



The Asia Foundation



Sarvodaya



The INSPIRED Project

Funded by - The Asia Foundation

Implemented by - Sarvodaya

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**2018 June 1st to 2021 August 30th
Sri Lanka**

Contents

Message from Deputy Country Representative of The Asia Foundation	04
Message from the President of Sarvodaya	05
About the INSPIRED Project	06
'We are on the same path together,' exhibition	07
Executive summary by the Executive Director, Sarvodaya	08
Recommendations	10
Case studies Thambalagamuwa	
1. Mr A. Jabarulla - Dairy farm	11
2. J.A. Rupika Irangani - Organic home gardening (Partnership)	13
3. T. Thevaponmalar - Home gardening (Partnership)	14
4. Anula Priyadarshani Fernando - School equipment and clothing retail (Partnership)	16
5. Vinodani Ransimala - Plant nursery	17
6. S. Marliya - Dress making (Partnership)	19
7. Mrs. S.M. Habila - Multi-shop	20
8. T. Vijayarathi - Rice flour production	22
9. Mrs. D. Sayaruby - Party mix and bites	23
10. Abdul Aziz Pashmina- Palmyra leaf handicrafts (Partnership)	25
Case studies Town & Gravets	
1. C. Jeroni - Candle making	27
2. Vasanthan Jeyamaladevi - Sari decorations (Partnership)	28
3. Paul Julies Paul - Aloe vera products (Partnership)	30
4. A. Ranjani - Aloe vera products (Partnership)	32
5. J. Mathivathani - Party mix and bites	34
6. V. Balasaraswathi - Handwash and natural soaps	35
7. Jayapalan Jayakumari - Rice flour production	37
8. N. Nishanthini - Dress making (Partnership)	39
9. P. Vijayarani - Rice flour packeting and mill (Partnership)	40
10. M. Shabina Shanthi - Rice flour production (Partnership)	42
11. N. Rukkiya - Short eats (Partnership)	44
12. P. Thangeshwary - Traditional food (Partnership)	45
13. V. Raheema Begum - Dry fish (Partnership)	47
14. N. Riswana Begum- Short eats and meals (Partnership)	49
15. S. Puvanakeethan - Motorcycle mechanic	51

16.	S. Tharshini - Food business (Partnership)	53
17.	Ashoka Shriyani - Bites and sweets (Partnership)	54
18.	Sukirtha Jeevamalar - Dress making (Partnership)	56
19.	Shyamali Priyanthilatha -Dry fish and Maldive fish (Partnership)	58
20.	T.S. Sepali Priyanthi - Dry fish and Maldive fish (Partnership)	59
21.	T.H. Vijitha Mallika - Dry fish and Maldive fish (Partnership)	61
Case studies Kantale		
1.	M. Thanuja Kumari Munasinghe - Dress making (Partnership)	63
2.	E.L.M.S. Geethika Bandara - Ice-cream making	65
3.	A. Inshaf Ahmed - Handloom clothing (Partnership)	67
4.	A.M Beevi Umma - Handloom clothing (Partnership)	69
5.	A. Fathima Rifna - Handloom clothing (Partnership)	71
6.	A. Jeravajeni - Spice manufacturing (Partnership)	73
7.	J.P.C Padmini - Buffalo curd (Partnership)	75
8.	W.P Ranjini - Dairy Farm (Partnership)	77
9.	K.B.T Nisansala - Buffalo curd	78
10.	P. Roshini Gomes - Concrete flower pots	80
11.	A.W Chandani Abeygunawardane - Lake View Guesthouse and Restaurant	82
12.	K.R Sujeeva Indralatha - Handloom bags (Partnership)	84
13.	W.S Rathnamali Wattegedara - Spice production (Partnership)	86
14.	G.B Mangalika Shirani - Sewing mosquito nets (Partnership)	88
15.	Ruwanthika Chaamali Kodikara - Baby clothes using natural dyes (Partnership)	90
16.	H.A Nishanthi Shyamali - Clothing with natural dyes (Partnership)	91
17.	M.A Manori Prasadini - Baby clothes using natural dyes (Partnership)	93
18.	K.W.G Chandani Jayantha - Sweets	95
19.	G. Selvarani - Rice flour production	96

Message from Deputy Country Representative of The Asia Foundation

The Asia Foundation is proud of our long and successful partnership with Sarvodaya spanning many decades. This particular partnership began with Sarvodaya in 2018 with a focus on implementing activities under the Initiative for Sustained Peaceful Inter-ethnic Relations for Economic Development (INSPIRED) project in the Trincomalee district.

This project promotes social cohesion through inter-community engagement in the micro and small business sector. The project is based in the Eastern Province and is implemented with the support of local partners Group Action for Social Order (Ampara), Eastern Self-Reliant Community Awakening Organization (Batticaloa), Sarvodaya (Trincomalee), the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities and the Good Market.

Sarvodaya conducted several inter-community dialogues with 72 micro and small business owners, the majority being women, across three project divisions. These dialogues provided the opportunity for businesses to interact collaboratively around common interests and to ensure economic benefits are inclusive and available equally to all. Sarvodaya also trained these participants, providing business skills and an understanding of gender and conflict sensitivity. In addition, a selected number of micro and small business owners received seed grants to support business ideas that promote and strengthen inter-community collaboration.

It is inspiring to see Sarvodaya publish 50 stories that highlight the outcomes of the INSPIRED project. This will be a great resource that documents successes and lesson learned, which can be of use for many stakeholders. I wish to thank Sarvodaya for this effort and wish them well in their continuing journey to uplift and empower the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in Sri Lanka.

Johann Rebert
Deputy Country Representative
The Asia Foundation

Message from the President of the Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya (Inc.)

Sarvodaya is delighted to have partnered with the Asia Foundation on the INSPIRED project catering to the ground realities of Small and Micro Entrepreneurs in the District of Trincomalee. While creating novel entrepreneurial opportunities, the project has also helped existing businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This booklet features 50 key-success stories of the project, while portraying how the implementation methodology adopted has improved the entrepreneurial capacities of the project beneficiaries. It has enhanced existing business outputs, created fresh ones, as well as contributed to the regional economy in different capacities.

The Trincomalee District had been specifically selected as a project focus area considering several socio-economic aspects, i.e., its multi-ethnic population, the high frequency of women-headed households and the level of additional empowerment and support they require to recover from the aftermath of the three-decade armed conflict. This recovery is not only in terms of livelihood regeneration, but most importantly, in terms of re-establishing trust and cooperation between different communities that are divided on ethnic, religious and language contours. The project was operational since 2018, amidst different ethnically and culturally sensitive junctures. The Easter Sunday attacks (April 2019), affected intercommunal trust that was slowly progressed since the end of war. In 2020, the socio-economic fabric was once more disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nevertheless, the project has yielded successful outcomes by August 2021, indicating impressive findings, such as enabling business opportunities as a key factor to uphold communal integration, paving the way to economic interdependence. It is noteworthy that most grant recipients are women and many participants formed financially viable, inter-communal partnerships to qualify for the grants. Their economic interlinkages are back on track, having re-established trust and cooperation amongst diverse communities. Some businesses are already in the process of registering their businesses with the intention of contributing to the formal economy. It is also noteworthy that most grant recipients had no formal knowledge of business accounting, nor related acumen to formalities. Therefore, the training given to them have been a proven success in empowering them to face the challenges of the entrepreneurial world.

On behalf of Sarvodaya I extend my sincere gratitude to the Asia Foundation for a yet another successful, trusted, and cherished partnership. The project teams and implementing partners at the field level was indispensable in taking this project to its fruition against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also extend my gratitude to the Governor of the Eastern Province, the Eastern Provincial Council, the District Secretaries and Grama Niladaris of the respective project divisions. My sincere appreciations to the ground level CBOs, particularly; the Group Action for Social Order (Ampara), Eastern Self-Reliant Community Awakening Organization (Batticaloa), the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities, the Good Market, and the Vidatha Resource Center for their continuous support.

We look forward to continuing our partnerships with the Asia Foundation, ground level partners and communities leading to Sarvodaya – the Awakening of All.

Dr Vinya Ariyaratne

President

Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya (Inc.)

About the INSPIRED Project

The Initiative for Sustained Peaceful Inter-ethnic Relations for Economic Development (INSPIRED) project was conducted by the Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Sharamadha Sangamaya (Sarvodaya), in the Trincomalee district. Funding for the project was granted by The Asia Foundation (TAF).

The project was implemented by Sarvodaya, in collaboration with the Eastern University, South Eastern University, Centre for Poverty Analysis, Group Action for Social Order, Eastern Self-Reliant Community Awakening Organization, Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities and National Enterprise Development.

Project duration

2018 June 1st to 2021 August 30th (extended from July 31st, 2021)

Project objectives

The broad objective of the project was to improve inter-ethnic relations in Sri Lanka through inter-community engagement in the business sector in the Eastern province, and through advocacy for institutionalization and national replication of successful inter-ethnic reconciliation pilot initiatives.

Project goals:

1. Establish an evidence base on inter-ethnic social capital and business environment in project sites to inform P2P activities and track changes in attitudes and behaviors.
2. Support inter-ethnic dialogues with a focus on business community tensions/issues within selected project divisions.
3. Transform behavior and practices among ethnic groups through inter-group dialogues at district level that support inter-ethnic cooperation on economic initiatives.
4. Promote replication of lessons learned and models of inter-ethnic collaboration in the business sector from project divisions with other local authorities, in the Eastern Province.

Project locations

Following a baseline research by the Eastern University and other partners, the project was launched in the Trincomalee District, in the 3 Divisional Secretariats divisions of:

1. Thambalagamuwa
2. Kantale
3. Town and Gravets

Training programs

1. Peace building
2. Inter-group training and dialogues on economic interdependence and coexistence in selected project divisions P.P.D (divisional Level)
3. Business Development
4. Gender development
5. Business proposal and planning

6. Inter-group training and dialogues on economic interdependence and coexistence in selected project divisions P.P.D (district level)
7. Good Market Training- for technical skills and value addition in the areas of organic farming, food processing and crafts. Each participant attended a training on the subject area that was most suitable to develop their existing business or business plan.

Project monitoring

The most impactful aspect of the INSPIRED project was the continuous project monitoring and advisory support services extended to all grant recipients, which was instrumental in creating a nurturing backdrop for grant recipients, to achieve their business objectives. Grant recipients were visited at their business locations at least twice a month and in some cases up to four times per month, to review progress according to their business proposals. These visits were recorded using photographs and documentation, to track progress. On each visit, discussions were held with the grant recipients and their families, on any bottlenecks and/or problems experienced, and solutions were provided in the form of technical advisory support through various external agencies. In addition, regular phone calls were also made to grant recipients to remain engaged and to provide any required assistance.

We are on the same path together,' exhibition

A 2-day entrepreneur's exhibition, titled We Are On the Same Path Together, was held on September 28th and 29th 2020, at the Hindu Cultural Hall in Trincomalee. The objective of the exhibition was to preserve and promote local production and traditional handicrafts for sustainable livelihoods of the poor and marginalized. The exhibition was organized by Sarvodaya INSPIRED project team with the support of The Asia Foundation and district and national level Sarvodaya staff, and also volunteers. More than 86 small and medium entrepreneurs displayed their products at this exhibition. The exhibition was very impactful for the entrepreneurs, to generate new orders for their goods and to develop new ideas for the future.

Objectives

1. Strengthen social cohesion of the business community (Inter ethnic and cultural)
2. Create a platform for the beneficiaries to showcase and publicize their businesses ventures and talents
3. Build new market-oriented linkages and networks
4. Create new opportunities for the beneficiaries within the project

Executive summary by the Executive Director, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement

Sarvodaya and The Asia Foundation partnered in 2018 to bring the light to the lives of the struggling small and micro entrepreneurs, particularly in the Trincomalee district through the INSPIRED project. Trincomalee district is selected as the location for the pilot project due its harmonized demographic composition of having all three Sri Lankan ethnicities providing an ideal location to test the theory of 'Promoting social cohesion through entrepreneurship' in the post-war Sri Lanka.

After months of consultation with the Local Government Authorities and the district authorities the three locations of Thambalagamuwa, Kantale and Trincomalee Town and Gravest were selected as the most suitable locations for the INSPIRED project. All three locations accommodate a mixed population of Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim communities, with a language-mix of Sinhala and Tamil, intersected by limited use of English. All three locations are still recovering from the nearly-30 years of armed-conflict and represent high levels of poverty and a significant percentage of female-headed households, which made economic recovery from the conflict even more difficult.

The project faced an obstacle almost immediately following its launch, due to the Easter Sunday Attack in April 2019, which once more divided the communities on ethnic and religious lines with propagated distrust. However, this was also a challenge to test the effectiveness of the INSPIRED project's design to build communal bridges, and I am pleased to report our success in this regard as an exceptional outcome of the project. The project once again faced a set back with the sudden emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, which caused implementation delays due to restrictions on travel and gatherings as a result of health guidelines imposed by the Government to contain the spread of the virus. However, once again, our team prevailed against these headwinds and steered the project to a satisfactory conclusion by August 2021.

A total of 120 participants, a majority of them are women, benefited from the INSPIRED training, while 49 benefited from the seed grants. Many of these grants were awarded for feasible, practical, and intercommunal partnerships that were mutually beneficial. The training programs introduced participants to the concepts of entrepreneurship, communal cooperation and women's empowerment and also the use of external resource agencies such as the Good Market and the Vidatha Resource Centers provided targeted technical training to project participants to capitalize on market opportunities. On a practical level, many new market linkages were created for all participants to enhance their business opportunities. The exhibition 'We Are On the Same Path Together' organized in September 2020, presented innovative platform for the participants to expand market linkages.

One of the most important contributions by the INSPIRED project was the creation of ongoing communication linkages between the participant entrepreneurs and the key local government agencies, such as the Provincial Council, Local Government Authorities and the District Secretariats. The INSPIRED teams also supported grant recipients by connecting them to the additional advisory services to successfully deploy their proposed business plans. As at the time of this report in August 2021, all 49 grant recipients have recorded steady progress in their enterprises under the INSPIRED support and supervision, and have continued to maintain the inter-communal linkages created through the INSPIRED project for the betterment of the society through greater understanding and coexistence. We believe, this can be a initial small step towards reestablishing communal trust and cooperation through the promotion of entrepreneurship, that could lead an example to the entire country.

Sarvodaya teams have learned many lessons through the INSPIRED project, despite the backdrop of the Easter Sunday Attacks and the COVID-19 pandemic, and we look forward to an even more effective and powerful engagement with similar community groups in the future to benefit their lives, families and their communities.

As we conclude INSPIRED project in Trincomalee, I would like to acknowledge all the support and assistance extended to Sarvodaya by The Asia Foundation, state and non-state institutions, entrepreneurs and businesses including the Chambers of Commerce, and I also like to extend my sincere appreciations to our Project Team led by Ms. Jinadari Wedamulla, and District Team led by Mr. Jeevaraj.

We are so happy that we could inspire not only the project participants but many other stakeholders too through the INSPIRE Project to continue their life long journeys of service to humanity.

Sincerely yours,

Chamindha Rajakaruna (Attorney-at-Law)

Executive Director

Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement

Recommendations

Learnings from the Project

- More training on enterprises
- Civilians prefer to express their feelings and experiences within small groups
- Entrepreneurs are willing to learn new things from non-traditional sources
- The pandemic experience helped to continue the project activities while maintaining strong networks.
- Need to have alternative methods to complete activities
- It is necessary to focus on aligning with the other partner organizations for more sustainability
- A solid mechanism to expand efficiency among the internal team is a requirement
- Expanding the geographical coverage [divisional and district wise] by escalating the project objectives
- Need to implement a mechanism for the selected beneficiaries, to keeping them on track with us

Case studies Thambalagamuwa

1. Mr A. Jabarulla - Dairy farm

History of the client

Mr Jabarulla who lives in 619, Araba Nagar, bought a cow to obtain fresh milk, in 2017. His cow produced 3 liters of milk per day. He had also built a small, makeshift shed to house the cow and sold the milk to a few neighbors.

Present situation

Mr Jabarulla now owns 3 milk cows and 2 calves, and provides 40 liters of milk per day, which he sells to the area Milk Board. The milk was examined and was considered of good standard. He has improved the cowshed to make it sturdier and cleaner, and is able to collect the cow dung to make fertilizer. He has also stocked up on straw and feed for cows. He has started making organic fertilizer from his cow dung.

With his herd of cows and calves, Mr Jabarulla is now considered a small dairy farmer and his income supports his family's wellbeing. His business growth has set a good example to other villagers.

Explanation of the project training course

In 2018, Mr Jabarulla joined the project and participated in all the workshops. In the first workshop, he learned about cooperation and communications, conflicts and outbreaks of violence, related to the present context. The activities consisted of cultural dialogues at the divisional level that helped change attitudes and foster friendships. He had a good relationship with other community members and gave his full support to the district participants and all activities.

Monitoring process

Before selecting Mr Jabarulla for the grant, the Sarvodaya team visited his business location for an assessment. After receiving the grant, the Sarvodaya team visited him twice a month, to physically verify progress and use of grant funds. Sarvodaya continues to monitor his business and community activities.

Outcome of activities

After the program, Mr Jabarulla keeps a cash book, which is updated daily and he now understands cashflow management and has a better understanding of his expenses and profit.

Through the project, he learned about the interlink between business and social cohesion, which was helpful to improve his business interactions.



Following the project, he has invested in improving and expanding his business. He has purchased new cows and calves and upgraded the cow shed. He has diversified his business into cow-dung fertilizer production. In January 2021, He spent the grant money for the above purchases and therefore had a zero balance. In February and March 2021, he earned Rs 39,000.

Selection for Grants

The selection to receive the grant was based on capacity, the business idea, the background of the area, the location and workshop attendance. At divisional level, the Grama Niladari, and Local Government Authority officials also approved Mr Jabarulla for the grant.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is an organization, which helps everyone without discrimination on religion, race, cast. Etc.. It motivates the self-employed"

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Aid from the Asia Foundation helped to bring peace between inter-ethnic communities."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Divisional Secretariat and Local Government Authority also support the poor village community and village level infrastructure development."

Value added products

The new product of fertilizer has been added to his business as an additional business line and income. The fertilizer is made using the cow dung from the cows. The fertilizer is sold directly from his home to neighboring farmers and also farmers from outside his village.

Market linkages

Mr Jabarulla has established a business relationship with the Milk Board of her area to sell milk and also established contacts to sell fertilizer.

Business registration process and progress

He has registered his business in the Department of Animal Husbandry at the village level, and regional level offices.

Social cohesion within the community

During the workshops Mr Jabarulla maintained a very good relationship with all ethnic groups and also provided support for district level participants.

Job opportunities

All work is done by the family and no external labor is being used.

2. J.A Rupika Irangani - Organic home gardening (Partnership)

History of the client

Irangani started home gardening as a small-scale business in 2015 with the support of her family and made it a successful business. She also weaves door mats in her spare time. During COVID-19 lockdowns she contributed to her village by distributing the produce from her garden among other village families.

Present situation

Irangani has started organic farming in her garden

Explanation of the project training course

Irangani participated in all INSPIRED project trainings and awareness programs and continues to be an active participant. She was exposed to account keeping and money management, how to establish business relations with government and private establishments, the public-private dialog with the Provincial Council and the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities. and also training by the Good Market on organic farming.



Monitoring process

The business was monitored once a month and once a week after the grant was given.

Outcome of activities

Irangani has applied the training on organic farming to her home gardening business. She has also started keeping accounts.

Selection for Grants

Irangani joined with another home gardener, Mrs Thevaponmalar, a Tamil lady also from Thambalagamuwa. The two ladies applied for the grant as a partnership and were awarded the grant due to the communal cooperation of the partnership and women empowerment aspects.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I joined the project because of Sarvodaya and it was very useful for me. So I am grateful for this opportunity."



Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Asia Foundation helped our businesses and also gave us funds. I have no words to describe how helpful this has been. I hope the Asia Foundation continues to help small businesses like us."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I highly appreciate the training by Good market. The public-private dialogue was also a good thing that helped businesses. I would like to thank all of them for collaborating in this way."

Value added products

Irangani has added value to her produce by making them organic.

Market linkages

Irangani has a new business partner, Mrs Thevaponmalar. She has also established many other business contacts by attending the INSPIRED project activities.

Business registration process and progress

Irangani has not yet registered her business.

Social cohesion within the community

Irangani has established a partnership with a Tamil lady and she hopes everyone learns to live in harmony, and cooperate with all communities, for mutual benefits."

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

3. T. Thevaponmalar - Home gardening (Partnership)

History of the client

Thevaponmalar is a widow from the Palampottaaru area. She does home gardening as a business. She has paddy land where she farmed rice and also grew black gram, ladies fingers, brinjals, and chili.

Present situation

Following the INSPIRED training she has formed a partnership with Irangani also from Thambalagamuwa, and has started organic farming using organic fertilizer and has also started poultry farming.



Explanation of the project training course

Thevaponmalar, participated in women's development, business development, marketing procedures, peace, and reconciliation workshops and increased her professional abilities and good relationships with other ethnic groups.

Monitoring process

Thevaponmalar's progress was observed twice a month with regular discussions on the status of her plans. The

INSPIRED team also coordinated with the Agriculture Development Officer and arranged matters to improve her business. Her high rate of performance, reflected the proper consultations and guidance.

Outcome of activities

The additional advisory and technical support provided through the INSPIRED project, by connecting Thevaponmalar with the national agricultural authorities, have helped her transition successfully into organic farming.

Selection for grants

Thevaponmalar partnered with a Sinhalese in applying for the grant which was awarded in the basis of the proposed business plans, community cooperation and gender empowerment. She is widow, providing for her family, and her daughter is still in school. This was also a consideration is selecting Thevaponmalar for the grant.



Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya sees everyone as the same, in providing regional level training and enhancing them to develop."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Asia Foundation is an organization that provides livelihood support and motivation to village-level women, to increase their professional capacity to develop livelihoods."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The divisional and district secretariat are doing infrastructural development in or villages, which is a good thing."

Value added products

Thevaponmalar is producing organic produce from her organic farm, which has higher income generation potential.

Market linkages

Thevaponmalar has partnered with a Sinhalese and has also made many other market links.

Business registration process and progress

Business registration is in the process of being made

Social cohesion within the community

Thevaponmalar has a partnership with a Sinhalese and also maintains good relationships with all communities.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

4. Anula Priyadarshani Fernando - School equipment and clothing retail (Partnership)

History of the client

Anula started her retail outlet in 2015 to sell items for school children such as school books and school bags. With the support of her husband her shop became reasonably successful. She then added clothing and religious offerings to her product list.

Present situation

Anula has expended her product range to include palmyra leaf products following the formation of a partnership with a Muslim lady called Pashmina.

Explanation of the project training course

The INSPIRED training raised awareness about business planning, how to establish contact with government and private establishments for business purposes and financial management. Training was also provided by the Good Market.



Monitoring process

The business was monitored once a month and once a week after the grant was given.

Outcome of activities

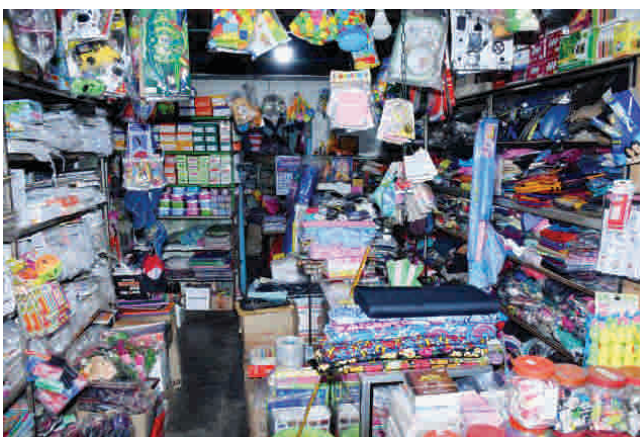
Anula has learned to administrate her business better and she has also established a business partnership.

Selection for Grants

Anula met Pashmina, a Muslim lady also from Thambalagamuwa, who had a business of palmyra leaf products and they two of them applied for the grant as a partnership. They were awarded the grant on grounds of gender empowerment and communal cooperation.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"It was through Sarvodaya that we got to know about this project. I learned many things about improving my business from this project."



Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Our businesses were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Asia Foundation has helped people like us recover. I am thankful for that."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The public-private dialogue made it possible to talk directly with Provincial Council officials, which is a very good thing. The Good Market also gave a good training. I am grateful to them."

Value added products

Anula has now expanded her product range to include palmyra leaf products which she obtains from Pashmina her business partner.

Market linkages

Anula has established contact with Pashmina and many other entrepreneurs at divisional and district level through the INSPIRED project.

Business registration process and progress

Anula has already registered her shop with the Provincial Council

Social cohesion within the community

Anula is partnering with Pashmina who is a Muslim lady and the two are working together in peace and harmony. Anula also engages with all communities in her business dealings.

Job opportunities

Anula hires extra help for her shop during December and April to cater to the busy season.

5. Vinodani Ransimala - Plant nursery

History of the client

Vinodani started a small plant nursery for flowers in 2017 supported by her mother and her husband. Her business is called Chanudi Plant Nursery.

Present situation

Vinodani has started a new business of making jams and chutneys without the use of chemicals.

Explanation of the project training course

Vinodani attended the INSPIRED project activities at divisional and district level and learned about business management and communal cooperation. She also attended training by the Good Market.

Monitoring process

The business was monitored once a month and once a week after the grant was given.



Outcome of activities

Vinodani has applied her Good Market training to start a new business.

Selection for Grants

Both district and divisional level participants of the INSPIRED project were allowed to apply for the grant and Vinodani applied for the grant and was selected as a woman entrepreneur and due to communal cooperation.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Because of Sarvodaya I learned a lot about how to make my business successful and I have put into practice what I learned."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Like Sarvodaya the Asia Foundation has helped our business and given us funds. I am very grateful to them."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I am grateful to the Provincial Council, The Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities. and the Good market for their services."



Value added products

Using her training from the Good Market, Vinodani has started a new business of making jams and chutneys without chemical additives. She plans to sell these to the Good Market.

Market linkages

Vinodani has established a business connection with the Good Market and got to know many other entrepreneurs on her area.

Business registration process and progress

Vinodani has applied for business registration

Social cohesion within the community

Vinodani says she learned about peaceful coexistence and inter community cooperation for successful business through the INSPIRED project. She says she learned about different ideas and experiences through the project and hopes everyone will live in harmony.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

6. S. Marliya - Dress making (Partnership)

History of the client

Marliya is from 587 Siraj Nagar, Mulipoththanai. She is a dress maker, stitching all kinds of dresses for girls.

Present situation

Marliya has purchased a sewing machine, which has enhanced her output. She also purchased stocks of textiles and is now taking dress making orders and also putting her clothes into retail shops to sell. Using her training, she is also making cloth animal toys and cloth bags.



Explanation of the project training course

Marliya joined the INSPIRED project in 2019 and learned about women in leadership, violence, and conflict, social cohesion, reconciliation between ethnic groups, financial management and business proposal development. She also participated in the public-private dialog. The awareness programs made her interact with other ethnicities and she was able to benefit from their different experiences and business models.

Monitoring process

Marliya was visited twice a month to check progress and to assist her with advice.

Outcome of activities

Marliya production volumes and quality have improved and she has diversified into cloth bag making and cloth toy making.



Selection for grants

By considering her leadership qualities, participation and business proposal, it was decided to select her for a grant.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"In my point of view, Sarvodaya serves women like me and motives them."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Asia Foundation collaborates with Sarvodaya and helps to improve village level people's livelihoods. They give funding and enhance women's development and help girls who are in a lower economic condition."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Divisional Secretariats are doing infrastructural development and helping to utilize local resources. They conduct training and encourage us to register or businesses."

Value added products

The use of a sewing machine has improved the quality of the sewing. In addition, Marliya is also making animal toys and bags from textiles.

Market linkages

Marliya is developing products for the Good Market by collaborating with other girls in her village.

Business registration process and progress

She has started the business registration process

Social cohesion within the community

Marliya has established contacts with all ethnic communities and works with them in harmony.

Job opportunities

In future, Marliya plans to build a work space to produce more cloth crafts by recruiting girls.

7. Mrs. S.M. Habila - Multi-shop

History of the client

Mrs Habila from 506 Shirajh Nagar, Mollipothana, had opened a small multi-shop and chicken business in her village.

Present situation

She now owns a new shop, and has expanded her range of goods. She also has a bigger clientele for her chicken.

Explanation of the project training course

Initially, at the start of the INSPIRED project, she was not very communicative. However, over time, as she interacted with other participants, she became actively involved in district discussions with all participants, and participated in all the workshops, and shared her own business experiences.



Monitoring process

The Sarvodaya team members and Asia Foundation officials visited Mrs Habila at her business premises twice a month and advised her about advancing her business. She was selected for the grant based on the review process.

Outcome of activities

She now understands the daily maintenance of the cash book and knows the monthly income. She has now built a new shop in front of her, after discussing with her family. The project grant could not cover the full construction

but she completed the construction of her shop with her own funds and also purchased a refrigerator, weighing machine and scales. She needs more capital to purchase chicken to supply her growing demand.

Selection for Grants

Asia Foundation and Sarvodaya both made a direct home visits and selected her for the grant. Her participation in all workshops, family support, ability, and the contribution towards women's empowerment, were other criteria for the selection.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is an organization that serves all, regardless of caste or religion."



Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I came to know that Asia Foundation is funding this project. Their staff are also very helpful."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Local Government Authority and Divisional Secretary and other voluntary organizations are doing many social activities in our area."

Value added products

Mrs Habila has added value to her business by taking it to the next level by building a separate shop and expanding her business.

Market linkages

Mrs Habila made many new friends and established many new market linkages by attending the INSPIRED project.

Business registration process and progress

She has not registered her business yet.

Social cohesion within the community

When she joined the INSPIRED project, she was hesitant to mingle with other participants. After a few days, she started actively participating and proposing new ideas and actions. Gradually, she built friendships, with other participants from other religions approaching her and talking to her. Today, she has got more customers from outside her village, while her village clientele to purchase chicken have also increased.

Job opportunities

Her nephew is currently helping her in her business. We assume that in the future, she will be able to provide job opportunities for other people as well.

8. T. Vijayabarathi - Rice flour production

History of the client

Vijayabarathi from Pathinipuram, Palampottaru, started making rice flour in 2018, by pounding rice manually, for her neighbors.

Present situation

Currently, the production process has been upgraded from manual, to a machine using a rice grinder. The customer base has expanded to new customers, with regular orders from other ethnic communities.

She has built-up a stock of rice, as raw material, to enable continuous production. A separate room was constructed to house the grinding mill, and a grinding machine has been purchased. She is now equipped to expand her business. She has also started a new business of palmyra craft.



Explanation of the project training course

Vijayabarathi learned about gender, social cohesion, peace building, conflict and violence at the INSPIRED project activities. She understood how to start and conduct a business and the business opportunities in her community. She also learned to face challenges in business.

Monitoring process

The Sarvodaya team visited her business premises twice a month and discussed with family members how to improve the business.

Outcome of activities

When Vijayabarathi first joined the project, she had only a handful of customers and she had no marketing skills to expand her business. After join the project, she has made many new contacts. Through the district level group meetings she got many ideas to improve her business.



She now maintains a daily cash book and understands money turnover and profits. In January 2021 she recorded a turnover of Rs 130,050 and a profit of Rs 6,130. In February 2021, the profit increased to Rs 12,360 and in March 2021 it grew to Rs 20,510.

Selection for Grants

Vijayabarathi applied for the grant and received the funds, which she used to develop many areas of her business. Her participation and ability to apply her learnings, were the main reason for selection for the grant.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya works with everyone and works at village level organizing awareness programs on all aspects, such social, economic and political equality."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The only thing I knew about them is that they were financing the training we received."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Divisional Secretariat and the Local Government Authority provided a variety of services and also advice for us."

Value added products

Vijayarathi had significantly improved her rice flour business following the INSPIRED project support. She has also started a new business of Palmyra craft, after learning about this business opportunity at the INSPIRED events.

Market linkages

She has found new customers, and gets regular orders from other ethnic communities following the project.

Business registration process and progress

Vijayarathi has registered her business at the Divisional Secretary office and also created a trademark for her product.

Social cohesion within the community

There is heavy demand for Vijayarathi's rice flour among all communities.

Job opportunities

Now her daughter is fully involved in the business and maintains the accounts and overlooks the packeting of rice flour.

10. Mrs. D. Sayaruby - Party mix and bites

History of the client

Mrs Sayaruby from No 19, Virugamma, Thampalakamam, started making party mixes and bites in 2017, as she did not have a job after completing her degree. She started her business in a small-scale and only sold her goods in the Thampalakamam Division.

Present situation

The business has grown with the support of her husband. The grant funds were used to purchase a grinding machine to grind the rice and large containers to store the dry mixture. She also purchased stocks of raw materials to enable continuous production. She got a separate, new, electricity connection for the business and recruited employees to expand the business.



Explanation of the project training course

She participated actively and gained knowledge from the workshops on gender, peace building, inter-ethnic dialogues and inter group dialogues. At district level meetings, she communicated with other participants to expand her business. She understands the business environment, and how to maintain relationships with customers, suppliers and also the interlink between business and social cohesion.

Monitoring process

The Sarvodaya team visited her before the grant and twice a month after the grant, to check on progress.

Outcome of activities

She maintains the cashbook and checks the revenue and profit every day. According to her account book, the turnover in January 2021 was Rs 237,030 and the profit was Rs 38,085 and in February, the turnover was Rs 308,440 and the profit was Rs 42,540.

Selection for Grants

Mrs Sayaruby has a good educational background and support from her husband, which were factors considered in selecting her.



Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya, helps everyone without any difference of ethnicity and gives full support to all communities."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Asia Foundation is funding the grants and partnering with Sarvodaya. They are supporting our businesses and livelihoods."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Local Government Authority and others were all helpful to us."

Value added products

No new products but Mrs Sayaruby has gone from manual production to mechanized production, which has significantly increased the quality and output of her products.

Market linkages

During the project, she identified new customers at district level and expanded her market.

Business registration process and progress

Mrs Sayaruby had already registered her business at the Divisional Secretary's Office, Thampalakamam and now the Public Health Inspectors are monitoring her production to maintain quality standards.

Social cohesion within the community

Mrs Sayaruby works with all ethnic communities in her business activities as suppliers and as customers and has a network of contacts from all communities.

Job opportunities

Two women have been recruited, on a casual basis, to help with the packeting and labelling.

10. Abdul Aziz Pashmina - Palmyra leaf handicrafts (Partnership)

History of the client

Pashmina lives in Araba Nagar. She started making handicrafts from palmyra leaves and keeping chickens, as a self-employment, to support her family's income. She was trained in palmyra craft making by the Thambalagamuwa Divisional Secretariat. She also identified women in her area who faced financial difficulties and taught them how to make palmyra handicrafts. This helped many women earn a small income and Pashmina decided to make palmyra crafts her main business.



Present situation

Following the INSPIRED workshops, Pashmina has formed a business partnership with Anula Fernando, a Sinhalese lady who owns a retail store, to sell her palmyra products. She has also improved her product standards. She has established contact with the Good Market, palmyra department, and is supplying her products to the Good Market. She also established other business contacts and has expanded her retail space in her village and district. Pashmina and her husband have also built a small shop to sell her produce. She is an inspiration to her village as a successful woman entrepreneur. She continues to train young people on how to make palmyra crafts such as baskets, flower baskets, cake boxes, bags etc...

Explanation of the project training course

Pashmina received training through this project on women's development, peace, and conflict, business planning and marketing and also how to cooperate and work with all ethnicities. She also attended special training on establishing marketing links with other ethnic groups.

Monitoring process

Pashmina's progress was monitored twice a month, through physical visits.

Outcome of activities

Pashmina has applied her training to her business and knows to manage her business finances and how to engage with all communities to expand her retail market. She has learned how to make attractive items that appeal to the market.

Selection for grants

The INSPIRED project team noted Pashmina's talent for working with other communities and her professional skills. Therefore, the team advised her to form a partnership with a Sinhalese to expand her market reach. The partnership was awarded the grant.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya serves women like me and motivates them."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Asia Foundation collaborated with Sarvodaya and helped to improve village level people's livelihood and also gave funding for us."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Divisional Secretariats are doing infrastructure developments and helping to utilize local resources. They conduct training and encouraged me to register my business."



Value added products

Pashmina now has the knowledge to produce good quality, market oriented, products for the Good Market, and is now involved in making these products. She has established contact with other women who have been trained in palmyra crafts, to supply orders.

Market linkages

Pashmina has established new market linkages through her partnership with Anula and through the Good Market.

Business registration process and progress

Pashmina had already registered her business, when she joined the INSPIRED project

Social cohesion within the community

Pashmina gets on well with all communities and her partnership with the Sinhalese lady Anula is doing well. The two are setting an example in community cooperation.

Job opportunities

Pashmina already provides income for girls through her business and hopes to expand the income opportunities to more women.

Case studies Town & Gravets

1. C. Jeroni - Candle making

History of the client

Jeroni lives in China Bay. During the tsunami she was displaced and was staying in a displaced persons camp. During this period, she attended a training in candle making. She later started making candles at home with her husband's help. She had a few molds to make her candles, and she allocated a separate small work area in the house for this. She trademarked her candles 'Angel' and sold churches, temples and shops in her area.

Present situation

After receiving the grant, Jeroni has increased her stock of raw materials and bought more molds from a Muslim business and expanded her product range to include perfumed candles, colored candles and candles for birthday cakes. She has renovated her work area and repaired the electrical wiring to facilitate better larger volumes of output. She is currently increasing her production and identifying shops and churches in other districts to increase her orders.



Explanation of the project training course

She participated in the awareness programs by Sarvodaya and the Asia Foundation and gained knowledge on peace and reconciliation, gender and equality and business planning, and participated in public-private dialogues.

Monitoring process

Jeroni was visited twice a month to observe her business and to help her with advisory services.

Outcome of activities

Jeroni has expanded her business and improved her production capabilities.

Selection for Grants

She was selected for the grant, taking into account the active participation in training seminars, her business ability, her family contribution, her plans for employing others, and the business proposal she submitted.



Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is doing a universal service for Tamil, Sinhala, and Muslim people without any discrimination."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Asia Foundation has funded us and is monitoring us through Sarvodaya."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"It is not an easy task to go to government departments such as the Divisional Secretariat and the Local Government Authority to seek advice and contacts regarding business. But they have helped us through the project. Civil society organizations have also contribute to business development."

Value added products

Jeroni has expanded her product range from ordinary candles to decorative and perfumed candles.

Market linkages

She has established many new contacts during the training program and at the exhibition hosted by Sarvodaya she made more contacts.

Business registration process and progress

Jeroni's candle business was already registered by her family before the project.

Social cohesion within the community

Jeroni interacts with Tamil, Sinhala and Muslim communities in her business and provides her candles to all religious places and all traders.

Job opportunities

Jeroni has recruited her sister to help her with the business as the number of orders have increased. She pays her sister a small wage.

2. Vasanthan Jeyamaladevi - Sari decorations (Partnership)

History of the client

Vasanthan Jeyamaladevi is from Bharathi Puram. Her business is designing and decorating saris for weddings and special occasions. She obtains good quality saris from India. With the help of friends and relatives, she identified stores to sell her saris. In addition, new customers were introduced through regular customers. Much of the household income, including money for the education of her children, is met through this business.

Present situation

With the INSPIRED grant money, Jeyamaladevi bought a new Yugi sewing machine. She has also formed a new business partnership which is



generating new business orders. She is also getting new orders through her contacts at the Divisional Secretariats and the District Secretariat.

Explanation of the project training course

By participating in INSPIRED awareness seminars, Jeyamaladevi learned about peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning and project proposal writing, and also participated in the public-private dialog.

Monitoring process

Jeyamaladevi was visited 3 times a month to monitor her business. During the visit, the record of the monthly budget and savings were observed and necessary advice was given.

Outcome of activities

Jeyamaladevi has acquired the skills to make products and sell the goods to the Good Market. In addition she has a new partnership that gets her new sewing orders.



Selection for Grants

Jeyamaladevi formed a partnership with Thanuja Kumari, another dress maker from Kantale, who is a Buddhist. They were selected for the first round of grants. The selection process considered the gender aspects, the plans given in the project proposal and communal harmony depicted through the partnership between a Tamil and Sinhalese, in allocating the grant.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is a very good organization."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I got to know about the Asia foundation only after coming for this training."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"It was a privilege to have a joint discussion with the Provincial Councils and other businesses. The Divisional Secretariat, District Secretariat, and civil organizations have also helped and provided training."

Value added products

Value addition has been through improvements to design and sewing techniques

Market linkages

Through her partnership, Jeyamaladevi sells her saris in Kantale through Thanuja Kumari and sells Thanuja's dresses in her area. Thanuja sends sari orders to Jeyamaladevi and Jeyamaladevi sends dress making orders to Thanuja. The two had never met before coming to the training. They plan to send more goods to the Good Market over time, and to advertise through websites.

Business registration process and progress

Jeyamaladevi is in the early stages of her business registration.

Social cohesion within the community

After joining the trainings, Jeyamaladevi interacted with people from other ethnic communities. She has been cultivating good relations with other ethnic communities not only professionally but also by participating in their activities. Her business partner Thanuja is a Sinhalese and now both families are collaborating.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

3. Paul Julies Paul - Aloe vera products (Partnership)

History of the client

Paul is a Christian in China Bay. His main business is the operation of a photography studio, which is the primary source of his income. As a part-time occupation, he grew aloe vera in small pots.

Present situation

At the INSPIRED training events Paul formed a partnership to cultivate aloe vera and develop aloe vera drinks, as a new business venture. The two have now leased a land for this purpose. They now produce and sell aloe vera saplings. They also manufacture aloe vera drinks, according to health and safety guidelines and also make deliveries to orders.

Explanation of the project training course

Paul gained knowledge on peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning, project proposal writing and also participated in public-private dialogues. He also learned how to make aloe vera products such as soap and drinks from the INSPIRED training.



Monitoring process

Paul was visited 4 times every month to check on progress of the aloe vera business and to provide support services if required. The business is also monitored by the Public Health Inspector, and advice and other professional contacts are available when required.

Outcome of activities

Initially, Paul had little experience in cultivating aloe vera and on making aloe vera drinks. However, he has now acquired the technical knowledge to do this. The business is now progressing well.

Selection for Grants

Paul who is a Christian formed a partnership with Ranjini who is a Hindu. The partnership was selected in the first round of grants due to the unusual nature of the venture, the intercommunal partnership and gender cooperation.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I understand Sarvodaya operates all over the country. As I attended the workshops I gained more clarity regarding the organization. By attending events organized by Sarvodaya, I had the opportunity to meet new faces and be able to develop my studio business as well."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Asia Foundation and their plans are very good. Getting a loan is not an easy task. Providing training and grants is a great opportunity for all of us."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"We owe a debt of gratitude to everyone who supported this project."

Product's Value added

The business is a new one and is a value addition to both partners.

Market linkages

Both partner families are currently working in collaboration. Their future goal is to expand the business into women-led families and young people. They hope to advertise through Facebook and WhatsApp.

Business registration process and progress

The business is in the process of being registered.

Social cohesion within the community

Paul is fluent in Sinhala and had a good relationship with all communities. He is helpful and co-operates with all communities and even participates in their cultural activities.

Job opportunities

No new jobs have been created but the partners hope to recruit help in the future



4. A. Ranjani - Aloe vera products (Partnership)

History of the client

Ranjani is a Hindu in a village called Devanagar. She is the head of her family and she supports her family by making party mix and bites, that she gives to shops to sell. She was also planting aloe vera in small quantities and making drinks from it, and selling it in a very small scale in plastic bottles.

Present situation

Ranjani and her INSPIRED project partner Paul have leased a land and are cultivating aloe vera. They sell aloe vera plants and aloe vera drinks to customers and to shops. They have already set up the fence, water, and electricity, in the leased land. The quality of Ranjani's aloe vera drinks has improved. Instead of plastic bottles, she is now packing the aloe vera drink in glass bottles and is using natural ingredients instead of chemical colors and preservatives.



Ranjani has identified new sales outlets in the town, to sell their products. In addition, new customers were introduced through regular customers. Orders are also arriving through contacts at the Divisional Secretariat and the District Secretariat.

Explanation of the project training course

Ranjani gained knowledge on peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning, project proposal writing and also participated in public-private dialogues.

Monitoring process

They were visited 4 times per month, to observe their business and were also monitored over the phone.

The outcome of the activities

The aloe vera partnership has resulted in a new business to cultivate aloe vera and to make aloe vera drinks.

Selection of Grants

The Christian – Hindu partnership was selected in the first round of grants due to the unusual nature of the venture, the intercommunal partnership and gender cooperation.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I knew that Sarvodaya formed village associations and built houses and public wells for people. It was only after coming to the training workshop that I came to know that self-employed people like me are also helped by Sarvodaya."



Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I came to know about the Asia Foundation only after coming to the training. After participating in the training, I feel it was an opportunity of a lifetime. I had to face many difficulties in getting a loan from the banks. So, I have to say that it is a gift to us that the Asia Foundation provided quality training and guidance and also provide this money as a grant. So I would like to express my gratitude to them."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I am also grateful to the Divisional Secretariat, Provincial Council, and other civil organizations for their help."

Product's Value added

She produces and distributes products of a high quality. The Public Health Inspector advises them regarding health and safety standards and regarding safety measures during COVID. They hope to further develop the industry by embracing women-led families and youth, over time.

Market linkages

Ranjini has made many new contacts, including at the Divisional Secretariat and the District Secretariat, and stores in town.

Business registration process and progress

The joint venture is pending registration.

Social cohesion within the community

After joining the training, Ranjini had the opportunity to interact with other communities and she has been cultivating good relations with all communities.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created but the partners hope to recruit help in the future.

5. J. Mathivathani - Party mix and bites

History of the client

Mathivathani lives in China Bay, in Ananthapuri, in the Uppaveli Pradeshiya Sabha. She is the head of her family and the main income earner. While working for a company, she started making party mix and bites with the support of her family, to earn an income. She educated her children up to university and continues to work on her business.

Present situation

After joining the INSPIRED program, Mathivathani expanded her business and has started exporting in a very small scale through her contacts. She used the grant money to expand her work area and to purchase raw materials and additional equipment. Her monthly income is now higher than ever before. She has now recruited help for the business.



Explanation of the project training course

Mathivathani attended all the training workshops and participated by speaking, leading group activities, and coming up with new ideas.

Monitoring process

Mathivathani's business was visited twice a month to support her with advice and market links.

The outcome of the activities

As a result of the INSPIRED project, Mathivathani has expanded her business and made new business contacts. She has been doing the work as proposed in her business plan. Her ambition is to advertise to grow the business further.

Selection of Grants

In addition, taking into account the business planning and relationships with other communities, the well-prepared business plan, and her family support, were factors that were considered when selecting Mathivathani for the grant.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I know about Sarvodaya before joining the workshop. Sarvodaya has been in my district for several years and I have participated in other programs conducted by Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya is an organization that provides services without discrimination."



Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I did not know about the Asia foundation before joining the program. I got to know that this organization is the main party giving funds for my grant. So the Asia Foundation is the one that motivates me to do innovative things in my business."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Provincial Council and civil society organizations gave business advice."

Product value additions

No new value additions have been made, except for business expansion.

Market linkages

Mathivathani's market was initially in a narrow circle, which has now expanded. She now sells to her village and the town and sends her products abroad as well.

Business registration process and progress

Mathivathani is aware of the importance of business registration and has taken the initial steps to register with the Uppuveli Local Government Authority.

Social cohesion within the community

Earlier, Mathivathani did not have the opportunity to interact with other communities. She got the opportunity to interact with other communities during the training. She also attended cultural events and family events, which has created strong intercommunity bonds.

Job opportunities

Mathivathani now has 6 people working for her

6. V. Balasaraswathi - Handwash and natural soaps

History of the client

Balasaraswathi began making handwashes about 3 years ago. By experimenting and learning from others, she learned how to make soaps and shampoos as well. Initially, she used the products in her family and gave them to her relatives. Then, she started selling in a small scale in her own village and later, expanded her market into the next village.

Present situation

She now uses natural materials and follows health guidelines in manufacturing her products. She has improved the appearance of her products by



designing the packaging, and increased the range of her products, such as beetroot soap, carrot soap, aloe vera shampoo etc..

Her business has also grown significantly through new contacts and market linkages and she has started exporting her products. Currently, government employees and private-sector employees are regular customers. She has saved a small amount of money from the business and bought a motorcycle.

Explanation of the project training course

Balasaraswati gained knowledge on peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning, and project proposal writing and also participated in public-private dialogues. The training by Good Market has helped her improve the quality of her products by using natural ingredients and expand her product range. She also learned how to design product packaging to make her products more attractive. Language was not a problem for her to interact with other communities at the training and she got the opportunity to interact with other entrepreneurs.



Monitoring process

Balasaraswati was visited 4 times a month and the monthly accounts and invoices were checked and advice and support were provided if required.

Outcome of activities

The quality and appearance of Balasaraswati's products have improved, because she has applied her training to her business activities. She has also applied the knowledge on marketing and business contacts, to expand her market. She has also started exporting.

Selection for grants

She planned her business improvements and submitted the application for the grant. After making home visits she was selected for the initial grant

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"It was only after attending the training that I learned about the activities by Sarvodaya."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"All I know about the Asia Foundation is that they are financing the training we received."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Other institutions, such as Divisional Secretariat, and Local Government Authority provided various services. They provide advice and counseling if there was any need."

Product value additions

The quality of Balasaraswati's toiletries has improved and she has improved the packaging.

Market linkages

Balasaraswati's market linkages have grown significantly. She has started exporting abroad through a Muslim contact. She is also getting orders over the phone. In addition, she is cooperating with Buddhists due to her Sinhala language.

Business registration process and progress

Her business was registered with the Uppaveli Local Government Authority under the name PSV.

Social cohesion within the community

Balasaraswati got the opportunity to export her products through a Muslim contact and she is also working through her Buddhist contacts. She continues to expand her contacts across all communities.

Job opportunities

Her future dream is to employ women like himself and has already provided employment for one lady.

7. Jayapalan Jayakumari - Rice flour production

History of the client

Jayapalan Jayakumar is a resident of the Uppaveli Division. She owns a grinding mill, which is in her yard. She would grind rice, chili, and coffee and sell them to friends and neighbors to earn a small income. She is also a social welfare activist engaged in supporting women in need, in her area.

Present situation

Jayapalan has purchased a grinding machine and a coconut scraping machine, in addition to the existing grinding mill. She has bought stocks of raw materials to supply on demand. She has started packeting her products instead of selling them loose, and developed the brand name 'Sansika.' She is putting her Sansika brand goods into the shelves of shops in her village and the neighboring village. She also uses her coconut scraping machine to supply shredded coconuts to hotels and eateries.



Explanation of the project training course

Jayapalan attended all the training workshops and she participated actively by speaking, leading group activities, and coming up with new ideas. In addition to business planning and building relationships with other communities she also learned financial management.

Monitoring process

Jayapalan's business activities were monitored 4 times per month

Outcome of activities

Jayapalan has expanded her business and her market.

Selection for grants

Following direct home visits and review of the grant application, the grant was awarded to her.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya has been serving our district for many years. When I was a teenager, I attended events organized by Sarvodaya. It is an organization that can serve all, regardless of caste or creed."



Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I did not know about the Asia Foundation at the beginning. I came to know this name only after attending the training. They sponsored the training."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"If we talk about the Divisional Secretariat and the Divisional Council, we sometimes face difficulties trying to register a business. After the INSPIRED project we have now established contact with government places and we are able to communicate with them."

Product value additions

Jayapalan sells good quality, hygienically packeted products, under the Sansika name, in small and medium sized packets. She has been doing the work as proposed in her business plan.

Market linkages

Previously, Jayapalan had a narrow market. Now, her market has expanded in the village, town and district. Jayapalan plans to advertise to expand her market reach.

Business registration process and progress

Jayapalan was aware of the importance of business registration and had already registered with the Uppuveli Local Government Authority.

Social cohesion within the community

Having done business within a narrow circle, Jayapalan did not interact with other communities. At the INSPIRED activities, she had the opportunity to interact with other communities and she engaged with people both professionally and also at a personal level.

Job opportunities

She hopes to recruit young women take the business to the district level and divisional level as well.

8. N. Nishanthini - Dress making (Partnership)

History of the client

Nishanthini lives Ganase Lane, Trincomalee. She wanted to start her own business and began by purchasing clothing in bulk and selling them hose-to-house in her area. Her customers were limited to neighbors and relatives, but she made a small profit from this business.

Present situation

Nishanthini has now rented shop space and opened her own small clothing store. She has expanded her stocks of clothing and has also started her own dress making and cloth bag making business. She designs cloth bags from discarded clothing. Her customer base has now increased.



Explanation of the project training course

At the INSPIRED training, Nishanthini was briefed on peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning and project proposal writing. She also participated in the Good market workshop and developed new knowledge and skills and attended the public-private dialog.

Monitoring process

Home visits were made twice a month to observe her business activities. She was supported with the necessary advice and solutions, whenever required.

Outcome of activities

Nishanthini's business has expanded and diversified, while her customer base has also increased. As a result of the training she received, she has learned dress making and cloth bag designing from waste materials.



Selection for grants

Nishanthini formed a partnership with Marliya, a Muslim lady, who is a dress maker and also makes cloth toys in the Thambalagamuwa area. They got to know each other at the INSPIRED workshops. The partnership was selected for the second round of grants.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya has trained us to be self-employed and the training has helped us increase our income. This is very useful for us."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I found out that the Asia Foundation were the ones that funded all the training we received. Until now, people like us have not had training. This is what it means to be supported through training. I want to convey my thanks to them."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I have got to know these officials through the INSPIRED project and now I know to talk to them and work with them"

Value added products

Nishanthini's business has seen significant value addition due to the INSPIRED project as she has been able to develop her existing business, while adding new business lines to enhance the business. She is now providing better quality products, a wider product range and customized clothing, through her dress making.

Market linkages

Nishanthini and Marliya are now working together and sharing business contacts. Their collective market has expanded as they exchange business orders.

Business registration process and progress

She has applied for business registration after the INSPIRED project.

Social cohesion within the community

In addition to the intercommunal partnership, Nishanthini engages with all communities in her business activities and had the opportunity to establish contact with all communities during the INSPIRED training events.

Job opportunities

No new jobs have been created.

9. P. Vijayarani - Rice flour packeting and mill (Partnership)

History of the client

Vijayarani is a resident of Murakapuri village in Muragapuri. She started selling rice flour in 2016, by buying rice and grinding it at a nearby mill. She sold the rice flour to her neighbors. This was not very profitable as she had to pay the mill for grinding the rice. Later, she got a loan from a financial institution and bought a grinding machine and utensils and expanded her business. She put her flour into shops. In 2017, she registered her business under the brand name "Saturthi" products to further expand her business.

Present situation

The INSPIRED project gave her additional knowledge and training on producing high quality rice flour and also provided financial support to further expand her business. She has now bought a small sealing machine and is packeting the rice flour. She also



formed a partnership with Rathnamali, a Sinhalese lady from Kantale and is able to sell her rice flour packets through Rathnamali. In turn, she markets Rathnamali's packeted spices.

Explanation of the project training course

The workshop taught her many new techniques related to business and self-employment. She also gained knowledge on peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning, project proposal writing and participated in the public-private dialogs. She attended all the training workshops and participated by speaking, leading group activities, and coming up with new ideas.

Monitoring process

Direct home visits were made to regularly monitor the business.

Outcome of activities

Vijayarani has learned many new business concepts and developed a good business plan as a result of her training. The quality of her products has also improved. Through the workshop training, she has developed business goals and objectives that will guide her business in the future.



Selection for grants

Vijayarani was selected for the grant in the second round of grants based on her business plan and the relationships with other communities.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is a national-level organization. It has been serving our district for many years. When I was a teenager, I attended events organized by Sarvodaya. In particular, it is an organization that can serve all, regardless of religion."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I did not know about the Asia Foundation at the beginning. It was only after attending the training that I came to know. They sponsored or training."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"When focusing on the Divisional Secretariat, local government authority, etc.. we sometimes face difficulties while making business registrations."

Value added products

Vijayarani's business has improved with better quality products that are hygienically produced and packaged. Her market has also expanded.

Market linkages

The market opportunity was initially within a narrow circle. Currently she has expanded her market in her village, and into the town and the district. Her goal is to further expand her business and market both locally and internationally. In this regard, she continues to market her products.

Business registration process and progress

Vijayarani was aware of the importance of business registration and she registered with the Municipal Council in the year 2017 under the name of Saturthi Products.

Social cohesion within the community

She has expanded her business among other ethnic communities and there is strong demand from all communities. She also collaborates with all communities and participates in their events, and share ideas and experiences.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created.

10. M. Shabina Shanthi - Rice flour production (Partnership)

History of the client

Shabina lives in the village of Palaiyur and is the head of her family. After her husband's death, she went to the Divisional Secretariat for help, to find some source of income. She started making snacks and selling them through, a few shops and the family lived on this income. Eventually, the Local Government Authority gave her a rice mill.

Present situation

Following the INSPIRED project Shabina has organized her business. She has arranged a space in her house for her business activities. The customer base and market has also expanded from to urban. She is following the health and safety standards in grinding the flour and packeting, with labels.



Explanation of the project training course

Shabina was exposed to business management methods and financial management. She also gained knowledge on peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning, project proposal writing and participated in the public-private dialogs.

Monitoring process

We could observe her performances through a home visit thrice a month and recorded her performances and improvements.

Outcome of activities

Shabina has started keeping accounts and has a better understanding of her business status. She has organized her business to a professional standard and has proper management.

Selection for grants

She was selected for the second round of grants by observing her participation in group activities and based on her business plan.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya has spread its wings in all districts and is serving all people without any discrimination. I am very grateful to Sarvodaya for organizing this event and I hope they will continue this training to help us."



Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Asia Foundation has motivated women. So far I did not receive any grants from other organizations. If this kind of opportunity is expanded to all women, it would be great."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Local Government Authority and Divisional Secretariat are doing regional-based activities and they are helping us improve our business."

Value added products

Shabina now manufactures packets according to health and safety standards which has improved the quality of her products. Her market has also expanded due to the contacts from the INSPIRED project.

Market linkages

Shabina has decided to distribute her products to the good market.

Business registration process and progress

Shabina has registered her business at the Local Government Authority.

Social cohesion within the community

Previously Shabina did not know many people from other communities. After the training, she had the opportunity to expand her business through new contacts. For the last two years, she has maintained good relationships with other ethnic communities.

Job opportunities

Now Shabina is doing her business alone but her sister helps her with large orders.

11. N. Rukkiya - Short eats (Partnership)

History of the client

Rukkiya lives in Jamaliya village, in Trincomalee town. As her husband's monthly salary was inadequate to meet their children's education and other needs, she started making short eats such as samosas, patties and Chinese rolls, and selling them to the wedding receptions in the neighborhood. She also put her goods into a few shops in her neighborhood to sell.

Present situation

Currently, her business is growing and her orders are increasing. She has started making traditional Tamil short eats, such as wadai, dry fish sambol, and also bites and distributing these on a wider scale.

Explanation of the project training course

She was briefed on subjects such as peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning, project proposal writing and participated in public-private dialogs and other district level training.

Monitoring process

Rukkiya's activities were observed 3 times a month by visiting her house and the team discussed with her, how to improve and advance her business.

Outcome of activities

Initially, Rukkiya's market was very narrow and she is now taking large orders and collaborating with her family. She is also providing snacks for weddings, and for workshops run by companies. Through this, a large number of new customers have been introduced.

Selection for grants

During the INSPIRED training she met and decided to partner with Sabina Shanti, who is a Christian from the village of Paliyoor. Their business proposal was accepted due to community integration and women empowerment.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I have a long association with the Sarvodaya, especially in the Sarvodaya system. I am aware of the objective of the activities of the organization. I have been involved in this project and I can say that it is a boon for the self-employed, in bringing them together to create a network."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Asia Foundation's funding for this project is welcome. So far I has only received training for a long time, but now we also got funds to support or businesses."



Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Government agencies (Divisional Secretariat, District Secretariat, Local Government Authority etc..) are providing services regionally. They keep in touch when needed. At the same time, they make guidelines."

Value added products

Rukkiya's products are manufactured to high quality, applying health and safety standards and her range of goods have also increased.

Market linkages

Rukkiya has established market linkages through her partnership and through other contacts from the INSPIRED project.

Business registration process and progress

Rukkiya went to the Divisional Secretariat to register her business. She has been consulting with them and making arrangements for the registration.

Social cohesion within the community

Sinhalese and Tamils live near to her village and she supplies for anyone. She is involved in community affairs.

Job opportunities

Rukkiya continues her business with her family's support. Her sister and her mother help her to supply big orders.

12. P. Thangeshwary - Traditional food (Partnership)

History of the client

Thangeshwary lives in Trincomalee and her husband is a laborer. She has been making and selling traditional breakfast food such as string hoppers, pittu, dosa, idli etc... for over 15 years, to supplement their family income. She would also make rice flour by pounding rice. This income helped educate her children. She mostly sold her foods to neighbors and acquaintances.

Present situation

Now, her food business is doing very well. New customers have been introduced her food is also sold in the city and the outer district. She has expanded her range to include desserts and many spicy dishes and now also does food catering and deliveries.

Explanation of the project training course

Thangeshwary participated in awareness seminars on peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning, project proposal development and in the public-private dialog.



Monitoring process

Thangeshwary's house was visited twice a month to check on progress and discuss what kind of assistance she needed.

Outcome of activities

Thangeshwary has grown her business using the skills from the INSPIRED project to plan her business and expand her customer base from all communities. She has also started saving in a small way from her profits.



Selection for grants

Thangeshwary has formed a partnership with a Muslim lady, Rakima Begum. They were awarded the grant based on their business proposal and communal cooperation.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I only know a little bit about Sarvodaya."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I did not know about the Asia Foundation before. I came to know this name only after coming to this training. They have given us a good training."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"As far as I know, government agencies are doing development work in the villages. I have heard others talk about this."

Value added products

Thangeshwary has learned to prepare her food to a good quality standard, according to health and safety guidelines, for nutritious meals. She makes sure the food is delivered to customers at the right time and in the right place.

Market linkages

She has expanded her market linkages after the INSPIRED project by interacting with other participants. She is getting orders from all ethnicities.

Business registration process and progress

After attending the INSPIRED project, Thangeshwary has now started the business registration process.

Social cohesion within the community

Since there are Tamil and Sinhalese people in her village, more and more friends are contacting their friends and getting her food orders. Thangeshwary caters to all customers, according to their needs, and contributes towards harmony between communities. She also attends their cultural events.

Job opportunities

Her family members help her.

13. V. Raheema Begum - Dry fish (Partnership)

History of the client

Raheema lives in the village of Tirukkondaloor. Her husband is a fisherman and owns a fishing boat. They sold their daily fish catch in bulk as their main source of income. As an experiment, Raheema attempted to make dry fish in a very small scale and sometimes sold it to neighbors and relatives.

Present situation

She is currently focused on her dry fish business, which she has expanded and improved following her training from the INSPIRED project. She has got more customers and has the potential to earn a good income through this business. She has also used the grant to purchase and stockpile more fish and utensils and equipment, to support her dry fish production business.



Explanation of the project training course

At INSPIRED awareness events, Raheema learned about peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning, project proposal writing and participated in public-private dialogs and food processing.

Monitoring process

The INSPIRED team visited Raheema at her home 3 times a month. They made sure that all required hygiene practices were being adopted and good quality materials are used in the production of Raheema's dry fish.

Outcome of activities

Raheema has formed a partnership with 3 other Sinhalese ladies and together they have expanded their business reach and opportunities. Raheema has also learned how to keep proper accounts and the techniques to make dry fish in a hygienic and safe manner.

Selection for grants

Raheema has formed a partnership with 2 other Sinhalese participants in the INSPIRED project – Vijitha Mallika and Shyamali Priyanthilatha - for the grant. All three ladies are dry fish producers and traders. After evaluating the joint project proposal put forward by them, they were selected for a grant in the second phase of the grant program.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is a community service organization and serves people of all the three ethnicities. The staff responsible for this program gave us good guidance when we needed it. Not only that, even during the training sessions I spoke with everyone and there was no difference how they treated people."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I heard the name of Asia Foundation only after joined the training workshop. They treated us equally during training sessions. This opportunity is not available to anyone. I give my thanks to Asia Foundation."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The government parties have been supportive during the project and we got to know them during the public-private dialog. I am also grateful to the Good Market for their training."

Value added products

The quality of Raheema's dry fish has improved significantly following the technical knowledge she gained through the training on how to implement health and safety standards in making dry fish. She has also established contact with the Good Market to sell her dry fish.

Market linkages

A business network has been created through the INSPIRED project. Earlier, Raheema's market was very limited. Now her market reach has expanded through her partnership and also contacts from the INSPIRED project. She is getting orders over the phone.

Business registration process and progress

Until Raheema attended the INSPIRED training, she had not registered her business. Now she has started the registration process.

Social cohesion within the community

Raheema's location is home to all three ethnic communities. Raheema maintains contact and communicates with everyone. She attends different cultural events and personal events. In addition, during the INSPIRED training she made friends with many other entrepreneurs like herself, including her 3 project partners.

Job opportunities

She is currently running her business with her family's help. She hopes to provide employment to women like herself in the future.



14. N. Riswana Begum - Short eats and meals (Partnership)

History of the client

Riswana is a Muslim in Palaiyoothu village, which is home to communities from 4 religions. She is the head of her household and is the main income earner. She has been supporting her family for about 5 years by selling food. She would make a small quantity of breakfast foods every morning, like string hoppers, pittu etc.. and sell them in nearby shops and she also made small meals and sold these to her neighbors. As an additional income she would pound rice and make rice flour, which she sold to her neighbors. Her mother and children helped her prepare the food items every day.



Present situation

After the INSPIRED project, Riswana's home business is expanding. She has used the grant funds and bought raw materials such as spices and coconuts to make food, and rice to make rice flour and food items. She has also purchased a small grinding machine to grind rice. She has identified food outlets and is regularly supplying them with a range of food items and is also catering to weddings, funerals, New Year and birthday celebrations, and other occasions in homes and offices.

Explanation of the project training course

Riswana comes from a very conservative Muslim background and did not interact with people outside her family. Initially, she did not want to participate in a public training event, such as the INSPIRED project.

After being persuaded to attend the INSPIRED program, she was exposed to concepts of formal business management, including keeping accounts and to other concepts such as gender equity, peace and conflict, communal cooperation etc... She also participated in the public-private dialog and training by Good Market on food production.

Monitoring process

The INSPIRED team visited Riswana's home twice a month and checked her accounts and progress of her business plans. The team also helped her with new customer contacts and gave suggestions on resolving problems.

Outcome of activities

There have been changes in Riswana since she attended the INSPIRED training. It is noteworthy that she is now interacting with other communities and participating in each others personal events and helping each other. Riswana has made many new friends who support her and her business has expanded with orders from many new customers and word of mouth recommendations.

Selection for grants

Riswana was selected for the grant during the second round of grants, as she is a hard working single mother and was willing to interact with all communities. Her progress at the INSPIRED meetings were observed favorably. She participated actively in all team activities and presented a project proposal to develop her business.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I did not know about Sarvodaya before, because I did not get involved with outsiders and did not attend any workshops, or events."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I have never heard of Asia Foundation. It is a new thing to me. I know now that they gave us money for training and for self-employment. I want to thank them and also Sarvodaya. It is a good thing if the training we got was available to other people like me."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I don't know much about these places. Only that they helped with this project."

Value added products

Riswana has learned to prepare her food under hygienic conditions, according to health and safety guidelines and has now expanded her market reach significantly from where she used to be.

Market linkages

Riswana has got many new customers after the INSPIRED project, including individual customers as well as eateries and intuitions.



Business registration process and progress

Riswana did not know about registering her business. After attending the training, she has started the process.

Social cohesion within the community

She has now started interacting with other communities and she caters to all communities.

Job opportunities

She is currently running her business only with her family's support.

15. S. Puvanakeethan - Motorcycle mechanic

History of the client

Puvanakeethan attended training in motor mechanical work and became interested in it. So, he started his own garage in a small way, Trincomalee town and obtained bank loans and purchased the equipment he needed, including some specialized equipment. His business was quite successful because his garage is located in the Trincomalee town that has high business opportunities. The garage is located near bilingual schools, government and private institutions and in close vicinity of the Trincomalee station. He also obtained the professional certifications of NVQ and RPL 2 and 3, and listed his garage with the Municipal Council to help generate business.

Puvanakeethan is also an active social worker and does many things to help young people and others in need in his community. He uses the earnings from his garage to help others and to organize events such as environmental activities.



Present situation

Puvanakeethan did not have any business management and financial management training. The INSPIRED project gave him the required knowledge to manage his garage in a professional way and to organize his finances. He also purchased additional equipment for his garage using the funds.

Explanation of the project training course

Puvanakeethan was learned about peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning, finances, and how to write a project proposal. He also participated in the public-private dialog with the Local Government Authority and business sector.

Monitoring process

Puvanakeethan's garage was monitored continually, as it is located in the Trincomalee town within easy access.

Outcome of activities

As an outcome of the INSPIRED project Puvanakeethan got to know many Sinhalese and Muslim customers and expanded his clientele significantly. He was appointed the INSPIRED project representative for the business community at the Local Government Authority meetings, which he continues to do to date.

Selection for grants

Puvanakeethan was selected for the grant based on his business proposal, as he is a young person with his own enterprise and due to his active involvement in community welfare.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is an organization that has been successful not only in advancing youth, but also in organizing more vocational training classes on various issues related to women's life, livelihoods, and social issues, as well as

many handicrafts, community service, and multi-ethnic activities in professional and social issues. I hope Sarvodaya will continue implementing and expanding on activities like this."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Asia Foundation has helped break-down racial and linguistic discrimination and has enabled all people to interact. They have helped entrepreneurs identify their problems, eased the way to find solutions, and found ways to solve problems through discussions. They are conducting seminars and events on how to find solutions to entrepreneurial challenges."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Divisional Secretariat, Divisional Council, etc... have been doing development projects at the village level. At the same time, they have been advising people on how to register businesses and are inviting us to trainings conducted by them, and allowing trade fairs district by district. They satisfactorily comply with customer requests."



Value added products

Value addition for Puvanakeethan, has been in the form of expanding the clientele for his garage and expanding his community linkages.

Market linkages

Puvanakeethan has made many new contacts through the INSPIRED project, including other entrepreneurs, businesses and government officials.

Business registration process and progress

Puvanakeethan started registering his business at the start of the INSPIRED project and has now completed the registration.

Social cohesion within the community

Puvanakeethan gives young people training in motorcycle mechanics at his garage and organizes many social welfare activities such as providing organic fertilizer, environmental events and others. He works with all communities and helps all communities.

Job opportunities

Three young boys are currently working at his garage and he is paying their monthly salary.

16. S. Tharshini - Food business (Partnership)

History of the client

Tharshini is a resident of Ananthapuri village. Her husband is a laborer. She started making short eats and meals to supplement their family income and for the education of their children. She supplied her food to a few people in her village.

Present situation

Since the INSPIRED project, Tharshini has expanded her business systematically. She has expanded her contact network and is getting food orders from Sinhala, Muslim and Tamil people from her village and the neighboring village, including food orders for weddings and other events. She has identified neighborhood eateries and small hotels and has canvassed small orders. The quality and cleanliness of her food has also improved. Her partnership with a Sinhalese lady has also helped her with her business.



Explanation of the project training course

Tharshini participated in awareness programs on peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning, writing project proposal regionals and also participated in public-private dialogs.

Monitoring process

Tharshini's home was visited twice a month to observe her activities and to check on cleanliness and food quality standards. She was provided with necessary advice on each occasion.

Outcome of activities

Tharshini has started making her business more organized and is developing her market by marketing her business. She is also keeping accounts and managing her finances.



Selection for grants

Tharshini was selected for a grant in the second phase after monitoring her business and observing how well she applied her training in her business. She attended all training events and submitted a project proposal. She has also formed a partnership with Ashoka Shriyani, who is a Sinhalese.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is one of the organizations that trains all, Sinhala, Muslim and Tamil people together. I have joined Sarvodaya and they are giving their fullest support to us."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I have not known this Asia Foundation until now. I have attended training conducted by other organizations. They only give training and that is also very short. This is the first time a series of workshops has been done to give a higher level of knowledge with money. I am grateful for this."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Divisional Secretariat and the Local Government Authority give us the advice. They are also doing development work in the villages."

Value added products

Tharshini prepares good quality and nutritious food, hygienically, and distributes to the right places at the right time.

Market linkages

Nowadays there are more and more friends and customers contacting Tharshini and placing orders, because of the quality of her food.

Business registration process and progress

Tharshini has started the registration process after attending the INSPIRED project

Social cohesion within the community

Tharshini works with all communities and caters to their needs according to their requirements.

Job opportunities

Her family and neighbors help Tharshini and she pays them for their assistance.

17. Ashoka Shriyani - Bites and sweets (Partnership)

History of the client

Ashoka started her business of making party mix, bites, jujubes and marshmallows in her kitchen, in 1985. Her business became quite successful with time but was badly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, as she lost orders and customers.

Present situation

Using the INSPIRED project grant and network of contacts she made through the project, Ashoka has restarted her business. She has also formed a



business partnership with Tharshini, who she met at the INSPIRED project activities. She has also started making amberella chutney using the training she received through the Good Market.

Explanation of the project training course

Ashoka participated in awareness programs on peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning, writing project proposal regionals and also participated in public-private dialogs. She also attended training by the Good Market on food processing.

Monitoring process

The INSPIRED team visited Ashoka's home once a month to check on progress of her business plan and to assist her in case she faced any difficulties.

Outcome of activities

One of the most useful outcomes of the INSPIRED project for Ashoka has been to learn accounting. She is now keeping accounts of her business. She has also improved the quality of her products due to the Good Market training and has started making amberella chutney.

Selection for grants

Ashoka originally applied for a grant as an individual but was not selected. She then formed a partnership with Tharshini from Trincomalee during the second round of grants. The partnership was selected for the grant due to its communal cooperation content.



Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya has always worked for the people. So, I am happy to have joined them and learned so many things."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Asia Foundation not only educated us but also gave us funds to save our businesses. I cannot explain how valuable this assistance has been for me."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Through the project we were able to discuss our problems with Government organizations, which was a very useful thing for us small businesses. I am also very happy with the training I got from the Good Market. I learned how to make chutney and other foods."

Value added products

Ashoka has added value to her business by restarting her business which had stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and she has started making amberella chutney which is a new product.

Market linkages

Ashoka has established a new market linkage through Tharshini in Trincomalee and has also made many new contacts to sell her products.

Business registration process and progress

Ashoka had already registered her business before the INSPIRED project.

Social cohesion within the community

Ashoka's business partner is a Tamil lady from Trincomalee and she has made many new contacts from Tamil and Muslim communities, as well as Sinhalese. She cooperates with all parties without any discrimination.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created.

18. Sukirtha Jeevamalar - Dress making (Partnership)

History of the client

Sukirtha lives in a village called Selvanayaka Puram. Her husband's livelihood was to sell ready made clothing in bulk. Sukirtha attended sewing classes and learned how to sew clothes, earning a small income. She had one sewing machine to sew.

Present situation

Sukirtha is now doing dress making and retailing her clothes as a business, and has built a separate shop area next to her house where she does her sewing and displays her clothes. Using the grant money, she has bought a second sewing machine and has also hired a girl to sew.

Sukirtha now has a wide range of clients from all communities, not only from her village but also from outside. From the INSPIRED training she is making cloth bags and toys for children as well, which has added to her income.



Explanation of the project training course

Sukirtha learned about peace and conflict, gender equality, business planning, project proposal writing and attended the public-private dialogs.

Monitoring process

Sukirtha's activities were monitored regularly, sometime even 6 times a month, because she is located close to the field office. During each visit the team would ask her what she needed and helped her resolve any problems.

Outcome of activities

Sukirtha's business has expanded and her technical knowledge and skill have also expanded. She is now able to make many new products that she did not know before.

Selection for grants

Sukirtha was selected for the grant in the second phase because of the improvements seen in her after her training and taking into account her interest in working with the project.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Villages have been served every day by the Sarvodaya organization."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"They have given us this training and money for our businesses. I am grateful for this."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The government people have been quite supportive."



Value added products

Sukirtha is now making new products such as cloth bags and toys. All her products are good quality and attractive.

Market linkages

Sukirtha is actively seeking new marketing opportunities.

Business registration process and progress

Sukirtha has not yet registered her business but is preparing to register.

Social cohesion within the community

Sukirtha's husband is fluent in Sinhala and they buy bulk clothes and embroidered garments from Sinhala businesses from other districts. Sukirtha also maintains a good relationship with all the Kantale area communities, which has resulted in a good understanding with them.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

19. Shyamali Priyanthilatha -Dry fish and Maldive fish (Partnership)

History of the client

Shyamali started her business of making dry fish and Maldive fish in 1996. She also made Sri Lankan breakfast items such as string hoppers and pittu and put them into sops in her area. Her husband and family helped her with her business.

Present situation

The emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 made it difficult to purchase fish stocks to make her dry fish and Maldive fish. However, she has now restarted her business again.

Explanation of the project training course

Shyamali learned about financial management of a business and how to plan a business and how to work with government and private establishments. The training programs by the Good Market and the Vidatha Resource Centre on food production was helpful for her business and she also learned about many different new product ideas through this training.



Monitoring process

Shyamali's business was monitored once a month at the start and once a week after the grant was given to provide her with support and monitor progress.

Outcome of activities

Shyamali has applied her learnings from the INSPIRED project to her business and has improved the quality of her products and financial management.

Selection for Grants

Shyamali applied for the grant during the first round but was not selected. She applied again in the second round after forming a partnership with two other participants - Vijitha Mallika and Raheema Begum. The second application was awarded the grant on grounds of gender empowerment and communal cooperation.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Because of this project from Sarvodaya I got to know many things about business and how to improve my business."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Asia Foundation gave us funds to develop my business and I benefited in many ways from the project. I am grateful for this."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I am grateful for the institutions like the Good Market, the Provincial Council, the Sri Lanka Local Government Collective, that collaborated in the INSPIRED project for doing a good job."

Value added products

No new value additions were made.

Market linkages

Shyamali has made many new contacts from the INSPIRED project and the partnership has also created a new market linkage.

Business registration process and progress

Shyamali has not registered her business yet because she does not have ownership of her land. She plans to register her business as soon as she gets her land permit.

Social cohesion within the community

Shyamali has partnered with a Muslim and Sinhalese and says if there is trust and cooperation, language and other differences do not matter.



Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

20. T.S. Sepali Priyanthi - Dry fish and Maldive fish (Partnership)

History of the client

Sepali started her dry fish and Maldive fish business in 2010. The business was very successful and she was able to distribute her products in her area and also outside with the support of her family. She bought the fish for her business from her own boat and also others, generating incomes for many people.

Present situation

COVID-19 disrupted her business but she has now restarted and continues her business.

Explanation of the project training course

The INSPIRED training included successful business management, engaging with government and private establishments for business purposes and financial management. Training on food production was provided by the Good Market the Vidatha Resource Centre.



Monitoring process

The business was monitored once a month and once a week after the grant was given.

Outcome of activities

Sepali now maintains accounts and understands her finances. The training on food processing has also helped her improve the standards of her products.

Selection for Grants

Sepali applied for the grant during the first round and was awarded the grant on grounds of gender empowerment and communal cooperation.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is a very good organization. Always helping people. I learned a lot from this project and I am grateful"



Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Asia Foundation has collected the business community and done them a great services. I am very grateful."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I would like to thank the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities. and the Provincial Council for the opportunity for business to discuss their problems. I am also grateful to the Good Market for their training because it has generated more interest in local products. We also learned about many new products"

Value added products

No new value additions were made

Market linkages

Sepali has made many new business contacts through the INSPIRED project.

Business registration process and progress

Sepali has not registered her business because she does not have legal ownership of her land. She plans to register her business as soon as she receives her land permit.

Social cohesion within the community

Through the INSPIRED project Sepali was exposed to all communities and interacted with all communities, which contributed towards a cooperative and understanding attitude.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

21. T.H. Vijitha Mallika - Dry fish and Maldive fish (Partnership)

History of the client

Vijitha started her business of dry fish and Maldive fish in 2010 supported by her husband and 3 sons. The business was extremely successful and her products were distribute and sold in her local area as well as outside until COVID-19 made it difficult to acquire fish to make her products.

Present situation

Vijitha has now restarted her business.

Explanation of the project training course

From the INSPIRED project Vijitha learned how to operate business successfully, how to communicate and establish contact with government and private establishments and financial management. The training programs by the Good Market on food production was another useful element to develop Vijitha's business. She learned how to make dry fish of good quality using less salt, which has helped her improve her products.



Monitoring process

The business was monitored once a month and once a week after the grant was given to her, to check on progress.

Outcome of activities

Vijitha has applied what she learned about keeping accounts to her business, which has improved the business management. The quality of her products have also improved through the application of food processing techniques taught by Good Market.

Selection for Grants

Vijitha applied for the grant during the first round but was not selected. She applied again in the second round after forming a partnership with two other participants – Shaymali Priyanthilatha and Raheema Begum. The second application was awarded the grant on grounds of gender empowerment and communal cooperation.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya has been serving the people for a long time. I am happy to have been involved in one of their activities."



Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"We gained a great deal of knowledge because of this project by the Asia Foundation and I would also like to say thank you for the funds they gave us."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The knowledge we got from Good Market is very useful for us to develop our businesses. Also, I think the public-private forum was a very good thing because it allowed us businesses to talk to the officials of the Provincial Council."

Value added products

No new value additions were made

Market linkages

Through her partnership Vijitha has established new market links.

Business registration process and progress

As Vijitha does not have legal ownership of her land and she does not have a land permit, she has not yet registered her business but plans to do so as soon as her land ownership is confirmed.

Social cohesion within the community

Vijitha has partnered with Raheema, a Muslim from Trincomalee and Shymali, establishing cross community business links. She also deals with all communities in her business activities.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

Case studies Kantale

1. M. Thanuja Kumari Munasinghe - Dress making (Partnership)

History of the client

Thanuja started her dress making business in 2015, in a small scale, in her own home, supported by her family. Although there are other dress makers in Agbopura, Thanuja quickly became popular because she developed new designs. She designed and sewed sari jackets, bride saris, school uniforms, office wear, dresses for social occasions, etc...

Because she was keen to improve herself and develop her cottage-business, she also attended different training programs, organized by government and non-governmental organizations, from the time she started her business.

Present situation

Previously, her dressmaking activities were done in her house, but now her husband has built her a small, separate sewing-room with some retail space as well,



to showcase her dresses, paving the way for her to expand into a formal business. Sewing orders have also increased significantly, following Thanuja's use of new techniques and designs after the INSPIRED project training, making it difficult to cope alone. Therefore, Thanuja has recruited additional pairs of hands to help her meet the orders.

Explanation of the project training course

Thanuja participated in the local level and district level activities, as well as awareness programs organized through the INSPIRED project. These events exposed her to practices and theories on entrepreneurship and business planning and management, and increased her financial literacy, educating her on accounting and money management. Thanuja has applied her knowledge from the INSPIRED project towards improving her business, including managing her finances and expanding her product range.

Training events included a training by the Good Market on dress making, which was directly applicable to Thanuja's business. Thanuja has used the knowledge from this training, to create unique clothing designs, using natural colors. There is a growing demand for these designs.

Monitoring process

Thanujua's business was monitored once a month, by physically visiting her premises, from the time she started her business. After she was given the grant, monitoring was done once a week, by visiting her business and discussing progress, and how to resolve any problems.

Outcome of activities

The INSPIRED forums were a platform to meet and interact with other entrepreneurs. During the district level programs, Thanuja met Mrs Jeyamaladevi from Trincomalee, who had a garment business. Mrs Jeyamaladevi invited Thanuja to form a partnership. The two of them then applied for the SEEDS grant as a partnership.

Selection for grants

Thanuja and Mrs Jeyemaladevi applied for the grant as a partnership venture, which was selected for the grant due to the opportunities it presented in communal cooperation, as Thanuja is a Sinhalese and Mrs Jeyemaladevi is a Tamil lady. Gender equity and strengthening women's livelihoods, was another consideration as the two partners are women entrepreneurs.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is an institution that always thinks of the ordinary people. I am happy that I could work with them. I hope to work with Sarvodaya in the future as well."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"When I first participated in this project, I did not have a plan on how to develop my business. I just made clothing to orders. The knowledge imparted through this program gave me the idea that I can advance my business further. I told my husband about my plan and he built me a separate room to do my sewing. I got this far because of this Asia Foundation project. I am also grateful for the grant from the Asia Foundation to build-up my business."



Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I must say, I am very happy about the training I got from the Good Market, which was extremely useful to expand my business with new ideas. Before that, I did not know how to use natural colors, or how to do batik designs. I learned these things from the Good Market training. I got into this area because of the knowledge from Good Market."

Value added products

Thanuja has started making batik designs, using natural colors, as a new product line, in addition to her normal dress making.

Market linkages

Through her participation in INSPRED activities, Thanuja has widened her contact base of government and private contacts. She has established a new partnership with Mrs Jeyamaladevi and got to know many other entrepreneurs, and people who can help her, both from the INSPIRED project and outside. Already a Muslim shopkeeper, who supplies Thanuja with raw materials, has also offered to retail her clothing at his outlet, expanding her market reach.

Business registration process and progress

Thanuja has not yet registered her business.

Social cohesion within the community

Thanuja's new business partner is a Tamil lady, Mrs Jeyamalardevi. The two of them work with mutual trust and cooperation and Thanuja retails her clothing at a Muslim shop. Thanuja also transacts with other Tamil and Muslim people, as well as Sinhalese, to obtain her raw materials and to sell her clothing. The INSPIRED project has introduced her to people from all communities and established direct connections to facilitate support and cooperation.

Job opportunities

After the INSPIRED project orders for Thanuja's clothing has increased and Thanuja has recruited her 2 daughters and another employee to help her.

2. E.L.M.S. Geethika Bandara - Ice-cream making

History of the client

Geethika started making chocolate flavored popsicles at her home, using milk powder, under the trade name Royal Ice Cream in 2015. Her father helped her by selling them in the neighborhood, using a bicycle that he had modified to carry the popsicles.

Present situation

Using the Rs 200,000 grant she received from the INSPIRED project, Geethika has bought a deep freezer, a beater, ice cream molds and other raw material required for ice cream making. She has also started using ice cream cups, instead of popsicles, which are more durable and easier to transport, and developed new flavors. She now offers a range of flavors, instead of only one flavor, and makes her ice cream from fresh milk instead of milk powder, which has increased sales.



Explanation of the project training course

Geethika faced many difficulties with her business and did not know how to improve it. In 2018 she heard of the INSPIRED project and decided to participate. She hoped the project would help her develop her business. The project activities taught her to identify the bottlenecks obstructing her business and what she was doing wrong, and helped her develop practical solutions. She learned how to solve the problems face by her business, how to plan her business and build contact networks to help her business grow. The Good Market training was also useful in a practical context.

Monitoring process

Geethika's ice cream business was monitored once a month from the start of the project, and once the grant was released to her, she was visited once a week, to assess the status of her business and discuss the latest situation and any business problems with her and her family.

Outcome of activities

Geethika has had the opportunity to discuss the problems she faced in operating her business and to receive advice on how to better manage her business, including how to plan her purchases, manage her funds and keep accounts. Using the knowledge from the training, she is keeping an accounts book and updating her accounts every day, which makes it easier for her to track her financial status daily. She is now able to measure and monitor the real financial status of her business, and understands how to manage and plan costs, to operate at a profit.

Selection for grants

Participants at local and district level were given the opportunity to apply for a SEEDS grant. In Geethika's case she was selected because of the unusual nature of her business, her efforts as a woman entrepreneur and her community linkages through her business.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"This is the first time I worked with Sarvodaya and I am very happy that Sarvodaya gave me this opportunity to participate in this program."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I heard about the Asia Foundation for the first time, when I participated in the INSPIRED project. From this project I gained a great deal of knowledge on how to manage a business properly. I am also grateful to the Asia Foundation for giving me this grant."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I am very happy with the awareness and training I received from the Good Market. Also, the public-private workshops involving the Provincial Council and trad associations was very useful and helpful to all of us. We were able to voice our difficulties and ask questions directly from the relevant officials and we got to know them. I hope the problems we raised at these events will be addressed in future."



Value added products

Geethika has added value to her ice creams by introducing ice cream cups, which are more hygienic and easier for the customers to use. She has also introduced new flavors, such as vanilla, honey-and-cashew nuts, and chocolate. The new products enjoy higher demand compared to ice cream cones and have significantly added to her income.

Market linkages

Through the INSPIRED project forums and activities, Geethika has established many new business contacts to supply her with ingredients and fresh milk and also for retail opportunities.

Business registration process and progress

After attending the INSPIRED workshops, Geethika understood the importance of registering her business and has applied for business registration.

Social cohesion within the community

Geethika lives in a village with all three communities of Sinha, Tamil and Muslim people. She sells her products, transported by her father in his modified bicycle, to all communities and enjoys a large Muslim clientele at the mosque on Fridays. Demand for Geethika's ice cream has increased and she notes that cooperating with all communities will support business growth and prevent misunderstandings.

Job opportunities

No new jobs have been created

3. A. Inshaf Ahmed - Handloom clothing (Partnership)

History of the client

Inshaf and two of his friends, Rifna and Beevi Umma, started weaving and retailing handloom textiles in 2018 after attending a training organized by the Green Women's Organization (Haritha Kantha Sanvidanaya). In addition to handloom weaving, they would also purchase handloom clothing, such as saris, sarongs, lungis, kurthas ect... from Batticaloa and sell these items in their area and out them into shops in Kantale town. However, one day, the owner of their handloom machines, who was their trainer in handloom weaving, wanted his 3 machines returned. This put a stop to their handloom textile weaving business, but they continued with their business of purchasing handloom clothing from Batticaloa and reselling these items.



Present situation

Inshaf and his partners originally wanted to use the grant funds to purchase handloom machines. However, as the grant funds were not adequate to purchase 3 handlooms, the trio have purchased 3 Juki sewing machines. Each machine cost Rs 57,000.

Using his sewing machine Inshaf has started sewing handloom clothing and selling these. Their plan is to purchase their own handloom from the profits of this business.

Explanation of the project training course

Inshaf joined the INSPIRED project, which was deployed through the Green Women's Organization, in 2018. He has been participating from the inception of the project and continues to be an active member of the project to date.

Through the project he learned to keep accounts and to understand how to operate a financially viable business by managing costs and prices. He has also learned what government agencies to engage with regarding business matters, and has also established contact with many private companies and entrepreneurs. Inshaf also participated in the public-private workshops organized by the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities. The training programs organized by the Good Market also contributed towards developing his business.

Monitoring process

Inshaf's business activities were monitored once a month at the start of the project. When the grant was disbursed, the business premises was visited once a week to check progress, discuss the next steps and to provide advisory services whenever required.

Outcome of activities

Inshaf and his partners have learned to keep accounts on their business and know to manage their finances based on the accounts. They opted for the business plan of purchasing 3 Juki machine to sew handloom clothing, instead of taking a loan to buy 3 handlooms. They plan to build up their profits to purchase a handloom. They are managing their business and finances prudently.



After the INSPIRED training events, Inshaf identified a new business opportunity and started a new business of making palmyra leaf products.

Selection for grants

Inshaf applied for the SEEDS grant with two ladies who are his friends, Rifna and Beevi Umma. Their partnership was selected for the grant due to the uncommon nature of their business and it being a new business venture, and due to gender equity as two of the business partners are women. Another deciding factor was communal cooperation. As young entrepreneurs, starting a new business, they qualified for the Rs 200,000 grant in the first selection round. Inshaf was also an active participant in the project who applied his learnings to his business.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is a good institution. We learned many things through them. We hope to work with them in the future as well"

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"We faced a big obstacle when we had to return our handloom to the owner. However, the grant from the Asia Foundation allowed us continue our business using a different format. So I am grateful to the Asia Foundation."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"We were able to get to know many different organizations and people because of the INSPIRED project. We got the chance to talk with the Provincial Councils and explain the difficulties we faced as business people. The Good Market also gave us a really good training and business education. So I am very happy with this project."

Value added products

In addition to his clothing business with his partners, Inshaf has started a new business of making and selling palm leaf products. Using his own funds, Inshaf makes colorful items, such as baskets, string hopper racks, wedding cake boxes, wall decorations etc...from palm leaves and sells these to generate a second line of income.

Market linkages

Inshaf and his partners got to know many entrepreneurs and business at local and district level and made many friends from all three communities. This contact network can be used to develop his business.

Business registration process and progress

The business has not been registered

Social cohesion within the community

Inshaf got on well with Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim participants of the project and also works with all three communities in his business transactions. He understands that cooperation among all communities is essential for business development and plans to continue working with all communities in the future.

Job opportunities

No new jobs have been created at this time.

4. A.M. Beevi Umma - Handloom clothing (Partnership)

History of the client

Beevi had participated in a handloom textile weaving training conducted by the Green Women's organization. After this training, Beevi joined hands with Inshaf and Rifna and the three started weaving handloom textile. The handlooms and accessories were provided by the trainers, which made it possible for them to immediately apply their learning and start their business. However, the handlooms had to be returned to its original owner. As they could no longer weave textile, the three partners purchased handloom cloth and clothing and sold these in their area.



Present situation

After the INSPIRED training, Beevi bought a Juki sewing machine from her share of the grant money as a handloom was too costly. She buys handloom textile from other weavers and uses the Juki machine to sew handloom clothing, which is sold in her neighborhood.

Explanation of the project training course

During the INSPIRED program, Beevi learned how to plan and manage a business and how to understand the needs of her community and what products had a market opportunity, to supply goods according to market

demand. Through the training provided by Good Market, she learned how to make local products, to suit local consumer demand and how to make products from natural ingredients.

Monitoring process

The business was monitored once a month and was monitored more frequently once a week after the grant was given, to review the business and provide whatever support services required.

Outcome of activities

Beevi now knows to keep accounts and keep track of the business finances. She has also understood how to build up her business and plan her business.

Selection for Grants

Beevi attended all project activities during the project duration and applied for the grant with her business partners Rifna and Inshaf. She was selected for the grant on the basis of being a young female entrepreneur with a new business venture and on the basis of communal cooperation.



Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Because of the INSPIRED project I have learned many new things about operating a business that I did not know before. I am very grateful to Sarvodaya and the Asia foundation for this social service they have done."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The funds from the Asia Foundation was what helped us continue with our business, after we lost our handloom. So I am very grateful"

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I am very thankful to the great service by Good Market, which had great practical use for us, and for the support given to the entrepreneurs through the public-private forums."

Value added products

Value addition to products has been limited to making clothing from handloom textiles.

Market linkages

Through the INSPIRED project activities Beevi has widened her market linkages by getting to know many other entrepreneurs and small business owners at local and district level.

Business registration process and progress

The business has not been registered yet.

Social cohesion within the community

Beevi says the INSPIRED project created an environment for different communities to interact and get to know each other and exchange business idea and learn from each other. It taught participants how to work together without discriminating, with all communities. Beevi says she made many new friends from all three communities due to the project.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

5. A. Fathima Rifna - Handloom clothing (Partnership)

History of the client

After participating in a handloom training course conducted by the Green Women's Organization in 2018, Rifna partnered with Inshaf and Beevi in a handloom textile weaving venture. The handlooms and accessories were provided by the trainers and they immediately started their business. There were no other handloom textile producers in the area, which was another advantage and they enjoyed good sales. However, they had to return the handlooms which stopped their business. The three friends then bought handloom clothing and sold those.

Present situation

Rifna purchased a Juki sewing machine from her share of the grant funds and has started sewing clothing from handloom material. Rifna also uses her Juki machine to sew school uniforms for school girls.



Explanation of the project training course

Rifna participated in all INSPIRED project activities and learned business management, accounting and how to sell to consumers, how to identify market and consumer needs and supply to demand. She also participated in training by the Good Market on how to make eco friendly products.

Monitoring process

The business was monitored once a month at the start of the project and was then monitored once a week after the grant was provided.

Outcome of activities

Rifna has learned to keep accounts and maintains the account books and understands how to manage the business and plan for the business.

Selection for Grants

Rifna attended all project activities and participated actively. She applied for the grant with her partners Beevi and Inshaf. She was selected for the grant on the basis of being a young female entrepreneur, their business being a new and uncommon business, and communal cooperation.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"We learned a great many things because of Sarvodaya that we were not aware of before. I am grateful to Sarvodaya for that."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I must thank the Asia Foundation very much for the funds they gave us to take our business forward."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I think a very good element of the program was the public-private forum with the Provincial Council. It gave entrepreneurs the chance to explain our problems and difficulties. Also, from the Good Market training we learned how to use natural colors, how to make toys from handloom materials and how to make soap using natural ingredients. I am very happy about this because these are very useful skills."

Value added products

The value addition is in the form of making clothing from handloom textiles and sewing school uniforms.

Market linkages

Rifna has made many new contacts among business in the district and at local level, due to the INSPIRED project activities.

Business registration process and progress

The business is not registered.

Social cohesion within the community

Rifna is very happy that she got the opportunity to interact with different communities through the INSPIRED project. She says she got the chance to talk to different people and exchange ideas and business possibilities with all communities. She feels harmony and cooperation between communities will help develop entrepreneurs.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created



6. A. Jeravajeni - Spice manufacturing (Partnership)

Kantale

History of the client

Jeravajeni is a women's rights and welfare activist and has directed many women towards the INSPIRED project through her civil society organization, the Green Women's Organization. The Green Women's Organization is a registered social service organization.

Jeravajeni started her own business by using a rice milling machine, which her mother received through another non-government organization as a grant for widows - to make rice flour. The rice flour was sold to a few people in her area.

Present situation

Jeravajeni has formed a partnership with two other participants at the INSPIRED project and has expanded her cottage business. Using the Rs 50,000, which is her share of the grant funds, she has bought a blender, sealing machine to seal packets of spices, and raw materials. In addition to rice flour, she is now grinding and packeting chili and the traditional Sri Lankan spice mix used for cooking, as an additional income source. She sells her products at a small shop in her house, and also puts them into other retail outlets.



Explanation of the project training course

Jeravajeni participated in the INSPIRED project, which was conducted through the Green Women's Organization, and continues to be an active participant. At the project training events she learned how to manage money effectively as a business, how to network and communicate with private and government institutions, and participated in the public-private forum organized by the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities. She also participated in a training organized by the Good Market. Jeravajeni became a committee member of the public-private forum, representing the INSPIRED project on behalf of the entrepreneur community.



Monitoring process

At the start of the project her business was monitored through monthly visits and after the grant was disbursed, her business activities were monitored once a week.

Outcome of activities

As a result of the INSPIRED project activities, Jeravajeni found a business partner and expanded her business. She has applied what she learned in the training to her business, to manage it better.

Selection for Grants

Jeravajeni was selected for the grant as she and her partners are women entrepreneurs and had formed a new business venture. The partnership is also an example of communal cooperation between a Tamil lady and two Sinhalese ladies. Jeravajeni applied for a grant as a partnership with Padmini and Ranjini Samaratunga, both of whom she met through the INSPIRED project. They were selected in the first round of selections.

Jeravajeni used her share of the funds to improve her existing business and to start a new business line.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is not an unknown organization to me. I have been working with Sarvodaya for some time now. I am very happy about the social services done by Sarvodaya."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"This is the first time I have worked with the Asia Foundation. Because of this project we learned many things about how to do a business properly. Also, I am grateful to the Asia Foundation for giving us this funding."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I am very happy with the institutions that collaborated in this project. The Provincial Councils, the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities, and the Good Market all worked with Sarvodaya and the Asia Foundation in this project very effectively. The training programs and the awareness program on organic agriculture conducted by Good Market were very valuable."

Value added products

Jeravejini has started grinding and packeting chili and the Sri Lankan spice mix (thuna paha) as a new business line. Some of her grant money was invested in this new venture. Her products are named Green Women products after her social services organization.

Market linkages

Jeravajeni made many contacts during the INSPIRED program. After the project her products are now sold at Padmini's shop as well as her own shop, and other retail outlets in the area.

Business registration process and progress

Jerawajeni has not registered a new business as she is using the Green Women trade mark for her products.

Social cohesion within the community

The partnership between Jeravajeni and the two Sinhalese women is being conducted successfully, demonstrating the potential for cooperation among different communities.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

7. J. P. C. Padmini - Buffalo curd (Partnership)

History of the client

Padmini Jayaweera started her buffalo curd shop called Thilini Curd after the death of her husband. She did very small scale production of curd by purchasing milk from Tamil and Muslim producers. However, in a very short period her shop became very popular, not only in Agbopura but in other surrounding areas.

Present situation

Padmini used the Rs 100,000 grant from the INSPIRED project to modernize and improve her sales outlet and also bought stocks of milk, buffalo ghee and honey. Her shop attracts many travelers and regulars because of the quality of here curd.



Explanation of the project training course

Padmini attended the INSPIRED project trainings and was exposed to techniques on how to professionally manage her business to achieve business growth. The training events helped her plan the expansion of her business in a systematic manner. Her level of financial literacy has improved and she has learned to understand and maintain daily accounts.

Monitoring process

Padmini's business operations were assessed once a month at the start of the project and once a week following the grant.

Outcome of activities

She attended all training events and has learned how to make her business financially viable and how to manage her resources. The trainings on food technology conducted by the Good Market and the Vidatha Resource Centre has been applied towards improving her products and her business. She has learned to maintain accounts and is using this knowledge to control and manage her business.

Padmini has formed a new business partnership with Jeravajeni and Ranji who she met during the INSPIRED project, which is a positive outcome of the project.

Selection for Grants

Padmini, Jeravajeni and Ranji planned a business partnership and applied for the grant as a partnership. Their application for the grant was selected based on ethnic diversity and gender. The grant funds were shared among the three ladies.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is an institution that has always helped people prosper. It is a social services organization and an organization that can set an example. So I am grateful for the assistance they have provided"

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I have been doing social service for many years and I have helped many women, but I have never received such valuable assistance as this. The funds from the Asia Foundation is the first time I have received financial assistance in my life."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

Padmini has had the opportunity to represent the business community from the INSPIRED project, at the committee established at the Provincial Council. She is very happy about this, as it makes it possible to bring up specific problems faced by the business community, with the Provincial Council to develop solutions fast. She is also grateful for the training by the Good Market."



Value added products

Padmini has added value to her business through the INSPIRED project by expanding her product portfolio to include other related products that have strong demand, such as honey and ghee.

Market linkages

One of Padmini's business partners, Ranjini has agreed to supply fresh milk to Padmini to make curd. Padmini has also established contact with many other entrepreneurs, expanding her contact base.

Business registration process and progress

Padmini had already registered her business

Social cohesion within the community

Padmini and Jerawajeni are not only entrepreneurs but are also active in social services to help women. They have started a social service organization for this purpose. Their partnership is also aimed at building social coexistence by supporting women and building support network among all communities.

Job opportunities

No new employments were created

8. W.P. Ranjini - Dairy Farm (Partnership)

History of the client

Ranjini started a small dairy business around 2010, by registering with the area Milk Board. She sold the milk from her cows to her neighbors and the Milk Board. At that time she had 3 milk cows.

Present situation

Ranjini formed a business partnership with Jeravajeni and Padmini to apply for the SEEDS grant. She used her share of the Rs 50,000 grant and her own money to purchase another cow. Now she has 4 milk cows that supply her with fresh milk.



Explanation of the project training course

Ranjini attended the INSPIRED training events and learned about business management and financial management and also the advantages of peaceful cooperation in making businesses successful. She learned how to build up community networks with all communities and how to work with private and government agencies. The Good Market and Vidatha Resource Center training on food technology was extremely useful for her.

Monitoring process

Ranjini's business was monitored once a month and then once a week after disbursement of the grant.

Outcome of activities

The most significant outcome of the INSPIRED project is the business partnership that was formed with Jeravajeni and Padmini who were also participants. Ranjini's business has also grown because of the grant and business management has improved.



Selection for Grants

Participants at local and district level had the opportunity to apply for the SEEDS grant and Ranjini's application was submitted as a partnership. It was selected due to the communal cooperation that is generated through the partnership and the contribution towards women's empowerment.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya has always helped people and I am grateful for the knowledge they have given us through this program."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Because of the practical knowledge we received from the Asia Foundation project and the funds, we were able to expand our business and grow as entrepreneurs and I am grateful to them."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Before this, businesses like us never had the chance to discuss our problems with the authorities and get their support. The public-private forums gave us this unique opportunity. I am very happy about this. I am also grateful for the Good Market training because that knowledge was very useful.

Value added products

Value addition for Ranjini's business has been in the form of acquiring another cow, which has increased her income. Improved business management is another form of value addition.

Market linkages

Ranjini now supplies liquid milk to Padmini to make her curd and has also established contact with many other businesses.

Business registration process and progress

The dairy business is already registered

Social cohesion within the community

Ranjini cooperates with all communities in her business and the INSPIRED project has enhanced coexistence and cooperation through the formation of her business partnership.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created.

9. K.B.T. Nisansala - Buffalo curd

History of the client

Nisansala opened a shop called New Thilini Curd, to sell buffalo curd that she made at home. She learned how to make buffalo curd from her mother, J P C Padmini, who is another beneficiary of the INSPIRED Project, and she ran her business based on what she knew about her mother's curd making and selling business. When she opened her own curd shop, she registered it as a business under her mother's guidance

Present situation

The business that was conducted on a very small scale, has now grown considerably. Using the Rs 200,000 grant funds, she has expanded her business by adding new products, such as fruit juice, ghee, honey and buffalo ghee, which she sells at her shop. Her shop is popular among both local and foreign tourists because of the high quality of her curd. She used the grant funds to improve and modernize her shop and bought blenders, a fridge and tables and chairs for her customers.



Explanation of the project training course

The INSPIRED project has taught her how to operate a business professionally, to make it financially successful, how to work with private and government agencies, how to establish business contacts, and how to manage her finances. The food technology course by the Good Market and Vidatha Resource Centre, was useful to take her business to the next level.

Monitoring process

Nisansala's business was monitored once a month at the start of the project and was monitored once a week after the grant, to help her implement her business plan.

Outcome of activities

Nisansala has applied her learnings to her business and now keeps daily accounts of her business transactions. She has understood how to take her business forward has expanded her business by improving her shop into a juice café and has expanded her product range. These improvements have increased her income.

As her shop is located in the main Kandy road, she has a good clientele and good sales.



Selection for Grants

Nisansala applied for the grant and was selected as she was a young, female entrepreneur and due to her specialized skill of curd making. Another factor was her determination and her capability.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is a very good institution and an exemplary institution setting an example to our society. It was a pleasure to work with them."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I learned about the Asia Foundation because of this project. Also, the funding they provided helped me develop my business."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

The public-private forums and meetings with the Provincial Council and trade associations were very good, because they allowed entrepreneurs to voice their problems in operating their businesses. I am very happy that we got that opportunity to interact with the authorities and talk to them. I am also grateful for the awareness and food processing training given to us by the Good Market."

Value added products

She has added value to her business by adding other products, including fruit juice, ghee, honey and buffalo ghee. She has also redecorated and modernized her shop in a small café concept where customers can sit and enjoy a fruit juice and curd.

Market linkages

Nisansala has made many new contacts from the INSPIRED project which has expanded her market links. She also participated in the exhibition “We are Together on One Road” organized by the INSPIRED project which gave her a platform to showcase and sell her products to the visiting public. She was able to promote her business to other businesses as well.

Business registration process and progress

Nisansala has already registered her shop

Social cohesion within the community

From the time she opened her curd shop, Nisansala has been buying her fresh milk from Muslim milk suppliers and has a good relationship with them. During the project she established contact with many people from different communities and continues to operate her business by cooperating with everyone.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

10. P. Roshini Gomes - Concrete flower pots

History of the client

In 2001, Roshini started her business, which was called Dhananjana Concrete Works, to manufacture concrete flowerpots. She faced any obstacles at the start, as this was not the type of business typically operated by women and the sector is male dominated. However, Roshini did not to give up. When she started her business, she could not afford to buy professional molds and therefore, she made her own fiber molds to cast her flowerpots.



Present situation

After receiving the INSPIRED project grant of Rs 200,000 she used the money to purchase the latest flowerpot molds and also bought molds for paving stones. She also bought stocks of cement, sand, wire and cable and mettle dust, which are other raw materials for her products. The products manufactured using the new, professional molds, have helped increase her sales significantly, due to their more professional appearance.

She plans to use her profit to purchase a concrete mixing machine.

Explanation of the project training course

Roshini attended all training events organized by the INSPIRED project. She attended the local and district level awareness events and applied her newly acquired knowledge immediately to her business. The Good Market was selected to provide many new different training events on new products, including how to make soap using

natural ingredients, how to sew bags and how to make bags from paper. The participants were also taught financial management, which helped participants like Roshini professionally manage and plan their businesses.

Monitoring process

The project monitored Roshini's business once a month at the start and later once a week to check on progress.

Outcome of activities

Roshini says the INSPIRED project was the turning point for her business, as it made it possible for her to take her business to a more professional level and improve the quality of her products. The grant has also allowed her to expand her product line, which is generating additional income.



Selection for Grants

Participants at local level and district level were given the opportunity to apply for the grant and Roshini was selected on the basis of gender equity and as Roshini's business is an unusual business for a woman. Another reason was community cohesion as Roshini sold her products to all communities and bought raw materials from all communities without any discrimination.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya is not new to me because I worked as a training officer at the Kantale Sarvodaya unit. So, I am very thankful to Sarvodaya for this social service they have done."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I first heard about the Asia Foundation through the INSPIRED project. The same way I am grateful to Sarvodaya, I am grateful to the Asia Foundation for the assistance they gave me to develop my business."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

Because of the INSPIRED project we got the chance to talk about our business related problems with the authorities. I am grateful to the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities for this opportunity. Also, the knowledge we got from the Good Market training taught us to make products that we can sell in the local market."

Value added products

In addition to her original production of flower pots, Roshini has now started making new products such as paving stones, well rings, fence posts, and is attending training on how to use titanium on her products to make them look more attractive.

Market linkages

At the exhibition organized in September by the INSPIRED project, a Tamil lady from Trincomalee purchased Roshini's products and placed a number of orders. After this contact Roshini now has business connections in Trincomalee and sells her goods in Trincomalee as well as Kantale.

Business registration process and progress

Roshini's business is already registered with the Provincial Council

Social cohesion within the community

Roshini purchases her raw materials from all communities, and deals with businesses from all communities with no discrimination. She also sells and produces for all communities and her customer base includes people from all three communities. Her largest customer base is the Muslim community. She sells her products at her business premises and outside, in collaboration with others.

Job opportunities

Roshini operates her business with her husband and a Tamil lady and she receives orders for 50 flower pots every month on the community money club system (seettu system). She also recruits workers on contract basis and does not discriminate on ethnicity or religion.

11. A.W. Chandani Abeygunawardane - Lake View Guesthouse and Restaurant

History of the client

Chandani's Lake view guesthouse and restaurant is a family operated business with the entire family lending a hand. In addition she had also recruited another lady as a helper. Her menu comprised both Sri Lankan cuisine as well as some popular foreign dishes. The restaurant also does catering for the areas government and private institutions and for schools and functions. Due to her reliability and good quality of food she has a strong clientele. The location of her restaurant, near the Kantale reservoir, is another advantage because of the steady stream of tourists and locals coming to view the reservoir. These trippers and locals who come to bathe in the lake, are a good source of income. In addition, the restaurant has a separate area to accommodate open air dinners and lunches.



Present situation

Chandani developed a specialized traditional Sri Lankan village food menu to target the many tourists and also local visitors to her areas. However, the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 put an end to travelers and tourists visiting Chandani's restaurant. Not giving up, Chandani created a Facebook page for business and started online catering. This has continued to generate some revenue through Facebook orders and telephone based catering orders. Due to her accurate and reliable delivery services she has become popular for online catering.

Explanation of the project training course

The INSPIRED project's awareness programs exposed participants to aspects that make businesses successful through, how to build business relationships with the government and private sector and how to manage

business finances. Training programs by the Good Market on food production was also useful for Chandani.

Monitoring process

The business was monitored once a month at the start of the project and was visited once a week after the grant was given.

Outcome of activities

Chandani joined the INSPIRED project in 2018 and participated in both divisional and district level training activities as well as awareness programs.

She identified the market opportunity for traditional, Sri Lankan village food, following her exposure to business development from the INSPIRED the project, and training she received from the Good Market. She then created a special Sri Lankan food menu targeted at tourists and urban local travelers.



Selection for Grants

Chandani applied for the first round of grants but was not selected. This was primarily because the grant was given mainly to uncommon business ideas and community cooperation-based ventures. Chandani's project proposal did not stand out as something different. However, she was not discouraged. She refined her business proposal into a traditional village food business, and reapplied for the second round of grants, and was able to qualify for the grant.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"It was only because of Sarvodaya that I got the opportunity to participate in the INSPIRED project. I gained a great deal of knowledge about proper management and operation of a business through this project. So I would like to thank Sarvodaya for this service. "

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Asia Foundation not only gave us an education but also gave us funds to develop or businesses. I cannot describe in words what this means to us. I am thankful to the Asia Foundation for this help and I hope they will continue to help people like us in the future."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I am very grateful to the Good Market for the trainings they gave us. I would also like to mention the public-private forum organized by the Sri Lanka Local Government Collective, the Provincial Council and the trade associations. This was the first time we had such as opportunity and I this this was very valuable for small business like us"

Value added products

Using the knowledge provided by the Good Market training, Chandani is planning a new business venture to packet cinnamon powder. She will initially supply her packeted cinnamon to the Good Market.

Market linkages

Chandani has established many new business connections through the INSPIRED project activities and has also got new business linkage with the Good Market to supply cinnamon powder.

Business registration process and progress

Chandani's restaurant was already registered.

Social cohesion within the community

Chandani's restaurant and catering business deals with all ethnic communities to obtain supplies and as customers. She serves everyone with the same level of respect and works in harmony with all communities.

Job opportunities

Chandani already employs a lady, but plans to recruit a few more employees to help her business in the future

12. K.R. Sujeeva Indralatha - Handloom bags (Partnership)

History of the client

Sujeeva started sewing bags using handloom textile as a hobby in around 2015. She sewed bags for friends and neighbors according to their requirements. She also made washing/detergent powder after attending a training by the Vidatha Resorce Centre. Her older brother helped her by selling the washing powder in the village and also putting it into shops in the neighborhood.



Present situation

By now the handbag sewing hobby has become a fairly substantial business. A full range of bags in different designs are now being manufactured including handbags, school bags, carriers bags, purses and other types of bags in different colors and designs. She gets orders from the schools in the area and she also supplies bags to many of the local shops. Sujeeva purchases her raw materials from a shop owned by a Muslim trader called The Oxford located in Colombo.

Explanation of the project training course

Sujeeva participated in the INSPIRED project and learned how to manage a business successfully and how to cooperate with all communities to develop a business with mutual benefits. She also participated in a training event by the Good Market which helped improve her business.

Monitoring process

Her business was monitored once month at the start of the project and was later monitored once a week after the grant was given to her.

Outcome of activities

After the training by Good Market, Sujeewa is ready to supply bags made from handloom textiles to the Good Market. This business will also help handloom textile weavers.

Selection for Grants

Sujeewa's grant application as an individual entrepreneur was not selected during the first round of grants. Her business proposal was for her washing powder business but there was another application from a lady in Trincomalee who had developed a more advanced washing powder business that produced a range of goods such as handwashes, washing powder, soap etc... Therefore, the grant bypassed Sujeewa and went to the other lady.

However, Sujeewa was not discouraged. She formed a partnership with another lady participant of the INSPIRED project – Shiranai - and the two applied for the grant as a partnership during the second round of grants and was selected. On this occasion Sujeewa's business proposal was to develop her cloth bag making business.



They were selected due to it being a new business owned by women entrepreneurs and due to the community cooperation by their business. Sujeewa's participation in all INSPIRED project activities and her cooperation with all communities, was also a plus point.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya has always been working for the welfare of the people. So I am very happy to have had the opportunity to work with them."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I am grateful to the Asia Foundation for bringing this project to the people of Trincomalee"

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The exhibition organized by the inspired project gave business the opportunity to showcase their skills. The training given by Good Market and the public-private forum with Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities, were wonderful opportunities for entrepreneurs."

Value added products

Sujeewa has made improvements to her cloth bags following the training.

Market linkages

Sujeewa built up her contact base both in her neighborhood and at district level due to the INSPIRED project activities.

Business registration process and progress

The detergent business has been registered as ENT Products but no new business has been registered for the cloth bags.

Social cohesion within the community

Sujeewa interacts and transacts with all communities in her daily business operations and maintains cordial relations with all communities.

Job opportunities

No new jobs have been created yet, but Sujeewa hopes to recruit a employees to help expand her cloth bag business.

13. W.S. Rathnamali Wattededara - Spice production (Partnership)

History of the client

Rathnamali's original business was the sale of clothing. However, after about 7 years of operations this business, which was originally profitable, started losing money. Rathnamali continues to try to salvage her clothing business.

Present situation

Following the training on food production by the Good Market, Rathnamali has embarked on a new business venture in the form of a partnership, to manufacture spices. Her husband and her sisters-in-law help her with the business.



Explanation of the project training course

Rathnamali attended all divisional and district level activities and training events, including the training by Good Market. She learned about business development, starting a new business and managing a business in a professional manner.

Monitoring process

The business was monitored once a month at the start of the project and was monitored once a week after the grant was provided to check on progress and provide any required advisory and other support that was required.

Outcome of activities

Rathnamali came up with the idea for her new business after her training from the Good Market by applying the knowledge she receives from the INSPIRED project about identifying market opportunities. She was able to spot the market opportunity and utilize locally accessible resources, such as raw materials for spices, to develop a new business plan.

Selection for Grants

Rathnamali first applied for the grant as an individual but was not selected. She then formed a partnership with another INSPIRED project participant, Vijerani, who has a business in Trincomalee, and applied for the second

round of grants. The partnership was selected for the grant on the grounds of empowering women entrepreneurs, community collaboration and being a new business.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The INSPIRED project team did not drop anyone. They checked on everyone and supported everyone in the same way, which helped me develop my business idea. I am grateful to Sarvodaya for this service."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Asia Foundation and Sarvodaya organized not only trainings and awareness programs but also an exhibition which allowed entrepreneurs to showcase their abilities and also get publicity and new customers. I am grateful for this support."



Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I really appreciate the public-private forums with the provincial councils and other businesses to discuss or problems. I am also very happy about the opportunity we got to learn how to improve and develop our businesses from an institution like the Good Market, which is an international organization."

Value added products

No additional value added products were developed.

Market linkages

Rathnamali has acquired retail connections to sell her spices, not only in her area, but also in Trincomalee. She also has obtained orders from Chandani in Kantale, who operates a restaurant. She also plans to sell her goods to Good Market due to the high standard of her products.

Business registration process and progress

Rathnamali's business has not been registered but she plans to do so soon.

Social cohesion within the community

Rathnamali has entered into a Partnership with Vijayarani from Trincomalee, demonstrating communal cooperation and also transacts with all communities in her business dealings.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created.

14. G.B. Mangalika Shirani - Sewing mosquito nets (Partnership)

History of the client

Mangalika has about 5 years of experience sewing clothes for babies and children. However, there are now many women in her area engaged in the same business of sewing baby clothes and children's clothes.

Present situation

Following the INSPIRED project, Mangalika has used her grant funds to repair her sewing machine and to purchase the required materials to make mosquito nets. She has started a new business of sewing mosquito nets.



Explanation of the project training course

Through the INSPIRED project Mangalika learned about market demand, identifying business opportunities, planning and managing a business and financial management. She also learned how to work with government institutions and businesses. Through the training events by Good Market, that connected other businesses, Mangalika gained a great deal of knowledge about developing a business.

Monitoring process

Mangalika's business was monitored once a month and was monitored once a week after she received the grant to support her with advice.

Outcome of activities

Due to the INSPIRED project exposure to business thinking, Mangalika understood the child and baby clothing market is almost saturated because all the dress makers in her area are making these products. Therefore, she decided to develop a new product.

Applying the training by Good Market, Mangalika is turning out many different mosquito net designs and enjoys high demand for her products. She no longer has to compete with other clothing producers in her area as she is making a totally different and uncommon product.

Selection for Grants

Shirani's grant application did not qualify for the first round of grants. However, she applied for the grant again as a partnership with Sujeewa, and was selected for the second round of grants. The grant was approved because the business was a new business operated by 2 women entrepreneurs to empower women and due to the communal cooperation through the business.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"We got the opportunity to participate in this project through Sarvodaya. We learned a lot about business through this project and I am grateful to Sarvodaya for this opportunity."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The grant from the Asia Foundation has helped those who had gone out of business because of the COVID-19 pandemic recover and restart their businesses. I am grateful to the Asia Foundation for their support."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The public-private forums allowed us to discuss our problems directly with the Provincial Council. Also the knowledge we got from Good Market is very valuable as entrepreneurs."

Value added products

No new value added products

Market linkages

Mangalika has retail connections to sell her mosquito nets not only in her area but also in Kantale town. She also plans to sell her products to Good Market.

Business registration process and progress

Mangalika's business is not registered but she plans to do so soon.



Social cohesion within the community

Mangalika buys her materials and transacts with all communities. In Kantale. Her mosquito nets are retailed at 2 Muslim shops called Muflihas and Fair Lanka. Mangalika says she is happy that she was given the opportunity to work with and get to know a diverse community through the INSPIRED project.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

15. Ruwanthika Chaamali Kodikara - Baby clothes using natural dyes (Partnership)

History of the client

Ruwanthika started her dress making business in 2014 for all kinds of women's clothing, which was extremely successful and she enjoyed a large and regular clientele.

Present situation

The INSPIRED project was a turning point for Ruwanthika's business as she embarked on a new venture to make baby clothes using natural dyes.

Explanation of the project training course

The project taught participants how to operate a business successfully, how to work with all communities in harmony and peace, how to develop good relationships with government and private institutions to develop their businesses, and financial management. Through the Good Market training participants were exposed to new business ideas and Ruwanthika applied this knowledge to conceive her new business.



Monitoring process

Ruwanthika's business was monitored once a month and once a week after the grant was given to her, to help her with her business.

Outcome of activities

Following the training from Good Market Ruwanthika purchases cotton materials and dyes them using natural colors and makes many different designs of baby clothes. The natural dyes make the clothing non-toxic and safe for the sensitive skin of babies.

Selection for Grants

Ruwanthika applied for the grant in the first round but was not selected. In the second round of grants she reapplied as a partnership with Manori Prasadini, and was selected. The reasons were, that it was a new business operated by two women entrepreneurs and generated community cooperation through the project.



Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I am grateful to Sarvodaya for this opportunity and I think the business knowledge we have gained will be very useful to develop our businesses."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I heard about the Asia Foundation for the first time from this project. We got a lot of knowledge about business through this project and I am grateful to the Asia Foundation for the funding that gave me."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The public-private forum by the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities gave us the opportunity to discuss our problems with the Provincial Council. The training and knowledge from the Good Market gave us new business ideas and helped to create new business opportunities. So I am very happy about this."

Value added products

No new value added products

Market linkages

Ruwanthika hopes to sell her products to the Good Market soon and also plans to put her baby clothes into retail shops in her area.

Business registration process and progress

Ruwanthika has not registered her business with the Provincial Council but pays her taxes.

Social cohesion within the community

Ruwanthika does not discriminate any community and believes it is a good thing to cooperate with all communities. She transacts with all communities. She believes businesses can go a long way if they cooperate with and help all communities.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

16. H.A. Nishanthi Shyamali - Clothing with natural dyes (Partnership)

History of the client

Nishanthi started her dress making business in 2008 following a training by the Youth Council. She made wedding saris using natural products and dresses for special functions.

She had also attended other training events and was able to conduct her business with reasonable success.

Present situation

She has expanded her business by making sari jackets and school uniforms. Following the INSPIRED project



training, she is planning to make batik designs using natural ingredients.

Explanation of the project training course

Nishanthi participated in all INSPIRED project trainings at divisional and district level. She learned how to make a business successful from the start, how to establish business relations with government and private establishments, financial management, and also training by the Good Market on clothing.

Monitoring process

The business was monitored once a month and once a week after the grant was given

Outcome of activities

Nishanthi has formed a new business partnership and is hoping to expand her product line to include natural dye batiks. She has also registered her business.

Selection for Grants

Nishanthi met Mrs Sugirdajeevamalar during the INSPIRED district level activities. As Mrs Sugirdajeevamalar was also in the clothing business in Trincomalee, the two decided to form a partnership and apply for the grant. They were awarded the grant due to the communal cooperation of the partnership and women empowerment aspects.



Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"By attending this project through Sarvodaya, we were able to get to know people from different communities and learn about this business ideas. I am very happy about this."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"We learned a great deal about doing business from this project and the Asia Foundation also gave us money to help develop or businesses. So, I am very grateful to them."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The INSPIRED project has done a social service through their activities. I also appreciate the good training we got from the Good Market and the opportunity to express our problems to the Provincial Council at the Public-Private dialog organized by the Sri Lanka Local Government Collective."

Value added products

Nishanthi is planning to make batik clothing using natural dyes.

Market linkages

Nishanthi has established a business link in Trincomalee through her partnership with Mrs Sugirdajeevamalar. She has also got to know many other businesses at divisional and district level.

Business registration process and progress

Nishanthi has registered her business with the Provincial Council.

Social cohesion within the community

Nishanthi has formed a new business partnership with a Tamil entrepreneur and has established contact with all three communities following INSPIRED project activities. She conducts her business in harmony with all communities.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

17. M.A. Manori Prasadini - Baby clothes using natural dyes (Partnership)

History of the client

Manori started her dress making business in 2016 making school uniforms for girls and also dresses for ladies. She also did bridal dressing but she stopped this to focus on her dress making business.

Present situation

Following the INSPIRED project, Manori has expanded her product line beyond dress making. She has started making baby clothes using natural dyes, face masks and sanitary towels.

Explanation of the project training course

Manori participated in all INSPIRED project trainings and awareness programs and was exposed to account keeping, how to establish business relations with government and private establishments, the public-private dialog with the Provincial Council and the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities. and also training by the Good Market.



Monitoring process

The business was monitored once a month and once a week after the grant was given

Outcome of activities

Manori has diversified into baby clothing using natural dyes, face masks and sanitary towels

Selection for Grants

Participants at divisional and district level had the opportunity to apply for the seed grant. Manori's first grant application as an individual entrepreneur did not qualify for the grant. She applied for the second round of grants after forming a partnership with Chamali Ruwanthika. The partnership qualified for the grant as it was a business by two women entrepreneurs and supported communal coexistence.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

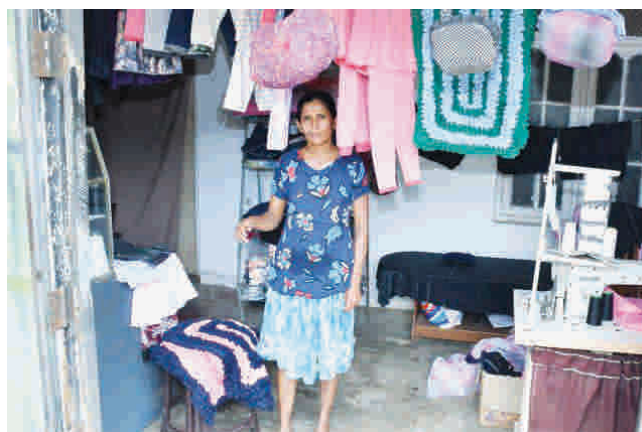
"I am thankful to Sarvodaya for the support they have given us. We learned many new things about business during this project."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"We heard About the Asia Foundation for the first time, through this project and we learned many things about business from this project. They also gave us finds for our businesses, for which we are thankful."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Public-Private dialog organized by the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities. gave us the chance to discuss our problems with the Provincial Council. This was very useful. The training we got from the Good Market was also very useful."



Value added products

Manori has added value to her existing business by developing baby clothing using natural dyes, face masks using natural dyes and sanitary towels from cotton cloth.

Market linkages

Manori is planning to sell her baby clothes, face masks and sanitary towels to the Good Market.

Business registration process and progress

Manori plans to register her business soon.

Social cohesion within the community

Manori says if everyone worked together in harmony and cooperation there would be no conflict.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

18. K.W.G. Chandani Jayantha - Sweets

History of the client

Chandani started making traditional Sri Lankan sweets on a very small scale in 2015. She sold her sweets to tea shops and shops in her area and soon experienced a growth in demand and even started getting individual orders because of the good quality of her items. She made traditional Sinhalese sweet cakes such as athirasa, mung kewum, konda kewum, aasmi, narang kewum, dodol and unduwel and savory kokis with the help of her family.



Present situation

Chandani's business has continued to do well and she now gets regular orders for her products. She is also preparing to produce dehydrated fruit and vegetables.

Explanation of the project training course

Chandani participated in all INSPIRED project trainings and learned how to make a business successful from inception, account keeping, how to establish business relations with government and private establishments, and also benefited from training by the Good Market and the Vidatha Resource Center, in food technology.

Monitoring process

The business was monitored once a month and once a week after the grant was given.

Outcome of activities

Chandani learned how to make dehydrated fruits and vegetables and is planning to produce these for the market. She is also applying her learnings on financial management by keeping accounts of her business.



Selection for Grants

Chandani formed a partnership with Selvarani who was also a participant at the INSPIRED project. The partnership was awarded the grant during the second round of grants as this was an uncommon business venture between two women entrepreneurs with communal collaboration.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Sarvodaya has always helped people and sets an example. So I am grateful to Sarvodaya for helping us."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The Asia Foundation gave funds to develop our businesses and we were also educated on how to manage our businesses better. I would like to thank them for this."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"The public-private dialog connected businesses with the Provincial Council and we got the opportunity to discuss our problems and possible solutions, which is a really good thing. The training we got from organizations like the Good Market and Vidatha also benefited businesses like ours."

Value added products

Chadani plans to produce dehydrated vegetables and fruits

Market linkages

Chandani has made a business connection with Selvarani and the two entrepreneurs help each other. Chandani purchases rice flour to make her sweets from Selvarani and Selvarani sells Chandani's products in her area and canvasses orders for sweets. Chandani has also made connections with other sales points in the Kantale area, such as canteens in schools and hospitals, and tea shops in town.

Business registration process and progress

Chandani plans to register her business soon.

Social cohesion within the community

Chandani believes that inter communal interactions through business activities will prevent conflicts and encourage harmony.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created

19. G. Selvarani - Rice flour production

History of the client

Selvarani started making and packeting rice flour in 2004 after the death of her husband to generate an income for her family. She bought a grinding machine to make rice flour and she sold her output to neighbors and even shops in Trincomalee.

Present situation

In addition to her ongoing business of making rice flour, Selvarani also supplies rice flour to Chandani her INSPIRED project partner, to make sweets.

Explanation of the project training course

At the INSPIRED project trainings Selvarani learned how to manage a business professionally to make it successful from inception, account keeping, how to establish business relations with government and



private establishments, the and also benefited from training by the Good Market and the Vidatha Resource Center, in food technology.

Monitoring process

The business was monitored once a month and once a week after the grant was given.

Outcome of activities

Selvarani has steady orders from Chandani, her business partner, for rice flour, and she sells Chandani's sweets in her area.



Selection for Grants

Selvarani applied for the grant as a partnership with Chandani. They were selected for the grant during the second round of grants as this was an uncommon business venture between two women entrepreneurs with communal collaboration.

Regarding Sarvodaya from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Because of my connection with Sarvodaya, I got to learn a great deal about business management."

Regarding Asia Foundation from the beneficiaries' point of view

"Like Sarvodaya, the Asia Foundation also educated us about business and they also gave us a grant for which I am thankful."

Regarding other stakeholders (Civil societies, Provincial Councils, divisional and district secretariats, etc...) from the beneficiaries' point of view

"I would like to thank the organizations that collaborated with the INSPIRED project like, the Provincial Council, the Sri Lanka Local Government Collective, the Good Market and Vidatha Centre for their contributions."

Value added products

No new product value additions have been made.

Market linkages

Selvarani's partnership with Chandani has created a two-way market link-up for the partners.

Business registration process and progress

Selvarani has not registered her business.

Social cohesion within the community

Selvarani says, if all communities cooperated and helped each other, peace will be an automatic outcome.

Job opportunities

No new jobs were created