



# Chrysalis

Catalyzing change

May 2021



**“I believe I am a leader and a change maker in society”**



**Enterprise : National Symposium**



**Economic Independence and gaining Control.**



**Women. Solid Waste Management. Social Cohesion.**

In this issue of the newsletter, we introduce another Board Member of Chrysalis, who was involved in Chrysalis' transition process right from the beginning. Tim Bishop, is an international development consultant, with over twenty years of cross-sector experience in senior management roles. Tim is passionate about social development issues and prides himself of being able to get the best out of people. As a member of the Country presence review committee which was established back in 2013 to determine the future of CARE's programming in Sri Lanka and as a staffer of CARE UK, Tim was an active participant in the design of what would eventually become 'Chrysalis'.



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*"I first came to Sri Lanka in 2009 as a technical person to work with the CARE SL team and I had seen the potential of the country. At first, I was honestly apprehensive, because while the concept of Chrysalis as an entity was ultimately unique within the CARE system, at the same time no one had a blueprint for it because it had not been done before."*

The review team recognized that a change was much needed.

*"If we continued to do things the way we had been, in contexts that were changing rapidly, we were not going to move with the times and we were not going to stay relevant. This meant that our impact would be compromised and over a longer period of time our mission would not be a success. Given those realities, we all knew that we had to put a 100% of our commitment and energies into trying to do something differently"*

Tim sees a two-pronged potential for Chrysalis. *"On the one hand, inside Sri Lanka, Chrysalis can hugely impact women and youth in a meaningful way. The impact would be quite profound as it would be based on evidence. Like for example the CDF which promotes the tea plantation workers' voice, could have a much longer-term impact towards even changing policy and impacting the private sector. Within the CARE family, I think it's a little bit about being a test case. The CARE confederation can learn from Chrysalis and use it as a model to transform other CARE offices in different countries. And I think that's really important for the confederation and for CARE's 2030 agenda."*

*Beyond that globally, I would like to think that Chrysalis could carve out an approach to work with the private sector to empower women and young people. I see that Chrysalis has the potential to not just be CARE's entity in Sri Lanka but work in other countries as well, through its consulting arm. Of course, we see this happening already; for example we are talking to the Ethical Tea Partnership about rolling out the CDF model to other countries that they are present in".*

Tim also highlighted a few challenges.

*"As a company ltd by guarantee but committed to a social purpose, we always have to think ahead about our pipeline. We can only be successful if we know how we are going to fund our work and that's a never changing goal post. However, the political situation in the country is always changing, humanitarian crises could occur requiring our response and there could be economic downturns on the back of the pandemic. With his long association with CARE and Chrysalis, Tim brings with him a commitment to finding the right solutions for Chrysalis' interventions, through facilitating ideas, bringing in learning from other countries and particularly around working with the private sector to achieve Chrysalis' goals in the next 10 years."*

*"I can convene and facilitate ideas that think about the connection between local and national, in the case of SL the regional and the global. I also kind of retain a link to the CARE confederation. The fact that I am not a Sri Lankan, there is also the diversity of perspective that I am bringing."*

**“I believe I am  
a leader and a  
change maker in  
society”**

*- Srikanthan Kalaivany*



*The European Union funded project 'Building Inclusive Communities and Promoting Women's Leadership (TRANSFORM)' is a three-year project implemented in the northern districts of Jaffna, Vavuniya, Killinochchi, Mulaitivu and Mannar, Northern Province.*

*1.25 million people in the conflict affected districts in northern Sri Lanka continue to face numerous and specific issues resulting from decades of war and ineffective post war reconciliation and reintegration processes. The TRANSFORM project aims to enhance democracy and human rights in northern Sri Lanka through the promotion and protection of gender equality, fundamental freedoms and justice.*

A council member of the Karaichi local government authority, Srikanthan Kalaivany is a resident of Punnaineeravi, in the district of Kilinochchi, in the northern province of Sri Lanka.

*“As a council member, I have a lot of responsibilities which come on top of my role as a wife and mother. There are even times when I have to work late but my husband and children are very understanding of the nature of my work and they help me around the house a lot. Due to all the support I get, I have more time to focus on creating change within my community.”*

Kalaivany has been engaged in community development and empowerment work since 2017.

*“Due to the conflict there have been many different kinds of projects in this area, but they have been mostly around livelihood and entrepreneurship. Through one of them, I have established a mushroom production unit in my home. But while these projects improved the economy and sustainability of my family, it was only more recently that I was able to acquire skills that really enabled me to change my community. The leadership trainings have played a pivotal role in helping me to become a women leader and change maker in society. Previously I would not have dreamed of engaging in politics but through various discussions, I was made aware of what my role could be in community transformation. I cannot be more grateful for the programmes that supported me to contest and win a seat in the local government election.*



*“I am able to inspire the next generation of women in my community!” - Kalaivany*

*I have gone many steps further and acquired knowledge to handle virtual platforms such as MS TEAMS for meetings and discussions as we adapt to new ways of working amidst the Covid-19 crisis."*

The forty year old Mother of three proudly states,

*"The experience and skills that I have gained has helped me to restructure my family priorities and ensure economic stability. Not only my own career but I am happy that I have been able to inspire the next generation of women, to also take up politics and leadership, so that we can find solutions for our own problems. Among other initiatives, together with other women councilors, I was able to push for the construction of a lactation room near the Kilinochchi bus stand. I am also in the process of making more people aware of the RTI (right to information act) and how to access it."*



Kalaivany actively engages in trainings and discussions

*"I have observed that women's participation is minimal in the preparation of activities and budgets for their rural development, when it comes to the Decentralized Budget Meetings (DCB). Empowering women and enabling solidarity amongst them makes the difference which ensures realistic and sustainable development"*

- Ms. N. Inparaj, Directress, Department of Rural Development

Image Credits : Chrysalis

## Chrysalis Head Office is at a new location.



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No: 7, Park Way, Colombo 5

# 5<sup>th</sup>

## ANNIVERSARY

We have reached **87,000** women and youth directly and supported **700,000** people indirectly in rural, urban and plantation communities in Sri Lanka.

With 53 staff and 4 Regional Offices in Kandy, Badulla, Kilinochchi and Puttalam and the Head Office in Colombo, we are fully geared and ready to continue our journey to empower the women and youth of Sri Lanka.



## National Symposium on understanding the challenges experienced by women engaged in micro, small and medium enterprises in Sri Lanka and identifying key policy recommendations

Chrysalis together with the Ministry of Samurdhi, Household Economy, Micro Finance, Self-Employment, Business Development and the European Union in Sri Lanka, hosted a two-day National Symposium to convene diverse stakeholders and revisit Sri Lanka's Policy on SMEs in order to identify and define a way forward to address the challenges experienced by women engaged in micro, small and medium enterprises. The main objectives of the National Symposium were: to facilitate a national dialogue with Women Entrepreneurs, State Institutions, Private Sector, Banking Sector, Civil Society and Academia to identify and understand specific implications faced by women in the MSME sector in Sri Lanka; and to develop actionable policy recommendations to revise the National SME policy drafted in 2016. The two-day Symposium took place with strict health guidelines in-place to minimize the risk of Covid-19 and saw the participation of many stakeholders including women entrepreneurs.

In addition to plenary sessions, group work was carried out to formulate recommendations for the public and private sector on five thematic areas: an enabling environment, access to finance, access to market, competitiveness and entrepreneurial culture and promoting norm change.

According to responses to the question posed via Mentimeter to 46 respondents, on the most decisive problems faced by entrepreneurs, nearly half of the respondents (46%) stated that 'entrepreneurial culture and promoting norm change' is the most decisive problem faced by women entrepreneurs. 20% of the respondents identified policy and regulatory environment as the most decisive problem. A lesser number stated access to market, access to finance and improving competitiveness of MSMEs as the most decisive challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs.



*Entrepreneurs and stakeholders actively engage in the plenary sessions*



*A young entrepreneur describes her product*



*Minister Shehan Semasinghe in conversation with an entrepreneur*



*An entrepreneur arrives at the Symposium*



*Participants actively engage in the group discussions which also included online participants*



*Esteemed panelists who discussed 'Enabling an Inclusive Environment for Women Entrepreneurs to Thrive'*



*Officials from respective Ministries, Minister Shehan Semasinghe, CEO and Chairperson of Chrysalis and H.E. Denis Chaibi, EU Ambassador*

# Women. Solid Waste Management. Social Cohesion.

Women play a critical role in responding to environmental degradation due to their local knowledge and leadership in sustainable resource management and practices at a household and community level. However, women in Sri Lanka largely remain under-represented in all levels of policy formulation and decision-making in natural resources and environmental management, conservation, protection and rehabilitation.

Chrysalis identified the need to apply an intersectional lens to the issue of solid waste management and ensure that any solutions related to the waste management crisis, and communal tensions therein, including the meaningful and active participation of women. In Puttalam and Mannar where Chrysalis works, many of the dumping grounds are located in poor, "lower class", coastal fisher villages. The burden of care that falls onto already vulnerable groups of women is worsened by the additional challenges of caring for a household in close proximity to the dumping sites.

In parallel, youth who are the most vulnerable to the ill effects of inadequate waste management, can also contribute to reduce and reverse environmental degradation. They have an increased access to information and technology comparatively to their parents and have thereby the tools to influence positively, solid waste practices at their level as agents of change. A majority of youth including in Sri Lanka practice the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) diverting an average of 7.2M tons per day from disposal.

Chrysalis' Solid Waste Management (SWM) project takes into consideration these realities and seeks to promote women's engagement in social cohesion through SWM, to create and sustain lasting peace in Sri Lanka.



Initial mobilising activities - promotion of tree planting



Initial mobilising activities - beach cleaning on Uchchumunai island together with the Kalpitiya Municipal Council



Youth Task Force Kalpitiya geared for action



Diversity Kitchen Programme with the participation of key government officials



Initial mobilising activities - cleaning the village canals

# Economic Independence and gaining Control.


Over 25% of Sri Lankan Households are female headed and this has been a discussion point in many platforms. Chrysalis between Aug 2019 and Oct 2020 implemented a project to 'Economically empower 450 Female Headed Households (FHH), predominantly war and military widows in Kurunegala, Anuradhapura and Kilinochchi'. The initiative supported women in setting up and running viable and resilient businesses or sustainable livelihood initiatives to ensure their economic independence. The project is supported by UN Women with funding from the United Nation's Secretary General's Peace Building Fund and People of Japan.

*"People with generosity are very rare. Many people come and talk with me and show a good face but later we realize they have no integrity".*



This was the general perception of the sample of women interviewed for the need assessment conducted by Chrysalis to understand the unique challenges faced by these women along with the value chain analysis to connect businesses owned by female headed households.

**450**   
Project Participants underwent business development training and refined their business ideas

   
**375** developed business plans and pitched their business for grant support

**352**   
Businesses supported with in-kind assistance for business development

## Women's Economic Empowerment

**44** Front line government officials trained to understand the issues and support

To create an enabling environment

**59** Mentors from the sector connected



The findings helped to design tailor-made training and business development packages. Chrysalis and the Industrial Services Bureau (ISB) accompanied them through a series of trainings and empowered them to refine their business ideas, and enrich their business with the learning and experience obtained through trainings and exposure.

Building the agency of FHHs while connecting them to groom their relationships and networks was one crucial element highlighted in the experience sharing. Business skill development combined with a coaching and mentoring process along with in-kind assistance through an organized competitive process, has resulted in positive changes in the lives of the military and war widows, their families and communities.



*Business Pitching by small scale livelihood owners*



*Trained to confidently pitch their livelihoods for grant support*



*Business Pitching by small scale livelihood owners*



*The panel consisting representatives of local authorities analyzing the products*



*Grant distribution ceremony in Kilinochchi*

# “The CDF has brought about a win-win situation for the estate”

Manoj Ramdas is the current Group Manager (Aislaby estate) at Malwatta PLC. It was nice to catch up with him on his thoughts about the Community Development Forum (CDF) and how it works!

*“I was intrigued when I heard about the concept of CDF because I did not think it was possible to have a collaborative relationship with the families of estate workers. In all my years I had almost no connection with the non-workers and especially the youth of the estate. And even though I did speak to the estate workers at odd intervals, they would rarely reach out to me for any direct assistance. But today I enjoy a good relationship everyone: workers, non-workers and the youth of the estate. For example, a while ago I received a phone call from the Vice-President of the CDF. He inquired as to whether it is safe to travel to Colombo for some personal work.”*

Manoj Ramdas is among many Estate Managers that we work with, who are very appreciative of the CDF for the way it has changed worker-management relations on the estates.

*“Chrysalis’ emergency dry ration distribution programme also supported the positive change in the people’s perception of the management. Somehow, they seem to have developed a sense of belonging within the estate and an understanding that we the management wish to look after not only them as workers, but also the wellbeing of the non-workers”.*

The CDF acts as a forum for dispute mitigation and redressing grievances. Ramdas says,

*“During CDF meetings, the estate community brings forward their issues. The estate management strives to find solutions to these issues and some issues get solved at the meeting itself. The management also has got an opportunity to share what they have done for the community and know that this information will be disseminated to the greater community through the CDF members. I believe that the CDF has created a win-win situation for the estate management as well as the estate community. This is one of the best achievements for me so far”*

## What is a CDF?

*The Community Development Forum (CDF) is an estate-level decision-making forum. It operates within the boundaries of the tea estate and comprises all categories of stakeholders, namely workers, non-workers, youth, women, representatives of the estate management at senior and mid-levels, civil society, trade unions, and governmental, non - governmental and private organizations, all collaborating to address issues connected to the wellbeing of the community and estate productivity. The CDF fills an institutional vacuum for collective decision making within the estate.*



Mr. Manoj was actively involved in the International Women’s Day celebrations organized by the CDF at the Aislaby Estate.

*“To celebrate International Women’s Day, we had a wonderful celebration on the estate. I was present for the entire event and made it a point to greet all the workers who work tirelessly to bring profit to the company with a gift of sweets. I could see that it was not the sweets that they enjoyed, but the recognition made by the estate management to appreciate their hard work. I strongly feel that through the CDF, we are gradually becoming one big family”.*