

## **NEW YEAR APPEAL -SUPPORT FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES AMIDST AN ECONOMIC COLLAPSE**

Batticaloa  
January 1, 2024

New Year brings us the news that fuel prices are increasing by 10% which means that the prices of goods including food will also rise. This is in a context where the cost of living has gone up by about 300% over the last year and a quarter, while salaries have remained the same.

This constant increase in costs while income remains the same is for ordinary families a relentless increase of pressure. Vast sections of our country are cutting back on food consumption. Child malnutrition is high. We increasingly see people begging for help on the streets, including mothers with small children –something we did not see so much of earlier.

We continue with our friends generous support to manage our programs in support of marginalized and vulnerable youth to provide them with educational pathways to get out of poverty.

However, Marilyn and I are having to respond to and try to support an increasing number of families and youth needing help for their living expenses. This again we try to do with the help of friends and family overseas. This support we provide informally and not through our work.

The support that some youth need (for living expenses) is about Rs.20,000 a month and families need about Rs.35,000 a month (please note that this is minimal help for them. The support for youth is to help with their living expenses while they pursue studies. The help for families is sometimes for families of our students, so that the student does not have to drop out of studies and work to help their families, but it is also for families not connected to our program also.

If any of you are able to provide partial or full support for a youth, family or more please do let me know.

Please continue to keep us all in our thoughts and prayers as we head into one more challenging year.

Best,

Darshan