

## CONTENIS

Editorial Message

Cover Story

Staff Testimonies
Highlights

Special Feature

## EDITORIAL

Editors: Matthew Whitty

Assistant Editor/Layout: Shenal Hettiarachchi

Contributors: Frank Reimann KhayaliJohn S. Saundharya Devashri Peiris

### The Most Defining Feature of Humanity

The anthropologist Margret Mead was once asked by her students what she considered to be the first sign of civilization in a culture. I was thinking of tools for hunting, grinding stones to prepare food, or even religious artifacts when I read the question. But no. Mead said that the first evidence of civilization was a 15,000-year-old fractured and healed femur found in an archaeological site. A femur is a bone connecting the hip to the knee. Mead explained that in the animal kingdom if you break your leg, you die. You cannot run from danger; you cannot drink or hunt for food.

A broken femur that has healed is evidence that another person has taken time to care about the needs of a fellow human being. Someone has taken the time to stay with the fallen, attended to their injury, carried them to safety, and supported them through recovery.

I think the most defining feature of humanity is our capacity for empathy – the ability to put ourselves in others' shoes. Research even suggests that compassion and benevolence are an evolved part of human nature, rooted in our brain and biology, and ready to be cultivated for the greater good.

For me, this all comes together in ADRA's purpose: "To serve humanity so all may live as God intended."



## MESSAGE COVER STORY

ADRA, together with Oxfam, has established approximately 1500 nutrition home gardens (NHG) in estate and rural communities of the Nuwara Eliya, Matale, and Monaragala districts, through their jointly implemented Assisting Communities in Creating Environmental and Nutritional Development (ACCEND) Project. The intervention hopes to increase the nutritional status of households by creating access to food that are safe and nutritious. The project ensured that the NHGs established were to improve nutrition, are organic-based, and are beneficiary-led (family-oriented). The beneficiaries of the intervention are those who have undernourished children below the age of 5 and families that include those suffering from chronic kidney disease (CKD) and chronic kidney disease of unknown origin (CKDu). The project conducted trainings on organic home gardening techniques and further supported the beneficiaries by providing consultation, gar- " After eating healthy food from the home garden, my dening tools, and seeds for germination.

To document the success and the impact of the intervention, the project conducted a study with the support of an Chandrika Kumari is another beneficiary of the intervenindependent researcher named Mr. Kapila Premarathne, tion from the Wanarawa area of Wilgamuwa. She sold sampling 200 households covering 10 Gramha Niladhari the excess produce from her home garden and used the areas of the Wilgamuwa Divisional Secretariat.

ted project participants both economically and nutrition- duction of their home gardens. This has contributed imally, providing them with adequate food and more even mensely towards the economic improvement of their during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Sanjeevani, households. one of the beneficiaries from the Kumbukanda area, revealed that her whole family survived on the produce of To learn more about the intervention and their home garden during the intermittent lockdowns im- the findings of the study, read the research posed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "Our home garden report through our website at adrasrilanka. has been a Godsend during this time of difficulty. We were org/nghis. unable to buy our groceries due to the restrictions. So, we depended on organic and fresh vegetables, greens, The ACCEND Project is implemented in coland fruits from our home garden to cook our meals," she laboration with the Sri Lankan Government stated.

Another beneficiary, Iresha Kumari's 3-year-old daughter, was underweight at the beginning of the activity. Upon consuming healthy and organic food from their ho-

## Nutrition Home Gardens

An economically and nutritionally impactful intervention



me garden, she is now within the average weight range. daughter gradually gained weight. This inspired my mother also to start a home garden," said Iresha.

income to purchase spray cans and a hose pipe. She is just one of the many beneficiaries who have been able The study reveals that the home gardens have benefit- to earn a significant income by selling the excess pro-

and with the generous funding of the European Union.

by Shenal Hettiarachch and Khayali John



## STAFF TESTIMONIES SPECIAL FEATURE

#### S. Saundharya

Administrative Assistant/Cashier - ACCEND Project

"I joined ADRA Sri Lanka back in 2017 as the Administrative Assistant for the European Union funded ACCEND project. The project is implemented with Oxfam, so I have the opportunity to work with colleagues from both organizations – which has been amazing! I have been employed at ADRA for the past four years, and throughout the journey, I've had both ups and downs. I had to work on vast project areas and meet strict deadlines, which have been challenging and a learning

curve at the same time. The experiences and knowledge I've gained have added so much to both my personal and professional life, which I believe will be valuable to me in the long run.

I love working at ADRA because of its beautiful working atmosphere. Most of my colleagues are young and are people to whom I can relate. Everyone is treated equally at ADRA, and its organizational culture makes the workplace feel like home.

I wish the best for ADRA and hope that it recieves more funding and projects to support the needy in Sri Lanka.

## NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

#### A Face-lift for the Tinsin Tamil School

ADRA concluded the Supporting Children in School (SCS) project, funded by the Czech Republic Development Cooperation, in December 2022. The project refurbished several school buildings, established essential sanitation facilities, and rendered equipment and material support to develop smart classrooms in the Tinsin Tamil School.

#### EU funding Utilized to Raise Awareness and Provide Clean Water

ADRA and Oxfam through their jointly implemented ACCEND project, donated electronic and IT equipment to support the expansion of Health Information Management Systems in Monaragala. Additionally, the project installed and handed over two water systems powered by solar energy in Lediyangala Primary School and Maraka Divisional Hospital in the Wilgamuwa Division. The project is funded by the Euorpean Union.

#### BRAVE Project Supports Vaccination Efforts of the Government

The Building Resilience and Vaccine Awareness (BRAVE) project distributed personal protection (PP) kits in several vaccination centers of the Negombo and Minuwangoda areas of the Gampaha district to support the vaccination efforts of the government and to encourage people to get vaccinated. Additionally, awareness was raised regarding vaccination aftercare through brochures given with the PP kits.





## Supporting the Vulnerable in the North

The third phase of the Local Economic and Social Strengthening (LESS) project aims to effectively retain and integrate vulnerable groups such as youth, ex-combatants, and refugee returnees into society. The project is funded by the Australian Government's Department of Home Affairs and is implemented with the support of ADRA India in the Vavuniya, Mannar, and Kilinochchi districts of Sri Lanka.

Since the first and the second phases of the project, ADRA has been working closely with relevant stakeholders to better support these vulnerable groups. Carrying forward, The LESS III project aims to create a lasting impact within the project's operational districts through the improvement of the economic landscape and reintegration of refugee returnees and other vulnerable groups.

Through the project, beneficiaries are supported through strengthened Refugee Reintegration Networks (RRNs), while economic growth is supported through empowering family and local community economic systems.

In the last quarter of 2021, the project increased the capacity of the target groups, civil society organizations, and public stakeholders. The project has established a new RRN and several youth groups in the Mannar Dist-

-rict as well. The newly established groups also have been linked with Divisional Secretaries and District Secretaries to create space for dialogue between the duty bearers and the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) which will lead to better understanding and increased awareness among both parties.

Furthermore, the project has improved the capacity of local government administrative bodies and key stakeholders through various trainings, to effectively perform mandated duties. Among the trainings conducted are human resource improvement trainings, special capacity enhancement activities for the women's and children's section of the Divisional Secretariat offices, capacity building trainings for key government stakeholders, and debt management trainings for the public sector and community leaders.

One of the other major interventions of the project is to support the livelihoods of selected beneficiaries. The project supports the beneficiaries to develop a business plan and then offers them business coaching to start a livelihood of their choice. In the latter quarter of 2021, the project provided livelihood support to 65 beneficiaries altogether.

by Devashri Peiris



# ADRA

NO. 37 PURANA ROAD, WATTEGEDARA, MAHARAGAMA, COLOMBO, 10280.

WWW.ADRASRILANKA.ORG