

Executive Summary

The community development project, which began in 2018, was initiated by the PIM as part of its philanthropic activities. One of the key motivations for starting this project was to broaden the impact of PIM's productivity improvement programs, which mostly focused on increasing school productivity, to include a broader set of outcomes such as livelihood, social, and cultural development. During the first year of the project, a comprehensive theoretical framework was developed to address the development of the chosen community in a systematic manner. The initiative was transformed from a strictly community-focused initiative to a research-oriented engagement to evaluate the PIM's community development model from the second year onwards.

The community associated with Bapa/Mathu/Pareigama Maha Vidyalaya, a school in Kalutara district, was chosen for this worthy cause. A thorough assessment of the Pareigama village found a slew of social and economic difficulties that will require outside assistance to resolve. The underlying issues impeding most families' advancement include social discrimination, lack of basic domestic facilities, and poverty. Being mostly an agricultural village dependent on tea plantations, home garden crops, paddy, animal husbandry, and day labor, the community had the potential and possibilities to build small-scale home-based businesses.

A detailed literature review was conducted to seek solutions to difficulties impeding the community's progress. Theoretical framework revealed that a community could be developed by promoting entrepreneurship/home-based small businesses, stimulating social and cultural development, and developing the school. The community, village school, and village temple are thus three important foundations of this model. The project managers devised a detailed project plan to test the above theoretical model in this impoverished community based on the difficulties identified and potential solutions presented by the literature review.

The project was carried out over a three-year period. Each year, two learning partners from the corresponding MBA batches were assigned to oversee the initiative, with PIM serving as the project's principal funder. At the same time, outside contributors and volunteers were brought in to help where they were needed. Moreover, stakeholders such as the school principal, head priest of the village temple and government officials such as Grama Sewaka,

agriculture officer, veterinary officer and PHI formed a vital part of the project implementation.

The project was divided into seven project components to facilitate easy implementation and monitoring, including livelihood development, productivity improvement, cultural development, social development, school development, new product creation, and project sustainability. Various initiatives were then carried out to implement these programs, including developing 15 small businesses, increasing awareness of productivity concepts, promoting healthy habits and sanitization, interventions to improve Sunday school attendance, and enhancing school infrastructure and quality of the education. Project managers closely monitored the implication of initiatives to assess the feasibility of the theoretical framework. Moreover, a special project was also carried out to evaluate the feasibility of operating commercial level compost production at village schools.

The final outcome of the project was evident in many areas, including improvement in livelihood of families developed, increased O/L pass rate of students, improvement in living conditions of the community and overall cultural and social development. Moreover, project managers could apply managerial skills, including conceptual, interpersonal and technical knowledge, while managing this remarkable project. Such learning is expected to help them achieve great heights in their professional as well as personal lives. Most notably, with the successful implementation of this initiative, PIM was able to produce a time-tested framework that warrants rural community development. The policy preparers and government institutions can use this framework for the overall development of the country.