

Compassion 575

1st quarterly report

for 2017

Name of CFCDP	No of Children	District / Province
Poolankaadu	42	Thoppigala / East
Tharavai	42	
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

Happy Birthday Uncle Argabright



The Children of the Wattala CFCDP enthusiastically celebrated uncle Argabright's Birthday this year too.

Children were excited and highly thrilled to design birthday wish cards and pictures. They also made that day a play day. Kids enjoyed playing and had lots of outdoor activities that day. The main aim was to enjoy and thank God for Uncle Argabright; for his life, his Ministry, his family and for all the things he has done for the poor children of Sri Lanka. What they wanted was to let uncle Argabright know how much they love him and appreciate his hard work and support for children. Children have understood how much it had helped them; they comprehended the value of being helped. There is no free after school class held anywhere close to Wattala. NCM Lanka is the only organization that provides this form of assistance to children. These

are children from very poor families and their parents can't afford extra tuition. Education has become one of Sri Lanka's most expensive components even though it is one of the main countries that provide free education to children. Education is provided free to children attending school supported by the Government, but its quality is extremely poor. It is close to impossible for a child to pass any form of examination without outside support. It is unlikely to see anyone passing examinations who have depended solely on school education. In Sri Lanka children need outside support and this is one of the main reasons for children from poor families to drop out of schools very early in life when their parents can't afford extra tuition. This could also be considered as one of the main contributors to the unemployment issue Sri Lanka is suffering very much with. Children are thankful to Uncle Argabright for removing this barrier and opening opportunities to education. They know their parents wouldn't certainly send them for extra tuition if they must spend additional money on them. Children realize what uncle Argabright is doing takes off a huge weight from their shoulder and that's why they said "THANK YOU, UNCLE, WE LOVE YOU AND WISH YOU FOR YOUR BIRTHDAY" (children shouted) in one voice to show how much they love him.



Dengue update

During the first five months of the year 2017, 43915 suspected dengue cases were reported to the Epidemiology Unit from all over the island. Approximately 41.47% of dengue cases were reported from the Western province. The highest numbers of dengue cases were reported during the 16 weeks of 2017. Majority of dengue victims are children and it was reported that the Lady Ridgeway Hospital for children is full up and children are made to share beds. Children and adults are advised to seek immediate medical attention in the event of fever by day three of the illness.

Following is the statistics of dengue affected people throughout Sri Lanka up to the first week of May, 2017. Highlighted are areas where NCML conducts its CFCDPs and other projects.

RDHS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total Cases
Colombo	2690	1900	2466	2453	289		9798
Gampaha	1627	1064	1875	1270	17		5853
Kalutara	564	438	825	730	4		2561
Kandy	263	209	367	448	20		1307
Matale	126	99	142	107	0		474
N Eliya	52	30	42	37	1		162
Galle	809	490	376	200	16		1891
Hambantota	228	200	331	327	16		1102
Matara	428	379	334	347	58		1546
Jaffna	558	483	880	492	75		2488
Kilinochchi	55	80	35	28	1		199
Mannar	144	91	67	91	0		393
Vavuniya	61	75	143	80	0		359
Mulativu	37	30	21	19	6		113
Batticaloa	215	453	815	958	32		2473
Ampara	50	51	61	71	0		233
Trincomalee	386	662	2128	919	0		4095
Kurunegala	401	374	498	588	15		1876
Puttalam	197	134	210	248	21		810
Apura	164	145	246	144	4		703
Polonnaruwa	55	64	98	119	14		350
Badulla	228	130	140	168	9		675
Moneragala	97	93	109	120	15		434
Ratnapura	430	361	489	433	17		1730
Kegalle	210	231	377	311	19		1148
Kalmunai	393	234	345	170	0		1142
TOTAL	10468	8500	13420	10878	649		43915

Dengue awareness campaigns in CFCDPs

This situation warrants regular removal of possible mosquito breeding sites from the environment. Unless the environment is kept clean, the increase of dengue mosquitoes cannot be controlled. NCML called on all children to join them to eradicate possible mosquito breeding places earlier this year. It was highly important to address this issue as the number of people affected kept increasing frighteningly. People have understood the need. They no longer want to allow this deadly disease to take away lives of loved ones or see them go through life threatening moments.

Children happily participated in the school cleanup program. They were highly excited and motivated to stop mosquitoes from breeding. All mosquito breeding places were cleared. Most of them were coconut shells, tins and plastic bottles thrown away by the village people. Children cleared them all and set fire to some of the waste products. Some of them were buried while dried leaves were used as compost. Children were taught safe disposal of waste. They have been taught many times before, yet it was found that their minds needed to be refreshed. They were spoken to about the consequences of not disposing trash properly. Our intention was not to frighten children, but to let them know the seriousness of this disease. The teachers too joined the children in cleaning the school garden and the surrounding. It was a motivation to see teachers and children joining hands to fight this giant threat. Almost all CFCDPs had this program. We intend having this more frequently to prevent dengue mosquitoes from breeding.



Distribution of school books

At the beginning of each year, NCML provides school books and all other necessary stationeries to all the children who participate in the CFCDPs. This year too children from all schools received books and other school supplies. Children were happy to receive books, pens, pencils, bottles and so much more as they realize this lessens the weight on their parents. Stationery is an expensive component for any

parent. May it be in villages or cities, parents do spend lots of money on purchase of books for their children. Distributing books for the CFCDP children is a great support for the parents who are extremely low earners. They solely depend on labor jobs which they are very unlikely to find daily. They can hardly manage 3 meals a day from their earnings. Purchase of books and other school supplies for their children does certainly upset their monthly plan. When it upsets this and the pressure is great, parents abstain from buying books and when these needs are not met, children tend to avoid school and eventually drop out of school very early in life. To avoid such unfortunate occurrences, NCML supports children in every possible way to make education their number one priority.

Children from schools supported by Compassion 575 too received books and all other school needs. Evening classes are being conducted daily. Children enjoy the activities done differently to the morning school at the CFCDP. In many CFCDPs the numbers have increased simply because of the activities that we do differently.



Workshop for CFCDP staff

Early this year, NCML called all field staff for a 2-day workshop. Almost all the staff who work at the CFCDPs attended. Its primary goals were to appreciate their hard work in the field, to teach new teaching techniques, to develop capacity, knowledge and skills, to learn from them about the challenges and difficulties they encounter in the field and to encourage and motivate them to do things differently that would change the lives of children, their families and the communities.

They were also spoken to about the spiritual growth of children and were advised to focus more on teaching Christian values through choruses, Bible stories, behavioral changes and if possible to make them memorize bible verses. There were concerns, but at the end everyone agreed to adhere to it.

The program also had group discussions, skits and games. Undoubtedly, this was a well-earned break for the field workers. They work with so much pressure and to extreme tight schedules and moving slightly away from their regular work certainly refreshes their minds. It gives them tremendous amount of satisfaction and lessens stress. The field workers not only learned new things, they also had fun at the workshop.

Success story

Sivaruban is in grade 5 in one of NCML's CFCDPs in North Sri Lanka. He lives with his sister as he lost both parents during the war. Sivaruban was an infant when his parents fled their little home with his other two siblings fearing shell attacks and all other violence that were taking place around where they lived. During their stay in jungles, they moved more than a hundred times to places that provided safety. They managed many years without being hurt until one day the entire story changed.

The final fight between the two parties way back in 2009 had been ruthless we were told. It had taken many lives, properties and left thousands of children orphaned. The fights went on until the Sri Lankan army won in mid-2009. It was a year of victory for the Majority, but the story was different for some among the minority and unfortunately Sivaruban's story too ended differently.

The couple that bravely evaded shells and everything else that came their way could not hold that last bit. Sivaruban's parents had to sacrifice their lives at the final fight. They got killed in a shell attack. Since then, it was his older sister who was then 19 had to take care of her two little brothers. Life was terrible from thereon. They moved from camps to camps and finally reached Elephant pass when the Government resettled the war victims.

Sivaruban joined our CFCDP in Elephant Pass when he was 7; studying in grade 2. He was very different from the other children. Being timid and shy is common, but there was fear in Sivaruban's face. He feared when teachers approached him. He was afraid of noises and would always select to be alone. He would walk to school without books at least two days of the week; he was very forgetful and slow in his work. The teachers said that he couldn't write from one to ten even though he was in grade 2. Basically, Sivaruban was a slow learner.

NCML began spending time with him. It took more than a year to get him to talk with us. He was a difficult client to deal with. But, as time passed by, Sivaruban became our best friend. He began building confidence in us and pouring out many things that were bottled for years. NCML staff could deal with some of the undealt issues that were disturbing him very much. One main area we identified and dealt with was that Sivaruban feared or disliked the color Red, and nobody knew why. Whenever he was given a picture to draw, he avoided using Red completely. During games, he would pick any color but not Red. This was mystifying. We were eager to know why he didn't like Red. When we spoke with him and had spent countless number of days, we figured that he had seen his parents in a pool of blood when that ill-fated incident took place. He was 4 at that time and he still remembers the incident quite well and Red most possibly reminded him of that incident and disturbed him awfully.



Sivaruban was engaged in lots of outdoor activities. Initially, none of the activities he participated in had Red in it. Later, we began introducing Red to some of the things he was doing. For example, when it came to drawing pictures, we chose pictures that didn't have Red at all, and later pictures that had a little bit of Red and eventually it increased.

Today, Sivaruban is feeling much better. We wouldn't say he has got over it completely, but he is able to handle fear. He has made lots of friends at the CFCDP and enjoys all the activities. He is seen spending time with friends and happily sharing food that his sister makes for him. The teachers and the local staff are counselling him still and helping him get over many things.

Sivaruban has improved academically as well and counselling continues and identified areas will be dealt with seriously.

