

Towards Return and Reintegration

OfERR Ceylon - Annual Report - April 2020 March 2021

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Message from Our President

The year 2020 was unlike any we've experienced in our lifetimes. The onset of the novel coronavirus posed an enormous health and safety risk for the more than 80 million people world-wide displaced by conflict and persecution, as well as millions more forced from their homes due to disaster caused by natural hazards.

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 2020–2021, OfERR's main focus was supporting returned refugees from India in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Rebuilding the social, economic, cultural and political fabric was essential for reinstating 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 2020–2021 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)

Introduction

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 realize their full potential to contribute to and benefit from sustainable development.

Executive Committee & Management Committee

S.No	Members	Position
1	Miss. Sinnathamby Sooriyakumari	President
2	Samuel Chelvanayagam Chandrahasan	Treasurer
3	Mr.Arumugam Nadarajah	Secretary
4	Mrs. Ahiela Ratnarajasingam	Joint Treasurer
5	Mr.Pathmanathan Kandeepan	Director
6	Miss. Victor Selvam Thenmozhi	Director
7	Mr.Sivasamy Parthasarathy	Vice President
8	Mrs. Rathakrishnan Krishnananthi	Joint Treasurer

Management Committee

- 1) Ms. Sinnathamby Sooriyakumary
- 2) Mr. Samuel Chelvanayakam Chandrahasan
- 3) Mr. Arumugam Nadarajah
- 4) Mrs. Jayaratnam Komathy
- 5) Mr. Pathmanathan Kandeepan
- 6) Mrs. Ratnarajasingam Aheila
- 7) Mr. Sivasamy Parthasarathy

- 8) Miss. Victor Selvam Thenmozhi
- 9) Mr. Maria Soosai Sakkariyas
- 10) Mrs. Rathakrishnan Krishananthi
- 11) Mr. Simeon Mariathan
- 12) Mrs. Rex Costa Bridget
- 13) Mr. Joseph Gunaseelan
- 14) Mrs. Tharmapoopathy Kandavel

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'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 evolution as CSO:

OfERR (Ceylon) is an off spring of OfERR in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. The refugees from Sri Lanka founded OfERR for the refugees, in the year 1984. Following a review and re-visioning exercise of OfERR in 2004, OfERR (Ceylon) was founded to specifically work among the refugee returnees from India. Having launched its operations, OfERR (Ceylon) found a compelling need to work with the internally displaced persons who lived in the open relief camps or welfare centers. The tsunami of 26th December 2004 created more IDPs and rendered several thousands homeless. OfERR (Ceylon) responded to this unexpected and urgent needs of the situation by extending its work to the eastern province where the devastation was severe. As the situation of the Tsunami affected people improved, the conflict

in the north and eastern parts of the country escalated. This situation called for a series of humanitarian responses. The efforts of OfERR (Ceylon) scaled up to work on the relief, rehabilitation and reconciliation of the displaced people, and now OfERR (Ceylon) handles more of developmental projects.

For more than a decade, OfERR (Ceylon) has been providing humanitarian and development assistance with wide a range of interventions such as community building, civil & legal documentation, education, 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. With the war in Sri Lanka has come to an end in 2009, OfERR (Ceylon) at present focuses on strengthening the reintegration support for the refugees returning from India.

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-coordinated 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 variety 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.

OfERR (Ceylon) Organogram

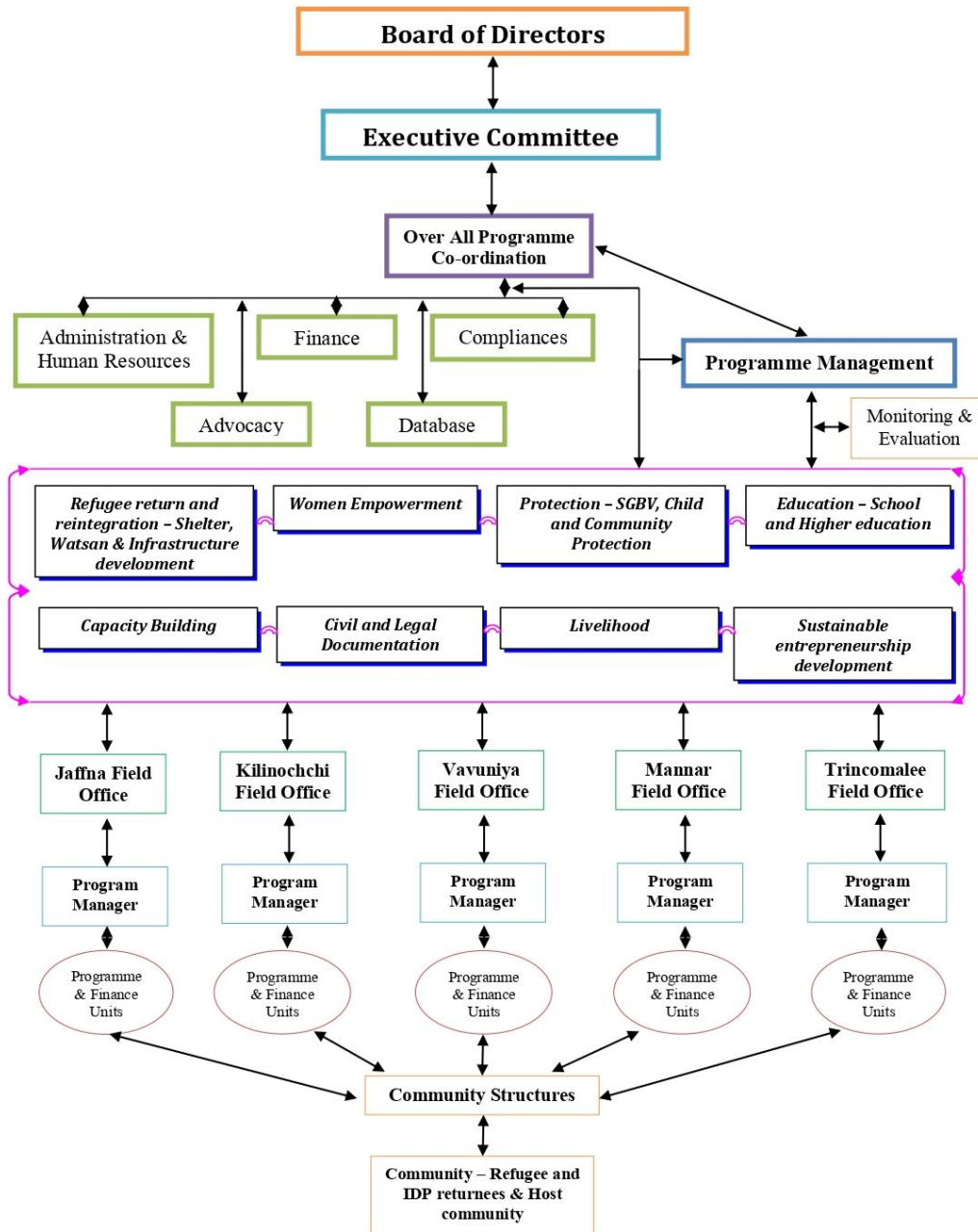


Figure 1 - OfERR Ceylon's Organogram

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

Achievements in April 2020 March 2021

2020 was a year of unprecedented challenges, both for OfERR Ceylon and the rest of the international community, but we proved ourselves adaptive and forward-thinking in facing up to them. It is still too soon to say what the long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic will be, but there have already been far-reaching social and economic setbacks, many of which have hit the world's most vulnerable people hardest.

Despite nationwide travel restrictions in Sri Lanka and limited health expertise and capacity in many locations, our staffs been able to “stay and deliver” throughout the pandemic. Others have embraced the need to work remotely, tailoring their work to the new situation and improving outreach through digital training, coordination and capacity development.

Lessons we learned from our experiences in 2020 is the importance of building local capacity and making sure our activities are in line with communities' needs and wants. This means designing programmes that better engage with the communities they are intended to benefit.

Community Based Organization – “Unity is Strength”

“True partnership means being willing to receive as well as to give; to listen to refugees as well as to talk to refugees; to be questioned by refugees as well as to ask questions; and finally, to use all resources for the refugees to enable them to face their past, live their present and hope for a better future.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that we, as one global community, can only be safe if everyone is included and protected. With the understanding that community mobilization is crucial to engage the community, to effect community-based protection and community-based development, this programme has gained more importance with the refugee returnee and IDP reintegration programme.

Saving habits among women in the recent days are very rare and depleting. The olden golden practice of saving handful of rice has faded away from our memories. On the other hand, unnecessary celebrations, luxurious living, ambitious desires and exorbitant interests have

occupied the lives of common man and toughened the living worse and worse. In order to combat money lending for interest problems among the Sri Lankan refugees in India, OfERR has started forming refugee women into self-help groups in the camps. The same concept has been adopted to Sri Lanka with the formation of SHGs among returnees and IDPs. OfERR (Ceylon) has planned formation of welcome groups (WGs), women self-help groups (SHGs), women empowerment groups (WEGs), and community economic development forums (CEDFs) and other community-based CBOs.

In this community mobilization programme, the WGs, that are formed in Divisions, have not only helped to disseminate information about government services and schemes and citizen rights in Sri Lanka, but also assisted in empathetic welcome groups providing hand-holding support to the refugee returnees to access assistance and services for reintegration. The SHGs, WEGs and CEDFs aimed to create and foster women's leadership, collective actions and socio-economic development. In addition, the VDCs have organized members from village level to come together and plan and implement necessary actions, to strengthen prevention and protection services for the children's betterment. The linkage and referrals that were made through the WGs, WEGs, CEDFs, SHGs and other community structures resulted in providing maximum reintegration assistance to the returnees which is detailed in the table given below.

S. No	Group	No. of Groups	Members					
			IDPs		Returnees		Total	
			Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Welcome Group	43	82	157	73	199	155	356
2	Self Help Group	51		431		275	0	706
3	Women Empowerment Group	16	8	74	15	147	23	221
4	Community Economic Development Forums	4	2	7	9	33	11	40

In the reporting period, OfERR Ceylon has formed 114 groups comprising 1512 members (92 Male and 669 Female from Internally Displaced persons and 97 Male and 654 Female from Refugees Returnees from India). The community mobilization has been helpful for OfERR

(Ceylon) to easily connect with the beneficiaries in the ground level. Particularly, the WGs, who have become an integral part of the return and reintegration of the refugees from India with their active welcoming, guiding, mentoring, accompanying and facilitation roles, have been a good focal point to connect the returnees and IDPs with the reintegration schemes such as land, housing, health, education and livelihood. It is remarkable to say that they made noteworthy difference in helping refugee returnees to reintegrate themselves in their places of origins successfully.

Civil and essential documentation – “Protection for a Future”

The uncertainties caused by the ethnic war in 1983 made disruptions in the normalcy of Sri Lankan Tamils and forced them to experience frequent displacement in and outside the country. The frequent displacements had not only created uncertainties, but also made many to lose their documentation evidences such as birth, marriage and death certificates and paved ways to raise questions over the future of their generations. At the same time, their protracted refugee situation made them being unconscious of the documentation. OfERR (Ceylon) works in coordination with OfERR to provide support with the essential documentation of refugees in India and refugee/IDP returnees in Sri Lanka. Since the arrival in Tamil Nadu, nearly 24,000 children had born to the parents of the Sri Lankan Tamils living in the camps. Of them, the majority have not registered their birth at the consular office of Sri Lanka in Chennai and therefore, face the risk of being classified as stateless. The reason for their inability to register for the consular birth is that they either lost their documents or unregistered their births, marriages and deaths.

The returnees face enormous difficulties with the absence of their essential documents in hand. Especially, majority couldn't go further with the absence of citizenship as it is important for returnee registration, resettlement, education and employment purposes. In order to prepare the returnees with essential documents, OfERR (Ceylon) trained the staff on civil documentation and having linkages with civil papers officials at divisional (ADR), district (DR), Provincial (ARG) and National level (RG) in order to access supports from the authorities.

S.No	Essential Documents	Field Offices				
		Mannar	Vavuniyaa	Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu	Jaffna	Trincomalee
1	Birth Certificates	71	60	03	17	71
2	Marriage Certificates	06	32	06	05	04
3	National Identity Card	11	18	04	53	25
4	Death Certificates	01	21	02		02
5	Police Report (clearance of land issues, no objection certificates)	01	14		15	
6	Governmental declarations	31	27			
7	Birth certificates for Refugee Parents	26	25	22		37
8	Citizenship Alterations and Certificates		32			
9	Driving License		51			
10	Educational Equivalent Certificate		45			
Total		17	325	37	90	139

Understanding the needs of essential documents among the refugee returnees, OfERR (Ceylon) has also been consistently advocating with the concerned authorities to simplify the procedures and requirements. Hence, there is less insistence of mandatory documents by the officials and help the refugees to receive documents with the submission of minimal supportive documents. In essential documentation, OfERR (Ceylon) has been recognized as a nodal agency to supplement the governmental civil and essential documentation support to the people. Overall, OfERR (Ceylon) has assisted 738 beneficiaries to receive essential documentation in the reporting period.

Whatever the documentation assistance provided, the complex bureaucratic document requirements and the long processing of citizenship has been a challenge for the refugee returnees to obtain their citizenship. The citizenship long processing basically puts an applicant's life on hold for up to 12 months as the National Identity Card is not issued before the citizenship is granted. The graduates who need the equivalent SL certificate for Poly-

technical courses also have to wait for several months. OfERR continues to make these slow bureaucratic procedures easier and faster through advocacy with the Relevant Ministries.

Community Protection and Capacity Building – “Reduce Vulnerabilities and Build Capacities”

OfERR (Ceylon) regards capacity building as essential for human and community development in the post-conflict scenario and works with the ideology that every human being is the same in God’s creation, but they turn out to be different when they start to recognize their hidden potentials.

In order to materialize this belief, OfERR organizes capacity building trainings and awareness programs to develop the capacities of the IDPs and refugee returnees. By building refugee capacities and promoting their vocational and income generation activities, OfERR (Ceylon) aims to create a sustainable community with enriched knowledge, skill and attitude.

Some of the capacity building programs held among the target groups including refugee returnees and IDP returnees are:

1. Training on Community based protection/vulnerability reduction;
2. Training on Sexual and Gender Based Violence Protection;
3. Training on Child Protection;
4. Training on Child Care, Health & Hygiene;
5. Participatory Rural Appraisal exposure training;
6. Entrepreneurship Development Programme;
7. Specialized livelihood trainings;
8. Advanced training on Essential documentation;
9. Training on peace building and community cohesion;

OfERR Ceylon is conducting the training activities among the communities as it is believed that education is a key for community development. OfERR (Ceylon) also facilitates capacity building sessions concerning civil documentation, disaster risk management, gender-based violence and child abuse, child protection measures, civil rights and access to legal services, good governance and functions of local governments. These activities are planned and implemented in cooperation with community-based organizations (CBOs), self-help groups and other local actors. OfERR Ceylon also provides training sessions which are aimed at providing and upgrading livelihood skills such as business & marketing, mechanical

maintenance, home gardening, herbal plant cultivation, chili powder production and small business development.

District	Total No. of Trainings	Participants	
		Male	Female
Trincomalee	22	110	212
Jaffna	2	50	25
Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu	1	3	5
Vavuniyaa	22	142	192
Mannar	22	258	419
Total	69	563	853

OfERR (Ceylon) field staff, who were trained on advanced protection training, have engaged in conducting protection trainings in the district and village level, based on the needs identified. In the training, the participants were brainstormed about the usage of community protection tools such as problem identification, problem prioritization, power walk, stakeholder analysis, protection egg analysis, etc. There were overall 69 trainings conducted with the participation of 563 men and 853 women comprising of IDP and Refugee Returnees.

SGBV and Child Protection – “Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women”

District	Trainings		SGBV		Child Protection	
	SGBV	Child Protection	Male	Female	Male	Female
Trincomalee	5	3	74	137	40	41
Jaffna	4	2	61	76	40	70
Vavuniyaa	10	5	131	254	65	105
Mannar	6	3	88	134	37	80
Total	25	13	354	601	182	296

A total of 25 awareness programs on Sexual and/or Gender Based Violence were conducted with the participation of 354 men and 601 women. All the S/GBV awareness sessions were facilitated by Government Women Development Officers with the support of OfERR animators and linkage officers. 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.

The awareness programme on child protection intended to strengthen the community measures to protect child rights. A total of 13 awareness programs on child protection and rights were conducted with the participation of 182 men and 296 women. 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 behavior 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.

Physical Infrastructures – Temporary Shelters and School infrastructures



Many returned refugees struggle to secure adequate housing. Homes and property may have been destroyed or damaged during the war and land title documents may have been lost, and in some areas the military has still not release the land and they forcibly occupied for ‘high-security zones’ back to former residents. Returned refugees must also stay for a minimum of six months at one

location to apply for National Identity Cards (NIC), essential civil documents to secure employment, education or other services in Sri Lanka. To complete the six-month requirement until they get a housing assistance, OfERR’s temporary shelter programme has been set up. The objective is to assist the vulnerable refugee returnees with the transitional shelter upon

return, to restart their lives in a positive way in their native villages. For the shelter assistance programme, the vulnerability of the returnees were assessed with the participation of village level government officials and CBOs.

Provision of Temporary Shelters	
District	No.of Beneficiaries
Trincomalee	19
Jaffna	25
Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu	12
Vavuniyaa	38
Mannar	37
Total	131

Upon finalizing the beneficiary for support, the materials were provided for the owner-driven construction of temporary shelters. Overall, there were 131 beneficiaries of refugee returnee community assisted with the provision of temporary shelter in the northern and eastern provinces.

Sustainable Livelihoods – “Livelihood is an inalienable right of resettled community”

In the context of a post-war rehabilitation, strengthening the livelihood and employment opportunities in the resettlement areas is very vital. With the contextual changes, the refugee returnees and the displaced communities were beginning to resettle in their native villages. At this situation, with the understanding that right to livelihood is an imperative to a returned or a resettled refugee or an IDP family, OfERR (Ceylon) has given maximum emphasis to the sustainable livelihood programme. The other reason is that the sustainable livelihoods, while giving the individual a regular income, will also contribute for the local economic development. In this effort, the livelihood sector was considered as one of the primary areas of recovery and among the resettled households, livelihood has been considered as one of the most



important needs that to be immediately catered. Thus, OfERR’s intervention aims at providing

support for sector-based livelihood assistance for returned/resettled communities who engaged and willingness to engage in agriculture, fisheries and livestock related sectors and enterprise development support, especially for youth through inputs, equipment and accessories with required skills.

There were overall 389 beneficiaries assisted with the provision of livelihood such as fishery, agriculture, animal husbandry and micro-enterprises. The detailed number of beneficiaries with sectorial and district wise break up is given below.

S. No	District	Fishery	Agriculture	Animal Husbandry	Micro Enterprises	Grand Total
1	Jaffna	31	25	41	56	153
2	Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu		24	45	33	102
3	Vavuniya	1	8	6	5	20
4	Mannar	22	13	18	6	59
5	Trincomalee	11	2	17	25	55
Total		65	72	127	125	389

As a result of the livelihood support, the families were asserted their right to earn with the provision of livelihood, after reintegration in their native places where there is a lacking of livelihood and employment opportunities. With this, they were capacitated to engage in sustainable livelihood measures to accomplish day today livelihood needs of the families. From the monitoring of livelihood beneficiaries that were undertaken with the external experts it was learnt that from the needs assessment to the point of evaluation there was a continuous connectivity with the beneficiaries; and the success rate of over 90 per cent among the monitored beneficiaries was quite evident from the field visits. Particularly, among the returnees, the livelihoods restored their sense of hope and dignity and made them be self-reliant to cope up with the economic challenges that are experienced in the preliminary period of reintegration.

Education – “The tool for change”

Education is regarded as one of the most important needs as part of the reintegration needs. Understanding that good education can lit hope in the lives of resettled families, OfERR

(Ceylon) gave maximum importance in reintegrating the children back in schools upon return. This is due to the reason that assistance in accessing the Sri Lankan school system, vocational skills training, and other education related services in Sri Lanka will result in more sustainable livelihoods and employment opportunities.

Education Support	
District	No.of Beneficiaries
Trincomalee	31
Jaffna	27
Kilinochchi	20
Mullaitivu	26
Vavuniyaa	45
Mannar	52
Total	201

In this line, OfERR (Ceylon) provided assistance for the returnee children with securing enrolment in schools and ensuring better reintegration in the schools in Sri Lanka, providing support with stationery, uniform, shoe-socks to the most vulnerable children, providing support with catch up classes (including language classes) for children below 18, conducting career guidance and counselling sessions for graduates/diploma holders, providing counselling support to motivate and monitor school education & support for reintegration in schools through recruitment of animators/counsellors in the regional offices, support payment to graduates to obtain equivalent certificates for the Indian qualifications, providing travel costs associated with obtaining 10th and 12th standard equivalent certificates and linking the experienced/skilled returnee students with appropriate non-formal education or National Vocational Qualification certificate programs.

There were 201 children assisted with the support for their education, of them 154 children are from returnee families, whereas 47 children are from host communities, the latter category of beneficiaries were chosen on the basis of the extreme vulnerability.

Water and Sanitation – “Promotion of health and hygiene”

The health programme intends to influence a greater understanding of child care needs and requirements, and improve individual and family health and hygiene practices, while also intending to promote psycho-social wellbeing among the target groups. In the awareness programmes, topics such as child protection, child abuse and child rights were taught. The Regional Director of Health Services (DHS) and Medical Officer of Health are some of the key

government officials who facilitated these training programs with the support of OfERR (Ceylon) field staff. OfERR (Ceylon) staff, who were experienced in child-friendly programmes, have also played a major role as facilitators in conducting the child care, health and hygienic sessions. In these sessions, the children were sensitized on child rights, personal hygiene and hand washing techniques. They were taught about six steps of hand-washing and encouraged to practice it at home in order to lead a healthy and hygienic life. During the course of the trainings, awareness materials carrying the visuals of good health and hygienic practices have been demonstrated in order to provide practical examples of good hygiene.

Districts	No. of Trainings	Male	Female	Total
Jaffna	2	16	26	42
Vavuniyaa	4	58	45	103
Mannar	6	31	42	73
Total	12	105	113	218

In order to promote hygienic standards in the schools, there were trainings and awareness sessions conducted. In these training, 218 children including 105 boys and 113 girls have participated and benefited with the information on hygienic aspects and participants gained basic awareness and knowledge about managing the menstrual hygiene in a positive way.

Success Stories – Lighting up the Lives of People

Mrs Suwrnan Nilanai left Sri Lanka in 1990 due to the unrealistic situation and took shelter in various refugee camps in TamilNadu. In 2015 she married to Mr. Sewarnan and returns to their mother land in 2017. When she was in South India she went for a sewing training and worked as a sewing teacher for six months. After she returned from south India she joined as a member of Ananithivu South Women Rural development Society and became a sewing teacher. Her Husband involved farming in their village. And they blessed with Babyboy.



OfERR Jaffna supported her husband to get citizenship, at that time Nilanini requested to get sewing machine to start tailoring at home. By considering her request and her skills OfERR given tools and equipment for her to start her carrier in 2021 June. At the same time OfERR requested her to

consider whenever she gets opportunities to establish her tailoring activities, consider to provide employment for a woman from vulnerable families. OfERR organized for her to get advance skill/ Market strategies technical trainings, Business development coaching and mentoring training.

Now she has established her tailoring business and given employment opportunity for five women from vulnerable families, under her supervision they have taken orders from various places such as orders to stich uniforms from preschools and schools. Their quality stitching and customer service grabbing more customers and getting number of orders.

Nilanai opened boutique on a main road of Analithivu, and hanged all their stitched cloths. If



the country situation become stable, she will have more orders locally as well from abroad. The Divisional Office of Kayts and the Women Rural Development Society honored her for her initiatives and the support she is giving to the village of Analithivu South.

Child Protection and Case Management

My name is Sumathi age 35. I have received various trainings such as Protection training, gender equality and Sexual gender-based violence prevention training, child protection and health related training through OfERR. I have been a member of the Welcome group formed by OfERR in my village of Kumpurupitiy to welcome returnees and provide them with the



necessary registration, Residencial arrangements, and enrollment of children in schools. OfERR then looked after my services and recruited me as a counselor to identify the needs of returnees in the Kuchchaveli area, such as collecting databases and working with relevant government officials on the protection of women and children. Together with the Women Development Officer, Child Protection Officer and Grama Sevakar of the Kuchchaveli Divisional Secretariat, I have been conducting SLRRRP3 project training with Government officials and OfERR Officers to provide awareness training to the people of our area.

In this situation, a 14-year-old returnee girl from our area and immediately took action to protect the girl when she heard the news that a young man from a neighboring village had tried to abuse her. The matter was immediately reported to the Grama Nilathaari through Kuchchaveli Divisional Child Protection Officer and the team including the Health Division took charge of the girl. It is noteworthy that the girl's mother has gone to the Middle East as a housemaid. The incident took place when the girl's father, who was in the care of her father, went to work. We continue to maintain secrecy and take remedial action in this regard. Due to the absence of the mother, we have handed over the responsibility of the girl's Mother's Sister. The girl's father has also been provided with goat rearing assistance as a livelihood assistance. The girl is under our constant surveillance and protection from his Aunt. She has been safe at home since school was held because of the Covid 19 period. In the safety of the girl, the photo, name and family details are not mentioned here.

Well Construction in Trincomalee

The Kuchchaveli Divisional Secretary provided permanent housing with government land for 13 returnees in the village of Iranaikeni in the Kuchchaveli Divisional Secretariat Division of

the Trincomalee District in response to the OfERR's involvement in several consultations with the Government to reintegrate the returnees. The need for water to resettle 55 people from these 13 families was paramount, for which our SLRRRP 3 project was helpful. Through this project a Common dug well was constructed and handed over by the Divisional Secretary for public use. A Water Conservation Committee has also been set up to monitor water hygiene and maintenance of the returning public who hand over the well. Those who received this assistance received safe water without any shortage of water.



Showed the way; We live happily - I am Balakrishnan Mahadevan, Trincomalee

My family was also affected by the 1990 war. My parents and I took refuge in India and lived in the Thiruvadavoor refugee camp. Many years passed and I got married to a woman named Krishnaveni in 2007 and lived with three children. I decided to return to the country in view of the future of the children and returned with my family to my wife's sister's house in Trincomalee 2018 with the help of UNHCR. I made my registrations at OFERR and then they found my needs and took the Consular Birth Certificate and Sri Lankan Citizenship Certificate for my children. Having received these documents there is no impediment for my children to continue their education. Not only that they provided school equipment for my children and met their children's educational needs. I confirmed to the government that there was no land house under the guidance of OfERR. As a result of registering with the Divisional Secretariat of Town & Gravest, in 2019 the government provided 15 perch of land in the



village of Iluppakulam, Trincomalee. Following this, a housing project worth Rs. 750,000 / - was obtained by the National Housing development Authority. Due to the political change in the country during that period, the foundation work on the house was suspended on the eve of completion. “As the deity one went to worship came to meet one cross wise” Like this proverb,



OfERR came across and helped me who was in despair of being distracted. OfERR Ceylon provided Livelihood support for Carpentry tools worth of 1 Laks. With that help, I set up a workshop on the land of another relative and started a business. Although I have a lot of plans to raise goats and chickens from the income I get from that business, I have given up the plan of doing

other businesses where we already have a relative home without a home. Although the relatives' house, how many days they will stay with us from time to time there are minor disagreements. When we went to the OfERR Ceylon and told them our situation we could not bear these. They talked to the Divisional Secretary and took permission to set up a temporary Shelter and permanent Toilet on the land given to us by the government. I am currently doing my carpentry business and raising chickens on my land. “Live happily with my family and safely in my own home on my own land in my own Country.” I don't have to depend on anyone for family expenses and children's education because I currently have two careers. With that income I added the children to the evening class. I also showed money to pick up the electrical connection to the house. Now we eat three meals a day to our satisfaction. Next, I am saving a little of the income and making arrangements for goat rearing. I will plan with income... I will progress in the economy. I will raise the quality of education of the children.

Nothing is impossible if tried says – Thevarasa Pradeepan

My name is Thevarasa Pradeepan. Kumburupitiya is a permanent resident of Kuchveli Divisional Secretariat area in Trincomalee district. When I was nine years old, I went to India by boat with my mother, father and 2 brothers by boat from Mannar on 02.05.1990 due to the ethnic riots in my homeland. They took us to Kadayanallur refugee camp in Tenkasi district and registered us there. During my stay in the camp I was educated up to grade 12 as well as going to the daily wages available after the completion of school studies. Thus, while my life was going on, I fell in love with Santhanam Devarani, a resident of my camp in Trincomalee

Kanniya village, on 06.07.2000. Both of our daughters studied up to grade 10 in India. My parents and siblings returned to the country in 2011 after the war ended in 2009. Even after their return, I had to live in India due to the circumstances in which I had to live. During my time there I went to work for wages and met my family needs. But every minute I lived with the stigma of being a refugee. When the thought of returning to the country comes, so does the fear of how we will go and live there. So I will forget the idea of returning to the country. In the end I made an enthusiastic decision that after 27 years of refugee life, if my life is over, my main duty is to love my two children so that they can live peacefully in their motherland. Having lived in a 10 x 10 size house for so many years without it alone India would not be my mother country. How long does it take for someone else to put on a shirt? If it's here, the children will end up getting married here. If so, it will be here for generations. Also my relatives in Sri Lanka kept saying that the situation here is good and you should return to the country. Following this, with the help of India OfERR, we registered our marriage and obtained a birth certificate for our children in Embassy of Sri Lanka. Then with the help of UNHCR we returned to my home village on 24.10.2017. A welcome group member assisting to registration arrangements. At the Divisional Secretariat, we were treated with respect as returnee. Since I had 20 perches of land, I got Rs. 33000.00 for temporary hut provided by the Ministry of Resettlement. We had set up a temporary house with money provided by the Ministry of Resettlement and a travel allowance from UNHCR. In addition, the Divisional Secretariat had provided a toilet worth Rs. 54000.00. I took my records to OfERR and they looked at my documents and took steps to get the children citizenship. They also corrected errors in the documents. Citizenship has been delayed for two years now due to the country's Covid 19 epidemic.



We got a permanent house worth Rs. 1000000.00 in 2019 under the Government Housing Scheme for Returnees. We finished building it and we are currently living there. By the time we returned to the country employment was low. I am currently working. I am working in a farm with a salary of Rs.30000.00 per month. I was applying for a livelihood for poultry at OfERR. They also came to my house and examined my condition and paid Rs. 100000.00 worth of Backyard chickens were also provided. I did better maintenance because I had prior experience working on the farm and now it is starting to lay eggs. I bought more chickens and goats because I wanted to make proper use of the help they gave me. I am currently making arrangements to do integrated farming. I'm currently worried about telling my friends in India on the phone where they might have gone in the economy if they had returned to the country earlier. In the current state of mind we are eating and sleeping peacefully in my own home in my mother country... This happiness does not exist in refugee life...

Implementation Arrangement:

Organizational Management:

OfERR's functional management is headed by Ms.Sooriyakumary, President of the organization, who is the overall programme coordinator. The organization's functional management is divided into four sections:

1. Project/Programme Management:
2. Financial Management:
3. Human Resources and Administration:
4. Procurement:

In addition, OfERR (Ceylon) has permanent resource persons, who engage with the organization as resource persons on Technical, Management and other Policy matters.

The organizations' management committee engages in planning, implementing, reporting and monitoring of the activities implemented in their respective districts. The staff appointed for programs, finance and administration have come from diverse educational and professional backgrounds with expertise in programme management and working at the grassroots. This was an asset in implementing a variety of programmes ranging from education, health, women empowerment, capacity building, psycho-social assistance, essential documentation, legal aid, constructing houses, startups in dairy, agriculture, fisheries and retails, and cross-cutting issues such as HIV, health, gender-based violence, child protection, the environment, peace and reconciliation.

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) and Reporting:

All the activities are undertaken in collaboration with the government stakeholders and thus, the government is directly involved in the activity implementation and undertaking regular monitoring of the activities.

OfERR staff monitor on a monthly basis according to the work plan. The joint monitoring take place with OfERR and respective Divisional Secretariat staff to ensure the planned activities are on track. OfERR will mobilize the support of producer group members to get involved in project implementation and monitoring.

OfERR organize review meetings periodically – monthly, quarterly and half yearly with partner organizations and relevant government officials, order to review the progress and major challenges faced during the implementation. If there are any deviations/discrepancies in implementation plan, the plan is reviewed with collaboration of donor staff as well as government officials on a quarterly basis.

The OfERR Head Office shall prepare the monthly/quarterly/annual progress reports (both physical and financial progress) based on field office program updates. OfERR will prepare reports according to donor's reporting formats. The reports will include the following:

- Summary of the achievements (by using quantitative and qualitative techniques) in line with the established targets.
- No of beneficiaries covered during the project period
- The key-issues and challenges of the project

- Case studies, project photos and video clips
- Comments, conclusion and recommendation for pending work, project direction and sustainability of project.

The project evaluation is carried out by OfERR with support of donor staff Divisional/District Secretariat after completion of every project. The evaluation mainly focus on outcomes, objectives, sustainability, best practices, lesson learnt and key-challenges of the project. The Evaluation report is shared with partners and Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, concerned district/divisional secretariats, and other concerned department. As a grassroots organization, OfERR continues to walk along with the communities and time to time guide them for further improvement by themselves.

Project Activity Summary For 2020/2021

OfERR (Ceylon)					
Project Activity Summary For 2020/2021					
S.No	Name of the Project	Name of the Donor	Project Period	Income this year	Total Expenditure this year
1	GAP Programme	Act for Peace	01.07.2017 to 30.06.2020	9,22,456.00	54,69,959.00
2	Strengthening the Sustainability of Sri Lankan Refugee Return and Reintegration 3	Act for Peace	01.09.2019 to 31.08.2021	6,80,58,318.95	7,96,47,957.04
3	Human Right Education - Jaffna	National Peace Council	01.06.2018 to 31.12.2020	13,57,613.00	10,55,198.00
4	Human Right Education - Mannar	National Peace Council	01.06.2018 to 31.12.2020	5,56,005.00	6,81,705.00
5	Support for Durable Resettlement in Sri Lanka in the Trincomalee District	UNDP	23.12.2019 to 31.08.2020	1,21,66,000.00	1,29,19,863.00
6	Joint Program for Peace - Jaffna	UNDP	15.12.2020 to 31.08.2021	29,92,800.00	7,03,162.00
7	Joint Program for Peace - Mullaitivu	UNDP	15.12.2020 to 31.08.2021	52,00,500.00	13,73,633.00
8	Strengthening Access to Justice and Service Provision for Survivors of SGBV - 001A	UNDP	27.06.2019 to 30.08.2021	6,21,400.00	7,52,635.00
9	Strengthening Access to Justice and Service Provision for Survivors of SGBV - 001B - 001D	UNDP	01.09.2020 to 30.06.2021	35,47,200.00	35,47,200.00
10	Education Environment Improvement in Kilinochchi District	UNICEF	21.02.2020 to 31.12.2020	56,10,975.00	92,34,732.00
11	Humanitarian Emergency Response Plan to provide relief assistance for refugee returnees in Sri Lanka	Canadian Tamil Congress	01.04.2020 to 30.05.2020	5,64,782.83	5,66,826.50
12	Community Awareness Building Programme for the "Education Environment Improvement Project in the Killinochchi District (Phase II)	UNICEF	22.03.2021 to 31.12.2022		5,27,143.00
				10,15,98,050.78	11,64,80,013.54

Conclusion

With the dedicated approach to light up the lives of the returnees, whether IDP or refugee returnees, OfERR (Ceylon) utilizing the funds and resources in hand, have done maximum to improve the lives of the population of target. However, being an organization that was stemmed from the refugee humanitarian approach, OfERR (Ceylon) always prioritized encouraging refugees to return and providing support to strengthen the reintegration climate, so as to enable returnees restart their lives in their places of origin successfully. With maximum refugees still languishing in refugee camps, we continue to advocate with the governments of India and Sri Lanka, to facilitate the return of refugees back in Sri Lanka as more to be taken care in the reintegration situation. In this line, there is a strong message sent across to India and other countries that no Sri Lankan should live with the identity as a refugee.

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