

Compassion 575

4rd Quarterly report

for 2015

| Name of CFCDP | No of Children | District / Province |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Poolankaadu | 42 | Thoppigala / East |
| Tharavai | 42 | |
| Naripul Thorttam | 110 | Batticaloa / East |
| Vaharai | 95 | |
| Indagala | 128 | Badulla / Uva |
| 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 |

Dangedara off the Ground

The new CFCDP in Jayawardana Sinhala Vidyalaya in Dangedara got off the ground towards the tail end of the last term with 116 children.

Dangedara is another school that nurtures children of extreme low income earning families. NCML has been involved in a lot of paper work such as, Data Collection, Enrolling of children to our program, collecting family details and so on over the past few months. While all these things were happening, the teachers began coaching the children with some extra support for the year end examination which was just around the corner. A quick assessment was done to identify weaker children. Thus 47 were chosen to receive special care. They needed much more than the usual classroom coaching. It was necessary to have teachers coaching them individually and more personally. For the rest of the children, it was the usual afterschool support that NCML is specialized in.

NCML will get into more action in the coming year; introducing activities like crafts, outdoor activities, Singing, Drama, listening and of course counselling, which ranks pretty high in the plan of action.

Murippu CFCDP

The CFCDP in Murippu that commenced 2 years ago precisely has shown tremendous progress over the years. Situated in a war torn area, it had nothing much left but hardships and gloominess in life for the children and the adults who returned from camps. Children were found extremely disturbed. Their families were scattered and broken. Some of the children didn't know their biological parents; especially fathers. The situation was pathetic as it can be.

As NCML has been repeatedly reporting, the grade 5 scholarship examination is mandatory to all children across the Island. Facing it at this point was certainly a tough call for the children who had just returned from a severe painful situation. Nevertheless, the system leaves no exception, but to have children do it. The teachers did whatever they could during morning school to prepare the children. But that was certainly not enough. Children needed much more than what they receive during morning school. It was reported that no child went above obtaining 30 marks continually for 3 years. This certainly determines the poor quality of education the school offered the children.

The first year of NCML's involvement in this CFCDP didn't make or demand much results. We were simply not prepared to burden the children. We were more focused on creating a child centered / child friendly environment. Also, our emphasis was on strengthening **the teacher - student relationship**. In parallel to our focus was the usual coaching of grade 5 children as the exam was nearing. We arranged teachers to give special attention to the grade 5 children much prior to attending to other children. They were coached separately. Teachers gave their fullest possible backing to prepare them mentally to face this examination.

There came the examination much quicker than we thought. Children sat for the examination. This time the result was definitely pleasing; it was slightly different to the years before. We were taken by surprise when little Thiruban scored 57. He was certainly way below the cut off mark, but it proved the potential in these children. None of the children got through this time, but each came close to scoring 50 marks.

Hard work continued. Teachers continually worked hard. Thiruban's achievement was certainly an eye-opener for all other children. It proved that no gloominess in life could hold them back or prevent from reaching higher levels in life.

There came August 2015 in no time. The new batch walked with confidence to face the exam. This time the result was even more pleasing. It was a clear message conveyed that nothing can stop them. This time it was Sivakumar who took the baton from Thiruban who went up to score 107 points. The relay is on and there are number of talented children eagerly waiting to take over the baton. Though this year too none of the children went above the cut off mark which was 152, there is clear sign of children getting there quickly. They are halfway through the ladder;

confidently climbing to reach the top. Their improvement has certainly pleased the School Management, parents and NCML.

Children's Day Celebrations.

Children's day was celebrated much differently this year in Sri Lanka. Our aim was to teach our children that we no longer need to be considered destitute. **"God has been good to us and he is our provider. He loves little children"** was the lesson taught at almost all the CFCDPs. In connection to this, the children engaged in doing something different. Some visited other nearby schools that had poorer children than us, Children of some CFCDP visited Elders / Children's Homes while few engaged in planting trees for the betterment of the future generation.

This was certainly a different approach. Children enjoyed much more than the usual celebrations. Of course, each CFCDP had its traditional programs, but the new totaling added flavor to the existing program. The support the local NCML staff extended was highly remarkable. They worked hard. They were adamant to adapt changes to the existing patterns.

With the support of the field staff, NCML planned to plant trees in and around the school premises of Murippu School. Prior to this, NCML called on all the parents to discuss about their intended service to their village and called for donations; donate saplings. The parents too were highly excited with our plan. Everyone agreed to send plants from their garden.

On the day of the tree planting event, children walked to school with various kinds of plants to plant in the school premises and in a few prominent places in their village. The Principal and the school staff joined NCML to encourage the children. The day's programs began with children planting all of them in the school garden. It was a memorable day for them.



Murippu school children plant banana and coconut tree saplings on Children's Day.

All CFCDPs across the Island

Following the tree planting program, visits to elders/children's home and various special events was their usual Children's day celebration at the CFCDPs. Children staged many entertaining events that included Dramas, Speeches, Songs and Dances. All the programs were contextually designed. There were items that displayed the culture and traditions of Sri Lanka.

Success Story

This year, we made it compulsory for all parents to attend the function held to celebrate World Children's Day. We had close to 75% of parents attending the program throughout the Island. We are extremely pleased with their attendance. In Sri Lanka, especially in villages, parents hardly participate in children's affairs. About 90% of the parents wouldn't even know the grade of their children in school or the name of the class teacher. Very difficultly principals summon parents to school should the school need to discuss matters concerning their children's education. However, this practice is slightly changing. In most of NCML supported schools, parents' involvement is increased. We've been spending ample time in encouraging parents to be involved in their child's education. This year's children's day celebration was one of the exceptional occasions where every child had at least one family member showing up to witness their talents and abilities.



Parents of the Poolankadu CFCDP attending a parents' meeting in the school.

NCML will continue to work on strengthening the bond between the caregivers, (teachers and NCML local staff) parents and children.

NAZARENE COMPASSIONATE MINISTRIES OF LANKA.