Sustainable livelihood development for low-income families in the Puttalam lagoon area

Objectives
The project had two main objectives:

1. to develop the skills and knowledge of 40 underprivileged women from all ethnic groups living next to Puttalam lagoon; and
2. to improve the socio-economic status of 40 families through the introduction of environmentally friendly alternative livelihoods.

Background
This project focused on enhancing the livelihoods of women from 40 low-income families living in the vicinity of Puttalam lagoon. It aimed to increase women’s self-confidence and empower them economically through awareness programmes on gender equality and human rights, and through the provision of loans for small business ventures.

Target beneficiaries
Forty low-income families living in the Palavi area of Puttalam.

Outputs
- Establishment of two women’s organisations.
- Delivery of awareness programmes on the importance of the local environment.
- Delivery of awareness programmes on gender equality and human rights.
- Organisation of an educational trip.
- Delivery of four training events on business-related topics.
- Active engagement of 40 women in business ventures.
- Establishment of a revolving loan fund.

Accomplishments and challenges
Women were empowered to build a livelihood for themselves without needing help from the men in their family. Such women’s development activities often have far-reaching impacts extending beyond the boundary of the household.

Contributions to cross-cutting themes
Gender equality
This project targeted women, helping to empower them economically.

Lessons learned
To ensure the sustainability of projects aimed
at supporting underprivileged communities, it is essential to involve community members in project design, seek their cooperation in every activity from the outset, and give them responsibility for the project’s success.

Also important is giving participants space to solve problems and manage conflicts amongst themselves without outside interference.

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