



GENDER AND DISABILITY INCLUSIVE

*Economic Development
(iLIVE) Project, Sri Lanka*



About this report

This brief summarises the results from an end of project evaluation of World Vision Sri Lanka's iLIVE project (2016-2021), completed independently by Lead Disability & Development Consultant, Kevan Moll and his team, between March and September 2021. Evaluation design and data analysis was supported by Saba Mebrahtu Habte, Evidence Building Advisor, and technically reviewed by Viktoria Midelaury, Disability Inclusion Advisor; Ellie Wong, Economic Empowerment Manager, Gayathri Jayadevan, Women's Economic Empowerment Technical Advisor; Clay O'Brien, Financial Inclusion Advisor; Melissa Sprake, Country Impact Manager for Sri Lanka, World Vision Australia; and Thambirajah Jeyarajan, iLIVE Project Manager, World Vision Lanka.

The Gender and Disability Inclusive Economic Development (iLIVE) Project was supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

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Front cover photo: Shanthini Sivapalan cultivates groundnuts at her own field in Manthai East (North Sri Lanka)



World Vision





'Virudsam' (name of the S4T group) is an inclusive Savings for Transformation (S4T) group that engages in regular savings meetings in their village located in Muthur (East Sri Lanka)

CONTEXT

Despite reaching middle-income status in 2010, a key challenge for Sri Lanka is how to achieve inclusive economic growth.¹ Over 90% of those identified as people living in poverty are situated in the rural areas of North, East, Central and Uva Provinces. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), there are 1,617,924 people with disabilities in Sri Lanka (8.7% of the population), and women with disabilities comprise 57% of Sri Lanka's disabled population.² The percentage of people with a disability and the number of female-headed households in these provinces are higher than the national average, which is largely due to the 30-year conflict that took place here.

The iLIVE project aimed to address four inter-related problems:

- 1. High rates of poverty amongst vulnerable rural populations:** 70% of the population is employed within the agricultural sector but key problems include rural communities not connected to productive markets, lack of relevant market and technical skills, and lack of access to capital to expand their livelihoods.
- 2. Limited participation of people with disabilities in livelihood activities:** People with disabilities, especially women, are generally excluded from society. Due to discrimination and stigma associated with their disability and gender they do not have equitable opportunities to increase their income.³
- 3. Limited participation of women in livelihood activities:** A major challenge to development in Sri Lanka is low female participation in the labour force (30%),⁴ although World Vision Lanka programs show that women

do participate in subsistence activities. This is due to the socio-cultural norms that see the role of women as predominantly in the home, with high domestic workloads that leave no time for livelihoods and skills training.

- 4. Limited knowledge and evidence on how to promote gender and disability inclusion in economic development.** A Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey⁵ undertaken for the project has pointed to the importance of including women and people with disabilities in economic development programs, as reflected in the statements below:

"The husband has the power. If the women do not agree they will face the punishment."

– Woman with disability, Eastern Province

"Mostly the disabled people don't come forward to join the group. They isolated themselves ... thinking they are people with defect. Also, they think that groups are not willing to help them as no loans are provided mostly to the disabled in the thought that they cannot pay it back."

– Men's group, Muthur, Eastern Province

The end of project evaluation findings summarised in this brief are aimed at filling the existing evidence gaps on how to promote gender and disability inclusion so as to increase the income and economic empowerment of women and people living with disabilities.

1 World Bank. (2014). 'Transforming into a middle-income country', 16 April.

2 UN ESCAP. (2015) Disability at a Glance: Strengthening Employment Prospects for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, pp.158

3 DOJF. 2017. UN Universal Periodic Review - Sri Lanka 2017 Third Cycle, 28th Session 2017, Disability Organization Joint Front (DOJF), March 2017.

4 Ibid., 1.

5 iLIVE 2017 KAP survey.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

iLIVE Goal: Increase the economic engagement of 24,000 vulnerable people – inclusive of people with disabilities and women – by increasing the incomes of 2,696 participants, including 1,650 producers to achieve a 30% increase from the project's targeted value chain crops by 2021.

Working in four districts and eight divisional secretariats of Northern and Eastern Provinces, the project adopted a holistic approach to programming to achieve multiple Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) and women's economic empowerment (WEE) outcomes, including:

- *Economic advancement:* To succeed and advance economically through improving their income generation and employment potential
- *Access:* To have equitable access to economic opportunities, resources and services
- *Agency:* To have the power to make and act on economic decisions, and to translate those choices into desired outcomes, including manageable workloads and well-being
- *Equitable systems:* To benefit from equitable policies, laws, institutional practices, and social norms.

A twin-track approach to gender and disability was deployed through a dual focus on mainstreaming across Outcome 1, while also implementing targeted approaches to addressing the barriers and lack of opportunities faced by women and people with disabilities in Outcomes 2 and 3. Outcome 1 focused on increasing *economic advancement* and *access* to opportunities, resources and services. In line with the Savings for Transformation (S4T)⁶ and Local Value Chain Development (LVCD)⁷ models, the focus was on supporting producer and S4T groups. The iLIVE project applied the LVCD project model as a key intervention for income generation, and the primary approach for achieving gender and disability inclusive economic development within the three targeted value chains of groundnuts, manioc and mushrooms by supporting the pooling of labour and resources, and the aggregation of produce. Value chains were selected based on market demand, profitability and opportunities for women and people with disabilities to benefit. The project's key inclusion strategy was to focus on value addition options where there were good opportunities for the project participants to benefit. This was combined with the S4T project model, which promoted a savings culture in communities and created social safety nets as well as capital for people to start/scale up their own production activities.

Outcomes 2 and 3 aimed at increasing the *agency* of women and people with disabilities, as well as promoting *equitable systems*. By adopting a gender-transformative approach, the project sought to promote equitable gender relations at household level and positive shifts in community attitudes on gender and disability through reflective dialogue, behaviour change and awareness-raising activities.

Key interventions for Outcome 2 included [Community Change \(C Change\)](#) at community level and [Journeys of Transformation \(JoT\)](#) at household level. C Change mobilises communities around specific local issues – including gender and disability inclusion barriers – enabling participants to understand causes and take steps to address these collectively through changes in attitude and behaviour. JoT is a 14-week gender-transformative intervention that focuses on increasing women's agency by engaging men as allies in support of WEE. This is achieved by working together with women and men to promote more equitable household decision making, men's involvement in domestic and care work, and healthier couple relations. The logic behind this intervention is that it is not possible to engage in gender transformation at household level without also transforming the community attitudes, norms and relations.

Key interventions for Outcome 3 included strengthening the capacity of disabled people's organisations (DPOs) and supporting persons with disabilities to take up leadership positions in DPOs and other group structures (e.g., producer groups, savings groups).

Outcome 4 sought to increase project stakeholders' understanding and access to knowledge and experience on how to achieve economic empowerment inclusive of women and people with disabilities for future projects. The emphasis here was on programming, taking intersectionality into account and how different drivers of vulnerability link to one another.

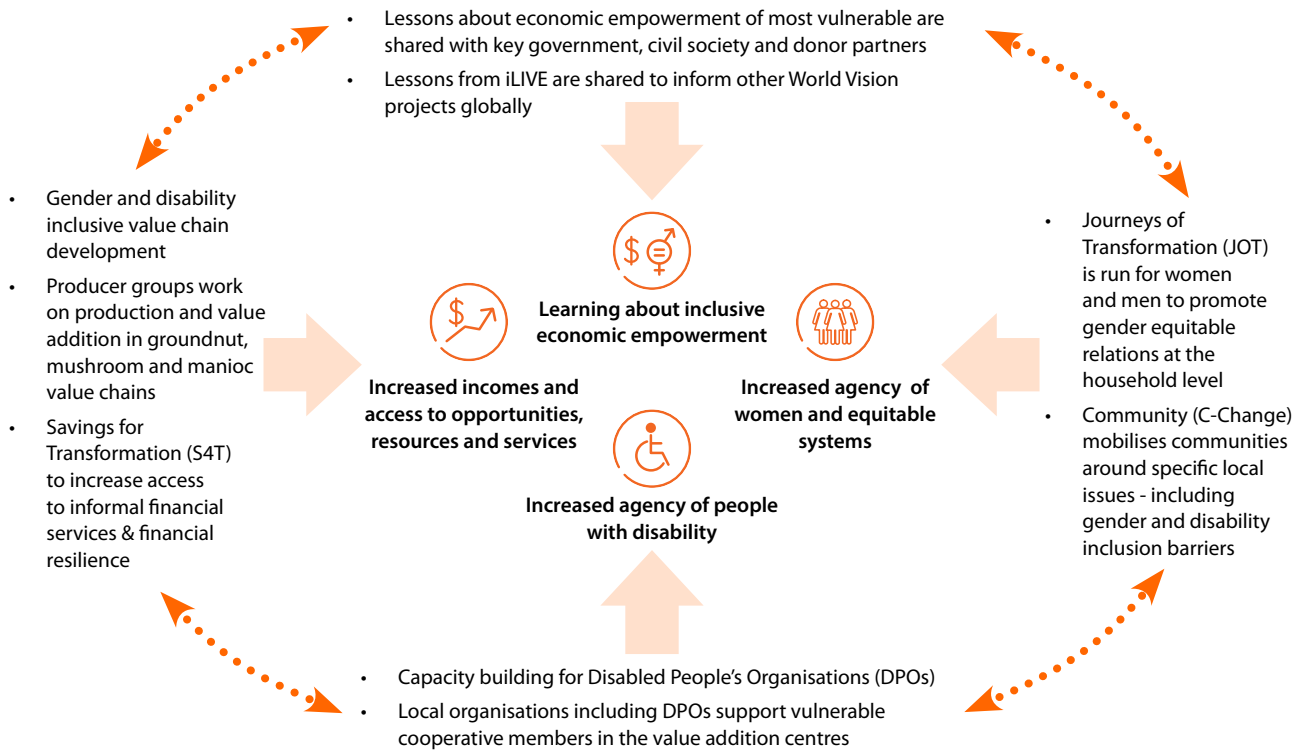


ON AVERAGE, PARTICIPANTS ACHIEVED **A 29% INCREASE IN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**, BENEFITING 32,000 VULNERABLE PEOPLE THROUGH GREATER FINANCIAL SECURITY, IMPROVED NUTRITION, AND HOUSEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS, AMONG OTHER IMPACTS.

6 Savings for Transformation (S4T) model is World Vision's adaptation of the Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) savings groups approach, to reach the most vulnerable groups (especially women and persons with disabilities) and often most marginalised children, living in different contexts (all faiths, rural, urban or semi-urban).

7 The Local Value Chain Development (LVCD) project model aims to help producers generate a sustainable income to provide for the needs of their families and children. Producers increase their incomes by working together in groups to have stronger understanding and connection to markets and by better matching their production to market demand to improve their profitability.

Figure 1: How the iLIVE Project Achieves Change



EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purpose of the iLIVE end of project evaluation was to assess overall progress towards the project's stated goal, outcomes, outputs and indicators, as well as the effectiveness and cumulative impact of the project's aim to increase incomes for vulnerable people within targeted communities. This included targeting women and people with disabilities through local agricultural value chains and the design and deployment of strategies to overcome social barriers that prevent or limit their participation. The evaluation had six objectives, framed around organisation for economic cooperation and development (OECD) development assistance committee (DAC) criteria of impact, effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, coherence and sustainability, as well as 23 guiding evaluation questions detailed in the terms of reference (ToR). The evaluation included specific cost analysis, with a focus on estimating the additional cost and benefits of disability inclusion using the value for money framework. It also investigated the added value of adopting a twin-track approach targeting gender and disability inclusion.



Merianita Aanathan is no longer limited by her disability. She grows mushrooms and sells her harvest to the mushroom coffee producers in her village in Karaichchi (North Sri Lanka)



METHODOLOGY

The evaluation can be categorised as a quasi-experimental pre-post evaluation. A mix of qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Impact was quantitatively assessed for all key project goal, outcome and output indicators to determine the level of achievement and impact against baseline measures undertaken in August 2018 and final targets throughout the life of the project. In-depth qualitative data provided insights into how change was achieved, and the barriers faced. Towards this, the evaluation deployed a range of methods and tools including data analysis, household interviews, key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). The evaluation also undertook a cost benefit analysis by estimating the costs of disability inclusion for the project, assessed with value for money in terms of economy, efficiency, equity and effectiveness. An additional cost estimation tool (ACET), developed by the project team, was used to enhance understanding of the costs of disability inclusion to aid planning and design in future programs. The evaluation formally started on 15th March 2021 with background reading, review and planning, while the core consultative process with project participants, personnel and other stakeholders took place between 20th May and 1st July, 2021.

LIMITATIONS

A major limitation was the government-imposed COVID-19 restrictions on travel and gatherings which required all interviews to be conducted remotely by mobile phone or internet connections, and hence prolonged the preparatory and planning phase. Despite these challenges, the evaluation team successfully interviewed 975 people, 269 for the impact assessment, 646 for the end-line survey and 60 for the comparative survey. Of these, 64% were female, 26% were people with disabilities and 22% were female heads of household. The demographics of the project participants were 73% female, 19% people with disabilities and 14% female heads of household.

Jeyachitra Makenthiram is the largest shareholder in her S4T group. She loves spending her leisure time playing with her youngest son at home in Kandawalai (North Sri Lanka)

KEY FINDINGS

The iLIVE project largely met its goal by achieving an average increase in total annual household income of 29% (see Table 1). The project also successfully achieved its holistic economic empowerment outcomes, in terms of:

- **Economic advancement:** The project has been able to increase average annual household income earned from key value chain products by 107% (mean).
- **Access:** The project was able to increase access to new economic opportunities, resources and financial services for vulnerable groups. The 3,120 members of the 85 producer groups (PGs) were 66% female, 15% people with disabilities and 12% female heads of household. The 4,188 members of the 172 S4T groups were 85% women, 13% people with disabilities and 14% female heads of household.
- **Agency:** The project has been able to make positive shifts in key household decision-making processes, leading to a 38% increase in women reporting decision-making power over productive activities they are involved in. However, access to, and control of, financial resources showed limited progress, and in some cases a regression. This indicates that continued efforts are required to bring about the desired positive changes in women's agency and economic empowerment in these communities.
- **Equitable systems:** There has been positive shifts in norms linked to gender and disability, although harmful attitudes to the related issue of gender-based violence (GBV) persist.

Table 1: Project progress against goal indicators

GOAL INDICATORS	BASELINE SURVEY	END OF PROJECT	% CHANGE
Median average annual household income earned from key value chain products			
– All households (median)	15,000	29,250	95%
– All households (mean)	21,671	42,482	96%
– PG members (also other group members) (median)	15,000	30,000	100%
– PG members (also other group members) (mean)	21,671	44,857	107%
Average annual household total income			
– PG members (can also be members of other groups)	146,429	202,003	38%
– All households	146,429	188,205	29%
% people reporting access to and control over financial resources			
– Male	55%	46%	-16%
– Female	46%	45%	-2%
– Female	60%	47%	-22%
% women reporting having decision-making power over productive activities they are involved in	56%	77%	38%
% women reporting decision-making power over inputs and equipment for production/income generation	56%	70%	25%
% women reporting decision-making power over major household expenditures	63%	71%	13%

Outcome 1: Increased capacity for producers to earn income, including people with disabilities and women, through: (1) Increased engagement of producers in target value chain activities (producing/processing/selling); (2) Improved market linkages and collective buying/selling for producers through producer groups; (3) Increased technical, vocational and financial literacy skills of producers; (4) Increased capital and access to finance for producers; (5) Increased time available for income-generating activities (IGAs)

In terms of achievements against targets, the evaluation revealed that the iLIVE project made very good progress with 83% of all Outcome 1 level indicators fully or largely achieved. The project has been successful in increasing the capacity of 3,120 producers (66% women and 15% people with disabilities), and positively contributing to increasing their incomes. Significant achievements were also made in terms of changes between baseline and endline against key Outcome 1 indicators, as shown in the table below.

Table 2: Project progress against key Outcome 1 indicators

OUTCOME 1 - SELECTED INDICATORS	BASELINE SURVEY	END OF PROJECT	% CHANGE
% households engaged in selling crops, produce or services related to value chains promoted by the project	39%	58%	50%
% households accessing inputs, processing equipment and/or market information collectively or through a PG	30%	47%	55%
% respondents who report feeling aware of market information (prices, demand, etc.) for selling their products	34%	57%	67%
% respondents who report feeling satisfied that they received fair prices for their products	54%	67%	24%
% households who have used own savings or loans in order to invest (expand/diversify) in their IGAs	65%	73%	12%
% S4T group members who report feeling satisfied with their S4T group		100%	
Time available for IGAs: Mean average number of hours per day engaged in income-generating activities	2.7	6.2	130%

Out of the three value chain products, mushrooms proved an attractive option for women or people with disabilities, especially when space and/or mobility is limited. As a relatively new product that is currently backed by the government, mushrooms are considered to have the most growth potential. 25% of all producer groups and 13% of all PG members are engaged in mushroom production (74% female, 30% people with disabilities, 17% female heads of household). As a result, several project communities were designated as 'mushroom production villages'. Groundnuts were cited as a 'safe' product, with established markets and government promotion and support. Accordingly, groundnut PGs were the largest groups with an average membership of 47 across the 53 active groups (65% female, 12% people with disabilities, 12% female heads of household). Similarly, several communities were designated 'groundnut production villages' by the government which attracted the attention of the private sector and other government bodies. Average membership across the nine active manioc PGs was half that of groundnut groups at 24 per group (66% female, 13% people with disabilities, 13% female heads of household).

Consistent with the LVCD model, iLIVE supported local market facilitators (LMFs) who worked with PGs, linking them to local markets and later to district, regional and national markets. Marketing agents (MAs) were also engaged in the process. These are more experienced entrepreneurs with their own private sector contacts and networks, which they would leverage to facilitate links with larger regional and national markets. The project ensured that the LMFs and MAs earned a commission from their work, so that there were incentives for them to continue to do this work after the end of the project.



83% OF OUTCOME 1 INDICATORS FULLY OR LARGELY ACHIEVED



3,120 PRODUCERS (66% WOMEN & 15% PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES) INCREASED CAPACITY AND INCOME



130% INCREASE IN TIME AVAILABLE FOR INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES

“Previously, few people knew that mushrooms are edible and nutritious. Since then, many women and people with disabilities have been trained in mushroom production and value-added products. Today, many people include mushrooms in their diets. One area of Kiran is now known as a mushroom village because of the high quantity of production and quality of value-added products.”

– DIVISIONAL SECRETARY, KIRAN

At the same time, PG members were also encouraged to start value addition processes rather than production and sales of fresh produce. This involved running Value Addition Centres (VACs) on a small scale, with technical training inputs on value addition, food processing, packaging, business planning and cost calculation provided by the project. VACs were then linked to PGs to source raw materials and fresh produce, as well as to LMFs and MAs to facilitate market access through their respective contacts and channels. By the end of the project, 19 LMFs (five female, four people with disabilities and one female head of household) were working collectively with 1,009 retail shops, vegetable sales outlets and other buyers. Although most respondents in the evaluation had not engaged with LMFs, those that had, spoke appreciatively of their role; for example, collecting produce from individual producers for pooling and selling elsewhere at a higher price, enabling primary producers to concentrate on production, and assisting those unable or unwilling to travel and those with limited knowledge of the relevant markets. LMF payments were considered reasonable given their efforts, including time spent, cost of travelling, marketing products and collecting money.

Almost all S4T members indicated they were satisfied with their groups. 73% of respondents stated that their savings or loans were used to invest in their IGAs, and this was reflected in the 130% increase in the average number of hours engaged in IGAs. This was highest among women with disabilities at 223%, followed by all women at 150%. In comparison, the average amount of hours engaged in IGAs by all male participants increased by 110% (70% among men with disabilities). These findings suggest that targeting vulnerable groups – especially women with disabilities – to enhance their economic engagement was effective.

“S4T is our village bank. It is our own bank and it is our money that we revolve for our needs.”

– KII WITH FEMALE S4T GROUP MEMBER, SERUVILA

Of the 87 S4T group members who participated in the evaluation, 90% had benefited from group loans, 60% to start or expand their businesses and 30% to cover COVID-related shortfalls and/or repay previous loans. More generally, S4T members, including the 1,068 (26%) who are not PG members, were also able to obtain loans to invest in other productive activities including poultry, goat rearing, small shops, kiosks, fishing, and home gardening, as well as for household needs and emergencies. In KIIs and FGDs, S4T groups indicated that people now have greater security and resilience with the ability to meet unexpected costs, plan for the future, start new businesses and/or scale up existing ones. This compares with a research study⁸ conducted for iLIVE, which found that S4T contributed to strengthening the

“We work together as a group, processing mushrooms for packaging and selling. It was helpful and also saves time and money by selling products together and taking turns to assist each other in production.”

– FEMALE PG MEMBER, VERUGAL

resilience of vulnerable communities when their livelihoods and day-to-day activities were affected by natural disasters. 79% of all loans taken were for business development. Of the 411 loans disbursed at that time, 29% were invested in LVC ventures, 50% in non-LVC enterprises and 21% for non-business activities such as children’s education and household needs.

The evaluation also revealed the success of these initiatives with the reported average number of hours per day spent on IGAs increasing by 130% from 2.7 hours (baseline) to 6.2 hours (end-line). Sex-disaggregated figures show similar increases from 2.3 to 5.8 hours for women (150%) and from 3.4 to 7.2 hours for men (110%).



Kumuthini Sabesalinkam makes sure that their savings group ‘lyanar’ (name of their S4T group) meets regularly in Manthai East (North Sri Lanka)

8 World Vision Australia (WVA). 2021. Effectiveness of Savings for Transformation (S4T) and Producer Groups (PGs) to Enhance Economic Engagement and Resilience to Natural Disasters: Gender and Disability Inclusive Economic Development Project (iLIVE), Eastern and Northern Provinces, Sri Lanka. WVA, August 2021.

Outcome 2: Increased agency of women, through: (a) Changed community attitudes on gender; (b) Increased equitable household decision-making power; (c) Increased time available for women through shared care work

The evaluation found the project made good progress with 73% of all Outcome 2 level indicators fully or mostly achieved. Key achievements for selected indicators are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Project progress against key Outcome 2 indicators

OUTCOME 2 - SELECTED INDICATORS	BASELINE SURVEY	END OF PROJECT	% CHANGE
% people in agreement that it is perfectly acceptable for women to work outside of the home	73%	86%	18%
– Male	69%	84%	21%
– Female	76%	87%	15%
% people in agreement that there are times a woman deserves to be beaten (that beating women is an acceptable way to discipline them)	44%	23%	-47%
– Male	57%	25%	-56%
– Female	36%	22%	-38%
% households where men are involved in daily childcare	23%	36%	57%

The evaluation considers the iLIVE project as largely successful in increasing women’s agency. This has been achieved through a combination of changed attitudes and gender-related behaviour including increased equitable household decision making and sharing of household responsibilities (such as daily unpaid household and care work) which has created more time for income generation.

Decision making: As outlined in the goal level indicators, there have been increases in women’s decision-making power related to production activities and major household expenditure. For example, the percentage of women reporting decision-making power involving major household expenditures increased by 65%. However, there are some mixed and sometimes contradictory findings to other results in some areas. For example, while there have been increases in women’s decision-making power on production activities and major household expenditure, other results linked to decision making over purchases, as well as access to, and control of, financial resources, show limited progress and in some cases, regression.

Manageable workloads: The evaluation revealed that the proportion of households where men are involved in daily childcare rose by 57%, from 23% (baseline) to 36% (end-line), and this was higher among men that participated in JoT (53%). The JoT program specifically targeted female members of S4T groups, some of whom also engaged in LVCD, and their partners to encourage shared responsibility and decision making.

Equitable systems: The project has also seen strong changes in attitudes to women’s mobility, although harmful attitudes relating to GBV and women’s autonomy persist, suggesting limitations to women’s well-being. KIIs and FGDs with female participants identified C Change as the catalyst



73% OF OUTCOME 2 INDICATORS FULLY OR LARGELY ACHIEVED



57% INCREASE IN HOUSEHOLDS WHERE MEN INVOLVED IN DAILY CHILDCARE



OVER 2,000 WOMEN BECAME ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE WITH ACCESS TO TRAINING AND OPPORTUNITIES

for changes in behaviour and attitudes at community level, with people actively encouraged to express their views and suggestions in community groups. One female head of household in Kiran who participated in C Change and S4T groups described how the project simultaneously built her confidence to engage more actively in community events while also preparing her community through sensitisation programs.

“As a single woman heading my household, I used to find it very difficult to face my community but after I was recognised, I have become a leader of my group and am appreciated by 75% of our community.”

– KII WITH A PRODUCER GROUP MEMBER, KIRAN

Links between agency and access: These initiatives, together with access to training and opportunities for income generation, enabled over 2,000 women, many of them vulnerable, to become economically active. Confidence derived from this, reinforced by respect generated in others, has led to the increased visibility of married, widowed, divorced and separated women, and women with disabilities in the community. Most of these women were not only selling and trading publicly in local markets and running their own businesses but also taking a more active role in community groups and activities. KIs revealed that there was increased female participation in community meetings, with women articulating their concerns, views and suggestions with confidence and clarity. In Kilinochchi, an instructor from the Department of Agriculture described how women were better able to assess and develop their capacity and

“Most women are now actively participating in community meetings and expressing their views with confidence. Decisions are made together as a family after participating in the JoT program. Women are engaging in IGAs based on their skills.”

– EDO, KANDAVALAI

skills as well as identify sources of information and support, and how to utilise these for their own benefit. This increase in confidence and engagement means that female iLIVE participants are now routinely invited by government to community consultations on different issues to ensure their participation in public consultations.

Outcome 3: Increased agency of people with disabilities, through: (a) Increased independence of people with disabilities; (b) Changed community attitudes towards people with disabilities (for livelihood); (c) Strengthened capacity of DPOs, government and service providers

The iLIVE project had particular success in increasing the agency of people with disabilities through a combination of increased independence (regarding decision making, economic and community engagement), changed attitudes towards people with disabilities, and the strengthened capacity of DPOs. 79% of the Outcome 3 indicators were either fully or largely achieved, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Project progress against key Outcome 3 indicators

OUTCOME 3 - SELECTED INDICATORS	BASELINE SURVEY	END OF PROJECT	% CHANGE
% respondents who report feeling confident to speak out on key community/economic issues in front of other people and groups	36%	95%	163%
– People with disabilities	39%	95%	144%
% People with disabilities reporting they are able to make their own decisions about what is important to them	47%	90%	91%
– Male	50%	94%	88%
– Female	44%	86%	96%
Community attitudes: % respondents reporting they feel comfortable working with someone who has a physical or sensorial disability	26%	91%	250%
% respondents reporting a positive change in treatment of people with disabilities over the last four years		31%	

The percentages of people with disabilities who reported feeling confident to speak out on community issues and to make their own decisions rose dramatically by 144% and 91% respectively. This was mirrored by a marked increase (250%) in the proportion of people saying they would be comfortable working with someone with a physical or sensorial impairment and a decline in those with the opinion that people with disabilities cannot do work such as agriculture. Despite these findings, only 31% of people with disabilities reported positive changes in their treatment over the last four years, a clear indication that negative attitudes and behaviour continue to persist within the community and therefore require longer term interventions.



79% OF OUTCOME 3 INDICATORS FULLY OR LARGELY ACHIEVED



250% INCREASE IN PEOPLE WHO FEEL COMFORTABLE WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



91% INCREASE IN PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WHO FEEL CONFIDENT IN MAKING THEIR OWN DECISIONS

Outcome 4: Increased project stakeholders' understanding and access to knowledge on how to achieve economic empowerment inclusive of people with disabilities and women for future projects

The evaluation revealed that the iLIVE project had made significant progress with substantial all-round success in increasing the knowledge and understanding of stakeholders regarding gender and disability inclusive economic empowerment. With 100% of Outcome 4 indicators fully achieved, it was the highest rate of achievement of the four outcomes. The iLIVE project's major stakeholder has been government, primarily at divisional level but also at district and provincial level with 486 officials engaging in consultations and participation in project activities, including training inputs. As a result, not only has there been greater understanding and knowledge on how to deliver gender and disability inclusive empowerment, but there is now also the potential and capacity to do the same in their own programs through the adoption or incorporation of several project approaches and interventions.

The project has made strong progress across empowerment domains. Project stakeholders broadly agree that adopting a twin-track approach was successful in promoting holistic outcomes, including the Outcome 1 focus on economic advancement and access, and Outcomes 2 and 3 focusing on agency and equitable systems (social norms). However, certain dimensions of agency, particularly decisions related to expenditure and resources made less progress, suggesting that further investigation is required on the added value of JoT in promoting women's agency, as part of a broader economic development approach.



100% OF OUTCOME 4 INDICATORS FULLY ACHIEVED (INCREASING THE KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER AND DISABILITY INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT)



Kosala Muththulinkam is a volunteer for the Disabled People's Organisation in her area and is involved in mushroom production to earn a living in Muthur (East Sri Lanka)

SUSTAINABILITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The evaluation found that there was considerable and justified confidence within the iLIVE project team regarding the sustainability of most project structures, processes and values. This is largely due to the increased independence of participants and the widespread adoption of project practices by other parties – including local government – in the broader project area. Most project structures were to be registered or affiliated to regulatory bodies. PGs were registered with the Department of Agriculture and/or Co-operative Society, and VACs with the Small Enterprises Development Division (SEDD). Confidence in the sustainability of S4T groups is evidenced by the fact that, after initially disbanding, 76% of all the groups re-formed annually and independently of the project at least once.

Although there was limited success in large-scale private sector engagement at a national level, this was countered by affiliation with government entities and links with district-level local private sector actors who continue to provide support and access to a wide range of services and opportunities beyond the project. At an individual level, the income and employment opportunities generated from the project's creation have fostered increased confidence and independence. By the end of the project, most participants had gained greater knowledge, capacity and incentives to produce goods and start businesses, giving them the means to earn additional income and enhance their resilience going forward.

The evaluation estimated that the cost of enabling people with disabilities to participate in the project over the first four years was A\$894,798 (US\$639,674).⁹ The 'surcharge' of disability inclusion costs was A\$62 (US\$44) per project participant with a disability, which is 12.6% higher than the average cost of other project participants. This compares favourably with existing (although limited) evidence which estimates the cost of disability within public social expenditure at around 10% (and up to 25% in some countries).¹⁰ Economy was realised by having one staff member fully engaged on disability inclusion, while all other staff were required to include this within their own work with technical support from World Vision Australia and World Vision Lanka disability-inclusion advisers and external partners.¹¹ Reasonable accommodation measures such as transportation facilitated the participation of people with disabilities into project training inputs, structures, and processes. With respect to efficiency, the project aimed to

ensure that a target of at least 10% disability inclusion was reached, and in each of the three years between project years 2-4, these targets were exceeded by 448%, 233% and 37% respectively. With regards to effectiveness, the additional attention and cost of disability inclusion was ultimately successful as the project exceeded its targets and achieved (fully or largely) 11 of the 14 Outcome 3 indicators. As a result, people with disabilities made up 19% of all project participants. To put this into perspective, the WHO estimates that people with disabilities account for 15% of the global population. These findings will contribute to the ongoing discourse on the business case for disability inclusion in LVCD and Inclusive Market Systems Development (iMSD).¹²

Overall, the evaluation estimated that the 29% average increase in annual household income is benefiting approximately 32,000 vulnerable people through greater financial security, improved nutrition, and household improvements, among other impacts. With a further 12,500 people reached through gender and disability awareness activities and 18,750 household members benefiting from changed attitudes and behaviour, a total of approximately 50,750 direct and indirect beneficiaries and household members have been impacted. When considered in terms of the overall cost of the project, this equates to A\$99 (US\$71) per person impacted (all project participants). Given that the nature of these outcomes – income security, resilience, improved gender and disability inclusion (leading to greater engagement in economic development as well as household and community decision making) – are sustainable and dispersible, the project should be regarded as good value for money.

The project's unique approach of recognising the intersectionality between gender and disability, and addressing gender and disability inclusion jointly, allowed for a more comprehensive and holistic approach and therefore a greater impact on individual and community attitudes and behaviour change. This particularly benefited women with disabilities who are often marginalised in gender or disability exclusive approaches. The project's dual focus on gender and disability undoubtedly increased the participation of women with disabilities. In 2017, the project's disability survey had identified 709 women with disabilities; however, the project ultimately engaged with 858 women with disabilities, 21% more than originally documented.

9 Average ROE as per WVA ACET Tool: US\$1 = A\$1.40

10 WHO & World Bank (2011) World Report on Disability, www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/world-report-on-disability.

11 Christian Blind Mission (CBM), Promondo and Value for Women (V4W) provided external support on disability and gender inclusion in economic development.

12 The Economic Costs of Exclusion and Gains of Inclusion of People with Disabilities (cbm.org); Conceptualizing inclusiveness of smallholder value chain integration - ScienceDirect; Microsoft Word - Business case for disability inclusion_FINAL KS with links.docx (beamexchange.org).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation showed that the project has contributed significantly to the goal of increasing income from the project's targeted value chain crops, especially for vulnerable groups, including women and people with disabilities, while enhancing their agency and economic engagement in the project area. These are the key recommendations made in relation to future programming in this area:

Overall: Scale up twin-track designs that promote more holistic approaches to GEDSI and WEE

- World Vision should consider how to replicate key design elements to promote GEDSI and WEE outcomes in Sri Lanka and other countries. This builds on the key finding that the twin-track approach of gender and disability mainstreaming in economic development, together with targeted interventions on gender and disability inclusion, were integral to the project's success.
- It was clear that the dual focus on improving incomes and access to opportunities, resources and services, combined with the focus on agency and equitable systems via attitude and behaviour change together yielded greater benefits.

Outcome 1: Consider using holistic iMSD in LVCD, with clear private sector engagement and mainstream financial services, and broader target groups

- Consider how the generic/common processes and techniques of LVCD can be shared and applied to other products and sectors so that other participants can also benefit from the inclusive and holistic market system approach; consider engaging a broader range of target groups across the poverty ladder, in addition to marginalised groups such as women and people with disabilities.
- When looking to engage with a range of private sector actors, particularly those of large scale and at national level, ensuring consistency in quality and quantity is paramount; support from the same actors towards this should be explored given the mutual benefits.
- In addition to establishing S4T groups and building members' capacity to save, borrow and repay, ensure that pathways to mainstream financial services are available to those who wish to use these services.

Outcome 2: Incorporate strategies for engaging men and boys to address gender concerns, and include other influential household members

- Ensure that programs seeking changes in social norms have clear strategies for engaging men and boys from the outset and deploy a range of mainstream and targeted interventions to address any significant and relevant gender imbalances as necessary at both the community and household levels;

- Consider how JoT or an additional/alternative intervention might be expanded to include other influential household members, such as the mothers-in-law.

Outcome 3: Consider including women and men with psychosocial impairments

- Consider including women and men with psychosocial impairments (mental illness) in project activities and outcomes in future programs, which may require additional staffing resources and strengthening mental health clinics. It will be important to continue to build upon the iLIVE project achievements, experience and learning to include these most marginalised groups of people with disabilities in future projects, using many of the resources available in Sri Lanka and globally, such as Christian Blind Mission (CBM).

Outcome 4: Design further analysis plans of the efficacy of key interventions across program outcomes at the onset, with methods for instilling collective responsibility

- Future projects should consider further analysis of the efficacy of individual interventions and particular combinations, by including these indicators at the outset to allow for such analysis – for example, added value of interventions such as JoT and/or C Change to inform the scaling of twin-track approaches to economic empowerment.
- Where any key program components are new to most staff, ensure that methods to generate and drive a sense of collective responsibility are in place.



A Social Inclusion session being conducted with women with disabilities at Vaharai (East Sri Lanka)



World Vision



'Saraswathy' inclusive S4T group members conducting their regular savings meeting in Kiran (East Sri Lanka)

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THIS MEANS THE WORLD

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