

Project Report

the Plan:

Life-saving support to drought-affected children and their families by providing clean drinking water and food

Where

SRI LANKA

What

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Impact

Increased access to safe water, provided essential food packages and raised awareness on good hygiene and sanitation practices during emergencies for 54,749 people, including 22,368 children.

Your contribution has made a huge difference to the lives of children in Sri Lanka.



Emergency support for drought-affected children and families in Sri Lanka

Ampara, Anuradhapura and Monaragala districts, Sri Lanka

Final report

Project summary

Below average rainfall between March and November 2014 resulted in over 6 months of severe drought across certain areas of Sri Lanka; and in particular in the typically dry zones of the country, including the districts of Ampara, Anuradhapura and Monaragala. Initial assessments indicated that **over 50,000 people across the three districts had been severely affected by the drought**. Many families were living without clean drinking water and without reliable sources of food due to crop failure.

Plan Sri Lanka **developed a rapid and coordinated response** taking into consideration the most urgent needs identified, gaps in provision from other humanitarian agencies and our expertise and potential reach in the affected areas.

Plan's **two month response prioritised** improving health by **increasing access to safe water, providing essential food** packages and **raising awareness** on good hygiene and sanitation practices during emergencies.

Through this emergency response, Plan has provided immediate and vital support to 54,749 people (27,795 female), including 22,368 children.

Impact

We had originally planned to target eight divisions in the three identified districts but due to an urgent government request, Plan's response increased to cover nine divisions:

four in Monaragala district, four in Anuradhapura district and one in Ampara district. Through savings made across a number of budget lines (please see the expenditure report below for details) we were able to do this within the available budget and reach even more people than the 49,614 originally planned. The project focused on responding to the immediate needs of those living in some of the worst drought-affected areas and who were at risk of becoming malnourished and contracting waterborne and other related diseases:

- Plan provided 387 water storage tanks and helped coordinate 354 trips of water tankers to supply water distribution points providing **access to safe, clean drinking water** for 54,749 people (including 22,368 children) from 18,034 families for a continuous period of 80-100 days;
- During field visits, Public Health Inspectors (PHIs) and midwives told Plan staff that they had **dealt with fewer cases of diarrhoea** during this drought than they had when facing a similar situation in previous years;
- 2,275 people received essential food packages at a time when severe drought had a **hugely negative impact on land cultivation, harvests and food security**;

Sri Lanka: The Facts



- Population: 21 million
- Infant Mortality: 17/1000
- Life expectancy: 75
- Below the poverty line: 7%
- Human Development Index: 92/186
- Water supply coverage: 79%
- Population under 15: 25%*

*Sources: WHO 2006, 2010 and HDI 2013.

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Final report

- Over 20,000 people reached through health and hygiene awareness activities to support **improved life-saving hygiene practices.**

“We only had one meal a day as there was not enough food during the drought. I had been struggling throughout this season to feed my family. I am so grateful to Plan for providing us with water and the most needed food rations. With this food, I can feed my family for the whole month. I thank Plan over and over again for their generous support.” says Manjula (age 29), recipient of emergency water and food assistance

Activities

- **Provision of safe drinking water to 54,749 people**

Plan purchased 387 (1,000 litre capacity) water storage tanks – 14 more than originally planned – and coordinated with local government authorities to arrange for the installation of the tanks at pre-identified locations accessible to each community.

Through 93 different Community Based Organisations (CBOs), local community members had been consulted by divisional secretary officers to determine where the new water tanks should be placed. Factors taken into consideration included whether other water sources (currently dried up due to drought) were nearby which would allow communities to continue to utilise the new water storage tanks in the future. Women and girls were also involved in this decision-making process; it was important to ensure this, as the burden of water collection predominantly falls on them.



Families collecting water from the new water tank

In addition, Plan helped coordinate the delivery of the safe drinking water through 354 trips of water tankers to the water distribution points in the nine targeted divisions. We had initially thought that 361 water tanker trips would be required but by the time Plan's response began, the Sri Lankan government had already taken action to release water tankers from other districts to accelerate the distribution process. The National Water Supply & Drainage Board (NWSDB) provided the clean water.

Teachers from local schools and pre-schools told us that due to Plan's quick response, students were also able to continue attending school. A total of 22,368 children (11,472 girls) benefited through improved access to safer drinking water in the three targeted districts.

- **Essential food package distribution to 2,275 people**

Plan was able to provide food assistance to 275 more people than originally planned: 2,275 people (1,172 female) from 687 different families in Padaviya and Buttala divisions from Monaragala and Anuradhapura districts received food assistance. As the food assistance programme was implemented in close collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), we did not arrange for distribution of food packages to the same families – hence food package distribution was not carried out in all nine divisions. Each food

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Final report

package consisted of three items: 12kg of rice, 3kg of pulses and 1 litre of vegetable oil. The identification of vulnerable families was done in close coordination with CBOs and the local government; and the WFP's selection criteria were used to ensure that the families most in need were targeted for food distribution. Using these criteria, the families targeted were those who were most food insecure, live below the poverty line and who had also been affected by last year's drought. Plan also took special care to make sure that particularly vulnerable households, e.g. female-headed households, were also included in the list of selected beneficiaries.

- **Health and hygiene awareness promotion reaching over 20,000 people**

Plan coordinated with the NWSDB as well as the provincial health departments to design appropriate Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on good household water management and improving basic hygiene practices. The visuals used in the materials were designed by the older members of children clubs running in the project locations. In total, 16,000 leaflets were printed and distributed to individuals, families, pre-schools and schools.



Example of materials promoting good household water management

Additionally, 32 community awareness-raising sessions on better hygiene practices were also conducted with Public Health Inspectors (PHIs) volunteering their time to oversee the sessions. Community leaders arranged the meetings and encouraged local community members to attend. Due to the short-term nature of our response, it was beyond the scope of the project to assess if behavioural changes occurred as a result of these sessions but early feedback from local school principals informs us that they have seen some improvements in children's hand washing practices.

We estimate that over 20,000 people will have been reached through the leaflet distribution and community-level awareness-raising activities on basic health and hygiene promotion.

Challenges faced and lessons learned

- A Provincial Council election campaign took place in Monaragala district during the project period. This resulted in an attempt by local political leaders to influence government officials' decision-making to favour beneficiaries from particular communities to sway voters. However, clear and direct planning by Plan at the start of the project meant local government authorities were aware that beneficiary selection would be based purely on need.
- This project did not face any other significant challenges during its implementation however; we found that relying solely on government/WFP criteria to identify vulnerable beneficiaries meant that some who really needed support would not be captured. Even though those below the poverty line were prioritised for food distribution, we felt that other categories should also be taken into consideration e.g. female-headed households, families with disabled family members. This way Plan was able to identify and genuinely support the most vulnerable families.

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Final report

Community participation and sustainability

The community members themselves have played a key role in the project: through their participation in deciding where to place the water storage tanks, by having community representatives oversee the water distribution, to attending community sessions on good health and hygiene practices. Their close involvement in both the planning and implementation stages of the project will support its sustainability.

Plan worked closely with the Community Based Organisations (CBOs) to coordinate and manage activities at the village level. Where appropriate, children were also involved in supporting to prepare the list of beneficiaries, as well as disseminating information about when the water and food distribution would be taking place.

Plan also worked with local authorities and coordinated its response with a number of other agencies to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure we delivered maximum impact. Plan is also collaborating with other NGOs such as World Vision, Care, Save the Children and Child Fund to conduct an assessment on the long-term impact of drought, especially on nutrition and livelihoods, in eight districts most severely affected in Sri Lanka.



A mother receiving her food pack.

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Project expenditure

Plan Sri Lanka developed an initial response scheduled to last for two months. Originally the response had a total budget of £76,712, with £30,000 generously funded by the Commission and, given the scale and severity of the emergency, the remaining shortfall was to be met from Plan Sri Lanka's own emergency funds. Thanks to some key savings made – outlined below – final project expenditure was £53,194; £23,518 less than expected. This was an incredible outcome of the project, as we were able to deliver all activities in full and reach more people than originally planned, while Plan Sri Lanka were able to retain over £20,000 of their own much needed emergency funds, which can now be utilised when needed during a future emergency response.

The donation of £30,000 from the Commission was hugely significant in ensuring we secured the funds needed to deliver this much needed project.

On behalf of the thousands affected by the drought in Sri Lanka, we thank you for your life-saving support.

Your contribution is vital to ensure the wellbeing of children in Sri Lanka.
If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us.
Registered charity number 276035



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Project activity	Budget (\$)	Budget (£)*	Expenditure (\$)	Expenditure (£)	Comments
Provision of 1,000 litre capacity water storage tanks (including fitting and transport costs)	37,673	22,231	35,252	20,799	
Provision of water by tanker (13,000 litre capacity)	55,539	32,773	19,717	11,633	This activity cost less than originally budgeted because Plan was able to hire three water tankers for below the estimated cost. In addition, government authorities released the use of a further 2 tankers where Plan only had to cover fuel costs.
Provision of food packages	30,000	17,703	34,088	20,562	
Community sensitisation on hygiene and sanitation	3,500	2,065	0	0	During discussions with the Ministry of Health, they agreed to deliver this activity free of charge.
Provision of IEC materials on water management and good hygiene practices	800	472	407	240	There were no design costs incurred for this activity; and printing was done in bulk which also saved costs.
Plan Sri Lanka staff costs (including travel)	2,488	1,468	695	410	The project was delivered by the respective Plan Program Units (PU) in Monaragala, Anuradhapura and Ampara districts, where Plan Community Development Facilitators were already directly involved with the response. It was coordinated well with the district authorities so all costs were accommodated within the PU's admin budgets.
TOTAL	\$130,000	£76,712	\$90,159	£53,194	

*Plan projects are budgeted in US\$, although funds are raised in other currencies and expenditure is made in local currency. The exchange rate used here is £1=US\$1.6949.