

**GR002-07221-QQVB**

**Life After War: Children and Young People in Sri Lanka (LAW Project)**

**Final Evaluation**

**Business Creations – Sri Lanka (BCG)**

**in partnership with**

**APT – Action on Poverty (APT)**

**funded by**

**Comic Relief**

**1st-13th August 2015**

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## CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT	
1.1 Introduction to the Project	8
1.2 Description of the project	8
CHAPTER TWO – THE EVALUATION	
2.1 Evaluation	12
2.2 Overall Objectives of the Evaluation	12
2.3 Methodology	12
2.4 The Evaluation Team	15
CHAPTER THREE – EVALUATION FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	
Part I - Administration	16
3.1 Programme Planning and Management	16
3.2 Financial Management	18
Part II - Programme Findings	19
3.3 Outcome 1	19
3.4 Outcome 2	23
3.5 Outcome 3	24
3.6 Outcome 4	26
3.7 Target Groups	28
3.8 Evaluation Conclusions	28
CHAPTER FOUR – LESSONS LEARNT	
4.1 Lessons Learnt	32
4.2 Special Issues of Comic Relief	33
CHAPTER FIVE – RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.1 Recommendations	34
ANNEXURES (see separate file)	
Annex 1 List of GNDs where the project is implemented	
Annex 2 List of performance indicators for assessing outcomes	
Annex 3 Terms of reference for the evaluation	
Annex 4 Checklists for FGDs, KIIs and individual entrepreneurs	
Annex 5 Number of FGDs and KIIs conducted	
Annex 6 Field work schedule	

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Terminal evaluations of development projects engage with diverse groups of stakeholders and generally a range of views, comments, and recommendations are made. Feelings of appreciation, satisfaction, relief, and disappointment are also expressed. This project was no exception. Members of Community Based Organisations (CBOs), children and young people, state service providers, administrators, Business Creations Guarantee Limited (BCG) and its partner, Action on Poverty (APT) – all stakeholders – have expressed diverse views and emotions and been involved in different ways in the evaluation process, though just the evaluators takes the responsibility for it. Valuable contributions have been made by all stakeholders to ensure that this evaluation is as comprehensive and complete as possible, and serve also the purpose of contributing to development science through learning valuable lessons.

We are thankful first and foremost to the CBO members, young people and children of all the project locations for sharing with us their achievements; the changes they have brought about in their lives, their families, communities and clubs; their future plan, and their concerns as well.

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J. Henry de Mel and Priyantha Caldera  
Evaluation Team  
Colombo - August 2015

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Agriculture Instructor
BCG	Business Creations Guarantee Ltd
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CHAST	Child Hygiene and Sanitation Training
CPO	Child Protection Officer
CRPO	Child Rights Protection Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DS	Divisional Secretary
DSD	Divisional Secretariat Division
EDO	Economic Development Officer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GN	Grama Niladari
GND	Grama Niladari Division
HH	Household
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGA	Income Generation Activity
MW	Mid Wife (Family Health Worker)
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
PHAST	Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation
PHI	Public Health Inspector
SSO	Social Service Officer
UTOP	Use to Own Programme
VCRMC	Village Child Rights Monitoring Committee

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### THE STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

**Chapter one** introduces the project, its locations, outcomes, interventions, inputs, the budget, assumptions, and constraints faced.

**Chapter two** describes the final evaluation, its scope, methodology, sample, limitations and introduces the two evaluators.

**Chapter three** presents the evaluation findings under two main heads viz. administration and programmes. Administration deals with planning and management including finance and human resources and partner/donor relations. Programme findings are presented under the four planned outcomes, categorized under findings from project documentation and those from field verifications by the evaluation followed with a conclusion. The Chapter includes a final evaluation conclusion based on standard evaluation elements.

**Chapter four** discusses lessons learnt from the project by the evaluation and the special issues of Comic Relief.

**Chapter five** spells out recommendations and follow up actions.

The report is followed by six annexes including the Terms of Reference.

### SUMMARY

**Chapter One** “Life After War” is a three-year Comic Relief-funded project carried out by Business Creations Guaranteed Limited (BCG) with guidance from Action on Poverty (APT) of UK. It focuses on children and youth stigmatised and exploited due to the conflict and marginalisation of Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts, in 10 Divisions and 41 GNDs. It benefits 4,200 families/carers and their children.

**The objective** is to support the stigmatised children/youth to be accepted and to guide the exploited to safe livelihoods through supporting their families with special livelihood support through CBOs organised for them with the cooperation of state duty bearers and the corporate and civil society sectors. Four **outcomes** are planned to achieve the objective.

**Outcome 1:** 2,600 children have improved nutrition, education and living conditions through increased incomes of their families.

**Outcome 2:** 12,000 beneficiaries have better health through raised awareness and domestic sanitation facilities.

**Outcome 3:** Children/youth are included in family/community decision making processes and in social and economic activities.

**Outcome 4:** Children/youth are protected and their rights are observed.

**Inputs** toward achieving these outcomes trainings, coaching, services and grants in relation of CBOs, loan schemes, livelihoods, rights, health and sanitation are provided. The major **Project Assumptions** are about the government service providers/duty bearers and their cooperation. Two major **constraints** faced were the negative image of NGOs that promote deposits/savings and the dependency syndrome of the beneficiaries.

**Chapter Two** This is the final evaluation and its **scope** covers generally the project cycle management, donor relations and lessons learnt and recommendations. The **methodology** adopted combine document and field research utilising tools such as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and observation. Baseline and endline surveys are also available. The **Sample** covered the 3 districts, 8 DSDs, 19 CBOs, livelihood practitioners and representatives of all stakeholders of all ethnicities numbering 229 persons.

**Chapter Three** Administration: planning, monitoring, reporting, management and financial management are assessed to be satisfactory. The principal assumptions are valid and have been fulfilled. Major revisions to the project include increasing the number of CBO from 35 to 42 to cover all 42 GNDs; establishment or revival of VCRMCs and Child Clubs; increasing the number of UTOPs within the same budget – all revisions are warranted for achieving the objectives of the project are in order. All Constraints including the negative image of NGOs that promote deposits/savings, the dependency syndrome of the beneficiaries and loss of experienced staff in one district have all been managed with minimal negative impacts. Relations with APT and the Comic Relief, the donor are positive and have helped smooth implementation of the project.

### **Programme Findings:**

In overall terms, the project has exceeded or achieved 25 of the 26 outcome indicators with a quantitative target across the four outcomes. Further, two of the four target groups have also been exceeded, one is on track, while one is unlikely to be achieved.

**Outcome 1:** Targets are achieved to a high degree. Target groups have accessed social and economic services from the CBOs, upgraded livelihoods, have generated increased incomes that have benefitted children and young people. Links to state duty bearers and corporates and empowerment of members are crucial and contribute to sustainability of the CBOs.

**Outcome 2:** Health, hygiene and HIV/AIDS training have produced positive behavioural changes in children, young people and adults in spite of being constrained by seasonal scarcities of water.

**Outcome 3:** Children have more opportunities for expressing themselves and satisfying their needs. Youths through engagement in livelihood activities and CBOs are recognized better and feel included. Duty bearers, adults and communities have been sensitised to the need to include children and young people in decision making at the domestic and community levels.

**Outcome 4:** The revival of VCRMCs and other project inputs have produced noticeable changes regarding child protection. At the community and DSD levels there is strong commitment to observe child rights particularly to that of education and freedom from hazardous work. Reporting of cases has increased following prompt and meaningful action.

**Target Groups:** the four target groups and plans and achievements are treated here.

### **Evaluation Conclusions**

**Efficiency:** the project is moderately efficient considering duration, costs and planned activities. The actual project management cost ratio is nearly 15 per cent and is satisfactory.

**Effectiveness:** outcomes have been achieved to a significant degree in particular, outcome 1. The strategy of ensuring the rights and protection of children and young people through increased incomes at household level and linked to more awareness and commitment on the part of duty

bearers has proved to be effective. Almost all targets are already achieved or are on track for doing so.

**Relevance:** The project is addressing the felt needs of the war affected, vulnerable groups selected for the project in the East and is highly relevant.

**Sustainability:** Most CBOs are sustainable and a few others need more coaching and mentoring for self-reliance. Livelihoods and the spirit of entrepreneurship will tend to grow over the coming years. Child Clubs see children regularly flow in and out and hence unless CBOs and duty bearers persist clubs have less likelihood of sustainability. VCRMCs for assuring child rights and protection will depend a lot on the state duty bearers who are transferable officers and hence their sustainability depends a lot on the continued interest of CBOs. The project is very much in line with the government policies on child rights and poverty alleviation.

**Impacts:** Several planned and unplanned positive impacts are identifiable. Eight impacts are listed and two major examples are: A) Social cohesion at community level has been heightened by the CBO and its activities. B) The project is contributing, though unplanned, to peaceful coexistence and ethnic harmony (unplanned).

**Gender:** Women take a leading role in the CBOs but the men too are involved in the livelihoods. Women will in time assume a very strong position in the community due to their earning capacity and leadership.

**Environment:** It is positively affected through the adoption of organic and integrated farming in agricultural enterprises. No negative impacts are discernible.

**Peaceful Co-existence:** The project indirectly contributes to peaceful relations among all ethnicities that lead to social harmony and is indispensable for any sustainable development.

**Chapter Four** Twelve lessons are gleaned for possible dissemination. They range from obtaining state sector co-operation and services without offering monetary incentives; reinforcing duty bearers' engagement and commitment to the CBOs; being non-prescriptive but facilitating people to decide for themselves; supporting persons already engaged in some livelihoods to plan scaling up and increasing incomes, and to remarkably managing to pass on CBO leadership to young people without alienating traditional leaders but retaining them as advisors.

### **Special issues of Comic Relief:**

*Regarding effective approaches to protect children and young people at risk from exploitation and hazardous work.* Discontinuing schooling due to poverty, poor accessibility and also lack of skills training and recreational facilities for young people are the factors contributing to the problem and they need resolving.

*How are children and young people severely stigmatised due to conflict related factors be best helped and protected?* Victims need to be supported psychologically and mentally for healing and to put the past behind them by acquiring skills for livelihoods and serving the community. There are several examples of such persons.

*What synergies and challenges are there to working with a child rights based approach combined with access to sustainable livelihoods?* Incomes can be used in an enlightened manner so that rights are respected. The challenge is to overcome negative views of authority, parental and others associated with our culture.

**Chapter Five** Recommendations and follow up actions are proposed for a future phase. About 30% of CBOs need further strengthening for self-reliant functioning and the gains in child and young people's rights and protection need to be systematised and consolidated. Fourteen recommendations are made – 8 for CBOs and 6 for rights and protection.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE AFTER WAR (LAW) PROJECT

The project to be evaluated was planned in 2012 mainly to address the urgent needs of war affected and marginalised communities of Eastern Province of Sri Lanka focusing particularly on children and youth. The thirty year conflict disrupted livelihoods, education, and health, resulting in high levels of unemployment, illiteracy, poverty and exclusion and also damaged the social fabric in the North and East. Children, youth and widows have been most affected losing on education, life skills, their rights and being exploited. Several were forced to help the rebel forces and into anti-social activities and consequently stigmatised by their own communities. Most of them - young people, adults and duty bearers - are not fully aware of their rights and are at risk of abuse and exploitation.

Since the conclusion of the conflict in May 2009, government development programmes have focused mainly on economic and some social infrastructure development. Most INGOs/NGOs have carried out relief or hasty resettlement programmes prioritising material benefits and handouts neglecting community empowerment and mobilisation for long term positive changes.

The overall aim of the project is to contribute to improving the quality of life of children and youths marginalised by conflict through imparting business development and life skills also to the other family members thereby creating profitable livelihoods and ensuring a desirable quality of life for the affected children, youth and other members of the households.

### 1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

**1.2.1** "Life After War" is a three-year Comic Relief-funded project that is implemented by Business Creations Guaranteed Limited (BCG) with guidance from Action on Poverty (APT) of UK. Project details are given below.

**Project duration** - January 2013 to December 2015.

**1.2.2 Project Locations** - 10 Divisional Secretariat Divisions (DSDs) of Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee Districts. Ampara district - 5 DSDs (Lahugala, Akkaraipattu, Eragama, Navnithanveli and Maha Oya). Batticaloa district 3 DSDs (Porativu Pattu, Eravur Pattu and Koralai Pattu) and Trincomalee district 2 DSDs (Seruvila and Gomarankadewala). The project works in 41 selected Grama Niladari Divisions (GND) of the 10 DSDs, ranging from two in Akkaraipattu to eight in Maha Oya (Refer Annex 1 for a list of project GNDs).

**1.2.3 The target groups** - 1,600 children and youth engaged in hazardous work and a further 2,160 at risk of being drawn into this, as well as 4,200 parents and carers who lost their assets during the conflict and currently have no secure livelihood.

#### Beneficiary Selection Criteria:

1. War affected families direct or indirectly, with following impacts:
  - Education disrupted during the war period
  - Disability due to the war
  - Displaced/resettled due to the war

2. Poverty level: People with inadequate income sources or low incomes
3. Families with 2 or more below 18 years of age and more than 4 dependents
4. Widows, female headed households and/or disability in the family
5. GN certification that the person lives permanently within GND
6. Families with a level of positive thinking
7. Families with mothers who have migrated for labour abroad
8. Families with a history of child issues
9. Families without adequate sanitation facilities and hygienic conditions

#### **1.2.4 Planned Project Outcomes**

- 1) 3,000 families and 1,000 young people affected by conflict accessing social and livelihood services through 35 self-reliant CBOs (termed Development Societies)/youth clubs. Of these, 1,000 young people and 2,400 families have increased incomes by at least 25%, improving the nutrition, education and living conditions for at least 2,600 children.
- 2) 12,000 children, young people and families of vulnerable children affected by conflict are more aware of the importance of hygiene, adopting hygienic practices and reporting improvements in family health.
- 3) By the project end, 2,000 children and 1,000 young people are more effectively included in family and community decision making (particularly that affecting their right to education and non-exploitation in economic activities), and report increased social and/or economic inclusion in the community.
- 4) Children and young people better protected from, and less vulnerable to, rights abuse and exploitation as a result of increased awareness and observance of child and youth rights among families, communities and duty bearers, and action taken against perpetrators.

The foregoing outcomes are provided with performance indicators for monitoring and evaluation purposes. (For indicators refer Annex 2)

#### **1.2.5 Inputs and Interventions**

The four broad areas of intervention are livelihoods development, CBO formation, health and hygiene, and child and youth rights. Varied inputs from the project include the following:

- Institutional support and training (adoption of a constitution, leadership training, holding elections, record keeping, documentation, financial management and registration with authorities).
- Business training (adaptation of Generate, Start and Improve Your Business {GYB, SYB and IYB} including the operation of CBO savings and lending schemes).
- Inputs around livelihoods including individual business counselling, technical training (food processing, organic farming and preparation for the “Use To Own Programme” - UTOP).
- Inputs on health and hygiene including Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST), Child Hygiene and Sanitation Training (CHAST), nutrition and home gardening, disease prevention and Body Mass Index (BMI) measurements.
- Inputs on child protection include parenting skills, child rights and laws relating to this.
- Inputs on CBO formation and capacity building include establishment of group saving and lending schemes as access to business start-up capital, social security funds, and a new local resource of funds

Besides, several CBOs have also received inputs from external sources viz. relevant government agencies, corporates and civil society organisations.

**1.2.6 Budget** – the fund allocation for the project is £ 604,024 for the three years.

### **1.2.7 Main Project Assumptions**

Cooperation and services from the DSs and GNs; Social Services, Economic Development, Education and Health, Vocational Training agencies. Private sector trainers and corporates are co-operative (for apprenticeships, livelihood services/marketing). I/NGOs and UN Agencies for review meetings for policy changes and collaboration.

### **1.2.8 Main Project Challenges and Constraints**

- DSs, GNs and communities did not want any NGO to engage in accepting deposits (savings) from people due to very negative experience.
- Due to the 30 year conflict, people lost their business sense and did not even fully use the resources they already have for livelihoods. Negative attitudes prevailed and they had a minimal sense of their rights and entitlements.
- Communities were very much characterised by a dependency syndrome due to some NGO work that preferred hand-outs to empowerment especially during tsunami and conflict period.
- Some key government officers without an in depth grasp of child rights and protection were looking for handouts for children and not beyond.
- Muslim, Tamil and Sinhalese communities are different culturally and socially. Muslim women's participation in project work is a big challenge. Caste consideration among Tamils in Panama Division was a constraint to forming CBOs. The Aborigine community in Pollabedde have different values and norms, e.g. on education, hygiene, teen marriage etc.
- In some DSDs the absence of relevant government officers or officers with inadequate awareness and competencies.
- Turnover of experienced BCG staff mainly due to offer of government jobs constrained progress in Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts in particular.
- In Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts surveillance of NGO activities by security forces had negative impacts. Also, frequent demands for project updates from Government administration at district and DS level - often for the same information - disrupted project implementation.

### **1.2.9 Principal Revisions to the Project**

- Number of CBOs was increased from 35 to 42 at GN level.
- Child Clubs and Village Child Rights Monitoring Committees (VCRMCs) needed to be formed or revived at GND level as they are indispensable for achieving child related outcomes.
- Increased number of UTOPS within the same financial allocation.
- In some GNDs weekly fairs were organised for marketing produce.
- BCG had to often sponsor NGO coordinating meetings in Ampara and Batticaloa districts as several NGOs worked in these areas without any co-ordination.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.1 THE EVALUATION

“A final evaluation, to be participatory and inclusive of all stakeholders, was incorporated into the original proposal and scheduled for the latter stages of the project. Provisionally scheduled for 3rd to 10th August 2015, the final evaluation provides an opportunity to assess overall progress towards the project’s targets and objectives, and to identify and document key learning for wider dissemination...” -TOR. The evaluation was conducted during 1st and 13th August 2015.

### 2.2 OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

**“The overall objectives of this final evaluation are to:**

- Evaluate the impact of the project on individual beneficiaries, their households and their communities: (What difference has the project made to people’s lives? Who has benefited and in what ways? Are those changes relevant to people’s needs? Are these changes likely to be sustainable in the long term?)
- Assess the success of the project in meeting its own targets and outputs: (To what degree have project outcomes been achieved? Were there any unexpected outcomes?)
- Describe how has the project made a difference: (What was the overall theory of change? Has it been effective in bringing about lasting change? Were there any gaps? What have been the most effective methodologies and approaches used to bring about changes to people’s lives? What has worked and what has not?)
- Identify key contributing factors which enhanced and/or hindered these results: (Have there been changes to policies, practice and attitudes of decision and policy makers to benefit the project’s target group? To what extent has the project contributed to the achievement of broader national and international policies, conventions, targets, etc.? To what extent has the achievement of the changes/outcomes been influenced by external context and other factors?)
- Identify key learning points and make recommendations for future operations of this and similar projects: (Consider the project’s three learning questions and provide a summary of relevant learning and experience to date. What lessons have been learned? Who have they been shared with?)
- Assess the effectiveness of the project’s management, monitoring, learning and financial systems: (How have they helped or hindered the delivery of lasting change? Has the project been cost effective?)
- Consider how APT and Business Creations and the relationship between them has helped or hindered the delivery of lasting change
- Consider the role and effectiveness of Comic Relief in the project: (How have Comic Relief’s grant making policies and processes, approach to grant management, and the way in which it has used its organisational assets helped or hindered the delivery of lasting change? Are there any other ways in which Comic Relief has helped or hindered the delivery of change?” - TOR

### 2.3 METHODOLOGY

Evaluations are primarily concerned with the “before and after” of a project for assessing achievement of planned objectives. A reliable baseline and endline are available and have been utilised for generating quantitative data. For field verification of the findings of the endline survey and project documentation, and gathering qualitative evidence, the evaluation used a cross sectional study using a historical / retrospective approach which relies on the memory of programme participants. The

historical approach also relies on records/documents that can be used to re-create the pre-project context and thus assess the performance of the programme.

The evaluation assessed the project in relation to the achievement of planned outcomes and the process itself with reference to the project elements and also to the key components of an evaluation viz. efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance and sustainability together with accepted cross-cutting themes.

In order to carry out the tasks described in the TOR, two basic methodological approaches were adopted viz. 1. Documentation Research and 2. Field Research.

**2.3.1 Document Research** comprised of the examination of related documents which provided the evaluators with quantitative and qualitative data. The evaluation accepted the project documents as reliable records of actual changes effected and progress achieved.

**2.3.2 Field Research** focused on qualitative data. Achievements claimed in the documentation were verified at field level by the evaluators using accepted scientific research tools viz. Key Informant Interviews (KII), focus group discussions (FGDs) and observation. Thus the following were carried out as part of the field verifications:

- Meetings with BCG staff
- Focus group discussions with government administrators and service providers; children's clubs and CBOs were conducted using a checklist
- Key Informant Interviews with DSs, GNs and with CBO members in livelihoods were conducted using a specific checklist
- Observation of the CBOs, members, children, youth and BCG staff

### **2.3.3 Sample**

A number of persons and institutions are involved in the implementation of the project and the following purposive sample covering all 10 DSDs and representatives of all stakeholders (of all ethnicities) presented in table 1 was deemed to be reliable and satisfactory for obtaining the required evidence using several tools (refer Annex 4 for FGD Checklists and Annex 5 for the number of FGDs conducted and Annex 6 Field Visit Schedule). 19 CBO FGDs, 36 KIIs and 24 visits to livelihoods were carried out engaging 229 persons.

**Table 1 - Sample**

Project	No	Sample Criteria	No	Sample Percentage
Number of Project DSDs	10	Sample DS Divisions	10	100%
Number of Project GNs	41	Sample GN Divisions	24	58%
No. of Div. Secretaries	10	Sample Div. Secretaries	5	50%
No. of GN Officers	41	Sample GN officers	3	7%
DSD based Officers in Groups <sup>1</sup>	10	Sample Groups in 3 DSDs	3	30%
No. of CBOs	42	Sample CBOs	19	45%
No. CBO committees	42	Sample	9	21%
Sinhala GNDs	19*	Sample GNDs	8	47%
Tamil GNDs	12	Sample GNDs	7	58%
Muslim GNDs	6	Sample GNDs	3	50%
Tamil Sinhala GNDs	4	Sample GND	1	25%
VCRMC committee	42	Sample	1	3%
Child clubs	42	Sample	2	5%

\* Including Aranthalawa I and II Divisions

**Table 2 - Distribution of CBO FGD Sessions in Three Districts**

District	Sinhala	Tamil	Muslim	Sinhala/Tamil	Total	District CBOs No.
Ampara	4	1	3	1	9	25*
Batticaloa	0	6	0	0	6	9
Trincomalee	4	0	0	0	4	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>42</b>

\* Including Aranthalawa I and II CBOs

**Table 3 - Distribution of Key Informants and Sample Size**

District	Sinhala	Tamil	Muslim	Total	No. of GNDs	Sample %
Ampara	15	1	5	21	24	87
Batticaloa	0	7	0	7	9	78
Trincomalee	8	0	0	8	8	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>1</sup> CRPO, EDO, PO, SSO

**Table 4 - Site Visits to Business Operators**

<b>No.</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>No. of Visits</b>
1	Ampara	13
2	Batticaloa	5
3	Trincomalee	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>

**2.3.4 Limitations** of the Evaluation: limited time for FGDs and KIIs and the short attention span of most participants made the assessment of KAP rather challenging.

#### **2.4 THE EVALUATION TEAM**

**J. Henry de Mel** is specialised in community development and with wide experience in the field of training (planning, monitoring and evaluation) and carrying out consultancies, particularly evaluations (community development, mental health, capacity building, project planning etc.) spanning over 14 years. He taught community development at the Open University of Sri Lanka for 15 years. He holds a Master's Degree in Town & Country Planning from the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka and a PG Diploma in Pedagogy from Rome.

**Priyantha Caldera** is a professionally qualified Consultant with 20 years of work experience and substantial training received from World Bank, ADB, USAID and IFAD. He obtained his Bachelor's Degree in Economics from the University of Colombo and Master's Degree in Economics from the University of Kelaniya. He worked as Team Leader, Deputy Team Leader and Consultant Economist in various development projects of the World Bank, ADB, JICA, FAO, JBIC, IFAD, USAID, GIZ and UN funded projects and provided his services to AECOM (USA), IESC (USA), Land O Lake (USA), NSJ Consultants (Japan), INCLAM (Spain) and SMEC (Australia).

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3 EVALUATION FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The evaluation findings are presented in two parts.

Part One deals with project administration and management and comprises of:

- Programme planning, management, administration and donor relations.
- Financial management

Part Two deals with the findings on the project outcomes and their indicators

#### PART I: ADMINISTRATION

##### 3.1 PROGRAMME PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT – FINDINGS

**3.1.1 Planning:** the project is well designed and is based on a sound analysis of the target groups and their socio-economic and political contexts and prioritises the war affected, disadvantaged communities utilising nine valid beneficiary selection criteria. Originally only Ampara and Batticaloa districts were selected but later Trincomalee district too was included and it is commendable as that district besides marginalised communities also sheltered two resettlement camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The evaluation confirms the isolated and disadvantaged status of the selected communities. All the project elements are clearly and comprehensively formulated. Overall project planning guided by the application format of Comic Relief is very sound.

**3.1.2 Project assumptions:** all the assumptions made (page 3 above) except for the role of UN agencies, are very valid for the project. The contributions of the identified government agencies, the private sector and CSOs were the most critical for the success of the project.

**3.1.3 Project Revisions:** the revisions to the plan listed in chapter one were warranted as the project was expanded to 42 GNDs. A child club and a VCRMC were required in each GND for effective child related interventions. UTOP grants were increased to cater to more numbers of deserving persons while ensuring that recipients had adequate funds for the planned business. Weekly fairs were started in some GNDs to help in marketing. Some NGO coordinating meetings had to be sponsored by the project to ensure that possible negative impacts from duplication and similar interventions of some other NGOs were prevented.

**3.1.4 Project Constraints:** Constraints to the project were successfully managed in the following manner.

- DSs, GNs and community concerns about CBOs accepting deposits (savings) was overcome by the project through placing all control of the deposit fund and other monies from BCG with the CBO fortified with vital systems and procedures, and not BCG.
- Loss of people's business sense was overcome through business counselling, realistic business plans and continuous motivation.
- Communities' dependency syndrome was gradually diluted through an appreciation of the resources they already had at hand and credible plans to create good incomes.
- Socio-cultural negative traits of diverse ethnic groups were countered not through convincing them that what was offered was really to benefit them. Also traditions and customs were respected and the opinion leaders were won over by showing there were no hidden agendas.

- Absence of relevant government officers or officers with inadequate awareness and competencies in some DSD was a serious constraint. Existing officers were trained and motivated by the project for its work.
- Turnover of experienced BCG staff constrained progress in Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts. This was managed by recruiting new staff and also getting experienced staff from other GNDs to support them in short spells.
- Surveillance of NGO activities by security forces in Batticaloa and Trincomalee were countered through strong relations with the DSs and their staff.
- Frequent demands for project updates from Government administration at district and DS levels were managed by providing them with regular updates and visits to DSs by staff for updating purposes.

## TOR

- **Assess the effectiveness of the project's management, monitoring, learning and financial systems:** (How have they helped or hindered the delivery of lasting change? Has the project been cost effective?)

**3.1.5 Management:** BCG is responsible for project implementation, monitoring and reporting with support from APT, with a total staff of 27 including a Director and a Manager (see Annex 6 for the list of names and staff categories). Liaison with government administrators, agencies, corporates and CSOs are carried out in a very effective manner as have been relations with the beneficiary groups.

**3.1.6 Administration:** The project is administered satisfactorily. Resources are used optimally in carrying project activities. Human resource management is of a high order indicated by high levels of staff motivation and commitment.

*Monitoring, documentation and Reporting:* Progress is tracked through weekly staff meetings and monthly reports from the field. The Management Information System adopted is satisfactory. Tour reports of APT, mid-term reviews, field visit reports of the Director and Manager are also utilised. Data bases are being used for the three major project components and documentation is satisfactory. Based on all available data and information, performance reports are prepared and shared with all stakeholders. Monitoring, documentation and reporting are very satisfactory and have contributed to tracking progress in achieving project objectives and in required follow up.

## TOR

- **Consider how APT and Business Creations and the relationship between them has helped or hindered the delivery of lasting change**

**3.1.7 Relationship with APT:** APT is the link between BCG and the donor. APT provides technical inputs, e.g. business counselling training for BCG staff and support for monitoring and evaluation through monitoring visits followed with detailed reports. Besides these APT had also facilitated a training cum exposure visit for the project manager to Kenya on child rights. Also APT supervises financial management and facilitates donor disbursement of funds. The evaluation confirms smooth and productive relations between the parties and it has contributed significantly to the high achievements of the project.

## TOR

- **Consider the role and effectiveness of Comic Relief in the project:** (How have Comic Relief's grant making policies and processes, approach to grant management, and the way in which it has used its organisational assets helped or hindered the delivery of lasting change? Are there any other ways in which Comic Relief has helped or hindered the delivery of change?)

**3.1.8 Role and effectiveness of Comic Relief:** the grant application format itself helps greatly in sound design of the project as the applicant is taken through all the elements of a project essential for effective implementation. The contractual obligations of both parties are made clear and the various conditions for disbursement of funds and its utilisation are emphasised leaving no room for misunderstanding. Minimal demands on BCG have helped it to focus single-mindedly on project implementation. The relationship between the donor and BCG has contributed very much to the overall achievements of the project.

## 3.2 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Financial management is taken care of by BCG with the guidance and supervision of APT according to acceptable accounting standards for ensuring accountability and transparency. The financial management system also provides management with the required information in an efficient and timely manner – e.g. income, expenditure and variance reports etc. Overall, the financial management system is adequate to ensure that funds are expended efficiently and for the intended purposes in a transparent and accountable manner.

**3.2.1 Conclusion:** the project is administered and managed very satisfactorily. Relations between management and staff are very cordial while assigned targets are pursued. Follow up and close supervision have ensured that lapses or gaps in the field are corrected promptly and the project is not jeopardised. Constraints to the project (e.g. loss of staff) have been well managed. It appears that resources are applied for the intended purposes efficiently.

## **PART II: PROGRAMMES – EVALUATION FINDINGS**

The evaluators examined and used data from the project data base, the end line survey, progress reports, review and tour reports and other project documents and verified through field level interviews and focus group discussions, their reliability as evidence of change. Evaluation findings are presented under “Findings from Project Documentation” comprising of data from the project documents and listed in the same sequence as the performance indicators. Following this section, evaluation findings from the field visits are presented under “Findings from Field Verifications” listed again in the same sequence as the performance indicators.

### **TOR**

- **Evaluate the impact of the project on individual beneficiaries, their households and their communities:** (What difference has the project made to people’s lives? Who has benefited and in what ways? Are those changes relevant to people’s needs? Are these changes likely to be sustainable in the long term?)
- **Assess the success of the project in meeting its own targets and outputs:** (To what degree have project outcomes been achieved? Were there any unexpected outcomes?)

### **3.3 PROJECT OUTCOME 1**

**3,000 families and 1,000 young people affected by conflict accessing social and livelihood services through 35 self-reliant CBOs (termed Development Societies)/youth clubs. Of these, 1,000 young people and 2,400 families have increased incomes by at least 25%, improving the nutrition, education and living conditions for at least 2,600 children.**

#### **3.3.1 Performance Indicators and Findings**

*(For the four following outcomes, findings mean those derived from project documents, reviews, base and end lines. Field Findings mean those derived from the field research for the final evaluation). Sentences with numerals and in italics are outcome indicators.*

#### **1. The 35 CBOs/youth clubs established, meeting regularly and functioning independently, actively supporting their members to access social and livelihood services.**

**Findings:** 42 CBOs have been established. Hence the target is exceeded. The total combined membership of the 42 CBOs (including 12 youth clubs) is 4,123, 3,119/76% female and 1,004 male. 3,018 families and 1,156 young people have accessed social and livelihood services through 42 CBOs (target 35), i.e. 74% of all CBO members. At the end of Year 2, it was reported that 964 families and 2,177 youth had accessed services. However, these figures were reassessed and subsequently revised as many youth were married and were therefore re-categorised as families. Average meeting attendance of CBOs is 62% (baseline 53%). 24 CBOs (57%) are assessed as very strong (>70marks); 11 CBOs (26%) are strong (50-70 marks) and 7 (17%) are weak (<50 marks) according to BCG ranking.

3,007 instant loans up to LKR2,000 each have been issued to the value of LKR4,841,000. 1,255 project loans each between LKR5-10,000 have been disbursed for business purposes to the value of LKR4,479,900, while 519 UTOP grants averaging LKR18,000 each have been disbursed with a total value of LKR9,342,000.

**Field Findings:** Of 19 CBOs engaged in FGDs, 65% can be categorised as strong and 35% as satisfactory using the same criteria as BCG. 198 people with disabilities (about 7% of CBO members), both disabled by natural causes and due to the conflict are found in all communities. Some CBOs have assisted them to improve their livelihoods. Government pensions of LKR3,000 per month are available through the Divisional Secretariat. The project effort is commendable.

All CBOs reflect social capital newly acquired by the community. Though most members are female, males also participate and value the groups that enable them to access vital social and livelihood services. Members are energised about their livelihood plans, their outcomes and are conscious of the role and responsibilities of the CBO. Various trainings have impacted on members significantly and they are empowered. CBOs are also engaged in child protection activities and appear to be more concerned now about their welfare, especially education.

**2. 1,000 young people have increased incomes by at least 25%**

**Findings:** 1,156 youth have increased their average monthly income by 43% (LKR 8,572). The target is exceeded.

**Field Findings:** Youths have benefited particularly from job placements and their increased incomes are satisfactory with a sound platform for progress.

**3. 2,400 families have increased incomes by at least 25%**

**Findings:** 2,400 households have increased their monthly incomes by an average of 32% (LKR31,722). Hence the target is exceeded already.

**Field Findings:** Increase in household HH incomes: although the endline survey asserts an average 20% increase, interviews with business operators indicated a minimum of 25% in a few cases while most ranged from 40-70% increases with a few exceptions that increased by 400-500%! Proxy indicators such as savings, investments, house improvements, etc. also point to significant increases.

**4. 2,600 children have improved nutrition, education and/or living conditions**

**Findings:** 4,253 (target 2,600) children have improved nutrition, education, and/or living conditions. The target has been greatly exceeded. The base line average for sanitation facilities was 69% while at endline it has risen to 71%, a 2 % improvement.

**Field Findings:** Education of children in terms of attending school has increased significantly with hardly anyone not enrolled mainly due to the vigilance of CBOs and VCRMCS. However, irregular attendance is still an issue for a few due to either a migrant parent or labour shortages for harvesting etc. It can be affirmed that living conditions have improved for most children.

**5. 25% increase in the calorific value of year-round food intake**

**Findings:** As a whole, 71 % of average households have been able to consume a balanced diet. At the end line survey, the calorific value of food intake for children recorded a 51% increase against the baseline - for adults a 48%-58% increase and for the over 64 years age group, a 30%-35% increase. The target has been exceeded. The average percentage level of people's awareness on balanced diet is 61% compared to 51% at the baseline, a 10% increase.

**Field Findings:** The calorific value of food intake was difficult for the evaluators to handle as they lacked the necessary expertise, but it appears to have increased.

**6. 25% increase in numbers of people eating three meals a day, all year round**

**Findings:** 61% of beneficiaries (baseline was 16%) are able currently to eat three meals a day. The target has been greatly exceeded. The average individual, it is revealed, takes four breakfasts, 4.41 lunches and 6.37 dinners per week at the end of project, an improvement on the baseline.

**Field Findings:** prior to the project, even some current CBO members did not have 3 meals a day. In four CBOs, there are still a few members missing three meals a day and 5-10 others in the community (especially single elders) at least periodically or due to disastrous situations like crop loss.

**7. 25% increase in household expenditure on children/youth education (tuition fees, books, etc.)**

**Findings:** the average monthly expenditure on household income on education is 15% (LKR 2,537) while the baseline was 8%, an 88% increase. As such, the indicator has been achieved. Expenditure on food makes up 62% of monthly expenditure, education 15% and transport 5%.

**Field Findings:** Most households affirmed that they spent more money on education of their children by way of purchasing books, bags, tuition etc.

**8. 25% increase in expenditure on improvements in living conditions (housing and sanitation improvements and repairs: toilets, bathrooms, household items and bicycles).**

**Findings:** At the time of the baseline survey, the average amount spent on household improvements was 2% of household income. This has now increased to 8% of household income - a 300% increase. 73% of households have access to safe water compared to 60% at the baseline, while 71% of households have sanitary latrines compared to 69% at the baseline. As such, the target has been exceeded.

**Field Findings:** Nearly all households in FGDs confirmed that they have sanitary latrines and most have decent housing too. Seasonal shortages of drinking water affect a good number of households in all the districts which impacts upon better results in sanitation. Almost all households possess at least some household assets such as a bicycle, radio/TV, etc. In some GNDs, a few households also have motor cycles or three-wheelers.

**9. Number of new business start-ups (Yr3 - 1,000)**

**Findings:** The number of new business start-ups amounts to 786. The target may be on track for meeting by project conclusion, although with the number of existing businesses scaled up at 3,328 compared to an end of project target of 2,000, in overall terms the indicator has been achieved.

**Field Findings:** All the business start-ups visited were making more than 25% profit compared to the period prior to the project.

**10. Number of businesses operating at a profit one year after establishment/upgrading (Yr3 - 1,500)**

**Findings:** 3,028 businesses are operating at a profit after a year of establishment/upgrading, i.e. 91% of all businesses started or scaled up. The target has been exceeded.

**Field Findings:** All the businesses in our field verifications were operating at a profit in spite of constraints like water shortages.

### **11. Number of project beneficiaries supported to secure employment (Yr3 - 150m & 150f)**

**Findings:** The number of project beneficiaries supported to secure employment is 321, 156 male and 165 female. As such, the end of project target has been achieved/

**3.3.2 Conclusions - Outcome 1:** All 11 targets in Outcome 1 targets have been achieved or exceeded within less than two and a half years.

In the post war context of eastern Sri Lanka, government resettlement efforts focused more on infrastructure development while CSOs focused on water and sanitation and pre-schools and such social infrastructure. There was hardly any support for livelihood development, and if at all, it comprised of granting micro credit in a few areas but without any business counselling or follow up. The project intervention with mobilisation and empowerment of the people through CBOs and a thorough preparation for systematic livelihood development based on business plans, business counselling, loans/grants and close follow up is probably the first in eastern Sri Lanka. In just 30 months, the changes brought about in and through livelihoods development is very significant as shown in the changes recounted in the foregoing section of findings.

**Benefits for the People:** the most difficult part of mobilising and empowering the community and getting livelihoods started has been achieved to a high level and the CBO systems and procedures are in place. Hence they have a strong organisation. Members are more knowledgeable and aware of their entitlements and the development situation. The affordable (low interest levying) lending mechanism is very effective as about 80% beneficiaries have gained from it - all loanees have increased their incomes and also savings. The total funds with the 42 CBOs amount to over LKR10 million. The degree of ownership of the CBO and competencies acquired by its members together with the linkages forged with the state and other duty bearers/service providers augur well for future effective socio-economic development and sustainability. The sense of ownership of the CBO and the livelihood activities has been brought about by the project by establishing systems and procedures right at the start of the CBO, and these were operated by the members with guidance from the project and not by the project itself as often happens. As a result even after two years, CBOs have a solid base of participation, transparency and accountability. Benefits from income increases are already benefiting children and young people. The deliberate effort to involving young people in CBO leadership is appropriate. Traditional leadership has been given an advisory role and young people given the leadership, effectively combining the experience of the elders and the energy of the young. Empowerment and livelihood development appear to be strong areas of the project. People are better linked with government service providers and have a sense of being included and have a stake as citizens. CBOs themselves take formal interest in child protection and child rights. Overall, the lives of these people have changed from one of hovering below the poverty line to one of having gone beyond or about to go beyond and upgrading the quality of life of children, young people and adults. About a fourth of CBOs require consolidation and four of them need a few more months of continued coaching and mentoring until they master the procedures and fully adopt the systems for self-reliant functioning.

### 3.4 PROJECT OUTCOME 2

12,000 children, young people and families of vulnerable children affected by conflict are more aware of the importance of hygiene, adopting hygienic practices and reporting improvements in family health.

#### 3.4.1 Performance Indicators and Findings

**1. 30% increase in hygiene knowledge, attitude and practices among 80% of target beneficiaries consulted.**

**Findings:** 72% of beneficiaries have an adequate awareness on hygiene. The target has been achieved. The availability and use of safe drinking water in all ten DSDs at the baseline was 60% and at end line it is 73% - a 13% increase.

**Field Findings:** During FGDs, adults recalled elements of PHAST and also elements of CHAST they had gathered from their children. Children remembered the various videos and cartoons on hygiene and sanitation and it had been new learning for them. All FGDs asserted that the hygiene programmes were very effective. 80% families have adopted drinking boiled cool water. FGD participants gave anecdotal evidence of better health enjoyed by them providing indicators such as less expenditure on medicines. Children's clubs have had sessions on measuring Body Mass Index (BMI) by the Public Health Inspector.

**2. 20% decrease in the prevalence of diarrhoea and vector-borne diseases**

**Findings:** 7% of households consulted are regularly affected by diarrhoea and vector-borne diseases compared to 65% during the baseline study. As such, 93% of households have experienced a decline in prevalence of diarrhoea and vector-borne diseases - a decrease of 89%. The indicators has been achieved. However, most GNDs are water scarce areas and during the monsoon rains, water becomes unsafe to drink. More needs to be done in this area.

**Field Findings:** it can be affirmed that most people the evaluation team met had adequate awareness of hygiene and practice and were found to be also careful of mosquitoes. It is claimed that 83% use bed-nets. They have some knowledge of other vectors but how careful they are about them or manage them was difficult to assess due to limited time.

**3. 20% reduction in the average number of days per household per month lost to illness**

**Findings:** The average number of days lost to illness is currently 0.5 days per household per month according to the KAP survey of July 2015. With an average three days lost per months to illness at the time of the baseline study, this represents an 83% decrease. The target has been achieved.

**4. 30% increase in knowledge of HIV and other STDs amongst 80% of targeted young people and adults consulted**

**Findings:** The overall increase in awareness on HIV/AIDS and STD is reported to be 59% among 80% of the target group. Hence the target is achieved.

**Field Findings:** Most FGD participants remembered participating in HIV/AIDS awareness programmes which are rare opportunities for most people in interior areas. However, the programme had not been conducted in a few GNDs.

**3.4.2 Conclusions - Outcome 2:** All four targets in Outcome 2 targets have been achieved. With low education levels and public health services at a minimum in the marginalised communities of the project, health and hygiene knowledge and practice are at low levels. However, the project has made a difference in spite of the constraints such as water scarcity for six months of the year in many locations and the prevailing low educational levels. It can be affirmed that the target children, youth and adults are more aware of health and hygiene through project interventions. Children appear to be influenced by the messages and activities on hygiene and health, especially the activities such as BMI measurement, cartoons and videos. The co-operation of the MOH has been useful. Beneficiaries claim to be practicing what they learnt but it is difficult to assess behavioural change directly by evaluators. The evidence from project documents indicates positive behavioural change in spite of serious constraints on the availability of water in most project GNDs, and the evaluation can confirm it.

### 3.5 PROJECT OUTCOME 3

**By the project end, 2,000 children and 1,000 young people are more effectively included in family and community decision making (particularly that affecting their right to education and exploitation in economic activities), and report increased social and/or economic inclusion in the community.**

#### 3.5.1 Performance Indicators and Findings

1. ***50% of families consulted are able to identify examples of increased inclusion of children and youth in family decision making, particularly those around rights to education and economic activities.***

**Findings:** 84 FGDs comprising around 1,200 persons conducted before the evaluation revealed that 62% of families are able to identify examples of increased inclusion of children and youth in family decision making, particularly those around rights to education and economic activities. Hence the target has been exceeded already.

**Field Findings:** parents, mostly mothers, affirmed that they consult children regarding tuition and purchasing books, etc. as children are now more vocal and express their views, needs and preferences. Youths are generally free to choose their livelihood pursuits, although it appears that girls are guided more by parents/adults.

2. ***70% of communities consulted are able to identify examples of children and/or young people actively participating in village decision making structures or processes***

**Findings:** 76% of communities consulted are able to identify examples of children and/or young people actively participating in village decision making structures or processes. Thus the target has been achieved already.

**Field Findings:** CBOs affirmed they have instigated a Special Advisory Panel comprising senior community leaders in order to give priority to youths in their membership, and more than 126 young office bearers are now participating in decision making. Capable youths are given various responsible places in the community. Youth appreciate being included and given priority. Several CBOs gave examples of children running their club activities (each of the 40 GNDs has one children's club).

**3. 70% of targeted children are able to identify examples of new or improved access to community activities or events**

**Findings:** 68% of targeted children are able to identify examples of new or improved access to community activities or events. This figure is derived from a survey of 1,200 children conducted just before the final evaluation and differs from the 83% calculated from a sample survey of 100 children conducted in July, 2014. The target is on track to be fully achieved.

**Field Findings:** Children in their clubs affirmed that they choose activities when they meet and are supported by youths or adults. They are more aware of rights.

**4. 70% of targeted youth are able to identify examples of new or improved access to social and/or economic activities.**

**Findings:** 85% of targeted youth are able to identify examples of new or improved access to social and/or economic activities. Again, this figure is derived from a survey of 1,200 children conducted just before the final evaluation and different from 94% generated from a sample survey of 100 children conducted in July, 2014. Hence the target is exceeded already.

**Field Findings:** Youth stated that they are supported with job placements and/or apprenticeships and that they are mostly responsible for their livelihood choices and activities.

**3.5.2 Conclusion–Outcome 3:** All four targets in Outcome 3 targets have been achieved or exceeded. In Sri Lanka, particularly in rural communities the exercise of authority is patriarchal and also at household level it is very hierarchical. As such, the involvement of children and youth in decision making even in matters relating to them is hardly the norm. In such a culture to bring about change is a big challenge taken by the project. In discussing children and young people with other stakeholders, it became clear that children enjoy a better status in their own households and in the community due to the project as parents and community members have been sensitised to the need for inclusion of children in decision making and community life. Adults recognise the importance of including children and young people and it is a positive change. Children now have more opportunities for expressing themselves and satisfying their needs. Youths - particularly through engagement in trainings, livelihood activities and CBOs - are recognised better in the community, and opportunities are afforded them to play responsible roles. Young people are included as a distinct and valuable group in the community. Outcomes 1 and 2 contribute to this outcome and all three are interconnected. These are major changes for children and youth brought about by the project.

A key project strategy has been to develop a new generation of leaders among young people with whom the project is engaging, and the main plank of this has been to support young people to become leaders of CBOs formed and/or supported by the project. 126 young people have been elected as CBO leaders and as a result, are now directly involved in community decision making. Although the project also works with traditional community leaders (since most meet the project's eligibility criteria), these have been encouraged to form advisory panels to their respective CBOs given the need to allow new and younger leadership to evolve.

### 3.6 PROJECT OUTCOME 4

Children and young people better protected from, and less vulnerable to, rights abuse and exploitation as a result of increased awareness and observance of child and youth rights among families, communities and duty bearers, and action taken against perpetrators.

#### 3.6.1 Performance Indicators and Findings

1. **70% of families consulted able to demonstrate increased commitment to the rights of children and young people to freedom from abuse and exploitation.**

**Findings:** it was found through 84 FGDs conducted just before the evaluation with 1,200 persons that 69% of families are able to demonstrate commitment to the rights of children and young people to freedom from abuse and exploitation. The target will be fully achieved by end of project.

**Field Findings:** all members of CBOs representing households appeared to be very committed to ensure their children's rights, particularly those to education and freedom from abuse and exploitation. CBOs, VCRMCS, schools, CRPOs, GNs and the police are vigilant about child abuse and exploitation and take prompt action.

2. **50% of community members consulted able to demonstrate increased commitment to the rights of children and young people to freedom from abuse and exploitation.**

**Findings:** 68% of community members consulted are able to demonstrate increased commitment to the rights of children and young people to freedom from abuse and exploitation. The target is already exceeded.

**Field Findings:** CBOs co-operate closely with VCRMCs and schools to ensure that children attend school and that they are not exploited in any way. People are more vigilant and inform the VCRMC if they notice children engaged in hazardous work.

3. **70% of duty bearers consulted able to demonstrate increased understanding of, and commitment to the rights of children and young people to freedom from abuse and exploitation.**

**Findings:** 85% of duty bearers consulted are able to demonstrate increased understanding of, and commitment to the rights of children and young people to freedom from abuse and exploitation. The target is already exceeded.

**Field Findings:** Duty bearers at KIIs and FGDs indicated that they have a fair understanding of child rights and are committed. Technical officers such as SSOs, CRPOs and CPOs appear to be more aware of child rights than GNs, DSs and such administrators.

4. **50% increase in number of reported cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation.**

**Findings:** there has been a 95% increase in the number of reported incidents of child abuse recorded compared to the 2012 baseline data. As such, the target is already achieved and exceeded.

**Field Findings:** Some VCRMC members explained that due to effective action, an increasing number of cases are being reported to them. Other people reluctant to discuss such issues face to face present cases on the mobile phone to seek advice.

5. ***50% increase in action taken by duty bearers on reported incidents of abuse and exploitation, including removal of children and youth from abusive environments, and action taken against perpetrators***

**Findings:** 75% of duty bearers had taken action on reported incidents of abuse and exploitation, including the removal of children and youth from abusive environments, and action taken against perpetrators. The target is exceeded already.

**Field Findings:** VCRMCs take swift action as all critical agencies are represented. One mother said that some teachers come looking for children absent from school.

6. ***50% of victims of abuse reporting satisfaction in the way duty bearers have handled their complaints.***

**Findings:** 65% of victims of abuse report satisfaction in the way duty bearers have handled their complaints. The target is already exceeded.

**Field Findings:** During FGDs, parents affirmed action taken by the VCRMC is effective and satisfactory. A few mothers wanting to migrate to West Asia for work have changed their minds after discussions with VCRMCs, indicating its potential. Children have learnt about child rights and are aware of the helpline 1929.

7. ***Numbers of children and youth transitioning out of hazardous / exploitative employment***

**Findings:** 370 children and youth (197 male and 173 female), of whom 198 are below 18 years of age (102 male and 96 female) have been supported to exit hazardous and exploitative work. Since no quantitative target was set, the evaluation cannot say whether or not this target has been achieved.

**Field Findings:** VCRMC members explained that they direct school drop-outs for vocational training and thereafter for employment. Teenage marriages have apparently also declined due to the vigilance of CBOs and VCRMCs and due to youths continuing studies. All CBOs reported that the number of children in hazardous or exploitative work is very less now, if not at all.

**3.6.2 Conclusion – Outcome 4:** All six of the seven targets in Outcome 4 targets have been achieved or exceeded. Particularly since the conclusion of the war, the incidence of violence against women and children especially from the north and east is reported to be rising due to various factors. Exploitation of children and young people is also increasing. Often what the state and other duty bearers do is hardly commensurate with the magnitude of the problems. Therefore it is very relevant that this aspect has been included in the project. Changes brought about by the project over a short time in relation to child rights is very significant and most important for children and youth in the context of often neglected child rights observance. Parents, CBOs and state duty bearers are very active with regard to promoting child rights and preventing abuse and exploitation. Government policies have not changed but how they are implemented at community level has. Government service providers at DS level who did not have the capability to work at community level now make use of the CBOs for channelling their services. The vigilance of parents, teachers and the community is paying off as more cases are being reported to the authorities for action and it is being reinforced by the prompt and effective action taken by the relevant agencies. However, although the actions of VCRMCs is positive, the underlying root causes of child rights violations - poverty, poor adult education, parent's migration and the consequent lack of parental love - still persist, albeit reduced.

### 3.7 TARGET GROUPS

The following four target groups of the project have been focused on consistently. Of these, two have been exceeded, one is on track and one is unlikely to be achieved.

- 1,635 (900 females and 735 males) youths engaged in hazardous work have been engaged by the project. The target was 1,600 (50% males & 50% females) and has therefore been achieved.
- 406 (206 females and 200 males) stigmatised children have been reached. The target was 240 (50% male) and as such, has been achieved.
- 2,083 (1,255 males, 828 females) children at risk of being drawn into hazardous work have been reached by the project. With an end of project target of 2,160 (50% male), the project is on track to achieve this.
- 2,857 parents and carers have been reached by the project. With an end of project target of 3,960, this is unlikely to be achieved.

### 3.8 EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS

**3.8.1 Efficiency:** the project is moderately efficient considering duration, costs and planned activities. The total project estimated cost was £ 604,024, operational cost was £ 89,814 and programme implementation cost was £ 514,210. The actual project management cost ratio was nearly 15%. This is a relatively good proportion and partly justified by the need to serve a widely scattered target populations in all three districts. The project suffered from unexpected delays during the second year of implementation due to experienced staff in Trincomalee district leaving, but has however, managed to attain most of the district targets by August 2015 and is commendable.

**3.8.2 Effectiveness:** *(the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance)*. The four outcomes have been achieved to a significant degree with almost all targets already realised or on track to realisation. Generally the popularity and attraction of tangible change especially related to livelihood support tends to downplay the importance of less tangible change like in child rights. The project should be commended for taking up the challenge of ensuring child rights and protection through support for livelihood development. The effort has been successful and the strategy effective. People have engaged in economic development while being cognisant of the fact that benefits should contribute to the wellbeing of their children and youth (and also themselves).

**3.8.3 Relevance:** *(the degree to which the rationale and objectives of a project are or remain pertinent, significant and worthwhile, in relation to the identified priority needs and concerns)* In this sense the project is highly relevant to the target populations for facilitating them to optimise their productive resources. The issues addressed by the project remain the major concerns of the war affected, marginalised communities of Eastern Province, i.e. livelihoods, incomes and quality of life. Uplifting the socio-economic status of the household and through that enhancing the status of children is a realistic development strategy. The project is highly relevant to all war affected and even other regions of the country.

**3.8.4 Sustainability:** *(the likelihood of the continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits and the resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time are critical.)* The degree of sustainability varies from each component (i.e. livelihoods/incomes; health/KAP; rights/protection) and hence are considered separately. **CBOs** (*livelihoods*) and their functions are most likely to be sustainable due to the sound empowerment of the members, their competence in institutional (registration of 35 CBOs and remaining seven in process) and finance/livelihood matters (own savings fund totalling over LKR10 million, individual bank accounts) and linkages with government agencies, CSOs and corporates. **Child Clubs** (*KAP*) as children grow up and move out of the club, members have to be replaced and retrained, which is a major challenge for sustainability. However, with CBO and government service providers' continued interest, sustainability is possible. **VCRMCS** (*Child Protection*) are concerned with the protection and promotion of child rights, and their continuance depends much on government officers - all of whom are transferrable - and their training, knowledge and commitment do not always measure up to expectations. Hence sustainability will be a challenge. Some degree is possible if CBOs can pressurise state duty bearers sufficiently and without let up. **Government policies** related to children and youth are adequate and in place but poor implementation either due to lack of adequate budgets, manpower or poor commitment are the main issues. There is also some confusion regarding VCRMCS as the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) cannot directly issue circulars to GNDs or DSs but through their relevant ministry. This needs to be resolved.

**3.8.5 Impacts:** *(positive or/and negative, primary or/and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended).* The following major impacts of the project are identified.

1. CBO has unified the community through its common vision and harnessed human and other resources for development through cooperation and collaboration. Now people celebrate New Year together or go on pilgrimages, etc. and undertake shramadana (labour sharing).
2. CBO's own funds and new linkages with government agencies, corporates and CSOs have given them a sense of inclusion and optimism for breaking through poverty contributing also to social cohesion in a big way.
3. Government agencies find CBOs to be effective vehicles for their own service provision at village level and hence members access economic and social services/resources they were previously unaware of or unable to access.
4. Government agencies, particularly those related to child welfare, galvanised by the project are seeking to be more service oriented and active.
5. CBOs with the training and exposure they have are in a position to embark on other development activities with other agencies including CSOs.
6. The project by working with all three ethnic communities is also contributing practically to peaceful co-existence and reconciliation.
7. CBOs have a very high demonstrative value for other marginalised people in the community for overcoming poverty and deprivation.
8. Some parents are less inclined to migrate to West Asia for work leaving their children at home after appreciating the negative impacts on family.
9. People have become time conscious and more punctual as they value time.
10. A savings habit and an entrepreneurial outlook have been acquired by CBO members.
11. CBOs have imbibed the culture of shramadana which also contributes to strengthening social cohesion.

**3.8.6 Gender:** women by far outnumber men in the membership of the CBO and that is because men are engaged as the chief breadwinner, although in reality, many female beneficiaries are probably the major earner in the household. However, men take interest in the CBO and also benefit from its services. The family as a unit is engaged in the CBO and its activities, and women play a major role and this is accepted and recognised by all parties. The project has given women a good opportunity to apply their skills and capabilities.

**3.8.7 Environment:** the natural environment is positively affected by the predominantly agriculture-based livelihoods of CBOs as they adopt organic farming promoted by the project, as well as integrated agricultural practices such as livestock and home gardens, bio-gas and cattle rearing, home gardens, etc. Other livelihood activities are not known to adversely affect the environment.

**3.8.8 Peaceful Coexistence:** for a country that had been battered by a 30 year long conflict, peaceful co-existence is indispensable, and all development interventions ought to contribute to it directly or indirectly. The project contributes to this by bringing people of diverse ethnicities together in training programmes and exposure visits which establish links and goodwill among them.

## TOR

- **Describe how has the project made a difference: (What was the overall theory of change? Has it been effective in bringing about lasting change? Were there any gaps? What have been the most effective methodologies and approaches used to bring about changes to people's lives? What has worked and what has not?)**

**3.8.9 The theory of change:** the changes that the project planned to bring about are behavioural in nature and are possible only if attitudes are influenced through knowledge coupled with positive values/ motivation. The theory of change underpinning project design comprise of two components or chains of influence. The first is that awareness creation among stakeholders on child rights and protection, coupled with strengthening of relevant service providers with knowledge and skills would contribute to positive changes in child rights observance. The second is that increasing household incomes through livelihood support combined with the first would ensure better health and hygiene facilities for children/young people, and also facilitate their participation in decision making in relevant areas at household and community levels. This theory of change is well-tested, proved to be effective and most valid and appropriate for marginalised communities as in the case of the beneficiaries of this project. Its effectiveness can be concluded from the results listed under each of the four outcomes in the foregoing pages.

To ensure lasting changes this project is inadequate, new state duty bearers (VCRMC members, CRPOs et al) will sooner or later replace those who have been trained or motivated by the project. The new entrants will have to be trained and motivated, but the project will be concluded by then. Similarly Child Clubs will enrol new children who will have to be given awareness programmes, etc.

The most effective methodologies for achieving positive changes in people are: mobilisation and empowerment; establishment of CBOs with all the capacity building and systems in place and integration with state and other service providers.

## TOR

- **Identify key contributing factors which enhanced and/or hindered these results: (Have there been changes to policies, practice and attitudes of decision and policy makers to benefit the project's target group? To what extent has the project contributed to the achievement of broader national and international policies, conventions, targets, etc.? To what extent has the achievement of the changes/outcomes been influenced by external context and other factors?)**

Contributory factors to the results achieved are many. The various project activities under each of the four outcomes and the manner in which they were implemented had been the most critical factors. Generally the project had won the confidence of the people through sound mobilisation and empowerment. Together with this, state service providers/duty bearers too were won over and their cooperation and link to the community ensured through their regular participation in the CBOs' work and through regular visits for progress sharing with DS based officers. Project support to VCRMCS and children's clubs in the correct measure and time ensured that progress was not hindered due to lack of resources. Similarly with CBOs, UTOP grants were disbursed after careful preparation of the communities and with inputs from the state and corporate sectors.

The only factor that had not been positive is that in a few GNDs the registration of the CBO with the DS has been delayed due to a local requirement for involvement of the DS in financial transactions of the CBO.

The project had not contributed to any policy changes at any level of government. In Sri Lanka particularly child rights; women's right and poverty alleviation related policies have been updated in recent times and the issue is poor implementation due to inadequate human and other resources. However, the project has positively influenced attitudes of duty bearers for more commitment to child rights and protection, and poverty reduction through livelihoods development.

Child rights and child protection; gender equity; people's participation and poverty reduction for upgrading quality of life are policies advocated at the international and national too. The project has demonstrated that even communities in difficult circumstances can be effectively mobilised to contribute very significantly to poverty alleviation, to the observance of child rights protection, including those of young people.

Contribution to project achievements by the external context and other factors – households in the war affected regions were desperately trying to eke out a living, i.e. earn adequate incomes in the absence of any support for it. This factor contributed much to winning over the communities. Another factor is that there were several relevant government officers and CSO persons willing to respond to the pressing needs of the people, but they lacked some critical knowledge or skill or just a linkage (to the community and resource persons, etc.). The project identified this missing element and provided it and followed up effectively.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.1 LESSONS LEARNT

#### TOR

- **Identify key learning points and make recommendations for future operations of this and similar projects: (Consider the project's three learning questions and provide a summary of relevant learning and experience to date. What lessons have been learned? Who have they been shared with?)**

Some interventions and strategies of this project are found to be exceptionally effective and hence worthy of note for sharing as a contribution to development education. Some of the major lessons are listed below.

1. BCG did not offer any monetary incentives for government officers' participation in project activities as is generally done yet succeeded in getting their cooperation and even appreciation of the project.
2. The project linked CBOs with government agencies for receiving resources and supervision /monitoring, and for integration that ensures sustainability.
3. BCG formally engaged government officers effectively by involving them in the beneficiary selection process based on accepted criteria and transparent manner and in the follow up activities.
4. Designated BCG staff co-ordinated with government officers, regularly updating them on progress, and hence strong relationships were built.
5. BCG project objectives converge with Government's national policies on poverty reduction and projects related to it.
6. BCG field staff was very close to the CBOs motivating them successfully, coaching and mentoring the beneficiaries regularly and monitoring thus motivating the people.
7. At community level BCG neither sidelined nor antagonised traditional civil society leaders but strategically obtained their co-operation as advisory panel members, thereby introducing another layer for ensuring accountability. Thus the project effectively linked the energy of the youth with the wisdom and experience of the seniors for effective development at community level.
8. At the CBO level, possible conflicts especially those related to governance and financial matters (saving, loans and UTOP grants) were effectively avoided through the adoption of procedures and regulations that ensured full participation of members; transparency and accountability.
9. BCG was non-prescriptive but gave people knowledge and skills. People had to decide if they were going to start livelihood activities or improve on what they were doing already and what targets they wanted to keep.
10. High success rates in livelihoods were due to supporting people already in some livelihood activity to think bigger and get them to formulate targets through a simple business plan and train them in record keeping, finance and time management. Thus people were made to challenge themselves in a realistic manner and achieve the set targets.
11. Repayments are very good as CBOs realise that it is their own money that they are taking on loan. Also the established systems ensure accountability and transparency - to all members.
12. Some planned changes might look very challenging to achieve but however with the initial first steps, it gathers momentum and unforeseen contributions come along. When VCRMCS were

formed or revived participating agencies were hesitant. However, with the project steadfastly going about training etc., members became motivated so much so that for example some teachers now go looking for students absent from school.

## 4.2 Special Issues of Comic Relief

### TOR

- ***What are the most effective approaches to protect children and young people at risk from exploitation and hazardous work?***

Hazardous work and exploitation in eastern Sri Lanka occur as children do not attend school because of poverty, no readily accessible secondary school and/or because after leaving school there is nothing for them to do in the village - no avenues for skills training, decent work or even sports and recreational facilities. These issues need to be addressed in order to protect children and young people from exploitation, hazardous work and teenage marriages. As such, education, skills training and decent work are a must.

#### **Feasible Approaches:**

- In relevant DSDs, run a campaign to persuade particularly mothers with young children to desist from labour migration abroad.
  - Advocate with provincial authorities for establishing secondary schools in needy GNDs.
  - Advocate for the establishment of skills training programmes for school leavers/youth with provincial authorities.
- ***How are children and young people who are severely stigmatised due to conflict related factors best helped and protected?***

Often also the poor are stigmatised. The community stigmatises children and young people because they believe that such persons cannot overcome what has befallen them or what they have done (or may have done) in the past. If such victims can learn to be positive and overcome their state, then they will be accepted and even respected. Thus victims need to be helped psychologically and mentally to heal the scars and adopt positive attitudes and learn skills that can help them to earn a decent income and serve the community too. This will take them on the path to de-stigmatisation. There are examples of such people who overcame their past. The communities in which they live too need to be supported through awareness programmes, counselling and such measures.

- ***What synergies and challenges are there to working with a child rights based approach combined with access to sustainable livelihoods?***

Sustainable livelihoods generating increasing incomes, with awareness raising could lead to better observance of child rights. Many factors that influence the violation of child rights could be controlled with the enlightened use of increased incomes. The challenge is that in a society where feudal, authoritarian and patronage values and norms persist, increased incomes may tend to bolster ones authority and pay less heed to the rights of one's children (and others). An enlightened view of life and values shared by the community and strengthened by duty bearers will be indispensable for making rising incomes to contribute to increasing observance of child rights.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for consolidating during the next few months the gains made in less than two and a half years. A consolidation period for the current project is warranted as about 10% of CBOs need more coaching and mentoring to become self-reliant. Also the gains on child rights and protection need to be fully systematised and embedded in the community for their sustainability.

#### CBOs

1. Continue to coach and mentor the weak CBOs for a few more months for self-reliant operations.
2. Transform UTOPS to commercial ventures. For assuring better prices for UTOP businesses, it is necessary to develop lead entrepreneurs to co-ordinate with small producers that supply similar products (i.e. dairy) to him/her and he/she can supply bulk quantities to buyers with supply assurance and bargaining power. To implement this concept, it is necessary to develop lead entrepreneurs' business infrastructure (i.e. mini chiller to collect fresh milk, etc.) and give bigger UTOP grants.
3. Avoid subsidised interest rates in credit schemes (only for instant loans), because formal micro finance sector average interest rate is 3%. Therefore, it is necessary to increase 1% to at least 2%. Some societies already have 3% interest rate (i.e. Janashakthi CBO, Kivulekadawala, Gomarankadawala).
4. Train all CBO members in leadership and motivation for wider and more active participation in the CBO and in their own livelihood activities.
5. Give UTOPs to all deserving members and expand livelihoods support so that current non-members can be given membership in the CBO.
6. Strengthen the CBO fund through a matching grant relative to group savings for increasing its capacity for more and bigger livelihood loans.
7. CBO registration is vital for sustainability. The project should facilitate this process.
8. Give more technical training to members in areas that are popular and have a ready market, e.g. costume jewellery, food processing, etc.
9. It is important to promote further linkages with existing value chains through public-private sector partnerships (e.g. Hayleys for Papaya cultivation).

#### Rights of Children and Young People

10. Train government officers in empowerment, rights based approach to development, child rights and entrepreneurship for more enlightened commitment to the people's development. Link with the District Secretariat's initiative with ILO that declared Ampara District as a "Child Labour Free Zone,"- the first district to do so in Sri Lanka.
11. Give children's clubs basic sports materials, exposure visits and training for child leadership for adopting more child friendly programmes.
12. Mechanisms needs to be put in place where children are automatically included into processes of decision making and work that promote meaningful child participation in schools and at community level.
13. Continue to focus on children and their issues with households, communities and duty bearers until systems, standards, procedures, etc. become institutionalised.

14. Advocate for appointment of CRPOs and CPOs and such officers at all DSDs.
15. Instil further into households and CBOs the importance of child rights and protection and what their obligations are in this regard.
16. HIV/AIDS awareness had not been imparted to a few GNDs and these need to be covered.
17. Adopt performance indicators for the health and protection areas that are easier to verify.

## **ANNEXURES**

*(see separate file)*

- Annex 1 – List of GNDs where the project is implemented
- Annex 2 - Performance Indicators for assessing project outcomes
- Annex 3 – Terms of Reference for the Final Evaluation
- Annex 4 - FGD Checklists; KIIs and Visits to Entrepreneurs
- Annex 5 - Number of FGDs, KIIS and Visits to Entrepreneurs
- Annex 6 - Field work schedule