

Strategic Program for Agricultural and Rural Enterprise Development in Welioya

Rotary
Club of
Colombo Centennial



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1. Introduction

The Rotary Club of Colombo Centennial has embarked on a long-term strategic reach to transform Weli-Oya, a historically underserved agricultural community in Sri Lanka, into a model of rural resilience, sustainable farming, and inclusive enterprise. This initiative forms part of the club's broader mission to empower communities through opportunity, knowledge, and innovation. Weli-Oya once stood as a bordering village of the former conflict zone. Despite peace and stability, its recovery has been slow, and much of its economic potential remains unrealized. The region's fertile soil, natural water resources, and unwavering population make it uniquely positioned for agricultural revival if the right systems of support are introduced.

2. Vision

To establish Weli-Oya as a thriving agricultural and entrepreneurial hub, built on modern farming practices, equitable market access, financial inclusion, and sustainable resource management improving quality of life for every family in the region.

3. Mission

To design, implement, and sustain community-driven programs that enable farmers, youth, and small entrepreneurs in Welioya to access resources, training, technology, and markets, fostering self-reliance and shared prosperity.

4. Strategic Objectives

- Enhance Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability
- Strengthen Market and Financial Access
- Promote Value Addition and Enterprise Development
- Foster Strategic Partnerships and Knowledge Sharing

5. Current Situation Analysis

5.1 Socioeconomic Context

Weli-Oya's population is 6,904(2012 Census).in Mullaitivu District relies heavily on agriculture and small-scale trading. Infrastructure is minimal; access to markets, technology, and finance is scarce.

5.2 Key Challenges Identified

- **Limited Credit Access:** Farmers lack collateral or documentation for formal loans.
- **Low Productivity:** Outdated techniques lead to low yields and soil depletion.
- **Post-Harvest Loss:** No storage or cold-chain facilities.

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- **Weak Market Access:** Dependence on intermediaries results in low income.
- **Lack of Farmer Organizations:** Absence of cooperative structures for collective strength.
- **Youth Outmigration:** Young people move to cities due to lack of rural opportunities.
- **Environmental Stress:** Irregular rainfall and poor water management reduce stability.

5.3 Community Strengths

- Fertile land and abundant water sources.
- Willingness among farmers to learn and adopt innovation.
- Strong sense of community and trust in Rotary's engagement.

6. Strategic Components

6.1 Agricultural Development

- Training programs on modern cultivation, irrigation, and crop rotation.
- Introduction of high-yield, drought-resistant, and organic seed varieties.
- Establishment of demonstration farms and farmer field schools.

6.2 Rural Enterprise and SME Growth

- Identification of promising micro-entrepreneurs and provision of business mentoring.
- Facilitation of small machinery and tools through revolving equipment schemes.
- Support for product diversification (e.g., food processing, packaging, and value-added goods).

6.3 Financial Inclusion and Cooperative Formation

- Establishment of farmer cooperatives and saving groups.
- Partnerships with microfinance institutions for low-interest community loans.
- Training in bookkeeping, credit management, and financial literacy.

6.4 Market Access and Value Chain Development

- Creation of regional buyer networks and local collection centers.
- Support for branding and market certification of local produce ("Welioya Green").

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- Promotion of e-commerce and digital platforms for rural producers.

6.5 Women and Youth Empowerment

- Special focus on women-led home gardens, seed processing, and food manufacturing.
- Youth-focused programs on agri-tech, entrepreneurship, and cooperative leadership.

6.6 Climate and Environmental Resilience

- Promotion of climate-smart agriculture and organic fertilizer use.
- Small-scale renewable energy solutions (solar pumps, dryers).
- Water management and reforestation for long-term sustainability.

7. Implementation Framework

The **Rotary Club of Colombo Centennial** will coordinate implementation through:

1. **Community Engagement:** Establishing farmer and youth committees for decision-making.
2. **Technical Partnerships:** Collaborating with agricultural experts, universities, and development agencies.
3. **Capacity Building:** Conducting continuous training and mentoring sessions.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regular tracking of outputs and outcomes using data dashboards.
5. **Scalability Planning:** Documenting best practices for replication in nearby rural areas.

8. Expected Outcomes

- Increased agricultural yield and profitability among smallholder farmers.
- Strengthened local food systems and household nutrition.
- Established cooperative enterprises with financial and operational sustainability.
- Enhanced inclusion of women and youth in economic activities.
- Reduced post-harvest loss and improved market presence for rural products.
- Strengthened climate resilience and environmental stewardship in the region.

9. Sustainability Strategy

Sustainability will be achieved through:

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- Building local capacity for independent operation of cooperatives and enterprises.
- Reinforcing partnerships with private sector buyers and government programs.
- Reinvesting local profits into community funds for education and infrastructure.
- Integrating the initiative within the Rotary Club's annual program cycles for continuity.

10. Future Roadmap

The Welioya Strategic Program will evolve through **three phases**:

1. **Phase 1 – Foundation (Year 1):** Baseline assessments, training programs, and initial pilot farms.
2. **Phase 2 – Expansion (Years 2–3):** Infrastructure setup, market linkages (possible export opportunities), and cooperative development.
3. **Phase 3 – Consolidation (Year 4+):** Full operationalization, replication to nearby divisions, and integration with national food security programs.

11. Partnerships and Collaboration

The Rotary Club of Colombo Centennial welcomes collaboration with:

- **Development Agencies:** For technical guidance and research.
- **Private Sector:** For sustainable market and investment linkages.
- **Financial Institutions:** For accessible microfinance and credit lines.
- **Government Departments:** For alignment with national agricultural policies.
- **Academic Institutions:** For student and faculty engagement in field projects.

12. Conclusion

The **Weli-Oya Strategic Program** embodies Rotary's commitment to sustainable, people-centered development.

By combining **community participation, agricultural innovation, and enterprise development**, this initiative will not only revive the agricultural potential of Welioya but also restore dignity, stability, and opportunity to a region once left behind.

This is not merely a project, it is a long-term movement toward self-sufficiency, rural prosperity, and hope.