

# Assist Resettlement & Renaissance

Charity registered in England & Wales – Reg. No. 1151025



## Livelihood Support by Assist Resettlement & Renaissance in Vanni

### Current living and economic conditions in many areas of East and North

The innocent victims of war in Eastern & Northern Sri Lanka were originally displaced during the final phase of the civil war and spent their past few years in various refugee/detention camps run by the military after the end of civil war. They are now facing extreme hardship after they were resettled in their villages. Following resettlement, 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 job opportunities.

### Current Living conditions in Mullivaikal & Mathalan (Mullaithivu)



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## Current living Conditions in Batticaloa



## Current economic conditions in the East and North of Sri Lanka

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. In Mullaithivu district alone, there are 5265 widows, 1248 widowers, 4524 women headed families and 3351 disabled persons including 1786 persons who became disabled as a result of the war.

Data available for Mullaithivu district indicates that there are nearly 84% of the total families earn less than Rs 5000 per month and around 18% earn less than Rs 1500 per month. This data also shows that there are only 26% of the total employable are in some kind of employment as at 31 Dec 2012. The remainder of

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74% of the employable persons in this district are unemployed and struggling for their survival. These numbers are given in tables below based on Mullaitivu District statistical Handbook of 2013.

**Table 1: Female headed families, widows & widowers In Mullaitivu district as at 31.12.2012**

	A.G.A.Division	Female Headed Families	No of Widows	No of Widowers
1	Maritimepattu	1551	1456	
2	Puthukkudiyiruppu	239	1518	810
3	Oddusuddan	1051	887	225
4	Thunukkai	777	549	108
5	Manthai East	429	347	23
6	Welioya	477	508	82
<b>Total</b>		<b>4524</b>	<b>5265</b>	<b>1248</b>

**Table 2: Families classified by income group in Mullaitivu district as at 31.12.2012**

	A.G.A Division	Less Rs 1500	Between Rs 1500 - 5000	Above Rs 5000	TOTAL
1	Maritimepattu	2588	7820	1985	12393
2	Puthukkudiyiruppu	1100	8352	2100	11552
3	Oddusuddan	581	4506	347	5434
4	Thunukkai	1038	1940	533	3511
5	Manthai East	806	1347	408	2561
6	Welioya	747	1403	767	2917
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,860</b>	<b>25,368</b>	<b>6,140</b>	<b>38,368</b>
<b>Percentage of the total</b>		<b>17.88%</b>	<b>66.12%</b>	<b>16.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Table 3: Employed & Unemployed population in Mullaitivu district as at 31.12.2012**

<b>Employed population in Mullaitivu district as at 31.12.2012</b>						
	A.G.A Division	Workers in Govt.	Workers in Semi Govt.	Workers in NGO Int. & local	Workers in Private sector	Total
1	Maritimepattu	565	14	36	1455	<b>2070</b>
2	Puthukkudiyiruppu	660	890	75	150	<b>1775</b>
3	Oddusuddan	141	29	37	29	<b>236</b>
4	Thunukkai	288	25	42	372	<b>727</b>
5	Manthai East	213	18	32	36	<b>299</b>
6	Welioya	579	196	14	255	<b>1044</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>2446</b>	<b>1172</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>2297</b>	<b>6151</b>
<b>Unemployed population in Mullaitivu district as at 31.12.2012</b>						
	A.G.A Division	G.C.E.(O/L)	G.C.E.(A/L)	Graduates	Others	Total
1	Maritimepattu	910	531	0	640	<b>2081</b>
2	Puthukkudiyiruppu	950	560	5	1500	<b>3015</b>
3	Oddusuddan	951	482	18	3983	<b>5434</b>
4	Thunukkai	1019	407	23	3110	<b>4559</b>
5	Manthai East	277	148	6	0	<b>431</b>
6	Welioya	790	215	1	936	<b>1942</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>4897</b>	<b>2343</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>10169</b>	<b>17462</b>

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The numbers from Mullaithivu district indicate that a significant number of families are struggling to survive since the end of the war due to lack of job opportunities and lack of support to start any meaningful self-employments. Assist RR believes that this would be the case in other war affected areas in the East and North of Sri Lanka. The funds provided by the NGOs are often not enough to start something that would make them self-sufficient. For example, a cow would cost around Rs 50,000 but just one cow is not going to make them self-sufficient. They would need at least 2 cows (Rs 100,000) to make a reasonable living out of their investment.

When Assist RR visited some of the war affected and remote villages in the East and North of Sri Lanka and spoke to the villagers, they informed that their children are attending schools on empty stomach. Many children are having only one meal a day. We urge NGOs and charities to consider assisting families with meaningful livelihood projects that would make them self-sufficient. Diaspora Tamils also should think of creating job opportunities by setting up businesses such as factories, farms, etc.

There are nearly 3500 families living along a 70 km length of coastal areas in Mullaithivu district. Nearly 1000 families have received assistances from INGOs. However, there are still nearly 2500 families, who never received any assistance to start their livelihood and to stand on their own feet. The main reason for this lack of support is the cost of the equipment needed for their livelihood. A boat, an engine and a net will cost around Rs 6 laks. Hence there is a reluctance to support this initiative.

It is possible to get majority of the funds (75%) needed as loans from banks at preferential rates. Assist RR with the help of other charitable organizations could fund the rest of 25% of the funds needed. It is understood that having a boat will assist up to 6-7 families to earn a living using a boat, engine and a net and will provide employment to many more families in the area, such as selling fish, making dry fish, repairing nets, repairing boats, etc. Our support will greatly improve the living conditions of the fishing families in these areas.

There are also nearly 85 families in Manthuvil, Mullaithivu, who depend on Inland (Lagoon) fishing in Nanthikadal lagoon for their livelihood. They have also lost all their gear for fishing and are struggling for their survival. They would need Theppams at a cost of Rs 30,000 each and nets at a cost of Rs 24,000 each to start their lives.

## **Assist RR aims to improve the livelihood of these people**

Our charity aims to provide assistance and to enhance the lives of these innocent victims by focusing on livelihood projects, education and healthcare. Our charity would like to 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 in the East and North of Sri Lanka. 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.

As a start, Assist RR is currently working with their partners, supporters and banks to provide 25 sets of fishing boats, engines, and nets at a cost of Rs 600,000 per set. This would provide regular income to nearly 175 families in Mullaithivu coastal areas. Assist RR also progressing on setting up a garment factory and a mill to produce saleable items such as chilli powder, flour, etc and to sell. We can do more though to help the unfortunate people in the East and North of Sri Lanka.

## **What can Diaspora Tamils do to help these people?**

Assist RR believes that Diaspora Tamils should also consider assisting these families to live in better shelters than that they are currently living in, as can be seen from the photos above. The cost of repair would be between Rs 200,000 and Rs 400,000 and a new build may cost around Rs 600,000. After watching the children in the first photo of this document and their living conditions, I am sure all of you will agree that we should do something about their living conditions.

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Please remember that their current situation is not their making. These innocent victims of war were just minding their own businesses along the coastal and remote villages and were caught in the middle of the war. Prior to the war, many of them never even ventured out of their villages.

In summary, the following livelihood supports have been identified by Assist RR, in order to help the unfortunate people in the East and North of Sri Lanka and to make them stand on their own feet:

- Livelihood support such as cows and goats with a minimum investment of Rs 100,000 per family;
- Providing fishing gear (boat, engine and net) to fishermen families;
- Providing Theppams and Nets for Inland fishing in lagoons;
- Setting up of small scale manufacturing units such as garment factories, mills, food processing units, etc, to provide employment to locals mainly women;
- Assist farmers with their farming activities;
- Assist people without houses/damaged houses to have decent shelters.

**Can we please take this as another challenge and do something about it?**