areas surrounding the camps. With so little security there is a real sense of vulnerability by the people living in them. Nursing and pregnant women also have few services available to them and like all of the women they suffer with major basic issues like access to food, water, basic health and the need for a safe clean living environment".

A lack of social structures to integrate IDP communities living in the camps with surrounding villages has also meant that an enormous gap exists between the two communities despite their geographical closeness.

With plans now underway by the government to resettle communities living in the welfare camps there is some hope for a better future. Mr Royce explains, "Many of the people in the camps are landless. Now they are hoping to resettle and stay in the Mannar District and many have hopes to be involved in fishing and agriculture". ■



Families do the best they can to create a home from temporary shelter

in Pesalai, Sewalanka has provided assistance along with Valvodayam, Population Services Lanka, Sri Lankan Red Cross Society, ZOA and

the family structure, women and children have been really affected. Only a few people have individual huts whilst others have spent years living

Building Sustainable Development with communities in the North

With the commencement of the MoU and the cessation of hostilities, Sewalanka Foundation (SLF) has been expanding its development programs in the North. In the past, SLF has been focused on relief and emergency programs in the North meaning the organisation has had to develop new approaches and skills for the delivery of sustainable development projects.

Since 1996, SLF has been working on a large development program funded by German Agro Action in the Vavuniya, Mannar and Anuradhapura districts. This has been implemented within around 100 villages and reached a target population of 5000 families. A major component of SLF development programs is to facilitate communities to take responsibility for their own needs and to provide skills and inputs to enable "ownership" of the activities.

SLF Development programs use the following mechanisms:

- Social Mobilisation to establish community participation and formation of community based organisations (CBO's) within the participating communities.
- Financial, administrative, vocational, management and entrepreneurial skills development of the members of the CBO's to ensure full capacity of the community is reached to allow the community to manage their own needs and create sustainable economic growth.
- Micro finance components to facilitate the setting up of both traditional and non traditional enterprises to increase income and diversify production and employment in the communities.
- Link and exchange programs with local authorities and services, and other CBO's to encourage skill transfer and integrate families into existing local services and programs.
- Involvement and integration of private companies and local expertise to enable greater marketing opportunities for the communities.
- Improvement of the community's infrastructure facilitating better health, sanitation, education, production and employment.



A Womens CBO meeting in the Wannu

Since 2000, SLF has expanded its development programs in the North and now works in partnerships with Oxfam, Danish refugee council, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the European Union (EU). SLF are now the largest development project implementing agency in the North of the country.

In order to support development activities, SLF has established a large CEFE unit which delivers enterprise training to all ethnic communities. This year, around 1,500 entrepreneurs will be trained by Sewalanka through this program.

SLF is able to utilise its' own agricultural resource centers –located in Vavuniya and Anuradhapura- to provide training in new farming techniques such as organic farming, integrated pest management and water management systems. This practical training has had major impact on local farmers enabling better storage, processing and marketing practices. In 2002, SLF established a marketing information system that provides farmers with up-to-date prices for production costs.

SLF development programs feature strong gender and peace building components where awareness is created and participation in community decision-making processes by all sectors of the community is encouraged. Particular emphasis is given to creating opportunities for women and disabled community members through training in home & nutritional gardening, food processing and home based business creation.

A monitoring and evaluation system has been established by German Agro Action and Sewalanka where the strength of CBO's is assessed allowing SLF to withdraw from direct involvement within these communities once full independence has been achieved. SLF also establishes apex organizations or farmer companies which combines CBO's from adjacent communities to allow for better resource management, increased purchasing power and cost reduction in production to participating villages. Often these organizations generate high levels of income and in some cases have become NGO's themselves, providing assistance to villages within their localities.

With the resettlement and return of families to their original villages, SLF works with an integrated program allowing us to work from relief, through rehabilitation to sustainable development programs over a number of years.

As community participation is an integral requirement of these programs, SLF has created a field manual for social mobilization and not only intensively trains its own staff, but also works with other NGO's to improve working practices of field staff operating in rural communities. ■

2002: responding to needs in the Wannai and the North

With the new peace initiatives in the North, 2002 saw a spontaneous return of Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP's) to the Wannai and Jaffna. Emergency assistance for the basic needs of the returnee's was not forthcoming and SLF, with their partner organisation, German Agro Action (GAA) mobilised funds from the German government and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) to assist returnees to the Vavuniya North division of Manthai west, Madu and Pallai and Thenmarachichi areas in Jaffna. Assistance was also provided to the returning Muslim community in the Musali area in Mannar.

In Vavuniya North 607 families returning to devastated conditions were assisted with basic shelter, agriculture inputs of paddy, fertilizer, vegetable seeds and tools. 104 wells damaged from the conflict were rehabilitated to provide water to these returnees. Four tanks in the area were also rehabilitated to enable farmers to re cultivate their paddy lands that



A well constructed for a returning Community with a Sewalanka, BMZ & GAA partnership

had been abandoned for more than five years.

Under the same project, 225 families in the Mannar area were relocated in Sannar. These families were assisted to re-start agricultural production and were provided with temporary shelter

and water facilities. Another 315 families in Manthai west were assisted with agriculture and the rehabilitation of drinking water wells. For these families, 13 wells were rehabilitated and 17 new wells were constructed. In total, 1147 families received assistance as part of this ECHO, GAA and Sewalanka partnership.

The Ministry of Interoperation for Development [BMZ] of the German government, through German Agro Action, supported returnee communities to the North to restart paddy production and home gardening in the Maha season.

Among the assisted were 1000 families in the Vavuniya North division, and 1024 families in Manthai West and Madu divisions of the Mannar district.

In the village of Paddikudduirruppu 300 families had returned after 18 years of displacement. The project was able to assist these families with a food package and inputs for paddy to enable the returnees to re-cultivate paddy lands. 2918 families in the Thenmarachichi Division and 1132 families in the Killinochichi District were assisted with a food package consisting of rice, dhal, sugar, flour, sprats and coconut milk powder: a sufficient food supply for one month for a family of five members. They were also assisted with the re plantation of their much damaged perennial crops such as coconuts and mango.

725 families in Manthai west and 700 newly returned families in Vavuniya North were also assisted with a similar food basket. The rehabilitation of damaged wells- both drinking and Agro- assisted

the water needs of the new returnees as well as the re cultivation of highland flied crops.



Temporary shelter being constructed for a returning family in Vavuniya North with a GAA/BMZ & Sewalanka partnership

Additionally, 415 recent returnee families in the Vavuniya North division were assisted for facilities of sanitation and paddy cultivation assistance through a UNHCR-Sewalanka partnership.

With the expansion of the activities in the North and specifically in the Wannai, Sewalanka established its central office for the North in Kilinochichi in December 2002. The sub offices in the Kanakarayankulam and Manthai West will come under this administration.

Sewalanka conducted several training sessions for new recruits in the Wannai covering development concepts as well as the mission and methodologies of Sewalanka.

We were also happy to open a Sewalanka office in the Jaffna peninsula in July 2002, which is now contributing to the development of the communities in this area.

Sewalanka will continue to support the returnees to the North by assisting resettling communities to rebuild their villages and establish social and building infrastructure with the long term objective of reaching communities with sustainable development. ■

GAA: celebrating 40 years

German Agro Action (Deutsche Welthungerhilfe) have been Sewalanka's most significant donor/partner since Sewalanka was formed in 1993. Sewalanka wishes to congratulate German Agro Action on celebrating 40 years of fighting against world hunger and poverty.

German Agro Action was founded in Bonn in 1962 and its first projects were carried out in Ethiopia, Ghana, India and Peru in 1968. Today, German Agro Action funds around 500 projects in 50 countries.

In the last three years alone, German Agro Action has supplied more than 10 million people with aid items. In Sri Lanka, through the 10 year partnership with Sewalanka, German Agro Action has assisted 76,422 families with relief assistance and 19,352 families with Development assistance.

Mr Dirk Altweck, Director of German Agro Action Sri Lanka, writes about the work GAA have been doing in Sri Lanka.



GAA meet with Community Groups in Vavuniya

Experiences gained from the GAA/ Sewalanka project, "Poverty Reduction and Socio-economic Development in rural communities" implemented in more than 80 villages in Vavuniya South, will be used as a model for sustainable development programs that work in close cooperation with Community Based Organisations and other self help structures in the villages. ■

from GAA

German Agro Action has been supporting people in need in Sri Lanka for more than 30 years. Over this period we have established close links with several non-government organizations in the country.

Since 1994 the main focus of our project activities carried out with Sewalanka Foundation has shifted to the North of the Country that has been destroyed by the violent conflict. Our work with Sewalanka Foundation has seen us support Internally Displaced Families in the Districts of Vavuniya, Mannar, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu. Furthermore, we brought relief to families in disaster areas during the cyclone in Trincomalee District in December 2000 and to families in the South hit by the sever drought in 2001.

Since mid 2002 we have been assisting families to resettle to their original communities and homes in the Wannu region by providing humanitarian items covering basic needs of food, shelter, infrastructure etc.

The main objective for 2003 and beyond is to initiate sustainable development in the conflict affected areas in the North by working on food security and by improving social structures in the communities.

FACT BOX

Sewalanka Foundation

District and sub-District Offices – 17

Number of Staff Employed – 310

Population Statistics

(000's)	Vavuniya District	Northern Province	Sri Lanka
Estimated Population-2000	120	1379	19177
Population Density- 2000	72	156	292
Projected Population- 2010	134	1525	21030
Crude Birth Rate- 2000	23.8	20.2	17.3
Crude Death Rate - 2000	5.6	5.2	6.0
Natural Increase Rate- 1998	1.4	0.9	1.1
Total Fertility Rate - 1995	3.6	2.2	2.3
Infant Mortality Rate - 1997	10.9	11.5	16.3
Maternal Mortality Rate - 1996 (for 10,000 live births)	3.0	6.0	2.3

Source: Department of Census & Statistics Colombo

the Social Mobilisation concept at Sewalanka

The application of social mobilisation approaches by Sewalanka goes back to 1993, during the implementation of the poverty alleviation programme of the National Development Trust Fund (NDTF). The experiences and the methodologies adopted by the Change Agent Programme (CAP) and the Integrated Rural Development Projects (IRDP) in the 1980's were useful in training a cadre of about 175 Social Mobilisers (SM). Each SM was allocated one Grama Niladari (GN) division and in our experience the outreach of each SM was approximately 250 families.

The social mobilisation process of Sewalanka comprises of four broad phases –

- (i) conscientisation of the target group
- (ii) need assessment and planning
- (iii) capacity enhancement in

economic activities and

- (iv) linking with the national economy

The basic concept behind mobilisation was to sensitise community members to the vicious cycle of poverty and motivate them to get together in to small groups of 5 – 10 families with the view to act collectively and to emerge out of the poverty cycle. Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques helped the village communities not only to assess their own socio-economic status and their potential but also to bind them in to uniform groups. As a part of the mobilisation process the institutional capacity of these small groups is built up to mobilise savings and manage small loans, to make decisions through committees and to systematically keep accounting and other records continuously upgraded. The mobilisation process reached its peak when small groups in each village became federated in to one Community Based Organization (CBO). Based on the hypothesis

that 'as long as the target group remains external to a project they will not be able to reap its benefits on a sustained manner' the key objective of this initial social mobilisation process was to internalize the 'project' in the target communities. The increased levels of participation, realisation of their own potentials and enhanced capacity to own and manage project activities were the key outcomes of the social mobilisation process ten years ago.

This early social mobilisation process is found to have two serious limitations. Firstly, it is more 'project centered' and has little consideration on the ability of the target communities to deal with power structures and social dynamics that perpetuate poverty. Secondly, it focuses primarily on the small groups and new CBOs formed during the mobilisation process and does not have an effective mechanism to integrate with the existing CBO's within the target group.

is an 'empowerment' process that should have its own indicators, some donor agencies have already begun to equate the outcome of social mobilisation with that of physical project achievements.

Sewa Lanka is primarily a service delivery organization (agriculture, fisheries, small business development, credit, infrastructure development etc.) with a considerable emphasis on social mobilisation as a means towards enhancing the capacity of the target communities to reap the benefits of such services. As such,

Sewa Lanka has no difficulty in equating the success of its social mobilisation process with the outputs related to its services. However, the capability of target communities and the CBOs to move forward socially and economically in a sustained manner still remains inadequate. Therefore, further improvement of the social mobilisation process towards a wider social change is necessary.■

Mr Aliya
Deputy Adviser- Training
Sewalanka Foundation

*Facing page: A CBO meeting in the Wann
Above: Sewalanka Social Mobilisers meet with a Community group*

The 'project centeredness' of social mobilisation process in Sewa Lanka has gradually lessened but not completely disappeared during the last ten years. Adopting improved and more effective Participatory Need Assessments (PNA) methodologies has led to the incorporation of *the real needs* of the target groups in to project designs thus making the mobilisation process more 'community centered'.

The shift of policies of the government and donors towards bringing target communities in to a



increase the target groups understanding of the objectives and expected outputs of the project. However, some skill inadequacies exist that prevent social mobilisers from facilitating the target group to be fully involved in monitoring and evaluation utilising the logical framework approach.

The latest development in the social mobilisation concept has come from two fronts. Firstly, there is pressure to 'time bound' the social mobilisation process which usually is seen as slow peddling. Secondly, there is concern about the lack of an acceptable 'achievement measure' for social mobilisation. While some argue that social mobilisation

Components of Social Mobilisation at SEWALANKA FOUNDATION

1. **Expose Community to underlying factors and poverty**

2. **Enable the community to form groups of 5-10**

3. **Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques** to enable the community to define their own situation, problems and priorities

4. **Build Capacity of groups** so they are able to conduct efficient meetings, mobilise savings, manage small loans, manage book keeping of their groups finances.

5. **Formation of a CBO** brings together small groups to form one consolidated village society. Capacity of the CBO is built so they are able to manage loans, network with other groups, approach NGO's and government organisations, define and manage development projects.

WORKSHOPS

Response to threats to International Security

Sewalanka participated in a Seminar on *Responses to new threats to International Security* organised by the Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA) 29th January 2003 at BMICH.

The main speaker at the seminar, Mr. Mike O'Brien, British Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, addressed the security issues in the global context as well as those of particular relevance to the evolving peace process in Sri Lanka, from the perspective of the British government.

Peace & Conflict Impact Assessments

On January 16th Sewalanka attended an Introductory Workshop on Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments. The workshop was organised by the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies at Galadari Hotel.

The workshop introduced participants to new methodologies to evaluate the impact of development projects on Peace and Conflict.

World Community Media & Social Justice

Sewalanka's Media Coordinator, Ms Tanya Notley, attended the AMARC8 World Community Media & Social

Justice conference in Kathmandu, Nepal February 20-27th.

The seminar included a number of practical workshops relating to community media production and included a focus on producing media during times of conflict.

Sewalanka is currently engaged in research in the North on how Community Media can be utilised in conjunction with its process of social mobilisation to enhance program benefits.

As a resolution of the conference, AMARC, an international non-governmental organization serving the community radio movement, will be opening an Asia office, located in Kathmandu. Interested NGO's and Media Organisations can contact Sewalanka's Media Coordinator for further information.

Peaceful Coexistence

Sewalanka's advisor on peace-building and reconciliation, Mr. Nobu Ando, participated in "Workshop on peaceful co-existence", organized by UNHCR on 13th January 2003 in Colombo. This workshop was conducted to familiarise staff members of UNHCR and implementing partners with the concept of peaceful coexistence with the intention of integrating the concept in ongoing programs.

Fact Finding Missions

Since the ceasefire, Sewalanka have been collaborating with consultants from M & Y Consultants, Nippon Koei and Pacific Consultants International for the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This collaboration has involved a number of fact finding missions aimed at examining the needs for Agricultural, Irrigation and Rural Development as well as IDP resettlements in the North and East.

In February, Sewalanka assisted Nippon Koei Consultants on their fact finding mission for the Infrastructure Development Institute of Japan – an organization authorized by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of Japan.

Sustainable Technologies Meeting

On the 23rd March, Sewalanka held the first planning and development meeting for Sewalanka Sustainable Technologies (SST). This newly formed organisation, SST, will aim to provide affordable rural technical services which are socially appropriate, economically viable and environmentally sustainable.

Among the areas SST will examine in the near future : irrigation, water and sanitation, alternative energy, low cost housing, storage, food processing and communications.

NEW OFFICE

Sewalanka will completely move its Head Office to Boralesgamuwa after Sri Lankan New Year. Until this time, you can contact us at the Nugegoda Office.

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SEWALANKA Newsletter

The SLF Newsletter will be published as a bi-monthly publication. To subscribe, please contact the SLF Media Department at the address provided. A donation to cover postage and printing costs would be appreciated.

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