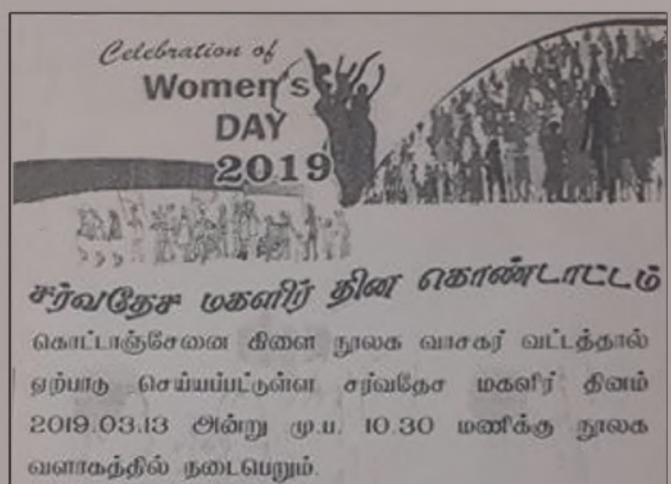


South Asia: Sri Lanka Colombo Public Library



Empowering women entrepreneurs

With the aim of uplifting the livelihood of less privileged communities in Colombo and its suburbs, the Colombo Public Library launched an 'Entrepreneurial Skills Development Programme' for women. It was launched in 2019 to coincide with the International Women's Day celebrations at the library. To deliver the programme the library established a partnership with the Small Enterprise Development (SED) division of the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs.

A series of entrepreneurial skills development workshops were conducted by the SED resource persons. The topics covered at training workshops include how to select a self-employment opportunity, where to get vocational training, how to do financial administration, how to prepare microfinance and marketing strategies and available market opportunities. Thereafter, the participants who were interested in starting a business were registered at the SED to provide further training, depending upon their interests. The library together with SED assisted trained participants by referring them to the relevant microfinance organisations.

The first workshop was conducted at the Kotahena Branch Library where a majority of people live in under-served settlements and belong to low income earning groups. The workshops have continued since then due to the overwhelming community demand.

As a result of training workshops, several women have started small scale businesses especially in the food and bakery products and apparel industry. Using the skills and knowledge gained, many of them have linked with popular supermarket chains to market and sell their products. The library also provided opportunities to showcase and sell their products at various events organised by the library.

The program has directly contributed to the improvement of family income and thereby betterment of the daily lives and wellbeing of these women and their families. The programme has also contributed to the promotion of female labour force participation in Sri Lanka.

Relevant links

<http://www.sed.gov.lk/sedweb/en/>



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Relevant SDGs

