



Evaluation Report

'Sustaining and Nurturing Rural Agro-Industrial Social Enterprises (SUNRISE) Project'

Submitted to
Oxfam in Sri Lanka

Submitted by
Independent Evaluator



PASS Asian (Pvt) Ltd
www.consultant.lk

67A, Thalawathugoda Road, Pitakotte, Sri Jayewardenepura, 10100, Sri Lanka

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Evaluation Team
February 2021

Affirmation

“Except as acknowledged by the references in this report to other authors and publications, the findings, conclusions and recommendations described herein consists of Oxfam’s own work, undertaken to evaluate the ‘Sustaining and Nurturing Rural Agro-Industrial Social Enterprises (SUNRISE) Project’ to find out the impact on women’s economic empowerment in Fruit and Vegetable, Handloom and Spice sectors in Sri Lanka and to learn lessons for future programs as a part of the requirement of Oxfam’s Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning System.”

Primary quantitative and qualitative data collected throughout the evaluation process remains the property of the communities and families described in this report and thus must be utilized only with their consent as well as Oxfam in Sri Lanka.

Evaluation Team
Oxfam Colombo, February 2021

Abbreviations

DAP	Differently Abled People
DAP	Differently Abled People
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience
DSD	Divisional Secretariat Division
EDB	Export Development Board
EDB	Export Development Bank
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practices
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LoP	Life of Project
LOP	Life of Project
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MSCS	Most Significant Case Stories
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NEDA	National Enterprise Development Authority
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
RCA	Root Cause Analysis
SME	Small and Medium sized Enterprises
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SUNRISE	Sustaining and Nurturing Rural Agro-Industrial Social Enterprises
TOR	Terms of Reference
WEE	Women Economic Empowerment
RMB	Results-Based Management
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDC	Mobile Data Collection

1. Executive Summary

Sri Lanka is a lower middle-income country in need of support to transition into a more competitive, inclusive, and resilient stage. The entrepreneurs in the country have a greater potential in contributing and defining new heights in the economy of Sri Lanka and female, youth and the differently abled labour force has a massive hidden capacity which is yet to be explored. It can be comfortably stated that Oxfam's SUNRISE project epitomized the impact which a Non-Governmental Entity can create in the livelihoods of the rural population as well as the economy of the country.

The project was implemented from 2017- 2019 covering four geographical areas in Sri Lanka, namely, Batticaloa, Kegalle, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu. The right holders' (traditionally named as beneficiaries) sample included a very inclusive set of right holders representing all genders, ethnicities, economic and social statuses etc. SUNRISE project focused on three main areas of enterprise namely, handloom, fruits and vegetables and spices. These were selected based on Oxfam's earlier experiences in the country. The benefits provided by the project were multi-faceted and very need oriented at the same time.

The group of right holders included 540 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) which consists of 250 women and 290 men, farmers and employees and employers from the four locations. Oxfam worked very closely with the local organizations the government authorities and tailor-made the programs to suit the community. The duty bearers and stakeholders who partnered in the project were of a background where they had a sound understanding of the needs and the potentials of the right holders. With the awareness sessions, trainings, job fairs and exhibitions, exposure visits, in-kind grants and other types of support provided by the project it was able to retain an imprint in the localities.

Through all the above interventions the project had been successful in attaining its major objective which is Women's economic empowerment through sustaining and nurturing a viable group of women-led enterprises in targeted value chains capable of uplifting and empowering the lives of poor women and their families.

The main purpose of the final evaluation is to determine the impact of the project intervention on beneficiaries as well as determine the extent to which the objectives have been met against specific indicators and targets.

The specific areas of the evaluations were to assess the overall performance and progress trend against the project objectives and expected results, to assess the relevancy, effectiveness, efficiency and impact as well as the sustainability of the overall project and assessing the specific intervention areas, to document and provide feedbacks on challenges and lessons learned and to make recommendations about the project, including appropriate adjustments to project implementation mechanism and potential replicable and scaling up strategies.

Oxfam has decided to obtain the service of an external consultant to design and facilitate the final evaluation process. Accordingly, PASSAsia was selected as the external

consultant for this evaluation to take over mentioned activities in the evaluation TOR. The quantitative evaluation commenced in March 2020 and the qualitative analysis arranged in October 2020. Evaluation process was delayed due COVID 19 pandemic situations.

The project had been successful in improving the knowledge on quality assurance, strengthening local and international markets, providing help to farmers to obtain 'Good Agricultural Practices' (GAP) and 'Good Management Practices' (GMP) certificates, increase income and increase the financial capacity to reinvest and providing support on preparation of business plans. Most importantly the project catered to women by introducing 15 'Gender at Workplace Guidelines' and introducing the root cause analysis which stimulated putting gender at workplace into perspective.

Women have the capacity of being phenomenally successful both as entrepreneurs and employment generators. When given the right training they are progressive in adopting new technologies to create maximum outputs. While managing the household economy women can manage a separate mean of income and provide for the family at the same time. So, the correct result-oriented guidance and assistance is the requirement to capacitate the women workforce towards contributing to the economy.

In terms of implementation of the project, there were two major incidents which affected the smooth flow of activities. One being the Easter attack which took place in April 2019 and the Covid-19 global pandemic in 2020. Although these two instances were major blows to the economy of the country, SUNRISE project had endured both the situations.

This project is a good model for Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) interventions in Sri Lanka however Oxfam must further align it to face the challenges of new normal. Specially this project model is highly relevant to Sri Lanka at this time to support WEE as a rehabilitation response for COVID-19 pandemic impact on MSMEs in regional areas.

2. Introduction

2.1 Oxfam

Oxfam is a global movement of people who are fighting inequality to beat poverty together. They strive to; save and protect lives in emergencies, work with people to build resilience capacity and rebuild their livelihoods and, because people want lasting solutions, Oxfam campaign for genuine, durable change. Oxfam International was formed in 1995, this is a confederation of 19 independent charitable organizations to maximize efficiency and achieve greater impact to reduce global poverty and injustice. The name “Oxfam” stands for Oxford Committee for Famine Relief and was founded in Britain. Currently they are working in more than 90 countries, with thousands of partners, allies, and communities. (Oxfam International, 2020). Oxfam has over 20 years of experience working around the livelihoods in Sri Lanka. Their focus areas in Sri Lanka are **economic justice, gender justice, disaster preparedness and humanitarian aid**. In addition to these, another two important themes inspire all their work: **Peace building** and **right to be heard**. To achieve their objectives, Oxfam supports strong civil society actions, networks, and partnerships. (Oxfam In Sri Lanka, 2020)

2.2 Description of the Project

Sustaining and Nurturing Rural Agro-Industrial Social Enterprises (SUNRISE) Project (2016 -2019) has its **overall objective as “Women’s economic empowerment through sustaining and nurturing a viable group of women-led enterprises in targeted value chains capable of uplifting and empowering the lives of poor women and their families”**.

Fruits and Vegetables (in Vavuniya - Mullaitivu), Handloom (in Batticaloa) and Spice (in Kegalle), were the selected sectors which are capable of uplifting and empowering the lives of poor women and their families. This project continues to work around key market sub-sectors that are not only commercially viable, but also ones that can benefit women. Ensuring that women are empowered, and their roles are promoted in value chains with an emphasis on the roles that women play outside work in the household. The challenges they face in their lives as farmers, entrepreneurs and workers are recognized as being deeply affected by their life cycles, social issues such as gender discrimination and gender-based violence (Inception Report, 2020)

2.3 Specific Objectives

- Economic empowerment of women in up to four districts of Sri Lanka
- Enhanced employment creation and incomes for women
- Strengthened value chains of four agro-industrial sectors.
- Stronger policy making on MSMEs, including market resilience, right to resources and women’s economic empowerment.

2.4 Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

The main purpose of the final evaluation is to determine the impact of the project intervention on beneficiaries as well as determine the extent to which the objectives have been met against specific indicators and targets.

3. Description of the Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation was undertaken by employing the following mixed method approach based on the evaluation objectives and requirements of the information.

1. Quantitative and qualitative secondary data collection through a rapid desk review
2. Primary quantitative data collection mainly via Beneficiary Questionnaire Survey using KoBo Collect mobile data collection technology.
3. Qualitative primary data collection through Key Informant Interview (KII), Most Significant Change Stories (MSCS) / Case Studies and Objective Observations of physical evidence related to progress and performances of beneficiaries.

3.1. Data Collection

Type of data	Method of Quantitative Data Collection	Method of Qualitative Data Collection		
1. Primary data	Beneficiary Survey 4 DSDs in Batticaloa, 3 DSDs in Kegalle, 4 DSDs in Vavuniya and Mullaitivu (n= 398)	MSCS	KIIs (n= 21)	Objective Observations (n= 44)
2. Secondary data	Desk review covering SUNRISE introductory presentation, MEAL plan, TOR, other project documents provided and websites of related stakeholders and organizations			

Table 1: Methods adopted, and tools applied in the evaluation.

For the entire evaluation process 463 people participated. Details of the evaluation respondents are presented the table below.

	#	Male	Female	Total
Beneficiary Survey		188	210	398
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	21	11	10	21
Objective Observations	44	20	24	44
Total participants for Beneficiary Survey, KIIs, MSCS and Objective Observations		219	244	463

Table 2: Details of total evaluation respondents

3.2. Designing Tools

3.2.1 Beneficiary Survey Questionnaire

A Beneficiary Survey questionnaire was prepared based on the objectives of the evaluation and variables set up in project and the type of information required as per the project MEAL plan (Appendix 01: SUNRISE Evaluation ToR), its intended utilization, and knowledge on the population on which information was gathered. Both Sinhala and Tamil languages were used with the intention of assuring effective communication among enumerators and the project right holders. (Appendix 02 SUNRISE MEAL Plan).

Using KoBo Toolbox open-source technology platform, both Sinhala and Tamil medium Beneficiary Survey forms were converted into a digital format with easy-to-use instructions for enumerators. This was completed by a team of KoBo Toolbox certified technical experts. Several technical pre-tests were performed with the confirmation that

the Sinhala and Tamil medium forms are synchronized for database accuracy. (Appendix 03 – Evaluation Inception Report with Tools).

3.2.3 KII, and MSCS Guides

Open-ended questions were formulated as guides for consultants to facilitate key informant interviews and MSCS. These documents were in English language since the team of consultants were capable in managing the task in English, Sinhala, and Tamil languages (Appendix 04: Initial Data Collection Schedule, Appendix 05: Case Study Guide and Appendix 06: KII Questionnaire Guide)

3.3. Sampling Procedure

3.3.1 Beneficiary Survey

Initially a sampling frame was requested and then the choice of the sample was planned. Stratified random sampling method was decided upon to represent all districts. The sample size was proposed to make sure the 95% confidence interval and the 5% of margin of error. Since this is the final evaluation 100% of the Life of Project (LOP) was taken as the beneficiary population in selected districts. In the evaluation process 398 sample surveys were completed in all districts. The table below shows the statistically significant sample size for each district and the sector. The study was able to exceed the sample size planned and secured the reasonable database. (N = relevant beneficiary population and n = sample).

District	Vavuniya	Mullaitivu	Batticaloa	Kegalle
Beneficiary MSMEs	N = 150 n = 108	N = 150 n = 108	N = 150 n = 108	N = 150 n = 108
Sector	Fruits and Vegetables		Handloom	Spice
Beneficiary MSMEs	N = 300 n = 169		N = 150 n = 108	N = 150 n = 108

3.3.2 Qualitative Data Collection

Upon the request of the consultant, Key Informants and the MSCS sample was provided by Oxfam representing locations and different categories such as government sector, private sector, partner organizations, and community and Oxfam staff. Based on them further discussions and interviews were facilitated by PASSAsia.

3.3.3 Most Significant Case stories (MSCs)

Three consultants for three districts were committed to conduct this tool to the purpose of cover the Most Significant Case Stories, specifically in all districts. Consultants used MSCs questions only as a guide. Discussions were facilitated by asking probing questions based on the answers provided by respondents with the objective observations to get a clear understanding.

3.3.4 Objective Observations / Site Visits

A team of consultants was committed to practice this tool. However, in addition to the formal observations by consultants, enumerators were also advised to obtain physical evidence (such as equipment and instruments provided by Oxfam, documentations etc.) as and when required to make sure the accuracy of the data and their reliability. Objective observations were done in all possible visits including livelihood and small business activities, farming activities, handloom activities etc. As per the preliminary

findings of the beneficiary survey consultants visited both randomly selected and purposely selected beneficiaries to have a detailed observation on how they are performing home gardens and livelihood activities. Beneficiary surveys excel database was imported from Kobo toolbox and Data analysis were done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). (Appendix 07: Details of the Methodology).

4. Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability

Project implementation- Geographical Coverage

This project covered four districts in Sri Lanka (Batticaloa, Kegalle, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu)

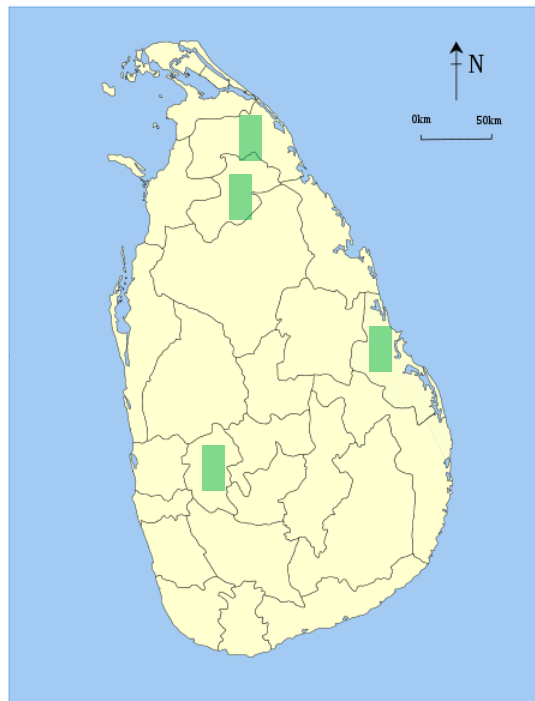


Figure 1: Project Locations in the District Map of Sri Lanka

The outcomes and the main activities of the project are as follows.

Outcome 1 - Women and men will increase their income by 20% through improvements in quality and quantity of products they produce in the handloom, fruits and vegetables, and spice sectors. Increases will be seen in beneficiaries' business turnover, savings, and financial capacity to reinvest in their businesses.

Outcome 2 - Women and men will increase their skills in entrepreneurship, business operations and access to markets and services.

Outcome 3 - Families, communities, workplaces support an inclusive and gender-just economy.

Outcome 4 - Enable and facilitate women's participation in MSMEs by influencing national and regional policies that affect WEE and MSMEs.

In achieving the above outcomes, the project main activities are presented below.

- The project worked with 540 MSMEs (250 women and 290 men, and strengthened their knowledge and capacity in production, quality assurance of goods, provided access to local and international markets and financial programmes.
- 240 commercial farmers applied for the certification in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) out of which, fruits & vegetable farmers obtained the certification and were offered a premium price for their produce, Further, 9 SMEs applied for Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) certifications, of which 5 MSMEs obtained the certification. This enabled them to reach high end national and international markets.
- Income increases by 25%, among 19 women owned SMEs and 36 men owned SMEs in all three sectors. In addition, average income increase of LKR 5000 per month was evident among the employees of handloom.
- Financial capacity to re-invest from savings increased to an average of 2 million among 30% of SMEs in the spice and handloom sectors, which led to 218 employment creations (including women and men) in all 3 sectors, and emergence of 27 new SMEs in the handloom sector. Evidence shows that, women’s involvement in the value chain has increased in the all-3 sectors.
- Market linkages - 20 MSMEs and approximately 150 farmers from the fruits and vegetable and the spice sectors were able to access new markets.
- Development of 15 “Gender at the workplace Guidelines” has encouraged 10 MSMEs to incorporate workplace ethics and gender in their regular activities at workplace.
- As an intervention to strengthen the capacity of partner institution staff, 486 National Enterprise Development Authority (NEDA)/SME officials, agriculture, economic development and ‘Samurdhi’ managers were trained by Oxfam to develop business plans, marketing, branding, and packaging. Most of the officials have improved their competency to develop a quality business plan, coaching, and to provide business related support to the SMEs in Batticaloa and Kegalle because of it, the trained officers coached 45 micro entrepreneurs on business plan preparation.
- 5 divisional level enterprise forums were conducted in Batticaloa and 4 district level enterprise forums were conducted in Kegalle and these platforms were created for MSMEs to voice their issues collectively and developed a system to monitor the progress.
- Officials from the Eastern provincial administration received awareness about the root cause analysis (RCA) concept and assessment findings. They are now willing to work with Oxfam in the future on RCA and to incorporate gender & WEE concepts in their budgeting. Thus, enabling and facilitating women to participate in MSMEs in all 3 value chains.

Overview on the sectors

Handloom Sector in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's Handloom Industry dates to several years. The tradition of handloom weaving has been brought down from generation to generation in the country. Handloom industry in Sri Lanka is a highly labour intensive, export oriented, rural based industry. This industry mainly consists of small and medium scale producers. There are some large-scale manufacturers too. The Sri Lankan handloom industry is clustered, particularly in the Western, Eastern, North Western and Southern Provinces. The Western Province has a major share followed by the Eastern Province and Central Province. The industry provides employment opportunities to around 15, 000 individuals which includes a remarkable number of women in the country. (S.A.G.Samanthi, 2017) Women have a huge potential in contributing to the economy through handloom sector.

In terms of sustainability, the environmentally conscious production process, and social inclusion within the weaving communities are the key driving forces. Although handloom sector is one of the most sustainable enterprises in Sri Lanka which ensures fair trade, the innovation and growth is greatly hindered by the structural barriers presently existent. (Wanniarachchi, T., Dissanayake, K. and Downs, C. 2020).

However, this is a sector with far stretching prospects of business expansion, employment generation, innovation, and export potentials. Therefore, given the correct training, resources, and market orientation this is a sector which can create a huge impact to the Sri Lankan economy through the involvement of females. Handloom is a low-risk endeavour in which women can easily engage in within their homestead while balancing the other household responsibilities.

From the inception of the industry, this was considered as an industry driven by the rural womenfolk this might be due to the delicacy associated with the designs. However, it is a labour-intensive industry which consumes less utilities so it is one of the many industries which can be used to put the household female labour to productive economic use.

Spice sector in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka produces a range of spices, Cinnamon, clove, vanilla, ginger, pepper, nutmeg, cardamom, ginger, and turmeric. Over 90% of these products are being exported to the main end users. The little island is most famous for the unique variety of cinnamon grown on its shores. Sri Lanka's climate is well suited to the cultivation of certain spices. The low cost of labour in rural Sri Lanka is a competitive advantage in production of spices.

Even though spices is a sector with greater economic potentials there are some weaknesses pushing down the production levels, such as lack of; commercial cultivation, transportation and storage facilities, industry standards, awareness of quality standards among the producers, cultivation of high yielding varieties, awareness to new technological advancements for products development, information availability to the farmers level regarding the prices, markets and quality requirements and funds to technology upgrading.

The spice sector is dominated by smallholders, with over 70 percent of the cultivated land being smallholdings and home gardens cultivating on less than one hectare of land. Although this might serve as a major drawback in expanding the cultivation, this is a good opportunity to mainstream female labour into the economic process. The Department of Export Agriculture too have planned projects to promote the home gardens where women empowerment is given priority. Although the spice sector is a sector with a high level of division of labour, at the field level it is evident that men and women have the capacity to be involved in the whole production process independently regardless of their gender. The initial processing of spices is an exclusively female job. Also, the value addition to spices is an activity which can be easily undertaken by women amidst their household chores. Furthermore, female labour is specially sought for in certain tasks like stalk separation in cloves which needs delicate and patient involvement.

Around 15,000 people are directly involved in the Spice sector and currently thirteen plantation companies are associated with the sector. (EDB, 2012)

Fruit & vegetable sector in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a country blessed with a tropical climate and a geography that suits a variety of agricultural crops. It has been supplying a range of tropical fruits, nuts, and vegetables to the world. Produced by autonomous clusters of farmers, around eighty different varieties of fruit and vegetables are grown in Sri Lanka's varied agro-climatic areas. Annual production of fruits and vegetables is 900,000 metric tons and Sri Lanka exports both fresh and processed varieties to many destinations in the world. **Processed food fruit & vegetables sectors** have been identified as a high potential sector in the world due to the high demand from the end consumers and for value added products in the world market (EDB, 2020).

Northern Province contributes significantly to the food production of the country. About 167,000 farm families are engaged in food production activities, and most of them had been affected by the prolonged 30-year war. Female-headed households are prominent in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. Interestingly women continue to engage in the agricultural activities even in the absence of their male counterparts. Presently those families have gradually increased their food production activities. Crops such as paddy, subsidiary food crops, fruit crops, vegetables are cultivated in the Province. There is a big requirement to increase the food production within the Northern Province incorporating environmentally friendly technologies and techniques to become self-sufficient in food. The farmers need to get adequate income from their farming activities by transforming their subsistence farming to commercial farming.

The cost of cultivation can be reduced by introducing appropriate farm machineries and technologies. (Wigneswaran, 2020) And also the introduction of new labour efficient machineries is the best option to channel more female man-hours to the sector. Furthermore, the fruit and vegetable preservation technologies have a larger scope in terms of involving women in the sector. Women can easily get involved in activities like production of jam, cordial like products from fruits and the packaging, desiccating of vegetables.

Although some major strides have been made in terms of gender equity since 1990, complete gender parity will not be realized for 99.5 years according to the World Economic Forum. Gender inequalities costs the development in three facets: reproductive health, empowerment, and economic status. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rates, empowerment is measured by the proportion of parliament seats occupied by females and males aged 25 years and older with at least some secondary education, and economic status expressed and measured by labour force participation rate of female and male populations aged 15 years and older.¹

From the above aspects, the economic status is an aspect which can greatly be improved through an intervention. SUNRISE project had been able to address the issue to a certain extent. The project was set forth with the overall objective of; Women's economic empowerment through sustaining and nurturing a viable group of women-led enterprises in targeted value chains capable of uplifting and empowering the lives of poor women and their families.

In ensuring the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project, initial understanding on the gender gaps is important. Upon identification of the gaps, policies and programs should be designed to address those gaps.

A woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on economic decisions. In this regard to succeed economically, woman need the skills and resources to compete in markets, as well as fair and equal access to economic institutions. And to have power to agency to benefit from economic activities, women need to have the ability to make and act on decisions and control resources and profits.² The policies, strategies and programs should be designed to bridge the gaps in gender. For this project intervention, the following specific objectives were set to be achieved with the completion of the project.

- Economic empowerment of women in up to four districts of Sri Lanka
- Enhanced employment creation and incomes for women
- Strengthened value chains of three agro-industrial sectors.
- Stronger policy making on MSMEs, including market resilience, right to resources and women's economic empowerment.

Oxfam had been successful in achieving the overall objective with the target group leaving space for improvement. As the project is being implemented the benefits had been biased to the female entrepreneurs who are providing a substantial contribution in place of the poor entrepreneurs and families.

The economic empowerment is well ensured, and the results had been quite effective as the entrepreneurs have had two major blows to their enterprises: one being the Easter attack and the other the Covid-19 pandemic.

¹ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>

² Understanding and Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment, Definition, Framework, and Indicators, Golla AM et al.

The sector selection and the location selection contributed greatly to the effective implementation. The sectors which are most important to women entrepreneurs were selected based on the prior experiences of Oxfam.

The **efficiency** of the project was at stake due to the two major events which occurred in the context during the project implementation period. The Easter attack which occurred in April 2019 affected the businesses vastly. The Easter attack limited the mobility and the markets dropped. The Covid-19 pandemic too is creating an even bigger negative impact on the entrepreneurs where the markets are affected in unprecedented rates.

In terms of **relevance**, the project was phenomenally successful in the economic empowerment aspect. The project right holders saw improvements in terms of economy. However, the gender aspect of it can be improved further. While it is a very proactive step to include males in the process, the percentage of women can be maintained higher to ensure that more women re-benefitted.

Although it was not a part of the initial plan to include Differently Abled Persons (DAP), as the project proceeded DAP were included in the discussions and sessions. Parallel to women, differently able people have capacity in contributing to the economy, just like creating a gender-just society, inclusivity is equally important. So, this initiative of the project is greatly helpful in bringing out the true potential in the community through enterprise.

Right holder selection has suffered constraints in some instances, due to the duty bearer selection or misinformation. Suggestions are that more right holders from the low-income category could have been included, a younger generation of right holders could have been selected and a more bottom-up approach could have been used. There were constraints in terms of the homogeneity of the resource distribution and the relevance of some of the grants provided.

However, SUNRISE project has been successful in improving the knowledge levels, capacity development, expanding access to markets locally and internationally and improving financial literacy. Income levels, saving levels and the business scales have improved by the impact created by the project. Market linkages have developed. The SMEs being able to obtain GAP certification and 5 SMEs obtaining GMP certification is noteworthy. Further to the economic aspects, the introduction of a gender policy has improved the social and mental capacities of the employees a lot. The cumulative effect of all these interventions is proven to be successful in achieving the project's targets.

In ensuring the **sustainability** of a project it is important that the project is planned, monitored and the project delivery and support processes are controlled sustainably. This includes considering the environmental, economic, and social aspects of the project life cycle in managing resources and processes where deliverables and effects are aimed at realizing benefits for stakeholders and are performed in a transparent, fair, and ethical manner to include proactive stakeholder participation.

Oxfam has been successful in ensuring the sustainability of the project in many instances. From the qualitative analysis it was apparent that in almost all the places monitoring has

been continued even after the completion of respective activities where at instances officers were employed for the monitoring purpose. The fact that the project was able to create independence in the right holders through the provision of knowledge, establishment of strong marketing linkages and providing with the correct skills and resources was a strong aspect to ensure the sustainability of the project. The technological exposure through which the entrepreneurs opened themselves up to the digital markets had been much needed sophistication.

Oxfam's intervention in introducing the entrepreneurs to the established market chains like "Keells" and "Cargills" is an affair which is to be rewarded in the days to come. Oxfam has been successful in addressing some of the issues and need which they were unable to find solutions.

A thought-provoking idea was brought up in the KILs by the president of the Women Development Federation, Batticaloa. And it is that, following the Covid-19 breakdown, women were the most affected and organizations should strive to introduce means to train women to generate income through channels which are resilient to such change. Another commended comment from the CEO of the Chamber of Commerce-Batticaloa states that Oxfam has taken the lead in reviving the cooperative society which had been hibernating since 1978. As this process included the approval of the deputy secretariat, the effect is promised to last even upon project completion.

In terms of areas which require attention; it would have been more sustainable if more trainings were given to micro and small-scale entrepreneurs as their business meets the crossroads at one point. In terms of export market linkages too, the project allows only up to the introduction of export market linkages, but it would be better if the entrepreneurs can be followed up until they become well established with those linkages.

5. Key findings, including best practices and lessons learnt

5.1 Beneficiary Survey

5.1.1 Characteristics of the MSMEs sample and the context in Vavuniya and Mullaitivu districts.

Respondents of this Beneficiary Survey are the right holders of SUNRISE Project living in the target DSDs in Vavuniya and Mullaitivu districts. A total number of 175 respondents participated in this evaluation and 13 of them are **MSMEs**. 38.5 % of females and the rest of them were male. Except for one MSME all others were Tamils.

According to the Women Development Officer of Batticaloa, the participation of men in the trainings was its distinction. This helped a lot to create awareness among men, about the importance of having an equal participation from their female associates in thriving in economy at the home base and in business.

Main livelihood of most of the MSMEs are dependent upon fruits and vegetables and others depend on either fruits or vegetables. About 61.5% depend on fruits and vegetables, 15.4% depend on only vegetables, another 15.4% on only fruits. Additionally, 7.7% of the sample rely on floriculture and fruit trees. About 85% of MSMEs have a name for their livelihood, 84.6% of them have registered their business under different authorities with various type of business registrations such as proprietorship, partnership, community-based society, cooperative society initiated by International Labour Organization (ILO). Most of them are registered under divisional secretariat and department of agriculture. The MSMEs who have not registered their business stated that they do not have enough knowledge about registration or that there is no requirement for the registration process.

When the business status of the MSMEs is considered, a higher percentage of them are used to record keeping and have established market links but the usage of business logos, websites and emails is less than 50% of total. Usage of a logo and record maintenance could be observed during the data collection process.

Only 23.1% of the sample right holders were there from the beginning of the project, the rest joined in at different stages of the project. Oxfam connected with right holders in different ways, 15.4% got connected through GSD/DSD and 84.6% through Oxfam SUNRISE project officers. 84.6% of the total respondents were satisfied with the right holder selection.

However according to the KIIs performed, there is scope for improvement about right holder selection where more field level officials can be involved. Most of the project activities were implemented by both Oxfam officers and partner organizations. About 38.5% mentioned that their project activities were implemented through only Oxfam officers. Mainly there were four types of assistance provided by Oxfam to the MSMEs, but every one of them were not provided with all the types of support.

There were several training programs, learning and marketing assistance and policy advocacy support conducted by Oxfam and their partner organizations. Right holders stated that the training programs increased their knowledge level, awareness about new technologies, new practices, how to increase production capacity, how to produce a quality product, how to increase market opportunities, importance of bookkeeping, how to expand the business, how to produce a product in a cost-effective method, how all these knowledges led to improve the business and increase the income level. And for beginners, the knowledge on agriculture really helped. In addition to business related affairs, these training programs gave them an exposure on gender sensitization, care economy, to recognize the woman's position in the family and outside, and awareness about differently abled persons and the importance of giving opportunities to them.

Through the qualitative analysis it was found that, as the officers too were trained together with the right holders the impact was magnified as the officers too developed gender sensitive thinking. This is a proactive step in creating more opportunities for women.

Via exposure visits and exhibitions, stake holders too got exposed to ideas for the new business ventures and were motivated themselves. They were able to acquire new contacts and ways and means for marketing and transporting their products, it helped to increase their market opportunities, enabled selling their product without delay, enabled selling their products in more sustained and higher prices, supply level increased, knowledge about the demands for the products in outside market increased and about market strategies were made familiar. Through advocacy support, the right holders upgraded knowledge about policy advocacy and capacity building. They learnt how to reach a farmer and develop their skills, improve their business marketing networks and links.

About 92.3% of sample MSMEs received in-kind grant support from Oxfam, such as tea packing machines, water pumps, photocopy machines, computers, vehicle, ovens, blender, land modification equipment, three wheelers, machinery equipment, net houses, and digital balances. The value of those grants was in the range of LKR 50000-2000000. Grants were given based on their requirements. Total value of in-kind grants given to sample beneficiaries by Oxfam is LKR 4,234,000. These types of grants lead to enhance the production, number of products, quality of the products, market value and reduce production time, reduce post-harvest losses, facilitate easy transportation, easy scaling, and protect plants during unfavourable weather conditions.

Following is the insight of a development officer in Batticaloa. **“Without the support of NGOs in the Northeast, it would be difficult for any government agency to make progress”**. She added to the statement further saying that other NGO's provide funds, but the Oxfam's efforts changed their livelihoods creating a long-term impact.

About the 14.28% of the right holders who did not use the policy support at all, the reason is the non-existence of a policy. From the KIIs performed it was identified that a gender policy was non-existent except for the Women Development Federation, Batticaloa. The gender policy here is mention worthy which they had prepared with the support from a lawyer. She says the policy clearly describes the women's safety at the workplace, the importance of providing them protection, facilities, allowances (EPF/ETF)

and advice on economic planning. Opportunities and knowledge should be created for the creation of gender policies which can be a very progressive step towards women's economic empowerment.

Out of the respondents 92.3% stated that the project implementation was good, 84.6% mentioned that Oxfam implemented project activities on time, rest of them were in the view that the implementation was moderate. Communication processes were smoothly maintained by officers and 92.3% mentioned that officers visited the villages to monitor the project activities.

When asked about the improvements in business after the SUNRISE project, majority of them indicated that there is an improvement in all most all the activities of their business. Based on a MSME's statement, budgeting helps to identify expenditure and income easily, it facilitates the monthly report generation and through pre planning expenses can be managed properly. Record keeping facilitates easy interpretation of sales reports, tracking entire account details and planning future activities accordingly. Marketing is the key to increase the sales rate, increase profit, enable supply of products on time, increase market opportunities and extending their businesses. Changes in sales help to export products to outside market, direct supply to big companies, increased production, and expanded business. Value chains enabled partnership networking, frequency of delivery increased, number of dealers increased. Developed customer services increased the number of customers and selling products directly to customers possible.

Number of laborers, and their skills improved due to human resource management. Improvement in owner's and employees' capacity lead to improve the product quality, expand the business, and increase the volume of production, marketing strategies and labour management. Awareness in new technologies helped to reduce labour force and reduce all kind of losses in all stages of processing. Changes in overall business management redefines successful business and enable handling all situations in a wider view. The persons who did not have any improvements with regards to these aspects told that they do not have enough knowledge to improve these, and some of them were already aware and following well even before the project implementation, therefore they felt that further improvement is unnecessary.

There were several MSMEs who developed their capacities and enhanced their production level and income level through SUNRISE but not all MSMEs. All the respondents stated that there is in positive impact in their income after SUNRISE project, however based in the MSME's statements the entire differences are not resulting of SUNRISE project, but there is a significant share from Oxfam. Some MSMEs who were already well established in their business did not see any big difference in income level due to this project. According to right holder's responds 76.9 % of them have increased their assets than before but this was a collective effort of all other support programs and not Oxfam alone.

The habit of saving was existent among 53.8% of the sample, the amount being in between LKR 5000-60 000 based on the availability of money. About 76.9 % reinvested on their business and the amount was in between LKR15000- 800 000. Last reinvestment has occurred during the last one-years period. Most of the reinvestments were made for

purchasing inputs for another production or invested on land, new building, or a new vehicle. The majority out of the samples (69.2%) who have loaned are repaying their reinvestment loans as agreed, only 7.7% is struggling to repay their loans.

Result indicates that before the project implementation 38.5% people were not able to manage their business after a disaster even for one month, but that value was recorded as 7.7% after the project. According to the qualitative analysis, the lockdown situation due to Covid-19 created a dearth in raw materials, customers, crop loss, product loss and ultimately demotivating the entrepreneurs specially women due to their inability to move away from the homesteads. For the entrepreneurs who were maintaining a production and selling cycle with no savings, this was a huge blow where they were unable to pay off loans and manage household economy.

A percentage of 53.8 of the samples already had the system to DRR and again 53.8% of them were having alternative income sources during off-season, such as tailoring, seasonal products, working as third-party insurance agents, farming in own land. MSMEs who have DRR strategies could manage their business for a longer period, such strategies are; stock the inputs for new production, not only seasonal plants they are planting annual plants also, renting out their own machineries, selling the products to the community during times of risk, reduce imports from others during unfavourable conditions, maintain local daily customers even during price fluctuations. Some of the MSMEs showed their stocks as their risk reduction tool.

Obviously training programs and exposure visits improved knowledge of MSMEs, but still 7.7% of the samples mentioned that there is no change in knowledge level. 84.6% of the beneficiaries mentioned that there is a change in productivity after the project. Productivity increased due to better knowledge, higher demand for their product, proper marketing, delivery enhancement and certifications due to good quality of the product. Samples of 53.8% stated that they are linked to medium enterprises, 7.7% were linked with large enterprises and 38.5% did not have any link with medium/large enterprises, they were selling their products in the local market. All MSMEs are running their business with these linkages.

MSMEs employed family and hired labour regardless of their gender. Before the project implementation, only 7.7% of the MSMEs employed a disable person in their business which is female, but after the project 23.1% of MSMEs were employing female DAP staff in their business. Overall, the number of female employees employed under MSMEs were specifically enhanced after the project.

About 15.5% were having a gender policy in their business; gender equality and giving respect to women, ensuring their protection were considered as the gender policy in such places. 61.5% of MSMEs had facilities improved for females at their workplaces.

According to the MSMEs, although there was an impact on their lives regarding knowledge level, assets and income level, any improvements in family standards, hygiene, the level of child education or social status did not result from this project. About 30.8% stated that their assets increased, 23.1% stated the increase in income levels, 7.7% of the sample experienced an increase in knowledge.

5.1.2 Characteristics of the right holder farmer samples and the context in Vavuniya and Mullaitivu districts

A total number of 175 right holders of SUNRISE project living in the target DSDs in Vavuniya and Mullaitivu districts participated in this evaluation including 162 **right holder farmers** which included a percentage of 54.5 % females and rest male.

The main livelihood of all right holder farmers was farming. Majority of them had been farmers for more than three years, only 7.3% have started farming recently within the last 3 years. A percentage of 14.5 beneficiaries were engaged in cultivation as a part time job and 0.6% as a seasonal job and for 84.8% of samples it has been a full-time livelihood. A percentage of 88.5 right holders were used to saving and the saving amount deviated from LKR100- 85000, the amount is dependent on their profit.

An exact 20% of farmers mentioned that they have a kind of a gender policy in their field and workplace where equal respect is given to male and female worker where they are treated equally and protection to women is ensured. 28.5% percent of farmers stated that they have improved facilities and flexibilities for women such as basic needs, bonus during festival time, toilet facilities, arrangements for childcare, and flexibilities to pregnant and lactating mother.

Several trainings, learning support and in-kind grants were provided by Oxfam for farmers to enhance their productivity through increasing their knowledge and awareness level. Exactly 75.8% of farmers from the sample were benefited by both training and exposure visits/exhibition and 24.2% of them were benefited only with training programs. According to farmers, every right holder was not benefitted by the in-kind grants.

Beneficiaries stated that training programs increased their knowledge level, awareness about new technologies, new practices especially on how to produce organic fruits and vegetables, how to use organic fertilizers, how to save water, how to increase production capacity how to produce a quality product, how to increase market opportunities, importance of book keeping, how to expand the business, how to produce in a cost effective manner, how all of these types of knowledge lead to improve the business, increase the income level and for the beginners it had been really helpful to learn about agriculture. More than farming related themes these training programs opened them up to gender sensitization, child protection, how to treat a woman in the family and outside, and awareness about differently abled persons and importance of giving equal opportunities to them.

Via exposure visits and exhibitions beneficiaries got new contacts and ways and means for marketing and transporting their products, it helped to increase their market opportunities, enabled to selling their products without delay, enabled to selling their products and sustain higher prices, supply levels increased, acquired knowledge on demands for the products in outside markets and learned about market strategies. Through advocacy support beneficiaries got knowledge about policy advocacy and capacity building, learned about how to access a farmer, and developed their skills, increase their business marketing networks and links. 94.5% stated that the Trainings are particularly useful. 87.9% stated that the Exposure visits are particularly useful.

Due to this project's support right holder farmers stated that their income, safety, and dignity improved. When considering the family level impact from the project, income levels has risen due to SUNRISE project, but the level of increment and sustainability of the enhancement in income is questionable. Assets also has increased in a particular percentage of families, but the level of usage of those assets is again questionable. Other impacts stated by the right holders are Knowledge about gender sensitization, Knowledge about Child protection, Motivation for farmers to increase their productivity, Knowledge about organic farming and Production of chemical free organic products to their families as a start.

People are with different perspectives and expectations; their level of satisfaction depends on their requirements and expectations. Here also two set of people mentioned that they were happy about the project support and motivation which enable them and their family to function on their own without relying on others. But still there was other set of people who were not satisfied about the project interventions, they believed this is not enough help to run their farming. With reference to such comments some gaps were identified during project implementation are stated below.

- For two years the only help given by Oxfam was with some seeds and motivations. Even the given seeds were low in quality and were hybrid, which were of one-time use. These questions the sustainability in enhancing their productivity.
- Although all the training programs were attended no help apart from training was provided by Oxfam, they feel that only training is not sufficient to increase their income, support with capital too is necessary to put the gained knowledge in action.
- For some of them sprinkler systems were given, this intervention was not very much rewarding for the farmers who owned larger land areas.
- The method followed was selecting the right holders through locally established organizations, but the respondents feel that a more scientific method would have been better.
- Farmers also suggested that there are still in the primary stages of their enterprise who need support than the ones who are well established. So, the beneficiary selection should target on choosing the neediest.
- A fraction of the right holders got only trainings and exposure visits, while others were supported with seeds and equipment. The resource distribution should be more even within the sample.
- More members especially youngsters need to be included in training programs.

5.1.3 Characteristics of the MSMEs sample and the context in Batticaloa district

A total number of 115 beneficiaries of SUNRISE project living in the target DSDs in Batticaloa district participated in this evaluation and 15 of them are **MSMEs**. 26.7% of **MSMEs** are females and rest of them are male.

Main livelihood of all the MSMEs depends on handloom. 66.7% of them had registered their businesses under Divisional Secretariat and Department of Agriculture under only one main type of business registration-Proprietorship. Some of them did not have the knowledge on business registration and some of the others did not want to register due to tax payment issues.

When considering the business status of the MSMEs, higher percentage of them had market links and maintained record keeping but no one had logo / website/ Email to their business. Records could be observed during the data collection process. Analysis shows that only 20.1% of the samples joined as right holders at the project initiation time. According to 80% the project was implemented by both Oxfam officers and partner organizations while 20% mentioned it as through only partner organization. Mainly there are four types of support provided by Oxfam to MSMEs, but all were not benefitted with all types of support.

There were several training programs, learning and marketing assistance and policy advocacy support provided by Oxfam and their partner organizations. The right holders stated that training programs increased their knowledge level, awareness about new technologies, how to increase production amount, how to produce a quality product, how to increase market opportunities, importance of bookkeeping, how to expand the business and increase the income level.

Via exposure visits and exhibitions beneficiaries got knowledge on business administration, it provided them an opportunity to identify business opportunities and motivated them with improved thinking capacity, curiosity of business raised and provided knowledge about effective production. They also got new contacts and ways and means for marketing. Policy advice facilitated the increase in knowledge, new technical skills which led to maintain good standards in the business.

About 93.3% of the sample MSMEs received in-kind grant based on their requirements from Oxfam, such as Infrastructure for business, equipment, cupboards, furniture, winder machines, weaving machines and binding machines. These grants lead to enhance the production, number of products, quality of the products, market value and reduce production time, reduce post-harvest losses, facilitate easy transportation, easy scaling, and protect plants during unfavourable weather conditions.

Of the respondents, 73.3% stated that the project implementation is good, and that Oxfam implemented project activities on time, rest of them indicated that the implementation was moderate. A sound communication was maintained by the officers and 80% mentioned that officers visited the villages and monitored the project activities.

According to the MSME's statements budgeting helped them to identify expenditure and income easily which enabled the reduction of business losses and expenses. Record keeping helped to identify areas to control expenses. Marketing facilitated the identification of new markets and market linkages where sales were increased. Changes in sales facilitated the identification of providers easily, new linkages to sell the products ensuring more profit. Through the introduction of value chains, the number of dealers increased. Developed customer services resulted in increasing the standard of the products, sales increased, number of customers increased, relationship with customers strengthened and a good rapport was built between the customers and MSMEs.

Enabled the effective management of employees, to maintain good business relationships, productivity of employees increased, number of laborers increased due to human resource management. Improvement in owner's capacity paved way to increase production due to enhancement in employee's care, better relationships with employees, employees working with interest, more outputs with effective ideas and skills improved. As a result of staff capacity building programs quality of the business increased, productivity increased, production per hour increased, and creativity was improved. Changes in overall business management was a good approach to run a successful business, enabled the handling of all situations in a wider view and the status in society was enhanced. The persons who did not have any improvements regarding these elements told that they lack knowledge in these elements.

About 73.3% were getting a monthly income and 26.7% on a weekly basis. There are several MSMEs who developed their capacities and enhanced their production level and income level by SUNRISE project. All most all the respondents stated that there is a positive change in their income due to SUNRISE project. According to right holder's answers 86.7% of beneficiaries mentioned that they have increased their assets than before because of the in-kind grants from Oxfam, introduction of new interventions and expansion of business.

Saving habit is there among 86.7% of samples, the amount fall in between LKR 3000-60000 based on the availability of money. About 53.3% reinvest on their business and last reinvestment occurred during 2018-2020 two-year period. Most of the reinvestments occurred to purchase machines and equipment for the expanded business.

Who have received loans are repaying their reinvestment loans as they agreed? Result indicates that before the project implementation 38.5% people they could not manage their business after a disaster even for one month, but that value was recorded as 7.7% upon the completion of the project. Through the qualitative analysis of the KIIs it was evident that the right holders lacked knowledge on the available loan facilities before the project. But the awareness on the loan facilities and the financial management guidance eased off the financial burden for most of the entrepreneurs.

No one from the sample were adopted to any kind of DRR system before the project and only 26.7% of them had alternative income sources during offseason such as vegetable cultivation, three-wheeler driving, rearing poultry and cattle and fishing. Most of them do not have any alternative income because they do not have time to get involved and they do not have any knowledge and skills to do other jobs. MSMEs who are having DRR

strategies could manage their business for a longer period and they are mainly adopted for two types of strategies such as insurance and savings.

Obviously training programs and exposure visits improved knowledge of MSMEs, but still 6.7% of samples mentioned that their knowledge is poor, but training was successful in eradicating the extremely poor category. All beneficiaries mentioned that there is a change in productivity after the project. Productivity increased due to better knowledge, stronger support, introduction of new technologies, and increased sales.

Samples of 60% stated that they had links with medium enterprises, 13.3% had links with large enterprises and 26.7% did not have any link with medium/large enterprises. 13.3% of 60% had agreement links with medium/ large enterprises and they are selling their products in the local market. Again 13.3% reported that they faced some issues with those enterprises during sales and services. The issues being quality below the expected standard (75%), supply delivery failure on time (100%), lacking the agreed quantity (25%).

MSMEs employed both males and females from outside and from within the family. About 80% MSMEs had family members as employees. Before the project only 6.7% MSMEs employed a male DAP but after the project 13.3% of MSMEs had both Female and male DAP staff with them. Result indicates that the number of employees working under MSMEs increased after project from 0-5 employees to 6-10 employees due to business expansion. Percentage of female employee inclusion too heightened in the MSMEs after the project. About 26.7% had a gender policy in their business which defined; separate working place for males and females, special holidays, and flexibilities in working hours for women. 73.3% MSMEs had improved facilities in their workplace for females.

Project right holders stated that their life standard increased immensely and if this project is to continue that will benefit their society in every way. All the MSMEs in the sample were satisfied with the project interventions. There were some instances where improvement is possible, such as instances where equipment of the already available type was given when the expectation was new equipment.

5.1.4 Characteristics of the Employee Sample and the Context in Batticaloa District

Respondents of this Beneficiary Survey were the right holders of SUNRISE Project living in the target DSDs in Batticaloa district. A total number of 115 respondents participated in this evaluation including 100 **employees**. Analysis shows that an exact 66 percent are females and rest of them are males.

The main livelihood of all right holders is handloom. 76% of beneficiaries had the saving habit, saving amount deviated from LKR500- 11000, the amount depended on their wage and monthly expenses. Zero sexual harassment cases in working place were reported.

Exact 14% of them mentioned that they had a kind of a gender policy in their field and workplace which included respect and treating male and female workers alike and protection to women. A fraction of 28.5% stated that they had improved facilities and flexibilities to women such as basic toilet facilities, separate washroom and rest room and

feeding room facilities to women, arrangements for childcare, and flexibilities to pregnant and lactating mothers about leave and working hours. Workplaces maintain techniques to prevent sexual harassments such as separate rest rooms for males and females, freedom of speech against problems and issues and a mechanism to inform the employer directly, an appeal box has been fixed in male/female only working places.

In terms of the period of employment, 61% have been working for more than three years, 31% of them for a 1-3-year period and only 8% have started recently working for less than three years. Here 97% are skilled labours and 3% only unskilled labour. About 74% of the employees are permanent full-time workers and another 26% of them are permanent part time workers. They are engaged in thread spinning, sawing, weaving, doll Stitching, looming and tassel work.

Several trainings and learning support were provided by Oxfam to enhance their productivity through the increase of their knowledge and awareness level. Exactly 50% of employees from sample were benefited through both training and exposure visits / exhibition and 85% of them were benefited only by training programs. Right holders stated that training programs improved their knowledge level, work efficiency, income, career development, production methods, order of work, know how on new techniques, understanding about work and knowledge on skilful work.

Through learning and marketing assistance employees achieved higher output levels within short periods of time, income was raised, direct marketing was facilitated, market demand increased, market development, demands for the products identified, exposing their business to outside, market techniques learnt, and business improved through new market linkages.

According to Women Development officer of Batticaloa, **“Business was booming due to industry initiatives and innovations in products could be seen”**. Further she mentions that awareness on unpaid care work improved the male participation in household chores. This was a major leap in easing off the women’s triple burden to be engaged in a more economically viable activity.

Analysis indicates that a higher percentage of employees are satisfied or somewhat satisfied on their work and working environment. When considering Family level impact, income level has increase due to SUNRISE project, income has influenced on the education of their children also but only 38% reported that.

Overall satisfaction is seen among the employees, from their point of view SUNRISE is a good project to create a poverty free society, people’s knowledge improved on unknown things, employees who were benefitted by the project were motivated to start a new business, they are expecting more services and own winding equipment to start their own business.

5.1.5 Characteristics of the MSMEs Sample and the Context in Kegalle District

A total number of 108 right holders of SUNRISE Project living in the target DSDs in

Kegalle district participated for this Evaluation and 16 of them were **MSMEs**. Analysis shows that an exact 50% MSMEs are females and the other half of them are male.

According to District coordinator of CEFNET there had been a program called 'Integrated Rural Development Project' in Kegalle, but afterwards there had not been any projects and even NGOs did not come to Kegalle. So according to him Oxfam's intervention was **'A good opportunity for low-income entrepreneurs and farmers to develop their skills and knowledge and to improve technology to gain a good income.'**

Main livelihood of all the MSMEs is dependent on spice-based businesses. All the MSMEs had names for their livelihood, 93.8% of them had registered their business under different authorities under one main type of business registration which is Proprietorship. Most of them were registered under Divisional Secretariat. Only one of them were not registered due to poor infrastructure facilities and therefore the need to improve and apply for the registration process.

Around 18.9% of the respondents started their business after the year of 2016, other 81.1% started even before that. When considering the business status of the MSMEs, higher percentage of them had market links and were used to record keeping but a lesser percentage only had a logo / website/ Email to their business. Record keeping could be observed during the data collection process.

About 75% of the respondents stated that they were satisfied with beneficiary selection another 25% were unaware about the beneficiary selection. All project work was implemented by Oxfam officers. About 20% mentioned that their project activities were implemented through only partner organization. Mainly there were four types of support such as Training, Linked grant, Policy advocacy / capacity building and exposure visit / exhibition provided by Oxfam to MSMEs, but all of them did not receive all types of support.

There were several training programs, learning and marketing assistance and policy advocacy support conducted by Oxfam and their partner organizations. Beneficiaries stated that training programs increased their knowledge level, awareness about new technologies, how to increase production capacity, how to produce a quality product, different types of business and business management including bookkeeping and account management. These activities helped to scale up their business from a micro level to a small-scale business which leads to enhance standard of life and social recognition. Coordinator of CEFNET mentioned that he developed a lot himself. **"I learnt about gender equity, childcare and sex and gender-based violence through the trainings. They are important for learnings for me."**

Through the KII analysis it was found that the right holders too were greatly benefited by the project. The Women Development Officer in Kegalle puts it this way; **"I have participated at a number of government trainings. These trainings were practical than the other trainings I have participated at. I was able to identify my weaknesses before I go to the field and work. I still use what I learnt during the trainings, in the field."**

Via exposure visits MSMEs were self-motivated and learnt about production of new value-added products, they were able to acquire practical knowledge regarding value added product development, new packaging materials and level of quality required for the market. MSMEs are now able to market their own products to big potential buyers.

Based on MSME's statements, a good understanding of business, it is functioning, bookkeeping, quality packaging materials, quality raw material selection, proper cash flow management, use of new machineries and technologies were learnt from Policy Advices / Capacity building support.

About 87.5% of sample MSMEs received in-kind grant support from Oxfam, such as Shifter machine, toaster machine, product display cupboard, polythene sealing machine, grinding machine, scale, Steel cupboard, ginger washer and cutting machine, shade net house, green mesh fence. Those grants facilitated the Increase in labour efficiency, production quantity, packaging quality, accurate weight measurements, and proper product display. Above factors lead to overall quality improvement and nursery plant quantity also improved and plant mortality rate reduced due to protection from harsh weather conditions.

A fraction of 87.5% respondents stated that the project implementation was good, 93.8% mentioned that Oxfam implemented project activities on time, rest of them indicate it as a moderate level of implementation. All the respondents mentioned that officers visited the villages and monitored the project activities, A good communication was maintained in a good way and issues were solved genuinely.

Based on MSME's statements budgeting helps to identify expenditure and income easily which enables to; reduce business loss and expenses, to identify the demand for the products and the quantity. Record keeping helps to identify areas to control expenses. Some of them were not used to applying these because they did not have the know-how. Marketing facilitated the increase in value added products. Market strategies such as provision of free samples, small affordable packets, word-of-mouth marketing, commissioning schemes for sales representatives, marketing the product quality using retail outlets and government contract to supply plants in bulk orders. MSMEs were not properly engaged in marketing because of poor functioning of the business.

MSMEs sell bulk orders to the middleman. Improved quality of the products in terms of cleanliness, improved packaging material led to high demand and competitive advantage with the growing attraction of customers. Participation in sales exhibitions, weekly fairs, and places which attracts more tourists also helped the MSMEs immensely. Contracted agreements were made with government bodies for bulk orders especially for nursery plants, all the above improvements occurred due to changes in sales activities.

With the improvement in customer service knowledge, MSMEs got to know how to pitch the customers and market the products with attractive talk. Their products are delivered to rural areas to make access easy to the customers. Persons who already have good market and enough productivity have not seen many differences.

Increased employees' facilities and salaries to reasonable levels incentivized the employees which influenced their working efficiency and job satisfaction which were results of changes in human resource management.

Improvement in owner's capacity paved way to increase production due to care enhancement for employees, maintaining good relationship with employees, employees working with interest, more outputs, sales increased, more bulk orders and business expansion. As a result of staff capacity building programs quality of the business increased, productivity increased. Production capacity increased due to introduction of new technologies and the quality standards achieved. Changes in overall business management gave a good path to run a successful business, gave a good knowledge in business management, skills improved and now they are confident in running a proper business. They have now started to keep books and start saving for future requirements of the business. There are several MSMEs who developed their capacities and enhanced their production level and income level through the SUNRISE project.

According to right holders' answers 87.5 % have increased their assets than before because of the in-kind grants from Oxfam, introduction of new interventions and techniques of business expansion. Saving habit was there among 81.3% of the sample, the amount falls between LKR 1000-100 000 based on the availability on money. About 87.5% of respondents who have received loans only repay their reinvestment loans as they agreed. The categorized responses are presented in the plotted figure, when the question was how many months you can manage your business after a disaster.

Results indicate that before the project implementation 37.5% people could not manage their business after a disaster even for one month, but that value recorded as 2% after the project. A sample of 12.5% were only adopted to the DRR system such as good Stock (purchase raw materials in bulk when prices are low and produce finished goods for shorter period), diversified products range, cultivating more than one crops (spices, tea, rubber...etc.), Insurance schemes and savings before the project. MSMEs who are having DRR strategies could manage their business for a longer period.

Respondents of 56.3% had alternative income sources during offseason such as tea, rubber, or coconut cultivations, rent from dialog tower, potato farm, and daily wage jobs. Most of them do not have any alternative income because they do not have time to involve in another business and they do not have enough capital to start the business.

Obviously training programs and exposure visits improved knowledge of MSMEs, but training eradicated the poor category of knowledge. Almost all beneficiaries mentioned that there is a change in productivity after the project. Productivity increased due to better knowledge, more support, introduction of new technologies, and more sales.

Samples of 60% stated that they had links with medium scale enterprises, 6.3% had links with large enterprises without any agreement and 93.8% did not have any link with enterprises.

"Until they get to the export level, it is better to help them by providing raw materials etc. What we do is only providing the link to the export market. The entrepreneurs expect something more like equipment, and finances than just the market link." The

development officer in the Kegalle district expresses her views saying that the right holder transition from small and micro can be done smoothly if the support provided continues rather than stopping abruptly.

MSMEs employed both males and females as employees and both from outside and family members. About 81% MSMEs had family members as employees. Before the project implementation only 12.5% MSMEs employed DAPs in their business who were females, there is not any change after the project in this regard. There are not any significant changes in total number of employees before and after project. The percentage of MSMEs who employed female employees from family as well as from outside also had not changed significantly.

Only 6.3% of the respondents had a gender policy in their business treating with respect to women and providing sanitary facilities are considered as gender policy in such places. MSMEs of 43.8% had improved facilities such as Restroom facilities, Separate washrooms for female and Basic toilet and sanitary facilities in their workplace to female.

There is not any family level impact recorded by beneficiaries. MSMEs wanted this project to continue further but expresses the need to allocate more funds to improve infrastructure development for sales, machines with new technologies with high capacity, more market linkages, and buyers.

5.1.6 Characteristics of the beneficiary farmer Sample and the Context in Kegalle District

Respondents of this Beneficiary Survey were the beneficiaries of SUNRISE project living in the target DSDs in Kegalle district. A total number of 108 respondents participated in this evaluation and 92 of them were **right holder farmers**. Exact 42.4% farmers were females and rest of them were male. Main livelihood of all the farmers is dependent on spice cultivation.

All respondents started their farming before the year of 2000. When considering the business status of the farmers, higher percentage of them had market links and record keeping but no one had logo / website/ Email to their business. Record keeping could be observed during the data collection process. Samples joined as right holders of the project during the period of 2017-2020.

65.2% got connected with Oxfam through awareness session, and 13% through CBOs, 12% through GSD/DSD and another 8.7% got involved in this project through Oxfam SUNRISE project officers, rest of them got connected through chamber/business association. About 89.1% respondents stated that they are satisfied with the beneficiary selection. When informed about dissatisfaction towards selection of right holders only 12.5% stated that they received a response for their complain while 37.5% as not received and the rest stated as they do not know how to complain / they did not make a complain.

There were several training programs, learning and marketing assistance and policy advocacy support conducted by Oxfam and their partner organizations, details of those and percentage of right holders are listed in the table.

Right holders stated that training programs improved their knowledge in plantation as well as business management (Accounts and Management) skills and how to improve crop yield and labour efficiency using new machineries and technology. Further training on soil conservation techniques, crop management skills such as proper plant pruning and training methods, compost fertilizer making process, post-harvest techniques, and new value-added products like white pepper and organic products which have low market price as raw material were proved to be helpful.

While the right holders were directly benefited, they were indirectly benefited by the duty bearers who were trained too. According to the assistant director of export agriculture in the Kegalle district, one of the major observations he made was that Oxfam's way of dealing with a massive number of right holders is impressively effective and could be used in his area of expertise too.

Via exposure visits and exhibitions, beneficiaries got a good experience regarding proper crop cultivation techniques, mix crop cultivation techniques and the crop types suited for different regions in Sri Lanka, spice drying techniques such as heat water treatment and machine drying and value-added products. Due to the Covid-19 situation the gathered knowledge could not be properly applied, but overall yield and quality improved. In the KII analysis it was proposed that if the right holders can further be made aware about the trending crops than dwelling in the traditional crops, it would be much more useful.

About 97.3% of the sample farmers received in-kind grant support from Oxfam, such as water Hose, hoe, wheelbarrow, knife, rake, bush cutter machine, ladder, and net house. These grants lead to enhance the easiness to carry out daily routine, labour efficiency increased, cost of production reduced, and time was saved, weeding was made easy and soil conservation improved, irrigation & harvest made easy and crops were high yielding which facilitated increased income.

The respondents of 90.2% stated that the project implementation is good, 88% mentioned that Oxfam implement project activities on time, rest of them indicate a moderate level of implementation. Many agreed that communications were maintained in a good way (85.9%) by officers and 83.7% mentioned that officers visited villages and monitored the project activities, 69.6% were of the view that problems were solved in a good level of approach when issues occurred.

Based on farmers' statement budgeting helps to identify expenditure and income easily, enabled to reduce business losses and expenses. Record keeping has helped to identify areas to control expenses. Marketing facilitated the identification of new markets and market linkages, sales increased, buyers directly contacted farmers and bought their products, earned high prices through value added products and organic products.

Changes in sales facilitated to identify the providers easily, new linkages to sell the products made more profit. Through the introduction of value chains, the number of

dealers increased. Developed customer services lead to increase the standard of the products, sales increased, number of customers increased, and through maintaining good relationship with customers a good rapport was built up between customers and farmers.

Enabled the effective management of employees, strengthened business relationship, productivity of employee increased, and number of laborers increased due to human resource management. Improvement in owner's capacity paved way to increase production due to care enhancement in employees, maintaining good relationship with employees, employees working with interest, more outputs with effective ideas, skills improved. As a result of staff capacity building programs enhancement were observed in quality of the business, productivity, production per hour, multi cropping techniques and organic fertilizer usage.

Changes in overall business management made way to run a successful business, enabled handling all situations in a wider view, status in society enhanced and enabled to assess the level of business. The persons who did not have any improvements regarding these elements, told that they do not have enough knowledge to improve these elements and having small farming and businesses the requirement of records and other managements is less. Gaps exist for improvements, some of them reported about low irrigation facilities, high labour requirement and poor delivery systems.

There are several farmers develop their capacities and enhance their production level and income level by SUNRISE project. According to right holders' answers 56.5 % of right holders mentioned that they have increased their assets than before because of in-kind grants from Oxfam.

Saving habit was there among 57.6% of the samples, the amount fell between LKR 100-20 000 based on the availability of money. About 48.9 % reinvested in their business and the amount fell in between LKR1000- 4000000. Last reinvestment occurred during the 2017-2020 year period. Most of the reinvestments occurred to purchase machines and equipment for the expanding business.

All from the sample who have received a loan are repaying their reinvestment loans as agreed. Result indicated that before the project implementation 28.3% people could not manage their business after a disaster even for one month, but that value now recorded as 20.7%. Sample of 29.3% adopted to DRR system before the project and 56.5% of them had alternative income sources during offseason, such as tea plantation, coconut and paddy cultivation, banana plantation, livestock, fishing, mushroom farm, daily wage jobs, carpentry work, small shop owner spice manufacturing, plantations, raw rubber collection, contract masonry work, brick manufacturing, rice mill and nursery management. Some of them did not have any alternative income because they did not have time to get involved and some had differently able family member. Farmers who are having DRR strategies could manage their business for longer periods and they mainly adopted two types of strategies such as insurance and savings.

Training programs and exposure visits improved knowledge of farmers, but still 1.1% of the samples mentioned that their knowledge is poor, but training eradicated the extremely poor category. All beneficiaries mentioned that there is a change in productivity after the

project. Productivity increased due to better knowledge, stronger support, introduction of new technologies, and more sales.

Only 1.1% stated that they had a link with large enterprises, others were not having any link with medium/large enterprises, no one had agreements and issues with large enterprises.

Right holder farmers employed both males and females as employees under them, both from outside and within family members. About 77% farmers had family members as employees. Before the project implementation only 2.2% farmers employed a total number of 12 DAPs in their business, after the project also 2.2% of farmers having DAP staffs but total number decreased to 5 including both males and females. This reduction indicate there is no influence through trainings in this regard. Number of employees working under farmers increased after project implementation, but the changes are not significant. Percentage female employees from family as well as outside was also not increased significantly.

No one had a gender policy in their business, 15.2% farmers who had improved facilities for women.

One of the farmers mentioned the impact of SUNRISE project on their life as follow.
“Oxfam gives more new things and they always motivate us. Good project and I got more knowledge, before the project we did not have any idea about field practices and followed only traditional methods, but now we know all the things well with training and field visits. Scope of current training is good but please add more cinnamon plantation trainings and environmental protection. Trainings were even helpful to improve family work efficiently. New opportunities occurred in life due to this project (Appendix 08: Descriptive Statistics of the Beneficiary Survey).

6. Most Significant Case story / ies

The most Significant case studies of the project provides an in depth, detailed view to the successive occurrences in the target population. These expresses the range of individuals whose lives were changed for better and the ways and means of how the needs of the individuals were catered to in the most effective ways.

For instance, Kathirkamathambi Allagamma (62 years, Batticaloa) is a lady who was supported by the project. She is a true inspiration to the single mothers who await their entrepreneurship career. She started her handloom career in 1972 where she worked extra tiring hours for meager pay. She started on her own in 2014 and now runs a well-established enterprise named “Thuwishika Handloom” which provides employment to 4men and 18 women. Oxfam provided her with 3 machines, expansion of shelter, exposure, marketing linkages and improving capacity.

Shanmugam Aruleswari (Age 22, Batticaloa) is an overly ambitious entrepreneur operating a handloom business with her family support. She had received loans and developed the business. Bud her dependence on a single middleman for raw material was a severe blow on her side. So, she was given support with improving networks and financial management skills by Oxfam.

Mrs. Udika Samarasinghe is a phenomenally successful entrepreneur who produces export quality spice products. She deals with many issues at the home-base being a mother to a differently abled child. Her enterprise is the way to finance her family which was greatly improved with Oxfam’s interventions. Mrs. Udika’s enterprise can be considered as an instance where a need focused successful intervention was made by the project. Her business ‘Ceylon Herbs’ was registered in the Divisional Secretariat and was guided to prepare a logo, email and a website for the business. This helped her to expand her horizons to reach out to the export markets. She was provided with a ginger washer and a ginger cutter by the project which helped her to increase the production from 15kg to 100kg per day.

Women who started in very primary steps but had the potential to climb up the ladder were traced and supported by the project. Mrs Krishnathaas is one such example. Ms. Sajirani Krishnathaas’s is also an inspiring story where she had started the job by investing LKR1500. She started at a very primary stage where her son was the only support, she had. Now she is providing employment to 17 employees who are widows out of whom 2 are differently abled. Being a widow herself she decided to help other women up and her efforts were much appreciated and supported by Oxfam. Being an all-female enterprise, they were facing restrictions of movement for distribution, accounts management and so forth. Through Oxfam’s intervention, the employees were trained to drive, publicizing support for the products overseas (Canada, Australia) is provided, financial support is provided, and the mental capacity of the women was redefined by the project.

Although the project mostly looked at empowering women economically, men were not completely left out. Mr. Suranga Sampath from the Warakapola DS division is a right holder of the project who was greatly benefitted. He employs 3 females and one male

and is considering employing a differently abled person upon the instructions and insights provided by the project.

Mannivannan from the 'Mullaithivu United Farmers' Corporative society expresses how the project helped them with infrastructure, financially and with standardizing production through GMP certification. He added that the government support which was provided for them to start with 45 members was very successfully complemented by the Oxfam project which enabled them to increase the membership to 150 members including 35 women, and 2 disabled people.

Mr. Kirubagaran from the Fruit Growers Cooperative society states that Oxfam's help came at a much-needed hour when no one else was helping them out. Out of the 450 membership 276 are women. Although women were forced to work till late before, the situation changed after the gender equality knowledge given by Oxfam trainings.

In addition to these above interventions, Oxfam has been successful in reducing the sexual and gender-based violence cases in the locality through the awareness sessions and the training programs. The case studies stand witness to the genuine impact created by the project in the lives of the project right holders in the areas (Appendix 09: Full details of Case Studies including Images).

7. Recommendations on the opportunities to provide guidance for future programming

This contains summary of conclusions based on surveys, KIIs and objective observations. Judgment of the colouring was done by the consultants using primary and secondary qualitative and quantitative data and its triangulation. The summary of the colour code guide is presented below.

Achieved	Moderately Achieved	Insufficient Achievements	Cannot Decide or Not Applicable
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The table below demonstrates overall project achievements of the results.

Criteria	Status	Remarks
Efficiency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project was able to introduce highly relevant novel model with approaches and strategies for WEE projects. Therefore, interventions are highly relevant and effective to bring results. However, due to two un-expected external factors (Easter Sunday attack and COVID-19 pandemic) have created many confusions and complications to reach expected efficiency, impact, and the sustainability with coherence. Even with those challenges project was able to moderately achieve those criteria. Further, some of the changes happen with the implementing partners have created extra delays and issues to bring coherence and efficiency.
Effectiveness		
Relevance		
Coherence		
Impact		
Sustainability		
Overall Results		

Considering the impact created by the project in the areas implemented, the project proves to be successful in achieving the set goals and target. Many different techniques and methods have been used to give trainings and knowledge, many people have achieved a progress, but there are very less no of outstanding performers, only few have manufactured new items or value-added items. Also, woman empowerment is not at a satisfactory level. However, there is scope for improvement and the following recommendations can be made based on that.

The impact would have been better if the right holders were categorized upon selection, the needs of the categories identified and then catered. This approach could have led to the clear understanding of the needs of the women groups.

From the input from the right holder's end, it is recommended that future programming focus on the younger generations to ensure the sustainability. And the distribution of the grants should be made more homogenous, the low-income category can be prioritized. The direct involvement of Oxfam in right holder selection would have been more effective than employing the partner organizations for the task, as it might lead to biases.

The way this project was implemented, and the benefits of this project are at a satisfactory level. But the government system had a major role in the success of this project. Oxfam project was started in 2017, but due to the issues of the government and market volatility, prices were dropped, especially the Easter attack affected the tourism industry and foreign market enormously, because of those demand for pepper and clove decreased. Weather and climate changes also have affected the production. They were many issues with road construction and water supply. The farmers who purely depended on the Oxfam donations and subsidies failed. So, the focus should be more on equipping them with the skills, exposure and means to achieve higher targets other than just providing them with grants. Support for cinnamon, coconut, coffee, and other cultivations are expected further.

In conclusion, SUNRISE project is especially useful, but the weather & climate changes and government disputes have affected the success of this project.

Conclusions were derived in line with the evaluation objectives. This section visualizes and explains the summary of conclusions. Data for deriving conclusions were from both quantitative (Beneficiary Survey and secondary references) and qualitative (KIIs and secondary references) sources. Conclusions were derived based on scientific basis.










It is noted that the impact on the lives of MSMEs increased in terms of knowledge and income due to this project, but there is no improvement in family level hygiene or family level child education due to this project and there is not any change in their social status.

Also, after the project implementation, the number of women and differently abled people employed under MSMEs increased drastically. However, there were issues pertaining to the percentages of females and males selected as right holders. In many instances, the male right holder fraction was greater than that of the females.

In some instances where machinery was provided, it could have been better to have provided more sophisticated or the most appropriate machinery than limiting for the allocated budget.

It is recommended to further improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation plan (M&E Plan) with the focus of results-based monitoring (RBM) approach and strategies to enhance results of this kind of projects. In this regard verifiable indicators to be established with annual targets and M&E plans for each implementing partners. Further, baseline survey is essential. Introduction to mobile data collection and qualitative data analysis techniques are also essential for this kind of projects in the future.

8. Appendices: Charts, TOR, Field visits, people interviewed, documents reviewed

Appendix 01 - SUNRISE Evaluation TOR	 Appendix1-Evaluation-TOR.docx
Appendix 02 – SUNRISE MEAL Plan	 Appendix2-SUNRISE-MEAL-Plan.xlsx
Appendix 03 – Inception Report with Tools	 Appendix3-Inception Report with Tools
Appendix 04 – Original Data Collection Plan	 Appendix4-Data Collection Schedule.pdf
Appendix 05 – Case Study Guide	 Appendix5-Case-Study-Guide.pdf
Appendix 06 – KII Guide	 Appendix6-KII-Guide.pdf
Appendix 07 – Details of the Methodology	 Appendix7-Evaluation-Methodology.pdf
Appendix 08 – Descriptive Statistics	 Appendix8-Descriptive Statistics.pdf
Appendix 09 – Case Stories	 Appendix9-Evaluation-Case-Stories.pdf