



Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC

Annual REPORT

2023 - 2024



Cover Story

In 2023/24, Caritas Sri Lanka continued its mission amid economic challenges, standing with vulnerable communities through faith and solidarity. Under the theme “Empowering Journey through Resilience,” Caritas provided humanitarian support, capacity-building and advocacy, helping thousands rebuild their lives.

Inspired by Isaiah 41:10, “Fear not, for I am with you,” Caritas remained a beacon of hope. Through steadfast commitment, CSL uplifted lives, ensuring no one is left behind. As we move forward, the spirit of resilience drives our efforts, empowering communities to build a future of dignity, justice, and peace.





VISION

Realization of a Just Sri Lankan Society based on the Gospel Values of Love, Forgiveness, Peace, Unity and Equality-lived, promoted and protected irrespective of Caste, Creed and Nationality.”

MISSION

“Empowering people through animation and being in solidarity with their efforts for Integral Human Development”

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Message from the Bishop Chairman

Dear Friends and Partners in Service,

As I present the Annual Report of Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC for the period of April 2023 to March 2024, I am deeply moved by the extraordinary journey of resilience and empowerment that our organization has undertaken alongside the communities we serve. In a year marked by significant economic challenges and social transitions, the unwavering spirit of our people has been both inspiring and humbling.

Through the dedicated efforts of our Diocesan Centres and the national office, we have witnessed remarkable transformations in communities across the island. Our integrated approach to development has enabled us to address immediate needs while building sustainable pathways to recovery and growth. The collaboration between Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC and our 13 Diocesan Centres has demonstrated the power of unity in serving the most vulnerable among us.

This year’s theme, “Empowering Journey through Resilience,” reflects not just our programmatic focus but also the very essence of our mission. We have seen communities rise above adversities, supported by our interventions in livelihood development, social protection, and capacity building. Our emergency response initiatives have provided crucial support during times of crisis, while our long-term development programs have laid the foundations for sustainable community empowerment.

I am particularly grateful for the innovative approaches our teams have implemented in addressing the complex challenges faced by our beneficiaries. From promoting sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation to strengthening social cohesion and peace-building initiatives, our programs have touched multiple dimensions of community well-being. The success of our mission would not have been possible without the generous support of our partners, both local and international, who have stood by us in solidarity. Their trust in our work has enabled us to extend our reach and deepen our impact. I also acknowledge with gratitude the tireless dedication of our staff, volunteers, and community leaders who work at the grassroots level.

As we look to the future, we remain committed to our vision of building a more just and equitable society. The lessons learned and achievements of the past year strengthen our resolve to continue walking alongside the marginalized and vulnerable, ensuring that no one is left behind in our journey towards integral human development.

May God continue to bless our efforts as we strive to be instruments of His love and compassion in service to humanity.

In Christ’s Service,

✠ Justin B. Gnanapragasam
Bishop of Jaffna
Chairman, Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC

Message from the National Director

Dear Friends, Partners in service,

It is with a deep sense of gratitude and reflection that I present to you the Caritas Sri Lanka Annual Report 2023–2024. Over the past year, our nation has faced profound challenges ranging from economic hardships and social disparities to political instability and environmental crises. These difficulties have placed immense pressure on our communities, particularly the most vulnerable among us.

Despite these challenges, Caritas Sri Lanka has continued its mission to serve those in need, support struggling families, and bring communities together. With the help of our 13 diocesan centres, dedicated staff, volunteers, and generous partners, we have been able to assist thousands of people across Sri Lanka.

During the past year, we focused our efforts on sustainable livelihoods, quality education, peace-building, and humanitarian assistance. Our commitment to integral human development has been evident in the many programs we have implemented, providing marginalized communities with economic opportunities, skills training, and social reintegration support. Our peace and reconciliation initiatives have continued to heal divisions, strengthening interfaith and inter-ethnic relationships in the hope of building a more harmonious Sri Lanka.

The political and economic instability of recent times has greatly affected the people we serve. Rising inflation, unemployment, and governance concerns have left many struggling to meet their basic needs. In response, Caritas Sri Lanka has expanded its relief efforts, advocated for social justice, and amplified the voices of those who often go unheard. Through advocacy and community-driven development, we remain committed to upholding the dignity of every individual and ensuring that justice prevails.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the fraternal partnerships of our donors, international partners, the Catholic Church, local institutions, and the selfless contributions of our volunteers and staff. Your generosity, accompaniment, and commitment to our shared mission continue to inspire and strengthen us in our journey.

As we look ahead, let us renew our dedication to the principles of solidarity, compassion, and service. Let us continue working together to build a just and peaceful Sri Lanka, where every person regardless of background can live with dignity, security, and hope for a brighter future.

May God bless you all abundantly.

Fr. Luke Nelson Perera
National Director
Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT



Most Rev. Dr. Justin Gnanapragasam
Chairman



Most Rev. Dr. Maxwell Grenville Silva
Vice Chairman



Rev. Fr. Luke Nelson Perera
National Director

Annual Report 2023/24

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Diocese of Anuradhapura

Rev. Fr. Alec Roy Samantha Fernando



Diocese of Badulla

Rev. Fr. Pradeep Nishantha Fernando



Diocese of Batticaloa

Rev. Fr. A. Jesudasan



Diocese of Chilaw

Rev. Fr. Dilan Marius Fernando



Diocese of Colombo

Rev. Fr. Lawrence Ramanayake



Diocese of Galle

Rev. Fr. Lasantha Fonseka



Diocese of Jaffna

Rev. Fr. Eugene Francis



BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Diocese of Jaffna - Vanni

Rev. Fr. S. Sebajeevan



Diocese of Kandy

Rev. Fr. Desmond Perera



Diocese of Kurunegala

Rev. Fr. Thusitha Priyanga



Diocese of Mannar

Rev. Fr. G. A. Arulraj Croos



Diocese of Ratnapura

Very Rev. Fr. Damian Fernando



Diocese of Trincomalee

Very Rev. Fr. Paul Robinson



ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Dinesh Weerakkody

Mr Dinesh Weerakkody is the Chairman of Hatton National Bank PLC, Chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce Sri Lanka and Cornucopia Sri Lanka. He holds several honorary Advisory roles in the current government. He currently serves in several of private sector and MNC boards and Chairs / Member of the Audit Committee and the Remuneration Committee in several of those companies. He is a Council Member of the Employers Federation of Ceylon and the Institute of Directors of Sri Lanka. He is a member of the CIMA Asia Pacific Industry Advisory Body. Mr Weerakkody has published widely on Economics, Banking and Finance, HR, Leadership, Management, International Relations and development issues. He is the author of six books and is a regular business speaker/ commentator.



Mr. Shanaka Ranasinghe

Mr. Shanaka Ranasinghe President's Counsel, was called to the Bar in Sri Lanka in October 1986. During 1987-1995 he functioned as a member of the Attorney General's Department. He was appointed as 'Principal Magistrate' in the Solomon Islands during this period and subsequently reverted to private practice in 1995 and developed an extensive practice in the criminal field. He was appointed as a President's Counsel in 2012.



Ms. Shehara Jayawardana

Ms. Shehara Jayawardana serves as the Joint Managing Director of McLarens Group. McLarens Group is a diverse conglomerate with over 60 companies and has its core business in the shipping, marine and logistics sectors. Ms. Shehara is also the Founding President of WISTA Sri Lanka, a global network for empowering women in the maritime sector. She was also appointed as the Treasurer of the Ceylon Association of Shipping Agents. She holds a MSc. in Shipping, Trade and Finance with Honors from City University, CASS Business School, London, UK and BSc. in Economics with Honors from London School of Economics, UK."



ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Yu Hwa Li

Mr. Yu Hwa Li is the National Director, Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka and an experienced NGO leader in international development and project management and brings a wealth of knowledge. Mr. Li has served World Vision and Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC previously and serves on the Boards of LEADS and Lanka Financial Services for Under-served Settlements. He is a member of the Sri Lanka Institute of Directors (SLID).



Mr. Angelo M. Patrick

Mr. Angelo M. Patrick holds an MBA from the University of Colombo and is a Fellow Member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (UK) and a Member of the Institute of Marketing (UK). He has held Directorates and Senior Management positions over the past 45 years in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Canada. He is presently a Group Director Capital Maharaja Organisation Ltd, having previously held the positions of Managing Director NDBS Stock Brokers Ltd, Director (Carson Cumberbatch & Co Ltd, Senior Management Consultant, Bank of Ceylon. Mr. Patrick is also a Non Executive, Independent Director of Richard Pieris Exports plc.



Mr. Tony Candappa

Mr. Tony Candappa, was a banker for 35 years, 15 years at American Express Bank and 20 years at Union Bank of Colombo PLC, lastly as the Vice President - Treasury. Presently employed as a consultant at SAFE Holdings Pvt Ltd.



Mr. Victor Silva

Mr. Victor Silva is a Fellow Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, Fellow Member (retired) of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, U.K and Fellow Member (retired) of the Chartered Institute of Marketing, U.K. He was employed at the Ceylon Tobacco Company Limited and held several key management positions in Finance and Administration. He was elected as the Secretary of the Catholic National Association of Laity, the representative body for all Catholic lay faithful of Sri Lanka.



List of Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organizations
CESM	Community Empowerment & Safe Migration
CI	Caritas Internationalis
CSL	Caritas Sri Lanka
DC	Diocesan Centre
DFCC	Development Finance Corporation of Ceylon
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction & Management
ECPP	Ecological Conservation & Plantation People
GGH	Green Gold Harvesters
LLPP	Lighting the Lives of the Plantation People
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
MSME	Micro Small & Medium Enterprises
PwDs	Person with Disabilities
SAFS	Sustainable Agriculture & Food Security
SPJ	Sustainable Peace & Justice
SSEP	Stepping Stone to Safeguarding Sri Lanka's Resources
STEAM	Science Technology Engineering Arts & Maths
VLVC	Village Level Vigilant Committee

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT & SAFE MIGRATION (CESM)

The Community Empowerment and Safe Labour Migration Unit (CESM) at Caritas Sri Lanka has been implementing projects and programs in alignment with the Strategic Plan of 2022-2025.

Throughout the period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, the unit has actively engaged in a variety of initiatives aimed at enhancing education, child nutrition, community empowerment, clean water access and addressing migration-related concerns.

1. Education support projects

The CESM unit has been providing support to enhance learning opportunities for 1,202 students through financial assistance, leadership workshops, counselling sessions, and educational seminars. These efforts were supported by Caritas Korea funding project implementation in the Dioceses of Anuradhapura, Batticaloa, Chilaw, Jaffna, Galle, Kandy, Ratnapura, Mannar, Trincomalee and Vanni. Additionally, the CSL-DFCC Bank scholarship program supports 182 children in the Dioceses of Badulla, Chilaw, Colombo, Galle, Kandy, Kurunegala, Ratnapura, Vanni and the National Centre. And the educational assistance for 65 children/ youth affected by the Easter Sunday bomb in Batticaloa Diocese through funding from Zonta Club Colombo.

2. Child nutrition and well-being project

Ensuring the health and well-being of preschool and secondary school children, especially those most affected by malnutrition has also been a top priority for the CESM unit. Selected 1,700 children were provided with nutritional packages, nutrition programs and health education in the Dioceses of Anuradhapura, Badulla, Ratnapura, Trincomalee, and Vanni, funded by Caritas Korea.

3. Community empowerment and development programs

Community empowerment and development have been at the core of our efforts, with micro-level interventions focused on livelihood initiatives. Funded by the Irasil Foundation, these programs have empowered communities in the Dioceses of Galle, Kurunegala, Trincomalee, and Mannar. Our partnerships with Don Bosco in Mannar, De La Salle Brothers in Colombo, the Special Needs Institute in Negombo, and the Sisters of Immaculate in Kelaniya have further strengthened our community development initiatives.

4. Clean drinking water projects

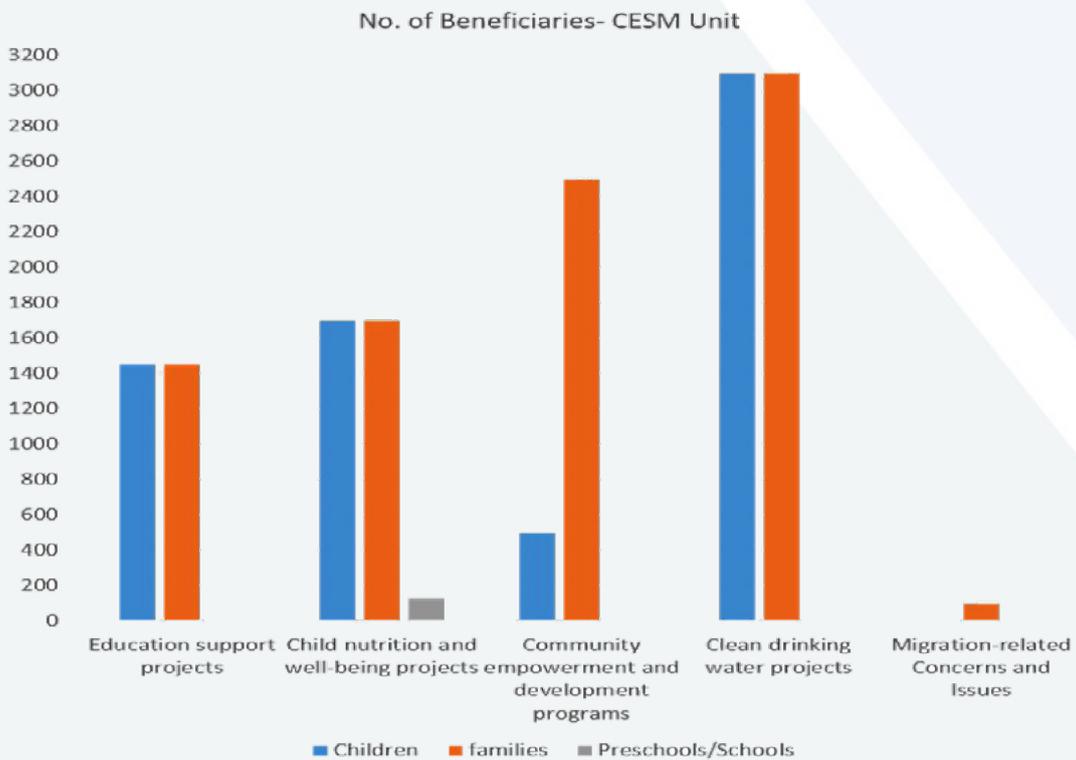
Access to clean drinking water remains a critical concern and the CESM unit has addressed this need through micro-level projects in schools and communities. Funded by Projects

Lanka, these clean drinking water projects have been successfully implemented in the Dioceses of Kurunegala ensuring that communities have access to safe and clean water.

5. Migration-related Concerns and Issues

Although there is currently no specific project dedicated to migration, the CESM unit remains vigilant and responsive to the challenges faced by migrants. We offer support and advocacy as needed, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to addressing migration-related concerns and issues.

Through these inclusive efforts, the Community Empowerment and Safe Labour Migration Unit continues to make significant steps in improving the lives of individuals and communities across Sri Lanka.



1. Supporting Primary Education for Poor and Vulnerable Children Programme

Project Name : *Supporting Primary Education for Poor and Vulnerable Children in Sri Lanka*

Funding Partner : *Caritas Korea*

Project Duration : *2020 - 2023*

Target area : *Chilaw, Galle, Kandy & Ratnapura*

Number of beneficiaries: *664*

The “Supporting Primary Education for Poor and Vulnerable Children” project is making a significant impact through the Dioceses of Chilaw, Galle, Kandy, and Ratnapura. This

is the Final year, the project goal is to enhance the educational and nutritional well-being of 664 preschool and Grade 5 scholarship children.

Key Activities

- Monthly nutritional packages are distributed to 200 preschool children in the Chilaw Diocese, ensuring they receive essential nutrients.
- Grade five scholarship students 450 across the Dioceses of Galle, Kandy, and Ratnapura benefit from similar nutritional packages, supporting their overall health and development.
- Educational Assistance Monthly allowances are provided to 14 dedicated preschool teachers in Chilaw, supporting their important role in early childhood education.
- Educational packages and materials, including past papers, are supplied to 450 Grade 5 students to support them in their preparation for scholarship exams.
- A comprehensive Teacher Training Programme develops the skills of preschool educators, ensuring high-quality teaching.
- Psychosocial counselling sessions are organized for parents and guardians in Chilaw, offering guidance and support to help them better support their children's education.
- Exposure visits for preschool children in the Chilaw Diocese provide them with educational experiences and learning opportunities outside the classroom.
- The project celebrates key events such as the Tamil Sinhala New Year and Children's Day, fostering a sense of community and cultural appreciation among the children.
- Educational seminars are conducted for Grade 5 students, providing them with valuable insights and preparation plans for their upcoming exams.



Through these various activities, the project is not only addressing immediate educational and nutritional needs but also building a supportive community around these vulnerable children. By investing in their early education and well-being, the project is clearing the way for brighter futures and empowering the next generation to reach their full potential.

2. Nutrition and well-being support for children affected by the economic crisis

The “Nutrition and Well-being Support for Children Affected by the Economic Crisis” project supported by Caritas Korea is implemented in the Dioceses of Anuradhapura, Badulla, Trincomalee, Ratnapura and Vanni aiming to address the nutritional and holistic well-being needs of vulnerable children amid an economic crisis.

Due to the economic crisis in Sri Lanka worsening the nutritional deficiencies among children, we have made efforts to address these critical issues. The main goal is to improve the living standards and overall well-being of children in these selected areas. By implementing the targeted activities, we aim to lessen the negative impacts of the economic downturn on children’s health, education and nutrition.

We provided nutritious meals to over 1,700 children in preschools and schools across these Dioceses. This initiative ensured that children received at least one balanced meal per day, which is very vital for their growth and development. We also conducted educational sessions for parents on preparing balanced diets and the importance of nutrition, highlighting the benefits of organic home gardening to support sustainable nutrition. Additionally, we distributed essential items like nutritional packages and sanitary napkins to enhance the hygiene and health standards for the children. Regular health check-ups and awareness programs on topics such as sexual education, health and social media literacy were conducted for both children and parents.

Children’s clubs were formed to build a sense of community, providing a platform for children to engage in extracurricular activities and develop social skills. We worked with local authorities, religious leaders and government officials to improve resource use, and collaboration and ensure the effective implementation of project activities. The economic crisis presented major challenges, such as rising prices and disruptions in agricultural production. Despite these difficulties, Caritas adapted by focusing on the most vulnerable children and families, ensuring that support was directed to those in greatest need.

The project directly benefited over 1,700 children and indirectly impacted more than 4,500 family members. By addressing immediate nutritional needs and encouraging long-term health practices, we laid a foundation for sustainable improvements in children’s well-being. Our holistic approach under this project through nutrition, health, education, and community engagement, has strengthened resilience among the affected communities.



3. Micro Projects- funded by Irasil Foundation

<i>Project type</i>	<i>Implementation partners during this period</i>
<i>Livelihood</i>	<i>Diocese of Galle, Diocese of Kurunegala (03 projects), Diocese of Trincomalee, Diocese of Mannar, Don Bosco Mannar (03 projects) & Nazareth Convent in Madulkelle</i>
<i>Water</i>	<i>Diocese of Batticaloa, Diocese of Galle & CODESEP</i>
<i>Financial assistance</i>	<i>Special Needs Institute in Negombo, Colombo & renovate the hostel facilities of Lasallian Community Education Services</i>
<i>Construction</i>	<i>Built 02 classrooms at St. Matthew's School in Deniyaya</i>

Caritas Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the Irasil Foundation, has continued to expand its micro-project initiatives since their launch in July 2020. Over the years, we have successfully implemented more than 60 micro projects focused on providing clean drinking water, agro wells, livelihood opportunities and financial assistance, benefiting families across Dioceses. The above table details the projects implemented during the concerned reporting period.

These micro-projects highlight our commitment to encouraging local contributions and efforts. While the Irasil Foundation provides essential funding for project activities, Caritas Sri Lanka along with the Diocesan Centers and partner organizations, covers additional costs. These include baseline surveys, project orientations, capacity-building programs, and monitoring and evaluation. Local contributions also include staff and administrative expenses. There is also a beneficiary contribution to building a sense of ownership and active participation in the projects. These collaborative approaches ensure both effective implementation and community engagement.



4. CSL – DFCC Scholarship programme

Project Name : CSL – DFCC Scholarship Programme
Project Duration : 2020 - 2025
Target area : Chilaw, Galle, Kurunegala, Badulla, Vanni, Ratnapura, Kandy & Colombo
Number of beneficiaries: 198

Diocese	No. of students
Chilaw	33
Galle	28
Kurunegala	40
Badulla	22
Vanni	12
SEDEC - National Centre	27
Plantation Dioceses (Diocese of Colombo, Galle, Kandy, Kurunegala & Ratnapura)	36
Total	198

Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC with the DFCC bank in Sri Lanka started this scholarship programme from October 2020 till September 2025. This scholarship programme is being implemented in Chilaw, Galle a, Kurunegala, Vanni and Badulla Dioceses.

This project provides a monthly scholarship to children who are talented and excellent in their higher studies from grade 10th above. Children from grades 10 – 11 are getting Rs.4000 as a monthly scholarship allowance while A/L, HND, and University Students get Rs.5000. So far 195 children will benefit from this project.

5. Educational Assistance to economic crisis and war-affected poor children in Northern, Eastern and North Central provinces of Sri Lanka

Project Name : Education Assistance for War-Affected Families and Poor and Marginalized Families in Northern, Eastern and North Central province in Sri Lanka
Funding Partner : Caritas Korea
Project Duration : 2022 - 2025
Target area : Anuradhapura, Batticaloa, Jaffna, Mannar, Trincomalee and Vanni
Number of beneficiaries: 450

The Education Assistance for War-Affected and Marginalized Families Project Transforming Lives Through Education a remarkable advantage at raising educational

opportunities for vulnerable people, the “Education Assistance for War-Affected Families and Poor and Marginalized Families” project is making steps across several dioceses in Sri Lanka. Now in its second phase first year, this project supports 450 children across the Dioceses of Anuradhapura, Batticaloa, Jaffna, Mannar, Trincomalee, and Vanni, with each diocese benefiting 75 students.

Main Activities

- Each of the 450 students receives a monthly educational support scholarship of Rs. 4,000. This financial assistance helps relieve the burden on families and ensures that children can access necessary educational resources and opportunities.
- Revision classes for grade 05 and OL students in six dioceses. These two exams are major milestones in children’s education, as grade 05 students can find a better school for education by successfully passing through the exam and grade 11 students can move ahead with higher education.
- Recognizing the importance of holistic development, the project has introduced a Leadership and Communication Skill Development Program. This program provides students with energetic skills that extend beyond academics, encouragement confidence and effective communication.
- Conducted Emotional literacy programme in all 6 Diocese. In this programme, children’s skills for the management of their emotions and behaviour will be improved through counselling and systematic guidance for children who need support as identified by the parents and the wider group.

By supporting children from war-affected and marginalized families, the project not only contributes to their educational journeys but also helps in the broader goal of community development. It provides these students with the tools they need to succeed and build a brighter future for themselves and their communities. This project marks a significant step in addressing the educational needs of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, providing them with the support they need to overcome barriers and achieve their full potential. As the first-year progresses, the initiative is setting a strong foundation for continued growth and impact in the years to come.



6. Water Projects- funded by Projects Lanka LLC

Caritas Sri Lanka in partnership with Projects Lanka LLC has implemented projects on clean drinking water access in the Diocese of Kurunegala. During the past year, Caritas has successfully provided reverse-osmosis filtration systems and water storage tanks to 10 schools with an additional 16 schools benefiting from similar support over the past years.

In addition, parent-school societies were formed to ensure the sustainability and effective maintenance of these water facilities. Students and community members were educated on the proper cleaning and testing of the filtration units.

This initiative has not only provided essential clean drinking water but has also fostered a sense of community ownership and responsibility ensuring the long-term benefit and sustainability of the water facilities.

The 10 schools supported during this reporting period include:

1. Bamunugama Primary School, Nagollagama
2. Hithokadawala Primary School, Hithokadawala
3. Maduragoda Kumara Primary School, Maduragoda
4. Hiripitiya Primary School, Hiripitiya
5. Herathgama Primary School, Herathgama
6. Embogama Primary School, Embogama
7. Mahakeliya Primary School, Mahakeliya
8. Ganthiriyawa Primary School, Ganthiriyawa
9. Siyambalangamuwa Primary School, Siyambalangamuwa
10. Hinakgala Sobitha Primary School, Hinakgala

7. Educational Assistance for Children / Youth affected by the Easter Sunday Bomb in Batticaloa Diocese

<i>Project Name :</i>	<i>Education Support for Marginalized Children in Batticaloa Diocese</i>
<i>Funding Partner :</i>	<i>Zonta Club one of Colombo</i>
<i>Project Duration :</i>	<i>One year</i>
<i>Target area :</i>	<i>Batticaloa</i>
<i>Number of beneficiaries:</i>	<i>32</i>

Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC has initiated an education support program targeted at marginalized children affected by the Easter bombing in Batticaloa Zion Church.

Funding from the Zonta Club one of Colombo, the program has significantly great help for the lives of many students. This is the first year in the second phase, last 2 years this programme provided educational assistance to 65 students, and this year, it continues to make a difference by supporting 32 students from low-income families in the Batticaloa and Ampara districts.

Each selected student receives monthly education assistance of Rs. 4000, which helps cover essential educational expenses, ensuring that financial difficulties do not delay their academic goal. This program not only helps with their immediate educational needs but also brings up a sense of stability and hope for a brighter future.

Key Challenges & Responses

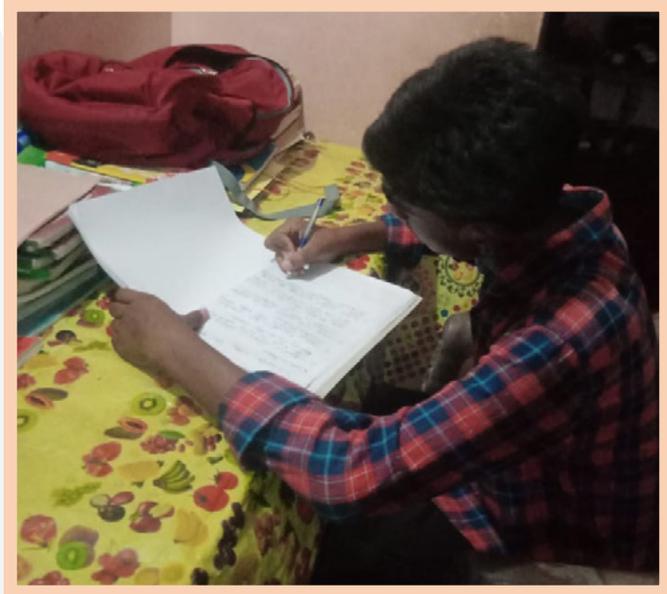
In implementing projects on education, child nutrition, community empowerment, clean water access and migration support, we faced several challenges.

1. One of the pressing issues was the limited awareness of safe migration practices. Because, the potential migrants in the communities lacking accurate information about migration processes leaves them vulnerable to exploitation. Therefore, in response to addressing this cause, we are working in collaboration with the Catholic National Commission for Migration forming migrant societies across the Diocesan Centers, organizing awareness sessions and workshops among the potential and returnee migrants on safe migration practices, migrant rights and available resources.
2. Some communities initially expressed their resistance to empowerment initiatives, as they expected dry ration packs or tangible items to receive, with the prices hike of goods and often due to cultural differences and lack of understanding of program objectives. Therefore, to address this, we engaged more local leaders in the communities and conducted orientations and discussions in the communities to understand the program objectives fostering more trust and giving ownership to the community of the empowerment programs at the initial step itself.
3. Malnutrition in children stands as an ongoing issue impacting health and educational outcomes, so through projects we raised awareness sessions on the importance of nutrition for parents/ guardians and children. In collaboration with government and other stakeholders, specially healthcare providers. Also, schools and preschools based feeding programs and household kitchen gardens were introduced to improve access to nutritious food, helping to mitigate child malnutrition effectively.
4. School dropout rates have reduced in a considerable manner. Our education assistance programs, leadership programs, capacity building workshops and school supply distributions through programs and projects have been a supportive factor to it.

SUCCESS STORY

This aid has strengthened Mast. Vivekananthan's educational pursuits altered the trajectory of his life.

Mast. Vivekananthan Criton Ignatius is a student at T/T/St. Joseph's College (National School). He resides with his mother and brothers at No. 12/9, Poompuhar Road, Palaiyootru, Trincomalee. His father, Mr Ignatius Vivekananthan, has passed away, leaving his mother, Mrs Vanmathy Vivekananthan, to support the family through domestic work. The family has encountered numerous problems and difficulties.



Mrs. Vivekananthan's income is used to cover their daily needs, including food, tuition fees, and transportation. Faced with financial difficulties that made it challenging to meet school and tuition expenses, Mrs Vivekananthan sought assistance from EHED Caritas. The organization considered their family situation and educational needs and provided support by enrolling Mas. Vivekananthan in a project aimed at improving the educational opportunities for students affected by the Civil War.

This project, funded by Caritas Korea, offers him Rs. 5,000.00 per month.

EHED Caritas organized meetings and seminars, and their staff visited the family's home to understand their conditions and needs better. With the help of the organization, there has been a significant improvement in the academic performance of students like Mas. Vivekananthan. The support has proven invaluable, helping cover expenses for educational materials and transportation each month.

This assistance has not only impacted his education but has also benefited



many other students. During the economic crisis, the financial support provided by the organization enabled continued education, including online classes through Zoom. This aid has strengthened Mas. Vivekananthan's educational pursuits altered the trajectory of his life. It has brought hope and opportunity to him and other students who struggle to access education.

Mas. Vivekananthan expresses his heartfelt gratitude to Caritas Korea for their generous contributions. The support has demonstrated that students are deeply motivated and interested in their education when they receive such assistance.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION & MANAGEMENT (DRRM)

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management unit is dedicated to implementing programs in alignment with the vision and mission of Caritas Sri Lanka. Our primary focus is to address the unique needs of communities affected by natural and man-made disasters, particularly in regions of Sri Lanka where the impact is notably significant. We aim to identify, assess, and pro-actively reduce disaster risks through a systematic and collaborative approach with local diocesan networks. Our efforts are dedicated to mitigating the adverse impacts of hazards through comprehensive prevention, mitigation, and preparedness activities and measures. We are also looking forward to developing an anticipatory action plan in collaboration with like-minded organizations as a part of risk management.

While the local communities who faced severe hardship for nearly 30 years are now gradually rebuilding their lives and livelihoods to the best of their ability, the Caritas Sri Lanka DRM unit joins hands with these people to face challenges, sustainably rebuild their lives and live with dignity with proper protection for their families.

Today the country is facing a complex political, economic, and social situation, characterized by governance issues, economic challenges, and ethnic tensions. This crisis has led to widespread protests, government instability, and calls for political reform. Caritas ensures adequate supportive measures to the victims of the economic crisis in parallel with effective programs of provisions of dry rations and educational materials, medical assistance, livelihood support, skill training etc. and streamlining the families to the society.

In response to the impact of climate change, including events such as flash floods, earthquakes, heavy rainfall, cyclones and landslides, we are actively assisting affected individuals through our Diocesan centres and District-level disaster management centres. However, with its limited capacity, and resources and especially due to the efforts of Diocesan field staff, the DRRM unit implements the following projects for the betterment of the community.

1. Livelihood Support and Housing Construction for the War Affected Families in the Northern, North Centre and Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. (Funded by Misereor)
2. Mitigation of Thalassemia Disease- Caring for the Neglected and the Helpless' (Funded by Misereor)
3. Ensuring the Rights of Children with Disabilities and their Parents/Caregivers in Mannar and Kilinochchi Districts. (Funded by Kindermissionswerk)
4. Facilitating Green Gold Harvesters to Reap Maximum Benefits for Plantation Communities (Funded by Misereor)
5. Enhancing Resilience of the Victims of Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka (Funded by Caritas Internationalis & Italian Bishop Conference).
6. Enhancing Resilience of the Victims of Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka (Funded by MISEREOR).

7. Provision of Medical Assistance to patients suffering from severe medical conditions and financial trauma (Funded by Caritas Seoul).
8. Mobilizing vulnerable communities to be resilient to disasters in 13 disaster-prone districts in Sri Lanka (Funded by Caritas Asia).
9. Enhancing Food Security and Livelihoods for Crisis – Affected Families in three provinces in Sri Lanka (Funded by Caritas Australia)
10. Micro Projects (Funded by Caritas Italiana)

1. Livelihood and Housing Support for the War Affected Families in the Northern, North Centre and Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. (Funded by Misereor)

In the aftermath of the war, many people in the Northern and Eastern Provinces are struggling economically and socially. The three decades of civil war has still an impact on the lives of people, during which Caritas Sri Lanka contributes to ensuring the positive life perspectives of the internally displaced individuals through providing livelihood support to the affected families to uplift their economic situation and also to repair and rebuild 04 half-built houses in 05 of the 06 dioceses we support through the project.

Livelihood support is provided on several avenues such as farming. Poultry farming, cattle rearing, fishing etc. This has contributed significantly to improving the income levels of the households in the war-affected families. A total of 25 houses were repaired in the 04 Dioceses Batticaloa/ Jaffna/ Mannar/ Trincomalee/ Vanni). Before providing livelihood support the families are trained and capacitated on improving leadership skills, developing business plans, maintaining documents and financial planning for households. Through the project CSL has ensured that at least 75% of the beneficiaries have increased their income levels by 20% and at least 50% of the families are in a place to save for possible future emergencies.

2. Mitigation of Thalassemia Disease - Caring for the Neglected and the Helpless' (Funded by Misereor)

Thalassemia is a growing health crisis in regions like Batticaloa, Chilaw, Badulla, and Kurunegala, posing significant challenges for local healthcare services. The government demonstrates less attention to the mitigation of the disease and the lack of effective education at the grassroots level has hindered progress.

To address this critical issue, CSL carries out an initiative to support Thalassemia patients and their families. By collaborating with health authorities and local communities, Caritas Sri Lanka is implementing a comprehensive strategy to raise awareness and empower individuals to manage and prevent Thalassemia more effectively. Various awareness programs, mobile clinics to screen blood samples, and blood donation campaigns organized in partnership with hospitals have brought about significant strides in educating the public. One key focus is promoting blood screening before marriage to prevent the transmission of Thalassemia.

This project embodies a concerted effort to improve health outcomes and enhance the quality of life for those affected by Thalassemia, ensuring that they receive the care and attention they need. During a time when the country lacks the essential medication needed for the survival of these patients, CSL together with the diocesan centres works in providing the vital medication, equipment and maintenance devices needed for the infusion pumps.

Through this initiative for the past year, the knowledge of the Thalassemia disease among schoolchildren and youth has increased by 82%. Totally 654 schoolchildren and youth have increased their knowledge about the thalassemia disease. 640 young people have undergone blood screening in the 02nd year of the project out of the 800 expected count. Totally 12 blood donation campaigns were conducted throughout the second year. 20 families of thalassemia patients were allocated funds to establish income-generating livelihood ventures, a measure that has been executed successfully. Nearly, 120 patients are provided with medical devices across the 04 dioceses.

3. Ensuring the Rights of Children with Disabilities and their Parents/Caregivers in Mannar and Kilinochchi Districts. (Funded by Kindermissionswerk)

The regions of the North and East have been grappling with significant challenges from the aftermath of war, including disabilities and disruptions in public services. Despite the government’s attempts to implement various strategies to tackle these issues, these efforts have fallen short of reaching families with Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and Children with Disabilities (CwDs) as intended. Although the government has formally outlined certain services and provisions for Persons with Disabilities and Children with Disabilities through legislation, only a limited number of individuals in these groups have been able to access and avail themselves of these resources. Some government departments have cited insufficient funding as the primary reason for their hesitation in providing such services.

With the support of Kindermissionwerk, a key partner of Caritas Sri Lanka, this project was initiated to address the essential needs of children with disabilities (CwDs) and persons with disabilities (PwDs) in the Kilinochchi and Mannar districts.

The total number of those who benefited from this project.

Caritas HUDEC Vanni- Kilinochchi

		Planned for three years		Reached as of 31st December 2023	
		CwDs	PwDs	CwDs	PwDs
1	Direct beneficiaries	120	200	188	236
2	Indirect Beneficiaries	475	750	752	940

Caritas Valvuthyam- Mannar

		Planned for three years		Reached as of 31st December 2023	
		CwDs	PwDs	CwDs	PwDs
1	Direct beneficiaries	75	250	91	305
2	Indirect Beneficiaries	100	650	641	

The difficulties faced by the Children with Disabilities (CWD) and Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in their communities are diverse. These challenges are around the aspects of loss of independence, transportation difficulties, accessibility issues, lack of education, unemployment, and communication and social relationship issues.

4. Facilitating Green Gold Harvesters to Reap Maximum Benefits for Plantation Communities (Funded by Misereor)

Continual deprivation of political, socio-economic, and cultural rights plagues the plantation community, with grievances persisting to this day in various forms. In response to these challenges, the GGH Programme emerges as a community-centric initiative spanning four plantation dioceses. Its primary aim is to catalyze a favourable transformation in socio-economic conditions, ultimately improving the well-being and livelihoods of plantation families. Beyond directly benefiting the vulnerable recipients of the project, achieving these goals has also played a pivotal role in uplifting the broader community’s socio-economic standing, transitioning it from a state of recovery to one of development.

The estate sector faces severe challenges due to recent political and social changes, worsened by an economic crisis. Essential needs are scarce, causing hardship for the plantation community. Many returning workers find themselves unemployed due to downsizing. Household expenses are soaring, while wages remain stagnant. Access to healthcare and education is difficult, with rising costs. However, CSL promotes awareness and responsibility within the community. Despite barriers, there is a growing recognition of the importance of education, with more students opting for higher education.

The number of direct and Indirect beneficiaries were as follows;

No	Diocesan Centre	Direct Beneficiaries	Indirect Beneficiaries
1	Badulla	443	857
2	Ratnapura	208	832
3	Galle	203	842
4	Kandy	260	700

No	Diocesan Centre	Vigilant Group	CBOs	Other Groups
1	Badulla	12	3	13
2	Galle	4	1	2
3	Kandy	11	5	5
4	Ratnapura	4	2	4

The collaboration between the four Diocesan centres extends to various estates within their project areas, each comprising several divisions. To streamline project implementation and ensure future sustainability, the project outline dictates the formation of Community-Based Organizations (CBO) groups, Vigilant Groups, Children groups, and Youth groups within each division. These groups serve as vital pillars for community engagement, empowerment, and effective implementation of initiatives aimed at uplifting livelihoods and fostering social development. By establishing these structured groups, the project aims to gain local leadership, promote community ownership, and facilitate the smooth execution of interventions tailored to the unique needs of each division within the estates.

5. Enhancing Resilience of the Victims of Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka (Funded by Caritas Internationalis & Italian Bishop Conference).

Sri Lanka has faced significant challenges recently, beginning with the tragic events of 2019 when the Easter Sunday bombings resulted in substantial loss of life and instilled fear within the populace, subsequently impacting economic activity. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these difficulties, as continued lock-down measures disrupted business operations and led to widespread job losses.

The reasons for the economic loss in Sri Lanka happened due to the cessation of tourist inflows due to pandemic-related travel restrictions, coupled with a decline in remittances from Sri Lankan expatriates. Before the pandemic, systemic issues such as excessive borrowing and fiscal mismanagement, alongside concerns regarding governmental transparency and corruption, had already eroded public trust and confidence in leadership.

The country faced serious financial problems, for example, long lines for food and fuel, power cuts, and less farming due to a lack of fertilizers. Prices for food and medicine are going up fast, making it hard for families, especially those working in stores and factories, to afford what they need. Many employees lost their jobs due to the economic and political crisis.

The journey towards economic recovery and social resilience demands concerted efforts and pragmatic strategies to rebuild livelihoods, fortify institutions, and foster inclusive growth. Despite the formidable obstacles, the collective resolve to overcome adversity underscores a shared commitment to smoothing a brighter future for all Sri Lankans.

In this project, 40,808 families were provided with dry ration packs, 552 individuals participated in Counselling programs, 27,514 children were supported with educational facilities and 4709 individuals with chronic diseases were supported with medical treatments. 57,530 direct beneficiaries were supported by this project. A key achievement of this project is finally Caritas Internationalis submitted our final narrative report with the relevant annexes to the Baobab System.

6. Enhancing Resilience of the Victims of Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka (Funded by MISEREOR).

Sri Lanka faced a serious economic crisis due to a combination of factors and is still trying to overcome it. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit hard, especially impacting tourism and remittances from abroad. However, the problems go deeper than that. The country is dealing with high debts, and the corruption of the government and the institutions. Because foreign reserves are low, lack of goods and households, and the electricity issues. The rise in household prices, stemming from import restrictions, posed significant challenges for people as they struggled to cope with the increased cost of living.

In this challenging landscape, Caritas Sri Lanka steps in, focusing on advocating policy reforms, implementing social interventions, and embedding resilience-building measures into development initiatives. Operating through its Diocesan Centres, Caritas aims to bolster food security and resilience, alongside conducting nationwide “Silent Solidarity Campaigns” to rally resources and express solidarity with affected communities facing economic hardships and vulnerabilities.

Misereor and Caritas Sri Lanka’s collaboration has sparked positive change amid economic and political turmoil, empowering vulnerable families. Through counselling, they address the root causes of breakdowns, promoting communication and trust. Livelihood training fosters self-sufficiency while education and medical support uplift communities. Challenges persist, but lessons learned drive sustainable solutions. Overall, the project has transparently aided those in need, emphasizing partnership and community involvement for lasting impact.

Overall, 15,706 beneficiaries assisted by distributing dry rations, and 10,123 supported children for their education. 7847 People who got Psycho-Social consultancies can participate in social, economic and educational activities.

7. Provision of Medical Assistance to patients suffering from severe medical conditions and financial trauma (Funded by Caritas Seoul).

Provision of Medical Assistance project, aimed at aiding individuals afflicted with chronic medical conditions and financial hardships across multiple regions in Sri Lanka. Over three months starting from April 24th, 2023, the initiative, operating under the Health & Medical Care sector, worked tirelessly to mitigate the risk of fatalities among those

lacking access to hospitals and financial means to procure essential medications. Through strategic objectives, including reducing the financial burden of medication acquisition and conducting comprehensive needs assessments, the project made significant strides. Caritas Sri Lanka, in collaboration with local medical authorities, clinics, and diocesan staff, played a pivotal role in facilitating access to crucial medications and providing financial assistance where needed. The outcomes of these efforts were profound, with an estimated 650 beneficiaries experiencing an enhanced quality of life, symptom alleviation, and improved physical functioning. This project identified and assisted 729 patients, surpassing the original target by an impressive 112%. This achievement underscores the project's effectiveness in addressing the urgent medical needs of communities, as evidenced by rigorous grassroots-level needs assessments and the successful implementation of support interventions. To some beneficiaries, we provided Case grants and medicines according to their needs.

The project "Provision of Medical Assistance" helped to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable populations and prevent unnecessary fatalities in Sri Lanka at least.

8. Mobilizing vulnerable communities to be resilient to disasters in 13 disaster-prone districts in Sri Lanka (Funded by Caritas Asia).

Sri Lanka faces a complex humanitarian context shaped by a variety of natural and man-made disasters, from floods and cyclones to civil conflicts and social unrest. While Caritas Sri Lanka has historically responded to major disasters like the 2004 tsunami, the landscape has shifted toward recurring minor events such as localized floods and droughts. These 'smaller' crises, though less attention-grabbing, have a significant impact on communities, necessitating a shift in focus towards capacity building to enhance resilience and preparedness at the local level.

Despite Caritas Sri Lanka's commendable history in disaster response, addressing the current challenges requires bridging knowledge and skill gaps, empowering communities, and adapting strategies to the changing disaster landscape. The organization must move beyond reactive responses to major disasters and prioritize proactive measures tailored to the ongoing minor events. This entails not only equipping communities with the tools and knowledge to withstand recurring disasters but also fostering sustainability and embracing innovative approaches to disaster risk reduction. Caritas Sri Lanka in hand with Caritas Asia collaborating to address these issues and to give knowledge and awareness to a target group. The project's target beneficiaries encompass a diverse range of individuals, starting with the direct focus on 30 Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL) officers, which includes 2 staff members from each of the 13 dioceses, along with 4 from the national centre. This comprehensive strategy aims to create a significant impact by capacitating CSL officers and fostering community engagement in disaster resilience across the targeted areas.

In the last months, the DRRM Unit has organized two Disaster preparedness training programmes on thematic areas in Sinhala medium and Tamil medium. Altogether 46 participants participated in both training programmes.

9. Enhancing Food Security and Livelihoods for Crisis – Affected Families in three provinces in Sri Lanka (Funded by Caritas Australia)

To address the incidents led by the post-COVID-19 era, the economic crisis which began in 2022, the staggering inflation rate and promoting sustainable recovery Caritas Australia funded the aforementioned project for one year.

The project adapts the concept of local supply to meet local demand and focuses on three main aspects: Households facing specific vulnerabilities are provided with temporary immediate food assistance enabling their active involvement in sustainable food security initiatives, Provision of immediate relief supplies to support the most disadvantaged households, the target population will have undergone the psychosocial interventions, have enhanced coping skills, deepened understanding and a strengthened sense of connection.

Ratnapura, Chilaw and Trincomalee dioceses were chosen as regions with heightened vulnerability. In this initiative, each diocesan centre actively supported the livelihoods of their beneficiaries by engaging in activities such as home gardening, fishing, poultry farming, sewing, etc.

Furthermore, support was provided for developing the sustainability of aquaculture activities through inland fishery societies and supporting horticulture at the village level. These endeavours aimed to not only provide immediate assistance but also to foster new opportunities for the beneficiaries. As a sustainable outcome, each Diocesan centre was tasked with establishing a market hub to showcase and sell the products generated through these efforts.

No	Diocesan Centre	Direct Beneficiaries	Indirect Beneficiaries
1	Chilaw	125	312
2	Ratnapura	125	446
3	Trincomalee	125	375

10. Micro Projects (Funded by Caritas Italiana)

Caritas Italiana has overseen the execution of four micro-projects in Kandy, Batticaloa, Ratnapura, and Mannar by joining hands with Caritas Sri Lanka.

- ***Construction Of A Preschool Building For Poor Estate Worker’s Children at Aningkanda estate, Deniyaya - Galle Diocese.***

The preschool classes previously held in a deteriorating temporary shelter at Aningkanda church premises prompted a collaborative effort involving the community, parents, and local leaders to secure funds for a new building. With generous contributions from

Caritas Italiana, the Bishop of Galle, and local donors, construction commenced despite weather-related delays. Completion of the roof, walls, doors, and windows was achieved by February 10, 2024, leading to the formal inauguration of the building on February 12, 2024, attended by the Bishop of Galle and other dignitaries.

Following the opening, preschool and Sunday school classes began immediately in the improved environment, expected to positively impact student motivation and learning outcomes. The new preschool building has brought real benefits to both students and the local community. This has boosted student motivation and engagement with parents and with the teachers. This project's success shows the community's dedication to a quality education and also it shows the sustainable development and educational progress in Aningankanda. This assisted in providing new opportunities and a brighter education for the future generation.



- ***Improving The Health And Sanitation Facilities Of 14 Families At Rattota, Matale Construction Of Toilets. - Kandy Diocese.***

The project launched in Rattota Parish has brought significant benefits to fourteen families, successfully addressing their dire living conditions. Monitoring visits were successfully done on time by the diocesan management. With the dedicated efforts of our organization's director, the project maximized resources and utilized both direct and indirect labour from the beneficiaries.

Tasks such as digging toilet pits and transporting construction materials were carried out by the beneficiaries themselves, with additional support provided to the weak and elderly members. Crucially, the involvement of Parish youth played a pivotal role in ensuring the project's successful completion.

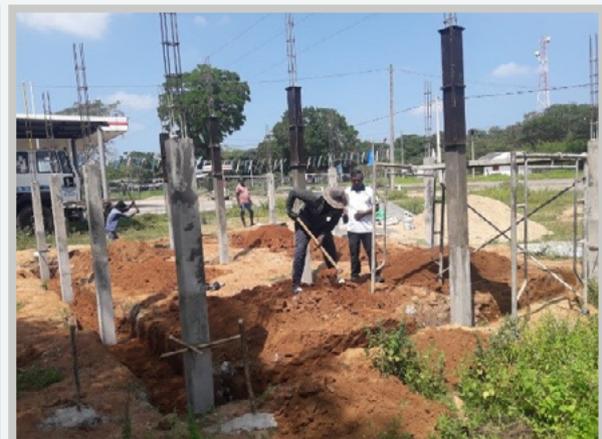
The toilet construction project for 14 families has greatly improved sanitation, dignity, and health in the community. It provides safe waste disposal, restores dignity and privacy, and boosts education by reducing school absences. It benefits the entire community by promoting hygiene, health, and economic empowerment. Overall, it's a significant step towards sustainable development and better quality of life for all involved.



- ***Construction Of A Public Market Building At Madhu Road Village For Resettled Small Sellers - Mannar Diocese.***

The orientation program held at Thekkam Multi-purpose Building on November 12, 2023, led by the Director of Caritas-Valvuthayam, engaged beneficiaries and community stakeholders, addressing local challenges and proposing an open market for small-scale producers. Construction approvals were secured from Nanattan Pradesa Sabha and Madhu Divisional Secretariat, with technical officers' contributions. Skilled manpower was recruited with support from the Parish Priest of Madhu Road, ensuring local employment. Materials were sourced from authorized dealers with discounts obtained through bulk purchasing, while sand and blocks were procured locally. The market building, inaugurated on January 6th, 2024, symbolizes community collaboration, facilitating commerce, social engagement, and cultural exchange. Vigilant monitoring ensured exemplary craftsmanship.

The open market has empowered locals economically, diversified income streams, created jobs, facilitated knowledge exchange, enhanced access to goods and services, promoted community cohesion, spurred infrastructure development, and fostered environmental sustainability through conscientious consumption practices.



- *Renovation Of A Community Hall for the welfare and development of the conflict-affected and resettled community at Mavilankanthurai, Batticaloa Diocese.*

In Fatimapuram, Mavilanguthurai village, Batticaloa Diocese, the necessity for a Multi-purpose Hall arose from civil riots in 1983, leading to displacement and resettlement. Communal clashes were carried out until 1994, promoting resilience and understanding among the Tamils and Muslims. Caritas EHED Batticaloa initiated the project, rallying stakeholders for a new hall due to irreparable damage. Financial constraints caused both communities to pool resources, with religious leaders pledging support. With approval and assistance from Caritas Italiana through National SEDEC, construction began in 2023. Progress, monitored closely, highlights the community's active involvement, skilled local labour, and efficient management of resources. The hall, pivotal for gatherings and events, particularly benefits women, youth, and elders, incorporating collective progress and inclusivity, promoting social cohesion and addressing communal concerns effectively.



Key Challenges and Response

The implementation of project activities within the DRRM Unit faced significant obstacles, largely due to severe economic instability in Sri Lanka. Sky-rocketing inflation, currency devaluation, and rising costs of living strained financial planning and execution, forcing frequent budget adjustments and a re-prioritization of activities. Local dioceses responsible for on-the-ground activities were particularly impacted, as currency fluctuations and rising costs limited their purchasing power and project reach. Additionally, the economic crisis increased the demand for intervention among struggling communities, intensifying the need for expanded outreach despite constrained financial resources.

Adverse weather conditions, including heavy rains and flooding, presented further logistical challenges. Unpredictable weather disrupted field activities and delayed critical assessments, particularly in areas where infrastructure was damaged or inaccessible. Limited mobility also affected national staff, reducing the frequency of monitoring visits and delaying evaluations necessary for project adjustments.

Another critical gap highlighted during this period was the absence of a comprehensive emergency response plan for Caritas Sri Lanka. Without systematic protocols, the organization faced delays in coordinating effective responses during emergencies,

impacting timely support for vulnerable communities. Additionally, high turnover among field staff disrupted program continuity and strained diocesan teams, affecting relationships with communities and reducing project effectiveness.

Response Measures

To address these challenges, the DRRM Unit and dioceses took adaptive measures, including:

1. **Resource Optimization:** Resources were allocated sparingly to ensure essential needs were met, prioritizing critical activities within budget constraints.
2. **Scaled-Down Activities:** Activities were reduced to align with the limited budget, focusing on core objectives even if full implementation wasn't feasible.
3. **Increased Local Partnerships:** Partnerships with local suppliers and community organizations helped access additional resources, cut costs, and pool expertise.

For climate-related issues, teams adjusted by coordinating field visits during more stable weather and collaborating with local leaders to gather updates on field conditions. To address the lack of an emergency response protocol, Caritas Sri Lanka began developing a comprehensive plan that includes regular staff training and collaboration with local government agencies for more aligned crisis responses. Lastly, efforts to reduce staff turnover included enhancing diocesan-level on-boarding and training to retain expertise and maintain project continuity.





SUCCESS STORY

They have brought hope into our lives and have shown Lisan that he can overcome the challenges he faces.

My son, Lisan, was born in Mannar, a beautiful place that holds so many memories for our family. He is my third child, and I remember the joy that filled our home when he arrived. Lisan was healthy at birth, and I was filled with hope and dreams for his future.

However, everything changed after his second vaccination. That day, Lisan cried incessantly, and I could feel a knot of worry forming in my stomach. By the end of the day, he had experienced convulsions three times. I felt helpless as I held him, wishing I could take away his pain. As the months passed, it became increasingly clear that something was wrong. Lisan showed minimal activity; he struggled to move, couldn't maintain his posture, and was unable to hold his head up. His left hand and leg seemed unresponsive, and my heart ached for my little boy.

We took Lisan to a special hospital in Colombo, where doctors informed us that there was a decline in his brain development. They reassured us that as he grew, he might improve, but I couldn't shake the fear that lingered in my heart. I wanted so desperately for him to thrive and experience life like other children.

Then came his sixth year, a turning point in our journey. Lisan began to move his hands and legs, crawling for the first time. He could utter a few words, and I felt a flicker of hope reignite within me. With support, he learned to stand, but walking remained a challenge. He was still dependent on us for everything, and the road ahead seemed long and uncertain.



I am profoundly grateful to the teachers at the school and everyone at Caritas Valvuthayam for their unwavering support. They have brought hope into our lives and have shown Lisan that he can overcome the challenges he faces. As a mother, I will always fight for my son's happiness and well-being, and I am so proud of the progress he has made. Together, we continue this journey, hand in hand, with love and hope guiding us forward.

SUSTAINABLE PEACE & JUSTICE (SPJ)

The Sustainable Peace and Justice (SP&J) Unit aims to build peaceful, inclusive communities by engaging key groups: youth, students, village-level communities, government officials, and religious leaders. Implementing across 13 dioceses, the SP&J Unit promotes understanding among diverse ethnic and religious communities. Currently, two major projects support this mission: one funded by Misereor (Germany) across all dioceses, and another by CAFOD (England) in two dioceses. Both projects promote peace, justice, and respect for cultural diversity, addressing underlying social conflicts and supporting sustainable development.

1. “Helping People Move Towards Reconciliation” Project

The CAFOD project is mostly carried out in the dioceses of Batticaloa and Chilaw, where we promote reconciliation among various ethnic and religious communities. Several initiatives were implemented to encourage harmony between the various communities. We have also focused on agroecological initiatives to address the current economic crisis. Agroecology, in our view, is a sustainable agricultural method that balances human activity with natural ecosystems and is essential to promoting peace by minimizing conflicts over land and natural resources. It fosters social cohesiveness and community empowerment by encouraging cooperation and equity among the beneficiaries. Additionally, this has created new economic opportunities and fostered self-reliance, helping stabilize communities affected by violence and poverty. At the national level, various events were conducted that nourished both youth and community members.

Ethnodrama was another very creative method used to bring out the current grievances the women faced due to the current economic crisis. It was a theatrical performance the participants used monologues and dialogues to express their stories to resolve especially their conflicts in the family and among the communities.

2. “A Modern, dynamic and youth-centred Approach to peace processes and conflict mitigation” Project

“A modern, dynamic and youth-centred approach to peace processes and conflict mitigation”. a MISEREOR-supported programme strongly focused on engaging youth (75%) to address various issues related to conflict-prone areas.

Activity Highlights

The Liberian Peace Building Visit was a learning forum where participants gained valuable knowledge from the “International Workshop on Dealing with the Past in Liberia, Africa,” which helped them understand the similarities and differences between peace and conflict in Liberia and Sri Lanka. Ven. Galkandhe Dhammananda Thero

enlightened the attendees on “Building Peace in a Multi-Religious and Multi-Ethnic Society,” providing insights into the political and social peace processes in Sri Lanka. As a result, participants acquired a deeper understanding of the challenges and strategies involved in fostering peace within diverse societies.

A capacity-building session on Outcomes and Indicators was conducted, providing peace coordinators with comprehensive knowledge of the logical framework of the projects. Ms. Renuka a lecturer from the SLFI trained the coordinators on measuring the indicators using various tools. As an outcome, all Diocesans could do meaningful research as a team in their own DCs and create programmes based on their findings.

There were several workshops conducted on the topics of Human Dignity, Social Justice, and the Value of Life, with active participation from members of the IRF. The sessions were enriched by the diversity within the group, providing a rich exchange of perspectives and experiences. The participants actively shared their views on subjects related to peace and religious harmony, and they were encouraged and motivated to speak out against injustices. The workshops fostered a sense of empowerment and readiness among attendees to raise their voices and take action when needed, promoting values of human dignity, social justice, and respect for life.

Forum Theatre was an exceptional tool for exposing and addressing societal conflicts. Through theatrical depiction, it achieved several goals: identifying issues, raising awareness, fostering dialogue, facilitating solutions, empowering individuals, and building empathy. In summary, forum theatre is a dynamic and interactive approach that catalyzes positive social change by spotlighting conflicts and promoting solutions within society. This training led the volunteers and peace coordinators to further utilize forum theatre techniques to address conflicts and empower communities.

Caritas Sri Lanka could launch a significant initiative titled ‘Religious Amity Training Modules’ aimed at addressing the issues of inter-religious reconciliation in Sri Lanka. This book was designed to cultivate religious understanding and harmony among different religious communities. The book aimed to be distributed to the Department of Religious and Cultural Affairs for implementation across schools, Sunday schools, and among teachers.

A workshop on conflict mitigation with women was conducted in Anuradhapura, funded by Agiamondo. The workshop, facilitated by Sr. Deepa Fernando, aimed to empower 30 women between the ages of 25 and 45 with skills to manage conflicts in their personal lives. The sessions included various activities focused on increasing self-awareness and understanding one’s inner self. The primary goal was to equip participants with practical strategies and insights for effectively addressing and mitigating conflicts in their daily lives.

We organized a Peace Forum at the regional level, conducting a few events in three distinct Dioceses: Trincomalee, Anuradhapura, and Galle. This regional approach held significant importance as it provided a platform for meaningful discussions on critical issues such as peace, justice, and inter-religious harmony.

Another accomplishment we had as a team was the International Women’s Day in 2024. Powerful narratives and experiences shared by the women from communities of farmers,

plantation workers, rubber and tea, disappeared families, Free Trade Zones, and fisherwomen. Their narratives highlighted the difficulties and challenges faced by women in their communities. Dr. Ajantha the environmentalist and Ms. Achala, the human rights lawyer, provided insightful viewpoints on women's rights and empowerment. The International Women's Day 2024 Celebration at Caritas Sri Lanka was more than just an event; it witnessed the strength, resilience, and indomitable spirit of women from all walks of life. By providing a platform for their voices to be heard, Caritas Sri Lanka reaffirmed its commitment to gender equality and social justice, ensuring that every woman's story is acknowledged and celebrated.

We get involved in all organized public demonstrations and initiatives intended to defend the rights of the people. We could take part when events were planned in resistance to the PTA, ATA, and the Online Safety Bill. We demand that peace and equity continually be maintained.

Key Achievements

- We have strong youth groups in the 13 DCs who actively participate in conflict mitigation locally and Nationally.
- There are women's groups in all DCs who take part in our activities. Many women have been capacitated to lead a balanced life.
- In Batticaloa and Chilaw they have done home and community gardens and initiated small markets for their products.
- DC, Regional and National Peace Forums function perfectly to capacitate peace-related activities.
- There are active Village Level Vigilant groups who engaged in common issues in the village towards conflict mitigation.
- We have some volunteers to support in the DC as field officers.
- We have an effective Networking system with other NGOs and CBOs related to peace and reconciliation.
- We have conducted several workshops with AGIAMONDO to bring Peace and Healing.
- The International Women's Day was a very significant event in which many women victims were present to relate their story highlighting how much they have become strong to vice for the other victims.

Challenges and Responses

- Since our primary focus is on youth, it has been challenging to retain them as permanent
- Members of our groups.
- When launching our activities, we encountered difficulties implementing them
- Consistently across all DCs.
- Accurately counting the number of beneficiaries has also been a challenge.
- Managing transportation costs has become a significant issue that needs to be addressed.
- We often encounter situations where people expect us to provide livelihood support.

SUCCESS STORY

Caritas provided us with the opportunity to learn multiple languages, enhancing our ability to communicate and connect.



When explaining reconciliation, it can be called a peaceful and problem-solving method between group or individuals. This helps to implement peacemakers, and unity forever. In this way, we were able to learn exactly about reconciliation through Caritas.

We had the opportunity to go to different environments and work with different cultures, a little away from the environment and culture where we live.

We got the opportunity to work with friends from different ethnics and religions from all over the country and also we were able to build relationships with them through Caritas.

We also got the opportunity to learn other languages and to work together with everyone. We also learned a lot about how to work with brothers and sisters through training programs, leadership camps, etc.

I am very grateful to Caritas for giving us so many experiences.

I pray that people of all ethnicities and religions will be given more strength to act as citizens of one country and to cultivate these good practices in future generations.

- Venuri Lakshika

*Beneficiary of A Modern , dynamic, and youth -centered approach to peace processes and Conflict Mitigation Project
From Ratnapura*

ECOLOGICAL CONSERVATION & PLANTATION PEOPLE (ECPP)

The Ecological Conservation and Plantation People (ECPP) Unit was established as part of Caritas Sri Lanka's Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2025, with a strong focus on addressing ecological justice issues and advocating for the rights of the plantation community. This dual focus underscores Caritas Sri Lanka's commitment to environmental stewardship and social justice within the context of Sri Lanka's diverse cultural and ecological landscape.

The ECPP Unit utilizes advocacy and lobbying as primary tools to promote sustainable ecological practices also the rights and welfare of the plantation community. There are four major projects run under the ECPP unit. 'Stepping Stone to Safeguarding Sri Lanka's Natural Environment', and 'Empowered Households: Fostering Secure sustainable livelihood and nourishing environments for families' are two projects designed to emphasize ecological conservation and climate justice. 'Lighting the Lives of Plantation People' (LLPP- CRS), and 'Lighting the Lives of Plantation People' (LLPP- Caritas Australia) are two projects designed for Indian origin Tamil population, who have been in Sri Lanka for 200 years. These projects collectively underscore the ECPP Unit's commitment to ecological sustainability, social justice, and the empowerment of marginalized communities within Sri Lanka.

1. 'Stepping stone to safeguarding Sri Lanka's Natural Environment' (SSEP)

"Stepping Stone to Safeguarding Sri Lanka's Natural Environment" (SSEP) is a three-year project funded by Misereor. Launched in January 2022, SSEP is being implemented across all 12 Dioceses covering the entire Sri Lanka to empower communities affected by environmental degradation, particularly the impacts of climate change. The project seeks to address environmental challenges by fostering sustainable solutions, guided by principles of ecological and climate justice. Key themes of SSEP include water conservation, sustainable agriculture and lifestyle practices, and biodiversity conservation. The overarching goal is to promote stewardship of our shared environment while enhancing community resilience and well-being.

Based on insights gained during the first year, targeted activities were developed to align with Sri Lanka's diverse climatic and geographical regions. The project's primary focus was on advocating for environmental conservation and addressing local environmental challenges within the Dioceses. Caritas Sri Lanka facilitated dialogues between vulnerable communities affected by climate change and environmental degradation, engaging relevant stakeholders and media outlets. Selected community members from each Dioceses, including youth and children, received training on environmental conservation and climate justice. Additionally, Caritas Sri Lanka organized clean-up and tree-planting campaigns, along with commemorations of World Environment Day at the Diocesan level. These efforts aimed to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among communities in safeguarding our shared environment. Ensuring the protection of water

resources and advocating for the right to safe and clean drinking water is a central focus of SSEP. Caritas Sri Lanka has undertaken significant efforts in this regard, including the restoration of abandoned public drinking water wells and the installation of water refill stations throughout Sri Lanka. Concurrently, Caritas Sri Lanka has conducted seminars for schoolchildren and adults on personal hygiene and life skills, emphasizing the critical importance of sanitation and effective water management practices. These efforts are aimed at promoting health, sustainability, and community well-being across Sri Lanka as part of environmental conservation.

2. Village-level Environmental Group protected their Natural Environment through advocacy

Vanni Diocesan Centre established a village-level environmental group in Vellapalam-Udaiyarkaddu under SSEP to empower the local community in safeguarding their natural environment. This small village is situated in Mullaitivu District, within the Puthukudiyiruppu Divisional Secretariat area, where agriculture serves as the primary livelihood. Due to high concentrations of calcium and magnesium in the groundwater, residents lack access to safe drinking water. Consequently, they rely entirely on a natural pond within the village for drinking water, agriculture, freshwater fishing, and animal husbandry. This pond spans approximately 70 acres of land. Unfortunately, the entire land surrounding the pond was appropriated by a wealthy individual living abroad for personal use, severely disrupting the livelihoods of the local community.

Caritas HUDEC-Vanni intervened by empowering the community through advocacy and lobbying training via stakeholder meetings and workshops. This initiative led the community to organize a solidarity campaign with Caritas HUDEC-Vanni's support, aimed at addressing the issue publicly. The village-level environmental groups formed under SSEP from Udaiyarkaddu & Vellapalam took the lead in this campaign under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Sebajeevan, Director of Caritas Vanni-HUDEC. Additionally, community members submitted two petitions to the Puthukudiyiruppu Divisional Secretariat and the Department of Agriculture, outlining their grievances and urging authorities to take legal action against the land privatization. Subsequently, legal proceedings were initiated against the individual responsible for the land appropriation. Following a court judgment, nearly 60 acres of land were returned to the community. However, efforts continue to secure the remaining 10 acres for public use. Through SSEP's extensive support, a new generation has emerged with heightened environmental awareness and a commitment to protecting their natural resources.

The project was able to reach 4889 direct beneficiaries and 14,667 indirect beneficiaries at the end of the second year. The project promoted environmental conservation through sustainable initiatives such as the formation of village-level environmental groups, restoration of abandoned water resources, promotion of organic farming, and seed production, and empowerment of the communities to find adaptation alternatives against climate change. Moreover, 189 prospering entrepreneurs have been facilitated to adopt climate-smart agriculture techniques.



3. ‘Empowered Households: Fostering secure sustainable livelihood and nourishing environments for families’

Livelihood insecurity among vulnerable groups is primarily caused by risk factors linked to their livelihoods: water scarcity for agriculture, limited market access, fertilizer challenges, and impacts from pests and diseases. Insufficient crop diversity and inadequate cultivation practices exacerbate these issues. To address these challenges, adopting coping strategies and promoting climate-smart agricultural practices is crucial for ensuring sustainable livelihoods. This project aims to empower households to achieve sustainable income levels, aligning with its objectives.

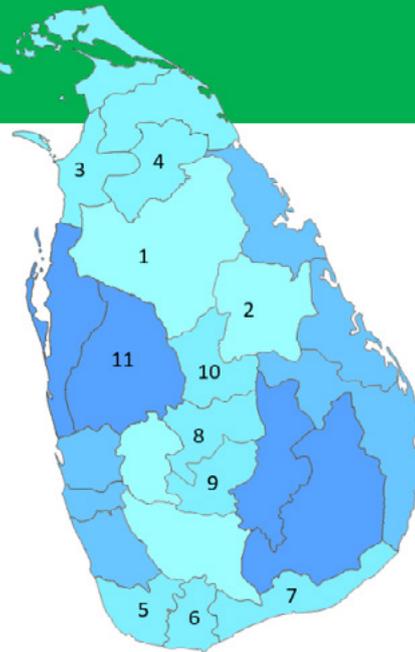
The project’s main strategy involves establishing model farming units in targeted regions. Evaluating the replicability of this model will be a key focus during the project’s end-line evaluation.

The “Empowered Households” project by Caritas Sri Lanka aimed to support 300 of the most vulnerable families across 5 dioceses. Beneficiaries were selected from the bellow mentioned districts: Caritas Kurunegala – Janasetha (Kurunegala District), Caritas Anuradhapura – Sethsaviya (Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa Districts), Caritas SED Galle (Hambantota District), Caritas Mannar- Valvuthayam (Mannar District, Vavuniya), and Caritas Kandy – SETIK (Matale and Kandy Districts). The project spanned eight administrative districts in Sri Lanka, including Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Mannar, Vavuniya, Hambantota, Matale, Kandy, and Kurunegala, and was conducted from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024.

Target Regions

- In Sri Lanka 11 Administrative districts

1. Anuradhapura
2. Polonnaruwa
3. Mannar
4. Vavuniya
5. Galle
6. Matara
7. Hambantota
8. Kandy
9. Nuwara Eliya
10. Matale
11. Kurunegala



The project's overarching goal was to enhance livelihood security and resilience, empowering vulnerable households to foster peaceful, safe, and nourishing family environments. To achieve this, the project focused on three key sectors: agriculture, micro-small business development, and community development. The main objectives were to strengthen saving groups and household income, promote climate-smart agricultural practices, and enhance producer groups and MSME development.

Main Activities and Achievements during the reporting period

Agriculture

The project prioritized climate-smart agricultural practices (CSAP) to ensure sustainable farming and resilience to climate change. Provided basic training on Climate Smart Agricultural Practices: (CSAP) selected farmers received training in crop diversification, drought-resistant crop selection, and soil preparation. These sessions expanded farmers' theoretical and practical knowledge, particularly on perennial crop cultivation. Farmers were also trained in pruning TJC mango trees, which aids in effective harvesting. Overall, 296 participants (153 males, and 143 females) received CSAP training across the five diocesan centers.

In addition, the selected farmers were facilitated with exposure visits to learn best CSAP model farms to provide farmers with practical insights. These visits demonstrated the benefits of sustainable farming, encouraging farmers to integrate these methods for long-term productivity. A total of 218 farmers (107 males, 111 females) participated in these visits, gaining valuable insights into CSAP techniques.

The farmers were provided basic inputs to motivate CSAP adaptation. In view of that 274 farmers (164 males, 110 female) were facilitated with 7,860 coconut plants, 4,385

mango plants, and 180 cashew plants. The Kandy region received an additional 2,369 plants, including Gini Waraka, Guava, and Lime. In total, 14,794 trees were planted, with continuous monitoring by diocesan staff and Agriculture Instructors. Farmers successfully implemented CSAP techniques, preparing their lands according to guidance and receiving ongoing support for disease management, fertilizing, and watering. This collaborative effort achieved 100% of the target beneficiaries and fostered community commitment to sustainable livelihood development.



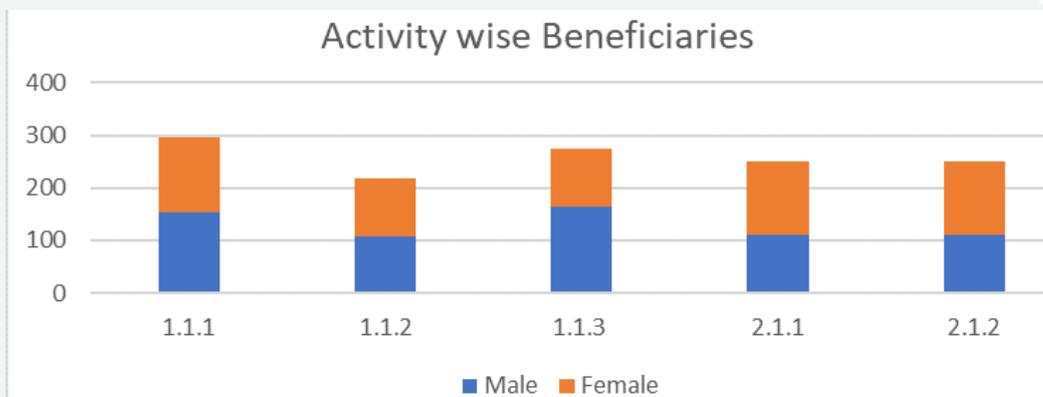
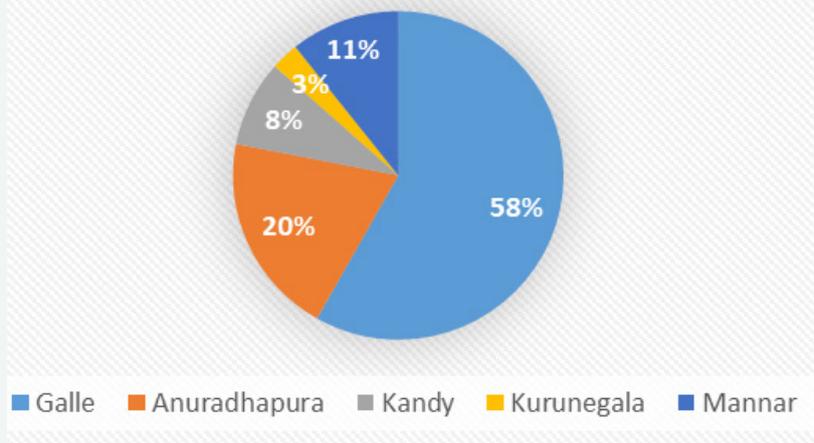
Community Development

The project established 15 saving groups across within five diocesan centres, providing training on the Saving for Transformation model and financial management. These groups focused on savings, social fund creation, time management, financial management, trust-building, and teamwork, benefiting 111 males and 138 females. The saving group meetings, lasting only 30 minutes, allowed members to save time and money, crucial for their livelihoods.

Tool packages were distributed to facilitate smooth operations, including cash boxes, passbooks, cash bags, padlocks, stationery, constitutions, loan calculation sheets, attendance sheets, and calculators. Orientation sessions were conducted in Galle, Mannar, Anuradhapura, Kandy, and Kurunegala, successfully setting up saving groups as planned.



Total Assest in the Saving Group Rs 379,670



Expected Outcomes

The project aims to establish sustainable and diversified income sources at the household level and enhance households’ resilience to adverse climate impacts and shocks.

Conclusion

The “Empowered Households” project by Caritas Sri Lanka has made significant progress in improving livelihood security and resilience among vulnerable families. Through targeted training, exposure visits, and the provision of essential resources, the project

has successfully empowered households to adopt climate-smart agricultural practices, establish saving groups, and develop MSMEs. These efforts have fostered a sustainable and nourishing environment for the beneficiary families, aligning with the project's goal of promoting peaceful, safe, and resilient communities.

The Lightning Lives of the Plantation People - Caritas Australia Funded Project

Overview

The Lightning Lives of the Plantation People Project, funded by Caritas Australia, aims to empower the plantation community in Sri Lanka through networking and advocacy for meaningful citizenship. The project's main objectives include forming and strengthening a network of CSOs involving human rights groups and other stakeholders at both provincial and national levels, conducting constructive advocacy on plantation community issues with a rights-based and positive approach to community welfare, promoting social dialogue and government consideration through strategic interventions, and empowering the community via awareness sessions marking a benchmark in their history. Major activities during the annual report period encompass awareness programs on labour rights for plantation communities, technical vocation training for school leavers and teenagers who failed O/L and A/L, medical camps, nutritional awareness programs for pregnant mothers, CSO advocacy sessions on plantation community issues, language classes for plantation school children, and women's hygiene awareness sessions. These activities are carried out within the four plantation dioceses of Ratnapura, Kandy, Galle, and Badulla, addressing the key issues highlighted in the bishop's press conference in 2023.

Challenges and Responses

A major challenge faced by the diocese is the marginalization of the plantation community, who are often reluctant or not encouraged to integrate with other communities. They face pressures from external factors such as economic crises, political agendas, unfair wages from estate owners, and social discrimination. These challenges make project implementation within these communities difficult. Additionally, these communities lack essential infrastructure facilities. Despite these challenges, the project aims to secure the necessary facilities for the plantation community through effective advocacy and mobilization.

Activities and Achievements

During a recent medical camp, Caritas Ratnapura and Caritas Kandy successfully served 418 beneficiaries, addressing critical health issues in the plantation region. One of the concerns is the high rate of malnutrition among newborns. To combat this, diocesan centres organized three nutritional awareness programs for pregnant women, with over 147 mothers participating. In some dioceses, these mothers also received nutritional packs to support their health and that of their babies.

Education is a vital concern in plantation communities, where schoolchildren face significant challenges, especially after completing their O/L exams. Many schools do not offer A/L subjects, leading to high dropout rates. To counter this, vocational training programs were introduced, providing students with new opportunities to build their futures.

The diocesan activities often exceeded their target numbers of beneficiaries, with ongoing projects being continuously monitored by project coordinators to ensure their success and effectiveness.

This multifaceted approach not only addresses immediate health and nutritional needs but also invests in the long-term future of the community by enhancing educational opportunities. The dedication and proactive measures taken by the diocesan centres are making a tangible difference, fostering hope and resilience in the plantation regions.



4. The Lightning Lives of the Plantation People – Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

Overview

Caritas Sri Lanka is implementing the “Lighting the Lives of the Plantation People” (LLPP) project, funded by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), USA, over 10 years from September 2021 to September 2031. The project focuses on the six plantation districts of Colombo, Galle, Ratnapura, Kandy, Badulla, and Kurunegala, aiming to enhance the quality of life for the Malayaga Tamils (Indian Origin Tamils) in these communities. The primary goal is to ensure equal opportunities for community welfare and access to basic resources and services through effective networking among civil society organizations (CSOs) and stakeholders. Key objectives include forming a network of CSOs and human rights groups at provincial and national levels, advocating for the rights and welfare of the plantation community, and promoting social dialogue and strategic interventions to

address community concerns. Through awareness sessions, the project seeks to empower the plantation community and mark a significant milestone in their history.

Programs and Services: Detailed descriptions of the National and DC-level programs and activities conducted during the annual report period

- ***Capacity Building of the Formed CSO Forums***

The project initiated capacity-building activities focused on advocacy training and action plan development to empower members of the CSO forums. By guiding them to identify and prioritize the felt needs specific to their regions, the project enabled these forums to initiate effective advocacy initiatives. The project aims to strengthen the capability of CSO forum members so they can actively engage in efforts toward policy changes at the national level.

- ***Commemoration of the 200years arrival of the Plantation Community***

A collaborative effort involving USAID, NCC, NPC, PREDO, Uvasakthi, Paffrel, Monlar, NAFSO, Safe Foundation, Rajarata University Students Union, Samadhanam organization, and various other CSOs, NGOs, and INGOs organized a “Walk” from Mannar to Matale to commemorate the 200-year arrival of the Plantation community in Sri Lanka. Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC supported the initiative, emphasizing the history, struggles, achievements, and current socio-economic status of the Malaiyaha Tamil community to promote understanding among the Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamils, Muslims, and other citizens. Caritas Diocesan centers provided meals and accommodation to the walkers along the route, showcasing community spirit and commitment. The Walk began on July 28 at Thalaimannar and ended on August 12 in Matale, initially with 21 permanent walkers, which increase to 66 permanent walkers. The final day attracted around 2000 participants at the concluding event in Matale.

- ***Catholic Bishops Demand Action on Unresolved Socioeconomic Issues Faced by Plantation Community in Sri Lanka***

A significant press conference was held on June 30, 2023, at Caritas Sri Lanka, SEDEC, where the Catholic Bishops of the Plantation Regions united to address the long-standing socioeconomic issues faced by the Indian Origin Plantation Community in Sri Lanka. This event coincided with the 200th commemoration of the arrival of the Indian Origin Tamil People to the country in 1923-24. The press conference had two primary objectives: first, to identify the persistent socioeconomic challenges that have remained unresolved due to unstable policies and inadequate implementation by successive governments and plantation management; and second, to present a series of recommendations aimed at integrating the vulnerable Plantation Community into national social services, with the goal of achieving meaningful citizenship for them in Sri Lanka.

- ***Workshop on Enhancing Partnering Capabilities at Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC***

Under the LLPP program a workshop on enhancing the partnering capabilities

of Diocesan Project Coordinators and National Coordinators (NC) staff held On September 15, 2023, at the SEDEC Auditorium in Colombo, the workshop brought together dedicated professionals focused on.

During the period, important initiatives have been undertaken to raise awareness and advocate for the rights of the plantation community, specifically the Malayaga Tamils, in Sri Lanka.

1. Awareness Session for Clergy: On April 4, 2023, an awareness session was held at the Fatima Retreat House in Lewella, Kandy. This session targeted the clergy of the Diocese of Kandy, emphasizing the social issues confronting the plantation community and the role of church leaders in addressing the structural discrimination that has impacted the Malayaga Tamils for generations.

These activities reflect a commitment to empower the plantation community by advocating for their rights, raising awareness about their social issues, and fostering collaborations with various stakeholders, including clergy and media personnel. Together, these efforts aim to bring to light the challenges faced by the plantation community and work towards their emancipation and integration into society.

- ***Research Initiatives Under the “Lighting the Lives of Plantation People” Program (LLPP)***

As part of the “Lighting the Lives of Plantation People” Program (LLPP), a significant research initiative has been undertaken to address the gaps in the educational system affecting the plantation sector in Sri Lanka.

1. Right to Education Study: A comprehensive research study titled “The Right to Education for Children from the Plantation Community in Sri Lanka: Issues, Challenges, and Future Directions” was conducted by PassAsia (PVT) LTD, a reputable research and consultancy firm. This study aims to identify and analyze the barriers to education faced by children in the plantation community.
2. Cultural and Identity Research: Additionally, another research study focusing on the culture and identity of the plantation community in selected districts has been started.

85 scholarships were given for the selected children by 30th of September 2023 and 105 new scholarships have been granted from 1st October 2024, for A/L students and undergraduates. The project has been observing the significant progress in their education.

Awareness Session for the Conference of Major Religious Superiors (CMRS) on the plight of the Plantation Community and CSL's intervention towards the betterment of their lives



Capacity Building of the Formed CSO Forums



Validation session of the Plantation Research



Invitation to the Media Personnel to cooperate with the journey of Empowerment of the Plantation People



An Awareness Session for the Clergy of the Diocese of Kandy Diocese on Mission of the Catholic Church in the Emancipation of the Plantation Community in Sri Lanka



An Awareness session on the 200-year Journey and the Present-Day Plight of the Plantation Community in Sri Lanka at the National Seminary Kandy



**Caritas Sri Lanka joins hands with the Malayaga Makkal Walk
“Tracing our roots to win our Rights”**



Catholic Bishops Demand Action on Unresolved Socioeconomic Issues Faced by Plantation Community in Sri Lanka



Challenges and Responses

Ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes once external support such as funding, resources, and technical guidance diminishes is a key concern. Therefore, Ensuring that communities adopt sustainable practices in resource management is essential for the long-term success of environmental initiatives. In response to financial constraints, Caritas Sri Lanka introduced a savings mechanism aimed at enhancing and sustaining local groups engaged in environmental initiatives. This holistic approach not only

supports immediate needs but also seeks to ensure the long-term viability and impact of community-led environmental efforts under SSEP.

One of the most pressing challenges we encounter is the country's economic crisis. This situation has made it difficult to implement projects effectively at the grassroots level. With rising prices of essential commodities, community members are primarily focused on sustaining their daily livelihoods. Consequently, we have experienced a lack of cooperation in advocacy related SSEP as well as LLPP projects. In response to this challenge, there are alternative livelihoods that align with conservation goals were developed to facilitate the communities to reduce reliance on unsustainable practices. However, implementing these alternatives required more supports and investments.

Another significant challenge is the rapid population growth, which drives local communities to encroach upon forests and other ecologically sensitive areas. This poses a considerable threat to the country's natural environment. Building a sense of ownership among community members for conservation efforts is critical but can be challenging to achieve. To address this issue, Caritas Sri Lanka has worked diligently to raise awareness among local communities about the importance of environmental protection. Through the formation of environmental groups and conducting awareness sessions, we strive to empower communities to understand and advocate for the conservation of their natural surroundings.

Moreover, the heart of LLPP project is the formation of the Civil Society Organization forum. However, it has been observed that in some Dioceses it was hard to find Civil Society Organization members. It has also proven to be a significant challenge. Additionally, financial barriers remain a prominent issue during project implementation, hindering our ability to fully realize our objectives.

However, despite the challenges through innovative approaches and community engagement, we continue to work towards ecological justice and the empowerment of the plantation community in Sri Lanka.

SUCCESS STORY

We also kept a continuous connection with the stakeholders who supported the task and made good coordination with the community leaders of the estate.

Kosgala Estate is located in Ratnapura Divisional Secretariat, which is geographically located at the boundary of St. Joachim's Estate, Hidellana. Over 200 families live in the estate and most of them are working in the estate. Rubber and Tea are the main crops planted on the estate. As this year marks the 200th year of the arrival of the plantation community from India, the 'Our Voice' CSO Forum of Sabaragamuwa take initiatives to raise voice to win and to bring them up a dignity for the plantation community in the province.

Accordingly, with the collaboration of Loin's Club of Ratnapura, Leads and Foundation of Goodness we were able to identify the Kosgala estate as the most affected and with many issues where the CSO forum has the social responsibility to intervene. Although we identify the issues of them, we were challenged to process our intervention in a systematic way where our intervention could not affect the lives of the people.

Therefore, we contacted Ven. Suddamma Thero, who is the president of the inter religious dialog of Rathnapura District and through him, we made contact with the religious leaders of the Kovil located at the Kosgala Estate. Apart from that to make an official arrangement we contacted Mr. W. M. T. D. Wanigasekara, Grama Niladhari of the Kahangama GN Division and also Foundation of Goodness; a local foundation that actively works in the area to arrange this particular advocacy and lobbying program.

We went and met community leaders of the estate and discussed the existing issues of them. We also kept a continuous connection with the stakeholders who supported the task and made good coordination with the community leaders of the estate. Initially, this program was organized as a commemoration program for 200th year arrival of the plantation community to Sri Lanka. Religious rituals were also done in the Kovil.

Ven. Suddamma Thero and the chief monk of Kahangama Temple also participated in the program; it was a remarkable experience that showed the religious unity between Hindus and Buddhists. About 75 people gathered at the Kovil. Ven. Thero addressed the gathering, highlighted the importance of Hinduism, and deeply explained the valuable contribution of the plantation community to the Sri Lankan economy. We welcomed some of participants to speak up about their opinions regarding their lives in the plantation sector in Sri Lanka. Most of them raised their voices on unsolved issues of their lives and how they were discriminated as slaves without having any basic rights as the other major society obtain.

Meanwhile, we addressed the gathering and motivated them to raise their voices. All came out of the Kovil and did picketing. There were many issues they brought forward; such as;

- Lack of transportation facility to the school for their children. (St. Joachim's Tamil School is only the school that is located border of the Kosgala estate). However, schoolchildren of the estate cannot go to school since there were no buses to Karapincha, St. Joachim's Estate. This made a big issue where many school drops were recorded.
- Lack of a playground (youth of the estate request this since they haven't a place to play; this would be a good idea to take drug- addicted youth and endangered teenagers from drug addictions)
- Roof of the Kovil was in dangerous condition since all rafters were decayed.
- Lack of space for them to build their houses.
- Sanitary issues (Lack of toilets, pure water system) People stood holding posters that displayed their issues and requests beside the road. Finally, all signed a request form and handed over it to Grama Niladhari and Ven. Monk. After considering the need of the school bus for the betterment of the children the request letter which included 75 signatures of the participants was given to the chief of Ceylon Transport Board of Ratnapura Depart.

Finally, the people of Kosgala Estate obtained a bus for their estate, which runs across their estate to Karapincha Estate. Mr. D. M. E. Roy (Principal of St. Joachim's School stated that school drop-outs seen of the school children of Kosgala were reduced as the bus runs daily to Karapincha Estate). As the youth of the Kosgala estate requested a playground, Lion's Club of Ratnapura built a playground for them. The first Softball cricket tournament was also held recently after construction of the new playground. The above mentioned are the success stories that are remarkable at the course of time that we encounter.

In addition, it is not fair to be considered as the only effort we put in as CSOs nevertheless people stood up for their rights and won their rights. We intervene as Responsible CSOs of the province to make them successful and to create better human dignity in society.



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE & FOOD SECURITY (SAFS)

The Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security Unit of Caritas Sri Lanka serves and promotes sustainable agriculture to ensure food security with food access, availability, utilization, and stability in poor and marginalized farmer communities in Sri Lanka.

The unit aims;

1. To increase food Production with selected Poor and marginalized people
2. Reduce hunger and ensure access to food by all people, in particular, the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food all year round.
3. Reduce poverty by enhancing family income.

Key projects include;

1. Addressing causes for poverty and ensuring Food Security for farming communities in Sri Lanka (April and 31st May 2023)
2. Project: “Improving Rural Livelihood, Enhancing Food Security, Building Climate Resilience in Sri Lanka” (June 2023 to March 2024)
3. Project: “With work towards a decent life-support for Poor families in Sri Lanka”

1. Addressing causes for poverty and ensuring Food Security for farming communities in Sri Lanka (April and 31st May 2023)

The program, which was implemented from January 2018 to May 2023, substantial funds have been allocated to support the program beneficiaries from Caritas Norway and back donor funding from NORAD. These funds have played a crucial role in advancing the objectives of the program, bringing about positive changes in the lives of poor and marginalized farmer families, school children, and mothers of preschool children in the project areas.

Over four years (2018 to 2021), the project not only met but exceeded its targets in engaging with the beneficiary groups. In the case of Farmer Families, the cumulative total of 28,631 engaged households exceeded the 26,000 target. This success reflects the project’s effectiveness in reaching out to and supporting agricultural communities. Similarly, with School Children, the cumulative achievement of 56,648 surpassed the annual target of 52,000. This demonstrates a substantial impact on the education and well-being of the targeted children. Preschool Mothers were also effectively reached, with 28,542 engaged over the four years, exceeding the 26,000 target. This highlights the project’s consistent and successful approach to involving mothers in preschool-related programs. For Preschool Children, the cumulative total of 28,542 aligns with the 26,000 target, indicating a successful effort to benefit young children in the selected

communities. Overall, the project not only met but exceeded its beneficiary targets across all categories, emphasizing its impactful and effective initiatives in improving the lives of these communities.

Summary of key achievements

Key achievements of the program during the period from January 2018 to May 2023 have been reported as follows:

- Community mobilization and strengthening of 28,631 subsistence farmers.
- Formation/Revitalization of 2,830 Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
- Formation/Revitalization of 740 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).
- Empowering CBOs to establish 13 DC level and 30 District level Federations with the power to influence decision-makers.
- Strengthening SHGs and CBOs for Savings and Credit.
- Conducting Participatory Rural Appraisal to identify village resources.
- Providing training on gender sensitization and main-streaming.
- Raising awareness on advocacy and lobbying to secure rights.
- Capacity building for Field Officers, Lead farmers, and Government Extension officers through refresher training.
- Promotion of Family Farming among 28,631 families, including Organic home gardening, livestock rearing, and bee-keeping, for food security.
- Promotion of inland fisheries to increase protein intake for a nutritionally balanced diet. 427,696 fingerlings stocked in 54 newly constructed fish ponds, 7 renovated fish ponds, and 10 seasonal tanks with 115,000 fingerlings.
- Promotion of home gardening among 56,648 school children for a nutritionally balanced diet and to reduce malnutrition.
- Providing financial assistance for farmers to acquire inputs.
- Promotion of marketing, marketing linkages, and a value chain approach.
- Providing rainwater harvesting and irrigation facilities.
- Disaster preparedness and climate change adaptability, including promoting drought and flood-resistant crop cultivation techniques.
- Distribution of seeds to 54,857 farmers, plants and seedlings to 27,534 farmers, and agricultural tools to 14,454 farmers for their home gardens.
- Distribution of poultry chicks to 5,351 farmers, goats to 118 farmers, piglets to 38 farmers, quails to 150 farmers, and bee boxes to 420 farmers.
- Conducting a nutrition program for 28,542 mothers.
- Promoting a nutritionally balanced diet for 28,542 preschool children and their siblings to reduce malnutrition.
- Establishment of 72 Village Knowledge Centres.
- Establishment of 623 Demonstration farms.
- Establishment of 300 plant nurseries.
- Establishment of 73 Village Knowledge Centres to disseminate knowledge to smallholder farmers.

2. “Improving Rural Livelihood, Enhancing Food Security, Building Climate Resilience in Sri Lanka” (June 2023 to March 2024)

Caritas Sri Lanka has started implementing the program/ project entitled “Improving Rural Livelihoods, Enhancing Food Security, and Building Climate Resilience in Sri Lanka” from 2023 to 2027 (5 years) by aiming at safeguarding food security through improving livelihoods, ensuring food security and building climate resilience for 90,400 households residing in 2,470 villages in all 25 districts of Sri Lanka, accounting for some 361,600 direct and indirect participants with the support of Caritas Norway/NORAD. An estimated minimum of 993, 500 indirect participants will have an impact from interventions. The target groups of the project under the 90,400 HHs in the 25 districts are the farmers, Mothers with children, Children, Youth, and differently able persons (PwDs) to safeguard food security.

Summary of key achievements

- Community mobilization and strengthening of 7,800 Smallholder farmers.
- Formation/Revitalization of 786 Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
- Formation/Revitalization of 262 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).
- Empowering CBOs to establish 13 DC level and 32 District level Federations with the power to influence decision-makers.
- Strengthening SHGs and CBOs for Savings and Credit.
- Conducting Participatory Rural Appraisal to identify village resources.
- Providing training on gender sensitization and main-streaming.
- Raising awareness on advocacy and lobbying to secure rights.
- Capacity building for Field Officers, Lead farmers, and Government Extension officers through refresher training.
- 13 DC level Knowledge/information centres are established to disseminate and in operation
- Establishment of 231 Demonstration farms.
- Establishment of 64 Village Knowledge Centres to disseminate knowledge to smallholder farmers.
- Promotion of Family Farming among 7,800 families, including Organic home gardening, livestock rearing, Inland fisheries, and bee-keeping, for food security.
- Promotion of inland fisheries to increase protein intake for a nutritionally balanced diet. 37,100 fingerlings stocked in 15 renovated fish ponds.
- Promotion of home gardening among 6,885 school children for a nutritionally balanced diet and to reduce malnutrition.
- Providing financial assistance for farmers to acquire inputs.
- Promotion of marketing, marketing linkages, and a value chain approach.
- Provided irrigation facilities (Drip Irrigation, Sprinkler irrigation, Water tanks, Water cans, water lifting pumps) to 1738 farmers.
- 6151 Smallholder farmers were trained on Disaster preparedness and climate change adaptability, including promoting drought and flood-resistant crop cultivation techniques.

- Distribution of seeds to 3,115 farmers, plants and seedlings to 382 farmers, Poultry chicks distributed to 264 farmers, and agricultural tools to 1329 farmers for their home garden establishments and to increase the productivity of Home Gardens.
- Conducted a nutrition program for 2,906 mothers of preschool children.
- Promoting a nutritionally balanced diet for 2,906 preschool children and their siblings to reduce malnutrition.
- 667 unemployed Youth trained in the establishment of home gardens using sustainable agricultural techniques.
- 697 Persons with Disabilities were trained in the establishment of home gardens using sustainable agricultural techniques.

3. “With work towards a decent life-support for Poor families in Sri Lanka”

Caritas Sri Lanka –SEDEC has been implementing a project “With work towards a decent life- Support for Poor families” in Kurunegala, Colombo, Kandy, Ratnapura, Galle, Vanni, and Chilaw Dioceses with support from Caritas Slovenia since 2015. The major aim of the project “With works towards decent life support for poor families in Sri Lanka” is to transform impoverished households into sustainable economic units through financial support and enhancing knowledge through entrepreneurship development training. New 25 family members were selected, trained on entrepreneurship development, and given the financial support of Rs. 50,000 each to start or expand their livelihood activities from Badulla District by Caritas Badulla to uplift their living conditions in the year 2024.

- **Addressing causes for poverty and ensuring Food Security for farming communities in Sri Lanka (April and 31st May 2023)**

No	Category of the target group	2018 to 2023 Target	January 2018 to May 2023 Achievements	% of Achievement
1	Subsistence farmer families	26,000	28,631	110%
2	School Children	52,000	56,648	109%
3	Mothers of pre-school children	26,000	28,542	110%
4	SHGs	2,600	2,838	109%
5	CBOs	864	742	86%

- “Improving Rural Livelihood, Enhancing Food Security, Building Climate Resilience in Sri Lanka” (June 2023 to March 2024)

No	Category of the target group	2018 to 2023 Target	January 2018 to May 2023 Achievements	% of Achievement
1	Smallholder farmers	7,200	7,800	108%
2	School Children	6,500	6,885	106%
3	Mothers of Preschool Children	2,600	2,906	112%
4	Youth	650	692	106%
5	PWDs	650	765	118%
Total		17,600	19,048	108%

Challenges and responses

- 1) **There were some difficulties in organizing capacity-building programs at the National Centre due to the long distance from the National Centre to each DC**
 The Caritas Jaffna DC has the highest distance from the National Centre. It’s about 400 Km. As well as all dioceses of North and East regions have more than 300km travelled for one trip. Normally we conduct Capacity-building programs for our food security diocesan-level staff members. We normally gather at the National Centre for special moments but there was an issue regarding the distance problem and transport costs were very high during that period. Sometimes the available vehicles weren’t sufficient for official visits and programs. During a period like this, we conducted some meetings with the whole diocesan centre (bi-annual review meeting, and discussion regarding reporting) through the virtual platform. However, some un-avoided communication issues occurred during the virtual meetings. But the essential training programs are being organized at the selected diocesan centre and we invite other diocesan members to participate, If there isn’t sufficient space to bear the participation population for the program currently we selected suitable external centres to hold our sessions.
- 2) **Due to the adverse climatic effects, the DC staff members faced issues while travelling to the fields**

Heavy thunder-showers occurred in Northern, Eastern, Southern, North-central, and Uva provinces during the end of the last year. The Wind speed had been (30-40) km/h in the sea areas. most of the beneficiaries’ home gardens and cultivation land

were destroyed in this suffering condition. A negative impact was raised throughout most of the diocesan centres in our network. It struck mainly farmer income and their family members living standards because most of the beneficiaries depend on their home garden cultivation to carry their lives. The harvesting time of crops coincided with unusual rain spells, as a result, paddy seed production couldn't be done. It will not only affect the income of farmers but also a severe shortage of seeds for the next season, and reduced production both in terms of quality and quantity. It has happened like same. In addition to that Some DC members were affected by the epidemic situation and they were unable to provide their contribution for project activities during the sickness period. So parallel- with the disaster, immediate actions were taken to improve adverse climatic resilience capacity at the diocesan level which should be a strength. And also DC staff members faced issues while traveling to the fields by their motorcycles. If there is a three-wheeler in such adverse weather conditions, it is possible to avoid difficulties during traveling to the field. We mentioned this solution that we can use to overcome these suffering conditions for Caritas Norway and the permission was given by them as soon as possible.

3) Due to the new recruitment of project staff members, the project implementation rate had taken slow condition.

New recruitments take some time to get used to the work environment and it depends on the people so the time spent can't be changed all at once. Not only food security staff members but also some DC directors also newly appointed which affected to reduced project implementation rate in some DCs. To overcome these matters we conducted several capacity-building programs, an orientation program, and a Financial management training program. At present many of the dioceses have changed in their staff. Experienced staff are limited but they are being trained. Approximately, we have a plan to conduct mid-term evaluations also to enhance the quality of the project activities. We have already organized to conduct a capacity-building program from 17th -19th April 2024, for agronomists of all diocesan centres at the National Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Training Institute Kalawewa-Vijithapura. We hope to share knowledge regarding Home Garden Establishment and Climate Smart Agriculture, Insect and Pest Control in home gardens, and Climate weather resilience crop Cultivation techniques. This kind of capacity-building program is supported for newcomers to familiarize themselves with the project.

4) According to the new budget imposing VAT affected electricity, transport, and fuel

Ring in the new year for Sri Lankans was an increase in the value-added tax (VAT) rate to 18% and a withdrawal of tax exemptions on several goods and services. From 01 January the 18% VAT imposed on agricultural machinery, inputs, diesel,

and other equipment, including fertilizer previously listed as exempted. The last day of 2023 witnessed long queues as people rushed to stock up on essentials such as fuel and gas. In an attempt to raise government revenue, the VAT rate on applicable goods and services increased from 15% to 18% starting 01st January 2024. This amendment brought 97 previously VAT-exempt goods and services including, fuel, gas, and telecommunication services. In such a backdrop, VAT drove up the prices of these items and equipment, which in turn increased the production costs of farmers, and ultimately impacted the consumer. Under this situation, diocesan staff members faced troubles with travel expenses because they had to travel long distances to inspect their beneficiary's field from their DC. This condition makes it difficult to achieve their targets at the expected level.

- 5) **Due to the currency exchange rate deduction, there was a loss of about 40 million LKR.**

Description	NOK	LKR	%	Grant Income	Exchange gain/loss
1st Installment 10%	600,000	21,600,000	10%	17,888,170.52	(3,711,829.48)
2nd Installment 40%	2,400,000	86,400,000	40%	68,656,527.24	(17,743,472.76)
3rd Installment 50%	3,000,000	108,000,000	50%	88,985,228.78	(19,014,771.22)
Total	6,000,000	216,000,000		175,529,926	-40,470,073

To overcome this problem our DCs had cancelled some programs, and input distributions that they planned before. So this challenge created tangled conditions at the DC level, and the activities should be redesigned to solve this matter. Currently, a procedure is being planned to redesign the project activities at the national centre level.

SUCCESS STORY

The Food Security Program has not only improved Mr Somasuntharam's economic situation but also earned him a reputation as a respected figure in his village for his achievements in organic agriculture.

Mr Somasuntharam, a 68-year-old farmer from Veddayamurippu village in the Manthai West DS Division, has demonstrated remarkable progress since being selected for the Food Security Program in 2018. Living with his wife after the marriage of his six surviving children-tragically having lost one son to the war-he was initially engaged in small-scale farming and home gardening. However, the program introduced transformative opportunities that have significantly improved his livelihood.



Through the Food Security Program, he received extensive training on various aspects of organic agriculture, including home gardening, organic products, fertilizer production, pest repellents, quality seedling cultivation, and marketing. These training sessions were conducted in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and other partner organizations. With new-found knowledge and practical skills, he became passionate about organic farming and quickly expanded his efforts. One of the key strengths of the Food Security Program was its holistic approach. After the training, participants were provided with essential materials to produce organic seedlings and pest repellents. This support ignited Mr. Somasuntharam's interest in organic vegetable farming,

small-scale seedling production, and the preparation of pest repellents. The program's staff further supported him by establishing connections with Agricultural Instructors, enabling him to sell his organic fertilizers and seedlings. Today, he markets his organic vegetables locally in neighbouring villages and at markets in Adampan and Mannar.

Mr. Somasuntharam now proudly produces organic vegetables, seedlings, and pest repellents on a larger scale. In his village, he is recognized as a pioneer in organic pest repellent preparation, creating high-demand products such as fish amino acid, 3G solution, and banana solution. The ban on chemical fertilizers by the government has only increased the demand for organic products. As a result, he now earns a monthly income of Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 25,000.

The Food Security Program has not only improved Mr Somasuntharam's economic situation but also earned him a reputation as a respected figure in his village for his achievements in organic agriculture. His success story is a testament to the transformative impact of the program on local communities.

PARTNER VISITS

Visit of Irasil Foundation – 22nd July to 6th August 2023

From 23rd July to 6th August 2023, Mr Gerard and Mrs Shivanthi Chitty representing Irasil Foundation and Mr Kyle Chitty, and Mr and Mrs Eymard Chitty representing Projects Lanka were in Sri Lanka to visit project implementing locations across Sri Lanka which enabled them to witness first-hand the impact of the projects.

On 26th July, the Diocesan Director of Caritas Kurunegala Rev. Fr. Thusitha Priyanga and the team, visited Edandawala Primary School in Kudalgamuwa, where RO water facilities have been provided. The team met the school principal and children and had discussions. The team also visited 02 fish pond locations which it show our sustainable aquaculture projects and visited the 32 acres of paddy cultivation in Nagollagama which is a significant initiative aimed at promoting sustainable agricultural practices and supporting local farmers.



The following day, 27th July, the team travelled to Mannar. They held discussions with Mannar Diocesan Director Rev. Fr. Anton Sebamalai, Rev. Fr. Arulraj Cross, Rev. Fr. Jayabalan, Rev. Fr. Victor Sosai and Rev. Fr. William Costa from Don Bosco. The group then visited the fisheries community in Papamoddai, where they reviewed the financial assistance provided for purchasing fishing nets, motor repairs and other essential fishing equipment, and our commitment to supporting the local fishing industry.



On 28th July, the team engaged in a productive discussion with Anuradhapura Diocesan Director Rev. Fr. Alec Roy. The discussion focused on the success of completed projects and explored future project opportunities, strengthening our ongoing commitment to sustainable development in the region.

The visit continued on 29th July with a visit to Thevakiramam, Aligambay with the Diocesan Director of Batticaloa Rev. Fr. A. Jesudasan and his team, to the water project location.



On 31st July, the team met with the Bishop of the Badulla Diocese, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Jude Nishantha and Diocesan Director Rev. Fr. Prasanna Swarnadhipathy. They discussed the ongoing projects and potential new project opportunities, followed by a visit to the Healthy Corner in Badulla, demonstrating our holistic approach to community health and well-being.

The visit on 2nd August included discussions with the Galle Diocesan Director Rev. Fr. Lasantha Sanjeewa, CODESEP Director Rev. Fr. Anthony Jesudas and CODESEP staff. The team then visited the Deniyaya estate to review the water project and visited St. Matthew’s School in Deniyaya, showcasing our commitment to improving educational infrastructure and access to clean water.



The partner visit concluded on 4th August with a strategic discussion with the World Vision team, including Dr Dhanan Senathirajah, Mr Romesh, Mr C. Sutharshan and Rev. Fr. Luke Nelson. This meeting focused on exploring future project opportunities and reinforcing our collaborative efforts towards sustainable development.

The visit by representatives from Irasil Foundation and Projects Lanka was a significant milestone, providing valuable insights and fostering stronger partnerships. Their feedback and recommendations will be instrumental in enhancing our project strategies and ensuring continued success in our mission to support and empower local communities.

Visit of Misereor Delegates

Ms. Broeckmann Corinna and Ms. Ulrike Weinspach, partners from Misereor, undertook a visit to Caritas Sri Lanka from February 13th to 29th, 2024. Their visit commenced with a meeting with staff members from Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC. Subsequently, the partners travelled to Jaffna and Mannar as part of their engagement with SSEP.

During their visit to the Jaffna Diocese, the partners had the opportunity to meet with the Mandaitivu village-level environmental group. In the Mannar Diocese, they visited the Keeri, Madukkarai, and Veppankuzham village-level environmental groups.



Their visit allowed them to gain first-hand insights into the initiatives and impacts of SSEP, strengthening their partnership with Caritas Sri Lanka in promoting environmental conservation and community empowerment across these regions.

Visit of Norway Delegates

Mr. Tobias Wilbers, Program Advisor for the Food Security Program and Senior Adviser for Peace and Reconciliation, alongside Ms. Maria Langs, Humanitarian Adviser, from Caritas Norway, embarked on an insightful field visit to Sri Lanka from January 24 to 30, 2024. This visit aimed to assess the progress of the island-wide Food Security Program implemented by Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC. National Director Rev. Fr. Luke Nelson Perera, National Program Coordinator Mrs Nilani Tissera, and Regional Coordinators Mr K. Hershenth, Ms Amali Shamani, and Mr Sadun Fernando joined the delegation at this important event. The field visits covered key program areas in Kandy, Anuradhapura, and Vanni DC.

This initiative, a testament to the enduring partnership between Caritas Norway, and Caritas Sri Lanka, has been in operation since 2013. The Food Security Program is designed to empower local communities through sustainable agricultural practices such as organic home gardening with mixed cropping, livestock rearing, bee-keeping, and pond fish culture. Over the years, this program has transformed the lives of more than 7,800 farmer families, promoting healthy, balanced diets and boosting local economies. In 2023, its positive impact also reached 6,800 school children, 690 unemployed youth, and 3,000 mothers of preschool children, significantly contributing to the reduction of malnutrition across the island.



During their visit, Mr. Tobias and Ms. Maria were accompanied by diocesan directors and field staff from Caritas Kandy, Caritas Anuradhapura, and Caritas Vanni. These local teams organized comprehensive field visits to home gardening projects, Village Knowledge Centres, and Marketing Centres. The hands-on experience allowed the visiting advisors to observe the tangible outcomes of the program, particularly the progress made by Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in rural areas.

The gratitude of the local communities was evident through their warm welcome, which highlighted their appreciation for the program’s contributions. Beneficiaries expressed their satisfaction with the ability to cultivate and consume chemical-free vegetables and fruits, leading to healthier, more nutritionally balanced diets. These conversations

with farmer families provided valuable insights into the ongoing success of the Food Security Program.

In conclusion, the visit of Caritas Norway's advisors underscored the success and impact of the Food Security Program in Sri Lanka. This collaboration between Caritas Norway, and Caritas Sri Lanka continues to serve as a model of sustainable development and compassionate outreach, fostering positive change and improving the well-being of communities throughout the country.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

PROJECT OVERVIEW - 1st APRIL 2023 to 31st MARCH 2024 (Partner- Wise)

Agency	Project	Amount (Rs)	Total (Rs)	Sector
AGIAMONDO	Civil peace service project	3,446,016	3,446,016	Peace & Advocacy
CAFOD	Helping people move towards reconciliation phase - SLK 331	11,700,000	11,700,000	Peace & Advocacy
Caritas Asia	Capacitating CSL Staff to mobilize vulnerable Communities to be resilience for disasters in disaster prone districts in Sri Lanka.	2,445,406	2,445,406	Emergency Support
	Contextual Analysis of Sri Lanka	2,730,560	2,730,560	Peace & Advocacy
Caritas Australia	Lighting the Lives of Plantation People	6,359,855	6,359,855	Advocacy & Lobbying
	Enhancing food security and livelihood for crisis affected families in three provinces in Sri Lanka.	40,516,438	40,516,438	Emergency Support
	Micro Project 2023	6,860,000	6,860,000	Livelihood Development
	Enhancing resilience of the victims of the Economic & Hunger crisis in Sri Lanka.	42,529,500	42,529,500	Emergency Support
Caritas Korea	Educational assistance to economic crisis and war affected poor children in Northern, Eastern and North Central provinces of Sri Lanka	33,477,792	33,477,792	Educational Support
	Supporting Primary Education of Poor and Vulnerable Children	14,256,000	14,256,000	Educational Support
	Nutrition & well-being support for children affected by economic crisis	36,925,000	36,925,000	Emergency Support
Caritas Malaysia	Enhancing resilience of the victims of the Economic & Hunger crisis in Sri Lanka.	16,235,452	16,235,452	Emergency Support
Caritas Norway	Improving Rural Livelihoods, Enhancing Food Security and Building Climate Resilience in Sri Lanka.	193,490,621	193,490,621	Sustainable Agriculture
Caritas Slovenia	With work towards a decent life support for poor families in Sri Lanka.	2,737,238	2,737,238	Sustainable Agriculture
Catholic Relief Services - USCCB	Empowering of Sri Lanka's Tea plantation communities.	29,061,351	29,061,351	Advocacy & Lobbying
Centre for Humanitarian Affairs (CHA)	Scholarship Program 2023-2024 for the children affected by the Zion Bomb attack and conflict in Batticaloa.	384,000	384,000	Educational Support

FINANCIAL REVIEW

PROJECT OVERVIEW - 1st APRIL 2023 to 31st MARCH 2024 (Partner- Wise)

Agency	Project	Amount (Rs)	Total (Rs)	Sector
DFCC Bank Plc	Scholarship Program for underprivileged children .	2,000,000	2,000,000	Educational Support
Kindermissionswerk	Ensuring the rights of children with disabilities and their parents/ care givers in Mannar & Kilinochchi districts	18,562,125	18,562,125	Health & Rehabilitation
	A modern dynamic and youth centered approach to peace process and conflict mitigation. 322.900.1147	64,405,500	64,405,500	Peace & Advocacy
Misereor	Mitigation of Thalassemia in the Dioceses of Kurunegala, Batticaloa and Chilaw through Awareness and Empowerment 322.900.1148	5,823,236	5,823,236	Health & Rehabilitation
	Facilitating Green Gold Harvesters to Reap Maximum Benefits to Plantation Communities- 322.900.1145	22,835,111	22,835,111	Advocacy & Lobbying
	A stepping stone to Safeguarding Sri Lanka's Natural Environment 322-900-1149	111,636,500	111,636,500	Environment and climate resilience
	Enhancing resilience of the victims of the Economic crisis in Sri Lanka. 322.900.1152	53,277,600	53,277,600	Emergency Support
	Livelihood & Housing Support for war affected communities in Northern, North Central and eastern provinces in Sri Lanka.". 322.900.1147	55,012,000	55,012,000	Livelihood Development
	Livelihood & Housing Support for war affected communities in Northern, North Central and eastern provinces in Sri Lanka.". 322.900.1147	55,012,000	55,012,000	Livelihood Development
MSC Mission Overseas Aid Fund / Project Lanka	Micro Project	19,055,750	19,055,750	Livelihood Development
Mr. Mark Cutter	Sundry donations	235,104	235,104	Emergency Support
One-Body One-Spirit Movement- OBOS	Provision of Medical assistance to patients suffering from severe medical conditions and financial trauma	6,640,516	6,640,516	Health & Rehabilitation
	Empowered Households: Fostering Secure sustainable livelihood and nourishing environments for families	7,469,770	7,469,770	Livelihood Development
		810,108,441	810,108,441	

FINANCIAL REVIEW

PROJECT OVERVIEW - 1ST APRIL 2022 to 31ST MARCH 2023 (Project- wise)

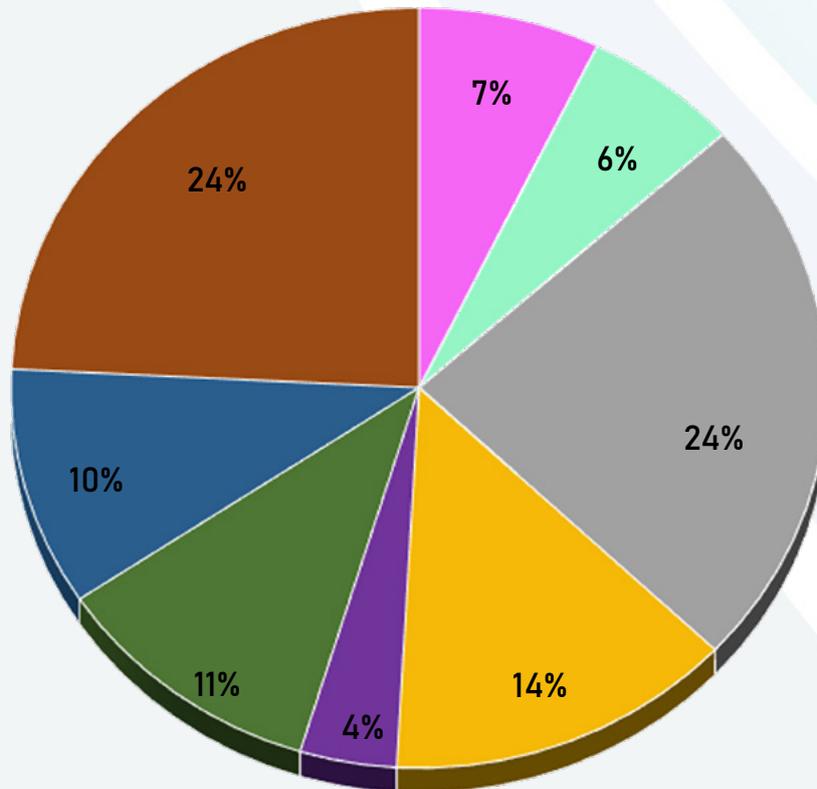
Project	Agency	Amount (Rs)	Total (Rs)	%	Sector
A modern dynamic and youth centered approach to peace process and conflict mitigation. 322.900.1147	Misereor	64,405,500	64,405,500	8.0%	Peace & Advocacy
A stepping stone to Safeguarding Sri Lanka's Natural Environment 322-900-1149		111,636,500	111,636,500	13.8%	Environment & climate resilience
Improving Rural Livelihoods, Enhancing Food Security and Building Climate Resilience in Sri Lanka.	Caritas Norway	193,490,621	193,490,621	23.9%	Sustainable Agriculture
Capacitating CSL Staff to mobilize vulnerable Communities to be resilience for disasters in disaster prone districts in Sri Lanka.	Caritas Asia	2,445,406	2,445,406	0.3%	Emergency Support
Contextual Analysis of Sri Lanka		2,730,560	2,730,560	0.3%	Peace & Advocacy
Educational assistance to economic crisis and war affected poor children in Northern, Eastern and North Central provinces of Sri Lanka	Caritas Korea	33,477,792	33,477,792	4.1%	Educational Support
Empowered Households: Fostering Secure sustainable livelihood and nourishing environments for families	One-Body One-Spirit Movement-OBOS	7,469,770	7,469,770	0.9%	Livelihood Development
Empowering of Sri Lanka's Tea plantation communities.	Catholic Relief Services - USCCB	29,061,351	29,061,351	3.6%	Advocacy & Lobbying
Enhancing resilience of the victims of the Economic crisis in Sri Lanka. 322.900.1152	Misereor	53,277,600	53,277,600	6.6%	Emergency Support
	Caritas Malaysia	16,235,452	16,235,452	2.0%	
	Caritas Italiana	42,529,500	42,529,500	5.2%	
Enhancing food security and livelihood for crisis affected families in three provinces in Sri Lanka.	Caritas Australia	40,516,438	40,516,438	5.0%	Emergency Support
Ensuring the rights of children with disabilities and their parents/ care givers in Mannar & Kilinochchi districts	Kindermission	18,562,125	18,562,125	2.3%	Health & Rehabilitation
Facilitating Green Gold Harvesters to Reap Maximum Benefits to Plantation Communities- 322.900.1145	Misereor	22,835,111	22,835,111	2.8%	Advocacy & Lobbying

FINANCIAL REVIEW

PROJECT OVERVIEW - 1ST APRIL 2022 to 31ST MARCH 2023 (Project- wise)

Project	Agency	Amount (Rs)	Total (Rs)	%	Sector
Helping people move towards reconciliation phase - SLK 331	CAFOD	11,700,000	11,700,000	1.4%	Peace and Advocacy
Lighting the Lives of Plantation People	Caritas Australia	6,359,855	6,359,855	0.8%	Advocacy & Lobbying
Livelihood & Housing Support for war affected communities in Northern, North Central and eastern provinces in Sri Lanka." 322.900.1147	Misereor	55,012,000	55,012,000	6.8%	Livelihood Development
Micro Project	MSC Mission Overseas Aid Fund/ Project Lanka	19,055,750	19,055,750	2.4%	Livelihood Development
	Caritas Italiana	6,860,000	6,860,000	0.8%	Livelihood Development
Mitigation of Thalassemia in the Dioceses of Kurunegala, Batticaloa and Chilaw through Awareness and Empowerment	Misereor	5,823,236	5,823,236	0.7%	Health and Rehabilitation
Nutrition & well-being support for children affected by economic crisis	Caritas Korea	36,925,000	36,925,000	4.6%	Emergency Support
Provision of Medical assistance to patients suffering from severe medical conditions and financial trauma	One-Body One-Spirit Movement- OBOS	6,640,516	6,640,516	0.8%	Health and Rehabilitation
Civil peace service project	AGIAMONDO	3,446,016	3,446,016	0.4%	Peace and Advocacy
Scholarship Program 2022 - 2023 for the children affected by the Zion Bomb attack and conflict in Batticaloa.	Centre for Humanitarian Affairs (CHA)	384,000	384,000	0.0%	Educational Support
Scholarship Program for underprivileged children .	DFCC Bank Plc	2,000,000	2,000,000	0.2%	Educational Support
Sundry donation	Mr. Mark Cutter	235,104	235,104	0.0%	Emergency Support
Supporting Primary Education of Poor and Vulnerable Children	Caritas Korea	14,256,000	14,256,000	1.8%	Educational Support
Work towards a decent life support for poor families in Sri Lanka.	Caritas Slovenia	2,737,238	2,737,238	0.3%	Sustainable Agriculture
		810,108,441	810,108,441	100%	

FUND RECEIPTS 2022/2023



Appreciations

Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC and the Diocesan Centres wish to express our sincere gratitude to all our Partners for your steadfast support, assistance, and encouragement. Your dedication is instrumental in driving our collective efforts to make a meaningful impact in the community.

Thank you for standing with us.

Asia Partnership for Human Development (APHD)

CAFOD

Caritas Germany

Caritas India

Caritas Italiana

Caritas Japan

Caritas Korea

Caritas Norway

Caritas Singapore- CHARIS

Caritas Slovenia

Catholic Relief Services - USCCB

Centre for Humanitarian Affairs (CHA)

DFCC Bank Plc

Hatton National Bank Plc

Kindermissionswerk

Misereor

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MSC Mission Overseas Aid Fund / Project Lanka

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