



SRI LANKA

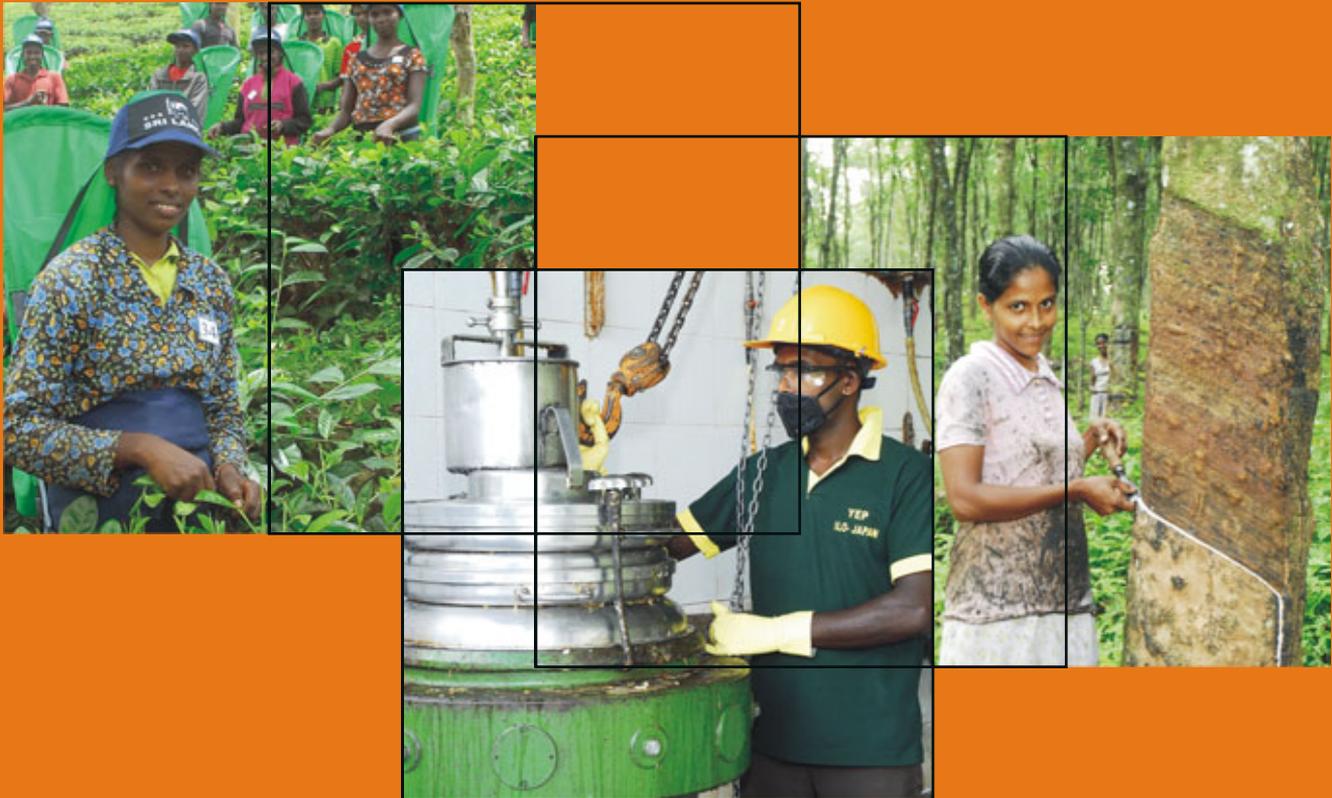


JAPAN



International
Labour
Organization

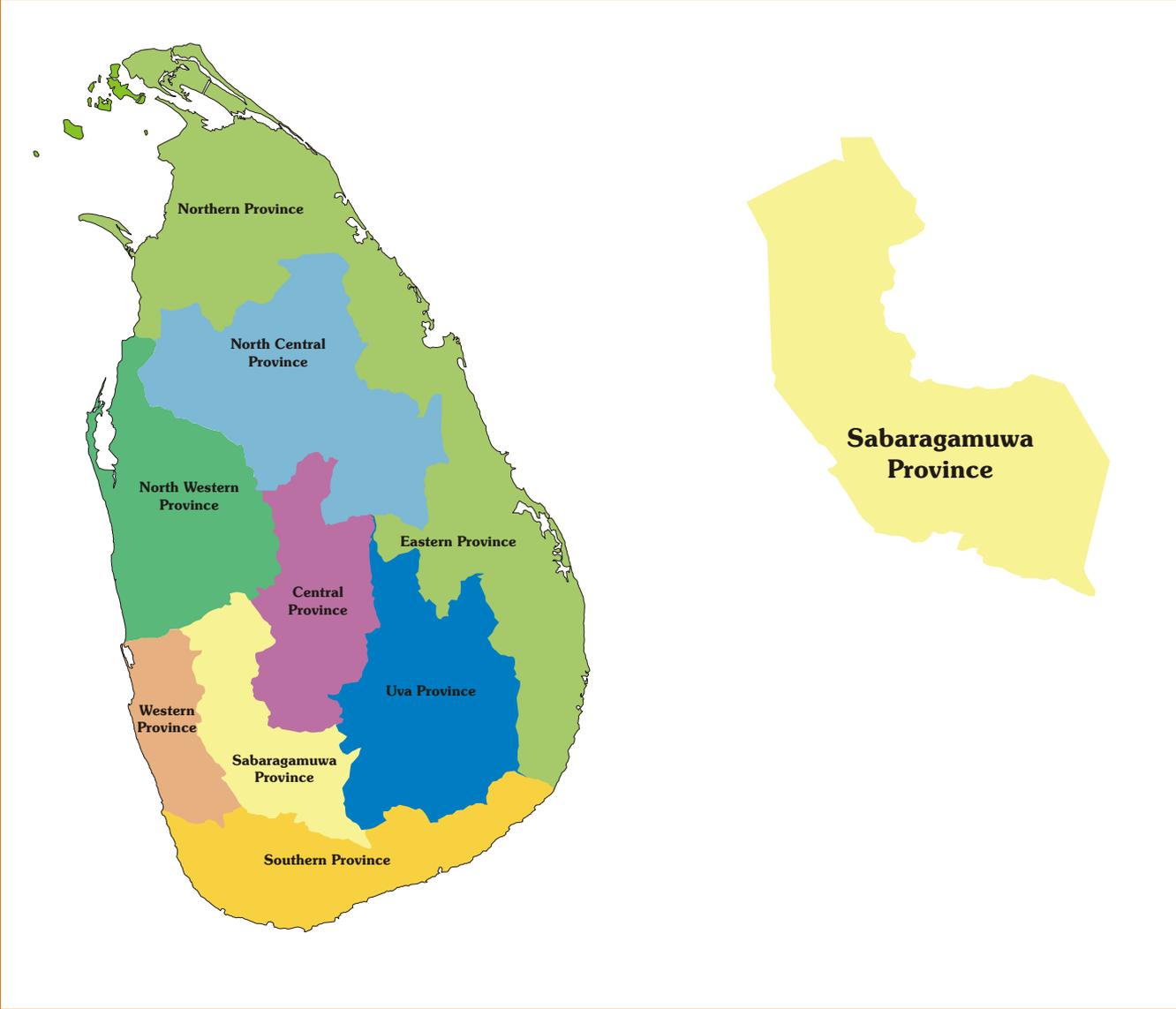
PROMOTION OF DECENT WORK FOR PLANTATION AND RURAL YOUTH IN SRI LANKA



ILO/ Japan Multi-Bilateral Programme

ASIAN 2006
DECENT WORK
DECADE 2015

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

Sri Lanka faces a unique youth employment challenge, particularly in the country's tea and rubber growing regions. Young people on plantations lack a diverse choice of employment because of language barriers, limited educational opportunities and geographic isolation.

The ILO/Japan project, Promotion of Decent Work for Youth in Sri Lanka, helps alleviate unemployment and underemployment among rural young people by directing them to vocational training opportunities, providing entrepreneurship training, improving employment and recruitment services for employers and young workers, and developing a curriculum to improve teaching of “soft skills” on plantations.

The project contributes to poverty reduction by helping rural youth enter the labour market. By developing the capacity of local staff and institutions, it also improves labour market and employment services. In addition, it works closely with plantation companies to promote strategic corporate sustainability, factory improvements and a good work-life balance.

At the national level, the project helps rural and plantation youth raise their issues and promote their views to the Government, trade unions and employers' associations. It works to improve knowledge and understanding of youth employment issues and to support policy creation and development.

The project's activities are based in the Sabaragamuwa Province. The promotion of Decent Work for youth in Sri Lanka is a multi-disciplinary project. The project contributes to improved employability and Decent Work for young women and men in the province of Sabaragamuwa through:

1. Knowledge enhancement for decision makers
2. Capacity building for service providers
3. Access to more and better jobs for plantation and rural youth



Project period 2007-2010

IMPROVED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO YOUTH

Quality career guidance services have reached over 15,000 young women and young men in the 11 vulnerable administrative divisions covering both plantations and rural communities of the Sabaragamuwa Province. The plantation youth were thus far deprived of career guidance services that provided them with information and knowledge about the labour market beyond the plantations. TOTs for 74 career guidance officers including In-Service Advisors in schools have been completed and trainers equipped with quality tools to ensure standardised service delivery for these vulnerable groups. They have now internalised this learning and conducted a considerable number of training programmes within the course of their duties and many young women and young men who are still within the formal school system but on the verge of moving into the world of work have received Career Guidance directly through these cascading training interventions.



SOFT SKILLS AND A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR ATTITUDINAL CHANGE AMONGST YOUTH

The Province of Sabaragamuwa comprising the districts Rathnapura and Kegalle has been identified as an area of high unemployment and plantation youth identified as one of the most vulnerable groups. In order to enhance their prospects for employment, the Decent Work for Youth in Sri Lanka Project developed a basic **Business English programme** for delivery by 30 experienced teachers identified by the Regional English Support Centre (RESC). English teachers trained on quality (business) English reached some 600 young men and young women in rural areas.

Street Theatre is a popular medium for conveying messages to young people especially in rural and plantation communities in Sri Lanka. The Project's communication strategy primarily uses street theatre to sensitise and inform young people, their families and communities about youth employment challenges and to harness their support to promote decent work for young people. Through the project 40 plantation residents 38 of them youth (of whom 28 are young women and girls) are being trained to sustain the performance developed initially by a professional team. A few talented older women have been included in the trainee group to ensure the security of these youth during and after practice sessions as they commute back home after rehearsals and performances. The trainees have reviewed the original script, discussed its contents and added their collective ideas to the theme on youth employment and are producing it in bilingual dialogue pitching at the targeted plantation audience. As 21 year old Manju Rekha says “we enjoy ourselves doing this drama, it's fun and we will continue to work on the drama and perform for our friends and family on the estates even in the future”.



“
I knew learning English is very important but didn't get an opportunity to do so since I couldn't afford to pay the tuition fees. Now thanks to the ILO/ Japan project I am following the Business English course. I trust this knowledge will make a big difference in my life.”

**Ravindran Krishanthadevi-
Houpe Estate**

LIFE SKILLS FOR TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL-TO-WORK



Life skills have been recognized by the Project as a learning gap amongst plantation youth. The lack of life skills contributes to making plantation and rural youth less employable than their urban counterparts. The project has developed a life skills package with a view to strengthening vulnerable youth from the plantations to ease their transition from school to work. 24 young volunteers and workers from the six participating plantation companies were chosen through an assessment process to train as master trainers imparting the life skills package to youth entering the labour market for the first time. Additionally this life skills package is being introduced to government and trade union run vocational training centres in the Province as an integral part of the vocational training curricula. Life skills will be combined with a ILO gender training package for Vocational Training service providers to also ensure that trainers will make space and encourage young women to opt for non-traditional vocations that may prove to be financially more rewarding in the world of work.

It also assists youth to develop lifelong learning skills and good practices that will help them transit into the world of work and also meet the challenges in the work place. Recognising that young people are in need of competencies to face interviews, to be productive and successful in the work place, the project developed a trainers manual and student handbook providing advice and guidance on 'how to' achieve smooth school-to-work transition. All tools have been developed in the local languages.

The training programme includes methodology such as, unlearning, learning, reflection and experiential learning. Trainees learned new skills of communication and programming of the sub-conscious (NLP). They also learned about self discipline, self esteem and self-confidence.

“

I am Sudarshani. I participated in the Life Skills TOT and non formal education TOT programmes conducted by the Youth Employment project ILO/ Japan and PHDT Rathnapura. I found it a great opportunity I ever had in my life. I will use the knowledge and the experience I gathered here, to make my life successful. I will also use my knowledge to be a better trainer and help young people succeed in life ”

Sudarshani –Opata Estate

life skills - abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.



YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT (YED)



The Project conducted a pilot **Youth Entrepreneurship Development (YED)** Training of Trainers programme as well.

The objective of the training programme was to improve the trainers' knowledge and training skills on entrepreneurship development to enable them to teach entrepreneurship as a skill to youth who attend the training courses of their respective organizations with a view to enhancing youth employability. In-Service Advisors of the Provincial Department of Education Sabaragamuwa, Career Guidance Officers of the Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka and the Youth Corps (YC) Centers in the Province, followed this programme. The YCs prepare a minimum of 600 youth for school-to-work transition every year.

After the training programme, the career guidance officers of the Rathnapura District Office of the Vocational Training Authority (VTA) of Sri Lanka organized and conducted a Youth Entrepreneurship Development training programme for youth following vocational training courses at their training centre. 20 youth following vocational training courses in masonry, carpentry, garment making and beauty culture successfully completed the YED component as well. This stimulated the interest of the Youth Corp (YC) and other authorities to incorporate the YED component into the mainstream YC and VTA curricula. Discussions ensued between the service providers, Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) and the ILO, resulting in the YED curricula and other ILO tools (such as Business English, Life Skills for School-To-Work Transition (SWT), Gender for VT trainers and Career Guidance) being mainstreamed into these institutions that provide services to youth. The Training of Trainers programmes are presently on going.



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR YOUTH

Access is an impact of capacity building and knowledge management of labour market information which were the initial focus of this project. Access has been improved in terms of linking the plantations to the employment service providers, particularly where the baseline study found that only 27.5% of young persons had access to vocational training services. The National Institute of Plantation Management (NIPM) has presently been contracted to provide basic skills for 6 plantation occupations to 300 young women and men from the 22 selected estates of the project and will be assured of National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) certification at project closure. The NVQ certification material is being developed by the TVEC in partnership with the National Apprenticeship & Industrial Training Authority (NAITA). In this way, plantation youth will receive a nationally recognised and internationally understood qualification that will increase their upward mobility in the world of work. On the job training has already provided employment to 276 plantation youth, of whom 225 are young women.



JOB BAZAARS: DIRECT EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUTH

“
It is very very difficult to find a good job in Sri Lanka. But the Job Bazaar Organized by the ILO/ Japan Youth Employment project gave me an opportunity to meet employers/ companies at our door step. This is the first time in my life I came for this type of program. It opened my eyes to see the options I had. I thank the ILO/ Japan project and the organizers for this opportunity.”

Loganathan Niranjala (Rakwana)

With support from the Youth Employment Project (ILO/Japan), the District of Rathnapura and Kegalle undertook a total of six job bazaars. These events brought together (a) young job seekers, (b) employers (c) Business Development Service (BDS) providers and (d) trainers. Some 4027 youth took part in the events conducted so far. They benefitted from interacting with employers, business services, development agencies, vocational training providers and foreign employment agencies. From their booths employers solicited 1387 vacancies. Employers also conducted on-the-spot job interviews and called job seekers for more thorough interviews for the selected youth before they were recruited.

The vocational training providers gave vocational guidance and advice and signed up youth for training which also attracted more than 600 youth. The foreign employment agencies solicited employment abroad for youth who wished to work overseas. At these bazaars, a designated area was allocated for career guidance undertaken by officers from various youth employment related Ministries & Authorities trained by the project. The job bazaars were planned and implemented by the District Secretariat of the Districts of Rathnapura and Kegalle with technical assistance and support from the Youth Employment Project (ILO/Japan). The District Secretariat of Kegalle has completed two job bazaars with their own funding. Both the District Secretariats have planned several job bazaars in the year 2011 as well.



NON FORMAL EDUCATION FOR YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN

Non Formal Education has been recognized by the Project as a mechanism to educate school dropouts. A study on 22 selected estates in the plantations of Sabaragamuwa identified over 700 school dropouts belonging to the age group 05-14 years, the age of compulsory school going.

However due to poverty, a lack of interest of both parents and children, poor facilities in schools as well as a lack of qualified teachers in the schools, and entering the labour market at an early age, children drop out from the formal education system.

With support from the Youth Employment project, PHDT Rathnapura organized a Training of Trainers (TOT) for 25 selected estate youth. The objective of the TOT was to improve the trainer's knowledge and skills on non formal education and to enable them teach school dropouts on their estates to develop literacy, numeracy and language skills with a view to placing them back in school or helping children of legal age to enter the labour market. As an outcome of this TOT, non formal education programmes on these selected estates have commenced.



STRATEGIC CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY (SCS)

The Project works with six Regional Plantation Companies (RPCs), some of whom have subscribed to sustainability plans under a previous ILO programme. This experience has encouraged the ILO to replicate with adaptation, the development of Strategic Corporate Sustainability (SCS) Plans for Youth Employment, through a similar consultation process, facilitated by a national SCS expert. The strategy will include a component of social dialogue to promote harmonious industrial relations between young workers and the RPCs who employ them. At the end of the project at least three SCS Plans to promote decent work for plantation youth would be finalized, printed and disseminated amongst stakeholders.



“ I manage Pelmadulla estate that has a labour force of 800 out of a total resident population of 4,000. This estate was ranked 7th among the ten estates of this company in this region in terms of profitability as at end 2007.

At the beginning of 2008 I took over this estate as manager and found that one of the major reasons for low productivity was the severe worker shortage in spite of the 4000 resident population. Thus we started many activities with the assistance of the PHDT in order to correct the worker shortage and one major project we started was this ILO/Japan youth employment project (YEP).

YEP helped us in many ways –

- *They helped us identify the reasons why young people did not like to work on plantations.*
- *They helped us align youth aspirations and our requirements so that there is no mismatch.*
- *They helped us guide youth who were on the plantation to employment that young people never thought possible through proper training and support. For example more girls were trained and employed for cinnamon peeling, (which was predominantly a male-dominated) job and provided employment under the Collective Agreement to all of them.*
- *The project helped in maintaining industrial harmony by guiding and directing suitable candidates for employment outside the estates as well, so that the unemployed youth on estates were not forced into estate work due to a lack of options.*
- *The project also provided guidance and assisted youth into self employment.*

We have been able to improve the productivity tremendously during this period and I am proud to state that as at end October my estate is ranked no 1 in profitability, not only from amongst the ten estates in the region but from amongst all the 17 estates in the Company.

Under this project we have started a strategic Corporate Sustainability programme for youth employment, with the guidance of a very competent consultant and we will definitely strive very hard to sustain the productivity that we have achieved during these three years.

Finally I wish to state that during these three years of partnership with the project we have started to better understand the problems faced by youth on estates and have been able to come up with solutions for some of them. We will continue to commit ourselves to find solutions to their problems which have proved strategic in solving management's challenges relating to productivity too. ”

*Jeewantha Senarathne
Manager - Pelmadulla Estate*

SAFE WORK FOR YOUTH



“ As manager of Pussella Estate, I always wanted to have a safe and secure workplace for the employees of my Rubber Factory which has approximately 58 male and female workers, including youth.

Although safety & health aspects are a very important factor in a rubber factory, workers and staff at times do not adhere to the safety & health instructions laid down.

Last year, the Youth Employment Project of ILO/ Japan commenced its activities on my estate. Occupational Health & Safety has been a key element in the project and several awareness raising programmes were conducted on my estate.

Replacing decayed timber, patching up damaged floors in slippery wet milling areas, checking and filling the fire extinguishers well on time are important.. Repairs to belt and motor guards of rollers were subsequently done by the Company. Although this work should have been done as a routine, some of the work had been delayed. But we are now motivated and have realized the importance of this having attended the Occupational Safety & Health Programmes conducted by the ILO/ YEP. The workers too appreciate this. ”

Manoj Udugampola
Manager— Pussella Estate

‘START-YOUR-BUSINESS’ FOR PLANTATION YOUTH



“ As Deputy General Manager of Ederapolla estate I got the opportunity to work closely with ILO/ Japan YEP. Through this project we carried out training programmes on Start Your Business (SYB) for selected unemployed estate youth. The Industrial Development Board provided the technical training. As a result of these programmes most of the participants have started their own businesses.

G. Gunaseelan has started a Screen Printing and Graphic designing business. He serves the estate needs through his business which has not only benefited the community but also found him employment on the estate without have to leave his family in search of greener pastures.

F. Ostila has started her food business and she is supplying food to the estate co-operative regularly. S. Ranjitha Kumary and N. Jenita have started a joint sewing and catering business on the estate providing for the estate workers needs. M. Sendil Kumar, M. Sivakumar and K. Gamini Susantha have started small scale grocery shops in their homes finding direct employment for themselves through the project.

Due to the SYB programme the unemployed youth on Ederapolla estate have found employment opportunities and have been able to start business which is beneficial to themselves and the estate community. ”

C.S. Amarathunga,
Deputy General Manager
Ederapolla Estate



“ Helping young people to realize their productive potential and to harness their energies and talents to shape a better world is our challenge and our responsibility today, and our gift to our future ”

Juan Somavia,
*Director-General
ILO*

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR RELATIONS AND PRODUCTIVITY PROMOTION



“ The Youth Employment Project initiated by the International Labour Organization is very beneficial to youth especially in the face of the world economic crisis. Although this Project is basically directed to the Sabaragamuwa Province, it would be very advantageous if such Projects are extended to the other Provinces of the country. I appreciate the endeavours of the Colombo office of the International Labour Organization in implementing Projects of this nature. ”

Mahinda Madihabewa
*Secretary
Ministry of Labour Relations and Productivity Promotion*

A MESSAGE FROM THE SABARAGAMUWA PROVINCIAL COUNCIL



“ Along with funding and technical assistance from the Youth Employment Project of ILO, Sabaragamuwa Province has benefitted with a comprehensive Vocational Education and Training Plan (VET) in collaboration with Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission. This initiative currently has made a remarkable achievement in the field of labour market information and skills development especially among the youth of Sabaragamuwa. We look forward to collaborating with the ILO in our future endeavours too. ”

P. Kodithuwakku
*Chief Secretary
Sabaragamuwa Provincial Council*



Sujatha Pallettehenne
*Deputy Chief Secretary (planning)
Sabaragamuwa Provincial Council*

REFLECTIONS OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS



“As a pilot project ILO/Japan YEP addressed very important areas of youth employment, youth entrepreneurship, vocational training, career counseling, occupational safety and health etc. The support extended by ILO in implementing this project is remarkable”

*Nilanthi Sugathadasa
Additional Secretary (Youth Development) and YEN focal point in Sri Lanka
Ministry of Youth Affairs*



“The Youth Employment Project is a well Planned Programme which is being implemented in Ratnapura District with a variety of interventions in the fields of Youth Employment, Labor Market Information related Training, Life Skills Development and Vocational training targeting young women and men living in plantations and surrounding villages.

26 partners involved in youth employment activities are now working under one Youth Employment Coordination Committee chaired by the District Secretary.

The Programme is linked to the District Development Plan and will continue in the future years. Thanks to the ILO for giving their contribution and participating towards the success of this Programme”.

*Hewa Gunadasa
District Secretary
Ratnapura*



I thank ILO/ Japan YEP for the enormous support given to achieve the objectives of the district Youth Employment Programme in the Kegalle District. Without continuous support and dedication we may have been unable to achieve the local targets set.

Although we may be unable to receive the support of ILO in future, the experience and exposure that we gained through the project has encouraged us to continue the project activities in future. We hope to use the existing administrative set up and resources to do so.

*D.M.P. Dissanayake
District Secretary
Kegalle*



“Youth Employment Project” funded by the ILO/Japan is implemented in Sabaragamuva Province, with the PHDT as their main implementing partner. The project focuses on youth, mainly in the plantations and adjacent villages, providing them with training interventions such as Vocational Training, On the Job Training, Life Skills Development, Business English, Non Formal Education, Career Guidance, etc.

Our appreciation to the ILO for their contribution towards the success of this project.

*Mr. H Nalin de Silva
Regional Director,
PHDT, Ratnapura*

REFLECTIONS OF SOCIAL PARTNERS



The ILO ought to be congratulated for the efforts that are being taken to bring out a brochure for the Youth Employment Project in the Sabaragamuwa area that had been initiated by the ILO Colombo, a project calculated to enhance employment opportunities for young people.

Encouragement given to youth to get themselves gainfully employed has assumed significant dimensions in the context of the employment losses due to the world economic crunch. I am of the view that the ILO should continue this type of programme to encompass young people in the other Regions in Sri Lanka as well as it would demonstrably highlight the Decent Work Agenda.

*Arumugan Thondaman M.P.
General Secretary
Ceylon Workers Congress*



The Employers' Federation of Ceylon is extremely pleased to have been engaged with the ILO on youth employment activities. The EFC identified employment generation as one of its key objectives in relation to promoting Decent Work in Sri Lanka. One of the crucial issues that have surfaced from time to time in the area of youth employment has been the uncertainty surrounding the key skills and competencies that employers in the private sector require of prospective job candidates, at entry level.

The EFC was extremely happy to undertake a survey amongst its membership with the assistance of the ILO ACT-EMP in order to ascertain

the skills and competencies required by employers at entry level. The findings of the survey revealed that, especially in relation to executive and managerial categories, quite apart from technical knowledge and skills, employers look for soft skills in prospective employees.

Projects such as these which the ILO has highlighted in this brochure are very commendable, as it directly impacts on the target group. We congratulate and thank the ILO for its efforts and assistance to us over the years.

*Ravi Peiris
Director General
Employers' Federation of Ceylon*



The unemployment and underemployment of youth is not only an economic loss to Sri Lanka but is also a cause for youth discontent and social uprising. In addition, these factors act as barriers to achieving a decent work culture.

The ILO/ Japan YEP promoted opportunities for youth especially in the plantation sector, to obtain decent employment, and promoting the unionizing of youth as a means of preventing exploitation, fulfilling the aspiration of the NWC.

*Gerald Lodwick
Deputy Secretary General
National Workers Congress*



For more information:

Ms. Shyama Salgado - shyama@ilo.org / Colombo@ilo.org

Mr. Kenichi Kamae - BKK_JAPANTC.org

Web: www.ilo.org/colombo

All Photos © ILO

DECENT WORK

A better world starts here.