

# Compassion 575

## 2<sup>nd</sup> quarterly report

### for 2017

Name of CFCDP	No of Children	District / Province
Poolankaadu	42	Thoppigala / East
Tharavai	42	
Pulipaaindakal	105	
Naripul Thorttam	110	Batticaloa / East
Vaharai	95	
Murippu	56	Mullaitivu / North
Pooneri Maththuwilnaadu	40	Kilinotchchi / North
Paranthan G.M.T	60	
Elephant pass G.M.T	155	
Colombo Ministry Center, Wattala	65	Gampaha / West
Bogahawatta	71	Nuwara Eliya / Central
Dangedara	116	Galle / South



## **Children of the Pulipaaindakal CFCDP excel in sports**

Children must be active every day to develop healthily. For this reason, NCML has been encouraging children to be more involved in sports and other extracurricular activities besides education. Physical activity stimulates growth and leads to improved physical and emotional health. Exercise is also known to relieve stress. Some children experience as much stress, depression, and anxiety as adults do. And because exercise improves health, a fit child is more likely to be well-rested and mentally sharp. It is also proven that moderate physical activity can improve a child's skill at arithmetic, reading, and memorization.

Sports help children develop physical skills, get exercise, make friends, have fun, learn to play as a member of a team, learn to play fair, improve self-esteem and not forget education. But today, sports has increasingly become a money making business. The highly stressful, competitive, "win at all costs" attitude prevalent at colleges and with professional athletes affects the world of children's sports and athletics; creating an unhealthy environment. Children who are competent at sports are more easily accepted by children of their own age, and are more likely to be team players and group leaders. Such children usually have better social skills. The primary goal of NCML to promote sports is to help children find the success in sport they need to make them feel valued and wanted. Every child can be successful at one sport or another, but how much are these children encouraged by parents and caregivers is something that needs serious consideration.

Like children all over the world, children in remote villages in Sri Lanka too love to play. They enjoy running between trees and rice fields which are the only locally available facility. Children have very limited choices to make. Not very many sports can be played in villages even though they would love to. Volleyball, Elle (baseball) and running are the three most played sports apart from some old-fashioned games played which are not known to many. These three are the recognized sports that the village people engage in. NCML has always shown great interest towards sports and supported children very much remembering that the attitudes and behavior taught to children in sports carry over to adult life. To help children get the most out of sports, in most CFCDPs teachers take the children out to the field every Friday to give them physical training. Basically, Fridays are allocated for sports. Children spend more time in the field on Fridays than on other working days. Here, NCML has been supporting children in developing their running skills and also helping in other sports such as passing the ball, Elle and Volleyball. Children love running, they wear no spiked shoes, track shoes and not even a cheap pair of bathroom slippers when they run around. No matter how the surface is, they run barefoot.

The teachers and the local NCML staff figured that the children of the Pulipaaindakal CFCDP had more liking towards Elle; something similar to baseball. They enjoyed playing Elle and day by day their skills improved and they soon became professionals in the game. Fortunately for them, our local staff, Suresh is a professional player in his village. Even though he doesn't represent his team now for various reasons, he has the ability and the experience to coach children. Suresh spent most of his evenings training children and he made sure they learnt the technics properly. He also registered this team to the Zonal Sports Committee. The role of this committee is to organize matches between schools. Earlier this term, the Pulipaaindakal Elle team comprising of children from grade 4 and 5 was called to play a match against another school in the same village. There was a lot of excitement and preparation before the match. The match was played in the same village. Our team was too strong to be beaten. We won the match. There were many other matches organized during the past few months subsequently at the Zonal level and we won all the matches.

Later the champions were invited to play matches outside their village that were organized by the district Secretariat Office. Now the competition was getting slightly harder. Our team had to meet teams that were somewhat stronger than them. Suresh and the teachers made sure the children weren't getting too worried and pressurized. They were encouraged and were given more coaching. The children faced their giant opponents with confidence. They managed to beat all the teams that competed with them. Today they are the Junior Elle (Baseball) champions in the entire district.

The parents are very happy with their children's performance. It is important that parents take an active role in helping their children develop good sportsmanship. We have spoken with parents about it and have advised them to be actively involved; particularly in sports and education.

From here the team will compete with other schools at a National level.



Suresh (NCML staff) coaching CFCDP children



The Pulipaaindakal Elle team

### **The village primary school becomes secondary Education Provider after NCML began the CFCDP in the school**

The Pulipaaindakal School in Thoppigala was once shortlisted to be padlocked as the number of children attending school was alarmingly decreasing. This was when children from the 7<sup>th</sup> grade began dropping out of school. The numbers were insufficient to function as an education provider. The school had less than 20 children initially and the Government decided that they should seriously look to increase the numbers or to allow the existing children to join other schools in the village and use this facility for other purposes. Thoppigala is an isolated village which is approximately 30 kilometers from the main road. It is certainly not possible for children to walk that distance to receive education. There is no bus service and the only mode of conveyance would be to walk close to 60 kilometers a day. This would have had even the 20 who attended school to easily decide against it.

The reason for children to drop out was the poor education the school was providing. The school has had very few teachers, who get absent often mainly due to the village's poor transport facilities. Most of the days, the children would go to school in the morning and do nothing until they return home in the evening. This obviously encouraged the children to stay away from school and help their parents to earn money.

When NCML began its Ministry at this school, it had very few kids whose attendance was very poor, few teachers and their attendance too wasn't pleasing, kids didn't know to read or write and some children didn't even know the difference between capital and simple letters. NCML knew the task ahead was tough and it was never going to be easy changing those stubborn attitudes. But, with the experience we've gained over the years, we knew things will turn around. We were certain of the change we were targeting for. The teachers and the local staff began their work. After some time, the children and the villagers recognized our program wasn't just education alone, but had many opportunities for the entire community to develop. Home visits began and the parents too were included in our program.

It took a while to reach our goal. But, slowly the community began to understand our program and began to show changes. More children began showing up at school. The number began increasing while children dropping out of school completely stopped.

This made the officials rethink their decision made against the Pulipaaindakal school. They were very impressed with the progress the school had made and not only removed it from the list to close down but upgraded to be a secondary education provider to the children of Thoppigala. Now the school provides education to children up to grade 10.

This is a great achievement. It is not easy; especially in a village to be upgraded from primary status to secondary education provider considering the difficulties and the facilities they lack. It was said that this wouldn't have happened if NCML didn't intervene when it needed it most. "NCML came at the correct time to save the school from being closed down" the Principal said. The village children need not travel too far to receive education up to grade 10. Their village school can accommodate them up to grade 10. Our aim is to make this school provide education up to advanced level (grade 13) so that the village children will never leave their village for education throughout their school career. We are certain of receiving such status considering the progress the school has thus far shown.

We thank the local staff and the teachers for their hard work. This wouldn't have been possible if not for their hard work and support.

## Other CFCDPs

All other CFCDPs supported by Compassion 575 function as usual. After-school classes are being held regularly and children are found participating in all the activities with much interest. The children are served an afternoon snack before they come for the evening program. This helps children a lot as they don't go home after morning school. They stay behind for the evening classes as majority of them live far from school. Also, if children can go home, their return to school for the evening classes will be quite uncertain.

Teachers teach with much interest and commitment. This is a busy period for both children and the teachers as they prepare for the forthcoming term end evaluation. Teachers spend extra hours with children to coach them.



Elephant Pass CFCDP



Paranthan CFCDP

## Success Story

### Hope Restored

It's over 7 years since the war ended, but in terms of rebuilding, there seems to be no major development work taking place especially in Thoppigala. Thoppigala was hard hit by the war. People lost everything. They were displaced and now resettled. All their livelihood was destroyed and had nothing to begin life with. Even now, people struggle to make ends meet as most of the families earn less than LKR 5,000 (USD 35.00) a month. Lots of ladies are found migrating to middle eastern countries seeking employment and hundreds of children are either half parented or orphaned.

Kalaivaani is one of the children who lost both parents in the war. She attends our CFCDP in Pulipaaindakal. Like many other children, Kalaivaani too decided to drop out of school at the age of 11 when she was just moving to 7<sup>th</sup> grade. She lost hope in life. She didn't have a reason to live. After her parents' death, Kalaivaani was taken to her grandmother. She too was a widow and had to care for 4 more children. She caught fish in the river and made a living. Her earning was very little, yet, with all her difficulties, she agreed to adopt Kalaivaani into her family.

Kalaivaani was terribly disturbed. She was not happy to live, she didn't like school and made every attempt to skip school. The grandmother too hasn't schooled. So, she wouldn't force Kalaivaani to attend school daily. Kalaivaani would skip school as and when she preferred.

Kalaivaani was met by one of the NCML staff one day at her school. This was when NCML began the CFCDP in the village school. Her story was very painful, yet was curable as NCML has met hundreds of children with similar conditions. "Kalaivaani looked relieved that evening after she had told me everything that had happened to her" said one of the teachers at the evening class. From that day, the teachers and the local NCML team began working very closely with her. She was counselled, prayed with, visited home and was included into all the activities. Most of the time, she was made the group leader in which she participated. This restored her hope very much. Kalaivaani gradually began showing interest towards our program and soon became a part of our program. When Kalaivaani shared some of her pains with our local staff, she had told that the meal that she receives at the CFCDP has been the only meal for the day on days her grandmother returns with no money.

Today Kalaivaani receives education in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Because the school now educates children up to grade 10, she need not leave our evening program and go elsewhere for education. She is a happy child at the CFCDP.

Kalaivaani is blessed with a beautiful voice. She can sing beautifully and composed a song about the love of a mother. She sings that song all the time at the CFCDP and the children in her grade enjoy listening to her beautiful voice. Kalaivaani's ambition is to become a banker. She wants to one day become a manager of a bank.

We are glad we could help Kalaivaani. We will support her as long as she is in our program and continue to pray that her ambition will be fulfilled and God will enable her to help many other children who face similar gloominess in life.

