

VOICES OF CHANGE

THE CHRYSALIS STORY



**WHERE COMMUNITY
VOICES MEET
LASTING CHANGE**

Spetember Edition

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

At Chrysalis, we are reminded every day that change begins in the courage of people. A mother who starts a small business to give her children a better tomorrow, a young woman who steps into leadership despite the odds, a farmer who reimagines his livelihood in the face of uncertainty—these are the real changemakers who inspire us.

Our role is to walk alongside them: to open doors, build confidence, and create spaces where their voices matter. Whether it is women striving for equality, youth driving innovation, or communities coming together for resilience, we see proof that transformation is possible when people are given the opportunity to lead their own journeys.

This is the heart of Chrysalis—believing in people’s potential and working together to build futures that are inclusive, fair, and full of possibility.

Ashika Gunasena
CEO - Chrysalis

VOICES OF CHANGE

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FROM DESPAIR TO NOURISHMENT

What does hope look like?

Sometimes, it's a mother learning how to nourish her child. Other times, it's a boy lacing up new shoes for his long-awaited return to school.

Jayakanthan Kalogini faced a truth no mother is ever prepared for—her little boy was severely underweight.

"I used to feed my child in the usual way, not knowing that he wasn't getting the right nutrients," Kalogini shared. "When the PHM (Public Health Midwife) told me that my son was severely underweight, I was devastated. I didn't know what to do.

Through the 'Supporting Communities to Ensure Food Security and Build Their Resilience' project, Kalogini received four rounds of nutrition packs; thoughtfully prepared with essential vitamins and protein her child needs. But more importantly, she learned how to prepare meals in new ways that her son would actually enjoy.

"At first, my son refused to eat sprats and dry fish," she laughed. "Then I learned to cook them with cheese marination. For the first time, my son ate them eagerly.

She even began making chickpea laddus as a healthy snack, and slowly, her son's weight improved.

Mrs. Arulmani, the PHM from Ponnagar, confirmed the transformation: "With continuous guidance and support, she adopted better feeding practices. It impacted the child and the entire household's approach to nutrition."

From confusion and fear to confidence and resilience;

Kalogini's journey reminds us that change begins with knowledge, support, and love.



TWO MOTHERS, ONE DREAM

"Before, we were scared every time it rained. Now, my daughter has a safe place to come home to. That means everything to me," a mother mentions to our team.



In rural Sri Lanka, two mothers, Dhamika and Sureka, wake up each day with the same hope: to ensure their children have a better future than their own.

Dhamika Priyanthi carries the weight of three generations on her shoulders. Living in Mahasembukuliya with her 14-year-old daughter and 77-year-old mother, she's been doing everything on her own since her husband left years ago. She earns a modest income working as a daily labourer at a local salt production facility. From this, she manages to stretch every rupee to cover food, school fees, and her mother's medical needs. Due to an incomplete house, Dhamika is concerned about her daughter's safety. She couldn't leave for work unless her mother stayed home to watch over the girl, which would affect her income too.

Sureka, a few villages away, shared a similar struggle when it came to her children. After years of grueling work abroad, she returned home to find the money she had sent back gone and her husband gone with it. Left alone with two children, she turned to her passion, sewing, to rebuild her life. Taking classes under a renowned fashion designer,

eventually, she joined a local garment factory, where she saved diligently and purchased a sewing machine and an over-lock machine.

Both women were selected to receive Multipurpose Cash Grants through the Buddhist Global Relief (BGR) initiative implemented by Chrysalis. With LKR 20,000, they made powerful choices.

Dhamika used the grant to buy construction supplies and finally finished building their house. On the other hand, Sureka used the funds to buy essential sewing accessories in bulk from the city, a practice she had previously deemed unattainable.

The "Emergency Intervention for Economic Crisis" project is a timely two-year intervention, sponsored by Buddhist Global Relief (BGR) in collaboration with CARE USA and implemented by Chrysalis.



“WHEN ALL HOPE WAS GONE AND I WAS HIGHLY DEMOTIVATED AFTER THE BETRAYAL AND HARDSHIP I’D ENDURED, THIS PROJECT GAVE ME MUCH MORE THAN JUST MOTIVATION TO PROTECT MY CHILDREN’S FUTURE AND MOVE ON,” SHE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED.

Funded by the Hilton Foundation and implemented by Chrysalis with support from CARE USA, the "Support Communities to Ensure Food Security and Build Their Resilience" project helps vulnerable communities across Sri Lanka—including women, children, farmers, and small entrepreneurs—cope with the impacts of the economic crisis, food insecurity, and malnutrition.

SARUKSHAN'S FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL IN NUWARA ELIYA

Sarukshan is seven. Until recently, he had never been to school.

Living with his parents and three siblings in a makeshift shelter on unlicensed land in Nanuoya, the odds were stacked against him. His father's daily wages barely kept the family afloat. His mother, overwhelmed and uneducated, didn't know that school enrollment was mandatory or that her children had a right to learn.

That changed when the Nuwara Eliya District Secretariat flagged his case during the project. Working closely with GN-level officials and the Zonal Director of Education, he was enrolled at the Nanu Oya Navalar Tamil Primary School. They provided uniforms, shoes, school supplies, and awareness sessions for his parents.

The change was immediate. Shy at first, Sarukshan now walks proudly into school with a lunchbox in hand and stories to tell when he returns home.



WEAVING A NEW PATH



Hafsa Kider (Hikmat)
Communications and
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**HOW THE
WOMEN OF
WADATHTHA
TURNED
REEDS INTO
RESILIENCE.**

Wadaththa is a rural village where most families rely on farming as their primary source of income. But in recent years, farming has become more difficult. Water flow has been blocked by aquatic plants, and farming has become less reliable due to changing weather patterns. It has become increasingly harder to have economic growth to sustain their families.

During the 'Building Resilience' project, a team of social mobilisers and government officers met with residents to better understand local concerns and figure alternative ways to earn a living. It was during these discussions that the idea of weaving baskets using local reeds and rattan plant was suggested by the village's Economic Development Officer. It was a low-cost skill that led to small-scale income opportunities and the women expressed interest in giving it a try.

For women in Wadaththa, this project offered something new. It did not promise large income, but it offered a regular activity with potential for profit. It helps reduce the pressure that comes from relying on agriculture alone, a now uncertain income source.

"Before this, I had never even touched a reed or rattan plant. However, through the training, we learned a great deal. Now, we've even received a machine to press the rattan, and it's been beneficial for our weaving business. It's not hard to find the raw materials. They're available around us, and we can collect them at no cost. That helps us make a good profit from what we sell," says Anushika Madushani, a weaver from Puttalam.

With the support of local government officials, the training continued beyond the initial sessions, giving the women time to build skills and confidence. Moreover, they were able to use the products at home or sell them in nearby markets. Some women have begun to experiment with different shapes or patterns, hoping to increase the value of what they make.

There is interest in further training to improve product quality and find more places to sell their work. But there was a technical challenge the women came across while they were identifying what further support they needed.

"The only issue we're still facing is shaping the products properly while weaving. We need some shaping frames. If we want to go further, we need the tools to shape our products and direct access to the market. At the moment, our trainer brings in the business, and we give her a cut. It would help us a lot if we could sell directly and keep more of the profit," tells Shyamalie, another weaver.

It is clear that practical, community-led solutions can open up new possibilities and lead to real changes. The women of the community maintained steady participation and genuine effort to make it work for them. Importantly, it has become a solution to the climate crisis as it uses freely available materials and creates economic and social support against an uncertain future, reminding us that resilience can begin by listening to the community and supporting them.



PLANTING SEEDS OF CHANGE IN NORTHERN SRI LANKA

“I used to farm the way my parents did,” she says quietly. “We planted when we could, hoped for the best. I didn’t know there was another way.”



The Farmer Field Business School (FFBS), first developed under CARE’s Pathways to Empowerment Programme, helps rural women farmers improve productivity and profitability through a gender-responsive, market-based, and nutrition-sensitive approach. In Sri Lanka, it is implemented as the Improved and Sustainable Agriculture Project: Expanding FFBS in the North.

Dishanthi is a 26-year-old mother, wife, and groundnut farmer. These days, her field work has been more purposeful and fruitful. But not long ago, things were very different.

With a toddler at home and only traditional methods to rely on, Dishanthi struggled. Her yields were unpredictable, and expenses often outweighed what little income the crops brought.

That changed in 2023, when Chrysalis introduced the Farmer Field Business School (FFBS) to her village through the *Improved and Sustainable Agriculture Project*. With hands-on training and a chance to learn modern, climate-smart techniques, Dishanthi discovered a new way forward.

She learned to treat seeds, space them with precision, and nurture the land with care. Her harvest told the story, rising from 600 to 800 kilograms per acre. But her biggest transformation wasn’t measured in kilograms, it was in courage.

With 27 other farmers, Dishanthi cultivated groundnuts, soon emerging as a quiet leader. She became the group’s secretary and later, she started mentoring others, leading meetings, and proving that women could be both farmers and changemakers. Her demonstration plot became a local symbol of success: from 2 kilograms of quality seeds, she produced 21 kilograms; a harvest of both skill and pride.

Through the project’s Village Savings and Loan Association, Dishanthi accessed credit, supported her son’s education, and began saving; something she never imagined possible. And now, she dreams bigger: to share knowledge on nutrition, gender, and value addition, and to be known as a model farmer in every sense.

SVRI FORUM



**Hayati Rasool,
Senior Programme Coordinator
Chrysalis Advisory Services**

REFLECTIONS FROM SOUTH AFRICA...

As a young researcher, the SVRI Forum 2024 in Cape Town, South Africa, was truly a phenomenal experience to take in.

The Forum is the world's biggest gathering of researchers and practitioners working to end sexual and gender-based violence in all its facets. There were over 1500 researchers, practitioners, and service providers presenting their work, focusing on varied demographics through multiple approaches. It was both inspirational as well as humbling to see the vast global network focused upon this field.

The community around the Forum was open, always ready to welcome new people, and ready to share experiences and learnings. More than anything, it was the influx of learning opportunities that was near-overwhelming, but excellent to receive.



As a networking opportunity, there was an immense amount of access to funders, local organizations, and INGOs who were very open to connecting about future work and opportunities.

At an organizational and management level, the Forum itself was a great learning experience. Self-care experiences were built into the program, acknowledging the difficult subject matter being dealt with. There were designated quiet spaces for calls and unwinding. Sessions had real-time artwork being created, mirroring the work, conversations, and participant quotes from sessions. Numerous other small details were skillfully inserted into the proceedings, making participants' experiences both informative and smooth.

For our own work, the Forum was the ideal place to be inspired and motivated. We were at the Forum in the early stages of our own project with SVRI: an ambitious and innovative project to embed Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) prevention in the local health system of Sri Lanka, working with the Family Health Bureau of the Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka and the SVRI. The sheer amount of global research on IPV prevention that focuses on building evidence and scaling up programmes that have been scientifically proven to work was staggering and underlined to us the importance of aligning with the global community and research in this battle.

In general, the Forum was an inspiring and motivational experience that really spoke to me as someone just setting out on their journey in this field, connecting me to a global network of people as well as to a global evidence base that will only help me, as well as Chrysalis, moving forward.

HOW TO DEVELOP A CDRFI PRODUCT TO OVERCOME BARRIERS OF CLIMATE RISK FINANCING?



Deshani Herath,
Project Manager - Insuresilience
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REFLECTIONS FROM THE PROJECT...

Introduction

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of Sri Lanka's economy. Yet, they remain highly vulnerable to climate-related disasters such as floods, droughts, and extreme rainfall. These events disrupt supply chains, damage infrastructure, and threaten livelihoods. Recognizing this challenge, Chrysalis has pioneered efforts to design Climate and Disaster Risk Financing and Insurance (CDRFI) solutions tailored for SMEs.

From Concept to Action

A scoping study revealed that only 10% of SMEs were familiar with CDRFI products. Many found existing insurance products complex, mistrustful, or unsuitable for their business needs. To bridge this gap, Chrysalis initiated capacity-building workshops and discussions with entrepreneurs, district SME consortia, and national-level stakeholders.

Through this process, the Multi-Actor Partnership (MAP) was established—bringing together government agencies, banks, insurance companies, and SME representatives. MAP plays a vital role in shaping solutions, sharing knowledge, and ensuring accountability.

The Revolving Fund Model

After extensive consultation, the MAP recommended a Revolving Fund as the most practical and immediately feasible CDRFI product. Unlike traditional insurance, the revolving fund allows SMEs to access loans for climate resilience initiatives while continuously replenishing itself as repayments are made.

Moreover, this recommendation was shaped not only through government consultation but also from the initial scoping study and further enriched by consortium discussions. Together, these multi-stage consultations led to identifying the Revolving Fund as the most feasible entry point for CDRFI in the SME context.

Key features include:

- Flexible, SME-friendly guidelines and repayment terms.
- District MAPs will act in an advisory capacity, providing guidance and recommendations.
- Technical input from the Central Bank to ensure compliance with financial regulations

Why It Matters

The revolving fund empowers SMEs to recover faster from climate shocks, reduces dependence on external financing, and fosters a cycle of reinvestment in climate resilience. Over time, it is expected to grow into a self-sustaining financial mechanism that strengthens local economies.

“IN AN ERA OF ESCALATING CLIMATE RISKS, COMPREHENSIVE CDRFI SOLUTIONS ARE NO LONGER AN OPTION BUT A NECESSITY—EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO SAFEGUARD THEIR FUTURE.”



A JOURNEY BEYOND THE ROAD, INTO THE HEART OF COMMUNITY



Most travel stories begin with a map. Ours began with a conversation. When Chrysalis met the women and youth of Thalkote, Karagasthenna, Kadadora, Kolapathana, and Aberdeen, there was no fanfare, no souvenir stands, no travel brochures. Just questions.

- What do you want for your village?
- What do you wish visitors could see?
- What stories are waiting to be told?

SRI LANKA LESS TRAVELLED

These weren't just remote locations tucked into the hills of Matale and Nuwara Eliya. They were living, breathing communities with rich cultural heritage; and for the first time, an invitation to shape their own path forward through tourism.

This was the beginning of Sri Lanka Less Travelled — a two-year community-based eco-tourism project implemented by Chrysalis, with the support of CARE Deutschland and funding from the European Union. But more than that, it was the start of a movement where local communities became the storytellers, curators, and custodians of their own land.



Hemalatha runs a thriving homestay. ‘Nisala Sevana’ (meaning a ‘serene shelter’) is a traditional Sri Lankan home situated at the base of lush green peaks in Kadadora, drawing eco-conscious travellers who seek authentic, rural experiences in Sri Lanka.

But her journey — like so many women’s — began much earlier, far from home.

Years ago, she had left to work as a housemaid in the Middle East, sending back every cent to build a better life.

When a fire destroyed her home, she came back to ashes. Hope felt distant.

Dreams paused. Then, something changed.

With training, encouragement, and a little bit of courage, Hemalatha transformed her home into **Nisala Sevana** — a serene shelter. More than just a homestay, it’s now a welcoming sanctuary where travellers experience rural life: walking through paddy fields, tasting garden-grown vegetables, and hearing stories of resilience.

“WHEN THE TEAM FROM CHRYSALIS FIRST CAME, I DIDN’T THINK SOMEONE LIKE ME COULD BE PART OF A TOURISM PROJECT,” SHE SAID WITH A SOFT LAUGH. “BUT THEY LISTENED. THEY SAW US.”

BRINGING THE JOURNEY TO THE WORLD

“THIS IS MORE THAN A TOURISM PROJECT – IT’S A VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION,” SAID DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM, HON. PROF. RUWAN RANASINGHE.



On May 15, 2025, the spirit of Sri Lanka Less Travelled came alive at Trace Expert City, Colombo. The event, Roots and Routes: A Cinematic Journey, celebrated the two-year journey of the project and the communities that shaped it.

Over 300 guests — including government officials, diplomats, tour operators, and journalists — gathered to witness the unveiling of the five signature destinations: Thalkote Village, Karagasthenna, Kadadora and Ranamune, Kolapathana Estate, and Aberdeen Waterfall.

Speakers highlighted how local women are now tour guides, homestay owners, and community leaders. With training and tools, they’ve turned informal knowledge into formal livelihoods — changing not just their income, but how they see themselves.

The event ended with a launch of the coffee table book.

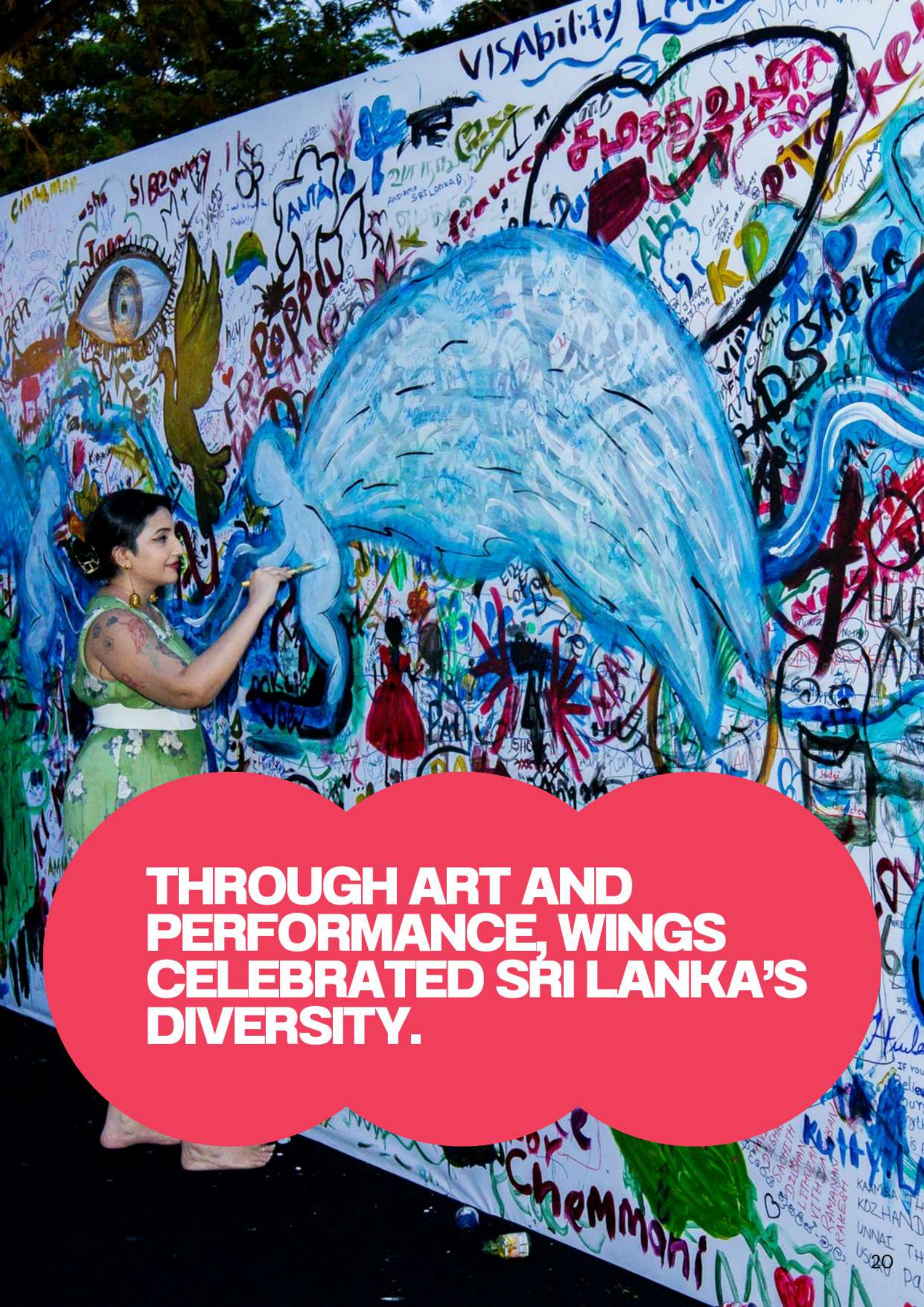
A JOURNEY BEYOND THE ROAD, INTO THE HEART OF COMMUNITY



WINGS: Flight Begins Here

On August 1st and 2nd, the Independence Arcade in Colombo came alive with colour, rhythm, and stories as Chrysalis hosted WINGS: Flight Begins Here. Held under the Fostering Inclusive Communities and Economies (FICE) project, part of the EU- and German-funded SCOPE programme with GIZ and the Ministry of Justice and National Integration, the event brought together people, communities, and ideas in a celebration of resilience and inclusivity. The Diversity Market showcased 40 women- and youth-led SMEs from across Sri Lanka, offering a vibrant mix of products that reflected the creativity and determination of local entrepreneurs. Around them, art and culture wove powerful narratives—film screenings told moving stories of strength and social cohesion, the Kahata photo exhibition revealed striking glimpses of everyday resilience, and regional cultural dance performances infused the space with the rhythm and diversity of Sri Lanka’s heritage. The highlight was a mesmerizing performance by Ravibandu Vidyapathi, whose artistry bridged tradition and modern expression, leaving audiences spellbound.

WINGS was more than a marketplace or exhibition—it was an experience that connected hearts and inspired hope. Visitors paused at the Facilitated Wall to write messages of peace, inclusion, and unity, turning it into a living canvas of shared aspirations. For entrepreneurs, it was equally life-changing. As Niluka Damayanthi from Akuressa reflected, “Participating in FICE changed my business and my confidence. I have connected with entrepreneurs from other parts of the country and learned new skills.” These voices, along with the artistry, performances, and stories, transformed WINGS into a platform of resilience and imagination. It reminded everyone present that Sri Lanka’s strength lies in its diversity, and that when communities come together, they can create not just opportunities, but a brighter, more inclusive future.



**THROUGH ART AND
PERFORMANCE, WINGS
CELEBRATED SRI LANKA'S
DIVERSITY.**

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