

A photograph of four young boys standing in a row outdoors. They are all wearing white short-sleeved button-down shirts and blue pleated shorts. The boy second from the left is smiling and has a green backpack strap visible. The boy third from the left is looking directly at the camera and has a blue and white bag strap visible. They are standing on a dirt path. In the background, there is a yellow building with a dark roof and some trees.

World Vision

Welcome

## Introducing Neluwa community, Sri Lanka

By partnering with the Neluwa community,  
you're helping to create lasting change in children's lives  
through improvements to education, health and livelihoods.

# Sri Lanka overview



**Sri Lanka is an island nation in the Indian Ocean. Its nearest neighbour is India. Colombo is the capital and the main languages are Sinhalese, Tamil and English.**

Sri Lanka has been a centre of Buddhist religion and culture since ancient times and almost 70 percent of Sri Lankans are Buddhists. Hinduism, Islam and Christianity are also practised.

One-third of Sri Lankans earn their living from agriculture, while garment-making and tourism have become major industries.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, Sri Lanka became a plantation economy, famous for its production and export of cinnamon, rubber and Ceylon tea, which remains a trademark national export.

Other main exports include clothing and textiles, spices, precious stones and coconut products.



# Community overview

**Neluwa is a rural area in south-western Sri Lanka. It is the poorest division of Galle District, which was badly affected by the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami. The climate in Neluwa is hot and humid, with average daytime temperatures of around 27° Celsius. About 28,000 people live there.**

The area is rich in natural resources and is situated in the foothills of the Sinharaja forest. It is also prone to damage from regular floods and landslides. There are many natural water sources in the area, but these become polluted when there are heavy rains.

Most people in Neluwa work on small tea estates to earn income for their families. Many families live and work within the tea estates for their whole lives. There are few other job opportunities in the area and many people lack the skills and resources to increase their incomes.

As it is common for both parents to be working on the tea estates, some children suffer from neglect, with older children often kept home from school to care for their younger siblings. Schools lack trained teachers and facilities and the local literacy rate, at 77 percent, is significantly lower than the national rate of 91 percent.

Alcohol abuse and early marriage are some other major problems in the area.

Child malnutrition is a major challenge in the area as children's diets lack essential vitamins and nutrients needed for healthy growth and development. Health centres lack essential facilities and less than half of all households have electricity.



## Children play sports including cricket and volleyball

and a local game called Elle, which is similar to baseball.



## Most people travel by motorbike, tri-shaw or use public transport.

Very few families have cars.



## Most family homes are built with mud and bamboo and consist of only one room.

There are some two-room homes built on concrete blocks with a separate kitchen.

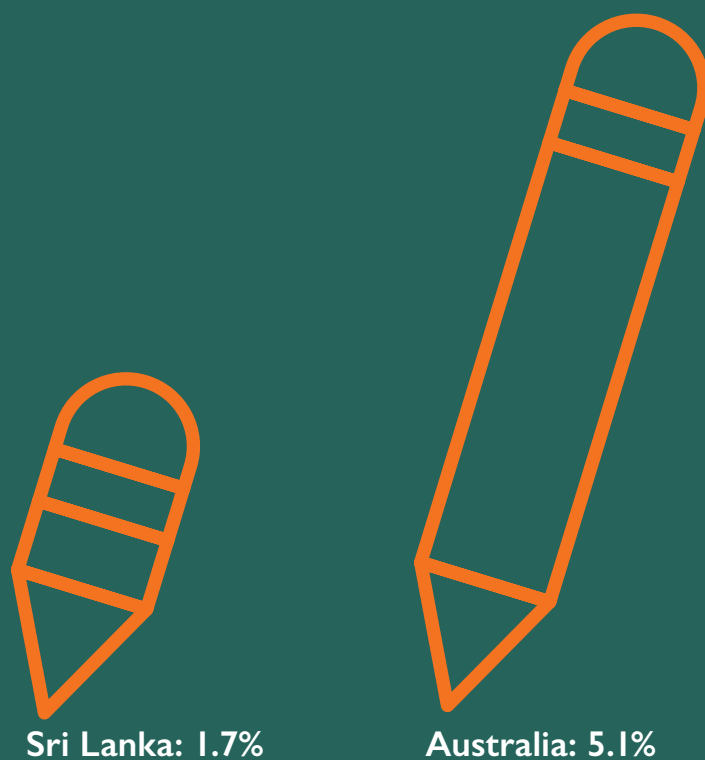


## As the majority of families are Buddhist,

they attend religious events on full moon days and celebrate Vesak – the birth, death and enlightenment of Lord Buddha – which falls in May each year.

# In comparison to Australia

## Public expenditure on education (% of GDP)



Indicator	Sri Lanka	Australia
Population	21.4 million	23.6 million
Population living on less than US\$1.25 a day	4.1%	0%
Life expectancy	74.9 years	82.4 years
Under five mortality rate (per 1,000 births)	9.6	4
Access to clean water	96%	100%
Adult literacy	91.2%	96%
Internet users	25.8%	85%

Sources: United Nations Development Programme 2015 and UNICEF 2016.

## We're making progress

World Vision is implementing an Area Development Program in the Neluwa community to improve the wellbeing of all the children living there by promoting sustainable social and economic transformation.

The program started in October 2008 and is expected to run for about 12-15 years. It aims to directly benefit more than 18,000 people.



"I cannot thank World Vision enough for the blessings it has brought to our family through this project, especially for helping us turn an abandoned land into a lively garden," says Jayasena, father of Ranil, Apsara and Bhagya pictured above with the family cow, which produces milk for the children to drink and manure to keep the vegetable garden fertile.



Preschool attendance



Prevalence of children under 5 who are underweight



## Inspired principal transforms neglected school

“It was really marvellous the way the school developed within a short period of time.”

— Prasanga Fernando, World Vision Program Manager



**Devalagama junior school is in the Neluwa division. In 2009, it was in such a state of neglect and disrepair that the number of students regularly attending dwindled to 29 and it was on the verge of closing.**



There were no toilets or drinking water; the classrooms didn't have enough desks and chairs and on some days there wasn't even a teacher.

However school principal, Shantha Kamal, was determined to keep the school open. With World Vision's support, he began to mobilise resources to rebuild the school. Together they worked to transform it into a place children wanted to be, with new toilets, drinking water, playground equipment and a library with new books.

During this time, Mr Shantha also went out into the community, visiting homes and preschools to ask parents to send their children to the school.

Seeing the progress he was making, the government education office began to fill the school's teaching vacancies and enrolments began to increase.

While the school facilities were being developed, World Vision focused on improving education quality through teacher training, literacy programs and English language classes.

The Devalagama junior school went from being a forgotten school to the most popular one in the area. Recently it was formally recognised by the government for its excellence and Mr Shantha was awarded a certificate of appreciation for leading the school to success.

“This is the true joy of life, being used for a purpose recognised by myself as a mighty one,” says Mr Shantha proudly.

# There's still much more to do



Great things have been achieved in the Neluwa community, but there is still much left to do before all children living there have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Through your partnership with the community, you will be supporting the following development activities that focus specifically on improving education, health and household incomes.

## Education and child rights

- Improving facilities in primary schools and supporting teacher training.
- Working with local partners to build the capacity of existing preschools and linking them to existing government education structures.
- Raising awareness amongst parents about the importance of early childhood education.
- Providing educational support for children with special needs, including those with a disability and children who have dropped out of school.
- Conducting child rights awareness programs and setting up "Child Societies", where children and youth meet regularly to learn about their rights and develop new skills.



## Health and nutrition

- Working with government health staff to educate parents on good nutrition practices for babies and young children.
- Growth monitoring to identify malnourished children in the community and supporting their nutritional recovery.
- Training health workers, preschool teachers and community volunteers on maternal and child healthcare.
- Improving existing health centre facilities and supporting construction of new health centres.
- Renovating existing water sources, protecting wells, conducting hygiene education, and supporting families to build and maintain hygienic toilets.



## Livelihoods

- Supporting families to develop alternative income sources including dairy farming, poultry raising and beekeeping, growing peppers and cinnamon, and running small businesses.
- Supporting families to establish home fruit and vegetable gardens and raise livestock to provide their children with nutritious food and excess produce to sell for income.
- Supporting vocational training for young people.
- Training families to create household management plans.
- Establishing savings clubs and providing families with access to low-interest loans.
- Improving the community's capacity to prepare for and respond to floods and other natural disasters.

**For more information**

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