

Raising buffalo to enhance the income of widows and their families in Pottuvil (Phase 1)



Buffaloes managed by widows, Pottuvil, Sri Lanka © R. Mahindapala

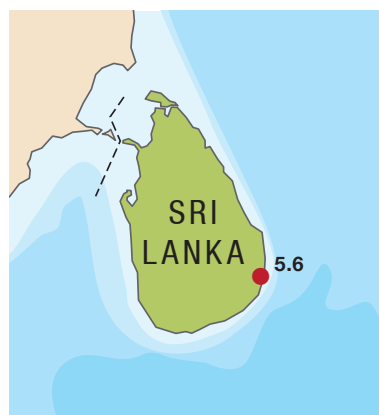
ing standards of widows and families headed by women. In 2007, LDDFA received 30 buffaloes from GTZ (German Technical Cooperation), and in 2008 another ten from the UNDP Small Grants Programme, for widows in Pottuvil to tend. LDDFA secured a small grant from MFF to buy eight more animals and help another eight widows. Through this grant, LDDFA aimed to raise the living standards of these women by giving them a productive asset which they could use to earn extra income.

Target beneficiaries

Families headed by women, in particular eight selected widows, in the Pottuvil area.

Outputs

- ▶ Identification of beneficiaries with assistance from the Pottuvil Divisional Secretary.
- ▶ Training of beneficiaries in buffalo rearing, milking and marketing of dairy products.
- ▶ Construction of a shelter and protective fence around the buffalo farm.
- ▶ Purchase of eight buffaloes, with the herd increased to 23 animals by the end of the project.
- ▶ Active participation by local government through periodic check-ups by the local state veterinarian.



LOCATION

Pottuvil, Sri Lanka

PRIORITY POWS

- Sustainable Livelihoods

DURATION

Six months

MFF GRANT AMOUNT

US\$4,374

Objectives

The objective of this project was to raise the living standards of families headed by widows and other women by providing them with buffaloes for milking (dairy) purposes.

Background

Most of Pottuvil's mainly Muslim population depends on fishing, livestock rearing and small business enterprises for its livelihood. Pottuvil was affected by the long civil unrest in Sri Lanka, and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami killed many local men fishing at sea. These events left large numbers of women, mostly widows, as the heads of their families.

The poverty of these families and their communities, especially in the coastal areas, forces them to depend heavily on the surrounding coastal vegetation for fuelwood and other necessities. To address poverty and reduce the pressure on coastal resources, this project aimed to empower widows and female heads of families by establishing a buffalo farming enterprise.

The Livestock Development Dairy Farmer Association (LDDFA) of Pottuvil was established in 2003 with the goal of raising the liv-

Accomplishments and challenges

The project established a well-managed and profitable buffalo breeding unit. Widows were trained in buffalo farming and became actively engaged in farming activities. They gained skills and confidence in marketing dairy products and managed to generate extra income for their families. Eight widows were introduced to a part-time income-

generating occupation, and as a result each earned an additional monthly income of LKR 1,000 (US\$9).

The project managed to put in place a satisfactory arrangement to market buffalo milk. The monthly milk production, an average of 500 litres, fetched an average income of LKR 17,000 (US\$150). A litre of milk fetched an average price of LKR 34.22 (less than one US dollar).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Contributions to cross-cutting themes

Gender equality

This project was targeted at women, giving them a chance to earn additional income.

Lessons learned

Training courses provide an opportunity to raise women's confidence in carrying out income-generating projects.