

Prepared by

Participant from Sri Lanka

For the
Leadership Development Course for Persons with Disabilities
2006

Proposal for :

Lochana

An income generating project
for unemployed vision impaired women

Sri Lanka Council for the Blind

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Sri Lanka.**

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15th November 2006

Executive Summary

Introduction -

Implementing organisation - Sri Lanka Council for the Blind

Founded in - 1956

Type of organisation -

Government Approved Non-Governmental Service Provider

Membership - All vision impaired persons in the island, approximately 69,000

Mission -

Prevention of vision impairment, Rehabilitation of the vision impaired and Equalisation of Opportunities for the vision impaired in Sri Lanka

Need -

Only 14.4% of Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) are employed
Difficulty of PWDs to gain employment in private and public sectors due to lack of educational and professional qualifications, employer attitudes etc.

95% of vision impaired women are unemployed

Social isolation of PWDs due to rejection by family for being a liability

Knowledge acquired in Japan -

Concept, Management of Sheltered Workshops and the role played by them towards social inclusion of PWDs -

- Director, Ms. Yoriko SAKAI of the "AZAMI joint workshop" in Saitama City, Saitama Prefecture,
- Director, Mr. Masayoshi NAKANO of "Kinuta Kobo, Setagaya Ward Sheltered Workshop for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities
- Chief supporter Mr. Takeshi KITAZAWA of "Sukippu, Setagaya Ward Employment Support Centre for Persons with Disabilities
- Director and Board Member Mr. Katsuhiko HANADA of "Tamashiro-no Sato, Sheltered Workshop for Persons with Hearing Impairment." in Ome City, Tokyo
- Director, Mr.SASHIDA of JEED

Details of the Project -

Target Group - Unemployed vision impaired women with low educational qualifications

Aim -

Promoting employment of persons with vision impairment for sustainability and self-worth.

Objectives -

- I. To empower five vision impaired women with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to manage a small business

- II. To provide a location, equipment and raw material to gain an income and socialise for five vision impaired women till they acquire the confidence and financial stability to start a business of their own
- III. To evoke a sense of team spirit and sense of belonging to a group
- IV. To provide peer counselling to the five workers
- V. To help the five workers master daily living skills

Time Span - January to December 2007

N° of instructors - 1

N° of workers - 5

Training/Working hours - 8 hours three days a week from 9 am to 5 pm

Action - Recycling paper and creating products for orders

Total cost of the entire project - US \$ 2,883

Need funding for - US \$ 1,323

+

Need services of a JICA overseas volunteer

I. Introduction

Sri Lanka Council for the Blind (SLCB) is a Non-Governmental Government approved service provider. The beginning of this service provider organisation goes back to 1956 when it was called the National Council for the Welfare of the Deaf and the Blind. The bifurcation of this organisation took place in 1971 with the Sri Lanka Council for the Blind and the National Council for the Deaf functioning as two separate service provider organisations. Today, the Sri Lanka Council for the Blind is recognised as the premier and principal organisation for the welfare of the vision impaired community. Its mission is Prevention of vision impairment, Rehabilitation of the vision impaired and Equalisation of Opportunities for the vision impaired in Sri Lanka.

SLCB represents all citizens of Sri Lanka whose vision is impaired which adds up to approximately 69,000 according the Census on Housing and Population – 2001. All vision impaired persons in the island can gain free membership and become a beneficiary of the SLCB. Life membership is awarded to vision impaired and non-vision impaired individuals who are not beneficiaries for a one time payment of Rs.1,000 . Currently, there are 101 life members.

SLCB conducts Rehabilitation Programmes all year round for the adult vision impaired community. The most popular are the ...

Braille Literacy and Mobility Training

Counselling

Spoken English

Computer Literacy

Telephone Operator Training

Programmes. All these services are offered free of charge to any vision impaired person in the island. SLCB also concentrates on the educational and personality development of vision impaired children.

The largest on-going projects are ...

- Programme for expansion of Talking Book and Braille Library Services sponsored by Sight Savers International.
- Programme to provide computers and computer instructors for Vision Impaired students in residential Schools for the Blind in the island sponsored by the Christian Children's Fund.

- Scholarship Fund and provision of assistive devices for vision impaired students who need to excel in their Education sponsored by the Korean Businessmen's Association.

SLCB's main task is to empower the vision impaired with the skills and knowledge to secure employment. Presently, it is engaged in providing assistance for self-employment, securing job opportunities for skilled rattan workers and job placement for qualified workers after they undergo the rehabilitation programme.

II. Needs

The population of Vision Impaired Persons is 69,000 according to the census on Housing and Population – 2001 and has undoubtedly grown by now. The same statistical report discloses that only 14.4% of the Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) are employed, out of which the majority is male. Women constitute the larger part of unemployed PWDs.

On one hand, the Government of Sri Lanka has taken measures to resolve this problem to some extent by passing Act 28 for the Protection of Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 1996 which states that 3% of the number of employees in public institutions should consist of PWDs. However, since no special concessions are made to PWDs at competitive public service entrance examinations, the number of PWDs entering the public service is very limited. On the other hand, most PWDs are not academically or professionally qualified to gain employment in the public sector.

Private sector enterprises are hesitant to hire PWDs as they are profit reliant organizations. Many do not believe that PWDs could contribute to the growth of the company. Nevertheless, academically or professionally qualified PWDs have a higher possibility of getting employment in the private sector.

Moreover, PWDs who are female have more difficulty in securing employment in Sri Lanka and according to a survey conducted by university students, approximately 95% of women with vision impairment do not have a job. These women are talented and hard working and in most cases, frustration and depression have invaded their lives.

**Comparative Levels of Education Reached by Men and Women
with Disabilities and Income Levels**

**Source : Ministry of Social Welfare, Social Research Study Draft
– March 2003**

Level of Education	Gender			Monthly Personal Income in SLRs.	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
Less than Grade 5	24	28	26	Less 1,000	7	12	8
Grade 5	7	11	8	1,000 – 1,500	11	31	15
Grades 6 – 9	31	30	31	1,501 – 3,000	30	31	30
G.C.E. O/L	30	21	26	3,001 – 6,000	41	24	37
G.C.E. A/L	7	9	8	Over 6,000	11	2	9
Higher Education	1	0	1				
Total	100%	100%	100%	Total	100%	100%	100%

It is evident that there is a strong correlation between gender and the levels of education and income one receives. According to the Table,

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Receiving an income of less than US\$ 1.00 per day	48%	74%
Receiving an income of less than US\$ 2.00 per day	89%	98%

The situation is aggravated further by the high cost of living in Sri Lanka. In every family, every adult member, irrespective of their gender, needs to contribute financially for its existence. Families to which a PWD belongs face more challenges as they have to incur additional expenses especially on health and transport services. In the case of vision impaired women, just as in the case of any other PWD, no income poses a problem to the extent that they are rejected by the family for being a liability. This is true particularly in low income families as no subsistence grant / pension is awarded to PWDs by the Central or Local Governments.

In this context, the need to find means of employment for women with vision impairment is of the utmost priority. In seeking a solution to the problem, an adaptation of the concept of Sheltered Workshop, which I personally experienced in Japan during the Training Programme for

Leadership Development of Persons with Disabilities, was believed to be most suitable. The workshop not only provides the vision impaired an opportunity to gain an income but also give a sense of dignity.

The workshop also conforms with the National Policy on Disability for Sri Lanka - 2004 which provides disabled people with the conditions for them to exercise their rights and responsibilities, guarantee for them an equitable share of available resources and inclusion into the socio-economic mainstream. The policy includes sectoral policies and strategies for inclusion in many areas including employment

III. Related knowledge Acquired from Japan

PWDs in Japan have more facilities and opportunity to exercise their rights than in any other Asian country. Many efforts have been taken on the part of the Japanese government to secure employment opportunities for PWDs irrespective of their disability and ensure accessible transport in order to commute to work. Instead of the PWDs becoming liabilities to the State, they are incorporated into the work force and given an opportunity to contribute towards the country's economic development. This concept made a strong impact on me and hence, my intention of adapting the same.

The rehabilitation of PWDs to suit the work environment takes place in sheltered workshops. During the Leadership Development Course for Persons with Disabilities, I was able to visit several workshops . The director, Ms. Yoriko SAKAI of the "AZAMI joint workshop" in Saitama City, Saitama Prefecture, the director, Mr. Masayoshi NAKANO of "Kinuta Kobo, Setagaya Ward Sheltered Workshop for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities", the Chief supporter Mr. Takeshi KITAZAWA of "Sukippu, Setagaya Ward Employment Support Center for Persons with Disabilities" and the director and Board Member Mr. Katsuhiko HANADA of "Tamashiro-no Sato, Sheltered Workshop for Persons with Hearing Impairment." in Ome City, Tokyo, all emphasized on the fact that the workshops provided the PWDs an opportunity to socialise as well as earn a living. They also added that the workers gained a sense of self-worth and confidence to enter the open labour market. These workshops serve a dual purpose. On one hand they train workers for jobs, on the other, they workers who wish to do so continue to work at the workshop.

Some of the facts which I found useful to apply in Sri Lanka are as follows.

- **The workshops receive special subsidies by the central and local governments.**
- **The subsidy depends on the number of workers and their attendance.**

- **Priority status is given to the products and services of workers belonging to the workshop when the central or local government offices makes any purchases**
- **The Central Government has passed specifications for workshops and rules and regulations have to be adhered to strictly**
- **Hygienic conditions should be maintained at all times**
- **Workers are trained to a routine in order to get accustomed to working hours**
- **Instructors are well trained and able to deal with the needs of the workers**
- **Workshops not only provides vocational training and employment but also give the users a means to socialise, to improve their daily living skills and to have hope for the future / a reason to live for.**

IV. Project

Lochana is a pilot project that targets to generate an income to 5 unemployed vision impaired women between the ages 21 – 50. These 5 women will gather used paper and make recycled paper manually for sale according to the demands of the market. It would be run as a small business enterprise where profits will be shared by the workers while investing money for growth at the same time.

The selected vision impaired women = workers will come to the workshop three times a week and will work for eight hours. At first, the instructor will train them on how to make recycled paper. Towards the end of the training period, the workers will test different textures, colours etc. and produce items which can be marketed. Once several samples have been produced and piece rate is calculated, the samples will be taken to prospective buyers. Discarded paper products will be gathered from institutions and households which are willing to provide them. The waste paper is recycled and produced to meet the orders.

The workers will be paid a travelling allowance of Rs.100 per day in order to encourage them to come to work. Any profits made will be shared among the workers equally while saving a portion for reinvestment. The level of success of this pilot project will determine the continuity of the project. Expansion of the workshop will rely heavily on the profit made.

Additional Benefits of the Project

V. Goals & Objectives

Target Group :

Unemployed Vision Impaired Women with low educational qualifications

Over Goal :

- Towards the “Society for All”, promoting equal participation of Persons with Disabilities

Aim :

- Promoting employment of persons with vision impairment for sustainability and self-worth.

Objectives :

- To empower five vision impaired women with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to manage a small business
- To provide a location, equipment and raw material to gain an income and socialise for five vision impaired women till they acquire the confidence and financial stability to start a business of their own
- To evoke a sense of team spirit and sense of belonging to a group
- To provide peer counselling to the five workers
- To help the five workers master daily living skills

Outputs

At the end of the programme, the trainees will be able to

- produce recycled paper
- make marketable products by experimenting using their own creativity
- market their products using marketing strategies
- maintain accounts and manage profits
- work as a team
- give fellow vision impaired persons strength and courage
- perform daily living activities independently
- freely mingle with others in the society
- start their own small business

VI. Scope of Work

Project Committee = Accountant of SLCB, Project Manager and Committee Member of SLCB

Workers = five selected vision impaired women

N°	Activity	Persons involved	Time Period
1.	Forming Project Committee	SLCB	Nov.25 th 2006
2.	Carrying out a research on how to recycle paper	Project Manager	Nov.25 to Dec.9 th 2006
3.	Carrying out a market research	Project Mananger	Dec 10 th to 31 st 2006
4.	Renting a suitable location	Project Committee	Dec. 10 th to 31 st 2006
5.	Recruiting a suitable instructor	Project Committee	Nov. to Dec. 2006
6.	Calling applications from unemployed vision impaired women	Project Manager	Nov. 28 th to 31 st Dec. 2006
7.	Selecting 5 women through interviews and notifying the selected persons	Project Committee	Jan. 07 th to 14 th 2007
8.	Briefing the selected women / workers	Project Manager & Instructor	Jan. 21 st 2007
9.	Accumulating instruments and material	Project Manager	Jan. 22 nd to Feb. 22 2007
10.	Training the workers	Instructor	Feb. 23 rd to Apr. 22 nd 2007
11.	Allocating responsibilities and duties to workers	Instructor	23 rd Apr. 2007
12.	Testing,determining piece rate, making samples	Workers & instructor	24 th Apr. to 7 th May 2007

13.	Meeting and getting orders from prospective customers	Workers & instructor	Continuous process May 8 th to Dec. 20 th 2007
14.	Collecting discarded paper products from schools, offices and households	Workers & instructor	
15.	Purchasing material needed	Project manager	
16.	Recycling paper and making products to meet the orders	Workers	
17.	Delivering the products to the persons who placed orders	Workers	
18.	Financial evaluation and sharing of profits if any at the end of each order	Project committee, instructor, workers	
19.	Paying allowances to workers and instructor	Project Committee	Last Saturday of every month from Jan. to Dec. 2007
20.	Final evaluation	Project committee, instructor & workers	Dec. 22 nd 2007

VII. Time Table

Phase	Activity N°	Time
1 Pre-Programme	1 to 12	Nov. 25 th 2006 to May 7 th 2007
2 Programme Execution	13 to 18	May 8 th to Dec. 20 th 2007
	19	
3 Post- Programme	20	Dec. 22 nd 2007

VIII. Budget

Expenditure in US \$

ITEM	Unit Cost	No: of People/units	Occasions	TOTAL
Renting room a	100	12 months	1	1,200
Allowance for Instructor	30	1	12	360
Postage for selection of workers	0.05	20	1	1
Purchase of blender	150	1	1	150
Purchase of materials for frames	5	10	1	50
Labour cost for construction of frames	2	1	10	20
Basins for soaking paper	20	2	1	40
Purchase of gold dust, colouring, glue, scissors, hangers, polythene, ruler	5	1	10	50
Transport allowance for workers	1 per day	5	12 days x 11 months = 132	660
Transport for business promotion	1	6	10	60

Transport for delivery of orders	1	2	10	20
Transport for collection of discarded paper products	1	2	10	20
Stationery	5	1	1	50
Telephone bill	6	1	12	72
Electricity bill	8	1	12	96
Water bill	2	1	12	24
packaging	1	1	10	10
TOTAL				2,883

Revenue in Sri Lankan Rupees

SOURCE	Amount	Units	Occasions	TOTAL
JICA overseas volunteer	30	1	12	360
SLCB premises	100	1	12	1,200
Sponsor				1,323
TOTAL				2,883