

Men Care

A GLOBAL FATHERHOOD CAMPAIGN

World Vision®

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THE ART OF FAMILY LIVING



World Vision Lanka
Patana & Devon Area Development Programmes

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Introduction

World Vision is a Christian, humanitarian, development and advocacy organization working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. In all its programmes World Vision emphasizes on gender equality and fosters healthy relationship between men and woman.

Children are always at the heart of our work and our response and focus is especially aligned to their wellbeing. Realizing the importance of harmony in the families in creating a child friendly environment, World Vision initiated the Men Care programme to motivate men to become more caring and responsible as husbands and fathers. Men Care was first introduced in 2009 in Brazil, and started in Sri Lanka in 2011. Since 2011 more than hundred families have profited through this programme .

In 2014 Men Care Programme commenced in Patana and Devon Area Development Programmes. World Vision invited the managers and deputy managers of Kotagala Plantation, health team, field officers and explained the vision, mission of the activity and the selection of the fathers and the goal and objectives that we are expecting to reach.

The management helped us to select 120 fathers from eight divisions to be a part of the Programme and their families participated in the three day residential family encounter programme. The participants have had a transforming experience through the Programme as you will read in their stories.

Preface

Gender inequality has become a major concern throughout the globe. Gender inequality slows down economic and social development and constitutes an obstacle to good governance. Studies show that women's lack of access to education, health services and employment has a direct contribution to poverty. Empowering women to achieve gender equality is therefore a long-term driver for growth and competitiveness in a globalized world. It leads to inclusive and sustainable development, faster poverty reduction and speedier progress toward attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. Gender integration also adds transparency and openness into policy processes and their implementation. Gender mainstreaming is not just the right thing to do, but is the smart thing to do.

For an organization, achieving gender equality needs to be an overarching goal in order to meet its development goals. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, by its para. 202 and 204 emphasizes the necessity of “mainstreaming gender”, affirming that, “in addressing the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels, Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programs so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects of women and men respectively’.

For an organization focusing on the wellbeing of the child, it is a fundamental acceptance that a child's wellbeing centers on the love, care and protection of both parents. Often, socially defined roles, responsibilities and expectations placed on mothers and fathers directly affect the care, protection and development of children. According to a study done by the Ministry of Child Development

and Women Empowerment in 2003 on the impact of domestic violence on children, 33.5 % of children from homes where there was violence, reported that it became the cause for the breakdown of education, 20.5 % reported that it negatively affected their physical and mental health, and 7.9 % reported that they became violent and disobedient to their parents. A UNICEF Report (2000) emphasizes that the domestic violence and the threat of violence experienced throughout a woman's life and resultant conditions created in the home has negative impacts on the development of children.

It is misplaced to say that violence against women perpetrated by men occurs because men cannot control their bad tempers or because they have no impulse control. Men who use violence do so because they equate manhood with aggression, dominance over women and with sexual conquest. Often they are afraid that they will be viewed as less than a "real" man if they are nonviolent or share power with women.

MenCare is a global campaign to promote men's gender equitable involvement as caregivers in the lives of their partners and children. MenCare's partners work at community, national and regional levels by advocating for more gender equitable policies related to care giving and developing and adapting programs to work with fathers and their partners to prevent violence against women and children. E.g. MenCare father's manual for the Tea estate region has been designed by World Vision.

Lalindra Ranasinghe
Technical Specialist –
Gender and Peace Building,
World Vision Lanka.

Message from the ADP Manager

Hundreds of miracles have begun to make people wonder and marvel in the neighborhood of the Plantation worker households in World Vision's Patana and Devon Programme areas. The emergence of loving, caring and sharing husbands, fathers in the so far male dominated families is making the neighbors and their own families wonder at this miraculous transformation. How can this happen?

The Patana Area Development Programme (ADP) reflecting on its four year experience in working with 4832 families for the wellbeing of children in their families and communities has realized that though the programme interventions have met the primary needs to a certain extent, the secondary needs of love & care, self-dignity and self-actualization have not been adequately addressed. Thus the need for the development of psychological needs has turned to be a priority promoting the mental health of the families for holistic transformation. More over the ADP has learned that all the Development interventions tend to lose their effectiveness when the family being a basic, social, economic, cultural, political and spiritual unit neglects its responsibility and accountability to provide a child friendly living environment in the family. Having learned that family development has to be given the highest priority and this need has been highly prioritized in planning for the early stage development of the Devon ADP community.

Learning from the above experience Patana ADP has launched the Program of Men Care and the Devon ADP too has followed the same steps. The response to the ADP invitation has been encouraging. 120 men have participated in the 6 months program where they were facilitated to reflect critically on their Life styles and to enjoy the family encounter program where as families they could share their past and present experiences of their family life. The mustard seeds of Men Care seems to grow as a branching tree where loving, caring family nests are being built.

This initiative of publishing 13 stories of significant changes in the life of families of Men Care participants indicates the process of transformation taking place in all these families. These stories show how men have metamorphosed to be caring, sharing and loving persons. This endeavor of promoting a child friendly family environment with gender equity has been a highly expensive exercise. We wish this mustard seed of Men Care grow in to an enormous mustard tree where hundreds and hundreds of family nests are built within the plantation community. For this, there is a need for more and more partnership, sharing financial, physical and human resources.

We acknowledge the efforts of Ambagamuwa ADP for its initiative in localizing the Promundo Modules to adapt to the local context. The facilitator Mr. Isaac of this program has proved to be an effective contributor. The Kotagala Plantations PLC Management is to be thanked for its collaboration. The Zonal Director Field Operations, Zonal Manager Field Operations and the World Vision Staff have to be commended for their guidance, and commitment. The participants' families who have become living witness of the possible transformation through the Men Care program have to be thanked for their commitment and perseverance.

R. Alex Ruban,
ADP Manager,
Patana & Devon ADP,
World Vision Lanka.

From Violence to Harmony

Moorthy and Lingeswary begin their married life with the blessing of their parents. Working together at the Yathanside division as plantation workers, they were dreaming of a happy family life, loving and caring their off springs. Suspicion began to creep into their family, as Moorthy continued to visit the arrack tavern and come home heavily drunk. Lingeswary becomes the innocent victim of domestic violence, being physically, verbally harassed and abused. When Moorthy harasses Lingeswary and their children Lukshan, Sindika and Saranya, begin to cry aloud, pleading the father to stop the violence against their mother.

Lingeswary having witnessed the changes taking place in the Yathanside division through the interventions of the World Vision Patana ADP always thought of how she could get the World Vision assist her in transforming her husband's violent behavior.

The World Vision Patana ADP having realized the importance of a harmonious family life for the wellbeing of the children and also gender equality saw the importance of the role of the men as husbands and fathers and initiated the Men Care programme. The welfare officer of the plantation management having been informed of the Men Care programme, was successful in getting the participation of twenty five men within the Yathanside division. Moorthy was one of them. According to Moorthy, there were some significant experiences within the programme that made him to change his way of life. The most significant experience for him has been the "Health and Sexuality" session of the programme. "My suspicions of my wife were found to be one of my own creations and I regret for my grievous fault" says Moorthy.

What a change! Moorthy continues to speak of his change, "My past is gone. Now I am a new man. I have begun to be a loving and sharing husband and an affectionate and caring father. Now I

come home early, as I have been able to reduce my drinking habit. Reducing my drinking, I am able to save some money for my family, a part of which is spent for our children’s education.”

Moses and Jayaprakash, the neighbors of Moorthy’s family said “Now we do not hear the loud crying of Moorthy’s children. Things have changed in Lingeswary’s family.”



A Caring father

Kobinath as an adolescent migrates to Colombo searching for an employment, leaving the Christlesfarm division in Kotagala. Being in Colombo, influenced by the urban culture he gets into the habits of smoking and drinking liquor. Having experienced the urbanized life, Kobinath returns to Chritlefarm and begins to work as a plantation worker. But he continues his smoking and liquor drinking habits, adding a new habit of beetle chewing. At the age of twenty three he marries the young lady Kumudhini. When Patana ADP started its development interventions in the Chrislesfarm division Kumudhini began to attend the meetings and also participate in different programmes especially the nutrition programme. Her child Dhanushika was found to be malnourished turned to be a well nourished child through the nutrition programme. When the plantation management identified Kobinath for the Men Care programme Kumudhini was happy and encouraged him to participate at the proposed programme.

Earlier, after a heavy day's work Kumudhini comes home to attend to the domestic chores. Kobinath is not a husband who helps his wife in her domestic work. During all the years of the family life Kumudhini had to struggle to make both ends meet, as her husband used to bring only a fraction of his earnings, after spending for liquor, cigarettes and beetle. This created the family disputes between them, making the children victims of malnutrition.

Having responded to the invitation of the World Vision, Kobinath begins to participate in the Men Care programme. The three day residential family encounter programme according to Kumudhini and Kobinath they were the most enjoyable days in their family life. The session on "Child development and family spending" has contributed in promoting his relationship with his wife and his children. He says "Now I realize that due to my wasteful spendings, how far I have made my wife and children to suffer". Having determined

to change for a better family life, Kobinath has begun to change his unhealthy habits. Now he has completely stopped smoking, reduced liquor intake and beetle chewing.

With a happy smile on his face Kobinath says “Now I have begun to care for my children. In the morning I help Dhanushika and Pragash our daughter and son to be ready for school. As I come home early now, I have begun to share the domestic work with my wife in cooking and washing.” Kumudhini an active and dynamic young wife says, “Now I am confident that we as a family can live a happy a contented life.” When asked from Kumudhini’s mother, she said “Now I can see a very good change in Kobinath especially in upbringing the children. He has already started cattle rearing as an additional income for the wellbeing of the family.” The smiling faces of the two children indicate that they are being loved, cared and protected by their parents.



A dream realized

Young Revathy finds Nishanthan to be a loving young man. Knowing each other they begin to build up a loving relationship leading to their marriage. As a young man Nishanthan had turned to be a habitual liquor drinker. In spite of this Revathy continued to have faith and confidence in him. He cared so much for Revathy, he did not want her to be a tea plucker. The frequent return of Nishanthan fully drunk began to make Revathy's life difficult. The unnecessary expenditure made poverty creeps into the family. Many a times Revathy fearing her drunkard husband's returning home after work, went to her parental house with her son.

Revathy has become well aware of the changes taking place in the Lochiel division due to the World Vision interventions and has participated at the meetings and programmes of the Patana ADP. For their livelihood improvement they were provided with a pair of goats which is developing into a small herd. When the plantation management was informed of the Men Care programme by the World Vision Patana ADP to identify potential candidates under the criteria provided by the ADP, Nishanthan was found to be a potential candidate for the proposed programme. When Nishanthan informs Revathy of his willingness to participate in the programme, it was a good news for her who have been dreaming Nishanthan to be a teetotaler.

Nishanthan reflecting on his experience of participating in the residential family encounter programme, shared how the sessions on alcoholism had helped him to realize how far his excessive drinking had impaired his ability to be a good caregiver to his son and a caring partner to his wife Revathy. Revathy with a smile on her face began to say, "I am so happy now that on the pay day he comes home early with bags full of household commodities and some savories for me and our son Naveen. Whenever he earns money through casual work he gives me a part of his earnings. My dream has been realized, but

together we are envisioning for a bright future.” When asked how to sustain the family harmony Revathy saying that, “Regular visits of the facilitator of the Men Care programme (Mr. Isaac) would be welcomed by Nishanthan and I too would be happy to have this regular visits of the facilitator.”



The shell is broken

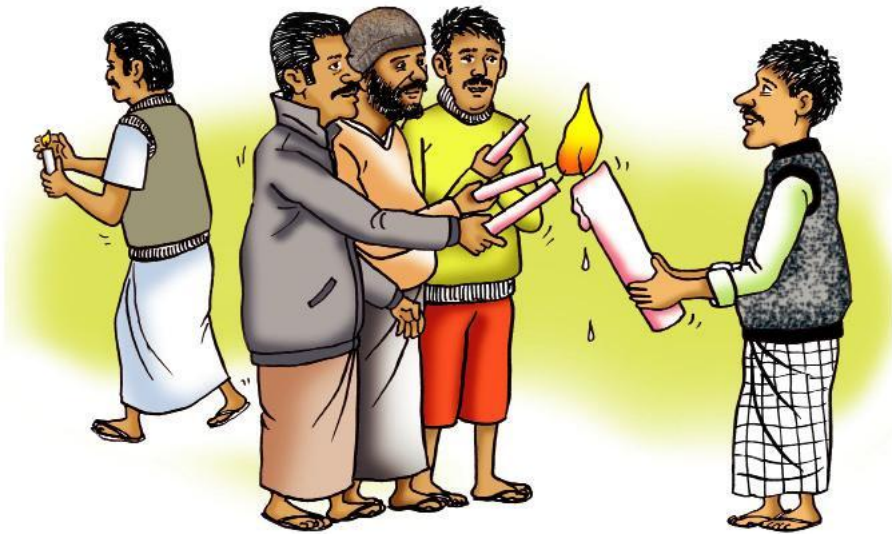
Chaminda Ramasamy begins the day and ends the day being at home, only attending to a small plot of home gardening. Sumathy a tea plucker at Christlesfarm division is the only bread winner of the family of four members including a son and a daughter. Being brought up in a male dominating culture Sumathy had to struggle in tolerating her husband who idles away his time at home. Whatever he earns from the home garden plot or casual work once in a way is spent on alcohol.

Sumathy, been a hardworking and a dynamic woman has always participated in the Patana ADP Development programmes. The plantation management knowing the unhappy family condition of Sumathy due to Chaminda Ramasamy's life of isolation, had identified Chaminda to be a candidate for the Men Care programme of the World Vision Lanka. Speaking to Chaminda it became clear that he has been able to break his shell of isolation and emerge as a person with self-dignity transforming himself from dependency to interdependency. According to Chaminda "The family and the equality" session at the family encounter residential programme has helped him to look at his life critically and change himself to participate more equally at home. "Being animated by this awareness I was motivated to search for an employment and now I am employed as a JCB machine operator and brings the salary home monthly without wasteful expenditure."

Sumathy caressing her children, brightened her face and said, "Free from daily chores we had the time to spend three days together in the three day residential family encounter programme. Chaminda and myself spent our time sharing together how we can make our lives happier by providing well for our children." Reflecting on her student's life she said that she couldn't continue her studies as she failed in mathematics due to the unavailability of a maths teacher. She, determinedly said, "We want to see that our children do better

than we in their studies and become professionals.” The elder son Vinoth is now studying at an international school in English medium as a grade one student.

Listening to Chaminda and Sumathy, it is hoped that Vinoth and Vithishan are educated for life. The neighbors observing the radical change in the Chaminda-Sumathy family began to request from Sumathy whether they too could have an opportunity to attend to this programme. Punithamalar, Susila, Selvarani and Neelamegam were some of the neighbors who have been motivated by this change.



The girl child is protected

A little house in the middle of two rows of line houses has only one room and a kitchenette. This little house looks to be an untidy dwelling with no space for the children to breathe freely. Gnanamuthu and Logeshwary with their three daughters have been destined to live an unhealthy life, making the children vulnerable for all forms of infections and diseases. Adding insult to injury, the five members of the family have to find a sleeping space within 8*8 feet floor area of the single room. As a husband and a wife the sexual life has been limited as three girls sleep in the same room.

Logeshwary being in the Lochiel division has been participating in various meetings and programmes of the World Vision Patana ADP. All her three daughters have become sponsored children by participating in the nutrition programme she found that her children were suffering from malnutrition. Feeding her children according to what she learned at the nutrition programme she provided nutritious meals for her children. Except for one child the other two have turned to be well nourished. She hopes the other child to would gain the correct weight.

Gnanamuthu returns home late in the evening after enjoying his daily quota of liquor. Because of this daily practice he gets indebted and major part of his monthly earning, he spends on repaying the debt. Logeshwary struggles to make both ends meet and has no way of saving for improving their housing conditions. Whatever, the difficulties they had Logeshwary has been able to equip the essential domestic appliances persuading her husband. Informed by the estate management Gnanamuthu responded positively to the invitation of The World Vision Patana ADP for the Men Care programme. Having participated in the Men Care programme, Gnanamuthu reflected on how he has to change positively in assuring the wellbeing of their three daughters. He began to say “I realized the urgent need for a spacious larger room to provide a safe and a protective environment

for our three daughters. It was at the session on Healthy Sexuality that I and my wife began to understand that healthy sexuality and sex life contribute to a happy marriage.

Animated and motivated by these inspirations, Gnanamuthu in a conversation with Logeshwary agreed to build a new room. Attempting to reduce his wasting of money for liquor he has begun to save money and gradually build the room within a period of eight months. Determined to build a new room they borrowed a loan of Sixty thousand rupees from The Micro Finance facility of Brendina an NGO working in the area. As they have to pay Six thousand rupees monthly as the repayment installment, Gnanamuthu has stopped his daily quota of alcohol to save money for the repayment. Logeshwary has been working as a government factory worker in Colombo earning a fair monthly salary. When asked why not return to Colombo, she responded saying, “I have to care and protect our three daughters. Both of us want to see that our children do better in life than we have been destined to live. We want them to be educated and live a real human life.”



Repentance brings reconciliation

Satheeshkumari begins her day at five o'clock in the morning preparing tea for her husband Manivannan and the four children. She has to prepare rotti and sambol for their family breakfast. While the husband sleeps, she makes the children ready for school, pre-school and the crèche. Gajani and Sai Saran make their way to school on their own and the mother takes the two younger children Tharaniya and Dilrukshan to the pre-school and the crèche. Stheeskumari leaves home to be at the field in time.

Satheeskumari by participating in the nutrition programme of the World Vision Patana ADP was happy that two of her children could gain the age appropriate weight through the nutrition programme. The plantation management identified Manivannan as a potential candidate for the Men Care programme proposed by the Patana ADP.

The Men Care programme attracts Manivannan and he participates in all the sessions in the programme. The most significant session for him has been the session on the Family and Equality. Looking into himself he found how much he has neglected his roles and responsibilities as a husband and a father to his family. He said "I felt guilty of overloading my wife with daily household chores without offering my help." Satheeshkumari giving a feedback on the transformation of her husband she said, "What a blessing it is for me to have a warm cup of tea from my husband in the early morning." Manivannan carries his two year son Dilrukshan to and from the creche and his four year old daughter Tharaniya to the pre-school. This was a result of a decision of Manivannan taken at the end of three day residential family encounter programme and a promise given by him to the estate manager saying, "Here after I will reduce fifty percent of my daily alcohol consumption." When Manivannan and Satheeskumari with their son Sai Saran met Mr. Isaac the facilitator of the programme, six year old Sai Saran came

running to Mr. Isaac and has said, “Sir, my father has changed, he comes home early and spends time with me.”



Respecting each other

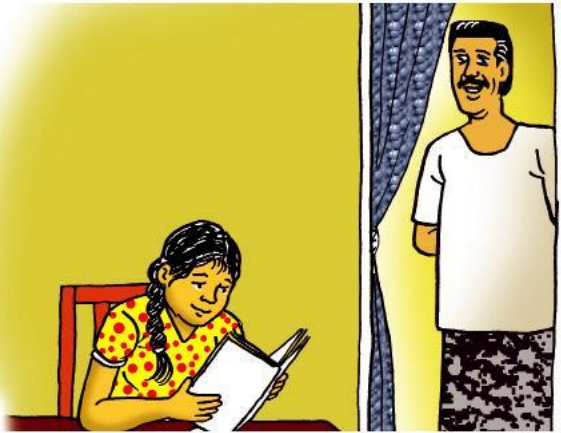
Jeyapragash and Janaki have been residents of Dimbulla upper division. Janaki is a housewife attending to her home garden and looking after three children Boudharani, Hariharan and Janarthan. They are all school going children. Jayapragash by trade is a mason earning a daily wage. Having lived together for ten years, they were on the verge of separation.

Unable to bear the total neglect by her husband, Janaki was in the habit of leaving home and spending two to three days at her parents' home. But feeling her affection for her children needing her care, she used to come back to her family. Jeyapragash when at home never gave an ear to his wife. He also never paid attention to the education of his three school going children. Janaki was burdened with not only the daily domestic chores but also with assisting the children in their school work. When Jayapragash comes home drunk, Janaki had to bear the beatings by her husband.

Janaki has engaged herself in assisting the nutrition programme of the Devon ADP, where she has taken the responsibility to prepare the meals with the child development officer. Commenting on her experience she said, "We experienced the joy of working together for the welfare of the children of our neighborhood." Devika, a sponsorship field assistant of Devon ADP, knowing the pathetic situation of Janaki's family identified Jeyapragash as a suitable candidate for the Men Care programme.

Having participated in the Men Care programme he commented saying, "Having continuously followed the Men Care programme for six months I have gained the self-confidence to break away from my past way of life and become a loving husband and a caring father. According to him he initiated himself into a gradual transformation active listening to his wife and children."

When asked about her husband, Janaki began to say, “Now he listens to me and I too have begun to listen to him. As a result, we together plan our family budget allowing some savings for our children’s education.” But she has two fears. Their daughter Boudharani attending advanced level bio technology classes, has to return home late in the evening from Hatton. Starting from the entry of the Dimbulla upper division she has to walk three and a half kilo meters along the lonely estate road. Janaki always suffer from the fear of any harm to her daughter on her way. The other fear is though Jayapragash has stopped alcohol, there is a risk of his friends distracting him to renew the drinking habit. When asked how to overcome these risks, she said, “We need to have a house close to the main road.” Janaki wants her children to be well educated and now she is happy that her husband saves money for their education. Responding to our question the elder son Hariharan said, “I want to be an Engineer.” He with great respect to his father he said, “I am proud that our father has changed to be a caring father not only earning money but also being with us attending to our studies.” And he continued saying that, “When I am educated well I will look after my father and mother who have brought up us with commitment and dedication.”



Time for listening

Thanaraj and Vasanthamalar have been spending their three years of marriage blessed with a child Pabilashini. Being cultured in a male dominating environment, Thanaraj was more like a Kangani (Supervisor) dictating terms to his wife Vasanthamalar and never giving her a helping hand. When he returns home from Colombo where he works as an assistant salesman at a textile shop he wants the house to be kept clean and tidy. He got angry whenever he saw the things are not up to his expectations and began shouting at Vasanthamalar. His dictating loud voice was a harassment to his child.

Vasanthamalar having participated in the nutrition programme of World Vision Devon ADP was happy to see her child gaining weight by being fed according to the nutritional food preparation and food habits. Her brother Vijay being a close companion of Niranjan the Programme Assistant informed Vasanthamalar about the Men Care programme. She requested Thanaraj to participate in the programme. Thanaraj thought that it was a programme about children, but he found it to be a programme leading to a change in the way of life. Commenting on his experience of the programme he began to say “How I have been violent against my wife and also it is in this programme that I learned how important it is to listen my wife at least a few minutes and also being with my child for some time.”

Vasanthamalar expressing her experience in the residential family encounter programme she said “This was the first time after three years we sat together close to each other and talked together. I was listening to him and he was listening to me.” Both of them have a dream of living in a house of their own, instead of living in the parental house with an extended family. Thanaraj said “Staying at the parental house have made their life stagnant. We need change. Having our own house we will begin to change our way of life, because of the feeling of ownership.”

Vasanthamalar and Thanaraj are blessed with parents ready to contribute in realizing their dream of a house of their own. While Vasanthamalar’s father is to provide a plot of land Thanaraj’s father is ready to provide some financial assistance. Being supported by their parents Vasanthamalar and Thanaraj have begun to save for housing.



A moment of grace

Thiruchelvam and Vickneshwary with their two children are living in a one - room house with a kitchen in front. The children are made to sleep under a tin sheet roof with leaking holes. Vickneshwary has always been asking her husband to renovate the roof. But because of the excessive drinking habit, Thiru could not respond to her demand. The unhealthy environment with a kitchen in front has created an unfavorable environment for their children.

Vickneshwary having participated in the nutrition programme conducted by World Vision Patana ADP was well aware of the development interventions of the ADP. She was happy that her eldest daughter was able to gain her age appropriate weight by providing nutrition according to the food preparation and practices learned at the nutrition programme sessions (PDHEARTH).

The plantation management when informed by the Patana ADP identified Thiru as a potential candidate for the Men Care programme based on the criteria provided.

The moment of grace descended upon Thiru, when at the Men Care programme, together with his wife reflected on the characteristics and the needs of their children during the residential Family Encounter sessions. Having learnt how as a family can manage their family budget to ensure the wellbeing of the children, Thiru has decided to change his way of life. Commenting on his efforts to change himself for better, he says, “I have begun to reduce my routine use of alcohol and as a result we are saving five hundred rupees per child monthly in the bank.” Both together Thiru and Vickneshwary are planning to renovate the roof with new roofing sheets.



A Metamorphosis

The plantation worker families are destined to live in line rooms. Thus there need to be a good neighborly relationship among the families in the line rooms. The peace and harmony of the line No.2 of Lochiel division has always been disturbed by Chandramohan, because of his aggressive behavior with the neighbors. It has become an embarrassment for his wife Sagunthala and his children. His verbal abuses have been humiliating the neighbors. Fortunately his neighbors never had lost their patience. Chandramohan did not want his wife Sagunthala to speak to the neighbors or share anything with them. Being an Ice-cream seller whatever he earns he used to spend not only for household needs but also for alcohol.

Sagunthala has been participating in the nutrition programme of the World Vision Patana ADP and has been successful in making her daughter gain the correct weight. Chandramohan coming to know of the World Vision through his wife took the daughter with a critical ear problem to meet the ADP manager. The ADP manager requested the programme Coordinator to provide all the assistance necessary for medical care. The plantation management identified Chandramohan as a person who needs to reform his life.

It was at the three day residential family encounter sessions that the conversation began in sharing their life experiences. Chandramohan asked, “If we can spend our time happily here why can’t we live the same way happily at home.” Sagunthala said, “If you are willing to listen to me and I too am willing to listen to you. We can live happy life with our children because we can think together and plan together our future family life.” Having learnt about the difference between confrontational communication and affirmative communication Chandramohan began to manage his emotions and control his anger. The neighbors of Chandramohan are surprised at the change of behavior of their neighbor Mohan. Commenting on his behavioural change, Muthukumar, a neighbor said, “It looks to

be a miracle that Mohan has metamorphosed from being aggressive person to a more understanding person.”

Having reduced his drinking habit, together with his wife an additional room has been constructed providing a healthier environment for the children and also proving privacy for Sagunthala and Chandramohan to be a happy husband and wife. Whatever limitations Chandramohan has he is a highly confident person, promising a better standard of living for his wife and children. Finally he commented, “We were ignorant of the value of our life. No one guided us, even our parents could not show us the way. It is the World Vision who showed us the path of wisdom.”



A new trend

The social marginalization combined with economic poverty has made most of the parents of the plantation worker families to neglect the education of their children. But some of these families through socialization have realized how poverty prevents education and education prevents poverty. Thus there is a trend in these families in promoting the education culture. Srikanth with limited social interactions was not influenced by this new trend. Consequently education of his children was not a priority for him. Rajalakshmi though interested in educating their children, she was not able to convince her husband of this need.

Out of the sixteen families who participated at the Men Care programme, Srikanth's family was one of them. At the session on Child Rights and Protection, Srikanth began to understand the importance of educating their children and also what both of them want to achieve with their children's education. With the income of both of their earnings as plantation workers and the income from the cow added with an additional income from Srikanth's casual work, the family has begun to save for the education of their children. Srikanth and Rajalakshmi filled with hopes and aspirations said, "We shall live for our children. Our future is our children."



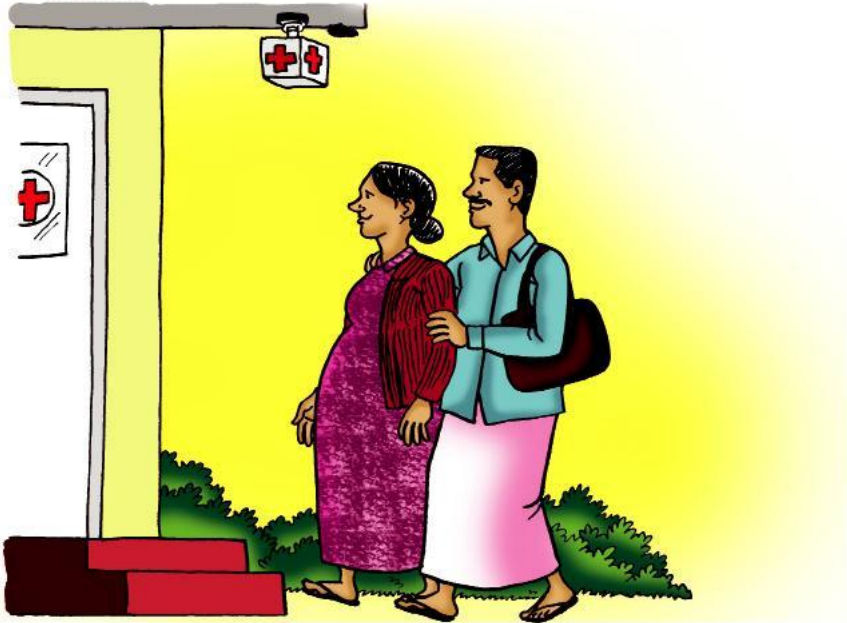
12. An accompanying husband

The plantation culture like in most of the Asian cultures has influenced how men and women have to act, dress, think and talk. Gender wise the plantation women have been entrusted with the reproductive role of feeding, nursing, caring and protecting the children. The men in the plantation sector are not made to share the above reproductive role with their wives. Making things bad to worse, the women of the plantation sector have turned to be the main bread winners of their families. This situation has created a burdensome life to the women.

Thilagawathy had participated with her two sponsored children in the nutrition programme conducted by the World Vision Devon ADP. She has also seen the development work of the World Vision related to the school and the community. Thilagawathy had already given birth to two children. But Pushpadhayalan, her husband had never accompanied her to the Mother and Child clinics. It was the plantation management which identified Pushpadhayalan as a potential candidate for the Men Care programme. The change begins with Pushpadhayalan as he participates in the Men Care programme. At the session on Family and Equality, there was an opportunity for him to critically look at how the socially imposed gender roles have made him to be an irresponsible and uncaring husband. At the end of the programme, he was determined to change his attitudes and behavior as a responsible husband and father.

After the programme Pushpadhayalan began to spend his spare time with Thilagawathy and his two sons. By this time Thilagawathy becomes pregnant with the third baby. Pushpadhayalan accompanies Thilagawathy to the mother and child clinics. There he learns about nutrition needs and caring needs of a pregnant mother. When asked about her husband's change of behavior she began to say "I feel safe and protected when Dhayalan accompanies me to the clinics. He has begun to bring nutritious food to me. How happy I am to be a wife

of a caring husband. Dhayalan has become a role model for the other young husbands.” Both together they dream of having their children well educated. But given the living conditions of having to live in a five into six square feet space which cannot be called a room but a cubical where six members have to sleep. How can the children have a child friendly, healthy and learning environment to continue their education?



Positive attention

Fatherhood needs to be looked at in a holistic way. In the plantation sector as most of the fathers limit their roles and responsibilities mostly to the economic wellbeing and sometimes these roles and responsibilities are also neglected. Chandrasekar and Rajamanikkam had spent twenty five years of married life. Chandrasekar has turned to be Chandraboss because of his leadership in the trade union. Chandrasekar had not paid any attention to the other dimensions of child wellbeing. His youngest daughter said that her father's disturbance at home did not create a learning environment at home for her studies and thus she could not complete her ordinary level examination. The plantation management in identifying potential candidates for the Men Care programme identified Chandrasekar for the programme because as a leader in the Forestcreek division can be an influence to the other households as an agent of transformation.

Rajamanikkam having witnessed the changes taking place in the Forestcreek division because of World Vision Devon ADP's intervention was happy when her husband was selected for the Men Care programme. Both of them had the opportunity of participation at the Men Care programme in the three day residential sessions. It was here for the first time Chandrasekar begins to understand how positive attention plays an important role in developing a good relationship between parents and children. Leaving Homsa the programme venue after the programme he was determine to pay a caring and loving attention to the different needs of the family. As both of them have learnt about family budgeting for the wellbeing of the family they have begun to reduce unnecessary expenses for the wellbeing of their family.

Vidyashini the youngest child in the family of three children said that she is happy to see her father helping her mother at home whenever he is at home and that she is proud of her father.

Vidyashini continued saying that “I have learnt from the change of my father’s life and I am determined to live a prosperous family life in the future.”





Men Care Graduated Fathers



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