

Building capacity of schoolchildren as a forerunner to sustainable mangrove ecosystem conservation initiatives (Phase 1)

Building the capacity of schoolchildren, Phase 1, Sri Lanka © Visura Development Foundation



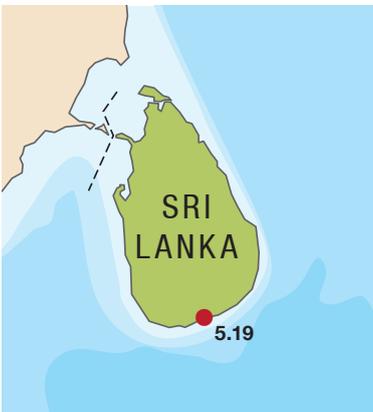
sought to enhance awareness of mangrove conservation and its importance among children in the town of Ambalantota.

Target beneficiaries

Schoolchildren from Ambalantota Maha Vidyalaya school in the RUK area.

Outputs

- ▶ Delivery of awareness programmes for 50 students on identifying uses of mangroves by the community.
- ▶ Delivery of sessions to guide document preparation for 50 students.
- ▶ Delivery and facilitation of group presentation sessions on mangrove management for 50 students.



LOCATION

Rekawa, Ussangoda and Kalametiya (RUK) area, Sri Lanka

PRIORITY POWS

- Civil Society Engagement

DURATION

Two months

MFF GRANT AMOUNT

US\$2,680

Objectives

This project had three main objectives:

- ❶ to enhance awareness among schoolchildren of mangroves, their uses, and sustainable consumption and conservation methods;
- ❷ to help GCE A-Level students conduct research projects on mangrove ecosystems; and
- ❸ to enhance students' capacity to promote environmental awareness by sponsoring activities on mangrove conservation.

Background

The RUK area is associated with rich mangroves, but increasingly these are being damaged by the activities of both visitors and residents. Since mangroves are an important part of the coastal ecosystem, it is vital to raise awareness among communities of their ecological roles and values. Recognizing that no one absorbs information or carries a message better than schoolchildren, this project

- ▶ Delivery of an awareness programme on mangrove species and the value of environmental management for 25 students.
- ▶ Delivery of awareness programmes on the uses of different mangrove species by rural communities for 25 students.
- ▶ Delivery of a programme on simple project proposal writing for 25 students.
- ▶ Establishment of a school environmental management unit with 50 students.
- ▶ Increased capacity within the school environmental management unit.
- ▶ Organization of an educational tour for 14 students.
- ▶ Organisation of art and essay competitions.
- ▶ Mounting of an exhibition for the project completion meeting.

Accomplishments and challenges

After conducting various awareness programmes and establishing a school environmental management unit, the target schoolchildren are now much more aware of the importance of mangroves.

Challenges

One disadvantage was that the project was a short one and coincided with the end-of-year school exams, so students could not give it their full attention. Further, the school selected for the project was in an underdeveloped area and suffered from a high level of student absenteeism.

Contributions to cross-cutting themes

Communications and gender equality

The students participated in art and essay

competitions, and mounted an exhibition for the project completion meeting. The project targeted all schoolchildren irrespective of whether they were boys or girls.

Lessons learned

Awareness can be raised in younger generations by stimulating schoolchildren's interest and passion for the environment through art, essay and public speaking competitions, and by encouraging them to discuss the importance of mangroves with their families and communities. The project successfully changed children's perceptions through awareness programmes highlighting the importance of conserving their local environment.

Awareness programmes need to be scheduled carefully to avoid conflicts with important dates in the school calendar, for example avoiding exams.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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