

Open University of Sri Lanka – (OUSL)
Progress Dec 2006

Financial support of the year 2006- SLR 6451168.00

Brief description of the project -

The programme in Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihood focused on the rural youth who have been deprived of formal education due to North East conflict and other unforeseen reasons. The target group was expected to have an agricultural background and they would be willing to secure their livelihood in agriculture or a related field such as post harvest processing, marketing of agricultural produce, rural constructions and rural welfare work.

The programme of study designed by the Rural Research Unit (RRU) in collaboration with the academic department of agricultural and plantation engineering covers different aspects of rural agriculture with a practical bias. The programme of study is delivered through animators stationed in the areas of students supported by course materials given to the students and carrying out field work specific to selected areas. This is a programme of study that deviates from conventional classroom teaching or distance learning methodology and at the end getting the students to sit for a final test. The emphasis of the programme is laid to ensure that students get hands on experience by doing things and sharing experiences with colleagues. The programme seeks to empower rural youth to stand on their strength and engage in a sustainable livelihood while remaining in their home areas

At present RRU has set up four centres in different parts of the country: Vavuniya, Badulla, Kalmunai, and Ampara. The maximum number of students attached to each centres is limited to 30 and each student group is assigned a trained animator. Each Centre is provided with basic agricultural equipment. The first batch of students numbering 86, completed their course in July 2006. After an assessment based on actual work done by individual students and the knowledge gained through lesson materials the successful students were awarded the *Certificate in Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihood*.

The RRU and the department of agricultural and plantation engineering have been closely and frequently monitoring the progress of the programme and of the enrolment of a second batch of students was done in August with certain modifications

Goal of the project

The long-term development goal is to create a community of farmers who could critically evaluate the options available to them and take informed decision using latest technology and information.

Progress of the first batch of students

Progress in Different Centres

1. BADULLA CENTER (Mahiyangana and Welimada)

20 students completed the course against 21 remained in the beginning of the year. All the students started projects as part of the course. The projects initiated by the students include: Mushrooms, Bee Keeping, Powdered condiments and spices, Agro-outlets, Animal husbandry and Nursery Management.

2. AMPARA CENTER

5 students remained as at end of year 2005, but this dropped to 3 students in the end of the completion of the course.

All the 3 students started projects as part of the course. They are Mushroom, Chilly, Betel cultivation and marketing

3. KALMUNAI CENTER

19 students completed the course. The course was highly affected by continuous work stoppages.

The Projects initiated by students are : Vegetable cultivation, poultry management and Cattle Management, and Mushroom cultivation.

4. VAVUNIYA CENTRE

26 Students completed the course.

Projects initiated by students are, Mushroom, Groundnut growing and processing, Poultry, Agro-outlets.

Activities towards the latter part of the period were interrupted by civil unrest.

General Conclusions regarding the first batch.

- After completion of the course work, trainees were allowed time to carry on with their projects while the animators were summoned to the central campus for practical training over a period of two months
- Assessments of students were undertaken at the end of this training
- In some centres the activities were interrupted by civil unrest and adjustments in the future plans were made to overcome this.

Planned results not achieved and suggested changes for quality improvement.

There were some set backs in relation to the anticipated state of development of the students in that most of them have not been able to adopt a lively-hood in the field of their choice by the end of the course. This is attributable to the quality of the students selected, the absence of the right aptitude in that most of them have not possessed the skills to develop individually.

This situation was addressed in the recruitment of the new batch. We also have arranged to improve the quality and maturity of the trainers by subjecting them to three months of refresher training.

Yet another factor was the absence of social stability in some areas around the centres. The completion of the curriculum in Vavuniya and Kalmunai were delayed and thus holding examinations in all centres were delayed. For the coming years the centres were selected avoiding troubled spots as assessed for the time being.

Out of the new batch, active student groups will be formed in to working associations so that the work could be continued on a collective basis, even after completion of their course.

We would be carrying out an evaluation using external resources and will also get a feed back from the students. The proposed method of evaluation is given in the attached sheets.

The second batch of students

After giving thorough consideration to the comments made by animators and on the basis of findings made during supervisory visits by the senior staff it was agreed that the programme seems to succeed in some centres whereas in some centres difficulties have arisen due to frequent disturbances prevailing in the

north and east. Therefore we suggested relocating the existing centres and including new two centres for the reasons mentioned below, which was agreed.

The second batch of students was recruited and the course commenced in August 2006. Each centre has 30 students each in the beginning. The course will be completed in August 2007.

Centre	New location for new batch	Reason for change
Vavuniya	Chettikulum	The situation of the present location is deteriorating and conducting classes and field work is becoming difficult. The Chettikulum is also located in the same district, but free from disturbances at present. Follow up partner- WDC/ CFHD
Mahiyangana and Welimada	Welimada- Uva province	This centre is functioning smoothly; there is a demand from students. Due to logistic difficulties in running at 2 locations positioned in Welimada for this batch- follow up partner FIOH
Kalmunai	Bibile- Uva province	Kalmunai is located in eastern province and the regular interaction with students has been reported extremely difficult due to frequent protest campaigns connected with north east conflict. Therefore it was shifted to Bibile area in Monaragala district which is dominated by a backward rural community.- follow up partner FIOH
Ampara	Dehiattakandiya- Kudagama	Ampara experiences similar difficulties as Kalmunai and at present too the student number is low. The best alternative for this centre is thought to be in Dehiattakandiya, Kudagama in the same district, and the trained animator is also willing to serve in there.- follow up partner FIOH
New	Monaragala-Uva province	Monaragala was selected as a new centre, to include different agro-climatic zones with water shortage and high poverty.- follow up partner FIOH

The challenges:

1. As mentioned above the poor security situation around centres affected the programme. This is not anticipated in 2007 as we have moved centres to more secure places. Vavuniya centre still functions in another area, but the progress will depend on the security situation in the near future.
2. The selection of students in the first batch was more dominated by the NGO responsible. This creates some problems as some students did not have sufficient basic knowledge to follow the course. In selecting the second batch, more care was taken through awareness creation among parents and youths about the course.

Annexes:

1. Training programmes –of staff
2. Organization of the programme-

Expenditure statement – Open University of Sri Lanka 2006

Code	Item	Budget 2006	Amended Budget 2006	Expenditure as at 31.12.06
	Capital expenditure for 02 centres			
A1	Workshop tool sets, 2 Nos.	30,000	45,000.00	42,670.00
A2	Water pump, 2 nos	30,000	15,000.00	10,299.00
A3	Farm equipment set, 2 Nos.	40,000	45,000.00	44,800.00
A4	Measuring and weighing equipment, 2 sets	20,000	40,000.00	37,605.00
A5	water Filtering Systems	30,000	10,000.00	6,900.00
A6	Display boards, 2 Nos.	10,000		-
A7	Push bicycles, 2 Nos.	20,000	20,000.00	13,299.00
A8	Wind mill, 1 No	120,000		-
A9	Ram pump, 2 Nos.	50,000	20,000.00	13,800.00
A10	Food processing equipment, 2sets	50,000	75,000.00	75,000.00
A11	Vein anemometer, 1 No.	20,000	30,000.00	29,750.50
A12	Cost of building rainwater harvester, solar dryer, protected houses ..	150,000	220,000.00	70,151.00
A13	Office and IT Equipment	250,000	250,000.00	249,725.00
A14	Wood working machine		50,000.00	47,000.00
	Total	820,000	820,000.00	640,999.50
	Programme expenditure			
B1	Course fee (Rs 6000 x150students)	900,000.00	900,000.00	404,813.35
B2	Scholarships (80x1500x4)+(150x1500x8)	2,280,000.00	2,280,000.00	
	Total	3,180,000.00	3,180,000.00	404,813.35
	Recurrent expenditure			

C2	Coordinating & counsaltancy	360,000	180,000.00	149,200.00
C3	Salaries of Trainers / Animators	1,204,000	1,050,000.00	965,853.33
C4	Cost of workshops & Field Trips	100,000	100,000.00	52,323.00
C5	Overtime Payments			
C6	Cost of Evaluation of Programme and students			
C7	Piecewise charges for hired work/equipment	50,000	50,000.00	21,000.00
C8	Traveling / Lodging & Subsistance	300,000	300,000.00	261,998.50
C9	Materials / Consumables for the period		170,000.00	61,483.10
C11	E.P.F / E.T.F	255,600	419,600.00	434,243.31
	Sub Total	2,269,600	2,269,600.00	1,946,101.24
	OU-Overheads 8%	181,568	181,568.00	181,568.00
	Total Recurrent expenditure	2,451,168	2,451,168.00	2,127,669.24
	Grand total	6,451,168	6,451,168.00	2,532,482.59
	Balance B/F from year 2005		369,613.19	
	Funds Disbursed from 01.01.2006 - 31.12.2006		3,131,695.81	
	Total		3,501,309.00	
	Total Expenditure from 01.01.2006 - 31.12.2006		2,532,482.59	
	Cash in Hand as at 31.12.06		16,960.00	
	Balance available as at 31.12.2006		985,786.41	

Annex 1

Training Programme for Animators from 15th May to 15th July-2006

Participants

1. Mr. Gayan Kularatne
2. Mr. Kapila Dhanawardhana
3. Mr.S. S. F Mannas
4. Ms. B.A.S.N.Lakmali
5. Miss M.S.Rathnayake
6. Mr.Chandana Premalal

Resource Persons:

1. Prof. H. Sriyananda
2. Dr. Gamini Kulatunga
3. Dr. S.A.M.A.N.Senanayake
4. Dr. P. Ratnaweera
5. Mr. S.B.Ratnayake

Projects Undertaken

1. Repair of a Pedestrian Suspension Bridge
2. Construction of a rainwater tank using a re-usable mould.
3. Making a dry powder of Bael Fruit that can be reconstituted to a drink.
4. Constructing a foot operated "Zig zag Corn seed remover"
5. Making a draft (human/animal-powered) Ridge former for ground nut beds.

Annex 2

Organization of the Programme

The project, program of study in Agriculture for sustainable livelihood commenced in November 2004. The OUSL conducts the programme with the participation of Rural Research Unit and the Department of Agricultural and Plantation Engineering. The official Authority undertaking the project is the CERC and is funded by the ODW of Norway. The first batch of students was enrolled in June 2005 and completed the one year programme in July 2006. The programme was conducted in Badulla, Vavuniya, Kalmunai and Ampara managed by trained animators. The second batch was taken in August 2006, under grave alterations to the way the programme is conducted and with new centres added.

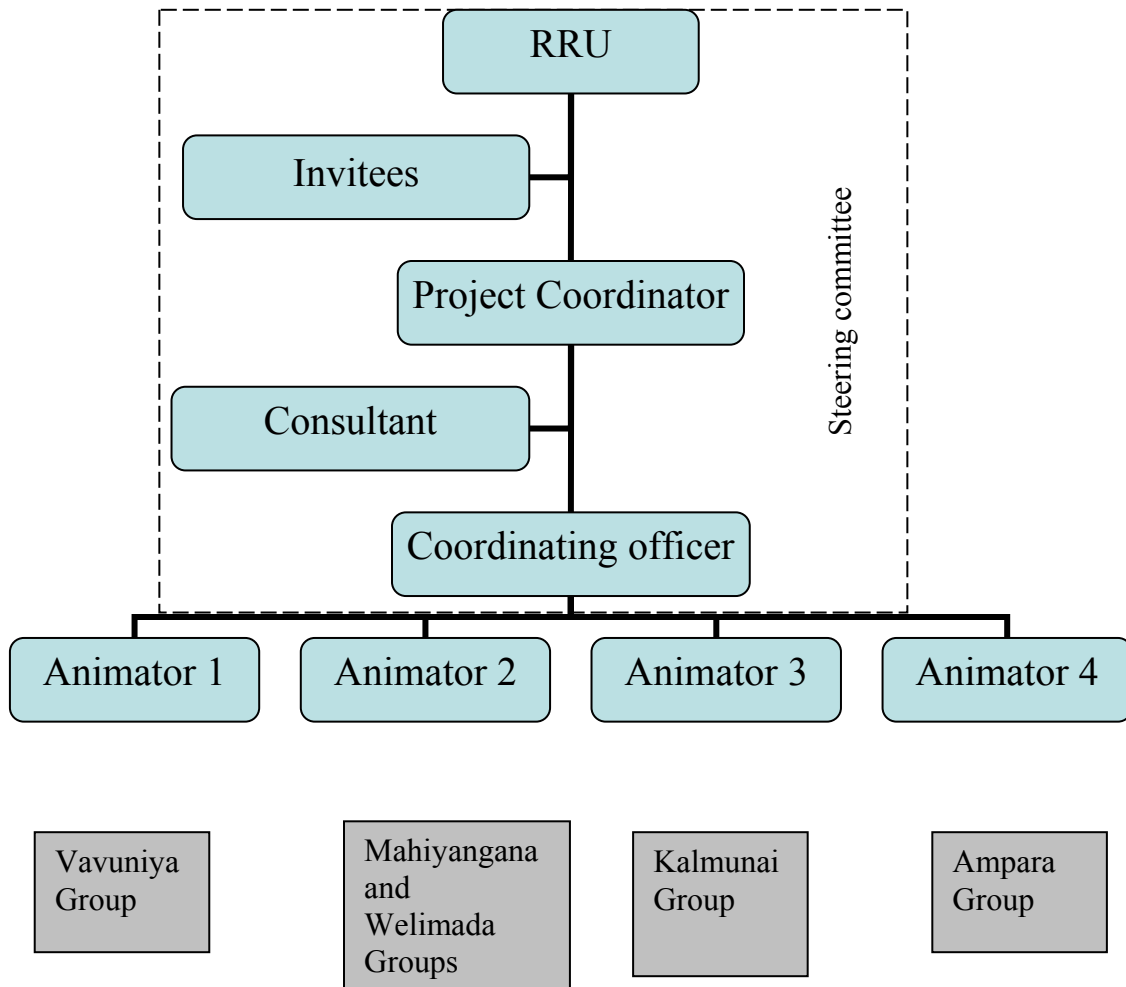
The invitees from the staff of the faculty serve as the steering committee to assist in the overall management of the programme. The steering committee consists of following as the members:

Pof. H.Sriyananda
Dr. Gamini Kulatunga
Dr. N.S. Senanayake

Dr. Prasanna Ratnaweera
Dr. Roshan de Silva
Ms. Nimsha Weerakkody

Resources and laboratory space of the Department of Agricultural and Plantation Engineering provides the central amenities to the programme including the housing of common equipment made available to the regional centres as and when necessary. The Coordinator of the programme, the coordinating officer and the Consultant operate at the centre, while four regional centres manned by the animators are established. The regional centre serves as the frontline position to which the trainees are attached. Each regional centre is provided with computer facilities and communication equipment to constantly be in touch with the coordinating staff. The first phase of the project development involved training of the Animators to carry out their mission in accordance with the principle that guide the training programme.

The project management structure was established as shown below:



Note: This setup slightly changed for the second batch of students, Kalmunai group was dropped and Monaragala was included.

The duties and responsibilities of project staff	
RRU	Chairing steering committee
Project coordinator	In charge of the day to day project activities, responsible for implementing decisions of the steering committee, communicating with Animators and giving instructions as and when needed in consultation with the RRU
Coordinating Officer	In charge of coordinating center in Colombo, Attending to

	the needs of mini workshop and farm, arranging training facilities for animators (and students), Assisting Project coordinator
Consultant	Attending to matters relating to purchases, evaluation, reporting etc. Providing the resource base for curriculum development, training and implementation.
Animators	Conducting training sessions at centers, arranging and conducting fieldwork, workshops; facilitating the trainees to gain knowledge and experience, reporting student progress on individual basis. Preparation of lesson materials when needed