



Reflections

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Cover Story

Sathyaraj Learns Organic Gardening

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EDITORIAL

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MESSAGE

Communication Matters!

Compassion is one of ADRA's core values. It defines the why, what and how of our work. The theologian Walter Brueggemann is credited with the following statement:

"Compassion constitutes a radical form of criticism, for it announces that the hurt is to be taken seriously, that the hurt is not to be accepted as normal and natural but is an abnormal and unacceptable condition for humanness."

This suggests to me that the work we do in ADRA can be seen as a radical form of criticism. If this is true, then it is important for us to not just do our work but to communicate it - to make it visible.

You could argue that if we show compassion and change one person's life but nobody else knows about it then we have limited our effective impact to that individual. However, if we change that same one person's life but communicate that to a thousand people, we might inspire those people to help others the same way, or to be aware of the need for change. Suddenly our impact has the potential for exponential growth, and we can begin to have an effect on the underlying systems of inequity or injustice that created the need in the first place.

This is why we must communicate - and keep communicating about what we do and why it matters.



Mark Webster
Regional Director
ADRA Asia

COVER STORY

Sathyaraj Learns Organic Gardening

Sathyaraj (31) is an ardent gardener. With just basic knowledge of agriculture he managed a home garden on a two perch (50m²) land. Upon taking part in the nutrition home gardening (NHG) trainings facilitated through the European Union funded ACCEND project, he gained valuable knowledge and insight that allowed him to expand and improve his garden.



Sathyaraj poses with freshly plucked beans from his garden.

The ACCEND project aims to improve health and nutrition in the estate as well as rural communities of Sri Lanka. The project encourages families to engage in home gardening in order to boost the nutritional status of households and to increase access to food that are safe and nutritious. The project complements home gardening activities through provision of training, consultation, seeds for germination, and gardening tools and utensils.

Sathyaraj is a bachelor who hails from the Alton estate of Hatton. He works as a labourer for the estate and lives with his mother and his brother's family. "My father is deceased, and my brother works at a hotel in Colombo. So, I take care of my mother and my brother's family," says Sathyaraj.

The NHG trainings promote organic home gardening and cover numerous important topics associated with NHG such as soil preparation and preservation, water management, seed preservation and germination, landscaping, organic pest control, and fertilizer preparation. "The trainings broadened my knowledge regarding home gardening. I learnt things that I never knew before. I've incorporated what I have learnt from the trainings into my garden. I've learnt techniques to manage space and to grow vegetables without using artificial fertilizers and chemicals. All the vegetables in my garden are organic. I use organic fertilizers that I prepare all by myself," says Sathyaraj with pride. His home garden boasts a variety of organic vegetables, greens and yams. They use the produce of the garden for home consumption which has widely reduced their household expenditure.

Through ADRA's intervention, Sathyaraj and his family have realized the importance of eating healthy and organic food. Additionally, the trainings have augmented Sathyaraj's passion towards gardening. "Gardening brings me peace of mind and relieves me when I'm stressed. I want to thank ADRA for conducting these trainings. They were instrumental in boosting my interest towards gardening and helped me improve my garden," says Sathyaraj expressing his gratitude towards ADRA and the project.

The ACCEND project is funded by the European Union and is implemented jointly by ADRA and Oxfam. In collaboration with the Government of Sri Lanka, it works towards uplifting and improving water, sanitation, hygiene, health, and nutrition in the Nuwara Eliya, Matale, and Monaragala districts. In addition, gender justice and disaster risk reduction are woven across project activities as cross-cutting themes.



STAFF TESTIMONIES

Shanika Kaluthanthrige

Finance Officer

“My journey with ADRA began back in 2010 right after I finished high school. One of my friends told me about a vacancy advertisement for an Administrative Assistant at ADRA. I hesitantly applied since I was a fresher, but got selected to my surprise. ADRA allowed me to kick start my career at a very young age. During my 11 years at ADRA, I received exposure to all the departments of the organization and received a broader understanding of how it functions.

Through ADRA, not only did I get to serve vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka, but also received exposure to country offices globally. This has added value to my professional as well as personal life. I’ve had the opportunity to mingle with numerous people, experience different cultures and traditions, and above all learn so much from each of those experiences. While at ADRA I’ve also been constantly challenged to take risks, new responsibilities and to push my limits. I believe that this vastly contributed to my development as a person and has moulded me into who I am today.

What I love the most is ADRA’s friendly and supportive working atmosphere. Here at ADRA, we lift each other up and work as a team to achieve our goals and objectives. I consider it a privilege to work here, and I will always cherish the life-long friendships, experiences, and memories I’ve gathered.”

NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

Technical Training for NWSDB, Water Resource Board and ADRA staff

The European Union funded ACCEND project facilitated a technical training on borewell drilling for the staff of the National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWSDB), Water Resource Board and ADRA’s drilling rig team from 19th to 23rd of April. It was conducted by resource persons from the NWSDB, Tissera Engineering, PRD Rigs and ADRA. The extensive training consisted of indoor sessions and a hands-on practical session which provided insight to the participants on borewell drilling techniques, procedures, and operation and maintenance of the drilling rig.

Capacity Building for Public Sector Staff

Through the third phase of the LESS project, ADRA conducted a capacity building training on self-planning and monitoring for staff of the 04 Divisional Secretariat Divisions of the Kilinochchi district. The training will contribute towards improving knowledge and skills of the staff and will augment productivity within the workplace. The LESS project is funded by the Australian Government’s Department of Home Affairs.

Health and Nutrition Fairs in the Estates

Three health and nutrition fairs were held in Stockholm estate on the 21st of March followed by Mahanilu estate on the 28th of March and concluded in Fairlawn estate on the 30th of March. The fair consisted of two components: the ACCEND community volleyball tournament and the health and nutrition awareness session. Both activities were tied together to encourage community participation and involvement of the youth, children and the elderly.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Safe & Clean Water to Estate Communities



While water is a basic human need, access to clean water, proper sanitation and hygiene are equally important for good well-being and a healthy life. However, a majority of people in the plantation sector of Sri Lanka do not have access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities.

Through the European Union (EU) funded ACCEND project, ADRA and Oxfam addresses and strives to mitigate these issues

associated with water, sanitation and hygiene. Earlier in February and March, the project handed over 08 completed improved gravity fed water systems (IGFWS) that are intended to provide safe and clean drinking water to more than 1300 families across 08 estate divisions in the Ambagamuwa Divisional Secretariat Division.

These gravity-fed water systems which are constructed with the tripartite contribution of the estate management, communities and the project, hauls water from natural springs to the individual homes of people using the laws of gravity. The system also involves a natural filtration mechanism that purifies the water before it reaches the households.

Raising Awareness on SGBV & Women's Health

Oxfam and ADRA in collaboration with the European Union recently launched the report “Health and Life Experiences of the Ambagamuwa DS Division: A Gender-based Study” (HLEAD). Prior to the launch the project also carried out an online advocacy campaign highlighting excerpts from the report.

The report addresses gaps in existing research by providing a concentrated perspective of the general health needs of women and the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence in Sri Lanka’s plantation and estate communities within the Ambagamuwa Divisional Secretariat Division.



The findings of the trilingual report highlight patterns in thematic areas such as menstrual health and hygiene, family planning, sexual and reproductive health, and mental well-being. The qualitative and quantitative nature of the report provides an indication towards areas requiring greater attention to inform future project initiatives. The report is produced as part of the ongoing ACCEND Project as a joint effort between ADRA and Oxfam; funded by the European Union and in collaboration with the Government of Sri Lanka.

Digital copies of the trilingual report are now available through adrasrilanka.org/hlead.



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