



SEWALANKA FOUNDATION

Tamil fishermen reforest the mangroves

Palakuda Lagoon Fishermen are working together and with government replanting mangroves as part of the long journey to eventually rebuilding their local eco-systems and livelihoods.

“If we replant the mangroves, we’ll catch more fish” said Raju Gulasingham. When asked how that was so? Patiently he explained, “mangroves, by growing in and at the edge of the lagoon, provide both somewhere for young fish, prawns and crabs to hide (from predators) and food, in the form of leaves that fall into the water and decompose”.

To prove the point Mr. Gulasingham explained that when 90% of the mangroves fringing Palakuda Lagoon were cleared in the mid 1980’s – to increase local security – the impact was immediately felt by fishermen in the years that followed. The amount of fish, crabs and prawns caught from the lagoon steadily declined, reducing the average income of lagoon fishermen to its current level of less than Rs 150 per day.

This mangroves (Tamil – *kanna* / Sinhala - *kadol*) discussion occurred during the proceedings of Palakuda Fishermen’s Cooperative Society’s inaugural Mangrove Replanting Day, held in Vinayapuram (Thirukovil DS Division, Ampara District) in May 2004. Mr. Gulasingham is the society’s Mangrove Nursery Manager; he was personally responsible for overseeing the collection, propagation and replanting of over 10,000 mangrove seedlings in 2003/2004.

In collaboration with Fishermen’s Cooperative Society’s in Vinayapuram and in Umithi (who each have their own mangrove nursery and Nursery Manager), over 25,000 mangroves seedlings, comprising five different species, will have been planted by lagoon fishermen in Palakuda Lagoon by the end of May 2004.

The reforestation of the mangrove forest in Palakuda Lagoon is part of a natural resource co-management and community development project that is currently

being implemented by Sewalanka Foundation Ampara with financial assistance from the UNDP Global Environment Fund (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP).

In addition to providing technical and financial support to three Fishermen’s Cooperative Societies to establish community-based mangrove nurseries, the project has also worked to strengthen the institutional capacity and management capability of the three societies, culminating in the delivery of a revolving credit fund, worth Rs 100,000, to each society.

The project is novel in many ways, not least by being perhaps the first example of a community managed nursery for mangrove seedlings in Sri Lanka: the nursery managers’ salaries are paid by each society, from the interest (2% per month) re-paid by fishermen receiving loans from their society.

Working with existing government CBOs representing the local fishing community, instead of establishing its own ‘Sewa Society’, was another innovation initiated by the project. This has resulted in Sewalanka field staff working

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Working with government-supported CBOs

Sewalanka Foundation's Batticaloa district office is taking a new collaborative approach to creating active and effective government-supported community-based-organisations.

The Batticaloa district office received support from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) in June 2003 through the Australian Community Rehabilitation Programme (ACRP) to meet the basic needs of four returning communities.

The villages of Pirampathivuvu and Murukanthivu (Kiran DS Division) and Miltrikuddeiruppu and Kovilkuddeiruppu (Vaharai DS Divisions) are located northwest and north respectively of Batticaloa Town.

In accordance with the terms of the current Cease-fire Agreement both DS divisions remain under the control of the LTTE. All four villages are located adjacent to government controlled areas, which in the recent past made them extremely vulnerable during periods of conflict.

The destruction of housing and social infrastructure was widespread. Villagers displaced several times over the past twenty years, only began to return in the latter part of 2002. In May 2004, Vaharai was again the scene of conflict, which briefly resulted in villagers fleeing briefly from Miltrikuddeiruppu and Kovilkuddeiruppu.

Against this backdrop Sewalanka Foundation Batticaloa conducted participatory needs analysis with men, women

and youth in the four villages in 2002 to ascertain village needs, prior to developing, submitting and securing project support from

AusAID in Colombo. The 'basic needs' type project that emerged sought to improve shelter, access to safe drinking water and to kick-start each village's economy through access to formal credit.

The project's shelter component has improved the housing for 200 beneficiary families (primary beneficiaries: female-headed-households and widows), through the provision of tin sheets and cement floors. These have replaced the cadjan roofs and mud floors of the typical village hut.

Access to safe drinking water has been achieved through the construction of 18 drinking water wells in the four villages. The implementation of both shelter and drinking water project components have followed fairly standard implementation procedures; not so though the approach adopted to kick-start economic activity in the four villages.

Taking a new approach

Here, instead of setting out to establish its own community based organisations (CBOs), the district staff in Sewalanka's Batticaloa office decided, pre-project implementation, to work with local government officers to develop and strengthen existing CBOs; in this instance four Women's Rural Development Societies (WRDS - one in each village) and two Rural Development Societies (RDS - one each covering two villages).

The rationale for this approach was twofold; firstly, why if a CBO already exists in the village would Sewalanka wish to start its own Sewa Society. Secondly, they argued that the long-term viability of a government supported CBO (i.e. a RDS) is likely to be greater than that of an NGO supported CBO (i.e. a Sewa Society). The assumption here being that NGOs come and go, but government remains.

To further support their argument in favour of working with both WRDS and RDS, Sewalanka Foundation's Batticaloa office staff asserted that villagers were more likely to support the development and strengthening of WRDS or RDS than the establishment of a new NGO-mediated CBO. This contention was subsequently borne out, if only indirectly, when villagers in both Miltrikuddeiruppu and Kovilkuddeiruppu complained loudly to Sewalanka Foundation field staff about local and international NGOs arriving with project funds, establishing their own CBOs and departing as soon as the project-sponsored activities were completed.



Having reached their decision largely on theoretical grounds, the practicalities of working through government-supported CBOs have slowly revealed themselves over the past twelve months. To begin with, all six societies existed as 'name only' CBOs, the WRDS were not officially registered with the DS Office, neither had they opened bank accounts. Also, none of the six societies kept proper CBO records, held monthly meetings nor had established savings and credit programs. With the support of the respective Rural Development Officers (RDO) and Divisional Secretaries (DS), Sewalanka Foundation's Batticaloa field officers began a series of institutional and capacity building exercises with each of the four WRDS and with the two RDS.

Although the processes have been fairly slow compared to establishing a Sewa Society. It has taken seven months just to register the four WRDS through the two DS Offices - Sewalanka Foundation's Batticaloa office staff currently feel that they have been vindicated in their new approach, as members of the four WRDS:

- are increasingly clear of the objectives and responsibilities of their CBO,
- gained confidence in their organisations,
- made efforts to join with neighbouring WRDS in collective protest (e.g. against a local ruling on ferry ownership), and importantly
- placed increasing pressure on the DS office to deliver government services to their village. For example, the newly mobilised WRDS in Pirampathithivu and Murukanthivu successfully lobbied the DS in Kiran for NECORD funds to rebuild the village school.

These actions and initiatives are positive indications that even if Sewalanka Foundation Batticaloa staff were to withdraw its support at the end of the project time-frame, which is not planned, the WRDS would continue to function, supported by the DS office.

Savings made!

The delivery of formal credit (Target Beneficiaries: economically active families with young children) that concludes the project's 'project bound' activities, provides an additional focus around

which Sewalanka Foundation's Batticaloa staff can further strengthen each of the WRDS.

Sewalanka Foundation Batticaloa has estimated that a WRDS member will 'save' in terms of reduced loan repayments Rs1,592.50 on a loan of Rs3,500 over six months. This is compared to the costs incurred in borrowing the same amount from informal credit sources. Formal credit made available to WRDS members through the WRDS (at 24% pa) contrasts starkly with informal credit provisions in the area, which is available at rates of up to 240% pa. Loans will be used for income generation activities.

Outputs achieved

Although the outputs that have already been achieved by the AusAID ACRP project - improved shelter for 200 families, access to safe drinking water and the delivery of formal credit - are all now contributing meaningfully to improving the immediate quality of life of more than 400 villagers in Batticaloa district, the progress that has been made in creating active and effective government supported CBOs will perhaps be the lasting legacy of the project.

Sewalanka Foundation Batticaloa staff wish to thank Nik Rilkoﬀ at AusAID in Colombo for her support of the project's implementation and the government officers in the DS offices in Kiran and Vaharai for their assistance in the successful implementation of the project.

For further details of Sewalanka Foundation's project activities in Batticaloa district please contact Mr. G. Nagarajah 065 222 4778. ■

Good governance in Batticaloa!

This AusAID project funding has enabled major institutional strengthening in the Sewalanka's Batticaloa District Office. The Batticaloa Office opened in 2001 but due to local difficulties and internal problems it had not become fully operational until April last year.

Since the funding has arrived the office has steadily increased its operational capacity, established relationships with government departments and non-government organisations and entered into a constructive dialogue with the LTTE during the past twelve months.

This growth will continue into 2004 as Sewalanka is preparing to expand its staff capacity and begin work with three new donor partners. ■

Opp Top Pakkiyarethinam Chairman WRDS Murukanthivu, in discussion with S.F. Jaganathan.
Opp Tin sheets and cement floors are used by villages in Pirampathithivu to construct clean and dry shelters.
<< Tin sheets being transported to Murukanthivu & Pirampathithivu across the Valaichenai River.



Sewalanka Enterprise Development Company

In order to better meet Sri Lanka’s changing development needs, Sewalanka Foundation has formed a fully owned subsidiary called *Sewalanka Enterprise Development Company (SEDCO)*.

SEDCO aims to complement one of Sewalanka’s expertise areas in social mobilisation and institutional capacity building, as it focuses on providing rural enterprise development services.

The two institutions operate independently and develop their own specific skills, expertise, and institutional networks, but work together towards a common vision: economically viable, socially just, environmentally sound rural development.

Rural enterprise development: the basics

Rural enterprise development projects have been implemented in Sri Lanka since the 1980s when non-governmental organisations (NGOs) began developing entrepreneurial training programs for micro and small-scale enterprises for rural communities.

The microenterprise-based approach to rural development has made considerable contributions by increasing awareness of business opportunities in the rural sector and building up enterprise planning and management skills.

However, experience has demonstrated the difficulties for projects to prove sustainable beyond the project cycle and to alter the structural inequalities between the urban core and the rural periphery. In part, this is due to the isolation of projects from information and marketing networks. That is a lack of access to national-level consumers, investment capital, business development services, international markets and/or information on current market trends; inputs needed for dynamic growth.

Compared to other countries in the region, research has shown Sri Lanka has not developed a coherent microenterprise sector. In Thailand and India, for example, small-scale enterprises have been linked to national and even international markets through producer organisations and marketing and information networks. The

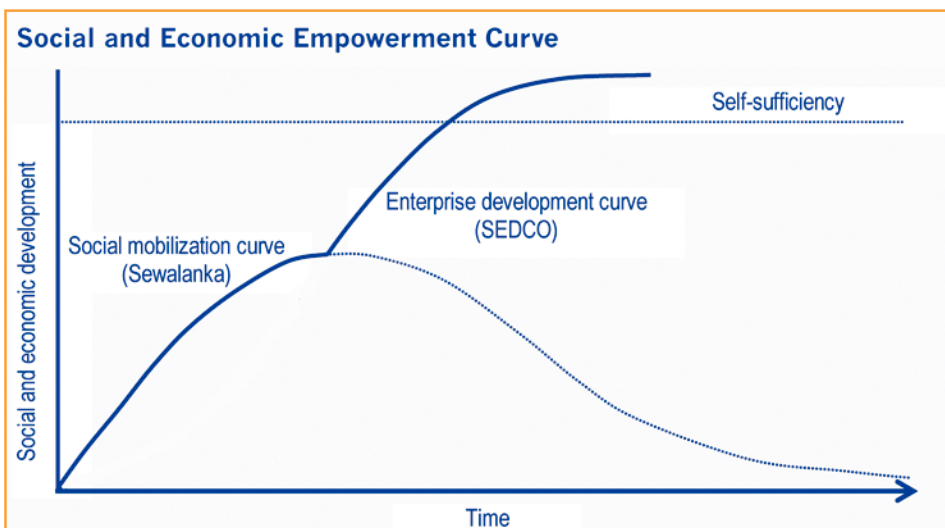
development of these social networks has enabled geographically isolated rural enterprises to access new technologies, to identify opportunities for market expansion, and to respond quickly to changing market trends.

In Sri Lanka, social development and economic development are rarely integrated. Some organisations possess considerable skills in social mobilisation and institutional capacity building. Their social development programs can lead to an initial rise in awareness, collective action, and the formation of local groups, but at a certain point, if no economic benefits are evident, interest wanes and institutional capacity declines.

Other interested organisations have focused solely on economic development and the formation of new rural enterprises. However, if enterprise development occurs without the formation of the necessary social networks, then new enterprises can remain isolated with little economic power and limited access to credit, markets and information. As a result, when the project cycle is over and external support and funding are removed, some of the enterprises go out of business or continue to operate at a very low level.

Why a separate organisation?

The formation of SEDCO enables Sewalanka and SEDCO to each focus on developing their specialised skill sets. As Sewalanka’s experience shows that different skills are required at different stages of a community’s social and economic empowerment process. A social mobiliser may not have the necessary marketing skills, and an



accountant may not be familiar with the dynamics involved in mobilising a community. Ideally, the integration of these activities will ensure that:

- i) groups see an economic benefit in collective action
- ii) enterprise development occurs in the context of a broader social network.

These two goals are important as enterprise development can provide economic support for the community network, and the community network provides a safety structure in adverse market conditions.

SEDCO's business approach

SEDCO provides complete assistance for the business cycle. A number of certified GTZ/CEFE (Competency-Based Economies through the formation of Enterprises) and ILO/SIYB (Start and Improve Your Business) trainers are available to assist rural entrepreneurs with the start-up process. SEDCO also fosters long-term growth, by offering a full range of business support services, including management and financial consulting, assistance with processing, packaging, labeling, and certification procedures, credit and investment services, and market linkages.

SEDCO's target group includes potential entrepreneurs, established enterprises, and organised groups (community-based organisations, farmers' organisations, fisheries cooperative societies, etc.). SEDCO also provides enterprise development and consulting services on a contract basis to other development institutions.

Rather than trying to copy

urban industrial development, SEDCO builds on existing strengths in the rural economy. Support services are particularly directed towards the agriculture and fisheries sectors, handicraft development, and ecotourism services. Special attention is given to activities that capture more value for producers in rural communities (processing, packaging, organic certification, etc.) or shorten the supply chain (direct marketing, local and international fair trade networks, etc.).

SEDCO aims not to create more rural *mudalalis* or make it easier for large corporations to extract resources from the rural sector but to facilitate broad-based economic growth and structural change in rural Sri Lanka.

SEDCO office is near Sewalanka Head Office at 46/5 Dehiwala Road, Boralesgamuwa, Sri Lanka. You can contact the SEDCO office at sedco@sri.lanka.net or +94 (0)11 254 5688 or visit www.sedcolanka.org. ■

Water Supply and Sanitation in the Central Province

In April 2004 Sewalanka Foundation's Plantation Workers Development Centre in Hatton and SEDCO's Sustainable Technology Division, in conjunction with the Central Provincial Council, undertook a water supply and sanitation information dissemination campaign and survey of Nuwera Eliya Pradeshiya Saba (PS).

The survey targeted 51 of the 58 Grama Niladari divisions (GND), incorporating 21,830 people or 63% of the population. Sewalanka Foundation recruited and trained 23 staff members for a two month period to complete the work.

The survey collected data to determine: distance for each household to safe drinking water; quality of sanitation facilities; and, willingness or ability of the household and community to contribute 25% of project costs.

Based on the information collected the Central Provincial Council prioritised and selected six GNDs from Nuwera Eliya PS to receive support for water supply schemes; in addition six GNDs were selected from Hatton and six from Kurunegala. As part of the scheme implementation, Sewalanka has been awarded Phase One of the two-year project, that is a 10 month contract to facilitate community-based-organisation formation and strengthening. ■



Graph depicting the integration of social and economic development. Top Youth Corp training in Mulkirigala << CEFE mobile promoting the programme in villages.

Trincomalee Women Ready for Business

Trincomalee beneficiaries are the first to complete business-skills training as part of the Women's Empowerment Project (WEP), and are well on their way to starting their own businesses.

When starting a new business there is always the risk of failure; particularly for newcomers. Failure is minimised when a solid business plan is well developed and the entrepreneur has undergone some basic business training. This was the message delivered by committed business trainers in Trincomalee in May, as 75 women undertook a three day "Training of Women in Starting and Managing of Self-Employment and Micro-Enterprises" programme.

The training programme is part of the larger *Social and Economic Empowerment of Women in the North and East of Sri Lanka* (WEP) Project. The three day programme was delivered to three groups of women from the three participating villages. Each group consisted of 25 participants. The villages selected comprised Tamil, Sinhala and Muslim women and were Alim Nagar and Thangapuram in Muthur DS Division, and Peramaduwa in Kanthalei DS Division.

Most women expressed that this was the first time they have participated in this type of training program. Therefore Mr Shakthi, Trincomalee-based CEFE lead trainer emphasised the importance of adequate training as, "...failure for one entrepreneur means discouragement for another 25 (entrepreneurs)". A followup field visit to Hambantota is planned in July. Forty-five women from the three villages will meet with Hambantota Women's Federation, the Janashakti Bank, small women's groups and successful entrepreneurs to share their experiences in establishing businesses and forming and strengthening community based organisations.

For the women of Thangapuram, Peramaduwa and Alim Nagar life is difficult - all three villages are very isolated, and as boundary villages to the conflict areas this has taken its toll on the social and economic conditions within these communities. Working daily in the fields or in home-based enterprises provides women with few financial returns for their labour. This project will see these women realise their dreams of running their own businesses – many with the personal goal of increasing their income and economic status, as well as becoming more socially active within their communities.

The training is further supported through the WEP project. Ass women from each village will be selected to receive a loan for a viable business enterprise, and other persons pursuing agricultural or livestock related enterprises will be eligible to receive grants. The selection process for those that receive loans or grants is based on the best business plan developed through the training. The agricultural grants will cover livestock purchase, including chickens for poultry and egg farming, and agricultural inputs, such as fertiliser and seeds.

The Women's Empowerment Training Programme was delivered through Sewalanka's newly derived SEDCO (Sewalanka Enterprise Development Company). This training included the CEFE Entrepreneurship Development Awareness Programme for the Tamil speaking villages, and the ILO/SIYB (Start and Improve Your Business) Generate Your Business Idea (GYBI), delivered in Sinhala.

In a follow-up visit to Alim Nagar and Thangapuram on May 11 2004, women had selected their chosen businesses. Eight participants had chosen sewing (with six requiring further skills training), three women had selected rock breaking (with no skill training required), and five others selected rice flour production (requiring training in food handling and packaging). Additional proposed businesses include tooth powder production, snack food processing, a chicken farm, egg farm, and a potential joint project producing rice flour; whereby one woman will grow the rice, and another will make the rice flour.



"Before coming I did all different kinds of work. From this training I have learnt it is better to specialise in one area. I now better understand the abilities and capacities of others. I now feel I am in a positive position to set a goal for my life", says one participant from Alim Nagar.



International Women's Day 2004

International Women's Day (IWD) on 8 March is a major day of global celebration for the economic, political and social achievements of women. Sewalanka Foundation offices and staff island-wide participated in IWD activities in support of women's struggle for equality, justice, peace and development.

In addition to business training, gender training was also conducted. This entailed overcoming perceived barriers based on gender roles in a culturally sensitive manner. In line with the WEP's long-term objectives: to sustainably enhance women's participation in the social and economic activities both at the domestic and community level through income and employment generation activities understanding gender and gender roles was an important component.

Ms. V. Jeselabanu also from Alim Nagar says, "After participating in this training programme I'm now in a position to understand girls don't have stay in the home. I now understand the value of women's work, the equality of men and women, and the equal ability to work. I am motivated from this training to start a small business enterprise and feel empowered to do so".

The *Social and Economic Empowerment of Women in the North and East of Sri Lanka* Project is a World Bank initiative through Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF) and implemented by the National Development Bank (NDB) and Sewalanka Foundation. Also as part of this project another 25 participants from Peramaduwa in Kanthalei DS Division have completed similar training. A further 50 participants from Alim Nagar and Thangapuram in Muthur DS Division are expected to completed training by the end of July 2004. They will also be eligible for the loans and grants mentioned above.

Further information please contact Ms. Kaushalya Nawaratne, Director – Women's Empowerment Unit on +94 (0)11 254 5362-5, sewahq@sri.lanka.net.

For further information on SEDCO, please refer to the article in this newsletter or contact via +94 (0)11 254 5688 or sedco@sri.lanka.net ■

The Jaffna-based Sewalanka staff, women groups and other NGOs interested in the rights and welfare of women joined hands under the aegis of UNHCR Jaffna to celebrate IWD. Over 200 women filled 14 vehicles decorated in different colours, displaying posters and banners to proceed through Jaffna. Participants sung songs, and short street-dramas were conducted throughout the procession. This mobilisation demonstrated that women are strong and dynamic members of the community, who deserve to be treated with respect and dignity in all spheres of life.

Sewalanka Mannar District staff participated in a campaign organised by the Mannar Women's Development Foundation and funded by Oxfam. Activities included a discussion about women's issues, a street play in Mannar Town to speak out about women's rights and a Sewalanka organised fellowship lunch, followed by discussion to celebrate Women's Day.

The Vavuniya-based Sewalanka Psycho-Social Project organised a cultural event, "*A Flowers Emerges from the Fire*" (Ginnen Pipuna Malak), an account of a strong woman's day-to-day difficulties and how she overcomes the gender-based injustices. The event was well received by guests from all ethnic groups, including rural women and representatives from funding agencies, government authorities and other NGOs. Other Sewalanka staff also participated in events in Vavuniya organised by the NGO Consortium of Vavuniya.

In Colombo, Sewalanka Vavuniya staff participated in a national celebration to highlight the rights of women to be free from violence, oppression and suppression. The celebrations, organised by Prabodhini, a project of the National Peace Council, included a march, speeches and cultural events. Approximately 50 Sewa Society female leaders, both Sinhala and Tamil, joined the march and presented a drama, "*Women's Participation Towards Sri Lanka's Sustainable Peace*". The performance emphasises the women's personal and direct experiences of conflict by narrating two aspects of the 20-year conflict; the death of husbands and sons and the suffering of widows and children that follows, including the challenges and difficulties, even after the war that these women face. This was a significant event, especially as so many rural women from all the ethnic groups participated in this drama, from remote and war affected areas of Vavuniya. ■



<< Participants from Peramaduwa, with trainers Ms. G. Dissanayake and Mr. A. Samaranayake
Opp Trainer Mr Kesawan with participants from Alim Nagar.
Opp Top Field officer Shama Mohammed and V. Jeselabanu from Alim Nagar

Sharing the light with RETs

Renewable Energy Technologies (RETs) like solar power is increasing being utilised in the remote areas of Nepal and Sri Lanka. Considering the cost involved in installing Solar PV Systems, Sewalanka Foundation is learning from the Nepalese experience of how to provide electricity to the poorest of the poor.

On 28 May 2003 Sewalanka Foundation co-hosted a workshop with the Himalayan Light Foundation (HLF) to explore transferring successful Nepalese programs into a Sri Lankan context. The half-day workshop was well attended with representatives from key donor partners, solar industry business partners and other non-government organisations (NGO) working in this field.

HLF is a non-profit NGO working in the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal to improve the quality of life of the remote population of the Himalayan region via the introduction and use of environmentally friendly renewable energy technologies.

HLF were visiting Sewalanka as part of a greater vision to establish the *South Asia Regional Consortium for RET and Poverty Alleviation*. The aim of the consortium is to usher in a new way of thinking and acting about RET deployment and village development among NGOs, the private sector and donors.

Sri Lankan Energy Scenario

In 2002, 61% of Sri Lankan households enjoyed grid electricity. There is a large disparity between connections in rural and urban areas, as 47% of households are connected in rural areas, 51% in estate communities and 81% in urban areas. The Sri Lanka Government provides Solar PV subsidy only on Solar Home System installations and actively promotes these household connections. Unfortunately, due to the prohibitive costs, even with the subsidy, this technology is not available to low income groups. Also no special or additional assistance is provided to people in unsettled areas or to community groups wanting to install systems for public buildings.

Learning from Nepal

During the workshop, HLF introduced two programs that could be adopted by Sewalanka, the Solar Sisters Programme and the HELP program.

Solar Sisters™, developed by HLF, focuses on improving rural communities' livelihoods by providing affordable solar lighting systems. The systems are installed in community buildings commonly used for handicraft production, educational programs and community meetings.

The Solar Sister installation projects are funded by foreign volunteers, who subsidise a solar PV system and come to Nepal for 10 days to install it themselves as part of an eco-tourism holiday. A recent volunteer described his experience, "How else can you trek, sight see, meet wonderful people, learn about a new land while working (installing the solar system) with the villagers and then see the joy and use of your labors."

The second programme is HELP™, a programme that combines the installation of solar electricity technology with income generation activities. HELP trains and assists villagers set up and run income generating activities such as weaving and thangka painting to maximise the benefits of extended evening hours made possible by renewable energy lighting systems. In turn, the products made are given to HLF to cover the costs of the solar lighting system. Once the system is paid for, the profits from the handicrafts are returned to the villagers. In this programme HLF are carrying the risk of finding a market to sell the products.

Leading the way

Sewalanka has begun work on adopting the Solar Sisters programme to Sri Lanka. The Upatissagama Village in Mahavilachhiya DS division of Anuradhapura district has been identified as the inaugural site for the Solar Sisters Program. Sewalanka is searching for 3-4 volunteers to install community solar system lighting in the local school building. The building is utilised by the social sector and used for community meetings and vocational training classes. Currently they are using kerosene petrolmax lamps for lighting which is costly and produces thick black smoke that affects villager's health and is dangerous.

For further details of Sewalanka Foundation's activities concerning RETs and the Solar Sisters Programme contact Lal Fernando, (0)11 2545362/5, sewahq@sri.lanka.net or information on HLF or the consortium contact Sapana Shakya, info@hlf.org.np or SapanaS@hlf.org.np, www.hlf.org.np ■

Making a difference in one year

As 30 June 2004 marks the end of the first year of operations for the Integrated Food Security Programme (IFSP), it is a timely opportunity to look at the extensive outputs achieved.

IFSP targets 52 villages in the worst conflict affected areas of the Wannu to secure the pre-conditions for a peaceful co-existence and achieve food security. The project works through mobilising communities in the sustainable use of existing resources. It is a German Agro Action (GAA) and Sewalanka Foundation programme funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The Wannu area, the DS Division of Vavuniya North and the Northern part of the Vavuniya DS Division, characterise the social, economic and psychological damage inflicted during the conflict between the Sri Lankan Security Forces and the LTTE prior to the 2002 cease-fire agreement. Due to the cease-fire, internally displaced families (IDPs) started to return to their homelands. However, upon their return they experienced severe hardships as buildings and homes were destroyed, irrigation facilities dysfunctional, roads impassable, large-scale unemployment prevalent and a lack of adequate health care facilities.

As a result, the IFSP focuses on three main components:

1. Food availability by assisting resettling families to clear land and cultivate paddy for personal use and income generation. IFSP supplies seed paddy inputs and agricultural tools, supports backyard poultry businesses and home-gardens and constructs agricultural wells.
2. Accessibility to markets ensuring villagers can get to the market, that food is available at the market and that villagers have the capacity to buy food. IFSP has constructed agricultural access roads, Multi-purpose Cooperative Society (MPCS) outlets, MPCS stores and rice mills.
3. Stability in terms of rebuilding communities' social structures and support networks destroyed by conflict, and addressing health and hygiene issues. IFSP has provided training to strengthen local community-based-organisations (CBOs) and constructed toilets and renovated drinking water wells.

During 2005 Sewalanka and GAA look forward to another year in our strong partnership. The IFSP project will continue to provide for returning communities already assisted to ensure long-term stability and self-sufficiency. In addition, the project may be extended in 2005 to assist the repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees from India.

Activities achieved in 2003/04:

Agriculture

- Paddy inputs and tools for 1250 families
- Milking cows for 225 families
- 280 goats for 70 families
- 2000 chicks for 200 families
- Vegetable seeds for 1100 families
- Perennial crops for 1700 families
- Renovation of 50 agro-wells
- Farmers' organisations and people who received seed paddy training
- 1 Artificial insemination centre

Multipurpose Cooperative Society

- 1 MPCS store building
- 4 MPCS outlets
- 9 rice mills

Strengthening CBO's

- 50 training sessions on leadership, savings & credits, and group formation
- Rs2,000 collected from each beneficiary used as base for the CBO's revolving fund
- 2 community centres built in villages that don't have them

Water and Sanitation

- 148 toilets constructed
- 70 drinking water wells renovated
- 10 new wells constructed

Plus 42 km of agricultural access roads constructed .

For further information on this project contact Ms. Lakshi Abeyasekara, Director Special Projects on +94 (0)24 222 1354 or sewahq@sri.lanka.net ■

MPCS store opens

A newly constructed Multipurpose Cooperative Society (MPCS) store opened on 19 June 2004 built by the Integrated Food Security Programme (IFSP). This will be a main store for all of Vavuniya North area as it has a storage capacity of 50,000 bushels.

The effect of the new building for small-scale farmers, especially returning internally-displaced farmers, is huge. Considering before the construction, MPCS could not purchase paddy in bulk, as they had no storage facilities; hence farmers used to sell their paddy for a low price to intermediaries. Now the MPCS can purchase the



>> Opening ceremony for new MPCs store

rice for a reasonable price directly from the farmers and store it to sell later during the shortage period.

The Vavuniya Government Agent was the chief guest at the opening; Directors of MPCs, Directors NEIAP office and

some special guests also attended this ceremony. The Vavuniya Government Agent in his speech praised the hard work and dedication of Sewalanka Foundation and GAA. He noted the increased capacity of the MPCs and that this would not only improve the conditions for local farmers but also help the MPCs to store dry rations received for local returnees. ■

Training the IFSP Trainer

Train the Trainer on Social Mobilisation and Capacity Building was a five day training programme for 21 senior Field Officers of the Wannu German Agro Action Integrated Food Security Programme (IFSP) held in Anuradhapura from 24-28 May 2004. The programme aimed to improve the training skills and knowledge of senior Field Officers to:

- Conduct their own training sessions for village-based mobilisers on techniques and strategies in social mobilisation and capacity building for the Community Based Organisations (CBO) in the IFSP focal villages
- Foster behavioural change so both senior Field Officers and village-based Social Mobilisers develop programs and strategies aligned with the IFSP aims and objectives.

This practical training was conducted by Mr. Aliyar, Sewalanka National Training Coordinator and Mr. Newton, Director, Sewalanka Vavuniya District Office. The topics covered included:

- Basics in social mobilisation
- Characteristics of a well functioning CBO and the importance of field officers to analyse, strengthen, empower, monitor and evaluate CBOs
- Identifying the needs of CBO capacity building utilising SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis
- Preparation and enhancement of quality training modules by standardised and improved existing training modules for village-based social mobilisers training
- Goal setting and planning the CBO activities with reference to IFSP aims and objectives
- Visualisation and presentation skills, including using

- body language to enhance their skills
- IFSP and nutrition
- A field trip to two CBOs in Vavuniya to give guided experience in implementing the techniques learnt.

The participants stated they found the training extremely useful as they could see the tangible benefits for their field work and future training sessions they will conduct. ■

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closely with government extension staff from the Department of Fisheries and the Cooperative Department, to the mutual benefit of them, the fishermen and Sewalanka.

The coordination that resulted from this approach enabled the project to establish a Co-management Committee at the DS Office. The Co-management Committee, which meets every two months to discuss issues affecting the lagoon and its natural resources, is presided over by the respective Grama Sevakas and comprises representatives from the three societies, the DS Office and the Departments of Fisheries, Forestry and Wildlife, the Environmental Authority and Sewalanka. The meetings act as a forum for defusing local issues (i.e. the use of illegal fishing gear) and to plan initiatives such as the Mangrove Replanting Day.

Although the project's funding is now coming to an end, the fishermen are confident that they will continue to collect and replant mangrove seedlings beyond the project time-frame, financed by their revolving credit fund and supported by Sewalanka Foundation Ampara.

As fishermen from the society emerged laughing from the mangrove nursery clutching six month old *Poo kanna* seedlings (Sinhala - *Mal kadol* / Latin - *Bruguiera gymnorhiza*), Mr. Gulasingham pointed out to me the 4 cm high seedlings of *Aegiceras corniculatum* (Vethala kanna / Heen kadol), each with only two small leaves, that he had collected in March and which will be ready for planting before the northeast monsoon later this year.

It will take perhaps five years before the mangrove seedlings planted this year begin to make a real contribution to increasing fish production and thereby increasing the income of fishermen in the lagoon. The fishermen's enthusiasm for the project, typified by Mr. Raju Gulasingham, is evidence of a growing sense of social and economic possibility that can be found now all along the eastern coast of Ampara District.

For further details about Sewalanka's project please contact: Deepal Chandrathilake, District Director Ampara (sewaamp@sltnet.lk) or Steve Creech (oddfish@slt.lk) ■

Ampara Training Resource Centre Opens

Over 100 Sewalanka Foundation staff members from offices island-wide converged in Ampara from 21-23 May 2004 for three-day festivities to celebrate the opening of the new Training Resource Centre.

The Training Resource Centre will enable Sewalanka Foundation to host residential training programs as the complex has a large training hall and six hostel rooms, two with attached bathrooms. The centre will also complement the existing Ampara Office agricultural plot that experiments with new forms of sustainable agriculture.

The centre was opened on the first day of the three-day programme at 10.30am on 21 May 2004 by Harsha Kumara Naveratne, Sewalanka's Chairman. Mr. Naveratne stated, "I am delighted by the progress made by Ampara District Office in strengthening its position as one of the foremost national NGOs in the District."

The opening ceremony was well attended with representatives from donor agencies, local non-government organisations and religious leaders. The first-day festivities concluded with the 'Bana' and 'Pirth' ceremonies that went throughout the night to pray for the prosperity of Sewalanka Foundation.

The weekend was concluded with the mammoth inaugural Sewalanka Foundation Cricket tournament. Six teams from Ampara, Vavuniya, Mannar, Monaragala, Colombo and Galle with Hambantota competed from 9am to 7pm. The cricket day provided an excellent opportunity for staff members from different offices to meet each other and interact on a social basis.

The **Training Resource Centre** will be available for use by local organisations and international donors wishing to conduct training in the district.

For further information or to reserve the centre contact Deepal Chandrathilaka, Ampara District Director tel: +94 (0)63 222 4757 or email: sewaamp@sltnet.lk ■



Nearly 40 Sewalanka staff members on 22 May 2004 provided 'dane', gift giving and respect ceremony, at the Csridyananda Perivena in Ampara. In the afternoon staff visited and provided lunch and gifts for a Children Home housing 35 children with disabilities.



Top Sewalanka staff cricket day participants congratulate each other on a successful day's play.
<< The new Training Resource Centre in Ampara District

Tamil Fishermen reforest mangroves

Photos from the leading story on Tamil fisherman reforest mangrove



Top G. Nagaraja, holds a six month old 'Bruguiera gymnorrhiza'
Bottom Nursery managers Selvaraja, Vinayapuram FCS, and Gulasingham, Palakudah FCS, with some of the 15,000 mangrove seedlings that they have collected and nurtured this year.



Surf's Up in Local Surfing Competition

Sewalanka Foundation, in conjunction with the newly formed A'Bay Surf Foundation, helped organise the preliminary competition for the inaugural 'Champion of Champions' Surfing Competition. 'Champion of Champions' was an international surfing event held in Arugam Bay from 16-20 June 2004 and organised by the British Professional Surf Association. Sri Lankan Airlines was the main local sponsor of this event.

Over 30 Sri Lankan boys came from island-wide to compete in the preliminary competition for ten wild-card placements in the main event. The winner of the preliminary tournament was an Arugam Bay native who received Rs.25,000 and a new surfboard. The local event was the first such 'local surf competition'; a repeat event is scheduled to take place annually for the next 4 years.

Sewalanka facilitated the start of the A'Bay Surf Foundation in its drive to develop co-tourism – community based tourism.

City kids supporting Sinharaja



>> Mr. Ajith receives money raised by Grade 5 students at the end of year celebrations and exhibition

Grade five students from The Overseas School of Colombo have been studying about Sinharaja UNESCO World Heritage Rainforest as part of their "Sharing the Planet" module last semester. The students were so moved by what they studied that they raised Rs6,000 through a cake sale. This money was given to Sewalanka Foundation to continue the environmental awareness and art classes for students living in the Sinharaja buffer-zone communities.

World Environment Day celebration

Sewalanka Foundation celebrated World Environment Day by participating in a major exhibition held in Anuradhapura from 5-6 June 2004. The theme of the celebrations was 'Biodiversity - Our Heritage'. Sewalanka's stall focused on Sinharaja Buffer Zone Conservation and Mangrove Conservation in the East; these are environmental conservation projects to enhance community livelihoods and have measurable success outcomes. Throughout the two days, many members of the public visited Sewalanka's stall and bought products made through the Sinharaja project like Kithul treacle and Jaggery.

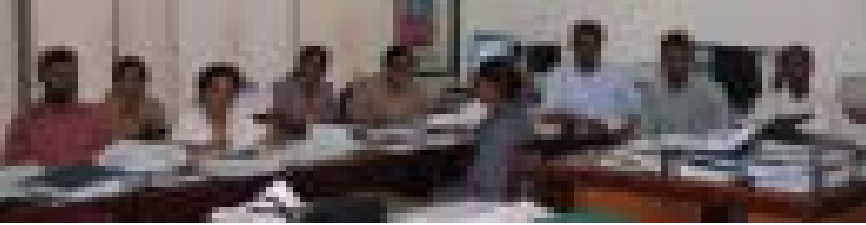


>> Sewalanka Staff and Chairman at the World Environment day stall.

At the end of the two days Sewalanka received an award by the event's organisers, Sri Lanka Nature Forum with the auspices of UNDP Global Environment Fund/Small Grant Program, for its great work in sustainable environmental conservation.

End of Financial Year

The 30 March 2004 marked Sewalanka Foundation's financial end of year. The finance team worked extremely hard to make sure all matters were completed by this date. Mr. Dissanayake, Director of Finance would like to congratulate the Accounts Departments in each district office and the head-office team for a successful year. ■



>> Sewalanka financial team hard at work.



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Sewalanka Newsletter

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