

Compassion 575

4th Quarterly report

for 2016

| Name of CFCDP | No of Children | District / Province |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Poolankaadu | 42 | Thoppigala / East |
| Tharavai | 42 | |
| Naripul Thorttam | 110 | Batticaloa / East |
| Vaharai | 95 | |
| Murippu | 56 | Mullaitivu / North |
| Pooneri Maththuwilnaadu | 40 | } Kilinotchchi / North |
| Paranthan G.M.T | 60 | |
| Elephant pass G.M.T | 155 | |
| Colombo Ministry Center, Wattala | 65 | Gampaha / West |
| Bogahawatta | 71 | Nuwara Eliya / Central |
| Dangedara | 116 | Galle / South |

Children's day celebration

Children are our future and they ought to be recognized as partners of our Ministry is NCML's stand in its involvement with children. What NCML believes is merely different to some other institution. In many parts of the world, especially in Sri Lanka, children are used as objects that meet the needs of some individuals who are concerned for their own benefit or pleasure. Often we've heard and seen children being used as objects to improve organizational security. Children are used to bring more revenue to families, organizations and individuals and they have been simply used for these purposes.

That said, for NCML, Children's Day this year was not simply a day to celebrate children for who they are, but to bring awareness to children throughout the island that have succumbed to violence in forms of abuse, exploitation and discrimination. Children are used as laborers in some parts of the country, immersed in armed conflict, living on the streets, suffering by differences be it religion, minority issues, or disabilities. Whilst allowing them to enjoy the day as it was their right, we also made all arrangements to let children know the threats and challenges they meet in their day to day life and the ways to be preventive.

Generally functions are organized in schools and most schools hold cultural performances on this day, run by the children themselves. Teachers also get involved, and may perform songs and dances for their students. On this day, the Local and the Central Government also make it a point to showcase children's films as part of Film festivals organized in many parts of the country and also various cultural and social institutions conduct competitions for children. Children's Day is seen as a day for the kids to engage in fun. Children take part in many activities organized for them and it is celebrated widely in almost all the schools that are supported by NCML.



Paranthan Children's Day



Elephant Pass Children's Day

NCML's celebration this year was much different. It took the opportunity to teach children some of their rights and most importantly preventive measures that would come in handy in times of trouble. To make it more effective, NCML invited people from institutions that dealt with child issues and their development. Our main objective was to raise awareness among children and adults to prevent child exploitation.

In areas where NCML ministers in Sri Lanka, it is understood that poverty is the main reason for child exploitation. People are vulnerable. They have the least of education and are extreme low income earners. Most of the mothers migrate to other parts of the country or leave the country seeking employment. This leaves their children, especially girls, in vulnerable situations. To mitigate this situation, NCML has been offering parents the opportunity to increase their income through savings and loans through the self-help groups. We also offer parents the opportunity to increase their income through provision of livestock. But still, hundreds of mothers are found leaving their young children with people who care very little for the safety of children for employment.



Cultural programs at the Children's Day celebrations in Naripulthottam CDC

At this year's children day program, every parent who participated was well educated about their role in preventing children from danger and all forms of exploitations. What we emphasized mostly was the support we expect from parents for the safety of their children. "Nothing we do at the CFCDP could help

the child from being exploited unless parents too support our efforts” said Suresh, the local NCML staff when he addressed the gathering at the Poolankaadu CFCDP. The support of parents to safeguard the lives of children is highly crucial and this is one component NCML has been very persistently persuading. They were also spoken about the Child Protection Authorities they could reach when needed. Though the Government of Sri Lanka has put these positions in place, they are hardly made uses of. People haven’t the knowledge to approach these assistances. Therefore contact details of all places that work for the safety of the children were given to parents. Mr. Pathmanadan from the Child Protection Bureau attended the Children’s day program in the Tharavai School and in his speech he went on to say that Children who are victims of exploitation need protection. *“Provide them shelter, health care, counselling and education to build a new future”* he continued while thanking and appreciating the good work NCML has thus far done in villages that no other organizations have reached.

Year-end evaluation

The children in all Compassion 575 supported CFCDPs got extremely busy during the past few months as the year end examination got closer. Teachers and students engaged in very serious work preparing for this important examination. Examinations that began early November generally go on till early December in some schools. During this period teachers and students focus more on classroom work than the outdoor activities. Children revisit all lessons taught from January and get help from teachers who stay with them till late evening.

Yaalini and Navamani are teachers from the Paranthan CFCDP. They live quite far from the school and use public transportation to get to school. They teach mathematics to the children. Ramki, NCML's local staff informed us that these two teachers stayed till about 5.00 pm daily during the last two weeks to help the children. *“They live far and the last bus from the village to where they live is at 4.00 pm. They hire trishaws to get to the town after teaching the children till 5.00 pm”* Ramki said. This was the commitment we saw in teachers in all the CFCDPs across the island this quarter. NCML met with all the teachers and all of them are very confident of their children doing much better this time. They confirmed that they received a lot of support from children. *“They concentrated well and were focused. Therefore it was easy for us to do more work than we expected”* said Yaalini. She also went on to say that the teachers are beginning to learn that the children are quietly making their way to be independent. They are now able to read and understand a lesson. *“We promote a curriculum that aspires to equip children with numeracy and literacy, as well as knowledge in other subjects, when you guide children toward understanding the basics then they are able to understand the subject better”* she continued.



Outdoor activities at the Murippu CDC in Northern Sri Lanka

Success Story

Madusha is a grade 5 student from the Dangedara CFCDP in South Sri Lanka. His parents are day laborers. They have no stable employment. Dhammika, Madusha's mom, leaves home once the little boy leaves to school in search of jobs. She walks from house to house finding odd jobs like washing clothes, washing dishes and pans, cleaning the garden, cooking etc. These jobs are hard to find and there are days that Dhammika returns home early as she fails to find jobs.

Madusha was quite good in studies as well as sports. He showed interest in outdoor activities as well. But for some unknown reason, Madusha began getting absent quite frequently from school. Eventually, about 2 months prior to his scholarship examination, he completely stopped coming to school. This continued for about 2 weeks.

This was quite upsetting the teachers and the caretakers. *"I could not wait any more, so I went to Madusha's home to look for him"* said Viduni, NCML's local staff.

When Viduni got there, something very unusual had happened. Madusha who was very fond of Viduni, refuses to talk to her. *"He completely ignored and avoided me"* Viduni said. Feeling very sad about his behavior, Viduni sat down to talk to his mother. During her conversation, Viduni figured out that the relationship between both parents wasn't steady. *"My husband is an alcoholic, he returns home heavily drunk basically every day and beats me and sometimes the children as well"* said Dhammika with tears pouring down her face. This terrible lifestyle of theirs has affected the children badly and they too respond negatively.

"After seeing all these things happen, Madusha has refused to go to school probably to stay home and rescue me in case his father comes home during the day" the mother continued assuming it was for this reason her son stopped going to school. Viduni was very sad to leave that home that day. However, she made her second attempt the following day. Viduni visited Madusha again, surprisingly, his behavior had slightly changed. *"Good morning Aunty"* Madusha greeted Viduni. After a very long discussion with both Madusha and his mother, the little boy agreed to come back to the CFCDP.

By this time Madusha had missed quite a lot of school work. It was about 3-4 week's work that Madusha had to catch up and it would never be possible if Madusha did not get special care. Therefore, a teacher was arranged for Madusha to coach him separately. The teacher worked very hard with him and spent extra hours in the evening to help him for the scholarship examination which was just around the corner. Madusha too showed tremendous interest. We made every possible attempt to make him forget the problems he faces at home while he was at the CFCDP.

In no time, the big day came. It was Madusha's day to showcase his talents and abilities. The little boy went confidently to sit for the gigantic scholarship examination like he had never missed any of the lessons. The teachers were quite certain that Madusha would do very well in his examination. Like expected Madusha did his best to score 78 points. He was one of the 17 boys who reached this point. Though he couldn't climb up to the cut off mark, his achievement is highly appreciable. Dhammika at a recent parents meeting told NCML that she was very happy about the interest NCML showed towards her son and it was purely the love we had for her son that changed him.

Madusha is a very happy student at the Gangedara CFCDP and NCML will continue to support him and his family.