

City Official's Workshop Report

Kurunegala City

Held on March 11<sup>th</sup> 2013

At

Blue Sky Hotel

Kurunegala

Sri Lanka

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## **1. Introduction**

An increase in the number of people moving to urban areas, population growth and lack of government planning and investment, has led to an increase of informal settlements and overcrowding in existing settlements in Sri Lanka. With no secure tenure of land, many poor people have no affordable alternative but to illegally occupy government land, leaving them vulnerable to eviction. Sri Lanka's urban informal settlements are characterized by poor quality housing and inadequate water, sanitation, drainage and solid-waste infrastructure, resulting in pollution, ill health, and poor social wellbeing.

Women living in urban poor settlements in Sri Lanka engage in some form of income generation activity. They are considered as Home Based Workers and characterized by small scale in operation, unorganized and engage in primitive stage of entrepreneurial activities. They also have few social protection mechanisms and networking with mainstream micro and small enterprises. HBWs are neglected and marginalized in service delivery as majority of them are not identified in mainstream enterprise development services due to scale of operation.

To uplift the livelihoods of HBWs, project intends to link them with local livelihood support schemes and also to facilitate dialogue with city officials to include home-based workers in the city's decision making processes and policies that affects their living environment as well as the livelihood. In light of above city official's consultative workshop was organized in each project location.

## 2. Planning

City officials work shop in the Kurunegala city limit was planned to held at the “Hotel Blue Sky” on 11<sup>th</sup> March. Government officers and Non-government officers who work related to Home Based Workers and community members from each slum area divisions were invited as the Participants.

As of Moratuwa program government officials were not willing to attend the program unless central government consent is obtained. As such the director general of Economic Development ministry was invited as the chief guest.

## 3. Participation

Commissioner of Kurunegala Municipal council including medical officers of health and public health inspectors, Assistant Director of Planning from Divisional secretariat and field officers including Samurdhi development and Grama Niladhari representing two main government institutions and representative from government and nongovernment organizations participated the program. Participation from the government organizations was ensured by inviting the Director General of Economic Development Ministry as the chief guest. List of attendants mentioned bellow.

- Mr. Dhamma Disanayeka. - Director General, Ministry of Economic Development.
- Commissioner of the Municipal council - Kurunegala
- Assistant Planning Director – Divisional Secretariat office Kurunegala
- Community development officers of Divisional Secretariat Kurunegala
- Samurdhi officers

- Grama Niladari in Related divisions.
- Medical officers of health in Municipal council.
- Chief Public Health Inspector and other Public Health Inspectors
- Community Development Officers in Health section in Municipal council
- Graduates from divisional secretariat office.
- Other NGO Officers.
  - Kantha Sanwardena Padanama
  - Human Rights Organization
- Community members from five divisions (AmmanKovil para, Wilgoda, Melkanda, Meleriya Layma, Galwala)
- Project manage and officers of Janathakshan

#### 4. Agenda of the program

Time	Schedule
09.30-09.35 am	Welcome speech
09.35-09.40 am	Lightning the oil lamp
09.40-10.10 am	Introduction about the project – Mr.Prasad Rathnayeka, Project Manager
10.10-10.25 am	Morning Tea time
10.25-10.45 am	Address the audience- To present the survey results of the Home Bases Workers in five divisions in the kurunegala city area.
10.45-11.05 am	Addressing the gathering by assistant planning director divineguma, Divisional secretariat office Kurunegala.

<b>11.05-11.25 am</b>	Address the audience by Mr.Dhamma Dissanayeka, Director General, Ministry of Economic Development.
<b>11.25-11.45 pm</b>	Presenting ideas by other officials
<b>11.45-12.30 pm</b>	Open discussion and planning future events
<b>12.30pm</b>	Winding up the program, Thanking speech and the Lunch

## 5. Proceedings

As planned, the program was started at 9.30 am on 11/03/2013. The venue was the Hotel “Blue Sky” in the Kurunegala city. Program commenced with lighting the traditional oil lamp.

Then the audience was welcomed by Project Manager, Mr. Prasad Rathnayeka. He initiated the addressing with an introduction to organization and program. Mr. Rathnayake explained the objectives of the project with the relevance to HBWs in Kurunegala. He further added the activities carried out by the project with future scope. Participation of other government and non-government institutes in carrying out the project intended activities was highlighted in the later part of the address by emphasizing the importance of recognizing HBWs as contributors to the local and national economy.

Following the introduction to the project, findings of urban study in Kurunegala was presented. It covered infrastructure, livelihood and other social issues faced by HBWs in Kurunegala. Five urban poor settlements were included in the survey namely Wilgoda, Amman Kovil Road, Melkanda, Meleriya Layma and Galwala.

Key points discussed in the presentation mentioned below

Infrastructure related issues:

- Squatter families unable to obtain electricity connection and water connection.
- Less water accessibility during drought
- Higher elevated areas cannot get water properly
- Flooding in “Wilgoda” settlement
- Poor access roads
- Poor sanitation facilities in Wilgoda and Malaria Layma settlements

Social Issues:

- Drug addiction and alcoholism reported.
- Mosquito borne diseases (dengue)
- Insufficient space for HBWs
- Branding as slums cause social stigmatization

Business Related Issues:

- No proper marketing facilities and exploitation by the middle men
- Restrictions on street vending and unavailability of other options (HBWs products are sold in street by other vendors)
- Business registration cannot obtain due to illicit dwellings
- Financial difficulties

- No proper marketing facilities and orders are less for HBWs.( Especially for sewing and food processers)

## **6. Plenary discussion**

After the presentation, assistant planning director of Kurunegala divisional secretariat has proffered his ideas regarding the project and possible areas of working together. Especially there will be a possibility of livelihood related capacity building for HBWs through Divi Naguma program during 2013.

Key note address was made by Mr.Dhamma Dissanayeka, the Director General of Economic Development Ministry. Addressing the audience he presented the importance of local knowledge and self-employees in local and national economy. He added that better coordination of Government, non-government, Private and civil society organizations will play a key role in addressing the issues of HBWs and urban poor communities. As such this project can play a leading role in engaging all concerned parties to engage in development discussion. He emphasized that forming a coordination committee will play a vital role in working together for addressing issues and accordingly commissioner of Kurunegala Municipal council was appointed as the chairperson of the committee.

Samurdhi officers have mentioned that their authority is implementing various programs targeting self-employees in urban poor settlements. Loan schemes are implemented for micro enterprises initiated by individuals or groups of poor in the community. They further mentioned that organizing in to group is one key factor for obtaining all the services they provide for poor families. It was also emphasized that working as pressure groups is important to eliminate issues and to improve their income generating activities.

One important business linkage opportunity came up from two medical officers participated the program. They mentioned that there is a scarcity of medical envelopes in the market so paper bag producers in the city can exploit the opportunity. Project will facilitate the discussion between two parties in following year of the project.

Project next year plans were then discussed with the plenary by introducing the need of addressing infrastructure needs of urban HBWs. Organizing HBWs to work as a team was one main area discussed. Even the health issues like Dengue and other contagious diseases in the city can be solved if people work together to address them and pressurize the service provision by various organizations on the same.

#### **7. Out comes emerged / Possible solutions**

- Formation of a coordination committee with representatives from Government organizations, non-government organizations and leaders of HBWs was one of the main agreements made at the end of the program. Commissioner of Kurunegala Municipal council will take the lead role in coordination committee proposed and it will consist of assistant planning director, medical officer of health, public health inspector representatives from other non-government organizations, Janathakshan staff and leaders of HBWs. Mandate of the committee will be formed in the next quarter.
- Working with paper bag producers to capitalize the marketing linkage mentioned by Medical officers of health in producing medical envelopes.
- Divi Neguma program will focus on small enterprise development in 2013 thus opportunities will be created for HBWs to get livelihood development support.

As such project needs to work closely with Assistant director planning to channel the services.

## **8. Conclusion**

City official's workshop was able to generate an understanding on HBWs in the city has among the government organizations who provide various services. It further facilitated a discussion on infrastructure, livelihood and social issues faced by HBWs and possible solutions to address them. As a result positive attitude towards the HBWs was developed and some rapport with city officials created.

As a result it was proposed to form a coordination committee as well as organizing HBWs in to groups thus will be able to voice out their needs in a strong manner. IUP project will facilitate the engagement in initial stage then handing over the ownership to community and government representatives.