

**CARE AUSTRIA EMERGENCY INTERVENTION FOR THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN SRI LANKA – CENTRAL, PLANTATION (UVA), EASTERN, NORTH & URBAN COLOMBO (WESTERN) PROVINCES
FINAL REPORT
PROJECT OVERVIEW:**

Background:

The ongoing economic crisis in Sri Lanka has affected the most vulnerable households to an unprecedented level. This is the island nation's worst economic crisis since gaining independence in 1948. Food insecurity remains rampant throughout all provinces due to reduced production over several harvest seasons. Medicines, fuel, cooking gas and electricity have tripled if not more in price, contributing to further inflation and soaring living costs. Many families continue to have to choose which child they are able to send to school (if any), and malnutrition and wasting are on the rise amongst the younger age group. Around a third, if not more of Sri Lanka's 22 million strong population is reeling with this shock and in desperate need of sustainable humanitarian assistance. The fiscal debts that the government has historically accrued, combined with the COVID-19 pandemic that impacted tourism, one of Sri Lanka's largest foreign exchange earners, have now meant that the government is unable to hold the currency stable vis a vis the international financial markets. Food and energy price shocks due to the Ukraine conflict have also taken their toll, with the tea market, another large export industry suffering as a result due to Russia being unable to purchase. The UN OCHA Asia Pacific estimated food inflation at an overwhelming 85.6 percent over the year to October 2022.

In the North, the current economic crisis has led to extremely high price escalations, shortage of basic commodities, loss of income and communities are on the verge of facing severe malnutrition and loss of income; particularly impactful on the most vulnerable. The Northern Province is predominantly engaged in agricultural practices. The major livelihoods of the province are agriculture, fisheries, daily wage labour (primarily unskilled), micro, small and medium enterprises, and civil society and private sector employments. The country's prolonged civil war impacted this region significantly, so communities were already vulnerable when the COVID 19 pandemic hit, followed by the economic crisis. In particular, there are severe shortages of commodities, continuous power failures, shortage of all fuels (petrol, diesel, kerosene, and LP cooking gas) and lead to a situation of wasted time as people queue to secure fuel and other essential supplies.

Chrysalis has been working in Eastern province to empower women and include them in the process of inclusive governance and civic engagement. Social norms are a consideration in Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee, as when reaching female participants, it is necessary to be sensitive to cultural expectations. Chrysalis does this through empowering the community leaders, especially the women leaders. The project team engaged collaboratively with local Authority and other relevant Government Agencies to work with the 45 Community Centers (5 Community Centers in in each local Authority). Communities in the Eastern Region are badly affected by the consecutive price increase, scarcity of fuel and the continuous power cuts which have led to difficulties in securing basic commodities with severe shortages, daily power cuts, and people queuing for hours to secure essential supplies. The high dependence of communities on farming, fishing and daily wage earning worsened due to the COVID pandemic, where many jobs were lost, and small businesses through fishing and farming had to close due to economic pressures.

Chrysalis has been working in the Central, Northern and Eastern province to increase food security, but the CARE Austria project presented a first opportunity for Chrysalis to also intervene in urban Colombo, Western Province. The economic crisis has been devastating for plantation communities in the Central Province, and also those living in rural Eastern and Northern Province, with the increase in transport costs meaning higher prices all round. However, those living in the capital, Colombo and suburbs continue to suffer with the growing costs of electricity, water, house rental or for those who own their own property, transport and fuel costs. It was imperative that we include even a small group of urban project participants in our intervention, as inflation has hit very hard, and most are struggling to feed their families. Nutritious food, especially for growing children and students is only accessible at a huge premium. Families in urban Colombo need to learn to eat different sources of protein, and due to the soaring inflation, need to cut costs. This will impact growth of younger children, and lead to malnourishment and wasting. For school-going children, particularly those who are growing, stunted growth is now a norm, and students fainting, unable to last the full school day without adequate food, is now headline news. We therefore felt that it was important as a pilot project to enable 650 households from in and around central Colombo and suburbs to start home gardens, to be able to save funds while increasing nutrition in meals provided, especially to children and elders living at home. Recipients of the home gardening kit in Colombo were 90% female. This was viewed as a medium term intervention and recovery support, and preferred to dry ration distribution which in other districts, had been a one-off. Home gardening provision for those

who are most vulnerable ensures that they have access to superior vitamin and mineral-rich nourishment, in turn helpful for building immunity to the multitude of new viral infections spanning the globe.

Chrysalis Proposal to CARE Austria:

In response to the economic crisis, Chrysalis proposed the following interventions to CARE Austria, with the **overall goal of supporting vulnerable communities who are most affected by the economic crisis, food insecurity and malnutrition to cope with immediate gaps in household needs, thereby improving resilience to further shocks.** Chrysalis successfully implemented the programme in the Northern, Eastern, Uva (Plantation), Western (Colombo) and Central provinces of Sri Lanka

Project Goal:

Respond to the immediate food needs of the most vulnerable in line with humanitarian/SPHERE standards while improving agricultural production and food security by the provision of home gardening kits for most vulnerable households as an intermediate solution to the food crisis in the country.

Project Targets and Interventions:

Chrysalis was able to reach the target number of households through this emergency intervention. Distribution of dry ration packs and home gardening kits. Chrysalis distributed 2330 dry ration packs in total, reaching approximately 9500 persons through this intervention. 7435 selected households received Home Gardening Kits. In addition, as funds remained due to a favourable exchange rate gain, Chrysalis was able to donate stationery packs to 100 children from vulnerable households.

Needs Assessments and Community Contribution:

The Plantation, Uva and Central province covers Strathspey, Balmoral, Bogawana, Lethenty, Aislably Nayabedda, Dambatenna and Uva Highlands Estates. Community Development Forums (CDFs) which are a concept pioneered by CARE International Sri Lanka, where representatives of all communities on an estate meet to make decisions that ensure stakeholders have a voice and make collective decisions for problem solving in a more transparent manner. The CDF was integral to the success of the CARE Austria emergency intervention as it provided in-kind support by selecting beneficiaries, attending meetings in the divisions, organizing the distribution program and transporting the items to the most vulnerable families. Since this was an emergency intervention, it was done based on the request brought forward by the CDF, and a formal needs assessment was not done. But during the CDF meetings in all estates in Uva and Central Provinces, one of the key highlights brought forward by the estate community was related to the pressures undergoing due to the current economic crisis. Provision of dry rations packs and other support to cope with the crisis was identified as a main issue in the estate development plans in all the eight estates. The content of the dry ration pack and the selection of beneficiaries were done by the respective CDFs. A Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) was conducted in the plantation communities for a UNFPA funded project during this period, which is also applicable for this proposal. This was used for all implementation during the project duration. The data is owned by UNFPA and is pending publishing. In the North, a rapid needs assessment was conducted by Chrysalis's Emergency Task Force in consultation with local state authorities such as the District Secretariat, Divisional Secretariats, local government authorities, local civil society actors, and community leaders. The assessment identified that certain vulnerable groups were very severely affected. These groups include the daily wage earners, unemployed people, and youth who have completely lost/dramatically been lowered income, pregnant and lactating mothers, families who have children below 5 years, women-headed households, micro, small and medium entrepreneurs and employees, Samurdhi beneficiaries (low-income group defined by the government standards), elderly people who have no earnings and depend on their children and households with persons with disabilities. They are most susceptible to food insecurity in the short and long term which leads to serious socio-economic challenges including the risk of malnutrition and chronic diseases.

Sourcing for Dry Ration Pack and Home Gardening Kit – Challenges:

In this time of soaring inflation, sourcing all items was a significant challenge. To fulfil emergency needs with quality inputs was our aim. In all districts where the project was implemented, Chrysalis sourced supplies for the dry ration pack and home gardening kit from both larger suppliers and local producers. We tried our best to ensure that the dry ration pack was designed in line with the standards provided by SPHERE, World Food Programme (WFP), local health authorities in Sri Lanka and with input from the community. The nutritional flour, dhal, rice flour, soya, sugar, coconut

oil and salt were locally purchased from the wholesale shops/dealers. Chrysalis purchased the required items from various suppliers who produced in the region partly and beyond the region. Further, Chrysalis also ensured that some portion of the supplies (Largely the two flour varieties) were purchased from women entrepreneurs who were initially established by other Chrysalis projects and capable of having required quality and quantity of supplies. This created a supportive indirect mechanism that also boosted the production of the women-led organisations. While most of the required dry ration pack items were available with many suppliers locally and regionally, the price of items was still relatively high due to the cost of transportation. Chrysalis negotiated or received the quotations from fewer suppliers than usual, since many other suppliers were not willing to quote the items due to daily price fluctuations in the market as well as high transportation cost. From the received quotations, Chrysalis and selected the vendors through the procurement process and ensured that the selection of vendors is aligned with procurement guidelines. The selected vendors then supplied required items within the set period and distribution proceeded on schedule. In contrast, the suppliers for home garden items such as seeds, planting materials and compost were very limited. Further, the formal suppliers were not willing to submit the quotation due to the unstable prices and availability of seeds and other planting materials. Therefore, Chrysalis had to go ahead with a selection of suppliers from a limited number of suppliers in each region for home garden items.

Contents of the Dry Ration Pack and Home Garden Kit – The Determination Process

While Chrysalis was keen to standardize both the dry ration pack and home garden kit, we recognized that the needs of families in different areas might be different, as would the species of seeds and plants vary depending on the suitability and fertility of the land in that area of the country, plus type of access to a water source. Hence we consulted with the community leaders and the Agriculture Officers to determine the details of what would be included.

We tried to ensure that protein intake was a priority and that dry rations lasted as long as possible. Hence the inclusion of dhal and soya meat. Below is a sample of what was included in the dry ration pack in the North.

CONTENTS OF THE DRY RATION PACK

Item Description	Unit
Dry Ration / Nutritional Food Pack	
Nutritional Flour	2 Kg
Dhal	2 Kg
Coconut oil	1 L
Rice Flour	2Kg
Soya meat	500 g
Sugar	1Kg
Salt	400g

Contents of a Dry Ration Pack:



All home gardening kits included some combination of vegetable seeds, pots, tools to assist with gardening and fertilizer. In the East, Chrysalis included a 1000/= cash grant towards land preparation. In Colombo, the West, a *kathurumurunga* (*Sesbania Grandiflora* Fabaceae) plant was included, due to its high nutritional value, and taking into consideration the fact that it is able to grow in small spaces. The East included drumstick and papaw plants due to their medicinal uses. Urban dwellers in Colombo also received water cans to enable them to easily nurture plants growing on small balconies and a set of plant 'bags' that take up less room than standard pots, which they also received.

Contents of a home garden pack:



Collaborative selection of Beneficiaries

In each location, the selection of beneficiaries based on specific criteria for the distribution of home gardening kits or dry ration pack distribution was made with the collaboration of the local authorities, divisional secretariat, and in the case of the Plantations, the Community Development Forums (CDF). Importantly, Agriculture Officers were also involved in order to ensure the sustainability of home gardening. In the Northern Province, the respective Divisional Secretariats through the Grama Niladari divisions in the districts played a significant role in the selection process. The

lists of beneficiaries were initially provided by them, and then cross-checked by Chrysalis through our own monitoring mechanisms, and then confirmed them as per the selection criteria for the project, taking into consideration their vulnerability levels. When the selection was completed the list of selected beneficiary names was displayed in order to ensure complete transparency in the selection process. In the plantations, the CDF managed to select the most vulnerable members living on the tea estate by very strictly adhering to the selection criteria. After the process was complete, a name list as compiled and put up in selected locations in the four estates.

Criteria for Selection of beneficiaries for home gardening

Chrysalis used a comprehensive set of criteria across all implementing offices to assist in an equitable process for the selection of beneficiaries for home gardening. Given the precarious economic situation and the unprecedented number of vulnerable families, this was no easy task. A fair and transparent criterion was developed in consultation with community leaders and local authorities to identify the target families. Chrysalis collaborated with the community leaders and community-based organizations and mobilized through the existing programs to ensure complete transparency.

Our criteria is below:

1. Most vulnerable with very low income (less than Rs.20,000 per Month)
2. High priority given to women-headed households
3. High priority given to families who have children below the age of 5 and children who are malnourished or wasting
4. High priority given to households supporting five or more persons
5. High priority given to pregnant and lactating mothers
6. High priority given to elderly who had little recourse to other sources of income
7. High priority given to differently-abled who had little or no recourse to other sources of income
8. High priority given to those who were recently made redundant and lost jobs due to the economic crisis and also to daily wage earners who are more vulnerable
9. The recipient should not have received any support for Home Gardening within the previous 3 months. The beneficiary should have the interest to involve in home gardening
10. The recipient should be physically able to engage in home gardening and have a suitable space protected from animals (safety fencing) along with a water source.
11. The recipient should be able and willing to attend all meetings and training sessions related to home gardening.

An example of the criteria in practice in the north the following categories of the people who received assistance

Distribution of Dry food packs

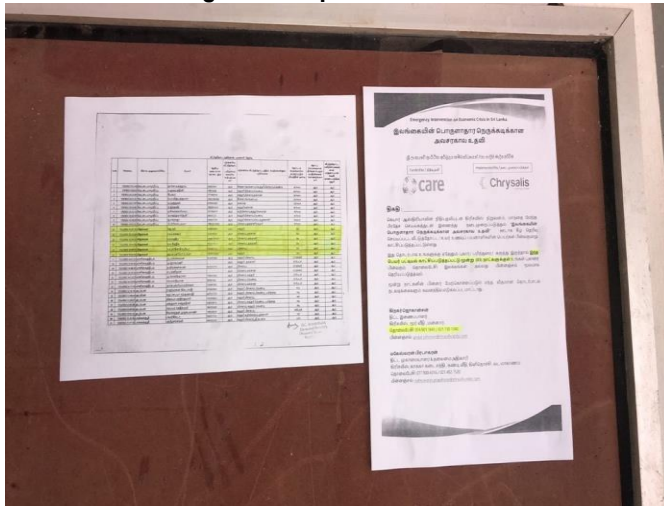
Types of beneficiaries received Dry Ration Food Pack

· Women-headed households,	330
· Elderly persons (highly dependent)	60
· People with disability	188
· Low income (Labour, Farmer, Self Employee, other business)	335
· Families who have a high no of members	29
· Families who have below 5 years old	19
· Poverty	20
· Pregnant women	69
· Lactating mothers	30
· Widows	38
· Rehabilitated	2
Total	1,120

Complaint Mechanisms

- Chrysalis set up a complaint mechanism to address the discrepancies and grievances of communities regarding the selection of the beneficiaries. The list was displayed for 7 days and after 7 days the complaints received were verified by the representatives from Community Centre, Local Authority and Divisional Secretariat, and the list was finalized collaboratively. In the plantations, the CDF Members introduced the complaint review mechanism, and displayed the beneficiary lists prior to the distribution so that if there were queries, the community was given time to make a complaint. As per the photo below, the list of beneficiaries chosen was clearly displayed on the notice board of the Grama Niladhari office. Due to potential discrepancies and grievances regarding the selection of the beneficiaries, it was essential to put in place a complaints mechanism to address this. If community member had any issues either regarding inclusion or exclusion, they were given a certain time within which they were encouraged to lodge a complaint to Chrysalis via a dedicated phone number or in person. Only after rectifying any such issues, the final list of beneficiaries was taken to start the distribution process with the support of the Divisional Secretariat Officials. In particular in the Plantations, if any community member had an issue regarding the selection process, they had been given the freedom to lodge a complaint to the CDF. After giving a certain time, the community members had put forward their concerns to be solved through the CDF. A complaint review committee was formed, the corrective actions were taken, and the new name lists were finalized and re-displayed. The selected beneficiaries were given the tokens. Another committee was formed with the vendors at the location of the distribution, to determine if there were issues related to the content and quality of the pack.

Photos illustrating the Complaints Procedure:



Training on Home Gardening

In most areas where home gardening kits were distributed, basic training on how to successfully home garden was given prior to the distribution. Participants were asked to commit to meetings and training sessions related to home gardening, and were given instruction on preparation of the land, optimizing the area available to suit the proposed cultivation, also how to prepare compost at home. Information was also given on optimal diet, protein necessity and the nutritional composition of the food. In the Eastern Province, the Agricultural Department (Government of Sri Lanka) and their agricultural instructors volunteered their time to input into the training.

Mannar Town – Awareness Session before the distribution



Collaboration and Coordination with the Stakeholders:

Throughout the different provinces, a notable feature of the project was collaboration and coordination with the stakeholders. In the case of the Home Gardening kits, they were distributed with the collaboration and the support from the Community Centre, Local Authority and the Divisional Secretariat (DS). Representatives from Local Authority (Assistant Commissioner of Local Authority and the Secretary), Divisional Secretariat (Divisional Secretary or Assistant Divisional Secretary) were present during each distribution. Chrysalis representatives spoke at the beginning of each distribution to describe the purpose of the project, inform those attending about CARE Austria's role, and stressed the need for the emergency support in the present context due to the economic crisis. Chrysalis also left contact details with participants, and assurances that we, together with the representatives of the DS Office and the Local Authority would continue to encourage, monitor and provide feedback or support to make the home garden as successful as possible. Our aim was to not only support them to meet their basic daily food needs, but to also ensure that they had a surplus and a means of income generation.

In the Eastern Province, the Assistant Commissioner of Local Government remarked while giving out the Home Gardening Kits, ***“This is a good opportunity during this economic crisis of our country to meet the needs of our food requirements since we expect that there will be problem in future to find our food. We have to be prepared to provide our food by ourselves through local production. We all have to use this opportunity to set up a small home garden to grow vegetables and fruits through this emergency support of Chrysalis”.***

Distribution Days

Distribution Days were well planned and meticulously organized. All recipients had to produce their National Identity Card (NIC) to be eligible to collect their dry rations or home gardening kits. They then had to sign off against their names on the beneficiary list. If they could not produce their NIC, a letter signed by a government authority was accepted in lieu (for example if their NIC was lost). If the recipient themselves could not attend due to bad health, they were able to send a representative on their behalf

to collect, but the representative needed to be in possession of their NIC to receive the dry rations or home gardening kit. Contents of each pack or kit were checked by recipients, and before their arrival Chrysalis staff carried out random checks on the goods ready for distribution. Recipients came by foot, bicycle, motorbike, and by shared lorry to collect their dry rations or home gardening kits.



Photos of several distribution days across the island are below:







Challenges and Lessons Learnt:

- Home gardening has a true domino effect. The home gardening kit recipients not only started their own home gardens to provide vegetables for their own food consumption, but a significant number of the participants put their own additional contribution and extended their home garden by growing additional crops to earn an income. This is became a motivation to enable others to get involved in home gardening. Government Institutions also started to provide support to promote home gardens in their communities as an emergency intervention.
- Transportation difficulties were key in hampering the easy access of those growing home crops to markets. When fuel costs finally reduce, this process will become easier.
- There were issues in beneficiary selection. Due to the ongoing assistance by other organizations in the respective areas, there were last-minute changes in the selection of the beneficiaries that occurred at the time of distribution. Further, all the organizations have been used same criteria for the beneficiary selection leaving the possibility that there were some exceedingly vulnerable community members left out. Chrysalis was able to address these changes.
- Unavailability of centralized database in the district secretariat – Chrysalis’ emergency task force found it difficult to identify the most vulnerable beneficiaries within the complex scenario which resulted from unavailability of data base and the simultaneous involvement of many other agencies in the emergency assistance.
- Extremely difficult to select only a few recipients as the need was so dire, it was essential to reach out to everyone, but impossible.
- Lack of coordination among the actors those who are engaging in the emergency assistance; there is a sad lack of a coordination mechanism among emergency actors, malfunctioning of regulated sector coordination at the local and national level.
- Selection of suppliers: Due to the price fluctuation of food commodities and planting materials, the suppliers were reluctant to show their interest. The validity of the quotation has also become very short due to price fluctuations, which does not meet Chrysalis’ procurement regulation.
- Mode of payment: The suppliers preferred a cash payment for their supplies and services which is inconsistent with the organization’s procurement and finance policies
- Fuel (especially the diesel) shortage issue poised an issue in ensuring the distribution of packs to the venues. Even though a regular fuel quota is allocated on weekly basis with limited supply of diesel (20L/vehicle), the vendors charged higher rates for their vehicle hire, which negatively impacted on the allocated operational direct/operational cost of the budget

Suggestions For future interventions:

Feedback from communities suggested that the provision of unconditional cash grants is an important support measure for most vulnerable communities. The cash supports them to access medicine, health services, transport, and education needs. A follow up mechanism could be developed jointly with the divisional secretary officials to trace back the utilization of the unconditional



grants. A similar mechanism could be put in place for monitoring dry rations and the home gardening kits. Diesel engines could be utilized for irrigation purposes, and solar systems (high cost, however, would need to be a government initiative). Support is needed from the Government of Sri Lanka and Agricultural and Farmers Associations to manage the abandoned cattle issue in relation to home gardening and crop preservation. **CASE STUDIES FROM ALL OVER SRI LANKA:**

Nilusha is 39 years old and lives close to Homagama. She graduated from high school at 18, worked at a pharmacy, and then married her husband, a soldier in the Sri Lankan Army. They have two children, a girl of 13 and a boy of 10. Nilusha’s husband is the main breadwinner of the family and is employed as a mechanic in the Army camp. “I am very happy to receive this kit because I can add to my home garden and grow more fresh vegetables with no pesticides. This is so very important for my son who needs to avoid chemicals”, says Nilusha, whose son was born with neurological difficulties and has seizures 3 – 4 times a day. Nilusha’s children attend the Army school in nearby Panagoda, but she goes to school too, as she needs to be there in case her son falls and hits his head. She continues to help support the family by baking goods for nearby restaurants and ensuring upkeep of the home garden, crucial to providing healthy nourishment, especially for her son. His drug regime allows no room for a drop in nutrition.

Sri Lanka’s nationalized healthcare system provides Nilusha’s son with his twice daily medication for epilepsy free of charge, but are only able to issue it every three months, and only for a month each time. Nilusha has to

purchase the balance drugs to ensure that her son’s neurological condition stays on track. She is currently paying 50% more for her son’s medication than she did just six months ago. Sri Lanka imports about 85% of its pharmaceutical needs. The current severe economic crisis and Sri Lanka’s depleted foreign reserves mean that free healthcare can no longer be guaranteed in practice, and many like Nilusha must buy their own medication.

Nilusha is stressed and worried that essential medicine for her son may not be available at all in the months to come. “I kept him safe during Covid-19, but now I have to work even harder to protect him” says Nilusha. Her baked goods business is no long an option, due to the unreliable supply of cooking gas, and the high price of ingredients like butter. The home garden will be Nilusha’s priority now “This is so good for us. We will use the tools for all the plants. I am grateful for the compost as it is too expensive to afford. It is so good to have 11 new seeds to plant in these 8 pots”.

Mrs. Munawwara Saliey is 51. She is a Montessori school teacher and the President of the Jayagathpura Muslim Women’s Society located in Modara, Moratuwa. She came with fellow society members Sheena, Rifka, Manseeya and

Minha to collect home gardening kits at the Thapodanaramaya Buddhist Temple in Mount Lavinia. Due to the District Office being too small to accommodate the 150 project participants, the Buddhist priests kindly agreed to allow this distribution at the Temple. A home gardening kit was also presented to the temple as a gesture of thanks. The ladies from the Jayagathpura Muslim Women's society live as neighbours and share cooking ingredients with each other as needed. They currently plant a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. As is traditional for their community, they remain mostly at home, while their husbands work at or run small shops in the neighborhood.



“Covid-19 has been a very difficult time for us as for many months all shops remained closed and we had no income. We had to manage with what we had. Fish from the sea, coconuts from the tree, and vegetables from the garden”. Hot on the heels of the pandemic came a severe economic crisis and food insecurity is now rampant in Sri Lanka, particularly affecting young children whose parents cannot now afford to give them three meals a day.

The community they live in is very poor. “The children who come to my Montessori need books, pencils, pens, but they can’t concentrate without food. Our home gardens will ensure that every child gets nourishing vegetables daily”. The Society is committed to home gardening as a way to provide a constant supply of vegetables for children in their community. They started home gardening in 2016 to allow Montessori children to have a hands-on experience in learning how to grow their own food. These were good times for Sri Lanka’s economy, but they wanted to be prepared for any situation. “When you start something in good times it pays off during bad times also,” says Munawwara smiling as she and her team prepare to collect their compost sacks, watering cans, seeds and tools. They will return to their homes to ensure that every child under the umbrella of the Jayagathpura Muslim Women’s Society is able to eat their green vegetables this week.

T. Kirogini is an estate worker of Cleveland division of Strathspey estate. Her husband used to work in a factory nearby, but now has had to go to Colombo as they had no option to cope up with the current economic crisis in the country.



“I have a son who is aged 7 years now. I lost my second child after 8 months of being born. It was a shocking moment in my life. He was diagnosed with a rare disease and passed away. I was lamenting for three long years and finally decided to have another child. Now I am expecting my third child. Since I lost my previous child I am concerned about my health and nutrition. I attend the monthly clinics in Strathspey dispensary. The midwife and the EMA always say that I am below the BMI rate. They tell me to take more protein items. I barely remember a day that I had any meat items. Whenever we bring chicken, fish or eggs, we give them to our child who is also under weight. I fear my own health and the unborn child. But my priority is to take care of the child I have now. We make sure to get green leaves for our daily meals. But sometimes during rainy days, it is hard to look for them. Normally we eat rice or roti alternatively. Our choice and range of food have been limited as we cannot afford to buy any luxury food items.

We used to get Triposha (A nutrient supplement) through the midwife during the pregnancy period. But now she says that there are no allocations given by the government. So we barely had nutritious meals during this period because of the fact that the income is insufficient to spend on nutrients. When the child’s school necessities, bills, expenses on medicine and debts are settled we left with nothing to save. During such a period, provision of a nutrient pack was

a God given gift. I thank the Community Development Forum in taking the initiative to help people like us.”

T.Kirogimi (25 years)
Estate worker (Strathspey estate)



Krishnasamy Anitha is a 25 year old lactating mother living at Thandiadi in Thirukkivil in Ampara District with her husband and three sons aged 8, 2 and 2 (twins). She faces huge difficulties in managing their day to day life with inadequate income and no stable employment. They have stopped the cultivation due to the price increase and the present economic crises. Now her husband is involving in lagoon fishing to manage the daily expenditure of her family but the income he receives from the fishing is not enough for them. She supplements breast milk with bottled milk for her twins since due to inadequate nutrition she cannot produce enough for both. She spends Rs 1,650 for 350 grams of milk powder every day to feed her children. Her older son's education is difficult to

manage with this low income due to this economic crisis and the price increase. One of her twins is malnourished, so she must buy vitamin, medicines and nutritious food for him but she is unable to, since the income is not enough for their daily meals.

“The price of the medicine and the tablets I use to buy is increased due to the present economic crisis. I am much worried about my children. The eldest one is going to school but the other 2 are small. One son is very weak; he should be 12 Kg in weight, but he is only 9.5 Kgs. The doctors prescribe the medicines and suggest the nutritious food. Earlier we had regular income the price was not high, and we were managed to get it for them but now we are unable to buy them and every day I worrying about my son.” She is one of the beneficiaries of Chrysalis and received assistance for starting the home gardening –with inputs such as vegetable seeds, tools, sprayer, compost fertilizer, plants which are very helpful – as she extends the vegetable garden she has started in her garden. She is confident that this will help, and hopes to gain some income from the surplus of vegetable. She further thanked Chrysalis and said ***“I am much happy about Chrysalis who provide this support for the Home Garden. I have a small garden in my land -- I hope that I can get vegetables for our daily consumption after 2 months and I can earn a small amount of income from the surplus.”***



“I began home gardening with the encouragement of Chrysalis, and before I started, I used to spend 6000 rupees per month on vegetables. Now, I am spending less than 2500 rupees per month to buy vegetables. I also share my produce with others when they need vegetables, and I have sold 5kg of beans from my garden. Overall, home gardening has dramatically reduced my expenses on vegetables.”

Suresh Kanthi, Balmoral Tea Estate, Central Province



Sampasivam Rathithevi, 32 years old, living in Kayathri village in Thirukkovil with her husband and her 11 years old Son. She is the pregnant mother and expecting her 2nd child. Her husband is working in Pradeshiya Saba as a laborer with inadequate income to manage his family. Earlier he was working for 5 days in a week but now the days are limited and he cannot go to work regularly because of this prevailing economic crisis. She has huge challenges feeding her family. Earlier they had 3 times meals per day with fish or meet with vegetable and green leaves but now they eat at most 2 x times per day due to this present economic crisis, and sometimes the children go to bed hungry. She said taking a long breath ***“I used to manage the family based on the***

income of my husband but now I face difficulties to manage with in the income of my husband since he is unable to go for work daily and the price increase due to economic crisis. We have to buy the things for food on loan from the shop and the amount of loan is increasing day by day. We don't know how we can settle the loan within the income we receive now. We have spent Rs 5,000 per week for the food before 6 months but now we have to spend more than Rs 12,000 per week for food. And also, we bought 20 Kg of rice for Rs 3,500 but now we buy for Rs 6,200 and the price is increasing day by day.” Now Rathithevi feels worried about the unborn baby. The Doctors advise her to eat more fruits and prescribe some nutritious tablets for baby, but she has no money to buy them. She needs Rs 4,650 per month to buy the tablets, but she borrows the money from her relatives and neighbors for her unborn baby. ***“I have dream about my unborn baby, but I don't know what will happened to my unborn baby because of the problem I face due to lack of income and the price increase”*** She is happy about the support for starting home gardening by Chrysalis and said ***“Chrysalis is providing me the support for starting home gardening. They provide vegetable seeds, tools, compose, hand sprayer, plants and Rs 1000 money for preparing the land will be very helpful to us to manage our day today food as well as to earn small amount of income from the surplus. I am much interested to engage in home gardening. Since I am pregnant, I can get the support from my husband to engage in home gardening. This is the urgent need for the people in this prevailing economic crisis. We all have to thankful to Chrysalis and this type of support to meet our emergency needs.”***



“In 2018, my husband and I were able to earn a good income from farming and used it to build our house and buy a motorcycle. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to receive fertilizers for our crops, which led to a significant decrease in yield. Despite spending all of our savings on the cultivation in the hope of good results, we only earned 2 lakhs for the second quarter of 2020, which is equivalent to 66700 per month. While this allowed us to live a comfortable life and buy the goods we needed for 25000 per month, in 2022 second quarter, we only earned 75000, the lack of a good harvest in the last quarter meant that, which was not enough to cover even the cost of labor, fertilizers, and seeds.

Previously, we could afford nutritious meals and even gave our children an egg to eat daily.

However, due to the economic crisis caused by the fertilizer ban, we are now only able to give our children eggs once a week. The prices of household goods have also skyrocketed, and I have had to mortgage all of my gold to the bank. My husband and I are under much stress because of this crisis, and I fear that I will not be able to feed my children in the near future. I am also worried about being able to afford their education and have decided not to pay their tuition fees. As a mother, I am particularly concerned about the household situation. I know that women are more stressed than men during this crisis because it is not easy to provide nutritious meals for our children”

Priyanthi, Plantation, Uva Province

Manoji is a 55 year old farmer. She and her husband have worked their own small paddy (rice) field for over 30 years. **“I know a good plant when I see one,”** Manoji said, examining the drumstick (moringa oleifera) plant that was part of the Home Gardening Kit distribution in Maharagama. Drumsticks have been grown in Sri Lanka for centuries, and are a valuable part of a nutritious diet. They are packed with anti-oxidants and contain 7 times more Vitamin C than an orange and 15 times more potassium than bananas. **“There are so many health benefits when we are given such good plants and seeds. What a blessing. We have the climate to grow whatever we wish”.**



The main challenges Manoji and her family face in their home garden are the annual floods from the Kelani River that water-log their property and harm their crops, as do monkeys and porcupines who are an unwelcome constant. **“Having more pots is good as it is easy to move them around in times of water rising. We are so grateful in this time of hardship to get useful things like this”.** Manoji hopes that being able to use the compost to plant the 11 different seeds given in pots will help her family survive this year when the floodwaters rise. The economic crisis has meant that prices of tools and utensils have soared. Their garden hoe broke last year and they cannot afford to replace it. Her husband and she will now use the shovel and rake provided in the home gardening kit to remove weeds and harvest root crops. When floodwaters rise each year, the couple

find themselves in dire economic straits. The current economic crisis has caused rampant inflation so they can no longer rely on being able to buy fish and meat. Vegetables and pulses are their main source of nutrition, so a home garden is a crucial

asset to struggling small-holding farmers in their community **“As we get older, we must also eat well to protect our health. Plants like drumsticks, long beans and wing beans will help us as we go forward”.**

Kandaiyah Sivapalasingam has become a successful farmer in the recent past at Tharmakeny in Pachchilapalai division in Kilinochchi District. He is 56 years old and living with his wife Mrs. S. Kokulavayhani having 3 children. Both are working on their own farm, and used to earn around Rs. 45,000 as a monthly income before crisis. He has an acre of land which he uses for vegetable cultivation such as cereals, root crops and leafy vegetables. Since the economic crisis hit, he is unable to do his cultivation commercially. As an alternative, he allocated a small plot of land as an effort to do a home garden to survive the economic crisis. Upon receiving Chrysalis’ home gardening kits which include vegetable seeds and other planning materials he has started to cultivate. Stray cattle are still an issue, and the lack of fertilizer or electricity connection/fuel to operate the irrigation pump. **“Agriculture is my occupation and passion. I learned a lot from my experience. In the past, I have been able to earn decent income and able to manage needs of my family. However, now we are miserable about our future. The assistance I got from Chrysalis has enabled us to look at the farming as small scale home gardens. I believe that it will help us to get organic and nutritional food for our consumption to cope with the current crisis”.**



Mehaladevi is 53, and has earned a living as a seamstress in the Eastern Province capital of Ampara since her early twenties. Her elderly mother lives with her, and she supports her siblings and their children too. A traumatic childhood with her father’s early death is now behind her, but the current crisis has been devastating. The economic crisis means less orders for clothes; Mehaladevi’s income is now inadequate to take care of her family, and she has started home gardening to help with cost management. Medical expenses have soared, and the family needs to save every cent. Chrysalis’ home gardening package complete with seeds, tools and money for land preparation, means that Mehaladevi can scale up the home garden, sell her produce, and generate an income. **“With my little garden, I will keep myself occupied. This will help me forget the awful memories of the past, and help me to look toward a happier future,”** she says.

D.Chandrakala is an estate worker living in Uva Highlands estate is a mother of four children. Her youngest child attends the child development center, and her family was chosen as a beneficiary to receive a nutrition pack worth Rs.6,500.00. Her husband is a daily paid worker in the vegetable market in Bandarawela town. They have received a plot of land from the estate to construct their house but due to financial difficulties construction has been halted and they live in a temporary shelter that gets flooded during the rainy season. Due to this situation it is hard to find food for their children. *“My husband can save only about Rs.10,000.00 from his salary because in each month we must pay debts. There had been days we have we all went to bed on empty stomachs because there had been nothing for us to eat I got to know from the child development officer my youngest child that the CDF of Uva Highlands is choosing beneficiaries to give away nutrition packs. Thanks to this initiative we have been able to have a balanced diet for a few days. There were chickpeas, rice, dhal, samaposhha packs, a bottle of oil, red rice, and wheat flour. My children have not had a piece of meat or at least a piece of dry fish for more than one month. As soon as I saw the packet of sprats in the pack I gave them for dinner. I was in seeing my children enjoy the meal after months of deprivation. I have been receiving complaints from the midwife as well as the*



child development officer that my youngest child is underweight. I'm left with no option but try to provide as much as possible for my children but the prevailing condition in the country makes it extremely difficult for people like us to provide a balanced diet for our own children. I thank the CDF for taking this initiative for helping people like us when the whole country is in a crisis.”

N. Sudharshika aged 19 is a pregnant, non-worker in Dambetenna estate. She got married to a bus-conductor and resident of this estate and settled down here, living with a 5-member family. Her husband lost his job as the fuel prices increased and the owner of the bus found it difficult to continue with the service due to the economic crisis.

“When my husband lost his job, he became a three-wheel driver. He used to transport the visitors to Lipton’s seat. But now there are only a few visitors coming here. Also, there are only a few rides that he gets as the rentals also have increased. And with the limited fuel quota he had to spend most of the hours staying in long queues for days. So on average he used to get a profit of Rs.500.00 a day which was not cost effective at all. Yet we had no choice but to continue with this job.



We had a debt of Rs. 40,000.00 to be paid to the shop nearby. My husband spent most of his day lamenting over the fact that he cannot provide for me during my pregnancy. He was reluctant to leave me alone, so he engaged in several odd jobs in Bandarawela. But our debts, difficulties expanded and that’s when my husband decided to move to Colombo looking for a job. He was offered a job at a tyre company in August. It was an emotional and physical separation and August was the most difficult month. As he was on probation, he received only Rs. 20,000.00. This was

barely enough to secure the expenses at home while spending on necessary vitamins for me. During such a difficult time, we received a nutrient pack worth of Rs. 6,500.00. It had almost all the nutrients that a pregnant mother would need. This was enough for 10 days. My husband had a sigh of relief when few days as I had proper meals for few days”

- N.Sudharshika (19 years)
Non worker (Dambetenna estate)



Apilan Kobika is expecting her first child in autumn. The thought of the future fills her with worry and anxiety. Apilan's homeland of Sri Lanka is suffering from a severe economic crisis that has brought the country close to collapse. Inflation has risen sharply. Basic food prices have skyrocketed. For people like Apilan, this means that they can hardly buy food because it has become unaffordable. In a distribution in the northern province of Vavuniya, Apilan received two kilograms each of flour, rice flour and lentils, one liter of coconut oil and one kilogram each of sugar and salt. This is a great help for Apilan and her husband who works as a day laborer in agriculture. The economic crisis is making it increasingly difficult for him to find employment. Fuel has

become very expensive and is scarcely available, and as a result, agricultural production has also declined. The couple are concerned about the cost of delivering the child, as the two have hardly any reserves of savings. **"We had to sell our two dairy cows to make a living,"** says Apilan. **"We could no longer afford the cows because the prices for feed have risen so much."** Apilan hopes for further help. **"We need this support as long as food is so scarce."**

Soundary Leyam Sebamalai gave birth to her first child at the age of 26. Shortly after giving birth, she became paralyzed. Over the years she began to lose mobility in her left fingers. Now she is 63 years old and cannot walk or use her left hand. The grave economic crisis in Sri Lanka makes their already difficult life even more difficult. The 63-year-old used to run a small grocery store. The curfews during the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in major financial losses. The current severe economic crisis made the situation worse, and she finally had to close her business altogether. **"Our lives are severely impacted as we have almost no food and little access to basic necessities** says Soundary. Her husband is now the only breadwinner in the family. The day laborer helps fishermen separate the catch from the nets and clean the fishing lines. He earns LKR 500 (approx. EUR 1.40) two to three times a week. "His earnings are so small; we can hardly meet our basic needs. **We somehow manage to nourish ourselves, but I can feel my health deteriorating rapidly due to the lack of nutrients in our meals,"** says Soundary. Due to high inflation, the family cannot buy meat and vegetables. Because the money is barely enough, Soundary even had to pawn two of her necklaces. She doesn't believe she will be able to get them back. Her doctors believe she has an autoimmune disease. This greatly affects her own mobility, but also that of her family. She is heavily dependent on her daughter who lives nearby, as is unable to cook or manage her own toilet needs.



Above: Soundary receiving her Dry Ration Pack

54-year-old Ravichanthiran Ravimathi explains with much delight that she has also been a project participant of Chrysalis's



Emergency program. Ravimathi received the home garden package, including seeds, tool kits, and cash for land preparation, just a month ago. As a businesswoman and farmer, previously, Ravimathi was focused on running a small eatery and seasonal other filed crop cultivation and her family responsibilities. She could get an income of Rs. 10,000/- per month from the eatery business. She used 1.5 Acre, two seasons per year, cultivating Ground Nut, Maize, and Cowpea and getting an income of Rs.50,000 bi- annually. But, the Emergency Program, Ravimathi said, made her aware that she could earn a higher income or at least cover her food consumption in this economic crisis if she spent time and energy making a home garden. In 2019, she lost her husband, Vairamuththu Ravichanthiran, to a heart attack. She had lived all her life with the four children. After her

husband's immediate death, while she took all the responsibilities and started life as a single parent of 4 children, COVID -19 impacted her badly in 2020. Due to the country's frequent lockdowns and health concerns, she could not continue the eatery. Then only her daughter started to go to work. When the situation returned to normal from the impact of COVID, the eatery shop started again. While she continued it, the country's economic recession also affected her business badly, and she could not continue due to the increased prices of goods and services. The income from the eatery shop also stopped, and the masonry work has not been prioritized during the crisis, her son didn't get frequent work and the income was reduced by Rs.4000 per month. The income they get monthly is not enough to meet their food expenses. Ravimathi worried that she couldn't feed her children with nutritious food, so she provided the food with the available items. She was confused with the continuous burden affecting her and feared her children's future. But, Ravimathi strongly believes in cultivation and home gardening as a livelihood priority. At least, she can cover their food consumption. **"Since 2019, it has been the worst period of my life. Chrysalis gave me something to focus on and a meaningful way to find some happiness through home garden assistance."** Ravimathi says.

Jasalini Nona is 49, and a mother of two girls, aged 22 (starting an Engineering degree at Ruhuna University) and 15 (at school)



Her 52-year old husband works in the textile shop in Ampara District, but Jasalini earns a daily wage at a sugar cane garden. Their joint income is 25,000/= monthly, and they are hard hit by the economic crisis. "We have less access to nutritious food and essential items, but educational expenses for our daughters have gotten higher" she says with anguish. Chrysalis identified Jaslini's needs, and the home gardening kit provided will enable her to make family food consumption a priority, with 12 varieties of vegetables. "I am eager to cultivate the home garden, and will able to get the vegetables for own consumption and rest can be used to get a little income, which we'll be able to send for daughter's education" said Jasalini Nona

Additional Photographs:

Home Gardening Kit recipients from all over the country sent us photographs in the 3 months post-project completion to show us how their home gardens were thriving. Here is a small selection:



CARE AUSTRIA STATIONERY SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN FROM MODERA, MORATUWA

Wednesday, February 1st, 2023

Under the CARE Austria project, stationery supplies consisting of a large transparent folder containing exercise books in different sizes, three pens in black, red and blue, along with a pencil and pencil case were distributed to 96 children from 8 under-privileged schools in the Modara, Moratuwa area, a suburb of greater Colombo.



Jayagathpura Women's Society several of whom participated in our home gardening distribution in November 2022, requested Chrysalis to help the children of their community. We were happy to be able to include them under our emergency response programme. The children will use their new books and pens when they begin the new school term in April 2023, after the New Year celebrations. The cost of these items has increased by more than 3 times due to the economic crisis, and many parents are unable to bear the cost, and therefore children are dropping out of school. Chrysalis is very pleased to be able to empower youth in this regard.

Stationery packs were prepared for all 100 children (49 boys and 51 girls - aged between 5 – 18 years old), however 4 were absent due to illness and will collect their packs later. We hosted the children at our office premises and a small box of refreshments was provided for all, and a milk-based drink. The children gave a speech and sang for us in thanks.