



Catalyzing Change

The Newsletter of Chrysalis

January 2022

As we look back in retrospect at the year 2021, it was a year that reminded us of the importance and relevance of our mission – to ensure inclusive and equitable growth in a world where inequalities are growing and gains were lost. Our fantastic team and partners remained committed to fulfilling our objectives, despite the restrictions caused by Covid-19 and the related socio-economic and political challenges. Chrysalis demonstrated its ability to work closely with women, youth, and their communities to address fundamental issues that continue to marginalize and discriminate.

Chrysalis’s current portfolio of 22 projects/initiatives is worth approx. 7.8 million USD and spans across 6 provinces and 14 Districts in Sri Lanka as well as globally. We have enabled thousands of women and youth to reach their potential while contributing to the growth of local economies and influencing decisions within their homes, communities, and at local and national decision-making forums. We have continued to pursue our goal of ending gender-based violence influencing communities, local and national authorities, and local and global corporate partners. Our commitment towards celebrating diversity continued, through creative and innovative entry points that engaged youth to challenge the status quo and extremist views and values. We also engaged in dialogue, studies, and implementing community-led models to understand the implications of climate change and mechanisms to build resilience.

Apart from our achievements at the community level, we have successfully influenced the revision and implementation of policies that are critical for enabling the entitlements of women and youth, which included the recognition of gender-specific needs in the SME policy.

Chrysalis has continued to consolidate our operational capacity, including establishing an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) process to ensure effective financial and procurement services and also reviewing and revising key policies that allow for greater inclusivity, accountability and transparency.

We are truly humbled by the recognition and support we have received from communities and all our national and global partners in Government, Civil Society, and the Private Sector. The trust they placed on us enabled us to surpass our targets.

This newsletter highlights key results of our work, implemented in collaboration with women, youth, their communities, and all our partners. We hope you will be inspired, as you continue to be and become our ally in transforming Sri Lanka, where diversity is celebrated and growth is inclusive.

Ashika Gunasena - CEO

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The Executive Leadership Team of Chrysalis!

Standing from left to right:

Kushala Cooray (Head of Operations)

Ashika Gunasena (Chief Executive Officer)

Tharanga Silva (Head of Finance)

Seated from left to right:

Vindhya Fernando (Head of Advisory Services)

Ahamed Rislán (Head of Development Services)



Key highlights from major initiatives

Film4Dialogue

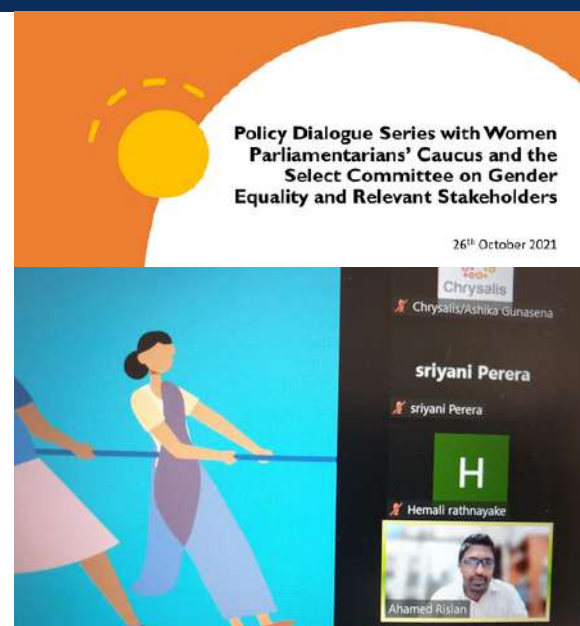
The Film4Dialogue project that enables social cohesion and dialogue across multiple divides, produced 10 short films in the areas of gender equality, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, rights of LGBTIQ persons, coexistence, peacebuilding and democracy. Chrysalis launched these films via Zoom, reaching an audience of around 200. The project ended in October 2021, however, Chrysalis will continue screening the films and facilitating dialogues at 6 targeted locations to ensure continuation of these timely discussions.

Made by Her

The Made by Her Market Platform which will promote inclusive, ethical and digital markets for resilient micro, small and medium enterprises in Sri Lanka, was initiated in June 2021. Made by Her will facilitate enterprises led and managed by women, to overcome the issues of diversifying their markets and reviving marketing and business networking approaches. We hope to launch the Made by Her platform in early 2022.

Contribution to SME Policy

The recommendations of the SME policy were presented to the 'Women Parliamentarians' Caucus and the Select Committee on Gender Equality and Relevant Stakeholders by Chrysalis. This policy brief outlines some of the most pressing challenges women face in the medium, small and micro enterprise (MSME) sector and proposes key recommendations that are intended to promote economic inclusivity. Meant to be mutually reinforcing, the actions recommended are seeking to cumulatively help create an environment that facilitates and empowers women as entrepreneurs. Chrysalis continues to advocate for policy level changes with the State Ministries of Samurdhi and Business Development and Women Affairs.



Head of Development Services at Chrysalis, presenting the recommendations

What Works to Prevent Violence: Impact at Scale

The online public launch of UK government's flagship programme 'What Works to Prevent Violence: Impact at Scale' took place to coincide with the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. It is a 7-year programme to scale up global evidence-based efforts to prevent violence against women and girls. The programme is funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and implemented by a consortium of partners: International Rescue Committee, Social Development Direct, Raising Voices and CARE International. Chrysalis is also a member of this consortium together with CARE International.



Matale Business Service Center begins operations

In yet another excellent collaboration between the European Union in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, the State and Chrysalis, the One Stop, Business Service Center in Matale was declared open in December, by Ms. Jenny Correia Nunes, Head of Development Cooperation - European Union Delegation to Sri Lanka and Maldives and Ms. Ashika Gunasena, Chief Executive Officer, Chrysalis, under the patronage of Hon. Shehan Semasinghe, State Minister of Samurdhi, Household Economy, Micro Finance, Self-Employment and Business Development.



The Cabinet has approved the establishment of the Business Service Centers in all 25 districts of the country. The task of establishing and running these centers across the country will be managed through a collaborative effort of the State Ministries of Samurdhi, Household Economy, Micro Finance, Self-Employment and Business Development along with the District Secretariats of each district.

The pilot programme of this project was launched in Monaragala with the financial and technical support of the European Union funded Enterprise Project and the model is now being replicated in Matale. Business Service Centers are also expected to be established in Nuwara Eliya, Badulla and Kilinochchi, in the near future.



Sesath Marketing and Demonstration Center

The Sesath Marketing and Demonstration Center which was built with funding from the European Union, under the Enterprise Project was handed over to the community in early December. The by-road leading up to the village, which was restored through the Enterprise project was also opened today.

In addition to the infrastructure, the Direct Aid Program (DAP) funded by Australian High Commission, Sri Lanka and Maldives and managed through the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade's (DFAT), supported Chrysalis to take a holistic approach and address the factors that hinder growth in this industry, including their inability to establish and sustain competitiveness, develop economically viable products and the lack of collectivization among villagers who make the craft, especially coordination and collaboration between different generations. The interior of the Marketing and Demonstration Center was also funded by the Direct Aid Program.



Opening of the renovated road



Opening of the Center



The Sesath Marketing and Demonstration Center

Women to lead economic growth in the Districts of Ampara, Colombo, Monaragala and Vavuniya



Chrysalis is the implementing partner for the economic empowerment component of the 'Women Peace and Security Agenda in Sri Lanka (the G7 women, peace and security partnership initiative)' project, supported by UN Women with funding from the People of Japan, in collaboration with the State Ministry of Women and Child Affairs. The project supports 700 women livelihood owners across 4 districts and supports social cohesion and peace building initiatives with 180 women leaders across 3 districts.



Being implemented in the Districts of Ampara, Colombo, Monaragala and Vavuniya, the initiative focuses on selected divisional secretariat divisions and further strengthens Chrysalis' work aimed at empowering women and youth.

For Chrysalis this is a first opportunity to implement an initiative within the Western Province. While it has its own challenges, it also brings with it an interesting and new learning for the organization.



Youth to the forefront in managing waste and building inclusive, peaceful communities !



The Promoting Women's Engagement in Social Cohesion through Solid Waste Management (SWM)' project reached successful completion with a total investment of 8.25 million rupees for local level SWM initiatives. The establishment of Youth Task Forces in four local government areas and mobilizing youth to work with local authorities for the growth of their communities is one of the major highlights of the project and our work this year.

As one of the initiatives of the Promoting Women's Engagement in Social Cohesion through Solid Waste Management' project implemented by Chrysalis, in the districts of Puttalam and Mannar, four Youth Task Force (YTF) groups were established in the Puttalam district. Once they received coaching and brainstorming sessions to understand the importance of 3R practices, the energetic youth began to create various artworks to raise environmental protection awareness. They stand out as role models for their neighbors, by posting their creations from household waste on social media and creating awareness.

YTF members also mobilized respective area Praja Mandala members and initiated solutions for SWM related issues. They set up PET bottle collection centers and decorated the play areas of preschools with waste materials from the village.



As part of the capacity building of YTF members, youth experience sharing programmes were held, where the YTF members of four Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in the Puttalam district met and shared their interventions and experiences. The programmes were entirely organized by the respective YTF, and they invited LGA staff and council members to participate as well. During the programmes, the YTF organized a mini exhibition of their creations from solid waste and an activity of planting mangroves in the lagoon area, to symbolize the importance of protecting the environment.

Significantly, the YTFs have attracted the attention of their respective LGAs with whom they now collaborate closely. Recognizing the capacity of youth and the significance of their involvement in community engagement and youth capacity, the Chilaw Urban Council (UC) has registered the YTF as an official body and they have even been issued identity cards. They are also involved in the online complaint mechanism for the general public in their respective areas.

The project completion event took place at the end of November in Chilaw, in the presence all local stakeholders from local authorities to Praja Mandala members, to Youth Task Force members. The Governor of the North Western Province the late Hon. Raja Collure graced the event.



Stakeholders from diverse sectors, communities and local authorities participated



The Hon. Governor addresses the gathering



The jubilant SWM team take off their masks for a moment to celebrate!

A leg up for rebuilding rural economies

The European Union funded ENTERPRISE project has implemented 60 rural infrastructure projects with an investment of LKR 112.20 million, across the districts of Badulla, Monaragala and Matale. 41 agricultural roads, 15 irrigation canals and 4 Marketing Centers are among the completed rural infrastructure. 5,553 people will benefit directly and 82,951 people indirectly.

A total of 100 rural infrastructure projects will be completed by the Enterprise project in the Uva and Central Provinces. The implementation of the rural infrastructure process involved a comprehensive process through which 81 Economic Development Plans (EDPs), were prepared in consultation with communities and stakeholders, through a community-oriented approach.

Praja Mandala (PM) and Community Development Forums (CDF) were selected to facilitate the Economic Development Plans in consultation with PM/CDF members and respective Pradeshiya Sabhas. Community members took part in several participatory assessments to identify their economic and social development needs. While each PM and CDF identified 5 economic and social needs, based on the recommendations made by community members and participants, rural infrastructure was prioritized at the end of each session.



Udaxeragama Canal which will benefit around 750 people



Programme Manager of the European Union, Dharshani Premaratne, opened the Dahanakkawela Agri Canal benefitting around 750 people



Chrysalis' Board Member Tamara Bernard opened the Waradola, Tholabowattha agricultural road, directly benefitting more than 400 farmers

The European Union funded ENTERPRISE project aimed to create an enabling environment for women and youth to create and participate in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Targeting the Uva and Central Provinces, it used inclusive business models to celebrate the diverse perspectives and experiences of those involved while ensuring profitability. ENTERPRISE also incubated enterprises, and sought to amplify women and youth voices in economic decisions and influence over SME policies that impact them.

Enterprise is implemented by Chrysalis and the British Council in Sri Lanka in partnership with CARE Deutschland-Luxemburg.

“Educating a woman means educating a whole community”



“ It is only now that I feel I am really contributing as a member of the Urban Council”.



Dilani Croos is a member of the Mannar, Urban Council but despite being a member of this legislative body, she was a silent member unable to participate in discussions around policy and governance processes. The other members didn't give her the space to take any decisions let alone convey her ideas. She was increasingly frustrated because she wanted to speak up on behalf of the vulnerable segments in her community.

Her own community whom she fought for, criticized her for choosing her passion to become a leader. All of this impacted her psychological well-being. This is common for all women who engage in political processes across the country. Too often women are not at the table due to religious and socio-cultural barriers and limited awareness of their rights and entitlements.

The TRANSFORM Project has conducted a series of trainings to enhance the knowledge of members of 18 platforms in terms of leadership quality, decision making, human rights, fundamental freedoms, right to information and the power and function of the Human Rights Commission in Sri Lanka. Due to her participation in the trainings, Dilani realized how much more she could achieve and the role she could play to help her community.

When an Urban Council (UC) member blamed her for taking a certain decision, she made an entry in the police and lodged a complaint against the member for blocking her participation in decision making.

Dilani is keen to educate the younger generation to respect others irrespective of their diversities through collaborative communication. Dilani has the potential to achieve so much for her community, now that she is aware and confident.

The European Union funded project 'Building Inclusive Communities and Promoting Women's Leadership (TRANSFORM)' is being implemented in the northern districts of Jaffna, Vavuniya, Killinochchi, Mullaitivu 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.

Those who make Sesath!!



In the Unaveruwa village, for 193 families including almost 348 women (which makes up seventy five percent of the community) producing Sesath is their main source of income. Regrettably, this unique, old art form is under threat. Increasingly the youth in the community are reluctant to carry on the tradition due to limited economic returns and it's perceived non-suitability as a vocation.

The Direct Aid Program (DAP) funded by the Australian Government and managed through the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade's (DFAT), supported Chrysalis to take a holistic approach and address the factors that hinder growth in this industry, including their inability to establish and sustain competitiveness, develop economically viable products and the lack of collectivization among villagers who make the craft, especially coordination and collaboration between different generations.



If the craft is to survive, the Sesath needs to be marketed extensively with a strong focus on its cultural value, the people who make it, and the diversification of products that honor the craft and address modern needs. An integrated plan that addresses the economic and social needs of the community may heighten the interest of a next generation of Sesath makers.

Together with DFAT, Chrysalis worked with the community in Unaveruwa towards establishing it as a tourist destination for local and international tourists, which will enable them to understand the value of the craft, meet members of the community and understand their way of life. Youth from the village will be capacitated to lead this process providing them economic and social incentives. All activities were channeled through existing community governance structures (Praja Mandala) as the main stakeholders to ensure long term sustainability of the community.

“ My mother engages in the production of Sesath. She stays up late in the night and makes Sesath. I used to get really annoyed with her work but never bothered to help her do it. While she makes Sesath, I usually get on the phone or computer.

With this initiative I was recruited to the website team and I began to see the real value in these Sesath which my mother makes. Now I am able to help my mother sell her products for a good price and that makes me feel good.”

Randeepa Jayakodi (18 years)

“ As a young girl who was born in the Unaveruwa village in the Mathale district, I am involved in the generational family trade; manufacturing of Sesath and Laksha. I am incredibly content to carry out this manufacturing of Sesath from the comfort of my own home.

In the future, I hope to continue my work and make my products popular within the country and even outside the country as well. I want to safeguard this industry that has been carried out through generations by acquiring more opportunities to sell our products within the market.”

Kanchana Madhushani (19 years)



“ The leadership training has provided me with some important skills. These skills will allow me to continue to build on my leadership roles within the community, and to be an example for other women. Importantly, they will ensure that I can continue to support my family financially as well as the future of Sesath-making in Sri Lanka.”

A.M.D. Menike (37 years)