



“THE VOICE” Vol.2, AUGUST 2025

Newsletter of the “Project for Women’s Economic Empowerment through Entrepreneurship, Leadership and Networking”



Contents

- 01. 4th JCC meeting
- 02. JICA HQ Monitoring Mission
- 03. Story of the WE
- 04. Networking Event



Match making at the networking event, June 19th



JCC meeting, July 11



JICA Headquarter Monitoring Mission

01. 4th Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) Meeting of the Project

The Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) has been officially established, serving as a critical hub for ensuring the seamless execution of the Project. Convening at least once a year, these meetings are presided over by the Secretary of the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, who guides the discussions with a focus on effective decision-making. This forum is designed to address any potential implementation challenges, ensuring that the Project remains steadfast in its pursuit of success.

The 4th JCC meeting took place in the conference hall of the Ministry of Women and Child Secretariat office, located in Sethsiripaya, Battaramulla, on 11th July. During the meeting, Aya Yamaguchi, the Project Team Leader, presented the Work Plan, which was approved by the JCC. Additionally, the District Women Development Officers (WDOs) from the Monaragala and Ampara Districts shared key updates regarding the Women Action Societies (WAS) and the Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE) components. As a result, the WAS are now positioned to operate independently within their districts, expanding their membership in society. Furthermore, the Women Entrepreneurs (WEs) have evolved into genuine entrepreneurs, establishing viable partnerships with Resource Organisations (ROs).



Aya Yamaguchi presents the Project Annual Action Plan to 4th JCC

02. JICA Headquarters Monitoring Mission



The missions in a group discussion



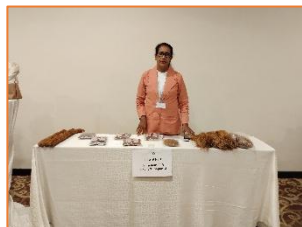
Mission observing products of WE

The mission conducted a field visit to Monaragala and Ampara Districts from June 16-18, 2025. Meetings were held with 4 WAS members, 7 WEs, concerned WDOs and Women Development Field Assistants (WDFAs) to review the progress and achievements made by the Project over the past two years. The mission confirmed that, through the Project activities,

WDO, WDFA, and WAS have significantly enhanced their capacities in promoting WAS initiatives. In collaboration with WDO, an action plan was developed, and WAS groups have been actively engaged in community-level initiatives to empower women by enhancing their knowledge and self-esteem, as well as supporting their economic activities.

The mission also confirmed that through the provision of equipment, structured business-related training and gender awareness sessions provided by the Project, WEs have greatly strengthened their capacities and are now actively and confidently engaged in running their businesses. Many WEs noted that the digital marketing and gender training sessions were among the most valuable components of the program.

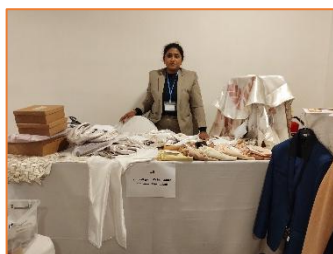
03. Story of Women Entrepreneur (WE) from the 1st batch of the pilot activity - I want to be a role model to other women in the country



Ms. Nishantha at the networking event

Nishantha Menaka, Ampara: Produces Coir-related products under the name of THN Group

"I started my business in 2019 with my husband in Ampara, focusing on products made from coconut husk, or coir. We aim to create job opportunities for women in our rural community. In 2024, I was honoured with the Best Woman Entrepreneur Award in Ampara District for my commitment to business growth and community impact. After joining the JICA Women's Economic Empowerment Project (WEE Project), I worked on expanding our product range to international markets, leading to significant income improvements and profitability. We've recruited 222 individuals, supporting economic growth and receiving increased social recognition, including leadership roles in local civil societies. This progress highlights advancements in social and economic empowerment."



Ms. Madushani at the networking event

Madushani Tennakoon, Monaragala: Madushani Wedding Designs

In 2019, I established my clothing business in Wellawaya, Monaragala, focusing on creating stylish apparel for both men and women. Drawing inspiration from my family's legacy in tailoring and my passion for fashion, I have always emphasized quality and unique designs. My current goal is to reach international customers by utilizing premium materials and adhering to exceptional production standards. Since joining the JICA WEE Project, I have broadened my product range, found new market opportunities and improved the quality of my offerings, thanks to the invaluable training and equipment provided by the Project.

04. Networking Event, June 19th at Waters Edge, Hotel



The participants of the event

To WEs linked with identified and potential resource organisations (ROs), an event of networking was organised by the Project on June 19th. Altogether 70 participants, including 16 WEs under the Project, participated in the event with their products, which were showcased at the event.

The ROs and WEs met together to discuss potential match-making opportunities. During the session, WEs gained access to marketing, training, product promotions, trade fairs, finances, and exposure opportunities. Significantly, the Secretary of the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, the Women's Bureau Director and staff, the JICA Headquarters delegation, JICA Sri Lanka staff, 16 ROs, and District-level WDOs attended the event. There are plenty of ROs expressing their willingness to liaise with these WEs for marketing and training opportunities. It is a good indicator that WB can follow up on this work with these ROs.



Gallery walks at Networking Event

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