



International Medical Health Organization (IMHO)

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Microcredit Projects for War-Affected Families in Mannar & Vanni

With the resettlement of war-affected persons in Vanni, there still remains much to be done in serving this vulnerable demographic and bringing them to their feet again. The loss of property and livelihoods remains a major obstacle in the way of these persons restarting their lives with confidence and with the tools to succeed. Small-scale microcredit efforts have helped people worldwide to emerge from poverty and reclaim their lives, their health, and their futures. The opportunity has now arisen for such efforts to be undertaken in the war-affected regions of Sri Lanka, to assist those in need in returning to a situation of economic stability. Whether these persons engage in agriculture, animal breeding, poultry farming, small-scale business, or any other industry, access to microcredit, education on microfinance, and mobilization of persons into small collectives leads to empowerment and income generation. Such income generation holds the key to meeting the needs of one's family, upgrading the standard of living, and returning to a sense of normalcy. It also helps to address many of the psychological stressors and mental health issues that have emerged on account of recent events. With such great loss and suffering, mental disorders and suicide rates have spiked in the post-conflict period. Microcredit is crucial to helping people in need to rebuild their lives.

Given this pressing need, IMHO has committed to sponsoring the following microcredit projects with three very reputable and committed partner organizations:

1. Survivors Associated -SA, an organization which has a strong track record in

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1. Survivors Associated -SA, an organization which has a strong track record in carrying out microcredit projects, is implementing a microcredit project in the resettled areas of Mannar area to benefit 90 people. This project calls for training 20 people each in the industries of masonry, carpentry, and tailoring, and another 30 to be trained in starting small businesses. The training period will last for 3 months. Upon completion of the training, equipment will be given to the beneficiaries to carry on with their work. The total project amount is \$10,000 for this project to be implemented in the months to come.

2. Kalmunai Mental Health Society (KAMHA)- IMHO has given \$2,500 for 5 total families in Kilinochchi from a severely disadvantaged socioeconomic background who are simply hoping to rebuild their lives now that the war is over. These funds will be used to help these families purchase equipment and gain access to a small amount of capital and resources in helping them to start small industries and reclaim their livelihoods. A private donor has come forward for this effort, for which we are very grateful. An additional \$500 was given to KAMHA as an educational grant for staff attached to the Kalmunai Base Hospital, as well.

3. Mannar Women Development Society (MWDS)-IMHO is currently exploring a microcredit project for families headed by single women in Kilinochchi in the amount of \$10,000.

Reports Indicate High Malnutrition Rates throughout Northeast Sri Lanka



Echoing the findings of humanitarian organizations, Sri Lankan media has been recently reporting on the very high levels of malnutrition in the Northeast. Child malnutrition is considerably high in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and has reached 46% out of a national average of 29%, a Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) revealed. In two provinces the prevalence of malnutrition is significantly higher among boys, (50%) than among girls (42%). This difference between the genders contrasts dramatically with the malnutrition pattern in the rest of the country, where malnutrition rates amongst boys and girls are very much similar. The data also demonstrates that children aged 12-35 months constitute the most underweight demographic, with the age group of 36-59 months showing a gradual dropping off. This data holds true nationwide.

While it is somewhat surprising that the rates of malnutrition in urban and rural vary only by 1%, it is not at all surprising that the study revealed that a lack of maternal education is strongly associated with these lower levels of malnutrition.

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The child malnutrition rate amongst those with uneducated mothers is 63%. Child malnutrition declines to 54% for those with primary educated mothers, 42% for secondary educated mothers, and 36% for tertiary educated mothers.

Within the Northern and Eastern provinces, Batticaloa and Vavuniya have the highest levels of malnutrition with 53% and 51% respectively. Trincomalee stands at 45%, Ampara at 44%, and Jaffna at 43%, making Jaffna the best amongst the districts within the Northern and Eastern provinces. IMHO is proud to have sponsored many maternal health and child nutrition projects over the years, especially in Jaffna, and remains resolute in its commitment to improving child and maternal health. Only in this way can we truly ensure that the next generation grows up healthy and able.

Support for Jaffna Hospital Diabetic Center and Pathology Lab

At the Jaffna Hospital Diabetic Center established with support from IMHO in July 2009 (just one year ago!), one medical officer and three pre-interns are doing an initial assessment and full diabetic screening (including for retinopathy and peripheral neuropathy) for patients. The center has a focus on education, with each patient receiving an hour of individualized diabetic education. Follow-up care is arranged through the patient's primary care physician. The center saw 1,425 patients in 2009, and over 1,000 patients have so far been seen this year. The diabetic awareness program implemented by the center has been extremely successful, with well over 15,000 people having benefitted to-date. IMHO continues to provide ongoing support for the center through the Jaffna Hospital Development Association, having recently given another \$3,500.



In addition, IMHO also recently provided support to the Pathology Lab at the Jaffna Hospital in the amount of \$2,000 to purchase blood collection tubes. A lack of these blood specimen tubes has been one of the limiting factors of the lab. These reusable glass tubes cost a mere Rs. 5 (US \$0.04) per bottle. IMHO is also working to facilitate the delivery of additional tubes.

Upcoming IMHO Events

Ethiopia Medical Volunteer Trip

WHEN: October 17-30, 2010

WHERE: Addis Ababa & Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

WHY: To serve those in need by providing quality health & medical care

WHO: Medical doctors & health professionals (especially those with a background in diabetes care, cardiology, eye care, primary care, & telemedicine)

HOW MUCH: \$995 all-inclusive, excluding airfare

For more information or to express interest, please email the IMHO Programs Coordinator at coordinator@theimho.org. You can also view the event listing on our website [HERE](#).

SAVE THE DATE: IMHO Semi-Annual Meeting

WHEN: Saturday, October 16, 2010; registration opens at 8:00am & program commences sharply at 8:30am

WHERE: Baltimore Marriott Waterfront, 700 Aliceanna Street, Baltimore, MD, 21202

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*Free breakfast and lunch will be provided

*Rooms can be booked under a special group rate of \$179/night for standard single or double (group code: IMHO) for Friday, October 15th

*We will be joined by visiting physicians from Sri Lanka who will share their first-hand insights, experiences, and projects

*Presentations will cover the current situation in Sri Lanka today, IMHO's recent and planned efforts, and other special guest presentations

*Please RSVP to IMHOconvention@gmail.com This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it or 714.315.0518 so that we may get an accurate headcount!!

*****SAVE THE DATE: April 30, 2011**

8th Annual IMHO Convention in Houston, Texas***

WHEN: Saturday, April 30th, 2011; Registration opens at 8:00am; Program starts at 8:30am

WHERE: Sheraton North Houston (at George Bush Intercontinental Airport), 15700 John F. Kennedy Blvd., Houston, TX 77032

WHY: Come hear first-hand about the humanitarian needs in Sri Lanka and globally from visiting experts, doctors, and humanitarian workers. Learn about the important work of IMHO, participate in panel discussions on various topics, and get involved with our organization. More details to come! You can also view the event listing on our website [HERE](#).

Please mark your calendars now and plan to join us for our 8th Annual IMHO Convention, taking place this year in Houston, Texas. Rooms will be available for booking by phone at 281.442.5100. For reservations by phone, group nightly rates are \$79/night +tax, which does not include breakfast. The nightly group rate with breakfast for 2 included is \$89/night +tax. Please ask for the group rate for the International Medical Health Organization (IMHO). We look forward to seeing you there!

**Be the
Difference.
Save a Life
with just
\$1/day!
**DONATE
TODAY!****

During this crucial time in Sri Lanka and around the world, as we face monumental challenges in providing better access to quality medical and health care for those most at-risk populations, we need YOUR HELP now more than ever. With **just \$1/day** (or \$30/month) you can help save and improve lives in Sri Lanka and elsewhere. Please consider making a donation to IMHO today. You can **donate online via PayPal as a one-time or recurring donation** (the amount & frequency of which are up to you).

You can also **donate via mail** by sending a check made out to "IMHO" to the following address:

**IMHO Treasurer
PO Box 61265
Staten Island, New York 10306
United States**

All donations are tax-deductible (tax ID code #59-3779465)

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