



# MOTHER & CHILD PROJECT

12<sup>th</sup> Progress  
Report  
for the Period  
September to  
December 2024



**The Mother & Child Project (MCP) was initiated by CandleAid Lanka in February 2021 and has sustained its efforts successfully for over three years. This report presents the progress made between September to December 2024, as well as details of fund utilization from February 2021 to December 2024.**

CandleAid established a fund to support helpless Mothers who are either widowed or abandoned by their spouses. These are women who bear the full responsibility of feeding, clothing, educating, and nurturing their children while shouldering the burden of earning a livelihood to sustain their households.

Through our network of volunteer coordinators, CandleAid identifies and supports families who meet the criteria outlined above. These families receive financial assistance of LKR 5,000 per month to supplement their income for a period of 12 months. More importantly, CandleAid explores opportunities to empower the mothers by encouraging them to leverage their abilities, talents and strengths to start or expand their own businesses and improve their family's circumstances. Women who are already engaged in small-scale home-grown initiatives are provided with support to enhance the productivity of their endeavors through a discussed plan of action. It must be mentioned that most beneficiary families may not qualify for empowerment due to their specific circumstances and logistical challenges.

Enrollment of families commenced in February 2021. During the period from September to December 2024, 03 new families were enrolled, bringing the total number of families in the project to 158. All 03 newly enrolled families are now receiving monthly assistance. Additionally, three more families have been screened and are set to be enrolled in January 2025.

**A Summary of the Mother & Child Fund is as follows:**

Donations received up to end December 2024	LKR 9,625,304.62
Number of donors	76
Total amount allocated up to December 2024	LKR 9,480,000.00
Balance available for allocation	LKR 145,304.62

Given below are the details and photos of the three families (MCP 156 to MCP 158) that were enrolled during the reporting period.

CandleAid Ref. No. : MCP 156  
Name of Beneficiary : Mrs J Lalitha  
Handapangoda, Kalutara

**Family Circumstances:**

Lalitha is a mother of one son. Her husband, who had been bedridden for a long time, passed away in January 2024 at the age of 79 years, due to heart complications associated with aging. Her son is currently in Grade 12, pursuing studies in the art stream and is preparing to sit for the GCE Advanced Level examination in 2025. Lalitha is unable to work due to her physical disability. The family receives LKR 8,500 monthly through the government's Aswesuma welfare program. In addition to this, they rely heavily on the generous support of relatives and neighbors to manage their day-to-day expenses. The family has no other source of income.



CandleAid Ref. No. : MCP 157  
Name of Beneficiary : Mrs Kusumlatha Karunasingha  
Kamburupitiya, Matara

**Family Circumstances:**

Kusumlatha is a devoted mother to her only daughter. Tragically her husband abandoned the family when their child was just three months old and is now living with another woman. He provides a monthly alimony of LKR 7,500 for their daughter's support. Her daughter, currently in Grade 13, is studying in the Mathematics stream and is preparing to sit for the GCE Advanced Level examination in 2025. Kusumlatha spends approximately LKR 10,000 monthly on her daughter's extra classes to ensure she receives the necessary academic support. Until five months ago, they lived in their own house, which was severely damaged by a landslide. This forced them to move into a rented room with a monthly rental of LKR 10,000, significantly straining their finances. She works tirelessly as a housemaid earning LKR 12,000 per month. However, her income combined with the alimony, is insufficient to cover their daily living expenses and her daughter's educational needs. Despite these challenges, Kusumlatha remains determined to support her daughter's education and future aspirations.



CandleAid Ref. No. : MCP 158  
Name of Beneficiary : Mrs R Sanjeevani Gunathilaka  
Mattegoda, Colombo

**Family Circumstances:**

Sanjeevani is a mother of two daughters who has been enduring significant challenges following the untimely passing of her husband in August 2023 due to a heart attack. Her struggles intensified when she was diagnosed with lung cancer in September 2023. She is currently receiving treatment at the Apeksha Cancer Hospital in Maharagama. Initially, she underwent chemotherapy, but she now relies on oral chemotherapy tablets for convenience and attends clinic once a month. Her eldest daughter, who completed her G.C.E. Advanced Level examination in 2022, has been unable to pursue further studies due to the family's dire financial circumstances. She is fully dedicated to caring for her mother and plans to enroll in a vocational course in the future. Sanjeevani's younger daughter is currently studying in Grade 09. The family lives in a rented house shared with Sanjeevani's sister, for which they pay a monthly rent of LKR 20,000. Sanjeevani receives a government grant of LKR 3,000 per month as financial aid for cancer patients. However, this grant, along with support from relatives, is insufficient to meet their daily living expenses and her children's educational needs.



## **Self-Empowerment of Women (SEW)**

CandleAid is committed to enrolling selected Mother & Child beneficiaries in the Self-Empowerment of Women (SEW) programme. This initiative aims to provide these mothers not only with a sustainable livelihood but also with the dignity and sense of accomplishment that comes from self-reliance.

The challenging economic situation in the country has hindered progress in this area during the reporting period. Nevertheless, we remain committed to carefully reviewing beneficiary profiles and engaging in meaningful discussions with them to assess their suitability for future empowerment opportunities. Our unwavering goal is to uplift and empower these women, equipping them with the tools, resources and confidence needed to transform their lives and secure a bright future.

## **Acknowledgement**

We are confident that our donors, whose collective generosity has enabled CandleAid to initiate and sustain the Mother & Child Project for over three years, will be gratified to read and learn the outcome of this initiative. Within this short span we have successfully enrolled 158 families in the programme. The mothers enrolled face tremendous challenges as they raise their children amidst the harsh realities of poverty. CandleAid's pledge to contribute LKR 5,000 per month for an assured period of one year to each of these families has offered them with much-needed relief. These mothers are deeply grateful and comforted by the knowledge that people they have never met have cared enough to offer support and help to uplift their lives, which are often filled with sorrow and despair.

This project would not be possible, nor would it be progressing as successfully, without the generosity of our kind-hearted donors. Hearing about these mothers' struggles and witnessing their determination to provide for their children has been a deeply emotional experience for us. Our project's vision is to support these impoverished mothers in fulfilling their responsibilities, and it is our duty to extend our heartfelt gratitude to every donor who has contributed to its success.

The mothers we assist are so grateful for what we are doing, as what seems 'little' to us is indeed 'a lot' to them, and for some of them, that is the only income they are assured of to sustain their family expenses every month.

CandleAid takes this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude once again for the donations made to the fund. More importantly, we are thankful for the trust and confidence placed in us. It is through such gestures of goodwill and compassion that CandleAid is able to carry out its meaningful projects and programmes in its endeavor to alleviate poverty. Thank you to each and every one of you.

**Yasmin Weerasuriya**

**Director**

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