

Livelihood Support in Vanni by Assist RR

1. Clothes Distribution in Mullivaikal East

During a visit by Assist RR in June 2013, three suitcases full of used clothes were taken to Puthumathalan and Ambalavan Pokkanai in Mullaithivu and were handed over to a number of families there. Although Assist RR was unsure how the villagers would react to being provided with used clothes, we found that they were very keen and happy to receive these clothes. This encouraged Assist RR to collect more used clothes in the UK and to ship 6 boxes of to Mullaithivu. These clothes were distributed to the villagers in Mullivaikal, and the event took place at Chandran Pre-School (which was renovated by Assist RR). Nearly 120 families benefitted by these clothes.



Clothes Distribution in Mullivaikal East on 06th Nov 2013

2. Solar Powered Lamps

At the opening ceremony of Chandran Pre-School in Mullivaikal East, Colombo Ramakrishna Mission (RKM) donated nearly 50 solar powered lamps to help the children learn and families to save money on kerosene. When Assist RR went there to distribute clothes in November 2013, many families who did not receive these lamps, stated that these lamps would be very useful to their children with their learning, and made a request that Assist RR should arrange to donate these lamps to the rest of the families in their village.



Mullivaikal East Pre-School Opening and donating solar powered lamps by RKM

Assist RR would like to donate additional lamps to families in Mullivaikal East and West initially, and we are looking for donors to help these families. These lamps cost only around £6 (Rs 1150.00) per lamp. The bulb fitted in this lamp has a life of 10 years and the battery has a life of 3.5 years. The battery can be bought at a cost of Rs 200 locally.

The suppliers and RKM haven't received any complaints in the last 1.5 years since they started giving away these lamps. Even if the lamps lasted 2 years, it would be very cost effective as they would save significant amount of money on kerosene. It is estimated that 200 lamps would be needed to provide light to the households in these two villages. Please consider this initiative, as this is a crucial need and not very expensive to support.

3. Livelihood initiative - Rice/Flour Mill in Mullivaikal

During clothes distribution on 6th Nov 2013, the women from this village asked whether we could also donate rice, flour, sugar, etc as they have been struggling for food due to lack of employment opportunities. Assist RR went to back to this village on 7th Nov 2013 and met the villagers to discuss how we could help them to earn a living rather depend on handouts.



Meeting representatives of Mullivaikal East villagers on 7th Nov 2013

The villagers were very keen to participate in projects that would provide them with employment and earn a living. They agreed to a suggestion that they can make food items including rice and flour that can be exported to Colombo, where Katpaham shop is very keen to market these products. We expect to help at least 10 families to make a living through this initiative. We have approached a friend of Assist RR to provide an estimate to start this livelihood support project.

Rural Development Societies (RDSs) are functioning in each and every village in Sri Lanka. Assist RR would be able to get the assistance of these RDSs to support this initiative, in addition to the assistance of local Vithanai (Grama Sevaka), who would be ultimately reporting to the GA. Mullivaikal East RDS assisted us in distributing the clothes and to meet the villagers on 7th Nov.

4. Small Garment Factory in Mallavi, Thunukkai

Assist RR has another proposal to start a small garment factory, which would provide initial employment to a minimum of 11 women. It is possible to grow this business and employ more women if the plan is successful. It is proposed that this factory should be located in Mallavi, Thunukkai in Mulliathivu district, as this place is surrounded by many villages including Iyankulam, Kodaikaddiyakulam, etc, that are the most deprived areas in the North.

We would need around £10,000 to start this business proposition, and could borrow from banks for the running of the business for a short term, until enough working capital is created within the business. The proposal is being reviewed by our members and can be implemented soon with the support of Diaspora. We have spoken to a few contacts in Colombo, who are willing to market the product for a commission. We are currently looking for agents in Jaffna to help us to market the items produced.