



Idulgashinna Organic Biotea Project: hear from the people who live and work there about what difference it has made in their lives

Longtime Tradewinds supporters Jill and Michael Finnane talked to the members of the Social Development Committee when they visited them in 2007. The committee includes village representatives (Sinhalese) as well as the people from the estate. Gnanasekeran was the interpreter. Each person was asked to say,

‘What do you see as the biggest changes that have happened in your life on the estate since the project began in 1992?’

Mrs Syanathaie

I am happy about prospects for education of the children from preschool opportunities to computer training. They now have a good foundation and so I feel there will be a bright future for our children.

Mrs A Gowrie

Earlier no child-care centre so it was hard for us to go to work. Now we can go to work and the children are well cared for.

Mrs P Wijayaletchumy

There is a better environment. Before there was no drainage now there is. Housing is much better. The children and the house are clean.

Mrs R Sakojani

My daughter was able to get computer education. I am confident she will get a job.

Mr S Maran

The children. We never expected the children would get to this level. Now some are going to university. We are very thankful to Mr Zaki Alif and his partnership with others.

Mr T Sasticumar

I have worked here for 8 years and now 40 other people from a neighbouring tea garden have come here to work. Now we get a good income level, job opportunities and can support our families.



Members of the Social Development Committee meeting to tell Tradewinds about the impact of the changes at Idulgashinna.

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Mr BPB Ponraj

The culture and attitude has been changed. A major problem was alcohol. Now that has been brought down. Mental attitudes have changed and families are happier.

Mrs WM Nirmala

The vast improvement in the health sector. Families can come any time to get advice and education about prevention. We are now living in healthy houses with a healthy environment.

Miss TR Lalani Itnadasa

There is now a good awareness of health systems. For example TB can be caught at the early stages. Everyone now knows what they should do.

Miss MH Vasana

There is now a good opening for vocational training for young children such as computer training.

Miss Chintha Uadayangani

(Comes to work here from the village – came originally as a trainee.) I work for the technical section and help drafting plans. We are building strong buildings and they will be stronger in the future. It has been a great opportunity to come from the village to work here. There is a good understanding between the village and here.

Miss S Nishanthi

The relationship between the management and the workers –it is like one family.

Mr SP Francis

There have been many, many changes... Government teachers being appointed to the plantation. We now have two students at university and one doing teacher training. When Bio-tea children go to the government school the teachers see a big difference. The children also are now getting some good results in the scholarship exam. The vocational training centre gives a good opportunity for the children.

Mrs Shirani Nilmini

I came from the village as a trainee many years ago. I enjoy handling the workers' wages. I see more employment; now their contribution to the Employment Provident Payment has risen from Rs1mil/month. There are more days' work available for the workers. They are healthier and that means they work more. I feel comfortable about the environment here and it makes me hopeful about peace for Sri Lanka.

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Mr YJS Gnanaraj

I provide vocational training on the theory and practice of construction. It is completely different working here. Most of our workers come from other projects. We have been able to train workers in skills so many are happy here. They can get in as a trainee and build up their skills. So there is much fulfilment in working here.

Ms S Selvambal

(Works as a family counsellor especially on women's problems and has been there for 15 years.) I have seen remarkable changes in women's empowerment. Now they want to educate their children rather than send them off to earn money. Now they can make their own decisions. Before women were sad and angry; now they are happy.

Mr S Vahadevan

I feel very much younger after joining here. I am very happy compared with other estate sectors where I have worked. I am grateful to Zaki for uplifting the downtrodden society to this position. The focus here is to have a better medical coverage and a better social development, for example university admissions. The estate community is happy and healthy and not miserable like elsewhere. This means they can come to a better standard and so they are viable workers and viable families. Then in turn they are viable for the project. We look for more improvements. If there are any shortcomings then please let us know.

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