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Reintegration and Reconciliation through entrepreneurship development

It's been one year since the conclusion of the war. At a time when peace building and conflict transformation are buzzwords in the development landscape of Sri Lanka, we'd like to share our experience. In this edition we bring stories from the field about the people we've worked with and the things they've done.

Ramesh* is from Kaluwanchikudy. During the conflict he was arrested on suspicion and questioned by the Special Task Force (STF).

On his release he went to Saudi Arabia,



starting out as a labourer and progressing to Salesman. 8 years later he came back and set up a grocery shop in Vantharomoolai.

He says that through the Business Development training he learnt marketing and other aspects of a business. He observed what items sell fast and what is in higher demand. He visited shops in adjoining villages and began to supply items to them bringing him an additional daily income of Rs.4,000-5,000. During the harvest season he rents his harvester to others earning Rs. 5,000 to 6,000. In the off-season he hires the front-end loaders to others. This brings an additional income of Rs.5,000-6,000 per day during off-season. He now plans to buy a three wheeler and use it to

expand his network.

Vikram* from Vakarai says: *Vakarai is a very backward area. I live at Kathiravelly. At the outset I was functioning in the L.T.T.E and lost one*



of my legs. Then I was allowed by them to quit the movement.

Subsequently I got married and have a child. I could not engage in

any job due to my physical condition, and I suffered a lot. I was living in the midst of a lot of problems and difficulties. Since I knew tailoring I rented a sewing machine and started a business. However I derived only a small profit, as I had to pay for the machine.

Then I followed the training program and was able to re assess my situation. Now I turn out 15 dresses, and get an income of Rs.1500/- a day, Rs.20,000/- per month. I received a sewing machine from IOM and am carrying on my profession without any obstacles. Those who are engaged in the same profession have since formed a group where discussions are being carried out with regard to their problems and shortcomings. I am taking steps to further develop my business and look forward to the future with optimism.

*Names have been changed.

The business development training was implemented through the ICRS project of IOM and financed by USAID. The project was completed in March. NF continues to support the trainees with follow up and counselling to maintain and improve their enterprises.

We invite our readers to check out our latest video aired on Young Asia TV:

<http://www.yatv.net/video/no-war-zone-of-april-14-2010/>

Contributing to an efficient government service through training

The Nucleus Foundation implemented a training program for government sector



representatives in Batticaloa recently. The training was commissioned by the IOM ICRS

the aim of project with the aim of developing the capacities of employees of the local government authorities so that they are strengthened and therefore enabled to provide better services to their clients.

Over 35 participants from the District Secretariat participated in the program that covered a variety of topics including:

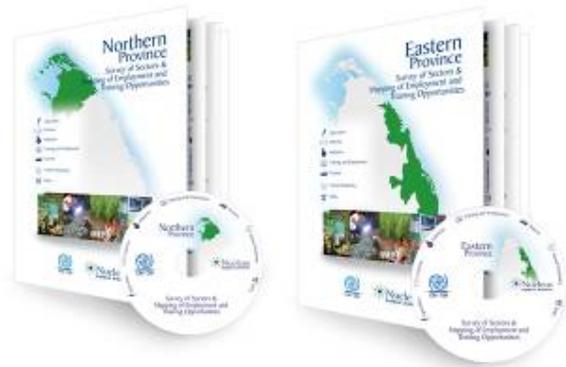
- ▶ Communication and presentation skills
- ▶ Financial management
- ▶ Monitoring and evaluation
- ▶ Leadership and team building

The participants appreciated the opportunity they were offered and expressed their gratitude to the GA, IOM and NF. Active participation during the group activities during the sessions indicated that the training program was well received. Most of the participants are of the opinion that the training provided was an unique opportunity and needed to be continued in the future. The GA has requested that more such training programs be conducted for government personnel in order to improve their service delivery.

Discovering potentials and opportunities in the North & East

The Nucleus Foundation is primarily a project execution agency, in the last 3 years we have implemented a variety of projects on behalf of a range of clients. We take pride in the fact that our clients keep coming back to us. In this context we were approached by several organisations to conduct different types of studies and research.

We recently concluded a labour market survey and employee and service provider mapping exercise in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The survey was completed in 45 days and covered sectoral analysis of six sectors in each province. The findings include



the training and employment opportunities at present as well as more detailed analysis of

sectors of importance in the regions such as agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry, tourism and industries. These findings will be used by IOM to plan their next interventions in the North and East.

We are also conducting a capacity building needs identification survey of EU partners in Sri Lanka; the findings of which will be used to develop a comprehensive training plan that will also be pilot tested by NF. On another assignment also for the EU, NF is in the process of identifying the environmental impacts of food security projects in the eastern province of Sri Lanka.

Under the GTZ FLICT supported Entrepreneur Exchange program NF is undertaking an action research component to test out the hypothesis that *when persons of different communities are exposed to the Nucleus approach where they exchange ideas and experiences and learn from each other, they develop not only business linkages but also develop relationships that cut across ethnic lines, and while increasing incomes they also lead to more economic and social integration and exchanges between the communities contributing to peace building in a sustainable manner.*

The results of the above will soon be available and NF sincerely hopes that the clients that commissioned these studies will disseminate the information among other stakeholders. We would like to reiterate that although NF is primarily a project execution agency, we strongly believe that research can be used meaningfully in planning and designing of projects, and who better to undertake such research than practitioners themselves? We would like to promote the idea that

development practitioners and researchers should compliment each other rather than working in isolation and would like to know our readers thoughts on this. So do write in with your ideas.

