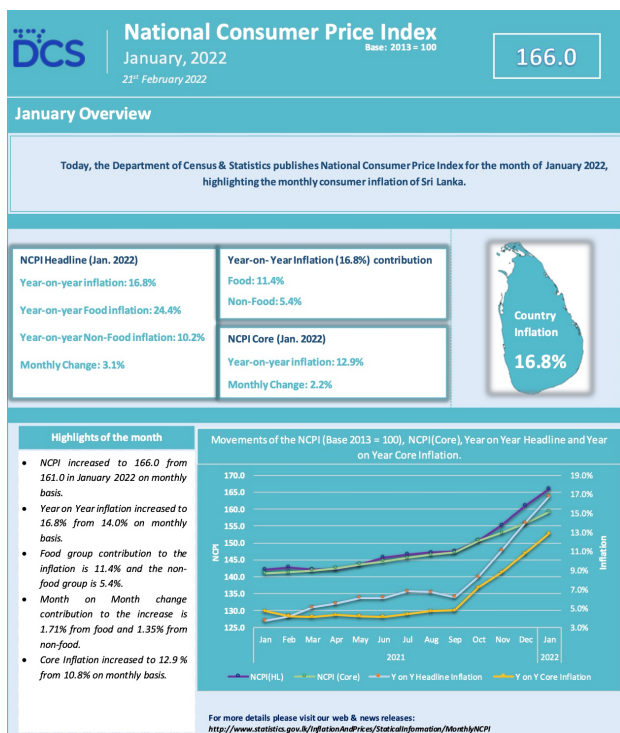


WE ARE ONE- *a Sarvodaya Initiative*

Reinforcing Sri Lanka’s Existing Social Protection Mechanism By Ensuring Food Security At Selected Vulnerable And Marginalised Communities Within The Sarvodaya Movement’s Network Accompanied By A National Mass Media Campaign ‘WE ARE ONE’ (360°) To Sensitise And Inspire The Public to Help and Care For Each Other During Trouble Times

Context

Being a lower middle-income country Sri Lanka in the recent past had set benchmarks in the region for its health and social indices. However, due to many contributing factors such as poor governance, fiscal and economic affairs, heightening geopolitics in the region, Sri Lanka is currently experiencing a downward spiral bringing forth negative outcomes severely affecting multiple dimensions of social protection and welfare. The pandemic has already highlighted gaps in the current Social Protection and Welfare systems also bringing about fresh challenges.



Currently there is a mounting household food insecurity crisis amongst the low-income and vulnerable communities (due to a short-sighted fully organic agriculture policy and banning of chemical fertiliser and pesticide in the island: indirectly due to the present dollar crisis) amidst a deepening economic crisis resulting high rates of inflation (16.8% NCPI, 2022 Feb 22)ⁱ and high cost of living. The prices of essential supplies, medication and other basic requirements fluctuate (mostly increase) almost on a day-to-day basis. The economic downturn is affecting severe

challenges at both micro and macro-economic spheres trickling down to the socio-economic and political life of the population. The effects are heavily felt by the most marginalised and disadvantaged, non-affluent populations. Inflation has affected philanthropic endeavours. Typical self-reliance systems have been affected resulting people to people charity drives declining and typical self-reliance support networks being disrupted . In this backdrop Civil Society and Humanitarian Actors are currently bracing and strategizing diverse initiatives as non-affluent, marginalised, and vulnerable groups are already taking a devastating toll.

A recently conducted UNICEF survey (2021) notes that *'Loss of income or lowering of income is compensated by reducing food intake at household level'* and this has a direct impact especially on the country's population of children particularly from marginalised populations. A 2020 report of the Ministry of Finance indicates that 500,000 people were pushed into poverty in 2020ⁱⁱ. By 2022 we could only project that this will increase due to the declining economic situation in the island. Like in most places globally, Sri Lanka is equally experiencing an emergence of the 'new poor'. Lack of social protection/welfare coverage when they lost their jobs or sources of income especially due to the negative effects of the pandemic is making things difficult for people and communities living in disadvantaged/vulnerable populations.

Guided by Sarvodaya's purpose to *'build a just, sustainable and a compassionate social order that fulfills the basic human needs of the community through individual and collective awakening'* and its decades of experience in facing crisis, Sarvodaya has vigilantly weighed the importance of immediately interfering in three different ways in responding to the looming crisis. At the short and mid-term Sarvodaya's initiative and response to the crisis will revolve around ensuring food security and safeguarding vulnerable children and communities in carefully selected geographical locations. Parallely Sarvodaya will implement a national level media campaign to sensitize and inspire the public utilising mass media and social media inspiring people to help each other at this time of crisis. In the long run Sarvodaya will be looking at mid- and long-term solutions to ensure these communities are resilient to the economic pressures and shocks and will be introducing fitting programmes in the scope of conscious economics.

Sarvodaya Response : Short-Mid Term

A) Community Kitchens (CKS) based at Pre-Schools /Child Development Centres – High Priority

Immediate food insecurity has already impacted the growth of children at both rural and urban low-income household levels. Although there is no formal study carried out on this regard, Sarvodaya through its network has gathered primary data on child growth through the local MOH divisions and it indicates the on-set of a food insecurity crisis due to shortages as well as affordability caused by inflation (e.g.: Lankagama MOH). The below table will depict the process in which Sarvodaya has planned to establish CKS at the Pre-School level. The goal of establishing CKS is to directly address growth deficiencies in Children.

Intervention: CKS

Mode of operations

# No of Beneficiary Hubs	Responsible Unit	Operations	Resources
5000 Pre-Schoolers, i.e., 110 Pre-Schools/CDCs that require support to run a nutrition programme and establish Community Kitchens (110X50 Each =5000 pre-schoolers)	Sarvodaya ECDU will take the lead in gathering primary data as well as assessing the actual requirements of pre-schools based at Sarvodaya Shramadana Society level. FOD will cooperate with logistics ECDU will prepare updated guidelines on the operations of Community Kitchens based at pre-schools.	- Special attention will be given to select Low Income area –with a special focus on the estate and urban sectors. -Prioritise at places that doesn't have an existing Nutrition programme. -Possibly connected to a Sarvodaya Shramadana Society (SSS) (management and sustainability of programme at community level will be ensured by the SSS)	Sarvodaya will provide an initial investment for utensils/other support to establish the CKS

		-ECDU will develop Weekly ration/food menu counting the necessary caloric requirements and craft a guideline on cleanliness, food prep, nutrition, rationing, best practices etc.	
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B) Community Food Banks (CFB) – Short to Mid Term

Sarvodaya through its network of Sarvodaya Shramadana Societies (SSS) will identify communities residing in Rural, Urban and Estate sector that would require support in terms of essential food rations. The CFB will have a dual purpose, i.e., to function as a donation receiving centre as well as to function as a re-distribution centre for families that require essential supplies. The rationale is to feed the most vulnerable people at least a meal a day and to leave no one behind in this time of crisis.

Intervention: CFB

Mode of operations

# Of Beneficiary Hubs	Responsible Unit	Operations	Resources
25 Community level Food Banks will be established at the Sarvodaya District Centres	<p>Sarvodaya Field Operations and the Shramadana Societies Unit will collaborate to manage the CFB programme</p> <p>They will gather primary data and select relevant SSSs.</p> <p>Network with local CBOs. (<i>replicating</i></p>	<p>-will ensure that Low Income areas are properly identified with least target errors.</p> <p>- Estate sector will be prioritised as national nutrition indicators show a steady decline of nutrition indicators in this sector.</p> <p>- CFB will run both as a receiving and a distribution centre</p> <p>- Hygiene/storing advice etc will be shared with SSSs that opt into the programme.</p> <p>- The Food Bank will hold a certain quantum of essential food items which will be made into</p>	An initial investment for utensils/other support will be provided by Sarvodaya mainly to establish the centre for operations

	<p>CSO response for C19) with the help of HQ based mechanism</p>	<p>standard family packs (nutrition balanced) to be distributed amongst the needy families in each hub.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -SSS connection is important to ensure sustainability of the programme. - SSS will design/customize a ration pack fitting the consumption pattern of the area (E.g: Estate Wheat). - Ration should fulfil necessary caloric intake and suffice a family of four for a week. - SSSs/District Centres will reach out to business personnel and well-wishers in their local areas to expand the operations. - Sarvodaya will establish a transparent stock keeping and issuing system to maintain accountability and fair distribution of resources. 	
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C) Promoting Home & Community Gardening (HCG) – Short-Long Term

In partnership with eco-initiatives such as Thuru and other eco-partners Sarvodaya will promote home and community gardening in both urban and village settings. This initiative will target at the short, mid, and long-term targets and bring about a sense of community fellowship while educating school children of the importance of food security. The tree planting project will not only function as a mere activity but also one that would boost the community confidence as well as inspiring children in times of crisis and to bring about a sense of communal responsibility and celebration opening their minds to look beyond the crisis and to prepare them for a resilient future. Part of the plants and seeds will be sponsored and supplied by Sarvodaya to initiate the programme

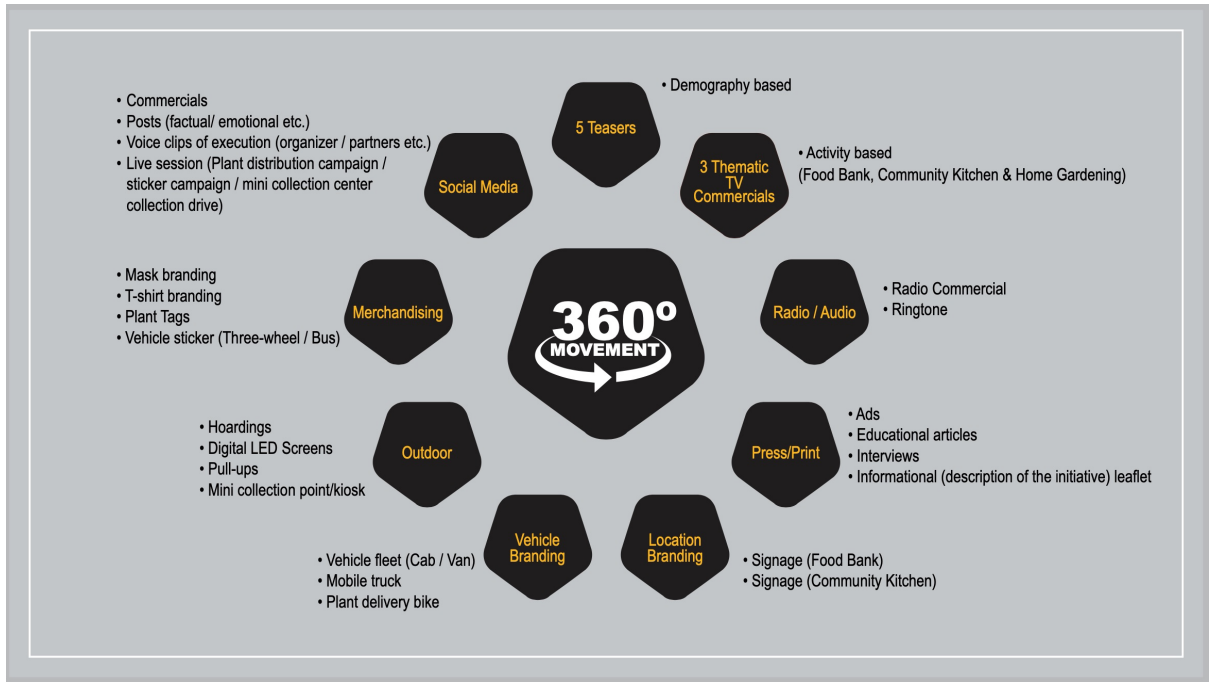
while requesting communities to contribute to the programme in their own capacities, i.e., saplings, seeds, labour to run community gardens etc.

Intervention: HCG

# Of beneficiary communities	Responsible Unit(s)	Operations	Resources
400 Home Gardens i.e., 50 HG per district * 08 districts Communities / SSS, Schools	Sarvodaya Resource Development Unit, FOD, Sarvodaya Shramadana Societies Unit Will gather primary data and operationalise the project at community level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - THURU will provide technical inputs and design an info pack - Selection of fitting Annuals and Perennials suiting the geographical area/eco-system of the communities - Operationalising a Seed distribution and Seed saving initiative - Organic Fertilizer and stimulant production at community level - Promotion of EM and green housing technology at community level to increase existing crop yields and the planned ones for Yala cultivation season. 	<p>Sarvodaya will hand over a selected number of plants to each SSS.</p> <p>-Communities will contribute and pool plants and seeds (<i>given that we inspire them to do so</i>)</p> <p>Sustainability must be ensured by local SSS</p>

D) Communications Plan : A National Media Campaign - 360° - Short-Mid Term

Sarvodaya in consultation with an established media company has extensively brainstormed to design a national mass media campaign coine as “**WE ARE ONE**” and is in the process of finalising a well-structured communications programme . It utilises a 360° approach reaching out to all types of media i.e., television, radio, print, hoardings, mass digital displays and social media audiences.



While tapping and capitalizing on the socio-cultural values Sri Lankans largely believe and look upon (*the importance of sharing, caring and dāna-alms/ freely giving*), this media campaign will inspire and stimulate audiences to take care of each other as well as to deeply see themselves in the life circumstances of those who require their care and support through these trying times with the intention of stimulating them to contribute in whatever way they could. The campaign will have a main tag line statement 'WE ARE ONE'.



The campaign will be launched with a teaser just before the Sri Lankan New Year (07th April 2022) and campaign-proper will be launched soon after (20 April 2022) as the team has given due consideration to the media reach landscape festival periods. Sarvodaya is delighted to showcase the designed media campaign to potential donors and well-wishers for their review.

The campaign will mainly:

- Adopt a fitting storyline and messaging to communicate the importance of the three key activities planned for the Food Security programme: namely the Community Kitchens, Food Banks, and Home/Community Gardening.
- It will tap into the emotions and values of the population while inspiring them at a moral scale reminding that they should take care of each other and help each other.
- It will have a unique trilingual tag line and a logo
- Key material will be video clips customised to different media and platforms
- All material will be produced in trilingual format
- Social Media (Facebook and Instagram will be the key platforms to communicate)

There is much to explore and intervene in the front of Sri Lanka's Social Protection System. However, due to the current economic crisis even the beneficiaries of the existing formal social protection system are facing hardships and the majority that requires support are not even included in the formal system. High rates of inflation and food insecurity are worsening the living conditions of the most vulnerable and marginalised communities especially children in their growth cycles. Sarvodaya's immediate attempt is a rapid response to address some of the challenges faced by communities in addressing their most basic requirement i.e., Food Security. With limited resources this is an attempt to intervene and stand tall with communities' shoulder to shoulder in these trying times bringing them a glimpse of hope for the future and to leave no one behind.

E) Social Protection Research Programme

Is presented separately as a Research Proposal (Managed by the Sarvodaya Institute of Higher Learning) and not in the interest of this proposal.

Last updated on 12 April 2022/Udf

References:

ⁱ <http://www.statistics.gov.lk/InflationAndPrices/StaticInformation/MonthlyNCPI/NCPIInfo2022E>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.treasury.gov.lk/api/file/0b7d1935-6235-4156-97b6-752d6a8039d0>

[FOD- Field Operations Unit; SSS – Sarvodaya Sharamadana Societies;](#)