



Evaluation: Addressing socio-economic concerns of victims of war, children, women and persons with disabilities in Sri Lanka

Quick Facts

Countries: Sri Lanka

Date of Evaluation Report: January 2018

Type of Evaluation: External Final Evaluation

Keyword 1: Community Based Inclusive Development

Keyword 2: Empowerment

Keyword 3: Livelihood

Background and Context

Summary of the purpose, logic and structure of the evaluated subject

The civil conflict in Sri Lanka that lasted more than two decades has left a large number of persons that were combatants, members of the armed forces or civilians, with disabilities. Because of their disabilities, they do not have equal opportunities to employment, leaving them isolated and segregated.

The target Northern and Eastern provinces of the project face multiple difficulties caused by conflict and disaster, including a climate of indifference and neglect among community members. The civil society organisations (CSOs) were weakened through conflict and displacement, which is especially evident in the Northern Province.

The project was designed to strengthen the most vulnerable groups of society, such as women, children and persons with disabilities. Supported by the European Union and planned for a 3-year period, the project started in February 2015. CBM was the lead partner; Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Batticaloa district and Community Association for Child Protection and Development (CACPD) in Jaffna district were implementing partners.

The project addressed local authorities, council members and community representatives with the goal to enhance governance practises in addressing poverty, in particular within vulnerable populations. Enhancing collaboration between non-state-actors and local authorities was targeted towards the creation of income generation of the most disadvantaged households.

The project planned to achieve the following:

1. Communities can access information and participate in development planning.
2. Community-based facilitators ('barefoot counsellors') and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) address psychosocial and development concerns in the villages.
3. Sustainable income generating mechanisms for vulnerable and marginalised households.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The overall aim of the evaluation was to assess the achievements and effectiveness of project delivery over its 3-year duration.

The evaluation was intended to contribute to the learning of all stakeholders, to identify lessons learned and draw recommendations from the experiences of CBM, the YMCA and the CACPD.

Clients of this evaluation were the European Union, CBM, government stakeholders of North and Eastern Provinces in Sri Lanka, DPOs, Women's Rural Development Societies, CSOs, the YMCA and CACPD for learning and replication.

Methodology of the evaluation

The evaluation followed the [OECD DAC criteria](#) for evaluation and included an assessment of the organisational capacities and collaboration of CBM and its partner organisations. The evaluation methodology followed an interactive learning approach, supported by project documentation providing contextual background. This involved a desk and field research and analysis and synthesis of information.

Desk research included a review of project planning and monitoring documents; a review of baseline documentation, progress reports including financial reports and information generated from the Management Information System; and an online literature review.

Field research was conducted to gather information at project level consulting project stakeholders including key informant interviews, focus group discussions and visits to income generation ventures.

Information analysis and feedback session: After the thorough analysis of information gathered, findings were presented to the partner teams. With their feedback, conclusions and recommendations were finalized.

Main Findings and Conclusions

The findings confirmed that the project has strengthened the community to encourage local authorities to serve the most vulnerable groups through participatory planning processes.

Action oriented training programmes tailored to address the knowledge gaps within *Pradeshia Sabhas* (municipal legislative bodies) have increased the understanding of good governance, democratic decision making, and service delivery to include the most vulnerable groups. Employing community-based facilitators as communicators between CSOs, communities, Pradeshia Sabhas and divisional secretariats has strengthened the CSOs and facilitated participatory development planning mechanisms in line with the '*Pradeshia Sabha Act*'.

Capacity enhancement training for CSOs and the community has strengthened mutual trust, enhancing their engagement in decision making processes. Awareness has been increased on the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, the national policy for disabilities, accessibility, gender and disability inclusion. This led to persons with disabilities' and women-headed households' motivation to raise their voices towards government authorities and other stakeholders to ensure that their rights are met and being represented in the advisory committees of *Pradeshia Sabhas*.

Strengthening community-based facilitators, DPOs and inclusive village groups to be the connectors to stakeholders in the economic development sector has opened up channels for families of persons with disabilities, and women-headed households having access to income generation practices. More than 90% of women-headed households and persons with disabilities supported in livelihood development by the project reported a more than 20% increase in their income and improved savings.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The following factors for successful implementation were identified:

- Working with well-networked and experienced partners
- Consultative planning process
- Inclusion of community-based facilitators
- Repeated visits to communities and local authorities
- Training needs assessment as basis for results-oriented training and the capacity development process
- Training content action oriented and specific to target group
- Repeated training and supervision
- Follow-up on successes or challenges of livelihood activities
- Regular workshops for sharing experiences of participants
- Monthly meetings of partner organisations to discuss progress and adjustments

The evaluation brought about the following recommendations that CBM will address together with the partner organisations:

- Address fluctuation of *Pradeshiya Sabha* employees through training on disability and gender inclusive development.
- Improve sustainability through continuous capacity development and raise awareness of newly appointed *Pradeshiya Sabhas* members.
- Continue institutional strengthening of DPOs and inclusive village groups, especially in the North, and facilitate peer learning with stakeholders from the East.
- Include analysis of intersectionality and most vulnerable groups in the planning of future projects.
- Take existing micro-credit structures into account in the planning process to suit the specific needs of the target group.
- Buy in external technical expertise to address knowledge gaps for successful income generating activities.
- Establish a monitoring and evaluation system at the community level.
- Document processes and case studies.