



## Stories from the Field

### Improving Accessibility through Rehabilitating Internal Roads in the North *Project for Rehabilitation of Community Infrastructure and Facilities in the Conflict Affected Areas in Northern Province of Sri Lanka (RCIF)*

The Project for Rehabilitation of Community Infrastructure and Facilities in the Conflict Affected Areas in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka (RCIF) is a community infrastructure development project, contributing towards the sustainable rehabilitation and reconstruction. Funded by the Government of Japan and implemented by UN-Habitat, the project supports returned and resettled Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to overcome their on-going hardships, exacerbated by the lack of basic services. Implemented in the districts of Killinochchi and Mullaitivu, key project interventions include the construction of community centres, preschools, internal access roads and storm water drainage systems.

The RCIF project is supporting the rehabilitation of 60 Km of internal access roads in selected villages in the two districts. Thiruvalluwar Street located in Malayalapuram Grama Niladhari Division was recently rehabilitated with project funding, through a participatory construction process.

Malayalapuram village is located in Karachchi Divisional Secretariat (DS) Division in Killinochchi District. The village consists of 543 families. Farming, animal husbandry and daily wage labour are the main livelihoods of the village. This village, similar to hundreds of others in the North, was badly affected by the three decades of conflict in the country. From 2008-2009, during the final stages of the conflict, families were displaced and were relocated to Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Vavuniya District. When the Government of Sri Lanka resettlement process began, people gradually returned to the village during 2010-2011. The initial period of resettlement posed difficulties as the families had to restart their lives without basic infrastructure facilities such as housing and water supply.



Stretch of road prior to rehabilitation

When the RCIF project selected Malayalapuram village for assistance, a Settlement Improvement Planning (SIP) workshop was conducted in June 2013 to identify the priority needs of the community. The participants, including the Grama Niladhari Officer, representatives of Community Based Organisations (CBO) and community members collectively identified priority community needs including the rehabilitation of internal roads, construction of a multipurpose community centre, construction of common wells, home gardening and livelihood support to families, construction of a primary health care centre and renovation of irrigation channels. The rehabilitation of the internal access road, *Malayalapuram Thiruvalluwar Street*, was selected by the community as a priority intervention.

Established in 1983, the Malayalapuram Thiruvalluwar Street is a 1.32 Km stretch of internal access road linking Malayalapuram to Murukandi village. The road is used daily by about 150 people as the main access road to travel to work, school, market places and farmlands.

The road was in a state of disrepair due to years of neglect during the conflict. In addition to large pot holes along the road, it was prone to flooding during heavy rains due to lack of proper culverts. In addition, some residents living adjacent to the road, had encroached onto the road, thereby narrowing its width in some locations.

Following preliminary planning, the rehabilitation work of the road commenced in October 2013. The work was handed over to a Community Based Organisation (CBO) through a community agreement by UN-Habitat. Following a rigorous



selection process, with the support of the Karachchi Divisional Secretariat, the Malayalapuram North Rural Development Society (RDS) was selected as the CBO to manage this initiative.



Children using the newly rehabilitated road

Based on the scope of work and bill of quantities, a total grant amount of LKR. 1,961,485 was allocated for the rehabilitation work. The payment was provided in four instalments to the RDS, based on the physical progress of work. Skilled construction workers were hired and materials purchased by the CBO under the supervision of UN-Habitat technical team. The Pradeshiya Sabha (Provincial Council) coordinated the design and approval process for the road and assisted in resolving the road encroachment issues by demarcating the correct road boundaries. Local Government officials including the Karachchi Divisional Secretary, Rural

Development Officer and Grama Niladhari provided advice and support to the RDS to undertake the rehabilitation of the road. Malayalapuram community members contributed their own labour towards the initiative by clearing areas designated for road expansion.

Mr. Nahenthiran, President of the Malayalapuram North RDS stated “We were very happy to work on the rehabilitation of this road. This initiative has built the capacity of the RDS members to implement projects through a participatory approach. Our grateful thanks to the Government of Japan for the grant assistance.”

The rehabilitation of the internal road was completed in March 2014. About 150 families have directly benefited from this intervention while hundreds of others who use it to access Skanthapuram, Konavil and Murikandy villages have been indirectly benefitted. Mr. Chandrabalan, the Grama Niladhari of Malayalapuram stated “Timely assistance by UN-Habitat and the Government of Japan has helped us access the neighbouring villages, town centres and market places more easily. It has also helped to enhance cohesion in the village and build capacity of the RDS.”



Official opening of the road by the Japanese Ambassador

In early March 2014, the internal road was officially opened by His Excellency Nobuhito Hobo, the Japanese Ambassador to Sri Lanka, during his visit to the Northern Province.

The RCIF project is being implemented in over 80 villages in the Districts of Killinochchi and Mullaitivu and will run from April 2013 – March 2015. The second phase of this project commenced in April 2014 and will run for two years.