

Livelihood Support by Assist Resettlement & Renaissance in Vanni

Completed Livelihood Projects

Assist Resettlement & Renaissance (Assist RR) was formed mainly to relieve poverty of innocent victims of war in Sri Lanka by improving their livelihood. These people were originally displaced during the final phase of the civil war and spent their past few years in various refugee/detention camps after the end of civil war. They are now facing extreme hardship after they were resettled in their villages. Although it was part of a resettlement process, the people are being housed in tents and damaged houses with no roofs and without water and toilet facilities and are living on rare hand-outs without any work or jobs.



Current living conditions in war Mullivaikal East



Current living conditions in AmbalavanPokkanai



Current living conditions in Puthumathalan

Our charity provides assistance and enhances the lives of these innocent victims by focusing on livelihood projects by prioritising vulnerable and needy families. This would include helping women headed families, families with seriously disabled/injured men, women, and vulnerable children. There are thousands of widows and seriously disabled/injured people, who are living in this region without any assistance and are facing immense suffering and hardship financially, mentally and physically.

Our charity would like to provide assistance and invest on these families in order for them to start small businesses or self employment based on their skills and preferences including farming, fishing, etc that they were involved with before the war. This would relieve them from their current poverty situation and enhance their shattered lives and make them stand on their own feet instead of living on hand-outs.

Assist RR met six families identified by Ramakrishna Mission (RKM) as in need of livelihood assistance in March 2013. Following this meeting, Assist RR handed over cycles to five of these families in Puthumathalan. Two of these families have lost their parents at the end of the war and live with their grandmothers. Three families are headed by women as a result of the war.



AssistRR Meeting five families in Puthmathalan



Handing over cycles to the families by the GA of Mullaithivu, Mr Vethanayagan

Assist RR also promised to provide livelihood support such as cows, poultry and fishing nets to these families. This became a reality in June 2013 and Assist RR handed over livelihood assistances to 5 families in Mathalan and AmbalavanPokkanai villages and another 3 families, recommended by Dr Namachivayam (Sivanarulllam), in Visvamadu. The needs of these families were checked again by Mullaithivu District Educational Development Trust Fund (MDEDTF). Items such as cows, goat, chicken,

fishing nets and sewing machines were handed over to the families. Veterinary doctors in Mullaithivu assisted us in purchasing cows, goats, and chickens. These families believe that our assistance would certainly help them, albeit, in a small way. Another two families in Mannar recommended by Dr Namachivayam were given Rs 60,000 cash towards livelihood support. Assist RR also donated bicycles to two more deserving families in Mullivaikal and Mathalan in June 2013.



Livelihood assistance to two families from Puthumathalan



Fishing net and goats to two families from AmabalavanPokkanai



Livelihood assistance (water pump) to a family in Visvamadu

Future business ideas to create jobs

Concrete Building Block Factory

When we met Mrs Parameswary family in Puthumathalan in August 2013, she told us that they have been given Rs 100,000 to build a small house. As this is only a little amount of money to build a house, they are forced to do most of the building labour work themselves. Mrs Parameswary told us that she was looking for a grill to make concrete building blocks but couldn't even rent one. Assist RR therefore bought a grill and donated to Mrs Parameswary (see a photo below). Assist RR also advised her to rent out this grill and earn an income using it.

This gave us an idea to start a small business to make building blocks. This would provide employment to a number of locals and enable selling the blocks to the needy people at affordable prices. MDEDTF is forming a non-profit making cooperative society to run and manage this unit. We initially aim to supply building blocks to Mullivaikal, Puthumathalan and Pokkanai areas in Mullaithivu. Assist RR has been requested to purchase two machines that make building blocks and a generator to provide electricity. We are currently in the process of obtaining estimates for the machinery. Assist RR believes that this is a worthy project that would help the locals in many ways.



Donating a grill for making building blocks to Mrs Parameswary in Mathalan in Aug 2013

Small Garment Factory

In addition to the above livelihood project, Assist RR also exploring setting up of a small garment factory in an area in Mullaithivu for providing employment to war widows. The profit made would be invested back in the society. We are also exploring other areas where we can invest to provide employment to war widows. We will share this when we have concrete plans.

Assist RR believes that it should concentrate more on livelihood support projects so that we can help more families to stand on their feet. There are more women headed families and disabled, who need assistance to start their lives and to stand on their own feet. Assist RR is in the process of selecting more families in need of desperate help. We therefore need more funds to assist many more families. With your support, Assist RR can help more people in need of assistance.

"Give a man a fish; you have fed him for today. Teach a man to fish; and you have fed him for a lifetime"

Future Projects to improve Living Conditions

When Assist RR was rebuilding Chandran pre-school in Mullivaika East in June 2013, people who live in this area requested to provide toilet facilities for them as they didn't have access to toilets. Their houses and toilets were badly damaged at the end of the war as can be seen from the photo below.



Damaged toilets and houses in Mullivaikal East area

As women were facing problems and hardship as a result of non availability of toilet facilities, Assist RR built two toilets for the use of local villagers within the school premises as shown in the photo below.



Two toilets that were built for the use of local villagers in Mullivaikal East

Assist RR now understand that there are around 100 families, who have been resettled in Mullivaikal East. Assist RR received an urgent request from Mullivaikal in September 2013 to provide more toilet facilities as the rainy season was about to start in this part. The request was for a few toilets to be built in a number of common areas so that the local villagers can share them.

Assist RR discussed this need with MDEDTF, who suggested that it may be cost effective to repair the damaged toilets based on a priority list. They have now prepared a list of nearly 100 families in a priority order. The families were prioritised based on a number of criteria that included families with disabled members, girls, elderly, etc.

We hope you can appreciate the hardship these people are facing as a result of the war. It is our responsibility, as Diaspora, to lend our support and help them in this hour of need.