

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April 2025

4th Edition



Message from the National Director

Dear Friends and Partners,

This April was a significant month for Caritas Sri Lanka as we advanced our communication, food security, and peace-building efforts through impactful collaborations and activities.

We were honoured to welcome Mr. Frode Nordahl, Head of Communications at Caritas Norway, whose visit enriched our communication capacity. His workshop empowered our teams with tools for storytelling, transparency, and global engagement. The subsequent field visits captured inspiring beneficiary stories, deepening our connection with those we serve.



April also marked our Annual Review Meetings, where diocesan centres shared experiences and innovations in implementing the Food Security Program. These gatherings reinforced our collective commitment to accountability, community empowerment, and sustainable development.

Regionally, our participation in the Asia Human Mobility Workshop in Bangkok allowed us to share the Sri Lankan context and strengthen solidarity on migration issues. At home, initiatives like the inter-religious training in schools, poultry distribution in Ratnapura, and child nutrition in Haputale showcased our continued dedication to grassroots empowerment and peace-building.

I extend my gratitude to our partners, teams, and communities. Let us move forward with unity, compassion, and purpose.

Fr. Luke Nelson Perera
National Director

Highlights of the month

Workshop on
Asia Human
Mobility

Project
Updates

Partner Visit

Success
Stories

Regional Workshop on Asia Human Mobility

Caritas Sri Lanka participated in the Regional Workshop on Asia Human Mobility held on April 29-30, 2025, in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshop brought together representatives and partners from various Caritas organizations across Asia, including those from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Tajikistan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Japan, Macau, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Myanmar. The focus was on migration-related challenges, regional cooperation, and the role of the Church in protecting the dignity and rights of migrants.



Mr. Hershant, Regional Coordinator of the SAFS Unit, and Mr. Jayasiri Premaratne, Head of the ECCP Unit, represented Caritas Sri Lanka at the event. Their participation enhanced the broader dialogue on human mobility, allowing them to share insights about the Sri Lankan context, key migration trends, and the initiatives undertaken by Caritas Sri Lanka to support migrant communities and returnees.

The workshop served as a platform for mutual learning and strategic planning, featuring sessions on safe migration pathways, policy advocacy, reintegration programs, and cross-border collaboration. Participants also discussed faith-based approaches to supporting migrants and building resilience in communities affected by migration.

This engagement underscores Caritas Sri Lanka's ongoing commitment to being an active voice in regional humanitarian efforts and working in solidarity with Caritas Asia and the global network to uphold the rights and dignity of all individuals on the move.

SAFBIN Core Team Meeting- Virtual

The SAFBIN Core Team Meeting took place successfully on April 22, 2025, gathering key members from Caritas Sri Lanka, Caritas India, Caritas Pakistan, Caritas Bangladesh, Caritas Austria, and Caritas Nepal. The purpose of the meeting was to review progress, discuss ongoing activities, and plan the next steps for the Smallholder Adaptive Farming and Biodiversity Network (SAFBIN) program in the South Asian region.

This meeting served as an essential platform for internal reflection and strategic alignment. The team focused on current challenges at the field level, explored opportunities to scale up effective practices, and discussed ways to strengthen collaboration among Caritas partners. Core team members provided updates from their respective fields, highlighted key outcomes from recent activities, and evaluated the program's impact based on feedback from farmers and data collected over recent months.



Discussions also revolved around improving adaptive farming techniques, enhancing biodiversity in local farming systems, and increasing farmer resilience in the face of climate variability. The team considered ways to incorporate these insights into future phases of the program, ensuring that SAFBIN continues to empower smallholder farmers with sustainable, community-driven solutions. Notably, the National Coordinator, Mrs. Nilani Tissera, emphasized water conservation methods during her presentation at the meeting.

The meeting reaffirmed the team's commitment to advancing food sovereignty, ecological sustainability, and farmer-led innovation as core pillars of the SAFBIN approach.

Annual Review and Sharing Meetings for 2024

Caritas Sri Lanka successfully conducted its Annual Review Meetings for the year 2024 over three consecutive days, from April 23rd to 25th, 2025, at the SEDEC National Centre in Colombo. The gatherings brought together Diocesan Centres (DCs) from across the country to share their progress, challenges, and key learnings, with a particular focus on the implementation of the Food Security Program.

The review meetings were structured over three days, with each dedicated to different regions:

- On April 23rd, DCs from Trincomalee, Badulla, Jaffna, and Kurunegala presented their program outcomes and shared insights from their respective communities.
- On April 24th, the focus shifted to Mannar, Galle, Anuradhapura, Vanni, and Kandy, where participants reflected on their approaches to promoting sustainable agriculture, nutrition, and community resilience.
- The final day, April 25th, featured presentations from Ratnapura, Colombo, Batticaloa, and Chilaw, highlighting both successes and areas needing continued attention.

A central focus throughout the three days was the progress and outcomes of the Food Security Program, a flagship initiative designed to address hunger, malnutrition, and livelihood challenges in vulnerable communities. Staff from each DC provided detailed accounts of project implementation, beneficiary feedback, and local innovations they employed to adapt to regional needs.

In addition to programmatic discussions, the meetings also addressed financial management. Representatives from T&D Associates, Chartered Accountants - Ashan Ramanayake, Assistant Manager, and Mohomad Imad, Audit Associate - joined the sessions to present audit findings and the management letter. Their insights emphasized the importance of strong financial controls, timely reporting, and adherence to best practices in fund management. Constructive feedback was provided on improving compliance and accountability across all diocesan centers.

These sessions also offered opportunities for collaborative reflection, with open discussions allowing participants to exchange ideas, learn from one another, and propose improvements for future programs. The collective knowledge shared during the meetings not only reinforced the spirit of solidarity within the Caritas network but also laid the groundwork for more targeted and effective interventions in 2025 and beyond.

As Caritas Sri Lanka continues its mission to serve the most vulnerable, the Annual Review Meetings remain a vital platform for accountability, learning, and growth, ensuring that every effort aligns with the values of compassion, justice, and community empowerment.



Workshop on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)

On April 3rd and 4th, the National Director of Caritas Sri Lanka, Fr. Luke Nelson, along with the Community Empowerment and Social Mobilization (CESM) team, participated in a two-day capacity-building workshop focused on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). This event was organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) specifically for United Nations entities operating in Sri Lanka.

The workshop brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from the Government of Sri Lanka, civil society organizations (CSOs), and technical experts in the field of migration. The goal of this collaborative gathering was to enhance understanding and coordination among key actors involved in migration governance.



Throughout the sessions, participants engaged in in-depth discussions aimed at strengthening national frameworks and promoting effective collaboration among stakeholders. A central focus was to position Sri

Lanka as a champion country for the GCM by aligning national efforts with global migration goals and best practices. The workshop served as a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and reaffirmed the importance of a unified approach to safe, orderly, and regular migration in the country.

Poultry Distribution to Empower Families in Gurugalla Parish - Ratnapura Diocese



As part of the ongoing socio-economic empowerment efforts under the Irasil Foundation Project, Caritas Sri Lanka, in collaboration with Caritas Ratnapura, conducted a poultry distribution program at Gurugalla Parish in the Epalapitiya Grama Niladhari Division within the Dehiowita Divisional Secretariat Division. This initiative is one of several grassroots-level interventions designed to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable families in rural Sri Lanka.

The program focused on empowering 20 selected low-income families by supporting them in starting sustainable poultry farming with country hens. Each family received a set of poultry, along with necessary guidance and ongoing support to ensure proper care and management of the birds. The project also provided infrastructure assistance where needed, aiming to create a solid foundation for income generation through backyard poultry farming.

The initiative seeks to achieve multiple goals: enhancing household incomes, promoting food security by providing access to fresh eggs and meat, and fostering self-reliance within the community. By equipping families with practical skills and resources, Caritas aims to help them build more resilient and independent lives.

This poultry distribution program reflects Caritas Sri Lanka's ongoing commitment to promoting inclusive development and economic justice. Through such initiatives, Caritas continues to work hand in hand with diocesan centers to improve the quality of life for under-served communities, ensuring that the most vulnerable have opportunities to grow and thrive with dignity.

Promotion of Caritas Inter-religious Training Modules in Schools

As part of the National Centre activities under the CAFOD project, the Sustainable Peace and Justice (SPJ) Unit of Caritas Sri Lanka successfully organized two programs titled “Promotion of Inter-religious Training Modules in Schools” on April 8th and 9th, 2025. These events took place at Batthulu Oya Maha Vidyalaya and Angunawilla Maha Vidyalaya in the Puttalam District.

The programs targeted students in Grades 8, 9, and 10 and were attended by school principals, teachers, the Diocesan Director of Caritas Chilaw, and the CAFOD Project Coordinator.

The sessions were facilitated by Ms. Eureshi Kaveesha, Programme Officer of the SPJ Unit, who introduced the Inter-religious Training Module recently published by Caritas Sri Lanka.

A key observation during the sessions was that many students had limited awareness of their own religious teachings and values. However, through interactive methodologies such as educational games, group discussions, and personal storytelling, students began to show increased interest in understanding and appreciating diverse religious and cultural perspectives.

The safe and participatory environment encouraged students to share personal stories related to other faith traditions, actively listen to one another, and engage meaningfully with the core ideas of inter-religious understanding and mutual respect promoted by the program.

This initiative significantly contributed to fostering a spirit of dialogue and harmony among students, aligning with the broader objectives of peace-building and reconciliation upheld by the SPJ Unit and Caritas Sri Lanka.



Advocacy and Lobbying Session for Peace Forum Members – Caritas Batticaloa

On April 23, 2025, Caritas Batticaloa – EHED organized an Advocacy and Lobbying Session on Peace and Reconciliation as part of the ongoing CAFOD project. This session gathered a diverse group of participants, including CAFOD beneficiaries, government officials, members of the Inter-religious Forum (IRF), and representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs).

The session was facilitated by Mrs. Sumithra Sellathamby, a highly experienced national trainer in peace-building and reconciliation. Her guidance enabled participants to critically analyze the root causes of conflict in their communities. Through structured discussions, participants explored strategies for fostering inclusive community engagement, with a particular emphasis on the active involvement of religious leaders in reconciliation efforts.

The session highlighted the importance of inclusive dialogue, strategic advocacy, and collaborative partnerships in addressing communal tensions and promoting sustainable peace. Participants were equipped with practical tools to transform their personal experiences and pressing community concerns into actionable advocacy plans.

A significant outcome of the session was the proposal to establish localized networks of community leaders dedicated to peace and reconciliation. These networks are envisioned as platforms for coordinated advocacy, knowledge sharing, and collaborative action at the grassroots level, reinforcing the long-term goals of the CAFOD project and the mission of Caritas Sri Lanka's Sustainable Peace and Justice Unit.



CAFOD Partner Visit Strengthens Monitoring, Evaluation, and Future Planning

Caritas Sri Lanka had the privilege of hosting representatives from CAFOD during an important partner visit in early April 2025, which provided a valuable opportunity for collaboration, reflection, and strategic planning.



On April 1st, a focused meeting was held at the Centre for Society of Religion (CSR) with CAFOD partners to discuss the application of Outcome Harvesting as a tool for monitoring and evaluation. This session was particularly significant for Caritas Sri Lanka, as it allowed for the presentation of project outcomes and the sharing of practical experiences with fellow implementing partners. The dialogue fostered mutual learning and enhanced the capacity of all stakeholders to assess project impacts more effectively and adapt strategies for better results.

Following this, on April 3rd, CAFOD representatives visited the Caritas Sri Lanka National Centre to review the progress of ongoing projects and engage in forward-looking discussions about proposed initiatives for the upcoming year. The donors provided insightful and constructive feedback, especially regarding peace and reconciliation efforts, which remain a core focus area for Caritas. They also reflected on the broader implementation of programs over the past year, appreciating the tangible impacts achieved through collaborative efforts.

This partner visit was a valuable opportunity not only to showcase the work being done at both grassroots and national levels but also to integrate donor perspectives into future planning. The ongoing relationship with CAFOD continues to be crucial in strengthening Caritas Sri Lanka's mission of social justice, peace-building, and community empowerment throughout the country.

Amplifying Voices, Building Resilience: Caritas Sri Lanka's Communication Workshop and Field Engagement with Caritas Norway

Caritas Sri Lanka organized a dynamic and impactful Communication Workshop as part of the "Improving Rural Livelihoods, Enhancing Food Security, and Building Climate Resilience" project, funded by Caritas Norway and implemented by the Caritas Sri Lanka network. This event brought together key communication and program leaders to enhance their skills, share insights, and explore innovative strategies aimed at amplifying the voices of the communities we serve. The workshop took place on April 1st at Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC in Colombo.

The session was led by Mr. Frode Nordahl, Head of Communications and Fundraising at Caritas Norway. His global expertise in communication and storytelling significantly enriched the workshop. Participants included the National Director, National Center staff, and communication focal points from diocesan centers and Diocesan Coordinators.

Mr. Nordahl's presentation focused on the core goals and strategies of communication and its role in organizational growth. He discussed corporate communication, public relations, editorial strategies, marketing, and fundraising, highlighting storytelling as a powerful tool for global engagement.



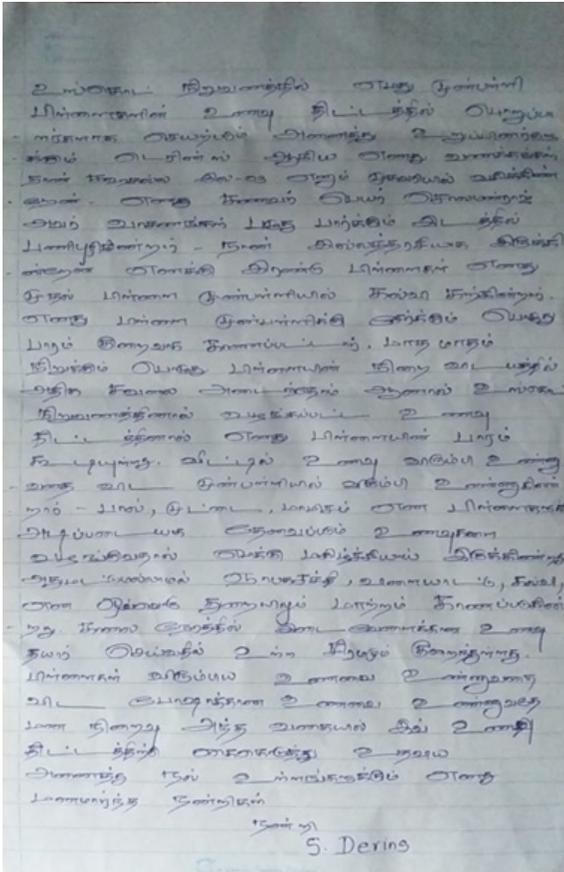
The interactive workshop featured group discussions, practical activities, and real-time feedback, allowing participants to gain hands-on experience and a deeper understanding of effective communication techniques. Following the workshop, from April 2nd to 4th, Mr. Nordahl, along with the Food Security Team and the Communication Team of the National Center, visited diocesan centers in Ratnapura, Kandy, and Colombo.

These field visits aimed to capture life stories from beneficiaries through video clips, photographs, and personal interviews. These narratives will be vital for future fundraising efforts, connecting global supporters with the real-life impact of Caritas work on the ground.

Caritas Sri Lanka's Communication Workshop and field visits marked a significant milestone in enhancing visibility, transparency, and engagement. The efforts aim to strengthen communication initiatives and prioritize beneficiaries, ultimately building resilient communities and achieving lasting change.



A Nourishing Start: How the Child Nutrition Program Transformed Lives



I am Derins from the Kahagalla estate in Haputale. I am a housewife, and my spouse works as a helper at a garage. We have two daughters; one has attended kindergarten at the Kahagalla church, while the other is about to start.

I noticed that my children were underweight, which troubled us. During this time, the nutrition program at the USCOD Centre was launched at the kindergarten in Kahagalla estate. The program clearly explained its purpose to us, introducing nutritious menus for the children at the kindergarten.

The kindergarten provided breakfast that included various nutritious foods such as milk, eggs, rice, vegetables, cereals, meats, and fruits, ensuring a balanced diet for the children's nourishment. It brought us joy to see our children having access to healthy meals. We noticed improvements in their memory, increased activity in sports, and advancements in their kindergarten education. It was clear that the program was making a difference.

Many parents had difficulty preparing meals for their children in the mornings for various reasons, but now that meals are provided, the situation has changed. The children enjoy eating meals with a variety of food items.

We are incredibly thankful to everyone involved for selecting us for the child nutrition program, which has been a blessing for all of us. Thank you.

**Join Caritas Internationalis
Jubilee campaign to call for debt justice**

#Jubilee2025 #TurnDebtIntoHope



Our Network of Support

At Caritas Sri Lanka, we believe that true change happens when we work together. During March, we were once again blessed by the generous support of our funding partners, friends, and collaborators.

Your contributions have helped us to continue our mission of serving the poor, protecting human dignity, and promoting justice and peace across Sri Lanka.

Whether through funding, technical advice, or collaboration on activities, your partnership has made a real difference in the lives of many people.

We are deeply grateful for your trust and commitment.

Together, we are building stronger, more hopeful communities.

Thank you for standing with us and believing in the work we do.

We look forward to continuing this journey with you, hand in hand, in the months ahead.

Do you want to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those in need? Caritas Sri Lanka invites you to be part of our mission to uplift communities, promote justice, and foster sustainable development.

Here's how you can help:

Join Hands With Us – Be the Change!

 Donate – Your generosity fuels our projects, helping us reach more vulnerable communities.

 Volunteer – Lend your time and skills to create real change on the ground.

 Advocate – Raise awareness and be a voice for justice, peace, and human dignity.

 Join Our Campaigns – Support initiatives for peacebuilding, sustainability, and social empowerment.

Every effort—big or small—makes a difference.

Take action today
and be part of something greater!

Visit our website or
follow us on social media
to learn more.

Together, we can transform lives!

Stay Connected – Be Part of the Change!

Stay updated on our latest initiatives, impact stories, and opportunities to get involved by connecting with us online. Follow, engage, and spread the word!

Follow us on;

 Facebook: Caritas Sri Lanka -SEDEC

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