

Catalyzing Change

September 2019

The Chrysalis Board of Directors has seen a few changes in the recent past. Our former Board Chair Dar Vanderbeck has stepped down and Nelun Chris Gunasekera has taken over. Our newest members are, Beth Dunlop, Tamara Bernard and Tim Bishop.

In this issue we introduce another member of the Chrysalis Board of Directors: a founding director, **Audrey Fernando Guneratne** has quietly but steadfastly supported the organization to achieve its goals and vision. Having been at CARE International from ... up to 2019, Audrey is an insider/outsider who was physically present at CARE while the transition was happening and saw every bit of the change and now witnesses first-hand Chrysalis' growth and success.

"We had carried out one restructure within CARE where we went from direct implementation to implementing through partners, and doing more policy level work, advocating for change because we wanted to have impact at scale and we had already begun to think about sustainability. When CARE USA decided to close its operations in Sri Lanka we weighed in on the viability of various organizational models that would enable us to offer our technical expertise and serve the needs of the private sector, as well as continue to implement development initiatives that addressed the needs and entitlements of women and youth. Of course, the long-term goal was to reduce own dependency on institutional funding and build our reserves by diversifying our resources to allow us to be creative, innovative and be able to influence change at scale.

Once we decided on the legal frame work which would suit us and limited by guarantee was decided on, it was a no brainer that Ashika would lead the organization

There was a lot of support from CARE International for the transition process. CARE's Delhi Resolution committed to ensuring fifty percent membership from the Global South in its governing bodies. To do that, it was going to need more independent entities with the capacity and voice to influence global decisions.

This, that and more

"I really want to see the Chrysalis voice growing within CARE International. I've witnessed firsthand the benefit we have got from CARE when it comes to resources., but I want to see how we can really impact the changes that are going to happen inside CARE. CARE has always 'talked' about the change and now we have proved the benefits as well as the challenges associated with change. Our lessons are critical for CARE globally."



Audrey Fernando - Founder Board Member

These entities simply could not be mere branches of a larger CARE member partner. There were others from the global south proposing changes to the way they governed themselves. Chrysalis ended up leading this change within CARE because we decided there was no turning back as Greg Brady (the Country Director of CARE Sri Lanka who led the change) would say ...

3 years on, I think Chrysalis has exceeded all expectations, I honestly thought change would happen at a slower pace, but the team has been raising funding back to back for projects, which speaks volumes about the talent in the entire organization. Everything has come together and it has worked out well."

Celebrating 3 years!!!!

100 Women Entrepreneurs

1070 Employment Opportunities

3500 Youth Leaders

204 Women Political Leaders

303 Communities Mobilized

20,000
Women & Youth

"It always seems impossible until it is done"
- Nelson Mandela



The venue of the celebrations - Asylum Colombo



Chrysalis CEO Ashika Gunasena greets UNFPA Representative Ms. Ritsu Nacken



Chrysalis Board Chair Nelun Chris Gunasekera



Chrysalis Board Member Vidusha Nathavitharana



The Chrysalis Board with the CEO



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Chrysalis staff felicitating the CEO Ashika Gunasena



Chrysalis CEO Ashika Gunasena



Give away baskets produced by Chrysalis entrepreneurs

“We started as a women farmers’ cooperative.
But now it’s time for us to register as an Enterprise...”

- Exotic Vegetable Collective

Cosmetics made from natural herbs, exotic vegetables by a women-led motorcycle repair business; These are just a few of the many enterprises selected for the Chrysalis implemented ENTERPRISE project funded by the Integrated Rural Development Programme of the EU in the Uva and Central provinces of Sri Lanka.

Launched in 2017, the project recognizes enterprises led by women and youth and supports them with financial, technical and institutional linkages. The Initiative also accompanies them to accelerate and scale-up enterprises by developing new portfolios of products and expanding markets beyond their localities.

In a district which is heavily dependent on agriculture, the **Nuwara-Eliya Exotic Vegetables Collective** was formed in 2014. Today it consists of 60 women who have come together as a startup cooperative, spear-headed by Careem Jereena, whose sharp business acumen is helping to see to fruition the humble beginnings of this collective. “One of us suggested growing vegetables and herbs that did not exist yet in the market”, says Jereena. With financial support from Chrysalis, they have now opened a retail shop for their vegetables with all profits being shared among themselves. Indeed, this enterprise can be hailed as a successful model as it provides a fair distribution of its profits unlike the much-touted Fairtrade system. Moreover, it empowers women in decision-making and provides a measure of equality.



Vegetables are sorted and graded for distribution

One of the women drives a Tuk Tuk over the villages, collects goods and brings them to a popular organic Saturday market in Colombo. Jereena is particularly proud of the fact that the women have recently started supplying two large national food chains.

“Instead of tapping into a new market niche we simply adapt our product range. This also means that we need neither additional equipment and machines nor extra land.”

In addition to the special products, the cooperative also acts particularly as a team. Four widows, one disabled woman and five mothers with handicapped children are part of the project. “We want to support the disadvantaged,” says Jereena. **“The superstition in Sri Lanka is strong; widows are considered misfortunes, and disabilities are a taboo subject.”** In addition, the farmers’ wives cook every day with their own products and distribute the food to the poor in the village. Two percent of the monthly income goes into social commitment.

The cooperative wants to grow, and the women are looking for new market niches. One has already been found. This summer, Nuwara Eliya Exotic Vegetables opens a stand in the trading centre where they sell their own soups and juices.



A farmer brings in vegetables which are then weighed and purchased

“Growing a variety of vegetables means that I can harvest more often as a result I depend less on the seasonal crops”

“Our supply is our main challenge. Demand for our products is growing constantly so we need more farmers supplying to us.”

Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts and Chrysalis join hands in a mission to retain youth in the hospitality sector!!!

While youth unemployment in Sri Lanka has been between 17 – 20% over the last decade, ironically the hospitality sector in the country is continuing to confront a lack of suitable human resources.

Although a fair number of youth apply to the sector and go through the initial training phase it is increasingly difficult to retain them, especially the young women, due to the social and cultural stigma associated with the industry.

“We have a huge battle to convince our families that there is nothing wrong with the hospitality sector. There is so much social and cultural stigma associated with this industry that creates many barriers for us.” says a trainee from Kandy who also thanked everyone in English. It was her first time speaking publicly, let alone in English!

She is one among 35 selected youth who completed a 5-month training course with a combination of technical and life skills and graduated from the Skills for Empowerment Programme recently. Most of the students wish to stay in the sector while a few wants to further their education. Although many are eager to remain the dropout rate is on the increase - a reality that Chrysalis wishes to better understand together with companies like Cinnamon who are committed to engaging youth – especially young women in their company. We are engaging with youth from primarily the rural areas with high levels of youth unemployment to better understand their reluctance and fears about joining emerging sectors like hospitality and tourism and to seek solutions.

Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts provided the technical trainings and exposure to the main departments of the hotel in terms of food and beverage, kitchen, housekeeping and front office for a period of one month. This was followed by a specialized area of training for three months, depending on the interest and skill sets of the students, along with English Language training. The technical training wrapped up with the provision of on-the-job (OTJ) training. Chrysalis worked with the Human Resources and Training Team of Cinnamon to provide life skills: such as conflict sensitivity, gender and diversity, leadership, communication and financial management.



Team building activities at Habarana



Making a presentation of their group work



This young girl is now planning to have her own cafe



A casual but engaging approach to training and development

Through the findings from the research conducted in 2017, “Barriers to Recruiting and Retaining Youth, including Women, to the Hospitality Industry in Sri Lanka” Chrysalis hopes to make appropriate and informed recommendations to industry actors in order to address the issues and improve the image of the sector as a rewarding and safe workplace with progressive career options.

Encouraging Youth to the forefront of Sri Lanka's Economy!



"...I passed my G.C.E. (O) level six years ago in 2013. Although I was desperate to make a living, I did not want to join my mother to work on the estates. It wasn't easy to find a different job either. I was just another tea estate girl with no hope for the future"

Just 21 years of age, R. Ranjutha is now the Vice-President of the Community Development Forum (CDF) of Lethenty estate.

"I remember when the CDF became a buzz word in our community in the year 2018. What we heard was that the CDF was not like any of the traditional societies. It was an open forum for those who seek solutions to their problems. Impressed by what the CDF meant and more importantly the space that it allowed for youth, I became fully involved in the CDF formation process from the beginning and due to my active role in organizing the community, I was elected as the CDF representative for the households in my division. Soon after I was made the Vice President of the CDF and the leader of the Income Generation Group."

The Estate Management was so impressed with her new skills and commitment that she was given an estate job as a Child Development Assistant.

Ranjutha confessed that she is no longer bored or desperate and highlighted some of the community activities that she is engaged in right now: sharing community needs at the CDF meetings and providing feedback from the CDF to the community, organizing community awareness meetings, and selecting eligible small-scale entrepreneurs for income generation grants. With a beaming smile she said "the CDF was the turning point of my life".

In July 2019, Ranjutha was recruited by an International NGO as a Social mobilizer for Lethenty estate.

Promoting and supporting youth to be active contributors to society is at the heart of Chrysalis' overall programming. As such, special efforts are made in our work with the Plantation Community, where youth are increasingly disenchanted due to the lack of opportunities. Last week, we celebrated their contribution in the last 2 years to our work in 3 estates in the Uva Province with a certificate awarding ceremony.

The Community Development Forum (CDF) is an estate-level decision making forum, representing all stakeholders, to address issues connected to the wellbeing of the community and estate productivity

Chrysalis together with the Community Development Forums of Dambatenne, Nayabedde and Uva Highlands estates, conducted a skills development programme consisting of modules in Communication, Problem Solving and Decision Making, Leadership and Team Building, Household Money Management, Participatory Rural Appraisal, Street Drama and Financial Management & Record Keeping. Interlaced into the entire programme was the key ingredient of addressing gender issues.



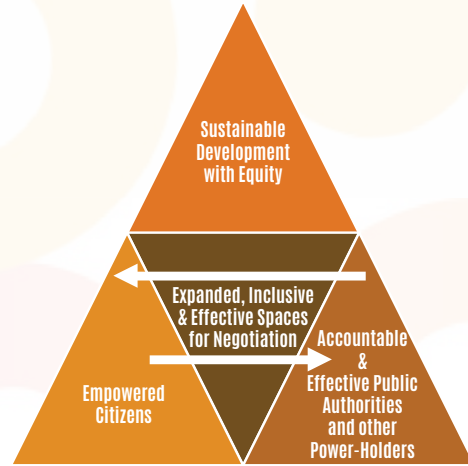
A youth delivers the vote of thanks



Youth at the certificate ceremony

Governance - from Theory to Action

Improving transparency, accountability and effectiveness of national, provincial and local governance structures is a challenge Sri Lanka has faced for decades. With significant amendments to the constitution and electoral systems and especially the 25% quota for women in local government, a small yet significant space was opened up for change in the past couple of years. Unfortunately, the poor level of knowledge and understanding among state officials contributes significantly to ineffective execution of these reforms. Communities in northern Sri Lanka face additional challenges resulting from decades of conflict. Since community consultation processes are not rigorously and properly executed, almost 85,500 families in the districts of Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu struggle with unaddressed socio-economic, political and legal issues.



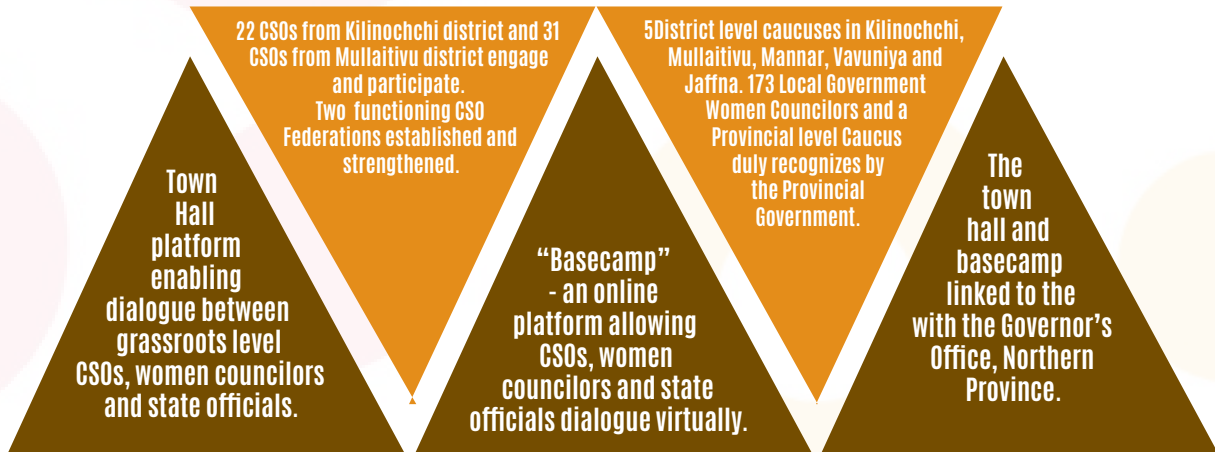
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“I am working with five Pradeshiya Sabhas to establish a Women and Children Unit (WMU) and to introduce Gender budgeting within the Council. It will help the WMU to address women and children issues within their boundaries.”

Mrs. Roman Diffna Croos
Member, Pradeshiya Sabha - Mannar



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"I have supported the establishment of a women and children's unit as well as formed a differently abled people's forum. Through funds raised in this forum an access friendly ramp will be constructed in the division".

Mr. Vairamuththu Jeyaruban, Member/
PS Manthai East
& Coordinator/ Federation of Civil Society
Organizations – Mullaitivu.



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"Our first step was to establish a Women's Affairs Unit (WAU) in the Pradeshiya Sabha, Karachchi, with the concurrence of most of the Pradeshiya Sabha members. It is the first women affairs group in the Northern Provincial local government. We are determined that the WAU Pradeshiya Sabha – Karachchi will be a role-model to other local governments."

Mrs. S. Kalaivani
Member -Karachchi Pradeshiya Sabha /
Kilinochchi District



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I am working with Wannu Cross movement which has around 2000 women member. The movement has mobilize the women in many ways particularly in livelihood and human rights issues. The political identity has been eased me in to interacting with government counterpart, political leaders, members of Civil Society Organizations, local and international organization to bring out people's problems and find solution.

Mrs. Mathini Nelson - Deputy Chairman
-Urban Council Point Pedro



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Chrysalis' 'Shared Platform' project, funded by USAID-DAI, and implemented in the North brings together diverse actors such as state officials, local government women councilors and grassroots level CSO representatives to discuss and share their collective agreements and demand action from the relevant authorities.



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Consultative sessions between local authorities and Civil Society Organizations