

TOWARDS RETURN AND REINTEGRATION



OFERR (CEYLON)
ANNUAL REPORT
APRIL 2015 TO MARCH 2016

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Message from Our President



For more than a decade, OfERR (Ceylon) has provided humanitarian and development assistance to resettled IDPs, refugee returnees and host communities in Sri Lanka. We provide humanitarian assistance with wide a range of interventions such as community building, civil & legal documentation, SGBV (Sexual and Gender based violence) and child protection, advocacy, women empowerment, shelter construction, water & sanitation, return & reintegration, livelihood, etc, to improve the lives of the returned refugees and the communities that were resettled in Sri Lanka.

In the financial year 2015–16, OfERR's main focus was supporting re-turned Internally Displaced Persons and returned refugees from India in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Rebuilding the social, economic, cultural and political fabric was essential for rein-stating a sense of safety, security, and well-being among the returnees. The refugee returnees program that aimed at strengthening the sustainability of refugee return addressed the

challenges they face before return in India and after return in Sri Lanka. The programs strengthened the preparedness of encamped refugees in India to return and reintegrate, while assisting returned refugees in Sri Lanka to access services and livelihoods, and strengthen their self-reliance and capacity to identify and address key reintegration-related protection risks.

We considered the refugee return as the foremost priority among all the other programs. Our advocacy has materialized our dual motive of strengthening the return and reintegration of refugee returnees in Sri Lanka and sustaining the reintegration of their lives and livelihood in the post-conflict Sri Lankan context. The stakeholders, especially the Ministries, Secretariats and Departments in India and Sri Lanka, were assisted to facilitate the return of Sri Lankan refugees from India and further strengthen the reintegration support.

In order to facilitate the reintegration of the returnees in the post-conflict scenario, we not only work for the resettling population, but also work with them. Our continued focus is on reducing the vulnerability of individuals, families and communities through a holistic approach; and also, providing protection (by helping beneficiaries to secure essential civil documents), housing, livelihoods, education, health, nutrition and information-sharing. We also worked hard to increase the coping capacities of communities and their ability to reduce vulnerability and enhance self-reliance. Our community-based participatory assessments led to a recommitment to dealing with problems faced by women, children, and persons with disability, elders and the poor.

Our endeavours seek to create a favourable and enabling environment for returned refugees and newly resettled displaced persons. OfERR Ceylon's goal is to create a vibrant, inclusive and environmentally

sensitive economy in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. OfERR (Ceylon) aims to empower and uplift vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Sri Lanka by finding and enabling just and peaceful solutions, strengthening community dialogue, learning and participation, upholding human values and rendering humanitarian service.

The success stories that are featured in this report are shared by individuals from the project areas, through their own experiences. We hope that we have helped them transform their lives for the better.

We want to extend our sincere thanks to our donors for their generous contributions to OfERR Ceylon's work. We thank them for helping us to improve the lives and future opportunities of our beneficiaries. Throughout this year we have learnt a good deal from our beneficiaries and from the projects which will help us refine future development efforts.

Year 2015–16 also tested OfERR Ceylon's ability to respond to a wide range of challenges and adopt strategies to seize new opportunities. Shifting priorities of development aid agencies also reconfirmed our belief that we needed to tread the path of building resilience of a surplus-producing inclusive economy. We need to build the capacity of community based groups to set up micro, small and medium enterprises to spur economic growth. OfERR Ceylon reformulated its strategies to focus on promoting self-reliance by encouraging local economic growth, developing the market, improving the investment climate in the region, preparing youth for employment in a globalized economy and contributing to peace and harmony in communities.

With the above analysis in mind, we held a number of meetings with the staff, our donors who have stood by us and have helped us to grow continuously, and people who are closely associated with OfERR in India and Sri Lanka. The goal was to reflect collectively on our record of achievements, lessons learnt, areas for improvement and the challenge of supporting growth in Sri Lanka, particularly in the war-devastated Northern and Eastern provinces. During the meetings it emerged that we should continue to support both IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) and refugee returnees with the focus on their well-being, particularly in the context of resource-constrained settings.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the OfERR staff, volunteers and communities for their commitment and sacrifices, without whom OfERR Ceylon would not have achieved all these positive results. We hope that you will enjoy reading about our achievements and our success stories.

Sincerely,

S.Sooriyakumary,
President,
OfERR (Ceylon)

A. INTRODUCTION



Teachers and Preschool Children from Vavuniya and Mannar districts during their Exposure visit to Nuwera Eliya Naritasan Nursery Institute

OfERR Ceylon is a non-profitable service based organization founded in 2004. It works with the mandate of undertaking rehabilitation and developmental programs for the internally displaced persons and the returning refugees from India in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. In the course of over a decadal service, OfERR Ceylon, be it a conflict or a natural disaster, has provided rehabilitation and development support to the displaced population in many parts of Sri Lanka to overcome their crisis. It is remarkable that OfERR Ceylon expanded its work to include humanitarian aid assistance for the Tsunami hit communities in the Eastern Province during 2004 Tsunami. OfERR Ceylon, in coordination with its mother organization OfERR (India), engages in advocating for 'structured refugee' return program.

Vision and Mission

OfERR aims to empower and uplift vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Sri Lanka (and Tamil Nadu) by finding and enabling just and peaceful solutions, strengthening community dialogue, learning and participation, upholding human values and rendering humanitarian service.

- An inclusive, peaceful and tolerant society, free of poverty and discrimination where the rule of law protects the people and their rights.
- A society that is governed by open, democratic and accountable government with structures and processes that are transparent and in which all people can participate and hold meaningful dialogue.
- A society with resourceful, resilient and self-reliant communities where people are empowered and able to realise their full potential to contribute to and benefit from sustainable development.

Executive Committee & Management Committee

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------|
| 1) Ms Sooriyakumary | - | President |
| 2) Mr. T. Tharmaseelan | - | Secretary |
| 3) Mr. S. C. Chandrahasan | - | Treasurer |
| 4) Mrs. Rathakrishnan Krishnananthi | - | Jt. Treasurer |

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1) Ms. S. Sooriyakumari | 10) Ms. R Krishananthi |
| 2) Mr. S.C. Chandrahasan | 11) Mr. S. Mariathan |
| 3) Mrs. J. Komathy | 12) Mrs. M. Selvamalar |
| 4) Mr. P Kandeepan | 13) Mrs. R. C. Bridget |
| 5) Ms. R. Aheila | 14) Mr. J. Gunaseelan |
| 6) Mr. S. Parthasarathy | 15) Mrs. T.Kandavel |
| 7) Ms. V.S. Thenmozhi | 16) Mr. S. Thayanantharajah |
| 8) Mr. M. Soosaisakkariyas | 17) Mrs. N. Amsananthini |
| 9) Mr. T. Tharmaseelan | 18) Mr. E. M. V. Ilangainathan |

The OfERR Ceylon board meets twice a year and its Executive Committee on a monthly basis. The Executive Committee, together with the directors of the regional field offices, form the Senior Management Team.

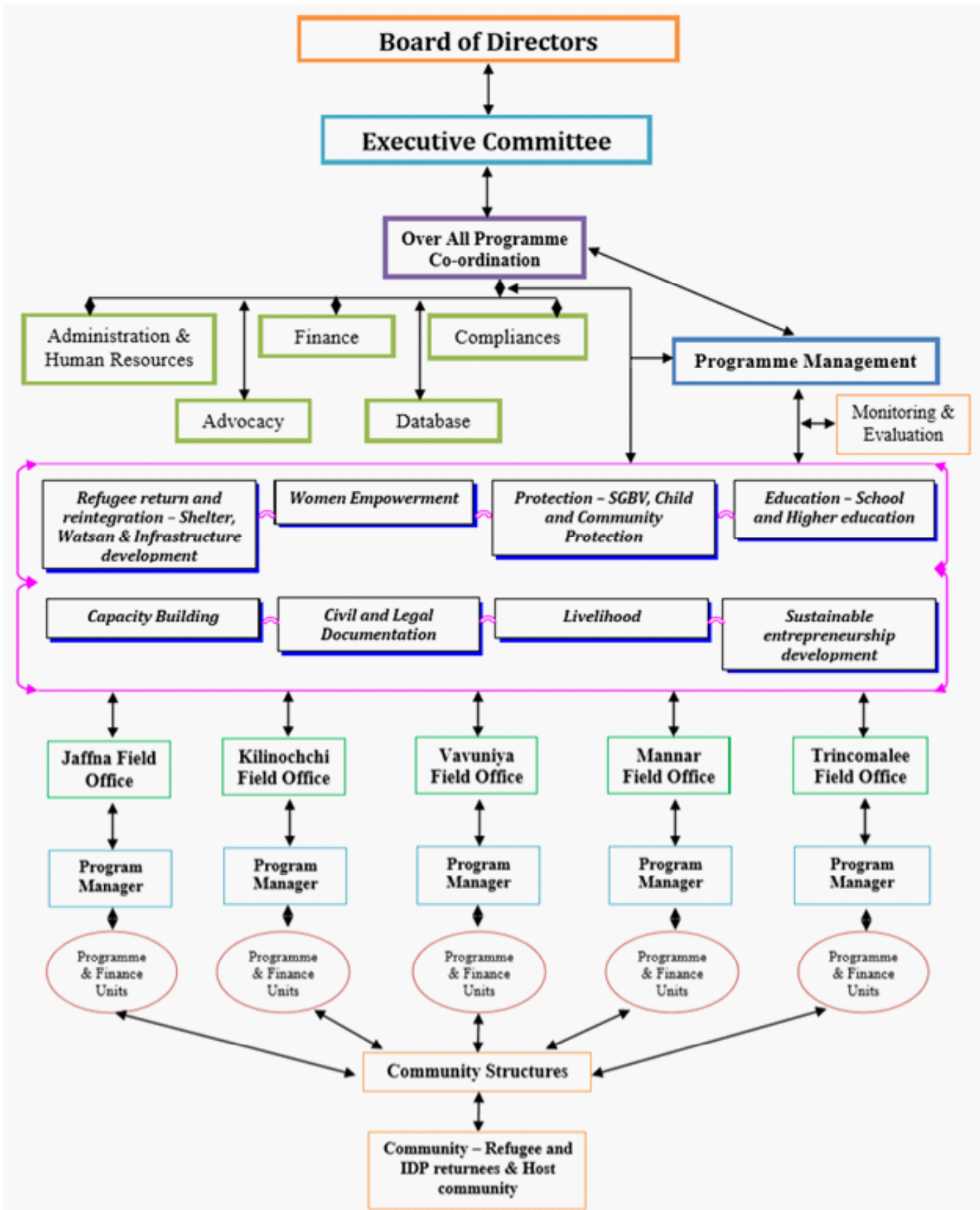
Regional Offices and Staff



OfERR (Ceylon) – Vavuniya Field Office at the Project Orientation Session facilitated by Mr. Vivek, Programme Officer – CRS

OfERR Ceylon's staff come from diverse educational and professional backgrounds with expertise in programme management and working at the grassroots. The expertise at OfERR Ceylon was an asset in implementing a variety of programmes ranging from civil and legal documentation, capacity building, women empowerment, education, linkage services, livelihood, advocacy and cross-cutting issues such as HIV, health, gender-based violence, child protection, the environment, peace and reconciliation. OfERR has 87 staff working in head office and five regional offices and are engaged in programme management, advocacy, administration and finance programs. OfERR is present in Northern and Eastern Province providing humanitarian assistance to the IDP returnees and refugee returnees. OfERR Head office is located in Dehiwala, whereas five regional offices are located in Trincomalee, Mannar, Vavuniya, Kilinochchi and Jaffna districts.

OfERR (Ceylon)'s Operation



OfERR Ceylon operates through head office situated at Dehiwala. The activities planned in the head office flows through five regional offices located at Vavuniya, Mannar, Trincomalee, Kilinochchi and Jaffna. The well-co-ordinated organisational structure of OfERR comes handy for both decision making for long and short term solutions and in times of crisis.

The staff appointed for programs, finance and administration have come from diverse educational and professional backgrounds with expertise in programme management and practitioners' knowledge by working at the grassroots. This was an asset in implementing a va-riety of programmes ranging from education, health, women empowerment, capacity building, psycho-social assistance, essential documentation, legal aid, constructing houses, start-ups in dairy, agriculture, fisheries and retails, and cross-cutting issues such as HIV, health, gender-based violence, child protection, the environment, peace and reconciliation.

Charitable Status:

OfERR Ceylon has been incorporated as a Limited liability company on 21st May 2004, under section 21 of the Companies Act No 17 of 1982 without the addition of the word "Limited" to its name. Reg. No N(A) 1201.

It is registered under The Companies Act No. 7 of 2007 as a Guarantee Limited Company on 13th May 2008 – Reg. No NA 1201 & new No. GA 47.

It is registered as a Voluntary Social Services / Non-Governmental Organization under Voluntary Social Services Organizations (Registration & Supervision) Act No 31 of 1980 as amended by Act No 8 of 1998 on 24th August 2004, Reg. No L-89406.

B. A new Hope to the Lives of Returnees



A refugee returnee family was provided livelihood grant support to take up goat rearing

OfERR (Ceylon), in the reporting period 2015-2016, has received funding support from Act for Peace (AfP), Primates World Relief Development Fund (PWRDF), Chelvanayakam Charitable Foundation (CCF), UNICEF, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Church of Sweden (CoS), Palmera, US Embassy, Australian Embassy, Japan Embassy and well-wishers from different parts of the world. Their aids have enabled OfERR to provide wide range of humanitarian assistance services including education, women empowerment, community building, civil and legal documentation, reintegration, capacity building, shelter construction, child protection, water and sanitation, sexual and gender based violence protection and livelihood support to the IDP and refugee returnee population in seven districts of Northern and Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. In addition, in Anuradhapuram and Puttalam districts, OfERR's (Ceylon) interventions with school development program has brought changes in the lives of the community through education. The achievements in the year 2015-2016 have been detailed below under different programs.

1. Resettlement and Reintegration of Returnees

OfERR (Ceylon) return and reintegration program aimed at addressing the current gap in post-return support services and thus, intended to strengthen the sustainability of refugee return and reintegration. Although Sri Lanka's civil war ended 7 years ago, the vast majority of Sri Lankan refugees in India have not returned home. Most have lived in Tamil Nadu for 10-25 years, awaiting a durable solution. However, about 40% of camp-based refugees wish to return, but they are apprehensive about their ability to survive in Sri Lanka, as great uncertainties remain over their land and property, their ability to find work and access livelihoods and basic services, the nature of support they would have during the return and reintegration process, and the general security situation.



Refugee returnees at the port of arrival

In this context, the program focused on strengthening the preparedness of encamped refugees in India to return and reintegrate, while assisting returned refugees in Sri Lanka to access services and livelihoods, and strengthen their self-reliance and capacity to identify and address key reintegration-related protection risks. The Program also worked to mobilize the resources and support of refugees, host communities,



A refugee returnee with the newly constructed house

governments and other key stakeholders in a three-way strategy – firstly, by sensitizing key stakeholders; secondly by advocating for the development of a more robust policy framework to support the reintegration process; and thirdly, by providing resourceful support to the development and implementation of return and reintegration programs set forth by Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and Government of India (GoI). In the reporting period, a total of 179 families comprising of 406 refugees returned to Sri Lanka. OfERR (Ceylon) provided wide range of services including providing documentation support, linkage services, support cells, advocacy meetings, capacity building sessions, protection trainings and livelihood referrals, to ensure that the returnees are reintegrated successfully into their original places.

OfERR Ceylon formed 56 welcome groups in five districts to strengthen the community support for the refugee returnees resettling in their original places. Through welcome groups, 661 vulnerable families among the returned refugees were provided linkage services, networking aid and guided to receive reintegration support for civil and essential documentation. The WGs based on the living situation recommended 109 returnee families to be considered for OfERR Ceylon’s livelihood and education support.

Welcome groups and OfERR field staff work jointly to meet the returnees soon after their arrival in their communities. Of the total returnees, 69 families comprising of 88 men and 72 women were met by the field staff and welcome group members who also collected the data of these persons. A brief analysis of those data is detailed below:

- A total of 28 refugee returnees in need of consular birth certificates were identified, and 30 persons didn’t have Sri Lankan citizenship.
- There were 30 returnees identified with the need of essential civil documentation including birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates.
- A total of 10 persons were in need of death certificates to claim their land.
- A total of 46 households were identified as landless, whereas 55 households were identified without shelters for living; there were 62 families in need of water sources.
- A total of 32 persons had to obtain National Identity Cards.
- Marriage certificate needs were found among 25 couples.
- There were 25 graduates needed support to obtain Sri Lankan equivalent certificates; whereas 22 returnee graduates are in need of employment.
- The vast majority (93 per cent) of the households were identified with the livelihood needs.

On identifying these needs, the returnees were linked with the appropriate government Departments and officials including Land Registration Department, Housing Department, Samurthi Officers, Additional Registrars, and the Grama Sevakas. Further, the welcome groups ensured ‘hand holding support’ to the returnees to help them restart their lives by facilitating their access to governmental services including housing, land and essential documentation which has strengthened the sustainability of their reintegration.

WG members, along with OfERR documentation and linkage officers, and field workers undertook data collection for 1,495 refugee returnee families (a total of 4,942 people across five districts). The data collected has been used to assess the shelter, livelihoods, education and other needs of refugees, enabling better targeted program support and informed representations to local, provincial and federal government authorities.

OfERR Ceylon through Support cells in five districts, one in each district engaged in advocating for refugee returnees' inclusion in the government's livelihood scheme worth of Rs 1,00,000 per family. There were 25 awareness sessions organized with the participation of 259 men and 492 women in the refugee returnee communities. The sessions helped orient returned refugees on available government services, support, entitlements and how the administrative system works.

2. Protection through Civil and Legal Documentation

In the reporting period, 649 refugee returnees were assisted by OfERR Ceylon to claim their civil and legal documents such as Sri Lankan birth certificates, marriage certificates, consular birth certificates, citizenship, etc. These documents are essential for the returned refugees to exercise their civic duties and enjoy the rights and entitlements in Sri Lanka. The table given below details the breakdown of essential documents of refugee returnees and IDP returnees obtained in the reporting period.

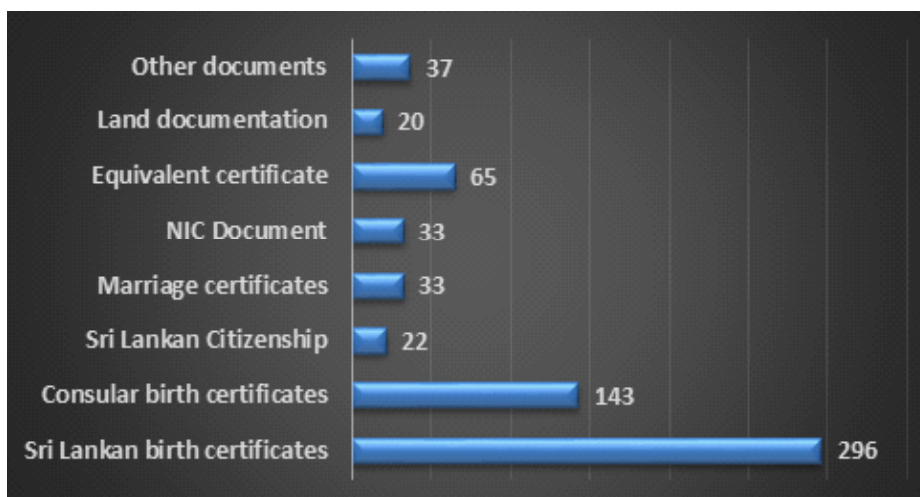


Chart – Civil and Legal documentation support



Beneficiaries are issued essential documents at the mobile documentation clinic held at Mutur, Trincomalee

The documentation needs of the returned refugees are high. OfERR Ceylon both assesses the document needs and status of newly returned refugees through data collection during home visits, through referrals from the welcome groups, government officials and analysis of data collected in Tamil Nadu before people departed. Some returnees also approach OfERR Ceylon directly to get their documentation done. OfERR Ceylon provides the returnees with financial support and facilitates the contact with the concerned offices to obtain their essential documents.

At present, the process for obtaining Sri Lankan citizenship takes anywhere from nine months to 2 years, which basically puts an applicant's life on hold as they cannot get a National Identi-



Beneficiaries are processed for essential documents at Divisional Secretariat, Mutur Division

Sri Lankan citizenship, OfERR Ceylon has assisted 294 returned refugees with the supportive documents to make applications.

In addition there were three mobile documentation clinics organized in Pachchilaipalli division in Kili-nochchi, Velanai Division in Jaffna and Mullaitivu Division in Mullaitivu. Some 3,222 refugee returnees and returned IDPs were assisted to obtain their civil and legal documents or supportive documents to apply for their essential documents in this event. Approximately, 40% of these persons were returned refugees from India and 60% were returned IDPs. These mobile clinics have proven quite effective to recover their civil and legal documents, many of which have not been claimed since 2006. The concerned officials of various branches at Divisional Secretariat such as Registrar, Agriculture, Land, Samurdhi, Social Service, NIC, Police, Post Office, Human Resources, Industrial, Rural Development, Medical Camp, Legal Aid Commission, Rehabilitation, Women & Child Care and Disaster Management were directly involved in rendering the documentation services to the beneficiaries.

3. Advocacy to strengthen 'Return and Reintegration Support

OfERR (Ceylon) influenced the drafting of the Sri Lankan Government's National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement and that has resulted in a substantial Sri Lankan Government policy commitment to refugee reintegration.

Since January 2016, OfERR has also made attempts to influence the ongoing revision of the Sri Lankan Constitution by stressing the prioritization and entrenchment of the right to return for Sri Lankan refugees living in India and elsewhere. To that effect, OfERR submitted a letter to the committee who is mandated by the Sri Lankan government to revise the Constitution. The letter points out that provisions ensuring the inalienable right of refugees to return to their country and guaranteeing a life with safety and dignity, should be enshrined in the Constitution with emphasis that no one shall arbitrarily be deprived of his/her right to enter his/her own country regardless of caste, ethnicity and religion.

In a meeting between OfERR and Ministry of Resettlement, the Ministry confirmed that Sri Lanka is expecting 30,000 refugees to return, which clearly communicates the Government of Sri Lanka's willingness to make favourable environment for the refugees return to Sri Lanka. The following initiatives have been taken by the MoR for the returnees partly as a response to OfERR's advocacy:

- Provision of dry rations: The MoR has made policy decision to provide much needed dry rations to returning refugees on arrival.
- Livelihood support: The MoR has submitted proposal to access Gol funds to support the livelihood initiatives of the returning refugees. Under this program, the MoR has proposed Rs.2,20,000/- per family for the livelihood support.

- Housing: Refugees have now been made eligible for government housing, which means they can now become beneficiaries of the MoR owner-driven housing scheme which has plans to construct 8,000 houses using GoSL funding.



OfERR (Ceylon) raised the concerns of refugee returnees at the meeting convened by the District Secretary and Indian Deputy High Commissioner at District Secretariat, Jaffna

- Housing, land and property restitution: The President and Prime Minister, through the Cabinet, has set up a Task force to release the lands of the Internally Displaced Persons and have been insisting the Military release private lands that were acquired for military purposes. Following the recommendation of the MoR, the Task force has now included returning refugees in the process so they can benefit from the land being released.
- Targeted resettlement support: The MoR has also started engaged in much more clear-cut prioritizing for providing housing and other forms of resettlement support.
- Access to civil documents: The MoR has agreed to work with Immigration Department by establishing an Inter-Ministerial Task force, which was suggested by OfERR, to clear the backlog. In specific, for Consular Birth Certificates and Sri Lankan Citizenship. This will have an enormous impact on returning refugees as many have to wait for more than a year to obtain Sri Lankan Citizenship.
- The Department of Immigration and Emigration was asked to look into the possibility of a waiver of the penalty of Rs.25, 000/- for the late registration of citizenship (after 21 years).
- Giving priority to Citizenship application processing – The Department of Immigration and Emigration said this would also require a policy decision to speed up the process so it was decided to include the issue in the joint cabinet paper.
- Flexible arrangement to process the citizenship application of the refugee returnees – It was suggested by the Secretary that refugee returnees can be considered on a special basis and a flexible arrangement can be made to expedite the processing of citizenship.
- Waiving of processing fees for equivalent certificates – The University Grand Committee informed that they have submitted a cabinet paper to waive the processing fee of Rs.2500/- for obtaining the equivalent certificate. The Secretary requested has requested follow up on this. Finally, OfERR made note of the complications involved in getting equivalent certificates for the poly technical degrees earned from India.

To strengthen the advocacy at the divisional and district levels, OfERR (Ceylon) had undertaken some of the specialized advocacy activities that are mentioned below:

a) Interface with government officials to raise awareness: In the advocacy meetings, the officials were updated on the areas where the government functionaries could provide able-support to assist the refugee and IDP returnees. Their support was dragged in obtaining consular birth certificates of the children born in India, Sri Lankan birth and Citizenship certificates, National Identity cards, equivalency certificates to the academic degrees and other documents.

b) Supporting Divisional Secretariat with Volunteers: OfERR (Ceylon) has provided volunteers' support to the Divisional Secretariats in Vavuniya North and Vengala Cheddikulam. The volunteers provide special attention to the refugee and IDP returnees who seek the support of these Divisional Secretariats for documentation assistance.

c) Meetings with the state level functionaries in Sri Lanka: OfERR (Ceylon) has met with state level functionaries including the Northern Provincial Governor, Minister for Resettlement, Department of Immigration and Emigration, Secretary to the Ministry of Resettlement, REPPIA (Rehabilitation of Persons, Properties and Industries Authority), Leader of the Opposition and Consular Services at 17 occasions. OfERR has shared the returnees' data to prioritize and present the needs of the returnees among these officials.

d) Signing of MOU with Resettlement Ministry: OfERR (Ceylon) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Resettlement Authority in December 2015 to bring in the support of Ministry of Resettlement to assist the refugee and IDP returnees with the reintegration support including the essential documentation. OfERR (Ceylon) through their advocacy with the Ministry of Resettlement has requested to set up an inter-ministerial task force or steering committee to assist the refugee returnees and IDPs with the reintegration support including essential documentation.

e) Job placement referral programs to support 25 returnee graduates in the jobs: In order to improve employment prospects for the returnees, OfERR had strongly advocated with the governmental departments to enable refugee returnee and IDP graduates and diploma holders to benefit from job prospects. There were 34 returnee graduates provided networks and mentoring support to get into the government sector of Sri Lanka. A total of 12 returnee graduates got into the private sector with the effective network connections that has been undertaken to assist the refugee returnees in the reintegration process.

4. Education – Promoting Child Friendly Approach Activities

OfERR (Ceylon) under the funding support of EU-UNICEF undertook the program titled "Support to District Development Program (SDDP)" to support small scale rehabilitation of school infrastructure and WASH facilities in order to promote child friendly education. The main objective of this program is to create or establish the model for Child Friendly environment in specially targeted Schools in Vavuniya, Mannar, Anuradhapura and Puttalam districts. The main component of this program is Education. Under education there are two sections one is Hardware and the other is Software. To create a Child Friendly approach, new construction and renovation of the school buildings has been undertaken. On the other hand, trainings were conducted to contribute for capacity development on CFA related activities such as Formation/Activation of School Attendance Committee (SAC), Develop and distribute advocacy materials to promote attendance and reintegration, Collect data of OOSC/ dropped out children, and irregular/poor attendance, Preparation of school catchment areas maps, Home visits to reintegrate children, Community based cluster meetings for awareness creation, Teacher training on inclusive education and child friendly approach, Student camp promoting child to child approach & peer study initiatives in educational activities, Seasonal calendars to identify the seasons for irregular attendance, Awarding System for promoting attendance, reintegration and retention, Assistance (cash grant & in-kind support) for promoting attendance for identified vulnerable, Support improved Learning competent (ALP), promote social cohesion, Early Child Development activity, etc.



WASH awareness is provided to children in Maruthoduvanvelankulam GTM School, Mannar

The second component is Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). There are two categories in WASH as same as Education Construction and Software. The Project has supported various tools and mechanism to enhance the CFA in the School such as Base line data collection, Toilet construction, Group Happy Hand Washing Unit, Sustainable water supply, Hygiene Promotion training and MHM training. The number and types of schools benefited under this program are detailed below:

Type of School	Vavuniya	Anuradhapura	Puttalam	Mannar	Total
Resource School	27	10	10	15	62
Peripheral School	15	10	10	20	55
Pre-School	15	10	10	15	50
Total	57	30	30	50	167

In addition to the child friendly education, this program component benefited in monitoring the education and attendance of the school students through reintegration of dropped out / out of school children, minimizing and reduction of poor attendance, irregular attendance, dropping out and increasing learning achievement of children, particularly at primary level. As a result, there is an adequate documentation of an increased engagement of children in school activities. The local community has been involved in creation of child friendly environment schools. This program also resulted in sensitizing the government actors involved in the school education, to encourage the schools to have better environment to develop interest among children by promoting child friendly education theme.

The Project Specific target groups were students, parents and teachers. The beneficiaries' details are given below:

District	No of Schools	Teachers	Students		
			Boys	Girls	Total
Vavuniya	27	384	3241	1815	5056
Anuradhapura	10	294	1476	1477	2953
Puttalam	10	66	680	704	1384
Mannar	15	104	1198	1201	2399
Total	62	848	6595	5197	11792

OfERR (Ceylon) collaborated with local authorities and relevant implementing agencies to strengthen the implementation of this program in schools through establishing the network.

5. Community protection for sustainable community development

In order to empower refugee returnees and IDP returnees to better identify, assess and compare the risks they may face in their day today life, OfERR (Ceylon) conducted Community Protection trainings. These trainings served as a tool to prepare returnees for re-integration and take individual and collective action to reduce the risks at the time of reintegration.

A total of 30 persons including staff, welcome group members and community representatives were trained on Community Protection. Subsequently, 11 village level trainings were organized through a customized approach with the participation of 67 men and 292 women from the refugee returnee and host communities.



District level protection training held at Kilinochchi

In these trainings, the facilitators used innovative energizers as Balloon Game and several protection tools that were taught in the Protection ToT training. Some of the protection tools used are Problem Identification and Analysis, Power Walk, Protection Risk Equation to simplify their facilitation of protection training.



Participants while playing 'Protection Game' as part of Protection Training in Jaffna

There were many problems identified among the target groups, including lack of shelter and livelihood; few employment opportunities, increasing suicides, gang fights/violence (increase in attacking by sickles), natural calamities/floods, theft, child abuse, drug abuse, alcoholism, micro-credit, and domestic violence. The participants prioritized one or two problems that disrupt the stability in their community and analysed on the same protection problems using the protection tools. The facilitators brainstormed the participants in order to give them an understanding of the causes, threats, and vulnerabilities related to these protection problems.

For example, in the protection training held in Jaffna, alcoholism and increasing violent culture were prioritized; in Kilinochchi, money lending for exorbitant interests was prioritized. Migrant women going to gulf countries have been identified as a serious protection problem in Vavuniya whereas drug and alcohol abuse were highlighted in Mannar. SGBV has been prioritized in Trincomalee district.

6. Sexual & Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and Child Protection

OfERR has improvised the awareness materials on SGBV, Child Rights and Protection and Child Care, Health and Hygiene that were used to sensitize the target groups in the previous projects. However, the materials are updated on a regular basis. Six community field mobilisers/animators, who were employed under SLRRRP in the five district offices, engaged in conducting the



SGBV Protection awareness is facilitated by the Women Development Officer in Mannar

awareness programs on these issues among the targeted communities and mobilizing support from the government officials to facilitate these programs.

6.1 SGBV Protection

46 awareness programs on SGBV were conducted targeting the WG members and the refugee returnees. There were 1068 women and 472 men, including 731 WG members and 526 refugee returnees participated in these sessions. These sessions were facilitated by Women Development Officers from the government and OfERR staff. The participants were informed about the training through CBOs, WGs and the community mobilisers and mobilized for the awareness programs. The sport meet, exhibitions and WG follow-up meetings were utilized to conduct these sessions.

Besides providing inputs on different types of SGBV issues, the facilitators urged the participants to reflect upon the issues that they have encountered in their day to day life and present the approaches they applied to deal with those issues.

6.2 Child Protection

A total of 39 awareness sessions on child protection and child rights were conducted which benefited 465 parents and 802 children. Of them, 56 parents were part of WGs and 268 are Sri Lankan returnees. To strengthen government-community relations, government child protection Probation officers were brought in as facilitators to conduct these sessions among the community. In these sessions, the facilitators presented different types of violence that children are often subjected to and encouraged the participants to be aware of those issues. Similar to SGBV awareness programs, the sport meets, exhibitions and WG follow-up meetings were utilized to conduct these sessions.

The facilitators oriented the participants on how parents can be proactive to prevent and protect their children from abuse and violence. The children were given an understanding of what is good and bad touches and to be conscious of abusive behaviour in their day to day life. The awareness sessions used video clips and visual presentations. The participants, especially the women, understood the need to take affirmative measures to ensure the protection of children. The participants have learnt about the preventive measures and become conscious of the systems and structures in order to protect children from abuses and protection risks. In the child protection and rights sessions, the following stories were shared by the OfERR staff without revealing the identity.

There were 23 health and hygiene awareness sessions conducted for the community members. The Regional Director of Health Services (DHS) facilitated these training programs benefiting 283 boys and 372 girls of which, 139 are refugee returnee children. In this training, topics such as child protection, child abuse and child rights were taught. The support and guidance of psycho social officers and the Education Department were provided.



Child rights and protection training is conducted in a school at Mannar



Child Health care and Hygiene session is facilitated at Mannar by the Primary Health Inspectors

7. Livelihood

The livelihood activity aimed to support returned refugees to engage in business/service enterprises and have better access to relevant information and are more confident in sustaining their ventures. Though the need for livelihood among the returnees is one of the major concerns, OfERR (Ceylon) attempted its best to support the refugee returnees with support schemes. The projects funded by CRS, CCF, UNDP, USHA Silai and governmental schemes, have been utilized to provide financial and capacity building assistance to the returnees to sustain their lives.



Bags made out of Palmyrah leaves in Vavuniya

The financial assistance worth of Rs.40,000/- was provided as livelihood grants to 21 refugee returnee families to generate income through petty shops, farming, fishing, cattle rearing and community canteen. These applicants were selected on the basis of vulnerability. Three people were referred to other NGOs for livelihood support.

There were 20 returnees referred for residential tailoring training and provision of a sewing machine under USHA Silai program to earn livelihood for their survival. OfERR has provided advice to some of the returnee graduates regarding employment opportunities in the private and public sector. There were five returnees linked up with the Dialog Company, the leading mobile network service provider in Sri Lanka. They were subsequently employed and make about Rs. 20,000/- per month.

OfERR has formed District Livelihood Cells and promoted entrepreneurship activities among the returnees. Under this program, livelihood applications were received from 35 returnee families requesting for livelihood loan support. These applications were processed and the beneficiaries were supported with the livelihood grant and loan to successfully start their livelihood.



Livelihood beneficiaries in Jaffna

Under the UNDP funded program, OfERR trained youth and women with the wide range of livelihood programs such as youth enterprise development, business plan implementation, trainings and exposure visits for confectionary producers, fish processing producers, fruit processing producers, milk processing producers, etc. The trained and exposed youth and women were further supported with the livelihood inputs and equipment to undertake income generation programs. There were 125 youth trained on industrial training and business plan development trainings and after the training they were offered Rs.40,000/- each to engage in enterprise developmental activities. There were 250 women trained on business awareness and after the training, they were provided Rs.30,000/- each to engage in income generating activities such as petty shops, garment making, animal husbandry, etc. In these trainings they were exposed to undertake marketing analysis and establish marketing linkages. A total of 300 beneficiaries were assisted with the construction of Palmyra production unit. There were 25 youth trained on Coastal Tourism activities and provided support with the swimming equipment to engage in coastal tourism such as show-

ing the coral reefs, etc. Besides, selective women were trained on Boutique making, Tailoring, Readymade garments making and handicraft making.

7.1 Renovation of agro tank

OfERR ((Ceylon) supported renovation of agro tank named 'Kidathalaiparithankulam' in Vavuniya district to enhance the economic status and livelihood support infrastructure of returned IDPs and refugees in the Vavuniya North Division of Vavuniya district. This program benefited 110 families consisting of 368 members in Periyamadu village with the enhancement of livelihood opportunities.

The program supported the renovation of agro tank with the bund repair, spill renovation, deepening of tank (in some areas), and construction of sluice. This program helped to improve the economic status and livelihood support infrastructure of returned IDPs and refugees in the Periyamadu village of Vavuniya District.

Due to this, the water table in the agro wells improved and this resulted in increasing the paddy cultivation and high land crop cultivation. This has also strengthened the livestock farming and improved the subsidiary income of the farmers. The villagers, who have lack of employment opportunities within the locality, engaged in regular agriculture labour work as the agriculture activities has been improved. Some of the outcomes achieved as a result of this program are:

- A total of 95 families comprising of 332 individuals are assured with irrigation system to have improved access of water for farming activities;
- There is an increased paddy cultivation and high land cultivation among the villagers;
 - 240 acres of land is equipped for paddy cultivation, whereas 200 acres of land is ready for high land crop cultivation;
 - The villagers are prepared to engage in paddy cultivation for both the seasons in the year;
 - 40 families engaged in paddy cultivation, whereas 95 families engaged in high land crop cultivation;
- A total of 40 families assisted with irrigation to engage in paddy cultivation to increase their household income;
- 10 families are ready to engage in pond water fishing activities to enhance their income;
- The vast majority of the families engaged in livestock farming and thereby, assured of subsidiary income to support their livelihood; 95 families cultivate vegetables from home gardening to take care of their food security needs; improved water table that resulted in promoting agriculture and highland crop cultivation;



Tank Breach is filled with concrete pilling



Different looks of agro tank sluice after construction

C. Project Management

OfERR delivered on all outputs, at times exceeding the targets within timelines, through its network of field offices, extension workers and volunteers. Thanks to the active cooperation and collaboration of the community and local government administration for making it possible and efficient.

OfERR carefully tracks its projects through ongoing monitoring and record-keeping. We need to know whether we have been successful in accomplishing our objectives. We believe it is essential to be accountable to our community and government partners, along with our donors. We have been pleased with how our work has positively impacted the communities in their efforts to re-establish their lives and livelihoods in the post-conflict situation.

The impact of these interventions can be seen through some of the stories of beneficiaries in the subsequent sections in this report.

D. Success Stories – Lighting up the Lives of People

OfERR delivered on all outputs, at times exceeding the targets, through its network of field offices, extension workers and volunteers. But did it help the people? Here are some stories from refugee and IDP returnees.

1. A successful journey towards reintegration



Mr. Nagaraj with his son in front of the Provisional Store that he started with the support by OfERR

Mr. Nagaraj, who lived in Moongiloorani camp, Sivaganga district in India, returned in February 2016, and he was met by OfERR's documentation officers at OfERR's Jaffna office. He sought guidance and support for his son who had completed his degree in B.Sc. in India.

Having helped him to get the equivalent certificate, he asked for help to find a job as he was new to the area and yet to know about people and places. The field staff and linkage officer shared this information with the WG and when the group came to know about a vacancy at a private bus stand, they made the introduction which helped him to procure a job as time keeper in the bus stand.

Furthermore, Mr. Nagarja did not have a house on his land prior to his displacement, and therefore, the Divisional secretary had informed him that he will not be on the beneficiary list for the housing scheme. However, the project assistant and the linkage officers intervened in this matter and made a request to the Divisional Secretary to consider his case. As a result, he was included on the list and now registered for the housing scheme also.

He is one of those who very often speak to refugees in India through Skype and share his own experience in resettlement and reintegration after his departure to his homeland. His son, who has completed Bachelors in Computer Science, has been provided hand-holding support to obtain his equivalent certificate, National Identity card and driving license. He has also been assisted to make a job application for the posts of Samurthi Officer and Grama Sevaka in his locality. He is now awaiting the interview call. Mr. Nagaraj was provided a livelihood grant worth of Rs. 40,000/- under the CRS program to establish a Petty shop.

2. A Long and bumpy road to Citizenship

The uncertainties caused by war forced Krishnan with his wife Rani to flee Sri Lanka by boat to India in the year 1990. They lived in Kottur, Sri Lankan refugees' camp in Coimbatore District. His first two children namely Siyamala and Praba were born in India shortly after their arrival. They were able to obtain the Indian birth certificates of the children, but due to lack of awareness, the family didn't obtain Consular birth certificates and Sri Lankan Citizenship from the Sri Lankan Deputy High Commission in Chennai.

The family returned to Sri Lanka by ship facilitated by UNHCR in 1992. Since their arrival, the family, including six children, has been living in Poonthottam village of Vavuniya South Division. The daughters, Siyamala and Praba, who were born in India, are married and live separately with their husbands. In 1993, the family made efforts to apply for Consular birth certificates for Siyamala and Praba but they didn't know about the required supportive documents and the procedures to follow. The family also didn't have the resources to meet the officials and get their support to obtain the consular birth certificates.

Much later, in 2008, the family submitted an application for consular birth certificates through the Additional District Registrar, Vavuniya, but they didn't receive the birth certificates. In 2013, OfERR (Ceylon) assisted them to submit another application for consular birth certificates, and after two years of waiting, both Siyamala and Praba received their consular birth certificates. When they were intending to make the application for citizenship, the family was stunned to receive another set of consular birth certificates in response to the first application they submitted in 2008. They had thus obtained two consular birth certificates carrying two different dates of registrations. They didn't have the courage to carry on with the application for citizenship as they feared that they would be punished for having two consular birth certificates of different dates of registration.



OfERR (Ceylon) staff came to know about these cases when collecting data for the database. Had they been in receipt of their consular birth certificates at least in 2011, they would have been below 21 years of age and need not have to pay the penalty of Rs.25, 000/- for the late registration of citizenship. OfERR (Ceylon) head office visited the Consular Section of the Central Record Room in Colombo, who process the consular birth certificate applications. One of the consular birth certificate that was received on the basis of the application made in 2008 was surrendered. As their daughters were above 21 years of age, they approached OfERR (Ceylon) office to request support to make application for citizenship under the late registration procedure.

OfERR (Ceylon) assisted with the compilation of all the essential documents such as citizenship application signed by JP, Applicant's Indian birth certificate, father's birth certificate, mother's birth certificate, parents' marriage certificate, one grandparent's birth certificate, consular birth certificate, refugee family identity card, return documents (passport copy and exit page) and GS letter with DS confirmation to complete the citizenship application for both Siyamala and Praba. In this process, OfERR (Ceylon) assisted the family to obtain the grand parent's certificate at the Office of the Additional District Registrar.

They were supported to make the application at the Citizenship Division, Department of Immigration and Emigration in June 2016, and OfERR has promised further assistance to the applicants till they receive their citizenship. They have been very grateful for the support provided by OfERR. Nevertheless, they feel disappointed about the mal-functional bureaucratic system in Sri Lanka which has complicated their lives unnecessarily. The father of those two girls said, "Though we made the application in 2008, we were disappointed not to receive the consular birth certificates. However, OfERR (Ceylon) provided us moral and mental support as well as assisted us all the way to submit the application for the citizenship. In the future, my daughter's would proudly say that they are Citizens of this country."

3. “Our School – a success model for other Schools”

Puthukkulam Pandithamani Kanapathipillai Vidyalayam School excels as one of the best schools in Vavuniya district. One of the EU-SDDP supported CFA intervention namely ‘Participatory Rural Appraisal’ made this school’s journey as inspiring one to encourage the parents to make exclusive plans to ensure students receive ‘inclusive quality education”.

Pandithamani Kanapathipillai Vidyalayam School is located at Puthukkulam village in Vavuniya North. Having understood the importance of improving access to education, the people in this village have contributed Rs.12, 000/- and started this school in 1990 with 12 students. Now, this school functions with 31 male and 24 female students and 5 teachers. Children from nearby villages such as Kanagarayankulam, Alankulam, and Kurisuttakulam attend and benefit from the school along with Puthukkulam village children.



Picture of the School Building and Urinal used since 1990

Despite the 25 years of historic performance, the school has been unfortunate not to be equipped with sufficient infrastructure and wash facilities to provide quality education to the children. In the past 15 years, the scarcity of school building, toilets, urinals, electricity connection and drinking water facilities had always remained a concern. The students used the toilet that was constructed in 1990. Children were in constant fear of reptiles like snake that frequently trespasses into the class rooms. One day, all 55 children ran out of fear as the snake entered into their school. Fortunately, the Child Friendly Education Promoter chased the snake away and protect children.

The teachers, who mostly run without resources, found it hard to mobilize resources to address these needs. The parents were too unbothered about the basic facilities and were neither conscious nor involved with children’s academic related activities.

Being identified as one of the vulnerable schools in Vavuniya North, this school was recommended by Zonal Education Department to benefit under ‘Resource Schools’ activity of EU-SDDP Program. At the initial stage, OfERR Child Friendly Education Promoters had visited the school and did the baseline data collection about the school and the children. From the data collection, the major problems were identified as school infrastructure, wash facilities and the students’ irregular attendance.

The PRA program was organized with the participation of 22 parents, 14 students and two teachers on the 26th and 27th April 2015. The facilitators engaged the participants to carry out catchment area mapping, venn diagram describing the support by NGOs, problem analysis and action plan.

The parents and students, being surprised and impressed by the program, keenly participated in this PRA process and were very active throughout sessions. They, with greater enthusiasm and energy, marked the houses, common places and places of risks as part of the catchment area mapping. As a result of this exercise,, scarcity of class rooms, toilets, drinking water and teachers, electricity disconnection, and lack of

specialized coaching has been identified as the major problems by the participants.

Having gained awareness on various elements that contribute quality education, the participants under the guidance of CFEP have developed the action plan to resolve major problems and set the timeframe to achieve their plans.



Parents and Children actively participate in the PRA

Two months since the exercise, the community has now established electricity connection for the school building; they joined together and cleaned the thorny bushes around the school building to make spacious atmosphere for children to engage in leisurely activities.

Under the small scale rehabilitation intervention of this project, OfERR has taken charge of building two toilets for this school, wherein the parents contributed physical labour. The labour wages were saved and utilized to construct a temporary shed for making additional classrooms.



Parents engage in cleaning of the school

With the electricity connection established, efforts to lay water connections supported by electric motor were initiated. The parents regularized the habit of cleaning the school campus once a month to maintain positive school environment. They also supplement the World Food Program's mid-day meal scheme with the cooking labour and vegetables to take care of the nutritional well-being of the children.

School Attendance Committee was revised with the membership of 11 members. The students' attendance is being regularly monitored by this committee and students with different problems are referred for specialized attention. As days progress, parents show keen interest in their children's education and undertake new initiatives to ensure their children receive standard education. They have also started specialized coaching for students of Grade V. Children are taught to practice personal hygiene measures in their everyday life, to lead clean and healthier life. School Development Societies along with the government officials such as Grama Sevaka are involved in the school development related activities and are showing keenness to improve the quality of education. With the above listed interventions,



Children provided special coaching

the school is marching ahead to prepare the best citizens for tomorrow.

School Principal Jayanthi, with greater surprise, said, "The school atmosphere has changed a lot. Students receive quality education in our school. There has been improvement in the students' attendance too. Along with children, parents are involved in the school activities, which is a greater boost for children. With this, we are sure that we would create our school a role model for other schools to emulate".

Conclusion

The Year 2015-2016 has been phenomenal for OfERR in terms of its achievements, learnings from shortcomings and improvisation. It has added value to the work of the organization by uplifting the lives of many refugee and IDP returnees. OfERR has been on its successful journey with the support of its donors and encouragement from its beneficiaries for 13 years as the wheels of the organization. The conflict stricken scenario has not been detrimental in coping from the past but have taught us to fight the odds and stand strong against the vagaries of weather. With the help, encouragement and prayers, OfERR promises to be at the service of the society, especially in rebuilding and normalizing the post conflict societies in the future years to come, with increasing hard work and commitment.

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