

Coastal Community Restoration Project (CCRP)

The 2004 Tsunami had a devastating effect on the coastal ecosystem, small farms and home-gardens. As the water receded, land was stripped of vegetation and piled with sand, mud and debris. Combined with high inflation and a decline in tourists, communities who live on only a few dollars a day were pushed into deepening poverty. Once people's emergency needs had been met (such as our well-purification programme in 2006) there remained a desperate need to re-establish and develop livelihood opportunities and restore surrounding ecosystems.

With the support of Swiss Labour Assistance, a Solidar consortium member, we launched the 3 year Coastal Community Restoration Project in 2005 to introduce new sources of income through small enterprise development and home-garden rehabilitation, and restore ecosystems to increase biodiversity.

Income diversification

The project is based on the set up of six sustainable community based organisations (CBOs), and one existing RRI nursery, in seven key towns. Each CBO manages a nursery and training centre that produces edible, medicinal, ornamental and utility plants. These are distributed to 700 home gardens and used for ecosystem restoration. A central cooperative guides the CBOs in management, agricultural training programs and ecosystem restoration along coastal areas. Members are trained in income generating activities such as mushroom cultivation, floriculture, organic farming techniques and small business management. CBOs spread this knowledge within the community to encourage crop and income diversification. A sales

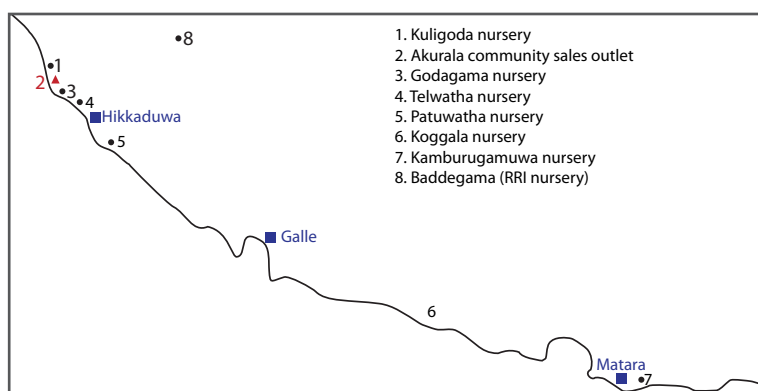
outlet has been established in Akurala, Hikkaduwa, to allow CBOs to sell their products to a wider market.

Restoration

The ecological element engages community members in the rehabilitation of the southwest coastal zone whose mangroves, wetlands and coral reefs normally provide protection from most coastal storms and mitigate flooding. They are also vital fish breeding grounds, and produce edible plants, firewood and building materials. The project has recreated a green belt along the coast which will restore soil cover, improve biodiversity and provide a wind barrier and shade that allows home-gardening activities to take places only meters from the coast.

Achievements:

- Six community nurseries established
- 700 organic home-gardens planted and developed, providing households with a nutritional food source and income
- CBOs trained in management and income diversification opportunities
- Biodiversity increased through home-garden restoration using native plant species
- 86 acres of public and coastal lands replanted with over 23,000 plants, strengthening coastal defences and halting soil erosion
- Communities encouraged to work together and develop innovative solutions to social and agricultural issues
- Indigenous medicinal plants grown and made available as an alternative to western medicine



Map of CCRP communities and outlet centre

